COUNTRY REPORT

SIERRA LEONE

Sierra Leone MICS Survey 2017

MICS

UNITY FREEDOM JUSTICE

COUNTRY REPORT

Sierra Leone Country Report

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CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
ECD	Early childhood development
ECE	Early childhood education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESP	Education Sector Plan
FQSE	Free Quality School Education
ILO	International Labour Organization
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (now the MBSSE)
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
MICS-EAGLE	MICS Education Analysis for Global Learning and Equity
MBSSE	Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education
MTHE	Minister of Technical and Higher Education
NCSA	National Commission for Social Action
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TSC	Teachers Service Commission
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
WHO	World Health Organisation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The MICS – EAGLE (Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys – Education Analysis for Global Learning and Equity) is UNICEF's global initiative to support countries to make better use of their MICS data. It provides systematic in-depth data analysis that supports governments for evidence-based policy planning, monitoring, and advocacy using the most recent household survey datasets. It focuses on equity issues in education such as gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, child labour, disability, and regional disparities.

In the context of newly established guidelines for education policy, Sierra Leone is the second country to embark on the MICS – EAGLE initiative. The Customization Workshop to define the most important priorities in education policy took place in October 2018. During the workshop, government actors, members of civil society, as well as experts in education and statistics came together to identify the main challenges in the country's education system. Those challenges were presented in the form of policy and research questions, most of which this report aims to answer. The research questions were reorganized and reviewed to meet the availability of data, while questions for which there is no data available help to identify the data gaps. The policy and research questions were regrouped into thematic categories. This report presents analysis of each thematic category using both descriptive analysis and regressions to better understand the challenges identified by policy makers and experts.

The first chapter presents and introduction of the report, as well as its main objectives, while the second chapter provides an overview of progress the country is making towards Sustainable Development Goal 4 on quality education.

Chapter 3 describes the factors determining participation at each level of education, and shows that attendance has strongly increased in the country over the last few years. The chapter highlights the strong inequalities in access to education, particularly unfavourable to children from poorer backgrounds and rural areas. Indeed, growing up in poorer families is presented as the strongest determinant preventing access to schools. Child labour and early marriage are also factors preventing children from staying and progressing in school. The chapter also looks closely at inclusive education, addressing the disabilities for which schools are the least prepared.

The fourth chapter looks into internal efficiency, particularly grade repetition and how it is influenced by the age of students. Children who repeat Grade 1 are much younger than those who do not, showing that starting pre-primary education might be more appropriate for children who are of pre-primary age than prematurely entering primary school. The chapter also provides a pathway analysis, which is an interesting overview of how children progress across education levels.

The fifth chapter shows which children and youth have the most proficient numeracy, literacy, and ICT skills. The chapter corroborates the dimensions of inequality presented in chapter 3, meaning that more rural and poorer children are less often in school. Further, when they are in school they are less often learning.

Chapter 6 provides statistical evidence on the importance of parental involvement to guarantee a stimulating learning environment for children. The results show that children from similar backgrounds whose parents are more active in their education have more solid numeracy and literacy skills.

The data availability and gaps are presented in chapter 7, which points to information on teachers as one of the main gaps. The chapter also describe the different data sources available in the country that can be used for policy and research.

The findings presented in those chapters served to enlighten the discussion on policy actions at the MICS – EAGLE policy workshop, which was organized 17–19 June 2019.During the event, government, civil society, and aid donors gathered to discuss the main policy implications that could be prepared based on the findings from the initial draft of this report. The policy debate initiated the further discussion of several consultations with policy makers that took place after the workshop. The combination of the policies discussed and the outputs of the individual consultations informed the policy options proposed at the end of each chapter. The 10 main points per topic are:

Early Learning

1. Several groups during the workshop indicated that a cost-efficient way to rapidly increase the provision of early learning is to **include early childhood classes in all primary schools with a high proportion of underaged**

children in Grade 1. Furthermore, teachers currently teaching primary level grades should receive specific training to adapt to early childhood education (ECE).

2. Additionally, workshop participants agreed that **mother-tongue education in early grades** is extremely important for children to learn quicker, especially reading skills. Children in earlier grades should be taught in their local language, which requires the curriculum, learning, and teaching materials to adapt to each mother tongue.

Parents

3. **Further data collection is necessary to better understand parents' perception** and the barriers that cause children to drop out of school. There is room for improved perception data to more clearly explain the reasons why some children do not complete their grades.
4. Parents play a pivotal role in their children's learning. **Parental responsibility in education should be included all across education planning,** especially in the future Education Sector Plan. Particular attention should be paid to the role of fathers in sharing the responsibility of stimulating their children and engaging in their schools.

Violence against children

5. The Child Rights Act has been in place since 2007 to protect children. However, there needs to be **stricter enforcement of laws to prevent violence against children.** Although legislation already exists, it is important to ensure strict compliance to all laws prohibiting child labour.
6. There should be robust **awareness campaigns against violence and violent punishment**. In order to raise awareness regarding the importance of education, the government must develop a communication and social mobilization strategy that reaches out to most parents. Sensitization campaigns are key to helping parents understand the importance of their engagement in their children's education. Those campaigns are also key to helping parents understand the risks of violent punishment and how to more successfully discipline their children.

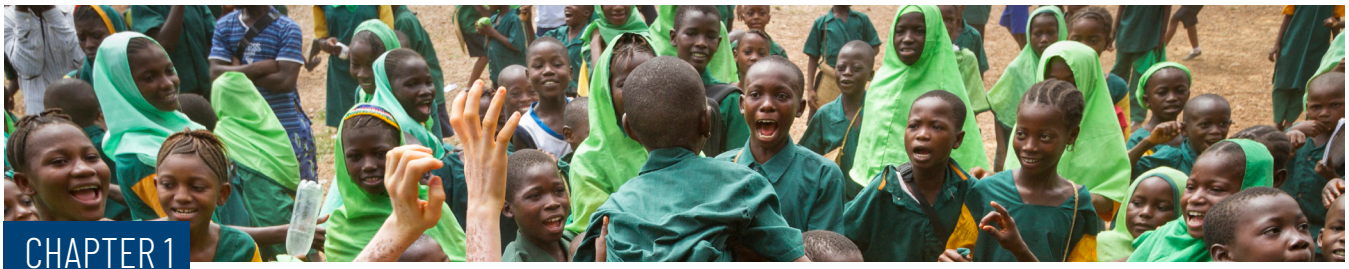
Teachers

7. There has to be further **investment in teacher training (pre-service and in-service),** particularly in preparation to teach at the ECE level. This should be done by creating an incentive mechanism for teachers to participate, for example, by guaranteeing that teachers have access to free training and professional development opportunities. The curriculum for the training of teachers should be adapted to the subjects and levels they intend to teach.
8. **Teaching conditions should be improved** beyond the opportunity of accessing free training. More incentives, such as salaries and benefits, are necessary to attract more qualified people to the teaching profession and to ensure that they remain in the job after training.
9. **Teacher recruitment should be transparent** from the start and there should be a system in place to assess and evaluate teachers throughout their careers. High-performing volunteer teachers should be included on government payroll.

Schools

10. Increase the **construction of public schools,** especially in rural areas and districts with high out-of-school populations. Construction is necessary to meet the missing gap in school supply at all levels of education, including early childhood education. Expansion of the number of schools should comply to a needs assessment that identifies areas where the demand for new school building is the strongest. Newly built schools should be constructed following guidelines that are accommodating for children with disabilities.

These 10 main policy action points were discussed and reviewed at a high-level ministerial meeting to discuss the workshop results. Following the meeting, one of the main steps for action includes the formation of a ministerial steering committee to further discuss the policy options based on the summary recommendations. The steering committee will review the list of sectoral activities and assign responsibilities and a timeline for implementation. Furthermore, the committee will monitor the accomplishment of each of the 10 summary policy recommendations, which should also inform policy discussion in the country, including new Education Sector Analysis that will start in July 2019 and serve as a basis for the preparation of the next Education Sector Plan 2021–2025.



CHAPTER 1

Introduction and objectives of the report

The MICS – EAGLE (Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys – Education Analysis for Global Learning and Equity) is UNICEF's global initiative to support countries to make better use of their MICS data. It provides systematic in-depth data analysis that supports governments for evidence-based policy planning, monitoring, and advocacy using the most recent household survey datasets. It focuses on equity issues in education such as gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, child labour, and regional disparities.

Sierra Leone has recently seen important developments in its education policy. In May 2018 the presidential address to Parliament launched the Free Quality School Education (FQSE) programme of the government, in line with electoral promises. The FQSE inputs aim to increase access, equity, and completion, and to improve quality, relevance, and integrity. Inputs such as the provision of teacher training, teacher learning materials, textbooks, provision of meals in school, removal of double shifts, and improved learning environment are also expected to increase the efficiency of the system, which will result in reducing dropout and thereby increasing completion rates.

The FQSE programme also addresses various instances of education planning, including school construction, teacher training for better learning and education costs. Public and government-approved schools at the primary and lower secondary level were tuition free, but parents had to pay some fees, for example, for uniforms, school materials, and examinations. Those fees were abolished for the school year 2018/19 after the policy and gratuity was expanded to also include upper secondary education and pre-primary schools from the age of 3 years. Enhanced free education was associated with a commitment from the government to allocate 21 per cent of its annual expenditure to education.

In the context of newly established guidelines for education policy, Sierra Leone is the second country to embark on the MICS – EAGLE initiative. The customization workshop to define the most important priorities in education policy took place in October 2018. During the workshop, government actors, members of civil society, as well as experts in education and statistics came together to identify the main challenges in the country's education system. Those challenges were presented in the form of policy and research questions, most of which this report aims to answer. The research questions were reorganized and reviewed to meet the availability of data, while questions for which there is no data available help identify the data gaps. The policy and research questions were regrouped into thematic categories. This report presents analysis of each thematic category using both descriptive analysis and regressions to better understand the challenges identified by policy makers and experts.

In June 2019 government, civil society, and aid donors gathered at a policy workshop to discuss the main policy implications that could be prepared based on the findings from the initial draft of this report. The policy debate opened the discussion for several consultations with policy makers, which took place after the workshop. The combination of the policies discussed and the outputs of the individual consultations informed the policy options proposed at the end of each chapter.

This report should inform policy makers, academics, and donors about the status of education provision, quality, and equity in Sierra Leone. The report should also enlighten the discussion of the new Education Sector Analysis that will start in July 2019, as a basis for the preparation of the next Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2021–2025.

The second chapter of the report provides an overview of progress the country is making towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, while chapters 3 to 6 propose analyses and policy options in several areas of education. Chapter 3 investigates attendance, while chapter 4 focuses on internal efficiency, chapter 5 in learning and skills acquisition, and chapter 6 on parental engagement. The seventh chapter provides a discussion on data availability and data gaps. Finally, chapter 8 describes the next step to be taken after publication of the report.

CHAPTER 2

SDG 4 data update and education context

Sierra Leone strongly commits to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015. The SDG goal associated with education is SDG 4, which calls upon all nations to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (then MEST, now MBSSE) developed and launched the Education Sector Plan 2018–2020, which aligns with the SDG 4 goal, and guides data analysis and policy discussions detailed in this document.

2.1: What is the current status in monitoring and achieving SDG 4 targets?

Tracking and following up to SDG targets rely on data availability. It is very important for countries to have the necessary data to monitor their progress towards SDG 4. Figure 1 summarizes the SDG 4 Global Indicators, their current status for Sierra Leone in terms of indicator values, and data availability.

Currently, some indicators can be calculated using data from surveys or administrative sources, although many other indicators remain unknown, which hampers effective policymaking. In this context, MICS 6 data does, indeed, provide a valuable calculation ground for many of the targets that were previously unavailable.

Figure 1 below shows all the global indicators together with the figures for Sierra Leone using MICS 2017 whenever the information can be calculated by MICS, and UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) sources for the remaining data points that can be calculated with available data.

Besides many of the global indicators, MICS also allows for the calculations of several thematic indicators.

Figure 2 shows the figures for the thematic indicators that can be calculated using MICS 2017 data for Sierra Leone.

FIGURE 1: **SDG 4 Global indicators by availability**

TARGET		INDICATOR	CURRENT VALUE FOR SIERRA LEONE
Target 4.1	Access, completion, and learning outcomes in primary and secondary education	**Indicator 4.1.1 - Proportion of children and young people (a) in Grade 2 or 3; (b) at the end of primary education; and (c) at the end of lower secondary education achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex**	Reading (grade 2–3): 6.1 (total), 4.3 (male), 7.6 (female)
			Mathematics (grade 2–3): 5.6 (total), 5.2 (male), 6.0 (female)
			Not available for disaggregation (b) and (c)
Target 4.2	Early childhood development and education	**Indicator 4.2.1 - Proportion of children under 5 years who are developmentally on track in health, learning, and psychosocial well-being**	51.4
		Indicator 4.2.2 - Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age)	63.9
Target 4.3	Technical, vocational, tertiary, and adult education	**Indicator 4.3.1 - Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex**	Not available
Target 4.4	Skills for work	**Indicator 4.4.1 - Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill**	2.3
Target 4.5	Equity	**Indicator 4.5.1 - Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile, and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples, and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated**	Female/male: 1.07 (primary), 1.00 (lower secondary), 0.92 (upper secondary)
			Rural/urban: 0.83 (primary), 0.33 (lower secondary), 0.21 (upper secondary)
			Bottom/top wealth quintile: 0.70 (primary), 0.19 (lower secondary), 0.07 (upper secondary)
Target 4.6	Literacy and numeracy	**Indicator 4.6.1 - Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills,v by sex**	Literacy (people age 15–24): 64.0 (female), 71.9 (male)
			Not available for numeracy
Target 4.7	Sustainable development and global citizenship	**Indicator 4.7.1 - Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in: (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education, and (d) student assessment**	Not available through household surveys and not reported in the last data submission

TARGET		INDICATOR	CURRENT VALUE FOR SIERRA LEONE
Target 4.a	Education facilities and learning environment	**Indicator 4.a.1 - Proportion of schools with access to: (a) electricity; (b) Internet for pedagogical purposes; and (c) computers for pedagogical purposes; Proportion of schools with access to: (d) adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities; Proportion of schools with access to: (e) basic drinking water; (f) single-sex basic sanitation facilities; and (g) basic handwashing facilities (as per the WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) indicator definitions)**	Not available through household surveys and not reported in the last data submission
Target 4.b	Scholarships	**Indicator 4.b.1 - Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships, constant US$**	895,778
Target 4.c	Teachers	**Indicator 4.c.1 - Proportion of teachers in: (a) pre-primary education; (b) primary education; (c) lower secondary education; and (d) upper secondary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training**	ECE – 54.1
			Primary 53.8
			Lower secondary 68.7
			Upper secondary 73.5

Source: UIS and MICS 2017

FIGURE 2: **SDG 4 thematic indicators available using MICS**

TARGET		INDICATOR	CURRENT VALUE FOR SIERRA LEONE
Target 4.1	Access, completion, and learning outcomes in primary and secondary education	**Indicator 4.1.3 - Gross intake ratio to the last grade (primary education, lower secondary education)**	Primary (84.9), Lower secondary (69.2)
		Indicator 4.1.4 - Completion rate (primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education)	Primary (64.2), Lower secondary (44.2) Upper secondary (21.7)
		Indicator 4.1.5 - Out-of-school rate (primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education)	Primary (18.1), Lower secondary (19.0), Upper secondary (36.0)
		Indicator 4.1.6 - Percentage of children over-age for grade (primary education, lower secondary education)	Primary (10.8), Lower secondary (35.3)
Target 4.2	Early childhood development and education	**IIndicator 4.2.3 - Percentage of children under 5 years experiencing positive and stimulating home learning environments**	Children aged 3–4: 28.5
		Indicator 4.2.4 - Gross early childhood education enrolment ratio[1] in (a) pre-primary education and (b) early childhood educational development	Pre-primary: 17.1
Target 4.3	Technical, vocational, tertiary, and adult education	**Indicator 4.3.2 - Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education by sex**	Tertiary: 5.9
Target 4.5	Equity	**Indicator 4.5.2 - Percentage of students in primary education whose first or home language is the language of instruction**	2.0
Target 4.6	Literacy and numeracy	**Indicator 4.6.2 - Youth/adult literacy rate**	People age 15–24: male (71.9), female (64.0)

Source: UIS and MICS 2017

[1]Theoretical ages used for calculation of pre-primary gross enrolment rates were 3 to 5 years.

[2]Theoretical ages used for the calculation of tertiary gross enrolment rates were 19 to 22 years. Tertiary education also includes vocational, technical, nursing, and teaching colleges. MICS data has a cut-off at age 24, so tertiary students aged 25 or older are excluded from the numerator, which may lead to the actual gross enrolment ratio being higher than the one reported here.

CHAPTER 3

Which factors determine participation in each level of education?

Schools should guarantee that all children enrol in and graduate from basic education, coupling access and completion. Sierra Leone adopts a 3-6-3-3[3] education system covering from pre-primary to upper secondary. Basic education starts at the age of six in primary school. Students are expected to start lower secondary school at the age of 12 and upper secondary school at the age of 15. In every cycle of education, part of the students who start the first grade of the cycle drop out before graduating from the last grade. Despite recent progress, attendance rates in Sierra Leone are relatively low in primary education, and they decline even further at the lower and upper secondary levels. In terms of participation, it is important for the country to pursue a dual objective of substantially increasing the number of children who join in early levels of education, and to ensure that all students continue until graduating from upper secondary school.

3.1: What is the attendance rate by level of education and how has it changed over time?

Sierra Leone has made sound progress in increasing access to primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary schools. This is in line with the government's commitment in its Education Sector Plan 2018–2020 to achieve universal primary education by 2020. Further, according to the Education Act of 2004, the then MEST (now MBSSE) has decided to make basic education "free and compulsory," although affordability continues to be one of the biggest challenges facing the education sector. This is due to the fact that, despite being free of tuition fees, other costs – such as school materials, uniforms, transportation, etc. – do prevent some children from staying in school. It is thus noteworthy that the adjusted net attendance rate[4] in primary education jumped from 43 per cent in 2000 to 82 per cent in 2017, albeit remaining relatively far from the 100 per cent target. Although much of the progress occurred in the beginning of the 2000s, enrolment has also increased substantially between 2010 and 2017 from 74 per cent to 82 per cent. Despite current inclusion being higher than in the past, 18 per cent of children of primary school age are still out of school, and it is necessary to identify who they are and facilitate their access to education.

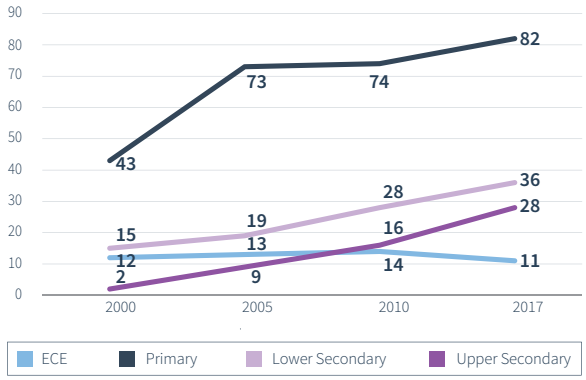
Both lower and upper secondary education levels also saw significant improvement over the last 17 years. For lower secondary education, the adjusted net attendance rate increased from 15 per cent in 2000 to 36 per cent in 2017. In upper secondary, the increase was even more dramatic. According to the 2000 MICS, only 2 per cent of young people aged between 15 and 17 were attending upper secondary education, while the most recent data shows an impressive increase to 28 per cent adjusted net attendance rate at this level. Nevertheless, the rates remain low and there needs to be greater effort in increasing access to secondary education in general across the country.

[3]When MICS6 was conducted, upper secondary education in the country lasted for four years, while now it has changed to three years.

[4]Adjusted net attendance rate is calculated as the share of students who are of the official school age group of a level of education that are attending that level or a higher one, divided by the total number of students of the official school age. More details are available in the Annex.

Figure 3 also shows that the percentage of children aged 36–59 months who are attending an early childhood education programme remained more or less stable throughout the years, fluctuating from 12 per cent in 2000 to 11 per cent in 2017, with a peak at 14 per cent in 2010.

FIGURE 3: **Adjusted net attendance rate[5] from 2000 to 2017 by level of education**



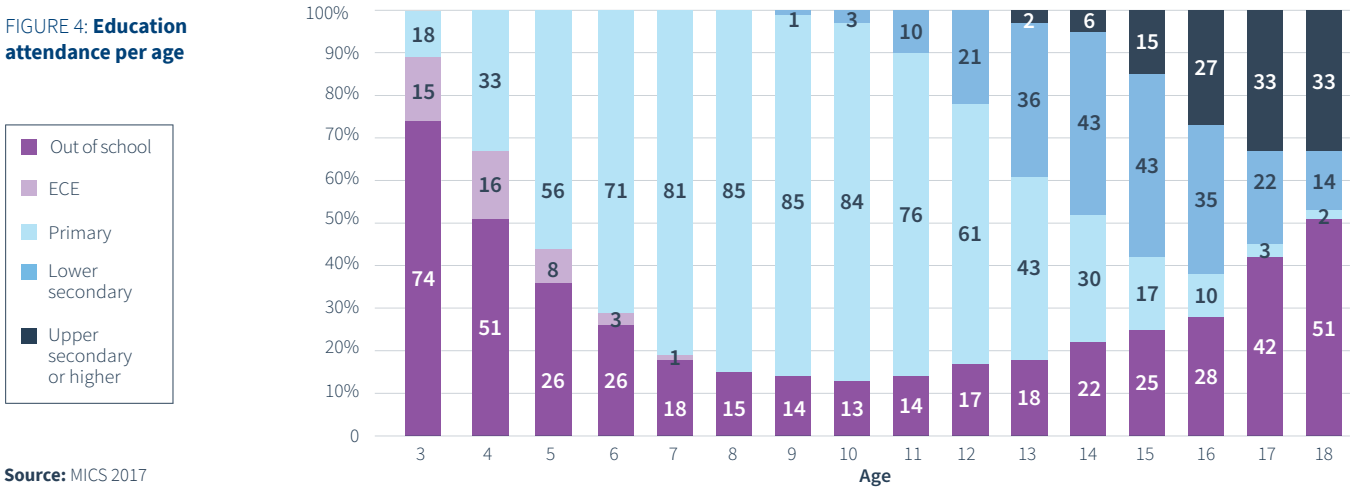
Source: MICS 2000, MICS 2005-2006, MICS 2010, and MICS 2017

As shown in Figure 4, most students in Sierra Leone are already in school before they turn 5, usually in primary schools with a few in early childhood education. Indeed, ECE is rare in the country, peaking at 16 per cent attendance among students aged 4. Primary education, on the other hand, reaches out to most students of aged 5–12.

