



Photo: Leh Wi Lan

LWL Insights

September
2024

Welcome to our second newsletter of 2024, filled with updates and progress on our work across the education sector to improve outcomes in secondary schools in Sierra Leone. Between March and August, we've developed initiatives to improve teaching quality, create safer, inclusive school environments, and enhance opportunities for secondary learners.

Distributing Hygiene Kits to Improve Girls' Attendance

Adolescent girls in Sierra Leone miss up to 20% of school when they don't have hygienic sanitary products to manage their period safely. In June, we worked with the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE), the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) and the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs (MoGCA) to distribute over 78,000 menstrual hygiene kits to schoolgirls across the country. These kits include reusable sanitary pads, soap and learning materials, ensuring that the girls always have what they need for a leak-free period.

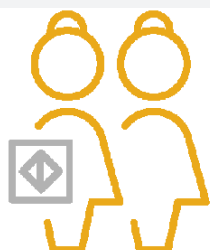
This initiative builds on work with MBSSE to share over 420,000 kits in previous years, and is part of our broader collaboration to create a safe, positive school environment where girls can thrive. We were delighted to work with District Education Offices as well as teachers and mentors to ensure the kits reached girls across five districts: Kailahun, Bo, Western Rural, Port Loko, and Bombali.

"The last time I had my period, I didn't have any cloths to use - that's what we had to use - so I missed school. I was too ashamed to tell anyone, so I stayed home that day."

Hannah, hygiene kit recipient



420,000
menstrual hygiene
kits given to secondary
school girls.



Championing Safety and Inclusion for Learners with Disability

In March, a community of Inclusion Champions (ICs) was launched to support the learning and safety of learners with disabilities. By ensuring schools have a key person to lead inclusion policy, planning and projects will ensure learners with disabilities receive better quality teaching, improve community awareness of disability inclusion, and increase enrolment of learners with disabilities.

240 ICs will take an active role in strengthening inclusive practices for learners with disabilities across 20 secondary schools in Bombali, Bo, Kailahun, Western Rural and Port Loko. They've been trained by organisations of people with disability how to: identify disabilities; use referral processes to get support for learners; implement techniques for creating more inclusive classrooms; and create a school-wide inclusion plan.

ICs will receive ongoing support, monitoring and training to ensure they are able to sustainably implement their work. We already see their positive impact: for example, one school has identified 21 learners with disabilities in need of support and developed a tracking database to monitor their learning progress.



Case study:

Inclusion Champions at a rural school in Bombali were told by teachers that Paul* was struggling to concentrate. When they met Paul, they established he had difficulties with hearing and suggested to teachers they move Paul to the front of the class, to ensure he speaks clearly in lessons, write information on the board and regularly check for understanding. Through these small adjustments, the monitoring reports show that Paul is now doing better in class.

*Learner's name has been changed for privacy.

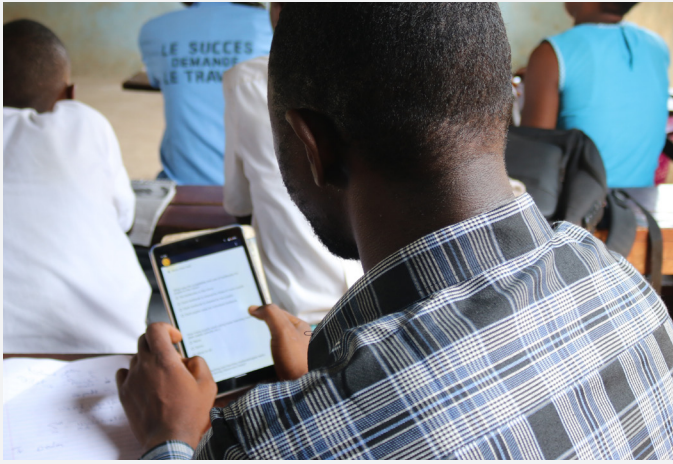
Establishing the National Technical Advisory Committee on Disability Inclusion

The National Technical Advisory Committee and Working Group are now advancing disability-inclusive education in Sierra Leone. Chaired by the MBSSE Deputy Chief Education Officer and including members from TSC, INGOs and organisations of people with disabilities, the committee will provide strategic oversight on quality learning, safety and inclusion for learners with disabilities. This multi-partner collaboration will enhance the capacity and commitment of stakeholders across the education system to develop and implement policy.

