



Monitoring and Evaluation Report
July - December 2017

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Table of Content	Page
Introduction	3
Overview of Activities	3
PILLAR ONE - Scholarship	
Formal education	4
Due Diligence on educational institutes	5
PILLAR TWO - Skills class	
Skills classes	6
Review and development of workbooks	6
Development of grading schedule for skills classes	7
End of Semester Trainer Meeting	7
PILLAR THREE - Personal guidance	
Personal guidance sessions	8
Group guidance sessions	9
Programme related activities	
Internships	10
Student/guardian meeting	11
Master class	11
Fresh Salone Visit	11
Christmas beach activity	12
The Organisation	14



Introduction

Schooling for Life is an educational organisation that empowers youth through the Skills for a Successful Future Programme. The Skills for a Successful Future Programme is divided into three segments; Scholarships, Skills training and Personal guidance.

The reporting time line for Schooling for Life is on a six-month basis. As stated in the cover page, this report covers activities planned and implemented from July to December 2017. Within this reporting period, Schooling for Life has implemented various activities that fall within or are related to the three pillars; pillar one covers all activities that have to do with the formal education (scholarship) segment of the Skills for a Successful Future Programme, pillar two covers all activities that are related to the social and practical skills training, while pillar three covers activities that fall in the personal guidance segment. There are other activities that are indirectly related to the pillars as they address the development of the students or the programme as a whole but do not fall under the three pillars directly. These activities are reported on under "Programme related activities".

At the end of every reporting period, the organisation evaluates what went well and what can be improved upon going forward. These points are taken into consideration over the next reporting period. In that light, during the covered period in this report, the following adjustments have been made:

- End of semester trainer meetings have been introduced
- During these meetings the effectivity of the workbooks is discussed as an ongoing evaluation
- The manner of assessment in skills training has been re-assessed to balance theory and practice and a grading template has been created for the trainers accordingly
- More internship opportunities have been created within Schooling for Life
- A map of companies for possible internships has been initiated (needs further work)
- Planning for students' outreach training has been initiated

Overview of activities July - December 2017

- Completion of due diligence on educational institutes
- Registration of continuing students into their respective institutes
- Continuation of skills classes
- Continuation of personal guidance
- Master class
- Effect a student evaluation on skills trainers and both workbooks
- Develop a Work Ethics workbook



PILLAR ONE - Scholarships

Formal education

Due to the fact that the progress of the academic year is contingent on the teaching within the respective institutes, Schooling for Life has students in the programme who have officially finished the programme of the organisation (pillars two and three) but are still pursuing their diploma. These students are referred to as year 3 students.

The students who, as of the start of the 2017 – 2018 academic year, are in their second year of all three pillars, are referred to as year 2 students.

Schooling for Life has 31 students (both year 2 and 3) enrolled in various tertiary technical vocational institutions in Freetown. Year 2 students have entered into the second year of the following institutions and courses:

Government Technical Institute – Four (4) students

- Diploma in Electrical Engineering - 3 students
- Diploma in Mechanical Engineering - 1 student

College of Business Information and Technology (COBIT) – Five (5) students

- Diploma in Network Engineering – 1 student
- Diploma in Database Administration - 4 students

These students have completed their IC3 and A+ courses.

Milton Margai College of Education and Technology (MMCET) - Goderich Campus. Three (3) students

- Diploma in Social Work – 3 students

Institute of Advanced Management and Technology (IAMTECH) - Four (4) students

- Diploma in Business Administration – 2 Students
- Diploma in Banking and Finance – 2 Students

The year 3 students are also enrolled in various institutions and studying different courses:

BlueCrest College – Nine (9) students

- Diploma in Web Development – 2 Students
- Diploma in Network Engineering – 7 students

MMCET - Brookfields Campus – One (1) student

- Certificate in Tourism Management – 1 student

MMCET – Congo Cross Campus – Three (3) students

- Certificate in Civil Engineering – 1 student



- Diploma in Secretarial Studies - 2 students

Institute of Public Administration and Management – One (1) student

- Diploma in Human Resources Management - 1 student

Due Diligence on educational institutes

Prior to the start of each academic year 2017 – 2018, Schooling for Life does due diligence on the relevant educational institutes in Freetown to determine where to place new students for the upcoming academic year. The due diligence was also finalized for this academic year and institutes were chosen. At the start of this academic year, the management of the organisation unfortunately had to decide to not take on new students this year to protect the quality of the programme delivered to the current students as the office did not have capacity to expand on delivery and maintain quality at the same time.

