



**Government of Sierra Leone**

**Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education**



## **2025 Out-of-School Children (OOSC) Study National Report**

**A Nationwide Enumeration and Profile of Out-of-School Children Aged 7–14 Years**

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**Aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4:**

**Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**



**“Every Child Counts. Every Child Learns.”**

- *“No Child Left Behind in Sierra Leone”*
- *“Education for All, Everywhere”*
- *“Reaching the Unreached, Teaching the Untaught”*

## Foreword

Sierra Leone continues to make strong progress in expanding access to education and strengthening the foundations of human capital development. Through the Free Quality School Education (FQSE) programme, the National Policy on Radical Inclusion, and sustained investments in school infrastructure and system reform, the country has demonstrated a clear commitment to ensuring that every child can learn and thrive.

Despite these achievements, too many children remain outside the formal education system. Their absence represents both a personal loss of opportunity and a national challenge that affects social mobility, economic growth, and long-term development. Addressing this challenge requires reliable, detailed, and timely data on who these children are, where they live, and the barriers they face.

This Out-of-School Children (OOSC) Study provides Sierra Leone's first nationwide, child-level enumeration of out-of-school children aged 7–14 years. Covering all 16 districts and profiling more than 108,000 children, the study offers an unprecedented evidence base on the scale, distribution, and drivers of exclusion. It highlights the complex interplay of economic hardship, socio-cultural norms, disability-related barriers, household labour demands, and structural constraints such as distance and inadequate school infrastructure.

The findings underscore the urgent need for targeted and coordinated action. They point to clear opportunities to strengthen social protection, expand community-based and flexible learning pathways, improve school accessibility, enhance disability-inclusive education, and modernize learner-tracking systems. These recommendations align with the Education Sector Plan (2022–2026), the Radical Inclusion Policy, and Sierra Leone's commitment to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4.

I commend the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, district teams, enumerators, and technical partners whose dedication made this study possible. Their work ensures that children who are often invisible in administrative data are finally counted and recognized.

This report is both a milestone and a call to action. As a nation, we must continue to ensure that no child is left behind and that every learner—regardless of circumstance—has a place in our classrooms and a pathway to a brighter future.

## Acknowledgement

The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) extends its appreciation to the many individuals and institutions whose technical expertise and commitment made this Out-of-School Children (OOSC) Study possible. This report represents the collective effort of national, district, and community-level actors who contributed to the design, implementation, and analysis of Sierra Leone’s first nationwide, child-level enumeration of out-of-school children.

The Ministry acknowledges the leadership of the Directorate of Planning and Policy (DPP) for guiding the overall technical direction of the study, including the development of the survey methodology, tools, and analytical framework. The contributions of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) team were central to the integration of administrative data, the management of digital data collection systems, and the validation of district-level results.

We recognize the critical role played by Statistics Sierra Leone (Stats SL) in providing population projections and technical guidance on sampling, data quality assurance, and statistical standards. Their collaboration ensured methodological rigour and alignment with national data systems.

Special appreciation is extended to the District Education Offices, District Literacy Officers, Non-Formal Education Officers, and District IT Officers who coordinated field operations, supervised enumerators, and ensured adherence to ethical and safeguarding protocols. The dedication of the enumerators and field supervisors—who worked across all 16 districts, often in challenging terrain—was essential to reaching more than 108,000 children and capturing accurate, high-quality data.

The Ministry also acknowledges the Education Above All (EAA) for funding this activity and the World Bank as grant agent through the Free Education Project. Also, for their technical support whose expertise strengthened the study’s design, analysis, and reporting. Their contributions helped ensure that the findings are robust, policy-relevant, and aligned with global standards, including the UNICEF–UIS Five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE) framework.

Finally, we extend our gratitude to the children, parents, guardians, and community leaders who participated in the study. Their willingness to share information has provided the evidence

needed to better understand the realities of exclusion and to design more effective pathways for reintegration.

This report is the product of a truly collaborative effort, and the Ministry remains committed to using its findings to advance inclusive, equitable, and data-driven education policy in Sierra Leone.

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

5DE	Five Dimensions of Exclusion
ALC	Acceleration Learning Centre
ALP	Acceleration Learning Programme
ANER	Adjusted Net Enrolment Rate
ASC	Annual School Census
CLC	Community Learning Centre
CMF	Conceptual and Methodological Framework
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
CWD	Children with Disability
DE2	Second Dimension of Exclusion
DE3	Third Dimension of Exclusion
DE4	Fourth Dimension of Exclusion
DLO	District Literacy Officer
DMT	District Management Team
EAA	Education Above All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESA	Education Sector Analysis
ESP	Education Section Plan
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FQSE	Free Quality School Education
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GPI	Gross Parity Index
IFAD	International Food and Agricultural Department
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IT	Information Technology
JSS	Junior Secondary School
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MBSSE	Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education
MTNDP	Medium-Term National Development Plan
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPHC	National Population and Housing Census
OOSC	Out-of-School Children
PCA	Principal Component Analysis
Q1	Lower Quintile
Q5	Upper Quintile
R	R Statistical Programming
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SLIHS	Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Scientists

SSL	Statistics Sierra Leone
SSN	Social Safety Net
SSS	Senior Secondary School
STATA	Statistical Analysis Software
Stats SL	Statistics Sierra Leone
ToT	Training of Training
TSC	Teaching Service Commission
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Emergency Fund
WASH	Water and Sanitation Hygiene
WPP	World Population Prospect

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## Executive Summary

Sierra Leone has made significant progress in expanding access to basic education through the Free Quality School Education (FQSE) programme and the implementation of the National Policy on Radical Inclusion. Despite these gains, **108,144 children aged 7–14 years remain out of school**, representing one of the most pressing education challenges facing the country. This Out-of-School Children (OOSC) study—the first nationwide, child level enumeration of its kind—provides a comprehensive and verified profile of excluded children across all 16 districts. It offers critical insights into the scale, distribution, and drivers of exclusion, and provides an evidence base for targeted policy and programming.

## Purpose and Scope

The study focused on identifying OOSC aged 7–14 years old using a multi-stage cluster sampling design, necessitated by the absence of a national sampling frame for this population. All 16 districts served as tier-1 units, with chiefdoms and towns/communities forming tier-2 and tier-3 units, and households and hotspots constituting the primary sampling units. District-level OOSC population projections (derived from 2025 estimates based on the 2015 census) guided the allocation of enumerators and expected interview volumes. The Project aimed to register approximately 120,000 OOSC, with district projections totalling 126,050 to allow for operational buffers, and each enumerator was expected to interview at least 124 children over two weeks. The exercise ultimately registered 108,144 children—11,856 short of the minimum target—largely due to coverage limitations inherent in a two-week, non-census operation and the exclusion of all 6-year-olds based on global OOSC definitions. Registration efforts will continue into the project's second year to address these gaps.

It's worth noting the findings in this report will complement the compendium<sup>1</sup> developed by MBSSE for programme intervention of the OOSC surveyed.

The analysis draws on:

- 2025 Primary OOSC household survey data
- 2025 Annual School Census (ASC)
- 2015 National Population and Housing Census projections

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<sup>1</sup> COMPENDIUM FOR IMPROVING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR 120,000 OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN, August 2025 by MBSSE

- 2018 Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey (SLIHS)
- (2016, 2021) Prior OOSC assessments

The study applies the UNICEF–UIS **Five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE)** framework to estimate exclusion among primary- and junior-secondary-age children and to identify those at risk of dropping out.

## Key Findings

### 1. Magnitude and Geographic Distribution

A total of **108,144 children** aged 7–14 years were identified as out of school. Exclusion is highest in:

- Western Area Urban (11.3%)
- Kenema (10.0%)
- Bo (9.5%)
- Western Area Rural (9.5%)
- Kono and Tonkolili (8.4%)

Low absolute numbers in districts such as Falaba and Koinadugu reflect low population density rather than lower exclusion rates.

### 2. Dimensions of Exclusion

- **DE2 (Primary-age OOSC, 7–11 years):**  
68,672 children (6% of primary-age population), with boys slightly more affected.
- **DE3 (Junior-secondary-age OOSC, 12–14 years):**  
39,472 children (8% of this age group), with **girls more affected**, reflecting adolescent vulnerabilities.
- **DE4 (At risk of dropping out):**  
36% of children aged 12–14 remain in primary school—an indicator of late entry, repetition, and elevated dropout risk.

### 3. Age and Schooling Trajectories

The largest concentrations of OOSC are at ages **7, 8, and 14**, indicating:

- Delayed entry into primary school
- Increased dropout during early adolescence
- A strong link between late entry and eventual dropout

#### 4. Gender Dynamics

While Sierra Leone has achieved gender parity in enrolment, exclusion patterns now show a male disadvantage:

- 53% of OOSC are boys
- Boys are **36% more likely** to cite “lack of interest” as a reason for non-attendance
- Girls face unique risks during adolescence, including pregnancy (1.6% among DE3)

#### 5. Socio-Cultural Barriers

Non-economic barriers account for a significant share of exclusion:

- Lack of interest in school (9.3%)
- Health related challenges (7.7%)
- Pregnancy and initiation rites, which act as “hard exit points” from schooling
- A pronounced “Adolescent Spike” in disengagement between ages 11–14

#### 6. Economic Barriers

Economic constraints remain the **dominant driver**, cited by **80%** of OOSC:

- High opportunity costs of child labour
- Household insolvency despite FQSE fee removal
- Strong geographic concentration in Port Loko, Karene, and Falaba
- Urban poverty paradox: high exclusion in Bo City, Makeni City, and Freetown despite school availability

#### 7. Household Structure and Labour

Large family sizes create a “Sibling Penalty”:

- Children in households with 6+ children are significantly more likely to engage in market or domestic labour
- Labour demands increase sharply with household size, pushing children out of school

## 8. Disability and Inclusion

Children with functional disabilities face compounded exclusion:

- Highest concentrations in Falaba, Bombali, and Kenema
- Lack of assistive devices, inclusive infrastructure, and trained teachers limits participation

## 9. School Infrastructure and Distance

Physical access remains a major supply-side barrier:

- Severe infrastructure deficits in Pujehun (15.2%), Falaba (12.5%), and Moyamba (12.4%)
- Long distances disproportionately affect young children and adolescent girls
- Evidence supports a shift toward feeder schools and community based early grade classrooms

## 10. Migration and Instability

High mobility disrupts schooling:

- 7% of OOSC are “children on the move”
- Lack of portable student records leads to permanent dropout after relocation
- A digital learner-tracking system is urgently needed

## Policy Implications and Recommendations

The findings point to a dual challenge: economic exclusion at the household level and structural gaps in school accessibility. To address these, the report recommends:

### 1. Targeted Social Protection

- Expand cash transfers in high poverty districts
- Offset opportunity costs for ultra poor households

- Prioritize Port Loko, Karene, Falaba, and urban trading hubs

## **2. Infrastructure Expansion**

- Adopt a Feeder School Model in high distance districts
- Build satellite classrooms in remote chiefdoms
- Improve school transport options in riverine and hard-to-reach areas

## **3. Reintegration Pathways**

- Scale up Accelerated Learning Centres (ALCs)
- Provide flexible learning options for adolescent mothers and working children
- Strengthen community-based sensitization on timely school entry

## **4. Disability-Inclusive Education**

- Deploy assistive devices and disability friendly WASH facilities
- Train teachers in inclusive pedagogy
- Prioritize high-burden districts for resource allocation

## **5. Strengthen EMIS and Learner Tracking**

- Introduce a national digital student ID
- Enable cross district portability of records
- Improve monitoring of attendance and dropout

## **6. Address Socio-Cultural Barriers**

- Expand school health and nutrition programmes
- Strengthen adolescent-focused life skills and reproductive health education
- Engage traditional leaders to reduce harmful practices

## 1. Introduction



### 1.1. Introduction

Reliable education data is essential for effective policy formulation, planning, and monitoring of sector performance. While administrative systems such as the Annual School Census (ASC) capture information on schools, teachers, and enrolled learners, they do not account for children who are entirely outside the formal education system. The Out-of-School Children (OOSC) data collection was therefore implemented to complement existing data systems and to provide a comprehensive understanding of children who are not enrolled in or attending school. The exercise aligns with national education priorities, including the Education Sector Plan (ESP), the FQSE programme, and Sierra Leone's commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education.

### 1.2. Overview of the Global Initiative of OOSC

***UNESCO: Global Monitoring Report<sup>2</sup>***

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unesco.org/gem-report/en/view/outofschool>

As of 2023, globally 272 million children and youth are out of school, of which 78 million were of primary school age, 64 million of lower secondary school age and 130 million of upper secondary school age. Since 2015, when the fourth Sustainable Development Goal on education (SDG 4) was set out-of-school numbers have reduced by less than 1%. The most affected education level is upper secondary education as 130 million students are out-of-school in that education level- 48% of the total number across all levels.

Poorer countries are falling behind. In the poorest countries, 36% of students are out of school compared to 3% in the richest countries. Almost three-quarters of the global out-of-school population is in Central and Southern Asia (34%) and sub-Saharan Africa (39%). Globally there are more boys out of school than girls: 139 million boys to 133 million girls. This is a trend that started in 2007 and is increasing.

Out-of-school population estimates depend on the overall population estimates of school-age children, adolescents and youth. These are updated every two years by the United Nations Population Division (UNPD) in its World Population Prospects (WPP) series. The 2022 WPP, whose publication was delayed by a year due to the impact of COVID-19, suggested that population levels had been underestimated. As the COVID-19 pandemic had affected the smooth implementation of censuses around 2020, it was considered appropriate to wait for the release of the 2024 WPP before switching to the population estimates informed by the 2020 rounds of population censuses.

The 2024 WPP confirms that there were significant increases in population estimates compared to the 2019 WPP, which had been used in the out-of-school model so far. The out-of-school population of children is now estimated to have reached at least 272 million, a considerable increase by 21 million compared to the last reported estimate of 251 million for the same year.

The out-of-school estimation model relies on the relative stability of long-term progression of school-age populations through the education system to ensure that trends are consistent over time. However, this methodological strength becomes a weakness in the case of sudden changes in school enrolment and attendance patterns due to emergencies and crises.

A methodology was developed to complete the model using information generated mostly by humanitarian actors:

- A criterion is needed for identifying the countries where emergencies and crises have the largest potential impact on school participation.

- Information from humanitarian or other sources that indicate the potential size of the out-of-school population needs to be compiled and scrutinized with reference to several characteristics.

A first attempt to measure the magnitude of out-school population in crisis countries was conducted in 10 countries: Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Mali, Myanmar, Niger, State of Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan

The results shows that the impact of the 10 most significant crises on the school participation in 2023 suggest that this out-of-school population is underestimated by almost 13 million, which would raise the global out-of-school population to 285 million.

### 1.3. Overview of the Education Sector in Sierra Leone

The 2004 Education Act has been repealed by the 2023 Basic and Senior Secondary Education Act. Part IV of the 2023 Basic and Senior Secondary Education Act emphasises leaving no child behind by which schools and communities should make provision for every child irrespective of his/her background, status, or physiology to access, stay and complete each level of school education. Part IX of the act states that schools should be child-friendly, inclusive and actively promote gender-sensitivity, tolerance, dignity and personal empowerment; provide basic disabled-friendly and gender friendly health and sanitation facilities; provide spacious and well-ventilated class rooms; actively discourage discrimination in all forms and employ measures to eradicate it; and corporal punishment and all other forms of degrading punishment designed to cause, or create fear of physical pain in a pupil, administered or threatened for the purposes of domination or control are prohibited.

In 2018, the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) made education and human capital development the foundation of its Mid-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP), showing a strong commitment to improving the educational outcomes of its citizens. Education is viewed as the bedrock of long-term sustainable growth and socio-economic development of the country, helping to shift people out of poverty and create new opportunities to reduce inequitable income distribution and increase choices. Because the government of Sierra Leone views education for development as the overarching guiding principle for the new MTNDP, the Free Quality School Education (FQSE) programme is its priority. This was the

government's flagship programme between 2018 and 2023 to provide a solid base to enhance human capital development and to facilitate the transformation of the economy<sup>3</sup>.

Gains from the FQSE programme saw an increase in pupils' enrolment by **74%** from **1,982,475** in 2018 to **3,450,104** in 2025. Primary school enrolment increased from **1,369,738** in 2018 to **2,071,892** in 2025 showing a **51%** increment, while junior secondary enrolment increased by 116% with **315,500** pupils enrolled in 2018 measured against **681,129** enrolled in 2025<sup>4</sup>. Primary gross completion rate surged from **78%** in 2018 to **117%** in 2025 while junior secondary jumped from **49%** in 2018 to **112%** in 2025. These figures include both over and underage enrolments.

The FQSE programme focuses on the rights of all children to receive an education that is appropriate to their needs. This is particularly important for individuals and groups that have been marginalised and/or excluded within the education sector and society because of poverty, gender, disability, social class, language, geographic location and other circumstances. A National Policy for Inclusive Education (2021) emerged from the FQSE programme where there is a commitment to put mechanisms in place to review and implement inclusive education policies and laws relating to inclusion, making public facilities, especially schools, accessible, friendly, and welcoming for all categories of children. There is an emphasis on the radical inclusion of those who have been excluded through intentional actions, inactions, and moral stances<sup>5</sup>.

The Education Sector Analysis (ESA) found that there was a 14%-point difference in the probability of completing primary education between the children from the poorest and richest households. There is also a 14%-point difference in favour of urban children accessing primary school, which widens to 33% points at the end of the primary level<sup>6</sup>.

The Radical Inclusion Policy (2021) identifies four groups of marginalised students for special consideration. These include students with disabilities, pregnant girls and parent learners, children from the poorest households, and children in rural and underserved areas. To help address these critical disparities, the policy provides a roadmap for identifying and addressing

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<sup>3</sup> Mid-Term National Development Plan 2019-2023

<sup>4</sup> 2018 and 2025 Annual School Census Reports

<sup>5</sup> National Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools, 2021

<sup>6</sup> Education Sector Analysis: Assessing the enabling environment for gender equality, 2020

the unique needs of these groups of students. The cost of implementing some of the activities of the Radical Inclusion Policy were included in the 2022-2026 Education Sector Plan (ESP).

#### 1.4. Study objectives

The overarching objective of the OOSC data collection exercise is to systematically identify and enumerate children aged 7–14 years<sup>7</sup> who are currently not attending primary or junior secondary school even though the project has a target of 120,000 OOSC. Additionally, the enumerators were not limited to the project target. The choice to selecting the age group 7-14 years is based on UNESCO definition of OOSC. The resulting dataset will provide a robust and nationally representative evidence base on out-of-school children within this age cohort, thereby supporting targeted enrolment and re-enrolment interventions and informing the design of evidence-driven policies and programmes.

#### **Specific objectives include:**

- Identifying and registering out-of-school children across all districts;
- Producing disaggregated data by age, sex, location, disability status, and schooling history;
- Distinguishing between children who have never attended school and those who have dropped out;
- Understanding key economic, social, cultural, and health-related barriers to schooling;
- Informing reintegration pathways into formal education, Accelerated Learning Centres (ALCs), and other appropriate programmes.

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<sup>7</sup> MBSSE, (2025) Compendium for Improving Learning Opportunities For 120,000 Out-Of-School Children, Page 7

## 2. Sampling and Survey Methodology



### 2.1 Survey Design

The study surveyed out-of-school children (ages 7–14 years) across all districts in Sierra Leone using cluster sampling, aiming to reach about 120,000 children. No quotas were set for sex, age, or location. Data was collected through structured interviews, following strict ethical protocols. Enumerators and supervisors were thoroughly trained, and data quality was ensured through layered supervision and real-time review. Data privacy was maintained, and analysis was conducted using multiple software tools for reliability.

**Table 2.1: Distribution of Target OOSC by District**

District	Projected District Population	Population Weight	Chiefdoms	Minimum Expected OOSC	Actual OOSC Enumerated	Variance
Bo	756,975	0.092272	17	11,073	10,286	787
Bombali	387,236	0.047203	13	5,664	4,908	756
Bonthe	297,561	0.036272	12	4,353	3,461	892
Falaba	166,205	0.020260	13	2,431	2,203	228
Kailahun	545,947	0.066549	15	7,986	7,565	421
Kambia	367,699	0.044821	10	5,379	5,009	370
Karena	290,313	0.035388	13	4,247	4,600	-353

District	Projected District Population	Population Weight	Chiefdoms	Minimum Expected OOSC	Actual OOSC Enumerated	Variance
Kenema	772,472	0.094161	17	11,299	10,859	440
Koinadugu	206,133	0.025127	10	3,015	2,439	576
Kono	620,703	0.075661	15	9,079	9,093	-14
Moyamba	346,771	0.042270	14	5,072	4,528	544
Port Loko	528,038	0.064366	14	7,724	6,791	933
Pujehun	429,574	0.052363	14	6,284	4,817	1,467
Tonkolili	557,257	0.067928	19	8,151	9,080	-929
Western Rural	662,056	0.080702	4	9,684	10,285	-601
Western Urban	1,268,757	0.154657	8	18,559	12,220	6,339
<b>National</b>	<b>8,203,697</b>		<b>208</b>	<b>120,000</b>	<b>108,144</b>	<b>11,856</b>

### 2.1.1 Sample Design

The study targeted out-of-school children (OOSC) aged 7–14 years in Sierra Leone. Given the absence of a comprehensive national sampling frame for this population, the study adopted a multi-stage cluster sampling approach to ensure national coverage and operational feasibility in communities within every chiefdom that include households and hot spots (slums, marketplaces, mining areas, motor parks, etc.).

All 16 districts were included as tier 1 sampling units. Within each district, trained enumerators covered chiefdoms and towns/communities, which served as tier 2 and 3 sampling units respectively. The primary sampling units were the households and hotspots in the communities/towns. Two approaches were used to identify the OOSC (i) collaborate with community leaders/influencers to help identify households and hotspots these OOSC live, and (ii) data collection was done during school hours and children found in spaces like hotspot during that time were targeted. At the final stage, eligible out-of-school children were selected within communities, based on predefined inclusion criteria: children aged 7–14 years who were not attending school at the time of the survey.

Although no formal stratified sampling was applied, the study used district-level population estimates of out-of-school children to guide operational planning. A projected expected number of OOSC was assigned to each district based on 2025 population projections from the 2015 national population and housing census conducted by Statistics Sierra Leone (Stats SL)<sup>8</sup>. This data informed both the allocation of enumerators and the anticipated volume of interviews per district. The out-of-school children project implemented under the Free Education Project managed by the World Bank aimed to reach an overall target of approximately 120,000 out-of-

<sup>8</sup> See annex

school children, with district-level projections totalling 126,050 to allow for coverage buffers. Consequently, each enumerator was expected to interview a minimum of 124 children over a two-week period.

No fixed quotas were set by sex, age group, or location. This approach was adopted to maximize feasibility, ensure broad geographic representation, and reduce selection bias when working with a hard-to-reach population.

While the sampling design enabled wide geographic coverage, the absence of formal stratification means that some sub-groups (e.g. age bands or sex) may not be proportionally represented. This limitation is common in large-scale surveys involving hard-to-reach populations and can be addressed during analysis through data disaggregation and weighting, where appropriate.

### 2.1.2 Data Collection Limitation

The data collection exercise had a floor minimum of 120,000 OOSC to be enumerated and 108,144 OOSC were registered with a variance of 11,856 more to meet the minimum floor target. However, this was not limited to non-availability of the OOSC but there might be possibility of two reasons creating the gap. One can be coverage since we do not have the resources equivalent to conducting a census and the enumeration lasted two weeks as we were constraint with time, there is a possibility of enumerators not reaching every community though they reach every chiefdom in the country. Secondly, there was a whole age category (6 years old) that was left out due to the design of the project and definitions on OOSC by global institutions. This category may consider as either “never attended” or “temporary non-attenders”. Nonetheless, the registering of OOSC will continue into year 2 of the project with these two reasons in mind.

### 2.1.3 Questionnaire

To capture a comprehensive profile of out-of-school children, the questionnaire was structured into seven (7) sections, each designed to collect specific and complementary information. The sections included: Location Information; Child General Information; Family Background; Schooling History; Barriers to Education; Disability Status; and Future Education Plans.

The Location Information section captured the child’s district, region, and town/community of residence. This was complemented by the Child General Information section, which recorded the child’s full name, age, sex, and home address.

The Family Background section collected information on the child's parents or guardians, including contact details, household size, parental occupation and income levels. This information provided insights into the child's household socio-economic status and potential vulnerability.

The Schooling History section documented the child's educational background, including whether the child had previously attended school and the level attained. The Barriers to Education section explored the key reasons why the child was currently out of school.

To assess disability status, the questionnaire incorporated the Washington Group Short Set of Disability Questions, enabling the identification of children with functional difficulties. This information intended to support appropriate disability-related assistance and inclusive education interventions during school reintegration.

Finally, the Future Education Plans section captured the preferences and aspirations of the child and parent/guardian regarding how and where the child should be reintegrated into education. The full questionnaire is provided in Annex 2.

#### 2.1.4 Ethical Protocol

Given that the study involved children under the age of 18, strict ethical procedures were followed in line with child protection and survey ethics standards. Verbal informed consent was obtained from the parent or legal guardian of each child prior to participation. In addition, assent was obtained from the child in an age-appropriate manner before the interview was conducted.

Parents or guardians were involved at the initial stage of the interview process to provide background information about the child and to confirm eligibility. Child interviews were conducted in a manner that ensured privacy, safety, and confidentiality. Interviews took place in open or semi-public spaces that allowed privacy from bystanders while ensuring that the interaction between the enumerator and the child remained visible and non-isolated, in accordance with child safeguarding protocols.

Enumerators were trained on ethical conduct, confidentiality, and child safeguarding principles, including appropriate engagement with children and procedures for handling sensitive information. No interviews were conducted in enclosed or private rooms with children.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to decline or withdraw at any point without consequence. All information collected was treated as confidential and used solely for the purposes of the study.

#### 2.1.5 Training of Trainers and Enumerators

A comprehensive training programme was implemented to ensure high-quality and ethical data collection. The overall training process spanned five (5) days and was conducted in two phases.

*Photo 2.1.4: District Level Training of Enumerators*



First, a Training of Trainers (ToT) was conducted, involving two representatives from each district, specifically the DLO and the District I.T. The ToT utilized a standardized training manual developed specifically for the study. This session focused on an in-depth review of the data collection instruments, survey objectives, and field protocols, and equipped master trainers with the necessary technical, facilitation, and supervisory skills required to effectively train enumerators at the district level.

Following the ToT, enumerator training was conducted simultaneously across all districts over a period of five (5) days. During this training, enumerators were instructed on the technical aspects of the data collection tools, survey administration procedures, and the use of digital data collection platforms where applicable. The training also emphasized ethical considerations, including informed consent, child safeguarding, confidentiality, and appropriate engagement with children and caregivers. In addition, enumerators were trained on field procedures, data quality assurance, and reporting protocols.

