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GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Ministry of Basic & Senior Secondary Education

NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK & GUIDELINES FOR BASIC EDUCATION

PREFACE

The New Direction Government of His Excellency President Julius Maada Bio launched a bold new Free Quality School Education (FQSE) policy in 2018 that is transforming Education in Sierra Leone. Within the FQSE policy, tuition fees from pre-primary to senior secondary, including examination fees, are covered by the Government; core learning materials are provided to all children; and school feeding is expanded across the country. More teachers are trained and incentives to strengthen the workforce are broadened.

A critical element to the FQSE policy, however, is curriculum development. The skills and attributes of learners to prepare them for post-secondary school life in the 21st Century need to be delivered in innovative ways. An excellent curriculum enables learners to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values for development of individuals, communities, and the nation, through inclusive growth and patriotic contributions to an equitable and progressive society. In its relatively young history, Sierra Leone has made commendable development strides despite socio-political challenges including an 11-year civil war and the 2014 Ebola epidemic. However, economic growth has been mixed and investments have not adequately or quickly expanded and diversified. Such economic constraints make it difficult for the social sectors to deliver quality services fairly and consistently to communities.

To break this impasse, the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) has prioritized its investments in human capital development, focusing on three important sectors: food security, education, and healthcare. Education in particular can deliver on the human capacity required to produce a more competent workforce, enhance productivity, and facilitate national development. Such a breakthrough needs an innovative curriculum that is successfully interpreted and implemented by a competent teacher workforce operating within a quality-oriented education system. All this starts with a well-designed curriculum framework.

On behalf of GoSL and the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE), I am pleased to commend this ***National Curriculum Framework and Guidelines for Basic Education in Sierra Leone*** to stakeholders and partners, as an insight into our education transformation efforts. It is a reference document to inspire and guide those responsible for designing, implementing, and managing a new basic education curriculum for Sierra Leone. It anchors an innovative curriculum that will guarantee nine years of quality basic education for all as enshrined in the 2004 Education Act. We expect that this framework and its resulting new curriculum will contribute to national goals such as:

(a) Facilitate equity and radical inclusion with a chance for every child to learn and succeed in life, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disabilities, poverty, or other life circumstances.
(b) Fulfill the hopes and aspirations of learners and their parents, as well as local communities and the nation by improving quality and restoring integrity in education.

(c) Enhance employability and livelihoods through appropriate skills training and talent cultivation.
(d) Support national unity, civics, good governance, and nation building, through the celebration of our rich ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity.
(e) Help children to achieve their human potential by safeguarding knowledge and practices that enhance their overall health and well-being.

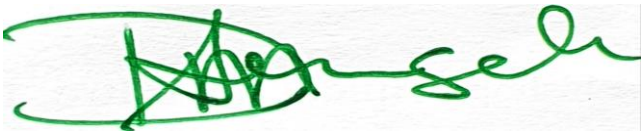
As a nation we have made some progress with access and gender parity. Primary enrolment has risen steadily from 1,194,503 in 2010 to 1,770,368 in 2020, whilst junior secondary enrolment during the same period increased from 244,489 to 451,685. Gender parity for primary improved from 0.95 to 1.00 during this period. But 37.2% of primary-school age children and 22.2% of JSS-age children are still not in school. Some never started school, others dropped out of primary school, and some did not complete junior secondary. These disadvantaged children often come from poor homes, live in remote rural areas, have disabilities, are orphans, are pregnant girls who, until recently (March 2020 when the ban was lifted by my Ministry) were prevented from attending formal school, or are young dropped-out mothers who were not allowed to continue their education when they became pregnant. Sadly, more girls than boys tend to drop out of school before completing basic education.

Early gains from allocation of adequate resources to support the FQSE policy indicate that we can do more. All our children can start and complete nine years of basic education as is their right. Quality and integrity can be enhanced. Learning in our schools can shift from being narrow and largely academic, and pedagogy can be more learner-centered, empowering, and focused on developing foundational skills and competencies such as computational thinking, comprehension, critical thinking, creativity, and civic-mindedness as an integral part of human capital development through quality education. Learners can become less reliant on "memorization" and the motivation, support and management of the teacher workforce can be strengthened. In line with the early promise of the FQSE program, this framework offers insights and guidance to broaden the range of prescribed learning, shift to learner-centered pedagogy, and increase access to curriculum in an equitable manner. It stresses understanding as well as "valuing" and "doing" as integral to learning, whilst also linking prescribed learning to regular and real-time assessments by classroom teachers, not just at national examinations. It embraces school-based support for teachers and incentives for continuous professional development of teachers and school leaders.

Earlier and revised versions of this framework were developed through extensive nationwide consultations with stakeholders, including ordinary Sierra Leoneans whose views about, and aspirations for development through education significantly informed the development of this framework. The framework is also informed by global and regional agendas such as G7+ Peace Building and State Building Goals; the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals such as Goal 4: quality education for all; and the African Union Agenda 2063 for people driven development, reflected through local ownership of the content of this curriculum framework. The framework and its derived subject specific syllabi, its associated

learning outcomes and strategies collectively reflect the Government's agenda and National Development Plan titled "Education for Development", the MBSSE's vision that all learners will have equal opportunity to access quality basic education, and its mission to ensure safe learning environments that are inclusive and well-resourced. My Ministry is committed to continuous curriculum monitoring and evaluation to ensure effective implementation and robust functioning.

Staff at MBSSE, in particular my Chief Education Officer (Dr. Yatta Kanu) and my Permanent Secretary (Mr David W.S. Banya), are grateful to all the stakeholders whose voices made the development of this framework a truly inclusive process and to the consultant (Dr. Cream Wright) and Ministry staff who have prepared a new and thoroughly revised version in line with the vision and priorities of the new Government. We appreciate the contributions of our development partners (especially UNICEF and World Bank) that facilitated initial versions of the framework. We now look forward to having all our partners accompany us as we strive to transform education for a healthy, peaceful, progressive, and prosperous Sierra Leone.



By Hon. David M. Sengeh
Minister
Ministry of Basic & Senior Secondary Education

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

NDP	National Development Plan
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
BoGs	Boards of Governors (Schools)
CBOs	Community-Based Organisations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFS	Child Friendly Schools
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease of 2019
CRA	Child Rights Act (Sierra Leone)
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations)
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
ESP	Education Sector Plan
EVD	Ebola Virus Disease
FDI	Foreign Direct Investments
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune Virus / Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICT	Information & Communications Technology
JSS	Junior Secondary School
MBSSE	Ministry of Basic & Senior Secondary Education
MEP	Ministry of Energy and Power
MRU	Mano River Union

NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPA	National Power Authority
NPSE	National Primary School Examination
P/C-TAs	Parent/Community-Teachers Associations
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SL	Sierra Leone
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SMCs	School Management Committees
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SSS	Senior Secondary School
TAs	Talent Academies (proposed)
TMS	Teacher Management and Support
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
TSC	Teaching Service Commission
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WAEC	West African Examinations Council

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1. The Context for a New Basic Education Curriculum in Sierra Leone

In 2018 Sierra Leone crossed another transformative milestone with the peaceful transfer of power to a democratically elected new Government, ushering in a promising era of peace and progress. This continued to turn the page on a turbulent past of brutal civil war, prolonged economic decline, chronic corruption, weak governance, social stagnation, political unrest, lack of transparency, and the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) epidemic. A hallmark of the new regime is the declaration of Free Quality School Education (FQSE) as a flagship programme, and an appropriate budget allocation (21% of government budget) to match such a bold vision. This marks an impressive reinvigoration of a sector that usually has ambivalent policy support despite successive governments affirming its importance for national development and for meeting the aspirations of citizens. Understandably, the ambitious FQSE vision of the government presented a challenge to policy makers, planners, and practitioners, as well as education development partners. This was further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic that is testing the resilience of education systems and stoking a human capacity crisis across the world where 1.6 billion students faced school closures.

In principle, Sierra Leone has consistently reaffirmed education as a right of all citizens, to be enjoyed without discrimination. But, in practice, investments in education over the years have produced mixed results. Access to education has expanded greatly despite cycles of economic decline, yet an estimated 22% of school-age children were out of school in 2018. Disparities also persist, with children from poor households in rural areas and urban slums, as well as orphans, children with disabilities, pregnant girls, and other disadvantaged groups denied the right to education. Similarly, efforts have been made to enhance quality by modernizing and diversifying the curriculum as well as expanding teacher training (pre-service & in-service) to raise pedagogical standards. Yet there has not been lasting quality improvement because of poor planning, budget constraints, and a variety of setbacks that reflect perennial shortcomings in national development.

These trends indicate a need for reform to match the government's vision to make education a repository of hope for the nation, with citizens contributing to growth whilst benefiting from inclusive development and wealth distribution. Reform can also enable education to safeguard health and well-being of citizens and fulfil aspirations for an improved quality of life. But reform must also address the range of constraints that may inhibit progress in society.

An excellent curriculum is central to reform. It can actualize the FQSE policy and Government's vision for development by contributing to an educated, trained, motivated, and patriotic

citizenry. The curriculum can also ensure that citizens are better prepared to help build peace, safeguard health, promote well-being, advance social and cultural progress, and participate in a dynamic work force for inclusive economic growth. It is in this context that the Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) has decided to initiate and facilitate development of an innovative, reform-oriented, and dynamic national school curriculum for basic education in Sierra Leone.

1.1. Introduction and Overview

The Minister of Basic Education (MBSSE) has issued this framework to inform/guide all stakeholders and partners working on the development of the new basic education curriculum. The 2004 Education Act grants the Minister statutory powers including to "*prescribe the courses and subjects of instruction to be given in government schools and assisted schools*". Therefore, this framework is a reference document for all government schools and government-assisted schools. But it is also essential for private schools as well as for the content and learning outcomes prescribed for learners of basic education age in all non-formal/informal institutions. A curriculum framework is the precursor to the development of a national school curriculum, which will contain the prescribed courses and subjects of instruction in detail. In general, a framework lays the foundation, highlights key values and principles, and provides conceptual as well as technical guidelines for the development of a national school curriculum. Typically, it gives the background, rationale, ideology, and priorities underpinning development of the national school curriculum. This comprehensive framework includes concepts that:

(a) Put the education system in its historic and contemporary contexts as a background for understanding development challenges and how the curriculum can contribute to progress.

(b) Highlight principles and priorities that reflect the vision, ideologies, policies, and values, of government regarding human capacity building and national development.

(c) Reflect the hopes and aspirations of learners, parents, and local communities, to achieve their developmental potential and improve their quality of life through education.

(d) Demarcate potential returns to justify diverse investments in education by government, learners, parents, communities, and development partners.

(e) Outline the latest knowledge areas (subjects/topics), pedagogical techniques, and learning theories, to be factored into the school curriculum for modernity and quality assurance.

(f) Provide key elements of the prescribed learning and recommended pedagogy that should be captured in the curriculum at specified levels within the structure of the school system.

(g) Link education with civics, peace, patriotism, and celebration of cultural diversity in the nation.

Within such broad parameters, this curriculum framework highlights the purpose of basic education in Sierra Leone, spelling out its goals and objectives as well as its scope and orientation of the knowledge involved. It also clarifies how best to structure and organise this knowledge for effectiveness and efficiency in the national school curriculum. It specifies core subject areas with broad examples of expected learning outcomes by highlighting what the learners should know/understand, appreciate/value, and be able to do/demonstrate at different stages. It also informs pedagogical concepts (learning/teaching/assessment), teacher support mechanisms, teaching/learning resources, and conditions/environment required to implement the national curriculum. This framework provides guidelines on how these elements can be approached, managed, and utilised to develop teaching syllabuses and mechanisms for delivering quality learning in schools. It also deals with partnerships, the role of stakeholders, and strategies to manage, monitor, and evaluate the national curriculum for quality assurance.

The most essential point highlighted by the framework is that the national school curriculum is not simply a collection of subjects to be taught in schools. It is dynamic and must reflect the vision/goals of the government for human capacity building and national development. It must also capture the interests and aspirations of learners, parents, and communities who are beneficiaries of the new curriculum. As such, practitioners must appreciate that the curriculum is shaped not only by the prevailing state of “subject knowledge” and “pedagogical trends”, but also by the development history of Sierra Leone and the changing aspirations of its people. This includes the economic, political, social, and cultural trends over the years, as well as the experiences “endured” and “enjoyed” by citizens. These invariably influence the development ideologies of elected governments. They also shape the beliefs, attitudes, hopes, fears, and aspirations of the learners, parents, and communities that are beneficiaries of a new national school curriculum. In simple terms, a new national school curriculum must be treated as part of a transformative process by which education can better serve the country in achieving national development goals and enabling individuals and communities to realize their aspirations for an improved quality of life. Figures 1 & 2 below illustrate the broad developmental linkages that a curriculum framework should capture at the macro level as well as the micro level, respectively.

Figure 1: Macro-Level Links – Economic Development / Education / Curriculum

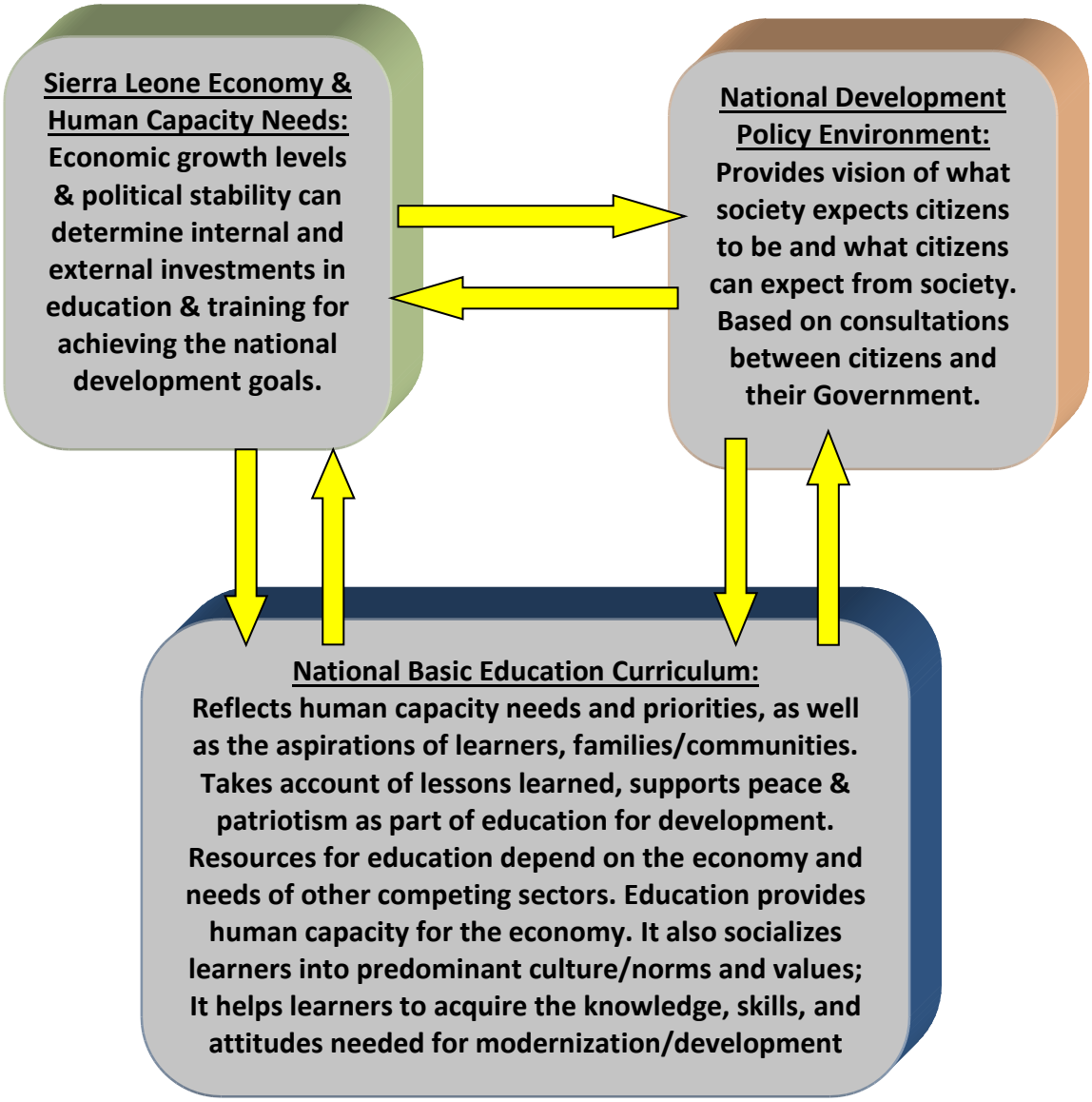
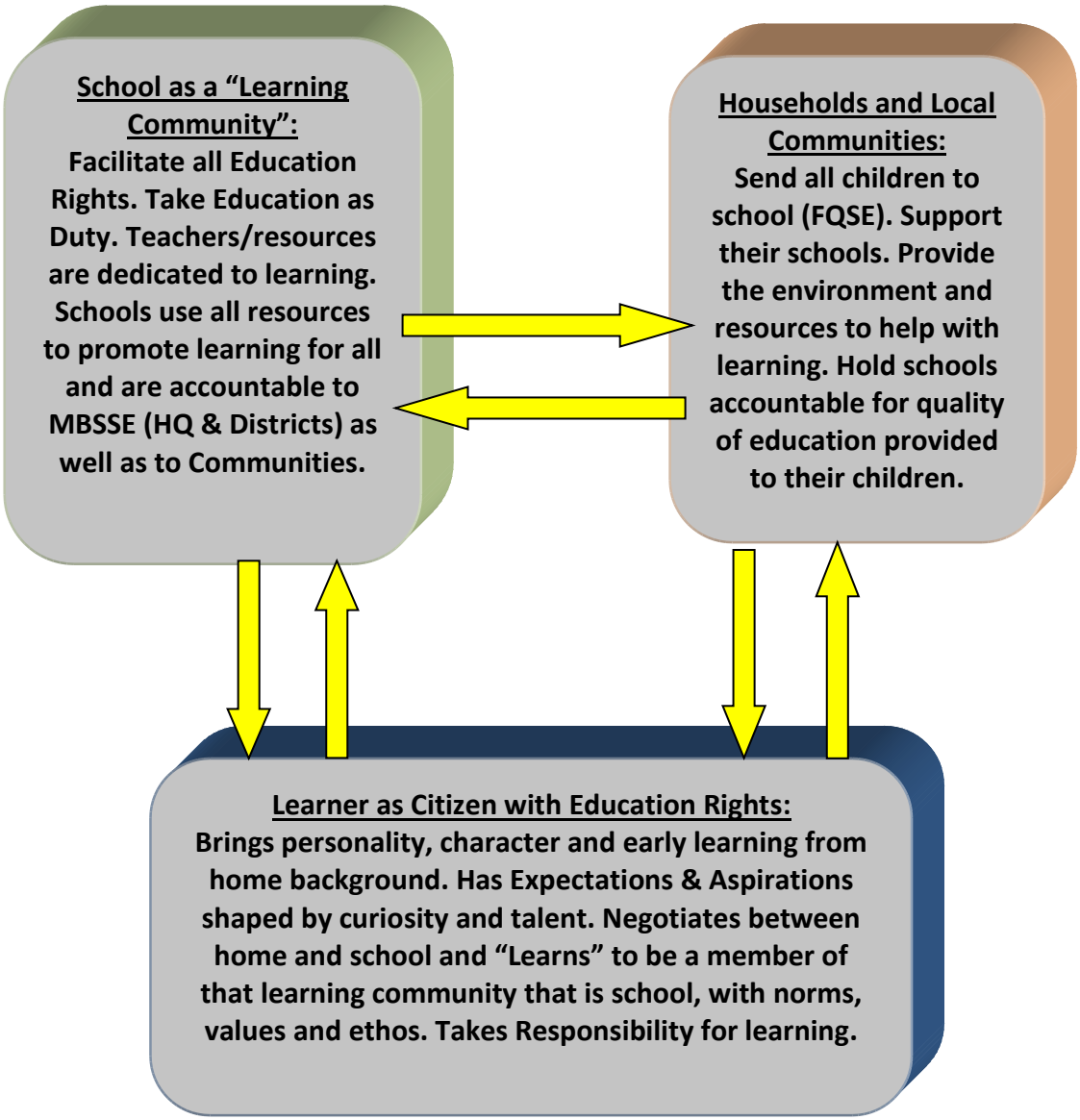


Figure 2: Micro-Level Links – Learners / Schools / Local Communities



1.2. Background and orientation

Through this framework, the Ministry of Basic & Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) has set out parameters for a new basic education curriculum that reflects pedagogical advances and contemporary knowledge for developing human capacity, as well as embodying the vision, priorities, and development goals shared by the Government and People of Sierra Leone. These include inclusive economic growth, increased employment opportunity, equitable participation, and effective learning for all. There is a focus on equity and radical inclusion to support children from poor rural areas and urban slums, as well as orphans, street children, adolescent girls, pregnant girls, and children with disabilities. MBSSE also intends this curriculum to re-kindle confidence in the quality of schools and integrity of the education system. It should transform education for a new generation by restoring rights and responsibilities, developing skills in problem-solving, critical and creative thinking, communication, collaboration and teamwork, and civic engagement, encouraging social cohesion, celebrating diversity, and preventing sexual exploitation and gender-based violence against young people, especially adolescent girls. The new curriculum should also promote radical inclusion by helping to uphold the dignity, aspirations, self-confidence, and self-worth of all learners, and challenging gifted and talented students to thrive.

This framework outlines key features to inform and guide the design and implementation of a new basic education curriculum. These include the legal and policy contexts, the underlying ideologies and key principles, recommended pedagogies and practices, broad subject areas and content, prescribed learning achievements, and the administrative specifications for managing curriculum implementation. In addition, a series of ***Guidance Notes*** are available, to clarify and promote debate on the national priorities for 21st Century Competencies. These are "The 5Cs" listed as: ***Comprehension; Computational Thinking; Critical Thinking; Creativity; and Civic-Mindedness***.

