

**NATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY GROUP – TRANSPARENCY
INTERNATIONAL**

AFRICA EDUCATION WATCH SURVEY REPORT

REPORT TITLE:

**ENHANCING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN
PRIMARY EDUCATION IN SIERRA LEONE**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Corruption in the education sector has been in existence for a long time. Misappropriation, misuse and mismanagement of the existing education infrastructure and resources especially books, stationary, charging of illegal fees i.e. tuition for extra classes, bribery and corruption at all levels of the education sector from the ministry to the district level have gone un abetted. Results from an earlier survey done in Moyamba as a pilot study, revealed that cases of corruption and bribery are rampant in primary education. The national Accountability group, the local chapter of Transparency International in Sierra Leone conducted its study in March in western area, Northern Province, southern province and eastern province which were presented by Freetown, Bo, Kenema and portloko districts respectively.

In 2005 NAG undertook the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey on the education sector in the Moyamba District, south of the country. That survey focused on two main indicators; Teaching/learning materials and funds meant for school fees subsidies. It was suggested by community members that such a program be undertaken on regular basis as it would increase the level of accountability and transparency in primary education as a follow up, another project embarked on by NAG regarding improving accountability in primary education was quarterly monitoring of primary schools through out the country.

In 2006 NAG conducted the Citizens' Report Card (CRC) household survey on primary education, the result of which indicated that 7.31% of households claimed that there were no primary schools within their communities, suggesting that the establishment of primary schools in these localities would be a major boost to development within these communities. It was also established that 35% of households claimed that primary school children within their communities were not provided with free learning materials, violating government guidelines on free supply of teaching/learning materials. It was also highlighted that 91.92% of all households claimed that there are still school age children (primary) within their communities that are not attending school. 19.46% of all households interviewed claimed that the provision of educational services in their communities was dissatisfactory.

The Africa Education Watch survey is therefore a follow up to the previous studies and its primary aim is to track the flow of resources in the educational linkages from the ministry to the schools and needs to establish if these resources reach the intended destination. The study further tries to understand cases of mismanagement, misuse and misappropriation by looking at availability of basic services such as water, health services, and provision of food to schools, provision of learning materials, number of teachers, school supervision, pupils' performance, and type of school among other socio-economic and demographic indicators.

The survey took a total of two weeks and was conducted in all the four provinces including, Freetown Port Loko, Bo and Kenema. The research was coordinated by NAG staff and four supervisors. A total of 1069 household questionnaires, 54 provider 1, 43 provider 2, 50 provider 1b and 4 provider 3 was administered by 20 Research assistants(data collectors).

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND WIDER IMPACTS

In regard to costs and quality of education from parents' perspectives, 78.4% of parents/guardians agreed that their children receive books, stationary and in some cases meals and uniform which come from NGOs mainly GTZ, CARE and PLAN. Even though they generally agreed that the government is doing its best and that the schools are not very expensive, there is obvious discontent on the amount of money paid by the parents. From the quantitative data obtained 51.7% of respondents claimed that the quality of education is not up to standard especially bearing in mind that they have been paying fees towards registration, PTA fees, fees for private lesson among other charges which they see as an extra burden, especially now that the government should be offering free primary education among other educational subsidies. 56% of the households also said that there is insufficient number of teachers and a good number (37%) said the teachers are not qualified. Cases of embezzlement or paying of bribes within the school system are very few (22% and 27% respectively).

However, there is still a wide capacity gap in terms of education personnel, education equipment and materials and also a structured system to stream line the education system. The ministry of education in terms of timely response to problems in schools needs to be made more succinctly clear. It is important however to mention that majority of households interviewed especially in portloko and Kenema know little or nothing about quality education and school governance because only 17% and 19% of households in this enumeration area monitor or are involved in their children's education on a daily basis.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

86.4% of households said head teachers were the main officials in charge of school budget and finances. However only 25.6% were extremely satisfied, while 3.6% were extremely unsatisfied. Another 44% of the respondents were somewhat satisfied. This means majority of the households were not fully convinced on how the school finances were managed. This is further confirmed by the fact that only 7.1% knew about school capitation grant.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON SCHOOL FINANCES

5.2% of the household heads agreed that they obtained information on budget and school finances, while 93.9% have never attempted obtaining the information. Most of those in charge of financial management in the districts did not know how much was allocated to the schools in the districts or when educational materials were dispatched to the schools. The public mainly obtained financial information through financial reports mainly balance sheets and financial statements. All the districts have a district finance officer who is in charge of district budget.

SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

Most schools benefit from supervision and support from the government and NGOs especially. SABABU education project supported by UNESCCO also helped in the construction of schools though they never offered material support in terms of books or other learning materials. Most schools received occasional visits from ministry of education officials which in most cases were routine check-ups on the running of the schools.

GENERAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS EDUCATION SYSTEM

Most of those interviewed believed that education was important to the nation but they strongly agreed that corruption was rife in most schools. Even though the quality of teaching was not bad more needs to be done by recruiting more qualified teachers. Most of those interviewed disagreed that parents were either involved in decision making or that the school was well run. Those interviewed believed that corruption was a serious problem not only in schools but also in the entire country. The government has done its best to improve the education system. For example, the free primary education has increased accessibility, what needs to be done is to improve quality especially in government schools which mostly suffer from affected by negligence, misappropriation and lack of accountability.

INTRODUCTION

The following report is the outcome of a year-long assessment process conducted by National Accountability Group (NAG), the National Chapter of Transparency International, in Sierra Leone. This report, originating from Transparency International's Africa Education Watch program, is an attempt to present a balanced assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the governance structure within the primary education system. In doing so, the report seeks to clarify the link between robust governance and quality service delivery, and offers recommendations to improve governance in an effort to increase the quality of education services delivered at primary school age in Sierra Leone.

According to UNESCO, primary school enrolment increased by 36% in Sub-Saharan Africa between 1999 and 2005¹. In the context of the global agenda of achieving Education for All (EFA), this increased demand for quality education – and corollary scaling-up of resources for primary education – poses a challenge to many countries and has rarely led to better educational outcomes. Financial leakage, waste and inefficiencies result in fewer resources available to achieve the agenda of EFA. Improving the management of the scarce resources available for education will be necessary if the successful achievement of the second Millennium Development Goal² is to have an impact at all.

Problems relating to corruption and mismanagement/misuse of education resources are rife and occur in various forms, ranging from diversion/leakage of funds, embezzlement, bribery and above all the existence of ghost schools, teachers and even school pupils. Between July and September 2008, the ministry of Education Youth and Sport conducted a nationwide school and teacher verification in order to ascertain the exact number of registered schools and teachers in the country and in the bid to put an end to the existence of ghost schools and teachers as this is one of the illegal channels through which school resources are diverted.

It is in this context that Transparency International (TI) initiated its Africa Education Watch programme in July 2007. The programme has since been implemented in seven countries across the region: Ghana, Madagascar, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda. The aim of the Africa Education Watch programme is to improve transparency and accountability in the use of primary education resources.

The first step of the program was an extensive assessment of the primary education system in Sierra Leone. These outcomes are presented in this report. First, National Accountability Group conducted a desk study of the primary education system, where legal texts, administrative regulations and financing mechanisms were critically assessed and analyzed. Upon completion of the desk study, the assessment moved into the second phase where a quantitative survey of primary education service providers and of primary education services users took place.

In Sierra Leone, 1,069 households were polled, 50 primary schools approached as well as the headmasters, chairs of School Management Committees/Parent Teachers Associations (SMC/PTA) and responsible district education officer(s) were

¹ UNESCO, *Education For All Global Monitoring Report - Education for All by 2015: will we make it?*, (Oxford University Press 2007)

² The second MDG is to “ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling”; see <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

interviewed. The financial records and accounting systems of these schools and districts were made accessible for review thanks to our collaboration with and the support of the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport through the Directorate Office in Freetown and the District Education Units within the Local Councils.

By compiling and processing this wealth of information (legal, administrative and financial) and by cross-referencing it with the information gathered on day-to-day experiences of the users and providers of primary education in the country, National Accountability Group has been able to draw up a picture of the system as it currently works, with all of its strengths and weaknesses. Chapter I and II of this report will present an extensive overview of the system, including analyses and discussion of specific problems and shortcomings in the governance and management structures of the primary education sector.

Finally, the set of recommendations aimed at improving governance and the management of resources in the primary education sector, presented in the last chapter of this report, were developed by National Accountability Group in cooperation with key Education partners and non-governmental organizations such as GTZ, the Anti-Corruption Commission, Action Aid Sierra Leone, Heads of Primary Schools, Local Councils and the University of Sierra Leone.

The Africa Education Watch surveys carried out across the region show convincingly that waste, leakage and corruption in the education sector obstruct the delivery of quality primary education in many African countries. The findings presented in this report offer us all a sad reminder of this reality but also enable us to better understand the problems at hand while offering concrete recommendations towards developing solutions to solve these.

We hope that you, our reader, will find these analyses and recommendations useful and invite you to contact us should you wish to join us in our efforts to build a more efficient primary education system in Sierra Leone.

CHAPTER ONE – THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN SIERRA LEONE

Western education in Sierra Leone is traced all from Christian missionaries who built schools and other learning institutions in the 18th century for the purpose of exposing African children (Sierra Leoneans) to formal education. Over the years, policies have been reviewed among which are “All our future” published in the early 1970’s and “Education For All” (EFA) done in the early 1990’s. Education in Sierra Leone is primarily controlled by the Ministry of Education with the 6-3-3-4 system including:

- Pre-primary
- Primary
- Secondary and
- Tertiary

Formerly, pre-primary education was not an obligation because of the limitedness of institutions. What were important were primary, secondary and tertiary levels. However, those who were privileged to attend pre-primary schools were also considered. At the turn of the 1990’s, pre-primary education gained some amount of importance because of the adoption of the new educational system in Sierra Leone.

That system called Basic Education was adopted after the JOMTIEN consultative meeting held in 1990. The aim of adopting such a system was to give every child the junior secondary level opportunity of having basic education up to form three.