The training approach combined presentations, practical demonstrations, role plays, and mock interviews to ensure enumerators were adequately prepared for field deployment.

#### 2.1.6 Fieldwork and Quality Control Measures

Field data collection was conducted over a period of two (2) weeks across all districts. In each district, supervisors, together with trained master trainers and non-formal education officers, were responsible for the daily supervision and coordination of enumerators.

Supervisors conducted random spot-checks, including accompanying enumerators during interviews to directly observe data collection procedures and adherence to ethical and methodological protocols. Supervisors were required to submit daily progress updates, which enabled timely identification of operational challenges and field-level constraints.

In parallel, the central data management team provided daily district-level data summaries based on submissions received from enumerators. These reviews focused on identifying data quality issues, including missing responses, inconsistencies, and incomplete records. Feedback was promptly communicated to district teams to enable corrective actions and reduce the recurrence of common data collection errors.

These layered supervision and real-time data review mechanisms helped ensure data completeness, accuracy, and consistency throughout the fieldwork period.

#### 2.1.7 Data Management, Editing, and Analysis

To ensure data privacy and integrity, access to the dataset was restricted to a limited number of authorized members of the data management team. All data were stored securely and handled in accordance with established data protection and confidentiality protocols.

During the data collection period, the data team conducted continuous data monitoring, including routine checks of incoming submissions to identify errors, inconsistencies, and missing values. Preliminary data cleaning was undertaken concurrently with data collection to enable early detection and correction of data quality issues.

Following the completion of fieldwork, a final data cleaning and validation exercise was conducted through a collaborative review process led by the data team and supervised by the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE). This process ensured consistency, completeness, and readiness of the dataset for analysis and reporting.

Data analysis was conducted using multiple software tools, including SPSS, Stata, Python, R and Microsoft Excel. The use of multiple analytical platforms was a deliberate quality assurance measure to cross-check results and validate outputs, thereby enhancing the reliability and robustness of the findings.

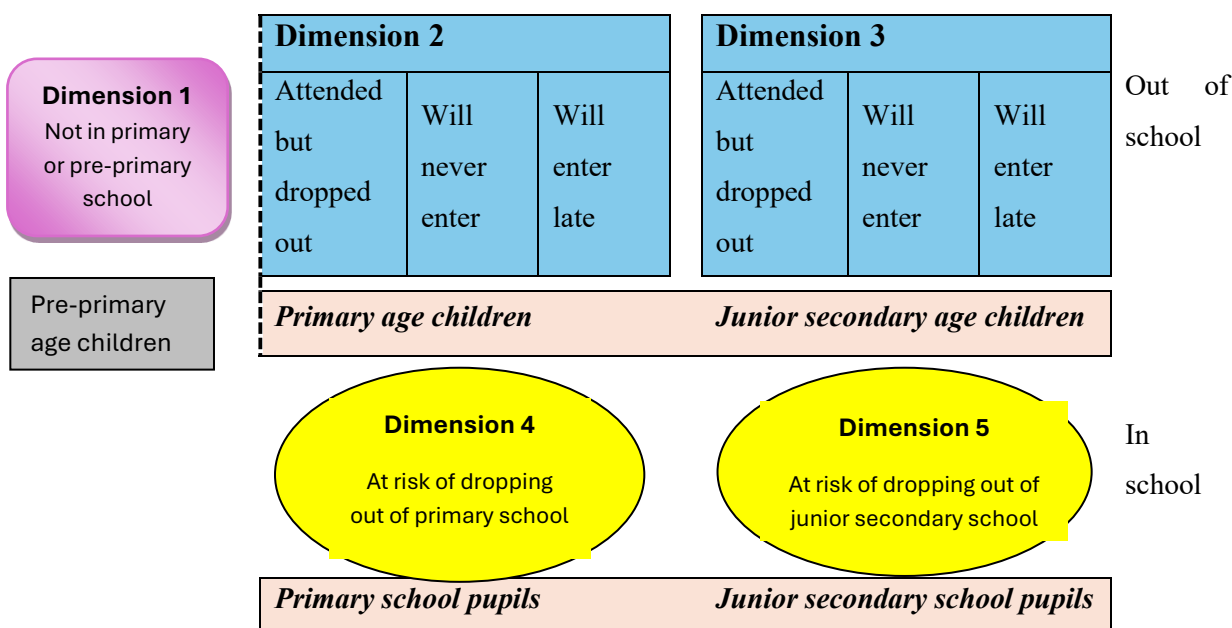
## 2.2 Conceptual and methodological framework (CMF) and the Five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE)

The analysis views the situation of OOSC as the result of a series of processes that occur over their life cycle. Being out of school is influenced by multiple actors and factors resulting in a complex interaction between children, parents/carers and teachers, in cultural, institutional and legal frameworks. It was important, therefore, to adopt a clear conceptual framework to help understand the situation of children who are out of school. The guiding methodological framework was produced by UNICEF and UIS in 2011 as part of the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children (UNICEF & UIS, 2011). The conceptual and methodological framework (CMF) provides an understanding of OOSC through the lens of Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE) (see Figure 1). Dimension 1 includes children of pre-primary school age who are not in pre-primary or primary school. Dimension 2 includes the children of primary age who are not in primary or secondary education. Dimension 3 applies to children of junior secondary age who are not in primary or secondary school. Dimensions 4 and 5, respectively, comprise children enrolled in primary or junior secondary school who are at risk of dropping out. The identification of children at risk of dropping out is based on observed dropout rates as a measure of the percentage of children at risk. This model is important as it helps to define children's schooling experiences; it differentiates between children who drop out and those who have not yet entered school. As such, the model makes explicit the different levels of exclusion from educational access and aids in the profiling of children into different dimensions, which is helpful for policy and planning. Figure 1 below shows the five dimensions of exclusion and the linkages between them.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> ALL CHILDREN IN SCHOOL BY 2015: Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Report (June 2014), UIS and UNICEF

*Figure 2.2: Five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE) and the Linkages between them*



The 5DE model provides snapshots of children at particular points in time. It differentiates between children who are in school and those who are not. It also demonstrates that even when children are in school, some are at a higher risk than others of dropping out. Nevertheless, when addressing OOSC, it is important to understand the flows or movements in and out of education over time. These movements include several factors: whether children will have access to primary education; whether they are expected to enrol on time; what is their chance of grade repetition; if children will complete a full cycle of primary education; whether there are enough spaces in lower secondary schools to accommodate the population of primary school leavers; and so on. In this respect, there is a dual relationship between the dimensions of exclusion and the characteristics of the educational system. These characteristics are poor quality teaching and regular grade repetition, either of which can push children out of school and increase the chances that children in Dimension 4 or 5 (at risk of dropping out) could end up in Dimension 2 or 3 (out of school).

For this study, primary data collection OOSC was carried out across all 16 districts of the country in every chiefdom targeting children aged 7 to 14 years old. These are ages supposed to be in primary or junior secondary school. If we are to relate this to the five dimensions discussed above, we are talking about Dimension 2 and 3. The analysis went further to include Dimension 3 using age-enrolment data from the 2025 Annual School Census (ASC) conducted by the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE).

## 2.3 Data sources

The data collection approach focuses mainly on quantitative data collection methods, involving the recruitment and deployment of enumerators across the sixteen (16) districts. Enumerators were allocated based on the population size to ensure proportional coverage across all sixteen districts. Enumerators were assigned to localities such as Market areas, slums and other settings where out of school children can be easily located.

This approach enhanced data accuracy and reliability as enumerators conducted face to face interviews with parents/guardians. Direct engagement at community level allowed for verification of information and improved data quality. The data collected were analyzed around key indicators including number of out of school children across the sixteen districts, age distribution, disability, Early Marriage, Pregnancy, household income, demand and supplied barriers etc.

### 1.3.1 Primary Data

A structured questionnaire was developed to capture information on out of school children aged 7 – 14. Data collection was conducted in November 2025 leading to the generation of comprehensive primary data on children who had never attended school or who had dropped out of school due to several reasons.

A total of 594 enumerators were recruited, trained and deployed across the sixteen districts and further deployed to chiefdoms, Section and Towns within each district. Enumerators were trained to identify and collect data on children who have never attended school or may have dropped out of school due to several reasons.

In total, 108,144 interviews were conducted. Given that the children were underage, interviews were carried out with parents or guardians who provided informed consent on behalf of the children. Prior to the commencement of the data collection, radio jingles and community sensitization were carried out to raise awareness and foster community cooperation and collaboration, making it easier for data collector to move from one community to another.

### 2.3.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data sources were reviewed to support further analysis and comparison. These involves administrative and survey dataset such as:

- Annual School Census
- Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey (SLIHS)

- National Assessment of the Situation of Out of School Children in Sierra Leone 2016 and 2021
- National Population and Housing Census (NPHC)

These documents were consulted and assessed to compare trends in the number of out of school children, reasons for the dropping out of school and the projected population estimates against findings from the 2025 nationwide out of school children data collection conducted by the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education with support from Free Education Secretariat. Also, comparisons were made between the projected district level estimates by statistic Sierra Leone and the actual number of out of school children captured through the 2025 primary data collection.

While Secondary data sources are useful for trend analysis and comparison, they have limitations to accurately report the actual number of out of school children. In many cases their reliance on some sample-based methodologies results in estimates rather than verified child level data. Sierra Leone's evidence base on OOSC largely relied on estimates, secondary data, and diagnostic studies rather than comprehensive child-level primary data across all sixteen districts.

## 2.4 Evaluation of Secondary Data

### 2.4.1 Overview of Data Source

Data Source and Attributes				
Data Source	Background	Key Variables	Coverage	Analysis of OOSC
Annual School Census Data 2018 to 2025	Agency: MBSSE/Planning and Policy Directorate, ASC is an administrative Annual Data Collected by the Ministry	School Profile Pupils' enrolment Teachers Enrolment WASH Climate Condition Disability	School at all Levels. Both Private and Public Schools Targets all school children - Data can be disaggregated by district, place of residence	ASC data is used to report the number of children ages 7 to 14 enrol in schools Children likely to drop out of

	SurveyCTO is used for the data collection, Stata, Excel, Python is used for data Analysis	Pregnant Learners	(rural/urban), gender, age group	schools due to over aged
Out of School Children Study 2016/ 2021	Agency: UNICEF/CGA	Ages of Children School enrolment Teachers Enrolment	Household, NGOs Parents/Guadian Chiefs/Market women	Barriers Finding (Demand and Supply Barriers  Profile of out of school children
National Population and Housing Census (2015) (NPHC)	- Agency: Statistics Sierra Leone (SSL) - Reference year: 2015	- Children of all ages, sex and location - Children by urban rural location - Child labour - Orphanhood	- The 2015 census was a complete enumeration of all residents in Sierra Leone - Targeted every household and its members nationwide for interview - Covered all women, men and children of all ages and places of origin	- The NPHC 2015 data projected to 2025 is used to generate estimates on OOS children, in particular DE2, DE3 and DE4 using percentages derived from the ASC

## 2.5. Critical reflections on secondary data and study limitations

Data accuracy, relevance and timeliness are key and useful to generating reliable analytical products that inform policy formulation and decision. However, Data quality issues and discrepancies in administrative and survey data sources, which reflect in less complete, less accurate and less reliable statistics, are a generic problem affecting understanding of the situation of out-of-school school children and making cross-country comparisons difficult (Omoeva et al. 2013). Sierra Leone and most low-income countries in Sub-Sahara Africa are not exempt from these challenges.

Major Secondary data sources in Sierra Leone including the National Population and Housing Census (NPHC), Annual School Census (ASC) each have limitations that affect their ability to accurately determine or compute the actual out-of-school children.

UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) recommend that multiple data sources, rather than a singular data source be used when estimating and profiling out of school children, (UNICEF and UIS, 2015). This is true because each of these sources address specific indicators of interest. Survey data, for example provide information on place of residence, household characteristics, family history, socio economic status, factors contributing to school exclusion. We can also use this dataset to estimates enrolment and school ages population of out of school children, but they remained a sample based.

While the ASC is conducted yearly, other surveys or studies like, NPHC, National Assessment of the Situation of OOSC in Sierra Leone are not conducted annually. In addition, the sample size used in some of these surveys do not adequately reflect the actual population size. In most cases homeless are not included, which constitute a significant number of OOSC in Sierra Leone.

The Annual School which has been updated from Paper based to a digital data collection in 2018 also contains some limitations around its enrolment. For several reasons which are not limited to fees subsidy, payment of examination fees, distribution of school meals to primary school, school heads are in the habit of inflating the enrolment of children as subsidy paid to schools is tagged to the number of children in that school. The higher the enrolment the higher the subsidy.

The annual school census data cannot be used to trace regular attendance as it is conducted once a year. Also, it does not capture data on out of school children. The available option is to

subtract enrolment figures directly from the relevant school-age population (from census records). Sometimes a significant gap might arise when you tried to match the two. Another limitation is that the database does not provide information on individual or household characteristics of school children.

To address issues around enrolment, the Ministry decided to conduct the ASC 2025 in two segments: the main school survey and a partial classroom headcount questionnaire. Enrolment figures provided by school leaders were validated against actual headcounts conducted by enumerators, allowing the Ministry to assess the extent of discrepancies between reported and observed enrolment.

However, a full-scale classroom headcount is required to comprehensively address the challenge of bloated enrolment across schools. Implementing such an exercise would require additional financial support from partners, as the resources currently allocated for the Annual School Census are only sufficient to cover administrative data collection.

## 2.6 Data Triangulation

This study draws on recently conducted out-of-school children primary data collect and reliable secondary data sources to generate robust analysis and insights on out-of-school children (OOSC) in Sierra Leone. The 2025 OOSC data collection by MBSSE serves as the primary dataset, complemented by national population census figures from 2015 projected to 2025. Enumerators went to communities across the country with a structured questionnaire designed in a digital mobile data collection platform (Kobo Collect) collecting data from children in households and those in the street. The data collected from these children and their caregivers forms the basis of this report. These population projections are combined with the OOSC data derived percentages to analyse the number, status, and distribution of OOSC. In addition, the Annual School Census (ASC) datasets for 2025 provide essential statistics on school enrolment that report on enrolment profile and the analysis on dimension 4.

The 2018 Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey (SLIHS) data enrich the OOSC findings by offering deeper insight into the complex characteristics and lived experiences of excluded children. While administrative and survey-based secondary data underpin the estimation of enrolment patterns and the five dimensions of exclusion, the triangulation of all data used (primary and secondary) enables a comprehensive analysis of the barriers and bottlenecks to education.

Furthermore, the primary data, supported by relevant literature and policy documents, forms the foundation for assessing existing strategies and identifying policy options capable of addressing the major obstacles to inclusive education.

### 3. Estimates and Profile of Out-of-School Children



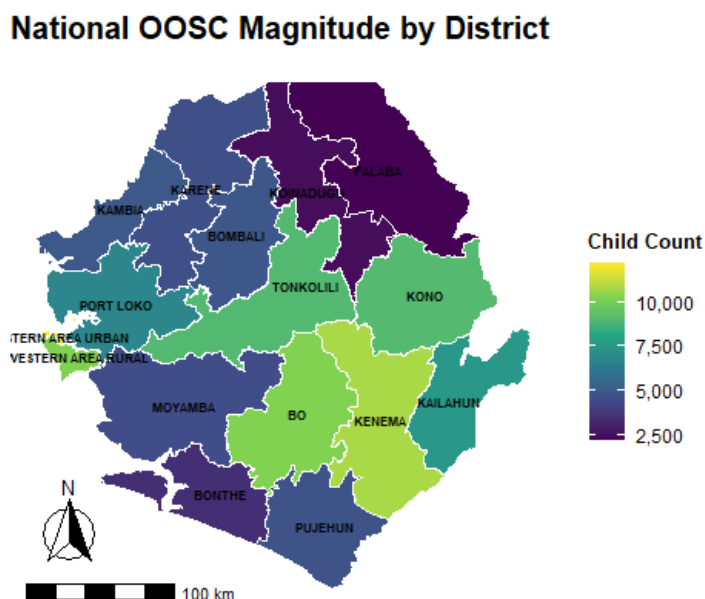
#### 3.1 Introduction

Education is a cornerstone for individual and societal advancement, serving as a key instrument for poverty reduction and the development of human capital. Free primary education is recognized as a fundamental human right under Article 28 of the Convention for the Rights of the Child (CRC). Early exclusion from education is unacceptable, as it limits children's intellectual growth and undermines long-term workforce productivity. Accurate data on children excluded from basic education is essential for effective intervention, which underscores the importance of empirical studies such as the Education Above All (EAA) Out-of-School Children (OOSC) initiative.

Recent school enrolment statistics highlight progress in Sierra Leone, particularly regarding gender parity across all school levels. This chapter presents estimates of out-of-school children aged 7 to 14 years old, analyses the Five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE) using the Conceptual Methodological Framework (CMF), and profiles excluded children by their social and demographic characteristics.

### 3.2 Post-FQSE: Scale of the Problem

*Map 3.2: National Geographic Distribution and Magnitude of Out-of-School Children*



Map 3.2 shows the size of the out-of-school children (OOSC) crisis in Sierra Leone and the total identified number of children, 108,144. This "Magnitude Map" serves as the baseline situational analysis, pinpointing the key geographical areas of the most extreme exclusion. OOSC are predominantly located in the Southern, Eastern, and Western parts of the country, with Kenema, Bo, Western Area Urban, and Western Area Rural being the most significant crisis hotspots in the country. These high-volume districts are demarcated with bright yellow and light green colour gradations, and they are the most crucial areas for large-scale enrolment drives because of the substantial amounts of logistical resources that out-of-school children are determined to be. On the other hand, the dark purple shaded districts in the remote parts of the North-East, like Falaba and Koinadugu, are also less populated and exhibit low absolute numbers (lower counts) of out-of-school children, which may, as the text suggests, be due to lower population density instead of a lower percentage of exclusion.

For the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) and its international development partners, this map serves as a Strategic Logistical Roadmap to the most prioritized districts for large-scale interventions (mass "Back-to-School" campaigns, instructional materials distribution, and school feeding programme expansion) in relation to achieving the highest "Return on Investment" by reaching the largest number of children in the least possible time.

### 3.3 Overview of School Enrolment and Participation

#### 3.3.1 School Enrolment

Table 3.3.1 below presents a detailed breakdown of school enrolment by sex and district, drawing on the most recent annual school census (2025 ASC). Overall, enrolment patterns—both in aggregate and across primary and junior secondary schooling levels—largely mirror the population distribution across districts. It is therefore expected that Western Urban registers the highest enrolment figures at both levels.

A more nuanced picture emerges when examining the disaggregated part of the distribution. Although Western Area Urban records the highest total enrolment (307,218), at the disaggregated, the pattern differs with Kenema District registering more pupils at the primary level (213,884) than any other district. Also, Western Area Rural recorded the highest enrolment (111,177), highlighting a notable divergence from the general trend.

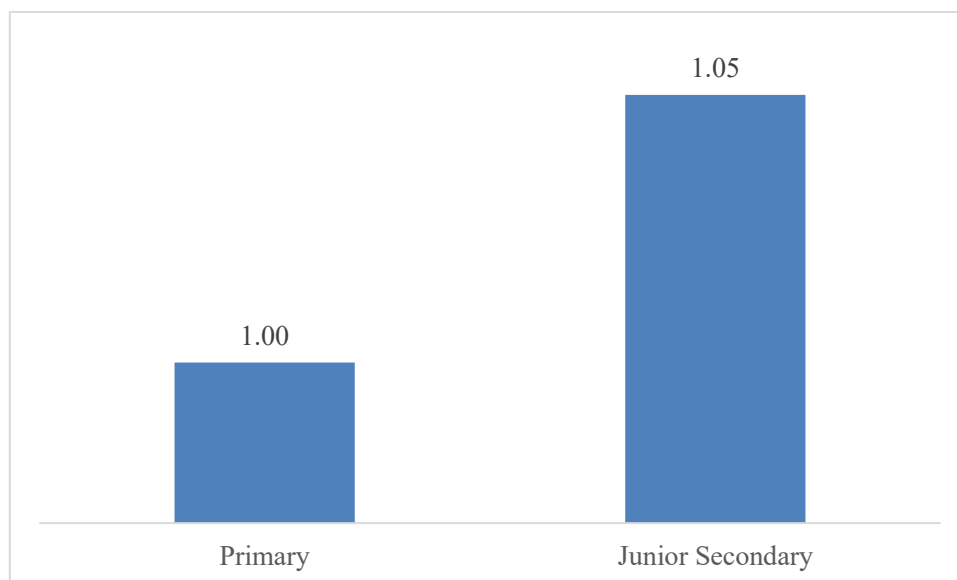
*Table 3.3.1 Number of Children Enrolled by School Level, Sex, and District – (2025 ASC)*

District	Primary			Junior Secondary		
	Boys	Girls	Both	Boys	Girls	Both
Bo	83,512	90,938	174,450	24,279	26,846	51,125
Bombali	58,434	60,216	118,650	25,222	26,277	51,499
Bonthe	29,090	32,725	61,815	5,313	5,829	11,142
Falaba	30,439	27,486	57,925	5,516	5,281	10,797
Kailahun	46,637	49,858	96,495	10,308	11,425	21,733
Kambia	80,678	77,805	158,483	22,189	21,417	43,606
Karene	42,633	40,823	83,456	11,703	10,874	22,577
Kenema	100,212	113,672	213,884	28,793	32,720	61,513
Koinadugu	24,054	24,525	48,579	7,513	7,871	15,384
Kono	83,115	84,871	167,986	22,200	25,214	47,414
Moyamba	48,065	49,302	97,367	8,906	9,163	18,069
Port Loko	82,654	82,007	164,661	27,224	27,120	54,344
Pujehun	34,883	38,951	73,834	4,962	5,496	10,458
Tonkolili	78,906	82,891	161,797	20,570	21,027	41,597
Western Area Rural	93,378	100,608	193,986	51,957	59,220	111,177
Western Area Urban	94,868	103,656	198,524	50,862	57,832	108,694
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,011,558</b>	<b>1,060,334</b>	<b>2,071,892</b>	<b>327,517</b>	<b>353,612</b>	<b>681,129</b>

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) measures the ratio of female to male enrolment, with values between 0.97 and 1.03 generally considered indicative of parity. A GPI below 0.97 signals

disadvantage for girls, while a value above 1.03 indicates disadvantage for boys<sup>10</sup>. As shown in Figure 3.3.1a below, primary level enrolment in 2025 reflects perfect parity (GPI = 1.00). However, Girls are increasingly advantaged at the junior secondary level with a parity index of 1.05.

*Figure 3.3.1a: School Enrolment Gender Parity Index (GPI) – 2025 ASC*

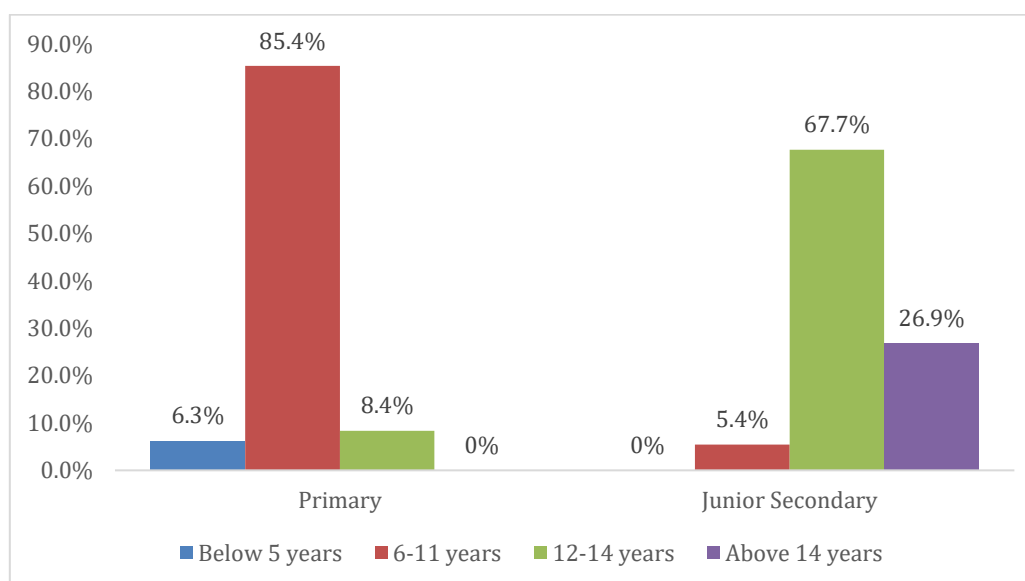


As expected, the largest share of enrolment is at the primary level, with 2,071,892 children enrolled. Of these, 85.4% fall within the official primary school age range (6–11 years), while 8.4% are overage (above 11 years) and 6.3% are underage as seen in Figure 3.3.1b below.

Junior secondary enrolment totals 681,129 learners. Among them, 67.7% are within the appropriate age range (12–14 years), 26.9% are overage (above 14 years), and the remaining proportion (5.4%) are underage (below 12 years).

<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that when GPI is analysed for OOS children the interpretation is reversed: a GPI which is less than 0.97 is favourable to girls (i.e., more out-of-school boys than girls) while a GPI that is more than 1.03 is favourable to boys (i.e. more out-of-school girls than boys).

*Figure 3.3.1b: Percentage Enrolment by School Level and Age Category – 2025 ASC*



### 3.3.2 School Participation

The adjusted net enrolment rate (ANER) is the most widely used indicator for assessing school participation. While the net enrolment rate (NER) measures the proportion of children of official primary or lower secondary school age who are enrolled at the corresponding level, it does not account for those who may be studying above their age-appropriate grade. ANER addresses this limitation by including all children of the relevant age group who are enrolled in either their designated level or any higher level of schooling.

For primary-age children (6–11), the ANER therefore captures participation in both primary and secondary education. Similarly, the ANER for junior secondary school (JSS) reflects the share of lower-secondary-age children (12–14) who are enrolled in either JSS or senior secondary school. This makes ANER a more comprehensive measure of actual school participation across the education system.

### 3.4 Dimensions of Exclusion

The analysis of the Five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE) relies on children’s exposure to education across government-defined age groups for each level of schooling. In Sierra Leone, the official age range for primary education is 6–11 years, while junior secondary covers ages 12–14. However, age misreporting remains widespread, particularly in rural areas where adult illiteracy is high and many parents either fail to register births or lose birth certificates. As a result, both the ASC and national population and housing census data are vulnerable to inaccuracies in reported ages.

