Systems-level Analysis of Education Service Delivery in Sierra Leone

Commissioned by the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE). Undertaken by the Education Partnerships Group (EPG) with funding from the UBS Optimus Foundation.

Acknowledgements

Foreword

There has never been a more exciting time for education in Sierra Leone. His Excellency President Julius Maada Bio and the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) is committed to transforming education service delivery and improving learning outcomes for all children and young people by enabling them to fulfil their potential, contribute to the national and global economy, and participate in public life.

At the heart of Sierra Leone's development aspiration is its people. Human Capital Development is central to the Government's Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) 2019-2023 entitled "Education for Development", which lays out a new direction for improving the lives of Sierra Leoneans through education, inclusive growth, and building a resilient economy.

The provision of free quality education is the cornerstone of our commitment to developing Human Capital. The Government's flagship Free Quality School Education (FQSE) initiative aims to achieve greater access, quality, and equity for over 1.5 million children by removing financial barriers to school enrolment and improving teaching

and learning outcomes. To meet this commitment, the Government doubled the annual education budget from 11% to 22% from 2017-2018.

In order to achieve this ambitious and transformational vision, it is critical that Government decision-making is informed by timely, actionable, and locally relevant data. These ingredients are essential for evidence-based policy design and implementation. My joint appointment as Sierra Leone's Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) and Chief Innovation Officer at the Directorate of Science, Technology, and Innovation (DSTI) reflects the Government's commitment to leveraging data, technology, and innovation to strengthen education service delivery and improve teaching and learning outcomes for all.

Evidence-informed policymaking seeks to increase the role of empirical data and insights in policy decisions. Naturally, evidence-informed policymaking should not be at odds with innovation. Where evidence is unreliable or simply non-existent, it is essential to analyse current efforts and explore innovative new ways to test new policy initiatives in order to generate evidence for future policy decisions.

Of course, the Government cannot do this alone. At the MBSSE, we believe that strong and collaborative partnerships across government agencies and with various highly reputable institutions within and outside Sierra Leone will help us achieve our objectives. This report is one example of such a partnership and the MBSSE's commitment to ensuring the latest evidence on how the quality and efficiency of education service delivery informs policy design and implementation.

In 2019, the MBSSE commissioned the Education Partnerships Group (EPG) to undertake a systems-level analysis of education service delivery, with a particular emphasis on identifying the disconnects between policy design and delivery. EPG worked closely with the MBSSE to co-design the objectives, scope, and methodology of the study and to ensure cross-Government participation, including colleagues from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD); the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED); and the Office of the President at State House.

The report presents data at multiple levels of the system (central, district, schools) in order to support the streamlining of decision-making processes, strengthen system-wide accountability, and facilitate the complete decentralisation of basic education service delivery. To date, the report has informed the development of Sierra Leone's Education Sector Analysis, preceding the new Education Sector Plan (2020-2025); a proposed restructure of the MBSSE and the establishment of a Delivery Unit. The report has also informed the ongoing policy development work of the MBSSE's Emergency Education Taskforce (EET) Operations, Policy and Planning (OPP) Pillar, chaired by the Chief Education Officer, Dr. Yatta Kanu.

Furthermore, the MBSSE continues to prioritise data-led initiatives to ensure evidence-informed policies and policy initiatives lead to strengthened education delivery and improved learning outcomes, including:

- A functional review of the MBSSE conducted by the Office of the President's Public Sector Reform Unit (PSRU) in late 2019 to examine the challenges, service delivery functions, and institutional structure and staffing in order to enhance the Ministry's overall performance potential.

- The Government of Sierra Leone's Education Data Hub, connecting data from the Annual School Census and the National Examination Results to support decision making through a data-driven process to inform policy, planning and evaluation of interventions across schools.

- Sierra Leone's Education Innovation Challenge (EIC) designed and launched in late 2019 by DSTI and the MBSSE to find new, innovative ways to improve learning outcomes in primary schools, currently being scaled up in partnership with the Education Outcomes Fund (EOF).

- The MBSSE's new 'one tablet per school' programme, building on the success of the MBSSE's 'Situation Rooms' launched during the Ebola response to analyse real-time data to make evidence-based decisions, as part of our COVID-19 emergency response.

Strengthening evidence-based policy is an essential part of the MBSSE's mission to create an environment for all children in Sierra Leone to have an equal opportunity to access quality education. I wish to thank everyone involved in the creation of this report. It represents a true collaboration across Ministries, Departments and Agencies; research partners; development partners; and – most importantly - our schools. We hope the same sector-wide collaboration continues to improve the quality of education for all children, for many years to come.

Dr. David Moinina Sengeh

Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education

Chief Innovation Officer, Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation

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The MBSSE continues to prioritise data-led initiatives to ensure evidence-informed policies and policy initiatives lead to strengthened education delivery and improved learning outcomes

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Glossary

CA	Chief Administrator, Local (District) Council
CEC	Chiefdom Education Committee
CEO	Chief Education Officer
CTA	Community Teachers' Association
DD	Deputy Director
DEC	District Education Committee
DEO	District Education Office
DFID	Department for International Development
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPG	Education Partnerships Group
ESP	Education Sector Plan
EU	European Union
FO	Finance Officer
FQSE	Free Quality School Education
FPE	Free Primary Education
JSS	Junior Secondary School
LC	Local Council
LGA	Local Government Act (2004)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MBSSE	Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MoFLGD	Ministry of Finance Local Government Department
MTHE	Ministry of Technical and Higher Education
PO	Procurement Officer
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SMC	School Management Committee
SSS	Senior Secondary School
TLM	Teaching and Learning Materials
TSC	Teaching Service Commission
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Executive Summary

Background and Context

Sierra Leone is a West African country of approximately 7.5 million people. Politically, it is a democratic nation with a constitutional parliamentary republic. There are three spheres of government: the national government, Local Councils and Chiefdom Councils. Between 1991 and 2001, the country experienced a ten-year civil war. This was followed by a devastating Ebola outbreak in 2014 – 2015, which killed about 4,000 people and severely disrupted public service delivery, including forcing schools to close for a period of nine months.[1] Education is a priority for the current government, with President Julius Maada Bio announcing a five year initiative to roll out free pre-primary, primary and secondary education, known as 'Free Quality School Education' (FQSE) in August 2018.

According to the National Census Data 2018, 1.7 million students are enrolled at the primary, junior secondary and senior secondary levels. While enrolment has increased in recent years, completing school remains a significant challenge, with only 64% of children completing primary, 44% completing junior secondary, and 22% completing senior secondary education.[2] Learning outcomes remain worryingly low – with only 12% of children in Grades 2 and 3 meeting the expected levels of numeracy skills for their grade.[3] Additionally, there are huge regional and socioeconomic inequalities. In the western region, three times more children achieve the expected reading skills for their grade than in the rest of the country.[4] Amongst the richest children, around 39% demonstrate basic literacy and numeracy skills, compared to only 3% of the poorest children.[5]

The governance of education service delivery in Sierra Leone is complex. As the delivery of basic education (primary and junior secondary) is a devolved function, it is governed by the Local Government Act 2004, and implemented by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD).[6] The sector-specific legislation governing and regulating the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) is the Education Act 2004. The delivery of senior secondary education is solely the mandate of the MBSSE, whilst the delivery of higher and technical education is delivered by the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE).

1 MEST. (2018) Education Sector Plan 2018-2020, p. 1

2 NICEF. (2018) *Country Office Annual Report 2018 Sierra Leone,* UNICEF, New York, p. 3
www.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/Sierra_Leone_2018_COAR.pdf

3 UNICEF (2017) Sierra Leone Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) Findings
https://blogs.unicef.org/evidence-for-action/much-children-learn-new-evidence-sierra-leone/

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Government of Sierra Leone. (2004). *The Local Government Act,* Freetown, Sierra Leone.
http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2004-1p.pdf.

Objective of the Study

This report was commissioned by the MBSSE in May 2019, following consultations with the Education Partnerships Group (EPG) early in 2019. The objective of the study is to conduct a mapping of the education system in Sierra Leone at two levels in order to identify inefficiencies and possible ways to address them:

1. An organisational mapping of the current education service delivery, including the MBSSE legislative mandate, organisational structure, functions, as well as individual roles and responsibilities, and

2. Process mapping of three key areas of education service delivery as identified by the MBSSE for further investigation:

    a. School subsidies;

    b. School monitoring;

    c. Education budgeting, disbursement and expenditure.

Both organisational and process mapping of key areas seek to identify disconnects between policy design and delivery. The report is intended for use by the MBSSE and other relevant stakeholders, inside and outside the government, to support the streamlining of decision making and processes, strengthen the accountability within the education system, and facilitate the full decentralisation of basic education service delivery from the central to the district levels. This study corroborates the majority of findings published in the functional review of the MBSSE carried out by the Public Sector Reform Unit (PSRU) in 2019.

The report includes a set of suggested next steps based on the findings of the study. These suggestions are for the Ministry to consider as it explores how to best strengthen education delivery and implement FQSE.

Study Methodology

The report is based on 98 in-person interviews with national and regional stakeholders, selected in consultation with the MBSSE. Data was collected in four districts: Bombali (North), Moyamba (South), Kenema (East) and Kambia (North-Western).[7] There were two main steps in data collection:

1. Desk Review of available policy documents, including legislation and official policy, internal ministry documents, job descriptions and operational guidelines

2. Key Informant Interviews conducted with staff associated with basic education service delivery at central and district level.

During analysis, data collected from school, district, and the central level were coded from the digitized note template into relevant themes. Data was triangulated across the four districts and respondent types to identify emerging trends and differences within and between districts, and between central and district level. The key findings and suggested next steps were validated in a workshop with the MBSSE Senior Management Team (SMT) as well as by the Minister before the finalisation of the report.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The following limitations should be kept in mind when interpreting the data and results of the study:

1. The study focuses on basic education and it sampled only primary schools;

2. It does not cover education service delivery by city councils;

3. It is not nationally or regionally representative and provides a snapshot in time across sampled districts. Findings must be interpreted as indicative not conclusive;

4. Process mapping for education budgeting, disbursement and expenditure is only at district level;

5. The list of policy documents used for the study cannot be confirmed as exhaustive as there was no central repository of information to refer to.

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7   The districts were sampled based on four criteria: (i) rural; (ii) regional representation (excluding Western area);
(iii) Human Development Index rankings; and (iv) at least one district in which the World Bank PBF is operational

Overview of Key Findings and Suggested Next Steps

1. Education Service Delivery

This section begins by looking at who holds responsibility for the delivery of basic education in policy and in practice, at the central and district levels. At the central level, basic education service delivery is the primary responsibility of MBSSE. The MBSSE was created in 2018, after the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) was split into the MBSSE and the MTHE.

The Teachers Services Commission (TSC) created in 2011 is a semi-autonomous body that is part of the MBSSE. The FQSE unit established in 2019 is also part of the MBSSE. The TSC and FQSE have staff at the district level reporting to individual headquarters in Freetown, in addition to the District Education Office (DEO), which reports to the Directorate of the Inspectorate within the MBSSE at the central level.

At the district level, basic education has been officially devolved since 2004, and service delivery at Primary and Junior

Secondary level is the responsibility of the Local Councils, who report to the MLGRD. Local Councils have Local Council Education Committees (LCEC) that are composed of selected councillors. Overall responsibility for planning and oversight of education service delivery (as well as implementing education services at senior secondary level), however, remains with the DEO. There is an unclear and overlapping division of roles and responsibilities at district level between the DEO, FQSE, TSC and Local Council leading to confusion and an inefficient use of limited resources.

Despite there being multiple government bodies involved in the delivery of basic education, they are each mandated under their own legislation, with no unifying legislative act to guide centralised and decentralised functions.

Summary of Key Findings

1. **Legislation guiding education service delivery**

   a. **There is no unifying legislative act and/or accompanying policy guidelines outlining the centralised and decentralised functions of education service delivery.**

2. **Central level structure (MBSSE)**

   a. **The MEST 2009 organogram and the MBSSE job descriptions have not been updated to reflect the current structure and reporting lines of the MBSSE.**

   b. **Half of all positions in the technical arm of the MBSSE are currently vacant, meaning senior staff have no junior staff to which to delegate work.**

3. **District level structure**

   a. **There is significant overlap and duplication of the roles and responsibilities of staff in the DEO, the TSC District Office, and the FQSE District Coordinators, with limited mechanisms for sharing information between offices.**

   b. **Devolution of basic education is accepted by both the DEO and Local Council; however, it is only partially implemented. There is a lack of operational guidelines on how devolution should be implemented in practice.**

   c. **The role of the LCEC, as well as how they work with the DEO on decentralised functions, is ambiguous in practice.**

Suggested Next Steps

Suggested next steps	Suggested actions
1 Draft unified legislation for education decentralization[8]	• Consultation between the MBSSE and MLGRD during the current review of the LGA to ensure harmonisation • Consultation between the MBSSE and MLGRD during the review of the Education Act • Consultation between the MBSSE and relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to draft new or review existing education legislation
2 Create implementation guidelines for all decentralized functions of education service delivery★[9]	• Consultations between the MBSSE and MLGRD at central and district level to draft harmonized guidelines • Consultations with additional education stakeholders at central and district level to understand different perspectives • Draft accompanying training materials for central and district officials based on draft harmonization guidelines • Pilot draft implementation guidelines in order to determine what requires further development or clarification • Draft monitoring and evaluation framework to learn from the piloting and roll out of implementation guidelines • Publish finished guidelines online
3 Review structure, roles, and responsibilities of central and district level MBSSE staff	• Draft MBSSE organogram restructure for effective and efficient service delivery[10] • Develop clear and updated job descriptions to match the organogram • Draft monitoring and evaluation framework to learn from the MBSSE restructure • Hold workshops for central and district level staff to ensure a shared understanding of the structure, reporting lines, roles and responsibilities.
4 Draft clear Terms of Reference for all operating Education Committees at district level and below★	• Consultations between the MBSSE and MLGRD at central and district level to draft clear Terms of Reference (TORs) • Draft accompanying training materials for central and district officials based on the TORs • Draft monitoring and evaluation framework to learn from operating Education Committees
5 Improve communication and information sharing between staff at all levels of the MBSSE	• Develop guidelines for records management, data storage and information sharing for the MBSSE

8 The MBSSE has started the process for this

9 Denotes where EPG may be able to provide further support.

10 The MBSSE is already working on this.

2. School Monitoring

This section looks at school monitoring in policy and in practice. In policy documents, the term 'school monitoring' is not used anywhere. School inspections, however, are included in the Education Act 2004, with Part X (Section 47) mandating the Minister to ensure that inspections are routinely undertaken. In the 2009 MEST organogram, the Directorate for the Inspectorate in the MBSSE holds overall responsibility for school inspections.

In practice, there is confusion about what 'school monitoring' entails, but in general, the term is used to refer to official school inspections, as well as other official visits to schools (by units, commissions, or committees formed under the MBSSE or MLGRD) to monitor any aspect of education service delivery. There is no uniform school monitoring tool being used across districts or accompanying guidelines on how the tool should be implemented or frequency of its use. There is no systematic storage, sharing or use of school monitoring data currently collected.

Summary of Key Findings

Responsibility for school monitoring

a. **The District Education Offices (DEO) are insufficiently resourced to ensure that all schools are monitored, although the human resources required to fully execute school monitoring is also unclear.**

b. **There is duplication of school monitoring responsibilities amongst the DEO, TSC District Office and FQSE Coordinator. Despite duplication of responsibilities between different offices, many schools are still not monitored due to resource constraints.**

School monitoring process

c. **There are no publicly available minimum quality standards for schools on which to base monitoring visits.**

d. **There is a lack of clarity about what 'school monitoring' should entail and the frequency with which it should occur.**

School monitoring tools

e. **Different school monitoring tools are used in different districts and they are predominantly compliance focused. Devolution of basic education is accepted by both the DEO and Local Council; however, it is only partially implemented. There is a lack of operational guidelines on how devolution should be implemented in practice.**

f. **Currently there is no way to share or use the data collected through school monitoring processes.**

Suggested Next Steps

Suggested next steps	Suggested actions
1 **Draft comprehensive minimum quality standards for schools★**	• Consultations with the MBSSE at central and district level • Consultations with headteachers, teachers and School Management Committees • Consultations with additional education stakeholders at central and district level to understand different perspectives • Draft comprehensive minimum quality standards for schools
2 **Review, simplify and standardize the existing school monitoring tool and process★**	• Harmonise work already done on school monitoring tools by the EU and other partners to avoid duplication of effort • Review the tool to ensure that it is developed on the basis of agreed minimum quality standards and is fit for purpose • Review the indicators for determining quality of teaching and learning in the existing tool • Consultations with Inspectorate staff at central and district level to suggest simplifications • Pilot simplified tool in order to determine what requires further development or clarification
3 **Create monitoring and evaluation capacity within the MBSSE as recommended by the functional review**	• Provide training to all Inspectorate staff on the new school monitoring tool • Develop and expand existing education information systems to include school monitoring data • Provide training to all Inspectorate staff on how to input school monitoring data into expanded EMIS
4 **Conduct an audit of the current human resources available for school monitoring★**	• Draw on recommendations from the functional review conducted by the PSRU and conduct an audit of the existing human resources for school monitoring

3. Education budgeting, disbursement and expenditure

This section looks at the process of budgeting, disbursement and expenditure of funds for education at the district level in both policy and practice. The budgeting, disbursement and expenditure process is similar across devolved sectors. Budgeting is carried out jointly between the DEO and the Local Council and the practice followed is in line with the policy outlined in the budget circular. Once the budget is approved, funds are disbursed from the Ministry of Finance to local councils. Disbursements are usually not full or timely – this affects implementation of planned activities.

Local councils disburse funds received from the centre to the DEO upon receiving a request from the latter through a Public Expenditure Tracking (PET) form. After checks to ensure the request is in line with the approved budget and action plan, the funds are disbursed. While expenditure receipts from the DEO are reconciled by the Local Council Finance Officer, there is a lack of clarity on mechanisms to monitor the quality of activities conducted by the DEO with the funds spent.

Summary of Key Findings

1. **Drafting and submitting budgets for approval**

   a. **The DEO and LC agree on the education budgeting process and their respective roles and responsibilities in policy and practice.**

   b. **There is tension between the DEO and the LCEC during budget development as basic education is devolved.**

   c. **Schools are not involved in the budgeting process.**

2. **Fund disbursement and expenditure**

   d. **The process to disburse funds from the Local Council to the DEO is clear.**

   e. **The central government often delays fund disbursement to the districts. Funds received are less than funds approved, rendering the budgeting process redundant.**

   f. **The protracted process for the DEO to access funds from the Local Council delays the implementation of planned activities.**

3. **Monitoring education budgeting, disbursement and expenditure**

   g. **During the education budgeting process, monitors from the MoFED visit the district.**

   h. **There is some confusion about the exact nature and frequency of DEO expenditure and activities being monitored by the Local Council.**

   i. **Both internal and external auditors audit Local Council expenditure.**

Suggested Next Steps

Suggested next steps	Suggested actions
1　Conduct research into the inclusion and involvement of schools in the budgeting process	• MBSSE to consult with the MoF to understand the feasibility of including schools in the budgeting process • Consultations between the MBSSE and MLGRD at central and district level to determine the feasibility of including schools in the budgeting process
2　Review the process, mechanisms, and timeline for funds disbursement from central to district government	• MBSSE to consult with the MoF on reviewing and streamlining the current process for education funds disbursement • Draft guidelines for strengthened communication between MoF, Local Councils and DEO for advance notice on the amount and timeliness of money available for disbursement • Pilot new strengthened communication between MoF, Local Councils and DEO to determine what requires further development or clarification
3　Develop policy guidance on fund disbursement and management between Local Councils and devolved sectors	• MBSSE to consult with MoF and MLGRD to develop guidelines on timing and monitoring of funds disbursed at district level • Pilot new policy guidance on fund disbursement management to determine what requires further development or clarification
4　Create a systematic approach to monitoring how education funds are spent by the DEO and the quality of education activities carried out★	• DEO to liaise with Local Councils to brainstorm feasible monitoring approaches and feed back to central level • Joint consultation between the MBSSE and MLGRD to determine ideal monitoring process • Draft guidelines for strengthened monitoring of expenditure • Pilot strengthened monitoring of expenditure to determine what requires further development or clarification

4. School Subsidies

While school subsidies were introduced in Sierra Leone in 2001, the current government made revisions to the subsidy amount and process in 2018. All government and government-assisted schools are now meant to receive a per pupil subsidy of 10,000 Leones in primary school; 50,000 Leones in junior secondary schools (JSS); and 60,000 Leones in senior secondary schools (SSS) every term. The most critical challenge has been the persistent and significant education budget deficit, meaning that not all eligible schools are registered and approved to receive school subsidies. The current sector deficit is estimated by the MBBSE as close to Le 23 trillion for 2019–2023 (approximately USD 2.3

billion).[11] The subsidy deficit is estimated to be around Le 670 billion (approximately USD 68.5 million) over the same period. According to the MBSSE, this figure is likely to increase as more out-of-school children join the system as a result of the FQSE policy.

There is no formal policy guidance on the school subsidy process including its eligibility criteria, disbursement, use and accountability mechanisms. However, despite the lack of official documentation, respondents across all four sampled districts demonstrated a consistent informal understanding of the purpose and process of the school subsidy scheme.

Summary of Key Findings

1. **Mapping the process**

   a. **Despite the absence of any official written policy or guidance on the subsidy scheme, respondents understood the purpose and process of the school subsidy scheme.**

2. **Compiling eligible school list & allocation of subsidies**

   b. **There are low levels of confidence in the quality of school level data and inefficient mechanisms for verification.**

   c. **Schools are incentivised to inflate enrolment numbers to increase their subsidy amounts.**

   d. **Subsidies are insufficient to adequately address the needs of some schools.**

3. **Disbursement, withdrawal and use of subsidies**

   e. **Subsidies are frequently disbursed after the school term has begun and the amount is sometimes incorrect.**

   f. **Respondents reported withdrawing funds from the bank either directly or after first seeking a letter of authentication from the DEO.**

   g. **During expenditure, subsidies are spent predominantly on outputs and not focused on driving school improvement.**

4. **Monitoring & complaints procedure**

   h. **Current monitoring efforts do not work and there is a lack of effective accountability mechanisms, leading to misuse of funds with no real consequences.**

   i. **There is no effective complaints procedure for schools to follow.**

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11 This data is from internal calculations and presentations prepared by Dr. Michael Mambo and shared with the research team. Mambo, Michael (2019) Presentation on the Progress on Implementation Plan for the Free Quality School Education and Costings, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Suggested Next Steps

Suggested next steps	Suggested actions
1 **Draft (i) a written policy, accompanied by (ii) operational guidelines, (iii) monitoring framework, and (iv) complaints resolution procedure★**	• Consultations with the MBSSE at central and district level • Consultations with headteachers, teachers and School Management Committees • Consultations with additional education stakeholders at central and district level to understand different perspectives • Draft policy guidance and operational guidelines for school subsidies, including clear guidance on their use • Develop an accountability framework for school subsidies • Pilot policy guidance and accountability framework to determine what requires further development or clarification
2 **Ensure shared understanding on financial management, reporting, and use of school subsidies**	• Conduct district level training workshops with all stakeholders
3 **Develop options for strengthening enrolment data in terms of (i) the quality of data collected and (ii) database storage**	• Consultations between relevant MBSSE departments (notably EMIS) and DSTI on strengthening the Annual School Census data collection and storage • Develop a robust system of verifying the enrolment data when preparing list of eligible schools
4 **Evaluate the allocation criteria for school subsidies★**	• Explore multi-dimensional ways to allocate school subsidies • Conduct a cost effectiveness analysis of each option • Draft a sustainability plan for school subsidies, particularly after donor aid finishes
5 **Ensure subsidies are disbursed in a timely manner**	• Draft guidelines for strengthened communication between MoF, Local Councils and DEO for advance notice on the amount and timeliness of disbursement • Pilot new strengthened communication between MoF, Local Councils and DEO to determine what requires further development or clarification • Pilot new strengthened communication with schools to determine what requires further development or clarification

The finalised report has been shared with the MBSSE and its partners. Findings and suggestions from this report are informing the current Minister Dr. Sengeh in the development of policies for the MBSSE. EPG will continue to work with MBSSE to further develop suggested next steps and consultatively assign responsibility with members of MBSSE.

Introduction

A. Purpose of the study

This report was commissioned by the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) in May 2019, following two consultations with the Education Partnerships Group (EPG) between January and March 2019. The purpose of this study is to conduct a mapping of the education system at two levels in order to identify inefficiencies and possible options for reform. The first level maps the current structure of the MBSSE, looking at the extent to which the policy of decentralisation has been implemented in practice. The second level maps three areas of interest identified by MBSSE: (i) school monitoring; (ii) education budgeting and disbursement; and (iii) school subsidies.

The report is intended for use by the MBSSE and other relevant stakeholders as they work towards more efficient service delivery and good governance across the education system, as outlined in the 2018–2020 Education Sector Plan (ESP). Specifically, this report hopes to provide information to help streamline decision making and processes, strengthen accountability, and fully decentralise education service delivery, as also outlined in the ESP. The report proposes a set of suggested next steps based on the data collected, for the MBSSE to consider as it explores how to best strengthen education policy design and implement Free Quality School Education (FQSE).

B. Report Overview

The report is based on 98 in-person interviews with national and regional stakeholders, selected in consultation with the MBSSE, and includes a policy literature review. Section I of this report provides background information on the context and education system in Sierra Leone. Section II outlines the research methodology and research questions guiding the report. Section III focuses on the organisational mapping of the MBSSE, covering its mandate, structure, functions, and roles and responsibilities from central to decentralized levels. Section IV explores a more detailed analysis of the systems and processes associated with school monitoring; Section V does the same for education budgeting and disbursement, and Section VI for the school subsidy scheme – all in policy and practice. The report concludes in Part VII by proposing a set of recommended next steps based on the findings from the research for the MBSSE to consider.

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12 Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. (2018) *Education Sector Plan 2018-2020*, MEST, Freetown, Sierra Leone, p. 71-86 https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/sierra_leone_education_sector_plan_2018-2020_0.pdf

Section I: Background on Sierra Leone

1.1 Country context

Sierra Leone is a West African country of approximately 7.5 million people. Geographically, it is divided into four Provinces (Eastern, Northern, North-Western, and Southern) and the Western Area (where the capital, Freetown, is located). The country is further divided into 16 districts. The country experienced a ten-year civil war (1991-2001), followed by a devastating Ebola outbreak in 2014-2015 which killed about 4,000 people and severely disrupted public service delivery, including forcing schools to close for a period of nine months.[13]

Politically, Sierra Leone is a democratic nation with a constitutional parliamentary republic. There are three spheres of government including the national government, Local Councils and Chiefdom Councils. At the national level, the president is elected for a maximum of two consecutive five year terms and is head of state and government. Local Councils are a blend of elected officials (Mayor/Chairperson and Councillors) and public officials who worked to provide devolved services, including education, as mandated in the Local Government Act.[14]

Today, Sierra Leone remains one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 181st out of 189 countries on the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index in 2018.[15] Poverty remains widespread, with more than 60% of the population living on less than US$ 1.25 a day.[16] The country depends heavily on aid; with roughly 50% of public, human, and infrastructure development programmes financed by external resources. Despite the challenges, in many ways, the country serves as an international model in its ability to maintain peace and move forward, even in the face of adversity.

