



# Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education Inclusive Data Charter Action Plan

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Updated November 2024

## 1. Background

In February 2019, the **Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE)** of Sierra Leone took a bold step toward fostering inclusivity and equity in education by adopting the **Inclusive Data Charter (IDC)**. This framework, aligned with the global **'Leave No One Behind'** agenda, commits to improving data-driven decision-making to support equitable access to quality education for all. The IDC serves as a vital tool to identify and address disparities, monitor progress, and enhance accountability in the education sector, particularly for marginalised groups such as girls, children with disabilities, and those in remote or underserved areas.

The adoption of the IDC underscored the Ministry's recognition of the transformative power of data in shaping policy and practice. It set forth key objectives, including promoting equity in education, ensuring improved access for underserved communities, upholding quality assurance, and fostering accountability through transparent governance.

This commitment aligns with global efforts to enhance data disaggregation and promote evidence-based decision-making. By becoming an IDC Champion, the MBSSE pledges to:

1. Strengthen the quality and inclusiveness of education data in Sierra Leone.

2. Foster stakeholder collaboration to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
3. Advocate for broader adoption of the IDC principles among governments and organisations worldwide.

The IDC Action Plan outlines the Ministry's commitment to implementing the five principles of the Charter, which are as follows:

- **Principle 1:** Include all populations recognised and protected by Sierra Leonean law in data collection.
- **Principle 2:** Disaggregate data to accurately represent all populations.
- **Principle 3:** Draw data from diverse sources to ensure comprehensiveness.
- **Principle 4:** Promote accountability among data collectors and statisticians.
- **Principle 5:** Strengthen human and technical capacity for disaggregated data collection and use.

This revised Action Plan is a roadmap to support Sierra Leone's development priorities. It emphasises improving education data to enhance enrolment, attendance, and learning achievements. It is a living document that will evolve to reflect emerging priorities.

## 2. Introduction

On November 19–20, 2024, the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE), in collaboration with the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (Global Partnership) and Sightsavers, convened a National Stakeholders Workshop at the Atlantic Hotel, Freetown. The workshop included 30 representatives from key sectors: government, civil society, academia, the disability community, development partners, the private sector, and the media. The workshop was a collaborative platform for reviewing and updating Sierra Leone's Inclusive Data Charter (IDC) Action Plan.

The workshop aimed to review and update Sierra Leone's Inclusive Data Charter (IDC) Action Plan of 2019/2020 to ensure alignment with the *BIG 5* national priorities and MBSSE's strategic objectives. Recognising the importance of inclusive and data-driven approaches to education, the workshop focused on the following goals:

- Revisiting the IDC Action Plan to integrate emerging national development priorities.

- Strengthening partnerships across sectors to enhance resource mobilisation, expertise sharing, and inclusive education.
- Building consensus on key priorities for advancing gender and disability inclusion within the education sector.
- Developing a robust monitoring framework to ensure accountability and track progress.

The discussions highlighted critical gaps and challenges impeding the effective collection and use of education data, including:

1. Data gaps, especially in other disability types, out-of-school children and access issues in remote areas.
2. Capacity constraints among data collectors, analysts and practitioners within the Ministry.
3. Limited capacity and resources for evidence-based policy-making, implementation and dissemination/popularisation.
4. Insufficient infrastructure, including digital tools and internet access.

In response, the workshop outlined strategic objectives to address these gaps and challenges, and these include

- Expanding disaggregated data production by gender, other disability types, geography, and income to close gaps and ensure targeted interventions.
- Scaling up capacity-building initiatives on data management to strengthen collection/production, analysis and use
- Enhancing the accessibility and transparency of education data to support evidence-based policymaking by improving resources for implementing and popularising policies.
- Enhancing interoperable data and digital infrastructure for data collection and management
- Strengthening the Education Data Working Group to improve stakeholder coordination and reduce inefficiencies.

The updated IDC Action Plan will integrate Sierra Leone's *BIG 5* priorities, particularly:

- **Human Capital Development:** Strengthening the link between education and workforce readiness.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** Ensuring that no child is left behind, with a focus on gender, geography, and disability.

### 3. Current Work and Commitments

The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) is advancing inclusivity and equity in Sierra Leone's education sector by leveraging data and aligning with the national development **BIG Five** priorities. These commitments focus on advancing human capital development, with education as a central pillar, targeting access, quality, and equity, particularly for marginalised groups.

