

TUITION ASSISTANCE

PLAN (TAP)

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Education is an expensive commodity regardless the location of its consumers. In Sierra Leone, where this program will be implemented, education is not affordable by many citizens. The cry for help by many parents to educate their children is overwhelming. The Sierra Leone government is faced with many social service challenges that are equally important as education. Like in many countries around the world education is paid for either directly or indirectly at all levels: from kindergarten to college level. As a result, a reasonable percentage of citizens in Sierra Leone are illiterate. Many Sierra Leoneans who went through education up to college level will barely mortgage their future to relatives who had contributed to pay for tuition and other educational charges. Such gestures are expected to be reciprocated by elites whose salaries may not be enough to feed the family that they have started. This is just one example out of the many social and economic issues that are affecting many Sierra Leoneans. As citizens, we cannot continue to blame government for every economic or social difficulty that our compatriots are facing. We (OMBA) want to join government in its effort to reduce illiteracy in Sierra Leone. OMBA has seen the challenges that the education sector is facing as an opportunity to participate in the development of education in Sierra Leone. Therefore, this proposal will discuss the Tuition Assistance Plan (TAP).

About 95% of the students at Murialdo School are from homes well below the set UN poverty index, where a meal a day is not guaranteed and some students have to walk at most ten miles daily to get to school. Hunger, lack of school fees and learning materials have resulted in many students dropping out of school in recent years. This program (TAP) will cater for orphans, students from single parent homes and those coming from very low income homes. There are scores of orphans currently attending Murialdo School. According to school data there were 35 orphan students left behind by the rebel war and other natural causes. Unfortunately, shortly after the attack in 2014 by the Ebola Virus Disease, the statistics of orphan children in Sierra Leone shoots up almost exponentially. Currently Murialdo School has a record of about 45 orphan students both in junior and senior secondary school. This population accounts for almost 5% of the entire student population.

In addition to the orphan population, there is a reasonable percent of students coming from single parent and extremely impoverished homes. In general the high statistics of poor students in Sierra

Leone correlate directly to the country's socio-economic down fall. The report below was issued by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). For the purpose of this document, we paid keen attention to the numbers on Educational Attainment of Youths in the report. It is very clear that the numbers are troubling and tell a lot about the high illiteracy rate in the country. By this measure, our Tuition Assistance Plan program will to some extent make a difference in changing some of the factors like: lack of school fees, which is interrupting students' attendance and subsequent attainment.

FIG 1. EDUCATION SYSTEM

School Entrance Age:

Primary school - Age 6

Duration and Official Ages for School Cycle:

Primary: 6 years - Ages 6 - 11

Lower secondary: 3 years - Ages 12 - 14

Upper secondary: 3 years - Ages 15 - 17

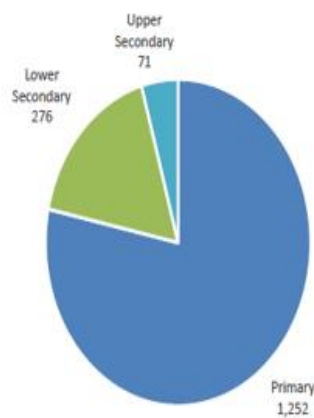
Academic Calendar:

Starting month: September

Ending month: July

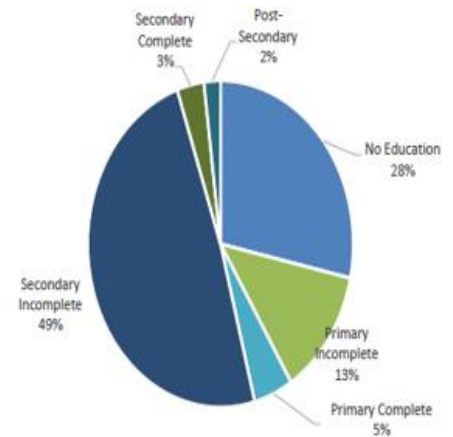
Data source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics

FIG 2. NUMBER OF PUPILS BY SCHOOL LEVEL (IN 1000S)



Data Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2001-2012

FIG 3. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, YOUTH AGES 15-24



Data source: EPDC extraction of MICS dataset 2010

This is a 2010 report which might be viewed as relatively old. But with all fairness, if those numbers are projected meaningfully to the current year, 2016, the change on the nature of the demographics representing the different sections of the pie chart will be very small due to economic stagnation in the country. These statistics could be viewed as a wakeup call to government and all citizens of Sierra Leone to work very hard for a change to the status quo in education. As an alumni organization, we view this report as an opportunity to first off reach out to all alumni of Murialdo School asking for their unconditional financial support. Secondly, this document will be circulated to other organizations for the sole aim of developing a partnership that will make a difference in the lives of the youths in Sierra Leone, particularly those at Murialdo School.

AIM OF THE TUITION ASSISTANCE PLAN (TAP)

Academic investment in students currently attending Murialdo Secondary School to alter the high rate of student dropping out of school.

SPONSOR/s

The major sponsor of these program is the Old Murialdo Boys Association (OMBA). However, as stated above, OMBA will solicit the support of local and international organizations; philanthropists; government and non- government organizations; local leaders; religious institutions with interest in education; entrepreneurs and any individual or group of individuals interested in the education of current students at Murialdo Secondary School.