Although the official age to enter lower secondary education is 12, only 21 per cent of 12-year-olds attend that level of education, while 61 per cent are still in primary school and 17 per cent are out of school. As they grow older, more and more students attend in lower secondary schools, reaching 43 per cent for those aged 14 or 15. Similarly, entrance into upper secondary education that should happen when students turn 15 is often delayed, and only a third of students in a given age cohort will attend this level of education by the time they are aged 17 or 18.
In contrast, the number of students out of school increases for every cohort from the age of 11 to the point that the majority of 18-year-olds in Sierra Leone are not attending any type of formal education. It is therefore necessary to increase access to both levels of secondary education, as well as to ensure that those who gain access remain in school until graduation. It is also important to facilitate that access takes place at the official age stipulated by the government.

Pre-primary, or ECE, is composed of three grades in Sierra Leone. As previously noted and as confirmed on Figure 5, access to ECE is generally low in the country. Moreover, many factors such as household location and wealth illustrate how unequal ECE attendance is. Although male and female children attend ECE at similar levels, there are notable gaps across socioeconomic indicators. For example, while 27 per cent of urban children aged between 36 and 59 months attend early childhood education, only 3 per cent of rural ones do so. Similarly, children coming from wealthier backgrounds and whose mothers attended upper secondary education attend ECE in much higher numbers than those from less privileged conditions and who grow up with less educated mothers.
The fact that ECE is not free in Sierra Leone very likely contributes to low ECE attendance, and also explains the high attendance of five-year-olds in primary education, which is free and compulsory.

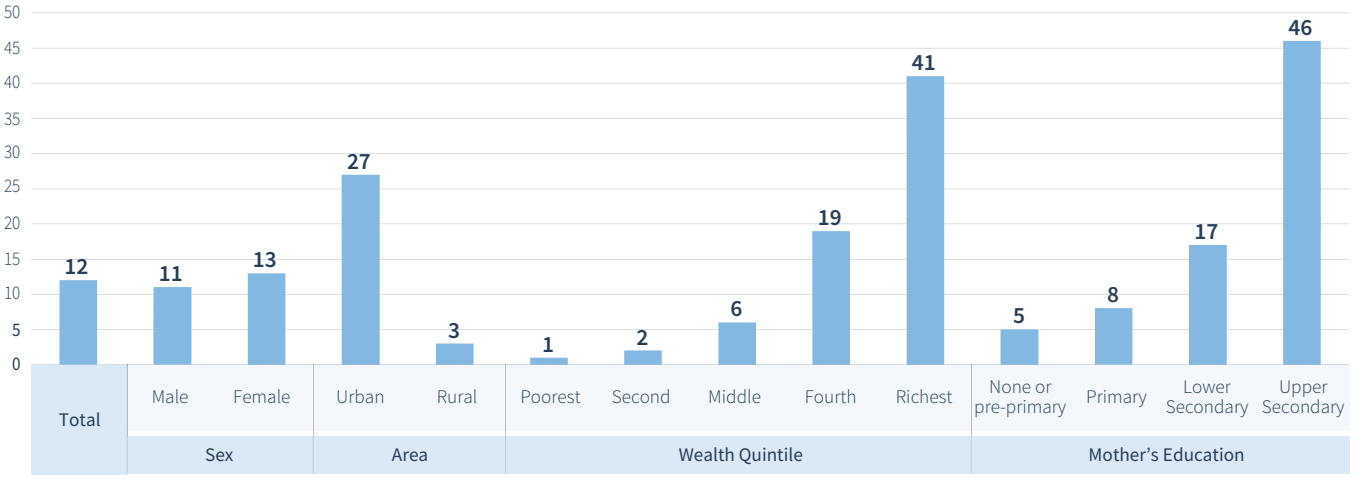
FIGURE 4: **Education attendance per age**



Source: MICS 2017

[5]ECE refers to the percentage of children aged 36–59 months who are attending an early childhood education programme.

FIGURE 5: **Percentage of children aged 36–59 months attending early childhood education by various socioeconomic characteristics**



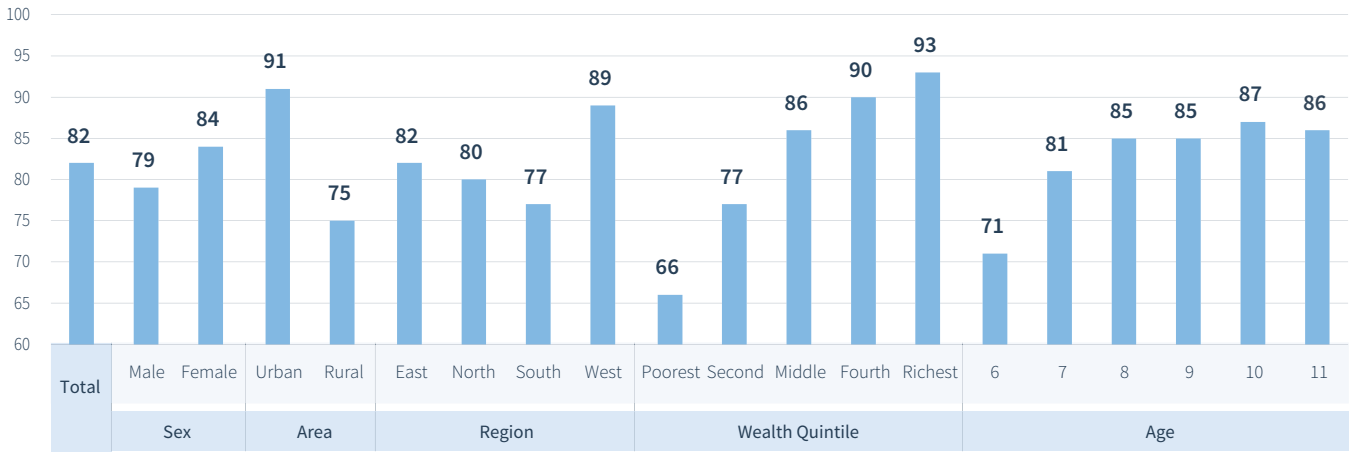
Source: MICS 2017

The most recent Education Sector Plan stipulates that the country should achieve 15 per cent attendance of ECE for children aged between 3 and 5 by 2020, which will require strong efforts, particularly focusing on the most disenfranchised groups, such as poorer and rural children.

Despite primary education being much more available and attended in the country, Figure 6 shows that the inequality in primary education is similar to that of ECE. This means that urban and richer children are much more likely to attend this level of education. In terms of wealth, the picture is slightly different from ECE. In ECE the richest quintile stands out with a 41 per cent attendance rate, while the bottom four-fifths of the population only send between 1 and 19 per cent of their 3 to 5-year-old children to pre-primary schools (Figure 5). In primary school (Figure 6) the picture is reversed, as the poorest are the ones to stand out: every quintile of the population except for the poorest sends over 75 per cent of their children to primary school at the appropriate age, while the figure drops to 66 per cent for the lowest quintile. Overall, across all levels of education those in the poorest quintile are less likely to participate in larger numbers in each level of education.

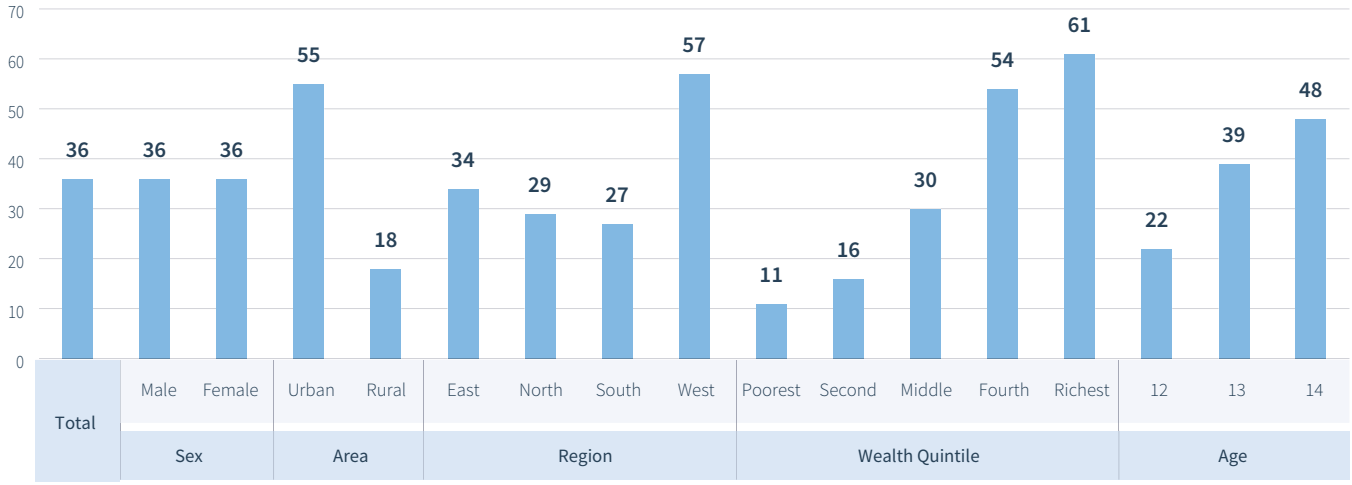
In terms of subnational location, the wealthier and more urban areas in the West, where the national capital is, have much higher attendance rates in primary school, while the other regions, particularly the South, fare worse. Interestingly, the same picture of later start of primary education shown in Figure 4 is confirmed in Figure 6, as only 71 per cent of six-year-olds are in primary school, while many more join as they grow older.

FIGURE 6: **Primary adjusted net attendance rate by various socioeconomic variables**



Source: MICS 2017

FIGURE 7: **Lower secondary adjusted net attendance rate by socioeconomic characteristics**

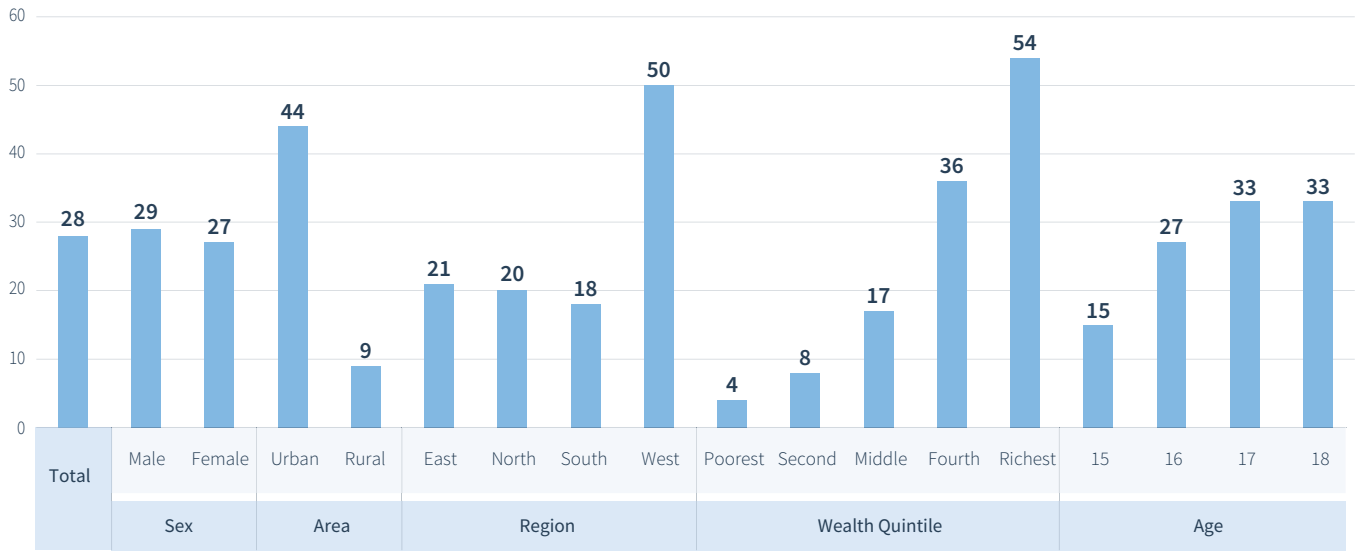


Source: MICS 2017

If the gender gap was not very wide in ECE and primary education, it is fully closed in lower secondary, which is attended by girls and boys in similar numbers as shown in Figure 8. Socioeconomic disparities and the rural-urban divide are aggravated in this level of education. While 57 per cent of teenagers attend lower secondary education at the appropriate age in the West, less than 35 per cent do so in the rest of the country. The gap between the richest and the poorest families reaches 50 percentage points difference, meaning that only 11 per cent of children in the poorest households attend lower secondary education at the appropriate age while 61 per cent of children from the wealthiest household attend lower secondary schools at the appropriate age. Similar to what happens in primary education, late entry by one year is a common factor, as the attendance rate shoots from 22 to 39 per cent between the official entry age of 12 and the year following.

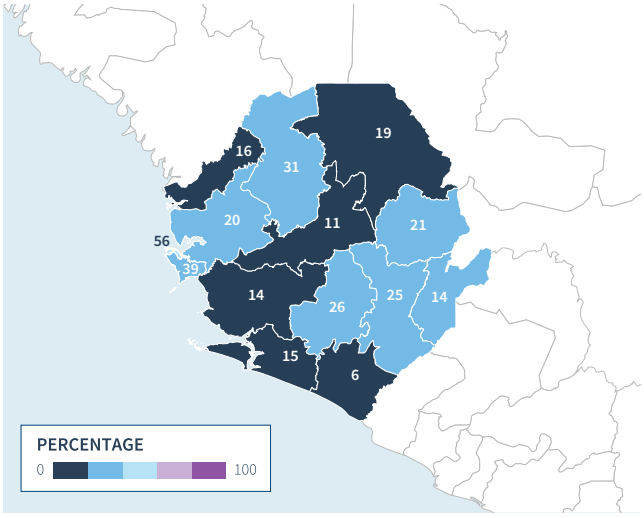
The data on upper secondary education reinforces what is seen in earlier levels: low gender gap, but high socioeconomic inequalities, particularly jeopardizing rural and poorer children. Late entry is also visible through the large gap between attendance rates at ages 15 and 16. Moreover, the clear advantage of children living in the western parts of the country around Freetown is even more visible in upper secondary education.

FIGURE 8: **Upper secondary adjusted net attendance rate by various socioeconomic variables**



Source: MICS 2017

FIGURE 9: **Upper secondary adjusted net attendance rate by district**



Source: MICS 2017

The disaggregation of regions into districts stresses the strong geographic imbalances, with the areas around Freetown, both rural and urban, faring much better, while the rest of the country falls behind. Poorer and more rural districts such as Pujehun, Tonkolili, Kailahun, and Moyamba send less than 15 per cent of their youth to upper secondary education. The Education Sector Plan identifies two critical challenges facing the secondary education: overcrowding in existing facilities and the absence of secondary schools in some districts. These could possibly contribute to the high regional variations in secondary education attendance.

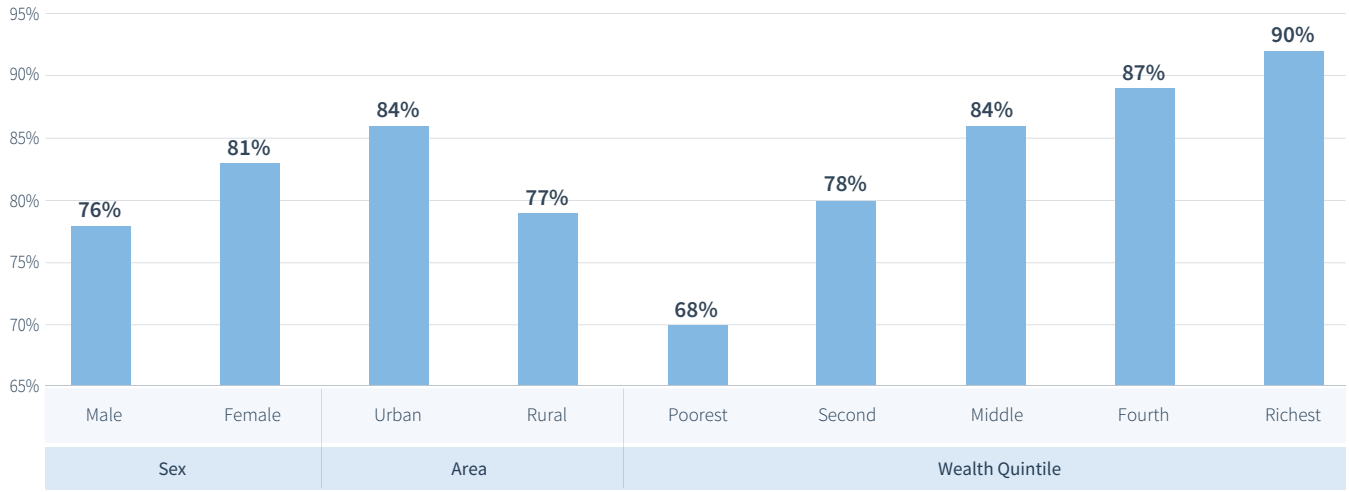
3.2: What are the determinants of access to education?

The last research question highlighted the various factors that affect children's attendance to pre-primary, primary, and secondary education. Nevertheless, many of those characteristics
are usually combined: for example, poorer children often have less educated mothers; and wealthier children often live in urban areas. Indeed, mothers' education plays a critical role in ensuring that children attend and learn in school.

In this section, regression analysis is conducted to calculate expected attendance rates for primary schools, taking into account various individual and household characteristics such as gender, age of the child, household wealth, and rurality. The results are summarized in Figure 10, which allows for disentangling all these factors and points to which are affecting attendance the most[6].

The likelihood of attending primary education in the appropriate age is high across the country. However, it is much higher for richer (90 per cent) than poorer (68 per cent) children and for urban (84 per cent) than rural (77 per cent) ones. Girls have an 81 per cent chance of attending primary school, while boys' chances are 76 per cent. The region of residency, however, is not a significant predictor of primary school attendance when controlled by area and wealth. This means that students from certain districts, notably in the West, are better off not because of the districts where they live per se, but because those districts are richer and more urban.

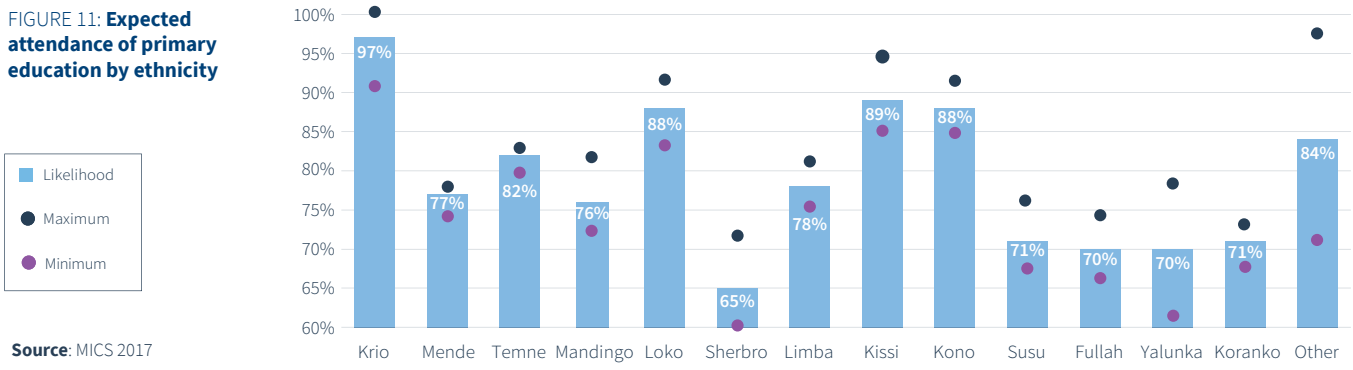
FIGURE 10: **Expected primary school attendance by sex, area, and wealth quintile**



Source: MICS 2017

[6]Full results of the regressions are presented in the Annex, including confidence intervals, marginal effects, and odds ratios. A list of controls used per regression is provided under each chart.

FIGURE 11: **Expected attendance of primary education by ethnicity**

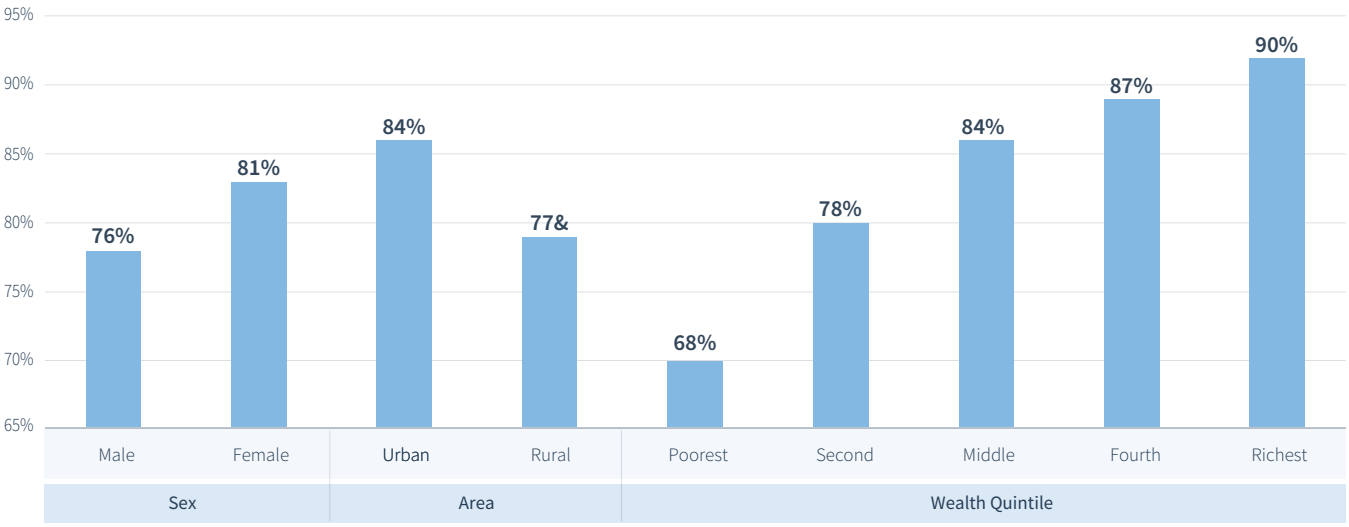


Source: MICS 2017

In Figure 11, the higher and lower bounds show the maximum and minimum possible values with a 95 per cent confidence, meaning that there is a 95 per cent chance of the actual attendance falling between the lower and higher bounds. If the values of a given category falls between the lower and higher bounds of another category, it means that it cannot be assumed that, within a 95 per cent confidence, the values for the two categories are significantly different from each other. Interestingly, the figure shows that ethnicity is also not a good predictor of success for most ethnic groups when controlling for other socioeconomic variables. On the one hand, the Krio do perform significantly better than most other ethnicities, and there is a significant difference between children in the two largest ethnic groups where Temne are more likely to be in school than Mende. On the other hand, differences are not significant for most of the smallest groups, with likelihoods varying around 70 and 80 per cent.

Figure 12 reveals that in lower secondary education, sex is not a good predictor of attendance as the difference between boys and girls is not significant (this result is not shown in the chart). Ethnicity also does not explain attendance gaps for any group, including the Krio. This means that when all demographic and socioeconomic variables are put together, there are clear signs of the characteristics affecting lower secondary attendance the most: rurality and socioeconomic background. Material wealth seems to be the best predictor of attendance at the lower secondary level, as the odds of richer children being in school at that level are almost three times higher than those of poorer children, even when controlling for other advantageous factors such as place of residency and mother's education.

