

Non-Formal Education Directorate

NFE is presented as an organized, systematic educational provision outside the formal school system, but integral to the educational system, with clearly defined educational objectives and learning clientele.

The objectives of literacy and non-formal education programmes are in very broad term two-fold, namely:

- Acquisition of basic reading, writing and numeracy skills to recognized names, numbers, signs and symbols
- Acquire functional knowledge and skills relating to the promotion of basic human needs, quality of life, fundamental human right and empowerment of women and other vulnerable groups.

Non-formal education programmes consist of mainly adult courses, vocational skills/income generation training, sexual reproductive health and life- skills and education.

There is a set of harmonized curricula produced by MEST covering Literacy, Numeracy, Community Studies and Income Generation . These curricula materials has been infused with many imagining issues including Sexual Reproductive Health/Life Skills Education, Business Skills, Civic education

The content of the programmes mainly include:

- Human rights and good governance
- Democracy and peace education
- Sexual reproductive health/HIV/AIDS and life skills education

These are in addition to work-oriented knowledge, skills and desirable behaviours in agriculture, small-scale enterprises, cottage industries, hygiene and sanitation, home management, food preservation, h, reading and writing in community languages, etc.

The approach in programme delivery is integrative, combining literacy and numeracy skills acquisition with occupational and life skills development, awareness-raising on human rights, good governance, civics rights and responsibilities and religious and moral education.

The mode of delivery combines face-to-face interaction between teachers and learners, radio and TV discussions, community meetings, use of poster, charts, and other information leaflets .

The programmes serve the needs, concerns and interests of diverse groups who include out- of school children, youths, adults, women and girls.

Overall, more women than men are participating in NFE and literacy programmes in the country

Collaboration with other bodies

The Ministry work in collaboration with Non-government organizations such as, the People Educational Association – Sierra Leone (PEASL), the Sierra Leone Adult Education Association (SLADAE), the Institute of Sierra Leonean Languages, Partners Women Commission, Division of Extra Mural Studies

- Develop and implement programmes for Literacy and Non-Formal Educating e.g. Training of Facilitators (Sexual Reproductive Health – SRH).
- Collaborate with relevant bodies in the designing and developing of Teaching Learning Materials and Curriculum for NFE and Adult Education Programmes.
- Design and develop training modules on Adult Literacy Methodologies for facilitators (Adult Literacy Teachers).
- Collaborate with relevant agencies and organization in the management of adult and NFE programmes
- Establishment/strengthening of Adult Literacy Classes and Community Learning Centres.
- Monitoring and supervision of Literacy and NFE programmes
- **Major Activities**
 - Establishment of Community Learning Centres
 - Training of literacy personnel including literacy facilitators ,supervisors and providers of literacy and civic education
 - Review/adaptation /integration of non-formal curriculum
 - Quarterly monitoring visits to literacy and community learning centres

Transition and 6-9 months Recovery programme

Providing a comprehensive package of services to vulnerable children in the context of Ebola

The Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak was declared in Sierra Leone on the 25th May 2014 by the Government of Sierra Leone. The health emergency marked a drastic turn of events that overran and overturned gains recorded in all spheres of life of the country.

The consequence of Ebola viral epidemic has been devastating leading to the loss of almost a whole academic year and jeopardizing the continuation of many school children, particularly adolescent girls, who became pregnant in Sierra Leone.

To effectively address this matter, a working group on Special Needs was set up with participation of various stakeholders. The mandate of this committee includes ensuring that

vulnerable children go back to and stay in school. Of particular interest, in addition to the pregnant girls, are Children with Disabilities (CWDs).

In order to address the situation, MEST, with funding support from Development Partners embarked on the Special Needs Programme. The Programme is two-pronged, aimed at supporting vulnerable children, in particular pregnant school girls and Children with Disabilities (CWDs) (vulnerable children, who are visually, physical, hearing impaired, have learning difficulties or are mentally challenged), to access and complete education).

Support to Pregnant School Girls Establishment of Learning Centres

Based on location of identified pregnant school girls, learning centres were established nationwide, using the following models:

- (1) **Community Learning Centres**
- (2) **School-based interventions**

(1)Community Learning Centres: MEST has 44 Community Learning Centres (CLCs) across the country (mostly at chiefdom level), which focus on literacy and basic skills training but have been utilised to provide education to pregnant girls as a temporary solution while they are not permitted to attend school. The enrolled girls will form study groups based on their education level and will be supported by a trained teacher from upper primary, JSS and SSS depending on the level of the pregnant school girl.

(2)School-based interventions: In cases where no CLC is accessible, girls were enrolled in a study group in their respective schools, outside of schooling hours (afternoon school) . It is important to emphasize that this programme should not be misconstrued as a parallel system to the formal schooling. This is to put in place a bridge with the vision of getting all pregnant adolescents back into school.

Teachers in the learning Centres are engaged to support the girls in their education in four Core subjects for JSS 1 to 3. In the case of SSS pupils, teachers for that level are engaged in coaching in three subjects, namely Mathematics, Language Arts and a science subject.

