

PRIMARY EDUCATION IN SIERRA LEONE AND  
DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP WITH BRITAIN  
: PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING  
EDUCATION FOR ALL (EFA)

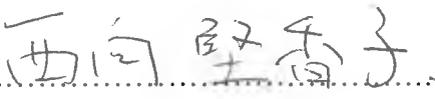
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## Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Signed: ..........

Mikako Nishimuko

## Declaration of Word Count

The exact number of words of the thesis is 78,315.

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## Abstract

One of the world's poorest countries, Sierra Leone, experienced a civil war from 1991 to 2002. The government has since been in the process of rebuilding the nation, including the education sector. Yet, the challenge is that Sierra Leone is a very poor country with about half of its national budget being donor-funded. Sierra Leone's former colonial master and largest aid provider, Britain, is a particularly important development partner. With donor assistance, the government introduced a free primary education policy to achieve the international goal of EFA. The net primary enrolment ratio has rapidly increased, from 35 per cent in 1992 to 63.0 per cent in 2004. However, field research based on school observations, interviews with government officials, teachers and people engaged in Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) such as Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Faith-based Organisations (FBOs), and questionnaires from pupils, parents, teachers, NGOs and government officials, reveals worrying trade-offs in the quality of education provided. In addition, schools charge parents "school fees" to run their schools under the free education policy. This is one of the barriers to regular schooling for the vulnerable. Such findings show that the government lacks the ability to provide adequate public services to the people. CSOs have filled this democratic deficit and greatly contributed to the provision of education. However, an investigation of donor-recipient relationships in this area showed that there is a gap between the rhetoric and practice of "partnership" and "ownership" in the development relationship. Using three development theories – Modernisation theory, Dependency theory and Postcolonial theory to analyse aid modality and trends in education plans and strategies, this research argues that Sierra Leone has been in transition with regard to establishing ownership of its national development, working with Britain as its main partner.

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## List of Acronyms

AACC	All Africa Churches Conference
ACC	Anti-Corruption Committee
AfDB	African Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CADO	Community Animation Development Organisation
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CREPS	Complementary Rapid Education for Primary Schools
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
CTA	Community Teacher Association
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DC	Developed Country
DFID	Department for International Development
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Military Observer Group
EC	European Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EFA	Education for All
EU	European Union
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FBO	Faith-based Organisation
FPE	Free Primary Education
FTI	Education for All First Track Initiative
GAT	General Agreement on Trade
GATT	General Agreement on Tariff and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GNI	Gross National Income
GNP	Gross National Product
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone

HELP	Hands Empowering the Less Privileged
HDI	Human Development Index
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Country
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HTC	Higher Teachers Certificate
IDB	Islamic Development Bank
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRCSL	Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JSS	Junior Secondary School
LDC	Less Developed Country
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MSF	Medecins Sans Frontieres
MTE	Mother Tongue Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPSE	National Primary School Examination
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OEEC	Organisation for European Economic Co-operation
PBET	Post-basic Education and Training
PRGF	Poverty Reduction Growth Facility
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SMC	School Management Committee
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel

SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
TC	Teachers Certificate
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commission for Human Rights
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPC	Universal Primary Completion
UPE	Universal Primary Education
US	United States
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the research on ‘Primary Education in Sierra Leone and Development Partnership with Britain: Progress towards Achieving Education for All (EFA)’. It outlines the rationale behind this research by presenting key background issues, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, an explanation of the theoretical framework and the structure of the study.

## 1.2 Background to the study

Of the world’s 6.6 billion people, 5.3 billion are found in Less Developed Countries (LDCs) where 3 billion of them live on less than \$2 per day (UNECOSOC, 2004). Thus, nearly half of the world population lives in poverty. Furthermore, 93 per cent of world population growth occurs in LDCs (UNFPA, 2007, p. 7, p. 90). The words “poverty” and “poor” have a deep connotation. Poverty is linked with hunger, malnutrition, ill health, HIV/AIDS, overpopulation, inequality, political and economic instability, child labour, lack of self-esteem, exclusion from educational opportunities, conflicts, and terrorism. These issues are inextricably linked. Poverty is a multidimensional problem, involving social, economic and political issues. The World Bank divides poverty into two main types, using the “poverty line”, based on per capita annual income of \$370 and the “extreme poverty line”, based on per capita annual income of \$275 (World Bank, 1990, p. 26, p. 28). “Absolute poverty” is used to categorise those who live on less than \$1 a day, indicating extreme cases of poverty. Behind the term, “poverty”, there is the suffering of real people and the need for poverty eradication. Education can be one avenue of escape from poverty.

Education is not only an issue of human rights, as Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNHCHR, 1948) states, but also, can bring about substantive progress in social and economic development, which can then have a significant effect in terms of reducing poverty. This is because there is a connection

between economic growth and human development. Education plays a significant role in the process of improvement of incomes and living standards, through providing means to obtain knowledge and technology. Economic growth can provide the resources for improvements in human development, which then contributes to economic development, creating a virtuous circle. According to a number of studies including Ramirez (2000) and Oketch (2006), increased earnings have a positive correlation with additional years of education. An improved environment for education is also likely to support higher rates of growth, as low-income people are able to seek better economic opportunities. That is, education can help people become more productive and earn more through strengthening their human capital, in the forms of skills, techniques, and qualifications. Moreover, households where members have at least primary education have a higher probability of getting out of, and a lower probability of falling into, poverty (Bigsten, Kebede & Shimeles, 2003). Harrison (in King & Buchert, 1999) suggests correlations between basic education and health, agricultural productivity and participation in the economic sector. This is because poverty has many manifestations, and education plays a role in reducing ill-health and fertility rates, and increasing employment skills and income levels. Education can also play a significant role in promoting a more democratic political system by enabling participation in decision-making. Silue (2000) points to lack of good governance, lack of democracy and weak political institutions as major development problems in Africa, which have been maintained due to the fact that the majority of the population is illiterate and does not participate in the development process. To meet the gap between the elite minority and the majority, education should be made accessible for all. Considering the benefits which education has with regard to improving living standards and quality of life, as well as creating essential opportunities for social and political participation, it is a crucial human development goal and an essential tool of empowerment for the poor.

The international community has placed education, especially at the primary level, at the top of the development agenda, urging donor countries to give more external financial assistance to the sector and encouraging aid recipient countries to spend more of their budgets on education. The World Conference on EFA in Jomtien in 1990, the

World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, and the United Nations (UN) Millennium Summit in New York in 2000, are major conferences where the importance of Universal Primary Education (UPE) was discussed and the international community signed the agreement to achieve the goal of UPE. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which set out to be achieved by 2015 followed the EFA goal and have assigned a significant role to education in reaching other development goals, which are:

- (a) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, (b) achieve universal primary education (UPE), (c) promote gender equality and empower women, (d) reduce child mortality, (e) improve maternal health, (f) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, (g) ensure environmental sustainability, and (h) develop a global partnership for development (UNDP, 2003, p. 1-2).

The development of education in LDCs is inseparable from foreign assistance, and the international community has committed itself to making sure that aid is used effectively. The international community has stressed the need for “partnership” in development relationship. Criticisms of the aid relationship have centred on “partnerships” coming with a set of pre-conditions, such as, pro-poor economic growth strategies, pro-democracy and pro-human rights policies, pro-gender and pro-equity policies, and a pro-environmental sustainability commitment (King, 1999). Northern donors argue development projects are likely to produce more effective outcomes when LDCs have “good governance”. With regard to the development of education, favourable political and socio-economic conditions in a country are vital. They can create the necessary pre-conditions for improving access to schools for boys and girls, and have a greater impact on the attendance of girls in particular. Therefore, Developed Countries (DCs) have imposed the pre-condition of working towards good governance on LDCs as a condition of eligibility for aid. However, the autonomy of LDCs and the nature of “partnership” that can exist under such conditionality are highly questionable both in ethical terms, as well as in terms of the benefits they bring.

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), which have become central to development assistance, were introduced by the World Bank and International

Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1999. PRSPs have adopted certain principles, notably a country-driven strategy, based on partnership between governments and other actors, as well as a result-oriented strategy, and integration of macroeconomic, structural and social policy elements (Caillods & Hallak, 2004). The aid approach is set to be more comprehensive and country-driven than before, and a good partnership between aid donors, recipients and beneficiaries is emphasised. Ownership of development projects is not only aimed at the government level, but also at the Civil Society Organisation (CSO) and community levels. As with the MDGs, human development - especially education and training - is one of the core elements of PRSPs. It is seen as central to long-term equitable development. It is essential to examine the current aid relationship between donors and recipients in the area of the development of education.

Aid to Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in the area of education has been flowing in not only from the Western countries, but also from Islamic states and institutions. Islamic expansion into Africa started earlier than Christianity. In colonial times, Christian missionaries sometimes avoided areas influenced by Islam, and this led to the 'Islamic-Christian division of territories and souls' in some areas of Africa (Daun, 2000, p. 42-43). Huntington (1996, p. 3) argues that in the Post-Cold War era the most important distinctions among peoples are cultural, and 'states increasingly define their interests in civilizational terms'. Therefore, culture and cultural identities shape 'the patterns of cohesion, disintegration, and conflict' (Huntington, 1996, p. 20). The competition between Islam and Christianity can escalate into conflict, as seen in Nigeria and Sudan. The All African Conference of Churches (AACC) believes that Christian education can transform Africans, leading to democracy, participation, accountability, respect for human rights, and creation of civil society (AACC, 1992). On the other hand, Muslim groups think that Islam is more appropriate for Africans because traditional African values, such as, kinship rules, polygamy, and moral values are closer to Islamic values than to Christian (Trimingham, 1983). Both Christianity and Islam have worked for the spread of their faith together with the provision of education.

### 1.3 Statement of the Problem

Sierra Leone is one of the poorest countries in the world, and one which until recently, experienced a lengthy armed conflict that killed thousands of people and devastated the economy and the infrastructure. The government's capacity to rebuild the nation remains weak. Sierra Leone's Human Development Index (HDI) value was the lowest in the world from 1996 to 2004 (GoSL, 2005, p. 1). Although in the 2005 and the 2006 Reports it had moved up to the second lowest position, in the 2007 Report Sierra Leone again had the lowest HDI in the world (UNDP, 2007, p. 232). In terms of education, the net primary school enrolment was 35 per cent in 1992 (MoE, 1995, p. xii). The government of Sierra Leone has committed itself to achieving the goals of EFA and the MDGs, introducing education reforms, including a series of new policies, notably a free primary education (FPE) policy. This has resulted in a rapid increase in the net enrolment ratio of primary education to 63 per cent in 2004. However, more than 30 per cent of children still do not attend school and primary completion rates are below 60 per cent nationally (MEST, 2007, p. 23). These figures are a cause for great concern, and there is still an obvious gap between the outcomes of the efforts made to improve matters in the education sector and the targets which need to be met. The prospect of Sierra Leone meeting the goals of EFA and the MDGs by 2015 seems remote.

The former colonial power, Britain is the largest bilateral aid provider to Sierra Leone. In November 2002, the Department for International Development (DFID) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the government of Sierra Leone, promising 10 years of support in fighting corruption, strengthening security, improving public financial management, and developing and assisting the country's PRSP.

However, because the PRSP is geared towards making progress regarding the MDGs, Sierra Leone's national development plans and strategies are focused on quantitative aspects. Eurodad (2008, p. 21) points to 106 benchmarks in Sierra Leone's PRSP. One example, seen in Sierra Leone's *PRSP Annual Progress Report*, is the target of increases in primary net enrolment of 70 per cent by the end of 2006 (GoSL, 2006, p. 61). The commitment to achieving EFA is necessary. Yet, this could lead to the decline

in the quality of education provided being downplayed, if quantitative aspects, such as enrolment rates become the main focus. Nearly 80 per cent of primary schools in Sierra Leone are faith-based, either along Christian or Islamic principles. Both Britain and Sierra Leone claim to have a committed “partnership” in terms of international declarations. This “partnership” is not just between the governments of the two countries since aid also goes to Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and charity groups. In the education sector of the PRSP, the increased allocations have been used for implementing UPE programmes such as provision of additional teaching and learning materials for primary schools, payment of National Primary School Examination (NPSE) fees and provision of textbooks to secondary schools (GoSL, 2005). Overall, Sierra Leone’s EFA programme has been greatly supported by donors, and primary education in Sierra Leone has been much influenced by history, religion, and foreign aid.

#### 1.4 Purpose of the Study

Since primary education in Sierra Leone has been much influenced by history, religion, and foreign aid, it is important to examine the processes involved in achieving the goal of EFA. This is because Sierra Leone is in a post-conflict situation and how the country has made efforts to meet the MDGs and the impact of EFA regarding the provision of primary education in Sierra Leone have not been researched in depth. Furthermore, considering the fact that about half of Sierra Leone’s national budget is donor funded, and that the international community has stressed the importance of having a good partnership in development, analysing whether the new concept of “partnership” could overcome problems associated with past aid conditionality is a worthwhile topic of study, particularly related to the achievement of the MDGs by 2015. That is, the purpose of this study is to examine and analyse how Sierra Leone has been in the process of achieving the international goals of EFA and the MDGs and the impact of the policies related to these goals on primary schooling in Sierra Leone. The development relationship between both donor NGOs and local recipient NGOs, and Sierra Leone and her long-time development ally, Britain, with particular consideration of the concepts of “partnership” and “ownership” is also examined. An

analysis made of how the “partnership” between donors and recipients has been established in the provision of primary education. Participants in this study include the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), British Council Sierra Leone, DFID Sierra Leone, and an international NGO, Plan Sierra Leone, which is a part of Plan International originally started in Britain and still receives some funding from Britain. Local NGOs that are funded by Plan Sierra Leone, namely, Community Animation and Development Organisation (CADO), Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) and Pekin to Pekin Movement are also important participants. Considering that the majority of schools are based on Christian and Islamic principles, both types of faith-based schools were chosen, in addition to municipal schools and a private school. This research shows that religion and Faith-based Organisations (FBOs) play a significant role in the development of education, as do NGOs, in supplementing the government efforts to achieve EFA. Ansarul Development Services, the Methodist Church of Sierra Leone, and Sierra Leone Muslim Brotherhood were participants in this part of the research.

## 1.5 Research Questions

The present piece of research, entitled “Primary Education in Sierra Leone and Development Relationship with Britain: Progress towards Achieving Education for All” is driven by two main research questions and three sub-questions, as follows:

### *Main Questions*

1. What is the impact of EFA on provision of primary education in Sierra Leone today?
2. What is the impact of aid on “partnership” and “ownership” between donors and recipients in the development of primary education in Sierra Leone?

### *Sub-questions*

1. Is there competition or tension between Christianity and Islam in the provision of primary education today?
2. What is the role and impact of religions and NGOs on the provision of primary education?

3. How can British aid to Sierra Leone be effective in helping achieve EFA and the MDGs?

#### *Hypothesis of Main Questions*

1. The FPE introduced by the government with a view to achieving EFA has contributed to reducing parents' financial burden for their children's primary education, and therefore significantly contributed to an increase in access to schooling.
2. Considering that conditionality that aid brings identifies winners and losers in the development process (Slater & Bell, 2002) and the idea of the MDGs is to a great extent of Northern coinage (King, 2004), conditionality still exists in the aid relationship, and "partnership" is still a buzzword.

#### *Hypothesis of Sub-questions*

1. Considering the historical background of seeking for converts and Huntington's (1996) argument in *the Clash of Civilizations*, there could be competition or tension reflected in education provision between Christianity and Islam in Sierra Leone.
2. Both Christianity and Islam have long history of offering education in Sierra Leone, and have played a significant role in the area of moral education. Considering the government's weak capacity in rebuilding the nation financially and to provide good governance, NGOs have a significant role in the provision of education.
3. The United Kingdom (UK) is the largest bilateral aid provider to Sierra Leone, and without its assistance, Sierra Leone cannot meet the MDGs. However, because of the conditional nature of the aid relationship between donors and recipients, the ways in which aid could be used effectively to achieve the MDGs remains a puzzle.

## 1.6 Explanation of Theoretical Contribution

In examining the process of development in developing countries, there are two legitimately accepted grand theories, which are Modernisation theory and Dependency theory. Theorists of the latter criticise the former, arguing that colonialism led to

exploitation, which still continues under the current political and economic structures governing the world economy. However, it is a historical fact that it was colonial powers that introduced colonies to the Western educational system and Western values possibly with positive potential for their development at least in some respects. In turn, the Modernisation school argues that DCs have assisted LDCs' development through foreign investment, trade, and aid (Fagerlind & Saha, 1989).

These theories have been influential in shaping the perspectives of policy makers and have been reflected in education policies throughout Africa. Furthermore, considering the fact that Sierra Leone has been in the process of rebuilding the nation, devastated by the conflict, these theories could be still relevant today. Thus, examining education and aid policies by comparing these two meta-theories, one can show how national plans and strategies have been influenced by the theories and also reveal significant points concerning the positive and the negative aspects of aid relationships through the case of Sierra Leone. In addition, it would also be useful to analyse these issues from the perspective of Postcolonial theory. The reason for this is that the latter is based on bringing in voices from the Third World, challenging powerful, dominant Western views and reveals the complicated hybrid culture of the present day situation (Wane, 2002). For example, the present education policy and curriculum reflect the needs of Sierra Leonean more than ever before. Furthermore, the MDGs and PRSPs, which emphasise the importance of developing a global partnership, have also given more space and opportunities for local actors in developing countries. Therefore, Dependency theory, Modernisation theory and Postcolonial theory are used to examine the current aid relationship in the area of the development of education in Sierra Leone and how education policies in the country have been influenced by these theories. They are also used in an examination of the impact of EFA on the provision of primary education.

## 1.7 Structure of the Study

Considering that about 70 per cent of the population lives in poverty and that more than 30 per cent of children in Sierra Leone do not go to primary school, Chapter Two

reviews literature on the relationship between poverty and education and how education can potentially contribute to the eradication of poverty. The government, which relies on donor funding for about half of its national budget, has been strongly committed to achieving the international goal of EFA by 2015 with foreign assistance. Chapter Three discusses the relationship between education and foreign aid, centering on the issues of “partnership” and “ownership”. As Sierra Leone’s education has been largely influenced by both British colonialism and Islamic expansion, in Chapter Four, the historical background of education in Sierra Leone is reviewed. This chapter also outlines Sierra Leone’s current education system and strategies to achieve EFA. Chapter Five presents a theoretical framework, based on an analysis of three development theories - Modernisation theory, Dependency theory and Postcolonial theory. The aid modality and trends in education plans and strategies are also analysed using the three theories. Chapter Six discusses the methodology used in this research. Chapter Seven discusses and analyses the impact of EFA on the provision of primary education in Sierra Leone, and the role of religions, FBOs, and NGOs in the provision of primary education. Chapter Eight examines the relationship between donors and recipients in working on Sierra Leone’s EFA and aims to elucidate whether Sierra Leone and Britain have established a good development partnership which enables progress to be made in achieving EFA and the MDGs. The final chapter concludes the discussion by reviewing my research findings and research questions.

## Chapter 2 Poverty and Education

### 2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review the linkage between poverty and education. Through discussing the links between economic activities and education, this chapter argues that education contributes significantly to economic, social and political development. Considering that nearly two-thirds of the world's children who do not have access to education are girls, gender and education is examined. Following this, as education can also contribute to the democratisation of societies, links between democracy and education is discussed. Education in Africa has been greatly influenced by the work of Christian missionaries since the colonial times, as well as Islamic expansion. Thus, the links between religion and education are examined. Finally, although the international commitment to EFA has led to increased access to schooling, the quality of education has been traded off in many SSA countries, including Sierra Leone. Therefore, quality of education is discussed. Reviewing these issues helps understand the background relating to why the international community including Sierra Leone, has been committed to achieving the goal of EFA.

### 2.2 Economic Activities and Education

Recently, the importance of education in contributing to poverty reduction has been emphasised more than ever before. There definitely is a connection between economic growth and human development. Ranis, Stewart and Ramirez (2000, p. 198) point out two distinct causal links between these two phenomena, arguing that 'the resources from national income are allocated to activities contributing to human development' and 'human development helps increase national income'. They further make the point that when poor households receive extra income it leads to a significant increase in food expenditure and calorie consumption, as well as to greater spending on the education of children. That is, economic growth can provide the resources for progress in human development, while improvements in human development contribute to economic development. In a number of studies (Oketch, 2006; Ramirez, 2000; Ranis et

al, 2000), increased earnings have been shown to have a link with additional years of education. An improved environment for education is also likely to support higher rates of growth, as those on low incomes are able to seek better economic opportunities.

Moreover, Bigsten et al (2003) argue that completion of primary education positively affects per capita expenditures. This is because the availability of adult labour is an important determinant of their welfare. Based on the authors' investigation of the impact of growth on poverty reduction in Ethiopia, Bigsten et al (2003) point out that the completion of primary education has more influence on urban areas than rural ones and that households where members have at least primary education have a higher probability of getting out of, and a lower probability of falling into, poverty.

However, the effects of education on poverty reduction extend not just to urban areas, but also rural ones. Considering that in SSA the majority of people live in rural areas where there is widespread poverty, the role of education can have significant effects on the social and economic development of rural areas, too. Mathews (1988) points out that all African countries are predominantly agricultural, with over 70 per cent of people engaged in agriculture, and that a literate population is more productive than an illiterate one. He argues that if more African farmers completed primary education and learned the three Rs and some elementary principles of natural science, the agricultural extension service's task of raising productivity would be much easier, faster and cheaper than is currently the case. In Sierra Leone, the adult literacy rate is 39 per cent overall, for males 49 per cent and for females 29 per cent (MEST, 2007, p. 4). Since agriculture is the main branch of the economy, contributing over 36 per cent to the GDP, engaging over 70 per cent of the rural population (MEST, 2007, p. 4), the case of Sierra Leone may be a good illustration of Mathews' argument.

Education can play a significant role in improving incomes and living standards, through strengthening of people's knowledge, skills and abilities and improving welfare, leading in the medium and long run to poverty reduction. Tilak (1998) argues that education not only contributes to economic growth in monetary and physical terms,

such as greater farm efficiency and labour productivity, but also leads to reduction of poverty and an improvement in income distribution, as well as various forms of social, economic and political development. Therefore, there is a need for all children to have regular access to education.

## 2.3 Gender and Education

Gender equality and the empowerment of women is one of the MDGs. The reason for this is that there is persistent gender inequality in many countries. A generic form of gender inequality is boys' and men's enhanced access to education. Sierra Leone's net primary school enrolment ratio is 63 per cent, but girls comprise 45 per cent of the total (MEST, 2007, p. 22). Such gender inequality plays a significant role in accounting for Africa's poor growth rates and failure to address poverty reduction.

An improvement in females' education helps increase their labour force participation and earnings. SSA in particular is characterised by women's relatively high participation rates in agriculture: about 67 per cent of women work in this branch (Blackden, Canagarajah, Klasen & Lawson, 2006, p. 12). Considering that in many African countries agriculture accounts for a large portion of GDP, women's contribution in this area cannot be neglected. This means that women's access to assets and inputs, including machinery, fertilisers and seeds, as well as increased knowledge about productivity, can have significant growth effects (Blackden et al., 2006). Furthermore, in SSA, more than 84 per cent of women who are not engaged in agricultural work are informally employed for instance as street vendors and home-based workers. In this respect, Blackden et al (2006) argue that women in SSA have less access to formal sector employment than men and thus face gender-based obstacles to work in the formal sector, preventing them from access to finance, land and non-land assets, justice services and information. This gender discrimination reduces economic growth and women's employment status positively influences their bargaining power in the household (Blackden et al, 2006).

Furthermore, female education is positively associated with nutrition and fertility, as

well as reduced infection and child mortality rates (Abu-Ghaida & Klasen, 2004; Blackden et al, 2006; Bruns, Mingat & Rakotomalala, 2003). Women with some formal education are more likely to seek medical care, ensure that their children are immunised and better provide for their children's nutritional requirements. Hannum and Buchmann (2005, p. 343) argue that educated mothers are 'more informed about preventive health care practices, such as immunisations, less fatalistic about disease, and more likely to adopt innovative behaviours related to children's health'. This leads to their children having higher survival rates and being healthier than is the case with uneducated mothers. Improved health status is not only an end in itself, but contributes to reductions in fertility and family size. Educated females tend to get married later and have fewer and healthier children. Abu-Ghaida and Klasen (2004, p. 1083) point out that a one-year increase in women's schooling leads to a reduction in the total fertility rate of between 0.3-0.5. That is, women with education are much more likely to use reliable family planning methods, delay marriage and child bearing, and have fewer babies than women with no formal education.

Evidence also shows that the education level of mothers is a significant variable affecting many aspects of the lives of their children. Shultz (2002, p. 212) argues that the education of mothers 'produces more favourable child outcomes than does the father's schooling', particularly in birth outcomes, child survival, good nutrition, health, completion of schooling and adult productivity. Furthermore, Ranis et al (2000) point out that when women control cash income, expenditure patterns move more towards human development inputs, such as food and education, than when fathers are in charge of household income. Education for girls and women can lead to a reduction in fertility and infant mortality rates and may contribute to better household management. That is, female education benefits not only the women themselves, but also their families and the next generation.

Moreover, Fagerlind and Saha (1989, p. 183) argue that 'a better educated female population is likely to contribute not only to a more politically active adult population, but also to the transmission of political values as well', because literacy skills promote organisational mobilisation and political participation. Therefore, literacy is a step

towards being able to possess information and knowledge, provides wider communications and livelihood opportunities, motivation to participate in public decision-making and leads to more self-confidence and higher aspirations. Greater female educational attainment also leads to wider choices for careers and thus to improved economic and social status. Blackden et al (2006) point out that educated women are less likely to participate in corruption than men and women's empowerment is associated with improved governance. Considering that corruption is a significant cause of inequality and vice versa, breaking the vicious cycle through the empowerment of women is important for poverty reduction.

However, in many cases in SSA, boys are prioritised over girls in terms of educational opportunities due to poverty and patriarchal relations in the household and instead of being sent to school, girl children stay at home to help their families (Okojie, 2001). This phenomenon is related to social structures, which place greater emphasis on the education of the son, as this is seen as a secure investment for the future of the family. Gender is reflected in the respective positions of men and women in society and gender relations are constructed through the linkages of power and dominance that structure life opportunities for all. Stromquist (in Heward & Bunwaree, 1999) argues that there is a need to examine women's double role of reproduction and production. In spite of patriarchal practices, females also have a role in community management: women and girls are largely involved in maintaining projects in their areas, such as water supplies, health care and education undertaken by the community (Moser, 1993). That is, women actually have a triple role or a "triple burden" to carry.

Women's contributions to household and community work are immense. Women can have a powerful impact on, and bring benefits to, their families and communities if they have education. In other words, putting females into vulnerable positions causes not only disadvantages to women themselves, but also their communities. The oppression of women leads to obstructions in health care, economic growth, political participation and overall national development. Thus, it is necessary to provide females with greater educational opportunities than those that currently exist. Therefore, it is necessary to remove obstacles to girls' schooling and to enable them to participate

more in formal education.

## 2.4 Democracy and Education

Development issues in Africa are not only those connected to economic problems, but also those related to lack of good governance, democracy and weak political institutions. It has been argued that these problems have persisted because the vast majority of the population is illiterate and do not participate in the political dimension of the development process (Silue, 2000). Poverty is not just about a lack of income, but also the fact that poor people do not have access to all the opportunities they need, as they are locked into multiple forms of vulnerability.

Harber (2002, p. 268) points out that the 'postcolonial African government has primarily been characterised by the authoritarianism of either one party or military rule', and the economic mismanagement of which have exacerbated levels of poverty. This is because authoritarianism makes openness, transparency and accountability virtually inexistent and instead causes civil unrest, violent repression and wars against neighbours. It also leads to higher military expenditures, neglecting social issues. Authoritarian governments bring about repression, censorship, intimidation and intolerance, coupled with increasing levels of inequality and dropping levels of social welfare. Under these systems, elites seek the satisfaction of their own interests, while the poor become increasingly more marginalised. Development is hardly possible. Ake (1996) strongly criticises African elites, arguing that they have marginalised the majority in the development of Africa through politics and that they have instituted the colonial system in pursuit of their own interests rather than transforming it into a democratic movement for people. He thinks that both foreign agents and local elites do not see the majority as agents of development, although 'democracy is the only way to relate development to social will' (Ake, 1996, p. 36).

In this respect, one of the reasons why education is seen as a means of poverty reduction is its potential to democratise societies from bottom upwards. The skills and values of democracy are not generic, nor naturally given, but socially learned (Harber,

2002) and the school is a powerful social institution for cultivating a democratic political culture. Harber (1997, p. 2) argues that ‘democracy is about people actively participating in social and political institutions’ and what is important is how they participate. Democracy gives people an opportunity to improve their lives through participating and being integrated into their societies. However, in order for people to take the opportunities, they need to understand the process of democracy, its meanings and values, and education has to impart values (Harber, 2002). School is a place to impart pupils to the fundamental values of democratic societies, such as the inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between women and men, and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable. Schools should provide a forum for the effective exercise of citizen’s rights and participation as critical and active members of society. Furthermore, the access to and spread of literacy increase the chances of political participation and a high degree of public contestation in political life (Lind, 2005). Education can encourage the poor and marginalised to participate in social and political arenas.

The UNDP (1993, p. 21) defines participation as people’s close involvement ‘in the economic, social, cultural, and political processes that affect people’s lives’, and emphasises its importance in providing access to decision-making and power. The UNDP (1993, p. 21) argues that participation demands increased empowerment in three spheres. First, in economic terms, ‘being able to engage freely in any economic activity’; secondly, in social aspects, ‘being able to join fully in all forms of community life, without regard to religion, colour, sex or race’; and lastly, in political areas, ‘the freedom to choose and change governance at every level, from the presidential palace to the village council’. The UNDP (1993) clearly states that people’s participation is an essential element of human development. The international development community broadly concurs with the UNDP’s view and has supported the development of participatory democracy. One such example of foreign assistance aimed at fostering democracy is the DFID support for the National Electoral Commission in Sierra Leone, in 2002. The programme was supported because the DFID (2003) believes that building an effective democratic and modern government leads to citizens having more influence on the government. In this regard,

democratisation is seen as a process leading to development.

Although schools in Africa traditionally tended to promote authoritarian values instead of participation, debate, and critical views from citizens, a number of African countries have shown a good understanding of education as a tool, leading them to participation in development processes and bringing about democracy. Sierra Leone is one such country which has been in the process of building good governance through rebuilding its government institutions and encouraging people's participation in social, economic and political areas. "Democratisation" and "good governance" have become key development terms in the lexicon of the international community. Harber (2002, p. 267) argues that a greater level of democracy will be possible when 'political culture and civil society in Africa become more democratic' and 'this will depend on the spread of more democratic values and behaviours'. There is a strong need for people's participation in their civic lives, and in this respect, education is seen to play an important role in supporting people's democratic movements.

## 2.5 Religion and Education

### 2.5.1 Introduction

Religion is an important source of culture and social structures. Colonialism brought Africa formal education through Christian missionaries. However, the spread of Islam has also led to the provision of training and education throughout the continent. Therefore, this section examines education provided as a result of the spread of both Christianity and Islam in Africa. This helps understand the influence of religion on education and underpins the comparative study of Sierra Leone's history and its current education situation.

### 2.5.2 Christian Education

The British government encouraged the activities of the missionaries by 'granting them full administrative freedom and providing them with occasional grant-in-aid' (White, 1996, p. 13). Old established groups working in Sierra Leone were the Church Mission

Society (CMS), the African Inland Mission, and the Church of Scotland. In 1923, the Colonial Office formed the advisory Committee on Native Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies, which later became the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies. In 1925, the committee issued the “Memorandum on Education Policy in British Tropical Africa” suggesting the following priorities for British colonial education:

1. The government should control the administration of education, but should cooperate with the private voluntary organisations (missions).
2. Education should be adapted to meet local needs and conditions.
3. Local languages should be used in primary school instruction.
4. The education of girls should be given more attention. (White, 1996, p. 13)

In 1935, a follow-up document added the need for adult education and the necessary interrelationship between school and community. The British government collaborated with the missions, and had a ‘deeper confidence that the spread of enlightenment, which is the aim of education, is the surest means of leading a people to the truth’ (White, 1996, p. 19). Their perspective on knowledge was rational, and the approach focused on the importance of truth and reason and developing better minds and souls. White (1996, p. 19) quotes a study by the Nuffield Foundation and the Colonial Office, arguing that ‘Education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations, and traditions of the various peoples’. Furthermore, the British government considered local needs as seen in the following quotation, ‘[the] whole of the curriculum should be integrated with agriculture and other work in it’ (White, 1996, p. 19).

Nevertheless, the interests of the British remained paramount. For example, Okeke (2003, p. 30) strongly argues that colonial education was never designed to serve the interests of the colonised, for even the few natives that were educated, the objective was both technically and philosophically to create a cadre of locals who were to selectively serve as a mediating buffer, the so-called interpreters, between the interests of the metropolis and the “illiterate/uneducated” colonised millions. Through education, European colonialism created a new class of natives to work for them. Ashley (1988, p.

46) points out that the colonial education in Sierra Leone was modelled on the British system and its objective was to ‘develop a British type of society with great emphasis on replacing indigenous values with the Western values of individualism, inequality, and elitism’.

AACC has worked to advance Christian education in Africa, to build awareness of, and advocacy for, new values and social transformation. They organise meetings, undertake research, propose model curricula, and design pilot training programmes to identify specific projects, as well as being instrumental in “conscientising” churches and people regarding the development of education in general and the values of Christian education in particular. They believe that these efforts lead to economic and social development (AACC, 1992). The standing body of the Conference (1992) argues that the church can provide leadership when African people call for new values and transformation based on more open democracy, greater participation, accountability, respect for human rights and the creation of civil society. Overall, AACC is premised on the belief that Christian education can play a vital role in political, economic, and social processes, giving Africans the framework for a new value system and critical understanding of society. The objective of Christian education is not only to establish the kingdom of God, but to work towards cultivating African people’s consciousness in all aspects of their lives (AACC, 1992).

### 2.5.3 Islamic Education

Some Muslims have been critical of colonial education, which they see as being fundamentally based on Western philosophy and ideology. For example, for Nadvi (1997), the first step to reconstruct Muslim education is to eliminate the Eurocentric curricula that were imposed on the Islamic world. He argues that colonialists distorted Islamic history, philosophy, theology, language, and literature by inculcating the Western culture and educational system, and implanting notions of inferiority in Muslims. Cook (1999) outlines Ali’s view on negative aspects of colonialism, stating that it was ‘doing immeasurable damage to the moral, spiritual, and ethical values of Islamic culture and heritage’. In sum, a number of Muslim leaders argue that European

philosophy has dominated the world of education, and that the Western model is of contributing to education and knowledge and to civilisational and moral values are not always in accord with Islamic values.

Cook (1999) argues that the movement calling for the Islamisation of education is one of the keys to the revitalisation of Islam. Lasisi (1995, p. 13) states that 'Islam means submission to the will of God', and 'Islamic education deals basically with the understanding of the duties of man to God and society'. Cook (1999, p. 345) also explains that education is a process that builds a complete individual, 'including the rational, spiritual, and social dimensions of the person', and in Islamic teachings, perfection can only be achieved through obedience to God. Therefore, Islamic education aims at imparting a Muslim identity to pupils and leads them to spiritual perfection through knowledge of duty towards God. Acquiring knowledge is not an end in itself, but a means to stimulate moral and spiritual consciousness leading to faith (Cook, 1999, p. 346).

There is demand for Islamic education which inculcates religious ethics and morals by Muslim parents in Africa. Islamic education is of two types; one provided by Koranic schools and the other by Arabic schools. In Koranic schools, pupils are supposed to learn the three Rs in Arabic and the basics of Islam. On the other hand, it can be said that Arabic schools offer a modern type of Islamic Education and compete with Western secular primary schools. Unlike Koranic schools and similar to secular schools these have a timetable (Daun, 2000). Another common form is *madrassa* schools that are conducted in the afternoon and which children attend after secular schools have finished for the day. Islamic discipline is related to every aspect of human life for them. The *Qur'an* provides them with guidance in all matters, such as, manner of greeting and speaking, and attitudes to parents and elders. However, it is worth noting that although Islamic education meets Muslim parents' demands, Koranic schools also have to meet the requirements of local Muslim leaders, such as the use of pupils as labour force, and the maintaining of their status in the local community (Daun, 2000).

According to Lasisi (1995), teachers at Koranic schools do not receive a formal salary, because their work is regarded as a part of the religious duty to spread the Islamic faith. However, teachers are given gifts in kind from pupils' parents, when and where they are available. Pupils are expected to be obedient to their teachers and to serve them on all occasions. A problematic aspect of Islamic education is that it is not open to critical scrutiny. Cook (1998) points out that initiating students into a particular Islamic conception of the world with the intention of committing them to the faith is not education, but "indoctrination", which prevents pupils from questioning beliefs and engaging in critical analysis. This is because there is no or little freedom for children to develop their own views in this environment.

## 2.6 Quality in Education

Providing a good quality education is one of the six goals in the Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000). However, policy makers have a tendency to pay more attention to access, without similar consideration of quality. As a result, rapid expansion in enrolments has occurred, but the quality of education has suffered in some countries in SSA, including Sierra Leone.

There are linkages between educational quality and national economic productivity (Hanushek, 2000), which reinforces the point that improved access should not undermine the quality of education on offer. Although quality is difficult to define, Wolff (in ADEA, UIE & GTZ, 2006, p. 50) identifies four components of a quality education;

- (a) appropriate medium of instruction (in mono- or multimedia systems), (b) culturally adequate curricular content, (c) professionally applied teaching methods, (d) adequate financial and material resources.

Wolff also emphasises the importance of adequate curriculum reforms, teaching methods, and secured funding. This is because the role of schools is not only to provide skills for reading, writing and arithmetic, but also to teach people to become independent and critical thinkers (Wolff, in ADEA et al., 2006). Furthermore, there is the 'adaptation of children to schools' (MLA Project, 2000, p. 24) to be questioned.

When this is the case, the education offered may be far from one of a good quality.

One such adaptation can be seen in language policies in education. Silue (2000) observes that almost all African nations use a foreign language as the medium of instruction. Since UNESCO has promoted the use of the mother tongue in teaching since 1953, many African countries started to use their mother tongues or national languages in education (Hovens, 2002). Many bilingual school programmes use the home language for the first two or three years of schooling, and then make a transition into instruction using the dominant language. Benson (2005a) argues that although the supposed benefits of this model are not supported by theory, it seems to be approved by many politicians and parents. However, Heugh (in ADEA et al., 2006, p. 64) argues that learners need six to eight years to learn a second language sufficiently to use as a medium of instruction. Moreover, Bgoya (2001, p. 287) contends that if a foreign language is imposed on children artificially, they may fail to be proficient in their own language, as well as in the foreign language, thus becoming 'twice disadvantaged'. Alidou and Brock-Utne (in ADEA et al., 2006, p. 97) also point out that children in Africa experience a lot of difficulty in reading and writing in both their mother tongue and the official language. Many do not develop adequate literacy skills after six or seven years of formal basic education. Furthermore, the use of unfamiliar language as a medium of instruction can also lead to 'traditional and teacher-centred teaching methods', which include teachers doing most of the talking while children remain silent or passive participants (Alidou and Brock-Utne, in ADEA et al., 2006, p. 85).

Moreover, Benson (2005a; 2005b) points out that there is a large gap between the elite and the marginalised. Those who dominate are the speakers of the prestigious language used in education, governance and other official domains, while the marginalised rarely have access to this language and are 'speakers of languages or dialects that are not valued, sometimes not even recognized, by formal structures' (Benson, 2005a, p. 2). There is a view that African education based on the use of foreign language as the medium of instruction is 'responsible for the hi-jacking of development by a tiny minority, leaving the vast majority on the outskirts of development' (Silue, 2000, p. 34). The positive aspect of using the home language as the medium of instruction is

that 'learning is reinforced directly' at school and also at home through interaction with family members (MLA Project, 2000, p. 71). Nekhwevha (1999, p. 503) also argues that 'vernacular education is vital to the cognitive, emotional and socio-cultural development of the individual'. The reason for this is that the former permits students to 'express their full range of knowledge in a language in which they are competent, and their backgrounds are valued and used as a basis for instruction'. As a result, learners 'develop higher self-esteem and greater self-confidence, as well as higher aspirations in schooling and in life' (Benson, 2005a, p. 5). Therefore, Benson (2005a, p. 10) argues that 'designing a schooling system that recognizes the ethno-linguistic background and competence of learners goes a long way toward improving educational opportunities for all, including those from marginalized groups, and especially for female learners'.

The designing of a school system must also include providing an adequate curriculum. As Mathews (1988) points out, the educational curricula in LDCs have often been taken over from ex-colonial masters without modification, and are not relevant to the skills needed for survival and community improvement.

In addition, the quality of education can depend on the standard of human resources provided, including teachers. The MLA Project (2000) cites age, gender, qualifications, experience and language of the teaching force as characteristics that directly and indirectly influence children's learning performances. Hanushek (2000) argues that improving teacher quality is the key to improving student performance, and the quality of a school is greatly influenced by class size, teachers' experience, and teacher's salaries. In terms of the connection between class size and pupils' achievement, Krueger (in Krueger & Hanushek, 2000) argues that reducing class size increases pupils' test scores. The quality of teaching is also influenced by the support teachers receive through a process of evaluation, supervision and feedback, contributing to proper accountability in teaching (MLA Project, 2000). This kind of regular evaluation and supervision is useful not only in teaching, but also in the management of schools. This is because a major impediment to improving schools is 'a lack of regular information about what is working and what is not working' (Hanushek, 2000, p. 23).

The MLA Project (2000, p. 41) emphasises that teachers are a ‘valuable national resource’ and therefore their training is a ‘significant social investment’. Ensuring that there is sufficient basic furniture, enabling the physical environment to facilitate teaching and learning, and providing teaching and learning materials is a ‘minimum condition for enhancing the quality of the teaching and learning process’. In-service training, libraries, and teacher resource centres are also important and useful facilities in improving teacher’s classroom performance (MLA Project, 2000, p. 44).

Finally, children’s home environments are important in securing support for their learning. Parents’ education level is a decisive factor affecting their children’s performance (MLA Project, 2000). The reason for this is that parents with higher education levels encourage their children’s education psychologically and are academically able to provide support. Furthermore, adequate food intake greatly influences the learner’s capacity for concentration and learning. Travel time to school is another aspect that increases a learner’s burden. However, parents tend to overlook the importance of learning support at home (MLA Project, 2000). Since poverty is widespread in SSA, many parents are busy in pursuing their livelihoods and are ignorant about the importance of the home environment to children’s study. Overall, children need parental support and care with regard to their education and in SSA the factors outlined above can have significant negative influences.

## 2.7 Summary

This chapter examined the connection between education and development with particular reference to poverty. The study of this connection is motivated by the fact that the international development community has emphasised the importance of education in poverty reduction, a fundamental plank of Sierra Leone’s national development plan. Education can help to improve living standards, enhance the quality of life through increasing employment skills and income levels, reducing ill health and fertility, providing people with a sense of their rights, citizenship and democratic values for participation in social, economic and political activities. Considering that female education extends the benefits to the household, community and the next

generation, it is obvious that women's education and gender equality is significant in poverty reduction, as well as women's own right.

This chapter also reviewed the key ideas concerning Christian and Western education introduced to African communities in colonial times, as well as Islamic education. Attention to this issue is legitimated by the fact that a majority of schools in Sierra Leone are faith-based and religion is one of the most important social and cultural elements shaping the lives of children and societies. In addition, by reviewing elements of quality in education, this chapter argues that without the provision of good quality education, pupils cannot make use of, or even obtain, the benefits education is capable of ensuring. Therefore, elements of quality in education are used as a conceptual framework in examining the quality of education provided in Sierra Leone's primary education.

Since approximately half of Sierra Leone's national budget is donor funded, the country's educational development is inseparable from issues concerning development aid. As a result, the next chapter discusses aid to education and the relationship between donor and recipients.

## Chapter 3 Aid to Education and Relationships between Donors and Recipients

### 3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the dynamics of international development aid and how these affect national development policies in general and relationships between donors and recipients in particular. This interest is legitimated by the fact that many SSA countries, including Sierra Leone, have largely relied on foreign assistance to fund their education sectors. Since achieving EFA and the MDGs are surrounded by global consensuses, the international framework underpinning commitment to these goals and attendant financial promises are also reviewed. Drawing on lessons learnt from Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), where ownership on the part of aid recipient countries was lacking, the aid relationship between donors and recipients is assessed, with particular emphasis on notions of “partnership” and “ownership”. Subsequently, as the development partnership is not only between states, but also involves CSOs playing a significant role in educational development, the role of CSOs with particular reference to NGOs and FBOs is examined. Finally, the particular case of Sierra Leone’s development aid partnership with Britain is discussed. Examining these issues helps to deepen the analysis of my research questions as to key issues concerning development relationships between donors and recipients, as well as the roles of CSOs.

### 3.2 International Framework: Financial Promises and Commitments to Achieve EFA

Since the 1990 Jomtien conference, EFA has gained momentum as a key development goal. However, the first world conference that advocated EFA was not Jomtien, but a series of meetings that took place nearly half a century ago. The first target to meet UPE was set to be achieved by 1980, and agreed on during the 1960’s at four regional conferences: Karachi (Asia) in 1960, Addis Ababa (SSA) in 1961, Santiago (Latin America) in 1962, and Tripoli (Arab States) in 1966. However, the target was not met

by the time-frame of 1980 in any of the four regions.

In March 1990, the World Conference on EFA was held in Jomtien, Thailand, sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), UNICEF, UNDP, and the World Bank; later, UNFPA joined them. Under the auspices of these partners and other development agencies, 155 governments, 33 international bodies, and 125 NGOs came together and committed to the following:

- (a) expansion of earlier child care and development activities; (b) universal access to, and completion of, primary education by the year 2000; (c) improvements in learning achievement; (d) reduction in adult illiteracy to one-half its 1990 level by the year 2000; (e) expansion of provisions of basic education and training in other essential skills required by youth and adults; and (f) increased acquisition by individuals and families of the knowledge, skills, and values required for better living and sound sustainable development (World Bank, 2000, p. 4).

Donor agencies strongly promoted basic education, especially primary education, as the main priority. Each government was asked to set its goals and objectives on the basis of the Jomtien declaration. Therefore, Jomtien provided a powerful framework for EFA, and encouraged LDCs to pursue their “own” initiatives, a significantly promising development goal that can lead to the establishment of good development partnerships with other members of the international community. As the targets were not met by 2000, a new date was agreed upon in Dakar in 2000: 2015. One reason may be that pointed out by King (2004): Jomtien lacked a clear view about the relationship between the national financial capacity of LDCs, with regard to providing EFA, and the obligations of the donor community to bear the cost. This unresolved issue was carried over to Dakar.

The purpose of the 2000 World Forum on Education in Dakar was ‘to adopt a stronger, more action-oriented approach to the goal of universal basic education’ (Ostveit, 2000, p. 99). Therefore, the emphasis was on the time-frame of 2015 to meet all targets and its goals were more specific:

(a) expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children; (b) ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality; (c) ensure that the learning needs of young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs; (d) achieve a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults; (e) eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality; and (f) improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensure excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy, and essential life skills (World Bank, 2003, p. 25).

The Dakar forum basically reaffirmed the Jomtien commitment. However, it clearly placed an emphasis on assisting vulnerable and marginalised groups of children and the need for good quality education, as well as strengthened moves towards wider participation in attempts to achieve EFA, emphasising the importance of civil society participation in planning, implementation, and monitoring. Furthermore, it went beyond Jomtien in terms of strengthening the commitment of the international community to support EFA with external resources. The international community affirmed that bilateral and multilateral funding agencies and the private sector must support countries lacking the internal resources to achieve EFA by 2015 (King, 2004). Yet, it is pointed out that this leads to the danger of increasing the aid dependency on the part of LDCs. This is because the forum gave the green light for donor countries to keep aid recipient countries in dependent relationships, by setting the targets which could obviously not be met without donor funds.

A few months after Dakar, in September 2000, leaders from 189 countries met at the

UN Millennium Summit in New York, aiming to eradicate poverty. From this summit's declaration, eight MDGs were derived, to be achieved by 2015:

(a) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, (b) achieve universal primary education, (c) promote gender equality and empower women, (d) reduce child mortality, (e) improve maternal health, (f) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, (g) ensure environmental sustainability, and (h) develop a global partnership for development (World Bank, 2003, p. xviii-xix).

Two of the MDGs, that is, UPE and gender equality and empowerment of women, are carry-overs from the Dakar conference. Furthermore, the drive to achieve the UPE itself is regarded as a means of attaining other MDGs, which are seen as crucial overall measurements of global development progress.

In order for developing countries to achieve MDGs, a significant amount of aid is necessary. Under the Presidency of the UK, the 2005 G8<sup>1</sup> summit at Gleneagles in Scotland campaigned to "Make Poverty History", and urged the world to increase aid. One of the objectives set was the promotion of development to end extreme poverty, with special focus on Africa (DFID, 2006b). In 2005, the G8 and other donor countries promised increases in their aid budgets to provide an extra \$50 billion a year by 2010, half of which would go to Africa. The UK government announced that it would quadruple aid for education to reach a total of \$15 billion (£ 8.5 billion) over the next ten years (DFID, 2006a, p. 26). The UK exceeded its target of spending £ 1 billion on Africa in 2005-06, and plans to spend at least £ 1.25 billion by 2007-08, providing more long-term aid, based on Africa's needs (DFID, 2006b, p. 4). Gordon Brown, presently the British Prime Minister, but at the time the Chancellor of the Exchequer, stated that 'it is one of the world's greatest scandals that today 100 million children do not go to school' (DFID, 2006a, p. 26).

Another sign of progress made at the G8 Gleneagles was the promise to cancel debt. It was proposed that up to 43 countries would have 100 per cent of their debt to the IMF, the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB) cancelled when they

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<sup>1</sup> The G8 comprises the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, France, Russia, Germany, United States, Japan, Italy and Canada.

complete the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiatives (DFID, 2006b). At Gleneagles, the G8 reaffirmed the right of LDCs to ‘decide, plan and sequence their economic policies to fit with their own development strategies’ (UKAN, 2006, p. 1).

However, it is problematic that while the international community has made efforts to reduce the debt burden of LDCs, aid structure, in which recipients are kept in a dependent relationship with donors, has not been fundamentally changed. The reason for this appears to be the trends that encourage the donor community to contribute with further financial aid aiming to achieve EFA, such as those set out at the Dakar World Forum in 2000, the UN Millennium Summit in New York in 2000, and the G8 Summit in the UK in 2005. Therefore, it can be argued that LDCs will not be fully emancipated from debt and are likely to remain in a dependent relationship with donors given this extra reliance on funds to meet these targets.

### 3.3 Aid Relationships between Donors and Recipients: Partnership and Ownership

Because the aid system, and as a consequence, the development relationship has changed considerably over the past decades, reviewing the development modality, mainly after the 1980’s, could elucidate some key problems embedded in the current aid relationship pertaining to issues of “partnership” and “ownership”.

To achieve the UPE set at Addis Ababa, African countries aimed for 1980 as a deadline. According to Daun (2000), primary education expanded greatly in SSA during the 1960’s and 1970’s. However, it stagnated during the 1980’s and 1990’s, due to economic crises, worsened by SAPs, which were designed by the IMF and the World Bank to reduce government expenditure and the extent of state intervention in the economy, and to promote liberalisation and international trade (Simon, 2002; Oketch, 2007). Furthermore, regional development banks and most bilateral donors favoured and pursued the implementation of SAPs and therefore, LDCs that already were in debt found it impossible to receive foreign aid without accepting SAPs. SAPs caused currency devaluation and inflation in LDCs, increased the prices of imported

food, increased unemployment, and led to deteriorated public services (Simon, 2002). In terms of education, it affected many LDCs' public expenditure, leading to cuts in state-funded education. This adversely affected the quality and quantity of education. Thus, foreign assistance aiming at the development of LDCs in this case affects the education sector negatively, which is a major dilemma and contradiction of aid.

Currently, the relationship between the North and the South is often professed as a "partnership", based on the establishment of "ownership" of national policies on the part of the recipients. However, King (1999, p. 16) argues that the discourse of "partnership" and "ownership" was brought about by the recognition that many previous development cooperation initiatives were adopted under financial pressure, and were not "owned" in the South. The keys to more effective and sustainable development are learning from past experiences, such as SAPs and the establishment of "ownership" in the development relationship on the part of recipients. That is, the idea of "partnership" is a reflection of DCs' attitudes towards LDCs, characterised by a top-down approach with conditionality in the implementation of SAPs or other programmes void of "ownership".

The use of the "partnership" rhetoric has been seen in many documents and international declarations, including the MDGs and PRSPs. Yet, it is not easy to form a good "partnership" in practice. Sceptics claim that the international frameworks such as the MDGs and PRSPs are focused on areas where many donors prefer to deliver aid. King (2004) argues that although it is politically proper to promote FPE, 'the MDGs are not in fact widely owned in the South at all', and points out that 'these targets were part of a new Northern agenda after the end of the Cold War, and the North now wants the South to own what the North has already decided upon'.

