



— ANNUAL REPORT

2024 2025

A year of showing up,
every time.

The work of Inkundla Spaces across Freetown
and the provinces of Sierra Leone — festival,
programmes, and the year that held them.

SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE, DOING THE WORK.

This is our second year. With all the electricity of beginning something new. And not yet far enough along to speak with the confidence of an institution. Somewhere in the middle — doing the work, figuring out what the work actually is, and trying not to let the difficulty of funding make us smaller than we want to be.

The 2025 Inkundla Arts Festival was themed *Mind Matters: Stories That Heal*. It was not an accident that in our second year we chose mental health as the lens. The pressure on artists in Sierra Leone is real. The expectation that you create, perform, and sustain yourself with almost no infrastructure is real. We know this from the inside, and we have spent this year building spaces that acknowledge it.

We kept running Wi Kreative Playgron every month. We ran the Open Mic Series in Freetown and the provinces. Rise & Riot returned for its second year, bringing more poets to the stage. Trivia Tuesdays became a monthly fixture at. We brought provincial artists to the festival and paid them to be there. Every artist who participated in a programme where a fee was promised was paid.

Funding remains our biggest obstacle. There is no meaningful public funding for independent arts in Sierra Leone. The 2025 festival was mostly community-funded, raised through GoFundMe and in-kind contributions. That is something we are proud of and something we want to change. Creativity needs infrastructure. We are still building ours.



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A FULL YEAR OF PROGRAMMING, ON A LEAN BUDGET.

Every event that was planned, ran. These are the figures behind the year, across Freetown and the provinces.



100%

Every artist who was promised a fee was paid.



SECTION 01

YEAR-ROUND PROGRAMMES

The work that runs every month, in Freetown and across the provinces — open mics, slams, workshops, trivia, and a printed page.

01 Wi Kreative Playgron & Kommunity

03 Rise & Riot Poetry Slam

05 Kreative Workshops & EducAid

02 Open Mic Series

04 Trivia Tuesdays

06 The I Anthology



WI KREATIVE PLAYGRON KREATIVE KOMMUNITY

Monthly creative gatherings in Freetown, running since Dec 2023.

Wi Kreative Playgron (WKP) centres six featured artists per session — poets, musicians, and storytellers who share their work and their process. Kreative Kommunity (KK) opens the floor to multiple voices through an open mic format. Both grew out of the Pop Up Spaces that started in December 2023.

In 2025, sessions continued monthly, rotating across venues in Freetown — community spaces, creative hubs, and neighbourhood spots that brought different crowds into the room. Artists are paid for featured performances; events are open to the public on a pay-as-you-can basis.

The December session featured the Rise & Riot 2025 Top 3 (Salma, OAKDeen, and Barrie) performing alongside musicians and digital art. Kreative Kommunity brings together open mic performance and a free painting and colouring session each month, run in partnership with Paint Pages.



2025 SESSIONS

30 Jan · 27 Feb · 27 Mar · Aug · 26 Sep · 26 Dec, with a special edition at the Festival Opening Night, 31 Oct.

SUPPORT

Friends of Sierra Leone (FoSL) and Atlantic Lumley Hotel, with in-kind community contributions.

6

FEATURED
ARTISTS / SESSION

11

SESSIONS IN
2025

OPEN MIC SERIES

Creative platforms taken to the communities that don't usually have them.



Since 2024, the series has run in Lunsar, Foredugu, Kenema, Bo, Waterloo, Blama, and Freetown — giving poets, musicians, and storytellers a stage in their own communities, without requiring them to travel to the capital to be heard.

In 2025, the series ran across six locations. Foredugu's community hall hosted multiple editions, supported by Friends of Sierra Leone and the Lunsar Artists Union. The series debuted in Blama in February with two editions at Blama Center. In May, a new open mic launched in Goderich with Progressive Young Stars at Ramish Bar.

In Kenema, open mics ran at K2 Nightclub (Kenema West) and Bintu's Bar (Kenema East), supported by OneVillage Partners and AVSI Sierra Leone. In Freetown, the Inkundla Open Mic was hosted at Hotel Barmoi.

135

PERFORMERS REACHED IN 2025

Across 9 open mic events, separate from WKP and Kreative Kommunity

2025 LOCATIONS

Freetown

Foredugu

Blama

Goderich

Kenema

RISE RIOT POETRY SLAM

Sierra Leone's national poetry slam, launched by Inkundla Spaces in 2024. Poets perform original memorised work across multiple rounds, with no backing tracks and no props, judged entirely by the audience. Winners receive cash prizes and performance slots at the Inkundla Arts Festival.