It was viewed as something praiseworthy because it complemented the Grammar school type of education which only catered for those who were intelligent. The new system thus had the opportunity to blend of the grammar school and the vocational types (education for self reliance) which was the primary focus of the famous Julius Nyerere (An African educational philosopher) in the Tanzanian situation during his presidency.

In the above context, the structure was also revisited especially with respect to primary education. The entry age was increased while the years in that level was reduced. That is instead of sending children to school at 5 (five) years which was the former policy, children were only accepted in schools at age 6. They had to sit to the National Primary School Examination (NPSE) in class 6 and not to the Selective Entrance Examination (SEE) which was formally taken in class 7.

Due to the change, the need for pre-primary education was more obvious for children between 2 and 5 years, who needed to spend some time in the nursery schools where they had to learn the three R’s (Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic) and more of practical work like drawing crafts and singing/dancing and drama.

With the above framework, this report is part of a three year program that will be facilitated by the education department of Transparency international focusing on the following issues:

- A general description of the primary education system
- Recent policy changes trend
- Social control and public accountability
- Main actors improving accountability in primary education
- Common problems experienced in primary education

Description of the Primary Education System

The education sector in Sierra Leone is the largest government entity with the highest number of government employees in the country. Since 1993, Sierra Leone has been operating the 6-3-3-4 system of education, meaning that pupils are expected to spend 6 years in primary schools, 3 years in junior secondary school, 3 years in senior secondary school and 4 years in tertiary institutions (college or university). After six years of primary education, under this system, pupils are expected to take the National Primary School Examination (NPSE), which if passed will allow pupils to enroll into secondary education for an initial three years. The Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) is taken after the first three years in secondary education. Successful candidates are enrolled into senior secondary for three years after which they take the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). Successful candidates in this examination are then enrolled into colleges or university.

Primary education forms about one-fourth of the entire education sector. In spite of this however, the budgetary allocation does not adequately cover primary education. This greatly affects the standard of services provided by primary schools, as Head Teachers often complain about the inadequacy and untimely disbursement of school fees subsidies controlled by the Sierra Leone administration.

Primary schools are classified into either public or private schools. The private schools are owned, controlled and administered by private individuals or entities. Public primary schools, which form the basis of this analysis, are further classified into government schools and government assisted schools. The government schools (municipal/local council schools) are owned and supported by the government, while the government assisted schools (mission schools) are owned by religious missions like the United Methodist, the Catholic, The United Christian Brethren, the Ahmadist and other Islamic bodies and assisted by the government.

With a total of 4,328 registered public primary schools (both government supported and government assisted) in the country for the 2005/2006 academic year, a total of fifty-two billion, one hundred seventeen million four hundred thousand Leones (Le52, 117, 400,000) equivalent to fourteen million, four hundred and seventy-seven thousand and fifty-five Euro (14, 477,055 Euro) was allocated to the education ministry. Of the said amount, only one billion, six hundred and five million, nine hundred thousand Leones (Le1,605, 900,000), equivalent to four hundred and forty-six thousand and eighty-three Euro (446,083 Euro) was allocated to the primary education sector, covering only 0.45% of the total budgetary allocation for the

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education ministry in the 2007 national budget. Text and exercise books and other teaching/learning materials are also distributed to schools through Schools Management Committees (SMCs) under this policy. This is done in order to ensure transparency accountability and fair distribution. Thus, the paradox here lies in the fact that in spite of the significant oversight role of the SMCs in monitoring the distribution and use of school materials, one hardly finds these materials, especially textbooks in the schools.

Apart from the inadequacy of these materials, allowing for instance, one textbook to be shared by three or four pupils at a time, the few that are distributed to the schools are diverted onto tables of petty traders in the markets, who then sell the books at exorbitant prices to parents who can afford the cost. As a result, pupils from poor homes are deprived of the very facilities which are meant for them.

This School management Committee is hierarchical and comprises the following officials:

- The Head Teacher
- The councilor/ chief (as in the case of provincial schools)
- A women's leader
- Two members from the Community Teachers' Association (CTA)
- The Community Teachers' Association Chairman who is a signatory to the School's account
- The school's proprietor
- Two members of the teaching staff of the school and
- The Inspector of schools in that area

It should also be noted that most, if not all public primary schools in Sierra Leone run two school sessions – one session in the morning between the hours of 8:00 am and 12:00 noon and another session in the afternoon between 1:00 pm and 5:00 pm. For these schools, there are normally two heads: that is one Head Teacher for the morning session and another for the afternoon session. According to the policy, schools running two sessions should have separate teachers for each session, but in many cases, the same teachers teach in between the sessions and receive double salaries at the end of the month in spite of the ineffectiveness of such teachers.

As far as subsidies are concerned, it is the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MEST) which undertakes that venture. There are three terms in each academic year and at the beginning of each term, the education ministry is expected to transfer a certain amount of funds as school fees subsidies to each government assisted primary school to run the schools. This is as a result of the fact that in present day Sierra Leone, there is a policy for education for every Sierra Leonean child (Education for All Policy). In previous years, school fees paid were used by the schools' administrations to run the schools – procurement of learning/education materials, text books and maintenance or repair, as the case may be. Under this new policy, pupils are no longer required to pay school fees. Instead, government is expected to pay the sum of Le 2.000 (0.55 Euro – US\$ 0.78) for every registered pupil in any government supported school or government assisted school as school fees subsidies.

The major source of income for government assisted schools is subsidies from the government, though at times, independent bodies like NGOs, CSOs, communication and corporate companies can step in with various forms of support, mostly depending on their interest, scope and mandate. UNICEF, Plan International, CARE International and UNESCO for instance have for the past twenty years been assisting public schools with education/learning materials, health/sanitation facilities and even with construction of school buildings and supply of classroom furniture. Other independent entities like Brighter Tomorrow for Africa Foundation, World Food Program, Children Learning Services, Children of the Nation, to name a few, also assist with scholarships and school feeding programs in designated areas in the country.

In spite of these sources most primary schools have created parallel structures to extort money from parents. One of such is in connection with social functions like Thanksgiving services, Christmas performances, Garden Fetes, concerts and film shows organized at certain periods of the academic year, for which different amounts are levied on pupils with a view to generating funds to augment where the ministry's support ends. There are also other instances where teachers levy mandatory charges for private tutoring, pamphlets, and report cards. Some schools even ask pupils to pay for furniture which they eventually leave behind as they are promoted to higher classes.

For most public primary schools in the Western area, there is another independent body comprising Head Teachers. They always meet every first Wednesday of each month. Their purpose of meeting is to share common problems affecting them in their different schools and at the same time finding solutions to those problems. This body has proved very useful to heads of schools because they are able to identify problems and take decisions as a unit. The results of their meetings and deliberations are also reflected at their SCM meetings at which issues which may have been deliberated at their Head Teachers' meetings are discussed. The stakeholders in primary education are the government of Sierra Leone, the parents, the communities and the SCM.

As far as procurement of text books is concerned, the main source is the Ministry of Education. The ministry officials always ask the Heads of primary schools to furnish them with the rolls of their various schools and when that is done, the next step is to allot the available materials to the schools. This distribution, though uneven, still poses problems such as the inadequacy of additional materials. For example, at the Tabernacle Primary school at Circular Road, the Head Teachers are having problems with the distribution of the materials received. In the PM shift (the afternoon shift), there were only 15 (fifteen) text books given for 200 (two hundred) pupils in class 5 (five). Given the insufficiency, "who should benefit and who should be denied?"

It has also been often remarked by most Head teachers that the Ministry of Education has started distributing text books and other school materials and supplies to Private primary schools. This is one of the many reasons why the textbooks and other materials are not adequate for distribution to the public primary schools. Another reason is that some officials in the Ministry of education have syndicates with the book sellers in town and when the large quantities arrive for distribution to schools, they divide them up into two: one part for distribution and the other for illegal sale to

the booksellers on the streets. Most schools have problems of maintenance and construction of more classes and other infrastructure. The existing structures have become so much inadequate to the extent that the classes are now congested. This stems from the fact that the existing structures could no longer accommodate the crowd that comes to be registered. However, some local NGO's have come to the aid of a few schools in the capital and more in the interior. NaCSA (National Commission for Social Action) has done so much in this direction. New buildings, schools with larger spaces to accommodate the growing population have been constructed and that has helped in responding to the many problems concerning accommodating larger numbers.

The issue of sanitation is a crucial one, as 95% of the public primary schools complain of huge sanitary problems to tackle. The reason is that there is lack of water in some areas and in others, inadequate toilet facilities for the ever growing school population. Thus the poorly managed toilet facilities and unsafe water for drinking are sometimes responsible for some of the common diseases contacted by school pupils.

In some cases, meals are served in some schools while others do not benefit from such a privilege. The reason is that in some areas where NGOs operate (the rural ones for the most part), there is the dire need for school feeding programs because majority of the children who attend schools come from families living in abject poverty. Therefore, they as NGOs see feeding as an important strategy for children's motivation to school.

Additionally, codes of conduct are prescribed initially by the Ministry of Education. These are however interpreted by the school heads according to the needs and situation. Therefore, the codes may slightly different from one school to the other. In the case of conflict of interest, giving gifts and private tutoring, the heads of the schools are directly in control. When there is a conflict of interest, the Head Teacher tries to settle it amicably. If that is not achieved, a warning letter is issued to the parties concerned and if they still do not heed the warning, the matter is taken to the manager of the school for his/her intervention. For private tutoring, some schools give the mandate to teachers especially those teaching the examination classes (class 6). This is done because of the inadequate time teachers have to cover the syllabus before the exams are taken.