1.3. Historical and Contemporary Contexts

A complicated history of formal education in Sierra Leone has resulted in challenges that a new basic education curriculum must overcome. Up to the end of the 1960s Sierra Leone offered quality education and served as a center of excellence in West Africa, providing secondary and tertiary education to learners from other countries in the region. But this rather elitist system had low enrolment, high disparities, and significant wastage through repetition and drop out. Its curriculum was also narrow, academic, and outdated. This education system failed to cater for the diverse interests and talents of learners or the needs of an industrializing economy and

related job market. This sense of elitism continues to haunt the education system in Sierra Leone and the new basic education curriculum would need to address this problem vigorously.

Education in Sierra Leone is still dominated by rote memorization and "recall" learning and teacher-centered pedagogy, as well as a focus on covering topics in national NPSE and BECE examinations. Schools function to select students for entry to the next level of the education system, rather than to promote learning achievement for diverse children in the system. Public investments continue to subsidize higher education at the expense of expanding and improving basic education or supporting all learners in the pursuit and realization of their diverse talents.

In the 1970s and 1980s, successive governments strived to expand education as well as to diversify and modernize the school curriculum. A series of projects were implemented to build new schools and modernize the curriculum by introducing Social Studies and Population Education (SSPE), Core Course Integrated Science (CCIS) and Modern Mathematics. These projects also diversified the school curriculum with technical and business subjects. Some progress was made, but the economic decline and structural adjustment measures of the 1980s constrained budget allocations to education, making it difficult to sustain these gains. Poor financing led to a decline in quality, whilst growing political instability created uncertainties, undermined norms, and diluted standards in education. The 11-year civil war of the 1990s exacerbated these negative trends, leading to the decline and near collapse of the education system in Sierra Leone. Lessons were learned in shoring up education against great odds and education emerged as a key priority in national reconstruction after the war in the 2000s. Any progress that was being made was halted by the 2014-2016 EVD epidemic. Sierra Leone has now turned the page on this dark period with a new Government embarking on human capital development through education transformation via the bold policy of free quality school education.

1.4. Legal and Policy Contexts

Education in Sierra Leone is regulated by various legal and policy instruments as well as national development strategies and education sector plans formulated by Governments over the years. All of these have implications for a transformative agenda that seeks to plot a new direction for development by articulating emerging needs and aspirations of citizens. The most recent of these policy instruments is the Free Quality School Education (FQSE) introduced in 2018.

A distillation of legal and policy instruments indicates a range of critical implications for a new basic education curriculum, as summarized in Chart 1 below.

Chart 1: Instruments Regulating Education in Sierra Leone

LEGAL-POLICY INSTRUMENT	PROVISIONS & IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CURRICULUM IN SIERRA LEONE
The 1991 Constitution	Treats education as national development instrument. Commits the Government to equal rights and provision of education for all citizens at all levels (primary, secondary, vocational, colleges, universities). More specifically it states that the Government should develop policies that provide free and compulsory basic education at primary and junior secondary levels as and when practical.
The Education Act of 2004	States that "every citizen of Sierra Leone shall have the right to basic education" and makes primary and junior secondary school compulsory. Provides legal basis for the 6-3-3-4 structure of 1995. One goal is "to enable citizens to understand the complexities and opportunities of the modern world". It emphasizes whole child, not just cognitive dimension. It also provides for local governing bodies in the form of School Boards and School Management Committees (SMCs).
The Local Government Act (2004)	Provides for the transfer of management and supervision responsibilities for basic education, from central government to local government.
The Child Rights Act (2007)	Makes education rights binding in the laws of Sierra Leone for commitments relating to the United Nations convention on the rights of the child (CRC), and the African charter on the rights and welfare of the child.
National Education Policy (2010)	States the goal of education as "to develop citizens that can contribute to building a cohesive, healthy, and strong nation with a sustainable and dynamic economy; a free, just and peace-loving society; a democratic and harmonious society; and a moral and disciplined society".
White Paper on Education (2010)	Provides for: reduction of class size; performance contracts for head teachers and principals; and library facilities in every school.
TSC Act (2011)	Shifts responsibility for teachers from Ministry to Teaching Service Commission, with a mandate to "manage the affairs of teachers in order to improve their professional status and economic wellbeing and for other related matters".
FQSE (Free Quality School Education)	Began in the 2018/2019 school year in September 2018; seeks to remove financial barriers to attending school while ensuring that students learn under the supervision of trained and qualified teachers with the right facilities and equipment; the government presents a per student block grant to all approved government and government-assisted schools and enforces that schools do not charge fees; the block grants are supposed to substitute for school fees and cover running expenses such as salaries for non-teaching staff, paying for facilities maintenance and basic materials. The government also provides educational materials directly to schools, including textbooks for core subjects, supplies to students and teachers, and will cover examination fees.

1.5. Ideologies that Underpin the New Basic Education Curriculum

There are at least four sets of ideologies that are presented in this framework as underpinning elements for the new national basic education curriculum. Some of these ideologies reflect the Government's FQSE policy and its vision and priorities for a new direction in national development. Others are based on cutting-edge technical knowledge in the field of education and development as well as the latest developments in learning theory and pedagogy. These ideologies are briefly outlined in this section to inform and guide work on the design, implementation, and management of the new basic education curriculum.

1.5.1. Rights-Based Ideologies

Sierra Leone is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and other conventions that guarantee education as a fundamental right, such as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). National commitment to these conventions has been enshrined in its Child Rights Act (CRA) of 2007, which makes education rights binding in national law and prohibits discrimination. Education rights have been further consolidated and given practical significance with the FQSE policy of the new Government. MBSSE intends the new curriculum to embody a "radical inclusion" approach that facilitates education as a right for all Sierra Leonean children and adolescents in three ways.

1.5.1.1. The Right to Education

In line with Government's policy, all children in Sierra Leone have the right to access school, attend regularly and complete nine years of basic education to achieve the learning prescribed in the curriculum. This right is violated if children are not enrolled in school; or drop out before completing nine years of basic education; or fail to achieve much in terms of the prescribed learning. Barriers persist in access and completion of basic education despite much progress with expanding enrolment and the recent reversal, by the MBSSE Minister, of the policy which prevented visibly pregnant girls from attending school. Learners from low income households, children with disabilities, and street children are most likely to be out of school. Similarly, children in remote rural areas are affected more than those in urban areas, and girls are still worse off than boys in completion of basic education.

Gender parity in access remains a challenge due to household preferences that favour boys, and cultural practices such as early marriage, and household chores that restrict girls' participation in education. Girls have become even more vulnerable with deepening poverty,

erosion of social norms and standards of behaviour, as well as interruptions to schooling and the protection it offers. These deficits have led to erosion of education rights as well as moral apathy and lawlessness and contributed to sexual exploitation and gender-based violence against adolescent girls. Another concern is that education rights of children with disabilities are not being addressed. The traumatic events of the recent past (civil war, Ebola, etc.) have exacerbated both the aforementioned issues with a rise in numbers of child amputees, children with other physical disabilities, children with various forms of psychological and mental disabilities, and a high number of adolescent mothers who had become pregnant during the Ebola crisis when schools were forced to close for significant periods.

1.5.1.2. Rights in Education

The way in which children are treated in school determines if they have a fair chance to learn. Schools must provide a conducive learning environment that welcomes all children, respects their rights, treats them equitably, seeks their best interests, safeguards their health, ensures their well-being and security, protects them from exploitation, uses fair and transparent rules, and provides adequate resources for learning. If schools do not offer these conditions, then children's rights ***in education*** are being put at risk. They are more likely to have a negative experience of schooling and may drop out or fail to achieve their learning potential.

MBSSE intends the curriculum to be implemented fairly and equitably, with non-discriminatory school environments that are conducive to learning and promote a chance for every child to learn. MBSSE shall facilitate radical inclusion through principles of quality with equity to ensure that all children can enjoy their "rights in education". MBSSE is committed to safeguarding "rights in education" for all vulnerable children, especially those with disabilities and pregnant girls and parent learners who may need special provisions for full integration into mainstream education, and adolescent girls who may need protection from sexual exploitation and gender-based violence.

1.5.1.3. Rights through Education

Education is a basic right enshrined in law in Sierra Leone. But it is also a right through which other rights are realized. Citizenship rights relating to democratic participation in governance require basic literacy and numeracy. Education also gives citizens "voice" in affairs of the nation, making them aware of their rights/responsibilities and enabling them to hold their governments accountable. Similarly, the right to work and secure a livelihood depends on education and training. When schooling does not open the door to these other rights, children are denied their "***rights through education"***. E.g. if indoctrination takes place in schools, or if learners are not empowered to make informed choices on healthy relationships or sexual and reproductive health issues. Also, if children leave school unable to read and write, as often

happens, they are functionally illiterate and cannot take advantage of the other rights that education usually leads to. MBSSE expects that basic education in Sierra Leone should lead to an individual becoming a functional citizen who can achieve their fullest potential to participate fully in the economic, social, political, and cultural life of the local community and the nation. Without such an outcome, learners would have been deprived of their ***"rights through education"*** and much of the investments in education would also have been wasted. It is therefore important for practitioners to link the design and implementation of the new basic education curriculum to the requirements for participating fully in real life roles and activities of modern Sierra Leone.

1.5.2. Economic & Human Capacity Ideologies: Human Capital Development

A major rationale for public investment in education has always been the expected economic benefits in terms of a trained/competent work force for industrialization and modernization. The government regards this as a pivotal contribution of education to development in Sierra Leone and has, therefore, placed human capital development (HCD) through free quality school education at the centre of its Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019 – 2023, positing HCD as "…the most fundamental pathway to achieving middle income sustainable development for the country in the not too distant future" (H.E Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone). The aim of HCD is, therefore, to generate a critical mass of highly educated, skilled, and trained Sierra Leoneans with the capacity to undertake research for development, start productive businesses, and deliver better leadership and services in the public sector (NDP). Growth in foreign direct investments (FDI) to exploit natural resources and establish industries in various sectors imply a need for competent personnel to fill various positions. There will also be a need for educated, trained and enterprising nationals to create jobs related to servicing these growing industries and benefiting from the "backward linkages" of industrialization. Given its ambitious development goals, and the need to attract further FDI, Sierra Leone would need to maximise its human capacity through education and training. MBSSE regards the policy of FQSE as a potential harbinger of inclusive growth and equitable distribution of wealth in Sierra Leone. Curriculum design should therefore ensure that the majority of those who complete basic education can continue to learn and enhance their competencies, as well as being able to seize opportunities and secure a fitting livelihood within a growing economy.

1.5.3. Socio-Cultural Ideologies

Education is the principal means that all societies have for transmitting culture to their young, as well as to equip the next generation with the means to advance and transform culture. MBSSE expects that the new basic education curriculum will initiate children into the norms,

values, and practices of Sierra Leone's rich and diverse culture. The curriculum should be designed to make young people appreciate and practice what it means to be a Sierra Leonean. They should celebrate and be proud of the religious and ethnic diversities that make for such a vibrant culture. The curriculum must enable young people to support cultural change with support for positive values and practices whilst avoiding negative or harmful practices.

In addition, MBSSE is aware of the growing cultural re-awakening in Sierra Leone and Africa. Spurred by expansion of social media and communications technologies, young people are now embracing, popularising, recreating, expanding, and revitalizing their cultural heritage in areas like music, dance, literature, theatre, religion, design, fashion, art and craft, food and cuisine, etc. Increasingly also these cultural areas provide livelihoods for young people and contribute to economic development. MBSSE expects the new curriculum to foster these positive trends.

1.5.4. Socio-Political Ideologies

MBSSE intends that the new basic education curriculum should ensure that Sierra Leoneans do not repeat the tragedy of civil war that ravaged communities, ruined the economy, and almost wiped out the education system. The UNESCO Charter argues that since it is in the hearts of men and women that the seeds of war are sown; it is in the minds of men and women that we must plant the seeds of peace. Basic education should help to unite successive generations of learners around the common good of development. Disagreements are inevitable, and can even be productive for good governance, but they must be handled through the peaceful and democratic means afforded to all by the Constitution.

2. Key Priorities and Principles for Basic Education in Sierra Leone

2.1. Key Priorities for the New Basic Education Curriculum

Successive Governments have been committed to providing quality basic education for all children in Sierra Leone in the expectation that education will help to address development priorities such as those outlined in this section. These priorities should therefore be consistently built into the design, implementation, and management of the new basic education curriculum.

2.1.1. Cultivating Talents and Fulfilling Aspirations

Basic education should help to unleash the potential of successive generations, so they can fulfil their own aspirations and contribute to national development. Lack of attention to the interests and talents of the young can frustrate them, alienate them from school, and generate a sense of unfairness. This brings risks of increased tension and conflict in society. MBSSE expects schools to identify and help cultivate the different talents of pupils, rather than force them into a straitjacket of fixed subjects and rigid academic examinations. MBSSE considers it imperative for basic education to equip students with competencies that make them creative/enterprising and prepared for further learning as well as for the world of work. Basic education must enable young people to identify and have confidence in their own abilities and talents, as well as to understand that there are multiple pathways leading to successful careers in life. The new curriculum must make it possible for Sierra Leone to benefit from the myriad talents of all its adolescents and youths, rather than adhering to a blind elitism that alienates many young people by restricting success to so-called academic pursuits. MBSSE expects the new curriculum to move beyond the restrictions of a purely academic orientation. Practitioners should use prescribed subjects to promote technological and ICT literacy as well as competencies relating to the business world. It would be unacceptable for young people to complete nine years of basic education and not understand “how things work” in technology, or how business is done by entrepreneurs, or how to be successful by seizing opportunities in the technological and business environment of Sierra Leone. These indicators of success must be reflected in the NPSE and BECE examinations.

2.1.2. Nurturing a Problem-Solving Culture

MBSSE intends that basic education should orient learners to understand the critical principle that development is ultimately about people and human capacity to solve problems that inhibit progress. In pedagogical terms, problem solving involves capacity to engage in computational

thinking, critical and creative thinking, and utilizing knowledge creatively to understand and deal with challenges that do not appear to have obvious solutions. It entails use of cognitive, affective, psycho-motor, and motivational aspects of learning. So, the curriculum should build self-confidence of learners and equip them with problem-solving skills for daily life and for contributing to community and national development. Basic education should help students to develop a new outlook and approach to life, shifting from dependency to self-reliance. They must act with the knowledge that sustainable development requires individuals, communities, and nations to take charge of their own destiny and be responsible for solving their problems.

Basic education should help to end the "any excuse" mentality for not taking action and replace it with a "can do" attitude that thrives on solving problems. The curriculum should empower learners for operating in a creative and knowledge-based economy; making them willing to embrace change and challenge stereotypes. Learners must be educated to be creative in finding solutions and to learn from their mistakes/failures. Curriculum design should help learners understand, for example: the rules for doing business; the value of experimenting with ideas; the risks of starting new things; and the advantages of utilizing local resources and talents.

2.1.3. Promoting Peace Building and Political Stability

Sierra Leone has learned from bitter experience that the hard-won gains of development which took years of investment and sacrifice to achieve can be destroyed within a very short period of time, when political and socio-economic problems are allowed to degenerate into violent civil conflict. If these mistakes are not to be repeated by future generations, then basic education must promote a sense of belonging for all young people, enabling them to have a voice and a stake in a democratic society that provides a fair chance for all to succeed. The curriculum must empower young people with knowledge, attitudes, skills, and civic values on political stability, democratic governance, social coherence and peace building, peaceful resolution of conflicts, fairness and transparency, as well as truth and reconciliation for social justice.

These issues may be dealt with as part of certain subject areas in the syllabus, and the design of the curriculum should take this into account. However, the intention is that students must learn from real-life practices such as: how schools are organized, how learners are treated, and how schools function (as "learning communities"). Such "experiential learning" will have a greater impact on students than conventional teaching. It can shape their attitudes and values for life.

MBSSE will encourage, support, and facilitate efforts by schools to create environments that promote peace and stability in schools and communities, as well as encouraging fairness in relationships amongst learners, between learners and teachers, amongst teachers, between school heads and teachers, and between schools and the communities they serve. MBSSE will

also encourage schools to become "learning communities" that exemplify such values in their structure, organization, management, and general institutional ethos.

2.1.4. Responding to Emerging issues & Perennial Concerns

One of the challenges for keeping the curriculum relevant is that it should be dynamic and respond to both current and emerging issues of concern to society. It cannot ignore the imperative and perennial issues that pre-occupy society, but it must also cater for likely changes in what concerns society. It is difficult to provide for all this simultaneously in the curriculum. For instance, Sierra Leone is currently in the grip of an existential crisis from the COVID-19 pandemic that threatens all countries, and its full economic consequences are not yet understood. Back in 2014, the threat was from the world's worst outbreak of an Ebola Virus Disease which was previously unknown in West Africa. Going further back there has been the preoccupation with peace building in the aftermath of a destructive eleven-year civil war. Then there is the perennial concern in dealing with poverty and endemic corruption as impediments to national development.

All of this means that the national basic education curriculum must be designed such that the prescribed subject areas and associated content, pedagogical styles, and supplementary learning materials can be used to address perennial and emerging issues that are of most concern in Sierra Leone. For example, the Ebola crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic caused prolonged school closures that necessitated curricular and pedagogical adaptations in order to provide students with continuous distance learning opportunities—for example, condensed curriculum content material was taught by veteran teachers through interactive radio and TV programmes, mobile phone applications such as WhatsApp and SMS, and computer. All teachers should be trained and supported to use these innovative pedagogies to complement traditional teaching methods in the teaching and learning of curriculum content. In addition to such existential issues, areas of current concern which the curriculum must address include: food security; adolescent pregnancy; gender-based violence; youth unemployment; climate change and environmental protection; inclusive growth, equitable wealth distribution, career guidance, AI/ICT literacy, and financial literacy.

2.2. General Guiding Principles for the Basic Education Curriculum

In designing, implementing, and managing the basic education curriculum, practitioners must be guided by a variety of educational principles that are pertinent to the Sierra Leone context.

2.2.1. Learning across Conventional School Subjects

Much of the learning that is essential for basic education in Sierra Leone does not always fit easily into a single subject or discipline as conventionally taught in schools. For instance, learning to deal with gender and sexuality issues or managing risky health behaviours would need to be covered through a number of subjects such as integrated science, social studies, and physical health education, etc. This can also be done through appropriate stories in language classes and in supplementary learning materials (readers, comics, plays, CDs/DVDs, online resources, etc.). In some cases, such as Life Skills or sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), it is required (by definition) that learning must cut across conventional subjects by being "mainstreamed" into the curriculum.

Providing learning across conventional subjects or mainstreaming learning into the curriculum offers the advantage of a holistic approach to learning. It also makes it likely that learners can better relate what they learn to the real world rather than treating it simply as material for passing examinations in a school subject. In general, this approach enables practitioners to ensure that essential learning is not only covered within a subject syllabus, but also repeated and reinforced across several subjects in the school curriculum.

For this to be successful, practitioners should avoid "fragmented learning" across subjects by using projects, homework, class tests, etc.; that require learners to draw on the knowledge and skills gained from different subjects. Also, provision of supplementary materials that draw from different subjects to provide information, entertainment and knowledge on the key issues will make the approach feasible. So, MBSSE will encourage and support use of supplementary materials on social media, family life, peace building, career paths, sexual and reproductive health, teenage pregnancy, life skills, health pandemics, cultural diversity, social media, etc.

2.2.2. Learning from School/Classroom Practices

Some of the essential learning recommended for basic education in Sierra Leone includes areas like empathy, justice, peace and democracy, human rights, health, and environment. These can be part of the syllabus in one or more conventional subject areas. However, practitioners should also be open to the possibility that these are often best learned by experiencing actual practices in schools and classrooms. Teaching democracy through prescribed subject areas may get learners to pass examinations, but this is not why these elements are in the school curriculum. Alternatively, schools can function along democratic lines, enabling pupils to organise and participate in elections for their class monitors and school prefects; or to exercise "voice" in the decisions that affect them in school as part of grievance redress mechanisms. Such schools will also have rules and regulations that are fair and transparent, with avenues for

complaints and redress when necessary. Learners who experience such school practices will likely develop an understanding and appreciation of democracy-in-practice that will influence their personal values and approach to life in general. Through such practices many schools can serve as incubators for a culture of peace and democracy in Sierra Leone. Such outcomes are more important than passing written tests and examinations on "peace and democracy".

Similarly learning related to human rights can be effectively promoted in "rights-respecting" schools where learners are treated with due dignity and mutual respect, rather than being bullied, humiliated, preyed upon or exploited. Also, schools that organise voluntary activities in the community can teach children much more about civic duties than they would learn through didactic teaching of Civics as a subject. Practitioners should treat such "learning-in-practice" as effective and efficient ways to deal with various perennial and emerging issues in society.

2.2.3. Emphasis on Learner-centered Pedagogy

This curriculum framework places new demands on teachers and learners, with a shift in the traditional mind-set around teacher-centred pedagogy. The new basic education is not so much about "topics to be taught" by the teacher, but more about "learning to be achieved" by the students. Hence teachers must shift from simply being transmitters of knowledge to facilitators of learning; and learners must no longer be treated as passive recipients of knowledge from an all-knowing teacher. Learners must become active participants in the teaching-learning process through which they achieve expected learning outcomes in the curriculum. These principles have implications for institutions under the Ministry of Technical & Higher Education (MTHE) that provide pre-service and in-service teacher education & training for the new curriculum.

MBSSE believes, in conjunction with TSC, that these institutions should now focus on preparing teachers for learner-centred pedagogy and a teaching style that helps students to understand, value, and act on what they learn. This new breed of teachers will need to be supported with school-based strategies for continuous professional development (CPD). So, MBSSE and TSC will guide/support districts to establish school clusters that can serve as platforms for a variety of school-based continuous professional development programmes. These may be "mentoring networks" led or supervised by experienced educators and subject experts; or peer-to-peer learning groups and communities of practice (CoPs) formed by teachers' subject associations.