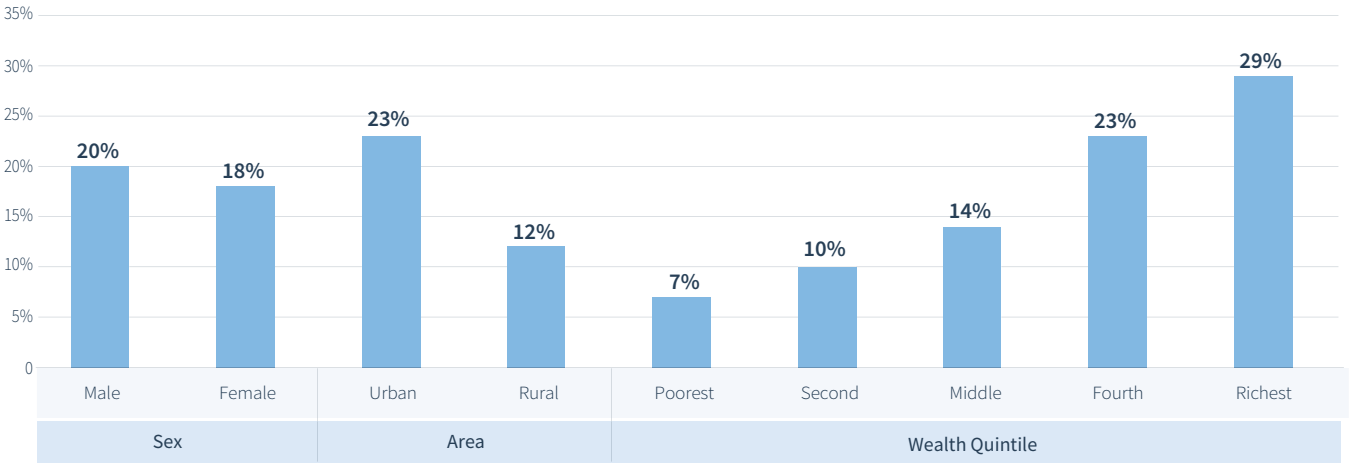
FIGURE 12: **Expected lower secondary school attendance by sex, area, and wealth quintile**



Source: MICS 2017

[7]Significance occurs when the minimum possible value of one group is higher than the maximum possible value of another group. This means that there is a significant difference between the predicted values.

Figure 13: **Expected upper secondary school attendance by sex, area, and wealth quintile**



Source: MICS 2017

Expected school attendance in upper secondary education as shown in Figure 13 confirms what was shown regarding primary and lower secondary school: wealth inequality and place of residency are the most important factors, and thus are where policy makers should act to narrow the gap between children in and out of school. In upper secondary education, richer students are over four times more likely to attend than poorer ones.

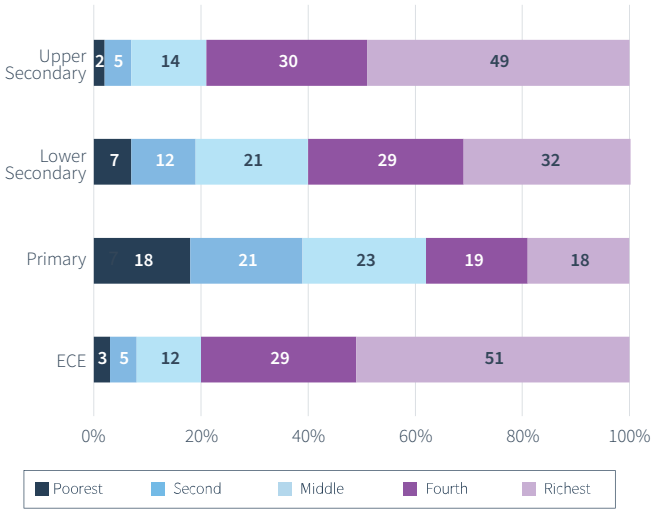
Moreover, urban students are almost twice as likely to attend upper secondary education at the appropriate age than rural ones. Mothers' education also helps explain attendance, although to a much lesser extent than wealth. Further, more educated mothers tend to be in wealthier households, which already contributes to higher attendance.

3.3: What are the most important challenges to inclusion?

The regression analysis in the previous section shows a clear picture highlighting material wealth as the most significant variable to explain educational attendance in Sierra Leone, confirming what was put forward by other reports (UNICEF, 2019). Place of residency and a mother's education also influence attendance, as do gender and some ethnicities at the primary level. Whereas previous analysis has focused on the attendance rate of children with different family backgrounds, this section analyses the socioeconomic status of students and investigates the impact of family wealth on education. The results replicate the findings of the earlier section, and are shown in Figure 14.

In early childhood education, children from the richest families occupy around half of all places, while the poorest represent only 3 per cent of the children in pre-primary schools. In contrast, in primary education, where access is much higher, the division is much more equal, with each of the five groups representing around a fifth of total number of children attending school. At lower secondary school, however, the scenario becomes dimmer for children in the two poorest quintiles, as their combined share decreases from 39 to 19 per cent. On the other hand, the share of children from the two richest quintiles increases between primary and lower secondary schools from 37 to 61 per cent. In upper secondary education, the richest quintile alone is home to almost half of all young people who attend this level, while the bottom 40 per cent of the population represents only 7 per cent of everyone in the cohort.

FIGURE 14: **Distribution of students by household wealth quintile and level of education**



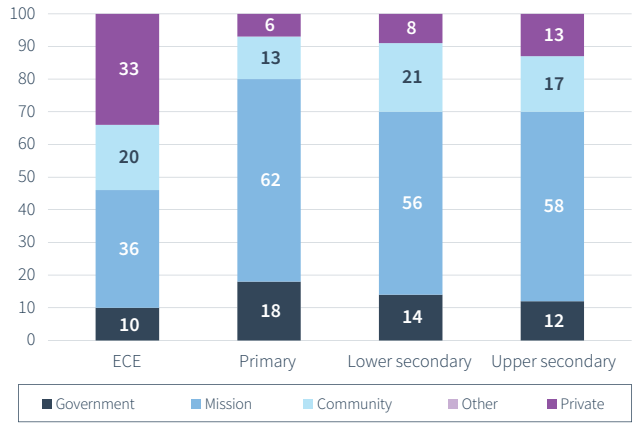
Source: MICS 2017

3.4: Who provides education?

Most schools in Sierra Leone are the responsibility of missions, communities, or are privately owned, with the distribution shown in Figure 15. Despite many efforts, government schools provide education to less than a fifth of all students in the country, ranging from 18 per cent of primary students to 10 per cent of children enrolled in an ECE programme. Indeed, more than half of all primary and secondary students attend schools provided by missions or religious services.

In ECE the private sector takes up a third of all enrolments, which is a very high share and can help explain barriers to accessing this level of education. Upper secondary, another level that most children fail to attend, is also overwhelmingly maintained by non-government institutions.

FIGURE 15: **Share of students by ownership of the school they attend**



Source: School Census 2018

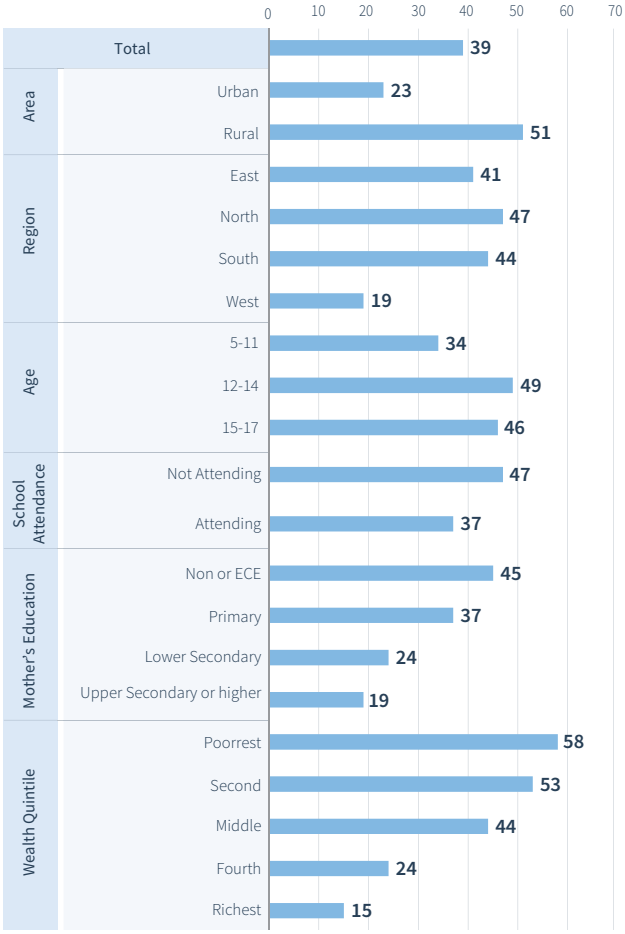
3.5: How does child labour impact access to education?

Extensive research in the past has established the link between education and child labour. Child labour often has a negative impact on school attendance, reduces net enrolment ratio in primary education, and is negatively associated with literacy rates (ILO, 2015; ILO, 2008). However, the relationship flows both ways as lack of accessible and quality education can increase the prevalence of child labour (Huebler, 2008).

Child labour refers to children working under hazardous working conditions or working for more hours than it would be expected for their age in economic activities or household chores. Many children in Sierra Leone stay out of school to engage in working activities. Some others are able to reconcile school with work, even under hazardous conditions.

In Sierra Leone, as shown in Figure 16, almost 40 per cent of all children aged 5 to 17 work under conditions that are not suitable for their age. Child labour is considerably higher in socioeconomic groups that also present the strongest disadvantages in entering and staying in education. Children from rural areas and those who live in regions other than the West are more highly represented among working ones. Poorly educated mothers also have their children work more often than mothers who attended secondary or higher education. Further, social economic inequalities are a strong factor explaining which children work. While only 15 per cent of the richest children work, the share increases nearly four-fold for the poorest quintile at 58 per cent.

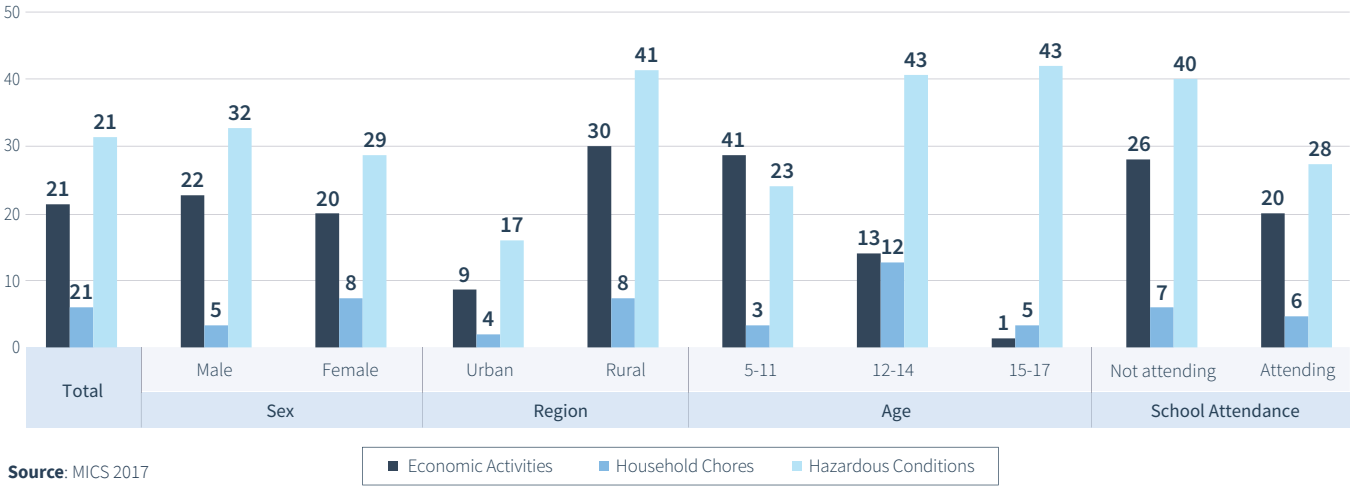
FIGURE 16: **Children in child labour by socioeconomic background and school attendance**



Source: MICS 2017

[8]The threshold for an activity under non-hazardous conditions to be considered child labour is: at least 1 hour of economic work or 28 hours of unpaid household services per week for children aged 5 to 11; at least 14 hours of economic work or 28 hours of unpaid household services per week for children aged 12 to 14; at least 43 hours of economic or unpaid household services per week for children aged 15 to 17.

FIGURE 17: **Children in different child labour activities by socioeconomic background, age, and school attendance**



Source: MICS 2017

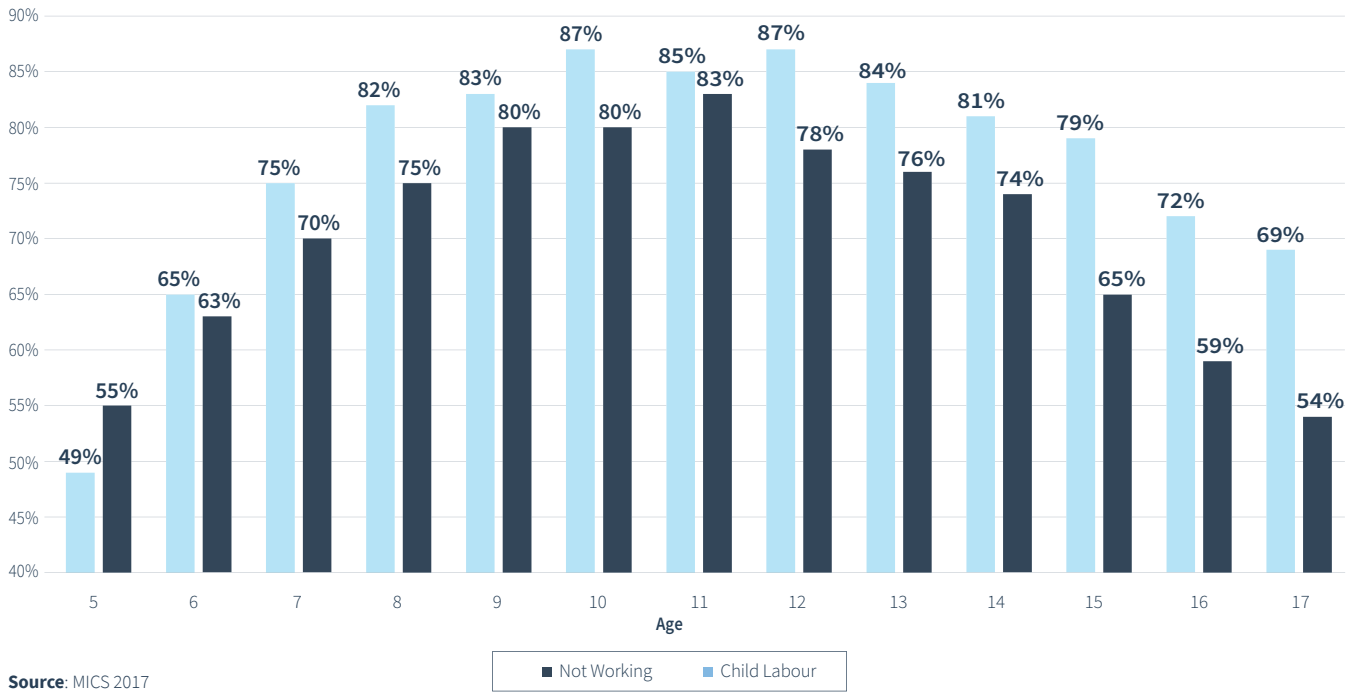
Figure 17 disaggregates child labour into the three types considered in this analysis: working for economic activities, working in the household, or working under hazardous conditions. In Sierra Leone most child labour is performed for economic reasons and/or under hazardous conditions. Although boys and girls engage in child labour in similar proportions, girls participate more often than boys in household work.

School attendance is less common among children who work for economic reasons than among those who do not. Nevertheless, many more children working under hazardous conditions are out of school than among those who are not engaged in child labour. It is important to understand in greater detail how this correlation plays out.

Child labour and education may be hard to combine and therefore difficult to measure the direct impact of one over the other, as it is mostly children who are already out of school who tend to work rather than those who currently attend school. This can be linked to the fact that many children out of school are also rural and poorer than their counterparts, and that child labour is then correlated with socioeconomic disadvantage rather than education. The link between school attendance and child labour is further investigated in the regression analysis in Figure 18, which can help understand which factor has the largest impact on a given variable when controlled for other important factors. It allows for disentangling whether lower attendance is directly linked to child labour or if it is linked to a poorer socioeconomic background, which increases the chances of both being out of school and working at an early age.

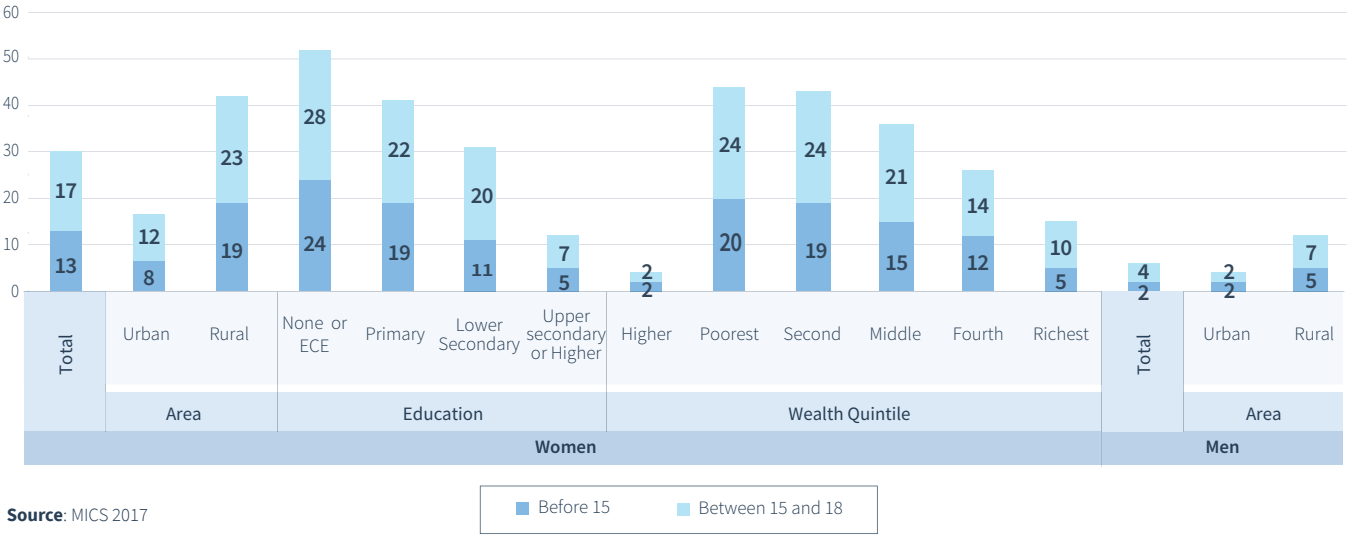
Figure 18 shows the results of the regressions for expected attendance controlling for several socioeconomic variables. The differences in likelihood of attending school between children who work and children who do not increases significantly starting at the age of 11. At 11 the likelihood of a child attending school when working is 83 per cent versus 85 per cent for children who do not work. At 17, however, the gap has substantially increased to 15 percentage points: to 69 per cent and 54 per cent, respectively. . This increase signifies that child labour decreases the likelihood of a child attending school and therefore hampers education. Based on Figures 16 and 17, we can also state that this disadvantage is largely faced by poorer students, meaning that more factors hinder poorer students from attending school than their more well-off peers.

FIGURE 18: **Expected attendance of children by age and child labour status**



Source: MICS 2017

FIGURE 19: **Percentage of young people aged 20 to 24 who are married**



Source: MICS 2017

3.6: What is the link between child marriage and education?

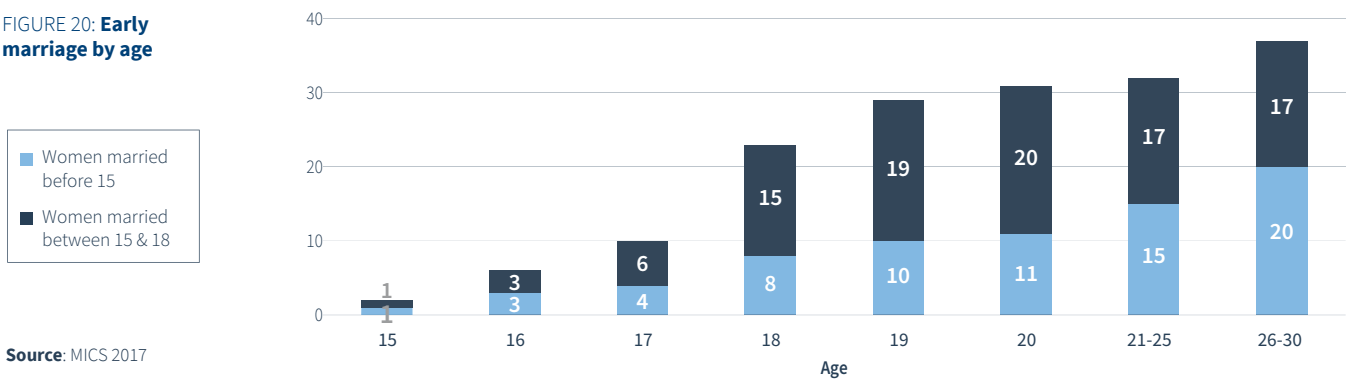
Child marriage refers to a marriage or union taking place before the age of 18. The impact and economic costs associated with child marriage are high. Specifically, with respect to education, marriage before 18 years of age is often the key reason for girls dropping out of school (Wodon et al., 2017; McCleary-Sills et al., 2015). Once married, the likelihood of young girls returning and completing their education is extremely low (Wodon et al., 2017; McCkeary-Sills et al., 2015; ICRW, 2006). Moreover, the intergenerational effect of child marriage is high as data suggests that the phenomenon negatively affects children of child brides (Wodon et al., 2017). Conversely, girls with higher levels of education are less likely to marry young (ICRW, 2006).

Child marriage is relatively common in Sierra Leone, particularly among girls. As explained above, engaging in a union or marriage early on can hamper progress in school and increase dropout rates. As a result, whenever possible, early marriage should be prevented and children should be encouraged to stay in school for as long as possible.

Figure 19 shows that, overall, far fewer boys than girls get married before they are 18. Only 3 per cent of young males married before the age of 15 and 7 per cent before 18. For females of the same age, 13 per cent married before they were 15 and a shocking 31 per cent before they were 18. The same factors affecting the attendance rate (location and wealth) are also the main determinants of early marriage. Girls living in rural areas, less educated, and poorer are more likely to marry early. Evidence from Sierra Leone reiterates the findings from studies on child marriage in other countries: education seems to be the most significant factor for those who marry young and those who do not.