Therefore, extra classes are often given on week-ends or at the end of the school day and pupils are asked extra fees to augment the teachers' transportation costs. The idea behind this is to allow the teachers to cover up for topics they would not have covered in the normal curriculum but more often that not, teachers use the opportunity to their advantage by extorting additional charges from the pupils, who most times have no option but to pay, if they want to pass the exams. Access to information varies at different levels. Concerning the budget, it is very difficult accessing it at the central, district and local level. This is because of the fact that the government would not like to divulge how much money is allocated to education. If that amount is divulged, there would be a lot of censuring because it is widely believed that the monies allocated for education are not fully utilized. However, some primary schools, especially in Freetown can make their books on income and expenditure available to interested parties (for example, students working on dissertations and other researchers).

The information that is given by schools is for the most part correct but those obtained from the Ministry of Education are sometimes faulty because they do not give the correct picture when disseminating the information. In the contrary however, most schools in the provinces do not embark on proper record keeping. This makes it difficult for researchers to get the accurate information for example on the amount of money received by the school from the ministry for school fees subsidies. As a result, researchers often have no better option but to either rely on estimated figures provided by school heads on one hand or inaccurate or startling figures provided by the Ministries of Finance and Education or by the independent auditors in some cases.

Recent policy changes and trends

As discussed earlier, the government has introduced a new education policy (Education for All) which all government supported and assisted primary schools should benefit from. Under this new recent policy, children no longer pay fees. The government offers **Free Basic Education** for children in primary schools up to Junior Secondary School. However there is a problem with this policy because the government often fails to pay the subsidies to the schools on time which affects the smooth running, as learning materials like chalk ought to have been received or bought before reopening of schools. At times, the Heads of schools have to go out in search of loans or extort illegal charges from the vulnerable pupils for running of the school before the government subsidizes. Thus the **Free Education** policy is not seen as pro poor by most heads of schools because the government only pays fees subsidies (less than a Euro per child) but do not give the children uniforms and adequate exercise books. The text books supplied are not sufficient and therefore when the pupils do not have decent uniforms or any exercise books and/or texts and writing materials, they simply stay home. What in fact worsens the situation is the fact that little or no anti-corruption measures are taken against, for instance head teachers who extort extra charges from pupils because they always put on the defense that not only are the subsidies and materials inadequate, they also are not distributed on time. This therefore makes the government's claim of providing free education more of a farce than reality.

The passage of the Local Government Act ushered great potential for the system of governance in Sierra Leone which increases citizen participation in public policy formulation and implementation. A meaningful redistribution of power and resources from Freetown to the 19 local councils and their constituencies could go a long way toward addressing the patronage networks and the lack of downward accountability that flourish in Freetown. If successfully carried out and with active involvement from the public, Sierra Leoneans could enjoy an unprecedented level of influence within government, allowing them their first significant opportunity to participate and effect positive changes in their own communities. Citizenship will shift from mere users of services provided by the state and donors to makers and shapers of their own policies.

The handing over of responsibilities is currently ongoing, as the basic education sector has been officially devolved to the local councils on the 16th of September, 2006. While the effective transfer of funds and staff is yet to come to fruition, the devolution process is underway. Thus the proposed education sector survey, if started and continued on a regular basis over the years, will present pre and post-devolution scenarios the delivery of services in the education system, especially in the primary education sector. Thus, the repeated conduct of sector analyses, then, will provide a framework from which local government service delivery may be evaluated and compared with that of the central government.

Unfortunately however, the entire decentralization process is not totally appreciated by most heads of schools, especially those in the interior of the country. The reason is that the structures are not there to effectively practicalize the devolution process especially in the basic education sector hence government has only succeeded in effecting institutional devolution, leaving the crucial aspect of fiscal/financial devolution to be realized. One then wonders how the recently established local councils could ever be effective in delivering educational services without the vital material and fiscal capacity to do so. Coupled with this, decisions are still taken at central level which takes so much time in getting to the schools in the interior or rural areas. Thus in the event, prompt action is necessary as heads of schools often access such funds after the deadlines.

From a transparency or accountability perspective, the Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) since its establishment has put in place certain measures to track down corrupt officials within the education sector. In a Corruption Perception Survey conducted by the ACC in 1995, it was revealed that the education sector was one of those sectors identified as “corruption hot-spots” ie, as one of the sectors easily prone to corruption. Our Corruption Household survey also supported that claim. As a corrective measure, the ACC appointed Integrity Officers in all the corruption hotspots including the education sector. These officers go to schools at regular intervals to get themselves au fait with the happenings in the schools. In addition, the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) also has a number of recommendations proffered by the public as to how corruption could be minimized if not totally eradicated in the education sector. Also, a seminar was conducted for Head Teachers in which a given format was recommended containing the procedures to follow in respect of receipts and expenditures. These books are sent to the auditors through the school managers for auditing at the end of every term or academic year.

Like in other developing countries, civil society in Sierra Leone remains the primary monitor or watchdog on government abuses. The international community, despite the major donations it makes to the government, is reluctant to impose strict conditionality on the government or ensuring that the funds that it gives are spent judiciously. The advantage of the use of NGOs to conduct anti-corruption work is that they are truly independent and are most times very effective in their oversight mechanisms such as periodic monitoring and the conduct of social audits.

The Anti-Corruption Commission is hardly effective in tackling the endemic problem of corruption in the country. This is largely because the position of Commissioners is a presidential appointment, hence the office is politicized. Another irony is that government efforts to ensure accountability in its dealings are themselves fraught with

allegations of corruption; the annual conduction of the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey by the Ministry of Finance, for example, is alleged to be riddled with the misappropriation of funds. The disadvantage of NGOs in Sierra Leone is that they have little sense of cooperation among themselves, thus similar organizations end up duplicating their efforts to little or no profitable ends.

Social Control and Public Accountability

The public is represented by the Schools Management Committees, which are expected to perform oversight responsibilities. In the first place, the SMCs are supposed to monitor the income and expenditure of the schools and to urge schools toward the compliance to education rules set by the government. The SMC representatives are also expected to play a key role in the distribution of education/learning materials in order to see that the materials supplied have been fully distributed and to ensure fair distribution among the pupils. It is however disheartening to note that they have not been too effective in performing this role the result of which is most of the materials meant for use by the pupils are diverted to private ends. Moreover, there has been a seeming lack of control of the schools' budget by the SMCs. This gap is thus a possible opportunity of inadequate transparency which give rise to corruption.

This problem is largely attributed to school heads, who are normally very reluctant to disclose budgetary information to SMCs. In some cases some SMCs chairpersons even connive with school heads to siphon funds meant for the running of schools. In effect, the SMCs are really not effective in carrying out their responsibilities. In most schools the members in the SMCs are hand picked by the head teacher based on personal connections. This therefore greatly undermines the effectiveness and independence of the SMCs especially in decisions which the head teacher has a stake in.

Most primary schools have notice boards but one can hardly find any budget related information on them. Even though the notice boards are easy channels through which the public can access information, most school heads deliberately refuse to put on the notice boards any information relating to finance, which further undermines proper accountability and openness. In fact in most primary schools, the head teacher is also the bursar and the sole controller of the funds. In essence, in such primary schools, the aspect of internal oversight or auditing is completely lacking thus compromising accountability and transparency.

Another move to improve service provision was the introduction of the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) by government through the Ministry of Finance. The PETS program has been tracking public expenditures within the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). Moreover, the legal and regulatory framework for public financial management has also been strengthened. Some reform in this area includes the enactment of an economic budget law (Government Budget and Accountability Act), the Procurement Act and strengthening the Audit Service. The PETS has been used as a diagnostic and innovative tool used by government to assess leakages of public funds as they flow through different layers of government.

One limitation of the PETS program, however, is the absence of client perception and a closer analysis of the lapses between providers and their clients/citizens to understand why services fail. Moreover, the intention of PETS as a mechanism to strengthen upward accountability is also restricted to expenditure tracking and does not go far enough to track the crucial stage in the service delivery chain, the last step from the service provider to the consumers. It is expected that even if an increase share of public expenditures can be reallocated towards the provision of services such as education and health service providers like teachers should be present in classes just as doctors and nurses must provide the care that patients need. Unfortunately however, evidence suggests that they often become mired in systems where incentives for effective service delivery are weak, wages may not be paid, corruption is rife and political patronage is the way of life.

Additionally, highly qualified teachers seldom wish to serve in remote rural areas. So do they too often leave the shores of Sierra Leone in search of greener pastures? Due to lack of monitoring, the penalties for absenteeism are ineffective. Moreover, the alleged prevalence of “extra fees” for services creates an incalculable bribery tax that is attached to even the most basic services. Sometimes, providers are driven by intrinsic motivation, be it through professional pride or genuine motivation to help the poor. Teachers deliver timely and efficient services often in difficult circumstances: in collapsed buildings with overflowing latrines and few resources; and classes with inadequate furniture or without textbooks.

CHAPTER TWO - THE SURVEY AND ITS FINDINGS

DATA DESCRIPTION

The data collection instrument consisted of 1 household and four provider questionnaires which were very diagnostic and carefully constructed, tracking resource flow and leakages in primary schools. The questionnaires were meant for various stakeholders in the education sector for better understanding of the channel of resource flow and where pitfalls (leakages) are more likely to occur.

- *Households:* The household questionnaire was geared towards gaining an understanding of the experiences and challenges that recipient parents, and guardians face in attempting to give their children education. Attempts were made to gauge the extent of corruption, both overt and implied. The household survey instrument was also used to gauge peoples' awareness of the exemptions and fees subsidies mandated by the government.
- *Service Providers:* Public service providers in the education sector were also interviewed as to their own experiences in the delivery of services. They were queried as to their own practices, which were juxtaposed to the responses from the household questionnaire during data analysis. Efforts were been made to discover the challenges and constraints facing public education service providers.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Due to the unavailability of sample frame, especially for various house holds, A list of schools was used to randomly select the households, hence a total of 20 pupils were randomly selected from each school, which formed a representative sample of the households. A series of questionnaires was developed for the surveyors to ascertain how much their schools have actually received in payment for school fees subsidies and teaching and learning materials. The questionnaires were also designed to capture time delays in the transfer of school fees subsidies and teaching and learning materials from the central government to the local councils, and from the local councils to the schools and further how the school heads utilized the funds.