#### Current Work

##### a. Enhanced Data Disaggregation for Equity

MBSSE reported in November 2024 that there is significant progress in leveraging disaggregated data to address disparities in the education sector:

- **Gender Parity Index (GPI):** Notable progress has been achieved, with girls comprising 51% (1,708,420) of total enrollments compared to boys at 49% (1,635,050). Girls outnumber boys at all educational levels, reflecting efforts to close gender gaps.
- **Inclusion of Children with Special Needs:** Preliminary data collection on students with disabilities is providing a foundation for tailored interventions.
- **Regional Equity:** Improved enrollment data, disaggregated by region, enables targeted support for underserved communities.

##### b. Real-Time Data Accessibility and Decision-Making

The Ministry has operationalised tools to enhance decision-making and transparency:

- **Dashboards: Policymakers can now access real-time data to make** informed decisions, including enrollment trends and resource allocation.
- **Prioritisation Tool:** which provides decision support to enable school construction and renovation decisions, addressing regional disparities.
- **Teacher Deployment Tool:** Facilitates equitable distribution of teachers, ensuring underserved areas have access to qualified educators.

##### c. Stakeholder Collaboration through the Education Data Working Group (EDWG)

The EDWG brings together key stakeholders, including government, development partners, and civil society, to:

- Harmonise data collection and sharing efforts, reducing duplication and inefficiencies.

- Align initiatives with national priorities and the *BIG 5* development framework.
- Share resources and expertise to address systemic challenges

## Commitments

MBSSE remains steadfast in addressing persistent challenges and advancing its goals under the *BIG 5* commitments, mainly to deliver accessible, high-quality education via:

### a. **Expanding Access and Equity**

Aligned with the *BIG 5* objectives of ensuring universal access to education, MBSSE is working to:

- Expand enrollment in marginalised communities by addressing barriers such as poverty, distance, and gender bias.
- Increase the inclusion of children with disabilities through targeted programs informed by data.

### b. **Improving Data Systems**

To address challenges such as fragmented data collection and reliance on outdated systems, the Ministry is committed to:

- Transitioning to fully digitalised data platforms to replace paper-based systems.
- Enhancing the Education Management Information System (EMIS) to provide timely and reliable data for tracking school performance and outcomes and to aid policy decision-making.

### c. **Building Capacity for Data Management**

MBSSE recognises the importance of skilled personnel in sustaining progress and commits to:

- Providing training programs for data collectors and analysts to ensure high-quality data.
- Equipping schools with digital tools and internet access, particularly in rural areas.

### d. **Aligning with National Development Goals**

#### **4. Monitoring and Evaluation**

To ensure progress, the MBSSE will implement a robust monitoring, evaluation and learning framework, including:

- Regular reviews of the IDC Action Plan by the Data Governance Task Team.
- Transparent reporting on achievements and challenges.
- Periodic updates to the Action Plan to address emerging needs and opportunities.

#### **5. Conclusion**

This revised IDC action plan reaffirms the Ministry's commitment to advancing inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all. By aligning with Sierra Leone's development priorities under the *BIG 5*, the Ministry aims to leverage data to catalyse transformative education outcomes that leave no one behind.

## NATIONAL ACTION PLAN 2025

### 1. Data: Expanding disaggregated data production by gender, other disability types, geography, and income

| Objective  | Actions   | Outcome                                       | Means of Verification   | Partner Organisation  | Timeframe | Fund Source  |
|--|---|---|---|---|-----------|--|
| Expanding disaggregated data production by gender, other disability types, geography, and income to close gaps and ensure target interventions | <p>The Medical Board and the relevant disability specialist organisation should develop a national framework for assessing, classifying, and certifying the types of disability.</p> <p>Develop an assessment guide for use in schools, based on the national framework, to identify types of disability during enrollment.</p> | Data disaggregated for action form developed. | Developed National Framework and Assessment Guide for Identifying and Classifying Disability in school children | Social Welfare, National Commission for Persons with Disability, SLUDI, Schools and other learning institutions | 2025      | Ministry of Finance, Government of Sierra Leone/Education Partners |
| Data gaps on specific goals  | Building the capacity of special needs Teachers in  | Current data has been revised and             | Training manual Logbooks  | Ministry of Finance and Education partner   | 2025      | Ministry of Finance, Government of                                 |