For King (1999, p. 16), the new partnership could promises to only shift conditionality from the macro-economic area, as it was with SAPs, to 'a situation where the North chooses partners according to whether they fulfill certain other essential criteria'. These criteria include pro-poor economic growth strategies in the South, pro-democracy and pro-human rights policies, pro-gender and pro-equality policies,

and a pro-environmental sustainability commitment. Therefore, in this respect, conditionality still exists.

For Slater and Bell (2002, p. 348), the word, “conditionality” requires ‘the identification of winners and losers in the process and the politics of decision-making within key institutions, such as the IMF, the WTO, and the World Bank’. This also applies to the relationship between the countries of the North and South. Turner and Hulme (1997) argue that it is difficult to distinguish policy dialogue from donor conditionality. ‘Post-Cold War conditionality has spread to include political matters, such as, human rights, open elections, and media freedom, and Western advocacy groups have pushed for conditions to be set in terms of gender, environmental management, and military expenditure’ (Turner & Hulme, 1997, p. 228).

Petras and Veltmeyer (2001, p. 121) regard development cooperation as ‘subordination of the aid recipient to the donor, the reproduction of imperial relations under another name’, as most of the aid is ‘tied to purchases of goods produced by the donor countries at prices often higher than market figures’. Edgren (2002) argues that aid is often seen as compensation to former colonies for their lack of access to export markets in Europe, and believes that development assistance has made the ties between DCs and LDCs stronger than they were during the colonial era.

Furthermore, aid has an aspect of favourable investment and trading arrangements with transnational companies of donor countries (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2001). In order to provide aid, these agencies demand access to strategic raw materials, free entry into domestic markets, and the elimination of social regulations. Thus, cooperation within unequal relations of power and economic exploitation merely reinforces and deepens injustice. Mosley (2000, p. 219) points out that ‘for all governments, aid policy has been a balancing act between strategic, commercial, and altruistic (developmental) objectives’, but arguably at the expense of the South.

In the British case, Mosley (2000) argues that the commercial objectives of the UK form part of an aid-trade programme, which acts as an export subsidy fund for

contracts in LDCs for British firms, while the development objective has been the UK government's commitment to poverty reduction in the LDCs. The role of the state is highly important, as aid is not just a charity, but is based on national and business interests as well as development objectives. Killick (2008, p. 68) agrees that 'aid has been used to promote Britain's national interests', including foreign policy, security, immigration and commercial objectives.

However, British aid relations with African states have seen some improvements in quality recently. During the 1980's nearly half of total UK bilateral aid was tied in a form whereby 'imports financed by British aid were restricted to goods and services originating in the UK', resulting in the reduction of the real value of the aid (Killick, 2008, p. 70). Yet, the UK has gradually reduced this way of operating and in 2001 it was abolished. All British assistance to Africa has been in the form of grants, as against loans, for the last 20 years (Killick, 2008).

The important issue here is that although conditions the North imposes on the LDCs seem to be put forward in the form of proper criteria for the development of the latter, they lead to an intrusion on domestic sovereignty and to a take-over of the ownership of national development policies. The situation is further complicated by the fact that 'the DAC donors see themselves as key players in a new aid approach that is more to do with donor coordination and harmonization' (King, 2004, p. 89). That is, the word "partnership" implies justified involvement of donors in the national ownership of programmes in LDCs.

For this reason, the OECD (2004) has become concerned with the question of how donors deal with LDCs which have a weak commitment to aid conditions. There are a lot of poor and marginalised people in such countries. If donors ignore, or do not prioritise working for them, the majority of poor people are likely to become more marginalised and their lives further devastated. If the donor community cannot have a good partnership with those with a weak commitment to donors' conditions, and if it leads donors to withhold their development contribution to these countries, it shows that power politics in aid relations is winning over humanitarianism. With regard to the

development of education, considering that the Dakar conference led to the increase of donors' financial assistance to LDCs, their influence on recipients' development policies is critical. Although this could possibly have negative effects on the establishment of aid recipients' "ownership", and the forming of good "partnerships", the OECD (2004) argues that a significant effort needs to be made towards helping those with weak commitment among aid recipients. Overall, the international community needs to promote quality of aid, and how effectively the aid is used is significant in development.

In this respect, at the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in March 2005, over 100 countries and donors signed the declaration which includes a series of commitment to improve the quality of aid through the following:

1. Development countries exercise leadership over their development policies and plans (ownership)
2. Donors base their support on countries' development strategies and systems (alignment)
3. Donors co-ordinate their activities and minimize the cost of delivering aid (harmonisation)
4. Developing countries and donors orient their activities to achieve the desired results (managing for result)
5. Donors and developing countries are accountable to each other for progress in managing aid better and in achieving development results (mutual accountability) (OECD, 2007b, p. 9)

There is some new jargon in this declaration, notably the use of "alignment" and "harmonisation". However, all the other key words and ideas are reaffirmations of those used in the MDGs and the PRSPs, and the Paris Declaration emphasised that these issues are critical for both donors and recipients in trying to deliver and use the aid effectively.

Mutual accountability originates in a reversal of logic: if LDCs own policies and build institutions adequately, LDCs can bring about sustainable improvements in people's

lives in partnership with DCs. Donors are supposed to merely help this process, and in general, the idea of “partnership” has been more well-established among donors than before. Furthermore, Rao and Smyth (2005, p. 9) clearly point this out:

A major reason for project failure is the lack of ownership and involvement by all actors, especially local communities. Communities will not maintain the assets and benefits created through such a partnership unless they are involved in the planning process and not only in the implementation phase.

That is, local participation and ownership on the part of LDCs are currently regarded as crucial to the sustainability of development outcomes. In sum, local participation, capacity building, national ownership, good governance and good partnerships in development relationships, are seen as mutually reinforcing in enhancing the effectiveness of aid.

## 3.4 The Role of Civil Society in Development

### 3.4.1 The Role of Civil Society Organisations in Development

The state is often viewed as the main executor in delivering public services to the people. However, many governments in Africa cannot afford to provide sufficient allocation for the education sector without support from the international donor community. Rose (2007, p. 1) argues that since ‘the state has been unable to fulfill its role in extending access of appropriate quality to all children in the context of the Education for All’, the role of non-state providers delivering services to the ‘under-served’ is becoming increasingly important. The role of CSOs is seen as particularly important for impoverished countries, such as Sierra Leone, whose education system has been seriously affected by the civil war that ended in 2002.

The notion of civil society was synonymous with the state until the 19th century (Chabal & Daloz, 1999). Currently, however, civil society is regarded as being a separate sector to that of the state or the market, and is seen as a corrective one. Blair (1997, p. 25 in Hulme and Edwards) define civil society as ‘the collectivity of those social organisations that enjoy autonomy from the state (are not a part of the state or

creatures of it) and have as one important goal among others to influence the state on behalf of their members'. Harber (2002) also argues that civil society is not motivated by personal profit, and has own understandings of social improvement and works for the public good. Civil society organises activities to influence and improve society. CSOs can raise the voices of 'those who might not otherwise be heard and those for whom voting is meaningless in a context of poverty' (Lind, 2005, p. 25). Furthermore, CSOs help educate, and encourage the mobilisation of, people, including marginalised groups, to exercise the right to participation.

The UNDP (2003) states that national ownership does not involve just governments, but politicians, government agencies, communities, local authorities, and CSOs, since political momentum for policy change must be brought about by the people. King (1999, p. 18) concurs, saying that 'the new partnership should not be entirely a matter of state-to-state relations, but must also be about strengthening all manner of civil society linkages between two countries'. He continues that it should include 'North-South contacts between churches, popular movements, cultural and educational exchanges, environmental co-operation, trade, industry and tourism, and lastly, but importantly, co-operation between those from the particular Southern country domiciled in the North and their homeland'.

One of the key development problems in Africa is the lack of people's social and political participation (Ake, 1996). Civil society is an important component of participatory democracy as it pluralises society. There are many forms of CSOs, such as NGOs, charity groups and trade unions. Considering Sierra Leone's weak state capacity in provision of basic services and its particular history which religion has contributed to the provision of education, this research sees the role of NGOs and FBOs particularly important in development of education.

### 3.4.2 Non-Governmental Organisations in Development

After the power of the state declined during the 1970's and the 1980's, NGOs are expected to play a greater role than before in development. While governments are

seen as hierarchical and autocratic, NGOs are regarded as having a comparative advantage in the areas of cost effectiveness, reaching out to the poor, popular participation, and flexibility and innovation. Although they have gained greater power and played more significant roles than before, since the 1990's NGOs have been criticised for being part of the big development industry, along with states and donors. This is largely because NGOs, especially bigger ones, are regarded as mediators, or service deliverers on behalf of states and donors with financial and other stakes in the aid system. As NGOs gain much needed funds for operations, in return, they work on programmes under close government supervision. Therefore, NGOs have become convenient consultants for states establishing collaboration, rather than corrective relationships.

Most NGOs see the relationship with bilateral and multinational agencies as a dialogue on policy, while donors themselves are more enthusiastic about NGOs as implementers of projects. Donors encourage NGOs to increase engagement with governments in order to foster public reform and to enable governments to subcontract proposals to NGOs and private agencies (Turner & Hulme; Bebbington & Riddell, both in Hulme & Edwards, 1997). Fowler (in Desai & Potter, 2002, p. 511) also points out that 'donors hope to widen and deepen the array of actors who will "own" development in the South and be committed to aid finance and the success of its interventions'. NGOs can thus be regarded as implementers of donor policies and mediators with governments. Many NGOs accept these roles because they enable them to obtain vast resources and scale-up their work, which can make it more effective. Although big Northern NGOs have not lost their original objectives of representing the poor and powerless to bring about improvements in their lives, the rise of other forms of CSOs in the development discourse could imply that it is the Southern NGOs and other local CSOs that are better equipped to represent the voices of the vulnerable more closely than Northern NGOs.

Southern NGOs and some other forms of local CSOs can do what outsiders find very difficult, providing basic welfare services and infrastructure and filling gaps left by the partial delivery of governments. This is possible because development workers as outsiders tend to have biases that prevent them from having real contact with the rural

poor. Chambers (1983) strongly argues that marginalised groups should be included in the development process and allowed to participate in the improvement of their lives.

Local participation is critical in development projects, when the intended beneficiaries are involved, benefits tend to be more concentrated and far reaching (Turner & Hulme in Hulme & Edwards, 1997), and outcomes could be more sustainable. This is because local participation can lead to reflection of cultural and community values in the development process, thus the outcome sustainable, as they will be based on flexibility and sensitivity to local conditions (Rao & Smyth, 2005). Many Northern NGOs have changed their focus from that of direct implementation of their business to a partnership approach with encouragement of local CSOs' to own projects. Not only do outcomes multiply, but southern NGOs also develop their capacity. The inclusion of local participation can enhance democratic potential, as well as it contributes to curbing corruption and making state more accountable to its citizens.

However, the problem is that Hudock (1999, p. 59) classifies Sierra Leone as an extreme case of resource dependence, pointing out that NGOs in the country have relied heavily on external resources and are 'largely donor driven and reflects outside interests rather than those of grassroots groups' due to the unfavourable political and economic climate. Therefore, there is a need to examine carefully the role of NGOs in Sierra Leone and the relationship with donors.

### 3.4.3 Faith-Based Organisations in Development

Another type of CSOs which has notably contributed to the development of education in recent years is FBOs. Religion is an important source of culture and influence on social structures. Colonialism brought Africa formal education through missionaries, and Islamic groups also set up formal and informal education in Africa. Therefore, it can be said that FBOs have a solid foundation of work in social development.

Belshaw, Calderisi and Sugden (2001, p. 3) point out that most of the poor in Africa are deeply religious and that they 'have spiritual resources to draw on in overcoming

their poverty'. The reason for this is that in many areas of Africa people trust religious leaders and respect religious norms and values as these are part of, or even central to, their lives. Religion provides consolation to people, including the poor, and it is part of 'their personal identity, the foundation of their sense of community, and the basis of their hope' (Belshaw et al. 2001, p. 3). Not surprisingly, in such cases, FBOs are a huge influence on conduct, ethics and morality. They also provide emotional, moral and spiritual support to people and can mobilise communities. Therefore, FBOs' involvement in the public arena can bring about positive development, especially in areas such as health and education, through sensitising their members.

Belshaw (2005) points out some of the advantages of FBOs' development work: (a) the long-term commitment to their memberships as they have served the community for a long time; (b) the majority of the members are likely to consist of the poorest and marginalised in LDCs; (c) links to sister organisations which possibly provide funding and expertise; (d) emphasis on the "golden rule" (treat others as you yourself wish to be treated) as a guide to social relationships; (e) spiritual and relational experiences which can raise self-regard; and (f) confidence in marginalised people and help them benefit from new opportunities. Thus, as FBOs have often worked in communities for a considerable period of time, demonstrating long-term commitment, people's trust in them is often high. Furthermore, local religious leaders, such as imams, sheikhs and pastors have moral and spiritual legitimacy through the dissemination of their views. These are excellent resources for community development.

In addition, their strong network can provide efficient support swiftly. For example, according to Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan (2003), with regards to a major earthquake in Cairo in 1992 and serious floods in Egypt in 1994, when the government's response was slow and ineffective, the Muslim Brotherhood and similar organisations provided shelters in mosques, and delivered effective welfare and relief services. During the civil war, which occurred from 1991 to 2002 in Sierra Leone, Muslim Aid helped some 11,000 of the most vulnerable, when 200,000 civilians were displaced to neighbouring Guinea (Muslim Aid, 2004).

There are however some potential weaknesses in the work of FBOs, including the restricted nature of beneficiaries groups, the possibility of a top-down manner in policies and action, and the risk of co-option into state-dominated political structures favouring elites in society (Belshaw, 2005). Moreover, there is a view that as FBOs tend to engage in long-term work, based on pursuing their religious mandate, they may be lacking in a focus on results and in professionalism. However, regarding the first point, Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan (2003) argue that the disbursement policy has become less strict, engaging projects targeting on the vulnerable. Considering FBOs' crucial advantages of being closer to the poor than other development actors and their strong moral and spiritual influences over people, their role in development work can be very significant and beneficial.

### 3.5 Sierra Leone's Development Partnership with Britain

As stated earlier, Sierra Leone's weak economy cannot provide enough resources to rebuild the country on its own. However, since Sierra Leone reached HIPC completion point in December 2006, and qualified for full debt relief, those owed to the IMF, the World Bank and the AfDB, as well as Paris Club creditors, accounting to \$1.6 billion, were cancelled. The remaining debt stock for Sierra Leone was \$530 million in 2007 (Eurodad, 2008, p. 10). This cancellation removes a great financial burden on the country. Sierra Leone, like other developing countries, is vulnerable to unanticipated external shocks, such as changes in international prices of primary exports, and imports. International prices of the country's major exports, notably cocoa, coffee, bauxite and rutile, continue to fluctuate and the trends are generally unfavourable. At the same time, the prices of imports, especially petroleum products, remain high. These unfavourable terms of trade lead to a shortage of foreign exchange, depreciation of the nominal exchange rate and to an increase in domestic prices (GoSL, 2005a). Annual average consumer price inflation in 2005 was 13.1 per cent (GoSL, 2006, p. 25).

Sierra Leone agreed a ten year long term partnership agreement for the country's development with the UK in 2002. The UK has led security initiatives and worked on aid programmes in key sectors, such as, the army, police, judiciary, and civil service,

because sustainable growth and democracy can be achieved only in a safe and secure environment which Sierra Leone needs to build. The UK has also enlisted the help of other members of the international community to provide aid.

However, to make the aid effective, Sierra Leone needs to work towards good governance. Weak governance over many years has been blamed for Sierra Leone's currently high incidence of poverty. An over-centralised system of administration and management of public financial resources in Freetown, an overburdened and ineffective judicial system, as well as weak and inefficient public and local government institutions, are seen as the root causes of poor governance, thriving corruption, mismanagement and inappropriate economic policies. Examples of mismanagement are numerous. One example of the need for good financial management and transparency is found in the case of financial tracking conducted with the support of DFID. This procedure revealed that 90 per cent of drugs could not be accounted for or did not reach their final destination (AAPPG, 2006, p. 65). The weak and inefficient civil service, with a poor record of service delivery, especially to the poor, is also a serious problem. Nepotism in the recruitment of key personnel, low salaries and poor conditions of service, limited training opportunities, abuse of public office and lack of enforcement of rules and regulations are some of the main challenges in this area. In addition, weak capacity to formulate sound economic policy exacerbates these failures (GoSL, 2005a).

In response to these problems, the government has adopted decentralisation and local empowerment as key strategies for promoting good governance and reducing poverty. There is clearly a need to increase efficiency, transparency and accountability in the public sector. Furthermore, local government can play a key role in delivering services more efficiently and increasing opportunities for people. Lind (2005, p. 24) argues that 'educational decentralization strengthens democracy in that it fosters strong local management and accountability, bringing government closer to the people'. In other words, decentralisation leads to the increasing involvement of local communities in decision-making processes. In the education sector, the School Management Committee (SMC), which was introduced in all primary schools by 2005, has this

purpose. The SMC plays a role not only in assisting the school's management, but also in linking more closely the school and local community (GoSL, 2004, p.31).

Furthermore, the government has committed itself to fight corruption at all levels in both the private and public sectors. Dr. Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, who was the President of Sierra Leone from 1996 until 2007, clearly regarded corruption as a national security issue (GoSL, 2005a), as it is 'the abuse of public office for private gain' is both a cause and symptom of poor governance (ACC, 2001, p. 3). In response, a national anti-corruption strategy was developed with the support of DFID, British Council and the World Bank, and the Anti-Corruption Committee (ACC) was established in 2000.

Moreover, currently, PRSP is a centerpiece of Sierra Leone's national development in which the UK has strongly supported. The government has developed and implemented a PRSP in a participatory manner in a way to engender progress towards achieving the MDGs. The PRSP has three main pillars: (a) promoting good governance, security and peace; (b) promoting pro-poor sustainable growth for food security and job creation; and (c) promoting human development. The government (GoSL, 2005a, p. 75) states the need for 'intervention through participation processes involving consultations with civil society and other community stakeholders in the country'. That is, the government, in partnership with donors, is committed to poverty reduction through employing a comprehensive and country-led approach and through the involvement of multiple stakeholders. Moreover, for the government, 'human resource development is the bedrock for poverty reduction and sustainable development' (GoSL, 2005a, p. 76). This is justified by the fact that 'rational investment in the health and education of the population and increasing access to basic services provide the basis for enhancing the capacities of the poor and reducing their vulnerability for sustained poverty reduction' (GoSL, 2005a, p. 76).

Institutional development and capacity building are strong bases of the PRSP, from which to promote an economic, political and social environment conducive to reducing poverty. In the education sector, it is the government that is ultimately responsible for

providing, promoting and guaranteeing basic education for all children, therefore, the government needs to function efficiently. Thus, DFID has been supporting Sierra Leone's good governance and capacity building programmes and has focused particularly on institutional development. Furthermore, some of DFID funds are being spent on support for a Civic Engagement Process, which aims at promoting people's participation in the process. It also aims to involve major stakeholders, including youth, women, the disabled, government officials, traditional and religious leaders, ex-combatants, and war victims (GoSL, 2005a, p. 15).

Regarding the education sector, since the end of the war, DFID has not directly provided assistance to operational projects for the education sector, but a significant proportion of its budget support has gone to the government of Sierra Leone for the provision of education services, including the teachers' salaries (DFID, 2007). Budget support as a form of aid provision was backed in the Paris Declaration, since it reduces high transaction costs and gives the governments of recipient countries more flexibility in taking policy decisions about which areas to prioritise (OECD, 2007). Sierra Leone received nearly one fifth of its budget in the form of external support in 2007, and this form of support comprises 35 per cent of all DFID aid to the country (Eurodad, 2008, p. 20). Therefore, the UK's aid modality is aligned with international frameworks in giving the government of Sierra Leone decision-making spaces.

Yet, it is worth noting that a key feature of the agreement is 'the use of agreed benchmarks for progress on reform in Sierra Leone' (DFID, 2004, p. 1), and the PRSP has 106 benchmarks which donors and the government of Sierra Leone have to monitor (Eurodad, 2008). This could make the work of the government difficult and amount to donor "conditionality" rather than a good "partnership". With the UK, Sierra Leone has quarterly meetings to review the progress on the benchmarks and indicators of progress. These meetings are organised to discuss 'the timing and size of the Government of the United Kingdom's transfers of funds for budgetary support, in the light of progress on the agreed benchmarks and indicators of progress' and 'the extent of support to other areas of the UK assistance programme in the light of progress on the benchmarks and indicators of progress' (DFID, 2004, p. 6).

Post-conflict Sierra Leone's development needs are immense and substantial external resources are needed in order to meet the goals of EFA and the MDGs. Shortfalls or delays in donor disbursements often force the government to cut expenditures, including those related to poverty reduction. The government has to resort to borrowing from the domestic banking system to fund key expenditures, thereby increasing the domestic debt burden and fuelling inflation. These trends negatively affect the welfare of the poor and increase the level of poverty (GoSL, 2005a). For example, the total of poverty-targeted expenditures stood at nearly Le31.7 billion for the first quarter of 2006, compared with a target of Le42.0 billion, which means there was a shortfall of Le11.6 billion (27.7 per cent). This resulted in significant shortfalls within the MEST. The government (GoSL, 2006, p. 67) states that 'complex requirements lead to delays in the commencement of project activities and failure to meet conditions for aid effectiveness'. Delayed disbursement of pledged resources affects the implementation of the PRSP. Therefore, as outlined in the Paris Declaration, harmonisation and aid effectiveness need to be increased in practice by both donors and the government of Sierra Leone.

### 3.6 Summary

This chapter discussed the dynamics of international development aid, with particular reference to the development of education. This review was justified by the global consensus regarding the need to work towards EFA and the MDGs, and without support from donors Sierra Leone's achievement of the goals in a timely manner cannot be unrealistic. In this respect, aid from both the North and Islamic networks has played a significant role in providing humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, while there is a strong connection between the international frameworks such as EFA, the MDGs and PRSPs and national education policy regarding development of education, the international commitment to those goals could lead to the formation of the donor community's increasing financial assistance to LDCs. Since achieving UPE requires substantial additional aid for SSA, the quality of aid and aid relationships between donors and recipients, are seen as highly important if aid is to be utilised effectively for

development purposes. Therefore, “ownership” on the part of LDCs and a good “partnership” in development are crucial considering the sustainability of development outcomes. The partnership is not just between states, but also includes civil society. Reviewing the role of NGOs and FBOs showed that CSOs can be a vehicle both for providing basic services as a supplement to government’s provision, as well as assisting democratisation processes through promoting local participation. The UK has worked in partnership with Sierra Leone for the purpose of the country’s development, in line with the frameworks of the PRSP, the MDGs and the Paris Declaration. The present chapter also discussed that development processes are not simple and straightforward in terms of timely aid provision or with regard to creating conditions conducive to meeting agreed benchmarks.

In order to make links between Sierra Leone’s education development, aid and history with particular reference to the influence of British colonialism, the next chapter reviews colonial history and primary education in Sierra Leone.

## Chapter 4 Background of Colonial History and Primary Education in Sierra Leone

### 4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline Sierra Leone's historical background, with particular reference to British colonialism and the contribution of missionaries to education. This is justified by the fact that together with the international frameworks of EFA, the MDGs and the PRSP and development aid, Sierra Leone's particular history has shaped the form of the current primary education system. Therefore, reviewing the history of the development of education is essential as a means to understanding the links between Sierra Leone's history with the expansion of Christian and Islamic missionaries and the current education system, as well as the country's close development relationship with Britain. The discussion also outlines indigenous cultural issues related to education with regard to how they have contributed to non-formal education in Sierra Leone. The conflicts that occurred in Sierra Leone from 1991 to 2002 devastated educational facilities, and this is one of the reasons which has made it difficult for Sierra Leone to achieve EFA by 2015. As a result, the ways in which the 11 year conflict has affected children is discussed, followed by a review of the current education system and the government's commitment to achieving the goals of EFA and the MDGs.

### 4.2 Colonial History and Missionaries' Contribution to Education

Britain began trade with West Africa for slaves, ivory, and gold in the 16th century. The numbers of slaves in Britain increased after the American War of Revolution in 1775. Britain encouraged slaves there to leave their masters and to join the British armies and obtain freedom. After the war, some went to London, while others went to the British colony of Nova Scotia. The black poor in Britain increased and became a social problem, with plans to help them existing as early as the 1770's (Fyle, 1981). Granville Sharp based his arguments on natural justice, arguing that the slave trade was

unnatural and unsupported by any universal law. Sharp's associates, Wilberforce, Venn, and others, joined him in the evangelical wing of the Church of England. Known as the Clapham Sect, this group supported the proposals for the Relief of the Black Poor and saw Sierra Leone as an opportunity for their "civilising" work and the Christianisation of Africa. The British government agreed to subsidise the resettlement process (Alie, 1990; Clarke, 1986).

Sharp, Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson set up the London-based Sierra Leone Company to introduce trade and enterprise among settlers. One of the objectives of the company was 'to introduce civilisation among the natives and to cultivate the soil by means of free labour' (Sumner, 1963, p. 6). Two thousand people went with him in 1791. All household heads were issued certificates granting them land there. In 1792 a school was started by the company and the content resumed mostly to the three R's and religion. The pupils were educated as Christians, and some became church leaders. Other graduates were given minor positions assisting the Company in the administration of the Colony (Alie, 1990; Fyle, 1981).

In the nineteenth century, the recaptives and settlers, except the British officials, gradually developed their own identity, calling themselves Krios and adopted the Krio language. While British influence on the Krio culture was exerted by the colonial government through Christianity and education, they also brought many African values into the culture. Thus, Krio culture and language had much English and Western influence along with African aspects (Fyle, 1981).

Founded in 1799, the CMS has its origin in the Anglican Church. The leading members were the great abolitionists who also founded the Sierra Leone Company (Sumner, 1963). In 1804 the CMS went to Sierra Leone as the first white missionary group. Through trade with West Africa, Britain obtained primary products such as palm oil, timber, ground nuts, cocoa, gold, and rubber (Frost, 1999). In 1808, the British Parliament undertook direct responsibility for the Crown colony and the company handed over the responsibility for education to the colonial government. However, in those days government assistance to education was smaller than the

missionaries' contributions, and it was the latter who initially worked on the development of education as part of their evangelisation. The principal objectives of the CMS were aimed at the "civilisation" of Africans through the formation of missionary schools, amongst other activities. The CMS had close ties with the company, as well as the support and patronage of the British upper and ruling classes. In 1816, Governor MacCarthy divided the colony into 16 parishes, appointing CMS missionaries as administrators (Clarke, 1986; Fyle, 1981). Beginning in 1818, the CMS was in charge of school development, appointed by the government. The government's main contribution to education was the provision of some educational grants for liberated African children.

The missionaries' work sometimes stalled because of frequent sickness and death for the local climate. Therefore, the CMS built a training centre for their local future ministry, as they thought Africans would withstand the climate better. The training institution was opened at Fourah Bay in Freetown in 1827, and the Fourah Bay College, affiliated with the University of Durham in Britain, became the first African university (Fyle, 1981; Wise, 1956). The college was mostly for the Krio elites who resided in Freetown, and they became the best educated and trained in West Africa. In fact, it was an important feature of Krio society to emphasise education. Education was a mark of achievement since it was a sign of being "civilised" (Fyle, 1981).

Having no common ethnic background, Krio took the British as their model. They were relatively prosperous, since the British administration relied on them. The early establishment of education in the colony gave them a good start and a number of Krio served in senior positions in the administration and the medical services. Furthermore, with the help of Sierra Leone's natural harbour, trade flourished and raised the prosperity of the professional bourgeoisie among the Krio. They built solid, well-furnished houses and gave their children a good education at missionary schools and universities in Britain (Alie, 1990; Fyle, 1981). They saw themselves as 'outposts of Western civilisation' (Kaplan, 1976, p. 93).

The CMS also set up the first secondary school in West Africa, CMS Grammar

School in Freetown in 1845, which attracted students from the interior and neighbouring countries. In 1849, the CMS also established the Annie Walsh Memorial School, the first secondary school for black African girls. The Sierra Leone colony was the centre of secondary education in West Africa<sup>2</sup> (Fyle, 1981). Sierra Leone developed and provided scholars and professionals, especially teachers, administrative officers, clergy, and personnel in other areas, serving in other English speaking countries, particularly in West Africa. Many former leaders of West African countries were educated in Sierra Leone. The superior educational resources of Freetown earned the colony the reputation of the “Mother of British West Africa” and the “Athens of West Africa” (Alie, 1990, p. 82; Hirsch, 2001, p. 23). Even today, these schools are regarded as the premier institutions in Sierra Leone.

In 1824, the government decided to take over management of the colony schools to raise academic standards and to open schools to all children. The reason for this was the colonial government regarded the education provided by the CMS as too “bookish”. Teachers were forbidden to teach religious instruction, which affected the CMS, as they heavily relied on such teaching. Partly in response to these changes, the CMS set up the Christian Institution to train African local teachers, and started to run their own schools in 1824. Although Christian missionaries continued to spread their evangelisation into the hinterland through education, some elders viewed Western educated children as disrespectful toward their parents, local traditions, and customs; they also perceived them as lacking motivation for the agricultural work that was the mainstay in the area. In this respect, the missionaries caused a cultural rift between the youth and the elders in local communities. The missionary schools promoted a new type of school to the locals where the students did not undergo traditional rituals in their secret societies (Clarke, 1986). Many tribes, such as the Temne and Mende, sent their children to Freetown for a better education, where the Krio families served as the children’s guardians. Although the missionaries continued working to convert

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<sup>2</sup> Although CMS played the leading and active role in their mission and school establishment, there were also other missionaries working in Sierra Leone such as Wesleyan Methodist Missionary society, American Missionary Association of the Congregational Church of United States, the United Brethren in Christ Church, African Methodist Episcopal Church, Roman Catholic missionary organizations, United Methodist, Free Church, and so on (Kaplan, 1976).

“educated Christian elites” through education, the indigenous people were not willing to abandon their lifestyle and culture (Clarke, 1986, p. 50).

In 1896 Britain divided Sierra Leone into two administrative units: the colony and the protectorate. The colony covered Freetown and the Sierra Leone Peninsula, while the latter included the hinterland. Both the African and the British captives in the colony traded with the hinterland. To the colony, trade was meant for mediating in disputes and sending missions into the interior. As trade developed, more people travelled between the colony and the hinterland, including some Muslim traders (Fyle, 1981).

Compared to the colony, which had over 100 churches with 20,000 members by the end of the First World War, mission schools were few in the protectorate. The widespread practice of polygamy, collective values in families and of local culture, in general tended to limit the strength of conversion to Christianity (Clarke, 1986). To provide more teachers for the primary schools, and also to nurture future paramount chiefs and uphold the indirect rule system, the colonial government established the Bo School in 1906 for the sons and nominees of chiefs (Alie, 1990; Fyle, 1981). The Bo School is still seen as a prestigious school in Sierra Leone. When field research was conducted, the present Principal, Bob Katta, informed me that the President of Sierra Leone in those days, Dr. Kabbah, wrote him a letter saying he was willing to participate in the ceremony and to offer a speech on the day of 100th year anniversary of the school in 2006, as an honorary member. To this day, Old Boys of the Bo School and honorary members enjoy privileged status and engage in extensive networking with each other.

In the early twenty century, the construction of the railway and roads from Freetown offered new opportunities for mission and school expansion, as well as more trade and development of the network overall. It brought the interior Western influences from Freetown and the dispatching of British troops, and encouraged youth in the protectorate to obtain education in the colony (Alie, 1990; Fyle, 1981). However, Alie (1990) points out that all these development were not primarily designed to benefit Sierra Leoneans, but the colonial power, Britain.

Britain embarked on the road to decolonisation soon after the Second World War ended. The reason for this was that Britain was weakened by the war and was unable to effectively resist the nationalist independence movement. In addition, the new superpowers – the US and the Soviet Union - opposed colonialism for different reasons. The UN also condemned colonialism. Sierra Leone achieved independence in 1961, not through violence or rebellion, but through diplomatic negotiations of a number of politicians, lawyers, and academics. At the Independence Constitutional Conference in London in 1960, it was agreed that Sierra Leone should become politically independent on the 27th of April, 1961 (Alie, 1990; Fyle, 1981).

It is worth emphasising the fact that after achieving independence, Sierra Leone maintained for a while a relatively high rate of school enrolment, especially in the Freetown area, due to the legacy of colonialism and government policy. In 1961 Sierra Leone attended the Conference of African Ministers of Education in Addis Ababa, and set the target of achieving compulsory primary education by 1980. In an effort to attain this target, the government made efforts in providing opportunities for primary education. Primary school enrolment almost doubled during the 1960s, from some 81,600 in the 1960-61 school year to some 154,900 in the 1969-70 school year, further increasing to 178,000 in the 1972-73 school year (Kaplan, 1976, p. 126). In the mid-1970's more than one out of every three children of primary school age could find a place in school. By 1984, 88 per cent of children in the Freetown area were attending school and 77 per cent of the girls were attending. This rate was very high in Africa at that time. Primary education spread from Freetown along the major roads. However, in the north of Sierra Leone the majority of the population is Muslim and some areas in this region had no formal primary schools until after 1960 (Peil, 1990).

### 4.3 Islamic Expansion and its Influence on Education in Sierra Leone

The influx of Islam into Sierra Leone began earlier than the British presence in the country. Before Britain founded the Crown colony in 1808, Islamic institutions and

doctrines had been rooted in the northern hinterland through the presence of Muslim traders (Skinner, 1997). Islam expanded into Sierra Leone through trade, missionaries, Jihad, and schools (Alie, 1990). Business with the colony appealed to these traders, and within 20 years they established the small communities of Mandinka, Serakuli, Banbara, Fula, Jakhanka, and others in Freetown or nearby. Muslim immigrants were landlords, traders, merchants, craftsmen, political organisers, and religious and educational specialists, and mixed with the locals (Skinner, 1997).

The most influential Islamic movement had taken place in the north of the interior, Jallonkadu, in the early 1700's. Jallonkadu was the home of the Yalunka and an area where Fula migrants from the north had been settling since the fifteenth century. The early Fula were not Muslim, but by the seventeenth century other Muslim Fula joined them. In 1727, Fula led by Karamokoh Alfa, declared a Jihad to convert the Yalunka by force, and set up a new government in Jallonkadu, naming it Futa Jallon. The Fula successfully expanded their territories through their strong power which they used to conquer others. Islam was spread not only through Jihad, but also through intermarrying and the formation of Koranic schools. For example, the Soso, who converted to Islam married Temne and took Temne children into their Koranic schools. The educated descendents of marriages between Soso and Temne became prosperous through trade. These new converts helped spread Islam in the North. Soso became more powerful than the Temne and extended their territories (Alie, 1990). As well as Koranic schools, there was also the Islamic University of Foday Tarawaly at Gbile, which a Koranic scholar, Foday Tarawaly, founded. By the 1870s, the University had several hundred men enrolled and also had female students. An Afro-West Indian scholar, Dr. Edward Blyden, described Gbile as 'a sort of university town, devoted altogether to the cultivation of Mohammedan learning' (Fyle, 1981, p. 32-33).

The reason why Islam was welcomed by local rulers was that Muslims could write in Arabic and were useful as clerks. Muslim scholars who were highly literate in Arabic earned a favourable place in the courts of interior kings, where they served as clerks, interpreters and advisers. Islam was also welcomed because it was often seen as an African religion that did not require big change on the part of the local people who

converted. Islam was regarded as the religion of the blacks, as opposed to Christianity, which was for the whites. That is, Islam did not oppose important traditional practices, such as polygamy, which Christianity condemned, although it limited polygamy to four wives. Islam was greatly infused with African traits in Sierra Leone. Furthermore, while Christianity was regarded as having a weakness in spiritual force, emphasising more secular thought, regarded as a cause of morality breakdown, Islam, in contrast, had deep social influence with family and community values. For these reasons, many people, especially in the north, opted to be Muslims. Furthermore, Muslims brought wealth in the form of trade and job opportunities for the local people. Their caravans needed guards, porters and guides, and local merchants and rulers gained wealth through trade (Alie, 1990; Fyle, 1981; Trimingham, 1953).

In 1921, during the later Islamic movement, there was an Ahmadiyya movement in Sierra Leone, originated from India. Seen as unorthodox by Sunni Muslims in Sierra Leone, the Ahmadiyya movement sought to purify Islam and limit the spread of Christianity (Clarke, 1986; Fisher, 1975). In 1932 the Sierra Leone Muslim Congress was created to unite various Muslim communities and to give a concerted voice in dealing with colonial Christian society. The Congress supported Muslim institutions and founded schools and colleges. In 1942 the Muslim Association was also set up by a breakaway group of highly educated Muslims from the Congress, who built their own school (Kaplan, 1976). The Ahmadiyya had opened six primary schools by 1959, and by the late 1960's their movement had expanded even more. The Muslim Brotherhood evolved from the Ahmadiyya and contributed to education in Sierra Leone, appealing to Egypt for assistance with the government of Sierra Leone's approval and Egypt began sending teachers in 1961. Egypt also provided scholarships to study and to receive technical training in Egypt, and funds to construct an Islamic religious establishment in Sierra Leone. Thus, Islamic missionaries and Islamic countries provided significant support for education in Sierra Leone (Clarke, 1986; Fisher, 1975; Kaplan, 1976).

Since Islam was winning support in the villages of resettled Africans, the CMS introduced a free school to compete with them when the Muslim primary schools

charged fees (Skinner, 1997; Proudfoot & Wilson, 1960). This indicates that there was competition between the CMS and Islamic institutions with regard to the spread of their associated schools. However, although both were in seek of converts from animists, the relationship between Christianity and Islam, was more or less amicable overall, as well as that between Islam and the colony. The CMS appointed Dr. Edward Blyden, whose sympathy for Islam was well-known, as an agent in Sierra Leone. He was intent on drawing something positive out of the kindred faiths of Christianity and Islam. Yet, this idea was radical to many in the CMS and they dismissed him. Blyden turned to secular patronage, Governor Kennedy (Sumner, 1983). His patronage of Islam led to the appointment of a local Muslim, Muhammad Sanusi, as a government Arabic writer. Later Blyden used his connection to set up a government-backed Muslim Board of Education and became its head. The colony was not hostile to Islam, rather it was concerned over the education of the Muslim population. The colonial government started to support Muslim schools in 1890. In 1902 there was a department for Muslim education set up in the colony, and the schools followed the regular primary curriculum, to which instruction in Arabic was added. Blyden also helped appoint a local Muslim teacher of Arabic at Fourah Bay College.

Indeed the colonial government had some sympathetic views towards Islam. For example, Governor Hay also assisted with land and grants for teachers' payment in Muslim schools and Muslims expressed their gratitude (Kaplan, 1976; Sanneh, 1983; Sumner, 1983). Later on this amicable policy spread to the CMS, which opened a school at Dan Street, Freetown for Muslims. The education was given free on condition that the pupils enrolled would accept Christian religious instruction without requiring conversion. The school was successful, and its influence led to friendly relations between Muslims and Christians and brought about a new interpretation of the Christian doctrine. However, this work was discontinued by opposition from the Sierra Leone Church Mission in 1908 and the government's financial difficulties resulted in reducing assistance after the mid-1920's. The Muslim population increased steadily in Sierra Leone; its proportion to the total population in the colony was 10 per cent in 1891, 26 per cent in 1931, and 30 per cent in 1950 (Trimingham, 1953, p. 13-14). Government-aided Muslim schools increased significantly in the mid-1970s,

operated by the Sierra Leone Muslim Congress, the Muslim Brotherhood and the missionary Ahmadiyya, amongst others (Kaplan, 1976; Sumner, 1983; Trimmingham, 1953).

#### 4.4 Secret Societies and Indigenous Beliefs

Although Christians comprise roughly 30 per cent and Muslims 60 per cent of the population, the remaining 10 per cent profess indigenous beliefs. To this day, some Sierra Leoneans follow and respect traditional values, and these have contributed to non-formal education in Sierra Leone. One unique social institution Sierra Leone has is “secret societies”<sup>3</sup>. Although called as such, they are political, educational and social institutions. They are called Poro or Wunde for men and Sande or Bundo for women, according to region (Fyle, 1981). The Krio do not join or belong to these Bundo or Poro societies, because they are descended from a hybrid mixture of ancestors who settled in Freetown and are distinguished from other indigenous ethnicities (Alie, 1990; Forde, 1975; Fyle, 1981).

Fyle (1981, p. 65) describes these secret societies as a combination of ‘religion, recreation, festivity and education’. Forde (1975, p. 65) also refers to them as providing as ‘education for living’ with the main purpose of training the youth for adulthood within the society. Forde (1975, p. 65-66) argues that although pre-colonial Africa did not have formal schools, this did not mean that children were not educated, but rather that the education was ‘more directly relevant to the society in which the child was growing up’. The reason they are called secret societies is because their activities are confined to members of a particular sex in a specific society. Aliens are not allowed to become members.

When initiated, girls are secluded in the bush for a year or so, although today the seclusion is for shorter periods because pupils attend formal schools. Initiation involves learning domestic science skills, such as cooking, cleanliness, child care,

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<sup>3</sup> Although some authors such as Fyle (1981) use the past tense to describe these societies and traditional beliefs in their literature, this thesis uses the present tense, as these societies still survive, though on a much smaller scale than before.

hygiene, songs, how to be hardworking and modest and other duties of womanhood. That is, the emphasis is placed on preparation for their future roles as wives and mothers. The initiation requires circumcision, because this is supposed to reduce sexual excitement and keep girls chaste. The virtue of faithfulness to the husband is in high regard, and girls' virginity brings great honour to their families. The ceremony accompanying the end of initiation takes place after harvest time when there is plenty of food. Parents and suitors try to outdo each other in demonstrating their status with lavish gifts, feasts, and other means. The girls are then eligible for marriage and the whole society accepts them as "full adults" (Forde, 1975; Fyle, 1981).

Male societies are more political, as major decisions are taken in the society bush. When young men are initiated, they learn a series of activities of manhood such as swimming, farming, fishing, fighting, hunting, house building, bridge building, carving, palm-tree tapping, the use of various herbs to cure ailments, dancing, drumming, story telling, and rankings in the society. That is, their training includes physical education, occupational skills, social and cultural education, and knowledge of the vicinity (Forde, 1975). These trainings lasted from a year to five years. Today, with more boys going to formal schools, as is the case with girls, the period has been curtailed to as little as a few hours or at most a few days or weeks. When their training is complete, they are supposed to be eaten by the devil that is part of the spirit of the society. They are then reborn as adults and given new names. The ceremony ends in the same way as that of females, with great festivities, involving singing and dancing, and the whole community welcomes them back (Alie, 1990; Forde, 1975; Fyle, 1981).

Regarding indigenous beliefs, some people believe in the existence of a supreme God, who is usually appreciated through lesser gods such as rocks, hills, trees, or some carvings. For example, the Mende call the supreme God, Mahin Ngewoh. God is Kru Masaba for the Temne, and Kanu Masala for the Limba. They also have God or spirits in many aspects of life, represented by trees and stones, to which people feel close. Elaborate ceremonies related to the indigenous religion are carried out on some occasions, such as births and deaths (Alie, 1990; Fyle, 1981).

As Christianity and Islam spread, the traditional aspects have gradually disappeared. In the north in particular, Islam had made significant inroads into the local traditions by the nineteenth century. Many started mixing their traditional customs with Islam (Fyle, 1981). Furthermore, today formal education curriculum includes domestic science and vocational trainings, which the traditional society also provides. This is another reason for the decline of the scale of secret societies.

#### 4.5 Effect of the War on Children

The current insufficient access to, and quality of, education in Sierra Leone is largely due to poverty which has worsened since the 1991 to 2002 civil war. It had many negative effects in the country and people in general and children in particular. In March 1991, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), led by Foday Sankoh with the support of Charles Taylor of Liberia, involved in the illegal trade of diamonds, arms, and timber, began attacking villages in eastern Kailahun. This warfare spread to other parts of the nation as the rebels attempted to overthrow the government. They terrorised, looted, and burned villages, devastated infrastructures, and raped, mutilated, and killed civilians. The Economic Community of West African States Military Observer Group (ECOMOG), British troops, and the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) supported the government. The Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL)<sup>4</sup>, a national multi-religious organisation dedicated to promoting cooperation among the religious communities for peace, greatly contributed to ending the war and mediated in negotiations between the government and rebels as well (IRCSL leaflet). The civil war officially ended on the 28th January, 2002, when a Declaration of the End of the War was issued.

The decade of war resulted in 20,000 deaths, over two million displacements, and thousands injured through human rights abuses (GoSL, 2005a). The social, economic,

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<sup>4</sup> IRCSL is comprised of the major religious organisations from the two main religions in Sierra Leone, namely Christianity and Islam. They include Council of Churches of Sierra Leone, which has 44 Christian organizations, the Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone, Pentecostal Churches Council, and the Roman Catholic Church, while Islamic Community includes Federation of Sierra Leone Islamic Organisations, Federation of Muslim Women Associations of Sierra Leone, Muslim Brotherhood Islamic Mission, Sierra Leone Muslim Congress, Sierra Leone Muslim Missionary Union, Supreme Islamic Council, and United Council of Islam (IRCSL leaflet).

and physical infrastructure of the country was mostly destroyed and the level of poverty worsened. There was a mass exodus of skilled manpower. About 50 per cent of health and educational facilities were vandalised, and local infrastructure and community sites, including markets, stores, rice mills and community service buildings were destroyed (GoSL, 2005a). Regarding primary schools, over 80 per cent of them across the country were completely destroyed or heavily damaged (Bennell et al., 2004). Sierra Leone was divided between rebel control of over three-quarters of the country and government control of the rest, with the rebels holding onto lucrative mining and agricultural regions, while the Freetown government largely depended on foreign assistance, mainly from the UK (Kamanda, 2002).

Children were victims of the war in more ways than one. Many were assailants, though not by choice: boys were required to be soldiers, and girls were forced to be soldiers, wives, or subjects of humiliation through rape or mutilation. Denov's (2005) research on ex-child soldiers shows that after children were abducted or forcibly inducted into the RUF, they had multiple roles such as domestic work, sexual slavery and combat activities. Failing to perform the role(s) in an efficient manner often led to punishment, and even death. Sexual violence to girls included forced marriages to rebels. Some girls who became pregnant from rape, often gave birth, although babies frequently died soon after. It is reported that three to four thousand children were forced to take up arms in the conflict (Heeren, 2004). Children were also manipulated by promoting their rank to commander, by giving them lectures on the necessity of overthrowing the corrupt government, and by inculcating solidarity to make them feel as if they were part of a new family and community (Denov, 2005). They were victims of separation, displacement, violence, and there was an absence of educational facilities and opportunities, shelter, food, health and recreational facilities. Even after the end of the war, the vulnerability of children has remained very acute. They had difficulty going through re-integration into families and communities. Girls in particular, faced greater potential for community rejection. The experiences of sexual violence led to girls being labelled as "unmarriageable", often leaving them marginalised socially and economically in societies 'where girls are valued primarily for their future roles as wives and mothers, and where marriage is the best option to obtain economic security

and protection' (Denov, 2005, p. 8).

Furthermore, as children are one of the most powerless groups in society, they suffer a heavy burden of poverty and deprivation through not getting an education, in addition to health and nutrition deprivation and having to engage in paid or unpaid labour. Many became street children as a result of the conflict (GoSL, 2005a). Tens of thousands of pupils were denied access to schools through displacement and the threat of violence. Although the government stipulates that children should attend primary school for six years, from age 6 to 12, there were, and still are, many children who missed the chance of schooling or started their schooling at a much later age (GoSL, 2004). Considering that education can be a means to tackle poverty, the lack of education means loss of a chance for a better future. It is necessary to include these children in the education system.

#### 4.6 The Current Education System in Sierra Leone and the Government Commitment to EFA

Although the weak economy and experience of the civil war represent great hardships for Sierra Leone, the government has been in the process of rebuilding the education sector with the strong commitment to achieving EFA. There are three types of primary schools in Sierra Leone: (a) government schools; (b) government-assisted schools; and (c) private schools. The government schools are set up and managed by, or on behalf of, the government and often owned by the local government and district council. About 80 per cent of all schools are government-assisted schools, established by mostly religious organisations (about 75 per cent), NGOs or communities, and recognised and assisted by the government, in terms of the provision of school materials, teachers' salaries, and subsidies, in the same way as government schools. Private schools are established and run by private individuals and managed by private business without receiving public funds. All types of schools use the same curriculum.

Although the official language of Sierra Leone is English, there are at least 13 distinct vernacular languages spoken (MEST, 2007, p. 3). Four languages – Krio, Limba,

Mende, and Temne – have been promoted to national language status and they are also languages of wider communication (Francis & Kamanda, 2001). Under the Education Policy of 1995, the use of Sierra Leone languages is recommended during the first three years of primary schooling. However, from Class 4, English is used.

The government has been working for the improvement of access to primary education, particularly after the Jomtien Conference on EFA in 1991. The Conference promised financial and technical assistance if LDCs adopted the new programme set out based on achieving EFA. In Sierra Leone's case, the plan for UPE was approved by UNICEF, and was commissioned with the help of UNESCO and implemented in late 1993 (Banya & Elu, 1997). Under the UPE scheme, the new system of 6-3-3-4, which entails six years of primary education, three years of junior secondary education, three years of senior secondary education and four years of university education, was adopted. Before this system, Sierra Leone's education system was based on the old British education system of 7-5-2-4, which had been used since colonial times. The present system was set to unify other Anglophone countries of West Africa, such as Benin, Gambia, Ghana, and Nigeria. There is also a common examination system when pupils finish their education. For example, at the end of the sixth year of primary education, pupils take the NPSE for entry into secondary school. Successful students are placed in a secondary school of their choice. Unlike the previous system, those who cannot pass the examination need to repeat the final year and prepare for the examination the next year. The new system gradually replaced the old one and featured new curricula and syllabi (GoSL, 2004; MEST, 2007).

The old system and curriculum were based on a type of grammar school education and were for degree purposes, designed to train civil servants for British colonialism. However, needs have shifted. The new system is designed to 'rapidly enhance literacy and improve the educational opportunities for women and girls, rural dwellers and those disadvantaged in the acquiring of formal education', and 'introduce into the curriculum new subjects such as indigenous and Sierra Leone Study which shall give and enhance a proper and positive understanding of Sierra Leone' (GoSL, 2004, p. 4). In other words, the new curricula reflect the values and needs of Sierra Leonean pupils

and societies, strengthening more technical elements than before. Many vocational institutions are set up to provide training in skills such as soap making, gara dyeing, tailoring, computer study and engineering. *The Education Act 2004* (GoSL, 2004, p. 5) states that every citizen shall have the right to basic education designed to:

1. Provide facilities for all citizens to be literate and numerate and help them to cultivate the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to earn a good living.
2. Improve the social and health circumstances of the citizen.
3. Inculcate patriotism.
4. Enable the citizen to understand the complexities and opportunities of the modern world.

Overall, primary education aims to give children socialisation opportunities and an elementary introduction of improving and enriching their own circumstances, and to contribute meaningfully to life in their community and nation and thus to development (GoSL, 2004).

Furthermore, in order to achieve EFA and the MDGs, the government introduced a FPE policy in 2000. The tuition fee of Le500 per term was abolished in 1999 to encourage better access to primary education (Bennell et al., 2004). Under this new policy, the government began paying tuition fees, providing teaching and learning materials and core textbooks to all children in classes 1-3, extending this to classes 4-6 in 2002. Since 2001, the government has borne the responsibility of the NPSE fee. The government set a fine not exceeding Le500,000, imprisonment, or both, for a parent or a guardian who neglects to send their child to school (GoSL, 2004). The government has kept promoting access to basic education with a focus on girls, as part of its commitment to achieving EFA by 2015 (GoSL, 2005a). Moreover, *the Education Act* (GoSL, 2004) states that the MEST may fund from time to time grants-in-aid for the provision of meals and transportation, and medical and dental services to children attending government schools and government assisted schools, as well as establishing and maintaining more schools and providing regular inspection and supervision to schools.

These government efforts led to an increase in the net primary enrolment rate to 63 per cent in 2004 (MEST, 2007, p. 22). However, the completion ratio is 55 per cent nationally with 64 per cent for boys and 45 per cent for girls, and the repetition rate is 12 per cent (MEST, 2007, p. 19-20). Faced with these negative statistics, the MEST (2007, p. 22) has made a stronger commitment to achieving UPE and Universal Primary Completion (UPC), and set the following goal:

To provide six year of good quality universal primary education to all children of primary school-going age (6-11 years) and the over-aged who had missed out – including those with special needs and ensure that they all complete with necessary knowledge and skills.

Furthermore, to achieve UPE and UPC, the MEST (2007, p. 22) set the following specific objectives:

1. To ensure that all children enter primary schooling at the age of 6 years
2. To ensure that schools provide a safe environment for all children especially with regard to sexual exploitation and abuse and discrimination
3. To improve the access of girls to and completion of primary education with the aim of attaining gender parity
4. To ensure that the vulnerable and disadvantaged children including orphans, children in institutions, those with special needs and in need of protection, enroll and stay in school
5. To ensure that all children starting primary education learn in a healthy and hygienic environment and finish school
6. To improve the quality of primary education nationwide
7. To ensure provision for the mentally challenged at the primary level

Overall, the government sees expansion of access to, and quality of, basic-education, with a focus on education for females and the vulnerable, as the priority in the education sector. The commitment is shown in expenditure too. The government is set to gradually increase the share of education expenditure from 3.9 per cent of GDP in 2004 rising to 4.7 per cent in 2010 and to 5.5 per cent in 2015 (MEST, 2007, p. 38).