The research coordinators were responsible for tracking resources from the central ministries in Freetown to the local councils, including how much was reportedly allocated and actually transferred. They also traveled round the enumeration areas to oversee the enumeration exercise. The field officers were responsible for soliciting information from the local councils as to how much and when these resources were received, and subsequently transferred to schools.

The surveyors were thus responsible for conducting research at the grassroots level, the schools, through personal interviews and an examination of school records to ascertain the amount of resources received by each school, when these resources were delivered and how and on what they were used. This would allow the flow of resources from the central government to the schools to be analyzed effectively, as each level of government will be accounted for. The records indicating the timing of delivery and receipt of resources will also allow for the study of time delays in the receipt of these resources, the enumerators also interviewed household heads so as to compare the information from school heads to see if there was any correlation.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

To test the reliability and validity of the questionnaires, a pretest was done, after which modifications were made and a final draft was designed from the recommendations and suggestions received.

SAMPLING PROCEDURES

After deciding on the sample size, a procedure was formulated of selecting the subjects to be included in the sample. The population chosen was representative of the general population and cluster sampling was used to cater for different localities studied.

CLUSTER SAMPLING

It involved selection of the contact group (pupils in the school) who were then included in the sample and each member became a unit of observation. The clusters (households) were then randomly selected, with special regard to the selected number of pupils who then led us to there various households using the following steps:

- Determination of the sample size
- Definition of clusters forming the population
- Listing of all clusters in a random order
- Identification of the population (pupils)
- Using the table of random numbers, selecting the required number of clusters according to the sample size required.
- All members in the selected clusters were included in the sample as units of observation

HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONNAIRE

A total of 1,069 questionnaires were administered in 1069 households and the response rate was 98%. Due to the fact that the sample drawn from the population was small, sampling error was a possibility. This would not however affect the quality of data collected, as errors are inherent in random sampling. It was impossible for the school enrollment registers to have the addresses of the pupils. Thus, 20 Pupils per school were selected at random; they later gave their addresses to the enumerators, which they used to get to the household, where the household heads were interviewed. Much to our delight, there was full cooperation of the head teachers and class teachers by making class registers available, which made it easy to select the number of pupils at random.

Table 1 Age distribution by province

		QUESTION TWO			Total
		BELOW 30	31-50	OLDER THAN 50	
PROVINCE	Freetown	3.9%	13.0%	5.5%	22.3%
	Bo	3.9%	13.7%	4.2%	21.9%
	Kenema	5.1%	17.9%	5.3%	28.2%
	Portloko	3.8%	19.1%	4.8%	27.6%
Total		16.6%	63.6%	19.7%	100.0%

From the statistics most of those interviewed, 63.6% were between the ages 31-50 years. Among these, 19.1%, 17.9%, 13.7%, and 13.0% were reported from Port Loko, Kenema, Bo and Freetown respectively. Another 19.7% were older than 50 years, among which 5.5%, 5.3%, 4.8% and 4.2% were from Freetown, Kenema, Port Loko and Bo respectively. 16.6% were below 30 years among which 5.1%, 3.9% each and 3.8% were from Kenema Freetown, Bo and Port Loko respectively. Thus, Kenema had the highest proportion (5.1%) of the youngest cohort while Freetown had the highest proportion (5.5%) of the oldest group. The table further reveals that nearly two-thirds of the sample (63.6%) was middle aged.

Table 2 Respondents' sex distribution by province

		QUESTION THREE			Total
		MALE	FEMALE	3.00	
PROVINCE	Freetown	11.6%	10.8%		22.4%
	Bo	9.8%	12.2%		22.0%
	Kenema	12.3%	15.7%		28.1%
	Portloko	13.6%	13.9%	.1%	27.6%
Total		47.3%	52.6%	.1%	100.0%

According to table 2, a total of 47.3% males were interviewed compared to 52.6% females. Bo had the lowest number (9.8%) of male headed households interviewed while Port Loko had the highest number (13.6%) of males interviewed. Among the females, Freetown had the lowest (10.8%), while Kenema had the highest (15.7%) proportion interviewed.

Table 3 Summary of level of education by province

		QUESTION FOUR					Total
		DID NOT ATTEND SCHOOL	ATTENDED PRIMARY SCHOOL BUT DID NOT FINISH	COMPLETED PRIMARY SCHOOL	COMPLETED SECONDARY SCHOOL	COMPLETED TERTIARY	
PROVINCE	Freetown	3.1%	1.1%	2.6%	8.4%	6.9%	22.2%
	Bo	8.3%	2.1%	4.3%	5.2%	1.9%	21.8%
	Kenema	11.3%	2.9%	5.2%	4.9%	3.8%	28.2%
	Portloko	11.2%	2.1%	3.2%	7.0%	4.3%	27.8%
Total		34.0%	8.3%	15.3%	25.6%	16.9%	100.0%

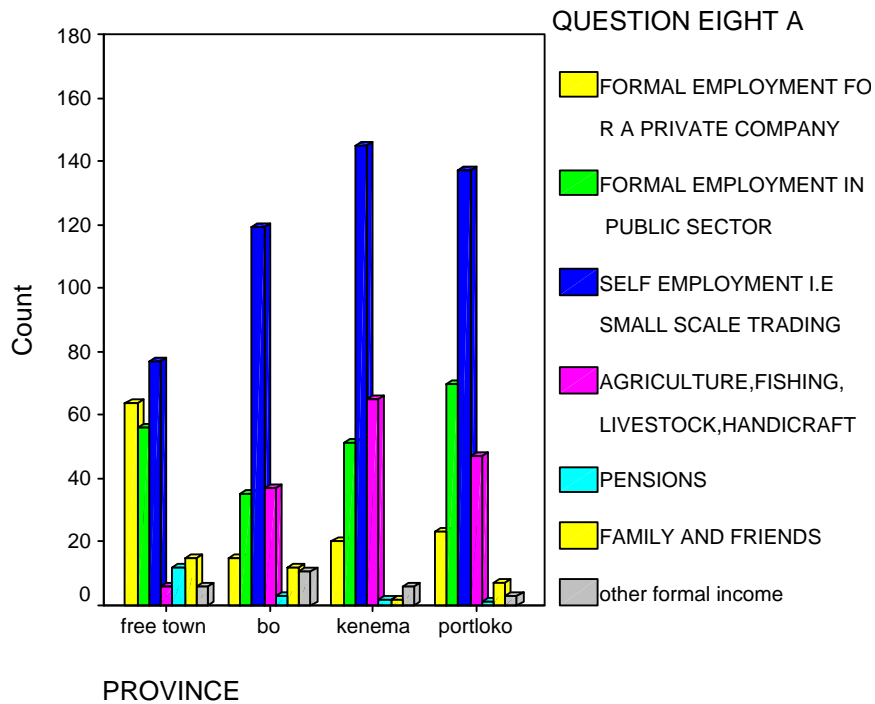
Among the households interviewed Kenema and Port Loko showed high illiteracy rates at 11.3 % and 11.2% respectively. On the contrary, Kenema had the highest drop-out rate (2.9%) as indicated by those who did not finish primary school. Freetown had the highest literacy rate ie, completion of primary, through secondary school to tertiary level. The data however generally suggests that more than half of the household respondents were reasonably literate.

Table 4 Summary of average monthly income by province

		QUESTION SEVEN				Total
		Le 50,000-99000	le100000-1490000	le1500000-1990000	dont know	
PROVINCE	Freetown	6.7%	9.7%	2.8%	3.1%	22.3%
	Bo	8.8%	7.1%	1.2%	4.7%	21.9%
	Kenema	10.5%	7.6%	1.1%	8.8%	28.1%
	Portloko	9.0%	10.4%	1.0%	7.1%	27.7%
Total		35.1%	34.9%	6.2%	23.8%	100.0%

According to table 4, 35.1% of those interviewed reported an average monthly income of (le 50, 000 0-99, 0000). Among these, 10.5%, 9.0%, 8.8% and 6.7% were from Kenema, Port Loko, Bo and Freetown respectively. Another 34.9% were within the Le 100,300 to Le 149,000 income bracket. Among these, 10.4%, 9.7%, 7.6% and 7.1% were from Port Loko, Freetown, Kenema and Bo respectively. Finally, a small proportion of 6.2% earned between Le 150,000 and Le 199,000 per month. In this group, 2.8%, 1.2%, 1.1%, and 1.0% were from Freetown, Bo, Kenema and Port Loko respectively. The data generally indicates that Freetown had the lowest proportion in the lowest income bracket, while it maintained the highest proportion respondents belonging to the highest income bracket.

Figure 1 Sources of employment by province



As figure illustrates, most of the respondents, irrespective of the locality were self-employed doing small-scale trading. This was followed by those in the formal/public sector, agricultural enterprises and the private sector respectively. Other sources albeit insignificant were from families and pensions.

PROVIDER QUESTIONNAIRE ONE

This questionnaire was designed for profiling education providers' problems in servicing schools. It also sought to reveal information on school budgeting, and the general school governance.

The questionnaire was used to interview head teachers / school directors. The demographic characteristics of the school head interviewed included age, gender and level of education.

Table 5 Age distribution of school service providers by province

		QUESTION 1		Total
		31-50	50 AND ABOVE	
PROVINCE	Freetown	8.0%	8.0%	16.0%
	Bo	16.0%	10.0%	26.0%
	Kenema	16.0%	14.0%	30.0%
	Port loko	4.0%	24.0%	28.0%
	Total	44.0%	56.0%	100.0%

According to table 5, 44.0% of the head teachers belonged to the age bracket between 31 and 50 years. Among these, 16% each were from Kenema and Bo while 8% and 4% were reported for Freetown and Port Loko respectively. Additionally, slightly more than (56%) were above 50 years of age, among which 24%, 14%, 10%, and 8% were from Port Loko, Kenema, Bo and Freetown respectively. The data not surprisingly suggests that primary school heads were generally old.

