



**Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE)
Government of Sierra Leone
Minister's Annual Letter to MBSSE Staff**

December 20, 2021

Dear MBSSE Family and Friends:

The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE), a priority Ministry for the New Direction Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone, has its activities driven by the annual workplans and result frameworks in several national and international documents including the Sustainable Development Goal 4 Benchmarks, the National Development Plan Outcomes, MBSSE's Annual Work Plan and Plans with various partner organizations. For these activities of MBSSE to be successful, we need the collaboration of all internal staff, parents, students, teachers, government entities, non-state actors and civil society organizations. This is something we have done better this year – building and working within a family to deliver on education priorities for our children. They say it takes a village to raise a child and when you educate a girl, you educate a nation – we have worked with this ethos in mind to ensure that every child can have access to quality education. 2021 has been hard for us as a team and for the world as COVID-19 continued to impact our lives and livelihoods. However, we've remained resilient, resolute and productive. For this and many more, I say thank you to all.

Below are a few things I'm happy to highlight from the amazing 2021 stellar accomplishments of the MBSSE and Partners which broadly fall under Policies reforms; EdTech; education transformation and systems strengthening:

- Three Policies were approved in Cabinet including the **Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools, Integrated Homegrown School Feeding Policy and Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy**. The School Health policy has been validated with Ministry of Health and it awaits cabinet approval. Several more policies and acts including the Basic Education Act have been reviewed and in draft for development in 2022.
- The Education Sector Plan 2022-2026 (ESP) will be published in March 2022. Nonetheless, the **MBSSE has completed the Education Sector Analyses, Joint Education Sector Review, Financial Costing and Simulation, District Level Validation and initial drafting of the ESP**. These are all critical steps in the ESP development, and this is the first ESP development that is led by MBSSE and local staff thereby building our capacity to better plan and manage education service delivery in Sierra Leone.
- The Early Grade Reading Assessments and Early Grade Mathematics Assessments (EGRA/EGMA) were completed in partnership with UNICEF and the Global Partnership for Education. **These assessments show significant improvements in the learning outcomes in Sierra Leone in comparison to the previous assessments in 2014**. Other assessments and evaluations have been done on national transition exams, all showing improvements in learning outcomes for children and in particular, girls in remote areas.
- The Directorate of Science, Technology and Innovation's Education Innovation Challenge (EIC) Midline Report evaluating the EIC was conducted and published. This and many other reports informed the establishment of **the Government-backed Education Outcomes Fund of \$17.2m which will kickstart in September 2022 in Sierra Leone**.



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- The Education Data Hub was updated and deployed; the **Radio Teaching Program further expanded through a process informed by a detailed population-based coverage analyses** done in collaboration with researchers from GRID3.
- Mobile-based learning technologies including the USSD/SMS Results Checker, Dictionary, and Placement Checker for students and parents were developed and deployed. **These solutions have been used by citizens at SLL 0.00 over 3 million times.**
- System wide interventions including provision of devices to schools, supporting **training for over 12,000 teachers and staff**, and advocating for wider connectivity were conducted with Partners in collaboration with the District Education Offices.
- The Annual School Census 2020 and 2021 data were collected with the former already published and disseminated. **The ASC 2021 was done with a physical headcount in the schools as well and those results will shape the subsidy payments in 2022.**
- In collaboration with UNICEF, the **Learning Passport was set up to hold ten years of digital national transition examinations and content for early childhood education.** This will be rolled out in early 2022 thereby democratizing learning materials on a platform that is online/offline and available on mobile.
- MBSSE's core education services including Civic Education, Guidance Counselling, Adult and Non-formal Education, and Special Needs Education were all strengthened through policy initiatives and interventions. **Civic Education textbooks were procured to cover the entire basic education level; busses were procured for special needs schools and materials supplied to their students.** The **Senior Secondary School curriculum framework with accompanying 76 subject syllabuses were developed for validation.** These were both Outcomes in the National Development Plan and the Government's Manifesto.
- Various reports including the **Out-of-School-Study was completed with UNICEF-Sierra Leone and a Strategy developed for integration of those learners back into schools** through formal education and other non-formal programs with partners.
- **Over 100 schools were renovated, upgraded or built in 2021 with the European Union; over 4,000 teachers recruited with the Teaching Service Commission,** teaching and learning materials procured and distributed to schools and school feeding expanded.
- Boarding homes across the country were assessed for renovation with the Office of the Presidential Infrastructure Initiative, and **the procurement for the construction of hostels in three districts concluded** through the World Bank Free Education Project.
- Locally, there are strengthened relationships with the Sierra Leone Teacher's Union, a consortium of Civil Society Organizations, a consortium of NGO organizations and independent research institutions. Across government, there are increased support from the Sierra Leone Police, the Anti-Corruption Commission, the National Civil Registration Authority, the National Social Security and Insurance Trust, Sierra Leone Water Corporation and several other Ministries, Departments and Agencies. A Partnership Coordination Desk established in 2021 works closely with organizations implementing Service Level Agreements across the country.
- MBSSE collaborated with academic institutions including University of Sierra Leone, Milton Margai University of Science and Technology, Harvard, MIT, Yale and more.



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- International organizations like EdTech Hub, GRID3, TBI, ODI and Education Partnership Group have continued to have presence at MBSSE working closely with the ministry on core reports and analyses.
- **MBSSE holds a unique position in Global Education platforms as a Board Member of GPE on the Executive Committee, the Chair of GEM Report, a member of the High-Level Steering Committee for SDG 4, a member of World Bank's Accelerator Program, a lead country for UNAID's Education Plus initiative and more.**
- MBSSE has continued to have an improving relationship with WAEC in the conduct of national and international examinations. For the first time in history, the Basic Education Certificate Examinations were released before the start of a new school year. Malpractice reports are at an all-time low in public and private examinations.
- MBSSE has several ongoing Projects, each of which has its own implementation units. These include the Free Education Project Secretariat; Education Outcomes Fund Secretariat; BADEA Secretariat; GPE Secretariat and the EU Support to Sierra Leone. There has been improved coordination within and among the units and the Ministry since the establishment of the Donor Partners Desk.

The MBSSE prioritized its human capital development in 2021. A new MBSSE Organogram was approved and rolled-out with several new postings, promotions and deployments across the districts. A Resource Library was set up at MBSSE HQ for staff's continued learning and development and an HR audit has informed several skills development activities. We traveled with teachers and MBSSE staff to international conferences and meetings, and extended leadership opportunities to many more. MBSSE staff pray together in the mornings, support each other in weddings and cry together in hardship.

In addition to these activities which have been highlighted, MBSSE notes the recommendations in the various Audit Reports from government and partners on how we can improve our activities efficiently and transparently in 2022. We believe that together, we can use the toll-free 8060 number, the Basic Education Commission, the increased School Quality Assurance Officers, the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Ombudsman Office and others to bring about improvements in the education system.

Even as the world was still grappling with COVID in 2021, MBSSE was able to continue its advocacy for increased Domestic Financing in Education; and attracting more resources from partners including the new GPE Systems Transformations Grant for which Sierra Leone has become eligible to develop a compact. I am more than excited to continue working with you to solidify these gains in policy and digital transformation in 2022!

Season Greetings and Happy New Year. I am proud of all that we have accomplished!

David Moinina Sengeh
Minister, MBSSE