



Sierra Leone National Consultation Report



UNITED NATIONS
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Table of Contents

1. National Convenor	1
2. Consultation Process	1
3. Principles of Engagement	2
4. Consultation Focus and Outcomes	3
(A) Recovery from Covid-19 disruption [short-term]:	3
(B) Transforming education [medium-longer-term]:	4
(C) Ensuring sustainable public financing:	6
(D) Review of National Education targets and benchmarks:.....	6
5. Appendix: Organizations present at the National Consultation Event.....	6
6. Appendix: Agenda at National Consultation Event	8
7. Appendix: Mapping of TES Action Tracks to Sierra Leone Education Sector Plan and SDG-4 Indicators.....	8
8. Appendix: Sample Discussion Guide for National Consultation Event.....	9

1. National Convenor

The national convenors for the national consultations for the Transforming Education Summit are His Excellency Dr. David Moinina Sengh, Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education and His Excellency Professor Alpha Tejan Wurie, Minister of Technical and Higher Education.

UNICEF provided support to the consultation process on behalf of the UN Country Team.

2. Consultation Process

The process was initiated in a kick-off national event on 1st June 2022 that gathered stakeholders from across the country and across the education sector in Freetown. The National Consultation was conducted in English and was attended by a total of 141 participants.

The discussions were framed by a draft Education Sector Plan 2022-26, which had in turn been informed by a number of national consultations:

- **Joint Education Sector Reviews based on “Education Sector Analysis: Assessing the Enabling Environment for Gender Equality” (2021)**
- **Needs assessment survey on higher/tertiary education and consultative workshop on the report for transforming access, quality, relevance, and funding mechanisms for the sub-sector (2021)**
- **National Consultations for the Education Sector Plan: Transforming Learning for All (2021-2022)**
- **Gender transformative leadership workshop for regional education leaders (2022)**

The above consultations were cascaded at the regional level across the country.

In addition, nearly 5000 people participated in a U-Report circulated to young people in Sierra Leone. Nearly 2,000 respondents were in the age group of 10 to 24 years and the questions were framed around global surveys for young people ahead of TES.

The profile of the attendees at the 1st June event were the following:

Age	0-17	18 -20	30-59	60+
# attendees	2	9	129	1

Gender	Male	Female	Prefer not to say
# attendees	93	48	0

The following sectors were represented:

- **Child Protection**
- **Communication**
- **Education**
- **Nutrition**
- **Health**
- **Information Technology**
- **Social Protection**

In addition, the following stakeholder types were represented:

- **City and local government representatives**
- **Government and national institutions**
- **Local authorities**
- **Local Non-Governmental Organizations**
- **International Non-Governmental Organizations**
- **Media**
- **Members of Parliament**
- **Public Servants**
- **Scientific community, academic, universities and research institutes**
- **Teachers, educators, facilitators, and professors**
- **Youth and students (including children and adolescents)**

Please see the appendix for the full list of organizations represented at the national consultation, the agenda for the event, a mapping of the links between the Sierra Leone Education Sector Plan, the TES Action Tracks and SDG-4 and finally a sample discussion guide from one of the workstream discussion.

3. Principles of Engagement

The consultations were prepared by a working group convened by the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education and the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education. The working group employed an engaged whole-of-government approach and, in addition to these ministries, comprised the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Information and Communication, the Directorate of Science Technology and Innovation, Statistics Sierra Leone, the National Commission for UNESCO, WFP and UNICEF.

The consultations aimed to have a nationally representative and inclusive set of stakeholders and invited education officers and youth representatives from all the 16 districts as well as non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations supporting education in Sierra Leone, including ones specifically focused on inclusion of the disabled.

Subsequent engagements with local paramount chiefs, tribal heads and teacher unions contributed to giving the consultations a holistic perspective.

4. Consultation Focus and Outcomes

During the national consultation event, participants were divided into five working groups that each following one of the themes of the action tracks:

1. **Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools**
2. **Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development**
3. **Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession**
4. **Digital learning and transformation**
5. **Financing of education**

Each group discussed a set of questions relating to the four themes of the consultation:

1. **Recovery from Covid-19 disruption [short-term]**
2. **Transformation of education [medium-longer-term]**
3. **Review of national education targets and benchmarks**
4. **Ensuring sustainable public financing**

For other consultations including those with the local Paramount Chiefs, the discussions were centred on the role of citizens at the local level to drive monitoring and effective citizen participation for service delivery.

