

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Annual Report 2016



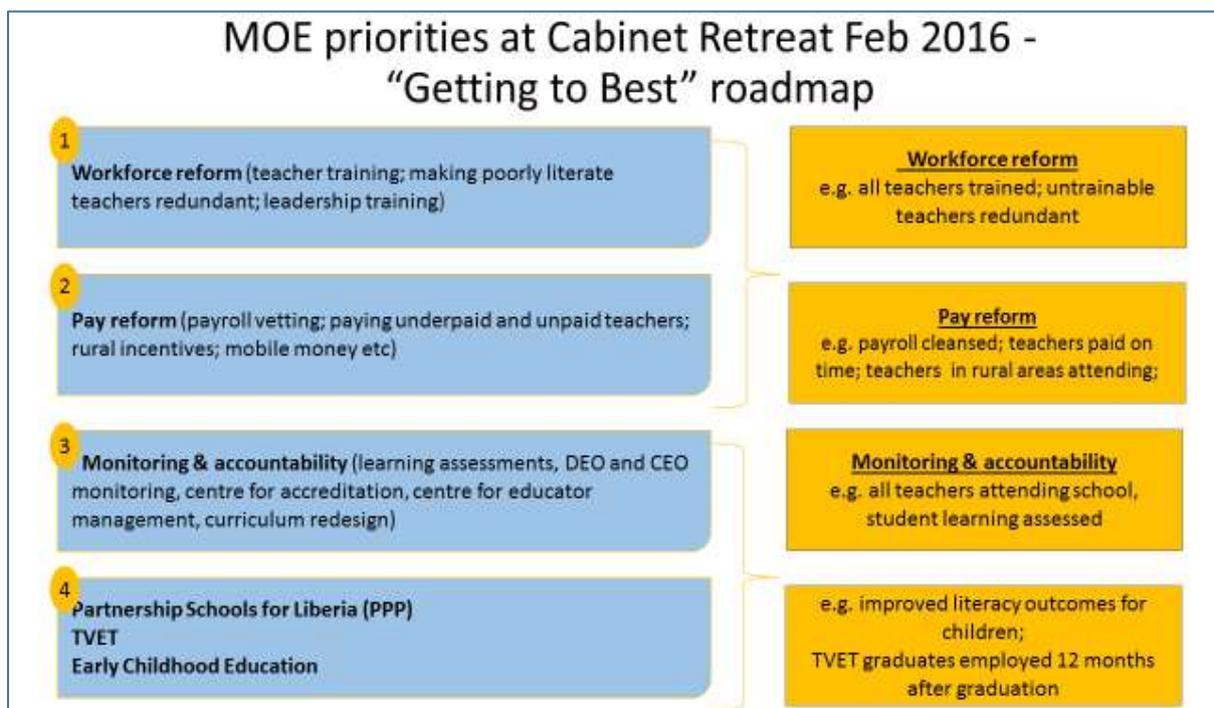
Contents

1. Ministry of Education commitments at the start of 2016	3
2. Progress to date	4
3. Performance dashboard	5
4. Full report of achievements	6
4.1 Workforce Reform	6
4.2 Pay Reform.....	6
4.3 Irreversible Accountability Systems.....	7
4.4 Accelerating learning outcomes: Partnership Schools for Liberia; ECE; TVET	8
5.5 Other Ministry achievements and projects	11
6. Resources and gaps	11
7. Next steps:	12
Plan to October 2017	12
Plan to 2020 (G2B-ESP)	12

1. Ministry of Education commitments at the start of 2016

This year the Ministry of Education focused on essential improvements in our education system to ensure that the education system does not fail Liberia's children and youth. As set out in Vision 2030 and the Agenda for Transformation, the country's goal is to achieve inclusive growth and middle income status by 2030. Education is an integral part of achieving this goal and the Ministry of Education remains committed to providing access to quality education that is affordable.

In 2015, "Getting to Best" was launched with the Ministry's top nine areas for reform which have been developed into a three year 'Getting to Best -Education Sector Plan'. Ministries were asked to lay out their top priorities at the start of 2016 and these were the four priorities in the 'Getting to Best' roadmap.