Content of the curriculum : The core content/accelerated learning curriculum developed by the MEST Accelerated Learning working group formed the basis for the content being taught. Subjects taught at primary level are Mathematics, Language Arts, Environmental Science and Social Studies. Mathematics, Language Arts, Integrated Science and Social Studies are covered by the Junior Secondary School (JSS) whilst Senior Secondary School (SSS) girls access lessons in Mathematics, Language Arts and a Science subject (Biology or Health Science).

In order to support the learning in the centres, a total of 1,000 primary, JSS and SSS teachers (**M,829, F,171**) were identified and oriented in the use of the core content syllabuses drawn from the MEST Accelerated Curriculum. The training took place simultaneously in all 14 district headquarter towns and was facilitated by lecturers and other educationists.

Currently , 8,918 girls are enrolled in 126 learning centres nationwide and are attending 2 hourly lessons three times weekly (Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays). This figure includes those that were pregnant before, during and after during the Ebola crisis, those that are lactating and those that at this time are yet to be classified. The classes are being run for classes 5 and 6 for primary level, JSS 1-3 for Junior Secondary School (JSS) and SSS 1-4 for Senior Secondary School (SSS). Each centre is manned by a centre coordinator who takes care of the centre, collects and documents key data and monitors activities in the centre, including attendance of both girls and teachers. The centre coordinators submit monthly reports to MEST.

The learning centres have been supported with various teaching and learning materials. Specifically, copies of the core content syllabuses drawn from the MEST Accelerated Curriculum have been printed and distributed to the centres for use by the teachers, from which they develop lessons are to be taught. In addition textbooks in 6 subjects for the various levels were also printed and supplied to the learning centres , to be used as reference materials for both teachers . The MEST psycho-social manual were also printed and distributed for use by the teachers in the centre to facilitate their rendering of psycho-social support to the girls.

So far 5,750 girls have expressed desire to return when schools reopen in January 2016. Majority are being enrolled into either their former schools or new schools in all the fourteen districts

Children with Disabilities (CWDs)

With regards to the CWDs, a number of activities also can have also been carried out in order to facilitate enhanced learning for the pupils.

In relation to the Blind and Visually Impaired, there are currently six special schools nationwide catering for the formal education of the blind and visually impaired at primary level. A rapid assessment of these institutions and facilities targeting these special needs groups revealed that there was a dearth of teaching and learning materials to support their learning. Those that are available were either outdated or damaged.

The Educational Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ECBVI) is the only supplier that has an expert team that undertakes the technical task of brailing printed text and procuring teaching and learning materials for the blind. several activities such as provision of Braille Embossed textbooks in various subjects, provision of popular readers in Braille, procurement of Braille writers, procurement and cutting of Braille papers, digital tape recorders and batteries.

With regards to support to the deaf and hearing impaired there are three special schools nationwide catering for the formal education of this group at primary level. The schools were also supported with teaching and learning materials through a specialized supplier of teaching and learning materials for the deaf and hearing impaired, One Family People.

Regarding monitoring and supervision, the Special Needs Working Group was set up at MEST to oversee the activities of the project. The group meets weekly or as and when necessary to plan, discuss progress towards targets and take necessary actions and make recommendations for the refinement of the programme. In order to ensure that planned activities were moving in the

desired direction, periodic monitoring was undertaken by key stakeholders at district and national level and members of the Special Needs Working Group. Key stakeholders included MEST, UNICEF, UNFPA, Irish Aid, Deputy Directors of Education and MEST volunteers.

Areas monitored included teacher training, punctuality and regularity of pregnant school girls and teachers in the learning centres, supply of teaching and learning materials and hygiene kits. Qualitative aspects were also monitored such as lesson delivery, class work and individual assignments and challenges faced by both pregnant school girls and teachers.

Tracking performance management took place at two levels. First the office of the chief of staff through the Presidential delivery team leading to monitoring on weekly or fortnightly basis with support from the coordinators office.

- Mrs. Olive B. Musa – Director and Sam F.O. Koroma (Education Officer, Adult Education)
- Establishment/strengthening of 10 Community Learning Centres and Adult Literacy Classes.
- Establishment of six (6) CLCs in 1st and 2nd quarter.
- Training of 80 (eighty) Literacy Facilitators and 25 Coordinators of CLCs in Integrated sexual Reproductive Health, Literacy and Numeracy in May and July 2014.
- Organize meetings with partners for the for the observance of World Literacy Day, 8th September, 2014
- Conduct airing of literacy jingles, radio and television discussions by facilitators and providers of literacy at national and district levels on the theme: “Literacy for Ebola Prevention” as part of the observance of World Literacy Day week lone celebrations.
- The training was organized in collaboration with UNFPA and Resource persons were drawn from the school of nursing at the Northern Polytechnic, Makeni; Njala University Bo Campus in the Mathematics and Linguistics departments.
- Two (2) trainings were conducted at the Bo Home Economics Centre in Bo district in May 2014 and Panlap Community Learning Centre in Bombali district in July 2014.
- Participants for the Bo training comprised literacy facilitators and CLCs Coordinators from Bo, Bonth, Kenema, Kailahun, Pujehun, Moyamba and part of Tonkolili districts

- The second training organised in July drew participants from Adult Literacy and Community Learning Centres in Bombali, Koinadugu, Kono, Kambia and Tonkolili districts
- The objective of the training was to improve and update participants on the use of the Integrated Sexual Reproductive Health Literacy and Numeracy Modules.