The statements below summarize the discussions from the National, Regional and Special consultations and the results from the U-report consultation targeting young persons. They do not necessarily represent the opinion or ambition of the Government of Sierra Leone, which is captured in the statement of national commitment, but instead reflect a summary of the positions and ambitions of the stakeholders present at the consultations.

(A) Recovery from Covid-19 disruption [short-term]:

Sierra Leone employed experience from the Ebola pandemic as part of the overall strategic response to the COVID outbreak. The Government created awareness, sensitised teachers, school children, and communities on prevention of COVID in and out of schools, and employed mobilisation of communities for local action as the key strategy. Distance education programmes for children and teachers were employed, although young people shared that they missed being in school and together with their peers during lockdown.

Although learning loss has been inevitable due to school closure, due to the above measures, the number of students passing the national transition exams actually rose after the lockdowns.

This period also witnessed government's improved policy focus, particularly on Radical Inclusion, overturning the ban on pregnant girls attending school, introducing the sexual and reproductive health curriculum, and the Freetown Manifesto for gender transformative leadership in education.

Financing of education also witnessed positive change through commitment of 20% GDP to education budget and establishing a multi-donor trust fund.

For these and other reasons, the period that also saw the Covid-19 disruption actually engendered a sense of optimism about the future of education in Sierra Leone.

In the consultation there was a clear statement that there is now a need to consolidate the gains made, especially with regards to inclusion and gender and emergency preparedness, so that the country is even better prepared for the next disruption to education. The education sector in Sierra Leone should endeavour to:

- 1. Create a comprehensive emergency response plan that incorporates the learnings from the Covid-19 response, potentially with the creation of a standing committee that consolidates the evidence about the reach and quality of the different interventions, and works with schools to prepare them;**
- 2. Build a more resilient education system. Schools reopened for all children on October 5, 2020. While COVID-19 prevention and risk mitigation measures continue to be in force, the country is making an effort to (a) further improve learning outcomes, (b) support accelerated learning using technology in teaching and learning, (c) keep children safe in school, including from sexual and gender-based violence, and (d) strengthen the institutional capacity;**
- 3. Ensure country-wide education radio coverage and continue to improve reliability of signal and relevance of programs;**
- 4. Accelerate the expansion of digital and Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) or “sms-based” learning tools along with electrification and digital connections to reach the most remote areas.**

(B) Transforming education [medium-longer-term]:

Sierra Leone has already invested significant resources - and is seeing promising initial results - to reach the aspirational SDG-4 targets to provide quality learning for all children, even if it still has a way to go. Young people in the youth survey confirmed the best learning modalities for them is working in group with others, learning by doing and experimentation and listening to their teachers. Most of them confirmed that they want to learn and get education to get a good career, and for their self-awareness. They want to learn transferable skills such as strength and resilience, teamwork and kindness and feel that schools can help build these.

The discussion groups across the give work streams identified three categories of levers for transforming education, namely what practices should be continued, started, and stopped.

Continue:

- 1. Promote education as a vehicle for national development and gender equality as stated in the Freetown Manifesto for Gender Transformative Education**
- 2. Sustain political support at the highest level with +20% of the national budget**
- 3. Continue to focus on access to and quality of Early Childhood Education and Early Grade education to support foundational learning**
- 4. Emphasize teachers and the teaching profession as integral to education system success and support the continued professional development of teachers with emphasis on digital skills.**
- 5. Roll-out of school electrification and internet connectivity including through project GIGA**
- 6. Close coordination among national and international education stakeholders as exemplified through the NGO consortium and the multi-donor trust fund**
- 7. Put young people first, as exemplified by the Youth Advisory Group**

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8. Provide for technology, connectivity across schools and build capacities of teachers, children and other stakeholders to use them
 9. Pioneer innovative financing, as exemplified by the Sierra Leone Education Innovation Challenge

Start:

