



# SCHOOLING FOR LIFE

## **Schooling for Life 2015 Monitoring and Evaluation Report**

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## Introduction

The Schooling for Life Foundation (SfL), a young and growing 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 16 Adelaide Street, 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 supports around 20 youths per year per class (classes increase yearly), between the ages of 15 till 25. These youths are 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.

## Targets for 2015

As the whole country of Sierra Leone was brought to a halt in 2014, it was quite difficult to plan both skills training classes and the scholarship programme. Pending the containment of the Ebola outbreak and the continuance of daily life thereafter, with schools opening, the targets of SfL for 2015 were as follows:

- Before the lift of the ban on gathering:
  - Make sure all students are doing well as well as the families
  - Make sure all trainers are doing well and are still on board for their respective positions
  - Create a structure wherein students can be engaged in classes without breaking the ban on gathering
  - Have the organisation and the programme as ready as possible, pending the lift of the ban on gathering
  - Secure funding for the next budget year
  - Secure all registrations for 2015
- After the lift of the ban on gathering:
  - Start skills training classes
  - Do due diligence on respective educational institutes in Freetown
  - Get students enrolled in their respective educational institutes
  - Secure funding for the next budget year



## Activities and Achievements 2015

When schools reopened after the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone, Schooling for Life (SfL) decided not to send the students to school yet, even though they opened. In stead, we increased the skills training classes to get the students into the learning mode.

### 2015 – 2016 progress

#### January – April 2015

As schools were still closed and official teaching was not allowed during the period of January – May 2015, SfL started initial classes focused on Ebola related Civics, which in turn focused on personal responsibility and community engagement. Strict Ebola measures were taken regarding hand washing, temperature being taken and classes were held with 5/7 students per class. SfL started engaging students in January with the objective of getting them out of their houses and engaging them in positive activities.

#### May – September 2015

In May 2015, the schools reopened in Sierra Leone. However, since the school year was cut short because of Ebola, SfL decided not to send their students to school until the next school year, which would start in January 2016.

In stead, Skills training classes were doubled to give the students a jumpstart on their learning and to get them active again before the start of the new school year. The subjects during the first semester were the following: Math, English language, and Civics.



It is SfL's believe that making sure students believe in themselves and giving them the chance to start from a level that everyone feels secure about, is the only way to ensure their motivation and confidence to learn and understand taught material. Therefore, the entry level was kept relatively low, especially with Math. The result on the end of semester exams showed success as 19 out of 22 students passed in Math (passing grade 55%). English proved more difficult, with 15 students passing. Civics had 20 out of 22 students passing.

For all subjects reference was held and all but 4 students passed all exams. These 4 students did not pass English.

Rules within SfL state that students have to pass two out of three subjects each semester, which was accomplished.

SfL is a small-scale organisation with the purpose of delivering quality education and to be able to cater to the needs of the recipients. Therefore, the management evaluated with the students as well as the trainers to ensure better understanding of the subjects taught in the next semester. In that light, classes for English were adjusted, the pace was reduced and the trainer has implemented higher focus on the needs of the students.



#### Other activities:

- In May, SfL organised a fieldtrip to Fresh Salone, an agricultural farm just outside Freetown. Students learned how different vegetables and fruit grow in green houses. SfL's reason for such fieldtrips is to increase the general knowledge of the students and to broaden their horizon. More trips like these will hopefully follow.



- In August, one of our students, Morlai, was the first to do an introductory internship. The internship, that lasted a week, was at CICA Motors Sierra Leone. Morlai is going to study to be a mechanic and during this week, learned the basic trades of the craft.
- In September there was a serious flooding in Freetown due to heavy rainfall. Some of the students of SfL were affected and lost (part of) their belongings. After commitment for additional funding, SfL was able to provide the affected students with replacement of the essential belongings, like clothes, mattresses, and study books.
- Also in September, SfL started a partnership with Africell SL. One of the biggest communication companies in Sierra Leone that as their sponsorship provides SfL with free skills training facilities.

#### **October – December 2015**

During the first study year, two subjects are consistent throughout the school year in skills training classes, namely English language and Math. Each semester a third subject is added. For the second semester the additional subject was Time Management. Students learned how to manage their time on a daily basis, allocating their time towards high and lower priorities. In addition they learned how to manage their time in a group assignment or meeting, as well as how to work with different character trades, when working with others.

In the week of 14 December, again, end of semester exams were held. The results will be handed in in the first half of January and reported upon in the next year report.

Also in December, the IT students have started their resp. Networking and Software studies and the two students who will follow Secretarial Studies have started their two-month preparatory classes. They will start their official studies February 2016.

The other students will start their studies beginning of 2016.



