



SCHOOLING FOR LIFE

Monitoring and Evaluation Report January – December 2014

Schooling for Life
September 2015

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Introduction

The Schooling for Life Foundation (SfL), a young organisation founded in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, in 2012 settled in Freetown, Sierra Leone in May 2014. Now the foundation is registered in Sierra Leone and has an office at Wilkinson Road, Freetown.

The aim of the foundation is to assist youths in Freetown, Sierra Leone who are unable to pay for their tertiary education through its 'Skills for a Successful Future' programme.

The 'Skills for a Successful Future' programme gives SfL its uniqueness in its approach, especially compared to other programmes in which work ethics, behavioural change, and other practical and social skills hardly get any consideration.

These skills will help make students successful and hardworking contributors to Sierra Leone's society at large, as a distinctive aspect of the programme is that it focuses on jobs within the current job market of Sierra Leone.

The programme will support 20 youths, between the ages of 15 till 25, in the first year. These youths will be supported on different levels in their professional and personal lives, ensuring they are well prepared to take an active part in societal and professional life in Sierra Leone after they have finished the programme.

In April 2014, Founder and Country Director of Schooling for Life, Sjerly Pereira, moved to Sierra Leone to set up SfL in its capital.

The Strategy of the programme

The programme is built on three pillars:

(1) Scholarships (formal education)

As a consequence of the demand for and need of skilled vocational workers, Schooling for Life only funds vocational education. The student chooses his/her own study, after which Schooling for Life chooses the educational institute of the highest quality available in Freetown. Schooling for Life will pay full scholarships for all selected students, both school fees and school materials. This requires time to be invested in the evaluation of individual motivation and abilities of the students to ensure they choose a study that matches these factors. Time also needs to be invested in evaluation of the quality of different educational institutes in Freetown that match the choice of study of the students.

(2) Social and practical skills training (non-formal education)

The non-formal education focuses on supporting skills that students need in addition to their formal education. Strengthening social skills offers the students the opportunity to use professional skills more effectively. To do this, the following actions are undertaken:

- In order to achieve quality, SfL trains its own trainers in the student-focused training method. This method creates an optimal learning environment for the student.
- Every trainer creates a curriculum in consultation with SfL for his/her course, focused on specific objectives.
- Trainers are monitored on the implementation of the student-focused training method and the curriculum.
- The training centre that is used for the training activities is located in the city centre and is equipped with the necessary facilities.

For internships in the second or third year (depending on the course of study) eligible companies will be approached and if possible preliminary agreements will be made. Students are monitored and supervised during the internship in order to increase the possibility of keeping the job even after the internship.

(3) Personal Guidance

Youth in Sierra Leone greatly lack personal guidance, which is a very important aspect for creating self-confidence and perseverance. Every two weeks students have a one-on-one talk with their personal mentor.

This unique combination of knowledge, skills and guidance in the transformation from theory to practice, gives the students the best possible foundation for achieving a better future. The first year, the programme focuses on broadening the general knowledge of the students. They learn skills like time management, civics, computer science and communication, which they need to succeed both socially and professionally. We are also working hard to improve the quality of their English and maths, which is often not up to standard after their high school education. The second year we specifically focus on work ethics (how to behave at work), and increase the overall knowledge and skills of obtaining and keeping a job. The students will do internships to gain experience, to introduce them to potential employers and, if possible, to secure a future job. Students will keep being monitored for a year after leaving the programme in order to



evaluate the impact of the programme; both for students and employers.

SfL believes that in order to have a programme succeed one must respond to local demand. That is why we have done initial and follow up research locally. Additionally, we looked at similar programmes in Sierra Leone and concluded that this programme is unique in the sense that it has an all-round approach to preparing youth and involving the needs of both recipients and suppliers (employers and youth). Multiple NGOs and (local) companies have underlined this fact.

The aim of the programme is:

1. To create access to job opportunities for at least 20 young people (in the first year) in Sierra Leone by offering them quality education, intensive guidance and develop adequate skills to increase their potential on a social and on a professional level.
2. Closing the gap that now exists between employers' needs and what young people in Sierra Leone have to offer, so that young people can find work and employers

Targets in the Netherlands beginning 2014

- Raise all remaining needed funds for the first year of operation
- Set up organisation in Sierra Leone and implement programme
- Secure stable organisation in the Netherlands

Start up targets in Sierra Leone

Targets May – September 2014:

- Hire a Trainer of Trainers
- Hire an office assistant
- Buy a car
- Hire a driver
- Registration as an NGO with different ministries and SLANGO
- Obtain work permit
- Find an affordable office space
- Buy office supplies
- Find a suitable training centre
- Start recruitment of the first trainers
- Train the first trainers
- Start recruitment of the students
- Develop a list of possible vocational schools
- Establish contacts with good schools



Activities

January – March

- These months were dedicated to fundraising. By the end of March 2014 the full budget for the first 14 months of operation in Sierra Leone were secured;
- Hired an Operational Manager to replace the founder in the Netherlands;

April

- Founder moved to Sierra Leone to start the organisation and implement the programme;
- Started ground work and networking to achieve objectives of the coming months.