1. Engagement with parents and communities in a two-way dialogue on best practices/support education of children especially girls
2. Overhaul of teaching pedagogy from rote learning to promoting critical thinking and acquisition of hard and soft skills acquisition to prepare students for the 21st century labour market
3. Strengthen continuous academic support and supportive supervision to pre-school and early grade teachers through provision of structural support systems for learning communities within the local institutions and clusters
4. Train and support teachers in a gender transformation pedagogy and how to prevent school-related violence and adopt healthy lifestyle choices
5. Work closely with teachers to scale up use of technology that supports teaching and learning.
6. Integrate transferable skills and 21st century skills into curriculum and training in school education
7. Support and focus on mental health and counselling for children in the age of COVID 19.
8. Build pathways to support socio-economic opportunities for young people
9. Co-create solutions with young people for their productive transitioning from skills and education to work, based on their needs and challenges
10. Create a digital one-stop shop for education information and data for all education stakeholders in Sierra Leone: students, families, communities, government and international partners

Stop:

1. Reduce or eliminate corruption and malpractice in the education system
2. Corporal punishment of students;
3. Duplication of development partner programs: overlapping / contradictory education interventions

(C) Ensuring sustainable public financing:

Sierra Leone is already leading with +20% of discretionary budget committed to education every year in the medium-term national development plan, which also is key for attracting international financing of education in Sierra Leone. In addition, Sierra Leone will work to:

1. Improve budget execution and review efficiency and equity of current spending, including by expanding the share that goes to early childhood education
2. Improve accountability and accuracy of school subsidies, exam fees, teacher salaries and school feeding through digital national learner ID and effective teacher and school management data systems
3. Build exit strategies into donor projects; reduce administrative burden of internationally-funded education projects on government staff

(D) Review of National Education targets and benchmarks:

Sierra Leone is contemplating the following ambitious targets by 2030:

1. Cut learning poverty in half compared to pre-covid-19 levels
2. Zero out-of-school children in primary school
3. At least 40% of female school teachers and administrators
4. A minimum of two trained, qualified and licensed teachers in every primary school
5. All children receive at least one year of early childhood education at the start of school
6. All schools have access to energy and internet connectivity infrastructure
7. Maintain a minimum 20% of budget and achieve 5% of GDP invested in education

5. Appendix: Organizations present at the National Consultation Event

Government	Higher Education	Civil Society
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ministry Leadership○ Ministry Directors○ District Education Officers○ Teaching Service Commission○ FREE Project Secretariat● Ministry of Technical and Higher Education● Ministry of Finance● Ministry of Information and Communication● Ministry of Social Welfare● Directorate of Science Technology and Innovation● Parliament of Sierra Leone● Freetown City Council● Western Rural Area Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Freetown Polytechnic● Milton Margai Technical University● Tertiary Education Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Civil Rights Coalition● Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools● CSO Consortium● Institute for Governance Reform● Rainbo Initiative

NGOs	Development Partners	Youth Representatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Concern Worldwide ● Educaid ● Focus 1000 ● International Rescue Committee ● National Youth Awareness Forum ● Plan International ● Propel ● Purposeful ● Save the Children ● Sightsavers ● Street Child ● Teach for Sierra Leone ● VSO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Education Outcomes Fund ● Education Partnerships Group ● Irish Aid ● Global Partnership for Education ● UN Country Team ● UNDP ● UNESCO ● UNFPA ● UNICEF ● World Bank ● World Food Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bo District ● Bombali District ● Kailahun District ● Kenema District ● Kono District ● Pujehun District ● Western Rural Area ● Western Urban Area

Media	Private Sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Africa Young Voices TV ● A-Z Newspaper ● Concord Times News Paper ● Forum News Paper ● Momentum News Paper ● Radio Democracy ● Satellite News Paper ● Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation ● Standard Times News Paper ● Star Radio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Genex Consulting ● Identity Talk Consulting ● Rising Academies Network

