



Leh Wi Lan



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Photo: Leh Wi Lan

Leh Wi Lan (LWL) works with the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MBSSE) and education partners throughout Sierra Leone to strengthen teaching quality, inclusion and safety in secondary schools. This newsletter shares updates from the field – from strengthening school leadership and improving understanding and use of data, to uniting voices for greater inclusion and driving positive shifts in knowledge, attitudes and practices around learners' safety and wellbeing.

Making sense of education data systems

Reliable data is key to sustaining education improvements in Sierra Leone. Consultations with partners and senior MBSSE officials highlighted that despite strong data systems, leaders can struggle to use them together. To bridge knowledge gaps, a practical session was held on the national education data ecosystem. The discussion showcased how data systems – such as the School Master List, Annual School Census, Teacher Management Information System and School Quality Assurance tool – can work together to give a clearer picture of what's happening across schools. By improving coordination and access to data, the Ministry can make stronger, evidence-based decisions that improve planning, accountability and service delivery. The meeting closed with agreed next steps to continue strengthening leadership engagement and promote consistent data use across the system.



Strong leadership for sustainable change



Sierra Leone celebrated the graduation of the first two cohorts of the School Leadership Programme (SLP). Nearly 500 school leaders completed a year of training to strengthen their leadership, management and teaching skills. And that's only the beginning. SLP graduates are putting learning into action to make schools safer, more inclusive and better managed for every child. During a reflection workshop, school leaders shared stories of change; one in Bombali said the school safety and inclusion toolkit completely reshaped his approach, making support for every learner his top priority. Delivered by MBSSE and the Teaching Service Commission (TSC), with support from LWL, the SLP is moving toward accreditation and collaboration with higher education institutions, ensuring sustainability and lasting impact across Sierra Leone's schools.

Building grassroots advocacy for inclusive education with OPDs

Sierra Leone's vision for an inclusive education system means ensuring that every child has the opportunity to learn. Over the past two years, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) have participated in district and national level education meetings to strengthen advocacy for learners with disabilities. Recently, a capacity-building workshop brought together 48 OPD representatives from 16 districts to improve their knowledge and skills to better engage with education decision-makers and to develop an action plan for inclusive education. As a result, a Pan-Disability OPD District Team on Inclusive Education was created and endorsed by the MBSSE Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Director. This gives OPDs a stronger, unified voice to influence policy.



Watch out for a new film on transforming school leadership in Sierra Leone – coming soon!

Inclusion Plan implementation shows positive results

A recent LWL review of 100 schools showed strong progress in implementing School Inclusion Plans (SIPs) in secondary schools. The SIP helps schools to identify inclusion barriers, plan actions and track progress to ensure every child, especially marginalised learners, can attend, stay and thrive in school. The review found that ICs are leading initiatives that promote peer support, adaptive teaching, inclusive classroom arrangements and identification and referral of learners with disabilities. Collaboration among teachers, parents, district officials and service providers is also strengthening, although links with OPDs and medical service providers still need to improve. These findings support the need for formal recognition of the IC role and reinforce SIPs as a vital tool for promoting inclusive education practices.

School Inclusion Plans -100 schools reviewed

Read our learning briefs for full findings and recommendations from the study – available on the [Sierra Leone Education Knowledge Platform](#).

96% making good progress on SIP implementation	98% of learners with disabilities feel more included
73% of ICs received district or NGO support	89% of schools improved accessibility (ramps, adapted seating, signage)

Positive shifts in knowledge and attitudes on school safety and wellbeing

Violence, bullying and sexual abuse are major barriers to learning in Sierra Leone but encouraging progress is being made. Findings from the 2025 Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) Survey reveal that teachers are increasingly aware of reporting procedures and safer classroom practices, while learners show stronger understanding that violence is forbidden in school and greater awareness of their rights. There’s broader recognition that sexual relationships between teachers and learners are prohibited and more learners know that sexual touching is forbidden. Positive shifts are also seen in attitudes toward pregnant learners and menstrual hygiene. On the other hand, stigma, limited disability inclusion, fear of reporting and entrenched violent behaviours persist, highlighting the need for capacity building and targeted interventions to ensure all learners feel safe and included in school.

Learners that think that:

Violence is forbidden in school

Year	Percentage
2025	70.7%
2024	61.5%

Teachers that think that:

Pregnant learners should go to school

Year	Percentage
2025	76.9%
2024	54.5%

Personal Insight

A deeper look at what drives our efforts and the people behind the progress.



Abdulai Dumbuya

Disability Inclusion Lead

"Over the past years, there has been notable progress in inclusive education across Sierra Leone. Awareness and understanding of inclusive principles have grown among teachers, school leaders and local education authorities, leading to improved enrolment and participation of children with disabilities in mainstream schools. Capacity building for teachers has strengthened practices and we've seen better collaboration with MBSSE and OPDs.

Social and cultural barriers still remain. Stigma and misconception lead some parents to keep their children at home, especially girls with disabilities... [So], there still more room for improvement in those areas.

My dream is that every child in Sierra Leone, regardless of their disability, gender or background, can learn, grow and thrive in a safe, supportive school environment. And I think we're on to achieving that. The systems and structures that we've set up, all of that leads to us achieving this dream one day."

Strengthening knowledge-sharing on what works

The [MBSSE Sierra Leone Education Knowledge Platform](#) is a sector-wider website that provides resources, research and policy guides to those committed to building safety, inclusion and quality teaching in secondary schools. To support its development as a one-stop resource hub, we're welcoming all feedback on the platform. Please share your views in this short survey: <https://forms.gle/QqphtsEypuVqPmRt5>

What's next?

- Launching the new SQAQ tool and dashboard
- Validating a new School Leadership Policy



The second phase of the Lehi 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. Lehi Wi Lan is implemented by a consortium of national and international organisations led by Cambridge Education.