



Youth Development

**NATIONAL YOUTH
COMMISSION
(NAYCOM)**

**MINISTRY OF
YOUTH EMPLOYMENT
AND SPORTS (MYES)**

SIERRA LEONE STATUS OF THE YOUTH REPORT 2012

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AfDB	African Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
BADEA	Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examinations
COMAHS	College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences
DFID	Department for International Development
ECOWAS	Economic Community for West African States
FIAS	Foreign Investment Advisory Service
FBC	Fourah Bay College
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GIZ	German International Cooperation
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HEST	Higher Education, Science and Technology
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Country
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HTE	Higher or Tertiary Education
IDB	Islamic Development Bank
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPAM	Institute of Public Administration and Management
JSS	Junior Secondary School
MAFFS	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDRI	Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative
MEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
MICS	Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey

MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MYES	Ministry of Youth, Employment and Sports
NAYCOM	National Youth Commission
NCTVA	National Council of Technical, Vocational and other Academic Awards
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPSE	National Primary School Examinations
NYEAP	National Youth Employment Action Plan
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPEC	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SCP	Smallholder Commercialisation Programme
SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SSS	Senior Secondary School
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children and Education Fund
UN	United Nations
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
USL	University of Sierra Leone
VPE	Volunteer Peer Educator
WAEC	West African Examinations Council
WAEMU	West African Monetary Union
WASSCE	West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations

DEFINITIONS OF TERMINOLOGIES

Child Labour: According to the definition of “child labour” that was used in the latest Multi Indicator Cluster Survey 2010, a child aged between 5 and 11 years was considered to be involved in child labour activities, if s/he, during the week preceding the survey, performed at least one hour of economic work or 28 hours or more of domestic work per week. For a child aged between 12 and 14 years, the cut-off points to be considered as “child labourer” were at least 14 hours of economic work or 28 hours or more of domestic work per week.

Gender Inequality Index: The Gender Inequality Index (GII) reflects women’s disadvantage in three dimensions—reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market—for as many countries as data of reasonable quality allow. The index shows the loss in human development due to inequality between female and male achievements in these dimensions. It ranges from 0, which indicates that women and men fare equally, to 1, which indicates that women fare as poorly as possible in all measured dimensions. The health dimension is measured by two indicators: maternal mortality ratio and the adolescent fertility rate. The empowerment dimension is also measured by two indicators: the share of parliamentary seats held by each sex and by secondary and higher education attainment levels. The labour dimension is measured by women’s participation in the work force. The Gender Inequality Index is designed to reveal the extent to which national achievements in these aspects of human development are eroded by gender inequality, and to provide empirical foundations for policy analysis and advocacy efforts.

The **Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER)** or **Gross Enrollment Index (GEI)** is a statistical measure used in the education sector and by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in its Education Index to determine the number of students enrolled in school at several different grade levels (like elementary, middle school and high school), and examine it to analyze the ratio of the number of students who live in that country to those who qualify for the particular grade level. UNESCO, describes 'Gross Enrollment Ratio' as the total enrollment within a country "in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to this level of education."¹

Net Enrolment Ratio (NER): Enrolment of the official age-group for a given level of education expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population. **Purpose:** To show the extent of participation in a given level of education of children and youths belonging to the official age-group corresponding to the given level of education. **Calculation method:** Divide the number of pupils enrolled who are of the official age-group for a given level of education by the population for the same age-group and multiply the result by 100.

Labour force participation rate: Labour force participation rate is the proportion of the population ages 15 and older that is economically active: all people who supply labour for the production of goods and services during a specified period.

Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) was developed in 2010 by Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative and the United Nations Development Programme and uses different factors to determine poverty beyond income-based lists. It replaced the previous Human Poverty Index. The MPI is an index of acute multidimensional poverty. It shows the number of people who are multi-dimensionally poor (suffering deprivations in 33% of weighted indicators) and the number of deprivations with which poor households typically contend. Although deeply constrained by data limitations, MPI reveals a different pattern of poverty than income poverty, as it illuminates a different set of deprivations. The index uses the same three dimensions as the Human Development Index: health, education, and standard of living. These are measured using ten indicators. Each dimension and indicator is equally weighted.

Value chain: A ‘value chain’ in agriculture identifies the set of actors and activities that bring a basic agricultural product

from production in the field to final consumption, where at each stage value is added to the product. A value chain can be a vertical linking or a network between various independent business organizations and can involve processing, packaging, storage, transport and distribution. The terms “value chain” and “supply chain” are often used interchangeably. Modern value chains are characterized by vertical coordination, consolidation of the supply base, agro-industrial processing and use of standards throughout the chain. *Source: FAO, 2010.*

¹ Official UN definition for Gross Enrollment Rate

FOREWORD

The '2012 Sierra Leone Status of Youth Report' is a 'ground-breaking' document, which endeavours to give an informed analysis and documentation of the status of the youth in the country. It focuses on prioritized thematic areas such as Youth Employment and Economic Empowerment, Education and Training, Health Development Indicators and Youth Participation in Development.

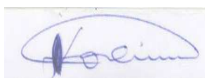
This report has been produced to inform national development policies and strategies in order to ensure that youth benefit from existing and emerging new opportunities in the country. Taking a critical analysis of the country's social, economic, political, cultural and sectoral context, the report will be used to identify potential opportunities and entry points for youth development and the extent to which these could be scaled up to the benefit of large numbers of youth in Sierra Leone.

The report is largely based on desk review, obtaining relevant secondary literature on the youth and selective consultations of key stakeholders involved in implementing youth development programmes were undertaken. Only to a very limited extent was primary data gathered during the preparation of the Youth Report, largely because of limited time and resource constraints in carrying the assignment.

The report is anchored on national development, political, cultural socio-economic contexts, taking into account the challenges confronting Sierra Leone. Since there is a big challenge in obtaining youth disaggregated data, nationally, existing data sets have been used to make inferences on the situation of the youth in the country. It is envisaged that in the coming years, more up-to-date youth specific data will be generated with a view to informing future National Youth Reports and the extent to which youth development and empowerment is taking place, including the impact and national implications of various current and future interventions.

NAYCOM and UNDP are highly indebted to the Consultant, Dr Stephen Chipika, whose tireless effort resulted in the production of this high quality product within a limited period. The inputs of all our partners who assisted by providing much valued information are also acknowledged. I would also like to commend all the stakeholders involved in the preparation of the Youth Report for their invaluable support, including those who may not have been directly consulted in the process but whose published or unpublished resources were used in the report. The specific support of the following people is acknowledged: Thea Lacey and Catherine Daniel of Restless Development; Jinnah Jusu Ngobeh of Statistics Sierra Leone; Franklin S. Bendu of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development; S.M. Sapateh, T.G. Meseray and Alhaji S. Janneh of the West African Examination Council and the National Consultant, Dr Omodele R.N. Jones and his team and Professor David Koroma of the Tertiary Education Commission who edited the final version of the report.

It is my considered view that the 2012 Status of Youth Report is well informed by current realities and the status of the youth in the country. The challenges raised in this report are an opportunity for Sierra Leone to reposition itself to take decisive measures to tackle youth development issues, which in my view, requires the support of every Sierra Leonean, and sustained support from all our national and international development partners.



Anthony A. Koroma
Commissioner
National Youth Commission

PREFACE



Let it be known to all that Sierra Leone can only move forward when its youth step forward. I have listened to the youths; I am re-affirming the covenant I made with the youths: *I dedicate my life to your service; I submit my administration to your participation, I commit our economy to your employment; I pledge the resources of this country to your education, your acquisition of appropriate skills, and your advancement.* Let all be witnesses unto this proclamation: this new social contract; this new economic imperative, this Agenda for Prosperity: we will equitably distribute the fruits of prosperity to all; we will respect the rights of all; we will focus on the training and employment of youths; and we will continue the restoration of discipline, law and order in society.

But government alone cannot bring prosperity; the private sector alone cannot bring prosperity. The Agenda for Prosperity needs commitment, cooperation, and discipline from youths, middle age and older persons. The Agenda for Prosperity requires the youths to render their creativity, their energy and their zeal unto the service of their nation, their community, and for their own progress. The Agenda warrants progressive action for bringing about prosperity. The Agenda needs discipline, it needs hard work; it needs initiative and drive. Help the country to help you; help the government to help you, help your community to help you. I know many youths are involved in a lot of good activities; I know many youths want more.

But to get more, you have to do more, you have to be more disciplined than your colleague; you have to respect the law, you have to respect your teacher, you have to respect your boss, you have to be ready to get new skills; you have to be honest. It will be easier for government and the private sector to create more opportunities for you when you pay greater attention to your behaviour, when you are more than ready to seize opportunities and be part of the transformation. The job of transforming this country is as much in your hands, as it is in our hands; and I believe that together, with discipline in our relations, commitment to our endeavours, and respect for laws and regulations we will definitely bring prosperity to this nation.

The process has started. We have established the National Youth Commission (NAYCOM); we are attracting investments that create jobs; we are building, equipping and supporting technical and vocational centres everywhere, we are appointing younger people to positions of authority in government. We will do more. With youths we will move this country forward, and the transformation will be unstoppable.

Presidential Address Delivered by His Excellency The President Dr Ernest Bai Koroma G.C.R.S.L. on the Occasion of the State Opening of the First Session of the Fourth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone (Excerpt)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Macro-level issues

The Youth Report notes the following at the macro-level, which is critical to trigger the right direction in youth development.

1. **Through its National Development Plan, Agenda for Change, Sierra Leone is making commendable strides to reverse the negative development trends**, largely exacerbated by the decade old civil war, to ensure self sustaining growth and development. An analysis of macro-economic development indicators show that the country is steering in the right direction, from the recovery phase to the development phase.
2. **Despite commendable performance in managing macro-economic indicators, unemployment and underemployment levels have remained very high, with the formal sector absorbing only 9 percent of the labour force.** The high levels of poverty and unemployment and underemployment that characterise more than 70 percent of the country's population, a large share of whom are youth call for extraordinary measures to tackle them, with the youth and their representatives in the forefront formulation of strategies and interventions designed to uplift their status.
3. **Stabilization of macro-economic indicators by itself is insufficient to promote growth and deal with the growing challenge of unemployment, in particular as it pertains to the country's youth. Economic growth is central to overall employment creation.** Other practical measures also need to be taken to boost the creation of decent employment for young women and men.

Key Actions

- i. **Formulate comprehensive and inclusive pro-employment job-rich growth targets for Sierra Leone.** The GoSL also needs to develop engendered employment and poverty reduction targets as a matter of priority. In view of the enormity of the youth unemployment and challenge with decent jobs creation strategies for Sierra Leone, this Youth Report advocates for comprehensive and inclusive pro-employment job-rich growth targets for Sierra Leone. The National Employment Policy and the National Youth Employment Action Plan (NYEAP) can be a useful starting point for this effort. Concrete steps in mobilising financial and human resources are required to support both the recently finalised National Employment Policy and the NYEAP, within the framework of functional public private partnerships (PPPs).
- ii. At the broader level, policies and strategies must target improvement of the human development index, covering health, nutrition, education and living standards, in particular reduction of the observed high levels of poverty in the country's population. This calls for **development of clear youth development sensitive policies and strategies at national, sector, sub-sector and micro levels, accompanied by an implementation framework supported by adequate financial and human resources.** Given the large share of youth in the 15 – 35 age bracket, comprising roughly 34 percent of the population, policies and programmes targeting the youth need careful planning, with clear targets set for the immediate, medium and long term².

²When children under 15 years are included, the proportion of young people (including those who would soon become youth) to the total population rises to over 60 percent.

Meso and Micro Level Issues

At the meso and micro levels, the Report Findings are as follows:

1. **MSME Development and agro-based value chains:** The report notes that a large number of young people, over 80 percent of them are trapped in low return activities in the micro and informal sector. There has been little or no focus to deepen capabilities of the largely informal micro, small and medium enterprises. Strategies to strengthen value chain development, in particular for the agricultural sector, have been lacking nationally³. MSMEs are identified in this Report to be a key entry point into decent jobs for a large proportion of the youth, yet there has not been a coherent national thrust to promote the development of micro, small and medium enterprises⁴. There is no MSME policy or strategy to guide Sierra Leonean enterprise development in a systemic manner.

Key action:

Designing of an MSME policy needs to be prioritised at national level. This would be with a view to strengthening the capabilities of micro, small and medium enterprises. In this area, substantial investment in deepening business development services, on the basis of priorities set in the National Youth Employment Action Plan is needed. This is an important step to strengthen the technological capabilities⁵ of small businesses in the country. Focus on agro-based value chains is particularly critical, given the high potential of the agricultural sector to absorb large numbers of young people, especially in rural areas.

2. **Labour Market Information:** The report notes that **the state of labour market information in the country is a challenging, giving rise to use of estimates of employment and unemployment figures, which can be avoided if an effective national system is established.** The estimates may be far removed from reality, hence the need to have more accurate statistics. These should be based on what is prevailing on the ground, especially in measuring levels of under-employment in the non-formal sectors; researching on the potential drivers for growth in employment and what is required to catapult more self-sustaining job-rich growth.

Key Action

Improvement in labour market information system: Addressing the key issue of youth unemployment requires accurate data on the situation prevailing in both the formal and informal sector. The government and development partners in Sierra Leone, need to prioritise resources mobilization and **planning for a new labour force survey**, and overall improvement of the labour market information system on a sustainable basis, taking note of the situation prevailing in the vulnerable non-formal sectors.

3. **Employment Creation and the Labour Market:** There is a well documented **mismatch** between current and anticipated future labour market and its preparation, from the lower level schools system, at primary, junior and senior secondary, to higher and tertiary education and training, including university and technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

³The MAFFS supported Smallholder Commercialisation Programme is taking up the issue of agro-based value chain development. However, it is at its preliminary stages of implementation.

⁴The GoSL and NAYCOM supported National Action Plan on Youth Employment makes strong reference to the development of MSMEs in Sierra Leone.

⁵ Technological capabilities (TCs) are defined as the knowledge, skills and efforts required for firms to bring about an indigenous process of technological development. This can occur by increasing efficiency in the management of the enterprise value chain and improving the innovation capabilities of MSMEs.

There is a general **lack of innovation to meet the changing job market demands, including self-employment**. This mismatch has given rise to a disconnect between supply and demand for labour, contributing to increasing levels of youth unemployment.

Key Actions

- i. The mismatch between education and training and the labour market needs, can be addressed through the development of **labour market ready skills and entrepreneurship minded youth, with the capacity to successfully scale up business opportunities, both in the informal sector and the more demanding formal sector; ensuring education and training matches the requirements of both formal and informal employment, including self-employment**.
- ii. **Support to National Youth Employment Action Plan:** There is scope for holistic and engendered youth sensitive approaches to development, taking into account the challenges of different age groups, for example, the disabled and other marginalised groups such as illiterate youth, and those in rural areas. **The GoSL and development partners need to take a more bold stance to provide practical forms of support to the Sierra Leone National Youth Employment Action Plan⁶.**
- iii. **Deepening establishment of public-private partnerships (PPP)**, to ensure that adequate measures are taken to implement the NYEAP in priority areas as documented in the youth employment action plan. The following is an outline of some of the priority areas spelt out in the NYEAP.

Education Sector

1. **Meeting the challenges of out-of-school youth and children:** There is a large proportion of **children out of school**. Whilst it is noted in this report that the GoSL has shown **strong focus in developing the primary schools system** in the country, in view of the magnitude of the challenge, there is need for **sustained Government commitment and leadership in addressing the out-of-school challenge** in Sierra Leone. The Youth Report acknowledges that whilst the **situation has improved markedly in recent years**, there is continued concern with **high levels of illiteracy amongst the youth and how to deal with the over-aged but illiterate**.

Key Actions

- i. With poverty identified as one of the major underlying causes of children dropping out-of-school, transparent, equitable, efficient and accountable resource allocation systems are required to address the prevailing socio-economic challenges. **The Donor community must increase its financial support to education programmes for vulnerable children and support national frameworks set out by the Government. Actors working in education, child protection and social protection must also develop joint criteria and guidelines, for the identification of out-of-school children and the provision of holistic programmes addressing the out-of-school problem.** To address the issue of youth dropping out of school earlier than is desirable, a two-pronged intervention that provides both short-term/immediate and long-term assistance is vital in supporting marginalised families to improve their financial and economic resources whilst ensuring that their children continue their schooling. Addressing the complex and overlapping issues of out-of-school children requires a holistic approach that involves the various sectors and all stakeholders.

⁶ A National Youth Employment Action Plan (2012) was recently finalized in Sierra, with the involvement of UNDP Sierra Leone, NAYCOM and some collaborating partners like the World Bank and others.

The current free basic education programme needs to also consider targeting improving access to schools by the disadvantaged out- of-school children, including dealing with the challenges of over- aged children.

- ii. **Current effort to tackle illiteracy must be sustained and where necessary scaled up:** There is need to strengthen literacy levels of the population, especially the youth, addressing identified gaps in basic education and training, from primary, secondary education, through to more advanced training and qualifications; higher education, TVET and apprenticeship training, based on the labour market realities of the country; adoption of innovative approaches to human resources and skills development⁷. *{MOFED also needs to spearhead a process of determining rate of return in the various levels of the education sector, to justify renewed and sustained focus in the sector, if returns are found high, which is expected}.*
 - iii. **Gender mainstreaming: There is need to take particular care to ensure a level playing field for the illiterate young women and men,** developing basic programmes to meet the needs of marginalised young women and men, for example, in the area of vocational education and training and raising literacy levels generally.
2. **Junior and Senior Secondary Schools:** Despite the reported construction of large numbers of new Junior Secondary Schools, a **large proportion of children completing primary education remain without access to JSS.** The MEST 2010/11 School Census Report point to the need to continue to give priority to the construction of Junior Secondary Schools, training and recruitment of appropriately qualified teachers and the provision of textbooks and other teaching learning materials for increased access at Junior Secondary School level.

Key Action: Continue to give priority to construction of Secondary Schools, training and recruitment of qualified teachers, improving the quality of education.

3. The pattern of **high failure rates for the BECE and WASSCE examinations has been repeated in recent years**, highlighting the urgency of prioritising full implementation of the recommendations of the 2010 Education Commission which are contained in the Government White Paper. It has been noted in this report that despite a 50 percent improvement in the pass rates for the senior secondary examination since 2008, failure rates for the WASSCE have remained unacceptably high over the three-year period, from 2009 to 2011.

Key Actions

- i. **Improvement of performance in the BECE and WSSCE:** There is need to **monitor the extent to which the recommendations of the Education Commission are being implemented {relating to addressing the issues understood to be the underlying causes of high failure rates at junior and secondary schools}; whether other measures are required** to support the proposals already largely accepted by Government⁸.
- ii. From a gender perspective, the effort to support improvement in pass rates for both girls and boys at both junior and senior secondary schools needs to be sustained, as well as looking at other qualitative aspects of education for girls, including entry into higher learning institutions such as universities. General improvement in enrolment for both girls and boys at JSS and SSS levels must also continue to be a priority for government and its development partners in the education sector.

⁷ Refer to Education Sector Strategic Plan.

⁸ Except for only a few, most of the key Commission's recommendations were accepted by the Government.

Higher/Tertiary Education

The GoSL has invested much in **ensuring equity in access to higher education through its affirmative gender policy on female students in the sciences and engineering disciplines and support for entry into HEIs by students with disabilities**. However, the issue of financing of higher education has surfaced as a major concern for many prospective students, in view of financial and economic challenges facing most Sierra Leonean households.

Over the past 6 years, the government has prioritised the education sector in the annual budgets. This is demonstrated by ‘increases’ of budgetary allocation to the education sector between 2007 and 2010. However, the financing of the education sector from national treasury has remained a challenge, in view of the limited funding base. Support from international development partners to the higher education sector has remained minimal.

Key Actions

- i. **Higher and Tertiary Institutions (HEIs):** It is widely acknowledged that **the governance structures and laws governing Higher Education Institutions need to be reviewed to assess how they hinder or facilitate the institutions to perform their mission**. The current legislation does not encourage innovation and improvement of quality as it constrains the authority of HEIs and support organizations such as the TEC to develop strategies to improve the system. The review of the TEC 2001 Act and other remedial effort when completed should contribute to an improved situation than currently the case.
- ii. **Financing education sector development: Government must continue to prioritise Education and Health sectors, in addition to forging strategic innovative public and private partnerships and other sustainable approaches:** Given the low public financial base from which the GoSL draws its budget for the education sector and the limited number of development partners involved in education, a new strategy needs to be employed. Relating to Higher/Tertiary Education Institutions, the GoSL is encouraged to consider other innovative avenues of complementing the government’s student grant scheme. There is a need to forge stronger public and private partnerships, mobilising mining and other private companies to invest a significant share of their profits in developing Higher/Tertiary Education Institutions and other priority areas of the education sector as part of their community obligations. New international development partnerships also need to be sought to promote education development in the country.

Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET)

TVET is an option for large numbers of youth unable to enter university and polytechnics. **Many young people view TVET lowly. The use of ‘outdated equipment’, poor funding for TVET programmes, general lack of strategic thrust and quality are cited by the youth as major challenges.** Budgetary allocation to the education sector is lowest for TVET, being only 2 percent of the sector budget, between 2009 and 2010, compared to 51 percent for pre-primary and primary education, and 19 percent for higher education.

Key Actions

Dealing with challenges confronting TVET

- i. **The Youth Report also notes that the current national education curricula needs review and reform, with resources provided to support the endeavour.** Strengthening of student internships and attachments of youth from tertiary and other segments of the education and training system, taking into account the challenges facing the most vulnerable and disadvantaged youth. The traditional apprenticeship system needs to be recognized, ensuring that it meets the needs of those who can be trained on the job, as well as providing incentives to those who house youth for such training. There is need to consider ways of upgrading the capacity of such training, where appropriate. For example, incentives can be provided in areas for which there is scarcity of skills.
- ii. **There is need for a rethink of the development approach for Sierra Leone; balancing investment in infrastructure and associated projects, with investment in human resources development. A two-pronged approach, focusing on deepening the local technological capabilities, including human resources, (both in terms of quality and quantity) and organizational and management skills, is likely to be more sustainable and to achieve better results for the youth and the country than one focusing merely on supply of infrastructure and 'recovery'.** In order to deal with the challenges cited, there is need for a new drive and strategic shift of focus with a view to developing a dynamic TVET system capable of meeting the challenges of a country in transition, to transformation and a more self-sustaining development phase. The Government of Sierra Leone, in collaboration with international development partners, such as the World Bank, European Commission, International Labour Organisation, UNCTAD, UNDP and others need to review the current situation. TVET development priorities must be given to the following:
- iii. Expedite the finalisation of the TVET policy, which has been in draft form for several years. Once the new TVET policy is adopted, **an Implementation Plan and a Costing Framework** is required, accompanied by a comprehensive resources mobilization strategy to support prioritised interventions.
- iv. Consideration needs to be made for developing a **National Human Resources Development Plan**, on the basis of a new TVET Policy, and within the framework of the Education Sector Strategic Plan, incorporate development of a new-look TVET system and labour market-oriented education and training system.
- v. **Development of human resources development support networks, involving the private sector (e.g., local mining companies and others), forging linkages between TVET demand and supply in the labour market.** A framework could be developed to establish a way in which private companies can invest in certain training programmes, focusing on areas for which there is definite demand, e.g., mining technology, technicians, engineers, middle level management programmes, business and marketing capacity development. Focus should be to deepen human resources capabilities, focusing on the youth through effective public and private partnerships.

The Health Sector

1. **In recent years, Sierra Leone has made rapid progress in implementing key health interventions.** The Free Health Care Initiative, launched in 2010, to provide free health services to pregnant women, and other vulnerable groups such as breastfeeding mothers and children under the age of 5 years, is particularly noteworthy. The 2010 Health Sector Performance Report and the Service Availability and Readiness Assessment (SARA, 2011), amongst other issues, highlighted the need to have improved availability of essential drugs at all health facilities in order to ensure an adequate level of services.
2. Although access to health care has improved in recent years, studies show that at least one third of the Sierra Leonean population remained dissatisfied with medical services.

Key Actions

Sierra Leonean medical facilities need to boost their service readiness, especially in conducting quick in-house diagnostics laboratory tests and the supply of drugs as part of a strategy to improve the country's health delivery system, and the country's HDI, in particular with a view to benefiting marginalised groups like young women and men without decent sources of income as well as other groups. The strategies should also seek to address the reproductive and health needs of young women, issues of early marriages, and other key issues affecting women which have been identified in the report.

3. **HIV and AIDS: HIV prevalence is higher among girls than boys, indicating a worrying trend of infection in young girls.** Whilst the youth have not been recorded as group with the highest prevalence, Sierra Leone cannot afford to be complacent. Despite progress in controlling the epidemic, particularly under the difficult conditions of the post-war period, youth in Sierra Leone are a high risk group and vulnerable to increased HIV rate of infection.

Key Actions

The GoSL and development partners need to **scale up education and awareness programmes across all groups of the population, paying particular attention to addressing gender issues; tackling challenges relating to young women who are noted to be more vulnerable to HIV and AIDS than male counterparts.** HIV and AIDS programmes must also seek to reach out to groups found to be least knowledgeable such as rural areas, where awareness campaigns have been less visible.

4. **Teenage pregnancies:** There is increasing awareness that the high level sexual activity amongst girls increases their vulnerability to HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. **Studies abound to show that teenage pregnancies are a major challenge in Sierra Leone.** There are serious consequences for young girls, such as dropping out of school early and reducing their educational opportunities. Teenage pregnancies are linked to low contraceptive prevalence in the country, with young women the least likely to use contraceptives, making them more vulnerable.

Key Actions

Substantial programmes need to be put in place, **including improving awareness and availability of contraceptives to ensure that young women are better able to manage their sexual reproductive health.**

5. **Substance and drug abuse:** Available information point to a growing challenge of drug and substance abuse amongst young people in the country. Recent studies have shown that youth are resorting to substance and drug abuse on an increasing level because of frustration emanating from poverty and joblessness⁹. There are however, cases of youth from affluent families and gainfully employed that result to substance and drug abuse

Key Actions

The urgent need for concerned authorities to **monitor closely developments in substance and drug abuse** has been demonstrated in this report. **The GoSL in collaboration with relevant development partners needs to explore cost effective ways of tackling the challenge of substance and drug abuse amongst youth before it worsens.** Substance and drugs abuse prevention should be well-informed, disseminating relevant and accurate information on abused substances in Sierra Leone, with timely appropriate action taken.

6. **Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C): The practice is on the decline.** This has been a subject of discussion in various UNICEF supported Multi-Indicator Cluster Surveys in recent years.

Key Actions

Sustained awareness and education on the negative effects of FGM/C in affected communities and regions is still required and is more likely to reduce further the occurrence of this practice, nationally, in the foreseeable future as results from efforts so far undertaken indicate.

7. **Young people with disability:** A recent study on disability in Sierra Leone published by Leonard Cheshire Disability, a UK Charity, reveals “**very concerning levels of abuse, discrimination and lack of access to essential services like health, education and welfare for disabled people**”. A Disability Act (2012) which was recently passed, followed up with establishment of a Disability Commission in July 2012.

Key Actions

There is need to develop more practical interventions targeted to supporting the livelihood system and general welfare of disabled persons. The Disability Act needs to be backed up by sustained strategies of financial resource mobilization, capacity building and training, to support the ‘entry points’ for scaling up opportunities for disabled young people to have more decent lives. In this regard, practical interventions implemented through the Disability Commission, established in July 2012, would be noteworthy¹⁰.

Youth Participation in Development

The report identifies a number of opportunities for youth participation in development on the basis of development best practice from youth-led interventions. These include the key issue of establishing functional management and organisational structures, furthering of non-formal peer- peer education in managing youth-oriented sexual reproductive health issues, dealing with the national challenge of teenage pregnancies, capacity building and preparation of young people for the world of work through structured internship schemes and empowerment of young people to become effective community development workers, amongst other strategies.

⁹ Restless Development, Sierra Leone, 2012.

¹⁰ Sierra Leone has been commended for recruiting into the police force, disabled persons, for the first time in the history of the country.

It is noted that **whilst these interventions, by themselves, may not be a panacea to the challenges of youth participation in development, yet when combined with other approaches, they constitute a valuable starting point for engaging the youth more meaningfully in development processes in the country.** For example, the on-going formulation process of the Sierra Leone Youth Service Corps could benefit immensely from the initiatives already being undertaken in the country by various development partners.

The establishment of NAYCOM and decentralised youth structures at grassroots level in the form of District Youth Advisory Committees, District Youth Councils (DYCs) and Chiefdom/Zonal Youth Councils are steps in the right direction. However, these structures, from national to decentralised levels, need to be followed up with **provision of tangible support involving functional or effective public private partnerships.** Heavy dependence on existing limited annual government budgetary allocation and on financial resources of a few international development partners may not be adequate to implement a comprehensive youth support programme and may not be sustained in the long term.

Key Actions

- i. Borrow from lessons learned by selected development partners and those from other countries in similar context, taking measures to scale development best practice, feeding these into a programme with bigger national orientation and higher potential impact.
- ii. The **capacity and skills building challenges** observed in the finalised assessment of DYCs point to the need **for comprehensive resource mobilisation strategy for youth development interventions, nationally.** This report advocates for creative ways of resource mobilisation and doing business for sustaining youth development programming in Sierra Leone¹¹. The report also advocates for the establishment of a variety of practical interventions designed to uplift the wellbeing of the youth and to meet the needs of different youth groups on the basis of priorities set with their participation.
- iii. **Lobbying strategy: A key strategy for broadening youth participation:** through advocacy, awareness raising, sensitising youth on various issues, focusing on attitudinal change, exploring ways of unleashing youth potential, and involvement in non-traditional areas, including areas in which youth are generally not engaged. If opportunities are 'scaled up' or 'deepened' in what is referred to in this report as 'major drivers for growth in employment creation in Sierra Leone', the country would move in the right direction with the youth. If the right conditions are created, including rationalisation of the use of underutilised land and sustained investment in agricultural development, there are opportunities worth taking in agro-based value chains, with a potential shift away from subsistence farming. Amongst other strategies, NAYCOM can use youth role models to change the mindset of youth disinterested in farming-related activities, transform the perspective of the youth and facilitate movement into higher value agro-based productive enterprises. Amongst other sub-sectors, strategies should concentrate on programming focusing on a 'new-look' sector with diverse opportunities for the youth.

¹¹ Sustained mechanism of resource mobilization, monitoring and supervision of the fund to ensure that it achieves its objectives would be critical. Large mining companies are showing signs of interest in joining in national development efforts designed to benefit the country (*Refer to case study, box 9, innovative PPP, initiated with support from GIZ*)

- vi. **Establishment of broad-based partnerships centred on youth development in Sierra Leone:** Truly, successful interventions designed to tackle the issue of youth development; in particular the one relating to the key issue of creation of decent employment for young women and men depends on building meaningful partnerships and alliances on a local, national, regional and global level. Action plans on youth development can be used as a tool for the conversion of youth development priorities into concrete action and to strengthen the coordination of youth relevant interventions.

- v. **What the Youth Must Do:** The GoSL has made a **good start in tackling youth development issues** in the country. The challenges the country faces in other sectors and nationally are enormous. Clearly, the youth themselves must **arise and have more self-determination, work harder, become more innovative and entrepreneurial, change their mind-set** and unproductive **culture** and become **more productive and focused citizens**. To be sustainable, once the structures are established and fully established, support from Government and development partners should **complement** the **practical initiatives** of the youth, rather than the other way round!

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(Photographer: Bex Singleton, website –bexsingleton.com) This picture shows that young Sierra Leonean women have creative talents and are desirous to be engaged in various forms of employment either in the public or private sector of the economy. All that is required: mobilisation, mass public education, creation and/or improvement of more livelihood opportunities for sustainable youth development and empowerment.



(Photographer: Bex Singleton, website –bexsingleton.com) Working in the informal sector e.g. trading in foodstuffs, is a source of livelihood for large numbers of youth. Better remunerating opportunities can be found for the youth by creating more conducive training and livelihood opportunities.



(Photographer: Bex Singleton, website –bexsingleton.com) Sierra Leonean youth can do better than loitering as these young men are doing.

1. OVERVIEW

1.1 BACKGROUND/INTRODUCTION

The National Youth Commission (NAYCOM) was established by an Act of Parliament (No 11 of 2009) which came into force on 22 December 2009. The Act opened up space for the Commission to “empower the youth to develop their potential, creativity and skills for national development...” The Act established a governing Board of eleven persons that consists of representatives of the four provinces, youth representatives and delegates from Ministries of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) and Youth Employment and Sports (MYES).

Since its establishment, NAYCOM has housed the Youth Employment Support Programme (YESP), with the support of MYES, UNDP and World Bank. NAYCOM has, in collaboration with the MYES, facilitated the review of the Youth Employment Strategy, which culminated in the development of the National Youth Employment Action Plan (NYEAP) during the period 2011/2012. In order to strengthen the participation of young women and men in development, NAYCOM has also overseen the development of restructured District Youth Councils and decentralised structures in the form of Chiefdom/Zonal Youth Councils, by ensuring that truly democratic elections are conducted freely and fairly in all of the 13 districts of the country. With the involvement of NAYCOM Youth Officers and other technical backstopping support, awareness, training and capacity building were undertaken in all the districts, to ensure achievement of that endeavour. The process of mobilising material and financial resources to strengthen the institutional capacities of NAYCOM and its decentralised structures to ensure a higher level of effectiveness and impact is on-going.

1.1.1 Objective of the Youth Report

The major objective of the ‘2012 Sierra Leone Status of Youth Report’ is to provide a comprehensive analysis and documentation of the status of the youth in the country, focusing on prioritized thematic areas such as Youth Employment and Economic Empowerment, Education and Training, Health Development Indicators, Youth Participation in Development. This report has been produced to inform relevant national development policies and strategies in order to ensure that young women and men benefit from existing and emerging new opportunities in the country. Within the country’s social, economic, political, cultural and sectoral context, the report would be used to identify potential opportunities and the extent to which these could be scaled up to the benefit of young women and men in Sierra Leone. In order to produce the report, substantial desk review was conducted, obtaining relevant secondary literature on the youth, with consultations of selected key stakeholders carried out in the process. Where necessary, during the consultations some primary data was also gathered and analysed with a view to producing a Youth Report that is adequately informed with current realities, status and developments in the country.

The first section discusses the macro-economic environment, analysing some key development and demographic indicators. The second section discusses issues of Youth and the Labour Market while the third discusses Education and Training. The fourth section discusses, Health Development Indicators. Other themes, such as youth participation in development and others will be incorporated in due course.

1.2 Overview of Demographic Background: Population Statistics in Sierra Leone

Table 1 and figure 1 highlight the youthful nature of the Sierra Leone population. On the basis of population projections provided by the GoSL, well over 60 percent of the population of 5,967,910 is made up of those in the age bracket of up to 35 years, which includes children less than 15 years.

The youth¹² constitute about 34 percent of the total population¹³.