6. Appendix: Agenda at National Consultation Event on June 1st

Agenda



Transforming Education Summit
September 2022



	Responsible / Speaker	
1 Registration	UNICEF / Radisson Blu	08:30 – 09:30
2 Welcome Statements and Opening Prayers	CEO MTHE	09:30 – 09:40
3 Opening Statement from United Nations	UN Resident Coordinator	09:40 – 09:50
4 Opening statements from Government of Sierra Leone	Ministers of MBSSE and MTHE	09:50 – 10:10
5 Links between Education Sector Plan and Transforming Education Summit	MBSSE	10:10 – 10:30
6 Introduction to Discussion Groups for Five Action Tracks	UNICEF / GPE Coordinator / DT	10:30 – 10:40
7 Coffee Break	Radisson Blu	10:40 – 11:00
8 Discussion Groups for Five Action Tracks	[Initials]	11:00 – 12:30
9 Lunch	Radisson Blu	12:30 – 13:30
10 Report Back	Rapporteurs	13:30 – 14:00
11 Pulling it together	UNICEF / GPE Coordinator / DT	14:00 – 14:20
12 Closing	Deputy CEO MBSSE	14:20 – 14:30

7. Appendix: Mapping of TES Action Tracks to Sierra Leone Education Sector Plan and SDG-4 Indicators

TES Action Tracks	ESP Objectives	SDG 4
1. Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 3: Reduce disparities in educational access, experience, and outcomes Objective 4: Provide safe, healthy, and conducive educational environments Objective 6: Enhance emergency prevention, preparedness, response and recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.5: Eliminate all discrimination in education 4a: Build and Upgrade Inclusive and Safe Schools
2. Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 1: Strengthen the Instructional Core (Curriculum, teaching and learning resources, assessment) Objective 8: Strengthen partnerships in support of learning and work readiness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1: Free Primary and Secondary Education 4.2: Equal Access to Quality Pre-Primary Education 4.3: Equal Access to Affordable Technical, Vocational and Higher Education 4.4: Increase the Number of People with Relevant Skills for Financial Success 4.6: Universal Literacy and Numeracy 4.7 Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship
3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 2: Recruit, retain and support excellent educators Objective 7: Eliminate corruption in education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4c: Increase the supply of qualified teachers in developing countries
4. Digital learning and transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 9: Increase use of data and technology to support learning and service delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1: Free Primary and Secondary Education 4.4: Increase the Number of People with Relevant Skills for Financial Success 4.6: Universal Literacy and Numeracy
5. Financing of education (and systems strengthening)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 5: Strengthen governance, management and accountability of the system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1: Free Primary and Secondary Education 4b: Expand higher education scholarships for developing countries Indicator F.1: Government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP Indicator F.2: Government expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure

8. Appendix: Sample Discussion Guide for National Consultation Event

National Consultation for Transforming Education Summit



**Theme: Accelerating progress and building coalitions for the Education Sector Plan
Action Track 3: Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession**

Time available: 90 minutes

Facilitator: Mr. Conrad Sackey (TSC)

Rapporteur: Mr. Adam Kreimeia (MBSSE)

Action Track Scope (Excerpted from discussion paper):

The achievement of SDG 4 and the transformation of education rely heavily on teachers and education personnel¹, yet global progress on education is severely constrained by three major challenges: teacher shortages; the qualifications and emerging professional development needs of teaching personnel, and their status and working conditions. In 2015, it was estimated that 69 million teachers were needed globally to meet SDG 4². Without enough teachers, classrooms are overcrowded, teachers are overworked, and the quality of teaching is inadequate to enable all learners, especially the most vulnerable, to achieve the expected learning outcomes

In line with the Report of the International Commission on the Futures of Education, the transformation of education requires supporting teacher collaboration, reflective practice and research supporting teacher autonomy and participation in public debate and decision-making in education. Such a workforce also needs decent work, including respect for fundamental principles and rights at work, equity and equality in access to quality education and education technology, and adequate working conditions and safety and health at work, including mental well-being for all education personnel, as well as protection against violence and harassment and communicable diseases.

Contents:

- Discussion Guide
- Annex I: Relevant Objectives, Outcomes and Activities from from Sierra Leone's 2022-26 Education Sector Plan
- Annex II: Main SDG 4 Objectives and Indicators
- Annex III: Key Policies and documents



Discussion guide

Overall purpose

To identify specific actions, innovative ideas and new alliances and partnerships to transform Sierra Leone's education system to support teachers, teaching and the teaching profession

Discussion Questions:

Topic A. Ensuring full recovery from COVID-19 educational disruption

- What steps have been taken to recover pandemic-related losses related to teachers, teaching and the teaching profession? What progress has been made to date?
- What additional measures are proposed to support further recovery in the short-term?

