



Gambia

Education for All 2015 National Review

This report was prepared by the relevant national authorities in view of the World Education Forum (Incheon, Republic of Korea, 19-22 May 2015). It was submitted in response to UNESCO's invitation to its Member States to assess progress made since 2000 towards achieving Education for All (EFA).

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The paper can be cited with the following reference: "Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Gambia". For further information, please contact: efa2015reviews@unesco.org



The Gambia National Education For All Review Report



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The Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education in collaboration with the
Gambia National Commission for UNESCO

December 2014

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACE	African Centres of Excellence
ADB	African Development Bank
BADEA	Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa
BFCI	Baby-Friendly Community Initiative
BLP	Basic Literacy Programme
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CCM	Coordinating Committee Meeting
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CFSI	Child-Friendly School Initiative
CSIP	Community Skills Improvement Project
CSR	Country Status Report
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education for All
EFANet	Education for All Campaign Network
ELINL	Early Literacy in National Languages
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
FIOH	Future In Our Hands
GATE	Gambia Association of Teachers of English
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GFSI	Girl Friendly School Initiative
GIR	Gross Intake Rate
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GTTI	Gambia Technical Training Institute
ICT	Information Communication Technology

IDA	International Development Agency
IFLP	Integrated Functional Literacy Project
IDB	Islamic Development Bank
JSDF	Japanese Social Development Fund
LEG	Local Education Group
MoBSE	Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education
MoHERST	Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology
MSWG	Multi-Sectoral Working Group
MTP	Medium Term Plan
NATC	Njawara Agricultural Training Centre
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NTA	National Training Authority
NYSS	National Youth Service Scheme
OFID	OPEC Fund for International Development
PAGE	Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment
PIQSS	Programme for Improved Quality and Standards in Schools
PPPA	Public-Private Partnership Approach
PTC	Primary Teachers certificate
QT	Qualified Teacher
RIFT	Remedial Initiative for Female Teachers
SA	Sahel Alliance
SEGRA	Swedish Early Grade Reading Abilities
SMT	Senior Management Team
SSS	Senior Secondary School
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UBS	Upper Basic School
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WSD	Whole School Development

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Review Team wishes to acknowledge the support of The Gambia National Commission for UNESCO for facilitating the entire process of this National EFA Review. The Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education under the leadership of the Honourable Minister, Fatou Lamin Faye and the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Baboucarr Bouy has demonstrated the necessary leadership in the accomplishment of this task despite the short notice from UNESCO.

The Team is also extremely grateful to the EMIS Consultant, Mr. Basirou Toure and the Systems Analyst, Mr. Alpha Bah of the Planning Directorate at MoBSE for their resourcefulness in providing accurate data for this review. By the same token, the Team wishes to recognize the useful comments provided by Dr. Burama L Jammeh, Director, Curriculum Research, Evaluation and Development Directorate of The Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education and Mr. Matharr Baldeh, National Coordinator, Education for All Campaign Network.

The financial and technical support provided by UNESCO-BREDA, which has indeed enriched the document, is exceedingly recognized and appreciated.

Finally, the Team wishes to register its profound gratitude and thanks to all those partners who have in one way or the other assisted in the drafting and finalization of the National EFA Review Report 2014.

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Executive Summary

This Report is a requirement from UNESCO for countries to undertake a process that establishes progress registered towards Education for All from 2000 to date. It must be borne in mind that the last EFA assessment was conducted in 1999 to show progress from 1990 to 1999 (Jomtiem Declaration). In the same vein, another assessment is required to illustrate the progress made from 2000 to 2014 (Dakar Framework for Action). However, due to limitation in the timeframe, a full blown assessment could not be undertaken, but rather a review process has been done which is informed by a desk review with reference from assessment reports, policy documents, Studies, project appraisal and completion documents as they relate to the six goals of education for all.

It must also be recognized as a limitation that securing accurate data for all the EFA goals for the period under review was indeed a challenge. Hence, for those goals whose data was not available for the entire period, a short time series was used mainly from 2010 to 2014.

