



Schooling for Life Monitoring and Evaluation Report
July – December 2016

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Introduction

This report reflects a six-month overview of activities and events of Schooling for Life Sierra Leone (SfL) Skills for a Successful Future programme from July to December 2016. Schooling for Life is a growing organisation that has been operating in Freetown, Sierra Leone, since 2014 with the aim of giving talented and motivated youths the tools to build a successful future. The objective of the programme is primarily to bridge the gap between youths who can't find work and employers who can't find skilled employees.



The programme offers an intense three pillar education package consisting of: Scholarships for the vocational education of a student's choice, Extra-curricular skills training at a Schooling for Life training centre and Personal guidance by a professional guidance counsellor. The programme is open to eligible Sierra Leonean youths between the ages of 15 up to 25.

Overview of activities July – December 2016

This programme phase witnessed a complete delivery of targets and activities as set in the Schooling for Life activity plan. Proper engagement of students and trainers in the project activities was ensured and enhanced through the extra-curricular skills training, personal guidance and student scholarships in a tertiary vocational education of the student's choice. Owing to the fact that some programme activities did not commence on time or as anticipated, students, trainers and staff have been very passionate in completing activities to ensure effectiveness by the end of the reporting period (December). This report will represent the total programme achievements from July until December 2016. Some but not limited to organisations Schooling for Life has partnered with these two quarters are Africell SL, Afriqia Solutions, The Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Coalition, and Protech Security Agency.

List of planned activities for this reporting period (July to December)

- ✓ Create a standardized curriculum for our main skills training subjects.
- ✓ Create a means through which the students will have a way to practice more for their skills training subjects.
- ✓ Evaluate students' performance in all three pillars of the programme, as well as general behaviour, to decide on progress into the second year of the programme.
- ✓ Evaluate effectiveness of skills classes, and consult trainers and students on relevance and educational level of the topics.



- ✓ Secure trainers for new and/or following year subjects.
- ✓ Training of Trainers Workshop.
- ✓ Finalize the selection process in the new SfL academic year and hold inauguration of the new students.
- ✓ Do due diligence on the educational institutes in Freetown that are eligible/compatible with the subjects that SfL's new students want to study.
- ✓ Start and complete the admission and registration of our new students.
- ✓ Continue to monitor the progress of first batch of students in their educational institutes.
- ✓ Evaluate the level of knowledge attained by first batch of students and quality of education in their respective educational institutes to take into consideration for the upcoming due diligence.
- ✓ Personal Guidance.

PILLAR ONE - SCHOLARSHIPS

Due Diligence

Due diligence is a key activity conducted every year to assess the quality and standards of institutions that we consider placing our students in. The due diligence focuses on infrastructure, equipment, staff capacity, qualifications, services, practical and internship experiences, and experience in students' future opportunities. The following were some but not limited to tertiary vocational institutions across Freetown visited in August to assess quality for the Schooling for Life students: Blue Crest College, COBIT, IAMTECH, GTI, Milton Margai College of Education (MMCET), IMAT college of business studies and technology, and IPAM. The due diligence facilitated the placement of students into a wider variety of vocational institutes this academic year compared to last academic year. Three new institutions received Schooling for Life students this year to pursue Information Technology (IT), Business Administration, Banking and Finance, and Mechanical and Electrical engineering respectively. Second year students still continue in MMCET (different campuses), Redeemers School of Nursing and Blue Crest College. Schooling for Life students currently study in six different tertiary vocational institutes instead of three compared to last year. This is important to SfL because by having our students attend different institutes, we will be able to compare the quality of education the students receive from these institutes and make even better founded decisions for placement in the future.

Start and completion of registration and admission of our new students

Between September and October 2016, registration and admission of new students into their respective technical vocational institutes started. Application/registration forms were bought for all new students to enrol for pillar one of the Skills for a Successful Future programme; the scholarship. Application/registration forms were filled in the office, together with the students, according to their course of study, before submitting to the institutes. The objective was to ensure that the forms were completed properly with the correct





information for admission, and to have students take ownership over their own application process. Sixteen new students were successful with the admission and registration process while one student was unfortunately expelled from the programme. The institute selected, according to the student's chosen course of study, could not provide the lecture(r)s to continue the specific level of the course our student had applied for, and which he was admitted for. The decision to

eventually expel the student from the programme was decided upon because Schooling for Life was not informed of his choice to stop attending skills classes and personal guidance, this happened without our consent, after repeated attempts to support him in exploring other educational options.