The Millennium Development Goals focused countries on increasing access to education. Liberia has 1.5 million children in school. Recent statistics stating that 62% of children in Liberia are out of school have been recognized as incorrect and revised down to 17% of children (over a third were in Early Childhood Education). This is not an acceptable situation and work continues to get over-age and out of school children into classes pitched at their level. However, as recognized by the Global Partnership for Education and Sustainable Development Goals, having access to school is, all too often, not leading to learning.

There can be no learning in schools without teachers. Therefore, in the Getting to Best Roadmap, MoE prioritized: 1) getting a paid teacher for every class of children (pay reform); 2) improving the quality of school teachers and principals; 3) implementing accountability systems to ensure quality teaching and measuring learning outcomes; 4) accelerating learning outcomes and youth employment by: contracting out schools to innovators (Partnership

Schools for Liberia), improvements to Technical and Vocational Training (TVET); free, quality Early Childhood Education (ECE).

VISION FOR 2019:

A Liberia where there is a quality teacher, in every classroom, every day, with learning outcomes assessed. Improvement is supported by strong school administrators (Principals, DEOs, CEOs) and local monitoring.

2. Progress to date

As demonstrated by the performance dashboard on the following page, good progress has been made. More could be made with further fundraising. And some reforms (such as paying teachers) cannot be met without commitments from the Government of Liberia. Highlights from this year include:

1. Paying all teachers 2. Improving the quality of teachers

- 65% of 15,000 teachers vetted. \$2.25m of savings identified from removing ghosts
- 1,382 qualified teachers have been placed on payroll as direct replacements, and the Ministry is in the process of planning training and certification programs to expand and strengthen the pool of available instructors and leaders for Liberia's schools
- Teachers on supplementary payroll identified and becoming civil servants
- Voluntary teachers identified (around a third of the workforce) and some can be paid from savings from ghosts. 250 tested and added for Partnership Schools for Liberia.

Challenges for next year: Currently around 3 classes of every primary school have no teacher. And 2-3 have an unpaid teacher. Meanwhile 1,500 teachers are of pension age but cannot be removed from payroll due to fiscal constraints; and teachers who are tested as functionally illiterate cannot be removed as there are no funds for severance. There are 8000 voluntary teachers currently teaching waiting to come onto payroll.

3. Improved monitoring systems

- Negotiated with USAID to include learning assessments for ECE to Grade 2 in the READ program. At present our first assessment of learning is in secondary school for the Grade 9 WAEC.
- 94 Partnership Schools for Liberia are monitored every 2 weeks by providers. Many government schools are not seen once a year.
- Proposal in place for development of a single school and teacher monitoring tool with training for DEOs and CEOs to administer this. Funding is likely.
- Proposal in place for low cost, light touch inspectorate to do "flash" visits to schools and ensure DEO monitoring is taking place.

4. Accelerated learning outcomes

- 94 Partnership Schools run by 8 providers opened to try new learning models
- ECE free in all of these schools- 28,000 in PSL schools
- TVET proposal developed and \$20m available if MFDP can offer funding for 50 highly trained TVET teachers to be added to payroll

3. Performance dashboard

Outcome	Project	Planned / designed?	Funded?	Implementing?	Result
1. Pay reform (paid teacher for every class)	Payroll cleansing	Yes. Investment memo	Big Win Philanthropy	6 counties	\$2.25m so far
	Mobile money	Yes. USAID doc	USAID	Nimba	Rolling out further
	Supplementary teachers	Yes, 1,811 teachers	CSA - \$6m	on civil service	pay in discussion
	Paying voluntary teachers	Yes, 6,900 voluntary	\$5.4m (for trained)		
	Pensions	Yes, 1,100 staff	\$4m		
	Redundancies	4900 (30% of existing staff likely to fail)	\$4.9m		Would save c\$8.5m annually
	Rural incentives	Pilot for 200 to S.East	\$300K		
2. Workforce reform (improving teacher quality)	Testing all teachers	Yes. Investment memo	Big Win Philanthropy	9000 tested	Training being planned
	CPD / training for all teachers	Y, 7600 teachers	\$7.6m (see ESP)		
	Strengthening school leaders	Y, 2500 principal pilot	\$100K of \$1.86m	piloting	
	ECE teacher training	Yes	UNICEF	610 trained	More teachers needed
3. Irreversible accountability systems	DEO monitoring systems	Yes - PSL and ESP	\$1.84m		
	School inspections	in ESP	\$1.23m		Low cost, high impact
	Learning assessments	in READ program	USAID (to grade 2)	In procurement	Could scale nationally
	Accreditation	Not in ESP or concepts	Not costed		
4. Accelerate learning outcomes	Partnership Schools for Liberia	Yes	Range of donors	94 schools	28,000 students
	Make ECE free	Being costed	\$23.8m -current fees	To be announced	More funds needed
	TVET	in design	EU – 20m Euro	In discussion	MYS lead?