May

- Secured a shared office at a central location in the Western area of Freetown and moved into a private office in June;
- Hired the Trainer of Trainers who later carried the title of programme manager. He started in June;
- Hired an office assistant, he started end of May;
- Researched which institutes SfL had to register with;
- Registered SfL with the National Youth Commission, who are under the mandate of the Ministry of Youth Affairs;

- Registered SfL with SLANGO, the umbrella organisation for NGOs in Sierra Leone;
- Started registration with National Revenue Authorities (NRA);

June

- Moved into the new SfL office;
- A work permit for the Country Director was arranged;
- SfL finalised the Constitution of Schooling for Life;
- SfL made preparations for the application process of the students;
- SfL initiated the process of acquiring an attestation from the Ministry of Education Science and Technology, which was necessary for other registrations;

July

- Ebola contingencies and working plans were established;
- SfL hired an accountant to work on the taxes, revenue through the NRA and all other related issues;
- SfL initiated the registration with the Ministry of Finance Economy and Development, which is mandatory for all NGOs;
- SfL was able to secure free airtime with two different radio stations to promote the application process of the students;
- SfL published a half page advertorial in a national newspaper to promote the application process of the students;
- SfL advertised through an online media channel (Yahoo groups) for students and trainers recruitment for the 'Skills for a Successful Future' programme;
- SfL met, partnered and business aligned with over 40 organisations across the Sierra Leonean youth and education NGO sector and governmental offices;

August

- SfL prepared and planned the student assessment day, implementing Ebola safety measures;
- SfL identified over seven types of vocational study institutes;
- SfL received 90 student applications, interviewed 45, assessed 27 and subsequently selected 22 students (incl. 2 students from a Sierra Leonean logistics company) to be the first cohort of the 'Skills for a Successful Future' programme 2014, over the course of a month;
- SfL created a database of technical and vocational institutions in the capital Freetown specialising in various study programmes;



- SfL developed and held a four day Training of Trainers participatory presentation session with trainers, implementing Ebola safety measures;
- SfL received 25 applications for trainers, interviewed 15 and trained 12 trainers (incl. 2 teachers of James International) over four days and selected five trainers to deliver skills training during the first year;
- SfL created a resource guide for trainers and the Training of Trainers training manual;
- SfL started a potential collaboration with an IT training centre in Freetown. With the option to hold skills training there as well as create a 2-year curriculum for SfL IT students.

September

- SfL visited the educational institutes that were applicable to the students' choices that were still open (at that time);
- SfL met with and interviewed the parents/guardians of the SfL students to garner their dedication and commitment of their child/ward's involvement and education in the programme; implementing Ebola safety measures for both parents and students;
- SfL planned and provided an Ebola sensitisation class for all the SfL students (in two groups) with support from a local NGO.

What was achieved

- Full budget was secured for the first 14 months;
- SfL NL had a stable team of 4 people;
- A full SfL team was hired;
- An office was secured;
- A good official car was purchased;
- SfL was registered with the necessary institutes required for its operation;
- The application process with the students was successfully finalised with 22 students;
- The Training of Trainers was successfully developed; and completed over four days;
- Technical and vocational institutes were visited and selected based on the study choices of the students;
- The first SfL – local business cooperation was established and implemented during the pilot phase;
- Several options for a skills training centre were identified;
- Secondary schools in Freetown were successfully identified;
- Within the short period of time that SfL had been up and running, the organisation had received very positive response from companies, other NGOs and civil society. They have all confirmed the exclusivity of the content of the programme and its approach. This gives the SfL programme an exclusive position within the field of existing organisations and programmes.



EBOLA OUTBREAK

A completely unforeseen challenge was the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone and especially in Freetown. The outbreak caused the staff to be more careful and forced safety measures to be taken. Also, as the SfL office is located within the GIZ building, we were forced to leave the office at 4pm every day, starting beginning of August, according to GIZ regulations.

Measures that were taken: A bucket with chlorinated water and disinfectant for hand washing was put in the office, and a thermometer was purchased for temperature testing. For both student assessment and trainer training, everyone had to always wash their hands after having left the room and for guardian interviews we did the same; this was also done in combination with taking of temperatures. And of course, there was a no touching policy.



As schools closed and we were no longer allowed to bring together more than 10 students at a time, SfL was forced to suspend the programme. In addition, in mid-August riots started and the situation in the city seemed to change for the worse. Having monitored and evaluated the outbreak as time passed, SfL could no longer continue its activities and had to decide to evacuate international staff. We continued with the programme and proceeded with the preparation as long as we could, by continuing to visit possible educational institutes and to finish the application process by holding the interviews with the parents.

Also, to support the students as much as we could, before the programme was paused, we held **Ebola sensitisation classes**. For this, we approached different NGOs who provided these classes and found a professional from GOAL. Classes were held in two sessions, in Krio, to make sure everyone understood the information.



Also, to support the fight against Ebola, Schooling for Life did **a fundraiser for Connaught Hospital and King's Sierra Leone Partnership** in Freetown. We raised almost €1,700 and were able to supply the Emergency ward with pillows, towels, soap, toothbrushes and paste, disinfect, buckets, flip-flops, clothes, juice and much more. It was completely coordinated in cooperation with KSLP.