Continued monitoring of the second year students within their educational institutes

As schools reopened in October, all (by then) second year students were intended to go back to school. However, as MMCET was awaiting the NCTVA results (national exams), no classes were resumed and students remained at home. Blue Crest College follows a calendar year schedule and therefore, these students follow a different timeline. The student in Redeemers school of Nursing completed her Nursing Board Entry Exam and came in 3rd in the exam of the school. After admission, she started her introductory classes after a long time awaiting her results.

After evaluation of the performance of the students in their first year, regarding all three pillars the programme, it was decided by the Schooling for Life management that one student was not to continue into the second year, as his progress fell significantly short and he persistently did not adhere to Schooling for Life Rules and Regulations. He was therefore expelled from the programme at the end of the academic year, after several meetings with and without guardians present.

PILLAR TWO – SKILLS TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Skills Training

As an essential part of the three pillar programme of Schooling for Life, we did an evaluation of the subjects offered during the academic year 15/16. The evaluation showed that students in their first year are in higher need of soft skills classes than for example computer skills classes. The soft skills are an essential foundation to the behaviour and perseverance of students in the programme as a whole. It was therefore decided to start first year students off with an introduction to soft skills in the first semester, and to leave the computer skills classes to the second year in the programme. The complete first year of



skills classes, next to English Language and Maths, is focused on social skills. These skills will be related to the job market during the second year, wherein students receive a full year of Work Ethics.

All skills classes started first week of October.

Subjects for students year one were, as stated above; English Language, Mathematics and Introduction to Soft Skills, and for students year two; English Language, Mathematics and Work Ethics. Effective classes went on for eight full weeks followed by a revision week, examination week and another revision on exams for all students. Schooling for Life chooses to hold revision for all students after the end of semester examinations to give students the chance to learn from their mistakes and to know what they still need to improve on in order to do better in the next semester. Reference examinations were held during the last week before Christmas holidays. Overall, students were very impressive in Mathematics, Work ethics and Soft skills examinations. English Language exams posed challenges due to both the level of the exam and later unclear communication regarding assessment plans from the side of Schooling for Life.

To avoid final grades being solely based on the end of semester exams and to encourage students to show their participation throughout the semester, Schooling for Life has decided to introduced a different grading system wherein practical assessments through tests, assignments, group work, presentations and class participation have been included as an additional compulsory way to assess students throughout the semester. This can help the students practice more frequently and to improve their skills and knowledge. It also helps them not to focus all their attention on the result of the end of semester exam. The English Language and Mathematics workbooks (discussed below), handouts and notes in skills classes also support effective learning.

English Language and Math Workbooks

English Language and Mathematics workbooks were developed during August and September 2016 and printed in October the same year to improve students' English Language and Mathematics skills. English Language and Mathematics are key subjects posing challenges for students in secondary education. The workbooks were created to facilitate an effective and active learning process in these subjects. The students receive extra explanation and exercises through the workbook, which gives them the chance



to read ahead, follow up and do additional practice next to their classes and homework. We also want to give the students the chance to share their knowledge with others in their



communities, which is facilitated through the same workbooks. Thanks to the support of Africell SL, each student and trainer received a copy of the workbooks for their class year. Some of the topics treated in year one English Language are: grammar, reading and comprehension, essay writing, and narrative and descriptive writing skills. In year two, some of the topics treated in English Language are: grammar, idiomatic expression, vocabulary, reading and comprehension, and essay writing. Number base, modular arithmetic, approximation and estimation are amongst topics treated in Mathematics for year one. Year two of Mathematics deals with probability only as it covers one semester.

Secure Trainers for New and/or Following Year Subjects

Trainers are lead facilitators in the skills training conducted for the students. The main objective of the trainers is to support students' active learning through the Schooling for Life teaching tools and methodologies. Three additional/new trainers and one Volunteer were secured to cover English Language, Soft Skills, Time management, and Work Ethics and employability skills classes. Each trainer has to develop their overall subject curriculum and monthly lesson plans, and lead in the skills training of their subjects. During their skills classes, throughout the academic year, trainers are monitored by Schooling for Life supervisors to ensure that our teaching methods are duly implemented and the lesson plans are followed.