At the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000, a framework for action emerged as a major conclusion to guide the implementation of national action plans in order to achieve the following EFA goals:

1. Improve Early Childhood Care and Education
2. Universal Primary Education
3. Gender Parity in Enrolment in Primary and Secondary Education
4. Essential Learning skills for the youth
5. Reducing Illiteracy by 50% by 2015
6. Improvement of Quality Education

In The Gambia, like other countries, the goals were contextualized based on existing policies but at the same time policies had to be fine-tuned and in some cases developed to cater for the challenges to attain the EFA goals. This section of the report summarizes the following:

1. The inextricable linkage between national policies and EFA
2. The progress registered in EFA
3. The interventions and implementation arrangements
4. The prospects beyond 2015

From the review, it is evident that the education policies have been available to support the implementation of educational programmes anchored in EFA. However, the goal on essential learning skills cuts across more than one “government” sector (MoHERST, MoYS, MoBSE, and the private sector) and the sectoral policies on this goal have not been aligned to support each other.

Under ECD, significant progress has been registered in access with the number centres increasing from 265 in 1999 to 1,015 in 2014 with a corresponding enrolment increase from 29,910 to 87,061 registering a similar increase in GER from 17.7% to 41.1%. This is mainly due to the annexation policy requiring the establishment of ECD centres in existing lower basic (primary) schools in deprived communities with zero cost for the beneficiaries. There is evidence that these communities have taken advantage of this opportunity and enrolled their children in the annexed ECD centres. Another dimension that has emerged is the community-based ECD provision for the 0-3 years using the baby-friendly community initiative (BFCI+) which is found to be an effective intervention for early stimulating for learning. The challenge, however, is the quality of the facilitators to deliver the ECD curriculum in a manner that will add value to lower basic school readiness.

With regards to Universal Primary Education, the education sector has realigned its policy to target universal basic education with focus on nine years of uninterrupted basic education rather than 6 years of primary education. The education sector has been able to attract more students into basic education through a variety of interventions based on innovations and political decisions such as the abolition of all forms of levies in public lower and upper basic schools, the donkey cart initiative, madrassah and majalis education programmes. The net effect of these interventions is traced to a surge in the intake and enrolment rates in lower basic which increased from 76.3% in 1999 to 123.8% in 2014 and 71.7% to 97.1% respectively. The basic education programme increases its GER by four percentage points in one year from 84.4% in 2013 to 88.0% in 2014. With the introduction of no fee paying in public basic education, the demand for additional school places will undoubtedly increase and education sector must therefore work towards meeting such demands.

The target for Gender Parity in enrolment has been surpassed in lower basic education with a GPI of 1.04, while the upper basic registers 1.00 and secondary education 0.91. Interventions that delivered progress in this goal include scholarships for girls in upper basic and secondary, separate toilets for girls, the provision of sanitary pads to female students, and the provision of labour-saving devices to mothers' clubs for income generation, the proceeds of which are ploughed back to support the education of their daughters.

In the goal of literacy, remarkable progress has been recorded for the cohort 15-24 years with a reduction of the illiteracy rate by 46% missing the target by only 4 percentage points while the illiteracy rate for the 15+years has been reduced by only 28% missing the target by 22 percentage points. This suggests that a lot more work needs to be concentrated on the latter if adult illiteracy is to be reduced by 50%.

On the acquisition of essential learning skills and the creation of further learning opportunities, the public provision of technical and vocational education and training needs to increase with more than nine public providers in order to cater for the less fortunate population. Community-based TVET provision which targets out-of-school youth must be expanded beyond the North Bank Region and the Njawara Agricultural Training Centre (NATC) model be replicated in the rest of the regions. This center is community owned and financed through a succession of donor projects. The goal is to create self-employment and raise incomes. It offers short-term training to practicing farmers in a series of two-day sessions, six in all for a total of 12 days of training. The center selects 10 villages (out of 350 in the division) and five women per village for the part-time training, which includes "step down training" to enable them to teach others in the village. The aim is to create community gardens for producing lucrative vegetable crops. In terms of opportunities for further learning within the context of continuing education, secondary education has witnessed remarkable progress with a GER increase from 33.9% in 2010 to 41.2% in 2014. Overall, progress has been registered in creating lifelong learning opportunities through the establishment of public secondary schools closer the doorsteps of deprived communities while interventions in TVET require greater harmonization of sectoral policies and programmes in addition to addressing the negative perception of the public of TVET being a second option or low income earning ventures.

In an attempt to improve the quality of education, the education sector has formulated new policies and developed corresponding educational programmes that focus on foundational skills in reading and mathematics, teacher training (both pre-service and in-service), curriculum improvement initiatives and monitoring and supervision of teaching and learning. Greater attention has been given to the reading agenda that is supported by various reading strategies (Jolly Phonics, SEGRA and National Languages) and given the preliminary results of the early literacy in national language pilot programme, Year III evaluation (2013/2014), the strategy of using national languages to reinforce

early reading abilities is paying dividend and the MoBSE is therefore working towards integrating all the strategies to support the reading programme.