2.2.4. Competencies at Different levels of Knowledge

Education in Sierra Leone is dominated by recall learning due to the high-stakes examinations which determine progress from one level of education to the next. Recall learning is not the same as understanding, valuing, and using what is learned for quality living. To promote quality in basic education, MBSSE proposes that learners should be assessed for different levels of

knowledge and understanding. This is in line with rigorous curriculum design processes that are advocated for in so-called "Depth of Knowledge" models as well as in revised versions of Bloom's "Cognitive Process Domain" (Chart 2). These modern curriculum design models suggest that for quality learning students must not only be able to remember (recall), but must also be able to demonstrate that they: understand, can apply, can analyse, can evaluate and can create as a result of their learning experiences. Beyond this cognitive dimension, quality learning entails that students should be able to incorporate what they learn into their personal world view and value system (Valuing) in an appropriate manner. Quality learning also requires that students should be able to decipher practical implications of what they learn and to use this in their everyday life, especially for solving complex problems and civic engagements that are driven by well-examined selected values.

This guiding principle means that there must be close alignment of the curriculum content, teaching style, and assessment methods in basic education. Content should be stated in varying depths to reflect the levels of cognition/competence to be achieved by students. This makes it possible to work out the teaching styles most likely to elicit student learning at the required depths. The mode of assessment should also be aligned to the content and teaching style so that learners' progress can be measured in terms of depth of cognition/competence achieved. Formative assessment by teachers during the school year can be used to adjust teaching styles and raise students' performance. In this way, students across the country can progressively be prepared for national assessments in the early years (EGRA/EGMA) and at the end of the primary cycle (NPSE) as well as at the end of JSS (BECE).

Chart 2: Summary of Revised Bloom's Cognitive Process Domain (with Examples)

REMEMBER	UNDERSTAND	APPLY	ANALYSE	EVALUATE	CREATE
Recall; Retrieve knowledge from Long-Term memory; Locate; Identify; Recognize;	**Construct meaning; Clarify; Paraphrase**	**Carry out or use a procedure in given situation; Use or carry out in a familiar context; Apply in situation that is unfamiliar**	**Break into parts; Say how the parts relate; Organise; Differentiate the relevant from the irrelevant; Focus; Distinguish; Find Coherence; Select Outline; Rebuild**	**Judgements to be made on basis of clear criteria; Detect Inconsistencies or Fallacies; Judge; Critique**	**Reorganise into new pattern or structure; make hypothesis; synthesize; design; plan; construct; produce**
SOME EXAMPLES OF TYPICAL LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS IN EACH CATEGORY					
Recite: a poem; multiplication	**Explain story, clarify poem,**	**Use formula in the correct way, apply**	**Organise formula into key parts,**	**Say if True or False; relevant**	**Write a poem, compose a song,**

tables; standard definitions; etc. State: principles and formulae in maths/science;	**summarize, interpret, convert math formula into words,**	**a rule in maths, calculate answers, measure, observe, record findings in science**	**criticise writing, extract key points from a narrative, deduce essence of a story/poem**	**or irrelevant, good or bad, useful or not, judge moral of a story**	**set out a plan, translate words into figures for a maths problem, paint a picture,**

2.2.5. Equity and Inclusion

Successive Governments have supported the principle of equity in education and the MBSSE is committed to ensuring that every child has a fair chance to learn and to achieve what is prescribed in the curriculum. All learners irrespective of social origin, gender, disability, or other status should be able to enjoy their education rights and achieve their potential, in line with the provisions of Free Quality School Education (FQSE) and the Education Act of 2004. MBSSE shall therefore support access and integration in mainstream education of children with disabilities and learners with other special needs. MBSSE shall also support measures and practices to reduce gender disparity in schools/schooling and in the teacher workforce, as well as gender bias in the school curriculum. It will support fair deployment of qualified teachers and equitable distribution of pedagogical resources, facilities, and equipment to all 16 districts in the country.

2.2.6. Assessment and Accountability

Assessment in Sierra Leone is dominated by high stakes examinations like NPSE and BECE, that have a detrimental backwash effect on school-based assessments. The primary purpose of homework, class tests, and annual examinations in schools should be to determine areas of strength and weakness, to provide students with remedial support they may need. In addition, such assessment should help teachers improve their performance in promoting learning. It should also enable schools to add value to the capacities and competencies of learners. MBSSE believes that if the curriculum is implemented effectively and national examinations test what is prescribed in the curriculum, then these school-based assessments should help all students to make steady progress towards success in the NPSE and BECE examinations. Currently NPSE and BECE dictate what happens in school-based assessment, by their power to select some learners for the next stage, whilst condemning the rest as failures with little prospects for advancing in life. This cannot be the purpose of assessment in a system that guarantees nine years of quality basic education for all.

Practitioners should not be obsessed with preparations for NPSE and BECE. They should instead be focussed on expected learning outcomes in the curriculum and how teachers/schools will know if such learning has been achieved to an adequate depth (assessment). Focus should also

be on how the teachers will operate for students to learn what is prescribed (pedagogical style); and what should be done with students who do not know (cannot do) what they are supposed to have learned (revision or remedial support?). These issues must be aligned in the design of the curriculum, and appropriate depth of knowledge in given topics/themes/activities must be specified for the class level involved. In designing the curriculum, practitioners should also be aware that failure to achieve the prescribed learning is not just about the students being poor learners. It can be due to misalignment between assessment and learning outcomes, teaching styles and learning outcomes, teaching styles and assessment modes, as well as inadequate remedial intervention. These alignments must be strengthened in curriculum design.

MBSSE wants schools to be accountable to their students as well as to their local communities. Students have a right to know what they are supposed to learn and how they will be assessed. They should have a fair sense of when they are succeeding and when they need to make more effort to succeed. So, regular and constructive feedback from the teachers (homework/tests) as well as from the schools (report cards and annual results) are important if students are to take more responsibility for their learning. Similarly, parents have a right to know if their children are making progress or wasting time in school. MBSSE expects schools to build bonds with their communities, to provide parents with information on what schools are doing well or failing to do well as well as to ensure that children receive the support they need at home for learning.

2.2.7. Quality and Integrity

MBSSE will ensure the quality of the basic education curriculum through a commitment to relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency as key determinants of quality. For relevance, the basic education curriculum must be responsive to individual, community, and national aspirations. It should empower learners with the knowledge, skills, and values they need to contribute to progress in Sierra Leone society. Basic education shall prepare students not only for further learning in post-basic institutions, but also for service to their communities and for entry to the world of work (emergent industries, enterprise, or self-employment). The drive for relevance must also include new areas such as ICT and Artificial Intelligence (AI), so learners can be computer/digitally literate and exploit the benefits of a fast-growing industry for personal and national development. All learning areas proposed in this framework reflect a concern with relevance, and MBSSE will support periodic reviews to ensure that new/emerging issues are incorporated in the national school curriculum.

For effectiveness and efficiency, schools must deliver on the learning that is prescribed and promised in the curriculum (effectiveness) and must make the best use of available resources in facilitating learning (efficiency). It is this combination of effectiveness and efficiency, together with relevance, that are the key determinants of quality in education. What is offered in quality

schools cannot simply be about academic subjects in themselves. The content and the way it is implemented must relate to the interests and aspirations of learners, as well as to the needs of communities and to national development goals. Similarly, the curriculum needs to be realistic, with a fair chance for schools to deliver on the learning that is prescribed and promised in the syllabus. This implies that staff and resources should be equitably available, so that all schools can deliver on what the curriculum promises. Since resources are finite, schools have to make efficient use of what is available, to deliver the prescribed learning for quality education.

Besides quality of education MBSSE is concerned with broader issues of integrity of the whole education system. One of the negative effects over the years is erosion of the norms and values that define standards in schools, education systems, and public institutions generally. This has led to weak institutions and systems, which are being replaced by personalities, privileges, and patronage. When this happens, laws are circumvented, rules are flouted, cheating becomes a means of getting ahead, professionalism is abandoned, and impunity becomes commonplace in society. The education system in Sierra Leone continues to be affected by its fair share of such negative factors that affect the integrity of public institutions. Loss of integrity can undermine the fabric of a democratic and peaceful society in which people expect state institutions and systems to be fair and transparent in delivering public services such as education. Loss of faith in the integrity of the system can also be a recipe for the type of chaos and conflict that the new basic education curriculum is intended to help prevent in the country.

MBSSE expects that the new national curriculum will enhance the quality of basic education in Sierra Leone and restore the integrity of the education system. Central to this is the issue of teacher professionalism, which is addressed in chapter 5. It is vital for Sierra Leone to have teachers who are not only competent and committed, but who are also widely respected as professionals and who can be entrusted with the challenge of shaping the attitudes, values and competencies of the next generation by their professional work as facilitators of learning.

2.2.8. Partnerships and Stakeholder Roles

The FQSE programme can only succeed through strong partnerships involving all stakeholders dealing with education. To make basic education work for all, it is critical that contributions should be made by different partners and that all stakeholders should play their appropriate roles effectively and efficiently. The most important aspect of partnerships for success involves coordination between key entities (MBSSE/TSC/MTHE) at HQ and district levels. Partnership roles are elaborated in section 7 of this curriculum framework.

2.2.9. Social Cohesion and Celebration of Diversity

Sierra Leone is a small but richly diverse society with at least fourteen ethnic groups making up the population of seven million citizens. The new curriculum needs to foster attitudes and values that contribute to social cohesion, not only through tolerance and mutual respect, but also by appreciating and celebrating the country's ethnic and religious diversity. The basic education curriculum should help to cultivate a sense of national pride and identity in learners, rather than adherence to narrow or divisive ethnic and other partisan interests or causes.

A culture of peace is critical for building a social cohesion in society. The curriculum should therefore nurture and promote values of peace, respect for diversity, equity, justice for all, and non-violence. Learners need to acquire skills for peaceful resolution of their differences. Basic education should help learners explore divisive issues by viewing them through three lenses or habits of mind: *Open-mindedness, fair- mindedness, and full-mindedness*. **Open-mindedness** is a willingness to consider different ideas, different perspectives, and alternative ways of looking at people, places, events, and issues. This recognizes differences in points of view and the rights of others to hold points of view that are different from students' own. **Fair-mindedness** is the inclination to give a fair hearing to other points of view, to judge matters on the basis of their own merits and not simply in terms of our own interests, biases, preferences, and affiliations. It includes a willingness and ability to empathize with others, to place oneself in the place and predicament of others or at least to imagine issues from their perspective. Empathy does not mean that we must agree with positions taken by others or be supportive in all cases; it simply requires that we try to understand in a vivid way what others think and how they feel. Empathy does not imply moral relativism or an "anything goes" attitude. Learners may still judge that certain practices are undesirable or unappealing. But, as the adage suggests, we shouldn't condemn others until we have walked in their shoes. **Full-mindedness** is the inclination to make up one's mind on the basis of adequate understanding of the whole story rather than leaping to conclusions or settling for simplistic/incomplete explanations. It helps students to develop two traits: a) anticipating complexity which is the inclination to look beyond simplistic accounts of complex issues and to look for ramifications and inter-connections, and to see phenomena as part of a constellation of inter-related factors; and (b) suspending judgment when warranted. This means a willingness, when dealing with complex matters, to delay reaching firm conclusion until varying viewpoints and related evidence have been considered. When learners can explore divisive issues through the lenses of open-mindedness, fair-mindedness, and full-mindedness, they can help to build a fair and just society for all.

3. Structure and Organisation of basic Education in Sierra Leone

3.1. Structure of Basic Education in Context

The structure of education in Sierra Leone comprises of a year of pre-school, six years of primary school and three years of junior secondary school (JSS), followed by three years of senior secondary school (SSS) and four years of tertiary education. Within this structure, basic education can be understood in relation to its contributing entities as shown below in Chart 3:

Chart 3: Contributing Entities for Basic Education in Sierra Leone

a) **ECCD Centers/Projects and Pre-Schools: prepare children for school from around 3 years of age, up to when they are due to start school at the age of 6 years.**

b) **Primary Schools: comprised of a 6-year cycle of schooling that provides children with the skills for learning (literacy & numeracy) as well as a basic opportunity to learn in prescribed core subject areas.**

c) **Junior Secondary Schools (JSS): comprising a 3-year cycle of schooling that enhances learning achieved in primary and prepares learners for further learning or careers aligned with their interests and talents.**

d) **Teacher Training Institutions (TTIs): responsible for pre-service training of teachers with oversight from Tertiary Education Council (TEC); also do some in-service training of existing teachers in Sierra Leone.**

e) **West African Examinations Council (WAEC): an autonomous body dealing with learning assessment and quality assurance in West Africa. It conducts the NPSE and BECE examinations for basic education.**

f) **Ministry of Basic & Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE): the main policy making, oversight, governance and management entity for basic and senior secondary education in Sierra Leone.**

g) **Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE): governance and oversight of Higher Education, TVET institutions and Teacher Training (TTIs) in conjunction with Tertiary Education Commission (TEC).**

h) **Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MoLGRD): Oversight of 16 districts that are now responsible for managing basic education under the 2004 Education Act.**

i) **Teaching Service Commission (TSC): mandated by 2011 Act to recruit, deploy and manage the affairs of teachers, to improve their professional status & economic wellbeing, and for all other related matters.**

A curriculum for early childhood education has already been developed and MBSSE supports a year of pre-school education (linked to primary schools) for all children. It will also buttress early childhood care for children aged 3 – 6 years in collaboration with the Health sector and

the Social Welfare sector. In general, MBSSE will encourage, support, and facilitate provision of quality ECCD and pre-school programs for 3-6-year-old children, in partnership with providers such as NGOs, CBOs, Faith-Based Organizations, parents' groups, and external entities. TSC will also facilitate training & development of care-givers and ECD tutors as part of its role in teacher development and management.

Primary education consists of six years and enrolls children between the ages of 6 and 12. It is divided into lower primary (classes 1-3) and upper primary (classes 4-6). After these six years learners take the National Primary School Examination (NPSE). This is used to select learners for entry into the limited number of Junior Secondary Schools available in the country. Essentially the NPSE is a rationing mechanism to allocate an inadequate number of JSS places to learners who have completed the 6-year primary cycle. It is also used by junior secondary schools to decide which students to accept, based on NPSE scores. This perpetuates an elitist syndrome in which every year the best JSS schools admit primary school students with the best NPSE scores.

This seems meritocratic but is actually counter to the policy of quality basic education for all children on an equitable basis. The use of NPSE as a rationing mechanism violates the rights of some children to nine years of basic education. Also, allowing so-called good JSS schools to admit only the best pupils from primary schools continues the perverse elitism that needs to be broken for equity in the education system. In principle all those who complete primary school should be able to enter JSS based on a combination of criteria rather than just having good schools taking in the best pupils from the primary level. Moreover, MBSSE is convinced that good JSS schools should be able to admit pupils with poor NPSE results and groom them for success. School quality can be measured by the value-added when a school admits poor performing pupils and gets them to become successful learners. There is little virtue in schools claiming to be "good schools" when they have the best teachers, best facilities, and the most resources; and then insist on admitting only pupils with the best NPSE results.

MBSSE shall partner with potential providers to ensure there are enough JSS places to admit all pupils who complete primary school. Also, whilst the NPSE will continue to be administered at the end of the primary cycle, it will increasingly be used for diagnostic purposes. This will enable Junior Secondary Schools to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the pupils that they admit and to plan how best to promote learning effectively and efficiently. MBSSE will also encourage and support junior secondary schools that add the most value in terms of moving pupils from being poor performing NPSE students to becoming high achieving JSS students.

Junior Secondary School education consists of three classes (Forms 1, 2, and 3). The normative age bracket for JSS is 12-15 years-of-age. This is also a vital period in the human life cycle that heralds significant changes for young adolescents, in terms of their physical maturity, cognitive

growth, behavior formation, emotional change, and enhanced skills sets. They also experience hormonal changes (e.g. puberty), which affect self-identity and personality in terms of gender and sexuality. Cognitively, adolescents also start to understand multiple identities as members of a family, community, and nation, as well as their race, ethnicity, and religion. At this stage, education helps cultivate a healthy sense of loyalty and patriotism in young people. It can also help to develop tolerance as well as appreciation and celebration of the rich national diversity of the country. But practitioners should also be aware that in this phase, as adolescents form relationships with peers, authority figures and younger children, they also begin to understand their rights and responsibilities. As such they will assert their independence, question things, push boundaries, take risks, and show heightened curiosity; as well as becoming concerned for their future. They will also begin to identify with role models, take pride in their individuality, develop a sense of identity, and envisage who/what they want to become in future.

It is at this critical stage that education should contribute to positive development of young people; otherwise society risks losing them to more negative influences. Given the complex changes they are going through, adolescents will have particular needs relating to: health and personal hygiene; gender and sexuality; sex education; emotional competencies, self-efficacy; comprehension skills; and many other traits that will stand them in good stead as they develop. MBSSE expects that the new curriculum will cater for these particular adolescent requirements through the prescribed subject areas as well as through supplementary materials and teaching and learning activities. MBSSE will also ensure zero tolerance for any form of sexual exploitation or gender-based violence towards JSS learners at this vulnerable life-cycle stage of adolescence.

The 3-year JSS cycle is also a transitional stage after which students may decide to pursue general academic studies in senior secondary schools or specialist training in TVET institutions or enter the proposed “Talent Academies” that prepare them for broad occupational fields. MBSSE will support career guidance and counselling in JSS, to help students make informed choices by giving them insight, advice, and guidance on multiple pathways to success based on their interests and talents. Navigating such multiple pathways may require the introduction of **cooperative (co-op) education in JSS 3** to combine classroom learning with supervised work experience that counts as part of learning achievement. So, students can gain work experience that gives them new confidence and skills to thrive as responsible members of society. MBSSE will therefore support measures that empower students to make informed choices at JSS 3, based on their interests and talents, despite the elitism that still haunts the education system.

To counter the elitism that portrays TVETs as being for who fail in “academic” courses, MBSSE plans to establish Talent Academies in the education system (Figure 3). Talent Academies are conceived as innovative, high-quality institutions that educate, train, and mentor learners for

broad occupational fields such areas as: music and the entertainment industry, sports, fashion, food security, graphic design, creative arts, ICT & AI, etc. Talent Academies will be designed to build on students' interests and talents through specialized post-basic courses that prepare them for a broad range of career possibilities in these occupational fields.

The annotated structure of the education system shown in Figure 3 summarizes the vision for education under the FQSE policy and its various transformative instruments, such as the new curriculum. It can be used to track the envisaged progression of every child from the early age of 2 to 3 years old in the family and local community. Options available for early childhood development & education (ECDE) are outlined in line with Government's intention to expand and improve provisions, so every child can start school at 6-years-old and be "ready to learn".

Primary cycle consists of lower primary (Class 1-3) and upper primary (Class 4-6). At lower primary the focus is on literacy and numeracy as tools for learning. MBSSE expects every child to be competent in these areas before progressing to upper primary. The pedagogical focus in Class 1-3 is on "play-based" learning (PBL) and "learning how to learn". Mother-tongue or local community language will be the language of instruction at this stage. These specifications imply that TSC will facilitate deployment of trained teachers (literacy & numeracy) competent in use of mother-tongue or community language to cover class 1-3 level.

At upper primary top priority will be to correct gaps in literacy and numeracy. Thereafter, priority will be to give every child a basic opportunity to learn (BOTL) with regular attendance of teachers and learners, use of allotted time for learning activities, and operating schools for the stipulated number of days in the calendar. This will deepen competencies and improve learning achievement for all learners. MBSSE intends that the NPSE should become a diagnostic test that provides a profile of the strengths and weaknesses of each learner, rather than a high-stakes exam that determines entry to Junior Secondary School.

Junior Secondary (JSS) is the final stage of basic education and is designed to prepare learners for further studies and training in a variety of institutions (based in interest and talent) or for initial entry to the world of work. The focus will be on improved learning achievement across a range of subjects, combined with strong guidance and counselling that orients learners towards best post-basic studies/training and career paths. Emphasis will also be on remedial work to prepare learners for the BECE examination, which will be widened to reflect an increasing range of interests and talents amongst the adolescent population completing junior secondary school.

