



CSO-SDG VNR REPORT AND PEOPLE'S SCORECARD





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FOREWARD





INTRODUCTION

Overview of the SDGs and the country's commitment

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030, all people will enjoy peace and prosperity. There are 17 SDGs covering various social and economic development issues, including poverty, hunger, health, education, climate change, gender equality, water, sanitation, energy, urbanization, environment, and social justice.

Sierra Leone's Commitment to the SDGs:

Sierra Leone has demonstrated a solid commitment to achieving the SDGs. The government has integrated the SDGs into its national development plans and strategies, including the Medium-Term National Development Plan (2019-2023). The country has also taken several steps to accelerate progress towards the SDGs, such as:

- **Prioritizing Key Goals:** Sierra Leone has identified SDG 4 (quality education) and SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions) as its accelerator goals, recognizing their importance for the country's socioeconomic transformation.
- **Investing in Education:** The government has increased educational budgetary allocations and implemented policies to ensure free and inclusive access to quality education for all.
- **Promoting Peace and Justice:** Sierra Leone has made significant strides in strengthening its institutions, promoting peace, and upholding justice.
- **Partnerships and Collaboration:** The government works with various stakeholders, including international organizations, civil society, and the private sector, to mobilize resources and expertise for SDG implementation.
- **SDG Acceleration Roadmap:** Sierra Leone recently presented its SDG Acceleration Roadmap at the United Nations General Assembly, outlining its strategic priorities and actions for the next seven years. The roadmap focuses on ending poverty (SDG 1), ending hunger (SDG 2), and reducing inequality (SDG 10).



Challenges and Way Forward:

While Sierra Leone has made commendable progress towards the SDGs, several challenges remain, including limited resources, weak institutional capacity, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. To overcome these challenges, Sierra Leone needs to:

- **Strengthen Domestic Resource Mobilization:** The government must explore innovative financing mechanisms and enhance tax collection to generate more resources for SDG implementation.
- **Enhance Institutional Capacity:** Building the capacity of government institutions is crucial for effectively planning, implementing, and monitoring SDG-related programs.
- **Foster Partnerships:** Continued collaboration with international partners, civil society, and the private sector is essential for leveraging resources, knowledge, and technology to achieve the SDGs.

Sierra Leone's commitment to the SDGs is a testament to its determination to build a more sustainable and equitable future for its people. By prioritizing key goals, investing in education, promoting peace and justice, and fostering partnerships, Sierra Leone will be on track to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

Purpose and scope of the CSO Spotlight report

The CSO (Civil Society Organization) Spotlight Report assesses a country's progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The primary purpose of the report is to:



Provide an Alternative Perspective: The report offers a viewpoint from civil society, complementing official government reports. It often highlights issues and concerns that might be overlooked in official accounts.



Enhance Accountability: The report holds governments accountable for their SDG commitments. It scrutinizes policies, actions, and results, highlighting successes and shortcomings.



Amplify marginalized voices: The report often focuses on the experiences and perspectives of marginalized groups, ensuring that their voices are heard in the SDG discourse.



Influence Policy and Action: The report aims to inform and influence policy discussions and actions related to the SDGs. It provides recommendations for improvement and calls for greater inclusivity and transparency in decision-making processes.



Scope:

The scope of a CSO Spotlight Report can vary depending on the specific focus and capacity of the organization producing it. However, it typically covers the following aspects:

- **Assessment of SDG Progress:** The report evaluates the country's overall progress towards achieving the SDGs, often focusing on specific goals or targets.
- **Analysis of Government Policies and Actions:** The report scrutinizes government policies, programs, and initiatives related to the SDGs, assessing their effectiveness and impact.
- **Examination of Stakeholder Engagement:** The report examines how stakeholders, including civil society, are involved in SDG implementation and monitoring processes.
- **Identification of Challenges and Gaps:** The report identifies key challenges, barriers, and gaps hindering SDG's progress, offering recommendations for improvement.
- **Recommendations for Action:** The report provides concrete, actionable recommendations for government, civil society, and other stakeholders to accelerate SDG progress.

Overall, the CSO Spotlight Report is a valuable tool for promoting accountability, transparency, and inclusivity in pursuing the SDGs. It provides a platform for civil society voices and helps ensure that the needs and concerns of all people are considered in the journey towards sustainable development.

METHODOLOGY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

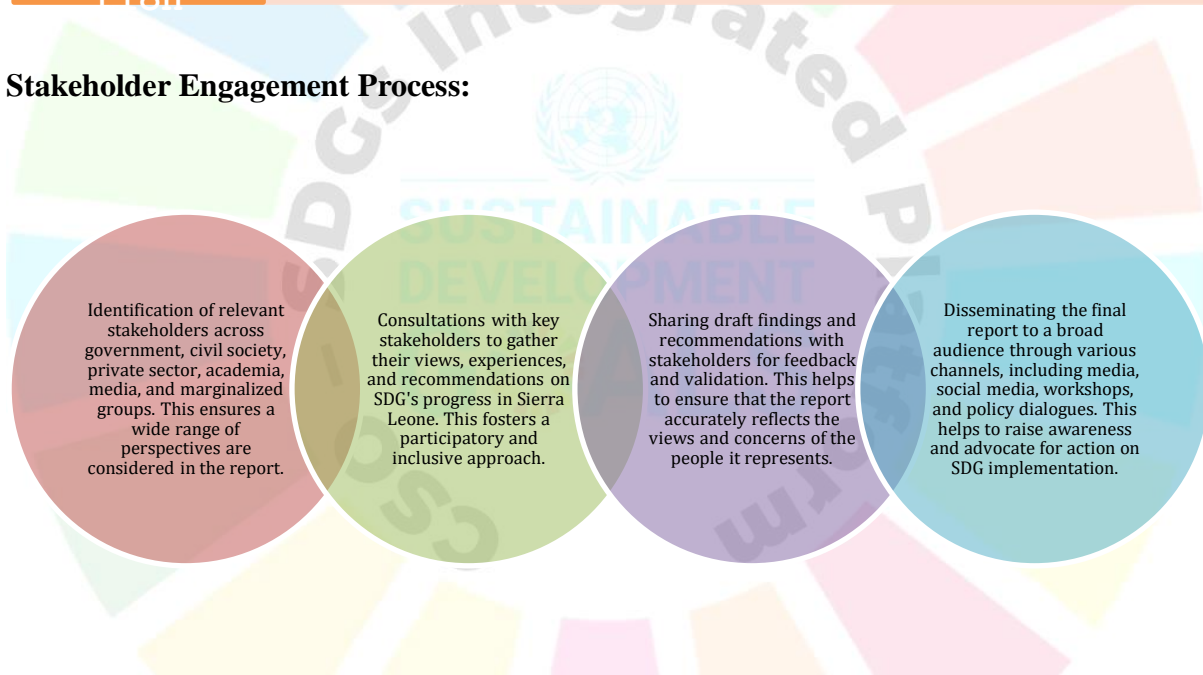
The methodology and stakeholder engagement process for a CSO Spotlight Report on Sierra Leone's SDG progress would typically involve the following:

METHODOLOGY



| | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Desk Research</p> | <p>Extensive review of existing literature, reports, and data sources on Sierra Leone's SDG progress, including government reports, UN. reports, academic studies, and media articles. This helps to establish a baseline understanding of the current situation.</p> |
| <p>2. Data Collection</p> | <p>Primary data will be collected through surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, and consultations with various stakeholders across different sectors and regions of Sierra Leone. This provides valuable insights into people's lived experiences and perspectives on the ground.</p> |
| <p>3. Data Analysis</p> | <p>Rigorous qualitative and quantitative data analysis using appropriate statistical and thematic analysis techniques. This helps to identify trends, patterns, and key findings related to SDG progress.</p> |
| <p>4. Validation and Triangulation</p> | <p>Findings are validated by cross-checking different sources and triangulation of data using various methods. This ensures the accuracy and reliability of the report's conclusions.</p> |

Stakeholder Engagement Process:



Specific Considerations for Sierra Leone:

- **Focus on marginalized groups:** Special attention should be paid to engaging with marginalized groups, such as women, youth, people with disabilities, and rural communities, to ensure their voices are heard, and their concerns are addressed in the report.
- **Contextualization:** The methodology and stakeholder engagement process should be contextualized to the specific realities and challenges of Sierra Leone, considering the country's unique cultural, social, and political context.
- **Partnership and Collaboration:** Collaboration with existing civil society networks and platforms in Sierra Leone can help to leverage existing knowledge, expertise, and resources, as well as to ensure a broader reach and impact of the report.