1.2 Education in Sierra Leone

Since 2007, successive Education Sector Plans (ESPs) have provided frameworks for education reform. To date, there have been three ESPs (covering the periods 2007-2015, 2014-2018, and 2018-2020). The current ESP (2018-2020), is a transition document between the ESP covering the Ebola recovery (2014-2018) and the next ESP, which is planned for 2021-2025. The three overarching objectives of the current ESP include:

1. Improvement in education service delivery;
2. Improved systems integrity (specifically by reducing cases of malpractice in national examinations); and
3. Improvements in foundational learning outcomes (evidenced by children in primary and junior secondary meeting minimum learning assessment standards in English and Maths).

In August 2018, Sierra Leone's newly elected President Julius Maada Bio announced a five year initiative to roll out free pre-primary, primary and secondary education, known as 'Free Quality School Education' (FQSE). When launching the FQSE initiative, the President acknowledged the support required from development partners to fulfil FQSE.

There is a high degree of variance in the number of schools at each level of the education system in Sierra Leone. Out of 10,747 schools reported in the 2018 National Education Census, 65% are primary schools compared to 14% junior secondary schools (JSS), 6% senior secondary schools (SSS), and 15% pre-primary schools.[17] The variance in the number of schools at each level raises a fundamental question about access to secondary education.

13 MEST. (2018) Education Sector Plan 2018-2020, p. 1

14 Government of Sierra Leone. (2004). *Local Government Act,* MEST, Freetown, Sierra Leone.
http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2004-2p.pdf

15 UNDP (2019), Human Development Report 2019: *Beyond Income, Beyond Averages, Beyond Today - Inequalities in Human Development in the 21st Century,* UN, New York.
http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/SLE.pdf. p. 2

16 UNDP (No date) *About Sierra Leone*, UN, New York.
http://www.sl.undp.org/content/sierraleone/en/home/countryinfo.html

17 MEST (2018) Annual School Census Report 2018, MEST, Freetown, Sierra Leone

Only 16% of all schools are government-owned, with a majority (53%) run by mission/religious bodies. The National census data available to EPG does not break down information on the proportion of government-assisted to government-owned schools.

Successive governments have made efforts to increase access, retention, and promotion from pre-primary to senior secondary school levels. As it stands, more children are enrolling in school than ever before. According to the National Census Data 2018, there are 1.7 million students enrolled at the primary, junior secondary and senior secondary levels in Sierra Leone.

Although enrolment has remained low at pre-primary level with a Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) of 14% in 2016, the GER for primary school is 130%, owing to the significant number of overage and underage children.[20] At the junior secondary level, the GER falls to 65% and by senior secondary, the rate is just 29.5%. These numbers, while low, are on a positive trajectory, with the number of children in primary, junior and senior secondary school rising. Overall, an estimated 35% of children aged 6-18 years nationally remained out of school in 2017.

While enrolment increases, completing school remains a significant challenge, with only 64% children completing primary, 44% completing junior secondary, and 22% completing senior secondary education.[21] Of the 1.7 million enrolled students, 56% are female; however, females are less likely to pursue JSS and SSS than males. At the primary level (classes 1-6), females significantly outnumber males with a gender ratio (F/M) of 103.21. Of the 56% of females enrolled in school, 73% are enrolled in primary schools. In contrast, at the JSS and SSS levels, males outnumber females with a gender ratio (F/M) of 98.86 and 90.98, respectively.

These figures indicate that while female students outnumber male students overall, male students are more likely to pursue higher levels of schooling than female students.[22]

Composition of Schools in Sierra Leone
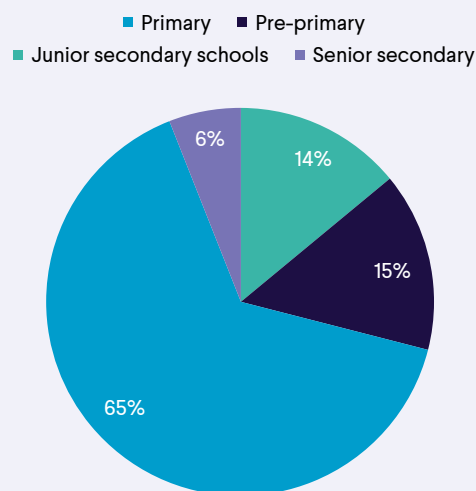
Figure 1: Composition of schools in Sierra Leone, National Census Data 2018[18]

Composition of School Types in Sierra Leone
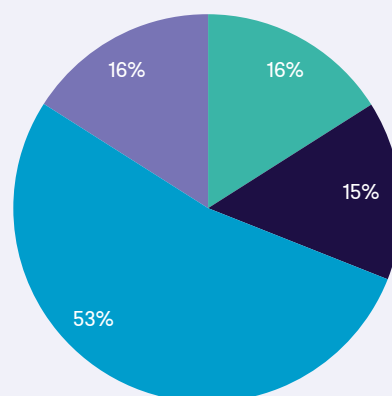
Figure 2: Composition of school types in Sierra Leone, National Census Data 2018

18 Ibid.,

19 Ibid.,

20 MEST. (2018) *Education Sector Plan 2018-2020*, p. 1

21 UNICEF. (2018) *Country Office Annual Report 2018 Sierra Leone,* UNICEF, New York, p. 3
https://www.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/Sierra_Leone_2018_COAR.pdf

22 MEST. (2018) Annual School Census Report 2018

Male And Female Students Enrolled in School in Sierra Leone

■ Male   ■ Female
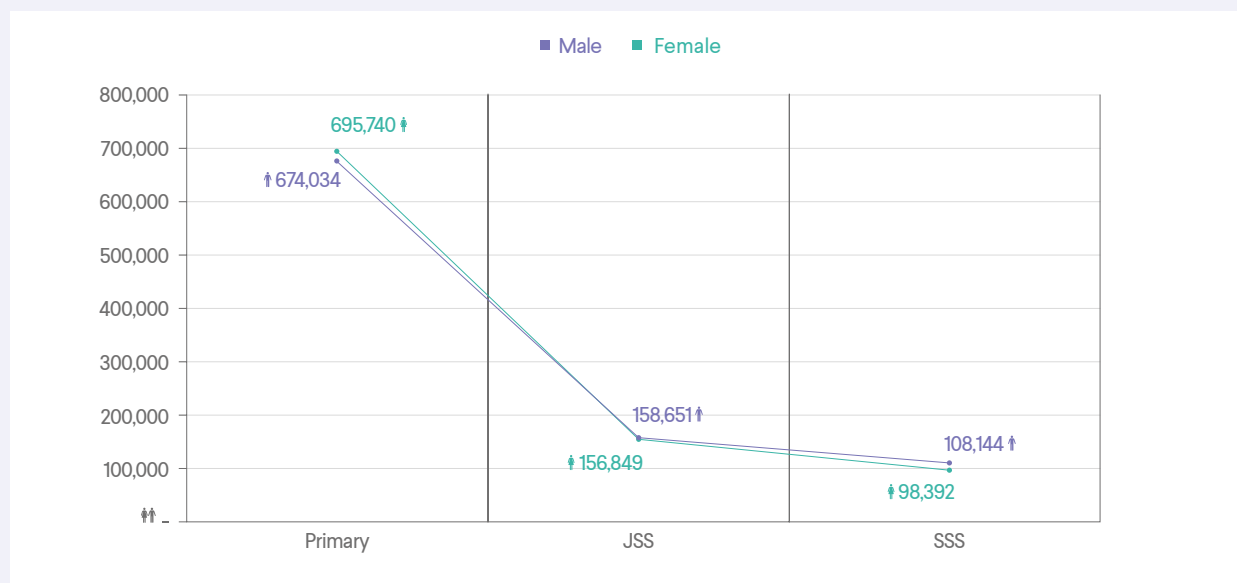
Figure 3: Number of male and female students enrolled in school in Sierra Leone, National Census Data 2018.[23]

Learning outcomes remain worryingly low. According to UNICEF's 2017 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), only 12% of children in Grades 2 and 3 meet the expected levels of numeracy skills for their grade.[24]

Within Sierra Leone, there are huge regional and socioeconomic inequalities. In the western part of Sierra Leone (where Freetown is located), three times more children achieve the expected reading skills for their grade than in the rest of the country.[25] Amongst the richest children, around 39% demonstrate basic literacy and numeracy skills, compared to only 3% of the poorest children.[26] Unsurprisingly, virtually all out-of-school children fail to display foundational skills.

In the first grade of lower secondary education, only 66% of children have acquired the foundational literacy skills expected in Grades 2 and 3, and just 42% have acquired the equivalent foundational numeracy skills expected for the same grades.

The poor quality of learning is significantly affected by the quality of teaching, with 41% of male and 28% of female teachers in 2016 lacking formal teaching qualification or teaching with a qualification below the required level.[27] Exacerbating this problem is a lack of data and systems to assess learning and education quality.

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23 Note: the Census Data does not provide numbers at the pre-primary level

24 UNICEF (2017) Sierra Leone Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) Findings
https://blogs.unicef.org/evidence-for-action/much-children-learn-new-evidence-sierra-leone/

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 MEST. (2018) *Education Sector Plan 2018-2020*, p. 47

Section II: Methodology

2.1 Objective

Determined in consultation with the MBSSE, the objective of this study is to conduct a mapping of the education system in Sierra Leone at two levels in order to identify possible inefficiencies and ways to address them:

I. Organisational mapping of education service delivery (mandate, structure, functions, and individual roles and responsibilities);

II. Process mapping of three key areas which include:

  a. school subsidies;

  b. school monitoring;

  c. education budgeting, disbursement, and expenditure.

2.2 Key research questions

Both organisational and process mapping of key areas seek to identify disconnects between policy design and delivery. In order to do this, four overarching questions guide each section:

1. Based on existing legislation and policy, what are the roles and responsibilities of the MBSSE, and other Ministries with responsibility for the delivery of basic education?

2. What do the roles and responsibilities of the MBSSE, and other Ministries look like in practice?

3. If there are gaps between policy design and delivery, what are the possible explanations?

4. How can the identified gaps between policy design and delivery be addressed?

For each of these overarching questions, there are more detailed research questions outlined in relevant sections within the report.
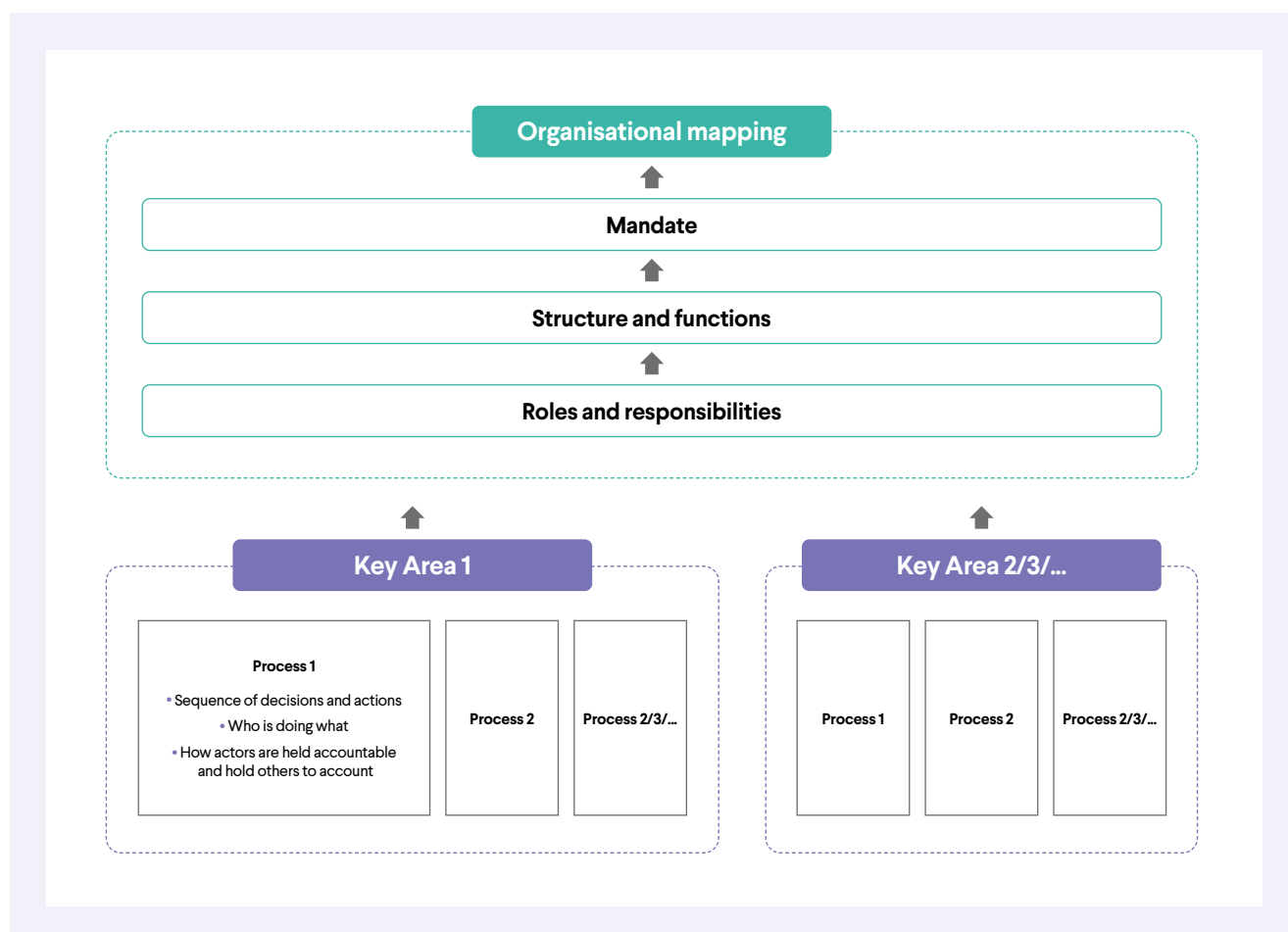
Figure 4: Diagram of organisational and process mapping of key areas

2.3 Scope and limitations of the study

The following limitations should be kept in mind when interpreting the data and results of the study:

1. **The study focuses on the delivery of basic education** (primary and junior secondary) and does not include senior secondary education (although senior secondary education is mentioned in some sections). It covers all actors involved in basic education service delivery including the MBSSE, MLGRD, and MoFED.

2. **It concentrates on basic education delivery by district councils** and does not include city councils. The decision to focus the study on district councils was not explicitly agreed with the MBSSE; however, it was agreed that the study would focus on regions outside Freetown as it represents an urban anomaly.

3. **The study is not regionally or nationally representative** but instead presents a snapshot in time across four districts (Bombali, Kenema, Kambia, and Moyamba). The sampling approach for these four districts is described below. This means that the findings are indicative, not conclusive. The study would benefit from the inclusion of a larger number of districts, particularly those in urban areas.

4. **The process mapping for education budgeting, disbursement, and expenditure is focused at the district level** and does not include central level processes.

5. **The list of policy documents referred to may not be exhaustive** as there is no central repository of information and it therefore proved challenging to access all documents. Notably, as new policy documents were produced by respondents throughout the study, the study team routinely integrated this new information into the data.

6. **Within basic education, only primary schools were sampled for data collection.**

2.4 Data Collection and Analysis

To answer the research questions for this study, both primary and secondary data sources were used. There were two main steps in the data collection process:

1. **Desk review:** The study began with a desk review of available policy documents.[28] In total, two reviewers completed templates and policy summaries for each document and reached a consensus over the implications of the policy in a summary table. The desk review was completed prior to conducting the qualitative interviews to allow the research team to identify any discrepancies, gaps or ambiguity that would inform the subsequent data collection. It should be noted that not all relevant policy documents were available to the team at the beginning of the study and so some policy documents were reviewed during and after qualitative interviews (see Annex A).

2. **Qualitative Interviews:** Key Informant Interviews were conducted with staff associated with basic education service delivery at the central and district level. A total of 98 interviews were carried out. Table 1 summarises the respondents.

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28 This included legislation, Education Sector Plans, operational guidelines, job descriptions, organograms and other internal ministry documents and presentations

Office	No. of respondents	Respondents
District and School level respondents		
DEO	14	Deputy Director, Senior Inspector, Inspector, Supervisor, Finance Officer
TSC	7	Officer, District Director
FQSE	4	FQSE District coordinators
District Council	12	Chief Administrator, Finance Officer, Chairman District Council, Chairman Education Committee
Primary School	43	Head Teachers and SMC chairs of 6 schools per district (government, government-assisted and private), 3 from a rural chiefdom and 3 from an urban chiefdom.
Central level respondents		
MBSSE	14	Deputy Minister, Permanent Secretary, CEO, Heads of Directorates, Secretary TSC commission, Secretary Basic Education Commission, Deputy Technical Director School Feeding Secretariat, FQSE Coordinator, Head PPP unit
MLGRD	2	Programme Manager, Decentralisation unit and Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Decentralisation unit
MoFED	2	Economist, LGFD & Budget Officer

Table 1: Summary of number and type of respondent interviewed

Interviews were conducted using a bottom-up approach, starting at the school level and moving upwards within the education system, in order to understand how the paths of accountability flow upwards and to allow the research team to triangulate information. Detailed questionnaires were prepared and piloted before starting the data collection process.

Before interviewing, respondents completed informed consent forms. If respondents agreed, the interview audio was recorded and one researcher took notes on a note-taking template, which was created to ensure the notes were completed to address the research questions. The researchers did not create interview transcripts due to time and resource constraints. Following the interview, researchers digitized the interview notes using a digitization template. For interviews conducted with central government respondents, notes were typed directly into the digitization template during the interview and interviews were not recorded.

During analysis, data collected from school, district, and the central level were coded from the digitized note template and triangulated. Data was tagged according to the respondent type and district in order to observe and contrast data across stakeholder groups and identify the original interview transcripts and recordings.

The data were thematically coded into the study's four areas of interest: (1) Roles and responsibilities of the MBSSE; (2) Monitoring (3) Budgeting and Expenditure and (4) Subsidies. Within each theme, the data was further coded into sub-questions and emerging challenges. Data was triangulated across the four districts and respondent types to identify emerging themes and differences within and between districts, and between central and district level.

2.5 Sampling

Sampling was carried out at district, chiefdom and school level for primary data collection. The four districts sampled for the study include Bombali, Kenema, Kambia, and Moyamba.

The selection of districts was based on the following criteria:

1. **Urban vs. Rural:** The study only includes rural districts as there is currently relatively limited information on education service delivery in rural districts in Sierra Leone.

2. **Regional Representation:** The study sampled one district from each of the four regions – Northern, North-Western, Eastern and Southern – to maximize the diversity of the sample and ensure that the findings do not only apply to only certain parts of the country. The Western Area was excluded at the request of the MBSSE as it represents an urban anomaly.

3. **Human Development Index rankings:** The study used the 2017 Human Development Index rankings at the sub-national level[29] to select two high ranking districts and two low ranking districts. This allows the study to compare how structures, processes, and policies around service delivery differ for better and less developed districts.

4. **Operation of the World Bank Performance-Based Financing (PBF):** the study sampled one district that receives the PBF programme. This programme has been recognized by MBSSE officials to be working well and allows the study to compare if the national subsidy scheme operates or is regarded differently in PBF districts.
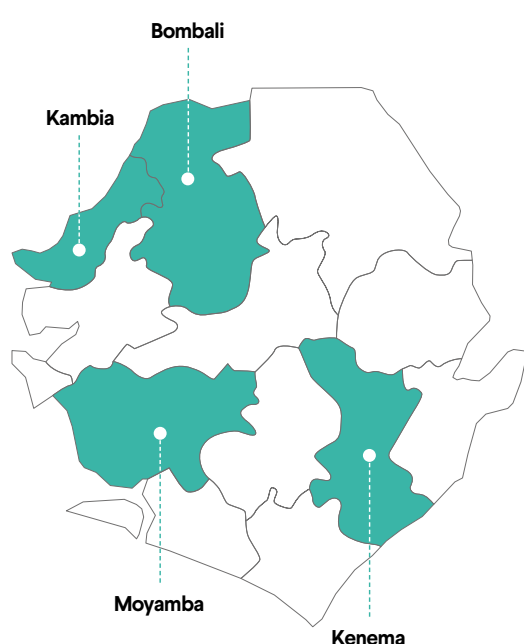
Region	District	HDI Ranking 2017	WB/ PBF
Western	Western Urban	0.511	No
Western	Western Rural	0.442	No
Northern	**Bombali**	**0.409**	**No**
Southern	Bo	0.454	No
Eastern	**Kenema**	**0.410**	**Yes**
Southern	Bonthe	0.377	No
Eastern	Kono	0.389	Yes
Eastern	Kailahun	0.378	No
North Western	Port Loko	0.395	No
Northern	Tonkolili	0.360	Yes
North Western	**Kambia**	**0.390**	**Yes**
Southern	**Moyamba**	**0.366**	**No**
Southern	Pujehun	0.354	Yes
Northern	Koinadugu	0.356	Yes

Table 2: District Selection Matrix – district highlighted in blue are the sampled districts

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29 Global Data Lab. (2017) Subnational Human Development Index 3.0: Sierra Leone, Institute for Management Research at Radboud University, Netherlands.
https://globaldatalab.org/shdi/2017/indices/SLE/?interpolation=0&extrapolation=0&nearest_real=0
Note: Sub-national HDI rankings were only available for 14 out of 16 districts.

Chiefdom Selection Criteria

Within the sampled districts, the following criteria were applied to select chiefdoms:

1. Two chiefdoms selected randomly in each sampled district.

2. Stratified by proximity to district headquarter town.

   a. One randomly selected from chiefdoms within the district headquarter town or its environs.

   b. One randomly selected from a relatively far distance from the district headquarter town

School Selection Criteria

Within sampled chiefdoms the following criteria were applied to select schools:

1. Using the 2018 school census data provided by the MBSSE, 3 schools were randomly selected within sampled chiefdoms, meaning that a total of 24 schools were visited.

2. Stratified by type of school: One government school, one government-assisted school, and one non–state/ private school

In certain remote chiefdoms where no non-state/private schools were found community schools were sampled instead. A detailed sampling table can be viewed in Annex B.

Section III: Education Service Delivery – Organisational Mapping

3.1 Section Overview

This section begins by looking at who holds responsibility for the delivery of basic education in policy. Both the MBSSE and the MLGRD hold responsibility for the delivery of basic education, although each of them is mandated under their own legislation, with no unifying legislative act guiding the centralised and decentralised functions.

In 2018, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST) split into the MBSSE and the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE). Neither the structure nor the roles and responsibilities of the MBSSE have been updated in policy documents since the re-designation, and the structure and reporting lines of the MBSSE differ in practice from the policy documents. At the central government level, the MBSSE is severely understaffed with just under half of all positions currently vacant. In practice, this means senior staff have no junior staff to whom they can delegate work.

At the district level, legislation guiding decentralised education service delivery is vague, and not accompanied by guidance for how District Education Offices and Local Councils should work together. In practice, staff in Local Councils are unclear about their roles and responsibilities regarding decentralised functions.

The legislation makes provision for several different education committees at the district level, only one of which (the Local Council Education Committee) is functional. However, it is unclear whether the Local Government Act 2004 or the Education Act 2004 governs this committee and the role of the committee is ambiguous in practice.

The recent additions of the TSC District Offices and the FQSE Coordinators have added an additional level of complexity to education service delivery at the district level, with significant overlap between the roles and responsibilities of staff across the three offices. To further exacerbate this challenge, there are no policy documents or guidelines outlining the roles and responsibilities of the TSC District Offices. The job descriptions of the FQSE coordinators are vague and therefore open to interpretation. Lastly, this study found limited information sharing between the DEO, the TSC District Office, and the FQSE Coordinators.

3.2 Overview of Key Findings

1. **Legislation guiding education service delivery**

   a. **There is no unifying legislative act or accompanying policy guidelines outlining the centralised and decentralised functions of education service delivery.**

   b. **In legislation, District Education Committees (DECs) and District Education Boards (DEBs) have an overlapping mandate to support the delivery of education at the district level, but neither are functional in practice.**

   c. **It is unclear if the Local Government Act 2004 or the Education Act 2004 governs the Local Council Education Committees.**

2. **Central level structure (MBSSE)**

   d. **The MEST 2009 organogram and the MBSSE job descriptions have not been updated to reflect the current structure and reporting lines of the MBSSE.**

   e. **Half of all positions in the technical arm of the MBSSE are currently vacant, meaning senior staff have no junior staff to delegate work to.**

3. **District level structure**

   f. **There is significant overlap and duplication in roles and responsibilities of staff in the DEO, the TSC District Office and the FQSE District Coordinators.**

   g. **There are no available policy documents or guidelines outlining the roles and responsibilities of the TSC District Offices.**

   h. **The recent additions of the TSC District Offices and the FQSE Coordinators have added a level of complexity and duplication to education service delivery at district-level.**

   i. **There is limited information sharing between the DEO, the TSC District Office and the FQSE Coordinators.**

   j. **Devolution of basic education is accepted by both the DEO and Local Council but is only partially implemented.**

   k. **The DEO, LC, FQSE, and TSC reported working together on four main processes, which differ from those devolved in policy.**

   l. **The role of the Local Council Education Committee, as well as how they work with the DEO on decentralised functions, is ambiguous in practice.**

3.3 Legislation guiding education service delivery

a. There is no unifying legislative act guiding the centralised and decentralised functions of education service delivery.

Both the MBSSE and the MLGRD hold responsibility for the delivery of basic education, although each of them is mandated under their own legislation, with no unifying legislative act guiding the centralised and decentralised functions. The sector-specific legislation governing and regulating the MBSSE is the Education Act 2004. The TSC Act 2011 replaces Act II of the Education Act 2004, but does not include guidance on the separation of powers between the MBSSE and the TSC, and the Education Act 2004 does not reflect the changes outlined in the TSC Act 2011.[30]

As basic education is a devolved function, the delivery of basic education is governed by the Local Government Act (LGA) 2004, which governs the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD).[31] Although the Education Act acknowledges the role of local government in education delivery, it does not refer to the LGA 2004 and makes no mention of the devolved function of basic education.[32] As the LGA 2004 covers all devolved functions, there is no specific guidance on the decentralisation of education-specific functions. See Annex C for a visual representation of the different actors involved in education service delivery and the legislation governing them.

b. The Education Act 2004 makes provision for District Education Committees and the MBSSE has developed a Terms of Reference for District Education Boards – both of which are intended to support the delivery of education at the district-level – but neither is functional.

The Education Act 2004 mandates the Board of Education to appoint District Education Committees (DEC) that *"shall be appointed to co-ordinate, monitor and promote education in each district in collaboration with the Chiefdom Education Committees."*[33] However, there is no further guidance in policy pertaining to the structure or composition of the committee, and the DECs do not exist in practice. In 2019, the MBSSE developed terms of reference for District Education Boards (DEB) to: *"bring about more effective oversight of education at the district level through broadening and strengthening*

of mandates as well as spelling out more clearly roles and responsibilities and deliverables."

