Government of Sierra Leone

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2010

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Foreword

The Government of Sierra Leone is conscious of and committed to meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century, and believes education is a key tool to addressing them. Among these is the challenge of change – technological, social, economic and cultural. One of the purposes of education is to prepare the individual to adapt to and manage change. The type of education which equips the individual with knowledge, skills, positive attitudes and values is determined by education policy; policy on what is taught and learned, the processes of teaching and learning, and the modes of assessing learning.

Policy development on education in Sierra Leone predated the *Education Act* of 1964 and continued up to 1970, when the first *White Paper* on Educational Policy was published. Twenty-five years later in 1995, the *New Education Policy* was published to provide a framework for the new education system that was introduced in 1995. The introduction of this system was influenced by the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. Since then, there have been many significant events in education at the national and international stage such as the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, the Millennium Summit which adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the passing of a number of Acts in 2001 culminating in the passing of the new Education Act in 2004.

More recently, as part of the "Agenda for Change", His Excellency Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, commissioned an investigation into the poor performance of pupils in the 2008 Basic Education Certificate Examination and the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination. A *White Paper* stating the position of the Government on the recommendations of the commission informed the development of *The National Education Policy 2010*. This policy seeks to provide a sound basis for directing the implementation of the new national system of education, the 6–3–4–4. It is hoped that this modified system will contribute to the provision of equitable access and opportunities for sustained learning achievement for all children and young people.

Let me thank all those, including our development partners, who initially contributed to the development of the draft policy, and those who have been intensely engaged in the process of finalising it. I thank IBIS/Concern Worldwide for their financial contribution to the process. My ministry is committed to the implementation of these policies and as a next step will develop a 5-year implementation plan based on this policy. Thank you all for responding to a national call to duty.

Dr. Minkailu Bah
Minister of Education, Youth and Sports

October 2010

Section I

Introduction

1.0. Preamble

The Government of Sierra Leone has prioritized education as one of the key drivers of economic growth. Since the end of the 10 year civil war in 2002, considerable progress has been made in consolidating peace and ensuring security for all. There have been two democratic elections. In education, enrolment rates in all sub-sectors have grown significantly. Primary and secondary enrolment rates more than doubled between 2000 and 2007; however, at least 30% of school-aged children are still out of school. The number of students sitting for the national level examinations have increased, yet performance, especially at the secondary level is weak. Furthermore, there are large disparities in access and performance based on gender, area of residence, and household wealth, which has serious implications for the country's economic and social developmental goal of achieving broad-based economic growth and alleviating poverty. In addition, unequal access to education threatens our hard won security. The Government is committed to providing quality basic education for all as enshrined in the Constitution. This new education policy is predicated on the *Constitution of Sierra Leone* and other supporting legislative and policy documents including *The Education Act 2004*, *The Government White Paper on Education 2010*, *The Local Government Act 2004*, *The Education Sector Plan 2007-2015*, The *National Policy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) 2010*, and the *National Policy for Teacher Training and Development 2010*. The policy also ensures full participation, collaboration and involvement of internal and external stakeholders including civil society organizations, community-based organizations, teachers, non-governmental organizations, other government ministries and professional organizations as well as international partners.

1.1. Social and Demographic Context

The population of Sierra Leone is approximately 5 million and consists of a number of diverse ethno-linguistic groups. The population, based on the National Population Census 2004[1] grew at an average rate of 1.8 percent per year over the last four decades. Around 66 percent of the population live in rural areas. The largest increase in population has been in the capital city of Freetown.

Children and youth make up a very large proportion of the total population in Sierra Leone. Just over 40 percent of the total population is less than 15 years of age, and around 34 percent are between 15 and 34 years of age. Between 1963 and 2004, both the number of children and youth and their share of the total population increased. It is expected that there will be a rapid expansion in the younger age groups (due to high fertility rates) in the coming years, with little

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[1] Government of Sierra Leone National Population Census 2004, p.20

change in the size of the older population (due to stagnant and low life expectancy rates). This can be seen in the population pyramids in Figure 1.1 for 2004 and 2015.

Figure 1.1

Population Pyramids, 2004 and 2015
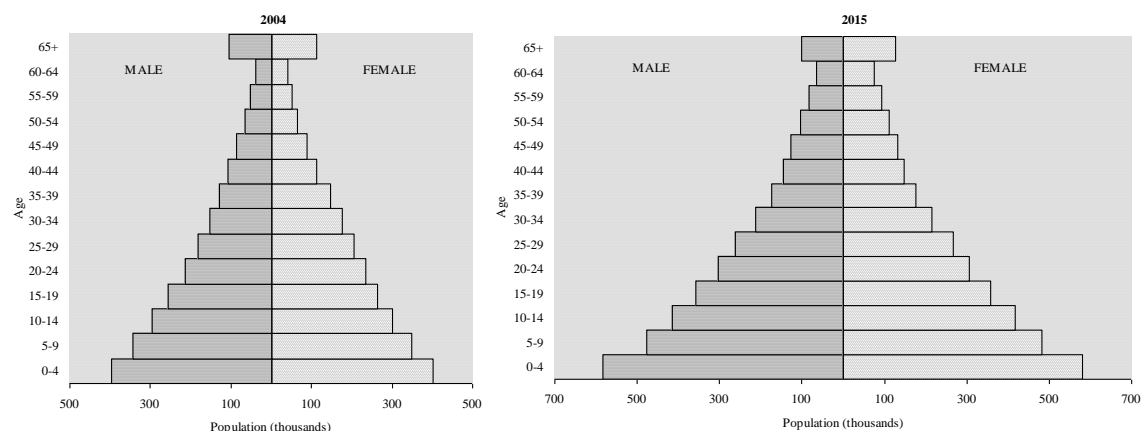
Source: Ed

The literacy rates amongst the youth and adult population are low. According to the 2008 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS 2008), 55% of men and 74% of women are not literate.

