



**Schooling for Life Monitoring and Evaluation Report**  
**January – June 2016**

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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. The organisation is fully 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 overall objective of the organisation is to bridge the gap between youths in Sierra Leone who can not find suitable work and are not adequately skilled for the job market, and employers who can not find adequately skilled local employees.

The 'Skills for a Successful Future' programme is a unique programme that focuses on an all-round preparation for youths to succeed in the job market. This is done by combining all skills and qualities needed to become an active pillar in social and professional life.

The programme supports around 20 youths per year per class, between the ages of 15 till 25, who prove eligible for the programme, for a period of two years.

## Targets for January – June 2016 (second half of 2015-2016 academic year)

- 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 and streamline 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.

## Lessons learned and Experience turned into change

- The application process started earlier in the year (March) so that more time could be spent on the different stages of the selection process. As we didn't know how many applications we would receive, we wanted to make sure that we would finish the selection with sufficient time left for due diligence before schools close for rainy season.
- The application criteria for students have been adjusted to a higher level.
- Applying students were screened more intensely on their choice of study and their relating grades on their grades' lists.
- Quarterly guardian/student meetings were continued.



## Activities and Achievements January – June 2016

### January – March 2016

As schools re-opened after Christmas break, students who were enrolled at Milton Margai College of Education and Technology (MMCET) matriculated at their institute in January.

As some of the SfL students were enrolled with BECE results only, some were placed in Trade Certificate classes (Construction Engineering) where others had to participate in preparatory classes before they could start regular education (Secretarial Studies).

The student who applied for Nursing at Redeemers School of Nursing started preparatory classes in January as a mainstream part of the preparation for the entry exams to Nursing school. The nursing board exam was taken in March.



### Application and Selection of the 2016-2017 class

Mid March the application process for the 2016 – 2017 academic year was launched. As a learning curve from the previous application process, criteria were upgraded from BECE graduation to WASCE graduation, asking for a higher level of high school graduates. The level of the first batch of students had proven to be insufficient to get students into a Diploma level course in most colleges in Freetown. To avoid complications and disappointment on both SfL's side as well as the students', it was decided to ask for a minimum of

three credit points on WASCE level with mandatory credit in English Language and Mathematics, and one credit point in a study of choice related subject.

As another lesson learned, additional meetings were held with potential students who needed to provide further clarification on reasons for choice of a certain studies. Some students were asked to perform research and later clarify certain choices, as part of the selection process.

In total, Schooling for Life received over 50 applications, from which 32 students were interviewed and 22 were selected to take the Schooling for Life assessment. The evaluation of the assessments was done independently by two SfL staff members, through a standardized marking scheme. After the evaluation of the assessments, 18 potential students were invited with their guardians for individual meetings to discuss mutual expectations. Out of these 18 potential students, 17 were eventually selected in July for the programme. Therewith, the complete application and selection process of the 2016-2017 class took four (4) months.

## Skills classes

During the second semester, students followed Communication skills classes. The objective of the class is to teach students the basics of social and professional forms of communication. Students were taught how to communicate effectively and appropriately in every situation.

## Extra Curricular

At the end of February one of the major sponsors of Schooling for Life came to visit the programme from the Netherlands. An extensive programme was developed to welcome the visitors. The students created their own play to portray the importance and added value of their participation in Schooling for Life to their own lives. And in addition, the students performed dances representing their tribes and gave speeches representing their own messages. Furthermore, the visitors attended several skills training classes and gave opportunity to the students to ask them their own questions. The sponsors were very impressed by what Sfl has achieved so far and by the level of the students and the skills classes provided.

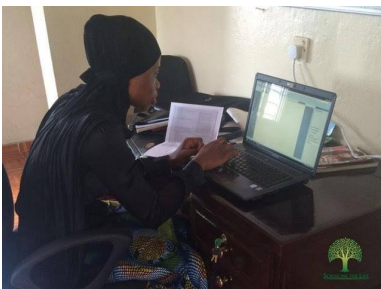
In March Schooling for Life took the students to a theatre play of Shakespeare at the British Council. Different acts of Macbeth, Merchant of Venice and Othello were performed by local students and artists. Schooling for Life feels that it's necessary and important to broaden the horizons of the students outside the classroom. Attending plays and other events gives the students more experience and outlook on the world around them and therefore improves the benefits of their education.



## April – June 2016

During the months of April through June, Schooling for Life was highly entangled in the application and selection process of the new students.

## Skills classes



During the third semester, students were given the opportunity to improve their computer skills. As Schooling for Life does not have the infrastructure for such classes, it was decided to hold the classes at the Sensi Tech Hub. Although Sensi was a good alternative at the time, it did prove to show some constraints regarding the use of the proper space within the hub and the fact that the hub uses second hand laptops that often did not seem to work properly. However, at the end of the semester, students had

gained basic knowledge of Office and the use of a computer. Students now know how to write letters, save them and the basic make up of computers, which will help them greatly in the future.

