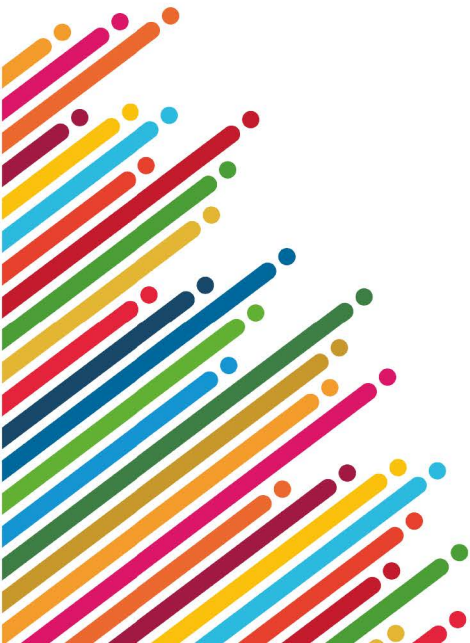
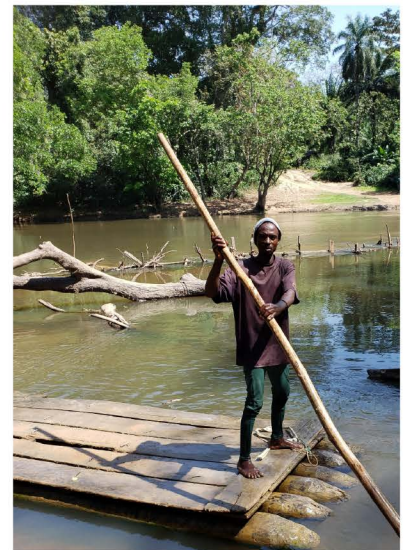




UNITED NATIONS
SIERRA LEONE



Sierra Leone Common Country Analysis and Leave No One Behind Reports Short Version



2023

COMMON COUNTRY ANALYSIS

The Common Country Analysis (CCA) report is an independent, forward-looking, analysis of Sierra Leone's positioning towards realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and national development priorities. It provides an evidence base for future UN development programs, critically looking at interconnections among development challenges. Guiding principles of UN development programs, including Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE), a human rights-based approach, and Leave No One Behind (LNOB) are considered throughout the CCA.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

Sierra Leone has a population of approximately 8.8 million, with an annual population growth rate of 2.2 percent. Seventy-five percent of the population is below age 35, and 40 percent are below age 15. About 44 percent live in urban areas. The 2019 income poverty rate (provisional) for rural areas is 80 percent vs. 27 percent for urban areas, showing a large disparity based on geography. This is also true for the multi-dimensional poverty index (MPI) which captures acute deprivations in health, education, and living standards. An upward trend in severe child food poverty between 2019 (34.5 percent) and 2022 (46.5 percent), is aligned with the worsening of key diet diversity indicators. Insufficient food consumption affects about 55 percent of the population and reliance on food imports is a major risk to food security. Almost one in three households is severely food insecure.

Sierra Leone has made great progress in decentralization, advancing to one of the more stable democracies in the region. Sustaining this requires the cooperation of regional and local authorities and ensuring that Local Councils receive fiscal resources and technical support to govern effectively. Traditional power structures continue to have significant influence and exist in parallel to democratically elected Local Councils. The country has a pattern of irregular migration, mostly male youth driven to go abroad by factors that include lack of economic and social opportunities.

Population growth puts continued pressure on the country's limited natural resources, including forests, waterways, and ecosystems. Facilities for managing pollution and waste have not expanded at the same rate as the growing population, especially in urban areas. Youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services are not accessible to a vast majority of young people. Twenty-one percent of all pregnancies occur in the adolescent population (29 percent in rural areas; 14 percent in urban areas). Current barriers to family planning include limited access to services, inadequate knowledge on methods, and social and religious norms.

Access to the a 'basic level' of water services has been slowly progressing, currently at about 63 percent of population and 31 percent for access to 'basic' sanitation. Twenty-eight percent of the overall population have electricity access, but only 4.9 percent in rural areas, although renewable solar energy capacity has huge potential.

Only 22 percent of the population in Sierra Leone are using mobile internet and ICT skills are low, particularly among young women

Sierra Leone has ratified key international human rights treaties, but violations continued to be reported, including those related to domestic violence, harsh detention conditions, forced labour, child trafficking, female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C), and child labour, especially in the artisanal diamond and gold mining sectors. Implementation of the 2011 Persons with Disabilities Act is impeded by lack of a strategy or policy and overall resource scarcity.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the country's positive economic growth pattern and caused the economy to shrink by 2.2 percent in 2020. Economic recovery was then severely hindered by the sharp rise in imported food and fuel prices due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and intensified price control measures were put in place. As of September 2023, the annual inflation rate was more than 50 percent, and for food products, more than 60 percent. Government borrowing to cushion pandemic impact and stabilize prices has severely constrained spending on public services, while also increasing the cost of borrowing for private sector actors. The country is at high risk of debt distress with a public debt stock-to-GDP ratio

reaching 96 percent in 2022, up from 79 percent in 2021.

