



Salone Legal Aid

SIERRA LEONE LEGAL AID BOARD



Launch of Scaling up Access to Justice Leaving no one behind Campaign, by the A.G of Sierra Leone and other dignitaries in September 2016

Sierra Leone Legal Aid Board (LAB)

Country Report

March 2017

Introducing the First Sierra Leone Legal Aid Country Board (LAB) Report

Sierra Leone is located on the West Coast of Africa between 7 and 10 degrees N, and longitudes 10.5 and 13 degrees W. The Republic of Guinea is to the north and northeast; Liberia is to the east and southeast, and the Atlantic Ocean on the west and south. It has 300 miles of coastline. From an approximate 70-mile coastal belt of low-lying land, the country rises to a mountain plateau



near the eastern frontier rising 4000 to 6000 feet with a rich timber forest region. The western area, on which the capital and main commercial centre of Freetown stands, is 24 miles long and 10 miles wide. Sierra Leone is divided into four key regional, the North, West, South East constituting 14 political districts with a population of approximately 7m.

Sierra Leone was engulfed in a conflict for eleven years 1991 -2002. This conflict had disastrous consequence on the political, social and economic fabric of the society. The war ended in 2002 and successful post-conflict peacebuilding programmes were instituted by the government, civil society and the international community. The country had since enjoyed fifteen years of peace and absence of direct violence as evident during the war years. Sierra Leone is working strongly to maintain the peace, rule of law and justice, notwithstanding the country continues to experience key challenges as a result of the lack of fully addressing the root causes of the conflict and the state of fragility still persists. One of the key areas is provision of access to justice for the poor that was one of the root causes of the conflict. Government has made great strides in dealing with these challenges. The key strategy to address these problems is the formulation of the ‘Agenda for Prosperity’ 2013-2018 (A4P) national plan document that builds on the success of the Agenda for

Change (AFC), the establishment of the LAB and the implementation of the Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹



Sierra Leone Legal Aid Board providing legal services to war widows on a range of matters including inheritance of their deceased husband's properties in the hands of grabby relatives.

This report is the first edition of the Country Report of the Sierra Leone Legal Aid Board (LAB) since the operationalization of its office in May 2015. The report features the modalities and activities of the Board since its operationalization. The focus of the report is on the core functions of the Board, its activities and programs as stipulated in the 2012 Legal Aid Act passed by the parliament of Sierra Leone in the areas of legal advice, legal representation, legal education and accreditation of Legal Aid Service Providers.

Overview of LAB Programs and Activities

Sierra Leone passed the Legal Aid Act in May 2012, thus establishing the Sierra Leone Legal Aid Board (LAB). The Legal Aid Board aims to provide legal aid in Sierra Leone and is a non-profit organization that remain independent of government. The Board's priority is to serve the legal interests of low income Sierra Leoneans, its core services are; provide legal information and education, provide legal advice and provide legal representation. The following issues are key in its

¹ ECOWAS Conflict Risk Assessment 2014

interventions, family issues, child support, debt, land issues, criminal cases, domestic violence, rape and defilement, juvenile offences, commercial driven disputes and community level problems.

Since its establishment, the Board's interventions have focused mostly on legal advice and legal representation for inmates of Sierra Leone Correctional Centers, legal education to citizens, forging partnership with Justice, Peace and Security Sector Institutions, Trusted Partners in civil society, Inter-religious council, academia, international and local non-governmental organizations and establishing the framework for the accreditation of legal aid service providers as provided for in the Legal Aid Act 2012.

The priority of the Board since its inception during this period is fourfold. First, to decongest the Pademba Road Correctional Center in Freetown by ensuring the hundreds of remand inmates at the center secure indictments and bail. Second, to build partnership with justice sector institutions – The Sierra Leone Police and the Sierra Leone Correctional Centers – and civil society groups. Third, to educate people on the mandate of the Board and on issues of law and how the justice system works, through community outreach. Fourth, to streamline the systems and processes by developing the Legal Aid Guide.