Successes

- There has been overall steady progress of our students in their various institutes from one level to the other. During the course of this reporting period, 12 out of 15 of our year 3 students progressed from one level to the next. Two of our year 3 students however, are still waiting for their results to be released by the National Commission of Technical Vocational and other Academic Awards (NCTVA).
- Year two students are also steadily going through their exams and are progressing from year one to year two.
- Schooling for Life continues to maintain contact and collaboration with the various institutes through the focal persons in the respective institutes who support in providing needed information from the various institutes.
- The organisation is receiving positive feedback from various institutes attended by our students, commending their dedication to their studies, their willingness to support other students and their regular and timely attendance.
- Some year 3 students are balancing their time between their institutes and their work, as they have secured jobs with employers or as interns.

Challenges

- In spite of the progress the students make in their formal institutes, we still have a challenge in the prompt release of results of students' exams. We still have two students whose results have not been released by NCTVA after a year. This is holding back the development of the students in the programme.
- Various institutes have not been providing definite timelines for start and end of modules, which has created difficulty for the organisation to assess real time progress updates of our students.



- Getting students' transcripts and progress reports from the exams offices in the various institutes proves a continuous challenge, which sets back the monitoring and evaluation process of the organisation.
- The delay in announcing of results of the national exams has led to 2 students in year 3 to still not have the opportunity to continue their studies as students are not allowed to continue in their institutes without those results.
- A new batch of students could not be taken on which mean the selection process and due diligence which were finalized could not be materialized upon.

How Will Our Experience Be Transformed into Change

- We will continue to have one contact person from the organisation to follow up with the various institutes as well as the national exams office in an attempt to secure students' progress reports;
- Different approaches will be tried to improve on relations with the various institutes to improve on feedback relating to student progress.
- Before any new application process is set out, all aspects will carefully be considered.

PILLAR TWO - Skills Training

Skills classes

This academic year's skills classes did not commence as planned as the evaluation of the workbooks, and the consecutive adjustments and printing of the same, took more time than anticipated. The academic year was kicked off with the start of Work Ethics class, followed by Maths and later English Language.

As mentioned above, the year 3 students had already finalized their pillar two and three of the programme and therefore skills classes in this academic year are conducted only for year 2 students.

Review and development of workbooks

During the period under review, the organisation commenced the process of reviewing and updating the Schooling for Life workbooks for Maths and English Language. The review process took into account the evaluation done by the direct users of the workbooks, namely the trainers and the students. The wish of Schooling for Life was to standardize the workbooks to reflect the quality of training we want the students to receive. The process resulted in the inclusion of new topics, for example:

English Language

- ✓ Year one:
 - The 8 parts of speech with a focus on improvement in grammar



- ✓ Year two:
 - Speech Writing
 - Writing of Proposals
 - Contractions
 - Letter writing

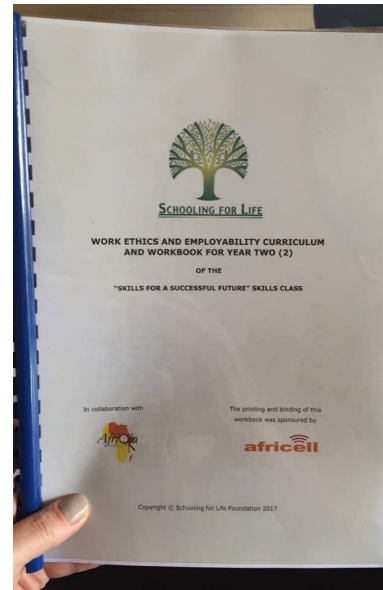
Mathematics

- ✓ Year one: slight changes were made
- ✓ Year two:
 - Statistics

Additionally, a new workbook on Work Ethics was added to the Schooling for Life workbooks in collaboration with Afriqia HR Solutions (the Work Ethics trainer). This addition was done in response to the repeated requests from students and to provide the trainer and the students with a more structured and standardized curriculum to be used for Work Ethics class. It is currently in use.

After all changes were made, Africell SL again supported the printing and binding of the adjusted workbooks and the newest addition, the Work Ethics workbook.

Efforts are currently made to develop a Computer Skills class curriculum. Computer skills classes are scheduled to commence in the second semester. This aspect will be covered in the next reporting period when the start of the computer skills classes is planned.



Development of assessment and grading overview for skills classes

Learning from last year's miscommunication in the grading standards of the different skills class subjects, Schooling for Life this year created a standardized grading schedule which included the different types of assessments to be done per semester and the percentages to be allocated towards the different types of assessments. This was done to assure fair representation of understanding and application skills of the new topics by the students.