Furthermore, the increased pressure that is put on schools and the education system by the general public and other stakeholders for the delivery of quality education prompted the MoBSE to carefully monitor the results from all forms of assessments and studies and share such results with the public in social accountability fora. This is necessary as it provides an indication of responding to the needs and aspirations of the population in the delivery of quality education.

In spite of the gains registered, there is a small pool of donors in the education sector and mobilizing financial resources to consolidate the gains and address the inherent weaknesses is indeed a major challenge. However, there is a steady increase in the public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP from 1.6% in 2006 to 4.3% in 2012. Similarly, the public current expenditure as a percentage of total government current expenditure increases from 11.6% to 22.2% during the same period. This represents an encouraging level of political will and commitment needed to champion the cause of EFA but the contribution of the development partners will continue to be critical, given that external funding comprised more than 35% of the total budget in 2009. This therefore shows that national efforts in EFA will continue to rely on foreign aid beyond 2015.

The coordination of EFA at the country level has been vibrant with support from two fronts (Government and civil society). The period under review has witnessed the aggressive campaigns mounted by civil society through the National Education for All Campaign Network (EFANet) as a recognized advocacy platform. On the other hand, Government has, to the extent possible, lived up to the expectations of the Dakar Framework for Action while the development partners have not been able to mobilize the required resources as enshrined in the Framework.

The prospects for EFA beyond 2015 must therefore take account of the challenges that militate against progress and at the same time, the need to strengthen the gains that have been registered thus far. The prospects of post-2015 have been highlighted in Section 4 of the document where recommendations are provided on all the six EFA goals.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Gambia is one of the smallest countries in Africa with a location in the western part of the continent. It has a population of 1.8 Million of which more than 60% are below the age of 24 with an annual population growth rate of 2.8%. According to the World Bank, The Gambia has an average per capita GDP of US\$610 (Atlas Method, 2011) and is ranked 165 out of 186 countries in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2012 Human Development Index.

The country has been vulnerable to external shocks related to both the global economic crisis and to adverse weather conditions. These shocks have led to an economic slowdown with a real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 3.3% in 2011 although the future prospects were more optimistic with a slow pick up in GDP of 4% in 2012 due to a strong rebound in crops and return of tourism sector growth in 2012. However, these prospects have recently been threatened by the Ebola outbreak in the three West African countries and the erratic rainfall pattern experienced in 2014.

According to The Gambia's Millennium Development Goals Status Report 2014, the infant mortality rate stood at 34 per 1000 in 2013 while the maternal mortality rate was 433 per 1000 live births in the same year. Malnutrition, which is a manifestation of poverty, especially among children, is evident country-wide. The highest proportion of underweight children is found in the predominantly rural areas particularly in the Central River Region (North) and Upper River Region, the poorest regions of the country.

Poverty is pervasive in spite of a noticeable decline in overall poverty rates during the last decade, with considerable regional variations. The overall poverty headcount index is estimated at 4.4% (upper poverty line: US\$1.25 a day) and 36.7% (lower poverty line: US\$1.00) although the poverty headcount index declined between 2003 and 2010, income inequality has not. In 2010, the poorest quintile of the population consumed only 5.6% of overall expenditures while the wealthiest quintile was consuming 46.5%. Unemployment primarily affects those who are young, urban, female and better educated – reflecting the weakness and lack of sophistication of the country's formal economy (Lahire et al 2010)..

In view of the above, the Government of The Gambia has a National Development Agenda entitled: Vision 2020 and informed by this Vision, is a medium term development framework called the Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE) 2012 – 2016 which highlights the priorities of Government as enablers and drivers of growth and employment. All sectors of Government have aligned their policies with the PAGE in order to ensure congruence between the pillars of the PAGE and sector priorities.

1.2 NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY CONTEXT

The education system in The Gambia can be traced in a continuum from early childhood development (ECD) to university education with three years of pre-school education, nine years of uninterrupted basic education, three years of secondary education and four years of tertiary and higher education. Until 2007, there was only one ministry responsible for the delivery of education and training guided by one national education policy as a framework for education sector strategic planning process. Following the creation of a second ministry, the mandates to deliver education and training have now been segregated between the two ministries of education, namely: The Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) and The Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST).