Building SQAOS's Capacity to Promote Quality Teaching

Two initiatives are underway to enable School Quality Assurance Officers (SQAOS) to improve monitoring and support for secondary schools. Though still in early stages, these represent a crucial step toward bolstering educational oversight and support, ultimately improving the quality of teaching and learning outcomes, ensuring:

- MBSSE receives better data on teaching and learning;



Launching the School Leadership Programme

Following a competitive application process, in April we welcomed 150 dedicated school leaders (23% female) as the first School Leadership Programme participants. This programme commits to improving educational leadership across schools in five districts (Western Area Rural, Port Loko, Bombali, Bo and Kailahun) to promote safety, inclusion and effective teaching for all learners.

- more teachers and school leaders receive quality recommendations on strengthening inclusion, safety and quality teaching practices.

A Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme for 180 new SQAOs is being launched with comprehensive training targeted to meet the education system's needs, while strengthening SQAO capacity and skills.

A pilot of remote supervision techniques is also running to ensure SQAOs can support all schools across their district, which is particularly important in remote, rural areas. Through technology such as Artificial Intelligence and chatbots, SQAOs can ensure continuity of school visits and enhance the quality of recommendations they provide to school leaders and teachers.

School Leadership Insights - Learning from Rwanda

Senior education officials from TSC, MBSSE and the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE) travelled to Rwanda to gain insight into their successful school leadership programmes. The visit provided an opportunity for delegates to learn about and reflect on the design of Sierra Leone's first accredited School Leadership Programme. During the trip, officials saw how the Rwandan programme implemented on-the-job support and coaching, balanced face-to-face and remote learning, and required collaboration between educational institutions and government bodies. While the lessons learned from Rwanda are valuable, officials recognised the need to adapt strategies to consider existing capacity and culture in our schools.

Over 12 weeks, these school leaders learnt about strategies for creating safer, more inclusive environments for all learners with the goal of implementing their learning in the new academic year while also embarking on their second module, which covers Improving Teaching and Learning.



"Everyone should have the opportunity to be included in the educational system in Sierra Leone. I hope every teacher takes this course to learn how to support all children, including those with disabilities."

Alphonso Kargbo, Principal, Western Rural District

A further 350 school leaders (10% female) have joined the SLP this October.

A Revised National Referral Protocol to Combat SGBV



On August 8th, the Government of Sierra Leone unveiled the 2024 National Referral Protocol (NRP) to improve cross-sectoral responses to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). This protocol aims to ensure that survivors of SGBV receive timely and appropriate support from service providers, starting from their first point of contact.

The new 2024 NRP was launched following extensive consultations led by MoGCA in partnership with MBSSE and various state and non-state actors. The launch event included representatives from MBSSE, MoGCA, TSC, the National Secretariat for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy, Ministry of Social Welfare, UN Women, Save the Children, Sightsavers, Defence for Children International and Rainbo Initiative.

It adds to the original document with:

- a guide on the roles and responsibilities of different actors involved delivering survivor-centred, trauma-informed responses

- coordination mechanisms and National Referral Pathways to ensure all survivors receive prompt, coordinated and effective services
- standards of professional practice for response services
- a framework for actors to monitor and evaluate their roles within the protocol.

At the launch event, Dr David Moinina Sengh, the Chief Minister, stressed the government's dedication to eradicating SGBV and creating safe learning environments for children:

"The Government continues to reaffirm its commitment to ensuring SGBV is prohibited, and we can respond adequately."



Hon. Conrad Sackey, the Minister of Education, highlighted MBSSE's commitment to developing policies that protect young people and promote a safe educational environment.

Leh We Lan was proud to support the review, design and launch of this document and is committed to working with the Government to create a safer Sierra Leone.

If you would like to receive more information about any of the topics mentioned above, or you would like to share some stories or information for the next issue, please reach out to our Comms Officer: Mariama.Sannoh@mottmac.com



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The second phase of the Leh Wi Lan programme is part of the Sierra Leone Secondary Education Improvement Programme II (SSEIP II), which is funded by UK International Development. This five-year programme supports Sierra Leone's Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) to deliver improved education outcomes at secondary level, with a focus on schoolgirls and learners with disabilities. Leh Wi Lan is implemented by a consortium of national and international organisations led by Cambridge Education.