Training of Trainers

Training of trainers is an annual activity conducted before the commencement of skills classes to train all Schooling for Life skills class trainers on the Schooling for Life teaching methods, active learning theories and tools for effective student learning processes. Due to time restraints, it was decided to hold a one-day introductory training of trainers' session on September 21st at the Schooling for Life office to introduce trainers to Schooling for Life teaching methodologies and techniques before the start of the academic year. This was complemented with another five-day training of trainers-session from the 29th November until 3rd December 2016, at the same venue. The objectives of the training of trainers is to familiarise trainers with Schooling for Life teaching methods and ideologies, for them to learn about key teaching- and learning tools for the students, and for the trainers to be able to use the trainer resource materials for the skills trainings. Some topics treated during the training were: Schooling for Life background, learning tools, understanding behaviours, learning styles, observation vs. judgement, teaching theories, active learning, telling vs. teaching and non-verbal communication. In a bid to facilitate better understanding, group activities, discussions, brainstorming, presentations, videos, role-plays and individual tasks and responsibilities were key methodologies used during the training. Preparations, communications and planning with the participants started very early to ensure effective coordination and cooperation. However, punctuality and absenteeism were unfortunately of key influence during the training; due to the latter, trainings could not be started on time and trainers were present/absent on different days, which caused them not to have the full benefit of the training. Consequentially, this does not enhance trainers' full understanding of Schooling for Life's teaching tools and methodologies, as needed for the skills training.



Therefore, supervisors are sure to monitor and guide the trainers throughout their teaching to ensure the correct usage of the teaching methods preferred by the organisation. This experience will, however, be a learning point for the next training of trainers.

Class Prefects

Each class (year one and two) have conducted elections this academic year to elect 2 students as class prefects and assistants. One male and one female per class represent the students, lead in running the affairs of the classes and mediate between students and Schooling for Life management. This is important to Schooling for Life because class prefects play leadership roles in ensuring active participation and team collaboration amongst students.



PILLAR THREE – PERSONAL GUIDANCE

With the introduction of a second class and the recruitment of a new personal guidance counsellor, the new personal guidance year started effectively. Personal guidance covers, but is not limited to, setting personal development goals and working towards personal growth of the students in both professional and personal life. Each student has personal guidance once every two weeks and each session takes not less than 45 minutes per student.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

World Youth Skills Day

World Youth Skills Day was celebrated on Friday July 15, 2016. This officially by the United Nations acknowledged day, was commemorated to raise awareness on the importance of youth skills development. The day was well celebrated with many activities and motivational speeches to the youths and stakeholders present at the British Council hall. Alimamy Sesay, one of the Schooling for Life second year students, opened the session, which exhibited boldness and life skills in our Schooling for Life student. The Country Director of Schooling for Life was invited on the panel of the event, joining other experts in the field of vocational education. The panel spoke about the importance of de-stigmatisation and the important role of Technical/vocational education in Sierra Leone.

Parents/guardian – Student Meetings

Every end of the semester, a guardian/student meeting is held to strengthen collaboration and communication between Schooling for Life and parents/guardians. This meeting has



taken place twice within this reporting period. It was geared towards updating parents and guardians on the status and progress of their children in relation to their schoolwork, skills classes, personal guidance and broader activities and events of Schooling for Life. The outcome of the meetings is always to have parents/guardians well informed on the quarterly activities and status of their children as this improves and upholds communication and relationships between the organisation and its beneficiaries.

Master Class



In September, Schooling for Life organised a "Skills for a Successful Future Master class" for all first and second year students. This event brought all students together in an all-day workshop for the first time to begin the new academic year. Vision mapping and the pursuit of excellence, acquiring skills needed for career building and building a career vs. getting a job were topics treated in the master class. Two external facilitators and guest speakers, Christine Sesay, Assistant Country Director Systems at GOAL and Maryam Darwich, Managing Director at Afriqia HR

Solutions, facilitated the sessions that day. It was a very educational day that brought great learning points for the students, both professionally and personally.

Student Inauguration

On 23rd September, seventeen new students were inaugurated into Schooling for Life. Upon completion of the rigorous application process to prove them eligible for the Schooling for Life programme, new students for the 2016 – 2017 academic year were inaugurated into the programme at the Schooling for Life office. Parents/guardians were updated during the inauguration on the status of placement into institutions based on the students' choice of study and due diligence done by Schooling for Life. It was further emphasized during the meeting that attendance of skills classes and personal guidance are both complementary to the scholarship and therefore compulsory at all times. All students signed the Schooling for Life Rules and Regulations, and received Schooling for Life T-shirts and ID cards in the presence of their parents/guardians.

Christmas Celebration Activity

A fun day activity was organised by Schooling for Life at Lumley beach on the 17th December. The objective of the activity was to have interactive and participatory non-formal end of year activities with trainers, staff and students of Schooling for Life outside the classroom. A lot of energy and time was put into the planning and preparation of the fun day activities by staff and students, which contributed to its huge success. The event started with an opening and welcome address by the Country Director, Sjerly Pereira, after which a



60minute football match between first and second year students commenced. While the men were playing football, the ladies had a manicure. This was followed by a quiz competition organised between houses – red, blue, green and yellow with 11 members in each house comprising students, staff and trainers -.