September - December

SfL did not fully cease activities. From the end of September until January 2015, SfL was still active in the Netherlands with behind the scenes work that was needed to support the programme in Sierra Leone. SfL was also in contact with all the students on a monthly basis to make sure all were well and healthy, and to check whether support was needed. Both SfL staff in Sierra Leone were retained and included in SfL activities, also during the absence of the Country Director.



Lessons learned

- An accountant is a highly needed part of the staff. Hiring an accountant was an executive decision, outside of the budget, but with positive outcome.
- Interviews with the trainers, before the TOT, have to be more informative towards the trainer on what SfL offers the trainer;
- More planned time is needed as everything takes even more time than originally planned;
- A good car, with qualities that SfL requires, is more expensive than we anticipated.

How will our experience be transformed into change

- When the programme re-starts in the New Year, SfL will plan more time to prepare and set up. We need to realise that most information is spread by word of mouth, which takes time;
- Also, we will hold the application process earlier in the year, to create more time after the selection of students has been made and studies are clear, to identify the right educational institutes;
- Out of the current studies chosen by students, SfL needs to make a clear overview of application periods and processes as to adapt the timeline of our own application process;
- In the new budget more funds will be allocated towards trainer fees, studies and training centre fees;
- SfL will continue activities that put the organisation on the map in Freetown and elsewhere;
- In the new budget, funds will be allocated for an accountant.

Targets and objectives of SfL for 2015

- Between January and July, SfL will raise €112.555 for the next programme year;
- Depending on whether schools will reopen in September 2015 or earlier, commitment of trainers needs to be checked and secured, presence of students needs to be secured and educational institutes need to be checked and secured specifically;
- SfL want to restart the formal programme in September 2015, depending on structure of the new school year post-Ebola;
- If schools re-open before September 2015, SfL will start with life and skills training, and personal guidance to reintroduce youth into the routine of studying.
- In the meantime, SfL wants to restart operations in Sierra Leone in January 2015 to prepare for the new start and to research possible partners who we could work together with. Research will start in December;
- Funding opportunities in Sierra Leone will be sought after throughout the year.



Financial Overview 1 January – 31 December 2014

	Balance sheet 2013	
Post	Assets	Liabilities
Bank	€ 7.654,05	
Allocated reserves		€ 65.814,05
Commitments	€ 58.160,00	
totalen	€ 65.814,05	€ 65.814,05

	Balance sheet 2014	
Post	Assets	Liabilities
Bank	€ 22.766,64	
Allocated reserves		€ 51.266,64
Commitments	€ 24.000,00	
Receivables	€ 8.000,00	€ 8.000,00
Car	€ 4.500,00	
totalen	€ 59.266,64	€ 59.266,64

* Receivables were due to transferred funds that were allocated to the wrong bank account by the bank and not re-allocated until 2015.

Income and Expenditure		
Gross Operating Profit		
Total Turnover		€ 38.939,09
Costs		
General costs		€ 42.326,50
Operating Income		-€ 3.387,41
Lost commitment from 2013 *		-€ 3.160,00
Earnings before taxes		-€ 6.547,41
Earnings after taxes		-€ 6.547,41



* Lost commitment: due to an altered selection process, and the postponed start of the programme, this commitment did not hold until the start of the programme in 2014.

Notes to Income and Expenditure

Total turnover 2014	
Allocated donations	€ 1.560,00
Private donations	€ 2.079,09
Sponsorship	€ 35.300,00
Total	€ 38.939,09

General costs	
Staff	€ 20.182,96
Marketing	€ 199,25
Bank and finance charges	€ 275,61
Transport	€ 271,37
Car depreciation	€ 3.000,00
Car loss	€ 1.700,00
Communication (phone/internet)	€ 810,87
Utilities	€ 406,26
Repairs and maintenance	€ 389,91
Office supplies	€ 939,93
Rent expenditure	€ 9.673,89
Licences and registration fees	€ 835,08
Food and beverages	€ 129,11
Miscellaneous	€ 18,67
Management expenditure	€ 2.582,74
Development expenditure	€ 196,98
Volunteer expenses	€ 68,00
Transfer/Exchangerate	€ 645,87
Total	€ 42.326,50

* Car loss: On the first car bought and sold, a loss of € 1700 was made.

* Car depreciation: The second and present car has lost an approx. value of € 3000 over a period of 5 months.



Current Board, Staff and Volunteers

The Board

Walter Remmerswaal – President
George Gelaga van der Heijden – Treasurer
Heleen Rijkens – Secretary
Harm Beskers

Sierra Leone – paid staff

Sjierly Pereira – Country Director
Mahmoud Bangura – Administrative assistant
Edward Massaquoi – Accountant
Mohamed Thoronka – Driver
Ibrahim Saidu – Trainer
Samuel Tamba Bockarie – Trainer
Moses Kabbah Bangura – Trainer
Patrick Saunders – Trainer

The Netherlands - volunteers

Rana van den Burg – communication and administration
Denise van Keulen – social media management
Dries Arnolds – web management

Contact information

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