Both are intended to support the delivery of education at the district level with the only apparent difference being that, in policy, the DECs oversee Chiefdom Education Committees whereas DEBs are supposed to oversee Ward Education Committees (which are currently non-functional). The Chiefdom Education Committees are also currently non-functional.

c. It is unclear if the Local Government Act 2004 or the Education Act 2004 governs the Local Council Education Committees.

Section 19 of the LGA 2004 states that *"Local Councils are authorised to appoint committees consisting of such councillors and performing with functions as the council may think fit"*[34] although it does not specifically mention any sector-specific committees or their functions. The Education Act 2004 states that if a local authority is to *"assist in the organization and development of education, the Minister [of education] may,*

by Government Notice, authorise the establishment by that local authority of an Education Committee."[35] This implies that the Local Council Education Committee falls under the designation of the MBSSE as opposed to the MLGRD. However, there are no terms of reference for the Local Council Education Committee.

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30 Government of Sierra Leone. (2011). *The Teaching Service Commission Act,* Freetown, Sierra Leone. http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2011-01.pdf

31 Government of Sierra Leone. (2004). *The Local Government Act,* Freetown, Sierra Leone. http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2004-1p.pdf

32 Government of Sierra Leone. (2004). *The Education Act,* Freetown, Sierra Leone. http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2004-2p.pdf p.13

33 Ibid., s 26 (2)

34 Government of Sierra Leone. (2004). The Local Government Act. s 19 (1)

35 Government of Sierra Leone. (2004). The Education Act. s 27 (1)

3.4 Central level structure

Per the Education Act 2004, the MBSSE is mandated to oversee and regulate Sierra Leone's basic and senior secondary education system, including the management of all government schools and the regulation and support of government-assisted and private schools.[36] Per the Local Government Act (LGA) 2004, delivery of basic education is a decentralised function, implemented by the MLGRD. Both the MBSSE and MLGRD work with the MoFED to obtain central funds to support the delivery of basic education services.

> **d. The MEST 2009 organogram and the MBSSE job descriptions have not been updated to reflect the current structure and reporting lines of the MBSSE.**

The MBSSE's structure is outlined in organisational organograms that were created in 2009 and obtained in hard copy by the research team from the MBSSE's Department for Human Resources. The hard copy documents bear the designation of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS). However, digital copies of the organograms on the MBSSE's website bear the designation of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST).[37] The 2009 MEST organogram is in Annex D.

The 2009 organogram is supplemented by official MBSSE job descriptions. All job descriptions were obtained in hard copy from the MBSSE's Department for Human Resources, with the exception of the Deputy Director and Assistant Deputy Director within the District Education Office (DEO), whose job descriptions were obtained in hard copy during the fieldwork.

Based on the MBSSE's job descriptions, the research team created a new organogram, which can be viewed in Annex E. Between the two organograms, there is consistency in the overall structure of the technical and administrative arms of the Ministry, with the Internal Audit Department and the Board of Education reporting to the Minister.[38]

At the senior management level, the major discrepancies are:

- the placement of the Deputy Minister(s);
- the heads of the technical and administrative arms of the Ministry;
- the placement of the Basic Education Commission; as well as
- the recent additions of the TSC and the FQSE unit.

Annex F highlights the key differences between the two organograms. During the fieldwork, the research team obtained the most recent organogram for the TSC in hard copy from their offices, which can be viewed in Annex G. The research team also obtained hard copies of the job descriptions for some FQSE staff. An organogram of the FQSE structure created from the job descriptions is available in Annex H.

Figure 5 depicts the MBSSE organisational structure in practice. Here, the Permanent Secretary oversees the administrative arm of the Ministry (with more units and staff positions in practice than outlined in policy) and the CEO oversees the technical arm. In practice, only one Director confirmed reporting to the CEO, with all others reporting to the Minister.

In 2018, the MBSSE established a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) unit staffed with one National Coordinator. This unit does not appear in any policy documents and is not accompanied by an official mandate or job descriptions. The National Coordinator was appointed by the President and reports directly to the Minister. Annex I presents a detailed analysis of the differences between the MBSSE structure in policy versus in practice.

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36 Government of Sierra Leone. (2004). *The Education Act,* Freetown, Sierra Leone.
http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2004-2p.pdf

37 Organograms on the MBSSE's website can be accessed here: http://www.education.gov.sl/Ministry.aspx

38 The Education Act 2004 established the Board of Education, which is primarily responsible for advising the Minister of Education on the legislation affecting education, as well as the organisation and operation of the education system. According to the Act, it comprises one Chairperson and 25 members, who hold office for three years and are eligible for one re-appointment.
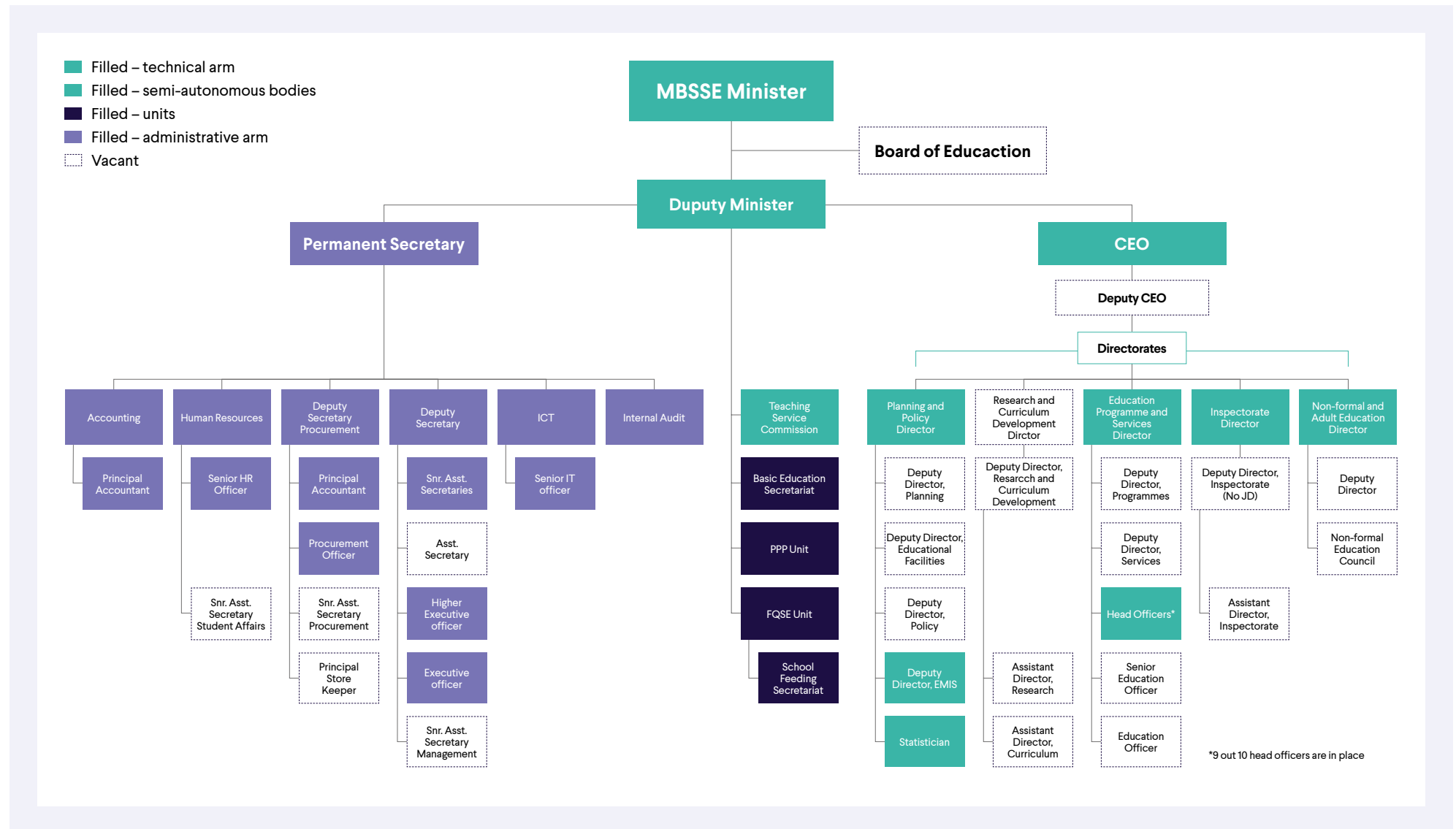
Figure 5: MBSSE organisational structure in practice (2019) as reported to the EPG research team

e. Half of all positions in the technical arm of the MBSSE are currently vacant, meaning senior staff have no junior staff to delegate work to.

Within the technical arm of the MBBSE, only four out of the five Directorates are currently functional (as the Research and Curriculum Directorate has not been operational for more than a decade), and 45% of all positions are currently vacant. Consequently, senior staff at the MBSSE noted that they are frequently required to switch from high-level oversight of education service delivery to direct monitoring and implementation, as there are no junior staff in the central

MBSSE to delegate lesser responsibilities. For example, senior ministry officials are often out of the Ministry doing monitoring during exams to prevent any cases of fraud, which interrupts their daily duties.

Further details about the roles and responsibilities of central MBSSE staff in policy versus practice can be viewed in Annex J.

3.5 District level structure

As basic education is a devolved function, its delivery is governed by the LGA 2004, which governs the MLGRD. At the district level, basic education service delivery at primary and junior secondary level is the responsibility of the Local Councils, which report to the MLGRD.[39] Overall responsibility for planning and oversight of basic education service delivery (as well as implementing education services at senior secondary level) remains with the District Education Office (DEO), which reports to the Directorate of the Inspectorate within the MBSSE at the central level.

f. There is significant overlap and duplication in roles and responsibilities of staff in the DEO, the TSC District Office and the FQSE District Coordinators.

The job descriptions for the Senior Inspector, Inspector, and Supervisors within the DEO describe monitoring teaching and learning as their most significant responsibility (with 50% of Supervisors' time and 40% of Senior Inspectors and Inspectors' time allocated for this respectively). Whilst the job descriptions for staff at the TSC District Office are not available, the TSC Act 2011 makes it clear that all aspects of teacher

management are the mandate of the TSC and its officials. The job descriptions for the FQSE coordinators describe the role as 'coordinating and implementing all activities related to Free Quality School Education' which includes responsibility for monitoring teaching and learning in classrooms, overlapping with both DEO and TSC staff.

g. There are no available policy documents or guidelines outlining the roles and responsibilities of the TSC District Offices.

Whilst respondents noted that there was an official job description for the role of TSC Deputy Director (DD) used for recruitment, no hard or soft copies could be located by the research team. Respondents also confirmed that there was no job description

for the TSC District Officers. According to the TSC operational framework document,[40] the job descriptions for district staff will be updated by the district operations management study but it is unclear when this study will take place.

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39 As per the LGA 2004 with devolution of basic education, LCs are responsible for 1) District Education Schools 2) Control of all pre-primary, primary and JSS schools, including provision of textbooks, teaching materials and oversight of school construction and rehabilitation 3) school supervisors

40 TSC. (2017) *Draft Operational Framework Document, version 2.* TSC, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

h. The recent additions of the TSC District Offices and the FQSE Coordinators have added a level of complexity and duplication to education service delivery at district-level.

The majority of respondents in the DEO, TSC District Office and the FQSE Coordinators expressed confusion about how the various offices and officials are meant to work together in practice. The TSC District offices are physically separate offices from the DEO (although in some instances they share the same compound). The TSC officials at the district level report to the central TSC in Freetown, which is also a physically separate office from the MBSSE even though the TSC Chairperson reports to the Minister. The two different levels of reporting exacerbate confusion and tension between the two offices.

In addition, the TSC offices have been either recently constructed or 'upgraded' using funds from international donors and are therefore better resourced than the DEO. For example, the TSC District offices are more likely to have newer office furniture, supplies, and air conditioning. This has further exacerbated tensions at the district level.

The research team created an 'in practice' organogram to demonstrate the structure and reporting lines of the MBSSE at the district level in practice, which can be viewed on the right-hand side of the organogram in Annex K.

i. There is limited information sharing between the DEO, the TSC District Office and the FQSE Coordinators.

All three offices conduct school monitoring and collect data on the same indicators, which they do not share with each other. A lack of information sharing adversely impacts the delivery and improvement of education services. For example, one respondent noted that a DEO official at the district initially refused to share information about data pertaining to schools and education activities in the district with the FQSE coordinator, which limited the FQSE's ability to operate in the district. Similarly, another respondent reported a disconnect between units that resulted in a refusal

to share census data across the department, commenting that "People just think they own the data."

The central MBSSE leadership is aware of the challenge of overlapping responsibilities between the DEO, TSC District Office and the FQSE District Coordinators, and have already held a district harmonization workshop to address this (a summary of the District Education Harmonization workshop held by MBSSE in Bo in April 2019 can be found in Annex L).

j. Devolution of basic education is accepted by both the DEO and Local Council but is only partially implemented.

Both the DEO and Local Council officials mentioned confusion in the delineation of responsibilities related to decentralised education functions, particularly regarding school management. Many Local Council respondents believe that technical staff who are currently part of the DEO should also be devolved and become part of the Council. According to policy, school Supervisors are meant to be devolved, but in

practice still sit in the DEO and report to the Deputy Director. DEO staff and Local Council Education Committee (LCEC) respondents also acknowledged significant overlap in roles and responsibilities on school monitoring, which has resulted in a duplication of effort and an increased workload for some headteachers.

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39 As per the LGA 2004 with devolution of basic education, LCs are responsible for 1) District Education Schools 2) Control of all pre-primary, primary and JSS schools, including provision of textbooks, teaching materials and oversight of school construction and rehabilitation 3) school supervisors

40 TSC. (2017) *Draft Operational Framework Document, version 2.* TSC, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

k. The DEO, FQSE, TSC and Local Council reported working together on four main processes, which differ from those devolved in policy.

In policy, the Local Government Act (2004) and the Local Government Assumption of Functions Regulations (2004) outline four devolved education functions: District Education schools, primary and junior secondary schools, School Supervisors and government libraries. The LGA 2004 devolves responsibility for 'District Education Schools' and oversight of all primary and junior secondary schools within the district to the Local Councils but does not distinguish the difference between the two.

The National Decentralisation Policy 2010 was enacted to harmonize the implementation of the LGA 2004 but does not provide any specific information about the decentralisation of education at the district level.[41] Additionally, there are no operational guidelines outlining how the different offices are supposed to work together to deliver these education services at district level.

In practice, respondents from the MBSSE at the district level (DEO, FQSE, TSC) and Local Council reported that they work together on four main processes (further detail of which can be found in Annex M).

1. The DEO works with the Local Council on education budgeting and expenditure monitoring (which is described in further detail in section V);

1. Members of the Local Council Education Committee sometimes conduct joint school monitoring with the Supervisors, Inspectors and Senior Inspectors of the DEO (which is described in further detail in section IV);

2. The DEO and FQSE District Coordinators support the Local Councils in distributing teaching-learning materials (TLMs), due to Local Councils' resource constraints (the Local Councils have a budget line for TLM distribution, although funds are rarely received in full or on time);

3. Lastly, TSC District Officers work with the Local Council during teacher recruitment as an official Local Council signature is required on teacher recruitment forms.

Table 3 provides an overview of the activities that are yet to be devolved (according to policy) versus activities that have been partially or fully devolved (in practice):

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41 Government of Sierra Leone. (2010). *National Decentralization Policy,* Freetown, Sierra Leone.
http://www.washlearningsl.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Decentralisation-Policy-Sept-2010-.pdf
The National Decentralisation Policy 2010 outlines the process for Local Councils to be audited as per the LGA 2004, as well as a proposed organisational structure for Local Council offices to better reflect the decentralisation process.

Main functions	Activities to devolve (policy)	Activities devolved (practice)
1 District Education Schools	• Recruitment of teachers • Paying salaries of staff • Provision of TLMs • Payment of school subsidies • Provision of furniture • Rehabilitation and reconstruction of schools • Staff Development (study leave matrix)	• Partial involvement in teacher recruitment with TSC by signing on the teacher recruitment form • Partial provision of TLMs. The budget line for distribution of TLMs is with LCs but TLMs are still procured by MBSSE centrally. They are also distributed jointly with the DEO • LCs have the provisions to raise funds/use grants for rehabilitation and reconstruction of schools and provision of furniture, but in practice this all happens through the DEO and its annual action plan
2 Primary to mid secondary schools (JSS 3)	• Payment of exam fees • Payment of salaries of staff • Provision of furniture • Provision of subsidised textbooks	• LCs have the provisions to raise funds/use grants for rehabilitation and reconstruction of schools and provision of furniture, but in practice this all happens through the DEO and its annual action plan
3 School supervision	• Inspection of teachers and school curriculum • Inspection of students	• LCs do joint monitoring of schools with DEO supervisors, but DEO staff are still primarily responsible for school monitoring
4 Government libraries	• Establishment of Boards • Supervisory monitoring • Training of staff	• None, and these are also not mentioned in the LGA 2004

Table 3: Activities to devolve according to policy' and 'Activities devolved in practice [42]

All four processes differ from those devolved in policy and are not guided by formal operational guidelines, which has led to confusion and overlap in roles and responsibilities.

1. **The role of the Local Council Education Committee, as well as how they work with the DEO on decentralised functions, is ambiguous in practice.**

Respondents from the LCEC's reported being unclear on their role in overseeing the implementation of education service delivery at the district level. According to policy, they are supposed to work with the DEO on education budgeting and monitoring, but their roles related to both are unclear in practice. Whilst LCEC respondents report being involved in the budgeting process during the drafting stage, the timing and scope of their role are vague. Respondents from the LCEC also reported that they periodically undertake joint monitoring of schools with the DEO, although the research team did not learn how often this happens, whether this happens consistently across districts, or the purpose of joint monitoring.

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42 Government of Sierra Leone (2004) *Local Government Assumption of Functions Regulations,* Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Section IV: School Monitoring – Process Mapping

4.1 Section Overview

This section begins by looking at the term 'school monitoring' before going on to explore who holds responsibility for school monitoring in policy and in practice.

In policy documents, the term 'school monitoring' is not used anywhere. In practice, there is confusion about what 'school monitoring' entails, but in general, the term is used to refer to official school inspections, as well as other official visits to schools (by units, commissions or committees formed under the MBSSE or MLGRD) to monitor any aspect of education service delivery.

School inspections are included in the Education Act 2004, with Part X (Section 47) mandating the Minister to ensure that inspections are routinely undertaken. In the 2009 MEST organogram, the Directorate for the Inspectorate in the MBSSE holds overall responsibility for school inspections.

At the district level, this study found that the DEOs are severely understaffed when cross-referenced against the district level organograms. In every sampled district, at least one position out of four was vacant, meaning that that the roles and responsibilities of staff at the district level are not being executed according to the job descriptions. Additionally, it is unclear in policy and practice how many staff members are actually required to execute the school monitoring mandate of the Directorate, as there is significant duplication of school monitoring responsibilities across offices.

Despite a lack of formal minimum quality standards underpinning school monitoring, most respondents shared an informal understanding of what a 'good school' looks like. However, the use of the existing School Inspection Forms Manual was highly inconsistent across districts, with staff in some districts using entirely different tools. The current tools in use focus predominantly on compliance (rather than the quality of teaching and learning) and only one district was able to describe the process for collecting and reporting school monitoring data. Generally speaking, the information collected is not used to inform decision-making and is not shared, even when it is collected.

Overall, this study found a lack of minimum quality standards, together with comprehensive guidance on school monitoring, exacerbated by a lack of financial resources to undertake school monitoring, particularly in hard-to-reach schools.

4.2 Overview of Key Findings

1. **Responsibility for school monitoring**

   School Monitoring (Directorate of the Inspectorate)
   a. **The roles and responsibilities of Inspectorate staff are clear in policy and practice.**
   b. **The DEO is severely understaffed.**
   c. **It is unclear how many staff members are necessary to execute school monitoring.**

   School Monitoring (TSC, FQSE)
   d. **Respondents reported duplication of school monitoring responsibilities between FQSE, TSC and DEO staff.**
   e. **Despite duplication of responsibilities between different offices, many schools are still not monitored due to resource constraints.**

2. **School Monitoring Process**
   f. **There is a lack of clarity about what school monitoring entails and its frequency.**
   g. **There are no publicly available minimum quality standards from which to monitor schools.**

3. **School Monitoring Tools**
   h. **Different school monitoring tools are used in different districts, and all of them are predominantly compliance focused.**
   i. **There is insufficient guidance and training on how to monitor schools and use school monitoring tools.**

4. **School Monitoring Data**
   j. **There are no policy guidelines about collecting monitoring data, and only one district could articulate what happened to the data after the DEO collected it.**
   k. **There is no way to share the monitoring data, even if it is collected.**

4.3 Responsibility for school monitoring

i) Directorate of the Inspectorate

a. The roles and responsibilities of Inspectorate staff are clear in policy and practice.

In policy, the term 'school monitoring' is not used anywhere. Part X of the Education Act 2004 mandates the Minister to ensure that school inspections are undertaken routinely by inspectors unless delegated in writing by the Minister. It states that it is the *"duty of the Minister to cause an inspection of every school to be made by inspectors at such intervals as shall be determined by the Minister."* [43] It goes on to say that the Minister must ensure schools are inspected by inspectors *"or any other person specially authorised in writing by the Minister to inspect such school in his name and on his behalf."* [44] The Act also notes that *"the local authority for any area may, with the approval of the Minister in writing, authorise any person, either generally or in any particular case, to inspect any pre-primary, community education centre, primary and junior secondary school in such area and in that case such person may exercise in respect of such school or centre, all the powers conferred by subsection (3) upon the Minister, any inspector or any other person inspecting any school in accordance with subsection (2)."* [45]

In the 2009 MEST organogram, the Directorate for the Inspectorate holds overall responsibility for school inspections, although it is unclear from the organogram which positions within the Inspectorate are located at the central and district levels.

According to job descriptions for Inspectorate staff, the reporting lines are the same as those in the 2009 MEST organogram: The Deputy Director reports directly to the Director of the Inspectorate, and the Assistant Director, Senior Inspectors, Inspectors and Supervisors in the DEO report to the Deputy Director. DEO respondents from one district said that the DD is responsible for conducting performance appraisals for the Supervisors, Inspectors and Senior Inspectors, but didn't know how and if that happened in practice.

The job descriptions outline specific responsibilities, as well as time allocation:

- Senior inspectors spend 50% of their time supervising staff in carrying out their work and 40% of their time monitoring and inspecting the use of teaching and learning materials.

- Inspectors conduct a variety of activities including school inspections (30%), teacher and SMC training (20%) and collecting information on teachers and students (10%) among others.

- Finally, supervisors are intended to spend 50% of their time monitoring and supervising teachers to make sure that the correct content is taught.

Further information on the roles and responsibilities of DEO staff can be found in Annex N.

In all sampled districts, respondents at the DEO confirmed they are responsible for monitoring schools in the district. Respondents also reported that they had clarity in their roles and responsibilities. They did acknowledge, however, significant overlap in mandate and responsibilities between the DEO, TSC, and FQSE. When asked to describe the structure of their departments and related reporting lines, all respondents described a structure that matched the MEST organogram.

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43 Government of Sierra Leone. (2004) *The Education Act.* Part X s 47 (1)
44 Ibid, Part X s 47(2)
45 Government of Sierra Leone. (2004) *The Education Act.* Part X s 47 (5)

b. The DEO is severely understaffed so staff cannot execute their responsibilities.

In the sampled districts for this study, the DEO is severely understaffed. In every sampled district at least one position out of four was vacant and only one district had an Assistant Director. This means that the roles and responsibilities of the Assistant Director, Senior Inspector, Inspector, and Supervisor are not being executed according to the job descriptions. Additionally, the difference between the various positions in practice is unclear.

To determine the geographic allocation of schools within each district amongst the DEO staff, every district is divided into zones. Each zone should be allocated a Supervisor, who holds responsibility for ensuring that schools in that zone are regularly visited. In reality, this varies significantly from district to district depending on the available human resources, and

often a Supervisor or Inspector covers more than one zone. In two of the four districts, there were no Supervisors employed at all.

To overcome staffing shortages, DDs in two of the sampled districts reported appointing more junior staff to support the work. For example, in one district where there were no Supervisors, the DD appointed headteachers as 'teacher attachés,' to fill the vacant supervisor positions. The 'teacher attachés' are expected to carry out the responsibilities of a supervisor. It is unclear if they are volunteers or whether they are paid for this role. In another district, the DD said, *"Currently, there are no Supervisors, except the headteachers recruited at chiefdom levels who are acting in those capacities. This leads to ineffective monitoring."*

c. It is unclear how many staff members at the DEO are necessary to execute school monitoring.

Multiple respondents across the sampled districts highlighted the challenge of inspecting all the schools within the district with the current staffing numbers. According to one DD: *"There are 484 schools in the district with only four accredited Ministry officials at the district level."* An Inspector from another District said: *"Candidly, we hardly conduct effective monitoring due to lack of personnel and logistics constraint. How can we handle 1000 schools with the limited personnel and resources available?"*

Given the high number and geographic spread of schools within the district, it is important to assess what number of staff are needed to effectively monitor all schools in the district. Currently, while it is obvious that DEOs are understaffed there is no information on what the mandated number of positions are in policy and whether that is appropriate.

ii) Teaching Service Commission, Free Quality School Education and Schools

d. There is a duplication of school monitoring responsibilities between the FQSE, TSC and DEO staff.

Across all districts, the majority of respondents reported that there are too many people with responsibility for school monitoring, causing confusion and duplication of effort, particularly between the DEO and the TSC District Office. For example, staff in the TSC District Office are responsible for aspects of school monitoring related to teaching and learning, which are also functions of the supervisors within the DEO. This has caused significant confusion. According to one DEO, Senior Inspector: *"What is our role then if we cannot monitor teachers who are responsible for the delivery of the quality aspect of education?"*

In addition, FQSE Coordinators also have the mandate to monitor schools and provide teaching and learning materials, as do the senior inspectors of the DEO. Moreover, respondents from three districts noted that Ward Councillors also hold some responsibility for school monitoring. Unsurprisingly, headteachers reported that there are too many people conducting monitoring visits, making it difficult for them and the School Management Committees to understand who is doing what.

For more detail on the overlapping roles and responsibilities of the DEO, FQSE and TSC see Annex O and Annex L.

e. Despite duplication of responsibilities between different offices, many schools are still not monitored due to resource constraints.

Staffing shortages and additional financial constraints mean that district officials are often not able to visit hard-to-reach schools that are situated far from an urban centre. This is exacerbated in very rural riverside areas, where special motorboats are required. As one Supervisor explained: *"Most times, monitoring is among those activities that are slashed out during budget hearings on the grounds that it can be implemented even if funds are not allocated to it. This oversight (lack of funds) impacts the monitoring of*

schools." In contrast, schools that are easier to reach often get monitored by multiple different offices.

The frequency of monitoring greatly fluctuates both within and between districts due to these resource constraints. In one district, respondents noted that in practice, government and government-assisted schools are visited more often than private schools and unapproved schools are rarely, if ever, visited.

4.4 School monitoring process

f. There is a lack of clarity about what 'school monitoring' entails and its frequency.

