

March 2005

## Project: **Education Renewal Project**

**Locations:** **Sierra Leone** (Moyamba District and Rural Western Areas of Freetown)

**Implementing Organization:** PLAN Sierra Leone

**Type of Programming:** Formal and informal education

**Target group/beneficiaries:** 12,000 school age children, Teachers, School Inspectorate, and local NGOs

**Stage:** Crisis (instability due to armed conflict) and transitional (post-conflict)

### **Environmental Context of the Program**

**SOCIAL:** Sierra Leone was already amongst the world's poorest countries when a series of devastating internal wars began in 1991. During the recent civil war, tens of thousands of children lost years of their education and around 40% of all schools were destroyed. It is estimated that there is one textbook for every 21 children in schools in the country. Even before the upsurge in fighting in '98-99, educational levels and access to education were extremely low. In 1995, 63% of men and 77% of women had never been to school. Only 15.3% of males and 7.3% of females had completed the six-year primary school level. In Moyamba District alone, only 8% of the current 1,270 teachers working in July 2001 are qualified. Pupil/teacher ratios are poor in the lower grades, with an overall average of 70:1.

**CULTURAL/RELIGION:** Sierra Leone is a multi-ethnic society. There are 20 native African tribes and comprise 90% (Temne 30%, Mende 30%, other 30%) of the population, Creole (Krio) 10% (descendants of freed Jamaican slaves who were settled in the Freetown area in the late-18th century), refugees from Liberia's recent civil war, small numbers of Europeans, Lebanese, Pakistanis, and Indians. Religion: Muslim 60%, indigenous beliefs 30%, Christian 10%. Languages: English (official, regular use limited to literate minority), Mende (principal vernacular in the south), Temne (principal vernacular in the north), Krio (English-based Creole, spoken by the descendants of freed Jamaican slaves who were settled in the Freetown area, a lingua franca and a first language for 10% of the population but understood by 95%).

**ECONOMIC:** The economy of Sierra Leone is based on agriculture and mining. Some 67% of the population is engaged in farming, fishing, or forestry. Much of the farming is of a subsistence nature. Plantation agriculture is remarkable only in the coastal region. Minerals are the nation's principal export. In 1997 the national budget showed revenues of \$87 million and expenditures of \$146 million.

**Political Relationships:** The 1991 to 2002 civil war between the government and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) resulted in tens of thousands of deaths and the displacement of more than 2 million people (well over one-third of the population), many of whom are now refugees in neighboring countries. Demobilization and disarmament of the RUF and Civil Defense Forces (CDF) combatants has been completed. National elections were held in May 2002 and the government continues to slowly reestablish its authority. However, the gradual withdrawal of most UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) peacekeepers in 2004 and the tenuous security situation in neighboring Liberia may present challenges to the continuation of Sierra Leone's stability.

## **Program Description**

**TARGET GROUP:** 12,000 school age children in 65 schools receive instruction on primary education subjects, health and hygiene, trauma counseling, and peace education. More than 1,000 schoolteachers receive in-service training. School Inspectorate, School Management Committees (SCMs), local partner NGOs, and CBOs (e.g. youth group) receive capacity building training.

**INTERVENTIONS/ACTIVITIES:** Provision of quality basic education through the provision of school furnishings, materials, books, teachers' guides, in-service teacher training and school rehabilitation - Provision of trauma healing, education for peace, reconciliation and conflict management and school based counselling services - Health and hygiene education through a child-to-child approach - Capacity building for governmental, voluntary and community institutions to support primary education.

**MATERIAL/PHYSICAL RESOURCES:** Schools are rehabilitated and in some cases new ones constructed due to increase in demand to provide appropriate learning environments. PLAN provides resources for school rehabilitation and construction and furniture. Communities contribute to the school rehabilitation activities by clearing the land and providing inputs such as scaffolding, gravel and water. Communities also create playgrounds for schools. Schools are equipped with furniture, toilets and drinking water. Teachers and students receive textbooks, supplies and other learning and recreational materials. PLAN also provides books for school libraries.

**FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES:** Funding is provided by donor agencies with in-kind community contribution to school rehabilitation/construction. The project pays teacher salaries over a three-year period through a phased-takeover plan agreed with Ministry of Education. The project provides capacity building opportunities to schoolteachers, School Inspectorates, School management Committees (SCMs), local partner NGOs, and CBOs (e.g., youth group).

**COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION:** The project is school-based and the communities own the schools. A committee of seven to nine members, representing different sections of the community – women, youth, traditional chiefs, religious partners etc, manages each school. They are supported by Community Teacher Associations, which give advice and mobilize local support. Community members elect School Management Committees (SMCs). Each school has one such committee, which acts as an interface between children, education authorities, teachers and parents. The SMC brings together local leaders, parents, representatives of the local chiefdoms and education authorities in tackling all aspects of setting up the education system as well as maintaining it. The SMCs are involved in mobilizing the community during the vital and crucial steps of the renovation and/or reconstruction works. They rally the community in providing local building materials for the construction work to come, and they mobilize the community in providing both skilled and unskilled labour for construction/rehabilitation work. The SMCs are responsible for long term maintenance of the well and hand pump as well as the school infrastructure itself. In that sense the SMC has to raise funds to help repair the school. School market gardening schemes and fees from the community are but two of the ventures the SMCs use to raise local funds for school maintenance.

**TEACHER TRAINING CURRICULUM:** In collaboration with the Pedagogical Research Institute of the MoEYS a national curriculum on landmine risk education was developed for primary school students. The curriculum was tested, reviewed and implemented in all target areas.

The curriculum was accompanied by a teacher training program, with a teacher's manual and teaching guidelines. The MREC project also developed a landmine risk education program for pre-service teachers in Teacher Training Colleges in collaboration with the Teacher Training Department of the MoEYS.

### **Programming Interventions: Impact and Effectiveness**

**ACCESS:** The project aims to improve access to education to:

- 12,000 school age children in 65 schools receive instruction on primary education subjects, health and hygiene, trauma counseling, and peace education.
- More than 1,000 schoolteachers receive in-service training.
- School Inspectorate, School Management Committees (SCMs), local partner NGOs, and CBOs (e.g., youth group) receive capacity building training.

**MANAGEMENT:** The project is organised jointly with the direct community beneficiaries through several consultative encounters, such as meetings, workshops and interviews set up mainly at community level. Project activities are implemented through partnership arrangements involving carefully selected local NGOs and relevant Government institutions. The main partners on Education Renewal in Moyamba District are the school communities (children, teachers, SMCs) the Inspectorate Division and Freetown Teachers College of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), and Pikin-to-Pikin Movement.

The MEST supervises and monitors all educational interventions and training activities for teachers and SMC members in the district to assure quality control in delivery and use. Freetown Teachers College implements the distance education component of in-service training for teachers. FAWE is responsible for implementing trauma healing and counselling and peace education activities at wider community level and for severely traumatised children. Pikin-to-Pikin Movement plays the lead role in hygiene education to the beneficiaries and the schools. The project is school-based and the communities own the schools. Each school is managed by a committee of seven to nine members, representing different sections of the community. The role of SMCs is to oversee the planning and implementation of the construction work and manage the school, latrines and wells and the distribution of school supplies once the school has become functional. Once the school construction is completed, the committees will ensure the maintenance of the school facilities.

**OVERALL PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS:** The Project was designed to improve the learning environment by rehabilitating existing school buildings or constructing new ones with water wells, latrines and hand-washing facilities in each school. Curriculum is enriched with health and hygiene and children share their learning with their families and peers. Teachers are provided flexible in-service training. Children are helped to cope with their experiences of war through counseling, art, music, plays, writing and games; activities which tie in well with regular school activities. Project progress review is assured through regular periodic visits and meetings involving beneficiary communities, implementing partners and Plan staff. These meetings are preceded by monthly and quarterly programme plans being drawn up in consultation with school authorities and community leaders. In addition, an annual review meeting is held to reflect on and consolidate the gains made in the past year, as well as shape the future course of action learning from our experiences. All bodies responsible for project implementation produce mandatory project monitoring and activity completion reports which are used during the various review meetings. At the time of the writing of this profile, the project has been in operation for about a year. Therefore it is a bit early to assess impact and effectiveness. However, it is expected that the impact of these integrated interventions and management structure would be effective.

**EQUIP1: Building Educational Quality through Classrooms, Schools, and**

**Communities** is a multi-faceted program designed to raise the quality of classroom teaching and the level of student learning by effecting school-level changes. EQUIP1 serves all levels of education, from early childhood development for school readiness, to primary and secondary education, adult basic education, pre-vocational training, and the provision of life-skills. Activities range from teacher support in course content and instructional practices, to principal support for teacher performance, and community involvement for improving school management and infrastructure. EQUIP1 works with food for education issues and contributes to the provision of education and training in crisis and post-crisis environments.

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) is the lead organization responsible for implementing EQUIP1 and is joined by fourteen outstanding partners: Academy for Educational Development, Aga Khan Foundation USA, CARE, Discovery Channel Global Education Fund, Education Development Center, Howard University, International Reading Association, The Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation, Juárez & Associates, Inc., Michigan State University, Save the Children, Inc., Sesame Workshop, University of Pittsburgh, and World Education, Inc..

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