Afternoon activities started with the “Treasure Hunt” which lasted for 45 minutes. Each house had a set of 9 questions/tasks, which they were to accomplish within the stipulated time. Green house won the treasure hunt competition by the highest number of people fitted in a car. The day was concluded with a balloon game where students had to step on each other’s balloons to have one house with intact balloons standing, and winning the game.

Short term employment experience opportunities

Short-term employment experiences are opportunities students get to pursue practical work-experience in a certain organisation, relating to their course of study, while they still continue their studies. This was done during holidays and while students await(ed) their NCTVA and end of semester results since October 2016 and ongoing. These short-term employment experiences are facilitated to broaden students’ experiences and expand their practical skills for the job market. Three short-term employment experience opportunities took place during this reporting period and ongoing. After completion of their studies, students are hopeful to gain valuable work experiences through full time internships to enter the job market.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Successful registration and admission of sixteen new students into tertiary technical vocational institutes to study Ordinary and National Diploma (OND) courses in various fields.
- Expansion into three new educational institutions in Freetown; Schooling for Life has been able to expand its reach and collaboration with educational institutions through the due diligence conducted. This is a significant step towards assessment of quality of education in general as this gives the organisation the chance to assess the quality of knowledge attained by the students within the different institutes. As a result, SfL can make better-informed choices in the future regarding where to enrol her students.
- Standardised English Language and Mathematics curriculum and workbooks for skills classes were developed and made available for all students and trainers. This significantly improves the quality of the skills training classes.
- Effective and sustainable relationships with parents/guardians to ensure commitment and support from the caretakers, who are ultimately responsible for the students as well as indirect benefactors of the programme.
- Start and/or continuation of effective support from and networking with companies/organisations like Africell SL (Skills class hall, material support and pr),



the TVET Coalition and Protech Security to ensure a national support system and to work on sustainability.

- Effective Master class organised to broaden the knowledge and horizon of Schooling for Life students.
- Seventeen new students were successfully admitted into the programme and inaugurated. After which unfortunately one student didn't continue in the programme. This is explained below.
- Effective start of skills classes and personal guidance for all students - each class has 3 subjects per week with 1hr 30 minutes per subject, each individual has 1 personal guidance session every 2 weeks, 45 minutes per session.
- Completion of training of trainers on Schooling for Life teaching- and learning methodologies.
- Successful completion of end of semester revisions and examinations.
- Successful interactive fun day activities at the beach.
- Short-term employment experience opportunities for our students; 3 short-term employment experience opportunities in 3 different companies.
- The development of an organisational activity plan, which improves progress planning and implementation.

CHALLENGES/ CONSTRAINTS FACED

- It proves difficult for trainers to submit lesson plans and other documents in time, which in turn obstructs the planning schedule of the organisation regarding preparations for the skills classes.
- Leveraging school time-tables with the Schooling for Life skills classes and personal guidance time-tables at the beginning of the year was a major challenge.
- Lateness in skills classes, though less than last academic year, due to long distances covered from educational institutes and traffic constraints in students' movement.
- The 1:30minutes per skills class seems to be limited time to cover lessons contents as set out in the lesson plans.
- Due to lack of structure given to trainers by the Schooling for Life management regarding exam grading at the beginning of the academic year, there was incoherent grading between subjects, which led to unexpected references in English Language and delays in submitting grades.
- Unexpected additional expenditures due to payments for assignments, tests, and pamphlets in several colleges.
- One student was expelled from the programme as he refrained from informing Schooling for Life on his choice of study after having been intensively assisted by the organisation in choosing the educational institute that suited his wishes and goals. In addition, there was a lack of communication on his decision to stop coming to skills class and personal guidance after the college that had admitted him earlier, could not offer him lectures to follow his course of study, even after they had offered him admission one month earlier.