Table 6 Sex distribution of head teachers by province

		QUESTION 2		Total
		MALE	FEMALE	
PROVINCE	Freetown	12.0%	4.0%	16.0%
	Bo	22.0%	4.0%	26.0%
	Kenema	26.0%	4.0%	30.0%
	Port loko	26.0%	2.0%	28.0%
Total		86.0%	14.0%	100.0%

According to table 6, more than four-fifths (86%) of the head teachers interviewed were males while the rest were females, which further confirms the predominance of males over females in the distribution of power.

Table 7 Level of education among head teachers by province

		QUESTION 3				Total	
		DID NOT ATTEND SCHOOL	DID NOT COMPLETE PRIMARY SCHOOL	COMPLETED PRIMARY SCHOOL	COMPLETED SECONGARY SCHOOL		COMPLETED TETIARY
PROVINCE	freetown				2.0%	14.0%	16.0%
	bo			8.0%	6.0%	12.0%	26.0%
	kenema			4.0%	18.0%	8.0%	30.0%
	port loko	12.0%	2.0%		6.0%	8.0%	28.0%
Total		12.0%	2.0%	12.0%	32.0%	42.0%	100.0%

According to table 7, only a very small proportion (12%) of the PTA chairmen never attended school. The rest 12%, 32%, and 42% completed primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education in that order. Among these only Portloko had illiterates and primary school drop-outs Freetown had the highest proportion tertiary graduates followed by Bo, Kenema and Portloko accordingly. The greater proportion of tertiary products from Freetown could be partly explained by the level of awareness and the greater proportion of respondents who could afford the cost of schooling for their children.

PROVIDER ONE B

This questionnaire was designed for profiling schools problems, budget information and general features of school governance.

The questionnaire was used to interview the PTA/SMCs chairpersons.

Most of the chairpersons were above 50 years, and majority were men who attained secondary education and above.

The PTA/SMCs were not well informed about the schools financial flows

Most schools operated bank accounts though almost all agreed they did not receive financial transfers on time.

Most of the schools procure their own goods but due to limited information flow between the ministry of education and the school authorities the latter hardly knew the readiness of their remittances in their accounts.

The head teachers were responsible for the supervision of most tasks and complaints

PROVIDER QUESTIONNAIRE TWO

This was used to interview the persons in charge of financial management at the schools .The main data sources were cashbooks, financial records, receipts and ledgers.

This questionnaire was very difficult to administer due to the incompleteness of records.

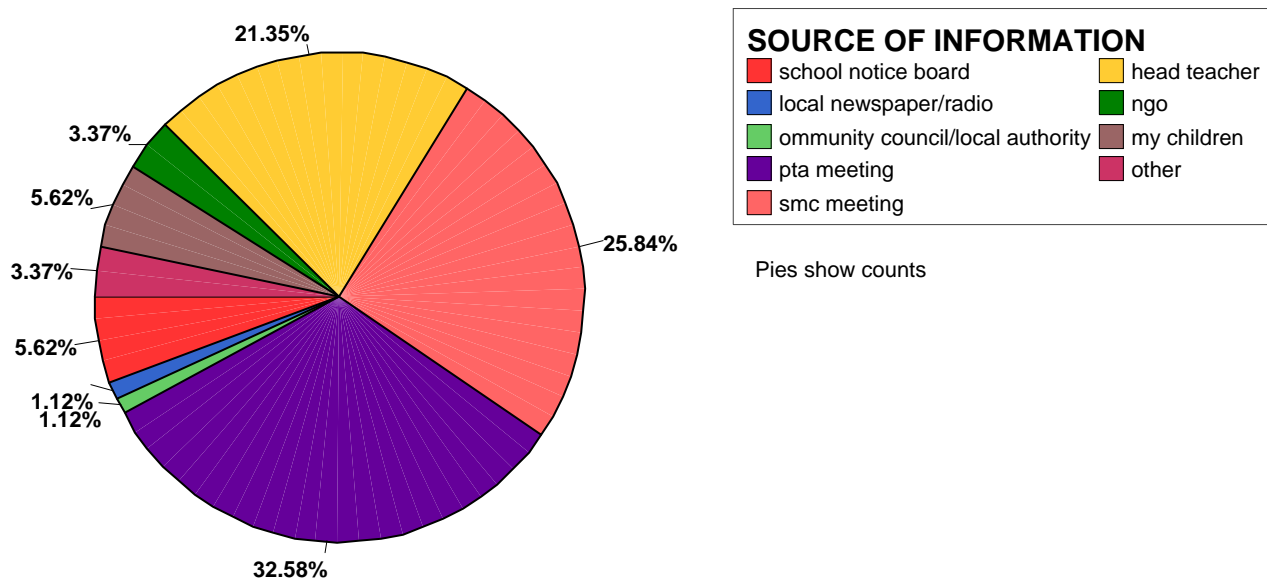
Most head teachers receive funds from the government for running the schools, i.e. maintenance, construction of new buildings, furniture etc.

Most schools do not display their financial records on the notice board. Even where they do, most records available were not up to date hence not very useful for proper accounting.

PROVIDER QUESTIONNAIRE THREE

This questionnaire was used to interview the person in charge of financial management in the district. Only three questionnaires were administered. Other sources also included government reports and financial records. All the three interviewed agreed that they had received financial training from either the government or NGO, but the financial resources available were inadequate to meet their responsibilities. They also believed that decentralization has enhanced the flow of financial resources from the central government to schools.

Figure 2 Sources of information on budget and school finance



According to figure 2, 32.58%, 25.84% and 21.35% of the respondents sourced their information on school finances through PTA meetings, SMC meetings and head teachers meetings. The other sources include: school notice boards school children, local councils and local administrators. The data thus confirm that information was not openly displayed on school notice boards hence only 5.56% of the parents who obtained information got it from the notice board. This also means school heads were not very transparent on school financial matters.

Table 8 Percentage of household respondents who attempted obtaining information on finances

QUESTION 41

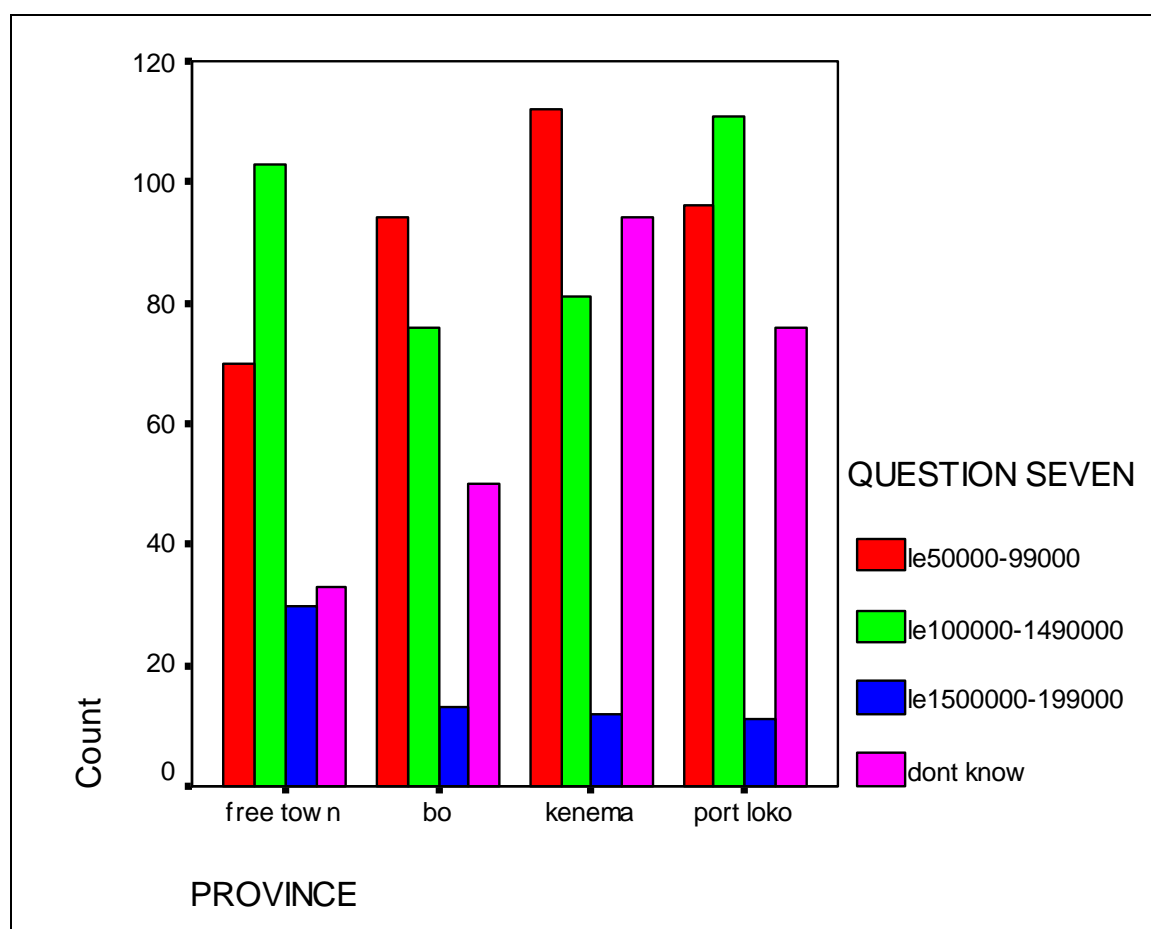
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	56	5.2	5.3	5.3
	no	1004	93.9	94.7	100.0
	Total	1060	99.2	100.0	
Missing	System	9	.8		
Total		1069	100.0		

According to table 8, an overwhelming proportion (93.9%) of our respondents made no attempts in obtaining information on school finances. Only an insignificant proportion (5.2%) made that effort, which signifies the level of apathy in the communities studied.

