

# Gender at the Centre Initiative (GCI) Baseline Study

COUNTRY LEVEL REPORT – SIERRA LEONE

APRIL 2021



# Acronyms

AESR	Annual Education Sector Review
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CEERP	COVID-19 Education Emergency Response Plan
CODE	Canadian Organization for Development through Education
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DFID	Department for International Development
DP	Development Partners
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDP	Education Development Partners
EFA-SL	Education for All Sierra Leone
ESA	Education Sector Analysis
ESC	Education Strategic Committee
ESP	Education Sector Plan
ESPIG	Education Sector Plan Implementation Grant
EU	European Union
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FGD	Focus Discussion Group
FQSE	Free Quality School Education
GATE-GEC	Girls' Access to Education
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GCI	Gender at the Centre Initiative
GE	Gender Equality

GER	Gross Enrollment Rate
GIZ	German Corporation for International Cooperation
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GRB	Gender-responsive Budgeting
GRESP	Gender-responsive Education Sector Plan
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDA	International Development Assistance
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
IsDB	Islamic Development Bank
ITAD	Information Technology and Agricultural Development
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JSR	Joint Sector Review
KII	Key Informant Interview
LEG	Local Education Group
LuxDev	Luxembourg Agency for Development Cooperation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MBSSE	Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education
MESRP	Migrant Education School Readiness Program
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MGCA	Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoEs	Ministries of Education
MGCA	Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs
MTHE	Ministry of Technical and Higher Education

NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NGSP	National Gender Strategic Plan
PMF	Performance Measurement Framework
PRP	Presidential Recovery Plan
REDiSL	Revitalizing Education Development in Sierra Leone
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-based Violence
SLBC	Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation
SLeGEN	Sierra Leone Girls' Education Network
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SLTU	Sierra Leone Teachers Union
SO	Strategic Objective
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TOR	Terms of Reference
TSC	Teacher Service Commission
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCO-UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASSCE	West African Senior School Certificate Examination
WFP	World Food Programme
YAP	Youth Advisory Panel

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# Sierra Leone – Baseline Country Report

## 1.1 Introduction

The Gender at the Centre Initiative (GCI) aims to mobilize the advocacy, resources, and expertise needed to support governments in accelerating progress in gender equality, in and through education. With support from four of the G7 donors and a multi-stakeholder partnership, Sierra Leone is one of eight partner countries in sub-Saharan Africa where GCI will be implemented. Specifically, the Initiative will focus primarily on ensuring that country-owned interventions, strategies and plans are financed, implemented and monitored for sustainable results. To this effect, a baseline study was conducted from October 2020 to March 2021.

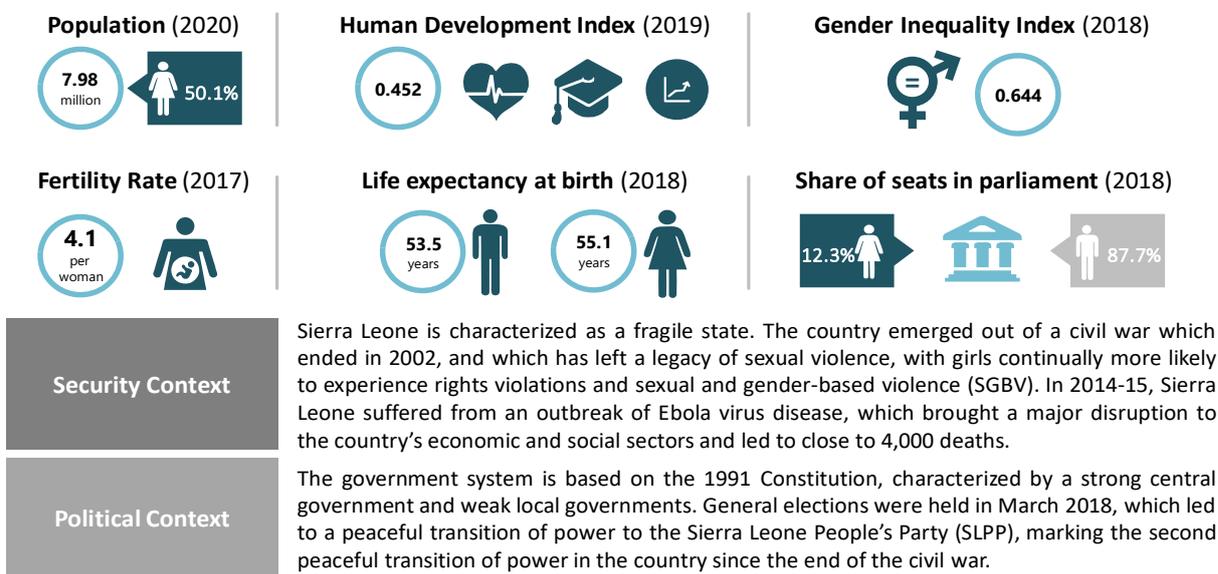
This report presents current gender equality-related findings for Sierra Leone, representing one of eight country reports within the broader global baseline study for the GCI. This country report for Sierra Leone includes: (1) A snapshot of the key gender and education issues in the country; and (2) the results of baseline data collection for each of the outcome-level indicators outlined in GCI's performance measurement framework (PMF). Key conclusions emerging from the results of the baseline data collection are presented in the global baseline study report.

## 1.2 Methodology

Data to determine baseline values on the various indicators in the GCI results framework was primarily collected through secondary data sources. This report draws on document and database reviews, relying when possible on existing sector monitoring processes and mechanisms, such as joint sector reviews, implementation reports on education programs, an education sector analysis conducted in 2020, and national plans/strategies related to gender equality, among others.

Due to the context of the current COVID-19 crisis, data collection was conducted remotely, with limited access to key documents and secondary sources. The Universalia team made requests for interviews with government and non-government stakeholders and was able to secure one interview with the World Bank (acting as the GPE Coordinating Agency). While the team of consultants was able to lead the baseline exercise remotely, a richer set of evidence is lacking in some areas to present additional information or make stronger assertions. Gaps for some results indicators are highlighted in the analysis of the baseline findings ([Section 1.5](#)). Please see [Appendix I](#) for the full list of documents reviewed.

## 1.3 Background Information on Sierra Leone



Source: UNDP Human Development (2019); World Bank (2020).

## 1.4 Snapshot of Gender and Education in Sierra Leone

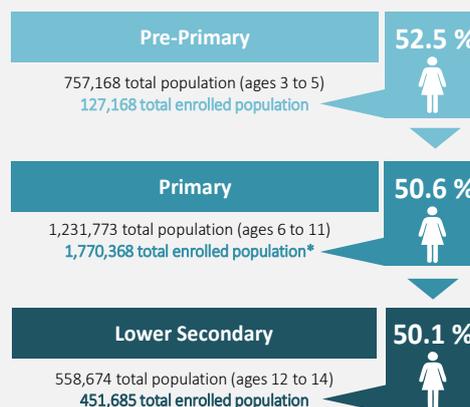
### Gender in Education

#### Education system

The education system in Sierra Leone is organized into pre-primary (three years), primary (six years), junior secondary<sup>1</sup> (three years), senior secondary (three years), higher education, and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The system also supports adult and non-formal education. Together, primary and junior secondary constitute the basic education cycle, which is compulsory for all children.