End of semester trainer meeting

Issues can emerge in skills classes that require dialogue between trainers and Schooling for Life. As a conclusion from the previous reporting period, the management adopted the practice to be holding one general meeting with trainers at the end of every semester. These meetings will cover the successes and challenges in the skills classes, conduct of students and opening communication to strengthen cooperation between trainers and the



management. The first meeting was held on the 15th December 2017. This first meeting was general and it is the wish of the management to have more in depth meetings in the future.

Successes

In this segment, the following went well:

- In spite of the challenges to get the academic year started, all were picked up and continued as planned;
- Successful review of Maths and English Language workbooks translated into adjusted workbooks which should suffice for the next two academic years;
- Successful development of the first edition of the Work Ethics workbook;
- A clear assessment and grading schedule was developed for skills classes before the start of the new academic year.

Challenges

- The academic year unfortunately didn't start in a uniform way, which has now cause skills classes to run on different timelines. This affects the following semesters.

How Will Our Experience Be Transformed into Change

- The organisation will ensure that all skills classes operate on a uniform timeline to ensure that all classes run simultaneously.
- Periodic review of workbooks will be done in such a manner that it will not interfere with the start of the academic year. A next review period will be started earlier after the close of the academic year, to assure a timely start of the next academic year.

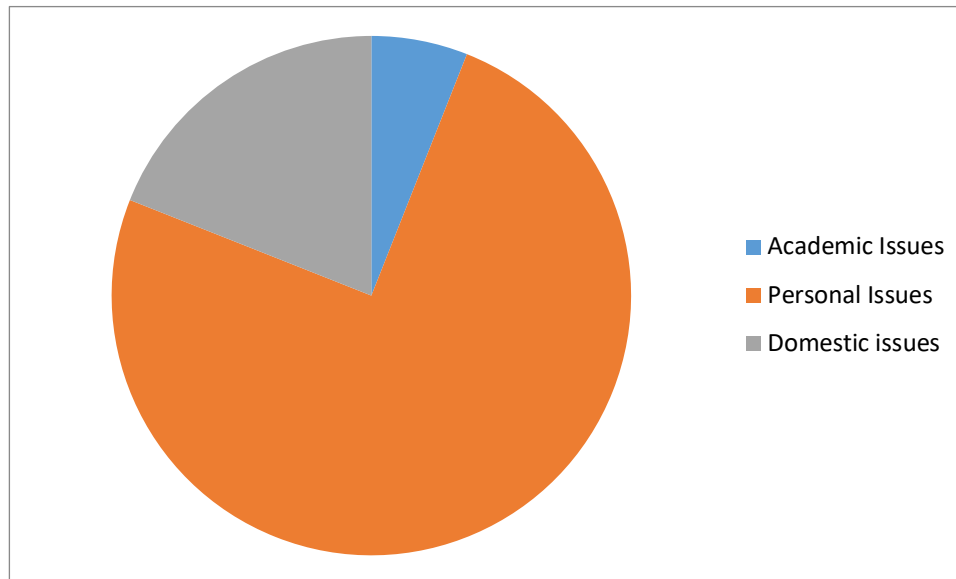
PILLAR THREE - Personal Guidance

Personal guidance

Personal guidance was designed to address the behavioral and academic progress of the students. Students are enrolled into the programme with numerous challenges on setting goals and dealing with different behavioral aspects. The guidance sessions are also designed to support students in making informed decisions relating to academic, domestic and social life. Confidence- and self-esteem building, and developing positive and creative thinking also form an integral part of the sessions.



The chart below shows the generic issues that students deal with:



Group guidance sessions

The idea of group guidance sessions is to check in with the groups as a whole (year 2 & 3 students) at the end of every semester and discuss common issues that they run into across the group and support each other in dealing with these common hurdles. This will increase their bonding within the team and promote support for each other in the programme. These group guidance sessions were organised on the 14th and 15th December 2017 for year 2 and 3 students respectively. Students require constant support in guidance to strengthen the level of cooperation amongst them. Year 2 students think and behave more competitively than supportively on tasks relating to academic work. The organisation is evaluating its current strategy to reverse this trend against the next reporting period.

The year 3 students are more of a team and support each other much more than the year 2 students. This could be a result of the fact that they were the first batch of beneficiaries and had more contact moments and personal attention from management at the initial stage of the programme. The year 3 students are collectively addressing the issue of transition from Schooling for Life skills classes and personal guidance to finding internship opportunities and transitioning into the job market. It was also evident that their presence in the office is declining, making it a challenge to keep up with their day to day activities and progress.

