

Background

The FCDO-funded **Leh wi Lan** programme supports the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) to improve learning outcomes for boys and girls at secondary level and to increase the enrolment, retention and well-being of girls in school. The first phase of the programme was successfully completed in March 2021 and the programme is now in extension phase with a focus on 1) supporting girls and children with disabilities to be in secondary school, safe, and learning 2) strengthening capacity of MBSSE, TSC, districts and schools to respond to Covid-19, and to deliver FQSE, 3) Improving data and evidence to drive sector monitoring, and legacy resources to communicate lessons learned.

As part of the first phase of Leh wi Lan activities, a series of annual Secondary Grade Learning Assessments (SGLAs) were administered to provide an annual “health check of the secondary education system” in Sierra Leone. The baseline SGLA I was conducted in 2017, with a follow-up SGLA II in 2018, and SGLA III conducted in all five regions and 16 districts of Sierra Leone in May-June 2019. In response to the onset of COVID-19 and ensuing school closures in Sierra Leone, the fourth round of the SGLAs was replaced with a mixed-methods Back to School (BTS) study conducted immediately after school opened in October 2020. The purpose of the BTS study was to understand how school closure affected children’s learning, safety and wellbeing while they were at home, and to use this data and evidence to support stakeholders with their longer term response and recovery priorities. The BTS study reported results at a regional level, based on a quantitative sample of 250 schools and a supplementary qualitative study in 20 schools.

The Learning and School Safety (LASS) study – 2021:

The programme is now in process of planning a follow-up round of evaluative study to measure learning outcomes and attitudes and practices related to reporting violence in schools. The study will build closely on the lessons and delivery model of the BTS 2020 study to provide a further data point and evidence to inform Leh wi Lan’s extension phase activities and support to MBSSE. In particular, the LASS study will:

- I. **Provide comparative data on learning performance and child safeguarding mechanisms one year on from the initial COVID-related disruptions.** This will help reaffirm continued direction of travel in both learning achievement and reporting violence in schools by allowing us to test whether the BTS study findings were one-off or continuing trend results.
- II. **Contribute to Leh wi Lan’s log-frame reporting** by providing vital evidence for the next Annual Review.

The LASS Study will use a **mixed-methods design**, similar to the BTS (2020) study. The level of disaggregation will be to explore province and national level trends. This will be reflected in the sample selection, fieldwork, analysis and reporting processes.

The study will take place in **Oct-Nov 2021** and include the following components:

- Pupil learning assessments at JSS3 and SSS3 level
- A school checklist instrument administered to principals
- Pupil focus group discussions (FGDs)
- Community-Teacher Association (CTA) FGD
- Key informant interviews (KIIs) with MBBSE/Gender and safeguarding specialists

In line with this, OPM seeks a survey and research firm in Freetown to partner with and implement the LASS Study. It is also expected that the survey firm will provide a highly skilled full-time Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Coordinator as per the requirements indicated below.

Interested organizations must:

1. Be a registered entity in Freetown, Sierra Leone.
2. Have a robust track record of implementing mixed methods research, particularly in the education sector
3. Have previous experience of conducting school and pupil level surveys.
4. Have established experience with large-scale surveys with a sample size of at least 2000 pupils and/or 250 schools
5. Have experience with managing and deploying large teams, of at least 40 field staff.
6. Be able to provide skilled technical staff (including, but not limited to, a Fieldwork Manager, Assistant Fieldwork Manager, Data Manager, Logistics and Operations Manager, Finance Manager, and a Liaison Officer) and field staff (quantitative data collectors, experienced qualitative researchers, transcribers)
7. Have experience working on previous rounds of SGLA and/or the BTS study (not necessary but will be considered a strong advantage)

Capabilities required for MEL coordinator:

1. Have at least 5 years of experience working in Sierra Leone
2. Experience working in monitoring and evaluation within education sector
3. Experience working within / with the MBSSE, and engaging with other important departments like Teaching Service Commission (TSC) and Statistics Sierra Leone
4. Have a strong grasp of mixed-methods research and concepts, including the ability to engage and lead interviews and discussions with key education stakeholders
5. Have been previously involved in the dissemination of education evidence to key stakeholders (central and regional level)
6. Have established relationships with key stakeholders within Leh wi Learn and MBSSE
7. Flexible to travel up-country as part of assignment requirements

To express interest, please send a 2 page (max) capability statement of relevant experience in the last 3 years, and CVs of key personnel including the MEL coordinator to A1534@opml.co.uk by **17th September 2021**.