The proportion of schools not approved by the government decreased substantially between 2018 and 2019, from roughly half of all schools to a quarter.<sup>2</sup> Unapproved schools are made up of a mix of faith-based and community-run schools, and vary considerably in terms of learning environments, materials, and teaching staff.

Total school age population and total enrolled population in Sierra Leone by level of basic education and sex (2019)



Source: UNESCO UIS \*Regardless of age

<sup>1</sup> Also referred to as 'lower secondary education' in this report.

<sup>2</sup> See MBSSE, Annual School Census Report, 2019, p. 15-16. This was noted as due to a significant effort made by the government to widen basic education access through increased numbers of approved schools.

**Key issues in gender and education:**

- **Child labour affects both boys' and girls' schooling**, with 3% of children aged 5-17 involved in some form of labour in 2017 (39.6% for boys and 38.4% for girls). However, while boys were more likely to be involved in economic activities, girls were more likely to be responsible for household chores.<sup>3</sup>
- **Geographic variations in gender disparities exist**, with the Northern region showing the highest gender disparities compared to other regions. Rural areas also show higher disparities compared to urban areas. Regional and gender disparities are further compounded by disparities in income, with low-income girls in rural areas significantly less likely to finish school (5% completion rate in secondary education) as compared to boys in urban areas from high income backgrounds (68% completion rate in secondary education).<sup>4</sup>
- **Limited access to sanitation facilities and menstrual hygiene products** also affect girls' schooling, although some schools now provide dedicated cubicles for menstruating girls (13% of lower secondary schools and 20% of senior secondary schools).

The following visuals present additional key underlying causes of gender inequality in the education sector in Sierra Leone, and an overview of key indicators for gender and education.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Sierra Leone Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2017, Survey Findings Report.

<sup>4</sup> 2020 draft education sector analysis (ESA).

<sup>5</sup> Sources: UNFPA (2017) and UN Women data (2013)

## Overview of Gender Equality in Sierra Leone

### Child Marriage

(% of women aged 20-24 years who were married before age 18, 2017)

29.9%

While the legal age of marriage is 18 in Sierra Leone, the Customary Marriage and Divorce Act of 2009 allows for marriage at 16 with parental consent. However, the country currently has a **National Strategy for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy and Child Marriage (2018-2022)**, which features a multi-sectoral approach in addressing child marriage and teen pregnancy, involving five government ministries.

### Adolescent Birth Rate

(births per 1,000 women aged 15-19, 2018)

112.8

Teenage pregnancy is a significant cause for school drop-outs among girls and their exclusion from education in Sierra Leone. A 2016 assessment by the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) and UNICEF finds that 28.6% of out-of-school girls are excluded from education due to pregnancy. In addition to the 2018-2022 national strategy aimed at reducing teenage pregnancy, the **GoSL also overturned a 10-year ban on pregnant girls attending school in March 2020.**

### Violence Against Women

(% of women aged 15 and older who experienced violence by a partner, 2013-14)

48.8%

In 2019, the President declared sexual violence as a national emergency, amidst calls for the review of the 2012 Sexual Offences Act. School-related GBV is a significant issue in the country, with sexual exploitation and abuse by male staff or students affecting retention and completion rates among girls at the lower and senior secondary levels. Sierra Leone has shown a strong political commitment to addressing these issues, notably with the **launch of a task force on school-related GBV in December 2019.**

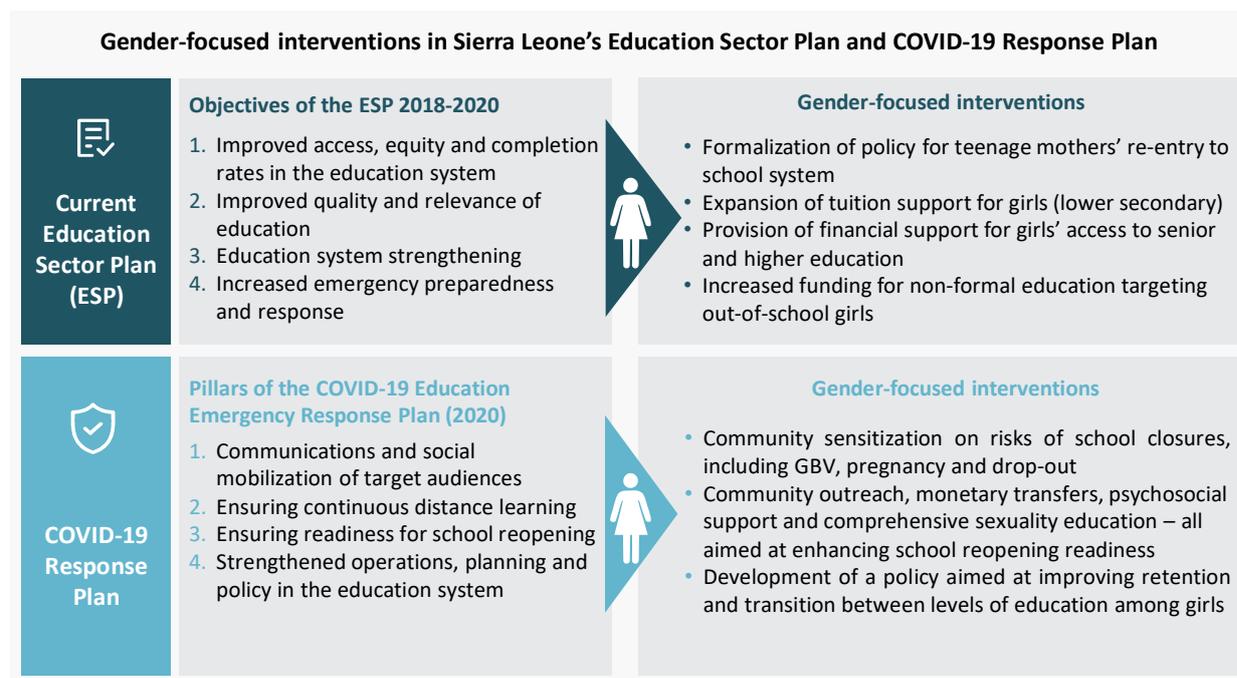
### Overview of Trends in Key Indicators for Gender and Education

