



RESTRUCTURING PAPER  
ON A  
PROPOSED PROJECT RESTRUCTURING  
OF  
SIERRA LEONE FREE EDUCATION PROJECT  
APPROVED ON JUNE 29, 2020  
TO THE  
REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

EDUCATION GLOBAL PRACTICE

WESTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGION

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**ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

AF	Additional Financing
ASC	Annual School Census
CASS	Classroom Assessment
CERC	Contingent Emergency Response Component
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPG	Education Partnership Group
E&S	Environmental and Social
ESP	Education Sector Plan
EU	European Union
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (of the UK)
FCV	Fragility, Conflict, and Violence
FEPS	Free Education Project Secretariat
FM	Financial Management
FQSE	Free Quality School Education
FREE	Sierra Leone Free Education
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HCI	Human Capital Index
IEC	Information, Education, and Communication
IRI	Intermediate Results Indicator
ISR	Implementation Status and Results Report
JSS	Junior Secondary School
LEG	Local Education Group
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MBSSE	Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education
MDTF	Multi-donor Trust Fund
MTHE	Ministry of Technical and Higher Education
NASU	National Assessment Services Unit
NATCOM	National Telecommunications Commission
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OPP	Operations, Planning and Policies
PBF	Performance-based Financing
PDO	Project Development Objective
RTP	Radio Teaching Program
SMC	School Management Committee
SRGBV	School-Related Gender-Based Violence
SSS	Senior Secondary School
TOT	Training of Trainers



## The World Bank

Sierra Leone Free Education Project (P167897)

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TPD	Teacher Professional Development
TSC	Teaching Service Commission
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene



**BASIC DATA**

**Product Information**

Project ID P167897	Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing
Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC) Moderate	
Approval Date 29-Jun-2020	Current Closing Date 30-Sep-2025

**Organizations**

Borrower Republic of Sierra Leone	Responsible Agency Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Educaiton, Save the Children Fund
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**Project Development Objective (PDO)**

Original PDO

The project development objectives are to improve the management of the education system, teaching practices, and learning conditions.

**Summary Status of Financing (US\$, Millions)**

Ln/Cr/Tf	Approval	Signing	Effectiveness	Closing	Net Commitment	Disbursed	Undisbursed
IDA-D6810	29-Jun-2020	13-Jul-2020	10-Aug-2020	30-Sep-2025	50.00	9.98	42.06
TF-B4659	15-Jun-2021			30-Sep-2025	5.38	0	5.38
TF-B4694	06-Feb-2021	26-Feb-2021	24-May-2021	31-Jan-2022	6.85	4.46	2.39

**Policy Waiver(s)**

Does this restructuring trigger the need for any policy waiver(s)?

No



## I. PROJECT STATUS AND RATIONALE FOR RESTRUCTURING

### A. Background

1. **The Sierra Leone Free Education (FREE) Project (P167897) in the amount of US\$50 million equivalent (IDA grant) was approved by the World Bank’s Board of Executive Directors on June 29, 2020, and became effective on August 10, 2020.** The closing date of the FREE Project is September 30, 2025. The Project is co-financed through a grant in the amount of US\$15.97 million equivalent from the European Union (EU); the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO) of the UK; and Irish Aid through a World Bank-administered Sierra Leone education multi-donor trust fund (MDTF), TF073453, which was established in February 2020.

2. **An Additional Financing (AF) for the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Education Response, which is financed by a grant<sup>1</sup> in the amount of US\$6.85 million from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), was added to the parent FREE Project.** The AF was approved by the World Bank’s Regional Vice President on February 5, 2021, signed on February 26, 2021, and became effective on May 24, 2021. The AF aims to support the Government’s COVID-19 education response. Specifically, the AF supports the implementation of Component 6 that covers: (a) strategic communications; (b) continuous distance education service delivery; (c) safe school reopening and health and safety of students; and (d) effective operations, planning, and policy during and after COVID-19 crisis. The AF has a different closing date from the parent FREE Project—January 31, 2022.

3. **The FREE Project has six components:**

Component 1: Policy, governance, accountability, and system administration

Component 2: Teacher management and professional development

Component 3: School level education development

Component 4: Project management, coordination, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Component 5: Contingent emergency response component (CERC)

Component 6: COVID-19 education response (through the AF for COVID-19 response)

4. **The Government’s main implementing agencies are the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) and the Teaching Service Commission (TSC).** The MBSSE and the TSC work closely with development partners and various stakeholders at the national, district, and school levels to implement activities. The Free Education Project Secretariat (FEPS) is responsible for day-to-day project management and coordination and oversees project activities.

5. **For the implementation of the COVID-19 response activities under Component 6 supported by the AF, the Government has an implementation partnership arrangement with the Nongovernmental Organization (NGO) Consortium.** The Consortium, led by Save the Children, includes Handicap International (operating under the name Humanity and Inclusion), Plan International Sierra Leone, Concern Worldwide, Foundation for Rural and Urban Transformation (FoRUT), Focus 1000, and Street Child of Sierra Leone. Some COVID-19 response project activities are implemented by these NGOs, working closely with the MBSSE and TSC. A Project Agreement was signed between the

<sup>1</sup> This is under the GPE COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Window: TF0B3765.