However, Sierra Leone's weak economy has affected primary education negatively. In primary schools, delayed payment of teachers' salaries, increasing teachers' unemployment, escalating qualification for the same duties and increasing training costs are problematic. Currently, applicants are officially required to have a Teacher's Certificate (TC), Higher Teacher's Certificate (HTC), Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Science in Education or/and Postgraduate Diploma in Education. As a way to address this, inspectorate officials are bribed to allow the employment of untrained and unqualified teachers (Banya, 1991). Additionally, the shortage of supplies, particularly chalk, textbooks, and copybooks is a serious problem. Moreover, the introduction of FPE led to an increase in student enrolment, exacerbating the problem of classroom capacity. The teacher-pupil ratio has risen to a level where meaningful learning is almost impossible, and there are some schools where each classroom has up to three or even four classes taking place, due to the shortage of school buildings. To reduce this, double-shift schools are common. Because of the rapid increase in pupils there is a need to employ more teachers. The MEST wants to employ at least another 5,000 teachers. However, there is a limitation due to 'staff ceilings' agreed with the IMF, which resulted in about 20 per cent of primary school teachers at government and government-assisted schools not being on the public sector payroll. As a result, they work as volunteers or receive very little money from schools (Bennell et al., 2004). Due to the government's inadequate ability to support education in terms of finance, logistics, and personnel, schools charge user fees to cover running costs (Banya, 1991; Bennell et al., 2004).

User fees are contrary to the government's FPE. The government clearly states that basic education shall be free in government and government-assisted schools, and that even private schools shall not charge unreasonably high fees (GoSL, 2004). Teachers' working conditions and salaries are very serious issues, with most primary school teachers living in poverty. Bennell et al. (2004) point out that in real terms their salaries have declined by as much as a half since the mid 1990's. The lack of relationship between teacher qualification, experience and their pay, as well as teachers' after-school tuition has affected their commitment to teaching in official classes (Bennell et al., 2004). These show that how Sierra Leone has its post-conflict

phase and confronts difficulties in primary education sector.

## 4.7 Summary

This chapter explored issues which have shaped the current configuration of primary education in Sierra Leone. Schools and education developed greatly as a result of Christian missionaries' involvement during the British colonial rule. Islamic missionaries also contributed to the development of education. For people in Sierra Leone, Islam served as a bulwark against British expansion and as a buffer against Western Christian invasion. Although there was a competitive element to some extent in seeking converts between Christian and Islamic missionaries, the relationship between the colonial government, the CMS and Islam in general were reasonably amicable. Traditional secret societies and indigenous beliefs with a significant role in training and education, have been greatly replaced by the expansion of formal education and of both religions. This chapter also reviewed the impact of the long brutal civil war on children's education. Many lost the chance of schooling or have had to start their education at an older age. The government has strongly committed to achieving EFA and the MDGs, and has enacted education reforms including the new education system, new curricula, syllabi and FPE.

In order to analyse theoretically Sierra Leone's national education and development policies, which are intrinsically intertwined with the international frameworks of EFA, the MDGs and the PRSP, the next chapter discusses the theoretical framework, reviewing Modernisation theory, Dependency theory and Postcolonial theory.

# Chapter 5 Theoretical Framework

## 5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the tenets of three development theories used in this study, namely the Modernisation theory, the Dependency theory and the Postcolonial theory. It also discusses the ways in which these theories are influential in development modality and national policy making, linked to the international frameworks of EFA, the MDGs and the PRSPs. The reason why these theories were chosen for this study is, that they have significant influence on international frameworks and policy making related to international development in general and the development of education in particular. Understanding these theories and their powerful influence helps examine Sierra Leone's overall development relationships between donors and recipients in general, and Sierra Leone and Britain in particular. In addition, in relation to my research as to the impact of aid on "partnership" and "ownership", the discussion also aims to highlight the impact of the relationship between donors and recipients in the development of primary education in Sierra Leone. This chapter consists of a review of Modernisation theory, Dependency theory and Postcolonial theory, followed by links between theories and education and development policies, as well as theoretical approaches to Sierra Leone's attempts to achieve UPE in the 1960's and today. Examining these government plans and acts are very important, because they are strategic documents that show the foundations of Sierra Leone's education system and reveal the government's vision and objectives regarding the provision of education in general and policy making in particular.

## 5.2 Modernisation Theory

Modernisation theory was influential during the 1950's and 1960's in particular. The Modernisation school argues that the process of modernisation requires the embracing of capitalism, the prioritisation of economic growth, and an increase in political capability, which will lead a developed society, using Western countries as models. Modernisation theorists argue that 'economic growth is seen to lead to decreases in

inequality, because it fosters economic differentiation and diversification, which allows wealth to “trickle down” from elites to the mass of the population’ (Rubinson, 1976, p. 638). The theory is based on the notion of ‘a direct causal link between five sets of variables, namely, modernising institutions, modern values, modern behavior, modern society, and economic development’ (Fagerlind & Saha, 1989, p. 16-17). The Modernisation school believes in a linear process of development, whereby LDCs adopt DCs’ development processes. Taking on Western values, norms and institutions can lead to breaking the cycle of underdevelopment. Kuster (1999, p. 7) argues that the Modernisation approach regards colonialism as ‘an evolution of traditional, undeveloped, and static cultures towards a dynamic, civilised, and differentiated modern society’. Modernisation theorists believe that Western values benefit LDCs, and that the crucial point in terms of bringing about increased productivity and higher living standards is economic development.

For a society to develop economically and socially, Modernisation theorists stress that it ‘must be composed of a modern population, meaning modern values, beliefs and behavior’ because ‘advanced societies contain high proportions of individuals with a high need for achievement, while the populations of less advanced societies contained lower proportions’ (Fagerlind & Saha, 1989, p. 50-51). They argue that social and economic development could occur after ‘an appropriate proportion of the population held modern attitudes, values, and beliefs about work, quality of life, the ability and desirability to control one’s environment, and other related values’ (Fagerlind & Saha, 1989, p. 51).

Proponents of capitalist theory thought that ‘inequality is a natural, short run outcome of the development process’, and as ‘the level of development increases, there is a broad expansion of the middle class, and hence a decline in equality’ (Vengroff, 1977, p. 17). The proponents of Modernisation theory assumed the “backwardness” of the Third World as an “original” backwardness that could be overcome by the transmission of capitalism and introduction of Western values. However, Leys (1996, p. 111) argues that the ‘backwardness of Africa was a new form of backwardness, the product of colonialism’. Fagerlind and Saha (1989) also point out some criticisms of

the theory: (a) it is problematic to prove all of the five causal variables are necessary for development in LDCs; (b) an underlying assumption that modern values are incompatible with traditional values is problematic; (c) individuals having modern values do not necessarily promote socio-economic development in the whole of society; and (d) the concept of modernisation is ideologically biased and ethnocentric, because it is equated with Westernisation. Furthermore, many studies show that increases in income do not necessarily lead to greater equality with high rates of economic growth, but rather inequality increases along with growth. That is, “trickle down” effects remain highly questionable (Rubinson, 1976).

Considering education, the Modernisation school argues that education plays a significant role in the social and economic development of a society. Fagerlind and Saha (1989, p. 52-53) point out that ‘education, particularly schooling, was perhaps the most important agent for transforming a traditional society into a modern one’, because ‘schooling has a modernising effect on the ways that people think, and consequently the ways they behave’. Shipman (1971, p. 32) sees education as a catalyst of modernisation, and ‘a weapon for an attack on established authority and a canker within traditional belief systems’. This is because education is the means by which populations are mobilised. Western formal education is regarded by Modernisation theorists as ‘an instrument of progress and a means of opening up seemingly conservative structures and belief systems to the values and attitudes declared necessary for modern socio-economic development along the lines of capitalist industrial countries’ which is ‘a path of human civilisation and modernity’ (Kuster, 1999, p. 8).

This argument sounds plausible, but can also be criticised: (a) it does not explain the external influences on education and downplays negative outcomes that education could contribute to; (b) the linear view does not consider confusions or conflicts in the uneven process of the transformation of education in the service of modernisation; and (c) ‘the causal chain linking education with the formation of modern values, attitudes and behavior to social and economic development’ can only be possible with extreme caution, and ‘social psychological modernisation without comparable structural

changes, both within and without societies, may create more problems' (Kuster, 1999, p. 8). That is, the relationship between educational attainment and social transition depends on both the country's political will and ability to provide education, as well as external influences. The reason for this is that when inequality persists, education cannot benefit the poor and marginalised in a genuine way. Yet, Modernisation school argues that development can occur through social mobility when people have formal education.

### 5.3 Dependency Theory

Dependency theory originated from Latin America during the 1950's, and developed in response and opposition to the prevailing Modernisation theory. Contrary to the latter, the Dependency school argues that 'inequality is greater in areas that are more economically and politically dependent' and 'dependency increases the chances of economic development decrease', although there could be short term benefits from dependent capitalist development (Vengroff, 1977, p. 17). Dependency theory was prominent during the early 1970's in intellectual circles, particularly in Europe and some LDCs, to the extent that even some unlikely international organisations such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the World Bank, began to accommodate some of its influences (Leys, 1996).

Frank (1975, p. 2-3) argues that "colonial", "imperial", and "capitalist" all refer to a set of relationships, and more importantly [exist] as a system of relations, in which domination, self-subordination, exploitation, and of course, development and underdevelopment, play a central part'. Dependency theory fundamentally questions the ability of capitalism to deliver the benefits of development to the periphery. The school argues that the underdevelopment of the Third World is a product of Western development and the world capitalist system. Frank (1975) argues that it is the capitalist system and colonialism in particular, as a manifestation of capitalism, which causes the pattern of development-underdevelopment internationally, and also at the national level. Fagerlind and Saha (1989, p. 22) argue that

The underlying assumption of this theory is that development and

underdevelopment as relational concepts within and between societies are inversely related. The underdevelopment of a region or society is seen as a process which is linked to the development of another region or an outside society.

The Dependency school presupposes that LDCs are highly dependent, as they are penetrated by foreign capital invested in raw materials in an exploitative process (Bradshaw, 1988). Ahiakpor (1985, p. 536) points out that as LDCs have relatively low levels of capital and are skill poor, 'technologies from developed countries are supposed to leave them alienated in the production process as well as deprived of a large share of the value added in production'. Moreover, foreign technologies also compete unfairly with and hurt local production techniques, creating a pool of unemployable "marginalised" people, while at the same time facilitating the emergence of a small group of peripheral economic and political elites in association with foreign investments (Bradshaw, 1988). That is, for Dependency theorists, underdevelopment in LDCs was not internally generated, but created by global political and economic structures that benefit DCs. The Dependency school rejects the linear process of development associated with Modernisation theory, and argues that the ties with the West disrupted the process of development in the Third World, which would have achieved progress gradually if colonialism had not occurred. DCs exploited LDCs, and the current global structure keeps LDCs in a dependent relationship with DCs in the name of development. Africa was made a satellite of the international capitalist system, tied to conditional relationships with DCs. The current global situation is characterised by neo-colonialism based on a neo-liberal economy.

However, Dependency theory has been subjected to heavy criticism. The most important among them is, in spite of their implication of an alternative course of development, superior to what at present exists, that Dependency theory fails to specify the cause, and 'some of what is happening under development is, after all, still development: painful, wasteful and ruthless, like early capitalism everywhere, but development none the less' (Leys, 1996, p. 114). Fagerlind and Saha (1989, p. 24-25) also sum up some criticisms: (a) Dependency theory's heavy focus on external factors

and neglect of the internal structures of underdevelopment; (b) considering the period of dependency in Latin America outlined by Frank, there is a confusion of two concepts - the capitalist mode of production and participation in a world capitalist economic system; (c) the fact from some studies that foreign investment, trade, and aid from DCs to LDCs contribute to economic growth in LDCs reveals a form of 'dependent development' rather than 'the development of underdevelopment'; (d) there is no explanation of the participation of non-capitalist countries in the development of LDCs, and the forms of dependency and underdevelopment that exists within LDCs; (e) it has failed to provide a strategy for development without dependency; and (f) there is no explanation of how elites in LDCs who tie up with DCs 'can be made to ignore their own interests and positions in favour of those of society as a whole'.

With regard to the connection with education, the Dependency school concerns itself about a possibility of education reinforcing the backwardness of undeveloped societies. Abraham (1978) argues that West Africans developed selective cultivation of food crops some centuries before Europeans came. Colonialism created a myth of Africa being the "Dark Continent" until Europeans discovered it and "opened it up" to international capitalism. This myth is taught to Sierra Leoneans through education. For Abraham (1978, p. 16), colonial domination led to a distortion of African history, with schoolboys and university graduates still stating that 'Pedro de Cintra discovered Sierra Leone in 1462', despite the fact that Sierra Leone had existed before Westerners discovered it. Therefore, it could be said that Dependency theorists see education 'as reinforcing the dependency condition of less developed societies' (Fagerlind & Saha, 1989, p. 24). Dependency theory does not deny that education promotes modernisation. However, they question whether or not modernisation contributes to autonomous national development. This is because development is not a linear transition from tradition to modernity, and traditional and local cultural values are not necessarily obstacles to bringing about development. Fundamentally, it is exploitative capitalism which causes development and underdevelopment.

## 5.4 Postcolonial Theory

A recent trend in the practice of development has been towards adopting approaches which are rights-based, participatory, country-led and partnership-based, as seen within the frameworks of the MDGs and PRSPs. The postcolonial approaches have influenced on this trend. Since the 1990's there has been an increasing awareness of the limitations of both Modernisation and Dependency theories and postcolonial critics have challenged their cultural representations of the Third World. Postcolonialism is used to describe and interpret 'a global "condition" or shift in the cultural, political, and economic arrangements that arise from the experiences of European colonialism' (Tikly, 1999, p. 605).

The foundation of the Postcolonial view is found in *Orientalism*, written by Edward Said in 1978. Since its publication, colonial discourse has been more widely discussed and this has led to the development of what has come to be denoted as Postcolonial theory. Said argues that the image of the Third World had been created by the West as early as the colonial period. Said (1978, p. 308) points out the distinction between the Orientalist and Oriental – while the Orientalist writes about the Oriental, the Oriental is written about by the Orientalist. The former has 'the power to observe, study, and so forth', while for 'the latter, passivity is the presumed role'. Said (1978, p. 1-2) points out that the 'Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience'; while the European is rational, virtuous, mature, and normal, the Oriental is irrational, deprived, fallen, childlike, and different. According to Said (1978, p. 42), in order to maintain the desired image of the West, during the 19th century it was a common practice for Britain to retire administrators in India and elsewhere when they reached the age of 55. Thus, Orientals would not see a degenerated Westerner. That is, all Westerners the Orientals saw needed to be 'a vigorous, rational, ever-alert young Raj<sup>5</sup>' in order to help create Orientalism based on Western superiority and Oriental inferiority. In this way, the West invented not only an image for itself but also one of the Orient. Said (1978, p. 7) argues that 'the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in

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<sup>5</sup> Raj: the period of British Rule in India (*The Oxford Paperback Dictionary* Fourth Edition 1994, p. 659)

and outside Europe' and it is reconstructed by reiterating 'European superiority over Oriental backwardness'.

With regard to education, such notion of superiority and inferiority was maintained through the tradition of learning and education (Said, 1978). Postcolonialists emphasise the importance of culture, and pay attention to power, hegemony, and domination in relationships. Despite colonialism, societies in Africa have retained cultural diversity, as colonialism did not totally destroy indigenous institutions, although it replaced or distorted them (Williams, 1998). Postcolonial studies decode complicated colonial heritages coexisting in society, and provide 'a necessary basis for developing a less Eurocentric and more comprehensive account of the effects of globalisation on education' (Tikley, 1999, p. 609).

Postcolonialists regard Mother Tongue Education (MTE) as a key issue in this process. Tikley (1999, p. 615) points out that 'One of the most significant legacies of colonialism in education has been the hegemony and subsequent globalisation of the languages of colonisers and the underdevelopment of indigenous languages'. Although UNESCO advances MTE, most former African colonies are reluctant to use MTE as a medium of instruction mainly because 'literacy and good education are equated only to communicative skills in English', and English 'keeps the gates to all forms of access' (Kamanda, 2002, p. 198). In Sierra Leone, while the publication of a new *Education Policy* in 1995 recommended 'the use of Sierra Leonean languages as medium of instruction during the first three years of primary schooling', 'the continued unchallenged use of English as the only instructional medium for advanced primary, secondary, and tertiary education' remained central (Kamanda, 2002, p. 198). The reason for this is that English brings numerous benefits, including better chances for future employment. In this respect, Kamanda (2002, p. 197) argues that 'One legacy of colonial language policy and attitude to MTE was the underdevelopment of Sierra Leonean languages, negative attitudes to their teaching and positive attitudes to English'.

Furthermore, colonialism undermined local knowledge and distorted minds and

identities of the colonised. Wane (2002) argues that postcolonial studies emancipate indigenous technological knowledge from a subordinate position. Wane (2002, p. 60) argues that 'African women's knowledge is buried underneath the colonial legacy and Western model of technological advancement', despite the fact that indigenous women are 'environmentalists, energy conservationists, ecologists, and agriculturists'. Colonialism and capitalism were impetuses for the rural people to move to cities to take part in the intrusive international market. Moreover, Western-based educational systems have continued to 'interfere with learning the processes of indigenous knowledge' because they 'have begun to question indigenous technological legitimacy, value and validity insofar as they do not contribute to participation in the cash economy' (Wane, 2002, p. 63). The author (2002) argues that formal education and its inherent rewards have made the rural poor lose confidence in indigenous knowledge, which have become devalued in their minds. However, for Wane (2002, p. 63-64), 'African women cannot completely divorce themselves from the outside world', and once they recognise and acknowledge their indigeness, they see 'what is essential, and what doesn't distort their space or identity'. African women can be very strong critical stakeholders, agents, and their participation can make development activities better, reflecting local needs and local knowledge. This is essential if outcomes are to be sustainable.

Finally, the prefix of "post" implies challenges from the voices of "subalterns", including non-whites, women, and people of Third World origin. Therefore, postcolonial theory is not just a single approach, but recognises diverse influences on, and paths to development. The Postcolonial theory challenges the powerful, dominant Western views which are based on dichotomies, such as, centre-periphery, metropolis-colony, modern-primitive, and self-other. In this way, resistance to dominant views and power, as well as re-evaluation of indigenous knowledge as a means to establish local identities has occurred in the areas of culture, language, and education. This approach has been integrated into aid relationships. People in the Third World have more voices in development issues than before, and donors too, have gradually shifted their views to regard people in the Third World as beneficiaries, participants and stakeholders in development. This has occurred along with the

movement towards “partnerships” in the development discourse, as seen in the international frameworks of the MDGs and the PRSPs.

## 5.5 Links between Theories and Education and Development Policies

### 5.5.1 Introduction

Theories are not only influential in academia, but also in the development of policies in general and education policies in particular. International conferences for policy making are influenced by theories in vogue at the time and therefore reflect the political, economic and social background of particular regions or nations. Furthermore, national plans and actions for development pertaining to education reflect agendas discussed at such conferences. There are clear links between development theories, international frameworks and education and development policies. This is obvious when observing the current strong commitments on the part of the international community to achieve EFA by 2015, obvious in the processes used to achieve the MDGs and the PRSPs. Understanding this link helps analyse Sierra Leone’s modality in education and development policies, particularly concerning my research questions regarding the impact of EFA in Sierra Leone, arguments about “partnership” and “ownership” and British aid to Sierra Leone. Therefore, this section focuses on links between theories and education and development policies, with particular reference to the Modernisation theory and UPE during the 1960’s, followed by theoretical approaches to Sierra Leone’s attempts to achieve EFA during the 1960’s and the UPE and the MDGs today.

### 5.5.2 Links between Theories and Education and Development Policies

The recent goal of EFA or UPE - as it is also called - was set at the conferences held in Jomtien and Dakar. However, UPE is not a new concept. It was conceived over 40 years ago. One significant conference that focused on connections with theories and discussed the UPE was the Conference of African States in the Development of Education in Africa in 1961. When the conference was held, the dominant and

influential view was based on Modernisation theory, which sees developing countries as “traditional societies” that need to modernise and which views education as a significant agent for bringing about social and economic development.

The Conference, held in Addis Ababa in 1961, had the purpose of ‘providing a forum for African States to decide on their priority educational needs to promote economic and social development in Africa’ (UNESCO, 1961a, p. v). The Conference discussed the following issues:

- (a) developing education in relation to African cultural and socio-cultural factors;
- (b) creating an inventory of educational needs for economic and social development;
- (c) viewing education as a basic factor in economic and social development;
- and (d) developing patterns of international co-operation for the promotion and implementation of programmes of educational development (UNESCO, 1961a, p. vi).

All countries adopted the goal of universal, free and compulsory primary education by 1980 (UNESCO, 1961a; UNESCO, 1961b).

At the time the conference was held, many African nations held contrasting views. They were full of hopes, while they had to face the reality of financial difficulties in post-independence. However, perhaps the former were stronger because they were in the middle of a transition. Some countries achieved political independence, while other countries were preparing for it. They were trying to move from ‘traditional ways of living towards Twenty[ieth] century industrialism’ (UNESCO, 1961b, p. 47). Although Africa faced the struggle to catch up with more developed nations (UNESCO, 1961a), they had hopes of becoming more developed and industrialised because of their belief in the virtues of the Modernisation theory. In the Annex of the conference report, Harbison (UNESCO, 1961b, p. 47) argued that the essential tasks for modernisation included the following:

- (a) to build effective political institutions and sound systems of government;
- (b) to modernise traditional agriculture;
- (c) to press forward rapid industrialization;
- (d) to achieve economic and political balance in external relationships;
- and (e) to build systems of education geared towards rapidly

changing needs.

In order to modernise a society, internal savings, productive investments, foreign capital, and highly trained people are required. It was clearly believed at the conference that the more rapidly they pushed for modernisation, the greater the need would be for high level manpower. As one of the resolutions clearly states, 'Economic social progress is indissolubly linked with the development of education' (UNESCO, 1961a, p. 63), and in this regard, education is 'gainful [to] economic investment and contributes to economic growth' (UNESCO, 1961b, p. 17).

African countries aiming to industrialise, needed to develop skilled labour, such as engineers, administrators, scientists and technicians, which modernising societies need. It was argued that 'education is an investment for the future' (UNESCO, 1961b, p. 49). This is because modern societies require 'relatively large proportions of technically trained manpower in the labour force' (UNESCO, 1961b, p. 49). At the same time, they required 'persons with broad, general education who are capable of adapting themselves to the ever changing environments of dynamic societies' (UNESCO, 1961b, p. 49). Therefore, the recommendations of the conference included the quantitative and qualitative improvements of education for economic and social development (UNESCO, 1961a). It was further stated that 'manpower is developed through formal education and also through training on the job' (UNESCO, 1961b, p. 52). These views are closely based on the main precepts of Modernisation theory.

However, although the achievement of UPE was set for 1980, it was rather donors who sought to emphasise the values of basic education, particularly equity, a cornerstone of democratic polities (Hurst, 1981). African countries held the view that expansion needed to take place primarily at secondary, post-secondary and higher education levels. Examining the priorities in education, the conference commission's statements made clear that universal, free and compulsory education was the goal but accompanied by post-basic education:

Although all countries accepted the aim of bringing about universal, free and compulsory primary education which UNESCO is required to promote under the very terms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a number of

representatives considered that universal primary education of that kind is not the first priority in their countries, but that the development of secondary or even higher education is more urgent (UNESCO, 1961a, p. 37).

All the African countries want a higher standard of living for their peoples. All are anxious to achieve universal primary education at the earliest possible moment. There are just and laudable goals. But, in order to increase national income, it is necessary for a country to save and invest. This usually requires a restriction of consumption in the short run in order to achieve higher living standards in the long run. In education, likewise, the development of high-level manpower fields. The newly industrializing countries must find the means of accumulating strategic manpower – the engineers, the administrators, the scientists and the technicians – which all modernizing societies demand. In poor countries, this may require some temporary restriction of the expansion of primary education (UNESCO, 1961b. p. 49).

Therefore, in the conclusions and recommendations of the conference, the Commission recommended that governments ‘establish priorities between the different levels and types of education in view of the dearth of resources’ and noted that ‘these priorities, which vary from country [to country], will affect the development of secondary and higher education in some cases and the development of primary education in others’ (UNESCO, 1961a, p. 41). In the section on the priorities of the conference report, this view was clearly shown:

It is of the highest priority to ensure that an adequate proportion of the population receives secondary, post-secondary and university education; this should be put before the goal of universal primary education if for financial reasons these two are not yet compatible (UNESCO, 1961a, p. 10).

It was believed that such a prioritisation would work more efficiently for the economic and social development of their countries. The reason African member states put an emphasis on post-primary education was that they assumed that ‘economic and social progress depended on strategic manpower development at the secondary and

post-secondary levels of education' (Bartels, 1983, p. 4). They thought that the economic and social progress would come mainly through industrialisation and modernisation. As a result, UPE was not the utmost priority as follows:

The major emphasis in educational development in Africa on secondary education, general, vocational and technical and allotting it first priority until there [was] a steady and adequate flow of well-trained and responsible young men and women in industry and agriculture, commerce, administration and training institutes of all kinds (Bartels, 1983, p. 10).

That is, although UPE was set for achievement by 1980, because of the large influence of the Modernisation perspectives on policy makers, they focused not just on UPE, but also on post-basic education, which is seen as being more effective in manpower development than centering entirely on the UPE.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that through examining the documents, it is clear those African leaders and policy makers were caught in a dilemma between accelerating modernisation and putting an emphasis on African values in the development of education for African futures. The reason for this is that African countries felt the need to develop African cultures and wanted to maintain an appreciation of indigenous cultures and traditions. African countries believed that they could reflect these aspects in their education policies (UNESCO, 1961a). For example, the conference outlined the fact that there was an urgent need to bring in textbooks that were more relevant to African lives and cultures than was the case at that time. They also believed that curricula and teaching materials should be adapted to African conditions and interests, promising to 'grow a larger conception and appreciation of African culture as a whole and of its contribution to the common cultural heritage of mankind' (UNESCO, 1961a, p. 5-6). The reform of the education was aimed in the following way:

As the present content of education in Africa is not in line with whether existing African conditions, the postulate of political independence, the dominant features of an essentially technological age, or the imperatives of balanced economic development involving rapid industrialization, but is based on a non-African background, allowing no room for the African child's intelligence, powers of observation and creative imagination to

develop freely and help him find his bearings in the world – African educational authorities should revise and reform the content of education in the areas of the curricula, textbooks, and methods, so as to take account of African environment, child development, cultural heritage and the demands of technological progress and economic development, especially industrialization (UNESCO, 1961b, p. 23).

These concerns came up because the content of textbooks still centred more on their former colonial masters, while for example, African geography was greatly neglected. The conference report pointed out that in secondary education programmes of some African countries, at least 80 per cent of textbooks dealt with the study of former colonial countries, while less than 10 per cent of the time was allocated to the study of the country's own geography (UNESCO, 1961b, p. 56). Therefore, African leaders and policy makers contended that African education should be more relevant to African values. This argument tallies with the Postcolonial perspectives, although it was too early for the arguments of the school to be realised in practice. Policy makers argued in the following way:

‘A major problem for African education planners [...] is to determine the kinds of adaptations which are consistent both with the particularized needs of the African countries and the necessity of integration with educational institutions in the rest of the world’ (UNESCO, 1961b, p. 50).

Overall, they were trying to adapt to modernisation by borrowing from advanced societies while also trying to retain African traditions, although this was not successfully achieved in practice.

Furthermore, in the aftermath of the conference there was a long period of aid dependency for African countries. The conference promised financial assistance to those wanting to achieve the goal of UPE, pledging ‘to coordinate their national efforts with external aid necessary for the fulfillment of the programmes adopted’ (Bartles, 1985, p. 93). The conference asked the international community to provide increased assistance. The money needed was expected to rise from \$140 million to \$450 million in 1965 and to \$1.01 billion in 1970 but in reality it fell to \$400 million by 1980.

Moreover, it could be pointed out that the timing of the conference led African nations towards aid dependency, partly because the OECD was established in 1961 to give further aid to LDCs. The OECD has supported the development of LDCs, as well as promoting policies assisting sound economic expansion and growth in world trade. This global direction was also moving towards a structure where developing countries, including many African countries, relied on aid from richer countries and donor agencies to fund development programmes.

However, some countries produced policies drawing on Dependency theory, challenging the prevailing orthodoxy. One such example was Ghana, where the government implemented a policy greatly influenced by Dependency theory, but which in the end, did not work out well. Ahiakpor (1985, p. 541-542) cites a Ghanaian government document titled 'Policy Guideline of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC)', in which it is stated that:

The historical roots of our present state of underdevelopment stem from British Colonialism which bequeathed a set pattern of economic development, social structures, attitudes and a parasitic state machinery. The retention of the structures of colonialism had assured the continued domination of our economy by foreign financial interests, with the attendant losses of the country's resources and hard earned wealth in a new phase of colonialism, which has been aptly described as neo-colonialism.

The guideline further states that 'revolution to the direct task of achieving total economic independence by ensuring a fundamental break from the existing neo-colonial relations'. The government took some actions in line with the above policy guideline, and their 'main instrument was persistent threats of nationalization or confiscation of assets', as well as the government re-negotiation of contracts with foreign firms (Ahiakpor, 1985, p. 542-543). The government also tried to lessen the influence of foreign culture by establishing a 'Citizens' Vetting Committee' with the power to investigate people whose lifestyle and expenditures substantially exceeded their known incomes. However, these actions did not produce prosperity and greater independence for the Ghanaian economy, while poverty and misery increased greatly.

In addition, the government's dependence on international aid increased greatly. They caused severe reductions in the stocks and flows of consumer and producer goods; reductions in production capacity and worker layoffs, especially in the manufacturing sector; significant increases in both official and black-market prices; and increased social tension and violence (Ahiakpor, 1985, p. 546). This example implies that although Dependency theory is important to understand given its strong influence on the policies of some African countries, it proved weak when its ideas were utilised in practice. In overall terms, it showed that development theories are influential in formulating national development policies.

### 5.5.3 Theoretical Approaches Relating to Sierra Leone's Attempts to Achieve EFA and the MDGs

Although the eleven year civil war set back Sierra Leone's educational development to a significant degree, the country has subsequently been in the process of rebuilding, including the education sector, working closely with donors. This is not the first time Sierra Leone has made a commitment to UPE. Since the country's development of education is inseparable from aid and international frameworks, there are two key common points relating to the Sierra Leone's attempts of forty years ago and today. One is the government's commitment to achieving UPE; the other is the presence of structures of international development that have led Sierra Leone to financial dependency on donors. Therefore, examining the differences regarding the two attempts forty years apart to achieve EFA helps to provide insights into my research question concerning the impact of EFA in Sierra Leone today.

Firstly, in the past there was a gap between the government's rhetorical commitment and the practical efforts in working towards UPE. During the 1960's and 1970's the government tried to achieve the goal. However, over this period the socio-economic situation of the country deteriorated greatly, leading to adverse effects on education development. After the conference in Addis Ababa, each African country was asked to formulate an education plan aimed at fostering development. These national plans for action reflected the conference agenda. Sierra Leone followed this direction and

UNESCO offered assistance sending three educational planning experts to help formulate policies that could lead to the achieving of the UPE by 1980 (Sleight, 1964).

Looking at *Sierra Leone Education Review* (1976, Porter & Younge), it becomes obvious that the country had two ultimate objectives. They wanted to achieve UPE by 1980, as well as ensuring that 'the education provided should be relevant and respond to the variations in the requirements for life and work within Sierra Leone' (Porter & Younge, 1976, p. 1). The government thought that economic and education development were mutually dependent on one another, in essence believing that education required economic advancement and that economic growth required improvements in education (GoSL, 1961). The government's overall view on education development is well illustrated below:

Tractors, lorries and power stations may improve the output of farms and workshops and contribute to the comfort of living. But to be useful they must be operated and kept in repair. To operate them and keep them in repair requires that they be understood. Understanding requires education. It is manifest that education contributes to economic growth [...] Education contributes to economic growth in myriad ways. Complicated equipment exists to help man control nature and earn a living. The application of heavy capital goods, both machines and structures, is a necessary feature of the development of any country. As we illustrated above, education makes a very direct contribution to economic growth by providing skills necessary for the effective use of such capital. Economic development inevitably brings changes and increased complexity in the administrative machinery of the country. Enterprises grow in scale and the affairs of government become more far-reaching and interwoven. New institutions concerned with banking, insurance, trade and distribution evolve. All of this additional machinery requires literate people trained [in] various degrees for its effective functioning. It is to the educational system that one must look for the supply of such persons (GoSL, 1961, p. 4).

The above statement shows that the government saw education largely as a tool to

enhance productivity and contribute to economic growth. The government clearly recognised the link between education and economic development, based on observing that the wealthiest nations had superior educational systems and achievements (Porter & Younge, 1976). This shows the influence of Modernisation theory on their thinking.

While African states signed up for UPE, the conference document (UNESCO, 1961a) stressed the importance of secondary and higher education for national development. The government of Sierra Leone also held this view, based on the influential Modernisation theory, and was interested in diversifying the economy. When observing the tendency for an excessive concentration of labour in agriculture, the government thought that surplus labour would be created by modernisation of agriculture through improved planting and breeding techniques, mechanisation, and agricultural credits. They believed that this could also work in other employment sectors, such as building and construction, the manufacturing industry, trade and other services (GoSL, 1962). The government followed the line that in order to bring about a brisk diversified economy, good education was necessary at various levels and of all types in order to train the population effectively and consequently to develop human capital in the country (GoSL, 1961). Therefore, the government's educational development plan (GoSL, 1961, p. 1) involved 'making projections for school enrolment at various levels, taking into account the manpower requirement estimates for the senior category, intermediate category, and skilled and unskilled manpower'.

A critical view with regard to prioritising the UPE are seen in some documents, such as *Sierra Leone's Education Sector Review 1974*, which stated that their goal was 'to evolve a long-term pattern of educational development and to define within this pattern an appropriate and meaningful role for the university as a crucial instrument of national development' (Bartels, 1983, p. 43). That is, while the government made efforts to work on the internationally agreed goal of UPE, there was also a partially conflicting desire in Sierra Leone to improve post-basic education. The reason for this is that it was believed that this would help develop the nation more efficiently than simply focusing on UPE. Therefore, although the government worked for the UPE, the national development plans were influenced more by the Modernisation approach than

by the commitment to UPE. In this respect, UPE was not the highest priority in Sierra Leone's development plans in the 1960's and 1970's.

As with many other African countries, a great obstacle to Sierra Leone's education plans was a lack of finance and heavy dependence on foreign aid. The government confessed that they would 'have very great difficulty' in financing UPE without 'foreign aid on a hitherto unprecedented scale' (Bartels, 1983, p. 43). They further stated that 'unless foreign aid becomes available, in amounts far greater than Sierra Leone has ever before enjoyed, it appears that it will be quite impossible to finance UPE by the mid-1970s'. During the 1980's, Sierra Leone experienced further economic decline, mainly due to an inefficient trade system and a lack of discipline in public sector management caused to some extent by SAPs. In 1991 the civil war began and the government spent much of its revenue on military expenditures. Considering that the net primary enrolment in the 1992 census was just 35.0 per cent (Ministry of Education, 1995, p. xii), Sierra Leone's recent educational reforms started almost anew once more.

The present UPE and EFA movements in Sierra Leone started at the Jomtien Conference in 1990. The conference resulted in Sierra Leone making a commitment to providing basic education for all children, and to implementing education reforms, which included adopting a new education system and introducing FPE in 2000 to boost access to primary education. Sierra Leone has also made a commitment to achieving the MDGs by 2015. The MDGs were framed in 2000, and Sierra Leone's PRSP, which was adopted in 2005, was written with a view to achieving these internationally set targets. Therefore, Sierra Leone's PRSP is integrated closely with the EFA programme, and policies are explicitly aimed at achieving the MDGs. The PRSP has become the nation's overall development plan. Programmes relating to the education sector in the PRSP are based on the recent government education policy laid out in *the New Education Act of 2004*. Recent education plans such as *the Sierra Leone Education Sector Plan 2007-2015* are therefore closely integrated with Sierra Leone's PRSP and with achieving the MDGs, particularly with regard to UPE and EFA.

In line with the international consensus, the government has clearly prioritised primary education in its national development policy. This is seen in many parts of government documents, which include:

The order of priorities of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology/Government of Sierra Leone as indicated in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and Mission Statement for education is as follows: Basic Education → Vocational Skills Training → Tertiary Education → Pre-Schooling (MEST, 2007, p. 16).

The government believes that UPE with 'reasonable learning outcomes is critically important in improving the livelihoods of the poor' and 'without minimum levels of literacy, numeracy and other key life skills it will be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve government of Sierra Leone's main development goals' (Bennell et al., 2004, p. 62). These goals include higher agricultural productivity, improved nutrition, lower population growth, the empowerment of women, a vibrant private sector, effective democratic governance at both national and district levels, and strong civil society participation in the development process (Bennell et al., 2004). This strong commitment to UPE is significantly different from the attempts to bring about UPE during the 1960's and 1970's.

It cannot be denied that the government to some extent still has a lingering attachment to the view they hold during the 1960's, as is shown by the importance it attaches to the post-basic education and training (PBET) programme. In government documents, there are statements which closely show the importance attached to the PBET, for instance: 'Basic education for all is essential, but the role of PBET in reducing poverty must be properly recognised', 'The graduates of PBET institutions should be spearheading the process of private sector development, which is now expected to be the main source of this economic growth' (Bennell et al., 2004, p. 65), and 'post-basic education is just as important for meeting our national vision of education as basic education' (MEST, 2007, p.121). These views are premised on the belief that post-basic education contributes to the development of human capital and closely links to progress in other sectors, such as the economy, health, agriculture, and infrastructure.

According to this belief, the PBET is more useful to national development than a stress on the improvement in primary education, and is also based on an expectation that increases in PBET are very important in boosting economic growth.

Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter Four, the new curricula and syllabi introduced vocational elements and Sierra Leonean values, through subjects such as Agriculture, Home Economics, Creative Practical Art, and Sierra Leone Study. This is to reflect the needs of pupils and society in Sierra Leone and promote the access to schooling. Regarding this introduction of vocational elements in primary education, MEST (2007) argues that this makes a smooth link to post-primary level which then provides the level of human capital necessary for the successful development of the country. This implies that the influence of Modernisation theory's ideas to some extent remains present in current policy making decisions in the education sector.

However, the government's primary stance is clearly based on promoting basic education as its main strategic focus with regard to achieving poverty reduction. The government now sees UPE as an important tool in improving people's livelihoods using a more holistic approach than before, which clearly differentiates its current thinking from that of the 1960's and 1970's. This significant change in the government's vision stems from the fact that the influence on policy making of the PRSP and the MDGs. That is, the framework provided by the PRSP and the MDGs, which prioritise UPE, leads the government to focus more on UPE than PBET. This is a significant difference from the policies of the 1960's and 1970's when Sierra Leone made efforts to promote all levels of educational access, while committing itself to the international goal of UPE. Today, the PRSP is the foundation of Sierra Leone's national development policies, and therefore, the international goals of UPE and the MDGs are organic part of Sierra Leone's national development programme. In this respect, the PRSP and the MDGs are powerful influences on Sierra Leone's development policies, just as ideas of Modernisation theory in the 1960's. In other words, today, while Modernisation theory has a limited influence in Sierra Leone's achieving EFA, more influential MDGs and the PRSPs for policy making dictate state actions, whereas during the 1960's and 1970's the former was the bedrock on which

education policies were formulated.

Another difference from the past attempt to bring about UPE and, a clear indication of the government's distancing itself from the Modernisation approach, is seen in the fact that Sierra Leone has reformed its educational curricula. When the Addis Ababa conference was held in 1961, African nations, including Sierra Leone, were full of hope, as some of them had achieved political independence and others were in the middle of such a transition. Therefore, while they were trying to achieve "modernisation", the importance of appreciating African culture and values was also emphasised and incorporating them into education was recommended (UNESCO, 1961a). However, because the education policy in those days was based on Modernisation theory ideas, and the influences and legacies of colonial powers remained strong, this was not adequately reflected in practice. That is, the Modernisation approach by its nature led Africans to work towards modernisation in terms of imitating Western models, focusing on industrialisation and to see their cultures and ways of life as "backward" and therefore a hindrance to modernisation.

Like other African countries during the 1960's, Sierra Leone faced a dilemma. On the one hand, they embraced the Modernisation approach. On the other hand, they did want to validate their own values and cultures. Therefore the government's education and development plan involved

Revising the content of education, with special reference to curricula in order to adapt it to the requirements of technological and economic development, to the political and social aspirations and trends of an independent country, to the environment, and to the cultural traditions of Africa (GoSL, 1961, p. 1).

Attempting to combine the Modernisation approach with an adoption of African values led to a contradiction in terms of how education was organised and policy was practiced. Therefore, the implementation of African values and culture in education was not fully realised. Sierra Leone had inherited a system of education that did not meet the country's needs; 'because of the old established links with Britain, the

influence of British educational practices, sometimes of no recent date, is found everywhere but is strongest in schools in the Western area' (Hawes, 1976, p. 7). In response to this, a new trial syllabus was introduced in 1969. However, although it became more 'relevant to local and national needs than had previously existed', the new syllabus was still criticised because the content was not 'entirely "in tune" with the needs of national development' (Hawes, 1976, p. 11). In sum, Sierra Leone 'inherited a British-type education system, aimed largely at the urban middle class', and 'the system was biased towards academically gifted students who entered tertiary education and found formal employment in government offices' (MEST, 2007, p. 5). The strong influence of Modernisation theory on education policies led to Sierra Leone not having curricula which adequately reflected their indigenous cultures and values.

By now, such 'European cultural hegemony in the colonial curriculum' (Tikly, 1999, p. 614) has been largely replaced. The government has made concerted efforts to bring educational development to the masses, and *the New Education Policy 1995* (Ministry of Education, 1995) and *the Education Act of 2004* (GoSL, 2004) encourages students to know their own country and to identify with it, without losing sight of the fact that they are part of a wider international world. That is, education reforms have led to positive representations of Sierra Leoneans and of their cultures being brought into the curriculum. This shift tallies with the views of the Postcolonial approach, in respect to which Tikley (1999, p. 609) argues it 'provides a necessary basis for developing a less Eurocentric and more comprehensive account of the effects of globalisation on education'.

With the introduction of the 6-3-3-4 system, replacing the old British system of 7-5-2-4, the curriculum was revised and new subjects, such as indigenous languages and Sierra Leone Study, have been included for the purpose of providing and enhancing a proper and positive understanding of Sierra Leone. The study of Sierra Leone is supposed to form a serious part of Sierra Leonean children's education (Ministry of Education, 1995; GoSL, 2004). Considering that Postcolonial theorists see the 'hegemony and subsequent globalisation of the colonisers and the underdevelopment of indigenous languages' as one of the most significant legacies of colonialism in education (Tikly,

1999, p. 615), this is a major policy change in relation to the old British inspired education system. It also represents a significant difference from the attempt to bring about UPE of about 40 years ago. Today, Sierra Leonean pupils can positively learn about and appreciate Sierra Leonean values and cultures as part of their education, and do not have to regard them as somehow inferior to western values. Through educating pupils as to the importance of Sierra Leonean values and cultures, the government hopes to achieve “Sierra Leone’s modernisation” driven more by indigenous values, knowledge and belief systems. In this respect, it can be argued that today “Sierra Leone’s modernisation” and changes in the development of education systems are based on a move towards “Africanisation” and away from “Westernisation”. In other words, by including more Sierra Leonean aspects in their educational reform, a more relevant and successful curricula can be developed compared to the Western influenced one which existed before. That is, Sierra Leone has aimed at achieving national development based on Sierra Leonean values. This current approach is based on ideas promoted by Postcolonial thinkers. Postcolonial theorists point out that African states have outlined the need for education to be more relevant to the life of Africans than previously. This should lead to African people having stronger voices in advocating their own development policies and programmes. Moreover, currently the PRSP, which is the foundation of Sierra Leone’s national development, is based on a country-led approach and promotes the participation of CSOs, indicating that there are more opportunities for local people to make their voices heard in the development process, which also is in accord with Postcolonial views.

Furthermore, international frameworks which foster commitments to EFA, UPE, the MDGs and PRSPs have led to LDCs being unable to avoid dependence on foreign aid. That the current attempt to bring about UPE is different from those made during the 1960’s and 1970’s, can be shown by the government’s strong commitment to its expenditure. About 20 per cent of current government spending is allocated to education, which is the largest amount allocated to any single sector. This is a respectable improvement, considering that the figure was only 8.7 per cent 10 years ago. Between 48 and 50 per cent of recurrent costs are allocated to primary education and 47.7 per cent of funds will continue to be spent on primary education until 2015

(Bennell et al., 2004, p. 77; MEST, 2007, p. 109-110). Looking at these recent budgetary allocations, the government clearly has prioritised the importance of basic education, especially primary education.

However, the efforts to achieve EFA have proved very expensive for Sierra Leone. To realise the goal, the proposed EFA National Action Plan estimates the total cost of necessary programmes to stand at \$722.9 million (Bennell et al., 2004, p. 72). MEST (2007, p. xii) argues that in order for Sierra Leone's education system to become sustainable in the context of the post-conflict recovery, 'expansion and upgrading of the education sector will require additional funding and more effective use of resources'. MEST (2007) strongly argues that significant support will still be required from donors if EFA and the MDGs are to be achieved. In this respect, the PRSP, EFA and the MDGs have all led to, and maintained a stronger relationship between the government of Sierra Leone and donors than previously existed.

The government's effort in financing education is reflected in statistics as well. For example, looking at the overall balance sheet for the first quarter of 2006, domestic revenue totalled about Le118.85 billion, exceeding the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) target of Le111.4 billion, due to the improved collections of customs and excise duties. However, total grants amounted to around Le48.2 billion, which was lower than the PRGF projections of about Le74.27 billion. Total expenditure and net lending of Le178.79 billion was also lower than the PRGF target of Le218.79 billion and the revised budget of Le187.65 billion, due to shortfalls in recurrent and development expenditures linked to a lack of disbursement and implementation of development projects. Furthermore, total poverty-targeted expenditures stood at about Le31.66 billion for the first quarter of 2006, which was lower than the target of Le42.0 billion, representing a shortfall of Le11.34 billion. The MEST has been affected by the significant shortfalls, since its shortfall represented 12.5 per cent of the total. These shortfalls were made up by the donors and the resources provided by them became available during the rest of the year (GoSL, 2006, p. 25-28). However, for a financially weak country like Sierra Leone, this shortfall and late disbursement affected their development plans and implementations negatively.

Furthermore, a government document (2006, p. 16) expresses the concern that ‘Sierra Leone [is] competing with other countries for resources and also the capacity of the country to absorb huge increment of new funding within the time frame.’ That is, Sierra Leone needs more external resources and needs to compete with other LDCs over donors’ assistance aimed at achieving EFA and the MDGs by 2015. MEST (2007) strongly argues that the cost of meeting their targets and goals set for EFA by 2015 exceeds what can be provided from domestic resources, and there is a considerable financial gap. Therefore, MEST (2007, p. 113) hopes that ‘it is for donor[s] to now go by their words and provide the necessary support’. In this respect, the phenomenon of putting developing countries into further dependency through EFA and the MDGs is the same as what occurred as a result of the Addis Ababa Conference in 1961 and the Dakar Conference in 2000, which committed African countries to achieving UPE and pushed LDCs into dependency as a result of financial burdens. Thus, the aid dependency of Sierra Leone has been an issue since the 1960s, and remains a considerable problem.

Finally, it is worth noting that this financial dependency on donors could have adverse effects on Sierra Leone’s development and stop it from pursuing necessary policies and programmes. For example, there is a serious problem with a shortage of teachers, and MEST is acutely aware of the need to employ more qualified teachers. However, ‘a ceiling on teacher employment made necessary by MoF/IMF requirements has made that impossible’ (MEST, 2007, p. 23). The imposition of this ceiling has led to a contradiction between MEST’s commitment to achieving EFA with quality education and the IMF’s requirement of a ceiling on recruitment. This is a dilemma that MEST feels deeply. Therefore, MEST (2007, p. 24) strongly argues that ‘the cap placed on the wage bill has to be expanded to reflect the real situation and need for increasing the number of trained teachers and ensuring that untrained teachers are able to access in-service training to improve their skill’, otherwise EFA and the MDGs will not be realised. This is an example which shows that donor conditionality still exists in highly aid dependent country.

The PRSP emphasises the importance of the recipient country's ownership over the development process and a country-led approach. Sierra Leone's PRSP emphasises the need for the active involvement of civil society in the development process as part of the encouragement of a wider participation process which can help to build Sierra Leone's ownership of policies aimed at poverty reduction. However, 'a syndrome of aid dependency has emerged as a development problem of its own' (Edgren, 2002, p. 263), and the international community has been seeking ways to make aid more effective and better able to reach the poor. Therefore, wider participation, especially of CSOs in the development process, is critical as indicated in previous chapters. Indeed, in the making of Sierra Leone's PRSP, many stakeholders were involved in preparing the programme for the education sector. This was put together by a team of consultants including Bennell, Harding and Rogers-Wright, MEST officials, officials from other ministries, academics and managers of important education and training institutions, NGOs and other civil society members, headteachers and donors. In total, about 300 people attended these meetings (Bennell et al., 2004). With regard to the PRSP and also EFA, MEST (2007, p. 21) clearly states that the achievement of Sierra Leone development goals is 'only possible through full collaboration and partnership with other line ministries, local government authorities, civil society, communities, NGOs, UN agencies and donors'.

This change in attitudes on the part of development stakeholders reflects an 'evolution of thinking' with a shift from 'doing for countries' to 'doing with countries' (Samoff, 2004, p. 398), and is influenced by Postcolonial school arguments. As Said (1978) argues, Postcolonial approach does not regard the 'Orientals', aid recipients or people from 'the Third World' as passive subjects who can simply be seen by the British, donors or 'the First World', but instead regards them as participants and/or stakeholders in the mainstream. This approach became more widely known and used in the development discourse in recent years. Thus, the PRSP has created space for the wider participation of local stakeholders and stressed the need for "good partnerships" in development which also reflects ideas set out in the Postcolonial approach.

## 5.6 Summary

This chapter discussed the three development theories used in this research, which are Modernisation theory, Dependency theory and Postcolonial theory. Through reviewing Sierra Leone's two attempts to achieve EFA 40 years apart, this chapter discussed how development theories can influence education and development policies, which are strongly influenced by international frameworks. The ideas put forward at the conference in Addis Ababa contained elements of all three development theories. However, since the Modernisation approach was dominant, the stress on achieving UPE was diluted and doomed to failure. Today, although LDCs including Sierra Leone remain dependent on donors, under the powerful influence of the MDGs and PRSPs the stress has moved to the key concepts of "partnership", "country-led" participation and involvement of local actors, revealing strong influences of the Postcolonial perspectives on policy makers.

In order to collect relevant data for this research, an appropriate methodology was carefully chosen and developed. Therefore, the next chapter discusses the methodological concerns pertaining to the present research.

## Chapter 6 Methodology

### 6.1 Introduction

The aim of this research is to conduct an in-depth investigation of the impact of EFA on the provision of primary education in Sierra Leone and that of the development partnership between donors and recipients in Sierra Leone's education development. Since Sierra Leone's current education has been influenced by aid, religion, long-term allies with Britain since the colonial history, to achieve the research aim, this study is guided by two main questions and three sub-questions as follows:

#### *Main Questions*

1. What is the impact of EFA on provision of primary education in Sierra Leone today?
2. What is the impact of aid on "partnership" and "ownership" between donors and recipients in the development of primary education in Sierra Leone?

#### *Sub-questions*

1. Is there competition or tension between Christianity and Islam in the provision of primary education today?
2. What is the role and impact of religions and NGOs on the provision of primary education?
3. How can British aid to Sierra Leone be effective in helping achieve the MDGs?

The methodology was carefully developed in order to draw out a discussion of key issues and to reach a useful conclusion from my research questions, based on collected data. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to discuss the approach and design of my research and to present the process of my data collection and analysis of this research. Exploring these helps make the methodology adopted for this research explicit and justifiable. This chapter consists of a discussion regarding the methodological approach, the research design and methodological concern. It also discusses procedures of data analysis.

## 6.2 Methodological Approach

The methodology for this research combines qualitative and quantitative components. The call for the use of combined methodologies to enhance research is not new. For Ritchie (2003, p. 25-26), 'Policy-makers saw "information" or "evidence" as synonymous with numbers', and especially during the 1960's and 1970's the main methods of policy making related to research were statistically based. However, other fields called for qualitative methods to 'understand more fully the nature of the problems that social policies had to address and to appraise those policies once implemented'. Qualitative approaches allow more flexibility in providing responses, and can contribute to making the whole picture richer when findings are analysed together with quantitative data. Brown and Dowling (1998, p. 82) clearly point out that 'Qualitative approaches are often associated with research which is carried out in an interpretative frame in which the concern is with the production of meaning', while 'quantitative methods are, correspondingly, associated with positivist forms of enquiry which are concerned with the search for facts'. Overton and Diermen (in Scheyvens & Storey, 2003, p. 38) describe quantitative data as objective, representative, specified in numbers, and collected as "independent facts", while qualitative data is 'subjective, not representative and prescribed in text'. Brockington and Sullivan (in Scheyvens & Storey, p. 57) also emphasise that qualitative research 'seeks to understand the world through interacting with, empathising with and interpreting the actions and perceptions of its actors'. Therefore, combining both approaches allows a fuller understanding of my main research issues than would have been the case if only one approach had been used.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that this study takes a comparative study approach too. The reason for this is that comparative education engages with 'the interface between present and past' (Alexander, 2001, p. 511), and recognises that an educational institution is a result of historical products or a reflection of its history. In terms of understanding the links between Sierra Leone's history, international frameworks and development discussed in earlier chapters and drawing an analysis of Sierra Leone's current efforts in achieving EFA, it could be said that this study owes to the comparative study point of view too. In order to determine that this study has

credibility, the data as evidence need to be collected systematically, to be interpreted and analysed carefully and thoughtfully. Therefore, the next sections outline how the evidence of my research conclusions are obtained and interpreted.