Agriculture made up 58 percent of GDP in 2022, followed by the services sector at about 32 percent. GDP growth is dominated by informal trade. Although the country is rich in mineral resources such as gold, diamond, bauxite and iron ore, it has attracted little foreign direct investment since gaining independence due to political instability and socio-economic problems. The most significant flows of external funds to Sierra Leone come in the form of Official Development Assistance, which has gone largely to support basic services. To advance the SDGs across all dimensions, there is a great need to expand domestic sources of SDG finance and to attract more international private finance.

A new Medium-Term National Development Plan was launched by the Government in early 2024, rooted in the SDGs and Agenda 2030. It identifies the 'Big 5 Game Changers' that will be most strategic for socioeconomic transformation in the next seven years. These include Feed Salone (boosting agricultural productivity), Human Capital Development, Employment Scheme (youth jobs), Enhancing Public Service Architecture, and Technology and Infrastructure.



GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES TOWARDS SDG REALIZATION

Following are key gaps and opportunities towards SDG realization in Sierra Leone that emerged from the CCA:

POVERTY

The country's MPI shows that two-thirds of the population are multidimensionally poor. Insufficient spending on public services limits health, education, and other social services that promote wellbeing and economic growth.

PRESSURE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

The country's natural capital is needed to sustain the population and can also provide ongoing streams of revenue for economic development and poverty reduction if sustainably managed. Protection measures are especially important in light of population growth.

LACK OF ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

Sierra Leone's economy is relatively undiversified, and this contributes to economic instability. Agriculture, fisheries, and manufacturing, as well as mining and natural resources (if sustainably managed), provide a good basis for diversification and growth.

FOOD SECURITY

Food security has worsened over time and the reliance on imports to meet food requirements is a major risk. A transformed agriculture sector could have a significant influence on poverty-reduction and counter inflationary effects and support improved nutrition outcomes.

INEQUALITY

There is significant inequality between urban and rural environments on measures of poverty and food security. Expansion of infrastructure in these areas, including roads, energy, and IT connectivity would address the root causes of many deprivations.

FISCAL STABILITY

Maintaining fiscal discipline will be crucial in restoring macroeconomic stability and reducing the debt burden. To complement this, it is vital to fully implement recommendations outlined in the country's Integrated National Financing Framework, including climate finance.

GOVERNANCE

Corruption is considered to exist across all levels of government and is cited as a significant obstacle to foreign investment; it also impacts public service delivery and economic development. This requires continued efforts to address corruption and increase transparency.

GENDER RIGHTS

Women and girls are commonly subjected to social marginalization and discrimination in economic matters, as well as unsafe and abusive environments that prevent them from realizing their full potential. Raising awareness among rights holders and capacity building among duty bearers is needed to fully realize GEWE provisions.

CLIMATE ADAPTATION

Sierra Leone is one of the most climate vulnerable countries in the world with the least readiness. There is a need to accelerate actions in most-impacted sectors: Agriculture and Food Security; Environment and Natural Resources; Fisheries and the Coastal Zone; Infrastructure; Disaster Preparedness and Management; Water Resources; and Public Health.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment is a major driver of rural to urban migration and a main reason that youth turn to drug use and embark on irregular migration. Current systems for providing youth with life and job skills are failing to reach most youth in the country.

DATA GAPS

There is a need to strengthen national capacities to address SDG data gaps, including the use of geographically segmented data, and sex and age-disaggregated data to address gender-related gaps and issues of exclusion. Improved data will support effective analysis and planning.

MULTI-LEVEL EMPOWERMENT

UN development activities should target multiple levels in society for transformative change:

- 1. Individuals** - empower individuals and businesses with information and tools for more control over advancing their rights and economic potential.
- 2. Communities** - build potential for community development by fostering inclusivity and building knowledge and capacity on relevant issues.
- 3. Government enabling environment** - support a government with requisite skills and knowledge, trusted by citizens, to effectively deliver key public goods and services.
- 4. SDG finance** - increase financial flows from domestic and international sources by developing multiple financing mechanisms to complement public finance.

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Children face challenges linked to financial limitations pervasive in society, but also due to failure to enforce existing protection measures and shift harmful social norms. Adolescent girls face early marriage, FGM/C, and inadequate access to sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR).