COUNTRY CONTEXT

Socio-economic and Political landscapes.

Socioeconomic Landscape:

- **Poverty:** Sierra Leone remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with a high poverty rate and widespread inequality. Most of the population lives in rural areas and relies on subsistence agriculture for their livelihood.
- **Economy:** The economy heavily depends on mining (mainly diamonds and iron ore) and agriculture. However, the country faces challenges such as low productivity, limited diversification, and vulnerability to external shocks.
- **Infrastructure:** Sierra Leone's infrastructure is underdeveloped, with limited access to electricity, clean water, sanitation, and healthcare, particularly in rural areas.
- **Human Development:** The country has improved health and education outcomes, but challenges remain, including high maternal and child mortality rates, low literacy levels, and gender disparities.
- **COVID-19 Impact:** The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing socioeconomic challenges, disrupting livelihoods, increasing food insecurity, and straining the healthcare system.
- **Natural Disasters:** Sierra Leone is prone to natural disasters, such as floods, landslides, and droughts, further impeding development efforts.

Political Landscape:

- **Recent Elections:** Sierra Leone held presidential and parliamentary elections in June 2023. The incumbent President, Julius Maada Bio of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), was re-elected amidst the opposition's concerns regarding the electoral process's transparency and fairness.
- **Political Stability:** While Sierra Leone has made significant strides in consolidating peace and democracy since the end of the civil war in 2002, it still faces challenges in terms of political polarization, ethnic tensions, and the legacy of conflict.
- **Governance:** Weak governance, corruption, and lack of accountability remain significant obstacles to development. The government has taken steps to address these issues, but more must be done to strengthen institutions and promote good governance.



- **Civil Society:** Civil society organizations play an essential role in Sierra Leone, advocating for the rights of citizens, promoting development, and holding the government accountable. However, they face challenges such as limited resources and restrictive laws.

Overall:

Sierra Leone is a country with immense potential, but it faces significant socioeconomic and political challenges. Addressing these challenges will require sustained efforts from the government, civil society, and international partners to promote inclusive economic growth, strengthen governance, and invest in human development.

KEY DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES.

Key Development Challenges in Sierra Leone:

1. **Poverty and Inequality:** High poverty rates and widespread inequality remain major challenges, with a significant portion of the population living below the national poverty line. The rural-urban divide is stark, with rural areas experiencing higher poverty rates and limited access to essential services.
2. **Fragile Economy:** The economy is highly dependent on extractive industries, particularly mining, and vulnerable to external shocks. Diversification of the economy, promoting value addition in agriculture, and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (S.M.E.s) are crucial for sustainable economic growth.
3. **Weak Infrastructure:** Inadequate infrastructure, including limited access to electricity, clean water, sanitation, and healthcare, hinders development. Improving infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, is essential for enhancing living standards and supporting economic activities.
4. **Human Capital Development:** Despite progress in health and education, challenges remain. High maternal and child mortality rates, low literacy levels, and gender disparities persist. Investing in quality education and healthcare, especially for women and girls, is crucial for achieving sustainable development.
5. **Governance and Corruption:** Weak governance, corruption, and lack of accountability continue to undermine development efforts. Strengthening institutions, promoting transparency, and fighting corruption are essential for creating an enabling environment for sustainable development. Corruption emerged as an overarching factor



influencing the Civil Society Organization (CSO) scorecard. It permeated various sectors and levels of governance, hindering progress towards sustainable development goals. Bribery, embezzlement of public funds, and patronage networks undermined the effectiveness of public institutions, eroding public trust and confidence. The lack of transparency and accountability mechanisms further exacerbated the problem, allowing corrupt practices to flourish unchecked. This pervasive corruption not only diverted resources away from essential services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure but also created an uneven playing field for businesses, stifling economic growth and perpetuating inequality. Addressing corruption is therefore crucial for improving the CSO scorecard and achieving a more just and equitable society.

6. **Climate Change and Environmental Degradation:** Sierra Leone is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as floods, droughts, and sea-level rise. Environmental degradation, including deforestation and pollution, also poses significant challenges. Implementing climate change adaptation and mitigation measures and sustainable environmental practices are crucial for ensuring resilience and protecting natural resources.

Key Development Opportunities in Sierra Leone:

1. **Natural Resources:** Sierra Leone has abundant natural resources, including minerals, fertile land, and fisheries. Sustainable management of these resources can generate revenue for development, create jobs, and improve livelihoods.
2. **Youthful Population:** Sierra Leone has a growing young population, which presents a significant demographic dividend. Investing in education, skills development, and job creation for youth can unlock their potential and drive economic growth.
3. **Agricultural Potential:** Agriculture remains the backbone of the economy, employing a large portion of the population. Enhancing agricultural productivity, promoting value addition, and improving market access for farmers can contribute to poverty reduction and food security.
4. **Tourism:** Sierra Leone boasts beautiful beaches, diverse wildlife, and rich cultural heritage, which offer potential for tourism development. Promoting sustainable tourism can generate revenue, create jobs, and contribute to economic diversification.
5. **Regional Integration:** Sierra Leone's strategic location within the Economic Community of West African States (E.C.O.W.A.S.) provides regional trade and



economic integration opportunities. Strengthening regional cooperation and trade ties can enhance market access, attract investments, and promote economic development.

6. **Renewables and Energy Access:** Sierra Leone has significant potential for renewable energy sources like solar and hydropower. Expanding access to clean and affordable energy can improve living standards, support economic activities, and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

By addressing the challenges and seizing the opportunities, Sierra Leone can achieve sustainable and inclusive development, improve the well-being of its people, and build a more prosperous and resilient future.

PROGRESS ASSESSMENT

Analysis of the country's performance across the 17 SDGs

Sierra Leone has made notable progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but significant challenges remain. Here's an assessment of the country's performance across the 17 SDGs:

Progress:

- **SDG 1: No Poverty:** Sierra Leone has made some progress in reducing poverty, but the rate remains high, particularly in rural areas.
- **SDG 2: Zero Hunger:** Progress has been made in reducing stunting and undernourishment in children, but food insecurity remains a challenge, especially in vulnerable communities.
- **SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being:** Maternal and child mortality rates have declined, but access to quality healthcare remains limited, particularly in rural areas. The COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted the need to strengthen the healthcare system.
- **SDG 4: Quality Education:** Significant progress has been made in increasing school enrollment and gender parity in education. However, challenges remain regarding quality of education, teacher training, and access to education in remote areas.



- **SDG 5: Gender Equality:** While progress has been made in promoting women's political participation and reducing gender-based violence, gender inequality persists in various aspects of life, including education, employment, and decision-making.
- **SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation:** Access to clean water and sanitation remains challenging, particularly in rural areas. The government has set ambitious targets for improving access, but significant investments are needed to achieve these goals.
- **SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy:** Access to electricity remains limited, especially in rural areas. However, the government is investing in renewable energy sources to expand access and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.
- **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth:** The economy has grown in recent years, driven by mining and agriculture. However, job creation has not kept pace with population growth, and unemployment, particularly among youth, remains a significant challenge.
- **SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure:** Investments in infrastructure, such as roads, ports, and energy, are underway, but more needs to be done to improve connectivity and support economic development.
- **SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities:** Inequality remains a significant challenge, with disparities in income, wealth, and access to opportunities. Targeted interventions are needed to address these inequalities and ensure no one is left behind.
- **SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities:** Urbanization is rapidly increasing, but cities face challenges such as inadequate housing, poor sanitation, and limited access to essential services. Sustainable urban planning and investment in infrastructure are needed to address these challenges.
- **SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production:** Efforts are underway to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, but more needs to be done to reduce waste, promote recycling, and encourage sustainable agriculture practices.
- **SDG 13: Climate Action:** Sierra Leone is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as floods, droughts, and sea-level rise. The government has developed a National Climate Change Policy and is implementing adaptation and mitigation measures, but more resources and capacity are needed to address this challenge effectively.
- **SDG 14: Life Below Water:** Efforts are underway to protect marine resources and promote sustainable fisheries, but challenges remain regarding illegal fishing, pollution, and climate change impacts.



