



Youth and Child Advocacy Network -YACAN

In collaboration with Oxfam in Sierra Leone and other Civil Society Organizations

Call to Action for the Government of Sierra Leone

7th July 2021

10,000 young people will not be fit to be employed in the next two years if Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is not prioritised by government in the education budget.

INTRODUCTION

Young people in Sierra Leone continue to lead population ratio from the last 2015 census making 68.5 of the country population, and by 2026 if the trajectory continues this will mean 80% of sierra Leone population will be young people 0 to 34yrs. The 2018 Human Development Indices and indicators says 70% of the young people 18 to 35yrs are unemployed and underemployed and 57% of Sierra Leone population are poor. According to 2018 World Bank report, 90% of Sierra Leone workforce is self-employed in the informal sector. In Sierra Leone TVET program is divided into formal and non-formal and the program is been driven by both Government and private institutions. By 2019 there were 380 technical and vocational institutions registered by the then ministry of Education Science and Technology, with about 27,055 students enrolled for various courses in the TVET program across sierra Leone with Western Area hosting over 65% of all the institutions. In 2020, out of the 22% budget allocation by the education sector it was appalling to note that only 1.3 % was allocated to TVET and 60% of this fund went to the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE).

BACKGROUND / EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2018, the Ministry of Education was separated with Higher education as an entity and Basic Education as another institution. In the last three years, Ministry of Higher Education has seen two different ministers and in 2019 the ministry developed the first National TVET Policy for Sierra leone.

This Call to Action (CTA) developed by Youth and Child Advocacy Network(YACAN) to present our views on the status of TVET in Sierra Leone with the view that if the Government of Sierra leone do not prioritize TVET in the shortest possible time it will affect significant number of the country young population in the next two years. The private sector contribution to TVET sectors is very low and government's current contribution in the midst of the current economic challenges is also inadequate to create the expected impact in the middle level employment in Sierra Leone.

As a youth lead civil society organization operating in Sierra Leone, we are convinced that some efforts have been made by the Government but we continue to see the need to do more if government is to fulfil its commitment on human capital development and transforming Sierra Leone to a productive nation as stated in its Midterm Development plan.

...Salamatu, a 24yrs of age young woman from Kroobay community tells us " I was a science student and was interested in plumbing, I tried to enrol in an institution but it was impossible as the only Government Technical Institute that operates is over 13k away from my house. I also made enquiries and told that this trade is not common amongst women and this made me to change my course to carting as there are over 3 other institutions around my community who offer training but there are pending challenges as the Institute lacks equipment and adequate number of teachers.

Benefit and Opportunities: if our Government Prioritizes TVET in the Education Sector

1. **Human Capacity Development for Young people (Female):** the 2020 school census shows that about 2.1 million children are in school which means at least 20% of these children will graduate from secondary school in the next two years and most of these young people are from rural areas and will need some form of TVET education. About 25,000 young people are currently in some form of TVET Institutions which means by the next 24 months these young people will be jobseekers or self-employed and either contributing directly or indirectly to the economy. Government currently owns 15 Government Technical Institutes (GTIs) and supporting over 200 Institutes across the country and if they are well managed, they will serve the increasing demanded that will support the labour markets with qualified staff. Females make up 55.3 % of the population which means more support to TVET will benefit more females graduates from the formal education and create opportunities for non-formal TVET skills to engage more female.
2. **Policy reform in the Education Sector:** The National TVET Policy of 2019 is highly appreciated for the ministry to navigates on it plans but we consider this as just the start to policy reform process in the TVET sector. The 2004 education Act has been a staunch pillar to aid government education interventions but with the current arrangement with two ministries of Education, then, the Education Act 2004 needs to be reviewed and repealed to meet the current circumstance on education. Sierra Leone over the last 10years has signed many international protocols on TVET education and this needs to be ratified and domesticated to impact young people's lives. The Current TVET Policy doesn't clearly speak to gender issues with respect to

TEVT. This needs to be considered so that the policy will help address gender stereotyping on education and employment.

3. **Budget and Resources Mobilization towards TVET:** we recognize efforts by the government to budget for TEVT in the 2020 and 2021 Financial Year which has shown progress from time to time. However, the need to support the 2019 policy implementation there is need for it to be prioritized in the education sector budget. The current resources expended on lecturers in TVET institutions with some increment made in April 2021 is appreciated , however, more qualified lecturers are needed in TVET institutions to ensure that young people are provided with timely and marketable skills to meet competitors' in the region. Budget allocation for procurement of upgraded technical and up to date equipment including learning materials is still a gap which needs investment by the Government. In 2020, out of the 22% budget allocation by the education sector it was appalling to note that only 1.3 % was allocated to TVET and 60% of this fund went to the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE).

RECOMMENDATIONS of this Call to action:

Considering the afore-mentioned concerns and opportunities, we therefore wish to make the following recommendations for the attention of Government of Sierra Leone through the Ministry of Tertiary and Higher Education (MTHE) and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development of the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL);

1. **Policy Reform:**

- We urge the GoSL to develop a national TVET Act for better planning and implementation of the TVET Policy in Sierra Leone.
- With the huge number of school drop out across the country, we call on the Ministry of Tertiary and Higher Education (MTHE) to facilitate the development of a non-formal TVET policy to ensure the restoration of dignity of young people who have dropped out of formal education but choose to continue with TVET
- We call on the Ministry of Tertiary and Higher Education (MTHE) to develop a white paper on the implementation of the six cluster in the 2019 national TVET Policy.
- We call on both the Ministry of Tertiary and Higher Education (MTHE) and the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary School Education (MBSSE) to develop a Senior Secondary School curriculum on TEVT to help enhance the capacity of pupils before graduation from Senior Secondary School.

- **Capacity support (human resources and equipment) to TVET Centres:** We call on government to conduct a speedy assessment of all TVETs facilities and special needs school in the districts
- We urge the government of Sierra Leone to refurbish and provide equipment to new areas within the TVET sector.
- We recommend that GoSL initiates a TVET program that enables young women and physically challenged to be enrolled so they can be productive and contribute to their own economic development
- We recommend that Government to promote and regulate apprenticeship which could add value to both agricultural and mining programs as working experience and on the job training within the next Education Sector Plan
- We recommend our government to link with other development patterns in the region to contribute to our TVET through provision of trainers and equipment for young people (male and Female) to benefits from in the next 2yrs.
- **Budget Reforms:** We urge Government to review the allocation of budget on TEVT programs. We recommend that GoSL initiates attractive tax programs for investors to establish companies to support training and experience drive for youths.
- We recommend that Government allocate 3.5% to TVET in Education Sector Budget
- We urge our Government to initiate performance allocation budget programmes to ensure districts education team used budget for intended propose.
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Conclusion:

On behalf of YACAN, Oxfam and other concerned Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), and institutions that participated in the process, we want to remind our Government that Sierra Leone’s chances to reform to a productive nation is now greater due to the fact that in the next 10yrs our population will remain young with young women making 53.2% of the said population. As citizens and members of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), we present this Call to Action to the Minister of Higher Tertiary Education (MHTE) to demand for a better and inclusive education for all in Sierra Leone.

Sign.....
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