To speed up access to justice for remand inmates, the Board works very closely with the leadership of the Correctional Centers and the Office of the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice to identify inmates without indictment and to facilitate the filing of the indictments. In December 2016, The Board had consultative meetings with legal aid service providers around the country to set the stage for their accreditation. The Board will start provisional accreditation of legal aid service providers in January 2017. This will be followed by a survey of legal aid providers in the country to assess the extent of activities of service providers, challenges and on building stronger collaboration and partnerships.



The Board completed its Legal Aid Guide and a three-year Strategic Plan in 2015.

The Guide is being processed for eventual passage into a statutory instrument. In the case of the latter, the Board was able to achieve the targets set out in the Plan in twenty months. The Board will develop a new three-year Strategic Plan in the first quarter of 2017.

The mandate of LAB according to Part 111 Section (9)2 of the Legal Aid Act 2012 includes;

- (a) Provision of legal aid;
- (b) Accredite persons or bodies and determining the types of persons and cases for which legal aid maybe granted, determine the circumstances in which contributions towards legal aid shall be paid by legally aided persons and how the contributions shall be circulated
- (c) Determine the types of persons and cases for which legal aid may be granted;
- (d) Determine the circumstances in which contribution towards legal aid shall be paid by legally-aided persons and how the contributions shall be calculated
- (e) Enter into cooperation agreements with legal practitioners, civil society and non-governmental organizations, university law clinics or law departments
- (f) Compile and publish information about the functions of the Board and other legal aid providers;
- (g) Cooperate with other bodies as it may determine for achieving its object;
- (h) Carry out other activities conducive to the attainment of the object of the Board;
- (i) Undertake research into all aspects of legal aid

The Mission of the LAB is to be committed to creating an innovative, collaborative, partnership and network organization that is flexible and responsive to eligible low-income individuals and groups and play leadership role in a fair and balanced justice system where people would be able to understand and protect their legal rights. Its Vision focuses on the provision of quality, accessible, affordable, timely and sustainable legal services to service indigent individuals and groups in Sierra Leone. Its core values are, ‘Social Justice, Respect, Quality, Accountability, Partnership and Community’

Legal Aid benefits the poor and the marginalized with low income, persons in detention by providing a mechanism to establish their innocence, victims and perpetrators of cases of sexual and gender based violations, an indigent who is arrested or accused of a crime though the Board shall prescribe the level of income which qualifies a person as indigent but also individuals, households, elderly people on state grants and pensions, children involved in criminal cases, asylum seekers – women, disabled etc.



Resolving a dispute between members of the deaf and dumb association and the Sierra Leone Police at the police headquarters in Freetown, 3 of them had spent 5 nights behind bars. In attendance is the Inspector General of the Sierra Leone Police Force.

3. Develop and implement cooperation agreements with legal practitioners, civil society and nongovernmental organizations university law clinics or law departments
4. Strengthen Alternative Dispute (ADR) mechanisms for increased delivery of legal aid services to indigents by LAB
5. Strengthen mechanisms protection of legal rights of women, children and juvenile
6. Establish an enhanced media, communication and public outreach of LAB
7. Building the human and physical capacity, research, monitoring and evaluation by LAB

From May 2015 to July 2016, the operations of the Board were limited to the Western Area which is home to the capital Freetown. This was due to the inadequacy of resources that made the Board not to establish its presence around the country at the same time. For over one year, the operations of the Board were limited to one of four regions – the Western Area – which is home to the capital Freetown.

The Board has opened up offices and deployed staff in six districts in the three geographical regions in August 2016 - Makeni and Port Loko in the Northern Province, Bo and Moyamba in the South and Kenema and Sefadu in the East. This brings to a total of seven offices operated by the Board in the country. This notwithstanding, the Board provided legal services to clients in all the 14 districts and 149 chiefdoms in Sierra Leone. The Board has also increased its staff strength from nine in May 2015 to eighty-five by the end of 2016, thirty-five of whom are paralegals funded by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA).



Handing over of Paralegal motor bikes by OSIWA / OSF Officials to Legal Aid Board for work of the board around the Country.

The Board expanded its operations into the other three regions – North, East and South – in August 2016 following the opening of six offices and the deployment of staff including lawyers in these locations, from where they provided legal assistance to clients in the seventeen Magistrates and three High Courts.

The opening of the office was followed by the launch of the Scaling Up Access to Justice Leaving No One Behind in September 2017 aimed at reaching out to communities with messages on the mandate of the Board, Rule of Law and Human Rights.

