

# **STREET CHILD SIERRA LEONE MARATHON & CYCLE CHALLENGE 2025**

## **WELCOME GUIDE**





Dear Street Child Supporter,

Thank you for joining us on the adventure of a lifetime, and welcome to the beginning of your Sierra Leone Marathon & Cycle Challenge journey. In this welcome pack you'll find some key tips for getting started - from fundraising to training plus more information on Sierra Leone and Street Child.

A key aspect of SLM is fundraising for Street Child. It is your kind generosity and support which makes it possible for Street Child to ensure children are safe, in school and learning. We want to help you achieve and even exceed your fundraising targets so we have included some important information and creative tips and ideas to get you started!

Please do read through the guide and get in touch if you have any questions or if you have any great ideas to share with your fellow participants.

You are about to embark on an adventure that is going to have a significant impact on the lives of so many children - time to shout about it and set the fundraising bar high!

Sierra Leone is a beautiful country and we look forward to welcoming you to the land of green, white & blue.

Get ready, here we go!

Mark and the Sierra Leone Marathon & Cycle Challenge Team





The Sierra Leone Marathon & Cycle Challenge is Street Child's flagship fundraiser and has raised over £2.5 million for the charity so far. Every year our supporters amaze us with their incredible fundraising efforts. Here's some top tips to get you going and start thinking about how you can smash your fundraising.

## Start thinking big

Fundraising is about so much more than just setting up a page and sharing, it's about being smart and creative. Think of your fundraising as a campaign from now until race day. It will be so much easier to exceed your target if you spend a bit of time coming up with creative ideas and aim high.

## Let us help you

We've been doing this for a while and have picked up some tips and tricks along the way. We've put together some fundraising materials to help you reach your fundraising target. The SLM Team are also on hand to help with ideas and support you along the way.

[Visit our fundraising page](#)

[Request fundraising resources](#)

## Social Media

Social media is a wonderful tool to help you report back to your supporters, share what you're learning, and highlight key points of Street Child's programmes. Be sure to tag us in your posts!

Relevant accounts:

LinkedIn: Street Child

X: @streetchilduk

Instagram: @streetchilduk

Facebook: /streetchilduk

TikTok: @streetchildcharity

## Set up your fundraising page

Setting up your fundraising page is such an important part of raising vital funds for Street Child. It's a really easy way of sharing your campaign and for your supporters to donate. We recommend using [Givestar](#), it's simple to use, can take donations via the app on your phone and you can follow your fellow SLM heroes too.

[SET UP YOUR FUNDRAISING PAGE HERE](#)



# FUNDRAISING IDEAS



Rather than birthday presents, ask your loved ones to donate the cost of a present!



Get creative with quizzes and murder mystery games, utilise the internet, you could be the next viral sensation!



Ask your donors to 'sponsor a mile' of your marathon.



Ask for match funding from your employer, share your fundraising page far and wide!



Ask your friends and family to donate the cost of their meal!



With each donation, your sponsor can pick a song for your Sierra Leone Marathon running playlist.

Donate for a personalised gift

- £5 for a social media thank you post
- £10 for a postcard from Sierra Leone
- £20 for a video shout out from the Marathon

Enjoy your fundraising! Just like your running training it needs dedication and a positive attitude. Reach out to us! for some new ideas and inspiration.





# TRAINING

## Training Plan

All great things start with a plan, and if running a marathon, half marathon, 10km, 5km or cycling 75km seems like a distant achievement right now, sticking to a solid plan will help you get there. The Sierra Leone Marathon & Cycle Challenge is like no other race so deserves its own training plan. We've put together a unique, tailored plan to help you reach your goal and prepare you for the challenge of a lifetime - plus we have former SLM heroes on hand to pass on any helpful tip or advice - get in touch for more details: [slmarathon@street-child.org](mailto:slmarathon@street-child.org)

## Be kind to yourself

If you miss a planned training session or for whatever reason have to take some time off, don't beat yourself up. The Sierra Leone Marathon & Cycle Challenge is designed for all abilities to take part, so take a break if you need it. You can always catch up on the plan, and worrying about it will do more harm than good! You'll still get there.