Topic: B. Identifying the main strategic transformations and levers for reimagining education for the 21st century and accelerating progress towards shared education goals

- Was the country off-track with regard to “support teachers, teaching and the teaching professional before the pandemic? - If yes, what are the main obstacles that have made it so difficult to move towards an adequate fulfillment of SDG 4?
- What possibilities for system change are apparent now that were not before?
- What features of education are most important to continue, strengthen and/or safeguard?
- What in current education policy and practice needs to be abandoned?
- What innovative transformations can be envisioned as desired features of education?
- What are the key levers of change within the national context?
- What coalitions and broad mobilizations can be activated?

Topic C: Ensuring strengthened and more sustainable public financing of education

Topic A. Ensuring full recovery from COVID-19 educational disruption

- How will greater equity in resource allocation be ensured?
- What additional innovative and multi-sectoral mechanisms can ensure adequate and sustainable domestic financing of education?

Topic D: Raising the ambition of national education targets and benchmarks

Topic A. Ensuring full recovery from COVID-19 educational disruption

- Which specific targets or indicators should Sierra Leone focus on championing by 2030?
- How can political accountability for achieving national SDG 4 benchmarks be strengthened?

Relevant Objectives, Outcomes and Activities from from Sierra Leone's 2022-26 Education Sector Plan

Overall goal: Higher levels of learning outcomes for all children and youth

Outcome 2.1 Recruit and retain qualified teachers and educators to meet demand

Topic A. Ensuring full recovery from COVID-19 educational disruption

- Develop career pathway for pre-primary teachers based on education, experience, and assessment
- Recruit qualified pre-primary, primary, and secondary teachers to meet the needed demand, while improving gender balance of the teacher workforce
- Provide rural or hardship allowances to encourage good teachers to serve in remote and disadvantaged schools
- Pay stipends to literacy facilitators in NFE Centres
- Review staff promotion criteria to ensure transparency and clear opportunities for growth for TVET educators
- Provide scholarships to teacher trainees in STEAM, SNE, languages etc., with a focus on gender balance
- Organise outreach and career day engagements with students in SSS and universities to take up teaching as a profession focusing on specific career pathways for women, students with disabilities, and other underrepresented groups

Outcome 2.2 High quality pre-service education for teachers

- Provide supervised teaching practice opportunities for teacher trainees enrolled in pre-service teacher education programmes
- Design flexible training programs for teachers on the government payroll without the required qualification
- Train/upgrade unqualified teachers and certify them based on TSC guidelines
- Upgrade classrooms, laboratories, libraries/resource centres, ICT infrastructure, and workshop facilities in TTIs
- Develop and use teacher performance assessment strategy and toolkit

Outcome 2.3 High quality continuous professional development and in-school support to teachers and other educators

- In-service CPD of teachers in pre-primary to senior secondary on selected topics
- Train literacy facilitators, centre coordinators, literacy organisers on the use of the NFE curriculum
- Orient local/indigenous resource person in skills in the community
- Develop and implement HE staff capacity development plan, including on gender issues

Main SDG 4 Objectives and Indicators

Target 4.c: By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States.

- **Indicator 4.c.1: Proportion of teachers in: (a) pre-primary education; (b) primary education; (c) lower secondary education; and (d) upper secondary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g., pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country, by sex**
- **Indicator: 4.c.2: Pupil-trained teacher ratio by education level**
- **Indicator: 4.c.3: Percentage of teachers qualified according to national standards, by education level and type of institution**
- **Indicator: 4.c.4: Pupil-qualified teacher ratio by education level**
- **Indicator 4.c.5: Average teacher salary relative to other professions requiring a comparable level of qualification**
- **Indicator 4.c.6: Teacher attrition rate by education level**
- **Indicator 4.c.7: Percentage of teachers who received in-service training in the last 12 months by type of training**