



MINISTRY OF BASIC AND SENIOR
SECONDARY EDUCATION - SIERRA LEONE

EDUCATION WEEKLY

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MBSSE ENGAGES CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS ON A COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP

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As part of its effort to have essential stakeholders on board in the strive to improve the quality of education in Sierra Leone, the leadership of the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) invited 13 heads of key Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to a meeting at the conference hall of the MBSSE on Wednesday, February 10, 2021 at 4:00pm. This call by the MBSSE is in realization of the fact that responsible Civil Society endeavours are essential for good democracy, proper service delivery and good governance. In the meeting, the Minister, Dr. David Moinena Sengeh, had the opportunity to outline the major priority focus areas of the ministry in this 2021 fiscal year. Those priority areas included but not limited to developing the basis and senior secondary education policies; radical inclusion and comprehensive school safety policies, reviewing the Education Act of 2004 and replace it with a 2021 Education Act; reviewing the 2011 Teaching Service Commission Act; developing a Village School policy; as well as a policy on all forms of bullying to include cyber bullying which has become prevalent in our societies. The Minister also promised that the MBSSE will soon start to publish names of schools that are receiving subsidies from the government and the amounts they receive. He also drew attention to the small number of Guidance Counsellors in our schools and how the MBSSE will innovate to have more of them and get them to work effectively. The Ministry will also innovate on education service

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delivery partnerships for improved service delivery. Responding to the Minister, the Civil Society Representatives emphasized on their work on education advocacy, education monitoring and data maintenance, community inclusion/participation to restore confidence in community members,



CHARLES MAMBU
CHAIRMAN - COALITION OF CSOs

and the reactivation of the Village Development Committees (VDCs) as an essential an integral part of getting the messages on the activities of the MBSSE and the government to grass root community members. They also urged the ministry to continue its work or providing access, school safety, radical inclusion and quality teaching to all pupils in our schools. Most importantly, they asked that the MBSSE provide thorough training to Civil Society organizations on how to engage, manage and articulate the activities of the ministry; while also doing effective consultation prior to putting together the draft of the 2021 Education. They emphasized that they are partners in development and not enemies of the ministry or the State and therefore would like to know how they can adequately support the MBSSE. The use of data and how data can support service delivery and resource acquisition and mobilization was also stressed by them. They appealed for data triangulation to enhance accuracy in data formulation. The also appealed for regular coordination meetings and experience sharing to better align the ministry's priorities to the work they do as CSOs. Concluding this meeting, the Minister outlined some Action Points as a takeaway from this meeting. They included: Ø Holding quarterly meetings with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Ø Creating and coordinating a consortium of Civil Society Organizations that will work with the MBSSE with Moses Mambu and Andrew Lavalie leading

that effort. Ø Creating a platform for community engagement Ø The organization and convening of townhall meetings with stakeholders such as Market women, Bike Riders, Parents as well as Religious Leaders Ø Looking to improve on data collection, data validation, data triangulation, and the reactivation of the Village Development Committees Ø The Senior Permanent to work with the Chief Education Officer and development partners to facilitate the training of CSOs on MBSSE-related functions and activities. Ø This current high level of engagement and partnership with CSOs to continue. This high level engagement with CSOs, the first ever, ended with the common understanding and agreement that we are all in this together and we owe it to ourselves and to the nation to improve the quality of education for the good of our children and our human capital development.

MBSSE & UNESCO CELEBRATE WORLD READ ALOUD DAY



The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE), in collaboration with the Sierra Leone National Commission for UNESCO celebrated the International World Read Aloud Day nationwide. Visiting various schools across the country, staff of MBSSE and UNESCO read aloud to children, and encouraged them to read with their peers. The celebration was used as an opportunity to scale up awareness raising on the importance of reading. Staff of MBSSE and UNESCO encouraged teachers and parents to read to the children, as reading helps children to learn new words, improve their vocabulary and comprehension skills. Parents at Moyamba Junction were exceptionally appreciative of MBSSE and UNESCO for encouraging them to read to their children, or tell them stories. This year's celebration of the Read Aloud Day was pioneered by the Deputy Minister of MBSSE, Mrs. Emily Kadiatu Gogra, Mrs. Melody Martin, the Head of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Unit of the MBSSE, the Secretary General of the National Commission for UNESCO for Sierra Leone, Dr. Mohamed Combo Kamanda. World Read Aloud Day (WRAD) is focused on bringing awareness to the importance of reading aloud and sharing stories and to advocate for literacy as a human right. WRAD was created in 2010 by LitWorld, a nonprofit organization believing in the power of reading.

TSC REFOCUSES ON BETTER LESSON DELIVERY THROUGH THE RADIO TEACHING PROGRAM



Following the review of the National Radio Teaching Program schedule, subject experts have on 9th February 2021 engaged in a writers' workshop session to plan schemes of work for subsequent lessons, in alignment with the newly approved Basic Education Curriculum Framework. As a support program to the formal school system, participants are also looking into an emergency preparedness plan for the Radio Teaching Program to be in the best position to deliver quality lessons for children in the event of a full blown emergency. The teachers in this country are responsible for enhancing the quality aspect of the Free Quality School Education flagship program of government. It is therefore but strategic to find a way to get the best out of them so that the said quality can be achieved very profoundly. The MBSSE, working with the TSC, would like

to see the radio teaching program as a solid intervention platform for providing tuition not only during emergencies but even under normal circumstances when some of our school going children, especially in hard to reach areas of the country, may not enjoy the benefit of full scale teaching from their assigned teachers who, for the most part, may be untrained and unqualified to even teach. In this case, the Radio teaching program and the lessons will serve as a permanent resource base that will be accessed by our pupils for knowledge acquisition. This program is eve more relevant to the visually impaired and it will help to cater to their learning needs. It will then lend credence to the formulation of our radical inclusion policy which seeks to ensure that all children are catered for regardless of their physical and/or psychological conditions.