### Other activities:

- In October SfL moved to a new office. This new office provides space for the organisation to grow and for the students to study. A small library has been created and an area for the students to study has been made available and was put into use by the students right away.
- SfL organised a meeting in October with all the guardians and students to inform the guardians about the progress of the students. Additional topics were the flooding assistance to some of the students as well as the announcement that SfL had decided to start providing students with half of their transport fees to skills training classes. This would have to secure class attendance and relieve the guardians and students of some financial burden.
- From October – December due diligence was done on several educational institutes that provide the studies that had been chosen by the students.
- In December, final decisions on the educational institutes were made and the registration process for the students was started.
- SfL selected the following educational institutes in line with what the students have indicated as desired study:
  - BlueCrest College for IT
  - School of Nursing/ Redeemers Nursing Training School, Freetown
  - Milton Margai College of Education and Technology (MMCET) for the following subjects:
    - Secretarial Studies
    - Automobile Engineering
    - Hotel and Tourism
    - Masonry



### What was achieved

- The organisation was fully registered with all necessary Ministries and institutions.
- Students were engaged in classes during the Ebola period, and observed and guided in responsible behaviour.
- In an allowed manner, skills training classes were initiated and proceeded with when the schools reopened.
- Trainers and students were engaged and trainers, if necessary, replaced.
- Bigger office space was found and secured.
- Due diligence was done on several educational institutes, rapport was build and relationships initiated.
- Partnerships with several companies/institutes, both in Sierra Leone and the Netherlands, were established.
- When schools reopened, the skills training classes were fully started with three subjects, twice a week.



- Two rounds of end of semester classes were held and references where necessary.
- The process of registration and all related cost at the different educational institutes were organised and structured, and fulfilled where possible.
- All students received SfL t-shirts before Christmas break.

### Lessons learned

- SfL needs to do better testing on the students' choice of study and the feasibility of it for the specific student.
- SfL needs to check better whether the entry criteria of the choice of study match the study results of the students.
- Registration and admission (and all related) fees for both private and governmental educational institutes are much higher than expected.
- The process of registration at governmental educational institutes is much more complicated and lengthy with many more steps than expected.
- Lack of funds for transport fees influences attendance at skills training classes.
- Guardians/caretakers feel the need for a quarterly meeting to be updated on the progress of the students.
- Evaluation at the end of every semester is very important during the first stages to be able to assess necessary changes for the learning process of the students.
- There are many unforeseen cost in the personal lives of students that need to be given attention, as they too influence the performance of the students.

### How will our experience be transformed into change

- The selection process has been evaluated and adjusted for the next school year:
  - Different criteria have been instated for students to enter the programme, keeping the objective of the organisation in tact.
- Overviews have been made of every single cost of the registration and admission process at the educational institutes.
- Extra funding has been sought for the transport of the students, to be able to pay the way to skills training classes. That way there are no financial excuses not to attend as the way back is to their own discretion.
- Guardians/caretakers have been involved in the process. Two meetings have been held to update them on the progress of the programme and the students. As per the wish of the guardians/caretakers, quarterly meetings will be held to update them.
- After the end of semester exams, the results have been evaluated as will be done in the future to transfer conclusions into change.
- SfL is looking at what should be necessary assistance outside of the educational cost and what is feasible without becoming a humanitarian aid organisation and therewith straying from the objective of the organisation.



## New targets and objectives of SfL

- Finalize all registrations and coordinate the full programme to a successful first school year of the first batch of students.
- Initiate and successfully finalize the improved selection process of the second batch of students.
- Improve streamlining registration of the second batch of students.
- Secure full funding for the upcoming budget year.
- Further build towards a stable and secure team in Sierra Leone.
- Secure more long-term partnerships/sponsorships both in the Netherlands and in Sierra Leone.

## SfL Board

Walter Remmerswaal - Chairman

George van der Heijden - Treasurer

Heleen Rijkens - Secretary

Harm Beskers

## Current staff and volunteers

### Sierra Leone – paid staff

Sjierly Pereira – Country Director (currently managing both teams)

Jacqueline Kenny – Programme Manager

Anna Williams – Office/Administrative assistant

Edward Massaquoi – Accountant

Kawusu Tarawallie - Driver

Trainer – Samuel Bockarie

Trainer – Moses Bangura

### The Netherlands - volunteers

Rana van den Burg – Communication and Administration



Denise van Keulen – Social media

Dries Arnolds – Website

Barbara Heutink – Social media

### Contact information

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### Bank information

Bank account the Netherlands, Rabobank, NL49RABO017149022

Chamber of Commerce in the Netherlands: 54762081

Bank account Sierra Leone, United Bank for Africa, Leones account: 5401-1003-000593-1