1.2. Political and Administrative Context

Sierra Leone gained its independence in 1961 and became a republic in 1971. After a long civil war, Sierra Leone is currently a fully fledged democracy based on the presidential and parliamentary system and operating on the basis of separation of powers between the legislature, the judiciary and the executive arms of governance. Administratively, the country is divided into 4 regions (the Northern, Southern and Eastern Regions, and the Western Area), 13 administrative districts, 19 Local Councils and 149 chiefdoms. Freetown, the capital city, is in the Western Area. The devolution of central government services and the reestablishment of local government (based on *the Local Government Act of 2004*) are some of the key political and administrative reforms of recent years.

1.3. Economic Context

The Republic of Sierra Leone is blessed with an abundance of natural resources. However, many years of political instability and mismanagement constrained the economic development of the country resulting in the majority of people living in poverty. Per capita gross national income (GNI) of US$320 in 2008 is much lower than the average of US$1082 for Sub-Saharan African countries or $564 for low-income countries[2]. About two-thirds of the working-age population engages in subsistence agriculture. Manufacturing consists mainly of the processing of raw materials and of light manufacturing for the domestic market. The country has important mineral resources, including diamonds, gold, bauxite, iron ore and rutile. Seventy-five percent of the land is arable. Of the arable land, ten percent is cultivated, mainly for food crops such as rice,

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[2] Data from World Bank website: data.worldbank.org [Accessed Sep 5th 2010]

cassava, yams, and other root crops. Commercial agriculture, largely cocoa, coffee and palm oil, devastated by the civil conflict, is gradually being resuscitated. The major source of hard currency is diamond mining. The Government has made the transformation of the economy to enable broad-based and pro-poor economic growth its key goal, and has prioritized providing reliable power supply, promoting agriculture and food security, developing a national transportation framework, and developing human resources through improved provision of basic social services.[3]

1.4. Human Resources Development Priority

Over the last decade, Sierra Leone has ranked at or near the bottom of the UNDP Human Development rankings due to low literacy rates, high maternal and infant mortality rates, and low life expectancy.

Despite the current situation, Sierra Leone has a rich history of human resources development through Western style education in Sub-Saharan Africa: the country boasts the first school for boys (CMS Grammar School) founded in 1845; the first school for girls (Annie Walsh Memorial School) founded in 1849; and the first tertiary education institution (Fourah Bay College) founded in 1827. The country played an important role in the training of the first corps of administrators, doctors and teachers in English-speaking West Africa in the first half of the last century. However, this education system catered to only a very portion of the population.

Since the end of the war, in 2002, significant progress has been made in increasing access to education. Primary school enrolments have increased from about 400,000 in the late 1980s to about 660,000 at the end of the war in 2001/2002.[4] Since then, primary enrolments have more than doubled reaching 1.3 million in 2006/07. Enrolments in the secondary level also doubled during the same period. Despite this, many school-aged children are still out of school; according to the DHS 2008, 26% of children aged 10-14 have had no formal education, and there are disparities with respect to gender, rural-urban residence, region and wealth. The disparities get wider as you move further up the education system. Figure 1.2 below shows the distribution of net attendance rates[5] in the primary and secondary sector across different groups. The figures show that disparities increase with the level of education, and attendance ratios are much lower in rural areas, outside the Western Area, and for the poorer households. Furthermore, the same pattern of disparities can be found in terms of educational performance, access to educational inputs (such as quality teachers), and public expenditure on education.

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[3] The Republic of Sierra Leone: Poverty Reduction Strategy 2008-2012: Agenda for Economic and Social Empowerment
[4] Country status report on Education
[5] Net attendance rate is the number of pupils in the official age group for a given level of education, expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group

Figure 1.2 Primary and Secondary Net Attendance Rates for various sub-populations (Source: DHS 2008)
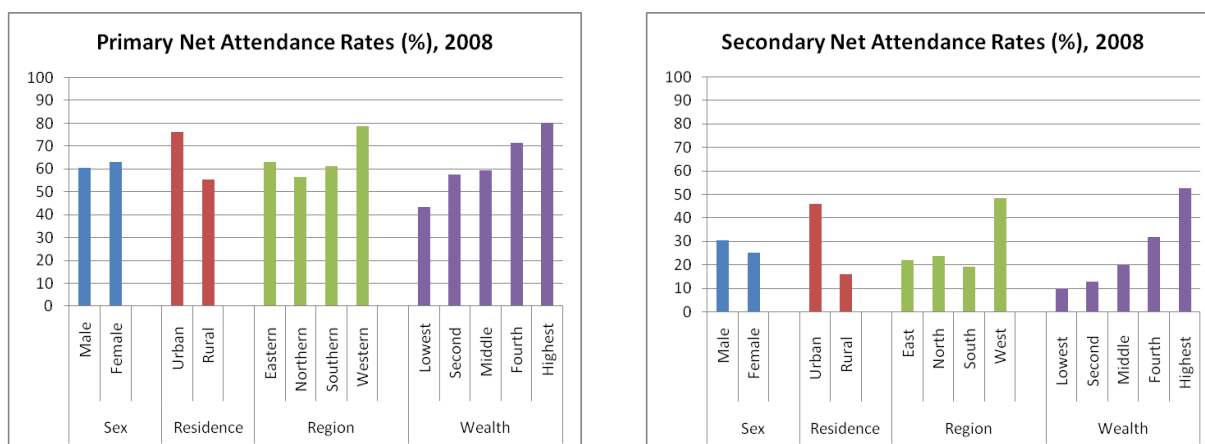
1.5. Policy Justification and Scope

At the core of the education priorities of the Government is the effort to first ensure the right of all children to gain access to the opportunities and environments required to meet their basic learning needs as reflected in the national Constitution's declaration that *"all children in Sierra Leone have a right to free compulsory basic education at primary and junior secondary school levels."* The Government of Sierra Leone has therefore embarked on reviewing the national policy, structures and systems for education. The new policies, plans and programmes are geared towards removing existing disparities in and enhancing support for and management of the education system towards meeting the national human resources development priorities.