<p><b>Primary Gross Enrollment Rate (GER)</b></p>	<p>The primary GER for girls was slightly higher than for boys in the period 2015-2019. The gap between girls and boys increased marginally, with the gender parity index (GPI) for primary GER increasing from 1.01 to 1.03 during the same period. Of note, the GER for both sexes was above 100% throughout 2015-2019, indicating significant repetition and over-age school enrollment.</p>	<p><b>Primary GER (girls and boys), 2015-2019</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Girls (%)</th> <th>Boys (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2015</td> <td>116.9%</td> <td>115.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019</td> <td>145.6%</td> <td>141.9%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Girls (%)	Boys (%)	2015	116.9%	115.3%	2019	145.6%	141.9%
Year	Girls (%)	Boys (%)									
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2019	145.6%	141.9%									
<p><b>Lower Secondary Gross Enrollment Rate (GER)</b></p>	<p>The lower secondary GER increased substantially during 2015-2019 for both sexes. The gap between girls and boys was reduced during the same period, with the lower secondary GER for girls slightly higher than for boys in 2019. The GPI increased from 0.93 to 1 between 2015 and 2019.</p>	<p><b>Lower Secondary GER (girls and boys), 2015-2019</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Girls (%)</th> <th>Boys (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2015</td> <td>57.4%</td> <td>53.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019</td> <td>81.1%</td> <td>80.6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Girls (%)	Boys (%)	2015	57.4%	53.7%	2019	81.1%	80.6%
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<p><b>Primary Completion Rate</b></p>	<p>The primary completion rate for girls was higher than boys between 2015 and 2019. The gap between girls and boys diminished from 1.2 to 0.1 percentage points from 2015 to 2019.</p>	<p><b>Primary Completion rate (girls and boys) 2015-2019</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Girls (%)</th> <th>Boys (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2015</td> <td>75.9%</td> <td>74.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019</td> <td>79.7%</td> <td>79.6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Girls (%)	Boys (%)	2015	75.9%	74.7%	2019	79.7%	79.6%
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<p><b>Transition Rate from Primary to Lower Secondary</b></p>	<p>Despite a significant increase in the transition rate from primary to lower secondary levels of education for both sexes, this figure was overall higher for boys than girls throughout 2016-2019.</p>	<p><b>Transition Rate from Primary to Lower Secondary (girls and boys), 2016-2019</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Girls (%)</th> <th>Boys (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2016</td> <td>79.9%</td> <td>83.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019</td> <td>92.3%</td> <td>97.5%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Girls (%)	Boys (%)	2016	79.9%	83.5%	2019	92.3%	97.5%
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Source: UNESCO UIS (2019) and MBSSE Annual School Census Reports (2015-2019)

## Education Sector Plans

Sierra Leone's most recent sector plan is the 2018-2020 Education Sector Plan (ESP). It constitutes an interim sector plan which updates the previous 2014-2018 ESP, aiming to bridge the time needed for developing a full new plan (which is currently under development). In 2020, the country put forward its COVID-19 Education Emergency Response Plan (CEERP), which includes efforts to address the specific vulnerabilities and needs of girls.



Prior to this most recent ESP, Sierra Leone had previously developed two ESPs covering the periods 2007-2015 and 2014-2018. Additionally, Sierra Leone's most recent joint sector review (JSR) was in 2015. Please see the table below for a timeline of key sector plans and reviews.

	2010-2020										
ESP	2007-2015 ESP										
			2014-2018 ESP								
						2018-2020 ESP					
Emergency response plans for education			MESRP 2014-2015 <sup>6</sup>	PRP 2016-17 <sup>7</sup>					CEERP		
JSRs				*							
Analyses									ESA 2020		

<sup>6</sup> MEST Ebola Strategic Response Plan 2014-2015

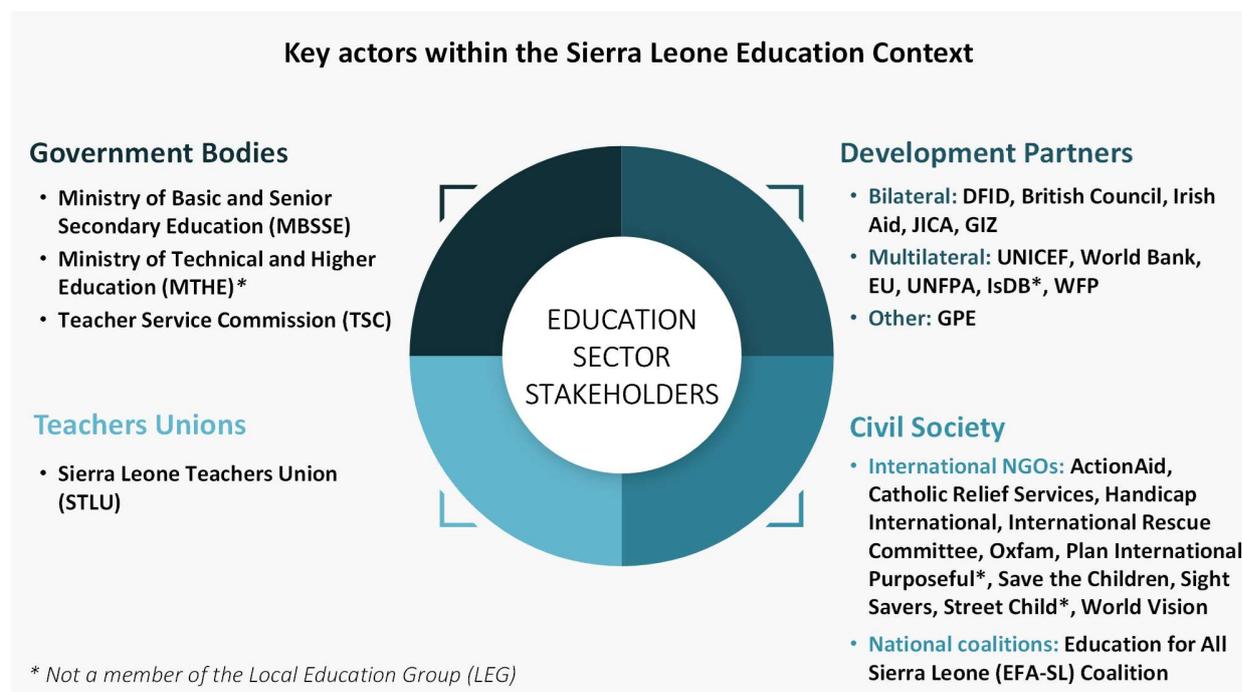
<sup>7</sup> Presidential Recovery Plan (PRP) 2016-2017

## Education Sector Stakeholders

There are currently **two ministries covering education** in Sierra Leone. Please see the table below for a breakdown of ministry and responsibility.

NAME OF MINISTRY	RESPONSIBILITY IN EDUCATION
<b>Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE)</b>	Pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and senior secondary education
<b>Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE)</b>	Higher education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

**The role of the Local Education Group (LEG)** is currently played by the Education Strategic Committee (ESC), which was recently created following a restructuring of education sector coordination mechanisms in March 2020. Prior to this restructuring, the role of the LEG was played by the Education Development Partner (EDP) Group, which included representatives from the MBSSE, the Ministry of Finance, donor and multilateral agencies, international NGOs, CSOs, and the Sierra Leone Teachers' Union.<sup>8</sup>



<sup>8</sup> The EDP still exists, following the restructuring of sector coordination, as an information, accountability and lesson sharing forum for organizations and institutions involved in the education sector.

## 1.5 Baseline Findings

This section of the country report systematically addresses the baseline values for each of the outcome-level indicators outlined in the GCI performance measurement framework, based on a comprehensive document review of the most current information available.

All sources of information from which baseline values were derived are identified in the tables below. A comparison of baseline findings and comparative conclusions for Sierra Leone and all other partner countries will be addressed in the global baseline study report.

The time period which was considered for this baseline review was **2019 to July 2020**, i.e. information on actions, events, meetings or statements which took place prior to 2019, and post-July 2020 were not counted as baseline entries for indicators. However, some exceptions to this were made, especially in relation to most recent ESPs, ESP implementation reporting, or Education Sector Analyses (ESAs) which were published prior to 2019.

When relevant information was found from after July 2020, this is included in the report narrative for consideration to be included in GCI monitoring for the first full year of implementation of the initiative.