## 6.3 Research Design

### 6.3.1 Introduction

I decided on employing three research tools in the field research which are questionnaire, interview and observation. I used data from these sources of different types to answer the research questions, enforced by subsequent document analysis. Prior to the field research for data collection, there were two stages: a pilot study and the preparation for field research. Therefore, this section reviews the pilot study, the preparation for field research, followed by fieldwork experiences.

### 6.3.2 Pilot Study

Peterson (2000) argues that any researcher needs to use common sense, getting to know something about the potential participants and their ability to answer the questions, before creating a questionnaire. I also wanted to follow the suggestion of Scheyvens and Storey (2003, p. 54) concerning the need to: 'ensure that the data to be collected will be authentic, valid and appropriate', as well as meaningful and accurate, and 'include[s] all sectors of the target population'. Without careful attention to these considerations, the questionnaire is likely to be incomplete and inaccurate, the questions may be misunderstood, and the response rate is likely to be low (Gillham, 2000a). Problems with reliability and generalisability are likely to occur if the above issues are not addressed adequately. Therefore, a pilot study was a chance to test my research tools and I piloted one of my questionnaires, 'questionnaire to parents'. The focus of the pilot was to understand and examine the background of the participants, difficulties underlying regular access to schooling and any religious underpinnings to their views were very helpful for me in terms of understanding the big picture of my participants' values and views. It proved a great help in preparing for my field research in a focused way. This section thus reflects on my pilot study which was the very

foundation of my field research in terms of all the procedures involved, including forming questions, approaching participants, and analysing data.

To begin the pilot study, I obtained an agreement to participate from 25 Sierra Leoneans, living in London by e-mail. These individuals were identified using a website, Sierra Leone Biography and E-mail Directory (<http://www.sierra-leone.org>). I chose this because when I conducted my pilot study in 2004, Sierra Leone was not a country to which it was easy to travel, although conditions had significantly improved since the end of the civil war in 2002. I targeted those who were currently living in London, thinking that it would be “convenient” for me if I could get adequate responses from them. According to Gillham (2000a, p. 18), random samples, as used by novice researchers are not really random, but are, instead, “convenience samples”, effectively ‘picking people who just happen to come to hand’. Gillham (2000a, p. 45) also notes that ‘sending questionnaires out is one thing; getting them back is quite another’. This is something I experienced at firsthand. When I sent people e-mail to introduce myself and to ask for their participation in my pilot work, asking if they had experienced child-raising at primary education level, Gillham points about reply rates to questionnaires resonated: 10 out of 25 persons contacted, replied to me, and were willing to cooperate with my pilot study. This was by any measure, a good start. However, only five of these people actually filled in my questionnaire.

Nevertheless, the pilot led to some very helpful suggestions and modifications to my research methodology. For example, it was brought to my attention that some people in Sierra Leone have access to the internet. This knowledge allowed me to cast my net wider than London and to contact potential respondents in Sierra Leone itself. This was made more important because some of my London participants had been away from their home country for close to, or even more than, a decade. Although they said that they closely kept in touch with their families and relatives in Sierra Leone, there was a possibility that they had lost touch with some of the present realities of living in the country. I thus selected 20 people living in Sierra Leone, from the same Sierra Leone E-mail Directory. Of these, 7 people filled in my questionnaire. This meant that I had two groups of people in my pilot: one with 5 participants living in London. The second

comprised 7 participants who were currently living in, and had brought up their children in, Sierra Leone.

After all the questionnaires were returned, I clearly noted parts of my questions which appeared confusing to the participants. I carefully looked at the wording and compared what participants had put in the sections titled, 'Other (please specify)'. I then made a list of all the answers to each question which allowed me to examine the pattern of their answers more clearly. During this process I removed a couple of questions which appeared to be unhelpful and thus not worth asking. Then I looked through the sets of answers several more times. To help with this analysis, I created bar charts and tables of the aggregated data to make the outcomes visually clearer.

In terms of explanatory purposes, the answers given by the participants were more interesting than the bar charts, but were more difficult to present in a coherent form and to analyse. However, these explanatory answers gave me more knowledge, and a clearer picture of the people, their lives and educational settings, than I had when starting the pilot. Gillham (2000a, p. 61) argues that 'the strength of a questionnaire is in description, not explanation' and warns that, 'interpreting results and suggesting what they mean is a temptation that questionnaires expose you to'. However, interpretation is also a necessary process when analysing data and producing findings. Spradley (1980, p. 13) argues that 'you will constantly be making cultural inferences'. Brown and Dowling (1998, p. 82) contend argue that 'qualitative approaches are often associated with research which is carried out in an interpretative frame in which the concern is with the production of meaning'.

During the process of analysis, simple information from participants' answers were connected with other answers, and from this conjunction it was possible to highlight similarities, to identify differences, and to draw further inferences, and as a result, to weave the research into patterns. For example, questions asking for levels of agreement/disagreement are individually descriptive, but these could also be tied up with other questions, including explanatory ones, so that data obtained from them becomes richer. Although in my pilot study, the data were not procured by interviews

but by semi-open-ended questioning, the findings could be more valuable and possess greater explanatory power, when connected to interview responses. In this process, reflection was also needed. As Scheyvens and Storey (2003) argue, researchers should be aware of their positionality in terms of ethnicity, age, gender, and social and economic class, as these aspects may influence the data produced by participants and interpreted by researchers.

From the pilot study, I gained more insights into the social context of school and the religious contribution to education in Sierra Leone. Therefore, I sought to examine if there were any connections between religion and schooling in the area of the development of education. What was unfortunate for my pilot study was that I only had one female respondent. I assume that this was because I contacted people by, and conducted the questionnaire through, e-mail, males tend to use more than females in developing countries. Moreover, males could be more amenable to being approached through the Internet by a total stranger, while female are more wary of establishing such contacts. Furthermore, my pilot participants were likely to be urban dwellers, given the nature of my contact via the Internet.

Therefore, this experience reminded me of the need to have a more balanced range of participants in the field research. I also realised the need to use other questionnaires, observations, interviews and document analysis in conjunction so as to be able to weave together and develop a cohesive picture. Overall, the pilot study opened my eyes as to the need to carefully examine my questionnaires again in order to be sure that they reflected my research questions. Through trying out the pilot process, from sending questionnaires out to participants to presenting outcomes, and examining the inter-relationships between questions, I found that it was much more time consuming work than I had originally thought. Moreover, the process was sometimes frustrating; for example when there were to be no responses, slow responses, or when contacts were over-friendly. Some contacts went as far as asking me for favours or gifts. Yet, this was all part of the research experience, which I believe not only prepared me better for the field research in Sierra Leone, but also gave me the opportunity to refine my work with a sense of academic excitement.

### 6.3.3 Preparation for Fieldwork

Prior to the field research, careful preparation was conducted in order to begin data collection immediately after arriving in Sierra Leone. It included establishing relationship with some key participants, as a result of consulting with the Sierra Leone High Commission in London, obtaining a research permit from the MEST and obtaining research participation from DFID Sierra Leone and Plan Sierra Leone.

Starting to make a network prior to fieldwork was very helpful in terms of setting off smoothly in the post-conflict country. One such useful experience to learn a picture of Sierra Leone was the obtainment of the research permit from the MEST. When consulting with the staff at the High Commission regarding my research, I was advised to write a letter to MEST to seek a research permit and assistance. They then forwarded the letter to the MEST. I was told that the process would be quick, but it took a couple of weeks for a reply to arrive. I was informed that at that time, in Freetown, teachers were on strike over their poor working environment and had gathered outside the Ministry building. Therefore, MEST had closed their office for some days and was not functioning normally for a while after ending the strike. The experience gave me some idea of teachers' working conditions before I left for fieldwork.

Furthermore, since my home government (Japan) was advising against unessential travel to Sierra Leone in my planning stage, my own security was also important. There was no Japanese embassy or Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) office in Sierra Leone, which I had thought I could contact in an emergency. JICA did set up their office after I finished my fieldwork, and a Japanese embassy in Freetown may be established in some years, since the Japanese government has planned to increase the number of its diplomatic establishments in Africa. Therefore, to overcome the lack, I started with networking with those who had ties with Sierra Leoneans living in Sierra Leone.

Fortunately, I did get to know kind and helpful people. My friend introduced me to his Sierra Leonean friend living in London, who asked his mentor in Sierra Leone to arrange accommodation for me in Freetown. I was also advised on issues of data collection and introduced some people who I had wanted to meet in Freetown. In addition, a Sierra Leonean I got to know through my pilot study received his master's degree, like me, from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). He had some close friends working for the government and he gave me useful telephone numbers of contacts in Sierra Leone. Furthermore, my supervisor introduced me to a Sierra Leonean professor in the US, who then introduced me to a relative living in Sierra Leone. He also gave me some advice and contacts when I was in upcountry. These people were actually my gate keepers too. The official letter from the MEST confirming I was doing research and another letter written by a Professor of Fourah Bay College also helped me in approaching and asking for assistance from my research participants.

#### 6.3.4 Fieldwork Experience

During preparations, I was advised that it would not be efficient and productive to collect data during holiday seasons in Sierra Leone, since many officials are likely to have longer holidays than officially allowed. In this study, government officials, NGO and FBO staff are important participants. The access to schools was also another significant point to consider, as this research involved teachers, pupils and parents. Therefore, the fieldwork was conducted from April to July before many participants were supposed to start having their summer holiday.

To conduct data collection effectively in the given timeframe, I started to visit my participants to explain my research, and at the same time distributed questionnaires to them. On the occasion, I attached letters from the MEST and a professor at Fourah Bay College to the questionnaires to legitimate my inquiry. My questionnaire participants were, teachers, parents, pupils, DFID Sierra Leone, British Council Sierra Leone, Plan Sierra Leone, the MEST, MoFA, CADO, FAWE and Pekin to Pekin Movement. Then, allowing my participants around 10 days to up to three weeks to complete

questionnaires, I approached them again for a follow-up interview. During the time between my first visit and as the interviews, I tried to extend my presence at and around schools in order to give teachers, pupils and parents an opportunity to ask any questions related to my research. This is because I thought that it is only through the approach they could easily reach me, since the majority of them did not have access to mobile and email, which my questionnaires suggested them to contact if they need any question or clarification. During this period, I also conducted observations at schools, on NGOs' operational fields and at churches and mosques.

A semi-structured interview schedule was designed based on the research questions and information eliciting from questionnaires conducted in advance<sup>6</sup>. My interview participants were headteachers or deputy headteachers, some teachers who volunteered to express their views with headteachers, British Council Sierra Leone, DFID Sierra Leone, Plan Sierra Leone, MEST, MoFA, CADO, FAWE and Pekin to Pekin Movement. Interviews were conducted at schools or participants' offices, but in an informal and relaxed atmosphere. Most of interviews were tape-recorded, except the ones where participants hesitated to agree to recording. Different from questionnaire administration which could be apt to systematic data collection, interviews could be situational in terms of a range of topics and timeframe. Therefore, I learned to manage and control the situation as an interviewer. The empirical data were later complemented by the analysis of relevant documents. I expected to obtain data including subjective views of my participants regarding my research questions which would suggest a qualitative approach, as well as hoped to collect some quantitative data to draw a background of my participants, their work and their life.

## 6.4 Methodological Issues

### 6.4.1 Introduction

In this study, a range of methods was employed to collect data and to help draw conclusions for my research questions. This section presents practical information and

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<sup>6</sup> Both questionnaires and interview schedules are attached in the Appendix.

the rationale for my data collection. It consists of the selection of research sites, the selection of participants, research instruments, the role of the researcher, the positionality as a foreigner, the language in conducting field research, and generalisability, reliability and validity, as well as ethics and concerns.

#### 6.4.2 Selection of Research Sites

Five towns were selected as research sites, based on their role in regional administration and my interests in their historical background of towns. These are Freetown, Bo, Moyamba, Kenema, and Makeni. To reflect views in various places, towns in the east, west, south, and north of Sierra Leone were chosen. Freetown is the capital of the country and was the Crown colony and center of British colonialism. Bo is the capital and administrative centre of the Southern Province and was the capital of the protectorate of Sierra Leone under British rule. Moyamba is the second most populated town in the South Province, and Plan Sierra Leone appointed it as their model district. Kenema is the capital of the Eastern Province, and the region was most severely affected by the civil war than other areas. Makeni is the capital of Bombali district and the largest town in the Northern Province where Islam has been practiced by a large number of the population over centuries.

Statistics show that the levels of poverty of these districts vary, and urban and rural ratios differ considerably. The urban and rural ratios for poverty in these areas are as follows: the western area – 17.1/70.1 per cent, Bo – 59.9/67.8 per cent, Moyamba – 59.0/69.0 per cent, Kenema – 77.5/95.0 per cent, and Bombali – 83.4/90.0 per cent (GoSL, 2005, p. 27). Since the western area has a considerable poverty gap between the urban and rural areas potentially affecting school environments, not only primary schools in central Freetown, but also schools in the suburbs were selected. This is in order not to lose insights into the situations of schools structured in rural areas. For the same reason, schools were selected in as scattered a way as possible so they were not concentrated in certain areas of the towns I visited.

In addition, the operational districts of my participant NGOs were considered when

selecting the sites. In the three of the five towns I visited, my participant NGOs have their offices and operational fields: in Freetown, there are offices of Plan Sierra Leone, CADO, and FAWE. In Moyamba, there are offices of Plan Sierra Leone, FAWE and Pekin to Pekin Movement. In Makeni, there are offices of Plan Sierra Leone, CADO and FAWE.

### 6.4.3 Selection of Participants

Participants were categorised into two major categories: school-related participants, including teachers, parents and pupils, and development-related participants, including the government, NGOs and FBOs workers.

#### *School-related participants*

As the majority of schools throughout Sierra Leone are faith-based, 11 Christian schools and 10 Islamic schools were chosen, in addition to five municipal schools and one private school. The latter was not in my original plan, as examining government schools and government-assisted schools was considered enough to adequately analyse the impact of EFA. It was also expected that those schools would reflect the contribution to education made by religious organisations. However, I was advised to visit a private school in Bo to see how the school environment there was different from government schools and government-assisted schools.

Regarding the sample number of school-related participants, I originally planned to distribute questionnaires to all teachers of Class 6, all parents whose children were in Class 6 and all pupils of Class 6 level from each school. However, after discussions with those who gave me advice and practical information concerning collecting data in Sierra Leone, I realised that this would constitute an unrealistically large sample for me as an individual research student. In addition, considering the burdens of school-related participants particularly teachers, and the difficulties entailed in trying to sample such a large number of participants, 5 teachers, 20 parents and 20 pupils from each school was finally decided upon. These school-related participants were chosen to obtain data mainly with regard to the impact of EFA, the role of religion and FBOs in the

provision of primary education and religious tolerance in Sierra Leone.

The final sample numbers from the 27 primary schools (11 Christian schools, 10 Islamic schools, 5 Municipal schools and 1 private school) were 125 teachers, 454 parents and 488 pupils. Simple response rates were, 92.6 per cent, 84.1 per cent and 90.4 per cent respectively, which were reasonably good and satisfactory rates. However, it is also worth noting that the number of respondents from some Methodist church schools was slightly larger than the sample base. This is because a Methodist education officer, whom I had interviewed earlier, photocopied questionnaires for teachers and distributed a copy to their schools in the regions I had informed him I wished to visit. The headteachers of these schools I actually visited returned the questionnaire to me together with the ones I distributed. The details of these school names and sample numbers are attached in the Appendix.

#### *Development-related participants*

Britain is the largest bilateral aid provider to Sierra Leone (MEST, 2007, p. 7), while Plan Sierra Leone is the fourth largest education donor in Sierra Leone after the World Bank, the AfDB and UNICEF (MEST, 2007, p. 14). This means that, in terms of NGOs, Plan Sierra Leone is the largest education donor in Sierra Leone. The NGO, Plan, originally started in Britain. Since Plan Sierra Leone is in partnership with local NGOs, supporting their work, the following local NGOs were also chosen as participants in the study: CADO, FAWE, and Pekin to Pekin Movement. All of these NGOs have branch offices, from which they aim to make their operation effective across the country.

In sum, in order to examine the scope and impact of British assistance to Sierra Leone, development relationships between donors and recipients in the provision of education, and the impact of EFA in Sierra Leone, the following stakeholders were chosen:

5 Donors:

- (a) British Council Sierra Leone,
- (b) DFID Sierra Leone
- (c) Plan Sierra Leon (Freetown, Moyamba and Makeni offices)

9 Recipients:

- (a) MEST
- (b) MoFA
- (c) FAWE (Freetown, Moyamba and Makeni offices)
- (d) CADO (Freetown and Makeni offices)
- (e) Pekin to Pekin Movement (Moyamba and Makeni offices)

In order to examine religious contributions to education in a historical context, current provision of education and religious tolerance in Sierra Leone, FBOs were also important participants in this study. Based on availability and willingness to cooperate in my inquiry, the following FBOs agreed to give interviews:

- (a) Ansarul Development Services
- (b) Sierra Leone Muslim Brotherhood
- (c) Methodist Church of Sierra Leone

Name of organisations of my participants are attached in the Appendix. For convenience, participants are labelled as follows:

*Donors A*

British Council A-1

DFID A-2

Plan Sierra Leone A-3

*Recipients B*

MEST B-1

MoFA B-2

CADO B-3

FAWE B-4

Pekin to Pekin Movement B-5

*FBOs C*

Ansarul Development Services C-1

Sierra Leone Muslim Brotherhood C-2

Methodist Church of Sierra Leone C-3

*Teachers D, Parents E and Pupils F, accordingly*

-Freetown-

Sierra Leone Muslim Brotherhood Primary School: D-1, E-1 and F-1

Ahmadiyya Muslim Primary School: D-2, E-2 and F-2

Regent Square Municipal Primary School: D-3, E-3 and F-3

Holy Trinity Primary School: D-4, E-4 and F-4

Regent Primary School: D-5, E-5 and F-5

Bathurst Street School: D-6, E-6 and F-6

City Mission Primary School: D-7, E-7 and F-7

-Bo-

Sierra Leone Muslim Brotherhood Primary School: D-8, E-8 and F-8

Ahmadiyya Muslim Primary School: D-9, E-9 and F-9

Bo District Educational Committee Primary School: D-10, E-10 and F-10

Sierra Leone Church Primary School: D-11, E-11 and F-11

Methodist Church Primary School: D-12, E-12 and F-12

Awada Primary School: D-13, E-13 and F-13

-Moyamba-

Ahmadiyya Muslim Primary School: D-14, E-14 and F-14

Moyamba District Educational Committee School: D-15, E-15 and F-15

Methodist Church Primary School: D-16, E-16 and F-16

St Joseph Primary School: D-17, E-17 and F-17

-Kenema-

Ahmadiyya Muslim Primary School 1: D-18, E-18 and F-18

Ahmadiyya Muslim Primary School 2: D-19, E-19 and F-19

Ansarul Islamic Primary School: D-20, E-20 and F-20

Kenema District Educational Committee Primary School: D-21, E-21 and F-21

St Charles Lwanga Primary School: D-22, E-22 and F-22

Methodist Church Primary School: D-23, E-23 and F-23

-Makeni-

Sierra Leone Muslim Brotherhood Primary School: D-24, E-24 and F-24

Alharrkan Islamic Primary School: D-25, E-25 and F-25

Bombali District Educational Committee Primary School: D-26, E-26 and F-26

Methodist Church Primary School: D-27, E-27 and F-27

#### 6.4.4 Research Instruments

The following research instruments were employed in this study: 1) Document Analysis; 2) Questionnaire; 3) Semi-structured Interview; and 4) Observation. In order to make clear how these research instruments contributed to the research in general, and to my research questions in particular, rationale for the methods employed are set out separately.

##### 1) Document Analysis

All research involves document analysis, which includes the use of secondary data, such as official statistics collected by governments and government agencies (Blaxter et al., 2006). Blaxter et al. (2006, p. 171) point out the benefits of, and reasons for, using secondary data as follows:

1. Because collecting primary data is difficult, time-consuming and expensive
2. Because you can never have enough data
3. Because it makes sense to use it if the data you want already exists in some form
4. Because it may shed light on, or complement, the primary data you have collected
5. Because it may confirm, modify or contradict your findings
6. Because it allows you to focus your attention on analysis and interpretation
7. Because you cannot conduct a research study in isolation from what has already been done
8. Because more data is collected than is ever used

Key policy documents relating to Sierra Leone's education and development policies were gathered and analysed in order to provide information relevant to my research questions. In its post-conflict phase, the country started to compile government documents, including ones previously published on-line. To my knowledge, these documents were made available on-line relatively recently, from late 2006. For the purposes of this study, the documents found particularly useful included:

*New Education Policy (1995)*

*Education Act (2004)*

*PRSP Education Sector Review (2004)*

*Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2005)*

*Sierra Leone Education Sector Plan (2007)*

Analysis of these documents contributed to drawing a relatively good picture of Sierra Leone's education and development relationship with donors, through the provision of statistics, benchmarks, targets, difficulties and problems embedded in the country. In this study, documentary analysis contributed deeply to understanding the historical background, and the analysis of my research questions regarding the impact of EFA, how British aid contributes to Sierra Leone achieving EFA and the MDGs, and to the overall development relationships between donors and recipients. Especially it helped answer research questions by comparing the 'rhetoric' documentary commitment or objectives of government policies and development relationships and findings obtained from my participants through questionnaires and interviews.

## 2) Questionnaire

Brown and Dowling (1998) view questionnaires as particularly useful for collecting simple information, such as people's experiences and knowledge, although not always very effective in determining people's way of thinking or how they construct meaning. Furthermore, questionnaires are advantageous in that their cost is usually low, respondents can choose when to complete them, the response is anonymous, the potential for interviewer bias is non-existent, and the closed questions are conducive to relatively simple, straightforward analysis (Gillham, 2000a). However, researchers need to prepare well when developing questions and their possible answers, keeping in

mind that limited choices for respondents are necessary when asking closed questions. According to Gillham (2000b), in all empirical research, before collecting data, the researcher must have a plan for its analysis. It is important to get the 'right' data by asking the 'right' questions. This is because 'Question wording can have a major effect on answers' (Gillham, 2000b, p. 12). Therefore, questions must be free of bias and not lead participants to certain answers. Moreover, technical language should be avoided so that all participants can understand the questions. Peterson (2000, p. 10) argues that 'A question can only be effective when it is consistent with the ability of potential study participants to understand and answer it'. To reduce such problems as much as possible, my questionnaires were checked by colleagues at the Institute of Education, and then a pilot study was conducted with Sierra Leoneans currently living in London and Sierra Leone, before my field research was finally conducted.

In this study, the questionnaire is the primary research instrument. It provided me with a great amount of quantitative data which I hoped would enable me to create a background of my participants and school environment and development relationship. Furthermore, since questionnaires included some open-ended questions, they enabled me to obtain some qualitative data as well. Combining questionnaires to school related participants and those from development related participants, provided data for substantive analysis regarding the impact of EFA on the provision of primary education in Sierra Leone, development partnerships between donors and recipients, the relationship between Christian and Islamic organisations in the provision of primary education, and the role of NGOs concerning the provision of primary education.

### 3) Interviews

Due to its nature as a written tool, the questionnaire is limited, in terms of exploring responses. In contrast, 'the overpowering positive feature of the interview is the richness and vividness of the material it turns up' (Gillham, 2000b, p. 10). Gillham (2000b) perceives the interview as a conversation in which the interviewer seeks responses for a particular purpose. The relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee involves the element of control, and 'control in the sense of management is

fundamental to skilled interviewing' (2000b, p. 1). Furthermore, Brown and Dowling (1998) recommend the use of efficient probes and prompts. A probe is a question that an interviewer uses in an effort to acquire or clarify information, or to find out why an interviewee responded in a certain way. An interviewer uses a prompt to suggest a possible response. Keeping in mind that probes and prompts potentially thwart the spontaneity of the response, researchers should plan the prompts they will give when participants seem to have difficulty answering questions and what probes they will employ to obtain further information (Brown and Dowling, 1998). In this respect, researchers control the interview process. Moreover, Gillham (2000b, p. 15) points out that 'Anonymity is sometimes assumed to encourage people to disclose facts, experiences, feelings or attitudes that they would not disclose to another person'. Through this research it emerged that some government officials and religious leaders seemed to have this attitude. It is essential to assure respondents of anonymity and confidentiality, and to gain their understanding and trust before starting the interviews through explaining interviewees the purpose of the research and why they were chosen to participate. Furthermore, for my participants to be able to express their opinions, views and feelings on issues related to my research questions freely, I endeavoured to show some understanding attitudes to them.

Since interviews involved not only obtaining answers from questions, but also some discussions and informal conversation, which led to the gaining of further information and the clarifying points that might have remained unarticulated without interviews. As a result, they proved to be a very useful research tool in this study. However, I also concerned about a possibility of myself being influenced by interactions with interviewees through friendly conversation to some extent. Therefore, I was aware of being fair and seeing the data and information objectively. Interviews enabled me to search into detailed explanation and complexities that characterise teaching and learning environments, as well as revealed more complex problems related to EFA, development aid, aid relationship, the roles of religion and FBOs in education development. To be more precise, interviews with headteachers contributed to analysing the impact of the EFA policy in Sierra Leone, and the religious contribution to education. Interviews with government staff also contributed to analysing the impact

of EFA in Sierra Leone, development relationships between donors and recipients, and the ways in which British aid to Sierra Leone is progressing in terms of achieving the MDGs. Interviews with NGOs contributed to an analysis of the impact of EFA in Sierra Leone, development relationships between donors and recipients, and the roles of NGOs in the provision of primary education. Interviews with FBOs contributed to an analysis of the relationship between Christianity and Islam in the provision of primary education and the role of FBOs in the provision of primary education.

#### 4) Observation

With participant observation, the researcher becomes immersed in every aspect of the people's lives (Mason, 1996). Through structured observation the researcher is able 'to record and analyse behaviour and interactions as they occur' (Ritchie, 2003, p. 35). Mason (1996, p. 60) contemplates 'how far researchers should and can participate in the situations they study, and conversely, whether it is possible or desirable simply to observe without participation'. Somehow researchers need to be ready not only to observe but also to interact. Mason (1996, p. 63) suggests that before observation, researchers need to decide whether they are going to be 'complete participants' or 'complete observers', since they are not able simply to be absent from the setting altogether. Brockington and Sullivan (in Scheyvens & Storey, 2003) see the effective researcher as being friendly and able to interact with people, as well as willing to learn from what they say and do. Therefore, although my original plan was to engage in structured observation as a "complete observer", I prepared myself to seek to be open with regard to ways of understanding my participants, their behaviours and culture through the interaction.

However, sometimes things did not go as planned. For example, when I visited schools to observe, some teachers saw me as a "guest". Their way of welcoming and treating me sometimes led to the school children not behaving in their usual manner. At some schools I even was asked to make a speech because teachers thought that I was a good "role model" for pupils, especially for girl pupils – female student studying in the UK from Japan, which is far from the UK and a non-English speaking country. In terms of being "complete observer", it was not a perfect situation, but I enjoyed answering

questions from, and interacting with, pupils. Through interacting pupils and teachers, I gathered additional insights, including the fact that female teachers are themselves regarded as “role models” for female pupils, and therefore they saw me in the same way. The observation of schools enabled me to appreciate points which might not have fully drawn from documents, questionnaires and interview responses. Another aspect I learnt from these occasions was that those pupils were more mature than I had thought they would be and had their own well-defined views of their futures.

Related to my research question, observation in schools contributed to my comprehension of the impact of EFA on the provision of primary education, and to the religious contribution to the provision of primary education. Moreover, visiting church services, mosques, and an Arabic school as an observer also helped my understanding of the religious contribution to education in Sierra Leone. Combining the four methods of document analysis, questionnaires, interviews and observation, is a way to supplement to each other in order to provide a sophisticated response to the research questions formulated.

#### 6.4.5 The Role of the Researcher

All participants were informed that I am a self-funded research student, conducting the fieldwork. I made clear to them that my research was solely for academic purposes. I felt this clear indication necessary, since I attached a letter for research assistance written by the MEST to questionnaires. Although the letter was very helpful to obtain people’s cooperation in my research, I felt a need to explain that I was an independent researcher, and no information provided by my participants would be forwarded to the MEST and/or used for other purposes.

Spradley (1980) indicates that the researcher continually makes cultural inferences. I also continuously tested inferences I had regarding Sierra Leonean cultural and social values. Scheyvens and Storey (2003) caution that researchers should be aware of their positionality in terms of race, ethnicity, age, gender, and social and economic class, since these aspects may influence the data.

Therefore, I took field notes, recording what happened during the data collection. They included informal comments and conversation I had with my participants outside of data collection, diary of my days, descriptions of events, my feelings and views on issues and emerged from experiences, and issues I saw and felt interesting in the field. I tried to be reflective, and keeping notes helped me in this respect. In doing so, I thought that I would be able to understand the lives of participants in my study better and that I could collect richer data through interaction with those with whom I was working, than would have been the case if I had simply followed my planned research methodically without reflecting on my interaction and relationships. These contributed to analysing data through understanding the people and social issues, since qualitative data involves interpretation and making cultural inferences.

#### 6.4.6 Positionality as a Foreigner

Some value and moral considerations emerged during the field research. As I look different from Sierra Leoneans, sometimes people stared at me and I felt that their expectations of me as a foreigner were high. From their way of treating me, I categorised myself at different times as a woman, student, foreigner, non-black, and Japanese and tried to understand the motors of these inferences. For example, a taxi driver gave me a new interpretation of being a student as a rich, saying that because in Sierra Leone, poor people do not go to university. This way of thinking shocked me, as I had a view that students would be usually seen as the financially disadvantaged. He continued that after the end of the war, many foreigners have come and hired taxis for a full day or half a day and paid a fortune. That was another reason why he tried to charge me higher fare than normal. This experience made me think about the responsibility for my actions as a foreigner towards local people. I thought that sometimes issues of money could cause a distorted relationship between locals and foreigners.

Another experience I felt was an indication of high expectations of me as a foreigner was that sometimes I was asked to hire people in various towns. In some cases, they

brought me their CVs or showed me their certificates of qualifications. I did not need a research assistant, but I sometimes asked some of them to be a guide when I was upcountry. They said that it is not easy to find a job in Sierra Leone and usually they do farming and petty-trading but cannot really earn money from them. Therefore, seeing me walking alone in the town, they thought it would be a good chance to find a paid job in cash. Although I felt sorry that I was unable to provide employment opportunities often, I was aware of my positionality and capability as a research student, and tried not to give them excessive expectations.

A difficulty arising from data collection was that I felt that the majority of ordinary Sierra Leoneans living there had a different sense of time management to me. I often experienced their late arrival and was sometimes mildly embarrassed by their vague time arrangements. When complained, however, some Sierra Leoneans were upset by this and could not understand why punctuality was such a big issue. Some replied to me with a smile, saying 'we have an African time'. In this respect, I was wondering if they had a different sense of time or if being late was a habitual thing. However, thinking about our positionality, I came to realise that our situations were very different. While I visited Sierra Leone for fieldwork and had left my daily household chores and duties at home, they had their everyday lives to get on with. That is, I had an environment in which I was able to concentrate on my data collection, but they had their own day-to-day lives into which I had just happened to come. Yet, this different sense of time affected my schedule. Sometimes I had to wait for a long time, and appointments were even cancelled after I waited for two hours, as the person I was going to meet did not turn up at the office. These experiences made me realise that organising data collection and actually conducting it were very different processes. Therefore, I learnt that I had to be flexible to make full use of my time efficiently, and everyday I prepared a plan A, B and sometimes C, in case there were changes in appointments.

However, there were also people who were busy and often had a tight schedule. They were often academics, government officials, and international NGO staff. This was because although during the civil war, Sierra Leone was more or less cut off from the

international community, recently, many aid agencies, international NGOs and academics from abroad have worked in the country and needed to collaborate with these high profile locals. One such example was an arrangement with a representative of Plan Sierra Leone. Although I obtained the agreement prior to visiting to the country, I failed to make an interview arrangement. In the end I visited him without an appointment, although that was not my preferred style. He explained that as someone holding the topmost position in an international NGO, he had so many things to do and so many people to meet, that he had to deal with urgent matters first. He had not filled out the questionnaire that I had left him in advance, as there were so many surveys and questionnaires he needed to complete. He showed me a lot of questionnaires and similar forms from multilateral aid agencies on his desk. He found mine from among the pile and suggested having an interview immediately there. He also introduced me other branch offices upcountry where I could see their work in operation.

In all cases, I appreciated the assistance of my participants greatly. This is because these experiences reminded me of one of the articles in *the Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* (BERA, 2004), stating that ‘researchers must recognise concerns relating to the “bureaucratic burden” of much research, especially survey research, and must seek to minimise the impact of their research on the normal working and workload of participants’. My participants had a lot of responsibilities in their work and everyday lives, yet they still found time to help me with my research.

#### 6.4.7 Language in Conducting Field Research

English, the official language of Sierra Leone was used in conducting field research. This choice did not bring any problems in general when speaking with interviewing teachers, government officials and NGO and FBO workers. As far as teachers were concerned, in a way their knowledge of English proved that they were likely to have been educated and trained, which was evidenced from questionnaire responses too. Many Sierra Leoneans are multilingual, and it is said that the “average educated” Sierra Leonean can speak English, Krio, and his/her mother tongue fluently. However, they were not always the “averagely educated”, with basic education, especially

parents and those people I met in towns. Therefore, originally I planned to hire a research assistant.

However, hiring a research assistant led to another problem. It was not easy to find a “good” assistant for my purposes, and with my value of time. After working with various people for a couple of weeks, I decided to work totally alone, as I realised that different people have different values and views to mine regarding time-keeping, commitment, responsibility and prioritisation, and I wanted to use my time in the most productive way possible. Occasionally I found difficulties in communicating, especially in a village, such as Moyamba. However, fortunately, there were always someone who tried to help me and I greatly appreciated this. People in rural areas who assisted me seemed quite proud of using English and did so as much as they could in front of other village people. I also remembered basic Krio words with which to communicate with people. This helped me in establishing good relationships with locals, and assisted in making the data collection effective.

It can be argued that it would be disadvantageous for me to conduct fieldwork in English, since my mother tongue is Japanese. However, this issue applies to all researchers to some extent, as researchers often cannot escape from the discourse of translation and interpretation in fieldwork. In relation to the issue of “otherness”, researchers do engage in “cultural inference”. Furthermore, it could be argued that allowing people to speak in their native languages affords them the opportunity to think and talk with each other, without involving the researcher. Scheyvens and Storey (2003, p. 5) refer to such a situation as ‘comfort for participants’.

#### 6.4.8 Generalisability, Reliability and Validity

It is necessary to examine whether my research addresses concerns over generalisability, reliability and validity in order to prove that my work is trustworthy. Blaxter et al. (2006, p. 221) defines generalisability as ‘whether your findings are likely to have been broader applicability beyond the focus of your study’. Reliability refers to consistency of research processes and exists when a piece of research, carried

out several times, yields the same results. Validity refers to ‘whether your methods, approaches and techniques actually related to, or measure, the issues you have been exploring’ (Blaxter et al. 2006, p. 221). That is, a researcher needs to check whether the research methods, techniques, and/or instruments are reliable, whether the analysis and findings from the data collected reflect or confirm concepts or theories as predicted, and whether the findings from the sample population are applicable to wider cases or populations.

Generalisability can be tested by carrying out research using different samples. Ideally, reliability can be established when more than two researchers conduct the same research using the same instruments and have the same or similar findings. However, with respect to my study, the best I could do was to use my carefully chosen research instruments and to analyse the collected data as carefully as possible. In this respect, the experience of the pilot study, discussed earlier, was very helpful in giving me lessons and some confidence. I also tried to include participants representing a diverse group of people with respect to gender, class, religion and ethnicity, in order to reflect all the chosen variables as fully as possible. Therefore, I visited towns in the north, south, west and east of Sierra Leone. Furthermore, through the pilot study, I learnt that even when questionnaires are the main instrument of data collection, there is a strong need to bear in mind the fact that over-reliance on questionnaires should if possible be avoided and, where possible, questionnaires need to be complemented by other instruments, such as interviews, observation, literature reviews and documentation. Therefore, in this research I tried to employ a range of methods. Through triangulation of different methods and the use of carefully selected data sources, I attempted to enhance generalisability, reliability and validity in this study.

#### 6.4.9 Ethics and Concerns

In terms of ethical considerations, I referred to *The British Educational Research Association: Code of Ethics*, and *Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2004)* by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) which provided the basis of my knowledge in this area, both of which were downloaded from the Institute

of Education website. These guidelines made me more aware of respect and responsibility for my participants and knowledge, social values and the research itself.

As discussed earlier, all participants were given anonymity. The name of institutions such as government departments, institutions, NGOs and FBOs were used, although the name of participants remained confidential. This is because institutions' names of development related participants are necessary when arguing their roles and their relationship, and policy implications. I also followed the suggestion of Scheyvens, Nowak, and Scheyvens (in Scheyvens & Storey, 2003) that researchers should state that potential participants do not have to participate if they do not want to, and participants should have the right to withdraw at any time. Furthermore, I stressed that any personal information I obtained would be confidential. This is because it is important to avoid the possibility of damaging or negatively affecting their relationships and lives.

An ethical dilemma always arises when one sees others as subjects. The extent to which an outsider can be close to the people being studied is controversial. Scheyvens and Storey (2003) suggest that the research process can potentially be exploitative, especially when it is in developing countries. Terms such as 'academic tourism' (Mowforth & Munt, 1998, p. 101) and 'research travelers' (Clifford, 1997, p. 67) have been used in this respect. Researchers conduct fieldwork for academic purposes, mostly over a short period of time, regarding the people they study as subjects. Therefore, researchers must know that power relations are involved, potentially bringing about biases, assumptions, injustice, and inequality. It is not always the researcher who has power. The researched can also exercise power by bargaining or refusing to participate in the study. Research cannot be apolitical. However, this does not mean that a researcher has to accept the position of the "outsider" in a negative way. As a result, I tried to develop a mutual and sound relationship with the people with whom I worked, maintaining respect for them, particularly with regard to their privacy and safety.

Furthermore, nobody can escape from the issue of "otherness" whatever their

nationality. This is because, for example, even if I was a Sierra Leonean and doing field research in Sierra Leone, although ordinary people would see me as a Sierra Leonean like them, I would be still “outsider” in the eyes of my participants working for organisations, such as government officials, NGO staff and school authorities. During my stay in Sierra Leone, I was aware of being an outsider and being more specifically of being Japanese. I hope this could work in a positive way in examining the relationship between Britain and Sierra Leone, in the sense that I could be distanced from both countries and their cultures and thus objective and fair.

One of my concerns was children’s involvement in data collection, as pupils were also important participants in my study as questionnaire respondents. Peterson (2000, p. 10) warns that ‘A question can only be effective when it is consistent with the ability of potential study participants to understand and answer it’. Questions that are acceptable to adults are not always acceptable to children, since they may require different language capabilities. In addition, Brown and Dowling (1998) point out that children might give answers that they think their teachers or interviewers want to hear. Robson (2002, p. 102) refers to this phenomenon as ‘participant bias’, explaining that pupils know the importance of ‘good results’. Through the interaction with children I learned that pupils were mature enough to fill in questionnaires and also seemed sensible about their behaviours. I did not give any particular instruction in this respect, since having an unnecessary interference did not seem to be a good idea.

In a similar vein, whether researchers can adequately explain their research theme to them and gain informed consent from children is ethical. Some argue that researchers should request the consent of parents or guardians. Herein lies the question of whether or not to participate in the research is the children’s decision, made freely and without pressure. I wanted to collect data with as little outside pressure as possible. However, informing parents and possibly the wider community about the purpose of my research, and about the participation of children, would help establish a positive relationship with the researched community. I intended to explain to them what I was doing and why I was asking them to participate. However, that was not as simple as I had planned it to be. Because of FPE, the number of pupils has rapidly increased, while school

infrastructure has not adequately improved. As a result, over-population at schools was a serious problem and my appearance as a foreigner caused difficulties for teachers, by bringing about huge excitement amongst the pupils. Innocent children enjoyed the situation and tried to interact with me. After discussions with headteachers and teachers at the various schools I visited, I respected their suggestions about how best to ask for cooperation concerning the questionnaire administrations and what could be the most appropriate way to interact with staff and pupils. Thus, at some schools I introduced myself and explained my work to pupils, while at other schools teachers explained to their pupils the purpose of the research on my behalf. I realised again that I needed to be well-prepared in order to act properly, effectively and flexibly on different occasions, considering any burden of my participants and their environment.

## 6.5 Procedures of Data Analysis

Policy makers often tend to be in favour of a quantitative approach to data collection and analysis using benchmarks. I do not deny the importance of statistical approaches. However, in this research, I tried to move beyond these and reflect the voices of participants, in order to achieve a deep knowledge and understanding of their views, and of issues affecting primary education in Sierra Leone. Therefore, as discussed earlier, both quantitative and qualitative approaches to data analysis were taken. While quantitative or statistical data would provide clear and explicit outcomes within given choices, the use of qualitative data was useful to supplement, validate and explain the quantitative results obtained. To gain insights into the knowledge and views of my participants and in order to effectively analyse answers to the research questions, the data gathered were processed in the following way:

1. Raw quantitative data from questionnaires were coded and assigned frequency values through Excel and SPSS, with a heavier reliance on the former.
2. Figures, diagrams and charts were made to organise and examine components of the quantitative data obtained from questionnaires.
3. Recorded tapes were checked more than several times and all the interviews were transcribed and kept as text files. The printed transcripts were read through again

more than several times and irrelevant data were excluded and kept in separate text files. The relevant data were coded manually according to categorisations established based on the questions and themes examined.

4. The coded data were all printed out and further refined to sort out and group information into smaller categories. Then, the interpretation of qualitative data was carefully done whenever necessary.
5. Coded data and frequency values were then re-examined, categorised, evaluated, compared and synthesised.

The coded and categorised data based on themes were looked at many times in order to examine and identify any patterns or returning themes, and then examined holistically. The simple quantitative data were then analysed descriptively using percentage counts, tables and figures to present the relevant characteristics, views, perceptions of the respondents. Demographic data were also handled similarly. The process was intricate and greatly time consuming, although I had been prepared due to the experience of the pilot study. Then qualitative data which for example refer to interpretation, meaning, relationship, perception were interrogated in relation to my research questions. Although the different data components were analysed separately, they were joined in an exercise of multiple triangulation. Reflexivity as a researcher and as a foreign outsider was made during this process. Field notes were useful in this. Moreover, examining Sierra Leone's approach to development in general and development of education in particular, and development relationship, using the theories discussed in Chapter 5 and collected data combined with documentary analysis helped understand the processes of Sierra Leone's achieving EFA with partner stakeholders, and in the end helped answer my research questions. As a result, the qualitative data helped supplement, validate and explain quantitative data. Overall, throughout this research I attempted to make this research trustworthy.

## 6.6 Summary

This chapter explored how my methodology was selected and developed in order to collect and analyse the necessary data to produce meaningful discussions about and

answers to my research questions. In addition, it contained self-reflective sections on my experience of undertaking the pilot study, field research and data analysis. This chapter also explained how my collected data were processed for analysis, in order to provide insights into answering my research questions. Reviewing this methodology is important to show that I attempted to enhance credibility of my research.

Using the methodology discussed, with careful consideration of the proposed research issues, I was able to elaborate discussions and analyse my research contained in the ensuing two chapters. The following Chapter 7 looks at the discussion and analysis of the impact of EFA and religious contributions to provision of education, while Chapter 8 focuses on the discussion and analysis of development partnership with a close attention paid to “partnership” and “ownership” in practice, in the case of Sierra Leone’s development of education.

# Chapter 7 Discussion and Analysis on the Impact of EFA and Religious Issues in Sierra Leone<sup>78</sup>

## 7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss and analyse data focusing on education and religion related questions in an attempt to find responses to them. As a result, this chapter consists of the following sections: the impact of EFA and UPE, and the role of religions in the development of education.

## 7.2 Impact of EFA and UPE

### 7.2.1 Introduction

This section discusses the impact of EFA on the provision of primary education in Sierra Leone. Since the government implemented the UPE programme in late 1993 with assistance from donors, the country has made sequential and systematic efforts to achieve its objectives. These include the introduction of the new education system of 6-3-3-4 with a new curriculum, and the introduction of a policy of FPE. While these efforts have brought some positive outcomes, such as increased access to primary education, promoting girls' education and an improved curriculum, there have also been negative outcome and difficulties, including school fees as a barrier to regular schooling, and trade-offs in terms of loss in the quality of education provided when set against the rapid increase in enrolment at primary schools. Therefore, this section examines increased access to education including NGOs' work in assisting the provision of education, parents' financial burden in primary education, trade-offs in the quality of education, and the impact of the new education system. It also analyses the overall impact of EFA on the provision of primary education in Sierra Leone, which is one of the main research questions.

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<sup>7</sup> Demographics and other background related statistics for the study samples are attached in the Appendix.

<sup>8</sup> NB. Comments quoted from participants are stated verbatim and/or as they were written throughout this chapter.

### 7.2.2 Increased Access to Primary Education

Although the net primary school enrolment ratio was 35 per cent in 1992 just after the civil war started (MoE, 1995, p. xii), it rose to 63.0 per cent in 2005 (MEST, 2007, p. 25). This increased number of children at schools was observed during my field research. I saw many classes packed with children, while teachers struggling to control the rapidly increasing enrolments. Statistics also show that enrolment in Class 1 of primary education increased from 260,000 in 2004 to 355,300 in 2005 (GoSL, 2006, p. 61).

The rapid increase is largely because of the FPE policy the government introduced in 2000. The government clearly states that basic education shall be free in government schools and government-assisted schools, and that even private schools shall not charge fees that are unreasonable (GoSL, 2004). Under the FPE policy, the government has been responsible for paying tuition fees, providing teaching and learning materials and core text books to all children, as well as paying the NPSE fee. The government has kept promoting access to basic education with a focus on girls, and is firmly committed to achieving EFA by 2015 (GoSL, 2005a). In pursuit of this, the government has increased allocation to the education sector to about 23 per cent of the national budget (MEST, 2007). Furthermore, the government set a fine of up to Le500,000, imprisonment or both for a parent or a guardian who does not send their child to school (GoSL, 2004). This could be important spur to parents sending their children to schools, which is important when considering the fact that some teachers and parents highlighted problems in this area during the research. Although education used to be seen as being “for the privileged”, the FPE policy changed people’s view of education to something that is now regarded as “more affordable” than before. This is supported by teachers’ comments:

D-4: ‘Prior to the policy, education was only meant for the privileged because it was expensive. However, with the introduction of the FPE, the quantity in access to schooling including the needy was expanded’

D-16: ‘It has made many parents to send their children to school. More girls are now

attending. It has made parents to know that education is better than silver and gold’.

D-19: ‘This policy has helped the poor people in the sense that the government has handled the external fees or fees for all external exams. The headteachers and principals also have minimised the other school fees for fear that they would be reported. It also has strengthened the fact that education is not a privilege but a right’.

As 438 (96.5 per cent) parent participants highlighted, in Sierra Leone, radio is the most powerful and popular tool for the dissemination of news and information as seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Source of general information and news (Parents N=454)

	Radio	Newspaper	Community meeting	Family and Friends	Television	Internet
No.	438	222	155	150	97	24
%	96.5	48.9	34.1	33.0	21.4	5.3

My observations also showed that people often listened to the radio when they were farming, trading, travelling, or sitting in the streets. Therefore, it is plausible for the government and NGOs to use the radio to send their messages to the people, for example, regarding the FPE.

Furthermore, the government has encouraged parents and schools to expand girls’ education, shown in the following comment by a teacher:

D-23: ‘Those who had never had the opportunity to go to school are now going to school under the FPE policy. Especially the girl child education programme has been so much encouraged by the government’.

This importance of girls’ education is seen in government documents including the *Sierra Leone Education Sector Plan* (MEST, 2007). Although the people of the

Northern and Eastern regions of Sierra Leone are poorer than in other areas, and these regions have more uneducated girls and women, the government has supported completely free education to girls who have gone through NPSE successfully (Bennell et al., 2004). FAWE staff said that, because of the government policy, girls' retention rates have been going up and they found it very encouraging.

Since the government has made girls' education compulsory, schools have also encouraged an increase in girl's schooling, and 115 (92 per cent) teachers in my sample said that they encouraged girls' schooling. Questionnaires to teachers revealed the following efforts had been made in an attempt to encourage girls schooling:

Table 2. Details of schools' encouraging girls' schooling (N=125)

Aspect	No.	%
Visit parents	15	12.0
Counseling girl children	11	8.8
Giving prizes or promotions	10	8.0
Provision of free uniforms	9	7.2
Stressing the importance of girls' education	8	6.4
Not charging school fees to girls	7	5.6
Allowing child mothers to attend schools	5	4.0
Having more female teachers who acted as role models	5	4.0
Other	16	12.8
No Answer	39	31.2

“Other” included:

D-4: ‘Special attention are paid to girls in class’

D-9: ‘There is more space for girl children than boys. The government uses law for parents to send their girl child to school’

D-21: ‘Girls’ schooling was made compulsory by the government. A fine has been levied by parents who do not send their girl child to school’

In addition to efforts made by schools, NGOs and religious leaders have also contributed to the improvement of education in Sierra Leone, including girls' access to schooling. For example, Plan Sierra Leone, has been working towards education renewal in the country. Interviews with Plan Sierra Leone revealed that their work includes:

1. Construction and rehabilitation of primary schools, including toilets and wells.
2. Providing school furniture.
3. Training teachers through workshops as some are not trained and/or qualified.
4. Supporting teachers who cannot leave the village to have distance learning.
5. Providing refresher courses for qualified teachers.
6. Distributing school materials, including pens, pencils, teaching and learning materials, record books, registers and chalk, to help the schools run properly
7. Providing recreational kits to the war-traumatised children, such as footballs, volleyballs, handballs, skipping ropes, and games.
8. Promoting peace education.
9. Sensitising people on important issues, such as empowerment of girls and women.
10. Supporting local NGOs that share common goals with Plan Sierra Leone, such as a child-focused approach.

Although Plan Sierra Leone operates in several districts throughout the country, examining their work in Moyamba allowed me to provide a detailed analysis that highlights their energetic overall contribution. This is because Plan Sierra Leone appointed Moyamba district as their model district, and has supported over 400 primary schools (as of May 2005). Table 3 below shows teacher-pupil ratios based on responses to questionnaires administered to teachers.

Table 3. Teacher-pupil ratio (Teachers N=125)

	Freetown	Bo	Moyamba	Kenema	Makeni	Total
Percentage	17.1	59.9	59.0	77.5	83.4	54.3
poverty <sup>9</sup>	-70.1	-67.8	-69.0	-95.0	-90.0	-78.9
1-40	2 (7.4%)	4(private4) (13.3%)	4 (19.0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.0%)	11(private4) (8.8%)
41-60	14 (51.9%)	20 (66.7%)	12 (57.1%)	1 (3.7%)	7 (35.0%)	54 (43.2%)
61-80	10 (37.0%)	5 (16.7%)	3 (14.3%)	7 (25.9%)	3 (15.0%)	28 (22.4%)
81-100	0 (0%)	1 (3.3%)	0 (0%)	5 (18.5%)	1 (5.0%)	7 (5.6%)
101-	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	14 (51.9%)	7 (35.0%)	21 (16.8%)
No answer	1 (3.7%)	0	2 (9.5%)	0	1 (5.0%)	4 (3.2%)
Total	27 (100%)	30 (100%)	21 (100%)	27 (100%)	20 (100%)	125 (100%)

The government recommended teacher-pupil ratio is 1:40. The majority of classes in Moyamba had a teacher-pupil ratio of less than 1:60. This is a relatively good ratio, compared to classes in other towns. Freetown is the capital of Sierra Leone and Bo is the second biggest town in the country, which means that they have relatively good infrastructures and thus tend to attract more aid agencies than other areas. The classes with over 100 pupils were all from schools in Kenema and Makeni, where the level of poverty is more severe. In Kenema where the province was most seriously affected by the civil war, more than half of the samples show the teacher-pupil ratio is over 1:100.

In response to this, in an interview, a MEST officer stated that they have particularly focused on the Northern and Eastern regions since 2004, and that the outcome of this would be visible in a few years' time. The reason for this focus is that the MEST believes that these regions have the most severe poverty and tend to be more Muslim-dominated, where some traditional values might discourage girls' education. Therefore, the government has paid school fees and provided teaching and learning materials, exercise books, and uniforms for all girls who pass the NPSE in these

<sup>9</sup> Percentage poverty in districts shows the ratios of urban and rural accordingly (GoSL, 2005, p. 27).

regions in order to encourage females to continue their education to junior secondary level.