Consequently the new national policy on education is envisaged to accommodate the following priorities:

  a) providing pre-school opportunities for all children
  b) accessing and completing quality basic education
  c) expanding and improving post-basic schooling
  d) providing more and improved literacy and skills training opportunities
  e) providing enough qualified teachers to meet the needs of an expanding schooling system
  f) meeting our human resources needs through higher/tertiary education
  g) providing improved governance, planning and management
  h) monitoring for quality improvement and accountability
  i) financing and fiscal sustainability of the system
  j) improving learning outcomes for all
  k) provide educational opportunities for children with special needs

The policy will also enable us to meet the goal of education in Sierra Leone, which is to develop citizens that can contribute to building a cohesive, healthy, and strong nation with a sustainable and dynamic economy; a free, just and peace-loving society; a democratic and harmonious society; and a moral and disciplined society.

Section II

New Education System

2.0. Preamble

The Government White Paper of 2010 mandated a new structure of education; the main changes to the existing system were the inclusion of compulsory pre-school for children aged 3-5 and the extension by one year of secondary level education. These changes were made to improve learning outcomes of children and youth. Until now, compulsory education has been 9 years in length – 6 years primary and 3 years of junior secondary. The current system of education envisions 12 years of compulsory schooling – 3 years preschool, 6 years primary and 3 years of junior secondary.

2.1. The New Education Structure

2.1.1. Pre-school education is for children aged 3-5 years old. It shall be free and compulsory. Every primary school shall have a pre-school wing attached. Pre-school education will support the all-round development of the child and lay the foundation for future learning success.

2.1.2. Primary education is 6 years in duration and for children aged 6-11 years old. It is free and compulsory. This level of education will emphasise the acquisition of literacy, numeracy, communication, and critical thinking skills. There are no entry requirements and it is open to all children of appropriate age. It forms the first part of basic education. It is mainly provided in formal primary schools, but there are non-formal providers of primary education for older children and youth.

2.1.3. Junior secondary education follows primary education and lasts for 3 years. It is compulsory, and shall be made progressively free. It is open to all students who have acquired basic literacy and numeracy skills determined by passing the National Primary School Examination. The junior secondary school level provides basic general education and preparation for general or technical and vocational upper secondary school education. At the end of junior secondary school all students will sit for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE).   Junior secondary education marks the end of compulsory education.

2.1.4. Senior secondary school education follows the junior secondary school level. There are two types of senior secondary education – one that offers general education (SSS) and another offers technical and vocational education and training (SSTV).. Senior secondary education is open to students who meet the government-stipulated requirements in the BECE. SSS students choose subject areas that allow them to specialize and prepare for tertiary level courses. Students at the end of the senior secondary level sit either for the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) or the National Vocational Qualifications examination (NVQ).

2.1.5. Post-secondary, non-tertiary education programmes straddle the boundary between senior secondary and tertiary education. The entry requirement is that students have at least a BECE certificate. Some may have attempted WASSCE, but do not have the minimum criteria necessary to enter tertiary level programmes. These programmes are typically more specialized than what is offered at the senior secondary level. Such programs are typically offered at Technical Vocational Institutes, Agricultural Institutes, Junior Colleges of Technology, and Polytechnics and lead towards the award of a certificate.

2.1.6. Tertiary education follows the senior secondary level. It is offered by polytechnics, professional colleges, and universities. Minimum requirement for entry into tertiary education is set by institutions, but a pre-requisite is WASSCE or NVQ. Tertiary education programs lead to the award of diplomas, certificates, and degrees. University programs should be research-oriented. Teacher education occurs at the tertiary level and is offered by polytechnics and universities. In addition to teaching, universities are also involved in research.

2.1.7. Non-formal education will be provided for older children, youth, and adults who missed out on formal basic education. Community Education Centres (CEC) will provide basic numeracy and literacy skills that will allow older students to (re-)enter the formal system if they choose or continue on the non-formal path to acquire further skills training or enter employment.

2.1.8. National Institute for Education Training and Research (NIETAR) shall develop a qualification framework that spans both the formal and non-formal sectors and create pathways of progression between the two.

2.2.

Table 1 Summary of the Formal Education Structure

Level	Name of the education programme	Minimum entrance requirements	Main diplomas, qualifications or certificates awarded at end	Official entrance age	Duration (in years)	Part of Compulsory Education?
Early Childhood Education	Pre-Primary	3 years old	n.a.	3	1-3	Y
Basic Education	Primary	6 years old	n.a.	6	6	Y
	Lower Secondary	Pass NPSE	BECE	12	3	Y
Upper Secondary	Upper Secondary	BECE	WASSCE	15	3	N
Post-Secondary, Non-tertiary	Primary teachers' certificate	BECE	Teacher Certificate (TC)	15+	1	N
	Technical Vocational Institute	WASSCE or NVQ	Ordinary National diploma (OND)	18	2	N
Tertiary	University	WASSCE	Bachelor's degree	18	4	N
	Secondary teachers' certificate	WASSCE	Higher teacher certificate (HTC)	18	3	N
	Polytechnic	WASSCE	Higher National diploma (HND)	18	2	N

Section III

Formal Education Sector

3.0. Preamble

The formal education sector encompasses preschool, basic education, senior secondary education, technical vocational education and training, and tertiary education. It is provided by the government and non-government providers and under the control of the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports (MEYS).

