



CLASS OF 2023

A Scholarship
Campaign to
Support Women
in Teaching



Promoting every
child's right to read

Second Annual Report: Class of 2023 Scholarship Initiative

Respectfully submitted to CODE Supporters

August 6, 2022

Dear CODE supporters -

Enclosed please find a brief narrative and financial update on the *Class of 2023 Scholarship Initiative*, an innovative pilot project enabled by the generous support of donors like you.

The resounding headline in this second annual report is that despite the continued challenges of a global pandemic and economic hardship, 100% of the women participating in the program passed their second year exams, and 14% did so with distinction.

In her address to the scholarship participants at our inaugural *Knowledge Exchange Conference* held this past year, the Honorable Emily Gogra, Deputy Minister of Education in Sierra Leone said, "Consider yourselves as the new breed of teachers that will inspire your pupils to follow their dreams, discover their creativity, interest, talents and learn to use them to their fullest potential."

Our scholarship participants are rising to this challenge. They are deeply motivated, committed to making the very most of this rare opportunity, and passionate about being of service. We have offered a few of their personal reflections on page 9 of this report.

We are deeply grateful for your continued confidence in CODE and for enabling us to innovate and pilot new approaches for the delivery of our mission. While the scholarship initiative has yet to be formally concluded, results to date suggest that this pilot has been an unqualified success.

Sincerely,



Andrea Helfer
Fund Development and Marketing Director



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

An innovative pilot initiative to empower women in teaching

Two years ago we launched an innovative pilot initiative to empower women who have the passion for teaching but no formal teaching qualification. We believed that if these carefully selected women were given the chance to attend teachers' college, they could build a future for themselves and, just as importantly, positively impact their students' lives.

At CODE we know that the quality of teaching is the most important factor in determining the learning outcomes of students. In Sierra Leone, a country that has been set back by civil war and not just one pandemic but two pandemics, the education system lacks enough qualified primary school teachers and in particular female teachers. The presence of women teachers in schools is tremendously important in creating safe environments, promoting gender equality, and providing mentorship to girl students.

The *Class of 2023 Scholarship Initiative* was designed to increase the number of young women pursuing careers in education. This initiative is the first of its kind for CODE and a rare opportunity in Sierra Leone.

Through the program, 100 young women, 25 each from Western Rural, Port Loko, Karene and Bonthe Districts are participating in distance learning over three years to attain their Ministry-approved Teaching Certificate that will qualify them to teach at the pre- and primary school levels. The support provided by CODE includes tuition, books and learning materials, exam fees, a stipend, attendance at an annual conference, coaching and more.

The 100 successful women participants went through a rigorous selection process involving written applications, in-person interviews and mandatory success in the colleges' entrance exams. All the young women have, to date, been working informally as unqualified, volunteer teachers in rural schools but due to a variety of barriers have been unable to attend college.

Once formally qualified, these women are committed to teaching in rural districts where there is a shortage of qualified teachers. They will also serve as mentors and role models to girls in order to improve gender equity in classrooms and beyond.

With two years done and only one more to go, we are thrilled to share with you what these remarkable women have accomplished to date.



PROGRESS REPORT

An update on the second year of college

In the *Class of 2023 Scholarship Initiative* proposal and first annual report, we noted that it was soon after beginning their first year of teachers' college in early 2020 that the pandemic interrupted the scholarship recipients' strong start to their schooling.

Fortunately, their studies were not completely halted since the participants are enrolled in programs that are predominantly distance learning. That being said, both the colleges and CODE required time to adapt their support to the new "socially distanced" reality. Against all odds 99 out of 100 women completed their first year of teachers' college and passed their first year exams.

We are pleased to report that the participants have now concluded writing their second year exams and all 100 program participants passed and 14% passed with distinction.

The women have now begun their third and final year of study with a view to writing their final exams at the end of this calendar year.

In addition to the payment of fees included in the scholarship package for each student, key supports provided this past year included, required modules and supplementary learning materials; coaching in exam preparation; the creation of informal study groups; learning conferences; stipends to help with travel and stationery materials, and much needed moral support provided by our Scholarships Coordinator in Sierra Leone.

All in all, since the beginning of the program in 2020 only three of the originally selected scholarship beneficiaries have not performed adequately to continue. They were replaced by successful first year students who also met the criteria for participation including severe financial need.