MBSSE FIGHTS SCHOOL-BASED VIOLENCE THROUGH ITS COMPREHENSIVE SAFETY POLICY

The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) has heightened its school monitoring mechanism to ensure that the Comprehensive Safety Policy is working effectively in schools. The Ministry strives to ensure that children across the country are learning in safe environments. The Ministry emphasizes on its zero tolerance policy for school-based violence by embarking on spontaneous checks of pupils to ensure that they do not carry any form of weapons (guns, knives, razor blades, scissors, nails, etc.) to school with the intention to cause harm to others. This action is in line with the Ministry's Comprehensive Safety Policy which must be enforced by school authorities and MBSSE staff across the country. Quite recently, some schools in the Kono district have fallen victim of attempted school-based violence where actual weapons such as knives, scissors, pliers, plastic and iron combs, strings and cutlasses were discovered in the hands of some pupils in schools namely - Gbense High school in Koeyor Kaidu on Monday 8th February; SLMB Secondary School in Penduma Kaidu on Tuesday 9th February; Songu Mbriwa Secondary school in Njagbema Town, Fiamma Chiefdom on the 9th February; Banfifeh Secondary School, Gondola Town Nimiyama Chiefdom, on the 9th of February 2021 as reported by the MBSSE Deputy Director of Education, Kono District Mr. Alimamy Kamara. The incident in Kono is not isolated. Before this time, there have been reported incidents of school pupils carrying similar weapons to schools sporting arenas for reasons best known to them. Over the years, there was no school safety protocol to enforce against school-based violence. The introduction of the Comprehensive Safety Policy which has been activated in schools across the country is timely, necessary and appropriate action to fight school-based violence that seems to be on a rapid rise among learners within the school environments. The policy mandates the search and seizure of any form of weapons from pupils, teachers, school authorities and any individuals who interact with the school systems. It also mandates such individuals to declare their weapons or usable equipment such as guns, knives, razor blades, compasses, scissors, pliers, etc... that could be used as weapons to harm others. The incidents discovered in Kono district provides justification for the need for Comprehensive Safety Policy in schools across the nation. As always, the Ministry and the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) rely on Education Sector stakeholders who interact with pupils/students, and other individuals who often are present on school premises to enforce the Comprehensive Safety Policy in schools nationwide to ensure that children are learning in safe and comfortable environments. The Ministry also continues to work with its partner DFID's Leh Wi Lan on finding lasting solutions to School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) by working closely with community stakeholders to discuss how they receive reports of SRGBV/GBV issues, how they manage the reports, and what recommendations they may have for intervention.



MBSSE SETS TO INTRODUCE DATA COLLECTION SCHEME IN SCHOOLS



The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE), in collaboration with Leh Wi Lan has on Thursday 4th February, 2021 organized a one-day workshop for forty Principals of secondary schools at the Hill Valley Hotel in Freetown. The Data Analyst of the ministry's Delivery Team, Iman Beoku-Betts, said the purpose of the workshop is to do a user testing for a data collection program that the ministry will be coming up with soon. She said forty principals from different junior and senior secondary schools in the western area have been selected to participate in the workshop in order to test and get feedbacks on the said pilot project which is to commence soon. She said the ministry plans to take the workshop to other parts of the country as the participation was restricted to schools in the western areas due to the current COVID-19 measures and that the project will be extended to primary schools after the completion phase one. The country lead, EdTech Hub, Chris McBurnie added that the ministry is set to introduce a mobile app for teacher registration and students' enrollment and to better manage schools and keep proper track of attendance to aid in the implementation of the said pilot project. Grace Kargbobai; head of the MBSSE Delivery Team said the pilot project is part of a particular initiative led by the delivery team called "one tablet per school" which was to ensure data collection and management of teachers professional development through technology. She added her team is hoping and working towards yielding positive results from this said project, and she pleaded with the school authorities to utilize these tablets as resource centers to produce required effects. The principal, Baptist Junior Secondary School, John Gando Lavallie, welcomed the idea and applauded the ministry for the workshop as he sees it as worthy and timely because the world has moved to a technological age and the country needs to do likewise. He said after the first training that was earlier done by the ministry, an improvement has been seen as they have been able to resolve some issues they have had before now.



MBSSE Installs Billboard Posters Across the Country



Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education



unicef
for every child

+Plus other
Partners

With Key Messages on -

- the enforcement of the School Reopening Guidelines in schools/COVID-19 Guidelines.
- safe school environment.
- encouraging parents, guardians, and the public to help make schools safe for our kids.

Let's Keep Our Schools Safe

FREQUENCIES FOR EDUCATION RADIO

FREETOWN: FM 95.3 | KOIDU: FM 91.5 | MAMUDU: FM 94.4 | MAGBURAKA: FM 93.5 | MAKENI: FM 91.5 | BO: FM 91.5 | KENEMA: FM 94.4 | SEGBWEMA: FM 95.3

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