The Battle to Regain Primary Education in Sierra Leone

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Our conclusions
- This situation can be reversed for at one time the education in Sierra Leone was highly rated and it is possible to return to this
- Educating third world countries about this problem is key in order to spread awareness of this issue which still needs our attention
- Not a problem that can quickly be fixed, however with time and attention progress can be made

Our recommendations
- We believe that schools need to be built and teachers need to be educated
- We believe that the country government needs to put emphasis on the importance of education and spend of the GDP on restructuring schools
- We believe that education is not just needed for primary aged students but for all those who suffered this loss during the war

Our evidence
- The population in Sierra Leone in July 2012 is expected to reach 5.5 million, with 41.8% of the population in the primary education age bracket, meanwhile only 35.1% of the population is literate
- The Sierra Leone Civil War resulted in the destruction of 1,270 primary schools and in 2001 as the war was coming to an end, 67% of all school aged children were out of school
- Only 4.3% of the GDP in Sierra Leone is spent on education expenditures ranking 93rd out of 163 countries in this poll
- The war was started by an up roar by a rebel group which fought against the corrupt government in Sierra Leone.
- The rebel groups involved during the civil wars were Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). The grounds for which the war began was based on a lack of social-economic opportunities, lack of for the majority of citizens access to economic prosperity there was, and a distorted government with unequal rule.
- During his seven-year reign Major General Joseph Momoh welcomed the spread of unchecked corruption and complete economic collapse.
- The film “Blood Diamond” which show very brutally a realistic portrayal of the horrific events that occurred during this time.
- The grounds for which the war began was based on a lack of social-economic opportunities, lack of for the majority of citizens access to economic prosperity there was, and a distorted government with unequal rule.

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Prior to 1991 when the civil war started the education system in Sierra Leone was highly upheld and that attracted students from across West Africa. However, the civil war greatly damaged this view as this reduced financial support and led to a depleted view of the importance of education by youth. The 1990’s saw a severe decline in school enrollments in Sierra Leone, which led to the country having one of the lowest primary school enrollments in the world. This project examines the key factors which lead to this lack of primary education in order to help find solutions to achieve universal primary education, the second Millennium Development goal.

- Sierra Leone is located on the west coast of Africa where it was originally a British colony until independence when was reached in 1960
- The country’s main source of income is diamond mining
- The civil war which lasted 11 years starting in 1991 destroyed much of the country and displaced over 2 million people
- During the war blood diamonds funded the rebel army
- The rebels were very violent towards citizens - raping, kidnapping and killing them
- During the war Sierra Leone education system fell apart because of schools being targets for bombing
- After the war UN deployed a team to help with a smooth transition back to normal everyday life
- Diamond revenues have increased greatly reaching a high of 130 million dollars in 2004
- There was the establishment of the truth and reconciliation commission so victims and perpetrators could tell their stories and heal

The Problem

Due to a civil war lasting 11 years, Sierra Leone’s education facilities were made a target of the rebel army, leading to a struggle as they work to rebuild both the country and its education system after the war ended in 2002. The issue is that after 10 years, there still remains to be only a 35.2% literacy rate.

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