- **SDG 15: Life on Land:** Deforestation and land degradation are significant challenges. Efforts are underway to promote sustainable forest management, reforestation, and biodiversity conservation.
- **SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions:** Sierra Leone has made significant progress in consolidating peace and democracy since the end of the civil war. However, challenges remain in terms of strengthening institutions, combating corruption, and ensuring access to justice for all.
- **SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals:** Sierra Leone has actively engaged in international partnerships to support its development efforts. However, more resources and capacity are needed to implement the SDGs effectively.

Overall:

Sierra Leone has made commendable progress towards achieving the SDGs, particularly in areas such as education, health, and gender equality. However, significant challenges remain, including poverty, inequality, infrastructure deficits, and environmental degradation. Sierra Leone needs to prioritize investments in human capital, infrastructure, and sustainable economic development to accelerate progress. It must also strengthen governance, combat corruption, and ensure no one is left behind in pursuing the SDGs.

SIERRA LEONE'S SDG PROGRESS: Areas of Progress, Gaps, and Challenges

Progress:

- **SDG 4: Quality Education:** *Sierra Leone has made significant strides in increasing access to education, particularly at the primary level, through its Free Quality School Education (F.Q.S.E.) initiative. There has been a notable increase in enrollment rates and a reduction in gender disparities in education.*

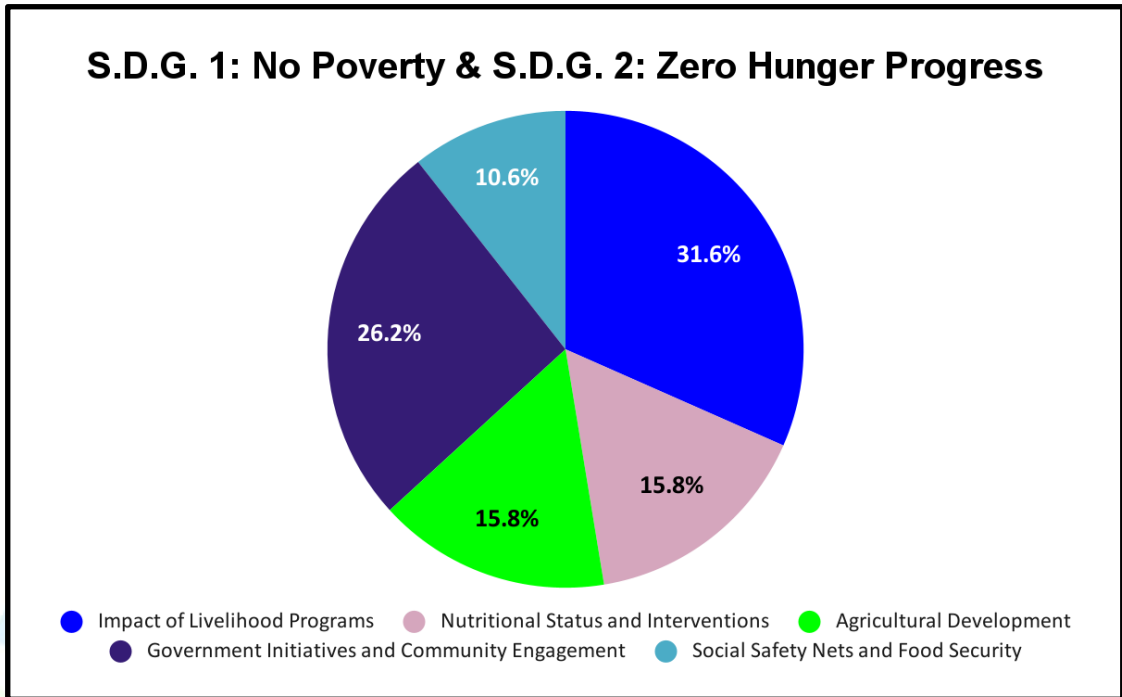


Figure 1: SDG 1: No Poverty & SDG2: Zero Hunger Progress

- SDG 5: Gender Equality:** The country has made progress in increasing women's representation in parliament and local councils and addressing gender-based violence through legal reforms and awareness campaigns.

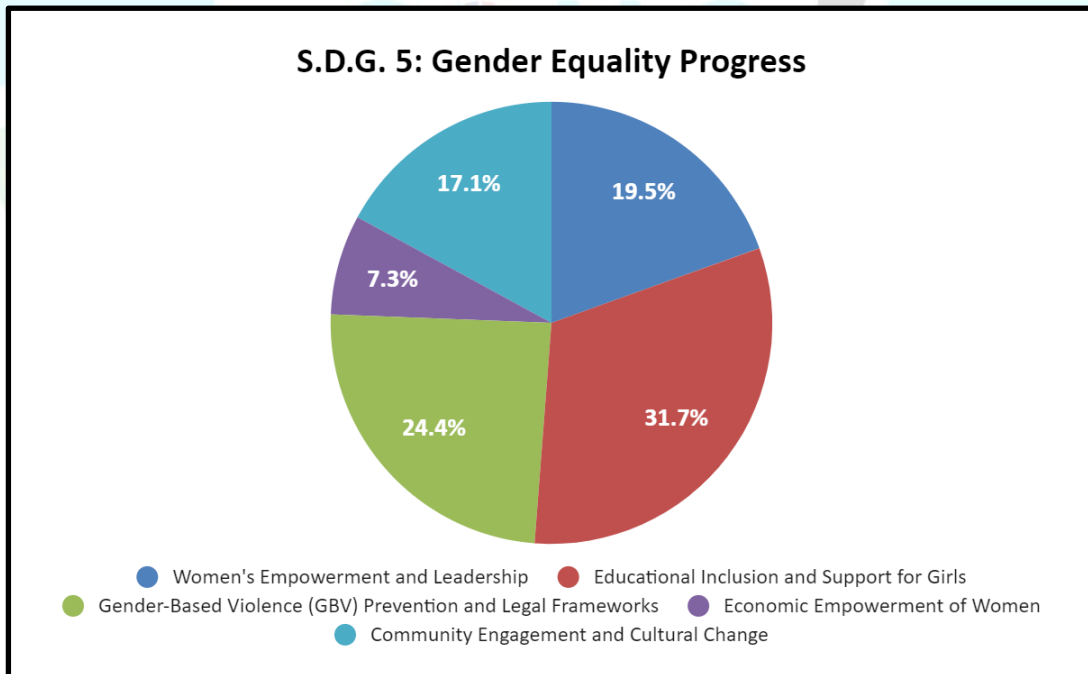


Figure 2: SDG 5: Gender Equality Progress

- SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions:** Sierra Leone has maintained peace and stability since the end of the civil war, and there have been efforts to strengthen institutions and promote justice, although challenges remain.

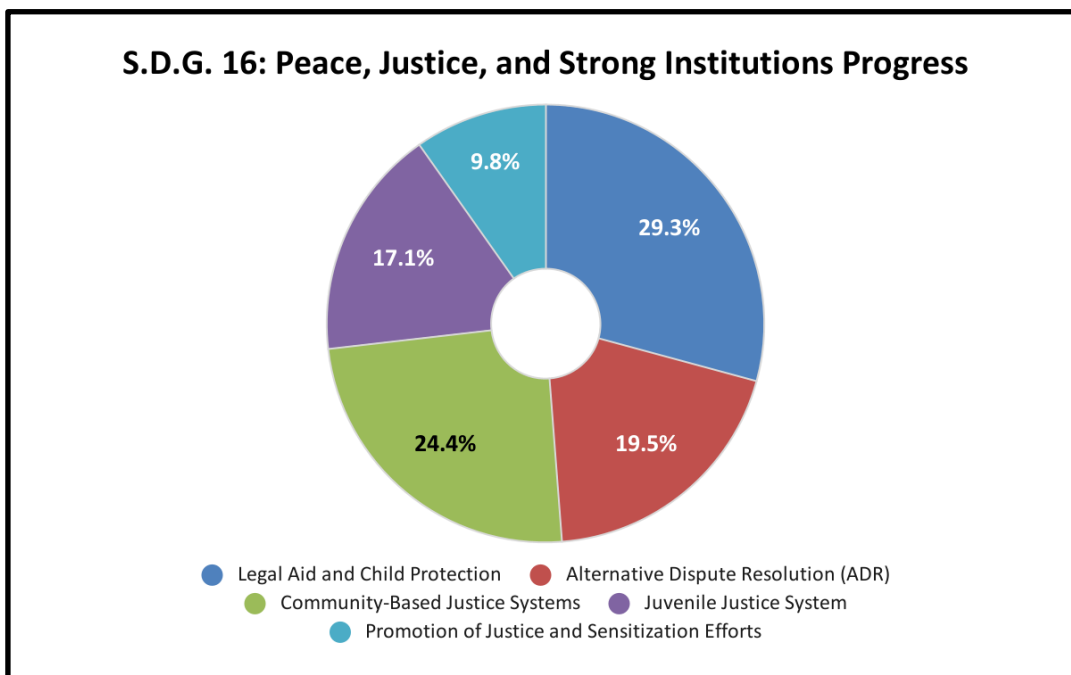


Figure 3: SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions Progress

Gaps and Challenges:

- SDG 1: No Poverty:** Poverty remains widespread, particularly in rural areas. Income inequality is high, and a large proportion of the population lives below the national poverty line.