## Hear from our SLM heroes

Take a look at the blog posts below from some of our Sierra Leone Marathon participants and get inspired!

Bea Meitiner, part of the travel duo Bea Adventurous, wrote a detailed account of her experience of race week here, including her experience of the project visits: [Is Sierra Leone Marathon the craziest marathon? - BEA ADVENTUROUS \(bea-adventurous.com\)](#)

Will Greenwood, former England Rugby star spoke about his experience in Sierra Leone and supporting Street Child: [Will Greenwood takes on the Sierra Leone Bike Challenge \(Evening Standard\)](#)





# ABOUT STREET CHILD

Street Child works to see all children kept safe, in school and learning — especially in low resource environments and emergencies.

Our vision is a world where it is seen as unacceptable for a child not to be in education. But today there are 250 million school-aged children around the world who are not in education. Millions more children are in school but failing to learn.

Street Child believes that education is a fundamental right and achieving universal basic education is the single greatest step toward eliminating the inequality gap and global poverty. We go to places where others don't go, where we seek out remote, hard-to-reach, fragile and disaster-affected states that are forgotten about and ignored. It's in these contexts where our pragmatic and cost-effective approaches can make a real difference to a child's future.

Street Child works to remove the complex social, economic and structural barriers to education wherever they lie. We are there to close the gaps through which the most marginalised children can slip. Our work includes not only building schools and training teachers but also protecting children and livelihood support for caregivers to ensure they can afford the cost of their children's education.

Wherever we work, we partner with local organisations and communities which allows us to be responsive and nimble. We use simple, low-cost and replicable solutions that allow us to create maximum impact for the most children.

## £30 COULD...

Send a child to school for a whole year.

## £60 COULD...

Provide a mother with a business grant.

## £90 COULD...

Provide learning materials to a whole classroom of students.

## £300 COULD...

Train a teacher and improve teaching quality.







# STREET CHILD OF SIERRA LEONE

Street Child started working in Sierra Leone in 2008 when the country had recently began recovering from a devastating civil war. Today, children continue to face significant barriers to learning. Many children never complete primary school, leaving school without foundational literacy and numeracy skills.

Makeni, the biggest town in Northern Sierra Leone and home of the Sierra Leone Marathon, is where Street Child's first-ever project was launched to support 100 street-connected children and get them to go back to school. Since then Street Child has grown to be a major NGO in Sierra Leone with offices and projects that span the entire country.

Street Child of Sierra Leone is our local partner and during SLM you will meet the team of project coordinators, social workers, family business officers, drivers and our excellent management team who implement and monitor our projects across Sierra Leone:

- 246,295 Children reached through our programmes.
- 39,606 Adults reached, 7,744 of which received family business grants
- 1,157 Classrooms across 385 schools supported through renovations or construction.

Since 2008, Street Child has grown rapidly. We now have programmes in over 25 countries around the world and have supported over one million children into education. Sierra Leone will always be that bit special to Street Child - it's where it all began!

[FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR WORK IN SIERRA LEONE](#)



# FLIGHTS

If you choose to arrive before Wednesday 30th April, please let us know if you need any assistance in booking extra hotel nights (this can be done via the WeTravel booking platform). If not then arrange to meet us at the Lungi International Airport on the morning of Wednesday 30th April. You will then join other SLM participants for the transfer from the airport to Makeni (approx 3 hour drive).

Ideally you should aim to arrive in to Sierra Leone on the morning of Wednesday 30th April for the 5 night package, where a member of the SLM team will meet you at the airport and assist you on your transfer to Makeni (approx 3 hour drive).

If you have selected the 3 night package, ideally you should aim to arrive in to Sierra Leone on the morning of Friday 2nd May, where a member of the SLM team will meet you at the airport and assist you on your transfer to Makeni (approx 3 hour drive).