3.1. Preschool

The objective of pre-school education is to contribute to the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of the child and to prepare the child for primary school. Government shall:

3.1.1.   provide compulsory pre-school education for children aged 3-5

3.1.2.   prioritize access for children from disadvantaged backgrounds and children with special needs

3.1.3.   support the training of pre-school teachers

3.1.4.   establish minimum operating standards for all providers of pre-school education

3.1.5.   monitor pre-schools for adherence to set standards

3.1.6.   provide guidelines for feeding programs for pre-schools

3.1.7.   ensure that all new construction and/or rehabilitation of primary schools make accommodation for a pre-school wing

3.1.8.   support NIETAR to develop appropriate pre-school curricula

3.2. Basic Education

The objective of basic education is to provide a common foundation of knowledge, skills and values for all citizens. At the end of basic education, students would have acquired the necessary cognitive, social, and pre-vocational skills that will allow them to live safe and productive lives and to contribute to the development of their communities and the nation. To this end, the Government shall:

Access

3.2.1.   ensure basic education is compulsory, and primary education free

3.2.2. ensure every community has a primary school within 2.4 km (1.5 mile) radius and at least one junior secondary school in each chiefdom

3.2.3. provide guidelines for the approval of new primary and JSS schools

3.2.4. encourage non-government providers to provide quality basic education to complement the government's provision

Facilities

3.2.5. ensure all school facilities cater to the needs of all children – boys, girls and those with special needs

3.2.6. ensure every school has library facilities

Standards

3.2.7. ensure schools conform to minimum stipulated national standards

3.2.8. ensure class sizes (or pupil-classroom ratio) do not exceed 45 pupils and teacher: pupil ratio do not exceed 1:45

3.2.9. ensure teachers have a minimum qualification of Teacher Elementary Certificate (TEC) for lower primary; Teacher Certificate (TC) for upper primary; and Higher Teacher Certificate (HTC) for junior secondary

Curricula

3.2.10. support NIETAR to develop and periodically review the curricula

3.2.11. ensure that the basic education curricula is gender-responsive, and that it prepares students for life and the world of work

3.2.12. ensure that the language of instruction in classes 1-3 is the national language of the region and English and that the language of instruction in class 4 and above is English

3.2.13. support the development of teaching and learning materials as well as reading materials in the national languages

3.2.14. provide each child in government and government-assisted primary schools with textbooks in the four core subjects (set) to reach a pupil: textbook ratio of 1:1

3.2.15. provide every government and government-assisted primary school with teaching and learning materials

3.2.16. emphasize the acquisition of early reading skills in primary school as a foundation for further learning

3.2.17. support the study of the French language by JSS students

Organization

3.2.18. ensure all schools operate a single morning shift system from 8:30 am to 2:30 pm

3.2.19. support the wearing of school uniforms for students and a dress code for teachers, but does not support ceremonial uniforms

Learning Assessment and Examinations

3.2.20. ensure continuous assessment is carried out by all schools forms a part of the student's final grading

3.2.21. ensure all students in the final year of primary education sit the NPSE and all children in the final year of junior secondary sit the BECE

3.2.22. ensure all students sit for a minimum of 7 and maximum of 9 subjects at BECE

3.2.23. pays examination fees for all BECE and NPSE candidates in government, government-assisted schools and community schools

3.2.24. ensure all students passing the NPSE with the minimum government stipulated score are placed in a JSS; students who do not pass can re-sit the NPSE

3.2.25. support the development of a learning assessment framework to ensure that students develop critical basic literacy, numeracy, and thinking skills in their early years of schooling

School Management

3.2.26. ensure that school management committees (SMCs) are SMCs established in all primary schools and Boards of Governors (BOGs) in Junior Secondary to assist with management of schools

3.2.27. ensure that community teachers associations (CTAs) are set up in all schools to facilitate community participation and support of schools

Fees and Financial Support for Students

3.2.28. provide school fee subsidies for non-private primary schools, which shall be paid by the Local Councils into school bank accounts operated at recognised banking institutions

3.2.29. ensure tuition fees and other charges are abolished in non-private primary schools and stipulate the fees to be charged in public JSS

3.2.30. ensure that school heads and management bodies are accountable for monies paid into school accounts and for accurate financial reporting

3.2.31. encourage CTAs, SMCs, BOGs, and alumni associations to raise funds to support schools

3.2.32. provide tuition fees, uniforms, and teaching and learning materials for girls in junior secondary schools according to Ministry-established guidelines

3.3. Senior Secondary Education

The objective of senior secondary education is to produce learners who have acquired knowledge and skills in specialized course of study that will enable them to move into employment or further training in a tertiary-level institution.   The Government shall:

Access

3.3.1. develop criteria for the establishment of SSS and SSTV

3.3.2. encourage private provision of SSS and SSTV

3.3.3. provide at least one SSS or SSTV per chiefdom and put in place measures to reduce gender and other disparities in access

Facilities

3.3.4. ensure each government and government-assisted SSS and SSTV has a well-resourced library

3.3.5. ensure each government and government-assisted SSS and SSTV has the necessary laboratories, workshops, and equipment to provide good quality instruction

Curricula

3.3.6. support NIETAR to develop and periodically review the curricula

3.3.7. ensure that teaching is based on curricula developed by NIETAR

3.3.8. ensure each SSS and SSTV have a Guidance and Career Counselling Department

Standards

3.3.9. ensure that teachers have the minimum qualification of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) or equivalent