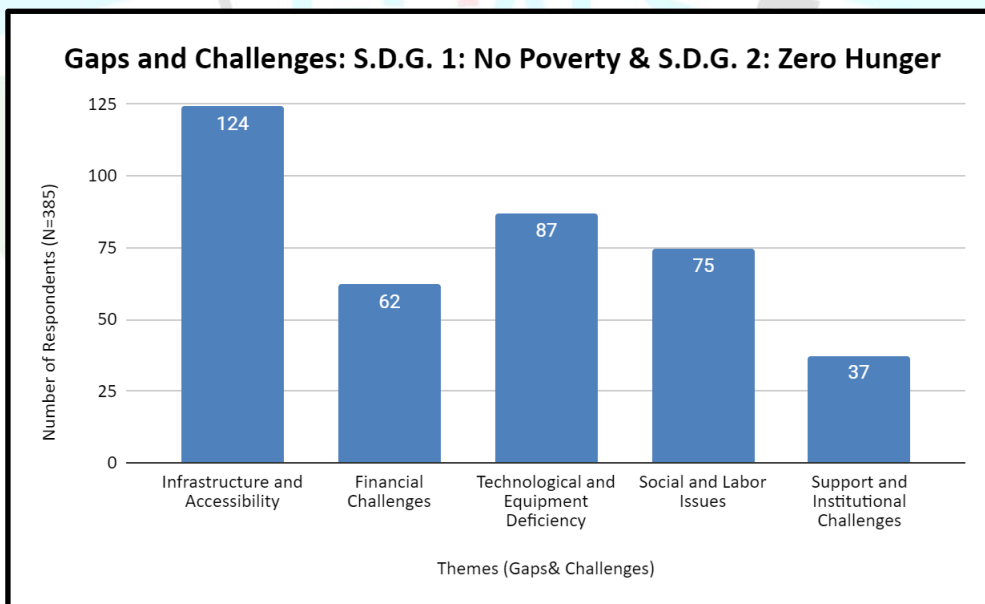


Figure 4: Gaps and Challenges: SDG 1: No Poverty & SDG 2: Zero Hunger

- SDG 2: Zero Hunger:** Food insecurity is a persistent challenge exacerbated by climate change, land degradation, and limited agricultural productivity. Malnutrition rates remain high, especially among children.

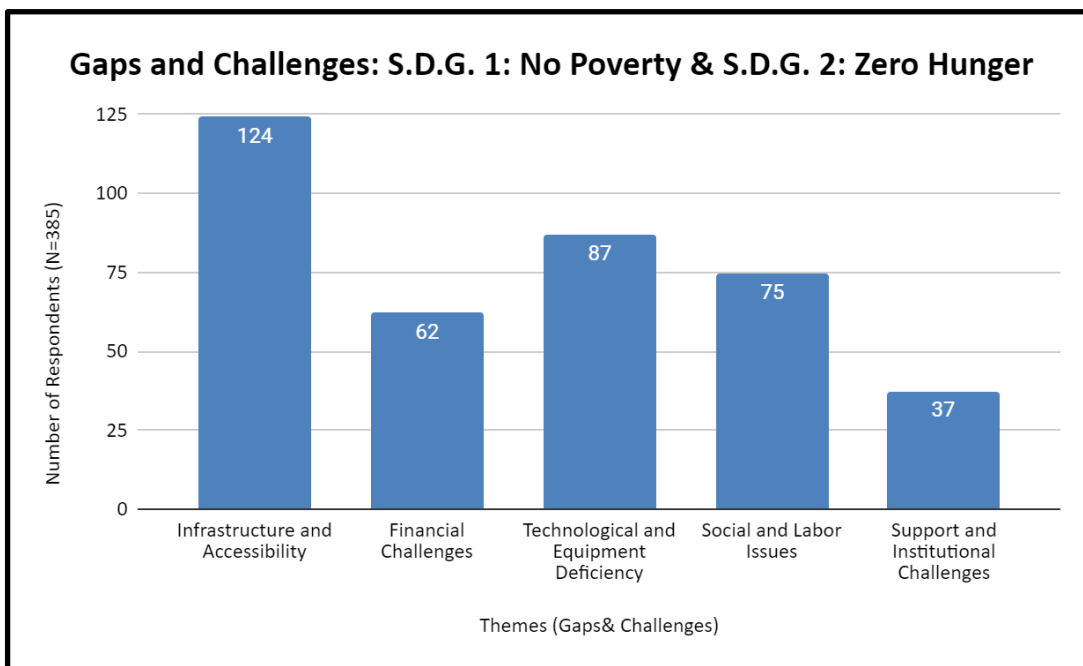


Figure 4: Gaps and Challenges: SDG 1: No Poverty & SDG 2: Zero Hunger

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being:** Maternal and child mortality rates are still high, and access to quality healthcare, especially in rural areas, remains limited. The COVID-19 pandemic has further strained the healthcare system and exposed its vulnerabilities.

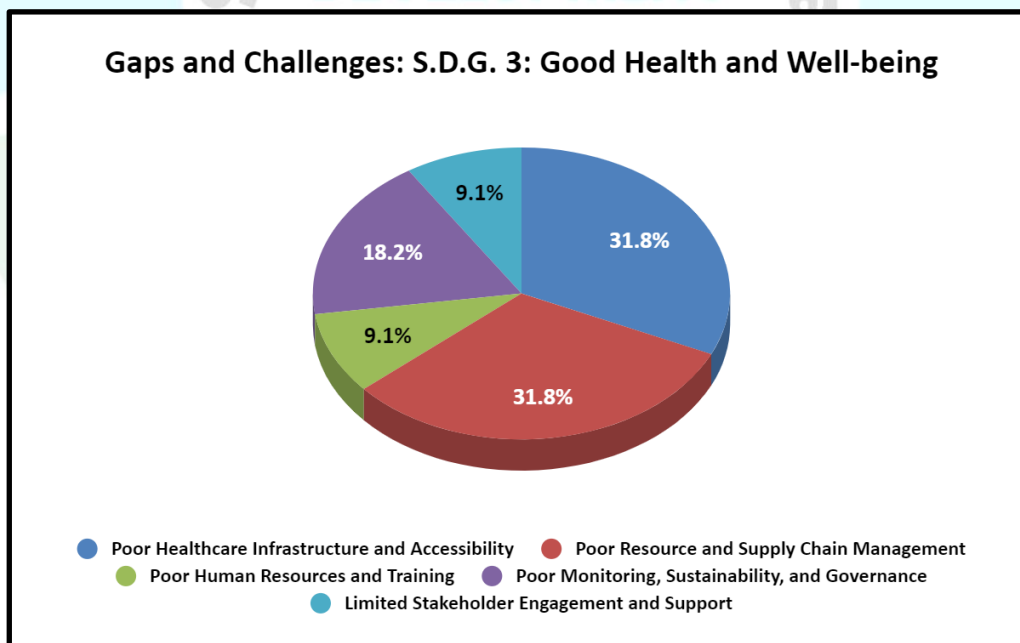


Figure 5: Gaps and Challenges: SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

- SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation:** Access to clean water and sanitation remains inadequate, particularly in rural communities. This contributes to the spread of waterborne diseases and hinders progress in health and development.



