

Maatwerk bij Terugkeer



# Country brochure Sierra Leone

Information for migrants from Sierra Leone  
who are considering return

Maatwerk bij Terugkeer (Mediation Agency for Return) in cooperation with  
Stichting Mondiale Samenleving-SMS (Global Society Foundation)  
March 2010

# Introduction

*This brochure provides information about the possibilities for migrants who reside in the Netherlands without a residence permit. Migrants without legal papers might have questions and considerations like 'Do I want to continue my stay in the Netherlands without legal papers?', 'Do I want to consider returning to Sierra Leone to rebuild my life and live as a legal resident in Sierra Leone?', 'What type of assistance can be provided once I have returned to Sierra Leone?'. In this brochure information is provided on housing, education, employment and medical facilities. In addition, you can find what type of assistance can be provided when you decide to return to Sierra Leone.*

# Practical information for migrants returning to Sierra Leone

## 1 Arrival at the airport

Upon arrival at Lungi International Airport in Freetown, returnees are expected to produce an Emergency Travelling Certificate (ETC) from the country they were seeking asylum or migrated to. It occurs that returnees are detained after arrival because they fail to produce evidence of their departure from Lungi or any other recognized airport. After being interviewed and if it is ascertained that there are no criminal backgrounds the returnees are released. A returnee does not need to consider any custom regulations, except if he arrives with a dutiable item, he or she is required to pay for the item in accordance with custom regulations and costs can only be determined when the item are assessed. Importation of goods is possible as the importer must have a valid travel document. In the absence of this, the goods might be declared as having been acquired illegally. Prior contacts can be made for arrival plans with:

**Mohamed Sahid Kamara**, Deputy officer,  
Sierra Leone Airport Authority (SLAA)  
Phone No. +232-(22)76-795536  
E-Mail : [mohamanga@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mohamanga@yahoo.co.uk)  
Or

**Mr. S.P. Lappi** Head of station  
National Revenue Authority  
Phone No. +232-(22) 76-605903.

## 2 Housing

In Sierra Leone, one can find a house through two sectors; either through the government housing scheme or the private sector. Due to the inadequacy of housing facilities owed to the government, most people go to the private sector to access housing facilities. The cost of rent for privately owned houses varies in terms of the structure and location of the house. Since no policy has been developed by the government on rents, currently people rent houses as they desire and there is no statute to protect tenants from landlords or house owners. Although there is a provision in the national constitution which covers tenancy agreements, there are no social grants for housing in Sierra Leone. The average rent for two bedrooms is SLL 5.500.000,- (EURO 1.062,81) per year in Freetown. Average costs of housing in Bo for the same space is SLL 3.000.000,- (EURO 579,71).

For further estate enquiries, you can contact:

**Mr. Raymond R. Browne**, Housing and Planning Manager, Sierra Leone Housing Corporation.  
E-Mail; [brownechoe\\_68@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:brownechoe_68@yahoo.co.uk)  
Phone No. +232-(22) 76-6377070 or +232(22)33-403333

Temporary shelters are available in the local community in cheap guest houses. Prices for one overnight stay range between SLL 60.000,- (EUR 11,60) and SLL 40.000,- (EURO 7,70) either in Freetown, Bo, Makeni or Kenema.



## 3 Access to employment

Sierra Leone is a developing country with an unequal distribution of the national income, resources and opportunities albeit the existence of substantial mineral resources, agricultural products and fishery resources. However, the economic and social infrastructure is not well developed and serious social disorders continue to hamper economic development. About two-thirds of the working age population engage in subsistence agriculture. Manufacturing consists mainly of the processing of raw materials and light manufacturing for domestic markets. The iron ore, bauxite and rutile mines have reopened. The major source of hard currency consists of the mining of diamond. Presently the economy of Sierra Leone is fragile as the economy is donor driven. The inflation rate is relatively high as this reflects on the cost of commodities in the country. The unemployment rate is also high. Up to 80% of the total population are either unemployed or underemployed.

The jobs that are available in the city are the security apparatus, teaching, civil service and nursing. The average take home net or salaries for civil servants are about \$50 per month. The majority of the total population are self-employed. In the regional towns and peri-urban settlements, most of the jobs are farming and petty trading while others are self-employed. The requirements to start up an enterprise are as follows:

- Registration of the business at the Ministry of Trade and the Administrator General 's Office
- having obtained an office space with address
- Business license and with a starting capital and tax clearance from the National Revenue Authority (NRA)

There is also a possibility to get loans from the banks and other financial institutions depending on the collateral presented which can be a house plan, or a surety in the sum value. The government has recently established a Ministry of Employment. This Ministry is responsible for creating employment for those that are not employed, and if one is not employed he/she is expected to register with the Ministry where employment opportunities are advertised.