Figure 3: Annotated Structure of the 6-3-3-4 Education System

<table>
<tr><td>TERTIARY COLLEGES & JOB TRAINING (4 YRS)</td><td colspan="5">National Vision in “New Direction”, FQSE; Investment Policies/Plans; Inclusive Economic Growth; Wealth Re-Distribution; Peace Building and Political Stability. Policies & Strategies on: Youth Unemployment; Poverty; Injustice; Crime; Corruption & Indiscipline; Illiteracy and Ignorance; Protection (GBV); Gender Disparities and Disabilities Disparities. The General Quest for National Identity and Nation Building</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Degree Colleges in Sierra Leone with wide variety of courses. (e.g. USL/Limkokwing)</td><td>Full Employment and on-the-job Industry Training Opportunities or Apprenticeships</td><td>Tertiary Colleges in Sierra Leone or external that offer Diploma/Certificate Qualifications</td><td>Self-Employment, Business Start-Ups and Supported Enterprise Scheme for young people</td><td>Full or Part-Time Employment and on-job Training Opportunities or Apprenticeships</td></tr>
<tr><td>SNR SECONDARY & POST-JSS: 3 YRS</td><td colspan="2">NCTVA / NVQ</td><td>MBSSE/WASSCE</td><td>MBSSE/WASSCE</td><td>NCTVA/NVQ/WASSCE</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">Apprentice Schemes & Job Placement Centers to guide youths on job opportunities and the training available for various types of jobs</td><td>Talent Academies which Educate, Train/Mentor for Broad Occupational Fields now emerging in Sierra Leone (Creative Industries; Food Tech)</td><td>Senior Secondary School for general & specialist education and training leading to careers in the traditional occupational fields in Sierra Leone</td><td>Senior TVET Institutions To Educate/Train for Business & Industry Job Opportunities; and Plan work experience for all in line with Businesses</td></tr>
<tr><td>3-YEAR JSS OR MIDDLE LEVEL</td><td colspan="5">BECE Examinations used to channel Students to Appropriate Post-Basic Institution</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="5"><u>Focus on improving Learning, with Guidance/Counselling on Post-JSS Studies and Careers</u>
Use incoming “learner profiles” to diagnose weaknesses and plan “remedial” support for learners. If any additional inputs required for remedial support, schools can request from MBSSE. Use diagnosis and any additional inputs to enhance BOTL and strengthen learning (BECE Grades). Provide career guidance & counseling to all learners. Plan for work orientation with employers during third year of JSS, e.g. through the introduction of Co-op education that combines classroom learning with work experience.
Train Heads & Teachers (profiles for diagnosis and requests to MBSSE). Train Career Guidance staff.</td></tr>
<tr><td>6-YEAR PRIMARY EDUC CYCLE</td><td colspan="5">Make NPSE Diagnostic to give “Learner Profiles” for students entering JSS Level</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="5"><u>Use last 3 Years to deepen competencies and Improve Learning Achievement for all Learners</u>
Use the “learner profiles” from national learning assessments (EGRA & EGMA) to diagnose weaknesses and plan improved basic opportunity to learn (BOTL) for all learners. Assess need for any additional inputs to the school as it provides support for learners. If any additional input is required, request from MBSSE/TSC.
Train Heads & teachers to use profiles for diagnosis of learners, and to make requests to MBSSE/TSC</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="5">National Learning Assessment (EGRA & EGMA) Proposed for Class 3/4 level in Sierra Leone</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="5"><u>Focus first 3 Years on “Learning How to learn” and developing basic competencies:</u>
Use <u>Age-appropriate curriculum</u> for: Basic literacy/numeracy (competent by Class 3); Language Skills; Self-expression; Health, hygiene, nutrition & well-being; Culture & History; Creativity; Self-identity; Nature & Our Environment; Making Things & How Things Work; Playing Games; Working Together; Religion/Beliefs; Critical Thinking; Work with Numbers; Appreciating music/dance/art; Civic mindedness;
Train Teachers on age appropriate curriculum, using Play-Based Learning & “Learning How to Learn”</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="5"><u>Expand/Improve ECDE & Pre-School to make children “Ready for School” by 6-years-of-age</u></td></tr>
<tr><td>ECDE</td><td colspan="2">Govt. will encourage, support and facilitate provision of ECCD by CBOs/NGOs, through training for caregivers and supply of kits for children to “play and learn”</td><td>Govt. Policy in the long term is to provide Pre-School in all primary schools so children can be given the help they need to be ready to start school at 6 years of age.</td><td colspan="2">Govt. will encourage and support multiple approaches to providing ECCD for 3-5-year-old children in Sierra Leone. E.g. Child-to-Child; Mobile Units; Village Play Groups</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="5">HOUSEHOLDS & LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN SIERRA LEONE</td></tr>
</table>

3.2. Organisation and Orientation of Basic Education

Successful implementation of a new basic education curriculum requires proper organization of time and other resources around the prescribed subject area content. MBSSE has mandated that schools should operate a single shift system from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Studies indicate that a longer school day can yield gains in academic achievement due to longer student-teacher contact time, and enhanced student enrichment activities (extra-curricular). This also helps to protect children from risks of juvenile crime, drug/alcohol abuse, or teenage pregnancy. MBSSE will consult widely on extending school times to enhance learning achievement/enrichment. Chart 4 shows the school calendar, with current time available for learning during the year.

Chart 4: Overview of the School Academic Year in Sierra Leone

THE SCHOOL YEAR COMPRISES OF THREE (3) TERMS WITH A TOTAL OF THIRTY-SEVEN (37) WEEKS		
FIRST TERM – 13 WEEKS	SECOND TERM – 12 WEEKS	THIRD TERM – 12 WEEKS
THE SCHOOL WEEK COMPRISES FIVE (5) DAYS – MONDAY TO FRIDAY (OR SUNDAY TO THURSDAY)		
THE SCHOOL DAY COMPRISES SIX (6) HOURS – 8:30 TO 2:30 (6 PERIODS FOR PRIMARY & 7 PERIODS FOR JSS)		
THE SCHOOL LESSON PERIOD IS MADE UP OF THIRTY-FIVE (35) MINUTES		
SCHOOLS MUST BE OPEN FOR LEARNING FOR A TOTAL OF 1,110 HOURS IN THE YEAR		

The content of an education system is reflected in the prescribed learning areas or subjects. It is these subjects, and their specific objectives, that enable schools to achieve the general learning outcomes prescribed for the education system. In prescribing subjects, this framework focuses firstly on subjects that are familiar to teachers. The national track record in dealing with a wide range of subjects is an advantage that implies a need to avoid undue creation of new subjects.

Secondly the framework prescribes learning that is considered by international consensus to be essential for today's students in basic education. The **Learning Metrics Task Force** set up by UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) and partner agencies consulted with 500 individuals in 57 countries to map out a consensus on learning that is essential for the 21st Century. On this basis it recommends seven domains of learning that must be mastered for success in school and life. These domains are: ***Physical Well-being; Social & Emotional; Culture & the Arts; Literacy & Communication; Learning Approaches and Cognition (learning how to learn); Numeracy & Mathematics; and Science & Technology***. MBSSE has ensured that these domains are covered through its prescribed subjects and suggested pedagogical approaches.

Thirdly, the framework prescribes learning to reflect priorities outlined by the new Government as essential for education and human capacity building. These are crystalized into **"The 5Cs"** of: ***Comprehension; Computational Thinking; Critical Thinking; Creativity and Civics.*** The first four of these are briefly outlined in Annex 1 of this framework document and are catered for in all subjects across the new curriculum. MBSSE will provide mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating implementation of "The 5Cs" in the school system, as the new curriculum takes hold. In the case of Civics, the Government mandated the National Council for Civic Education and Development (NaCCED) to "***develop curriculum content and innovative approaches for the promotion of good citizenship***". In line with this NaCCED has proposed that Civic Education (Civics) ***"should be adopted as a separate and stand-alone compulsory subject in schools to enhance its success and effectiveness"***. So, Civic Education (Civics) has been incorporated into this curriculum framework (Section 4.6). Its syllabus as well as its learning/teaching materials are being developed by NaCCED for use in schools. As a result, the subject formerly labelled as "Social Studies & Civics" has been changed to "Social Studies" and reduced in content to avoid duplication and overlap with Civic Education. It is expected that teachers dealing with Social Studies will also handle Civics Education in the curriculum. NaCCED will therefore work with TSC to ensure that these teachers are appropriately trained to implement these subjects in schools.

Prescribed subjects and time allocations must conform to key principles of curriculum design. First, the number of subjects must be realistic in terms of time available in the time table. An over-crowded curriculum makes it likely that in trying to teach so many subjects, no subject will be taught well. Second, subjects do not have equal weighting in importance for learners and time allocation. As such, the topics specified for a subject must be relevant and measured. The urge to include all possible topics as important must be resisted. So, topic selection is key to relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency in learning for any subject. This is the essence of quality in curriculum design. A third principle is that some subjects must be taken by all learners if they should achieve the general learning outcomes prescribed in the curriculum. Other subjects may be available for selection based on learners' interests and resources available in the school.

On this basis, MBSSE has prescribed learning in two categories of ***Core Subjects*** and ***Optional Subjects (Electives)***. Although the subjects have standard labels/names, they are nuanced to reflect orientation, priorities, and emphasis for achieving general learning outcomes prescribed for basic education in Sierra Leone. E.g. Science is nuanced as "Science & The Environment"; Agriculture is nuanced as "Agricultural Science & Food Security"; etc. So, in developing subject syllabuses the priority must be not only to select standard topics, but also to infuse the syllabus with key competencies and cross-cutting skills that reflect national priorities (The 5Cs) as well as global specifications of 21st Century skills and competencies.

Core subjects are compulsory and MBSSE has mandated that in primary education all subjects are offered as core. Lower primary will offer six subjects with priority on the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Upper primary will offer eight subjects, involving more materials as well as both concrete and abstract concepts. Chart 5 below shows the prescribed core subjects and time allocations, within the timetable in lower and upper primary, as well as at JSS level.

Chart 5: Core Subjects and Weekly Time Allocation for Basic Education

Lower Primary Level (Class 1-3)	**The Core Subjects Prescribed for Lower Primary School level**	**English**	**Mathematics**	**Civic Education (Civics)**	**Social Studies + Environmental & Life Skills**	**Practical Health and Physical Education**	**Music & Other Expressive Arts**		**French Appreciation**	
	# of Periods out of 30	**10**	**8**	**2**	**2**	**3**	**2**		**3**	
	Weekly %	**33.3**	**26.7**	**6.7**	**6.7**	**10**	**6.7**		**10**	
Upper Primary Level (Class 4-6)	**The Core Subjects Prescribed for Upper Primary School Level**	**English Language**	**Mathematics (including Financial Literacy)**	**Civic Education (Civics)**	**Social Studies (Includes Environment Studies)**	**Physical & Health Educ. (Including SRH and Personal Hygiene)**	**Music & Expressive Arts (Entertainment Industry)**	**French Appreciation**	**Science (Including Basic Tech & How Things Work**	**ICT Literacy**
	# of Periods out of 30	**8**	**6**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**3**	**2**	**3**	**2**
	Weekly %	**26.7**	**20**	**6.7**	**6.7**	**6.7**	**10**	**6.7**	**10**	**6.7**
Junior Secondary School (Form 1-3)	**Core Subjects Prescribed for JSS (Junior Secondary School Level)**	**English Language (Including E-Literacy)**	**French**	**Civic Education (Civics)**	**Mathematics; with Financial Literacy**	**Integrated Science (Plus Technological & E-Literacy)**	**Agricultural Science (including Food Security & Nutrition)**		**Social Studies with Sexual & Reproductive Health (SRH)**	
	# of Periods out of 35	**8**	**2**	**2**	**8**	**4**	**4**		**4**	
	Weekly %	**22.9**	**5.7**	**5.7**	**22.9**	**11.4**	**11.4**		**11.4**	

Junior Secondary School builds on what is covered at primary level and prepares learners for further general studies (senior secondary) or specialist studies (Talent Academies/TVETs); as well as for initial entry to the world of work where appropriate. MBSSE has mandated a **total of**

30 periods per week for primary schools and a **total of 35 periods per week** for JSS level (32 to Core and 3 to Options). The JSS level timetable includes core subjects and elective subjects based on the White Paper (2010) which established a maximum of seven examinable subjects to be offered by learners at JSS level in line with other West African Countries taking BECE. At JSS, learners may choose an elective or optional area to pursue depending on their interests and career aspirations. Chart 6 below shows the range and time allocation of optional subjects prescribed for Junior Secondary School level.

Chart 6: Electives or Optional Subjects and Weekly Time Allocation at JSS

Junior Secondary School (Form 1-3)	**Electives or Optional Areas that are Prescribed for Level of Junior Secondary School (JSS)**	**Sierra Leone National languages (Mende, Temne, Limba, and Krio)**	**Introduction to Technology and ICT Literacy**	**Business Studies and Entrepreneurship (Finance)**	**Religious & Moral Education**	**Arabic Language**	**Home Economics (include Food Security & Entrepreneurship**	**Music & Other Expressive Arts (The Entertainment Industry)**	**Physical Health Education: with SRH (Include SGBV & HIV/AIDS)**
	No. of Periods out of 35	**3**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**3**
	Weekly %	**8.6**	**8.6**	**8.6**	**8.6**	**8.6**	**8.6**	**8.6**	**8.6**

MBSSE has mandated that the mother-tongue of the learners or the language most widely used in the local community shall be the language of instruction in classes 1-3. From class 4 onwards English shall be the medium of instruction in all learning areas, except for other languages that are offered as subjects. The Arabic language shall be an option offered in schools where the immediate community deems it necessary for their children. At the JSS level schools will offer dominant indigenous languages in areas where they prevail, but children may also wish to learn national languages besides that which prevails in their own area. This could help children to engage in the process of celebrating Sierra Leone's linguistic and ethnic diversity.

4. Prescribed Learning and Expected Outcomes

To provide for the learning achievement envisaged by the end of the 9-year basic education cycle, MBSSE has prescribed learning areas or subjects for the curriculum. These subjects are familiar to Sierra Leoneans and reflect global consensus on 21st Century learning, as well as the national priorities for human capacity building (The 5Cs). These prescribed subjects have been nuanced to ensure that complex learning outcomes can be achieved in the new curriculum.

4.1. Special Needs Provisions & Radical Inclusion

In line with its policy of nurturing every learner's potential irrespective of disability or other life circumstances, MBSSE has developed a **Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools in Sierra Leone**. This makes specific provisions and mechanisms for effective implementation and monitoring of these provisions. The principle of radical inclusion pervades this curriculum framework and implies that special needs learners must be fully catered for in prescribed learning outcomes and in provision of resources for implementation. This starts with "functional assessment" to determine their placement and the kind of intervention measures that would best meet each learner's needs and abilities. Best practices in Africa (e.g. Kenya) have led MBSSE to specify that special needs learners be catered for in two modalities of: (1) Learners with special needs who can follow the regular curriculum and (2) Learners with special needs who's needs cannot be met by following the regular curriculum. Learners in the first modality may include those with:

(a) Visual Impairment; (b) Hearing Impairment; (c) Physical Handicap; (d) Learning Disabilities; (e) Functioning Autism; (f) Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties; (g) Mild Cerebral Palsy; (h) Communication Disorders; and (i) Gifted and Talented.

Some of these learners may be able to follow the same curriculum as learners without identified special needs. However, adaptations and modifications may be necessary for some of these learners to access the regular curriculum. Adaptations may include: Substitution of curriculum content; removal of some content area; and adaptation of teaching and learning strategies, resources, and assessment.

Learners with special needs who may not just follow the regular curriculum may include those with: ***Mental Handicap; Deaf Blindness; Severe Autism; Severe Cerebral Palsy; and Multiple Handicaps.*** These learners will need specialist/specialized curriculum and some intervention programmes. The purpose of intervention for these learners is to enable them to acquire skills which may not be taught in the regular curriculum, to enable them to become independent individuals. Their specialist curriculum will be stage-based rather than age-based and require individualized learning with trained teachers through Individualized Educational Program (IEP) for each learner.

Beyond these two modalities, there are **Learners with Profound Disabilities** who may have to be home-based or enrolled in hospital intervention programs. A final category of learners with a more positive sense of "special needs" are so-called **Gifted & Talented Learners.** For this special category of learners, the existing curriculum may be enriched by providing additional and advanced content, methodology, resources, and assessment.

4.2. Prescribed Subject Areas for Basic Education

The rest of this chapter gives summaries of the prescribed subject areas, with examples of the focus, orientation, suggested emphasis and expected learning outcomes. These are guidelines for practitioners on principles and specifications to be followed in the design/implementation of subject syllabuses for the new basic education curriculum. They are not intended to restrict subject specialists and curriculum practitioners engaged in developing the teaching syllabuses. Rather they simply provide guidelines for: selecting topics/themes and detailing them by grade or class levels; suggesting/specifying learning outcomes; providing examples of teaching and learning strategies; and recommending learning assessment methods in each subject area.

4.3. Languages (English, French, Arabic & Sierra Leonean Languages)

4.3.1. Justification in Basic Education

Literacy skills, comprehension and communication are a gateway to knowledge and a tool for learning in all other subject areas. The ability to read provides a foundation for further learning, and literacy skills empower individuals to participate effectively in their communities and nation. Basic education should focus not only on "learning to read and comprehend", but also on "reading to learn and achieve". For learners to develop literacy skills at an early age, MBSSE has mandated that more time will be devoted to basic literacy (English) in lower classes, with emphasis on letter sounds in primary 1-3.

MBSSE has mandated that the curriculum should offer English, French, Arabic and Sierra Leonean Languages. Other essential literacies that should be promoted as part of basic education in the 21st century include financial literacy, ICT literacy and technological literacy. These are catered for through other subject areas. Language is also a vehicle for carrying critical content and lessons in basic education, so that elements of other subjects or emerging areas of interest (e.g. social media, gender equality) can be taught through language programmes.

In Sierra Leone, English is the official language and language of instruction in schools. It is used in trade/commerce with the world and is valued as the main language of the internet. French will help Sierra Leoneans communicate better and interact at sub-regional level with countries of the Mano River Union (MRU) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as

well as with francophone countries at the global level. Content in the French syllabus should highlight francophone West African cultures and promote sub-regional peace/understanding, in addition to French culture per se. In the 21st century multi-lingual competence offers advantage for participation in trade, culture, and development in the sub-region as well as globally. Arabic is relevant as an optional subject for understanding of the Islamic religion and to produce literate individuals interested in that faith. This subject area will also provide learners with basic understanding and fluency in a language that is widely spoken in some parts of the world.

MBSSE has enabled use of national languages in the early classes (primary 1-3) as a medium of instruction and to facilitate the understanding and development of all four language skills for effective communication (i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing). In JSS 1-3 four national languages (Mende, Temne, Limba and Krio) have been mandated as examinable electives. These languages could also be used as vehicles for students to learn about Sierra Leonean cultures beyond their own and for conveying information and learning about content like personal health, gender and sexuality, peace building and celebration of diversity.

4.3.2. Examples of Core Areas and Expected Learning Outcomes

Chart 7: Languages – Examples of Core Areas and Learning Outcomes

CORE AREAS	EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES - Learners will be able to:
Listening and Speaking	**Listen to stories and produce main ideas based on critical understandings of basic elements in the stories. Communicate in spoken mode translating thoughts into utterances that show logical connections and are appropriate for the purpose they intend to achieve. Understand & carry out instructions and commands in languages taught and respond to those commands appropriately. Apply critical analysis of messages listened to, distinguish between facts and opinions, and express their views in a clear, logical manner based on commonly accepted communication norms and showing respect for the opinions of others.**
Comprehension: Reading, Understanding & interpreting (Learning to read & reading to learn)	**Read, comprehend and summarize written text. Apply critical analysis for the understanding of written text messages in various genres and for different purposes, from purely artistic to functional (e.g. including analysis of assumptions behind statements of opinions and facts and how "form" may also express the aim of the writer, etc.). Develop self-motivation for reading literary works in various genres (e.g. prose, poetry, drama, etc.).**
Writing	**Produce coherent, appropriately structured written passages (i.e. with correct use of sentences, paragraphs, sections) in language that is grammatically correct and appropriate for the purpose (i.e. notes, letters, short/long creative passages, descriptions, instructions, poems, etc.); Communicate in the written mode for different purposes; Write creatively or produce literary works as well as functional written text (letters, memos, SMS, etc.).**
Grammar, Structural and Lexical Items	**Learners will be able to write passages or text with minimal grammatical errors and in the correct language register based on the function of the written text and its readership.**

Communication Skills	**Develop communication skills based on the application of critical thinking processes, inquiry, and analysis and synthesis of information, to enable them participate actively in civic affairs of their communities and the country by exercising respect of self and others. Negotiate decision to prevent or deal with conflicting opinions constructively.**

4.4. Mathematics

4.4.1. Justification in Basic Education

Mathematics has daily applications in all fields: business, agriculture, history, communication, science, and creative arts. It is used to quantify descriptions of observable and non-observable objects/events precisely, for universal understanding. It is a tool for problem solving. By using observations and inferential logic learners can predict outcomes to support planning decisions. Mathematics can help learners to transform large pieces of information to a concise format (tables, graphs). It also prepares learners for the development of logical, analytical, creative thinking, problem solving, decision making, independent thinking skills, and sense of equity, justice, and fairness, that are essential ingredients of enlightened and independent individuals. Due to its broad applications, knowledge of mathematics is a key requirement for preparing children to survive and thrive in the 21st century. It must therefore be a core subject in the new basic education curriculum. To ensure its relevance to the world of the learner, where possible the Mathematics Syllabus will offer guidelines for the application of mathematical concepts to learners' real-life experiences, value systems, and understanding of evidence-based decisions.

4.4.2. Examples of Core Areas and Expected Learning Outcomes

Chart 8: Mathematics – Examples of Core Areas and Learning Outcomes

CORE AREAS	EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES - Learners will be able to:
Number and Numeration	**Count, write and recognize numbers; Distinguish between even and odd numbers; Write and arrange numbers correctly.**
Everyday Arithmetic including Financial Literacy	**Demonstrate an understanding of numbers (e.g., whole, fractions, decimals). Perform basic math operations (e.g., addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, percentage, proportions, equations, etc.) with applications in their daily life, (e.g. from dividing food items in parts to calculation of simple interest, taxes, utility bill payment, the concepts of saving, borrowing, interest rates, etc.)**
Measurement & Estimation	**Identify objects according to their shapes and describe their properties. Demonstrate practical skills of measurement (length volume and time) and express them in appropriate units. Apply knowledge of measurement in everyday life, e.g. the area of one town lot, the number of gallons in one *"BATA"* of palm oil, the temperatures of normal human body. Demonstrate**

	basic knowledge of the national currency and the ability to convert it to other currencies such as the dollar and the pound as well as implications of the correct and incorrect calculations made when counting currency in different contexts and scenarios (e.g. corruption, poverty, etc.).
Geometry	**Carry out simple construction for example use rulers and compasses to bisect lines and angles. Construct angles, triangles, and other plane figures.**
Algebra	**Learners will be able to translate word problems symbolically and solve them by applying logical thinking.**
Statistics	**Learners will be able to demonstrate an understanding of basic statistical concepts.**
Graphs	**Represent information in graphical forms and interpret unfamiliar graphs correctly. Draw and interpret bar charts and pie charts. They will interpret travel graphs.**
Basic Computing Skills	**Learners will be able to acquire basic computing skills (e.g. word processing, use of basic applications for various functions – numerical/statistical, visual narrative, etc.).**
Trigonometry (Introduction)	**Learners will be able to demonstrate knowledge of basic trigonometric concepts.**

4.5. Technology and ICT Literacy

4.5.1. Justification in Basic Education

Technology has been central to development throughout human history, and technological competence is increasingly critical for many occupational fields as well as for functioning in the modern world. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), including digital literacy, are at the heart of 21st century learning, progress, and human relations. People access information, find entertainment, contact friends, send messages, exchange views, observe events, enjoy celebrations and follow trends, through social media that involves use of cell phones, computers, tablets, laptops, desktops, and other devices that are linked through the internet and other electronic networks. Cell phones have become ubiquitous in Sierra Leone and are used for an ever-expanding array of communication and human interaction. Computers are also widely used in the world of work and for learning purposes, as well as for leisure and entertainment. Digital skills include being able to search, evaluate, and use information challenged through digital platforms. Sierra Leone's children are growing up in a world where technological competence and ICT literacy will be imperative for participating in the world of work and leisure, or to carry out routine human relations (social media).