- **SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy:** Access to electricity is limited, particularly in rural areas, hindering economic activity and development. The country relies heavily on expensive and polluting fossil fuels for energy generation.
- **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth:** The economy is characterized by high unemployment, especially among youth, and a large informal sector. Economic growth has been driven mainly by extractive industries, with limited diversification and value addition.
- **SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure:** Infrastructure deficits, including inadequate roads, bridges, and energy supply, constrain economic development and limit access to essential services.
- **SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities:** Inequalities persist across various dimensions, including income, wealth, access to education, healthcare, and opportunities. Addressing these inequalities is crucial for achieving inclusive and sustainable development.

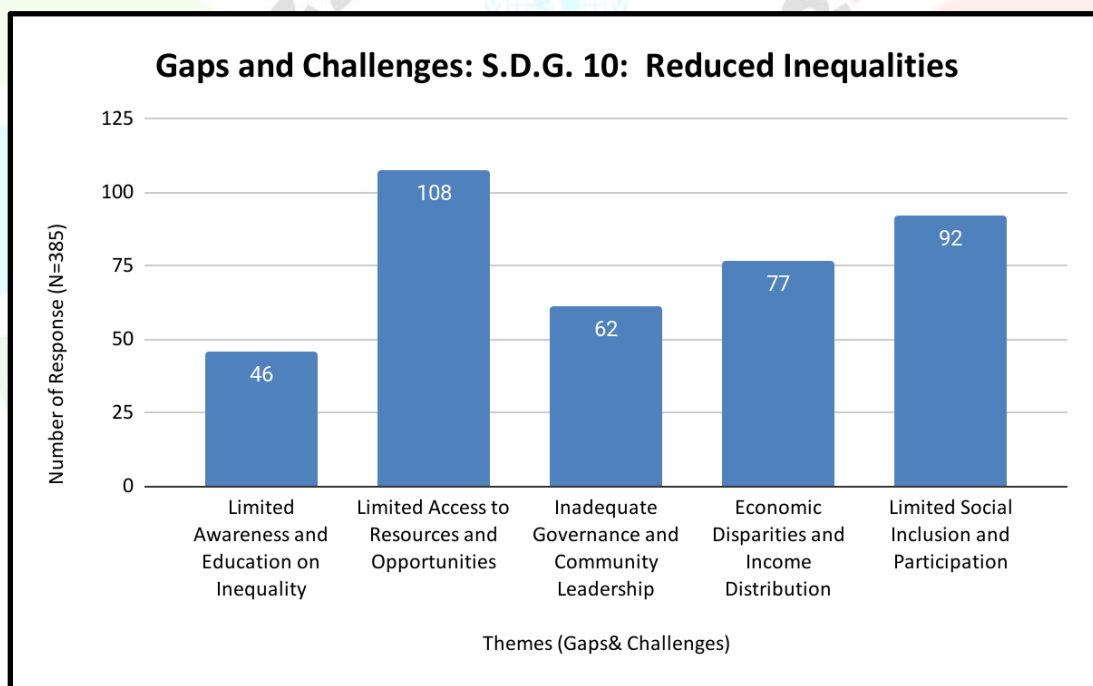


Figure 6: Gaps and Challenges: SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

- **SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities:** Rapid urbanization is putting a strain on infrastructure and services in cities, leading to challenges such as inadequate housing, poor sanitation, and increased vulnerability to disasters.
- **SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production:** Sustainable consumption and production patterns are yet to be fully embraced, with challenges such as waste management, deforestation, and unsustainable fishing practices.



- SDG 13: Climate Action:** Sierra Leone is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts, such as floods, droughts, and sea-level rise. Climate change adaptation and mitigation measures must be strengthened to build resilience and protect livelihoods.

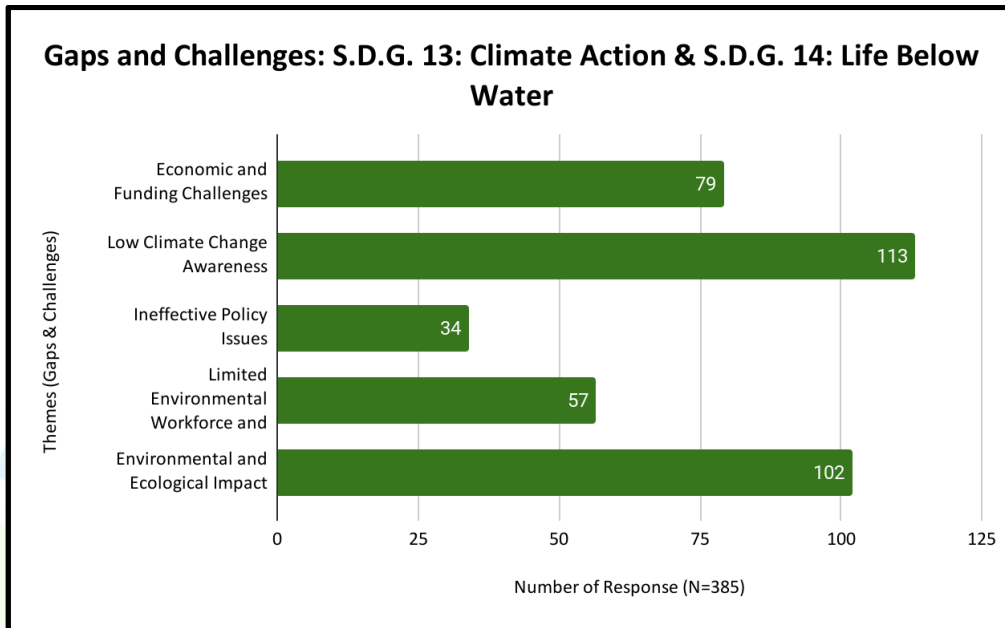


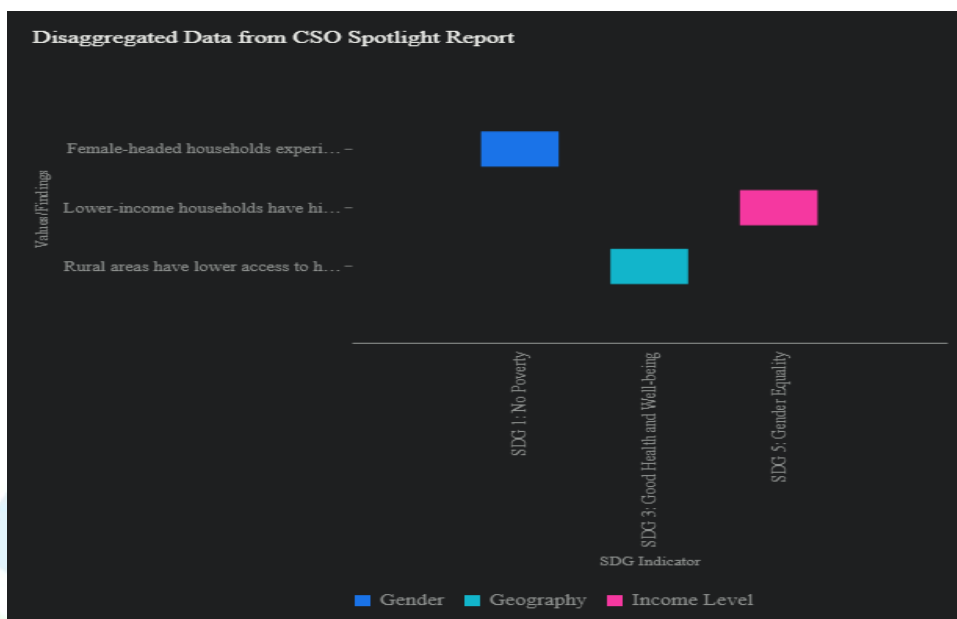
Figure 7: Gaps and Challenges: SDG 13: Climate Action & SDG 14 Life Below Water

- SDG 14: Life Below Water:** Marine resources are threatened by overfishing, pollution, and climate change. Sustainable fisheries management and marine conservation efforts need to be strengthened.
- SDG 15: Life on Land:** Major challenges include deforestation, land degradation, and biodiversity loss. Sustainable land management practices, reforestation, and conservation efforts are needed to protect ecosystems and biodiversity.
- SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals:** While Sierra Leone has engaged in international partnerships, more effective coordination and collaboration are needed to mobilize resources, expertise, and technology to accelerate SDG implementation.

