

## **Country strategic plan summary for 2004 -2013**

This document describes how Plan Sierra Leone and its partners will mobilise the different resources to improve the welfare and prospects of vulnerable children. It provides the strategic framework for consistent and continued action from 2004 to 2013.

### **About Sierra Leone**

Sierra Leone is situated on the West Coast of Africa. The country is located between the Republic of Guinea in the north, the Republic of Liberia in the east and the Atlantic Ocean in the west and south-west. It is a country with rich mineral, marine and agricultural resources. However, the richness of the country's natural resource base is in sharp contrast with its high indebtedness and the poverty condition of its population. The history of Sierra Leone is a rocky one, with a number of military coups, which eventually culminated into a civil war that started in March 1991 and lasted for 11 years. The war ended in January 2001. Sierra Leone currently ranks 176 in the UN Human Development Index, out of 177 countries assessed.

### **Plan Sierra Leone's program**

Plan started working in Sierra Leone in 1976. At the height of its operations, it had offices in three of the 12 districts of the country. Plan had to scale down its activity considerably due to the civil conflict which started in 1991. Child sponsorship program was stopped during the civil war. When the war ended in 2001, Plan Sierra Leone returned to the progressively pacified districts in the interior, and is currently operating in five of the 12 political sub-divisions of the country (Western Area, Moyamba, Port Loko, Kailahun and Bombali Districts). Plan Sierra Leone provides support to children through development of educational system and improvement of the socio-cultural environment of the communities. In order to implement its programs, Plan works in partnership with the government, local and international non-governmental organisations, children, youth, and community-based organisations.

### **Current issues affecting children in Sierra Leone**



**Children at a make shift school**

1. Children lack access to quality education. Adult literacy rate is the lowest in the world.
2. Poor health conditions of children, with high morbidity and mortality levels among children and mothers.
3. Low capability of parents and communities to support children's growth and development, due to extreme poverty.
4. Children live in unfavourable physical and socio-cultural environments.
5. Children lack opportunities for building and strengthening global relationships.

## How does Plan Sierra Leone hope to address these issues?



Children enjoying a conducive learning environment

### 1. Making pre-schools and schools fit for children

- Provision of sufficient classroom spaces, durable and child school furniture and teaching and learning materials.
- Promotion of community involvement and reflection through improvement planning.
- Advocacy to increase budget for educational infrastructure and qualified teachers, and lobbying for equitable access to facilities.

### 2. Ensuring the survival of mothers, infants, and children

- Expand the current school-based projects on health, hygiene, water and sanitation into the communities.
- Promote access to immunisation and basic health services.
- Develop practical skills to reduce the health risks among children and adults.
- Support advocacy for increased access to health services.
- Increase children and women's access to information on HIV and AIDS for behavioural change.



Women and their babies waiting for immunisation

### 3. Improving the economic and social capacities of communities to support children's growth

- Develop and strengthen the community structures and institutions to increase their participation in development and in control and management of community resources.
- Promote entrepreneurship training and access to financial services for youths and women.

### 4. Improving the socio-cultural environment for children

- Advocate for the formulation, adoption and implementation of policies supporting child's rights and child protection.
- Support children and partners to engage in dialogue and action with other members of the civil society in order to contribute to the transformation of unjust structures and systems.

### 5. Enhancing access by children to other people and cultures across the world

- Vigorously pursue the resumption of Plan Sierra Leone's child sponsorship program.

### 6. Program approach

Plan Sierra Leone will ensure that its programs 1) promote the approaches of child centred community development and community management of projects, and 2) use child-to-child methodologies. As a result of new programs coming on board, Plan will expand its geographic coverage, scope of activities and partnerships and alliances, and will build the capacities of Plan staff, communities and partners to meet the new challenges. Plan will also mobilise resources through various sources.