Table 1: Youth Population vs Other Population Groups, Sierra Leone, 2008-2012				
Year	0 - 14 years	15 - 34 years	35 - 49 years	50 yrs & over
2008	2,427,960	1,639,128	724,481	663,327
2009	2,484,820	1,680,929	739,382	674,535
2010	2,541,971	1,719,590	756,388	690,049
2011	2,600,436	1,759,141	773,784	705,920
2012	2,660,246	1,799,601	791,581	722,156
Source: GoSL/Statistics Sierra Leone, 2006, 2004 Population and Housing Census, Analytical Report on Population Projection for Sierra Leone				

Figure 1 and table 1 also demonstrate that Sierra Leone has a very large youth population relative to the adult population. A large population of children, 15 years and below (44 percent); with a relatively small proportion of people 35 years and above (23 percent), confirming a worrying situation that might point to decline in other key development indicators. This might require further investigation, analysis and possible policy intervention.

While the situation has improved since the end of the civil war, Sierra Leone's social indicators are still among the worst in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). In 2011, Sierra Leone remained in the low human development category, being ranked 180th out of 187 countries, according to the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI), which incorporates dimensions of health, education and living standards, placing the country amongst the top 10 poorest countries of the world¹⁴.

Sierra Leone ranked 180th out of 187 countries in Human Development Index

Nearly one out of five children in Sierra Leone dies before reaching the age of five, primarily due to malaria, diarrhoeal diseases and acute respiratory infection. Underlying factors include pervasive poverty, limited access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation, poor nutrition, and limited access to quality health services. The poor health status of the population is mainly a result of high disease burden caused by environment related communicable diseases aggravated by poor nutrition.

¹² Youth in Sierra Leone are legally defined as young women and men aged 15 – 35 years; the United Nations considers as youth those in the age bracket 15 – 24 years.

¹³ The last Population and Housing Census was carried out in 2004. Figures are based on projections of Statistics Sierra Leone (2006), using 'low variant assumptions' to the country's population and age groups.

¹⁴ UNDP - Human Development Report, 2011.

Figure 1: Sierra Leone Youth Population vs. Other Population Groups

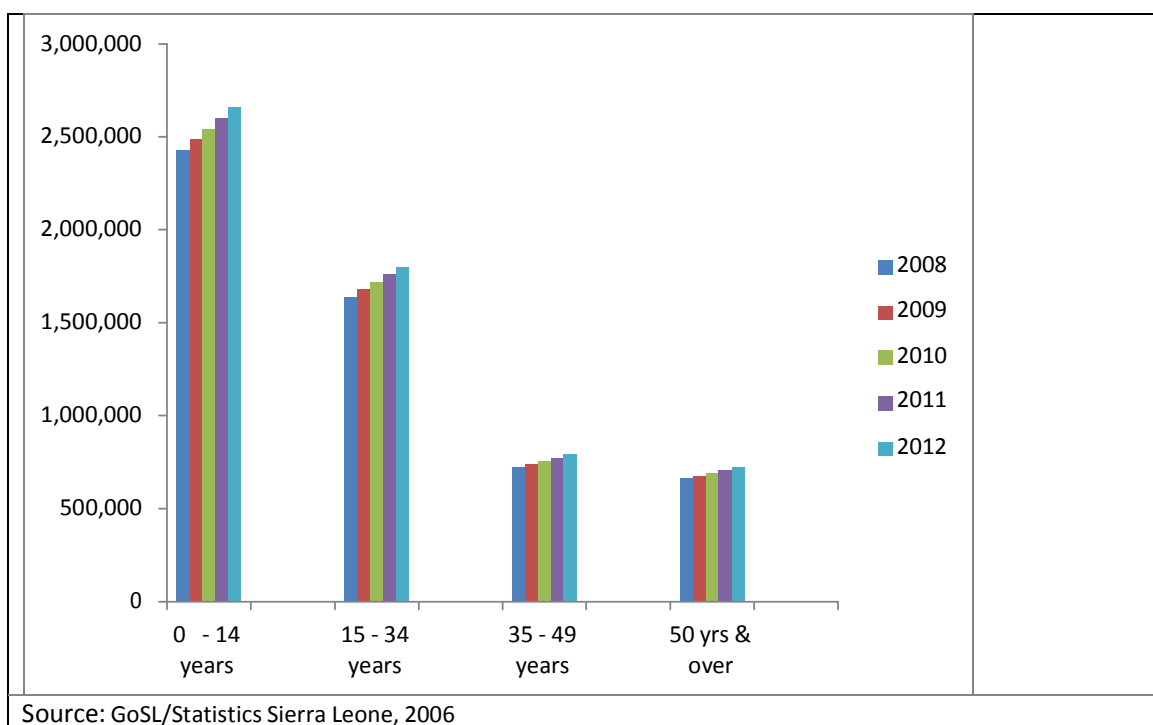
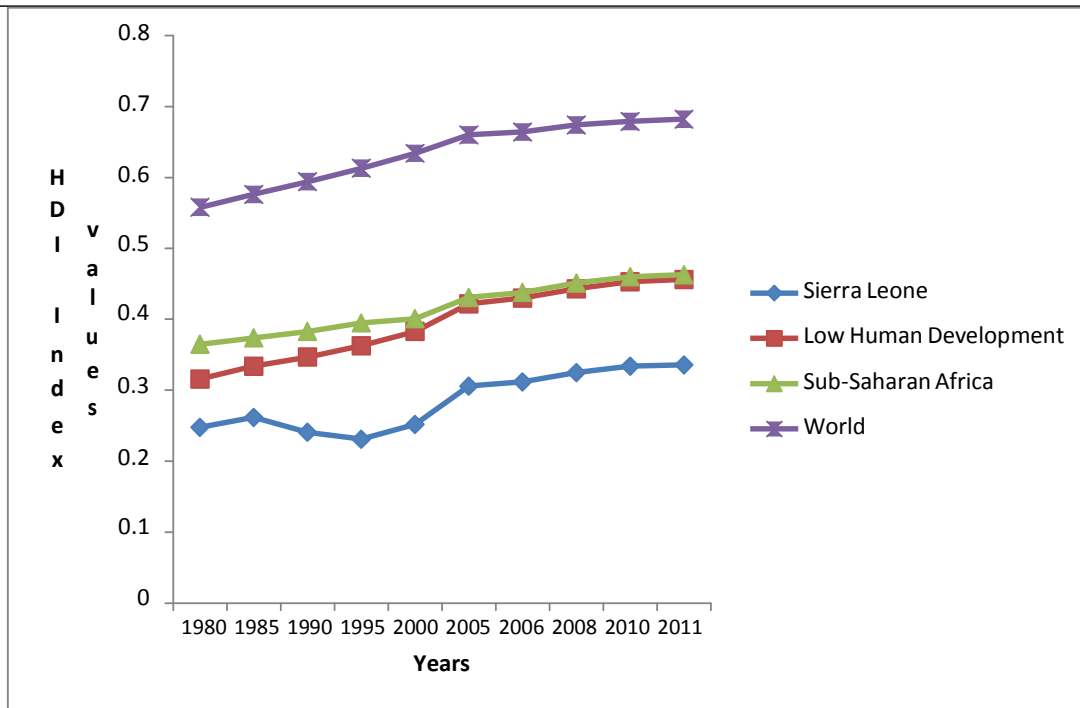


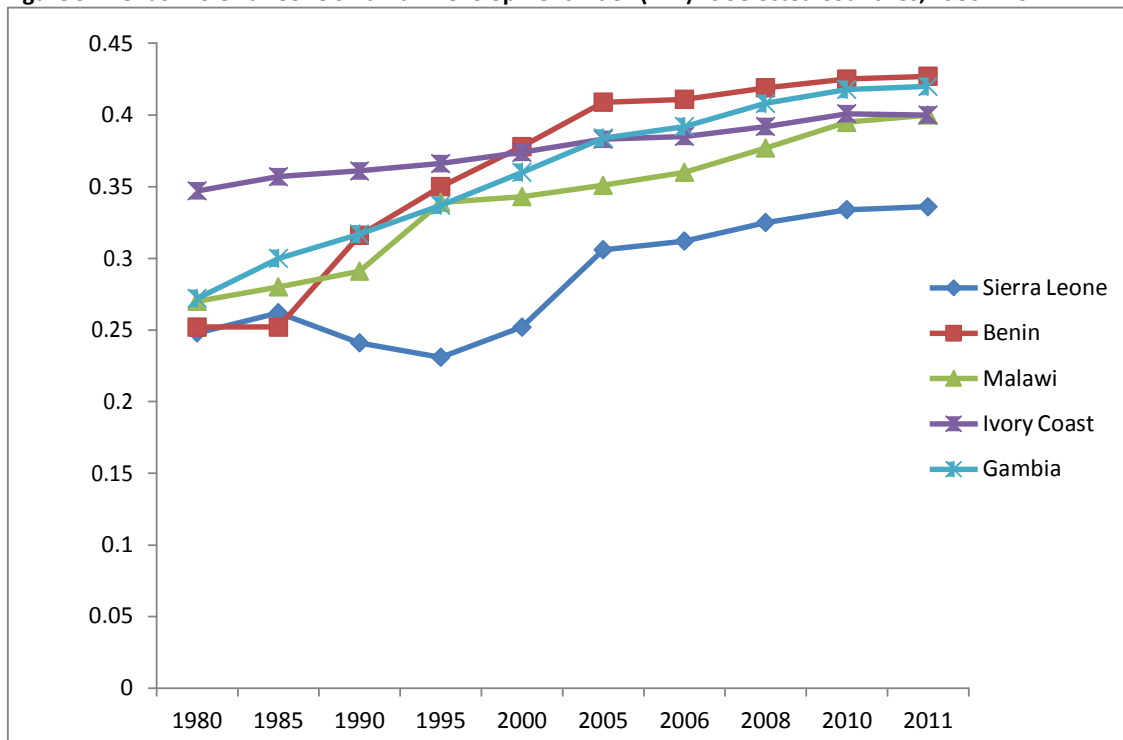
Table 2: Sierra Leone's Human Development Indicators for 2011 Relative to Selected Countries and Groups						
Country	HDI value	HDI rank	Life expectancy at birth	Expected years of schooling	Mean years of schooling	GNI/per (PPP) US\$
Sierra Leone	0.336	180	47.8	7.2	2.9	737
Guinea	0.344	178	54.1	8.6	1.6	863
Burundi	0.316	185	50.4	10.5	2.7	368
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.463	-	54.4	9.2	4.5	1,966
Low HDI	0.456	-	58.7	8.3	4.2	1,585
Source: UNDP, Sierra Leone Human Development Indicators, 2011						

Figure 2: Human Development Index: Sierra Leone Compared with Rest of the World



Source: Calculated from UNDP, Sierra Leone Human Development Indicators, 2011

Figure 3: Trends in Sierra Leone's Human Development Index (HDI) vs Selected Countries, 1980 – 2011



Source: Calculated from UNDP, Sierra Leone Human Development Indicators, 2011

1.2.1 Gender Inequality Index (GII)

The Gender Inequality Index (GII) reflects gender-based inequalities in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activity. Reproductive health is measured by maternal mortality and adolescent fertility rates. Empowerment is generally measured by the share of parliamentary seats held by each gender and attainment at secondary and higher education by each gender; and economic activity is measured by the labour market participation rate for each gender. The GI replaced the previous Gender related Development Index and Gender Empowerment Index. The GI shows the loss in human development due to inequality between female and male achievements in the three GI dimensions. Sierra Leone has a GI value of 0.662, ranking it 137 out of 146 countries in the 2011 index (Refer to table 3). In Sierra Leone, 13.2 per cent of parliamentary seats are held by women, and 9.5 percent of adult women have reached a secondary or higher level of education compared to 20.4 per cent of their male counterparts. The GI for primary schools was 1.04 in 2010¹⁵, demonstrating that efforts by the GoSL and its development partners to uphold the education of the Girl Child were paying off.

Table 3: Sierra Leone's Gender Inequality Index (GII) for 2011 Relative to Selected Countries and Groups									
Country	GII value	GII rank	Maternal mortality ratio	Adolescent Fertility rate	Female seats in parliament (%)	Population with at least secondary education (%)		Labour force participation rate (%)	
						Female	Male	Female	Male
Sierra Leone	0.662	137	970	143.7	13.2	9.5	20.4	65.4	67.5
Burundi	0.478	89	970	18.6	36.1	5.2	9.2	91.0	87.5
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.610	-	619	119.7	19.8	22.2	34.9	62.9	81.2
Low HDI	0.606	-	532	98.7	18.2	18.7	32.4	54.6	82.7

Source: UNDP, Sierra Leone Human Development Indicators, 2011

1.2.2 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)

The 2010 Human Development Report (HDR) introduced the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), which identifies multiple deprivations in the same households in education, health and standard of living. The education and health dimensions are based on two indicators each, while the standard of living dimension is based on six indicators. All of the indicators needed to construct the MPI for a household are taken from the same household survey. The indicators are weighted, and the deprivation scores are computed for each household in the survey. A cut-off of 33.3 percent, which is the equivalent of one-third of the weighted 5 indicators, is used to distinguish between the poor and non-poor. If the household deprivation score is 33.3 percent or greater, that household (and everyone in it) is multi-dimensionally poor. Households with a deprivation score greater than or equal to 20 percent but less than 33.3 percent are vulnerable to or at risk of becoming multi-dimensionally poor (See table 4).

The most recent survey data that were publically available for Sierra Leone's MPI estimation dates back to 2008. In Sierra Leone 77.0 per cent of the population suffer multiple deprivations while an additional 13.1 per cent are vulnerable to multiple deprivations. The breadth of deprivation (intensity) in Sierra Leone, which is the average percentage of deprivation experienced by people in multidimensional poverty, is 57.0 per cent. The MPI, which is the share of the population that is multi-dimensionally poor, adjusted by the intensity of the deprivations is 0.439. Guinea and Burundi have MPIs of 0.506 and 0.530 respectively.

¹⁵ Statistics Sierra Leone and UNICEF Sierra Leone, 2011.

*77 % of population
classified as poor*

*53 % of the population is in severe
poverty and below income poverty
line*

Table 4: Sierra Leone's Multiple Poverty Index (MPI) for 2011 Relative to Selected Countries and Groups

	MPI value	Head count (%)	Intensity of deprivation (%)	Population vulnerable to poverty (%)	Population in severe poverty (%)	Population below income poverty line
Sierra Leone	0.439	77.0	57.0	13.1	53.2	53.4
Guinea	0.506	82.5	61.3	9.3	62.3	43.3
Burundi	0.530	84.5	62.7	12.2	61.9	81.3

Source: UNDP, Sierra Leone Human Development Indicators, 2011

Headcount of MPI poor or percentage of population categorised as MPI poor is 77.0 percent; with 62.8 percent of the population living below \$1.25 PPP per day. This partly demonstrates why Sierra Leone is amongst the world's poorest countries¹⁶.

1.3 Overview of the Economy

The country's GDP growth accelerated in 2011 and the outlook is positive for 2012 and 2013 (Refer to table 2). Growth is largely driven by mining sector activities and new discoveries of iron ore aided by macroeconomic measures designed to boost economic development. Sierra Leone's political climate has improved in recent years and the country now enjoys relative peace and stability, despite isolated pockets of domestic violence. At the broader development level, although there have been some improvements in certain areas, the country's social indicators are amongst the lowest in the world and further efforts are needed to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Refer to table 5).

Real gross domestic product (GDP) growth increased from 5.3 percent (excluding iron ore) in 2010 to 6.0 percent 2011 and is projected to rise gradually to 6.3 percent in 2012 and stabilize at 6.0 percent in 2013 driven by recovery in the mining sector. According to International Monetary Fund projections, new iron ore exploration planned for 2012 should result in a one-time expansion of real GDP growth (including iron ore) of 51.4 percent for the reference year¹⁷. Yearly per capita income is expected to rise by 60 percent, between 2009 and 2012, from US\$ 421 to US\$ 679, though it remains low by global standards.

Despite this growth performance, inflation rose to 18.1 percent in 2011 in response to high international oil and agricultural prices on the one hand and the depreciating Sierra Leone currency the Leone on the other. The annual inflation rate is expected to fall to 11.7 percent in 2012 and to 9.4 percent in 2013, as a result of improvements in domestic agricultural production, the introduction of the new goods and services tax (GST) and the slower rate of currency depreciation.

The overall fiscal balance improved, as a result of a rise in royalties on diamonds and removal of fuel prices from -6.4 percent of GDP in 2010 to -5.3 percent in 2011.

¹⁶ UNDP, Human Development Report, 2011.

¹⁷ African Development Bank (ADB) and others, 2012, African Economic Outlook, Online.

The Government has in the past few years strengthened fiscal discipline which is meant to reduce the fiscal deficit to 4.5 percent and 3.6 percent in 2012 and 2013. However, the current account deficit has grown from 18.3 percent of GDP in 2010 to 55.7 percent in 2011, due to a rise in imports of machinery for the mining sector. The current account deficit is projected to stabilize at around 9.9 percent in 2012 and 9.6 percent in 2013 because of a substantial increase in exports of minerals and cash crops (see table 2). The tightening of fiscal and monetary policy will also help Sierra Leone to manage its debt sustainability better. Furthermore, strong reforms aimed at reducing corruption, providing free health care and improving the decrepit transport, power and public health infrastructures top the list of the government's priorities. As a result, the country is ranked as one of the world's top reformers by the 2012 World Bank's Doing Business index.

In 2011, the country's trade deficit widened substantially. The current account recorded a historically high deficit equal to 55.7 percent of GDP for 2011. This was due to a surge in imports of machinery and transport equipment, which were largely destined for new large-scale mining activities and road-construction projects. In the coming years, the external balance is expected to improve substantially in 2012 and 2013 when the trade balance should be in surplus at 15.9 percent of GDP in 2012 and 12 percent in 2013 owing to the recovery in mineral exports.

Sierra Leone, for the most part, has been current with its external-debt-servicing obligations in the last several years. The government, however, still faces the challenge of servicing its domestic debt (18.8 percent in 2011), including Treasury bills, Treasury Bearer Bonds and arrears to domestic suppliers as well as to utility companies. The country has received debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) and Multilateral Debt Relief Initiatives (MDRI), and from several donors including the IMF, the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the European Investment Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Fund.

A major factor in the Sierra Leonean success in macro-economic management has been its linkage to the ECOWAS Macro Economic Convergence Framework. Adherence to the ECOWAS intervention and targets for member states, which has focused on improvement of macroeconomic management and convergence, has been valuable in enabling Sierra Leone to stabilise its macro-economic indicators¹⁸. There is also recognition that promoting convergence and growth, including increase in levels of employment, requires a deeper understanding of a country's specific features and the need to focus on the 'most binding constraints' to growth¹⁹. Clearly, stabilization of macro-economic indicators by itself is insufficient and additional measures are required to catapult growth and deal with the growing challenge of unemployment in Sierra Leone, in particular amongst youth.

¹⁸ Sierra Leone joined ECOWAS at its inception in 1975. The country is part and parcel of a Macro-Economic Convergence Framework for West African states which was designed to improve macro-economic and monetary issues. This is done through the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and other regional institutional arrangements in place.

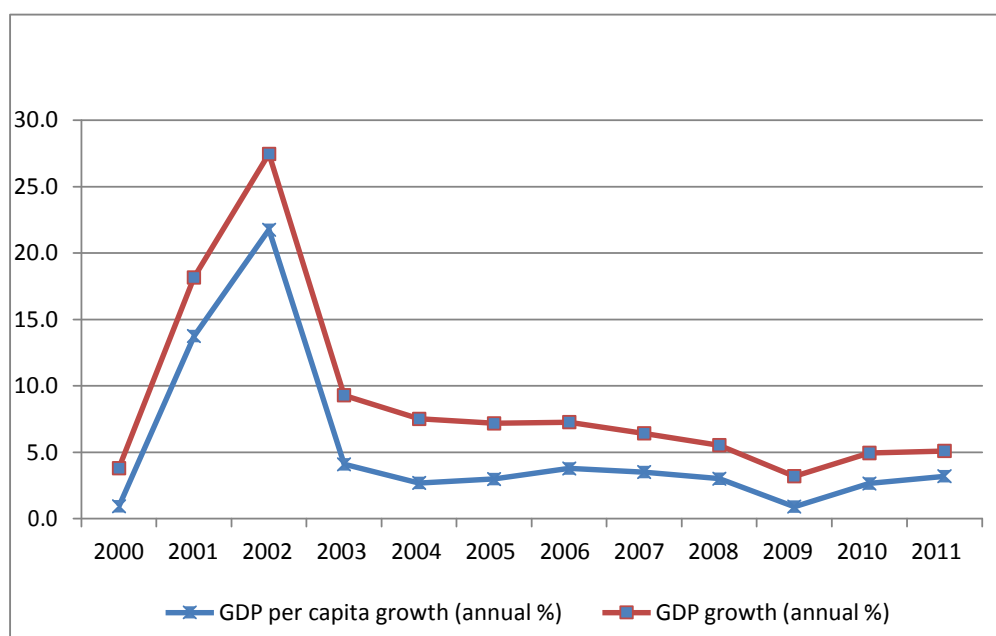
¹⁹ ECA, 2010, p. 4.

Table 5: Key Macroeconomic Development Indicators for Sierra Leone, 2009-2013					
	Years covered				
Indicators	2009	2010	2011	2012 (projected)	2013 (projected)
Population: total Pop. growth/annum*	5,579,670 2.3%	5,706,980 2.3%	5,836,220 2.3%	5,967,910 2.2%	6,101,950 2.2%
Population: Rural	3,386,599	3,441,845	3,496,039	3,548,537	3,599,328
Population: Urban	2,221,331	2,304,955	2,394,041	2,489,123	2,590,952
Working age: 15 – 34 years	1,680,829 (54%)**	1,728,755 (55%)**	1,782,728 (55%)**	1,842,597 (55%)**	1,908,076 (55%)**
Real GDP Growth % (excluding iron ore)	3.2	5.3	6.0	6.3	6.0
Per capita GDP US\$	421	432	482	679	726
National savings/GDP	2.8	5.0	-7.4	0.2	6.5
Inflation (annual)	-	17.8	18.1	11.7	9.4
Budget balance/Fiscal deficit - % GDP	-	-6.4	-5.3	-4.5	-3.6
Total debt - % GDP	-	47.2	42.1	-	-
External debt/GDP	-	32.7	30.4	-	-
Domestic debt/GDP	-	14.1	11.7	-	-
Current account/GDP	-8.4	-18.3	-55.7	-9.9	-9.6
Source: Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Sierra Leone, 2012; The African Economic Outlook, 2012; *GoSL/Statistics Sierra Leone, 2006.					

Note: * This is proportion of working age population, not of total population.

Figure, 4 shows a dramatic rise in GDP growth and per capita soon after the end of the civil war, of over 20 percent. The growth rates stabilised from the period 2003. The figure does not show the GDP growth rate expected in 2012, expected to rise to 51 percent, from a once-off development due to the effect of iron ore on the economy.

Figure 4: Sierra Leone-GDP and GDP per capita Annual Growth Rates (%)



Source: IMF, 2012, African Economic Outlook; ADB, 2012, World Development Indicators.

1.4 Macroeconomic Policy in Sierra Leone: 2007-2012

The civil war in the 1990s which devastated the economy of Sierra Leone, consequently led to a devastation that followed severe economic instability in the 1980s²⁰. From 1982 through 1990 per capita income declined in every year except one²¹. This dismal performance was in part the result of inappropriate stabilisation policies that included a disastrous experiment with floating the exchange rate. This prelude to the civil war carries a lesson that has informed the economic policies of the current government in Sierra Leone; which is that economic prosperity is an essential ingredient for political stability, social harmony and peace. Following the collapse of the economy in the 1990s, economic policy in Sierra Leone was to a great extent determined by the generosity and flexibility of donors and lenders²².

During the period, 2000 – 2010, private investment as a share of GDP remained well below a level consistent with sustained growth of per capita income for Sierra Leone. The major economic constraint to private investment, domestic or foreign, has been the poor state of the country's infrastructure. Correcting this problem, especially in electrical energy generation, has been a priority of the government that is yielding positive results²³. Soon after the government was elected in 2007, the global financial crisis and the resultant contraction in international trade struck the economy.

The government responded boldly to the global crisis with a countercyclical intervention (designed with support from international development partners)²⁴.

²⁰ Weeks, J. 1992, Development Policy and the Economy of Sierra Leone.

²¹ The unprecedented economic collapse is understood to have largely contributed to the break out of the civil war in 1990.

²² Weeks, J. 2011, Macroeconomic and Employment Study, UNDP Programme.

²³ The importance of the Bumbuna Hydroelectric Project is stressed in the Agenda for Change programme of the current government.

²⁴ Weeks, J. 2009b The Impact of the Global Financial Crisis on the Economy of Sierra Leone

Government took what were described as ‘bold and extra-ordinary measures’ to counter the global recession and its attendant problems²⁵. The measures included extra budgetary expenditures to provide the necessary fiscal stimulus to the economy. The temporary intervention to counter the international recession represented part of a larger broad-based strategy to response to the fall in growth rates after the mid-2000s, which reflected the limits to growth based on post-war excess capacity. The continuation and strengthening of the economic policies, through sound trade, monetary and fiscal measures which the government pursued during 2007-2011 are central to the creation of decent jobs for the youth on a sustained basis.

Clearly, the ‘robust economic growth’ performance after the civil war was not matched with corresponding increase in remunerative employment opportunities for the country’s able-bodied population, worse still for the youth. In response to the growing youth unemployment challenge, which has been well acknowledged by the state, in the past, the government national budget has allocated substantial sums to youth programmes, some of which were designed to be employment generating²⁶. Due to the magnitude of the youth unemployment challenge, through the adoption of all measures necessary, government needs to sustain its capacity to implement an effective macro policy to foster youth employment.

2. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

2.1 Overview

According to the ILO Global Employment Trends for Youth, the global youth unemployment rate reached its highest level on record in 2010, and increased throughout the year (ILO, 2010). The report shows that out of 620 million economically active youth aged between 15 and 24 years, 81 million were unemployed at the end of 2009, the highest number ever. In recent years, there has been increased concern over the tragic waste of human potential, particularly amongst the youth. However, unemployment figures in various African countries, including Sierra Leone, tend to downplay the problem of underemployment and poverty which are widespread amongst the youth, being much more prevalent in rural areas as a consequence of poorer job opportunities there. Young people in these rural areas are not willing to remain without work for long periods and often migrate to urban centres in search of employment.

The centrality of youth employment has been recognized in Sierra Leone as a major strategy to alleviate poverty and empower youth as part of the social, economic and political transformational process. In its generality, the unemployment problem affects the majority of adults in both rural and urban areas, even if its incidence may be higher among youth, women and rural folk (ILO, 2000). Although hard data on time-related and other forms of underemployment are generally lacking for Sierra Leone due to challenges with the labour market information system, the seasonal character of agriculture, the low incomes in the informal sector, and various structural factors all point to the inadequate utilisation of labour in most of the countries²⁷.

Sierra Leone is still emerging from a period of post-conflict reconstruction which followed a decade of civil war, which ended in 2001.

²⁵ Kamara, 2010, Government Budget Statement by Minister of Finance and Economic Development.

²⁶ Growth in this allocation has been constrained by the smallness of the government revenue base, mostly because of the small size of the country’s private sector and low export earnings. The drive to improve the business operational environment and competitiveness of local firms as well as international companies remains an uncompleted agenda, in view of the multiplicity and complexity of constraints confronting Sierra Leone.

²⁷ In West Africa, unemployment rates exceeding 40 per cent are not uncommon. In most of the rest of the sub-region too, unemployment rates are high, though perhaps not as high as in some parts of Africa where the formal sector is larger.

The war left most of the country's social, economic, and physical structures destroyed, resulting in the displacement of two million people, about half the country's population, more than 20,000 people dead, and caused immeasurable suffering. Central to the conflict lay a large group of marginalized young people, particularly from rural areas, who are mostly illiterate and without access to livelihood opportunities. Besides the challenges associated with the recovery for development phase, on the employment creation front, the limited capacity of the private sector and a generally difficult economic environment, exacerbated by the global economic crisis and its repercussions on the country's economy and labour market, have worsened the situation. Creating job opportunities for the large and growing number of young women and men is identified in the Sierra Leone Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (SLPRSP), '*An Agenda for Change*', as one of the country's major development challenges and central to maintaining peace and promoting pro-poor growth and reducing poverty.

2.2 The Labour Market Situation and the Youth in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone has a population of 5.9 million of which 40 percent live in urban areas; 44 percent are below 15 years old while over 55 percent of the working age population is between 15 and 34 years old (Refer to table 1). According to the national definition of Sierra Leone, all youth between 15 and 35 years old represent one-third of the population.²⁸ Adolescents i.e. those between 15 and 19 years represents 11 percent of the total population, those between 20 and 24 year represent 8 percent, and young adults i.e. those between 25 and 35 years represent 15 percent.²⁹

There is very little reliable and comprehensive data relating to the labour market in Sierra Leone; with labour market information being out of date. On the basis of available statistics, whilst there is an improvement in development indicators, as demonstrated by changes observed, latest Multi-Indicator Clusters Survey (MICS) 2010, which show that 48 percent of women in Sierra Leone aged between 15 and 24 years are literate; with 68 percent of their male counterparts being literate; doubling the literacy levels reported in the MICS 2005, the situation remains critical with the existence of large under-skilled population and low labour market participation rates for both female and male youth³⁰:

Youth in Sierra Leone face high rates of inactivity, underemployment and poor working conditions with long working hours and low pay. The vast majority of the youth have little chance of finding or securing a job. Youth have fewer opportunities for salaried employment compared with those above the thirty-five age bracket. Furthermore, employment opportunities are significantly lower for youth, regardless of their qualifications. Public sector employment opportunities tend to exclude youth on the basis of age and experience.³¹

Labor force participation rates of male and urban young adults remain significantly lower than for the adult population. Female participation in the labour market is 65.4 per cent compared to 67.5 for men (See figure 5 and table 4). It is noted that labour force participation rates are higher for both male and female in higher age groups, i.e. between 25 and 35 years, than those in the lower age groups. Although the difference might be marginal, this is principally because of gender inequalities caused by a combination of various socio-economic, cultural and other factors linked to the labour market and the country's development context.

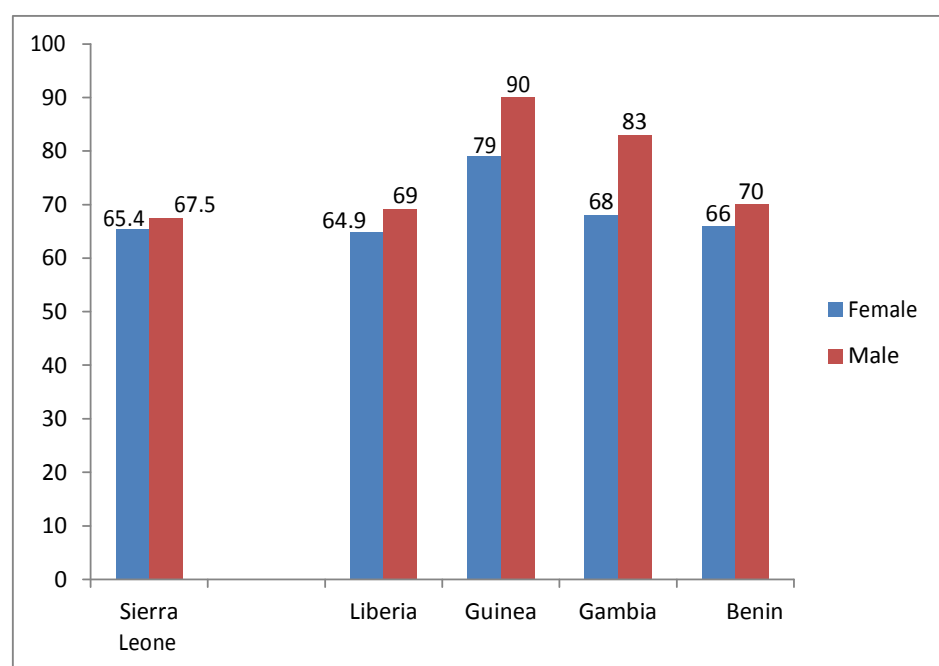
²⁸ Statistics Sierra Leone, 2005.

²⁹ Improving opportunities for Sustainable Youth Employment in Sierra Leone, World Bank September 2007.

³⁰ Sierra Leone Economic and Financial Assessment, P. Toigo, DFID Sierra Leone, 2008.

³¹ GoSL, PRSP II. 2008.

Figure 5: Labour Force Participation by Gender, Sierra Leone vs Selected Countries, 2011



Source: Calculation based on UNECA Africa Youth Report, 2011 and selected national data sets.

About 66 percent of Sierra Leoneans earn less than 1 US\$ a day.³² The cost of labour in Sierra Leone is amongst the lowest in the world. Most companies pay or claim to pay approximately between 140 and 160,000 Leones per month (the equivalent of between US\$30 – 37) as a basic salary, and pay scales range up to between LE 250,000 and 300,000 (US\$58 - 70)³³ at the top supervisory levels. The proportion of people in Sierra Leone whose income is less than US\$1 a day is 66.4 percent.³⁴ There is an acute shortage of formal sector jobs outside the civil service. Formal sector employment is estimated to occupy only 9 percent of the work force, including the civil service. Evidence available point to a situation whereby secondary school leavers have no better likelihood or viable opportunities of finding formal employment than primary school leavers. Unfortunately, this is in view of the critical shortage of jobs even for those with tertiary education qualifications. This situation contributes to brain drain as revealed by the large numbers of professionals in the diaspora³⁵. The situation is aggravated by a labour market mismatch of graduate training and tertiary education in general, which contributes to shortages of skills at various technical and managerial levels for the private sector, especially for the mining sector and other key growth sectors such as petroleum and construction.

³² Pieters, 2009

³³ Dfid, 2007

³⁴ Dfid, 2007

³⁵ Dfid Sierra Leone Private Sector Development Strategy Programme: Draft Inception Report, EME August 2007.

Less than 50% of young workers receive payment for their labour, compared with two thirds of adults aged 35 and above

Large numbers of 'working youth' but in extreme poverty; 80% of them earn less than US\$2 per day

The country's reported youth unemployment rate of more than '60 percent' is amongst the highest in the West African sub-region³⁶. Within the West African region, Sierra Leone has one of the highest rates of underemployment amongst the youth³⁷, with the total number of young workers living on less than US\$1 per day constantly increasing both before and after the post-conflict period. A large number of 'working youth' in Sierra Leone live in extreme poverty and over 80 percent of them are unable to earn enough to lift themselves and their families above the US\$2 per day poverty level³⁸. Partly because of the eleven years of civil war and the socio-economic development and transformation challenges facing the country, Sierra Leone has not been spared from a precarious economic situation, which characterises many West African youths.