Addressing these gaps and challenges will require sustained efforts from the government, civil society, private sector, and international partners. A comprehensive and integrated approach is needed to address the interconnected nature of the SDGs and ensure that no one is left behind.



Disaggregate data by relevant factors (e.g., gender, geography, income levels)



The CSO Spotlight report on Sierra Leone highlights disparities in SDG progress across different groups:

| SDG Indicator | Disaggregation Factor | Values/Findings |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| SDG 1: No Poverty | Gender | Female-headed households experience higher poverty rates than male-headed households. |
| SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being | Geography | Rural areas have lower access to healthcare facilities compared to urban areas. |
| SDG 5: Gender Equality | Income Level | Lower-income households have higher rates of maternal mortality. |

These findings underscore the importance of disaggregating data in identifying and addressing inequalities in SDG's progress. For example, policies to reduce poverty should specifically target female-headed households, while healthcare interventions should prioritize improving access in rural areas. Additionally, efforts to reduce maternal mortality should focus on lower-income families.

The CSO Spotlight report likely contains more disaggregated data and qualitative discussions on disparities across different groups. A thorough analysis of the report would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the specific challenges various population segments face in achieving the SDGs.



Cross-cutting Issues

Examine cross-cutting themes such as human rights, gender equality, climate change, etc.

Cross-Cutting Issues in Sierra Leone's SDG Progress:

Examining cross-cutting themes like human rights, gender equality, and climate change reveals their significant impact on Sierra Leone's progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These issues are interconnected and influence multiple goals, highlighting the need for integrated and inclusive approaches to development.

Human Rights:

- **Fundamental to Development:** Respect for human rights, including civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, is essential for sustainable development. Upholding human rights ensures that development efforts are equitable, inclusive, and benefit all members of society.
- **Challenges:** Sierra Leone faces challenges in ensuring full respect for human rights, particularly for marginalized groups such as women, children, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ individuals. Issues like gender-based violence, child labour, and discrimination persist.
- **Opportunities:** Strengthening human rights institutions, promoting legal reforms, and raising awareness can create a more inclusive and equitable society where everyone can participate and benefit from development.

Gender Equality:

- **Central to SDG Agenda:** Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is a standalone goal (SDG 5) and a cross-cutting issue that impacts progress across all other SDGs. Empowering women and girls is essential for reducing poverty, improving health outcomes, enhancing education, and promoting sustainable economic growth.
- **Challenges:** Gender inequality remains a significant challenge in Sierra Leone, with women and girls facing discrimination in access to education, employment, healthcare, and decision-making. Gender-based violence is also a pervasive issue.



- **Opportunities:** Investing in girls' education, promoting women's economic empowerment, and addressing gender-based violence can unlock the potential of women and girls, leading to more inclusive and sustainable development.

Climate Change:

- **Threat Multiplier:** Climate change significantly threatens Sierra Leone's progress in development. The country is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts, such as floods, droughts, sea-level rise, and extreme weather events, which can disrupt livelihoods, exacerbate poverty, and undermine development efforts.
- **Challenges:** Adapting to climate change and mitigating its impacts requires significant infrastructure, technology, and capacity-building investments. Building resilience to climate shocks and promoting sustainable practices are crucial for ensuring long-term development.
- **Opportunities:** Investing in renewable energy, promoting sustainable agriculture, and adopting climate-smart technologies can create new economic opportunities, improve livelihoods, and build a more resilient and sustainable future.

Other Cross-Cutting Issues:

Other cross-cutting issues that influence SDG's progress in Sierra Leone include:

- **Youth Empowerment:** Investing in education, skills development, and job creation for youth is crucial for harnessing the demographic dividend and promoting inclusive economic growth.
- **Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention:** Addressing the root causes of conflict, promoting reconciliation, and strengthening social cohesion are essential for sustainable peace and development.
- **Good Governance and Accountability:** Strengthening institutions, promoting transparency, and combating corruption are crucial for creating an enabling environment for sustainable development.

In conclusion, addressing cross-cutting issues is essential for achieving the SDGs in Sierra Leone. Integrated approaches that consider the interconnected nature of these issues are needed to ensure that development is inclusive, equitable, and sustainable for all.

Assessing Policy Coherence and Interlinkages across SDGs in Sierra Leone:



Policy coherence refers to the alignment and consistency of policies across different sectors and levels of government to ensure that they work together towards achieving the SDGs. Interlinkages, on the other hand, refer to the interconnectedness of the SDGs, where progress in one goal can either positively or negatively impact progress in others.

There have been efforts in Sierra Leone to promote policy coherence and address interlinkages across the SDGs. The government has integrated the SDGs into its national development plans, such as the Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP 2019-2023). This is a positive step towards ensuring policies across different sectors align with the SDG framework.

However, challenges remain in achieving complete policy coherence and addressing interlinkages. Some of the key issues include:

- **Limited institutional capacity:** Government institutions often lack the capacity and resources to coordinate and integrate policies across sectors effectively. This can lead to fragmented approaches and missed opportunities for synergistic action.
- **Competing priorities:** Different sectors may have competing priorities and interests, making achieving policy coherence difficult. For example, policies aimed at promoting economic growth may sometimes conflict with environmental protection goals.
- **Lack of data and evidence:** There is often a lack of reliable and disaggregated data to assess the impact of policies on different SDGs and to identify potential trade-offs and synergies. This makes it challenging to design and implement policies that effectively address interlinkages.
- **Weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms:** Weak monitoring and evaluation systems hinder the ability to track progress towards the SDGs and identify areas where policies are not coherent or have unintended negative consequences on other goals.

To improve policy coherence and address interlinkages, Sierra Leone needs to:

- **Strengthen institutional capacity:** This includes building the capacity of government institutions to coordinate and integrate policies across sectors and collect and analyze data on SDG progress.
- **Promote dialogue and collaboration:** This involves creating platforms for dialogue and cooperation between different sectors and stakeholders to identify common goals and develop integrated solutions.



- **Invest in data and evidence:** This includes collecting and analyzing disaggregated data to assess the impact of policies on different SDGs and to identify potential trade-offs and synergies.
- **Strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems:** This involves developing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to track progress towards the SDGs and to identify areas where policies need to be adjusted.

By addressing these challenges and strengthening policy coherence and interlinkages, Sierra Leone can accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs and create a more sustainable and equitable future for all.

Means of Implementation

Evaluation of financial resources, governance, partnerships, and data availability

1. Financial Resources:

- **Domestic Resource Mobilization:** Sierra Leone faces challenges in mobilizing domestic resources due to a narrow tax base, limited capacity for tax collection, and a large informal sector. However, there have been efforts to improve tax administration and broaden the tax base.
- **External Financing:** The country relies heavily on external financing, including official development assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investment (FDI). However, this can be unpredictable and may not always align with national priorities.
- **Innovative Financing:** There is potential to explore innovative financing mechanisms, such as social impact bonds and green bonds, to mobilize additional resources for SDG implementation.
- **Budget Allocation:** The government has increased budget allocations for key sectors like health and education, but more needs to be done to ensure adequate and equitable financing for all SDGs.

2. Governance:

- **Policy Coherence:** There have been efforts to integrate the SDGs into national development plans, but challenges remain in ensuring policy coherence across sectors and levels of government.



- **Institutional Capacity:** Weak institutional capacity, including limited human resources and technical expertise, hinders effective implementation and monitoring of SDG-related policies and programs.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** While there have been improvements in transparency and accountability, corruption remains a significant challenge. Strengthening anti-corruption measures and promoting good governance are crucial for effective SDG implementation.
- **Participation and Inclusion:** Ensuring the participation and inclusion of all stakeholders, including marginalized groups, in decision-making processes is essential for achieving the SDGs.

3. Partnerships:

- **International Cooperation:** Sierra Leone actively engages in international partnerships to mobilize resources and expertise for SDG implementation. However, there is a need for more effective coordination and alignment of partner support with national priorities.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Public-private partnerships (P.P.P.s) have the potential to leverage private sector resources and expertise for SDG implementation. However, careful design and implementation are needed to ensure that P.P.P.s are transparent, accountable, and benefit the public.
- **Civil Society Engagement:** Civil society organizations (CSOs) play a crucial role in SDG implementation, advocating for the needs of marginalized groups, monitoring progress, and holding the government accountable. It is essential to strengthen the capacity of CSOs and create an enabling environment for their participation.