World Bank and Save the Children on February 25, 2021. Additionally, a Subsidiary Agreement was signed by the MBSSE and Save the Children on March 4, 2021. A Sub-award Agreement was signed between Save the Children and each partnering NGO on April 13, 2021.

6. **This restructuring paper seeks the approval of Country Director for Sierra Leone to extend the closing date of the AF from January 31, 2022 to September 30, 2022. This would also include revising the end target for the six intermediate results indicators (IRIs) which are related to the AF to align them with the revised closing date.** The proposed restructuring does not include any other revisions.

## B. Country Context

7. **Sierra Leone is a low-income country with a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of US\$1,648<sup>2</sup> in 2020 and a total population of 7.8 million people.** Sierra Leone's economy grew by 7.8 percent on average between 2003 and 2014, driven mainly by the recovery of the agriculture and mining sectors. However, the 2014–2015 Ebola epidemic and iron ore price shocks devastated the country and caused the growth rate to drop from 20.7 percent in 2013 to –20.6 percent in 2015. After these shocks, the economy expanded by an average of 4.8 percent per year during 2016–2019, and it reached 5.3 percent in 2019, driven by agriculture and services. The country has graduated from the official list of fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV) countries since 2019, following progressive economic and social reforms and solid growth. Despite this progress, vulnerability remains high. The poor business environment and the high cost of energy and credit have kept manufacturing growth at a minimum. Sierra Leone's economy lacks diversification and relies mainly on subsistence agriculture with a moderate service sector and a low industry share driven by volatile mining sector. The country has experienced macroeconomic stress and fiscal imbalances in the recent past. Between the Ebola outbreak in 2014 and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the budget deficit averaged 5.7 percent. During the same period, domestic revenue mobilization averaged 12.7 percent of GDP, with an estimated tax gap of 4.5 percent of GDP. Since 2019, Sierra Leone has been ranked at a high risk of debt distress. The COVID-19 pandemic crippled the country's macro-fiscal conditions. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, public debt increased by 7.3 percentage points compared to the pre-pandemic debt forecast, spiking to 76.6 percent of GDP in 2020. Sierra Leone remains fragile with risks of weak capacity and vulnerability to multi-dimensional shocks (for example, epidemic, economic, and climatic).

8. **Challenging macro-fiscal conditions have constrained poverty reduction efforts.** The poverty rate fell from 54.7 percent in 2011 to 40.5 percent in 2019, albeit predominantly in urban areas<sup>3</sup>. The major determinants of poverty are large household size, low level of education of the household head, employment in agriculture, and non-wage employment. Inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient, increased from 0.33 in 2011 to 0.37 in 2018. More people are food insecure and the severity of food insecurity is deepening. It was estimated that more than 4.7 million people (more than 50 percent of the total population) were food insecure in 2020. The number of people facing severe hunger has tripled in the last five years.

9. **Like many countries in the world, Sierra Leone is facing the dire human capital impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.** Sierra Leone still has one of the highest maternal mortality ratios in the world (717 per 100,000 live births). Child mortality remains high (under-five mortality and neonatal mortality rates are 122 and 30 per 1,000 live births, respectively). Almost 30 percent of all children under-five years of age suffer from stunting. Sierra Leone's Human Capital Index (HCI) value for 2020 is 0.36, which indicates that a child born in Sierra Leone today can be expected to be 36 percent as productive when s/he grows up as s/he could have been had s/he enjoyed complete education and full health. The HCI

<sup>2</sup> Based on purchasing power parity (PPP), constant 2017 international \$.

<sup>3</sup> Based on the findings of the Poverty Estimate for Sierra Leone (2020) by the World Bank and the Statistics Sierra Leone.



for Sierra Leone is lower than the average for the Sub-Saharan Africa region. The COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected human capital accumulation.

### C. Sectoral Context

10. **The education sector is managed by the MBSSE and the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE),** with the MBSSE being responsible for preprimary school, primary school, junior secondary school (JSS), and senior secondary school (SSS), and the MTHE being responsible for technical and vocational education and training (TVET), tertiary and higher education, including preservice teacher training. According to the latest 2020 Annual School Census (ASC), there were 11,016 preprimary, primary, and secondary education schools in Sierra Leone. Of these, preprimary schools accounted for 15.9 percent (1,756 schools), primary schools for 63.7 percent (7,020 schools), JSSs for 14.5 percent (1,600 schools), and SSSs for 5.8 percent (640). There were approximately 2.5 million students in primary and secondary education in Sierra Leone.

11. **Education services are provided by a mix of government and nongovernment providers.** The majority of schools delivering basic and senior secondary education lie outside government ownership. At the preprimary level, only 10 percent are government schools and 90 percent of schools are owned and operated by nongovernment providers (42 percent by missions, 13 percent by the community, and 35 percent by private entities). At the primary level, only 18 percent are owned and operated by the Government, while the majority (63 percent) are owned and operated by missions, 10 percent by the community, and 9 percent by private entities. At the JSS level, only 15 percent are government schools and 85 percent of schools are owned and operated by nongovernment providers (60 percent by missions, 16 percent by the community, and 7 percent by private entities). At the SSS level, 16 percent are government schools and 84 percent of schools are owned and operated by nongovernment providers (63 percent by missions, 12 percent by the community, and 8 percent by private entities).