| <b>Objective</b>   | <b>Actions</b>  | <b>Outcome</b>  | <b>Means of Verification</b>  | <b>Partner Organisation</b>   | <b>Timeframe</b> | <b>Fund Source</b>   |
|--|---|---|---|---|------------------|--|
| and deliverables   | the teachers' training institutions to be able to teach and train teachers and conduct in-service training for teachers   | enhanced, and the capacity of staff and teachers has been strengthened.                               | M& E Report   |   |                  | Sierra Leone/Education Partners                                    |
| Improve data storage capacity for reporting and record management      | Build capacity for data storage and records management  | Data storage and management improved  | Data hub  | Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education/Education partners | 2026             | Ministry of Finance, Government of Sierra Leone/Education Partners |
| Establish an M&E unit to ensure a robust institution-wide M&E practice | Stakeholders' engagement on the significance of an independent M&E unit<br><br>Establish an M&E unit for the entire MBSSE/Education sector.<br><br>Recruit trained and qualified personnel. | M& E unit established.<br><br>Guaranteed delivery and impact of programs and policies of the ministry | SOP Policy Meeting minute Recruitment manual and report Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy in place | Development Partners  | 2025             | Ministry of Finance, Government of Sierra Leone/Education Partners |
| Improve Data Accessibility   | Publish data in machine-readable and user-friendly  | Data accessibility improved   | SOP and Policy  | Development Partners  | 2026             | Ministry of Finance, Government of                                 |

| <b>Objective</b> | <b>Actions</b>  | <b>Outcome</b> | <b>Means of Verification</b>   | <b>Partner Organisation</b> | <b>Timeframe</b> | <b>Fund Source</b>              |
|------------------|---|----------------|--|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|
|                  | formats for all classes of disabilities. Create more secure Networks (Data and Technology Systems) to support digital transformation and data exchange. |                | Framework for data publication and data exchange<br><br>Meeting report |                             |                  | Sierra Leone/Education Partners |

## 2. Capacity building: scaling up capacity-building initiatives on data management

| <b>Objective</b>                                    | <b>Actions</b>  | <b>Outcome</b> | <b>Means of Verification</b>  | <b>Partner Organisation</b>   | <b>Timeframe</b> | <b>Fund Source</b>  |
|---|---|----------------|---|---|------------------|---|
| Train and retain to enhance skilled human resources | Conduct a training needs assessment and Training of Trainers for different cadres of officers.<br><br>Recruitment of trained handlers |                | Training Materials, Training Report, Number of Minutes of meetings held | Sight Savers, World Bank, UNICEF, Other UN Agencies, Council, Statistic SL, Fab Inc | 2025             | Sight Savers, UNICEF, Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office |
| Strengthen capacity for knowledge                   | Link internal experts with external experts for capacity  |                | Capacity building reports, Reports on                                   | Human Resource Management Office, Ministry of Finance, Planning and                 | 2025             | Sight Savers, UNICEF, Foreign and Commonwealth                    |

| <b>Objective</b>  | <b>Actions</b>  | <b>Outcome</b>                            | <b>Means of Verification</b>  | <b>Partner Organisation</b>   | <b>Timeframe</b>     | <b>Fund Source</b>  |
|---|---|---|---|---|----------------------|---|
| management and transfer   | strengthening through mentorship/fellowships<br><br>Evaluate retirees' contributions to review their service extension.                                 |   | specific knowledge transferred, Reports of technical workshops                            | Economic Development, National Agency for Monitoring and Evaluation   |                      | Development Office  |
| Build capacity in enhancing gender-sensitive programming and mainstreaming in all policies.   | Conduct a comprehensive audit of education sector delivery plans and policies to assess their gender sensitivity.                                       |   | Gender audit report   | Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs, UN agencies, Civil Society Organisations | 2025                 | Sight Savers, UNICEF, Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office |
| Strengthen the capacity of teachers and handlers to identify special needs children and the requirement for accessible and inclusive education. | Evaluate the special needs unit's current skills, tools, and processes to inform the capacity-building needs of teachers and handlers.<br><br>Build the | Needs assessment report with gap analysis | Number of Meetings held on this issue, Minutes of meeting, Actual report of the appraisal | Sight Savers, World Bank, UNICEF, Other UN Agencies, Council  | Short to medium term | Sight Savers, UNICEF, Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office |