The number of Legal Aid Board offices in the country has increased from seven in August 2016 to eight by February 2017. This follows the opening of an office in Waterloo in the Western Area Rural District. This is crucial because Waterloo has amongst the highest crime rate in the country.

With support from the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), the Board recruited and deployed thirty-five (35) Paralegals around the country in December 2016. Twenty-Four Paralegals were deployed upcountry – two per district - and eleven in the Western Area. These deployments have consolidated our position as the largest legal aid organization in the country.



1. Summary of activities

a. Legal Advice and Legal Representation

The Board provides legal assistance to the poor and vulnerable in society. This group is prone to being disadvantaged in accessing justice because they cannot afford a lawyer. Adult applicants are subject to a ‘Means Test’ to determine qualification for legal aid. To pass the ‘Means Test’, the applicant’s income should not exceed the minimum wage of five hundred thousand leone (\$67).

The Legal Aid Act provides that the Board could provide legal assistance to as many as it could cope with. Children, the aged and retirees are exempt from the ‘Mest Test’, meaning they qualify for legal aid without any pre-condition.

Some LAB Staffs and Paralegals after a Community Outreach Program.

The Board provided legal assistance to five thousand two hundred and sixty-four (5,264) in 2016. Two thousand three hundred and fifty-four (2,354) indigents benefited from the Board in the first quarter of 2017.

Indigent remand inmates make up the majority of beneficiaries of the scheme in the formal courts. The decision to prioritize remand inmates for legal aid is part of a broader strategy to target a group whose freedom have been curbed coupled with the fact that they are among the most vulnerable due in part to overcrowding, poor prison conditions and its attendant consequences.

For instance, in May 2015, the Pademba Road Correctional Center had nearly two thousand inmates – prison and remand - even though it is built for 350 inmates. When the Legal Aid Board office was opened in Makeni in July 2016, the male Correction Center had 194 inmates even though it is built for 80. In the same period, the Bo Male Correctional Center had 200 even though it is built for 82 and the Kenema Male Correctional Center had 204 even though it was built for 150.



LAB Staff Visit to the Moyamba Correctional Facility, Southern part of Sierra Leone

The other Board's clients have come from referrals from members of the Bench and the Sierra Leone Police. Section 35 (2) of the Legal Aid Act provides that 'A Judge or Magistrate who is faced with an unrepresented person who appears to the Judge or Magistrate to be indigent may advise the person to seek legal aid by contacting the Board.' Section 35 (1) provides that 'If a police officer arrests a person who appears to be indigent he shall advise the person to contact the Board for assistance.'



Executive Director gives advice and Legal education to acquitted and discharged indigent inmates, some of whom were on remand from 9 to 10 years.

a. Juvenile Justice

Juveniles like the aged and retirees are not subjected to the ‘Means Test’ which is the requirement for qualification for legal aid. Of the five thousand two hundred and sixty-four (5,164) who benefited from the Scheme 2016, five hundred and seventy-nine (579) are Juveniles.

Of the Two thousand three hundred and fifty-four (2,354) who benefited from the scheme in the first quarter of 2017, two hundred and sixty-five (265) are juveniles.

The Board’s Paralegals monitor the juvenile homes and police stations to determine legal needs. With only two Juvenile homes in the country – one in the capital Freetown and another upcountry in the provincial headquarters town of Bo - children on remand are most times kept in correctional centers alongside adults.

Also, police stations in the country do not have cells for child suspects. In most of the cases, with the notable exception of Freetown and Bo, the children are either kept in cells or correctional centers alongside adults. It must however be noted that such abuses have also been reported in Freetown and Bo.

There have been improvements in reforming the juvenile justice system by way of new legislations – Child Rights Act 2007, Sexual Offences Act - and the establishment of the Legal Aid Board.

However, the juvenile justice system is still fraught with challenges. This includes failure to set up committees to promote the child justice environment as provided for in the Child Rights Act 2007, lack of transportation for juvenile offenders, detention of children in adult cells, absence of witness tracing mechanism, improperly constituted juvenile courts and lack of psychosocial support for children to ensure they do not reoffend.