12. **The Government supports nongovernment community/mission schools in primary and secondary education through the funding of teachers and teaching and learning materials.** The Government has a school approval process to qualify community/mission schools for government assistance. The 2020 ASC shows that three-quarters of schools have been approved for government assistance (50 percent in preprimary, 77 percent in primary, 80 percent in JSS, and 81 percent in SSS), and more schools are expected to be approved. Government approval implies the payment of subsidies to approved schools, textbooks, teachers' salaries, and examination fees. The increase in government-approved schools adds substantial financial outlay to the Government.



13. **Sierra Leone has made substantial progress in increasing access to education, but challenges remain.** The primary school completion rate increased from 76 percent in 2011 to 82 percent in 2019. Completion rates in JSS and SSS increased from 59 percent and 49 percent in 2011 to 84 percent and 72 percent in 2019, respectively. Despite the significant progress achieved in the last decade, the Sierra Leone education system faces a set of major challenges. They include the following:

- (a) **Low and inequitable access.** There is still significant variation in students' access to education by gender, socioeconomic status, and location. School retention rates among poor and rural children and adolescent girls are low. Inequities in access to preprimary school and SSS are particularly salient. Access to TVET and higher education is also low with disparities in terms of gender, location, and household income. Key factors generating the disparities include: (i) cost burden especially for poor families (for example, cost of uniforms); (ii) distance to schools and safety issues; (iii) lack of basic facilities for teaching and learning; (iv) school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV); and (v) teenage pregnancy (there was a ban on pregnant girls attending school, which the MBSSE overturned in March 2020).
- (b) **Poor learning outcomes and skills acquisition.** Sierra Leone suffers from severe learning poverty. For instance, assessment results<sup>4</sup> show that more than 80 percent of Grade 2 students cannot read a single word. Learning outcomes are also low at the JSS and SSS levels. There are also serious disparities in learning outcomes by gender, economic status, and location. Graduates from TVET and higher education lack job-relevant skills, contributing to high levels of youth unemployment. The key drivers of poor learning outcomes include insufficient and poor-quality teachers, weak teacher management, less time spent on teaching, a shortage of teaching and learning materials, and an inadequate learning environment. Poor labor market relevance of TVET and higher education affects skills acquisition.
- (c) **Weak sector management and governance.** Sierra Leone faces key challenges related to sector management and governance, including: (i) a weak policy and regulatory environment; (ii) inadequate quality assurance systems for educational institutions across education sub-sectors; and (iii) an education management information system (EMIS) that is fragmented and underutilized. These challenges lead to inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the education system.

14. **The Government's response to education sector challenges has been guided by the Medium-term National Development Plan (NDP) 2019–2023, the Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2018–2020 (extended until 2021), and the flagship Free Quality School Education (FQSE) Program launched in 2018.** Education is one of the national priorities as articulated in the NDP. The ESP 2018–2020 lays out the Government's strategy and focuses on several key areas including (a) access, equity, and completion; (b) quality and relevance; (c) system strengthening; and (d) emergency preparedness and response. The Government has made its further commitment to strengthening the education sector through the launch of the FQSE Program—to ensure free quality education to all school-age children from preprimary through secondary school.

#### D. Project Status

15. **The Project is on track to meet its Project Development Objective (PDO).** The implementing agencies continue to display a strong commitment to implementing the Project activities. The overall progress toward achievement of the PDO was rated Satisfactory in the most recent implementation status and results report (ISR). There are five PDO-level indicators under the FREE Project. The School Catchment Area Planning Policy has been developed and endorsed by the

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<sup>4</sup> The 2014 Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Math Assessment (EGMA) results report.





Cabinet meeting the Year 1 target for PDO-level indicator 1 (school catchment area and rationalization plan). The National Assessment Services Unit (NASU) has been established in the MBSSE, meeting the Year 1 target (project effectiveness - September 30, 2021) for PDO indicator 2 (learning assessment). There is no Year 1 target set for PDO-level indicator 4 (performance-based financing [PBF] - school grants). The Project is expected to disburse the first PBF (school) grants to schools by March 2022. The achievement of Year 2 target will be assessed after the PBF data collection of performance indicators is completed. Progress on PDO-level indicator 3 (improved teaching practices of teachers) and PDO-level indicator 5 (number of students benefiting from improved learning environment) will be measured only after the teacher observation tool is finalized and the school renovation grant is given to target schools, respectively.

16. **Progress under the AF (Component 6) is measured using six IRIs.** The end targets for four out of the six IRIs (to be achieved by the AF closing date) have been met. Cumulatively, when considering the combined initial COVID-19 response, 1,500,000 children (around 50 percent of whom are girls) have been provided access to programs and sensitization campaigns on COVID-19 and education response (IRI 1). The end target for IRI 2 has also been met and 1,000,000 children have been supported with remote learning and accelerated learning interventions. The end target for IRI 4 has been exceeded—all primary and secondary schools (11,000) have been equipped with minimum hygiene standards for the prevention of COVID-19. The radical inclusion policy has been endorsed by the Cabinet, meeting the end target for IRI 5. The Project is on track to achieve the end targets for IRIs 3 (number of teachers trained in using distance learning methods and/or to support accelerated learning) and 6 (number of apps, frameworks, platforms developed and implemented) but needs to accelerate the implementation of related activities. As of now, 6,080 teachers/inspectors have been trained and supported to assist accelerated learning (against the final target of 12,000). Only one platform (the MBSSE's PubPub) has been set up (the final target is two).