Given these limitations, findings from the 5DE analysis should be interpreted with caution. Nonetheless, any bias introduced by age misreporting is more likely to produce conservative estimates of exclusion rather than inflate the number of out-of-school children. Despite these challenges, the estimates generated are sufficiently robust to inform the design of strategies and programmes aimed at addressing out-of-school (OOS) children.

The analysis of excluded children focuses on those of basic school age (7–14) who are not attending school—either because they have never enrolled or have dropped out (DE2, DE3)—as well as primary-age children who are at risk of dropping out of primary or lower secondary school (DE4).

### 3.4.1 Dimension of Exclusion Two (DE2)

Dimension of Exclusion Two (DE2) captures children of primary school age (7–11 years) who are not attending school at either the primary or secondary level. Estimates for DE2 are derived from the 2025 Out-of-School Children (OOSC) data collection conducted by MBSSE, combined with the 2025 projected national population figures.

The table below presents the proportion and number of DE2 children—those aged 7–11 who were out of school in 2025—disaggregated by sex. Nationally, an estimated 68,672 children in this age group were out of school, representing 6% of all primary-age children. Boys were slightly more affected, with 36,801 (7%) out of school, compared to 31,871 girls (6%).

*Table 3.4.1: 7-11 Years Old OOSC Surveyed, and 2025 Projected National Population (DE2)*

Sex	Male	Female	Total
Percentage OOSC Surveyed	7%	6%	6%
OOSC Surveyed	36,801	31,871	68,672
2025 Project Population	545,883	570,298	1,116,181

*Source: 2025 OOSC Dataset (MBSSE) and 2025 Projected Single Age Population (Stats SL)*

### 3.4.2 Dimension of Exclusion Three (DE3)

Dimension of Exclusion Three (DE3) captures children aged 12–14 years—the official junior secondary school age—who are not attending school at any level. The table below summarises the estimated number and proportion of these children, disaggregated by sex.

Nationally, an estimated 39,472 children in this age group were out of school during the OOSC data collection, representing 8% of all 12–14-year-olds. The data indicates a gender gap, with

more girls (20,979) than boys (18,493) excluded from schooling, highlighting a greater disadvantage for adolescent girls.

*Table 3.4.2: 12-14 Years Old OOSC Surveyed, and 2025 Projected National Population (DE3)*

Sex	Male	Female	Total
Percentage OOSC Surveyed	8%	9%	8%
OOSC Surveyed	18,493	20,979	39,472
2025 Project Population	240,731	246,551	487,282

*Source: 2025 OOSC Dataset (MBSSE) and 2025 Projected Single Age Population (Stats SL)*

### 3.4.3 Dimensions of Exclusion Four (DE4)

A significant number of children in Sierra Leone who are currently enrolled in basic education remain at risk of dropping out for a variety of reasons. For this reason, assessing dropout risk among primary and lower-secondary school learners is an essential component of the broader analysis of school exclusion. Dimensions of Exclusion Four and Five (DE4 and DE5) provide a framework for estimating and profiling children in primary and lower secondary school who are at risk of leaving school prematurely (UIS & UNICEF, 2014).

Although multiple indicators could theoretically be used to analyse DE4 and DE5, the limitations of the available data restrict this study to a single risk factor: age. Age is widely recognised as a strong predictor of school dropout (UIS & UNICEF, 2014). Accordingly, this analysis uses age—specifically, children who are older than the official age for the grade they are attending—as a proxy for dropout risk, drawing on the 2025 ASC dataset.

Evidence from Cameron (2005) reinforces this approach, showing that the likelihood of failing to complete primary education increases as children become over-age for their grade. This makes age a meaningful and practical indicator for identifying learners who are most vulnerable to exclusion.

*Table 3.4.3: Percentages and estimated numbers of Children in Primary School who are at Risk of Dropping out by Gender and Age*

Sex	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Age						
12 years old	52,332	62%	55,816	61%	108,148	61%
13 years old	23,221	27%	24,865	27%	48,086	27%
14 years old	9,282	11%	10,642	12%	19,924	11%
12 to 14 years old	84,835	35%	91,323	37%	176,158	36%
Projected 12-14 years old Pop.	240,731		246,551		487,282	

*Source: 2025 ASC (MBSSE) and 2025 Projected Single Age Population (Stats SL)*

Analysis of DE4 by single year of age in 2025, as presented in the preceding table, indicates that 36% of children aged 12–14 years were still enrolled in primary school—an important marker of elevated dropout risk. Only a small proportion of learners older than 13 remained in primary school, accounting for 11% (19,924 children). Overall, the results show a steady decline in both the proportion and number of over-age children as age increases from 12 to above 13, suggesting that the risk of dropout diminishes slightly among the oldest over-age learners.

While age 11 is the official upper limit for primary school attendance, several factors contribute to children remaining in primary school beyond this age. Many may have entered school late—often at age 7—or repeated one or more grades. These patterns result in a significant share of over-age pupils who, despite being enrolled, face a heightened risk of not completing primary or junior secondary education.

### 3.5 Out of School (OOS) Children’s profiles

This section examines the number and distribution of out-of-school children in Sierra Leone, highlighting where they are located and the demographic characteristics that define them. It also identifies the districts with the highest concentrations of out-of-school children, disaggregated by gender and key age-group categories. The analysis is intended to inform targeted interventions aimed at ensuring that these children are reintegrated into the formal education system.

### 3.5.1 Number of Out-of-School Children

The survey result in table 3.5.1 below shows the number of children in Sierra Leone that are of school going age but are not currently attending school either because they have dropped out of school or they had never attended school. In Sierra Leone, there is a total of 108,144 children of school going age that are out of school as indicated in table 3.5.1 below.

Further analysis of the number of out-of-school children varies significantly across districts. As shown in table 3.5.1 below, Western Area Urban, Kenema, Bo, Western Rural, Kono and Tonkolili districts have high number of out of school children, reflecting a combination of population density, urban migration, and socio-economic pressures. These districts account for 11.3%, 10.0%, 9.5%, 9.5%, and 8.4% respectively of the national OOSC population in Sierra Leone.

On the other hand, districts such as Falaba, Koinadugu, and Bonthe accounting for 2.0 %, 2.3% and 3.2% respectively of OOSC reported comparatively lower absolute numbers. However, this does not necessarily indicate lower exclusion rates, as population size and geographic dispersion influence absolute counts

The percentage share of district OOSC underscores the need for context-specific interventions, with urban districts requiring strategies focused on retention and reintegration, while rural districts may require expanded access and outreach mechanisms.

*Table 3.5.1: Percentage distribution of Out-Of-School Children by District and Gender*

No	District	BOYS		GIRLS		TOTAL	
		NO.	%	NO	%	NO.	%
1	KAILAHUN	4,217	7.3	3,348	6.6	7,565	7.0
2	KENEMA	5,821	10.1	5,038	10.0	10,859	10.0
3	KONO	4,396	7.6	4,697	9.3	9,093	8.4
4	BOMBALI	2,641	4.6	2,267	4.5	4,908	4.5
5	FALABA	1,078	1.9	1,125	2.2	2,203	2.0
6	KOINADUGU	1,276	2.2	1,163	2.3	2,439	2.3
7	TONKOLILI	4,976	8.6	4,104	8.1	9,080	8.4
8	KAMBIA	2,452	4.2	2,557	5.1	5,009	4.6
9	KARENE	2,585	4.5	2,015	4.0	4,600	4.3
10	PORTLOKO	3,695	6.4	3,096	6.1	6,791	6.3
11	BO	5,581	9.7	4,705	9.3	10,286	9.5
12	BONTHE	2,377	4.1	1,084	2.2	3,461	3.2
13	MOYAMBA	2,626	4.5	1,902	3.8	4,528	4.2
14	PUJEHUN	2,822	4.9	1,995	4.0	4,817	4.5
15	WESTERN RURAL	5,134	8.9	5,151	10.2	10,285	9.5

No	District	BOYS		GIRLS		TOTAL	
		NO.	%	NO	%	NO.	%
16	WESTERN URBAN	6,103	10.6	6,117	12.1	12,220	11.3
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57,780</b>	100.0	<b>50,364</b>	100.0	<b>108,144</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: OOSC Data, 2025

### 3.5.2 Age

Analysis of the age distribution shows that children aged 7, 8, and 14 account for the largest share of out-of-school children across most districts as shown in table 3.5.1 below. Ages 7 and 8 consistently record high numbers in all sixteen districts, whereas age 14 displays more variation, with some districts showing significantly higher concentrations than others.

The high proportion of out-of-school children aged 7 to 9 strongly suggests delayed entry into primary school. This represents a clear violation of children's basic right to timely education, as the Education Act 2024 stipulates that every child should be enrolled in primary school by age 6.

The data also reveals a notable increase in dropout rates between ages 12 and 14. This pattern indicates that over-age learners who enter primary school late are at heightened risk of dropping out, likely due to factors such as academic challenges and increased economic or household responsibilities.

*Table 3.5.2: Distribution of Out-Of-School Children by District and Age*

District	7 years	8 years	9 years	10 years	11 years	12 years	13 years	14 years	15 years	Grand Total
Bo	2,260	1,298	927	995	665	1,013	1,116	2,012		10,286
Bombali	943	709	636	671	401	451	536	561		4,908
Bonthe	649	473	366	429	307	357	403	477		3,461
Falaba	307	300	249	346	193	291	274	243		2,203
Kailahun	989	751	532	813	543	1,063	1,118	1,756		7,565
Kambia	936	698	630	750	473	661	403	458		5,009
Karene	1,528	621	461	462	287	352	314	575		4,600
Kenema	1,999	1,298	987	1,397	756	1,167	1,121	2,134		10,859
Koinadugu	447	339	281	416	229	310	212	204	1	2,439
Kono	1,827	1,390	1,061	1,409	865	874	747	920		9,093
Moyamba	802	540	436	662	386	526	475	701		4,528
Port Loko	1,378	800	672	902	503	827	686	1,023		6,791
Pujehun	1,134	753	521	614	381	445	478	491		4,817
Tonkolili	1,371	1,080	965	1,098	791	1,131	1,144	1,500		9,080
Western Area Rural	2,337	1,466	1,100	1,312	901	1,049	1,038	1,082		10,285
Western Area Urban	2,128	1,552	1,307	1,532	949	1,511	1,388	1,853		12,220

District	7 years	8 years	9 years	10 years	11 years	12 years	13 years	14 years	15 years	Grand Total
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>21,035</b>	<b>14,068</b>	<b>11,131</b>	<b>13,808</b>	<b>8,630</b>	<b>12,028</b>	<b>11,453</b>	<b>15,990</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>108,144</b>

Source: OOSC Data, 2025

### 3.5.3 Gender

Gender disparities in school enrolment and across the five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE) have been examined earlier in this report. National-level data shows that gender gaps in basic education participation—once a major concern for girls—have largely been eliminated, as reflected in the acceptable gender parity indices reported above. Notably, results from DE2 through DE5 indicate that the remaining gender imbalance in exclusion from basic education now disproportionately affects boys.

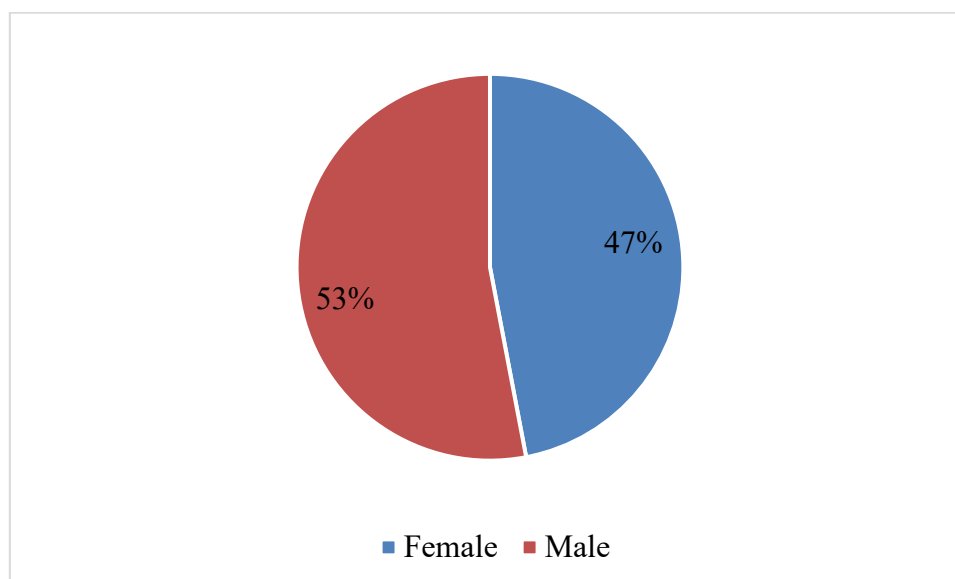
This shift suggests that recent gender-targeted policies aimed at improving girls' participation—such as free tuition and the payment of public examination fees—while highly effective, may now be producing unintended consequences by advantaging girls more than boys. Findings from the OOSC survey, presented in Table 3.5.3 and Figure 3.5.3 below, closely align with the enrolment patterns and exclusion dynamics discussed earlier, reinforcing this emerging trend.

*Table 3.5.3: Distribution of Out-Of-School Children by District and Gender*

DISTRICT	Female	Male	Grand Total	% Female	% Male
Bo	4,705	5,581	10,286	46%	54%
Bombali	2,267	2,641	4,908	46%	54%
Bonthe	1,084	2,377	3,461	31%	69%
Falaba	1,125	1,078	2,203	51%	49%
Kailahun	3,348	4,217	7,565	44%	56%
Kambia	2,557	2,452	5,009	51%	49%
Karene	2,015	2,585	4,600	44%	56%
Kenema	5,038	5,821	10,859	46%	54%
Koinadugu	1,163	1,276	2,439	48%	52%
Kono	4,697	4,396	9,093	52%	48%
Moyamba	1,902	2,626	4,528	42%	58%
Port Loko	3,096	3,695	6,791	46%	54%
Pujehun	1,995	2,822	4,817	41%	59%
Tonkolili	4,104	4,976	9,080	45%	55%
Western Area Rural	5,151	5,134	10,285	50%	50%
Western Area Urban	6,117	6,103	12,220	50%	50%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>50,364</b>	<b>57,780</b>	<b>108,144</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>53%</b>

Source: OOSC Data, 2025

*Figure 3.5.3: Share of Out-Of-School Children by Gender*

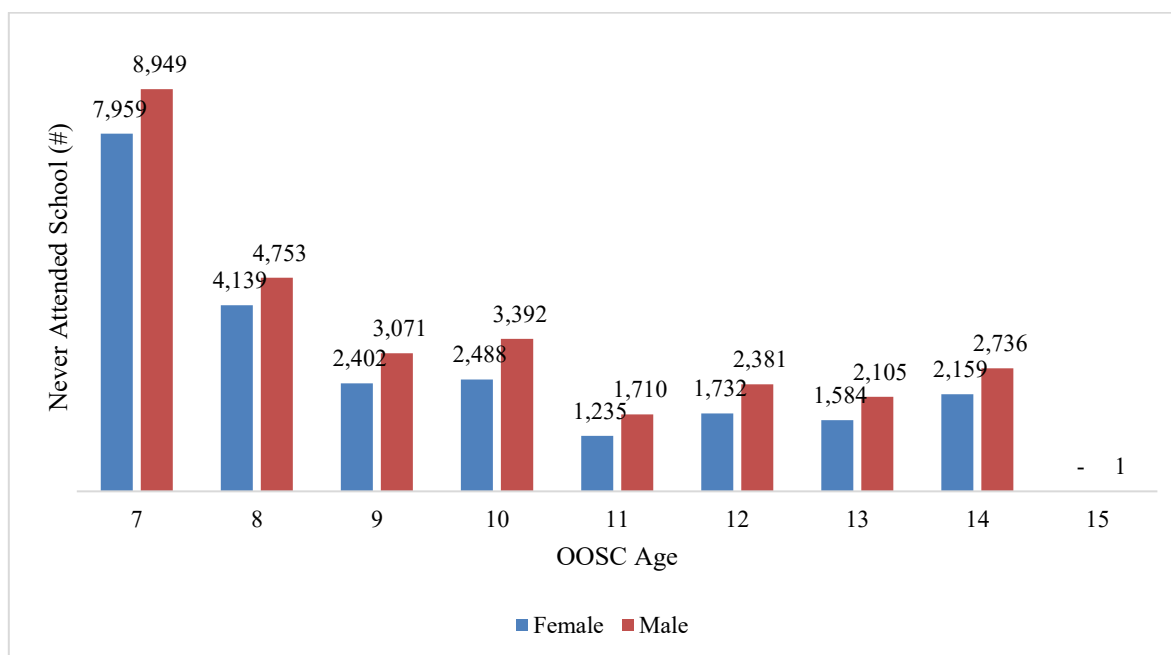


### 3.5.4 OOSC Previous School Attendance Status

#### *3.5.4.1 OOSC Never Attended School*

Figure 3.5.4.1 below demonstrates that children who have never attended school are heavily concentrated in the youngest age groups, especially ages 7–8, underscoring persistent barriers to school entry such as household poverty, inadequate school readiness, and parental constraints. Across all ages, boys are consistently more likely than girls to have never enrolled. Although fewer in number, the presence of never-attended children in older age groups is particularly alarming, signalling long-term exclusion and an elevated risk of lifelong illiteracy. Integration of younger age groups (primary school going age) can be less difficult for formal schooling education for OOSC never attended school than those of junior secondary school going age who have the possibility of going to the Community Learning Centres (CLC).

*Figure 3.5.4.1: Distribution of OOSC that Never Attended School by Age and Gender*



Out of the 108,144 OOSC surveyed, a total of 52,792 of them never attended any formal schooling which accounted for 49% of the children surveyed. As seen in Table 3.5.4.1 below, among the OOSC never attended school more male are found in this category than female. District distribution of shows Bonthe District has double plus male OOSC than their female counterpart while Falaba and Western Area Urban are the two district with registering more female than male OOSC.

*Table 3.5.4.1: Distribution of OOSC Never Attended School by District and Gender*

District	Female	Male	Total
Bo	2,562	3,390	5,952
Bombali	839	1,027	1,866
Bonthe	654	1,681	2,335
Falaba	301	274	575
Kailahun	1,924	2,484	4,408
Kambia	734	782	1,516
Karene	1,059	1,395	2,454
Kenema	2,765	3,334	6,099
Koinadugu	475	572	1,047
Kono	1,722	1,509	3,231
Moyamba	1,107	1,804	2,911
Port Loko	1,047	1,361	2,408
Pujehun	1,303	1,903	3,206
Tonkolili	1,229	1,552	2,781
Western Area Rural	2,460	2,649	5,109
Western Area Urban	3,517	3,381	6,898
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>23,698</b>	<b>29,098</b>	<b>52,796</b>

Source: OOSC Data, 2025

### 3.5.4.2 OOSC Dropped Out of School

Figure 3.5.4.2 below shows that children who dropped out of school are heavily concentrated in the older age groups except for age 11 years which is the official end age for the primary school level. All ages enumerated but 14 years reported more boys than girls dropped out of school. Information on the chart below couple with the grade the OOSC dropped out of school, will inform the integration of these OOSC to which level of accelerated learning they best fit. There is a possibility of 7 years and 8 years to be integrated into the formal school system immediately.

**Figure 3.5.4.2: Distribution of OOSC that Dropout of School by Age and Gender**

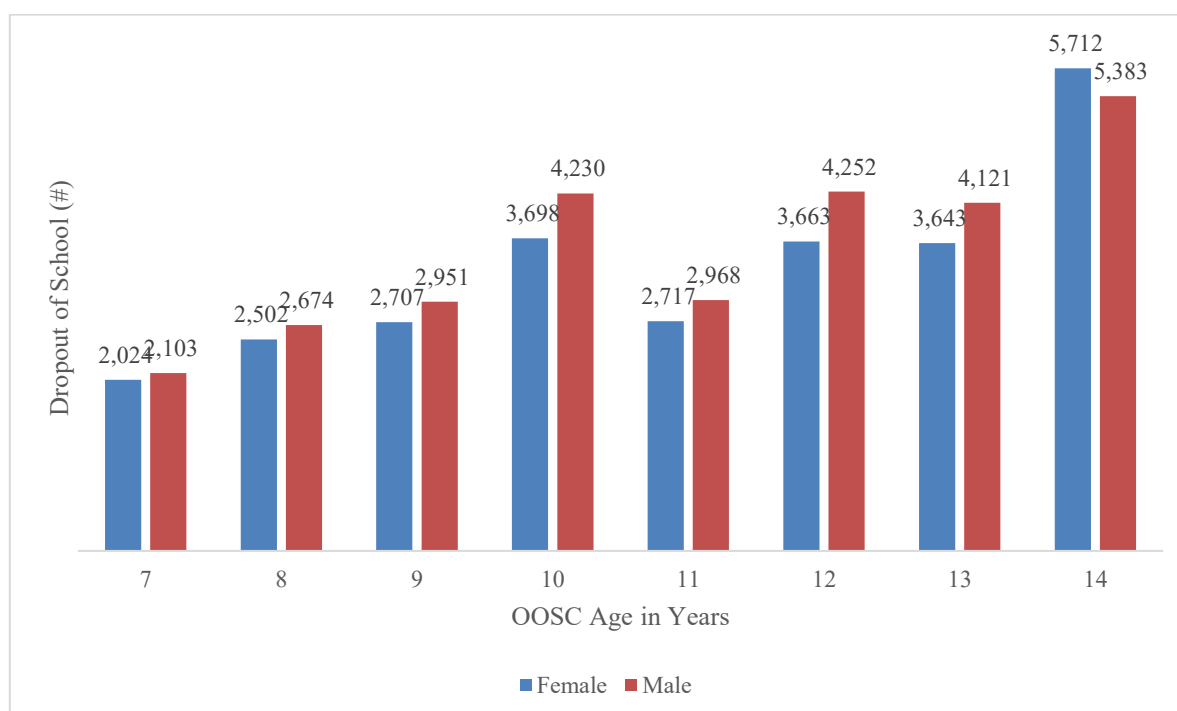


Table 3.5.4.2 below shows the distribution of OOSC that dropped out of school by district and gender. A total of 55,348 of the OOSC were school dropouts showing over half of the OOSC enumerated (51%) belong to this category. District distribution of shows that Western Area Rural, Kambia, Kono, and Falaba registered more female OOSC that dropped out school than their male counterpart.

**Table 3.5.4.2: Distribution of OOSC Dropped Out of School by District and Gender**

District	Female	Male	Total
Bo	2,143	2,191	4,334
Bombali	1,428	1,614	3,042
Bonthe	430	696	1,126
Falaba	824	804	1,628
Kailahun	1,424	1,733	3,157
Kambia	1,823	1,670	3,493
Karene	956	1,190	2,146
Kenema	2,273	2,487	4,760

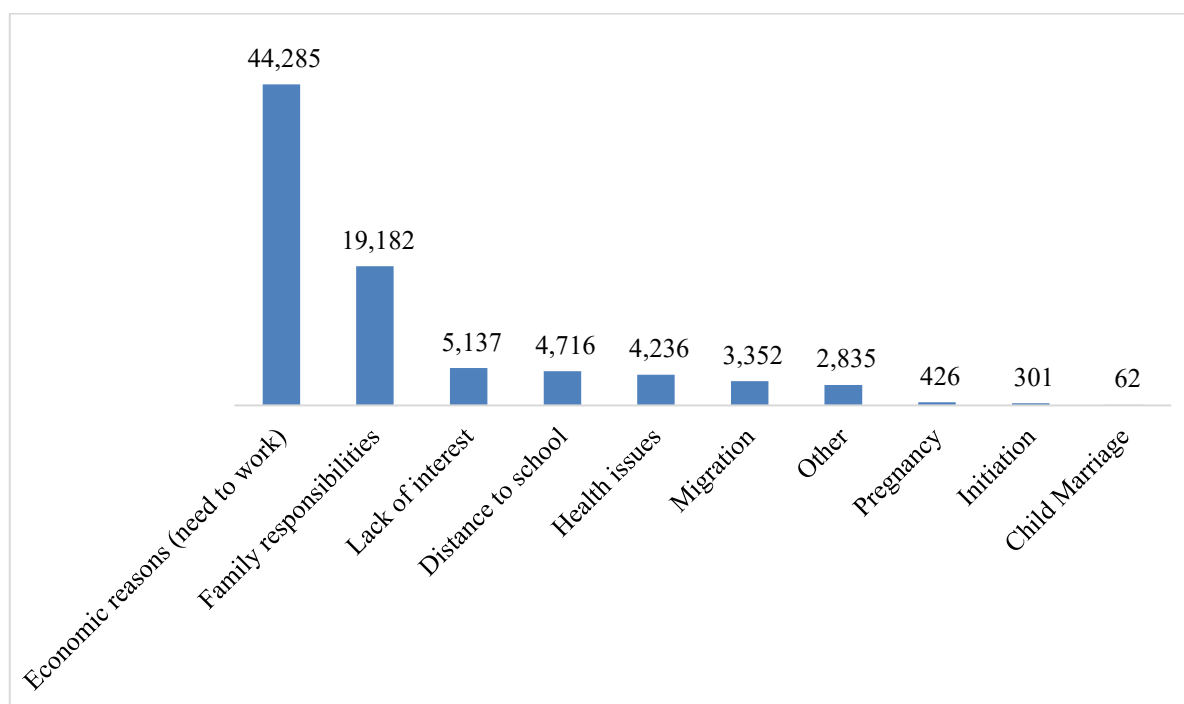
District	Female	Male	Total
Koinadugu	688	704	1,392
Kono	2,975	2,887	5,862
Moyamba	795	822	1,617
Port Loko	2,049	2,334	4,383
Pujehun	692	919	1,611
Tonkolili	2,875	3,424	6,299
Western Area Rural	2,691	2,485	5,176
Western Area Urban	2,600	2,722	5,322
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>26,666</b>	<b>28,682</b>	<b>55,348</b>

### 3.5.4.3 Reasons OOSC Dropped Out of School

Analysis of reported reasons for dropout indicates that economic constraints are the most frequently cited factor, including the need for children to engage in income-generating activities or household labour as seen in Figure 3.5.4.3 below. Other significant reasons include lack of interest in schooling, family responsibilities, and health-related challenges.

It is worth noting that multiple responses were allowed; therefore, totals exceed the number of children who dropped out.

*Figure 3.5.4.3: Distribution of OOSC by Reason why they Dropped Out of School*



### 3.5.5 Parents Guardian Occupation

The data in Figure 3.5.5 below, clearly shows that most households rely heavily on subsistence agriculture as their primary source of livelihood. Farming is the dominant economic activity for parents and guardians across the remaining fourteen districts.