Access to land in Freetown is relatively expensive. A plot of land (75 feet X 150 feet) can easily cost SLL 10 Million (EURO 1932,36). In case a person decides to live at the country side and desires to start a farm land can be assessed by negotiation for about SLL 20.000,- (EURO 3,9) per plot.

There are possibilities for acquiring micro-credit to set up small scale business as there are institutions established for that such as: ARD Micro Finance, BRAC Micro Finance and Salone Finance.

For further information, please contact :

**Safine P. Kanu**, Director of the secretariat of National Refugee Authority, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Corporation  
Phone No. +232(22)76-823261  
+232-(22)33-444951  
E-Mail [sphanudnrac@yahoo.com](mailto:sphanudnrac@yahoo.com).

## 4 Education

### General

There are both primary and secondary schools /as well as tertiary/vocational institutions all over the country. The country has a 6-3-3-4 Educational Policy. This means that you spend 6 years in primary school, 3 years in the junior secondary school, 3 years in the senior secondary school and 4 years at a university / college.

### Primary

Before entering the junior secondary (JSS) , it is compulsory to take and pass the National Primary School Examination (NPSE) with a pass mark of at least 230 as this is the entry requirement to junior secondary school. For a candidate to proceed from junior secondary to senior secondary he or she is expected to take and pass the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) for at least 5 subjects that should include one of the core subjects like English, Mathematics, or Integrated Science. This prepares a candidate for the West African Secondary School Examination Certificate (WASSEC). The difference between a private and public school is that a private school is privately owned by persons or missions who are responsible for paying the salaries of the teachers . The salaries of teachers in private school are usually higher than the salaries of teachers in public schools. School charges are also higher compared to school charges in public schools. Public schools are government owned. The government pays schools a subsidy. Through these subsidies, teachers' salaries are paid and school charges are lowered. The quality of teaching at public schools however unfortunately is very poor and is not effectively supervised by the state. The annual costs of enrolment in a government-owned school is SLL 52.500 (EURO 10,15), even

though the national policy prescribes it should be free. The average annual costs of enrolment in a private owned primary school is SLL 1.050.00,- (EURO 202,90).

## Vocational

The types of vocational training courses available in the country are business studies, accounting and finance, masonry, carpentry, automobile, electrical and electronics, community development studies, purchasing and stores management, block laying, beverage production, building and civil engineering, technology, information and communication, technical and marine engineering, catering, tailoring, welding, construction, hair dressing, secretarial duties and nursing, among others. These are owned by government, NGOs, as well as by private enterprises who choose to invest into education. They are all accessible by everyone as long as you are able to meet the cost and your choice of career is being offered at the centre or school. The annual costs vary between SLL 1.500.000,- (EURO 289,86) to SLL 5.000.000,- (EURO 966,19).

## Higher level education and university

At the moment, the country has the following approved and accredited higher institutions of learning which focus largely on Teacher education and Technical and vocational programmes:

Milton Margai College of Education and Technology (Location, Freetown), The Freetown Teachers College, The Port Loko Teachers College, The Makeni Teachers College. It also has the Eastern Polytechnic located in Kenema, the Northern Polytechnic and The Government Technical Vocation School.

There are two Universities: The University of Sierra Leone situated at Fourah Bay College, College of Medicine and the Institute Of Public Administration and Management and The Njala University housed in Bo, Mokonde Campus and the New England Campus. The programmes offered in all of these tertiary institutions vary but include, Arts, Literature, Law, Sociology, ICT, Nursing, Medicine, Foods and Nutrition, journalism, civil engineering.

Entrance to any of the institutions requires candidates to have taken and passed the Basic Education Certificate Examination or the West African Examination Certificate Examination with at least four or five credit passes.

The average fees range between SLL 1.800.000,- (EURO 1.142,9) – 7.000.000,00 (EURO 1.352,66) depending on the course of study. They are accessible to all.

## Scholarships

There are scholarships and grants available in the country, the first criteria is to be a citizen, and the candidate must reach tertiary level and should not fail or repeat his class.

## Certificates and Diplomas

Certificates and Diplomas obtained from Europe are verified from a list of accredited colleges and universities through a commission known as The National Commission of Technical and Vocational Awards (NCTVA) in Freetown. In addition, there is the Basic Education Commission which also verifies the authenticity of basic education certificates.

For further information, you can contact:

**Mrs. Esther Nicol**, Senior Assistant Secretary for Students, Ministry of Education,

Phone +232(22) 591 088  
Email: [mamatorma@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mamatorma@yahoo.co.uk)

Or

**Elizabeth M.Lebbie** Assessment officer  
National council for Technical vocational and other Awards

Phone +232-(22)77-257786 or  
+232-(22)76-854962

E-Mail [elizuris@yahoo.com](mailto:elizuris@yahoo.com).

