Stakeholder Consultation and Priority Services Report – Digital Access Point Project

Version 1

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1. Executive Summary

This Stakeholder Consultation Report summarizes feedback and requirements for enhancing e-service delivery through Digital Access Points (DAPs) across all 16 districts in Sierra Leone. Conducted in June and July 2025, the consultation engaged officers and management at the DAPs, local councils and authorities, and community members to assess the current state of digital public services relative to the top 20 prioritized services (conducted by the government the previous year), identify gaps, and determine community needs. Utilizing a Service Gap Assessment Tool and Stakeholder Interview Guidelines, the process evaluated 20 key services, including marriage certificates, land registration, and passport applications, across criteria such as availability, accessibility, and usability.

1.1. Key findings

While some districts offer partial digital services, significant gaps exist in user awareness, DAP accessibility, and institutional readiness, particularly in rural areas. Common challenges include limited broadband infrastructure, low digital literacy, and insufficient staff training. Community feedback highlights strong demand for accessible DAPs offering services like birth certificates and national ID applications, with a need for localized interfaces and assisted digital support.

1.1.1 Institutional Feedback Summary

1.1.1.2. Service Delivery Status

- **Service Delivery Remains Largely Paper-Based:** Across most districts, especially in rural areas, over 90% of services are still delivered manually despite partial digitization in areas like National ID registration. Institutions rely heavily on paper workflows due to inadequate systems and infrastructure.

- **Limited Institutional Readiness:** Many institutions lack trained ICT staff, formal helpdesks, and dedicated resources to support digital service delivery. Only National ID services consistently show signs of institutional support.

- **Infrastructure Challenges:** Frequent electricity outages and unreliable internet connectivity were universally reported. Several DAP-like sites operate without backup power or broadband, significantly hampering digitization efforts.

- **Partial or Absent DAP Access:** Even when digital services exist nationally, most are not locally accessible through DAPs. Citizens often have to travel to regional centers, indicating a clear need for local service access points.

- **Gaps in Policy and Coordination:** There is a lack of institutional coordination mechanisms for digitization, with service providers often operating in silos. Feedback suggested strong demand for clearer roles and joint oversight in DAP implementation.

1.1.1.3. Community Feedback

- **High Demand for Digital Services:** There is widespread interest in services such as National ID, birth certificates, driver's licenses, and passports. These were consistently ranked as top priorities due to their relevance to daily life.

- **Low Awareness and Digital Confidence:** In many districts, community members were unaware that services like social security, name change, or permits could be digitized. Even where services were known, people lacked confidence in using digital platforms, especially in rural districts like Falaba and Pujehun. Low digital literacy, particularly among women, elderly, and rural residents, restricts engagement, with smartphones used mainly for social media (e.g., WhatsApp) rather than e-services.

- **Smartphone Ownership vs. Usage:** While ownership of smartphones is high (80–90%), usage is mainly for entertainment and communication. Government service usage is minimal due to lack of awareness and digital literacy.

- **Barriers to Accessing Services:** Community members cited long distances, repeated visits, informal payments, and bureaucratic delays as major challenges. The inability to obtain essential documents has led to missed educational and economic opportunities. In Kenema and Pujehun, residents stressed guidance for form-filling and transparent, bribe-free operations to build trust.

- **Strong Support for Assisted Models:** Communities want DAPs to offer assisted services, including multilingual interfaces, form-filling help, and user guidance. There is a clear preference for human support over self-service systems .Communities highlighted the need for affordable access, reliable electricity (preferably solar), stable internet, and trained staff fluent in local languages like Krio or Mende to assist low-literacy users.

1.1.1.4. ICT Capacity and Support Needs

- **Severe ICT Infrastructure Deficits:** Many DAP candidate sites lack functioning computers, internet access, and power. Solar solutions were identified as urgent needs, especially in hard-to-reach districts like Falaba and Koinadugu. Even in urban areas like Western Urban, 85% of DAP-like sites experience weekly power or internet outages, and institutions rely on costly generators or limited solar solutions.

- **Inadequate Human Resource Capacity:** Over 80% of stakeholders reported that public institutions lack trained ICT personnel. Maintenance support is often ad hoc or reliant on external vendors.

- **Need for Basic and Ongoing Training:** DAP success depends on structured training for staff and digital champions. Training should cover digital literacy, empathetic user support, and basic troubleshooting.

- **Hardware and Connectivity Investments Needed:** There is a strong call for investments in modern devices, high-speed internet, and backup systems. Without this, DAP sites will face frequent service disruptions.

- **Sustainability and Lifecycle Management:** Stakeholders highlighted the risk of DAPs becoming obsolete if not supported with long-term maintenance strategies, including equipment replacement plans and dedicated funding.

1.2.1. Key Service Gaps Across Criteria

- **Availability**: Most services, except National ID and Education Services, have low to medium availability in digital formats. For instance, marriage certificates, birth certificates, and land registration are predominantly paper-based or unavailable digitally in districts like Falaba and Kambia.

- **DAP Accessibility**: Access through DAPs or public access points is limited, with most services rated as "No" or "Partial" access. National ID and Education Services are exceptions, with "Yes" access in urban areas like Western Urban, but rural districts like Bonthe and Falaba have no functional DAPs.

- **User Awareness:** Awareness is high for mandatory services like National ID, birth certificates, and driver's licenses (e.g., 90% awareness in Western Rural), but low for secondary services like social security, permits, or change of name (e.g., 85–90% unawareness in Falaba and Kono).

- **Usability**: Interfaces are generally not user-friendly, particularly for low-literacy users, with most services rated Low to Medium. Even where digital services exist, they lack localized or inclusive designs, as noted in Kailahun and Pujehun.

- **Technical Readiness:** Infrastructure deficits, including unreliable electricity and internet, result in Low to Medium readiness across most districts. Western Urban and Western Rural show High readiness for some services (e.g., National ID), but rural districts like Bonthe and Falaba are critically deficient.

- **Institutional Readiness:** Staff training and institutional support are inadequate, with Low to Medium ratings in most districts. Urban areas like Western Urban have better-trained staff (High for some services), but rural districts like Kambia and Moyamba lack dedicated IT personnel.

1.2.3. Priority services for DAP integration based on gap analysis

Based on the gap analysis, stakeholder feedback, and public demand, the following services were identified as high-priority for DAP integration:

- **National ID (Application and Replacement)**: High priority across all districts due to strong demand, relatively high availability, and existing digital infrastructure in urban areas. It scored Low Gaps in Western Urban and Western Rural.

- **Birth Certificates**: High priority in districts like Falaba, Kambia, and Pujehun due to critical needs for education and legal documentation, despite High Gaps in availability and accessibility.

- **Driver's Licenses (Application and Renewal)**: High priority in Western Urban, Western Rural, and Bo due to economic importance and moderate digital readiness, though Medium Gaps persist in rural areas.

- **Passport Applications**: Medium to High priority in urban districts (e.g., Western Urban) and some rural areas (e.g., Kono, Kailahun) due to travel needs, but High Gaps in accessibility and usability limit current implementation.

- **Land Registration and Title Transfer**: High priority in Western Urban and Western Rural due to economic significance, with Medium Gaps indicating feasibility for DAP integration with infrastructure upgrades.

- **Education Services**: High priority in urban districts like Western Urban and Bo, with Low Gaps due to existing digital access and high awareness, making them feasible for early DAP integration.

Services like marriage certificates, death certificates, and change of name were generally low priority due to lower public demand and significant gaps in availability, usability, and technical readiness, particularly in rural districts.

1.3. Recommendations

The following cross-cutting recommendations are derived from stakeholder and community engagements and are structured to guide the successful implementation of Digital Access Platforms (DAPs). They are categorized into short-term (0–6 months), medium-term (6–18 months), and long-term (18+ months) timelines to ensure a phased, sustainable, and inclusive approach to public service digitization. Each recommendation includes detailed actions, objectives, and anticipated outcomes to address identified challenges and align with stakeholder expectations.

Recommendations include short-term actions like awareness campaigns and staff training, medium-term integration of priority services into DAPs, and long-term development of interoperable databases. These insights provide a roadmap for stakeholders to strengthen e-service delivery, ensuring equitable digital access for all Sierra Leoneans, including youth, women, persons with disabilities, and rural communities.

Timeline	Recommendation	Actions	Objective	Anticipated Outcome
Short-Term (0–6 months)	Community Outreach and Awareness Campaigns	• Develop and implement a multi-channel sensitization strategy, including radio, community meetings, and social media, tailored to marginalized and rural communities. • Engage local leaders and influencers to promote trust in digital processes. Produce accessible materials in local languages and formats (e.g., audio for low-literacy groups).	Build awareness, trust, and confidence in DAPs, particularly among underserved populations.	Increased community engagement and reduced skepticism toward digital services, fostering higher adoption rates.
	Basic Digital Skills Training for DAP Staff and Local Champions	• Design and deliver training programs for DAP staff and community-based "digital champions" (e.g., youth volunteers) focusing on basic digital literacy, empathetic user support, and multilingual communication. Include practical exercises on assisting users with low digital confidence.	Equip staff and local champions to provide user-friendly support and bridge the digital literacy gap.	Improved user experience and accessibility, with staff capable of guiding first-time users effectively.

	Print-Ready Forms and Assisted Form-Filling Services	• Provide hard-copy versions of critical forms (e.g., for National ID, passports) at DAP locations. Train staff to offer assisted form-filling services, ensuring accessibility for users transitioning from paper-based processes. • Establish clear workflows for digitizing completed forms.	Facilitate a smooth transition to digital platforms for users unfamiliar with or unable to access digital interfaces.	Reduced barriers to service access, enabling broader participation in digital transactions during the initial rollout phase.
	Stakeholder Engagement and Change Management	• Form coordination committees with representatives from ministries, departments, agencies, local councils, and community leaders. • Conduct regular workshops to align expectations, address resistance to digital transformation, and foster collaboration. • Develop change management plans to support institutional buy-in.	Ensure stakeholder alignment and proactive management of organizational and community expectations.	Enhanced collaboration and reduced bureaucratic resistance, paving the way for smoother DAP implementation.
	Rapid Infrastructure Assessments	• Conduct comprehensive assessments of power availability, internet connectivity, and physical infrastructure at proposed DAP sites. • Prioritize locations with immediate readiness and identify gaps requiring urgent intervention. • Use findings to inform resource allocation.	Identify and prioritize infrastructure needs to support DAP deployment.	Targeted interventions to ensure DAP sites are operationally ready, minimizing delays in service rollout.
	Service Prioritization	• Identify and prioritize high-demand services based on community feedback and feasibility assessments. • Develop a phased rollout plan to ensure early success and build momentum.	Focus initial DAP efforts on services with high impact and feasibility to demonstrate value.	Early wins in service delivery, increasing user trust and encouraging broader adoption of DAPs.

Medium-Term (6–18 months)	Progressive Integration of Priority Services into DAP Web Portals	• Integrate high-priority services into DAP web portals, ensuring user-friendly interfaces, multilingual support, and cultural appropriateness. • Conduct user testing with diverse groups to refine functionality. Prioritize services identified in the short-term phase.	Create accessible, inclusive digital platforms that meet community needs and expectations.	Increased service uptake and improved user satisfaction due to tailored, efficient digital interfaces.
	Technical Capacity Upgrades	• Invest in modern hardware (e.g., computers, tablets), reliable backup power systems (e.g., solar panels), and high-speed internet connections at DAP sites. • Implement redundancy measures to minimize service disruptions.	Ensure consistent and reliable service delivery through robust technological infrastructure.	Reduced downtime and improved service reliability, enhancing user trust in DAPs.
	Assisted Digital Service Delivery Models	• Formalize assisted service models by establishing dedicated support desks at DAPs. • Train staff to assist users in navigating digital platforms, troubleshooting issues, and completing transactions. • Develop standard operating procedures for assisted services.	Provide ongoing support to users with limited digital skills or access to devices.	Increased accessibility for underserved populations, ensuring inclusivity in DAP adoption.
	Capacity Building for Local Technical Teams	• Develop training programs for DAP maintenance staff, focusing on troubleshooting, basic hardware repairs, and first-level IT support. • Establish partnerships with local technical institutions to provide ongoing training and certification.	Build local capacity to maintain and support DAP infrastructure, reducing reliance on external vendors.	Reduced operational downtime and cost savings through localized, sustainable technical support.
	Policy Enforcement and Inclusive Alternatives	• Strengthen oversight mechanisms to ensure consistent application of digital-first policies across agencies. • Retain paper-based or assisted options for users unable to transition to digital platforms (e.g., elderly, low-	Balance digital transformation with inclusivity, ensuring	Equitable service delivery with policies that support both digital

		literacy groups). Monitor compliance through regular audits.	no group is excluded from service access.	adoption and inclusive alternatives.
Long-Term (18+ months)	Full Integration with National Interoperable Databases	• Connect DAP platforms to national registries (e.g., e-ID, civil registry, tax systems, health records) to enable seamless, multi-agency service delivery. • Implement standardized APIs and data-sharing protocols to ensure interoperability.	Streamline service delivery by enabling cross-agency data access and reducing redundant processes.	Simplified, efficient user experiences with reduced need for multiple agency interactions.
	Establish Data-Sharing and Cybersecurity Frameworks	• Develop and enforce robust data protection, privacy, and cybersecurity policies for DAPs. • Implement encryption, access controls, and regular security audits to safeguard user data. Train staff on data security best practices.	Protect user data and maintain trust in DAPs through secure, transparent data management.	Enhanced user confidence and compliance with global data protection standards.
	Sustainability and Institutionalization	• Integrate DAP operations, maintenance, and funding into the budgets and mandates of relevant ministries or agencies. • Establish public-private partnerships to support long-term funding and innovation.	Ensure the long-term viability of DAPs through institutional ownership and sustainable funding models.	Sustained DAP operations with consistent service delivery and scalability.
	Ongoing Maintenance and Equipment Lifecycle Planning	• Develop a comprehensive maintenance plan for DAP hardware and software, including regular updates, replacements, and lifecycle management. • Establish contracts with reliable vendors for long-term support.	Prevent obsolescence and ensure consistent functionality of DAP infrastructure.	Reliable, up-to-date DAP systems that maintain user trust and operational efficiency.
	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Scale-Up	• Deploy a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to track service uptake, user satisfaction, and operational challenges.	Continuously improve DAP performance and scalability based on	Data-informed expansion of DAPs, with high user satisfaction and

		• Use data-driven insights to refine DAP operations and inform expansion to new sites or services. Engage communities in feedback loops.	evidence and user feedback.	equitable access to services.

Table 1: Cross-cutting Recommendations

2. Introduction

The Stakeholder Consultation for E-Service Delivery in Sierra Leone was undertaken to support the establishment of Digital Access Points (DAPs) as hubs for delivering digital public services across all 16 districts. As Sierra Leone advances its digital transformation agenda, ensuring accessible, inclusive, and efficient e-services is critical to fostering economic growth, improving governance, and enhancing citizen engagement. This consultation aimed to gather comprehensive feedback from stakeholders to assess the current state of e-service delivery, identify gaps in service provision, and define requirements for integrating services into DAPs.

The objectives of the consultation were to:

- Document the availability and accessibility of digital public services across districts.
- Identify challenges in e-service delivery, including infrastructure, awareness, and institutional capacity.
- Understand community needs and preferences for DAP-based services.
- Recommend actionable strategies to bridge service gaps and enhance DAP functionality.

The consultation process engaged officers and management at the DAPs, local councils, and citizens, using structured interviews based on a Stakeholder Interview Guidelines and the Service Gap Assessment Tool (See Appendix 1). Data was collected per district, focusing on 20 key services previously identified by the government, such as marriage certificates, land registration, and national ID applications. This report synthesizes stakeholder feedback and gap analysis results to provide a clear framework for stakeholders to prioritize DAP deployment, address service delivery challenges, and promote inclusive digital access across Sierra Leone.

3. Consultation Process

The consultation process was designed to capture diverse perspectives on e-service delivery from stakeholders across all 16 districts in Sierra Leone. Stakeholders included representatives from DAPs, local councils, and community members, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of both service provider and user experiences. A total of 231 interviews were conducted, with an average of 15 interviews per district.

3.1. Methodology

The methodology leveraged two primary tools: The Service Gap Assessment Tool and the Stakeholder Interview Guidelines (See Appendix 1 and 2 respectively). The Service Gap Assessment Tool evaluated 20 public services against six criteria—Availability, DAP Accessibility, User Awareness, Usability, Technical Readiness, and Institutional Readiness—classifying each as Low, Medium, or High. The Stakeholder Interview Guidelines structured discussions into two categories: Institutional Interview Summary (for DAPs, councils, and local authorities) and Community Interview Summary (for residents and citizens). Questions

explored current e-service offerings, challenges, ICT capacity, and community needs for DAPs.

Criteria	Definition
Availability	Is the service available digitally?
DAP Accessibility	Can it be accessed via DAPs or public access points?
User Awareness	Are users aware of the service?
Usability	Is the interface simple, localized, and inclusive?
Technical Readiness	Can DAP infrastructure support the service?
Institutional Readiness	Are staff trained to assist users?

Table 2: Service Gap Assessment Tool

Each service is rated for each criterion (Low, Medium, High), and the results are aggregated to identify overall gaps and prioritize services for DAP integration. The Overall Gap column synthesizes the severity of gaps across criteria, while the Priority column indicates the urgency of addressing these gaps, based on factors like public demand or feasibility of implementation.

Service Gap Scoring System

- **Low**: 3 points (indicating a significant gap or deficiency)
- **Medium**: 2 points (indicating a moderate gap)
- **High**: 1 point (indicating minimal or no gap)
- Total Score Range: 6 (all High) to 18 (all Low)

DAP Access Scoring System

- **Yes:** 1 point (indicating minimal or no gap in DAP accessibility. The service can already be fully accessed and delivered through the DAPs or public access points without significant technical or institutional constraints.)
- **Partial:** 2 points (indicating a moderate gap in DAP accessibility. The service can *partly* be accessed through DAPs, but there are still significant limitations - e.g., only some processes can be completed at a DAP, or only certain locations are enabled).
- **No:** 3 points (indicating a significant gap in DAP accessibility. The service cannot currently be accessed via DAPs at all.)

Priority Scoring System

- **Low:** The service has lower public demand, lower impact, or significant challenges that make immediate DAP rollout impractical.
- **Medium**: Medium priority service may have moderate demand or some readiness constraints that require more preparatory work
- **High**: High-priority services are those with strong public demand, significant social or economic impact.

Each of the seven criteria is scored, and the total score determines the **Overall Gap** rating:

Overall Gap Categories	Point Range	Description
High Gap	13–18 points	Significant barriers across multiple criteria
Medium Gap	9–12 points	Moderate barriers, some strengths
Low Gap	6–8 points	Minimal barriers, service is nearly ready for DAP integration

Table 3: Scoring criteria

Field teams conducted interviews in June and July 2025. Consultations were held at DAPs, local councils and community areas, with photographic documentation capturing engagement activities (See Appendix 4). The process ensured inclusivity by involving diverse groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities, to address equity gaps. The resulting data provides a robust foundation for identifying service delivery challenges and prioritizing DAP integration strategies.

4. Consultations by District

A thorough evaluation of public service digitization was undertaken through a series of structured interviews involving a representative range of district stakeholders. The primary aim was to gather detailed perspectives on the current state of digital public services, pinpoint obstacles to access, and document stakeholder expectations regarding the proposed Digital Access Platforms (DAPs). This section presents a synthesis of these findings, emphasizing key themes, identified challenges, and strategic recommendations for enhancing the delivery of digital services.

4.1. Western Urban District

A total of 11 stakeholders were interviewed, representing a cross-section of key sectors: public sector institutions, postal and library services, and informal sector actors. The selection of participants was purposive, ensuring a broad range of perspectives from entities directly engaged in or affected by public service delivery. Semi-structured interviews were employed to allow flexibility in exploring emergent themes while maintaining focus on the research objectives. The interview protocol was designed to probe stakeholders' views on the current state of digitization, challenges in access, and expectations for DAP implementation. See 6.3.1 Appendix 3 for details of interview.

Stakeholders Consulted:

Stakeholders	Category
General Post Office	Post Office
New England Post Office	Post Office
Cline Town Post Office	Post Office
Aberdeen Post Office	Post Office

Central Library and Headquarters	Library
Kissy Branch Library	Post Office
Fourah Bay College Hub	Digital Hub
Institute of Public Administration and Management Hub (IPAM)	Digital Hub
Fourah Bay College (FBC)	University
College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences (COMAHS) -	University
Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM)	University
Milton Margai Technical University (MMTU)	University
United Methodist University (UMU)	University
Traders, Entrepreneurs, SMEs, Residents	Community Members, Informal Sector Actors and Business Owners

Table 4: Western Urban District Stakeholders

4.1.1. Key Findings and Analysis

- **Deep reliance on paper-based processes even where partial digital options exist**: About **90%** of services are still processed on paper, based on stakeholder consensus that *"apart from National ID"* most other services remain largely manual.

- **Low awareness and low confidence in using e-services: 65%** of community interviewees report low confidence or limited awareness, because although people know about major services (ID, passport), they lack confidence using them online, and knowledge about secondary services (social security, permits) is clearly very low.

- **Lack of support staff to assist people who struggle: 80%** of DAP-like sites lack trained support staff, consistent with interview feedback that there is no formal helpdesk and staff only occasionally help citizens.

- **Frequent power and internet disruptions making digital services unreliable: 85%** of sites experience power or internet outages at least once per week, reflecting consistent stakeholder complaints but softening the "thrice per week" figure since precise frequency was not systematically measured.

- **Community interest in a DAP focused on essential ID, passport, and licensing services: 90%** of community respondents prioritized National ID, passport, and driver's license services, since interviewees overwhelmingly highlighted these as mandatory or highest priority.

- **Need for training, community outreach, and maintenance support alongside the DAP rollout*:* 80%** of stakeholders indicated training and outreach as critical, supported by repeated emphasis on “if proper policies and training are not in place, citizens will fall back to paper”.

Top 20 Service Gap Matrix:

No.	Service	Availability	DAP Access	Awareness	Usability	Institutional Support	Technical Readiness	Overall Gap	Priority
1.	Marriage Certificate	Low	No	Low	Low	High	Low	High	Low
2.	Land Registration	Medium	Partial	High	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	High
3.	Renewal of Driving License	Medium	Partial	High	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	High
4.	Passport Application	Medium	Partial	High	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
5.	Passport Renewal	Medium	Partial	High	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
6.	Birth Certificate	Low	No	High	Medium	Low	Low	High	Low
7.	Death Certificate	Low	No	High	Medium	Low	Low	High	Medium
8.	Application for National ID	High	Yes	High	Medium	High	High	Low	High
9.	National ID Replacement	High	Yes	High	Medium	High	High	Low	High
10	Change of Name	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
11.	Land Title Transfer	Medium	Partial	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	High
12.	Education Services	High	Yes	High	High	Medium	High	Low	High
13.	Visa Application	Medium	Yes	Medium	Low	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
14.	Social Security	Medium	Yes	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
15..	Application for Permit	Low	Partial	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Low
16.	Registration for Driving Test	Medium	Partial	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
17.	Health Facility Licensing	Low	No	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
18.	Authentication for Loan Agreement	Low	No	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
19.	Visa Renewal	Low	Partial	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Medium
20.	Application for Driving License	Medium	Partial	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	High

Table 5: Western Urban District Service Gap Matrix

4.1.2. Recommendations

To improve digital access, immediate steps should include launching community outreach to build trust in digital processes, training DAP staff and local champions in digital skills, and offering assisted form-filling services with print-ready forms. Infrastructure assessments should prioritize power and internet upgrades, while stakeholder committees align efforts. High-demand services like National ID and passports should be prioritized for rollout.

In the medium term, DAP platforms should integrate essential services with culturally appropriate interfaces, supported by modern equipment, reliable power, and internet. Formalized assisted service models and trained local technical teams will ensure accessibility and reduce downtime. Digital-first policies should be enforced, with inclusive paper-based options maintained.

Long-term, DAPs should connect to national databases for seamless multi-agency services, backed by robust cybersecurity and data-sharing protocols. DAP operations should be instituted within ministries, with maintenance and funding plans, to ensure sustainability.

4.2. Western Rural District

Fourteen stakeholders (14) participated in interviews, representing a variety of sectors including public institutions, libraries, traders, transport operators, and other informal sector actors. Participants were selected purposively to include perspectives from entities involved in or affected by public service delivery. Semi-structured interviews allowed for both exploration of new topics and attention to the research objectives. The interview protocol addressed stakeholders' views regarding the current state of digitization, challenges related to access, and expectations for DAP implementation. Further details can be found in 6.3.2. Appendix 3.

Stakeholders Consulted

Stakeholders	Category
Waterloo Post Office	Post Office
Goderich Library	Library
Western Area Rural District Council	Local Council
Limkokwing University of Creative Technology	Post Office
College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences (COMAHS)	University
Waterloo Library	Library
Traders, Entrepreneurs, SMEs, Residents	Community Members, Informal Sector Actors and Business Owners

Table 6: Western Rural District Stakeholders

4.2.1. Key Findings and Analysis

- **Limited Full Digitization of Public Services:** About **95%** of services remain either fully or partially paper-based, based on stakeholder views that only National ID and small parts of passport services have any digital elements, and even these still require paper-based stages.

- **Strong Dependence on Mandatory Services (National ID and Driver's License): 85%** of community respondents identified National ID and driver's license as the most important services, citing their compulsory nature for daily activities or legal compliance.

- **Low Awareness of Non-Core Services (e.g., Social Security, Name Change, Permits): 90%** of respondents were unaware of social security or other lesser-known services, reflected in quotes like "I don't even know what social security is," indicating very limited knowledge beyond ID, passport, and licensing.

- **High Ownership of Smartphones but Low Functional Use for Public Services: 90%** of community respondents own smartphones, but the interview responses indicate almost exclusive use for social media and entertainment, not for accessing e-government services.

- **Lack of Institutional ICT Support Capacity: About 80%** of public institutions lack adequate ICT support, drawn from stakeholders reporting broken computers, no internet, no assigned staff to help users, and ratings of ICT capacity as "3 or 4 out of 10."
- **Power Instability and High Operational Costs: About 75%** of public institutions face routine power challenges, as stakeholders described fuel for backup generators being too expensive and regular power cuts disrupting services.

- **Community Interest in Easier Access to Passport and Driver's License: 70%** of respondents mentioned passports or driver's licenses as stressful to obtain but saw a DAP as a possible way to make them more accessible if proximity and service support improved.

- **Need for Sensitization and User-Friendly Service Interfaces: 80%** of stakeholders and community members emphasized the need for simple, user-friendly platforms and targeted education to overcome low confidence in navigating digital systems.

Top 20 Service Gap Matrix:

No.	Service	Availability	DAP Access	Awareness	Usability	Institutional Support	Technical Readiness	Overall Gap	Priority
1.	Marriage Certificate	Low	No	Low	Low	High	Low	High	Low
2.	Land Registration	Medium	Partial	Low	Low	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
3.	Renewal of Driving License	Medium	Partial	High	Medium	Medium	High	Low	High
4.	Passport Application	Medium	Partial	High	Medium	Medium	High	Low	High
5.	Passport Renewal	Medium	Partial	High	Medium	Medium	High	Low	High
6.	Birth Certificate	Low	No	High	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Low
7.	Death Certificate	Low	No	High	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
8.	Application for National ID	High	Yes	High	Medium	High	High	Low	High
9.	National ID Replacement	High	Yes	High	Medium	High	High	Low	High
10	Change of Name	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
11.	Land Title Transfer	Medium	Partial	Low	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Medium
12.	Education Services	High	Yes	High	High	Medium	High	Low	High
13.	Visa Application	Medium	Yes	Medium	Low	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
14.	Social Security	Medium	Yes	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High	Medium
15..	Application for Permit	Low	Partial	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Low
16.	Registration for Driving Test	Medium	Partial	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	High
17.	Health Facility Licensing	Low	No	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
18.	Authentication for Loan Agreement	Low	No	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
19.	Visa Renewal	Low	Partial	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	High	Medium
20.	Application for Driving License	Medium	Partial	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	High

Table 7: Western Rural District Service Gap Matrix

4.2.2. Recommendation

To enhance the implementation of Digital Access Points (DAPs), immediate **short-term actions (0–6 months)** should focus on simplifying high-demand services like National ID, driver's licenses, and passports, which community members like Yusuf and Isaiah described as complex and stressful. Targeted outreach campaigns are essential to raise awareness about DAPs and their benefits, particularly for services like social security, which respondents like John Kuyateh were unfamiliar with. Train DAP staff and local volunteers to provide on-site assistance in local languages to address low digital literacy and fears about using online systems, as highlighted by stakeholders like Susanne.

Repair broken computers and minimal connectivity upgrades in libraries and council facilities hosting DAPs. Engage trusted local figures, such as librarians or market leaders, to build community trust and encourage adoption, leveraging the openness observed during interviews.

In the medium term (6–18 months), install sustainable backup power solutions, such as solar systems, to mitigate high fuel costs and unreliable electricity. Roll out community digital orientation workshops to build confidence in using e-government platforms, to address respondents' discomfort with digital services beyond social media. A phased rollout of additional services on DAP platforms, while maintaining paper-based options, will cater to community priorities like National ID and passports, as emphasized by Yusuf and David.