### Intermediate Outcome 1

Intermediate Outcome 1: Improved gender equality mainstreaming in and through education led and implemented by Ministry(ies) of Education in conjunction with other relevant Ministries		
Performance indicators	Data collection methods and data sources that provided information to establish the baseline value	Baseline
<b>1a</b> Implementation rate of gender equality provisions within approved ESPs	Review of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ESP (2018-2020)</li> <li>▪ ESP 2018-2020 Implementation Plan</li> </ul>	Insufficient data to provide a baseline value for implementation rate  No baseline value established, no supporting data available
<b>1b</b> Degree of coherence among interventions led and/or implemented by MoEs to address barriers to GE in education	Key Informant Interview Review of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ESP (2018-2020)</li> <li>▪ ESP 2018-2020 Implementation Plan</li> <li>▪ ESA (2020)</li> <li>▪ 2017 Appraisal Report of the 2018-2020 ESP</li> <li>▪ COVID-19 Education Emergency Response Plan</li> <li>▪ GPE Country-level Evaluation Sierra Leone (2018)</li> <li>▪ Strategy for the reduction of adolescent pregnancies and child marriage (2018-2022)</li> <li>▪ CODE website<sup>9</sup></li> </ul>	Coherent

<sup>9</sup> <https://code.ngo/approach/literacy-programs/transforming-girls-education-in-sierra-leone-2020-2023/>

Assessment of indicator 1a focused on the current ESP and the most recent implementation data available for the ESP. However, the MoE has not produced any progress reports on the ESP 2018-2020 to date, and as such there was no available data to establish a baseline value for the implementation rate (i.e. comparing planned versus actual GE-focused interventions) of the sector plan. Furthermore, there was no reporting or documentation available which provided information regarding the budget execution rate for GE-focused provisions within the ESP.

#### **Budget Execution Rate for Measuring Indicator 1a**

Assessment of indicator 1a focused on current Education Sector Plans (ESPs) and the most recent implementation data available on ESPs. It was initially anticipated that a review of available reports on ESP implementation (e.g. annual implementation reports, mid-term reviews, joint sector review reports, with data source varying by country) could determine the rate (i.e. percentage) or proportion (i.e. ratio) of GE provisions delivered against those planned. However, no baseline data on the 'implementation rate' for GE provisions (i.e. actions, resource allocations, or other measures related to ESP implementation aimed explicitly at enhancing GE in education) within approved ESPs could be identified from available sources in GCI pilot countries. Thus, where it was possible, the baseline value for indicator 1a was calculated differently than anticipated, as follows: 1) the number of GCI pilot countries officially reporting 'budget execution rates' (i.e. actual vs. planned budget expenditures) for GE provisions within approved ESPs; and 2) changes to the budget execution rates (actual expenditures relative to budget) for GE provisions within ESPs for GCI pilot countries reporting this data.

With respect to indicator 1b, the degree of coherence among interventions led and/or implemented by MoEs to address barriers to GE in education was assessed based on five criteria using a four-point scale (see textbox below). Here, data relied on information provided in documentation published prior to July 2020.

Sierra Leone was found to meet three of the five criteria for coherence (Criterion 1, 3 and 4), and was rated as 'coherent' for the reasons explained below.

**Criterion 1:** There is evidence of a pooled fund, illustrated in the World-Bank administered Multi-Donor Trust Fund for the Sierra Leone Free Education Project (2019-2025). The fund includes contributions from IDA, DFID, Irish Aid, and the EU. The project contains a focus on GE in education, notably in the following sub-components on: curriculum reform where gender-sensitive primary curricula materials are developed; and gender equality and inclusive education, which aims to finance school- and system- level interventions to address barriers to girls' education.

**Criterion 2:** There is no evidence of a functional coordination mechanism around gender in Sierra Leone.

**Criterion 3:** There is evidence that various interventions of key education sector actors are aligned with the gender objectives outlined in the ESP. The 2017-2021 joint project entitled "Girls' Access to Education" (GATE), is implemented by Plan International with support from UNICEF and Action Aid with funding from DFID and focuses on community awareness-raising to promote girls' education, inclusive education and the distribution of bursaries. The 2020-2023 Transforming Girls Education Program, implemented by CODE with funding from Canada, aims to improve reading and learning outcomes for vulnerable pre-teen and teenage girls.

**Criterion 4:** Complementarity, synergy and collaboration among education sector actors is exemplified by the launch of joint initiatives between MBSSE and other ministries, as part of the 2018-2022 strategy on addressing teenage pregnancy. In addition, a Task Force on school-related gender-based violence (GBV) was launched with the participation of various education sector actors. The MBSSE worked with the

Children’s Directorate of the Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs (MGCA) on the joint monitoring of school feeding programmes as well as several girls’ education projects together with other INGOs. The MBSSE has also taken steps to establish a closer working relationship with the MGCA at the regional and district levels to support the implementation and monitoring of the ESP.

**Criterion 5:** No evidence was available in support of joint monitoring or evaluation of the current ESP nor of a dedicated functional coordination mechanism in the education sector which addresses gender barriers in education.

#### Criteria and Rating Scale for Indicator 1b

To establish a baseline value for indicator 1b, the degree of coherence among interventions led and/or implemented by MoEs to address barriers to GE in education was assessed based on five criteria, which were developed by the Universalia team during the baseline study. The five criteria are:

- 1) There is a pooled fund or SWAP which includes specific provisions to address gender barriers to education;
- 2) There is a dedicated and functional coordination mechanism in the education sector addressing gender barriers in education (e.g. Gender Working Group of LEG);
- 3) There is evidence of alignment between ESP gender objectives and the interventions of key education sector actors;
- 4) There is evidence of complementarity, synergy, collaboration among education sector actors to implement joint and/or coordinated initiatives with regard to addressing gender barriers to education;
- 5) There is evidence of joint monitoring and evaluation of ESP objectives, strategies, action plans and initiatives related to addressing gender barriers to education.

Furthermore, the baseline value for indicator 1b was established according to the number of criteria met, using a four-point rating scale defined as follows: Highly coherent = all 5 criteria met; Coherent = 3-4 criteria met; Somewhat coherent = 1-2 criteria met; Not coherent = None of the criteria met.

### Immediate Outcome 1.1

**Immediate Outcome 1.1:** Strengthened institutional systems and processes within MoE to mainstream gender equality in education sector analysis, policies, planning, budgeting, strategies, and programs

Performance indicators	Data collection methods and data sources that provided information to establish the baseline value	Baseline
<b>1.1a</b> Gender responsiveness of their education strategic sector planning documents and tools at the national and subnational levels	Review of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2020 ESA</li> <li>▪ 2018-2020 ESP (incl. M&amp;E framework, budget, implementation plan)</li> <li>▪ COVID-19 Education Emergency Response Plan</li> <li>▪ National Gender Strategic Plan 2019-2023.</li> </ul>	Gender-responsive: 5 of 6 gender-responsive criteria adequately met

The gender responsiveness of education strategic sector planning documents and tools was assessed based on the number and extent to which six gender-responsive criteria were met, using a four-point rating scale (see textbox below). Data sources used focused on the most recent sector planning documents.

Five of the six gender-responsive criteria were considered to have been adequately met to determine the gender-responsiveness of education strategic sector planning documents and tools at the national and sub-national levels:

**Criterion 1:** Analysis of the gender situation in the education sector: While a full ESA was not conducted to inform the 2018-2020 ESP, the plan includes sex-disaggregated education data and brief qualitative information on key gender issues in education (e.g. sexual harassment by male teachers and/or male students, early pregnancies). Sierra Leone has since drafted a new ESA in 2020, in preparation of its next ESP. A gender analysis is part of the 2020 ESA, which is both mainstreamed across the assessment as well as presented in a dedicated chapter (on girls' and boys' progression through the education system). The COVID-19 Education Response Plan does not provide an in-depth gender analysis.

