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**Beyond Primary Education:
Challenges and Approaches to Expanding Learning Opportunities in Africa**

Parallel Session 4A

**Extending Basic Education,
Expanding Secondary Education:
Governance and Policy Issues**

Extending basic education to include lower secondary education,
while simultaneously addressing the quality imperative
within the context of scarce resources

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**Working Document
DRAFT**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study revolves around the theme ‘**Extending basic education to include lower secondary education, while simultaneously addressing the quality imperative** within the context of scarce resources’.

In addition to a desk review and focused discussions, questionnaires were distributed to a stratified random sample of educationists, managers, teachers, parents and stakeholders to gather information on the *structure* of the school system, the *curriculum* and *quality* of education provided. The summary below follows the research questions, as given in the *Introduction*.

BACKGROUND

Policy shifts

In 1995, The Gambia conducted a mid-term review of the 1988-2003 Education Policy which led to major policy shifts. These included: the restructuring of the school system from 6-3-3-4 to 9-3-4. It was realised that many primary school pupils left school prematurely because secondary school places were not available for them. The six years of schooling they acquired did not equip them sufficiently for them to enter the world of work. In many cases, they helplessly relapsed into illiteracy and increased the rate of unemployment. Enrolments figures were low, especially for girls; hence, the new focus on girls’ education.

Committed to providing nine years of continuous education, Government created three types of schools: lower basic (Grades 1-6), upper basic (Grades 7-9) and Basic cycle schools (Grades 1-9). Like the senior secondary schools, the upper basic and basic cycle school are now run by boards of governors, and are allowed to retain their fees for school development purposes. In addition to restructuring the school system, the policy shifts also led to the restructuring of the Department of State for Education. Directorates were established at headquarters leading to the upgrading of the regional offices to regional directorates. These directorates implement the education programmes and activities that were delineated in the 1996-2003 Education Master Plan and, recently, the 2006-2015 Strategic Plan.

The result of these policy shifts is that the GER has now increased tremendously. It increased from 59% in 1990 to 70% in 1996, and now stands at 92%.

Financial Implications

The provision of education in The Gambia is financed by either Government or the private operators with three types of school ownership: public, grant-aided and private. The grant-aided schools are owned by religious organisations but receive a subvention/grant-in-aid from government. Public schools are fully funded by government, whereas the private schools receive private financing. Government budgetary allocation to the sector is a key indicator of such commitment, but such allocations have fluctuated over the period from as low as 13.2% in 2004 to 21.1% in 2005.

Priority has always been given to basic education, which received an average share of 66% of recurrent expenditure during the period (Revised Education Policy 1988 – 2003). Public schools are fully funded by government, whilst the private schools receive private financing. The Education Strategic Plan 2006-2015 outlines that resource requirement over the policy period and the financing gap.

Growth targets set for each level of education, with the exception of technical and vocational education, have been exceeded. The surge in enrolment requires a corresponding increase in teacher

stock, especially at the upper basic level where specialised subject teachers are required. Instructional materials have a financing gap of above 75% and their inadequacy would have some real negative impact on learning achievements. The Third Education Sector Programme estimated at US \$51.3million had a financing gap of almost 25% by the end of the policy period in 2004. The implementation of the new Education Policy 2004 – 2015 is guided by an Education Sector Strategic Plan 2006 -2015. The overall investment for this ten-year strategic plan is US \$194.6 million, of which 66.2% is investment cost and 33.8% is recurrent cost. Currently, funding acquired so far amounts to 35.9%, thus leaving a gap of 64.1%. This translates to approximately an annual funding gap of \$12.5 million. This clearly demonstrates the challenge posed by resource constraints amidst dwindling donor support despite the international commitment to help developing countries in this endeavour.

Access and Equity

The emphasis on girls' education, special needs education and the differential strategies implemented in favour of disadvantaged and under-served groups attest to the attention given to equity issues. The Gambia has made significant progress in expanding access to basic education, especially in areas that were underserved, thus nearing the achievement of universal basic education as well as equitable access to quality and relevant education. Key among the areas of intervention have been establishment of new schools, rehabilitation of existing facilities, provision of textbooks and instructional materials, teacher recruitment and equitable distribution and supervision of teaching and learning.

Gaps exist at the upper basic and senior secondary level, but successful supportive policies have been developed to ensure access, performance and retention of girls in schools. Thus, currently education is tuition-free for all girls in Regions 3 to 6 and partially free for the remaining girls in public schools up to Grade 12. A Sexual Harassment Education Policy has been designed to address some of the contributory factors identified for the low participation of girls in schools. The result of all these interventions is that gender parity has been attained at the lower basic and basic levels.

As part of its commitment to integrate children with special needs into the education system, Government has made special education an integral part of the basic education programme. In addition, Early Childhood Development and Adult and Non-formal Education are both part of the expanded vision of basic education.

Teacher Education, Deployment and Utilisation

The rapid expansion in the school system and its resultant increase in student numbers called for the intensification of teacher recruitment and a change in the mode of delivery of teacher education and supply. Two sets of qualifications are required for the basic education cycle – the Primary Teacher's Certificate and the Higher Teacher's Certificate (HTC). In addition to in-service training for teachers and the pre-service training at the Gambia College, a B.Ed programme has been introduced for head teachers at the University of The Gambia.

In 2006, the Department of State launched an extensive training programme for school-based mentors who serve as role models and monitor and supervise teacher trainees. To support the teachers, all regional education directorates are divided into clusters. Each cluster has a monitor. The main role of the monitors is to support schools to ensure their proper functioning, to provide the expected level of education to pupils and to improve standards and quality of education. The monitors advise and facilitate access to opportunities for professional development and in-service training at the cluster level.

A Primary Teacher's Certificate (PTC) extension programme, with funding from the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA/FTI) and the Basic Education Support for Poverty Reduction (BESPOR), is being piloted in Region 5 where all the regular unqualified teachers are being trained to the level of PTC. The purpose of the programme is to upgrade the unqualified teachers to qualified status without compromising quality. Hopefully, the programme will be rolled out to other regions.

To match the expansion and reform process, capacity needed to be built for the management of the sector. Accordingly, continuous capacity building exercise have been carried out, and a good number of the sector's managers have been trained in one way or another.

Curricular Reform

The school curriculum has been reviewed, and the course groupings have been structured to include languages, maths, integrated studies, physical and health education, religious education and creative arts and handicrafts. The curriculum review exercises done over the years aimed at making the curriculum more responsive to both national and global needs. It has been made more gender sensitive, and stereotypes and cultural biases have been eliminated. The concern, however, is that while the curriculum is responsive to stakeholder needs, it is overloaded, possibly, due to the intent of accommodating emerging issues and topics.

The reforms instituted by the Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education (DoSBSE) included support and encouragement to the madrassa proprietors to establish the General Secretariat for Islamic/Arabic Education (GSIAE). Through GSIAE, the DoSBSE was able to sign a memorandum of understanding with madrassa proprietors, and as part of implementing the Revised Education Policy (1988 – 2003), a unified syllabus was developed for basic education (Grades 1 – 9). The integration of the madrassa curriculum with the conventional school curriculum contributed in boosting enrolment at the lower basic level and has made it possible for a common curriculum to be delivered in the country by both the madrassas and the conventional schools.

Quality Assurance

The expansion of the school system was fraught with challenges related to quality issues. At the school level, it was considered that quality was compromised through poor classroom practice, low mastery of both mathematics and English and little involvement of the community in the teaching-learning process. Some of the interventions made include: the creation of a cluster monitoring system to provide professional support to teachers; Fast Track Initiative (FTI) funding for adequate supply of teaching and learning materials in lower basic schools; creating incentive packages for teachers; and the organisation of a four-day national conference on quality education.

The terminal examination taken at Grade 6 for selection to senior schools has been phased out. The Grade 9 examination now has a continuous assessment component. As opposed to administering the National Assessment Test to a 5% sample of selected schools, the plan is to test all Grades 3 and 5 pupils to determine competency and mastery levels. Transition from Grade 6 to 7 is automatic, and is pegged at 100%. However, the last 4% of children who fail to demonstrate competence to move from Grade 3 to 4 or from Grade 5 to 6 will repeat that particular grade. Repetition will not exceed three attempts.

A Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) is being written within the context of the expanded vision of basic education. The QAF includes a *School Management Manual* for head teachers and a *School Review Handbook* for school self-review and development planning. A whole school development

programme has been initiated in one region to be rolled out to the remaining regions. The indication is that the commitment to provide quality education is genuine and acknowledged.

The study and findings

102 completed questionnaires were returned by a sample of educationists, managers, teachers, parents and stakeholders on the structure of the school system, the curriculum and quality of education provided. Analyses of the data show that:

1. 79% of the participants in this study (about 69.4% of whom are teachers) prefer the old 6-3-3-4 system to the nine years continuous education being provided now. A plausible implication is that the shortcomings identified with the 9-3-4 system should be addressed urgently and that more stakeholder sensitisation is crucial.
2. 77% of the responses suggest that the reform has resulted in a curriculum that responds to the needs of the Gambian society.
3. 68% suggest that the curriculum prepares students for life both within and outside The Gambia.
4. 54% of the responses on the content of the curriculum suggest that “the curriculum is overloaded.” This has far-reaching implications that need to be investigated further.
5. 63% of the responses from this sample stated that the curriculum “is not well delivered by teachers.” This is cause for concern in relation to teacher performance and, therefore, quality education.
6. According to 64.9% of the responses, there are more genuine attempts over the past 12 years (that is, after the policy shifts in 1995) at providing quality education than before.

Conclusion

The need to broaden basic education to include lower secondary education for the consolidation of basic skills and deepening of the foundations for lifelong learning and advanced training and education principally brought about the recent education policy shifts and reforms. When effectively complemented by efficient monitoring and supervision of schools, increased improvement levels would logically impact positively on the quality of education provided.

A major challenge in broadening basic education has been the lack of teacher capacity both in terms of numbers and quality. The high attrition rate of teachers and absence of a well-structured induction and in-service training has also not helped. The school curriculum has been reviewed to make it more responsive to stakeholder needs, but with concern about overloading it. The madrassa institutions have common syllabuses that have been harmonised with those of the conventional schools. Recent investments and interventions, such as the teacher incentive packages, provision of instructional materials and cluster monitoring arrangements, have made a big and positive impact on the quality of education provided. However, the indication is that although there is a huge potential for the basic education programme to succeed in The Gambia, all stakeholders need to be sensitised and educated further to gain their confidence and to ensure their commitment to, and participation in, the development of the system.