Or

**Regina C. Tarawally** Acting Inspector of  
Schools  
West Area

Phone +232-(22)76-807793  
E-Mail [regina50/50@yahoo.com](mailto:regina50/50@yahoo.com).

For additional information on several educational institutions see:  
[www.sierra-leone.org/links-schools.html](http://www.sierra-leone.org/links-schools.html)



## Healthcare

Health care in Sierra Leone is provided by a mixture of both government and non-governmental organizations. The government has divided the country into 13 Health Districts that correspond with the administrative districts of the country. There is a lack of health care facilities in the country as a result of the 10 years civil war. Since the war has ended, health care facilities are gradually being reconstructed. There are over 100 NGOs operating in the health care sector in Sierra Leone. The Ministry of Health and Sanitation is responsible for organizing health care through Peripheral Health Units (PHUs), Satellite Clinics and District Town Hospitals. Each Health District has a health management team and an average of 50 Peripheral Health units (PHUs) and 100 technical / Medical Staff. The PHU has been designed to function as a point of delivery of primary health care in the country and there are three main types. The health centers carries out health prevention measures, cures and health promotion activities and is in charge of overseeing the other PHUs in the area. It is designed that each chiefdom below the level of district should have at least one community health center.

There are no regulations with regard to health insurance but government is working towards having health insurance as part of its social protection strategy which is currently in a draft stage. It is not obligatory for returnees to register for medical services and therefore it requires no cost. Services can be paid directly after utilization. One receives medical treatment either from the government hospital /clinic or the private hospital depending on the desire of the person involved.

## Support in case of return to Sierra Leone

### Maatwerk bij Terugkeer

The aim and the mission of Maatwerk bij Terugkeer, Mediation Office for Return, is to facilitate the humane and independent return of ex-asylum seekers and migrants without residence permit to their country of origin.

Maatwerk bij Terugkeer and our partner organizations in the countries of origin provide assistance in the fields of medical care and follow-up care, education, credit provision and finding work, housing, in the country of origin. We seek appropriate help for every individual and provide support in accordance with the individual's needs. Migrants without residence permit and ex asylum seekers can also submit an application at Maatwerk bij Terugkeer if they wish to receive information on their country of origin which can assist them in their thinking process on possible return. They can also apply for assistance if they already have a clear idea of what they can do after their return and where they can make use of Maatwerk's support.

Maatwerk bij Terugkeer works from the basic principal that every individual makes his/her own decisions concerning the future. People are, as far as Maatwerk bij Terugkeer is concerned, free in their choice whether or not to return to their country of origin.

Maatwerk bij Terugkeer supports ex-asylum seekers and migrants without legal papers in the Netherlands by mapping the needs and possibilities after return in close cooperation with the counselors of a potential returnee. In conjunction with the partner organizations

There are essential drugs for malaria, fever, headache, abdominal pains, typhoid, diarrhea, dysentery and life saving drugs which are only available at the prescription of the Doctor. The costs of essential drugs vary. There is a mental health care clinic at Kissy which is regularly called Kissy Mental Home. In this clinic, psychosocial support is provided to patients. For more information please contact :

**Ibrahim W. Turay**, Hospital Manager,  
Connaught Hospital Sierra Leone.  
Phone No. +232-(22) 76-748734 and  
E-Mail [wazirilbrahim62@yahoo.com](mailto:wazirilbrahim62@yahoo.com)

The cost for health care, varies from one location to the other and from one specialist to the other. What can be generalized is the fact that payments are made for the following services:

- Consultation SLL 50.000.00,- (EURO 9,67)
- Cost of drugs are depending on the type of drugs prescribed
- Cost for admission SLL 30.000,00 (EUR 19,05) per night
- Hire of ambulance in case of an emergency SLL 200.000,00 (EUR 127,-)
- Professional fee often charged by the medical practitioners.

Private consultations are very expensive and the costs depend on the consultant. The costs are ranging from SLL 500.000,- (EUR 317,46) to SLL 5.000.000,-(EUR 3174,60). Where NGOs provide subsidy, the costs are very minimal and sometimes free. Some of the Medical focused NGOs include MSF, Concern World Wide, International Rescue Committee (for cases related to sexual and gender based violence). They are based in BO (Gondama), Kenema and Freetown.



of Maatwerk bij Terugkeer in the country of origin, realistic options are explored. The local partner organization provides further assistance to the returnee upon return in the country of origin.

Maatwerk bij Terugkeer closely cooperates with migrant- and civil society organizations in the Netherlands and the country of origin. We are concerned with the protection of your personal data and work in compliance with the Personal Data Protection Act.