**Criterion 3:** Coherence of the ESP with national gender goals and priorities on issues affecting girls' and boys' education, such as sexual and gender-based violence, child marriage, child labour, etc.: There is evidence of political commitment to addressing gender issues and inequalities across sectors, with a focus on the provision of comprehensive sexuality education and life skills training for adolescent girls and boys in-school, contained within the National Gender Strategic Plan (NGSP) 2019-2023. This comprehensive document includes eight strategic objectives,<sup>10</sup> three of which with direct relevance for addressing gender inequalities in education: "(SO2) Promote women's economic empowerment" includes an education-specific outcome on education and training opportunities for marginalized and vulnerable women, including women with disabilities, with a focus on STEM disciplines; "(SO4) Promote sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and adolescent girls, and prevention and response to GBV" which includes the education outcome provision of Comprehensive Sexuality Education and life skills training for adolescent girls and boys in-school;<sup>11</sup> and "(SO5) Strengthen coordination and gender mainstreaming across sectors" which recognizes the need for cross-sectoral coordination. It also lists establishing/strengthening gender focal points and/or Gender Desks in ministries, departments and agencies (e.g. district level MBSSE) and Local Councils, providing them with capacity-building training and establishing gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) committees at national, regional and district levels<sup>12</sup> among its activities.

**Criterion 4:** A budget specifically dedicated to addressing gender issues in education: Government-consolidated spending on 'gender and children' as a proportion of government spending in education appears small and a 'soft target'. Strategic intervention areas with a focus on gender issues have a dedicated budget allocation in the 2018-2020 ESP.

**Criterion 5:** A gender unit or focal point for gender equality in MoEs equipped with resources at national and subnational levels: The 2020 ESA provides a draft organigram of the MBSSE, which was still awaiting official validation at the time of review. There is both a Gender Unit (focused on GBV, sexual exploitation and abuse) and an Inclusive Education Unit (focused on the needs of children with disabilities, including

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<sup>10</sup> The other five strategic objectives in the NGSP are: 1) Strengthen legal, policy, and institutional capacities to enhance gender equality and women's empowerment; 3) Improve women's political participation and 6) Support research, ICT and reporting; 7) Women, peace, security and humanitarian action; 8) Production and use of gender statistics for evidence-based localization of the Sustainable Development Goals

<sup>11</sup> The National Gender Strategic Plan 2018-2023

<sup>12</sup> The National Gender Strategic Plan 2018-2023

girls) at the MBSSE.<sup>13</sup> As of March 2020, the Assistant Director of the Gender Unit is the only gender-focused officer within MBSSE headquarters. At the district levels, there is a lack of gender focal persons who have been given sufficient up-to-date staff development training or is responsible for coordinating gender-focused activities.<sup>14</sup>

**Criterion 6:** An M&E plan that takes gender into consideration by providing for sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis, e.g. baseline and targets: Sex-disaggregated education statistics are available.

#### Criteria and Rating Scale for Indicator 1.1a

To establish the baseline value for indicator 1.1a, the gender-responsiveness of education sector planning documents and tools was assessed based on six criteria drawn from UNGEI's Appraisal Form: Is the Education Sector Plan gender-responsive?<sup>15</sup>

The six criteria are:

1. Analysis of the gender situation in the education sector;
2. Participation of key stakeholders with expertise on gender in ESP development. These could include CSO representatives, gender focal points in MoEs, and other relevant ministries;
3. Coherence of the ESP with national gender goals and priorities on issues affecting girls' and boys' education, such as sexual and gender-based violence, child marriage, child labour, etc.;
4. A budget specifically dedicated to addressing gender issues in education;
5. A gender unit or focal point for gender equality in MoEs equipped with resources at national and sub-national levels (the assumption is that they have the influence, capacity, budgets, and time to do their work);
6. An M&E plan that takes gender into consideration by providing for sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis (e.g. baseline and targets).

Based on the number of criteria met, the baseline value for indicator 1.1a was established according to a four-point rating scale defined as follows: Highly gender-responsive = All 6 gender-responsive criteria reflected; Gender-responsive = 4-5 gender-responsive criteria reflected; Somewhat gender-responsive = 2-3 gender-responsive criteria reflected; Not gender-responsive = Fewer than 2 gender-responsive criteria reflected.

<sup>13</sup> Free Quality Education Project Social Assessment Report 2019.

<sup>14</sup> 2020 draft education sector analysis (ESA).

<sup>15</sup> See UNGEI's Education Sector Plan Gender Review: A guide to support gender responsive education planning (2013) for a further breakdown of the various elements that were considered in assessing each of these six criteria.

## Immediate Outcome 1.2

Immediate Outcome 1.2: Strengthened technical capabilities within MoE and other relevant ministries working in conjunction with MoEs to mainstream gender equality in education, including in emergency contexts		
Performance indicators	Data collection methods and data sources that provided information to establish the baseline value	Baseline
1.2a Number and position of staff at MoE and other relevant Ministries who report using in daily work new knowledge and skills acquired through training on mainstreaming gender equality in education, including in emergency contexts	Key Informant Interview Review of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2020 ESA</li> </ul>	1 staff member: Assistant Director of the Gender Unit at the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE)

Assessment of this indicator relied on the most recent information available from 2019 to July 2020. There is limited evidence from available documents and stakeholder consultation that Sierra Leone has recently had - or currently has - significant programmes or initiatives which provided training to ministerial representatives on mainstreaming gender equality in education (including in emergency contexts) over the past year. Sierra Leone participated in GRESP workshops in Togo and Nairobi, where participants were provided with GRESP guidance, as well as the reflection tools linked with each module to analyze the situation for gender and education in Sierra Leone. These are intended to be used in preparation of the next ESP. However, no information is available on the current status of the use of these tools nor on the extent to which GRESP workshop participants reported using newly acquired knowledge or skills in their daily work.

The ESA conducted in 2020 noted that one staff member at the MBSSE (the Assistant Director of the Gender Unit) was the only officer at the ministry with training in mainstreaming GE in education. As such, the baseline value for 1.2a in Sierra Leone was recorded as one staff member.