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

To better address the needs of LNOB groups, a people-centred approach, improved governance environment, and ensuring that LNOB groups participate in discussions around solutions are recommended. Root causes relate to poverty, deprivation, and discrimination.

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL RISKS

Among the risks analyzed, those most prominent in terms of Likelihood and Potential Impact relate to:

- Increased inter-party tension over constitutional and legal reforms;
- Drug abuse, youth marginalization and unemployment, particularly of most vulnerable groups;
- Increased rural-urban divide and irregular migration, particularly of young people; and,
- Over-exploitation of natural resources (timber, over-fishing, land, mineral, sand, etc.) that impacts on sustainability of resources, particularly drinking water.

INTERLINKAGES AMONG SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PILLARS

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

Unsustainable farming, storage and distribution processes, along with climate change and natural hazards, continue to escalate food security challenges. Modernizing the agriculture sector would increase food supply, reduce nutritional deficiency needs, provide youth jobs, and reduce reliance on imported food staples. Sector modernization can be driven by youth and is likely to retain more youth in rural areas to work as farmers if avenues are extended for them to acquire the necessary skills and apply for finance. Implementation of a blue economy strategy can enhance growth and employment in coastal areas and provide more fish product to inland residents as a source of protein.

By better equipping farmers, including vulnerable smallholder farmers, with more viable seeds, timely provision of fertilizers, improved agro-processing operations, modern irrigation tools, credit and insurance products, and digital information on weather and market variations, productivity and income can be enhanced. Equally important will be training farmers on the correct use of these tools through agricultural extension services and other avenues for peer learning. The government should work to eliminate import barriers for needed goods and technology, such as import duties, and promote timeliness of processing and distributing incoming goods throughout the country.

SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Natural resources, if sustainably managed, can boost agricultural production (via more productive land), generate revenues to support social programs and critical infrastructural development (via income earned by selling carbon credits), provide a reliable supply of protein to meet nutritional needs of the population (via improved fish stocks in coastal environments), and support the expansion of eco-tourism (via preserved natural ecosystems in coastal and forested areas). Designing and marketing bankable projects that make use of the natural resource endowment (via green bonds, carbon credit markets, blue bonds, debt-for-nature swaps, multi-partner grants for forest conservation, etc.) will drive economic growth.

methods that rely less on charcoal. Also, carbon credits trading is only possible with conservation and sustainable management of forest assets. Urgent steps are needed for conservation, including for the Western Area Peninsular National Park, which is key to water security for the capital city of Freetown and surrounding areas. The preservation of valuable ecosystem also lessens the risk of natural disasters which draw financial and other resources away from core development goals of the country.



However, forest assets will continue to be depleted at an alarming rate until the country puts major effort into enforcing environmental regulations and converting to more efficient and cleaner cooking

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

Many steps towards climate adaptation are best taken at the local level, such as effective waste management to keep water drainage systems clear of debris that can result in flooding during heavy rains, or use of sandbags to prevent overflow of waterways. Plus, effective management of solid and liquid waste streams is vital for maintaining water and soil quality. Communities need information, capacities, and resources to effectively manage these activities, including learning from other communities that have successfully realized key objectives.

Effective early warning systems at the local level are crucial to efforts to minimize disaster impacts. Providing community leaders with the knowledge and skills to enact such systems can be an important component of national disaster preparedness and response. Helping to build networks among adjacent communities can support more timely and effective response when disaster occurs.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Human capital development depends on essential services that are accessible to all. Investing in health infrastructure, equipment, and workers (both in numbers and skills) will improve the quality of services and minimize human costs and productivity losses from preventable disease and other negative health outcomes. Continued efforts are required to reduce the high rates of maternal and child mortality and address malnutrition, a significant contributor to infant morbidity and mortality. There is also a need to drastically scale-up mental health services, including counseling for persons with drug addiction issues, as these numbers are increasing at an alarming rate.

In the education sector, there is a need to invest more in teacher training and employ more teachers based on low teacher-to-student ratios. Only about 62 percent of teachers are qualified for the level they are teaching, substantially lower in rural areas. Use of digital tools for teacher training and education in general should be fully exploited. Seeking alternatives to traditional classroom teaching by scale-up of remote learning programs can expand the number of learners, including adults, reached with education programs.

YOUTH SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT

Current systems for providing youth with life and job skills, including literacy and numeracy, are failing to reach most youth. Only 43 percent of women aged 15–49 are literate and 59 percent of men. Digital learning tools can accelerate these objectives but need enabling digital and energy networks. Private sector engagement for the expansion of Technical and Vocational Education and Training can also be an important element to accelerate rapid scale-up.