3.3.10. ensure the maximum class size is 45 students

Assessment and examinations

3.3.11. ensure that continuous assessment is carried out in all schools

3.3.12. ensure that at the end of the SSS cycle, students in government and government-assisted schools sit for the WASSCE; and, at the end of SSTV students sit for the NVQ examination

3.3.13. ensure all students sit for 7 subjects at SSS

3.4. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

The main objective of TVET is to produce individuals with social, technical and vocational, and entrepreneurial skills that will enable them to enter employment and/or self employment, and thereby contribute to national development. There exists a national policy on TVET developed in 2010 entitled *National Policy on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) 2010*. In that policy document, the Government commits to:

3.4.1. harmonizing all existing policies, laws and plans related to the TVET sub-sector

3.4.2. ensuring that TVET curricula are focused on meeting the demands of the labour market and contribute to national development

3.4.3. involving employers and private sector in all aspects of TVET development and delivery

3.4.4. ensuring equitable distribution of well-resourced TVET institutions and centres across the country

3.4.5. developing competency-based curricula, with certification standards, and a qualifications framework that allows for articulation

3.4.6. ensuring increased public-private partnerships in the development of TVET programs as well as encourage active participation of bilateral, multilateral and non-governmental organizations in the TVET sector

3.4.7. ensuring that TVET sub-sector is well resourced, organized and managed

3.4.8. ensuring that the *National Policy on Technical Vocational Education and Training* is implemented, monitored, and evaluated

3.5. Teacher Education and Development

The main objective of teacher education is to produce professional teachers who have the subject knowledge and understanding, practical skills and competencies, and professional ethics to teach to the highest standards. There exists a *National Policy on Teacher Training and Development in Sierra Leone*, developed in 2010. In that policy document, the Government commits to:

3.5.1. provide adequate funding for the education and development of teachers

3.5.2. strengthen the monitoring, supervision, and control mechanisms of teacher training and development and the roles of partners thereof

3.5.3. ensure that teacher education institutions are well-resourced

3.5.4. develop guidelines for in-service teacher training and distance education

3.5.5. support the implementation of the *Code of Conduct for Teachers and other Educational Personnel* with appropriate sanctions against those that violate the code

3.5.6. establish and adequately support the Teaching Service Commission which will be responsible for all aspects related to teacher management

3.5.7. create partnerships with local communities, national and international agencies in support of teacher education and development

3.5.8. ensure that the National Policy on Teacher Training and Development in Sierra Leone is implemented and monitored

3.6. Tertiary Education

Tertiary education in Sierra Leone is provided by different types of institutions – colleges, polytechnics, and universities. The main objective is to conduct needed research and produce graduates to meet the requirements of the job market who can contribute to economic growth and overall improvement in the standard of living of the nation. Government shall:

3.6.1. support the Tertiary Education Commission to carry out its advisory, accreditation, and quality assurance responsibilities for tertiary education

3.6.2. ensure that tertiary education institutions adhere to approved curriculum mandates and matriculation requirements

3.6.3. ensure that new private universities shall be established according to the laws laid out in the *Universities Act 2005*

3.6.4. provide grant-in-aid to eligible students at public tertiary institutions according to established criteria, which shall be reviewed on a regular basis. Priority shall be given to the following groups of students:

a) All female students in the sciences and engineering
b) Unqualified teachers in rural schools enrolled in a distance education teacher certificate program
c) Students enrolled in the following areas of greatest needs: Language Arts, Mathematics and Sciences, Medicine, Agriculture, Technical/Vocational Education and Training, Early Childhood Education
d) Students with special needs

Section IV

Non-Formal Education

4.0. Preamble

Non-formal education (NFE) includes all organized educational and training activities and processes outside the formal education system that are designed to meet the learning needs of out-of-school children, youths and adults. These include adult and continuing education, non-formal education for children, skills training and apprenticeships for youths, community education and adult literacy programmes. About 300,000 primary school aged children are reported to be out of school due to various factors including poverty, and many of these children may not be able to enter formal schools. At 45% for men and 24% for women, the adult literacy rate in Sierra Leone is one of the lowest in the world.[6] The literacy rates are much lower for women and rural residents. The Government provides the institutional and legal framework for non-formal education. This section focuses on the policies that will guide action and ensure access to and sustain learning outcomes from NFE.

4.1. Adult Education and Literacy

The main objective of adult education and literacy programs is to ensure that all adults have access to literacy, numeracy, communication, and life skills. Government shall:

4.1.1. strengthen the statutory Non-formal Education Council to ensure that it can fully execute its advisory, supervisory, and regulatory functions

4.1.2. support the development of literacy programs in the national languages

4.1.3. provide guidelines for the development of literacy and adult education programmes and curricula

4.1.4. publish a directory of accredited adult education agencies in Sierra Leone

4.1.5. support the development of training programs for adult literacy teachers in recognized teacher training institutions

4.1.6. develop a qualification and certification framework for literacy and adult education; including equivalencies with the formal sector

4.1.7. commission surveys to periodically determine the literacy rates in the districts, and to provide data for planning adult education and literacy programmes

4.1.8. ensure that there are comprehensive adult literacy programmes in every district

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[6] DHS 2008

4.2. Apprenticeships and skills training

The objective of apprenticeship training and skills training is to enable learners or trainees to acquire specific occupational skills as artisans, craftsmen, technicians, and technologists by working alongside skilled and experienced trainer. Out-of-school youth (between the ages of 15 and 35) are the primary targets for apprenticeship and skills training. Government shall:

4.2.1. support the implementation of the *National Policy on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) 2010*, which provide a framework for the development of apprenticeships and skills training

4.2.2. ensure the development of a qualification and certification framework for apprenticeships

4.2.3. ensure the development of standards for apprenticeships and skills training programs

4.2.4. develop the capacity of the Inspectorate Directorate to monitor apprenticeships and skills training programs