Airport transfers are only permitted during daylight. If your flight arrives in the early hours of the morning or later in the evening then you will have to travel to Makeni the next morning. Also, if your flight departs early hours of the morning then you will have to travel to the airport the evening before.

Return flights should be booked from the afternoon of Monday 5th May onwards. The departure flights on Tuesday 6th and Wednesday 7th May are for those who added on to the beach extension (approx 3 hour drive from Tokeh Beach to Lungi Airport).

Please note that if you arrive in to Sierra Leone earlier or leave later than the dates stated on your selected package, then please do let us know and we can assist you in arranging extra hotel nights:

- 3 nights (Friday 2nd May - Monday 5th May 2025)
- 5 nights (Wednesday 30th April - Monday 5th May 2025)
- Beach Add On - 1 night - (Monday 5th May - Tuesday 6th May 2025)
- Beach Add On - 2 nights - (Monday 5th May - Wednesday 7th May 2025)

Please send your flight details to the Sierra Leone Marathon Team once they are booked.





# FLIGHTS

## Arrival Flights

The flight options we advise are as follows: (though please note flight schedules are subject to change over the next few months)

Package	Airline	Departure date and time	Journey details	Arrival date and time	Airport arrival details
5 night	Royal Air Maroc	Tuesday 29/04/25 16:40 LGW ----- Tuesday 29/04/25 18:10 LHR	12hrs 45mins via Casablanca ----- 11hrs 15mins via Casablanca	Wednesday 30/04/25 04:25 FNA	Met by a Street Child staff member at Lungi Airport - breakfast then transfer to Makeni
3 night	Royal Air Maroc	Thursday 01/05/25 16:40 LGW ----- Thursday 01/05/25 18:10 LHR	12hrs 45mins via Casablanca ----- 11hrs 15mins via Casablanca	Friday 02/05/25 04:25 FNA	Met by a Street Child staff member at Lungi Airport - breakfast then transfer to Makeni
5 day	Brussels Airlines	Tuesday 29/04/25 06:50 LHR	11hrs 10mins via Brussels	Tuesday 29/04/25 17:00 FNA	Please inform us if you would like us to arrange an extra hotel night on Tuesday 29th April for you
5 day	Turkish Airlines	Tuesday 29/04/25 06:35 LHR	18hrs 50mins via Istanbul	Wednesday 30/04/25 00:25am	Please inform us if you would like us to arrange an extra hotel night on Tuesday 29th April for your early morning arrival
3 day	Turkish Airlines	Thursday 01/05/25 06:35 LHR	18hrs 50mins via Istanbul	Friday 02/05/25 00:25am	Please inform us if you would like us to arrange an extra hotel night on Tuesday 29th April for your early morning arrival



# FLIGHTS

## Departure Flights

Beach Extension	Airline	Departure date and time	Journey details	Arrival date and time	Airport departure details
No Beach Extension	Turkish Airlines	Monday 05/05/25 01:25 FNA	18hrs 25mins via Istanbul	Monday 05/05/25 20:50 LHR	Please note you will need to leave Makeni on the afternoon of Sunday 4th May race day - no hotel room provided this night
1 Night Beach Extension	Turkish Airlines	Wednesday 07/05/25 01:25 FNA	18hrs 25mins via Istanbul	Wednesday 07/05/25 20:50 LHR	You will leave Tokeh Beach on the afternoon of Tuesday 6th May - no hotel room provided this night - unless booked on WeTravel
1 Night Beach Extension	Royal Air Maroc	Wednesday 07/05/25 05:25 FNA	9hrs 15mins (LGW) via Casablanca - ----- 10hrs 25mins (LHR) via Casablanca	Wednesday 07/05/25 15:40 LGW ----- Wednesday 07/05/25 16:50 LHR	You will leave Tokeh Beach on the afternoon of Tuesday 6th May - no hotel room provided this night - unless booked on WeTravel
1 Night Beach Extension	Brussels Airlines	Tuesday 06/05/25 18:20 FNA	14hrs 55mins via Brussels and Monrovia	Wednesday 07/05/25 10:15 LHR	You will leave Tokeh Beach on the morning of Tuesday 6th May
2 Nights Beach Extension		Wednesday 07/05/25 onwards			You will be dropped off at Lungi Int Airport or in Freetown if you wish to extend your stay





# TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

You must bring the following with you to Sierra Leone:

- Travel Itinerary
- Passport (+ photocopied versions)
- Visa (+ photocopied versions)
- Travel Authorisation from Sierra Leonean Government ([link below](#))
- Insurance details (policy number, insurer and international phone number)
- Yellow Fever Certificate
- Cash
- Staff contact details
- Emergency contacts

Make sure you have printed two versions of each document, send a copy of your travel documents to your next of kin, and email a copy to the Sierra Leone Marathon team before you travel.

## Passport

Passport validity - If you are visiting Sierra Leone, your passport should be valid for a minimum period of 6 months from the time of your visa application.

## Visa

Unless you have a West African (ECOWAS) passport, you will need a visa to enter Sierra Leone. It is best to apply as early as possible. Unless you are returning to Sierra Leone, it is best to apply for a single-entry visa which costs \$80. Please follow this link to apply: [Sierra Leone E Visa](#)

Please note that the landing visa you will receive is valid for entry anytime within 3 months and for stays of up to 1 month. You can apply for extensions, multiple-entry and business visas when in Freetown or through the relevant High Commission or Embassy.

Also all inbound and outbound passengers from international airports in Sierra Leone are required to pay a \$25 (each way) airport security fee prior to travel. Payment can be made online at: [Sierra Leone Securipass](#)



# TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

## Insurance

Your insurance must be valid for travel to Sierra Leone specifically and include long distance running and or cycling, medical evacuation and Covid-19 cover. Please send us your insurance details once booked via the emergency contact form.

## Vaccinations

Sierra Leone requires that you have received the Yellow Fever vaccine and you must have your valid vaccine certificate otherwise you will be denied entry into the country. Yellow fever has a 10-day incubation period so participants must ensure they are vaccinated at least 11 days before departure.

Anti-malarial medication is compulsory throughout your stay in Sierra Leone. There are different options (such as Malarone and Doxycycline) and participants should speak to their GP or local travel clinic for advice.

Please discuss vaccinations further with your GP/travel nurse. You'll usually need a course of injections over a 28-day period, so make sure you leave yourself enough time to do this.

You can research advice here on the Fit for Travel website:

<https://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations/africa/sierra-leone>



# SECURITY

## Security

Street Child liaises with various embassies on their assessment of security within Sierra Leone throughout the year and leading up to event week. We work with national staff, local police and immigration who are aware of our event and the team we have visiting Sierra Leone.

If a security situation arises, we will ensure participants are updated and have plans in place to manage those. The trip is planned with a complete itinerary so participants will not be on their own for a significant amount of time and will be stewarded throughout the trip by national and international staff.

## Travel Advice

We highly recommended that you stay up to date with current government travel advice, which can be found here: [Sierra Leone travel advice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)





# HEALTH AND SAFETY

## Safeguarding

There will be a briefing ahead of travel, and on your arrival in Makeni, on the regulations in place to keep you safe whilst in Sierra Leone. This will also include our expectations for participants during the school project visits, and general behaviour whilst in Sierra Leone.

## Race Day

- **Heat:** Please be wary that the temperature can be high with high humidity. Please respect the climate, wear sunscreen and any other sun protection and drink plenty of water.
- **Hydration:** Please drink plenty of water throughout your time in Sierra Leone. There is a serious risk of dehydration due to high temperatures. Please bring rehydration salts
- **Traffic:** Although steps have been taken to reduce traffic on the roads, there may still be a risk of vehicles. Please follow guidance provided in the Pre-Race Briefing.
- **Headphones:** Please do not run/cycle with headphones on so that you are aware of all traffic and any other warnings around you.
- **Running/Cycling:** where possible, please run or cycle with a partner or group.
- **Valuables:** Please try and leave your valuables in the bag drop off/secured in your hotel. If you wish to run with your valuables, please do not have these on display and keep these hidden.

