



## AFRICA EDUCATION WATCH: SIERRA LEONE

### GOOD GOVERNANCE LESSONS FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION

Formal education in Sierra Leone can be traced back to the Christian missionaries who built the first schools and other learning institutions in the 18th century. Today primary education is free for all children starting at age 6 and since 2006 government and government assisted schools are managed at the local level.

As part of the three-year Africa Education Watch, the National Accountability Group (NAG), the national chapter of Transparency International in Sierra Leone assessed whether the new decentralised education management systems are effective in controlling and preventing corruption in the country. The study examined whether school administrations are genuinely accountable and whether participatory governance systems bring public service closer to the user, particularly parents.

The key objectives of the programme are to:

- identify approximate levels of resource leakages or delays in resource transfer from the central government to school level
- determine the extent of (illegal) fees and other costs to parents, and
- assess decentralised accountability structures and determine how effective they are at controlling resources and preventing corruption.

## AFRICA EDUCATION WATCH RESPONDENTS: SIERRA LEONE

General Public (parents/guardians)	1,069
Head Teachers	54
Parent Teacher Association Chairs/ School Management Committee members	50
District Directors of Education	4

## COUNTRY FACTS\*

Primary Education in Sierra Leone	FREE
Length of study	6 years
Population 2007	6m
GNP per capita 2007 (PPP US\$)	679
Percentage of Population living on less than US\$1.25 per day	53.4%
Primary-age children	0.9m



## FINDINGS

- 52 per cent of parents said the quality of education is not up to standard.
- 62 per cent of parents report paying registration fees, which by law are illegal.
- 56 per cent of parents said there are not enough teachers and 37 per cent said the teachers are not qualified.
- 48 per cent of head teachers receive no financial management training.
- 22 per cent of those surveyed said there were cases of embezzlement at schools, and 27 per cent reported cases of bribery in the school system.
- 70 per cent of parents never sought financial information about their children's schools
- 80 per cent of schools had either incomplete or no financial documentation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teacher pay needs to be increased to motivate and increase the effectiveness of staff.
- Increased enrolment requires additional investment in schools including improvements in infrastructure, furniture and equipment.
- There should be more school inspections to limit corruption.
- Increase capital investment by government and through donor participation to improve and expand the education sector.
- Parents and local communities should be encouraged to participate more fully in the education sector and this should be done in a transparent and accountable manner in an effort to create ownership.
- There is a need for more training and the development of policies that enhance the transparency and accountability of those administering the primary education sector.

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### Contact

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