100% scholarship recipients passed their second-year exams

14% scholarship recipients passed with distinction



BUILDING CHAMPIONS OF GIRLS' RIGHTS

Scholarship participants attend first Knowledge Exchange Conference

Through the *Class of 2023 Scholarship Initiative*, we equip our participants to be knowledgeable and inspiring role models to female students as well as active advocates for girls' rights at schools and in their communities. We are doing so by routinely including this gender-focused subject matter in one-on-one monitoring visits as well as in the discussions held during "teacher learning circles."

In addition, the inaugural *Knowledge Exchange Conferences* was held in June, 2021. At the conference, scholarship participants celebrated the successful completion of their academic year, shared their course/work experiences, and made resolutions for the oncoming academic year. They were provided with trainings and materials in literacy, numeracy, gender, sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) and addressing gender-based violence (GBV). All 100 scholarship recipients attended the four-day conference along with representatives from the four teachers' colleges the women are studying at.

The Deputy Minister of Education, Madam Emily Gogra attended the conference and said this to the attendees in her opening remarks, "Today, ladies you have been given this golden opportunity by CODE in partnership with TALLE, believe in yourselves, significantly achieving what other women were not privileged to get. Women, measure up and be the role models you need to be to our young girls in our schools. Consider yourselves as the new breed of teachers that will inspire your pupils to follow their dreams, discover their creativity, interest, talents and learn to use them to their fullest potential."



APPLYING THE LESSONS IN THEIR CLASSROOMS

Mentoring and supporting the scholarship recipients in high-quality teaching

The CODE Sierra Leone Scholarships Coordinator, Ruby Boston-Griffiths makes regular visits out to the scholarship recipients to provide personal and on-site support. This is no small feat when the women are located not only in four different districts but also scattered within those districts.

In particular, three scholarship recipients live on Bonthe Island - a hard-to-reach island midway between the capital, Freetown, and the border with Liberia. Ruby understands the importance of meeting the women where they are and so a few months ago, Ruby and other members of the Sierra Leone team rented a boat to make the trip on the Atlantic Ocean waters to visit these women.



Ruby, Scholarships Coordinator, on the right with the SL team traveling to Bonthe Island.



Teacher, Aminta Kanneh, during classroom observation, Bonthe District.

Mentoring visits this past year focused on supporting application of new knowledge into practice. You may recall that all of our scholarship participants are volunteer teachers - unpaid and unrecognized for their contributions. This commitment to the teaching profession was one criteria in the selection process for scholarship beneficiaries. While most students in teachers' college only have one three-month practicum over the course of three years of study, our scholarship recipients are regularly in the classroom, honing their new skills.

This past year, the women were observed and coached in the classroom on the following skills and competencies:

- lesson-planning
- use of methodologies
- use of teaching aids
- control of the classroom
- time management



MONITORING PROGRESS

An Update on Key Milestones

Below is the high-level milestones table included in the original proposal. Despite the initial disruptions caused by COVID-19, we're pleased to inform you that we're well on track with our plans.

High-Level Milestones		
Scholarship Coordinator Hired (based in Freetown)	August, 2019	COMPLETE
Scholarship Recruitment (Advertising)	September - October, 2019	COMPLETE
Candidate Selection Process	November, 2019	COMPLETE
First Year of Program Begins	January, 2020	COMPLETE
First Year of Teachers' College and Mentorship Completed	December, 2020	COMPLETE
Scholarship Knowledge Exchange Conference	June, 2021	COMPLETE
Second Year of Teachers' College and Mentorship Completed*	Fall 2021	COMPLETE
Scholarship Knowledge Exchange Conference	Spring 2022	MOVED TO NOV, 2022
Third Year of Teachers' College and Mentorship Completed*	Fall / Winter 2022	
Certification - Graduation*	Late 2022/ Early 2023	
Final Scholarship Knowledge Exchange Conference	Spring 2023	NEW
Tracer Study #1 (monitoring and evaluation)	6 months past certification	
Tracer Study #2 (monitoring and evaluation)	1 year past certification	

Key Performance Indicators

Recognizing that this is a pilot initiative for CODE, we have established the following KPIs and targets to demonstrate a realistic ambition against which we will track our impact. After the second year, our retention rate has improved from the first year. We are comfortably above the minimum 95% target. The other two KPIs are longer term targets, which will be measured and reported on in the final monitoring and evaluation phase of this program.