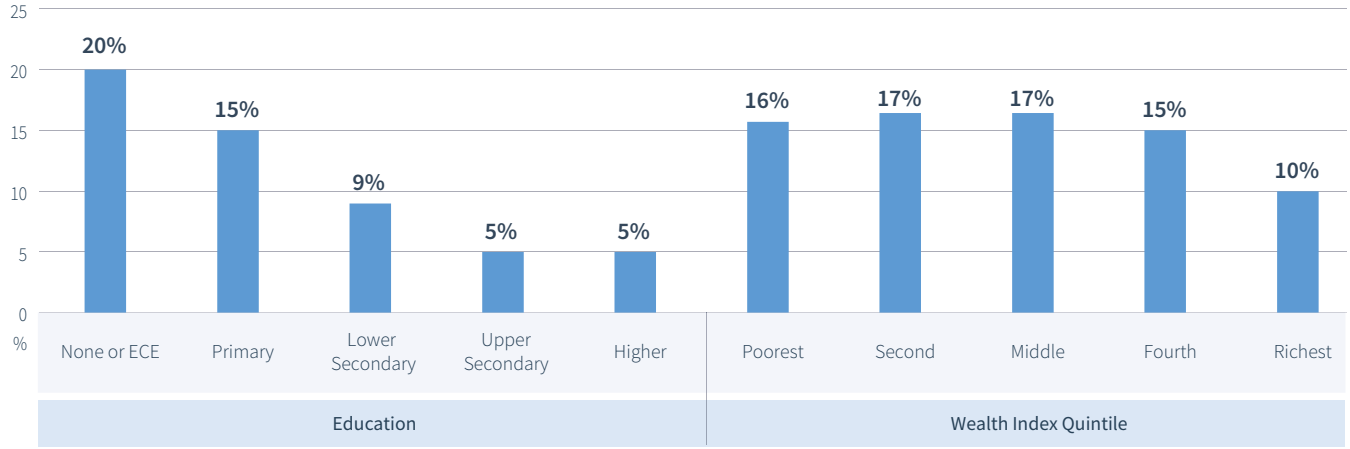
Figure 20 shows that despite very high numbers, early marriage seems to be decreasing given that women in the cohorts closer to age 30 married much earlier than young women and female adolescents today. Whereas fewer than 8 per cent of women aged 18 married before they were 15, 20 per cent of women aged 26 to 30 had done so.

FIGURE 20: **Early marriage by age**



Source: MICS 2017

FIGURE 21: **Expected share of women getting married before 15 by education and wealth quintile**



Source: MICS 2017

The regression analysis in Figure 21 shows how likely a woman is of getting married when controlling for various factors at the same time. The use of the regression is to understand how two variables correlate, while also considering several individual characteristics.

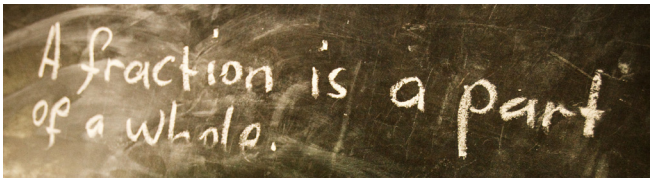
The results show that education is more correlated with early marriage than socioeconomic background. When controlling for sex, area of residence, region, socioeconomic background, and highest level of education attended, there is a larger difference in the chances of educated and uneducated women getting married than in the chances of poorer and richer women marrying early.

Indeed, only women in the top wealth quintile are significantly less likely to get married early in comparison to their peers. Nonetheless, lower levels of education are correlated with a higher likelihood of women getting married early, even when controlling for other socioeconomic factors. Regression analysis shows correlations between variables; and in the case of education, it influences early marriage, as much as early marriage influences education. As a result, it can be the case that women who get married early are more likely to abandon school and less likely to proceed to higher levels of education, but also that women who stay in education for longer will less often marry before they turn 15.

3.7: Who are the children with disabilities[9] and do they attend school?

Education systems can create additional disadvantages to children with disabilities, which may prevent them from accessing and fully participating in school. Taken together, creating an inclusive environment and establishing support systems can provide accommodating school environments in which children with disabilities can thrive. On a global scale, a lack of adequate support for children with disabilities has a negative impact on access to school and on the transitioning between grades and education levels (WHO/World Bank, 2011).

The Washington Group/UNICEF Module on Child Functioning, finalized in 2016, covers children between 2 and 17 years and assesses functional difficulties in different domains including hearing, vision, communication/comprehension, learning, mobility, and emotions. The purpose of this new module is to identify the subpopulation of children who are at greater risk of experiencing, for example, limited participation in education of an unaccommodating school environment.

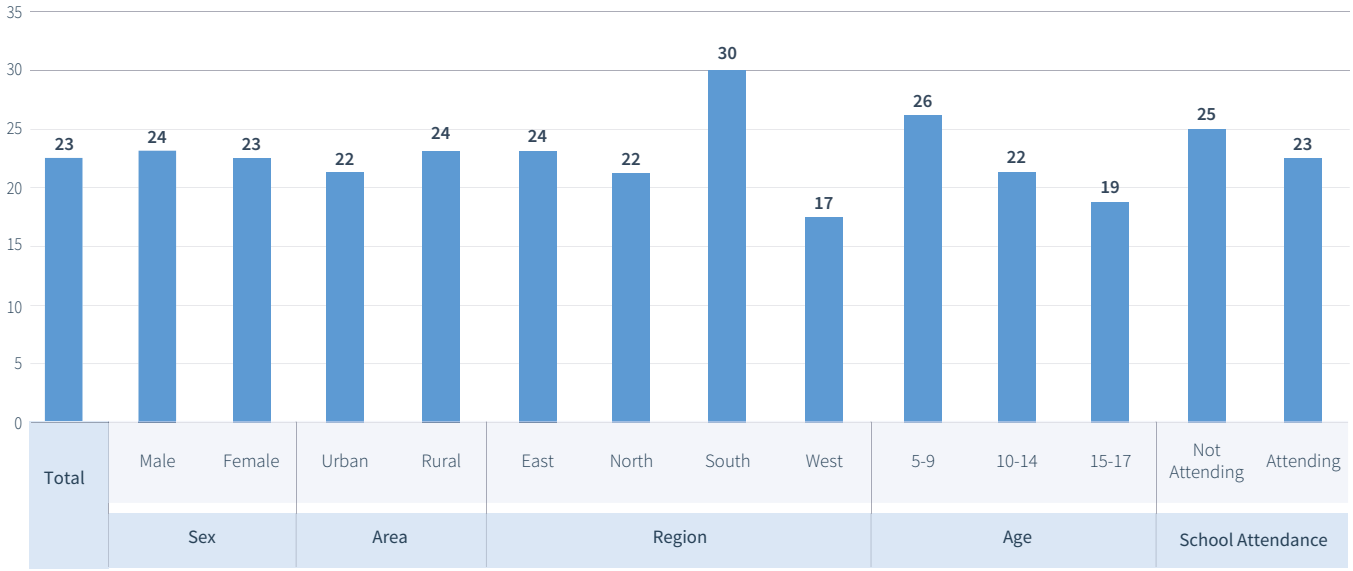


[9]Children with disabilities are defined as children who have a severe or moderate difficulty in at least one domain of the Child Functioning Module.

As shown in Figure 22, the prevalence of reported disability decreases with age, as 26 per cent of children between 5 and 9 years report having a functional difficulty, while only 19 per cent of those aged 15 to 17 years-old do so. Functional difficulties are equally present among children who do and do not attend school, at 22 and 28 per cent, respectively. Moreover, disabilities tend to be almost equally present among girls and boys and between rural and urban children.

In Sierra Leone, child functional difficulties range from anxiety and depression, which are the most common, to rarer domains such as hearing and seeing difficulties, which concern only 0.2 per cent of children, as shown in Figure 23. As a result, disabilities were divided into two categories for the analysis in this report. The first is associated with the disability domains defined for adults (Disability Group 1 in the chart), including six core functional domains (seeing, hearing, walking, cognition, self-care, and communication) put together in 2001 by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics[10]. The second group of disabilities, which represent child functional domains (Disability Group 2 in the chart)[11], was included in the most recent round of MICS surveys (MICS 6) that aims for more accurate measurement of children disabilities. Group 2 disabilities include domains of cognitive and behavioural characteristics, which are more accommodating to understanding children's difficulties and promoting inclusive education.

FIGURE 22: **Percentage of children aged 5–17 who have any functional difficulty, by socioeconomic background, age, and school attendance**



Source: MICS 2017

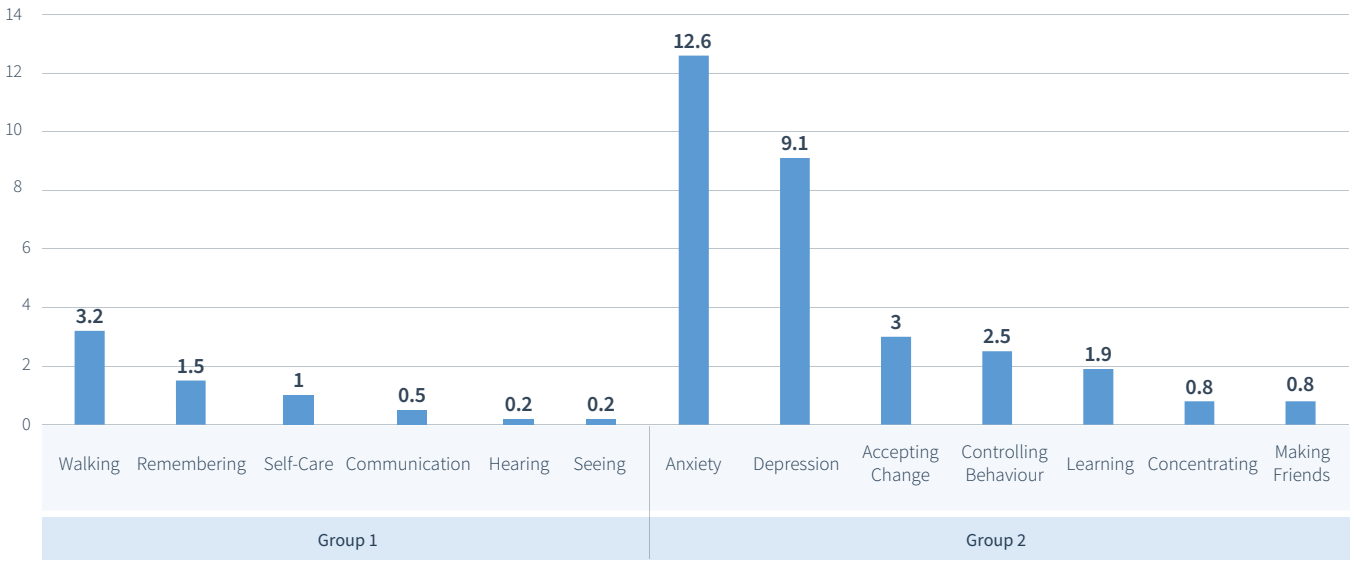
[10]The Washington Group was commissioned by the United Nations and mandated to develop comparable measures for disability. The main purpose of the Washington Group is the promotion and coordination of international cooperation in the area of health statistics, focusing on disability measures suitable for censuses and national surveys. The group has developed, and endorsed, a short set of questions on measuring disability and functioning in the adult population, to be used in censuses and surveys. It has also developed and endorsed an extended set of questions to be used as components of population surveys, as supplements to surveys or as the core of a disability survey that expands on the short set.
See http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/WG-Document-4-The-Washington-Group-Short-Set-on-Functioning-Question-Specifications.pdf.

[11]These revisions were motivated by a desire to develop tools that are in line with the WHO International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health – Children and Youth Version and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The goal is to assess child functioning in light of barriers and supports to daily living and social participation and to ensure that the entire age spectrum and additional relevant domains are captured.

Figure 24 shows the likelihood of school attendance using a regression analysis that controls for various socioeconomic variables, including gender, wealth quintile, and area of residence. The higher and lower bounds show the maximum and minimum possible values with a 95 per cent confidence, meaning that there is a 95 per cent chance of the actual attendance falling between the lower and higher bounds. If the values of a given category falls between the lower and higher bounds of another category, it means that it cannot be assumed that, within a 95 per cent confidence, the values for the two categories are significantly different from each other.

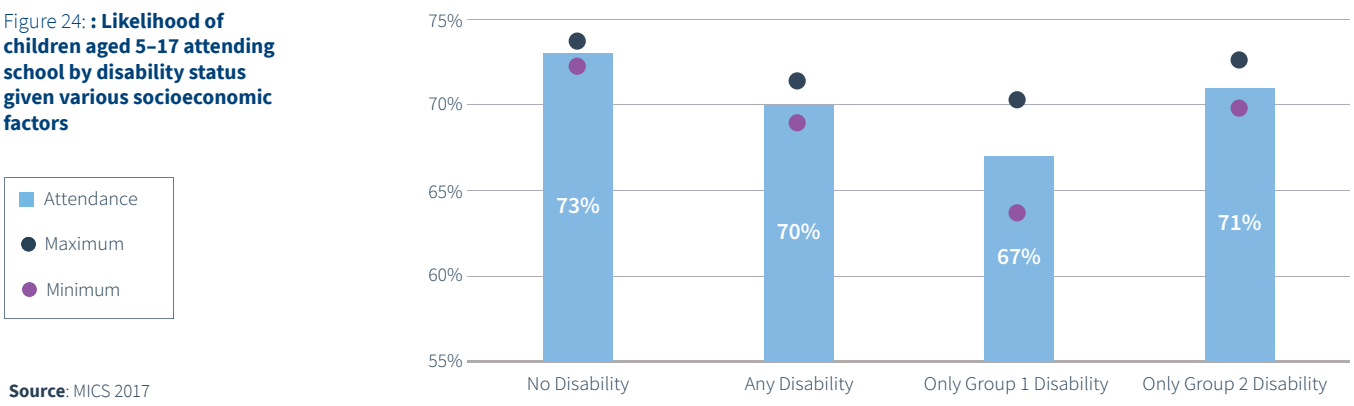
Figure 24 suggests that children with disabilities are not significantly less likely to attend school than children without disabilities. Nevertheless, children with Group 1 disabilities are only 67 per cent likely to be in school between ages 5 and 17, while children without any disabilities have a 73 per cent likelihood, which is a statistically significant difference.

FIGURE 23: **: Percentage of children aged 5–17 years with functional difficulty across domains**



Source: MICS 2017

Figure 24: **: Likelihood of children aged 5–17 attending school by disability status given various socioeconomic factors**



Source: MICS 2017

KEY ISSUES AND POLICY OPTIONS

Key issue 1 – School supply: Increasing the number of schools

The Free Quality School Education inputs aim to increase access, equity and completion, and improve quality, relevance, and integrity. The government introduced the FQSE programme to ensure that all eligible children and youth have access to basic education. Some efforts have been made in the direction of expanding the number of schools. The National Commission for Social Action is currently overseeing a community driven programme funded by the Islamic Development Bank, which funds the construction of schools in remote areas.

The World Bank is also funding a project on Physical Improvements to the Learning Environment, with a total input of US$24.1 million. The project aims to support the **construction, maintenance, and renovation of primary schools and junior secondary schools** identified using Annual School Census data, school catchment area planning, and information collected through site visits. The project will finance the construction of approximately 800 classrooms (300 primary and 500 junior secondary) to meet the immediate infrastructure needs.

Parental responsibility in education should be included all across education planning, especially in the future Education Sector Plan. Particular attention should be paid to the role of fathers in sharing the responsibility of stimulating their children and engaging in their schools.

Policy Options:

- The FQSE was associated with a government commitment to allocate 21 per cent of its annual expenditure to education. It is necessary to sustain this spending commitment in order to **enhance supply** to meet the demand for education, which is one of the main goals of the programme.

- It is important to speed up the **construction of public schools,** especially in rural areas and districts with a high out-of-school population. Construction is necessary to meet the missing gap in school supply at all levels of education, including early childhood education.

- Expansion of the number of schools should **comply with a needs assessment informed by the School Census** that identifies areas where the demand for new school building is the strongest. To be fully inclusive, newly built schools should be constructed following guidelines that are accommodating for children with disabilities, including, for example, ramps and railings.

- The FQSE also aims at guaranteeing school standards and ensuring a quality assurance framework. This project aims to support the strengthening of existing school standards to ensure that key dimensions of inputs, practices, and outcomes are specified – including the definition of optimal class sizes and school sizes differentiated according to location and population density. It will also provide the definition of the minimum infrastructure package for optimal schools. It is extremely important that the **current guidelines defining school standards are followed** to guarantee quality of future school offer.

Key issue 2 – Early childhood education: Increasing the quality of and access to ECE

Investment in early childhood development brings substantial benefits that legitimize the required government spending[12]. In Sierra Leone, the National Curriculum Framework and Guidelines for Basic Education – 2015 has early childhood care and development as one of the constituent elements of basic education. In 2018 a national curriculum for early childhood development (ECD) was launched in alignment with the 'Play-Based Learning' philosophy. The philosophy – also known as 'Playing to Learn/Learning to Play' or 'purposeful play'– is globally identified as an effective methodology to advance early childhood development, and has been incorporated as a critical element in early childhood programmes across the world.

Policy Options:

- The **National Curriculum for ECD needs to be strictly followed** in class, and teachers in pre-primary education should be trained specifically to deliver the curriculum developed.

- Effective increase in the number of children attending ECE requires increased budgetary allocation to that level specifically. Extra funds should also guarantee the **strengthening of the recently established ECD unit in the Ministry of Basic Education to design an ECE strategy and policy.**

[12]Save the Children (2017), "Windows into early learning and development – Cross Country IDELA findings fueling progress on ECD access, quality, and equity."

- There has to be further **investment in teacher training,** particularly in preparation to teach at the ECE level. This should be done by creating an incentive mechanism for teachers to participate, for example, by guaranteeing that teachers have access to free education. The curriculum for training teachers should be adapted to the subjects and levels they intend to teach. There should be a national ECE curriculum for teacher-training colleges and universities to ensure that those teaching ECE have the necessary preparation.

- An arguably cost-efficient way to rapidly increase the provision of early learning put forward by participants of the policy workshop is to **include early childhood education classes in all primary schools.** The idea is that the large number of children who are of pre-primary school age, but instead are attending Grade 1 of primary education, should be taught together in a class that is designed for children their age. Further, this measure would require that teachers currently teaching primary grades should receive specific training to adapt to ECE.

- Early attendance of primary education is very high and attendance of pre-primary education is overall low. It is very important to promote **awareness campaigns** so that the population is sensitized to the need of putting their children in early childhood education at the right age.

Key issue 3 – Disabilities: Promoting inclusive education

In 2011, Sierra Leone enacted the Disabilities Act, which should serve as a support to a national legal framework complying with the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Disabilities Act is a legal instrument that requires more concrete actions.

Some efforts have been made in the direction of inclusive education. The UK Department for International Development (DFID) is currently working on the provision of assistive devices and adapted learning materials for children with disabilities. This has led to the provision, for example, of assistive devices and pupil handbooks adapted in large print, audio, and Braille. DFID has also developed a system for identification and referral for secondary school students to identify students' needs. The referral system has resulted in the procurement of general assistive devices (such as recording devices, magnifying rulers, and solar lamps) and individual devices (such as glasses, hearing aids, crutches, and prosthetics).

Policy Options:

- The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender, and Children's Affairs currently has a team assigned to promote inclusive education, but they require **more funds to develop an action plan** to guide more concrete implementation of activities.

- Actions coming from the **FQSE should systematically have a dimension of inclusive education**: New teacher training should train teachers on the inclusion of children with disabilities in class, and new schools constructed as part of the programme should be fully accessible and remove barriers for the attendance of children with disabilities.

- FQSE currently already argues that infrastructure support to schools should promote universally accessible design and that learning materials to children with disabilities are tailored to their needs. The programme also proposes the provision of training for teachers, school heads, and administrators in promoting an inclusive education environment. Provision of the necessary **materials to promote inclusive education** should be implemented.

- It is also part of the actions of FQSE to promote community awareness and **anti-stigma campaigns** on the capacities and rights of persons with disabilities. It is important that the actions proposed by FQSE are properly implemented.

CHAPTER 4

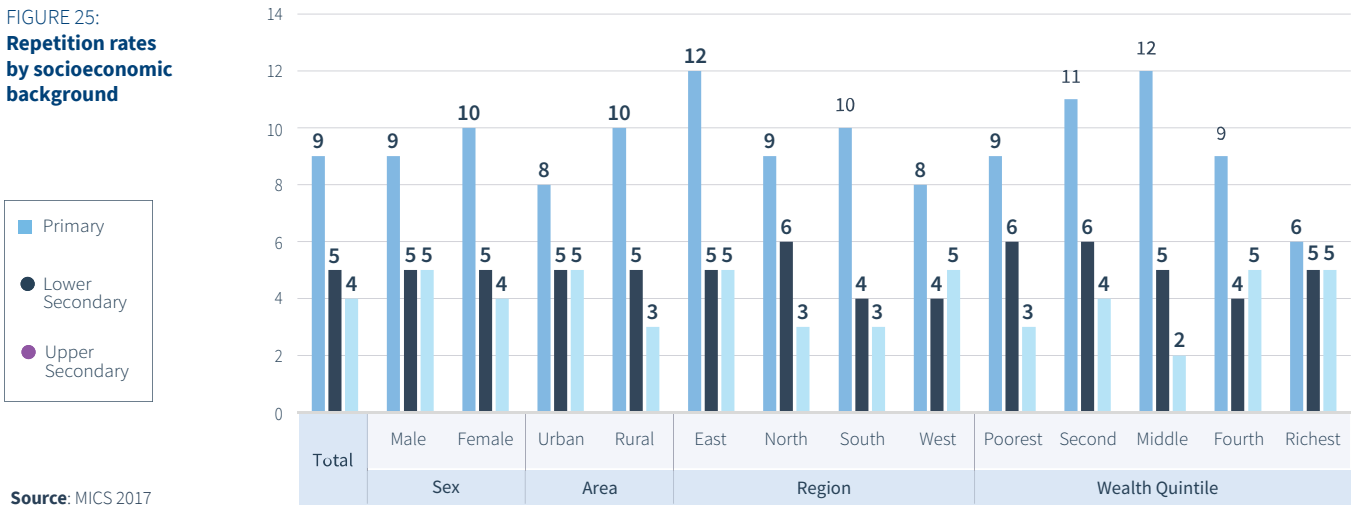
Internal efficiency

Access to school is a fundamental right, and it is critical to guarantee that as many children as possible enter each level of education. In addition, it is also important to ensure that students who started a certain level of education remain in school, avoiding dropout and repetition. Schools should provide students with the conditions to succeed in each class, reducing repetition rates at every level of education.

4.1: Which students repeat grades?

Grade repetition in Sierra Leone is significant, particularly in primary school. Figure 25 shows that around 9 per cent of students attending primary school in 2017 repeated the same grade they attended the year before, while 5 per cent of those in lower secondary and 4 per cent of those in upper secondary likewise repeated their previous grade. Repetition seems to be almost equally common among girls and boys in each level of education.