## COVID-19

We will be closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation in Sierra Leone, and updating you with any key information. We highly recommend that you stay up to date with the guidelines via the [UK foreign travel advice website](#). From the 8th July 2022, the Government of Sierra Leone withdrew the need for both inbound and outbound testing for all passengers, regardless of vaccination status.





# ITINERARY

**Wednesday 30th April: Arrival** - On arrival you will be greeted by a member of the Street Child staff. Depending on your flight arrival time, we will either take you to the Lungi hotel or directly to your hotel in Makeni (approx 3 hour drive).

**Thursday 1st May: Meet SCoSL** - This is your chance to meet with Street Child of Sierra Leone staff members and take part in workshops to discover how Street Child operate with local partners and overcome some of the challenges that they face.

**Friday 2nd May: Explore Street Child's work** - You will learn all about Street Child's work in Sierra Leone directly from our local teams. You will travel (a few hours) to rural communities to visit schools and meet our local staff so you can better understand how the money you fundraise will be used to help children stay in school, safe and learning.

**Saturday 3rd May: Workshops and Exploring Street Child's work** - You will visit some of our Family Business schemes in Makeni before attending the Pre Race Briefing. In the afternoon, you will watch a local football match.

**Sunday 4th May: Race Day and Party** - See more details on the next page.

**Monday 5th May: Departure / Optional Beach Extension** - All participants will travel to the beach in the morning to walk along the white sands, enjoy a fresh coconut, and go for a swim in the sea! It is a chance to relax and reflect on your incredible achievement whilst taking in the beautiful ocean views, followed by a bonfire beach celebration in the evening (Makeni to Tokeh Beach is approx 3 hour drive).

**Tuesday 6th and Wednesday 7th May: Departure / Optional Beach Extension**







# RACE DAY ITINERARY

**4:00am:** You will be provided with breakfast at your hotel, however, we do recommend you bring your race breakfast that you are used to training with. From there you will be transported to the Wusum Field Stadium at 4:30am.

**5:00am:** All participants will be in the stadium, on the AstroTurf. You will be given time to warm up and prepare for the day ahead. There will also be a safe and secure bag drop-off point, where you can leave anything that you are not carrying whilst running/cycling.

**5:45am:** Cyclists called to the start line for a 6:00am Start.

**6:00am:** Marathon and half marathon runners called to the start line for a 6:10am Start.

**6:45am:** 10km runners called to the start line for a 7am Start.

**7:15am:** 5km runners called to the start line for a 7:30am Start.

**On route:** There are a number of aid stations with refreshments (water, banana's, rehydration salts) along every course and additional water will also be carried by Red Cross, Police and Army on motorbikes and other vehicles.

**11:00am:** Prize giving ceremony for national runners.

**14:30pm:** Race to end.

**Finished:** Once you cross the line, you can collect your medal and find your bag. Afterwards, you can enjoy the atmosphere in the stadium and cheer on your fellow runners. There will be food provided from the Clubhouse and staff on hand to help you if needed. There will be regular shuttles from 11am to take you to your accommodation.

**Rest of the day:** Rest up and relax once you have returned to your hotel before preparing for the celebration party at the Clubhouse in the evening. The bus will pick you up and drop you off later that night.

# BEACH EXTENSION

All beach extension hotels are based on Tokeh Beach, around 20 miles south-east of Freetown.

There will be a beach bonfire/small party whilst at the beach, which is another chance to celebrate all your efforts. Dinner at the beach party will be included, as well as breakfast each morning. All other food and drink is not included at the beach hotels.

You will need to bring cash for the duration of your stay in Sierra Leone. Credit card use in Sierra Leone is extremely limited, especially in Makeni so it's only worth bringing your card strictly as a back-up. Instead, bring cash in either pounds or dollars to change once you arrive. You will be able to change your money on the first evening that you arrive at the Clubhouse.