Key Performance Indicators	Target	Yr 1 Result	Yr 2 Result
Retention of scholarship participants by year	min. 95%	97%	100%
Percentage of participants certified at the end of the 3-year program	min. 85%		
Percentage of participants who transition into paid teaching jobs within 6 months and within 1 year of being certified	n/a		





LOOKING AHEAD TO THE FINAL YEAR

Teachers-in-training prepare for the future

The 100 inspiring and hardworking scholarship recipients have now begun their third and final years of teachers' college, which will culminate in writing their final exams in the final quarter of 2022. They have come so far and overcome so much to have reached this point.

The knowledge exchange conference originally scheduled for June 2022 was moved to November 2022 and will focus on helping the soon-to-be graduates find a job and secure a spot on the Ministry of Education payroll.

CODE continues to support each young women in her goal to become a teacher and due to some savings in the budget, CODE is pleased to be able to:

- provide solar lanterns for more effective studying at night
- offer additional tutoring in preparation for final exams (reflected under program management in the budget on page 11)
- plan a third knowledge exchange conference for the spring of 2022 to bring the women back together six months after graduation to share their experiences and celebrate their new careers as teachers
- provide a package of material supports (e.g. stationary supplies, teaching aids, books etc.) to help the women transition into classrooms as qualified teachers



SCHOLARSHIP PARTICIPANT VOICES

The women speak about what this opportunity has meant to them



Theresa

"Before going for lectures, I take my children to my sister's house so that she can look after them. I am facing challenges but none will hinder the completion of my course work because I am a strong woman."



Alimatu

"I am so excited that my dream of becoming a teacher is about to be realized. I am also excited because when I am certified, I will be recognized as a teacher and my community members will respect me."



Zainab

"I have a very good relationship with my colleagues, we study together, do assignments, and share ideas. I am excited, and I am thankful to CODE for providing me with the opportunity to further my education."



FINANCIAL REPORTING

Program to date spending and variance analysis

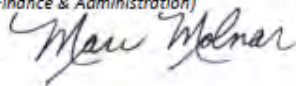
The budget for the three-year scholarship initiative is \$182,588 CAD. As of May 31, 2022 \$92,307 CAD has been spent against the overall program budget.

The spend rate is generally on track toward completion of this project in spring 2023 with final exam costs and final monitoring and evaluation activity expected to be incurred at the tail-end of the program.

It is worth noting in the two years since the project began, the local currency, the Sierra Leonean Leone (SLL), has lost 35% of its value. Exchange rate gains and projected underspend (most notably in the "Learning Modules" budget line) will therefore be redirected toward additional material supports and learning opportunities in the final year of the program to help ease the women's transition into the classroom as formally qualified teachers.

We expect the budget will be fully spent by June, 2023.

CODE		
CLASS OF 2023 Scholarship Initiative		
<i>(Part of Transforming Girls Education Program (TGEP) 2018 - 2022)</i>		
Unaudited Financial Report for the period ended May 31, 2022		
	Total 3-Year Budget (CAD)	Total Spent to May 31, 2022
College Administration Fees	8,400	376
Entrance Exams	560	451
Tuition	58,800	41,044
Registration Fees	3,955	3,195
Learning Modules	32,550	8,446
Student Stipend	21,000	10,591
Final Exam	21,000	-
Monitoring Visits	17,473	9,130
Program Management	18,850	19,074
All Direct Program Expenses	182,588	92,307

Approved by: *Marc Molnar*
(Director of Finance & Administration)
Signature: 
Date: August 05, 2022

Please note that the financial report above is based on unaudited financials. In the event that CODE makes materials adjustments to the financial statement as a result of our year-end audit, the RJL Braydon Foundation will be informed and provided with an updated financial report.



"Women and girls should be able to determine their own future, no matter where they are born."

-Melinda Gates



In partnership with
Canada

For further information please contact:

Andrea Helfer
Director, Fund Development and Marketing

✉ ahelfer@code.ngo

☎ 613.232.3569 x232

code.ngo