What was achieved in these sessions was the awareness amongst students that some of the problems they deal with on a daily basis are not unique but common among most of them; and that they can support each other in dealing with those issues through experience sharing.



Successes

- The confidence level of students has improved over time. Students who were enrolled into the programme with very low levels of confidence, who had difficulty constructing their thoughts and be bold to speak in class, already have developed greatly. Such that students now stand in front of the class to do presentations and debate on issues, they have learned to communicate more effectively at home which has decreased domestic altercations and reduced stress on a large scale.
- Students now make conscious efforts, with the support of the guidance counsellor, to discover their strengths and weaknesses and take affirmative actions to capitalise on strengths and improve on weaknesses.
- The guidance counselor and the students are able to assess the growth pattern and level of achievement in student's goals.
- Group guidance has established an awareness amongst students to realise the commonalities of their challenges and how they can support each other through experience sharing in dealing with such challenges.

Challenges

- A challenge is noted on students' attendance to guidance counseling sessions. This was however raised in the last student/guardian meeting as a serious challenge that needs to be addressed and improved upon. Guardians were asked to support in talking to their wards on this topic in order to reverse the trend. Schooling for Life will also further engage the students in discussions to see improvement.
- Year 2 students need to be more supportive to each other in dealing with issues.

How Will Our Experience Be Transformed into Change

- Schooling for Life will further discuss the options to address the trend of attendance to be incorporated into a larger behavioral training approach.
- Engage students in discussions to improve on their support for each other and further strengthen the values of being positive and critical thinkers.
- Ensure that year 3 students increase their presence at the office to determine the level of support that might be needed.
- The year 2 students need more contact time with management to work on their supportive attitude towards each other which is important to Schooling for Life in the grooming of their behavioral change.



PROGRAMME RELATED ACTIVITIES

Internships

Schooling for Life provides her students with the type of education that prepares them for the job market by giving them soft and hard skills that enable them to access and retain jobs. As our students progress throughout the programme, they are exposed to internship opportunities to gain experience in the work environment. The purpose of our programme is to train and equip students to be outstanding on the job. We consider internships to be a very important component in the programme as it provides an opportunity for our students to demonstrate their acquired skills and knowledge in a practical working environment and get adjusted to the practicality of the work environment. The performance of the students during their internships should attract further employment.

During this reporting period, Schooling for Life had the following categories of interns:

Interns at the Schooling for Life office – Two of Schooling for Life’s students who study Secretarial Studies at MMCET did an internship at the Schooling for Life office from September to December 2017. The purpose was to secure their office skills. As their education continued after that period, it was decided to discontinue their internships only to pick up again when their academic work is less pressing.

Interns in other companies - Two year 3 students who are studying IT at BlueCrest College did a five-month internship with a local company Afrigas from June to October 2017. Their outstanding performance led to long term employment opportunities. One of the students was given an employment contract with the same company (Afrigas) while the other filled the vacancy of Office Admin Assistant at the Schooling for Life office in November 2017. Both students are now highly valued staff members with their respective employers.

Interns at Skills class – One of Schooling for Life’s IT students requested to learn more about teaching Maths and during this reporting period he was working with the Schooling for Life Maths trainer in order to learn how to construct lesson plans and how to teach mathematics, in this case to our year 2 students. This gives him an opportunity to learn how to pass on information, to work with Word and Excel documents and how to evaluate performance.

Two other Schooling for Life IT students were taken on by Schooling for Life to develop a computer skills curriculum that would be used for the skills training on basic computer skills for year 2 students in second semester. This will be reported on in the next reporting period.

Efforts made by the organisation towards getting the year 3 students internships with external companies/organisations, will be covered in the subsequent reporting periods.

Student/guardian meetings

At the end of every semester, Schooling for Life holds a meeting with guardians and students to update guardians on progress, conduct and performance of students in skills classes and



in their various institutions. The student/guardian meeting was held on the 21st of December 2017.

A mark of success is the fact that all present (guardian and students alike) wanted to know the future plans of the organisation regarding the criteria and date for the next intake into the programme. The level of appreciation for the programme is very high.

It was noted that the relatively low turnout of guardians to these meetings is a challenge. This was noted in the previous reporting period and we have unfortunately not been able to improve on this in the period under review. Schooling for Life will need to re-evaluate this trend in order to improve on this.

Master Class



The master class of 2017 was focused on Health, Medication and Nutrition; and Sexual and Reproductive Health.

