

Final report on the vocational training project in sierra leone delivered by mobility sierra leone (MSL)

Summary of the project

The aim of this project was to improve the skills and prospects of 30 vulnerable people in Sierra Leone by training them in a trade and providing tool kits so they could set up their own businesses and earn a decent living. There are high levels of urban unemployment and underemployment in Sierra Leone, disproportionately affecting young people. They face a range of challenges including a lack of demand for labour, a shortage of formal employment opportunities and the lack of linkages between education and training and market demand. Small community-run businesses offer an effective route out of poverty.

What did we do?

This project was delivered by our partner, Mobility Sierra Leone (MSL), from their vocational training centre in Bo. Bo is the second largest city in Sierra Leone and is located in the Southern Province of the country.

MSL recruited 30 people, all of whom were male and between the ages of 15 and 45. 90% of trainees had either never attended school or left before completing their education. The primary being lack of funds to pay school fees and books. Prior to starting the training 75% of participants were unemployed. Those who were employed (25%), were engaged in informal employment, which offered no job security. Many participants could not read or write, and had limited numeracy skills.

Ten trainees each specialised in one of the following trades: motorcycle repair, carpentry, or welding. The training followed an established syllabus, and participants were continually assessed throughout and required to sit tests set by MSL.

Carpentry trainees can now use and maintain their tools. They understand workshop safety and the importance of wearing the correct protective clothing. They can take measurements, interpret technical drawings, saw and plane timber, and do different types of joins. They can make furniture including tables, chairs, doors, and bed frames, as well as fit roof trusses.

Welding trainees can use their tools safely and understand the importance of wearing the correct protective equipment. They can cut and fabricate different types of metals to make door frames and window frames.

Motorcycle repair trainees can identify different parts of a motorcycle and can disassemble and reassemble a motorbike. They can diagnose and fix faults on motorcycles relating to the suspension, brakes, tyres, and engine. They can service motorbikes and check they are safe to ride

All trainees participated in two-month work placements with local established businesses,

which helped them further develop their trade skills and gain an understanding of running a successful business. Their performance was assessed during their placement and all participants were required to complete an exam set by MSL at the end of the placement.

60 hours of business skills training was delivered during the project, which covered the following topics: marketing, customer care, business accounting and finance, and human resources. This knowledge will help trainees run successful, profitable businesses.

Life skills sessions focussed on personal hygiene, sexual and reproductive health, and prevention of diseases like Ebola. MSL provided additional support to those who required help with literacy and numeracy, because without these skills, people would be unable to master their trade or run an effective business.



Trainees during a practical session (taken pre-Covid-19)

What has changed as a result of the project?

- Prior to taking part in the training, 75% of participants were unemployed and 90% had not attended or completed primary or secondary education. Now 30 people have successfully graduated. Through passing examinations and regular observations by MSL they have demonstrable skills in carpentry, welding or motorcycle mechanics.
- 75% of trainees used their skills during the project to generate an income. This demonstrates the high quality of their work and their ability to price and market products.
- Trainees have a good understanding of how to set up and run a business. They have formed small business groups and each group has received a tool kit.
- Before the training only 17% of trainees were saving, after the training 42% said they were saving.

- Trainees' confidence and self-esteem has increased. As a result of participating in this project trainees said they felt more valued, more respected by their community, and better able to financially contribute to their household.

Here is some feedback from participants.

“The biggest change in my life is that I now have a skill,” Moiwo Moiguah, carpentry trainee.

The biggest change in my life is that I can now afford to buy something for myself and my family,” trainee.

MSL plan to carry out follow up activities with business groups during the critical start up time – they know from previous projects that this early support can make a difference. As well as assessing how well the groups are running, they will offer additional training and advice in business and technical skills.

Participant story



Keikula Sama has completed his training in carpentry. He is 26 years old and was unable to finish school due to lack of finances. He was unable to get a job before embarking on his training. He really enjoyed learning a new skill and using his hands to make furniture to a high standard. During the project he made and sold furniture, which funded new clothes and shoes, giving him the financial independence he has always dreamed of.

Keikula said: **“The biggest change in my life is that I can now afford to buy something for myself and my family.”**

He feels optimistic about his future and said: **“I feel good about my future because I am now a skilful person.”**