It is also noted that young women face particular challenges in the labour market. Whilst these young women experience similar levels of labour force participation and joblessness as those of their male counterparts, their participation in wage employment is around three times lower than men (5% compared to 15%).³⁹ Those limited number of young women working in the formal sector face persistent discrimination in the work place, including lower pay scales and limited access to non-administrative positions. Young women working in the informal economy also face greater constraints than men in operating businesses. The Foreign Investment Advisory Service (FIAS) survey highlighted that the average 'cost' (informal payments) incurred by female respondents to operate informally was five times that of males.⁴⁰

Youth unemployment is a potential trigger for social instability, underdevelopment and economic stagnation. According to the post-war Truth and Reconciliation Report, the problem of youth unemployment was a leading factor in the prolongation of the brutal ten-year conflict. In the early 1990s, young people with few job prospects and little hope of future progress joined rebel groups and engaged in criminal activities and armed conflict. Employment and job creation for young people in fragile and post-conflict countries like Sierra Leone is therefore a key component of the peace-building process.

In the context of the second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP II) for 2008-2012, the government has implemented new legislation for youth-friendly initiatives that aim to provide an environment conducive to youth development, employment and empowerment.

³⁶ The youth unemployment rate of '60 percent' is an estimate widely quoted in many government publications. However, there is urgent need to conduct a new labour force survey, which captures accurately an assessment of both the standard unemployment and structural unemployment rates for Sierra Leone, including rates of underemployment.

³⁷ This includes youth classified to be in 'vulnerable employment'. The vulnerable employment indicator is now one of the employment target indicators for Millennium Development Goal 1.

³⁸ Statistics Sierra Leone, 2003; Simpsons, G, 2011; UN, 2007

³⁹ World Bank. 2007a. Improving Opportunities for Sustainable Youth Employment in Sierra Leone.

⁴⁰ Sources of Informal Economic Activity in Sierra Leone, Part I: Survey Report, June 2006. FIAS.

As a response to the growing challenge of youth development and empowerment in Sierra Leone, which amongst other key challenges, include high levels of unemployment and underemployment, the National Youth Commission (NAYCOM) was established by an Act (No 11 of 2009) of Parliament and approved by the President on 22 December 2009. The Act sets out nine functions of the Commission, all designed to facilitate rapid formulation and implementation of policies and strategies that are beneficial to the youth to participate more actively in development activities, secure more decent jobs on a sustainable basis, contribute to decision making nationally, so that they can enjoy the benefits of the country's socio-economic transformation. Currently Sierra Leone is in the process of establishing development structures, with the involvement of NAYCOM and other key stakeholders, at both central and decentralized levels. These structures are expected to form the basis for the active participation of the youth in development in the country, with a practical programme of action in place to further the interests of the youth⁴¹.

Box 1: Inappropriateness of the Standard Definition of Unemployment

The international standard unemployment rate⁴² in general underestimates the gravity of the unemployment challenge in developing countries such as Sierra Leone, mainly due to the large proportion of the population in subsistence agriculture and informal activities {UNIFEM/Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, PASS, (by Chipika, J.T and Malaba, J, 2007)}. The exclusion of the "discouraged job seekers" from the category of unemployed also underestimates the level of unemployment. Discouraged job seekers include persons who would like to work but would not have actively looked for work during a study reference period because of some structural constraints. From the standard unemployment definition, one should have taken active steps to look for a job and if one fails to satisfy this criterion, they are classified as economically inactive. However, the criteria of actively looking for a job is difficult to fulfil in situations where there is no established advertising system, or where the person is far away from the job market and cannot afford transport or other forms of communication.

Box 2: Structural Unemployment

The standard method of measuring unemployment rates fails to capture large numbers of discouraged workers, high inactivity rates in both urban and rural areas, underemployment, and the quality of work. In recent years, an alternative method has been adopted to measure unemployment to capture the effects of structural changes in the economy on unemployment and also to deal with the problem of underestimation of the unemployment from the conventional measure of unemployment. Structural unemployment is a concept devised to capture those that have been displaced or underemployed as a result of structural changes in the economy (Chipika/ILO, 2012). The structurally unemployed were defined as those who were unemployed on the basis of standard unemployment data, those who were in the informal sector not by choice, the very poor and the poor communal farmers, very poor and poor unpaid family workers, very poor and poor in the informal sector and the very poor and poor engaged in public works.

⁴¹ In 2011/12, NAYCOM, in collaboration with development partners such as the UNDP and others developed a Youth Employment Strategy/National Youth Employment Action Plan, which has the support of multi-lateral organisations such as The World Bank, European Commission and various other international development partners, bilateral donors and local development actors. The National Youth Employment Action Plan is set to benefit from an unprecedented Public-Private Partnership and Networking Arrangement, which when effectively implemented will form the basis for a new type of partnership arrangement in the country's development arena designed to foster the generation of decent jobs for the youth on a sustainable basis.

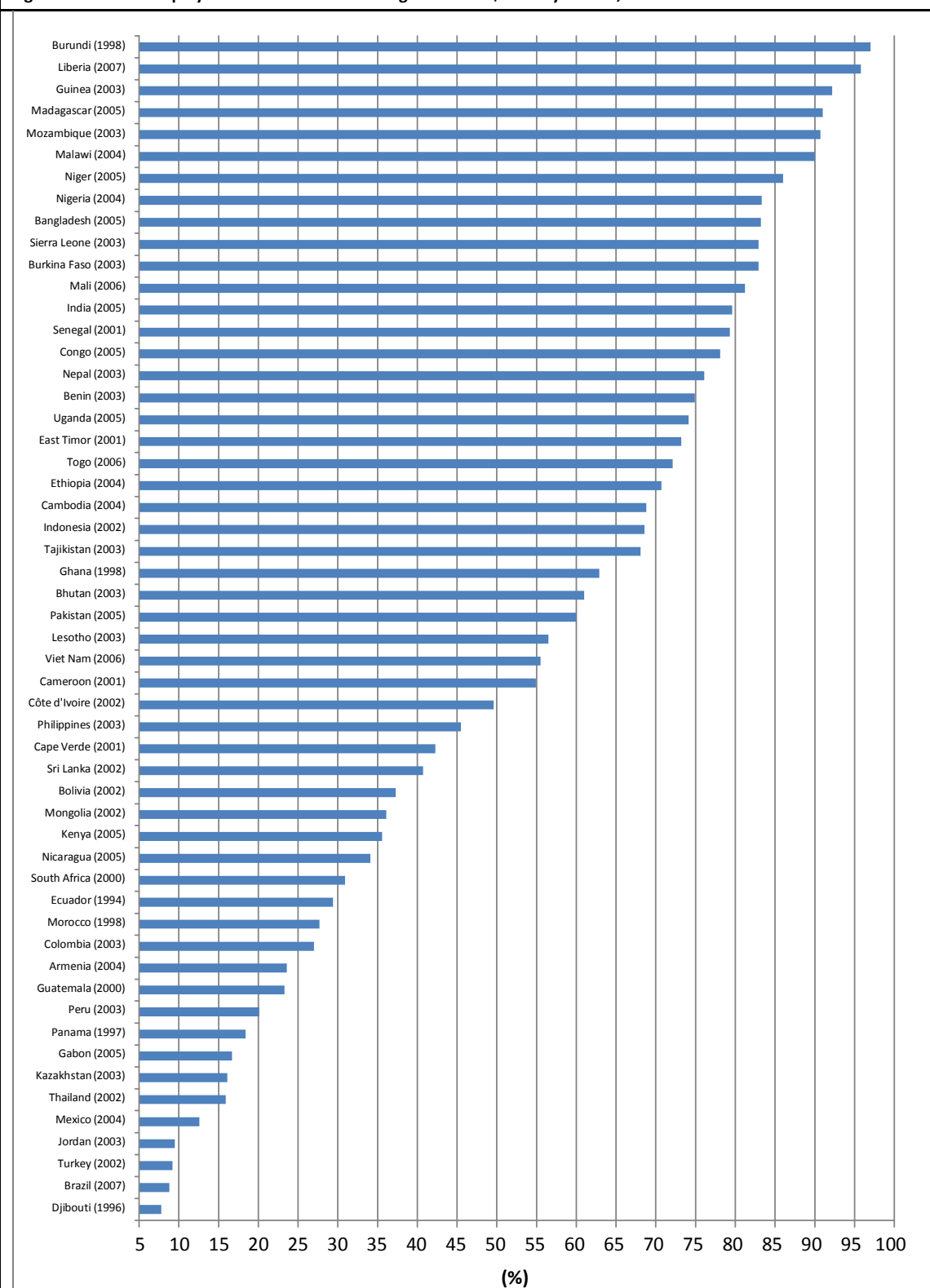
⁴² The unemployment rate is the percentage of the unemployed divided by the economically active population for the relevant age. According to the standard international definition of unemployment, the unemployed are those who during the reference period were simultaneously without work, currently available for work and were seeking work.

Table 6: Youth Unemployment Rates for Selected African Countries, 2011									
Country				Youth unemployment rate (%)					
	National unemployment rate			Standard unemployment			Structural unemployment		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
WEST AFRICA									
Sierra Leone	Not available ⁴³			7.3	4.0	5.2	-	-	60
Benin	-	-	-	20	24	22	-	-	-
Gambia	-	-	-	-	-	-	32	46	40
Liberia	-	-	3.7	3.7	5.7	4.7	-	-	88
Côte d'Ivoire	22.4	50.1	35.8	-	-	31	-	-	-
Guinea	-	-	-	13	27	20	-	-	-
Ghana	-	-	3.6	22	30	26	-	-	-
Nigeria	-	-	23.9	26	36	31	-	-	-
SOUTHERN AFRICA									
Botswana (2011)	-	-	7.5	13.2	14.0	13.6	-	-	46.1
Lesotho	-	-	25.3	-	-	-	37.9	58.5	47.4
Mauritius	-	-	7.7	-	-	-	18.1	26.3	21.4
Malawi	-	-	5.6*	1.6	0.3	0.8*	-	-	50.0
Namibia	-	-	51.2	-	-	-	36.7	47.0	41.7
Seychelles	-	-	2.0	18.0	28.1	20.2	-	-	-
South Africa	-	-	25.3	-	-	-	57.9	53.3	55.8
Swaziland	-	-	29.1	-	-	-	41.7	48.3	64.0
Zambia	-	-	16.0	23.0	19.5	21.1	-	-	48.0
Zimbabwe ⁴⁴	-	-	9.0	28.2	21.4	24.9	-	-	>70.0
Sources: CIA Fact book, 2012, United Nations Statistics, 2011, UNECA, 2005; United Nations Office in West Africa (UNOWA), 2007; The Republic of Sierra Leone, 2008. <i>An Agenda for Change</i>									

⁴³ No Labour Force Survey has been undertaken in recent years. Youth unemployment figures cited are based on projections by the Government of Sierra Leone and not on recent labour force studies. The absence of an appropriate labour market information system is a major challenge nationally, and specifically as it relates to addressing the labour market needs of the youth. This constraint seems to cut across most West African countries, resulting in them using 'estimates' whose basis is not altogether clear.

⁴⁴ The 'official' low formal unemployment figures for most countries mask high levels of structural unemployment.

Figure 6: Share of Employed Youth who are Working Poor at US\$ 2 a Day or Less, Latest Year



Source: KILM table 18, KILM 7th Edition

Unemployment data in Sierra Leone is, as elsewhere in Africa, sketchy and riddled with inconsistencies. Figure 6 shows unemployment rates for the world's different regions. West African countries feature strongly amongst those with high levels of unemployment, a third of the region's labour force being jobless. Evidence from the sub-region point to large numbers of workers being condemned to underemployment and poverty in West Africa. Sierra Leone has not been spared from the unemployment crisis, especially amongst its youth. Figure 6 shows that four of the top ten countries with the highest proportion of youth, categorised as 'working poor', are from West Africa. Sierra Leone is amongst the four West African states in that category.

Box 3: The Situation of Youth in the Sierra Leonean Labour Market

- High level of inactivity, especially for male and urban youth.
- High unemployment rates, up to four times higher than for older workers.
- Urban youth aged between 15 and 24 are ten times more likely to be unemployed than rural youth.
- High unemployment for young women in both urban and rural settings.
- High and growing levels of employment and underemployment in the informal economy, where employment is often low paid and dangerous.
- Lack of high quality skills, mismatch of supply of skills to labour market needs.
- Lack of business experience or knowledge of self-employment as an option.
- Lack of access to targeted business development services that include:-
 - access to information on variety of employment opportunities (including pathways to self employment)
 - lack of creativity, absence of innovative orientation
 - low investment capabilities, poor technological capabilities overall
 - lack of marketing capacity by most youth due to poor exposure and low education and training
 - limited or no access to credit facilities, especially the appropriate types such as micro-finance.

Sources: Modified from "Improving Opportunities for Sustainable Youth Employment in Sierra Leone", World Bank 2007 and "Productive and decent work for youth in the Mano River Union: Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire", UNIDO 2007.

In addition to the challenges stated, generally, formal jobs are very difficult to secure in Sierra Leone. Most young people perceive nepotism to be commonplace in the labour market. This can be in the form of political allegiance or family connections. Bribery of employers, such as offering the first month's salary in return for a job, is also understood by young people to be widespread⁴⁵. In view of the very small number of jobs available in the formal labour market, which absorbs only roughly 9 percent of the total employed, these challenges cannot be ruled out.

Child Labour⁴⁶: It is deemed necessary to make reference to issues of child labour under this section because of its significance in Sierra Leone. Findings from the MICS 2010 survey suggest that child labour is a notable problem in Sierra Leone. Fifty percent of children aged 5-14 are involved in child labour - 63 percent of children aged 5-11 years and 15 percent of children aged 12-14 years.

⁴⁵ Restless Development, Sierra Leone, 2012.

⁴⁶ See definition of child in definition and terms.

Nepotism and bribery of employers perceived by young people to be widespread in the labour market. Very small number of jobs available in the formal labour market, only 9% of total employed

Among children aged between 5 and 11 years, the vast majorities that are involved in child labour are classified as such due to performing one or more hours of *economic work* per week⁴⁷.

Child labour issues are somewhat sensitive topics in Sierra Leone. In Sierra Leone, every child that is not in school is a 'potential worker'⁴⁸. Research findings have shown that 87 percent of children, both schooling and non-schooling, were found to be working in some form of income-generating activity. A large proportion of non-schooling children revealed that they worked long, excessive hours on domestic or economic activities, with little or no rest. Children who combined work and schooling were frequently absent from school and achieved poor grades due to lack of time to attend school lessons or do their homework. In rural areas, a small number of boys who are involved in communal farm work and who initially combined work and school, eventually dropped out of school preferring instead the quick, tangible financial remuneration they receive from working. Many children stated that they would rather work and get paid than sit in school and be hungry.

The Child's Rights Act, 2007, has been implemented over the past several years in Sierra Leone. The way in which the Act has been implemented and interpreted has met with a level of resistance, as it has been perceived in many circles to pay little regard to what parents or communities were already doing with regard to child protection and without regard to local values and norms relating to child protection. Due to this misconception and mistrust and other factors, the implementation of the Act has been perceived by some as an imposition from outside; over-emphasising on the rights of the child and an laying very little or no emphasis on the responsibilities of the child. While the Act does address broad issues regarding child labour, there is doubt among stakeholders that it will achieve substantial impact on attitudes and practices regarding child labour at the household, community and country level.

2.3 Major Drivers of Growth and Employment Creation in Sierra Leone

2.3.1 Sustaining labour intensive public works programmes

The infrastructure sector holds substantial scope for absorbing youth labor, in the short to medium term. Although the GoSL has made significant efforts to improve the depilated infrastructure from the period during and after the end of the conflict, infrastructure remains underdeveloped in Sierra Leone which is a deterrent for both domestic and international investment.

⁴⁷ According to the definition of "child labour" that was used in the Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey, 2010, a child is considered to be involved in child labour activities if s/he, during the week preceding the survey, performed the following:

- Ages 5-11: at least one hour of economic work or 28 hours or more of domestic work per week.
- Ages 12-14: at least 14 hours of economic work or 28 hours or more of domestic work per week.

⁴⁸ UNICEF Sierra Leone, 2008.

Unskilled labour, which is abundant among youth, could be partially absorbed through the ongoing investment in infrastructure. It is important to note that this investment is already underway but needs to be scaled up. There is also a huge backlog in maintenance, as the scarce resources for road maintenance are spent in emergency works⁴⁹. There is also limited human resources capacity from technical skills and middle level management to maintain the infrastructure once it is developed. Developing innovative mechanism for infrastructure maintenance and other services such as garbage collection by Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) also hold the potential to absorb both unskilled and skilled youth. To ensure that the employment effect of infrastructure investments are optimized, demand-side policies need to be implemented through design and contracting, and supply-side interventions made through training in appropriate technology options, and managerial and operational requirements⁵⁰. Capacity building and training interventions can be targeted at the young women and men, the bulk of whom are unemployed or underemployed.

Current reconstruction projects, which are expected to continue for a long time to come as part of a key agenda for reconstruction and development after the decade old conflict continue to offer an opportunity for creating decent employment for the youth. However, young women and men to be benefit substantially from labour intensive public works, careful planning for preparation and policy level and institutional support is critical.

2.3.2 The agricultural sector

Agriculture accounts for 70% of all employment.

The agricultural sector is an engine for growth of employment in Sierra Leone. Agriculture provides the main source of employment and income for approximately 65 percent of the population in Sierra Leone plays a major part in the national economy, contributing 46 percent of GDP.

The country is endowed with favourable climatic conditions, several agro-ecological regions suitable for production of various crops, and abundant water resources. However, only 10% of the cultivable land is cropped every year.⁵¹ A larger share of the working poor is found in this sector than in other sectors. However, very little income is generated from the sector, with massive unexploited potential. Few businesses are also understood to be based on agriculture. For example, of the 11,541 Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) registered by the Sierra Leone Indigenous Business Association (SLIBA), only about 1% are in agriculture with the majority in the retail trade. There is massive potential to unlock decent employment opportunities in the agriculture sector through youth-led value chain development.

Major constraints to sustaining agriculture productivity increases include inadequate rural infrastructure, low adoption rates of productivity-enhancing agricultural technologies such as irrigation and improved plant varieties, and weak rural finance and extension services. Specifically, less than two percent of arable land is irrigated and fertilizer use is only 4kg/ha compared to 9kg/ha for sub-Saharan Africa.⁵² Most households do not use any inputs: natural or organic fertilizer.

⁴⁹ World Bank, 2006b.

⁵⁰ The European Commission supported Capacity Building Initiative, the recently launched Road Maintenance Management Programme with the Sierra Leone Roads Authority (SLRA) is acknowledged. However, there is need to scale up effort in human resources capacity building in infrastructure projects for more sustained development.

⁵¹ Government of Sierra Leone, 2010.

⁵² Republic of Sierra Leone (2009a), pages 15 and 16.

Compost is used by only 8 percent of the farm households; improved seed variety is used by 6 percent, and chemical fertilizer is used by 5 percent. Access to a power tiller or hand tractor is reported by only 4 percent of households and a thresher by less than 1 percent.⁵³ Less than one-third of farmers (29.7 percent) of households took credit for agricultural purposes and most (76.1 percent) of these credits were extended by family or friends.

The performance of the agricultural sector has a strong influence on the rate of socio-economic development and poverty reduction. Given the large proportion of population which depends almost entirely on agriculture, many investment opportunities exist in downstream agro-based activities in food processing and agribusiness. Increasing productivity and returns to labour in agriculture is the key to increasing productive employment for young people. The very low level of cash inputs in agriculture suggests that even fairly modest investments in an intensification of production may yield high returns and that there is a large scope for increasing production through policies aimed at creating a more enabling environment for farmers.

Sustaining inclusive job-rich growth requires a comprehensive approach. Parallel to an intensification of agriculture, through for example, the Smallholder Commercialization Project, an increase in productive non-farm employment, in the form of wage and salary employment or successful non-farm entrepreneurship, must be a core component of the country's agricultural development strategy. The fact that most poor people live in rural areas and derive their living from agriculture does not necessarily imply that policies aimed at agricultural intensification will be particularly pro-poor. Access to land, in particular for the youth, remains a key determinant of the benefits to young women and men from development efforts in the agricultural sector⁵⁴.

A recent study identified the agricultural and agro-business sector as the main driver of poverty reduction in the short and medium term⁵⁵. The sector has the potential to absorb unskilled youth on a large scale. With adequate support systems in place, agro-based value chains will certainly be the main driver of economic growth and poverty reduction, in the short to medium term. The food crop sector accounts for 60 percent of rural non-mining GDP, and there is still significant potential to meet unsatisfied latent demand as well as replace imports (2006b). In the medium to longer term, promotion of export products such as cocoa and gari offer the most important potential for major increase in employment opportunities and incomes in rural areas.

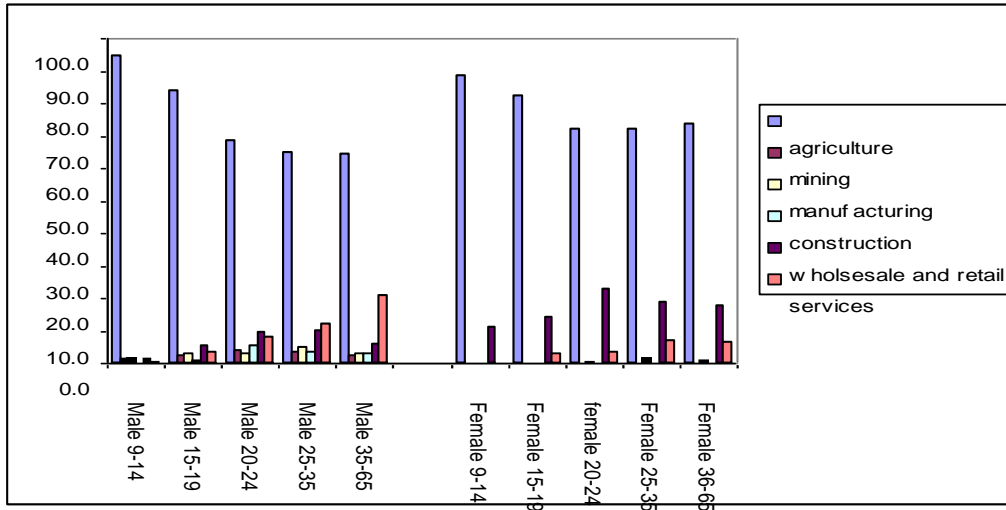
The Smallholder Commercialisation Programme (SCP) currently being implemented through the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS) can be the basis for developing existing and new agri-business value chains and the agriculture sector as a whole. This can be done by improving access to land for new farmers, increasing land under cultivation, raising of productivity by increasing levels of investment in technology, for example, seed and new methods of production and management of agro-based value chains. There are immense transformational possibilities for generating decent jobs for the youth on a sustained basis in the agricultural sector. The productivity and capability of the agricultural sector can be scaled up through innovative approaches, a new MSME development thrust, for example on the basis of current development best practices for the rice and cocoa value chains **(Refer to case study, box 10)**.

⁵³ World Food Programme, 2011, pp. 38 and 39.

⁵⁴ Anecdotal evidence point to a situation whereby many young women and men see access to land and secure tenure as a major challenge to their interest in the agricultural sector. At the same time, there is evidence to show that in Sierra Leone, there is a high level of under-utilization of land, with indications showing that less than 15 percent of the arable land is being utilised effectively.

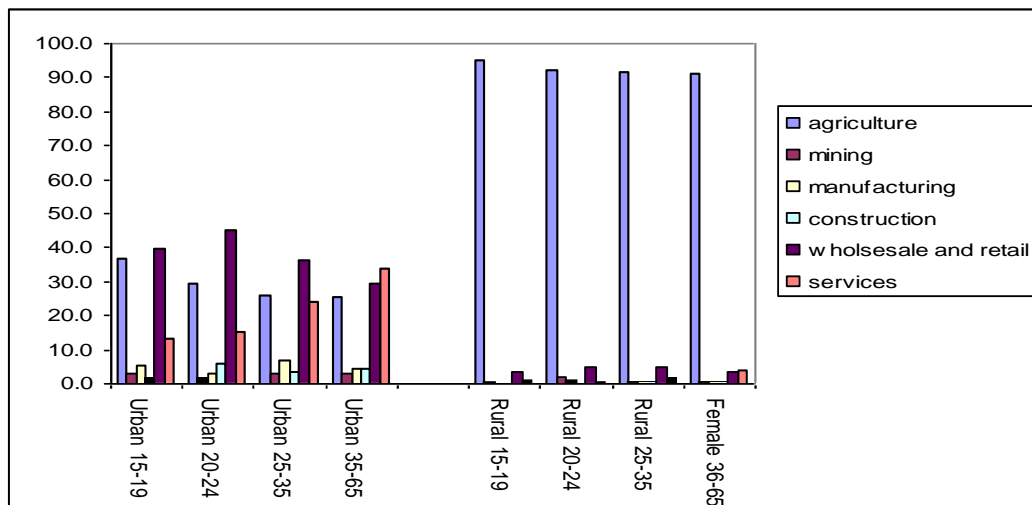
⁵⁵ World Bank, 2006; Pieters, 2009.

Figure 7: Distribution of the Labor Force by Industry of Employment, by Age and Gender, Percentage, Sierra Leone, 2004



Source: Pieters (2009) and Author's calculation based on Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey 2004;

Figure 8: Distribution of the Labor Force by Industry of Employment, by Age, Urban and Rural, Percentage, Sierra Leone, 2004



Source: Pieters (2009) and Author's calculation based on Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey 2004;

Increasing areas under cultivation hold significant potential in Sierra Leone, since there is abundant land and most traditional cash crop production was severely curtailed or halted completely by the war. The country has also an abundance of low-skilled labour as previously discussed. Rehabilitation and investment in the production, processing and marketing of cashew, cocoa, gari and ginger, and milled rice offer the best opportunities for expanded agricultural exports. These crops are produced and processed primarily by small holders and small business enterprises. Better processing technologies would not only raise the incomes of processors, but is also likely to increase demand for primary product production as an input into processing. Total (direct and indirect) employment gains are estimated at 72,000 person-years⁵⁶.

2.3.4 The mining sector

Sierra Leone has rich primary mineral resources such as diamonds, rutile, bauxite, gold and iron ore. The mineral sector in Sierra Leone is made up of three sub-sectors: a) large-scale production of non-precious minerals e.g. rutile and bauxite; b) large scale production of precious minerals e.g. diamonds; and c) artisanal and small-scale production of precious minerals mainly diamonds, and to a much lesser extent, gold.

**Mining sector
employs 14%
of total
labour force**

Mining and quarrying employ about 14 percent of the total labour force. There is potential to more than double employment generation capacity if correct strategies are adopted by the GoSL. However, to date, Sierra Leoneans have not benefitted significantly from mining because government revenues from mining have been so low.

A number of reasons have been given for this irony, in a country where some 70 percent of the population is classified as poor. It has been argued that tax laws have given too much away to the mining companies while government policies to monitor and regulate the mining sector are poor or non-existent. Studies suggest that with significant institutional and capacity reform, Sierra Leone could export US\$1.2 billion a year in mineral exports by 2020 – a sevenfold rise over current levels⁵⁷. It has been observed that with good government spending, nearly a million people could be lifted out of poverty.

Unless there are some fundamental changes in the governance of the mining industry, the current expansion in mining is not expected to translate into benefits for large numbers of Sierra Leoneans including young women and men, who should normally benefit from resources mobilised within the mining industry. The GoSL is expected to adopt bold measures to ensure that Sierra Leoneans benefit from mining to a level that corresponds to the mineral resources available. Key challenges in the mining industry include lack of capacity in all government departments associated with mining inability to assess and collect revenues such as income taxes, collection of basic geological information and monitor mining operations with the requisite skills; inadequate monitoring of mines, low transparency in operations of the sector, absence of sound legal and regulatory framework, and smuggling of diamonds. These challenges need to be tackled decisively and soonest.

⁵⁶ World Bank, 2006b.

⁵⁷ NACE, 2009.

2.3.5 Tourism sector

Sierra Leone's tourism and its potential as a driver for growth: A potential area of growth in the service industry is tourism. Small-scale beach hotels offer the best opportunity in the short-term, while larger scale tourism has potential in the medium to long term. Voted in the top 10 destinations in Lonely Planet's Best Places 2009, Sierra Leone has considerable investment potential. The natural climate is conducive for economic growth. The National Tourism Board has in recent years identified several areas, activities, and cultural sites that have strong tourism investment potential. Primary among these opportunities are 360 kilometers of pristine beaches, including Sulima, Turner's Peninsula, Sherbro Island, Shenge, Freetown Peninsula, Lungi, and Scarcies estuary. All these sites are still unexploited, yet they offer a myriad of opportunities such as development of niche tourism and expansion in virtually all segments.

However, the "take-off" would be constrained by the limits of the entrepreneurship that exists within the country and the difficulties in putting together all the elements that make up a successful tourism industry (World Bank, 2006b). While much smaller in scale of potential increase in youth employment opportunities than the agricultural sector, development of small scale tourism would help to respond to the need for stable employment for the large number of unemployed youth in the Freetown area. It remains to be seen how Sierra will work to establish and deepen the largely unexploited tourism potential, with a view to not only strengthening the country's socio-economic development, but also offering new opportunities for generating decent jobs for young women and men on a sustained basis.

2.3.6 The marine resources sector

The marine resources sector⁵⁸: The marine resources sector, particularly, the fish and shellfish subsector, provides substantial opportunities for investment. The fish and shellfish subsector is divided into two main markets: industrial fishing in the Economic Exclusive Zone and small-scale fishing. Investors interested in developing fish nurseries and processing freshwater fish can take advantage of the economic zone. With greater focus on strengthening the investment and technological capabilities within the sector, incorporating support to the largely underdeveloped small scale fishing groups operating around the coastal areas of Sierra Leone and with better organization and distribution of small scale catches, there is very great potential to both the fish export market as well as the unfulfilled domestic market⁵⁹.

⁵⁸ The marine fish sector could be a sustainable source of economic growth and employment creation only if the resource is severely regulated and the rule of law applied. Currently, evidence points to a steady depletion of stocks. Another potential source of income could come from processing of fish.

⁵⁹ It is noted that a substantial number of youth have formed small scale fishing cooperatives, which are low-scale in operation. Further assistance to the sub-sector through a public-private partnership model could facilitate the generation of new decent jobs for the youth on a sustainable basis.

3. EDUCATION SECTOR ANALYSIS

The formal education system in Sierra Leone is composed of six years primary schooling, three years junior secondary, four years senior secondary⁶⁰, and three or more years of higher education.

The 2010/11 School Census Report revealed that there are now many more schools in the education sector than before, with more primary schools constructed than other levels during the period 2008-2010 (see Figure 8). As a result of the greater interest shown at national level, enrolment at pre-primary school level has increased by 106 percent between 2005/06 and 2010/11. Due to lack of information on the benefits of pre-school education, in previous years, the situation was mixed with reductions recorded in some years. For example, between 2004/04 and 2005/06, national level enrolment decreased by 12 percent (Figure 7).

The right to education is a fundamental right for the development of children to their full potential. Good education enables a child to compete and benefit equally from the social and economic opportunities offered by society. The education system in Sierra Leone was badly affected by the civil war, but it is gradually recovering.

3.1 Education Development

3.1.1 Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary Education

Early childhood education: Although government policy advocates pre-primary education, this has not yet been translated into successful early childhood education programme. Nationwide, just 5.5 percent of children attending the first grade of primary school in 2010 had attended pre-school the previous year, indicating very low participation in pre-school. At the same time, only about 14 percent of children between 3 and 5 years were attending any form of organised early childhood education⁶¹.

Primary school attendance and participation: In order provide a legal framework for improving access to quality education; the government introduced free primary education in 2001. The government, through Local Councils, pays school fee subsidies for children in primary schools, meets the examination fees and funds for procurement of materials and textbooks. Retention from the first to last grade of primary school is high. The MICS 2010 indicates that the proportion of children who reached grade 6 of those who entered grade 1 stood at 93 percent in 2010 and was about the same for boys and girls.

*Net primary school
attendance rose from 69
% in 2005 to 74 % in
2010*

The *Education Act 2004* requires all children to complete basic education of 6 years in primary school and 3 years in junior secondary school. The government devoted a significant part of the national budget to education supported by various partners. About 74 percent of

children of primary school age in Sierra Leone i.e. (children between the age of 6 and 11 years) are attending school, an increase from 69 percent in 2005.

⁶⁰ The 2010 Government White Paper on Education recommended that an extra year be added to the Senior Secondary School from 3 to 4 years. Plans for implementing this change are underway.

⁶¹ Statistics Sierra Leone and UNICEF Sierra Leone, 2011.

Despite recorded improvements in recent years, Sierra Leone still has a relatively large proportion of potential school going children out of school.

Despite improved enrolment rates, 26 % of children are out of school

Approximately 26 percent of the children are still not attending school at the age when they are expected to be enrolled in and attending school⁶². The MICS 2010 reports that in urban areas 80 percent of children attend school while in rural areas only 72 percent of children attend. Rural areas face more inhibitions to school attendance than urban areas. These include walking long distances to the nearest available school and other challenges

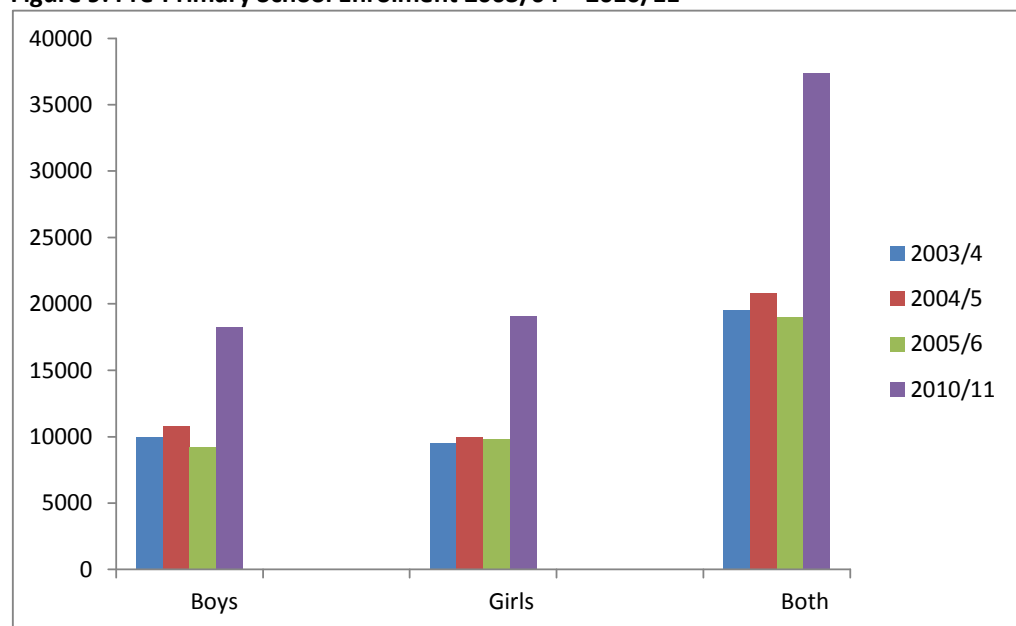
associated with poverty and deprivation of rural communities. Findings from a recent study in the country found poverty ranked by all study participants, both young and old, as the primary reason as to why primary school aged children were out of school⁶³. Children are “at risk” of not being in school due to their geographic location, gender, religion and present situation including those from marginalized, large, polygamous families. A child’s family status and or living situation greatly determine his or her vulnerability.