MBSSE expects that including technology and ICT literacy in basic education will empower learners with foundational competencies for various occupations as well as with ICT skills that are applicable in various contexts such as business, engineering, and education. Learners will be introduced to mobile phone usage and basic computer literacy in upper primary. During JSS,

learners will be introduced to additional ICT concepts and applications. The use of ICT in schools will enable learners to acquire knowledge and skills independently through the web in exploring various life-skills (e.g. personal development, entrepreneurship, and world of work).

4.5.2. Examples of Core Areas and Expected Learning Outcomes

Chart 9: Technology and ICT Literacy – Examples of Core Areas and Expected Outcomes

CORE AREAS	EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES: Learners will be able to:
Material Technology	**Investigate and explore products or ideas and be able to design a product. Choose appropriate materials (with attention to short and long term impact on the environment and health) for various design/functional purposes. Correctly use basic hand tools and equipment to make and evaluate or assess their product. Correctly and safely use appropriate tools and electrical equipment, to make and also assess a well-finished product.**
Basic Operations & Concepts for ICT Literacy	**Use input and output devices in order to successfully operate computers. Demonstrate understanding and correct use of software applications such as Microsoft Office and /or Open Office. Conduct basic navigation through the Windows environment or other Operating Systems.**
Multi-Media and Technology Resources	**Use a variety of media and technology resources for directed and independent learning. Use technology resources for problem solving and communication.**
Social and Ethical Issues in Technology and ICT	**Demonstrate supportive, positive social and ethical behaviors when using technology. Use technology systems and software responsibly.**

4.6. Science and the Environment

4.6.1. Justification in Basic Education

Science is a universal discipline through which learners investigate matter, living and non-living things, energy, as well as interaction between matter and energy. It is a body of knowledge about the natural world and helps learners to contribute meaningfully to the development of their communities through the understanding of the natural context where these communities are located and the need to respect it. Science education stimulates natural curiosity in learners to understand things around them and helps them to investigate various natural phenomena. Learners acquire skills to test hypothesis, make measurements, observations, and experiment to be able to make precise judgments. Learning science enables learners to develop key skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making based on ethical principles and respect. This will assist learners to explore emerging issues and develop life skills that enables them to appreciate the need to conserve the environment by respecting its natural diversity.

4.6.2. Examples of Core Areas and Expected Learning Outcomes

Chart 10: Science and the Environment – Examples of Core Areas and Learning Outcomes

CORE AREAS	EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES - Learners will be able to:
Matter	Demonstrate an understanding of the concept of matter and properties of matters. Distinguish between things that float and sink.
Chemical Reactions	Work out simple chemical equations and balancing chemical equations. Do simple tests to demonstrate chemical reactions using local materials while exploring the concept of personal safety.
Energy	Demonstrate an understanding of the concept, uses and forms of energy, energy transformation and sources of energy and their long-term impact on the natural environment. Identify forms of energy and their uses to human being and their socio-economic impact.
Machines (including "How Things Work")	Learners will be able to understand the concept of work, simple machines and their applications while exploring the concept of respect for property and working tools. They will be able to use/understand how simple gadgets work.
Ecology and Conservation	Learners will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between ecology and the environment, environmental degradation and conservation while exploring the concept of respect for the environment and its biodiversity.
Processes and Interactions in Living things	Demonstrate knowledge of the characteristics of living things and their life cycles and the importance of food and water to life and health. Identify various parts of plants and animals and explain their functions.
SRH: Sexual & Reproductive Health	Learners will be able to demonstrate improved knowledge and understanding of reproductive health (including family planning), sexuality, healthy growth & development. Demonstrate Life Skills for enhanced interpersonal relations for communicating and interacting effectively with others and making informed decisions and choices to promote risk-reducing behavior.
Reproduction in Plants and Animals	Learners will be able to understand what is involved in plant and animal reproduction including human beings, while exploring the concept of respect for self and others (e.g. reproductive rights, gender roles, sex and gender based violence, age-based power dynamics, etc.).
Ecosystems	Learners will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the ecosystem.

4.7. Social Studies

4.7.1. Justification in Basic Education

Social Studies is an interdisciplinary subject that draws its content from History, Geography, Civics, Economics, Government and Politics, Global Affairs, Environmental Studies, etc. for citizenship education and the promotion of civic competence. Social Studies can help learners to appreciate their environment (home, school, community), and better understand/appreciate their interdependence with multiple institutions that influence their lives. It can empower learners with knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to participate actively and equitably in

communities, regardless of gender or socio-economic status. It can introduce learners to human rights and democracy to make them self-confident, responsible, active, and caring citizens. Foundation elements of science as well as life skills (personal development, health promotion, social development, gender and sexuality, entrepreneurship, and the world of work) can be introduced in Social Studies. Some recurrent themes in Social Studies include: Local and global citizenship; Interdependence; Peaceful Co-existence; Diversity; Justice and Fairness; Basic Services; and Customs/Traditions and Change.

4.7.2. Examples of Core Areas and Expected Learning Outcomes

Chart 11: Social Studies – Examples of Core Areas and Learning Outcomes

CORE AREAS	EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES - Learners will be able to:
The Sierra Leonean Child and his or her Environment	**Understand their environment i.e. the physical and social environment, the basic concept of change and response to change (i.e. how individuals construct the environment by defining social norms and adopting common behaviors based on those norms, understanding harmful norms and how to cope with them, how the structure and dynamics of social environment affects individual lives differently, and how individuals and groups can act as change agents to construct a better world).**
The Local Community	**Understand the meaning and importance of diversity, the concept of leadership and respect for self, others, social justice, gender equality, authority and public property, rule of law and the importance of peaceful co-existence. Grasp the concept of time; understand inter-dependence of people, power dynamics, and the physical environment for co-existence and sustainability.**
The Administrative Divisions and Peoples of Sierra Leone	**Develop understanding of their own history, culture and heritage, administrative divisions of the country, governance, civic responsibilities, and cultural practices; Develop sustainable systems of co-existence as a nation.**
The Economic Activities of Sierra Leone	**Develop an understanding of the relationship between the physical features of Sierra Leone and the economic and social activities of its people. Develop an understanding of demands of occupations in the agriculture, mining and energy industries. Develop an understanding of the cultural lifestyle of the people of Sierra Leone; learn skills in collecting, interpreting and reporting information, through critical/creative thinking; Understand the value of interdependence, cause and effect and the concept of sustainable economic development.**
Sierra Leone in West Africa and the World	**Demonstrate an understanding of the position of Sierra Leone within its sub-regional, African and global contexts by investigating geographical, historical, economic, social and political aspects; Appreciate their role as citizens in the national, regional, and global senses; Understand the significance of climate change within the economic and political West African sub-regional context.; Display a sense of national pride and national identity; Understand the need for careful use of resources and care for the environment.**

4.8. Civic Education (Civics)

4.8.1. Justification in Basic Education

Civics (often called citizenship education) may be defined as educating children, from early childhood, to become responsible, clear-thinking and enlightened members, capable of creative thinking and critical analysis in making informed decisions about themselves and participating effectively in societal development. It also prepares young people for the challenges and opportunities of rapidly changing behaviours of economies and technological world. Citizenship education aims at producing the citizen who:

- Has respect for others
- Recognises and appreciates the equality of all human beings (radical inclusion)
- Has concern for other people
- Has regard for rules and laws
- Opposes all forms of discrimination
- Promotes a spirit of cooperation, tolerance and peace in society
- Has an awareness of their rights and responsibilities in a democracy
- Can meaningfully contribute to the national economic growth through self-development

Citizenship education is not about trying to fit everyone into the same mould; it is not indoctrination. Its aim is to present learners with different viewpoints and allow them to make informed decisions for themselves. Citizenship education is both *knowledge* and *practice* based, and the link between the two should be ever-present in most of the lessons. Thus, students should demonstrate citizenship education in the way they relate to family members, friends, other people (including those in authority) and how they comport themselves generally in society to make it violence free for others. Schools should also demonstrate citizenship education through the way they operate.

Citizenship education involves a wide range of different elements of learning, including:

Knowledge and understanding
Teaching topics and concepts such as: laws and rules, democracy, justice, equality, freedom, authority and the rule of law, human rights, diversity, corruption free practices, sustainable development, and the world as a global community.

Skills and aptitudes

Critical thinking, analysing information, expressing opinions, taking part in discussions and debates, negotiating, conflict resolution and participating in community action, to ensure self-awareness and self-actualization.

Values and dispositions

Respect for justice, democracy and the rule of law, openness, tolerance, courage to defend a point of view and a willingness to listen to, work with and stand up for others.

Learning in citizenship education is most effective if it is:

a) **Active**: emphasises learning by doing;
b) **Interactive**: uses discussion, teamwork and debate;
c) **Relevant**: focuses on real-life issues facing young people and society;
d) **Critical**: encourages young people to think for themselves;
e) **Collaborative**: employs group work and cooperative learning;
f) **Participative**: gives young people a say in their own learning.

4.8.2. Examples of Core Areas and Expected Learning Outcomes

Chart 12: Civic Education (Civics) – Examples of Core Areas and Learning Outcomes

CORE AREAS	EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES: Learners will be able to:
Life skills acquisition	**Acquire basic life skills i.e.** • **Assertiveness** • **Interpersonal relationships** • **Self-awareness, self-esteem and self-discipline** • **Problem solving (self-realisation)** • **Coping with emotions and stress (self-management)** • **Effective communication (self-expression)** • **Formation of friendships** • **Peer resistance** • **Informed decision-making (creative thinking)**
Peaceful co-existence, unity and national cohesion	**Appreciate the religion, rituals and cultural practices of others; develop the spirit of nationalism, patriotism and respect for national symbols, and law and order in society.**
Relationships, roles and responsibilities	**Develop understanding and practice of rules and laws, diversity (respecting differences), rights and obligations, concept of fair play, time and time management.**
Good governance	**Develop an understanding of good citizen characteristics and citizen participation in governance; politics and democracy. Develop an understanding and appreciate the value of rewards and sanctions. Develop an appreciation of our nation builders (past and present); role models in our society. Protect public property and the environment (self-responsibility). Develop an understanding of fundamental human**

	rights and freedoms. Appreciate the need for honesty in society and the fight against corruption (ethical and decent behaviour). Develop an understanding of the practice of land use, conservation and development; Appreciate the need to fight against human rights abuses, cultism, drug dependence and abuse among young people (self-direction).
Global citizenship	**Demonstrate an understanding of the position of Sierra Leone within its sub-regional, African and global contexts, by investigating geographical, historical, economic, social and political aspects. Appreciate their role as citizens in the national, regional, and global sense; Understand the significance of climate change within the economic and political West African sub-regional context and the world at large; Display a sense of national pride and national identity; Understand the need for careful use of resources and care for the environment.**

4.9. Agricultural Science & Food Security

4.9.1. Justification in Basic Education

This subject empowers learners with requisite competencies which enable them to participate in agricultural production, management, agri-business, and food security. Learners will use the acquired knowledge and skills to investigate and understand the relationships between farming and nutrition, production, and marketing processes to improve the quality of life for all.

4.9.2. Examples of Core Areas and Expected Learning Outcomes

Chart 13: Agricultural Science & Food Security – Examples of Core Areas & Learning Outcomes

CORE AREAS	EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES - Learners will be able to:
Agricultural Environment and Soil Science	**Demonstrate an awareness of the environmental factors which influence agricultural production with emphasis on soil and water, and modify and conserve them for sustainability.**
Farm Tools and Machinery	**Use and maintain farm tools and machinery; Apply improved agricultural technology with regard for the agricultural environment; Practice safety rules to increase farm productivity.**
Crop Production	**Grow selected field crops, vegetables and flowers and recognize their nutritional value; Apply recommended practices accordingly for growing and preserving crops and according to basic rules of health and hygiene.**
Livestock Production	**Rear small animals such as poultry, fish, rabbits, goats and cattle. Apply animal husbandry and hygiene practices linked to it.**
Agro-Forestry	**Incorporate agro forestry concepts and skills for environmental sustainability.**
Farm Business and Marketing	**Learners will be able to apply basic knowledge and skills of farm business and marketing to increase the profitability of agricultural activities by exploring concepts such as accountability, transparency, freedom from corruption; and fair trading.**

4.10. Business Studies & Entrepreneurship

4.10.1. Justification in Basic Education

Business Studies provide the pre-requisite knowledge and skills for effective engagement into the world of commerce. It focuses on the nature of business, key business functions, establishing a business, developing a business plan, ethical and legal issues that contribute to the success or failure of any business.

4.10.2. Examples of Core Areas and Expected Learning Outcomes

Chart 14: Business Studies & Entrepreneurship–Examples of Core Areas & Learning Outcomes

CORE AREAS	EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES - Learners will be able to:
Commerce	**Understand the meaning of production, factors of production, and channels of production.**
Office Procedures	**Demonstrate an understanding of office organization, types and structure, functions as well as qualities, duties and responsibilities of office staff.**
Book Keeping and Finance	**Identify various sources of finance and how to access them and the importance of maintaining efficient and transparent financial systems for clear accountability.**
Entrepreneurship	**Identify channels of distribution and develop a business plan. Differentiate types of businesses. Appreciate the ethical and legal aspects of business, including the nature of accountabilities of the different roles involved in the process of business.**

4.11. Home Economics (and Food Security)

4.11.1. Justification in Basic Education

Home Economics is a broad learning area encompassing nutrition, health, housing and environment, family life education, home management, clothing and textiles, and agriculture. The subject equips learners with competencies for improving the quality of life of individuals, families, and communities. It also promotes creativity, use of entrepreneurial and vocational skills for personal and national development as it creates opportunity for career pathways for learners, it strengthens family life.

4.11.2. Examples of Core Areas and Expected Learning Outcomes

Chart 15: Home Economics & Food Security – Examples of Core Areas and Learning Outcomes

CORE AREAS	EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES - Learners will be able to:
Home Management	Apply knowledge and skills in the creation, use, care and maintenance of household equipment.
Food and Nutrition	Classify food contents and their nutritional value within a balanced diet. Prepare nutritious and healthy meals by following basic hygiene procedures. Demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationship among food, nutrition and health in homes and communities.
Housing and Environment	Develop an appreciation of the interrelationship between housing, health and environment for the well-being of families and communities. Apply health and hygiene basic knowledge and practices to the care of the environment (e.g. household waste management and its impact on the environment)
Family & Household Resource Management	The learner will be able to apply knowledge and skills to generate and maximize the use of available family resources for a better quality of life, in a fair and equitable manner, for the benefit of all individual members of the family, taking into account their individual interests and needs. Learners must appreciate the impact of gender stereotypes and gender-based violence in the family (and how to report violence). Family planning, spacing, and family size.
Hotel Management and Other Careers in the Food Industry	Learners will be able to apply scientific and technological knowledge and skills for effective hotel management.
Clothing and Textiles and the Related Careers in the fashion Industry	Design and make African and foreign style of dresses and other apparels for various occasions. Display creativity in designing patterns and mounting shows to exhibit products. Make shoes, belts, hats, jewelry, and other accessories.

4.12. Physical Health Education (including SRH)

4.12.1. Justification in Basic Education

Physical health education covers physical, emotional, and social dimensions of an individual's health. It seeks to empower learners with health-related knowledge, skills, and competencies to live healthy and active lifestyles. Furthermore, learners recognize the importance of physical and recreation activities in the promotion of personal and community health. At the lower primary level, appropriate/relevant foundation elements of life skills will also be introduced, including naming/knowing body parts and personal hygiene, emphasizing bodily awareness, coordination and movement (outdoor/indoor sports, exercise, games, etc.). At upper primary and junior secondary levels learners will be given more in-depth, age appropriate and culturally sensitive information on life skills, including managing reproductive health.

4.12.2. Examples of Core Areas and Expected Learning Outcomes

Chart 16: Physical Health Education (&SRH) – Examples of Core Areas and Learning Outcomes

CORE AREAS	EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES - Learners will be able to:

(Core) Movement & Physical development	**Develop appreciation and participate in activities that promote movement and physical development through games, personal fitness exercises, etc. Develop understanding of collaboration in games and practice respect of rules through fair play and structured competition.**
Physical Health	**Identify and make routine use of practices that contribute to good personal hygiene; acquire healthy habits that promote hygiene and community health. Learn how to prevent harmful incidents through practices that mitigate the risk for contagious diseases such as Ebola, Covid19, Cholera, HIV/AIDS, STIs and infections in general, etc.; Demonstrate an understanding of the implications of emotional health, biological growth & personal development, in adolescence. Learn how to prevent infection and disease.**
(SRH) Sexual & Reproductive Health	**Learners will understand, value, and act on knowledge of sexual/reproductive health, menstrual health, sexuality, gender, growth and development. Demonstrate Life Skills for mutually respectful relations with members of the same and opposite sexes. Learners will understand the changes adolescence has on male and female bodies, and how to prepare for (cope with) them. Show and practice basic skills for communicating and interacting effectively and safely with peers and authority figures, including communication around consent and use of family planning. Routinely demonstrate the ability to make informed decisions and choices that promote risk-reducing sexual behavior, with information on sources of support to cope with such challenges.**
Diseases	**Learners will understand, value, and act on best ways of avoiding or minimizing the health risks associated with Ebola, Covid-19, HIV/AIDS and other STIs, Cholera, Malaria and other communicable or non-communicable diseases. Identify, understand, value and act on basic hygiene and health practices. Routinely use good health/hygiene practices in the home, school and community. E.g. washing hands at critical moments, waste disposal, water purification, use of protective bed nets, avoidance of infected persons and/or contaminated body fluids/materials, etc.**
Physical Education and Health	**Develop healthy lifestyle and habits that demonstrate understanding, valuing and acting on basic forms of physical exercises as critical to one's health. Make informed decisions about their own health, including sensible use of health facilities in the community. Acquire basic first aid skills to treat minor injuries.**
Nutrition and Health	**Learners will be able to appreciate the role of nutrition towards an individual's healthy growth. Make informed choices on daily meals and diet based on local foodstuff and the idea of a balanced diet.**
Environmental Health	**Learners will be able to demonstrate that they understand, value and can act on the relationship between environmental quality and health, especially how the quality of water can affect the health of individuals/communities (e.g. link between body fluids and Ebola; the role of water and body waste in cholera; stagnant water, mosquitoes and malaria; the use of water and soap at critical moments for hand washing to prevent the spread of diseases, etc.).**

4.13. Religious and Moral Education

4.13.1. Justification in Basic Education

Religious and moral education helps children to learn the concepts of belief in God and other deities in traditional and cultural life. It will also help the child to develop and internalize and critically assess morals and social values that hold the communities in peaceful co-existence. It also helps the child to understand the practices of other religious beliefs in Sierra Leone with the aim of respecting and celebrating the diversity of beliefs of fellow citizens. It conveys the idea of all being created equal or being equal in the sight of God (as taught in various religions and in some constitutions). Opportunities for the exploration of life-skills (personal development, health promotion, social development, growth and development, sex and sexuality, the world of work and entrepreneurship) and emerging issues (human rights, gender, environment) will be offered through this subject which will in turn be integrated with Social Studies and Civics and other subjects as deemed appropriate by curriculum practitioners.

4.13.2. Examples of Core Areas and Expected Learning Outcomes

Chart 17: Religious & Moral Education – Examples of Core Areas and Learning Outcomes

CORE AREAS	EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES: Learners will be able to:
The Concept of the Existence of a Supreme Being	**Understand the concept of the presence of God or a Supreme Being based on the faith group they may belong to.**
Traditional and Religious Disciplines	**The learners will be able to understand the practices and beliefs of the various religious and traditional practices. Appreciate and celebrate religious diversity in Sierra Leone, as a basis for promoting tolerance and peace.**
Moral and Religious Values as Espoused in All religions	**Learn and exhibit moral values, guided by their religious beliefs and by a sense of respect for all that exists. Learn how to be in peaceful co-existence with other members of their communities. Respect for elders, as in traditional values in Sierra Leone. Respect for women as mothers and sisters (respect for girls).**
Leadership Development	**Learners will be able to understand and appreciate leadership values exhibited in the lives of religious figures in their various religious faiths and human beings who have shown leadership through outstanding exemplary behaviors in their public and private lives. Learners will understand which qualities make a good leader and which qualities are not good for leadership.**

4.14. Music & Expressive Arts (Entertainment Industry)

4.14.1. Justification in Basic Education

Music & Expressive Arts at basic education level are justified because they are representative of culture and are an integral part of children's daily life. They expose learners to key concepts in Music as well as in the Arts, Dance, Drama, and Visual Art (painting, drawing, modeling, and designing) for the development of relevant skills of forming and shaping of materials. Through Music & Expressive Arts the cognitive, affective and practical experiential aspects of learning are integrated to address different areas of social life for learners to preserve and appreciate all elements of their environment, their heritage, and its cultural expressions. These arts also help learners develop concentration, self-absorption, creativity, confidence through expression, appreciation, and love for others' work. In a nation like Sierra Leone where negative attitudes can undermine peace and development, the inclusion of the Expressive Arts is likely to promote social interaction and mutual understanding among learners, thereby contributing to peaceful co-existence and even celebration of cultural diversity. In the building of national consciousness, the Expressive Arts will help learners develop life skills and explore emerging issues, with the learner at the center as a creative and critical subject able to display positive attitude towards human diversity, able to appreciate the value of preserving their cultural heritage, to appreciate others and their creativity and engage in productive activities for income generation. The creative arts allow learners not only to develop skills of analysis and critical thinking, but also to develop empathy and tolerance as well as to celebrate diversity.