Discharged and Acquitted and Discharged Juvenile inmates

b. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

The Board provides ADR service in all its eight offices around the country. The service was introduced in March 2016. The service complements the work of the Board in the formal and informal courts. It mediates civil matters or matters of a non- criminal nature at no cost to the parties involved.

These include maintenance, family issues, marital issues, debts, landlord and tenants, employer and employee, land issues and community level problems. Cases that do not fall within the remit of the ADR are referred to the relevant institutions including the Sierra Leone Police for criminal matters.

The service has had an instant impact on the formal justice system in terms of reducing the number of matters – civil cases - taken to the police or the courts. Also, where such cases especially maintenance cases are taken to the Family Support Unit (FSU) of the police, they have been referred to the Board’s ADR.

Seven thousand seven hundred and ninety-four (7,794) persons benefited from the service in 2016 following its introduction in March of the same year. Ten thousand eight hundred and fifty-three (10,853) people benefited from the service in the first quarter of 2017.

Once a matter has been resolved, both parties sign an undertaking to abide by the settlement reached. This is binding on both parties.



Alternative Dispute Resolution between different trade union groups in Sierra Leone

a. Community Advisory Bureau (CAB)

The Bureaus are the first port of call for members of the community. They are non-political and non-profit and are meant to address the justice needs of the community. The Bureaus will be established in all the three hundred and ninety-four (394) Wards in the country.

Fifteen Wards have so far been established in the capital Freetown in 2017. The following the training of volunteers by the Board. Each Bureau has an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) service, Legal Education component and an Information Board. Like the Board, the Bureau mediates matters of a non-criminal nature and do referrals for matters which fall outside their remit.

The Legal Education is done through community outreach. Members of the Bureau engage the community on the fear factor around access to the formal justice system especially the police and the courts. This is because we live in a society where contact with the formal justice system invoke

a lot of fear in people. This is being taken advantage of by police and judicial officers hence allegations of bribes.

The Community Outreach is meant primarily to educate people on their justice needs and problems. These include rights of suspects and accused, issues of arrest, detention and bail, redress mechanisms for human rights violations in the hands of the police and human rights.



b. Legal Education

Legal education is conducted through community, school and organizational outreach. The object of which is to raise-awareness on the mandate and activities of the Board, the Local Court Act 2011 which governs the operations of the local courts and other relevant national laws including Child Rights Act 2007, Sexual Offences Act 2012 and Domestic Violence Act 2007, Rule of Law and Human Rights.

The justice problems are due in large part to ignorance about how the justice system works. This is ***Establishment of the Community Advisory Bureau (CAB), in attendance are the community leaders, Chiefs and all the tribal head men in the Capital city Freetown.***



Community Outreach

Community Outreach events are hosted by the community. Seven thousand and forty-nine (7,049) members of various communities benefited from these events in 2016. Three thousand and five hundred (3,500) people benefited from the Board’s Legal Education in the first quarter of 2017.

The events are interactive in the sense that every facet of the community – local politicians, chiefs, youth and women’s leaders, religious leaders – have an opportunity to contribute.

The events provide an opportunity for people to share their experiences in accessing the justice system both at formal and informal level, discuss challenges and proffer solutions.



Legal Aid Board Community Outreach Meeting

School outreach

The school outreach is meant to educate school children on the scheme and how they can benefit from it. Additionally, they are sensitized on children's rights issues especially the Child Rights Act 2007 as part of the 'Child Protection under the Law' campaign. Issues of sexual abuse and exploitation, teenage pregnancy, early marriage, dangerous labor, trafficking and severe corporal punishment are an integral part of the campaign. A total of four thousand six hundred and sixty-one (4,661) pupils benefited from the school outreach programme in 2017. The Freetown office unveiled its school outreach in October 2016 which event took place at the Prince of Wales Secondary School in Freetown.



Legal Education In Schools

The Accreditation of legal Aid service providers is a core function of the Board. Section 9 (2) (b) of the Legal Aid Act provides that the Board shall 'accredit persons or bodies to provide legal aid.' It is also responsible for monitoring and evaluating the quality of legal aid provided by the legal aid service providers. Section 37 (2) of the Legal Aid Act 2012 which provides that any person or organization who engages in the provision of legal aid without being accredited commits an offence and will be liable on 'conviction to a fine not exceeding thirty million Leones or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years.'