Furthermore, although in Sierra Leone double-shifts at schools are very common in order to reduce severe congestion in classrooms, surprisingly, there was no double-shift school in Moyamba. An interview with Plan Sierra Leone revealed that they have constructed new, and rehabilitated old, school buildings, making double-shift schools unnecessary. The impact of the work by Plan Sierra Leone was highly notable. Not only have they made physical contributions, such as constructing and rehabilitating school buildings, and supporting the provision of teaching and learning materials, and recreation kits, but they have also provided workshops and refresher courses for teachers. My observations found that this level of support is reflected in the way classroom teaching occurred in Moyamba, where children had their own textbooks and notebooks. While this is normal in developed countries, it is uncommon in many places in Sierra Leone. Furthermore, together with Plan Sierra Leone, local NGOs such as Pekin to Pekin Movement, FAWE and CADO, have also supported schools by promoting peace and health education at schools, as well as providing skills training and sensitisation as to the importance of girls' education and the issue of human rights at a community level. This includes a focus on the rights of the disabled and vulnerable. These activities by NGOs help promote access to schooling and make teachers and children more motivated and engaged with teaching and learning.

The detailed role of religions with regard to the provision of education is discussed in a later section. However, it should be noted here that religious leaders have sensitised parents about the importance of women's education at churches and mosques. They have also sometimes supported schooling for girls by providing materials and uniforms and by offering scholarships. This is because many people in Sierra Leone are religious and religious leaders can thus have a significant influence on the thinking and the behaviour of the people. Therefore, the joint efforts made by the government, schools, NGOs and religious leaders have improved educational opportunities for both boys and girls. This is supported statistically. For example, on top of the increased enrolment

rates stated earlier, the number of girls passing the NPSE increased from 5,176 in 2004 to 20,062 in 2005 (GoSL, 2006, p. 61). This is a significant improvement, and deserves a certain level of appreciation.

However, behind the increase in the access to education, there are some problems, such as an increase in the number of children who drop out. In this study, as shown in Table 4, 95 (76.0 per cent) teachers said that they have pupils dropping out, and Table 5 summerising some of the reasons.

Table 4. Pupils' drop-out from school (Teachers N=125)

	Yes	No	No Answer
No.	95	26	4
%	76.0	20.8	3.2

Table 5. Reasons for pupils dropping out from school (Teachers N=125)

Reason	No.	%
Lack of money/poverty	84	67.2
Lack of parental care	55	44.0
Pregnancy and early marriage	46	37.8
Bad peer influence	17	13.6
Truancy	16	12.8
Death of parent	8	6.4
War affected trauma/age	5	4.0
Drug abuse	3	2.4
Far distance	3	2.4
Other	5	4.0

Note: "Other" included academic weakness etc.

Poverty stood out as the most common reason for drop out:

D-1: 'Pupils are hungry for poverty and lose motivation'.

D-2: 'Poverty is one. Parents need their children to help them in the farms to produce food or any other work rather than sending them to school, particularly girl child. The government is helping, but parents still cannot help to pay for the other needs'.

D-12: 'Financial problems to buy school materials such as textbooks, stationery etc. Traditional influence such as early marriage and becoming traditional leaders'.

D-23: 'Because of poverty, some parents send their children to sell some items in market or to have sex with men'.

D-9: 'Illiterate parents, cultural reason (e.g. girl children when initiated into the Bundu society while boys go out hunting to marry girls. Custom such as girls are meant for the kitchen)'.

D-23: 'Lack of interest in formal education. Some prefer quick money earning through either mining or trading'.

D-22: 'Some children who were behind the rebel line started schooling late. Some pupils are ashamed to go to school because of their age'.

Furthermore, there are still children - and more usually girls than boys - who do not go to a primary school. In this study, through questionnaires, as seen in Table 6, 69 (15.2 per cent) parents revealed that not all of their school-aged children were attending school.

Table 6. Parents' school-aged children going to school (Parents N=454)

	Yes	No	Some go some don't	No Answer
No.	379	4	65	6
%	83.5	0.9	14.3	1.3

The reasons were mostly financial difficulties, typified by a comment that:

E-21: 'Because of trade profit, it is difficult to send all my children to school'.

However, this can also be seen in another parent comment that:

E-27: 'Because of the remote location, it is not easy to go to school for children'.

Issues of proximity and safety were also stressed by parents, while girls' pregnancy was another notable reason given.

Considering the fact that about 70 per cent of the population lives in poverty and they experienced an eleven year civil war, it can be argued that still many children do not have a supportive environment for learning. Regarding teachers' comments about pupils' drop out, although poverty affects many children, it does not do so equally in terms of their gender. Girls are more at a risk of drop out because they are vulnerable to early sex and marriage, prostitution, and pregnancy, as well as being victims of their parents' preference for male offspring to participate in schooling opportunities. Furthermore, elder boys who lost their earlier age of education due to the civil war are found to be equally vulnerable in terms of access to schooling and regular and continuation of education.

Regular schooling and the completion of primary education that is of good quality, are more important factors than simply increased access to primary education. All children, regardless of their location, gender and/or age have the right to receive an education. In order for all children to have a good education and to bring the more vulnerable and marginalised into formal education, it is necessary to identify the main barriers, to children's regular schooling and completion of primary education.

### 7.2.3 Parents' Financial Burden with Regard to the Provision of Primary Education

Although the FPE has escalated the access, there are still some barriers to regular schooling for children, notably "school fees". With the introduction of the FPE, significant costs have been taken over by the government in collaboration with donors, but there are still costs borne by parents, and education is not entirely free. Answers to questionnaires revealed that 307 (67.6 per cent) parents in the sample found difficulties with regard to providing for their children's regular schooling. As seen in Table 7, over 60 per cent of parents pointed to "lack of money" as the major difficulty, followed by 19.2 per cent of parents who stated "safety reasons" and 18.5 per cent of parents who

“needed the child’s household help.” “Other” difficulties included transportation, provision of school materials, hunger and sickness, other health problems and medical costs, as well as lack of raincoats and umbrellas. Both “lack of money” and “need for household help” indicated that financial problems were the major problem and made up nearly 80 per cent of all of the parent participants’ responses.

Table 7. Parents’ difficulties in children’s regular schooling (Parents N=454)

Reason	Lack of money	Need for household help	Safety	Other
No.	276	84	87	18
%	60.8	18.5	19.2	4.0

Furthermore, in this study, 360 (79.3 per cent) parents reported they made sacrifices for their children’s schooling, which is shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Parents’ sacrifices in sending children to school (Parents N=454)

	Try not to buy clothes	Reduction of food	Skip meal	Reduce salt & sugar, etc.	Hire labour	Curtail expenditure	Sell livestock	Borrowing	Other
No.	172	187	85	31	50	290	82	156	13
%	37.9	41.2	18.7	6.8	11.0	63.9	18.1	34.4	2.9

As results indicate, parents engaged in substantial sacrifices in order to send their children to schools. “Other” sacrifices included:

E-3: ‘Failing to provide proper shelter’, and ‘seeking other private jobs to add more income’.

E-18: ‘Other priorities are laid aside for children’s education’.

E-20: ‘We have one meal per day because of the problem of buying text books for the

other daughters in secondary school’.

It is necessary to clearly understand why parents encounter such financial constraints within a system based on the FPE. Parents stated that in real terms, primary education is not totally free in Sierra Leone. Parents made monetary payments towards their children’s schooling in various ways, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Parents’ monetary contribution to school (Parents N=454)

Item	No.	%
Uniform	375	82.6
Textbooks	324	71.4
Tuition fee	266	58.6
Admission fee	229	50.4
School development fund	205	45.2
CTA	201	44.3
Stationery	201	44.3
Transport	200	44.1
Exam fee	150	33.0

According to interviews with headteachers and a MEST officer, the government does not have adequate financial capacity to deliver enough subsidies, materials, infrastructure, and salaries. That is, the government’s weak financial capacity throws a segment of the financial burden on parents, who have to buy school materials, and causes a poorer learning environment at schools. Therefore, schools collect “school fees” from parents on an individual basis in order to run their operations.

It is worth noting that on one occasion, a boy asked me and a non-Sierra Leonean businessman for Le2,000 (approx.40 pence) in order to pay his partial tuition fees. This was during class hours and he said he had been told by a teacher that he could not attend class until he could get the money. He knew about free education, but said sometimes people had to pay for the school. Although the government provides school

subsidies of Le2,000 per pupil per term, in practice, this is not enough for schools to run on.

These “school fees” clearly depended on the policy of individual schools and on particular circumstances. According to responses to questionnaires from teachers and parents, the fees range from: Le12,000-22,500 for tuition fees, Le500-5,000 for admission fees, Le10,000-13,000 for uniforms, Le10,000-30,000 for textbooks, Le5,000-8,000 or more for stationery, Le2,000 for exam fees, Le500-2,000 for CTA fees per term, from Le500 for the School Development Fund monthly requirements or Le5,000 per term to Le6,000 annually. Notable particular circumstances requiring parental contributions included Le2,500 for a mock final examination, Le1,000 for a testimonial, Le2,000 for a sports event, and some contributions towards the pay for teachers who were not yet officially on the pay roll, as well as occasional special requests from teachers.

Questionnaire responses found that less than half, 193 (42.5 per cent) parent participants had a regular income, and again less than half, only 197 (43.4 per cent) parents had other sources of income from other members of the family. Since 80 per cent of parents made some sacrifices in their lives for their children’s schooling, and 70 per cent of the population lives in poverty, these “school fees” are a heavy burden for parents, especially since most of them have more than one child of school age in their household, as seen in Table 10. Therefore, these fees are a serious barrier to children’s regular schooling.

Table 10. Number of children in a household (Parents N=454)

No. of children	No.	%
1	25	5.5
2	61	13.4
3	95	21.0
4	80	17.6
5	57	12.6
6	77	17.0
7	19	4.2
8	13	2.9
9	11	2.4
10	4	0.9
11-	9	2.0
No Answer	3	0.7

Furthermore, it is worth adding that not only monetary contributions, but also non-monetary contributions were made by parents to schools as seen in Table 11.

Table 11. Parents' non-monetary contributions to school (Parents N=454)

	Cleaning school	Maintenance of school	Provision of food	Collecting water	Collecting firewood	Other
No.	130	126	117	67	63	1
%	28.6	27.8	25.8	14.8	13.9	0.2

Although it varied from school to school, parents' involvement seemed to have an aim of community involvement, which some teachers pointed out and is exemplified by the following comment from a teacher:

D-1: 'Since the school is integrated with the community, parents should be involved in some minor work for the school'

Activities included the sweeping of school compounds, cleaning toilets, collecting water and firewood as the government is not responsible for water rates, electricity or

telephone bills. A teacher said that ‘the school normally collects Le100 on every Wednesdays for cleaning, and when there is time to paint the school, parents normally give contribution’. The collection of stones during school building is also another way to contribute. Another teacher said that ‘the school is community based, and the sustainability is enhanced with the corporation of the community. Therefore, the school requires and expects parents to make any non-monetary contribution’. It could be argued that these parents’ non-monetary contributions are a reflection of the government policy to some extent. A MEST officer explained it as follows:

B-1: ‘Since there are some people in community who can contribute to education development, we hope that the whole community can assist schools in their area. It helps make some parents who are not interested in children’s education because of poverty, engaged in it’.

In this way, parents are expected to get involved in the maintenance of their children’s school, both to financially and in kind, and in this way, parents have implanted into them an idea that the school is part of the community. Furthermore, this may help parents to be supportive to children’s learning.

#### 7.2.4 Trade-offs in Quality Education

While the government education reforms including the FPE have brought the increase in access to schooling, the rapid increase in access to school has brought trade-offs with regard to the quality of education. The teacher-pupil ratio is often used as an indicator to measure the quality of education. The government’s recommended ratio is 1:40. However, my field research showed that, as seen in Table 3 earlier, only 8.8 per cent of classes met this ratio, including four classes of one private school. A private school requires higher school fees than government and government-assisted schools, and therefore, is expected to provide a better learning environment and a higher quality of education. Except for the private school, few classes met the government recommended ratio; about half of the classes had a teacher-pupil ratio of over 1:60, while 17 per cent of sample classes had a teacher-pupil ratio of over 1:100. From the field research, it emerged that there are mainly two issues negatively affecting teachers’ motivation and commitment to their work. One is that teachers are exhausted

through dealing with massively increased class sizes as a result of the EFA policy. The other which is more serious, according to teachers, is salary problems. Both of them affect the quality of education provided to pupils.

Because of the rapid increase in the number of children since the introduction of the FPE, teachers' workload has increased. Schools need more teachers. This high number of class size affects the quality of teaching, as seen as some of teachers' comments:

D-20: 'Building is not large enough for such large classes, and teachers' burden is so huge. There are teachers who are not paid over 3 years. We need more teachers, but a headteacher cannot recruit new teachers. School authority come together in interviews, assess applicants, send documents to the government, and usually need years to be approved by the government. Because of the current situation of so many pupils for too few teachers, it is impossible to give them even small tests as it is impossible for teachers to mark them. We do not have such time. So we do not know if pupils really understand it or not and it affects quality of education.'

D-24: 'We need more teachers – Muslim Brother Education secretary recruited 10-15 applicants, but among them only 4 or 5 were approved by the government and 10 are suspended and therefore not teaching.'

D-27: 'Teachers used to have right to punish pupils using stick, but today, corporal punishment was banned for children's right. If you do, you could be reported to police, but it is so hard for teachers to control class and maintain discipline in such a big classroom.'

Furthermore, double-shift schools are a very common way to reduce severe congestion in the classroom. Many teachers pointed to overcrowded classrooms as being one of their difficulties in providing a good quality education, including comments as follows:

D-1: 'The "free education" has created more problems than solutions – classrooms are so congested that pupils do not take their work seriously.'

D-9: 'The school is overpopulated. We do not have enough seats/buildings. No good discipline in the school. A lot of children come to school without school materials such as books, pens and pencils'.

D-10: 'Classrooms are now so congested with children such that it is very difficult to control, hence shifting system has been introduced, but it is not good too'.

D-11: 'Increased the number of pupils in schools which degrade quality education with lack of enough school materials, chalks, books, furniture, buildings etc.'

These teachers' voices show the limitation of the capacity of both teachers' workload and school building. In addition, my observations found that most schools in the sample had severe problems concerning the infrastructure, security, facilities and equipment, with the exception of schools in Moyamba and a private school in Bo. Most schools did not have a proper playground, a library or a science laboratory. Many teachers expressed their concerns about school safety and wanted the school compound to be surrounded by a wall or fence so that strangers could not enter the compound during and after school hours. A fence was also regarded as being necessary to help stop some pupils from sneaking away from classes to play truant. Teachers also stressed the need for an assembly hall, a staff room, toilets and water well facilities. In terms of basic equipment, questionnaire answers showed that 114 (91.2 per cent) of the teachers felt that their school supplies, such as chalk from the government, were not sufficient. The government provides the supplies for schools annually at the start of a new academic year, except in Moyamba district where Plan Sierra Leone has been responsible for the provision. However, supplies were insufficient, and some teachers seemed to make voluntary contributions to meeting the shortfall. The following teachers' comments show the inadequacy of school supply and teachers' contributions to the area:

D-10: 'Our headteacher buys chalk.'

D-20: 'Teaching and learning materials are not enough. Even chalks. The government provides us 11 boxes per year, which means we can use just 2 chalks per week. Not enough at all. So we buy chalks. I myself buy 1 box every 2 weeks, otherwise you cannot teach in class.'

D-21: 'Only 20 English reader books for one class. We have over 100 pupils in one class.'

D-21: 'Textbooks are also in shortage; used to be 1 for 3 pupils, but now 1 for 10 pupils.'

D-15: 'I have to clarify that my school receives supplies, not from the government, but from Plan Sierra Leone.' (school in Moyamba)

D-16: 'Plan Sierra Leone has been responsible for the provision in our school.' (school in Moyamba)

Except for a private school and schools in Moyamba (where Plan Sierra Leone provided all school materials on behalf of the government), many children did not have a set of textbooks. Teachers also did not have their own teaching materials, and school textbooks for teachers were usually kept in a locked drawer so they would not be lost or stolen. Thus, the introduction of the FPE did not bring with it adequate school buildings and teaching and learning materials. Moreover, it led to an increase in teachers' workload due to the rise in the number of children attending schools. The workload for teachers of Class 1 was especially burdensome, as the majority of children did not go to nursery before primary education, and thus lacked discipline.

Teachers felt that it was very hard to control classes and to provide a good learning environment. They also stated that it would be better if they could set a small test regularly to gauge pupils' level of understanding, but they did not do this because it was impossible to mark so many pupils' papers. Therefore, teachers did not really know if pupils were learning from the classes or not. Schools in Sierra Leone need more buildings, more school materials and more teachers in order to provide adequate education for pupils, and all of these aspects should be a minimum condition with regard to the provision of education. In addition, many teachers wanted workshops or refresher courses to cope with newly-introduced subjects. Furthermore, the double-shift school, which is seen as being necessary in order to help deal with the shortage of school buildings, is an "adaptation to school" that children and teachers have to accept. Teachers pointed out double-shift system which negatively affects teaching time and its quality. The following comment from a teacher presents this clearly:

D-23: 'Now every child has an opportunity to go to school. That means most schools are now overpopulated. That has even brought the system of shifts into schools, there by limiting normal school time. I mean, the first schools begin to operate

by 8:00am and end by 12:00. In connection to that, teaching periods are very short. Therefore, there is not enough time to teach all the subjects per day effectively’.

Furthermore, the double-shift system is convenient in allowing teachers to engage in their secondary job, since the necessity of earning a living is a pressing issue for them. In this study, 63 teachers (50.4 per cent) had secondary jobs to meet their needs, and they varied from farming, livestock breeding and petty trading such as selling ice, water and oil, to private tutor work. Private tutor work seemed to be the most popular, especially in Freetown. Some parents said that some teachers deliberately did not teach everything from the syllabus in class in order to have more students for private lessons. Some teachers commented that they could not concentrate on their teaching during classes, as they were thinking about how to maintain their household. Some of their comments revealed that:

D-1: ‘I need another job to meet my needs, because my salary is not enough. It is not a professional job, but petty-trading after my working hours to sell onions, salt, Maggie etc’.

D-4: ‘I am doing a part-time teaching in private lessons where I am paid promptly’.

D-5: ‘I grow pigs, plant bananas and bake bread, and sell them, because my salary is small and cannot meet my economic needs’.

D-13: ‘I have private lessons and also sell cold water after school’.

D-19: ‘Everyday, I do my teaching for 6 hours from 7:30 to 1:30. I have another job after 2:00 to keep me busy and raise income’.

This need for secondary jobs detaches teachers from having a higher motivation and a stronger commitment to their work and pupils. It also leads to them losing pride in their profession, which can have a negative effect on the quality of education provided.

Behind teachers’ engaging a secondary job and having low motivation and commitment to their teaching lie the low and delayed salaries of the teachers, often regardless of their qualifications. From answers to questionnaires it was found that 120 teachers (96.0 per cent) were not satisfied with their salary, and they expressed the reasons as seen in Table 12.

Table 12. Teachers' reasons for salary (dis)satisfaction (Teachers N=125)

Reason	The salary is not enough to meet my needs	The salary does not come on time	The salary does not match my experience and qualification
No.	114	93	35
%	95	77.5	29.2

In this study, 121 (96.8 per cent) teachers had obtained qualification(s) of TC, HTC and/or Diploma. More than half of them had a teaching experience of over 15 years as seen in Table 13.

Table 13. Teachers' experience in education (Teachers N=125)

Year	Less than 1 year	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	Over 20
No.	2	19	21	12	21	49
%	1.6	15.2	16.8	9.6	16.8	39.2

However, as Table 14 and the following comments from teachers support their concerns about their salaries and qualification.

Table 14. Teachers' earnings (Teachers N=125)

Salary range	No.	%
Unpaid	6	4.8
Up to Le100,000	5	4.0
Le100,000-149,000	25	20.0
Le150,000-199,999	58	46.8
Le150,000-199,999	11	8.8
Le250,000-299,999	8	6.4
Le300,000-350,000	1	0.8
No Answer	11	8.8

Some of teachers' comments reflected on their remuneration:

D-1: 'I do not receive any salary because I have not yet been approved. I've been working for the school over 1 year'.

D-3: 'There is no difference in salary between I who have worked for over 20 years and a teacher who has only worked for 5 years. As long as you have the same qualification, you have the same salary which to me is not right. It dampens the spirits of the teachers'.

D-4: 'I have never experienced prompt payment of salary. My salary is not enough to sustain me for a month. Our salaries are fixed, but the price in the market is unstable. The price of commodities goes up every day'.

D-4: 'I have 7 children to care for their schooling, feeding, clothing and medical care, as well as myself and other extended family problems to look after. I also have to pay my rent too with such meagre salary'.

D-9: 'The Ahmadiyya mission and most other missions are very slow to promote teachers. Very difficult indeed. MEST also is very difficult to make yearly increment in teachers' salaries. Most education secretaries are very wicked to make recommendations for teachers' promotions, and some need bribes before you are put on your right scale'.

D-10: 'I am an HTC holder and am serving the same mission for 14 years, but I am not still a senior teacher. The salary is not enough due to the increase of prices of our basic needs, and it is not forthcoming'.

D-19: 'Salary delayed always. There is a continuous devaluation of the currency. Prices of essential commodities are very high. So many mouths to feed at home. Rent, light-bill, water rate continue to rise at alarming rate'.

D-20: 'Look! I have worked for 3-4 years now without any salaries as a trained and qualified teacher. From 2002 to 2005, the government has not paid me a single cent neither does talk about salary. The school is approved, but we, teachers are not approved. So I do not earn anything. It is strange world for me'.

D-22: 'Corruption causes this. The government pays money and this money is played upon by some corrupted ministers. Some deposit these and move to yield interest for them and some engage themselves in business enterprises. During

this process, delay occurred’.

Similarly to D-20, other teachers at the same school were also not paid. Considering that their main staple, a bag of rice, costs between Le60,000 and Le72,000 in markets, and that they have families to support by providing housing, education, nutrition, transport, medical expenses and other expenses, it is clear that teachers are struggling to make ends meet on their meagre salaries.

Furthermore, when interviewed, all headteachers, except those working for the private school, said their salaries were usually delayed by between about 30 and 60 days. As shown in some comments from teachers, some newly recruited teachers worked unpaid for months through to two or even three years in extreme cases, until they got on the payroll. When interviewed, a MEST officer outlined the payment procedure as follows: firstly, the MoF prepares salaries and vouchers and sends the vouchers to headteachers. Then, headteachers sign the vouchers, after checking to see if there is anything wrong with them, and return them to the MoF. Then, salaries are paid into the school bank account, as now most headteachers have a bank account as a part of the educational reforms which were included in the EFA policy. However, many teachers felt that their salaries did not match their experience and qualifications, and as a result strikes against bad working conditions took place. Teachers’ working conditions make it difficult to complete the syllabus. Some parents expressed in answers to questionnaires that if they had money, they would have sent their children to a private school in order to get a better quality education for them, because teachers at government and government-assisted schools go on strikes.

Some teachers lamented that among civil servants, teachers are the most vulnerable in terms of salary security, compared to police officers and nurses as their salaries had been incremented. The reason for this is that the government does not want these two professions to go on strike; police are important for state stability and nurses deal with peoples’ lives.

A considerable number of teachers were thinking about leaving the profession because

of the unreliable and meagre salary. They were considering moving to Freetown to look for alternative jobs and because there would be more parents in the capital who could afford to pay private tuition fees. In Freetown I came across a qualified and experienced teacher whom I had met in Bo. He told me that he had come for a job interview at the Central Statistics Office. He informed me that it would be better for him and his family if he found another job because of the insecure payment of his teaching job. He added he liked teaching and children. It is a great shame for Sierra Leone to lose good teachers due to poor working conditions, especially when the number of children attending schools has increased and there is a massive need for teachers.

It is worth noting that a majority of the teachers in my sample were originally very motivated and had enthusiasm and hope in their profession. Their working conditions and school environments have demoralised them over time. Teachers' reasons to become teachers reflect this process, as seen in Table 15.

Table 15. Teachers' reasons to become a teacher (Teachers N=125)

Reason	No.	%
I like/liked the profession	47	37.6
To serve the nation	39	31.2
To improve my education	36	28.8
No job except teaching	25	20
To mould characters of growing children	14	11.2
To reduce illiteracy rate	12	9.6
To have more time for myself and family	11	8.8
To grow future leaders	10	8.0
To be a nation builder	9	7.2
I like children	5	4.0
It is a women's job	5	4.0
I have the ability	5	4.0
To pass my knowledge and wisdom to others	4	3.2
Other	4	3.2

Overall, the majority of schools in my sample had many difficulties in meeting minimal conditions that schools need to provide to children. The government's lack of capacity to provide adequate education services leads to parents buying school materials, delays of payments to teachers, teachers becoming demotivated, and causes a poor learning environment, all of which affect the quality of learning negatively.

Regarding issues of language, in Sierra Leone, vernacular languages are the medium of instruction for Classes 1 to 3, and from Class 4, English is used. However, in relation to parental support of children's studies at home, in my study, the first language of 365 (80.5 per cent) parents was one of the four national languages which are Krio, Limba, Mende and Temne, and not English, as seen in Table 16.

Table 16. Parents' first language (Parents N=454)

First Language	No.	%
English	47	10.4
Krio	39	8.6
Mende	219	48.2
Temne	100	22.0
Limba	7	1.5
Others	37	8.1
No Answer	5	1.1

Furthermore, questionnaire responses revealed that while 45.6 per cent of parents can read, write, speak and listen in their first language, 43.4 per cent of the parents can only speak and listen in their first language, but are not able to write. It is thus pointed out that literacy skills of parents are also an issue when discussing children's home learning, assisted by parents, since they are conducted in English from Class 4 onwards.

Concerning the home environment, teachers pointed out that many children in Sierra

Leone do not have an appropriate learning environment in general and/or adequate parental care in particular. Teachers lamented the lack of parental care and attention towards children's education, as seen in the following comments from teachers:

D-1: 'Poverty – sometimes no shoes to wear during the rain season. Even no breakfast before going to school. For girls, early sex/prostitution is a problem'.

D-9: 'Illiterate parents, cultural reason (e.g. girl children when initiated into the Bundu society while boys go out hunting to marry girls. Custom such as girls are meant for the kitchen)'.

D-10: 'Illiterate parents just send their children empty-handed to school, saying that it is free education and the government should provide everything'.

D-10: 'Some parents do not take care of their girl children who get pregnant at an early age'.

D-10: 'Some do not have enough encouragement for education at home. Some parents do not care because they are illiterate'.

D-22: 'Parents are not bothered about buying school materials for their children. Whether school materials are enough or not, they don't care'.

D-23: 'Some pupils do not have parents in town. They live with guardians who do not take proper care of them. They always come to school late and untidy'.

D-25: 'Lack of parental motivation about the importance of education'.

D-26: 'Home environment is still very poor. Parents are not very interested in their children's welfare. Because of poor nutrition and sanitation, health is important issue. Some parents think their children should study only at school with teachers, but at home no study with parents, because of poverty. Children have to sell food, water etc as petty-traders'.

D-27: 'Some children do not care about schooling and some parents refuse to buy books for their children. The parents always blame that there are books in school which the government supplied'.

In my study, while 298 (61.1 per cent) children took less than 30 minutes to travel to school, 162 (33.2 per cent) children took between 30 minutes to an hour and 26 (5.3 per cent) children took more than one hour to travel to school. During the dry season it is very hot and humid, while during the rainy season there are continuous downpours.

The infrastructure is poor in many areas. There are no buses or other means of transport available at a reasonable cost to take children to and from school in those areas. Overall, children’s schooling brings up issues of safety and health as well as financial burdens. Once they become ill, the problem of recovery appears, as access to clinics is limited in terms of both proximity and financial cost for a majority of the population in Sierra Leone. Therefore, children need sound parental care with good understanding of, and support for their nutritional needs, health and education.

While adequate parental care and support for children’s learning need to be addressed, questionnaire outcomes showed that there were many parents who had a relatively high level of understanding and expectation regarding the value of education and their children’s futures. This is supported by the findings in Table 17 below, concerning parents’ expectations of primary education in this study. These parents’ expectations are consistent with parents’ responses regarding the reasons for sending their children to school summarised in Table18.

Table 17. Parents’ expectations of primary education (Parents N=454)

Expectation	No.	%
To have quality education	286	63.0
To have basic education	164	36.1
To develop knowledge	117	25.8
To develop good behaviour and attitudes	115	25.3
To become a useful citizen in society	91	20.0
To get a lucrative job	71	15.6
To become a patriotic citizen	5	1.1
Other	28	6.2

Table 18. Parents' reasons for sending children to school (Parents N=379)

Reason	No.	%
To get educated	291	76.8
For a better job	230	60.7
For better future	80	21.1
To be a useful citizen in the society	39	10.3
To be a self-reliant	30	7.9
To develop the nation	26	6.9
To look after parents later	25	6.6
To be a responsible citizen	10	2.6
To know their fundamental rights	8	2.1

Through radio programmes, people have learned about EFA, the government's FPE, the importance of education, and become aware of their obligation to send their children, including girls, to school. It is also true that parents were working very hard to send their children to school due to the necessity of paying "school fees," and that in order to compensate for the loss of their labour during school hours, children also spent their time helping their families before or after classes. This was supported by questionnaire responses from pupils. Their day often started with fetching water and sweeping their houses and compounds. Many washed pans, plates and clothes and assisted with farming and trading, as well as helped with cooking and looking after younger siblings. From pupils' responses, no gender specific household chore was identified – regardless of their sex, both boys and girls fetch water, do farming and/or help with cooking.

Although Freetown and Bo had relatively good hours of electricity supply – nearly half of the day, often it was dark by early evening in Moyamba, Kenema and Makeni, as the access to electricity was very limited. Therefore, many children did not have the option of studying in the evenings. Because of widespread poverty in Sierra Leone, having a good home environment to help facilitate educational achievement is a difficulty. Some parents pointed out that the low quality of education could lead to an

increase in drop-out rates because time and money spent on schooling is regarded as not being worth the cost. This is a “rational decision” for them. All except three pupils in my sample hoped to go to junior secondary school after primary education. Yet, some added that if their parents could afford it. The primary level is the foundation of education, and therefore it needs to be improved in terms of both quality and quantity, so it becomes a bridge to secondary education. In order for parents not to use the low quality of education as an excuse for not sending their children to school, and in order for all children to have a decent education, the quality should be monitored and evaluated robustly.

### 7.2.5 Impact of the New Education System

Since Sierra Leone started implementing the UPE scheme in 1993, the new education system of 6-3-3-4 has been adopted. Prior to this, the system was modelled on the old British education system of 7-5-2-4, which had been used since colonial times. The new system entailed the introduction of new curricula and syllabi, as the old ones were based on grammar school-type education aiming towards degrees, while Sierra Leone’s educational needs require primary and middle level education which the majority is expected to attain, in pursuit of national development. *The Education Act 2004* (GoSL, 2004, p. 4) states that the new system is designed to ‘rapidly enhance literacy and improve the educational opportunities for women and girls, rural area dwellers and those disadvantaged in the acquiring of formal education’, and ‘introduce into the curriculum new subjects such as indigenous and Sierra Leone Study which shall give and enhance a proper and positive understanding of Sierra Leone’. Thus, the new system is squarely based on an attempt to bring the disadvantaged and marginalised into formal education. Under the new system, after completing primary education, pupils have choices of receiving further education for academic or vocational purposes, if pupils pass the NPSE. An examination of the primary education curriculum shows the introduction of subjects including Agriculture, Home Economics, Creative Practical Arts and Study of Sierra Leone, which seem to reflect the needs of pupils and society in the country to a greater extent than was the case with the previous curriculum.

The new system and curriculum seem to be regarded quite favourably, as seen in teachers' responses:

D-1: 'The curriculum is good because it meets the needs and demands of today's society in Sierra Leone, and interests of the children. Also, it is good to give pupils vocational courses after the primary education'.

D-3: 'It is good to have not only academic but also vocational classes for pupils. [...] Another good thing about the new system is that at every stage there are exams and it encourages pupils determination to move to the next step. Also now you can choose whether you go to academic school or vocational school for secondary school, so it fits your capacity, interest and society's needs'.

D-12: 'It is a better system as not everyone is interested in academic choice and now you have a choice for skill and vocational education. But there is need for more materials and machinery for better outcomes'.

D-14: 'Far better, because previously teachers concentrated on only reading and writing, and therefore more drop out. But now, we have less drop-outs because not only reading and writing, but other subjects are encouraged. Even such as dance and carpentry. But a problem is we need facilities'.

Moreover, a MEST officer said that:

B-1: 'We have the current system to adopt various needs of children and society in Sierra Leone. If we had a type of grammar school education, it would be only for a degree purpose. We need to grow middle power'.

Therefore, it could be pointed out that this introduction of vocational elements into the formal education system has contributed to an increase in the number of children at school on top of the government's FPE policy and legal requirements. This is because now those who are not interested in academic education have a chance to continue their education through learning various vocational skills. As seen in Table 19 regarding pupils' future objectives and Table 20 concerning pupils' reasons for choosing future objectives, there was great variation. These show a full of wish to work for and contribute to helping people and the nation development. These children's hopes should not be thwarted by the poor access to schooling and/or

inadequate quality of education provided. Therefore, it is helpful for pupils to have the wider choices which have been introduced under the new system and are close to their future interests.

Table 19. Pupils' future career objectives (Pupil N=488)

Occupation	No.	%
Doctor	150	30.7
Nurse	96	19.7
Teacher	59	12.1
Lawyer	59	12.1
Engineer	16	3.3
President	16	3.3
Bank Manager	15	3.1
Minister	15	3.1
Police	10	2.0
Other	48	9.8
No Answer	4	0.8

Table 20. Pupils' reasons for the choice of future objectives (Pupil N=488)

Reason	No.	%
To cure the sick and improve health facilities	138	28.3
To serve my country	75	15.4
To work for the people	56	11.5
To help my family	30	6.1
I like the job	30	6.1
To pass my knowledge to others	29	5.9
Other	112	23.0
No answer	18	3.7

Table 21. Pupils' reasons why they like school (Pupil N=488)

Reason	No.	%
Helps me get educated	235	48.2
For my future	132	27.0
Education is better than gold and silver	31	6.4
I like the profession	24	4.9
To obtain moral standard	14	2.9
To make friends	12	2.5
Other	31	6.4

In overall terms, the new education system, with its revised curricula, is attempting to bring the previously excluded into the formal education system. The government now aims to provide more educational opportunities for the disadvantaged, such as girls, rural dwellers, and those who are not interested in academic study. The new system and curricula have brought more opportunities for all pupils to complete primary education and to move on to further education at a JSS level.

However, difficulties remain. For example, there is a fundamental problem with the shortage of school materials and facilities and chaotic teaching and learning environments, as seen in the following comments obtained through questionnaires to teachers:

D-11: 'Good thing is the new system is trying to grow middleman power. Now, education is not only for rich. Even if you want, you can go to technical school to be a carpenter or masons, etc. But a problem is for example, wherever you go, still expensive to get learning materials for study or skill improvement. Computers, sewing machine etc. are very expensive and the government cannot fully provide the equipment. So the system is good, but it is very expensive and has problems'.

D-16: 'The new system invited overpopulation of class size. The curriculum is there, but facilities for the curriculum are not there. Therefore, we cannot meet the

quality which the new system should have. Especially subject of home economics’.

D-16: ‘Positively, every child has a right to go to school and she/he should be admitted at primary level. Negatively, illiterate parents just send their children empty handed to school, saying that it is free education and the government should provide everything. Too much work for especially Class 1 teachers because these children have never been to pre-schools, so the teachers have to start from the scratch to teach them. At first the requirement for starting primary school was that the child should have gone through pre-school training, as of now it is not like that, although some schools are still stressing on pre-school certificate as one of their requirements’.

D-20: ‘Because my pupils give much work, I will not concentrate on all of them. The curriculum is really rich, but because teachers are not satisfied with their salary and too large number of pupils in one class, teachers cannot give quality education to pupils. Moreover, there are not enough required text books for pupils and teachers. On part in the curriculum which says that a child should not fail in a class for two years, a teacher should promote that child to another class. This is also adding to the poor quality of education’.

D-21: ‘There are more subjects to teach and study now, and it is not easy to cover all for teachers’.

Now that there is a more appropriate curriculum and more pupils are involved in learning, the government needs to not only make policy changes in order to further improve the system and curricula, but also needs to ensure that adequate school materials are supplied. Teachers also need opportunities to be trained in the new areas in which they are required to teach, otherwise, the improved curricula risk remaining meaningless. Furthermore, in order for teaching and learning environments to be conducive, a need of entry requirement into primary education was pointed out.

Moreover, the current system is different to the previous one in that those who cannot pass the NPSE need to repeat the final year and prepare to retake the examination the following year. If pupils fail the NPSE twice, they cannot go to JSS. Because of the 11

year civil war, there are children and young adults who lost the opportunity to engage in primary education or who have started their primary education at a later age. According to questionnaire outcomes from pupils, 281 (57.6 per cent) pupils were 13 years old or older. If children start their primary education from the age at 6, as stipulated by the government, they should finish when reaching 12. This means that there is a substantive body that started primary education after the introduction of the FPE, but at an older age. These pupils should not be deprived of their learning opportunity, by being excluded if they fail the NPSE twice, given what they have suffered during the civil war years. In this respect, teachers said that:

D-5: ‘Now those who were not successful in the final exam feel shy to continue education’.

D-20: ‘Drop-outs have increased if you fail the NPSE twice, you cannot go to JSS and overgrown children don’t want to repeat Class 6’.

The current system is still detrimental to older children’s learning, yet it should not punish generations of pupils whose education was delayed due to the conflict.

Furthermore, Table 22 and Table 23 below show teachers and parents had clear ideas about what school related problems should be improved. A majority of them pointed to inadequate provision of teaching and learning materials and school facilities, as well as the need for improving teachers’ salaries and teacher training and employment.

Table 22. Teachers’ views on school problems (Teachers N=125)

Aspects to be improved	No.	%
Punctual and raise of teachers’ salary	101	80.8
Adequate provision of teaching and learning materials	101	80.8
Provision of adequate school facilities	98	78.4
Employment of adequate number of teachers	42	33.6
Provision of adequate welfare service to pupils and teachers	17	13.6
Proper supervision of school	11	8.8
Provision of school lunch	5	4.0
Return to the old education system	3	2.4

Some teachers elaborated on these issues:

D-2: ‘Primary education is the very basic start in the educational pursuit for primary students. Good beginning always gives zeal to the students to aim higher. But on the other hand, if the students start poorly, there is a tendency that they will drop out along the line’.

D-4: ‘Need a library, need recreation ground and toilet. If teachers are paid on time, we can provide better quality of education, and teachers discipline children well and they will be able to be good future leaders’.

D-6: ‘Entry requirement into the primary school should start from pre-schools’.

D-9: ‘The salary scale of teachers should be revised. We need allowances, prompt approval of new teachers are needed. The government needs to make sure that teachers are approved together with the school. They should not concentrate only on school approval and forget about teachers. They also should avoid the delay in salary payment. The only thing that will help schooling and its improvement is, encourage teachers by approving and paying right salary to them’.

D-18: ‘Need to reduce teacher-pupil ratio, improve salary scale, and need to reduce costs of school fees’.

D-25: ‘More infrastructures to ease the problem of sitting accommodation. Also the teacher-ratio must be properly checked. For example, thinking about 157 pupils in my class, it is a problem. The classroom control is poor. Need more facility such as toilet and science lab too’.

Table 23. Parents’ views on school problems (Parents N=454)

Aspect	No.	%
Improvement of teachers’ salary	202	44.5
Adequate provision of teaching and learning materials	197	43.4
Provision of adequate school facilities	168	37.0
Emphasis on teacher training	111	24.4
Employment of adequate number of teachers	107	23.6
Reduction of teacher-pupil ratio	89	19.6
Other	107	23.6

Some comments included:

E-2: 'Providing adequate learning materials, good health and food facilities at school, safety for children going to school, and cutting down of practices that influence school children such as harmful drug taking, smoking and prostitutions'.

E-3: 'All schools must be well equipped, have well-trained teachers with good salary and incentive given to them. Proper supervision from the Ministry of Education. Headteachers should be given the opportunities to have seminars and workshops to build them modern day educational skills'.

E-7: 'Let the school system go back to normal time (8,00am to 2,00pm). Let there be enough schools that can accommodate children. Let there be enough school materials. Let the inspectorates be effective. Let schools be interesting with sporting activities'.

E-8: 'Two shift systems should be banned'.

E-12: 'Irregular school charges from school authorities levied on parents should be banned'.

E-13: 'The government should introduce school feeding programmes because a hungry man is an angry man. Also to make essential school textbooks be more easily accessible for teachers and pupils'.

E-14: 'Economic problems had led teachers and other government workers not to work well because of improper arrangement of payment'.

E-16: 'Let pupils learn in their language, Mende'.

E-20: 'Conduct weekly test to awaken the pupils' abilities'.

E-23: 'Respect our culture, no punishment, pay teachers well and on time'.

Overall, the government does not have adequate capacities to provide enough school materials despite the fact that it was responsible for the introduction of the new system and improved curriculum, which have had reasonably positive impacts in terms of more equal opportunities for children in primary education and transition to JSS. Trade-offs between the increased access to education and the quality of education provided are very important aspect to re-examine and improve in Sierra Leone. The question is – of course – whether a centralised structure of funding the education system could improve the current situation. Even as it is, parents and teachers invest

significant amounts of resources into maintaining and running local schools. As some of the teachers indicated earlier, the school seems to be a community institution rather than a place for children only. Given thus consensus in local communities, there seems to be potential for community mobilisation to improve at least infrastructural aspects, such as the number of classrooms, the availability of toilets/latrines, staff room and possibly recreational areas. However, as overwhelming evidence gathered suggests, the pecuniary aspects related to the education sector, particularly those affecting teachers, are a barrier which communities cannot solve. That remains a central – governmental – concern.

Fundamentally, Sierra Leone is a poor country where half of the national budget is supplied by foreign donors, so it is not easy to rapidly increase the education budget. Until Sierra Leone builds the capacity to provide basic services more adequately than is currently the case, the country will continue to require more financial assistance from donors.

#### 7.2.6 Analysis of the Impact of EFA on Provision of Primary Education

EFA means not only ensuring access to schooling for all children but also making sure that education is of good quality. A great deal of work has been done by the government in terms of policy reforms, including the introduction of the new education system, curricula, and the FPE. This has resulted in the curricula becoming more relevant to the needs of children and society in Sierra Leone than ever before, and children having a choice of going on to JSS for either academic or vocational purposes. For example, a well-designed Agriculture curriculum is likely to reflect the needs of students and their society, considering that about 66 per cent of the population lives in rural areas and about 75 per cent of the population is engaged in agriculture and that agriculture contributes to over 36 per cent of the GDP (GoSL, 2005a, p. 20, 32; MEST, 2007, p. 4). Taking Sierra Leone Study also could enhance pupils positive understanding of important issues relating to the country (GoSL, 2004). This is a good step forward, since this ‘culturally adequate curricular content’ is an important component of quality education (Wolff, in ADEA et al., 2006, p. 50). This is because

children not only obtain skills from subjects such as the three Rs, but also become independent and critical thinkers through schooling (Wolff, in ADEA et al., 2006, p. 50).

However, the government language policy, whereby the four national languages are the medium of instruction for Classes 1 to 3, and from Class 4, English becomes the medium of instruction remains in place. With regard to this issue, Heugh (in ADEA et al., 2006) argues that learners need six to eight years to learn a second language sufficiently to use as a medium of instruction. Bgoya (2001, p. 287) also contends that if a foreign language is imposed on children artificially, they may fail to be proficient in their own language, as well as in the foreign language, thus becoming 'twice disadvantaged'. Furthermore, for Benson (2005a, p. 10), 'designing a schooling system that recognizes the ethnolinguistic background and competence of learners goes a long way toward improving educational opportunities for all, including those from marginalized groups, and especially for female learners'. This research bears Benson's point out with regard to Sierra Leone, where making the curricula more relevant to the needs of children and society has encouraged access to education. Therefore, there is a possibility that the use of the national languages as medium of instruction throughout the entire primary level could bring about positive outcomes in terms of children's achievement and with regard to the wider inclusion of children within the system. Another negative aspect of the current medium of instruction in Sierra Leone is that it makes it unrealistic for the majority of parents to assist their children's study once it becomes conducted in English from Class 4, since the majority of parents' (80.5 per cent) first language is one of the four national languages. This is a significant problem, which can be illustrated by the unequivocal argument of the MLA project (2000, p. 37) that the 'Quality of education requires the strong support from the home of the learners'.

Furthermore, the rapid increase in the number of pupils has reached a level where teachers cannot cope with the over-populated class sizes. Adequate class size is important for children's learning, and class size is often debated in terms of its connections to students' achievement. Krueger (2006) argues that reducing class size

increases pupils' test scores, based on the Tennessee's Project Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio. Teacher-pupil ratio is used as an indicator by which to measure the quality of education. My field research shows that only 8.8 per cent of classes met the ratio recommended by the government. Therefore, a lot more must be done in order to ensure that all children in Sierra Leone have regular access to primary education that is of good quality, and which helps pupils succeed in moving on to JSS. Otherwise, simply gaining access to primary schooling through the EFA programme cannot be linked to positive developments in the education sector or to benefits for Sierra Leone as a whole.

Having examined the impact of EFA on the provision of primary education in Sierra Leone with a focus on three aspects - access, quality and equality - my research shows that access to schooling has significantly increased. The government's FPE policy has encouraged more parents to send their children to school, and the government has also promoted girls' education. However, considering the fact that "school fees" under the FPE have appeared, burdening parents and representing a barrier to regular schooling for children, the EFA programme still needs to be improved in terms of its ability to facilitate equal opportunities for education. As Shultz (2002) points out, there are some parents in Africa or globally who prioritise boys for education. Primary education provides pupils with the ability not just to learn the three Rs, but also teaches them about health education, decision-making and bargaining power through socialisation. It also helps pupils establish individual autonomy. Heward and Bunwaree (1999) argue that autonomy is crucial to women's control over fertility, and it is clear that women's education is positively associated with improvements in the areas of nutrition, fertility, infection rates and child morality (Abu-Ghaida & Klases, 2004; Blackden et al., 2006; Bruns et al., 2003). Women's autonomy is crucial in terms of making positive contributions to their households and next generation.

The other very important issue related to regular schooling is to prevent dropping out. The main reasons for children dropping out of school, according to findings from this research were: "lack of money" (67.2 per cent), "lack of parental care" (44.0 per cent) and "pregnancy and early marriage" (36.8 per cent). This study has revealed that some

children could drop out at any time due to their vulnerable position, in terms of being older, female and poorer.

In addition, nearly 40 per cent of pupils took more than 30 minutes to reach school. Sierra Leone's climate and poor infrastructure in many areas negatively affects pupils' ability to go to school regularly. Children's schooling is intertwined with important issues of health and safety. When children become ill, there is often a problem of slow recovery, as access to clinics is limited in terms of both proximity and financial cost for the majority of the population. In this respect, children need good parental care based on sound understanding of, and support for, their nutrition, health and education. That is, there are children who are not fully included in the EFA programme, and who could drop out at any time, because of their vulnerability in terms of gender, income level and distance from school.

Furthermore, the quality of teaching affects the quality of education (MLA project, 2004; Hanushek, 2000). Considering this, the currently low level of remuneration and delayed salaries, that do not adequately reflect teachers' experience and qualifications, causes them to lack motivation and to have low commitment levels to their profession. There is a definite need to increase the number of teachers, since the number of children in schools has massively increased as a result of the EFA programme. Without an increase in the number of trained teachers, education is likely to lack quality, since existing teachers clearly do not have the time and resources to monitor whether or not pupils understand what is being taught. Smaller class sizes could reduce teachers' burdens too. Currently many teachers were exhausted as a result of having to handle enormous classes. Hanushek (2000) argues that improving teacher quality is the key to improving student performance, and that teachers' pay is one of the most important issues to address in this regard, along with teachers' experience and class size. Visiting schools and listening to teachers, revealed that there is a serious need both to improve the salary of teachers and to recruit more teachers.

However, teachers' salary levels and the number of teachers trained and employed are not fully under the MEST's control. An officer at the MEST explained:

B-1: ‘The economy of Sierra Leone is donor driven and has limited resources. The MEST’s budget is not really owned by us, but kept by the Ministry of Finance’. There is a teacher employment ceiling imposed by the IMF, requiring MEST to curtail teacher employment when it reaches a certain level. MEST (2007, p. 23-24) has expressed strong dissatisfaction with this situation:

The country average [of pupil-teacher ratio] is 66 pupils to a teacher and 112 pupils per qualified teacher. There is an obvious need to hire more qualified teachers, but a ceiling on teacher employment made necessary by MoF/IMF requirements has made that impossible. Further, keeping to our commitment of free quality education as stated in the 2004 Education Act and meeting EFA-FTE benchmarks whilst at the same time keeping to teacher ceiling requirements which appear to take no cognizance of these facts places Sierra Leone in a very difficult position. The foregoing being the case, in setting the level of wage bill cap/reduction, reference must be made to the expenditures required to meet the MDGs and EFA goals in order to ensure that macroeconomic policies are not counterproductive to the realisation of these goals. The cap placed on the wage bill has to be expanded to reflect the real situation and need for increasing the number of trained teachers and ensuring that untrained teachers are able to access in-service training to improve their skills. Unless the wage bill is expanded to increase the adequate number of teachers required (not just a nominal increase per year), the MDG/EFA goal of universal primary education by 2015 will not be realized.

That is, this policy of setting ceilings applied by the IMF and the MoF is contrary to efforts to expand access to primary education and to achieve EFA. Sierra Leone’s ratio of average teacher salary to GDP per capita is 3.9. The benchmark of FTE for teacher salaries is based on ‘the structural parameters observed in countries that have demonstrated the best performance in achieving UPC [Universal Primary Completion] of [which] primary school is 3.5 times the GDP per capita’ (World Bank, 2007, p. 112). The benchmark was set to ‘allow the recruitment of the number of teachers needed to fulfill the objective within a reasonable level of public resources’ and ‘to ensure that candidates of high quality are recruited’ (World Bank, 2007, p. 112). That is, the

current teachers' average salary is slightly higher than the benchmark. However, not only is the benchmark unrealistic, but also these ceiling conditions and the setting of this benchmark has put MEST in a very difficult position over the necessary recruitment of teachers and its ability to increase teachers' salaries, despite the fact that at current levels they are hard to live on and about half of teachers in this study were engaged in a secondary job, in order to make an adequate living.

Sierra Leone's EFA is typical of cases in which very poor SSA countries have made a strong commitment to achieving the international goal of EFA with the support of donors. There are some other SSA countries which started FPE earlier than Sierra Leone, such as Malawi in 1994 and Uganda in 1997, and therefore they experienced earlier what Sierra Leone is facing now. Looking at the cases of Malawi and Uganda, the problems and difficulties Sierra Leone is currently facing with regard to the achievement of equal access to good quality education were not unforeseeable.

For example, in Malawi's EFA programme, Kadzamira and Rose (2003, p. 514) point out that 'while FPE has increased enrolment in primary schools, poor quality, particularly at the lower level to which the poor have most access is apparent.' Kadzamira and Rose (2003, p. 514) argue that although almost all children now go to primary school, 'many leave before they are likely to have obtained basic literacy and numeracy skills'. Furthermore, there was little consultation with the local level of stakeholders such as district officers, schools, teachers, parents and pupils, as FPE was based on a political agenda, and 'this is likely to hinder the effective formulation and implementation of policy' (Kadzamira & Rose, 2003, p. 505)

Uganda too, experienced a sudden drop in education quality, including the area of teacher-pupil ratio, and pupil-textbook ratio, although often UPE in Uganda is seen as successful. However, since 1997, the Ugandan government has constructed more classrooms, trained and employed more teachers and provided more textbooks, which has led to a gradual improvement in the quality of education provided. Nishimura, Yamano and Sasaoka (2006) point out that the construction of up to 4,000 additional schools contributed to a significant reduction in delayed enrolment. This is because

easy access to school is beneficial, especially for younger children, considering security issues and physical distance. Yet, as Nishimura et al. (2006) point out, the UPE has had a limited impact on young male adult students in Uganda, which is also the case in Sierra Leone. Some teachers explained that mature male pupils feel shy about coming to primary school, and if they fail the NPSE, there is a likelihood that they will give up continuing with education, because they feel too ashamed to stay at school to repeat the final year. However, because of the civil war, there are still a considerable number of mature pupils at school who started their primary education late. Inclusion of those who have been excluded up to now into the formal education system is necessary. This study also found older pupils, as well as girls, rural dwellers and the poor, to be particularly vulnerable to dropping out.