Table 9 Household income distribution by province

		QUESTION SEVEN				Total
		Le 50000-99000	le100000-1490000	le1500000-1990000	Don't know	
PROVINCE	Freetown	70	103	30	33	236
	Bo	94	76	13	50	233
	Kenema	112	81	12	94	299
	Port loko	96	111	11	76	294
Total		372	371	66	253	1062

Figure 3 household income distributions by province

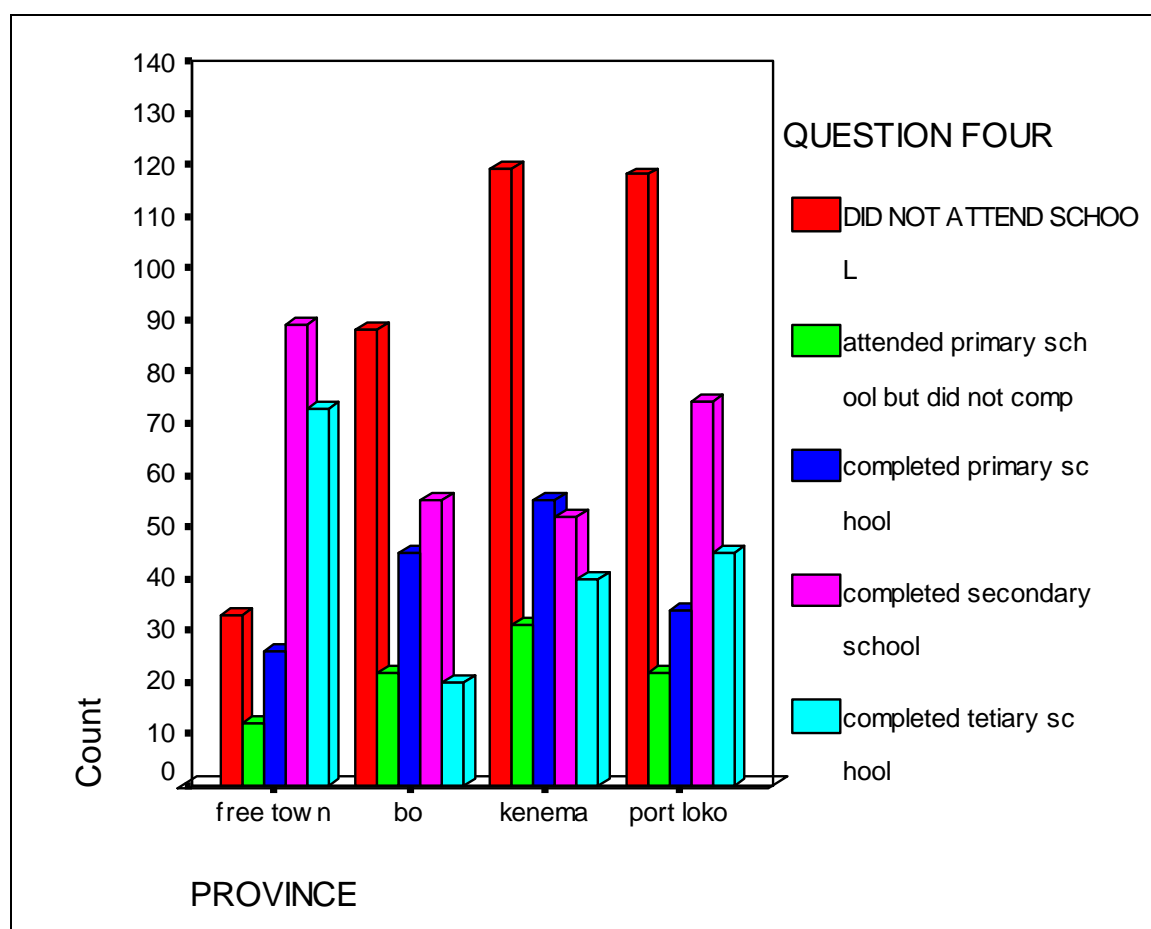


According to table 9 and figure 3, most of the respondents' incomes ranged Le 50,000 and Le 149,000. Only a small proportion was in the Le 150,000 – Le 199,000 per month income bracket. As seen in the analysis parents living in free town (capital city) have a higher income. There were however more respondents from Freetown in the highest than the other areas. This could be partly explained by the level of industrialization and access to jobs in the capital than in the provinces.

Table 10 Household level of education by province

		QUESTION FOUR					Total
		DID NOT ATTEND SCHOOL	Attended primary school but did not complete	completed primary school	completed secondary school	completed tertiary school	
PROVINCE	Freetown	33	12	26	89	73	233
	Bo	88	22	45	55	20	230
	Kenema	119	31	55	52	40	297
	Port loko	118	22	34	74	45	293
Total		358	87	160	270	178	1053

Figure 4 Household level of education by province



According to table 10 and figure 4, there were more household respondents in the provinces that did not attend school than in Freetown. Similarly, more primary school kids drop out of primary in the provinces than in Freetown. On the contrary, more respondents completed secondary school in Freetown and Port Loko than the other communities. The data also shows that more people completed tertiary institutions in Freetown than in the provinces. This is not surprising giving the differential income levels and accessibility to education in the capital than the provinces.

Table 11 Children's performance and household income

		QUESTION SEVEN				Total
		le50000-99000	le100000-1490000	le1500000-1990000	dont know	
QUESTION TWELVE	VERY WELL	92	114	21	24	251
	WELL	179	176	28	133	516
	AVERAGE	75	63	15	74	227
	POOR	8	10	0	8	26
	VERY POOR	1	3	0	0	4
	6.00	1	0	0	0	1
	DONT KNOW	0	0	0	1	1
Total		356	366	64	240	1026

Table 11 generally shows that those children whose performance was impressive were from low and medium income parents than their counterparts.

Table 12 Respondents' age and income

		QUESTION SEVEN				Total
		le50000-99000	le100000-1490000	le1500000-1990000	dont know	
QUESTION TWO	BELOW 30	61	42	8	66	177
	31-50	247	244	39	144	674
	OLDER THAN 50	64	85	19	42	210
Total		372	371	66	252	1061

Majority of those interviewed were between ages 31-50 and were more financially stable than other age groups. This places them in a better situation for affording cost of schooling.

Figure 5a Proportion of respondent complaining about school finances

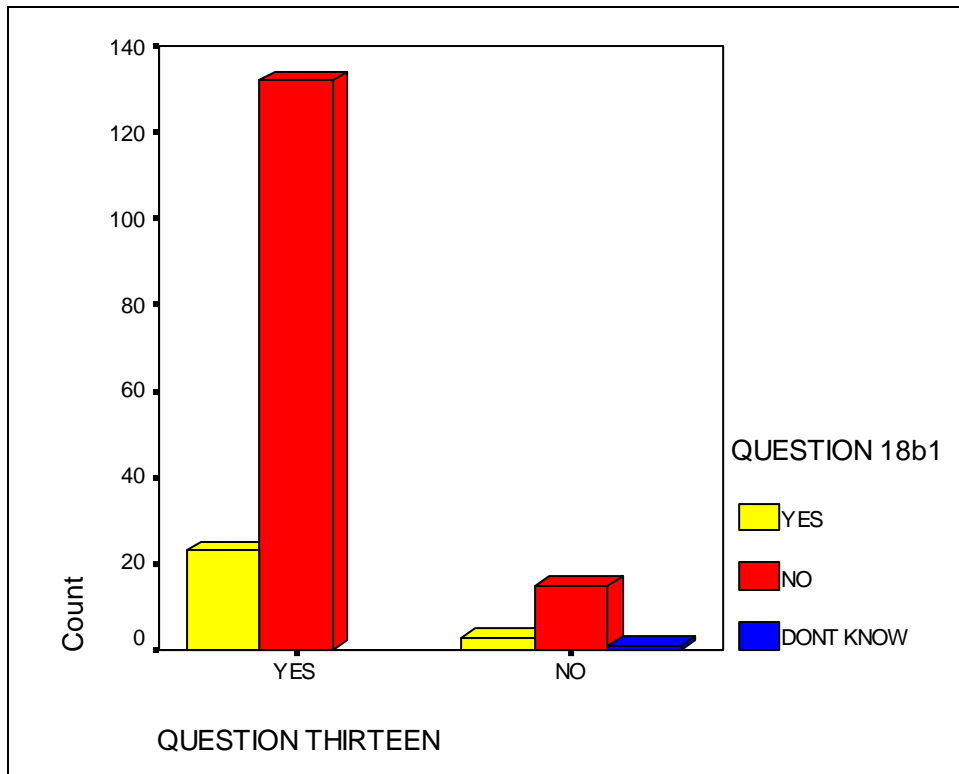


Figure 5b Level of respondents' satisfaction with operating school finances

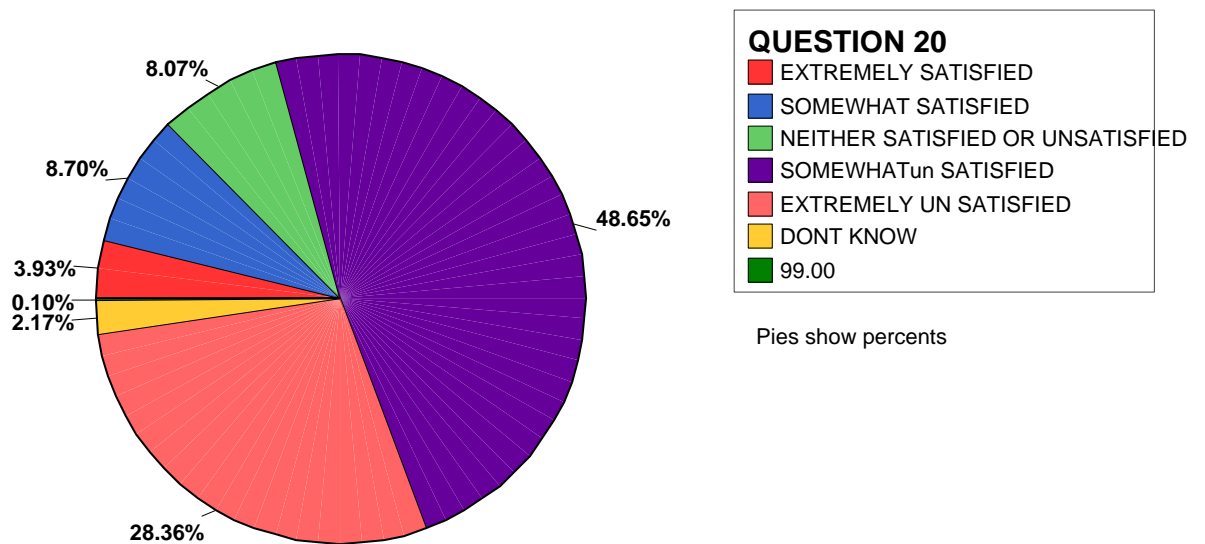


Figure 5a shows that an overwhelming proportion of respondents complained about school finances. On further segregation of the data, figure 5b shows that another overwhelming proportion were dissatisfied with the operation of school finances. Only a very small proportion (3.5%) was extremely satisfied, thus confirming the perceived existence of corruption and mismanagement in schools.