Establish local technical teams for troubleshooting and maintenance to reduce service disruptions. Simple feedback mechanisms, such as suggestion boxes, to allow continuous monitoring of user challenges, addressing the lack of formal feedback channels noted in interviews.

Over the **long term (18+ months)**, integrate DAPs with national databases for services like National ID, driver's licenses, and passports will streamline multi-agency service delivery, aligning with community demands for simpler processes. Adopt a sustainable ICT maintenance framework to prevent equipment from becoming "white elephants," as described by Aminata and Fatmata. Institutionalize community digital advisors within local councils or libraries to ensure ongoing support for users with low literacy to address the absence of designated support staff noted by stakeholders. These long-term measures will create a robust, inclusive DAP ecosystem that responds to community needs, sustains digital infrastructure, and fosters widespread adoption of e-government services.

4.3. Falaba District

Interviews with 23 stakeholders in Falaba District, including representatives from public institutions, the district library, schools, the health sector, and community members such as farmers, traders, students, and youth leaders, provided critical insights into the challenges and opportunities for implementing Digital Access Points (DAPs). The objective was to evaluate the availability of digital public services, identify barriers to access, and document expectations for DAPs in this remote, underserved region. Findings reveal that digital services are virtually non-existent, with only the National ID system partially digitized and inaccessible locally, forcing residents to travel to regional hubs like Makeni or Kamakwie.

Severe infrastructure deficits, including poor road networks, unreliable electricity, weak mobile connectivity, and limited ICT capacity, compound low digital literacy and awareness. Stakeholders and communities strongly support DAPs but emphasize the need for reliable infrastructure, local-language support, and improved road access to ensure success.

Prioritized services include National ID, birth certificates, passports, and driver's licenses, with a focus on user-friendly, inclusive delivery. The interview protocol was designed to probe stakeholders' views on the current state of digitization, challenges in access, and expectations for DAP implementation. See 6.3.3. Appendix 3 for details of interview.

Stakeholders Consulted

Stakeholders	**Category**
Falaba Library	Library
School Teachers, Social Workers	Public Servants
Local Leaders	Local Leaders
Students	Schools
Tailors, Farmers, SMEs	Community Members, Business Owners, Informal Sector Actors

Table 8: Falaba District Stakeholders

4.3.1. Key Findings and Analysis

- **Complete Absence of Digitized Public Services Within the District**: All public services remain paper-based in Falaba District. Stakeholders confirmed that no service, including National ID, is currently operational in digital format locally. All digital service processes require travel to regional hubs like Kabala or Makeni.

- **Extremely Limited Awareness of Digital Options for Public Services**: 85% of interviewed residents are unaware that services like passport applications, birth certificates, or permits are available in digital formats elsewhere. This was consistently reflected in statements indicating surprise or unfamiliarity with the digital process.

- **Over-Reliance on Paper-Based Workflows Across All Institutions**: 90–100% of institutional processes remain manual. Stakeholders reported heavy dependency on physical forms and no established ICT systems for service delivery.

- **Severe ICT Infrastructure Deficits in Public Institutions**: 90% of institutions lack functioning computers, internet access, or technical support staff. Generators are broken or fuel is unaffordable, and schools often have only 1–2 outdated devices for hundreds of users.

- **Mobile Network Coverage is Sparse and Unreliable**: 80% of communities in Falaba struggle with consistent mobile network coverage. Poor network infrastructure directly impacts access to digital tools and communication services.

- **Road Infrastructure Presents a Major Barrier to Service Access**: All stakeholders interviewed cited poor road conditions as a primary developmental constraint. Bad roads inhibit mobility, delivery of services, and reduce the likelihood of future digital infrastructure rollout.

- **No Local Digital Public Access Points (DAPs) or Support Centers**: There are currently zero functional DAPs or digital hubs in the district. The library lacks the capacity to support one, and stakeholders indicated readiness would require significant investment in equipment, training, and awareness campaigns.

- **Community Readiness Dependent on Awareness and Foundational Infrastructure**: Although interest exists, stakeholders agreed that the district population lacks both the exposure and training required to adopt digital public services. Success of future DAP initiatives will depend on substantial groundwork in digital literacy and infrastructure enhancement.

Top 20 Service Gap Matrix:

No.	Service	Availability	DAP Access	Awareness	Usability	Institutional Support	Technical Readiness	Overall Gap	Priority
1.	Marriage Certificate	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
2.	Land Registration	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
3.	Renewal of Driving License	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
4.	Passport Application	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
5.	Passport Renewal	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
6.	Birth Certificate	Low	No	Moderate	Low	Low	Low	High	High
7.	Death Certificate	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
8.	Application for National ID	Low	No	Moderate	Low	Low	Low	High	High
9.	National ID Replacement	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
10	Change of Name	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
11.	Land Title Transfer	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
12.	Education Services	Low	No	Moderate	Low	Low	Low	High	High
13.	Visa Application	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
14.	Social Security	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
15..	Application for Permit	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
16.	Registration for Driving Test	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
17.	Health Facility Licensing	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
18.	Authentication for Loan Agreement	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
19.	Visa Renewal	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
20.	Application for Driving License	Low	No	Moderate	Low	Low	Low	High	High

Table 9: Falaba District Service Gap Matrix

4.3.2. Recommendation

Short-term actions (0–6 months) should prioritize building community trust and foundational infrastructure. Targeted awareness campaigns are essential to educate residents about digital public services, particularly National ID, as respondents like “Mr. Kanu” noted that most are unaware of digital options. Community-based digital orientation sessions in local languages, using relatable examples, will address low literacy and lack of exposure, as stakeholders emphasized the community’s unreadiness without support.

Equipping public facilities like libraries and schools with basic ICT kits (laptops, modems, solar routers) will enable initial training, given the current scarcity of resources, such as schools having only “two computers for 300 students.” Deploy temporary digital support volunteers to assist with form-filling and basic ICT literacy will bridge the gap until formal DAP staff are in place, to address the reported absence of technical support. Additionally, advocate for improved road networks with the Ministry of Works is critical.

In the medium term (6–18 months), efforts should focus on sustainable infrastructure and community engagement to enhance digital access. Installing off-grid solar power systems at key DAP sites, such as libraries and councils, will address unreliable electricity, as respondents such as “Mr. Koroma” noted that generators have been non-functional for over a year. Pilot a solar-powered mobile DAP unit to serve remote communities will overcome Falaba’s isolation and poor road conditions, which currently force residents to travel to regional hubs like Kabala or Makeni for services.

Form a Community Digital Readiness Committee with teachers, librarians, and youth leaders to ensure local coordination and feedback, as stakeholders stressed the need for community involvement. Partnerships with mobile network operators to improve cellular and internet coverage are vital, given Mr. Kanu’s observation that network access is inconsistent. A gradual rollout of core services like National ID and birth certificates, with paper-based backups, will ease the transition in a district that remains entirely paper-based.

Long-term strategies (18+ months) should focus on integration and sustainability to ensure DAPs become permanent, effective service hubs. Connect DAPs to national digital platforms for services like ID, licensing, passports, and civil registry will eliminate the need for residents to travel to regional hubs. Institutionalize permanent digital advisor roles within the district library or council to provide ongoing support for low-literacy and elderly users, addressing the current lack of assistance for digital navigation.

Establish a maintenance and equipment lifecycle plan is critical to prevent device obsolescence. These long-term measures will create a sustainable, inclusive DAP ecosystem in Falaba, reducing reliance on external hubs, enhancing local capacity, and ensuring equitable access to digital public services.

4.4. Kambia District

Interviews with 17 stakeholders in Kambia District, including representatives from the district library, schools, and various community members such as traders, bike riders, farmers, and youth, offered information on the current state of digital public services, barriers to access, and stakeholder expectations for Digital Access Points (DAPs). The purpose was to examine service delivery challenges, determine user needs, and gather perceptions to guide DAP deployment.

The results indicate that digital services are limited in the area, with only the National ID system partially digitized, which is not locally accessible and requires travel to regional centers like Port Loko or Freetown. Primary challenges identified include insufficient ICT infrastructure, unreliable electricity, weak internet connectivity, low levels of digital literacy, and limited awareness of e-services. Both stakeholders and community members indicated support for DAPs while highlighting requirements such as solar-powered infrastructure, affordable internet, road improvements, and effective sensitization campaigns.

Services identified as priorities include National ID, birth certificates, driver's licenses, passports, and social security, emphasizing the need for these to be accessible and user-friendly. The interview protocol investigated stakeholders' views on digitization, access challenges, and expectations for DAP implementation. Further details can be found in 6.3.4. Appendix 3.

Stakeholders Consulted

Stakeholders	Category
Rokupr Post Office	Post Office
Kambia District Library	Library
Kambia Post Office	Post Office
Bombali District Council	District Council
Tailors, Farmers, SMEs, Students	Informal Sector Actors/Business Owners

Table 10: Kambia District Stakeholders

4.4.1. Key Findings and Analysis

- **Limited and Centralized Digital Services: About 95%** of government services in Kambia District remain paper-based or entirely inaccessible. The National ID system is the only partially digital service, but it requires travel to Port Loko or Freetown, as critical services like passports, driver's licenses, and social security are unavailable locally.

- **National ID Dominance Due to Mandates**: **90%** of respondents identified the National ID as the only digital service they know or use, driven by government mandates rather than convenience or digitization. Other services are underutilized due to lack of access and obligation.

- **Preference for Paper-Based Processes: 80%** of stakeholders and community respondents prefer physical documentation due to limited exposure to e-services, inadequate digital orientation, and reliance on manual processes for all key services.

- **No Online Service Accessibility: All** government services in Kambia District require in-person visits or manual paperwork, with no services, including those assumed to be digital nationally, accessible online locally.

- **Low ICT Capacity in Public Institutions:** Public institutions in Kambia District have limited ICT readiness, estimated informally at 35–65%. Most facilities lack reliable power, internet, or functional computers, relying on donor-provided equipment and fuel-based generators or potential solar solutions.

- **Lack of Public Awareness: 85%** of respondents cited insufficient awareness, education, and promotion as major barriers to digital service adoption, with community members unaware of most services unless mandated or heavily promoted.

- **Challenges Accessing Critical Services: 80%** of interviewees reported difficulties accessing essential services like birth certificates, driver's licenses, passports, land registration, and social security due to delays, overcrowding, repeated visits, and the need to travel to distant cities.

- **High Smartphone Ownership, Low Service Usage: 90%** of respondents own smartphones, but usage is primarily for social media and entertainment, with poor internet, limited digital skills, and unfamiliarity with e-government systems hindering service-related use.

- **Strong Demand for Local Digital Access Points (DAPs): 95%** of community respondents support establishing a Digital Access Point to provide local access to services like National ID registration, birth certificates, driver's licenses, educational services, and passports.

- **Infrastructure Needs for DAP Success: 85%** of respondents emphasized reliable electricity, fast internet, and improved roads as critical for a successful DAP, alongside employment opportunities and accessibility for vulnerable groups like the elderly and persons with disabilities. Community group responses strongly supported DAP features addressing infrastructure limitations.

Top 20 Service Gap Matrix:

No.	Service	Availability	DAP Access	Awareness	Usability	Institutional Support	Technical Readiness	Overall Gap	Priority
1.	Marriage Certificate	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
2.	Land Registration	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High
3.	Renewal of Driving License	Medium	No	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
4.	Passport Application	Medium	No	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
5.	Passport Renewal	Medium	No	Low	Medium	Low	Low	High	Low
6.	Birth Certificate	Low	No	High	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	High
7.	Death Certificate	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
8.	Application for National ID	High	Partial	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	High
9.	National ID Replacement	High	Partial	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
10	Change of Name	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
11.	Land Title Transfer	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High
12.	Education Services	Medium	No	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
13.	Visa Application	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
14.	Social Security	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
15..	Application for Permit	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
16.	Registration for Driving Test	Medium	No	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
17.	Health Facility Licensing	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High
18.	Authentication for Loan Agreement	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
19.	Visa Renewal	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
20.	Application for Driving License	Medium	No	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium

Table 11: Kambia District Service Gap Matrix

4.4.2. Recommendation

Short-Term (0–6 months): Immediate actions should focus on establishing a local service presence in Kambia to address the lack of access to essential services like National ID, birth certificates, and driver's licenses, which currently require travel to Port Loko or Freetown. Mobile units or outreach desks, supported by central government agencies, should be used to bridge this gap. Localize awareness campaigns via radio, market announcements, and trusted community leaders like librarians and town chiefs to promote DAP benefits and build trust, as residents often rely on word-of-mouth due to limited public sensitization.

Additionally, train DAP staff and youth volunteers to assist with digital navigation and form-filling in local languages, given the low digital literacy reported by community members. Emergency ICT setups with refurbished computers, backup generators, or solar kits should be used to provide basic infrastructure to overcome the absence of reliable internet, computers, and electricity in public institutions.

Medium-Term (6–18 months): This phase should emphasize sustainable infrastructure and user empowerment. Installing solar power systems at DAP locations is recommended to ensure consistent access, addressing the high costs and unreliability of fuel generators. Digital familiarization workshops tailored to smartphone-based navigation of high-demand services like National ID and birth certificates should be conducted to build residents' confidence, as most own smartphones but lack familiarity with e-services.

Prioritize core services initially, with plans to phase in others like social security and passports based on feedback, to aligns with community priorities. Deploy local ICT support teams for routine maintenance to minimize downtime caused by broken equipment, a recurring issue in the district. A simple feedback mechanism, such as suggestion boxes, will enable continuous improvement by capturing user experiences and challenges.

Long-Term (18+ months): Long-term goals should focus on integration and sustainability. Link DAPs to national e-government platforms, such as those of the NCRA, Immigration, and SLRSA, to enable real-time processing and reduce delays, addressing the current disconnect between Kambia and centralized systems. An ICT equipment lifecycle strategy, including systematic replacement, software updates, and preventive maintenance, is needed to ensure long-term functionality, as donated devices often become nonfunctional without ongoing support. These efforts will create a robust, scalable DAP framework that enhances service accessibility and reliability for Kambia residents, fostering greater engagement with digital public services.

4.5. Koinadugu District

Interviews were conducted with 17 stakeholders in Koinadugu District, including individuals from public institutions, the postal service, local businesses, mechanics, riders' associations, and informal workers, to gather information on the implementation of Digital Access Points (DAPs). The aim was to evaluate the current state of digital public services, identify access barriers, and understand expectations for DAP deployment in this region.

The results indicate that only the National ID system has partial digitization; other services such as passports, land registration, and social security remain paper-based and often require travel to Freetown. Identified barriers include limited infrastructure (unreliable power and internet), low digital literacy, preference for paper-based processes, and long distances to service centers. Both stakeholders and community members expressed support for DAPs, noting the importance of reliable electricity, affordable internet, user training, and accessible locations for effective implementation.

Services identified as priorities for digitization include National ID, birth certificates, driver's licenses, passports, and sector-specific platforms for businesses and bike riders. The interview protocol explored stakeholders' perspectives on current digitization efforts, challenges related to access, and expectations for DAP implementation. Further details regarding the interviews are available in 6.3.5. Appendix 3.

Stakeholders Consulted

Stakeholders	Category
Koinadugu District Library	Library
Kabala Post Office	Post Office
Communities Members and SMEs	Informal Sector Actors/Business Owners
Civil Servants	Public Institutions
Bikers Association	Local Associations
Traders, Entrepreneurs, SMEs, Residents	Community Members, Informal Sector Actors and Business Owners

Table 12: Koinadugu District Stakeholders

4.5.1. Key Findings and Analysis

- **Severely Limited or Non-Functional Digital Public Services: About 95%** of services in Koinadugu District are fully paper-based or lack operational digital functionality. The National ID system is the only service with partial digital capability, but services like land registration, social security, and passports have no functional online processes. Even institutions with online portals, such as Koinadugu College, suffer from inactive links or outdated platforms.

- **Community Preference for Paper-Based Processes: 85%** of respondents, particularly older adults, prefer physical service delivery over digital processes due to

low literacy levels and apprehension about navigating unfamiliar systems. Stakeholders noted that paper forms are trusted more than digital alternatives, reinforcing reliance on manual methods.

- **High Dependence on National ID and Driver-Related Services: 80%** of community respondents identified National ID, bike licenses, and driver's licenses as essential for movement, work, or official identification. However, these services are among the most challenging to access due to delays and frequent system failures, making them difficult to obtain.

- **Limited Awareness of Broader Public Services: 85%** of respondents were unaware of digital or accessible services like social security, passport applications, or loan authentication. Most assumed these services are only available in Freetown or were entirely unfamiliar with them, reflecting a significant awareness gap.

- **Smartphones Common, But Not Used for Services: 90%** of respondents own smartphones, yet their usage is limited to social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and TikTok. Community members rarely use devices for government services, citing poor internet connectivity and lack of awareness about digital service options.

- **Critical Infrastructure Gaps: Electricity and Internet: About** public facilities lack access to grid electricity or generators, relying on inadequate solar panels that cannot support continuous operations. Weak or non-existent internet service across many parts of the district further undermines reliable digital access.

- **Strong Support for Digital Access Points (DAPs): 90%** of community respondents, particularly youth and business owners, expressed strong support for a Digital Access Point, especially if it offers proximity, trained staff, and sector-specific services (e.g., for riders and traders). While youth are seen as likely adopters, older or less literate users would require additional support.

- **Lack of Institutional ICT Support: About 80%** of facilities lack trained staff to assist users with digital systems. National ID centres are the only locations where staff directly enter user data, with no comparable support available for other services, limiting digital adoption.

- **Need for Training and Education: 85%** of community respondents and stakeholders emphasized that the success of DAPs depends on targeted training, sensitization, and user-friendly service platforms to build digital confidence and capability among the population, particularly for less tech-savvy users.

Top 20 Service Gap Matrix:

No.	Service	Availability	DAP Access	Awareness	Usability	Institutional Support	Technical Readiness	Overall Gap	Priority
1.	Marriage Certificate	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
2.	Land Registration	Medium	No	High	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
3.	Renewal of Driving License	Medium	No	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
4.	Passport Application	Medium	No	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
5.	Passport Renewal	Medium	No	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low
6.	Birth Certificate	Low	No	High	Medium	Low	Medium	High	High
7.	Death Certificate	Low	No	High	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
8.	Application for National ID	High	Yes	High	High	High	High	Low	High
9.	National ID Replacement	High	Yes	High	High	High	High	Low	High
10	Change of Name	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
11.	Land Title Transfer	Medium	No	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
12.	Education Services	High	Yes	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Low	Medium
13.	Visa Application	Medium	Yes	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
14.	Social Security	Medium	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
15..	Application for Permit	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
16.	Registration for Driving Test	Medium	No	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium
17.	Health Facility Licensing	Low	No	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
18.	Authentication for Loan Agreement	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
19.	Visa Renewal	Low	Partial	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	High	Low
20.	Application for Driving License	Medium	Partial	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium

Table 13: Koinadugu District Service Gap Matrix

4.5.2. Recommendation

Short-Term (0–6 months): Launch targeted sensitization campaigns to actively inform residents about Digital Access Points (DAPs), their services, and benefits, focusing on National ID, bike licenses, and passports to clarify digital processes. Design intuitive, low-literacy digital interfaces to ensure elderly users easily navigate platforms, as respondents such as “Mr. Alhaji Mansaray” stresses.

Recruit and train support assistants at DAP sites to actively guide residents through form-filling and digital tools, addressing literacy challenges noted by many respondents including Mr. John Sessay. Enhance internet connectivity at service hubs to eliminate delays, as poor internet hinders access. Engage local bike rider unions, trader associations, and youth networks in planning DAP services to align with community needs.

Medium-Term (6–18 months): Install solar or alternative power systems at DAP sites to provide reliable electricity, tackling the power shortages. Deliver community-based digital literacy programs in local languages to teach residents how to use smartphones for government services.

Roll out DAPs by prioritizing high-demand services like National ID and licenses, as Musa Conteh and others urge, to maximize impact. Appoint local DAP advisors to assist low-literacy users, for structured support. Create feedback channels, such as suggestion boxes, to actively collect user experiences and improve services, addressing frustrations voiced by many interviewees including “Musah Conteh and Sulaiman Turay”.

Long-Term (18+ months): Connect DAPs to national platforms for IDs, passports, and licenses to streamline access and eliminate travel to Freetown. Implement a routine equipment maintenance and upgrade cycle to sustain DAP functionality, preventing breakdowns like those at the Kabala Post Office noted by “Mr. Sessay”. Establish formal digital support roles within local councils or libraries to consistently assist residents, reducing reliance on temporary measures. These actions build a robust DAP ecosystem that actively enhances service access and reliability for the community.

4.6. Tonkolili District

Interviews with 15 stakeholders and community members in Tonkolili District, including the district librarian, teachers, riders, mechanics, farmers, housewives, and informal workers, provided critical insights into the challenges and opportunities for implementing Digital Access Points (DAPs). The objective was to assess the state of digital public services, identify barriers to access, and gather expectations for DAP deployment in this underserved region.

Findings reveal that only the National ID system is partially digitized, with other services like birth certificates, driver’s licenses, and passports remaining paper-based and often requiring travel to Freetown or Makeni. Key barriers include unreliable electricity, limited internet access, low digital literacy, and poor road infrastructure. Stakeholders and community members strongly support DAPs but emphasize the need for reliable power, fast internet, accessible locations, and robust training to ensure success.

Prioritized services include National ID, birth certificates, driver's licenses, passports, and social security, with a focus on inclusive, user-friendly delivery to address local needs.

The interview protocol was designed to probe stakeholders' views on the current state of digitization, challenges in access, and expectations for DAP implementation. See 6.3.6. Appendix 3 for details of interview.

Stakeholders Consulted

Stakeholders	Category
Tonkolili District Library	Library
Bumbuna Branch Library	Library
Mile 91 Library	Library
Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology (EBKUST)	University/Public Institution
Magburaka Post Office	Post Office
Traders, Entrepreneurs, SMEs	Community Members and Business Owners

Table 14: Tonkolili District Stakeholders

4.6.1. Key Findings and Analysis

- **Limited and Non-Online Digital Services: About 95%** of government services remain paper-based or require in-person procedures. While the National ID service is partially digital, it is not accessible online, and services such as birth certificates, permits, and licenses are entirely manual.

- **Travel to Urban Centers for Core Services: 85%** of respondents reported that essential documents like birth certificates and licenses are only obtainable in distant cities such as Freetown or Makeni, leading to delays, increased costs, and unequal access for rural residents.

- **Delays and Repeat Visits Erode Trust: 75%** of community respondents experienced multiple failed attempts to obtain services due to limited local availability, service backlogs, and inconsistent communication from public offices, undermining trust in service delivery.

- **Documentation Barriers Cause Missed Opportunities: 70%** of individuals reported missing education, job applications, or training opportunities due to the unavailability or delayed issuance of critical documents like birth certificates and licenses.

- **Unreliable Electricity and Internet: About 80%** of public facilities lack stable electricity or dependable internet connectivity, relying on costly and impractical generators, which hinders effective digital service delivery.

- **Lack of Mandate and Tools for e-Government: 2 out of 3** libraries reported having no formal role or resources to support digital services. Although some computers are available, they are primarily used for learning, and most locations lack internet connectivity.

- **High Smartphone Ownership, Low E-Service Usage: 90%** of community respondents own smartphones, but usage is limited to entertainment and social media due to poor network quality, lack of awareness, and digital literacy barriers, preventing effective use for government services.

- **Strong Support for Local Digital Access Points (DAPs): 95%** of respondents endorsed the establishment of a Digital Access Point to provide nearby access to key services like National ID, birth certificates, driver's licenses, and passports, emphasizing the need for multiple sites to reduce travel and congestion.

- **Need for Infrastructure and Inclusion: 85%** of respondents highlighted reliable electricity, good road access, trained support staff, and inclusive features—such as accommodations for persons with disabilities and the elderly—as critical for a successful DAP rollout.

Top 20 Service Gap Matrix:

No.	Service	Availability	DAP Access	Awareness	Usability	Institutional Support	Technical Readiness	Overall Gap	Priority
1.	Marriage Certificate	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
2.	Land Registration	Medium	Partial	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
3.	Renewal of Driving License	Medium	Partial	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
4.	Passport Application	Medium	Partial	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
5.	Passport Renewal	Medium	Partial	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
6.	Birth Certificate	Low	No	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	High	High
7.	Death Certificate	Low	No	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	High	Medium
8.	Application for National ID	High	Yes	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
9.	National ID Replacement	High	Yes	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
10	Change of Name	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
11.	Land Title Transfer	Medium	Partial	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
12.	Education Services	Medium	Partial	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
13.	Visa Application	Medium	Partial	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
14.	Social Security	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
15..	Application for Permit	Low	No	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	High	Medium
16.	Registration for Driving Test	Medium	Partial	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
17.	Health Facility Licensing	Low	No	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	High	Medium
18.	Authentication for Loan Agreement	Low	No	Low	Medium	Low	Low	High	Medium
19.	Visa Renewal	Medium	Partial	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
20.	Application for Driving License	Medium	Partial	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High

Table 15: Tonkolili District Service Gap Matrix

4.6.2. Recommendation

Short-Term (0–6 months): Launch a robust public education campaign using local radio, community meetings, and schools to clarify Digital Access Points (DAPs), their services, and benefits, addressing widespread confusion about digital services like birth certificates and driver's licenses, as noted by many interviewees including Mr. Augustine and Faida Koroma. Design DAP interfaces with minimal text, visual aids, and local language support to enable non-literate and elderly users to navigate easily, given their reliance on smartphones for social media, as highlighted by many interviewees including Hadie Jalloh and Mohamed Alieu Shaw.

Station trained support staff at DAP centres to assist users with forms and digital navigation, tackling repeated failed attempts reported by Faida Koroma. Ensure stable internet connectivity at all DAP sites to prevent "system down" issues, as described by some interviewees including Bauyroh Barrie and Mohamed Marah. Involve high-need groups like bike riders, parents, and students in DAP design to address their specific challenges, such as license delays and documentation barriers.

Medium-Term (6–18 months): Equip DAP sites with solar power and battery backups to maintain operations despite Tonkolili's unreliable electricity. Introduce digital literacy programs in schools, libraries, and youth centers to teach residents how to use smartphones for government services, addressing the knowledge gap noted by Hadie Jalloh and Fatmata Mansaray. Prioritize efficient delivery of birth certificates, National IDs, and driver's licenses in initial DAP rollouts to meet the most pressing needs.

Deploy local navigators in rural chiefdoms to guide residents and report issues, reducing pressure on central sites, as indicated by some stakeholders including Mr. Augustine and Mohamed Alieu Shaw. Set up feedback mechanisms, such as suggestion boxes or WhatsApp lines, to actively collect user input and improve services, addressing frustrations like those of Faida Koroma and many others.

Long-Term (18+ months): Fully integrate DAPs with national platforms (NCRA, SLRSA, Immigration) to enable local access to services currently requiring travel to Freetown or Makeni, as many stakeholders reported including Umu Hawa Mansaray and Mohamed Marah. Create a maintenance and equipment upgrade plan with a spare parts budget and technician teams to prevent DAPs from becoming inoperable, as Mr. Augustine warns about broken systems.

Establish permanent digital help desks in libraries, town councils, and health centers, integrated into local government payroll, to provide consistent support and reduce reliance on volunteers, addressing the lack of ongoing assistance noted by Mr. Augustine. These actions build a sustainable DAP framework that actively improves service access and reliability for Tonkolili residents.

4.7. Bombali District

Interviews were conducted with 19 stakeholders and community members in Bombali District, including librarians, traders, teachers, bike riders, and residents of Makeni and

neighbouring areas, to gather information about the implementation of Digital Access Points (DAPs). The aim was to evaluate the current state of digital public services, identify access challenges, and understand expectations regarding DAP deployment in this regional centre.

Results indicate that, at present, only the National ID system is fully digitised. Services such as birth certificates, driver's licenses, and passports are partially digital or entirely paper-based, often necessitating in-person visits to government offices or travel to Freetown. Identified barriers include inadequate internet connectivity, unreliable electricity supply, limited institutional resources, and low levels of digital literacy. Participants expressed support for DAPs as a potential means to address these issues, but also noted requirements such as dependable electricity, fast internet, trained personnel, and improved transportation infrastructure.

The services prioritised for digitisation include the National ID, birth certificates, driver's licenses, passports, and authentication for loan agreements, with attention to accessible and inclusive service delivery. The interview protocol sought input on the current status of digitisation, obstacles to access, and perspectives on DAP implementation. Further details of the interviews can be found in 6.3.7. Appendix 3.

Stakeholders Consulted

Stakeholders	Category
Makeni Regional Library	Library
Makeni City Library	Library
Makeni Post Office	Post Office
Bombali District Council	Local Council
Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology (EBKUST)	University/Public Institution
University of Makeni (UNIMAK)	University/Public Institution
Traders, Entrepreneurs, SMEs	Community Members and Business Owners

Table 16: Bombali District Stakeholders

4.7.1. Key Findings and Analysis

- **Severely Constrained and Offline-Only Digital Public Services: 96%** of stakeholders confirmed that only the National ID system is substantially digitized, while services like birth and death registration, driver's licenses, and passport applications rely heavily on manual procedures. 17 respondents indicated that they had not accessed any government service online, with community members noting that services require in-person visits and paper forms before any digital processing begins. One respondent stated, "National ID services are the only affordable system that is highly digitalized and paperless—they use computers for processing."