PROGRAM OPERATION

OMBA will have to secure an office space at the school for the execution of this program and other activities that the association may be pursuing. Each year the TAP programs will be opened to students from May 1st to June 30th. Document processing and approvals will commence from July 1st to August 31st. All approved students will be notified in writing on or before August 31st. All TAP payments will be made a week following the start of the new school year to ensure that each beneficiary is attending school. To reduce the possibility of fraud or mismanagement of funds all TAP payments will be made to the school's account office by the head of the TAP committee. All students and their parent/guardian will be notified formally about payments.

TAP is designed to serve the most vulnerable students and therefore distribution of funds must be well thought out. There are many students at Murialdo School that may fall under the category of vulnerability or risk of dropping out of school. *Therefore, a first time recipient of TAP may not be eligible for another TAP until 1 year after the first TAP (example, if student 'A' receives a TAP in 2017/18 school year he/she may not get another TAP until 2019/2020 school year if he/she meets the criteria). No student may receive more than two TAPs during their entire academic life at Murialdo Secondary School; this will allow a fair distribution of the TAP funds. The TAP committee will have to study prudently on a case-by-case bases the distribution of TAP awards.

EXECUTION OF TAP

This program will be initiated with a minimum of 50 students; 25 TAP students at the Junior Secondary School and 25 at the Senior Secondary School. Each TAP recipient will be entitled to seven hundred fifty thousand Leones (Le 750,000) per academic year. This amount will not be paid directly to the student, parent or guardian. The TAP committee will pay to the appropriate school authority, fees and other school related expense that the TAP amount can cover.

*Depending on the availability of funds the rule above may be ignored for the main aim of keeping a student in school.

COMMENCEMENT

With timely discussions and very serious commitment by OMBA, this program is expected to start at the beginning of the 2016/2017 school year. A minimum of 50 million Leones will be raised to start the program. This suggested amount will guarantee the distribution of TAPs for one school year while donation collection is ongoing. As a major sponsor, OMBA must contribute at least 30 million Leones to the TAP funds at the start of each school year.

TAP SUSTAINABILITY

TAP funds will be invested in local stock market, so the returns will ease the burden on OMBA and other donors. Another way to sustain this program will be through annual fund raising events like, raffles, dinner and dance. These events will be made very special to attract lucrative donors.

BUDGET BREAKDOWN

SCHOOL YEAR	Number of Students	COST PER STUDENT		AMOUNT TO BE PAID IN LOCAL CURRENCY	AMOUNT TO BE PAID IN U.S. DOLLARS
2016/2017	50	Le 750,000/student		Le 37,500,000	\$7,415.46
Office staff	1	7 months	Le 600,000/mo	Le 4,200,000	\$830.53
Miscellaneous				Le 2,000,000	\$395.49
Total				Le 43,700,000	\$8,641.48

*1 USD = Le 5,057 as of date of document

Note: OMBA expects that before the start of the 2019/2020 school year more funds will be available in the TAP coffers through membership contributions and solicitations from various foundations for the continuation of the program.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for a TAP will be based on but not limited to the following criteria:

- a. Academic performance averaging 95% or better
- b. Socio-Economic Status (SES) of family (a number of factors will be considered, for example: elderly parents; blind parents; single parents; etc)
- c. Rebel war and Ebola orphans
- d. Behavior that reflects respect for peers, school authorities, community leaders, and neighbors. Other virtues like leadership and good citizenship will be considered as well.
- e. Excellent performance in sports, music or any performing-art talent
- f. Students with disability and minority students (like female students) may be given preference if they meet some of the above requirements

TAP COMMITTEE (FIVE-MAN COMMITTEE)

OMBA will select a five-man committee to run the program. School administration will involve in the selection of TAP students. This means the school principal and students' counselor will be designated committee members. This committee will be headed by the financial secretary or the treasurer of the current executive body of OMBA in Sierra Leone. Applicants to the TAP program must make available all required documents to this committee. The committee will authenticate all documents and thoroughly vet all candidates to the best of their ability. The committee will follow the eligibility criteria above to ensure that the funds for the TAP will be disbursed in a fair and nondiscriminatory manner.

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES OF TAP COMMITTEE

This committee will be bestowed with the most serious and critical task of running the TAP programs. Their responsibilities are as follows:

1. The committee shall determine eligibility for TAP students and disburse funds appropriately

2. Ensure that students approved for TAP will not receive cash until all fees and other school needs are paid off.
3. Will assist in the process of reaching out to OMBA members, branches of OMBA and other prospective donors to solicit funds for the program
4. Shall organize at least 2 fund raisers within a 12 months period
5. Shall be accountable to OMBA's national executive and other branches of the association
6. Shall convene an annual meeting with OMBA representatives, donors, students and parents to report on the successes and possible challenges of the program

OFFICE STAFF

OMBA will employ a staff to handle daily clerical duties. The clerk position will be seasonal running from May 1st to October 30th each year. The office clerk position will attract a monthly salary of Le 600,000. The budget total for this position will be Le 4,200,000.

PROGRAM BENEFITS

1. Promotes access to both secondary and tertiary education in Sierra Leone
2. Supports and improves the rate of literacy in the country
3. Ensure equal education opportunities to all citizens, especially students from single parent and very low income homes
4. Decrease the country's rate of child labor
5. Ensures good quality education to the future leaders of Sierra Leone
6. Encourages community participation and active engagement in the activities of OMBA
7. Both current and ex-students of Murialdo will develop stronger ties with OMBA and this may lead to active participation and support for the continuation of this TAP program
8. It will prevent arranged, forced and unwanted early marriages for girls that are interested in pursuing higher education.