Youth can have their educational path and ability to participate fully in the economy disrupted because of early sexual debut, unprotected sex, unsafe abortions, and high rates of sexual and physical violence, all of which predominantly impact young women more than young men. These situations can be reduced by scaling-up youth access to gender-specific SRHR information and services.

Youth employment would be advanced by local entrepreneurs, especially in rural areas, and expansion of existing businesses with successful models in fields such as agriculture mechanization and post-harvest processing.

INFRASTRUCTURE IN HARD-TO-REACH ARE

Those living in rural areas have much higher poverty rates and face limitations in health, education, and business development opportunities. Lack of infrastructure, such as roads, renewable energy, WASH and digital architecture, factor significantly into these deprivations. With improved infrastructure, local economies would benefit in key sectors such as agriculture. While renewable energy in the form of solar power has advanced in many district population centres, there are still remote communities that lack access to reliable and affordable energy, and this impedes economic growth. For example, substantial post-harvest losses in agriculture could be curbed through mechanized tools and technologies that rely on electricity, such as cold storage for perishable items.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

There is potential for significant expansion in trade, especially with other African countries in products and services around which Sierra Leone enjoys a comparative advantage. Initiatives that raise awareness of these opportunities and how locally owned businesses may engage are vital steps towards trade expansion, including user-friendly digital tools with market, transport, currency, and product standards information. Information in digital form is more easily accessible by groups such as women and youth in rural areas, persons with disabilities, and smallholder farmers, whose

GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

Effective government oversight is central to sectors such as banking, fisheries, and mining and minerals, as some sectors suffer from wide-spread perceptions of corruption, exacerbated by lack of transparency in operations and enforcement. Lack of clear policies to cover all aspects of investment limit development of a competitive market economy and impede FDI growth.

An enabling environment requires business mentoring centers, small-scale finance facilities, and scaled-up use of remote banking/digital finance.

Locally sourced renewable energy and sustainably managed delivery systems will provide a higher degree of energy independence for communities. Improved WASH and digital connectivity would also boost community development in key areas such as health and education.



ability to participate in centrally based workshops could otherwise be a barrier to trade activities.

Incubators and tech hubs can support enhanced ability for e-commerce and trade. They can promote or lead digital information platforms, connect businesses with potential global partners, and provide valuable market insights to MSMEs. Related to this are programs that guide businesses in meeting minimum standards for export products, particularly agricultural products, and understanding the legalities of trade agreements.

Similarly, the ability to attract funds from international donors and the diaspora (through diaspora bonds and investment funds), often hinges on whether the recipient investment vehicles are deemed to have clear objectives and transparent operations, and multi-stakeholder oversight.

Transparency in national and local fiscal operations, to include tax collection and revenue expenditures, is vital to maintain the public confidence in the tax system and willingness to pay taxes. Greater use of digital tools for providing information and

MAINSTREAM RIGHTS

Major efforts are needed for gender, disability, labour and other rights provisions in law to impact the daily lives of individuals. Many rights holders, especially in rural areas, are not aware of their rights or how to claim them. Cultural change, especially to promote equality and non-discrimination elements, would be advanced by public awareness campaigns including outreach to community leaders, civil society, social influencers, and the rights holders themselves.

It is equally important to develop the capacities of duty-bearers to meet their obligations. Yet presently, action on issues such as gender and disability inclusion are not standardized across all government entities and Local Councils or mainstreamed into budget systems. Gender-sensitive data is often not available and lack of disaggregated

INCLUSIVITY IN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

There is a strong belief among young people that their needs are not met by local leadership structures and an enabling environment is not present for them to participate actively in national or local decision-making processes. Similarly, while the country's GEWE Act provides for increased representation of women in political and economic roles, local power structures and cultural norms may limit women's ability to be fully embraced in these roles by local communities. Successful models for increasing engagement of youth, women, and vulnerable groups in community affairs should be extended

collecting feedback from end users will result in a more efficient, equitable and responsive government services in sectors such as health, education, social protection and infrastructure. Overall strengthened financial management and targeted steps to address illicit financial flows are needed to eliminate leakages in the system that drain resources from serving the public good.

data on persons with disabilities constrains effective planning.

