

## Educational Lifeline for 100 Pregnant Girls



### Summary

During the Ebola epidemic in Sierra Leone, teenage girls (particularly those orphaned when their families passed away) were out of school and more vulnerable to rape and sexual assault. A study by the United Nations Development Programme said that in Sierra Leone teenage pregnancy increased by 65% due to the socioeconomic condition imposed by Ebola. A survey of 1,100 girls and boys, also in Sierra Leone, by Save the Children in June 2015 found that most girls interviewed thought teenage pregnancy was rising, and 10% said more girls were being forced to sell sex due to loss of family, and with it, financial security. Fear of sexual assault was common, and the children told stories of girls attacked and raped, even in Ebola-quarantined households. These visibly pregnant girls are not being allowed to return to school and are at grave risk of dropping out of school permanently. Project will help to address this by providing an appropriate educational alternative for 100 pregnant girls to ensure they can make educational progress.

### Challenge

While the Ebola outbreak raged through Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea in the summer of 2014, public life ground to a halt. The danger of congregating in groups meant that public institutions, like schools, shut down. But the months of sickness and segregation left a legacy for girls that's only now starting to be felt: teenage pregnancy spiked, and some of the girls are now being victimized by the government's education policies. The inability of a pregnant girl or young mother to continue school can be one of the most harmful and psychologically distressing aspects of early pregnancy / motherhood - with an additional crippling, long term, career impact. As of April 2015, these pregnant, teenage, school-going girls are not allowed to attend school.

Also, pregnant girls in this culture, are usually “very reluctant” to attend school because they could be teased and ridiculed.

Data on teenage pregnancy in West Africa is difficult to obtain, especially as it’s often stigmatized and underreported. But Plan International, a children’s charity, said back in 2014 that teenage pregnancy rates in West Africa—already among some of the world’s highest—were on the rise. They pointed to enforced inactivity and lack of oversight: girls forced to stay out of school due to Ebola “become more vulnerable to sexual exploitation, sexual assault and rape.”

### **Solution**

We are offering a viable alternative and support to help 100 girls continue their education. Training is provided in basic numeracy and literacy skills - as this provides a vital foundation. Each girl also receives individual coaching, moral support and psycho-social support / counseling to ensure on-going educational progress. The girls also will have access to a networked computer lab, curriculum materials and video tutorials. With this support, the girls are able to continue to learn.

### **Long-Term Impact**

These deserving girls will be able to complete this critical step of their education. This will enable them to progress in their careers. As a result, their future employment opportunities will not be adversely or negatively affected. This educational lifeline will re-open the door of opportunities for them. This timely intervention will bring real hope and help them escape from potential future unemployment and poverty. This project will ensure that education is accessible for all affected children, especially orphans. A stop will be put on child labor and exploitation—and thereby reduce teen pregnancies—by sensitizing parents and providing livelihoods to poor families in order to protect girls from transactional sex.



## Resources

<http://www.developafrica.org>

[Teenage pregnancy rates rise Ebola-stricken Africa](#)  
[Schools Reopen in Sierra Leone, Ban Pregnant Girls](#)  
['Visibly Pregnant' Girls Banned From Graduating](#)  
[Visit the centre website and learn more](#)

<http://qz.com/543354/how-ebola-led-to-more-teenage-pregnancy-in-west-africa/>

<http://www.savethechildren.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=8rKLIXMGIpI4E&b=9241341&ct=14736265&notoc=1>



### [Develop Africa, Inc.](#)

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Twitter Page-<http://www.twitter.com/developafrica>

Google + Page - <https://plus.google.com/b/112795165718965455623/+DevelopafricaOrg/posts>

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*Empowering lives in Africa so that they can better themselves, their communities and their nations*

Develop Africa was established in 2006 and is a 501c3 non-profit organization is working to establish meaningful and sustainable development in Africa. Develop Africa was birthed out of the vision that human resource development is the key to improving nation building capacity in

Africa. Develop Africa is involved in a range of programs in Africa supporting education, microfinance and small businesses, job skills / leadership development training etc.

Through training, scholarship, investment and partnerships Develop Africa is helping to develop Africa's people through the promotion of transformational education, resource development, investment training and strategic empowerment. Our premise is based on the notion that in order to change one's personal, national or organizational status there must necessarily be a "change in the thinking and processing pattern of the mind."