In 2025, Rise & Riot ran as a standalone competition at the Inkundla Arts Festival on 1 November, across three rounds judged by the audience.

2025 PODIUM

- 1 **Salma** **CHAMPION**
- 2 OAKDeen
- 3 Barrie

The Top 3 went on to perform together at the December Wi Kreative Playgron.



Trivia Tuesdays

A monthly social trivia night — a place for adults to play. Organised and led by Isha, it has become a fixture in the Freetown social calendar: regular, accessible reasons for people to show up, be present, and enjoy themselves together.

12

SESSIONS ACROSS
2025

20–30

AVG. ATTENDANCE
/ NIGHT

KREATIVE WORKSHOPS

Structured creative development for artists who don't always have access to it.

In 2025, workshops were delivered in Lunsar, Foredugu, and Freetown as part of the pre-festival programme, focused on storytelling, songwriting, and performance.

Lunsar & Foredugu

A combined workshop brought together twelve provincial artists. Facilitated over several days with mental health practitioners supporting a wellbeing-centred process, artists were encouraged to draw from personal experience and transform it into work. Two artist groups were invited to the Freetown festival with return transport and stipends.

Freetown

A parallel workshop ran alongside the provincial programme, creating direct exchange between provincial and capital-based artists and helping build networks across regions.

12

PROVINCIAL
ARTISTS

4

ORIGINAL SONGS
CREATED

PARTNERSHIP

EducAid Sierra Leone

Since 2024, bringing creative development to students aged 14–18 in Freetown, a female-dominated cohort. In 2025, six students ran a Story Lab using the Echoes of Now format — focused on expression, reflection, and emotional awareness.

6

STUDENTS

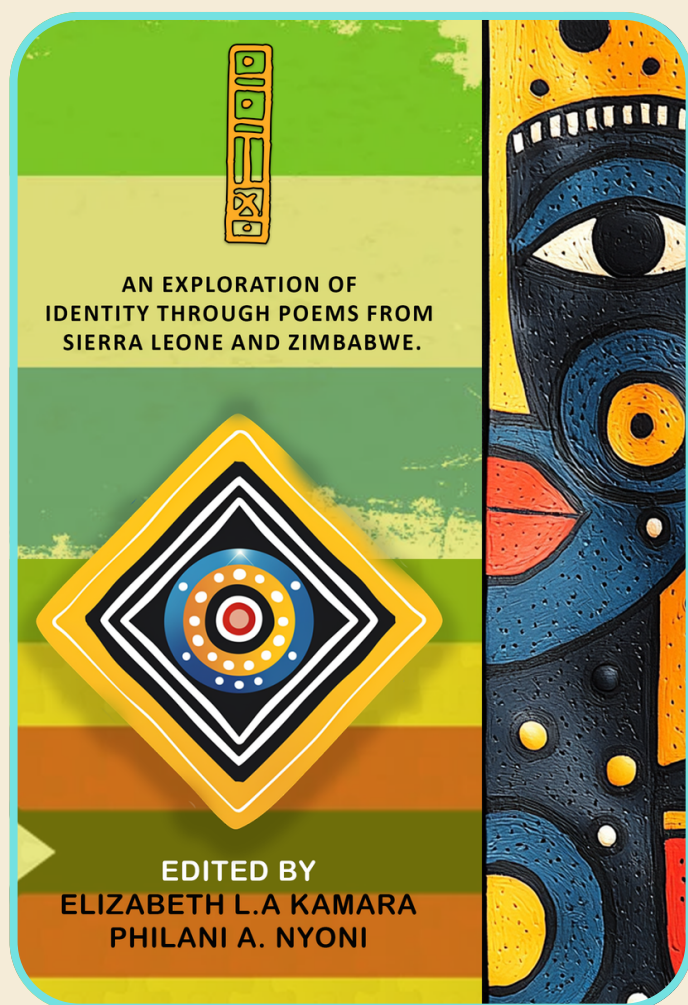
5

PERFORMED PUBLICLY



THE I ANTHOLOGY

A print poetry collection co-published with LitFest Harare, Zimbabwe — an exploration of identity, culture, and individuality.