17. **Overall implementation progress was rated Moderately Satisfactory in the most recent ISR.** Further, the ratings for Components 1-4, procurement, M&E, and environmental and social (E&S) compliance were also rated Satisfactory. Financial management (FM) performance was rated Moderately Satisfactory. An action plan has been developed to address the FM issues identified. Progress under the AF (Component 6), however, has been delayed given the initial delays in AF effectiveness. Component 6 was, therefore, rated Moderately Satisfactory. Disbursement of IDA funds under the Project is 19.8 percent (US\$9.8 million), up from 10 percent in May 2021. As of December 31, 2021, 65 percent (US\$4.46 million) of the AF (US\$6.85 million) has been disbursed. Of the AF, disbursement has been as follows: (a) Government (MBSSE and TSC) activities: disbursement rate is 29 percent (US\$0.96 million out of US\$3.35 million) and (b) NGO Consortium activities: the full amount (US\$3.5 million) has been disbursed.

18. **Restructuring with an extension of the closing date of the AF is requested given some delays and implementation challenges.** An action plan has been developed to accelerate the Project's implementation. However, the Government and NGO Consortium have indicated that they would not be able to complete certain activities under the AF by its current closing date of January 31, 2022. This is mainly because the activities are time-sensitive and have to be implemented one after another and therefore cannot be implemented simultaneously. Delays in effectiveness of the AF have substantially shortened the implementation period.



19. The status of project activities under the AF (Component 6) is provided below.

### **Subcomponent 6.1 Strategic Communications**

20. Subcomponent 6.1 supports communications regarding the importance of continuing education for all learners, the continuation of distance and accelerated learning, and the implementation of the protocol for school reopening in basic education. Activities under this subcomponent are being implemented by the MBSSE Communications Unit and the NGO Consortium.

21. **The MBSSE Communications Unit** has accomplished some of the activities, while others are ongoing. The achieved and ongoing activities are as follows: Six transmitters and four off-air receivers were repaired and two new ones were installed. Key messages promoting the use of the Radio Teaching Program (RTP) are being produced for dissemination. The posters and billboards have been prepared and placed. Regarding the MBSSE's outlook on community radios promoting continuous learning, the ban on corporal punishment in schools has been developed, and the MBSSE Communications Unit is working with community radios to raise awareness of the ban when the MBSSE publicly announces it. Scripts for the two radio drama series, a 'Teen's Corner Program' and a 'Child-Messages Program', have been developed. The unit is developing a budget to air these programs on community radios. The baseline and planning exercises for mobilizing and supporting community youth-support groups/influencers to sensitize adolescents on zero teenage pregnancy during school closures in 16 districts are ongoing. Pre-recorded messages increasing access of vulnerable children to the RTP have been developed and will be rolled out with the next airing of the RTP lessons. Moving forward, the Communications Unit plans to: (a) meet with the TSC, NGO Consortium, and the World Bank to address collaborations on repairs, scaling, and addressing issues with the RTP; (b) conduct refresher training for the radio staff in line with the supplementary teaching technique; (c) engage the management of Radio Mankneh in Makeni together with the National Telecommunications Commission (NATCOM) to negotiate the move from 95.3 FM frequency to broadcast without interruption in the entire Northern province; and (d) engage ten community radio stations and three television stations and newspapers on various project activities.

22. **The NGO Consortium** has made significant strides within this subcomponent. Implementation progress thus far includes the following: The Consortium has: (a) engaged with all 16 district stakeholders to identify, plan, and implement strategies for disseminating education response and COVID-19 messages; (b) adapted and printed child-friendly COVID-19 information, education, and communication (IEC) materials, including posters and brochures for all participating schools; (c) adapted, printed and distributed braille versions; (d) conducted over 30 radio discussion sessions across the districts; and (e) empowered 1,520 community mobilizers to conduct small group discussions and home visits to discuss symptoms, prevention and reporting of COVID-19 cases. About 26,800 children and 17,000 community members have been reached with messaging on COVID-19 and the education response. Planned activities for this subcomponent include the following: The NGO Consortium will: (a) scale up community outreach activities through community mobilizers and volunteers (those undertaking small group discussions and home visits) continuously to reach the full target group; (b) distribute IEC/social and behavior change communication materials in partnership with the MBSSE and TSC to all 16 districts; (c) finalize printing and distribution of easy read posters, (d) scale up radio discussions on education and COVID-19, back to school campaign, gender, and inclusive education; and (e) finalize adaptation of radio jingles and commence airing through community radios.

### **Subcomponent 6.2 Continuous Distance Education Service Delivery**

23. Subcomponent 6.2 supports the provision of continuous distance learning and accelerated learning. Activities under this subcomponent are being implemented by the TSC and the NGO Consortium.