Key:

Green – Designed / funding secured / implementing well

Amber – Close to design/ close to funding / implementation stalled

Red – not yet designed/ funded

ESP = Education Sector Plan. PSL = Partnership Schools for Liberia. Concepts = pack of concept notes for Getting to Best

4. Full report of achievements

4.1 Workforce Reform

In 2016, MoE partnered with LTTP/USAID and Big Win Philanthropy to pilot and roll out the Teacher Vetting and Testing project. To date vetting and testing has taken place in six counties for over 9,000 teachers and administrators, representing 65% of the total MoE teaching force. The program's goals are to enable MoE payroll cleaning and to support professional development for teachers and administrators so that there is a trained, paid teacher in every classroom by 2019. Vetted teachers are issued Biometric ID cards to improve monitoring and accountability. So far, 72% of teachers reached by this initiative have been issued Biometric IDs. In Lofa, Bomi and Grand Cape Mount counties, 88% of personnel reported for vetting and testing. Across Liberia, any personnel listed on payroll who does not complete vetting or follow-up to complete it within 30 days will be considered "ghosts" and removed from the government payroll.

Vetting and testing exercises are helping the Ministry transition eligible employees to pensions and identify those employees that can be made redundant. 9% of the workforce in Lofa, Bomi and Grand Cape Mount were recommended to CSA for pension, with similar numbers expected for Liberia's other 12 counties. The Ministry has already made 65 Central Office employees redundant, creating savings of \$113,220 USD per annum, and will be reviewing the qualifications and test performances of vetted teachers over the next year in order to determine how many can be made redundant. Those identified as functionally illiterate will be removed from service. Through these measures, MoE is freeing up resources and space on the payroll for trained, qualified teachers and administrators. 1,382 qualified teachers have been placed on payroll as direct replacements, and the Ministry is in the process of planning training and certification programs to expand and strengthen the pool of available instructors for Liberia's schools. Volunteers have been included in the testing and vetting initiative, and those that show promise will be eligible for expedited training to complete the necessary qualifications to become a teacher on the government payroll. Through Partnership Schools for Liberia (PSL), an additional 500 qualified teachers are now on the MoE payroll, 206 of whom are RTTI graduates.

MoE plans to accompany its investments in teachers' professional development with a program designed to train administrators in leadership and management. Data collected through ongoing workforce reform initiatives shows that most administrators, both in schools and in district or county offices, have only a C-certificate level of education and no specialized training in school leadership. MoE has developed a proposal for an initiative that would train and certify Principals, DEOs and CEOs, and County Board members so that they are better able to support their teachers, run quality schools and monitor learning outcomes. The total cost of this program is estimated at just over \$1.8 million USD, with \$100,000 USD so far committed by GoL.

4.2 Pay Reform

MoE's payroll reform measures are freeing up valuable government resources that can be reallocated to address shortcomings in Liberia's education system. Following the Teacher

Testing and Vetting program pilot in Montserrado, Bong and Nimba counties, 1,028 “ghost” teachers were identified and removed from the MoE payroll, saving the government of Liberia upwards of \$1,700,000 USD per annum. An estimated \$585,280 USD in additional yearly savings is expected once “ghost” teachers identified in Lofa, Bomi and Grand Cape Mount are deleted from MoE Payroll. The Ministry also reviewed the Central Office payroll for anomalies, identifying and removing 54 “ghost” employees for further savings of \$108,300 per year. In total, clearing the Ministry’s payroll of “ghosts” has so far resulted in annual savings of \$2,393,580 USD, with the remaining 35% of the teaching work force across 9 more counties still to undergo vetting over the next year.

