



# RISING ACADEMIES WORKS TO CLOSE THE ECD GENDER GAP FOR GIRLS IN LIBERIA

## Background

The Rising Academy Network (RAN) is a low- and no-fee schools network. In Liberia, RAN operates 29 no-fee government schools across seven counties as part of Partnership Schools for Liberia (PSL), a public-private partnership with the Liberian Ministry of Education. RAN is responsible for the daily management of PSL schools including teacher training and ongoing coaching, provision of curriculum and student workbooks, and school performance oversight.

## Research

During the first year of PSL (2016-2017 academic year), RAN piloted IDELA in five schools to test the tool in the Liberian context and gain initial insight into the early childhood population. In the second year of PSL (2017-2018 academic year), the Ministry of Education allocated an additional 24 schools to RAN, taking the total to 29. RAN has since rolled out IDELA assessments across the network of 29 schools with baseline, interim and endline collection points. 25 percent of eligible students (aged 3-6 years), with an even split of girls and boys, were sampled across the school network.



Photo: Rising Academies

IDELA Assessment in progress

## Results

In Liberia, the gender gap in learning outcomes is pronounced. Girls consistently score lower than boys, with the gender gap widening over time. For adults in rural areas, the literacy rate is 26 percent for women and 60 percent for men. By the time they reach adulthood, 95 percent of women in the region with a primary level education cannot read a simple sentence. To change the status quo for all children, and address the gender gap in education, RAN emphasizes quality teaching and regular monitoring and support in the classrooms. By assessing the progression of learning across key developmental areas from the nursery level by using IDELA, RAN aims to ensure that girls in the PSL network are making sufficient gains and are equally as prepared for primary school learning as boys.

Early findings from the 2017-2018 academic year reveal that girls' performance in IDELA assessment tasks was poorer when compared to boys. However, girls are making good progress in closing the gap. For example, girls' progress in IDELA sub-tasks including letter identification, oral comprehension and shape identification was greater than boys.

## Next Steps

A second interim assessment point is underway. A key focus during analysis of this data will be to examine whether girls continue to close the gap on boys, as RAN aims to ensure that students are equally prepared for primary school.

## Contact

If you have questions or require further information please contact [idelela@savechildren.org](mailto:idelela@savechildren.org).