

REPORT

VALIDATION WORKSHOP FOR THE ASSESMENT REPORT ON THE TEACHING OF CIVICS IN PRIMARY AND JUNIOR SECONDARY

SCHOOLS

YOUYI BUILDING

23rd January, 2025

BACKGROUND: Since 2021/22, NaCCED had successfully ensured the inclusion of the Civic Education subject into curricula for primary and junior secondary schools in Sierra Leone. It further supported the training of teachers in teaching the subject, and produced and distributed civic texts in schools across the country. After few years of the subject being taught, NaCCED determined that an objective and scientific evaluation was essential to understand how well the Civics teaching/learning process was going, and to identify areas for improvement. This generally entailed looking into teacher's knowledge of the subject; students' appreciation and understanding of it; and identifying aiding or obstructing factors involved in teaching and learning Civics. In this light, NaCCED, in consultation with the Teaching Service Commission (TSC), employed a reputable research consultant- the Institute for Government Reform (IGR) which carried out an extensive investigation on ***The Teaching of Civics in Primary and Junior Secondary Schools***. They covered 300 primary and junior secondary schools across the country. The validation workshop was procedurally meant to present the research findings to NaCCED; a representation of target beneficiaries (students and teachers); and a range of relevant partners. The participants were also to make observations and provide validation to the research process and findings. Members of the media were also involved to ensure public knowledge of the event.

THE EVENT: The Validation Workshop took place on the 23rd January, 2025 at the Youyi Building in Freetown. Facilitation of the programme was done jointly by representatives of NaCCED and IGR. Participants included teachers and pupils/students from various primary and junior secondary schools, and representatives from NaCCED, IGR, TSC, Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU), Sierra Leone Free Education Project Secretariat (SL-FEPS), the Ministry of Information and Civic Education (MOICE), the media etc. The event featured discussions, feedbacks and questions after the presentation of the report. This feature also included the proposal of relevant action points. The report was then validated by participants and concluded by closing remarks from the Regional Secretary West of SLTU, Mr. Foday Kuyateh.

Proceedings started off with participants' registration followed by a call to order, prayers, introductions and the Chairman's opening remarks. There were also brief statements from several personalities including the outgoing Chairman of NaCCED and representatives of TSC and SLTU.

- **Chairman's opening remarks- Mr. Joseph Bindi, Chairman of NaCCED:** The Chairman briefly explained the national role, mandate and relevance of NaCCED. He provided a brief backdrop of the gradual cessation of Civic Education as a taught subject in the country over time, and its laudable reintroduction into schools by HE President Julius Maada Bio during his first term of office. He explained that people who went to school during times Civics was still taught were more civic minded. Its disappearance as a school subject has seen a massive general

deterioration in basic civic attributes such as ability to identify national symbols, national pride, love for country etc. which has consequently brought a massive lack of national identity amongst Sierra Leoneans today. He added that Civic Education should target adults too; not just the young, and that it was important to learn from successes as well as challenges, hence the significance of this research carried out by IGR. He concluded by saying that the participation of the pupils and students in the workshop, being ultimate beneficiaries of such efforts, was a priority so that they could make meaningful contributions to the process as well.

- **Statement by Former Chairman of NaCCED, Mr. Kalilu Totangi-** Mr. Totangi explained that in efforts to design a curriculum for Civic Education and to again make it a taught subject in schools, there was invaluable support from prominent academic experts including Dr. Joe A.D Alie, the late Professor Magbele Fyle etc. He revealed that the government of Sierra Leone allocated millions of (old) Leones to the production and distribution of Civic text books to schools across the country. Further, thousands of teachers were trained in teaching the subject in their respective schools. Schools, he added, allocated 2 periods per week to the subject. He concluded by saying that when the need was at first identified for a research on the teaching of Civics in schools, NaCCED approached the TSC with whom it identified and selected IGR as a reputable and capable research organization.
- **Statement by Discipline and Petitions Manager of TSC, Mr. Patrick H. Sandi-** He commented that Civics in schools was a very laudable development whereby students can now know who they are as citizens, as well as their rights and obligations as citizens. He however added that having succeeded in reintroducing Civics in schools, efforts in this direction need to be reassessed for further improvement. He maintained high hopes for further improvements in Civic education efforts.
- **Statement by Mr. Foday Kuyate of SLTU-** He acknowledged that his union was invited by NaCCED to take part in the production of the civic text book for which he said they participated in a series of workshops to enable the process. Stressing that teachers were key to the implementation efforts to ensure Civic Education in schools, he advised that the impact of the Civic texts on teachers and pupils as covered by the research needs to be validated. He added that civic levels were extremely low in Sierra Leone, stating that the pervading violence amongst young people proved the need for massive civic education amongst them. He appealed to the TSC for increased training of teachers in the teaching of Civics. He informed all that the SLTU will be hosting a conference the following week and committed to ensuring that Civics would be prioritized in the event.

PRESENTATION OF REPORT: The IGR Consultant Lead, Mr. Andrew Lavalie, made a power point presentation on the research findings. As backdrop, he cited prominent anti-civic contexts in the country's history such as the civil war and its destruction of prominent development structures. Sierra Leone, he said, had to rebuild afresh. Some of the elements that had to be reintroduced into the fabrics of society were love for country, citizenship, tolerance, democratic values etc. It was for this reason that, 18 years after the war, President Bio established NaCCED, exclusively mandated to bring back civics into the Sierra Leonean culture and society. He explained that this study was carried out to see if the Civics curriculum was working in the schools.