Having solid physical infrastructure is a minimum condition for education. Constructing and rehabilitating schools helps decrease the shortage of school buildings and reduces the need for the double-shift system, as well as creating more employment opportunities for teachers. In this study, except for one private school sampled and schools in Moyamba where Plan Sierra Leone has been responsible for all the provision, there was a serious problem with a shortage of teaching and learning materials for both teachers and pupils. Improvements to the school environment are also necessary: surrounding schools with walls or fences would improve school security; adequate toilet facilities would enhance sanitation and privacy, especially for girls; libraries would enable teachers to prepare for classes and give children the opportunity to enjoy reading and improve their cognitive and analytical skills; feeding programmes would encourage children to attend classes regularly and also help teachers and children concentrate more on their classes. The government also needs to increase school budgets, as well as revising salary scales for teachers and providing payment without delay. Of course it would not be easy to achieve these needs in the short term, especially when there has been a rapid increase in access to primary education and budgets are lacking to the degree the MEST officer indicated. However, if improvements in these areas lead to a higher quality of education, as Uganda has experienced, Sierra Leone should also concentrate on pursuing these issues. Quality in education is important to pupil retention and learning outcomes, the long-term prospect

of the EFA.

With a majority of people living in poverty, in this study, it shows that 80 per cent of parents had made some sacrifices for their children's schooling. This is because the EFA programme has led to primary education becoming compulsory. "School fees", whereby schools charge parents on an individual basis, despite the government's FPE policy, are a heavy burden for parents. Kadzamira and Rose (2003), based on a study of Malawi, argue that for poorer households, EFA with FPE is likely to increase family allocations for education expenditures because many of these children were only able to start their primary education since the introduction of FPE. The pattern in Sierra Leone is similar to that in Malawi as far as the introduction of FPE is concerned: parents face a squeeze on their expenditures, due to both the direct and indirect costs of their children's schooling. The government's policy of FPE ignores these invisible burdens on households, and does not recognise the possibility that the poor could become even worse off as a result of this policy. These "school fees" vary from being in the form of tuition fees, admission fees, school development fees to exam fees. Schools need them, due to the insufficient government provision of subsidies with which to run schools. However, it makes primary education an expensive mandatory responsibility of parents. This could lead to an increase in drop out rates if the education provided lacks sufficient quality, given the high prevalence of poverty in the country. Therefore, the "school fees" mean not only financially heavy burdens for parents, but also have the potential to bring adverse effects on the home environment for children's learning, since a good quality education requires strong support from the home (MLA project, 2003).

Regarding parents' contributions, the MEST (2007, p. 105) estimates that their contributions account for about 50 per cent of total spending on primary education, while the government public funding represents 35 per cent. This means that education is actually made possible by parents rather than the state under the FPE. While the government needs to increase expenditures per pupil and ban schools from collecting "school fees" in order to reduce the burden on parents, this piece of evidence brings into discussion the great importance attributed to donors in maintaining Sierra Leonean

primary education. Given this split in contributions, it is obvious that it is the local economy that contributes most to the maintenance and difficult, painful development of the education sector.

If the government bans schools from charging “school fees” and revises teachers’ salary scales, a reduction in inequality in children’s educational opportunities is likely to take place, increasing regular schooling and completion of education, as well as causing teachers to be more motivated and able to concentrate on teaching without worrying about their secondary jobs. This could lead to a significant improvement in the quality of education provided as well. However, this places a further financial burden on the government, and at the moment, Sierra Leone does not have the capacity to provide the extra finance without further assistance from donors. Yet, as seen with regard to caps on teachers’ salaries and recruitment ceilings, external financial assistance is usually provided with conditionality. Sierra Leone is in a post-conflict situation and has weak governance, a devastated infrastructure and a high level of poverty at both state and citizen levels. Enhanced donor involvement may be a key to achieving a better paid teaching body. A MEST officer said that the economy of Sierra Leone is donor driven and there is limited state resource input. This is reinforced by the Ugandan case as well. Riddell (2003, p. 13) points out that the reason Uganda’s UPE programme has been so successful, and in fact achieved UPE, is that the country has ‘managed to attract significant funding from the development agencies in direct budget support to ensure overall costs are fully covered with the World Bank breaking its mould and contributing to a pooled fund.’ Thus, Sierra Leone’s ability to achieve EFA and UPE depends not only on the efforts of MEST in terms of policy reform, but also to a significant degree on the level of financial assistance from donors.

On top of the main reasons outlined above for the government’s inability to provide adequate education services, the UPE and EFA scheme has had an impact on opening up spaces to CSOs, such as NGOs and FBOs, in the development of education. This is because the EFA programme, the MDGs and the PRSP have all promoted CSOs’ involvement in the development arena. EFA made it clear that today’s development partnership is not only between governments and donor agencies, but also outlined

how the work of CSOs can bring about effective outcomes. In fact the involvement of CSOs in development projects has been posited as the key to sustainable development. This is because they can reach beneficiaries often more effectively than governments can (Turner & Hulme, 1997; Bebbington & Riddell, 1997, both in Hulme & Edwards, 1997; Lind, 2005; Belshaw, 2005). Based on the contribution made by Plan Sierra Leone and their partner local NGOs such as CADO, FAWE and Pekin to Pekin Movement, to educational renewal in Sierra Leone, it is possible to argue that NGOs can work more practically, efficiently, and effectively in areas such as school construction, materials supply, and in-service training courses for teachers in comparison to the government. Moreover, religious leaders are often closer to the people than any other actors and therefore their influence on people is enormous. Overall, EFA in Sierra Leone has opened up room for NGOs and FBOs and led to effective work with regard to the provision of education, to supplement the government efforts.

## 7.3 The Role of Religions in the Development of Education

### 7.3.1 Introduction

This section discusses the role of religions in the development of education. Colonialism brought Sierra Leone formal education through missionaries, and Islam set up formal and non-formal forms of education. Therefore, both religions have a respectable history in terms of providing education in the country. However, regarding today's religious contribution to development, Clarke and Jennings (2008, p. 1) point out that western official donors 'have traditionally been ambivalent about the relationship between faith and development and the activities of faith-based organizations (FBOs)'. The work of FBOs in development is a relatively new topic for mainstream academics, in particular. In order to examine my second sub-question on "the role of religion in the provision of education", this section starts by discussing the role of religion in education. Following that, in order to examine my first sub-question, "Is there competition or tension between Christianity and Islam with regard to the provision of primary education today?", religious tolerance in Sierra Leone is discussed. Finally, the two research questions above are examined in more general

terms.

### 7.3.2 The Role of Religions in the Development of Education

With regard to CSOs, both NGOs and FBOs have significantly contributed to the development of education. The superior educational resources of Freetown under British colonialism earned the colony the reputation being the “Mother of British West Africa” and the “Athens of West Africa” (Alie, 1990, p. 82; Hirsch, 2001, p. 23). Therefore, considering the fact that much of that education was provided by religious organisations, FBOs have a long history and solid foundation of work relating to social development in Sierra Leone.

Through the strong historical influence of British colonialism in general (and missionary work, in particular) and Islamic expansion, the majority - about 75 per cent - of schools in Sierra Leone are faith-based (Bennell et al., 2004). For example, Ansarul Development Services, Sierra Leone Muslim Brotherhood and the Methodist Church of Sierra Leone have contributed greatly to the development of education. Through interviews with the FBOs, this study found that their main roles in the formal education sector are:

1. Obtaining land for school construction
2. Construction and rehabilitation of schools
3. Provision of vehicles, furniture, teaching and learning materials from time to time
4. Offering scholarships to teachers for further study
5. Offering scholarships to pupils
6. Regularly visiting schools to monitor work
7. Recruitment of teachers
8. Training of Arabic teachers and offering in-service training for RME
9. Producing religious literature for schools and churches or mosques
10. Occasionally making up teachers salaries when teachers have not been paid by the government
11. Sensitising parents at churches or mosques as to the importance of education, so that they send their children to schools

12. Establishing and disseminating a code of conduct to maintain morality in schools and communities.

Acknowledging their contributions, the government regards FBOs as “service providers” like NGOs and other development agencies. The government often asks FBOs to propose and implement projects, offering grants to them. This is because, even in remote rural areas, there are churches or mosques and FBO networks, which are highly helpful in establishing schools and sensitising communities about the importance of education. Questionnaire answers and interviews with headteachers showed that these contributions were greatly appreciated by teachers and parents, as seen in the following comments by teachers:

D-5: ‘It has helped in the area of forgiveness, particularly concerning the problems from the war caused by rebels’

D-9: ‘Bought land and built the school structure. Also trains Arabic teachers. Offers Islamic knowledge and Arabic learning. Code of conduct to maintain morality in the school and community: No drinking alcohol or smoking, code of dress (decent dress, otherwise go home and change it). Not the government, but the mission rehabilitates school. But we need more building for increased numbers of children and teaching and learning materials’.

D-11: ‘Still now, sometimes we could get school materials such as pen, books from Anglican church, England. We have school links for friendship and love with St Margaret Primary School (Church of England, Crawley West Sussex). We do not have religious bias at all, but because our school is Christian school, we teach children our Christian doctrine, and some convert their religion’.

D-12: ‘Rehabilitation of education and infrastructure as a relief agency to schools and sensitise them and provide books. Peace and civil education for social rehabilitation after the war. Training of SMC. Production of Christian literature for schools and churches in local languages’.

D-14: ‘Missionary gives us some religious textbooks, and teachers can have in-service training for religious knowledge’.

D-16: ‘District reverends visit school. Cater employment / recruit teachers. Settle problems school may have such as relationship between parents and teachers etc.

Monitor the work of schools in Moyamba district’.

D-19: ‘By teaching RME. This subject teaches how to behave at home, school and in the community, and because they have the fear of God in them, they are afraid to do bad or not decent things such as using abusive language, fighting and playing truancy’.

In this study, questionnaire responses show that 121 (96.8 per cent) teachers and 438 (96.5 per cent) parents thought that religion in general has contributed positively to education. Furthermore, a question to teachers regarding religious contribution to education with more specific choices showed the same outcome, as seen in Table 24.

Table 24. Teachers’ views on religious contribution to education (Teachers N=125)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No Answer
Christian values	80 (64.0%)	29 (23.2%)	2 (1.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	14 (11.2%)
	Christian 55	Christian 16	Christian 1			Christian 4
	Muslim 25	Muslim 13	Muslim 1			Muslim 10
Islamic values	56 (44.8%)	40 (32.0%)	4 (3.2%)	1 (0.8%)	0 (0%)	24 (19.2%)
	Christian 25	Christian 25	Christian 2	Christian 1		Christian 22
	Muslim 31	Muslim 15	Muslim 2			Muslim 2

Moreover, as seen in Table 25 and Table 26 below, concerning religious contributions to education, many teachers and parents pointed out the moral and spiritual contributions made by religion to children’s character, the establishment of schools and RME as a subject, as well as other benefits.

Table 25. Details of religious contributions to education pointed out by teachers  
(Teachers N=125)

Aspect	No.	%
Morally and spiritually mould children's character	55	44.0
Establishment of schools	27	21.6
RME as a subject	18	14.4
Scholarships	10	8.0
Introduced formal education	9	7.2
Support school materials	8	6.4
Promote education	7	5.6
Build clinics and hospitals	6	4.8

Table 26. Details of religious contributions to education pointed out by parents

(Parents N=454)

Aspect	No.	%
Morally and spiritually mould children's character	296	65.2
Establishment of school	113	24.9
RME as a school subject	65	14.3

Some of the comments from teachers and parents regarding the contributions of religion to education indicated that:

D-1: 'They assist pupils by giving scholarship. By providing materials to schools. By providing school buildings for the community'.

D-2: 'I agree. Through lectures on the importance of education from both Imams and pastors. Through that, parents send their children to school'.

D-8: 'Islamic and Christian values have contributed so strongly by improving educational facilities in our country through building schools and giving aid to students'.

D-20 'They contribute a lot. They built more schools than the government, as well as moral contribution'.

- D-20: 'The Christians have built many schools and hospitals in our country to improve the standard of education by supplying pupils and students educational materials such as chalk, books, bags, pens and pencils, and even paying some school fees through scholarship. The Muslims do the same'.
- D-21: 'Christian and Islamic values have contributed positively to education by giving children the moral aspect of life. That is helping the children to give respect to authorities as well as parents. It has helped pupils to be God fearing by learning some verses in both the Bible and Qur'an which say that children must learn to obey and respect elders'.
- D-23: 'God comes first in whatever we do. Religion can make children to love their colleagues through friendship. They can help each other even in the classrooms and brighter children can help weaker ones. Children learn about good people in the past and their ways should be copied'.
- D-25: 'I strongly argue that the inclusion of Religious Moral Education into the school curriculum has brought a big change to pupils. They learn to share and forgive'.
- E-1: 'Islam has its own book called the Qur'an, while Christianity has its own book called the Bible. In order to know about God, people should or must read and write'.
- E-2: 'Religion is itself education because there are aspects of education that teaches for instance, not to smoke and what smoking does to you, not to drink and what drinking does to you, how to dress and what not to dress etc'.
- E-4: 'Because of our religious tolerance, both children attend the same schools and expand their scope of education and disciplines'.
- E-14: 'They provide schools to educate children. They help children with moral values. They develop the religious faith of children'.
- E-18: 'They have taught us to know about religious moral values. They have helped us know and understand Arabic and English languages'.
- E-18: 'Groups like CMS introduced western education in Sierra Leone in order to train preachers who can read and write. Today, both Christians and Muslims are opening schools throughout the country. They are partners to the government in promoting education in Sierra Leone'.
- E-20: 'Construction of schools, giving scholarship, providing reading materials for

schools, preaching to parents to send their children to schools’.

As these comments indicated, the contributions of religion to the promotion and development of education are twofold. Firstly, they can enact practical and systematic development work such as establishment of schools, provision of scholarships and school materials. Secondly, they have a great impact on the spiritual development of individuals, thus enhancing the fabric of communities. The fact that both teachers and parents frequently pointed out the “moral and spiritual moulding of children” than the “establishment of schools”, shows how religious value is important for the people in Sierra Leone, and it can influence people significantly. Furthermore, the spiritual and moral values are particularly needed since Sierra Leone experienced the civil war and children have been affected by the brutality. This is supported by some of teachers’ comments which included:

D-10: ‘Most students in schools today were involved in the war as combatants. A lot of Christian and Islamic values have been preached to them to forget about weapons, repent, change their wicked behaviours so that they can be fit in society’.

D-22: ‘Both religious values mould the moral aspect of children in schools. The decade long war had eroded moral of children which need to be re-installed by religion’.

Furthermore, Muslim Brotherhood staff explained that they work on the improvement of adult education for literacy improvement and it also leads to parents’ improvements of support in children’s learning:

C-2: ‘It’s not easy for parents just after the war. But we are working for adult education at grassroots levels. Especially in rural areas illiteracy rate is very high, and people often join Muslim, as some are interested in the doctrine and what we can offer like spiritual values, and the other in learning Arabic. We think if parents get educated, they know the importance of education for their children and support them’.

Considering the significance of their moral and spiritual values, one of FBOs’ most effective work in development of education could be their powerful impact in terms of

sensitisation as to the importance of education, based on their close relationship to local communities. Teachers and parents pointed out missionaries' contributions to advocacy in the area of promoting education, as seen in the following comments:

D-2: 'I agree. Through lectures on the importance of education from both Imams and pastors. Through that, parents send their children to school'.

D-25: 'Religion has encouraged Muslim parents to send their children to school to acquire quality education'.

D-27: 'They have spread education even in rural areas'.

E-33: 'We learn most of things from churches or mosques such as health and family issues including AIDS and its prevention. It shapes moral and behaviours of children. Religious leaders help sensitise people to promote education in churches or mosques'.

A staff of Pekin to Pekin Movement asked religious leaders to help with sensitisation as to the importance of education, to assist with placing an emphasis on girls' education and to provide information to their members about workshops operated by the NGO. This shows how FBOs and religious leaders are close to, and have a powerful influence on, the people in Sierra Leone: in addition, it is obvious that their participation in the development of education can bring about positive outcomes, even in poor and remote rural areas.

As some parents pointed out, the activity of religious bodies extended over primary education, as seen in Table 27.

Table 27. Children's non-formal educational opportunities (Parents N=454)

	Home	Bush/society school	Community	Vocational school	Private lesson	Arabic school	Sunday service	Radio
No.	149	74	69	67	46	46	14	9
%	32.8	16.3	15.2	14.8	10.1	10.1	3.1	2.0

This shows that there are some non-formal educational opportunities children have, and Arabic school and Sunday service are some of their choices. In this study, some

Muslim children went to Arabic schools (people often called Madrasas simply Arabic school). According to an interview with the headteacher of an Arabic school, they have a morning shift and an afternoon shift, so that children who are also receiving formal education can attend the one which suits them better, since the double-shift system operates in the formal education sector. They teach the Qur'an, faith, Hadith which includes behaviour to parents, neighbours and elders, the history of the Prophet and Arabic grammar. The tuition fee is Le2,000 per month in many places, and those who can afford it may donate something extra. On attending a Sunday service at a Methodist church as an observer, a priest preached the importance of unity in the community and talked about issues of health and education. He also announced the amount of money they collected from collection boxes during the previous service, and explained that it would be used to support local schools in the community. Therefore, not only in the area of formal education, but also in the non-formal education sphere and in the sphere of religious services, religion contributes to education positively. In addition, religious leaders assist with people's personal development and in awareness-raising on social issues.

However, it is worth noting that religious values could also have negative effects on education. Table 28 below, obtained from questionnaire responses, shows the outcomes from teachers regarding a question about adverse effects of religion on education.

Table 28. Teachers' views on adverse effects of religion on education (Teachers N=125)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No Answer
Christian values	3 (2.4%) Christian 2 Muslim 1	6 (4.8%) Christian 2 Muslim 4	10 (8.0%) Christian 6 Muslim 4	32 (25.6%) Christian 21 Muslim 11	40 (32.0%) Christian 27 Muslim 13	34 (27.2%) Christian 17 Muslim 17
Islamic values	7 (5.6%) Christian 3 Muslim 4	8 (6.4%) Christian 4 Muslim 4	13 (10.4%) Christian 8 Muslim 5	25 (20.0%) Christian 15 Muslim 10	33 (26.4%) Christian 17 Muslim 16	39 (31.2%) Christian 28 Muslim 11

Although the majority of teachers disagreed, three teachers (2.4 per cent) strongly agreed and six teachers (4.8 per cent) agreed that Christian values have eroded education in Sierra Leone, while seven teachers (5.6 per cent) strongly agreed and eight teachers (6.4 per cent) agreed that Islamic values have eroded education in Sierra Leone. Many of them did not leave any further comment, except one:

D-24: ‘The two religions have dismissed all our traditional secret societies, thus alienating us from AFRICA, our customary HOME and from our form of education’.

A similar question about adverse effects of religion on local values, traditions and life was asked to parents. The majority of parents disagreed with the view that religion had an adverse effect on local values, traditions and life in general. However, as seen in Table 29 below, 42 parents (9.3 per cent) strongly agreed and 65 parents (14.3 per cent) agreed that Christian values have eroded their local values and traditions, while 44 parents (9.7 per cent) strongly agreed and 82 parents (18.1 per cent) agreed that Islamic values have eroded their local values, traditions and life.

Table 29. Parents’ views on adverse effects of religion on their local values, traditions and life in general (Parents N=454)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No Answer
Christian values	42 (9.3%)	65 (14.3%)	28 (6.2%)	111 (24.5%)	51 (11.2%)	157 (34.6%)
	Christian 30	Christian 35	Christian 21	Christian 58	Christian 32	Christian 66
	Muslim 12	Muslim 30	Muslim 7	Muslim 52	Muslim 19	Muslim 87
				Other 1		No answer 4
Islamic values	44 (9.7%)	82 (18.1%)	31 (6.8%)	86 (18.9%)	36 (7.9%)	175 (38.6%)
	Christian 16	Christian 40	Christian 25	Christian 36	Christian 12	Christian 113
	Muslim 28	Muslim 42	Muslim 6	Muslim 49	Muslim 24	Muslim 58
				Other 1		No answer 4

Some parents elaborated thus:

E-6: 'Because of the introduction of Christianity and Islam into our society, it has eroded our local values and tradition. For example, neglecting some of our traditional belief like the poro and bondu society. Moreover, our ancestry way of worship such as pouring libation for the dead have being neglected completely now'.

E-10: 'Some of our cultural values have disappeared. Many celebrations including traditional ones have died away, and Islam and Christianity are constantly practiced'.

E-12: 'It has changed the local type of education'.

E-27: 'All the traditional secret societies inherited from our ancestors have been eroded and discouraged. Thus, it creates cultural alienation. But the religions have enabled us to be universal brothers and sisters to each other'.

Overall, some parents lamented the fact that Christianity and Islam have changed some of their cultural and traditional values and practices. However, given that these remain characteristic of some parts of Sierra Leone, such responses were concentrated in specific areas. Considering the fact that 74 (16.3 per cent) parents pointed out bush/society school as children's educational opportunity as shown in Table 27, it could be argued that while they appreciate religious contribution to education, in their mind, there is a kind of embarrassment or resistance to having their traditional and cultural values gradually fading.

However, it is worth noting that in an interview with the principal of Bo School, which was established by British colonial officials to educate chiefs' sons, appreciation for Christian and Islamic involvement in education is valued nevertheless:

'Look at the curriculum. We spend some time for both religions, Christian and Islamic ones, through learning moral education, singing songs, learning Bible and Qur'an, learning Arabic. Through them we maintain the religious values, ethics, discipline, which were not originally here, but came to us some time ago. So you can say primary education in Sierra Leone has been still influenced by the legacy of Christian and Islamic civilisation'.

Although Christianity and, Islam have led to the dilution of aspects of culture and tradition, the majority of people was positive about these religions and believed that both religions had contributed to the development of education greatly. Many people respect religious leaders and religious norms and values, as a result, FBOs can reach people, including the poor and marginalised, who are the intended beneficiaries of educational opportunities. That is, religions and FBOs have played a significant role in educational development in Sierra Leone.

### 7.3.3 Religious Tolerance in Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, the government has a reputation for not being biased with regard to religion and Christianity and Islam are seen as religions working hand in hand when necessary. This view is supported by three aspects. One is inter-religious marriage, which is becoming more common, according to some participants. Interviews revealed that with regard to inter-faith marriages often a wedding ceremony in a church would be followed by another ceremony in a mosque, with the marriage being celebrated in both traditions. Secondly, the role of the IRC SL can be highlighted. As a national multi-religious organisation, the IRC SL is dedicated to promoting cooperation and peace among the religious communities. It greatly contributed to ending the war by mediating in negotiations between the government and rebels. Therefore, people in Sierra Leone respect religious leaders greatly. Thirdly, Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbar, who was President from 1996 to 2007, is pointed out as a role model. Kabbar is seen as a devout Muslim. However, his secondary education was at the oldest Catholic school in the country and he was married to a Christian. When his wife died, he had a Christian funeral for her. Therefore, Kabbar is regarded as a good role model in fostering religious tolerance.

Furthermore, this research indicates that there is flexibility in the way people practice their religion. For example, Table 30 below, shows that the pupils' religion did not always match the school's faith. They seem to be open to combining bits and pieces of religious practices in the individual religiousness. That is, there is an indication of

“flexibility” in the way people practice their religion.

Table 30. School faith and pupils’ religion (Pupils N=488)

School type	No. of schools	No. of pupils		
Christian schools	11	182	92	90
			Christians	Muslims
			(50.6%)	(49.4%)
Islamic schools	10	194	16	178
			Christians	Muslims
			(8.2%)	(91.8%)
Municipal schools	5	93	33	60
			Christians	Muslims
			(35.5%)	(64.5%)
Private school	6	19	11	8
			Christians	Muslims
			(57.9%)	(42.1%)

According to questionnaire responses, confession is one of the considerations when parents chose their children’s school, as seen in Table 31 below.

Table 31. Parents’ reason for choosing their children’s school (Parents N=454)

Reason	No.	%
Financial reason	229	50.4
Religious reason	112	24.7
Quality of education and good reputation	49	10.8
Proximity	32	7.1
Child’s choice	4	0.9
Other	13	2.9
No Answer	25	5.5

In this study, financial considerations relating to the amount of the “school fees” were the most important in choosing a school for their children, pointed out by 229 parents (50.4 per cent), followed by a religious reason (112 parents or 24.7 per cent), the quality of education provided (49 parents or 10.8 per cent) and proximity to the school (32 parents or 7.1 per cent). Other reasons included being able to learn both Arabic and English, the child’s choice, a parent went to the school, a friend or mentor assisting in parenting or financing wanted the child to go to a school where the faith is the one they practice. Some Muslims preferred Christian schools, as they thought that they provided better education in general and better performance with regard to public examinations in particular.

Furthermore, this “flexibility” between school faith and individuals’ religion was pervasive not only among pupils, but also teachers. As seen in Table 32, the teachers’ religion did not always match the school’s faith.

Table 32. School faith and teachers' religion (Teachers N=125)

	No. of schools	No. of teachers		
Christian schools	11	56	47	9
			Christians	Muslims
			(83.9%)	(16.1%)
Islamic schools	10	41	15	26
			Christians	Muslims
			(36.6%)	(63.4%)
Municipal schools	5	24	11	13
			Christians	Muslims
			(45.8)	(54.2%)
Private school	1	4	2	2
			Christians	Muslims
			(50.0%)	(50.0%)

If Sierra Leone was a solely Islamic state and Sierra Leoneans were strict in their choice and practice of religion, this kind of inter-religious marriage and difference between the faith of the school and that of the child would not be possible. Furthermore, considering that FBOs are involved in teacher recruitment of faith-based schools, the finding that teachers' religion does not necessarily match the school faith at Christian and Islamic schools, shows that not only teachers, parents and pupils, but also religious leaders in Sierra Leone are highly tolerant of religious otherness, understanding and respecting for both faiths. Overall, these examples show that Sierra Leone has a high level of religious tolerance.

It is thus not a surprising finding that more parents disagreed rather than "agreed" with, the question, "Is there tension between Christianity and Islam?", as shown in Table 33, below.

Table 33. Parents' views on tension between Christianity and Islam (Parents N=454)

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	No Answer
No.	164	75	181	24
%	36.1	16.5	39.9	7.5

Some might think that the outcome that 181 parents “disagreed” is not substantial enough to support the above view. However, this was mainly caused by the fact that I had failed to specify the scope of the question. Therefore, a significant number of those who “agreed” put extra comments which included:

E-1: ‘Not nationally, but internationally there are tensions’.

E-1: ‘There are so many religious wars between Christians and Muslims such as ones in Nigeria, the Middle East and terrorism, but not in Sierra Leone’.

Not even relatively negative comments did convey hostility, as follows:

E-1: ‘Christians believe that Jesus is the only Saviour and he is a son of God, while Muslims do not believe it and believe in Prophet Mohamed’.

E-4: ‘Code of dress for women if causing misunderstanding. For example, a new way of dressing, covering of the face by some women is new to the community’.

E-8: ‘Muslims object to their day of worship, “Friday” being a working day. Christians visit the toilet during church services which the Muslims consider filthy’.

E-10: ‘Competition over gaining converts’.

E-12: ‘I do not term it tension, but we have some differences’.

Overall, this study gathered that people in Sierra Leone do not really feel much “tension” between the two religions, as the more amicable comments included:

E-3: ‘In my country, there is no tension between the religions. We do inter-marry, attend to each others business and even interact closely with each other’.

E-4: ‘Because of our religious tolerance, children of both religions attend the same schools and so expand their scope of education and discipline’.

E-7: ‘In our country, there is an organisation which provides unity between

Christianity and Islam called the IRCSL which brings Christians and Muslims together’.

E-20: ‘Muslims and Christians always work together’.

E-24: ‘Because both Christianity and Islam have respect for each other, for example, with regard to religious holidays and celebrating occasions most of the time together’.

Local NGO staff also acknowledged the religious tolerance as well as the fact that Christianity and Islam in Sierra Leone support democratic movement, reflected in the following views obtained through interviewing NGO participant:

B-3: ‘Muslims also support democracy. The government is not also religious biased at all’.

B-4: ‘Luckily, in SL, Christianity and Muslim work together in collaboration, and there is no problem in it. There is the Inter-Religious Council too’.

B-5: ‘Any negative views on Islam never came up to me. Because in SL, Muslim scholars believe their religion stands in peace and they also think that Islamic religion and organisations are also ready to work for development and democracy. In SL, Islam thinks that women are part of society, therefore, women also in some cases, standing, preaching and reading Qur’an in mosque’.

Through interviewing with FBOs, similar views were obtained:

C-1: ‘We believe that Muslims and Christians can live and help with each other peacefully. About girls and women’s subordination, women’s position in Islam has improved a lot and we have encouraged girls’ education. We also have offered vocational training opportunities for both women and men. Together with the government, we set up a computer centre and tertiary centres, teaching computer skills, tailoring, soap making, engineering and carpentry. Sierra Leone is now moving forwards development and democracy after experiencing the war’.

C-2: ‘Muslims are playing a vital role in democracy in Sierra Leone. We do not deny Jesus and Bible. We respect them. But I am not sure Christians believe in Qur’an, Mohammad and Islamic values. That’s ok, as that is an only small concern. We

need to respect for each other’.

C-3: ‘As a relief agency, we are working for rehabilitation of education. We think we can guide peace and civil education for social rehabilitation after the war. In Sierra Leone, we have a good religious tolerance and we do not have any problems with Islam’.

Furthermore, although it is not compulsory, on Fridays many women wear traditional African dress regardless of their religion. They see African dress as formal dress and are proud of wearing it. Many girls and women wore clothes ranging from modern to more orthodox and classic designs, which all looked very beautiful and elegant. I was told that Sierra Leonean women like to wear beautiful African dresses and men like looking at them, and also that it is good for national unity. I sometimes heard the term, “national unity” when I conducted field research. It can be argued that the eleven years of civil war, in a way, has strengthened people’s sense of the need for unity and religious tolerance.

#### 7.3.4 Analysis of Sierra Leone’s Level of Religious Tolerance and the Role of Religions in the Development of Education

In Sierra Leone, a religious symbiosis has been established in people’s minds. The previous section showed that many Christians and Muslims have a good level of mutual understanding and respect. Therefore, differences between the religions of individual teachers and the faith of the schools they work in were possible. Similarly, it was possible for children to follow a different religion to that of the school they attended. Some parents and teachers pointed out that local values and traditions had been diluted or had died out due to the spread of Christianity and Islam. Some parents also outlined denominational differences between their two religions. However, these differences did not seem likely to develop towards causing serious tension in Sierra Leone. Children learn RME at schools and communities including churches and mosque promote the importance of peace and the unity in Sierra Leone.

I had hypothesised that there would be a kind of conflict or tension between the two

religions. This originated in the historical competitive aspect between the two religions and their associational schools, although even in those days the two religions were not really hostile to each other. However, this study showed that no “*Clash of Civilisations*”-type applies to Sierra Leone, where there is a high level of religious tolerance. Behind this tolerance, lies the historical fact that people suffered severe hardship caused by the 11 year civil war, and the fact that the IRCSL greatly contributed to the end of the war by mediating negotiations between the government and the rebels. This significantly contributed to people having great respect for religious leaders.

Furthermore, religious leaders and FBOs on both sides have supported development and democracy in Sierra Leone. In this respect, the arguments of Belshaw et al. (2001) and Belshaw (2005) are useful in examining Sierra Leone’s case. The former points out that most of the poor in Africa are deeply religious and that religion provides consolation to people, including the poor. This is because in many areas of Africa, people trust religious leaders and respect religious norms and values, as they are part of, or even central to, their lives. In such areas, FBOs have a huge influence over conduct, ethics and morality, and they have provided emotional, moral and spiritual support to people and therefore, can mobilise their communities. Belshaw (2005, p. 7) in examining FBO’s role in HIV/AIDS prevention in Uganda, argues that ‘FBOs from all major denominations in the country should be key players in Uganda’s HIV/AIDS strategy’. This is because ‘religion plays a central role in nearly all aspects of life in Uganda’ (Belshaw, 2005, p. 7). Therefore, FBOs can have a great social influence on communities and play a significant role in social development.

Belshaw’s arguments do apply to Sierra Leone. In response to questionnaires, many teachers and parents pointed out religion’s moral and spiritual contribution to children’s development, arguing that religion is itself education, since it provides codes of conduct, moral values through religion. Many parents and teachers pointed out that religious values mould the moral aspects of children. These views are constructed partly due to the civil war they experienced. Some children were involved in the war as combatants, as rape victims or in other ways, and are still traumatised. As parents and

teachers pointed out, religion contributes to installing people forgiveness in their mind, and integrating and being fit into society, as well as planting the importance of peace and unity. Overall, therefore, the findings of this study indicate that religions can greatly contribute to educating children morally and spiritually.

Furthermore, the work of FBOs is not limited to the provision of moral and spiritual education. FBOs' involvement in the public arena can be a powerful means of bringing about positive effects, especially in the development of education, through sensitising their members as to its importance. This is supported by the findings indicating that parents and teachers greatly appreciated the religious contribution to the area of dissemination of knowledge about social issues, particularly those relating to health and education. It was acknowledged that missionaries promote education even in rural areas. Because of their close networking in communities, local NGOs asked religious leaders to help with sensitisation as to the importance of education and to introduce their members to workshops operated by NGOs. This shows how FBOs and religious leaders are influential and how their participation in the development of education can bring about positive outcomes even in remote and marginalised areas of the country.

This study also found that FBOs contribute to practical matters, including school construction and rehabilitation, provision of school materials, offering scholarships to pupils and teachers, offering in-service training for teachers and compensating some teachers for the non-payment of salaries. Indeed, their steady, often grassroots-based work was acknowledged by the government, which sees them as service providers alongside NGOs, and offers FBOs grants to propose and implement projects. FBOs possess comparative advantages in development work, including long-term commitment to and familiarity in the served community, as well as closeness to the poor and marginalised (Belshaw, 2005). Moreover, FBOs have access to and rely on churches or mosques as bases and good networks, even in remote rural areas, where about 70 per cent of the population lives. This helps establish schools and sensitise communities greatly as to the importance of education.

Although FBOs are regarded as “service providers” like NGOs by the government,

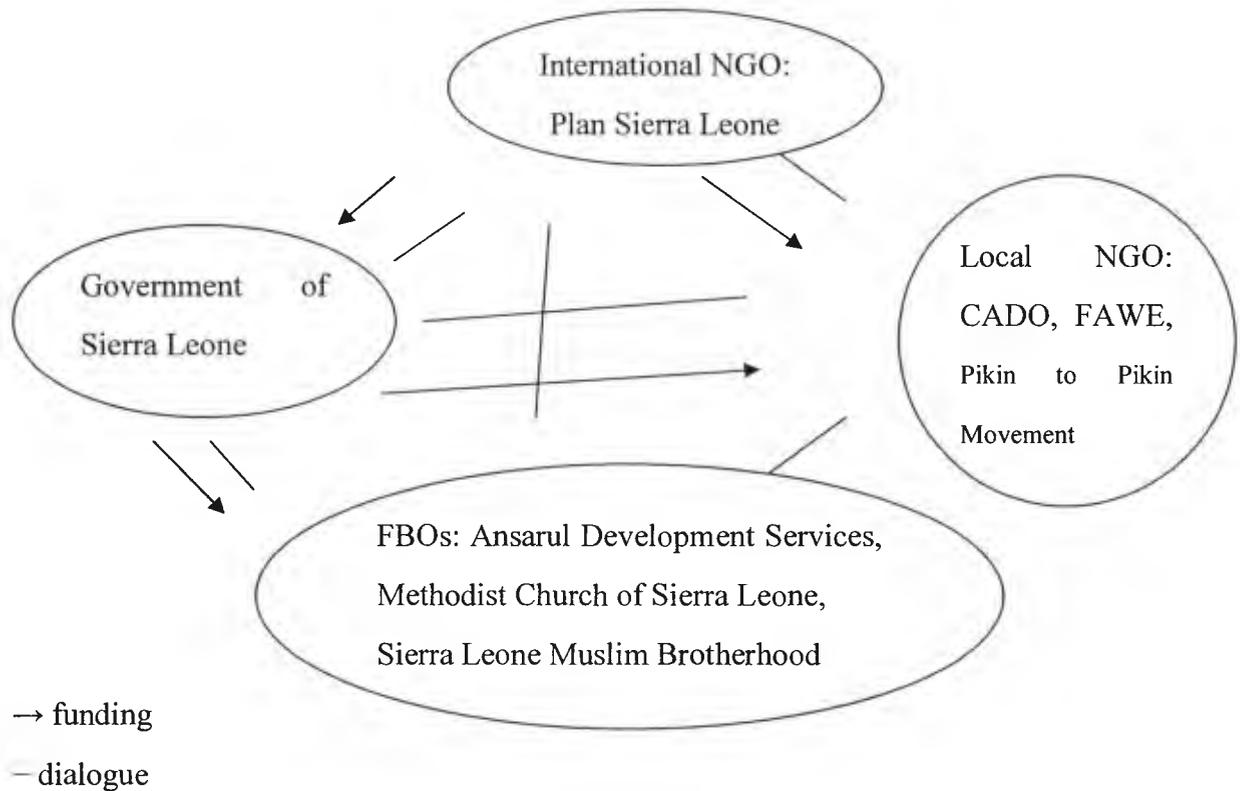
they tend to be closer to the schools and communities than NGOs. This argument can be supported in three ways. One is that separately from the regular district school inspectors, religious leaders also visit schools regularly to monitor. On top of monitoring purposes, their physical presence helps to maintain good discipline. They also attend an end-of-term assembly, where they make a speech and give special awards to those who have achieved excellent academic results. Sometimes religious leaders even settle problems caused by, or between, teachers and parents. Secondly, FBOs are involved in teacher recruitment, although a problem is that not all teachers recruited in this way are approved by the government for the limited financial capacity. Thirdly, the government set up a SMC in all primary schools to assist in the management of the school and to build bridges between the school and the local community. A religious leader is one of the SMC members in faith-based schools which account for about 75 per cent of primary schools in Sierra Leone. Therefore, the FBOs' significant contributions in development of education allow the argument that an increase in cooperation between FBOs and other development stakeholders could further promote Sierra Leone's progress towards EFA.

However, FBOs in Sierra Leone often lack capacity: their funding base tends to be small, as is their scale of support available to utilise resources. A Methodist church officer reported, during an interview, that after Sierra Leone gained independence, missionaries could not maintain bigger schools because they lost financial support from the UK, and today do less than the state, which took over the running of schools following independence. Some teachers and parents greatly appreciated the contributions of religious organisations to the establishment of schools, and it could be inferred that they believe that FBOs have "full" responsibility for the running of schools which are faith-based. However, as MEST (2007, p. 11) states, 'many provide no support, however, for the maintenance and development of schools and institutions bearing their names'. MEST offers FBOs grants to propose projects and help deliver education services to the people, while international NGOs, such as Plan Sierra Leone also construct school buildings for faith-based schools. That is, although FBOs lack capacity in terms of financial resources, FBOs are very important "service providers" from the government's point of view.

It should also be noted that EFA in Sierra Leone has led to a closer relationship between the government, NGOs, and FBOs. Plan Sierra Leone is indispensable for the MEST, since they assist with capacity building in MEST's district offices and help with the revision and printing of primary school syllabi, on top of making contributions in areas already outlined. Considering that the government offers local NGOs and FBOs grants to implement projects, when CSOs receive funds from the government, there is a need to examine the CSOs' legitimacy and their relationship with the government. The government has encouraged the involvement of CSOs in development processes under the PRSP because both local NGOs and FBOs are close to local communities and reach the intended beneficiaries of development projects effectively. Rao and Smyth (2005) point out that EFA initiatives have made the connection between the government and NGOs closer. This study showed that Sierra Leone's EFA programme has made the three actors which are the government, NGOs and FBOs connected. Moreover, when the government's ability to provide education is not adequate, their collaboration with NGOs and FBOs can bring about effective outcomes and their involvement in development projects is vital.

Considering their positives, the role of NGOs and FBOs in development of education in Sierra Leone is essential to achieving the goal of EFA. It is encouraging to know that they are likely to become more actively involved as key players in this area. Furthermore, this study argues that FBOs in Sierra Leone will also be more involved actively in cooperation with donors than is currently the case. The reason for this is that donors will not be able to ignore FBOs' powerful impact on intended beneficiaries and their significant contribution to social development. Both the government and donors are likely to regard FBOs as new channels for aid and as effective project implementers because of their comparative advantages. Therefore, when discussing "partnership" in social development in Sierra Leone, FBOs are key players, along with the government, donors, and NGOs. Thus, overall, this study argues that the EFA programme in Sierra Leone has caused a closer relationship to emerge between the government, NGOs and FBOs. Their relationship can be shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Relationship among the government, NGOs and FBOs



However, this study stresses that donors need to consider the most effective ways to assist FBOs carefully. This is because direct support by donors to FBOs may cause tensions or negative relationships between the donors and FBOs, possibly involving the communities targeted as intended beneficiaries, as it may invoke ideas of western superiority or even appear as a form of neo-colonialism. Although this study shows that Sierra Leone has high levels of religious tolerance, external assistance with political intentions involving FBOs could lead to tensions arising. FBOs might need to keep proposing projects working with the government to avoid tensions arising from changes of over-wearing political control through actively contacting to/with donors. Yet, this study found that problems remain in this area through lack of capacity on the part of MEST to establish more “ownership” and to have more ability to negotiate with donors. This is because even the MEST does not fully control its own budget and both donors and the MoF have strong control over it in certain respects. Thus, how FBOs form partnerships with the government and donors needs further study, considering

their religious motto and legitimacy over financial dependency. Therefore, since the roles of religion and education are very important in Sierra Leone, and FBOs' contributions to making progress towards EFA in particular is significant, the ways in which to channel aid to FBOs, especially aid from western donors to Islamic FBOs, remains an important issue.

To conclude, this study showed that FBOs can bring about effective outcomes in assisting Sierra Leone's EFA, and their involvement in development projects is vital. This is as discussed, because FBOs have a strong spiritual and moral values which people appreciate, and can reach beneficiaries effectively, including those otherwise marginalised.

# Chapter 8 Discussion and Analysis on Development Relationship between Donors and Recipients

## 8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss and analyse the second research focus regarding development partnerships in Sierra Leone. As a result, this chapter consists of the development relationship between donors and recipients, and the British contribution to Sierra Leone's attempts to achieve the MDGs, with particular reference to development of education.

## 8.2 Development Relationship between Donors and Recipients

### 8.2.1 Introduction

Because of the government's weak capacity with regard to providing adequate education to its people, both financially and in terms of management, Sierra Leone's development of education cannot be achieved without assistance from donors. Developing a good "partnership" in development process is one of the MDGs, and establishing "ownership" on the part of aid recipients has been set out as a new development challenge, considering that past aid relationships were based on donor-driven conditionality. Therefore, this section consists of a discussion concerning notions of "partnership" and "ownership" held by donor and recipient participants in this research, as well as development relationships between donors and recipients, which allows an examination of my second main question, namely "what the impact of aid on "partnership" and "ownership" concerning the relationships between donors and recipients in the development of primary education in Sierra Leone is".

### 8.2.2 The Notion of Partnership and Ownership

The international community has placed education, especially primary education, at the top of the international development agenda, urging donor communities to provide financial assistance and aid recipient countries to encourage more money to be spent

on education. However, this has led to maintaining or escalating the financial dependency of aid recipients, which runs contrary to the notion of “developing a global partnership for development”, as set out in one of the eight MDGs.

The largest international NGO in the area of education, Plan Sierra Leone, has provided substantial support to local NGOs such as CADO, FAWE and Pekin to Pekin Movement. Interviews with these NGOs found that they have received funding for all their activities and logistics, including the use of motor bikes, vehicles, computers, furniture, generators, rent, staff salaries, and some other costs, such as utility bills. The processes involved in these local NGOs’ planning and implementing their projects with Plan Sierra Leone’s assistance are: (1) carry out surveys and assessments of schools and communities; (2) write proposals and submit them to Plan Sierra Leone; (3) Plan Sierra Leone goes through them and approves them; (4) the local NGO and Plan Sierra Leone sign contracts; and (5) start the implementation. Staffs from local NGOs go in the field with colleagues from Plan Sierra Leone at least once every six months. However, Plan Sierra Leone officials come to the local NGOs’ offices and sites of operation any time they want in order to inspect their work.

Not only Plan Sierra Leone, but also “Plan Internationals” from other countries, such as Plan Ireland and Plan UK, visit both the operations of Plan Sierra Leone and those of local NGOs, since they are also donors to these local NGOs, using Plan Sierra Leone as an intermediary. Some of the operations I visited with Plan Ireland staff were run by Pekin to Pekin Movement and FAWE. Plan Sierra Leone sends a supervisor for monitoring and evaluation purposes, who visits local NGOs’ operational areas frequently to check whether or not projects are being implemented properly and whether finances are being handled transparently and responsibly. Local NGOs give Plan Sierra Leone monthly monitoring reports on their projects, and when necessary, they have meetings to discuss the progress of their work. In these ways, both international and local NGOs are working together in the area of education in Sierra Leone, supplementing public services.

Since the international community has been working to develop a good development

“partnership” and to establish “ownership” on the part of recipients, as discussed in Chapter Three, donor and recipient participants were asked how they understood the concepts of “partnership” and “ownership” through questionnaires. Their views revealed that to them:

Partnership involves -

1. Close and joint work towards mutually beneficial goals.
2. Working together, equal chances, support-implement, owe each other.
3. Working together, a synergy of efforts. Partnership involves sharing of responsibilities and roles.
4. Partnership is working together and sharing ideas to make the way forward.
5. Partnership is where two or more people come together to carry out a particular activity and in such case, a memorandum of understanding will be signed and there will be rules for the operation.
6. Partnership is to work with others, sharing resources in both financial and material, and liability and trust.

Ownership involves -

1. A sense of full responsibility in projects and activities.
2. Being in charge of resources and projects.
3. Ownership refers to beneficiaries of a project/programme. Ownership involves taking initiatives and actions because you consider the project to be yours – it belongs to you.
4. Ownership is firm control over resource and self-decision making.
5. Ownership implies that it is funded by donors, but implemented by owners with donors monitoring projects during implementation.

From their responses, the following could be identified as the essence of “partnership” and “ownership”:

- 1) Partnership involves respect and trust for each other.
- 2) Partnership means working together for common goals and benefits.
- 3) Partnership involves sharing ideas, resources and responsibility.
- 4) Ownership involves responsibility for projects.

5) Ownership involves control over resources and projects.

6) Ownership involves decision-making power.

It seems that both participant donors and recipients operated good concepts of “partnership” and “ownership”. However, considering the responses obtained from the questionnaire as to whether these participants regarded donors as a “partner” or “donor,” there was a slight gap between donors and recipients in their stance, as seen in Table 34.

Table 34. Participants’ views of donors (Donors N=5 and Recipients N=9)

	Donor	Partner	Both	Uncertain
Donors	0	4	1	0
Recipients	3	4	1	1

Four out of five donors saw themselves as “partners” of recipients, and one created a choice of “both,” which originally did not exist in my answer matrix. Conversely, while nearly half (four out of nine) the recipients saw donors as “partners,” three out of nine recipients regarded donors as “donors” rather than “partners.” One recipient chose “uncertain”, and one created a new answer, “both”. While all donors clearly identified themselves as “partners”, the answers by recipients were varied. Therefore, from this, it could be argued that although both donors and recipients had relatively good concepts of “partnership” and “ownership”, a question remains: why is there a perception gap between donors and recipients concerning their relationship?

The following Tables 35 to 41 reveal participants’ views on the role of donors and recipients according to development project stages and show how they see key players in each stage of project sharing.

Table 35. Participants' views on the role of donors and recipients: Project planning (Donor N=5 and Recipients N=9)

	Donor	Recipient	Both	No answer
No. of donors' response	0	1	4	0
No. of recipients' response	0	6	2	1

Table 36. Participants' views on the role of donors and recipients: Project implementation (Donors N=5 and Recipients N=9)

	Donor	Recipient	Both	No answer
No. of donors' response	0	2	3	0
No. of recipients' response	0	7	1	1

Table 37. Participants' views on the role of donors and recipients: Project monitoring (Donors N=5 and Recipients N=9)

	Donor	Recipient	Both	No answer
No. of donors' response	2	1	2	0
No. of recipients' response	1	0	7	1

Table 38. Participants' views on the role of donors and recipients: Project evaluation  
(Donors N=5 and Recipients N=9)

	Donor	Recipient	Both	No answer
No. of donors' response	0	1	4	0
No. of recipients' response	3	0	5	1

Table 39. Participants' views on the role of donors and recipients: Project follow-up  
(Donors N=5 and Recipients N=9)

	Donor	Recipient	Both	No answer
No. of donors' response	1	2	2	0
No. of recipients' response	1	2	5	1

Table 40. Participants' views on the role of donors and recipients: Project funding  
(Donors N=5 and Recipients N=9)

	Donor	Recipient	Both	No answer
No. of donors' response	3	0	2	0
No. of recipients' response	7	0	1	1

Table 41. Participants' views on the role of donors and recipients: Project participation (Donors N=5 and Recipients N=9)

	Donor	Recipient	Both	No answer
No. of donors' response	0	2	3	0
No. of recipients' response	0	5	3	1

The above results suggest the following findings: many respondents on both ends regarded project planning as a role of recipients or that of both donors and recipients. A majority of my participants saw project implementation as a role of recipients or that of both donors and recipients. A majority of my participants regarded project monitoring to be conducted by both donors and recipients, or donors alone. Many thought that project evaluation should be done by both donors and recipients, but some recipients saw it as donors' role solely. Many regarded project follow-up as both donors and recipients' role, but some saw it as recipients' work. A significant share of participants regarded project funding as the donors' role, although some saw it to be done by both. Many thought that project participation should involve both donors and recipients, but a large number of recipients regarded it as recipients' role. To summarise, although my participants pointed out that "partnership" means working together for common goals and benefits, it seems that working in "partnership" is not as simple as the concepts might indicate. Thus, examining the factors behind gap pertaining to the understanding of "partnership" and "ownership" and their practice helps in understanding Sierra Leone's current development relationship with donors.

### 8.2.3 Development Relationship between Donors and Recipients

As pointed out, there was a gap between the rhetoric and practice over "partnership" and "ownership" in the development relationship. However, as identified in the previous section, the participants shared some common goals with their partners. Questionnaire responses found that these common goals were:

1. Education for children and communities.
2. A child-focused approach.
3. Poverty reduction, eradication of illiteracy, support for female education and food security.
4. Development objectives in Sierra Leone, including governance, capacity building, and institutional and economic development.

Relating to the fact that some recipients perceived donors simply as “donors”, rather than “partners,” recipients were also asked whether or not they had established “ownership” of development projects. Donors themselves were also asked whether or not they thought Sierra Leonean recipients established “ownership” over such projects through questionnaires. As Table 42 below summarises, while two donors answered “yes”, two others were “uncertain” and one donor denied it. Surprisingly, six out of nine recipients responded positively to this question pertaining to ownership, one recipient was uncertain, one denied it and one did not answer it.

Table 42. Participants’ views on Sierra Leone’s having established “ownership” of development projects (Donors N=5 and Recipients N=9)

	Yes	No	Uncertain	No Answer
Donors	2	1	2	0
Recipients	6	1	1	1

This outcome reveals contradictory views regarding recipients’ perceptions of their relationships with donors and their sense of “ownership” over projects. That is, although some recipients regarded donors as “donors” rather than as “partners”, they could have a strong sense of “ownership” in their projects. In other words, it is possible for recipients to have a sense of ownership of projects, even when relying on financial assistance for their operation. The following questionnaire responses support such recipients’ views concerning “ownership” of projects:

B-2: ‘It is always clear that the projects they help fund belong to Sierra Leoneans,

especially now in the area of reconstruction in general. The projects are planned by Sierra Leoneans through the British assistance’.

B-4: ‘Yes, financially Plan Sierra Leone supports us, but we think we own our projects. Projects belong to FAWE, and Plan Sierra Leone assists FAWE. Plan Sierra Leone monitors and supervises our work and it is good for outcomes’.

B-4: ‘FAWE members prepare a project proposal and submit it to Plan Sierra Leone. This was approved and funded by Plan Sierra Leone, but implementation is solely done by FAWE and monitored by donors’.

B-5: ‘We plan and implement hygiene and sanitation projects and we monitor and supervise the projects for which we are registered by the government of Sierra Leone as a local NGO’.

These comments suggest that there is a certain level of autonomy and professionalism in the relationship between donors and recipients, as well as mutual respect.

However, issues of aid dependency and donor conditionality were also raised:

A-1: ‘In some projects, some are regarded as being less relevant to Sierra Leone needs and donor-driven’.

A-2: ‘I am uncertain, but in the long term, they need to own and manage projects and funding. But at the moment if we stop providing money the whole operation stops. So it is a balancing act and we need to provide money to them. At the same time we try to develop their capacity with regard to the decision making process etc. But they still rely on the UK greatly’.

B-3: ‘Donor conditionality does not allow rooms for ownership in a true sense. Arm-twisting is at play’.