Orphaned children: Orphaned children and those not living with their biological parents and children with disabilities are at greater risk of missing out on education. A recent study found out-of-school children ranking the death of a parent(s), second to poverty as the reason why they are not in school. Community-based researchers identified orphans and children living with extended family members or caretakers as the most exploited and marginalised children in their communities. **Although general progress has been registered in primary school attendance, efforts need to be directed in increasing timely intake in grade 1, assisting poor and vulnerable children who are out of school to get in and improving quality of education and achievement by such pupils.**

⁶² Statistics Sierra Leone and UNICEF Sierra Leone, 2011.

⁶³ UNICEF Sierra Leone, 2008, Out of School Children of Sierra Leone.

Figure 9: Pre-Primary School Enrolment 2003/04 – 2010/11



Source: Calculated from Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2010/11 School Census Report, Vol 1.

Enrolment at primary school level, though, has been increasing steadily over the past decade as shown in figure 10. The large increase in primary school enrolment between 2001/02 and 2002/03 was due to the introduction of free primary education in 2001. There was also a drive by the GoSL and its development partners to achieve universal basic education. The results of that drive has since stabilised, which is why in recent years, increases have not been as high as in the case of secondary school education.

3.1.2 Literacy Levels

The conflict in Sierra Leone affected access to educational opportunities for a large number of youth and this is reflected in the low levels of literacy in the country.

Despite doubling of literacy rate for women between 2005 and 2010, only 48 percent of young women aged 15 – 24 are literate

68 percent of male youth in age bracket 15 – 24 years literate, overall literacy rate for adults stands at 41 percent; 30% for women, 53% for

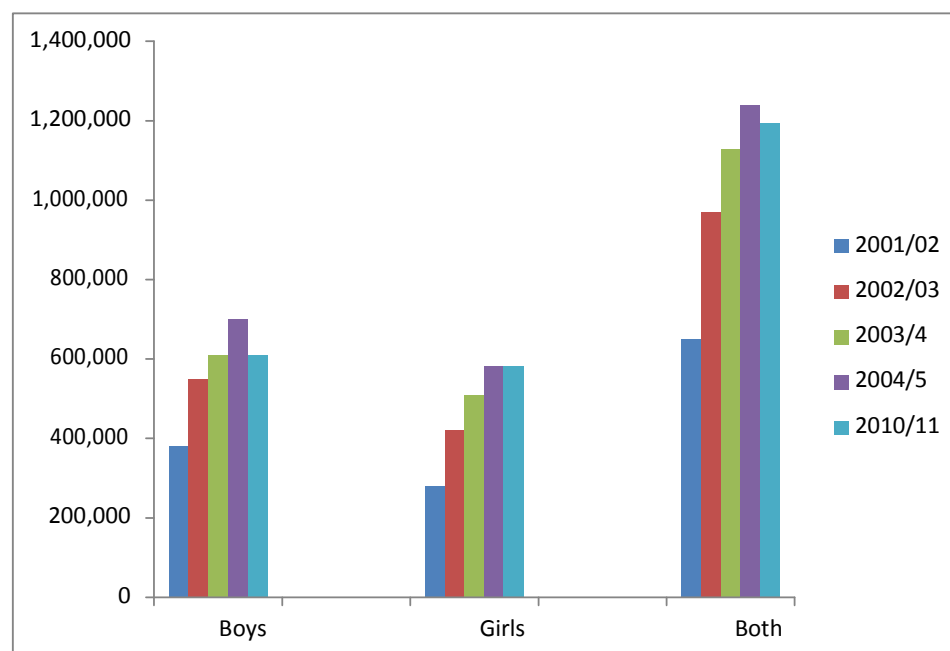
Notable improvement in literacy levels have been recorded for both female and male youth in recent years, with studies showing that 48 percent of women in Sierra Leone aged between 15 and 24 years are literate - almost double the Multi Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2005 estimate of 25 percent⁶⁴.

⁶⁴ Statistics-Sierra Leone and UNICEF-Sierra Leone, 2011; MICS 2010 Report.

Women aged between 15 and 19 years have been reported to have a much higher level of literacy, 59 percent, than did women aged between 20 and 24, 36 percent. Although literacy levels amongst women has reportedly improved between 2005 and 2010, as reported in a recent major study (MICS 2010), this finding is overshadowed by the fact that only 17 percent of women who attended some primary school could read simple statements during the MICS 2010 study. This obviously raises concern in certain quarters on the quality of primary education offered in Sierra Leone.

The literacy rate of 68 percent for male youth between 15 and 24 years was much higher than their female counterparts in the same age group. Women's literacy status was also positively associated with urban residence, higher levels of education, and higher household wealth (GoSL and UNICEF-Sierra Leone, 2011). The education of both female and male youth was negatively affected by the civil war. And due to the higher vulnerability of girls to violence and other factors, they are more negatively affected than their male counterparts. Illiteracy was also much more widespread in rural areas and among poorer households, than in urban areas. To demonstrate the rural and urban divide, some studies, have shown that the proportion of illiterate rural men was almost three times that of urban men (73 and 26 percent, respectively). For women, the proportion was 89 and 47 percent, respectively⁶⁵.

Figure 10: Primary School Enrolment 2003/4 – 2010/11



Source: Calculated from Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2010/11 School Census Report, Vol 1.

Data from the Sierra Leone School Census Report, 2010/11, indicate that the primary school Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) increased annually between 2001/02 and 2004/05. Between 2004/05 and 2010/11 the primary school GER fell by 40 percent from 162 percent to 122 percent (see Table 7).

⁶⁵ Statistics Sierra Leone and Ministry of Health and Sanitation, 2008.

⁶⁶ GERs over 100 percent occur in countries like Sierra Leone as a result of large numbers of students above the age range for the school level. This is usually the result of (a) many students starting school above the official entry age; (b) grade repetition, and (iii) drop outs returning back to a level when much older.

The general trend has been that the GERs for both junior and senior secondary increased annually over most the past 10 years from 2001/02 to 2010/11. In view of expected increases in enrolment at both junior and secondary school levels in the coming years, the GER is expected to keep increasing⁶⁷.

Table 7: Gross Enrolment Rate Values, Sierra Leone, 2001/02 – 2010/2011			
Years	Primary	Junior Secondary	Senior Secondary
2001/02	89%	23%	7%
2002/03	131	38%	12%
2003/04	146	39%	12%
2004/05	162	44%	14%
2010/11	122	62%	32%
Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Making Progress – Schools and Students in Sierra Leone, 2010/11 School Census Report – Vol. 1			

Table 8: Formal School Level Institutions by Region and Nationally, Sierra Leone, November 2010						
Region	Pre-primary	Primary	JSS	SSS	All	All
East	110	1,353	153	36	1,652	22%
North	90	2,233	313	46	2,682	35%
South	100	1,513	175	40	1,828	24%
West	344	832	247	86	1,509	20%
National (total)	644	5,931	888	208	7,671	
National (percentages)	8%	77%	12%	3%		
Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2010/11 School Census Report, Vol. 1						

Primary school enrolment
rise from 660,000 to 1,2
million between 2001
and 2011

Secondary school enrolment
rise from 83,000 to 353,000 in
10 years; Not enough to meet
high demand for secondary
school education

These enrolments in primary and secondary schools were boosted by GoSL policies to reduce the cost of education by eliminating tuition fees in primary school, providing scholarships for girls who enter junior secondary schools, and paying the cost of examination fees for all students who take the national examinations. The GoSL has also increased the supply of schools by building and rehabilitating schools across the country. Finally, the large enrolment growth is also a reflection of the fact that many older children and youths, who had missed out on schooling during the war, re-entered the formal school system as government provided a variety of second-chance and accelerated learning options after the war.

Statistics show that, to a large extent, enrolment at primary school far outweighs enrolment at junior and senior secondary schools, creating stiff competition amongst primary school pupils in their final grade, which leads to high dropouts after completion of the National Primary School Certificate Examination (NPSE).

⁶⁷ Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, School Census Report, 2010/11.

Secondary school attendance and completion: About 37 percent of children of secondary school age (12 – 17 years) were attending secondary school. Among the remaining, about 37 percent were still in primary school and 27 percent were not attending school at all.

37 percent of secondary school going age still at primary school; 27 percent are out of school

Data from the 2008 Demographic and Health Survey revealed that the secondary school gross enrolment ratio for children in the lowest quintile was 15 percent compared to 90 percent for the wealthiest quintile⁶⁸.

Poverty is a major cause of school dropouts, cannot afford cost of books, transport, uniforms and school fees. 'Hidden fees' levied by teachers for additional lessons, marking assignments and fees for re-taking examinations cause for concern

A recent study undertaken in Sierra Leone showed that young people believed that the leading cause of secondary school dropouts is poverty. Many young people simply could not afford to stay in education because of the cost of books, transport, uniforms and school fees. The study also cited several “hidden fees” such as teachers charging for additional lessons or marking assignments and fees for retaking examinations. In the case of young people in rural communities, the long distance to and from

school, often by foot, also contributed to dropouts. In the case of drop-outs by girls, there is also evidence of parental preference to send their sons to school over their daughters, especially in certain parts of the country, like those in the Northern region and Waterloo⁶⁹.

The poor quality of secondary school education, exacerbated by lack of qualified teachers, high class numbers and lack of basic teaching-learning materials and equipment, also caused many young people to lose interest in school and subsequently drop out.

National School Census data shows Proxy Completion Rate (PCR) for Junior Secondary is 41 % for girls and 49 % for boys.

The PCR for Senior Secondary School is 17 % for girls and 26 % for High school dropout at both Junior and Senior Secondary

Consistently, net attendance of girls is lower than that of boys in all the districts with the disparity being lowest in the urbanized Western Urban area. A key challenge is to get more girls into secondary school and ensure they complete at least Junior Secondary School (JSS) as required by the law.

⁶⁸ Statistics Sierra Leone and Ministry of Health and Sanitation, 2009; Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey 2008, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

⁶⁹ Restless Development - Sierra Leone, 2012.

The Proxy Completion Rate (PCR) from the 2010-11 National School Census data shows that PCR for JSS level is 41 percent for girls and 49 percent for boys. The PCR for Senior Secondary School (SSS) is 17 percent for girls and 26 percent for boys. Completion of secondary school is therefore very low, especially for girls. At JSS level, school fee subsidies are provided by the Government for all the three terms in form 1, two terms in form 2 and 1 term in form 3 in public schools. The government also supports procurement of learning materials and payment of examination fees in public secondary schools.

Table 9: Student Enrolment by Region, Level and Gender, Sierra Leone, Year, 2011												
Region	Pre-primary Enrolment			Primary Enrolment*			JSS Enrolment			SSS Enrolment		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
East	3,329	3,380	6,619	135,479	134,342	269,821	28,076	22,057	50,133	11,841	5,523	17,364
North	2,769	3,054	5,823	222,581	200,567	423,148	42,764	31,207	73,971	16,472	7,569	24,041
South	3,044	2,963	6,007	150,986	144,795	295,781	25,909	20,283	46,192	13,804	7,883	21,687
West	9,195	9,707	18,902	102,558	103,195	205,753	37,347	36,846	74,193	25,166	19,985	45,151
National Girl/Boy Ratio ⁷⁰	18,247	19,104	37,351	611,604	582,899	1,194,503	134,096	110,393	244,489	67,283	40,960	108,243
		1.05			1.04*			0.83*			0.61	
Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. 2012. The 2010/11 School Census Report. Vol. 1: Statistics Sierra Leone/UNICEF Sierra Leone. 2011												

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2012, The 2010/11 School Census Report, Vol. 1; Statistics Sierra Leone/UNICEF Sierra Leone, 2011

Table 10: School Enrolment and Performance Trend by Category, Sierra Leone, 2005 – 2011						
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Gross Primary Enrolment	1,291,355	1,356,688	1,324,968	1,353,723	-	1,194,503
Gross JSS Enrolment	150,917	179,710	195,215	252,162	-	244,489
NPSE Passes: Total	63,917	69,774	70,635	75,036	72,429	72,166
NPSE Passes: Boys	39,775	39,856	40,067	41,261	38,981	38,162
NPSE Passes: Girls	24,142	29,918	30,568	33,775	33,448	34,004
BECE Passes: Boys*	-	-	6,513	5,840	6,647	6,066
BECE Passes: Girls*	-	-	3,610	3,222	3,540	3,426
WASSCE Passes: Total*			150	246	357	486
WASSCE: Boys*	-	-	118	156	233	350
WASSCE: Girls*	-	-	32	90	124	136

Source: West African Examination Council, 2012; Examination; Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2010/11 School Census Report, Vol 1; (Refer also to Annex 1 for more details)

N.P.S.E – National Primary School Examination, B.E.C.E – Basic Education Certificate Examinations

*For both BECE (JSS) and WASSCE (SSS), candidates with 5 subjects including Language, Arts and Mathematics.

Due to a high level of drop-out rate for girls at primary school level, boys overwhelmingly outnumber girls at all higher levels of education (see table 11). Over the past 10 years, an increasing number of girls have entered both Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools. This is a notable positive development in addressing gender imbalances in the education sector.

⁷⁰ The MEST Census Report, 2010, records a lower gender parity index of 0.95, than one reported in the MICS 2010 study, which is 1.04. The author of this report finds the latter more credible, in view of available evidence.

Table 11: Children of secondary school age attending secondary school or higher (net attendance ratio), Percentage, Sierra Leone, 2010

Districts	Male	Female	Total
Kailahun	44.3	29.6	36.9
Kenema	35.1	29.0	32.1
Kono	37.2	32.1	34.8
Bombali	37.1	31.3	34.4
Kambia	40.0	20.4	30.2
Koinadugu	30.8	30.8	30.8
Port Loko	33.0	28.0	30.9
Tonkolili	40.7	27.1	34.3
Bo	40.6	28.0	34.7
Bonthe	31.3	24.2	28.2
Moyamba	30.2	16.0	22.9
Pujehun	26.9	28.5	27.7
Western Rural	54.1	39.1	46.2
Western Urban	61.2	58.1	59.5
National	39.9	33.2	36.6

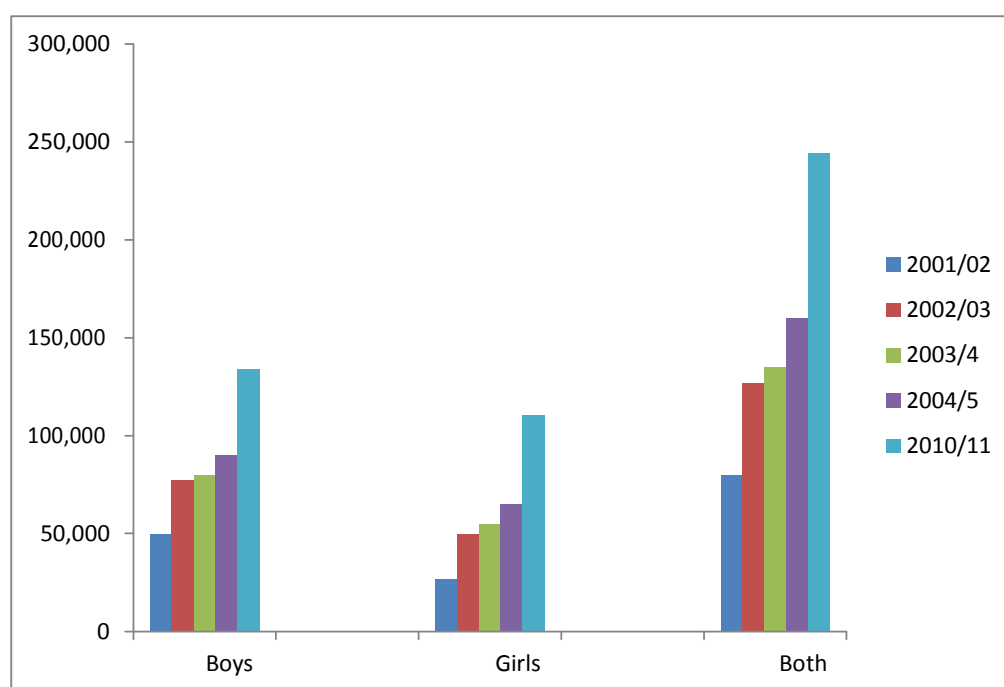
Source: GoSL and UNICEF Sierra Leone, 2011

Compared to enrolment at primary level, enrolment at junior secondary level stayed between 10 percent and 13 percent prior to the 2010/11 school year, which saw it rising to approximately 20 percent as shown in figure 10. Enrolment at Junior Secondary School has been increasing steadily over the years. Both male and female enrolments have increased but female enrolment has grown at a much faster rate of 80 percent; male enrolment at 43 percent between 2004/05 and 2010/2011. However, these increases by themselves mask the challenge that currently Junior Secondary enrolment remains one-fifth of Primary School enrolment. This poses a major national challenge as to where 80 percent of the youth go after completing basic primary school education. Footnote: Recent studies show that the private rate of return to investment in education (one additional year) by level of education in sub-Saharan Africa is: Primary School - 26.6 percent; Secondary School – 17 percent; higher level/tertiary education – 19 percent⁷¹.

Many junior and senior secondary schools are in the main district headquarters, a long way from communities forcing students to travel far every day or live in town with relatives or on their own to attend school. This increases costs and makes girls vulnerable to transactional relationships and sex. Parents in the communities researched complained of the high costs of sending their children to school, especially at junior and senior secondary schools. They cited this situation as a major reason for childrens' dropping out of school. The challenge is to get more children into secondary school and keep them there to enable more of them, especially girls, to complete secondary school.

⁷¹ Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2002; in Kingombe, 2011; Working Paper on Lessons from TVET.

Figure 11: Junior Secondary School (JSS) Enrolment 2001/02 – 2010/11



Source: Calculated from Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2010/11 School Census Report, Vol 1.

The current proportion of schools at the junior secondary school (JSS) and senior secondary school (SSS) levels compared to the primary level clearly indicates the urgency to accelerate access at that level. Secondary level graduates provide students not only for university education, but for the middle level manpower which is critical for sustainable development. Low growth of schools at secondary level has the effect of denying thousands of pupils the opportunity to complete the basic education cycle. A mismatch between primary schools establishment and establishment of JSS leads to overcrowding in JSS as well as SSS thereby resulting in to higher pupil-teacher ratio with the likelihood of negatively impacting on school performance.

A pattern of high failure rates at Junior Secondary was repeated for the three year period between 2009 and 2011. A lower proportion of candidates obtained the five passes in Language, Arts and Mathematics, which were required to progress from BECE to Senior Secondary in 2011 than for the 2008 examination⁷².

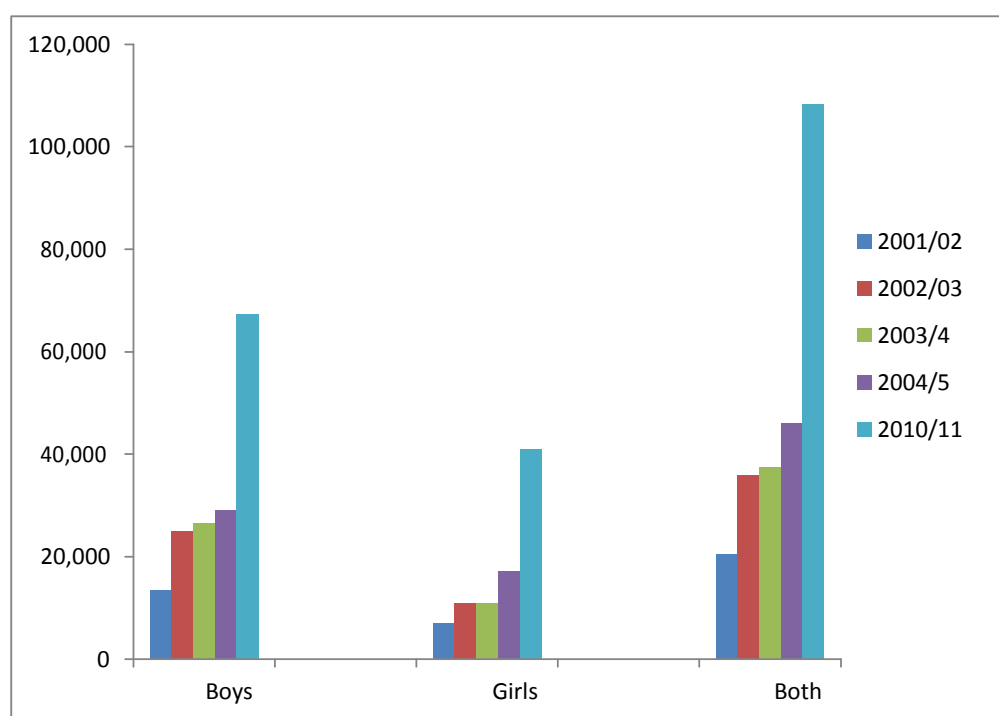
In 2010 the GOSL prepared a new Education Policy, which still awaits approval, and produced a “White Paper” on education which made far reaching recommendations from pre-primary through higher education, some of which are already being implemented. A key proposal, which was accepted by government, was to change the System of Education to include an early childhood component and an extension by one year of the duration of senior secondary school.

⁷² The President of the Republic of Sierra Leone set up a Commission of Enquiry to investigate the unusual poor performance of pupils in the 2008 BECE and WASSCE. Many of the key recommendations are being implemented.

Despite renewed effort by government to address high failure rates at senior secondary school level, pass rates of 1% are still recorded for key subjects like English and Mathematics; less than 15% eligible to enter higher education institutions. In 2011, 20% of WASSCE candidates failed in all subjects

The number of students taking the West Africa Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) over the last four years has remained relatively constant around 98,000, but pass rates have remained exceedingly low. Approximately one percent of candidates who sit the examinations meet the minimum requirement for entering university. In 2010 and 2011, only one percent passed both Mathematics and English; in 2010, five percent passed Mathematics and fourteen percent passed English Language. Since a pass in English Language is a requirement for most HEIs only about 14 percent are eligible to enter HEIs. In 2011, 20 percent of candidates who entered the WASSCE failed in all subjects, in keeping with trends in previous years. In response to the low pass rates, the President of Sierra Leone set up a Commission to investigate the reasons for the low pass rates. The Commission made a number of recommendations for action, which formed the basis of a 2010 government White Paper.

Figure 12: Senior Secondary School (SSS) Enrolment 2001/02 – 2010/11



Source: Calculated from Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2010/11 School Census Report, Vol 1.

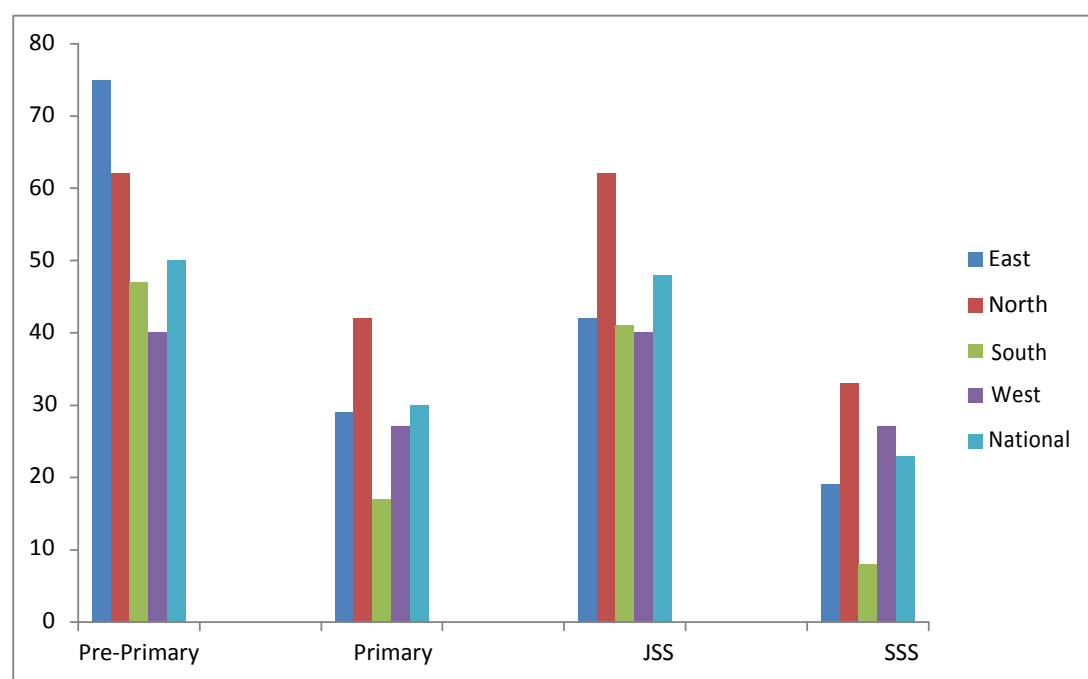
Performance by gender: The Government has in the past 4 years sought implemented the Girl-Child Support Programme to improve the retention rate of girls at secondary level and to eliminate gender disparity. Other partners, including UNICEF and USAID have played a significant role in advancing girl-child education. As a consequence of these interventions, the gender enrolment gap has narrowed considerably at the primary level (see Tables 9, 10, and Annex 1).

Analysis of the WAEC managed NPSE examinations for the period 2008 – 2011 shows that the improved retention of girls has paid off, to some extent. In the more urbanized Western Region, girls are performing as well as boys, and sometimes even better. However, in the more rural regions, with larger school-going populations, boys continued to consistently do better than girls.

Overall national performance shows boys performing better than girls in all the examinations, from NPSE, BECE and Senior Secondary levels. For example, between 2008 – 2011, the numbers of JSS candidates who wrote their Basic Education Certificate Examinations and obtained passes in 5 subjects or better, including Language, Arts, and Mathematics were below 20 percent. With an overall high failure rate reported during all the four years, 15 – 18 percent for boys and 25 percent for girls⁷³.

A peculiar feature shown in figure 13 is a disproportionately high number of unapproved schools at every level of schooling. Three out of every four pre-primary schools are unapproved. The large number of unapproved schools suggests a challenge in the regulatory and monitoring mechanism for such schools. This may also pose a challenge on the quality of service delivery and overall performance of such unregistered and ‘unmonitored’ schools.

Figure 13: Percentage of Unapproved Schools by Region and Level of Education



Source: Calculated from Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2010/11 School Census Report, Vol 1.

⁷³ WAEC Summary Report on NPSE, BECE and WASSCE Results, 2012.

Box 4: Measures to Improve Retention of Pupils at Schools through the School Feeding Programme

Due to widespread poverty, there is an understanding that large numbers of children especially in rural communities go to school without breakfast or even opt out of school. The World Food Programme (WFP) School Feeding Programme has been vital in providing diet rich in nutrients to address the health and the educational needs of vulnerable children. Recent findings show that in schools where the Schools Feeding Programme has been implemented, there is high retention rate for both boys and girls and academic performance of the pupils has improved. However, children benefiting from the WFP School Feeding Programme in primary schools are less than 300,000, about 25 percent of total enrolment. Thus, a National School Feeding Programme could increase access significantly and improve on the academic performance of the children. A National School Feeding Programme will not only promote access, but will significantly minimize child stunting which is endemic in Sierra Leone¹. This is important to the health status of future youth and adults in terms of their well-being which has a bearing on their ability to become productive citizens.

3.2 Higher/Tertiary Education Sub-sector

Having emerged from a decade-long civil war, which left the system in extreme disarray, the Government of Sierra Leone understands the value and contribution of education in general, as well as the value of higher /tertiary education in achieving economic growth and reducing poverty. Recent GoSL documents and strategies such as the *Education Sector Plan* and the *Private Sector Development Strategy, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* recognize that in order to truly benefit from economic growth, Sierra Leoneans need to have the requisite skills to be employed in the new private-sector led economy. Concern has increased regarding failure of the Higher Education sector in providing the management, technical and engineering skills needed for a growing and dynamic labour market⁷⁴. Similarly, the higher education institutions (HEIs) themselves are trying to introduce more market-oriented courses, but point out a lack of financial resources to make significant transformations to their institutions.

Sierra Leone has a long history of higher education. Fourah Bay College (FBC), founded in 1827, was the first higher education institution in sub-Saharan Africa. FBC attracted students from across West Africa, and Southern Africa and came to be known as the “Athens of West Africa.” In 1966, FBC became part of the University of Sierra Leone which consisted of FBC, Njala University College, College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences (COMAHS), and the Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM).

The decade-long civil war had a devastating effect in the education sector, including the Higher Education Sector. University colleges were attacked, buildings looted and destroyed, and lecturers captured and killed. Many academics and administrators fled the country and have remained overseas. Njala University College had to relocate its campus to Freetown, where it stayed for a decade. This meant that it could not carry out its mandate for teaching and research in the agricultural sciences.

The University Act of 2005 led to the re-constitution of the University of Sierra Leone into two independent and full-fledged universities, i.e. Njala University and the University of Sierra Leone and opened the way for the establishment of private universities. Njala University was established as a public university and the University of Sierra Leone (USL) comprising of COMAHS, IPAM, and FBC. Sierra Leone has one private university – the University of Makeni – founded in 2009. In all, Sierra Leone has a total of 21 higher education institutions registered with the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC).

⁷⁴ The 2004 Education Act defines tertiary or higher education as consisting of all formal education received after the completion of senior secondary schooling provided by universities, polytechnics, teacher training colleges, technical and vocational institutes, and professional schools and institutes. Successful completion of national senior secondary school examinations is ordinarily a pre-requisite to enter such programmes.

There are seven public HEIs (two universities, three teacher training colleges, three polytechnics) and 14 private HEIs. USL is the largest HEI followed by Njala University (refer to table 12). The private HEI sector accounts for less than 20 percent of overall enrolments.

It is widely acknowledged that the governance structures and laws need to be reviewed to assess how they hinder or help the HEIs perform their mission. The sector is governed by a number of different Acts which outline the governance, structure and institutional arrangements. The higher education sector includes the 2001 Polytechnics Act, the 2001 Tertiary Education Commission Act, the 2005 Universities Act, and the 2001 National Council for Technical and Vocational and other Academic Awards Act. The current Acts do not encourage innovation and quality as they limit the authority of Higher Education Institutions and supporting organizations like the TEC. The process of reviewing the TEC 2001 Act is underway and it is envisaged that the result of the review would be a stronger regulatory framework which gives more authority to the TEC in areas of accreditation and governance. The ambiguity in the roles and relationships of the various institutions, which make planning and undertaking reform difficult would also need to be tackled.

Access and Equity: Since the end of the war in 2001, Sierra Leone has made considerable progress in increasing access to education at all levels. Enrolments in the higher education sector have also increased significantly from 6,000 in 1998/99 to 16,000 in 2004/05 to over 25,000 in 2009/10⁷⁵. However, the growth in enrolments, from primary, secondary to higher levels is from a very low base, and coverage at the higher level is actually still relatively low compared to other countries. The tertiary enrolment per 100,000 inhabitants in Sierra Leone is about 435 compared to 881 in Ghana and 557 in Rwanda.⁷⁶

Competition to obtain student grants for entry into university is stiff; students resorting to use of political connections to get the limited government grants

As is the case in other developing countries, the growth has not been equitable – gender inequalities in access are prevalent in the post primary level; but even more revealing are inequalities due to household wealth and rural residence. Females make up less than 40 percent of enrolments at the HTE sector.

In recent years, government has taken steps to redress gender imbalances in the education sector, extending to HEIs. Whilst student enrolment in universities increased by 34 percent between 2006/07 and 2009/10, the proportion of male university students enrolled actually fluctuated and declined during the reference period; the female student enrolment increased demonstrating results of efforts to reduce serious gender imbalances in higher learning institutions in the country. (Table 12). However, the issue of accessing student grants to enter university has surfaced as a challenge for most young women and men. Many prospective students are reportedly resorting to using political connections to access the limited grants availed by the GoSL⁷⁷. There are also regional inequalities in terms of access and supply as most of the HEIs are in Freetown and other major cities (Refer to table 12).

The government has policies in place to encourage female students in the sciences and engineering and students with a disability to enter HEI. Female students who are admitted to a higher education programme in sciences and engineering fields automatically get a grant that covers tuition and other costs. Furthermore, any student with a disability who qualifies to enter a HEI receives a grant from the GoSL. In addition, the

⁷⁵ World Bank, Higher and Tertiary Education Policy Note, 2012. (Draft)

⁷⁶ Sources: Ghana and Rwanda 2009 from the UIS Online database. Sierra Leone estimated.

⁷⁷ Restless Development, 2012.

MEST endeavors to distribute grants by region to ensure equity across regions, but the criteria and formula for distributing the grants are unclear.⁷⁸

Entrance to HEIs is based on performance at the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and other equivalent examinations and the capacity of institutions, for example, infrastructure, staff, and other in-house factors. Individual institutions are responsible for setting the minimum requirement necessary for the various programmes on offer. For a Bachelor's degree, admission requirements typically include credit passes in 5 subjects (including Mathematics and English). The requirement for certificate and diploma courses is lower (*see Annex A2 for typical entry requirements from various institutions*).

Distance education is increasingly being used by colleges and polytechnics that offer teacher training as a means of reaching more students, and there is potential for expansion in this area. Teacher education by distance has expanded greatly since the end of the war, as it was used as a means for certifying large numbers of uncertified teachers in the classrooms. It remains the most popular means of certifying teachers, and there is support from international agencies for this method of teacher training. However, the possibility for a more general use of distance delivery as a means to increasing access to all institutions and various programs remains. Also, the teacher distance education programme uses a combination of print and residential-based tutorial. The use of different media (for example, radio and internet) still needs to be exploited.

Mismatch and lack of linkages between existing education and training and the labour market at all levels, including university degree programmes and other tertiary institutions. Education and training are too much supply oriented and lack innovation to meet changing job market demands, including self-employment

There is a mismatch between the current courses taught in universities and many other tertiary institutions and the knowledge and skills required by students for successfully entering the job market. At the University of Sierra Leone, the country's largest university, approximately 25 percent of students are enrolled in Arts, 29 percent in public administration and management, 17 percent in Social Science and Law, 14 percent in Pure and Applied Sciences, and only three percent in Engineering⁷⁹. Not only are Technical and Vocational Institutions limited in what they offer, their programmes are widely believed to mismatch labour market requirements. The existing polytechnics do not have the capacity to offer quality technical education as they lack the necessary skills, lecturers, equipment, workshops, and laboratories. There is no institution that trains instructors for the TVET sector⁸⁰.

In addition, most of the private higher education institutions focus on business and commercial subjects. Although the senior secondary school level has a technical and vocational track, few students aspire to it as opportunities for continuing are limited.