The study was constrained by financial factors and the timeframe within which it had to be conducted. This notwithstanding, the findings made are crucial and need to be investigated further.

INTRODUCTION

This study revolves around the theme ‘Extending basic education to include lower secondary education, while simultaneously addressing the quality imperative within the context of scarce resources’. The questions it seeks to address are:

1. What was the rationale for the policy shifts, and how have these shifts affected the governance of the school system and the education sector as a whole?
2. What were the financial implications, especially as regards needs and sustainability?
3. How did the transformation affect access and equity, particularly in relation to the poor and the rural communities?
4. What were the implications for education and training of teachers, head teachers and other education sector personnel?
5. How did the reform affect the curriculum and skills development, and to what extent is the ensuing curriculum relevant/responsive to the needs of the various stakeholders?
6. What have been the implications for articulation and assessment?

Objectives

Linked to the questions given above, the objectives of this undertaking are basically to:

1. Provide a case study, from the perspective of the ‘expanded vision of basic education, on The Gambia’s experience in ‘expanding’ basic education to include lower secondary education, whilst addressing the quality imperative simultaneously.
2. Share the Gambian model of universal basic education by highlighting best practices within the context of limited resources in a sub-Saharan African country.
3. Provide policy options and strategies for the provision of universal basic education, which includes lower secondary education, for discussion at the 2008 ADEA Biennial.

Methodology

The methodology consisted of working through a national team of researchers who were charged with the task of embarking on the following: desk/literature review; collection, compilation, analyses of and reporting on relevant data; and preparation and finalisation of a comprehensive report.

In addition to focused discussions, questionnaires were distributed to a stratified random sample of educationists, managers, teachers, parents and other stakeholders to gather information on the structure of the school system, the curriculum and quality of education provided. The findings support some of the arguments presented, and the sections of the report are chronologically aligned with the research questions.

Limitations

The period during which the study was conducted did not allow for much participation at school level, as data were gathered during the summer vacation. The timelines set for the whole process also meant working fast, which impacted on the output. Furthermore, the original scope of the study had to be scaled down due to financial constraints.

SECTION ONE: POLICY CONTEXT

This section analyses interventions and strategies such as the re-structuring of the school system, the roles and functions of such structures as the governance and management structures.

The Gambian education system has undergone a number of structural transfigurations and institutional transformations, the most radical of which was precipitated by the 1995 mid-term review of the 1988-2003 National Education Policy.

Propelled by the 1990 Jomtien declaration, The Gambia, like other countries, embarked on a massive expansion of its school system for the universalisation of primary education. The recognition of the immense rates of return that accrue from basic education, and the virtual functional illiterates that many of the school 'leavers' at the primary level were reduced to, necessitated a critical re-thinking of the education system. Therefore, among the decisions taken at the mid-term review was the transformation of the education sector into one that would create greater opportunities for girls at all levels of the system. In addition, it was resolved that the concept of the expanded vision of basic education would be adopted, which implied extending basic education to include lower secondary education and Adult and Non-formal Education.

At the end of the 1988 – 2003 Education Policy period, and in preparation for a successor 2004 – 2015 Education Policy, further consultations were held. These consultations were participatory and included all stakeholders, i.e. the government, non-governmental and civil society organisations, the private sector, faith based organisations, the media, children as well as adults (men and women), the educated and the un-educated, the literate and the non-literate, the urban and the rural populations. In keeping with the aspirations of the broad based consultations and in an attempt to address the MDGs and the six EFA goals articulated in the Dakar Framework for Action (2000) the concept of Basic Education was redefined to include Early Childhood Development and Adult and Non-formal Education.

Prior to the full implementation of the pronouncements of the 1988-2003 Education Policy, formal basic education was conceived to be constitutive of six years of primary schooling (Grades 1 – 6). This was followed by secondary schooling. Thus, The Gambia had a school system structured along the 6-3-3-4 model, that is, sequentially: six years of primary education; three years of lower secondary (Grades 7 – 9); three years of high or senior secondary (Grades 10 – 12) and, finally, four years of university education, which was obtained outside the country. This system was a change from the previous 6-4 or 6-5 system consisting of 4 years of secondary technical schooling or 5 years of high school.

At the terminal point of each segment (cycle) of the formal system, an examination had to be passed for transition to the next level. Hence, the Common Entrance Examination, later renamed the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE), was primarily used as the criterion for determining who would transit from Primary/Grade 6 to Grade 7 of the lower secondary (1988-2003 Education Policy) or to Form 1 of Secondary Technical or Form 1 of High School (1976-1986, policy period). The phasing out of this examination, leading to a 100% transition from the lower basic (primary) level to the upper basic (lower secondary/junior secondary) level, however, generated controversy to the extent that some traditionalists prefer the old system. Amazingly, for instance, 79% of the participants in this study (about 69.4% of whom are teachers) indicated their

preference for the 6-3-3-4 system.¹ The question is whether, or not, this has to do with the abolition of the Grade 6 terminal examination to which many Gambians attach some importance.

Before the introduction of the 1988 – 2003 policy, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the primary level was as low as 46%, whilst the GER at the secondary level was significantly lower due to the limited places available at that level. However, with the expansion that took place at the primary level and the introduction of the middle schools as part of the reforms that came together with the introduction of the 1988 – 2003 Education Policy, between 1990 and 1996 the GER in primary schools increased from 59% to 70%, growing at a rate of 2.4% a year for boys and 4.7% for girl. Moreover the transition rate from primary school to junior secondary school increased from 30% to 72%, compared to the target of 45% for 1996. At the junior level, enrolment grew by 78% over the same period.

In consequence, an offshoot of the mid-term review of the education policy was the consolidation and strengthening of the middle school concept at the lower secondary level as part of The Gambia's Basic Education cycle. In this regard, in the revised 1988-2003 Education Policy, the pronouncement was made that the existing 6-3-3-4 system of formal education would gradually be restructured into a 9-3-4 system.² This meant providing:

- nine years of basic education accessible to all Gambian children;
- three years of secondary education to cater for at least half of the graduates of the Basic cycle and to provide opportunities and more options for in-depth learning of both general and special subjects, such as Science and Technology (including Computer Technology), Commerce, etc.; and
- a number of programmes, ranging from 2 to 4 years of study at the post-secondary level, to respond to the middle and high-level human resource needs of the country.³

The actualisation of the foregoing policy pronouncements remains one of the cardinal objectives for the provision of education in The Gambia. The result is that three categories of schools now exist: **lower basic schools** (Grades 1 to 6) that feed the **upper basic schools** (Grades 7 to 9) and **basic cycle schools** (Grades 1 to 9). The latter caters for nine years of continuous schooling. These three categories, together, now make it possible to provide nine years of uninterrupted education for all the children, which accounts, for the national 92% GER at the lower basic level. Accordingly, the targeted transition rate of 100% from Grades 1-6 to Grades 7-9 has been achieved.

A major challenge of this innovative turnaround of the system has been to defuse and reconcile, in a sustained manner, the tensions that arise between expansion for access purposes, on one hand, and quality education that embraces performance, relevance, poverty reduction, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, on the other. The PSLCE has been abolished but without some controversy as it is realised that some children fall through the safety net and by the time they reach Grade 7 it is too late to take remedial action. This accounts for the emphasis put on 'quality' in the revised education policy. The Gambian experience in implementing these significant policy shifts makes an interesting case to share and compare with other countries and interested agencies.

It is apparent that the changes effected have brought about perplexing challenges, some of which are still being grappled with. However, whilst some of these challenges have been adequately

¹ Refer to annexed sections on 'structure, curriculum and quality' of basic education in The Gambia.

² 1998 version

³ Source: Revised Education Policy 1988 - 2003

addressed, there is a need to provide more information, through research, to establish the level of impact and success of some of the strategies being implemented; hence the justification for this study.

The roles and functions of the structures

The lower basic schools, as described above, cater for children from Grades 1 to 6 (aged 7-12) and provide the initial six years of education for those who enrol in them. They are stand - alone schools that are strategically located in communities to address the geographic access by students to schools which are situated within a three-kilometre radius to the feeder communities. Since the introduction of formal western education in The Gambia in the early twentieth century by the missionaries and the colonialists mainly as part of the evangelisation process and to prepare the educated to take up employment in government, this form of school was introduced in the country in selected places. Secondary education was limited to the urban areas and the only rural boarding school was opened during the colonial period to cater for the sons of chiefs in preparation for their leadership roles in their respective communities. Girls' access, especially that of Muslim girls, was limited.

After independence in 1965, the Government of The Gambia constructed more primary schools, which also saw an unprecedented expansion after the change of government in 1994. This rapid expansion can mostly be attributed to the fact that many primary schools were located within walking distances from the communities. However, their effectiveness in the provision of basic education was limited to the first six years, albeit the contribution they made in increasing access to education. For better management purposes, provision was made for each of the schools to be headed by a head teacher with support from a deputy head teacher and senior teachers.

In order to cater for the increased number of children coming out of these 'stand-alone' primary schools, similar schools were created at the junior secondary. With similar management structures to those provided for in the primary schools, the 'stand-alone' junior secondary schools were also established in selected places in the country along the same lines, particularly during the period after independence and following the 1994 change of government. Each of these schools had a catchment area of one or more feeder schools to provide the remaining three years of basic education to those children who had their first six years of their basic education in one of the stand-alone primary schools.

The basic cycle school is a model introduced as part of the phasing out of the PSLCE, which focuses on those areas where upper basic education has to be provided as a result of long distances from existing lower basic schools to the nearest 'stand-alone' upper basic schools as well as the insufficient number of feeder schools to warrant the creation of an upper basic school. The diagram on page 9 depicts the structure of the school system at the basic and secondary levels.

Organisational Structure

The Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education is responsible for policy development, management and coordination of education at the basic and secondary levels in The Gambia. The Secretary of State (SOS) is responsible for leadership in the sector and policy oversight. The Permanent Secretary is the chief executive and adviser to the SOS and provides oversight for the activities of the sector. There are two deputy permanent secretaries, one of whom assists the Permanent Secretary in the administrative and financial management functions of the department while the other assists in the coordination of policy implementation at both headquarters and the regions.

There exist two management committees for the effective management and coordination of policy implementation. One is the senior management team (SMT) comprising the directors of the sector, the Permanent Secretary and the two Deputy Permanent Secretaries and is chaired by the SOS.

The second is the coordinating committee meeting (CCM) made up of all the Directors, principal education officers, managers/deputy managers and deputy permanent secretaries to be chaired by the Permanent Secretary. These two committees meet bi-monthly by rotation at each of the six regions.