### Partner organisation in Freetown Sierra Leone: the Christian Brothers

In Sierra Leone Maatwerk bij Terugkeer cooperates with the Christian Brothers Project Resource Center (CBPRC). CBPRC is an organization which is primarily focused on the support of youngsters in a difficult position in Sierra Leone. Since 2007 CBPRC -in

close cooperation with Maatwerk bij Terugkeer has been implementing a special project for returning migrants without residence permit from European countries. The project offers first relief after arrival, a micro credit, guidance with setting up a small enterprise, psychosocial aid and family reunification. A social worker has been assigned to the project and provides tailor-made assistance. The support given starts with an intake in which the wishes, needs and possibilities are explored. In close consultation cooperation with the social worker the returnee will make up a realistic plan to invest the micro credit and makes an estimation of the chances and the threats. During the implementation of the plan support remains accessible. In addition, there is a network of returned compatriots in Sierra Leone with whom experiences can be exchanged

### Confidant in the Netherlands

Would you like to have a conversation with a trustworthy person about your life in the Netherlands? Do you sometimes consider return and are you seeking further information about your specific situation? You can get in touch with one of our confidants who are from Sierra Leone. It is possible to contact this person by telephone anonymously. A face to face meeting at a location of your preference can also be arranged. During the first meeting, the confidant will merely and carefully listen to your story. At a later stage, possible solutions to your problems can be discussed. Please note that these conversations are entirely confidential and free of obligations. You decide whether you would like to continue the conversations with the confidant. The confidant has no contact with any government agencies and the content of the conversations you have with him/her

remains confidential. If you are interested in this project you can get in touch with SMS. They can refer you to one of the confidants. You can contact SMS at the following phone number 030-2148063 and e-mail address: [info@sms-vluchtelingen.nl](mailto:info@sms-vluchtelingen.nl)

### Case

Ibrahim applied for asylum in the Netherlands in 2003. He has been living in limbo since his asylum claim was rejected and all hope for a permanent resident status in the Netherlands faded. He became destitute. After receiving this message he found the support of a project that helped him to find a new orientation towards the future. He attended a training in which he learned skills. With these skills he is able to operate a small enterprise. He developed a well-thought out plan to

set-up a small store and communicated his plan with the Christian Brothers in Sierra Leone. The Christian Brother assessed his plan taking into account the current situation and market in Sierra Leone and saw that Ibrahim's plan was feasible. The Christian Brother's therefore provided Ibrahim with a credit and supported him with negotiations with the landlord about the rent of the plot of land. Four months after return to Sierra Leone Ibrahim has built his own structure in a suburb of Freetown and opened his store. He sells daily necessities like bread, flour, cooking oil and rice. Although life is not easy for him, he manages to earn enough in order to have food on the table every day. He is thinking about strategies to extend his store in order to make it more profitable.



### Important organizations

- [Stichting Mondiale Samenleving \(SMS\)](#) [Global Society Foundation] for access to migrants and the diaspora network in The Netherlands: Utrecht, tel: 030-2148063, [www.sms-vluchtelingen.nl](http://www.sms-vluchtelingen.nl)
- [International Organisatie voor Migratie](#) [International Organisation for Migration] for facilitating flight bookings and adaptation of reintegration support: The Hague, tel: 070-3181500, [www.iom-nederland.nl](http://www.iom-nederland.nl)
- [Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland](#) [Dutch Council for Refugees] for legal expertise on the asylum and return procedure and representation of clients' interests: Amsterdam, tel: 020-3467200, [www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl](http://www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl)
- [Stichting Wereldwijd](#) [Worldwide Foundation] for education and training courses for returning migrants and asylum seekers: Eckelrade, tel: 043 - 4083122, [www.stichtingwereldwijd.nl](http://www.stichtingwereldwijd.nl)
- [Rode Kruis](#) [Red Cross] for tracing family members of migrants and asylum seekers: The Hague, tel: 070-4455822, [www.rodekruis.nl](http://www.rodekruis.nl)
- [Stichting Landelijk Ongedocumenteerden Steunpunt](#) [National Support Point for Undocumented Migrants] for current information on the situation for migrants without documentation in The Netherlands: Utrecht, tel: 030-2990222, [www.stichtinglos.nl](http://www.stichtinglos.nl)

## Contact details

### Maatwerk bij Terugkeer

Goeman Borgesiuslaan 77  
3515 ET Utrecht  
Postbus 9769  
3506 GT Utrecht

Telefoon: 030-7551580  
Fax: 030-7551582  
[info@maatwerkbijterugkeer.nl](mailto:info@maatwerkbijterugkeer.nl)  
[www.maatwerkbijterugkeer.nl](http://www.maatwerkbijterugkeer.nl)

### SMS

Hollantlaan 4  
3526 AM Utrecht  
Telefoon: 030-2138063  
[info@sms-vluchtelingen.nl](mailto:info@sms-vluchtelingen.nl)  
[www.sms-vluchtelingen.nl](http://www.sms-vluchtelingen.nl)

### Confidant

Can be reached via SMS on phone number 030-2138063

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Return is not necessarily a step backwards

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