4.14.2. Examples of Core Areas and Expected Learning Outcomes

Chart 18: Music & Expressive Arts – Examples of Core Areas and Learning Outcomes

CORE AREAS	EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES: Learners will be able to:
Singing and Accompanying	Acquire basic skills to sing with good vocal tone and intonation, singing in time and understanding the main beat and various characteristics of rhythm to be able to provide suitable and tasteful accompaniment.
Learning Basic Music Notation and Interpreting a short Score	Learners will be able to recognize and understand different types of symbols and terms used in music notation e.g. crescendo, crotchet etc. in order to interpret a simple score like a hymn sheet with music notes. Learners will be able to appreciate the role of music as a creative mode of expression for various purposes (e.g., aesthetic, political, faith-based, etc.)
Musical Instruments of Local and Foreign Communities	Know the names and typical sounds of indigenous and foreign musical instruments that they would come across.
Composing	Learners will appreciate their own compositions, valuing others through the engagement in collaborative creativity, and enjoying music on the whole.
	Use the body and muscles and available musical instruments and recordings to

Dance	**express themselves and their relationship with the space around them, entertain and at the same time increase accuracy of movement. Learners should be encouraged to feel comfortable in their own bodies and find a form of exercise which encourages joyful movement and self-confidence.**
Drama	**Appreciate drama, its forms, and its role in Sierra Leone culture and in other cultures; Acquire basic drama skills (e.g. voice, movement, interpretation of scripts, improvisation, and stage direction); Understand basic components of successful productions including audition leading to casting, managing rehearsal schedule, and budgeting for production.**
Drawing and Painting	**Analyze concepts critically, appreciate works of others through inquiry and uphold self-esteem by exploring their own creativity in the meaningful visual expression of their own experience of the world (e.g., sketching, collage, etc.).**
Designing	**Analyze concepts critically and use simple and more advanced techniques like stencils and templates, screen printing to produce posters, billboards, etc to be used in community education and commercial advertisement to express those concepts and convey visual messages linked to them.**
Modeling and Carving	**Use clay to model objects and figures for decorative and utility purposes in homes, schools and offices in the community and use horn, bone and wood in carving objects with aesthetic value that depict good and healthy practices in the society.**
Fabric Work	**Acquire basic skills necessary for dying and producing creative designs (e.g. batik, tie-dying, stamping).**

5. Teachers and their Professional Development

In common with most African countries, Sierra Leone faces serious challenges in preparing and maintaining an appropriate teacher workforce for basic education. The international literature tends to focus on the challenge of an adequate number of qualified and trained teachers. But this assumes that qualifications and years of experience in themselves can guarantee quality education. What really matters is what teachers do (and can do) in practice in their classrooms and schools. Hence the challenge for Sierra Leone now is the quality of the teacher workforce and its capacity to implement an innovative basic education curriculum. This new curriculum stresses learning, and a pedagogy designed to promote understanding, valuing, and applying what is learned in school. It expects teachers to interpret and practice principles of equity, inclusiveness, effectiveness, and efficiency in their classrooms and schools, including responding efficiently to maintain student learning in times of crisis. These challenges require a review of the role of the teacher by exploring factors that determine professional performance and teacher workforce competencies.

5.1. The Changing Role of the Teacher

Teachers have a pivotal role to play in curriculum reform. But teaching as a profession needs reform to meet the requirements of a new curriculum in Sierra Leone. On the one hand there

are questions about prevailing models of teacher education/training, and the extent to which such models can deliver results for professional development. On the other hand, there are issues of career structure, organization, and governance of the profession, as well as the patterns of remuneration and conditions of service. Such issues determine perceptions of the teaching profession and its attractiveness to capable young people, as well as levels of commitment that can be expected from serving teachers.

Following the inauguration of the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) in August 2016 these issues are being systematically addressed to ensure that Sierra Leone can have the right caliber of teachers for the new curriculum and that our teachers are valued, respected and rewarded by authorities as well as by society in general. MBSSE has taken a constructive "asset-based" approach which builds on what is positive and seeks to inspire all stakeholders with a vision of what is possible in transforming basic education. But the role of the teacher needs to change from what it is at present, through comprehensive and well-managed governance of the continuous professional development (CPD) process. This has to include a re-imagined pre-service teacher education system, relevant/responsive in-service teacher education and training (INSET) provisions, a renewed focus on equity and inclusion in the teacher workforce, as well as emphasis on ethics and standards in the teaching profession.

In practice, the pedagogy used by teachers is the most critical factor that determines improved learning outcomes for students and, consequently, a strengthened human capital, reduced poverty, and reduced inequality. Hence successful implementation of the new basic education curriculum will depend on what teachers do (and can do) in their classrooms and schools across the country. This in turn depends on the quality of the teacher workforce, which is shaped by the provisions for pre-service and in-service teacher education and training. What teachers can do also depends on available teacher support measures, adequate levels of resources, the general school environment and good management in schools. Much also depends on teachers being motivated and encouraged to ensure their students achieve the prescribed learning outcomes in the curriculum. This is not only about salaries and incentives, but also involves the sense of professional responsibility that teachers bring to the job, and the extent to which they get recognition, respect, and fair remuneration for their professionalism and performance.

The desired role of the teacher is defined by a learner-centered pedagogy that enables students to understand, value, and act on what they learn, rather than to learn simply for the purpose of passing examinations. This implies that teachers will help learners to develop inquisitive minds and critical and creative thinking processes, as well as problem-solving skills to deal with everyday realities.

Chart 19: New Role of Teachers in the Context of learner-Centered Pedagogy

In the context of learner centered methodologies and child friendly environment, teachers' roles are redefined to include issues such as: enabling learners to reflect on their own experiences; employing age appropriate teaching and learning methodologies; assisting students to construct own knowledge rather than simply reproduce facts; creating an environment that is conducive for learning to take place; valuing learners' points of view; creating an "abuse free" environment; providing remedial support for learners when needed; encouraging learners irrespective of gender, disability and any other condition to participate and enjoy the learning process.

In addition, teachers should ensure that their teaching supports learners' holistic development through life-skills that include: personal growth, health promotion, social development, sex and sexuality, entrepreneurship and the world of work; as well as through emerging issues like: civics, human rights, gender, health & environment.

Both TSC and MBSSE believe that whilst it is important to map out the new role of the teacher, it is even more critical to deal with issues that affect job satisfaction of teachers. This is the key to cultivating a competent and committed teaching force for successful curriculum reform.

5.2. Teachers and Job Satisfaction

An essential pre-requisite for a quality teacher workforce is that most teachers should have a sense of job satisfaction. National Focus Group Discussions and reviews of the international literature suggest that the factors which influence teachers' job satisfaction include:

(a) **Decline in the Status of Teachers:** There is a widespread perception in Sierra Leone that the status of teachers has been in decline for a long period. Different reasons are offered for this professional decline. Some suggest that as more citizens are educated, teachers are no longer seen as "sole custodians" of knowledge and wisdom or as a professional group that deserves privileges akin to those enjoyed by doctors and lawyers for instance. Others argue that the status of teachers has declined because teachers no longer live up to expectations of society. It is argued that in terms of personal comportment, social behavior and moral conduct teachers are not what they used to be. Teachers are also blamed for a perceived fall in education quality and standards. Mass expansion in access to school has not been matched by quality, as evidenced by declining results in public examinations. This has raised questions about the qualifications, competencies, and commitment of teachers. As such, teachers feel that they are not getting fair appreciation and respect from society for the work they do. This makes it hard for many teachers to feel a sense of job satisfaction.

(b) **Unattractiveness of the teaching profession:** Teaching used to be an attractive profession in the society, but many young people in Sierra Leone no longer aspire to be teachers. Many of them say that they do not regard teachers as role models for what they want to become

in life. Parents and community leaders also cite the declining importance and falling status of teachers who sometimes have to rely on "private lessons" or levy "unofficial charges" on pupils, to make ends meet financially. This creates the sense of teaching as a "struggling" profession that is no longer regarded as attractive. MBSSE appreciates that this situation really needs to change if our teachers are to feel a genuine sense of job satisfaction.

(c) **External Dominance of the Profession:** Compared to the medical and legal professions in Sierra Leone teaching is not perceived as a self-regulated profession that can set its own standards and maintain discipline amongst its practitioners. Teaching is externally driven in its governing rules, regulations, and codes of conduct, which are all largely determined by employers and governing bodies. Also, whilst teachers have some degree of autonomy in the classroom, many complain that their profession is micro-managed through a stream of instructions and regulations from employers. This does not make for job satisfaction.

(d) **Challenging Working Conditions:** Teachers routinely complain about over-crowded classes, lack of pedagogical resources, and sub-standard facilities that make it challenging for them to do their job satisfactorily. These challenges constrain the extent to which even the most enthusiastic and committed teachers can be expected to exercise a reasonable degree of professional competence, or to feel a sense of job satisfaction. The MBSSE is committed to making schools more child friendly as well as creating a working environment in schools that helps to meet the reasonable expectations of teachers and to promote job satisfaction.

(e) **Lack of Meaningful Consultations:** Some teachers feel that they are not being adequately consulted on matters affecting their profession and the work they do in schools. In-service training courses are usually prescribed without adequate consultations to determine the areas of need in which teachers require training and support. Engagement with the teaching force tends to be overwhelmingly about salaries and conditions of service, with negotiations taking place through teachers' unions. The TSC believes that subject associations and similar professional networks need to be empowered through regular engagement and support, to focus more on addressing matters of professional performance and job satisfaction

(f) **Poor Teacher-Student Relationships:** Successful teaching depends to a great extent on the relationship between teachers and their students. The views expressed during Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) suggest that students still rely on their teachers for tuition and guidance that would help them pass pivotal examinations, but not for much else. Students say that they have many complaints about the way they are treated by teachers but often feel they cannot raise these issues for fear of retribution and/or compromising tuition and guidance they require from teachers. This is particularly important for raising issues of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation. MBSSE expects that as school environments improve and

working conditions of teachers are addressed, relationships between teachers and students will also become more positive. Ideally this relationship should be one in which our teachers and their students share in the joy of learning as well as jointly reap the rewards of success.

(g) **Relative Decline in Rewards/Remuneration:** Despite efforts by successive governments to increase salaries in the public sector, remuneration for teachers and others on a fixed salary has been in relative decline, compared to the steadily increasing cost of living. This means that teachers are often preoccupied with issues of financial well-being as they seek ways of subsidizing their official pay. On the other hand, the phenomenon of "ghost teachers" has inflated the teacher pay roll and constrained the ability of government to offer an attractive remuneration package to teachers. The Teaching Service Commission has succeeded in substantially reducing the number of ghost teachers. There has also been progress with negotiations on salaries and conditions of service, as illustrated by implementation of a 30% salary increase for teachers that started in April 2020. The MBSSE and TSC appreciate that there needs to be constant negotiations around a satisfactory remuneration package for teachers. This is work in progress, in anticipation of even better conditions of service for teachers in the near future.

(h) **Weak Career Structure and Rules for Advancement:** Most reputable professions have rules for advancement within a well-defined career structure. This makes it possible for new recruits and serving professionals to set personal development goals and aspire towards higher achievement within the profession. In Sierra Leone teachers complained that the old career structure of the profession was too narrow and the rules for advancement were restrictive. There was the basic hierarchy comprising *Assistant Teacher; Teacher; Senior Teacher; and then on to Deputy Head Teacher and Head Teacher.* The rules for advancing along this hierarchy were mainly to do with formal academic qualifications and length of service. On one hand this was a recipe for stagnation, as teachers waited for long periods to log up the pre-requisite number of years of service to be considered for promotion. On the other hand, the rules encouraged pursuit of additional qualifications simply to gain promotion. Paradoxically this meant that teachers who spend more time out of the classroom on additional qualifications and training workshops had a better chance of being promoted than those who stayed the course and struggled with problems in the classroom. Importantly also, the old career structure did not give recognition to the increasing diversity of competencies that are required for teachers to provide quality basic education in our schools. Similarly, rules for advancement were not based on classroom practices and what teachers are able to achieve with the wide range of pupils in their charge.

Progress has been made in addressing these challenging issues, following the establishment of the TSC. There is now a new career structure that is guided by professional standards for teachers and school leaders that were recently established by the TSC. Thousands of teachers and school heads have been trained on the standards and are now able to develop portfolios. Plans to have all teachers registered and subsequently licensed will potentially contribute towards improving the image of the profession, and teacher quality and output. Work is in progress to develop a national framework and governance mechanism for the continuous professional development (CPD) of teachers and school leaders. This framework will facilitate greater collaboration between the principal entities (MBSSE/TSC/MTHE) in governance of continuous professional development programmes by various providers.

(i) **Dilution of Professional Standards:** There is concern amongst teachers in Sierra Leone that some in their rank could be responsible for diluting standards in the profession in terms of simple things like dress code, general comportment, language use, commitment to good performance, honesty, and personal integrity. Many teachers complain that some of their colleagues have been letting down the profession. They argue that this reflects the mass expansion of the workforce to make up for number of teachers required. This has not only allowed unqualified and untrained personnel into the profession, but also brought in a caliber of people who may not share the expected commitment, moral values, and ethical standards. The Teaching Service Commission has updated the 2014 Code of Conduct for Teachers and Other Education Personnel. Awareness of ethical standards has been raised and thousands of teachers have signed up to the Code.

(j) **Lack of Opportunities for Professional Development:** An important source of frustration for many teachers in Sierra Leone was expressed as the lack of opportunities to develop as professionals. After initial teacher education there were only two types of opportunities for professional development. First, teachers may acquire a higher qualification, so they aspire towards a degree if they already have the HTC or seek to do the HTC if they already have a TC. Second, teachers may gain new knowledge and skills from in-service training workshops that are mounted frequently to improve teachers' competencies. But these workshops are prescribed by providers rather than requested by teachers and are not tailored to meet teachers' needs. As such they tend to deal with broad areas of need as perceived by employers/experts, rather than with needs expressed by teachers based on their experience. Both options do not cater for the type of continuous professional development that is based on recognition of what teachers are doing already and what more they need to perform better. The TSC has made progress in addressing this challenge and the anticipated CPD framework will consolidate these gains effectively and efficiently.

5.3. Issues in Continuous Professional Development of Teachers

The MBSSE and the TSC give high priority to professional development of teachers as a critical part of the goal to provide quality basic education for all in Sierra Leone. Professional development is a lifelong quest that teachers must pursue throughout their career. It is not a one-shot exercise that can be achieved through a formal course of study. Pre-service teacher education courses are typically designed to initiate candidates into the teaching profession, providing knowledge of subject matter pedagogical skills and an orientation to what teaching entails. Once teachers start a career, they can improve their knowledge and competencies through in-service courses dealing with a wide range of topics. Beyond such formal pre-service and in-service courses, true professional development is really about being mentored by experienced colleagues, learning on the job, discussing problems with experts, accessing information on good practices, and exchanging experiences/ideas with peers; as well as benefiting from systematic support for, and management of, classroom activities carried out by teachers. These school-based issues as well as the more formal courses all need to be reviewed to better understand how we can best support our teachers as they embark on the path of professional self-development. Recognizing the key role of pre-service teacher education in nurturing quality teachers, the Teaching Service Commission developed a mentoring course aimed at providing student teachers on practicum with a more meaningful experience of school life and instructional processes, with school leaders as mentors.

5.3.1. Initial Preparation of Teachers (Pre-Service)

The model of initial teacher education for basic education, leading to the Teachers' Certificate (TC) and Higher Teachers' Certificate (HTC), has not changed very much in Sierra Leone over the years. There are six main institutions that currently offer initial teacher education courses in the country and these are shown below in Chart 19, together with the type of courses involved.

Most of these institutions offer "single shot" college-based programmes of three years duration, dealing mainly with subject content and pedagogy. In terms of practical teaching, students do micro teaching and school observation in the first year of the course, followed by two weeks of teaching practice in the second year, and a full term of teaching practice in the third year.

Chart 20: Initial Teacher Education Courses for Basic Education in Sierra Leone

Name of Institution	Teacher Courses, Duration, and Entry Requirements
Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone (FBC-USL).	**Founded in 1827 by CMS for the training of missionaries and teachers. Became a degree granting institution in 1876 with affiliation to Durham University. A leading institution in the University of Sierra Leone. Offers a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (Dip. Ed.), as well as Bachelors' &**

Public	**Graduate Degrees in Education.**
Njala University (NU) **Public**	**Set up in 1924 to train teachers; became Njala University College in 1964; constituent college of the university of Sierra Leone in 1972; and a separate university (Njala University) in 2004, under the new University Act. Offers TC, HTC Primary and HTC Secondary courses.**
Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science & Technology (EBKUST) **Public**	**The Northern Polytechnic merged with Makeni Teachers' College and Magburaka Technical Training Institute. Northern Polytechnic now merged with Teko Veterinary Institute, Port Loko Teachers College, and an Arabic College in Magburaka, to form EBKUST. Offers TC, HTC Primary and HTC Secondary Courses.**
University of Makeni (UNIMAK) **Private**	**The University of Makeni (UNIMAK) is a private university in the Northern Province of Sierra Leone that was fully accredited in 2009. UNIMAK places "social development" at the heart of everything it does. On this basis UNIMAK has developed academic programmes that are rooted in the everyday reality of contemporary Africa; Offers HTC secondary courses.**
Eastern Polytechnic (EP)	**Established under the Polytechnic Act of 2001, from a merger of Bunumbu Teachers' College (1933) and Kenema Technical Institute (1957). Offers TC, HTC Primary and HTC Secondary courses for teachers.**
MMCET - Milton Margai College of Education & Technology	**Established in 2001; merged Milton Margai College of Education (Milton Margai Teachers' College of 1960); Freetown Technical Institute; and Hotel & Tourism Training Institute. Offers HTC Secondary and B.Ed. courses.**
FTC: Freetown Teachers' College	**Founded in 1964 by The Anglican Diocese to increase number of trained teachers in primary schools. Offers TC, HTC Primary and HTC Secondary courses, and a distance learning programme for untrained teachers.**

TSC and MBSSE are aware that this model of college-based learning with short stints of practical teaching has several shortcomings. First, the model attracts students who fail to gain entrance to university degree courses. They may have no intention of becoming teachers but use these courses (TC/HTC) as a form of tertiary education that can lead to further studies at university level or to jobs outside of the teaching profession. Perversely, students with qualifications that are not related to teaching also seek last-resort employment as teachers if they do not find jobs in their chosen field. These "reluctant" teachers are untrained in pedagogy and not likely to be suitable for the new basic education teaching force required in Sierra Leone.

Second the model requires trainee teachers (and the nation) to invest three years of time and resources in college-based learning, before starting a career in teaching. Only tenuous links exist between pre-service institutions and schools, with the result that students are not adequately prepared for teaching practice, not having undergone any structured or meaningful programme of preparation. For these reasons, faced with the realities of classrooms and schools, some individuals who genuinely wanted to teach find that teaching is not a suitable profession for them; or the schools find out that some individuals are simply not cut out to be professional teachers. This can result in such individuals leaving the teaching profession at the

earliest opportunity. Alternatively, they may continue to teach (if they have no choice), but without the requisite motivation and commitment to the profession. Either-way, this is a waste of individual time and potential as well as a waste of national resources.

The TSC has been exploring with teacher colleges (through the MTHE and TEC) and teachers' unions, the option of introducing a model of initial teacher education involving several chunks of college-based courses that are interspersed with substantial school-based practice. This will enable potential teachers to serve extensive practical periods in the classroom, during which they can experience and learn about the reality of teaching in the Sierra Leone context. Experiencing this reality will help student teachers to decide if they wish to continue in the profession, and to better understand what to expect as teachers in the Sierra Leone context. The TSC also believes that with appropriate guidance in colleges, some students may decide to switch from teacher training to other courses that are more suitable for them. This will help to reduce the phenomenon of "reluctant" teachers who stay in the profession simply because they have done a course but lack commitment to the teaching profession. For the new basic education curriculum to be put into practice, the commitment of teachers matter just as much as their numbers.

5.3.2. Continuous Learning & Professional Self-Development

When students complete their pre-service teacher education course and obtain the TC or HTC certificate, this marks the start of a lifetime of professional development. It is a process that requires initiative on the part of the new teacher. It also entails continuous learning on the job: from personal experience; from peers; from experienced mentors; and through periodic workshops or occasional formal courses. Using such options. a new teacher begins to enhance his or her competencies, hone pedagogical skills, develop coping mechanisms, work out how different pupils learn, explore new ways of doing things, build relations with peers and with pupils, appreciate shortcomings and learn where to get help, develop specialist strengths, etc. Through this process of continuous learning new teachers begin to build up their own peculiar repertoire of knowledge, skills and competencies that make them true professionals.

MBSSE appreciates that current provisions for in-service training do not support the type of teacher-led initiatives and school-based issues that are germane to continuous learning for professional self-development. Workshops and in-service training courses currently focus on helping unqualified and untrained teachers, as well as introducing new subjects/topics and teaching methods. These courses are generally prescriptive and reflect what employers and experts believe that teachers need to have to improve quality of education. The TSC will work with teacher education colleges and district education authorities, as well as teachers' unions and teacher subject associations, to provide more school-based and teacher-responsive

opportunities for the type of continuous learning that supports professional self-development of teachers. This can best be achieved through development of a comprehensive system of teacher management and support services that focus on classroom realities and the challenges faced by teachers in their practice.

5.3.3. Teacher Management and Support (TMS)

In addition to equipment, materials, supplies and other support for curriculum implementation, there should be comprehensive provision of teacher management and support (TMS) services. Implementation of the new curriculum will require qualified, trained, and motivated teachers to give of their best as professionals. Studies show that continuous school-based initiatives are more effective than periodic national workshops in enhancing the competence of teachers and advancing their professional development. School-based initiatives can help teachers improve steadily on their classroom performance as they mature on the job and gain confidence in dealing with students from diverse backgrounds. Beyond this, initiatives at district and national levels can help to broaden the outlook of teachers, reduce any sense of isolation and help to build support networks or communities of practice with their peers. The TSC has initiated work on subject teachers' associations to stimulate reflection on the practice and delivery of the curriculum, ensure quality teaching and outputs from teachers in the core subject areas and make recommendations on all matters relevant to the implementation of the curriculum. TSC and MBSSE will therefore work jointly with partners at national and district levels to ensure that appropriate support for teachers is provided through initiatives and programmes at the school, district, and national levels.

Support at school level will be provided through resource rooms and peer-to-peer exchange in each school, guided/facilitated by the school head. There will be adequate supply of materials (books, magazines, CDs/DVDs, etc.) and equipment (radios, cell phones and DVD/CD players) to facilitate learning for self-improvement by teachers. This may require a resource room in each school as well as incentives (e.g. travel to workshops or a discretionary monthly allowance) to motivate self-improvement activities by teachers.