We envision an African continent fully developed in terms of its human and resource capacity, free from poverty; ignorance, and civil conflict and where the poorest and most vulnerable people become "leaders" and effectively manage their national resources.

We are involved in the following targeted activities:

- care for orphans
- job skills training
- microfinance / micro-lending and small business training
- scholarships
- books, school and teaching supplies
- basic computer training and computers
- mosquito nets, vitamin supplements, start up tool kits (such as sewing machines), school uniforms, Personal Protective Equipment for health workers etc.

Examples of specific activity: We provide -

- job skills training
- microfinance / micro-lending and small business training
- scholarships
- books, school and teaching supplies
- basic computer training and computers
- mosquito nets, vitamin supplements, start up tool kits (such as sewing machines), school uniforms etc.

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**Sierra Leone- Full Country Profile available at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sierra\\_Leone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sierra_Leone)**

**Sierra Leone** (<sup>i</sup>ˈsiːɹəˈliːoʊni, ˌ-liːoʊn),<sup>[5]</sup> officially the **Republic of Sierra Leone**, is a country in [West Africa](#). It is bordered by [Guinea](#) on the north, [Liberia](#) in the south-east, and the [Atlantic Ocean](#) in the south-west. Sierra Leone has a [tropical climate](#), with a diverse environment ranging from [savannah](#) to [rainforests](#). Sierra Leone has a total area of 71,740 km<sup>2</sup> (27,699 sq mi)<sup>[6]</sup> and a population of 7,075,641 (based on 2015 national census).<sup>[1]</sup> Sierra Leone is divided into four geographical regions: the [Northern Province](#), [Eastern Province](#), [Southern Province](#) and the [Western Area](#), which are subdivided into [fourteen districts](#). [Freetown](#) is the capital, largest city and its economic and political centre. [Bo](#) is the second largest city. The other major cities are [Kenema](#), [Makeni](#), and [Koidu Town](#).

About sixteen [ethnic groups](#) inhabit Sierra Leone, each with its own language and customs. The two largest and most influential are the [Temne](#) and the [Mende people](#). The Temne are predominantly found in the north of the country, while the Mende are predominant in the south-east. Although English is the [official language](#) spoken at schools and government administration, the [Krio language](#) is the most widely spoken language across Sierra Leone and is spoken by 97% of the country's population. The Krio language unites all the different ethnic groups in the country, especially in their trade and social interaction with each other.

Sierra Leone is a predominantly [Muslim](#) country,<sup>[7][8][9]</sup> though with an influential [Christian](#) minority.<sup>[10]</sup> Sierra Leone is regarded as one of the most religiously tolerant nations in the world. Muslims and Christians collaborate and interact with each other peacefully. Religious violence is very rare in the country.

Sierra Leone has relied on mining, especially [diamonds](#), for its economic base. It is also among the largest producers of [titanium](#) and [bauxite](#), a major producer of [gold](#), and has one of the world's largest deposits of [rutile](#). Sierra Leone is home to the third-largest natural harbour in the world. Despite exploitation of this natural wealth, 70% of its people live in [poverty](#).<sup>[11]</sup>

Sierra Leone became independent in 1961. [Government corruption](#) and mismanagement of the country's natural resources contributed to the [Sierra Leone Civil War](#) (1991 to 2002), which for more than a decade devastated the country. This proxy war left more than 50,000 people dead, much of the country's infrastructure destroyed, and over two million people displaced as [refugees](#) in neighbouring countries.

More recently, the [2014 Ebola outbreak](#) overburdened the weak healthcare infrastructure, leading to more deaths from medical neglect than Ebola itself. It created a [humanitarian crisis](#) situation and a negative spiral of weaker economic growth. The country has an extremely low [life expectancy](#) at 57.8 years.<sup>[10]</sup>

Sierra Leone is a member of many international organisations, including the [United Nations](#), the [African Union](#), the [Economic Community of West African States](#) (ECOWAS), the [Mano River Union](#), the [Commonwealth of Nations](#), the [African Development Bank](#), and the [Organisation of Islamic Cooperation](#).