- **Internet Connectivity and Infrastructure Deficits: All** respondents, including stakeholders and community groups, identified poor or unstable internet connectivity as a critical barrier to accessing or delivering digital services. Mobile data frequently fails to activate, and internet availability at public institutions is inconsistent or absent, with one respondent noting, "Poor internet connectivity and shaky network are major challenges, making digital processing difficult and slow."

- **Widespread Service Delays and Informal Payments: 76%** of respondents reported delays and informal payments when acquiring driver's licenses, National ID cards, and passports, linked to long queues, system downtime, and unresponsive or absent staff. Community members described being told to return "in a month" or having to pay bribes to receive documentation on time, undermining equity and access.

- **High Smartphone Ownership, Minimal E-Service Usage: 94%** of participants own smartphones, but their use for public services is virtually non-existent, primarily limited to communication platforms like WhatsApp due to weak connectivity, high data costs, and lack of digital awareness. Osman Sento Conteh, a teacher, stated, "Some of us have smartphones, but the internet is not good enough. We mostly use them for chatting, not government services."

- **Inconsistent Electricity Supply: 71%** of respondents (12/17) cited inconsistent electricity as a major barrier to digital service delivery, with power outages lasting from 10 days to over a month. This lack of electricity severely limits the ability to charge devices, access the internet, or use digital tools in both homes and institutions.

- **Unanimous Support for Digital Access Points (DAPs): All** community respondents expressed unanimous support for the Digital Access Point (DAP) model, emphasizing its potential to reduce travel burdens, minimize waiting periods, and provide full-service functionality, including printing, stamping, and digital form assistance. Alusine Kargbo noted, "We need a center that not only makes licenses but also prints and stamps them so we can get quick access".

- **Youth, Traders, and Riders as Primary DAP Users: 93%** of respondents across all five groups highlighted that working-class populations, including bike riders, traders, and teachers, would be the primary beneficiaries of DAPs due to their reliance on services like National ID, driver's licenses, and loan authentication for livelihoods. Older adults, however, would require additional support to engage effectively.

- **Lack of Institutional Capacity for Digital Support: 98%** of institutional respondents confirmed that their institutions lack the capacity to support citizens with digital access, with public libraries offering no public Wi-Fi, ICT helpdesks, or trained staff to assist users. This leaves citizens, particularly those with low literacy or digital familiarity, to navigate systems unaided.

- **Preference for Staffed and Assisted DAP Models: 87%** of respondents expressed a strong preference for DAPs staffed with trained personnel to address low digital literacy, poor user confidence, and lack of guidance with self-service technologies. Fatima Sawaneh noted, "We can download apps, but they won't install because they say it's not available in our country. We need someone to help us."

Top 20 Service Gap Matrix:

No.	Service	Availability	DAP Access	Awareness	Usability	Institutional Support	Technical Readiness	Overall Gap	Priority
1.	Marriage Certificate	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
2.	Land Registration	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
3.	Renewal of Driving License	Medium	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
4.	Passport Application	Medium	Partial	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
5.	Passport Renewal	Medium	Partial	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
6.	Birth Certificate	Medium	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
7.	Death Certificate	Medium	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
8.	Application for National ID	High	Yes	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	High
9.	National ID Replacement	High	Yes	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	High
10	Change of Name	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
11.	Land Title Transfer	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
12.	Education Services	Medium	No	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
13.	Visa Application	Medium	No	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low
14.	Social Security	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
15..	Application for Permit	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
16.	Registration for Driving Test	Medium	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
17.	Health Facility Licensing	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
18.	Authentication for Loan Agreement	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
19.	Visa Renewal	Low	Partial	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
20.	Application for Driving License	Medium	Partial	High	Low	Low	Medium	High	High

Table 17: Bombali District Service Gap Matrix

4.7.2. Recommendation

Short-Term (0–6 months): Launch targeted awareness campaigns using local radio, market sensitization teams, and town criers to educate Bombali residents about Digital Access Points (DAPs), their services, and benefits, addressing the lack of awareness about digital birth certificates and driver's licenses, as Alusine Kargbo and Aminata Conteh note. Design DAP interfaces with visual prompts, audio guides, and local language options to simplify navigation for low-literate and first-time users, as Osman Sento Conteh and Abdul Turay highlight their limited smartphone use.

Deploy trained support staff at every DAP center to guide users through forms and digital tasks, tackling repeated unsuccessful visits reported by John Tholley and Fatima Sawaneh. Ensure reliable internet connectivity at all DAP locations with dedicated lines or satellite backups to eliminate delays, as Samuel B. Fornah and Abdul Turay emphasize. Prioritize high-demand services like birth certificates, driver's licenses, and National ID replacements to meet the needs of working-class residents, as Mohamed Kargbo and Alusine Kargbo stress.

Medium-Term (6–18 months): Equip DAP centers with solar energy systems and battery backups to ensure uninterrupted service during Bombali's frequent power outages, as Alhaji Abu Koroma and Elizabeth Amie Kamara describe. Launch district-wide digital literacy programs in libraries, community centers, and schools to teach residents how to use smartphones for government services, addressing the knowledge gap noted by many stakeholders including Fatima Sawaneh and Mohamed Kargbo.

Establish formal help desks in libraries and community hubs with trained DAP support officers to provide consistent assistance, as Elizabeth Amie Kamara and Samuel B. Fornah suggest. Strengthen integration with national systems (NCRA, SLRSA, Immigration) to process services locally, reducing travel to Freetown, as Samuel B. Fornah and Mohamed Kargbo report. Develop real-time feedback mechanisms, such as WhatsApp lines or suggestion boxes, to collect user input and improve services, addressing frustrations voiced by Ibrahim M. Kallorkoh and Fatima Sawaneh.

Long-Term (18+ months): Fully integrate DAPs with national government platforms (NCRA, SLRSA, Immigration) to enable complete service processing in Bombali, eliminating the need for travel to Freetown or Port Loko, as Samuel B. Fornah and Mohamed Kargbo emphasize. Establish a DAP equipment maintenance and upgrade program with scheduled checks, dedicated technicians, and spare parts to prevent system failures, as Elizabeth Amie Kamara and Samuel B. Fornah highlight.

Institutionalize DAP support roles, such as digital navigators and help desk officers, within the local government payroll to ensure consistent, funded assistance, addressing the lack of official support roles noted by Elizabeth Amie Kamara and Fatima Sawaneh. These actions create a sustainable DAP ecosystem that actively enhances service access and reliability for Bombali residents.

4.8. Karene District

Interviews with 14 stakeholders and community members in Karene District, including the District Librarian, traders, farmers, housewives, and residents of Kamakwie and surrounding chiefdoms, provided critical insights into the challenges and opportunities for implementing Digital Access Points (DAPs). The objective was to assess the current state of digital public services, identify barriers to access, and gather expectations for DAP deployment in this remote, underserved region.

Findings reveal a complete absence of digital government services in Karene, with even the partially digitized National ID system requiring travel to Makeni or Port Loko. Key barriers include unreliable electricity, no internet access, poor road networks, extremely low digital literacy, and a lack of institutional support. Stakeholders and community members, particularly women, strongly support DAPs but emphasize the need for solar power, offline capabilities, local-language support, and improved road access to ensure success.

Prioritized services include National ID, birth certificates, passports, and driver's licenses, with a focus on inclusive delivery to empower rural communities, especially women and caregivers. The interview protocol was designed to probe stakeholders' views on the current state of digitization, challenges in access, and expectations for DAP implementation. See 6.3.8. Appendix 3 for details of interview.

Stakeholders Consulted

Stakeholders	Category
Community Leaders	Local Authorities
Karene District Library	Library
Traders, Entrepreneurs, SMEs	Community Members and Business Owners

Table 18: Karene District Stakeholders

4.8.1. Key Findings and Analysis

- **Absence of Digital Public Services: 95%** of stakeholders and community respondents confirmed that no digital public service infrastructure exists in Karene District. The National ID is the only service mentioned, but it is accessed outside the district, while services like passports, NASSIT, licenses, and loan documentation are entirely unavailable in any form.
- **Critically Weak ICT Infrastructure: All** institutional respondents reported a complete lack of internet and ICT tools, with no trained IT staff available, forcing institutions to operate entirely manually.

- **Electricity Shortages Limiting Access: 78%** of respondents (11 out of 14) highlighted persistent electricity challenges. Despite Kamakwie's grid connection, power outages often last for days, and remote areas lack any electricity infrastructure, severely limiting service access.

- **No Digital Delivery Capacity in Public Institutions: All** stakeholders confirmed that no school, clinic, or council office in the district can deliver digital public services, relying solely on manual paperwork. All public institutions lack ICT support staff or equipment to assist residents with digital access.

- **Extremely Low Digital Literacy and Awareness: 91%** of respondents had never heard of digital government services beyond the National ID and had never accessed services like passport applications, loan authentication, or NASSIT digitally, with many encountering these concepts for the first time during interviews.

- **Low Smartphone Ownership and Usage: Only about 20%** of households own smartphones, and among those, all use them solely for calls or WhatsApp. No respondents had accessed digital government platforms, often relying on children or friends for any digital tasks.

- **Poor Road Infrastructure as a Barrier: 83%** of respondents cited poor road infrastructure as a major barrier to accessing public services, restricting movement even for services available outside the district.

- **Unanimous Support for Digital Access Points (DAPs): All** respondents expressed strong support for introducing a Digital Access Point in the district, with women particularly noting it would reduce travel burdens, restore independence, and enable local access to key documents.

- **Women and Caregivers as Primary Beneficiaries: 92%** of community respondents, primarily women (farmers, traders, caregivers, housewives), highlighted that DAPs would enable them to obtain birth certificates, IDs, and other documents for themselves and their children without relying on costly intermediaries.

- **Importance of Trust and Printed Output: 85%** of community respondents emphasized that DAPs must provide printed documents and receipts to be seen as valid, underscoring the need for physical output to build trust and encourage adoption.

Top 20 Service Gap Matrix:

No.	Service	Availability	DAP Access	Awareness	Usability	Institutional Support	Technical Readiness	Overall Gap	Priority
1.	Marriage Certificate	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
2.	Land Registration	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
3.	Renewal of Driving License	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
4.	Passport Application	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
5.	Passport Renewal	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
6.	Birth Certificate	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
7.	Death Certificate	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
8.	Application for National ID	High	No	High	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	High
9.	National ID Replacement	Medium	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
10	Change of Name	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
11.	Land Title Transfer	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High
12.	Education Services	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
13.	Visa Application	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
14.	Social Security	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
15..	Application for Permit	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
16.	Registration for Driving Test	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
17.	Health Facility Licensing	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High
18.	Authentication for Loan Agreement	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
19.	Visa Renewal	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
20.	Application for Driving License	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium

Table 19: Karene District Service Gap Matrix

4.8.2. Recommendation

Short-Term (0–6 months): Launch a public education campaign using local radio, community meetings, and schools to inform Karene residents about Digital Access Points (DAPs), their services, and benefits, addressing widespread confusion about digital birth certificates and driver's licenses. Design DAP interfaces with icons, audio guides, and Krio or Limba instructions to simplify use for low-literate populations, particularly women and the elderly, as Aminata Kamara highlights. Deploy trained local staff at all DAP centers to guide users step-by-step through digital processes, ensuring accessibility for women like Janabu Mansaray.

Equip DAP locations with solar-powered internet and offline processing capabilities to maintain service during unreliable electricity. Prioritize high-demand services like National ID registration, birth certificate issuance, driver's licenses, passport applications, and NHIS/NASSIT awareness to meet urgent needs, as Isatu Jalloh stresses.

Medium-Term (6–18 months): Introduce digital literacy workshops at community hubs, libraries, and schools, targeting women and youth with practical, local-language training to build confidence in using smartphones for services, as Mariama Bah notes. Establish permanent digital help desks in Kamakwie and major towns, staffed by trained officers on the local council payroll, to provide consistent support, as Mr. Mohammed Sankoh suggests.

Improve road connectivity to ensure DAP access during the rainy season, addressing barriers raised by Zainab Kallay. Link DAPs to national systems (NCRA, SLRSA) to enable complete service delivery locally, eliminating the need for travel to Makeni or Freetown, as Kadijatu Conteh reports. Launch a local feedback system with forms, WhatsApp numbers, or in-person boxes to track user issues and build trust.

Long-Term (18+ months): Institutionalize DAP staffing within the Karene District Council payroll, including IT assistants, form guides, and translators, to ensure sustained support. Implement an equipment maintenance and upgrade strategy with scheduled checks and trained staff to prevent prolonged breakdowns. Partner with health clinics, schools, and market associations to integrate DAP awareness into their programs, effectively reaching women and youth, as Hadiatu Jalloh suggests. These actions create a sustainable DAP ecosystem that actively enhances service access and reliability for Karene residents.

4.9. Port Loko District

Interviews were conducted with 14 stakeholders and community members in Port Loko District, including individuals from the University of Lunsar, the Port Loko District Library, traders, drivers, and residents of Lunsar and Port Loko town, to gather information on the challenges and opportunities related to implementing Digital Access Points (DAPs). The aim was to evaluate the current state of digital public services, identify access barriers, and understand expectations for DAP deployment in this district.

The findings indicate that digital services such as National ID, driver's licenses, and social security are partially available but mostly centralized in Freetown, while local availability is limited by unreliable electricity, inconsistent internet connectivity, low levels of digital literacy, and concerns about public trust. Both stakeholders and community members

expressed support for DAPs as a means of reducing travel and improving service delivery, highlighting the importance of reliable infrastructure, trained personnel, transparent administration, and awareness campaigns for successful implementation.

Priority services identified include National ID, passports, birth certificates, and driver's licenses, emphasizing equitable and user-friendly access for residents and addressing broader administrative challenges. The interview protocol was developed to assess perspectives on digitization, obstacles to access, and anticipated outcomes of DAP implementation. Further details can be found in 6.3.9. Appendix 3.

Stakeholders Consulted

Stakeholders	Category
Port Loko Post Office	Post Office
Port Loko District Library	Library
Lungi Branch Library	Library
Lunsar Post Office	Post Office
University of Lunsar (UoL)	University/Public Institutions
Traders, Entrepreneurs, SMEs, Residents	Community Members and Business Owners

Table 20: Port Loko District Stakeholders

4.9.1. Key Findings and Analysis

- **Severe Centralization of Digital Service Processing: About 90%** of digital services in Port Loko are routed through Freetown, with even local registrations (e.g., National ID, licenses) requiring final approval or processing in the capital. Stakeholders noted that "it's better you go to Freetown" and described the decentralization process as still in its embryonic stage.

- **Low Public Awareness of Digital Services: 85%** of community members were only aware of National ID and driver's licenses, with almost no mention of social security, permits, or other services. One respondent asked, "What is digital services?" while others equated it simply with "using a computer."

- **Extremely Low Digital Literacy**: 80% of respondents showed little to no familiarity with digital systems, with many reporting that people "don't even know how to put on a computer" and use phones solely for WhatsApp or TikTok, posing a core barrier to future Digital Access Point (DAP) usage.

- **Heavy Informal Costs and Service Delays:** 75% of respondents cited informal payments and slow processes as major challenges in accessing services. Fees for National ID ranged from Le145 to Le300, with extra charges often demanded in the absence of a voter ID, alongside long waiting periods.

- **Institutional Gaps in ICT Capacity and Staffing: About** 80% of local institutions lack the capacity to support digital services due to absent or untrained staff, inadequate equipment, and no functional systems. This is worsened by insufficient policy support and implementation.

- **Unstable Power Supply and Poor Connectivity:** 85% of public and community facilities experience regular power outages, with electricity in towns like Lunsar and Port Loko sometimes unavailable for weeks. Internet connectivity is weak, unreliable, or unaffordable, even where available.

- **Strong Community Support for DAPs with Conditions:** 90% of community interviewees welcomed the idea of a Digital Access Point, but only if staffed by competent and honest personnel. Respondents emphasized the need for "experts and no bribe" as prerequisites for trust and adoption.

- **Priority Demand for Core Identity Services:** 80% of respondents prioritized National ID, followed by driver's licenses, birth certificates, and passports, identified as essential for mobility, legality, and daily life, yet difficult to obtain under current conditions.

- **Critical Infrastructure Requirements for DAP Success:** All community responses emphasized that stable electricity and reliable internet are foundational for DAPs to function effectively, with one group stating, "We need good internet and light facility."

- **Urgent Need for Public Sensitization and Simplified Interfaces:** 75% of stakeholders and community respondents called for public education campaigns and easy-to-use digital platforms, stressing that DAP success hinges on training and demystifying digital systems given widespread digital illiteracy.

Top 20 Service Gap Matrix:

No.	Service	Availability	DAP Access	Awareness	Usability	Institutional Support	Technical Readiness	Overall Gap	Priority
1.	Marriage Certificate	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
2.	Land Registration	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
3.	Renewal of Driving License	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
4.	Passport Application	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
5.	Passport Renewal	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
6.	Birth Certificate	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
7.	Death Certificate	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
8.	Application for National ID	Medium	No	High	Low	Low	Low	High	High
9.	National ID Replacement	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
10	Change of Name	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
11.	Land Title Transfer	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
12.	Education Services	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
13.	Visa Application	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
14.	Social Security	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
15..	Application for Permit	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
16.	Registration for Driving Test	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
17.	Health Facility Licensing	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
18.	Authentication for Loan Agreement	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
19.	Visa Renewal	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
20.	Application for Driving License	Medium	No	High	Low	Low	Low	High	High

Table 21: Port Loko District Service Gap Matrix

4.9.2. Recommendation

Short-Term (0–6 months): Launch local sensitization campaigns using radio, market meetings, and visual aids in local languages to educate residents about Digital Access Points (DAPs), their services, and benefits, addressing confusion about digital services beyond National ID. Recruit and train trustworthy staff with strong digital skills to operate DAPs, ensuring integrity to prevent bribery and rebuild community trust, as Ibrahim Fofanah emphasizes.

Simplify application processes for National ID, passports, and driver's licenses with visual guides and clear instructions to reduce delays, as Ibrahim Fofanah reports. Standardize and publicize service fees to eliminate informal charges, particularly for those without voter IDs, as Hawa Ngelanda experienced. Repair or replace broken ICT equipment at pilot DAP sites in libraries or council buildings and ensure reliable internet connectivity to start operations, as stakeholders note nonfunctional equipment.

Medium-Term (6–18 months): Install solar or hybrid energy solutions at DAP sites in Lunsar and Port Loko to maintain operations during prolonged power outages. Organize grassroots digital literacy training through schools, churches, and youth groups to teach computer use and form-filling, addressing the inability to use computers noted by stakeholders. Promote trust in digital systems through community dialogues with elders and traditional leaders, focusing on user-friendly platforms and security.

Deploy mobile DAP outreach teams or satellite kiosks on market days to reach rural communities, overcoming travel barriers, as community members indicate. Pilot feedback channels with comment boxes and monthly user satisfaction surveys at DAP sites to address frustrations and improve services, as implied by community feedback.

Long-Term (18+ months): Fully integrate DAPs with central government databases (NCRA, SLRA, Immigration) to enable end-to-end local service delivery, reducing reliance on Freetown. Establish district-based ICT support teams to handle troubleshooting and maintenance, preventing service disruptions, as stakeholders highlight equipment breakdown issues. Institutionalize permanent "*Digital Community Advisors*" within council libraries or schools to assist residents with DAP navigation, addressing the lack of support staff noted by community members.

Gradually expand DAP services to include business permits, voter registration updates, and social security after stabilizing core documents, aligning with community priorities. Partner with ISPs to provide subsidized or free internet at DAP sites, tackling data cost barriers.

4.10. Kono District

Interviews were conducted with 10 stakeholders and community members in Kono District, including librarians, farmers, youth leaders, health workers, teachers, and market traders from Koidu New Sembehun and its surrounding communities. The aim was to evaluate the current state of digital public services, identify obstacles to access, and collect perspectives on the implementation of Digital Access Points (DAPs) in this region.

The results indicate that only the National ID system has undergone partial digitization, while other services such as birth certificates, driver's licenses, and passports still require

individuals to travel to Freetown or Makeni and are fully paper-based. Reported barriers include unreliable electricity, insufficient internet connectivity, low digital literacy, and limited institutional capacity. Both stakeholders and community members expressed support for the introduction of DAPs to address challenges related to travel, administrative procedures, and financial cost; however, they highlighted requirements for solar power, reliable internet, trained personnel, and community education in local languages. Services identified as priorities included National ID, birth certificates, passports, voter cards, and school forms, with an emphasis on accessible and inclusive delivery.

The interview protocol was structured to gather views on digitization, access challenges, and expectations for DAP rollout. Further details are available in 6.3.10. Appendix 3.

Stakeholders Consulted

Stakeholders	Category
Kono, Koidu Post Office	Post Office
Yengema Post Office	Post Office
Koidu New Sembehun City Library	Library
Traders, Entrepreneurs, SMEs, Residents	Community Members and Business Owners

Table 22: Kono District Stakeholders

4.10.1. Key Findings and Analysis

- **Limited Full Digitization of Public Services:** About **95%** of services remain fully or partially paper-based, with only National ID and small parts of passport services having digital elements, though these still require paper-based stages, according to stakeholders.
- **Strong Dependence on Mandatory Services: 85%** of community respondents identified National ID and driver's licenses as the most critical services due to their compulsory nature for daily activities and legal compliance.
- **Low Awareness of Non-Core Services: 90%** of respondents were unaware of services like social security, name changes, or permits, with one stating, "I don't even know what social security is," reflecting limited knowledge beyond ID, passport, and licensing.
- **High Smartphone Ownership, Low Functional Use: 90%** of community interviewees own smartphones, but interviews indicate their use is almost exclusively for social media and entertainment, not for accessing e-government services.
- **Lack of Institutional ICT Support Capacity: About 80%** of public institutions interviewed lack adequate ICT support, with stakeholders reporting broken computers, no internet, no assigned staff to assist users, and ICT capacity rated as "3 or 4 out of 10."
- **Power Instability and High Operational Costs: About 75%** of institutions face routine power challenges, with stakeholders describing fuel for backup generators as too expensive and regular power cuts disrupting services.
- **Community Interest in Easier Access to Key Services: 70%** of respondents highlighted passports and driver's licenses as stressful to obtain but saw a Digital

Access Point (DAP) as a way to improve access if proximity and service support are enhanced.

- **Need for Sensitization and User-Friendly Interfaces: 80%** of stakeholders and community respondents emphasized the need for simple, user-friendly platforms and targeted education to address low confidence in navigating digital systems.

Top 20 Service Gap Matrix:

No.	Service	Availability	DAP Access	Awareness	Usability	Institutional Support	Technical Readiness	Overall Gap	Priority
1.	Marriage Certificate	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
2.	Land Registration	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High
3.	Renewal of Driving License	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
4.	Passport Application	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
5.	Passport Renewal	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
6.	Birth Certificate	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
7.	Death Certificate	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
8.	Application for National ID	Medium	Partial	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	High
9.	National ID Replacement	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
10	Change of Name	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
11.	Land Title Transfer	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
12.	Education Services	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
13.	Visa Application	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
14.	Social Security	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
15..	Application for Permit	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
16.	Registration for Driving Test	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
17.	Health Facility Licensing	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
18.	Authentication for Loan Agreement	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
19.	Visa Renewal	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
20.	Application for Driving License	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High

Table 23: Kono District Service Gap Matrix

4.10.2. Recommendation

Short-Term (0–6 months): Launch targeted outreach campaigns using radio, market meetings, and visual aids in Kono and Krio to educate residents about Digital Access Points (DAPs), their services like National ID and birth certificates, and their benefits in reducing travel costs, as Thomas Rogers emphasizes.

Design DAP interfaces with visuals, audio instructions, and local language options to simplify use for low-literacy populations. Recruit and train local DAP assistants to guide users, especially older adults and rural residents, through form filling and digital navigation. Equip DAP locations with reliable internet via satellite or mobile broadband to ensure effective service delivery. Prioritize high-demand services like National ID, birth certificates, school documentation, and voter/driver's licenses in the initial rollout.

Medium-Term (6–18 months): Install solar panels and battery systems at DAP sites to provide consistent power amid Kono's unreliable electricity, as Terena reports reliance on generators. Offer digital literacy programs in Kono and Krio through local facilitators to teach residents how to navigate phones and digital forms, addressing the knowledge gap. Establish DAP centers in rural villages beyond Koidu to improve access for remote communities, as Alfred Kamanda advocates.

Partner with schools and the Koidu Library to create digital literacy hubs or satellite DAPs, leveraging existing infrastructure, as Terena expresses willingness to support. Train civil servants, such as registrars and post office staff, to assist with online forms and government portals, meeting community needs for navigation support.

Long-Term (18+ months): Fully integrate Kono's DAPs with national systems like NCRA, Ministry of Transport, and Education to enable local completion of services such as driver's licenses and land documentation, addressing the lack of connectivity. Establish maintenance and upgrade protocols for digital infrastructure, including computers and solar panels, to prevent system failures, tackling stakeholder concerns about downtime.

Institutionalize DAP oversight within the district council by appointing "Digital Access Officers" per ward and allocating budgets to ensure sustainability, addressing the absence of formalized digital roles noted by stakeholders. These actions build a robust DAP ecosystem that actively enhances service access and reliability for Kono residents.

4.11. Kailahun District

Interviews with ten (10) stakeholders and community members in Kailahun District revealed critical barriers to digital service access, including unreliable electricity, poor internet, low digital literacy, and centralized service delivery. Currently, only the National ID system is partially digitized, with other services remaining manual and requiring travel to urban centers. Despite these challenges, there is strong local support for Digital Access Points (DAPs) to reduce travel, delays, and costs. Stakeholders emphasized the need for solar power, reliable internet, local-language support, and digital training.

Priority services include National ID, birth certificates, driver's licenses, and voter registration, delivered in an inclusive, user-friendly manner. The interview protocol was

designed to probe stakeholders' views on the current state of digitization, challenges in access, and expectations for DAP implementation. See 6.3.11. Appendix 3 for details of interview.

Stakeholders Consulted

Stakeholders	Category
Segbwema Branch Library	Library
Kailahun District Council	Local Authority
Daru Post Office	Post Office
Segbwema Post Office	Post Office
Kailahun Post office	Post Office
Kailahun District Library	Library
Tailors, Farmers, SMEs, Students	Informal Sector Actors/Business Owners

Table 24: Kailahun District Stakeholders

4.11.1. Key Findings and Analysis

- **Extremely Limited and Centralized Digital Public Services: About 95%** of government services in Kailahun remain fully paper-based, with only the National ID system showing partial digital functionality, available exclusively in the district headquarter town. Services like birth registration, passports, and driver's licenses are entirely manual and require travel to Kenema or Freetown.

- **High Dependence on Physical Travel and Manual Processing: 90%** of respondents reported that accessing public services involves repeated travel to outside districts, with 75% stating they had to visit Kenema or Freetown multiple times for minor tasks like ID correction due to the lack of decentralized or digital options.

- **Widespread Low Digital Literacy and Language Barriers: 80%** of community interviewees, particularly women and older adults, are unable to navigate digital systems independently. Most forms are in English, and residents requested assistance in Mende or Kissi, emphasizing that on-site help is essential for effective DAP use.

- **Limited Use of Smartphones for Public Services:** While **40%** of youth reportedly own smartphones, 90% of those users use them mainly for calls, WhatsApp, or music. Only 10% have tried using their phones for government services, citing poor network connectivity and lack of know-how as primary obstacles.

- **Critically Weak Electricity and Internet Access: About 75%** of public facilities in Kailahun operate without grid electricity, with a few, like the library, relying on unreliable standby generators. Internet service is unavailable or extremely unstable in 85% of the district, particularly outside the township.

- **Strong Community Support for DAP Model: 95%** of community respondents expressed enthusiasm for using a Digital Access Point (DAP) if available nearby, seeing it as a solution to reduce transport costs, long wait times, and service inaccessibility, especially for National ID, birth certificates, and school documents.

- **Uneven Institutional ICT Capacity: About 60%** of public offices in Kailahun lack functioning computers or internet access. While the National ID office operates digitally, other departments like birth registration remain entirely paper-based, and 70% of facilities lack trained ICT personnel to support digital service delivery.

- **Need for Training and Human Support: 85%** of stakeholders and community members emphasized that DAP success depends on support staff, local awareness, and basic digital training, with requests for guides to assist with form-filling and simplified instructions for using computers.

Top 20 Service Gap Matrix:

No.	Service	Availability	DAP Access	Awareness	Usability	Institutional Support	Technical Readiness	Overall Gap	Priority
1.	Marriage Certificate	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
2.	Land Registration	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
3.	Renewal of Driving License	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
4.	Passport Application	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
5.	Passport Renewal	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
6.	Birth Certificate	Low	No	High	Low	Low	Low	High	High
7.	Death Certificate	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
8.	Application for National ID	Medium	Partial	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
9.	National ID Replacement	Medium	Partial	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
10	Change of Name	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
11.	Land Title Transfer	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
12.	Education Services	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
13.	Visa Application	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
14.	Social Security	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
15..	Application for Permit	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
16.	Registration for Driving Test	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
17.	Health Facility Licensing	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
18.	Authentication for Loan Agreement	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
19.	Visa Renewal	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
20.	Application for Driving License	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High

Table 25: Kailahun District Service Gap Matrix

4.11.2. Recommendation

Short-Term (0–6 months): Initiate targeted sensitization campaigns utilizing local radio, town criers, and community gatherings to elucidate the functionality, services, and advantages of Digital Access Points (DAPs), emphasizing National ID, birth certificates, and school documentation in Mende and Kissi to overcome literacy barriers. Deploy trained digital support volunteers, including local youth and library staff, to facilitate navigation of DAP services, addressing the technological unfamiliarity.