FIGURE 25:
Repetition rates by socioeconomic background



Source: MICS 2017

Interestingly, repetition is a little more common in rural areas at the primary level, but less common in upper secondary education. This suggests that although there are fewer students attending upper secondary in rural areas, those who do attend this level in rural places tend to repeat less often than those in urban areas. In terms of geographic dispersion of repetition, there is no clear picture. The western region comprises the capital city, and it is more urban and richer than the rest of the country. On one hand, the West has lower repetition rates at the primary level, similar to urban areas. On the other hand, the trend reverses in upper secondary, with the West having higher repetition rates in upper secondary than the North and the South.

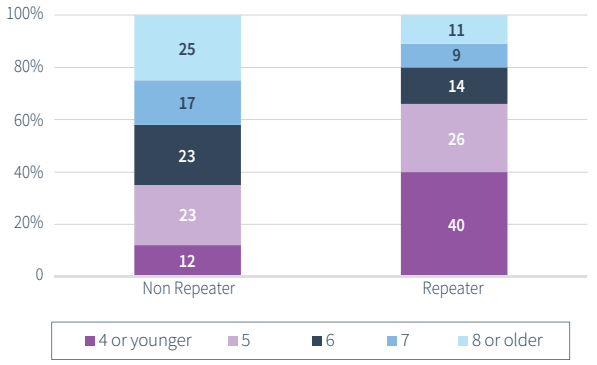
In line with the urban-rural divide as well as the regional patterns, wealth disparities also tend to favour privileged children in primary education, but not in upper secondary. Repetition rates are also higher among the richest students in upper secondary school than for the other four-fifths of the population.

It is important to understand where most of the repetition occurs. Figure 26 shows that it is concentrated in the first grade of primary school, as well as in the final grades of lower and upper secondary education. Repeaters in Grade 3 of lower secondary school and Grade 4 of upper secondary school are those who could not conclude their education cycle and will not graduate unless they are approved in the final grade. Those students need special attention as many of them are at risk of dropping out just one year earlier than when they would receive a graduation diploma, which could strongly improve their chances in the labour market.

On the other end of the distribution, repeaters in Grade 1 of primary school are often those who entered school too young, instead of attending ECE, or those who had a hard time adapting to the formal education system despite entering at the right age. A high 18 per cent of all students in first grade have also attended that grade in the previous year.

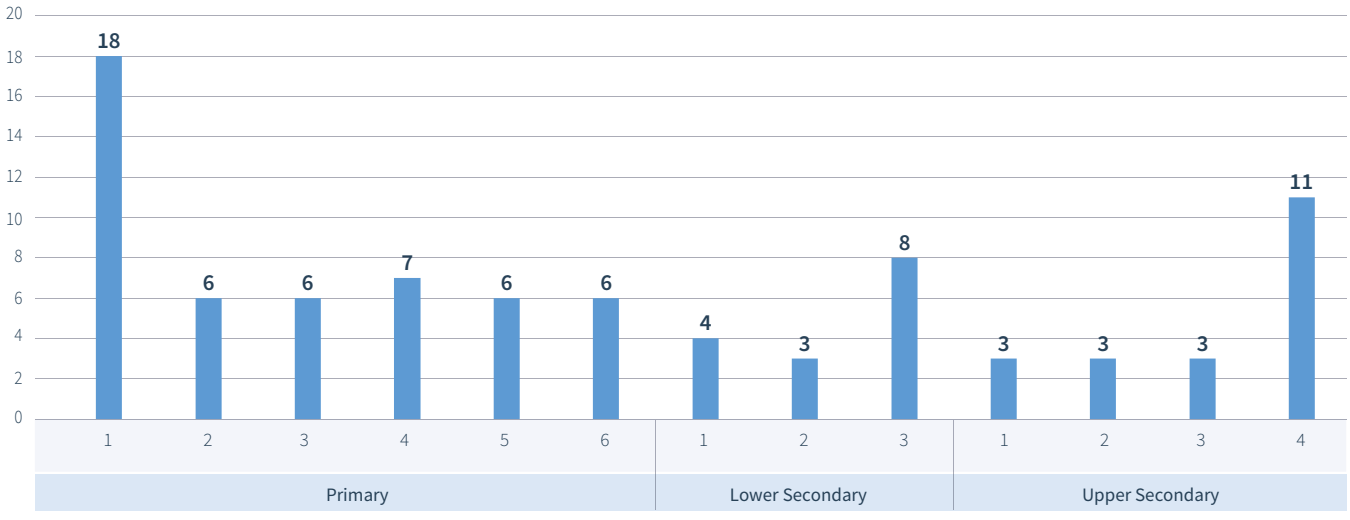
Figure 27 confirms that repeaters are much younger than non-repeaters. Of those who are attending Grade 1 of primary education this year and also attended it last year, 40 per cent were age 4 or younger when they attended it for the first time. Another 26 per cent were age 5, which points to a combined total of two-thirds of repeaters having attended primary school at an earlier age than the legally stipulated one. There is a clear pattern linking early attendance at Grade 1 of primary education and grade repetition.

FIGURE 27: **Age distribution of students in Grade 1 of primary school by repetition**



Source: MICS 2017

FIGURE 26: **Repetition rate by grade and level of education**



Source: MICS 2017

4.2: What is the share of students who are promoted in each grade?

Some of the students attending education drop out or repeat grades, failing to proceed to the subsequent grade. Promotion rates calculate the proportion of students from a cohort attending a given grade in a given school year who study in the next grade in the following school year. This excludes students who drop out, repeat a grade, or who conclude a grade but fail to start the following grade.

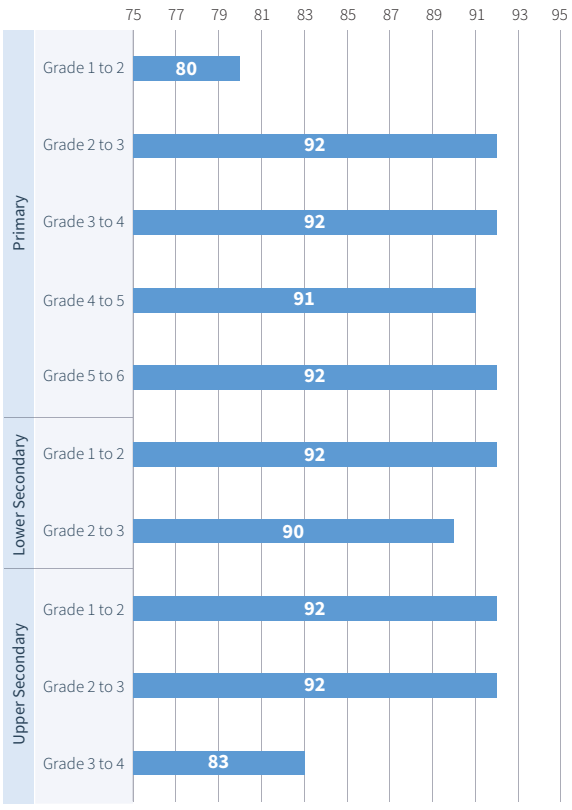
As it can be seen in Figure 28, non-promotion is concentrated in Grade 1 of primary level, mainly pushed by strong repetition, especially of younger children. Promotion rate is also lower from the third to the fourth grade of upper secondary education[13], this time pushed by a strong drop-out rate given that repetition rate at Grade 3 is low (as shown in Figure 26).

4.3: Are primary new entrants prepared to enter primary education?

School readiness measures the number of children attending the first grade of primary school who have attended ECE the previous year. Across the country, the level of school readiness is only 13 per cent. There are, however, strong inequalities, particularly socioeconomic and between regions. Fifteen times as many children from the richest quintile who are in the first grade of primary school have attended ECE than those of the poorest quintile.

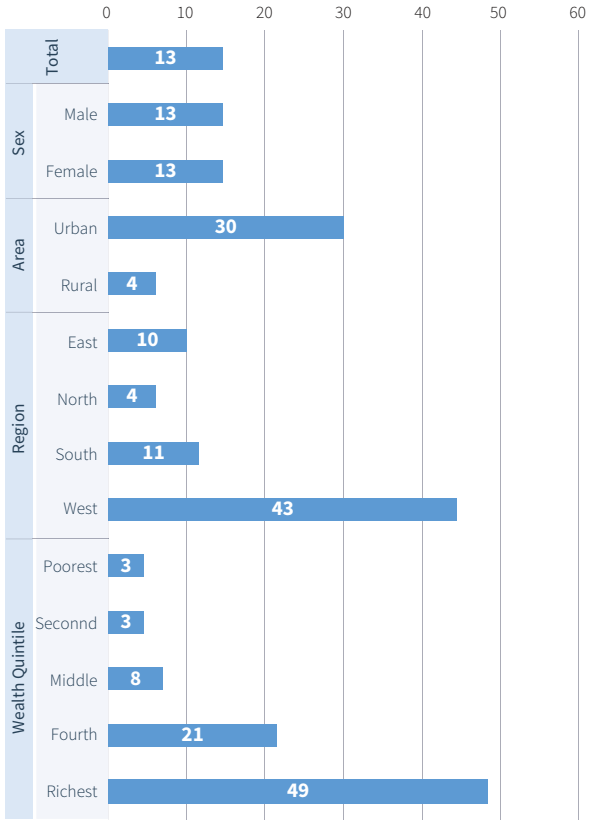
Further, many more urban children than rural ones in the first year of primary school had attended pre-primary education before starting primary school. There is also an extreme variation between regions. In the West, which includes the capital city, school readiness reaches 43 per cent of children of Grade 1, while in the other regions the figures is only 4–11 per cent.

FIGURE 28: **Promotion rates per grade**



Source: MICS 2017

FIGURE 29: **Percentage of children attending first grade of primary school who attended ECE the previous year**



Source: MICS 2017

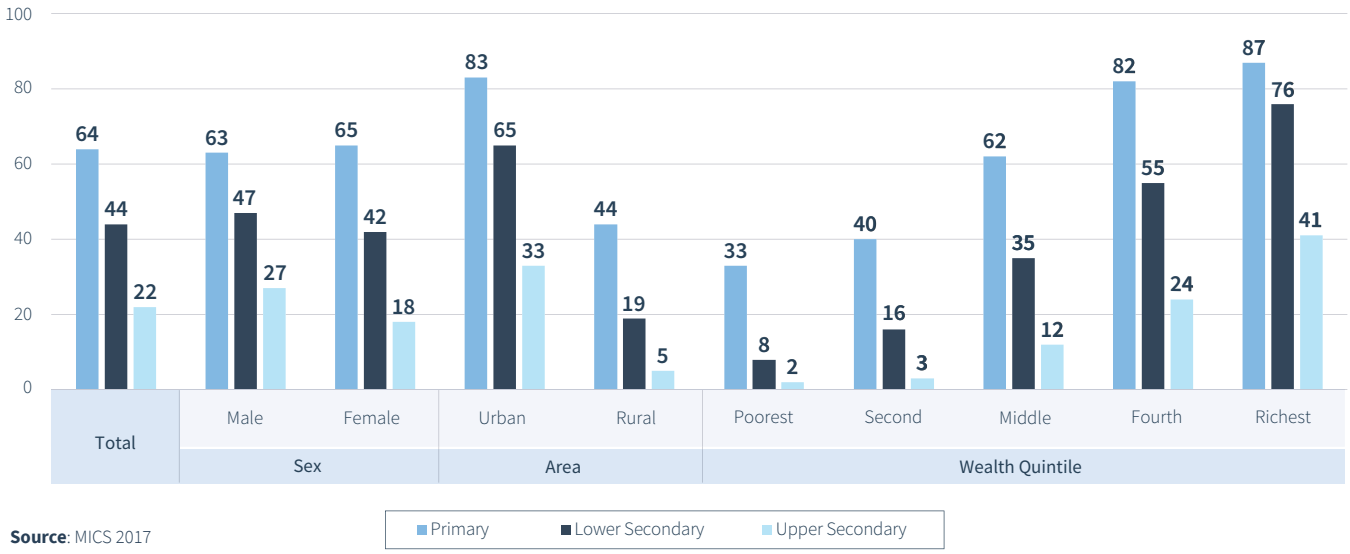
[13]Senior secondary Grade 4 was abolished since MICS data was released.

4.4: Which students complete each level of education?

Almost two-thirds of children are expected to complete primary education in almost even numbers for boys and girls. Richer and urban children are more likely to complete primary education than those in rural areas or growing up in poorer families.

As shown in Figure 30, gender imbalance only very slightly favours girls at the primary level, while the gap reverses and intensifies at the lower secondary and then upper secondary level. Around 27 per cent of young men aged between 21 and 23 finished upper secondary education, while only 18 per cent of young women in the same age group did. The most flagrant gaps are between poorest and richest families at upper secondary education, where completion rates are 20 times higher for the richest quintile than they are for the poorest.

FIGURE 30: **Completion rate by level of education and socioeconomic variables**



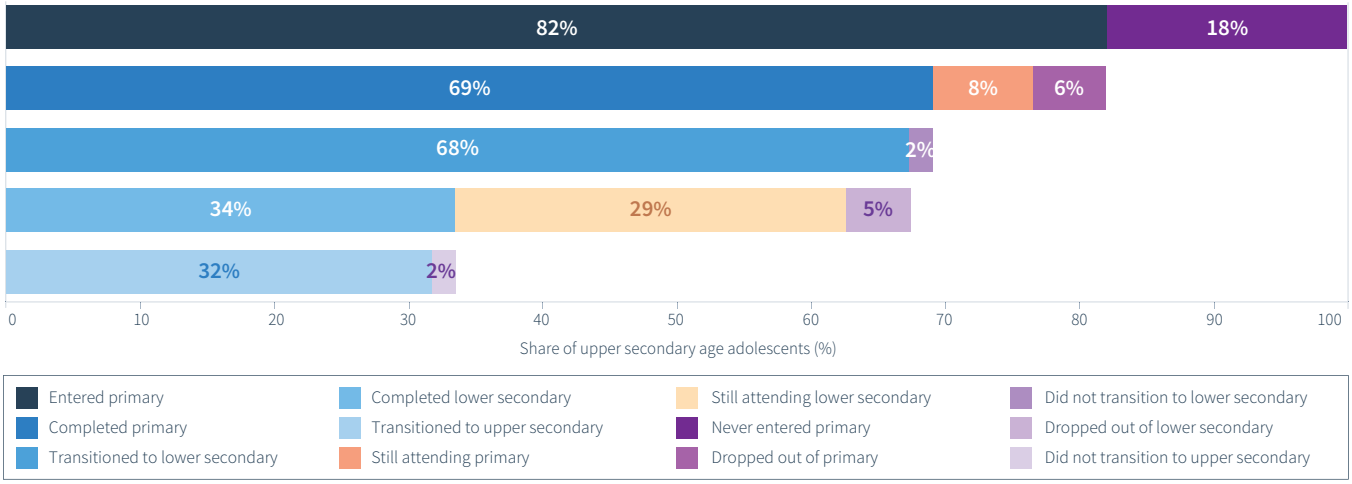
Source: MICS 2017

[14]Completion rate is calculated as the percentage of children aged 3–5 years above the intended age for the last grade of a given education cycle who have completed that grade. For example, for primary school, completion rate is calculated as the number of children aged 14–16 who completed primary education divided by the total number of children in that age group.

The pathway analysis shows that Sierra Leone manages to have over four-fifths of its school-age children enter primary school. However, fewer than half of these did not transition to upper secondary. Although some children drop out and some graduate and do not start the next level of education, the biggest group that fails to transition are those who are still attending lower secondarydespite but are of the appropriate age to be in upper secondary school. This points to the need of fighting repetition and ensuring that people enter school at the appropriate age.

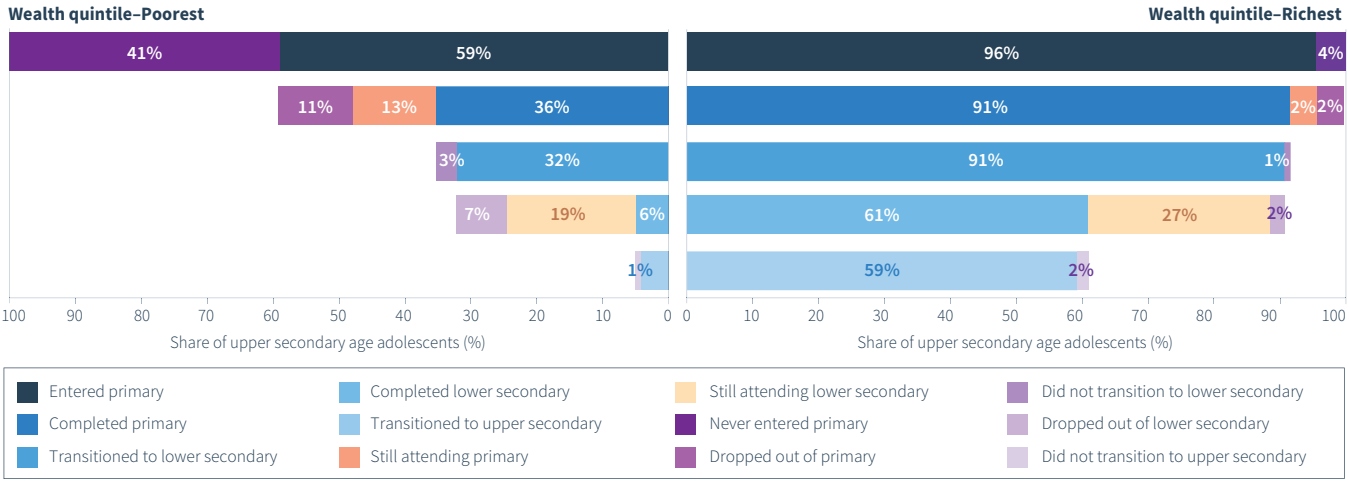
When contrasting the poorest and the richest quintiles, it is clear that children from the richest households are more advantaged in each level of education. Wealthier children are more numerous entering school, remaining in school, and graduating from school. Even for richer children, however, many students remain behind in lower secondary school while they should already be enrolled in upper secondary. Strikingly, the problem happens much earlier among the poorest children in Sierra Leone, as 41 per cent of these fail to even enter primary school and 40 per cent of those who do enter primary school do not complete it. This translates to only 32 per cent of children transitioning to lower secondary school, and even fewer into upper secondary education.

FIGURE 31: **Pathway analysis**



Source: MICS 2017

Figure 32: **Pathway analysis by wealth quintile**



Source: MICS 2017

KEY ISSUES AND POLICY OPTIONS

Key issue 1 – Repetition and dropout: Reducing repetition and dropout by improving relevant age-based attendance

The FQSE aims to foster school attendance at the right age, especially in early childhood education. The expected growth of pre-primary should lead to a reduction in the enrolment of under- age pupils. In the long run, having children attend pre-primary will better prepare them for Grade 1 and hence decrease repetition as well as the number of over-age children. Overall, it is expected that attending pre-primary education combined with entering primary education at the right age would also reduce overcrowding and pressure in the classroom space.

Policy Options:

- Guidelines defining the **expected age to attend each level of education must be enforced.** However, this requires all school areas to provide age-appropriate education. For example, children younger than the expected age for primary education should be able to attend pre-primary education in their school areas.

- **Further data collection is necessary to better understand parents' perception** and barriers that cause children to drop out of school. There is room for improved perception data to more clearly explain the reasons why some children do not complete their grades.

Key issue 2 – Gender equality: Promoting equality for all and ensuring girls are able to complete education

Schools should be accommodating for both girls and boys. Currently, girls have lower completion rates than boys. School staff members, including heads of schools and teachers, need to receive further training on gender sensitivity, including teenage pregnancy. Since 2015 several government announcements have argued that schools should ban visibly pregnant women from attending schools and sitting exams (Amnesty International, 2015).

Policy Options:

- The ban on pregnant women is discriminatory and stigmatizes girls. Moreover, enforcing such a ban prevents fair and balanced access to education for girls and puts them at higher risk of abuse. It is extremely important that all **girls are respected and accepted in schools, including during pregnancy.** The ban must be lifted in order to protect pregnant girls, fight stigma, and promote equal education rights for all young people.

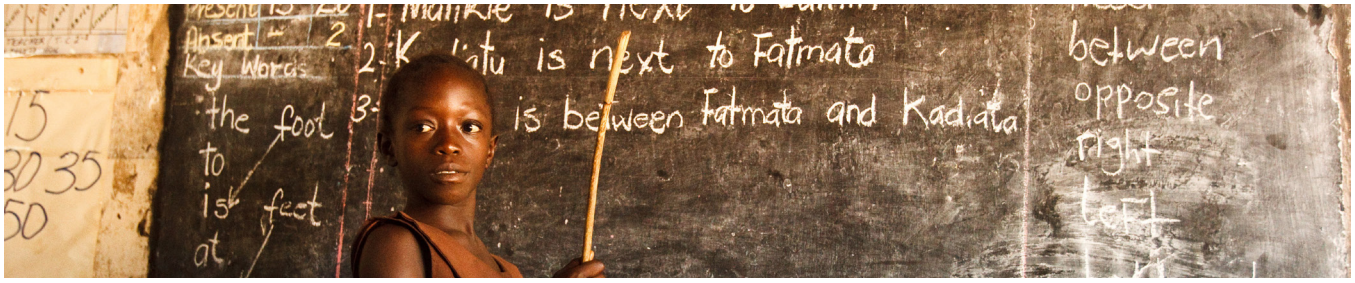
- There should be internal mechanisms to deal with school-related gender-based violence. This includes the development of more **efficient reporting mechanisms** for these types of violence.

Key issue 3 – Safety nets: Providing and assessing safety nets to improve school attendance

Social safety nets are an important mechanism to keep children in school, especially in more rural communities and in areas where child labour is high. The National Commission for Social Action (NCSA) is the part of the government that develops and implements the social programmes in the country. With the financial support of the World Bank, NCSA launched in 2014 a project to provide cash to poor communities. As part of the programme, families are first required to attend a preparation workshop, after which they can sign up to receive $US45 every quarter (US$15 a month). The project currently covers 28,000 households, but it is set to expand to another 35,000 households by 2023.

Policy Options:

- A qualitative assessment of safety nets by the World Bank in Sierra Leone argues that the unconditional cash transfers have encouraged school attendance. An **impact evaluation** is scheduled to be carried out with the support of UNICEF. Such monitoring and evaluation is extremely important to ensure that the project has the expected impact.



CHAPTER 5

Which children are learning and why?

A well-functioning educational system relies on high access rates across all levels of education. Participation in school per se should already assist children in their socialization and support them in the development of at least some soft skills. Nevertheless, high attendance rates do not guarantee that children enrolled are learning, particularly basic skills that will be useful in the future both in life and in the labour market.

5.1: What are children's reading skills?

MICS collects data on skills of children aged between 7 and 14 based on various dimensions of reading and numeracy skills that children are expected to have at Grades 2 and 3. For reading skills, children are asked to read a short story, of which they are expected to accurately pronounce 90 per cent of the words. After that, children are asked three questions on their understanding of the text, which contribute to the measurement of their interpretation skills; and two questions they should answer based on information they inferred from the text. Students are considered to have foundational reading skills when they have successfully read the text, interpreted it correctly, and inferred the information contained in it.