210 primary schools and 90 junior secondary schools (a total of 300) were researched nationwide. A total of 3,329 pupils were respondents.

RESULTS: Research results are detailed in the research findings document presented to NaCCED by IGR.

DISCUSSIONS, FEEDBACKS AND QUESTIONS:

- **Josie Kobina (Coalition for All Sierra Leone)**- Advised that in carrying out civic training in young people attention must be paid to the connection between the classroom and the home environments where they actually live. He observed that there were many adverse conditions to civic development in the pupils and students respective home environments. He added that it is NaCCED's responsibility to find solutions to young people's lack of good social norms and cultural awareness.
- **Foday Kuyate (SLTU)**- Highlighted that SLTU regularly monitors schools and has identified challenges with teaching Civics one of which he said was the fact that it was not yet a public examination subject. He added that difficult study areas identified by the research such as attitudes towards learning more about men and women in uniform should be addressed by NaCCED. He further stated that, apart from Civic text books, there was a general lack of basic civic materials such as copies of the national anthem, coat of arms, flags etc. He concluded by saying that teachers need to be given more training in the teaching of Civics and pledged to include NaCCED SLTU's conference the following week as well as make Civics a main theme in the conference.
- **Aruna Kargbo (CIVIC Overseers)**- Advised that teachers of Civics should be habitual followers of news especially via radio. This was to ensure that they are informed on occurrences in the country. He added that if Civics was made a public examination subject it would be most helpful. Accordingly, the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) should ensure its inclusion in school curriculums.
- **Abu Bakarr Sadiq Sesay (Sight Savers)**- Advocated that any assessments should capture disability concerns. He advised that copies of the civic curricula and texts should be printed in braille. He acknowledged that there was indeed disability inclusion in Primary 6, Unit 5 of the Civic texts but advised that there should be retooling and redefining of some definitions. He ended by asking if pupils with disabilities were included in the research exercise and, if so, requested the relevant research findings.
- **Miss. Bendu Massaquoi (Teacher, St Joseph's Convent)**- Started off by citing that the pervading hot tempers in society was due to most people not understanding that the economic hardships faced today are more of a global nature than any other reason. She advocated for the distribution of national flags amongst students during school marches; that songs be used as an approach to teach Civics; and that there be special facilities for students with disabilities.

- **Anita Sawyer (student- The Beacon High School)**- Thanked the organizers of the event for recognizing students as well as for work done to teach Civics in schools.
- **Makisha Nyuma (student- Annie Walsh Secondary School)**- Advocated for a policy of regular workshops and field trips for students to help widen their knowledge in Civics in terms of historical landmarks, geography, culture, peoples etc.
- **Handel Roberts (Student- Grammar School)**- Asked that the Civic texts be distributed amongst students rather than just the schools.
- **Idrissa Kabbah (Student- Prince of Wales)**- Echoed the previous speaker, asking for more Civic teaching and learning materials to be made more available in schools.
- **Student (St Joseph's Convent)**- Also advocated for more Civic books to be distributed amongst students.
- **Mr. Patrick Sandi of TSC**- Revealed that 300 teachers had been trained in the teaching of Civics. He, however, said that teaching methodology in difficult topics such as Men and Women in Uniform, The Environment etc. was still an issue as some teachers lacked effective methods to teach them.
- **Rev. Victor Davies (representing private schools)**- Said the Civic texts were not being distributed amongst private schools which only had the option of buying them. Private schools were not happy about this. He advocated a permanent establishment of a training desk at NaCCED to provide guidance on the teaching of Civics and other civic activities on request. Lastly, he asked that the contents of the Civic texts be posted on the internet.

RESPONSE BY IGR AND THE CHAIRMAN OF NaCCED:

Mr. Andrew Lavalie of IGR responded to different comments made on a range of aspects by the participants.

- **On the non-inclusion of PWDs in the exercise:** He admitted, and apologized for, an oversight in not including PWDs as respondents in the research.
- **On everyday skills and the attainment of certain statuses:** He suggested that the Civic contents should include steps to acquiring certain skills and statuses like steps in acquiring a driving license, registration for participation in elections etc. He suggested that these different details be taught to children.
- **On teachers' abilities to teach Civics:** He recommended that every teacher should be trained to teach the subject.
- **On Civic content/messaging in relation to target audiences:** He proposed that content/message review be made relative to different target audiences.
- **On the teaching of Civics in private schools:** He advocated the inclusion of private schools in the teaching of Civics.

The Chairman of NaCCED, Mr. Joseph Bindi, committed to engaging the Government and other relevant bodies including WAEC and MBSSE on all issues covered in the workshop.

REPORT VALIDATION: After all other aspects of the Validation Workshop had been satisfied the NaCCED Chairman, Mr. Bindi, asked participants if the report should be validated to which everyone agreed with the condition that all concerns made be taken into strong consideration. The report was then validated.

CONCLUSION: The Closing remarks were made by Mr. Foday Kuyate of TSC. The NaCCED Chairman, proposed the taking of a group photo involving all participants, after which there were refreshments and distribution of transportation refunds.