24. **The TSC** plays an important role in improving the quality of teaching and learning. The Presidential Best Teacher Awards were conducted to reward the great work of teachers while motivating them to aspire for excellence in their service delivery. The subcomponent supports installation of transmitters to expand the radio coverage. Procurement for installation of transmitters has commenced. The Project is also supporting updates of the radio program. The current proposal for the updated radio program is—one after-school radio program on English and mathematics for primary school students, and another after-school program on French for junior secondary students. Other ongoing activities under this subcomponent include: (a) provision of supporting materials of distance learning; (b) training for heads of schools on classroom assessment (CASS); (c) development of Teacher Performance Evaluation Strategy and Toolkit; (d) TSC leadership training and retreat; (e) training of staff on teacher records and management; and (f) monitoring activities. The next steps are as follows: the TSC plans to: (a) complete distribution of exams materials to underperforming schools; (b) roll out the training on CASS; (c) continue radio program supporting activities, including airing of existing lessons for students; (d) reprinting of teaching manual and airing of teacher-associated radio lessons expanding coverage; (e) install transmitters; (f) carry out sensitization campaign for existing radio program; and (g) develop an app for monitoring by the TSC.

25. **The NGO Consortium** is making good progress in setting up community learning circles, a community-level platform for catch-up learning opportunities for children, including remedial classes for those children requiring more specific support on literacy and numeracy. Under this approach, community/school members decide the best place in the community to conduct learning circles. Sixty-minute sessions take place at least once per week, usually after school or on the weekends, and can continue during school holidays. A total of 346 learning circles have been established in 11 of 16 districts, and 1,305 (990 males and 315 females) community mobilizers/teachers have been trained to provide age-appropriate inclusive and gender-sensitive support in the community learning circles. The Project also provided technical support to all 16 district authorities on the dissemination of messaging for parents/caregivers on children’s learning, well-being, and return to school. About 24,000 parents/caregivers have benefited from the activity. Community meetings and radio discussions were conducted in all 16 districts. To increase knowledge of school inspectors and teachers on inclusive education, gender, and psychosocial support, training of trainers (TOT) was provided to 80 school inspectors (64 males and 16 females) (two-day training on gender and psychosocial support and four-day training on inclusive education), by working closely with the TSC and district authorities. Online teacher professional development (TPD) modules have been developed and finalized with the TSC to pilot a low-tech and scalable distance mechanism for delivering teacher training and ensuring children have access to inclusive, safe, and gender-sensitive learning opportunities. Planned activities include the following: (a) provision of learning materials to community learning circles and distribution of solar radios in 16 districts across 1,683 learning circles; (b) provision of cascade training of inclusive education, gender, and psychosocial support; and (c) finalization of contents of online TPD module and provision of online TPD training.

### **Subcomponent 6.3 Safe School Reopening, and Health and Safety of Students**

26. This subcomponent supports: (a) safe school operations; (b) reaching out to the most vulnerable; and (c) well-being and protection of students. Activities under this subcomponent are being implemented by the MBSSE (that is, Directorate of Quality Assurance and Gender Unit) and the NGO Consortium.

27. **The MBSSE.** This part of the subcomponent, implemented by the MBSSE, supports the development of school safety protocols, gender-related activities, community outreach activities, monitoring of students’ attendance, and psychosocial training. The FREE Project supported the initial COVID-19 response activities, including school safety protocols and psychosocial support guidelines to 11,000 primary and secondary schools; training for 22,000 teachers; and the distribution of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) supplies to all 11,000 schools. However, not much progress has been made under this subcomponent in the last few months due to delays in procurement activities, except for the procurement of motorbikes for the newly recruited 160 inspectors to be used for monitoring and the concept note and



budget approval for the replenishment of the WASH supplies. Planned activities are as follows: (a) reprinting and redistributing school safety protocols and psychosocial support manuals; (b) training newly recruited inspectors, education officers, and teachers on the school safety protocols and psychosocial support; (c) engaging school and community influencers on psychosocial support; and (d) distributing replenished WASH/school supplies to schools; and (e) finalizing the SRGBV manual for training.

28. **The NGO Consortium.** The NGO Consortium’s focus under this subcomponent is to support boys and girls to return to safe schools and promote gender-sensitive and inclusive learning in schools. Progress made in these areas is as follows: (a) the most vulnerable children identified by a committee from within the community using a set of approved selection criteria developed with the guidance from MBSSE’s Radical Inclusion Policy; (b) school safety protocol training undertaken for all 16 districts: schools are developing disaster preparedness/contingency plans; (c) community and school leaders mobilized to undertake a three-phase back-to-school campaign across all 16 districts; (d) training conducted for school leaders and mother’s clubs to monitor the return of children to school and learning, disaggregated by gender; (e) identification of 5,655 vulnerable children finalized to receive support for learning materials (bags, pen, notebooks, geometry sets, and so on); and (f) data collected from 14 districts to identify and refer children with disabilities for assistive devices. Next steps are to: (a) distribute learning materials as incentives for most vulnerable children; (b) distribute school safety materials; (c) provide assistive devices to children with disabilities; and (d) distribute complaints and feedback boxes to all target schools.