With these savings and as a further step in payroll cleaning, MoE is correcting discrepancies in teacher salaries to ensure all employees are being paid at the correct level according to their qualifications and government policy. Across Lofa, Bomi and Cape Mount counties MoE was under-paying teachers by \$24,050 USD per month and over-paying by \$7,835 USD per month. Moving forward, the Ministry can reallocate money saved from overpaid staff and payments to “ghost” teachers in order to bring underpaid teachers’ salaries up to the correct amount and hire additional qualified teachers to fill gaps.

The workforce and payroll reform initiatives undertaken by MoE in 2016 have resulted in the creation of one central database to track all staff information, including credentials and payment details. For the first time in five years, MoE prepared and submitted a comprehensive personnel listing for all 15 counties to the Civil Service Agency (CSA) and Budget Bureau (MFDP). The Ministry also implemented a decentralization program assigning 5 administrative support positions to each of Liberia’s 15 counties, including a M&E officer, personnel officer, accounts officer, planning officer and procurement officer. To streamline payment processes, MoE is piloting a mobile money program in partnership with LoneStar MTN that has successfully enrolled 67 teachers in Nimba county since August and will be rolled out to additional counties over the next two years.

Overall the Ministry of Education has made significant progress toward delivering on the goals it set out last year. However, several challenges remain that will need to be addressed in collaboration with other Ministries, Agencies and Commissions of the Government of Liberia as well as development partners. Most notably, MoE’s payroll remains underfunded, and the costs of getting one C-certificate level teacher in every classroom by 2019, estimated at \$28 million USD, will not be covered by the notable savings achieved through payroll reform, estimated to be \$4 million USD when completed. Donor investments in the form of funding and technical assistance have been instrumental in advancing MoE’s agenda to improve Liberia’s education sector by enabling a wide range of projects and reforms. However, this aid is often earmarked for certain projects and cannot be used to cover certain gaps, including teacher salaries or pensions.

4.3 Irreversible Accountability Systems

MoE has been working along with partners to put in place effective monitoring systems to improve teacher and school performance.

Learning assessments: Since the war, Liberia has had no national assessment of learning before the grade 9 WAEC. This means there is no way of assessing whether the majority of children are leaving primary school able to read. We also cannot compare which primary schools are performing better or why. Assessments do take place in some schools and this means partners

can assess what teaching methods or interventions are working for those children. Learning assessments are being embedded in three ways. 1) The USAID READ program will embed learning assessments to Grade 3. This will expand Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and the Early Grade Maths Assessment (EGMA) – learning assessments designed and already trialled in Liberia. 2) Partnership Schools for Liberia includes baseline and endline EGRA and EGMA assessments for the control and treatments schools, National assessments at primary level, including re-implementing a national assessment at Grade 6, have been included in the Education Sector Plan and could be funded by a donor. 3) The Education Sector Plan costs learning assessments at all grades and a return to a national assessment at grade 6 (this used to be the WAEC). A donor may fund this.

Partnership Schools for Liberia enables each provider to manage a smaller cluster of schools. This means PSL schools are visited roughly every two weeks. This enables far more rigorous accountability for schools including support for teacher practice, and ensuring teacher attendance. Most countries in the region have a goal to visit each school a few times a year.

Monitoring of schools is hindered by a lack of training, lack of fuel and poor accountability for CEOs and DEOs. There is also no single monitoring tool, or use of smart phone technology (as in countries such as Ghana) to gather and report school data. Proposals have been developed under Partnership Schools which will impact on the national monitoring system. We are adjusting proposals and hoping these will be funded. Packages would include: consultation and development of a single school monitoring and teacher accountability tool; testing of the tool; training of CEOs and DEOs in its use; tracking and supporting local implementation. An inspectorate could consist of CEOs and DEOs or could ensure greater accountability by doing spot checks of schools to ensure DEOs are making regular visits. Without such improvements in accountability, and with continuing pay concerns for teachers, it is unlikely that teacher time and practice in the classroom will improve.