4. Data Availability:

- **Data Gaps:** There are significant data gaps in Sierra Leone, particularly for disaggregated data on various SDG indicators. This makes it difficult to track progress, identify disparities, and target interventions effectively.
- **Data Quality:** Even when data is available, its quality is often questionable due to limited capacity for data collection, analysis, and validation.
- **Statistical Capacity:** Strengthening the capacity of national statistical systems to collect, analyze, and disseminate reliable and timely data is crucial for effective SDG monitoring and evaluation.



- **Open Data:** Promoting open data initiatives and making data accessible to the public can enhance transparency, accountability, and participation in SDG implementation.

In conclusion, addressing the challenges related to financial resources, governance, partnerships, and data availability is crucial for accelerating SDG progress in Sierra Leone. This requires a multi-faceted approach that involves strengthening institutions, promoting transparency and accountability, fostering partnerships, and investing in data and statistical capacity.

Civil Society Perspective

Highlight the role and contributions of CSOs.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are crucial in Sierra Leone's journey towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They serve as vital partners to the government, complementing its efforts and filling critical gaps in service delivery, advocacy, and monitoring.

Key Roles and Contributions of CSOs:

1. **Advocacy and Awareness-Raising:** CSOs advocate for policy reforms, raise awareness about the SDGs, and mobilize public support for their implementation. They give voice to marginalized groups, ensuring their concerns are heard and addressed in the development agenda.
2. **Service Delivery:** Many CSOs provide essential services, especially in areas with limited government reach. This includes healthcare, education, clean water, sanitation, and livelihood support. They often reach the most vulnerable populations, providing targeted interventions and innovative solutions.
3. **Capacity Building:** CSOs build the capacity of communities and individuals to participate in development processes and hold duty-bearers accountable. They provide training on various issues, including human rights, gender equality, environmental protection, and good governance.
4. **Monitoring and Accountability:** CSOs are key in monitoring the government's SDG progress. They track the implementation of policies and programs, collect data, and



report on results. This helps to ensure transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making.

5. **Partnerships and Collaboration:** CSOs collaborate with the government, private sector, and international partners to implement SDG-related projects and programs. They leverage their expertise, networks, and resources to achieve a more significant impact.

Specific Examples of CSO Contributions:

- **Health:** CSOs like SightSavers and Health Alert Coalition have played a crucial role in combating malnutrition and improving child health outcomes. Generally, there are challenges in the health sector particularly privately owned health facilities as most do not cover free interventions for persons with disabilities or other marginalised or vulnerable people. Sightsavers continues to promote disability inclusion in all their interventions . It will interest you to know that Sightsavers has partners and projects in all regions in the country who are within the government hospitals- Wester Area Eye care project- it's at Connaught Hospital commonly known as 'eye clinic. Western Area Rural Eye Care Project- at Jui Government Hospital. Northern Area Eye Care – At the Government Hospital in Makeni, Southern Province Eye project- Bo Government Hospital and Eastern Province Eye Care Project- At the Kenema Government Hospital. All this projects support eye care units within all headquarter towns. Persons with disabilities including other marginalised and Vulnerable persons are treated free as Sightsavers provide a special fund for these categories of persons within the project call “Patient care cost” with over 760,000 patients (persons with disabilities and other marginalised and vulnerable groups) have benefited from over 10 years. In the event funds are not readily available due administrative constrains (this is seldom as funds are always provided though sometimes delay) this continues to be implemented with the savings from the project as Sightsavers also provided initial funds for the running of cost recovery schemes within these hospitals.
- **Education:** Organizations like ActionAid, For Her and Forum for the Development of Young People, have supported access to education, particularly for girls, through scholarships, school feeding programs, and advocacy for inclusive education policies.
- **Gender Equality:** CSOs like the 50/50 Group and the Women's Forum have advocated for women's rights and gender equality. They have supported women's political



participation, combating gender-based violence, and promoted economic empowerment for women.

- **Environment:** Organizations like Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Network (WASH-Net) Sierra Leone have worked to protect the environment and promote sustainable development. They have engaged in advocacy, community mobilization, and environmental education.
- **Volunteers Involving Organisations Network (VIONet):** a network of CSOs volunteer organizations in Sierra Leone, has been actively working to localize the SDGs in Sierra Leone by engaging with communities on multiple fronts. They raise awareness about the SDGs and train community members as SDGs ambassadors to develop locally-owned solutions for achieving these goals. Additionally, VIONet supports policy development initiatives such as the review of the national youth policy and collaborates with the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development to realize the integrated national financing framework. This collaboration involves engaging various stakeholders including city and district councils, private sector entities, market entrepreneurs, and national revenue authorities. The aim is to improve revenue generation and financing mechanisms to support the implementation of the SDGs throughout Sierra Leone.

Challenges faced by CSOs in engagement and implementation:

Despite their significant contributions, CSOs in Sierra Leone face several challenges, including:

- **Limited Funding:** Many CSOs struggle to secure adequate funding to sustain their operations and scale up their impact.
- **Restrictive Legal Environment:** The legal framework for CSOs is often restrictive, limiting their ability to operate freely and advocate for change.
- **Limited Capacity:** Some CSOs lack the necessary capacity, including human resources, technical expertise, and organizational systems, to deliver their programs and achieve their goals effectively.

CSOs play a vital role in Sierra Leone's SDG progress. Their contributions in areas such as advocacy, service delivery, capacity building, monitoring, and partnerships are essential for



achieving sustainable and inclusive development. However, for CSOs to fully realize their potential, they must address the challenges they face by providing adequate funding, creating an enabling legal environment, and strengthening their capacity.

Recommendations

Actionable Recommendations for Accelerating SDG Progress in Sierra Leone across diverse stakeholder groups and constituencies:

For the Government:

1. **Prioritize Investment in Human Capital:**

- Increase budgetary allocations to education and health, focusing on quality improvements, teacher training, and expanding access to healthcare in rural areas.
- Implement targeted interventions to address malnutrition and reduce maternal and child mortality rates.
- Invest in skills development and vocational training programs to address youth unemployment and promote decent work.

2. **Strengthen Governance and Institutions:**

- Intensify efforts to combat corruption through transparent procurement processes, asset declaration, and enforcement of anti-corruption laws.
- Enhance institutional capacity by improving coordination among ministries, departments, and agencies (M.D.A.s) responsible for SDG implementation.
- Promote decentralization and local governance to empower communities and ensure their participation in decision-making processes.

3. **Diversify the Economy and Promote Inclusive Growth:**

- Develop and implement policies to diversify the economy beyond extractive industries, focusing on agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing.
- Support small and medium-sized enterprises (S.M.E.s) through access to finance, business development services, and market linkages.
- Implement pro-poor policies that address inequality and ensure that economic growth benefits all segments of society.

4. **Invest in Sustainable Infrastructure:**



- Prioritize investments in infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, to improve access to electricity, clean water, sanitation, and transportation.
- Promote the use of renewable energy sources to increase energy access and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.
- Adopt climate-smart infrastructure designs to enhance resilience to climate change impacts.

5. Strengthen Data Collection and Monitoring:

- Invest in building the capacity of national statistical systems to collect, analyze, and disseminate reliable and disaggregated data on SDG indicators.
- Develop robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress, identify bottlenecks, and inform evidence-based decision-making.
- Promote open data initiatives to enhance transparency and accountability.

For the Private Sector:

1. Responsible Business Practices:

- Adopt sustainable business practices that minimize environmental impact, promote social responsibility, and contribute to the SDGs.
- Invest in local communities through corporate social responsibility (C.S.R.) initiatives that support education, health, and livelihoods.
- Engage in public-private partnerships (P.P.P.s) to support the government's efforts to achieve the SDGs.

2. Innovation and Technology:

- Develop and deploy innovative technologies that can address development challenges, such as renewable energy solutions, climate-smart agriculture, and digital financial services.
- Invest in research and development to create locally relevant solutions that can be scaled up and replicated.

For Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):

1. Strengthen Advocacy and Accountability:

- Continue to advocate for policy reforms that prioritize the SDGs and address the needs of marginalized groups.
- Monitor the government's SDG progress and hold them accountable for their commitments.