The topic of discussion was to guide students on what to consider when taking medication; to understand the importance of taking care of their own bodies when it comes to nutrition and sleep; and to increase knowledge on issues relating to sexual and reproductive health.

The contents and discussions were facilitated by external professional facilitators in agreement on the topics with Schooling for Life. All students took part in the master class, thereby also creating the opportunity for students at all levels to hold general discussions on the selected topics of the day. The masterclasses also contribute towards building on the skills of confidence, public speaking and engagement in constructive discussions.

It turned out to be a very interactive session, with high engagement of the students and during the evaluation they confirmed to have benefitted a lot from the master class.

Fresh Salone visit

Fresh Salone is an agricultural company, based in Sierra Leone. They are greatly involved in greenhouse plantation facilities. There are over 70 greenhouse stations in and around Freetown that were set up by Fresh Salone. On the 9th of December 2017, the 2nd year students of Schooling for Life visited the Aberdeen School garden greenhouse site which was set up with the help of Fresh Salone. The purpose of the visit was for students to learn more about (greenhouse) agriculture and how plants grow in general.



Through extracurricular visits, Schooling for Life wants to broaden the knowledge of her students so they will become more critical about the world around them. Many students have families living in the provinces that could benefit from the information the students acquired that day. Students demonstrated their interest in agriculture by asking pertinent questions relating to the operations of greenhouses and the growth of crops in general.

Christmas Beach Activity

For the second time, Schooling for Life organized an end of year activity as a Christmas celebration. This activity is designed to bring all students, staff and trainers together to socialize and learn from each other in an interactive and non-formal setting. On the 16th December 2017, Schooling for Life staff, students and trainers converged at Lumley Beach in Freetown for this activity.

The variety of both leisure and educational activities increased the level of interest and interaction amongst students and staff throughout the day. For example, the debate triggered a learning platform in an interesting and non-formal setting which made students interested and participatory while learning at the same time.

What came out as a challenge on this day was the poor attendance of the 3rd year students. Their attention to timeliness has been a point of attention to the organisation throughout this reporting period we are working on strategies to reverse this trend against the next reporting period.



Successes

- The internship engagement has been successful so far. Learning from the past, we increased the number of interns within Schooling for Life and their performance reflects the desired learning curves.



- Also, internships outside the organisation have started off as a success with both students being offered fulltime employment.
- The discussions during the student/guardian meeting indicated an expression of appreciation from students and guardians and the commitment of guardians present to support the students to maximize their potential. This success empowers the purpose behind these meetings;
- The subject of this year's master class was chosen to add knowledge outside of the regular topics discussed within Schooling for Life. The engagement and feedback of students as a result confirmed the necessity of teaching on this topic.
- The Fresh Salone visit proved very interesting and educative for the students as it gave them a better perspective on issues relating to agriculture.

Challenges

- Students' attitude towards Schooling for Life events - it was noted with concern in the period under review that students come late or are even absent without excuse from Schooling for Life events. This is a new trend that was noted in activities undertaken during the reporting period. This clearly is a sharp break from the expected behaviour of punctuality of students. Management is working on the best course of action to address this trend.
- The turnout of guardians at student/guardian meetings needs to increase. Most students were not represented at the meeting, which impacts the communication possible between Schooling for Life and the students' guardians.

How Will Our Experience Be Transformed into Change

- Our engagement with students will be intensive to instill the values of Schooling for Life. This will also call for group meetings and group guidance sessions to inculcate values and address the issue of absenteeism slowly showing up in the attitude of some of the students. We will also continue to encourage students to hold constructive engagements amongst themselves by way of peers inspiring each other.

Planned Activities for January - June 2018

- Students/guardian meeting with year 2 students
- Outreach training
- Start of Computer skills classes
- Continuation of skills classes
- End of semester meeting with trainers
- Training of Trainers for skills classes
- Application and selection process of new students



Schooling for Life Organisation (during reporting period)

Schooling for Life Board

Carolyn Drake - Chairman

Wytzke Triemstra - Treasurer

Thecla van der Kaaij – Secretary

Staff and Volunteers

Sierra Leone - paid staff

Sjierly Pereira – Country Director

Daniel Kamara – Programme Coordinator/ Trainer of Trainers

Edward Massaquoi - Senior Finance Officer

Memuna Stevens – Guidance Counsellor/Programme Assistant

Mohamed Nabieu – Programme Admin

Patrick Mambu – Office Admin Assistant

The Netherlands - volunteers

Dries Arnolds – Website

Barbara Heutink – Social Media and Communication

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