

Education: the quality imperative

The issue

Although school enrolment figures in Sierra Leone have improved, thanks to the abolishment of fees and the introduction of compulsory primary education, the quality of education provided remains questionable. For many children, especially in rural areas, weak educational foundations acquired in primary school impede their ability to succeed into second and higher levels of education, often making of the completion of education an aspiration rather than a reality. In rural Junior Secondary Schools (JSS) in Bombali and Kenema districts, the combination of a lack of prioritisation of children's educational needs by parents – often associated with poverty, domestic cores, child labour and traditional harmful practices – weak educational foundations and inadequate, low-quality learning environments result in high rates of school drop-outs and extremely low success rates at the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), which is a pre-requisite to move onto senior secondary schools.

Programme focus

We recognize that the quality of education is a *sine qua non* condition for children to fully enjoy their right to education and to offer them the best opportunities for success. We therefore put the quality of education at the centre of our actions.

 Education is everything, it helps you achieve your dreams.

Isatu



**Defence for
Children International
Sierra Leone**

Isatu's Story

12-year-old Isatu* was in Junior Secondary School 1 when her parents told her that she was promised to an older and will soon be removed from school. Concerned by their inability to provide for their daughter, Isatu's parents gave little importance to the value that education would bring to their daughter. After meeting with Isatu's parents and the leader of their community, DCI-SL encouraged them to invest in Isatu's future. They then went on to attend a debate competition in their daughter's school where Isatu's performance simply bluffed them. While her parents have now become fully supportive of their daughter's educational needs and refute any chance of her getting married against her will, Isatu herself has become a strong advocate for girls' rights in her school and community.

* Replacement to protect the child's identity

DCI-Sierra Leone is an independent child rights non-governmental organization. We consult with children and youths, communities, and other key stakeholders to design our programmes and bring the most appropriate and sustainable solutions at all levels.

2.5. Print out the figure below if you want the participants to do the first questionnaire (optional)

How do we bring change?

Since launching our education programme in Bombali and Kenema districts in 2015, we have taken on a holistic, comprehensive approach set the pace for a sustainable way forward. Through strategic engagement, innovative methods and securing quality, safe and stimulating learning environments, we strive to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for students.

Our strategies

train

We train and support school principals and teachers to implement innovative teaching methods and practices, provide extra lessons, facilitate group study sessions and organise regular extra-curricular activities to stimulate students' learning.

partner

We partner with schools' authorities and staff to adopt and/or reinforce guidance and child protection mechanisms to create safe, responsive learning environments.

engage

We engage with parents and communities to support the programme and prioritise their children's educational needs.

support

We support child rights clubs and/or movements in schools and communities to enable children to share their concerns and participate in decision-making processes.

Our achievements

Since 2015, we have intervened in 10 community JSS schools and achieved the following:

Focal teachers implemented new, innovative teaching methods and committed to give daily 2-hour extra sessions on Mathematics and English language and hold regular group study sessions **to reinforce the foundations of 2,400 pupils.**

School authorities reviewed internal regulations to prohibit, prevent and respond to sexual abuse and violence and corporal punishment, and organised extra-curricular activities and competitions.

Over 5,000 parents and community members were engaged to ensure their children's attendance in school, including for extra-lessons and evening group sessions.

Safe, quality and stimulating learning environments **increased school attendance by 25%.**

63% of students passed the BECE in 2016, a **25% increase** from the previous year.

4 community schools obtained their official approval from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and **2 received an award for their outstanding performances** at the BECE.



please supply



23276661184 confirm



dcisierraleone.org



DCI Sierra Leone



@DCISierraLeone

HEAD OFFICE

No. 4 Old Railway Line, Tengbeh Town, Western Area Freetown – Sierra Leone, West Africa

DISTRICT OFFICES

Bo City, Kenema City, Makeni City, Moyamba Town



**Defence for
Children International
Sierra Leone**