Children face many rights violations, often stemming from economic and financial resource limitations pervasive in society, but also due to failure to enforce existing protection measures. Child Labour affects 38 percent of girls and 40 percent of boys aged 5 to 17. Many children work under hazardous conditions, such as in mining or fishing, or are subject to sexual exploitation. Adolescent girls are subjected to harmful practices such as FGM/C and child marriage and exploitation such as school-related sexual abuse. There is no concrete national commitment to protecting rights and eliminating the practice of FGM/C for girls under age 18.

to more communities, including grievance redress mechanisms using the Fambul Tok approach (community owned peacebuilding and development), along with multi-stakeholder decision-making platforms. Such platforms include local and district-level government officials, as well as varied stakeholders to guide community development. Targeted programs can help build leadership and literacy skills of historically excluded groups, such as young women and persons with disabilities, to facilitate their meaningful engagement.

ENFORCEMENT OF SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

Weak enforcement of existing laws is an issue for women's rights, disability rights, and rights of persons living with HIV, among others. Based on 2019 data, 43 percent of women aged 15- 49 had experienced physical violence in the '12 months preceding the survey,' one of the highest rates in West Africa. Similarly, addressing water and soil pollution, protecting wetlands, ensuring compliant mining practices and national park protection, requires expanding and enforcing environmental protection laws. Economic expansion and diversification will ultimately be advanced by protecting key natural resources, such as water,

forests, and coastal zones that support growth sectors such as fisheries and eco-tourism.

There is a need to build capacity among judges and magistrates on legal provisions related to social and environmental protection and to expand the system of legal aid available to vulnerable persons to pursue justice when their rights are violated. There should also be enhanced enforcement tools and capacity at government institutions and expanded knowledge among local law enforcement on how to respond to situations where social or environmental laws are violated.

EXPANDED SDG FINANCE

The CCA outlines the country's narrow fiscal space and high debt burden. Only by charting a path towards a more consistent and reliable flow of domestic resources, minimally impacted by external economic shocks, can the country effectively support health, education, and social service programs and reduce the heavy reliance on overseas development assistance. The country prepared an Integrated National Financing Framework in 2020 and accelerating the 18 recommendations would help address the SDG financing gap. These recommendations consider both public and private finance (international and domestic).

The country has a potential source of ongoing finance from selling forest-related carbon credits on the global market, since forest assets will continually absorb carbon from the atmosphere to generate marketable carbon credits. Revenues from such transactions can not only benefit local forest communities, but the country overall. Setting up the proper governance structure and verification steps to certify credits is a complex task but warranted by potential revenue generated. Development partners can advise on market analysis, standards, and policy requirements, as well potentially support start-up costs.

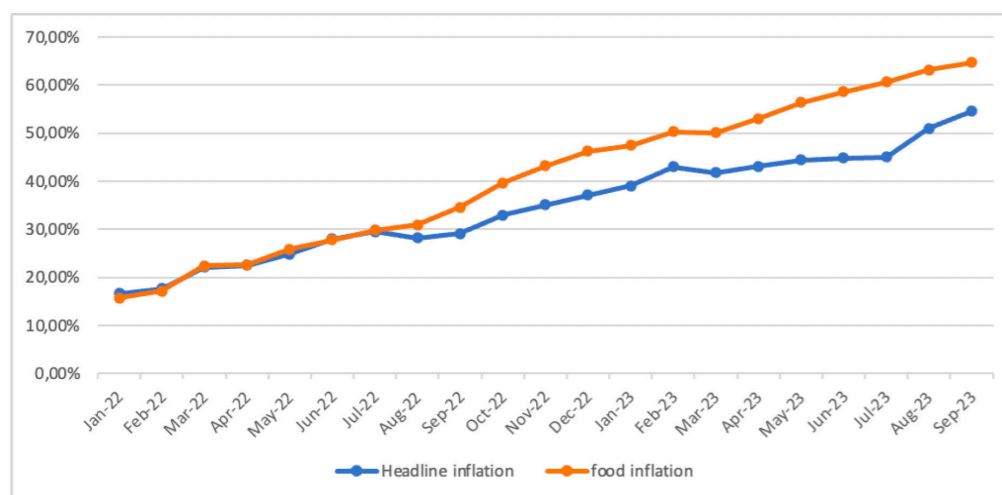


Figure 1: Overall inflation and food inflation (January 2022-September 2023).
Source: Authors' construction from Statistics Sierra Leone 2023