*Figure 3.5.5: Distribution of OOSC Caregivers Occupation Profile*

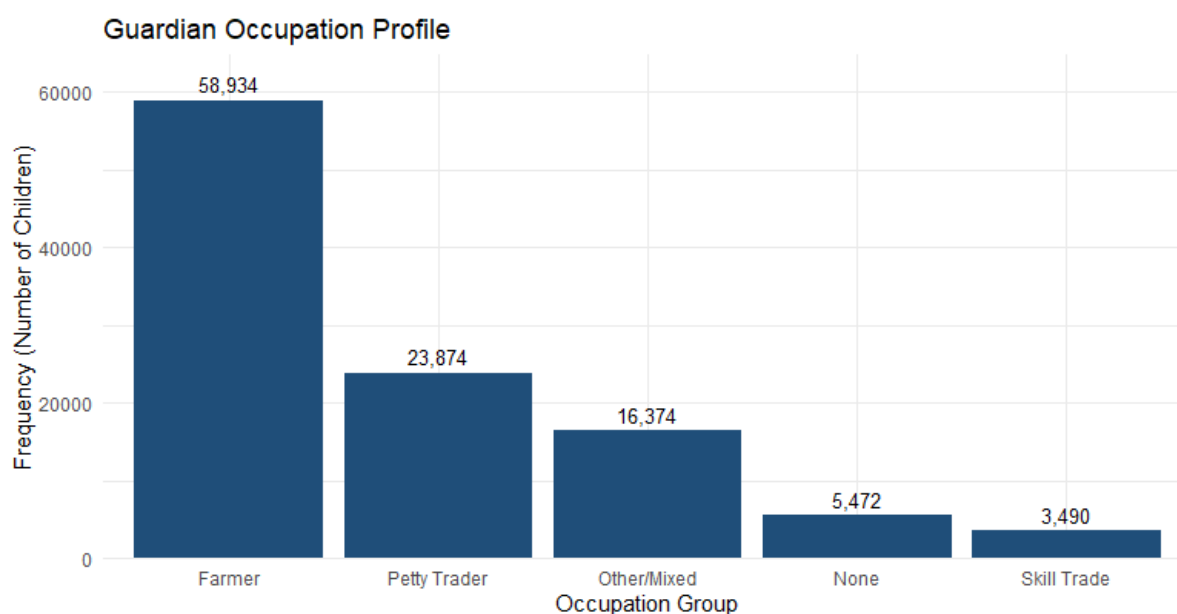


Table 3.5.5 below in contrast, Western Rural and Western Urban having limited access to arable land, make large-scale or even small-scale farming difficult. As a result, petty trading—an activity that requires minimal capital and little or no formal education—has become the most common livelihood option in these areas. The Western Area, both Urban and Rural, records a particularly high concentration of petty traders, driven largely by rural–urban migration and high population density.

These patterns suggest that households engaged in subsistence farming and petty trading often struggle to meet their children’s basic needs. In many cases, families depend on children to supplement household income through farm labour or by assisting in petty trading. This reliance increases the risk of children dropping out of school, and in some instances, parents may choose not to enrol their children at all.

The observed livelihood trends align with broader regional evidence indicating that agriculture—particularly subsistence farming—remains the largest source of employment across Sub-Saharan Africa. Reports by the World Bank, FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, and the ILO highlight that agriculture employs a significant share of the population in low-income countries, especially in rural areas where household labour, including child labour, is widespread. (World Bank 2019 *Harvesting Prosperity: Technology and Productivity Growth in Agriculture*; FAO, IFAD, UNICEF 2020 *Rural Livelihoods and Poverty Reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa*; ILO 2017 *Global Estimates of Child Labour*.)

*Table 3.5.5: Distribution of Out-Of-School Children by District and Caregiver Occupation*

DISTRICT	Farmer	Factory/ Industrial Worker	Driver/ Rider	Sales- person	Miner	Petty Trader	Skill Trade	Civil Servant	Fisher- man/ Fish- monger	Others
Bo	6,633	10	181	129	156	1,910	314	70	31	408
Bombali	3,585	5	20	11	27	1,008	59	33	6	112
Bonthe	2,723	10	21	5	8	302	74	20	503	248
Falaba	2,024	3	10	7	10	63	34	38	-	39
Kailahun	6,399	29	74	23	64	916	574	75	34	95
Kambia	3,436	4	54	-	3	1,768	121	32	141	150
Karene	4,446	5	5	5	15	293	24	6	1	27
Kenema	7,414	35	180	146	507	2,697	559	356	211	132
Koinadugu	1,930	1	16	7	61	744	102	24	7	69
Kono	5,634	16	33	74	637	1,893	477	78	9	134
Moyamba	3,816	4	4	3	11	624	57	39	130	73
Port Loko	4,946	9	34	3	7	1,628	106	54	101	128
Pujehun	4,350	-	9	4	7	303	42	24	119	65
Tonkolili	6,992	5	22	3	549	1,724	166	74	33	108
Western Area Rural	654	63	345	168	276	5,876	709	118	694	619
Western Area Urban	254	139	438	374	43	7,203	1,140	259	509	605
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>65,236</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>1,446</b>	<b>962</b>	<b>2,381</b>	<b>28,952</b>	<b>4,558</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>2,529</b>	<b>343</b>

*Source: OOSC Data, 2025*

### 3.5.6 Household Income

The income of the household, especially the head of household is a key variable that determines the welfare and wellbeing of household members. Households with higher income are more likely to provide for its members better social, health, education and other necessities of life, which enhance high standard of living, compared to low-income households.

Out-Of-School Children are affected by Household income levels. Children from low- income families are more likely to drop out of school than their peers from higher-income families.

Figure 3.5.5d: District Income Benchmarking

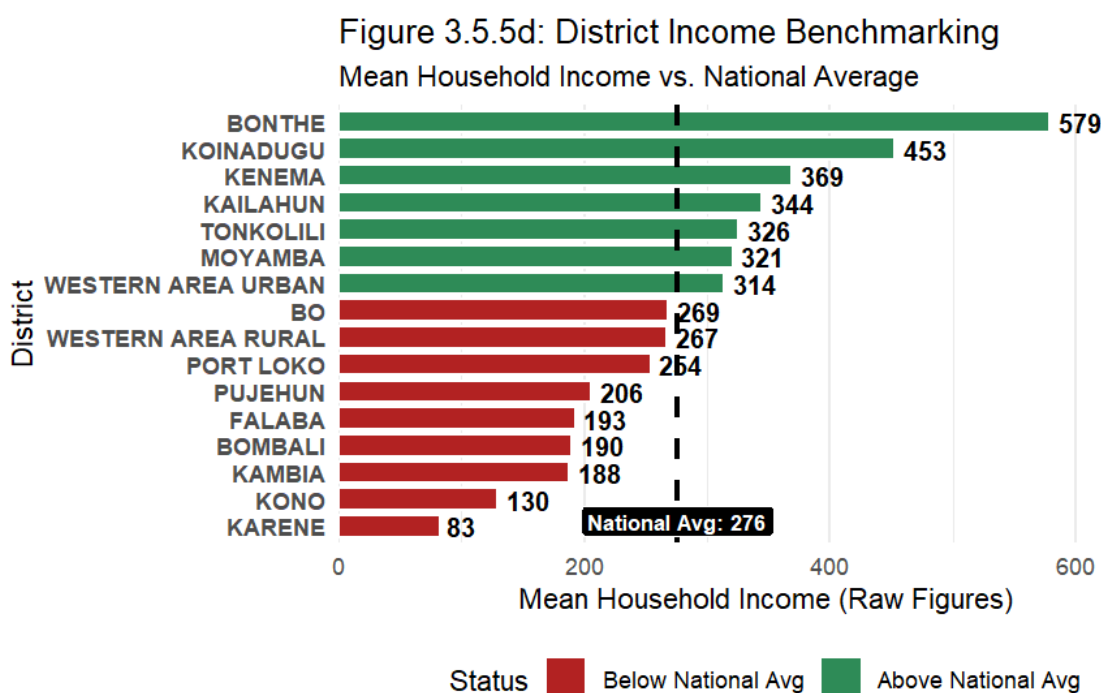


Figure 3.5.5d above shows the average income of parents/guardians of household where the OOSC are living. Nationally, the mean income of household of OOSC as reported in the survey is **Le276** per month.

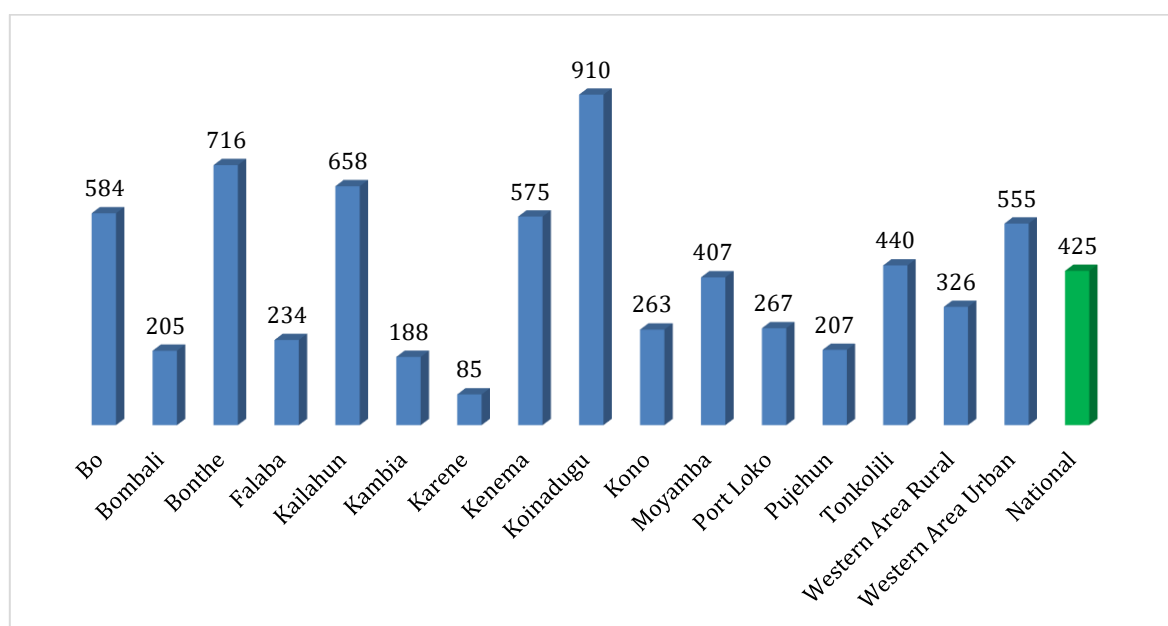
Furthermore, as indicated in the figure above, the average income of households of the OOSC significantly varies among districts, ranging from the lowest (Le83) per month in Karene district to the highest (Le579) per month in Bonthe district.

It is interesting to note that more than half of the districts in Sierra Leone have their mean household income below the national average, indicating that majority of households of the OOSC are low-income families. Districts like Karene, Kono, Kambia, Bombali, Falaba and Pujehun recorded the lowest average household income (Le83, Le130, Le188, Le190, Le196, and Le206) respectively.

On the other hand, there are districts that have their mean household income above the national average, with Bonthe district the highest (Le579), followed by Koinadugu (Le453), Kenema (Le369), Kailahun (Le344) and Tonkolili (Le326) representing the top five districts.

Overall, the mean household income is very low, which could be one of the key factors attributed to the high number of children dropping out of school.

*Figure 3.5.3: Average of Estimated Household Income per Month (in Leones) by District*



### 3.5.7 Out-of-School Children with Disability

Disability analysis reveals that both boys and girls experience significant levels of functional and medical disabilities as seen in Table 3.5.7a below. Severe functional difficulties and medical conditions such as epilepsy, albinism, and dwarfism contribute to exclusion from education.

*Table 3.5.7a: Distribution of Out-Of-School Children by Disability Type and Gender*

Disability / Condition	Boys	Girls	Total
Seeing	245	211	456
Hearing	279	250	529
Walking	16	10	26
Remembering	323	341	664
Self-care	108	97	205
Communicating	387	383	770
Epilepsy	482	428	910
Dwarfism	117	114	231
Albinism	71	75	146
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,028</b>	<b>1,909</b>	<b>3,937</b>

Table 3.5.7b below shows distribution of OOSC with disability by type/function found in each district. District level variations point to the need for inclusive education planning and collaboration with health and social welfare services.

*Table 3.5.7b: Distribution of OOSC by Disability Type and District*

District	Seeing	Hearing	Walking	Remembering	Self-care	Communication	Epilepsy	Dwarfism	Albinism	Total
Bo	24	37	1	45	4	34	63	11	5	224
Bombali	71	60	4	58	31	59	26	7	2	318
Bonthe	3	11	4	5	1	28	21	1	4	78
Falaba	9	6	1	80	6	96	21	3	7	229
Kailahun	32	37	1	31	5	50	59	18	6	239
Kambia	14	24	0	38	7	37	10	6	1	137
Karene	1	5	1	3	0	4	14	4	2	34
Kenema	55	52	5	69	100	77	134	43	58	593
Koinadugu	5	4	0	7	0	10	8	15	3	52
Kono	21	27	2	23	6	30	57	18	11	195
Moyamba	32	37	0	30	7	37	35	37	8	223
Port Loko	11	9	2	15	1	17	35	4	6	100
Pujehun	11	16	2	12	8	11	23	0	1	84
Tonkolili	22	31	2	32	7	50	57	15	7	223
Western Area Rural	28	38	1	29	10	36	27	9	6	184
Western Area Urban	117	135	0	187	12	194	320	40	19	1,024
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>3,937</b>

Source: OOSC Data, 2025

Key observations:

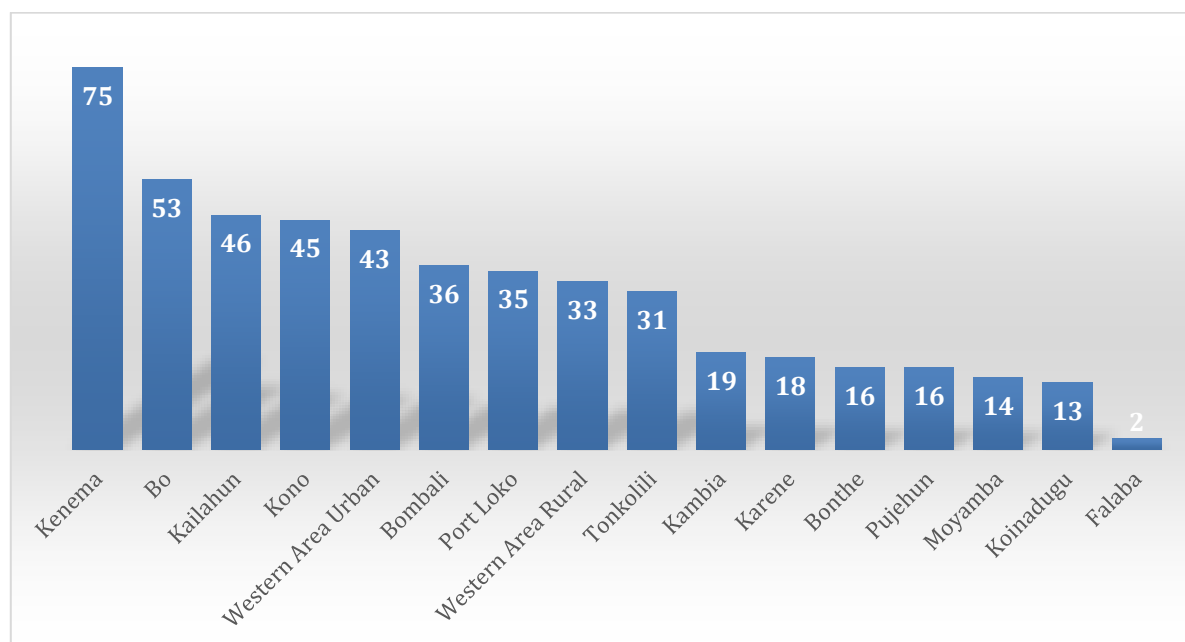
- Disability cases among OOSC are unevenly distributed across districts.
- High-burden districts require strengthened referral systems, specialised support, and inclusive education planning.

Lower-burden districts may still face challenges related to access, identification, and specialised services.

### 3.5.8 Pregnant Out-of-School Children

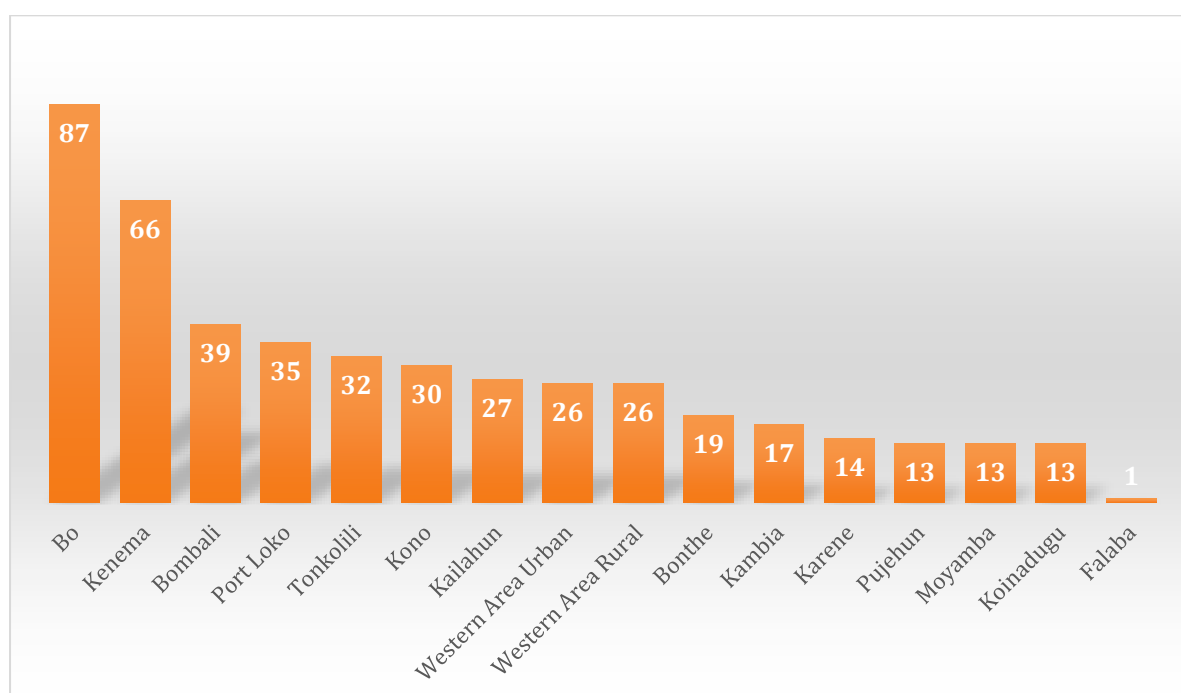
Pregnancy among out-of-school girls is observed across multiple districts and age groups, with higher prevalence among older adolescents. This reflects the intersection between education exclusion, early pregnancy, and broader protection challenges. Figure 3.5.8 below illustrates the distribution of OOSC found pregnant during the enumeration across the districts. A total of 495 OOSC with pregnancy were enumerated during the exercise and Kenema district (75) reported the highest number of OOSC with pregnancy followed by Bo district (53). Falaba district report the least number of OOSC with pregnancy (2).

*Figure 3.5.3: Distribution of OOSC Found with Pregnancy Across Districts*



### 3.5.9 Married Out-of-School Children

*Figure 3.5.9: Distribution of OOSC Who were Married Across Districts*



The presence of married learners among the out-of-school population indicates that child marriage remains a significant barrier to education. Married learners often face compounded challenges that limit their ability to return to formal schooling. Figure 3.5.8 Above shows the distribution of OOSC who were married during the survey across the districts. A total of 458 OOSC with pregnancy were enumerated during the data collection and Bo district (87) reported

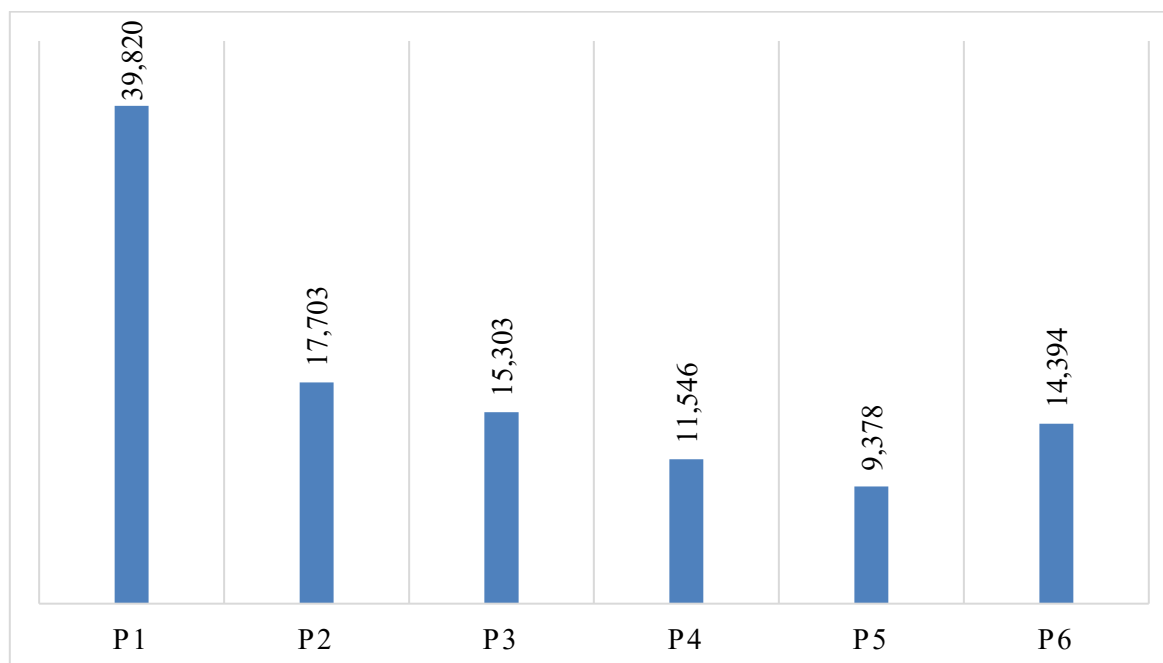
the highest number of OOSC who were married followed by Kenema district (66). Falaba district report the least number of OOSC who were married (1).

### 3.5.10 Reintegration of Out-of-School Children to Formal Learning

Reintegration analysis shows that most out-of-school children are recommended for placement at lower primary levels (P1–P2), reflecting delayed entry and learning gaps. Significant numbers at upper primary levels highlight the presence of over-age learners requiring accelerated pathways. Integration of OOSC requires three accelerated learning pathways with P1 and P2 go to Level 1, P3 and P4 move to Level 3, and P5 and P6 placed in Level 3 as the curriculum is developed for the project.

Figure 3.5.10 below shows integration pathways suggested by the OOSC enumerated. Combining P1 and P2 reports 57,523 OOSC (53%) suggesting being integrated into acceleration learning level 1, while 26,849 of the OOSC suggested acceleration learning level 2 (P3 and P4 combined) which is a quarter of the OOSC (25%). A total of 23,772 OOSC wanted to be integrated into P5 and P5 which is the third category of acceleration learning demonstrating 22% of OOSC enumerated.

*Figure 3.5.10: Distribution of OOSC Suggested Integration Pathways (P = Class)*



District level reintegration analysis reveals varying needs across districts, providing a basis for district specific planning, resource allocation, and coordination with partners. Table 3.5.10 below shows the distribution pattern of what the OOSC enumerated suggest.

*Table 3.5.10: Distribution of OOSC Class Reintegration Levels by District*

District	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
Bo	5,439	1,362	889	674	571	1,352
Bombali	1,308	482	875	904	696	643
Bonthe	956	1,041	687	382	179	216
Falaba	511	473	469	326	216	208
Kailahun	3,465	1,182	866	648	620	784
Kambia	1,268	628	765	777	590	981
Karene	2,071	566	463	431	366	703
Kenema	3,794	2,057	1,725	1,177	753	1,354
Koinadugu	457	591	506	348	317	216
Kono	3,617	1,708	1,321	916	766	765
Moyamba	2,172	485	718	327	429	397
Port Loko	1,578	1,048	984	822	763	1,596
Pujehun	2,847	586	557	368	261	198
Tonkolili	2,286	1,244	1,262	1,190	1,039	2,059
Western Area Rural	3,620	1,835	1,470	1,049	884	1,428
Western Area Urban	4,433	2,415	1,744	1,207	928	1,494

### 3.6 Multi-variate Analysis: The Vulnerability Framework

The report applies a multi-dimensional vulnerability framework to ensure policy interventions are focused on the most marginalized groups. This framework recognizes that school exclusion is rarely positioned with a single factor, but with a combination of overlapping socio-economic barriers.

#### 3.6.2 Results: The Re-entry Gradient

An important policy question is if the household capacity affects children's willingness to return to school. Interest in school re-entry is broken down by socio-economic deciles in Figure 3.6.2.

*Figure 3.6.2: Interest in Re-entry by Vulnerability Decile*

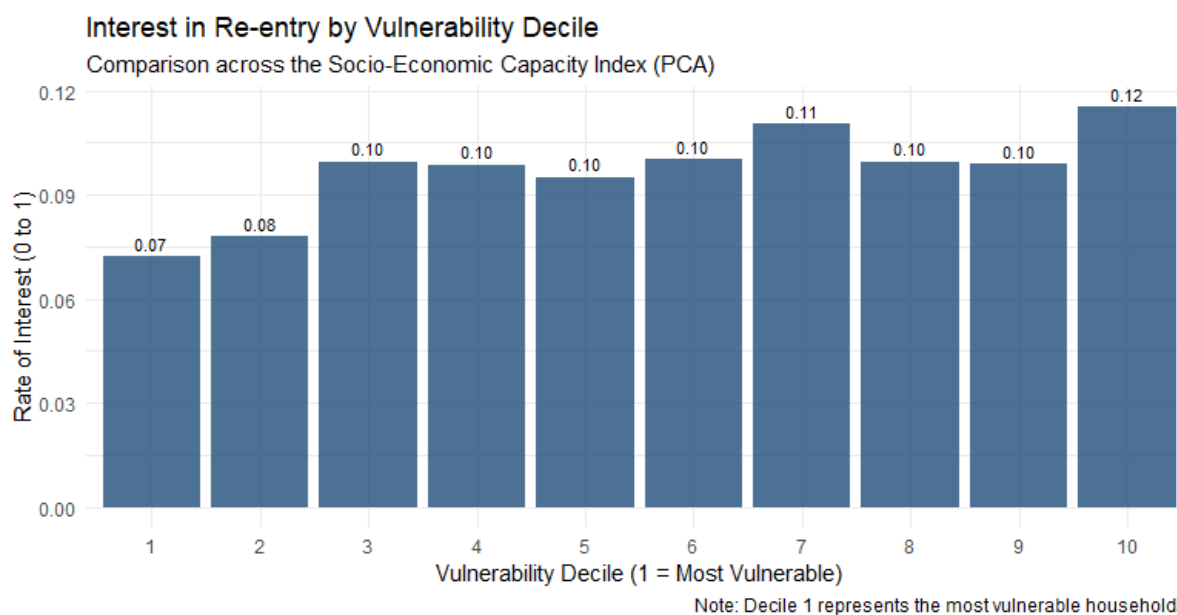


Figure 3.6.2 examines the multivariate analysis and shows a significant socio-economic gradient on the level of educational aspirations among the out-of-school children in Sierra Leone. The study uses the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) based Socio Economic Capacity Index and shows the significant correlation between household structural resilience and a child's willingness to return to formal school. As households move out of extreme vulnerability to economic stability, the potential and purpose of schooling to the child increases. It shows that the interest in education is not based on psychological factors but is rather a function of socio-economic realities and the available "liquidity buffer" at the family level.