The Board organized consultative meetings with legal aid service providers in the country in December 2016. The meetings were attended by 105 providers. They were meant to sensitize legal aid providers on the mandate of the Board with particular reference to their Accreditation.

It also accorded the Board an opportunity to interact with legal aid providers and donors and learn from their experiences since they have been in the business for a long time. While the Board has achieved quite a lot in providing legal services to the poor and vulnerable around the country, it is important to underscore the complementary role of other legal aid service organizations in the delivery of its mandate.

The meetings were followed by the provisional accreditation and then survey of providers in the country. This will inform opinion on the number of providers in the country, their operational areas and target beneficiaries.



Accreditation of Legal Aid Service Providers

by putting out a public notice on the commencement of provisional accreditation. This will run through to the 31 May 2017 during which time the service providers are expected to pick up the forms and then go through an interview. After which certificates will be issued to successful applicants.

Key Intervention Strategies

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - Goal 16: Peace, Security and Justice

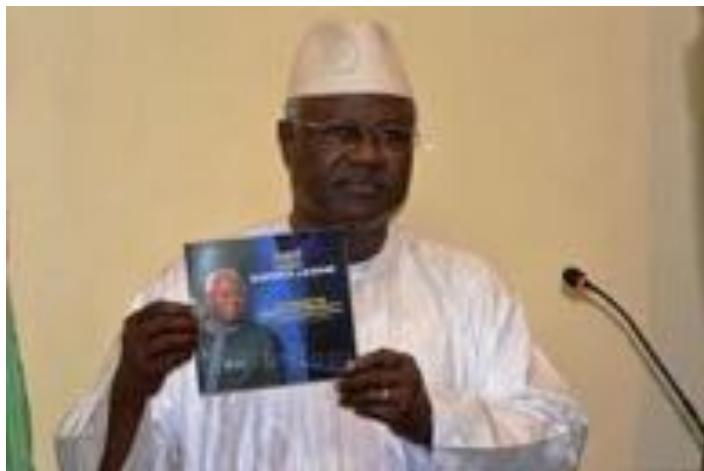
The Board is one of the lead institutions for implementing Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals which seeks to promote peace, justice and strong institutions. As the largest legal aid scheme in the country, the Board addresses the justice needs of the poor and vulnerable in society by providing free legal advice and legal representation to those coming into contact with the formal and informal justice system.

The Board has set itself the task of reducing the proportion of indigent persons including those on remand without legal aid to 20 percent by 2030. This will be achieved by opening six more offices in the remaining six districts. This will ensure having offices in all the fourteen districts in the country.

The Board would also recruit 28 lawyers, 28 Mediators/ADR Officers, 14 Outreach Officers, 306 Paralegals and establish 394 Community Advisory Bureaus. Additionally, the Board will train 2,600 partners in civil society as Paralegals.

The Agenda for Prosperity

This is the national planning document Sierra Leone in its third generation, the was the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 1, The second the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, and the third the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 11 or the Agenda for Prosperity, this has seven pillars with Pillar 7 focusing on Governance, the Rule of Law and Access to Justice.



of

Launching of The Agenda for Prosperity by:

His. Excellency the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma

The Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Investment Plan III 2015 -2018 , its related activities and Sierra Leone Performance Contract. The Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Investment Plan III is one of its main guiding strategy.

In ensuring that this plan is well tailored within the national and public private partnership context, the LAB works assiduously to deliver the following as set in the JSRS Investment Plan 111

‘Outcome 1 Justice is easily accessible locally, Output 4 Provision of Legal’,
‘Outcome 2; Output 6 Strengthen Alternative Dispute Mechanisms,
Output 7 Strengthen Juvenile Justice System
‘Outcome 3: Respect for Rights and Accountability

Key Challenges

The establishment of Community Advisory Bureaus have brought a fresh set of challenges for the Board. The lack of start-up funds to pay for electricity, rent and other basic necessities pose a serious challenge to the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the Bureaus. The lack of funds to cover basic activities incurring costs such as fare to contact those using the services of the Bureau or do referrals has a serious negative effect on the Bureau. What is more, the volunteers running the Bureaus do not receive any stipend for now.