There is currently no policy guidance on the school monitoring process, including which schools should be inspected, how they should be selected, and how often they should be visited. In two districts, none of the respondents could clearly identify any procedures or processes for ensuring that school monitoring is conducted as required. The relatively vague answers differed substantially across respondents. In two districts, respondents said that the DDs must report to the Directorate for the Inspectorate on school monitoring but did not know how that happened in reality. Respondents from

the other two districts had a clearer idea of the process for school monitoring for their respective districts, but the answers between them varied.

Across the four sampled districts, there was also conflicting information about how frequently monitoring should be conducted. Most respondents agreed that it should take place every term (three times per year) if DEOs were fully staffed, but there was no directive to this effect. In reality, the frequency of monitoring is strongly correlated with the availability of resources.

g. There are no publicly available minimum quality standards from which to monitor schools.

As there are no publicly available minimum quality standards for schools, any school monitoring processes and tools are not aligned to ensuring that a minimum quality standard is met. In the absence of minimum quality standards, respondents across all four districts articulated a fairly consistent informal understanding of what is considered to be a 'good school'.[46]

However, despite this understanding being fairly consistent, the indicators provided were vague and there was a lack of understanding of how these indicators could be benchmarked and measured. In summary, as there are no available policies on minimum quality standards for schools, schools are not measured against any published standards.

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46 Six indicators were mentioned: (i) good school leadership, (ii) good quality teachers, (iii) a good pupil-to-teacher ratio, (iv) adequate teaching and learning materials, (v) good quality infrastructure and (vi) good performance in national examinations.

4.5 School monitoring tools

> **h.** **Different school monitoring tools are used in different districts and all of them are predominantly compliance focused.**

In 2009, the Directorate of the Inspectorate published a School Inspection Forms Manual as a comprehensive tool for Inspectors, which includes a set of (9) inspection forms that cover different components of school inspection.47 It is only available in hardcopy. The tool specifies that the inspection process is intended to ensure:

- School standards are set, maintained, and improved upon;
- Schools comply with the National Education Policy rules and regulations; and
- Good data is available regarding actual pupil enrolment and the number of teachers and schools.[48]

Despite this reference to school standards, they are not included in the manual.

In all sampled districts, there was a high degree of inconsistency in the description of existing school monitoring tools. In one district, none of the respondents could identify any monitoring or inspection tools. The manual is not used in its entirety in any of the sampled districts, as respondents said that it is too long to be useful. According to the Directorate of the Inspectorate at central level, some forms from the manual are used for routine monitoring but it is unclear which ones, and there is no consistency in use between districts.

In two districts, respondents produced hard copies of entirely different monitoring and supervision tools; however, these documents also differed significantly amongst the districts.

In one district a Monitoring and Supervision Tool (authorship unclear),[49] a Monitoring and Supervision Template (MEST),[50] and an Inspection Report (MBSSE)[51] were produced in hard copy for the research team. In a second district, a School Observation and Support Tool (MEST)[52] and a Monthly Activity Report for Monitoring and Supervision of Schools (authorship unclear)[53] were also produced.

Overall, the vast majority of tools capture quantitative data and do not allocate space for qualitative observations at the time of inspection. All existing tools are designed to check the basic administrative functionality of schools and/or the quality of the school infrastructure.[54] Only one of the five tools provided a place to capture information regarding the assessment of teaching quality.[55]

Some respondents described classrooms being visited during a school monitoring visit, although the exact details of what was observed and how it was measured or recorded were unclear. Some respondents also mentioned teaching being observed, with a specific focus on checking if the teacher had a lesson plan and if they used the lesson plan to teach. Exactly how much time is spent monitoring teaching in the classroom during a school visit could not be determined and was a point of disagreement amongst respondents.

In addition, some respondents added that pupil attendance is checked, as well as how school subsidies are spent and the quality of teaching and learning materials.

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47 These include (A) Demographic Information; (B) Human Resource and Curriculum; (C) School Community Relations; (D) School Pupil/Learners Welfare; (E) School Facilities and Services; (F) Textbooks and other Inspection Materials; (G) Financial Management Issues; (H) Individual Teacher Observations; and (I) Inspection/ Supervision Report Summary.

48 Ministry of Education Youth and Sports (No date). *Inspectorate School Inspection Forms,* Government of Sierra Leone, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

49 No author (No date). (District name removed for anonymity) District Education Office School Monitoring and Supervision Tool. Freetown, Sierra Leone.

50 MEST (No date). *Template for the Monitoring and Supervision of Schools in (district name removed for anonymity) district 2017-18 School Year.* Freetown, Sierra Leone.

51 MEST (No date). *Inspection Report for Approval,* Freetown, Sierra Leone.

52 MEST (No date). School Observation and Support Tool, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

53 No author (No date). Monthly Activity Report for Monitoring and Supervision of Schools, Freetown, Sierra Leone

54 To check the administrative functionality, the tools record information on whether the school has: a logbook; bulletin board; timetable; sign-in book for teachers; and absence record book.
To check school infrastructure, the tools record information on land/site, playground, garden no. of building, no. of classrooms, office, store, kitchen, toilet and water, furniture, teaching and learning materials, type of water source hygiene materials, facilities for pupils with disabilities (in one tool only).

55 To check teaching quality within schools, the tool records teacher's expected learning outcomes, lesson plans, lesson effectiveness, lesson inclusiveness, teacher engagement with the teacher among other things.

i. There is insufficient guidance and training on how to monitor schools and use school monitoring tools.

The research team did not uncover any written guidelines to accompany the tools on how to conduct a monitoring visit or guidance on how frequently the tools should be used. Across all four districts, a minority of respondents from the DEO reported that they had attended workshops and other training to learn about school monitoring. Respondents reported that some of these workshops were provided by the government, while others were provided by development partners, such as UNICEF, the European Union (EU) and the Department for International Development (DFID).

The range of different monitoring tools currently in use, coupled with the range of different workshops and training offered by different partners, has further exacerbated the already fragmented nature of school monitoring.

4.6 School monitoring data

j. There are no policy guidelines about collecting monitoring data and only one district could articulate what happened to the data after the DEO collected it.

Outside of the brief mention in the manual of the importance of good data availability, the research team did not find a policy that mandates the collection of monitoring data, nor a written description of how and when data should be collected, or, indeed, how it should be used by the central or local government.

In practice, even in districts where monitoring is taking place, a connection did not seem to be made with collecting data as part of these monitoring visits. Of the four sampled districts, only one DEO official in one district highlighted the process for collecting and reporting school monitoring data.

The DEO official confirmed that after a school has been visited by a Supervisor, the completed monitoring checklist is entered into a database by a data clerk in the DEO. The Supervisor then writes a report, which is supposed to feed into an 'annual monitoring report.' However, the annual monitoring report was only mentioned in passing by this one respondent and no other respondents had heard of this report.

k. There is no way to share the monitoring data, even if it is collected.

In general, it appears that once the data has been collected it is not shared or used. This is exacerbated by the fact that there is no central database and so district level monitoring data is not shared with the Inspectorate office at the central level.

Section V: Education budgeting, disbursement, and expenditure – Process Mapping

5.1 Responsibility for school monitoring

This section begins by looking at the process of education budgeting in policy. There is a large amount of policy guidance on the budgeting process which is aligned to what is described by respondents in practice. Across the districts, there was consistency in responses given by both the DEO and Local Council on the education budgeting process and their respective roles and responsibilities.

While the DEO and Local Council Finance Officer work well together during the budgeting process, there is tension between the role of the DEO and the role of the Local Council Education Committee in the development of the budget, given basic education is a devolved function. This is particularly tense when deciding what items should be included in the budget. Additionally, the education budgeting process is top-down, and schools are not involved in any way. In fact, the only funds schools receive are school subsidies; they receive nothing directly from the district education budget.

There is no policy guidance on how frequently funds should be disbursed from the centre to the district. In practice, respondents reported that funds should be transferred quarterly, though in reality funds are received only once or twice a year. In addition, there is often a delay in the disbursement of funds, and the amount received is always less than what was approved in the budget. This renders the education budgeting process obsolete and hinders the implementation of planned activities.

Further, there is no policy guidance on how funds should be disbursed from Local Councils to the DEO at the district level, once funds have been received from the centre. In reality, there is consensus amongst respondents across districts on the process by which the Local Council transfers education funds to the DEO. However, according to DEO respondents, this process causes further delays in the implementation of planned activities. Even though education funds are transferred to the Local Council and basic education has been devolved, expenditure and implementation of basic education activities are conducted by the DEO. The Local Council Education Committee has no role during the disbursement process and expenditure process.

It is not clear from policy or practice exactly who is responsible for monitoring the education budgeting process and how the monitoring takes place. The internal process for monitoring the disbursement of funds from Local Councils to the DEO is clear but there is no routine monitoring to ensure that the funds disbursed are timely and complete. There is extensive policy guidance on how Local Council expenditure should be reported and accounted for. Expenditure by the DEO is usually monitored by the Local Council Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. However, the exact nature and frequency of monitoring are unclear. As per policy, internal and external audits of Local Council expenditure, which includes education expenditure, are carried out.

5.2 Overview of Key Findings

1. **Drafting and submitting budgets for approval**

   a. **The DEO and LC agree on the education budgeting process and their respective roles and responsibilities in policy and practice.**

   b. **There is tension between the DEO and the Local Council Education Committee during budget development as basic education is devolved.**

   c. **Schools are not involved in the budgeting process.**

2. **Fund disbursement and expenditure**

   d. **The process to disburse funds from the Local Council to the DEO is clear.**

   e. **The central government often delays fund disbursement to the districts. Funds received are less than funds approved, rendering the budgeting process redundant.**

   f. **The protracted process for the DEO to access funds from the Local Council delays the implementation of planned activities.**

   g. **The Local Council Education Committee has no role in the disbursement or expenditure process, despite basic education being devolved.**

3. **Monitoring education budgeting, disbursement and expenditure**

   h. **During the education budgeting process, monitors from the MoFED visit the district.**

   i. **There is some confusion about the exact nature and frequency of DEO expenditure and activities being monitored by the Local Council.**

   j. **Both internal and external auditors audit Local Council expenditure.**

5.3 Drafting and submitting budgets for approval

a. **The DEO and LC agree on the education budgeting process and their respective roles and responsibilities in policy and practice.**

In policy, there is a clear process for drafting and submitting education budgets for approval, which is outlined in policy documents. The Public Financial Management Act (PFM) 2016 (part IV) guides the preparation and approval of the national budget, which can be viewed in Annex P. The LGA 2004 mandates Local Councils must have a budget and outlines some of the processes associated with its preparation. These requirements include:

- Every Council shall prepare and approve a budget for each financial year and submit it to the Local Government Finance Committee three months before the beginning of the financial year (Section 67 sub-section 1).

- A Local Council Development plan shall form the basis for the preparation of the Local Council budget, and that residents shall be consulted through participatory development planning (Section 85 sub-section 3).

- The budget must reflect the priorities and needs of the locality as contained in the local council's development plan; balance income and expenditure by way of annual financial estimates of revenue and expenditure; be prepared in accordance with procedures prescribed by law; and be a public document posted on the notice board of local councils for the whole financial year.[56]

These relevant provisions in the LGA 2004 are also reinforced by the PFM Act 2016 through the following:

- Section 100 sub-section 1 of the PFM Act 2016, refers to section 67 subsection 1 of the LGA 2004 and states that a Local Council shall approve its budget of a financial year no later than one month before the beginning of the financial year.[57]

- Initial draft budgets are submitted to the Ministers responsible for Finance and Local Government who may make comments to be considered by the Local Council (section 99 subsection 2). The revised budget shall be submitted to the Local Government Finance Committee.[58]

In addition to the legislation, guidelines on the budget creation and submission process for Local Councils are summarized in the Budget Call Circular issued annually by the MoFED and sent to the Local Councils. The Budget Call Circular prescribes budget ceilings for each district and devolved sector, a budget calendar that sets out the time frame for the budget to be prepared and approved, and includes instructions on preparation for budget agencies.[59]

Figure 6 outlines the four overarching preparation and submission steps according to the Budget Call Circular. A full summary of activities under each of the four main steps, including the responsible institution and timeline, can be found in Annex Q.

Figure 6: Four-step budget preparation and submission process per the Budget Call Circular

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56 Government of Sierra Leone. (2004). *The Local Government Act,* Part XI, s 85 (1)

57 Government of Sierra Leone. (2016) The Public Financial Management Act. Freetown, Sierra Leone. Part VIII, s 100 (1)

58 Ibid., Part VIII, s 99 (2)

59 Ibid., Part IV, s 31 (2)
   The Budget Call Circular also contains written guidelines detailing the essential budget components, including: a summary of revenue and expenditures, details of their own revenues and expenditure sources, a summary of personnel costs including councillors sitting fees, allowances and other fringe benefits; and the annual work plans of the devolved sectors.

In practice, the education budgeting process and the roles and responsibilities described by the DEO are consistent with those described by Local Council officials across districts and is outlined in Figure 7. This demonstrates a consistent understanding of the process and division of responsibilities between the DEO and Local Council, who reportedly work well together at various points in the budgeting process. This is despite some observations from Local Council respondents that the budgeting process should be handled exclusively by the Local Council given that basic education has been devolved.

STEP 1: The MoFLGD sent out a budget call circular including the budget ceilings to the Local councils for all devolved sectors.

STEP 2: The Local council forwards the budget ceilings to sector heads (Deputy Director at the DEO for Education).

STEP 3: DD and DEO FO lead in developing and costing activities for the fiscal year. Local Council Education Committees and CSOs provide inputs to the development of the activities.

STEP 4: The DD works with the DEO FO to finalize a draft of the Education sector budget.

STEP 8: The DEO submits the final budget to the Local Council Budget and Finance Committee for review and approval.

STEP 7: The DEO amends the budget based on the feedback from the Budget Hearing meeting.

STEP 6: The Budget and Finance Committee leads the budget hearing meeting which is attended by the local community and interest groups.

STEP 5: All district level sector budgets are consolidated, and a budget hearing meeting is called by the Local Council.

STEP 9: The Budget and Finance Committee present the Local Council (Consolidation of all sectors) budget at a council meeting for approval.

STEP 10: Upon approval by the Local council, the budget is sent to the MOF at the central level.

Figure 7: The in-practice process for drafting and submitting education budgets for approval

b. There is tension between the DEO and the Local Council Education Committee during budget development as basic education is devolved.

The primary responsibility for drafting the education budget and annual work plan sits with the DEO, but the LC Education Committee is usually asked for input during the drafting process. According to respondents, there is some disagreement as to the level of involvement of the LC Education Committee. Respondents from the LC Education Committee observed that their role in contributing to budget drafting is limited. Additionally, there is reported disagreement between the DEO and LC Education Committee members over which activities to include in the budget. Respondents explained that LC Education Committee members are Local Councillors appointed by the Local Council Chairperson. Local Councillors are elected by constituents and therefore advocate for activities to be implemented in their wards. When the DEO and LC Education Committee do not agree on priorities, tensions escalate.

c. **Schools are not involved in the budgeting process.**

Respondents observed that schools are not involved in the budget drafting and submission process and are not consulted at any point. This means that education budgets do not consider the budgetary requirements of specific schools. Respondents also reported that the only funds disbursed to schools from the education budget are through the school fee subsidies.

5.4 Fund disbursement and expenditure

d. **The DEO and LC agree on the education budgeting process and their respective roles and responsibilities in policy and practice.**

There is no guidance in legislation about how funds should be disbursed from the central government to Local Councils, once the budget has been approved. The only guidance is for grants, which according to Part VII, 51 (1) of the LGA 2004, the MoFED should make to devolved sectors to Local Councils on a monthly basis.

There is also no guidance on the fund disbursement process at the district level, from Local Councils to devolved sectors, nor on the subsequent expenditure by devolved sectors. However, the research team was given copies of two standardized forms that

devolved sectors (in this case the DEO) complete for (1) activity requisition and (2) expenditure authorization (Annex R). These forms are known as Public Expenditure Tracking (PET) forms.

In practice, once the Local Council has received funds from the central government, there is a subsequent process for disbursing them to the DEO. This process is outlined in Figure 8. Respondents highlighted important differences between the disbursement process for funds involving procurement (in orange) and funds for regular activities (in blue).

STEP 1: Once the budget is approved, the MoF disburses funds to the Local Concil.

STEP 2: Once funds reach the LC bank accoun, the Local Concil FO notifies toe DEO

STEP 3: To with draw funds from the local council, the DEO FO first submits a PET form (1 and 2) and a cover letter with an activity breakdown to the Local Council CA

General Fund Disbursement

Procurement

STEP 6: CA approves the budget. If the budget exceeds 5 million leones (513 USD), then the chairperson approves the budget

STEP 5: The Development and planning officer sends the PET form back to the CA and confirms its alignment with the CA

STEP 4a: The CA forwards the request to the Development and Planning officer at the Local Council to see if it is aligned with the budget that the activity is in the sector's annual workplan.

STEP 4b: If the request invloves procurement related activities, the PET form passes to the Procurement Officer at the Local Council

STEP 7: Upon approval of the PET form request, the CA sends it to the Local Council FO who prepares the cheque.

STEP 8: The bank cheque is signed by four signatories: the CA, DEO Council Chair, DEO FO and DD and is then issued to DD

STEP 6b: Procurement officer issues a cheque directly to the vendor

STEP 5b: the procurement unit with the Local Concil will commence a procurement bidding process
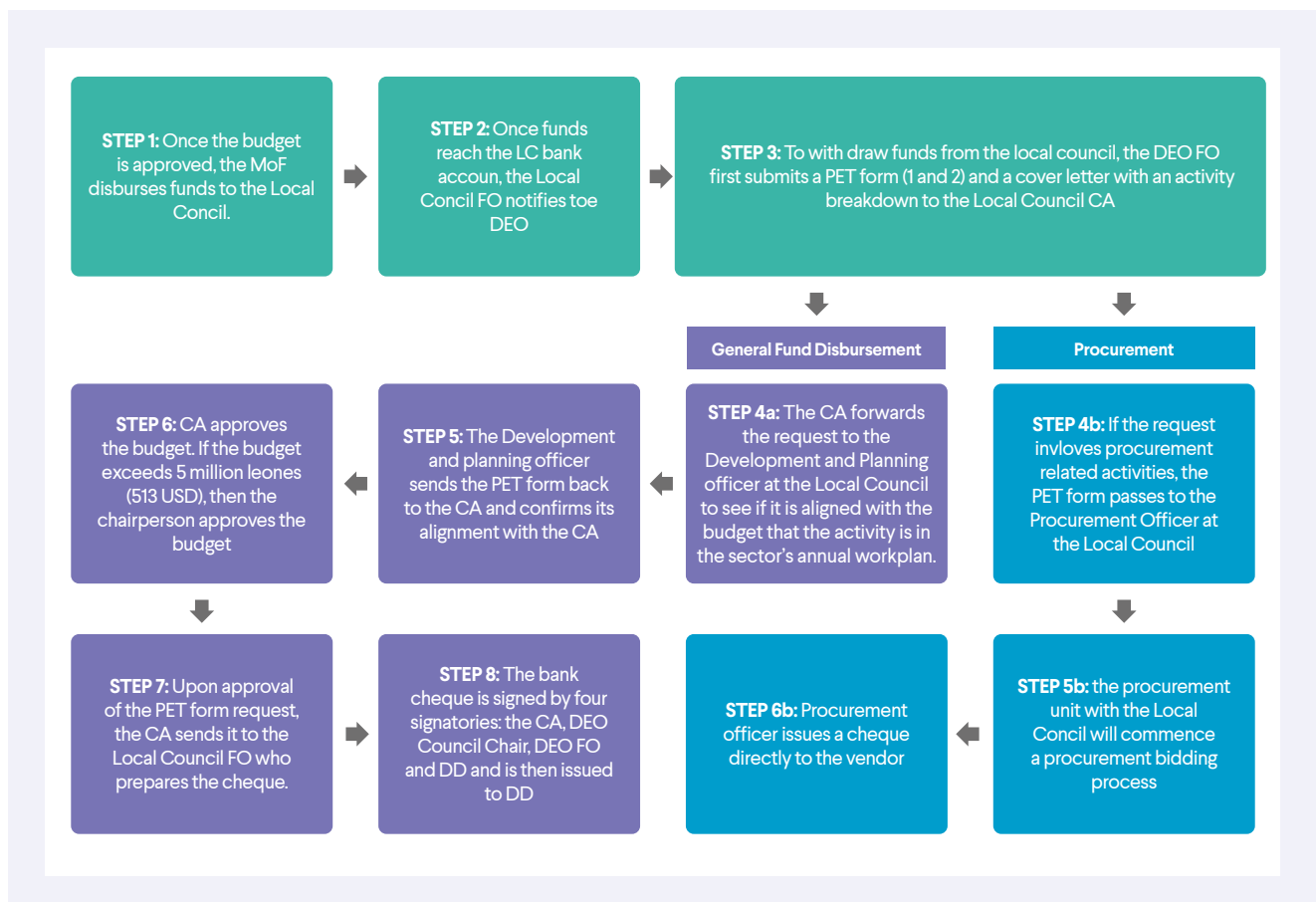
Figure 8: The in-practice process for disbursement and expenditure process

e. The central government often delays fund disbursement to the districts. Funds received are less than funds approved, rendering the budgeting process redundant

According to respondents, once the budget is approved, funds should be transferred from the central government to the LC every quarter. However, funds are usually severely delayed, and end up being disbursed only once or twice a year. This greatly affects the implementation of planned activities, as per the annual action plan, rendering the budgeting process obsolete. As one respondent said, *"We are in the last quarter of the year, but we have only received funds for the first and second quarters."*

When the funds are finally disbursed, they are also often typically less than what was approved by the Local Council. This further hinders the implementation of activities and reduces the usefulness of budgeting and planning. Incomplete funds also exacerbate the issue of limited funding, given the budget ceiling is already lower than what is needed, according to most respondents. As one respondent said, *"We don't expect to receive a 100% ceiling. There is always a variance between what we requested and what is given."*

f. The protracted process for the DEO to access funds from the Local Council delays the implementation of planned activities.

The majority of DEO respondents noted that while the process to access and spend funds (outlined in steps 3-8 in Figure 8) works, it is unnecessarily bureaucratic and causes further delays to the implementation of planned activities. More specifically, the steps unnecessarily duplicate the budgeting process. For example, the PET form is approved first by the Development and Planning Officer and then the CA / Chairperson, who checks whether the request complies

with the already-approved budget and action plan (step 5). As one respondent said: *"When we ask for funds to carry out our activities it sometimes takes too long to come through."*

In addition, since procurement (outlined in steps 4b-6b in Figure 8) is undertaken through the Local Council and not by the DEO directly, this too increases the amount of time the process takes and affects the timely implementation of activities.

g. The Local Council Education Committee has no role during the disbursement process and the expenditure process is limited, despite basic education being devolved.

All respondents noted that the Local Council Education Committee has no role in the expenditure of education funds or implementation of education activities despite the fact that basic education is devolved. The Committee is also not involved in any stage of disbursement of funds from the LC to DEO, which can be seen in Figure 8. As one respondent pointed out: *"The DEO will decide to do some projects in the schools with the money they receive but as the chair for the [Local Council District] Education Committee, I am never informed."*

Local Council Education Committee respondents added that they would like to have a role in the expenditure process since the monitoring of basic education has been devolved to them, in addition to the fact that they are elected representatives of the people. As a Local Council Education Committee respondent suggested: *"Let us be involved in the planning and implementation, so we will be able to monitor effectively."*

5.5 Monitoring of education budgeting, disbursement, and expenditure

In policy, the PFM Act 2016 dictates the financial corrective actions available to the Minister of the MLGRD if the Local Councils violate a step in the budgeting and expenditure process. Part VIII s 104 (1) describes three possible failures:

1. Contravening ceilings and rules established under subsection (2) of section 97 of the PFM Act;

2. Failing to implement an action plan to resolve underlying problems within the specified time frame; and

3. Failing to submit, or submitting with a significant delay, financial planning documents, budgets, budget execution reports, financial statements, or any other reports or information according to the timelines or other requirements of this PFM Act or any other enactment.

If a Local Council is found in violation during the budgeting and expenditure process, then the PFM Act Part VIII, s 104 (1) gives the Minister of the MLGRD the authority to:

1. Require Local Councils to submit or re-submit an action plan to resolve the underlying problem within a designated timeframe;

2. Require Local Councils to gain the approval of the Minister for key financial decisions;

3. Reduce or suspend grants or transfers from the State budget to the Local Council; and

4. Appoint for a specific period of time a financial administrator who would advise the Local Council on corrective actions, monitor the implementation of such actions, and who may issue legally binding directions to the local council in respect of such key financial decisions as specified by the Minister.[60]

There is also additional legislative guidance specifically regarding expenditure. Part VIII section 103 (1) of the PFM Act mandates every Local Council submit to the Minister of MoF and Minister of MLGRD a Budget Execution Report which includes the amount of actual revenue against expenditure.

In addition, Part IX s 81(1) of the LGA 2004 specifies that Local Councils shall *"keep proper books of accounts and proper records in relation to the accounts and shall, within the first quarter of the next financial year, prepare a statement of its final accounts in conformity with existing financial regulations."* It also states that the accounts and financial statements of the Local Council shall be audited externally by the Auditor-General and internally by the Local Council Audit Department.

The processes for external and internal audits are outlined in the PFM Act and LGA 2004 respectively. If the Auditor-General finds discrepancies in the Local Council's expenditure accounts, then the LGA 2004 permits them to disallow any item of expenditure and to surcharge the individual responsible and, if needed, give notice to the person affected. There is no guidance in policy about what actions the internal audit department should take if they find discrepancies in the accounts.

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60 Government of Sierra Leone. (2016) *The Public Financial Management Act,* p. 81–82

h. During the education budgeting process, monitors from the MoFED visit the district.

In practice, the majority of respondents said that there are a number of internal checks completed by the Local Council during the budgeting process to ensure that the devolved sectors are requesting funds in line with their approved budgets and development plans. The Local Council Finance Officer checks the DEO's adherence to the financial protocol by vetting the PET forms to ensure that all the sections are filled out appropriately. Before the amount requested can be approved, the Development & Planning Officer also checks for variances by comparing the amount requested against the annual work plan and budget. If irregularities are found in the disbursement process, all respondents shared a common understanding that funds would not be released until the irregularities were resolved but did not elaborate beyond this point. According to some respondents, representatives from the MOLGF are sent to the districts to also check if the correct process is being followed. It is unclear, however, at which point in the budgeting process these officials visit the districts and what they observe.

i. There is some confusion about the exact nature and frequency of DEO expenditure and activities being monitored by the Local Council.

According to respondents within the Local Council, expenditure checks should occur quarterly. While the Local Council Financial Officer has no role in monitoring, they do prepare a financial progress report for the Council to send to the MOLGF every quarter, which should include reconciled expenditure from the DEO. Local Council officials highlighted that they found getting timely receipts from the DEO challenging and some DEO officials reported that receipts had to be reconciled once a year, suggesting a mixed understanding of the frequency of checks and reconciliation.

The majority of respondents highlighted that the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer in the Local Council checks whether activities implemented by the DEO match the costs associated with them and the annual work plan. It was observed that the M&E Officer checks supporting documents including receipts, payment vouchers, and activity reports. They are also supposed to monitor how the actual activities are being implemented. In two of the four sampled districts, respondents mentioned that the Development & Planning Officer has a role in monitoring as well, although what this role is and how the Development & Planning Officer works with the M&E Officer is not clear.

j. Both internal and external auditors audit Local Council expenditure.