The first decile demonstrates one of the most significant High Vulnerability Deficits. Children from the bottom decile, or the most disadvantaged 10% of households, have a re-entry interest rate of 0.07. This level of aspiration is very low and signals the deep impact of exclusion. Children in the most extreme conditions of poverty, and with labor responsibilities that come with severe opportunity costs, face a structural barrier to learning. In many cases, education is viewed as an unattainable expense instead of a viable way to advance. The immediate need to engage in subsistence activities, such as farming, or informal trading, to ensure the survival of the household, tend to "crowd out" any interest in education as people focus on the immediate economic gains of work rather than the postponed benefits of education.

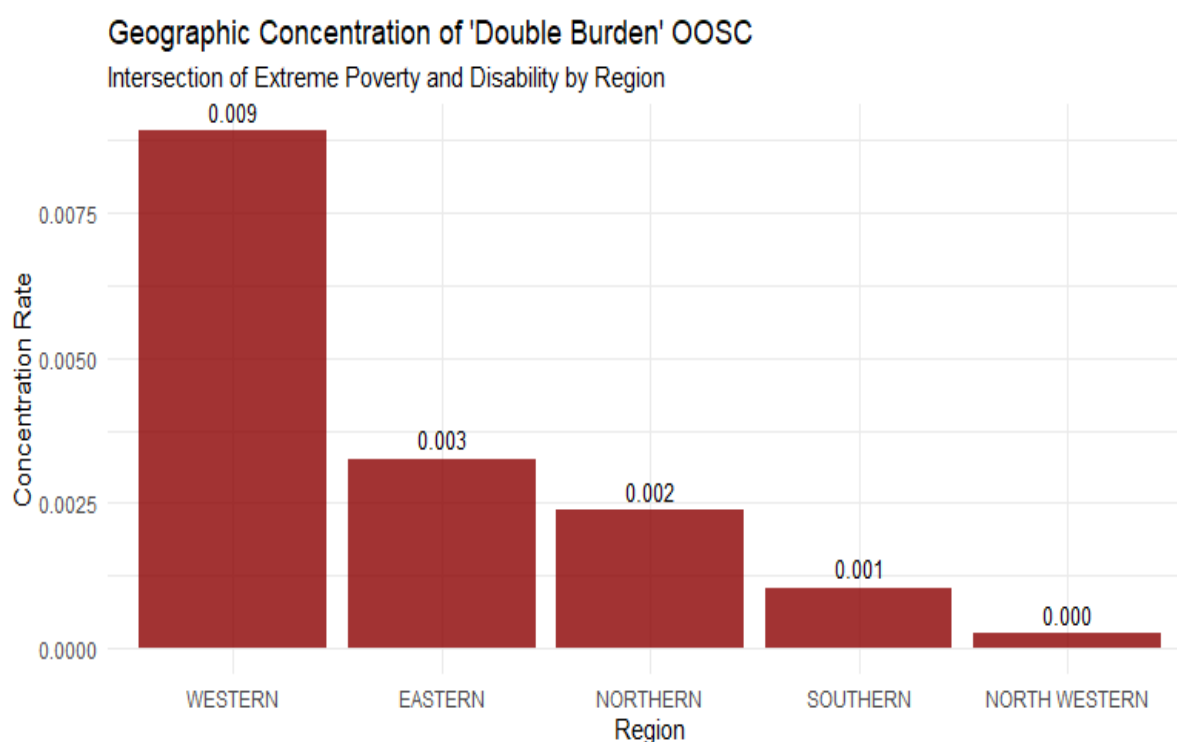
In contrast, the study records a noteworthy 'Capacity Spike' as household resources rise, with interest rates reaching a maximum of 0.12 (12%) for the top wealthiest decile. This positive

trend demonstrates that with more stability at the household level, perceived barriers to education, in this case the so-called “hidden costs” associated with school uniforms, transport, and other school materials, become more tangible. Also, families with greater socio-economic resources are more likely to understand the long-term gains of a more formal education. This is particularly relevant for policymakers at a national level because the “wish” to go back to school is most strongly correlated with the “capacity” to do so. To reverse this gap in interest, it is necessary to reduce the economic costs associated with formal schooling for the ultra-poor so that education becomes an attainable goal for the poorest of the poor, particularly those in the lower deciles.

### 3.6.3 The 'Double Burden': Intersection of Poverty and Disability

In accordance with the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle, we examined the Double Burden, specifically pertaining to children who reside with a functional disability and are situated within the bottom 20% of the wealth spectrum (Deciles 1-2).

*Figure 3.6.3: Geographic Concentration of 'Double Burden' OOSC*



## 4. Barriers Findings & Profile of OOSC



### 4.1 Overview

The implementation of the Free Quality School Education (FQSE) policy in 2018 and the Radical Inclusion Policy in 2021 have led to tremendous changes to the accessibility of the educational system. Nonetheless, an overwhelming 108,144 children remain outside the formal educational system. Current data indicates that while school fees have been eliminated, the obstacles to the educational system remain as complex and structural as before. In relation to the UNICEF 5 Dimension of Exclusion (5DE) framework, these obstacles are examined along two different axes: Supply-side barriers, which reflect the institutional absence and the quality of services, and Demand-side barriers, which are the economic and cultural factors at the household level. For children in Sierra Leone, it is evident that the barriers they face rarely operate independently. On the contrary, they combine to create a barrier to which the current, widely applicable educational policies are failing to address.

The analytical framework revolves three thematic pillars: socio-cultural barriers, economic barriers, and governance of the schooling system. Under socio-cultural barriers, it examines development and gender-related obstacles, in particular, life cycle shifts and the informal labour market's competitive pull. The economic pillar examines the resource allocation and the household level of the survival strategy of internal labour rationing system due to large family sizes. The last pillar, governance and schooling, rectifies remaining physical infrastructure bottlenecks and system level challenges of distance and student mobility tracking.

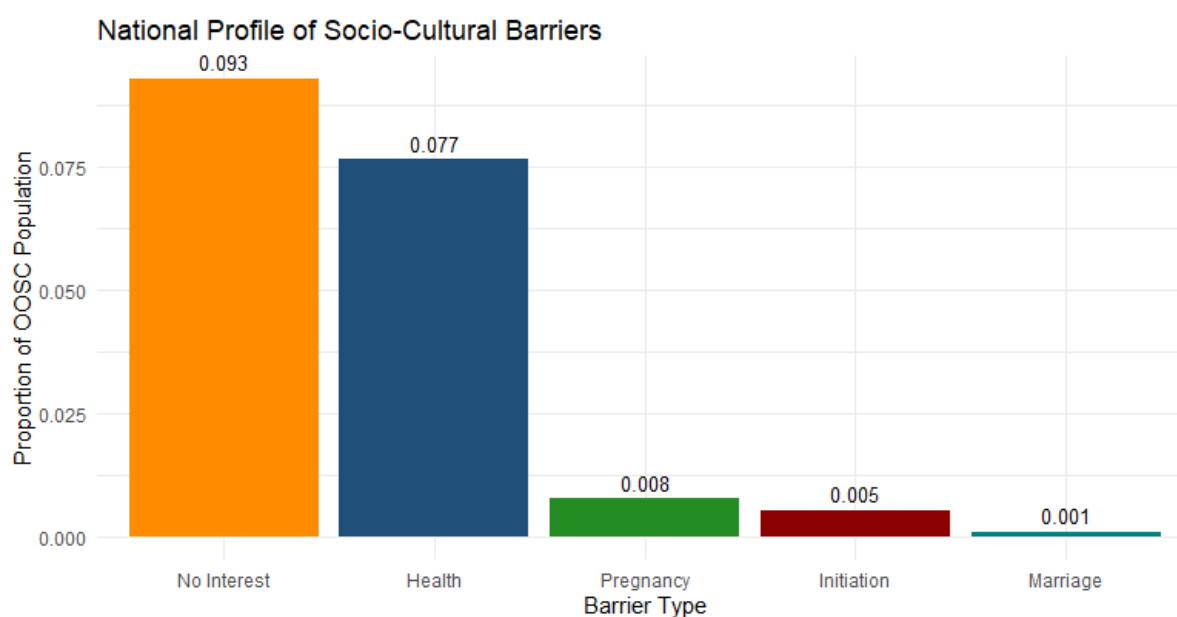
## 4.2 Socio-cultural Barriers to Education

Even though Sierra Leone's Government Free Quality School Education (FQSE) initiative has successfully removed a majority of primary level supply-side obstacles, including the elimination of school fees, substantial demand-side obstacles still block full enrolment. Such obstacles are socio-cultural in nature, embedded in the social fabric, and while they might not be monetary, they are structural and cannot be addressed with financial subsidies. They are the result of complex interactions between individual health status, culturally defined roles, and a systemic utility gap in which the perceived inter-temporal value of formal schooling (the long-term benefits of schooling) is assumed to be less than the immediate responsibilities within the community and the culturally ascribed roles.

### 4.2.1 National Profile of Socio-Cultural Exclusion

As illustrated in Figure 4.2a, the national profile of non-economic barriers reveals a critical "utility gap" within the education sector.

*Figure 4.2.1: National Profile of Socio-Cultural Barriers in Sierra Leone*



The national OOSC survey data shows that out of all socio-cultural barriers, the most prominent of them all involves the so-called “relevance crisis,” which shows that 9.3% of the surveyed population of Sierra Leone has no interest in attending school. This does not capture the full extent of the problem, nonetheless; an absence of interest in school can have more than one reason, an example being that the formal educational system does not provide sufficient value in comparison to the socio-economic context of one's family, which in this case, is most likely

to be the reason. In Sierra Leone, and especially in rural areas where farming and petty trading provide quick and immediate cash, schooling is increasingly conceived to be an opportunity cost. Families and children undertake an economically rational, but socially irrational, assessment that in terms of economic returns, entering the informal labour market is more valuable than spending time in a classroom.

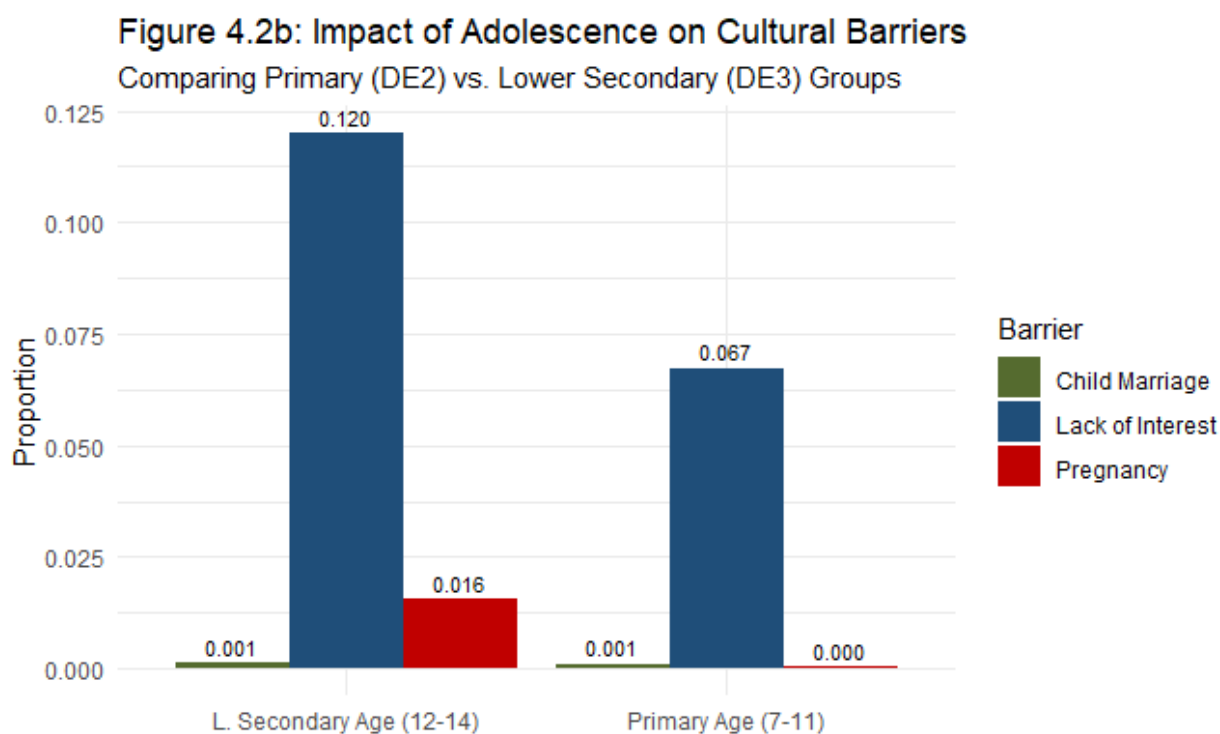
The systemic health vulnerability accounts for about 7.7% of school exclusion. The figure shows that in Sierra Leone, educational participation is highly dependent on the learner's overall health. In the presence of grossly manageable conditions like malaria, waterborne diseases, and chronic undernutrition, a child's school participation and attendance are potentially hostage to their health. Unlike other forms of barriers that others feel can change through behavioural modification, this vulnerability is a biological blockade to learning. The situation is a clear manifestation of the lack of school health protocols and nutrition programs, which in a community characterized by a weak health infrastructure, is a potent to marginalize children to the periphery of the classroom.

This study identifies one more type of barrier, which we will refer to as high-impact binary barriers. These barriers may manifest on a national scale with low frequencies, yet they indicate the most definitive exit points from the formal education system. Pregnancy (0.8%), and initiation or entry into secret societies (0.5%), are examples of social transitions that may catalyse a permanent dropout. While a health issue may bring about a temporary withdrawal, pregnancy and initiation signal a decisive reconfiguration of one's status from that of a child-student, to a fully-fledged adult, with community and/or parental responsibilities. Given that these events are commonly associated with social stigma or cultural responsibilities, they act as 'hard' barriers and the formal education system currently has very limited means to reduce or eliminate these. Even though these events may, at first glance, appear to occur with low frequencies, the degree to which they inhibit an individual's potential is absolute. Once these cultural transitions occur, these children often become lost to the education system.

#### 4.2.2 The Adolescent Transition and the 5DE Framework

This research incorporates the 5DE as the primary reporting framework to assist the development of evidence-informed intervention strategies and to comply with international reporting standards. The 5DE is a framework of global recognition, which lends itself to a more robust comparative analysis for the Primary Age group (Dimension 2, 7 – 11 years) and the Lower Secondary Age group (Dimension 3, 12 – 14 years).

Figure 4.2b: Comparison of Cultural Barriers across Educational Dimensions (DE2 vs DE3)



Analysis of the data using the Five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE) framework demonstrates a notable and critical phenomenon of rapid increase in socio-cultural barriers during the adolescent stage. We refer to the phenomenon as the “Adolescent Spike.” This shift signifies the first absence of school attendance reason(s) in the primary to early adolescent transition. The “Lack of Interest” barrier, for example, appears to spike by 80% during this transition, increasing from 6.7% to 12.0% (from Dimension 2 to Dimension 3) for primary to lower secondary age cohorts. It is reasonable to assume that as children become older and more cognitively advanced, they start to more constructively assess the value of their education. Where there is no school curriculum provision that offers economic value, older children become frustrated with education, sub-prioritizing it in preference to the cash-driving informal employment.

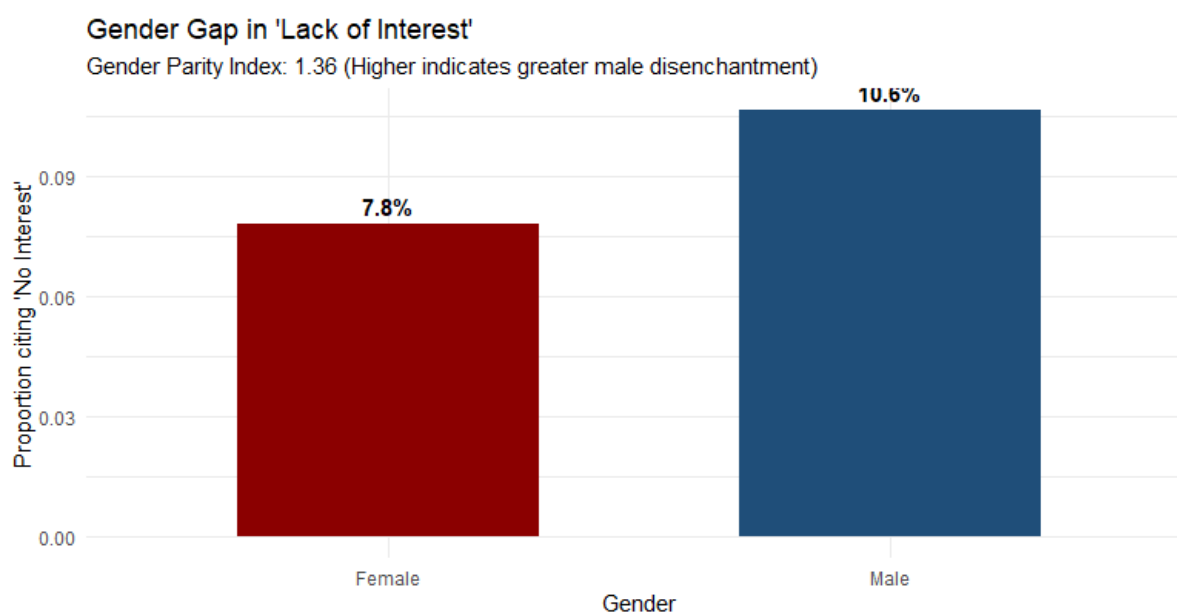
The period of transition is a clear “danger zone” for gendered attrition from schooling, especially for the girl-child. The data shows that the transition to Junior Secondary School (JSS) is pivotal fracture point, where pregnancy is a notable exclusion factor. While pregnancy-related school drop-out is practically absent in the primary school age group, it rises to 1.6% in the DE3 age group, indicative of the fact that the combination of biological and social factors creates a hostile environment for the girl-child, which even the most well-intentioned

educational policies are unable to address. This transition into adolescence is a critical period, creating a systemic bottleneck whereby the combination of educational irrelevance, reproductive health risk, and school dropout, lead to a total withdrawal from the formal school system for many children in Sierra Leone.

#### 4.2.3 The Gendered Gap in Educational Disenchantment

The use of reporting metrics in line with the global standards for the evaluation of equity and inclusion in education systems entails the use of ‘parity’ measures. The current analysis points to a marked inequity, with respect to school participation and disengagement, which is further illustrated in the dimensions of Figure 4.2.3.

*Figure 4.2.3: Gender Parity Gap in 'No Interest' Citations*



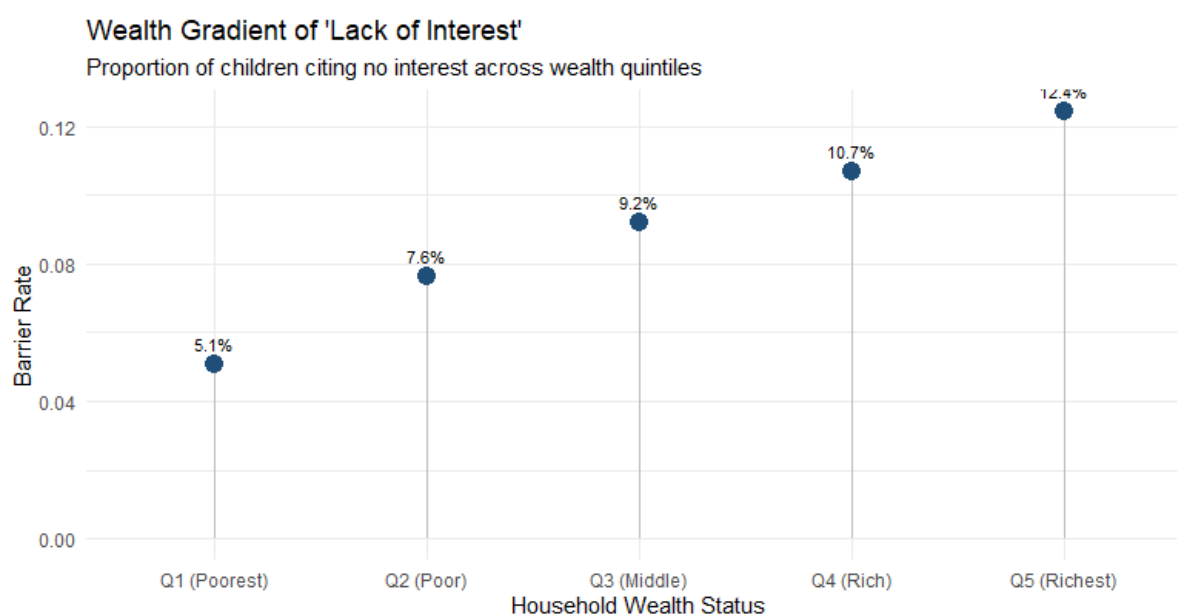
The Gender Parity Index (GPI) on “Lack of Interest” stands at 1.36, which quantifies the difference between the male and female engagement in school. Here, male out-of-school children are 36% more likely than female out-of-school children to mention disengagement from the education system as their reason for staying out of school. This exclusion phenomenon, which is more pronounced for young adolescents, is concerning, as it points to an educational system, and more specifically to its formal level, that is not responding to their interest or to their position in the developmental and economic spectrum. In the Sierra Leonean socio-economic context, the disparity can be explained mostly by the strong economic 'pull' of the informal labor market. In the case of Sierra Leone, adolescent boys are commonly employed in the informal sectors in urban cities. Sectors such as these compete against the

formal education system for the time and dedication of adolescent males, who value the opportunity for early economic engagement more than the long-term payoff of a traditional academic certificate.

#### 4.2.4 The Wealth Gradient Paradox and Intersectionality

A significant finding from the perspective of the national social protection strategists and educational authorities is the precise relationship between the socio-economic status of the household and the attitudes towards school engagement. As illustrated in Figure 4.2.4, the analysis shows a 'Wealth Gradient Paradox' in the context of Sierra Leone.

*Figure 4.2.4: Wealth Gradient of 'Lack of Interest'*

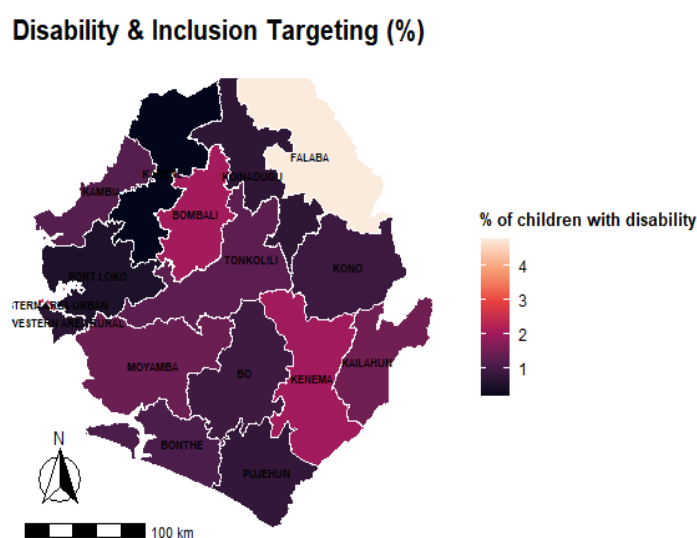


The result from Figure 4.2.4 contains empirical data reflecting a phenomenon referred to as the 'Wealth Gradient Paradox'. Most educational theorists believe school disengagement occurs as a result of some form of severe deprivation; however, Sierra Leone data reflects that as the socio-economic status of the household increases, so too does the level of 'Lack of interest' that acts as a barrier to school attendance. In the lowest quintile (Q1), just 5.1% of out of school children list a lack of interest as the reason, whereas this number more than doubles to 12.4% for children in the top quintile (Q5). As such, school disengagement as a secondary or non-critical activity, is more common in the economically higher reached households, signifying the school exclusion phenomenon in these groups is not an issue of financial resources but rather an issue of educational value.

This paradox touches on the opportunity cost of schooling, considering the well-established informal economy in Sierra Leone. In the informal economy, families engage in trade in a flexible and relational way, working together in a household business. In the case of the Freetown and Port Loko trade hubs, families of a higher socio-economic status view their children as key personnel to scale their family business. To these families, the potential income from child labour is immediate, whereas the potential financial reward from a child's formal schooling is speculative and in the distant future. Thus, children must drop out of school in order to support their parents in informal family businesses; this phenomenon explains the disengagement from pure school systems and curricula which have no immediate economic return. Moreover, for these families, the “cost” of schooling is the potential income the child could have earned while working, and this trade-off favours working over schooling as families are able to add children to their retail business.