At district level support will be provided through school clusters that bring teachers together in subject networks or more general communities of practice. As much as possible resources and services would be shared by schools in the same geographic area. School clusters can request help from teacher educators or subject experts in colleges, to organize small-scale workshops or provide one-on-one help with specific problems. This may entail using distance learning methodologies (radio broadcasts) and affordable digital communication tools (cell phones) to manage such one-on-one assistance. It may also be necessary to make budget provision for such activities through school grants or subventions to the main teacher education institutions.

5.4. Mandated Categories and Deployment of Teachers

To facilitate effective teaching and learning, MBSSE and TSC will ask MTHE and TEC to ensure that teacher education institutions produce a range of specialist teachers for basic education. At lower primary (Classes 1-3), specialist teachers in literacy and numeracy will be needed to improve learning achievement, whilst at upper primary and JSS levels specialist teachers, grounded in 2 or 3 subjects, will facilitate improved learning achievements. TSC will give high priority to recruiting and retaining individuals who are motivated and keen to pursue a teaching career. There will also be priority on providing incentives to retain qualified, competent, and experienced teachers who are already in the teaching profession. Through these measures, TSC expects to cultivate an effective and efficient teaching force of competent and committed professionals who can rise to the challenge of implementing the new basic education curriculum in Sierra Leone.

On deployment of teachers, the TSC will assign high quality teachers to schools and districts that have the greatest need for competent teachers. This will make the basic education system more equitable for learners across all 16 districts. MBSSE and TSC will explore incentives to attract and retain quality teachers for schools with the greatest need for such teachers. TSC will also promote national cohesion by encouraging a "mixed deployment" of teachers across the 16 districts. This means that beyond the basic requirement for teaching in the local language in Class 1-3, teachers will be deployed in a way that does not confine them to teaching in their home districts. This will promote cultural interaction in schools and encourage celebration of diversity, whilst avoiding the risk of balkanizing the education system.

5.5. Designing Career Incentives for Teachers

An outstanding problem for teachers is the lack of an attractive career path that can provide an incentive for professional self-improvement. The TSC has been making recommendations on matters of structure of the teaching profession, as well as promotion criteria for different grades, levels, and categories in the profession. In February 2019, Cabinet approved the teacher licensing policy and plans for teachers to move up the career path. MBSSE and the TSC will work with teachers' organisations to develop an attractive professional structure that would encourage young teachers to aspire for recognition and promotion as they improve their competencies and achieve results for learners.

For instance, it should be possible to negotiate provision of adequate compensation for the different roles played by different categories of teachers. MBSSE and TSC believe that most teachers can improve their professional performance by assessing their level of pedagogical engagement against an objective scale and aspiring to move up this scale. A version of such a scale derived from the international literature is shown in Figure 5. This is a five-level scale of

pedagogical engagement based on analysis of teachers' own accounts of how they perceive their jobs and what they do as professionals in the classroom. The scale ranks these reported teaching styles from "lowest form of pedagogical engagement" to "highest form of pedagogical engagement". The top of Figure 5 also shows examples of potential specialist areas that teachers can select and use for career advancement. The TSC is considering these specialist contributions as part of the criteria for recognition, promotion, and increased remuneration for teachers.

Figure 4: Template for Professional Development & Career Advancement

PROFESSIONAL SELF-DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS & SCHOOL HEADS -→						SCHOOL-BASED & COLLEGE-BASED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES
	←- Potential Specialist Areas in Career Opportunities of Teachers -→					
	Specialist Teacher for Subject Areas in Primary School (e.g. Science)	**Specialist Teacher in Lower Primary (Early Grade) or in Upper Primary**	**General Primary School Teacher with a Successful Track Record**	**Specialist Teacher and a Successful JSS Subject Coach (e.g. Maths; ICT)**	**Specialist Teacher and a Successful JSS Theme Coach (e.g. Democracy)**	
	Key Stages of Teachers' Pedagogic Engagement with Students					
	Highest form of Pedagogic Engagement ***Mentoring:*** **Teachers cultivate deep and lasting "learning partnership" with students, sharing their passion and love for learning with their students. Teachers put in extra hours and make the extra effort to inspire their students. Teachers effects on learners last beyond class time or school years**					
	Guided Participation: **Teachers help students take main responsibility for learning. Shift to student directed activities from teacher-centered work. Focus on the quality and depth of student learning with teacher providing guidance and encouraging students to reflect on the learning process.**					
	Facilitating: **Teachers interact with students and focus is on teaching the students not teaching the subject or subject-related skills. Use learner-centered methods with students as active participants rather than passive recipient. Focus on depth of student learning/understanding; not just "recall".**					
	Instructing: **Teachers interact with students, getting them to acquire and apply key skills including discipline-based activities (e.g. making observations in science). Teachers move around, monitor students' progress, provide help, etc.; but all activities still directed and controlled by teacher.**					
	Lowest form of Pedagogic Engagement ***Information Providing:*** **Teachers deliver knowledge to be reproduced later in exams. Uses direct instruction from teacher to student with minimal engagement. It is teaching a subject rather than teaching students. Give notes, deliver content, cover syllabus, hope learning happens, test "recall".**					

6. Learners, Pedagogy, and Resources for Learning

An important task in curriculum development that is sometimes over-looked is to envisage the profile of the learner after successful completion of the course of study. This profile is not in terms of grades scored in school tests, results achieved in public examinations, or certificates obtained; even though these are all important. It is also not just about the content or subjects covered during their schooling, although this is certainly a critical part of quality education.

What is most important is that those who develop the new curriculum should start with a vision of the successful learner in society. This entails mapping out a profile of the learner who has completed nine years of basic education. It involves such things as: functioning in community; conducting routine/complex transactions; contributing to work and the economy; helping with nation building; relating to others in positive ways; understanding and having control over one's own health; holding rational beliefs; solving problems; following sensible rules; making decisions based on evidence; appreciating culture; performing skilled tasks; settling disputes peacefully; demonstrating sense of civic duty; contributing to local and national debate on key issues; participating in democratic processes; etc.

In short, the experts and practitioners who develop the new basic education curriculum must have a sense of how the curriculum would impact the lives of learners as they complete school and become useful members of society. How could we tell that these young people have had the benefit of nine years basic education? What would be the distinguishing characteristics and demonstrable competencies that set them apart from those who have not had the benefit of a quality basic education? Ultimately it is these qualities that will be on public display as evidence of the impact that the new basic education curriculum has on young people in the country.

To ensure that the new curriculum has a fair chance of producing the desired impact on young people who complete basic education, attention would need to focus on more than the content of the curriculum. It is in the best interest of students that the focus should be on facilitating learning for overall development, rather than on teaching curriculum topics for examinations. So, what must be emphasized are pedagogy, resources, and conditions for learning in schools. Implementation of the new curriculum must be in the best interest of the learners as future citizens, rather than simply on teaching subjects and passing examinations.

6.1. Learners and their Best Interests

In the learner-centered pedagogy proposed for the new curriculum, teachers are expected to facilitate/guide the learning process. But students must be responsible for their own success in school, with support from parents and the local community. Learners therefore have key roles to play such as being: active participants in all learning activities; inquirers and independent

thinkers; co-constructors of their own knowledge; participants in assessment of their own learning; and respectful individuals who can share experiences with others in a constructive and collaborative manner. Some of these learner-centred elements and suggested measures that may be taken to implement them in schools are shown in Chart 21.

Chart 21: Learner-Centred Elements and Implementation Measures

Learner-Centred Elements	Measures to Support Implementation of Learner-Centred Pedagogical Models
Learning experiences should enable all learners to observe and practice actual processes, products, skills and values they are expected to acquire.	Teachers shall involve all learners in authentic learning experiences for them to develop life skills, attitudes and values for their individual holistic growth. All learners will be encouraged to use strategies for inquiry, problem solving and creative thinking to achieve that goal. MBSSE shall support provision of the necessary resources for schools to offer "A Chance for All Children to Learn" irrespective of gender, body ability or social/cultural/geographic origin/status.
Learning experiences should respect and accommodate the differences between learners.	Use flexible/adaptive teaching approach that values and caters for learners of different identities/backgrounds, in terms of language, culture, gender, health, location, values, abilities/disabilities, and prior learning/experience that they bring with them to the classroom as partners in the learning process.
Learning experiences should encourage students to learn both as individuals and as a group.	Help learners become autonomous through individual assignments and use of constructive feedback. Create conditions for learners to challenge knowledge acquired, when appropriate, based on their understanding of reality. Engage learners in group work and collaborative activities for exchanging views, negotiating agreements, and learning from one another.
Learning experiences should be motivating and their purpose clear to the student.	Provide learners with purposeful/relevant activities that stimulate thought, inquiry and enjoyment; and give constructive feedback on their performance in these activities. Relate activities to the realities of learners' everyday lives.
Learning should connect with existing knowledge, skills & values, but extend & challenge their ways of thinking/acting.	Successful learning builds on prior knowledge/understanding/skills. Provide opportunities for learners to connect new experiences to their pre-existing knowledge, and challenge their assumptions and misconceptions.

For learners to take such an active part in the learning process, it is important not to exceed the officially recommended teacher-student ratio of 1:45. MBSSE and TSC will work with MTHE and TEC to expand teacher education, and TSC will rationalise the deployment of qualified teachers to all public schools in a fair and equitable manner.

6.2. Resources and Conditions for Learning

Successful implementation of the new basic education curriculum will require provision of adequate resources as well as creation of appropriate conditions within an environment that is conducive to learning. Indeed, the learning environment in schools can be the most decisive factor in determining effective and efficient implementation of the curriculum. This is partly because the right environment facilitates the job of teachers and puts learners at ease to focus

on what is on offer in the curriculum. More importantly MBSSE is aware that the environment in schools can even be used as a teaching resource. E.g. children are more likely to benefit from a school environment with standards of good hygiene and cleanliness (water & soap), than from the didactic teaching of hygiene lessons in the classroom.

Districts and local councils have a key role in this, as they are responsible for mobilizing material resources for the schools under their jurisdiction. But the provision of adequate resources and creation of appropriate conditions for learning in all schools in the country will require a high degree of inter-ministerial cooperation as well as collaborative inputs from partner agencies. One of the "silver linings" from the devastating Ebola crisis has been a welcome increase in inter-ministerial collaboration and cooperation with partners on the challenging task of "building back better" in education.

MBSSE will promote use of coordination mechanisms such as Task Forces and Committees with education stakeholders and chaired/co-chaired by MBSSE. E.g. the MBSSE Education Emergency Taskforce established in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis. Through such mechanisms all major initiatives and strategies for education transformation will be jointly reviewed and assessed to agree on resource inputs and allocate responsibilities for implementation. These collaborative mechanisms will increasingly be used to assess existing situations, monitor progress, and evaluate results of various interventions, projects and programmes.

To harness the power of these coordinating mechanisms, and in the interest of parity, MBSSE shall set standards for school financing and TSC shall provide guidelines for supply of teachers. In consultation with stakeholders, MBSSE will specify per-pupil funding levels to guide school financing, and will work with TSC to ensure that adequate numbers of qualified teachers are deployed in a fair and equitable manner to all schools in districts across the country.

Beyond school financing and teacher supply, MBSSE will work with partners to enhance quality of basic education and ensure efficient implementation of the new curriculum. Some of the measures that will be taken include: setting standards for rehabilitating and maintaining school infrastructure; providing guidelines for setting up school-based teacher resource centers (TRCs); continuing and enhancing the school broadcast system that facilitated continuation of learning during emergencies (Ebola and COVID-19); and issuing specifications for specialist facilities like standard and mobile laboratories, workshops, first-aid rooms, studios and computer rooms.

In this regard, another "silver lining" from the COVID-19 and Ebola crises has been a new focus on rehabilitating and improving school facilities as part of post-crisis education reconstruction. Standards for safe schools were developed and used in the process of reopening schools and restoring learning. As part of this process water and sanitation facilities/services were provided

to all schools. In addition, hygiene kits and other supplies were distributed to all schools to promote safe interaction and good health practices of hand washing and general cleanliness in the learning environment. Partner agencies also facilitated procurement and distribution of radio sets to schools and communities as part of the school broadcast system that helped to maintain learning in the face of school closures during the COVID-19 and Ebola crises.

MBSSE and TSC will ensure that all these fortuitous crisis-driven developments in the education sector are harnessed to support effective implementation of the new basic education curriculum. In general, MBSSE and TSC will work with partners to determine cost-effective and flexible ways to use and enhance the various facilities and resources. Some facilities like science laboratories or computer rooms and teacher resource centers could be mobile (e.g. converted trucks/buses) so they can be moved around to service clusters of schools in the districts.

To consolidate the gains of post-crisis reconstruction in the areas of school facilities and infrastructure, MBSSE will support the development of a school maintenance scheme with clearly defined roles at the school, district, and national levels. MBSSE will also advocate with the Ministry of Energy and the National Power Authority, as well as the private sector and NGOs, to speed up the provision of electric power (especially solar) and the provision of cell phone and internet connectivity in schools. Similarly, MBSSE will work with partners to make school buildings physically accessible to all learners (including those with disabilities). It will also work with Ministry of Water Resources and Ministry of Health and Sanitation, as well as NGOs, to provide/maintain water and sanitation services (including menstrual hygiene) to all schools in Sierra Leone. The type of collaboration required to achieve this was ushered in as part of post-crisis reconstruction of the education system. Plans for safe reopening of schools involved inputs from Ministries and partner agencies dealing with Logistics, Health, Water & Sanitation, Child Protection, etc. MBSSE is also committed to timely payment of staff emoluments, especially salaries of teachers. Chart 22 below outlines examples of these resources/conditions for quality learning, and support measures.

Chart 22: Resources & Conditions for Quality learning with Implementation Measures

Resources & Conditions for Quality Learning	Measures to Provide the necessary Resources and Create Appropriate Conditions for Quality Learning in Basic Education
Availability of teaching & learning resources; as well as facilities and equipment for learning activities and to safeguard the health and well-being of learners.	**MBSSE will ensure that textbooks and supplementary materials are available in all public schools. Where possible, internet access will be supported to give learners access to e-resources. Teachers' guides and resource books shall be available in all schools. Science laboratories and other practical facilities shall be provided in all schools or shared by clusters of schools (e.g. mobile labs). First-aid facilities (room, equipment, supplies and training) will also be available in every school.**
	MBSSE will set standards to construct and equip new schools, and to promote a

Child Friendly Schools and Learning Environments	**culture of reading starting from lower primary. MBSSE will also issue guidelines to ensure rules/regulations are fair and in the best interests of the child, and applied in a transparent and democratic manner for the safety and well-being of children; To make schools free from abuse, exploitation and sexual harassment, MBSSE shall disseminate and help to enforce the Teachers' Code of Conduct. It will also provide guidance for schools to foster a culture of respect for children and advocate for this to be embedded in teacher training courses. It will work with partners to help develop "alternative forms of discipline" in schools so that (in line with the Child Rights Act) children are not subjected to bullying and humiliation through corporal punishment. MBSSE shall facilitate legal prosecution to the fullest extent for all perpetrators of violence and abuse against children that may occur in schools.**
Trained/qualified teachers appropriately deployed in basic education system.	**TSC has established credentials for teaching in Sierra Leone and will recruit teachers accordingly. Orientation and support will be provided for teachers who are already in the system but do not have these credentials. This will be achieved through mentor teachers in schools as well as by creating opportunities to gain the necessary qualifications. TSC will continue to ensure teachers are assigned to appropriate grades/cycles and engaged to teach appropriate subjects. In particular, qualified teachers shall be assigned to early grade literacy/numeracy.**
Motivated teachers and education personnel	**MBSSE shall work with the TSC to put in place measures to motivate and retain teachers, providing incentives for them to work in the schools that are most in need of good teachers. MBSSE will work with the TSC to resolve issues of professional development and career prospects, as well as setting fair conditions of service for teachers. The TSC will also work with MBSSE to put in place a teacher appraisal system that recognizes and rewards the work of successful teachers, especially those who add most value by coaching weak learners to become successful students. MBSSE will support the TSC to create an incentive scheme for exceptional/specialist teachers.**

7. Learning Assessment and Examinations

There are two aspects of learning assessment and examinations in Sierra Leone that require further review and would need to change with the new basic education curriculum. First, there is the high-stakes nature of end-of-cycle examinations like NPSE and BECE, and their backwash effects on school-based learning assessment (as already discussed in section 2.2.6.). Failing the NPSE or BECE often means the end of a young person's chances to continue with education or to go on to have a successful career. Students and parents have an obsessive focus on passing these examinations, often going to extraordinary lengths to succeed or to circumvent them and move to the next level. Also, the standing of schools depends almost exclusively on their track record of student passes in the NPSE and BECE. MBSSE regards schools as places where all our children can get the chance to learn, to develop their potential, and to build hope for their future. Schools must not be allowed to become the places where so many children get labelled as failures and have hope taken away from them. This tyranny of examinations must be broken, so the new curriculum can deliver learning and quality basic education for all students.

The second problematic aspect of assessment is that teachers and students are so concerned with passing NPSE and BECE that there is little focus on seeking opportunities for real learning. Indeed, most teachers are not adequately trained to prepare reliable and valid assessments to test for the learning that is prescribed in the curriculum. Assessment tends to focus on cognitive mastery, especially at the recall level, at the expense of other skills and competencies. MBSSE expects that there will be more emphasis on continuous assessment in the new curriculum as this will help teachers to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of their students, as well as reduce the stranglehold of NPSE and BECE on learning assessment. Over the years, however, continuous assessment has become mired in incompetency, dishonesty, and scandal.

Chart 23: Provision for Assessment and Examinations in Basic Education

Ensure that continuous assessment is carried out by all schools and forms part of the student's Final grading; Ensure that teachers have the training, resources, and integrity to carry out continuous assessment that can be relied upon; Ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are assessed, including issues that some teachers may regard as controversial such as comprehensive sexuality education; Ensure that all students in the final year of primary education sit the National Primary School Examination (NPSE) and all children in the final year of junior secondary sit the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE); Ensure all students sit for a minimum of 7 and maximum of 9 subjects at BECE; Pay examination fees for all BECE and NPSE candidates in government and government- assisted schools and community schools; Ensure all students passing the NPSE with the minimum government stipulated score are placed in a Junior Secondary School (JSS); students who do not pass can re-sit the NPSE; Support the development of a learning assessment framework to ensure that students develop critical basic literacy, numeracy, and thinking skills early in their schooling.

To address these challenges experts who design the national curriculum and practitioners who implement it must be clear about several issues. First there is the issue of the purpose of assessment, or why we assess learners. Second is the issue of assessment styles or the ways in which we can assess learners. Finally, there is the issue of what we are assessing or the range of competencies we want learners to demonstrate. These issues are all inter-related of course and they will need to be addressed by curriculum developers and classroom teachers, as well as by practitioners who design and administer public examinations (NPSE & BECE) for WAEC. First though, a word about Continuous Assessment as an integral part of student assessment.

7.1. Making Use of Continuous Assessment

At the classroom level, there are recorded marks or results from learning assessment during or at the end of each topic or unit. These results become the continuous assessment scores of the students, helping to build a profile of what has been learned during the year, as well as to determine progress to the next class. Teachers can use all the marks recorded during the year for the continuous assessment score, urging their students to perform consistently to get a good average score. Alternatively, teachers can use only the best marks recorded (e.g., the best 15 marks out of 25 marks recorded over the year) as continuous assessment scores, in which case the students have a chance to make up for any bad performance during the year.

In general, students must be made aware of the importance of these recorded marks and that the marks contribute to their continuous assessment scores and determine if they gain promotion to the next grade in basic education. These assessments need to use a variety of ways to collect information about a learner's learning and progress in all subjects. Collection of a learner's information should be a continuous process and should be recorded efficiently and effectively. The teacher should always give timely and effective feedback that will lead to positive action and help the learner. The recorded marks can also be used to develop a profile of each student, indicating the subjects and topics in which he/she is strong and those in which he/she is weak and may need help. This profile is important for the students as they begin to take responsibility for their own learning achievement. It is also important for parents so they know how best they can support learning improvements for their children. Finally, it is critical for a student's teachers in the new class so that they have a sense of strengths/weaknesses and how best to help improve learning for students who are promoted to their class. This important profile of the learner is usually captured in a well-designed school report card that is completed every term or even every month. It is also used to complement the results of national exams to determine whether or not the learner proceeds to the next level in his/her schooling.

An effective continuous assessment system requires both technical competence and technological support. Data bases of students' progress are an essential need. However, high computer illiteracy in schools and a lack of technical expertise among teachers have resulted in chaos and outright inefficiency in the reporting of students' progress. In addition, evidence obtained in respect of continuous assessment indicates not only incompetence in its administration but also acts of dishonesty, corruption, and fraud. Grades are given to students which they had not earned and there have been reports by both teachers and students that grades can be bought either in cash or in kind. Transformative basic education curriculum, therefore, requires MBSSE to provide teachers with not just the technical training and resources needed for implementation of continuous assessment but also inculcate in teachers the integrity and trust it takes to implement this approach to assessment.

7.2. The Purpose of Learning Assessments

We assess learners to determine how much they have achieved of the learning outcomes that are specified in the curriculum. So, a lot depends on how the learning outcomes are framed and specified. This is done rather broadly in the national curriculum document and translated into more specific terms in the teaching syllabus that guides what teachers do in classrooms. With each lesson in the classroom teachers plan to help their students acquire specified knowledge, understanding, skills, etc. It usually takes several lessons to complete a unit, theme, or topic in the syllabus. The purpose of assessment at the end of one or more lessons and/or at the end of a specific unit, topic, or theme would be to find out how much of the prescribed knowledge, understanding, skills, etc., the students have succeeded in acquiring. At the macro level the assessment done in examinations like the NPSE and BECE has a rather different purpose. It is usually to find out how much a student has acquired of all the learning prescribed for six years of primary schooling or nine years of basic education. This helps to determine whether a student: qualifies for entry to the next level of education; can meet the basic requirements in the work force; or meets the expected profile that demonstrates successful completion of six or nine years of schooling. In principle good performance by learners in classroom assessments or yearly class exams should accumulate and translate into successful performance at the NPSE and BECE examinations!