In 2012, both MoBSE and MoHERST were engaged in a process of policy revision and policy formulation respectively and by 2013 the former had finalized the revision of its policy while the latter validated a new policy on tertiary and higher education. Both policies informed the

development of sector-wide education strategic plan both long and medium terms. These policies and plans have been developed to consolidate the gains registered thus far and address the inherent weaknesses in the delivery of education and training.

Reflecting on the situation in 2000, the education sector pursued the following policy objectives as they relate to EFA by 2015:

1. Increase the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) of ECD from 17.7% to 40%
2. Increase the percentage of new entrants to grade 1 with ECD experience from 27.5% to 50%
3. Increase the Gross Intake Rate (GIR) from 76.3% to 100%
4. Increase the Gross Enrolment Rate of lower basic from 71.7% to 100%
5. Increase the percentage of teachers who are certified to teach from 72.8% to 90%
6. Increase the pupil-teacher ratio from 33.3:1 to 45:1
7. Reduce repetition rate from 10.6% to 4%
8. Increase the share of enrolment for girls for all levels of education to 50%
9. Reduce the rate of illiteracy for 15-24 year olds from 52.5% to 26.3%
10. Reduce the rate of illiteracy for 15+ year olds from 62.9% to 31.5%

In the pursuit of EFA, the MoBSE is not convinced that the overall strategy of conventional schooling will be able to meet the targets of the Dakar Framework for Action. Hence, innovative models of educational provision have been explored and implemented during the period under review (2000 – 2014). These include the Donkey Cart Initiative, Conditional Cash Transfer and the modernisation of Madrassah Education.

1.2.1 Early Childhood Development: Under ECD, the policy aims to expand the services to deprived communities so that the proportion of entrants into grade 1 with ECD experience will increase across the country. The policy further recognizes that ECD is not exclusively the business of a single sector, hence the participation of all those sectors that together contribute to the holistic and integrated approach is indeed critical in providing early stimulation for learning. By this assertion, the age bracket for ECD is deemed to be 0 – 6 years and with the 0 – 3 years receiving interventions under the Baby-Friendly Community Initiative (BFCI+) while the 3 – 6 years are catered for in pre-schools. The added dimension to these strategies is the community-based ECD provision, which empowers communities to participate in the delivery of ECD with support from Government and philanthropic organisations.

1.2.2 Universal Basic Education: With regards to universal basic education, the policy focuses on universalizing nine years of uninterrupted basic education rather than primary education. In this respect, the policy takes account of parental choices in terms of preferred type of education such as madrassah and majallis education with emphasis on equitable learning outcomes between conventional schooling and the other options. The policy also puts emphasis on interventions that eliminate barriers such as cost and traditional beliefs. Equity is also a prominent feature of the policy that discourages children to walk a distance of more than three kilometres in order to access a lower basic school.

1.2.3 Gender Parity in Enrolment: On Gender Parity in enrolment, the policy aims to eliminate all forms of barriers to girls' education with focus on access, retention and performance. The policy promotes interventions that support the supply and distribution of qualified female teachers who serve as role models in order to attract girls' enrolment, retention and performance, particularly, in deprived communities. The policy also underscores the need to create safe and supportive learning environments for girls with particular attention to the opportunity cost at the level of the households.

1.2.4 Essential Learning Skills and Further Learning Opportunities for the Youth: In the area of essential learning skills and further learning opportunities for the youth, the national strategy has

been on the acquisition of self-employable skills through the delivery of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) which caters for, on the one hand, formal school graduates through post-basic and post-secondary education TVET programmes and out-of-school youth through in-village skills training and traditional apprenticeship programmes, on the other. The national strategy also promotes lifelong learning beyond basic education with recognition for the pursuit of secondary and tertiary education.

1.2.5 Literacy: As regards the goal of reducing illiteracy by 50%, the education sector recognises that literacy is a prerequisite for most forms of learning irrespective of age groups. However, the national policy on this goal focuses on two age cohorts: 15 – 24 years & 15+ years with the priorities of integration and functionality of literacy, numeracy and livelihood skills. The policy also puts emphasis on the empowerment of NGOs in the design and delivery of literacy programmes through a contractual framework agreement with the MoBSE keeping its traditional role of monitoring, supervision and evaluation.

1.2.6 Quality of Education: The main thrust of the EFA agenda in The Gambia is the delivery of quality education, which, by all accounts, poses significant challenges to the education sector. Hence improving students' learning outcomes is a national priority highlighted in the national policy on education. The policy supports interventions aimed at capacity strengthening of teacher practitioners, school management structures and reforms within the teacher training programme at the Gambia College. Emphasis is also placed on continuing professional development of teachers through an effective and efficient e-learning platform. Given that the foundation of any education system comprises the first three years in the lower basic, greater attention is also paid to foundational literacy and numeracy skill. The policy also pays attention to the use of national languages to enhance early grade literacy. The spirit of partnership to advance the cause of education service delivery is critical in the improvement of quality education which is manifested in policy implementation..