| <b>Objective</b>  | <b>Actions</b>  | <b>Outcome</b>                              | <b>Means of Verification</b>  | <b>Partner Organisation</b>   | <b>Timeframe</b>     | <b>Fund Source</b>  |
|---|---|---|---|---|----------------------|---|
|   | capacity of Guidance counsellors, Inclusive Champions, and school mentors to identify and work with children and pupils with special needs. |   |   |   |                      |   |
| Provide Digital Tools and Equipment   | Supply tablets, software, or other digital devices to aid data management activities and processes  | Digital tools are distributed and in use.   | Technical reports on the assessment of tablets, software and digital devices. | Sight Savers, World Bank, UNICEF, CSO/OPDS, Other UN Agencies, Council (Oversight | Short to medium term | Sight Savers, UNICEF, Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office |
| Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the various training activities. | Track and assess the effectiveness and impact of the various capacity-building activities.  | M&E reports with actionable recommendations | M&E Reports on training impact  | Sight Savers, World Bank, UNICEF, Other UN Agencies, Council                      | Continuous           | Sight Savers, UNICEF, Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office |

### 3. Policy: enhancing the accessibility and transparency of education data

| Objective   | Actions   | Outcome  | Means of Verification  | Partner Organisation   | Timeframe | Fund Source   |
|---|---|--|--|--|-----------|---|
| Policy: enhancing the accessibility and transparency of education data to support evidence-based policymaking by improving technical capacity and resources for implementing and popularising policies. |   | Establishment of a Centralised Education Data Repository                   |  |  | 2025      | Government of Sierra Leone, World Bank, UNESCO, Education Partners. |
| Development of an Education Management Information Policy   | Development, ratification and dissemination of an Education Management Information Policy<br><br>Development of | Increased Stakeholders' awareness & access to Disaggregated Education Data | Availability of the Policy Specify target audiences and dissemination formats, | All MDAS, including the Law Officers Dept, The Police, ONS NCRA, Stats SL, Civil society, and Community stakeholders, OPDs | 2025      | Government of Sierra Leone, World Bank, UNESCO, Education Partners. |

| Objective                                     | Actions   | Outcome   | Means of Verification   | Partner Organisation  | Timeframe | Fund Source   |
|---|---|---|---|---|-----------|---|
|   | an Implementation Plan for the Education Management Information Policy  |   | including Braille, large print (bold), audio recordings, and audio-visuals Attendance lists, reports or meeting minutes. Implementation plan & M&E report |   |           |   |
| Development of a data strategy for education- | Assessment of the data readiness and governance structure, capacity and roles of stakeholders in the education sector, as well as for implementing the policy | Sector Data strategy to inform capacity development in data governance and management.<br><br>Annual Review of Policy | Available Data Policy or Legal Framework document.<br><br>Reports from radio discussions<br><br>Recording and reports                                     | All MDAS, including the Law Officers Dept, The Police, ONS NCRA, Stats SL, Civil society, and Community stakeholders, Community engagement through FGDs and radio discussions | 2025      | Government of Sierra Leone, World Bank, UNESCO, Education Partners. |

| Objective  | Actions   | Outcome   | Means of Verification  | Partner Organisation  | Timeframe | Fund Source   |
|--|---|---|--|---|-----------|---|
|  |   | Implementation Based on Education Data  | of key interviews  |   |           |   |
| Development/ Revision of the National Disability Policy in Education | <p>Development, ratification and dissemination of a Disability Policy for the sector</p> <p>Development of an Implementation Plan for the Disability Policy</p> | A comprehensive framework for inclusive education that ensures equitable access, participation, and learning outcomes for children with disabilities. | <p>Availability of the Policy</p> <p>Identified target audiences and dissemination formats, including Braille, large print (bold), audio recordings, attendance lists, and reports or meeting minutes. Implementation plan</p> | Relevant MDAS, including the Law Officers Dept, The Police, ONS NCRA, Stats SL, Civil society, and Community stakeholders, OPDs | 2025      | Government of Sierra Leone, World Bank, UNESCO, Education Partners. |