



Sustaining and Improving School Safety Committees



Key lessons and recommendations

Safe, inclusive and supportive schools are essential for learners to attend regularly, participate fully and achieve positive learning outcomes. Ensuring that schools are free from violence, discrimination and other safety risks requires coordinated action by school leaders, teachers, parents and communities. In Sierra Leone, School Safety Committees (SSCs) provide a mechanism for bringing these stakeholders together to identify risks, address concerns and create safer learning environments for all learners.

During LWL 2, the focus was on strengthening the school safety system including the SSCs and the systems that support schools to establish and manage them effectively.

What was achieved

A stronger national framework for School Safety Committees (SSC) with updated guidelines that standardise roles, responsibilities and safeguarding procedures across schools and the requirement to include representatives from the Board of Governors (BoG), Community Teachers Association (CTA) and a disability Inclusion Champion (IC) in their membership.

Guidance on SSCs included in the Teaching Service Commission (TSC)'s School Leadership Programme.

Improved capacity in 300 pilot schools to manage an effective SSC and to identify and address safety risks through the introduction of school safety self-assessment and action planning processes.

Integrated SSC functionality into the School Quality Assurance (SQA) process, enabling routine monitoring of school safety and stronger accountability at district and national levels.

Increased capacity at district level to help schools set up and manage effective SSCs.

Challenges/obstacles to address

Many schools do not yet have a functional SSC and not all schools are aware of the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE)'s School Safety Policy that requires all schools to have an SSC.

Systems for supporting schools to set up and manage effective SSCs, and for identifying schools that need help, are not yet well-established at national or district level.

Schools require continued and regular encouragement and coaching to ensure SSCs meet regularly and implement agreed school safety actions.

Community awareness of SSC roles and reporting mechanisms remains uneven across schools, limiting participation and ownership in some locations.

76%

Pilot schools with functional School Safety Committees

**Building
on Strong
Foundations**

What we've learned

School Quality Assurance Officers (SQAOs) using the new SQA process assess the quality of a school in six core areas, including school safety. Within this area, SQAOs are required to assess whether a school has a functional SSC using a small set of criteria. This means that the MBSSE at district and national level has access to data to help them support and improve SSCs.

Strong leadership at school level is critical for SSCs. Schools where principals champion SSC activities are more likely to follow up on agreed actions and maintain momentum. Having a module on school safety in the TSC's School Leadership Programme will help create safety champions among school leaders.

MBSSE and LWL introduced a new model for SSCs that includes representatives from the BoG and CTA. By bringing together school leaders, teachers, parents, and community representatives, the school and the community share responsibility for learner safety and wellbeing.

Recommendations

Sustain progress made	Improve progress further
School Level	
School principals and BoG to ensure their school has a functioning and effective SSC	Principals should actively monitor the effectiveness of SSCs and follow up on issues raised by learners, and ensure agreed actions are implemented and reviewed.
School leaders in 500 schools to ensure that their schools continue preparing plans for improving school safety	Principals and BoGs with SSCs share their expertise with nearby schools to help them establish functional SSCs
District Level	
SQAOs to continue collecting data about the presence and functionality of SSCs in schools as part of the SQA process	SQAOs and other District Education Office (DEO) staff to use school visits and meetings with schools to raise awareness of the importance of SSCs, promote sharing of good practice and help schools set up effective SSCs
In monthly Performance Management Meetings (PMMs), Deputy Directors (DDs) and SQAOs to: • review data collected via the SQA process on SSCs • use findings from the review to drive timely action, track progress, and improve SSCs • include school safety and SSC functionality as a standing agenda item during district review and PMMS	
National Level	
MBSSE to update the School Safety Policy with revised membership for SSCs and disseminate to schools	The TSC to ensure that the School Leadership Programme continues so that school leaders develop knowledge and skills to lead improvements in school safety
	MBSSE to work with partners to implement the School Safety Policy and support the expansion of functional SSCs

Where to get more information

You can download the Guidelines for Schools on Establishing and Operating a School Safety Committee from the MBSSE Education Knowledge Platform. These guidelines help all primary and secondary schools in Sierra Leone set up and run their SSCs. Available at:

<https://mbsseknowledgeplatform.gov.sl/material/guidelines-for-schools-on-establishing-and-operating-a-school-safety-committee/>



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