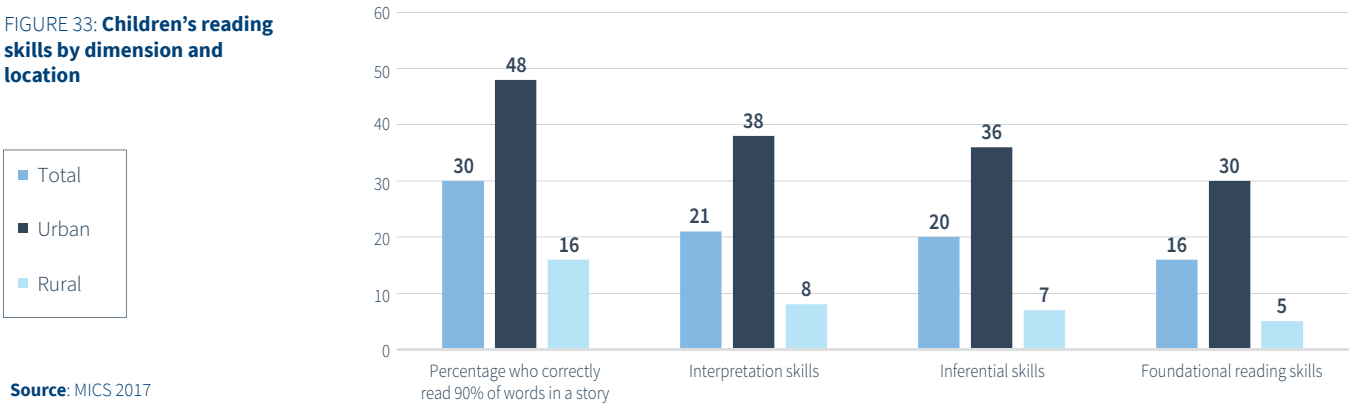
Around 30 per cent of children between 7 and 14 years in Sierra Leone were capable of reading most (over 90 per cent) of the test correctly. However, only about two-thirds could interpret and infer information available in the text, meaning that around 80 per cent of children in Sierra Leone failed in interpretation and inferential skills. There is a sharp divide in skill acquisition for this age group across socioeconomic lines, but also between rural and urban. Around 30 per cent of urban children have foundational reading skills, while only 5 per cent of rural children do.

Figure 34 shows that there is some gender imbalance, with slightly more boys than girls having the expected skills.

Regional differences are much more pronounced, as the western region stands out with over a third of its children with appropriate reading skills, while the figure is less than 13 per cent in the rest of the country. The gap between wealthier and poorer families is also flagrant, as reading skills are achieved by 39 per cent of the richest children, but only a mere 2 per cent of the poorest.

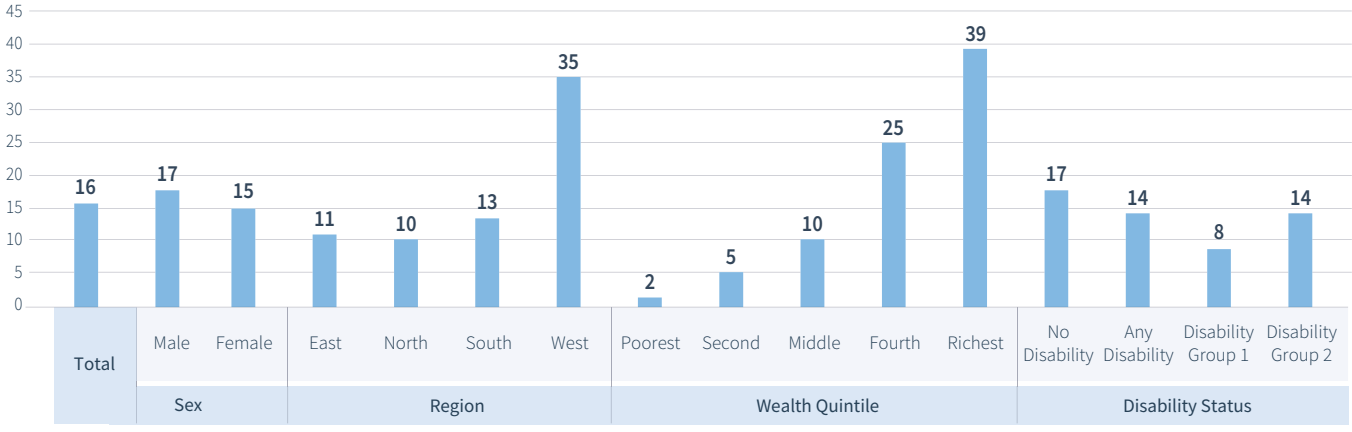
Finally, children with disabilities fare only slightly worse[15] than those without disabilities. However, the gap is wider for less common yet more hampering difficulties (Group 1). Disabilities were divided in two categories for the analysis, as shown earlier in this report, with Group 1 being more traditional disabilities (seeing, hearing, walking, cognition, self-care, and communication) and Group 2 being additional child disabilities (accepting change, anxiety, concentrating, controlling behaviour, depression, learning, and making friends). While on average 17 per cent children who do not declare any functional difficulty have the necessary reading skills, only 8 per cent of those with a Group 1 disability do. This shows that the disabilities in the six core domains seem to be linked with academic difficulties. Nevertheless, those types of disabilities are much rarer; and most children with learning difficulties have one of the Group 2 disabilities. Among children with any disability, or a Group 2 disability, the performance in reading is not much lower than for other children. Indeed, the gap created by disability is much narrower than the ones created by area or socioeconomic factors.

FIGURE 33: **Children's reading skills by dimension and location**



Source: MICS 2017

FIGURE 34: **Children's foundational reading skills by socioeconomic background and disability status**



Source: MICS 2017

[15]It is noteworthy that there is an upward bias on foundational learning results for children with disabilities, as children with very serious disabilities cannot take the Foundational Learning module, which is not sufficiently inclusive.

5.2: What are children's numeracy skills?

The struggle to have children acquire foundational skills is even more pronounced for numeracy than reading. Overall, only 22 per cent of urban children have the expected numeracy skills for their age, and in rural areas a mere 5 per cent do. Children are considered to possess the expected numeracy skills when they excel in all of the five assessed domains. The first one consists of recognizing and reading six numbers between one and three digits each. The second domain, number discrimination, presents a pair of numbers to children and they have to decide which one is larger. Children are considered to excel in this domain if they successfully respond to five questions on the comparison of number magnitude.

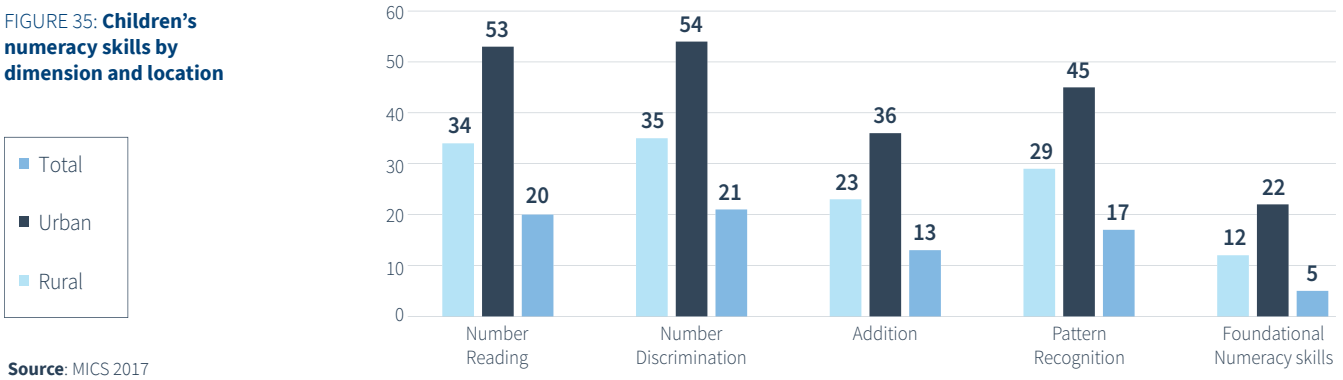
The third set of questions is composed of five simple addition questions, and children are expected to correctly answer all of them. The last domain introduces five sequences of numbers to children, and they are expected to complete all five in the appropriate manner.

Children found it easier to read numbers and tell what number is larger than the other, but even in number reading and number discrimination only about a third of children countrywide and a little over half of urban children responded correctly. The most difficult dimension for children was solving simple addition equations, which only 23 per cent succeeded in doing. Overall, a mere 12 per cent of all children between the ages of 7 and 14 are considered to have the expected foundational numeracy skills for Grades 2 and 3. The gap between rural and urban is especially wide, with five times more urban than rural children succeeding.

Besides the urban-rural divide, Figure 36 shows that geography and socioeconomic backgrounds are strong determinants of successful learning of numeracy skills. Children living in and around Freetown, the national capital, in the West excel in tremendously higher numbers than anywhere else in the country. Furthermore, the gap between richest and poorest stands at 3 per cent compared to 25 per cent of children with foundational numeracy skills.

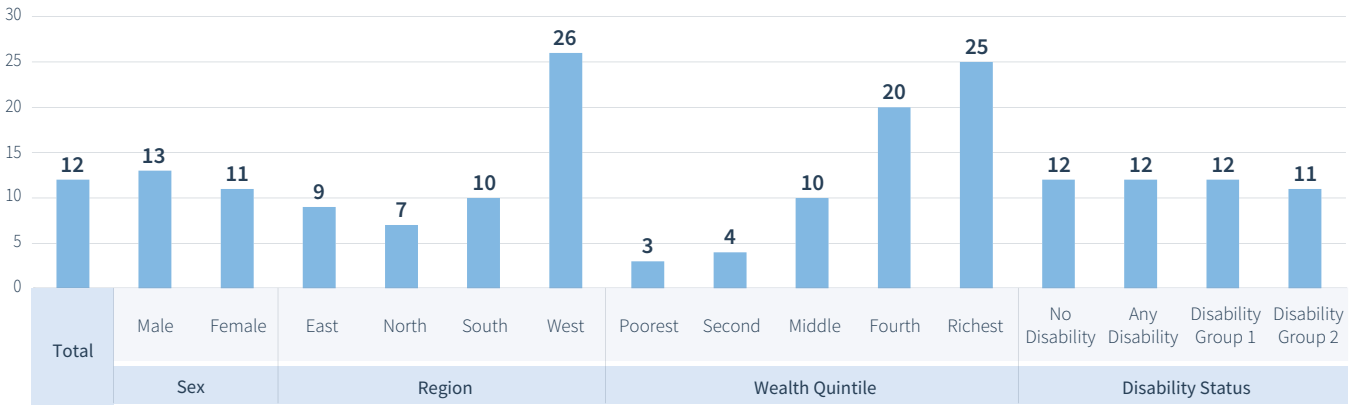
Interestingly, disability is not strongly linked to numeracy learning. Children with disabilities performed on similar levels to those without functional difficulties across the country when it comes to the five dimensions of numeracy skills.

FIGURE 35: **Children's numeracy skills by dimension and location**



Source: MICS 2017

FIGURE 36: **Children's foundational numeracy skills by socioeconomic background and disability status**



Source: MICS 2017

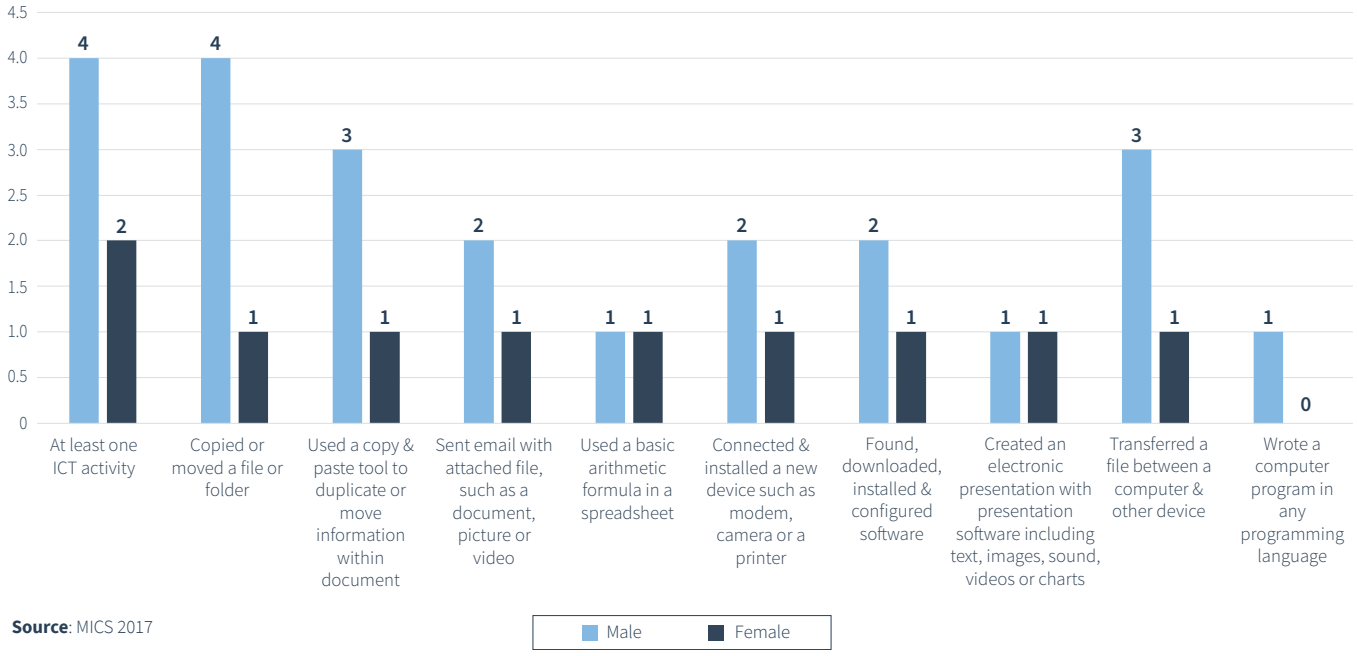
5.3: What ICT skills do young people have?

More and more, jobs require training in Information and Communication Technology. It is therefore essential for young people to acquire the ICT skills needed to excel in the labour market. The new MICS 6 module on Mass Media and ICT collected a list of computer related activities in which individuals are invited to respond as to whether they have carried out any of them over a given time frame. This allows for measuring the presence of ICT in an individual's routine and her/his ability to perform the related activities.

Figure 37 shows that ICT penetration in Sierra Leone is still very low. Fewer than 5 per cent of young men performed at least one of the activities proposed on the list; and for young women the picture is even dimmer, at around 1 per cent for each of the ICT related activities. Even the most common activities related to working with computers in copying and transferring files are mastered by a mere 4 percent or less of young men and just 1 per cent of young women.

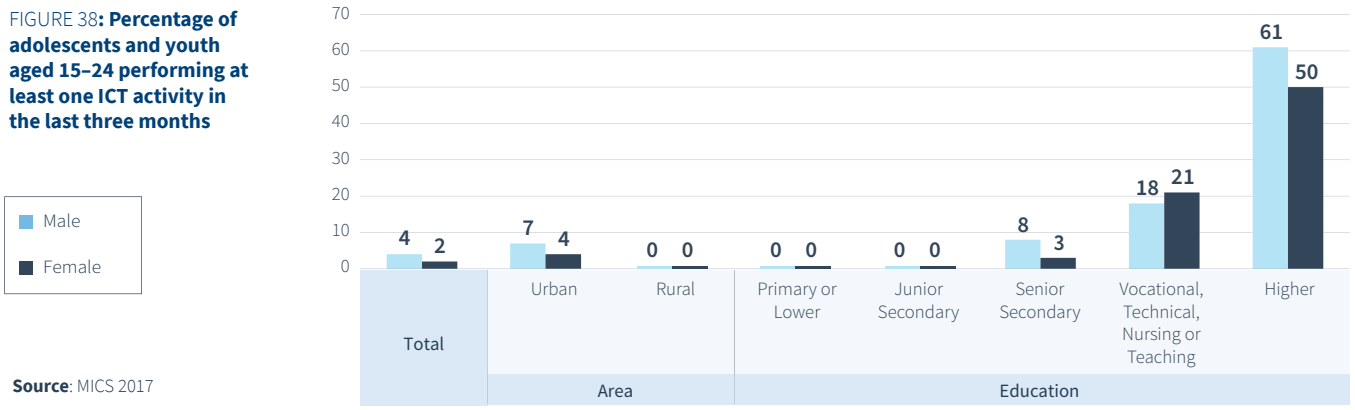
Although ICT use is very low in the country, on average, highly educated youth do use ICT at much higher levels than their less educated peers. Figure 38 exhibits that half of tertiary educated women aged 15 to 24 used an ICT skill in the previous three months and so did 61 per cent of men. For those who attended a vocational track, 18 per cent of men and 21 per cent of women ages 15 to 24 also used the referred ICT skills. This is in sharp contrast with almost no use of those skills in rural contexts or among youth who were educated to a lower level than senior secondary education.

FIGURE 37: **Percentage of adolescents and youth aged 15–24 who have carried out ICT activities**



Source: MICS 2017

FIGURE 38**: Percentage of adolescents and youth aged 15–24 performing at least one ICT activity in the last three months**



Source: MICS 2017

KEY ISSUES AND POLICY OPTIONS

Key issues and policy options Key issue 1 – Teaching conditions: Providing teachers with opportunities to grow and attracting better teachers

Teachers play a pivotal role in ensuring that pupils learn. It is important to equip teachers with the necessary skills and pedagogy for the profession, but it is also essential to attract more talented individuals to the teaching profession. For this, better teaching conditions are needed, as well as a fair and transparent recruitment process.

The Teachers Service Commission (TSC), which was created by an act of Parliament in 2011 and became operational in 2018, now combines most responsibilities in the hiring, training, and evaluation of teachers in the country.

Policy Options:

- **Teaching conditions should be improved** beyond the opportunity of accessing free training. More incentives, such as salaries and benefits, are necessary to attract more qualified people to the teaching profession and to ensure that they remain in the job after training.

- Due to a ban in recruitment that lasted for about 10 years and was only lifted in 2018, currently many teachers, especially in more rural and poorer areas, are volunteer teachers, meaning that they are not paid by the government, but usually receive a stipend from fees paid by parents. High performing volunteer serving as teachers should be included on the government payroll. The TSC wants to **give qualified volunteer teachers priority in hiring**, which is an important move.

- **Teacher recruitment should be transparent** from the start and there should be a system in place to assess and evaluate teachers throughout their careers. Recruitment should also follow the protocols established by the TSC, which use the annual school census as a guiding tool for the demand for teachers across schools and districts.

- There needs to be further **investment on the provision of teaching materials to schools**, including workbooks, manuals, and readers. Teacher-training materials such as Lesson Plan Manuals and Pupil Handbooks are also necessary.

- It is important to strengthen the system by **holding school staff to account.** DFID has a project to hold schools and teachers to account by training supervisors from the government who visit schools and provide tables that capture teachers' attendance, availability of materials, and an assessment of teaching practices.

- There needs to be improved **data on teacher quality**. Currently, the Annual School Census only includes data on teachers' qualifications, but this needs to be expanded in a way to learn more about teachers' performance.

Key issue 2 – Teacher training: Having teachers learn to improve student learning

In Sierra Leone, only 54 per cent of teachers in primary school and 68 per cent of those in lower secondary school are appropriately trained[16], which makes in-service training for teachers crucial. Training used to be handled by the Inspectorate Division of the Ministry of Education, but the responsibility now falls on the Teachers Service Commission, which is an important move given that the TSC oversees the hiring and paying teachers. Individuals who want to be teachers must possess a degree or a qualification certificate and then apply to the TSC. Once accepted by the TSC, teachers are trained in-service.

Some initiatives have promoted teacher training in parallel to the TSC. DFID currently has a project on improving teaching and learning in schools that promotes in-service teacher training at the secondary level. The project focuses on teachers of mathematics and English who are supported by 175 school officers. Each school officer supports and evaluates teachers and school principals in 10 to 14 schools. Officers train teaching staff and principles and support them in the design of a lesson plan, as well as conduct classroom evaluations.

The World Bank is funding a project by the Ministry of Education on Teacher Management and Professional Development, which falls under the FQSE. The project starts with an evaluation of what is the actual need for teachers according to the number of students using the Annual School Census. It then targets teacher professional development by providing a continuous in-service teacher-training programme to upgrade teachers' knowledge and pedagogical practices, with a focus on core subjects (English, mathematics, and the sciences). Trainings focus on teachers at the secondary level and cover the use off peer learning, subject knowledge,

pedagogy, and the use of teaching materials.

Policy Options:

- **Teachers must receive good training opportunities.** In-service teacher training is already being put in place, although it must be significantly improved, and fewer efforts have been made to provide pre-service training.

- **Harmonized training opportunities for teachers such as those provided by DFID and the World Bank should be encouraged.**

- Training should include pedagogy as well subject-matter knowledge. The 'Teachers Code of Conduct' that is currently underway should provide helpful **guidance on how teachers are expected to behave.** Pedagogy should be included in the Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders.

- It is important to foster innovation in teacher-training practices. For example, **distance learning** is a very cost-efficient modality of teacher training in place in Freetown's Teacher's College, yielding very successful outcomes. Currently, graduation rate in the college is higher for distance learners than for courses requiring physical presence on campus.

- **Training should be designed to specific levels.** Some training units, for example, do not possess classes tailored to teachers at the pre-primary level. The curriculum for teachers preparing for early childhood development should include pedagogic guidance on the relevant age group they will have in class. Play-based learning is extremely important in pre-primary level and it should be part of the contents of a pre-primary training.

Key issue 3 – Mother-tongue education: Teaching children in a language they understand

All schools in Sierra Leone are supposed to teach in English from the primary level. From Grades 1 to 3, children's native languages may be used in parallel to English as a language of instruction, but it is expected to completely fade out by Grade 3 of primary education. However, respective teaching and learning in mother tongue does not exist to support this process. The current practice of full English education expects pupils to learn reading in a language they cannot currently understand or speak.

Policy Options:

- Research has shown that **pupils learn to read faster in a familiar language** because they already have a repository of vocabulary and linguistic construction available, as well as the ability to pronounce the sounds of the language. This would facilitate learning to read as well as the comprehension of text. Having the ability to read and to understand a text in turn facilitates academic learning, specifically the learning of a secondary language. Ultimately, learning in mother tongue improves educational efficiency, with better learning outcomes and fewer pupils repeating/ dropping out of school.

- Mother-tongue education in earlier grades is extremely important for children to learn quicker, especially reading skills, and for them to remain in school. Children in earlier grades should be taught in their local language, which is easier if the curriculum, learning, and teaching materials are adapted to mother tongue. In some situations, there are no materials available in the students' native language and the initial investment to transition to mother-tongue curricula in early grades is too high. In those cases, the mother tongue could still serve as the **main language of instruction in class, while the textbooks remain in English.**

CHAPTER 6

How do parental engagement and home environment help children succeed in school?