- Engage in constructive dialogue with the government and other stakeholders to identify solutions and drive progress.

2. Capacity Building and Collaboration:

- Build the capacity of communities and individuals to participate in development processes and demand accountability from duty-bearers.
- Collaborate with other CSOs, the government, and the private sector to implement SDG-related projects and programs.
- Share knowledge, expertise, and best practices to enhance the effectiveness of development interventions.

For International Partners:

1. Align Support with National Priorities:

- Ensure that development assistance is aligned with Sierra Leone's national development priorities and the SDGs.
- Provide flexible and predictable funding to support long-term development programs.
- Invest in building the capacity of national institutions to implement and manage development programs effectively.

2. Promote Knowledge Sharing and Technology Transfer:

- Facilitate knowledge sharing and technology transfer between Sierra Leone and other countries to promote innovation and accelerate SDG progress.
- Support research and development initiatives that address local challenges and contribute to global knowledge.

Suggestions for Accelerating SDG Progress and Addressing Gaps in Sierra Leone:

A multi-faceted and integrated approach is necessary to accelerate progress and effectively address the gaps in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Sierra Leone.

1. Strengthen Data Collection and Analysis:

- Invest in robust data collection systems to gather accurate and disaggregated data on all SDG indicators, particularly for marginalized groups and remote areas.
- Utilize technology and innovative approaches like mobile surveys and community-based monitoring to improve data collection efficiency and reach.



- Build capacity for data analysis and interpretation to inform evidence-based policymaking and targeted interventions.

2. Prioritize Inclusive and Equitable Growth:

- Focus on pro-poor policies that address income inequality and promote equal opportunities for all.
- Invest in sectors with high potential for job creation, such as agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing.
- Support small and medium-sized enterprises (S.M.E.s) through access to finance, training, and market linkages.
- Implement social protection programs to safeguard vulnerable populations from shocks and provide a safety net for the most marginalized.

3. Enhance Human Capital Development:

- Prioritize investments in quality education, ensuring access for all children, especially girls, and focusing on improving learning outcomes.
- Strengthen healthcare systems, particularly in rural areas, by increasing the number of healthcare facilities, improving the availability of essential medicines, and training healthcare workers.
- Address malnutrition through targeted interventions, such as school feeding programs and nutrition education campaigns.

4. Strengthen Governance and Institutions:

- Intensify efforts to combat corruption through transparent procurement processes, asset declaration, and enforcement of anti-corruption laws.
- Enhance institutional capacity by improving coordination among government agencies, building technical expertise, and promoting merit-based recruitment and promotion.
- Empower local governments and communities to participate in decision-making and hold duty-bearers accountable.

5. Invest in Sustainable Infrastructure:

- Prioritize investments in infrastructure that supports sustainable development, such as renewable energy, climate-resilient infrastructure, and water and sanitation facilities.



- Leverage public-private partnerships (P.P.P.s) to mobilize private sector investment in infrastructure development.
- Innovative financing mechanisms such as green bonds and blended finance should be adopted to fund sustainable infrastructure projects.

6. Promote Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action:

- Implement climate change adaptation and mitigation measures to build resilience to climate shocks and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Invest in renewable energy sources to increase energy access and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.
- Promote sustainable land management practices, reforestation, and biodiversity conservation to protect natural resources.

7. Strengthen Partnerships and Collaboration:

- Foster effective collaboration between government, civil society, private sector, and international partners to leverage resources, expertise, and innovation for SDG implementation.
- Enhance coordination mechanisms to ensure alignment of development interventions and avoid duplication of efforts.
- Promote knowledge sharing and learning across sectors and stakeholders to identify best practices and accelerate progress.

By implementing these recommendations, Sierra Leone can accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs and create a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous future for all its citizens.

Conclusion

Summary of key findings and calls to action.

The CSO Spotlight Report on Sierra Leone's progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reveals a mixed picture. While there have been commendable advancements in certain areas, such as education and gender equality, significant challenges remain in eradicating poverty, improving healthcare, ensuring access to clean water and sanitation, promoting sustainable economic growth, and addressing climate change.

Key Findings:



CSO-SDG VNR SPOTLIGHT REPORT AND PEOPLE'S SCORECARD

- **Progress:** Notable progress has been made in increasing school enrollment, reducing gender disparities in education, and promoting women's political participation.
- **Challenges:** Significant challenges persist in eradicating poverty, reducing hunger, improving health outcomes, ensuring access to clean water and sanitation, promoting decent work and economic growth, and addressing climate change.
- **Inequalities:** Disparities exist across gender, geography, and income levels, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to ensure that no one is left behind.
- **Cross-Cutting Issues:** Human rights, gender equality, and climate change are critical cross-cutting issues that impact progress across multiple SDGs.
- **Means of Implementation:** Challenges remain in mobilizing adequate financial resources, strengthening governance, fostering partnerships, and improving data availability for effective SDG implementation.
- **Civil Society's Role:** Civil society organizations (CSOs) play a crucial role in advocating for the SDGs, providing essential services, building capacity, monitoring progress, and holding the government accountable.

Calls to Action:

- **Government:**
 - Prioritize investments in human capital, infrastructure, and sustainable economic growth.
 - Strengthen governance and institutions, combat corruption, and promote transparency and accountability.
 - Diversify the economy, create decent jobs, and address inequality.
 - Invest in climate change adaptation and mitigation measures.
 - Strengthen data collection and monitoring systems.
 - Foster meaningful partnerships with civil society and the private sector.
- **Private Sector:**
 - Adopt sustainable business practices and invest in local communities.
 - Leverage innovation and technology to address development challenges.
 - Engage in public-private partnerships to support SDG implementation.
- **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):**
 - Strengthen advocacy and accountability efforts.
 - Build capacity and collaborate with other stakeholders.
 - Continue to provide essential services and support marginalized groups.



● **International Partners:**

- Align support with national priorities and provide flexible and predictable funding.
- Promote knowledge sharing and technology transfer.
- Support capacity building and institutional strengthening.

By working together, the government, private sector, civil society, and international partners can accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs in Sierra Leone and build a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous future for all.





References

Official Government Reports:

- Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP 2019-2023): Outlines the government's development priorities and strategies, including its approach to achieving the SDGs.
- Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs): Sierra Leone reports to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on its SDG progress.
- Ministry of Finance Reports: Reports on budget allocations and expenditures related to SDG implementation.
- Statistics Sierra Leone (SSL): Official statistics on various SDG indicators.

UN. Reports and Publications:

- UN. Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for Sierra Leone: Outlines the UN.'s support for Sierra Leone's SDG implementation.
- SDG Country Profiles: Provides an overview of Sierra Leone's progress towards the SDGs.
- UN. Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Reports: These reports include data and analysis on human development indicators relevant to the SDGs.

Civil Society Reports and Publications:

- CSO Shadow Reports: Independent assessments of Sierra Leone's SDG progress by civil society organizations.
- Thematic Reports: Reports by CSOs on specific SDG-related issues, such as poverty, health, education, gender equality, and climate change.
- Research Papers and Articles: Academic studies and articles on Sierra Leone's development challenges and opportunities, including those related to the SDGs.

Other Relevant Sources:

- World Bank Reports: Reports on Sierra Leone's economic and social development, including data on poverty, inequality, and human development.
- International Monetary Fund (IMF) Reports: Reports on Sierra Leone's macroeconomic situation and fiscal policies.
- News Articles and Media Reports: Coverage of SDG-related developments in Sierra Leone.



ANNEXES

ANNEX 1- QUESTIONNAIRES

VNR Process: <https://ee.kobotoolbox.org/x/gj1G9YHve>

Progress 2015 - 2024: <https://ee.kobotoolbox.org/x/tm1godtS.G> .
<https://ee.kobotoolbox.org/x/P8Clcpvi>

2024: <https://ee.kobotoolbox.org/x/N1fh75ad>

SDGs Questionnaire_2024: <https://ee.kobotoolbox.org/x/X6hLx2y2>

ANNEX 2

Analysed Data:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1InpPZkjqQKNLGsnMnliocT1ymgCvusdtkZXG410939E/edit?usp=drive_link

ANNEX 3

Data Coding: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ohxzo63SFA3BFowjE0b-SfvA_OkSQDI59Mr12IZCtdA/edit?usp=drive_link