Most respondents reported that both internal and external audits are conducted to check education expenditure in the districts, which is in line with policy. Internally, respondents identified that either the Local Council Chief Administrator or auditors within the Local Council conduct internal checks. Externally, the Auditor-General checks the utilisation of funds by examining income documents and expenditure reports against the budgets, which the DEO is required to show. A minority of respondents highlighted the frequency of external auditing, stating that it occurs two or three times per year.

Section VI: School Subsidies – Process Mapping

6.1 Section Overview

First introduced in 2001 under the Free Primary Education (FPE) policy, school subsidies have been plagued by challenges for the last 20 years. The most critical challenge has been the persistent and significant education budget deficit, meaning that not all eligible schools are registered and approved to receive school subsidies. The budget deficit has been compounded by new commitments made by the Government of Sierra Leone to meet the cost of free schooling (reaffirmed in the ESP 2007–2015 and 2018–2020).

IIn 2018, the newly elected President Bio announced the introduction of the Free Quality School Education (FQSE)

initiative, with the newly designated MBSSE recalculating per-pupil subsidy fees for primary, junior and senior secondary schools. The inclusion of JSS and SSS in school subsidies is a key feature of FQSE. However, the current sector deficit is estimated by the MBBSE as close to Le 23 trillion for 2019-2023 (approximately USD 2.3 billion). The subsidy deficit is estimated to be around Le 670 billion (approximately USD 68.5 million) over the same period. According to the MBSSE, this figure is likely to increase as more out-of-school children join the system as a result of the FQSE policy.

Below is a brief timeline of the school subsidies in Sierra Leone.

Date	Event
2001	• Under the new Free Primary Education (FPE) policy, the MEST first introduced school fee subsidies for all children enrolled in Grades 1–3.
2002	• The government extended the school fee subsidy payment to cover children in grades 4-6.
2007	• A new Education Sector Plan was launched, with a financial objective to 'meet the cost of all 'free schooling' programmes and their consequences'.
2009	• 'Community schools' or non-state schools also became eligible to receive school fee subsidies, as long as the schools were approved by the government.
2010	• The per-pupil subsidy amount was recalculated and set at Le 9,000 (USD $2.20) in 2010.[62]
2011	• The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education introduced a system of officially approving schools based on basic infrastructural requirements such as classrooms, toilets, and recreation areas.[63]
2018	• Free Quality School Education (FQSE) was announced by President Bio. • The per-pupil subsidy amount was recalculated and set at[64] Primary school – Le 10,000 (USD $1.03) Junior secondary school – Le 50,000 (USD $5.14) Senior secondary school – Le 60,000 (USD $6.17)[65]

Table 4: Timeline of School Subsidies: 2001-2018.

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61 This data is from internal calculations and presentations prepared by Dr. Michael Mambo and shared with the research team.
Mambo, Michael (2019) Presentation on the Progress on Implementation Plan for the Free Quality School Education and Costings, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

62 UNESCO (2015) P.88

63 Ibid.

64 Since there is no policy document these are amounts that have been reported by respondents in practice. There is an internal Ministry presentation however that presents a different subsidy amount for primary schools, which is significantly higher at 40,000 Leones

65 Based on exchange rate of 1USD = 9,720 Leones

This section provides an overview of how the school fee subsidy scheme operates in the absence of an official policy. It also includes process maps for the individual steps of the subsidy scheme, starting with the compilation of a list of eligible schools, the investigation of disbursement, use, and monitoring of the subsidies.

6.2 Overview of Key Findings

1. **Mapping the process**

   a. **Despite the absence of any official written policy or guidance on the subsidy scheme, respondents understood the purpose and process of the school subsidy scheme.**

2. **Compiling the list of schools**

   b. **There are low levels of confidence in the quality of school level data and inefficient mechanisms for verification**

3. **Allocation of funds**

   c. **Schools are incentivised to inflate enrolment numbers to increase their subsidy amounts.**

   d. **Subsidies are insufficient to adequately address the needs of some schools.**

4. **Disbursement**

   e. **Subsidies are frequently disbursed after the school term has begun and the amount is sometimes incorrect.**

5. **Withdrawal**

   f. **Respondents reported withdrawing funds from the bank either directly or after first seeking a letter of authentication from the DEO.**

6. **Expenditure**

   g. **During expenditure, subsidies are spent predominantly on outputs and not focused on driving school improvement.**

   h. **Head Teachers and SMC chairs prepare a school improvement plan outlining how subsidies should be used by the school.**

7. **Monitoring**

   i. **In the absence of effective accountability mechanisms, funds are misused with limited consequences.**

8. **Complaints procedure**

   j. **There is an inefficient and ill-defined complaints procedure.**

6.3 Mapping the Process

a. Despite the absence of any official written policy or guidance on the subsidy scheme, respondents understood the purpose and process of the school subsidy scheme.

Despite disbursing school subsidy payments for more than 20 years, there is no official written policy or guidance on the subsidy scheme at central, district, or school level. All respondents reported that subsidies are intended to support the running of government and government-assisted schools, ensuring that the students attending these schools are able to do so free of charge. Respondents noted that subsidies were supposed to be spent on 'school improvement,' although individual accounts of what constituted 'school improvement' varied significantly across respondents. Only a minority of respondents connected subsidy expenditure to activities outlined in the school development plan.[66]

The majority of respondents identified seven steps involved in the school subsidy scheme:
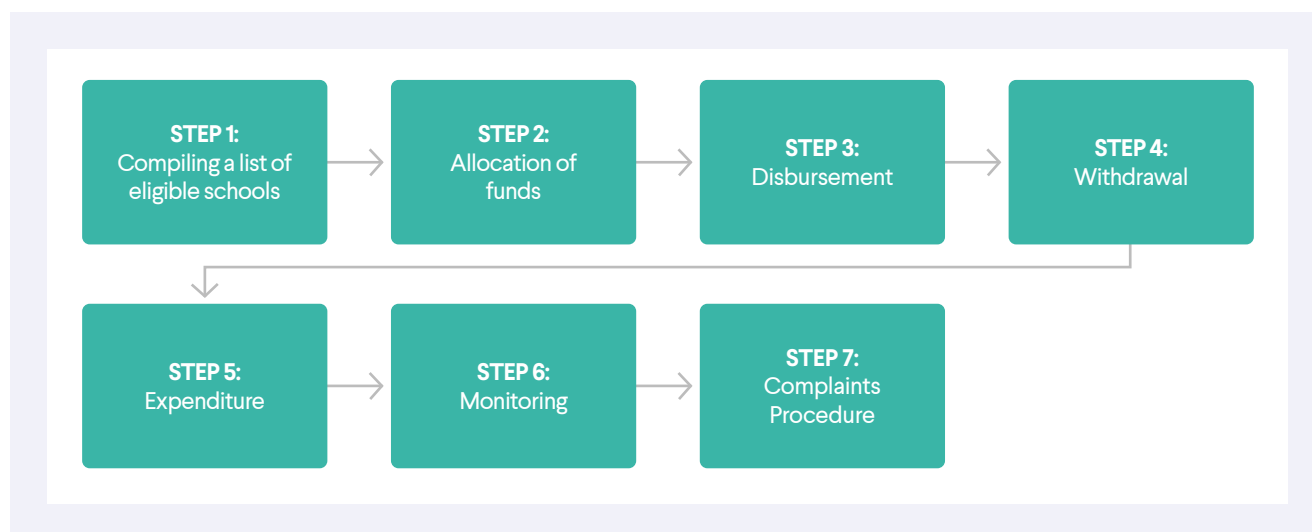
Figure 9: Process map of the main steps involved in the School Fee Subsidy Scheme

While respondents commonly understood the overall process, each step contains a sub-set of steps – leaving significant room for interpretation. This sub-set of steps are described in more detail below, highlighting the key findings by the research teams on the process.

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66 This finding perfectly corroborates findings on the same, cited in UNESCO (2013) P.47-49

6.4.1 Compiling the List of Eligible Schools

The highest degree of consistency in respondents' description of the process for accessing school subsidies was observed in the first step – compiling the list of eligible schools – although, respondents were often vague about the process of submitting and verifying school-level data. Figure 10 maps the process for compiling the list of eligible schools.
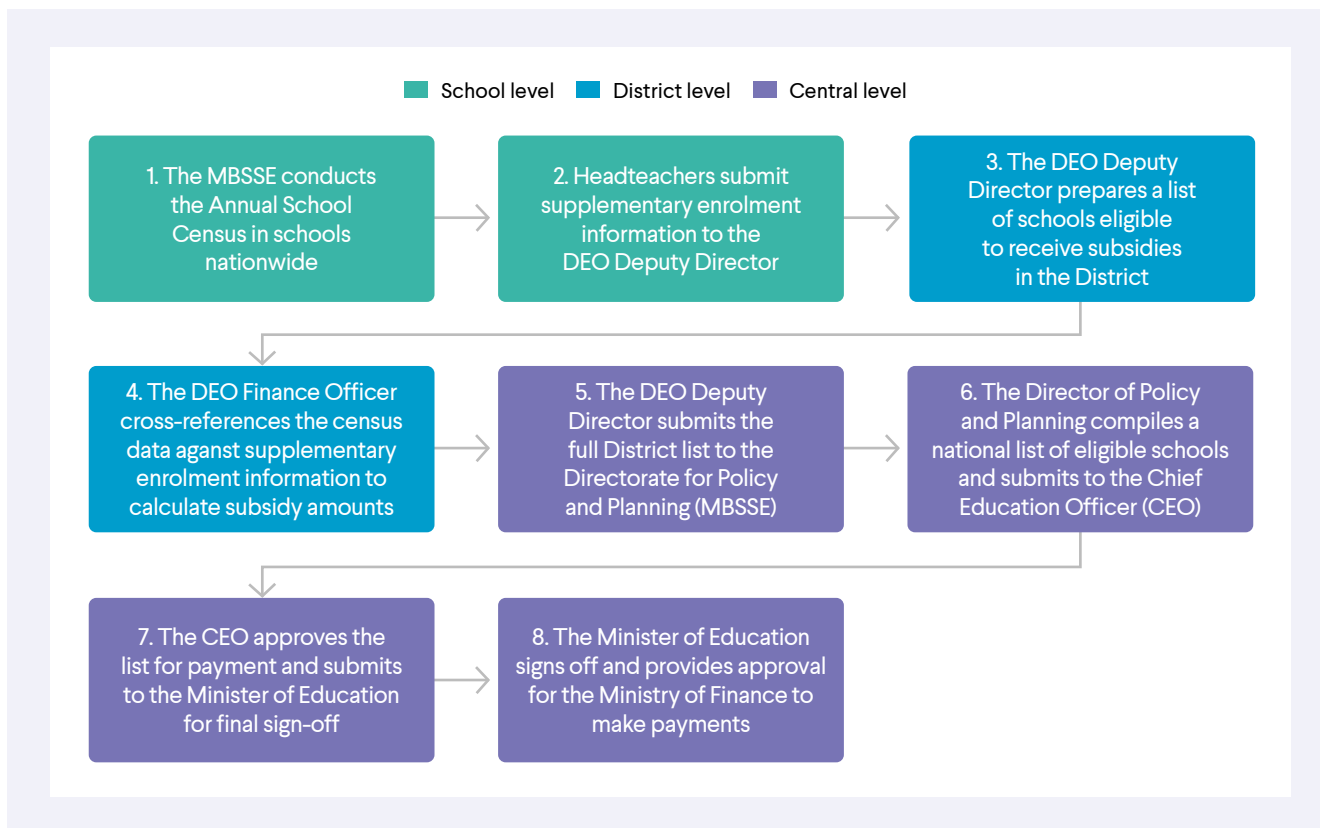
Figure 10: Process Mapping for Compiling the List of Eligible Schools

b. There are low levels of confidence in the quality of school level data and inefficient mechanisms for verification.

MBSSE officials cited the poor quality of data collected through the Annual School Census and the need for headteachers (HTs) to supplement the census data with school level data on enrolment.[67] It was unclear what happens when the data submitted by schools is different from that of the Annual School Census, and how the DEO verifies which information is correct. Even HT acknowledge the issue of poor quality of school data with MBSSE. As one HT said, *"The problem mostly with not receiving subsidies is associated with incorrect information about the school."*

In the absence of a central verified database, the DD sends a consolidated paper-based list of schools in the district (including school name, enrolment data, and bank account details) to the central ministry. Respondents reported that the paper-based nature of reporting leaves room for human error, particularly in the reporting of bank account details.

The method and frequency of the collection of the school bank account and verification details also remain unclear.[68] Respondents at the school level did not know what happened to the data after it was submitted to the DEO. Although most respondents reported that the DEO submitted the data to the central Ministry, most were unable to articulate which Directorate was responsible for subsidy allocation and disbursement within MBSSE.

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67 MBSSE officials in the central Ministry also expressed concerns about the accuracy of the annual school census data. They reported that a verification exercise is currently underway to resolve these issues.

68 Respondents frequently referenced cases of schools not receiving a school subsidy payment as the bank details had been recorded or incorrectly, despite having received a subsidy payment previously.

6.4.2 Allocation

c. Schools are incentivised to inflate enrolment numbers to increase their subsidy amounts.

The allocation of subsidies is based on enrolment numbers, as stated earlier. Each school receives a subsidy per student enrolled, which varies depending on whether the school is primary (10,000 Leones), junior secondary (50,000 Leones) or senior secondary (60,000 Leones) and no other factors are considered. As the subsidy amount is linked to enrolment, MBSSE officials described that schools are incentivised to inflate enrolment numbers when reporting – either during the Annual School Census, or when reporting to the DEO. Headteachers even encourage parents in the local community to send children to their schools in order to boost their numbers. One headteacher said: *"The higher the enrolment, the higher the subsidy. So, we are working hard to ensure we increase our enrolment in order to get more subsidy money to run the school."*

d. Subsidies are insufficient to not adequately address the needs of some schools.

Headteachers and School Management Committee (SMC) Chairs across the four districts reported that the subsidy amount is insufficient for most schools to undertake the type of activities required, including infrastructure and rehabilitation requirements. Development needs vary between schools and the subsidy does not take this into account. As one respondent said, "the subsidy amount is too small to undertake school development initiatives." In addition, some schools face a severe shortage of government teachers and have to use community teachers who are often paid from the subsidies received, leaving very little to cover any of the other needs of the school.

Primary schools, in particular, felt that their subsidies amounts were too small relative to their needs. One respondent pointedly remarked, "Primary school teachers have more responsibilities since they teach all subjects while secondary school teachers teach specific subjects. Yet, our subsidy is smaller (10,000 per child) while they receive 50,000 – 60,000 per child. This challenge should be addressed with an increase in subsidy especially for primary schools."

6.4.3 Disbursement

The shared understanding of all respondents is that school subsidies should be disbursed every term (three times per year).[69] Figure 11 maps the process disbursement of school subsidies.

School level █ District level █ Central level █

| 1. Payment is made directly from the Ministry of Finance to the school bank account | → | 2. The Directorate of Policy and Planning informs the District Educaion Offices that the subsidies have been disbursed | → | 3. Headteachers are informed that the subsidies have been disbursed – either by the District Education Offices, or by the bank or through the radio |

Figure 11: Process Mapping for Disbursement of School Fee Subsidies

In respondents' descriptions of the process, there were inconsistent answers about how schools were notified once the subsidies are disbursed. Whilst some HTs and SMC chairs cited the DEO, some cited banks themselves, and some reported hearing about it on the radio.

e. Subsidies are frequently disbursed after the school term has begun and the amount is sometimes incorrect.

While school subsidies are supposed to be disbursed every term, the majority of respondents said that the subsidy payments are often delayed, affecting the ability of schools to undertake activities as planned. For example, the subsidy payment is frequently used to pay salaries of community teachers, so when it is delayed, teachers stop teaching or become demotivated. In another example, one SMC Chair said "People think everything is free. Sometimes we use subsidies to help some of their kids with uniforms and TLMs. But subsidies are late and therefore we cannot help."

District level officials are aware of some of these challenges; one local council official said, "Even as I speak newly approved schools from last academic year have not received subsidies." There are also frequent instances where some schools do not receive the subsidy payment despite having received it in previous terms.

Only roughly half of the respondents indicated that the amount received was usually correct. HTs and SMC chairs across districts stated that there are instances where the subsidy amount fluctuates from term to term and they often receive less than what should be paid to them. Respondents observed this was primarily due to the use of inaccurate data to calculate the subsidy amounts. In a few cases, the HTs and SMC Chairs reported receiving incorrect subsidies to the DEO, but it was not resolved (see findings on complains procedure).

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69 In reality, the majority of respondents said that the subsidy payments are often delayed and, in some cases, not received at all. By how long and by how much differs on a case-by-case basis.

6.4.4 Withdrawal

Figure 12 shows the process the withdrawing the subsidies, once received.
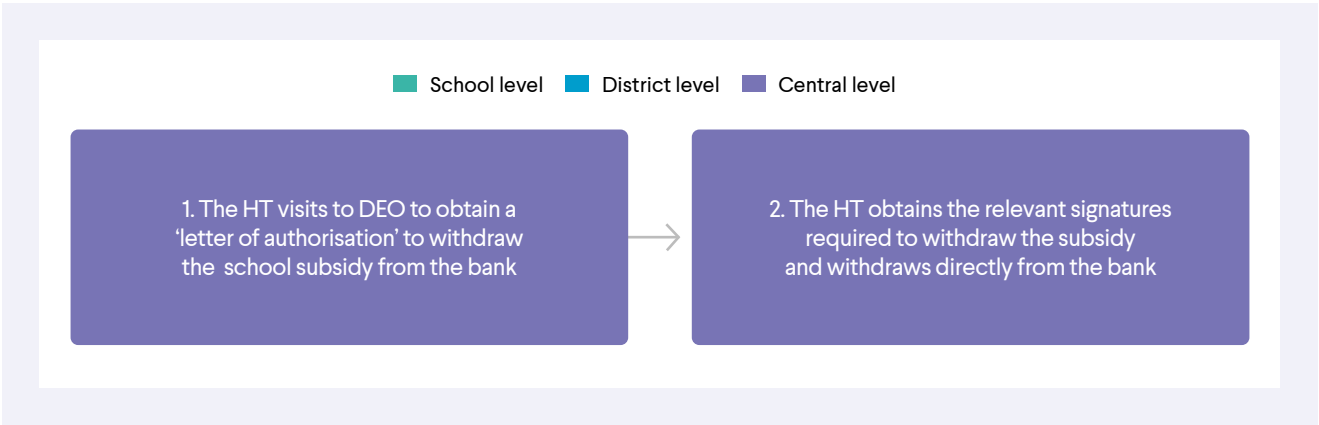
Figure 12: Process Mapping for Withdrawal of School Fee Subsidies

f. Respondents reported withdrawing funds from the bank either directly or after first seeking a letter of authentication from the DEO.

Two major points of confusion were cited by respondents regarding the process of withdrawing subsidy payments from the bank. Firstly, the signed 'letter of authorisation' from the DD was only required in some districts. Several respondents, including DDs, acknowledged that the letter was not mandatory, and that is was possible to withdraw the subsidy without it.

Secondly, all respondents described three signatories for each school bank account: 1) the HT, 2) the SMC Chair, and 3) the Community Teachers Association (CTA) Chair. However, there was confusion about how many signatories were actually required to withdraw the funds. Across districts, some respondents answered all three signatories were required, whilst some said only two were required.

6.4.5 Expenditure

Figure 13 maps the process of school subsidy expenditure.
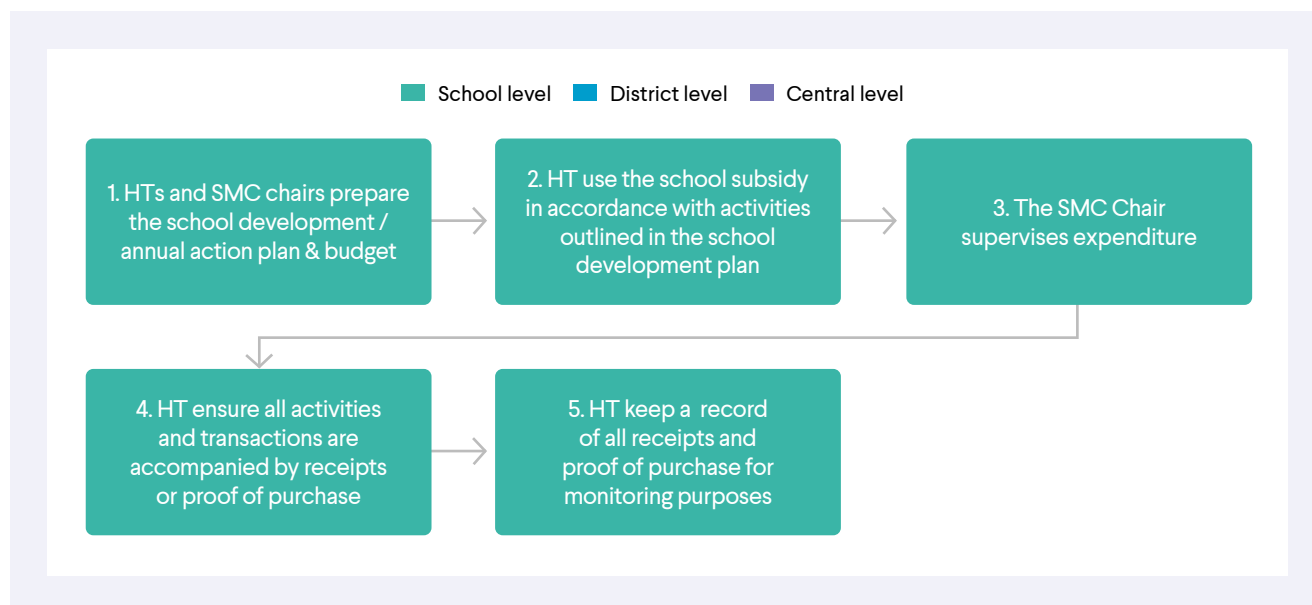
Figure 13: Process Mapping for School Fee Subsidy Expenditure

> **g. During expenditure, subsidies are spent predominantly on outputs and not focused on driving school improvement.**

Across all respondents, there were mixed reports about the process for preparing a school development plan and budget, and how it is linked to subsidy expenditure. Almost all respondents said that subsidies are meant to be used to 'improve schools' although they noted that, as this definition is so vague, HTs are usually able to justify any expenditure on the basis that it will improve some aspect of the school.

Interestingly, despite the absence of written policy guidelines on how to use the subsidy money, there was a high degree of consistency in how schools actually use the subsidies, with three key activities cited by all respondents: 1) paying the salaries of teachers who were not on the government payroll; 2) purchasing school furniture and teaching/learning materials, and 3) making minor repairs to infrastructure. As there is no consolidated data on how school subsidies are actually spent in practice, this information remains anecdotal and self-reported. In contrast, schools receiving the World Bank PBF reported they did have a guide outlining what the PBF subsidies could be used for. Some HTs had also received training for PBF.

> **h. Headteachers and SMC chairs prepare a school improvement plan outlining how subsidies should be used by the school.**

Headteachers and SMC Chairs prepare a school improvement plan every year to outline what the subsidy money will be spent on. What is unclear is at what point the plan is prepared. While MBSSE officials reported the plan should be made before the start of the term many Headteachers and SMC Chairs reported preparing it after the subsidy was received so they could plan more effectively according to the amount received.

6.4.6 Monitoring School Subsidy Expenditure

The process and frequency of monitoring school subsidy expenditure differ from district to district. Figure 14 maps the process of monitoring school subsidy expenditure.
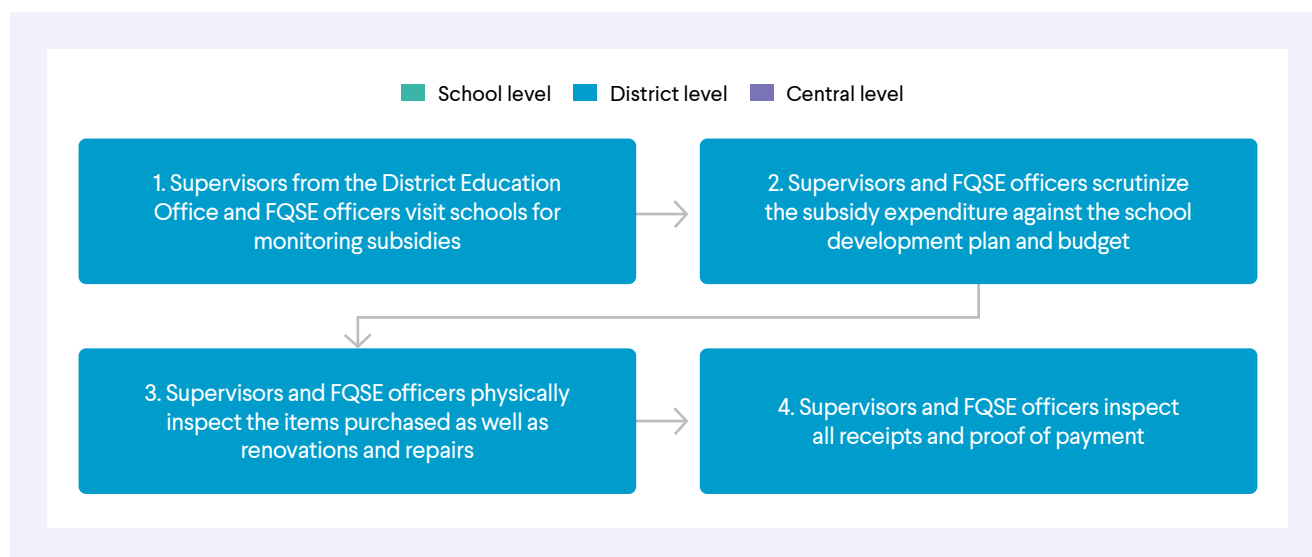
Figure 14: Process Mapping for Monitoring School Fee Subsidy Expenditure

The challenges associated with monitoring the expenditure of subsidies are largely similar to those in monitoring more generally. Respondents across all four DEOs reported major issues in their ability to monitor expenditure. Predominantly, they cited an insufficient number of staff (Supervisors, Inspectors, and Senior Inspectors), exacerbated by the lack of financial resources to reach even a sufficient number of schools, especially those in challenging terrains and rural areas. As noted in the Monitoring section, respondents confirmed that schools that are easier to access (in urban areas, close to an all-weather road) are more likely to be monitored. Schools that are harder to reach are less likely to be monitored, with some schools never being visited at all.

In addition, respondents reported overlap and duplication of financial oversight by the DEO, the Local Council and the FQSE. In some instances, respondents reported that local civil society organisations also check how school subsidies are spent. One SMC Chair said: "When you called me for an interview, I thought you are one of those civil society organizations or political party operatives who always bothered us with monitoring".

i. In the absence of effective accountability mechanisms, funds are misused with limited consequences.