Schooling for Life in addition had also started lobbying for donation of laptops to the organisation by third parties, to be able to give students the opportunity to practice the use of computers and the internet. Students can come to the SfL office during office hours to borrow the laptops and use them for practice (in the office).

### **Extra Curricular**

During Ramadan, SfL organised an Iftar dinner together with the students, staff and trainers. SfL believes it to be important to hold informal events where staff and students can interact in an informal setting. The students gave speeches about the meaning and importance of Ramadan, and SfL awarded prizes to the top 4 performing students to encourage others to work even harder and achieve the same. Followed by a commonly shared meal.

### **What was achieved**

- With limited staff, Schooling for Life was able to run the office, the skills classes and the application process for the 2016-2017 class at the same time.
- Funding for 2016-2017 was secured by the end of this reporting period, which enabled Schooling for Life to continue with the selected students in 2016-2017.
- The 2015-2016 academic year was concluded with all students. At the end of this reporting period, the class had a 0% drop out rate.
- A successful first visit of sponsors of SfL was accomplished wherein the visitors got a clear idea of what SfL has accomplished so far, what our programme entails and what has been achieved with the students.

### **Lessons learned**

- During the application process of the students it was noted that SfL needs to pay even more than already done, attention to the admission criteria of respective educational institutes and take this into consideration when admitting students.
- Now that SfL has more staff capacity, skills classes need to be planned well in advance. The computer class turned out to be tedious to hold and we should've had more time to plan.
- As the academic year progressed, it turned out that the students more urgently need soft skills classes like classes focused on behavioural change than computer class. Therefore, it has been decided that computer classes will be held in the second year and more focus will be put on soft skills in the first year with SfL.
- Students need more practice in their subjects. To be able to guarantee quality of the learning process that students go through, SfL needs to facilitate better in resources for students.
- English language remains an issue. The trainer does not seem to be able to improve the level of the class significantly. This needs looking into.
- Personal visits of sponsors can have a very positive impact on their experience of SfL. Having a personal experience increases the affection and connection one has with the

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programme and can positively impact commitment to the organisation.

### How will our experience be transformed into change

- To keep up with the needs of the students, the curriculum of the first year students will be adjusted to a more soft skills focused curriculum.
- During the next application/selection process, more focus will be put on the criteria of the respective institutes. If possible, the choice of study and compatibility thereof from the side of the students should be evaluated during the selection process.
- A new trainer will be hired for English language that is more open to change and adaptation to the SfL methods of teaching.
- A solution will need to be found to give the students more opportunity to practice English and Math throughout their course.

### New targets and objectives of Sfl

- Create a standardized curriculum for our skills training subjects.
- Create a means through which the students will have a way to practice more for their skills training subjects.
- Secure trainers for new and/or following year subjects.
- Do due diligence on the educational institutes in Freetown that are eligible/compatible with the subjects that Sfl's new students want to study.
- Finalize the selection process in the new Sfl academic year and hold inauguration of the new students.
- Start and complete the admission and registration of our new students.
- Continue to monitor the progress of the current students in their educational institutes.
- Evaluate the level of knowledge attained by students and quality of education in their respective current educational institutes to take into consideration for the upcoming due diligence.

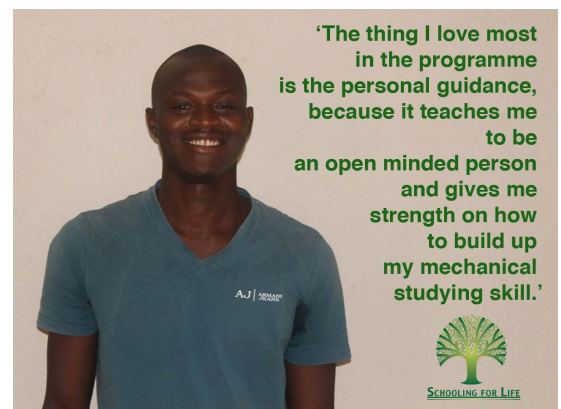
### Sfl Board

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

Samuel Bockarie - Trainer

Moses Bangura – Trainer

Patrick Saunders - Trainer

### **The Netherlands - volunteers**

Rana van den Burg – Communication and Administration

Dries Arnolds – Website

Barbara Heutink – Social media

**‘Train people as if  
they were what they ought to be  
and you help them to become  
what they are capable of being.’**

‘Schooling for Life has transformed my life  
and made me realise my dreams.  
The roots of goodness  
are in the soil of appreciation.’

Sylvester Mansaray  
student at Schooling for Life



### **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



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