The monitoring and evaluation of legal aid service providers to ensure the provision of quality legal aid is handicapped by inadequate resources – financial, human and material. If this is not addressed it will be extremely difficult to monitor the operations of the Service Providers especially in the remote parts of the country.

The Head Office in the capital Freetown has two vehicles. It will need more to expand its reach across the country especially regarding covering the seventeen Magistrate and three High Courts upcountry. The seven other offices in the country do not have any official vehicle. This poses a severe constraint on the ability of staff to do their work. For instance, Lawyers are constrained in covering the courts in their respective operational areas – two districts per lawyer. Paralegals are equally constrained in monitoring the formal and informal justice systems and in providing advice and legal assistance to those accessing the informal courts. Also, Outreach Officers are constrained in terms of the amount of community and school outreach events they can organize.

The Board is struggling to cope with the demand for legal aid from the poor and vulnerable. This is because more and more indigents look up to the scheme to address their justice needs. Also, the number of referrals from the police, courts and organizations have continued to increase. This is

despite the fact that the Board has a staff strength of 85 which has remained the same since the start of 2017.

Recently, the Board provided legal assistance to students of the Njala University who were arrested and charged with public order offences following a strike action they embarked on. Also, the Board provided legal assistance to two schools with securing the release of their results by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC).

Training opportunities for staff especially international ones are few and far in between. The Board has been in existence for two years and would therefore need to learn from other schemes. The Board would need to build the capacity of its staff especially lawyers, mediators and paralegals through training, study tours, staff pairing and staff exchange. It will also need to train trainers who will be responsible for training Paralegals from civil society partners.

Other Challenges

- I. Absence of national coverage in 7 districts of the legal aid scheme
- II. Lack of access to legal aid at all stages of the criminal justice system
- III. Limited numbers of lawyers especially in rural areas, underutilization of law students
- IV. Limited Legal and paralegal services in rural areas
- V. Operationalization of law and human rights clinics in universities and colleges
- VI. Government lack of an overarching national legal aid strategy to optimise available resources
- VII. Lack of a national strategy for legal literacy and education that can promote the work of LAB
- VIII. Lack of adequate resources to build and sustain the legal aid system
- IX. Provision of well-resourced office environment with spaces and equipment for hosting paralegals and mediators
- X. Lack of resources for training and capacity building to engage the development of short courses and accredited training for paralegals and other service providers

Institutional Arrangements

There are institutional arrangements that accompanies the full implementation of this strategic plan, amongst these are:

The Legal Aid Board

According to Section 9(1) of the Legal Aid Act 2012, “the object of the Board is established to provide, administer, coordinate and monitor the provision of legal aid in civil and criminal matters”. These broad powers cover a wide range of functions including amongst others, to provide legal aid, accredit persons or bodies to provide legal aid, determine the type of persons and cases for which legal aid may be granted, enter into cooperation agreements. In addition the Board under Section 10 have powers to do all things necessary to provide legal aid in accordance to its functions – establishing mechanism for effective administration, coordination and evaluation of legal aid. The Board functions is the lead agency in the execution of this strategic. They will have the responsible together with the Executive Director in setting out mechanisms for the implementation of the objectives of this strategic plan. They will do this through the holding of quarterly Board meetings, monitoring and providing oversight for the implementation of projects within the life of this plan.



Sierra Leone Legal Aid Board Offices in Port Loko and Freetown

The LAB is highest decision-making body it consists of;

- Chairman who is judge of the Superior Court of Judicature recommended by the Chief Justice and appointed by the President;
- A representative of the Law officers Department not below the rank of Principal State Counsel;
- A representative of the Ministry responsible for social welfare not below the rank of

Principal State Counsel

- A representative of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA) not below the rank of Deputy Director
- A representative of the Bar Association of not less than five years standing at the Bar;
- A representative of the Department of Law FBC
- A representative of the Council of Chiefs;
- One representative each of civil society and non-governmental organizations having experience, knowledge and expertise on issues relating to legal aid;
- A representative of the inter-religious council and the
- Chairman of the Local Government Association



A cross section of Board members and Staffs at LAB function

The Ministry of Justice

The Ministry of Justice and Office of Attorney-general is the lead ministry for the institutional framework for the legal functions of legal aid Board in the justice sector at national level. The Office of the Attorney-general will have a key responsibility of mobilization of resources for the implementation of this strategic, oversight into the administration of the office of the Executive Director and annually presents reports of the LAB to parliaments



The Learned Attorney General and Minister of Justice. Hon. Joseph F. Kamara

The Judiciary

The Office of the Chief Justice will support the LAB in creating the synergies that is needed for the LAB to work in close partnership with other arms of the Judiciary – The Court System and local courts across the country.