Parental involvement is crucial for child development in complementing education. Children learn more and faster with the support from their parents, as well as in a challenging and stimulating home environment. In general, children's learning performance is positively associated with parental involvement in school management and reading activities at home (Pomerantz et al., 2007). To measure this, the parental involvement module was included in MICS6. It collects information on key indicators on parental involvement in school including: availability of information on children's school performance (whether primary caretaker received a report card); involvement of adult (parent) in school management if a school has a governing body; participation in school meetings called by the governing body; involvement in school activities such as school celebration, sports event, and discussion with teachers on children's progress.

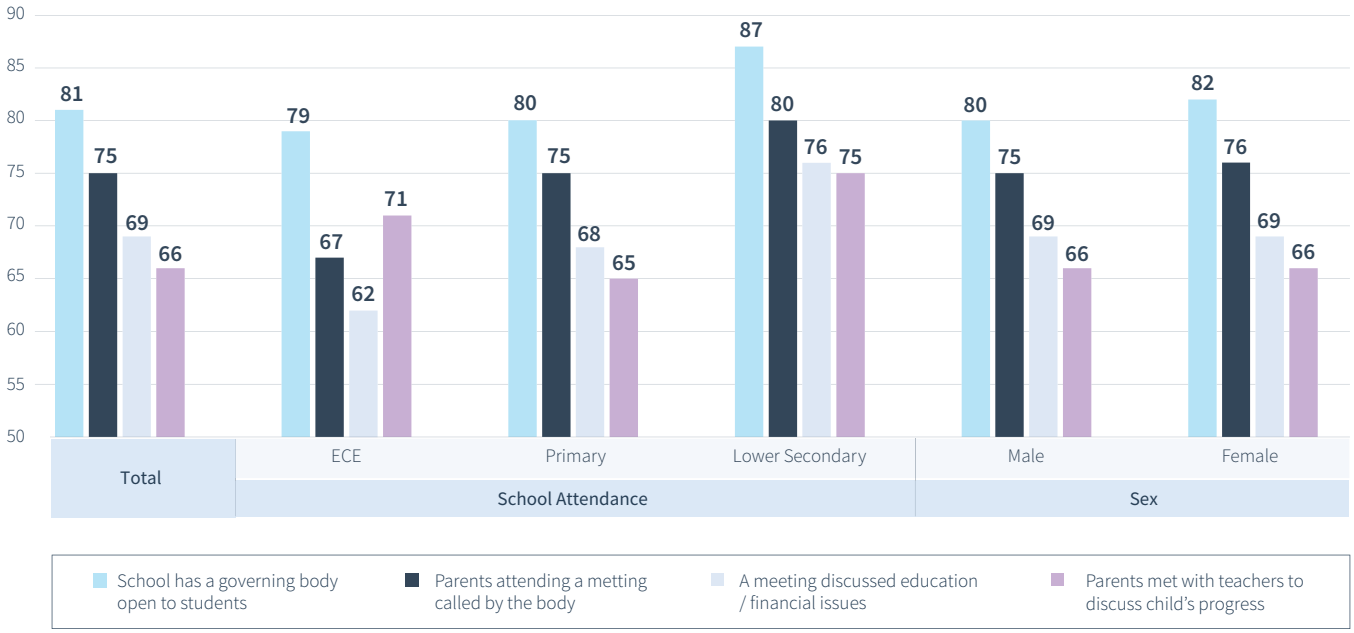
6.1: How does parental involvement in school vary across children?

This section further looks into parents' engagement in their children's education and their participation in school management, which are both important to understand the learning environment in which children grow.

Figure 39 shows that parental engagement in school-related activities is high in the country, as most schools have governing bodies in which parents can participate. Governing bodies are more common in junior secondary schools, but they are also present in almost 80 per cent of early childhood education centres. In those governing bodies, parents very often have the chance to attend meetings and frequently they discuss education and financial issues. Around two-thirds of parents have also met with teachers, through the governing body or not, to discuss the child's progress.

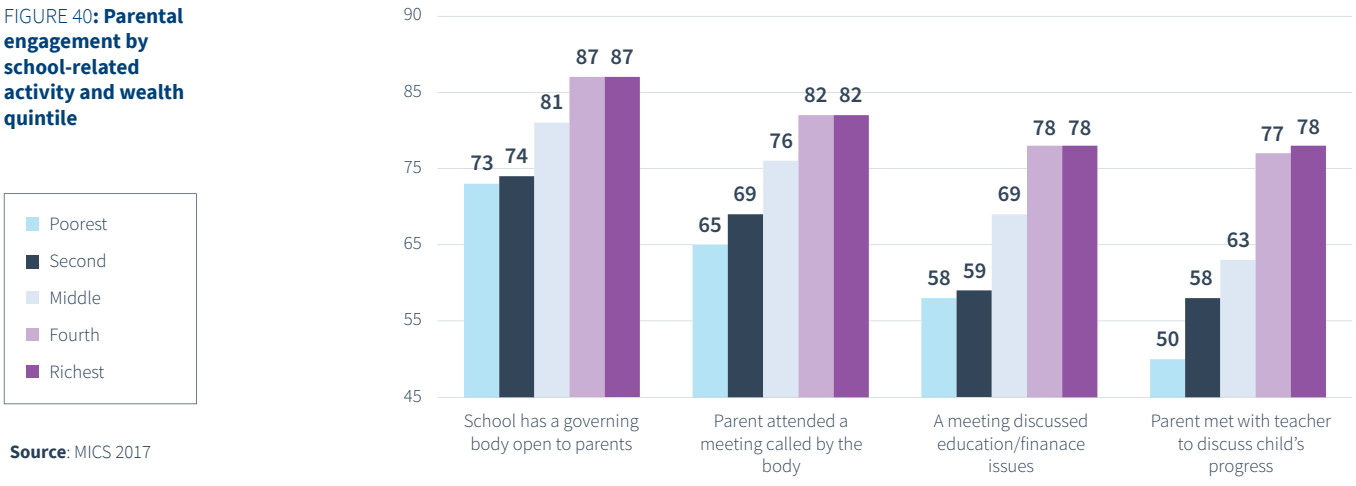
Figure 40 indicates that there is clear socioeconomic inequality in relation to parental participation across different metrics of engagement. Children in wealthier families more often go to schools where governing bodies exist. Further, their parents more often engage in various meetings to discuss their children's progress or how the institutions are managed.

FIGURE 39: **Parental engagement by school-related activity, gender, and level of education attended by the child**



Source: MICS 2017

FIGURE 40: **Parental engagement by school-related activity and wealth quintile**



Source: MICS 2017

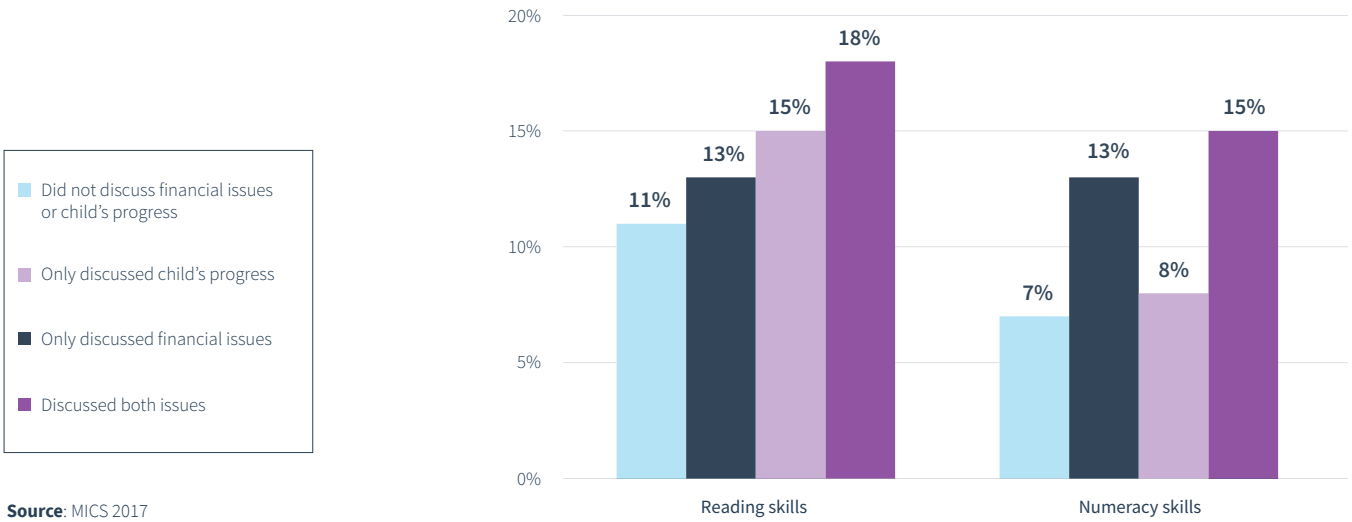
6.2: How does parental involvement boost children's skills?

Parental engagement is a strong determinant of a child's performance in school. One way to assess parental engagement is to analyse the engagement of parents and teachers. The regression analysis below shows that parental engagement with teachers is significantly correlated with children's skills acquisition even when controlling for wealth, gender, region, geography, and age. As more involved parents also tend to be wealthier, the regression analysis permits parental engagement to be seen in insolation, concluding that for equally wealthy parents, those who are more engaged will have their children perform better in numeracy and reading.

Figure 41 shows that children whose parents participate in meetings organized by the governing body perform significantly better than those whose parents do not engage in similar activities. Meeting with teachers, through the governing body or in parallel to it, does have an impact on children's reading skills, but not in their numeracy skills, when controlled for all the variables aforementioned.

The largest impact, however, is seen when both factors are combined. Parents who discuss with teachers both financial issues and their children's progress double the odds of their children achieving the expected numeracy skills, even when controlling for all socioeconomic and demographic factors. This means that among poorer families, as well as among richer ones, the odds of child success are increased by family participation.

FIGURE 41: **Children's foundational learning skills by parental interaction with teachers among children aged 7–14**



Source: MICS 2017

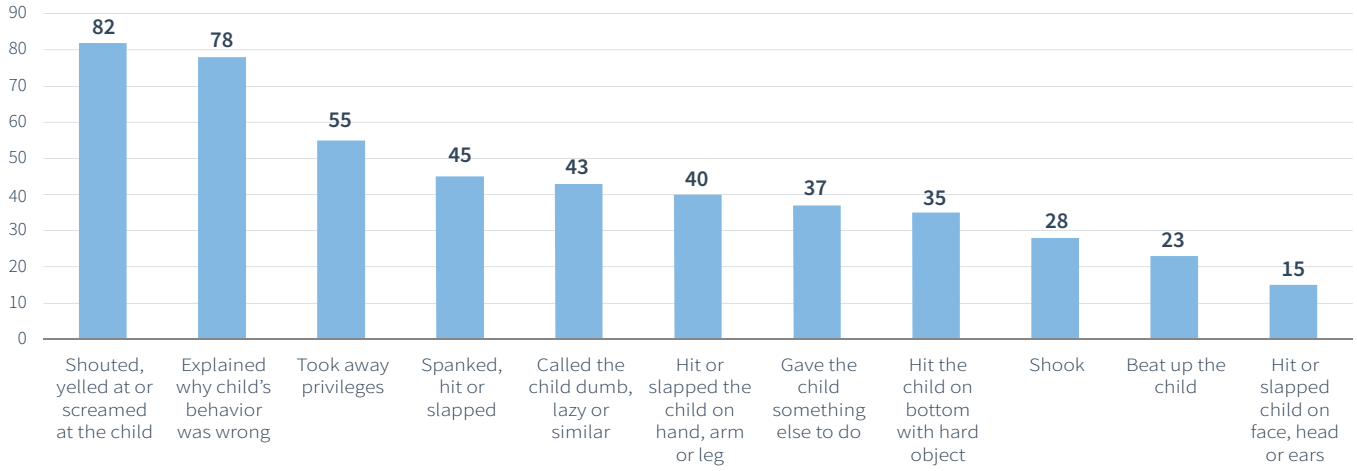
6.3: What is the impact of actual physical punishment experience and education indicators?

Among children and teenagers aged between 5 and 17, physical punishment is extremely common in Sierra Leone. Physical punishment can happen in less violent disciplining forms, such as psychological violence, including shouting and yelling, which constitute the most common form of punishment in the country. However, it can also mean severe physical violence in the form of a beating, which happens to a shocking 23 per cent of children, as shown in figure 42.

The types of child discipline illustrated in Figure 42 are regrouped into three main types in Figure 43, which is disaggregated by several socioeconomic variables. There is much less heterogeneity in how different types of punishment can be found across the country than one might have expected. Girls and boys are punished in similar ways, and so are children and teenagers from rural and urban areas. Across socioeconomic and geographic categories there is no exact trend pointing to where violent, very violent, or non-violent punishment is common.

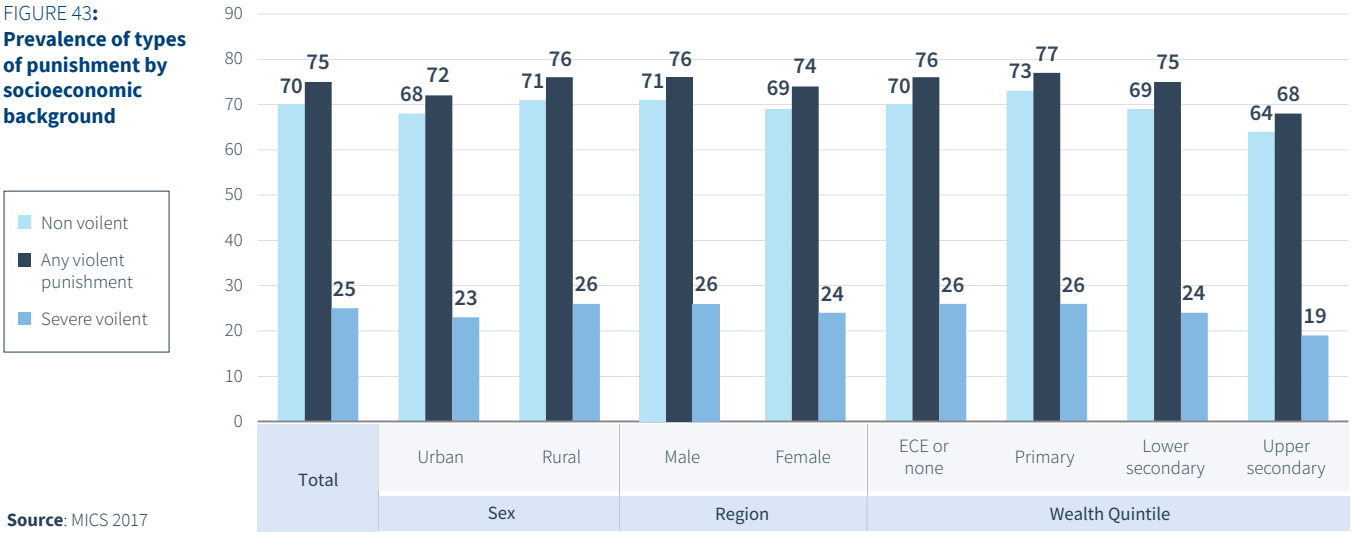
Figure 43 also shows that most parents punish their children using a combination of both violent and non-violent strategies. This pattern can be observed across regions, classes, and areas of the country. Severe violence, albeit less common than other forms of physical violence, still happens to nearly a quarter of all children aged between 5 and 17 in the country. Interestingly, there is some decrease in all forms of punishment, including non-violent punishment, as the level of the mother's education increases.

FIGURE 42: **Share of children by type of child discipline applied**



Source: MICS 2017

FIGURE 43: **Prevalence of types of punishment by socioeconomic background**



Source: MICS 2017

KEY ISSUES AND POLICY OPTIONS

Key issue 1 – Child protection: Working for safer schools and safer homes

The Child Rights Act has been in place since 2007 to protect children against violence in home and at school. The Act showcases very strict rules against child labour, early marriage, and physical punishment.

Policy Options:

- Although the legislation already exists, it is important to ensure strict compliance to all laws against child labour. There needs to be a **stricter enforcement of law to prevent violence against children.**

- There should be robust **awareness campaigns against violence and violent punishment**. In order to raise awareness of the importance of education, the government must develop a communication and social mobilization strategy that reaches out to most parents. Sensitization campaigns are key to helping parents understand the importance of their engagement in their children's education. Those campaigns are also key to helping parents understand the risks of violent punishment and how to more successfully discipline their children.

Key issue 2 – Parental engagement: Supporting more engaged parents for better learning

Parental involvement is crucial for child development in complementing education. Children learn more and faster with support from their parents, as well as in a challenging and stimulating home environment. Parents should therefore be given the tools to support their children and help them learn.

Policy Options:

- Parents, including fathers, play a pivotal role in their children's learning. **Parental responsibility in education should be included all across education planning**, especially in the future Education Sector Plan. Particular attention should be paid to the role of fathers in sharing the responsibility of stimulating their children and engaging in their schools.

- More **resources should be allocated to the functioning of the governing bodies** fostering parental involvement in schools. Those bodies need to have the capacity to engage and facilitate the participation of parents. Bodies should also help parents understand how to provide a stimulating learning environment at home.

- Schools should be given the tools to prevent violence against children both in school and at home. A useful strategy is to increase the number of schools with guidance counselling department from 81 per cent to 100 per cent. It is also important to encourage parental participation in those bodies.

CHAPTER 7

What are the main data and research gaps?

Using available data, many of the questions presented in the customization workshop were already discussed and addressed in previous chapters of this report. Nevertheless, a few questions remain unanswered due to the lack of data. During the Country Report Customization Workshop, participants identified a few data gaps that need to be addressed. Data of good quality is vital for sound policymaking, as they provide the necessary grounds for informed evidence-based decisions. The Annex provides the list of policy, data, and research questions presented at the workshop – including questions that were analysed by this report and questions that are yet to be answered.

7.1: What are the main sources of data on education?

Sierra Leone has substantial data in many valuable areas of education policy and research. There is quite a lot of data available on system efficiency through the MICS and Demographic Health Survey (DHS), as well as punctual surveys carried out by UN agencies such as the United Nations Population Fund and government branches such as Statistics Sierra Leone and the Ministry of Education. Data on schools' capacity and quality is also largely available when combining survey information from the MICS with the Education Management Information System (EMIS) administrative data, particularly the school census. There is data clarity on physical capacity of schools, as well as their learning environment. Moreover, MICS data is very rich on various dimensions of ECE, including socioeconomic and geographic disaggregation. Indeed, there is also substantive data on access and equity measures across all levels of education.

In 2014, prior to the Foundational Learning Module in MICS 6, Sierra Leone was part of two initiatives to measure early learning: Early Grades Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA). Both tools were designed for primary school pupils in low-income countries and have been used in more than 40 countries worldwide. Students were assessed in both Grades 2 and 4 in several competencies of reading in English and numeracy. The tests were designed to collect information that could be used for curriculum development, teacher training, and national policy. The assessments were developed in a partnership that included the then Ministry of Education, Sciences, and Technology, Statistics Sierra Leone, UNICEF, the DFID, the International Red Cross, and the World Bank.

In 2018, Statistics Sierra Leone launched the third round of the Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey. The survey, which should be implemented every three years, is the major source of data on poverty in the country, while also including several questions related to education. It collects education data on attendance and learning, but also on alternative education and reasons for repetition and dropout.

Besides MICS, DHS, and other internationally-run data sources, the Government of Sierra Leone is also very active in data treatment and collection. The Education Act 2004 gives the then Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST, now MBSSE) and the Minister of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE) the authority to manage the provision of education at all levels. Within the ministry, the Planning and Policy Directorate is responsible for educational data collection, publication, and management. The directorate collects basic information on schools, such as enrolment and teacher numbers, at the district level in collaboration with the Inspectorate Division, which is comprised of school inspectors and supervisors in the frontline.

The MBSSE has made significant strides towards the improvement of data quality with the implementation of the 2018 Annual School Census, which was the first nationwide digital data collection undertaken in Sierra Leone (with tablets).The primary source of data for the MBSSE is the Inspectorate Division; but the process of collecting data by the Division is unsystematic, and coverage of data collected is not comprehensive as it does not cover private schools, community schools, non-formal education, and technical vocational education and training institutions. As a result, EMIS was established as part of the Education Sector Plan 2018–2020 to improve data collection and to contribute to effective management of the education system.

One major component of EMIS is to conduct a high-quality school census annually to capture the required education data for planning and policy-relevant analysis. The school census results illustrate basic statistics and indicators of education sector performance, covering all schools in the country. The data collected provide key measurements that are useful in monitoring the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education, which is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Some of the many indicators that can be calculated using the school census include: number of schools, classrooms, and teachers; school facilities and teaching conditions; intake and enrolment; and repetition, completion, and transition rates.

The process of collecting data by the Planning and Policy Directorate was systematically carried out in all schools in all districts across the country. Each Head Teacher was responsible for the correct and accurate completion of their school's Annual School Census Questionnaire. An enumerator (school supervisors and inspectors) visited the schools and gave brief instructions on how to complete the questionnaire, and left the Questionnaire Guide and the Questionnaire for school administrator to complete.
The questionnaires include information on school identification (EMIS number and school name, location, and contact person), school particulars (source of funding, type of expenditure, ownership, shift, type, and approval status), classroom information (permanent and makeshift/temporal classrooms, and streams), students (new entrants with ECE, pupil enrolment, repeaters, and disability status), and teachers (professional and academic qualifications, if volunteer or on payroll, subjects taught, language of instruction used, and specialty).

7.2: What education data is missing for evidence-based policy and monitoring?

A few of the issues highlighted in the Customization Workshop deserve careful attention and analysis, but there is insufficient data to understand them. The main areas highlighted during the workshops were where there are substantial data gaps regarding teachers' skills, qualifications, and training, as well as pedagogy and methods. Participants asked quite a few questions concerning teachers that remain to be answered due to lack of data.

Although EMIS and the school census include information on teachers, more data is needed on their previous studies and experiences, as well as on their teaching and general skillsets. Self-reported or tested teacher competencies are important to understand their impact on student success, as well as to illustrate unequal teaching provision across the territory.

Data on teachers is also very important to understand who the best performing education practitioners are and how to boost performance of those struggling in class. In order for principals, teachers, and policy makers to learn from experience, there must be more data connecting teachers' competencies with skills acquisition and student well-being.

There is also room for improvement on data on pedagogic practices, especially their link with learning and student upskilling. Policy makers and school personnel must be able to better understand what pedagogies work better in each context to boost student competencies and learning. The Education Sector Plan aims to improve teacher and head of school/ institution competency, work orientation, and job commitment, with 75 per cent of teachers being trained and qualified for their employment, inspected, and evaluated. These laudable goals need effective measurement and monitoring, which require more well-developed teachers' data.

Besides matters related to teachers, a few other questions touched on some additional data gaps. There is currently no information on the distance between where children live and where they study. Information on commuting patterns is extremely important to prepare for expansion of the school network, specifically in light of school census and the potential it has on influencing construction of new schools and identifying the demand for teachers. A strategic plan for the construction of new schools must consider the distance that future students will need to commute and must cater to those students who have the more difficult commuting routines.

