



Promoting every child's right to read

TRANSFORMING GIRLS EDUCATION IN SIERRA LEONE - PROJECT BRIEF

December 16, 2019

"Evidence shows that when girls realize their rights to education, they not only improve their own economic prospects, health and well-being, but also that of their families, communities and nations."

-The Honourable Emily Gogra
Deputy Minister, Education in Sierra Leone

BACKGROUND

The need for investment in literacy in Sierra Leone is clear and compelling. Only 5-6% of Sierra Leonean children are reading at the proper grade level by Class 4. It's no surprise then that only 5-6% of all children in Sierra Leone are successfully completing secondary school.

Ensuring that children in primary school master literacy skills, to enable their learning across all subject matters, is critical to improving primary to secondary school transition rates.

Earlier this year, CODE completed the *Reading Sierra Leone 20/20 Program* - a multi-year investment in building the instructional skills of educators, as well as inspiring the love of reading through distribution of locally-authored, illustrated and published children's books.

More concretely, the program contributed to the skill-building of 175 educators and 21 writers and illustrators, as well as the development and distribution of over 42,000 books reaching 11,632 students in 25 schools.

LOOKING AHEAD

In January, CODE will initiate a new program in Sierra Leone - building on the foundation set by the *Reading Sierra Leone 20/20 Program*. This new initiative will be co-funded with the Government of Canada through Global Affairs.

The Government of Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) has set the stage for this new program in Sierra Leone that will directly support the Sierra Leonean government's own efforts to improve the learning outcomes of girls.

This 18-month program, titled *Transforming Girls' Education*, will be implemented by CODE in coordination with three key partners: The Sierra Leone Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE); the Association of Language and Literacy Educators (TALLE) - CODE's longstanding local partner; and The Faculty of Education at McGill University.

The new program takes a multi-faceted approach to addressing the challenges of low literacy and educational quality - with a particular focus on the issue of gender.

In order to maximize the program's reach and sustainability, CODE will work with six teacher training institutes in Sierra Leone to help their teacher educators (120 total) integrate gender-responsive pedagogy into their classrooms, with a view to also integrating this into formal teacher training curriculum.

Additionally, at the community-level, 960 teachers at 260 primary schools in four particularly needy districts (Bonthe, Karene, Port Loko, and Western Rural) will be trained and equipped to provide more effective reading instruction, as well as to support increased knowledge on sexual health and gender-based violence.

We know that strong female role models are a key aspect of empowering young girls to stay in school and to succeed. However, there is a severe shortage of female teachers in Sierra Leone, especially in the rural areas. To help address this challenge, the program will provide scholarships for 100 young women to enroll in and complete their education degree - with the understanding



"When you go to school and learn, you will be fine."

- Amie, 10 year-old student in New Maforki, Sierra Leone

that they will return to their home districts and play a crucial role in improving the quality of education including support for girls and young women.

To ensure that students and teachers continue to be equipped with high-quality reading and learning materials in their classrooms, this program will work with Sierra Leonean authors and illustrators to publish eight new curriculum-aligned children's books for distribution to participating schools.

HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE?

CODE is looking to its broad base of generous supporters to help us raise \$182,000, which will form the cornerstone of this significant new program.

CODE has kicked-off its fundraising campaign for this program with a holiday appeal titled "When I Grow Up." Thank you to all who are lending their support!



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