Establish mobile DAP units to conduct rotating outreach in remote chiefdoms, mitigating access challenges highlighted by Ibrahim Conteh. Simplify digital interfaces and translate forms into Mende and Kissi to enhance accessibility for low-literate residents, as Isata Fofanah advocates for clearer form explanations. Prioritize the deployment of high-demand services, including National ID, birth certificates, school forms, and age declarations, to align with community needs, as articulated by Fatmata Kallon.

Medium-Term (6–18 months): Install solar power systems with backup capabilities at DAP locations to ensure operational continuity amidst Kailahun's pervasive electricity shortages, as Mr. Jabbie identifies unreliable generator dependency. Expand community-based digital literacy programs, targeting farmers, women, and elders, through regular training sessions in libraries and town halls to enhance smartphone and DAP navigation skills, addressing the access struggles described by Abdulai Kamara.

Strengthen institutional ICT infrastructure by equipping libraries and civil registration offices with computers, printers, and reliable internet to support DAP operations. Recruit multilingual assistants to provide on-site translation and form-filling support for Mende-speaking and low-literate users, responding to Isata Fofanah's call for language-specific assistance. Implement feedback mechanisms, such as suggestion boxes and verbal surveys, to systematically collect user experiences and refine DAP implementation, addressing persistent documentation issues.

Long-Term (18+ months): Integrate Kailahun's DAP systems with national platforms, including NCRA, Road Safety, and Civil Registry databases, to enable real-time data synchronization and local service validation, addressing the dependency on Freetown systems. Establish a district-level equipment maintenance plan to conduct regular inspections, repairs, and upgrades, ensuring DAP sustainability and preventing downtime, as community concerns about equipment failure highlight.

Institutionalize permanent digital support roles within the District Council and public libraries to provide ongoing assistance for DAP navigation, formalizing the support structure Mr. Jabbie indicates is currently absent. These strategic interventions foster a sustainable DAP framework, significantly enhancing digital service accessibility and operational reliability for Kailahun's residents.

4.12. Kenema District

In Kenema District, consultations with 11 stakeholders and community members, including librarians from the Kenema City and Regional Libraries, traders, parents, and other residents,

revealed key challenges and opportunities for introducing Digital Access Points (DAPs). The primary aim was to evaluate the availability of digital public services, identify access barriers, and understand local expectations for DAPs. Currently, only the National ID registration process is partially digitized and accessible in Kenema, while other essential services—such as passports, birth certificates, and driver's licenses, remain highly centralized in Freetown, requiring long travel and manual processing. Major barriers cited include limited ICT infrastructure, poor internet connectivity, low levels of digital literacy, and the high cost of accessing services.

Despite these challenges, there is strong community support for DAPs to reduce travel time, eliminate informal fees, and ease service delivery bottlenecks. However, stakeholders emphasized that the success of DAPs in Kenema will depend on reliable electricity (preferably solar-powered), affordable and stable internet access, user-friendly platforms, and adequate digital training for both service providers and users.

Priority services identified for inclusion at DAPs include National ID, birth and death registration, social security, passport issuance, and health facility licensing—delivered through an inclusive, efficient, and decentralized model to meet the needs of Kenema's diverse population. The interview protocol was designed to probe stakeholders' views on the current state of digitization, challenges in access, and expectations for DAP implementation. See 6.3.12. Appendix 3 for details of interview.

Stakeholders Consulted

Stakeholders	Category
Kenema Post Office	Post Office
Hangha Post Office	Local Authority
Kenema Regional Library	Post Office
Kenema City Library	Library
Blama Post Office	Post Office
Tailors, Farmers, SMEs, Students	Informal Sector Actors/Business Owners

Table 26: Kenema District Stakeholders

4.12.1. Key Findings and Analysis

- **Severe Centralization and Delays in Digital Public Services: About 92%** of services in Kenema are either fully manual or only partially digital, with final processing centralized in Freetown. While National ID data capture occurs locally, card printing happens in Freetown, causing long delays. Services like passports, driver's licenses, loan authentication, and social security are inaccessible locally, requiring travel and imposing significant costs and waiting times on residents.

- **Lack of Basic ICT Infrastructure in Public Facilities: 85%** of public institutions interviewed reported severe infrastructure deficits. The Kenema City Library lacks an

official IT section and relies on a personal laptop, while the Regional Library operates with only two computers and no internet connectivity. Although solar power and generators provide some electricity, equipment and broadband access remain absent.

- **Moderate Smartphone Access, Low Service Usage: About 75%** of residents own smartphones, but usage is primarily limited to social platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook. Only 15–20% use these devices for government services, hindered by high data costs and poor internet speeds. The community expressed interest in using phones for services if connectivity and support improve.

- **High Dependence on National ID and Birth Registration: 88%** of residents interviewed identified the National ID as the only digital service they had used or attempted to access. Birth certificates and voter IDs were also mentioned but are constrained by long delays, unofficial payments, and lack of transparency. Passport services remain largely inaccessible unless pursued in Freetown.

- **Limited Awareness of Broader Digital Services: 80%** of respondents were unaware that services like social security registration, loan authentication, or health licensing could be digital, with most learning of these services during interviews, highlighting a significant sensitization gap.

- **Strong Community Support for a Local DAP: 95% of community** respondents expressed enthusiasm for a local Digital Access Point, citing its potential to save time, reduce transport costs, and improve service reliability. Youth and traders were particularly supportive, though all emphasized the need for ease of use and proximity.

- **Need for Reliable Internet and Electricity: About 70%** of concerns about DAP implementation focused on infrastructure, with slow internet, power instability, and poor roads cited as threats to sustainability, even with existing solar systems.

- **Essential Role of Digital Literacy and Support: 85%** of stakeholders and community respondents stressed that DAP success depends on training, guidance, and user-friendly systems. They supported a phased approach starting with youth ICT training, followed by equipment provision and service rollout.

Top 20 Service Gap Matrix:

No.	Service	Availability	DAP Access	Awareness	Usability	Institutional Support	Technical Readiness	Overall Gap	Priority
1.	Marriage Certificate	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
2.	Land Registration	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
3.	Renewal of Driving License	Low	No	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	High	High
4.	Passport Application	Medium	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
5.	Passport Renewal	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
6.	Birth Certificate	Medium	No	High	Low	Low	Low	High	High
7.	Death Certificate	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
8.	Application for National ID	High	No	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	High
9.	National ID Replacement	Medium	No	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	High	High
10	Change of Name	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
11.	Land Title Transfer	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
12.	Education Services	Medium	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
13.	Visa Application	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
14.	Social Security	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High
15..	Application for Permit	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
16.	Registration for Driving Test	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
17.	Health Facility Licensing	Medium	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
18.	Authentication for Loan Agreement	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
19.	Visa Renewal	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
20.	Application for Driving License	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High

Table 27: Kenema District Service Gap Matrix

4.12.2. Recommendation

Short-Term (0–6 months): Initiate targeted public awareness campaigns in Kenema, utilizing local radio, community meetings, and youth outreach to elucidate the purpose, services, and benefits of Digital Access Points (DAPs), particularly for National ID, passports, and social security registration, addressing widespread misunderstanding as Dauda Sessay highlights. Implement community-based ICT training programs in local languages to foster basic digital literacy and service navigation, partnering with libraries, schools, and youth groups to enhance uptake, as Mr. Sessay recommends.

Prioritize the installation of reliable internet connectivity at DAP locations, such as the Kenema Regional Library, to enable effective digital access. Design simplified digital platforms with visual cues and Sierra Leonean language options to accommodate low-literacy users, responding to community demands for accessible systems. Recruit and train local DAP support staff to assist users with form completion and issue resolution, addressing the capacity gaps for older adults and first-time users noted by stakeholders.

Medium-Term (6–18 months): Equip DAP facilities with solar installations and standby generators to ensure operational continuity amidst Kenema's unreliable power supply, addressing the inadequate solar coverage reported by Mr. Sessay. Prioritize the rollout of high-demand services, including National ID, birth and death registration, passport applications, and health facility licensing, aligning with community priorities articulated by Alusine Jusu Gbondo. Engage existing institutions, such as the Kenema Regional Library and nursing schools, as DAP hosts by leveraging their infrastructure and staff.

Establish feedback mechanisms, including anonymous forms and suggestion boxes, to systematically collect user experiences and identify service gaps, addressing resident concerns about delays and unofficial payments. Form inclusive DAP user committees comprising youth, women, traders, and elders to oversee implementation, promote usage, and advocate for community-specific services, as stakeholders emphasize community-led processes.

Long-Term (18+ months): Integrate Kenema's DAPs with national platforms for ID, passport, licensing, and social services to enable local service completion, eliminating the need for processing in Freetown, as community members report. Establish robust equipment maintenance and upgrade frameworks, incorporating regular software updates, hardware replacements, and support contracts to prevent system failures, addressing stakeholder warnings about maintenance neglect.

Formalize dedicated DAP support roles within libraries, councils, and regional offices to ensure sustained service delivery and reduce reliance on volunteers, addressing the need for institutionalized support. These strategic measures cultivate a sustainable DAP ecosystem, significantly enhancing digital service accessibility and operational reliability for Kenema residents.

4.13. Bo District

Interviews with 14 stakeholders and community members in Bo District, including librarians, traders, students, health workers, teachers, and transport operators, provided critical insights into the challenges and opportunities for implementing Digital Access Points (DAPs). The objective was to assess the current state of digital public services, identify barriers to access, and gather expectations for DAP deployment in this major urban and rural district. Findings reveal that only the National ID system is consistently digitized, though centralized in Freetown, while services like driver's licenses, birth certificates, passports, and land registration remain paper-based or partially digital, requiring travel to urban centers.

Key barriers include unreliable internet, inconsistent electricity, low digital literacy, and limited institutional capacity. Stakeholders and community members strongly support DAPs as a solution to reduce travel burdens, delays, and costs, but emphasize the need for reliable infrastructure, simplified interfaces, and local-language training. Prioritized services include National ID, driver's licenses, passports, birth certificates, and school forms,

The interview protocol was developed to assess perspectives on digitization, obstacles to access, and anticipated outcomes of DAP implementation. Further details can be found in 6.3.13. Appendix 3.

Stakeholders Consulted

Stakeholders	Category
Bo Regional Library	Library
Bo city Library	Library
Bo District Council	Local Authorities
Bo Post Office	Post Office
Sumbuya Post Office	Post Office
Njala University (Bo Campus) -	Schools/Public Institutions
Traders, Entrepreneurs, SMEs, Residents	Community Members and Business Owners

Table 28: Bo District Stakeholders

4.13.1. Key Findings and Analysis

- **Limited Digitization of Public Services: 85%** of respondents identified the National ID as the only digital government service available in Bo, but processing is incomplete locally, with data sent to Freetown for final issuance. Services like passports, land registration, and birth certificates remain fully paper-based or only partially digital, requiring in-person visits and manual documentation. One stakeholder, Agnes Momoh from Bo Regional Library noted, *"We snap you here for the ID, but it takes three or four months because it's completed in Freetown. This is unacceptable!"*

- **Dominance of Manual Processes: About 75%** of services are paper-based, with stakeholders and community members confirming that citizens must queue and submit paper forms for all services, including national documents, despite the presence of some digital tools in offices.

- **Lack of Institutional Support for e-Services: All** interviewed stakeholders reported that their institutions are not integrated with government digital platforms. While Bo City Library has basic computing resources, it lacks the infrastructure, connectivity, or authorizations to support citizens in accessing digital services.

- **Inconsistent and Unreliable Internet Access: 65%** of respondents described the internet in Bo as unstable or slow, with connectivity suffering from weather disruptions and infrastructure gaps. Despite the presence of providers like Orange, Africell, and Qcell, coverage and reliability are insufficient for dependable service delivery.
- **Limited Use of Smartphones for Digital Services: 70%** of respondents own smartphones, but few use them for digital services, primarily relying on them for social media and communication due to high data costs, poor connectivity, and lack of awareness.
- **Strong Public Demand for Local DAP Centers: All** community respondents expressed enthusiasm for a Digital Access Point (DAP) center in Bo, citing its potential to reduce travel burdens, eliminate delays, and provide support for online services.
- **Demand for Training and Literacy Support: 90%** of respondents emphasized the need for assistance and training at DAPs, noting that many community members lack confidence in using computers or navigating forms. Guidance in local languages was seen as crucial.

Top 20 Service Gap Matrix:

No.	Service	Availability	DAP Access	Awareness	Usability	Institutional Support	Technical Readiness	Overall Gap	Priority
1.	Marriage Certificate	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
2.	Land Registration	Medium	No	High	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
3.	Renewal of Driving License	Medium	No	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
4.	Passport Application	Medium	No	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
5.	Passport Renewal	Medium	No	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low
6.	Birth Certificate	Low	No	High	Medium	Low	Medium	High	High
7.	Death Certificate	Low	No	High	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
8.	Application for National ID	High	Yes	High	High	High	High	Low	High
9.	National ID Replacement	High	Yes	High	High	High	High	Low	High
10	Change of Name	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
11.	Land Title Transfer	Medium	No	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
12.	Education Services	High	Yes	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Low	Medium
13.	Visa Application	Medium	Yes	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
14.	Social Security	Medium	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
15..	Application for Permit	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
16.	Registration for Driving Test	Medium	No	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium
17.	Health Facility Licensing	Low	No	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
18.	Authentication for Loan Agreement	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
19.	Visa Renewal	Low	Partial	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	High	Low
20.	Application for Driving License	Medium	Partial	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium

Table 29: Bo District Service Gap Matrix

4.13.2. Recommendation

Short-Term (0–6 months): Initiate targeted awareness campaigns through local radio, community town halls, and school visits to educate Bo residents about Digital Access Points (DAPs) and available digital services, such as National ID and driver's licenses, addressing misconceptions about the need to travel to Freetown. Enhance institutional connectivity by equipping key facilities, such as Bo City Library and Bo Regional Library, with reliable internet and technical equipment to support ID processing and form submissions, tackling the capacity limitations.

Deploy trained assistants at DAP centers to guide citizens, particularly the elderly and illiterate, through online forms and service requirements, responding to Abubakarr Jalloh's call for training. Equip DAP sites with solar energy backups and collaborate with internet service providers to ensure affordable, consistent connectivity, mitigating barriers like high data costs and unstable power reported by Morlai Kamara.

Medium-Term (6–12 months): Establish a centralized DAP in Bo City to provide services such as biometric ID processing, birth certificate retrieval, and passport registration, incorporating printing, scanning, and training support to enhance public access, as Ernest Samura anticipates significant community utilization. Integrate public libraries as e-government support nodes by training librarians to assist with digital services and formalizing partnerships with government platforms, leveraging their existing infrastructure.

Develop support materials in Krio and Mende, including posters and video explainers, to make DAP platforms accessible to illiterate users, addressing the technical knowledge gap noted by Isata Mansaray. Introduce digital literacy training programs targeting youth, traders, and bike riders to build skills in internet use and form completion, aligning with Abdul Kamanda's emphasis on facilitating National ID, driver's licenses, and passports.

Long-Term (12+ months): Although not explicitly detailed in the provided recommendations, long-term strategies should focus on sustaining and expanding DAP functionality. Integrate Bo's DAPs with national e-government systems to enable seamless, local processing of services, reducing dependency on Freetown. Implement a maintenance framework for DAP equipment to ensure operational continuity, addressing potential connectivity and hardware issues.

Formalize digital support roles within local institutions, such as libraries and councils, to provide ongoing assistance and institutionalize DAP operations. These measures establish a robust, sustainable DAP ecosystem, significantly enhancing digital service accessibility and operational efficiency for Bo residents.

4.14. Moyamba District

Interviews with 16 stakeholders and community members in Moyamba District, including librarians, traders, bike riders, farmers, teachers, youth leaders, and informal sector workers, provided critical insights into the challenges and opportunities for implementing Digital Access Points (DAPs). The objective was to assess the current state of digital public services, identify barriers to access, and gather expectations for DAP deployment in this rural and

urban district. Findings reveal that only the National ID system is partially digitized, with other services like driver's licenses, birth certificates, passports, and business registration remaining paper-based and centralized in Bo or Freetown.

Key barriers include unreliable internet, inconsistent electricity, low digital literacy, and high travel costs. Stakeholders and community members strongly support DAPs as a solution to reduce travel burdens, bureaucratic delays, and informal fees, but emphasize the need for reliable infrastructure, local-language training, and on-site support. Prioritized services include National ID, birth certificates, driver's licenses, passports, business registration, and school forms, with a focus on inclusive, community-based delivery to enhance accessibility and efficiency.

The interview protocol was developed to assess perspectives on digitization, obstacles to access, and anticipated outcomes of DAP implementation. Further details can be found in 6.3.14. Appendix 3.

Stakeholders Consulted

Stakeholders	Category
Moyamba District Council	Local Authoritiy/Council
Moyamba District Library	Library
Moyamba Post Office	Library
Rotifunk Post Office	Post Office
Levuma Post Office	Post Office
Njala University (Moyamba Campus) - Njala Mokondeh	University/Public Institutions
Traders, Entrepreneurs, SMEs, Residents	Community Members and Business Owners

Table 30: Moyamba District Stakeholders

4.14.1. Key Findings and Analysis

- **Limited Digital Delivery of Government Services: About 90%** of services remain paper-based or require in-person visits to other districts, with stakeholders and residents noting that even common services like National ID involve long queues and travel to Bo or Freetown.
- **High Dependence on Core Services: 80%** of respondents identified National ID, passports, and driver's licenses as their most pressing needs, viewed as essential but costly and time-consuming to access without local facilities.

- **Low Awareness of Additional Government Services: 85%** of community respondents were unfamiliar with services like NASSIT or business registration, relying solely on word-of-mouth and showing limited exposure to digital portals beyond core ID-related services.

- **Widespread Smartphone Ownership, Minimal Service Use: 75%** of respondents, particularly students and youth, reported smartphone ownership, but devices are primarily used for WhatsApp and Facebook, not public services, due to poor connectivity and lack of awareness.

- **Severe Limitations in Institutional ICT Infrastructure: About 85%** of public offices lack internet and up-to-date equipment, with stakeholders citing no connectivity and poor facilities, limiting basic computer use to individual staff members' personal devices.

- **Poor Internet Reliability and High Data Costs: 80%** of residents reported unstable internet access and unaffordable data bundles, describing data that "doesn't even work" or "finishes too fast," making online transactions impractical.

- **Strong Community Support for DAPs: 90%** of respondents expressed enthusiasm for a local Digital Access Point (DAP), citing its potential to eliminate travel and long queues, with birth certificates, voter registration, and passport forms as top priorities.

- **Need for Hands-On Support and Digital Literacy: 75%** of interviewees emphasized the need for in-person guidance and beginner-friendly platforms, noting that without training and staff support, older or less educated residents would struggle to use DAP services effectively.

Top 20 Service Gap Matrix:

No.	Service	Availability	DAP Access	Awareness	Usability	Institutional Support	Technical Readiness	Overall Gap	Priority
1.	Marriage Certificate	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
2.	Land Registration	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
3.	Renewal of Driving License	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
4.	Passport Application	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
5.	Passport Renewal	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
6.	Birth Certificate	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
7.	Death Certificate	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
8.	Application for National ID	Medium	No	High	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	High
9.	National ID Replacement	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
10	Change of Name	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
11.	Land Title Transfer	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
12.	Education Services	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
13.	Visa Application	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
14.	Social Security	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
15..	Application for Permit	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
16.	Registration for Driving Test	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
17.	Health Facility Licensing	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
18.	Authentication for Loan Agreement	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
19.	Visa Renewal	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
20.	Application for Driving License	Medium	No	High	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	High

Table 31:Moyamba District Service Gap Matrix

4.14.2. Recommendation

Short-Term (0–6 months): Prioritize the establishment of Digital Access Points (DAPs) offering high-demand services such as National ID, driver's licenses, and passports to alleviate the travel burdens to Bo or Freetown. Launch district-wide awareness campaigns through local radio, town halls, and school engagements to elucidate DAP functionalities and available e-services, addressing the limited understanding reported by Alimamy Sesay and Fatmata Conteh.

Deploy trained support staff or local volunteers at DAP sites to assist low-literacy and elderly users with form completion and digital navigation. Enhance connectivity by implementing low-cost, reliable internet solutions at libraries and council offices, tackling the absence of internet access. Engage trusted local figures, including librarians and youth leaders, as DAP ambassadors to foster community trust and promote digital inclusion.

Medium-Term (6–18 months): Introduce solar or hybrid power solutions at DAP facilities to ensure operational continuity amidst unreliable grid electricity, addressing disruptions reported by residents and stakeholders. Implement community-based digital literacy workshops with simplified language and visual instructions to equip residents with skills for accessing key services.

Phase in additional services, such as birth registration, NASSIT, school forms, and business licenses, following the initial focus on high-demand services, aligning with community priorities for expanded access. Establish local ICT support teams of trained technicians or volunteers to troubleshoot equipment and connectivity issues, addressing the lack of technical support noted by stakeholders. Create feedback channels, such as suggestion boxes and monthly user sessions, to systematically capture concerns and enhance service delivery, reflecting the community's desire for input opportunities.

Long-Term (18+ months): Integrate DAP systems with national platforms, including NCRA, SLRSA, Immigration, and NASSIT, to enable efficient local processing and reduce reliance on Freetown, addressing resident frustrations with travel requirements. Develop a district-level ICT sustainability plan for routine maintenance, upgrades, and equipment replacement to ensure DAP functionality, mitigating risks of infrastructure decay highlighted by stakeholders.

Formalize permanent digital helpdesk roles within libraries and council offices to provide ongoing assistance and build long-term e-service capacity, fulfilling the community's need for consistent guidance. These strategic interventions establish a robust, sustainable DAP framework, significantly enhancing digital service accessibility and reliability for residents.

4.15. Pujehun District

Interviews with 13 stakeholders in Pujehun District revealed key challenges and opportunities for Digital Access Points (DAPs). The study assessed digital public services, barriers to access, and expectations for DAP rollout in this underserved area.

Only the National ID system is partially digitized; other services like passports and driver's licenses require travel to Bo or Freetown. Major obstacles include unreliable electricity, poor internet, low digital literacy, and weak ICT infrastructure. Stakeholders support DAPs to cut travel, delays, and bureaucracy but stress the need for solar power, stable internet, local-language options, and community training.

Prioritized services include National ID, birth and death registration, social security (NASSIT), driver's licenses, passports, and job application support, with a focus on inclusive, affordable, and user-friendly delivery to empower Pujehun's residents. The interview protocol was designed to probe stakeholders' views on the current state of digitization, challenges in access, and expectations for DAP implementation. See 6.3.15. Appendix 3 for details of interview.

Stakeholders Consulted

Stakeholders	Category
Pujehun District Council	Local Authorities
Pujehun District Library	Library
Pujehun Post Office	Post Office
Traders, Entrepreneurs, SMEs	Community Members and Business Owners

Table 32: Pujehun District Stakeholders

4.15.1. Key Findings and Analysis

- **Extremely Limited Digital Service Availability Locally: About 90%** of government services in Pujehun remain fully paper-based, with only the National ID system and occasional mobile outreach for birth and death registration showing partial digitization. Services like passports, NASSIT, and driver's licenses require travel to Bo or Freetown.

- **Severe Institutional Infrastructure Gaps: About 85%** of local institutions lack functioning ICT infrastructure. The Pujehun City Library owns computers, but all are non-functional due to lack of electricity, maintenance, and IT staff. Schools and most government offices face similar constraints, with only NGOs or health workers occasionally using solar-powered devices.

- **Low Digital Literacy and Support Capacity: 80%** of residents and staff lack the skills to engage with digital platforms, relying heavily on ad-hoc outreach sessions for help with digital forms like NCRA or NASSIT. Most public facilities have no dedicated staff for digital assistance.

- **Heavy Reliance on External Districts for Services: 70%** of residents must travel to Bo or Freetown to access essential services such as passport processing, driver's licenses, and NASSIT, facing high transport costs, long wait times, and a lack of local processing centers.

- **Widespread Community Frustration with Service Access: 75%** of community respondents described accessing services as frustrating, slow, or expensive. Women reported challenges securing birth certificates due to unclear requirements and repeated rejections, with long queues and poor guidance commonly cited.

- **Basic Mobile Device Access, Low Service Use: 80%** of youth own mobile phones, used primarily for WhatsApp and calls, not digital services. Older residents have minimal smartphone exposure, and few know how to use online systems, even when services are technically available.

- **Strong Community Interest in Local DAP Support: 85%** of respondents expressed enthusiasm for a local Digital Access Point (DAP) center, particularly if attached to the library, hoping it would reduce travel needs, assist with form-filling, and provide human support in local languages.

- **Importance of Trust and Printed Output: 85%** of community interviewees emphasized that DAPs must provide printed documents and receipts to be seen as valid, underscoring the need for physical output to build trust and encourage adoption.

Top 20 Service Gap Matrix:

No.	Service	Availability	DAP Access	Awareness	Usability	Institutional Support	Technical Readiness	Overall Gap	Priority
1.	Marriage Certificate	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
2.	Land Registration	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
3.	Renewal of Driving License	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High
4.	Passport Application	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High
5.	Passport Renewal	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High
6.	Birth Certificate	Medium	Partial	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
7.	Death Certificate	Medium	Partial	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
8.	Application for National ID	High	Partial	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
9.	National ID Replacement	Medium	Partial	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
10	Change of Name	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
11.	Land Title Transfer	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
12.	Education Services	Medium	No	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	High
13.	Visa Application	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
14.	Social Security	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
15..	Application for Permit	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
16.	Registration for Driving Test	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High
17.	Health Facility Licensing	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
18.	Authentication for Loan Agreement	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
19.	Visa Renewal	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
20.	Application for Driving License	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High

Table 33: Pujehun District Service Gap Matrix

4.15.2. Recommendation

Short-Term (0–6 months): Establish a solar-powered Digital Access Point (DAP) at Pujehun City Library, equipping it with internet, laptops, printers, and solar power to serve as the primary hub, addressing the infrastructure deficits. Conduct community sensitization campaigns via local radio and meetings to educate residents on accessing services like birth certificates, NASSIT, and National ID, tackling the lack of awareness. Deploy trained assistants fluent in local languages to guide residents, particularly elders, in form completion and digital navigation. Focus initial DAP operations on high-demand services, including National ID, birth/death certificates, NASSIT, passports, and license renewals, aligning with priorities. Provide affordable printing and scanning services at DAPs to overcome equipment access barriers.

Medium-Term (6–18 months): Introduce digital literacy training programs targeting youth and women to enhance their ability to use mobile phones for service access, addressing the limited usage. Organize mobile outreach visits by NCRA and other agencies to provide passport and driver's license assistance in remote areas. Enhance ICT infrastructure in local offices and schools with functional computers and solar power installations to support digital integration, addressing the nonfunctional equipment issues. Establish monitoring and feedback structures through local DAP user groups, comprising youth, elders, and leaders, to collect service feedback and improve usability. These initiatives strengthen DAP accessibility and community engagement in Pujehun.

Long-Term (18+ months): Integrate DAP functions with national digital platforms to enable real-time data processing, reducing the need for travel to Bo or Freetown. Expand DAP access by establishing satellite points or mobile units in underserved villages beyond Pujehun town, addressing the documentation challenges faced by women. Develop a district-wide ICT roadmap in collaboration with development partners and national authorities to guide long-term investments in education, health, and governance infrastructure, responding to Mr. Sessay's observation of limited technological resources. These strategic measures foster a sustainable DAP ecosystem, significantly enhancing digital service accessibility and operational reliability for Pujehun residents.

4.15. Bonthe District

Interviews were conducted with 13 stakeholders and community members in Bonthe District, including the librarian of Bonthe City Library and residents from Bonthe Municipality and surrounding areas, to gather perspectives on the implementation of Digital Access Points (DAPs). The objective was to evaluate the current status of digital public services, identify barriers to access, and collect expectations regarding DAP deployment in this remote, island district. The findings indicate that digital services are limited; only occasional mobile outreach is available for biometric National ID registration and birth/death certificates. Other services, such as passports, driver's licenses, and land registration, are not offered locally and require travel to Bo or Freetown.

Major obstacles are unreliable electricity, weak internet, low digital literacy, and poor ICT infrastructure. While stakeholders support DAPs to cut travel costs and delays, they stress the need for solar power, steady internet, local-language options, and community training. Top

service priorities include National ID, vital records, licenses, NASSIT, and application forms, with an emphasis on accessible, affordable delivery. The interview protocol explored views on digitization challenges and expectations for DAP rollout. See 6.3.16. Appendix 3 for details of interview.

Stakeholders Consulted

Stakeholders	Category
Bonthe City Library	Library
Mattru Jong Post Office	Post Office
Bonthe Post Office	Post Office
Traders, Entrepreneurs, SMEs	Community Members and Business Owners

Table 34: Bonthe District Stakeholders

4.15.1. Key Findings and Analysis

- **Severe Lack of Local Digital Public Services: About 85%** of essential government services, including passports, driver's licenses, and land registration, are unavailable locally in Bonthe District. Only sporadic outreach efforts for National ID and birth/death registration occur, forcing most citizens to travel to Bo or Freetown, undermining civic participation and creating dependency on distant centers.