**40**

POETS

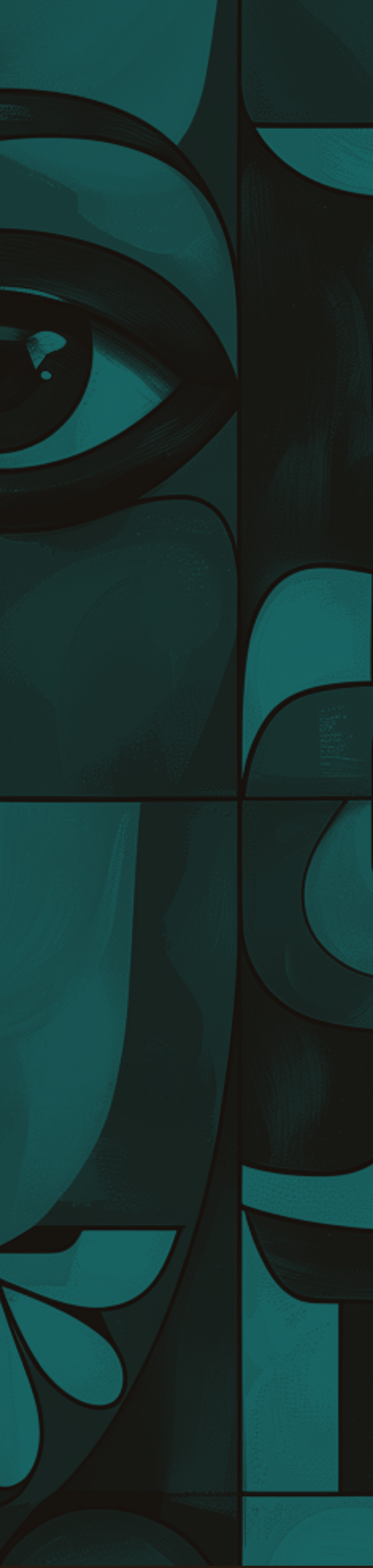
200COPIES
PRINTED

The 2025 edition brings together poets from Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe. Submissions closed in October 2025 with forty poets submitting work; editors reviewed all entries and poets were notified.

The printed anthology was distributed at and after the festival, to contributors, and to partner organisations including EducAid. Every copy for the Zimbabwean contributors was delivered in person, a small act that mattered to the poets on the receiving end.

In 2026, the format becomes the Poetry Korna Anthology series — a regular platform for South–South literary exchange.

Produced in partnership with LitFest Harare. Inkundla Spaces led the delivery of the 2025 edition.



SECTION 02 • THE FESTIVAL

INKUNDLA ARTS FESTIVAL 2025

Mind Matters — Stories That Heal

31 OCT – 2 NOV 2025 • MANGO PEAK, FREETOWN

THREE DAYS EXPLORING MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH LIVED EXPERIENCE.

The second Inkundla Arts Festival explored mental health through creativity and storytelling, deliberately avoiding medicalised or prescriptive definitions. Artists and audiences were invited to share personal narratives in ways that felt safe, culturally grounded, and honest.

The theme grew from conversations about emotional wellbeing, creative pressure, grief, resilience, and care. Across all three days the emphasis was on listening, presence, and collective reflection — facilitation guided by mental health practitioners to ensure care and avoid harm.

DAY 1 · 31 OCT

Opening Night

A school-based Story Lab with EducAid (11am–12:30pm), then the Kreative Kommunity Opening Night at Mango Peak (6:30–9pm) — poetry, music, visual art, and networking, co-hosted by S’phongo, Alice, and Isha around grounding and gratitude.

DAY 2 · 1 NOV

Conversations & Competition

Two facilitated conversations — *Wi Stodi Dem: Exploring Our Ancestral Stories* (Nzerengo Tere) and *Care On & Off Stage* (Mina Bilkis) — plus an Open Sketch & Colour session. The afternoon closed with the Rise & Riot slam and a Jabulani Music after-party.

DAY 3 · 2 NOV

Family Day

A Colour and Paint session invited children and caregivers into creative play. The festival concluded with a closing concert bringing together workshop artists, musicians, and collaborators — a celebration of what had been made across the three days.



PROVINCIAL ARTISTS

The festival should not only be for artists who can already afford to show up.

Five artists from Lunsar and Foredugu and one from Kenema were supported with return transport and stipends to participate in the full Freetown programme. Freetown-based artists were also programmed and paid. This was a deliberate choice.



Partnerships & support

The year was carried by partners who gave venues, sound, meals, mental-health guidance, and a foot in communities across Sierra Leone.

SAFE MINDS HAVEN

Guidance on mental-health language, framing, and facilitation throughout the festival — care, sensitivity, cultural grounding.

EDUCAID SIERRA LEONE

Partnered on the Story Lab programme since 2024, enabling direct engagement with young people in an educational setting.

AURORA FOUNDATION

A core partner since 2024. Provided Aurora House for *On the Balcony with Sorie Kondi* in April 2025, with Jabulani Music.

MANGO PEAK

Primary venue for the festival, Rise & Riot, Trivia Tuesdays, and On the Balcony. In-kind support that significantly reduced delivery costs.