The lack of bottom-up or top-down accountability has led to the misappropriation of funds, according to more than half of the respondents. Overall, the majority of all respondents confirmed that there are some checks in place, although they are executed inconsistently and with limited consequences for misuse. Respondents added that in many cases, the SMC Chairs are illiterate and so they are unable to adequately monitor how the headteacher is spending the school subsidy payment. As one DEO respondent said,

"We have mediated so many issues between SMCs and HTs on the purpose of the subsidy." In addition, there is no official process for reporting inappropriate or irregular use of funds. In two districts, respondents said that if misappropriation of funds is found, then the headteacher is asked to personally repay the money.[70] Additional respondents reported that the headteacher would face the Anti-Corruption Commission, although this has never actually happened.[71]

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70 In one District, the FQSE coordinator said that headteachers have two chances and are issued a warning. The headteacher is taken for refresher training and given another chance.

71 In some cases, it was reported that the School Management Chair reported the headteacher either to the Chief or to the Deputy Director. In these cases, it wasn't clear what the consequences were (if any).

6.4.7 Complaints Procedure

The complaints procedure that was described by respondents was informal and varied from district to district. Figure 15 maps the informal complaints procedure.
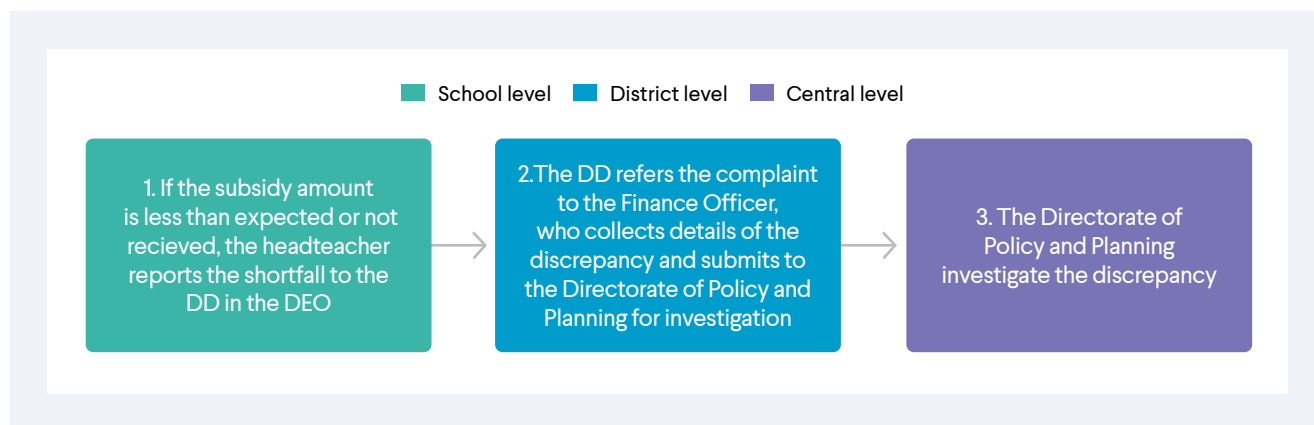
Figure 15: Process Mapping the Complaints Procedure

j. There is an inefficient and undefined complaints procedure.

Although an informal process of submitting a complaint exists, none of the headteachers interviewed knew what happened after they submitted a complaint to the DEO. In the DEO, none of the respondents knew what happened after they submitted a complaint to the Directorate of Policy and Planning. Respondents said that discrepancies and complaints are rarely, if ever, solved.

Section VII: Suggested Next Steps

7.1 Section Overview

In every interview, respondents were asked to suggest ways to address the challenges they faced. All of the respondents were solutions-oriented and able to identify a range of possible solutions focused on strengthening policy and streamlining delivery. These suggestions have heavily informed the policy options put forward in this section.

It is hardly surprising that a number of the recommendations included requests for increased resources – both financial and human – to address some of the challenges. However, cognisant of the April 2019 calculations made by the MBSSE, which estimates the current budget deficit to be Le 23 trillion over the next five years, the research team chose to focus on policy options aimed at primarily increasing efficiency, rather than increasing expenditure.

The suggested next steps represent what the respondents and the research team identified as the 'lowest hanging fruit' for the government in order to address, with limited resource implications, strengthening of education service delivery nationwide. These were validated and supplemented through discussion with the MBSSE Senior Management Team (SMT).

7.2 Feedback from MBSSE SMT Workshop

On 7th February 2020 the EPG team convened a workshop with the senior leadership of the MBSSE. The main objectives of the workshop were to a) validate key findings from the study and b) discuss suggested next steps to address the findings. A full list of participants can be seen in Annex S. Based on discussion with the SMT during the workshop and separately with Minister Sengeh, the next steps below are suggested.

Two strong recommendations emerged from the workshop:

i. For all suggested next steps, a person or department should be made responsible within an agreed timeline so accountability can be created in the system.

ii. EPG should identify where they might be able to support the MBSSE in planning, designing or executing some of the suggested next steps in further discussion with the Minister and MBSSE senior leadership.

In the next phase of EPG's support to the MBSSE, in consultation with the Ministry's senior leadership, persons or departments will be identified to hold responsibility for each of the suggested next steps below. The aim is to have this done by the end of March 2020.

7.3 Organisational Mapping

Suggested next steps	Suggested actions
1 Draft unified legislation for education decentralization[72]	• Consultation between the MBSSE and MLGRD during the current review of the LGA to ensure harmonisation • Consultation between the MBSSE and MLGRD during the review of the Education Act • Consultation between the MBSSE and relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to draft new or review existing education legislation
2 Create implementation guidelines for all decentralized functions of education service delivery★	• Consultations between the MBSSE and MLGRD at central and district level to draft harmonized guidelines • Consultations with additional education stakeholders at central and district level to understand different perspectives • Draft accompanying training materials for central and district officials based on draft harmonization guidelines • Pilot draft implementation guidelines in order to determine what requires further development or clarification • Draft monitoring and evaluation framework to learn from the piloting and rollout of implementation guidelines • Publish finished guidelines online
3 Review structure, roles, and responsibilities of central and district level MBSSE staff	• Draft MBSSE organogram restructure for effective and efficient service delivery[73] • Develop clear and updated job descriptions to match the organogram • Draft monitoring and evaluation framework to learn from the MBSSE restructure • Hold workshops for central and district level staff to ensure a shared understanding of the structure, reporting lines, roles and responsibilities.
4 Draft clear Terms of Reference for all operating Education Committees at district level and below★	• Consultations between the MBSSE and MLGRD at central and district level to draft clear Terms of Reference (TOR) • Draft accompanying training materials for central and district officials based on the TORs • Draft monitoring and evaluation framework to learn from operating Education Committees
5 Improve communication and information sharing between staff at all levels of the MBSSE	• Develop guidelines for records management, data storage and information sharing for the MBSSE

72 The MBSSE has started the process for this

73 The MBSSE is already working on this.

★ Denotes where EPG may be able to provide further support.

7.4 School Monitoring

Suggested next steps	Suggested actions
1 Draft comprehensive minimum quality standards for schools★	• Consultations with the MBSSE at central and district level • Consultations with headteachers, teachers and School Management Committees • Consultations with additional education stakeholders at central and district level to understand different perspectives • Draft comprehensive minimum quality standards for schools
2 Review, simplify and standardize the existing school monitoring tool and process★	• Harmonise work already done on school monitoring tools by the EU and other partners to avoid duplication of effort • Review the tool to ensure that it is developed on the basis of agreed minimum quality standards and is fit for purpose • Review the indicators for determining quality of teaching and learning in the existing tool • Consultations with Inspectorate staff at central and district level to suggest simplifications • Pilot simplified tool in order to determine what requires further development or clarification
3 Create monitoring and evaluation capacity within the MBSSE as recommended by the functional review	• Provide training to all Inspectorate staff on the new school monitoring tool • Develop and expand existing education information systems to include school monitoring data • Provide training to all Inspectorate staff on how to input school monitoring data into expanded EMIS
4 Conduct an audit of the current human resources available for school monitoring★	• Draw on recommendations from the functional review conducted by the PSRU and conduct an audit of the existing human resources for school monitoring

★ Denotes where EPG may be able to provide further support.

7.5 Education budgeting and expenditure

Suggested next steps	Suggested actions
1 Conduct research into the inclusion and involvement of schools in the budgeting process	• MBSSE to consult with the MoF to understand the feasibility of including schools in the budgeting process • Consultations between the MBSSE and MLGRD at central and district level to determine the feasibility of including schools in the budgeting process
2 Review the process, mechanisms, and timeline for funds disbursement from central to district government	• MBSSE to consult with the MoF on reviewing and streamlining the current process for education funds disbursement • Draft guidelines for strengthened communication between MoF, Local Councils and DEO for advance notice on the amount and timeliness of money available for disbursement • Pilot new strengthened communication between MoF, Local Councils and DEO to determine what requires further development or clarification
3 Develop policy guidance on fund disbursement and management between Local Councils and devolved sectors	• MBSSE to consult with MoF and MLGRD to develop guidelines on timing and monitoring of funds disbursed at district level • Pilot new policy guidance on fund disbursement management to determine what requires further development or clarification
4 Create a systematic approach to monitoring how education funds are spent by the DEO and the quality of education activities carried out★	• DEO to liaise with Local Councils to brainstorm feasible monitoring approaches and feed back to central level • Joint consultation between the MBSSE and MLGRD to determine ideal monitoring process • Draft guidelines for strengthened monitoring of expenditure • Pilot strengthened monitoring of expenditure to determine what requires further development or clarification

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★ Denotes where EPG may be able to provide further support.

7.6 School subsidies

Suggested next steps	Suggested actions
1 **Draft (i) a written policy, accompanied by (ii) operational guidelines, (iii) monitoring framework, and (iv) complaints resolution procedure★**	• Consultations with the MBSSE at central and district level • Consultations with headteachers, teachers and School Management Committees • Consultations with additional education stakeholders at central and district level to understand different perspectives • Draft policy guidance and operational guidelines for school subsidies, including clear guidance on their use • Develop an accountability framework for school subsidies • Pilot policy guidance and accountability framework to determine what requires further development or clarification
2 **Ensure shared understanding on financial management, reporting, and use of school subsidies**	• Conduct district level training workshops with all stakeholders
3 **Develop options for strengthening enrolment data in terms of (i) the quality of data collected and (ii) database storage**	• Consultations between relevant MBSSE departments (notably EMIS) and DSTI on strengthening the Annual School Census data collection and storage • Develop a robust system of verifying the enrolment data when preparing list of eligible schools
4 **Evaluate the allocation criteria for school subsidies★**	• Explore multi-dimensional ways to allocate school subsidies • Conduct a cost effectiveness analysis of each option • Draft a sustainability plan for school subsidies, particularly after donor aid finishes
5 **Ensure subsidies are disbursed in a timely manner**	• Draft guidelines for strengthened communication between MoF, Local Councils and DEO for advance notice on the amount and timeliness of disbursement • Pilot new strengthened communication between MoF, Local Councils and DEO to determine what requires further development or clarification • Pilot new strengthened communication with schools to determine what requires further development or clarification

★   Denotes where EPG may be able to provide further support.

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Annexes

Annex A: Policy documents retrieval dates

#	Document	Date Retrieved	Source
Legislation			
1	The Education Act (2004)	Jul 2019	Online: http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2004-2p.pdf
2	The Local Government Act (2004)	Mar 2019	Online: http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2004-1p.pdf
3	The Teaching Service Commission Act (2011)	Aug 2019	Hardcopy: TSC Secretariat. Online: http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2011-01.pdf
4	The Chieftaincy Act (2009)	Sep 2019	Online: http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2009-10.pdf
5	The Local Government Amendment Act (2016)	Sep 2019	Online: http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2016-11.pdf.
6	The Local Government Amendment Act (2017)	Sep 2019	Online: http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2017-02.pdf
7	The Public Financial Management Act (2016)	Dec 2019	Online: http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2016-13.pdf
Policy			
8	National Decentralisation Policy (2010)	Dec 2019	Hardcopy
9	The National Education Policy (2010)		Hardcopy: Horatio Nelson Williams
Education Sector Plans			
10	The Education Sector Plan (2007–2015) *A Road Map to a Better Future*	Feb 2019	Online: https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/sierra_leone_esp.pdf
11	The Education Sector Plan (2014–2018) *Learning to Succeed*	Feb 2019	Online: https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/GPE-09-2013-Education-Sector-Plan-Sierra-Leone.pdf
12	The Education Sector Plan (2018–2020) *Getting it Right – Service Delivery, Integrity and Learning in Sierra Leone*	Feb 2019	Online: https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/sierra_leone_education_sector_plan_2018-2020_0.pdf
Operational Guidelines			
13	MBSSE job descriptions	Aug 2019	HR Office - MBSSE
14	MEST organograms	Aug 2019	HR Office - MBSSE
15	TSC job descriptions	Dec 2019	TSC Secretariat
16	FQSE job descriptions	Dec 2019	FQSE Secretariat
17	Government of Sierra Leone Budget Call Circular for Local Councils	Oct 2019	District Council Office
18	Government of Sierra Leone School Inspection Forms	Sep 2019	District Council Office
19	TSC Teaching Registration and Licensing Policy (2018)	Dec 2019	TSC Secretariat
20	Teaching Services Commission Draft Operational Framework Document, Version 2, November 2017	Dec 2019	TSC Secretariat

#	Document	Date Retrieved	Source
Internal Ministry Documents			
21	Public Sector Reform Unit, Functional Review of MBSSE (2019)	Nov 2019	PS - MBSSE
22	District Education Boards (DEBs) – Terms of Reference		Dr. Dupigny
23	Ward Education Committees (WECs) – Terms of Reference	Oct 2019	Kayode Sanni – Leh Wi Learn
24	The Local Government (Assumption of Functions) Regulations 2004		Dr. Gaima
25	The Teaching Service Commission in Perspective Presentation		
26	Ministerial Notes - District Harmonization Workshop (23-26 April 2019)	Oct 2019	Kayode Sanni – Leh Wi Learn
27	Ministerial Presentation - Transforming Education, District Harmonization Workshop (2019)	Oct 2019	Kayode Sanni – Leh Wi Learn
28	Ministerial Presentation – Roles & Responsibilities of Planning and Policy Directorate (2019)		
29	Ministerial Presentation – Roles & Responsibilities of Planning and Policy Directorate (2019)		
Other			
30	Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) People's Manifesto (2018)	Aug 2019	Online: http://www.thesierraleonetelegraph.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/SLPP-MANIFESTO-2-02-2018-PDF.pdf
31	Supplement to the Sierra Leone Gazette (Oct 2011)		Hardcopy

Annex B: Detailed Sampling Table

District	Chiefdom	School
Bombali	Bombali Shebora	School A (Govt) School B (Govt Asst) School C (Private)
	Bombali Gbendembu	School D (Govt) School E (Govt Asst) School F (Private)
Kambia	Magbema	School G (Govt) School H (Govt Asst) School I (Private)
	Tonko Limba	School J (Govt) School K (Govt Asst) School L (Private)
Kenema	Nongowa	School M (Govt) School N (Govt Asst) School O (Private)
	Lower Bambara	School P (Govt) School Q (Govt Asst) School R (Private)
Moyamba	Kaiyamba	School S (Govt) School T (Govt Asst) School U (Private)
	Upper Banta	School V (Govt) School W (Govt Asst) School X (Private)

Annex C: Actors involved in education service delivery and the legislation governing them
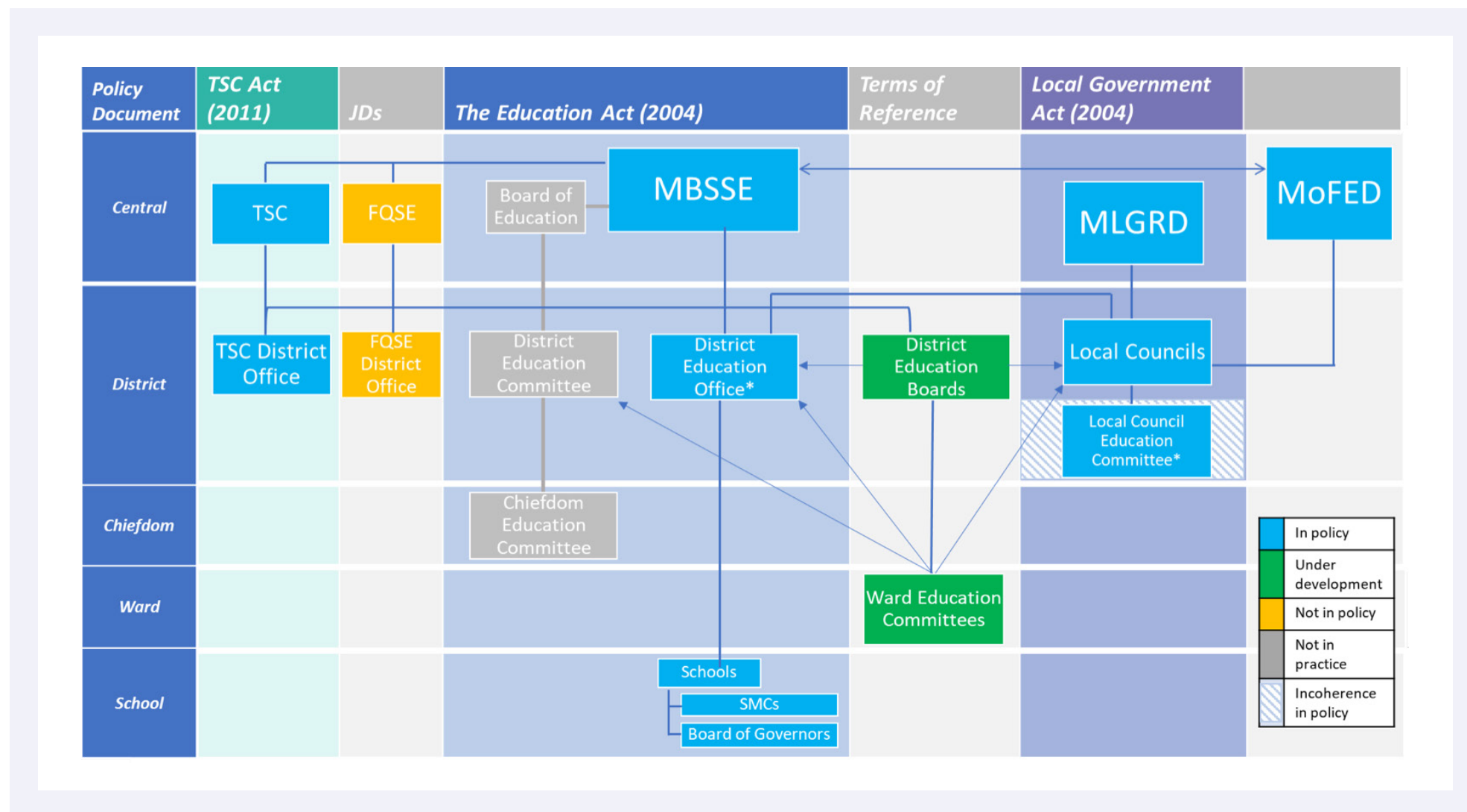
Annex D: Reproduction of MEST organogram (2009)
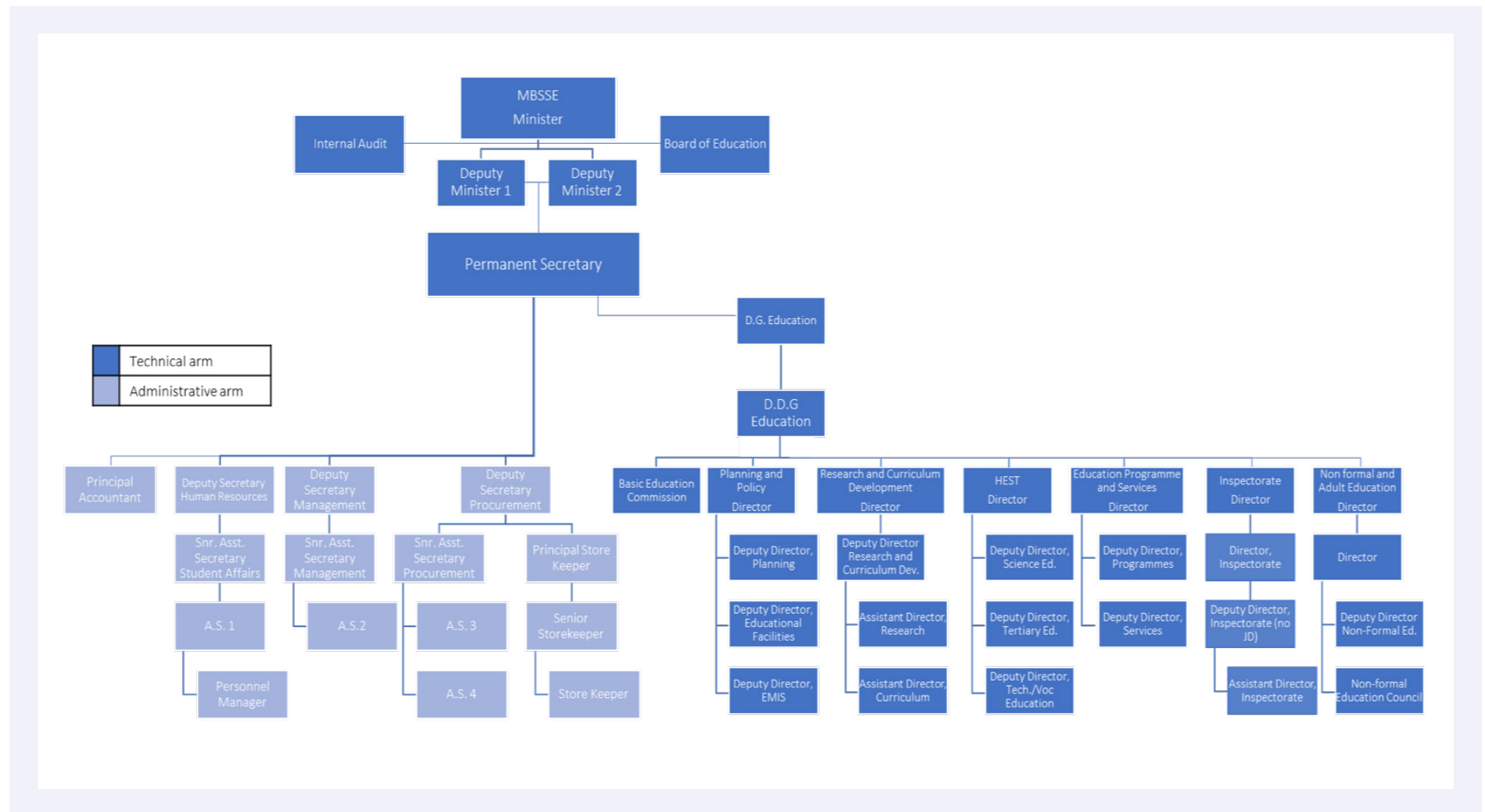
Annex E: MBSSE organogram created with MBSSE Job Descriptions
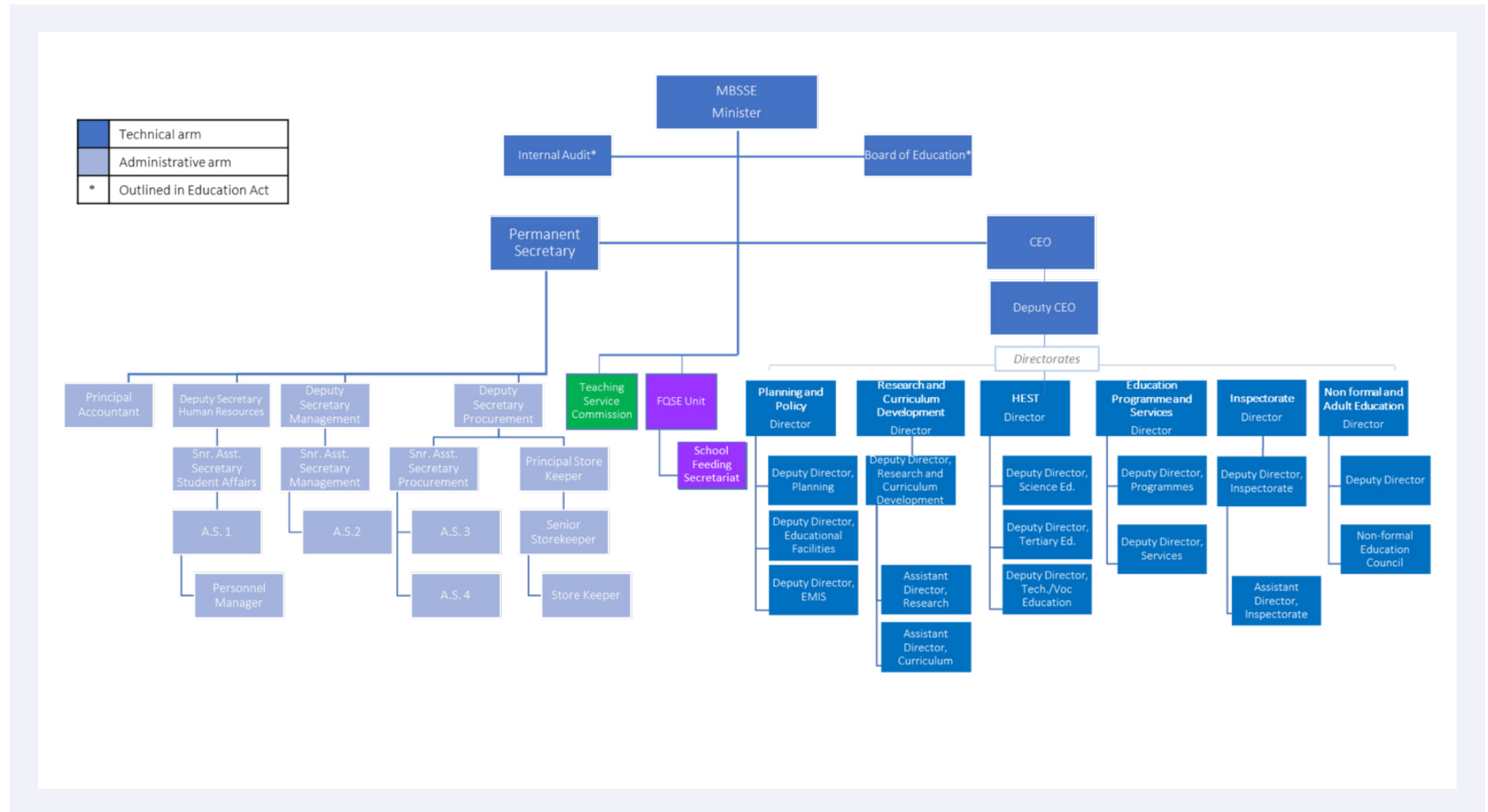
Annex F: Analysis of MEST organogram 2009 and MBSSE job descriptions

2009 MEST Organogram	MBSSE Job Description Organogram
Senior Management	
• The Minister oversees two Deputy Ministers. • The Deputy Ministers oversee the Permanent Secretary, who in turn oversees the heads of the technical arm.	• There is no publicly available job description for the Minister. The Minister appears in this organogram only to aid understanding of reporting lines. • There is no publicly available job description for the Deputy Minister, although this position is filled in Practice. The Deputy Minister position, therefore, does not appear in this Organogram • The Permanent Secretary does not oversee the head of the technical arm meaning that both the administrative and professional heads report directly to the Minister.
Administrative Arm	
• The Deputy Ministers oversee the Permanent Secretary, who indirectly oversees the Technical arm of the Ministry and directly oversees the Administrative arm of the Ministry	• The Permanent Secretary reports directly to the Minister and oversees the Administrative arm of the Ministry
Technical Arm	
• The Director-General and Deputy Director-General oversee the Technical arm of the Ministry and report to the Permanent Secretary	• The Chief Education Officer (CEO) and Deputy CEO oversee the Technical arm of the Ministry and report directly to the Minister
• In the technical arm, the Basic Education Commission is featured alongside the Directorates. This ceased to exist under the new designation of the Ministry.	• In the technical arm, the individual staff positions detailed within the 6 main Directorates are slightly different.
• There are no semi-autonomous units (such as commissions and Secretariats) reporting directly to the Minister	• There are three semi-autonomous units reporting directly to the Minister: 1. The Teachers Service Commission 2. The Free Quality School Education Secretariat (FQSE)

Annex G: TSC organogram 2019

TSC Organogram

- Chair/Commissioners
- Internal Audit
- Secretary

Dir. Teacher Registration & Licensing — Dep. Dir. Registration & Licensing — 16 Assistant Directors (Districts) — 16 Districts Officers

Dir. Teacher Management — Dep. Dir. Teacher Management — Manager Basic and Senior Secondary — Senior Payroll Officer — Senior Records Officer

Dir. Teacher Dev. & Performance — Dep. Dir. Teacher Dev & Performance — Manager In-Service Training

Dir. Teacher Employer Relations — Dep. Dir. Teacher Employer Relations — Manager Discipline and Petitions

Dir. Corporate Services — Dep. Dir. Admin and Finance — HR Manager — I.T Manager

P.M & E

IT Officer

Public Relations Manager

2 Payroll Officers

2 Records Officers

Data Entry Officer

Procurement & Facilities Manager

Finance Manager

Finance Officer

Admin. Asst Chair's office

Receptionist

Driver

4 Office Assistants

NOTE: Dotted-Lines = Staff to be recruited.

