

Technical Vocational Education and Training – Sierra Leone

From Mines to Minds: An Integrated Approach to Training and Local Economic Development

The problem: weak education system hampers job creation by the mining industry

The Government of Sierra Leone estimates that, in order to accommodate the fast growing population, approximately 600,000 jobs need to be created in the coming years. Mines are particularly important in achieving this objective because they operate in poor, mostly undeveloped and remote areas of Sierra Leone. In many cases, the mining industry is the most important sector in the region, providing employment opportunities for many people. Mining also plays a vital role as a pioneering industry, stimulating the development of key services, manufacturing, and up- and downstream industries with strong potential for local and regional economic development and the establishment of a local middle class.

The use of modern technology and proficient management practices require highly qualified staff. However, in Sierra Leone – as in many developing countries – there is a shortage of professionals and well-trained workers in the extractive industries. The lack of a skilled workforce hampers the sector's economic development and companies therefore cannot exploit their full potential. Due to the skills gap, currently only 23% of middle level and 12% of senior level staff in the mining sector are Sierra Leone nationals. Hence, no noteworthy middle class has emerged in the country so far.

Both the mining sector and the Government of Sierra Leone share an interest in a skilled workforce and in the promotion of youth employment. However, this raises several challenges, including the insufficient capacity (personnel, financial, organisational) in existing institutions at the level of both Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as well as higher education; a lack of teachers; a lack of alignment between labour market needs and curricula and a lack of strategic coherence between existing Government initiatives, mining companies' social investments and development partners projects.

Our partner

London Mining Company Ltd. is a Sierra Leonean registered company. It is 100% owned by London Mining Plc, a UK-based company that develops mines for the steel industry, with a corporate head office in London. London Mining Plc was founded in 2005 and processed an initial 1.5 million tons of iron ore in 2012, with capacity growing to 5 million t/a by the end of 2013. The Marampa operations in Sierra Leone employ more than 1,300 people with total assets of over EUR 200 million.

Contribution by London Mining Company Ltd.



- Provision of training equipment, machinery and materials
- Experts for curricula development and labour market information system
- Project coordination and management support

Contribution by GIZ

- TVET Expert for the concept design, policy issues, institutional development and project management
- Expert for adult literacy development and training
- Facilitation of the collaboration and interaction with other stakeholders from government and private sector through TVET Advisory Board
- Financial contribution to training delivery

Contribution by St. Joseph Training School

- Staff member for local coordination and project office
- In-kind contribution to training provision





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Strategy and activities

The project aims to pilot a technical, vocational and educational training approach. The core target group of the project is the local population in the mining district of Port Loko – over 3,500 people, of whom 32% are female and 83% are between 18 and 35 years old (Sierra Leonean definition of youth). But impact goes beyond that target group. The project will inform government policy and decision making. Through a multi-stakeholder TVET advisory board the results will encourage the public and private partners (e.g. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Chamber of Mines) to scale up successful curricula, qualification standards and instruments for other regions and institutions.

The project consists of two components. The first component (TVET Competence Centre) focuses on enabling and training the young population, students and employees of London Mining and other companies active in the region. It aims to develop and implement modernised training in selected trades for beginners and the existing workforce. The second component (Employability and Local Economic Development) lays the ground for a labour market information and promotion system and functional adult literacy.

The partners will work in collaboration with St. Joseph's Vocational Training Institute in Lunsar, close to London Mining's Marampa mining site, a nationally accredited and certified training provider. The project will support the institute in becoming a pilot competence centre for demand-oriented vocational training and self-employment services in the region.

The project addresses TVET students, graduates, the self-employed and job seekers. Applicants with previous work experience in the chosen training field will be given preference, along with women and youths from core villages directly impacted through London Mining's operations. However, applicants from peripheral villages and other parts of the country will also be eligible.

Relevance for the partners

The project is directly connected to the economic objective of London Mining to increase the efficiency of its operations in Sierra Leone. London Mining is planning to expand their operations, investing at least an additional EUR 200 million. A recent skills audit for 27 occupations has indicated that private sector demand for local human resources cannot be met without substantial vocational training or skills upgrading. Apart from the direct need for a skilled workforce, London Mining sees the partnership as a contribution to securing a sustainable and prosperous relationship with the local community for the remaining mine life of over 30 years.

Expected outcomes

The project will modernise the curricula and training delivery for four vocational trades, install infrastructure and equipment for the new occupational profiles and ensure efficient use and maintenance of training equipment. The goal is to improve the employment rate of St. Joseph's graduates to 55% (baseline 2011: 40%) by the end of the project. The graduates will be self-employed or employed by different companies in the Port Loko district. This includes graduates of the adult literacy programme entering the formal education system, 30% of whom are women.

The qualification standards developed at St. Joseph's are to be translated into national qualification standards by the national TVET advisory board and it is planned to replicate the "Mines to Minds" approach in at least one further region in Sierra Leone with potential further private partners.

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- **Objectives:** St. Joseph's Vocational Training Institute in Lunsar is a national reference school that integrates Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) with Local Economic Development (Mines to Minds approach)
- **Partners:** London Mining Company Ltd.
- **Duration:** April 2013 – **September 2014**

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