ATLANTIC LUMLEY HOTEL

Provided meals support during the festival, ensuring artists and participants were fed across the three days.

ROCKVILLE SOUND SYSTEM

Provided sound for the festival programme.

FRIENDS OF SIERRA LEONE

Supported the monthly Open Mic in Foredugu and the January WKP in Freetown — reaching rural communities.

ONEVILLAGE & AVSI

OneVillage Partners and AVSI Sierra Leone supported the Kenema Open Mic series in both Kenema West and East.

PROGRESSIVE YOUNG STARS

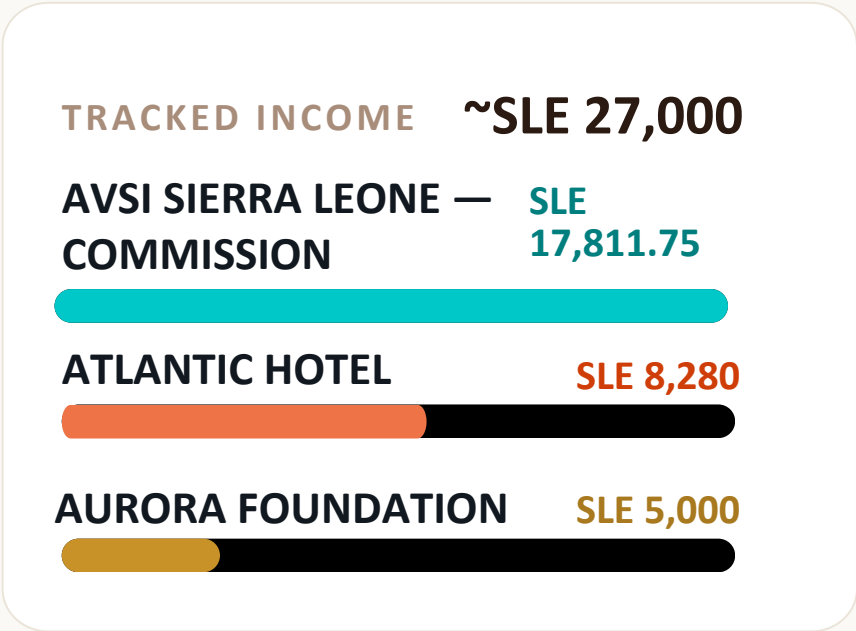
Collaborated on a one-time open mic at Ramish Bar in Goderich in May 2025.

Financial context

Arts funding in Sierra Leone is extremely limited. Inkundla Spaces operates without a government grant, a major institutional donor, or sustained core funding.

The 2025 festival was largely community-funded. A GoFundMe campaign raised £1,600 prior to the festival, with the majority of resources coming from community contributions, supplemented by in-kind support and limited event income.

Formal tracked income for the period was approximately SLE 27,000 — an AVSI Sierra Leone project commission, a REGINA festival sponsorship, and six months of WKP sponsorship from Atlantic Lumley Hotel. Pay-as-you-can contributions averaged SLE 1,500–2,000 per event and covered immediate on-the-day costs. All income was reinvested into programme delivery.



GoFundMe is shown separately as it was raised in GBP toward the festival. Bar lengths are relative to the largest income source.

Every event that was planned, ran. That is the standard we hold ourselves to.



2026 — building something that lasts.

For the first time, EU-funded programmes, a cross-border residency, and an international festival edition.

APR 2026 · EU CULTURE MOVES SALONE

FIRST EU-FUNDED PROGRAMMES

Two mobility grants: Kreative Workshops in Kenema, and the Borderless Voices residency bringing the team to Monrovia for a cross-border exchange with the Liberian Poet Society.

30 OCT – 1 NOV 2026

THIRD INKUNDLA ARTS FESTIVAL

Open Roads, Open Stages. The third Inkundla Arts Festival returns to the Freetown Innovation Lab, 30 October – 1 November 2026. For the first time, EU-funded programmes are feeding directly into the build — workshops, residencies, and months of creative work that arrive on stage in October.

LAUNCHED 2026

WHAT WE LEAVE BEHIND

A curated multidisciplinary exhibition bringing together visual art and live performance. The first edition was held at Aurora Foundation in April 2026. A new strand that will continue to grow.

LAUNCHED 2026

POETRY KORNA & A PERMANENT HOME

A monthly literary journal curated by Admire Bonnie — poets from Sierra Leone, Liberia, Zimbabwe and beyond. A partnership with the Freetown Innovation Lab gives Inkundla a permanent presence in the city.

The work continues. We are building something that lasts.





Creativity and community, in real life.

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Freetown, Sierra Leone · Registered with Freetown City Council (renewed annually) · Current registration: WARDC

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