4.2.5. ensure the full involvement of industry and other private sector partners in both the formal and informal sectors in all aspects of apprenticeships and skills training

4.2.6. register and license apprenticeship programmes which meet set criteria and closely monitor their operations to ensure quality delivery and desirable learning outcomes

4.3. Community Education

Community Education is an educational enterprise by the community, of the community and for the community. The Education Act, 2004provides for the establishment of community education centres for the promotion of literacy skills and basic education. CECs provide an alternative pathway for providing basic education to out-of-school children, youth and adults). Government shall:

4.3.1. provide and monitor the implementation of minimum standards for CECs with respect to:

      a)   certification of centre graduates
      b)   qualifications of centre facilitators
      c)   assessment of learning processes and outcomes
      d)   evaluation of programmes

4.3.2. provide a framework to facilitate the re-entry of community education centre graduates into the formal system

4.3.3. ensure quality provision of community education

4.3.4. assist communities to mobilize resources for community education

4.4. Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) and Complementary Rapid Education Programme for Schools (CREPS).

The objective of NFPE and CREPS programmes were to provide an alternative pathway to basic education for children and youth above the official primary school going age that missed out on primary education. The CREPS program provided older children and youth the opportunity to complete primary curriculum in three years instead of the usual six and an opportunity to transition into junior secondary education. Government shall:

4.4.1. provide guidelines to progressively transform NFPE and CREPS centres into fully-fledged primary schools or to continue as community education centres

4.4.2. facilitate the involvement of communities, in particular parents, in the management of NFPE and CREPS

4.4.3. provide in-service training programmes in psycho-social counselling and life skills for teachers

Section V

Management and Control of Education

5.0. Preamble

Government recognizes that effective and efficient management and control of education are critical to the realisation of the national goals of education. To this end, Government reaffirms that the control of education in Sierra Leone shall continue to be in accordance with the legal provisions, educational statutes and other relevant provisions and documents, the principal ones being the *Education Act 2004* and the *Local Government Act 2004*. Government shall continue to support and strengthen the various Councils, Commissions and Boards established to manage and supervise the education system, and to further enhance the decentralization process especially as it relates to the implementation of the National Policy on Education.

5.1. Roles and responsibilities of various actors

5.1.1. The overall responsibility for education shall be the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS). MEYS shall be responsible for developing education policies and standards and ensuring the adherence to policies and standards. MEYS shall be responsible for coordinating educational service delivery and the activities of all stakeholders in the sector MEYS shall also be responsible for the management of government SSS, SSTV and other post-secondary (but non-tertiary) institutions.

5.1.2. *The National Commission for Basic Education* was established by Decree No. 4 of 1994 to advise, coordinate, monitor, evaluate, and conduct research on basic education programmes in the country

5.1.3. *The National Board of Education* – reconstituted and reactivated in March 2007; to assist the Ministry of Education in addressing challenges to education in Sierra Leone

5.1.4. *The Tertiary Education Commission* – established by the Tertiary Education Act 2001; to advise Government on all matters relating to tertiary education; fund-raising for tertiary education; vetting the budgets of tertiary institutions; ensuring relevance of programmes offered; ensuring equity in admission; recommending modifications in conditions of service; and ensuring parity in appointment and promotion of staff. The TEC will be responsible for the accreditation of tertiary institutions

5.1.5. *The Teaching Service Commission* shall be responsible for all matters related to teacher management and professional development

5.1.6. *The National Institute for Education Training and Research* shall be responsible for curriculum development, teacher development, and educational research. NIETAR shall incorporate the National Curriculum Research and Development Centre, and the National Council for Technical, Vocational and other Academic Awards

5.1.7. *The Non-Formal* Education Council was established by an Act of Parliament in 2004. Responsible for advising on all matters related to literacy and non-formal education programmes in Sierra Leone

5.1.8. *The National Council for Science and Technology* was established by a decision of Cabinet in 2001 as an organ providing policy guidelines relating to the development, dissemination, and application of science and technology countrywide

5.1.9. Government shall adequately strengthen and monitor the institutions mentioned above to ensure their effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery. In turn, they should present report of their annual activities and finances to the Minister of Education, for the attention of Parliament

5.2. School Management

5.2.1. MEYS shall be responsible for setting policies, standards and norms and for coordination and monitoring, while Local Councils shall be responsible for the implementation of Government policies in all schools and centres below the senior secondary level

5.2.2. The management of non-private schools and centres below the senior secondary level shall continue to be the responsibility of the Local Councils as stipulated by the Local Government Act 2004

5.2.3. The management of non-private senior secondary schools and TVET institutions shall be the direct responsibility of the Ministry of Education, and this responsibility shall be exercised through its appropriate sections at both central and district levels

5.2.4. Each primary school shall have an SMC as its management body. Each shall also have a CTA

5.2.5. Each junior and senior secondary school shall have a Board of Governors as its management body. Each shall also have a Parent/Teachers Association (PTA) or CTA

5.2.6. Each TVET institution shall have a Board as its management body

5.2.7. Heads of schools and centres shall be responsible for the general running of schools/centres

5.3. Private Institutions

Government shall:

5.3.1. continue to encourage the establishment of private institutions of a high quality

5.3.2. develop and enforce minimum standards for the establishment and operation of private pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools

5.3.3. support the TEC to regulate and accredit private tertiary institutions

5.4. Data/EMIS

Government shall:

5.4.1.   ensure the use of reliable and good quality data in the planning and management of the education system

5.4.2.   continue to strengthen and decentralize the Educational Management Information System (EMIS)

5.4.3.   ensure appropriate monitoring and evaluation of the entire system, including monitoring and evaluation of learning outcomes