Table 13

QUESTION 15a3			area			Total
			URBAN	RURAL	4.00	
YES	QUESTION 15a7	YES	17.6%	15.8%		33.5%
		NO	23.6%	27.5%	2.5%	53.6%
		DONT KNOW	9.5%	3.4%		12.9%
	Total	50.7%	46.8%	2.5%	100.0%	
NO	QUESTION 15a7	YES	6.8%	12.4%		19.2%
		NO	23.6%	43.2%		66.7%
		DONT KNOW	8.3%	5.8%		14.0%
	Total	38.6%	61.4%		100.0%	
DONT KNOW	QUESTION 15a7	DONT KNOW	20.0%	80.0%		100.0%
	Total		20.0%	80.0%		100.0%
12.00	QUESTION 15a7	NO	100.0%			100.0%
	Total		100.0%			100.0%

According to table 13, only 33.5% of those interviewed paid for both private lessons and fees for the final exam. Among these more (17.6%) were from the urban than rural (15.8%) areas.

Additionally, 53.6 of those interviewed paid for private lesson but did not pay for final exams. Among these, 23.6% were from the urban area while 27.5 % were from the rural areas.

Another 19.2% of those interviewed did not pay for private tuition but for final exams. Among these, less (6.8%) were from the urban than rural (12.4) areas.

66.7% of those interviewed did not pay for private lesson or for exams. Among these, 23.6 % were from urban while 43.2 % were from rural areas.

The assumption here therefore is that schools in the urban areas charge extra levies and illicit fees often because the conditions of service and salaries paid to such teachers can not sustain urban lifestyles, thereby forcing them to resort to unorthodox methods i.e. private lessons for the flimsy reason of the need to complete their syllabus in time. Women were also more likely to pay bribes than men, apparently because in most case, they don't question the authorities and are easier to convince than men who always want to know the finer details of what the money was meant for. Most women are also not members of school management committees or parents teachers association even though some take responsibility for children's education. They only monitor a child's progress through report forms but rarely go to school to discuss children's performance with the teachers.

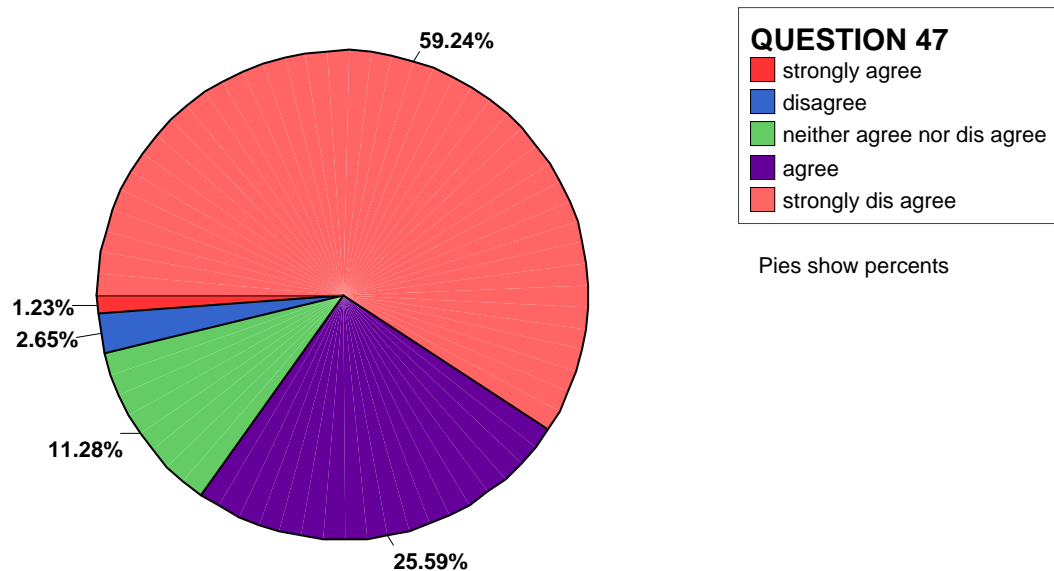
Table 14a Access to school financial management information

QUESTION 17			QUESTION 44					Total
			information was requested but denied	those i approached did not have information	i started process but did not see it through	i did not try to have access to information	other	
YES	QUESTION 41	no	6.7%			73.3%	20.0%	100.0%
	Total		6.7%			73.3%	20.0%	100.0%
NO	QUESTION 41	no	3.2%	6.6%	2.1%	70.0%	18.0%	100.0%
	Total		3.2%	6.6%	2.1%	70.0%	18.0%	100.0%

Table 14b Respondents' perception of corruption in primary school administration

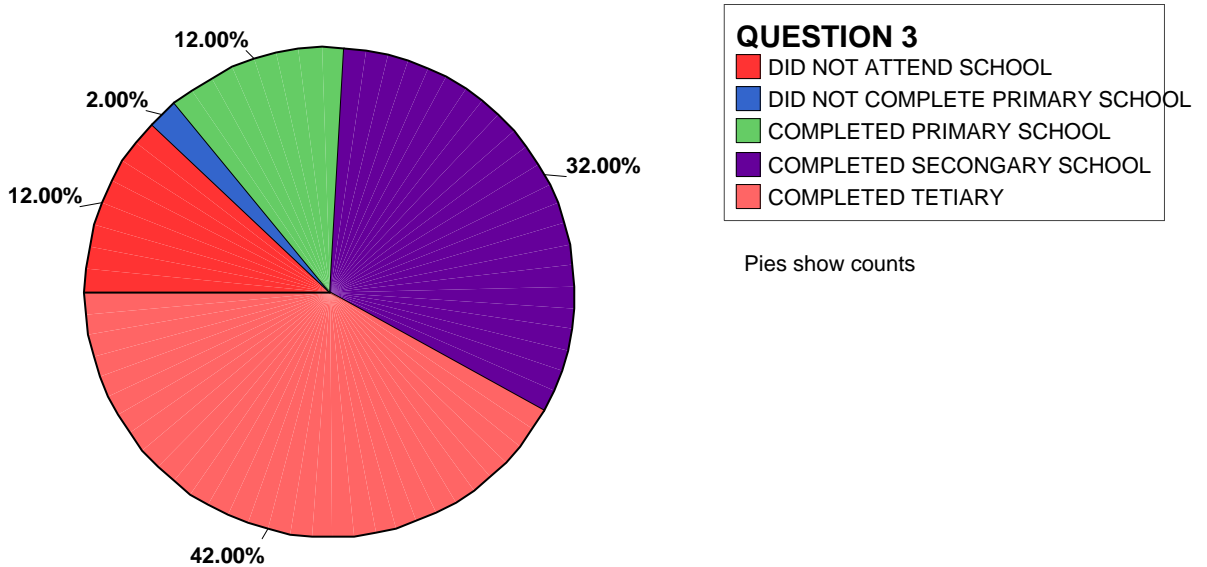
QUESTION 41			QUESTION 47					Total
			strongly agree	disagree	neither agree nor dis agree	agree	strongly agree	
yes	area	URBAN			7.3%	12.7%	21.8%	41.8%
		RURAL	1.8%		1.8%	23.6%	30.9%	58.2%
	Total		1.8%		9.1%	36.4%	52.7%	100.0%
no	area	URBAN	.3%	1.2%	4.5%	11.2%	28.6%	45.8%
		RURAL	.9%	1.6%	6.9%	13.1%	30.2%	52.8%
		4.00				.6%	.8%	1.4%
	Total		1.2%	2.8%	11.4%	25.0%	59.6%	100.0%

Figure 7



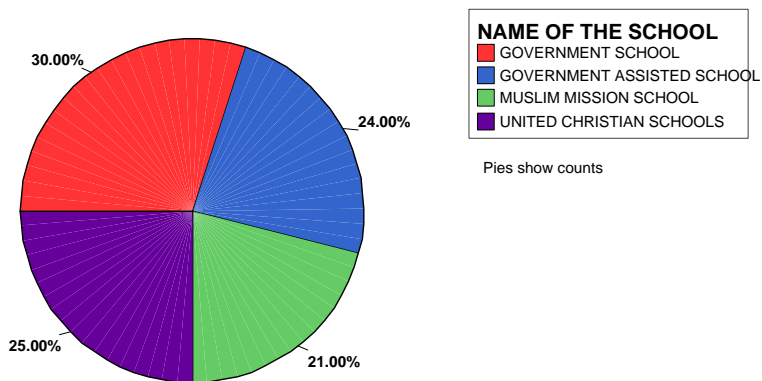
According to tables 14a and b, and figure 7, 73% of those interviewed heard about embezzlement of school funds but did not try to have access to financial information. On the contrary, 70% did not hear about embezzlement of school funds, nor did they try to access financial information. From the study, it seems that most of the parents and guardians believed there was corruption in schools. Among these, more respondents from rural than urban areas strongly agreed that there was corruption in operating school finances. This is not surprising among communication starved respondents in the rural Sierra Leone.

