

# Sierra Leone

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## About Sierra Leone

- Sierra Leone has a population of about 5 million of which 70% live on less than one dollar a day and 26 % live in extreme poverty<sup>1</sup>. In the UK there are 60 million people.
- GDP per capita is approximately \$200<sup>2</sup>. In the UK GDP per capita is \$37, 600 .
- The current ruling party is the Sierra Leone Peoples Party democratically elected in May 2002. The next national elections are scheduled in July 2007.
- Girls made up approximately 45 % of total enrolments in primary schools in 2004/5<sup>3</sup>. In the UK 100% boys and girls are enrolled in primary school.
- Average life expectancy is 41 years in Sierra Leone<sup>4</sup>. Average life expectancy in the UK is 79 years.
- In 2004, 283 out of every 1000 children died before the age of five<sup>5</sup> (the highest rate in the world) while in the UK 6 out of every 1000 children died before the age of five.
- Sierra Leone has the highest rate in the world for maternal mortality with 1800 per 100,000 women dying during childbirth. In the UK the rate is 13 per 100,000<sup>6</sup>.
- There is no reliable data on HIV prevalence but the latest study has estimated it at under 2%. Other data indicates that the rate is rising fast.
- Less than half of the population has access to safe and clean water<sup>7</sup>
- In 2005 Sierra Leone ranked 176 out of 177 in the UN Human Development Index. The UK ranked 18 out of 177 countries.

## DFID: Working to reduce poverty in Sierra Leone

In the past 3 years Sierra Leone has received approximately £91 million in aid from DFID. In the coming financial year (07/08) DFID will provide a further £40 million.

### Making aid effective

In the absence of domestic revenue DFID (supported by the other donors – the European Commission, the World Bank and African Development Bank) provided budget support in recognition of the need to pay public sector workers and start delivery of basic services to citizens. This was critical to stabilizing the country and establishing economic stability.

In 2006/2007 DFID's bilateral country programme amounted to £40 million of which £12.5 million has gone on budget support through Government systems. Release of funds has been conditional on progress on certain agreed benchmarks with government, including on public financial management reforms and tackling corruption.

As part of the drive for donor harmonisation DFID and the European Commission have in 2006 developed a new joint country strategy. Over the next 5 years (2007 – 2012) DFID will continue to build on the gains in the security and governance sectors but will do more to stimulate and sustain economic growth, improve infrastructure and improve basic service delivery to poor people.

### Governance

Poor governance is a cause of poverty. People suffer when governments don't allow participation in political life, provide access to justice, deliver adequate public services or control corruption. Despite existing problems with

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<sup>1</sup> Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey 2003/04

<sup>2</sup> World Bank, 2005

<sup>3</sup> UNICEF, 2006

<sup>4</sup> World Bank, 2004

<sup>5</sup> UNICEF, 2005

<sup>6</sup> UNICEF, 2005

<sup>7</sup> UNICEF, 2006

governance in Sierra Leone there are signs of improvement with new laws and systems to improve financial management and procurement being introduced. Through its work with the Sierra Leone Government

- DFID is helping to tackle corruption through a multi-pronged approach including support to the Anti-Corruption Commission, Auditor-General, public financial management reform, civil service reform, and strengthening greater citizen 'demand' for accountability through decentralization, support to civil society and the media.
- DFID is supporting improved communication and accountability between civil society and national and local government through the £7.5m ENCISS (Enhancing the Interaction and Interface between Civil Society and the State to Improve Poor Peoples lives) programme which seeks to increase the capacity of civil society to participate in, influence, contribute to and monitor the Poverty Reduction Strategy and local government policy, planning and implementation. Under the £2.5m PIVOT (Promoting Information and Voice for Transparency on Elections) programme, DFID is strengthening civil society and the media to support greater participation in electoral processes, particularly by marginalized groups, through civic education and improved provision of information. DFID also supports NGOs to implement programmes to support youth empowerment including Student Partnership Worldwide and Conciliation Resources.
- DFID is providing £4m to support a civil service reform programme carrying out management and functional reviews of ministries and working with Government to improve the effectiveness of Government.
- DFID is also providing £8m to support a joint DFID/WB/EC decentralisation programme to improve the capacity of local government.

### Health

DFID has committed £1.3m to a malaria prevention initiative over two years (until December 2008). This is delivered through Care International and focuses on combating Malaria through the distribution of bed nets.

As part of its Country Strategy for 2007-12 DFID is planning to substantially increase its contribution in the health sector, focusing on sexual, reproductive and child health.

### Education

Since the end of the conflict DFID has not provided support directly to the education sector, but a proportion of DFID budget support paid through the Government has however provided for the provision of education services, including the payment of teachers salaries.

### Orphans and Vulnerable Children

DFID is providing UNICEF with £1.3 million over 2 years (2006-08) to implement a programme to empower children, families and communities to provide care and protection for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children in 6 Districts in Sierra Leone. This programme aims to improve the well-being of the children in relation to health, education, and livelihoods, as well as reducing violence and increasing their participation.

### Making progress against the Millennium Development Goals...

While Sierra Leone has made progress in increasing primary school enrolment rates since the war, about 30% of primary school age children (6-11 years olds) remain out of school. The country is seriously off-track on most MDGs and this poses a formidable challenge for Sierra Leone to reach any MDGs by 2015.

For more information about DFID's work in Sierra Leone please visit [www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk)

If you are a journalist and wish to know more about DFID and its work to reduce poverty in Africa please call DFID press office: 0207023 0600.

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