⁷⁸ It is important to note that grants are paid directly to the institution on behalf of students, and not directly to students themselves.

⁷⁹ World Bank, 2012

⁸⁰ This has resulted in a TVET sector being unable to deliver high quality services for its clientele.

There is a perception that the quality of higher education has not improved significantly since the pre-war era⁸¹. This is evidenced by lack of facilities such as libraries and laboratories, poor and inadequate infrastructure, dwindling numbers of academic staff and informal reports from employers about the unimpressive quality of graduates available. Higher education is still struggling to recover from the debilitating effects of the civil war, despite efforts by government and institutions themselves. Furthermore, in recent years, there has been rapid growth of private tertiary institutions, which has been largely unregulated.

Although the TEC has developed guidelines for accreditation in the *Guidelines for Registration & Accreditation of Academic Programmes and Tertiary Education Institutions in Sierra Leone*, they have not been fully implemented. The TEC has also submitted a proposal for the development of Minimum Academic Standards for the various programmes offered, but this is awaiting endorsement by the MEST. The TEC cannot carry out these functions with its existing human, financial, and technical capacity.

The Higher Educational Institutions, especially universities, have difficulty attracting and retaining high quality academic staff because the salaries and conditions of service are poor. And the existing lecturers more often than not, embark on multiple jobs and consultancies to augment their salaries, which constrain their commitment to their institutions. Research, a key responsibility of academic staff, suffers. Twenty-five percent of the lecturers at the universities have doctoral degrees and 56 percent have a master's degree⁸². However teaching staff are insufficient for certain disciplines offered and the HEIs rely on large numbers of part-time contract lecturers. However, the available data does not allow calculation of the share of part-time lectures in the universities and polytechnics.

Financing: Shortage of funding is a key constraint facing higher educational institutions in their quest for expansion and quality enhancement. The public institutions receive subventions from government, which they use to cover recurrent costs, mainly salaries. They also receive fees from students, but the government puts a cap on how much they can charge. The HEIs would like to increase fees for all students, but that has not been approved by the GoSL. The development budget is limited and HEIs depend on international donors for such resources as there is no provision for this in the government budget.

Strike action by academic staff seeking higher salaries disrupted learning in universities in 2012; negotiated agreement reached with government resulting in resumption of university programmes

Salaries of academics are amongst the lowest in the region, which has led to a mass exodus of lecturers to foreign countries or other sectors of the national economy, frequent strikes and subsequent temporary closures of the universities. In the past few years, there has been a substantial increase in the cost of living without a corresponding adjustment in salaries. **As a result, 2012 witnessed series of strike actions by academics, who are seeking substantial increases to their salaries. Following recent negotiations between the GoSL and academic staff, a memorandum of agreement was signed that will ensure that salaries of university lecturers are increased three-fold the current level over the next four years.**

⁸¹ Representatives of the GoSL, however, are of the view that much has been done over the past decade to improve the quality of education, by constructing large numbers of new schools, supported by new libraries and other key infrastructure.

⁸² World Bank, Higher Education Policy Note, 2012. (Draft)

The government gives grants in aid (scholarships) to approximately 2,000 students (10% of students in public higher education institutions to cover approved tuition fees and other charges (e.g. examination fees, library, development, games and sports)⁸³. Fees have been kept low partly because the government considers it reasonable to continue with subsidizing this number of students. The fees are paid directly to the institutions for the students, and they are often paid late. Furthermore, it also limits the ability of both GoSL and universities to increase access. Discussions to replace these programmes with other financing types are yet to be finalized.

Income generation by the public HEIs, mainly from fees, is limited because of the relatively low level of fees. Fees range from Le 400,000 (US\$ 90) per year for teaching certificate studies in the polytechnic institutions to a maximum of Le 4.3 million (US\$ 1000) for medical students at the University of Sierra Leone. Public Universities had expressed their intention to increase fees in order to augment their internally generated income projects but such attempts find strong resistance from the government due to concern about the financial and political cost of such a policy. On the other hand, capacity limitation is a major factor in preventing the universities from generating income from consultancy projects in government contracts. However, some institutions have been able to raise significant amounts of revenues by offering short courses and other professional and post-graduate programmes. For example, IPAM raises 70 percent of its overall revenues in this way.

There has been an increase in the number of short term courses and certificate programmes in the public higher education institutions. Students pay fees for these courses, and they are a source of income for the institutions. These courses cater to a diverse group of students including working professionals and secondary school leavers who do not meet the requirements to enter into a degree programme. The increase of these courses is a reflection of the high demand for post-secondary school education. However, some of these HEIs have been criticized for enrolling large numbers of students in areas for which there is little labour market demand just because of their revenue-generating capacity. Many of the lecturers teaching these courses are part-time contract teachers with no commitment to the institutions.

Governance and Management: Governance arrangements in higher education institutions are not suited to the increasingly complex demands of quality higher education. Two legislations, The University Act of 2005 and the Polytechnics Act of 2001, outline the governance and institutional arrangements for the sector. The Chancellor of the public universities is the President of the country, who typically appoints (on the advice of the Minister of Education) a person to act as pro-Chancellor and chairman of the University Court, which is the highest administrative authority of the universities. The Chancellor (on the Advice of the Minister) also appoints the Vice-Chancellor and Principal. Although the Act grants the universities autonomy, the Minister's appointment of Vice-Chancellor and Principal opens the door for political influence. The Polytechnic Act established that every polytechnic should have a council to manage its affairs. The Chair of the Polytechnic Council is appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Minister. The university court is made up of a cross-section of individuals from the University of Sierra Leone, MEST, NCTVA, and Local Councils. Most of the members are appointed by the Minister of Education. Authorities of public higher education institutions complain that because many members of the top governing bodies are political appointments, there is undue political interference in the running of the institutions.

⁸³ In view of the high levels of poverty reported in this report, the challenge is how this facility can be scaled up to reach out to more needy students.

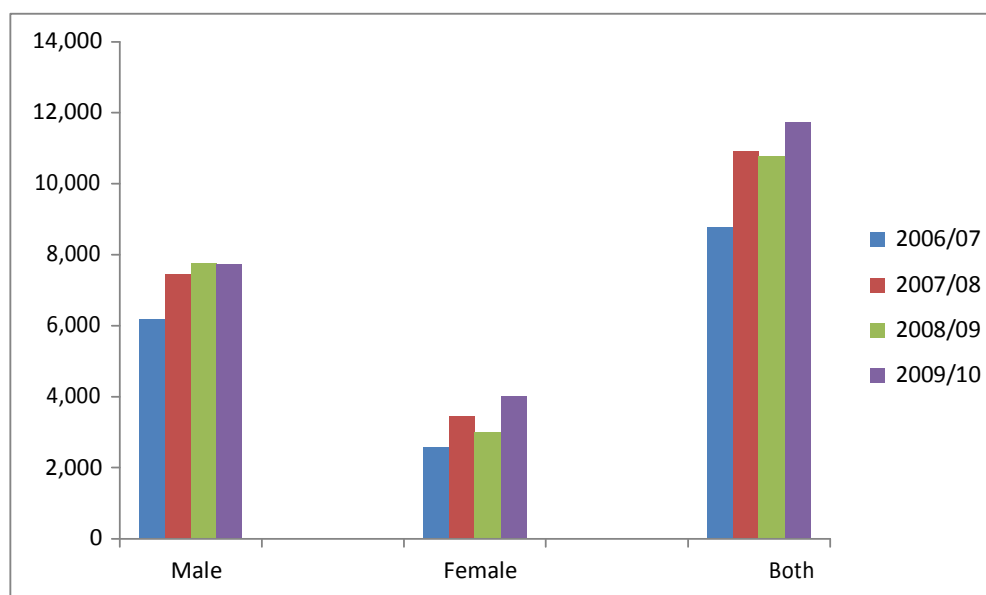
There is lack of reliable and up to date data on higher education to support planning and management. The TEC is inadequately funded hence unable to fully carry out its mandate effectively and efficiently

The TEC needs substantial support and capacity building in preparing the Higher Education Syllabi. The TEC is responsible for regulating, monitoring and coordinating higher education institutions in Sierra Leone. TEC is also responsible for advising government on the overall policies relating to the higher education sub-sector. If TEC is to continue being responsible for supervising and coordinating the preparation of HES, considerable capacity building support and technical assistance is needed.

There is a lack of reliable and sufficient data on the sub-sector to support planning and management⁸⁴.

The TEC collects basic data on higher education institutions under their remit, but detailed and comprehensive data on elements of the HE system such as staff, internal and external efficiency parameters, and student demographics is hard to find. The Education Management Information System (EMIS) does not collect data on higher education. The data collection in Sierra Leone is fragmented and each institution collects its own data according to different procedures. There is no specific strategy and procedure for collecting and utilizing the data. There is a need to establish a system for collecting and processing the statistics and information to provide accurate, timely and relevant information for management decision- making, budget preparation, and monitoring the progress of the HE programmes and plans.

Figure 14: Student Enrolment in Universities, 2006/07 – 2009/10



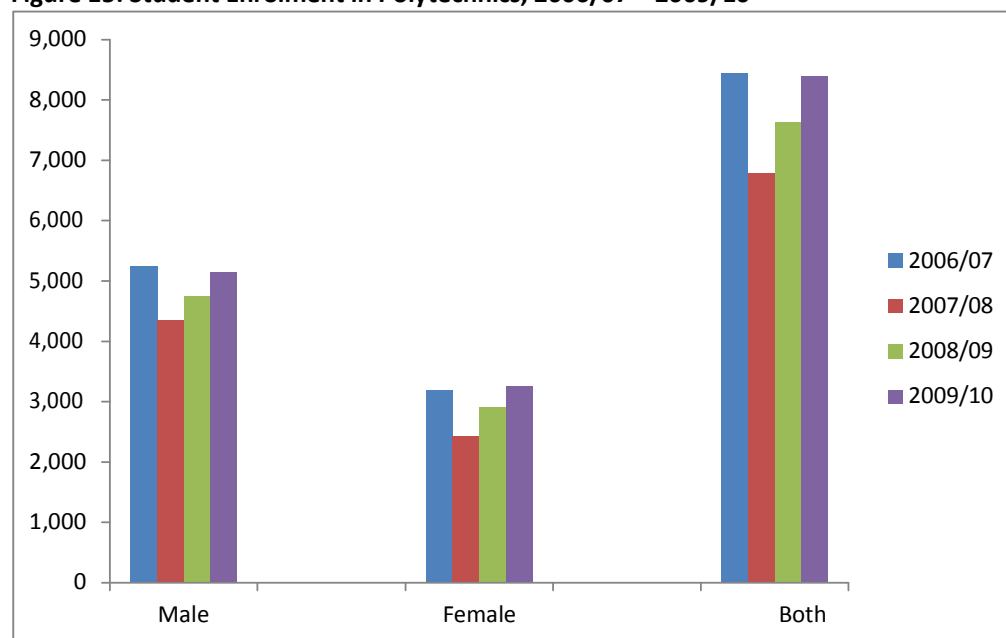
Source: Calculated from Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2010/11 School Census Report, Vol 1.

⁸⁴ The TEC is struggling to carry out its research, monitoring and evaluation functions, largely due to resource constraints. For example, the last comprehensive data for HEI only covers the 2009/10 period. There has not been funding to conduct further research from the 2010/11 financial year to date. Other key national research agenda, in particular, managed through Statistics Sierra Leone, has also been hit hard due to funding gaps.

Table 12: Enrolments at Recognized Tertiary Institutions, Sierra Leone, 2007/08 - 2009/10								
Years	2007/08				2009/10			
Public Institutions	Male	Female	% Female	Total	Male	Female	% Female	Total
University of Sierra Leone	4,730	2,092	31	6,822	5,129	2,472	33	7,601
-Fourah Bay College (FBC)	2,949	773	22	3,542	3,128	1,059	25	4,187
-College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences (COMAHS)	502	520	51	1,022	478	586	55	1,987
-Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM)	1,279	799	38	2,078	1,523	827	35	2,350
Njala University (NU)	2,591	1,338	34	3,929	2,298	1,449	39	3,747
Milton Margai College of Education and Technology	2,068	1,296	39	3,364	2,218	1,448	39	3,666
Eastern Polytechnic	1,421	594	29	2,015	1,302	785	38	2,087
Northern Polytechnic	870	546	39	1,416	1,619	1,026	39	2,645
Bonthe Technical College	49	13	21	62	38	15	28	53
Port Loko Teachers College	717	562	44	1,279	724	347	32	1,071
Freetown Teachers College	408	397	49	805	553	505	48	1,058
TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLMENTS	-	-	-	-	13,843	8,032	37	21,875
PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS								
University of Makeni (UNIMAK)	138	30	18	168	299	79	21	378
Liccsal Business College	114	138	55	252	186	240	56	426
Institute of Advanced Management and Technology	288	167	37	455	344	190	36	534
Sierra Leone Theological College & Church Training	34	165	83	199	21	85	80	106
The Evangelical College of Theology	113	50	31	163	160	68	30	228
Institute of Business Studies & Administration (IBSA)	140	229	76	302	198	207	51	405
College of Travel and Tourism Studies	20	73	88	83	147	32	18	179
Institute of Business Administration & Technology	122	83	40	205	261	131	33	392
Freetown College of Management & Accountancy	173	197	53	370	179	167	48	346
Finance and Management EMIBEX College	127	143	53	270	194	223	53	417
Institute of Continuing Education and Consultancy Studies	-	-	-	-	30	15	33	45
Every Nation College of Administration	36	11	23	47	64	22	26	86
Banktec College of Information Technology	28	22	44	50	46	66	59	112
College of Management and Administration (COMA)	15	14	48	29	58	46	44	104
TOTAL PRIVATE ENROLMENT	-	-	-	-	2,187	1,571	42	3,758
Sources: World Bank, Higher and Tertiary Education Policy Note, 2012; Tertiary Education Commission, 2011.								

Enrolment in Polytechnics declined between 2006/07 and 2007/08 due to instability brought about by the global economic crisis (Refer figure 15). However, it picked up and increased between 2008/09 and 2009/10. Female student enrolment in polytechnics has remained at between 37 and 39 percent of the total enrolment, indicating that there are more male youth in polytechnics than female students.

Figure 15: Student Enrolment in Polytechnics, 2006/07 – 2009/10



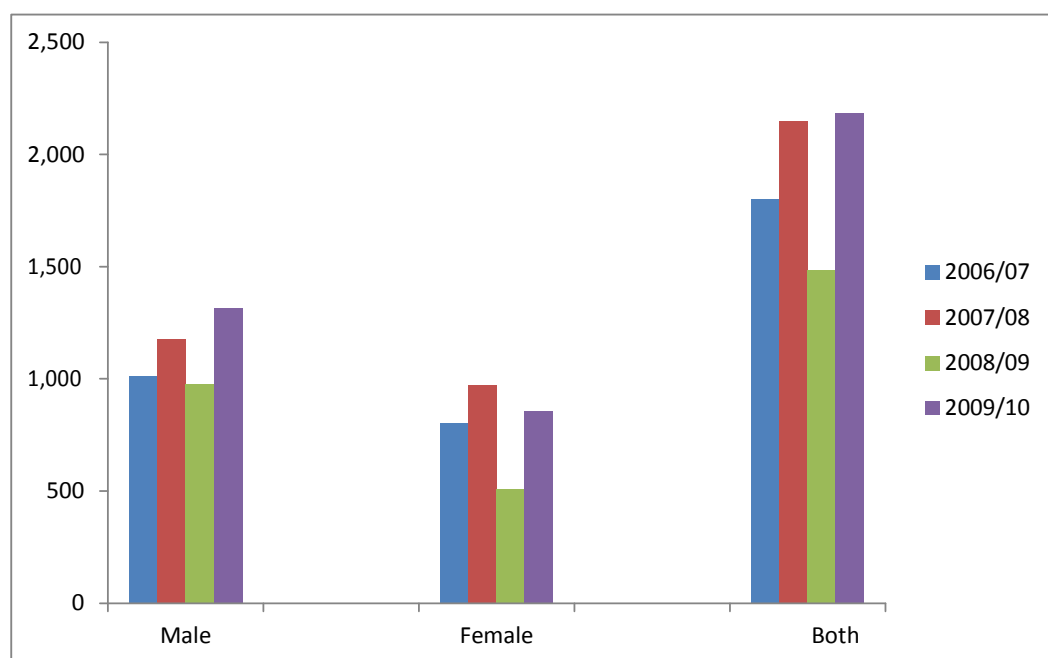
Source: Calculated from Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2010/11 School Census Report, Vol 1.

Student enrolment in Teachers Colleges shows fluctuations between 2006/07 and 2009/10. A decline is observed during 2008/09. The female student population at Teachers Colleges shows that there are fewer women than men, showing similar trends demonstrated by other tertiary institutions (Figure 16). However, the enrolment gap between female and male students is smaller than with universities and polytechnics, indicating that young women find it easier to enter Teachers Colleges than they do with other institutions of higher learning. There are three main teachers colleges in the country.

In Sierra Leone, the establishment of private tertiary institutions is substantially lower level than public institutions. This is keeping with the state of development of private sector in the country. Because of the development challenges the country has faced with the decade of war and the post conflict era, a strong private sector is still to evolve in the country. However, the situation with private tertiary institutions shows that for the relatively small student population over the years, a sizeable proportion of it is female, more than in the case with public tertiary institutions. A few of the private colleges actually have a higher a higher female to male student ratio, although the situation is mixed in many cases. However, the enrolment gap between female and male students is smaller than with universities and polytechnics, indicating that young women find it easier to enter Teachers Colleges than they do with other institutions of higher learning⁸⁵.

⁸⁵ There are two main teachers colleges in the country.

Figure 16: Student Enrolment in Teachers Colleges, 2006/07 – 2009/10



Source: Calculated from Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2010/11 School Census Report, Vol 1.

3.3 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone was considered to be a nation where grievances about educational exclusion and lack of economic opportunity have been identified as some of the major causes of the conflict (Paulson, 2009). Skills training, along with formal education, could contribute to consolidating development and the much needed transformation for consolidating the peace that has been achieved so far, with potential to open up real opportunities for young women and men. TVET programming is an integral part of a reintegration that creates and facilitates new opportunities and livelihoods for both ex-combatants and ordinary citizens, many of whom are young people; and for communities by enabling the possibility of building realities that differ considerably from pre-conflict ones.

TVET is an option for large numbers of youth unable to enter university and polytechnics. Many young people view TVET lowly. The use of 'outdated equipment', poor funding for TVET programmes, general lack of strategic thrust and quality are cited by the youth as challenges.

Sierra Leone Government's recent expenditures on education during the period from 2008 to 2010 were: \$11.996m; \$16.3m; \$17.457m respectively. The TVET shares of the 2008/2010 government education budget were as follows: 4.2 percent; 2.1 percent; and 2.2 percent (Table 13), a 50 percent reduction between 2008 and 2009 and basically unchanged between 2009 and 2010. Of the public TVET centre's registered with the Government of Sierra Leone in 2010; about 154 receive Government assistance; 46 get grants, while 109 obtained teachers' salaries for teachers on payroll. Some formal and non-formal training of the lower and middle level Technical and Vocational trade certificate holders with qualifications in electronics, motor mechanics, carpentry, masonry and others is currently not with National Council for Technical Vocational and Other Academic Awards (NCTVA) or the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology⁸⁶.

Table 13: Public Education Expenditures, US\$, Sierra Leone, 2008-2010

	2008	2009	2010
Education	US\$11,996 m	US\$16,3m	US\$17,457m
TVET	\$505,975	\$359,483	\$393,425
TVET/Education	4.2%	2.1%	2.2%

Source: Nyalley, 2010

Preliminary results from analysis undertaken by the MEST, in collaboration with some development partners, show that although education spending increased 18% in real terms between 2007 and 2010, its share as a percentage of GDP has decreased from 3.2 percent to 2.8 percent, with the lowest in 2008 at 2.6 percent. Within the education sector, the highest share has gone to pre-primary and primary education, 51 percent; 16.5 percent junior secondary, 10.2 percent to senior secondary, and 19 percent to higher education⁸⁷. Funding to TVET was only 4.2 percent of the education budget in 2008, falling to about 2 percent for the years 2009 and 2010

Ironically, low employment prospects after TVET training also cited as a key challenge

Most TVET youth graduates with certificates are trained in a limited number of technical areas such as soap making, tailoring and dyeing. However, the youth within the ages of 18-24 can hardly afford the working materials and fees required (Nyalley, 2010). Although TVET is an option for large numbers of youth unable to enter university and Polytechnics, many young people view TVET lowly. The use of 'outdated equipment', poor funding for TVET programmes and a general lack of strategic thrust has been a challenge for many youth.

⁸⁶ This partly explains why Sierra Leone depends on neighbouring countries for skilled and semi skilled workers in trades like electronics, carpentry, masonry and many others. A fully functional TVET could enable the country to rely more on its own locally trained personnel to fill lower and middle level technical manpower in various trades.

⁸⁷ Preliminary results from yet to be published MEST analysis, 2012.

In Sierra Leone, TVET was originally designed for school dropouts and those who failed the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) or failed to enter tertiary institutions. Consequently, the TVET system is stereotyped for those with a low level of academic achievement. This partly accounts for low level of human and material investment, poor salaries, low level of qualified teachers and poor quality of infrastructure, tools and equipment. For instance, the qualification of teachers mostly consists of high school graduates, Teachers Certificate (TC), Higher Teachers Certificate (HTC), a few Bachelor's Degree holders, with no appropriately designed TVET teaching qualification. Disabled young people, in particular, those whose disability are not natural but came as a result of the war, face particular hardships as their chances of employment have been severely reduced, particularly those who have had upper limbs amputated (Greene, 2009). Because of the different socio-economic set-up between urban and rural areas, urban youth are more likely to be unemployed and are more likely to be engaged in fishing, casual labour, petty trade, entertainment industry and diamond mining. Rural youth are more likely to be engaged in farming and other agro-based activities. There is now an ever-growing response to skills training in both technology-enhancing learning and non-technology usage through formal and non-formal education; this kind of response is absent in TVET and seems a long way of from being established. The proliferation of skills and vocational training, a large number of which are unregistered is a spontaneous response to the need to train the youth in order to become productive citizens. However, the response has tended to be supply oriented, and failed to match the requirements of the labour market both in terms of quality and level of sophistication.

Due to a number of factors, the main one being that there has been an absence of a national policy framework to guide TVET programming and development⁸⁸. Coupled with low levels of investment in technical and vocational education and training generally, the TVET system has not been able to respond to the labour market needs. For example, the current investment drive in the mining sector has demonstrated serious gaps in the education and training system, including TVET. In the absence of a strategy to respond to the labour requirements of the mining industry and other sectors that have potential to become drivers of growth such as the petroleum and fishing industries, the country's existing education and training system, including TVET is far from being ready to meet the labour market priorities⁸⁹. Sierra Leone has been unable to tap into its youth population to prepare a new generation of technically and managerially sound professionals required by the various sectors of the economy. As a result, unless there is a new drive to turnaround the situation, the country will continue to depend on human resources from other countries whilst it fails to nurture its own local human resource base, in particular, to prepare young people to occupy key technical, lower and middle level management positions in the country's private sector.

Over the past years, the challenges of the TVET system and possible options to address them are identified as follows:

- Absence of national harmonized policy for TVET, focusing on a national curriculum and syllabi as well as deepening capabilities of the TVET system to respond to the dynamic labour market priorities;
- Lack of a well resourced national accreditation system for all TVET centres; investment in the NCTVA has been too low to make an impact; moreover, a large number of key technical areas are excluded because of capacity constraints in the current system;

⁸⁸ A draft national policy for TVET was finalised in July 2010, with collaboration between the GoSL and UNESCO. However, the draft policy is yet to be ratified in Parliament and formally adopted. An implementation plan, with a clear resource mobilisation plan with stated priorities would also be required to support the policy immediately after the policy is adopted.

⁸⁹ Many of the youth who are currently unemployed could be trained through the TVET system and become productively employed in the mining, petroleum and other emerging key sectors which are poised for growth.

- TVET delivery system has had poor linkages with labour market, as well as being subjected to poor quality infrastructure, equipment, transport, material and staffing. This has affected the quality of the TVET deliverables and results.
- Most of TVET college graduates are unable to find gainful employment in the local community since in many cases, the qualification does not match the needs of the labour market or community; largely due to the supply orientation of the system. There is a mismatch with labour market demands.
- Historically, training programmes in the country, at all levels, have focused much on academic subjects at the exclusion of practical courses. Many of the existing colleges, including polytechnics, have tended to prioritize and offer academic courses than technical and vocational courses and programmes. This has created a gap in the availability of appropriately qualified TVET teaching staff.
- Because of the relatively high level of illiteracy, most of the youth trained in the non-formal sector are innumerate and functionally illiterate to the English Language. Delivery methods have been unable to deal effectively with this challenge. This calls for a change of strategy in order to reach out to the large number of illiterate youth;
- In view of the high level of poverty, currently, TVET is perceived to be costly and therefore, in many cases, inaccessible to poor youth;

Box 5: TVET Development Good Practice

Sierra Leone could also learn from development of the TVET system from other countries. There are some emerging trends in countries such as Botswana, Ghana and South Africa, where TVET has been modernized from the traditional apprenticeship schemes to programmes that permit movement into the national training system. The aim of this approach is to include a balanced proportion of general and vocational content that would enable participants to move both laterally within the TVET programmes and vertically to general or advanced education institutions. This progression within and between TVET and general education, when fully implemented, can create a breathing space whereby the education system responds to the types of skills demanded for the labour force at different periods (Oketch, 2009). As part of a long-term strategy, it has also been argued that adding vocational elements to primary school curricula or ensuring that basic education school-leavers are literate and numerate is the best way of preparing them for further training and also making them ready for the world of work (Ahadzie, 2009, in Kingombe, 2011).

Table 14: Private Rate of Return (%) to Investment in Education (one additional year), by Level of Education (shows quantitatively benefits to the country by investing in education)

Region	Primary	Secondary	Higher Education
Asia	20	15.8	18.1
Europe/Middle East/North Africa	13.8	13.6	18.8
Latin America/Caribbean	26.6	16.0	19.5
OECD	13.4	11.3	11.6
Sub-Saharan Africa	26.6	17.0	19.0

Source: Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2002 {in Kingombe, 2011}

4. HEALTH SECTOR AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

Table 15: Overview of Health Sector and Other Development Indicators, Sierra Leone, 2011

HEALTH INDICATORS	Life expectancy at birth (years)	47.8
	Mortality rate, under-five (per 1000)	217
	Mortality rate, infant (per 1000)	128
	Expenditure on health public (% of GDP)	1.4
Water and sanitation	% of population using improved drinking water sources, 2008, total	49
	2010, total	57
	Water treatment (2010)	2
	% of population using improved drinking water, 2010, urban	76
	2010, rural	48
	2008, rural	26
	% of population with improved sanitation facilities, 2008, total	13
	2010, total	40
	% of population with improved sanitation facilities, 2010, urban	58
	2010, rural	32
HIV and AIDS knowledge and attitudes	Adult population aged 15-49, HIV prevalence, % in 2001	1.1
	Estimated adult population aged 15 – 49, HIV prevalence, % in 2009	1.6
	Estimated number of people, all ages living with HIV and AIDS, (all ages, thousands), 2009	49
	HIV prevalence, 15 – 24 age-group, young people, 2009, male	0.6
	HIV prevalence, 15 – 24 age-group, young people, 2009, female	1.5
	Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15+ with HIV), 2009	59.6
	Comprehensive knowledge about HIV prevention, all (2010)	20
	Comprehensive knowledge about HIV prevention among young people (2010)	23
	% aged 15 – 24 with comprehensive knowledge of HIV and AIDS, 2005 – 2010, male	28

	% 15 – 24 with comprehensive knowledge of HIV and AIDS, 2005 – 2010, female	17
	Women who know where to be tested for HIV	46
	Women who have been tested for HIV and know the results	8
	Sexually active young women who have been tested for HIV and know the results	9
Sexual behaviour	Never married women (aged 15 – 24 years) who have had sex	65
	Sex before age 15 among young women	24
	Age mixing among sexual partners	26
	Sex with multiple partners	8
	Condom use during sex with multiple partners	10
	Sex with non-regular partners	37
	Condom use with non-regular partners	12
Orphaned children	Children not living with biological parent	22
	Prevalence of children with at least one parent dead	13
	School attendance of orphans	74
	School attendance of non-orphans	84
	Orphaned by AIDS, (0 – 17 years), estimated thousands, 2009	15
	Orphaned by other causes, (0 – 17years), estimated thousands, 2009	320
Reproductive Health		
	Adolescent fertility rate (2010)	122 per 1000
	Early child bearing (2010)	38
	Contraceptive prevalence rate (2010)	11
	Unmet need (2010)	27
Child Protection		
	Birth registration	78
	Child labour	50
	School attendance among child labourers	76
	Child labour among students	52
	Violent discipline	82
WOMEN AND HEALTH		
Early marriage and polygamy	Marriage before age 15	16
	Marriage before age 18	50
	Young women age 15 – 19 currently in marriage or union (MICS, 2010)	23
	Marital status, young women aged 15 – 19 who are currently married or in union of sort – female	30
	Age at first birth, women aged 20 – 24 who gave birth before 18 years, %	40
	Spousal age difference women age 15 - 19	35
	women age 20 - 24	36
Female genital mutilation/cutting	Approval of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)	72
	Prevalence of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) among women (2010)	88
	Prevalence of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) among daughters (2010)	10

EDUCATION		
	Expected years of schooling of children under 7 years	7.2
Literacy and education	Literacy rate among young women aged 15 – 24 years	48
	Literacy rate among young men aged 15 – 24 years	68
	School readiness	6
	Net intake in primary education	45
	Primary school net attendance rate (adjusted)	74
	Secondary school net attendance rate (adjusted)	37
	Children reaching last grade of primary	93
	Primary completion rate	117
	Gender parity index (primary school)	1.04 ratio
	Gender parity index (secondary school)	0.83 ratio
	Primary school participation, net attendance, male	62
	Primary school participation, net attendance, female	64
	Primary school participation, survival rate to last primary grade (%), 2006 – 2009	94
	Secondary school net attendance, 2005 – 2010, male	31
	Secondary school net attendance, 2005 – 2010, female	35
Source: Statistics Sierra Leone and UNICEF-Sierra Leone, 2011; MICS 2010, Freetown, Sierra Leone		

4.1 Health Services Delivery

In recent years, Sierra Leone has made rapid progress in implementing key health interventions. Following the development of the National Health Sector Strategic Plan 2020 – 2015, the Free Health Care Initiative (FHCI) was launched in April 2010 to provide free health services to pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and children under the age of 5 years, offering comprehensive services. Since the launch of the Basic Package of Essential Health Services for Sierra Leone in 2010, particularly for women and children, there has been a 250 percent increase in service utilisation and a dramatic decrease in case fatality amongst children⁹⁰. However, the 2010 Health Sector Performance Report highlighted the need to have continuous availability of essential drugs at all health facilities in order to ensure an adequate level of services.

Delivery of health services is critical to youth development and the overall wellbeing of young women and men. The following section provides an overview of the health sector and its linkages with the development agenda of young women and men.

The facilities density is the primary general indicator of access to health services. Eleven of the 13 districts in the country exceed 2 facilities per 10,000. Table 16 and figures 17 and 18 show that though the Western area has the lowest health facility density, it has the highest number of government hospitals, 48 percent, which can serve a much larger number of clients than other regions. The Western area has 38 percent of private clinics and the lowest number of government clinics, 8 percent. The Northern region, the area with the largest population, has the highest number of government clinics, 38 percent; and 41 percent of government hospitals.

⁹⁰ Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Government of Sierra Leone, 2010 Health Sector Performance Report.