- **Near-Total Absence of Online Access for Government Services: 90%** of residents have never used online government services. Despite some services being technically available nationally, residents lack the awareness, skills, or connectivity to access them, particularly in remote areas, isolating Bonthe from national digital transformation efforts.

- **Persistent Dependence on Paper-Based Processes: About 95%** of service processes remain paper-based, with only occasional digitization of health-related forms during NGO outreach. Most administrative tasks, like obtaining certificates or writing formal letters, rely on handwritten documentation, increasing errors and slowing processing times.

- **Critical Deficits in ICT Infrastructure: About 90%** of public institutions lack computers, internet, or IT staff. The city library has no functional computers, and schools and clinics operate without digital tools, relying on non-functional or temporary solar-powered devices, severely constraining digital service rollout.

- **Low Institutional ICT Capacity and Staffing**: Stakeholders rated ICT capacity at 3 out of 10, reflecting a lack of hardware, software, trained personnel, and technical support. Computer education is nearly non-existent in schools, and clinics rely on

intermittent NGO-provided equipment, creating a non-conducive environment for digital services.

- **Absence of Structured Digital Support Services: 95%** of residents lack access to public digital support mechanisms, such as help desks or community ICT assistants. Informal assistance from staff like librarians is unreliable, disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups like the elderly, women, and low-literate individuals.

- **High Awareness of National ID, Low Awareness of Other Services:** All respondents were aware of the National ID, but less than 30% knew about NASSIT, passport, or licensing services, indicating limited awareness campaigns, lack of information in local languages, and minimal outreach contributing to misinformation or ignorance.

- **Frustration with Access Attempts and Service Failures: 75%** of community respondents reported negative or incomplete service experiences due to system errors, missing documentation, or discontinued mobile outreach, discouraging further attempts and fostering a sense of exclusion from government processes.

- **High Barriers Due to Travel, Confusion, and Lack of Guidance: 80%** of respondents cited travel, procedural confusion, and lack of assistance as primary barriers, with high transportation costs, unclear requirements, and no facilitators particularly affecting rural dwellers, single parents, and elders.

- **High Mobile Phone Ownership, Minimal Digital Use: 85%** of residents own mobile phones, but fewer than 20% use them for public services. Despite growing smartphone penetration, low digital literacy limits usage to calling and messaging apps like WhatsApp, with potential for mobile-based service delivery underutilized due to lack of awareness, training, and affordable data.

- **Demand for Multilingual Staff and Supportive Environments: 90%** of interviewees emphasized the need for human assistance and localized communication at DAPs, requesting friendly, trained staff to guide users, assist with form-filling, and provide instructions in Krio or Sherbro, along with affordable printing, reliable power, and user-friendly spaces for digital learning.

Top 20 Service Gap Matrix:

No.	Service	Availability	DAP Access	Awareness	Usability	Institutional Support	Technical Readiness	Overall Gap	Priority
1.	Marriage Certificate	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Low
2.	Land Registration	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High
3.	Renewal of Driving License	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
4.	Passport Application	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
5.	Passport Renewal	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High
6.	Birth Certificate	Medium	Partial	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
7.	Death Certificate	Medium	Partial	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
8.	Application for National ID	Medium	Partial	High	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	High
9.	National ID Replacement	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
10	Change of Name	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
11.	Land Title Transfer	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High
12.	Education Services	Medium	No	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
13.	Visa Application	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
14.	Social Security	Medium	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
15..	Application for Permit	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
16.	Registration for Driving Test	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
17.	Health Facility Licensing	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
18.	Authentication for Loan Agreement	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
19.	Visa Renewal	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
20.	Application for Driving License	Low	No	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High

Table 35: Bonthe District Service Gap Matrix

4.15.2. Recommendation

Short-Term (0–6 months): Initiate targeted community sensitization campaigns through local radio, churches, markets, and youth groups to elucidate the purpose, services, and benefits of Digital Access Points (DAPs), addressing the lack of awareness. Establish temporary digital assistance points at the city library or community centers, staffed by local volunteers and trained personnel to support form-filling and inquiries, as Hawa Koroma emphasizes the need for guidance and printing facilities. Develop simplified, multilingual guides in local languages for accessing National ID, birth registration, and NASSIT services, distributing them via print and radio to accommodate low-literacy users. Train a cadre of local ICT facilitators, including volunteers and NYSC graduates, to provide foundational support for DAP service navigation, addressing the training and technical support deficits.

Medium-Term (6–18 months): Deploy a pilot DAP in Bonthe Town equipped with solar power, reliable internet, computers, and trained facilitators, prioritizing high-demand services like National ID and exam registration. Expand mobile DAP outreach to underserved communities through regular visits, addressing the service access gaps. Collaborate with local offices to digitize core paper-based services, including health and civic forms, to streamline processes. Enhance ICT capacity in public institutions by equipping schools and clinics in Bonthe Town and Mattru Jong with basic digital tools, tackling the lack of functional computers highlighted by Mr. Fofonah.

Long-Term (18–36 months): Scale DAP infrastructure to chiefdoms like Gbangbama, Sittia, and Tihun to ensure inclusive service coverage, alleviating travel burdens such as those described by Aminata Sesay for obtaining a death certificate. Integrate DAPs with national digital ID and civil registration systems to enable real-time validation and reduce reliance on regional offices, addressing the challenges faced with NASSIT processes. Institutionalize ICT literacy programs in secondary schools and adult learning centers, targeting women, traders, and elders to bridge the digital access gap. Establish feedback channels at DAPs to collect user input and adapt services based on community needs, responding to the emphasis on guidance and responsiveness. These strategic interventions foster a sustainable DAP ecosystem, significantly enhancing digital service accessibility and reliability for Bonthe residents.

5. Conclusion

The stakeholder consultations conducted across Sierra Leone’s 16 districts have revealed strong national demand and local necessity for the establishment of Digital Access Points (DAPs) to support inclusive, citizen-centered digital service delivery. While the technical capability to digitize essential services exists at the national level, significant barriers persist at the local level, particularly in terms of infrastructure, institutional capacity, and public awareness.

Key findings highlights that most government services remain paper-based and are inaccessible in rural districts. Institutional readiness is particularly weak, with limited trained personnel, inadequate digital infrastructure, and poor inter-agency coordination. Communities, meanwhile, face high costs and long travel distances to access basic services.

Despite high mobile phone ownership, digital service usage remains minimal due to low awareness, digital literacy, and trust in government systems.

There is overwhelming public and institutional support for the deployment of assisted DAP models that offer human support, multilingual access, and local relevance. Priority services for DAP integration include National ID, birth and marriage certificates, land registration, and business registration, as these are most in demand and suffer from significant access and usability gaps.

Closing these service gaps through DAPs will not only decentralize access but also accelerate the government's digital transformation goals, reduce informal service channels, and promote social equity. However, success will require a coordinated strategy that addresses capacity building, sustainable infrastructure, and long-term institutional support.

6. Appendices

6.1. Appendix 1: Stakeholder Interview Guidelines

a. Service Delivery Status

- What digital public services are currently offered in your district?
- Are any of these services accessible online by citizens?
- Are paper-based services being replaced or digitized?
- What challenges do you face in providing e-services to citizens?
- Do you currently provide support to citizens who struggle to use digital services?
- How would you describe your ICT capacity (infrastructure, power, staff)?
- What support would you need to integrate e-services into DAPs?

b. Community Interview Summary

- Are community members aware of any digital government services? Which ones?
- Have community members used any of these services? What was the experience?
- What difficulties are commonly reported in accessing public services?
- Do people have access to smartphones or internet-enabled devices?
- Would people use a Digital Access Point center if one was available nearby?
- What services do community members want most at a DAP?
- What support or features would make the DAP more useful to the community?
- Detailed stakeholder interview data (by district)
- List of stakeholders engaged (MDAs, local councils, CSOs, community representatives)
- Photographic documentation of consultation activities

6.2. Appendix 2: List of Stakeholders Interviewed

District		Stakeholder	Role/Job/Description
Western Urban	1.	Miss Aminata Bangura	District Librarian Kissy Library
	2.	Miss Dunstanette Bodkin	Administrator Central Library HQ
	3.	Abubakar S. Kamara	Street Hawker
	4.	Brima Katta	Managing Director SalPost HQ
	5.	Jamila Koroma	Trader
	6.	Samuela Fofanah	Student
	7.	Ibrahim B. Kamara	Deputy Managing Director SalPost HQ
	8.	Margret Moifula	Salpost HQ
	9.	Ahmed C. Kormoh	SalPost HQ
	10	Mr. Lamin Bangura	Central Library HQ
	11.	Momoh Kargbo	Biker
Western Rural	1.	David Samira	Trader
	2.	Santigie Issah	Trader
	3.	Yusuf Amadou	Biker
	4.	Bariel Kamara	Trader
	5.	Sussane Mensarray	Waterloo District Librarian
	6.	Sheku Tarawalla	Godreich Assistant Librarian
	7.	Fatmata Kabia	Assistant Librarian Waterloo District library
	8.	Felicia Sandy	Student
	9.	Harriet Russel	Beautician
	10.	Mariama Ummarr Alusinah Bah	Cosmetic Seller (Shop Owner)
	11.	John Kuyateh	Trader
	12.	Isaiah Komba	Student
	13.	Chernoh Jalloh	Mechanic Engineer
	14.	Jibril Iyne	Plumber
Falaba District	1.	Alhaji Morlai Jalloh	Village elder
	2.	Kumba Fofanah	Trader
	3.	Issa Conteh	Farmer
	4.	Adama Koroma	Biker

	5.	Lansana Sesay	Elder
	6.	Fatmata Turay	Youth leader
	7.	Mohamed Sankoh	Tailor
	8.	Aminata Bah	Schoolteacher
	9.	Mariama Conteh	Trader
	10.	Abdul Karim Kargbo	Rice farmer
	11.	Fanta Kamara	Farmer's wife
	12.	Sheku Mansaray	Petty trader
	13.	Memunatu Bangura	Resident
	14.	Lansana S. Kamara	Farmer
	15.	Alpha Shaw	Social worker
	16.	Iyba Turunka	Student
	17.	Ballah Koroma	Businessman
	18.	Abdulai Jagitau	Youth leader
	19.	Sanfa Kamara	Trader
	20.	Marima S. Kamara	Resident
	21.	Kadiatu Bah	Trader
	22.	Mr. Amara Mohammed Kanu	District Librarian Falaba district library
	23.	Kumba Marah	Student
Kambia District	1.	Saydi Kondeh	Trader
	2.	Marima Sesay	Self-employed
	3.	Alhaji Suleiman Kamara	Student
	4.	Moham B. Kamara	Driver
	5.	Musa Fofonah	Bike Rider
	6.	Songbo Marah	Tailor
	7.	Abdul Achy Shollor	Mason
	8.	Augustine M.S. Sesay	Electrician
	9.	Fatmata Marah	Student
	10.	Finah Mansaray	Trader
	11.	Aruna Kamara	Bike Rider
	12.	Moneh Kamara	Trader
	13.	Saio Sesay	Trader

	14.	Kaday Sow	Student
	15.	Aliamatu Sow	Student
	16.	Hawanatu Samura	Student
	17.	Marima Kamara	Student
Koinadugu District	1.	Musa Conteh	Mechanic engineer
	2.	Sulaiman Turay	Plumber
	3.	Lansana D Mariah	Electrician
	4.	Foday Mansaray	Business owner
	5.	Kabba Samurah	Government worker
	6.	Hassan wulareh	Government worker
	7.	Adama Mansaray	Nurse
	8.	Yusufu Barrie	Bike rider
	9.	Mohamed Lamar Jalloh	Bike rider
	10.	Ibrahim Jalloh	Bike rider
	11.	Mohamed A Bah	Bike rider
	12.	Amadu Jagitay	Bike rider
	13.	Suleiman Jalloh	Phone mechanic
	14.	Abdulai Dabor	Bike rider
	15.	Kadiatu S Kamara	Housewife
	16.	Alhaji Mansaray	Librarian Koinadugu District Library
	17.	John Sessay	Postmaster Kabala Post Office
Tonkolili District	1.	Mohamed Alieu Shaw	Vice principal
	2.	Amadu Shaw	Teacher
	3.	Mariama seray Jalloh	Trader
	4.	Fasalie Y Turay	Student
	5.	Haja Kaday Sow	Student
	6.	Hadi Jalloh	Moto bike mechanic
	7.	Bayuroh Barrie	Farmer
	8.	Mamoud Marah	Bike mechanic
	9.	Messeh M Kamara	Trader
	10.	Fadia Koroma	Trader

	11.	Famata Mansaray	Trader
	12.	Mohamed Marah	Self employed
	13.	Humu Hawa Mansaray	Self employed
	14.	Alhaji FL Kamara	Trader
	15.	Augustine	Librarian Magburaga Library
Bombali District	1.	Mohamed Kargbo	Bike Rider Deputy Chairman
	2.	John Tholley	Entrepreneur
	3.	Alusine Kargbo	Bike rider
	4.	Alhaji Abu Koroma	Bike rider
	5.	Ibrahim M Kallorkoh	Bike rider
	6.	Abdul Turay	Trader
	7.	Isata Conteh	Entrepreneur
	8.	Haja Rugie Timbo	Trader
	9.	Osman Sento Conteh	Teacher
	10.	Aminata Conteh	Entrepreneur
	11.	Joice Buntin	G4S worker
	12.	Famata Sawaneh	Student
	13.	Ahmed Kargbo	Teacher
	14.	Samuel Fornah	District Librarian Makeni Regional Library
	15.	Alhaji Abu Koroma	Bike rider
	16.	Elizabeth Amie Kamara	Librarian Makeni City Library
	17.	Sorie Sow	Trader
	18.	Fatmata Mansaray	Teacher
	19.	Zainab Jalloh	Hairdresser
Karene District	1.	Zainab Kallay	Trader
	2.	Mariama Barrie	Trader
	3.	Salimatu Barrie	Farmer
	4.	Ragiyatu Barrie	Entrepreneur
	5.	Many Marah	Farmer
	6.	Janabu Mansaray	Farmer
	7.	Mariama Bah	Housewife

	8.	Isatu Barrie	House
	9.	Hadiatu Jalloh	Trader
	10.	Isatu Jalloh	Housewife
	11.	Husianatu Bah	Trader
	12.	Famata Sow	Trader
	13.	Isatu Jalloh	Entrepreneur
	14.1	Mohammed Sankoh	District Librarian
Port Loko	1.	Ishmeal Walcott Fofanah	Ag. Registrar, University of Lunsar
	2.	Mohammed Bangura	Librarian, Port Loko District Library
	3.	Mohammed Sonah	Resident
	4.	Ibrahim Fofanah	Resident
	5.	Samuela Gbembo	Driver
	6.	Sinneh Kamara	Entrepreneur
	7.	Umu Kargbo	Resident
	8.	Hawa Ngelanda	Resident
	9.	Mabinty Bangura	Trader
	10.	Fatmata Sessay	Trader
	11.	Abibatu Kamara	Entrepreneur
	12.	Mariama Kondeh	Housewife
	13.	Osman Kamara	Trader
	14.	Mohammed Kondeh	Trader
Kono District	1.	Thomas Terena	Librarian
	2.	Patrick Sesay	Teacher
	3.	Thomas Rogers	Trader
	4.	Ibrahim Kanu	Trader
	5.	Hassan Fofanah	Trader
	6.	Sheku Bockarie	Teacher
	7.	Alfred Kamanda	Youth Volunteer
	8.	Moses Koroma	Father of Three
	9.	Abu Bakarr Jalloh	Shop Owner
	10.	Edward Fornah	Biker

Kailahun District	1.	Mr. Jabbie	District Librarian
	2.	Mariatu Koroma	Farmer
	3.	Sorie Jalloh	Village Youth Leader
	4.	Alhaji Musa Kallon	Elder
	5.	Isata Fofanah	Market Woman
	6.	Abdulai Kamara	Teacher
	7.	Jeneba Sesay	Youth
	8.	Haja Aminata Bangura	Mother of Two
	9.	Ibrahim Conteh	Trader
	10.	Fatmata Kallon	Community Health Volunteer
Kenema District	1.	Mr. Dauda Sessay	Librarian – Kenema City Library
	2.	Mr. Mansaray	District Librarian – Kenema Regional Library
	3.	Gbessay Kallon	Trader
	4.	Lamin Fofanah	Trader
	5.	Baindu Kallon	Parent
	6.	Mokona Sandi	Resident
	7.	Abdulai Dumbuya	Resident
	8.	Aminata Bangura	Resident
	9.	Alusine Jusu Gbondo	Entrepreneur
	10.	Aminata Sankoh	Resident
	11.	Elizabeth Susan Conteh	Business Owner
Bo District	1.	Cecil Roy Campbell	Librarian, Bo City Library
	2.	Agnes Bernadette Momoh	Librarian, Bo Regional Library
	3.	Edward Mansaray	Bike Rider
	4.	Alfred Fornah	Teacher
	5.	Ernest Samura	Entrepreneur
	6.	Theresa Mansaray	Trader
	7.	Mariatu Bockarie	Nurse
	8.	Anita Sillah	Trader
	9.	Memunatu Conteh	Student

	10.	Kadiatu Kabia	Student
	11.	Abdul Kamanda	Trader
	12.	Micheal Gbessay	Bike Rider
	13.	Joseph Marrah	Bike Rider
Moyamba District	1.	John Kposowa	Bike Rider
	2.	Cecil Bryma	Librarian, Moyamba District Library
	3.	Fatmata Conteh	Trader
	4.	Alimamy Sesay	Teacher
	5.	Isatu Kallon	Petty Trader
	6.	Mohamed Jusu	Driver
	7.	Sia Fornah	Hairdresser
	8.	Musa Kamara	Mechanic
	9.	Haja Memunatu	Farmer
	10	Peter Gbekie	Construction Worker
	11.	Zainab Bah	Student
	12.	Alhassan Koroma	Carpenter
	13.	Adama Tommy	Nursing Assistant
	14.	Ibrahim Lahai	Fisherman
	15.	George Bangura	Youth Leader
	16.	Susan Kamanda	Tailor
Pujehun District	1.	Mohammed Sessay	Librarian Pujehun District Library
	2.	Mohamed Bangura	Teacher
	3.	Isatu Conteh	Market Woman
	4.	Hassan Jusu	Entrepreneur
	5.	Fatmata Jabbie	Trader
	6.	Alhaji Mansaray	Elder
	7.	Kadiatu Kamara	Fish seller
	8.	Zainab Koroma	Student
	9.	Hawa Dumbuya	Trader
	10.	James Lahai	Biker
	11.	Mabel Tucker	Student

	12	Adama Kallon	Trader
	13.	Aminata Conteh	Entrepreneur
Bonthe District	1.	Abu Bakarr Fofonah	Librarian, Bonthe City Library
	2.	Hawa Koroma	Market Vendor
	3.	Ibrahim Sannoh	Fisherman
	4.	Isata Bendu	Teacher
	5.	Foday Musa	Bike Rider
	6.	Aminata Sesay	Housewife
	7.	Musa Bangura	Farmer
	8.	Zainab Jalloh	Trader
	9.	Alhaji Conteh	Boat Operator
	10.	Mariama Kamara	Youth leader
	11.	Joseph Bangalie	Retired
	12.	Kumba Fofana	Trader,
	13.	Alpha Kabia	Student

6.3. Appendix 3: Interview Report: Institutional and Community Perspectives on Digital Access Points (DAPs)

To inform the development of Digital Access Points (DAPs), interviews were conducted with stakeholders from public sector institutions, postal and library services, and informal sector actors, including community members such as informal workers, traders, transport operators, and students. The objective was to assess the current state of public service digitization, identify barriers to digital service adoption, and gather expectations for DAP implementation. Key findings reveal that while the National ID system is fully digitized, most government services remain partially digitized or paper-based, hindered by unreliable infrastructure, limited institutional ICT capacity, and low digital literacy among communities. Stakeholders and community members emphasized the need for reliable infrastructure, user-friendly support, and prioritized services like National ID, passports, driver's licenses, and educational applications to ensure DAP success.

6.3.1. Western Urban District Interview Details

Institutional Engagement

a. Current State of Digital Public Services

Stakeholders reported that among approximately 20 identified government services, only the National ID system is fully digitized, with other critical services such as birth registration, business registration, and tax administration remaining partially digitized or entirely paper-based. This limited digitization contributes to inefficiencies and public reliance on manual processes. Mr. Brima Katta, Managing Director of SalPost, noted,

"Apart from National ID, maybe only the universities have fully gone digital with online applications."

Margret Moifula, also from SalPost, highlighted the persistent preference for paper-based processes, even for services with digital options:

"*Even something as digitized as the American lottery ends up on paper here. People print out forms and go for help filling them."*

This reliance highlights the need for a gradual transition to digital platforms, supported by accessible resources and training.

b. Challenges to Digital Service Uptake

A recurring theme across interviews was the impact of unreliable power supply and limited internet connectivity on digital service delivery. These infrastructural challenges disrupt online transactions, eroding public trust in digital systems. Mr. Brima Katta explained,

"*For example, when using the online tax system, you start, and the light or internet goes off — you have to start all over."*

Such disruptions make digital processes frustrating and often impractical, particularly in rural areas, discouraging adoption and reinforcing dependence on paper-based systems.

c. Institutional Capacity Gaps

Stakeholders highlighted significant weaknesses in institutional ICT capacity, particularly in libraries and postal services. Outdated equipment, poor maintenance, and slow internet connections limit the ability to deliver digital services effectively. Miss Aminata Bangura, District Librarian at Kissy Library, stated,

> *"We need good computers and fast internet. So many computers just end up as white elephants because they break down or the internet is too slow."*

While some SalPost and library staff provide ad-hoc assistance with online systems, there are no formalized technical helpdesks or customer support structures to support vulnerable populations consistently, such as the elderly or those with low digital literacy.

d. Risks of Continued Paper-Based Reliance

Stakeholders expressed concern that without robust policies, enforcement, and public education, communities will revert to paper-based processes. Miss Dunstanette Bodkin, Administrator at the Central Library HQ, warned,

"If proper policies, enforcement, and training are not in place, citizens will just fall back to paper."

This sentiment was echoed across interviews, emphasizing the need for systematic awareness campaigns, local-language resources, and clear policy frameworks to drive digital adoption.

e. Specific Service Frustrations

Stakeholders identified passport acquisition as a particularly cumbersome process, characterized by high costs, delays, and incomplete digitization. Mr. Lamin Bangura from Central Library noted,

> *"It costs about $100, is so stressful and slow, because it isn't fully digital."*

Stakeholders agreed that DAPs could address these pain points by streamlining high-demand services, provided they are equipped with modern technology, trained staff, and reliable infrastructure.

Community Engagement

a. Awareness of Government Services

Community members, including informal workers, traders, transport operators, and students, demonstrated awareness of major government services such as National ID, passport issuance, and voter registration. However, awareness of less prominent services, such as social security, permits, and name-change applications, was limited. Momoh Kargbo, a local biker, remarked,

"I don't even know what Social Security is."

Many respondents perceived services like social security as relevant only to civil servants, highlighting a gap in public education about available services.

b. Service Usage and Priorities

Despite awareness of key services, most community members reported never using them digitally, preferring in-person interactions due to familiarity and accessibility. Abubakar S. Kamara, a street hawker, explained,

> *"I have heard about the National ID and passport, but I don't have them yet. When I am ready to travel, I will get the passport."*

When asked about desired DAP services, respondents consistently prioritized:

- National ID registration: Essential for identification and mandatory for all citizens.
- Passport applications: Critical for travel but currently costly and slow.
- Driver's license services: Valued for mobility and employment opportunities.
- Educational application support: Important for students accessing academic opportunities.
  Samuela Fofanah, a student at IMAT College, emphasized,

"National ID is the most important because it is mandatory for every citizen. But people will still need help using it."

c. Barriers to Digital Uptake

Community members identified several barriers to adopting digital services, including:

- Lack of confidence: Many lack the skills or trust to navigate online systems.
- Limited literacy: Low reading and digital literacy hinder engagement with digital platforms.
- Cost barriers: High costs of phone data deter usage, especially for low-income groups.
- Infrastructure challenges: Unreliable power and connectivity limit access to online services.
  Although smartphone ownership is rising, most respondents use their devices primarily for social media rather than e-government services, indicating a need for targeted digital literacy training.

6.3.2. Western Rural District Interview Details

Institutional Engagement

a. Current State of Digital Public Services

Of approximately 20 identified government services, stakeholders reported that only the National ID system and parts of the passport process are digitized, while services like birth registration, business licensing, and tax administration remain heavily paper-based. This limited digitization results in inefficiencies and prolonged reliance on manual processes. Sheku, Assistant Librarian at Goderich Library, explained,

"Even with the National ID, you still have to go there while they put your information into their system. But compared to other services, it's faster."

Susanne, a public sector stakeholder, added,

"There have been a few paper-based services that have moved to digital, but none of them have been fully digitized. People are still getting used to digitisation."

The partial digitization of key services, coupled with a lack of user-friendly interfaces, discourages adoption and perpetuates dependence on paper-based systems.

b. Institutional Capacity Challenges

Stakeholders consistently highlighted inadequate ICT infrastructure as a major barrier to digital service delivery. Libraries and public facilities often rely on outdated or broken computers, with no dedicated technical support systems. Fatmata, Assistant District Librarian, rated the ICT infrastructure poorly, stating,

"If I should rate our ICT infrastructure on a scale of 1 to 10, I would say a 4."

Sheku echoed this sentiment, noting,

"I would rate it a 3. Even the computers that work are not connected to the internet."

Compounding these issues, unreliable electricity and high fuel costs for standby generators hinder consistent service delivery. Fatmata elaborated,

"We have a standby generator, but the cost of fuel is enormous and makes providing services very frustrating."

The absence of formal technical support or helpdesk structures further limits the ability of libraries and public institutions to assist citizens, particularly those unfamiliar with digital systems.

c. Challenges to Digital Service Uptake

Low digital literacy, limited public awareness, and insufficient sensitization efforts were identified as key barriers to adopting digital services. Stakeholders emphasized that many citizens lack the confidence or skills to navigate online systems, and complex interfaces exacerbate this issue. Susanne stressed the need for proactive measures, stating,

"There needs to be government-led sensitization before DAPs are rolled out so people know how to use them."

Sheku added,

"The interface of these services should be simple and user-friendly, especially for those who are not so conversant with technology."

Without targeted education and simplified processes, stakeholders warned that digital services risk remaining underutilized, particularly among rural and less tech-savvy populations.

d. Support for DAPs and Implementation Considerations

Approximately 90% of stakeholders expressed strong support for DAPs, viewing them as a solution to streamline service delivery and reduce frustrations with current processes. However, they cautioned that success depends on addressing infrastructure deficits, providing user training, and implementing clear policy reforms. Stakeholders emphasized the need for reliable power, high-speed internet, and modern equipment to ensure DAPs function effectively. They also advocated for community engagement to build trust and ensure services align with local needs, highlighting the importance of involving local leaders to champion the initiative.

Community Engagement

a. Awareness of Government Services

Community members, including traders, bike riders, perfume sellers, and other informal workers, demonstrated awareness of core government services such as National ID, passports, and driver's licenses. However, awareness of less prominent services, like social security or administrative permits, was minimal. John Kuyateh, a petty trader, noted,

"Majority of the people in this community use smartphones, maybe 90%, but only for WhatsApp, Facebook, and TikTok — not for public services."

This limited awareness highlights the need for targeted sensitization campaigns to educate communities about the full range of available e-services.

b. Service Usage and Priorities

Most community members reported using only the National ID and driver's license services, with passports considered necessary only for travel. David, a trader, explained,

"I have not used any of these services yet. The cost of the National ID is high for me now, but I plan to get it."

Yusuf, a bike rider, added,

"I have done the National ID and the driver's license. I don't see the need to do the rest unless I really have to."

The driver's license and passport processes were frequently described as tedious and costly. Bariel Kamara, a perfume seller, highlighted,

"If there is a DAP closer, people will do more passports because."

6.3.3. Falaba District Interview Details

Institutional Engagement

a. Availability and Awareness of Digital Public Services

Stakeholders reported that among approximately 20 key government services, only the National ID registration is partially digitized, but even this service is unavailable within Falaba District, requiring residents to travel to regional hubs like Makeni or Bombali. Other services, such as passports, birth certificates, and tax administration, remain entirely paper-based, with little awareness of digital alternatives. Mr. Sorie Kamara, a primary school teacher, noted,

"People have heard about the National ID system, and they know it is entered into a computer, but we don't have facilities here to do the registration. They usually go to Makeni."

Mrs. Haja Umu Sesay, from the health sector, added,

"For services like passports or birth certificates, people don't even know they could be done digitally. Most processes are still done using paper and manual forms."

Mr. Amara Mohammed Kanu, the District Librarian, underscored Falaba's isolation, stating,

"To start with, my district is a very hard-to-reach area—very, very remote. Most of the things are not digital yet and it's difficult to deal with."

He clarified that even the National ID process is inaccessible locally, forcing residents to rely on distant hubs, which highlights the urgent need for localized digital service delivery through DAPs.

b. ICT Infrastructure and Institutional Capacity

Falaba's ICT infrastructure is severely underdeveloped, with most public institutions lacking functional computers, internet connectivity, or trained staff. The district's sole public library and schools operate with minimal or no digital resources, and unreliable electricity further

hampers service delivery. Mr. Abdulai Koroma, a secondary school principal, described the situation, saying,

"There is no stable network here, no light let alone to have computers."