Annex H: FQSE organogram created from 2019 job descriptions

Legend:
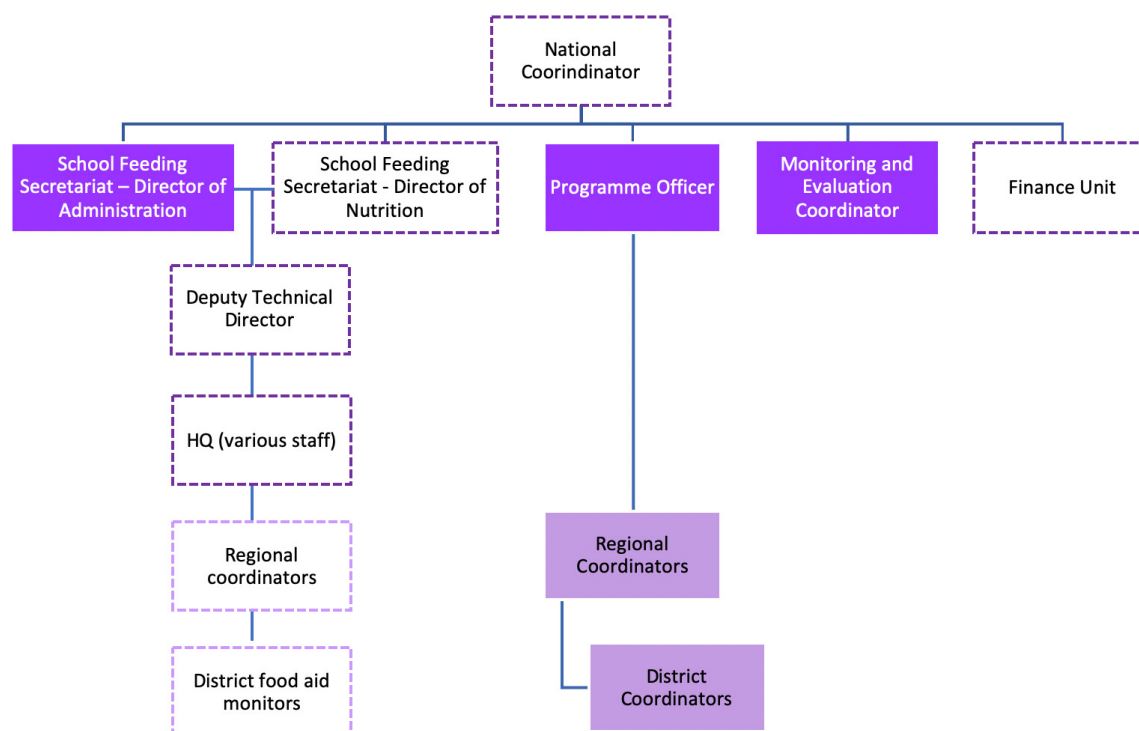
(solid dark purple)	Central in policy (JD)
- - - - -	Central in practice
(solid light purple)	District in policy (JD)
- - - - -	District in practice

Annex I: Analysis of differences between MBSSE structure in policy versus practice

Policy	Practice
2009 MEST Organogram & MBSSE Job Descriptions	2019 MBSSE Organogram
Senior Management	
• In the 2009 organogram, the Permanent Secretary reports to the Deputy Minister(s) and oversees both the Administrative and Technical arms of the Ministry. According to the MEST job descriptions, the Permanent Secretary reports directly to the Minister and oversees only the Administrative arm.	• The Permanent Secretary reports directly to the Minister and oversees only the Administrative arm.
Administrative Arm	
• In both the 2009 organogram and MEST job descriptions, the administrative arm comprises four central units: 1) Accounting; 2) Human Resources; 3) Management and 4) Procurement	• The administrative arm has two additional units to the four mentioned in policy documents: 5) Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and 6) Internal Audit.
• In both the 2009 organogram and MEST job descriptions, there are 15 staff positions in the administrative arm	• There are 19 staff positions in the administrative arm, 14 of which are filled and 5 of which are vacant
Technical Arm	
• In the 2009 organogram, the Director-General (DG) and Deputy Director General (DDG) oversee the Technical arm. According to the MEST job descriptions, the CEO and Deputy CEO oversee the technical arm.	• The CEO oversees the technical arm of the Ministry. The Deputy CEO position is currently vacant.
• In the 2009 organogram, the DG and DDG oversee six Directorates, as well as the Basic Education Commission. This is mirrored in MEST job descriptions, minus the Basic Education Commission.	• The CEO oversees five Directorates, four of which are functional. The Directorate for Higher Education, Science and Technology was re-designated to the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education in 2018. The Research and Curriculum Development Directorate is not functional.
• In both the 2009 organogram and MEST job descriptions, there are 21 staff positions in the technical arm.	• There are 21 staff positions in the technical arm, plus an additional 12 'Head Officers' in the Directorate for Education Programmes and Services, bringing the total number of staff positions to 33. Out of the 21 staff positions, only 6 are filled, leaving 15 positions vacant. In addition, only 9 out of 12 'Head Officer' positions are filled, leaving 3 vacant. In total, only 15 out of 33 (45%) positions are currently filled, leaving 18 out of 33 (55%) positions vacant.
Semi-autonomous units	
• In the 2009 organogram, there are no semi-autonomous units (such as commissions and Secretariats) reporting directly to the Minister. According to MEST job descriptions, there are two semi-autonomous units reporting directly to the Minister: 1. The Teachers Service Commission 2. The Free Quality School Education (FQSE) Secretariat (which includes the School Feeding Secretariat)	• There are four semi-autonomous units reporting directly to the Minister: 1. The Teachers Service Commission 2. The Free Quality School Education (FQSE) Secretariat (which includes the School Feeding Secretariat) 3. The Basic Education Secretariat 4. The Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Unit

Annex J: MBSSE Central Level Roles and Responsibilities in policy versus practice

Designation	Roles and Responsibilities (in policy)	Roles and Responsibilities (in practice)	The difference in policy vs. practice	Areas of overlap/lack of clarity with others
Senior Management				
Chief Education Officer (CEO)	• Coordinates the formulation of educational policies, strategies, and programmes. (10%) • Supervises the work of Directors of the various Directorates in the Ministry, such as teacher recruitment and other activities handled by the Inspectorate Directorate. (35%) • Reviews applications for the establishment of new schools and makes recommendations for approval. (20%) • Supervises the screening of candidates for public exams to provide quality assurance. (15%) • Supervises or oversees the implementation of donor-funded projects within MBE/THE. (10%) • Serves as the main liaison officer between the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and GoSL. This includes being chairman on all the national committees. (10%)	• CEO not interviewed	No interview	Not available
Deputy CEO	• Assist the Chief Education Officer in coordinating monitoring and evaluating activities of the Directorate in the Ministry. (20%) • Assist in supervising the work of Directors of the various Directorates in the Ministry. (20%) • Coordinate staff training and development in the Ministry. (15%) • Review applications for the establishment of new schools and make recommendations for approval. (10%) • Participate in the preparation of the annual budget and work plans for the Ministry.(10%) • Coordinate the implementation of donor-funded projects within MEST. (15%) • Assist in the development of educational policies. (10%)	• The role does not exist in practice	Not available	Not available

Deputy Minister	• Not outlined in policy (no JD)	• Reports to the Minister • Has no Direct Reports • Deputises for the Minister • Responsible for Early Childhood Development and Primary Education (whilst Minister is responsible for Junior and Senior Secondary Education) • Provides support to the Directorate for the Inspectorate (for example, by travelling to poor performing districts to talk with District officials to better understand the problem)	No Job Description (JD)	• Some lack of clarity between the role of the Minister and Deputy Minister • In reality, all Directors of the Directorates report straight to the Minister
Permanent Secretary	• Provide leadership and guidance for determining policies and objectives within the Ministry and the implementation of those policies and objectives. (20%) • Manage the budget of the Ministry (Vote Controller) with a view to ensuring that all expenditure is documented and accounted for in accordance with the Public Financial Management Acts and Regulations. (30%) • Manage assets to ensure that all applicable procedures are followed for acquisition, allocation, and disposal. (10%) • Supervise administrative and human resource functions to ensure compliance with Public Service Commission (PSC) regulations, Circulars from the HRMO and other policies. (10%) • Initiate and supervise the preparation of documents such as Cabinet Memoranda, speeches, and reports for the political leadership of the Ministry. (15%) • Liaise with other MDAs on cross-cutting policy issues. (5%) • Coordinate the activities and programmes of the respective Units/Divisions to ensure the realisation of the mandate of the Ministry. (10%)	• Oversees Technical and Administrative arms of the Ministry • Accountable for the Ministry's finances and accountable to parliament for Ministry expenditure (a term that is colloquially known as the 'vote controller') • Manage resources – human, material, financial • Provide policy advice to Minister • Drafts cabinet papers, speeches, correspondence for ministers • Signs off on Senior Secondary exam fees[75]	None – JD and reported responsibilities align	None

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[75] Whereas the MoLGF signs fees for Primary and Junior Secondary School exam fees as they are 'decentralised'.

Director – Inspectorate	• Coordinates the development of educational policies, strategies, and programmes for effective monitoring and supervision of schools. (20%) • Monitors the planning and rolling-out of curricula, programmes, and activities of schools for education quality control. (40%) • Participates in teacher recruitment, training, and placement for schools. (20%) • Carries out checks to ensure the integrity of the teachers' payroll. (20%)	• Assures quality and ensure compliance to education policies. • Superintends curriculum activities in the absence of the Research and Curriculum Development Directorate • ensures quality assurance through monitoring and supervision of schools • Enforces compliance to education policies • Utilizes checklist for monitoring. School monitoring tool is voluminous, so inspectors extract sections that are pertinent to their specific inspection per visit. • Conducts joint full-scale monitoring using the entire school monitoring tool.	Many activities listed in the official Job Description not mentioned in practice	• There is regular engagement with the council on budgeting and planning intervention for monitoring of schools
Director- Planning & Policy	• Coordinate the development of policies and strategies for implementation in line with the mandate of the Ministry. (25%) • Liaise with other Directorates for the development of annual budgets for the Ministry. (5%) • Coordinate the identification of projects and programmes and provide support to mobilize funds for execution. (25%) • Support the coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of educational programmes and projects. (10%) • Coordinate the collection and production of accurate, reliable and up-to-date information on schools and related activities to aid planning and decision making. (20%) • Supervise staff activities in the Directorate to ensure effective and efficient service delivery. (10%) • Coordinate the design and development of school facilities to conform to regulations and standards. (5%)	• Data on system functioning • School fee subsidies (Finalising national enrolment data, approving the allocation of resources, liaising with MLGRD)	Many activities listed in the official Job Description not mentioned in practice	• Overlap – with the hiring of consultants (e.g. for FQSE, etc). So, then things that are supposed to be handled directly by her get handled by them

| (Deputy) Director EMIS | • Liaise with the ICT unit for the installation of software for managing the database on the activities of the Ministry. (10%)
• Supervise the collection and collation of data/information on the educational activities of the Ministry to assist with statistical analysis. (35%)
• Provide training for staff to equip them with the requisite competencies in education management information systems. (15%)
• Collaborate with relevant institutions for the monitoring of infrastructure for schools and data on students/pupils to support quality assurance. (20%)
• Provide statistical data and advice to relevant units to assist with planning and decision making. (20%) | • Reports to the Director of Policy and Planning
• Oversees and supervises the 25 officials in the situation room (5 data analysts and statisticians)
• Works with all directorates when data collection and sharing is needed
• Champions the annual school census data collection, including data processing and management
• In charge of general data management on activities in the education sector
• Most important responsibility is data management
• Most time: activities on data management. | Some activities listed in the official Job Description not mentioned in practice, specifically, the provision of trainings and software installation.

Oversight of the situation room is not outlined in the JD. | • The roles of consultants especially those working on examination data conflicts with the role of EMIS which is charged with the responsibility of leading the data management process in the ministry.
• Consultants do not share data on exams (# of students, schools' performance etc) with EMIS which impede the work of EMIS.
• Lack of clear mandates for consultants. *Consultants should be aware of their mandates which is largely to support the work of the ministry; not to be totally in charge.

The situation room is an information hub set up to provide real time data on school support. It serves as a call centre, data collection, monitoring and management hub. The DD noted that there were some elements of political interference in the establishment and running of the situation room from recruitment of personnel to handling and sharing of data. This was done by the previous govt and he believes that the current govt has created avenues for the situation to be professional other than political. |

Director of Education Programmes and Services	• Coordinate the implementation of educational programmes and services in line with the mandate of the Directorate. (15%) • Supervise the activities of the units within the Directorate to ensure their activities are in line with the educational policies. (30%) • Provide support for the development and review of educational policies, strategies, and programmes for implementation. 10% • Collaborate with the Inspectorate and other relevant Directorates for the monitoring of the implementation of educational programmes and services to ensure standards are maintained/ (10%) • Facilitate the processing of scholarship schemes for candidates in line with regulations and policies. (30%) • Supervise the development of programmes for advocacy on gender and other social issues affecting education. (5%)	• Reports to the CEO • Coordinate activities of the unit • Performs duties assigned by Minister, PS or CEO • Reviews and suggests improvement to pedagogy • Ensure standards are maintained in education institutions (all schools)	• Job title • Many activities listed in the official Job Description not mentioned in practice	For e.g. 1) approval of schools and now not all files are passing through his office.
Director Non-formal education	• Coordinate the development, review, and implementation of Adult and Non-Formal education policies and programmes in line with the mandate of the Directorate. (15%) • Monitor programmes and activities of Adult and Non-Formal education centres to ensure their activities are in line with the educational policies. (30%) • Collaborate with relevant stakeholders in the design of curriculum, teaching and learning materials and facilitate capacity building programmes. (20%) • Collaborate with the development partners and other relevant agencies in the management and implementation of Adult and Non-Formal education programmes. (15%) • Facilitate the design of advocacy programmes on Non-Formal education to aid the reduction of illiteracy. (5%) • Facilitate the establishment of community learning centres to support functional education programmes. (10%) • Design and maintain a database on the activities and programmes of Adult and Non-Formal education for statistical analysis and decision making. (5%)	• Ensure that non-formal programmes are operating • Literacy officers report to the Director	None – JD and reported responsibilities align	None – very separate department! Also, non-formal hasn't been devolved

Annex K: MBSSE structure at District level – policy versus practice

Organogram Key

Color	Description
	Central MBSSE, Inspectorate
	District MBSSE, Inspectorate
	In practice, not outlined in policy
-	Vacant
	Central TSC
	District TSC
	Central FQSE
	District FQSE

Central:
- MBSSE, Minister
- CEO
- Deputy CEO
- Director, Inspectorate
- TSC Chair
- TSC Secretary
- National Coorindinator
- Corporate Services Department
- Teacher Management Department
- Teacher Development and Performance Department
- Registration and Licensing Department
- Teacher-Employer Relations Department
- Programme Officer
- Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator
- Finance Unit
- School Feeding Secretariat – Director of Administration

District:
- District Deputy Director
- Assistant Deputy Director*
- Senior Inspector
- Inspector
- Supervisors x3
- Finance Officer D.E.O
- Deputy Director TSC
- District Officer TSC
- Regional Coordinators
- District Coordinators

*Vacant in 3 out of 4 districts

Annex L: Summary of District Education Harmonisation Workshop, 23–26 April 2019, Bo

Context:

- In 2019 MBSSE intensified their presence at the district level by expanding the TSC, investing in DEO capacity and establishing the FQSE programme team.
- These efforts have brought unprecedented challenges for coordination and harmonisation across MBSSE agencies.

Participants:

- MS Sesay, Director of Inspectorate at MBSSE and line manager to DDEs;
- Deputy Directors of Education (DDEs), in charge of DEOs;
- FQSE District and Regional Coordinators;
- TSC District and Regional Deputy Directors; and
- District Support Officers (DSOs) and District Inclusion Officers (DIOs) from the Leh Wi Lan programme, which provides direct support to secondary schools as well as capacity support to DEOs, as well as the LwL Deputy Team Lead and the lead of LwL's Output 4: District Capacity Strengthening.

The workshop:

- Convened by Amara Sowa, National Programme Coordinator for FQSE, as part of the orientation for newly recruited FQSE District Coordinators.
- The workshop aimed to achieve three objectives:
  - improve each actors' understanding of this new district education landscape
  - lay the foundation for more effective inter-agency collaboration
  - support the Minister's ongoing effort to strengthen the decentralisation of education services.

Findings – Challenges:

Scepticism and conflict between agencies	• "perception of threat" • "us versus them" • Blame culture between agencies • The perception that new agencies symbolize the inadequacy of longer standing actors. • FQSE considered "political appointees;" there to pick holes in others' work.
Low level of understanding of each agency's role and value add	• Low-level knowledge of the other agencies' roles • Concerns about duplicative efforts • Completion among agencies
Ad hoc coordination – little info sharing/ joint planning	• DEO meetings, Education Sector meetings are district-level coordination platforms. • But the strength varies across districts; challenges include inconsistent attendance; updates are ad hoc and retrospective. • Lack of effort to update each other further erodes trust.
Lack of structural clarity from central MBSSE	• Not enough coordination at the centre establishing district functions and distinguishing roles • Each agency working in parallel under different departments • The only connection is the Minister level

Agency role articulation:

Summary: each agency's focus is different, but there are significant overlaps in the agency's mandates, imposing a responsibility on them to collaborate effectively and remain aligned

FQSE coordinators	• oversee the delivery of FQSE priorities at the district level • monitoring of FQSE results framework • offer oversight and delivery capacity to education partners on priority FQSE programme areas: teaching quality and teacher training, school fee subsidies and teaching and learning materials.
TSC deputy directors	• overall responsibility for human resource management of teachers (hiring, firing, professional development, and promotions) • principal responsibility for teacher and teaching quality • establish frameworks and policies governing teacher professional development and assure the quality of all teacher training • role in approving teacher training materials and delivery approaches, • establishing guidelines for teacher training and promotion • monitoring the effectiveness of teacher training and teaching practices.
LwL DSOs and DIOs	• school- and DEO-level support across the secondary education system • direct delivery of the LwL programme, including the provision of and training to heads of schools and heads of department in school leadership, targeted teacher training in lesson plan material (LPM) use and gender, and disability-inclusive education and teaching practices • monitoring and data collection at school and classroom level to monitor the effectiveness of LwL outputs • collecting generic school-level data (teacher attendance, pupil attendance, etc.) for DEOs – currently training DEO staff to collect and manage this data.
DDE	• oversight and coordination role in overall basic and secondary education effectiveness at district level • oversees activities of all education partners at district level: school-level monitoring and inspection, school approval and licensing. • involvement in the hiring, firing and performance management of heads of school, heads of department and teachers.

Four areas to improve district-level harmonization – recommendations to achieve coordination in the main document.

1. Teacher professional development and teacher training (TPD)
2. Strengthening district coordination platforms
3. Data collection, data sharing, and data integration
4. Community engagement, communications, and advocacy

Broader recommendations for central level stakeholders:

1. Each district has identified either one or two of the focus areas described above to progress at the district level and will use their upcoming coordination meetings to firm up their plans.
2. For the coming year, the district harmonisation workshop platform should be repeated 6-monthly, as a way of supporting agencies to progress their specific plans for collaboration and establish their ways of collaborative working.
3. The leadership of each agency in Freetown should come together to discuss and endorse these overall plans, and accountability mechanisms established to ensure progress with each district on specific areas for improved collaboration.

Annex M: Processes mapping MBSSE central (DEO, TSC, FQSE) and Local Council
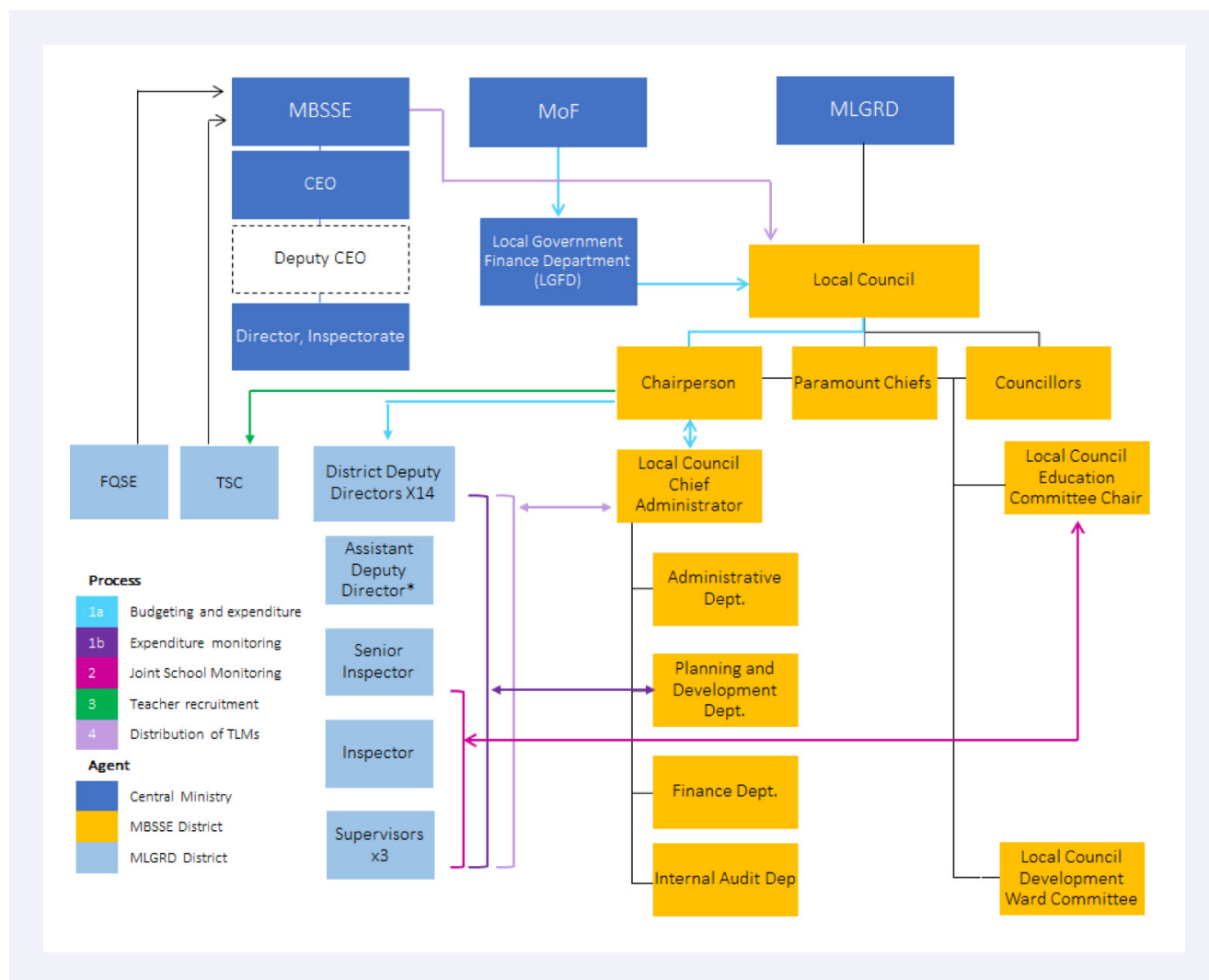
Annex N: MBSSE District Education Office (DEO) Roles and Responsibilities

Designation	R&R (policy)	R&R (practice)	Most important responsibility / Most time spent one	Difference in policy vs. practice	Areas of overlap / lack of clarity with others
MBSSE – District Education Office (DEO)					

DD	**Assists the Director of the Inspectorate**
	
	• in the coordination and supervision of the work of Inspectors and Supervisors of schools
	• prepares quarterly reports on the activities of the Inspectorate Division of the Ministry
	• sensitises stakeholders on the rules and regulations governing the management of schools through media campaign
	• preparing and issuing instructions/guidelines for inspections and coordination of school programmes
	• coordinates, monitors and evaluates the work of Inspectors and Supervisors of schools and other educational institutions
	• assesses the status of facilities in schools and other educational institutions
	• undertakes field visits for verification of authenticity/corrections of monitoring and evaluation reports.
	• Prepares periodic reports on schools and other educational institutions
		Monitors the entire education delivery process in the district
		
		• Authorized establishment of school accounts, and gives payment clearance of subsidy to schools
		• Monitors everything in the education delivery chain – teachers, schools, the staff at the DEO
		• Supervises all education projects
		• Visit schools
		• Led coordination meetings between the DEO and other agencies – Local councils and International Partners
		• A member in many committees- Planning, M&E
		• As the education sector head in the district, the DD serves as the chief liaison of the DEO to the Local council and other agencies.
		  – Interpret education policy according to various units
		  – Line management of supervisors and inspectors and other DEO staff
		
		"The role of the DD is to monitor everything in the education delivery chain at the district level"
			Most important: monitoring and supervision of schools
			
			Most time: administrative duties
				There is alignment between policy and practice, but some activities listed in the official Job Description not mentioned in practice such as the preparation of quarterly reports and inspection guidelines.	**Practice**
					Responsibilities are clear but overlap with TSC and tension between FQSE and TSC on teacher management
					
					• Overlap with TSC on teacher management. Both units have Acts that conflict with the element of handling teachers.
					• Report lines are not clear at the district level. This ignites the tension between the DEO and TSC. For instance, the TSC chair at central level reports to the CEO and Minister, similarly, the TSC DD should do likewise.
					• There is a lack of information sharing between the units.
					• There is tension between FQSE and TSC on who does what especially on the monitoring and supervision of teachers.
					• The cause for this overlap/conflict is the lack of clarity in the Acts
					
					"Responsibilities are becoming clearer and clearer by the day"
					
					However, there have been several engagements, so things are getting better

	Performs other duties, within the scope and intent of the job, as may be assigned from time to time.				*"The FQSE believes that they are mandated to superintend everything on education delivery including teacher management while the TSC is also mandated to handle teacher affairs. This ignites the tension on who does what on teacher management between the two units."*
Assistant Director	• Monitor teaching activities in schools and provide advice to ensure the implementation of educational curriculum, policies and procedures. 25% • Assist with the facilitation of educational programmes to build the capacity of teachers. 20% • Assist with the resolution of conflicts to improve teaching and learning activities. 10% • Conduct inspection of school structures and facilities to ensure they are convenient for learning. 30% Assist with the supervision of staff activities in the Inspectorate Division for efficient and effective service delivery. 15%	• Not interviewed as part of this study	Not available	Not available	Not available
Supervisor	• Monitor and supervise teachers of schools to ensure that the content of every subject is taught. (50%) • Collect data on student enrolment, staff, and school assets (including physical structures) for the purpose of updating the database of each school (20%)	Work extensively on supervision and inspection of schools • Collect data on pupil's enrolment, number of teachers, state of school infrastructure and school environment • Monitors the distribution and utilization of TLMs • Monitors classroom setup	Most important: monitoring schools Most time: Field inspections & supervising teachers	> Supervisors are meant to spend the majority of their time (50%) on monitoring teachers & the content they're teaching – they also report doing this in practice, spending the majority of their time on	Responsibilities are clear but sometimes overlap. Very clear responsibilities but more recently with the establishment of FQSE and TSC some functions overlap. There was no proper joint orientation when they came initially which caused a lot of problems. A meeting was held recently to address the issues around overlapping responsibilities. A few things have improved but it could be better.