Table 16: Distribution of Government and Private Medical Centres by Region, Sierra Leone, 2012				
Region*	Government hospitals	Private hospitals	Government clinics	Private clinics
Western	11	7	84	59
Eastern	3	-	270	23
Southern	4	6	313	32
Northern	5	9	416	26
National	23	22	1083	154
Source: Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Health Indicators Data, 2012				

Figure 17: Distribution of Government and Private Hospitals in Sierra Leone by Region, 2012

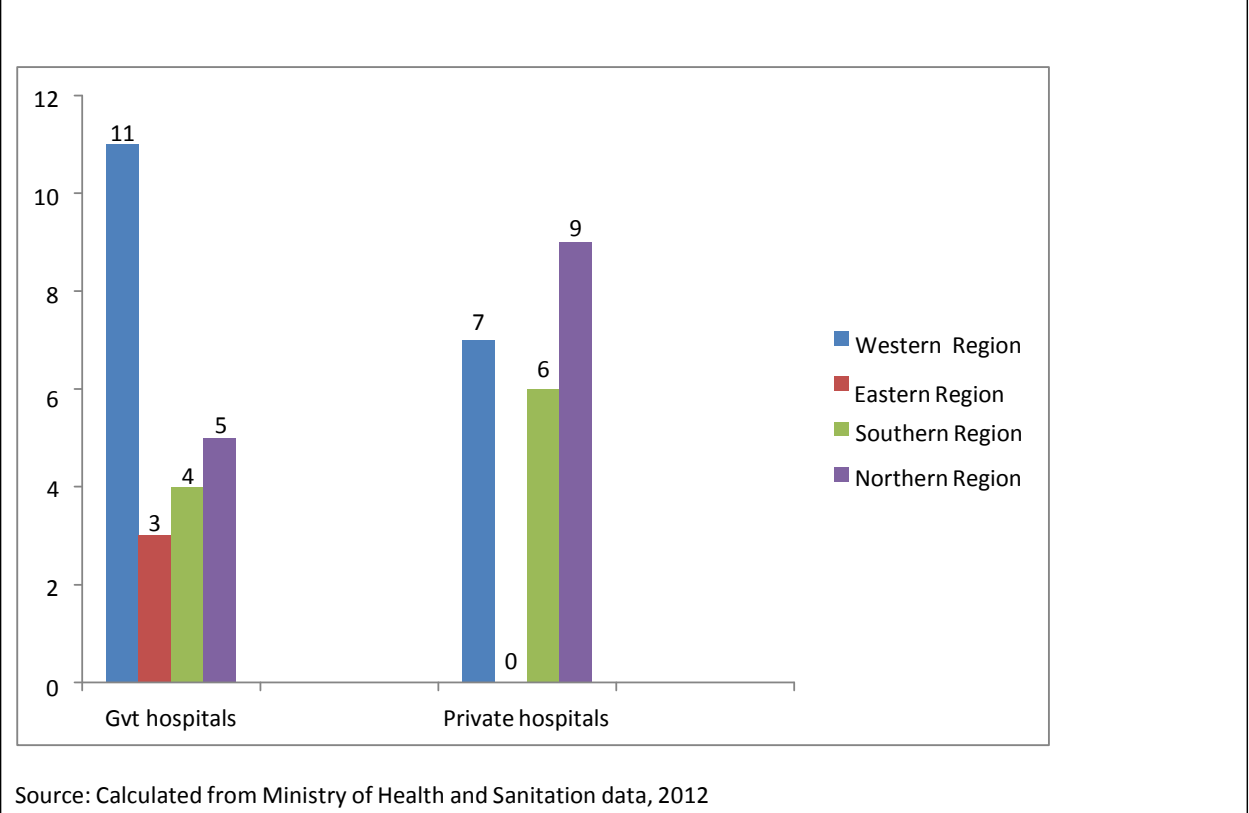
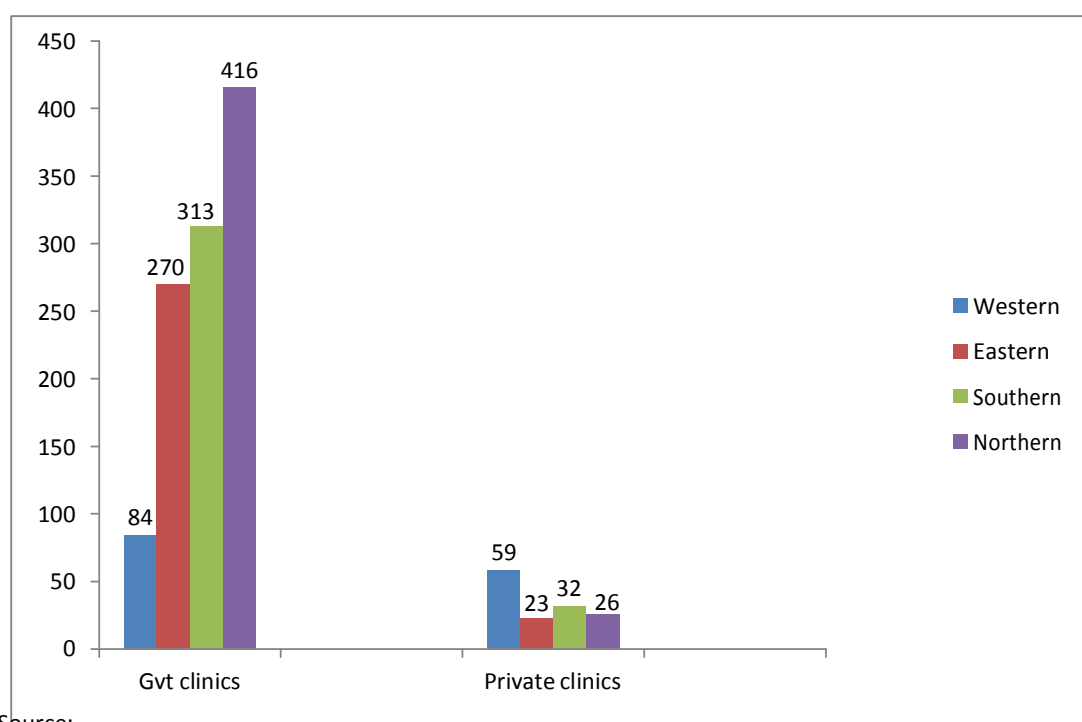


Figure 18: Distribution of Government and Private Clinics in Sierra Leone by Region, 2012



Source:

Source: Calculated from Ministry of Health and Sanitation data, 2012

4.2 Access to Healthcare

Health care services in Sierra Leone are provided by the GoSL, faith-based organizations, NGOs, private clinics, and traditional healers. The public health delivery system comprises three levels: (i) Peripheral Health Units (PHUs) for primary health care; (ii) District hospitals for secondary care; and (iii) Regional or National hospitals for tertiary care. Most aspects of primary and secondary health care have been devolved to the Local Councils following the approval of the Local Government Act of 2004. The private sector plays a fairly limited role in the sector currently. Of the 1,282 existing facilities, 1106 are public. Of these latter, 1,011 (79 percent) are located outside the Western Area. There are more than 176 private facilities owned by private organisations including churches and NGOs.⁹¹

Surgical care: An assessment of surgical capacity at 10 government hospitals in Sierra Leone in 2008 found severe shortages in infrastructure, personnel and supplies required for delivering surgical care⁹². In particular, hospitals lacked reliable supply of electricity and running water, there were fewer than 10 fully trained Sierra Leonean surgeons, and oxygen concentrators and other equipment were often not functional. Whilst basic surgical care for minor procedures could be performed at the primary care level, more comprehensive surgical care requiring a well equipped major operating theatre, is generally performed only at the district hospital level and above. In the latter, which if not handled properly, can be life-threatening. Evidence points to the need for substantial improvement within the health services context of Sierra Leone, in view of the challenges observed.

⁹¹ Ministry of Health and Sanitation Data, 2012.

⁹² Kingham, T.P, T. B. Kamara and others, 2009.

Table 17 summarizes the most recent information on access, need, use and satisfaction. If people walk less than 30 minutes from a medical facility they are considered in Sierra Leone to have access to health services.⁹³ About 46 percent of the population had access to medical services; in urban areas, 72 percent had access; in rural areas, 31 percent had access. Access also varied significantly among regions: 75 percent in the more urbanised Western Region, 43 percent in the Eastern Region, 37 percent in the Northern and Southern Regions⁹⁴.

Table 17: Population Access, Use and Satisfaction with Medical Services⁹⁵, Percentage, Sierra Leone, 2007				
	Physical Access	Need	Use	Satisfaction
Total	45.5	27.1	23.1	65.0
Rural	30.5	30.7	25.2	66.8
Urban	71.6	21.0	19.4	61.0
Eastern Region	43.3	28.6	25.4	69.7
Northern Region	36.8	30.9	25.3	63.5
Southern Region	36.9	28.6	24.0	68.0
Western Region	75.2	16.4	14.5	51.9
Source: CWI 2007, Table A1.15				

While the coverage of preventive interventions has improved in recent years as well as the access and use of health services by people, including the youth, these still remain low for most services. Primary and secondary healthcare services are functions that were devolved to the Local Councils (LCs) in September 2005.⁹⁶ A World Bank study indicates that after the devolution, access and satisfaction with the services improved. It reports that between 2005 and 2007, there was an increase of people with access to health clinics as well as increase in satisfaction with health clinics.⁹⁷

⁹³ Government of Sierra Leone (2007), page 19.

⁹⁴ Separate information on access to health facilities by the youth is not available.

⁹⁵ Access (physical) to medical services is defined for persons living in households with a health facility less than 30 minutes walk away. Need for a medical services is defined for persons who were sick or injured in the four weeks period preceding the survey. The use of medical services is defined for persons who consulted a health practitioner in the four weeks period preceding the survey. Satisfaction is defined as persons who consulted a health practitioner in the four weeks period preceding the survey and cited no problems.

⁹⁶ Zhou ed. (2009), page 62.

⁹⁷ Zhou ed. (2009), page 76 and Table 5.1.

At the national level 23.1 percent of the population made *use* of medical services; 25.2 percent in rural areas and 19.4 percent in urban areas. The recent survey results revealed that the leading health provider was Government hospitals (28.8 percent) followed by community health centres (24.1 percent), traditional healers (11.8 percent), drug peddlers (10.2 percent), and private health facilities (8.3 percent); the least used health provider was the mobile outreach clinics (0.6 percent)⁹⁸.

At national level, 35 percent of the population was *dissatisfied* with medical services. The reasons cited for dissatisfaction were high cost (38.9 percent), the long waiting time (37.9 percent), unsuccessful treatment (26.3 percent), no drugs available (12.3 percent), facilities not clean (4.9 percent), no trained professionals (3.4 percent), and other reasons (90 percent). At the regional level the highest percentage of dissatisfaction was from Western Region (48.1 percent) and the lowest from Eastern Region (30.3 percent).

On the whole, while there has been significant improvement in health care services since the end of the war, nearly half of the population had no physical access to health services and one-third of those that used the facilities were not satisfied with the services. People in Sierra Leone seek services from health care providers only once every two years and many public health facilities are underutilized.⁹⁹ Indeed, the Ministry of Health reports utilization rates of 0.5 per person in 2009 indicating the biggest barrier for accessing health care services is financial or cost related (**Figure 18**).¹⁰⁰

That cost is a major impediment to access health is confirmed by other surveys. In the DHS 2008, women were asked what their major concerns were in accessing health care (Table 18). Eighty percent of women mentioned getting money for the treatment: 89.5 percent of the women in the poorest quintile and 60 percent of the women in the richest quintile. Other reasons included distance to health facility (52.9 percent); having to take transport (50 percent); and concerns about the availability of drugs (48.7 percent).

In addition to cost of transport and the opportunity cost of time, households incur other expenses when visiting public health facilities. These costs include “officially sanctioned fees for drugs and other medical supplies, officially sanctioned service charges, and non-officially sanctioned fees demanded by various health care workers.” The charges apply to essential and non-essential services.

Some vulnerable groups are expected by law to have free access to health care¹⁰¹. Polio victims, amputees, the blind, the deaf, the mute, and people with diabetic retinopathy qualify for free primary health care services. However, as a recent World Bank Study indicates “this legal right is not backed up by an allocation of resources to support its provision. In the study, discussions with people with disabilities indicate that they do not have consistent access to health services, in particular rehabilitation services, and that this continues to be a major difficulty in their lives.”¹⁰²

⁹⁸ World Bank, unpublished social protection report for Sierra Leone, 2012.

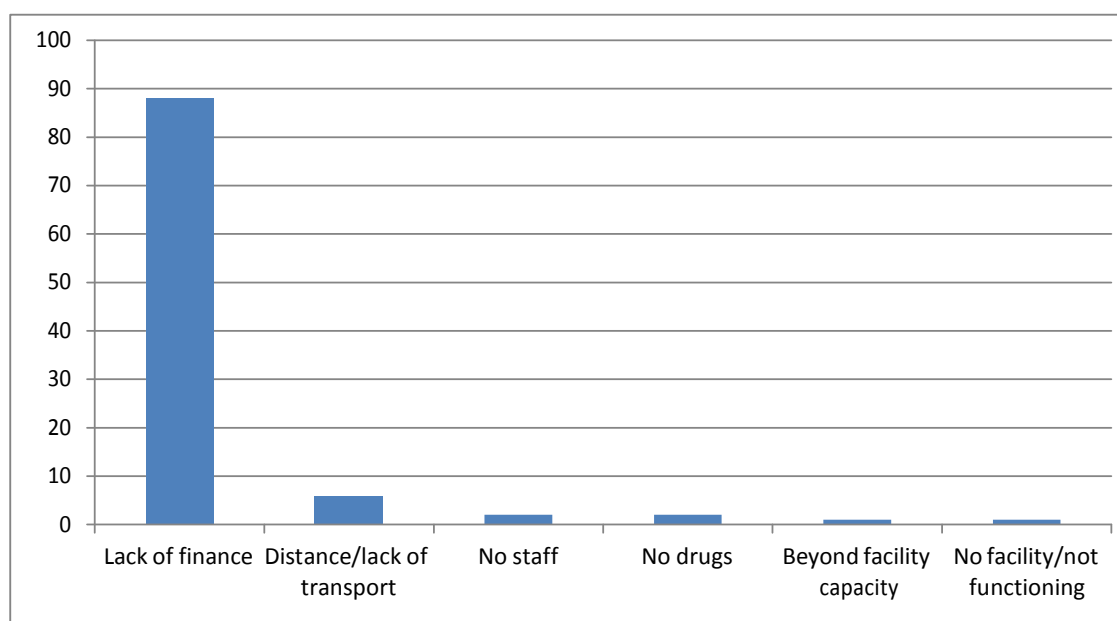
⁹⁹ World Bank (2009), page 129 and Table 2.9.

¹⁰⁰ Ministry of Health and Sanitation (2011), page 1.

¹⁰¹ The youth are not entitled to free health care, per se, since they are not categorised as a vulnerable group.

¹⁰² World Bank, unpublished social protection report for Sierra Leone, 2012.

Figure 19: Barriers to Accessing Health Services



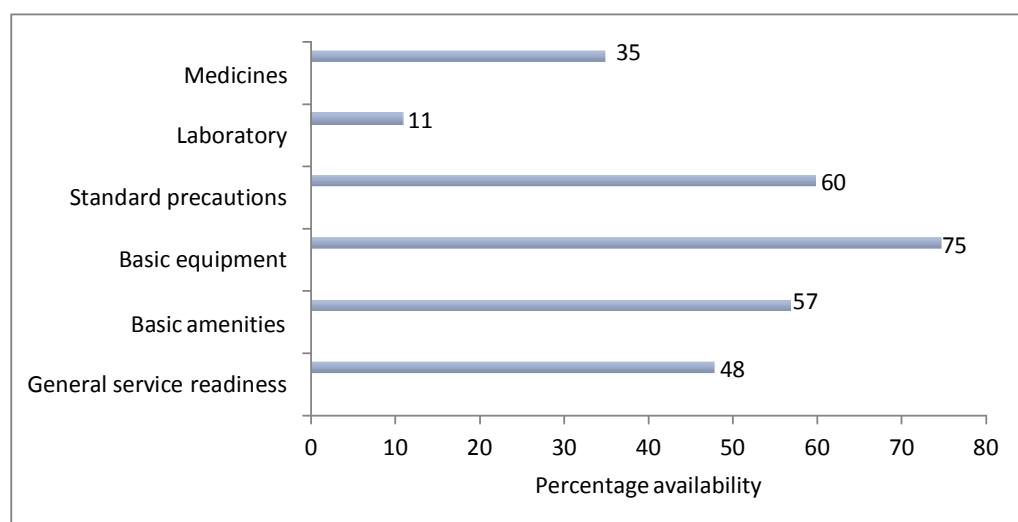
Source: Ministry of Health and Sanitation (2011), page 7, based on the National Public Services Survey 2008.

Figure 19 shows the General Service readiness index and domain scores for the 2011 Service Availability and Readiness Assessment. The General Service readiness index score is 48 out of 100. Across the five domains analysed, the basic equipment score is the highest and the laboratory diagnostics score is the lowest¹⁰³.

The implication of the information presented in figure 19 is that Sierra Leonean medical facilities need to boost their service readiness, especially in conducting in-house diagnostics laboratory tests and the supply of drugs as part of a strategy to improve the health delivery system, in particular with a view to benefiting marginalised groups like young women and men without decent sources of income as well as other groups.

¹⁰³ The General service readiness index is a composite measure designed to combine information from five general service readiness domains: basic equipment, standard precautions, laboratory diagnostics and medicines.

Figure 20: General service readiness index and domain scores, Sierra Leone, 2011



Source:

Ministry of Health and Sanitation, 2011, Service Availability and Readiness Assessment Report 2011

4.3 HIV and AIDS

HIV prevalence rate in Sierra Leone has increased in the last several years but remains low compared to other Sub-Saharan African countries. According to the MICS 2010 report and a UNAIDS Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic 2010, the incidence rate (or the rate of new cases) in Sierra Leone had begun to decline (**see table 15**). The HIV prevalence rate in Sierra Leone was 1.6 percent among women aged 15-49 years compared to 1.2 percent among men in the same age group. Urban dwellers are at a higher risk of infection than those living in rural areas (2.5% versus 1.0%). HIV prevalence varies by region, ranging from 0.8% in the Southern Region to 2.9% in the urbanised Western Region. HIV prevalence is particularly high among widows and those who are divorced or separated; 5.6% of widowed women are HIV-positive. Whilst the youth are not, per se, in the group recorded with the highest prevalence, Sierra Leone cannot afford to be complacent with the youth on HIV, as evidence in other regions shows that youth are in most vulnerable and high risk group.

Women of childbearing age comprised 59.6 percent of the HIV positive population. HIV prevalence is higher among the wealthier and more educated men and women and is more than double in urban areas compared with rural areas. In the 15-19 year age group, HIV prevalence is higher among girls than boys, indicating a worrying trend of infection in young girls. Sex with non-regular partners and sex without a condom are indicators of sexual behaviour that increases the risks of HIV. In 2010, some 37 percent of women aged 15-24 years reported that they had sex with a non-marital non-cohabiting partner in the previous twelve months compared with 42% of the same group in 2005. It is alarming to note that only 12 percent of these women reported using a condom the last time they had sex with such a partner, compared with 20 percent in 2005. An effective way of reducing HIV infection is for people to have accurate knowledge regarding how HIV is transmitted and how its transmission can be prevented. Correct information and reducing misconceptions about HIV and Aids is the first step toward raising awareness and giving young people the tools to protect themselves from infection. In 2010, 20 percent and 23 percent of women 15-49 and 15-24 years of age respectively had comprehensive knowledge of HIV and Aids, showing that young people are less knowledgeable about HIV and AIDS than older people. Overall, the least knowledgeable are the poor, people in rural areas, especially the less educated and older people.

Non-communicable diseases and mental health. As in other tropical developing countries, diseases such as malaria, sexually transmitted diseases (STD), HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis are among the most prevalent communicable diseases in Sierra Leone. However, the Ministry of Health and Sanitation also reports a noticeable increase in non-communicable diseases (i.e., hypertension, diabetes, cancers, and sickle cell anaemia) and mental health patients. In relation to the latter, the GoSL's Agenda for Change indicates that the incidence of mental health problems, especially among youth, has been increasing which is "generally attributed to post-war effects and substance abuse." It also indicates that there is "only one specialist in mental health in the country and health staffs even at the PHUs are not trained to deal with these cases."¹⁰⁴

4.4 Malaria

Malaria is a leading cause of death of children under age five as well as young women and men in Sierra Leone. In the more vulnerable category of the population, it also contributes to anaemia in children and is a common cause of school absenteeism. Preventive measures, especially the use of mosquito nets treated with insecticide (ITNs), can dramatically reduce malaria mortality rates among children and young women and men. In areas where malaria is common, international recommendations suggest treating any fever in children as if it were malaria and immediately giving the child a full course of recommended anti-malarial tablets. In the absence of studies specifically targeted at young people, it is not clear how that group of the population has been affected, apart of what is known about impact of Malaria on the country's population. However, evidence available shows that in all the four regions of the country, between 26 and 43 percent of the households have at least one mosquito net and a lower proportion of households have insecticide treated nets. Improving the rate of correct treatment among children with fever and other vulnerable groups of the population remains an urgent and as yet unfulfilled goal of the national malaria programme in Sierra Leone¹⁰⁵. Despite government effort to tackle malaria with the involvement of the Ministry of Health and development partners, in view of the magnitude of the challenge in the country, it can be inferred that such efforts need to be sustained and even scaled up in order to deal with the issue more decisively to reduce incidents of deaths associated with malaria.

¹⁰⁴ Republic of Sierra Leone, 2008, DHS, pages 86 and 87.

¹⁰⁵ Statistics Sierra Leone and UNICEF-Sierra Leone, 2011

4.5 Reproductive Health: Teenage Pregnancies

65% of young people aged 15-24 are sexually active

68% of girls have their first pregnancy between the ages of 12-20

About 34,000 unsafe abortions, accounting for about 8% of maternal deaths, mostly by teenage girls and young women

Reproductive health indicator; teenage pregnancies:

Sexual activity and childbearing early in life carry significant risks for young people all around the world. Table 15 presents some early childbearing indicators for women aged 15-19 and 20-24. Early sexual activity and the exposure of young girls to more sexually experienced men increase the vulnerability of young girls to HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. High levels of teenage pregnancy and child marriage hamper attendance and completion of school by girls in the country. The untimely pregnancy of young girls was ranked as one of the three most common causes for them dropping out of school¹⁰⁶.

In 2008, 47 percent of girls reaching 18 years of age already had a child or were pregnant. In 2010, 16 percent of girls married before 15 years; 50 percent married before 18 years; 38 percent of those in the 20-24 year age group had a live birth before 18 years.

Teenage mothers almost always lost their chance of accessing quality education and skills training to attain economic empowerment¹⁰⁷.

There is increasing awareness that the high level of adolescent births constitutes a major problem in Sierra Leone with a wide set of consequences that include lack of educational opportunities to young women, risks to women's health and fertility, and children being born into homes that are not ready for them. Local actors, including administrative and traditional leaders are becoming increasingly active in addressing the problems associated with the untimely pregnancies of young girls. Local by-laws and sanctions have been put in place to discourage boys' and girls' involvement in early sexual activities but the enforcement of such by-laws vary considerably across regions.

The Child's Right Act, 2007, forbids marriage before age 18 but has yet to be fully implemented. Policy makers need to establish enforcement mechanisms to ensure that this Act is enforced and there is adequate recognition of the importance of the problem of adolescent pregnancy by developing appropriate policies and strategies to discourage it.

Linked to the challenge of adolescent child births, appropriate family planning plays an important role in determining the health of young and older women and their children by a) preventing pregnancies that are too early or too late; b) extending the period between births; and c) limiting the number of children. It is critical for all couples to be able to access information and services that can prevent unwanted pregnancies, especially those that are too early.

In the MICS report, 2010, the use of any method of contraception was reported by only 11 percent of women in marriage or in union in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone lags behind an already low regional contraceptive prevalence rate of 17 percent.

¹⁰⁶ UNICEF Sierra Leone, 2008, Out of School Children of Sierra Leone.

¹⁰⁷ GoSL and UNICEF-Sierra Leone, 2011.

Adolescents were found to be less likely to use contraception than older women. Only about five percent of women aged 15-19 used any method of contraception compared to ten percent of 20-24 year olds and an even higher percentage of older women. The MICS 2010 report argues that family planning experts in Sierra Leone have noted that the GoSL family planning programme is not strong enough and is not a government priority as evidenced by the lack of government resources dedicated to family planning issues. For example, the GoSL does not purchase any contraceptive commodities with public funds. Barriers to the use of contraception at health facility level include lack of information about and availability of contraceptive services, especially in rural areas and amongst the more vulnerable young women.

Gender discrimination and domestic violence. Gender discrimination is often at the root of violence against women, in particular the younger ones. As elsewhere, women “have experienced political oppression in Sierra Leone and are greatly affected by laws and customs having to do with sexuality, marriage, divorce, child custody, and family life as a whole¹⁰⁸. Often, through patriarchal and traditional practices, young women are vulnerable to teenage pregnancies, child marriage, sexual harassment in schools by peers and teachers; in the workplace by male co-workers and senior managers, to HIV and AIDS, other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and sexual and gender-based violence.”¹⁰⁹

4.6 Reproductive Health: Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting¹¹⁰

The practice of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) in Sierra Leone is shrouded in secrecy and conducted by members of a secret society known as the Bondo Society. Most women in Sierra Leone are initiated into the Bondo Society between the ages of 8 and 18 years. It is widely reported that all women who are initiated into the Bondo Society undergo FGM/C. FGM/C in Sierra Leone is generally done under the auspices of the local head of the Bondo Society. In a recent study, 80 percent of female respondents aged 15-49 years reported having undergone some form of female genital mutilation. The practice appears to be more common in rural areas, in the Northern Province, among households in the poorest three quintiles and among uneducated women¹¹¹.

FGM/C remains a highly sensitive and political topic in Sierra Leone. While some agencies and Non-governmental Organisations continue to work to eradicate this practice, the GoSL has not made a particularly strong effort to eliminate the practice of FGM/C. Some politicians have sought to win votes by publicly supporting FGM/C. Whilst some districts in the north, where the practice of FGM/C is widespread have been declared “no cutting under 18” areas, the areas still have rates of FGM/C that are among the highest in the country. Child protection development practitioners and policy makers are currently struggling to find a strategy that will be effective in reducing the practice of FGM/C. Experts in this field note that the strongest support for this practice is among women. They note that many young men in Sierra Leone are under pressure from their mothers to marry a girl who has been “cut”. Given the reality that FGM/C is a strong social norm, it is clear that the practice of FGM/C cannot be legislated away or terminated by passing laws—people will simply hide and continue with the practice.

¹⁰⁸ This report notes that women are still highly under-represented in political structures and leadership positions at all levels, local and national. Though some effort has been made nationally to redress the gender imbalance, there is need to do a lot more.

¹⁰⁹ Republic of Sierra Leone (2008), DHS, page 94.

¹¹⁰ Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) is the partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other intentional injury to the female genital organs. FGM/C traumatizes young women, with immediate complications including excruciating pain, shock, urine retention, ulceration of the genitals and injury to adjacent tissue. FGM/C is a fundamental violation of human rights. In the absence of any perceived medical necessity, it subjects girls and women to health risks and has life-threatening consequences. Among those rights violated are the rights to the highest attainable standard of health and to bodily integrity.

¹¹¹ Statistics Sierra Leone and UNICEF-Sierra Leone, 2011.

Change will only come when individuals begin to collectively view the practice of FGM/C in a negative light and decide to stop the practice.

On a positive note, the MICS study 2010 showed that some progress has been made in reducing FGM/C over the past five years, with reductions of reported prevalence of FGM/C among daughters from 34 percent in MICS 2005 to 10 percent in MICS 2010. Sustained awareness and education on the negative effects of FGM/C is likely to reduce the occurrence of this practice, nationally, in the foreseeable future as results from efforts undertaken to date indicate.

4.7 Substance and Drug Abuse

15% substance and drug abuse amongst youth

A growing national challenge

Poverty, unemployment and trauma are largely blamed for increase in drugs and substance abuse by the youth

One of the most recent studies on drugs and substance abuse in Sierra Leone showed that the prevalence of substance abuse amongst the youth was at least 15 percent¹¹², pointing to an increased level of abuse over the past years. The most commonly abused drug is Marijuana. Cocaine and Brown-Brown come next on the list of most commonly abused drugs. Prescription drugs such as Valium, Diazepam and a few others are also growing in popularity.

An area of major concern is that many of these prescription drugs are widely available without prescription from pharmacies and street sellers. Research has also found risky practices such as sharing of sharps and sex without condom.

In Sierra Leone, Drugs and Substance abuse often starts in the teenage years. The majority of patients with substance abuse disorders treated in the formal health system are between 20 and 29 years of age¹¹³. One of the most frequently given reason for substance abuse is that it helps to overcome stress, to cope with problems, poverty, unemployment and traumatic experiences¹¹⁴. In the case of marijuana, young people claim they smoke it because it offers benefits such as helping them to meditate and give them wisdom¹¹⁵. Other youth claim that it gives them new confidence. In some cases, it is also understood to have medicinal effects such as curing asthma.

There is wide consensus amongst authorities that are knowledgeable on youth issues (these include school teachers and police), and young women and men themselves that there is a relationship between substance abuse and the increase in school violence in Sierra Leone. For example, there were reports of a growing negative influence of youth “cults” and societies in schools which were associated with violent behaviour.

4.8 Persons with Disabilities

Physical or mental disability is a major inhibition in Sierra Leone, in particular, amongst young women and men since it impacts negatively on their livelihoods prospects. Within the already challenging environment, it reduces the chances of the youth to gain access to decent employment within both the formal and informal sectors. The 2004 census found a high prevalence rate of disability among adults and children of 2.4 percent (130,000 persons).

¹¹² City of Rest, 2009.

¹¹³ City of Rest, 2009.

¹¹⁴ The extent to which some of the trauma referred to is linked to the civil war which ended 11 years ago cannot be determined.

¹¹⁵ Restless Development, 2012.

The proportion of disabled youth is not available. Out of the current number of disabled persons, it has been estimated that 9.5 percent is related to the civil war. However, according to a recent World Bank study on disability in Sierra Leone, the number of people with disabilities in the country could be as much as five times higher than the census figures and the number of people who were permanently disabled by the conflict is much higher than what was recorded by the census.¹¹⁶ The World Report on Disability 2011 prepared by the World Health Organization (WHO) and The World Bank estimates the disability prevalence rate in the adult population aged 18 years and above at 15.6 percent. According to the WHO, there could be as many as 526,000 (about 10 percent of the population) living with disabilities who are 18 years or older. It is presumed that a large proportion of disabled persons are youth, who are often exposed to high levels of inactivity, poverty, unemployment and underemployment. Disabled persons face other challenges; they are 2.7 times more likely to experience rape, physical abuse or bullying than those without an impairment¹¹⁷.

4.9 Access to Adequate Nutrition

There are no studies on the nutritional status of youth in Sierra Leone, neither have they been prioritised at national level. A proxy indicator of the situation prevailing in the country for youth, which might be useful to assess the background of young women and men in the country, is based on UNICEF-Sierra Leone supported periodic studies for children¹¹⁸. How performance in these indicators on the children can be used to estimate the nutritional status of the current or future generation of youth is a matter of speculation. For example, on the basis of available anecdotal evidence, it has been argued in development circles and by 'observers' that stunting is a major challenge amongst the current generation of youth in Sierra Leone.

The MICS 2010 found that almost one in four children under the age of five in Sierra Leone is moderately or severely underweight¹¹⁹ (22 percent) and eight percent are classified as severely underweight. Almost one in two children (44 percent) were found to be moderately or severely stunted¹²⁰ and eight percent are moderately or severely wasted (too thin for their height).

Child malnutrition is recognized by the GoSL as a serious problem that requires a multi-sectoral response. The Renewed Effort Against Child Hunger - Ending Child Hunger (REACH) and Under-Nutrition initiative is an example of a current inter-sectoral initiative to reduce nutritional deficiencies. National nutrition policy is being revised to include high-impact interventions and to intensify efforts in the area of infant and young-child feeding (IYCF). Community-Based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) activities have been introduced in Peripheral Health Units (PHU) for children with severe acute malnutrition. Recent data, however, show that coverage of CMAM activities had not been as high as originally planned and efforts have been intensified to improve quality and increase coverage of the intervention. Policy makers and programme managers are also working to develop a response to the high level of children with moderate malnutrition. However, there are no targeted interventions designed to address the nutritional status of the youth in Sierra Leone.

4.10 Access to Adequate Water

Safe drinking water and adequate sanitation are basic necessities for good health. Unsafe drinking water can be a significant carrier of diseases such as trachoma, cholera, typhoid, schistosomiasis and other pathogens that cause diarrhoea. Drinking water can also be tainted with chemical, physical and radiological contaminants that can have harmful effects on human health.

¹¹⁶ Ovadiya and Zampaglione 2009.

¹¹⁷ Leonard Cheshire Disability (www.lcdisability.org)

¹¹⁸ Statistics Sierra Leone/UNICEF Sierra Leone, 2011.

¹¹⁹ Weight-for-age is a measure of both acute and chronic malnutrition.

¹²⁰ Those with a height considered short for their ages are classified as moderately or severely stunted.

In addition to its association with diseases, access to safe drinking water may be particularly important for women and children who bear the primary responsibility for obtaining and carrying water - tasks that can take a great deal of time due to the long distances and or waiting times that are often required.

The relevant MDG goal is to achieve a 50 percent reduction in the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation between 1990 and 2015. The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) of 2010 estimates that overall, 57 percent of the population is using an improved source of drinking water - 76 percent in urban areas and 48 percent in rural areas. Ninety-one percent of the population in the Western Area gets its drinking water from an improved source, compared to 42 percent in the Northern Province. Only ten percent of households have both an improved source of drinking water and improved sanitation facilities where the latter are not shared with other households.

4.11 Use of Improved Sanitation Facilities

Access to adequate and improved means of basic sanitation is critical to maintain satisfactory levels of hygiene in households and communities and enable healthy practices related to sanitation. Inadequate disposal of human excreta contributes to the transmission of diseases that lead to child morbidity and mortality, besides being associated with a range of diseases including diarrhoeal diseases, malaria and cholera. An improved sanitation facility is defined as one that hygienically protects human excreta from human contact. Improved sanitation facilities include flush or pour flush to a piped sewer system, septic tank, or pit latrine; ventilated improved pit latrine, pit latrine with slab, and composting toilet. Forty percent of the population of Sierra Leone - 58 percent in urban areas and 32 percent in rural areas use improved sanitation facilities.

Experts in the field of sanitation in Sierra Leone note that the current policy is to promote the message that investing in sanitation facilities is important. There is an impression that the sanitation component of the public health ordinance dealing with sanitation should be reviewed and strengthened and that the GoSL should demonstrate commitment to improving sanitation by elevating the Division of Sanitation to the level of a directorate. The GoSL is still to further demonstrate its commitment to sanitation by making available the resources that it has committed to the water and sanitation component which is linked to the health sector.

5. YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT: LESSONS LEARNED IN SIERRA LEONE

This section is largely drawn from case study analysis of selected youth-relevant interventions in Sierra Leone. It is meant to identify entry points for the involvement of young women and men in development in the country. It also draws from the experiences of organisations already involved with youth development in Sierra Leone. The importance of developing appropriate youth structures is highlighted. On the basis of development good practice, the conclusions and recommendations section of the Youth Report points out the importance and potential for scaling up youth development programming in the country.

Box 6: Toward a Structured Process of Youth Participation in Development

Full participation of young women and men in development processes, is critical in capturing the development aspirations of the youth from design, planning, implementation, monitoring and supervision of practical interventions designed to benefit them. This is particularly critical for youth employment projects where the buy-in of beneficiaries is important. The GoSL has endeavoured to prioritize the involvement of the youth at all stages of major youth development programming through NAYCOM, youth associations and youth serving organizations. For the youth to be able to participate fully in development, issues of capacity building and training of the youth, at every level through to decentralized structures at chiefdom, district and ward levels is perceived to be vital for success. Sierra Leone is at initial stages of developing a Youth Service Corps Programme, in which youth would be integrated to prepare them for the world of work and to access decent employment opportunities in the country, in addition to enhancing their overall development potential. Through the collaboration between the UNDP, National Youth Commission and the Ministry of Youth and Sports, preparatory work has begun with a view to setting in motion the process that will result in the fully fledged establishment of Youth Service Corps Programme in the country. It is envisaged that the development of the programme would benefit from best practices from the West Africa sub-region and other regions.

5.1 Governance, Voice and Accountability

At district and community levels, youth are made to understand that the traditional practice is that older members of communities make most decisions. For instance, at district and community levels, most young people are not aware of the role and activities of district youth councils and chiefdom youth committees¹²¹. In this case, even though there is a mechanism in place to provide young women and men with a voice in decision-making processes, they do not know how to take advantage of it. This is largely because only those young people who belong to youth groups can participate. Many young people do not belong to youth groups. This remains the reality despite the recent formation of district youth councils and chiefdom youth committees. At national level, young people still feel excluded and many of them are yet to be exposed to the activities of the National Youth Commission. The Government established the National Youth Commission in 2009 in order to raise the profile of the youth issue; to enable youth to participate more in development planning and initiatives that directly affect their lives, and to bring better coordination, more focus and better alignment of all youth employment interventions. Given the challenges that any new organization faces, it will take some time for NAYCOM to implement its strategic plan for the next 5 years and for the full impact of its interventions to be felt amongst youth in the country.

¹²¹ "District Youth Councils (DYCs) and Chiefdom Youth Committees (CYCs) were set up to combat youth exclusion from decision making". Anthony A. Koroma, Commissioner, National Youth Commission.

Many youth believe that some politicians are exploiting them and using them as tools for political gain

There is also a general feeling amongst young people, particularly in urban areas, that they are exploited by politicians and used as political tools¹²². Traditional leaders have much influence on decisions made in communities. Unfortunately women, young people and children are largely left out of existing decision making structures. Youth also believe that whilst Local Councils do play vital roles in service delivery, their organizational and capacity constraints make it difficult for them to meet the expectations of young people.