5.4.4.   ensure school-based procedure for monitoring shall be established at all levels

5.4.5.   ensure the Planning and Policy Directorate has the resources it needs to be able to collect, collate and analyse and report on educational statistics

5.5. Decentralization and Devolution

Government shall:

5.5.1.   continue to support the devolution of functions to Local Councils as per the Local Government Act 2004

5.5.2.   continue to strengthen the decentralized system of management and supervision under the Inspectorate Directorate in the District Education Offices

5.5.3.   ensure strong accountability and reporting systems are developed and implemented across the various levels of decentralization and devolution

5.6. Financial Management

Government shall:

5.6.1.   continue to finance education at all levels and advocate for more active participation of the private sector, civil society, religious organizations, communities, and donor organizations in the financing of education

5.6.2.   ensure that the budget allocation for each sector of education shall respond to the specific needs and constraints of women and girls

5.6.3.   hold each head of institution and management body accountable for the financial management

5.6.4.   ensure that resources are well used and accountability systems are in place and working

5.6.5.   ensure that school fees subsidies paid to pre-primary and primary schools shall be utilized in accordance with guidelines set by MEYS

5.6.6.

5.7. Teaching and Learning Materials and Textbooks

Government shall:

5.7.1. procure and distribute freely teaching and learning materials to all government and government-assisted preschool, primary and JSS schools

5.7.2. provide every child in non-private primary schools with four (4) core text books in Mathematics, Language, Social Studies and Science

5.7.3. procure textbooks for secondary schools and sell these at a partial cost recovery basis

5.7.4. ensure that the Textbook Taskforce, set up by Government, is s responsible for the distribution of teaching and learning materials at both the headquarter and district levels, in collaboration with local councils

5.7.5. ensure that the membership of the Textbook Taskforce include representatives of Civil Society groups and local councils

5.7.6. ensure that NIETAR has a Textbook Division that will be responsible for encouraging local development of textbooks and determining appropriate textbooks for schools

5.8. School approval, monitoring and supervision

Government shall:

5.8.1. provide clearly defined guidelines for the establishment of any school and be responsible for the approval of new schools on recommendation of the Local Councils strengthen the capacity of the Inspectorate Directorate of the Ministry of Education to better perform its monitoring and supervision functions

5.8.2. support the development of an operations framework for monitoring and supervision

5.9. Partnership coordination

Government shall:

5.9.1. ensure the active participation of a wide range of partners in the education sector

5.9.2. regulate and coordinate the activities of education partners according to precise parameters and coordination guidelines laid out by the education ministry

5.9.3. ensure that partners adhere to the *Sierra Leone Aid Policy*

5.9.4. support the establishment of an Education Stakeholder Forum open to all NGOs and civil society organizations working in education to enhance information sharing and harmonized planning

5.9.5. require quarterly report of activities and spending from all education partners to the education ministry

5.9.6. require partners to provide the annual work plans according to agreed upon schedule

5.9.7. strengthen the NGO coordination office for enhanced coordination of the activities of education partners

5.10. Teacher management

Government shall:

5.10.1. establish and fully resource a Teaching Service Commission (TSC) that will be responsible for maintaining a professional teaching service. The TSC shall be responsible for all matters related to teacher management and development, including:

    a)   registering and licensing all professional teachers
    b)   maintaining a reliable database of teachers
    c)   vetting all qualifications and determining their equivalency based on a qualifications framework
    d)   teacher recruitment, appointment, promotion, transfer, and termination
    e)   enforcing the Code of Conduct for teachers, and disciplining teachers who violate the code in accordance with the law and the provisions of the Code of Conduct
    f)   ensuring non-professional teachers in service have the opportunity to get certified
    g)   organizing regular induction and orientation programme for new teachers
    h)   organizing continuing professional development programme for serving teachers

5.11.   Review of the Education System

Government shall:

5.11.1. conduct an annual performance review of the education sector in collaboration with development partners to assess the performance of the education sector based on agreed key indicators

5.11.2. ensure that district/council performance reviews are conducted in preparation for the national education sector review

5.11.3. ensure that up-to-date education statistics and financial information are available during the review process

5.11.4. ensure that the agreed recommendations from the review are carried out

Section VI

Cross-cutting Issues

6.0. Preamble

Cross-cutting issues present a formidable challenge for the educational system. The speed of technological change and development demands that science and technology are given priority in the education system. This requires that everyone should be taught the fundamental principles to cope with, utilize and exploit the benefits of science and technology. In this vain, the curriculum of all educational institutions shall have a strong component of Science and Technology. Health issues especially relating to sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and water and sanitation are now being addressed to create the environment for sustainable development. As Sierra Leone has just emerged from 10 years brutal civil war, the principles of civic education and peace education are vital components to be fully integrated into the educational system to ensure respect for the rule of law and human rights, without which progress will be impeded. An educational system cannot function effectively without a strong research base. This aspect of education shall be strengthened for a fast response to societal problems, the improvement of quality in the educational system, and over all socio-economic development.