## Immediate Outcome 1.3

Immediate Outcome 1.3: Strengthened capacity of MoE to change internal organizational culture to advance gender equality		
Performance indicators	Data collection methods and data sources that provided information to establish the baseline value	Baseline
1.3a Number and type of (new) actions taken by senior MoE decision- and policy-makers reflecting a commitment to strengthen or institutionalize mainstreaming GE	Key Informant Interview Review of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ESA (2020)</li> <li>▪ Strategy for the reduction of adolescent pregnancies and child marriage (2018-2022)</li> <li>▪ Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy (2020)</li> <li>▪ Chenor Bah column in <i>All Africa</i> (27 March 2020)</li> </ul>	6 new actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increased recruitment of female staff, including in leadership positions;</li> <li>2. 10-year ban on pregnant girls attending school overturned;</li> <li>3. Task Force on School-related GBV was launched;</li> <li>4. Development of the national strategy for the reduction of adolescent pregnancies and child marriage;</li> </ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Minutes of the SLeGEN meeting (28 September 2020)</li> <li>▪ MBSSE and MTHE websites</li> <li>▪ World Bank Implementation report of the Free Education Project (June 2020)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. 2020 incentive policy to improve girls' retention in schools passed;</li> <li>6. Development of a Radical Inclusion policy.</li> </ul>
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Assessment of this indicator relied on the most recent information available from 2019 to July 2020. Six new actions related to gender equality in education were identified as having been taken during this period, including:

1. Increased recruitment of female staff at the MBSSE, including in leadership positions through an ongoing \$50 million project funded by the World Bank and IrishAid. The project provides resources for the recruitment of a gender specialist. Other recruitment processes to this end have also reportedly begun.
2. On March 30, 2020, the government lifted the ban on pregnant girls attending school and sitting exams in anticipation of the nationwide closure of schools in light of COVID-19. Many of school-aged girls who became pregnant during the Ebola crisis never returned to the classroom largely due to the ban, so this measure is intended to alleviate a similar negative outcome in the context of other disease outbreaks such as COVID-19 and prevent further violation of girls' educational rights. Following the decision to lift the ban, the Education Minister has announced that the MBSSE will lead a collaborative and consultative process to develop a comprehensive policy whereby it will set out its vision of "radical inclusion" and "comprehensive safety" in which "all children are encouraged and supported to realize their right to universal education, without discrimination."<sup>16</sup>
3. The Task Force on School-related GBV was launched in December 2019 by the MBSSE at the request of the President (partly in response to the ECOWAS ruling<sup>17</sup>), and aims to address orders from the regional court to integrate sexual and reproductive health rights classes into the national school curriculum, developing strategies to address stigma and discrimination against pregnant girls.
4. The 2018-2022 Strategy for the reduction of adolescent pregnancies and child marriage involves the five-line ministries of Health and Sanitation; Basic and Senior Secondary Education, Science and Technology; Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs; Youth Affairs; and Local Government and Rural Development. The Strategy includes key actions for capacity building, such as the MBSSE working with District Education Offices to ensure: the Teacher Code of Conduct is enforced in all schools; the monitoring and implementation of laws and policies that protect adolescents from early pregnancy and child marriage; setting up school-based clinics; and creating an enabling school environment (e.g. CSE, counselling, sanitation facilities, support for girls' enrolment and retention).
5. In June 2020, the Cabinet passed an incentive policy to improve girls' retention in schools.
6. President Maada Bio of Sierra Leone recently announced a "radical inclusion" approach to education, under the leadership of the new Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (Dr. Moinina Sengeh), calling for a genuinely evidence-based policy. In response, Dr. Sengeh has

<sup>16</sup> See a copy of public statement of the President here (source accessed on November 9, 2020): <https://twitter.com/dsengeh/status/1244597164799655936/photo/1>

<sup>17</sup> In December 2019, a regional court held that Sierra Leone's ban on visibly pregnant girls from attending school and sitting exams was discriminatory and the Community Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) ordered that the policy be revoked with immediate effect.

constituted a broad-based Task Force, together with other ministries, civil society and academia among others to draft a new policy that will guarantee all girls full access to their education and schooling rights. The CSO Purposeful and coalition members are working on innovative ways to bring girls into the process to co-design and validate the policy for them, with them.

### Immediate Outcome 1.4

Immediate Outcome 1.4: Strengthened leadership by MoE for inter-ministerial and cross-sectoral dialogue and coordination to address demand- and supply-side barriers to gender equality in education		
Performance indicators	Data collection methods and data sources that provided information to establish the baseline value	Baseline
1.4a Evidence of MoE collaboration and coordination with other ministries/units/agencies in support of initiatives that are critical to gender equality in education	<p>Key Informant Interview</p> <p>Review of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National Gender Strategic Plan (2019-2023)</li> <li>▪ National Action Plan (2019-2021)</li> <li>▪ National Strategy for the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy and Child Marriage (2018-2022)</li> <li>▪ COVID-19 Education Response Plan</li> </ul>	<p>Evidence available:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. National Gender Strategic Plan (2019-2023) developed by the Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs (MGCA).</li> <li>2. National Action Plan (2019-2021).</li> <li>3. National Strategy for the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy and Child Marriage (2018-2022).</li> <li>4. Task force on School-related GBV.</li> <li>5. International Women’s Day (2019) event organized by MGCA in collaboration with MBSSE.</li> <li>6. Meeting of the National Women’s Conference (2019).</li> <li>7. MBSSE and partners working together with Gender and Family Support Units of the Sierra Leone Police at regional and district levels and media agencies (SLBC, Premier Media).</li> </ol>

Assessment of this indicator relied on information available from 2019 to July 2020. Overall, there is notable evidence of collaboration between the MoEs and the other ministries, as follows:

1. Developed by the Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs (MGCA), the National Gender Strategic Plan (2019-2023) addresses gender in education. Specific actions related to education involve partnerships with both Ministries of Education for improving opportunities for women in STEM discipline, as well as providing educational opportunities for marginalized and vulnerable women.
2. The National Action Plan (2019-2021) provides milestones for the Free Quality School Education (FQSE) initiative, which has a focus on improving girls’ education although none of the milestones have an explicit gender component. Key state actors involved includes MBSSE, other ministries and agencies (e.g. Ministry of Information and Communication, Ministry of Lands, Teaching Service Commission, Attorney General and Ministry of Justice Office, Parliamentary Committee on Primary Education and the Cabinet Secretariat).
3. The National Strategy for the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy and Child Marriage (2018-2022) involves the coordination and collaboration of five different ministries, including the Ministry of Basic Education (MBSSE), the Ministry of Gender (MGCA), the Ministry of Youth Affairs, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, and the Ministry of Health and Sanitation.
4. The MBSSE launched a task force on sexual and reproductive health in collaboration with other ministries.

5. The 2019 International Women’s Day event had a focus on education and touched on the issue of gender mainstreaming within the education sector. The event was organized by MGCA, with the Assistant Director for Gender of MBSSE in attendance, reflecting an example of collaboration between MGCA and MBSSE.
6. The 2019 meeting of the National Women’s Conference was attended by MBSSE, MGCA, a representative from Parliament as well as other organizations and agencies.
7. In the context of the COVID-19 Education Response Plan, the partnership between MBSSE, its partners and the Gender and Family Support Units of the Sierra Leone Police prioritizes the safeguarding of girls during the COVID-19 pandemic by addressing continued participation in education and prevention/response to GBV.

## Intermediate Outcome 2

Intermediate Outcome 2: Improved education sector enabling environment in support of MoE’s efforts in gender equality mainstreaming in and through education		
Performance indicators	Data collection methods and data sources that provided information to establish the baseline value	Baseline
2a Degree to which Annual Joint Sector Review aide-mémoires include references to GE in education	Review of the JSR aide-mémoire (2015)	Satisfactory

The degree to which annual JSR aides-mémoires include references to GE in education was assessed based on a four-point scale: Significant = numerous references/cross-cutting integration of GE; Satisfactory = evidence of integration of GE but not cross-cutting; Limited = some references to GE; Unsatisfactory = no or very few references to GE.