Considering that recipients usually have to rely on donors for financial resources, forming a “partnership” between donors and recipients and establishing “ownership” on the part of recipients is fundamentally difficult. Therefore, it is doubtful as to whether aid dependency could be overcome and true “partnerships” created. The questionnaire was used to find out whether financial aid could lead to pressure from donors and it weakens Sierra Leone’s ownership. In response, four out of five donors denied this to be the case, while only one donor admitted its possibility, and recipients’

responses were divided in half as seen in Table 43 below:

Table 43. Participants' views on financial aid weakening Sierra Leone's ownership (Donors N=5 and Recipients N=9)

	Yes	No	Uncertain	No answer
Donors	1	4	0	0
Recipients	4	4	0	1

Donor's views concerning recipients' aid dependency suggest that financial resources are not the only important resource, and there are other resources recipients own, which could contribute to the planning and implementation of projects. This is supported by the following comment:

A-1: 'Financial aid will be only one of the "planters" that make up a project. Sierra Leonean actors can bring other resources "to the table"'.  
 By "planters" one may mean, for example according to the donor, local actors' ability to identify the targets of their projects. Donors pointed out that through working together with national NGOs they could cover more regions and reach more people. This view is supported by the fact that donors have learned the importance of the following areas from working with recipients:

A-1: 'Identification of needs, use of resources for optional impact, monitoring and evaluation in difficult circumstances'.

Furthermore, the following comments made by donors and recipients suggest that financial assistance can lead to capacity building on the part of recipients and there are some improvements in donor-recipient relationships:

A-2: 'Rather, providing aid could increase Sierra Leone's capacity and institutional development, and it leads to having more ownership of projects'.

A-3: 'The way aid is provided, if on request, clearly defined. The need, expectation, implementation are clear and reach mutual agreement. It can strengthen Sierra Leone's capacity'.

B-2: 'They used to choose what project they might implement for a given community. But that changed gradually and now the government of Sierra Leone and the affected community are involved in making choices'.

B-4: 'It facilitates my project implementations and it strengthens my enterprise'.

These comments imply that the present financial assistance is incorporated into local capacity building, shifting meanings of financial dependency and assisting in establishing recipients' ownership over projects.

However, some recipients indicated that financial assistance from donors also has the power to weaken the ownership of projects on the part of aid recipients:

B-3: 'They have donor demands. That is, they suggest location, beneficiaries etc. The reporting system and disbursing of funds are stereotyped'.

B-3: 'A toilet project is needed in village A, but the funds proposed are requested for school construction. So the implementing partner's activity is redirected altogether. They come with indicators and dictate the manner in which funds are disbursed'.

B-4: 'Some donors attach strings to money. They do not allow you to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate the project by yourself'.

B-5: 'The funds do not come directly to us, but through Plan Sierra Leone, and accessing it depends on our relationship with them'.

These comments show that, in practice, establishing "ownership" of the recipients in aid relationships is not as simple when one party has considerably more financial resources and power and other parties have to rely to a large extent on these resources.

Therefore, as part of a further examination of this issue, donors and recipients were asked whether or not "conditionality" or "forced implication" by donors is a "past story" or is "still there now." As seen in Table 44 below, surprisingly, all donors admitted that some form of "conditionality" or "forced implication" remained. As for recipients, while two said it was a "past story", more than half answered that "conditionality" still exists.

Table 44. Participants' views on existence of "conditionality" or "forced implication" by donors (Donors N=5 and Recipients N=9)

	Past story	Still now	Uncertain	No answer
Donors	0	5	0	0
Recipients	2	5	1	1

Donors admitted some form of conditionality, as follows:

A-1: 'I think it still exists. That's one of problems and we are working for it in the international community as a whole'.

A-2: 'But we have made efforts to overcome "traditional conditionality". The UK is working with partners to encourage a country-led approach. In a case of Sierra Leone, what DFID does in Sierra Leone is very much based on the agreement we made and on what type of work needs to be done, identifying the weakness and planning to develop the area to function it. We encourage the Sierra Leone government taking responsibility in their action and we assist the process. We go to the Ministries, and see how many people working there, what kind of skills they have, what they can achieve, and probably what they will not achieve. The Sierra Leone government makes initiatives of development strategy, and says that they will do this and DFID provide funding. But at the same time, if they go in a wrong way, DFID cannot fund them'.

A-3: 'According to a project, amount of fund, but not really forced, but to some extent, still exist'.

A-3: 'It depends on the type of conditionality, but it has to be in agreement mutually, and everyone should be clear before started'.

The following recipient comments make their dependent relationship on donors with conditionality even clearer:

B-3: 'As a whole they leave us with no option but to accept conditions, just to keep our organisation going. The projects most times are not community-demand driven, but donor-demand driven. And as such, there is no ownership and the

development of our relationship with donors is not visible’.

B-2: ‘Real partnerships are still dancing to the tune of British actors by accepting their conditions and terms for possible support. The terms of operation are directed. So there is no ownership as you are there, only to carry out donors’ demands’.

B-4: ‘They give you their conditions on what to do with the money they are sending, and areas they want the project to take place and also their target groups’.

B-5: ‘Without financial aid, we can hardly effectively implement our projects, we cannot maintain our staff, salaries, and other logistics required’.

When recipients were asked about difficulties concerning working with donors, they pointed out similar aspects:

A-3: ‘The donors tell us what projects they prefer to be implemented using their funds. Some say we should build schools, while others stress training of teachers, etc. You cannot use the funds earmarked for construction for training, even if it is a pressing issue’.

B-3: ‘Late arrival of funds and funds arriving already tagged. For instance, they will say this money is for school construction or agriculture, but maybe these are not the peoples’ needs, so their participation is not good during implementation’.

These comments show the recipients’ difficult position when they have to rely on funding from donors and to accept and implement projects which are donor-driven, rather than based on community needs. Recipients also felt frustrated with donors’ lack of flexibility. Donors too, seemed to have frustration because of the recipients’ financial dependency, as seen in the following comment:

A-3: ‘They just depend on funds from us. When funds are not forthcoming, they cease to operate’.

However, there were also more positive views provided by recipients:

B-2: ‘Financial aid facilitates implementation, ownership can only be weakened if at the planning stage no provision is made to facilitate the operation of the project by locals so as to ensure long-term sustainability. This is so because planning process always works on the need of the community concerned. It is no longer a pre-planned package imposed on a community. Beneficiaries are usually

involved at every stage of the project these days. Besides projects are planned after a need and resources assessment survey is carried out in the community’.

B-4: ‘FAWE is given a free hand to implement projects according to aims and objectives. No conditions are attached’.

In order to improve aid dependency, all my donor participants said that they have worked for having Sierra Leonean actors’ better ownership. They expressed their efforts in the following way:

A-1: ‘Because we think that the fundamental purpose of donor-supported activity must be to enable the national entities to achieve full ownership of projects that affect main country’.

A-3: ‘Building the capacity of their staff. We also allow them to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate their projects’.

A-3: ‘Helping their capacity, skill and logistics etc’.

A-3: ‘Allowing them to do it for themselves rather than we doing it for them. Build the capacity of staff so that they can handle critical areas with professionalism’.

A-1: ‘Identification of needs, joint funding of projects, management of projects, evaluation of projects – all of them must be done jointly and openly’.

However, these donors’ efforts are not fully appreciated by recipients, as seen in Table 45.

Table 45. Recipients’ views on donors’ working Sierra Leone’s having better ownership (Recipients N=9)

	Yes	No	Uncertain	No answer
No.	4	3	1	1

The following comments from participants show that although some appreciated donors’ assistance in staff training and logistic for their capacity building, it also implicates that it takes more time for both donors and recipients to achieve a good “partnership” overcoming the issue of finance and power:

B-3: ‘By allowing Sierra Leoneans to full participation in the project implementation

process. By enhancing accountability and transparency principles among Sierra Leoneans’.

B-5: ‘They provide logistics which builds the capacity of institutions to be able to stand on their own. They provide in-service trainings for staff of institutions which improve their ability in what they do’.

B-3: ‘They do the planning, give directions and above all, they want to show that they have the resources. They must be listened to’.

Overall, donors seemed to be trying to build the capacity of local staff, and to develop their skills. This is supported by the following comment obtained from a questionnaire regarding the role of donors:

A-3: ‘Allowing them to do it by themselves rather than we doing it for them, and by building the capacity of staff so that they can handle critical areas with professionalism’.

Moreover, through working with donors, recipients have been learning substantially:

B-4: ‘Lessons learned are numerous, such as diligence, transparency, accountability, as well as accuracy and brevity in reporting’.

B-5: ‘British actors are very transparent. Keeping records and doing research are the lessons we learned from them’.

Therefore, considering the relationship between donors and recipients, collaboration seems a good description. This allows both donors and recipients to learn from each other, and consequently improve their performances. While recipients pointed to the issue of donor-driven programmes and projects, donors often counted on local NGOs to do need assessments and surveys. Local NGOs carry out surveys and choose communities and schools to work with – often the most marginalised and vulnerable. Therefore, it is not donors, but aid recipients that often identify the marginalised groups and areas requiring assistance.

This study also showed that aid dependency in the form of need for financial assistance affects the way recipients regard donors, often preventing them from seeing the latter

as “partners”. Thus, how donors and recipients can establish a good “partnership” is still a big issue to analyse. The reason for this is that while financial assistance from donors can increase recipients’ capacity, it also affects their way of performing projects, which tends to reflect donors’ wants more than local needs. However, this study also witnessed that there is a movement for the improvement in Sierra Leonean actors’ ownership which efforts were made by both donors and recipients. This, however, is a lengthy process to fully achieve and sustain.

#### 8.2.4 Analysis of the Relationship between Donors and Recipients Concerning “Partnership” and “Ownership”

This study showed that donors and recipients shared some common goals including provision of education for children and communities, and poverty reduction. Both donors and recipients had good concepts of “partnership” and “ownership”.

While the donor and recipient participants in this research were all aware of issues concerning “partnership” and “ownership”, their experience seemed to not fully reflect their rhetoric. The use of the terms “partnership” and “ownership” has been frequent in many documents and international declarations over the last decade. Yet, the relationship between donors and recipients in the case of the provision of education in Sierra Leone shows that financial assistance is a major connecting force between recipients and donors, and in such a situation, for donors and recipients to establish a good “partnership” is problematic, despite the fact that they have common goals. The reason for this is that as some recipients pointed out, funds for projects from donors are already tagged to certain conditions, and this affects their performance. Although donors have worked on achieving a better “partnership” with recipients, half the recipients in this study felt that the reliance on financial assistance from donors could weaken their ownership of projects. In practice, the current development modality remains primarily based on reflecting donors’ intentions. The primary element which forms aid relationships could be still based on an unequal power relation and those providing financial resources have a large amount of influence over recipients. As long as “conditionality” persists and “winners” and “losers” exist in aid relationships as

Slater and Bell (2002) argue, the word, “partnership” remains empty. In order to reduce and eventually get rid of conditionality and to create more equal relationships in the process of collaboration between donors and recipients, leading to a good “partnership”, capacity building of recipients is needed, as well as more freedom in the allocation of funds.

This issue of donor-driven processes, based on conditionality applied through control of funds is not only relevant to Sierra Leone, but applies to other LDCs. For example, Kadzamira and Rose (2003, p. 504) point out that ‘Given that financing of education in Malawi has always relied heavily on donor funding, international agencies continue to play an important role in the policy process’. They argue that donors continue to have considerable influence on education policies in Malawi.

However, in this study, some donors acknowledged that recipients have some comparative advantages, as often recipients are the ones who accurately identify the most appropriate target groups. Donors relied on needs assessment and surveys conducted by local NGOs. This cannot be done effectively by outsiders, as Chambers (1983) has consistently argued. Considering the fact that it is not donors, but recipients that can accurately identify vulnerable and marginalised groups and areas which need assistance, donors do rely on recipients to some extent. Therefore, collaboration between international NGOs and local NGOs allows the maximisation of the use of financial resources, because local NGOs have a greater ability to identify local needs, while international NGOs have better access to funds.

Having access to a considerable amount of funds allows Plan Sierra Leone to operate on a relatively large scale in doing work in line with government policy. Plan Sierra Leone’s work not only includes school construction and rehabilitation, but also extends to areas the government usually controls, such as the provision of school materials and workshops for teachers, capacity building for MEST district offices, and supporting the revision and printing of syllabi. Thus, Plan Sierra Leone is supplementing the government in providing education services and making progress towards achieving EFA, with the assistance of local NGOs. Not only does Plan Sierra Leone take on a

significant portion of work, but its partnership with local NGOs, such as CADO, FAWE and the Pekin to Pekin Movement, enables the organisation to contribute to small scale grassroots advocacy work, which includes establishing Health and Peace Clubs in schools and communities. Making use of the comparative advantages of both international NGOs and grassroots local NGOs could be significant in terms of reaching the government's "underserved" (Rose, 2007, p. 1), since it leads to better regional coverage, and the addressing of local needs effectively. Reflecting local needs and the involvement of multiple stakeholders in this way is significant, considering the sustainability of project outcomes. In this respect, Rao and Smyth (2005) argue that local communities cannot maintain the assets and benefits created if their needs are not properly understood by the development stakeholders. Therefore, local stakeholders' involvement and the establishment of "ownership" are important.

The Sierra Leonean government points out that shortfalls or delays in donor disbursements often force it to cut expenditures, including poverty reduction related expenditures. The government also offers CSOs grants to run projects. Therefore, shortfalls or delays in donor disbursements could result in the suspension or ceasing of operations, which could negatively affect the welfare of the poor significantly.

With regard to the relationship between local NGOs and the government, Hudock (1999, p. 4) points out that when southern NGOs receive funds from the government, 'their legitimacy as non-governmental actors is eroded and their relationship with clients at the field level are compromised'. This reflects the nature of the word "contractor" (Smillie, 1997, in Smillie & Helmich, 1997). Therefore, it is important for NGOs to remind their legitimacy as CSOs in working with the government and donors. Nonetheless, as local NGO participants in this research pointed out, working with donors and with the government is part of a process and they could obtain the opportunity to enhance their capacities. The government has encouraged the involvement of CSOs in the PRSP process, as discussed in Chapter Three, because local NGOs tend to be close to grassroots communities and can reach the beneficiaries of development projects effectively.

As discussed, the EFA in Sierra Leone made the connection between the government and NGOs closer and the partnership approach has become widely known. Yet, nevertheless, as indicated earlier, “partnership” between donors and recipients is still shallow. The current aid dependence of recipients on donors and the attached conditionality affect both their ability to have a good and equal “partnership” and to establish full “ownership” of projects and programmes on the part of the recipients. Therefore, at the moment, “partnerships” in practice have not moved beyond the rhetorical according to the findings of this study. In order for the word “partnership” not to become a way to mask a donor-driven approach to assisting recipients, it is necessary to strengthen the “ownership” of recipients.

However, this study also showed that there is great potential to develop a good “partnership”, and currently recipients are in the process of transforming towards it. Some of the recipients felt that they had “ownership” of their projects while working with donors. Working with donors can increase the local actors’ capacity. This is a way forward in terms of developing the “ownership” of recipients. To develop “partnership” depends on the efforts of both donors and recipients.

Finally, this study argues that this modality towards “partnership” through reducing the dichotomy of donors-recipients or DCs-LDCs which is based on the Postcolonial perspectives argued in Chapter Five, has been dominant in the development. Thus, it could be argued that the impact of the stress on “partnership” and “ownership” between donors and recipients in achieving EFA in Sierra Leone has been to move the relationship between donors and recipients forward to the next stage. This involves donors’ assistance in recipients’ building their capacities in pursuit of a less-dependent future, which differs from the previous approach where donors simply pushed a top-down and conditionality-based approach.

## 8.3 The British Contribution to Sierra Leone's Attempts to Achieve the MDGs with Particular Reference to the UPE

### 8.3.1 Introduction

This study argues that in addition to greater access to schooling, more efforts in the areas of improving the quality of education, upgrading school environments, reducing parents' financial burdens, retention and completion of basic education, and the inclusion of the more marginalised, are necessary – if significant progress is to be made in the education sector in Sierra Leone. Political will and policy reforms cannot fully solve the problems without adequate financial resources being made available. Additional funding for education and government institutional reform in Sierra Leone can create an increased capacity to provide sound education services. Sierra Leone's former colonial power, Britain, is the largest bilateral aid provider to the country, and its development role is therefore significant. Britain has given significant support to Sierra Leone's PRSP, which is characterised by a country-led approach and the involvement of CSOs. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter Three, PRSP goals and strategies are integrated with those involved in trying to achieve the MDGs, including UPE. In order to examine how British contributions are regarded as being useful to Sierra Leone's efforts to achieve the MDGs, this section discusses Sierra Leonean people's views on British contributions to education, followed by further discussion regarding British contributions to Sierra Leone's attempts to achieve the MDGs which is one of my sub-question. Following this, an analysis which integrates issues and arguments arising from the two sections is made.

### 8.3.2 Sierra Leonean People's Views on the British Contributions to Education

Although Sierra Leone used to be seen as a hub of education in West Africa during colonial times (Alie, 1990), more than four decades after achieving independence, the country is one of the poorest in the world and its prospects of meeting the goals of EFA and the MDGs seem very remote, largely because of the financial impoverishment of the country.

When interviewing headteachers and recipients, sometimes I heard people saying jokingly that they wished Britain would colonise them again, so they could have a better life. This implies that although Sierra Leone has been in the process of national development, hardship characterises the lives of the majority of people in the country: the UK is in some ways still expected to provide for Sierra Leoneans as a former colonial power. As discussed in Chapter Four, Christian missionaries contributed to the provision of education in Sierra Leone during British rule. In this regard, Table 46 below summarises teachers' views, obtained from questionnaires, on British contributions to education during colonial times and today:

Table 46. Teachers' views on whether Britain makes positive contributions to education (Teachers N=125)

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	No Answer
Colonial time	118 (94.4%)	1 (0.8%)	0 (0%)	6 (4.8%)
Today	72 (57.6%)	24 (19.2%)	13 (10.4%)	16 (12.8%)

Significantly, there were more teachers (94.4 per cent) who valued the Britain's involvement in education in "colonial times" than the current one. Furthermore, the response of those who were "uncertain" and who "disagreed" with Britain's contribution today was greater than with the former involvement.

Nevertheless, from responses to questionnaires, those appreciative of today's British contributions revealed the following forms of assistance, as seen in Table 47. Provision of school materials was by far the most recognised contribution, followed by sending expatriates, building schools and aid to the government of Sierra Leone.

Table 47. Teachers' views on areas where Britain currently makes positive contributions to education (Teachers N=125)

Aspect	No.	%
Provision of school materials	31	24.8
Sending expatriates	14	11.2
Building schools	13	10.4
Aid to the government of Sierra Leone	11	8.8
Offering scholarship	10	8.0
Introduced formal education	9	7.2
Use of English	6	4.8
Use of British Council and library	2	1.6

However, it is noteworthy that in response to the question about British contributions to education in Sierra Leone today, 25 teachers (20.0 per cent) referred to British contributions during colonial times. Furthermore, the following comments show some mixed views on the part of teachers:

D-2: 'By giving commonwealth scholarship to students. There are some British NGOs in the area of education and by providing materials for formal and non-formal education, and sending volunteers to do the work'.

D-9: 'Britain is our colonial master. English is our medium of communication in schools and colleges, etc. Besides, we have British expatriates, soldiers to train our people in Sierra Leone. The British embassy shows the tie between our country and Britain'.

D-19: 'Britain, upon request from the government of Sierra Leone has donated a large sum of money to boost the education in Sierra Leone'.

D-7: 'During the colonial period British contribution to education was so great which made Sierra Leone the best in education in West Africa. Today British contribution to education is not effective which is one of the great reasons for us to be backward in education'.

D-11: 'During the colonial period everything went well with education. For example, payment for teachers was regular and also there were a lot of educational

facilities in school, compared to now’.

The breakdown of parents’ responses to the same question greatly resembled that of the teachers’, as shown in Table 48.

Table 48. Parents’ views on whether Britain makes positive contributions to education (Parents N=454)

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	No Answer
Colonial time	427 (94.1%)	4 (0.9%)	6 (1.3%)	7 (1.5%)
Today	275 (60.6%)	64 (14.1%)	54 (11.9%)	61 (13.4%)

As shown in the above table, while the majority of parents (94.1 per cent) agreed that the British had made a positive contribution to Sierra Leone’s education during “colonial times”, the number of parents who agreed that Britain makes a positive contribution “today” declined to 275 parents (60.6 per cent). Furthermore, the increase in the numbers of “no answer” and “uncertain”, on top of “disagree”, shows respondents had some hesitation in providing a positive response to the question of whether Britain is making a positive contribution to education in Sierra Leone today.

Parents pointed to the following fields in which they believed currently Britain assisting, as seen in Table 49: provision of school materials, building schools, aid to the government, introduction of formal education, offering scholarships and sending expatriates. In a similar vein to teachers, 93 (20.5 per cent) parents referred to past positive British contributions, instead of identifying today’s contributions to education in Sierra Leone.

Table 49. Parents' views on areas where Britain currently makes positive contributions to education sector (Parents N=454)

Aspect	No.	%
Provision of school materials	123	27.1
Building schools	105	23.1
Aid to the government of Sierra Leone	94	20.7
Introduced formal education	88	19.4
Offering scholarships	75	16.5
Sending expatriates	24	5.3

The following comments are examples of parents' responses regarding the subject:

E-3: 'Because the British are improving our educational standard through the following ways: human resources, finance and technology'.

E-4: 'I believe that the British contributed to education in Sierra Leone, because there was an idea that the girl child should not go to school traditionally, but through the British people introducing the importance of education, our country changed a lot'.

E-5: 'Britain being our former colonial master, contributes to formal education in my country by providing training opportunities in teachers and by providing teaching and learning materials etc'.

E-8: 'In the colonial era Britain provided both learning materials and schools for Sierra Leoneans. And today, they render grants to the Ministry of Education to improve education in Sierra Leone'.

E-1: 'During the colonial period Britain built up schools and Fourah Bay College, CMS Grammar School, Methodist Boy's School. Today, they have no hands toward Sierra Leone's education since independence'.

E-9: 'In the colonial period Britain brought education in our country and thus those educating people are strong pillars to education in our country today'.

E-12: 'The system of education they left, and the infrastructure they left'.

E-13: 'Education during the colonial time was very good. School materials were supplied to pupils. Pupils were paid for when parents could not afford it. Salaries

for teachers were paid on time. Today it is the opposite’.

Some teachers and parents appreciated and pointed out provision of school materials, building schools and so on as British contribution to education. However, since Sierra Leone has had a close relationship with Britain historically, some participants had a vague expectation that British support will lead to a good provision of education in the country. Yet, overall, the teachers and parents had views that British involvement during colonial times was almost unanimously better than currently. This could implicate that they do not really know about current British contribution to Sierra Leone’s development in general and education in particular.

Although the DFID is not currently involved in direct education projects, considering the fact that DFID has assisted Sierra Leone’s education sector through both budget support and help with the country’s ten year education plan with FTI, the fact that there is a relatively low appreciation of the current British contribution to education on the part of Sierra Leoneans could be seen as disappointing from a British prospective. It is pointed out that the DFID and other British actors such as the British Council could improve visibility through for instance public relations, as well as enhancing accountability to their work in Sierra Leone. In other words, what is important to outline from the outcomes is the need for the UK to be accountable and transparent to both the government and the citizens of Sierra Leone, in terms how their aid is being used. This is not only to the UK citizen as tax payers to explain the use of money transparently, but also it is necessary to be transparent and accountable to Sierra Leonean citizens too. The latter helps bring about democratic society involving civil society with grassroots people. Therefore, through examining teachers’ and parents’ views on British contribution to education in today and colonial times, this study points out the British actors could improve their accountability, so that there is a better mutual understanding between them and it stimulates civil society movements in Sierra Leone.

### 8.3.3 British Contributions to Sierra Leone's Attempts to Achieve the MDGs

Lack of democracy can often mean a lack of good governance and a lack of participation by the people in the affairs of a country. In this respect, education can contribute to bridging the gap between elites and the majority of the population who are left behind in the political arena. International frameworks, such as the MDGs and the PRSP, have opened up spaces for CSOs to play an active and positive role in political and social welfare fields. Institutional development and capacity building are important aspects of PRSPs, aimed at promoting an economic, political and social environment which is conducive to poverty reduction. Thus, while DFID has been supporting good governance, capacity building and institutional development in Sierra Leone, it has also assisted in a Civil Engagement Process to promote the activities of CSOs.

These efforts have gradually shown some progress in Sierra Leone. The following views were obtained through interviews with NGOs, regarding the openness of the government towards civil society. All of the respondents answered in the affirmative and some of their main views are:

B-3: 'The government sees us as a recognised NGO, and otherwise, without NGOs, it is impossible to increase access to schooling in Sierra Leone. Also, in the past it was not possible to sing songs with political messages, but now you can hear the Emmerson's song anywhere, you can sing it in public and it is very popular. The government is ok about it'.

B-4: 'They are trying. When foreign donors come, the government sends NGOs to the meetings'.

B-4: 'Yes, they are trying and they are encouraging. Because in past, it was not happening, but now you can take actions and talk in community, and then come back to the government to move forward'.

B-5: 'Yes, because you can say most democratic activities are done through civil society and civil society organisations have been mushrooming in Sierra Leone. Civil society sensitises to the communities on what the government should do and what the communities can do for the better change'.

“Emmerson’s song” refers to the singer, Emmerson, whose song, “Bobor Bele”, took Sierra Leone by storm, and was loved by all, including the old, young, men, women, educated, uneducated, poor, and fortunate. The song was played all over Sierra Leone. The danceable music in Krio describes rampant corruption in Sierra Leone and in particular the selfish politicians, civil servants and non-governmental employees who use public funds for their own means, while the majority of people live in hardship. Emmerson’s music seemed a symbol of unity for those who were against corruption. According to NGO staff I interviewed, when there were some criticisms of Emmerson, for mixing politics with music, the former President Kabbah, whose Presidency ended in August 2007, protected him, saying that ‘we live in a democracy’. These words were very encouraging for those who were engaged in the civil society sector.

As noted in Chapter Three, as of May 2005, when I conducted my field research, there were 87 international NGOs and 213 national NGOs registered, according to the Ministry of Development and Economic Planning. A government official told me that the number of NGOs working in Sierra Leone has been increasing. Indeed, NGOs have played an important role in bringing about democracy. Through interviewing my NGO participants, all 10 of them have worked not only for the provision of education, but also on issues of human rights, networking for civil society movement and community development. Their commitment to democratic activities at a community level is shown in their comments:

B-4: ‘Yes, through advocating the society for the importance of education and participation of their workshops. We also ask churches and mosques to help this sensitisation, as well as using media such as radio’.

B-4: ‘What we do at a community level is raising people’s awareness in capacity building. Also we do not see children just as beneficiaries but also we want children to be actively involved in activities, not just passive attitudes’.

B-5: ‘Yes, working community to child protection, monitoring child rights, human right committee, child-centred advocacy’.

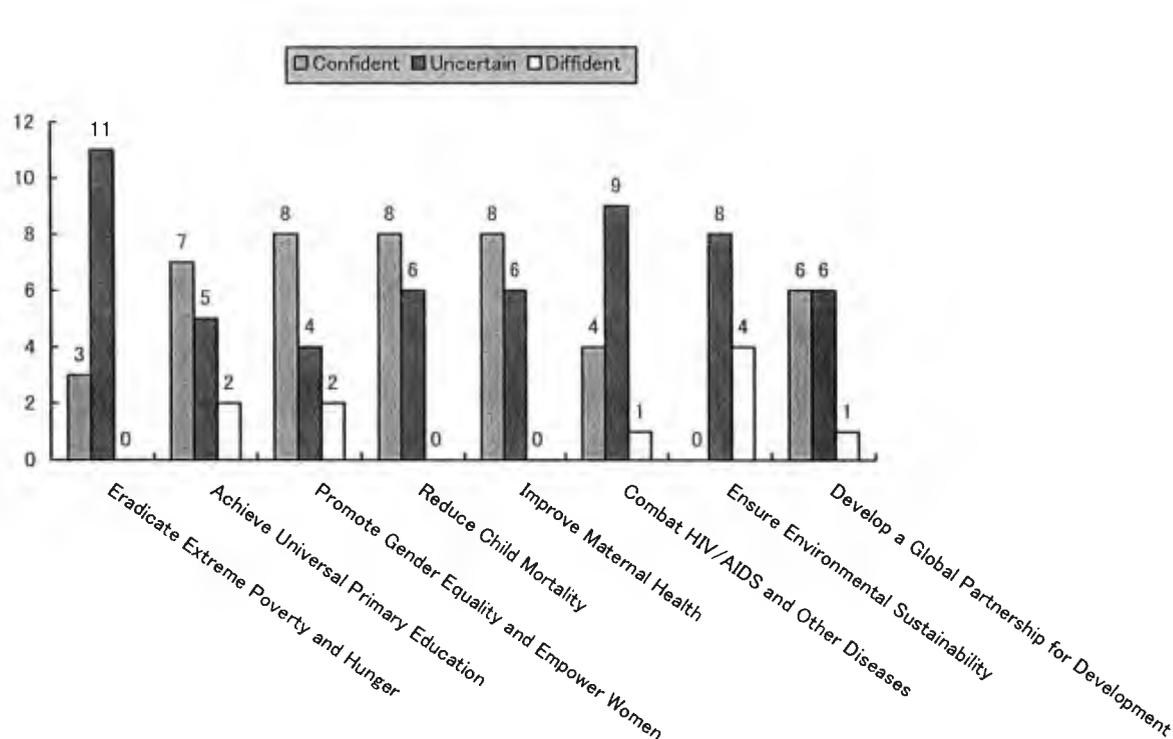
B-5: ‘Yes, Pekin to Pekin is working mainly for children, but we also meet up with the community people, CSO groups such as Bombali Human Right Committee and

Children's network in the district, and give and exchange information what we can make change for life'.

Overall, these views of my NGO participants reflect the government's fairly tolerant attitudes towards CSOs and democratic freedom, and show that Sierra Leone has been making progress in building democracy after the 11 year civil war. In this respect, it could be said that one of the common objectives of the governments of Sierra Leone and the UK, to promote civil society activities has been reasonably successful. As discussed in earlier chapters, education is not only meant to improve income levels or employment opportunity and health issues, but can also play an instrumental role in providing the means to obtain information through literacy and cultivating people as to having a sense of their rights, citizenship and democratic values. CSOs can play an important role as watchdogs in social, economic and political arenas, and therefore, development of education and peoples' active engagement in civil society movement are synergistically significant in Sierra Leone's development process.

Furthermore, the UK has given strong support to Sierra Leone in the country's PRSP processes, which are greatly integrated with efforts to achieve the MDGs. However, the timeframe of 2015 for MDG achievement does not seem to be realistic in Sierra Leone's case. This view was obtained through responses to questionnaires from 14 development related participants, who included government officials and NGO workers, as seen in Figure 2 below. It shows their mixed feelings and confidence levels regarding the possibility of achieving the goals by 2015:

Figure 2. Participants' confidence in Sierra Leone's achieving the MDGs (Development related participants N=14)



Regarding “the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger”, the majority of participants expressed uncertainty, while three participants were confident. A positive response was:

B-4: ‘The PRSP conditions set by the government and the plan to increase agricultural programmes by the president will eradicate it’.

Uncertain views included:

A-3: ‘Time-frame is too tight and far behind’

B-4: ‘The reasons are lack of commitment, uncontrolled economy, inaccessibility in many parts of the country, poor governance including nonpolism, tribalism, sectionalism, sex discrimination etc’

Concerning the “achievement of universal primary education”, seven participants were confident, while five were uncertain and two were doubtful. Positive views were:

B-3: 'Free primary education is being supported by the government'.

B-3: 'Structures are being put in place and there is an increase for free primary education'.

There were also views which expressed the need for further efforts:

A-3: 'There are still many problems. Need to pay teachers' salaries, training for staff and teachers, etc'

B-2: 'Lack of resources and proper management'.

As for "promoting gender equality and empowering women", eight participants were confident that this could be achieved, while six remained skeptical or doubtful.

Positive views were:

B-3: 'Women are being given priority in policies'.

B-4: 'Women are encouraged to play an active role in government departmental programmes and they are in key positions'.

The following responses show concerns about the negative impact of customary values regarding gender relations:

A-3: 'It is difficult thinking about traditional values'

B-2: 'Some customary practices that discriminate against women will not go soon'.

Regarding "reduction of child mortality", the split resembled that above. Positive responses were:

B-4: 'The government is persistently training and recruiting medical personnel and nurses in Sierra Leone to reduce child mortality'.

B-5: 'The Ministry tries to provide mosquito nets, malaria tablets etc.'

Skeptical views were:

A-3: 'Because no or few clinics in the majority of villages'

B-2: 'Lack of doctors and nurses, equipment, drugs etc'.

These comments show that the government's efforts to bring about tangible development benefits take a long time to reach the intended beneficiaries, particularly those in rural areas.

Regarding “improvements in maternal health” and child mortality, the same distribution of responses was visible.

In respect of “combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases”, four participants were confident this could happen, while nine participants were uncertain and one was doubtful. Positive responses were:

A-3: ‘Already programmes are in progress, the government is serious with other agencies’

B-4: ‘The huge sensitisation on education is ongoing’.

There were more views concerning lack of progress:

B-2: ‘Lack of resources and personnel trained in the field’,

B-3: ‘Much is still needed to be done in terms of sensitisation as it is still considered a myth’

B-5: ‘Not many go to AIDS check test’.

As for “ensuring environmental sustainability”, no one was confident this could be achieved. All responses pointed to the confusing nature of national policy:

A-3: ‘Just for money and ideas, trees are cut down without planning’

A-3: ‘No package for this yet’

B-2: ‘Not sure about the commitment of authorities so far’

B-5: ‘Due to extreme poverty, people do not think about it’

These comments show that there is a perception that at the moment the government is not prioritising this issue. Environmental issues seem to be seen as a second issue and the government’s inaction is explained through its priorities in poverty reduction.

Finally, regarding the issue of “global partnership for development”, six participants were confident this could be achieved, while others remained skeptical. Positive views included:

A-3: ‘Micro level to global level, we have it’

B-4: ‘Moving towards it’

However, as discussed in the section on “partnership” and “ownership,” there was a concern about conditions which partners proposed in working with Sierra Leone as

seen in the comment:

B-2: 'We may not fulfil partners' conditions'.

Furthermore, when interviewed, a DFID officer said that he was uncertain about the possibility of achieving any of the MDGs. He thought that because the government is under huge pressure from the international community in general, and donors in particular, Sierra Leone would make some progress. However, he did not think that Sierra Leone could meet the goals. The reason for this is that he believed the country still contains some dangerous elements which could trigger a civil war. For example, when a major event happens, such as the death of the president or the general elections, he felt the possibility of social unrest was great. Although the 2007 presidential election was free and fair according to observers, because of the growing tension between rival supporters of parties, police patrolled towns heavily. As a result, a state of public emergency was temporarily declared.

For the last some years since the war officially ended in 2002, Sierra Leone has made progress in rebuilding and developing the nation. This is evidenced by improved statistics concerning health and education indicators and the achievement of benchmarks set by the government and donors. However, as the DFID officer stated, Sierra Leone remains fragile in areas such as governance, state security, stopping corruption, food security and the economy. A high unemployment rate, a high inflation rate and poor working conditions for civil servants all have the potential to bring about social instability. Therefore, Sierra Leone still needs partners to assist its national development, and continued British support is necessary if Sierra Leone is to achieve the MDGs.

#### 8.3.4 Analysis of British Contributions to Sierra Leone's Attempts to Achieve the MDGs

As discussed in Chapter Four, the ties between Sierra Leone and the UK go back to colonial times. However, through signing the ten-year long Poverty Reduction Framework Arrangement in 2002, Britain's recent support for development in Sierra

Leone has increased at the government level, particularly through efforts to assist PRSP processes that the UK justified relationship thus:

Without substantial continued and flexible support from the donor community it will not be possible for the Government of Sierra Leone to sustain the difficult transition from conflict to peace and stability, and to attain the long-term growth needed to reduce the extreme poverty suffered by the people. (DFID, 2004, p. 3)

Therefore, the finding that teachers and parents view current British contributions to the education sector in Sierra Leone as lower than they were during the colonial period could be regarded as unexpected from the British point of view. Britain's low visibility in people's eyes as a generous contributor in education development raises three issues. Firstly, there is space for the UK to be more open, transparent and accountable with regard to provision of aid to Sierra Leone and its use. Secondly, at the moment, DFID does not have direct and visible educational projects in Sierra Leone. This links to the third point concerning how exactly the UK has assisted to Sierra Leone's development recently particularly with reference to achieving EFA and the MDGs.

Sierra Leone received approval for a 10 year education sector plan by the Fast Track Initiative Catalytic Fund Strategy Committee in Bonn in May 2007, which DFID supports, along with other donors (DFID, August 2007). However, this did not resonate with the majority of ordinary Sierra Leonean people. Even not a few of whom thought DFID was a British NGO, rather than a government department. Their views concerning current British contributions to education in Sierra Leone showed a relatively low level of appreciation.

Through the Paris Declaration, the international community made commitments to delivering aid effectively. One of the important issues in this respect was transparency. Moreover, Eurodad (2008, p. 32) points out that donors have also committed themselves to improving their 'accountability to developing country governments – and by extension to citizens of those countries'. Eurodad (2008, p. 32) argues that 'without access to basic disaggregated information about aid flows to the country and

the purpose of that aid, it is impossible for citizens in Sierra Leone to even begin to challenge their government or donors on the relevance of proposed interventions or whether the projects are actually implemented'. That is, for aid to be used effectively, transparency and accountability to citizens are necessary, so that CSOs can act effectively to improve the ways in which the aid is used. In this respect, considering that parent and teacher participants had a relatively low level of appreciation of the current British contribution to education in Sierra Leone, the UK could clearly improve the provision of information regarding its provision and use of aid at both government and citizen levels.

Regarding the second point, it is worth noting that not directly operating projects, but DFID has assisted Sierra Leone's development of education through partly funding initiatives of multilateral agencies. One such example is that DFID provided UNICEF £ 1.3 million over two years from 2006 to 2008 to implement programmes for empowering vulnerable children, families and communities. Furthermore, DFID has assisted Sierra Leone's education sector through direct budget support. In the past three years, Sierra Leone has received about £ 91 million in aid from DFID, and in the financial year 2007-2008, DFID provides £ 40 million. The poverty reduction budget support is a system whereby the funds go directly into the Sierra Leonean government's financial system in recognition of the need to pay public sector workers and ensure the delivery of basic services to citizens. In 2006/2007, DFID's bilateral country programme amounted to £ 40 million, of which £ 12.5 million was budget support (DFID, 2007, P. 1). Considering that budget support is seen as a progressive way forward to 'support government strategies' (Eurodad, 2008, p. 20), it could be argued that in channelling aid this way the UK is respecting and encouraging Sierra Leone's "ownership", through giving the government some flexibility with regard to policy decisions.

In addition, DFID's main work in Sierra Leone is enhancing capacity and institution building, aimed at assisting the government to provide better basic services, including education. Regarding the budget support, DFID announced in 2007 that it intends to provide Sierra Leone with £ 9 million funding for education over the next four years.

The amounts were earmarked for: teachers' salaries (61 per cent), Ministry wages (1 per cent), grants in aid, library board, planning and development services (5 per cent), pre-primary non-wage (6 per cent), secondary non-wage (6 per cent), tertiary and teachers' education (19 per cent), technical and vocational education (1 per cent) and capital costs (1 per cent) (House of Commons Hansard Written Answers for 12 June 2007). From this it can be seen that teachers' salaries, which this research has shown to be a key issue of concern for teachers, paid for by the UK's budget support to Sierra Leone.

Much attention has been paid to capacity building of institutions, since adequate capacity at the national level can lead to the establishment of appropriate policies and plans in general and to properly budgeted educational programmes in particular. To this end, MEST intends to provide appropriate training in the management of education programmes to MEST officials, as well as providing necessary office facilities, logistics, and communication support to enhance the capacity of MEST officials. This is considered necessary because district education offices are plagued with problems of poor infrastructure and lack of stationery, equipment, transportation, as well as weak systems, management, communication, and financial resources in general (MEST, 2007). Adequate capacity at the district level allows funds to be effectively channelled and distributed, and the use of these funds to be robustly monitored. These improvements could lead to a more efficient performance than is currently the case and to rigorous transparency. Furthermore, the education committees of local government authorities and councils need to build their capacity for effective and efficient management of the system (MEST, 2007). Adequate capacity at the school level means schools' proper management and effective use of resources. At the community level, the development of CTAs and SMCs are examples of initiatives involving more participation by grassroots stakeholders, including teachers, parents and community members. These empower communities to take over the management tasks of schools, which gives them more "ownership" of school management through their active participation.

Moreover, the government of Sierra Leone needs to have good governance and

adequate accountability in order to achieve EFA and the MDGs. This is because good governance is a precondition for the effective use of aid for development. It also leads to people's participation in political life, delivering adequate public services and controlling corruption (DFID, August 2007). Therefore, active engagement of civil society is important. In this respect, the question of "how British aid to Sierra Leone can be effective in assisting with the achievement of EFA and the MDGs" can be analysed through examining how Britain has contributed to Sierra Leone's capacity building in pursuit of good governance, in order to enable Sierra Leone on stakeholders to use public expenditures in an efficient way.

Hillary Benn, the Secretary of State for DFID until July 2007, gave a speech on political governance, corruption and the role of aid in February 2006 at the SOAS. During the speech he stressed the UK's commitment to reaching the UN target of providing 0.7 per cent of national income as aid, in order to "make poverty history". He also robustly argued the case for the importance of "ownership" of LDCs in the development process. He again strongly outlined the UK's commitment to increasing ODA at a seminar in April 2007, again at SOAS. In outlining the UK's historical path towards achieving democracy, he contended that LDCs cannot attain democracy by simply adopting models from rich countries, but instead need to achieve democracy endogenously. Donors can only assist in the process, and to do so, DFID's aid comes with conditions attached, such as respect for human rights, international obligations, commitment to improved public financial management and fighting corruption, and a will to reduce poverty. Benn argued that these aspects form the foundations of partnership, and by accepting them, partners undertake to use the aid for these purposes. Benn also pointed to weak governance and corruption as major problems in LDCs, and stated that DFID consequently worked hard to help build good governance in LDCs, giving examples of progress they had made, such as reducing the theft of drugs from the health service in Sierra Leone. When he visited Sierra Leone in July 2006, Benn emphasised the need to fight corruption in a meeting with politicians and members of CSOs.

There is a serious need to increase efficiency, transparency and accountability in the

public sector of the country. The government of Sierra Leone is committed to fighting corruption at all levels in both the private and public sectors. To this end, the national anti-corruption strategy was developed and the ACC was set up in 2000 with the support of DFID, the British Council, and the World Bank. Britain has also led security initiatives and worked on aid programmes in governmental sectors, such as the army, police, judiciary, and civil service, because sustainable growth and democracy can be achieved only in a safe and secure environment (DFID, 2004). Considering that it has ultimate responsibility for guaranteeing basic services to the people, it is vital that the government of Sierra Leone functions efficiently. Thus, DFID has been supporting initiatives for good governance, capacity building and institutional development in the country.

Moreover, as discussed in the previous section, some of DFID's funds are being spent on supporting a Civic Engagement Process. This is a part of the PRSP and aims to promote and activate the PRSP, calling for participation in the process, and providing information on poverty related issues, through sensitisation of civil society and other stakeholders, including youth, women, the disabled, government officials, traditional and religious leaders, ex-combatants and war victims (GoSL, 2005a). The reason for the DFID and the government of Sierra Leone take this approach is that CSOs play an important role in holding the government accountable and pressing for better public services. The importance of accountability was emphasised in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, where governments and civil societies were regarded as needing to play a complementary role in the providing services including the education sector.

In this respect, through interviews, it was found that NGOs in Sierra Leone encourage civil society movements, which in turn leads to the promotion of more open and participatory democracy. This is a good step in reducing opportunities for corruption, calling for peoples' participation in socio-economic and political arenas. NGO participants in this research stated that the attitudes of the government towards CSOs are supportive. Now in Sierra Leone, more people have become aware of corruption, through campaigns by the government, NGOs, FBOs and/or through the radio or open meetings, and thus have become a type of anti-corruption watchdog. As a result, it can

be argued that with donors' assistance post-conflict Sierra Leone has gradually built the foundation for solid democracy to develop, bringing higher levels of people's participation in social and political arenas. In this respect, it could be said that British aid to Sierra Leone is effective in terms of leading the country towards having a stronger foundation of good governance and democracy which are essential to achieving the MDGs, although this process is inevitably long-term.

With regard to the MDGs, it would not be realistic for Sierra Leone to achieve them by 2015, as some of the participants in this research clearly indicated. The timeframe is too short for one of the poorest countries in the world, and which has many necessary reforms to make and vital courses of actions to take which are untouched. However, in its current post-conflict phase Sierra Leone has made gradual progress in bringing about democracy, strengthening institutions, fighting corruption in pursuit of good governance, and working towards the achievement of the MDGs. Thus, it can be argued that British aid to Sierra Leone is proving effective to some extent in helping Sierra Leone to achieve the MDGs, the timeframe notwithstanding.

During the period of this research, both the British government and that of Sierra Leone underwent major political changes. However, their partnership has not been affected as a result, and Sierra Leone has continued to rebuild the nation and to make progress with regard to its development goals. When the Sierra Leone presidential elections debate was held at SOAS in August 2007, just prior to the elections in Sierra Leone, representatives of parties debated their policies and priorities, focusing particularly on the area of investment, employment, land and property rights, health, education, energy, anti-corruption and good governance. Candidates, including the one who became the new vice-president, were passionate about taking Sierra Leone forward and showed a strong commitment to working for the further development of the country. Therefore, it can be argued that the government of Sierra Leone shares its main development goals with those of the UK with regard to their partnership, which is based on bringing about poverty reduction in Sierra Leone. If it continues in the same vein, British aid will continue to be effective in assisting Sierra Leone's national development, including making progress in attempts to achieve EFA and the MDGs.

On the basis of the foregoing discussion and analysis in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8, the final chapter reviews my research questions again and suggests recommendations for policy makers as well as outlining the limitations of the present study.

## Chapter 9 Conclusion

### 9.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review the overall discussion, through answering my research questions, and to argue how theories together with the international frameworks of EFA, the MDGs and the PRSP, have influenced the direction of education and development, particularly through the attempts to achieve EFA in Sierra Leone. Recommendations for policy makers and consideration of the limitations of this study end the chapter. Discussing these aspects shows the significance of this research in contributing to the body of development knowledge, and sheds light on where further useful study could be conducted in pursuit of Sierra Leone's national development, particularly in the area of education.

### 9.2 Conclusion

As part of the international development community, Sierra Leone has been in the process of nation building overall and has put a strong focus on the education sector, in line with the international frameworks of EFA, the MDGs and the PRSP. The government has developed and implemented the PRSP in a participatory manner, aiming to achieve the MDGs with donors' assistance. The PRSP is based on a results-oriented approach, and in order to meet agreed benchmarks, which play a major role in deciding whether Sierra Leone obtains continued access to aid, the government has made substantive progress.

In answering my first research question regarding "the impact of EFA on the provision of primary education in Sierra Leone today", it can be argued that the initiatives for EFA in Sierra Leone have been a strong motivation in pushing the country to improve the education sector in general and to achieve EFA in particular.

This study showed that EFA in Sierra Leone has led to links between the government, NGOs and FBOs becoming closer. This is because CSOs such as NGOs and

particularly FBOs, are close to local communities and can reach the intended beneficiaries of development projects more effectively than the government. Moreover, Plan Sierra Leone, the largest international NGO operating in the education sector in the country is indispensable to the government, as their work involves capacity building of the MEST district offices, on top of large scale provision of school buildings and materials. Through this collaborative work of the government, NGOs and FBOs, access to primary education has improved. This is shown in the statistics: net enrolment at primary level increased to 63.0 per cent in 2005 (MEST, 2007, p. 22) from 35 per cent in 1992 (MoE, 1995, p. xii). Two major government reforms have contributed significantly to this increase.

Firstly, under the FPE introduced in 2000, the government has been responsible for paying tuition fees, providing teaching and learning materials and core textbooks to all children, as well as paying the NPSE fee. In addition, it made primary education compulsory. Secondly, new curricula and syllabi were introduced, as the previous ones were based on an old British type of grammar school education and geared towards degrees. In its current phase, post-conflict Sierra Leonean government has stressed the need to develop “middle level” manpower in pursuit of national development. To this end, the introduction of vocational elements into primary education, in the form of subjects such as Agriculture, Home Economics, Creative Practical Art, and Sierra Leone Study, which reflect the needs of pupils and society in Sierra Leone, has led to an increase in the number of children attending school.

It is noteworthy that the idea of increasing “middle level” of manpower, influenced by the views of the Modernisation theory has been extended into the primary education level, although as discussed in Chapter Five, improvements in human capital, based on the views of Modernisation theory were expected to be obtained through focusing on post-basic education, when Sierra Leone attempted to achieve the UPE in the 1960s. MEST (2007) argues that the focus on building a smooth link to post-primary level which then provides the level of human capital necessary for the successful development of the country. This implies that the influence of Modernisation theory ideas remains to some extent with regard to current policy making decisions in the

education sector. However, the Postcolonial argument appears more convincing in terms of its stress on the need for separation from ‘European cultural hegemony in the colonial curriculum’ (Tikly, 1999, p. 614). As discussed in Chapter Five, *the Education Act* (GoSL, 2004) encourages students to know their own country and to identify with it, without losing sight of the fact that they are part of a wider international world. These education reforms have led to favourable representations of being Sierra Leoneans, through the positive portrayal of Sierra Leonean cultures being brought into the curriculum, which tallies with the views of the Postcolonial approach.

However, it is important to emphasise that EFA brought about not only positive outcomes but also negative ones. This study examined how the rapid increase in access to primary level education has occurred without sufficient concomitant development in infrastructure, materials and teaching personnel. Moreover, the inadequate conditions of employment for teachers have also affected the quality of education provided negatively. Furthermore, due to the government’s weak financial capacity, schools make up for shortfalls in finance by charging “school fees” to parents, causing them a heavy burden. In addition, these “school fees” are a barrier to pupils attending school regularly, especially the poor, girls, rural dwellers and mature males. Other factors, such as poverty, gender inequality, lack of access to clinics and post-conflict trauma play a significant role in preventing these vulnerable groups from attending primary school. This study showed that these groups of vulnerable pupils had a high propensity to dropping out of school. Therefore, although the access to primary education has increased in quantitative terms, this has not occurred on an equitable or sustainable basis.

Together with the government, NGOs and FBOs have played a significant role in the provision of education, including efforts to help the vulnerable attend school through offering scholarships. Plan Sierra Leone’s work varies from large scale to the community level and involves working in partnership with local NGOs, on, *inter alia*, construction and rehabilitation of school buildings, provision of school furniture, teaching and learning materials, in-service course and workshops for teachers, and sensitising people regarding social issues, such as empowerment of women. FBOs’

work includes construction and rehabilitation of schools, provision of scholarships, regular visits to schools for monitoring, training Arabic teachers, in-service training for RME and sensitising parents at churches or mosques as to issues of conducts and community support. Considering these contributions, it can be argued that NGOs and FBOs have played a significant role in the provision of education in Sierra Leone and their work continues to be vital, especially since the government's ability to provide education remains weak. This provides a direct answer to my second sub-question concerning "the role and impact of religions and NGOs in the provision of primary education".

Regarding the first sub-question, "is there competition or tension between Christianity and Islam in the provision of primary education today?", this study concludes that in Sierra Leone there is a high level of religious tolerance and many Christians and Muslims share a good level of mutual understanding and respect. The contribution of the IRC SL to ending the civil war has helped increase this religious tolerance and heightened peoples' respect for religious leaders. On the negative side, some respondents to questionnaires pointed out that local and traditional values have been diluted or died out due to the spread of Christianity and Islam, and some participants pointed out denominational differences between the two religions, which they found divisive.

One of challenges facing Sierra Leone's development of education is a chronic lack of resources, and therefore financial dependency on donors. This affects the relationship between donors and recipients. With regard to my second main question, "what is the impact of aid on the concept of "partnership" and "ownership" regarding both donors and recipients in the development of primary education in Sierra Leone?", this study found that there is a gap between the rhetoric and reality of practice. This gap appears, despite the fact that all the stakeholders, including government officials and international and local NGO members, had a good conceptual understanding of "partnership" and "ownership" and shared common goals.

The international frameworks of EFA, the MDGs and the PRSP have been a strong

force in promoting access to schooling in Sierra Leone. The MDGs, which aim to establish “partnerships” in development and the PRSP, which is results-oriented and based on a country-led approach, have encouraged aid recipients to attain “ownership” over projects. As recipients in this study stressed, while some of them believed the projects they are working on to be largely donor-driven, others expressed a sense of ownership and stressed that donor funds assisted their capacity building. This research showed that donors often counted on local NGOs’ needs-assessments and surveys, as they recognised that they could not identify local needs as accurately as grassroots-based groups. Thus, even where Sierra Leonean stakeholders receive financial assistance, it is possible to overcome issues of “ownership” and to form good “partnerships” guided by mutual respect and similar interests, and a belief that both sides can profit from programmes. Local actors clearly have the capacity to operate certain development projects effectively. Moreover, actors on the donor side, have been working on building the capacity of recipients. Therefore, it could be argued that it is only a matter of time before recipients’ capacity has been built to the extent that they are able to play a leading role in development projects, outlining local points of view, based on local needs, which is what the Postcolonial school argues should be the case. Therefore, currently the modality of the development relationships between donors and recipients is seem to be in a transition phase, and this study found that progress is being made towards the forming of good “partnerships”.

Even after the recent education reforms were put into practice and the FPE was implemented with the assistance of donors, achieving EFA by 2015 seems remote, in terms of both quality and equity of provision in Sierra Leone. This means that Sierra Leonean actors need stronger capacity building, as only improvement in this area will lead to them towards gradually forming strong and more equal “partnerships” with donors and establishing “ownership” of projects.