Mr. Kanu, the librarian, rated the district's digital capacity as nearly nonexistent, stating,

"For my district, we are 90%, if not fully, paper-based. Digitisation is not available yet. It is difficult and not common like in the other districts."

He also highlighted poor mobile connectivity, noting,

"The phone network is very bad over here in Falaba district. It is not everywhere that you'll find network, and I think that's part of why many things is still paper-based."

The lack of trained personnel and high generator fuel costs exacerbate these challenges, as Mr. Mohammed added,

"Even if the government wants to roll out digital services here, we will need strong support to train people. The community is not yet ready without help."

c. Road Networks and Accessibility Barriers

A critical barrier unique to Falaba is its poor road infrastructure, which stakeholders identified as a major obstacle to development and service access. Mr. Kanu emphasized,

"The most problematic thing in this district is the road network. The roads are so bad that it makes any vital development very difficult. If anything is to be done here, the first thing the government must look at is the road network. It hinders the development of the district."

This logistical challenge restricts the deployment of digital infrastructure and limits residents' ability to access services, even in neighboring districts, making DAPs a potential solution only if paired with road improvements.

d. Support for DAPs and Implementation Considerations

Approximately 90% of stakeholders expressed strong support for DAPs, viewing them as a transformative solution to address service access gaps. However, they stressed that success depends on overcoming infrastructure deficits, providing extensive community training, and ensuring accessibility. Stakeholders advocated for solar-powered electricity, high-speed internet, and local-language support staff to make DAPs viable in Falaba's remote context. They also emphasized the need for coordination with local authorities and community leaders to align services with local priorities and build trust.

Community Engagement

a. Awareness and Experience with Digital Services

Community members, including farmers, traders, students, and youth leaders, exhibited limited awareness of digital government services, with the National ID system being the only service vaguely recognized as digital. However, even this service requires travel to regional hubs, and most residents have had no direct exposure to digital processes. Alhaji Morlai Jalloh, a village elder, stated,

"I do not really know about these computer systems. They say they use a computer for the National ID, but I have not done mine yet."

Kumba Fofanah, a market woman in Kurubonla, added,

"One of my nephews who visited from Freetown mentioned that some services like passports are done online, but here, we don't know how to do any of that."

Issa Conteh, a farmer in Musaia, shared his experience, saying,

"My cousin helped me to get the National ID, but we had to travel to Kamakwie or so. They used a computer there, but I didn't understand what they were doing. I just followed the instructions."

Adama Koroma echoed this, noting,

"The queue was long and it took the whole day. They typed our names on a machine, but we didn't get much explanation."

This lack of awareness and exposure highlights the need for robust sensitization and training to prepare communities for DAP adoption.

b. Challenges in Accessing Public Services

Community members highlighted multiple barriers to accessing public services, including long travel distances, poor road conditions, unreliable electricity, and weak mobile network coverage. Lansana Sesay, a resident, explained,

"If we need anything from government, we have to go all the way to Makeni or Kamakwie. It is far, and the transport is expensive."

Fatmata Turay, a youth leader, added,

"Even to make a phone call, you sometimes have to climb a hill or stand on top of a rock. The signal is very weak."

Specific services like birth certificates, passports, driver's licenses, land registration, and social security were described as particularly inaccessible, often requiring costly trips to Freetown or Makeni. Iyba Turunka, a student, shared,

"I had to go to Freetown to renew my birth certificate so I could register for exams. By the time I came back, my class had already gone far."

Ballah Koroma, a businessman, added,
"*These services are not here. It takes time and money to travel just for basic documents."*

c. Access to Digital Devices and Connectivity

While smartphone ownership is increasing, most residents use basic phones, and internet access is severely limited due to poor network coverage, particularly during the rainy season. Mohamed Sankoh, a young tailor, noted,

"Only one or two people in the village have Android phones. Most of us use small phones just for calling. Internet is too expensive and slow here."

Aminata Bah, a schoolteacher, added,

"Some students have smartphones, but they mostly use them for music. We don't use the internet much because the connection is very poor."

Kumba Marah, a student, emphasized seasonal challenges, stating,

"Yes, we have smartphones, but the internet barely works. The system is slow during the rains."

These connectivity issues highlight the need for robust infrastructure investments to support DAP functionality.

d. Community Support and Priorities for DAPs

Community members expressed strong enthusiasm for DAPs, viewing them as a solution to long-standing access barriers, provided they are centrally located and supported by reliable infrastructure. Mariama Conteh, a trader, said,

"If the government builds a center here, we will surely use it. But they must also put someone there to help people understand how to use the services."

Abdul Karim Kargbo, a rice farmer, added,

"Even if it's just to charge phones, use internet, or check news, it would help us a lot. We don't have any of those things here."

Prioritized services include:

- National ID registration and replacement: Essential for identification and mandatory for all citizens.
- Birth certificate services: Critical for education and legal documentation.
- Passport applications: Needed for travel but currently inaccessible.
- Driver's licenses and vehicle registration: Valued for mobility and economic opportunities.
- Land title registration, social security, and educational/health services: Address long-term community needs.
  Fanta Kamara, a farmer's wife, noted,

"If the center can help us get birth certificates or apply for IDs, that would be very good. These things are difficult to get now."

e. Required Features for DAP Success

Community members outlined key requirements for effective DAPs:

- Solar-powered electricity: To address unreliable power supply.
- High-speed, stable internet: To enable consistent service access.
- Improved road access: To ensure physical accessibility, as Ballah Koroma noted that poor roads would limit DAP usage.
- Local-language facilitators: To assist low-literacy users.
- Gradual training: To build digital skills over time.
  Sheku Mansaray, a petty trader, emphasized,

"The center should be built where people can reach it easily. And it should have someone who speaks our local language and understands how to assist people."

Memunatu Bangura added,

"There is no electricity here, so they should use solar panels. And they should teach us slowly how to use the services because most people have never used a computer before."

6.3.4. Kambia District Interview Details

Institutional Engagement

a. Availability and Geographic Limitations of Digital Services

Stakeholders reported that among approximately 20 key government services, only the National ID system is partially digitized, but it is not available within Kambia District, forcing residents to travel to Port Loko or other regional hubs. Other services, such as passports, birth certificates, social security, and land registration, remain entirely paper-based, with no local access points. Mr. Alex, a representative from the Kambia District Library, explained,

"None of the services are digital except maybe National ID. Even with the National ID, you have to go to Port Loko."

He speculated that passports and social security might have digital components elsewhere but confirmed their inaccessibility in Kambia, stating,

"Kambia lacks hubs or service centers for nearly all government services."

This geographic isolation exacerbates challenges for rural and underserved populations, limiting their participation in the national digital transformation agenda and highlighting the urgent need for localized DAPs.

b. Community Disinterest and Poor Awareness of E-Services

Low awareness and lack of interest in digital services were identified as significant barriers, driven by insufficient public sensitization and the absence of government mandates to encourage adoption. Mr. Alex noted that a recent government directive mandating National ID registration spurred some uptake, but overall engagement remains low. He stated,

"The people in this district don't have passion for e-services… Government had to make it compulsory before people started showing interest."

Without targeted awareness campaigns through radio, TV, or community outreach, residents remain unaware of digital service options, perpetuating reliance on paper-based processes.

Mr. Alex emphasized,

"The best way to make DAP accessible is through radio and TV adverts… and solarising the facilities."

This highlights the need for proactive education and engagement strategies to foster community trust and participation in DAPs.

c. Inadequate ICT Capacity and Infrastructure Deficits

Kambia's ICT infrastructure is severely limited, with a readiness level estimated at just 35% by Mr. Alex. Public institutions, including the district library and schools, lack functional computers, reliable internet, and trained staff to support digital services. Electricity is inconsistent, with fuel-based generators proving unsustainable due to high costs. Mr. Alex highlighted,

"Unless a donor or partner comes in, we can't get computers. We need to solarise the office just to get light."

These deficits restrict institutions like the library to traditional roles, such as education and literacy, with no capacity to deliver digital public services. The absence of local technical

support further hampers the potential for digital transformation, necessitating significant infrastructure investments for DAP implementation.

d. Stakeholder Recommendations

To ensure DAP success, Mr. Alex proposed several strategies:

- Community sensitization: Use radio, TV, and flyers to raise awareness about DAP services and their benefits.
- Solar-powered infrastructure: Install solar systems to ensure reliable electricity for DAP facilities.
- Equipment provision: Secure computers and modems through government or donor support to equip DAP sites.
  He emphasized that combining infrastructure upgrades with public engagement would be critical to driving adoption and maximizing DAP utility in Kambia's resource-constrained environment.

Community Engagement

a. Awareness and Use of Digital Services

Community members demonstrated limited awareness of digital government services, with only the National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA) for National ID issuance recognized as a digital process. Other services, including birth certificates, passports, driver's licenses, and land registration, were unknown as digital options and required travel to Freetown or Makeni. Saydi Kondeh, a community member, confirmed,

"Yes NCRA, where they collect National ID cards only."

Marima Sesay added,

"Yes, but the process is very slow."

The lack of local access points and slow service delivery further discourages engagement, highlighting the need for DAPs to bring services closer to residents.

b. Barriers to Public Service Access

Community members reported significant challenges in accessing public services, including:

- Long travel distances: Residents must travel to Port Loko, Makeni, or Freetown for services like birth certificates, passports, and driver's licenses.
- Overcrowded service centers: Lengthy delays at regional hubs disrupt access.
- High costs: Travel expenses and opportunity costs deter usage, as Abdul Achy Shollor noted,

"If we leave what we are doing to travel for weeks to get documents, we lose profit and customers."

- Lack of local hubs: No service outlets exist in Kambia, as Alhaji Suleiman Kamara shared,

"There is no provision for birth certificate renewal, they sent me to Freetown."

Moham B. Kamara described a personal loss due to delays, stating,

"I applied for my driver's license… by the time I was called, my mother had passed, and I had to leave without snapping."

These barriers underscore the urgency of establishing local DAPs to reduce travel and streamline access.

c. Digital Device Ownership and Connectivity

While smartphone ownership is common, functionality for accessing e-services is limited by poor internet connectivity and high data costs. Marima Sesay noted,

"Yes, we have smartphones, but internet is poor."

Aruna Kamara added,

"Some people have [smartphones], but access is still limited."

Low digital literacy further restricts the use of smartphones for anything beyond basic functions like calls or music, indicating a need for training and improved connectivity to enable DAP usage.

d. Community Demand for DAP Services

Community members expressed strong enthusiasm for DAPs, viewing them as a solution to access barriers. Desired services include:

- National ID and birth certificates: Essential for identification and education.
- Driver's licenses and vehicle registration: Critical for mobility and economic opportunities.
- Passport applications: Needed for travel but currently inaccessible.
- Social security and education services: Valued for long-term benefits.
- Land registration and permits: Important for property and business needs.

Marima Sesay emphasized,

"We need all the DAP services, tell Papa Government."

Kaday Sow added,

"Educational service, social security and birth certificate."

The demand for a comprehensive range of services highlights the need for DAPs to address diverse community needs.

e. Enablers for Successful DAP Rollout

Community members outlined key requirements for effective DAPs:

- Stable electricity: Solar power to address unreliable electricity.
- Affordable, fast internet: To enable consistent service access.
- Road improvements: To ensure physical accessibility to DAP sites.
- Staff support and training: Local-language facilitators to assist low-literacy users.
- Awareness campaigns: To educate residents about DAP services.
- Employment opportunities: DAP operations to create local jobs.

These enablers align with stakeholder recommendations, emphasizing infrastructure, education, and accessibility as critical to DAP success.

6.3.5. Koinadugu District Interview Details

Institutional Engagement

a. Limited Digital Service Availability

Stakeholders reported that among approximately 20 key government services, only the National ID system, managed by the National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA), is partially digitized in Koinadugu District. Other services, including land registration, social security, passports, and driver's licenses, remain entirely paper-based or have non-functional digital components. Mr. Alhaji Mansaray, a stakeholder, explained,

"Only the National ID is digital. None of the others can be done online. Even Koinadugu College has an online application feature, but the link just leads to a flyer — there are no forms to fill."

This limited digitization forces residents to rely on manual processes or travel to urban centers like Freetown for services, highlighting the urgent need for localized digital access through DAPs.

b. Cultural Preference for Paper-Based Processes

Despite the availability of the National ID system, stakeholders noted a strong cultural preference for paper-based processes, driven by low digital literacy and trust in familiar manual systems. Mr. Mansaray observed,

"People are still glued to and trust the paper process. Technology is taking over slowly, but due to low literacy, most prefer walking into offices and submitting forms physically."

This preference highlights the need for gradual transition strategies, including robust public education and support systems to build confidence in digital platforms, particularly for older or less tech-savvy populations.

c. Training and Simplicity for DAP Success

Stakeholders expressed strong support for DAPs but emphasized that their success depends on extensive training and user-friendly design. Mr. Mansaray stressed,

"If the government wants to implement something like DAP, then training and awareness of its benefits are essential. The youth may embrace this, but for the aged, there must be a support system."

He added that intuitive interfaces are critical, stating,

"Accessibility should be as simple and quick as possible."

The need for tailored training and simplified systems is particularly important in Koinadugu, where digital literacy is low, and older residents may face significant barriers to adoption.

d. Infrastructure Gaps: Power and Internet

Unreliable power and poor internet connectivity were identified as the most significant barriers to digital service delivery. Mr. John Sessay, District Postmaster of Kabala, explained,

"DAP is a good initiative, but the power issue must be addressed first. Many facilities have no electricity and rely on solar. At the Post Office, we don't have light or even a generator."

He further noted,

"Digitisation is not possible without consistent power and strong internet."

The absence of stable electricity and reliable internet severely limits the feasibility of digital services, necessitating infrastructure investments like solar power and high-speed connectivity for DAPs.

e. Lack of On-Site Digital Support

Few facilities in Koinadugu offer staff to assist with digital services, with the National ID process being a rare exception. Mr. Sessay highlighted,

"At least when you go to do your National ID, someone helps you enter your information. That's a great form of support."

However, this support is not available for other services, leaving residents without guidance for navigating digital platforms. This gap highlights the need for trained on-site staff at DAPs to assist users, particularly those with limited digital skills.

Community Engagement

a. Awareness of Digital Services

Community members, including mechanics, business owners, and bike riders, demonstrated limited awareness of digital government services, with only the National ID system recognized as partially digital. Other services, such as driver's licenses, passports, and social security, were unknown as digital options. Chernoh, a local mechanic, stated,

"I only know of NCRA — they cater for National ID Cards."

Foday Mansaray, a business owner, shared,

"I wanted a passport for a business trip to China, but there is no center here. I had to go to Freetown."

Yusif Barrie, chairman of the local bike riders' union, added,

"The only service we know here that is digital is the National ID."

The lack of local service points and outreach campaigns contributes to this limited awareness, emphasizing the need for targeted sensitization.

b. Experiences and Challenges in Service Use

Community members who used the National ID system reported overwhelmingly negative experiences, citing slow processes, system failures, and the need for repeated visits. Musa Conteh described the frustration, stating,

"The process is slow, stressful, and costly. I paid in January and still don't have my ID Card. I snapped twice already."

Sulaiman Turay, a plumber, echoed,

"It took three weeks just to snap and another month to get the ID. They kept saying the system was down."

Yusif Barrie highlighted challenges with driver's licenses, noting,

"I applied for three bike licenses and haven't received any. My riders haven't even snapped yet due to poor internet."

These experiences reflect broader issues of unreliable infrastructure, limited service capacity, and long distances to service centers, which DAPs could address by providing local access.

c. Demand for a Local Digital Access Point (DAP)

Community members expressed strong enthusiasm for DAPs, viewing them as a solution to reduce travel burdens and improve access to essential services. Musa Conteh noted,

"Maybe if there was a DAP nearby, I would try again for my ID Card."

Foday Mansaray emphasized the potential for business owners, stating:

"We need a DAP platform for business owners — so we don't have to travel all the time to buy market goods."

Yusif Barrie suggested sector-specific platforms, saying,

"There should be one for bike riders, to apply for licenses online."

The community's support for DAPs highlights their potential to enhance convenience and accessibility, particularly for underserved groups like traders and bike riders.

d. Barriers to Digital Inclusion

Community members identified several obstacles to digital service adoption:

- Poor internet access: Unstable and slow connectivity limits online engagement.
- Lack of electricity: Frequent power outages hinder digital service delivery.
- Low confidence: Limited digital literacy reduces trust in online systems.
- Limited awareness: Lack of outreach leaves residents unaware of e-services.
- Distance to service centers: Travel to Freetown or other hubs is costly and time-consuming.

Fatmata Kamara noted,

"We use smartphones, but mostly for Facebook and WhatsApp. We don't go online for public services."

These barriers underscore the need for infrastructure improvements and user education to enable DAP adoption.

e. Community Recommendations

To ensure DAP effectiveness, community members proposed:

- Public training and digital education: To build confidence and skills, especially for older residents.
- Reliable electricity: Solar power or generators to ensure consistent service delivery.
- Stable, affordable internet: To enable access to online platforms.
- Sector-specific platforms: Tailored DAP services for bike riders, traders, and business owners.

- Road construction: To improve physical access to DAP sites.
  These recommendations align with stakeholder insights, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach to DAP implementation.

6.3.6. Tonkolili District Interview Details

Institutional Engagement

a. Scope of Digitization in Government Services

Stakeholders reported that among approximately 20 key government services, only the National ID system, managed by the National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA), is functionally digital, with data captured electronically but not accessible online or via self-service. Other services, such as birth certificates, driver's licenses, learner's permits, and social security, remain entirely paper-based, requiring manual submissions. Mr. Augustine, District Librarian for Magburaka and supervisor of other libraries, explained,

"Amongst all the 20 services, National ID is digital. But I don't know any that is online. Digital yes, but not online."

He speculated that driver's licenses might be digitally supported due to integration with the National Identification Number (NIN) but could not confirm, stating,

"I don't have a driver's license yet, so I can't confirm that. But since it's linked to the National Identification Number, it should be digital."

Mr. Augustine further noted that services like learner's permits and birth registrations rely on physical forms, adding,

"Even with the learner's permit, you still must pick a physical form. And the exam is written, not digital."

This limited digitization highlights the need for DAPs to bring accessible, online services to Tonkolili.

b. Challenges Affecting Service Delivery

Stakeholders identified several operational challenges hindering digital service delivery:

- **Unstable electricity supply**: Most public facilities lack reliable grid electricity, relying on costly and unsustainable generators. Mr. Augustine noted,

"Some of the facilities do not have light. A facility can't solely run on generator for 24 hours."

- **Under-resourced ICT infrastructure**: Libraries have few functional computers, and internet access is unavailable in most facilities. Mr. Augustine stated,

"We don't have internet facilities. The computers that work are only used for learning, not for any service delivery."

- **Lack of service mandate**: Public libraries are not equipped or mandated to support digital services, focusing instead on literacy and education.

These challenges highlight the need for significant infrastructure investments and policy alignment to enable DAP functionality.

c. Institutional ICT Capacity

Mr. Augustine rated Tonkolili's ICT readiness as extremely low, at 3 out of 10, due to unreliable electricity, limited computer availability, and lack of connectivity. He explained,

"On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest ICT Capacity, I'd rate our ICT capacity at 3. We don't have stable electricity, and not so many computer systems to boast of."

Despite some efforts to improve infrastructure, current conditions are insufficient to support a comprehensive digital access strategy, emphasizing the need for targeted upgrades in power, equipment, and internet access for DAP implementation.

Community Engagement

a. Awareness and Use of Digital Services

Community members demonstrated limited awareness of digital government services, with only the NCRA's National ID system recognized as digital. Other services, such as birth certificates, driver's licenses, passports, and social security, were unknown as digital options and required travel to Freetown or Makeni. Umu Hawa Mansaray stated,

"They only cater for National ID Cards. Everything else—unless you go to Freetown or Makeni."

Fasalie Y. Turay added,

"Yes, I've used NCRA, but the process is very slow."

The lack of local service points and outreach campaigns contributes to this limited awareness, underscoring the need for robust sensitization efforts to promote DAP adoption.

b. Difficulties in Accessing Public Services

Community members reported significant barriers to accessing public services, impacting livelihoods and opportunities:

- **Distance to service centers**: Services like birth certificates and passports are only available in urban hubs, requiring costly and time-consuming travel. Mohamed Alieu Shaw noted,

"For birth certificates, unless you go to Freetown, you can't get it. There is no center here."

- **Service delays and repeat visits**: Multiple trips to NCRA offices often yield no results. Faida Koroma shared,

"Each time I went there they said, 'go and come back tomorrow.' I have walked to and from that place, I did not get it, so I have left it with them."

- **Impact on education**: Lack of timely access to documents like birth certificates leads to missed opportunities. Fasalie Y. Turay explained,

"I was not able to enter college because I didn't have a birth certificate. They told me to go to Freetown, and I lost the opportunity."

- **License delays and penalties**: Delays in issuing driver's licenses or plates result in fines or vehicle seizures. Mohamed Marah stated,

"*I paid for my license four months ago. I haven't received it, and they arrested my bike for not having it."*

These challenges highlight the urgent need for local DAPs to streamline access and reduce burdens.

c. Access to Devices and Connectivity

While most community members own smartphones, their usage is limited to social media and entertainment due to poor internet connectivity, high data costs, and low digital literacy. Hadie Jalloh noted,

"We have smartphones, but the internet connection is poor."

Mohamed Marah added,

"The internet is another wahala."

The unreliable internet, particularly during the rainy season, and lack of training on e-services further restrict digital uptake, emphasizing the need for improved connectivity and education.

d. Community Priorities for DAP Services

Community members expressed strong support for DAPs, viewing them as a solution to access barriers. Prioritized services include:

- National ID card application and retrieval: Essential for identification.
- Birth certificate services: Critical for education and legal documentation.
- Driver's license issuance and license plates: Vital for mobility and economic opportunities.
- Passport applications: Needed for travel but currently inaccessible.

- Social security and educational services: Valued for long-term benefits.
  Bauyroh Barrie emphasized,

"We need more offices for collection of National ID cards."

Faida Koroma added:

"A center for both the making and replacing of birth certificates and ID cards is what we need most."

Alhaji FL Kamara noted,

"Magburaka is not small anymore, but we are still behind due to poor development."

Respondents advocated for multiple DAP locations to prevent overcrowding and ensure accessibility across the district.

e. Recommendations for Effective DAP Implementation

Community members proposed several measures to ensure DAP success:

- Reliable electricity: Solar power or grid connections to ensure consistent service delivery.
- Fast, stable internet: To enable access to online platforms, especially during rainy seasons.
- Improved road access: To facilitate physical access to DAP sites, particularly in areas like Mile 91 with poor roads.
- Training and sensitization: To build digital literacy and confidence among residents.
- Dedicated staff support: Local-language facilitators to assist low-literacy and elderly users.
- Social inclusion: Accommodations for persons with disabilities and the elderly.
  Mohamed Marah emphasized,

"There should be a training center and support for handicapped people who don't have anyone but Papa Government."

Alhaji FL Kamara added,

"Light, road construction, and good internet are the most important things.

6.3.7. Bombali District Interview Details

Institutional Engagement

a. Availability of Digital Public Services

Stakeholders reported that among approximately 20 key government services, only the National ID system, managed by the National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA), is highly

digitized and largely paperless in Bombali District. Elizabeth Amie Kamara, Makeni City Librarian, noted,

"National ID services are the only affordable system that is highly digitalized and paperless—they use computers for processing."

Other services, such as birth and death certificates, driver's licenses, and passports, are only partially digitized and require in-person visits to government offices. Samuel B. Fornah, District Librarian, confirmed,

"People access the National ID card, birth certificate, death certificates, driver's license, and other related civil services, but most are still partially digital."

Passport services operate in a hybrid model, combining manual and digital steps, while services like social security and land registration remain entirely paper-based, highlighting the need for comprehensive digitization through DAPs.

b. Online Accessibility of Services

No government services in Bombali are fully accessible online, requiring citizens to visit service offices in person to complete paper forms, which are then manually entered into systems and forwarded to Freetown for processing. Elizabeth Amie Kamara explained,

"No, not at all. Unless you go to their office and fill a form."

Samuel B. Fornah added,

"After they enter your information into the computer, they send it to the head office in Freetown."

This reliance on physical visits and centralized processing creates significant barriers, particularly for rural residents, underscoring the potential of DAPs to provide local, online access to services.

c. Challenges in Delivering E-Services

Poor internet connectivity and unstable networks were identified as the primary challenges to delivering e-services, leading to delays and user dissatisfaction. Samuel B. Fornah described the inefficiencies, stating,

"When you get to NCRA's office, you'll meet a very long line. People spend the rest of the day there, and when it's finally your turn, staff say, 'I'm tired' or 'I'm going to eat.' Then they tell you to come back in a month."

These delays, compounded by staff fatigue and limited service hours, frustrate users and discourage engagement with digital systems, emphasizing the need for reliable infrastructure and efficient processes at DAPs.

d. Institutional Support for Digital Service Users

Public institutions like libraries lack the resources and mandate to assist citizens with digital services. Elizabeth Amie Kamara noted,

"We want to help, but we don't have the access or services."

Samuel B. Fornah added,

"We don't have the support for the citizens who want to use digital services because most of them are not available here."

The absence of trained staff and internet access limits institutions' ability to support digital adoption, highlighting the need for DAPs to include dedicated facilitators and robust infrastructure.

e. ICT Capacity

Bombali's ICT capacity varies significantly across departments. The NCRA office is relatively well-equipped for National ID processing, but other departments, such as birth and death registries, lack basic infrastructure like computers. Samuel B. Fornah explained,

"In some departments, ICT capacity appears strong, but in others, basic infrastructure like computers is completely lacking."

This uneven capacity highlights the need for targeted investments in equipment, connectivity, and training to enable DAPs to serve as comprehensive digital service hubs.

f. Stakeholder Recommendations for DAP Integration

Stakeholders proposed several strategies to ensure successful DAP integration:

- Improved internet connectivity: To enable fast and reliable access to digital services.
- Strengthened ICT infrastructure: Through provision of computers and modems.
- Full digitization of services: To eliminate reliance on paper-based processes.

Samuel B. Fornah emphasized,

"We need technology in our district so people can access services from their homes."

These recommendations highlight the importance of infrastructure and policy reforms to support DAP deployment.

Community Engagement

a. Awareness of Digital Government Services

Community members were primarily aware of the NCRA for National ID issuance and the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority (SLRSA) for driver's licenses as digital services, with no knowledge of other services being available digitally. Mohamed Kargbo, a bike rider, stated,

"We know about NCRA and SLRSA."

Abdul Turay, a trader, added,

"I know of only two government digital services—NCRA and SLRSA."

The limited awareness of other services, such as passports, birth certificates, or social security, highlights the need for robust sensitization campaigns to promote DAP adoption.

b. Experience with Digital Services

Community members who used the National ID and driver's license services reported slow and inefficient processes, marked by long queues and delays. Mohamed Kargbo noted,

"People use the services, but the process is very slow."

John Tholley described the impact of delays, stating,

"We strain for license. It takes up to two months. Even after paying, the police arrest us because we don't have a license plate."

These inefficiencies, coupled with the need to travel to service centers, highlight the potential of DAPs to streamline local access and improve user experiences.

c. Barriers to Accessing Services

Community members identified several barriers to accessing services:

- Delays and inefficiencies: Long wait times and staff unavailability disrupt service delivery.
- Bribery: Some resort to bribes to expedite processes, as Abdul Turay noted,

"Some of us bribe to get ours."

- Lack of local centers: Services like passports and birth certificates require travel to Freetown or Makeni.
- Service closures: Offices often close unexpectedly, as a community member shared,

"Sometimes the office just closes and says time is up."

These barriers disproportionately affect rural and low-income residents, emphasizing the need for local DAPs.

d. Access to Digital Devices and Internet

While most respondents owned smartphones, their ability to access services was limited by poor and unreliable internet connectivity. Abdul Turay explained,

"You buy MB but still your data will not come on."

Osman Conteh, a teacher, added,

"Some of us have smartphones, but the internet is not good enough."

Fatima Sawaneh highlighted additional challenges, stating,

"We can download apps, but they won't install because they're not available in our country."

These connectivity issues, combined with low digital literacy, restrict smartphone usage to social media and entertainment, underscoring the need for improved internet access and training.

e. Willingness to Use a Digital Access Point (DAP)

Community members expressed strong enthusiasm for DAPs, viewing them as a timesaving and stress-reducing solution. A group response noted,

"We would be very happy for that."

Alusine Kargbo added,

"We will love to use it because it will save time for everyone."

This widespread support highlights the potential for DAPs to address access barriers and improve service delivery.

f. Priority Services Desired at a DAP

Community members prioritized the following services for DAPs:

- Birth certificate application and printing: Essential for education and legal documentation.
- Driver's license application and stamping: Critical for mobility and economic opportunities.
- Passport application: Needed for travel but currently inaccessible locally.
- Authentication for loan agreements: Important for business and financial inclusion.
- National ID processing: Vital for identification and mandatory requirements.
  Alusine Kargbo emphasized,

"We need a center that not only makes licenses but also prints and stamps them so we can get quick access."

g. Features and Support Needed for DAP Success

Community members outlined key requirements for effective DAPs:

- Stable electricity: Solar power to address frequent outages, as Alhaji Abu Koroma noted,

"We used to have light frequently, but now it takes 10 days or even a month. Without light, our devices can't work."