#### Subcomponent 6.4 Effective Operations, Planning, and Policy

29. **MBSSE Operations, Planning and Policies (OPP) Team.** This subcomponent supports the development and delivery of the MBSSE’s effective OPP during and after the COVID-19 crisis. The process is led by the MBSSE OPP team (Chief Education Officer and Directorate of Policy Planning) with support from the FEPS and the Education Partnership Group (EPG), which is a non-profit consultancy. Present achievements are as follows: (a) the Cabinet’s endorsement of the Radical Inclusion Policy; (b) the development of the zero draft ESP (2022–2026); and (c) the development of MBSSE’s old and non-interactive version of collaborative digital-based technology platforms. Planned activities include countrywide policy dialogue on radical inclusion policy and social mobilization and engagement of stakeholders such as Paramount Chiefs, Council Representatives, District Education Officers, School Heads, Teachers, Pupils, and Community (School Management Committees [SMCs]/Board of Governors) in district headquarter towns. The Project will also continue to support local participation in the development of the ESP (2022–2026), especially during regional and national consultative meetings. Regarding the development of an online platform, one platform (*the MBSSE’s PubPub*) has been set up and the MBSSE plans to develop more.

#### E. Rationale for Restructuring

30. **The AF was processed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in accordance with GPE Guidelines but will require more time to complete the remaining activities.** Given the emergency nature of the AF, the implementation period was about 12 months consistent with GPE’s requirements, and the closing date was January 31, 2022 from the date of the approval. While the AF was signed on February 26, 2021, it did not become effective until May 24, 2021. Delays in the effectiveness reduced the implementation period of the AF to 8 months from initially planned 12 months. This 25 percent reduction in the implementation period is substantial and it will not be possible to deliver all the activities within the remaining timeframe—many of which are critical to the achievement of the PDO.

31. **The activities under the AF are being implemented by multiple agencies, including the MBSSE, the TSC, and the NGO Consortium, which comprises four international and three national NGOs.** Through the implementation



partnership, the NGO Consortium collectively has operational capacity and technical expertise in key areas relevant for the AF, including girls' education, community engagement, education in emergencies, accelerated and catch-up education, inclusive education, safe learning, evidence generation, and development of strong relationships with local partners and stakeholders. Given an innovative but unprecedented implementation arrangement promoting public-NGO partnerships, it took additional time to solidify these arrangements and responsibilities between the Government and the seven NGOs, both local and international, which contributed to the slow start of implementation after the AF effectiveness. Even though the complex arrangements led to delays in some activities, such implementation arrangements substantially improved the coverage of disadvantaged children and those living in remote areas.

32. **The proposed level 2 restructuring with an extension of the closing date of the AF is in response to a request from the Government in a letter dated December 16, 2021.** The proposed eight-month extension would allow all the envisioned activities to be completed, funds to be fully utilized, and the project targets to be met satisfactorily by September 2022. This proposed extension was approved by the Local Education Group (LEG), and in turn, by the GPE on November 29, 2021. Once this proposed restructuring is processed, the AF activities will have a new deadline of September 30, 2022. The end target date for the IRIs related to the AF will be changed to align it with the revised AF closing date.

## II. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED CHANGES

### A. PDO and Component Description

33. **There are no proposed changes to the PDO, the components, and implementation arrangements.**

### B. AF Costs and Closing Date

34. **The proposed restructuring entails an extension of the closing date of the AF to September 30, 2022.** The costs for the AF will remain the same.

### C. Results Framework

35. **The end target date for the six IRIs related to the AF will be changed to September 30, 2022, to align it with the revised AF closing date.**

### D. Implementation Arrangements

36. **The proposed restructuring will use the existing implementation and institutional arrangements.** The MBSSE will continue to be responsible for the overall implementation, prompt and efficient coordination, oversight, and monitoring of the project activities. Within the MBSSE structures, there are various directorates and units that are responsible for specific aspects of the project implementation. The TSC collaborates with the MBSSE to implement teacher-related activities. The FEPS is responsible for day-to-day project management and coordination and oversees project activities.

37. **Implementation arrangements with the NGO Consortium.** The NGO Consortium, led by Save the Children, will continue to implement some of the project activities under the AF, as planned. The NGO Consortium Program Implementation Unit includes the following key consortium management staff: (a) a chief of the party; (b) an awards manager; (c) a finance manager; (d) a monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning manager; and (e) an E&S



safeguarding coordinator. Working closely with the FEPS, the unit oversees all aspects of technical and administrative management of the activities implemented by the NGO Consortium and manages the relationships with the MBSSE, other stakeholders, and key staff from all partnering NGOs.

38. **Policy direction and oversight.** The oversight of the AF will continue to be carried out by the MDTF FREE Project Steering Committee, which has been set up for the Project. The NGO Consortium Program Management Board, which is represented by the country director of each NGO partner and a chief of the party, will continue to be responsible for performance monitoring and decision-making of activities implemented by the NGO Consortium.

**E. Fiduciary and Environmental and Social (E&S) Compliance**

39. **Fiduciary compliance.** As noted earlier, the ratings for procurement performance and for FM in the latest ISR were Satisfactory and Moderately Satisfactory, respectively. The fiduciary risks remain Substantial given the limited institutional capacity and multiple agencies, including government agencies and NGO partners, engaged in procurement activities. Both the FEPS and NGO Consortium Program Implementation Unit have designated procurement and FM specialists and will continue to put in place risk mitigation measures. The World Bank provides necessary training and guidance to the FEPS and the NGO Consortium Program Implementation Unit. There are no ineligible expenditures pertaining to the implementing agencies or no overdue audit reports related to the Project.