Another area with room for improvement in data availability is internal efficiency. In terms of inclusion, school characteristics that make them more accommodating for children with disabilities are currently not included in the school census, but could be. There is not much data to explain reasons for dropout. For example, data on teenage pregnancy, which is arguably a strong reason for discontinuity, is scarce.

Policy options

- Data gaps must be filled in areas such as student commuting patterns, inclusive education, learning, and child protection. An area that stands out is the need for more information on teachers in order to better understand their conditions and motivations. It is important to enhance data collected during the Annual School Census to include more information on teachers' skills and training, as well as pedagogy and methods.

- Data utilization for policy and research must be promoted. Most questions put forward in the workshop could be answered with available data. However, data that is available is often not taken into account during the decision-making process. It is necessary to focus more on using the data the country possesses, as much as on acquiring and generating new data sources.

CHAPTER 8

Way forward

The findings presented in the previous chapters have served to enlighten the discussion on policy actions at the MICS – EAGLE policy workshop, which was organized 17–19 June 2019. During the event, over 60 participants from various areas of the government and civil society came together to discuss the most important education challenges in Sierra Leone and to propose policy actions to address them. Several sectoral recommendations were proposed after the workshop and were then appended to the report as policy options, which are linked to the key issues at the end each chapter. The 10 main points are summarized below per topic:

Early Learning

1. Several groups during the workshop indicated that a cost-efficient way to rapidly increase the provision of early learning is to **include early childhood classes in all primary schools with a high proportion of underaged children in Grade 1**. Furthermore, teachers currently teaching primary level grades should receive specific training to adapt to ECE.

2. Additionally, workshop participants agreed that **mother-tongue education in early grades** is extremely important for children to learn quicker, especially reading skills. Children in earlier grades should be taught in their local language, which requires the curriculum, learning, and teaching materials to adapt each mother tongue.

Parents

3. **Further data collection is necessary to better understand parents' perceptions** and barriers that cause children to drop out of school. There is room for improved perception data to more clearly explain the reasons why some children do not complete their grades.

4. Parents play a pivotal role in their children's learning. **Parental responsibility in education should be included all across education planning**, especially in the future Education Sector Plan. Particular attention should be paid to the role of fathers in sharing the responsibility of stimulating their children and engaging in their schools.

Violence against children

5. The Child Rights Act has been in place since 2007, but there needs to be **stricter enforcement of the law to prevent violence against children**. Although legislation currently exists, it is important to ensure strict compliance to all laws against child labour.

6. There should be robust **awareness campaigns against violence and violent punishment**. In order to raise awareness to the importance of education, the government must develop a communication and social mobilization strategy that reaches out to most parents. Sensitization campaigns are key to helping parents understand the importance of their engagement in their children's education. Such campaigns are also key to helping parents understand the risks of violent punishment and how to more successfully discipline their children.

Teachers

7. There must be further **investment in teacher training (pre-service and in-service)**, particularly in preparation to teach at the ECE level. This should be done by creating an incentive mechanism for teachers to participate, for example, by guaranteeing that teachers have access to free training and professional development opportunities. The curriculum for training of teachers should be adapted to the subjects and levels they intend to teach, particularly in the area of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math).

8. **Teaching conditions should be improved** beyond the opportunity of accessing free training. More incentives, such as salaries and benefits, are necessary to attract more qualified people to the teaching profession and to ensure that they remain in the job after training.

9. **Teacher recruitment should be transparent** from the start, and there should be a system in place to assess and evaluate teachers throughout their careers. High-performing volunteer teachers should be included on the government payroll.

Schools

10. Increase the **construction of public schools**, especially in rural areas and districts with a high out-of-school population. Construction is necessary to meet the missing gap in school supply at all levels of education, including early childhood education. Expansion of the number of schools should comply to a needs assessment that identifies areas where the demand for new school building is the strongest. Newly built schools should be constructed following guidelines that accommodate children with disabilities.

STEERING COMMITTEE AND MONITORING OF ACTIONS

These 10 main policy action points were reviewed at a high-level ministerial meeting to discuss the workshop results. After the meeting, one of the main steps for action includes the formation of the Ministerial Steering Committee to further discuss the policy options based on the 10 summary recommendations. The Steering Committee will also be responsible for reviewing the details of the list of sectoral activities and for assigning responsibilities and a timeline. In addition, the committee should take necessary technical actions to implement the action plan designed.

The Steering Committee can be appointed anew, but it can also work as an extension of the existing Planning Committee, which consists of the Coordination Unit, MBSSE, and MTHE. UNICEF should be the monitoring agency responsible for supporting the Coordination Unit in planning the committee's meetings and reporting on the discussions and action points.

UNICEF and the Steering Committee should fill out the MICS – EAGLE Monitoring Sheet every six months for the total of two years. The sheet corresponds to the status of accomplishment of each of the 10 summary policy recommendations, including the list of assigned responsibilities. It is important that implemented and unaccomplished actions are recorded as a tool to evaluate the impact of the project. As more countries complete MICS – EAGLE and fill out the monitoring sheets, the compilation of execution of policy actions across countries will inform the global MICS – EAGLE evaluation and education sector.

In fact, the findings and the discussion results of the MICS – EAGLE initiative in Sierra Leone will certainly add value to the upcoming education sector analysis. Furthermore, the Steering Committee members should review and compare the former ESP with the findings and proposed policy actions in this report in order to identify new components that should be discussed for the next ESP process.

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Annex

Customization Workshop Documents

AGENDA

Day 1: Tuesday 9th October 2018 – Main Issues & Causal Tree

MIN	TIME	AGENDA ITEMS	PRESENTERS/ MODERATORS	MODALITIES	OBJECTIVES	OUTPUTS
30	9:00 - 9:30	Registration				
45	9:30 - 10:15	Opening • Welcome remark by UNICEF Dep Rep (10 min) • Welcome remark by Stats SL SG (10 min • Welcome remark by MBSSE Minister (10 min) • Group photo (15 min)	UNICEF Stats SL MBSSE	Plenary	To set the positive tone To get to know each other To understand the objectives	Govt. commitment Group photo
15	10:15- 10:30	Coffee Break				
60	10:30 - 11:30	Session 1: MICS 6 & EAGLE Workshop Objectives and Expectations (10 min) MICS 6 results (20 min) MICS – EAGLE (20 min) Discussion Q&A (10 min)	UNICEF (Celeste) Stats SL & UNICEF (Maryam) UNICEF (Suguru)	Presentation 1 Presentation 2 Presentation 3	To have an overview & updated data (MICS 6)	Increased knowledge about MICS 6 & EAGLE
60	11:30-12:30	Session 2: CR Chapters/Main Issues Group work 1 – identifying main issues in table groups discussion (20 min) Compilation & categorization of issues on 2 wall groups using Post-it notes (20 min) Results presentations by 2 wall groups (20 min)	MBSSE/SSL/UNICE	Groupwork 1 (2 large groups on walls)	To identify main issues/key thematic areas/ CR chapters	Increased knowledge in education issues An initial list of chapters of the CR
60	12:30 - 13:30	Lunch (facilitators: Combine 2 wall group works into 1 wall CR chapters/groups)				
60	13:30 - 14:30	Session 3: Causal Tree Identifying the CR chapters & grouping (10 min) Group work 2 – creating causal tree (50 min)	MBSSE/SSL/ UNICEF	Group work 2 (small groups by each chapter)	To discuss causal linkages between education indicators and various factors	Causal tree for each key thematic areas (chapters)
15	14:30 - 14:45	Coffe break				
100	14:45 - 16:25	Session 4: Causal Tree Group work presentations (70min) Discussion Q&A (30 min)	Group presenters (non-UNICEF)	Group presentations	To deepen understanding on the causal mechanism of various key thematic issues in education	Presentations of causal tree and discussed ideas on how they relate across chapters
35	16:25 - 17:00	Session 5: Reflection and Summary Summary reflection (15 min) Remind participants to bring laptop on Day 2 Evaluation form of Day 1 (10 min) Feedback Focus-Group Discussion with selected participants (10 min)	MBSSE	Plenary FGD	To reflect on Day 1 To improve Day 2	Summary of Day 1 Action points

Day 2: Wednesday 10th October 2018 – Data Worksheet, Analysis, Visualization

MIN	TIME	AGENDA ITEMS	MODERATERS	MODALITIES	OBJECTIVES	OUTPUTS
10	09:00 - 09:10	Recap of Day 1 including the feedback (5 min) Introduction to Day 2 (5 min)	MBSSE	Plenary	To set the tone for Day 2	Participants reminded of Day 1
100	09:10 - 10:50	Session 6: Policy/Data Questions Education analysis & comparison (20 min) Q&A (20 min) Group work 3 - Policy/Data Questions (factual & relation) (60 min)	UNICEF (Francis) MBSSE/SSL/UNICEF	Presentation 4 Groupwork 3 (by chapters)	To develop a list of data and policy questions	An initial Policy/ Data Questions Matrix
20	10:50 - 11:10	Coffee break				
60	11:10 - 12:10	Session 7: Data Gaps in Policy/Data Questions Group work 4 – Data worksheet (60 min)	MBSSE/SSL/UNICEF	Groupwork 4	To gather and categorize policy/ data questions To identify details of data gaps (Data source, Data collection frequency, Coverage, etc.)	Matrix of policy/ data questions (What we should know, what we know, what we don't know)
60	12:10 - 13:10	Lunch Break				
90	13:10 - 14:40	Session 8: Data Analysis and Visualization Groupwork 4 cont. - Data Analysis, Visualization (90 min)	MBSSE/SSL/UNICEF	Groupwork 4 cont.	To develop key education statistics tables and visualizations (e.g., charts and graphs)	Visualized basic education data
15	14:40 - 14:55	Coffee Break				
90	14:55 - 16:25	Session 9: Data Visualization Groupwork 4 cont. – Preparation of presentation slides (90 min) Every group submits PPT slides for Day 3 Each group assigns presenters and practice	MBSSE/SSL/UNICEF	Groupwork 4 cont.	To develop key education statistics tables and visualizations (e.g., charts and graphs)	Final matrix with research questions Group presentations for Day 3
10	16:25 - 16:35	Evaluation of Day 2 (10 min)	MBSSE			

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Day 3: Thursday 11th October 2018 – CR & Data Gaps

MIN	TIME	AGENDA ITEMS	MODERATORS	MODALITIES	OBJECTIVES	OUTPUTS
10	09:00 - 09:10	Recap of Day 2 (5 min) Introduction to Day 3 (5 min)	MBSSET	Plenary	To set the tone for Day 3	Participants reminded of Day 2
90	09:10 - 10:40	Session 10: Group Presentation 1 Presentation of the Group Work Results (70 min) Discussion Q&A (20 min)	Group presenters (non-UNICEF)	Group presentations	To deepen understanding on current SL education situation and data/research gap by key education themes	Inputs for draft chapters of CR
20	10:40 - 11:00	Coffe break				
90	11:00 - 12:30	Session 11: Group Presentation 2 Presentation of the Group Work Results (70 min) Discussion Q&A (20 min)	Group presenters (non-UNICEF)	Group presentations	To deepen understanding on current SL education situation and data/research gap by key education themes	Inputs for draft chapters of CR
80	12:20 - 13:50	Lunch Break & Prep				
60	13:50 - 14:50	Session 12: CR & Data Gap List Compiling as one CR (10 min) Discussion Q&A (20 min) List of Data Gaps (10 min) Discussion Q&A (20 min)	UNICEF (Celeste, Maryam, Suguru, Francis) Stats SL & MBSSE	Plenary discussion	To agree on CR contents and identify details of data gaps	Categorized data gap matrix
20	14:50 - 15:10	Coffe Break				
50	15:10 - 16:00	Session 13: Closing and Next steps Reflection, Discussion Q&A (30 min) Post-Analysis Policy workshop (10 min) Closing Remarks (10 min) Evaluation of Day 3 & entire workshop (20 min)	Stats SL & MBSSE & LEG & UNICEF (Celeste, Maryam)	Plenary discussion	To identify data collection strategy for the policy questions that are not answerable by MICS6 To set the tone for way forward	Action points for MBSSE, SSL, UNICEF and other stakeholders

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Stats SL	Amadu Gbofile	GIS Officer
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UNICEF	Claudio Alberti	M&E Officer
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UNICEF	Melrose Taylor	PA Education
UNICEF	Miatta Daramy	Education Officer
UNICEF	Matteo Valeza	Consultant

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List of Research Questions

1. Access

a. A general question on access indicators, i.e., what is the attendance rate by level of education and how has it changed from the last survey?
b. What isthe impact of child labour on access?
   - Child labour data should be disaggregated by region, wealth quintile, etc., to inform.
   - Regression analysis on determinants of education, including child labour as an independent variable. (It could be a dummy, or it could be a set of category variables in terms of number of hours. The analysis could be done for girls and boys separately).

2. Efficiency

a. At what point do children drop out from the education system, by wealth quintile (Francis presentation) and which districts have higher dropout rates (Equity group)?
b. At which grades are children repeating?
c. Who are failing to transit to secondary education?
   - Analysis of repetition, dropout, and transition by individual and household characteristics (sex, location, wealth quintile, district, etc., by level of education)

3. Learning

a. Do children who dropped out from school learn? (Francis)
b. In terms of disparity, who is learning behind? (wealth, disability, geographic, etc.)
   - For children with disabilities, the use of aid tools
c. How much does parental involvement in educating increase learning outcomes (Francis presentation, Equity group.

4. Social disparity/Inclusion

a. Education indicators by district, by levels, by wealth quintile, etc., to identify focus groups/areas. (This could be considered the visualization of the most updated out of school children in the country.)
b. Distribution of students by wealth quintile (Francis presentation)
   - Impact of free primary education favoring children from rich families. Needs for measures to support children from households of lower socioeconomic background.
c. Do children with disabilities attend school? (learning group)
d. Are schools friendly to girls, children with disabilities, etc.?
   - WASH estimates

5. Pre-primary education/ECD

a. Barriers for accessing ECD/ECE services, i.e., attendance or OOSC by wealth, location, region (Learning group)
   - Needs for supporting poor households
   - Neglect, violence, etc., and access to early childhood development index (ECDI) and to pre-primary school (regression)
   - Schooling status of pre-primary school aged children
   - Number of out-of-school children (OOSC) in pre-primary education level (OOSC plus under-aged students)
   - Private – public share of pre-primary institution
   - Are there appropriate play and learning materials in home and school?

6. School management/Safe school

a. Government only accounts for 31 per cent of pre-primary schools.
b. % of people reported physical punishment to raise a child, cross tabulated by learning or access.
c. Actual physical punishment experience and education indicators (cross tabulation or regression).
d. Impact of child marriage/early child bearing on education attainment.
e. Policy recommendations.

7. Policy Questions

a. Is the design of free education pro-poor and pro-equity?
b. What options for OOSC?
c. What is the missing link in our strategy to promote learning?
d. What resources and policies for the implementation of free quality education?
e. Simulation model? Sector analysis?
f. What is the missing link in our strategy to promote learning?

8. Data and Research Gaps

a. Teacher (absenteeism, performance, skills, motivations, distribution across levels of education, and by geographical locations)
b. School environment
   - Violence in school (sexual abuse, harassment, corporal punishment)
   - Pro-learning environment (single sex toilet, power, water, disability friendly facilities, school fence, physical structure)
c. Beneficiary satisfaction survey of children, parents, communities (covering quality, supply, demand, and social barriers as well as lessons learned from beneficiaries view point)
d. MICS follow-up survey on
   - Impact on ECE on retention, and
   - What happens to girls who dropped out from school due to pregnancy/marriage
e. Administrative data
   - ECE/Pre-primary monitoring (number, location, teaching/ learning materials, teachers, monitoring, etc.)
   - Inspectors (skills, numbers, resources)
f. Follow-up survey/studies

9. Impact of female genital mutilation on education

- Identified data gaps

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Policy Workshop Documents
Agenda

Day 1: (MC: John K. Ansumana; Rapporteur: Stephen Tandancy Musa)

TIME	MIN	AGENDA ITEMS	PRESENTERS	MODALITIES	OBJECTIVES	OUTPUTS
09:15	15	Registration				
09:30	20	Opening • Welcome remark by UNICEF (5 min) • Welcome remark by Stats SL (5 min) • Welcome remark by MBSSE (5 min) • Group photo (5min)		Plenary	To set the positive tone To understand the objectives	Shared vision Govt. commitment Group photo
9:50	15	Coffee/Tea				
10:05	60	Introduction • Round of introduction (10 min) • Workshop Objectives & Agenda (10 min) • MICS-EAGLE Process & Next Steps (20 min) • Country Report Overview (20 min)	MBSSE (Deputy Director- EMIS) UNICEF (HQ) UNICEF (HQ)	Presentation 1 Presentation 2	To have an overview and understand the process	Knowledge of activities during and after the workshop
11:05	70	Chapter 3: **Which factors are associated with participation in each level of education?** (Attendance, Access, Inclusion, Supply, Child Labour, Child Marriage, Disabilities) • Presentation - Data analysis results & findings (30min) Chapter 3 Group work • Key Findings & Priority Finding (40 min)	MBSSE (DD EMIS	Presentation 3 Groupwork 1		
12:15	60	Lunch				
13:15	120	Chapter 3 Group work cont. • Profiles & Barriers (25 min) • Additional Analysis Needed (20 min) • Critical Barriers (5 min) • Legal Framework & Sector Plan (20 min) • Challenges in Coverage & Effectiveness (20 min) • Sectoral Actions – Activities & Responsibilities (30 min)		Groupwork 1 cont.		Complete Data to Action Worksheet per group
15:15	15	Coffee/Tea				
15:30	110	• Group presentations (10 min x 8 groups) • Chapter 3 Consolidation Discussion (30 min)				
16:20	10	Reflection feedback (5 min) Feedback with selected participants (5 min)	All participants volunteers	Plenary FGD	To reflect on Day 1 To improve Day 2	Action Points
16:30		End of Day 1				

i. UNICEF staff to inform the hotel regarding the FGD feedback
ii. Documentation and preparation for Day 2

Day 2

TIME	MIN	AGENDA ITEMS	PRESENTERS	MODALITIES	OBJECTIVES	OUTPUTS
09:20	10	• Recap of Day 1 & Feedback (5 min) • Introduction to Day 2 (5 min)	MBSSE (Coordination Unit Head)	Plenary	To set the tone for Day 2	Participants reminded of Day 1
09:30	85	Chapter 4: Internal efficiency (Repetition, Promotion, Transition, Completion) • Group presentations (10 min x 8 groups) • Presentation - Data analysis results & findings (20min) Chapter 4 Group work • Group presentations (10 min x 8 groups) • Key Findings & Priority Finding (20 min) • Profiles & Barriers (20 min) • Additional Analysis Needed (20 min) • Critical Barriers (5 min)	MTHE (Director of Innovation)	Presentation 4 Groupwork 2		
10:55	10	Coffee/Tea				
11:05	105	Chapter 4 Group work cont. • Group presentations (10 min x 8 groups) • Legal Framework & Sector Plan (15 min • Challenges in Coverage & Effectiveness (15 min) • Sectoral Actions – Activities & Responsibilities (15 min) • Group presentations (5 min x 8 groups • Chapter 4 Consolidation Discussion (20 min)		Groupwork 2 cont.		Complete Data to Action Worksheet per group
12:50	60	Lunch				
13:50	85	Chapter 5: **Which children are learning and why?** (Reading, Numeracy, ICT) • Presentation - Data analysis results & findings (20min) • Chapter 5 Group work • Key Findings & Priority Finding (20 min) • Profiles & Barriers (20 min) • Additional Analysis Needed (20 min) • Critical Barriers (5 min)	MBSSE (Director- Inspectorate)	Presentation 5 Groupwork 3		
15:15	15	Coffee/Tea				
15:25	105	Chapter 5 Group work cont. • Legal Framework & Sector Plan (15 min) • Challenges in Coverage & Effectiveness (15 min) • Sectoral Actions – Activities & Responsibilities (15 min) • Group presentations (5 min x 8 groups) • Chapter 5 Consolidation Discussion (20 min)		Groupwork 3 cont.		Complete Data to Action Worksheet per group
17:10	10	Reflection Feedback (5min) Feedback FGD with selected participants (5min)				
17:20		End of Day 2				

Day 3

TIME	MIN	AGENDA ITEMS	PRESENTERS	MODALITIES	OBJECTIVES	OUTPUTS
9:20	10	• Recap of Day 2 & Feedback (5 min) • Introduction to Day 3 (5 min)	MBSSE (Coordination Unit Head)	Plenary	To set the tone for Day 2	Participants reminded of Day 1
9:30	70	Chapter 6: **How do parental engagement & home environment help children succeed in school?** (Parental engagement, Punishment) • Presentation - Data analysis results & findings (20 min) Chapter 6 Group work • Key Findings & Priority Finding (15 min) • Profiles & Barriers (15 min) • Additional Analysis Needed (15 min)) • Critical Barriers (5 min)	MSWGCA (Director of Children's Affairs)	Presentation 6 Groupwork 4		
10:40	10	Coffee/Tea				
10:50	90	Chapter 6 Group work cont. • Group presentations (10 min x 8 groups) • Presentation - Data analysis results & findings (20min) • Legal Framework & Sector Plan (15 min) • Challenges in Coverage & Effectiveness (15 min) • Sectoral Actions – Activities & Responsibilities (15 min) • Group presentations (3 min x 8 groups) • Chapter 6 Consolidation Discussion (20 min)		Groupwork 4 cont.		Complete Data to Action Worksheet per group
12:50	60	Lunch				
13:20	95	Putting together • Group discussion to summarize group worksheets for 4 chapters (20 min) • Panel discussion Q&A (75 min)	Moderator (MBSSE/ Directorate of Inspectorate) Panelists (MOPED, MTHE/Director of Research & Planning, Stats SL, LEG/ Development Partners, DSTI, UNICEF)	Group discussion Panel discussion	To summarize the group works & discussion points	Ideas for policy recommendations
14:55	55	Data gap chapter: **What are the main data & research gaps?** • Presentation (10 min) • Group discussion to compile group list of needs for further analysis for 4 chapters (15 min) • Panel discussion Q&A (30 min)	Stats SL Moderator & Panellists	Presentation 7 Group discussion Panel discussion	To map out the country's education data availability & to generate action points	Plan for post-workshop data analysis
15:50	10	Coffe/Tea				
16:00	50	Way Forward • CR finalization process (10 min • Monitoring (10 min) • Reflection for actions (30 min) – What is your takeaway for your action?	UNICEF (Diogo) UNICEF (Takako) All participants	Plenary	To move forward on post-workshop actions	Personalization of actions & clear next steps
16:50	20	Closing • Remarks (15 min) • Evaluation & Certificates (5 min)	LEG (EU) Stats SL (SG) MBSSE (CEO) DSTI (Director of Innovation) MTHE (CTHEO) MOPED (Development Secretary)	Plenary	To close & evaluate the workshop	Evaluation inputs
17:10	End of Day 3					

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COUNTRY REPORT

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