- Affordable, fast internet: To enable reliable service access.
- Improved roads: To facilitate physical access, as Ibrahim M. Kallorkoh highlighted,

"The road to the government hospital is so bad, pregnant women often miscarry on the way."

- Access to healthcare: To integrate health-related services into DAPs.
- Training and support: Local-language facilitators to assist low-literacy users.

6.3.8. Karene District Interview Details

Institutional Engagement

a. Digital Service Availability

No digital government services are currently available in Karene District, with the National ID system, managed by the National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA), being the only partially digitized service mentioned, but it is inaccessible locally and requires travel to Makeni or Port Loko. Mr. Mohammed Sankoh, Librarian at Karene City Library, stated:

"Over here have any center for digital services. Even for the National ID, people go to Makeni or Port Loko. Nothing is done here."

Other services, such as passports, social security (NASSIT), driver's licenses, and birth certificates, are entirely absent in both digital and manual forms within the district. Mr. Sankoh added,

"You can't apply for a passport or even a birth certificate here. These services are not available in any form here."

This complete lack of local service access highlights the urgent need for DAPs to bring essential services to Karene.

b. ICT Infrastructure and Facility Readiness

The Karene City Library, the district's only known ICT facility, is severely under-resourced, with just four computers, no functioning printer, and no internet access. Mr. Sankoh explained,

"We don't have internet here anymore here in this facility. Most of our internet things are done with our phone, even with that network is so bad here."

Electricity is a major barrier, with frequent outages in Kamakwie lasting days and no power at all in chiefdoms like Tambakha, Sanda Loko, and Gbanti. Mr. Sankoh noted:

"Light is a serious problem. Sometimes we go for three or four days without power in Kamakwie. In most villages and even some towns, there's no electricity at all. At this facility we depend solely on generator which is costly."

He rated the district's ICT capacity at 2 out of 10, stating:

"If we are being honest, the ICT capacity in this district is about 2 out of 10. We don't have what's needed now to support digital services."

The lack of internet, outdated equipment, and absence of IT personnel severely limit digital readiness, necessitating significant infrastructure upgrades for DAP implementation.

c. Institutional Capacity

No public institutions in Karene, including schools, health centers, or local government offices, are equipped to deliver or support digital services. Mr. Sankoh highlighted,

"We don't have any specially trained IT staff. If something goes wrong, we either manage on our own or call someone from outside the district."

Manual paperwork remains the norm, with government forms physically transported to other districts for processing. He added:

"As for this place paperless will take a while."

This lack of institutional capacity emphasizes the need for dedicated DAP staff and infrastructure to enable digital service delivery.

d. Public Awareness and Digital Literacy

Awareness of digital public services is extremely low, particularly in rural areas, where residents are unaware that services like NASSIT, passports, or birth certificates can be accessed digitally elsewhere. Mr. Sankoh noted:

"People don't even know these services exist digitally. When you tell them, they're shocked — they think everything still happens on paper and only in Freetown."

Digital literacy is also minimal, with only 10–20% of households owning smartphones, which are primarily used for social media and music rather than e-services. Mr. Sankoh explained:

"People may have phones but using them for public services is rare. They don't know how to browse websites or complete forms. About only 10-20% use smartphones here."

This low awareness and literacy highlight the need for extensive sensitization and training to prepare communities for DAP adoption.

e. Physical Access and Road Conditions

Poor road infrastructure exacerbates access challenges, particularly during the rainy season when many chiefdoms become inaccessible. Mr. Sankoh emphasized:

"The roads are in very bad shape. During the rains, some communities are completely cut off. Even getting other places is a big task for some of them."

This logistical barrier restricts residents' ability to access services outside the district and hinders the deployment of government programs, underscoring the need for road improvements alongside DAP implementation.

f. Readiness and Recommendations for a Digital Access Point (DAP)

Mr. Sankoh expressed cautious optimism about DAPs but stressed the need for significant investments in infrastructure and support. He recommended solar power, offline capabilities, and dedicated staff to guide users in local languages, stating:

"People here won't just start using a DAP. You need trained staff to guide them, explain things in the local language, and help them through every step."

He also emphasized building trust in digital systems, noting:

"Trust is a big issue. If people don't receive a printed document, they don't feel it's real. The system should help build trust and confidence in digital systems."

Prioritized services include National ID, birth certificates, and basic digital support, paired with community sensitization to ensure adoption.

Community Engagement

a. Community Awareness of Digital Services

Community members, particularly women, exhibited extremely limited awareness of digital government services, with only the National ID process recognized, though unavailable locally. Mariama Barrie, a trader, stated:

"They use computer for the ID card, but not here. We don't have any digital center in this district."

Services like passports, NASSIT, and birth certificates were unknown as digital options, with many women learning about them for the first time during interviews. This lack of awareness highlights the need for targeted outreach to educate rural communities about DAP services.

b. Experience with Government Services

Women who attempted to access the National ID process reported negative experiences, marked by long travel distances, time-consuming processes, and poor treatment at service centers in Makeni or Port Loko. Salimatu Barrie, a farmer, shared:

"I've given birth to two children, but I still don't have their birth certificates. I've tried everything. I'm not going again."

The physical and emotional toll of these processes, particularly for women with children or limited mobility, was significant, with long queues and exposure to weather adding to the burden. Many gave up after multiple failed attempts due to logistical and systemic barriers.

c. Difficulties in Accessing Public Services

Community members identified consistent barriers to accessing services:

- **Long travel distances**: Services like birth certificates and passports require travel to Makeni or Freetown. Zainab Kallay noted,

  "Even for a small correction on your birth certificate, they say you must go to Freetown. How many of us can do that?"

- **Poor road conditions**: Inaccessible roads, especially during the rainy season, exacerbate travel challenges. Ragiyatu Barrie, a trader, stated,

  "We suffer to get even common papers. Nothing is here. Everything is far."

- **Fragmented services**: Corrections or reissuance of documents require repeated trips, with no local support.
- **Lack of electricity and internet**: These infrastructure deficits further complicate access. These barriers disproportionately affect women, caregivers, and rural residents, emphasizing the need for local DAPs.

d. Access to Smartphones and Internet Devices

While basic mobile phone ownership is common (70–80% of households), smartphone ownership is low (10–20%), particularly among older women and rural residents. Smartphones are used primarily for WhatsApp and social media, not e-services, due to low digital literacy and unreliable internet. Aminata Kamara, a trader, noted:

"I have a phone, but I don't know how to go on the internet. If I need help, my son does it for me."
Isatu Barrie, a housewife, added:

"We don't use phone for that kind thing. It's just to call or check WhatsApp."

This limited digital engagement highlights the need for training and improved connectivity.

e. Willingness to Use a Digital Access Point (DAP)

Despite low digital literacy, community members, especially women, expressed strong enthusiasm for DAPs, viewing them as a means to reduce reliance on travel and middlemen. Janabu Mansaray, a farmer, stated:

"If the center is here and someone helps us step by step, we will use it. We are tired of always depending on others."

Husianatu Bah, a trader, added:

"We the women will benefit the most, especially those of us with children and no education." This support highlights DAPs' potential to empower rural communities, particularly women and caregivers.

f. Most Needed Services at a DAP

Community members prioritized the following services for DAPs:

- National ID registration and updates: Essential for identification.
- Birth certificate issuance and re-issuance: Critical for education and healthcare.
- Passport applications: Needed for travel but currently inaccessible.
- Driver's license applications: Vital for mobility and economic opportunities.

Isatu Jalloh, a trader, noted,

"Even when you go to hospital, they ask for paper. We need this center to help us get all those things easily."

Hadiatu Jalloh added:

"We want all of it — National ID, birth certificate, passport. If the government helps, our lives will be better."

g. Key Features Required for DAP Usefulness

Community members emphasized the following features for DAP success:

- **Solar power:** To address frequent outages and lack of electricity.
- Improved road access: To ensure physical accessibility, especially during the rainy season.
- **Local-language support**: Trained staff fluent in Krio or Limba to assist low-literacy users.
- **Inclusive facilities:** Shade, water, and seating for mothers and the elderly.
- **Financial support**: Assistance with service fees for low-income residents.

Many Marah, a farmer, stated,

"If there is no light, the machines won't work. If there's no road, we can't come. The government must make everything ready."

Mariama Bah, a housewife, added,

"We also need water and a place to sit. Some of us will come with babies."

6.3.9. Port Loko Interview Details

Institutional Engagement

a. Limited Access to Digital Public Services

Stakeholders reported that while services like the National ID, driver's licenses, and social security (NASSIT) are partially digitized at a national level, they are largely inaccessible in Port Loko due to infrastructural and institutional limitations. Ishmeal Walcott Fofanah, Registrar of the University of Lunsar, explained,

"Many of the government services are very limited in this district. They tell you it's available, but it's either not functioning or the delay is very bad. It's better you go to Freetown… Even for my driver's license, I had to travel to Freetown."

He noted that local processes are routed to Freetown for completion, stating:

> *"You can go to Port Loko to get your information, but they will still take it to Freetown. If you want to change something on your ID card, they refer you to headquarters."*

Mohammed Bangura, Librarian at the Port Loko District Library, added,

"The only one I know that is digital is the National ID — and that's digital from a high level, meaning from Freetown. Here in Port Loko, I'm not sure we are there yet."

This centralization highlights the urgent need for localized DAPs to provide direct access to digital services in the district.

b. Institutional Gaps and Infrastructure Limitations

Poor infrastructure and institutional readiness were identified as major barriers to digital service delivery. Unstable electricity, insufficient staffing, and obsolete equipment severely limit local capacity. Mr. Fofanah stated:

"Electricity is not stable… sometimes it goes for a month without getting it. And of course, the expertise of the individuals to operate this tech is still a lot challenging — some of the people cannot even put on a computer."

He warned that without addressing these issues, DAPs risk failure, noting:

> *"Fixing our infrastructure, qualified staff, light issues and network — these are very vital things that can steer the DAP on a good road… otherwise it will just be a white elephant."*

Mr. Bangura echoed,

"Our internet access here is low, and we have very unstable electricity. I know it's same all over the country, but here is a little worse."

These infrastructure deficits highlight the need for significant investments in power, connectivity, and trained personnel to support DAP implementation.

c. Slow Progress of Decentralization and Digitization

Stakeholders noted that decentralization of digital services remains underdeveloped, with most processes still reliant on Freetown for finalization. Mr. Fofanah explained,

> *"The decentralization process is still in the embryonic stage… Imagine the whole nation pushing information to one headquarters to process — that eats into a lot of time."*

Even when digital processes are initiated, they often revert to paper-based stages, as Mr. Fofanah noted:

"Digitization here is mid-way, not fully. A lot of things start from paper-based, so both systems are still sharing a platform."

This hybrid model and lack of true decentralization emphasize the need for DAPs to provide fully digital, localized access to services.

d. Low Digital Literacy and Public Trust

Low digital literacy and mistrust in digital systems, particularly among older residents, pose significant barriers. Mr. Bangura highlighted:

> *"Most people don't even know what digitization means. We lack the facilities to help us do digital training."*

He added that public trust is weak, stating:

"Many of our oldies would rather sit face-to-face with you than put their entire trust in a system."

This mistrust and lack of digital skills underscore the need for user-friendly interfaces and extensive community education to ensure DAP adoption.

e. Recommendations for DAP Readiness

Stakeholders supported DAPs but stressed the need for foundational improvements:

- Infrastructure investments: Stable power (preferably solar) and reliable internet.
- Staff and citizen training: To build digital skills and confidence.
- Simplified interfaces: To ensure accessibility for low-literacy users.
- Policy commitment to decentralization: To reduce reliance on Freetown.

Mr. Fofanah concluded,

"I personally think that the Digital Access Point is a marvelous idea, but there are prerequisites that can make it more functional."

Community Engagement

a. Limited Awareness and Understanding of Digital Services

Community members exhibited low awareness of digital government services, often equating digitization with the use of computers during registration. Mohammed Sonah, a resident, reflected this confusion, stating,

"What are digital services? I don't have a National ID so I can't tell. Too much money to register."

Samuella Gbembo, a driver, recognized limited digitization, saying:

"Yes? The National ID because they use computer and the driver's license — but National ID is more digital I think."

The broader ecosystem of digital services, such as social security or birth registration, was largely unknown, highlighting the need for robust awareness campaigns to promote DAP services.

b. Mixed Experience with Service Use and Procedural Delays

Community members reported slow and inefficient experiences with digital services, marked by long delays, poor communication, and unstandardized procedures. Ibrahim Fofanah shared:

"I have National ID but it took me two months to get it after I registered. They make you sit and interview you and enter your details into the computer."

Sinneh Kamara, a trader, added,

"Yes, I used it, but the process is very slow."

These delays and inefficiencies discourage engagement, particularly for residents with limited time and resources, emphasizing the need for streamlined DAP processes.

c. Financial and Informal Barriers to Access

Unofficial fees and financial exclusion were significant barriers, with residents reporting demands for informal payments to expedite services. Hawa Ngelanda explained:

"There are so much informal fees if you want things fast in almost all government services. I was charged 300 Leones instead of 145 for my National ID because I didn't have a voter's ID."

Mabinty Bangura, Fatmata Sessay, and Abibatu Kamara echoed concerns about systemic exploitation, with Mabinty noting:

"Even if the president makes it accessible for everyone, they will still get our money to chop because we know nothing about computer. I use my phone only for WhatsApp."

This distrust and financial burden highlight the need for transparent, accountable DAP operations.

d. Low Digital Literacy and Technology Access

While smartphone ownership exists, digital literacy and functional use are limited, with devices primarily used for WhatsApp and entertainment. Mariama Kondeh noted,

"It's not everyone that has smartphones. Those who do use it for WhatsApp — nothing else. Maybe TikTok too."

Osman Kamara added:

"The problem is the data. Too expensive."

High data costs and weak digital skills restrict engagement with e-services, necessitating training and subsidized connectivity for DAP success.

e. Community Interest in Digital Access Points (DAPs)

Community members expressed strong interest in DAPs, particularly if located locally and managed transparently. Mohammed Kondeh stated, "Yes."
Others emphasized conditions for uptake, with Ibrahim Fofanah noting:

"Yes, but the people there must be experts and no bribe."

This cautious optimism reflects the need for competent staffing and ethical management to build trust in DAPs.

f. Priority Services Desired Through DAPs

Community members prioritized the following services for DAPs:

- National ID: For identification and mandatory requirements.
- Passports: For travel but currently inaccessible locally.
- Birth certificates: For education and legal documentation.
- Driver's licenses: For mobility and economic opportunities.
  Mohammed Sonah said,

"If there is one around here, I will use the opportunity to do National ID."
Hawa Ngelanda added:

"National ID, passport, birth certificate. Birth certificate too is frustrating to do sometimes."

g. Infrastructure Requirements for DAP Success

Community members stressed the need for stable electricity and reliable internet to ensure DAP functionality. A group response summarized,

"They all said good internet and light facility."

Without these foundational elements, residents feared DAPs would fail to deliver meaningful improvements, emphasizing the need for infrastructure investments.

6.3.10. Kono District Interview Details

Institutional Engagement

a. **Digital Public Services Availability**

Stakeholders identified the National ID system, managed by the National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA), as the only partially digitized service in Kono District, though it still requires manual form completion and in-person visits. Other services, such as driver's licenses, birth certificates, and land registration, remain entirely paper-based or necessitate travel to Freetown for processing. Thomas Terena, Librarian at Koidu New Sembehun City Library, stated:

"As far as I know, only the National ID service is digital, and even that is limited... birth certificates, or land documents are still paper-based."

The lack of local access to digital services highlights the urgent need for DAPs to bring essential services closer to Kono's residents.

b. Online Accessibility of Services

No government services are accessible online in Kono, forcing even smartphone owners to visit government offices in person, often traveling to Makeni or Freetown. Mr. Terena explained:

"No, none of the services are accessible online here… Even those who have smartphones still have to go in person."

This absence of online access highlights the need for DAPs to provide digital platforms that enable local, self-service access to government services.

c. Extent of Digitization

Digitization efforts are limited to national-level institutions in Freetown, with Kono's services remaining heavily paper-based. Even the National ID process involves manual queuing and form submission. Mr. Terena noted:

"Maybe in Freetown, but not in Kono. The change to digital is not happening at our level yet."

This gap in local digitization emphasizes the need for DAPs to bridge the divide between national systems and Kono's underserved communities.

d. Challenges in Delivering Digital Services

Key obstacles to digital service delivery include unreliable internet, irregular power supply, and lack of integration with national digital platforms. Public facilities like the city library rely on small, costly generators and lack the infrastructure to support digital services. Mr. Terena stated:

"Connectivity is poor. Also, there is no steady electricity… Without proper infrastructure, it's hard to offer digital services."

These challenges necessitate robust infrastructure investments to ensure DAP functionality in Kono.

e. Citizen Support and ICT Capacity

Public facilities, including the library, lack the systems, internet access, and authorized platforms to assist citizens with digital services, though some provide limited help with form-filling or printing. Mr. Terena explained:

"We try to help, but our systems are very limited — we don't have internet."

The absence of formal support systems and low ICT capacity highlight the need for trained staff and equipped facilities at DAPs to support users effectively.

f. Requirements for Integrating DAP Services

Stakeholders proposed the following requirements for successful DAP implementation:

- Reliable internet service: To enable seamless access to digital platforms.
- Stable electricity: Preferably through solar power to address irregular supply.
- Staff training and simplified interfaces: To support low-literacy users.
- Direct access to official platforms: To connect DAPs to national systems.

Mr. Terena emphasized:

"We would need strong internet, stable electricity — maybe solar power — and access to the digital platforms themselves."

Community Engagement

a. Awareness of Digital Services

Approximately 90% of community members were only aware of the National ID service provided by NCRA, with extremely limited knowledge of other digital government services like driver's licenses, birth certificates, or social security. Patrick Sesay, a teacher, noted:

"Some of us know about the National ID… That's the only one many people talk about."

This limited awareness highlights the need for targeted sensitization campaigns to educate Kono's residents about DAP services.

b. Use and Experience of Digital Services

Community members who used the National ID system reported stressful experiences marked by long queues, network-dependent delays, and occasional demands for bribes to expedite processes. Ibrahim Kanu, a trader, stated:

"You can be there the whole day and still come back tomorrow because of network issues."

These inefficiencies, coupled with the need to travel to distant towns, discourage engagement with digital services, highlighting the potential of DAPs to streamline local access.

c. Common Access Challenges

Access to services beyond the National ID is extremely difficult, with birth registration, passports, driver's licenses, and land documents requiring travel to Freetown or Makeni. Thomas Rogers, a trader, explained,

"For things like passport or license, we have to travel to Freetown or Makeni."

These long distances, combined with bureaucratic delays and financial costs, create significant barriers, particularly for rural residents, emphasizing the need for localized DAPs.

d. Device Access and Internet Use

While smartphone access is common among youth, usage is largely limited to WhatsApp and Facebook due to poor digital literacy and unreliable networks. Alfred Kamanda, a youth volunteer, noted:

"Most people don't know how to use phones for services… The internet doesn't work well here. Bad network."

This restricted digital engagement highlights the need for training and improved connectivity to enable DAP usage.

e. Interest in DAPs

Nearly all community members expressed strong enthusiasm for DAPs, viewing them as a solution to reduce travel, financial stress, and bureaucratic delays. Thomas Rogers stated,

"That's exactly what we want… It would help us avoid all this stress."
This widespread support highlights DAPs' potential to transform service access in Kono.

f. Desired Services at DAPs

Community members prioritized the following services for DAPs:

- National ID and voter cards: For identification and civic participation.
- Birth certificates and age declarations: Critical for education and legal documentation.
- Passport processing: For travel but currently inaccessible locally.
- School forms and pension applications: For education and financial security.
- Support for farmers and small business owners: To facilitate economic opportunities.

Sheku Bockarie, a teacher, emphasized,

"We want help for things like birth certificates and school forms — even voter registration."

g. Needed Support Features

Community members outlined key features for DAP effectiveness:

- Stable electricity: Preferably solar to address irregular supply.
- Trained staff: To assist with form completion, especially for low-literacy users.
- Community training: In local languages like Kono or Krio to build digital skills.
- Reliable internet: To ensure seamless access to services.

Edward Fornah stated,

> *"We need electricity, staff that can guide people who can't read, and training in Kono or Krio."*

6.3.11. Kailahun District Interview Details

Institutional Engagement

a. Availability of Digital Public Services

The only digital government service reliably accessible in Kailahun District is the National ID registration, managed by the National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA), but it is limited to the district headquarters town and involves manual processes. Other services, such as driver's licenses, birth and death registration, passports, and land documentation, are primarily paper-based or require travel to Freetown. Mr. Jabbie, District Librarian:

"National ID is done here, but only in the district headquarter town, not in Kailahun district. Passport and other services are partly digital but mostly paper. Even at district headquarters people still prefer to go to Freetown, it's faster."

The limited availability of digital services highlights the urgent need for DAPs to provide local access to essential services across Kailahun.

b. Accessibility of Online Services

No government services in Kailahun are accessible online, requiring citizens to complete transactions in person, often involving long queues and extensive paperwork. Mr. Jabbie explained that the lack of online access forces residents to rely on physical visits, further complicating service delivery in a district with significant logistical challenges.

c. Status of Digitization

Digitization in Kailahun is minimal, with only the National ID process showing partial digital integration at the district headquarters. Other services, including birth registration and passports, remain heavily manual. Mr. Jabbie highlighted that there is no broad shift to digital alternatives, leaving Kailahun's service delivery stuck in outdated, paper-based systems.

d. Challenges to Digital Service Delivery

Key constraints to digital service delivery include:

- Poor internet connectivity: Unstable networks hinder digital processes.
- Inadequate infrastructure: Limited digital tools and facilities, especially outside the district headquarters.
- Unreliable electricity: Dependence on costly standby generators.

Mr. Jabbie stated,

> *"Electricity is a major challenge here, especially for the community. The internet too—it's not stable, and we don't have enough infrastructure."*

These challenges emphasize the need for robust infrastructure investments to enable DAP functionality.

e. Support for Citizens

The library and other institutions in Kailahun lack the resources to provide direct support for digital services, despite having capable staff. Mr. Jabbie noted that staff could assist citizens if services were available and adequately resourced, highlighting the potential for DAPs to leverage existing human capacity with proper infrastructure.

f. ICT Capacity

Kailahun's ICT capacity is severely limited:

- Infrastructure: Some institutions have computers and generators, but power is unreliable.

- Human resources: Staff are capable but underutilized due to the absence of functional digital services.
- Connectivity: Internet access is weak and unreliable, particularly in rural chiefdoms. These deficits underscore the need for targeted upgrades in equipment, power, and connectivity to support DAP implementation.

g. Support Required to Operationalize DAPs

To successfully integrate DAPs, stakeholders recommended:

- Improved internet connectivity: To enable seamless access to digital platforms.
- Stable electricity: Preferably solar power to reduce reliance on generators.
- Expanded ICT infrastructure: Including computers and access to national platforms.
- Full digitization of services: To replace manual processes.
  Mr. Jabbie emphasized that these foundational improvements are critical for DAPs to deliver meaningful services in Kailahun.

Community Engagement

a. Awareness of Digital Services

Most community members were only aware of the National ID service provided by NCRA, with little to no knowledge of other digital services like driver's licenses, birth certificates, or land documentation. Haja Aminata Bangura stated,

> *"We only know about National ID. The rest, we hear about them but we don't see them here."*

This limited awareness highlights the need for robust sensitization campaigns to educate communities about DAP services.

b. Experience with Digital Services

Community members who accessed the National ID service reported slow, frustrating experiences, often requiring multiple visits and travel to Kenema or Freetown. Abdulai Kamara shared:

"I went three times to Freetown to get my ID. It's not possible here."

These challenges, compounded by unclear processes and long queues, discourage engagement with government services, emphasizing the potential of DAPs to streamline local access.

C. Difficulties Accessing Public Services

Key barriers to accessing services include:

- Centralized services: Most services are available only outside the district or in the township, as Alhaji Musa Kallon noted:

"Apart from ID, everything else you must go to Freetown for. That's why many move there."

- Long travel distances: Particularly burdensome for rural chiefdom residents.
- Inconsistent digital processing: Lack of integration between local and national systems.
  These barriers disproportionately affect rural communities, highlighting the need for localized DAPs.

d. Access to Devices and Connectivity

Smartphone access is limited, with basic phones still common, particularly in rural areas. Even among youth with smartphones, usage is restricted to WhatsApp and social media due to poor digital literacy and unreliable internet. Isata Fofanah noted,

"Some youths have smartphones, but the internet doesn't work well here."

High data costs and weak networks further limit digital engagement, necessitating improved connectivity and training for DAP adoption.

e. Demand for a Local Digital Access Point (DAP)

Community members unanimously supported the establishment of a local DAP, viewing it as a solution to reduce travel costs, time away from work, and bureaucratic delays. Sorie Jalloh, a farmer, stated,

"If you have the center here, we can just go and come back and continue our farming."

This strong demand highlights DAPs' potential to enhance accessibility and economic productivity in Kailahun.

f. Priority Services at DAPs

Community members prioritized the following services for DAPs:

- National ID: For identification and civic participation.
- Birth certificates and corrections: For education and legal documentation.
- Driver's licenses: For mobility and economic opportunities.
- Voter registration and age declarations: For civic engagement and administrative needs.

These services reflect critical needs for formal participation in social and economic systems.

g. Support Required for Effective DAP Use

Community members outlined key features for DAP success:

- Stable electricity: Preferably solar to address unreliable power.
- Local-language assistance: Staff fluent in Krio or local dialects to support form-filling.

- Basic digital training: Tailored for adults, farmers, and low-literacy users.
  Mariatu Koroma emphasized:

"We don't know how to use computer. Someone must be there to help explain things to us."

Isata Fofanah added:

"We need people who can help us read the forms. Not all of us can understand English."

6.3.12. Kenema District Interview Details

Institutional Engagement

a. ICT Infrastructure and Institutional Capacity

Stakeholders highlighted severe gaps in ICT infrastructure, particularly at public institutions like the Kenema City Library and Kenema Regional Library. Mr. Dauda Sessay, Librarian at Kenema City Library, explained the absence of an IT section, stating:

"Let me start by telling you that we do not have an IT section at the library. We do not have anybody except myself because I have been using computer before. The only laptop we are using is my personal one."

Despite reliable electricity via a solar system, the library lacks the tools to deliver digital services. Mr. Sessay noted:

"People here know about computers a little, but they do not have the capacity to own one. The computers are expensive, and without them, it's impossible to access digital services."

Mr. Mansaray, District Librarian at Kenema Regional Library, reported slightly better resources, with two computers and a standby generator, but no internet access, stating, "Now we don't have internet, but we are planning to install one. We've got two computers… electricity is better now and we have a standby generator to support operations."
Both librarians rated Kenema's ICT capacity as low, emphasizing the need for significant investments in equipment, connectivity, and training to support DAP implementation.

b. Centralization of Digital Services

Digital public services, including National ID, passports, and driver's licenses, remain heavily centralized in Freetown, with only preliminary data capture and paperwork handled locally in Kenema. Mr. Mansaray explained:

"You go to the NCRA office in Kenema, take the photo, fill forms, and pay… but the card is produced in Freetown. You wait three weeks or a month before it comes back."

Mr. Sessay added:

"You cannot get passport, driver's license, or ID card in Kenema. All are centralized. You have to go to Freetown."

This centralization increases costs and delays for residents, particularly those in rural areas, underscoring the need for decentralized DAPs to provide local access.

c. Demand and Opportunity for Decentralization

Stakeholders expressed strong demand for decentralized digital services, believing that local institutions like libraries could host DAPs with proper support. Mr. Sessay emphasized:

> *"Please let us be very clear here. That will help the system. We are desperate to see the government decentralize these facilities… But first, people must be trained. You cannot give computers without training."*

He proposed a phased approach, starting with community-based ICT training, followed by equipment provision, stating:

"Conduct training for young people who are interested in ICT. After training, capacitate them with computers. It has to start somewhere."

This enthusiasm for decentralization highlights the potential for DAPs to transform service delivery in Kenema, provided infrastructure and training gaps are addressed.

d. Digital Literacy and Affordability Challenges

While mobile phone penetration is moderate and interest in ICT is growing, affordability and low digital literacy remain significant barriers. Many residents own smartphones but cannot afford internet access or services at private cyber cafés. Mr. Mansaray noted,

> *"Private institutions provide digital access, but at a cost. Maybe others cannot afford it. People use smartphones, but not always for accessing government services."*

The presence of higher education institutions like a university and nursing school highlights unmet digital needs, emphasizing the importance of affordable, accessible DAPs to serve students, professionals, and the broader community.

Community Engagement

a. Community Awareness and Use of Digital Services

Awareness of digital government services is moderate, primarily centered around the National ID process managed by NCRA. Lamin Fofanah, a trader, stated:

"Yes, NCRA. I know because I have done my National ID."

However, other services like social security, driver's licenses, and birth registration are less known or unfamiliar. Baindu Kallon, a parent, shared:

"I did my children's birth certificates, but the constraints were too much. You pay more for express service, and even then, the wait is long."

The limited awareness of broader e-services highlights the need for targeted sensitization campaigns to promote DAP adoption.

b. Challenges in Accessing Public Services

Community members identified several barriers to accessing public services:

- **Centralization**: Most services require travel to Freetown, as Elizabeth Susan Conteh noted:

"They tell you there is a center here in Kenema, but if you want it quick, go to Freetown."