4.4 Accelerating learning outcomes: Partnership Schools for Liberia; ECE; TVET

Partnership Schools

On September 5, 2016, the Government of Liberia, through the Ministry of Education, launched ‘Partnership Schools for Liberia,’ (PSL) a fee-free Public Private Partnership (PPP), in 94 primary schools run by 8 non-Government private providers. The PSL program will affect around 27,683 students in thirteen (13) counties. The goal of the program is to improve learning outcomes for government schools children beginning from Early Childhood Development (ECD) through grade 6. Enrolment at these Partnership Schools is free for parents, including at the ECD level. A rigorous evaluation of the program will be conducted to show the effect and impact of PSL on the Liberian Education system.

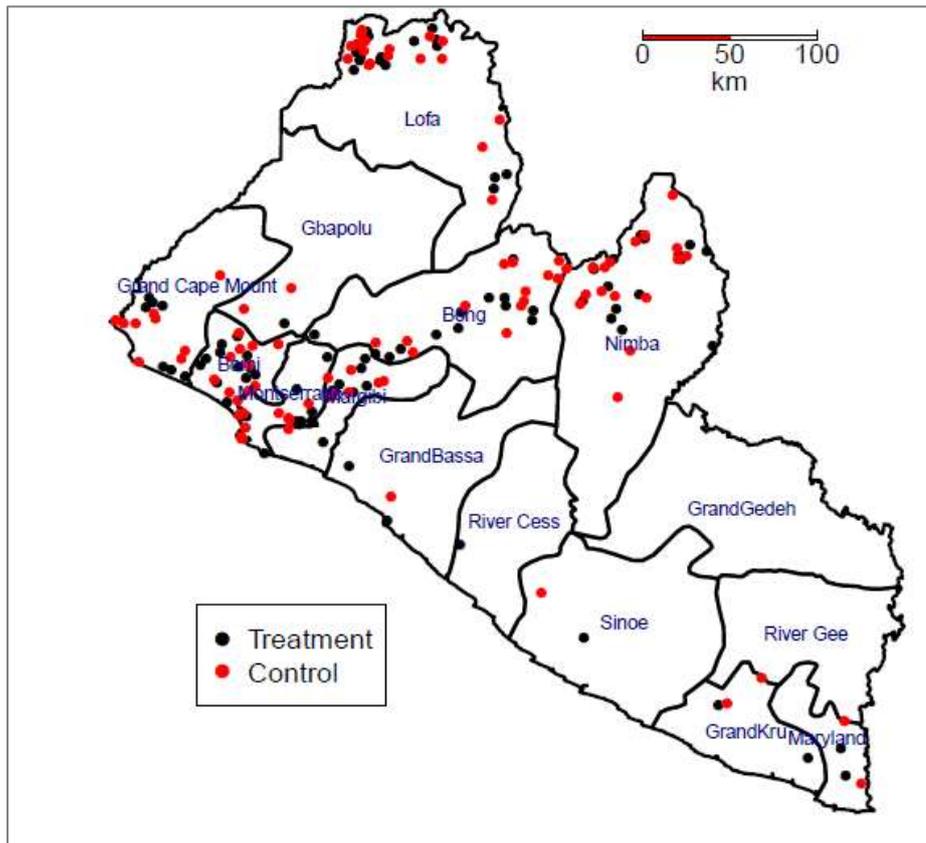
A list of eligible schools was identified from all public schools. The schools were randomly assigned to receive the program or not, giving two groups that are, on average, the same. We will measure where these groups are now and where they are at the end of the evaluation. The difference between them after the program is the true isolated impact of the program.