The purpose of learning assessment also depends on who is doing the assessment and what is wanted from the exercise. For most teachers, the purpose of assessment should be to find out how successful they have been in doing their job of facilitating learning. But the current reality is that teachers typically use assessment to judge which learners are winners and which ones are failures. This assumes teachers have done their job, and assessment is about performance of learners. TSC and MBSSE believe this approach must change for teachers to use assessment as a tool for improving their own practice. Teachers can reflect on their practice by using

assessment to ask questions such as: why did some of my students perform badly, which aspect of the unit did they not understand, are there better ways of teaching this topic to help all my students perform reasonably? By asking such questions and seeking help, if needed, teachers can steadily improve their own professional development.

Another way for teachers to use assessment is to help their students understand weaknesses and improve on performance. This is what should happen when a teacher does revision classes after an assessment. Such classes review strengths and weaknesses of learners as revealed in the assessment, so teachers can use this to help learners perform better. Also, teachers and schools can use assessment to inform parents and communities on progress with learning. MBSSE and TSC recommend that regular report cards and PTA meetings be used to provide parents and communities with feedback on performance of learners. This would indicate if teachers are doing well with facilitating learning, and if the school is being successful.

It is not only teachers who are concerned with assessment. MBSSE, TSC, District Councils and other education managers can use assessment to judge how schools are performing based on learning achievement of students. Hence, decisions can be made about assisting schools where students are performing poorly overall, or not doing well in particular subjects. Assessment can be a tool for allocating resources and support equitably; giving every child a chance to learn and helping every school to improve.

7.3. Styles of Learning Assessments

How we assess learning depends on what type of learning outcomes or specific competencies we are assessing, as well as why we are assessing learners and what we hope to get out of the exercise. The way in which learning outcomes are specified determines to a great extent how to assess learning, as well as how to facilitate learning (pedagogy). MBSSE mandates that learning outcomes should be carefully crafted as key drivers of the new curriculum, so that teachers can use them in conjunction with appropriate pedagogy and assessment styles.

Based on well-defined learning outcomes, classroom teachers can use a variety of methods to assess learning. These may include written tests, oral tests, practical performance, multiple-choice tests, essays, expressive rehearsals, productions; playing games (following rules), and settling arguments or disputes; as well as homework, project work, demonstration exercises, real-world problem-solving, etc. Also, learners can be assessed as individuals or as part of a group and even as a whole class doing a collective exercise. It is also possible to make use of self-assessment or peer-assessment exercises, so that learners can have an opportunity of assessing and correcting their own work in the process of learning. In addition, assessment of

learners can be on a regular and scheduled basis (weekly/monthly) or on an impromptu basis as in so-called “hot mental” tests or reading aloud by turn in class.

Most critically assessment can be designed to test learners on memory or recall; understanding or comprehension; use or application; interpretation or analysis; evaluating; creating; etc. Therefore, teachers need to be aware of (and be trained in) this rich menu of assessment styles. TSC and MBSSE support the need for intensive work in this area by experts and practitioners dealing with curriculum development. It is critical that those who design and administer public examinations such as NPSE and BECE should take account of this variety of assessment styles in testing learners.

7.4. Assessing Domains of Learning

MBSSE has prescribed a range of core subjects and electives or optional subjects that should be offered in the new basic education curriculum. These subjects have been carefully selected to reflect the competencies and learning domains that are considered relevant and essential for young people completing nine years of basic education in Sierra Leone in the 21st century. The subjects have been crafted in a form that makes them familiar to most education practitioners in Sierra Leone, but they have also been sufficiently nuanced to reflect the key competencies required by our young people on completion of nine years basic education. These subjects also embrace the 5Cs and correspond to the seven domains of learning recommended by global experts as essential for all young people to master if they are to succeed in school and life.

The general goal is to advocate for and support assessment of learners on these prescribed subjects or learning domains at different levels. The first level of assessment is at the classroom in our schools. Teachers should assess their learners to determine how well they are doing in terms of the units, themes, and topics that make up these domains of learning, at each stage of the 9-year basic education cycle. Through assessment at the classroom level, our teachers will ensure that children are learning and are being supported, so that every child has a chance to learn and progress from one grade to the next. This is the first and most important concern of the education system as regards assessment of learners in the prescribed subject areas or learning domains.

Beyond this the system is committed to promoting assessment in reading (literacy) and mathematics (numeracy) as tools for learning that all our students should acquire as early as possible. This means support for the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) to be administered to all learners at the fourth grade. In addition, MBSSE will support WAEC experts to ensure robust assessment of learners in the prescribed subject areas at the end of the basic education cycle (BECE).

8. Partnerships and Stakeholder Roles

The main stakeholders in basic education are the learners, teachers, and leaders in the schools. In addition, there are the parents and local communities that are indirect beneficiaries, served by these schools. Then there are the main providers and facilitators who invest resources, exercise governance, and manage the operations of the education system. Generally, it is important to understand that the type of partnership required for basic education to work for all children is not just a voluntary matter. There are critical expectations and obligations based on the principle of education as a right for all in society. It is therefore best to view partnerships and the roles of various stakeholders through the rights-based lens of education.

Learners can be defined as rights holders or young citizens with education rights. The school can be defined as a learning community within which such education rights are exercised and practiced, with teachers and school heads that have a duty to facilitate the education rights of all children. Households and communities can be defined as entities that have a duty to facilitate the education rights of all children. This involves the legal obligation to send children to school as well as the duty to support the work of the school and facilitate learning activities of children at home. Households and communities also have a democratic duty to support schools, and to hold them accountable for the quality of education provided for their children.

MBSSE recognizes that delivery of quality basic education requires the concerted efforts of all stakeholders. It welcomes and encourages the contribution of external and local NGOs in the education sector, through interventions that are in line with Sierra Leone's Education Sector Plan and guided by this curriculum framework document. These organisations can be of great support to the education system by implementing interventions such as those in Chart 24. The Education Act of 2004 recognizes the important role that parents/guardians play in the education of children in Sierra Leone, as reflected in Chart 24. MBSSE acknowledges the role of private school proprietors in providing facilities and other resources for use in the delivery of basic education. The agencies that constitute the education donor community in Sierra Leone are essential partners. MBSSE fully appreciates and welcomes their continuing role in making basic education work for all children and adolescents. In addition, the private sector continues to be a strong partner. There is optimism that the growing number of investors in various industries will translate into a strong education partnership to benefit the local communities in which these companies operate. Finally, MBSSE expects that the growing trend of the Sierra Leonean diaspora supporting their alma mater or schools in their home communities will continue and become a strong partnership for quality basic education (Chart 24).

Chart 24: Stakeholders' Roles in Partnerships for Quality Basic Education

ROLE OF MBSSE & TSC IN FACILITATING PARTNERSHIPS
Create an environment for all stakeholders to contribute to the successful implementation of quality education. (b) Formulate a policy framework to guide involvement of stakeholders in basic education delivery. (c) Comply with reporting procedures and timelines of projects that are funded by stakeholders. (d) Promote collaboration and networking among stakeholders for optimal use of resources. (e) Recognize the complementary role of NGOs in improving educational services. (f) Train community members to play a role in school development programmes, through School Management Committees, and other community-based school support structures.
ROLE OF EXTERNAL AND LOCAL NGOs
Contribute to pre-service/in-service training and school-based teacher professional development programs such as: peer-to-peer exchange; supervised learning clusters; or communities of practice. (b) Support development and supply of teaching and learning materials for curriculum implementation and enhanced education quality. (c) Participate in periodic curriculum reviews. (e) Support enhancement of school and educational governance.
ROLE OF PARENTS, GUARDIANS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES
Send children to school and ensure they attend regularly up to completion of the 9-year basic education cycle. Help with school management through school boards and PTAs. Support homework and learning at home
ROLE OF PRIVATE SCHOOL PROPRIETORS & OTHER PROVIDERS
Establish official agreements between MBSSE and school owners, defining roles of both parties. (b) Expedite the registration of private schools (especially JSS) that qualify for it, based on criteria set by the Government.
ROLE OF THE DONOR COMMUNITY (PROGRAM FINANCING & SECTOR BUDGET SUPPORT)
Engage in policy dialogue with Government around the education sector plan and framework documents that highlight national priorities for basic education.
ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR (PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS)
Invest in new schools (especially JSS) as part of corporate responsibility. Sponsor JSS students (especially girls) in the local community. Partner with MBSSE to provide teacher resource centers in schools and districts.
ROLE OF SIERRA LEONEAN DIASPORA AND ALUMNI GROUPS
Sponsor the rehabilitation of school facilities; construct equip and supply learning materials for school-based resource centers; support pre-service and in-service teacher training; provide inputs to school management.

9. Management, Monitoring and Evaluation

9.1. Management, Support and Supervision

Successful implementation of the new basic education curriculum will require teachers, schools, and districts to be adequately supported, managed, and supervised. Provision for this should be made at the school and district levels, as well as at the national level. School heads are the main managers of the curriculum in their schools. They should provide effective supervision of classroom practice and deal with problems encountered by teachers in the process of putting the curriculum into practice. School heads and teachers need to be oriented to the new basic education curriculum and its assessment procedures, as well as being kept abreast of changes in policies, regulations, and assessment methods that affect the curriculum. MBSSE will work with districts and key partners to provide adequately for school heads to have access to information and training opportunities for their role in managing curriculum implementation at the school level. School heads must also be empowered to solicit support and/or conduct school-based training on curriculum issues for the benefit of their teachers as well as to plan for and supervise administrative/logistic support for implementation of the curriculum in their schools. Based on these requirements, provision for effective and efficient management and supervision of curriculum implementation in schools should include those shown in Chart 25.

Chart 25: Provisions for Management & Supervision of Curriculum Implementation

Establish school management committees (SMCs) in all primary schools and Boards of Governors (BoGs) in Junior Secondary Schools to assist with school management. Set up Parents/Community-Teachers Associations (P/CTAs) in all schools to facilitate community participation and support for the schools, Provide school fee subsidies for non-private primary schools, which shall be paid by the Local Councils into school bank accounts operated at recognised banking institutions. Abolish tuition fees and other charges in non-private primary schools and stipulate any other fees to be charged in public JSS. Make school heads and management bodies accountable for monies paid into school accounts and for accurate financial reporting. Encourage CTAs, SMCs, BoGs, as well as alumni associations to raise funds to support schools. Provide tuition fees, uniforms, and teaching/learning materials for girls in junior secondary schools according to Ministry-established guidelines.

In addition to broad support for curriculum implementation in schools, there needs to be more specific provision of teacher management and support (TMS) services. The role of teachers is pivotal to successful implementation of the new basic education curriculum. Success requires teachers who are not only qualified and trained, but also motivated to give their best. Studies show that focusing on school-based professional development for teachers enhances their competence and performance as they mature on the job and gain confidence in dealing with students from different backgrounds. Implementation of the basic education curriculum will

therefore require that appropriate support be planned and delivered for primary and JSS teachers, at the school level as well as at district and national levels.

Support at school level is best provided through resource rooms and peer-to-peer exchange in individual schools, guided and facilitated by the school head. There should be adequate supply of materials (books, magazines, CDs/DVDs, online resources, etc.), as well as equipment (radios, cell phones, DVD/CD players, computers), to facilitate private learning and self-improvement activities by teachers. This may require a resource room for each school cluster as well as incentives (e.g. travel to workshops) that may be needed to motivate teachers to engage in activities that support their professional performance.

At district level support will be provided through school clusters that bring teachers together in a community of practice, as well as providing services and resources that can be shared by a small number of schools in the same geographic area. School clusters can request periodic help from designated teacher educators or subject specialists, who can organize/lead small teaching workshops or provide one-on-one help with specific problems encountered in the classroom. It is possible also to use distant learning (including cell phones) to manage one-on-one assistance.

At the national level support for teachers can best be managed jointly by the TSC and MBSSE Directorates in conjunction with their DDs, school heads and district education officers. The MBSSE Quality Assurance Division has successfully overhauled and modernized its functions from one of "policing" the system to a more constructive role of monitoring, advising, and supporting teachers as well as school heads for improved practice. The Inspectorate now needs to incorporate criteria for assessing the performance of teachers in its toolkit and use these to monitor implementation of the curriculum as well as to provide support that teachers may need. In conjunction with monitoring and support by MBSSE there needs to be standards and motivation by TSC for implementing the new curriculum. These functions of monitoring and support by MBSSE Inspectorate combined with standards and motivation by the TSC DDs should help teachers advance their professional competencies, and facilitate successful implementation of the new curriculum.

9.2. Monitoring & Adjusting Curriculum Implementation

The main reason for monitoring the basic education curriculum is to check that it is being put into practice or implemented as intended. Monitoring will help to determine how far teachers and other practitioners are adhering to recommendations and keeping to the guidelines set out for the new curriculum. It will also throw light on challenges faced by teachers and school heads as they implement the curriculum in schools, thereby providing a basis for planning support to meet their professional development needs. The monitoring process is a continuous one that

will help practitioners to make small adjustments and deal with obvious problems to allow for improved implementation. For effective and efficient monitoring, MBSSE shall assign responsibilities to appropriate bodies and personnel at the school, district, and national levels (Chart 26). It will also work with partners to ensure that resources required for monitoring are made available. MBSSE will put measures in place to ensure that the feedback from monitoring is used to improve implementation of the new basic education curriculum on an on-going basis.

Chart 26: Provision for Monitoring the Curriculum at School, District and National levels

MONITORING AT SCHOOL LEVEL
(a) Head teachers, deputy head teachers, principals and vice principals as well as heads of departments shall be responsible for curriculum implementation at school level. (b) Teachers will monitor learners' progress on a daily and weekly basis. This will assist them to reflect and improve on their teaching. (c) Learners as education clients shall monitor curriculum implementation at classroom level. MBSSE shall develop user friendly monitoring tools for this purpose. (d) Community Teachers Associations and School Management Committees shall have defined monitoring roles. (e) Learners' assessment records kept and used for purposes of monitoring.
MONITORING AT DISTRICT LEVEL
(a) Deputy Directors (DDs) of MBSSE & TSC and other district-based supervisors shall be responsible for monitoring & support as well as standards & motivation in the implementation of the curriculum in their district. (b) Guidelines for monitoring at district level shall be developed and provided to all relevant parties.
MONITORING AT NATIONAL LEVEL
(a) The MBSSE Quality Assurance Directorate and TSC Teacher Development Directorate at HQ shall also be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the curriculum. (b) The MBSSE Curriculum Specialists at HQ be responsible for monitoring curriculum implementation at national level. (c) Proper guidelines on monitoring at national level shall be developed. (d) Data-base shall be kept at national level for purposes of informing the monitoring process. (e) There shall be an annual dissemination of monitoring results to relevant stakeholders.

9.3. Curriculum Evaluation and Renewal

The role of evaluation is to determine the extent to which the goals set out for the curriculum are being achieved in practice. In the process, evaluation helps to establish what is working well and where there are shortcomings in the process of implementing the curriculum. Key issues will include whether the curriculum is as relevant in practice to the aspirations of learners and their parents/communities, or the development goals of Government as was envisaged and intended in the original design. Another issue is whether the curriculum is being implemented as effectively as possible, so that basic education is successfully delivering for all children, the learning that is prescribed in the syllabus. Evaluation helps to determine problems such as: lack

of resources; inappropriate content; faulty teaching styles; poor management; lack of support for teachers; unsuitable learning environment, etc. These and other factors may be inhibiting the effective implementation of the curriculum in some schools and districts. Again, evaluation can determine if the cost of implementing the curriculum is excessive and therefore probably unsustainable. This is a matter of efficiency and the issue is whether proper use is being made of all available resources in an economical manner; or whether excessive demands are being made for resources to support curriculum implementation. Essentially then evaluation deals with relevance, effectiveness and efficiency as key determinants of successful implementation of the basic education curriculum. It throws light on what is wrong and how it can be fixed.

However, for evaluation to be meaningful and useful it is important that enough time should be allowed, and support provided for schools to have a fair chance of implementing the curriculum effectively and efficiently. It is easy to find fault with a curriculum when in fact the problem could be that enough time has not been allowed for it to work in the school system. Typically, a national curriculum requires a full cycle, in this case the 9-year basic education cycle, before it can be comprehensively evaluated in a meaningful and fair way (summative evaluation). Since waiting nine years may be too long to correct faults with curriculum implementation, it is also normal to carry out a formative evaluation half-way through this period. This enables essential corrections to be made and provides useful interim data for the summative evaluation. It is also important for practitioners to note that minor adjustments to curriculum implementation can be made on a continuous basis by monitoring the process and taking necessary action to deal with minor problems without waiting for formative or summative evaluation. MBSSE has mandated that a formative evaluation exercise will be conducted five years after the start of implementation of the new basic education curriculum. A more comprehensive summative evaluation will be carried out ten years after the start of curriculum implementation. In general. the purpose of these evaluation exercises shall include the examples in Chart 27 below.

Chart 27: General Purpose of Curriculum Evaluation Exercises

- **Assess the relevance of the curriculum in terms of meeting the aspirations of learners and their parents or local communities; as well as the development goals set out by Government.**
- **Identify strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum in terms of content, teaching styles and assessment methodologies being used in the schools.**
- **Assess the effectiveness of the curriculum in terms of short-term results and long-term impact on individuals, local communities and the nation as a whole.**
- **Assess the efficiency with which the curriculum is being implemented, as well as the sustainability of recurrent resource provisions for the curriculum.**

MBSSE has also mandated that the formative and summative evaluation exercises will involve national experts and external experts. The involvement of external experts will ensure that these evaluation processes benefit from independent expertise with no vested interests in the results. The findings of the formative evaluation will feed into a mid-term curriculum review process, which will result in appropriate changes to improve implementation. The summative evaluation will provide evidence for a more comprehensive curriculum review process that takes account of the lessons learned as well as changes in the system since the curriculum was first introduced. This comprehensive review will then lead to the design of a new curriculum (i.e. a curriculum renewal process), based on the experience gained with the current curriculum as well as an assessment of changing realities and new priorities emerging in Sierra Leone.

10. Advocacy and Communications

The new basic education curriculum is intended to help transform education in Sierra Leone after years of decline and stagnation in the education sector. Given its critical importance the new curriculum must be designed through a highly participatory and consultative process that takes account of the views, concerns, expectations, hopes and fears of stakeholders across the nation. Such a process must also make full use of the expertise and experience of national subject specialists, curriculum planners, teacher educators, classroom teachers and other practitioners. Following its development, the new basic education curriculum will also need to be "sold" to the learners, parents, employers, and the public, that are expected to benefit from it. This will involve sharing the vision espoused in the new curriculum and building consensus around key issues in basic education such as: equity and inclusion; assessment and accountability; social coherence and peace building; quality and integrity; and partnerships. To address all these requirements MBSSE will support a major advocacy and communications campaign involving the use of a range of appropriate tools and mechanisms.

10.1. Participatory and Consultative Approach

MBSSE has mandated that the process of developing and implementing a new basic education curriculum should be highly participatory and consultative. This should not be an exercise that is executed by a team of experts using official policy documents to prepare a prescriptive new curriculum. By way of example this curriculum framework itself was developed through a nation-wide participatory and consultative process that canvased the views of various groups such as school children, parents, teachers, educators, community leaders, employers, local and national politicians, youth groups, traders, etc. Canvassing of views was done through large scale meetings, focus group discussions, and one-on-one interviews all across the country.

At these consultative events people were able to express their views freely and frankly, with much venting about what is wrong with education in Sierra Leone. These issues were discussed and documented but the consultations also shifted the focus from a deficit-based model of what is wrong with education to an asset-based model of what is possible in education if we can make the necessary changes. This approach helped to document widely held notions and beliefs about barriers to progress. It also captured aspirations and expectations of stakeholders regarding the future they want for education in Sierra Leone. There was always a palpable shift from despair and cynicism to passion and excitement for a new education vision!

In much the same way MBSSE expects that a participatory and consultative process in the design and implementation of the new basic education curriculum would yield a final instrument that is feasible and transformative for the future of education in Sierra Leone. Teachers and teacher educators must be involved as much as subject specialists and curriculum

planners and other experts in this process. No doubt there will be much venting about negative conditions in the schools and many reasons why certain changes may not be possible. All these will need to be discussed openly and frankly, but the main focus should be on inspiring participants with a sense and vision of what is possible if all stakeholders commit to transforming basic education in order to give all our children a better future in Sierra Leone.

10.2. Sharing the Vision and Building Consensus

For the new basic education curriculum to be successfully implemented it will be necessary to generate a significant degree of public excitement about the possibilities for positive change that it represents. Sierra Leoneans are resilient and a genuine sense of hope for the future can be kindled through the vision of a more equitable and inclusive basic education system that will give every child a chance to learn and acquire a quality education that feeds into the process of rebuilding/developing the country. To inspire the public in this way, the vision and virtues of the new curriculum must be broadcast and elaborated at every opportunity, through popular messages and multi-media engagement. Skeptics must be converted, and supporters must be empowered to give the new curriculum a fair chance of being implemented successfully.

MBSSE is aware that broadcasting inspiring messages will not be enough to win support for the new curriculum, especially in a climate of cynicism about public institutions and service delivery in various parts of the country. It is, therefore, proposed to mount a campaign of public exchange and engagement around the most exciting issues in such a transformative new curriculum—issues such as access and equity; quality and integrity; assessment and accountability; partnerships and stakeholder roles; social coherence and peace-building; and radical inclusion of pregnant girls and other historically marginalized/excluded learners in the country's education system.

10.3. Advocacy and Communication Tools

There is a welcome abundance of advocacy and communication tools that MBSSE proposes to use in building public support for the new curriculum. These include the local and national radio stations that have proliferated and offer public participation in discussion programmes (phone in). There has also been a rapid expansion in street theater with an increasing number of groups that use this medium for popularizing development messages. The wide range of local and national newspapers and magazines also offer a means of dealing with the challenge of popularizing the vision of the new curriculum and engaging the public in discussions on key issues. A revitalized school broadcast system will also be used to provide information and promote discussion on the new curriculum. Beyond this, MBSSE will encourage teachers' unions, student groups and such bodies, to include these key issues in their public discussion

events. Finally, MBSSE will use its website to disseminate information and promote discussion of the new basic education curriculum for Sierra Leone. This curriculum framework document as well as the new curriculum and the teaching syllabus for all subjects will be posted on the MBSSE website, with provision for public comments, suggestions and open discussion by Sierra Leoneans at home and in the diaspora, as well as by partners and interested education experts.