

The context

Sierra Leone ranks 100 out of 102 on the Social Institutions Gender Index [SIGI] because of statistics like:

- 47 per cent of girls between 15 and 19 years of age are married, divorced or widowed.
- Between 80 and 90 per cent of women are circumcised.
- 77 per cent of Sierra Leonean women think that gift marriage is acceptable.
- 9.5 per cent of women [20.4 per cent of men] have secondary education or above.

The above statistics add up to an environment where it is extremely hard for any girl to achieve her full potential in any aspect of life and thus overall as a woman.

There is little or nothing in the life of an average little Sierra Leonean girl to make her feel of value.

The aim

The purpose of the Girls Safe House in Maronka is to provide a home in which girls who would otherwise be vulnerable to a wide variety of emotional, mental and physical threats, can grow up strong in spirit, mind and body so they can live their lives to the full and contribute fully to society.

Specifically, who will live in the safe house?

Maronka is a tiny village of approximately 20 adults, 2 miles from Port Loko in the north of Sierra Leone. EducAid has a small primary school in Maronka of 180 children, of which 30 + stay in the village but are not originally from there. 15 of them are girls. There are also a number of girls who walk long distances to come to school each day from the surrounding area. This home will accommodate the 15 little girls who currently live scattered across the village, many of the village girls themselves and will provide the opportunity for many others from distant villages to stay at least during the week.

Little girls like:

Isatu, who we found living on the beach and hungry. She had run away from a difficult and very deprived home situation and had never been to school. She had learned to survive on the streets and some of her habits were not great. Now, she is catching up at school and is a much-loved member of the village community - a changed young woman on the way to being somebody.



Mariama was kitchen skivvy to a family in Freetown; a difficult little miss who did the opposite of everything she was asked to do and got herself a regular beating as a result. Taken to Maronka to start school, at long last, she is now a delightful little girl responding to love far better than she ever did to violence. She is nearly always top of her class.

Binta was left to bring herself up at 2 when her mother was sent to prison. She has clearly been seriously neglected for the best part of her little life. She had a heart-breaking habit of throwing herself into the arms of all visitors, seeking a bit of love and attention. She speaks now, though, and is starting to hold her own with her new playmates.



Gift Aid Declaration - Complete & send to: EducAid, PO Box 27143, Edinburgh, EH10 9AW, UK.

Title:

Surname:

Address:

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Post Code:.....

I would like the charity to treat all donations I have made since 6th April 2000 and all donations made from the date of this declaration until further notice, as Gift Aid donations.

Signed:.....

Date:

Email:

Notes:

- 1 You can cancel this declaration at any time by contacting the charity
- 2 You must pay an amount of income tax and / or capital tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the tax year (currently 28p for each £1 you give)
- 3 If in the future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and capital gains equal to the tax that the charity reclaims, you can cancel you declaration.
- 4 If you pay tax at the higher rate you can claim further tax relief in your self-assessment, tax return.
- 5 If you are unsure whether your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief, ask the charity, or ask your local tax office for leaflet IR 113 Gift Aid.

Please notify us if you change your address.