40. **E&S compliance** for the AF was rated Satisfactory in the latest ISR since the Project has made good progress in implementing the E&S requirements and plans. There are no outstanding issues.

**III. SUMMARY OF CHANGES**

	Changed	Not Changed
Results Framework	✓	
Loan Closing Date(s)	✓	
Implementing Agency		✓
DDO Status		✓
Project's Development Objectives		✓
PBCs		✓
Components and Cost		✓
Cancellations Proposed		✓
Reallocation between Disbursement Categories		✓
Disbursements Arrangements		✓



Disbursement Estimates		✓
Overall Risk Rating		✓
Legal Covenants		✓
Institutional Arrangements		✓
Financial Management		✓
Procurement		✓
Implementation Schedule		✓
Other Change(s)		✓
Economic and Financial Analysis		✓
Technical Analysis		✓
Social Analysis		✓
Environmental Analysis		✓

**IV. DETAILED CHANGE(S)**

**LOAN CLOSING DATE(S)**

Ln/Cr/Tf	Status	Original Closing	Revised Closing(s)	Proposed Closing	Proposed Deadline for Withdrawal Applications
IDA-D6810	Effective	30-Sep-2025			
TF-B4659	Not Effective	30-Sep-2025			
TF-B4694	Effective	31-Jan-2022		30-Sep-2022	31-Aug-2022



Results framework

COUNTRY: Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone Free Education Project

Project Development Objectives(s)

The project development objectives are to improve the management of the education system, teaching practices, and learning conditions.

Project Development Objective Indicators by Objectives/ Outcomes

Indicator Name	PBC	Baseline	Intermediate Targets				End Target
			1	2	3	4	
<b>Improved Management of the Education System</b>							
School catchment area and rationalization plan in place and associated transparent criterion-based school approval, and financing process implemented (Text)		No school catchment area plan in place	School catchment area plan produced and endorsed	Associated transparent school approval and financing criteria developed and endorsed	School catchment area plan used for school approval and financing process	Associated transparent criterion-based school approval and financing process linked to school mapping initiated	Associated transparent criterion-based school approval and financing process implemented
One national learning assessment (NLA) conducted and findings disseminated (Text)		No integrated national learning assessment (NLA) conducted	National assessment team set up	Staff trained, test items piloted and developed	One NLA conducted	Results of NLA analyzed and disseminated	Results of NLA disseminated and used for learning improvement
<b>Improved Teaching Practices</b>							
Percentage of teachers receiving project-supported training demonstrating improved teaching practices in the classroom (Text)		n.a.	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00





Indicator Name	PBC	Baseline	Intermediate Targets				End Target
			1	2	3	4	
<b>Improved Learning Conditions</b>							
Share of PBF schools meeting 85% of student attendance rate (Percentage)		50.00	0.00	60.00	70.00	75.00	75.00
Number of students benefiting from improved learning environment (Number)		0.00	505,600.00	515,712.00	526,026.00	536,546.00	547,278.00
Number of female students (Number)		0.00	252,800.00	257,856.00	263,013.00	268,273.00	273,639.00

**Intermediate Results Indicators by Components**

Indicator Name	PBC	Baseline	Intermediate Targets				End Target
			1	2	3	4	
<b>Component 1: Policy, Governance, Accountability, and System Administration</b>							
Annual school census conducted and report produced (Yes/No)		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
School quality standards developed for primary and secondary schools (Text)		Child-friendly school standards in place.	Stakeholder consultations on the current school standards	Current school quality standards revised	New school quality standards piloted	New school quality standards finalized	New school quality standards rolled out
A system for examination analysis and feedback in place (Text)		Small scale examination analysis conducted	Formulation of implementation arrangement for analysis	NPSE, BECE and WASSCE examination analyzed at down to ward level by item	Pedagogical feedback developed for the item analysis down to ward level and provided to all	Pedagogical feedback developed for the analysis at down to school level and	Pedagogical feedback developed for the analysis at down to school level



Indicator Name	PBC	Baseline	Intermediate Targets				End Target
			1	2	3	4	
					approved schools	provided to all approved schools	and provided to all approved schools
Number of SMC and Board of Governor members and teachers trained in gender in education (gender sensitization, GBV prevention and awareness) (Number)		0.00	0.00	12,000.00	22,000.00	28,000.00	32,000.00
Percentage of stakeholders receiving training demonstrating improved knowledge on gender (Text)		n.a.	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Inclusive education policy developed and in use (Text)		Inclusive education policy drafted	Inclusive education policy approved	Inclusive education policy reviewed by law office department	Teacher training program using inclusive education policy	Teacher training program using inclusive education policy	Teacher training program using inclusive education policy
Students benefiting from direct interventions to enhance learning (CRI, Number)		0.00	100,188.00	300,564.00	500,940.00	751,410.00	1,001,880.00
Students benefiting from direct interventions to enhance learning - Female (CRI, Number)		0.00	50,094.00	150,282.00	250,470.00	375,705.00	500,940.00
Students in primary education benefiting from direct interventions to enhance learning (Number)		0.00	65,122.00	195,367.00	325,611.00	488,417.00	651,222.00
Female students in primary education benefiting from		0.00	32,561.00	97,683.00	162,806.00	244,208.00	325,611.00