Directorates

The Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education maintains professional directorates, each of which is headed by a director. The director advises the Permanent Secretary on technical and professional matters relating to the area of expertise and responsibility. These are:

- Planning and budgeting
- Human resource development
- Basic and secondary education
- Standards and quality assurance
- Science, information and communication technology
- Curriculum, research, evaluation, development and in-service training
- Tertiary/higher education and research

Figure I: Structure of the school system

COHORT	LEVEL			DURATION
18 yrs & above	Tertiary and Higher Education			4years
15-18 yrs	Secondary	Secondary		3 years
7-15 yrs (Formal education)	Non-formal Education	Basic Education (Madrassa)	Basic Education (Conventional)	9 years (formal education)
5-6 yrs	ECD			2 years

Regional Education Directorates

Regional education directorates are now headed by Regional Directors, instead of Principal Education Officers as was the practice in the past. They engage in education policy dialogue and take full responsibility for the planning and implementation of educational programmes in the regions. The directors at this level are answerable to the Permanent Secretary pending the handover of the education service to the municipal/area councils within the overall national decentralisation plan. Given the anticipated responsibilities of the regional directorates in relation to the decentralisation process, the directorates continue to be strengthened within the context of government’s decentralisation programme and are expected to be absorbed into the local government structure at the divisional levels. For now, their funding comes from Central Government through the DoBSE headquarters and they implement programmes and spend as indicated in the overall education budget.

Projects Coordination Unit

The Programme and Donor Coordination Unit plays the role of donor mobilisation and co-ordination. The PDCU manages and coordinates the classroom construction programme through a partnership arrangement and undertakes the overall contracts management for the procurement of goods, works and services, arranges for the disbursement and replenishment of funds for project-supported activities, coordination of programme reviews and supervision, facilitates training activities and technical assistance requirements under the external support programme. It provides support for the procurement of all goods and services.

Linkages

The structures highlighted above have established linkages that make it possible to co-ordinate all education programmes without any hitches. The holistic approach to education makes it possible to ensure that there are both horizontal and vertical linkages. Curriculum development is centralised

and as shown in the chapters ahead, Government has influence over what is taught in the schools. Coordination arrangements include both public and non-public schools to ensure that there is uniformity and a clear continuum from the pre-school stage to the end of the nine-year basic education cycle. That all the various basic education programmes are coordinated by structural units within the Directorate of Basic and Secondary Education facilitates the articulation process. Assessment procedures are described in detail in the last chapter on quality.

SECTION TWO: FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Guided by national education policies (1988-2003 and 2004-2015), the Education Sector Public Expenditure Review, the costed Education Master Plan (1996-2003) and Strategic Plan (2006-2015), the chapter looks at the cost implications of the basic education expansion programme. The significance and impact of the strengthened Public/Private Partnership, investment strategies and the re-prioritisation of programmes are explored, among other interventions.

The revised Education Policy 1988 – 2003 was predicated against the background of a high annual population growth rate of approximately 4%, a low literacy level, especially for women, a high dependency ratio with almost half of the population under the age of 15 years, while GDP grew slowly at an average rate of 1.5 per cent over the five year period up to 1995 with per capita GDP declining at a rate of 2.5 per cent over the same period (PER 2006 & MTEF 2006). Recurrent expenditure on education grew at an average rate of 9% between 1990 and 1996, which more than doubled the planned target rate of 4.3%. As a result, growth targets set for each level of education, with the exception of technical and vocational education, were far exceeded. Priority was again given to basic education, which received an average share of 66% of recurrent expenditure during the period (Revised Education Policy 1988 – 2003).

The provision of education in The Gambia is financed by either Government or the private operators with three types of school ownership: public, grant-aided and private. The grant-aided schools are owned by religious organisations but receive a subvention/grant-in-aid from government. Public schools are fully funded by government whereas the private schools receive private financing. Education (tuition and textbooks) at the lower basic level is free but not compulsory, although this is stipulated in the constitution. Fees are paid at the upper basic level, but a number of scholarship and financial packages relieve parent of this burden, especially in relation to female students and boys from poor backgrounds.

It has been observed that whereas households continue to increasingly patronise the private schools system at the lower basic level where cost is relatively low (though free in public schools), a significant number of these children transit to the public and grant-aided schools where cost is highly subsidised by Government through scholarship that include textbooks, examination charges and other levies. This has resulted in the drop by 13% in the number of private upper basic schools as enrolment in these schools has declined by 26% between 1999 and 2005 (PER 2006). With the introduction of basic cycle schools (Grades 1- 9), parents have taken advantage of having their children in one school for nine uninterrupted years before transiting to the senior secondary level. This has reduced potential dropouts from Grade 6 in circumstances where parents cannot find guardians for their wards, especially for girls, thereby aiding enrolment growth at the upper basic level in public schools (see Appendix I, Tables II.1, II.2 and II.3 for enrolment and school growth and for school distribution by type).

The Government of The Gambia remains committed to the attainment of quality basic education for all. Government budgetary allocation to the sector is a key indicator of such commitment, but such allocations have fluctuated over the period from as low as 13.2% in 2004 to 21.1% in 2005. It is observed that sequel to the introduction of the nine years of uninterrupted basic education the sector received a boost in allocation between 2001 and 2002. This was, however, not sustained in 2003 and 2004. It has since picked up again in 2005, thereby restoring confidence in Government's commitment.

Table I: Table showing education's share of government budget (MTEF 2006 & PER 2006)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
20.8%	21.8%	15.4%	13.2%	21.1%

The basic functional components of the recurrent budget are personnel emoluments (including salaries, wages and allowances), transfers (subsidies and/or subventions to institutions and/or households) and goods, and services (materials and operating costs). The bulk of resources to the sector is for personnel emoluments and has accounted for an increase of 68% between 2000 and 2005 (see www.edugambia.gm for details). The growth in the number of public schools both at the lower and upper basic levels has a positive correlation with the number of teachers required, resulting in the surge in personnel emoluments over the period (see Appendix I, Table II.4 for recurrent allocation by function) .

Notwithstanding the huge nominal increase in personnel emoluments between 2000 and 2005, the internal efficiency measures such as the introduction of double shift and multi- grade teaching, the introduction of a flexible school calendar to increase contact hours, and the cluster monitoring system, the share of personnel emoluments has reduced from 64% in 2000 to 61.2%. Goods and services have increased from 10,794,212 to 84,647,235 representing 68.4% whereas transfers declined by 43.7% (Tables II.5 and II.6 at Appendix I show the percentage share of recurrent allocation by function and the percentage change in allocation). However, subsidies to households (scholarships and bursaries) increased substantially by 973.4% over the period, reflecting Government's deliberate targeting of the poor for subsidies (PER 2001 and 2006).

The increased share from 6.6% in 2000 to 29.4% in 2005, for example, of allocations for goods and services (including teaching/learning materials and other operational expenses) demonstrates the importance attached to quality control measures and quality inputs into the basic education system (for details on distribution of allocations to transfers and goods and services, see Appendix I, Table II.7).

The Education Strategic Plan 2006-2015 outlines that resource requirement over the policy period and the financing gap. The investment cost covers civil works, goods and services. The civil works are mainly the construction and rehabilitation of classrooms including furnishing. As of now, works and goods account for 69.2% of the total financing gap.

The surge in enrolment requires a corresponding increase in teacher stock, especially at the upper basic level where specialised subject teachers are required. Instructional materials have a financing gap of above 75% and their inadequacy would have some real negative impact on learning achievements. The Dakar Framework for Action states that "the heart of EFA lies at the country level". It also affirms that 'no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in

their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources.”⁴ The sector has, over the years, demonstrated its commitment to EFA by conducting a Public Expenditure Review (1998) and subsequently reviewed it (the last in 2006), the findings from which exercise informed a revised Education Policy 1988 – 2004 and a Master Plan to guide its implementation thereof. The Third Education Sector Programme estimated at US \$51.3million had a financing gap of almost 25% by the end of the policy period in 2004. The implementation of the new Education Policy 2004 – 2015 is guided by an Education Sector Strategic Plan 2006 -2015. The overall investment for the ten-year strategic plan is US \$194.6 million, of which 66.2% is investment cost and 33.8% is recurrent cost. Currently, funding acquired so far amounts to 35.9%, thus leaving a gap of 64.1%. This translates to approximately an annual funding gap of \$12.5 million (The Gambia ESSP 2006-2015). This clearly demonstrates the challenge posed by resource constraints amidst dwindling donor support despite the international commitment to help developing countries in this endeavour.

Conclusion

There has been a considerable increase in the number of schools at the lower and upper basic levels and a corresponding surge in enrolment and teacher numbers. Notwithstanding Government commitment to education, budgetary allocations have fluctuated and in some instances, declined over the period. With modest economic growth and a rising debt commitment, the gains in enrolment would be seriously undermined or even eroded if domestic resources are not complemented by external resources and, in particular, debt relieve funds. Meanwhile, the continued demand for growth in teacher stocks would further reduce allocations to quality inputs, the bulk of which is donor financed, thus raising further questions on ensuring quality education and its sustainability thereof. Ensuring a balance mix in resource allocations towards increasing access and improving quality could be the key to the sustainability of this bold policy initiative begun about a decade ago.

SECTION THREE: ACCESS AND EQUITY

This chapter looks at issues of access and equity against ‘quality education’ with particular reference to The Gambian 1997 Constitution, the Strategy Paper for the Reduction of Poverty in The Gambia, the EFA Goals and the MDGs. The emphasis on girls’ education, special needs education and the differential strategies implemented in favour of disadvantaged and under-served groups are examined.

The provision of education in The Gambia is informed by a number of instruments and principles, which include the supreme source of law in the country, that is, the 1997 Constitution. This constitution declares that basic education ‘shall be free and compulsory’, although for tangible reasons this is not being enforced. Therefore, education is recognised as a right, and social justice dictates that equal opportunities be created for all citizens of the country, hence the need for the equitable provision of education marked by an equitable distribution of resources. Accordingly, the current education policy (2004-2015) justifiably puts some emphasis on inclusive education.

Some communities in The Gambia are characterised by poverty, which is being addressed from various fronts including education. In view of this, the Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper and such

⁴ The Dakar Framework for Action, UNESCO 2000

instruments as the education policy, the EFA goals and the MDGs inform the provision of education in the country. Thus, the limited resources available in the country call for the prioritisation of interventions in addition to positive discriminatory or compensatory policies, for instance, in favour of disadvantaged groups such as girls and learners with special needs.