- **Delays and bureaucracy**: Slow processes and hybrid workflows hinder efficiency. Mokona Sandi stated:

"We're really straining for everything—ID card, passport, license plate, even birth certificates."

- **Informal fees**: Additional costs for expedited services create financial burdens. Abdulai Dumbuya explained:

"The informal money you have to pay just to speed things up makes it harder for people like us."

These challenges underscore the need for localized, efficient DAPs to reduce costs and delays.

c. Access to Digital Devices and Internet

Smartphone access is moderate, particularly among traders and youth, but usage is limited by high data costs and poor connectivity. Aminata Bangura noted,

"Many people here use smartphones, some use normal phones, but the problem is the cost of data."

The reliance on private cyber cafés for digital access further excludes low-income residents, emphasizing the need for affordable, public DAPs with reliable internet.

d. Community Willingness to Use a DAP

Community members unanimously expressed enthusiasm for DAPs, viewing them as a solution to save time, reduce travel, and alleviate financial stress. A respondent stated:

"Yes, we will love it. That's what we want, to reduce our work and save time."

This strong support highlights DAPs' potential to transform service access in Kenema.

e. Priority Services Desired at a DAP

Community members prioritized the following services for DAPs:

- National ID registration and replacement: For identification and civic participation.
- Passport applications: For travel, currently centralized in Freetown.
- Social security enrollment: For financial security.
- Birth and death registration: For education and legal documentation.
- Health facility licensing: To support healthcare access.
- Reliable internet access: To enable digital engagement.

Alusine Jusu Gbondo emphasized,

"Social Security, National ID, passport and licensing, all of these are needed."

f. Features Needed for an Effective DAP

Community members outlined key features for DAP success:

- User-friendly systems: Accessible to low-literacy users.
- Speed and responsiveness: To ensure efficient service delivery.
- Infrastructure support: Reliable electricity and roads.
- Affordable internet: To enable broad access.

A respondent noted:

"The system must be easy so that everyone can use it—and it must be instant."

Another added:

"Better internet speed, light, and good roads, that's what will make it really work".

6.3.13. Bo District Interview Details

Institutional Engagement

a. Access to Digital Public Services

Stakeholders reported that the National ID system, is the only consistently digitized service in Bo District, though its functionality is limited and processing is centralized in Freetown. Other services, such as driver's licenses, birth certificates, passports, and land registration, are either fully paper-based or partially digital, requiring travel to Freetown or Makeni. Mr. Cecil Roy Campbell, Bo City Librarian, stated:

"The Bo library does not process National ID or any biometric service—we only issue a membership ID for our readers."

Agnes Bernadette Momoh, Librarian at Bo Regional Library, added:

"You have to go to Freetown for biometric services. Even after registration, the ID takes months to come back."

This centralization highlights the urgent need for DAPs to provide localized access to digital services.

b. Online Accessibility of Services

No government services in Bo are fully accessible online, requiring physical presence at offices for application and completion. Even services initiated locally often require travel to Freetown or Makeni for processing. Mr. Campbell noted:

"They may be online, but you still need physical presence in offices for them to be effective."

This lack of end-to-end online functionality highlights the potential of DAPs to enable self-service access and reduce reliance on urban centers.

c. Transition from Paper-Based to Digital

While biometric components exist for some services like National ID, most processes remain manual, with physical documents issued for birth certificates, passports, and driver's licenses. Mr. Campbell explained:

"We still have physical copies for everything — birth certificate, passport, ID, even driver's license."

The slow transition to digital systems emphasizes the need for DAPs to bridge the gap between paper-based and fully digital processes.

d. Challenges in Providing Digital Services

Key obstacles to digital service delivery include unreliable internet, inconsistent electricity, and low institutional capacity. Public facilities like libraries lack access to government digital portals and rely on generators. Mr. Campbell stated:

"The internet is poor. We rely on a generator, and we don't have access to any government digital portals."

These challenges necessitate robust infrastructure investments to ensure DAP functionality in Bo.

d. Institutional ICT Capacity

While some staff have basic computer knowledge, Bo's institutions face power fluctuations and inadequate ICT infrastructure. Departments operate in silos, lacking coordinated digital integration. Mr. Campbell noted:

"ICT is growing — we're not there yet. Power is fairly stable, but we need better infrastructure."

This limited capacity highlights the need for enhanced equipment, connectivity, and training to support DAP implementation.

e. Support Needed for DAP Implementation

Stakeholders recommended the following for successful DAP integration:

- Stable internet: To enable seamless access to digital platforms.
- Solar or backup electricity: To address power fluctuations.
- Staff training: To build capacity for digital service delivery.
- Access to government platforms: To connect DAPs to national systems.
  Mr. Campbell emphasized:

"The DAP project will definitely improve capacity building, but we need reliable infrastructure to support it."

Community Engagement

a. Awareness of Digital Services

Approximately 75% of community members were aware of at least one digital government service, primarily the National ID process managed by NCRA. However, understanding of other services, such as passports, driver's licenses, and land registration, was limited, with confusion between computerized data entry and true online functionality. Edward Mansaray, a commercial bike rider, stated:

"Yes, of course we are aware of National ID and driver's license. But for things like land registration and passports, we don't really know if they're digital or not."

Alfred Fornah, a teacher, added:

"Digital is supposed to mean fast and easy, but that's not what we see here. Some services say they are digital but you still have to fill out forms and go to Freetown."

This limited awareness highlights the need for targeted sensitization campaigns to promote DAP services.

b. Use of Public Services

About 70% of respondents had interacted with services like National ID or driver's licenses, but described the processes as slow, frustrating, and often requiring travel to Freetown or Makeni. Theresa Mansaray, a trader, shared:

"I applied for my national ID card but had to wait months. I did my driver's license in Freetown because Bo was just too slow."

Ernest Samura, another trader, noted:

"People start the process here, but to finish anything, especially biometric documents, you have to travel to the city."

These experiences highlight the need for localized DAPs to streamline service delivery.

c. Common Challenges

Community members identified several barriers to accessing services:

- Long wait times: Due to limited office capacity and slow processing.
- Centralization: Requiring travel to Freetown or Makeni for completion.
- Poor infrastructure: Unreliable internet and power disruptions.
- High costs: Travel expenses and informal fees.

Mariatu Bockarie, a nurse, stated:

"We don't have the machines or staff to handle many people. That's why it's always slow."

Anita Sillah, a trader, added:

"For my child's birth certificate, I had to travel to Freetown. It's not easy and very expensive."

d. Access to Smartphones and Internet

Approximately 60% of respondents owned smartphones, but usage was primarily for WhatsApp, Facebook, and TikTok, not public services, due to costly data, unstable networks, and low digital literacy. Memunatu Conteh, a student, noted:

"I use my smartphone, but mostly for TikTok and calls. The internet is slow and expensive for other things."

Alfred Kamanda, a youth volunteer, added:

"Young people have phones, but we don't know how to use them for government forms."

These limitations emphasize the need for affordable connectivity and digital training for DAP adoption.

e. Willingness to Use DAPs

Community members expressed near-unanimous enthusiasm for DAPs, viewing them as a solution to reduce stress, travel costs, and delays. Ernest Samura stated:

"DAPs would ease the stress. People will use it for sure."

Kadiatu Kabia, a resident, added:

"If it's nearby and has staff to help us, it will be a big help. Everyone would use it."

This strong support highlights DAPs' potential to enhance accessibility in Bo.

f. High-Demand Services

Community members prioritized the following services for DAPs:

- National ID enrollment and correction: For identification and civic participation.
- Driver's license applications: For mobility and employment.
- Passport processing: For travel, currently centralized.
- Birth certificates: For education and legal documentation.
- School forms and age declarations: For administrative needs.

Abdul Kamanda, a trader, noted,

"We need passport help, license processing, and birth certificates. ID is common now, but the rest is still hard."

Joseph Marrah, a bike rider, added,

"I've tried to get my ID for a while. If a center comes here, I'll finally do it."

Support Needs for Effective DAP Use

g. Community members emphasized the following for DAP success:

- Reliable internet: To enable seamless access.
- Simplified interfaces: With form-filling support for low-literacy users.
- Trained staff: Fluent in Krio and Mende to assist residents.
- Local training sessions: To build digital literacy.

Morlai Kamara, a resident, stated,

"Internet is the main problem. Even if we have smartphones, without internet we can't do anything."

Abubakarr Jalloh, a commercial bike rider, added:

"We don't know much about computers. If you bring DAPs, also train people like us to use them."

6.3.14. Moyamba District Interview Details

Stakeholder Engagement

a. Current Digital Public Services

Stakeholders reported that while residents are aware of several government services, most are accessed through manual, paper-based methods, with only the National ID system being

partially digitized. Even this service often requires travel to Bo or Freetown for completion. Cecil Bryma, Librarian at the Moyamba District Library, explained,

"They are aware of the services through communication, but they are not using them in digital ways."

He added that infrastructure limitations prevent residents from accessing digital services, despite their willingness to adopt them if available. This highlights the urgent need for DAPs to provide localized digital access in Moyamba.

b. Institutional Capacity

Public institutions in Moyamba face significant challenges due to unreliable internet and inadequate ICT infrastructure. While there is moderate digital awareness among the population, the lack of functional equipment and connectivity hinders service delivery. Mr. Bryma noted:

"We need internet in the district. That is what we lack."

Power fluctuations further disrupt operations, with many facilities unable to support consistent digital services, emphasizing the need for infrastructure upgrades to enable DAP implementation.

c. Challenges with Digital Service Uptake

Stakeholders identified three primary barriers to digital service uptake:

- Weak infrastructure: Particularly unreliable internet and limited ICT equipment.
- Low digital literacy: Especially in rural communities, where residents lack skills to navigate digital platforms.
- Gap between awareness and access: Awareness of services exists, but practical access is limited by infrastructure deficits.

These challenges, combined with the reliance on smartphones for non-service-related activities, restrict digital engagement, underscoring the need for DAPs to bridge these gaps.

d. Support for the DAP Concept

Stakeholders expressed strong enthusiasm for DAPs, viewing them as a solution to reduce travel to Bo or Freetown for services like business registration, licenses, and birth certificates. They emphasized that DAPs must include reliable internet, community training, and dedicated support staff to guide users, particularly those with low digital literacy. Mr. Bryma's support highlights the potential for DAPs to transform service delivery, provided foundational infrastructure and training needs are met.

Community Engagement

a. Community Perspectives

Community interviews included a diverse group from Moyamba town and surrounding villages, representing bike riders, teachers, traders, tailors, youth leaders, students, and construction workers. Residents expressed frustration with the need to travel to Bo or

Freetown for administrative tasks, citing high costs, long wait times, and bureaucratic inefficiencies. Despite low engagement with digital platforms, there was strong optimism for DAPs, seen as a way to bring services closer to home, save time, and reduce financial burdens, particularly for women and rural residents.

b. Awareness of Services

Most respondents were aware of the National ID system, with some knowledge of passports and driver's licenses, but broader understanding of digital public services like NASSIT registration, birth certificates, or business licensing was limited. John Kposowa, a bike rider, stated:

"We know about the National ID card. That's the main one people talk about. The rest, we just hear about."

Fatmata Conteh, a trader, added:

"Some people know of driver's license and passport services, but they're not sure how digital they are."

Alimamy Sesay, a teacher, noted:

"There's talk of digital services, but they're not common here. I hear digital a lot but don't think it is well here."

This limited awareness highlights the need for sensitization campaigns to promote DAP services.

c. Service Use and Priorities

Few respondents had used digital government services, with the National ID being the most common, though experiences were marked by delays, long travel, and inefficiencies. Isatu Kallon, a petty trader, shared:

"I tried to get my National ID but had to go to Bo. The line was long, and I waited for days. Too much waste of time and money."

Mohamed Jusu, a driver, added:

"I applied for my driver's license in Freetown because Moyamba doesn't handle that properly."

Sia Fornah, a hairdresser, noted:

"I've only managed to do the NCRA ID – the process was slow."

Community members prioritized the following services for DAPs:

- National ID and birth certificates: For identification and education.
- Driver's licenses and passports: For mobility and travel.

- Business registration: For economic opportunities.
- NASSIT and school forms: For financial security and administrative needs.

Susan Kamanda, a tailor, emphasized,

"Many women like me would use it for birth certificates and business forms."

George Bangura, a youth leader, added:

"Definitely. If it's in town, people will go there every day. It will save people plenty wahala."

d. Barriers to Digital Uptake

Community members identified several systemic barriers:

- Inconsistent device access: While youth and students own smartphones, many adults, especially in rural areas, use basic phones without internet capabilities. Zainab Bah, a student, noted,

"*Some students have smartphones, but many just use button phones. We use WhatsApp but not for ID or government things."*

- Unreliable and costly internet: High data costs and poor connectivity limit digital engagement. Adama Tommy, a nursing assistant, stated:

"The cost of data is too high. And when you buy, the connection is bad."

Alhassan Koroma, a carpenter, added:

"Internet is there but it's not reliable. Most people don't use it for government things. They just hear about it."

- Lack of infrastructure and support: Delays and informal payments stem from inadequate equipment. Haja Memunatu, a farmer, remarked,

"Even simple corrections like name changes take so much time. The system is slow and unhelpful."

Peter Gbekie, a construction worker, noted:

"Most of our offices here don't have proper equipment. That's why things delay. Sometimes if you want things quick, you have to pay more money."

- Low digital literacy: Fear of technology and lack of skills hinder adoption. Fatmata Conteh, a trader, stated:

"Training for people like us who don't know computers well would help. If someone is there to explain, more people will use it."

e. Support Needs for Effective DAP Use

Community members emphasized the following for DAP success:

- Reliable internet and electricity: To ensure consistent service delivery.
- Local-language support: Staff fluent in Krio to assist low-literacy users.
- Community training: To build digital skills among residents.

John Kposowa, a bike rider, concluded,

"Electricity and internet that works every day. That's important."

6.3.15. Pujehun District Interview Details

Institutional Engagement

a. Current Digital Public Services

Stakeholders reported that digital public services in Pujehun are limited, with biometric registration for National ID cards being the most functional, occasionally supplemented by mobile outreach for birth and death certificates. Other services, such as passports, driver's licenses, and NASSIT registration, are either unavailable locally or require travel to Bo or Freetown. Mohammed Sessay, District Librarian at Pujehun District Library, stated:

"We have biometric registration for National ID and sometimes mobile registration for birth and death certificates. There's some help with NASSIT, but no passport or driver's license services here."

He added that even where online systems exist nationally, low digital literacy and lack of access prevent their use, noting:

"People go to Bo or Freetown for anything official. Even if online options exist, most people here don't know how to use them."

Limited digitization in the health sector, using tablets for forms, shows some progress but is not standardized, highlighting the need for DAPs to expand local access to digital services.

b. Institutional Capacity

Pujehun's institutional ICT infrastructure is severely underdeveloped, with non-functional computers, unreliable power, and no dedicated IT staff. Mr. Sessay explained,

"We have computers at the library, but they are not working. There's no electricity and no IT staff."

He noted that only a few NGOs and health centers with solar power have functional laptops, while schools lack digital resources entirely, stating:

"Only a few NGOs have laptops. Schools have none. Health centers use solar where available."

Ad-hoc efforts to assist with NCRA and NASSIT forms during outreach are inconsistent, underscoring the need for robust infrastructure and trained personnel to support DAP implementation.

c. Digital Service Access Points (DAPs)

Stakeholders strongly supported the DAP concept, emphasizing that a digitally equipped library could serve as a hub if provided with reliable infrastructure. Mr. Sessay recommended,

"We need solar power, laptops, internet, and training. A digital library could serve as the DAP center if properly equipped."

Key requirements include solar energy, functional ICT tools, staff training, and ongoing community sensitization to ensure DAPs are accessible and effective in Pujehun.

Community Engagement

a. Awareness of Digital Services

Community members exhibited limited awareness of digital government services, with most familiar only with the National ID system and some knowledge of NASSIT and passports. Other services, like birth certificates, were poorly understood. Mohamed Bangura stated,

"People talk about ID and NASSIT, but few know how to begin the process."

Isatu Conteh, a market woman, added:

"Some women want birth certificates for their kids but don't know where to go."

This limited awareness highlights the need for targeted sensitization campaigns to promote DAP services.

b. Experience with Accessing Services

While some residents accessed National ID through mobile registration, experiences were often frustrating due to travel costs, delays, and unclear procedures. Hassan Jusu shared:

"I got my ID when NCRA came with laptops two years ago, but for my driver's license, I had to go to Bo and wait weeks."

Fatmata Jabbie added:

"Many women were sent back when they tried getting birth certificates because they didn't have all the documents."

These challenges emphasize the potential of DAPs to streamline local service delivery.

c. Challenges Reported

Community members identified several barriers to accessing services:

- **Long queues and unclear processes**: Isatu Conteh noted:

"We wait in lines, get turned away, and no one explains what to do."

- **High travel costs**: Services like passports require trips to Bo or Freetown. Alhaji Mansaray stated,

  "Transport is expensive, and the internet is poor. Passport processing takes months."

- **Poor internet coverage**: High data costs and unreliable networks limit digital engagement.
  These barriers disproportionately affect women and rural residents, underscoring the need for localized DAPs.

d. Access to Digital Devices

While youth commonly own mobile phones, usage is limited to calls and WhatsApp due to expensive data and poor connectivity. Elderly residents rarely use smartphones, and public digital infrastructure is nearly non-existent. Kadiatu Kamara noted:

"Youth have phones, but data is expensive."

Mohamed Bangura added:

"We don't use phones for services—just for communication."

These limitations highlight the need for affordable, public DAPs with reliable internet.

e. Willingness to Use a DAP Center

Community members expressed strong enthusiasm for a local DAP, viewing it as a solution to reduce travel costs and procedural frustrations. Zainab Koroma stated:

"Absolutely. It would help us register births and renew licenses here in town."

Hassan Jusu emphasized:

"People will use it if there's guidance and it's affordable."

This widespread support underscores DAPs' potential to enhance accessibility in Pujehun.

f. Priority Services Requested

Community members prioritized the following services for DAPs:

- National ID issuance and replacement: For identification and civic participation.
- Birth and death registration: For education and legal documentation.
- Social security (NASSIT): For financial security.
- Driver's license renewal: For mobility.
- Passport application assistance: For travel.
- Job application and online form support: For economic opportunities.

Mohamed Bangura noted:

"We need help with passports and online forms."

Hawa Dumbuya added:

"Birth certificates, NASSIT, and license renewals are also a big need."

g. Features and Support Needed

Community members outlined key features for DAP success:

- Inclusive and affordable access: With user-friendly systems.
- Friendly staff: Fluent in local languages like Krio and Mende to assist low-literacy users.
- Solar power: To address unreliable electricity.
- Form-filling and printing support: To simplify processes.
  Isatu Conteh suggested,

"Friendly staff, solar power, and instructions in our language would help."

Kadiatu Kamara emphasized:

"Form help and affordable internet are key."

6.3.16. Bonthe District Interview Details

Institutional Engagement

a. Limited Digital Services and Infrequent Outreach

Digital public services in Bonthe are nearly non-existent, with only mobile outreach teams occasionally providing biometric National ID registration and birth/death certificate services. Other critical services, such as passports, driver's licenses, and land registration, are entirely unavailable locally. Mr. Abu Bakarr Fofonah, Librarian of Bonthe City Library, stated:

"We had mobile teams for biometric National ID registration and sometimes for birth and death certificates. Other services like passport, land registration, or driver's licenses are completely absent in Bonthe."

This reliance on infrequent outreach and external districts underscores the urgent need for localized DAPs to provide consistent access to essential services.

b. Low Awareness and Poor Connectivity Prevent Online Access

Despite some national services being available online, Bonthe residents cannot access them due to poor internet connectivity and low digital literacy. Mr. Fofonah noted:

> *"There are no services online. Even if there are some services available online, the people here do not know how to access them. Internet access is poor, and digital literacy is very low."*

This lack of access highlights the need for DAPs to provide reliable digital platforms and community education to bridge the digital divide.

c. No Transition Away from Paper-Based Processes

Government offices in Bonthe rely heavily on manual paperwork, with only limited health outreach programs using tablets for digital forms. Mr. Fofonah explained,

"Some health forms are filled digitally during NGO-led health outreaches, but everything else remains paper-based. We still write letters by hand for most official requests."

The absence of digital processes emphasizes the need for DAPs to introduce standardized digital systems in the district.

d. Basic Infrastructure Remains a Barrier

Bonthe's institutional infrastructure is critically underdeveloped, with unreliable electricity and no functional computers in public facilities like the library. Mr. Fofonah stated:

"We don't have reliable electricity. The library has no functional computers, and even if we had internet, people would not know how to use it. There's no IT staff in public offices."

This infrastructure deficit, combined with a lack of technical personnel, necessitates significant investments to support DAP implementation.

e. Absence of Formal Digital Support for Citizens

No formal system exists to assist citizens with digital services, though Mr. Fofonah provides occasional informal help. He noted:

> *"Sometimes I help students fill out online forms if I manage to get network, but that's rare. There's no organized system or public help desk."*

This ad-hoc support underscores the need for structured, staffed DAPs to provide consistent assistance.

f. Institutional Capacity Rated Critically Low

Mr. Fofonah rated Bonthe's institutional ICT capacity at 3 out of 10, citing poor infrastructure in schools and health centers, which rely on limited solar-powered tablets from NGOs. He stated:

"Our infrastructure is very poor. We don't even have a working desktop in the library. Schools in town lack computers, and health centers rely on solar to run one or two tablets given by NGOs."

This low capacity highlights the urgency of equipping institutions for DAP functionality.

g. Readiness Requires Equipment, Training, and Sensitization

To prepare for DAPs, stakeholders recommended:

- Solar power: To address unreliable electricity.
- Laptops and internet: To enable digital access.
- Staff training: To build technical capacity.
- Community sensitization: To raise awareness of digital services.

Mr. Fofonah emphasized,

"We need solar power, laptops, training for staff, reliable internet access, and above all, awareness sessions so the people of Bonthe can learn what digital services actually mean."

Community Engagement

a. Widespread Awareness of National ID but Limited Understanding of Other Services

Most residents were aware of the National ID process, with some familiarity with NASSIT and passports through radio or word of mouth, but lacked understanding of how to access these services. Hawa Koroma stated:

"I've heard of National ID and NASSIT, but I don't know how to apply."

Ibrahim Sannoh added:

"We don't hear about online government things here."

Isata Bendu noted:

"Students talk about online forms but have no access."

This limited awareness underscores the need for robust sensitization campaigns to promote DAP services.

b. Frustration and Disappointment with Service Access Attempts

Residents reported frustrating experiences with services like National ID and birth/death certificates, marked by delays, multiple visits, and incomplete outreach. Foday Musa shared,

"It took me three visits to get mine done when the team came."

Aminata Sesay added:

"My sister went to Bo for a death certificate last year."

Isata Bendu noted:

"Some youth tried to apply for ID cards, but most failed due to poor coordination."

Zainab Jalloh concluded:

"Most people just give up."

These challenges highlight the potential of DAPs to streamline local service delivery.

c. Cost, Confusion, and Physical Barriers Deter Service Access

High transportation costs, poor guidance, and complex procedures deter residents from accessing services. Hawa Koroma stated:

"People complain about delays and being asked to travel to Bo."

Kumba Fofana added:

"Too many steps, and nobody helps you."

Alhaji Conteh noted:

"Even when the teams come, they don't cover everyone."

These barriers, particularly for rural residents, emphasize the need for localized DAPs.

d. Mobile Phones Common, but Digital Literacy is Minimal

While mobile phones are common among youth, usage is limited to WhatsApp and calls due to high data costs and low digital literacy. Foday Musa stated:

"I use WhatsApp only."

Ibrahim Sannoh added:

"I have a phone but no data. We use it for calls only."

Kumba Fofana noted:

"Smartphone, but I don't know how to use it."

Aminata Sesay, an elder, said:

"I don't use a phone. My son helps me with calls."

This limited digital engagement highlights the need for training and affordable connectivity for DAP adoption.

e. Strong Demand for a Local Digital Access Point (DAP)

Community members unanimously supported DAPs, viewing them as a way to reduce travel burdens, enhance fairness, and empower residents, especially women and youth. Hawa Koroma stated:

"Yes, if we had a place close to help us, we would go there."

Zainab Jalloh added:

"People will use it if there is guidance and if it is affordable. It would help the women here a lot."

Mariama Kamara emphasized:

"Yes! This will help youth a lot."

f. High-Priority Services Residents Want at a DAP

Community members prioritized the following services for DAPs:

- National ID registration and replacement: For identification and civic participation.
- Birth and death certificates: For education and legal documentation.
- Driver's licenses and renewals: For mobility.
- Passport application support: For travel.
- NASSIT services: For financial security.
- Scholarship and job application forms: For economic and educational opportunities.

Hawa Koroma noted:

"Birth certificate, ID card, and passport are most needed."

Mohamed Bangura added:

"Help with passport and online forms, like job applications."

Kumba Fofana stated:

"Driver's license and ID."

Alpha Kabia emphasized:

"Exam registration."

g. Residents Want Guidance, Affordability, and Localized Communication

Community members outlined key features for DAP success:

- Trained staff: To provide guidance in local languages like Krio and Mende.
- Affordable access: With low-cost or free services.
- Solar power: To ensure reliable electricity.
- Form-filling and printing support: To assist low-literacy users.

Hawa Koroma suggested:

"We need someone who can guide us and a printer to help with forms."

Isatu Conteh added:

"Friendly staff, solar power, and instructions in our language would help."

Kumba Fofana emphasized:

"Assistance in form filling, and someone who speaks our language."

Mariama Kamara noted:

"Affordable internet, youth-friendly guides."

6.4. Appendix 4 – Selected Pictures from Stakeholder Engagement Activities

Access full documentations here:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1booHhMAsAzi7acfX1QfiKYwcXkZLRtAp

Western Province

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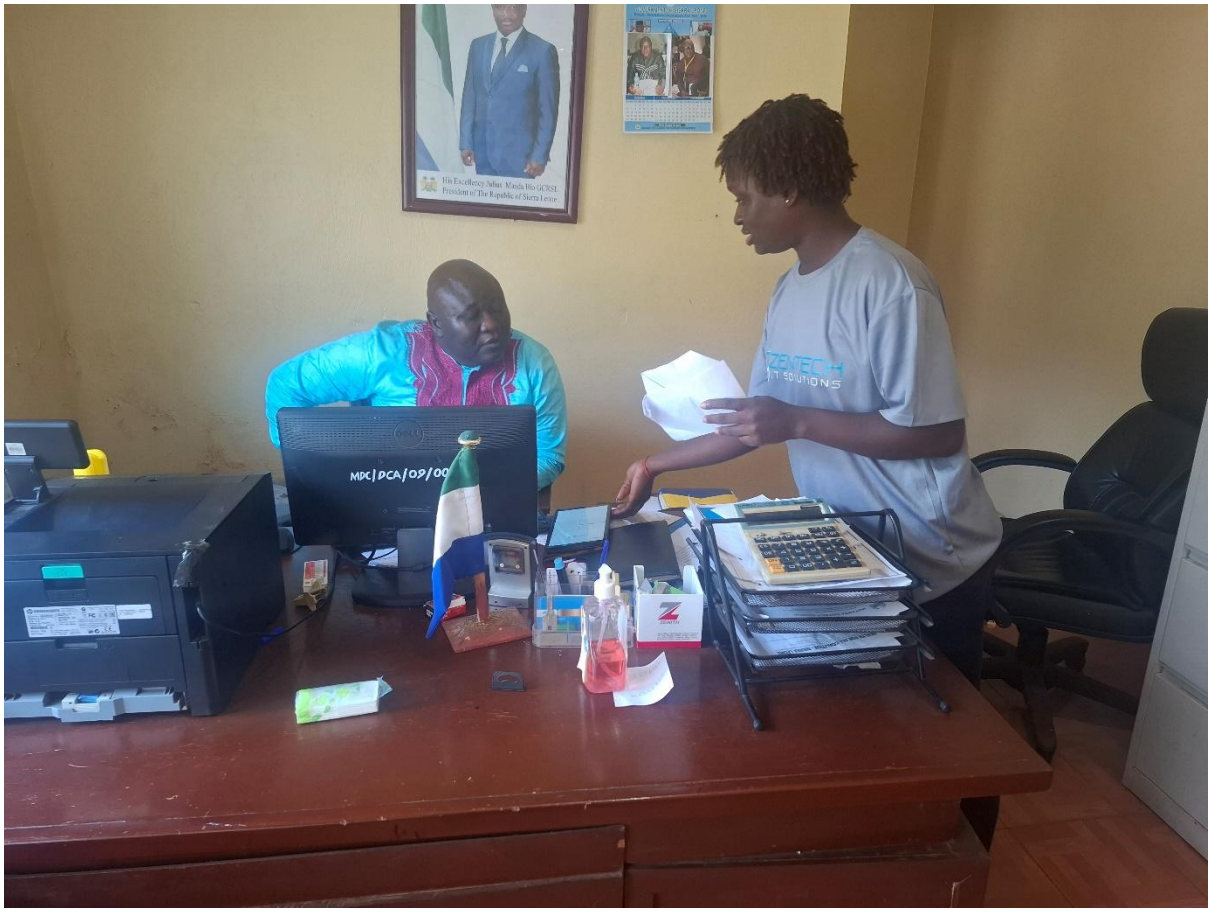
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