5.1.1 Establishment of District Youth Councils

District Youth Councils (DYC), formerly District Youth Committees, are structures created under the provisions of the National Youth Policy (2003). The purpose of DYCs is to provide young people with a mechanism through which they can participate in national development and to promote good governance, responsible citizenship and leadership among the youth.

The need to improve opportunities for youth involvement in decision making and national development was one of the major findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) established in the wake of the civil war. The creation of dedicated youth representation at District and Chiefdom levels in the form of the District Youth Councils and Chiefdom Youth Committees (CYCs) have been deemed to be a critical step towards achieving that objective. NAYCOM's mandate extends to overseeing, supervising and monitoring, to ensure that these structures are adequately established and capacitated in all of the country's districts¹²³. This is apart from spearheading programmes relating to development issues for the youth at national level.

A recent assessment of DYCs in Sierra Leone highlighted capacity constraints and lack of resources to enable DYCs to undertake activities at their own initiative¹²⁴. The DYCs depended heavily on government or the support of NGOs for their activities. They lacked complete governance structures, an established general assembly and other essential operational structures, including a uniform approach with respect to communication and networking. These constraints presented major obstacles to the achievement of key elements of the DYC mandate.

However, despite the challenges observed, a good start had been made with a strong and positive foundation established in the form of democratic structures of the DYCs. The key to progress in achievement of the DYC mandate depended on addressing capacity gaps faced by the DYCs to enable them to become fully-fledged, representative and effectively functioning vehicles for promoting youth issues at district level. It is envisaged that the NAYCOM would be involved in spearheading the tackling of capacity challenges of DYCs and CYCs, as part of its overall mandate on youth development in the country. This would be done with practical forms of support from the GoSL and development partners.

¹²² Restless Development, 2012.

¹²³ Step by step, NAYCOM is moving to position itself well to carry out the youth development mandate. At the time of writing up this report, NAYCOM was on course in overseeing a successful democratic process of electing new District Youth Council members for all the districts in the country's four regions. The process of electing Zonal Youth Councils had been successfully undertaken in all the areas.

¹²⁴ Restless Development, 2012b. A Baseline Assessment of District Youth Councils (DYCs) in Sierra Leone.

5.2 Case Study Analysis

Box 7: Coordination Arrangements for Youth Development; Roles and Responsibilities of NAYCOM, MYES and other Decentralised Youth Empowerment Structures

In terms of representation and voice, the country took decisive step forward in enabling youth adequate political space with the establishment of the National Youth Commission (NAYCOM). Established by the Government of Sierra Leone by an Act of Parliament in December 2009, NAYCOM was officially launched by H.E. President Koroma in November 2011. UNDP played a pivotal role in the process, providing technical and financial support. From January 2012, the commission started receiving government financial support to operate and carry out the basic functions.

NAYCOM has been designed to facilitate youth voice at senior level in Government. For the first time, youth actually have the feeling they have a body representing their interest within the state apparatus. NAYCOM's main task is to ensure policy coherence by promoting youth interest in Government policies. Other main areas of operation are collection of data and good practices on youth issues, and the delivery of specific services tailored for youth development, for example, career counselling services and vocational training.

NAYCOM is bound to ensure local representativeness through the establishment of district level Youth Councils, managed by capacitated district youth officers. The councils and the officers are intended to be the link with local communities, notably in rural areas.

Youth voice is also conveyed through a vast series of NGOs and their umbrella organization, the Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental organizations (SLANGO). The latter is a solid partner of NAYCOM and of Ministry of Youth Employment and Sports.

Among others, NAYCOM undertakes regular talks with the Bike Riders Association. A self-funded independent union meant to protect and support the interest of the several thousand young motorbike taxi riders (Okadas) in Freetown. The Association is self regulated and self financed.

In January 2011, a new ministry, which has the direct policy responsibility for promoting youth employment - the Ministry of Youth Employment and Sports (MYES), was established. The ministry spearheads the development of appropriate policies and programmes that will enhance and promote Youth Employment and Sporting activities nationwide. It provides support and oversight for the National Youth Commission. It is also expected to work in tandem with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, which has the responsibility of developing policies and manage programmes relating to employment, social security and industrial relations.

Engaging the Youth

Despite the decisive step forward made with NAYCOM, the national youth still appear reluctant to rely on public institutions. Available survey data show a significant level of dissatisfaction with government services, notably in the rural areas.

The extent to which such discontent and the existence of large numbers of unemployed and underemployed youth pose a threat to the existing peace and stability in the country is still to be determined. While, in principle, large numbers of unemployed youth are a potential source of insecurity given their vulnerability to recruitment into criminal and violent activities, reality shows contrasting signals. Tensions erupted in September 2011 in Bo, Sierra Leone's second largest city in the south of the country, where a political rally turned into a riot and young people reportedly ransacked some parts of the town. Sporadic eruption of violence persists in other parts of the country, including the music bands related clashes in Freetown. However, no systematic violent episodes have been reported recently and the feeling of insecurity and social tensions, as well as the blame on youth is arguably used as a political weapon by certain groups.

The current coordination structures for youth employment, an issue deemed critical by all stakeholders and agreed by all important players within the sector are as follows:

1. Partner Group: composed of the main agencies who support the GoSL on employment issues (such as the UN, World Bank, European Commission, German Development Cooperation, GIZ, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development) and provides coherent support to Government to coordinate on studies and new project interventions and to jointly develop lessons learned.
2. Youth Employment Strategy Group: composed of Senior Officers of MDAs and Directors of large NGOs

and supports the development of policy, coherence, synergies and strategic planning between projects, and the adoption of lessons learned.

3. Technical Working Group – field level implementers who share practical experiences on implementation of youth development activities.
4. District Youth Advisory Committees: These are structures established within the 19 local district councils in an attempt to decentralize youth employment coordination.
5. District and Chiefdom Youth Councils (DYCs/CYC) - ensure local youth representativeness. They serve as the commission's link with local communities.

Box 8: Kailahun and Koinadugu District Youth Employment Promotion Committees (KDYEPCs)

The GIZ supported multi-stakeholder dialogue fora were formed in May 2011 to discuss issues related to the promotion of youth empowerment and employment named the *Kailahun District Youth Employment Promotion Committee (KaiDYEPC)* and *Koinadugu District Youth Employment Promotion Committee (KoiDYEPC)*.

The KDYEPCs are Committees that comprise representatives from different organisations, working to promote youth empowerment and employment: NAYCOM, MYES, District Youth Council, District Council, private sector, civil society, as well as NGOs and development partners.

Objectives of the KDYEPCs

- To lobby and advocate for youth employment in the district; to influence, form and shape public opinion on youth employment
- To design and implement activities that empower young people; to ensure that young people meet their personal and social needs, build skills and competencies that allow them to be successful in their lives and become gainfully employed
- Map out stakeholders working on or supporting (youth) empowerment and employment in the district to implement projects and programs jointly in the future; to map out best practices for the employment of youth in the District
- To mobilise different stakeholders in youth services to develop and implement activities that empower youth for employment.
- To give direction to youth programmes provided by government and development partners through lobbying and advocacy.
- To support the District authorities in the planning and coordination of youth employment in the District

Activities implemented in 2011/2012

Since the formation of the Committees, the following activities have been implemented with collaborating partners:

- **Multi- stakeholders meetings organised:** brought different stakeholders and representatives of youth groups together to discuss issues related to youth employment and empowerment.
- **Developed a constitution** to guide the operation of the Committee
- **Sensitisation discussions on radio organised:** discussed issues related to youth empowerment, education and employment over radio in weekly programmes.
- **Survey conducted:** undertook a survey on youth organisations and youth-serving agencies in all the chiefdoms in the two districts; *a database was developed on this basis and was shared with partners.* Findings of the surveys from Koinadugu and Kailahun were presented at district level, as well as at national level at the Technical Working Group.
- Organisation of **debate and other education forums for senior secondary schools** in the district related to youth issues.

Capacity building for KDYEPC members: members of the two Committees were trained in proposal writing, basics of monitoring and evaluation, as well as basic issues linked to entrepreneurial and business skills

development.

On-going and planned activities for 2012

- Lobby with the District Council to include the priorities of the Committee in District Development Plan
- Lobby with District Council to take up employment promotion as a priority and allocate funds for this purpose
- Continue with capacity building of Committee members, especially in the areas of lobbying and advocacy
- Update database of youth organisations and youth-serving agencies in the districts
- Design a radio programme on Business Development Services for youth, which includes interactive and live sessions.

The potential of the KDYEPCs concept and similar approaches in enabling youth participation in development needs to be further explored, with a view to strengthening participation by young people.

Box 9: Case Reference on Innovative Public Private Partnership on TVET in Sierra Leone¹²⁵

The following German International Cooperation (GIZ) supported project proposal is aimed at formally establishing a “Public Private Partnership” venture in order to provide for the development of vocational and technical education and training sector in a specified target area, that is, within Port Loko, Bonthe and Moyamba districts.

The key partners of this PPP shall comprise of:

- London Mining,
- Sierra Rutile,
- St. Joseph’s Vocational Institute in Lunsar/Port Loko, (and eventually the “Jackson & Devon Anderson Vocational Institute” in Kpangungama/Bonthe),
- Ministry of Education/TVED/NCTVA, and
- German International Cooperation, GIZ.

The purpose of the above partnership is to develop and strengthen the existing vocational & technical education and training sector Port Loko, Bonthe and Moyamba districts. Those districts are “home” to substantial mining activities, for Iron ore in the Port Loko region and for Bauxite and Rutile in Bonthe and Moyamba. Both companies, but also the peripheral industries (Transportation, Construction, Services) suffer badly from the existing shortage of skilled and competent craftspeople. Skills’ training for the occupation profiles, demanded by the above industries is simply not there. However, this situation, as bad as it appears today, may turn into a “blessing in disguise”. That is to say it provides an opportunity to engage on and to focus on the development of demand oriented, responsive and relevant skills training in the region. For such an exemplary and model approach, the above partners shall put forces and efforts together. The existing St. Joseph’s Vocational Institute, run by a congregation of the Catholic Church and accredited by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Lunsar/Port Loko could become the hub of such vocational, technical and even entrepreneurial training activities. With the combined forces of above partners, the college could be transformed into a “Competence Centre”, providing services that are demanded by the emerging industries but would also be of benefit to the local and regional communities. As a “side-effect” of this envisaged concerted action on Vocational and Technical Education & Training, an increased support to general basic education, especially Functional Adult Literacy is desired. The industry sees above as a part of the global enhancement of the “employability” of the base populace. An outline of FAL is elaborated on in Part B of this proposal. FAL could be provided through the implementing partner SLADEA in the existing Community Education Centres, CEC’s under the guidance and supervision of the Non-Formal Education Directorate of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

¹²⁵ Based on the current private sector development work of GIZ in Sierra Leone, an example of demand driven PPP with high potential impact and likely to succeed in the country’s development context.

GIZ/GOPA has helped in the development of Literacy training materials in the “Lingua franca” of Sierra Leone, in the Krio language. Krio book 1 was successfully field tested, assessed and evaluated. It was publically launched on the World Literacy Day, the 8th Sept. in 2011 and is now a publication of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Krio Book 2 is currently being field tested. Both books are readily available, as well as the two complex and comprehensive Facilitators guides.

The envisaged GIZ supported “Public-Private-Partnership” on TVET structure

German International Cooperation/GIZ: Provides: Consultancy & Advisory Services, Financial Support

Ministry of Education /TVED /NCTVA: Provides: Accreditation & Certification

St. Joseph’s & Anderson Vocational Institutes: Premises, facilities for training of TVET graduates

Sierra Rutile & London Mining: Provides: Financial Support, Equipment, and Expertise...

Benefits: skilled & competently trained personnel; Enhanced Employability of local populace benefits Industries

Local/Regional Communities: benefit from social services, e. g. support to Community Development Funds, Live Skills Training, Primary Health Care, Functional Adult Literacy & Numeracy...

Box 10: Agricultural Value Chains – Opportunities for Enabling Youth to Access Decent Jobs¹²⁶

Promoting Agriculture, Governance, and the Environment (PAGE) is a four-year, \$13.2 million USAID-funded project in Sierra Leone, West Africa, that builds on previous United States Government projects in the agriculture, democracy and governance, and natural resource management sectors. A consortium of international NGOs is implementing the project: ACDI/VOCA is the prime organization, with World Vision and ARD, Inc. as the sub-grantees. World Vision Sierra Leone provides the technical competence for the agriculture component for PAGE. Through this intervention, World Vision Sierra Leone continues to build into the lives of children and their communities. The organization is training, teaching, guiding, and supporting farmers to achieve the greatest yield for their harvest. They have been actively listening to the communities and walking with them every step of the way.

The PAGE programme has supported the establishment of small producer agro-based clusters, involving youth, organising farmers into groups designed to facilitate entrepreneurship training, coaching/mentorship and facilitating marketing linkages for specific commodities, e.g., rice and cocoa. Between 2010 – 2012, a minimum of twelve limited liability companies involving young people, were established in two districts, Koinadugu and Kenema, with a focus on rice value chain development.

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has been engaged as a project partner, assisting in strengthening quality of rice produced, processed and marketed, targeting production international quality standard output¹²⁷. Six groups with an average membership ranging between 300 – 500 each, have been linked with the WFP, receiving technical support to increase production capacity, product quality and improve storage management of rice. The WFP also provided electric rice mills for processing rice. The project has also fostered farmer-private sector business linkages with micro-finance institutions (MFIs), securing loans at reduced interest rate, of 15 percent. Loans from MFIs have been used to purchase agricultural inputs, seed and packaging material. Project support to the rice value chain has also seen the establishment of linkages with private companies in the supply of packaging materials to farmers with a view to making their produce internationally competitive.

The long-term programme of World Vision International seeks to promote establishment of village savings and loan associations (VSLAs). By 2012, 147 VSLAs, with an average membership of between 25 - 30 had been established in 3 districts. The drive to promote savings culture, especially in rural areas is meant to improve the standard of living for Sierra Leoneans, by enabling them improve their financial status and generate income for investment in productive activities, besides enabling them to increase access to funds to meet their daily survival needs.

Source: World Vision International, PAGE Book of Stories, January, 2012

¹²⁶ Detailed information on the project has not been readily available.

¹²⁷ The WFP is seeking to buy food requirements locally, provided the produce can meet international standards, by so doing helping encourage local agricultural production.

Box 11a: Restless Development's Key Youth-led Development Models

Restless Development is Sierra Leone's foremost youth-led development agency. It began working in Sierra Leone in 2005, on an exploratory basis with a small number of youth. Today Restless Development works in every district of the country empowering young people to address the most urgent issues facing their communities and wider society. With a dedicated and hard working team of staff and volunteers Restless Development has succeeded in achieving national stature and a far-reaching reputation for programmatic excellence and tangible impact. Through its work in Sierra Leone and other parts of the world, Restless Development has generated a number of successful, replicable models for youth-led development three of which are summarised below.

Behavioural change through non-formal peer-to-peer education**The model**

Each year Restless Development trains up to 200 young Sierra Leoneans aged 18-28 years to be Volunteer Peer Educators (VPEs) in rural communities under the Youth Empowerment Programme. After receiving three weeks of specialised training the VPEs are placed for eight months in often remote rural communities where they implement a programme of peer-to-peer education focused on changing young people's behaviour with regard to their sexual and reproductive health (SRH). The programme targets young people both in school and out of school with SRH and life skills messages and training delivered through primarily non-formal methods (song, drama, discussions etc). It also incorporates other important areas of education which are not available through the formal school curriculum including conflict resolution and civic participation. The VPEs also target senior community members (teachers, health workers, religious leaders and local government representation) in order to gain their support for and participation in the programme.

Why it works

There is a strong body of evidence from around the world to show that young people are more likely to change their attitudes and behaviour if they believe those delivering the health messages are similar to them and face the same concerns and pressures. Trained peer educators are a more credible source of information because they communicate in readily understandable ways, they help to develop positive group norms and serve as positive role models.

Evidence from Restless Development's programmes corroborates the wide body of evidence from across Africa and the world on the effectiveness of the peer-led approach. For example, a Restless Development peer education intervention in 10 communities in Sierra Leone between 2007 and 2010 gave rise to a 29% (from 41-60%) increase in young men seeking treatment for STIs and 38% increase (from 40-78%) among young women. There was also a 10% increase in abstinence among both sexes, a leap of 28% in ever use of condom and an increase from 25-39% in use of condoms at last sex.

Sources: Restless Development 2012c; 2010 Annual Report; Sloane BC, Zimmer CG; The power of peer health education. Journal of American College Health 1993; 41:241-245; DiClemente RJ. Confronting the challenge of AIDS among adolescents: directions for future research. Journal of Adolescent Research 1993; 8:156-166.

Box 11b: Empowering Young People to be Effective Community Development Workers

The model

Restless Development's Youth Empowerment Programme empowers young Sierra Leoneans to undertake a programme of peer-to-peer behavioural change focused on sexual and reproductive health and life skills, and also incorporates a number of other areas including conflict resolution and civic participation. While the primary goal of the programme is to affect positive behavioural change among the target youth (both in school and out of school) and community leaders, a key secondary goal is to give the young Volunteer Peer Educators (VPEs) the opportunity to generate a bank of recognised and valuable transferable skills and experience. In addition to three weeks of foundation training, VPEs receive further top up training during the course of their 8 month placements and monthly support visits from the field officer as well as a debrief at the end of the placement, all of which contribute to their learning and development.

Why it works

There are currently very few opportunities for young people without qualifications to gain experience in community development in Sierra Leone. Restless Development's structured Youth Empowerment Programmes equips young volunteers not only with knowledge but, critically, with proven experience to be recognised as competent and able community development workers. The programme builds not only hard skills, for example, in delivery of programmes, monitoring and evaluation etc. but also important soft skills such as assertiveness, self-confidence, negotiation and mediation. Employment rates with NGOs and other organisations among young people who have graduated from the Restless Development youth empowerment programme are notably high.

Box 11c: Bridging the Experience Gap in Formal Employment: A Structured Internship Scheme

The model

Since 2008, Restless Development Sierra Leone has been implementing an internship programme designed to give young people formal work experience to increase their employability in the formal sector. From an initial relationship with the National AIDS Secretariat, the scheme has since grown to incorporate four other institutions (the Ministry of Health and Sanitation; the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; the National Youth Commission and District and Municipal Councils). This is in addition to the internship opportunities offered within Restless Development itself which include office-based support roles as well as six month structured drama intern placements. Key design features of the model include ensuring each placement is structured and supported with a clear set of goals and outputs and ensuring that the placement organisation has full ownership of the placement (for example, they have taken the lead on the design of the placement, are offering supervision and training for the intern and that there is a clear system for feedback from both the intern and the placement organisation in place).

Why it works

Young people are considerably disadvantaged in the formal job market because they often lack the skills and experience that employers are looking for.¹ The reasons for this include an education system that does not adequately equip young people with the necessary transferable skills¹ and a lack of opportunities for initial work experience/employer training schemes for graduates who have never worked.¹

Restless Development's own research has found young people to be further disadvantaged in the formal job market as a result of the employer prejudices against young people's reliability and capabilities and reluctance to invest in inexperienced but talented youth. On the other hand, research has also indicated that many employers struggle to find the skills and experience they require for all posts, and some consequently resort to employing candidates from abroad. With increasing numbers of young people completing secondary schooling and seeking to access tertiary education¹, and a burgeoning number of young Sierra Leoneans who are failing to find employment upon graduation, the need to support graduates to get their first foothold on the employment ladder is becoming increasingly pressing.

The effectiveness of the scheme is perhaps best illustrated by the destination of the scheme's graduates. Of the 137 young people who have benefited from Restless Development's internship scheme, 41 found immediate employment either in the placement organisation or in another, 20 secured part time jobs and 76 went for further study at university. The 61 who are employed are working with a range of organisations including Marie Stopes, Care, Coopi, GIZ, Help Sierra Leone, Njala University and Restless Development

Sources: DFID, 2008, Private Sector and Youth Employment Mapping; Freetown, Sierra Leone, YEN West Africa, 2008, Building the Case for Business Collaboration on Youth Employment; World Bank, 2009. Youth Employment in Sierra Leone Washington DC Publications.

Box 11d: Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) Needs Study in Sierra Leone

UNICEF Sierra Leone commissioned, Restless Development, a youth-led development organisation, to undertake a needs assessment with young researchers. The assessment focused on out-of-school children, for example, those who had dropped out of school and those who never attended school, or those who had participated in non-formal school programmes. The information collected was used to produce a set of guidelines for life skills programmes delivering non-formal HIV education to young people.

Challenges tackled: The study was designed to address a national lack of cohesion regarding efforts targeting out-of-school children in Sierra Leone. Out-of-school children have limited accessibility and community structures to learn about life skills. Most life skills education for the prevention of HIV/AIDS undertaken by many organisations is targeted only at young people in school.

Objectives (a) To generate accurate, gender-disaggregated information on the situation and needs of out-of-school youth using recognised research methods; (b) To identify current strategies, opportunities (partners and structures), and challenges to reach out-of-school youth; (c) To provide transferable skills and experience for the young people involved; (d) To inform and generate a more unified programme approach.

The process and results from partnering youth: Twenty young people (18 to 22 years) were given skills to directly implement research in 20 communities: conducted focus group discussions, 64 interviews, consultative meetings, piloting and producing questionnaires. The youth successfully carried out the participatory research whose findings were presented to a delegation of UN agencies, NGOs and civil society groups. The results realised were:

- A cost-effective way to collecting information relating to the youth was implemented, ensuring a wide national geographical coverage.
- UNICEF was better able to design programmes for out-of-school children which was subsequently implemented in collaboration with the GoSL and other development partners.
- Youth developed skills and experiences, realizing their own potential to undertake professional research.

Restless Development has since undertaken further independent research with youth in the driving seat. One research focused on key issues affecting youth and how the issues should best be tackled by government, civil society and the young people themselves. This was distilled into a Youth Report 2012, a publication shared with the youth and other stakeholders. The second piece of research investigated barriers that young people face in accessing sexual and reproductive health services, family planning and maternal and child health services.

Lessons learned: More open and freer interactions:

- In all cases, youth, the focus of the research effort, found it easier to talk to other young people more freely than to adults; young peer researchers were able to build a greater rapport with participants than otherwise possible. Young researchers were able to dig deeper and uncover information that the interviewees were shy, frightened or reluctant to reveal to adults. This was so despite the fact that, for example, young people's sexual and reproductive health rights issues are highly sensitive within the development context concerned.
- The model equipped young researchers with valuable training and experience in designing and carrying out research and data analysis which are skills that are in short supply in Sierra Leone.
- Adequate training and support for youth without prior research exposure is critical for progress to be achieved. However, if experienced implementing partners are engaged, this is very helpful to nurture young people to deliver successfully on areas where more experienced researchers are required.

Field supervision, monitoring and evaluation were also found to be critical for producing credible research outputs. Getting young people with no experience to undertake professional research requires commitment to train and develop capacity in them. Ensuring that the youth had their roles, responsibilities and expectations clarified from the outset before engagement was found to be essential.

Sources: DFID, UKAID, SPW and Youth Working Group, 2010; Restless Development Experiences, 2005 – 2012.

5.2.1 Individual Case Studies

Case Study 1: Rural-based peer-to-peer education programme



Testimony of two Restless Development-trained Volunteer Peer Educators

Bintu F Mani (22 years old from Kono) and Bob Lamin (24 years from Bo) are Volunteer Peer Educators (VPEs) placed in Bauya, Kongbora chiefdom, Moyamba district. We caught up with them in June 2011 as they were coming to the end of their 8 months placements and asked them to tell us about their experiences.

Box 12 a : Individual Case Studies (Bintu's testimony)

"I love working in this community. The people really appreciate my coming. I don't think I'll spend the rest of my life here but the time I've spent here has been very good for me and I've learned lots of lessons. The favourite aspect of our work here are the drama sessions with Out-of-School children when we address issues such as teenage pregnancy, HIV AIDS and early marriage.

This is not the easiest community to work in. It's sometimes difficult to get people to engage and we have not always had a good turnout for all our activities. However, it is great to see we have made some improvements which have been recognised by the elders. Most importantly, there has been a drop in teenage pregnancy which is definitely partly due to our sensitisation work.

Personally I feel I have achieved a lot through this programme. Previously I was scared to talk aloud to big people, but this experience has made me improve my way of talking. I no longer have fear of standing in front of people.

I think being a VPE with Restless Development will help me in many ways. The things I've learned through this placement I've never learned in my life. Some of the SRH messages are also new to me such as how to space having children and how to avoid HIV. My plan is to go back to college and study for an accountancy diploma."

Box 12 b : Individual Case Studies (Bob's testimony)

"It gives me joy to work with young people. I find it satisfying to be able to correct misconceptions and help young people make good choices. Before I became a VPE I was quite a shy guy. The experience of being a VPE has really helped me improve the way I communicate. I now know how to talk to people and guide them towards making good decisions. I have benefited from exposure to the standards that Restless Development uphold and they have given me tools to succeed. I've learned how to mobilise communities, raise awareness, do sensitisation. Most people see young people as a problem, but Restless Development sees them as the solution.

We have also met some challenges working here. Some of the community members had misconceptions about teenage pregnancy. They thought that because we were talking openly to young people about sex that we were actually encouraging more girls to get pregnant at a young age. But now the paramount chief and others have realised that our sensitisation activities have actually had a beneficial effect on reducing teenage pregnancies. We also found that some of the children were shy and demotivated and it was difficult to get them to participate, but over time there have been some good improvements here."

Box 12 c : Individual Case Studies (Paramount chief of Kongbora Chiefdom: Alfred Saidu Ndomawa Banya II)

“There was some resistance in the community when the volunteers first came because of concerns that our young people would be involved in open discussions around sexual behaviour. But we have learned that times are changing and we need to keep up. These volunteers have made a good contribution. We have seen a clear reduction in early teenage pregnancy this academic year. We are really happy that Restless Development has allowed this to happen and we hope their good work will continue.”

Case Study 2: Ministry of Health and Sanitation Intern

Grace Nancy Dumbuya, 26 years old, comes from Koinadugu, and was a Restless Development Volunteer Peer Educator in Kalamba, Bombali District, in 2007-8. Since August 2011 she has been working in the Health Education Unit at the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MOHS) in Makeni as a Restless Development-supported intern managed by the District Health Education Officer.



Box 12 d : Individual Case Studies (Grace's story)

‘I applied for this internship opportunity with Restless Development because I wanted to widen my work experience and I have been very happy with the new skills and experiences I’ve gained so far. My work is very diverse and I’ve been exposed to a lot of activities I had no previous experience of including monitoring and evaluation, giving advice to lactating mothers, immunisation and environmental health and sanitation to name a few. I’ve also had to do quite a lot of public speaking – which is new for me - and preparing and presenting the Unit’s reports at different inter-agency and intersectoral meetings. I’ve even facilitated a workshop which was a good experience. I feel my communication and interpersonal skills have also improved. Some of the challenges I’ve experienced is a lack of resources within the unit which means there it is not always possible to carry out all planned field-based activities (for example, due to shortage of vehicles). My line manager was also on sick leave for a while and it was difficult to know how to work without a manager.

Overall, this has been a very useful experience for me. I would now like to think about seeking a formal position within the Ministry of Health and Sanitation and I believe the skills I have gained here will put me in a strong position to do so. I think this internship scheme is a really good initiative because it allows young people to get valuable experience and it is also easy to balance with other activities like further studies’.

5.2.2 Lessons Learned from the Case Studies

The following are lessons learned from best practices in youth participation in development, taking particular attention to the socio-economic, cultural and political context of Sierra Leone¹²⁸.

Table 18: Lessons Learned from the Case Studies	
Thematic area	Lessons learned
Governance, voice and accountability	<p>Establishment of decentralised youth structures by itself is a step in the right direction. However, equally important practical steps must be taken, through resource mobilization, and training, to build the capacities of relevant structures to deliver their mandate from national to district levels.</p> <p>Young people need to be skilled, experienced communicators in order to engage with older decision-makers in central and local government, development partners, private sector, civil society and communities.</p> <p>Youth structures and leadership can benefit from cross-party or non-partisan support. However, too much isolation from mainstream political interaction (or government initiatives) can reduce their impact.</p> <p>Youth mainstreaming is an ambitious proposition in most countries, but there are no other clearly viable alternatives given the cross-cutting nature of youth issues.</p> <p>Young can be successfully involved in management decisions at various level, e.g., executive decisions, budgeting, programme design and management, that go far beyond merely consultation.</p>
Post-conflict transition and livelihoods, employment creation	<p>Programmes should address more effectively psychosocial needs and protective factors for conflict-affected youth. Lessons should be drawn from countries in similar context where success has been achieved in transition by youth to more self-sustaining growth and development.</p> <p>There is demand for legal/political literacy work including voter education.</p> <p>Vocational skills for displaced youth, in particular those out-of school, with low or no education must proceed from a thorough market assessment.</p> <p>Financing of livelihood interventions or transition to sustained decent employment opportunities for conflict-affected youth can be linked to clients' outcomes (employment, formal or non-formal) and innovativeness. Heavy dependence on short-term donor supported interventions, without exploring innovative youth driven financial mechanisms cannot be sustained, neither is it very beneficial in the long-term.</p> <p>Violence prevention work addressing economic, political and cultural factors is necessary in the country's development context.</p>
Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)	<p>Young people can make significant improvements to research, data collection and monitoring methods, suggesting more appropriate and creative methodologies and or indicators.</p> <p>Community leaders can be successfully mobilised on the issue of adolescent SRHR.</p> <p>Appropriate broadcast media campaigns can reach a third to over two-thirds of a given youth</p>

¹²⁸ This section draws substantially from lessons learned by Restless Development (formerly SPW) and development partners in Sierra Leone. Restless Development is an independent youth led-organisation with a substantial programme of work for the youth in Sierra Leone.

	<p>population.</p> <p>Peer educators can more effectively communicate with their peers (particularly relevant when young people are disproportionately affected by SRHR issues).</p>
Social Exclusion¹²⁹	<p>Development partners continue to operate with various understandings (paradigms) of youth development, many of which fall short of an assets-based or participatory approach.</p> <p>Reinforcing inequalities by targeting youth leaders from well-known visible groups alone must be avoided. Like all other areas of development, understanding inequalities and power relationships is crucial, including in relation to gender dynamics.</p> <p>Involving young people in policy, planning or situation analysis creates an obligation to involve them in implementation, supervision, monitoring and evaluation and to deliver concrete assistance.</p> <p>Expectations of young people and government alike need to be managed. It can help to commit to minimum outcomes/quality standards at the beginning of a process.</p> <p>Social exclusion issues call for understanding of the causes of exclusion, cultural sensitivity and imaginative outreach in appropriate languages, including prioritising the needs of those that are illiterate.</p> <p>Despite growing interest in youth issues in the country, youth as a sector is itself marginalised; mainstreaming is the appropriate response that must be followed through by all development partners, MDAs, private sector and civil society.</p> <p>The establishment of the Ministry of Youth, Employment and Sports (MYES)¹³⁰, National Youth Commission¹³¹ and appropriate decentralised structures such as district youth committees, accompanied with <i>sustained resource mobilisation</i> and <i>capacity building</i> at <i>national</i> and <i>local levels</i> should enable carrying forward of agenda of youth development and empowerment in a new unique manner.</p>
Substance and drug abuse	<p>The increase in substance and drug abuse in the country calls for the need to address it in a more focused manner, relating it to broader issues such as widespread poverty, high levels of unemployment and underemployment; and also possibly addressing other causes of trauma.</p> <p>Advocacy work on substance and drug abuse must be supported through youth-led structures, with peer-to-peer counselling, where it is required. Use of multi-sectoral approach involving youth leaders, the school system (teachers), religious and community leaders is expected to yield positive results rather than focusing on the vulnerable youth only.</p> <p>Establishment of drug abuse treatment centres is perceived to be an effort that is likely to assist in arresting the situation before the situation gets worse.</p>

¹²⁹ A cross-cutting theme for youth participation within the existing development context, hence critical to address.

¹³⁰ It is observed that in response to the youth development challenge, many African governments have established Youth Ministries. However, in the absence of paradigm shift on how youth issues, limited resource allocation from national treasury and lack of national strategic focus, the youth sector has largely remained highly marginalised.

¹³¹ NAYCOM facilitates the establishment of effective national and decentralised networked structures for promoting youth participation in development, playing a pivotal coordination, leadership and supervisory role. Monitoring and evaluation and evidence based approaches to development and scaling up of best practices are particularly useful in furthering the youth development agenda in Sierra Leone.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

6.1.1 Macro-level

- i. **Through its National Development Plan, Agenda for Change, Sierra Leone is making commendable strides to reverse the negative development trends¹³²**, largely exacerbated by the decade long civil war to ensure self sustaining growth and development. An analysis of macro-economic development indicators show that the country is steering in the right direction, from the reconstruction phase designed to restore the physical infrastructure (roads, transport networks, communication and others), destroyed during the war or left without adequate maintenance, through to the development phase. Over the past three years, GDP growth has stabilised at around 6 percent per annum, from about 3.2 percent in 2009; per capita GDP has increased by 50 percent in three years. Annual inflation has stabilised and declined, and is set to fall from 17.8 in 2010, to 11.7, with further declines anticipated in 2013. Though the budget balance/fiscal deficit is expected to improve, from -6.4 on 2010, to -4.5 in 2012; current account position is expected to improve from -55.7 in 2010, to -9.9 in 2012, this is not likely to impact significantly on the lives of ordinary Sierra Leoneans.
- ii. **Despite commendable performance in managing macro-economic indicators, unemployment and underemployment levels have remained very high, with the formal sector absorbing only 9 percent of the labour force.** The high levels of poverty and unemployment and underemployment, that characterise more than 70 percent of the country's population, a large share of whom are youth, call for extraordinary measures to tackle them, with the youth and their representatives in the forefront of formulation of strategies and interventions designed to uplift their status.
- iii. **Stabilization of macro-economic indicators by itself is insufficient to promote growth and deal with the growing challenge of unemployment, in particular as it pertains to the country's youth. Economic growth is central to overall employment creation.** Other practical measures also need to be taken to boost the creation of decent employment for young women and men. The Economic Commission for West African States (ECOWAS) initiative for member states which places emphasis on macroeconomic stability and convergence is a valuable intervention for the sub-region. Whilst there is an understanding that it has yielded some benefits in the macro-economic stability of member states, including Sierra Leone, it has also been recognised that promoting convergence and growth requires a deeper understanding of country specific features and the need to focus on the most binding constraints to growth with equity.