The Gambia has made significant progress in expanding access to basic education nearing the achievement of universal basic education. Enrolment levels varied from 100,273 in 1990, to 145,203 in 1995, 198,770 in 2000 and 246,442 in 2005 (DOSBSE EMIS and www.edugambia.gm). The number of primary schools has increased, and expansion of access continues to address the increase in demand. Tables 10 and 11 compare the number of schools in 1999-2000 and 2004-2005, and Table 13 compares the enrollment figures for 1998-99 and 2004-05 by cycle and gender (see Appendix III). The school age population is growing at a rapid rate in the country, and the greatest demand now for school places is in urban and peri-urban areas, though the rural areas still show significant increases in the school-age population. Projections for additional school places are given in Table 12, Appendix III. Completion at the lower basic (primary) level is now at 62 percent, and is expected to increase to 80 percent by 2010 and, subsequently, to 100 percent by 2015. Efficiency gains are targeted through an increase in pupil: teacher ratios to 45:1 at lower basic, and through the use of multi-grade in rural areas and double shifts in urban areas.

Tremendous progress has also been registered in the following areas:

- Equitable access to quality and relevant education
- Ensuring that financial resources available for the education sector which rank top among all sectors of the Government
- Teacher recruitment
- Classroom construction
- Purchase and distribution of textbooks
- Monitoring teaching and learning

However, to cope with the rapid growth of the basic education school-age population, The Gambia has adopted a number of policy reforms and innovations so that universal access to basic education will become a reality. Examples of these reforms are the education policies (1988-2003 and 2004-2015), the Education Master Plan (1998 – 2006) and the Education Sector Strategic Plan (2006 – 2015). All of these have translated into significant improvement in the delivery of education services at the basic level, some of the strategies of which are elaborated below.

Girls' Education

Achieving the EFA goals (1&2) and the education related MDGs goals (goals 2 and 3) depends largely on increasing female enrolment and improving their retention and performance levels. It is also a development fact that the education of girls contributes to poverty reduction as studies indicate that girls with six years of schooling have better health practices, less number of children, practise better nutrition, contribute to environmental sustainability and protect themselves better from HIV/AIDS. The results are even better for girls with secondary education. Thus, investments in girls' education would break the inter-generational cycle of poverty and would also contribute to the realisation of the MDGs.

Cognisant of the immense returns associated with girls' education and the potential it has on overall poverty reduction, the policy focuses on the enrolment, retention and performance of girls in schools. These efforts led to The Gambia attain gender parity at the lower basic level and at the basic cycle level. Gaps, however, exist at the upper basic and senior secondary level.

Supportive policies have been developed to ensure access and retention of girls in schools. The Sexual Harassment Policy is designed to address some of the contributory factors identified for the low participation in schools. These include early pregnancy, fears of parents that their daughters will be violated and consequently their non-enrolment in the first instance or withdrawal for early marriage in the second.

Implications

A major contributory factor for the low participation of girls in education was the cost to the household both in actual and opportunity costs. Poor households have to make choices on who to send to school and in most cases the girls lose out. To increase the proportion of girls from the lower basic to 50% in 2005 (Gender Parity Target) and to 46% at the upper basic level by 2015 from their 2000 levels of 40% and 41% respectively, significant financial resources were needed. Bursaries and scholarships were provided to girls to address their low levels of participation.

A Scholarship Trust Fund for girls was established in 1999 and user fees reduced at the upper and senior secondary levels. The current Girls Education Programme offers free schooling for girls in education regions 3-6. The President's Girls' Empowerment Programme (PEGEP), the Forum for African Women Educationalists – Gambia (FAWEGAM) and the Education for All Campaign Network, through the American Ambassador Girls' Education Programme, also provide scholarships for girls who are not covered by the scheme.

The Girl Friendly School Initiative, now called the Child Friendly School Initiative, is a package of services that provide a safe and supportive learning environment by making available providing inputs such as adequate teaching-learning materials, separate toilet facilities for boys and girls and water.

Teacher Supply

Cognizant of the need to rationalise the supply of teachers equitably across both advantaged and disadvantaged communities, the teacher training programme at the Gambia College was structured in order to train 300 students at the PTC and 300 at the HTC level annually during the period 1998 - 2006. This was based on the target student teacher ratio of 45:1. The training has itself been reformed with two years college based and one year teaching practice at the HTC level, while at the PTC level the training followed one year at the college and two years in school. Despite all these efforts, more than 30% of the teaching force is still unqualified. To this effect, there are strategies to address, which are discussed in the next section.

Taking account of the magnitude of the issue, a PTC Extension Programme with funding from EFA/FTI and BESPOR is being piloted in Region 5 where all the regular unqualified teachers are being trained to the level of PTC. Given the success of the pilot thus far, it is hoped that it will be scaled up and replicated in the other regions, the effects of which can reduce, to a large extent, the growing number of unqualified teachers, particularly in the rural regions.

Teacher Incentive Package

Given that an efficient and effective teacher incentive package may have the potential to curb problems associated with teacher postings and retention, particularly in deprived regions, the sector introduced the 'Hardship Allowance' and the construction of staff quarters as elements of the teacher incentive package for teachers serving in areas designated hardship zones.

Further to the introduction of these facilities, it has been much easier to attract teachers serving in urban settings to take up postings in hardship zones. The effect of this strategy has in no small measure brought about increased retention and equitable distribution of qualified teachers across the rural and urban regions.

Special Needs Education, Early Childhood Development and Adult Education

As part of its commitment to integrate children with special needs into the education system, Government has made special education an integral part of the basic education programme. The Education Policy aims to increase access and opportunities for special learners to maximise their potential for self-development and employment. To this end, three special schools for children with severe cases of the following disabilities have been established in the urban areas: blind; deaf and dumb; and learning difficulties

For less severe case students, mainstreaming is a strategy that is being employed to integrate this category into ordinary basic and secondary schools where substantial training of mainstream teachers has been undertaken in order to equip them with basic skills for handling these cases.

Additionally, support is being provided to cases of deaf and learning difficulties in order to address issues of both access and quality. For example, students with learning difficulties are provided with a mini bus to enhance regular attendance in school while deaf cases benefit from a mobile audiology test facility so that both urban and rural settings are catered for.

Within the framework of the expanded vision of basic education, and cognisant of the fact that universal basic education cannot be realised if Early Childhood Development and Adult and Non-formal Education are left out of the loop, it has to be mentioned, in passing, that both of these are integral aspects of basic education in The Gambia.

Children Missing in Education

One area where the education system has not been able to make inroads is to influence the *dara* system. The *dara* is an informal education system for Muslims. The learners (mostly boys) are sent to the marabout to memorise the Holy Quran and other Islamic teachings. Payment is in kind as learners work on the marabout's farm to pay for their tuition, boarding and lodging. This type of education is traditional and predominant in the rural communities. However, it is now becoming an urban phenomenon. As the marabout in the urban areas does not have a farm the children are sent out to beg in the streets and houses in order to meet the marabout's needs as well as the students' feeding, housing and other necessities.

SECTION FOUR: TEACHER EDUCATION, DEPLOYMENT AND UTILISATION

This chapter now examines (a) approaches to teacher recruitment, education, deployment and utilisation; (b) modes of delivery of educational and training programmes; and (c) relevant complementary sub-systems and mechanisms.

Approaches to Teacher Recruitment, Education, Deployment and Utilisation

One of the key prerequisites for achieving a significant improvement in education service delivery is the availability of an adequate number of well qualified and competent teachers. The Education

Policy 2004 – 2015 has, as one of its main objectives, the provision of high quality basic education for all Gambian children. The Education Sector Strategic Plan 2004 – 2015 maps out strategies for establishing a system that will facilitate the provision of an adequate supply of well-trained teachers.

The rapid expansion in the school system and its resultant increase in student numbers called for a change in mode of delivery of teacher education and supply. The Gambia College, the only institution in the country mandated to train teachers, restructured its teacher education courses from an academic theoretically based programme with some practical teaching modules to a more practically oriented programme. The target was to produce about 600 teachers annually - 300 Primary Teacher's Certificate (PTC) and 300 Higher Teacher's Certificate (HTC) from 1999 as opposed to about 120 in 1997-98 academic year. As Table 2 shows, the result is that from 1999 to 2005, 3413 teachers have been trained.

Table 2: Teachers trained by The Gambia College from 1999 to 2005

Years	Primary Teachers' Certificate		Higher Teachers' Certificate	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
1999-00	231	239	299	297
2000-01	241	240	333	310
2001-02	374	358	332	361
2002-03	403	377	338	321
2003-04	425	171	353	227
2004-05	471	346	353	166
	2145	1731	2008	1682

Two sets of qualifications are required for the basic education cycle. The Primary Teacher's Certificate involves three years of training, one year based at college for the theoretical aspects of the programme and two years in school-based teaching practice programme supported by termly assignments through distance learning coupled with short (face to face) lecture sessions in between. For the Higher Teacher's Certificate (HTC) which qualifies teachers to teach in Grades 7-9 the training has itself been reformed with two years college based and one year teaching practice. The intention was to cut down the number of years spent in College and to have teachers with some level of training and skills available in the schools where they were in short supply.

Deployment

The restructuring of the teacher education programme at Gambia College was based on the need to rationalise the supply of teachers equitably across both advantaged and disadvantaged communities. The increase in the intake of student numbers was based on the target student- teacher ratio of 45:1. These changes notwithstanding, there is still a significant teacher shortage and it is estimated that 6000 teachers will be needed to address the gap by 2015 and more than 30% of the teaching force is still unqualified (ESSP, 2006-2015). A Case Study on the Impact of International Monetary Fund Policies on the Achievement of the Education Millennium Goals in The Gambia puts the figure at 12000. Whatever the figure is this indicates a significant teacher shortage which cannot be easily addressed by the College given its absorptive capacity for the intake of teacher trainees.⁵

⁵ A Case Study on the Impact of International Monetary Fund Policies on the Achievement of the Education Millennium Goals in The Gambia, ActionAid International; The Gambia, July 2006

Taking account of the magnitude of the issue, a PTC Extension Programme with funding from the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA/FTI) and the Basic Education Support for Poverty Reduction (BESPOR) is being piloted in Region 5 where all the regular unqualified teachers are being trained to the level of PTC. The purpose of the programme is to upgrade the unqualified teachers to qualified status without compromising quality. The programme is designed in such a way that trainees are exposed to modern child centred teaching and learning theories during the three years. Adequate opportunity is also provided to these teachers to practise the theory they learn in the schools. Given the success of the pilot thus far, it is hoped that it will be scaled up and replicated in the other regions, the effects of which can reduce, to a large extent, the growing number of unqualified teachers, particularly in the rural regions.