Indicator Name	PBC	Baseline	Intermediate Targets				End Target
			1	2	3	4	
direct interventions to enhance learning (Number)							
Students in secondary education benefiting from direct interventions to enhance learning (Number)		0.00	35,066.00	105,197.00	175,329.00	262,994.00	350,658.00
Female students in secondary education benefiting from direct interventions to enhance learning (Number)		0.00	17,533.00	52,599.00	87,665.00	131,497.00	175,329.00
<b>Component 2: Teacher Management and Professional Development</b>							
Teacher management information system developed and in use (Text)		Teacher management information system not in place	Needs analysis conducted for teacher management information system	Detailed work plan for teacher management information system developed	Teacher management information system piloted	Teacher management information system applied nationally	Teacher management information system in use
Number of teachers in primary and JSSs participating in cluster-based CPD (Number)		0.00	0.00	10,000.00	16,000.00	22,000.00	22,000.00
Teachers recruited or trained (CRI, Number)		0.00	0.00	10,000.00	16,000.00	22,000.00	22,000.00
Teachers recruited or trained - Female (RMS requirement) (CRI, Number)		0.00	0.00	1,800.00	2,800.00	3,900.00	3,900.00
Number of teachers trained (CRI, Number)		0.00	0.00	10,000.00	16,000.00	22,000.00	22,000.00
<b>Component 3: School Level Education Development</b>							



Indicator Name	PBC	Baseline	Intermediate Targets				End Target
			1	2	3	4	
Share of PBF schools meeting 85% of teacher attendance rate (Percentage)		44.00	0.00	55.00	60.00	75.00	75.00
Number of schools developing school improvement plan and executing school activities based on the plan using a participatory approach (Number)		500.00	600.00	700.00	1,200.00	1,600.00	2,000.00
Survey of SMCs organization and effectiveness (Text)		Information of SMCs operation available on REDiSL supported schools	Baseline study conducted and recommendation provided	SMC manuals issued	Case study conducted	Midterm evaluation conducted	SMC manual revised based on evaluation results
Number of classrooms constructed in compliance with standards in target schools (Number)		0.00	0.00	80.00	200.00	350.00	500.00
Share of grievances addressed within a certain time period (Percentage)		0.00	50.00	60.00	70.00	80.00	90.00
<b>Component 6: COVID-19 Education Response</b>							
Number of children in the relevant age-group provided access to programs and sensitization campaigns on COVID-19 and education response (Number)		0.00	1,000,000.00				1,500,000.00



Indicator Name	PBC	Baseline	Intermediate Targets				End Target
			1	2	3	4	
<b>Action: This indicator has been Revised</b>	<b>Rationale:</b> <b>This is GPE COVID-19 Core Indicator.</b>						
Number of children in the relevant age-group provided access to programs and sensitization campaigns on COVID-19 and education response - female (Number)	0.00	500,000.00				750,000.00	
<b>Action: This indicator has been Revised</b>							
Number of children supported with remote learning and/or accelerated learning interventions (Number)	0.00	800,000.00				1,000,000.00	
<b>Action: This indicator has been Revised</b>	<b>Rationale:</b> <b>This is GPE COVID-19 Core Indicator.</b>						
Number of children supported with remote learning and/or accelerated learning interventions - Female (Number)	0.00	400,000.00				500,000.00	



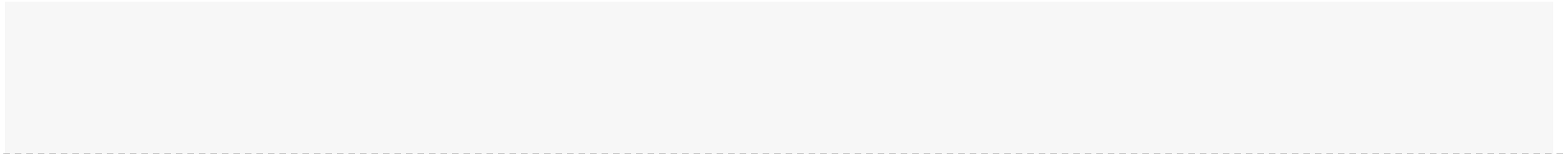
Indicator Name	PBC	Baseline	Intermediate Targets				End Target
			1	2	3	4	
<b>Action: This indicator has been Revised</b>							
Number of teachers trained in using distance learning methods and/or provided materials to support distance learning (Number)		0.00	8,000.00				12,000.00
<b>Action: This indicator has been Revised</b>							
<i>Rationale: This is GPE COVID-19 Core Indicator.</i>							
Number of schools equipped with minimum hygiene standards for prevention of COVID-19 (Number)		0.00	2,500.00				3,500.00
<b>Action: This indicator has been Revised</b>							
<i>Rationale: This is GPE COVID-19 Core Indicator.</i>							
Radical inclusion policy in place (Yes/No)		No	No				Yes
<b>Action: This indicator has been Revised</b>							
Number of apps, frameworks, platforms developed and implemented (Number)		0.00					2.00
<b>Action: This indicator has been Revised</b>							



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