	• Collaborate with teachers, parents, and pupils to ensure that the WASH facilities in the school environment are properly maintained (10%) • Receive complaints from teachers for resolution or escalation to supervisor (10 %) • Serve as the liaison between the inspectorate and schools (10 %)	Check teachers' records and lesson notes (see if lesson plans are being followed and support teachers with challenges. During supervision, if they observe that a teacher is not performing well, they provide advice and support them to get better. – If poor performance or delivery continues, will report to the Deputy Director and further actions will be taken. In one e.g. 4 teachers were brought to DD last academic year. 4) Classroom observation with a scoring scale of 1 – 5 • Write and submit a supervision report		> The main point supervisors do not mention that is noted in the JD is that supervisors are meant to receive complaints from teachers and escalate them	*"They lack an understanding of what they should be doing"* Relationship with LC is cordial, but supervisors have very little interaction. It is the DD that interacts with LCs. In one district the supervisor mentioned joint monitoring between the council & supervisor
Senior Inspector	• Monitor and inspect schools to ensure that the right curriculum is being implemented, teaching and learning materials are being properly used, etc. (40%) • Inspect in-service training of Teachers for quality assurance (10%) • Supervise staff in carrying out their work (50%)	**Gives supervisors and inspectors instructions to carry out specific instruction related to monitoring and supervision** • Collate and edit supervision reports from the field • Manage more than 200 KDEC (Local Council) schools in the district • Directly monitors Schools in assigned zones • As part of monitoring ensure there is a conducive environment for learning in schools • Conducts supportive monitoring; engages teachers on corrective measures which things are not right, • Gives and receives feedback from stakeholders	• Managing inspector and zonal supervisors is the most important part of responsibilities	> According to the JD 50% of time should be spent managing supervisors and inspectors, which is in line with what is reported in practice > Inspect in-service training of teachers for QA > About 40% of time should be spent checking if teaching & curriculum is happening correctly, TLMs, etc. are being used > Policy and practice are inline	**Practice** Confusion with LC role > Manager of LC council schools without authority • Does not have authority over all these schools even though he was told he is the manager of local council schools. When problems arise, he is blamed but this responsibility is not spelt out in JD Confusion with TSC & DEO roles There is a lack of personnel making it unclear who should be doing what & • There is some overlap with TSC responsibilities and that of the DEO particularly when it comes to teacher recruitment and training of teachers.

				Points to note for analysis > The JDs are vague. For e.g. The JD uses the work monitor TLMs etc. which is very vague > There is a lot of overlap between the JDs of SI, I, supervisors & TSC staff duties as stated by them	
Inspector	• Conduct inspections of school facilities and activities in assigned Districts (30%) • Provide supportive supervision to teachers and school Administrators in assigned District (10%) • Provide professional training for teachers and school administrators on the lesson plan and other school records (10%) • Collect information on the attendance of pupils and teachers in assigned District (20%) • Monitor and supervise the distribution and uses of teaching and learning materials supplied by government and donor partners (20%) • Train School Management Committee on matters pertaining to the governance of schools in the Districts (10%)	Monitors schools directly and supervises chiefdom level supervisors. Has extended roles in exam related activities. • Monitoring: > Collect data by observing the teaching methodologies used by teachers. Assessed lesson notes, check for the availability of TLMs and if and how those TLMs are utilized. > Has a checklist that serves as a guide on how monitoring should be done. > Monitor school infrastructure, WASH facilities, etc. > Check attendance records of pupils and teachers; conduct headcounts of pupils. > Facilitates the distribution of TLMs and monitors its utilization in schools	Most important: monitoring & supervising schools Most time: checking lesson plans of teachers & FW/supervision	> Train SMCs – this is in policy not mentioned practice > Meant to train teachers and school administrators in policy – not mentioned in practice	Relationship with LC is cordial but partial devolution is problematic. Plus, since funds go through council sometimes there is a delay in accessing them for planned activities With TSC & FQSE relationship is getting better. They have relinquished teacher-related responsibilities to TSC but are still expected to assess teachers *"We monitor and supervise the teachers in schools, so we are in a good position to recommend teachers for promotion. How can the TSC with only two officials who hardly visits the schools and doesn't monitor their performances, yet they lead in teacher promotion activities?"*

				Additional for analysis	
		• Supervision: Supervises supervisors who are in charge of monitoring schools in their designated chiefdoms. • Served as the secretary to the public exam committee. Responsible for organizing entries for NPSE *"My job description is boldly written in the 2004 Education Act. I am in charge of ensuring effective monitoring and supervision of schools in my assigned district."*		> Overlap with FQSE role to monitor distribution and use of teaching and learning materials Unclear division of school monitoring visits between inspectors and supervisors. There seems to some overlap in roles between them particularly around the supervision of teachers, monitoring of teaching & collecting enrolment, attendance data, etc.	
DEO – Finance Officer	No JD	Oversees DEO financial transactions under the supervision of the DD prepares Public Expenditure and Tracking (PET) forms • Ensure the effective utilization of funds by following the correct accounting procedures. • Participate in budget preparation • Prepare and oversee the management of petty cash • Collate school details for subsidy and PBF grants Pays support staff • Reconcile financial requests Vs expenses for each completed activity (liquidation) • Generate financial reports	Most time: Financial reporting for auditors and local council Most important: Financial reporting for auditors and local council *"My most important responsibility I financial reporting for auditors and the local council, and that is what I spend most of my time doing"*	> No JD	Relationship with LC is cordial & LC FO helps with the budgeting process. Challenges arise around approval and release of funds for DEO to spend *"When we ask for funds to carry out our activities it sometimes takes too long to come through"*

Annex O: MBSSE Semi-autonomous Bodies and Units Roles and Responsibilities Policy Vs Practice

Designation	Roles and Responsibilities (in policy)	Roles and Responsibilities (in practice)	The difference in policy vs. practice	Areas of overlap/lack of clarity with others
FQSE (national & district)				
FQSE National coordinator	No JD	– Ensure learning improves, makes sure the Dept of planning & policy gets the data needed – Leads planning and provision of TLMs. He directs that TLMs be sent to the Councils (he used to work with the decentralisation secretariat). He's always insisted the councils take leadership as basic education is devolved. The DDs and his staff are supposed to work with the local councils – the main challenge is that councils have no funds to distribute TLMs. The DEO & FQSE officers are there to provide support. – He also works with partners to be able to provide support to his programme. He provides updates to partners and they also provide updates to him.	No JD for a national coordinator	*"He's not doing anybody's job; you're doing everybody job"* *"FQSE covers all responsibilities here in the Ministry"* There have been heated conflicts & there is multiple education delivery staff at districts – FQSE, Leh Wi Learn, TSC, DD. He has done a proposal on how to harmonize the various functions – and received support to do these workshops from DFID. • DD- management of schools • FQSE- lead in the delivery of all activities related to FQSE programmes
FQSE District officer/ FQSE District coordinator	• the District Coordinator shall be resident in the district headquarter town and shall principally be responsible to coordinate and track the progress of implementation of the FQSE programme in the district. • Reports to the Regional Coordinator of the region where assigned. • Coordinates all activities of the Free Quality School Education Programme in the district • Collects important data monthly, and the information sent to the Regional Coordinators. • supports the operations of Ward Education Committee regularly	• Make sure education is free • Monitor receipt and use of subsidies by schools. Ensure subsidy is used for school purposes • Monitor learning in schools, including distribution of TLMs and checking if TLMs are being used • Probe into DEOs allocated budget and how they are utilised • Coordinate with DEO and TSC • Sensitise the community, teachers, parents on new education policy	– The JDs don't outline what FQSE activities comprise off. The respondents mainly focused on 1) subsidies 2) TLMs & 3) teaching and learning in classrooms. The JD doesn't mention these. It only mentions spot checks in schools to see if textbooks are being used & guidelines followed. Not clear what these guidelines are	**Practice** – Overlap with the role of DD & TSC but overlap seen as complementary by FQSE – TSC, FQSE &DEO all conduct monitoring *"I will not call this an overlap as it does not create any tensions between us…The district education office is grossly understaffed therefore we need more hands-on-deck to ensure that education is delivered effectively"*

	• carry out on the spot check in schools to ascertain the use of textbooks and adherence to the guidelines. • provide information, support, and guidance to partners supporting the Free Quality School Education Programme in the district. • Works with the Deputy Director of Education in the district and the Council in distributing FQSE materials. • with guidance from the Communications Specialist, leads in the dissemination of information on the FQSE at district level • provides leadership in the oversight of Public Examinations within the District • oversees and monitors the operations of the Adult and Accelerated Learning Centres in the District • ensures all activities in the district related to the Free Quality School Education are consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the programme. • prepares monthly report on the implementation of the FQSE programme which will be submitted to the Regional Coordinators at the end of every month. • Any other responsibility assigned by the Regional Coordinator and or the National Coordinator	*"FQSE staff are political appointees mandated to effectively watch the system to correct the bad practices of business as usual popularized by the previous regime"* *"We are here to ensure effective utilization of governments inputs into education including public examinations"* *"I make sure that extra syndicates or lessons for pupils outside school hours do not occur, it is one of the ways effective teaching and learning has been compromised in many schools."*	– There is nothing in their JDs about monitoring DDs but informally all respondents understand their "political watchdog" role to ensure all activities in the district are in line with FQSE objectives – The JDs talk about the distribution of FQSE material and we presume that's the same as TLMs that staff members refer to None of the officers listed leadership in public exam monitoring / Adult & Accelerated Learning Centres as part of their responsibilities / supporting ward education committees – The JDs mention important data to be collected monthly – but don't outline what this data is & the FQSE officers don't mention it either though they do send a report to the regional coordinators monthly	*"We work in unison"*

School Feeding Secretariat				
Deputy Technical Director: School Feeding Secretariat	Supports the Director of Administration and Director of Nutrition to ensure the successful implementation of the School Feeding Programme. Responsibilities: • Provide project management support to the school feeding programme and ensuring a coordinated approach with wider programmes that are complementary to the school feeding programme • Provide support to research and analyse policy and operational issues to support in the development of policies, programmes and activities • Support the identification, development and management of potential partnerships that would provide collaborative working relationships leading to improved implementation of the school feeding programme • Lead in Capacity Needs assessment and lead in the capacity building/strengthening of School Feeding staff through the organisation or design of trainings, workshops, daily interaction, etc. for efficient and effective delivery of food assistance to beneficiaries • Lead in the consolidation of monthly timely report on programmes and activities • Directly supervise the work of the Regional Coordinators with a view to ensuring consistency, high level of productivity and professionalism • Liaise with relevant authorities in generating/ soliciting/ data that would be used for informed decision making • Perform any other responsibility as may be assigned by the Director of Administration, Director of Nutrition or the national Programme Coordinator • Submit monthly report to the Directors of Administration and Nutrition	• Secretary of the technical working group – Minister of agriculture, Minister of Water Resources, Minister of Health, Minister of Social Welfare, MOF, MLGRD • Provide technical know-how – develop an annual work plan • Provide oversight to regional coordinators • There is a JD but have to access it from the Director of Admin (as part of the TORs) Most important responsibility – providing oversight for regional coordinators and getting reports from them • The most time – spent on different things depending on the day. But he looks at MOUs & then puts together TOR for the field visit	Some activities outlined in the JD were not specified in practice, specifically regarding research support and the partnership development. Respondent did not mention the technical working group in practice.	No overlap in responsibilities. **Working with Local Councils:** They are part of the WG & when they feed children, they feed children in their schools. The relationship is hard to describe as they haven't started feeding children yet. But they do speak with the DC when they're surveying schools that should be included in the programme. Even when new partners want to get involved the council

TSC (central & district)				
TSC Secretary	JDs exist apparently but are not in the JD pack received from TSC	**Duties cut across program delivery and administrative processes** • Supervises all directors • Leads in the development of policy and budget • Serves as secretary to the board • Serves as the link between TSC staff and the Board – •Admin duties include approving expenses from corporate services – Most Imp: managing admin operations to ensure the efficient running of the commission – Most time: On program-related matters and partner relations. Serves as the lead in most projects undertaken by the TSC	Not available	**Practice** Chair & Sec: There is overlap between Chair and secretary in executing their responsibilities. Though in theory, the policy framework highlighted their responsibilities, practically there tends to be overlap on who does what. *"The chair sometimes jokingly asked me – Are my stepping on your responsibilities?"*
TSC District Directors	JDs exist apparently but are not in the JD pack received from TSC	**Implement TSC mandate (teacher management) at district Level** • Initiate the process for the recruitment, transfer, promotion, and retirement of teachers at the district level • Execute all assigned tasks from the 5 directorates. • Monitoring and supervision of teachers. • Administrative duties – reports and day to day running of the district office • Liaised with other units – DEO, LC, and International Partners. *"Our work plan is determined at the central level. We implement all activities related to teachers' affairs at the district level. My responsibility is like moving the central level to the district"*	Not available	**Practice** No overlap. TSC focuses on issues related to teachers & DEO reports to TSC on teacher-related issues. TSC also reports to DEO on other issues TSC – relationship with the LC is cordial esp. relative to & they do work together a lot – LC has to sign teacher recruitment forms – TSC is part of the LC education committee – Highlighted need to understand who is responsible for the management of LC schools

		• Most Important= teacher management which includes recruitment, reassessment, promotion, placement and dismissal of teachers. • Most time: Administrative processes relating to teacher management		
TSC District officers	JDs exist apparently but are not in the JD pack received from TSC	The main aim is to support the TSC DD in delivery of TSC mandate • Teacher management • Verify teachers documents for recruitment and promotion • Monitors teachers in school • Check attendance of teachers • Observe teachers at work, check their lesson notes • Engaged teachers to address their concerns. • Provide advice on issues that can be handled at the district level. *"Perform tasks as assigned by DD/central level"* *"We are supposed to manage teacher issues at the district level. If a from our district reports directly to the central level, he will be referred back to us"*	Not available	**Practice** No overlap in roles for officers and roles and responsibilities quite clear. Overlap seemed to happen more at the TSC DD & DEO – Cordial relationship with LC & work with them on signing off teacher recruitment forms – Relationship with DEO has been strained but some report it is improving *"The DEO interferes into the functions of the TSC"*

Basic Education Secretariat				
Secretary Basic Education Secretariat	No JD	• Manage all staff in his secretariat • Monitor implementation of policy by the Ministry – main responsibility • Give support to the main ministry in whatever way possible E.g. recently the main ministry was asked to be present at the review of the 2005 university act. He was the one who was chosen to represent the MBSSE • He supports on legal matters – anything to do with a law he gives professional support • There is a new civic education syllabus (JSS 1-JSS3). He is an author on that and is participating in a retreat (Civic Education Council has just been formed and is under State House) • He is a political servant, not a civil servant. Paid by govt. • He set up the broadcasting house and oversaw the construction of the building. UNICEF funded it • He created the lesson plan manual • Also, chief reviewer of English lesson plan	No JD	Because of his experience, all responsibilities are clear to him. There is nothing he can't carry out. There is no overlap – it is necessary to have all hands-on deck. His mandate is to monitor everything
PPP Unit				
Head, PPP Unit	No JD	**Implement TSC mandate (teacher management) at district Level** • Initiate the process for the recruitment, transfer, promotion, and retirement of teachers at the district level • Execute all assigned tasks from the 5 directorates.	No JD	• Responsibilities sometimes unclear • STEM overlaps with higher education (pre-service side – teacher training). higher education ministry doing this for primary and secondary as well

		- Monitoring and supervision of teachers. - Administrative duties – reports and day to day running of the district office - Liaised with other units – DEO, LC, and International Partners. *"Our work plan is determined at the central level. We implement all activities related to teachers' affairs at the district level. My responsibility is like moving the central level to the district"*		

Annex P: Process for preparation and approval of the national budget (PFM Act 2016 Part IV)

STEP 1:

The Ministry of Finance establishes a medium-term budgetary framework for a minimum of 3 years, which includes a Fiscal Strategy Statement

STEP 2:

As soon as the Fiscal Strategy Statement of approved, the Financial Secretary shall issue a budget call circular for the purpose of guiding budgetary agencies in preparing budget proposals. The budget call circular:

   i) Prescribes budget ceilings on expenditure from the state budget
   ii) Prescribes a budget calendar for preparation and approval of the state budget
   iii) Includes instructions to be complied with by budget agencies in the course of preparing budget proposals

STEP 3:

By the date specified in the budget circular, the head of every budgetary agency shall submit a proposed budget to the Financial Secretary, which includes: estimation of revenue and estimation of expenditure

STEP 4:

The state budget shall be laid before Parliament by the Minister of Finance not later than 2 months before the beginning of the new financial year

STEP 5:

Upon submission to Parliament, the Minister shall publish the state budget documents in the Gazette and on the website of the Ministry.[76]

Annex Q: Budget Call Circular 2018

CONTENT OF THE BUDGET CALL CIRCULAR FOR LOCAL COUNCILS FOR THE PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF FY2018 BUDGET

1.0   Budget calendar for preparing and submitting FY 2018 budget[2]
The time table for preparing and submitting the 2018 budget of local councils is shown in table 1 below

Table 1: Timetable for preparing and submitting 2018 budget

No	Activity	Responsible institution	Timeline
	Budget Call Circular		
1	Issuance of Budget Call Circular to MDAs	FS/BB	3rd week July
2	Determine horizontal allocations based on 2017 agreed formula allocations	LGFD/MOFED/MLGRD	4th week July
3	Prepare draft circular for review by LGFC and MLGRD	LGFD/MOFED/MLGRD	1st week August
3	Issuance of first Budget Call Circular to Local Councils	LGFD/MOFED/MLGRD	2nd week August
4	Consultations to determine/review needs assessment (development planning process, where applicable, or review and prioritise needs from current development plans and budget priorities based on specific requirements in the Call Circular (budget ceilings, prepare revenue and expenditure projections etc)	LCs/Ward Committees/Devolved Sectors/NGOs/Chiefdom Councils	2nd, 3rd and 4th weeks August
7	Participatory open local councils budget discussions with the wider community	LGFD/BB/MLGRD/LCs/ Devolved Staff/ Citizens	28th to 30th August
8	Issuance of revised Budget Call Circular to Local Councils explaining assumptions/reasons for horizontal allocations and/or revised budget ceilings, where applicable	LGFD/MOFED/MLGRD	1st to 2nd week September
9	Confirmation of horizontal formula allocations and technical support to prepare and consolidate LCs annual budgets	LGFD/MOFED/MLGRD/ Devolving MDAs	3rd and 4th weeks September
	Provide support to prepare and consolidate chiefdom budgets	Local Councils	4th week September to 1st week October
10	Consolidate all devolved sector annual work plans including revenue and expenditure projections for approval by B&F Committee and council	LCs Administration	2nd and 3rd weeks October
11	Submission of draft consolidated budgets to the B&F Committee and council for review and consistency with requirements in the Call Circular	LC Administration	4th week October
	Submission of draft budgets		
12	Submission of draft budget to MOFED and MLGRD	LCs Administration	4th week October

[2] The budget calendar was prepared consistent with provisions in the PFM Act and Regulations of 2016

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No	Activity	Responsible institution	Timeline
	Discussions and comments on draft budgets		
13	Circulation of submitted draft budgets for comments related to credibility, consistency and compliance with requirements set up in Call Circular	LGFC/MLGRD/ MOFED Minister	1st and 2nd weeks November
14	Collate and communicate to LCs comments on draft budgets submitted, where applicable	LGFD	2nd week November
	Submission of approved budgets		
15	Incorporate comments by MOFED and MLGRD on draft budgets submitted	LCs administration/devolved MDAs	3rd to 4th week November
16	Submission and approval of final budgets with all comments incorporated	LCs administration and entire council body	4th week November to 1st week December
17	Submission of final approved budgets to MOFED and MLGRD	LCs administration	1st week December
18	Final budget presented to constituents	LCs/B&F Committee of Councils	1st and 2nd week December
19	Review and discussions of the approved budgets submitted to certify comments were incorporated	LGFC	2nd week December
20	Communicate to LCs additional comments by LGFC related credibility, consistency and compliance to submitted approved budgets	LGFD	3rd week December
21	Submission of revised final budget with all comments incorporated	LCs	4th week December

Annex R: Activity Requisition Form 1 – PET form 1 and 2

ACTIVITY REQUISITION FORM 1

Council: Kenema District Department: .... Programme/Project..
Location: Kenema District Ward:...................

This form should be completed by the program Manager when an activity is to be implemented for which funds will be required as per agreed work/ procurement plan. The purpose of the Form is or the Programme Manager to state the activity, to which objectives it relates(as shown in the MTEF estimates) and the types and cost of the inputs(of items and sub items) required.

ACTIVITY:

Brief description of activity to be undertaken:
Objective: (Indicate objective to be met as per Strategic Plan)

Full A/C Code/Details	Description	Qty	Cost Le	GoSL Le	Donor Le

DETAILS OF EXPENDITURE:

APPROVAL OF REQUEST:

Requested By:
  Name: Signature_____   Date:_____
      Programme Manager/Finance

Endorsed By:
  Name: Signature_____   Date:_____
      (District Functional Head)
Countersigned By
  Name: Signature_____   Date:_____
      (Finance Officer)

Approvede By:
  Name: Signature_____   Date:_____
      (Chief Adminstrator)

Expenditure authorisation form 2 – PET form 2

EXPENDITURE AUTHORISATION FORM 2

This form to be prepared by the **Finance Officer** and used in identifying the Items required and their cost. For each Item identify whether it is to be funded by The Station or Council or a donor

The Form is to be authorized by the **Functional Head, Chairman ,Chief Administrator and the Finance Officer**

TYPES OF EXPENDITURE REQUIRED

Items and sub-items (use standard Items and sub-Items)

PAYEE	Description	Qty #	Cost Le	GoSL Le	Donor Le

AUTHORISATION OF EXPENDITURES

District Functional Head

Name: _____ Signature_____ Date:_____

Chief Administrator:
Name: _____ Signature_____ Date:_____

Finance Officer:
Name: _____ Signature_____ Date:_____

Chairman:
Name: _____ Signature   _____ Date:_____

Annex S: MBSSE Systems Level Analysis of Education Service Delivery in Sierra Leone Workshop Participant List

#	Name	Position/ Title
1	Dr. Yatta Kanu	Chief Education Officer
2	Dr. Mohamed Kamanda	UNESCO Secretary General
3	Mr. M.M. Pearce	Director of Programmes
4	Stephen T. Musa	Non-key expert DC/M&E
5	Olive Musa	Director Non-formal Education
6	Lans Keifala	Director FQSE
7	*Amara Sowa*	National Programme Coordinator FQSE
8	*A.C.T Dupigny*	Education Consultant
9	*Michael Mambo*	Consultant, MBSSE
10	Abdul Sesay	School supervisor
11	Mohamed S. Sesay	Director of Inspectorate
12	H. Nelson- Williams	Executive Secretary, Basic Education Secretariat
13	Salamatu N. Koroma	Assistant Director, JSS/ SSS
14	Amara Sumaila	Literacy organiser
15	Osman Kamara	Director of Research and Curriculum Development
16	Dr. Emmanuel Gaima	Governance Advisor, Statehouse

Annex T: MLGRD Roles and Responsibilities in policy versus practice

Designation	R&R (policy)	R&R (practice)	Most imp. responsibility / Most time spent	Areas of overlap/lack of clarity with others (in policy & practice)
DC - Chief Administrator	the implementation of all lawful decisions of the local council; assisting and advising the Chairperson in the performance of his functions; supervising and coordinating the activities of the other staff and Departments of the local council; custody of all documents and records of the local council; performing such other functions as the local council or Chairperson may determine; and ensuring that staff performance standards are met.	Managed the day to day operations of the council. • Ensures the office ran well. Monitors the availability of equipment – stationary, electricity; punctuality of core staff and compliance with their responsibilities • Ensure timely implementation of activities. Processed sectors activity requests • Lead liaison to devolved sectors • Ensure compliance with the devolution sector *"As the name implies, I am chief administrator which means I am chief of everything chief of procurement, chief of finance, chief of admin, And permanent secretary for all the sectors in the district"*	Most time: coordinating with devolved sectors & internal admin duties	All responsibilities are clear no overlap Cordial relationship with DEO. There are some minor budget and finance disagreements, but all gets resolved.
DC – Finance Officer	Not outlined in policy	1) Preparing budget & financial statements. Provides technical support to devolved sectors in the budget development process. 2) Reconciliation – Leads the monthly reconciliation process by ensuring that all disbursement documents are efficiently reconciled for auditing purposes. 3) Disbursement and receipts 4) Prepares the council's financial report		All responsibilities are clear. A good relationship with DC

| DC – LC Edu Committee Chair | Not outlined in policy | Monitors education activities in the district

• Convenes DEC meetings

Monitors schools & activities carried out by the DEO

• Signs documentation for approval of educational activities in the district
• Generates periodic reports for LC
• Verifies education activities | Most important – monitoring education activities and DEO

Most time: monitoring schools/admin | Lack of clarity in role esp. with DEO even though the relationship is cordial

According to the education act, district education committee schools (LC schools) should be managed by LC Education Committee Chair. But schools are managed by the DDs office.

• The Proprietor should be the LC Chair according to the Education Act. But the DDs office does everything. This is quite confusing for the education committee chair.
• The LC education committee chair is involved in education sector budgeting. However, when the funds come to the district he is not involved in the execution or implementation of the budget. |