In The Gambia, the deployment of teachers is guided by the Postings Policy which aims at ensuring an equal distribution of qualified teachers across the country's six education regions. A number of constraints have been experienced in persuading teachers, especially female teachers, to take up positions in the remote and hard-to-reach areas. Teachers posted to dispersed rural communities face several hardships characterised by displacement from their communities and families, which is particularly difficult for female teachers; lack of basic social amenities and accommodation as well as inadequate access to information and educational opportunities.

Given that an efficient and effective teacher incentive package may have the potential to curb problems associated with teacher postings and retention, particularly in deprived regions, a hardship allowance has been introduced and staff quarters provided as elements of the teacher incentive package for teachers serving in areas designated hardship zones. Since the introduction of these facilities, it has been much easier to attract teachers serving in urban settings to take up postings in hardship zones. The effect of this strategy has in no small measure brought about increased retention and equitable distribution of qualified teachers across the rural and urban regions.

Teacher Utilisation

Due to the teacher shortage, when teacher trainees are sent to the schools on teaching practice, they are often placed in charge of a full class and have a workload the same as that of the other teachers within the school. In addition to this, they have obligations as trainees to complete course-work and assignments. To enable them to do this, they should be given a reduced number of lessons. This does not happen however, as their services are required full time. In theory when teacher trainees are out for their second and third year teaching practice they should be attached to a qualified teacher; in reality this rarely happens due to the dearth of qualified teachers in the system.⁶ On the college side, lecturers have to visit all trainees in the schools. The task is so daunting that it is impossible to visit more than once, if there is any visit at all for some trainees.

Modes of Delivery of Education and Training Programmes

“The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers.”⁷ The quality of teachers affects students' performance more than anything else; yet studies indicate that most countries do not always attract the best students. The Gambia is no exception. Criteria for entry into the Gambia College are based on academic qualifications and for the HTC include teaching experience as a qualified teacher. The bottleneck at this level is synonymous to getting interested

⁶ Teachers Speak Out, A Policy Research on Teachers' Motivation and Perceptions of Their Profession in The Gambia, Valuing Teacher's Study, VSO 2006

students with the academic standard from secondary school graduates and getting ambitious qualified teachers to move on to the HTC level. Consequently, the number of intakes is not getting any better as per the available places.

Attracting the right calibre of teacher trainees to register on the courses at Gambia College, particularly getting the required number of intakes who satisfy the admission criteria is a major challenge. To address the non-attainment of the eligibility criteria for entrance into the teacher education courses at Gambia College, applicants have to sit an entrance exam for the PTC and for the HTC. They must have four credits in the West African School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), especially in mathematics, science and English language. Most of the trainees do not satisfy these criteria as there is a high failure rate in these subjects in the school leaving examinations. By implication, it is difficult to get teacher trainees to opt for mathematics and science subject combinations for the HTC courses. This is a major problem area in the recruitment drive of teachers for secondary schools. Therefore, recruiting teachers either for direct college entry or from school leavers as untrained teachers to teach in these subject areas is a daunting challenge that calls for urgent action to change the status quo. It is little wonder, therefore, that there is concern that teachers in The Gambian have not been performing as expected (see appendix).

The Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education is in the process of developing new strategies and processes for attracting and screening candidates for the PTC course including replacement of the entrance examination with more effective assessment methods. Lecturers for the Extension Programme are selected and monitored based on performance and the willingness to use learner-centred methods of teaching as they have to work by example. Professional development opportunities of teachers are created as has already been started with the planning sessions, the use of learner-centred methodologies, and the production of teaching and learning aids using locally available materials etc.

Wilmot (2004) posits that the thrust of teacher training must be towards enhanced professional status and responsibility. The establishment of the University led to the introduction of the Bachelor of Education degree courses. Discussions have already begun for the integration process of Gambia College School of Education into the university to map out career paths for teachers. Courses are designed in such a way that one level of qualification and/or experience will contribute towards the attainment of the next level by the exemption of certain course modules or the number of years required to do the course.

Head Teachers

Posting of teacher trainees to schools for the purpose of teaching practice is structured such that trainees are under the stewardship of experienced head teachers and teachers. Teachers need to be supported at every level of their profession because they face numerous challenges as trainees and classroom teachers - whether these have to do with adjusting to a new environment when deployed to a new area, grappling with classroom management, applying new strategies and knowledge,

⁷ What works in education: The lessons according to MCKinsey www.economist.com/PrinterFriendly/cfm?story_id=9980014

professional development or other pertinent issues related to their personal and professional development.

The University has just graduated a number of head teachers trained in school management, a course tailor-made to the needs of the Department and in relation to the School Management Manual, the guide to the new school management vision of the Department. The objective of this training is to get effectively and efficiently managed schools involving the relevant stakeholders for improved learning outcomes.

Relevant complementary sub-systems and mechanisms

As distance education is the other major part of the teacher training programme, easy access to information using information technology such as the internet and from libraries and other data sources is important. An institutional assessment for the Gambia College in 2006 revealed that inadequate teaching and learning resources, library and research facilities, understaffing and inadequate capacity were some of the problems experienced.

Teacher trainees on teaching practice are particularly constrained in accessing materials from the college.

Mentors

Guidance and support for personal and professional growth is paramount in teacher deployment and retention as well as enhanced performance. In 2006 the Department launched an extensive training programme for school-based mentors who serve as role models and monitor and supervise teacher trainees. The mentoring system was piloted in Region 5 and has proven to be very effective despite teething problems that are being addressed to improve it. For the first time both teacher trainees and teachers in the region have some form of organised support at the school level. Using the cascading training method, the mentors were trained by a trained regional team at the cluster level for sustainability. A mentoring guide has been developed and will be used alongside the outline training programme to build on the structure and rolled out to all the regions and schools.

Cluster Monitors

All regional education directorates are divided into clusters and each cluster has a monitor. The main role of monitors is to support schools to ensure their proper functioning to provide the expected level of education to pupils to improve standards and quality of education. The system is an effective way of ensuring standards and quality at regional and national levels as well as responding to the capacity-building needs of teachers derived from cluster to regional sources. The monitors advise and facilitate access to opportunities for professional development and in-service training at the cluster level. The largest chunk of monitors' time should be spent in the schools. To facilitate this, they have been provided with motor bicycles to frequently visit the school in their respective clusters.

LESSONS LEARNT

Quality Teachers for Quality Education

Quality education is predicated on the quality of its teachers. The education system needs to get the best teachers and get the best out of the teachers by providing them with adequate professional development opportunities for self-development.

Inadequate school-based support

Autocratic and poor management of some schools can impact negatively on teacher performance and retention. This type of leadership discourages teachers from giving of their best, as they are neither motivated enough to excel nor are they involved in the day-to-day affairs of running the school in their respective capacities. On the other hand, some heads of school lack the necessary experience to manage a school.

Need to restructure training programme

Teacher training requires a good balance of theory and practice. The restructured teacher education programme at the Gambia College does not lend itself easily to this balance. The period between theory and practice is too wide and the blend of theory and practice that allows students to practise what they learn in theory is not well balanced for students to experiment and hone their teaching skills. Since teacher trainees spend quite a considerable chunk of their time as students in schools, the need for proper and effective support systems at that level cannot be overemphasized.

SECTION FIVE: CURRICULA REFORM

This section considers how the reform affects the curriculum and skills development, and examines the extent to which the ensuing curriculum is made relevant/responsive to the needs of the various stakeholders.

Curricula Review

The current policy shift and direction signal the need to correspondingly make the curriculum at all levels reflective of national priorities as well as the learning needs of students. This study suggests that the curriculum for the basic cycle was, and still is, overstretched, hence the demand on more coverage and effective teacher utility. The review of the curriculum over the years was also precipitated by the limitations and shortfalls in its design, in that pedagogy leaned more on teacher-centred than child-centred approaches, and learning materials were full of gender stereotypes and cultural biases. The new focus, therefore, called for intensive teacher training programmes with emphasis on new and appropriate pedagogies and assessment techniques. At the senior secondary level, teaching and learning are dictated by the examination syllabus of the West African Examinations Council, which inevitably may not adequately meet the desired learning outcomes.

Curriculum Revision

One of the prominent features of the expansion strategy was the re-visiting of the whole quality and relevance issue in education. Using the panel system, efforts have been made to revise the curriculum with a view to addressing concerns raised in the review process. The idea was to make the Basic cycle (Grades 1 – 9) curriculum more relevant to meet the needs of students in particular and the nation as a whole. The teaching syllabuses have been structured to prescribe the benchmarks for the national standards tests, to reflect more integration and a bias-free curriculum,

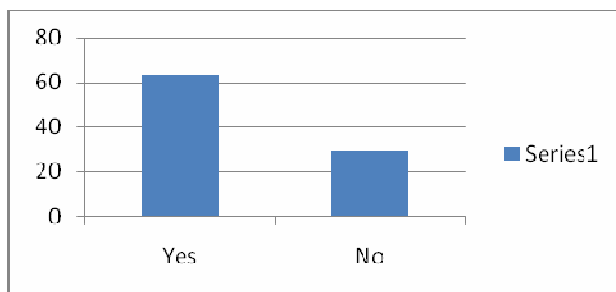
to be more child-centred and to inform the design of the examination syllabuses as well as the development of appropriate teaching/learning materials that are responsive to student learning needs.

The teachers' guides have been reoriented, and for the purpose of the desired relevance, the core curriculum has been redefined to cover literacy, numeracy, the arts, life and communication skills, and problem-solving in the context of a healthy lifestyle. The new curriculum depicts more integrated approaches to learning based on children's own experiences. The use of the thematic approach in lesson presentations relating to children's daily lives is now the recommended mode of delivery. Serious efforts have been made to remove stereotyping and cultural bias from all learning materials.

The course groupings have been structured to include languages; maths; Integrated Studies; Physical and Health Education, religious education and Creative Arts and Handicrafts. As indicated by the findings of this study, the reform has resulted in a curriculum that prepares students for life within The Gambia and outside (see column chart below and appendix for details).

Figure II: Responses on the relevance of the curriculum

Question: Does the school curriculum prepare students for life in the country and outside?



Towards a United School System of Madrassa and Conventional School Education: Syllabus Synchronisation and Curricula Harmonisation

“Madrassa” is an Arabic word, which means a school. In The Gambia, it refers to the formal schooling that uses Arabic as a medium of instruction. The system has been in operation for many years in the country and runs parallel to the formal school system. The 6-3-3 madrassa school system is generally operated by individuals and missions as a response to public demand for Islamic education. Some of the madrassas have a comprehensive setup running from primary to secondary. The integration of the madrassa to the formal school system has contributed to the increase of the Gross Enrolment Ratio. The new reform synchronised the madrassa curriculum, which was based on different syllabuses and textbooks from various Arabic countries, thus providing no clear curricular direction.