LESSONS LEARNT

- To be able to receive the lesson plans and other documents in time, it is necessary for Schooling for Life to clearly communicate deadlines to all trainers in a timely manner.
- It proves difficult to align skills classes with school time tables and personal guidance and this will be a point of attention for next year. This also influences the number of students the organisation can take on to keep the quality of the programme intact.
- Thought needs to be given to the 1hour 30minutes schedule for skills training sessions next year as most trainers do not complete their training sessions within the allocated time, with the objective of handling all planned components in the lesson plan.
- There needs to be a clear grading system to give structure to the evaluation of students' level of learning achieved. Also, assessments should be a clear balance between ongoing assessments throughout the semester and end of semester exams. It is important that all trainers are well informed in advance, as to avoid misunderstandings, backlog work and disappointment.
- Budget needs to be put aside for pamphlets, assignments and extra payments in schools apart from admission and other educational cost.
- The curriculum/workbook development processes should start earlier in the academic year as this takes more time than expected.
- Trainers need to be notified that exam papers are to be distributed to students during post-exam revision so that students have the opportunity to verify their answers and be confident about them, and in turn learn from their answers to know what they still need to improve on.
- Organise training of trainers' workshop as early as possible before the start of the new academic year to ensure proper planning. Additional thought must be given as to how we can secure presence of the trainers, timely and fully.
- It is important to emphasize effective/open communication and to manage expectations with students during the application process, and to double check up on admission criteria of institutes to avoid disappointment.
- Practical experience proves to be difficult to receive in technical institutes. Most labs and workshops are unequipped to facilitate this experience for students.



HOW WILL OUR EXPERIENCED BE TRANSFORMED INTO CHANGE

- During the upcoming months, and in anticipation of the next academic year, Schooling for Life will think of ways to facilitate the process of handing in of lesson plans and other documents. For example, by pre-structuring curricula. This will be followed up in the next report.
- At the end of the academic year a thorough evaluation will be done on the effectiveness of the skills classes and the time trainers have to execute their lesson plans. All parties involved will be asked for feedback on this to be able to make an informed decision for the next academic year.
- In response to students not having their answer sheets during exam revision, we have addressed trainers on the importance of this part of the process and the added value thereof for the quality of learning.
- To facilitate effective and structured assessments and grading systems for the skills classes, a clear grading overview has been created already and has been distributed amongst the trainers to clarify Schooling for Life expectations. This will result in coherent forms of grading throughout all skills classes, wherein both ongoing assessment as well as end of semester exams are taken into account.
- In advance of admission of new students into the programme, their high school results will be closely checked for specific credits needed according to study choice of the potential students. This is to make sure students have the required qualifications they need get into the study they want to pursue, which makes registration and admission into schools easier.
- We will endeavour to evaluate educational institutes throughout the academic year to ensure quality due diligence and better standards for our students. This will result in an overview of what to look for during our next official due diligence for the next class of students.
- Budget should be put aside to support students in payments of pamphlets, assignments, and practical experience to facilitate active learning in the institutes.
- The training of trainers will be planned earlier in advance of the next academic year. Lessons will be drawn from this years' experience regarding the training itself, relevant topics and planning, and this will be implemented into the planning and execution of the training at the beginning of the next academic year.



OBJECTIVES/PLANS FOR JANUARY – JUNE 2017

The activities mentioned below are targets of the organisation from January to June 2017. Schooling for Life will effectively work to ensure implementation as set out in the organisational activity plan and guiding timelines. We will work to ensure:

- ✓ Students' progress reports (these are internal reports to monitor the progress of students in all three pillars of the programme and their general participation and development observed).
- ✓ Monthly lesson plans
- ✓ Effective skills classes
- ✓ Securing of next year's budget
- ✓ Recruitment of new students into the Schooling for Life Skills for a Successful Future Programme
- ✓ Prepare and conduct end of semester examinations and assessments for skills trainings
- ✓ Conduct educational visits with the students to expose them to new learning opportunities outside of their classrooms.
- ✓ Review of curricula for skills classes at the end of the academic year to create standardisation, upgrade the standards of the curricula and quality of learning for our students (if necessary).
- ✓ Write bi annual newsletter by end of June.
- ✓ End of year skills training report to evaluate lessons learnt, challenges and the way forward. Conversations/evaluation will be done in collaboration with students and trainers to learn from the past academic year and to turn this into improvement points for the next academic year.
- ✓ End of year evaluation of trainers to establish successes and learn from obstacles encountered.



SCHOOLING FOR LIFE ORGANISATION

SfL Board

Walter Remmerswaal - Chairman
George van der Heijden - Treasurer
Heleen Rijkens - Secretary
Harm Beskers

Current staff Sierra Leone – paid Staff

Sjierly Pereira – Country Director (currently managing both teams)
Jestina Simba – Programme Coordinator
Memuna Kargbo – Programme Assistant/Guidance Counsellor
Mohamed Nabieu – Office/Administrative assistant
Edward Massaquoi – Senior Financial Officer
Mohamed Koroma - Driver
Maryam Darwich - Trainer (Volunteer)
James Menjor - Trainer
Sallieu Timbo - Trainer
Moses Bangura - Trainer
Musa Khalil Koroma - Trainer

The Netherlands - Volunteers

Rana Van den Burg – Communication and Administration
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