CROSS-BORDER ISSUES

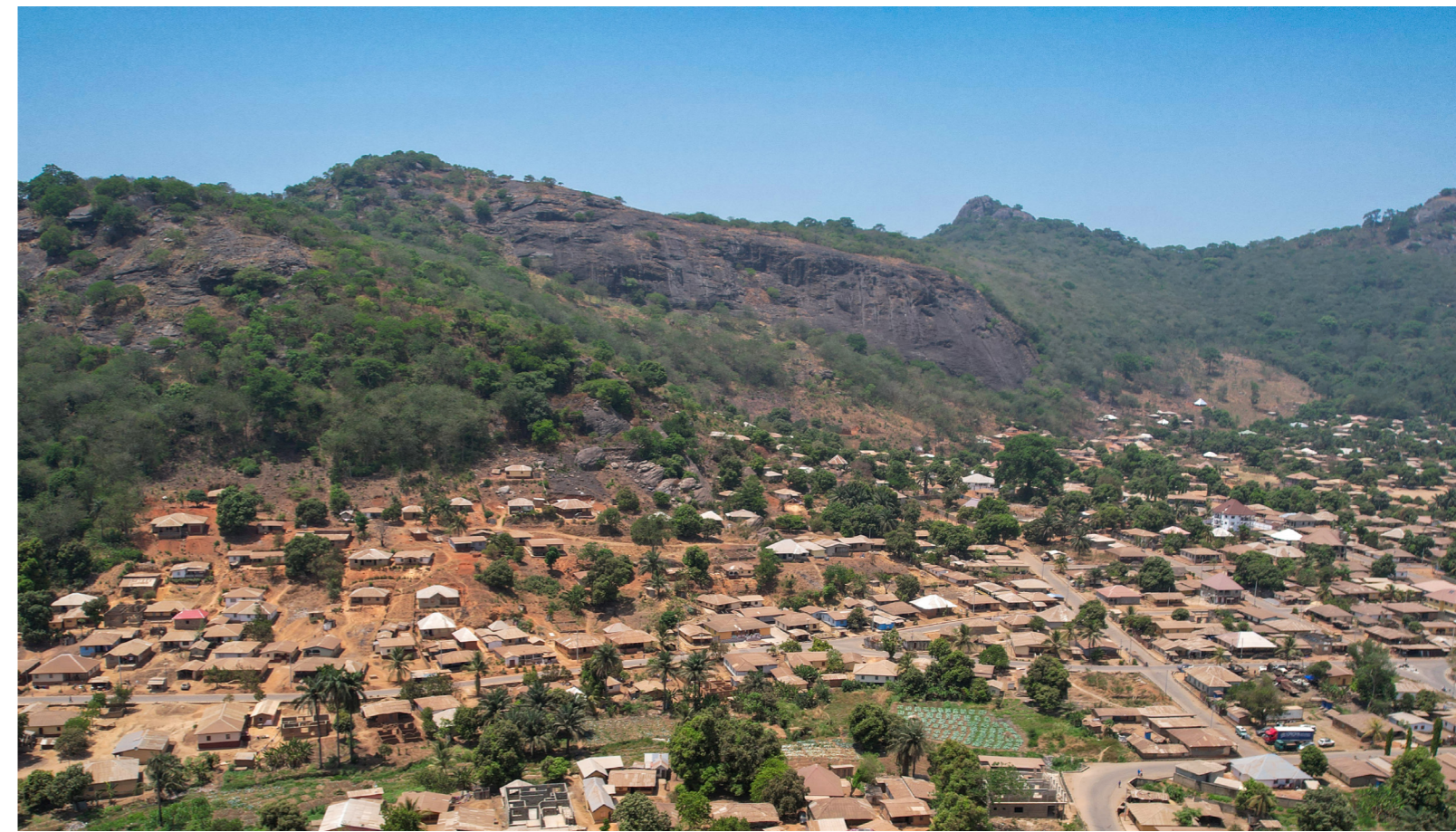
The borders in Sierra Leone are porous and this creates challenges for border management, especially given the widespread lack of resources for border control operations. As a result, border communities are hubs for criminal gangs and smuggling operations, including wildlife and mineral smuggling. Informal cross-border trade is the main source of livelihood for borderland communities. Most cross-border traders are women, often exposed to harassment, extortion and crime from itinerant people, unemployed youth and officials at the border crossing points.

The sub-region is endowed with valuable natural resources that include forests, water resources, and globally important flora and fauna. While environmental treaties provide a framework for cooperation and action, effective management of cross-border ecosystems requires concerted efforts at the national and regional levels, along with active participation from local communities and stakeholders. There are financial and capacity limitations, as well as weak governance structures and enforcement of environmental protection laws.

There is a high risk for cross-border disease spread, with limited capacities for early detection, reporting and management of public health threats at many formal and informal border crossing points. This risk is compounded by the possibility for transboundary animal diseases.

There is great untapped potential for increased trade between Sierra Leone and other countries in the sub-region, but a significant constraint is poor road quality and lack of other transport options.

The range of cross-border challenges underscores the need for enhanced regional cooperation through the Mano River Union sub-regional multi-lateral organization and the Economic Community of West African States. Sierra Leone can leverage UNOWAS support to strengthen border security, intelligence sharing, and joint operations with neighbors.



LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND (LNOB) REPORT



Inequalities within and across countries makes sustainable development difficult to achieve by, threatening economic and political stability, undermining social progress, and undercutting human rights. The need to address and reduce these gaps is at the core of the LNOB objective of Agenda 2030, a collective commitment by the UN member countries to “reach the furthest behind first” and recognize the need to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities, and end discrimination by addressing root causes. The primary objective of the LNOB analysis is to understand who is being left behind and why.

The UN LNOB frameworks identify the common reasons why people are left behind based on global evidence. There are five factors that represent the central driving forces of exclusion:

1. **Discrimination** based on assumed or ascribed identity or status.
2. **Socio-economic status**, especially multidimensional poverty and inequalities.
3. **Vulnerability to shocks** such as natural disasters, conflict, and economic shocks.
4. **Geography**, that is, groups isolated or excluded due to location with aggravating factors such as environmental degradation, lack of transport, or technology.
5. **Governance**, factors such as laws, policies, institutions preventing participation in decision making.

The following table lists different groups left behind in Sierra Leone along with causal factors. The groups were identified through consultations with the UN country team, as well as government and the NGO community. Additional information on causal factors was collected through document review, interviews, and focus groups.

PRIMARY CAUSAL FACTORS FOR GROUPS LEFT BEHIND

LNOB Groups	Discrimination	Socioeconomic Status	Vulnerability to Shocks	Geography	Governance
Children Living in Poverty	X	X	X	X	X
Informal Workers	X	X	X		X
Homeless persons	X	X	X		
Persons with Disability	X	X			
Persons Living with HIV/AIDS	X	X			
Survivors of Sexual & Gender-Based Violence	X	X			
Adolescent Girls impacted by Child Marriage and Harmful Practices	X	X			
Returnee Migrants	X	X			X
Those living in Hard-to-Reach Communities	X	X	X	X	X
Inmates of Correctional Institutions	X	X			X
Youths in Conflict with the law / Youth gang members	X	X			X
Persons with Substance Abuse Issues	X	X			X
Ebola Virus Disease Survivors with Latent Health Issues	X	X	X		
Children out of Primary or Secondary School	X	X	X		
Persons Trafficked, including Children	X	X	X		
Vulnerable Persons Negatively affected by Climate Change		X	X	X	

Groups left behind in Sierra Leone are impacted by poverty, especially multidimensional poverty. Many are deprived of basic services and living in precarious conditions. Many groups also face discrimination due to factors such as gender or sexual orientation, age, disability status, or location. These factors together result in LNOB groups being excluded from development and perpetuate poverty from generation to generation, resulting in not only deprivation, but also violation of their rights. Children in Sierra Leone are lacking several key elements that factor into measures of multi-dimensional poverty as shown below:

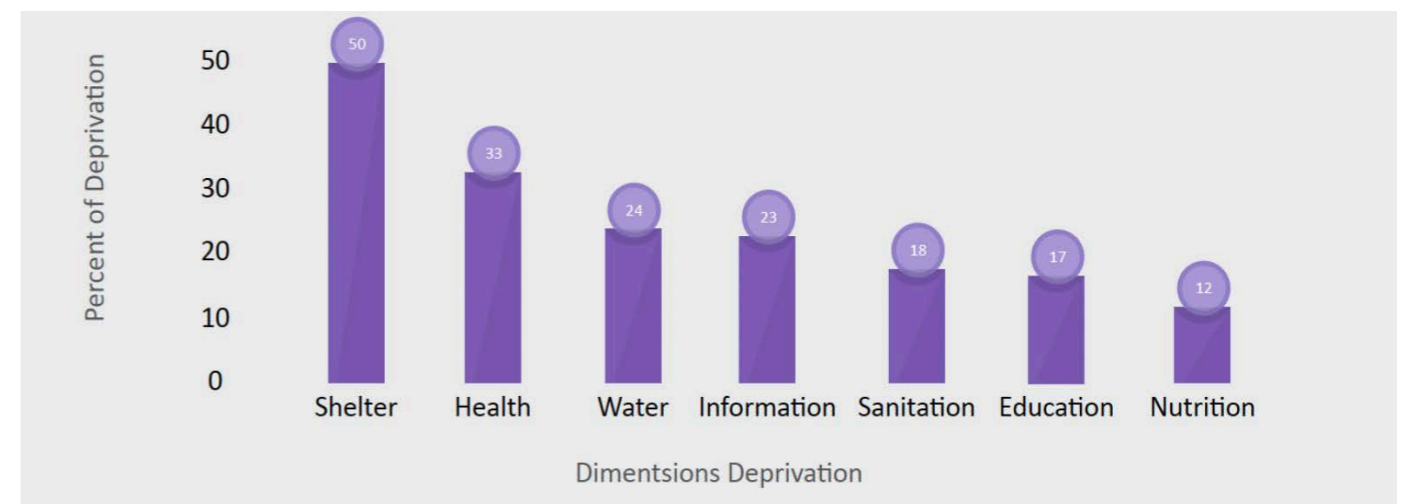


Figure 2: Incidence of Child Poverty: Percent of Children Deprived in each Dimension