The reforms instituted by Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education included support and encouragement to the madrassa proprietors to establish the General Secretariat for Islamic/Arabic Education (GSIAE). This contributed a major step towards providing access to quality and relevant education madrassa. Through the GSIAE Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education was able to sign a memorandum of understanding with madrassa proprietors and as part of implementing the Revised Education Policy (1988 – 2003), a unified syllabus has

been developed for basic education (Grades 1 – 9) in the following subjects: Islamic Studies, Arabic Language, English Language, Mathematics, Science and Health and Social and Environmental Studies.

INTERVENTIONS

- Provision of space for Gambian writers to produce books for use in madrassas.
- Development of a unified curriculum for all madrassas.
- Harmonisation of the madrassa curriculum with that of the conventional schools.
- Teaching English language as a compulsory subject in the madrassas.
- Provision of training opportunities for Arabic/Islamic teachers.
- Support (subvention) from government.

The interventions were meant to support the policy shift in extending basic education irrespective of the learning institutions and to have students in madrassas access formal education in conventional senior secondary schools.

National Languages

The policy on national languages required research to identify the instruments and basis for the development of materials and the training of teachers prior to the piloting of the scheme. A further study was required to revise the content of the materials, methodologies and training to support the thinking for the introduction of the policy. A three-year trial phase was meant to inform the decision on extending the programme but inadequate staffing at the Directorate militated against the intentions.

However, based on research findings (ADEA, 2003) about the usefulness of the national language a policy decision is being implemented that proposes that the curriculum for Grades 1-3 should include national (area) languages (Mandinka, Wolof, Pular, Jola and Sarahuleh), which should be the media of instruction for Grades 1, 2 and 3; and taught as subjects from Grade 3 onwards (Education Policy 2004 – 2015).

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

The reform has led to the development of a TVET policy and the establishment of the National Training Authority (NTA) by an Act of Parliament in 2002. To enhance the quality and relevance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), the Authority has been given the following mandates: Labour Market Information System (LMIS); standards development; registration and accreditation; and assessment and certification.

The labour market information aspect conducts surveys on the needs of the skills in demand by employers. The data collected provide an input into the labour market information system. The information obtained is used to establish priorities and develop standards on the priority needs identified. The standards development and validation are conducted with full involvement and participation of the training providers (National Training Authority, 2007)

Training providers or institutions are then offered to apply for registration to deliver the training based on agreed standards. The process adapted is gradually increasing the relevance of the skills training to the socio - economic development of the country (National Training Authority, 2006).

Relevance and responsiveness of school curriculum to various stakeholders

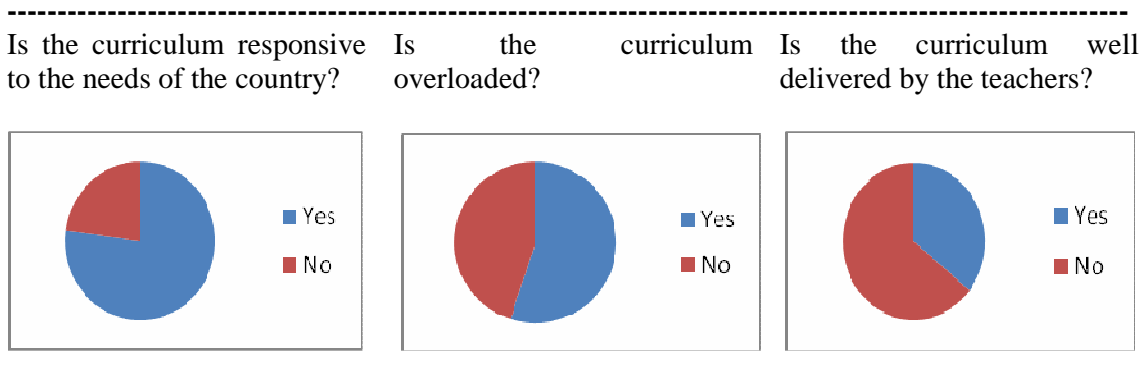
Although the policy intentions supported by structured transformations were meant to have a dramatic shift in handling the curriculum and injecting new approaches in teaching, the methodologies applied continued to lean more on the traditional teacher-centred approach. Perhaps the slow implementation of the reform was due to the inadequacy of support teaching/learning materials, large classes and sometimes inadequate allocated time for teaching.

The recent study on the perceptions concerning the relevance and responsiveness of the curriculum to the needs of the various stakeholders as part of the Survey on the Revision of Grade 7–9 Instructional Materials, conducted by the Directorate of Curriculum Research, Evaluation, Development and In-service Training, shows concern over the inadequate literacy and numeracy skills of graduates from Grade 9. The majority of respondents are of the opinion that children are unable to read or write letters. On the issue of numeracy, even at the upper basic level, children are unable to calculate their change when sent for shopping.

The reaction concerning the adequacy of curriculum content of the four core subjects reveals, for example, that the English language syllabus has not adequately covered the use of punctuation, creative writing skills, phonics, short stories and poetry. It is also concluded that children have a poor foundation of reading as evidenced in the early grade reading assessment conducted in April 2007 (DoSBSE, 2007).

According to the Curriculum Directorate staff, the mathematics syllabus was considered by teachers to be overloaded with Roman numerals, tessellation, sets and line symmetry, trigonometry, etc. The participants in this study, however, believe that the curriculum is generally overloaded. It was also observed by the teacher respondents in a study conducted by this Directorate that the syllabus falls short of bearing definitions of angles, games to reinforce teaching and learning as well as adaptability to the local environment. Similar findings were made for science and social and environmental studies; hence, the need to revamp the syllabus. As indicated by the findings in this study, the reform effected in this area has, generally, been well received. 77% of the responses on the curriculum suggest that the curriculum responds to the needs of Gambian society, and 68% suggest that it prepares students for life both within and outside The Gambia. Regrettably, however, 63% of the same sample stated that the curriculum “is not well delivered by teachers.” This is cause for concern in relation to teacher performance and, therefore, quality education (see appendix for details).

Figure III: Responses on the content and delivery of the school curriculum



Challenges

A major challenge of The Gambia's education reform is the possible gaps between expansion and quality education. There is still growing concern (World Bank Mission Aide Memoir, 2005) over pupils' performance, the relevance of the curriculum and the contribution of education to poverty reduction, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, as evidenced in both the Early Grade Reading Assessment and the Survey of the Review of the Grades 7-9 syllabus.

The challenges envisaged in the current Education Policy 2004 – 2015 provisions for curriculum improvement include the 'review and upgrading of the curricula across basic and secondary levels based on explicit learning objectives upon which assessments will be more reliably based'. Other issues include the need for children to access a set of textbooks and the enhancement of the provision of instructional materials both for conventional and Madrassa system. The envisaged introduction and expansion of computer literacy and ICT education across all the levels and the strengthening of the use of open and distance learning (ODL), educational broadcasting service (EBS) to support the teaching/learning processes are all new visions of the policy.

Way forward

To adequately address the aforementioned problems and challenges, there is a need for capacity building of the (curriculum) directorate which suffered, in the past, from institutional instability in terms of getting an organisational home and staff attrition. The following are some key recommendations.

- To provide technical support, implement capacity building plans to set standards, quality assurance, effective monitoring and evaluation of learning achievements.
- To promote the concept of inclusive education as a main strategy to attain the Education For All goals
- To embark on basic and secondary education curriculum evaluation and reform, taking into account the required skills, knowledge, values, attitudes and competencies for The Gambia's social and economic development
- To develop assessment tools that are flexible, adaptable, inclusive and promote a solid foundation for further education, skills development and lifelong learning.
- To ensure that national education objectives, contents and strategies respond to both national and global challenges.
- To build national capacities for curriculum research, materials development and evaluation of the school curriculum.
- To provide technical, financial and material support for teacher training, the provision of adequate textbooks and learning materials to the madrassa education programme, as envisaged in the Education Policy 2004 – 2015.

Lessons Learnt

- Availability of human resources must complement implementation drives.
- Thorough research must precede piloting of any educational innovation.
- Integrating the madrassas curriculum with the formal conventional curriculum has not adequately provided a level ground for accessing curricula content in the latter.
- That the senior secondary schools curriculum ought not to depend entirely on the exams syllabus as this may likely limit the scope of knowledge access to learners.
- The curriculum is too loaded to an extent that the impact of teaching-learning will take a slow pace.

Best Practices

- The participatory approach and inclusiveness in subject panel reviews.
- The intra-sectoral coordination and the willingness of the Madrassa to positively respond to the policy shift, helped to speed of the reform
- The periodic review of curriculum materials provided opportunities for updates and curriculum reforms.
- Integration of the Madrassa curriculum with the conventional curriculum contributed in boosting enrolment at the lower basic level.
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SECTION SIX: FROM ‘INSPECTION’ TO ‘STANDARDS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE’

The policy shift focusing on the provision of quality education poses challenges to opportunities in extending basic education services to include both lower and secondary education. Due to limited resources, effective monitoring and supervision with professional internal efficiency measures and assessment ought to be given priority.

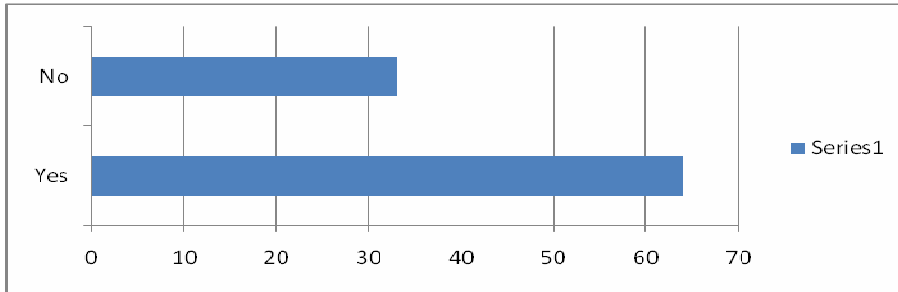
Background and Context

During the period 1988 – 2003, we witnessed a weak performance in the results of the end of the then Grade six and end of Grade nine examinations (WAEC Chief Examiner’s Report, 2000). The school-based internal assessments have made similar revelations as students did not achieve the required grade level competencies (MLA Study, 2000).