The most recent JSR aide-mémoire available (2015) outlines the main recommendations agreed to at the 2015 JSR, as well government and donors’ main commitments. Out of the 30 recommendations provided, three specifically target gender and/or girls’ education, with another two recommendations specifying both boys and girls as the targets of the recommendations and the rest do not specify gender at all.

Within the JSR aide-mémoire, several commitments were made by the government and development partners. Among these, only DFID’s commitment specifically targets girls’ education, with no mention of gender by the government, EU, GPE or other education development partners.

The JSR aide-mémoire was thus found to have integrated GE by including some recommendations targeting girls’ education and the inclusion of a GE-focused commitment on the part of a bilateral donor. However, GE was not referenced in the aide-mémoire as a cross-cutting theme or issue. As such, the baseline value for indicator 2a was considered ‘satisfactory’.

## Immediate Outcome 2.1

<b>Immediate Outcome 2.1: Strengthened capacity of national- and local-level civil society organizations, including youth-led organizations, to undertake effective evidence-based policy advocacy, campaigning and programming on GE in education</b>		
<b>Performance indicators</b>	<b>Data collection methods and data sources that provided information to establish the baseline value</b>	<b>Baseline</b>
<b>2.1a</b> Number of references to CSO policy positions/actions, campaigning and programming on GE in education, in LEG Annual GCI Update		Baseline will be collected in late 2021, when each country completes its GCI LEG Annual Report
<b>2.1b</b> Number of coordination meetings held by education-oriented CSOs focusing on GE in education	Review of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender at the Centre Initiative, Minutes of the GCI CSO meeting, July 2020</li> <li>Email correspondence among CSOs</li> </ul>	2 meetings held
<b>2.1c</b> Number of LEG meetings attended by CSO representatives	Education Development Partners (EDP) meeting minutes, 6 June 2019	1 meeting attended

As LEG annual GCI updates will only be produced once implementation of GCI effectively begins in Year 1, the baseline for indicator 2.1a will be collected in late 2021, once each country completes its GCI LEG Annual Report. Baseline values for indicators 2.1b and 2.1c were based on information available from 2019 to July 2020.

For indicator 2.1b, two CSO-led meetings were held during the baseline review period (i.e. 2019 to July 2020) which focused on GE in education:

- Based on email correspondences among in-country stakeholders, the Universalia team found that a CSO-led meeting which focused on GRESP and the inclusion of a gender analysis in the country's ESA was held in December 2019. The meeting prompted subsequent discussion among attendees on the establishment of a gender and education working group.
- In July 2020, a meeting was convened by CSOs in Sierra Leone to discuss the development of a proposal for the GCI. This meeting involved the participation of representatives from the Education for All – Sierra Leone (EFA-SL) Coalition, Plan International, as well representatives from the MBSSE. The meeting involved the identification of activities within the country's education emergency response plan to be included in the proposal (such as the production of learning materials and radio talk shows on protection of girls) that could be implemented by meeting participants

With respect to indicator 2.1c, one meeting of the Education Development Partners (EDP) held on 6 June 2019 was found to have been attended by representatives from the EFA-SL, as well as international NGOs such as Save the Children, Plan International, World Vision and Handicap International.

## Immediate Outcome 2.2

Immediate Outcome 2.2: Improved coordination for GE in education through LEGs, under the leadership of MoE		
Performance indicators	Data collection methods and data sources that provided information to establish the baseline value	Baseline
<b>2.2a</b> LEG scores in 8 countries on the revised (with gender integrated) “ <b>LEG Self-Assessment and Performance Feedback</b> ” tool (developed by GPE)		Baseline will be collected in late 2021/early 2022, when the GCI facilitates gender-integrated LEG Self-Assessments in the 8 countries
<b>2.2b</b> Number of GE-focused LEG meetings or sessions	Reviewed minutes for EDP meeting held on 6 June 2019 did not provide relevant supporting data Key Informant Interview	0 GE-focused LEG meetings or sessions

The LEG Self-Assessment and Performance Feedback tool was not yet ready to be used in Sierra Leone nor the seven other participating countries at the time of the baseline data collection.

For indicator 2.2b, the Universalia team received the meeting minutes for one EDP meeting held on 6 June 2019. Based on a review of these minutes, there was no evidence to suggest that the meeting focused on GE in education, and the minutes do not include any mention of gender or girls education. Further to this, a stakeholder interviewed noted that gender is not a standard agenda item of LEG meetings. Hence, the baseline value for indicator 2.2b is set at zero, as no GE-focused EDP meetings were found to have taken place during the baseline review period (2019 to July 2020).

## Immediate Outcome 2.3

Immediate Outcome 2.3: Improved policy and practice dialogue for GE in education at national, continental, and global levels		
Performance indicators	Data collection methods and data sources that provided information to establish the baseline value	Baseline
<b>2.3a</b> Number and focus of joint policy and practice statements on GE in education by education sector actors at national, continental and global levels	Facebook page of the MBSSE Facebook page of the British High Commission in Freetown	2 statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Statement reiterating UK’s commitment to supporting the Government of Sierra Leone to make progress on girls’ access to education (October 2019)</li> <li>▪ Co-chairing of a global conversation by the MBSSE and GPE, focusing on girls’ education in the context of COVID-19 (May 2020)</li> </ul> Focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Girls’ access to education</li> <li>▪ Retention of girls in education systems in the context of COVID-19</li> </ul>

<p><b>2.3b</b> Number and type of alliances, partnerships, and networks for policy and practice on GE in education created/strengthened at national, continental, and global levels</p>	<p>Review of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ World Bank Free Education Project Information Document, 2019</li> <li>▪ MBSSE website</li> <li>▪ DFID, Leh Wi Lan implementation reports, 2019 and 2020</li> <li>▪ MBSSE Report on Strategic Partnership Meeting in districts (2020)</li> <li>▪ SLeGEN meeting minutes, September 2020, July 2019</li> <li>▪ UNFPA website</li> <li>▪ Facebook pages of Save the Children Sierra Leone, ActionAid Sierra Leone, Purposeful, the British High Commission in Freetown and Plan International Sierra Leone</li> </ul>	<p>9 alliances, partnerships and networks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Multi Donor Trust Fund administered by the World Bank - Free Education Project (July 2019)</li> <li>▪ Hands Off Our Girls Campaign launched by Save the Children with various stakeholders involved (November 2019)</li> <li>▪ Sexual Reproductive Health Taskforce – co-chaired by the Chief Education Officer of the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education and the UNFPA Sierra Leone Country Representative (December 2019)</li> <li>▪ Partnership between representatives from NGOs/CSOs working on education and the Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education to discuss issues of collaboration and support to the Education Sector in Sierra Leone (January 2020)</li> <li>▪ DFID Sierra Leone video message on the importance of girls’ education and drawing attention to their ongoing support through the Leh Wi Lan education initiative in collaboration with the Government (March 2020)</li> <li>▪ Purposeful collaborated with Equality Now, WAVES SL, Defence for Children, Child Welfare Society, She’s the First, Amnesty International Sierra Leone and all the members of the Coalition for Girls Education to push the Government to lift the ban on pregnant girls in schools (March 2020)</li> <li>▪ Plan International Sierra Leone through the Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) launched the Girls Get Equal campaign with several stakeholders involved (March 2020)</li> <li>▪ Sierra Leone Girls’ Education Network (SLeGEN) (regular meetings 2019-2020)</li> <li>▪ Strategic partnership between MBSSE, MGCA, and Leh Wi Lan on girls’ education in the context of COVID-19 (May 2020)</li> </ul>
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Information to inform the baseline value for indicator 2.3a focused on joint policy and practice statements on GE in education made during the baseline review period (i.e. 2019 to July 2020). Based on a search of the websites and social media platforms of education sector actors in Sierra Leone (e.g. MoE, CSOs and multilateral and bilateral donors), two joint policy and practice statements on GE in education were found to have been made during the baseline review period:

- Facebook post by the British High Commission in Sierra Leone following a visit by the UK’s International Ambassador for Human Rights and Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN in

Geneva to the country. The visit entailed meetings held in October 2019 with the Human Rights Commission, the Sierra Leone Police and members of Civil Society and NGOs in the country. The Facebook post contained a statement which reiterated the UK's commitment to supporting Sierra Leone's government to further progress on the human rights of women and girls, highlighting the significance of girls' access to quality education in achieving this.