The timeline for data collection as well as a map of the treatment and control schools is as follows:

Baseline: September - October 2016 (starting of academic year 2016/17)

Midline: May - June 2017 (end of academic year 2016/17)

Endline: May - June 2019 (end of academic year 2018/19)



Evidence generated is intended to inform the Ministry's and donors' policy decisions to continue or scale up PSL. It will also contribute to the international debate about the design and role of charter school-like policies in education systems.

The list of the eight (8) Provider Schools are below:

1. **BRAC:** 20 Partnership Schools in Lofa and Nimba
2. **Bridge:** 25 Partnership Schools in Bomi, Bong, Grand Bassa, Cape Mount, Margibi, Montserrado, and Nimba.
3. **Liberia Youth Network:** 4 Partnership Schools in Bong and Sinoe
4. **More Than Me:** 6 Partnership Schools in Bomi, Gbarpolu, Montserrado
5. **Omega Schools:** 18 Partnership Schools in Bong, Margibi, Montserrado and Nimba
6. **Rising Academy Networks:** 5 Partnership Schools in Bong and Montserrado
7. **Street Child:** 12 Partnership Schools in Grand Cape Mount, Margibi and Montserrado
8. **Stella Maris Polytechnic:** 4 Partnership Schools in Maryland and Grand Kru

Providers have begun making improvements to school infrastructure: desks, chairs, repairs and painting, as well as procuring new books and learning materials. There will be more paid teachers in classrooms and PSL teachers will receive continuous professional development and additional training. Providers will place key emphasis on increasing girls' enrollment.

PSL schools will teach national Early Childhood Education (ECE) curriculum, tests literacy math, language arts, science, and other core subjects, and provide close monitoring and supervision to improve accountability and performance.

TVET

Young Liberians need to be able to develop their skills to contribute to the economy. To move towards this, in 2016, MoE collaborated with MYS TVET Taskforce and partners.

- TVET Curriculum: The MoE Division of TVET collaborated with the Center of Excellence for Curriculum, 4-H Liberia, MoE, FAO, WFP, MYS and CARI to develop the agriculture curriculum for Lower Basic Education to be piloted during this academic year, 2016/2017.
- MoE collaborated with USAID/FED and the private sector in agriculture developed the agriculture curriculum for secondary and post-secondary TVET. Piloting is ongoing at BWI and three community colleges (Lofa, Nimba and Grand Bassa).
- We trained 75 agriculture teachers that are involved with the piloting of the agriculture curriculum at BWI and the community colleges A proposal has also been developed with the EU which will bring \$20m to Liberia provided 50 high value TVET teachers can be added to the MoE budget.

ECE

The goal: increase access to quality early childhood education.

Quality early childhood education (ECE) improves student learning outcomes through primary school and beyond; it also has the greatest benefits for the most marginalised children.

The challenges:

- Not all children can access ECE, and costs are a barrier to access
- The quality of ECE is extremely poor in most of our schools
- Half the students in ECE are 6 years of age or older, and should be in primary school

Progress during 2016:

- Launched Early Learning Partnership Systems Research with the World Bank (securing US\$1 million in funding) to map needs and challenges and begin pilots to remove fees and reduce costs to families.
- Developed Education Sector Plan, a 5-year plan with components to gradually move Liberia to free ECE.
- To date, 610 teachers have been trained in 115 schools, both private and public, with awareness raising in Montserrado, Margibi, Grand Bassa and Nimba counties. Training for ECE teachers and caregivers is ongoing. Specific target schools are those that received the UNICEF ECE Learning Materials during the academic year 2016/2017.

4.5 Other Ministry achievements and projects

The goals: improve learning outcomes by ensuring teachers and schools have the training and resources they need to improve learning outcomes.