#### 4.2.5 School Accessibility for Children with Disability (CWDs)

*Map 4: Disability & Inclusion Targeting (%)*



Map 4 offers a key contribution to the spatial aspect of the "Leave No One Behind" (LNOB) initiative by showing the distribution of functional disabilities within the population of school age children who are out of school across the 16 districts in Sierra Leone. This “Inclusion Roadmap” identifies distinct geographical units where absolute educational engagement barriers are caused by physical, mental, or cognitive disabilities. The data indicates a pronounced concentration in Falaba, the district with the highest national prevalence (represented by the light beige/white gradient) with other significant concentrations in Bombali and Kenema. From this data we can conclude that in these districts the intersectional experience

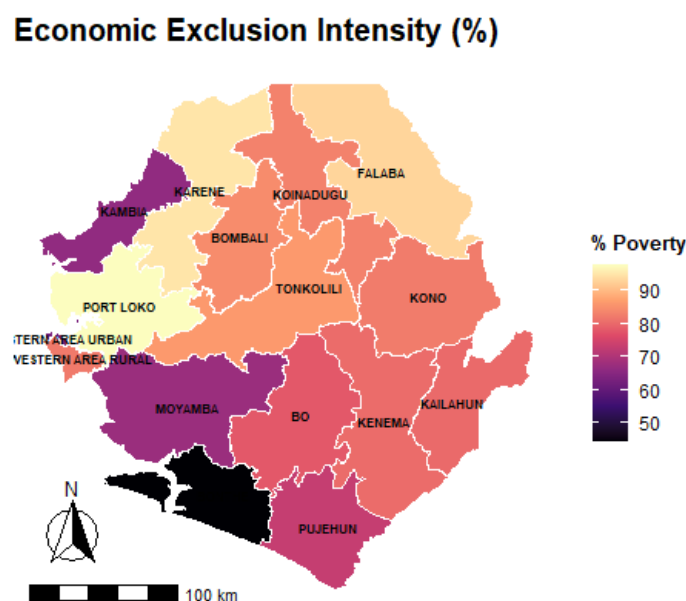
of disability and exclusion is the most pronounced and may be due to a lack of specialized schools or the inability of regular classrooms to cater to a range of learning differences. While the National Policy on Radical Inclusion is the legislative framework that compels the education of Children with Disabilities (CWDs), Map 4 is a framework for Evidence Based Targeted Resource Allocation. It shows disability, exclusion and deprivation in the greatest need of the attention of the Ministry and other Stakeholders. The distribution of assistive learning devices (such as braille kits and hearing aids), the construction of disability-friendly the infrastructure (e.g., ramps, and modified WASH facilities), and the disability-inclusive teaching training of teachers need to be prioritized. By marking the hotspots, the map demonstrates that "Radical Inclusion" shifts from a national ambition to a local, data-informed reality, targeting the specialized high-cost interventions to the areas with the greatest concentration of marginalized disabled children.

#### 4.3 Economic Factors: Poverty, Labor, and household Resource Rationing

The most significant structural barriers to educational attainment in Sierra Leone are economic in nature. Even though the Free Quality School Education (FQSE) program has been successfully implemented, 80% of identified out-of-school children (OOSC) cite economic reasons as the most important explanation for their exclusion. This section examines the extent of this barrier through the geography, family, and OOSC gender of the child to define the most important areas for targeted financial support.

##### 4.3.1 Geographic Intensity and the "Opportunity Cost" Hotspots

*Map 4.3.1: Geographic Intensity of Economic Exclusion*



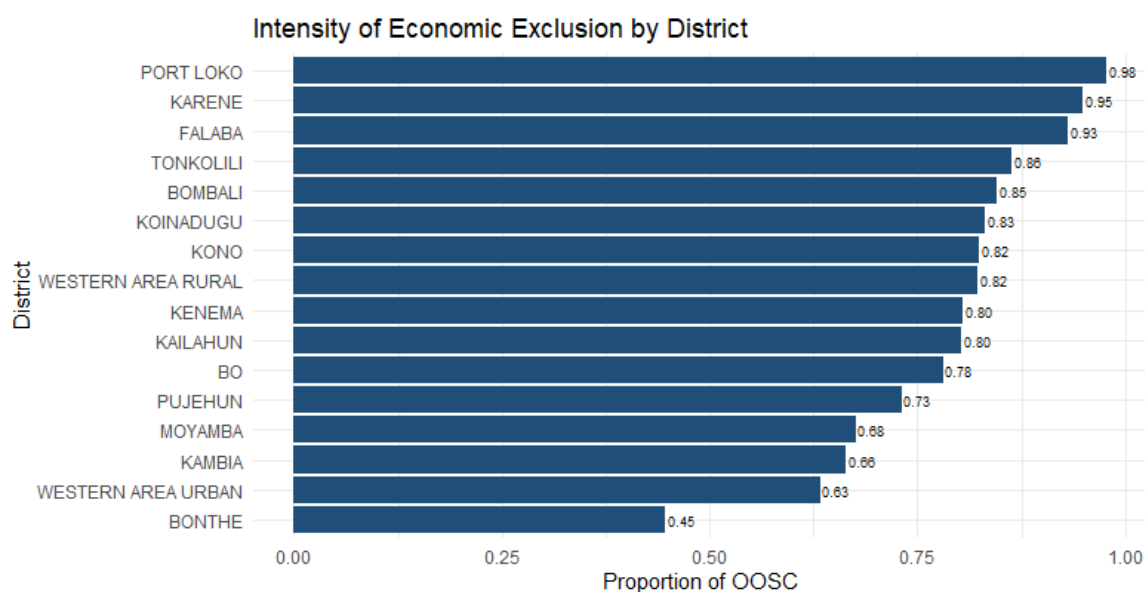
Map 4.3.1 illustrates the rural economic exclusion hotspots, specifically analysing the Out of School Children (OOSC) in each district, whose exclusion is due to financial household constraints, child labour, or both. Unlike Map 1, which captured volume (i.e. the number of children in a district), Map 2 is the first step in qualitative evidence collection for demand-side fiscal gap analysis. It shows economic exclusion in the Northern and Northwestern Economic Corridor (i.e. Port Loko, Karene, and Falaba). Economic exclusion is evident at near-universe levels (i.e. bright yellow/beige zones). These districts are where the Free Quality School Education (FQSE) program has hit a ‘subsidy ceiling’ in that the removal of school fees fails to offset the “hidden costs” of schooling (i.e. school uniforms, transport, and learning materials). In addition, the farming and trading activities in these areas, coupled with a high opportunity cost of child time, pushes households into a state of “labour-dependency.” In this state, children are viewed and utilized as economic units, rather than as learners. In contrast, the dark purple/black gradient depicting Bonthe shows that the coastal areas have a lower intensity of economic exclusion. This lower intensity of economic exclusion indicates that the factors contributing to the OOSC crisis in the coastal areas are more complex than economic factors and that additional factors, including physical distance and/or socio-cultural values, are at play.

For social protection strategists and policymakers, Map 2 determines the precise administrative boundaries within which the National Social Safety Net (SSN) and the expansion of weighted cash transfers should be prioritized to remove the economic barriers that currently prevents the ultra-poor from accessing the formal education system.

#### 4.3.1.1 Geographic Intensity and the "Opportunity Cost" Hotspots

Analysis of Figure 4.3.1.1 demonstrates that economic exclusion is not geographically uniform; rather, it is concentrated in districts with high informal labour demands.

Figure 4.3.1.1: Intensity of Economic Exclusion by District



The North and North-West regions are generally considered the country's most financially constrained educational zones. The economic barriers to education that previously existed in these regions have now evolved from an affordability issue into one defined by complete household insolvency. Economic reasons for not attending school are almost completely cited in Port Loko (0.98), Karene (0.95), and Falaba (0.93). The Free Quality School Education (FQSE) has likely hit the subsidy ceiling in these regions. Even though direct school fees have been eliminated, there are still other compounding costs that indirectly limit education access, including unescapable expenditures for daily transport, learning materials, and other costs that are prohibitive for households in the lowest wealth deciles.

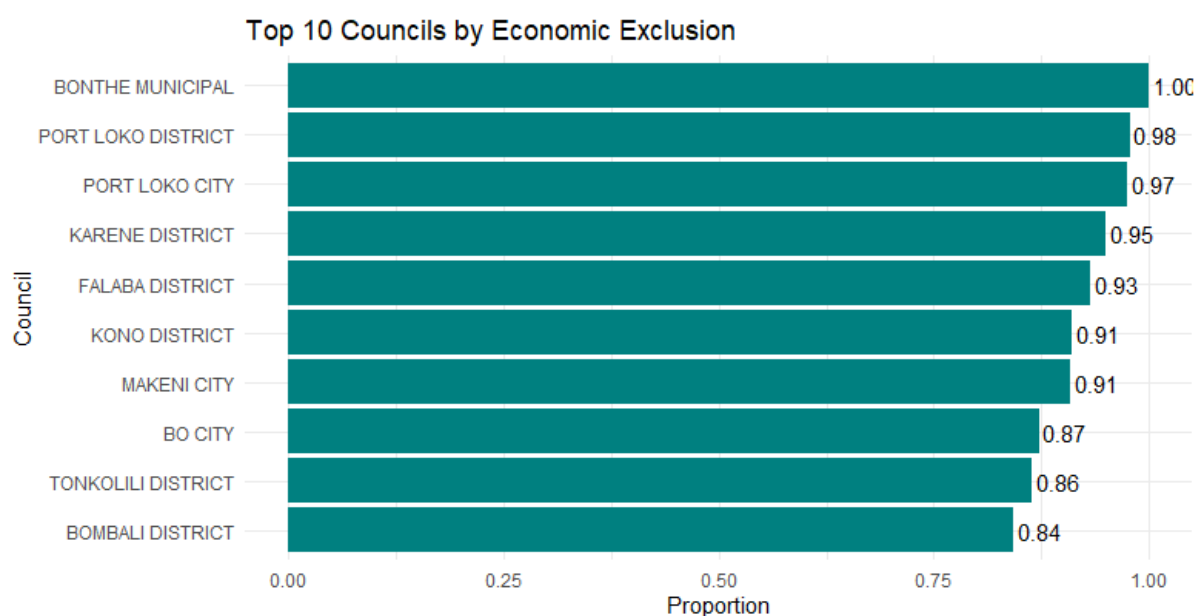
The degree of exclusion in these Northern hotspots stems from where the opportunity costs of a child's time in the local informal labour markets are highest. In Port Loko and Karene, the education system competes with the immediate cash pull of seasonal agriculture. While a child 'working' may be a cultural preference for some families, in many it is a structural need to keep the family income from falling. This poses a situation where the fiscal elasticity of the enrolment is inelastic. Even with free schooling, families do not have the financial means to bear the income loss resulting from a child being in school instead of working in the fields. These are, therefore, the highest priority districts for the extension of social safety net programs, with the need for interventions to go beyond schooling subsidies to cash transfers in order to offset the economic loss of child labour.

On the other hand, the Bonthe (0.45) offers a crucial analytical counterpoint for targeting national policy. Bonthe having the lowest citation rate concerning economic barriers suggests that the exclusion of schools in the coastal and riverine communities results from a more even combination of factors. Here, the barrier can less be attributed to the immediate concern of child wage labour and is more likely related to the physical availability of schooling, such as the long distances referenced in Section 4.4, or local socio-cultural factors. This differentiation is vital for the purpose of planning. While the North is in desperate need of significant funding to address the out-of-school crisis, Bonthe and similar districts require a shift towards supply-side investments. The construction of schools and the improvement of water-based transport to ensure that children can actually reach the classrooms their families are likely able to afford is paramount.

#### 4.3.2 Localized Affordability: Economic Exclusion by Councils

At the Council level, the breakdown of economic barriers makes available the level of detail needed for sub-national resource allocation, as well as the tailoring of localized social protection mechanisms. This method, as shown in Figure 4.3.2, pinpoints particular administrative units where financial barriers are a total barrier to schooling, thus improving the targeting of intervention to the units with the most pressing affordability gaps.

*Figure 4.3.2: Top 10 Councils by Economic Exclusion Severity*



The council-level disaggregation presented in Figure 4.3.2 captures remarkable sub-national variations, especially for given administrative units where economic barriers are absolute for

education. The most notable result is the economic barrier of 1.00 (100%) in Bonthe Municipal, along with almost total barriers in the Port Loko District (0.98) and Port Loko City (0.97). These values suggest that in such localities, the out-of-school children (OOSC) crisis is due solely to the absence of liquidity in the households. For these localities, policymakers should consider this a "saturation point" because, without integrated systems of financial support to cover the affordability gap, traditional supply-side measures (i.e. building schools, hiring more teachers) will have very little impact.

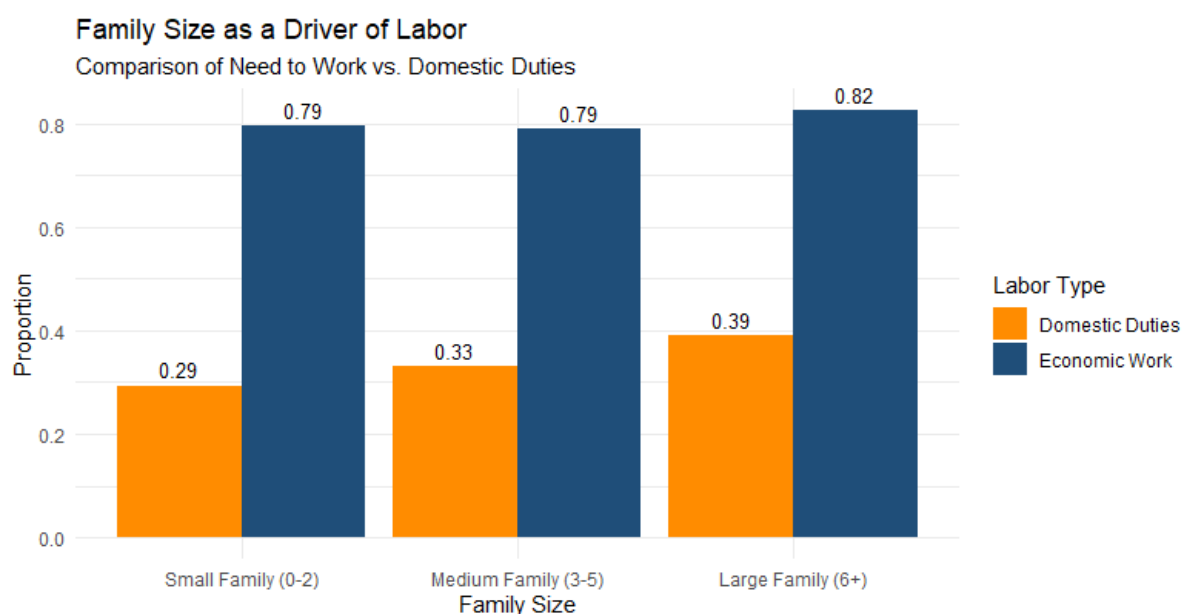
The data further confirms the "Urban Poverty Paradox," where more significant provincial trading hubs have higher rates of economic exclusion than many of their rural counterparts. For example, Makeni City (0.91) and Bo City (0.87) show high severity, despite being served with school infrastructure. This confirms that having a school physically nearby does not mean that a child can be enrolled, or when the household is in survival mode. Urban children, in these specific settings, are often used as informal economic operators because of the high daily costs of urban areas. A child's time is economically more valuable than the cost of (losing out) on education, education's future benefits, and further entrap vulnerable urban children to work immediately in the city to be able to meet subsistence.

The results indicate that school exclusion in Sierra Leone is moving from an infrastructural crisis to an economic crisis at the household level. Financial barriers remain the principal cause of school exclusion for most children in even the most developed area of Sierra Leone, Freetown City, which has an exclusion rate of 0.63. The pinpoint mapping at the council level indicates the need for social protection at the local level. The results from urban centres such as Port Loko and Makeni suggest that school-based interventions should focus on 'opportunity cost offsets' as they aim to free children from the obligations of daily work so that they can attend the schools that are available to them.

#### 4.3.3 The Sibling Penalty: Intra-Household Resource Rationing

One of the main contributions of this report is the recognition of the 'Sibling Penalty'. In Sierra Leonean households, dimensions of the family compel parents at times into what is depicted in the "Resource Rationing" state, as illustrated in Figure 4.3.3.

*Figure 4.3.3: Family Size as a Driver of Market and Domestic Labour*



The data presented in figure 4.3.3 shows the relationship between family size and child labour, indicating a case of “Intra-household Resource Rationing.” The higher the dependency ratio in a family, the more children drop out of school to work. The data shows a slight increase in “Economic Work,” – children working for pay – which is highest in the case of families with six or more children at a probability of 0.82. This means that for Sierra Leone, large families have a critical threshold whereby the financial viability of a family depends on the ‘monetization’ of children’s time, that is, through market work. Economic challenges are significant even for small-sized families (0.79), which means poverty is a baseline barrier. However, the increase to 0.82 in larger families signals a desperate need for multiple working children in families with very high consumption needs.

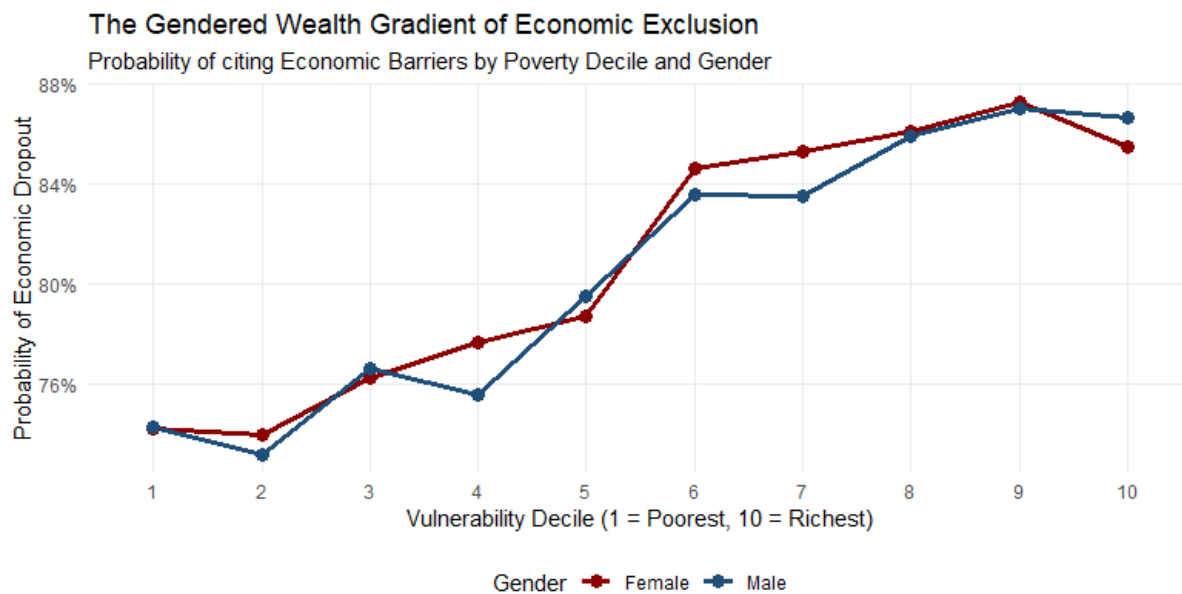
Similar to market-based labour, 'Domestic Burden' also increases as the size of the family increases. While the proportion of children expected to perform domestic tasks and look after younger siblings, do household water collection, and help with the household management - increase from 29% in small families to 39% in large families. This 10-percentage-point difference illustrates a particular 'care-gap' in the context of Sierra Leone; as the number of siblings increases, the internal demand for labour within the household increases, and children are increasingly used as household labourers in order to keep the family structure intact. This is a classic example of the 'Sibling Penalty' phenomenon where children from large families are not merely compelled to participate in monetary income earning activities, but are also

compelled to perform domestic work, thus, several of them are systematically forced out of school.

#### 4.3.4 The Gendered Wealth Gradient and Elasticity

The study examined the Gendered Wealth Gradient of economic exclusion (Figure 4.3.4) utilizing the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) Vulnerability Deciles from Section 3.5.

*Figure 4.3.4: The Gendered Wealth Gradient of Economic Exclusion*



The analysis of data pertaining to socio-economic capacity and school dropouts shows a clear poverty-gender elasticity within educational life cycles of both boys and girls. As households move from extreme to moderated economic vulnerability, there is an identifiable and quantifiable change in referencing financial barriers to the educational process. Specifically, within the most vulnerable decile moving up to any higher economic capacity cohort, there is a reduction in referencing economic barriers to education by 11.3% for girls and 12.4% for boys. However, the most important finding is the exceptionally elevated baseline of economic exclusion. Economic exclusion rates remaining above 74% in the most vulnerable populations signifying that economic constrain is a comprehensive and pervasive inelastic barrier. The prevalent exclusion indicates that the majority of those not in school experience an absence of monetary resources within their households that are insufficient to cover ancillary education-related costs such as uniforms, transportation, learning materials, etc. This barrier is universal, transcending the additional complexities of gender, relative economic position, or wealth.

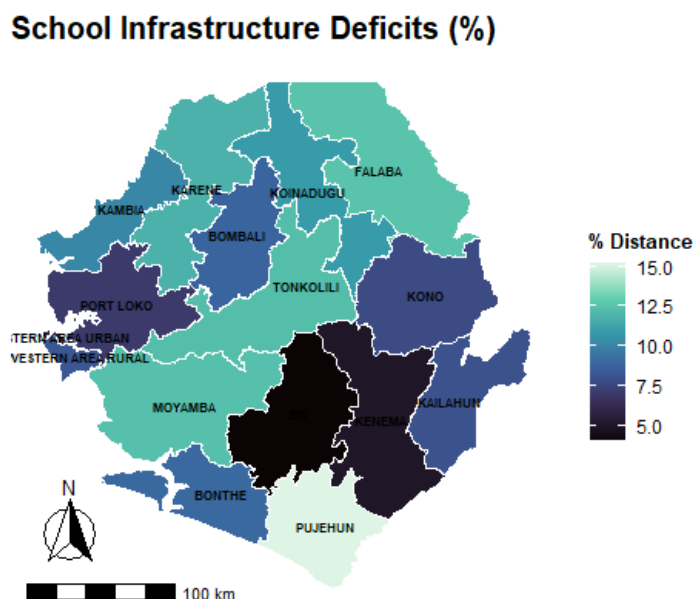
Sierra Leone's context presents many analytical insights, one of the most notable being the “upward trend” apparent in higher vulnerability deciles, as displayed in Figure 4.3.4. It is also interesting to note that the probability of economically based school exclusion increases with household capacity, especially as households reach the upper three deciles. This serves as evidence of another ‘Trade-Pull Effect’ in one of Sierra Leone’s dominant commercial and value-adding trade zones, such as Port Loko and the Western Area. It appears in these relatively ‘wealthier’ deciles that children are in school because the family has moved beyond absolute poverty. Poverty in these families is not an issue. The problem instead is the high opportunity cost of the child's labour. For families involved in family business, petty trade, or farming, the immediate monetary benefit of a child’s active participation in the informal economy is far higher than the perceived long-term, deferred return of a formal education.

#### 4.4 School-related Factors: The Infrastructure and Stability Gap

Besides the economic constraints of households, the distance to available school facilities, along with the routinized tracking of student movement, exemplifies the institutional “Supply-Side Frontier” of educational inclusion in Sierra Leone. While the National Policy on Radical Inclusion provides the necessary legislative framework in support of equity, its operational effectiveness is currently undermined by a still persistent geographic “Access Ceiling” in remote and difficult-to-access locations. This distance barrier operates as a structural exclusionary force especially on younger children and adolescent girls, to whom the risks of long-distance travel become safety and protection concerns. This type of exclusion is compounded by a “Stability Gap” where the unreplaced, non-digitized and non-portable student identity system means that family migration, or seasonal movement, often leads to educational losses that become irreversible. To eliminate these bottlenecks, a paradigm shift is required from aggregate school construction towards a “Feeder School” model, and Education Management Information System (EMIS), which operationalizes a new framework of cross-border learner tracking and administrative boundary shift, so that geographic mobility will not trigger a complete withdrawal from the formal schooling system.

#### 4.4.1 Geographic Mapping of the Infrastructure Deficit

*Map 4.4.1: School Infrastructure Deficits (%)*



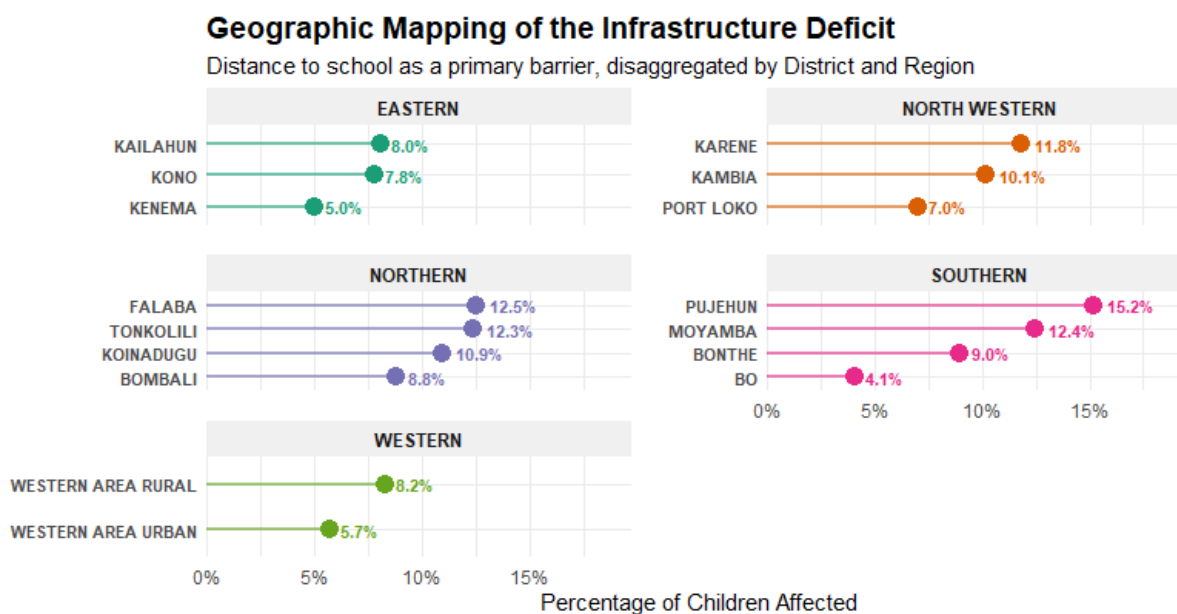
Map 4.4.1 offers an important supply-side spatial analysis, identifying specific "Infrastructure Gaps" wherein the main structural barrier to school enrolment is the physical distance to the nearest classroom. This map helps to differentiate between cash barrier regions and those with an absolute absence of situated service delivery. The data illustrates a clear "Access Corridor" with systemic infrastructure deficits in the Southern and Northern provinces, with Pujehun (15.2%) as shown in Figure 4.4.1 below, being the national nucleus of physical exclusion, accompanied by Moyamba, Falaba, and Tonkolili (all indicated by the bright teal gradients). In these neglected educational corridors, school exclusion is, without a doubt, a consequence of poverty, but more importantly, it is the result of geographic and spatial isolation. The distance to the nearest government school is often beyond the defensible walking distance to school of young grade school children and adolescent girls, for whom the additional risks posed by long distances become severe. In contrast, the low distance barriers apparent in Bo (4.1%) and Western Area Urban (5.7%) demonstrate a high degree of educational asset centralization, where supply of classroom space has sufficiently met demand.

MBSSE and its partners (for example, GPE), Map 4.4.1 serves as a building plan. It shows the areas with the most intense "access gaps" where the building of "Feeder Schools" or satellite classrooms is an imperative that should be fulfilled in order to close the enrolment gaps and, as such, to ensure that no child is left out of the Free Quality School Education (FQSE) initiative due to distance to a school.