- Co-chairing of an online global conversation by the MBSSE and GPE, which involved the participation of Ministers of Education from other GPE partner countries. The event focused on girls' education and the continuation of education in the context of COVID-19 in May 2020.

With regards to indicator 2.3b, the Universalia team reviewed relevant documents and conducted a search of the websites and social media platforms of various education sector actors for information that evidences alliances, partnerships and networks focused on policy and practice in GE in education that were either created or found to be active during the baseline review period (i.e. 2019 to July 2020). In Sierra Leone, nine alliances, partnerships and networks were found, which were included in the country-level baseline value for indicator 2.3b:

- The Multi Donor Trust Fund established in 2019, which supports the implementation of the Free Education project (contains a specific component on gender equality) and which receives contributions from the World Bank, DFID, Irish Aid and the EU;
- Launch of the Hands Off Our Girls campaign by Save the Children and the government of Sierra Leone in November 2019. The launch event of the campaign was attended by the First Lady and President of Sierra Leone, and entailed a national sensitization tour focused on raising awareness on sexual-based GBV, early marriage and teenage pregnancy as barriers to girls' education;
- Establishment of the Sexual Reproductive Health Taskforce in December 2019, which is co-chaired by the MBSSE and the UNFPA Sierra Leone Country Representative, and made up of education practitioners, donors, partners, civil society, local council, religious and community leaders in Sierra Leone. The Taskforce aims to develop policy on access to education for pregnant adolescent girls, identify bottlenecks in girls' access to education, and establish a curriculum for comprehensive sexuality education;
- Discussion on the need for collective efforts in SRGBV in schools by representatives of Oxfam, ActionAid, EFA, Community Action for the Restoration of Lives (CARL) and Save the Children in January 2020. The discussion focused on issues of collaboration and support in GE in the education sector in Sierra Leone. Specific themes included malpractices in examination administration and sexual-based GBV against girls in schools;
- "Leh Wi Lan" joint initiative between DFID and the Sierra Leone government. The joint initiative has been ongoing since 2017 and aims to improve learning outcomes in English and mathematics among Sierra Leonean secondary school students, with a particular focus on girls and students with disabilities. The joint initiative was active during the baseline review period, with the British High Commission in Sierra Leone posting a video message on their Facebook page reiterating their support to the initiative in collaboration with the government in March 2020;
- Collaboration between Purposeful, Equality Now, WAVES SL, Defence for Children, Child Welfare Society, She's the First, Amnesty International Sierra Leone and all members of the Coalition for Girls' Education to advocate and apply pressure on the government to lift the ban on pregnant girls in schools (which was later realized in March 2020);
- Launching of the Girls Get Equal campaign in March 2020 by Plan International's Youth Advisory Panel in Sierra Leone, which involves the MGCA, as well as youth groups, and regional and district level

leaders. The campaign aims to address structural violence against girls by increasing the visibility of issues such as access to education for pregnant girls, the need for a law to ban child marriage, and the need for increases in budget allocations to the MGCA for interventions aimed at addressing sexual exploitation and abuse;

- The Sierra Leone Girls' Education Network (SLeGEN) held meetings in 2019 and 2020, and is comprised of representatives from the MBSSE, the MGCA, UNICEF, Purposeful, Save the Children, One Family People, CODE and Street Child. Meetings focused on sharing the progress of GE-focused activities currently implemented by each organization, as well as the coordination of actions for future GE-focused activities (e.g. distribution of hygiene kits, organization of events to commemorate the International Day of the Girl-Child);
- Strategic partnership between MBSSE, MGCA, and Leh Wi Lan on girls' education in the context of COVID-19 established in May 2020. The partnership aims to raise awareness on teenage pregnancy, develop interventions to prevent GBV, improve collaboration on enhanced responses to expose perpetrators of GBV and protect victims, as well as to mobilize resources for the implementation of MBSSE interventions.

**For consideration to be included in GCI monitoring for Year 1 of the Initiative:** Through a search of education sector actors' websites and social media profiles, Universalialia also found relevant supporting information for joint statements that were made outside of the baseline review time period cut-off point (i.e. July 2020) for indicators 2.3a and 2.3b, and thus could not be considered as a data source informing the baseline value. However, relevant data contained in these sources of information could be considered to measure progress against this indicator for the GCI monitoring exercise to be conducted after the first full year of implementation.

For indicator 2.3a:

- Statements made by the Child Protection Specialist of Plan International Sierra Leone, a representative of a district-level government representative, and a secondary school principal following the distribution of 1,200 radios to girls in the school in August 2020. The distribution of radios was jointly undertaken by Plan International and the MBSSE, with statements made by the stakeholders highlighting the importance of the radios in girls' retention as a means for them to listen to radio teaching programs in the context of COVID-19.

For indicator 2.3b:

- In September 2020, IrishAid, UNFPA and UNICEF announced their collaboration in providing back-to-school kits to 1,000 girls in COVID-19 affected districts in Sierra Leone. The provision of the kits was aimed to support the re-opening of schools in the country and ensure continued access to education for girls in the context of the pandemic.

## Immediate Outcome 2.4

<b>Immediate Outcome 2.4:</b> Improved coordination and collaboration among global GCI Alliance Development Partners (DPs) to advance GE in and through education		
<b>Performance indicators</b>	<b>Data collection methods and data sources that provided information to establish the baseline value</b>	<b>Baseline</b>
<b>2.4a</b> Number and focus of joint statements on GE in education by GCI Alliance DPs	EU, Irish Aid, DFID and World Bank, Joint donor position on the current ban on pregnant schoolgirls attending school and taking examinations, August 2019	1 statement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Joint donor position on the ban of pregnant girls attending school and taking examinations (August 2019)</li> </ul>
<b>2.4b</b> Number and focus of joint publications on GE in education produced by GCI Alliance DPs	Search of: Websites of GCI Alliance DPs	Research did not uncover any DP joint publications regarding this country.  Baseline value = 0.

With regards to indicator 2.4a, one joint statement by GCI alliance DPs on GE in education was made during the baseline review period (i.e. 2019 to July 2020). In August 2019, the European Union, Irish Aid, Department for International Development (DFID) and the World Bank produced a joint donor position on the ban of pregnant girls attending school and taking examinations.

For indicator 2.4b, no baseline value could be established despite two attempts at collecting and analyzing relevant sources of information. Relevant supporting data to measure progress against indicator 2.4b will likely only emerge during the first full year of GCI implementation.

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