6.1.2 Meso and Micro Level

Youth Employment and the Labour Market Challenges

- i. **The education and training system is too supply oriented and lacks innovation to meet the changing job market demands, including self-employment.** There is a well documented mismatch between current and anticipated future labour market and its preparation, from the lower level schools system, at primary, junior and senior secondary, to higher and tertiary education and training, including university and technical and vocational education and training (TVET). This mismatch has given rise to a disconnect between supply and demand for labour, contributing to increasing levels of youth unemployment.

¹³² This includes a low human development index of 180 out of 187 countries ranked in the UNDP HDR in 2011.

- ii. **Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Development and agro-based value chains:** A large number of young people, over 80 percent are trapped in low return activities in the micro and informal sector. There has been little or no focus to deepen capabilities of the largely informal micro, small and medium enterprises. Strategies on value chain development have been lacking nationally¹³³. MSMEs are identified in this Report to be a key entry point into decent jobs for a large proportion of the youth, yet there has not been any coherent national thrust to promote the development of MSME¹³⁴. There is no MSME policy or strategy to guide Sierra Leonean enterprise development in a systemic manner.

- iii. A number of opportunities for youth participation in development have been identified, on the basis of development best practice from youth-led interventions in Sierra Leone. These include non-formal peer-peer education in managing youth oriented sexual reproductive health issues, dealing with the national challenge of teenage pregnancies, capacity building and preparation of young people for the world of work through structured internship schemes and empowerment of young people to become effective community development workers, amongst other strategies¹³⁵. **Whilst these interventions, by themselves may not be a panacea to the challenges of youth participation in development, when combined with other approaches, they constitute a valuable starting point for engaging the youth more meaningfully in development processes in the country.** For example, the on-going formulation process of the Sierra Leone Youth Service Corps could benefit immensely from the initiatives already being undertaken in the country by various development partners¹³⁶. Borrowing from the lessons learnt by selected development partners and those drawn from other countries in similar context, there is potential for some of the interventions currently being undertaken and new ones to be scaled up and feed into a programme with a bigger national orientation and higher potential impact.

- iv. **Improvement in labour market information system:** Addressing the key issue of youth unemployment requires accurate data on the situation prevailing in both the formal and informal sector. Currently, **the state of labour market information in the country is a challenge, giving rise to use of estimates of employment and unemployment figures, which can be avoided if an effective national system is established.** The estimates may be far removed from reality, hence the need to have more accurate statistics. These should be based on what is prevailing on the ground, especially in measuring levels of under-employment in the non-formal sectors; researching on the potential drivers for growth in employment and what is required to catapult more self-sustaining job-rich growth.

Education Sector

- i. **Meeting the challenges of out-of-school youth and children: There is a large proportion children out of school.** Whilst it is noted in this report that the GoSL has shown strong focus in developing the schools system in the country, in view of, the magnitude of the challenge,

¹³³The MAFFS supported Smallholder Commercialisation Programme is taking up the issue of agro-based value chain development. However, it is at preliminary stages of implementation.

¹³⁴ The National Action Plan on Youth Employment makes strong reference to the development of MSMEs in Sierra Leone. The terms of reference for this study to not give room for a detailed discussion of MSMEs.

¹³⁵ The challenge is how to scale up these interventions to reach out to a larger proportion of young people in Sierra Leone, as part of a strategy to prepare youth to become more productive citizens.

¹³⁶ With the involvement of the National Youth Commission and MYES, the GoSL is at the design stage of a National Youth Service Corps Programme. Both the design and implementation phases of the Youth Service Corps are expected to draw from development best practice in the country and from countries in other regions.

there is need for stronger Government commitment and leadership in addressing the out-of-school challenge in the Sierra Leone. With poverty identified as one of major underlying causes of children dropping out-of-school, transparent, equitable, efficient and accountable resource allocation systems are vital in addressing prevailing socio-economic challenges.

- ii. **Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET):** TVET is an option for large numbers of youth unable to enter university and polytechnics. **Many young people have low regard on TVET. The use of 'outdated equipment', poor funding for TVET programmes, general lack of strategic thrust and quality are cited by the youth as major challenges.** Budgetary allocation to the education sector is lowest for TVET, being only 2 percent of the sector budget, between 2009 and 2010, compared to 51 percent for pre-primary and primary education, and 19 percent for higher education.
- iii. **Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary:** Despite the reported construction of large numbers of new Junior Secondary Schools, **many thousands of children completing primary education remain without access to JSS.** The MEST 2010/11 School Census Report point to the need to give priority to the construction of Junior Secondary Schools, training and recruitment of appropriately qualified teachers and the provision of textbooks and other teaching learning materials for increased access at Junior Secondary School level.
- iv. The pattern of **high failure rates for the BECE and WASSCE examinations has been repeated in recent years**, highlighting the urgency of prioritising full implementation of the recommendations from the 2010 Education Commission which are contained in the Government White Paper. It has been noted in this report that despite a 50 percent improvement in the pass rates for the senior secondary examination since 2008, failure rates for the WASSCE have remained unacceptably high over the three-year period, from 2009 to 2011.
- v. **Over the past 6 years, the government has prioritised the education sector in the annual budgets.** This is demonstrated by 'increases' of budgetary allocation to the education sector between 2007 and 2010. However, overall, the financing of the education sector from national treasury has remained a challenge, in view of the limited funding base. Support from international development partners to the higher education school sector is minimal. The OECD Aid Database reports commitment of only \$1.5 million for the post-secondary sector, with most of the funds being for tuition support to students studying abroad rather than for local institutional support.
- vi. **Higher and Tertiary Institutions:** It is widely acknowledged that **the governance structures and laws governing Higher Education Institutions need to be reviewed to assess how they hinder or facilitate the institutions to perform their mission.** The current legislation does not encourage innovation and enhancement of quality as it constrains the authority of higher education institutions and support organizations like the TEC. It is hoped that the review of the TEC 2001 Act and other effort when completed will contribute to an improved situation than currently the case.
- vii. **Access and equity:** The GoSL has invested much in **ensuring equity in access to HEIs, through its affirmative gender policy on female students in the sciences and engineering disciplines and support for entry into HEIs by students with disabilities.** However, the issue of financing of higher education has surfaced as a major concern for many prospective students, in view of financial and economic challenges facing most Sierra Leonean households.

The Health Sector

- a. **Overall, in recent years, Sierra Leone has made rapid progress in implementing key health interventions.** The Free Health Care Initiative launched in 2010 to provide free health services to pregnant women, and other vulnerable groups such as breastfeeding mothers and children under the age of 5 years, is particularly noteworthy.

The 2010 Health Sector Performance Report and the Service Availability and Readiness Assessment (SARA, 2011), amongst other issues, highlighted the need to have **improved availability of essential drugs at all health facilities in order to ensure an adequate level of services.**

- b. **HIV and AIDS: HIV prevalence is higher among girls than boys, indicating a worrying trend of infection in young girls.** Whilst the youth have not been recorded as group with the highest prevalence, Sierra Leone cannot afford to be complacent. Despite progress in controlling the epidemic particularly under the difficult conditions of the post-war period, youth in Sierra Leone are a high risk group and vulnerable to increased HIV rate of infection.
- c. **Teenage pregnancies:** There is increasing awareness that the high level of sexual activity amongst girls increases their vulnerability to HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. **Evidence points to teenage pregnancies as a major challenge in Sierra Leone.** There are serious consequences for young girls, such as dropping out of school early and reducing their educational opportunities. Teenage pregnancies are linked to low contraceptive prevalence in the country, with young women the least likely to use contraceptives, making them more vulnerable.
- d. **Substance and drug abuse:** Available information points to a **growing challenge of drug and substance abuse amongst young people in the country. Recent studies point out that youth are resorting to substance and drug abuse on a increasing level because of frustration emanating from poverty and joblessness**¹³⁷.
- e. **Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C): The practice is on the decline.** This has been a subject of discussion in various UNICEF supported Multi-Indicator Cluster Surveys in recent years.
- f. **Young people with disability:** A recent study on disability in Sierra Leone published by Leonard Cheshire Disability, a UK Charity, reveals **“very concerning levels of abuse, discrimination and lack of access to essential services like health, education and welfare for disabled people”**¹³⁸. In view of the large number of disabled persons in the country, the GoSL has recently passed a Disability Act and in July, 2012, established a Disability Commission, tasked with implementation of the Act and programmes for disabled persons.

Youth Participation in Development

- i. **The establishment of NAYCOM and decentralised youth development structures at grassroots level in the form of District Youth Councils, Chiefdom Youth Councils, for the provinces, and Zonal Youth Councils, for the more urbanised Western region, are steps in the right direction.** District Youth Advisory Committees have also been established in all the 19 local district councils as structures designed to further decentralise, in a practical way, youth development coordination. However, those structures, from national to decentralised levels, need to be followed up with **provision of tangible support involving functional public private partnerships.**

¹³⁷ Restless Development, Sierra Leone, 2012.

¹³⁸ Cited from Social Protection Study Draft, World Bank (Unpublished) 2012.

- ii. Heavy dependence on existing limited annual government budget allocation and a few donors may not be adequate to develop a comprehensive youth support programme and may not be sustained in the long term. Other measures are required. These are spelt out in the recommendations section of the report.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Macro-level issues

- i. **Comprehensive and inclusive pro-employment job-rich growth targets for Sierra Leone.** The GoSL also needs to develop engendered employment and poverty reduction targets as a matter of priority. In view of the enormity of the youth unemployment and challenge with decent jobs creation strategies for Sierra Leone, this Youth Report advocates for comprehensive and inclusive pro-employment job-rich growth targets for Sierra Leone. The National Employment Policy and the National Youth Employment Action Plan (NYEAP) can be a useful starting point for this effort. Concrete steps in mobilising financial and human resources are required to support both the recently finalised National Employment Policy and the NYEAP, within the framework of functional public private partnerships (PPPs).
- ii. Furthermore, at the broader level, policies and strategies must target improvement of the human development index, covering health, nutrition, education and living standards, in particular reduction of the observed high levels of poverty in the country's population. This calls for **development of clear youth development sensitive policies and strategies at national, sector, sub-sector and micro levels, accompanied by an implementation framework supported by adequate financial and human resources.** Given the large share of youth in the total population, 60 percent, policies and programmes targeting the youth need careful planning, with clear targets set for the immediate, medium and long term.

Meso-and Micro Level Issues

Employment Creation and the Labour Market

- a. **Support to National Youth Employment Action Plan:** There is scope for holistic and engendered youth sensitive approaches to development, taking into account the challenges of different age groups such as the disabled and other marginalised groups such as illiterate youth, and those in rural areas. **The GoSL and development partners need to take a bolder stance to provide practical forms of support to the Sierra Leone National Youth Employment Action Plan¹³⁹,** by ensuring the following:
 - i. **Deepening the establishment of public-private partnerships (PPP),** to ensure that adequate measures are taken to implement the NYEAP in priority areas as documented in the youth employment action plan. The following is an outline of some of the priority areas spelt out in the NYEAP:
 - **Comprehensive Package of Business Development Services for the Youth** (Entrepreneurship skills development (including technology development and innovation, technical Vocational Education and Training, Micro Finance and Rural Credit, Production, processing, marketing and distribution of agro-based /agricultural commodities (development of value chains in the agricultural sector, Production, processing, marketing and distribution of agro-based /agricultural commodities (development of value chains in the agricultural sector.

¹³⁹ A National Youth Employment Action Plan was recently finalised in Sierra, with the involvement of UNDP Sierra Leone, NAYCOM and other development partners.

- **Public Sector Works** (Youth involvement in labour intensive public sector works programmes)
 - **Youth Participation, National Volunteerism, Cluster Development and Gender in Employment Creation and**
 - **Institutional, Regulatory and Policy Environment**
- ii. **Designing of an MSME policy is a priority. This would be with a view to strengthening the capabilities of micro, small and medium enterprises.** For this to happen substantial investment in deepening business development services, on the basis of priorities set in the NYEAP is needed in strengthening the technological capabilities¹⁴⁰ of small businesses in the country. Focus on agro-based value chains is particularly critical, given the high potential of the agricultural sector to absorb large numbers of young people, especially in rural areas.
- iii. **Labour market information system:** The government and development partners in Sierra Leone need to prioritise resources mobilization and **planning for a new labour force survey** and overall improvement of the labour market information system on a sustainable basis, taking note of the situation prevailing in the vulnerable non-formal sectors¹⁴¹.

Education Sector

- a. **Mismatch between demand and supply of labour:** The mismatch between education and training and the labour market needs, can be addressed through the **development of labour market ready skills and entrepreneurship minded youth, with the capacity to successfully scale up business opportunities, both in the informal sector and the more demanding formal sector; ensuring education and training matches the requirements of both formal and informal employment, including self-employment. For this to be successfully undertaken, the current national education curricula needs review and reform.**
- b. **Broadening of internships** and attachments of youth from tertiary and other segments of the education and training system, taking into account the challenges facing, the most vulnerable and less literate youth. There is need to **consider the traditional apprenticeship system**, ensuring that it meets the needs of those who can be trained on the job, as well as providing incentives to those who house youth for such training. There is need to consider ways of upgrading the capacity of such training, where appropriate. For example, incentives can be provided in areas for which there is scarcity of skills¹⁴².
- c. **Financing education sector development: Government must continue to prioritise Education and Health sectors, in addition to forging strategic innovative public and private partnerships and other sustainable approaches.** Given the low public financial base from which the GoSL draws its budget for the education sector and the limited number of development partners involved in education, a new strategy needs to be employed. Relating to HTIs, the GoSL is encouraged to consider other innovative avenues of complementing the government student grant scheme.

¹⁴⁰ Technological capabilities (TCs) are defined as the knowledge, skills and efforts required for firms to bring about an indigenous process of technological development. This can occur by increasing efficiency in the management of the enterprise value chain and improving the innovation capabilities of MSMEs.

¹⁴¹ Currently, it can be concluded that there is no functional labour market information system. This situation opens an opportunity to develop a labour market information system which is youth sector sensitive, disaggregating data and its analysis in a manner that meets the agenda for youth development.

¹⁴² Refer to NAYCOM/UNDP, 2012, National Youth Employment Action Plan.

There is a need to forge stronger public and private partnerships, mobilising mining and other private companies to invest a significant share of their profits in developing HTIs and other priority areas of the education sector as part of their community obligations. New international development partnerships also need to be sought to promote education development in the country.

- iv. **Addressing the out-of-school crisis: The Donor community must increase its financial support to education programmes for vulnerable children and support national frameworks set out by the Government. Actors working in education, child protection and social protection must also develop joint criteria and guidelines, for the identification of out-of-school children and the provision of holistic programmes addressing the out-of-school problem.** To address the issue of youth dropping out of school earlier than is desirable, a two-pronged intervention that provides both short-term/immediate and long-term assistance is vital in supporting marginalised families to improve their financial and economic resources whilst ensuring that their children continue their schooling.
- v. **Addressing the complex and overlapping issues of out-of-school children requires a holistic approach that involves the various sectors and all stakeholders. The current free basic education programme needs to also consider targeting improving access to schools by the disadvantaged out-of-school children, including dealing with the challenges of over-aged children.**
- vi. **Dealing with challenges confronting TVET: There is need for a rethinking of the development approach for Sierra Leone; balancing investment in infrastructure and associated projects, with investment in human resources development. A two-pronged approach, focusing on deepening the local technological capabilities, including human resources, (both in terms of quality and quantity), organizational and management skills, is more likely to be more sustainable and achieve better results for the youth and the country than one focusing merely on supply of infrastructure and 'recovery'.** In order to deal with the challenges cited, there is need for a new drive and strategic shift of focus with a view to developing a dynamic TVET system capable of meeting the challenges of a country in transition, to transformation and a more self-sustaining development phase. The Government of Sierra Leone, in collaboration with international development partners, such as the World Bank, European Commission, International Labour Organisation, UNCTAD, UNDP and others need to review the current situation.

For TVET, priority must be given to the following:

- i. Expedite the finalisation of the TVET policy, which has been in draft form for several years. Once the **new TVET** policy is adopted, **an Implementation Plan and a Costing Framework** is required, accompanied by a comprehensive resources mobilization strategy to support prioritised interventions.
- ii. Consideration needs to be made for developing a **National Human Resources Development Plan**, on the basis of a new TVET Policy, and within the framework of the Education Sector Strategic Plan, incorporate development of a new-look TVET system and labour market oriented education and training system.

- iii. **Development of human resources development support networks¹⁴³**, involving the private sector (e.g., local mining companies and others), forging linkages between TVET demand and supply in the labour market. A framework could be developed to establish a way in which private companies can invest in certain training programmes, focusing on areas for which there is definite demand, e.g., mining technology, technicians, engineers, middle level management programmes, business and marketing capacity development. Focus should be to deepen human resources capabilities, focusing on the youth through effective public and private partnerships.

Other Education Sector areas where action is foreseen:-

- i. **Current effort to tackle illiteracy must be sustained and where necessary scaled up:** There is need to strengthen literacy levels of the population, especially the youth, addressing identified gaps in basic education and training, from primary, secondary education, through to more advanced training and qualifications; higher education, TVET and apprenticeship training, based on the labour market realities of the country; adoption of innovative approaches to human resources and skills development¹⁴⁴. *{MOFED also needs to spearhead a process of determining rate of return a various level in the education sector, to justify renewed and sustained focus in the sector, if returns are found high, which is expected}.*
- ii. **Gender mainstreaming:** There is need to take particular care to level the playing field for the illiterate young women and men, developing basic programmes to meet the needs of marginalised young women and men, for example, in the area of vocational education and training and raising literacy levels generally.
- iii. **Improvement of performance in the BECE and WSSCE:** There is need to monitor the extent to which the recommendations of the 2010 Education Commission are being adopted {relating to addressing the issues understood to be underlying causes of high failure rates at junior and senior secondary schools}; whether other measures are required to support the proposals already largely accepted by Government¹⁴⁵.
- iv. From a gender perspective, the effort to support improvement in pass rates for both girls and boys at both junior and senior secondary schools need to be sustained, as well as looking at other qualitative aspects of education for girls, including entry into higher learning institutions such as universities. General improvement in enrolment for both girls and boys at JSS and SSS levels must also continue to be priority for government and its development partners in the education sector.

¹⁴³ILO could also assist in the establishment of a kind of a tripartite involving labour, private sector, government and other key stakeholders as part of a strategy to develop essential networks for national transformation and development, focusing on the priorities identified for the youth and the country.

¹⁴⁴Refer to Education Sector Strategic Plan.

¹⁴⁵Except for only a few, most of the key Commission's recommendations were accepted by the Government.

The Health Sector

- a. Although access to health care has reportedly improved in recent years, studies show that at least one third of the Sierra Leonean population remained dissatisfied with medical services. **Sierra Leonean medical facilities need to boost their service readiness, especially in conducting quick in-house diagnostics laboratory tests and the supply of drugs as part of a strategy to improve the country's health delivery system**, and the country's HDI, in particular with a view to benefiting marginalised groups like young women and men without decent sources of income as well as other groups. The strategies should also seek to address the reproductive and health needs of young women, issues of early marriages, recommendations on other key issues affecting women which have been identified in the report are as follows:-.
- b. **HIV and AIDS:** The GoSL and development partners need to **scale up education and awareness programmes across all groups of the population, paying particular attention to addressing gender issues; tackling challenges relating to young women who are noted to be more vulnerable to HIV and AIDS than male counterparts**. HIV and AIDS programmes must also seek to reach out to groups found to be least knowledgeable such as those in rural areas, where awareness campaigns have been less visible.
- c. **Teenage pregnancies:** Substantial programmes need to be put in place, **including improving awareness and availability of contraceptives to ensure that young women are better able to manage their sexual reproductive health**.
- iv. **Substance and drug abuse:** The urgent need for responsible authorities to monitor closely developments in substance and drug abuse has been demonstrated in this report. **The GoSL in collaboration with relevant development partners needs to explore cost effective ways of tackling the challenge of substance and drug abuse amongst youth before it worsens**. Substance and drugs abuse prevention should be well-informed, disseminating relevant and accurate information on abused substances in Sierra Leone, with timely appropriate action taken.
- v. **Female Genital Mutilation:** Sustained awareness and education on the negative effects of FGM/C in affected communities and regions is still required and is more likely to reduce further, the occurrence of this practice, nationally, in the foreseeable future as results from efforts undertaken to date indicate.
- vi. **Dealing with the disability challenge:** There is need to develop more practical interventions targeted to supporting the livelihood system and general welfare of disabled persons. The Act needs to be backed up by sustained strategies of financial resource mobilization, capacity building and training, to support the 'entry points' for scaling up opportunities for disabled young people to have more decent lives.

Youth Participation in Development

- i. The **capacity and skills building challenges** observed in the DYCs and Zonal Youth Councils point to the need for **comprehensive resource mobilisation strategy for youth development interventions, nationally**. This report advocates for creative ways of resource mobilisation and doing business for sustaining youth development programming in Sierra Leone¹⁴⁶. The report also advocates for the establishment of a variety of practical interventions designed to uplift the wellbeing of the youth and to meet the needs of different youth groups on the basis of priorities set with their participation.
- ii. **A key strategy for broadening youth participation; lobbying strategy**¹⁴⁷ – through **advocacy, awareness raising**, sensitising youth on various issues, focusing on attitudinal change, exploring ways of unleashing youth potential, and involvement in non-traditional areas, including areas in which youth are generally not engaged. If opportunities are ‘scaled up’ or ‘deepened’ in what is referred to in this report as ‘major drivers for growth in employment creation in Sierra Leone’, the country would move in the right direction with the youth. If the right conditions are created, including rationalisation of the use of underutilised land and sustained investment in agricultural development, there are opportunities worth taking in agro-based value chains, with a potential shift away from subsistence farming. Amongst other strategies, **NAYCOM can use youth role models** to change the mindset of youth disinterested in farming related activities, transform the perspective of the youth and facilitate movement into higher value agro-based productive enterprises. Amongst other sub-sectors, strategies should focus on programming focusing on a ‘new-look’ sector with diverse opportunities for the youth.
- iii. **Establishment of broad-based partnerships centred on youth development in Sierra Leone:** Truly successful interventions designed to tackle the issue of youth development, in particular that relating to the key issue of creation of decent employment for young women and men depends on building meaningful partnerships and alliances on a local, national, regional and international levels. Action plans on youth development can be used as a tool for the conversion of youth development priorities into concrete action and to strengthen the coordination of youth relevant interventions.
- iv. **What the Youth Must Do:** The GoSL has made a **good start to tackling youth development issues** in the country. The challenges the country faces in other sectors and nationally are enormous. Clearly the youth themselves must **arise and have more self-determination, work harder, be more innovative and entrepreneurial, change their mind-set and culture and become more productive and focused citizens**. To be sustainable, once the structures are established and fully established, support from Government and development partners should **complement the practical initiatives** of the youth, rather than the other way round!

¹⁴⁶ On paper the Youth Development Fund, which has support across the Sierra Leonean political divide should gain enough Parliamentary support, should a bill go before that house. However, a sustained mechanism of resources mobilisation, monitoring and supervision of that fund to ensure that it achieves what it is set out to achieve would be critical. Large mining companies (new ones expected to come on board) reportedly not contributing as they should to the development of the country and to national treasury could, through a levy, be targeted to provide a significant share of the resources for the Fund, on an on-going basis. The mining and other companies could be obliged by law to finance youth programmes in the districts where they operate, or even take a more national perspective.

¹⁴⁷ Use of various channels of communication and information dissemination is foreseen (e.g., active use role models, mass media campaigns, use of community radio stations, to target youth).

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APPENDIX A1: Statistics of WASSCE Results (2008 – 2011)

YEAR	CANDIDATE ENTRY			CANDIDATE SAT			No. of Candidates with Credits in 5 Subjects Including English Language and Mathematics			FAILURE (F ₉ in ALL Subjects)		
	Male	Female	TOTAL	Male	Female	TOTAL	Male	Female	TOTAL	Male	Female	TOTAL
2008	16,503	7,444 (31%)	23,947	16,274	7,297 (31%)	23,571	118 (0.07%)	32 (0.04%)	150 (0.06%)	2,164	1,875 (26%)	4,039 (17%)
2009	19,880	9,364 (32%)	29,244	19,179	9,087 (32%)	28,266	156 (0.08%)	90 (1%)	246 (0.09%)	2,690	1,820 (20%)	4,510 (16%)
2010	23,318	12,023 (34%)	35,341	23,039	11,894 (34%)	34,933	233 (1%)	124 (1%)	357 (1%)	3,746	2,797 (24%)	6,543 (19%)
2011	28,810	16,513 (36.4%)	45,323	28,611	16,415 (36.5%)	45,026	350 (1.2%)	136 (0.08%)	486 (1.1%)	5,241	4,037 (25%)	9,278 (21%)
Source: West African Examination Council (WAEC), 2012												

Statistics of NPSE Entry and Performance on Gender Basis (Regional) from 2008 – 2011

YEAR	REGION	ENTRY			NO. SAT			PASSES (Aggregate 230 & above)			FAILURE (Below Aggregate 230)		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2008	WEST	14,467	14,359	28,826	14,012	14,146	28,158	10,929	10,273	21,202	3,083	3,873	6,956
	NORTH	21,879	14,467	36,346	21,227	13,955	35,182	16,659	9,718	26,377	4,568	4,237	8,805
	SOUTH	9,740	7,572	17,312	9,442	7,233	16,675	3,196	3,681	6,877	6,246	3,552	9,798
	EAST	11,835	9,608	21,443	11,533	9,286	20,819	9,283	6,896	16,179	2,250	2,390	4,640
2009	WEST	13,402	14,194	27,596	13,187	13,978	27,165	9,784	10,023	19,807	3,403	3,955	7,358
	NORTH	20,309	14,562	34,871	19,960	14,679	34,639	14,696	10,381	25,077	5,264	4,298	9,562
	SOUTH	8,771	7,376	16,147	8,690	7,262	15,952	6,527	5,107	11,634	2,163	2,155	4,318
	EAST	12,543	10,651	23,194	12,489	10,592	23,081	10,254	8,264	18,518	2,235	2,328	4,563

YEAR	REGION	ENTRY			NO. SAT			PASSES (Aggregate 230 & above)			FAILURE (Below Aggregate 230)		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2010	WEST	13,033	14,308	27,341	12,962	14,210	27,172	9,879	10,251	20,130	3,083	3,959	7,042
	NORTH	19,274	15,183	34,457	19,065	15,003	34,068	14,053	10,788	24,841	5,012	4,215	9,227
	SOUTH	8,755	7,572	16,327	8,715	7,535	16,250	6,852	5,618	12,470	1,863	1,917	3,780
	EAST	10,628	9,414	20,042	10,557	9,347	19,904	8,197	6,791	14,988	2,360	2,556	4,916
2011	WEST	13,023	14,238	27,261	12,965	14,162	27,127	9,769	10,183	19,952	3,196	3,979	7,175
	NORTH	18,273	15,195	33,468	18,119	15,060	33,179	13,810	10,805	24,615	4,309	4,255	8,564
	SOUTH	8,390	7,777	16,167	8,368	7,759	16,127	6,737	5,900	12,637	1,631	1,859	3,490
	EAST	10,430	9,907	20,337	10,412	9,887	20,299	7,846	7,116	14,962	2,566	2,771	5,337
Source: West African Examinations Council, 2012													

Statistics of BECE Results - National (2008 – 2011)

YEAR	CANDIDATE ENTRY			CANDIDATE SAT			NO. OF CANDIDATES WITH FIVE SUBJECTS INCLUDING LANGUAGE ARTS & MATHEMATICS			FAILURE (Candidates with Aggregate 42)		
	Male	Female	TOTAL	Male	Female	TOTAL	Male	Female	TOTAL	Male	Female	TOTAL
2008	38,233	21,279	59,512	36,934	21,179 (36%)	58,113	6,513 (18%)	3,610 (17%)	10,123 (17.4)	6,541 (18%)	5,070 (24%)	11,611 (20.0)
2009	43,054	26,635	69,689	42,828	26,487 (38%)	69,315	5,840 (14%)	3,222 (12%)	9,062	6,977 (16.3%)	6,615 (25%)	13,592
2010	39,227	26,308	65,535	39,167	26,250 (40%)	65,417	6,647 (17%)	3,540 (13%)	10,187	5,945 (15%)	6,107 (23%)	12,052
2011	47,271	34,646	81,917	47,154	34,539 (42%)	81,693	6,066 (13%)	3,426 (10%)	9,492 (11.6)	7,402 (16%)	8,236 (24%)	15,638 (19.1)
Source: West African Examinations Council, 2012												

Statistics of NPSE Entry and Performance on Gender Basis (National)

YEAR	CANDIDATE ENTRY			CANDIDATE SAT			NO OF PASSES (Aggregate 230 & above)			FAILURE (Aggregate Below 230)		
	Male	Female	TOTAL	Male	Female	TOTAL	Male	Female	TOTAL	Male	Female	TOTAL
2008	57,823	46,104	103,927	56,223	44,611 (43%)	100,834	40,067	30,568 (69%)	70,635	16,156	14,043	30,199
2009	55,025	46,783	101,808	54,326	46,511 (46%)	100,837	41,261	33,775 (73%)	75,036	13,065	12,736	25,801
2011	50,116	47,117	97,233	49,863	46,869 (48%)	96,732	38,162	34,004 (73%)	72,166	11,701	12,865	24,566
Source: West African Examinations Council, 2012												

APPENDIX A2: Entry Requirements to Universities and Polytechnics

Institution	Type of Programme	Entry Requirement
Njala University	Bachelor degree	5 GCE 'O' Levels/WASSCE credits including English Language & Mathematics, obtained in not more than two sittings. School and departmental requirements
University of Makeni	Bachelor Degree	5 credits of WASSCE or 'O' levels (including English) in not more than two sittings or 4 credits together with a Higher Teacher's Certificate (HTC)
	Certificate Level	3 credits of WASSCE or 'O' levels, including English Language, in not more than two sittings
	Diploma Level	4 credits of WASSCE or 'O' levels, including English, in not more than two sittings
Fourah Bay College	Degree Programmes	Five GCE 'O' Levels/WASSCE credits including English Language, obtained in not more than two sittings. Also faculty and departmental requirements.
IPAM	Certificate	4 credits of WASSCE or 'O' levels, including English or Math, in not more than two sittings
	Degree	5 credits of WASSCE or 'O' levels, including English Language & Mathematics, in not more than two sittings
LICCSAL	Degree (in affiliation with University of Sierra Leone)	5 credits at GCE O'level or WASSCE including English Language. Mature Student entry for persons over 45 years of age
	Diploma	3 Credits at GCE O'level or WASSCE, including English Language. Certificate from accredited HEI 25+ and employed Enter into 1-year access program
Milton Margai College of Education and Technology	Trade Certificate	BECE and attainment of SSSIII
	Certificate	3 passes at WASSCE in relevant field
	National Diploma	4 passes at WASSCE
	Higher National Diploma	National Diploma plus 2 years work experience
	Higher Teachers Certificate	4 credits at WASSCE, including English, in not more than 2 sittings Teacher Certificate, plus 3 years teaching experience, with credit in English and Math or English and Science at WASSCE Teacher Certificate plus 3 years teaching experience plus passing Entrance Exam in English and Math for mature students
Source: World Bank, Higher and Tertiary Education Policy Note, 2012.		

APPENDIX A3: Additional Case Study: Profile of a Youth Leader



Young Leader Profile – Mohamed Kallon

Mohamed Ansumana Kallon, 29, is a young professional who belongs to hundreds of former Volunteer Peer Educators of Restless Development that are gaining increased livelihood and creating employment opportunities throughout Sierra Leone.

As a young secondary school leaver, Mohamed first joined Restless Development volunteers in 2006 and was placed at Sami Town in Tonko Limba Chiefdom, Kambia District, Northern Sierra Leone. He delivered awareness raising lessons on sexual reproductive health issues to about five thousand youths (students and non-students), worked with community stakeholders on local development initiatives, gave peer advice to young people, and mobilised the community to celebrate international events like the World AIDS Day and International Women's Day.

Through these activities, Mohamed developed both leadership and communication skills. His organisational skills in initiating, planning and executing events, involving many people were further enhanced. He also developed boldness and confidence in addressing crucial issues and gained a wealth of experience in managing resources.

Upon successfully completing his volunteerism tenure with Restless Development in 2007, Mohamed's potentials as a resourceful young man were quickly recognised by Marie Stopes Sierra Leone. He was first employed by Marie Stopes as a Behavioural Change and Communications Assistant, assigned to Kambia and Tonkolili Districts in Northern Sierra Leone in 2010.

Today, Mohamed Kallon is the Behavioural Change and Communications Officer of Marie Stopes Sierra Leone. His duties include delivering information, education and communication materials to Marie Stopes centres and outreach teams.

What is most interesting about Mohamed Kallon's career is that he is still helping young people make informed decisions about their sexual behaviour. He attributes his passion for sexual reproductive health amongst the youth solely to Restless Development.

APPENDIX A4: Labour Force Participation Rates

Table A3: Youth Labour force participation rates for selected countries												
Region and sub region	Country or territory	Percentage of youth in the labour force										
		15 – 19 years				20 – 24 years				Age transition in LFPR* (ratio)		
		Total	Female	Male	Female/ Male LFPR**	Total	Female	Male	Female/ Male LFPR**	Total	Female	Male
Western Africa	Sierra Leone	34	39	27	1.4	56	65.4*	67.5*	1.2	1.7	1.5	1.9
	Senegal	61	49	73	0.7	73	57	89	0.6	1.2	1.2	1.2
	Nigeria	18	12	25	0.5	44	28	59	0.5	2.4	2.4	2.4
	Liberia	53	53	53	1.0	65	64.9*	69*	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.2
	Guinea	69	69	70	1.0	85	79	90	0.9	1.2	1.2	1.2
	Guinea-Bissau	47	40	55	0.7	75	64	86	0.7	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Ghana	35	36	33	1.1	69	72	67	1.1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Gambia	57	61	52	1.2	76	68	83	0.8	1.3	1.1	1.6
	Côte d'Ivoire	43	36	50	0.7	61	47	76	0.6	1.4	1.3	1.5
	Burkina Faso	74	71	77	0.9	83	76	70	0.9	1.1	1.1	1.2
	Benin	48	50	46	1.1	68	66	70	0.9	1.4	1.3	1.5
Southern Africa	Botswana	35	33	36	0.9	84	82	86	1.0	2.4	2.5	2.4
	Lesotho	52	45	58	0.8	73	71	76	0.9	1.4	1.6	1.3
	Namibia	10	10	11	0.9	50	48	52	0.9	4.8	5.0	4.7
	South Africa	9	8	10	0.8	53	48	59	0.8	5.9	5.8	6.0
	Swaziland	35	33	36	0.9	67	58	77	0.8	1.9	1.8	2.1
Source: United Nations World Youth Report, 2010												

Note: For Sierra Leone, the amended figures relate to 15 years and over age group (World Bank, 2011); For Liberia, the marked figures relate to 25 – 34 years age group based on Liberia Labour Force Survey, 2010.



The Youth Report 2012 provides data and analysis on the situation of youth in Sierra Leone. This is the first in an annual series of reports that will explore the state of the country's youth.

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