#### 4.4.1.1 Geographic Mapping of the Infrastructure Deficit

Figure 4.4.1. demonstrates the unequal distribution of school infrastructure, which creates systematic deficit zones in the Southern and Northern provinces.

*Figure 4.4.1 Geographic Mapping of the Infrastructure Deficit (Faceted by Region)*



The spatial analysis concerning Sierra Leone's infrastructural gap portrayed in Figure 4.4.1 showcases the unequal distribution of educational opportunities in the country. The data analysis identifies the so-called "Priority Corridor" where distance to school functions as an enrolment barrier, resulting in physical school exclusion rates of over 12 percent. The systemic deficit of educational infrastructure in Pujehun (15.2 percent), Falaba (12.5 percent), and Moyamba (12.4 percent), is most pronounced. In these districts, a substantial number of children report distance as the reason for school non-attendance, suggesting that there are insufficient schools to match the area's population distribution. Consequently, these districts created for themselves spatial pockets of physical exclusion that cannot be resolved by standard enrolment campaigns.

The negative impact on communities indicates that a considerable number are possibly functioning outside the viable catchment area of government-supported schools. Young children in these remote areas face significant barriers to school access due to the long daily journeys and the physical and safety risks that these communities face. While Western Area Urban and well-serviced districts such as Bo (4.1%) and Kenema (5.0%) have mostly addressed the supply-side issue, the substantial double-digit figures from most of the Northern and

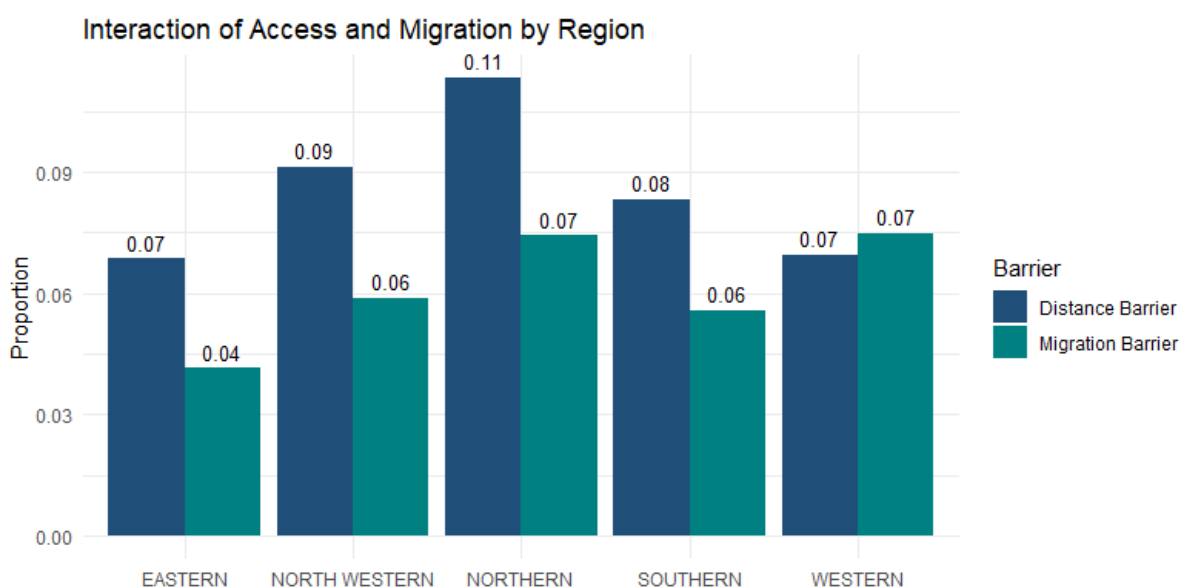
Southern provinces point to a significant case for local, evidence-based school mapping. In these neglected educational corridors, the absence of a classroom that children can reach within a reasonable walking distance remains the most significant cause of the population that is out of school.

Addressing these high intensity access requires a shift in the focus of infrastructural investments as required by the School Infrastructure and Catchment Area Planning Policy (SICAP). In Pujehun, Falaba, and Moyamba, remote chiefdoms, infrastructural investments should focus on the creation of satellite or community-based classroom facilities, or “Class 1-3” units. With these hubs of early grade learning introduced, the government could guarantee that the youngest learners would be within the internationally recognized threshold of a 3km walk. To close the infrastructure gap, this supply-side initiative is critical to ensuring that the right to an education is not contingent upon a child’s location.

#### 4.4.2 Interaction of Access and Migration

In addition to the barriers created by physical distance, the Sierra Leonean population's high mobility creates systemic disruptions. While Figure 4.4.2 contrasts barriers created by Distance (Infrastructure) with Migration (Residential relocation), it describes a case of “continuity crisis,” where mobility of households leads to loss of education, attributable to the lack of mechanisms that enable flexible or portable enrolments across administrative borders.

*Figure 4.4.2: Interaction of Access and Migration by Region*



Data from the spatial analysis of the Northern Region designates this area as the national centre for geographic exclusion. In Northern Region, highly mobile populations and poorly developed fixed infrastructures cause the greatest risk of education loss. At 11%, Northern Region maintains the highest distance-related exclusion rate in the country. Northern Region's dispersed rural settlement patterns, and difficult geography create significant supply-side barriers. In these rural areas, the absence of local classrooms is not an inconvenience, but a complete barrier that keeps children from regular attendance and discourages them from entering the formal education system.

A migration rate of 7% identifies and predicts this physical barrier for a unique and vulnerable group referred to as "Children on the Move." Within the Northern context, relocations of households are often out of choice, resulting from the agricultural cycles, food scarcity, or economic survival in the informal zones. When families migrate from one deprived area to another, the absence of a school in the new location often serves as a trigger for permanent dropout. Because of the deficiency of schooling apparatus, a relocating child may discover that their new community has an "Access Gap" that is far more severe than that of their previous one, effectively terminating their schooling during the move.

In light of this, there is a noteworthy "Stability Gap" within the national education system. In the case of "Children on the Move," the system's inability to monitor and assist learners who cross administrative boundaries means that changed locations lead to the complete loss of an academic identity. National policy, in this case, must not merely involve constructing additional schools. This is a high-risk group, and while more classrooms are certainly needed to close the 11% distance gap, the Ministry must also provide opportunities for portable enrolment and a digital student registry. The only way to ensure that a child's education continues after a period of seasonal or economic migration is by keeping their educational records and enrolment status portable.

## 5. Conclusion



### 5.1. Introduction

This study provides the most comprehensive and accurate picture to date of out-of-school children in Sierra Leone. It reveals that exclusion is driven by a complex interplay of economic hardship, socio-cultural norms, disability, geographic isolation, and systemic gaps in school infrastructure and learner tracking. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated, data-driven approach that combines social protection, targeted infrastructure investment, inclusive education, and strengthened governance systems. With the right policies and investments, Sierra Leone can significantly reduce the number of out-of-school children and advance its commitment to leaving no child behind.

The results demonstrate that, in the post-FQSE period, the challenges regarding school exclusion appear to be interrelated and multifaceted. Although the elimination of school fees has been an important achievement, the school remains closed due to the Sibling Penalty, the Adolescent Spike, the disengagement of children, and the costly child labour issues. In addition to the economic and socio-cultural challenges, the geographical isolation and the absence of

adequate and disability-inclusive child infrastructure create structural 'Access Ceilings' in the remote areas that require more than financial aid.

Moving forward, Sierra Leone will need to integrate social protection with enhanced education governance to formulate a structured and coherent response to these challenges. Sierra Leone can effectively close the policy-practice gap through the integration of innovative measures, such as digital learner tracking, implementing a feeder school model in remote areas, and cash transfers to reduce opportunity costs. This study aspires to facilitate systemic changes to realize the promise of Radical Inclusion, along with fulfilling Sierra Leone's commitment to the global education agenda and to leaving no child behind.

## 5.2. Key profiles and barriers

The findings show that the out-of-school crisis in Sierra Leone is not a singular issue; instead, it is a collection of localised, structural, and demographic challenges. The data highlights five major profiles and barriers that frame the landscape of educational exclusion.

- **The Gendered Demographic Shift and Male Disadvantage:** The findings are rather surprising given the demographic shifts that are being recorded. For the first time, boys comprise the majority (53%) of the out-of-school children. This illustrates that the significantly strengthened gender-parity policies and the “Radical Inclusion” strategy, which are aimed at increasing the enrolment of the girl child, have succeeded in doing so, but in the process, have caused boys to become increasingly vulnerable to the “trade-pull effect” of the informal labour market. In the urban centres and the mining regions, boys are 36% more likely than girls to claim that there is “no interest” in schooling; this position is often driven by the prevailing economic opportunities that petty trading, farming, and manual labour (which) are rather readily available, and are more attractive than the perceived long-term benefits of formal education.
- **The Adolescent Spike and the Relevance Crisis:** From a primary to junior secondary age (11–14 years), a critical ‘fracture point’ is identified. During this phase, the ‘lack of interest’ barrier increases from 6.7% in Dimension 2 to 12.0% in Dimension 3. This highlights a deep ‘relevance crisis’ in which the adolescent learners, especially those who started school late, begin to consider the opportunity cost of their time. For a significant number of learners, the formal curriculum seems irrelevant to their socio-economic context. The aforementioned transition is compounded by ‘hard exit points’

like teenage pregnancy (1.6% among DE3) and customary initiation rites, which often represent a definitive shift to a quasi-permanent exit from ‘student’ to ‘adult’.

- **The Economic Ceiling and the Sibling Penalty:** Even though the FQSE program has successfully eliminated tuition fees, economic barriers to inclusion are still present and are cited by 80% of OOSC caregivers as the main reasons for exclusion. The study describes a ‘Sibling Penalty’ in the context of large families (6 and more children) where households experience what would be termed as ‘intra-household resource rationing’. In such situations, the ‘liquidity buffer’ is so small that parents must monetise their children’s time to survive as a family. This creates a high reliance on child labour, whereby children are reduced to economic units that are exploited for productive activities in the market or for care work in the household. Even educational services that are ostensibly ‘free’ are unavailable because of the hidden costs such as school uniforms and learning materials that parents cannot afford, and the income that would be lost to work if children were not involved in household tasks.
- **Geographic Isolation and the Physical Access Ceiling:** In district such as Pujehun (15.2%), Falaba (12.5%), and Moyamba (12.4%), the barriers are not just economic, but also physical. These areas are the most affected by what can be called an "infrastructure deficit corridor" as the distances to the nearest government schools exceed the distance children (and especially adolescent girls) can be expected to walk. In these areas of extreme geographic isolation, schools are not merely unreachable: the risks of travel (exhaustion, protection risks) outbalance the incentives to attend. Outreach and sensitization interventions are unlikely to result in significant improvements in these districts, and there is an urgent need to construct satellite “Feeder Schools” to shorten the distance to schools.
- **The “Double Burden” of Intersectionality and Disability:** The exclusion of children with functional disabilities is most profound among those within the bottom 20% of the economic wealth spectrum. The “Double Burden” is most acute in the case of Falaba, Bombali and Kenema. These children experience multiple obstacles, including the absence of assistive devices (braille, hearing aids, etc.), exclusionary WASH facilities, and insufficient numbers of inclusive pedagogy trained teachers. For this group of children, exclusion is often total and permanent. This calls for “Radical Inclusion” in the sense that there is a need to move from policy rhetoric to the strategic prioritization of specialized resources in high prevalence districts.

### 5.3. Data on OOS children

This study signifies a historical achievement in the education sector in Sierra Leone, moving for the first time from theoretical, sample-based forecasting to a definitive countrywide child-level enumeration of 108,144 records. For the first time, the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) has a child-level database that is not an estimation, thereby providing a detailed account of exclusion for each of the 16 districts. Such a transformation in data collection techniques enhances the use of the Five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE) in a more sophisticated manner to provide empirically grounded answers to the questions not just of who is out of school, but of where and why the education system is failing.

The 5DE analysis shows that in Sierra Leone, school exclusion tends to be a multi-stage phenomenon that begins long before a child formally drops out of school. Data shows that exclusion is often the result of entry delay (Dimension 2) since many children do not start primary school by the official age of six. Starting school late causes a “ripple effect”, whereby learners become over-age for their grade (Dimension 4). Over-age students are then at a much higher risk of dropping out especially as they approach adolescence, and economic activities become prioritized over a primary education that no longer corresponds to their developmental level.

Moreover, high levels of internal migration have resulted in what the figures identify as a significant 'Stability Gap' in the national education system. A sizable 7% of the population of children out of school can be considered 'children on the move', in that they tend to lose touch with the formal education system and the associated schooling when they move house. Given that student records are largely still on paper and non-portable, moving from a rural farming community to an urban trading centre typically means an everlasting academic loss. A digital tracking system is absent, so when a student moves, they are usually considered to be new entrants to the system, or, in most cases, they do not re-enrol, and as a consequence, their entire educational history is lost.

Integrating the data into the National Education Management Information System (EMIS) will safeguard the findings and ensure they will bring about enduring positive structural changes. Through the institutionalization of this child-level enumeration, the Ministry will be able to move to a system of real time learner tracking. Digital integration of the data will facilitate the tracking of at-risk children across administrative borders so that a child's right to education is not interrupted by a change of location. Ultimately, this data constitutes the baseline to change

the EMIS for Sierra Leone's most marginalized learners from a passive record keeping system to an active, protective system.

### 5.3. Policy recommendations and the way forward

#### 5.3.1. Recommendations and opportunities

To achieve transformative results based on the findings of this study, the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) and its partners must focus on the following strategic interventions:

- **Social Protection, Targeted Cash Transfers, and the Opportunity Cost Offset:** Because household insolvency continues to be the primary driver for 80% of children excluded from school, the government needs to go beyond the removal of tuition fees to address the “hidden costs of schooling”. This entails the provision of weighted cash transfers in the so-called “economic hotspots” of Port Loko, Karene, and Falaba. These transfers should not merely aim at poverty alleviation but should function as an “opportunity cost offset” to the ultra-poor by alleviating the economic costs of losing a child to work. By providing a cash buffer, the state can counter the so-called “Sibling Penalty” and empower parents, especially in large families, to focus on schooling rather than the immediate economic contributions of the child to the household through market or home-based work.
- **Feasible Incorporation of Remote Access Feeder School Model:** In addressing the physical "Access Ceiling" that is evident in the Southern and Northern provinces, MBSSE should apply the Feeder School Model. In Pujehun and Moyamba, where distance is a definitive barrier, the emphasis should change from constructing large, centralized secondary schools, to building small, decentralized secondary schools, and then scaling down further to the establishment of mini satellite secondary schools, or “Class 1-3” hubs, in peripheral marginal chiefdoms. This also means that the youngest and most vulnerable learners, who are most likely to experience delayed entry (Dimension 2), will be able to receive instruction within the 3km radius, internationally recognized as the safe distance for learners to walk. This will mitigate the risks and fatigue associated with long walks.
- **Digital Learner Tracking and the Portable Student ID:** As part of addressing the “Stability Gap” brought on by high internal migration, the Ministry of Education in Sierra Leone needs to implement a national digital learner tracking system at the

national level and assign portable IDs to children. This strategy would help to address the issue of “children on the move” (7%) and help to avoid the “academic breaks” that can occur on the move. With digital IDs, academic records and other enrolment information can easily be transferred across district borders. This would ensure that children do not lose their educational history due to the bureaucratic practices of the past. By incorporating this learner tracking system into existing frameworks of the Education Management Information System (EMIS), it will be transformed from a passive system that only takes a snapshot of the population to an active protective system for the mobile populations.

- **Vocational Integration and Curriculum Relevance for Adolescents:** As part of efforts addressing the ‘Adolescent Spike’ in disengagement and ‘relevance crisis’ for 12–14 year olds (DE3), the Junior Secondary School (JSS) curriculum needs to place greater emphasis on practical value. The Ministry should integrate pre-vocational, skill-based modules, including but not limited to, digital literacy, sustainable agriculture, and technical trades within the formal academic cycle. This is especially critical for higher wealth decile households who currently perceive formal education as a speculative investment in comparison to the informal economy. Making school a ‘viable economic alternative’ will help retain boys who are likely to quit school for work and girls who are likely to drop out due to early pregnancy.
- **Inclusive Infrastructure and the "Double Burden" Mandate:** Operationalization of the National Policy on Radical Inclusion involves the need for further concrete initiatives that address the “Double Burden” of poverty and disability in the most affected areas of the country, specifically, Falaba and Bombali. Such initiatives should be holistic and extend beyond the mere granting of basic physical access. There should be constructively deliberate efforts to equip and retrain teachers on inclusive pedagogy, employ assistive devices (e.g., braille kits and hearing aids) and construct WASH facilities that are disability-inclusive in their architecture. The deliberate provision of these resources in high burden locations should enable the most disadvantaged and marginalized children to be enrolled, and to have the opportunity to learn.

### 5.3.2 Next Steps

The findings from this report recommends that the project delivers on the undermentioned activities to enhance access to education for the enumerated OOSC (108,144) of which 3,937 children with disabilities should benefit as prescribed in the project compendium.

***Activity 1***

The District Management Team (DMT) should engage the wider communities (with specific reference to parents/guardians) purposefully to enrol OOSC in their respective communities. The DMT should lobby chiefs and other local authorities to institute community by-laws and sanction defaulters who may fail to enrol their children at accelerated learning centre (See Annex 2 for Programme Intervention Distribution OOSC and ALC).

***Activity 2***

The project team through DLOs will seek the service of the District Health Management Team (DHMT) to conduct medical assessment to determine the degree of disabilities of the OOSC with disability enumerated. Findings of these assessments should help the project team to provide appropriate assistive devices to those children.

***Activity 3***

The ALCs (either at a school or community facility) should be identified and commence learning. In communities where ALC does not exist and there is an appreciable number of OOSC, the DLO under the technical guidance of NFE Director and in consultation with the community leaders should earmark a temporary accelerated learning centre to facilitate learning for OOSC in those communities.

***Activity 4***

MBSSE in collaboration with the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) should follow established procedure in facilitator vetting and selection. The TSC teacher training programs ensure that all facilitators apply and then shortlisted and eventually hired for delivery of content in the curricula for OOSC

***Activity 5***

Scale up efforts to reach more communities and register possible remnant OOSC across the country. DMTs and other pertinent stakeholders should enhance enrolment and attendance of OOSC in the designated communities. Furthermore, relevant structures to adequately manage individualised cases as well as embark on home visits as additional case management support.

***Activity 6***

MBSSE data team should set up database of learners who are ready to be transitioned to primary school and from time to time review their various databases to determine learners who are ready to be transitioned to primary schools and support them accordingly.

MBSSE should establish and maintain contacts with primary schools at which the OOSC have been enrolled and monitor those schools where the children have transitioned to determine their progress.

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## Annex 1: Distribution of OOSC by Chiefdom and Demographic Profile

District	Total	Age Category			Gender	
<i>Chiefdom</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>7-11 years</i>	<i>12-14 years</i>	<i>15 years</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
<b>Bo</b>	<b>10,286</b>	<b>6,145</b>	<b>4,141</b>		<b>4,705</b>	<b>5,581</b>
Badjia	36	30	6		23	13
Bagbo	621	376	245		142	479
Bagbwe(Bagbe)	226	154	72		53	173
Bo Town	1,237	843	394		692	545
Boama	577	340	237		297	280
Bongor	665	415	250		271	394
Bumpe Ngao	1,007	634	373		371	636
Gbo	562	293	269		278	284
Jaiama	348	267	81		153	195
Kakua	1,686	857	829		937	749
Komboya	301	209	92		143	158
Lugbu	340	230	110		159	181
Niawa Lenga	441	234	207		145	296
Selenga	154	83	71		62	92
Tikonko	1,592	994	598		791	801
Valunia	190	110	80		68	122
Wonde	303	76	227		120	183
<b>Bombali</b>	<b>4,908</b>	<b>3,360</b>	<b>1,548</b>		<b>2,267</b>	<b>2,641</b>
Biriwa	325	207	118		128	197
Bombali Seborá	429	287	142		233	196
Bombali Siari	79	32	47		22	57
Gbanti	516	333	183		244	272
Gbendembu	317	176	141		146	171
Kamaranka	866	864	2		368	498
Magbaimba Ndorwahun	413	296	117		191	222
Makari	275	167	108		137	138
Makeni City	204	135	69		96	108
Mara	553	336	217		248	305
N'gowahun	135	68	67		54	81
Paki Masabong	670	389	281		344	326
Safroko Limba	126	70	56		56	70
<b>Bonthe</b>	<b>3,461</b>	<b>2,224</b>	<b>1,237</b>		<b>1,084</b>	<b>2,377</b>
Bendu-Cha	236	179	57		90	146
Bonthe Urban	44	33	11		26	18
Bum	623	449	174		143	480
Dema	249	176	73		112	137
Imperri	416	226	190		106	310
Jong	399	227	172		135	264
Kpanda Kemo	147	83	64		31	116
Kwamebai Krim	503	343	160		137	366
Nongoba Bullom	195	139	56		52	143
Sittia	317	148	169		158	159

District	Total	Age Category			Gender	
<i>Chiefdom</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>7-11 years</i>	<i>12-14 years</i>	<i>15 years</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
Sogbeni	129	80	49		46	83
Yawbeko	203	141	62		48	155
<b>Falaba</b>	<b>2,203</b>	<b>1,395</b>	<b>808</b>		<b>1,125</b>	<b>1,078</b>
Delemandugu	222	194	28		124	98
Dembelia	113	56	57		40	73
Dembelia Sinkunia	122	78	44		60	62
Folosaba Kamba	97	67	30		49	48
Kamadugu Yiraia	175	133	42		91	84
Kebelia	97	52	45		42	55
Mongo	323	159	164		179	144
Morifindugu	320	163	157		162	158
Neya	199	129	70		107	92
Nyedu	245	185	60		116	129
Sulima	57	21	36		27	30
Wollay Barawa	233	158	75		128	105
<b>Kailahun</b>	<b>7,565</b>	<b>3,628</b>	<b>3,937</b>		<b>3,348</b>	<b>4,217</b>
Dea	315	110	205		144	171
Jahn	51	25	26		19	32
Jawie	381	131	250		186	195
Kissi Kama	831	300	531		402	429
Kissi Teng	412	150	262		174	238
Kissi Tongi	420	108	312		176	244
Kpeje Bongre	341	55	286		174	167
Kpeje West	706	386	320		318	388
Luawa	1,263	630	633		515	748
Malema	429	197	232		194	235
Mandu	255	185	70		92	163
Njaluahun	813	490	323		336	477
Penguia	319	89	230		157	162
Upper Bambara	613	437	176		248	365
Yawei	416	335	81		213	203
<b>Kambia</b>	<b>5,009</b>	<b>3,487</b>	<b>1,522</b>		<b>2,557</b>	<b>2,452</b>
Bramaia	260	179	81		132	128
Dixon	205	180	25		112	93
Gbinle	1,300	1,001	299		656	644
Khonimaka	31	21	10		13	18
Magbema	1,474	864	610		808	666
Mambolo	541	351	190		247	294
Masungbala	364	273	91		185	179
Munu Thalla	310	207	103		159	151
Samu	265	225	40		123	142
Tonko Limba	259	186	73		122	137
<b>Karene</b>	<b>4,600</b>	<b>3,359</b>	<b>1,241</b>		<b>2,015</b>	<b>2,585</b>
Buya	234	161	73		84	150
Dibia	109	56	53		48	61

District	Total	Age Category			Gender	
<i>Chiefdom</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>7-11 years</i>	<i>12-14 years</i>	<i>15 years</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
Gbanti	96	1	95		53	43
Libeisyagahun/Gbombahun	206	107	99		110	96
Mafonda Makerembay	147	115	32		43	104
Romende	387	308	79		153	234
Safroko	211	134	77		98	113
Sanda Loko	123	15	108		33	90
Sanda Magbolontor	104	63	41		49	55
Sanda Tendaran	301	210	91		137	164
Sella Limba	1,520	1,398	122		640	880
Tambakha Simibungie	239	140	99		137	102
Tambakha Yobangie	923	651	272		430	493
<b>Kenema</b>	<b>10,859</b>	<b>6,437</b>	<b>4,422</b>		<b>5,038</b>	<b>5,821</b>
Dama	581	248	333		355	226
Dodo	512	316	196		270	242
Gaura	461	296	165		184	277
Gorama Mende	997	676	321		470	527
Kandu Leppiama	493	373	120		243	250
Kenema City	2,574	1,229	1,345		1,300	1,274
Koya	490	331	159		251	239
Langrama	243	173	70		121	122
Lower Bambara	387	256	131		158	229
Malegohun	498	298	200		271	227
Niawa	259	139	120		37	222
Nomo	190	130	60		68	122
Nongowa	1,534	876	658		729	805
Simbaru	492	319	173		202	290
Small Bo	391	253	138		155	236
Tunkia	504	361	143		90	414
Wandor	253	163	90		134	119
<b>Koinadugu</b>	<b>2,439</b>	<b>1,712</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1,163</b>	<b>1,276</b>
Diang	243	160	83		129	114
Gbonkobon Kayaka	216	158	58		109	107
Kalian	126	78	48		71	55
Kamukeh	124	97	27		63	61
Kasunko Kakellian	480	387	93		203	277
Nieni	154	142	12		60	94
Sengbe	374	271	103		173	201
Tamiso	172	59	113		87	85
Wara Wara Bafodia	197	144	52	1	97	100
Wara Wara Yagala	353	216	137		171	182
<b>Kono</b>	<b>9,093</b>	<b>6,552</b>	<b>2,541</b>		<b>4,697</b>	<b>4,396</b>
Fiama	338	256	82		185	153
Gbane	139	114	25		82	57
Gbane Kandor	148	95	53		86	62
Gbense	2,077	1,454	623		1,103	974