You will also be able to organise various activities with the hotel on arrival. More information on the hotels and activities available can be found on the websites below:

Standard: Tokeh Beach Resort

Premium: The Place, Tokeh





# WHAT TO BRING

## Useful items:

- Torch and batteries are particularly useful as electricity is often turned off
- Lightweight waterproofs as there may still be some rain but it will be hot
- Anti-malarial medication
- Mosquito repellent with 50% Deet and a mosquito net
- Unlocked smartphone
- Power banks
- Money belt
- Cash in large notes to exchange in Makeni
- Basic first aid kit including: antiseptic cream, plasters and blister plasters, anti-bacterial hand gel, rehydration salts, high SPF sun cream, and after-sun
- Towel x 2 (quick dry is recommended)
- Hand held battery powered fan
- Filtering water bottle (you will be drinking bottled water but some people may still get sick)
- We strongly advise you bring your own pre-race breakfast that you are used to training with

## On your person:

- Comfortable running clothes and trainers
- Camelbak or similar water bladder or bottle
- Energy gels and snacks - we will have some snacks on course

## In your bag (small day rucksack):

- Sun lotion
- Waterproof or lightweight jacket
- Small amount of cash. There will be small stalls in the stadium to buy drinks or snacks, but you will be provided with a post-run lunch
- Hat and sunglasses





# KIT LIST

## Running Kit List:

- Running trainers
- Vest/T-shirt & Shorts
- Hydration vest (with bottles or bladder)
- Sunglasses
- Cap

## Cycling

- Bike Helmet
- Bike Gloves
- Water Bottle
- Sunglasses
- Small backpack
- Bike Repair Kit (small)

Please note we will provide you with a locally sourced bicycle for the event, along with mechanical assistance in adapting it to suit you. This is likely a mountain bike.

## Other useful items:

- Vaseline
- Sun cream
- Snacks - sweets, gels, energy bars
- Whistle
- Sweatbands
- Smart watch - GPX files available upon request







# YOUR CHECKLIST

## THINGS YOU NEED TO DO

Pay your deposit and package cost to confirm your place.

Set up your [fundraising page](#) and start fundraising!

Ensure you have all travel vaccinations needed for Sierra Leone- Yellow fever is essential!

Send us your flight details.

Apply for your visa.

Send us your Emergency Contact Details, Visa and insurance policy details.

Make sure you have your vaccine passport printed out and registered your travel on the Sierra Leone Government portal.

Share your upcoming challenge with your friends and family on Social Media.

## THINGS WE WILL DO

Send your Sierra Leone Marathon booking page - WeTravel.

Introduce you to the Sierra Leone Marathon Team.

Fundraising support and guidance.

Fundraising support and guidance given when booking your flights.

Send you details of how to apply for your visa and a letter of invitation.

Send you your pre-departure pack with all the information on what you need to have to fly to Sierra Leone.

Organise pre-departure safeguarding training for all participants.

Send you social media tips and hashtags.

# WE ARE HERE TO HELP

We will be with you throughout your Sierra Leone Marathon & Cycle Challenge journey, supporting you at every step. For the coming months towards race week you will:

- Have regular support from your Sierra Leone Marathon Team. The Street Child team will be your first point of contact for any questions you may have.
- Have access to fundraising materials such as collection buckets, posters, social media images and Sierra Leone Marathon supporter branding.
- Have access to our Fundraising Page, which has lots of helpful tips and ideas for your fundraising.

We have a dedicated team at Street Child to help guide your journey. Together we can ensure children are safe, in school and learning.

Please get in touch if you have any questions at [slmarathon@street-child.org](mailto:slmarathon@street-child.org) or 020 7614 7696.

You have signed up for one of the most epic adventures you will ever undertake, which will have a massive impact on the lives of so many children that Street Child support - so if you need any support, please do get in touch and I look forward to seeing you in Makeni for the Sierra Leone Marathon & Cycle Challenge 2025.

**Mark Maughan**  
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