Figure 8 Level of education of PTAs/SMCs



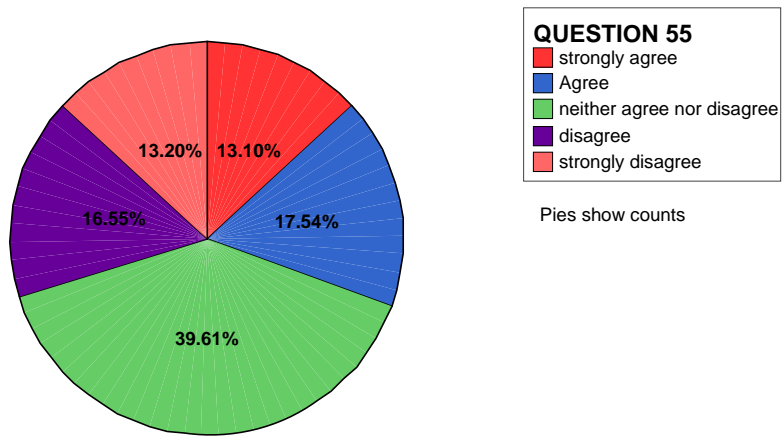
According to figure 8, most of the PTA/CTA chairpersons had completed secondary and tertiary education. Only small proportions did not attend or dropped out of school.

Figure 9 Type of schools in study areas



According to figure 9, 30%, 25%, 24%, and 21% of schools in the study area were government schools, United Christian schools, Government assisted and Muslim schools respectively.

Figure 10 Perception of parents' involvement in school administration



According to figure 10, PTA/SMC” perceptions about parents’ involvement in school administration are mixed. For example, while nearly one-quarter seem to agree that parents get involved in school administration, another similar proportion are in disagreement. Apparently due inadequate information flow in the study area, nearly half of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the level of parents’ involvement in school administration.

Figure 11 Frequency of visits to schools

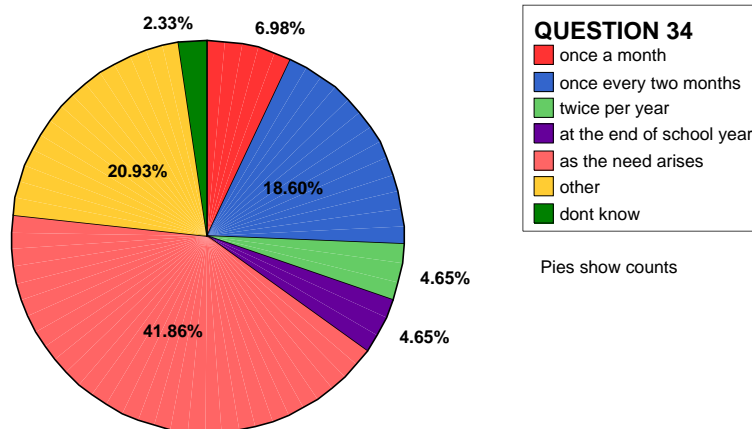


Figure 11 shows that generally schools officials pay very limited visits to schools. For example, about half (41.86%) visit schools only when the need arises. Another 18.60% visit once every two months while 4.65% each visit twice per year or at the end of every school year. Little wonder the school operatives have a free chance for misappropriation of school resources.

Table 15a Level of awareness of PTA/SMC about the sources resources for schools

		QUESTION 49							Total
		no not at all	no not well	neither well nor not well	yes well	yes very well	8.00	dont know	
QUESTION 47	YES	2.1%		2.1%	19.1%	21.3%		2.1%	46.8%
	NO	6.4%	6.4%	10.6%	8.5%	4.3%	4.3%	12.8%	53.2%
Total		8.5%	6.4%	12.8%	27.7%	25.5%	4.3%	14.9%	100.0%

Table 15b Level of awareness of timely arrival of school resources from source

		QUESTION 49							Total
		no not at all	no not well	neither well nor not well	yes well	yes very well	8.00	dont know	
QUESTION 46	YES			2.1%	8.3%	12.5%			22.9%
	NO	10.4%	6.3%	10.4%	18.8%	12.5%	4.2%	14.6%	77.1%
Total		10.4%	6.3%	12.5%	27.1%	25.0%	4.2%	14.6%	100.0%

According to table 15a, less than half the SMCs/PTAs interviewed were aware of sources and flow of school resources. Among those who are aware, only about one-quarter reported that assistance to schools was timely delivered. This situation further lends support to opportunities mismanagement of school resources.

Open ended questions

Some open ended offered opportunities to respondents to suggest some strategies which could enhance accountability and effective in the school system. Among these, the first suggestion was the need to upgrade teachers' salaries hence most of these believed teachers were grossly undercompensated for their services. Such increased salaries could form a basis for teacher motivation and hence increasing their effectiveness and efficacy.

The second suggestion was the need to increase furniture and equipment in schools giving the growing demand for primary education nationwide.

Thirdly, the improvement in infrastructural development like the construction of more classrooms was another area of challenge giving the double shift schooling pattern nationwide.

Finally, improving the schools through increase d visitations from all stakeholders (Ministry of Education operatives, PTA/SMC, Donor agencies, civil society/NGOs etc) could accountability and minimizes corruption in primary schools.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the survey and opinions canvassed from the wider society in the four provinces depict a scenario of misappropriation and misuse of resources especially with regard to free flow of education materials. From the education chain there are a lot of leakages which are mainly linked to lack of regular education guidelines in procurement, supply and distribution of education services.

The school heads are misusing the powers vested on them by the education act. It is therefore evident that a new source of momentum is needed to ensure that the education stakeholders stick to their commitment and that the government puts in place and acts upon frameworks necessary to support education.

If the government is committed to fighting ignorance, they should develop a framework where all children receive support to enable them complete their education. Regular transfer of grants by the ministry of education is not adequate. Additionally, constant monitoring of the schools through the schools inspectorate department is called for to assist in tracking the progress of the school by enhancing the school management accountability.

It is indeed evident from the survey findings that there are a lot of leakages of resources in the education sector which calls for the attention of the government, ministry of education in particular to help arrest the situation. This will require cooperation from other stakeholders in the education sector.

PROPOSED POLICY RECOMENDECTIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations could be useful to all stakeholders in the Sierra Leone education system.

- The need for increased capital investments by government through donor participation is necessary for improving and expanding the education sector
- There is also need to increase access to educational resources and improving the cost and quality within the policy of poverty reduction strategy
- The government should develop a policy framework on education, which could provide strategic direction to the ministry of education in terms of its scope, function, modus operandi and collaborative relationship with major stakeholders
- The government should invest more in the education sector as part of its commitment in providing social contract with its citizens
- Poverty and social impact assessments are required in the medium and long term to gauge the perception of stakeholders about reforms and financing processes which could improve on the education sector
- Civic engagement of all stakeholders in the education sector is mandatory which should be done in transparent and accountable manner in an effort to create ownership
- Informal interviews and focus group discussions highlighted the lack of efficient mechanisms for tackling malpractices in the education sector. A framework should be developed to handle such cases
- Finally, the need to develop policies and strategies which could enhance the accountability and transparency capacity of the primary education cannot be overemphasized

APPENDIX

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DATA BASE BUILDING

A database was built for all the questionnaires in line with Africa education watch analysis guidelines. The data base was designed taking into consideration qualitative and quantitative information.

For the sake of analysis five different data bases were built and were later synchronized for easy interpretation and correlation purposes

The data was maintained in house and was managed by NAG staff.

DATA SORTING AND FILTERING

The information collated was sorted out and filtered ready for input into the computer database, a thorough synthesis of the questionnaires was done to make sure all relevant and useful information is obtained from the mass of raw data.

All the questionnaires were given unique numbers to avoid double entry and to help in cross checking if the information key punched into the computer is true.

TRAINING OF DATA ENTRY CLERKS

Because of the physical and temporal gap between data collection and data analysis, it was not easy to start data analysis immediately four of those involved in collecting data were trained and later on recruited as data entry clerks as they were already part of the process and already had a thorough understanding of the questionnaires, in fact they developed a systematic framework which increased the validity and reliability of the data collected.

CODING AND ENTERING DATA

A code sheet was developed which indicated the location, column and width of each variable in the spreadsheet.

The data entry clerks transferred numerical numbers representing responses from the questionnaire into the computer.

To permit quantitative analysis, data was converted to numerical codes representing

attributes/measurement of variables for easy analysis

All the variables were given values as the computer software has an inbuilt system for managing the data as long as it is programmed.

This covered a total of two weeks

DATA COLLATION

The data collected was grouped into a logically ordered overview for analysis

All the information obtained from the field was arranged systematically both for qualitative and quantitative.

DATA ANALYSIS

Various factors were put into consideration when analysis the data this included

- Objectives of the study
- Research design used
- Type of measurement scale used in measuring variables
- Both qualitative and quantitative analysis was done

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Responses were given values for easy analysis the numbers were mutually exclusive and each response was given one number and the same pattern was applied to all responses to avoid duplication

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Patterns, trends and relationships were arranged into meaningful sets. This was done to all open ended questions for easy analysis. These categories were grouped together and given values

STEPS USED IN QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Data organization

The data available was collapsed into categories and all the responses assigned a numerical code all this was recorded in note cards field notes were also edited to check for meaningful response and important information.

Creating categories, themes and pattern

After establishing relationships between categories this was done after detecting various categories which are distinct from each other.

Variables such as sex, marital status, size of class were measured using nominal scale of measurement.

Level of income, position (school head, chairman, secretary etc) was measured using ordinal scale in some cases ratio scale was used especially where powerful statistical procedures were applied.

Discrete and continuous variables were also put into consideration

The generation of themes, categories and patterns was done by the computer the information was then evaluated and analyzed to determine the adequacy of the information, credibility, usefulness, consistency and validation.

GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics

Data was broken down into gender, social and economic situation, education, area of residence (rural or urban), marital status type of school (government, private, mission etc).

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