A major challenge has been the lack of teacher capacity both in terms of numbers and quality. The high attrition rate of teachers and absence of a well-structured induction and in-service training has also not helped. At the school level, quality is compromised by the poor classroom practice and little involvement of the community in the teaching and learning process. The absence of learner-centred approaches and unfavourable learning environments continue to be a cause for concern. On the contrary, however, notwithstanding intermittent, unsubstantiated allegations of ‘falling standards’ in the school system – for example, through the televised Education Forum - there is evidence to indicate that there are more genuine attempts, in recent times, at providing quality education than in the past (see bar chart below).

Figure IV: Responses on quality inputs

Response to the question: Are there more genuine efforts today to provide quality education in The Gambia than over 12 years ago?



Interventions

The interventions to support the reform include:

- Nationwide in-service training on reading for over 3000 teachers for Grades 1- 3 in order to improve pupils' reading skills.
- Creation of a cluster monitoring system to provide professional support to teachers.
- Introduction of performance management packages to link competencies to job advancement prospects.
- Fast track funding for adequate supply of teaching and learning materials in lower basic schools as well as creating incentive packages for teachers
- Introduction of performance monitoring to give room to stakeholder participation in the monitoring of the learning achievements of pupils.
- Collaborative efforts in the Whole School Development scheme.

Cluster Monitors

The institutionalisation of the cluster monitoring system was meant to support the quality delivery drive. The monitors' roles are to provide professional support and facilitate the exchange of best practices among schools within the cluster. The expected outcome of this is to help improve standards and performance as well as total school improvement. The cluster system provides opportunities to schools to even share resources as a result of the close proximity.

Learning Achievement Targets and National Assessment Tests

By the end of the 1988-2003 policy period Learning Achievement Targets (LATs) were established. These are benchmarks designed to show levels of coverage in the national curriculum based on time-lines. When the Grade 6 examination (selection exams) was phased out and replaced by the nine years of uninterrupted basic education a National Achievement Test (NAT) targeting 25% of Grades 3 and 5 was set up. In the current policy period this has now increased to 100% of the cohorts of Grades 3 and 5 pupils. The tests are conducted by an external examination body – the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) utilising the Learning Achievement Targets (LATs) prepared by. The policy now is that pupils who fail the test and fall within the last 4% bracket nationwide will repeat the work for that year. This is meant to discourage mass promotion at these levels and allow the concerned pupils to be given remedial attention, bringing them to the requisite grade level competence.

By all measures, quality education remains a challenge, with low mastery of both Mathematics and English, as observed in the results of the school leaving examinations. The NAT shows that in all core subjects including mathematics, English and science, a maximum of 10% of Grades 3 and 5

pupils reached the mastery level of 73%. Results from UNESCO's Monitoring Learning Achievements (MLA, 2000) demonstrate that 46% of the pupils reached the passing minimum mark (40%) in the core subjects. The Gambian Basic Education Examination, which is taken at the end of Grade 9, yields similar outcomes.

The 2006-2015 Education Strategic Plan sets a target to project 80% of the students to perform well in all subjects and that a transition rate from Grade 9 to 10 (upper basic to senior secondary) is maintained at a minimum level of at least 50%. In our quest for quality the ESSP aims at ensuring that over 90% of teachers are trained in special needs education and a curriculum designed which is responsive to the socio-economic needs of the country.

Monitoring and Professional Support

Monitoring and supervision during the 1988-2003 period was conducted by the then Inspectorate Division of the Department of State for Education. Staff in the directorate were located at the Headquarters and attempted to provide external monitoring and supervision of schools and at the same time offering advice on the internal monitoring and supervision at the school level to head teachers and senior teachers in charge of blocks.

After the policy shift from 'inspection' to 'Quality Assurance', the monitoring and supervision strategies were reviewed and modified. The idea of cluster monitoring was then conceived. Cluster monitors (in charge of a cluster of eight to twelve schools) are responsible for the external monitoring of schools but also provide advice for internal monitoring in schools. At present these monitors operate solely in the Basic Cycle but it is anticipated that later in the policy period, some form of the cluster monitoring will be extended to the secondary schools.

The weaknesses identified during the monitoring and supervision process are addressed by way of providing in-service training facilitated by regional, cluster and school-based training teams.

National Conference on Quality Education

The strong desire and commitment to address quality issues inherent in the education system necessitated a four-day national conference on quality education at which issues discussed ranged from the management of the education sector to practice at school and classroom levels. The principal output of this conference is a blueprint, which is planned to be validated and disseminated shortly.

Quality Assurance Framework

Following the developments described above in testing and monitoring, the Strategic Plan also directs the development of a Quality Assurance Framework for Education. The Standards and Quality Assurance Directorate (SQAD) is presently developing a Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), which will encompass the monitoring of all elements of the delivery and implementation of basic and secondary education. This framework is being written within the context of the expanded vision of basic education, which in The Gambia's experience includes the lower secondary level.

The Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) being developed will include:

- a revised version of the Cluster Monitors' Manual
- a School Management Manual for head teachers
- a School Review Handbook for school self-review and development planning
- monitoring guidelines and instructions for the Regional Directorates

It is expected that the pedagogical leadership role of heads of schools will be boosted through a structured and continuous leadership training programme. A school management manual for use by head teachers and other senior teachers has been developed.

The Quality Assurance Framework, when operational, will create a tracking and supportive system to assure quality and close all the bottlenecks that currently undermine quality services in the system. This will be a regulatory mechanism for the entire education sector.

The elements of the QAF listed above follow a ‘Whole School Development’ (WSD) model which, under the guidance of BESPOR, is now being introduced to lower basic and basic cycle schools in The Gambia. Whole School Development encourages development planning in schools in six areas as follows:

- leadership and management
- community participation
- teachers’ professional development
- management and delivery of the curriculum
- teaching and learning resources
- learner welfare and the learning environment

Lessons learnt and perceived best practices are as given below.

Lessons Learnt

- Genuine efforts are being made to provide quality education.
- The extension approach provides linkage in knowledge content at various levels.
- Workable interventions are injected in the system to boost quality.

Best Practices

- Strong stakeholder participation in monitoring learning achievements through the participatory performance monitoring.
- Teacher motivational initiatives by way of a Performance Management (PM) system.
- Training teachers on reading skills and techniques.

The policy shift to extend basic education to include lower secondary education was perceived not merely to increase access but also to address equity issues and quality delivery in the education system. The introduction, therefore, of a cluster monitoring system supported by participatory school management and performance strategies signal a new dawn in quality improvement in the system. However, the interventions with all the anticipated positive impact may still have bottlenecks in the absence of sufficient funding to sustain them.

The new innovations injected in the quality delivery drive have stressed the internal school efficiency measures with special focus on the regular assessment of student work performance. Recognition has also been made of the need to boost teacher morale through training and other incentive packages, as these certainly can trigger quality improvements in education delivery. Although the curriculum is extensive, it does provide opportunities for broader knowledge access. This notwithstanding, there is still a need to revisit the curriculum to make it a solid and unified from the basic to the senior levels. While it is evident that much has been invested to improve the quality of education, the only indication available on its impact, currently, is that the students’ results in the national Grade 9 and Grade 12 terminal examinations are gradually improving.

CONCLUSION

The need to broaden basic education to include lower secondary education for the consolidation of basic skills and deepening of the foundations for lifelong learning and advanced training and education principally brought about the recent education policy shifts and reforms in The Gambia. It was observed at the primary level that there was little evidence of literacy and numeracy development, and many children were not only engaged in rote learning or ‘imbibing knowledge’, but also left school after barely six years of formal schooling. It is important for children who are expected to move out to the world of work to be able to do something more than acquire only primary education. Therefore, the ultimate goal of education in The Gambia is, among other things, to produce high performing students capable, on graduation, of applying competencies to develop their country, their communities and themselves in all relevant aspects. A combination of existing opportunities makes this possible.

Government investment, FTI funding and other external support provide opportunity, for example, to offset the substantial financial imbalances that undermined the implementation of key education programmes in the past. Whilst multi-grade teaching, the double-shift and the cluster-based monitoring systems require improvement, they provide space for significant, increased internal efficiency within the school system. The Participatory Performance Monitoring system, which has been piloted in two communities, will, hopefully, continue to bolster the participation of parents and other stakeholders within the community in monitoring learning achievements and overall school improvement and school effectiveness interventions.

It is justifiably envisaged that the Performance Management System (PMS) package being introduced to profile competencies for various management levels within the basic and secondary education sub-sector will further enhance better performance that will percolate the entire system. In addition, the Quality Assurance blueprint and the blueprint on quality education are pillars to support the quest for sustained and appreciable quality improvements.

The National Assessment Test has the potential of serving as a catalyst in bringing about positive attitudes to school-work by both teachers and students. When effectively complemented by efficient monitoring and supervision of schools, increased improvement levels would logically impact positively on the quality of education provided. Systems of assessment must, however, combine both summative and formative components in a range of domains, with emphasis on applied learning, in the context of integrated knowledge.

Examination for control and selection, as conducted within the framework of an academic, elitist approach, is not quite helpful in the African context. Rather, it is instructive to blend the academic dimension with socio-political dimensions. Education, with curriculum development and assessment procedures, should seek not to reproduce societal trends or reinforce the stratification of society and, thus, sustain or widen the gap between the better-off and the poor, but should provide experience, skills and competencies for empowerment: empowerment for effective participatory citizenship, self-actualisation, equal opportunities, improved quality of life, economic growth, poverty reduction and upward social mobility. In this respect, based on evidence, there are enormous prospects and potentials for the expanded vision of basic education (leading to the extension of basic education to include lower secondary education), as implemented in The Gambia, to thrive resoundingly.

Conversely, however, it is evident that quality education, no matter how it is conceived, will continue to be elusive, given that it is tied to contexts, conditions and circumstances that are fluid and evolutionary. The implication is that there is some catching-up at all times. This study clearly

suggests that to circumvent overloading school curricula, the desire to develop diversified curricula that are responsive to emerging circumstances and to the needs of all stakeholders and the wider world should be balanced with capacity considerations. Well developed curricula have to be delivered effectively as intended; otherwise, expected results would not be realised. Thus, whilst there may be genuine and appreciable investments and attempts aimed at addressing quality issues, teacher performance stands out as one of the major factors that can either enhance or frustrate the attainment of set outcomes. The study indicates further that reforms need to be appreciated by all stakeholders, if they are to succeed. It is a paradox, as shown by the findings, that there is still a preference for the old 6-3-3-4 system that pushed out (into the world of work) about 40% of ill-equipped primary school pupils over one that provides nine years of basic education (laden with competencies and skills) for all. This underscores the need for thorough and sustained education or sensitisation of all and sundry from the conception phase to the implementation and evaluation stages of any educational reform.