This study also examined British aid to Sierra Leone, in an attempt to answer my third sub-question, which is “how can British aid to Sierra Leone be effective in helping achieve the MDGs?”. Britain has played a significant role in Sierra Leone’s poverty reduction policies, encouraging a country-led approach so that the government of

Sierra Leone could develop sound and autonomous governance. DFID has provided significant assistance to the MEST's work on *the Education Sector Plan*, through direct budget support, which contributes to the cost of public services, and the development of a joint strategy with the EC concerning work in the education sector (MEST, 2007).

However, this study showed that the British contribution to education is not highly appreciated by teachers and parents, compared to that offered in colonial times. Thus, this study points to the need for the UK to be more open and transparent, so that civil society actors in Sierra Leone, can understand the British aid flows and how Britain is actively engaged in development processes in the country and can be further involved in the development process. It is important for aid to be delivered and used in an effective way which is a commitment of the international development community enshrined in the Paris Declaration.

The government is committed to fighting corruption at all levels in both the private and public sectors, having established ACC in 2000, as corruption in Sierra Leone is notoriously widespread. Institutional development and capacity building are strong elements in the PRSP process, aimed at promoting an economic, political, and social environment conducive to reducing poverty. Wider participation in development processes, including that of NGOs and FBOs is necessary, and in this respect, as the DFID supports, civil society movements in Sierra Leone have been active. However, considering that it is supposed to have ultimate responsibility for guaranteeing, providing, and promoting basic services to the people, the government of Sierra Leone needs to function efficiently with regard to all aspects of its work. Thus, DFID supports programmes in the areas of good governance, capacity building and institutional development of Sierra Leone which is necessary as part of the post-conflict rebuilding process aimed to achieve the MDGs in general and poverty reduction in particular. In this respect, British aid is proving effective in helping Sierra Leone to achieve the MDGs. However the timeframe for the achievement of the MDGs – 2015 – is highly problematic.

My research showed that primary education in Sierra Leone still has problems with regard to quality and equity of provision and that NGO staff and government officials pointed out that Sierra Leone is far behind its targets in terms of meeting the MDGs by 2015. At the half way point in terms of meeting the MDGs by the timeframe, it is unlikely that Sierra Leone will achieve all the goals by 2015. The timeframe is too short for the country, which is in a post-conflict situation and still by widespread poverty and many other problems.

Regardless of the timeframe, Sierra Leone will continue to make progress with regard to nation building and will gradually achieve more sustainable development in moving towards the achievement of EFA and the MDGs. Sierra Leone's closest partner since colonial times continues to play an important role in the country's capacity building and this is likely to be the case over the long-term. DFID documents clearly state, for example that 'Budget support depends on three basic conditions being in place, including commitment to poverty reduction, commitment to human rights and progress in tackling corruption and improving the management of public funds' (DFID, August 2007, p. 1).

However, this study suggested that the nature of the term "condition" and its way of use has changed gradually from the one used in the 1980's and 1990's under SAPs. Although nearly half of the total UK bilateral aid was tied to goods and services originating in the UK during the 1980's, this way was abolished in 2001 (Killick, 2008). Recent usage of the term "condition" by DFID seems to refer to a "screening" purpose, aimed at identifying whether the aid recipient who will become the "partner" has the political will to pursue effective national development, together with DFID. In other words, it is part of a process of checking the extent to which DFID will be able to have a dialogue with the potential partner. Consideration of the potential partners' political will, which affects establishing "ownership" of development processes, is thus an important aspect of the relationship between donors and recipients. Developing political, social and economic institutions is an essential task for Sierra Leone in order for the country to make progress regarding national development, including the education sector. This is a necessary process in efforts to establish Sierra Leone's

strong capacity to own its national development processes.

Finally, this study showed that in development practice and relationships, the Postcolonial approach has gradually worn down the emphasis on binary oppositions, such as donors and recipients, the North and the South and the core and periphery and has influenced the move towards greater stress on forming good “partnerships”. In other words, this study argues that the influence of Postcolonial approach has contributed to reducing binary oppositions drawing together and to polarised groups such as “donors” - “recipients” and “core” and “periphery”, which the Modernisation and Dependency theorists regard as being irreconcilable, although their influences still remain to some extent. Through the current efforts to achieve EFA and the MDGs, development partners have helped to bring about processes where Sierra Leone has more “ownership” of its development process. The current reforms and efforts in the area of the development of education have led to local values and voices being heard more than in the past, which is also in accord with ideas put forward in the Postcolonial approach. This research also discussed that Sierra Leone has been recently working towards education development, based on an appreciation of Sierra Leonean cultures and values through adopting Sierra Leone Study as a school subject, which is greatly favoured by those supporting the Postcolonial argument. Furthermore, this Postcolonial approach stresses the point that even aid recipient countries or actors can achieve “ownership” of the development process when they have good governance and sound capacity. Therefore, key arguments and ideas from the Postcolonial approach could provide the basis for Sierra Leone’s vision of successful sustainable development.

### 9.3 Recommendations

In order for Sierra Leone to move forward in achieving equitable access to a good quality of education for all, policy makers need to be seriously concerned about not only achieving the international goal of EFA in terms of enrolment, but also about tackling obstacles to providing high quality and equitable education. Relationships among development stakeholders also need to be re-considered, so that aid to Sierra

Leone can be used more effectively than is currently the case. Examining these issues in depth brought up the following points:

1. Donors and the government of Sierra Leone need to pay more attention to the quality of education. Although donors should encourage the government to invest more in education, they also need to assist Sierra Leone financially in its efforts to achieve EFA and the MDGs by 2015.
2. Since the government is not able to provide sufficient subsidies to schools to supply all the necessary resources, schools charge parents “school fees” which are a barrier to regular and equal access to schooling. To eliminate the need for “school fees”, the donor community should allocate more financial assistance to the MEST directly. The current external assistance to primary education accounts for 22 per cent of the total, while parents’ contribution makes up about 50 per cent. Donors need to increase their contribution to helping Sierra Leone achieve EFA, as a matter of priority.
3. The MEST needs to build its capacity to the extent that it becomes able to negotiate with donors and the MoF on informed and equal terms. MEST’s capacity building is necessary, in particular, to allow it to push for an increase in budget allocations for the provision of services, including an increase in school subsidies, teachers’ salaries and employing necessary teaching force.
4. The MEST should improve working conditions for teachers so that teachers can concentrate on their jobs with a higher level of motivation and pride, the lack of which can be made of the quality of education offered greatly.
5. The UK and other donors need to improve their aid disbursement so that it occurs in a timely and foreseeable manner. This would help Sierra Leonean development stakeholders to plan and implement programmes without delay.
6. The UK and other donors need to improve their transparency and accountability through providing information concerning the aid flows and the use of aid at both government and civil society levels. Aid could be used more effectively than is currently the case through encouraging active civil society participation in development processes.
7. Donors and the government of Sierra Leone need to further strengthen links with NGOs, since they have comparative advantages in terms of being dynamic and able

to work at the grassroots.

8. Policy makers should take into account the contribution by FBOs to the development of education, since these organisations can be close to beneficiaries and their influence on them is often enormous. The sensitisation work by FBOs as to the importance of education has a significant impact on the intended beneficiaries.

## 9.4 Limitations of this Study

Although a rigorous attempt was made to provide samples that accurately reflected populations of various types, due to limited time, and security concerns as a female individual student, this study had some limitations in terms of sample coverage. Some schools in remote areas of towns were visited. However, this study could not include village schools in very remote areas of Sierra Leone. Moreover, some difficulties were experienced in getting the agreement of some FBOs to participate in this research, and therefore, the sample number was relatively small. In addition, this study found that FBOs in Sierra Leone do have a “partnership” with the government and NGOs. However, my study could not go beyond examining relationships between donors and recipients, without deep analysis of the relationship of the three: donors, recipients and FBOs. Therefore, further study in this area together with the issue of how to channel funding to FBOs is suggested.

Furthermore, it is worth noting here that throughout this research, I experienced a lack of reliable data with inconsistent statistics in government documents. A MEST officer explained that since each division, department or institution collects data based on their purposes and procedures, inconsistent in statistics can happen. This thesis prioritised the data that were used in the MEST documents first, and then data which were more frequently used in other government documents, when I needed to make choices.

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## APPENDIX 1 Supporting Letters for Field Research

1-A) Letter to Sierra Leone High Commission in London

1-B) Letter from Sierra Leone High Commission in London

1-C) Letter from Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST)

1-D) Letter from Professor Joe A.D. Alie

## 1-A) Letter to Sierra Leone High Commission in London

Mikako Nishimuko

22 Golders Green Crescent

London NW11 8LE

E-mail [mnishimuko@ice.ac.uk](mailto:mnishimuko@ice.ac.uk)

Sierra Leone High Commission

245 Oxford Street

London W1D 2LX

21/Feb/05

Dear Mr. James Alie, Deputy High Commissioner

Thank you very much for your advice and suggestion over the telephone. Mr. Mohamed Alie Bah had kindly advised me to speak to you, and I appreciate Alie's advice and kindness as well as your own.

I am a doctoral student at the Institute of Education, University of London, and I am researching Primary Education in Sierra Leone and Sierra Leone's Partnership with Britain in Achieve Education for All and Millennium Development Goals.

As my work examines issues of education and partnership with Britain, I would like to ask the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the Minister of Foreign Affairs for an interview. In the light of this, if you could help me with contacts or give me any advice, I would be very grateful.

Also I am going to visit the Sierra Leone High Commission in London to make a visa application, as I am planning to conduct my field research in Freetown and Bo, early next month. If you could advise me on this issue, it would be greatly appreciated. If you have any enquiries, do not hesitate to contact me please.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely

Mikako Nishimuko

1-B) Letter from Sierra Leone High Commission in London

HCL/ADM/64

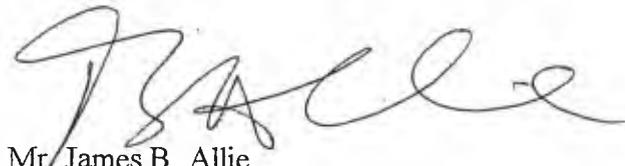
THE DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER SIERRA LEONE HIGH COMMISSION, LONDON  
MINISTER OF EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, FREETOWN

23<sup>rd</sup> February 2005

RE: REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

Please see the attached copy of a self-explanatory letter from a research student and kindly assign an officer in your Ministry to respond directly to Mikako Nishimuko's request.

I should also be grateful you will forward to me a copy of your response for our own records. Thank you for your prompt action and assistance.



Mr James B. Allie  
Deputy High Commissioner

- CC:
1. Mikako Nishimuko  
22 Golders Green Crescent  
London NW11 8LE
  2. Consular Officer – Sierra Leone High Commission

1-C) Letter from Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST)

FROM : BISEPATEL (SL)

FAX NO. : 232 22 224455

Mar. 23 2005 07:21PM



*When replying, please quote:*

Ref: ME054  
Telephone 240391

Ministry of Education,  
Science & Technology,  
New England,  
Freetown

21<sup>st</sup> March 2005

Mikako Nishimuko  
22 Golders Green Crescent  
London NW11 8LE  
Tel/Fax 020-8731-6915  
Email [mikako70@botmail.com](mailto:mikako70@botmail.com)  
[mnishimuko@doe.ac.uk](mailto:mnishimuko@doe.ac.uk)

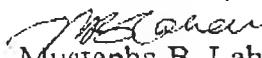
Dear Mikako,

**RE: REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE**

I am directed to refer to the above subject matter and to inform you that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has no objection to your coming to Sierra Leone in order to conduct a research work for you doctoral degree.

Mr. Mustapha Benson Lahai, Deputy Director, Higher Education in this Ministry has been assigned to you for assistance.

Yours sincerely,

  
Mustapha B. Lahai  
Deputy Director (HEd)  
Tel / fax: 232 22 223030  
E-mail: [biskonneh@mail.com](mailto:biskonneh@mail.com)

Copy: The Deputy High Commissioner,  
Sierra Leone High Commission,  
LONDON

1-D) Letter from Professor Joe A.D. Alie

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND AFRICAN STUDIES



d: JOE A. D. ALIE, PhD  
ail: jadalie@sierratel.sl  
joealie@hotmail.com

FOURAH BAY COLLEGE  
University of Sierra Leone  
Mary Kingsley Building  
Mount Aureol  
Freetown, Sierra Leone  
Tel: 232-22-228184

14th April 2005

To Whom It May Concern

RE: MS MIKAKO NISHIMUKO

This is to confirm that Ms Mikako NISHIMUKO is a Doctoral Student at the Institute of Education, University of London. She is currently in Sierra Leone to collect data for her research theme: "Primary Education in Sierra Leone and Partnership with Britain". While in the country she will be temporarily affiliated to the Department of History and African Studies as Visiting Research Scholar.

We would appreciate if you could kindly grant Ms Mikako Nishimuko access to your facilities (including the use of the Library and Documentation Centres) in order to enhance her work. Any other assistance you may wish to render will also be very highly appreciated.

Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely,

Joe A. D. Alie  
Senior Lecturer & Head  
Dean - Faculty of Arts

## APPENDIX 2 Questionnaires

2-A) Letter Attached with Questionnaires

2-B) Questionnaire to Teachers

2-C) Questionnaire to Parents

2-D) Questionnaire to Pupils

2-E) Questionnaire to Donors

2-F) Questionnaire to Recipients

2-G) Interview Schedules to Donors and Recipients, MEST, FBOs and  
Headteachers/Deputy Headteachers

2-H) Names and Numbers of Sample Schools and Organisations

## 2-A) Letter Attached with Questionnaires

Mikako Nishimuko  
Research Student  
Institute of Education  
20 Bedford Way  
London WC1H 0AL  
United Kingdom  
Tel/Fax +44-20-8731-6915  
E-mail mnishimuko@ioe.ac.uk  
/ /2005

Thank you very much for taking your valuable time to participate in questionnaire completion for my research. I am researching Primary Education in Sierra Leone and its Partnership with Britain, and currently conducting field research.

If you could complete the attached questionnaire, I would be very pleased. You can skip question(s) which you do not want to answer. There could be questions which do not apply to you. In this case, could you ignore them, please. However, your views are very important, and if you could answer as fully as possible, I would be very grateful. I will collect your completed questionnaire shortly. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Your assistance is very important to me and I do appreciate your help and kindness.

Yours Sincerely,

西向 堅 香子

Mikako Nishimuko  
Doctoral Student  
Lifelong Education and International Development  
Institute of Education

## 2-B) Questionnaire to Teachers

### Introductory Note

Dear Teacher:

The United Nations set the following Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be met by 2015, 1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; 2) achieve universal primary education (UPE); 3) promote gender equality and empower women; 4) reduce child mortality; 5) improve maternal health; 6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; 7) ensure environmental sustainability; and 8) develop a global partnership for development<sup>10</sup> Although significant progress is reported in some countries, there are serious challenges and doubt in many others. Among those, struggle to achieve these goals is Sierra Leone. However, the MDGs cannot be successfully achieved without Sierra Leone's development, because Sierra Leone is one of the members of the international community. There are obvious reasons why Sierra Leone is lagging far behind, one of them being the aftermath of the civil war. However, there are also many other reasons which cannot be well established without research. I am particularly interested in the kinds of factors that influence development in the context of the provision of primary education. Education is the base from which to achieve the other development goals, and education leads to development in its own right. But equally important is the fact that development in Sierra Leone is in many respects tied to international relationships, particularly, that with its former colonial master, Great Britain. I am thus researching Primary Education in Sierra Leone and the Relationship between Sierra Leone and Britain. The three key questions in this study are:

I would like you to help me to examine the area of primary education. This will entail completing the attached questionnaire as well as allowing for an interview where deemed necessary. May I assure you that all the responses will be used strictly for the purpose of this research, and that no individual names will be identified in any report or articles from this study. I would be very grateful if you could complete the questionnaire as fully as possible. If there are areas/questions which need clarification, please do not hesitate to bring them to my attention.

Mikako Nishimuko

[mnishimuko@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:mnishimuko@ioe.ac.uk)

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<sup>10</sup> UNDP (2003). Human Development Report 2003 Millennium Development Goals: A compact among nations to end human poverty.

Can you kindly complete the following questionnaire please.

1-1. You are..... Male ( ) Female ( )

1-2. How old are you?

15-19 ( ) 20-24 ( ) 25-29 ( ) 30-34 ( )

35-39 ( ) 40-44 ( ) 45-49 ( ) 50~ ( )

1-3. What is your religious background?

African traditional ( ) Catholic ( ) Protestant-Anglican ( )

Protestant-Baptist ( ) Protestant-Methodist ( )

Muslim ( ) Other (please specify )

1-4. What is the name of your school?

1-5. Which language do you use for instruction?

2-1. What subjects do you teach?

2-2-1. How many students do you have in a class?

2-2-2. How many classes to teach do you have a week?

2-3. How long have you been a teacher?

Less than 1year ( ) 01-04 years ( ) 05-09 years ( )

10-14 years ( ) 15-19 years ( ) Over 20years ( )

2-4-1. What kind of qualification(s) do you have?

2-4-2. Could you describe your academic background, including any training you had please.

2-4-3. Could you please describe the process of becoming a teacher?

2-4-4. Could you describe the reason why you became a teacher please.

3-1-1. How much do you earn?

3-1-2. Do you receive your salary regularly?

Yes ( ) No ( )

3-1-3. Regarding 3-1-2, if you ticked “No”, how often and for how long to you experience delays?

3-2-1. Are you satisfied with your salary?

Yes( ) No( )

3-2-2. Regarding 3-2-1, please explain.

3-3-1. Do you have another job to meet your living needs?

Yes ( ) No ( )

3-3-2. Regarding 3-3-1, if you ticked “Yes”, please explain.

4-1-1. How often do you get school supplies such as chalks etc. from the government?

4-1-2. Do you think it is enough?

Yes ( ) No ( )

4-1-3. Regarding 4-1-1 and 4-1-2, if it is not enough, how do you meet the shortfall?

4-2-1. Do you think that the New Education System with Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy has changed schooling?

Yes ( ) No ( )

4-2-2. If you ticked “Yes”, in what way do you think UPE has changed schooling/education?

4-3-1. Although free primary education has been introduced, some schools in some countries have charged user fees or imposed other charges, such as boarding fee and examination fees. Does your school require any of the following, and if you know the cost, how much is it?

	✓ if applicable	Cost
Tuition fee		
Admission fee		
School uniform		
Text book		
Stationery		
Examination fee		
Parent Teacher Association fee		
Boarding fee		
School development fund		
Other (please specify )		
Other (please specify )		

4-3-2. Does your school require or expect parents to make any non-monetary contributions such as cleaning buildings or collecting water?

Yes ( ) No ( )

4-3-3. Regarding 4-3-2, if you ticked “Yes”, please describe.

5-1-1. Do you think Christian and Islamic values have contributed to something positive to education in Sierra Leone? Please tick.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Christian values					
Islamic values					

5-1-2. Do you think Christianity and Islamic values have eroded education in Sierra Leone? Please tick.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Christian values					
Islamic values					

5-1-3. If you have any comments on 5-1-1 and 5-1-2, please describe here.

5-2-1. Do you think religion (Christianity / Islam) contributes positively to education?

Agree ( ) Uncertain ( ) Disagree ( )

5-2-2. If you ticked “Agree” regarding 5-2-1, in what aspects or how do you think religion contributes to education?

5-3-1. How far do you agree with the following statement?

“Britain has contributed positively to education in Sierra Leone during colonial period and today”

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
Colonial period			
Today			

5-3-2. If you chose “Agree” to today’s British contribution to education in the previous question, in what respects do you think Britain contributes to education?

6-1-1. Do you have students who drop out?

Yes ( ) No ( )

6-1-2. If you ticked “Yes” in the previous question, what are the main reason(s) for students’ dropout?

6-1-3. If you ticked “Yes” in 6-1-1, in which class or how old do you think students are when they are more apt to drop out?

6-2-1. Can a student who has dropped out come back to school if she/he wants?

Yes ( ) No ( )

6-2-2. Does your school make any efforts to stop students dropping out?

Yes ( ) No ( )

6-2-3. Regarding 6-2-2, if you ticked “Yes”, please describe.

6-3-1. Do you think your school encourages girls’ schooling?

Yes ( ) No ( )

6-3-2. Regarding 6-3-1, if you ticked “Yes”, please describe.

7-1-1. What do you think pupils expect from school?

7-1-2. What do you think parents expect from school?

7-1-3. What do you think school should provide pupils?

7-1-4. Do you think currently the school provides the above (7-1-1, 7-1-2 and 7-1-3) sufficiently?

Yes ( ) No ( )

7-1-5. If you have any comments on 7-1-4, please describe here.

7-2-1. In what areas do you think the current schooling/education system need to be improved?

7-2-2. As for the table below regarding problems/difficulties schools may have and areas in which they need to improve, please tick the ones which you think are applicable.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Heavy curriculum					
Poor education facilities					
Economic problems					
Poor administration					
Need for curriculum to be fit to local context					
Other (please specify )					
Other (please specify )					

7-2-3. Do you have any ideas that your school could be improved?

8. Could you describe in general terms what happens to students after they finished primary education?

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

In order to explore further, based on this questionnaire questions, I would like you to participate in an interview. If you can, please tick below and leave your name with your contact number (e-mail address, phone number etc) and your preferred time if you have please. I will contact you shortly to arrange an interview. I do promise you again that your name will not be revealed in any report or essay from this study. Many thanks for your cooperation.

Can you participate in interview? Yes (                    ) No (                    )

Your name;

Contact number / address;

Preferred date / time;

## 2-C) Questionnaire to Parents

### Introductory Note

Dear Parent:

The United Nations set the following Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be met by 2015, 1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; 2) achieve universal primary education (UPE); 3) promote gender equality and empower women; 4) reduce child mortality; 5) improve maternal health; 6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; 7) ensure environmental sustainability; and 8) develop a global partnership for development<sup>11</sup> Although significant progress is reported in some countries, there are serious challenges and doubt in many others. Among those, struggle to achieve these goals is Sierra Leone. However, the MDGs cannot be successfully achieved without Sierra Leone's development, because Sierra Leone is one of the members of the international community. There are obvious reasons why Sierra Leone is lagging far behind, one of them being the aftermath of the civil war. However, there are also many other reasons which cannot be well established without research. I am particularly interested in the kinds of factors that influence development in the context of the provision of primary education. Education is the base from which to achieve the other development goals, and education leads to development in its own right. But equally important is the fact that development in Sierra Leone is in many respects tied to international relationships, particularly, that with its former colonial master, Great Britain. I am thus researching Primary Education in Sierra Leone and its Relationship between Sierra Leone and Britain. The three key questions in this study are:

I would like you to help me with the situation underlying primary education. This will entail completing the attached questionnaire as well as allowing for an interview where deemed necessary. May I assure you that all the responses will be used strictly for the purpose of this research, and that no individual names will be identified in any report or articles from this study. I would be very grateful if you could complete the questionnaire as fully as possible. If there are areas/questions which need clarification, please do not hesitate to bring them to my attention.

Mikako Nishimuko ( [mnishimuko@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:mnishimuko@ioe.ac.uk) )

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<sup>11</sup> UNDP (2003). Human Development Report 2003 Millennium Development Goals: A compact among nations to end human poverty.

Please put a tick(s) (✓) and give some descriptions which apply to you.

A. Household questions

1-1. You are .....

Father ( ) Mother ( ) Other (please specify )

1-2. How old are you?

15-19 ( ) 20-24 ( ) 25-29 ( ) 30-34 ( )

35-39 ( ) 40-44 ( ) 45-49 ( ) 50~ ( )

1-3. What is your religious background?

African traditional ( ) Catholic ( ) Protestant-Anglican ( )

Protestant-Methodist ( ) Protestant-Baptist ( )

Muslim ( ) Other (please specify )

2-1. Who are the members of your household?

Grandfather ( ) Grandmother ( ) Father ( )

Mother ( ) Husband ( ) Wife ( )

Children (sons: ) (daughters: )

Other (Please specify )

2-2. Are you a single parent?

Yes ( ) No ( )

2-3. Who is the head of your household?

You ( ) Your husband ( ) Your wife ( )

Other (please specify )

2-4. What is the occupation of the head of your household?

3-1. Do you have a regular income?

Yes ( ) No ( )

3-2. Do you have any other members of your family who help make a living?

4-1. Please inform me of your language skills.

	Speak & Listen	Read	Write
1 <sup>st</sup> language ( )			
2 <sup>nd</sup> language ( )			
3 <sup>rd</sup> language ( )			
4 <sup>th</sup> language ( )			

4-2. Which language do you use the most often?

5-1. How do you get national and local information?

Newspaper ( ) Community meeting ( )

From family and friends ( ) Radio ( ) Television ( )

Internet ( ) Other (please specify )

5-2. What kind of information do you often look for?

Health ( ) Income ( ) Local news ( ) Education ( )

World news ( )

Other (please specify )

6. How far is it to the following facilities from your home and how often do you need to access them?

	Grocery shop	Primary school	Secondary school	Hospital
How far?				
How often?				

**B. Education Questions**

1. What is your highest level of schooling?

Primary school ( ) Secondary school ( )

Technical/Vocational school ( )

College/University ( ) Postgraduate ( )

Society/Bush/Traditional school ( )

Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_ )

2-1. How many children do you have in your household?

( \_\_\_\_\_ )

Are they engaged in any form of work? (eg. Paid work, helping family)

	Sex	Age	What she/he does
Children 1			
Children 2			
Children 3			
Children 4			
Children 5			
Children 6			

2-2. Do your school-aged children go to school?

Yes ( ) No ( ) Some go and some do not ( )

2-3. If your answer is “Yes”, why do you send your child to school?

(eg. for a good job, to read and write etc.)

2-4. If your answer is “No” or “Some go and some do not”, why don’t you send your child to school? (eg. financial difficulty, health etc.)

3-1. What type of school do your children go to?  
(eg. private or government assisted school, Christian or Islamic school etc.)

3-2. Why did you choose this type of school for your child/children instead of other choices?

3-3-1. Do you think Christian and Islamic values have contributed to something positive regarding your local values/traditions/life in general?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Christian values					
Islamic values					

Do you think Christianity and Islamic values have eroded your local values/traditions/life in general? Please tick.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Christian values					
Islamic values					

3-3-2. Do you think religion (Christianity/Islam) contribute positively to education?  
Agree ( )    Uncertain ( )    Disagree ( )

If you agreed in the previous question, in what aspects or how do you think so?

3-3-3. How far do you agree the following statement?

“There is a kind of tension between Christianity and Islam”.

Agree ( )    Uncertain ( )    Disagree ( )

If you chose “Agree” in the previous question, in what aspects or how do you think so?

3-3-4. How far do you agree with the following statement?

“Britain has contributed positively to education in Sierra Leone during colonial period and today”

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
Colonial period			
Today			

If you chose “Agree” to today’s British contribution to education in the previous question, in what respects or how do you think so?

3-4. Other than formal education at a school, how else can children be taught?

4-1-1. Do your children have any difficulties accessing school on a regular basis?

Yes ( )    No ( )

4-1-2. Regarding 4-1-1, if your answer is “Yes”, please inform any other physical difficulties in regular access to school?

Lack of money ( )    Need for child’s household help ( )    Safety ( )

Other (please specify )

4-2. Do you have any sacrifices to send your child to school?

Yes ( ) No ( )

If "Yes", what are they?

Try not to buy clothes ( ) Reduction of food ( ) Skipping of a meal  
( )

Reduction of using cooking fat, salt sugar etc. ( ) Hiring labour ( )

Curtail expenditure ( ) Selling livestock ( ) Borrowing ( )

Others (specify )

4-3. What kind of monetary and non-monetary payment do you make for your child's education?

Monetary:

Tuition fee ( ) Admission fee ( ) School uniform ( ) Text book  
( )

Stationery ( ) Examination fee ( ) PTA/CTA fee ( )

Transport to school ( ) Boarding fee ( ) School development fund  
( )

Other (please specify )

Non-monetary:

Cleaning school ( ) Maintenance of school building ( ) Providing food ( )

Collecting water ( ) Collecting firewood ( )

Other (please specify )

5-1. What do you expect from school for your child?

5-2. What do you want your child to be in future and why do you think so?

6-1. If you think primary schools have some problems/difficulties, what do you think are the strongest and the weakest causes of problems/difficulties in education? Please rank 1 to 6, indicating 1 in your order of preference and 6 in your least preference.

- Heavy curriculum
- Poor education facilities
- Economic problems
- Poor administration
- Need for curriculum to be fit to local context
- Other (please specify )

6-2. Do you have any ideas that school could be improved?

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

## 2-D) Questionnaire to Pupils

Can you kindly complete this questionnaire please.

1-1. You are.....Male ( ) Female ( )

1-2. How old are you? ( )

1-3-1. What is the name of your school?

( )

1-3-2. How long does it take to school from your home? ( ) mins)

1-4. What grade/class are you in? ( )

1-5. You are..... Christian ( ) Muslim ( )

Other (please specify ( ) You do not know ( )

1-6. What are your parent's occupation?

Father ( )

Mother ( )

1-7-1. Do you help your family? Yes ( ) No ( )

1-7-2. If you do, what do you do?

2-1-1. What subjects do you study at school?

2-2-2. What is/are your favourite subjects?

2-2-3. Why do you like the subject(s)?

2-3-1. Which subject(s) you do not like?

2-3-2. Why you do not like the subject(s)?

3-1-1. Do you like school?    Yes (    )    No (    )

3-1-2. Why do you think so?

3-2-1. What will you do after finishing primary school?

3-2-2. What do you want to be in your future? Or tell me your dream.

3-2-3. Why do you think so?

Thank you for your cooperation!

## 2-E) Questionnaire to Donors

### Introductory Note

The United Nations set the following Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be met by 2015, 1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; 2) achieve universal primary education (UPE); 3) promote gender equality and empower women; 4) reduce child mortality; 5) improve maternal health; 6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; 7) ensure environmental sustainability; and 8) develop a global partnership for development<sup>12</sup> Although significant progress is reported in some countries, there are serious challenges and doubt in many others. Among those, struggle to achieve these goals is Sierra Leone. However, the MDGs cannot be successfully achieved without Sierra Leone's development, because Sierra Leone is one of the members of the international community. There are obvious reasons why Sierra Leone is lagging far behind, one of them being the aftermath of the civil war. However, there are also many other reasons which cannot be well established without research. I am particularly interested in the kinds of factors that influence development in the context of the provision of primary education. Education is the base from which to achieve the other development goals, and education leads to development in its own right. But equally important is the fact that development in Sierra Leone is in many respects tied to international relationships, particularly, that with its former colonial master, Great Britain. I am thus researching the Primary Education in Sierra Leone and Relationship between Sierra Leone and Britain. The three key questions in this study are:

I would like you to help me with the relationship between donors and recipients to examine 'partnership' and 'ownership'. This will entail completing the attached questionnaire as well as allowing for an interview where it is deemed necessary. May I assure you that all the responses will be used strictly for the purpose of this research, and that no individual names will be identified in any report or articles from this study. I would be very grateful if you could complete the questionnaire as fully as possible. If there are areas/questions which need clarification, please do not hesitate to bring them to my attention.

Mikako Nishimuko ( [mnishimuko@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:mnishimuko@ioe.ac.uk) )

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<sup>12</sup> UNDP (2003). Human Development Report 2003 Millennium Development Goals: A compact among nations to end human poverty.

Can you kindly complete the following questionnaire please.

1-1. Please tick the appropriate one. You are a member of .....

British Government ( )      British Council Sierra Leone ( )

British NGO ( )      Missionary ( )

Other (please specify )

1-2-1. What is the name of organisation you belong to?

1-2-2. What is your nationality?

1-3. Please list top 3 sources of finance for your organisation?

1.

2.

3.

2-1. Which actors do you think are your partner? Please tick and leave your comments if you have any please.

	In theory	In practice	Any comments
British Government			
British Council Sierra Leone			
British Private Firms			
British NGOs			
Christian Missionaries			
Sierra Leone Government			
Other Sierra Leone NGOs			
Sierra Leone Local Community			
Sierra Leone School Staff			
Any other actor (please specify )			

Any other actor (please specify )			
Any other actor (please specify )			
Any other actor (please specify )			

2-2. Do you think you have a good “partnership” with other development actors?

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Any comments
British Government				
British Council				
Sierra Leone				
British Private Firms				
British NGOs				
Christian Missionaries				
Sierra Leone Government				
Sierra Leone NGOs				
Sierra Leone Local Community				
Sierra Leone school staff				
Any other actor (please specify )				
Any other actor (please specify )				
Any other actor				

(please specify )				
Any other actor (please specify )				

2-3-1. Do you think you share common goals with your partners?

Yes ( ) No ( )

2-3-2. Regarding 2-3-1, if you ticked “Yes”, in what ways or aspects do you share common goals?

3-1. Could you tick in appropriate boxes for who plays the role in the development of education, donors, recipients or both?

	Donors (British actors)	Recipients (Sierra Leone actors)
Project planning		
Project implementing		
Project monitoring		
Project evaluating		
Follow-up/aftercare of the projects		
Funding		
Participation in the project		

3-2-1. Have you had any difficulties working with any Sierra Leone actors?

Yes ( ) No ( )

3-2-2. Regarding 3-2-1, if you ticked “Yes”, please describe.

3-3-1. Do you think you are a partner, rather than a donor, or vice versa for Sierra Leone actors?

Partner ( ) Donor ( ) Uncertain ( )

3-3-2. Regarding 3-3-1, please describe your views/comments if you have any.

3-3-3. How have you worked for or how do you think you can work for a good 'partnership' with Sierra Leone actors?

3-4-1. Have you learnt anything in working with Sierra Leone actors?

Yes ( ) No ( ) Uncertain ( )

3-4-2. Regarding 3-4-1, if you ticked "Yes", what have been the challenges and lessons learnt from working with Sierra Leone actors?

3-5-1. Working with Sierra Leone actors, have you ever had a project which did not go as well as planned?

Yes ( ) No ( ) Uncertain ( )

3-5-2. Regarding 3-5-1, if you ticked "Yes", please describe it with its possible causes.

4. How do you understand 'partnership' and 'ownership'?

5-1-1. Do you think Sierra Leone has established 'ownership'? Or do you think they own a project?

Yes ( ) No ( ) Uncertain ( )

5-1-2. Regarding 5-1-1, in what way or how can you say so? Please describe.

5-2-1. Do you think you have been working for better 'ownership' on the part of Sierra Leone actors?

Yes ( ) No ( ) Uncertain ( )

5-2-2. Regarding 5-2-1, in what way or how can you say so? Please describe.

5-2-3. How do you think you can promote your partners' better 'ownership'? Please describe.

6-1-1. Do you think financial aid could provide pressure and thus weaken Sierra Leone's 'ownership'?

Yes ( ) No ( ) Uncertain ( )

6-1-2. Regarding 6-1-1, in what way or aspects, or why do you think so? Please describe.

6-2-1. Do you think that 'conditionality' or 'forced implication' by donors is a thing of the past or do you think it still exists?

Past story ( ) Still exists ( ) Uncertain ( )

6-2-2. Regarding 6-2-1, if you have any comments to support your view, please describe.

6-2-3. Have you made any efforts to overcome traditional conditionality?

Yes ( ) No ( ) Uncertain ( )

6-2-4. Regarding 6-2-3, if you ticked “Yes”, please describe.

7-1-1 DFID (<sup>13</sup>2004,p. 3) says that ‘successful aid relationships are based on mutual commitment and dialogue, transparency and accountability’. Do you think your approach shares the DFID’s stance?

Yes ( ) No ( ) Uncertain ( )

7-1-2. Regarding 7-1-1, please describe it if you have any comments.

8-1-1. When you choose schools or community to support and work for development, do you consider religion?

Yes ( ) No ( ) Uncertain ( )

8-1-2. How do you choose schools or community groups to support and work for development?

Please describe the criteria for the target group.

9. To what extent are you confident that Sierra Leone will be able to meet MDGs?

Tick the appropriate boxes and give any reasons/comments if you have please.

	Confident	Uncertain	Diffident	Any reasons /comments
Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger				
Achieve universal primary education				
Promote gender equality and				

<sup>13</sup> DFID (2004). Partnership for Poverty Reduction: Changing aid “conditionality” A draft paper for comment.

empower women				
Reduce child mortality				
Improve maternal health				
Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases				
Ensure environmental sustainability				
Develop a global partnership for development				

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

In order to explore further, based on this questionnaire questions, I would like you to participate in an interview. If you can, please tick below and leave your name with your contact number (e-mail address, phone number etc) please. I will contact you shortly to arrange an interview. I do promise you again that your name will not be revealed in any report or essay from this study. Many thanks for your cooperation.

Can you participate in interview? Yes (                    ) No (                    )

Your name;

Contact number, E-mail address or address;

Your preferred date and time;

## 2-F) Questionnaire to Recipients

### Introductory Note

The United Nations set the following Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be met by 2015, 1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; 2) achieve universal primary education (UPE); 3) promote gender equality and empower women; 4) reduce child mortality; 5) improve maternal health; 6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; 7) ensure environmental sustainability; and 8) develop a global partnership for development<sup>14</sup> Although significant progress is reported in some countries, there are serious challenges and doubt in many others. Among those, struggle to achieve these goals is Sierra Leone. However, the MDGs cannot be successfully achieved without Sierra Leone's development, because Sierra Leone is one of the members of the international community. There are obvious reasons why Sierra Leone is lagging far behind, one of them being the aftermath of the civil war. However, there are also many other reasons which cannot be well established without research. I am particularly interested in the kinds of factors that influence development in the context of the provision of primary education. Education is the base from which to achieve the other development goals, and education leads to development in its own right. But equally important is the fact that development in Sierra Leone is in many respects tied to international relationships, particularly, that with its former colonial master, Great Britain. I am thus researching Primary Education in Sierra Leone and the Relationship between Sierra Leone and Britain. The three key questions in this study are:

I would like you to help me with the relationship between donors and recipients to examine 'partnership' and 'ownership'. This will entail completing the attached questionnaire as well as allowing for an interview where it is deemed necessary. May I assure you that all the responses will be used strictly for the purpose of this research, and that no individual names will be identified in any report or articles from this study. I would be very grateful if you could complete the questionnaire as fully as possible. If there are areas/questions which need clarification, please do not hesitate to bring them to my attention.

Mikako Nishimuko ( [mnishimuko@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:mnishimuko@ioe.ac.uk) )

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<sup>14</sup> UNDP (2003). Human Development Report 2003 Millennium Development Goals: A compact among nations to end human poverty.

Can you kindly complete the following questionnaire please.

1-1. Please tick the appropriate one. You are a member of .....

Sierra Leone Government ( )      Sierra Leone NGO( )

Sierra Leone Local Community ( )      Sierra Leone School Staff ( )

Other (please specify )

1-2-1. What is the name of the organisation you belong to?

1-2-2. What is your nationality?

1-2. Please list top 3 of finance for your organisation?

1.

2.

3.

2-1. Which actors do you think are your partner? Please add comments if you have.

	In theory	In practice	Any comments
British Government			
British Council			
Sierra Leone			
British Private Firms			
British NGOs			
Christian Missionaries			
Sierra Leone Government			
Sierra Leone NGOs			
Sierra Leone Local Community			
Sierra Leone School Staff			

Any other Actor (please specify )			
Any other Actor (please specify )			
Any other Actor (please specify )			
Any other Actor (please specify )			

2-2. Do you think you have a good 'partnership' with other development actors?

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Any comments
British Government				
British Council				
Sierra Leone				
British Private Firms				
British NGO				
Christian Missionaries				
Sierra Leone Government				
Sierra Leone NGOs				
Sierra Leone Local Community				
Sierra Leone School Staff				
Any other Actor (please specify )				
Any other Actor (please specify )				
Any other Actor (please specify )				
Any other Actor (please specify )				

specify	)				
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2-3-1. Do you think you share common goals with your partners?

Yes ( ) No ( )

2-3-2. Regarding 2-3-1, if you ticked “Yes”, in what ways or aspects do you share common goals?

3-1. Could you tick in appropriate boxes for who plays the role, donors, recipients or both please.

	Donors (British actors)	Participants (Sierra Leone actors)
Project planning		
Project implementing		
Project monitoring		
Project evaluating		
Follow-up/aftercare of the projects		
Funding		
Participation in the project		

3-2-1. Have you had any difficulties working with donors (British actors)?

Yes ( ) No ( )

3-2-2. Regarding 3-2-1, if you ticked “Yes”, please describe.

3-3-1. Do you think British actors/Plan Sierra Leone are your partners or rather donors?

Partners ( ) Donors ( ) Uncertain ( )

3-3-2. How have you worked for or how do you think you can work for a good 'partnership' with donors (British actors)?

3-4-1. Have you learnt anything in working with donors (British actors)?

Yes ( ) No ( )

3-4-2. Regarding 3-4-1, if you ticked "Yes", what have been the challenges and lessons learnt from working with them?

3-5-1. Working with donors (British actors), have you ever had a project which did not go as well as planned?

Yes ( ) No ( )

3-5-2. Regarding 3-5-1, if you ticked "Yes", please describe it with its possible causes.

4. How do you understand 'partnership' and 'ownership'?

5-1-1 Do you think you have established 'ownership' in working with donors (British actors)? Or do you think you own a project?

Yes ( ) No ( ) Uncertain ( )

5-1-2. Regarding 5-1-1, in what way or how can you say so? Please describe.

5-2-1. Do you think donors (British actors) have been working for better 'ownership' on the part of Sierra Leone actors?

Yes ( ) No ( ) Uncertain ( )

5-2-2. Regarding 5-2-1, in what way or how can you say so? Please describe.

6-1-1. Have you ever felt that the approach by donors (British actors) is top-down? Or have you ever felt that the work and relationship with them as 'conditioned one'? Yes ( ) No ( )

6-1-2. Regarding 6-1-1, in what way or aspects have you felt so? Please describe.

6-2-1. Do you think financial aid gives pressure in weakening your 'ownership'?

Yes ( ) No ( ) Uncertain ( )

6-2-2. Regarding 6-2-1, in what way or aspects, or why do you think so? Please describe.

6-3-1. Do you think that 'conditionality' or 'forced implication' by donors (British actors) is a thing of the past or do you think it still exists?

Past story ( ) Still exists ( ) Uncertain ( )

6-3-2. Regarding 6-3-1, if you have any comments to support your view, please describe.

7-1-2 DFID (<sup>15</sup>2004,p. 3) says that ‘successful aid relationships are based on mutual commitment and dialogue, transparency and accountability’.

Do you think your approach shares the DFID’s stance?

Yes ( ) No ( ) Uncertain ( )

7-1-2. Regarding 7-1-1, please describe it if you have any comments.

8-1-3. When you choose schools or community to support and work for development, do you consider religion?

Yes ( ) No ( )

8-1-4. How do you choose schools or community groups to support and work for development? Please describe the criteria for the target group.

9. To what extent are you confident that Sierra Leone will be able to meet the MDGs?

Please tick the appropriate boxes and give any reasons/comments if you have.

	Confident	Uncertain	Diffident	Any reasons /comments
Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger				
Achieve universal primary education				

<sup>15</sup> DFID (2004). Partnership for Poverty Reduction: Changing aid “conditionality” A draft paper for comment.

Promote gender equality and empower women				
Reduce child mortality				
Improve maternal health				
Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases				
Ensure environmental sustainability				
Develop a global partnership for development				

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

In order to explore further, based on this questionnaire questions, I would like you to participate in an interview. If you can, please tick below and leave your name with your contact number (e-mail address, phone number etc) and your preferred time if you have please. I will contact you shortly to arrange an interview. I do promise you again that your name will not be revealed in any report or essay from this study. Many thanks for your cooperation.

Can you participate in interview? Yes (            ) No (            )

Your name;

Contact number / address;

Preferred date / time;

## 2-G) Interview Schedules to Donors and Recipients, MEST, FBOs and Headteachers/Deputy Headteachers

Interviews were mainly conducted as a follow-up of questionnaire responses. Since I asked my participants a number of questions, some examples of interview questions which were asked to donors and recipients, MEST, FBOs and headteachers and/or deputy headteachers, are stated in this section.

### <Donors and Recipients>

1. Could you explain your work, please?
2. Could you tell me about your working relationship with Plan Sierra Leone, please?  
(to local NGOs)  
Could you tell me about your working relationship with local NGOs you support, please? (to Plan Sierra Leone)
3. How does Plan Sierra Leone assist your organisation? (to local NGOs)  
How do you assist local NGOs with which you have a partnership? (to Plan Sierra Leone)
4. Do you think the government provides support for a good environment in which civil society can be active?
5. Do you have any special programme or effort to encourage civil society movements?
6. Do you think civil society in Sierra Leone encourages democracy?
7. Could you tell me your view regarding Islam and democracy, please?
8. Do you have any cooperative work with religious bodies?
9. DFID (2005 p. 5) argues that donors now include conditions relating to political and institutional change, as well as social and environmental policies and that this includes tackling corruption in the partner countries.  
Does DFID Sierra Leone recognise any corruption in Sierra Leone? How do you deal with the issue? (to DFID)

<MEST>

1. What the difference between government schools, government assisted schools and private schools?
2. What are the government responsibilities in the provision of primary education?
3. Could you explain about the Complementary Rapid Education Programme (CREP)?
4. There is a view that education in Africa needs to be decolonised and that the curriculum needs to be more suitable for local needs.

What do you think about this view related to primary education in Sierra Leone as it currently stands?

5. How do you think the new education system (6-3-3-4) has affected primary education?
6. What do you think about the religious contribution to the provision of primary education?
7. What are the challenges and difficulties in providing primary education and/or meeting the international target of EFA?
8. What is the government recommended class size or teacher-pupil ratio?
9. How has the government worked on sensitisation as to girls' education?

Do you have any special geographical areas you particularly working on the sensitisation?

10. How do you see the corporal punishment?
11. How do you see the double shift system?

Do you have any plan to stop it?

12. Could you tell me about your partnership with Plan Sierra Leone, please?

13. MEST is stated one of hotspots of corruption by ACC.

There are problems with teachers' salary issues and teaching and distribution of learning materials. How do you think MEST responds to this?

<FBOs>

1. Could you tell me about your work in education, particularly with regard to primary education, please?
2. Could you tell me how you operate your education programmes?

3. Could you tell me your view regarding the relationship between religion, democracy and the development of Sierra Leone?
4. How do you see the relationship between Christianity and Islam in Sierra Leone?  
How do you think you have come to have a reasonably good relationship between Christianity and Islam?

<Head Teachers/Deputy Head Teachers>

1. The MEST has set a goal of the establishment of SMCs in all primary schools by 2005.  
Does your school have SMC?  
If you have, who are involved and what kind of issues does it deal with?
2. The government document states that they have given over a 300 % salary increase to teachers between 1998 and 2003.  
Did you experience this?
3. If you have experienced a salary delay, how long was it for?
4. What are the possibilities for pupils after finishing their primary education?
5. Do you have any support from NGOs or FBOs/religious bodies?  
If you do, could you explain the support you have please?
6. How often does an inspector come to your school?  
What exactly does she/he do and afterwards are there any noticeable changes or improvements?
7. What do you think are challenges or difficulties in primary education?
8. How do you think the new education system (6-3-3-4) has affected your school or primary education in general?
9. What are the merits and demerits of free primary education at your school?

## 2-H) Names and Numbers of Sample Organisations

### Donors N=5 and Recipients N=9

5 Donors	No.	9 Recipients	No.
British Council SL	A-1	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST)	B-1
DFID	A-2	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA)	B-2
Plan SL, Freetown, Moyamba and Makeni	A-3	CADO, Freetown and Makeni	B-3
		FAWE, Freetown, Moyamba and Makeni	B-4
		Pikin to Pikin Movement, Moyamba and Makeni	B-5

### FBOs N=3

3 FBOs	No.
Ansarul Development Services	C-1
Sierra Leone Muslim Brotherhood	C-2
Methodist Church of Sierra Leone	C-3

2 - H) School Number—D (Teachers N=125)

Freetown	No	Bo	No	Moyamba	No	Kenema	No	Makeni	No
Sierra Leone Brotherhood School (SLMB) 6	1	Sierra Leone Brotherhood School (SLMB) 5	8	Ahmadiyya Primary School (AMDY) 5	14	Ahmadiyya Primary School (AMDY) 5	18	Sierra Leone Brotherhood School (SLMB) 5	24
Ahmadiyya Primary School (AMDY) 2	2	Ahmadiyya Primary School (AMDY) 5	9	Moyamba Educational Primary School (MDEC) 5	15	Ahmadiyya Primary School (AMDY) 3	19	Alharkan Primary School 5	25
Regent Square Municipal Primary School 5	3	Bo District Educational Committee School (BDEC) 5	10	United Church Primary School (Methodist) 6	16	Ansarul Islamic Primary School 5	20	Bombali Educational Primary School (BDEC) 5	26
Holly Trinity Primary School (CMS) 5	4	Sierra Leone Primary School (CMS) 5	11	St Joseph School 5	17	Kenema Educational Primary School (KDEC) 4	21	United Church Primary School (Methodist) 5	27
Regent Primary School (CMS) 2	5	United Methodist Primary (Methodist) 6	12			St Charles Primary School 5	22		
Bathurst Street Infant School (Methodist) 5	6	Awada Primary (Private) 4	13			United Church Primary School (Methodist) 5	23		
City Mission Primary School (Methodist) 2	7								





## APPENDIX 3 Demographical Data of School-related Participants

Table 50. Teachers' sex (Teachers N=125)

Sex	Female	Male
No.	62	63
%	49.6	50.4

Table 51. Teachers' age range (Teachers N=125)

Age range	-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-
No.	1	15	50	48	11
%	0.8	12.0	40.0	38.4	8.8

Table 52. Teachers' religion (Teachers N=125)

Religion	Christian	Muslim	Other
No.	75	50	0
%	60.0	40.0	0

Table 53. Parental status categorisation (Parents N=454)

Parent categorisation	Father	Mother	Other	No answer
No.	284	147	22	1
%	62.6	32.4	4.8	0.2

Table 54. Parents' religion (Parents N=454)

Religion	Christian	Muslim	Other	No answer
No.	242	207	1	4
%	53.3	45.6	0.2	0.9

Table 55. Family Size (Parents N=454)

Family size	2-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-	No answer
No.	108	268	58	11	6	3
%	23.8	59.0	12.8	2.4	1.3	0.7

Table 56. Head of household (Parents N=454)

Head of household	Father	Mother	Other	No answer
No.	403	30	20	1
%	88.8	6.6	4.4	0.2

Table 57. Parents' occupation (Parents N=454)

Top 10 of the head's occupation	No.	%
1. Teacher	141	31.1
2. Farmer	71	15.6
3. Trader	61	13.4
4. Civil Servant	22	4.8
5. Dead	14	3.1
6. Driver	11	2.4
7. Police	10	2.2
8. Missionary	7	1.5
9. Doctor	6	1.3
10. Clerk	6	1.3

Other: 66 parents include doctor, nurse, health worker, student, NGO worker, lecturer, community volunteer, soldier, security guard, tailor, photographer, accountant, miner.  
 No answer: 39 parents (8.6%)

Table 58. Father's job of pupils (Pupils N=488)

Father's job	No.	%
1. Trader	139	28.5
2. Farmer	89	18.2
3. Teacher	61	12.5
4. Driver	38	7.8
5. Builder	30	6.1
6. Diamond digger	23	4.7
7. Tailor	18	3.7
8. Dead	16	3.3
9. Civil servant	13	2.7
10. Police	10	2.0

Other: 50 parents (10.2%) No Answer: 1 parent (0.2%)

Table 59. Mother's job of pupils (Pupils N=488)

Mother's job	No.	%
1. Trader	264	54.1
2. Housewife	126	25.8
3. Teacher	37	7.6
4. Farmer	27	5.5
5. Nurse	17	3.5
6. Dead	7	1.4
7. Tailor	3	0.6
8. Civil servant	2	0.4
8. Clerk	2	0.4
8. NGO worker	2	0.4

Other: 1 parent (0.2%) No Answer: 0

Table 60. Parents' educational background: final education (Parents N=454)

	Primary school	Secondary school	Technical/Vocational school	College/University	Postgraduate school	Society/bush school	No Answer
No.	31	113	34	244	10	15	7
%	6.8	24.9	7.5	53.7	2.2	3.3	1.5

Note: Because 141 out of 454 parents in my sample are teachers, the number of college/university and postgraduate school leavers is high.

Table 61. Pupils' sex (Pupils N=488)

	Female	Male
No.	224	264
%	45.9	54.1

Table 62. Pupils' religion (Pupils N=488)

Religion	Christian	Muslim	No answer
No.	152	336	0
%	31.1	68.9	0

Table 63. Pupils class (Pupils N=488)

Class	2	3	4	5	6
No.	4	40	46	173	225
%	0.8	8.2	9.4	35.5	46.1

Table 64. Pupils' age (Pupils N=488)

Age	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
No.	1	9	20	44	43	90	102	69	53	37	9	6	1	4
%	0.2	1.8	4.1	9.0	8.8	18.4	20.9	14.1	10.1	7.6	1.8	1.2	0.2	0.8

Note: Although I asked headteachers and/or teachers to hand questionnaires to pupils in Class 5 or 6, some teachers seemed to give them out to younger ones. If children start their primary education from the age of 6 and no repetition occurs, they reach 12 years old in Class 5 or 6.