Source: Sierra Leone Children Poverty Report

ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF WHY PEOPLE ARE LEFT BEHIND

Addressing the challenges and deprivations these groups face requires a shift to targeted approaches, a people-centred approach, an improved governance environment, and ensuring that LNOB groups participate in discussions around solutions. LNOB should be a consideration in all phases of a project cycle – design, implementation, and monitoring/evaluation – for programmes led by the UN, Government, and development partners. Such an approach would be advanced by developed of programme indicators geared towards these groups and collection of more disaggregated data for LNOB groups, including by age, sex, and location.

Specific actions to help address the root causes of why groups are left behind include:

- Strengthen socioeconomic empowerment of the key population groups through targeted approaches to eliminate discrimination and promote empowerment of groups.
- Address gender and social norms that perpetuate the vulnerability of some groups left behind.
- Develop awareness raising campaigns and increase knowledge about human rights, gender equality and economic rights, including strengthening the consideration and voice of girls and women in society.
- Create a more conducive environment for job creation and doing business, ultimately for promotion of decent work for all, irrespective of their status in society, which would help solve many related social problems.
- Enact, and bring into force, laws, policies, practices, and institutions based on human rights, with greater attention to enforcing these laws and avenues for justice for those who are deprived of their rights.
- Improve governance to address weak law enforcement, institutional incapacity, ill-resourced institutions, and lack of policy coherence on key issues.
- Create supportive environments that foster community cohesion and political inclusiveness, to overcome discriminative practices and promote accountable institutions.
- Give greater voice to LNOB groups to express their views, including strengthening civil society organizations representing these vulnerable groups, to allow for greater participation community and sectoral decision-making.
- Improve data collection for LNOB groups to improve understanding of the needs of those left behind and to develop context specific LNOB approaches and instruments. Strengthened national data collection systems can be a tool for monitoring and measuring multidimensional poverty and inequality.
- Promote agreements among government institutions to facilitate marginalized individual's access to programs that enhance their rights (for example, civil registration), and to basic services (for example, health and education).
- Encourage bottom-up dialogue and inclusive discussions when developing programmes, including social protection approaches, and employ LNOB principles in the design.

- Promote wide-ranging sensitivity to the needs of LNOB groups in trainings of those providing social services and social protection at different levels of government, to raise awareness of the issues of people who are left behind.
- Stimulate a national dialogue on developing a Unique Social Register (USR) starting with people who are left behind and marginalized, to create an efficient data collection system using technology.
- Strengthen the national social protection strategy and approaches to better meet the needs of vulnerable groups.
- Disseminate information and ramp-up communication campaigns in communities related to understanding and claiming of rights, including information on legal forms of protest and legal access if rights are violated.

To ensure that no one is left behind, government, development partners, and the UN through its new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework should adopt the above recommendations, while also reflecting the HRBA to address the issue of LNOB in Sierra Leone:

- Human rights principles: these protect against actions that interfere with fundamental freedoms and human dignity, while supporting the agency of individuals and the population.
- Meaningful and inclusive participation and access to decision-making: the inclusion and meaningful participation of all stakeholders, with particular attention to greater involvement of those individuals and communities left behind in development. Those left behind in development trajectory should be empowered, involved and actively participate in prioritization and development decisions that affect them.
- Non-discrimination and equality: development priorities should not be discriminatory but affirmatively address existing developmental challenges. Programs should respect, protect, and fulfil the rights to equality and non-discrimination for those individuals and communities left behind.
- Accountability and rule of law for all: government and partners should be accountable for the inclusive implementation of programs aimed at development priorities.
- Transparency and access to information supported by disaggregated data: LNOB data and information should be available to all, and individuals and communities left behind should be provided with this information to support their access to development and social services.



States and their institutions, by applying these principles, uphold their responsibility as duty-bearers who are accountable for respecting, protecting, and fulfilling human rights. The above approaches also consider individuals as rights-holders and empower them to know, claim and to enjoy their human rights. Successful development progress depends not only on the government, the UN, and other development partners, but also on meaningful inclusion and engagement of groups left behind in support of social and economic advancement for all.



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