The Sierra Leone Law Courts Building in Freetown.

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

The Ministry of Finance and Economic planning will be responsible for governments subvention and auditing of accounts of the LAB. This is to mainly support staff salaries, rents and some operational costs of the Board. The will support the Board through fund raising drive from the donor communities and development agencies in the justice sector

Sources of funding

GoSL –Government of Sierra Leone

Donor Partners

SUMMARY OF LEGAL AID BOARD ACTIVITIES

January - December, 2016

	ADULT		JUVENILES		TOTAL
	MALE	FEMALE	BOYS	GIRLS	
LEGAL REPRESENTATION					
Court Activities	4,159	526	434	145	5,264
LEGAL ADVICE					
Alternative Dispute Resolution	1,949	2,338	1,403	2,104	7,794
LEGAL EDUCATION					
Community Outreach	2,500	3,567	638	344	7,049
School Outreach	56	38	1,461	3,106	4,661
TOTAL	8,664	6,469	3,936	5,699	24,768

January - March, 2017

	ADULT		JUVENILES		TOTAL
	MALE	FEMALE	BOYS	GIRLS	
LEGAL REPRESENTATION					
Court Activities	1,911	178	199	66	2,354
LEGAL ADVICE					
Alternative Dispute Resolution	1,736	2,605	2,930	3,582	10,853
LEGAL EDUCATION					
Public Engagement	1,330	1,050	595	525	3,500
TOTAL	4,977	3,833	3,724	4,173	16,707

SOURCE: M & E OFFICER - LAB

GRAND TOTAL = 24,768 + 16,707 = 41,475 (Total Beneficiaries)

SOURCE: M & E OFFICER - LAB

Profile of Executive Director



Executive Director, Sierra Leone Legal Aid Board

Fatmata Clara Carlton-Hanciles (Mrs.)

The Executive Director of the Legal Aid Board, Madam Fatmata Claire Carlton-Hanciles is head of the secretariat which provides administrative, secretarial and other assistance to the Board. Ms. Carlton-Hanciles brings a wealth of experience spanning **over Twenty years** of legal practice in the legal system and the United Nations

backed international war crimes tribunal, the former Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Ms. Carlton-Hanciles is the first Executive Director of the Sierra Leone Legal Aid Board. She is responsible for supervising the day-to-day operations of the Board which includes proffering pieces of advice on ongoing matters in court. She participates in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) sessions which mediate civil matters that would otherwise be taken to the courts or police. As someone who is passionate about children, she devote a lot of time on issues relating to their welfare.

She also participate regularly in legal education programmes which are conducted through outreach. She has participated in outreach events across the country. This has seen her meet with the Sierra Leone Labour Congress, Petty Traders Association, Market Women Association – Sierra Leone, the Sierra Leone Motor Drivers Union, Metropolitan Police and the Sierra Leone Teachers Union.

She receives complaints from either the suspects or their relatives who are dissatisfied with the way investigations are handled by the police. A key part of Ms. Carlton-Hanciles' work involves following-up with the police to ensure the rights of suspects. This includes the period of detention, population in police cell, detention of juveniles alongside adults and bail.

Mrs. Carlton-Hanciles has made no secret of her concern over the manner investigations are conducted by the police which sometimes result in matters being charged to court which in her view should have been better handled outside the courts. This view is also shared by judicial officers who from time to time express frustration over some of the matters charged to court.

She is deeply concerned that the prison population is not falling despite the best efforts of the Board. She thinks the bail conditions are too stiff making it difficult for suspects and accused persons to meet them. Also, she wants the judicial officers to give shorter sentences by not imposing maximum sentence.