District	Total	Age Category			Gender	
<i>Chiefdom</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>7-11 years</i>	<i>12-14 years</i>	<i>15 years</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
Gorama Kono	113	41	72		52	61
Kamara	131	96	35		59	72
Koidu City	1,256	900	356		631	625
Lei	470	278	192		204	266
Mafindor	350	272	78		179	171
Nimikoro	764	427	337		393	371
Nimiyama	357	216	141		179	178
Sandor	590	514	76		324	266
Soa	464	350	114		233	231
Tankoro	1,582	1,275	307		829	753
Toli	314	264	50		158	156
<b>Moyamba</b>	<b>4,528</b>	<b>2,826</b>	<b>1,702</b>		<b>1,902</b>	<b>2,626</b>
Bagruwa	598	366	232		179	419
Bumpeh	227	160	67		80	147
Dasse	40	31	9		17	23
Fakunya	752	492	260		355	397
Kagboro	519	367	152		180	339
Kaiyamba	592	335	257		282	310
Kamajei	57	19	38		35	22
Kongbora	322	185	137		132	190
Kori	72	24	48		36	36
Kowa	126	24	102		79	47
Lower Banta	146	109	37		75	71
Ribbi	547	320	227		243	304
Timdale	472	349	123		178	294
Upper Banta	58	45	13		31	27
<b>Port Loko</b>	<b>6,791</b>	<b>4,255</b>	<b>2,536</b>		<b>3,096</b>	<b>3,695</b>
Bakeh Loko	952	519	433		427	525
Bureh	174	123	51		93	81
Kaffu Bullom	295	168	127		142	153
Kamasondo	681	410	271		283	398
Kasseh	486	328	158		154	332
Koya	986	658	328		501	485
Lokomasama	218	151	67		90	128
Maconteh	881	561	320		409	472
Maforki	891	479	412		436	455
Makama	159	108	51		75	84
Marampa	537	392	145		273	264
Masimera	513	346	167		209	304
Thainkatopa	18	12	6		4	14
<b>Pujehun</b>	<b>4,817</b>	<b>3,403</b>	<b>1,414</b>		<b>1,995</b>	<b>2,822</b>
Barri	230	154	76		126	104
Galliness	229	168	61		34	195
Kabonde	212	162	50		80	132
Kpaka	445	302	143		212	233

District	Total	Age Category			Gender	
<i>Chiefdom</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>7-11 years</i>	<i>12-14 years</i>	<i>15 years</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
Makpele	343	239	104		162	181
Malen	307	233	74		138	169
Mono Sakrim	447	322	125		175	272
Panga	363	232	131		204	159
Panga Krim	377	225	152		146	231
Pejeh (Futa Peje)	372	227	145		140	232
Perri	368	254	114		138	230
Soro Gbema	439	338	101		151	288
Sowa	234	193	41		78	156
Yakemu Kpukumu	451	354	97		211	240
<b>Tonkolili</b>	<b>9,080</b>	<b>5,305</b>	<b>3,775</b>		<b>4,104</b>	<b>4,976</b>
Dansogoia	116	81	35		55	61
Gbonkolenkeni/Masankong	345	115	230		171	174
Kafe	124	83	41		59	65
Kalanthuba	278	206	72		112	166
Kholifa Mabang	475	162	313		219	256
Kholifa Mamuntha/Mayosso	148	117	31		51	97
Kholifa Rowala	1,208	641	567		571	637
Kunike Barina	730	565	165		356	374
Kunike Folawusu	220	88	132		95	125
Kunike Sanda	389	201	188		173	216
Mayeppoh	809	537	272		329	480
Poli	162	81	81		74	88
Sambaya	177	151	26		96	81
Simiria	741	456	285		351	390
Tane	1,208	744	464		565	643
Yele	504	321	183		233	271
Yoni Mabanta	391	174	217		142	249
Yoni Mamaila	1,055	582	473		452	603
<b>Western Area Rural</b>	<b>10,285</b>	<b>7,116</b>	<b>3,169</b>		<b>5,151</b>	<b>5,134</b>
Koya Rural	1,493	988	505		723	770
Mountain Rural	861	595	266		412	449
Waterloo Rural	6,215	4,360	1,855		3,167	3,048
York Rural	1,716	1,173	543		849	867
<b>Western Area Urban</b>	<b>12,220</b>	<b>7,468</b>	<b>4,752</b>		<b>6,117</b>	<b>6,103</b>
Central I	818	500	318		366	452
Central II	550	349	201		255	295
East I	943	676	267		518	425
East II	1,975	1,232	743		993	982
East III	5,079	3,078	2,001		2,612	2,467
West I	376	231	145		184	192
West II	1,014	613	401		495	519
West III	1,465	789	676		694	771
<b>National</b>	<b>108,144</b>	<b>68,672</b>	<b>39,471</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>50,364</b>	<b>57,780</b>

## Annex 2: Proposed Programming Distribution of ALCs and Facilitators by Chiefdom

Chiefdom	OOSC	OOSC with Disability	Proposed ALCs	Current ALCs	ALC Variance	Proposed Facilitators
Badjia	36	0	1		1	1
Bagbo	621	3	12		12	12
Bagbwe(Bagbe)	226	6	5		5	5
Bo Town	1,237	7	25		25	25
Boama	577	49	12		12	12
Bongor	665	9	13		13	13
Bumpe Ngao	1,007	7	20		20	20
Gbo	562	18	11		11	11
Jaiama	348	1	7		7	7
Kakua	1,686	44	34		34	34
Komboya	301	0	6		6	6
Lugbu	340	20	7		7	7
Niawa Lenga	441	8	9		9	9
Selenga	154	14	3		3	3
Tikonko	1,592	27	32		32	32
Valunia	190	1	4		4	4
Wonde	303	10	6		6	6
<b>Bo</b>	<b>10,286</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>206</b>		<b>206</b>	<b>206</b>
Biriwa	325	5	7		7	7
Bombali Seborá	429	5	9		9	9
Bombali Siari	79	160	2		2	2
Gbanti	516	6	10		10	10
Gbendembu	317	14	6		6	6
Kamaranka	866	0	17		17	17
Magbaimba Ndorwahun	413	3	8		8	8
Makari	275	12	6		6	6
Makeni City	204	3	4		4	4
Mara	553	3	11		11	11
N'gowahun	135	5	3		3	3
Paki Masabong	670	87	13		13	13
Safroko Limba	126	15	3		3	3
<b>Bombali</b>	<b>4,908</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>98</b>		<b>98</b>	<b>98</b>
Bendu-Cha	236	3	5		5	5
Bonthe Urban	44	0	1		1	1
Bum	623	10	12		12	12
Dema	249	0	5		5	5
Imperri	416	29	8		8	8
Jong	399	7	8		8	8
Kpanda Kemo	147	12	3		3	3
Kwamebai Krim	503	12	10		10	10
Nongoba Bullom	195	0	4		4	4
Sittia	317	0	6		6	6
Sogbeni	129	4	3		3	3

Chiefdom	OOSC	OOSC with Disability	Proposed ALCs	Current ALCs	ALC Variance	Proposed Facilitators
Yawbeko	203	0	4		4	4
<b>Bonthe</b>	<b>3,461</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>69</b>		<b>69</b>	<b>69</b>
Delemadugu	222	0	4		4	4
Dembelia	113	0	2		2	2
Dembelia Sinkunia	122	2	2		2	2
Folosaba Kamba	97	0	2		2	2
Kamadugu Yiraia	175	4	4		4	4
Kebelia	97	1	2		2	2
Mongo	323	35	6		6	6
Morifindugu	320	1	6		6	6
Neya	199	0	4		4	4
Nyedu	245	1	5		5	5
Sulima	57	2	1		1	1
Wollay Barawa	233	183	5		5	5
<b>Falaba</b>	<b>2,203</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>44</b>		<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>
Dea	315	2	6		6	6
Jahn	51	1	1		1	1
Jawie	381	103	8		8	8
Kissi Kama	831	3	17		17	17
Kissi Teng	412	1	8		8	8
Kissi Tongi	420	0	8		8	8
Kpeje Bongre	341	5	7		7	7
Kpeje West	706	15	14		14	14
Luawa	1,263	24	25		25	25
Malema	429	9	9		9	9
Mandu	255	6	5		5	5
Njaluahun	813	8	16		16	16
Penguia	319	8	6		6	6
Upper Bambara	613	52	12		12	12
Yawei	416	2	8		8	8
<b>Kailahun</b>	<b>7,565</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>151</b>		<b>151</b>	<b>151</b>
Bramaia	260	0	5		5	5
Dixon	205	0	4		4	4
Gbinle	1,300	12	26		26	26
Khonimaka	31	0	1		1	1
Magbema	1,474	10	29		29	29
Mambolo	541	8	11		11	11
Masungbala	364	0	7		7	7
Munu Thalla	310	107	6		6	6
Samu	265	0	5		5	5
Tonko Limba	259	0	5		5	5
<b>Kambia</b>	<b>5,009</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Buya	234	1	5		5	5
Dibia	109	0	2		2	2
Gbanti	96	0	2		2	2

Chiefdom	OOSC	OOSC with Disability	Proposed ALCs	Current ALCs	ALC Variance	Proposed Facilitators
Libesaygahun/Gbombahun	206	3	4		4	4
Mafonda Makerembay	147	1	3		3	3
Romende	387	11	8		8	8
Safroko	211	1	4		4	4
Sanda Loko	123	0	2		2	2
Sanda Magbolontor	104	0	2		2	2
Sanda Tendaran	301	8	6		6	6
Sella Limba	1,520	7	30		30	30
Tambakha Simibungie	239	1	5		5	5
Tambakha Yobangie	923	1	18		18	18
<b>Karene</b>	<b>4,600</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>92</b>		<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>
Dama	581	7	12		12	12
Dodo	512	1	10		10	10
Gaura	461	1	9		9	9
Gorama Mende	997	22	20		20	20
Kandu Leppiama	493	75	10		10	10
Kenema City	2,574	227	51		51	51
Koya	490	9	10		10	10
Langrama	243	3	5		5	5
Lower Bambara	387	7	8		8	8
Malegohun	498	1	10		10	10
Niawa	259	0	5		5	5
Nomo	190	11	4		4	4
Nongowa	1,534	183	31		31	31
Simbaru	492	12	10		10	10
Small Bo	391	2	8		8	8
Tunkia	504	25	10		10	10
Wandor	253	0	5		5	5
<b>Kenema</b>	<b>10,859</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>217</b>		<b>217</b>	<b>217</b>
Diang	243	7	5		5	5
Gbonkobon Kayaka	216	1	4		4	4
Kalian	126	0	3		3	3
Kamukeh	124	0	2		2	2
Kasunko Kakellian	480	2	10		10	10
Nieni	154	0	3		3	3
Sengbe	374	12	7		7	7
Tamiso	172	4	3		3	3
Wara Wara Bafodia	197	19	4		4	4
Wara Wara Yagala	353	6	7		7	7
<b>Koinadugu</b>	<b>2,439</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>49</b>		<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>
Fiama	338	16	7		7	7
Gbane	139	2	3		3	3
Gbane Kandor	148	0	3		3	3
Gbense	2,077	29	42		42	42
Gorama Kono	113	0	2		2	2

Chiefdom	OOSC	OOSC with Disability	Proposed ALCs	Current ALCs	ALC Variance	Proposed Facilitators
Kamara	131	7	3		3	3
Koidu City	1,256	20	25		25	25
Lei	470	18	9		9	9
Mafindor	350	1	7		7	7
Nimikoro	764	24	15		15	15
Nimiyama	357	39	7		7	7
Sandor	590	4	12		12	12
Soa	464	4	9		9	9
Tankoro	1,582	26	32		32	32
Toli	314	3	6		6	6
<b>Kono</b>	<b>9,093</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>182</b>		<b>182</b>	<b>182</b>
Bagruwa	598	16	12		12	12
Bumpeh	227	30	5		5	5
Dasse	40	1	1		1	1
Fakunya	752	13	15		15	15
Kagboro	519	87	10		10	10
Kaiyamba	592	8	12		12	12
Kamajei	57	0	1		1	1
Kongbora	322	2	6		6	6
Kori	72	2	1		1	1
Kowa	126	0	3		3	3
Lower Banta	146	5	3		3	3
Ribbi	547	12	11		11	11
Timdale	472	45	9		9	9
Upper Banta	58	1	1		1	1
<b>Moyamba</b>	<b>4,528</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>91</b>		<b>91</b>	<b>91</b>
Bakeh Loko	952	24	19		19	19
Bureh	174	0	3		3	3
Kaffu Bullom	295	8	6		6	6
Kamasondo	681	6	14		14	14
Kasseh	486	18	10		10	10
Koya	986	15	20		20	20
Lokomasama	218	2	4		4	4
Maconteh	881	4	18		18	18
Maforki	891	6	18		18	18
Makama	159	0	3		3	3
Marampa	537	10	11		11	11
Masimera	513	7	10		10	10
Thainkatopa	18	0	0		0	0
<b>Port Loko</b>	<b>6,791</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>136</b>		<b>136</b>	<b>136</b>
Barri	230	0	5		5	5
Galliness	229	1	5		5	5
Kabonde	212	3	4		4	4
Kpaka	445	8	9		9	9
Makpele	343	2	7		7	7

Chiefdom	OOSC	OOSC with Disability	Proposed ALCs	Current ALCs	ALC Variance	Proposed Facilitators
Malen	307	4	6		6	6
Mono Sakrim	447	41	9		9	9
Panga	363	5	7		7	7
Panga Krim	377	0	8		8	8
Pejeh (Futa Peje)	372	6	7		7	7
Perri	368	1	7		7	7
Soro Gbema	439	3	9		9	9
Sowa	234	2	5		5	5
Yakemu Kpukumu	451	7	9		9	9
<b>Pujehun</b>	<b>4,817</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>96</b>		<b>96</b>	<b>96</b>
Dansogoia	116	0	2		2	2
Gbonkolenkeni/Masankong	345	3	7		7	7
Kafe	124	4	2		2	2
Kalanthuba	278	1	6		6	6
Kholifa Mabang	475	10	10		10	10
Kholifa Mamuntha/Mayosso	148	1	3		3	3
Kholifa Rowala	1,208	69	24		24	24
Kunike Barina	730	6	15		15	15
Kunike Folawusu	220	0	4		4	4
Kunike Sanda	389	5	8		8	8
Mayeppoh	809	25	16		16	16
Poli	162	5	3		3	3
Sambaya	177	5	4		4	4
Simiria	741	22	15		15	15
Tane	1,208	13	24		24	24
Yele	504	8	10		10	10
Yoni Mabanta	391	9	8		8	8
Yoni Mamaila	1,055	37	21		21	21
<b>Tonkolili</b>	<b>9,080</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>182</b>		<b>182</b>	<b>182</b>
Koya Rural	1,493	27	30		30	30
Mountain Rural	861	8	17		17	17
Waterloo Rural	6,215	132	124		124	124
York Rural	1,716	17	34		34	34
<b>Western Area Rural</b>	<b>10,285</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>206</b>		<b>206</b>	<b>206</b>
Central I	818	16	16		16	16
Central II	550	47	11		11	11
East I	943	105	19		19	19
East II	1,975	86	40		40	40
East III	5,079	566	102		102	102
West I	376	2	8		8	8
West II	1,014	181	20		20	20
West III	1,465	20	29		29	29
<b>Western Area Urban</b>	<b>12,220</b>	<b>1023</b>	<b>244</b>		<b>244</b>	<b>244</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>108,144</b>	<b>3,923</b>	<b>2,163</b>		<b>2,163</b>	<b>2,163</b>

## Annex 3: 2025 OOSC Survey Questionnaire

## A. Location Information

Enumerator Name

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Enumerator Contact Number

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## Geo-Information

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latitude (x.y °)

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longitude (x.y °)

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altitude (m)

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accuracy (m)

---



## Region

- NORTHERN
- SOUTHERN
- NORTH -WESTERN
- WESTERN
- EASTERN

District

Council

Chiefdom

Section

Town

---

## B. Child General Information

Child's Full Name

---

Child's Age

---

Year of Birth

---

Gender

Male

Female

Address

---

## » Family Background

Parent/Guardian Name

---

Contact Number

---

Parent/Guardian Occupation

- None
- Farmer
- Miner
- Fisherman/Fishmonger
- Petty Trader Skill Trade
- Salesperson
- Civil Servant
- Driver/Rider
- Factory/Industrial Worker
- Other (Specify)

**If other, please specify**

---

**Estimated Household Income per month**

---

**Number of Siblings**

---

### C. Schooling History

**Has the child ever attended school?**

- Yes
- No

**If yes, at what age did the child start school?**

---

**Name of last attended school**

---

**Location of last attended school**

---

**Last grade completed**

- None
- Class 1
- Class 2
- Class 3
- Class 4
- Class 5
- Class 6
- JSS 1
- JSS 2
- JSS 3

**Year of last attendance**

---

**Why did the child stop attending school? (Check all that apply)**

- Economic reasons (need to work)
- Health issues
- Distance to school
- Lack of interest
- Family responsibilities
- Other (specify)
- Pregnancy
- Child Marriage
- Migration
- Initiation
- Other

**Other (please specify)**

---

**Propose level of reintegration**

- P 1
- P 2
- P 3
- P 4
- P 5
- P 6

#### D. Barriers to Education

##### Currently Pregnant?

- Yes
- No

##### Is the learner married?

- Yes
- No

##### Disability

##### Do you have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses? Would you say... [Read response categories]

- No difficulty
- Some difficulty
- A lot of difficulty
- Cannot do at all

##### Do you have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid(s)? Would you say... [Read response categories]

- No difficulty
- Some difficulty
- A lot of difficulty
- Cannot do at all

##### Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps? Would you say... [Read response categories]

- No difficulty
- Some difficulty
- A lot of difficulty
- Cannot do at all

**Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating? Would you say... [Read response categories]**

- No difficulty
- Some difficulty
- A lot of difficulty
- Cannot do at all

**Do you have difficulty with self-care, such as washing all over or dressing? Would you say... [Read response categories]**

- No difficulty
- Some difficulty
- A lot of difficulty
- Cannot do at all

**Do you have difficulty communicating, for example understanding or being understood?**

**Would you say... [Read response categories]**

- No difficulty
- Some difficulty
- A lot of difficulty
- Cannot do at all

**Does the learner experience any of the following common conditions:**

- None
- Epilepsy
- Dwarfism
- Albinism

## E. Future Plans

**Is the child interested in returning to school?**

Yes

No

**If yes, what support does the child need? (Check all that apply)**

Financial assistance

Health support

Transportation

Mentoring or tutoring

Other (specify)

**If others, Please Specify**

---

**Would the child prefer alternative education options such as vocational training?**

Yes

No

**If yes, please specify**

---

**Is there any comment or recommendation?**

---

## Annex 4: 2025 Projected Age and Sex Population from the 2015 Population and Housing Census

**Kenema District 2025 Projected population by single year, age (0-80+) and sex, 2015 PHC**

		Single Age														
Male		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
2025		7,234	7,133	8,574	8,660	8,420	7,798	6,846	5,728	4,707	4,087	4,057	4,446	4,987	5,384	5,544
Female																
2025		7451	7350	8832	8920	8,674	8,034	7,054	5,900	4,848	4,211	4,178	4,579	5,138	5,546	5,711
Both sex																
2025		14,685	14,483	17,406	17,580	17,094	15,832	13,900	11,628	9,555	8,298	8,235	9,025	10125	10930	11255

**Kailahun District 2025 Projected population by single year, age (0-80+) and sex, 2015 PHC**

		Single Age														
Male		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
2025		10262	10121	10083	9890	9,623	9,269	8,839	8,376	7,953	7,654	7,532	7,536	7586	7597	7541
Female																
2025		8121	8011	11788	12371	12,375	11,709	10,454	8,885	7,437	6,619	6,737	7,512	8,512	9,234	9,496
Both sex																
2025		18383	18132	21871	22261	21,998	20,978	19,293	17,261	15,390	14,273	14,269	15,048	16,098	16,831	17,037

**Kono District 2025 Projected population by single year, age (0-80+) and sex, 2015 PHC**

		Single Age														
Male		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
2025		6012	5930	8045	8294	8,216	7,768	6,995	6,045	5,153	4,588	4,520	4,798	5,198	5,462	5,519
Female																
2025		6344	6258	8491	8754	8,671	8,198	7,382	6,380	5,439	4,843	4,769	5,064	5486	5765	5824
Both sex																
2025		12356	12188	16536	17048	16,887	15,966	14,377	12,425	10,592	9,431	9,289	9,862	10684	11227	11343

**Bombali District 2025 Projected population by single year, age (0-80+) and sex, 2015 PHC**

		Single Age														
Male		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17

Year	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
2025	7623	7518	9331	9558	9,531	9,211	8,636	7,916	7,239	6,813	6,768	6,989	7305	7499	7474
<b>Female</b>															
2025	7897	7789	9670	9904	9,876	9,546	8,948	8,204	7,501	7,060	7,014	7,241	7569	7769	7744
<b>Both sex</b>															
2025	15520	15307	19001	19462	19,407	18,757	17,584	16,120	14,740	13,873	13,782	14,230	14874	15268	15218

**Kambia 2025 Projected population by single year, age (0-80+) and sex, 2015 PHC**

**Male**  
Single Age

Year	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
2025	5940	5858	6848	6944	6,849	6,528	6,006	5,383	4,811	4,476	4,485	4,733	5077	5318	5360
<b>Female</b>															
2025	6380	6293	7354	7457	7,355	7,009	6,450	5,779	5,167	4,807	4,816	5,083	5452	5711	5758
<b>Both sex</b>															
2025	12320	12151	14202	14401	14,204	13,537	12,456	11,162	9,978	9,283	9,301	9,816	10529	11029	11118

**Port Loko District 2025 Projected population by single year, age (0-80+) and sex, 2015 PHC**

**Male**  
Single Age

Year	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
2025	10265	10124	11110	11145	11,003	10,650	10,111	9,474	8,880	8,496	8,420	8,558	8792	8927	8851
<b>Female</b>															
2025	11017	10866	11925	11963	11,810	11,431	10,852	10,168	9,531	9,119	9,039	9,186	9436	9582	9500
<b>Both sex</b>															
2025	21282	20990	23035	23108	22,813	22,081	20,963	19,642	18,411	17,615	17,459	17,744	18228	18509	18351

**Koinadugu District 2025 Projected population by single year, age (0-80+) and sex, 2015 PHC**

**Male**  
Single Age

Year	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
2025	5600	5522	8492	9022	9,222	9,047	8,539	7,837	7,160	6,765	6,807	7,148	7586	7856	7840
<b>Female</b>															
2025	5540	5465	8401	8926	9,124	8,952	8,449	7,754	7,084	6,694	6,736	7,072	7505	7773	7757
<b>Both sex</b>															
2025	11140	10987	16893	17948	18,346	17,999	16,988	15,591	14,244	13,459	13,543	14,220	15091	15629	15597

**Tonkolili District 2025 Projected population by single year, age (0-80+) and sex, 2015 PHC**

		Single Age														
Male		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
2025	9050	8926	11021	11271	11,176	10,672	9,813	8,766	7,799	7,226	7,239	7,660	8235	8638	8727	
Female		9113	8987	11097	11350	11,252	10,747	9,881	8,825	7,852	7,277	7,289	7,713	8292	8697	8788
Both sex		18163	17913	22118	22621	22,428	21,419	19,694	17,591	15,651	14,503	14,528	15,373	16527	17335	17515

**Bo District 2025 Projected population by single year, age (0-80+) and sex, 2015 PHC**

		Single Age														
Male		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
2025	7009	6912	8280	8397	8,250	7,795	7,070	6,206	5,411	4,929	4,906	5,208	5630	5925	6005	
Female		7168	7070	8468	8588	8,440	7,974	7,233	6,347	5,534	5,042	5,020	5,328	5758	6062	6142
Both sex		14177	13982	16748	16985	16,690	15,769	14,303	12,553	10,945	9,971	9,926	10,536	11388	11987	12147

**Bonthe District 2025 Projected population by single year, age (0-80+) and sex, 2015 PHC**

		Single Age														
Male		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
2025	3136	3093	3964	4066	4,022	3,809	3,450	3,012	2,609	2,366	2,363	2,531	2755	2912	2966	
Female		3166	3122	4002	4104	4,059	3,845	3,481	3,041	2,633	2,390	2,386	2,554	2780	2940	2993
Both sex		6302	6215	7966	8170	8,081	7,654	6,931	6,053	5,242	4,756	4,749	5,085	5535	5852	5959

**Moyamba District 2025 Projected population by single year, age (0-80+) and sex, 2015 PHC**

		Single Age														
Male		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
2025	5869	5788	6320	6295	6,128	5,794	5,315	4,763	4,255	3,927	3,860	3,979	4172	4298	4299	
Female		6191	6106	6667	6639	6,464	6,112	5,607	5,025	4,489	4,143	4,073	4,198	4401	4534	4535

**Both sex**

2025	12060	11894	12987	12934	12,592	11,906	10,922	9,788	8,744	8,070	7,933	8,177	8573	8832	8834
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**Pujehun District 2025 Projected population by single year, age (0-80+) and sex, 2015 PHC**

		Single Age														
<b>Male</b>																
Year	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
2025	5172	5101	7139	7489	7,545	7,258	6,664	5,905	5,207	4,834	4,943	5,384	5946	6348	6452	
<b>Female</b>																
2025	5346	5274	7381	7743	7,802	7,503	6,890	6,105	5,384	4,998	5,111	5,565	6149	6563	6670	
<b>Both sex</b>																
2025	10518	10375	14520	15232	15,347	14,761	13,554	12,010	10,591	9,832	10,054	10,949	12095	12911	13122	

**Western Area Rural District 2025 Projected population by single year, age (0-80+) and sex, 2015 PHC**

		Single Age														
<b>Male</b>																
Year	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
2025	9751	9617	9797	9504	9,220	8,379	7,105	5,688	4,914	3,616	3,505	3,895	4453	4892	5195	
<b>Female</b>																
2025	10147	10008	10196	9891	9,596	8,720	7,395	5,918	5,113	3,764	3,648	4,054	4635	5091	5407	
<b>Both sex</b>																
2025	19898	19625	19993	19395	18,816	17,099	14,500	11,606	10,027	7,380	7,153	7,949	9088	9983	10602	

**Western Area Urban District 2025 Projected population by single year, age (0-80+) and sex, 2015 PHC**

		Single Age														
<b>Male</b>																
Year	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
2025	19027	18766	20138	19761	19,438	17,931	15,394	12,525	10,826	10,931	8,363	9,390	10755	12437	12919	
<b>Female</b>																
2025	19649	19380	20795	20406	20,073	18,518	15,897	12,935	11,178	11,288	8,635	9,696	11106	12843	13341	
<b>Both sex</b>																
2025	38676	38146	40933	40167	39,511	36,449	31,291	25,460	22,004	22,219	16,998	19,086	21861	25280	26260	

**Sierra Leone 2025 Projected population by single year, age (0-80+) and sex, 2015 PHC**

		Single Age														
<b>Male</b>																

Year	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
2025	111,950	110,409	129,142	130,296	128,643	121,909	110,783	97,624	86,924	80,708	77,768	82,255	88,477	93,493	94,692
<b>Female</b>															
2025	113,530	111,979	135,067	137,016	135,571	128,298	115,973	101,266	89,190	82,255	79,451	84,845	92,219	98,110	99,666
<b>Both sex</b>															
2025	225,480	222,388	264,209	267,312	264,214	250,207	226,756	198,890	176,114	162,963	157,219	167,100	180,696	191,603	194,358