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APPENDIX I: FINANCING EDUCATION IN THE GAMBIA

Table 3: Growth in Enrolment by level 1999 – 2005

Level	1999-00	2002-03	2005-06	% increase 1999-05
Lower Basic	154,664	171,496	182,055	17.71
<i>% increase</i>		10.88	6.16	
Upper Basic	37,831	55,434	63,842	68.76
<i>% increase</i>		46.53	15.17	
Senior Secondary	14,857	17,169	26,600	79.04
Total	207,352	244,156	272,518	31.43
<i>% increase</i>		17.75	11.62	

Table 4: Distribution of Schools by type

	1999-2000	2005-2006	1999-2000	2005-2006
	LBS		UBS	
	No of Schools			
Public & Grant-aided	336	378	56	119
Private	10	24	30	26
<i>% private</i>	3%	6%	35%	18%
	Enrolment			
Public & Grant-aided	152,140	174,811	29,707	57,853
Private	2,524	7,244	8,124	5,989
<i>% private</i>	2%	4%	21%	9%

Table 5: Growth in number of schools and enrolment by type

	1999-2000	2005-2006	1999-2000	2005-2006
	LBS		UBS	
	No of Schools			
Public & Grant-aided	336	378	56	119
<i>% growth</i>		13%		113%
Private	10	24	30	26
<i>% growth</i>		140%		-13%
	Enrolment			
Public & Grant-aided	152,140	174,811	29,707	57,853
<i>% growth</i>		15%		95%
Private	2,524	7,244	8,124	5,989
<i>% growth</i>		187%		-26%

Table 6: Recurrent Allocations by Function

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
	Actual	Approved Estimates	Approved Estimates	Approved Estimates	Estimates	Estimates
Personnel Emoluments	104,997,077	110,526,258	109,499,220	118,597,430	152,009,828	176,372,930
Basic Salary	83,413,951	88,041,630	88,547,920	97,994,300	113,301,979	129,886,216
Unqualified teachers	5,870,956	6,590,220	5,500,000	4,000,000	5,105,150	9,147,575
Double shift allowance	6,937,912	7,488,508	7,000,000	7,000,000	16,299,671	19,231,139
Wages	398,367	500,000	500,000	550,000	15,153,028	16,258,000
Allowances	8,375,891	7,905,900	7,951,300	9,053,130	2,150,000	1,850,000
Transfers	48,250,089	54,895,244	55,856,520	61,596,830	26,255,793	27,184,429
Subsidies/Subventions to Institutions	48,063,289	48,255,244	48,626,520	54,956,830	24,524,221	25,179,389
Grant-in-aid	7,356,358	9,560,365	11,462,570	13,792,740	23,542,321	24,459,389
Subventions	40,706,931	38,694,879	37,163,950	41,164,090	981,900	720,000
Subventions to Households	186,800	6,640,000	7,230,000	6,640,000	1,731,572	2,005,040
Scholarships	186,800	6,400,000	7,090,000	6,500,000	317,500	317,500
Bursaries	-	240,000	140,000	140,000	1,414,072	1,687,540
Goods and services	10,794,212	12,885,600	12,257,930	28,060,500	76,464,819	84,647,235
Teaching Learning Materials	1,565,080	2,089,900	1,505,500	2,413,500	1,095,754	930,216
Supplies	159,320	-	812,000	830,000	3,617,860	4,152,725
Operations & Maintenance	4,762,407	4,180,800	2,207,800	14,667,000	2,855,150	2,987,575
Other goods & services	4,307,405	6,614,900	7,732,630	10,150,000	68,896,055	76,576,719
TOTAL	164,041,378	178,307,102	177,613,670	208,254,760	254,730,440	288,204,594

Table 7: Percentage share of recurrent allocation by function

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
	Actual	Approved Estimates	Approved Estimates	Approved Estimates	Estimates	Estimate
Personnel Emoluments	64.0%	62.0%	61.7%	56.9%	59.7%	61.2%
Transfers	29.4%	30.8%	31.4%	29.6%	10.3%	9.4%
Goods and services	6.6%	7.2%	6.9%	13.5%	30.0%	29.4%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 8: Percentage change in Allocation

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
	Actual	Approved Estimates	Approved Estimates	Approved Estimates	Estimates	Estimate
Personnel Emoluments		5.3%	-0.9%	8.3%	28.2%	16.0%
Transfers		13.8%	1.8%	10.3%	-57.4%	3.5%
Goods and services		19.4%	-4.9%	128.9%	172.5%	10.7%

Table 9: Distribution of allocations to transfers, and goods and services

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
	Actual	Approved Estimates	Approved Estimates	Approved Estimates	Estimates	Estimate
Transfers						
Subsidies/Subventions to Institutions	99.6%	87.9%	87.1%	89.2%	93.4%	92.6%
Subventions to Households	0.4%	12.1%	12.9%	10.8%	6.6%	7.4%
Goods and services						
Teaching Learning Materials & Supplies	16.0%	16.2%	18.9%	11.6%	6.2%	6.0%
Operations & Maintenance	44.1%	32.4%	18.0%	52.3%	3.7%	3.5%
Other goods & services	39.9%	51.3%	63.1%	36.2%	90.1%	90.5%

APPENDIX III: SCHOOL NUMBERS AND ENROLLMENT

Table 10: Number of schools by local government area – 1999-2000

No. of Schools by Local Government Area (LGA) 1999/2000					
Local Gov't Area	Lower Basic	Upper Basic	Basic Cycle	Senior 2nd	Total
1 - Banjul/KMC	36	30	0	16	82
2 - Western Division	75	24	1	7	107
3 - North Bank Division	59	8	8	4	79
4 - Lower River Division	38	4	2	1	45
5 - Central River Division	64	8	6	2	80
6 - Upper River Division	57	7	7	1	72
Total:	329	81	24	31	465

Source: Unpublished Education Abstract EMIS DOSE

Table 11: Number of schools by local government area – 2004-2005

No. of Schools by Local Government Area (LGA) 2004/2005					
Local Gov't Area	Lower Basic	Upper Basic	Basic Cycle	Senior 2nd	Total
1 - Banjul/KMC	45	36	4	23	108
2 - Western Division	66	32	14	13	125
3 - North Bank Division	61	10	14	4	89
4 - Lower River Division	43	4	5	1	53
5 - Central River Division	66	8	16	5	95
6 - Upper River Division	67	7	10	3	87
Total:	348	97	63	49	557

Source: Unpublished Education Abstract EMIS DOSE

Table 12: Additional school places needed, lower and upper basic, by region

(Target of NER of 100% by 2015)

Regions/Divisions	Total additional school places needed by 2015 (covering 2007 – 2015)			Additional classrooms* to build per year			Additional classrooms* to build during project period (2007-2010)		
	Gr. 1-6	Gr. 7-9	Gr. 1-9	Gr. 1-6	Gr. 7-9	Gr. 1-9	Gr. 1-6	Gr. 7-9	Gr. 1-9
Region 1: Greater Banjul (Banjul & KMC)	14,626	18,753	33,379	35	45	81	140	180	324
Region 2: Western	69,788	55,675	125,463	169	134	303	676	536	1,212
Region 3: North Bank	10,511	5,411	15,922	25	13	38	100	52	152
Region 4: Lower River	348	892	1,240	1	2	3	4	8	12
Region 5: Central River	18,660	8,496	27,156	45	21	66	180	84	264
Region 6: Upper River	23,511	8,182	31,693	57	20	77	228	80	308
Total (Nation)	137,445	97,409	234,854	332	235	567	1,328	940	2,268

*using ratio of 45 students per class, using population growth rate projections from 1993-2003 census.

Source: WB mission report, March 2006

Table 13: Enrollment figures: 1998-99 and 2004-05, by cycle and gender

	1998/99	2004/05	Difference
Total lower basic gross enrollment rate (grades 1-6)	73	76	+3
Of which girls' GER	67	79	+12
Of which boys' GER	80	73	-7
Total upper basic gross enrollment rate (grades 7-9)	40	65	+25
Of which girls' GER	32	65	+33

APPENDIX II: SUBJECT DISTRIBUTION IN THE MADRSSAS

Table 14: Subjects taught in the Madrassas and the number of periods allocated, per week, by grade

	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Subjects												
1.	Islamic Studies of which:	7	7	7	10	10	10	11	11	11	16	16	16
	1,1 “Qur'an”	5	5	4	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1,2 “Tawheed”	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1,3 “Tajweed”				1	1	1	1	1	1			
	1,4 “Tafseer”				1	1	1	1	1	1	2	4	2
	1,5 “Figh”	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	4	6
	1,6 “Habit /Usul Hadith”				1	1	1	1	1	1	4	2	2
	1,7 “Sira”				1	1	1	2					
	1.8 Islamic History								2	2	2	2	2
2.	Arabic Language of which	11	11	11	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
	2.1 Arabic (1-3)	4	4	4	2	2	2	2	2	2			
	(“Kira” Grade 4- 6) “Mutala” (Grade 7 – 9)												
	2.2 Arabic Grammar				2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
	2.3 Arabic Writing	2	2	2	1	1	1						
	2.4 Arabic Oral	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1			
	2.5 Arabic Dictation	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	2.6 Arabic “Mahfuzat”	2	2	2	1	1	1						
	2.7 Arabic Literature							2	2	2	2	2	2
	2.8 “Balaka” (Rhetoric)										2	2	2
	2.9 Composition and Speech										1	1	1
3.	Geography							1	1	1	1	1	1
4.	English	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3
5.	Mathematics	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	2	2	2
6.	Science & Health	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1
7.	Social & Environmental Studies	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2			
8.	Physical Education	2	2	2	1	1	1						
	Total no. of periods per week	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31

Source: General Secretariat for Islamic/Arabic Education in The Gambia (2006)

APPENDIX III: FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES ON THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Table 15: Frequency of responses on the structure, curriculum and quality of basic and secondary education in The Gambia.

ISSUE	FREQUENCY
Which of these two school systems is better in your opinion?	
a) Primary school followed by junior secondary and high school or senior secondary school	81
b) Nine years basic education for all followed by Senior Secondary School	21
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	102
Is the school curriculum overloaded?	
Yes	50
No	41
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	91
Does the school curriculum respond to the needs of Gambian society?	
Yes	71
No	21
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	92
Is the school curriculum well delivered by the teachers?	
Yes	35
No	63
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	98
Does the curriculum prepare students for life in and outside The Gambia?	
Yes	63
No	29
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	92
Are there more genuine efforts today to provide quality education in The Gambia than over 12 years ago?	
Yes	66
No	28
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	94
There are more innovative interventions in the education sector now than 12 years ago.	
Yes	64
No	33
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	97