- We have distributed over two million textbooks and supplementary readers including learning materials to all public and community schools from Grades 1 to 12, benefiting over 495,842 students and 22,137 teachers in the 15 counties across the country.
- Partnering with UNICEF, teaching and learning materials have been provided to more than 8000 students and 280 teachers in 40 public schools in 6 counties.
- Trained 280 teachers in gender responsiveness in 40 schools in 6 counties.
- 400 students were trained in life skills and HIV/AIDS prevention.
- More than 50 science teachers from both Public and Private schools have been trained to use the UNESCO Micro-science Kits
- 10 science teachers (Science Bowl Competition coaches) have been trained in the use of digital electronic microscopes in Ganta, Nimba, Montserrado counties.
- 1,696 primary schools are benefiting from the current school feeding program, with the total of 389,714 students benefitting in 14 counties.
- Currently, WFP, in partnership with MoE, MoH and MoA are piloting the Home-Grown School Feeding program in 6 schools in Nimba.
- Between January to September, 2016, deworming exercises was conducted across the country benefitting 1,533,091 children.
- 9,052 teachers and 4,318 PTA members across all 15 counties participated in training in psychosocial support services and pedagogy.
- 102 WASH facilities constructed in 102 schools, benefitting 39,500 students across 7 counties (River Gee, Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Sinoe, Montserrado, Nimba and Maryland).
- Local scholarships supported 1,161 students studying at technical institutions and universities. 90% of new scholarships are being earmarked for students enrolling in scientific fields, including medical training. Selection was undertaken through a decentralized process. Bilateral scholarships also continue to benefit Liberia across multiple areas of national need.

6. Resources and gaps

Donor Funding

US\$110 million has been committed to the education sector by the donors and development partners listed below since Autumn 2015. Not all of this funding could be redirected by MOE. Fundraising continues:

- USAID – estimated \$80Million (USD) to increase access by out of school children, reading programs and mobile money (Getting to Best priorities included are learning assessments; potentially some DEO and CEO monitoring support; mobile money etc)
- EU - 20 Million (Euro) for TVET (in discussion)
- GPE - \$11.9Million (USD) for primary and basic education (in discussion)
- Vitol, Mulago, ARK, amongst others - Partnership Schools for Liberia, c \$4.5m
- Big Win Philanthropy - \$1 Million for payroll vetting and teacher testing
- World Bank - \$1m to identify challenges and best practices for free quality ECE

- WASH in schools, TVET agriculture and other UNICEF and UNECSCO programs
- Open Society Foundation (OSF) funding for monitoring standards (in discussion)
- GPE outstanding - \$100,000 for teacher training

Government funding

The MOE budget is around \$44m. \$37m of that is for payroll which covers around 15,000 teachers. Around 6000 classrooms are empty (an estimated 20% of students have no teacher based on an average class size of 50). As outlined above, the estimated \$4m savings from ghosts will not be enough to accommodate the estimated \$25m needed to get a teacher for each class. Creative solutions such as different pay scales, contract teaching etc. could be sought. The alternative is to continue to have over 6000 classes of children with no teacher every day or to reduce the number of schools and merge classes. There are an estimated 6,900 voluntary teachers waiting to be added to payroll. Pensioning the remaining 1500 who are ready to retire or paying severance for illiterate teachers could enable more qualified and active teachers to be paid. Government funding is anticipated for adding around 1810 supplementary teachers to payroll.

7. Next steps:

Plan to October 2017

- **Pay reform:** Getting all effective teachers onto payroll (including removing the pensionable and ineffective)
 - hope to see 4000 ghosts removed, 1500 pensioners removed, redundancies for illiterate teachers.
 - 7000 voluntary teachers waiting to be added to payroll including 1600 C-Certificate trainees.
- **Workforce reform:** Ensuring as many teachers as possible are trained
- **Improved monitoring and accountability:**
 - Inspectorate to be funded and operational
 - Randomised Control Trial for PSL Schools
 - Improved monitoring for PSL and other schools
- **Completion of first year of Partnership Schools** – hope to see improved learning outcomes for 28,000 children
- Robust assessment of **making quality ECE free** and roadmap to get there
- **Implementation of TVET reforms**

Plan to 2020 (G2B-ESP)

The “Getting to Best Education Sector Plan” is a four year plan covering the whole sector, not just the priorities for October 2017. It covers: school quality assessment; education management and accountability; access to free quality ECE; overage and out of school children programs; teacher education; curriculum & assessment; student well-being; TVET; Higher Education. Not all components are funded. GPE funding is dependent on the plan being in place, approved and appraised as well as on improvements in GoL commitments to education funding.