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Ministry of Planning and Economic Development

Employment Promotion Programme (EPP IV)

Promoting Youth Employment through Local Economic Development and Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Background

Sierra Leone is heavily indebted, not least due to a series of crises, and therefore has few stimuli for economic development such as investment promotion, a functional education system and legal certainty.

Therefore, it is burdened with an extremely high rate of un- and underemployment, 60 % –70 % of the working population classify as working poor, meaning that despite employment, the household falls below the poverty line (ILO 2019). Youth and women in rural areas of Sierra Leone are particularly affected.

Agriculture accounts for 55% of the GDP and 70% of employment, and is growing faster than GDP at 4.8%, but it is still mostly at subsistence level due to persistent underinvestment, low productivity, lack of diversification and low value addition.

Sierra Leone's economy is weak overall and very exposed to external shocks. The COVID-19 pandemic is causing additional economic disruption. The country's early stage MSMEs especially in the growth phase are particularly vulnerable to economic downturns. This exacerbates the country's precarious economic situation and the challenging socio-economic status of rural communities in particular. Together with the overall malfunctioning of the educational system this contributes to the only hesitant stabilization and further development of the country.

Our approach

The programme takes an integrated approach that brings together public and private actors to both improve employability and increase job opportunities. By providing financial and advisory support to the private sector, especially in agricultural value chains, the rural economy is strengthened and income opportunities for young people are created. At the same time, we are working to make young people fit for the labour market - through needs-based fast-track courses on life, trade and business skills, but also by strengthening the TVET system and adapting it to the needs of the labour market, building vocational schools, curriculum development, dual training of apprentices and further training of teachers and company trainers.

Project name	Promoting Youth Employment through Local Economic Development and Technical Vo-cational Education and Training
Commissioned by	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ)
Co-financed by	European Union
Project region	Sierra Leone, Westafrika
Project districts	Falaba, Koinadugu, Kono, Kailahun
Lead executing agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Duration	August 2020 – April 2024

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

The major focus of the project work in the fourth phase of the employment promotion programme is on the adequate preparation of youth for the labour market.

Short term training programmes for youth form one pillar of this component. The programme is working to establish demand-oriented training for 11,000 young people (50% women), with a focus on developing life, trade, and business skills. As such, it promotes craft, entrepreneurship, and employability. Another focus is the Integrated Farmer Training (IFT). Through its adapted and holistic approach that is combining essential aspects of Good Agricultural Practice (GAP), knowledge about farming as a business and attitude change exercises, 4000 advanced farmers will be reached and enabled to increase their incomes from self-employed agricultural work.

Another pillar is the further development and institutional strengthening of the TVET sector itself. The goal is to increase the employment opportunities of graduates by increasing the quality and demand orientation of TVET.

On the one hand, the programme aims to improve the institutional capacity of the ministry's departments and agencies involved in TVET, as well as to promote evidence-based education planning, improve the quality of examinations and the level of involvement of the private sector. The central task of the project in this area is to support the conceptual development and quality assurance of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in cooperation with the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE) and the National Council for Technical Vocational and other Academic Awards (NCTVA).

On the other hand, the project supports the practical implementation of the NQF through the improvement of physical learning environments in selected TVET institutions and the development/revision of curricula to meet the demands of the labour market and teacher education.

A key innovation in this context will be the integration of practical work experience into the Sierra Leonean TVET system (dual studies), which will strengthen the practical relevance of training. Together with the private sector, apprenticeship programmes for young people will be developed and implemented. Furthermore, technical and pedagogical in-house training of company trainers, foremen, managers and employees is also being promoted to improve product quality.

Private Sector Development

The second component aims to directly create more employment opportunities for young people. The number of permanent or seasonal employees as well as the number and income of self-employed persons are to be increased.

Micro-, Small- and Medium Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in the agricultural and non-agricultural private sector are strengthened and individual farmers are supported in the formation of marketing and/or purchasing associations, thus enabling growth. In addition to a favorable market outlook, special emphasis is placed on distinctive entrepreneurial initiative. Support is provided with various instruments, which can be combined with each other. Depending on the size, development phase and needs of the enterprise, a total of almost 2,800 smaller conditional financial transfers, medium-sized 100 percent grants and larger matching grants for industrial investments are applied through the Facility for Growth. In addition, the granting of 1,500 small loans to small farmers and small businesses is stimulated by risk reduction at the issuing institutions. Entrepreneurs receive in-kind goods as well as financial support for their further development. To accompany the interventions, 750 beneficiaries can undergo intensive commercial training through the SME Business and Coaching Loop. As part of pilot projects, the SME Business and Coaching Loop will also be offered to advanced growth-oriented enterprises and to people who are unable to read, write and calculate, or only to a very limited extent. In addition, various business development services with a strong focus on business-to-business, customer outreach, digitalisation and climate are being developed to facilitate business operations.

Expected Results in figures

TVET	
Skills Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Training of 5,000 youth in basic employment-related skills/competencies ➤ Training of 2,000 youth in vocational skills, with support for business start-ups and self-employment through conditional money transfer. ➤ Implementation of advanced Integrated Farmer Training for 4,000 farmers with financial support for selected farmers or FBOs.
TVET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 500 young people participated in dual apprenticeship programmes (50% women). ➤ 250 young people participated in on-the-job vocational training programmes. (50% women). ➤ The number of vocational school students participating in state-certified vocational school courses has increased by 25%. (50% women). ➤ 10 new demand-oriented competency-based vocational training curricula were developed, and 250 facilitators were trained. ➤ 3 vocational schools have thoroughly renovated, renewed and expanded their infrastructure and equipment. 1 vocational school and 4 model farms were newly built and equipped.
Private Sector Development	
B-Loop and Facility for Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 750 newly funded young entrepreneurs have improved their accounting, turnover, profit. The 250 fastest growing have received and processed a grant for further growth. (50% women). ➤ 1800 MSMEs have improved their competitiveness through credit, grant and advisory support. (50% women) ➤ 5 new business development services for MSMEs are introduced, some of them digital and climate and environment relevant.

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