6.1. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

The Government realizes that ICT are critical to the modern society and economy and that ICT can be a tool for expanding access to education as well as improving the management and operations of the education system. In support of and alignment with the National ICT Policy, the Government shall:

6.1.1. introduce ICT education in all institutions of learning, from primary to tertiary including TVET

6.1.2. develop special ICT training and programmes for out of school youths, people with special needs, and learners in non-formal centres

6.1.3. ensure all staff of the MEYS and teachers are competent users of ICT as a tool to enhance teaching and learning process, educational planning, and administration

6.1.4. create a website for the MEYS which will provide relevant information on education for student, teachers, and other stakeholders

6.1.5. support research and development in ICT and education at universities and research institutions including country-specific applications

6.1.6. encourage the use of ICT in delivering distance education programs

6.2. Science and Technology

Government shall promote science and technology at all levels of the society, whilst at the same time strengthening the science and technology capacity for sustainable socio-economic growth. Government shall:

6.2.1. strengthen science and technology infrastructure to train sufficient human resources in science and technology

6.2.2. strengthen the teaching and learning of science at all levels of the educational system

6.2.3. upgrade and modernise indigenous technology to better serve the needs of the country

6.2.4. strengthen the Science and Technology Council by providing more funding and capacity building

6.3. Rights and Protection

The education system shall protect the rights of all those who are within it and has an important role to play to inform and educate about the rights of children. The Government shall:

Health and Nutrition

6.3.1. extend and sustain school feeding programmes to provide nutritionally-complete meals for pupils in pre-schools and primary schools

6.3.2. ensure linkage with Ministry of Health and other relevant Ministries and departments on matters related to school feeding and health

6.3.3. encourage the establishment and maintenance of school gardens for the production of food and instil a culture of food production in children

6.3.4. include health and nutrition issues in the curricula for all children

6.3.5. ensure that each school and educational institution has a source of safe drinking water

6.3.6. ensure that each school and education institution has separate sanitation facilities for boys and girls

Child rights

6.3.7. ensure that the Code of Conduct for teachers and other educational personnel is enforced and violators of this code are prosecuted to the full extent of the law

6.3.8. ensure that learning environments are free from sexual harassment, abuse, and exploitation

6.3.9. ensure that children are not engaged in exploitative forms of child labour, which deprives the child of health, development or education

6.3.10. ensure that corporal punishment is banned in all schools in accordance with the Child Rights Act

6.3.11. prosecute to the full extent of the law perpetrators of violence and abuse against children

Special needs

6.3.12. provide extra assistance, specialized equipment and materials to support children and youth with special needs to access basic education

6.3.13. ensure all educational facilities cater for children with special needs

6.3.14. provide grant-in-aid to persons with disabilities who qualify to enter tertiary institutions

6.3.15. strengthen the unit for Special Needs Education in the Ministry of Education

6.3.16. develop and implement a national policy on Special Needs Education

6.3.17. include Special Needs Education in the teacher-training curriculum in all colleges

6.3.18. support communities to monitor the enrolment of children with disabilities (e.g. blind, low vision, deaf and physically challenged)

6.3.19. promote partnership and collaboration with education stakeholders to support inclusive education in their portfolios for basic education

6.4. Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS

In support of and alignment with the HIV/AIDS Policy, the Government shall:

6.4.1. integrate and promote sound, age-appropriate life skills education, including sexual and reproductive health education and HIV/AIDS information and education, at all levels of formal and non-formal education

6.4.2. ensure that all education personnel and/or learners infected and affected by HIV/AIDS are free from discrimination

6.5. Gender Equity

Government shall:

6.5.1. provide gender education at all levels, which includes education about gender-based violence and ensures equity in all education provision

6.5.2. support the removal of all barriers to education for all children, especially girls

6.5.3. ensure that all policies take the special needs of each gender into consideration

6.5.4. take affirmative action to increase the participation of girls and women in science, engineering, technology & mathematics and in the occupations related to these areas

6.5.5. take affirmative action to recruit more female teachers, especially in the rural areas

6.5.6. eradicate all forms of gender discrimination in schools and other learning institutions

6.6. Curriculum and Educational Material Development

Government shall:

Peace and Civic Education

6.6.1. ensure that peace and civic education is integrated into existing subjects in the curriculum of all schools and learning institutions

6.6.2. ensure that peace and civic education is taught in all institutions of learning to further strengthen good governance and the peace process

6.6.3. award prizes to educational institutions and student governments whose student body or membership demonstrate a high sense of discipline and good behaviour in student politics, sports, and academic performance

Educational Material Development

6.6.4. support the development of educational materials in the national languages

6.6.5. encourage the development of good quality supplementary books so as to encourage a culture of reading in learners

6.6.6. cause the language policy to be periodically reviewed and enforced throughout the country

6.6.7. ensure that every Teacher Training College recruits lecturers to teach the national languages

Learning Assessment

6.6.8. establish a unit for Learning Assessment and Evaluation within NIETAR to complement the efforts of the WAEC to promote and sustain quality learning

6.6.9. support the development of a learning assessment framework to evaluate student learning at regular intervals

6.6.10. strengthen the system of continuous assessments in the schools

Guidance and Counselling

6.6.11. develop policy and guidelines on Guidance and Counselling

6.6.12. train an adequate number of guidance counsellors to support primary and secondary schools in the country

6.6.13. provide relevant materials for students in life skills and career choices

6.7. Educational Research

The Government shall:

6.7.1. establish and fully fund NIETAR to undertake basic educational research

6.7.2. encourage and fund researchers to undertake regular research on issues affecting education

6.7.3. use research findings and data in decision- and policy-making in education

Acronyms

BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
BoG	Board of Governors
CEC	Community Education Centres
CREPS	Complementary Rapid Education Programmes
CTA	Community Teachers Association
EMIS	Education Management Information System
HTC	Higher Teacher Certificate
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
JSS	Junior Secondary School
MEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
NCBE	National Commission for Basic Education
NCTVE	National Council for Technical and Vocational Education
NFE	Non-formal Education
NFPE	Non-formal Primary Education
NIETAR	National Institute for Education Training and Research
NPSE	National Primary School Examination
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
SMC	School Management Committee
SSS	Senior Secondary School
SSTV	Senior Secondary TVET
TC	Teacher Certificate
TEC	Tertiary Education Committee
TEC	Teacher Elementary Certificate
TSC	Teacher Service Commission
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
WAEC	West Africa Examination Council
WASSCE	West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations

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