1.2.7 Education Sector Strategic Plan: Following the review and revision of the national Education Policy 2004 – 2015 and cognizant of the progress made on each of the EFA goals but also aware of the challenges associated with the attainment of these goals, an Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2014-2022 and a Medium Term Plan 2014 – 2017 (MTP) have been developed to cater for strategies for the implementation of the post 2015 education agenda. The national vision for education proposes a programmatic shift from programmes based mainly on cycles of education (ECD, basic education and secondary education) to a more results-oriented programming with emphasis on implementable interventions within Access & Equity, Quality and Relevance and Sector Management.

1.2.8 EFA Partnership: The education sector is supported by a small number of donors. Currently, in at the basic and secondary education levels, the World Bank's International Development Agency (IDA) and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) are the largest partners supporting systemic issues. The World Food Programme (WFP) supports school feeding with a view to enhancing school enrolment and establishing the foundation for a nationally managed home-grown school feeding programme. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provides support to the Programme for Improved Quality and Standards in Schools (PIQSS). The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) intervenes to support bilingual education in madrassahs and the Arab Bank for Economic Development (BADEA) supports classroom construction upper basic and secondary schools in the urban and peri-urban regions. At the higher levels of education, ISDB, Kuwaiti Fund, Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries Fund for International Development (OFID), BADEA and Saudi Fund are supporting the construction of faculty buildings and student dormitories for the expansion of the University of The Gambia. The IDA is supporting the Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence Project (ACE).

The education sector is a major beneficiary of joint donor and supervision missions held every two years with development partners including civil society participating in the monitoring of the extent to which educational policies and programmes deliver the desired objectives and outcomes. In addition, there is a local education group (LEG), which comprises all in-country development partners including NGOs, civil society and intergovernmental organisations in education whose role is also to monitor policy implementation and provide technical advice to the education authorities.

The MoBSE has instituted a partnership platform for monitoring implementation arrangements through a bi-monthly meeting called the coordinating committee meeting (CCM) held in the regions on rotational basis. The CCM brings together the senior staff of the two ministries and key stakeholders in the education sector for a period of five days in order to see at first hand, the level of policy implementation. The value addition of this platform is its ability to render social accountability.

1.2.9 Financing: In terms of educational financing, the Government of The Gambia is the primary provider and financier of education and training with government expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure increasing from 16.8% in 2001 to 21.6% in 2013. During the same period, government expenditure on education rose from 3.1% of GDP to 4.3%. However, salaries comprise the bulk of education expenditure, leaving less than 5% for quality measures. It must be noted that the external financing contribution is extremely critical given that it comprised more than 35% of total budget in 2009 thus showing a strong reliance on foreign aid. It is however, regrettable to note that the education sector is currently supported by a small number of donors, hence, large funding gaps exists for both ministries to implement the education sector strategic plan 2014-2022 (MoBSE - US\$95.0 million and MoHERST - US\$105.7 million).

SECTION 2: PROGRESS TOWARDS THE EFA GOALS

This section highlights a brief analysis of the progress registered during the period under review (2000 – 2014). It must, however, be noted that availability of accurate data on each of the EFA goals during the entire period has been the most significant challenge. The analysis therefore focuses on the indicator values of 1998/1999 as the baseline and the values for 2013/2014 as the end line for the review period. The difficulty in securing accurate data mainly affects the period 2000 – 2009 for some of the goals and targets, hence the limitation in this review process. A further limitation is attributed to the short timeline at the disposal of the review team. The team therefore did a desk review and referred to survey and assessments reports, project appraisal documents and policy documents to prepare an abridged version of this EFA Review.

2.1 EFA GOAL 1 - EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Indicator 1: Gross Enrolment Ratio in Early Childhood Development

Definition: The Gross Enrolment Ratio in Early Childhood is the total number of children enrolled in early childhood development programs, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the relevant official age-group 3 to 6 years.

Policy Context: Over the years, the provision of ECD was mainly private sector-led and the services were therefore not affordable, particularly, to households in deprived regions. Thus, the new policy focuses on the expansion of this service to deprived communities through the attachment of ECD centres to existing lower basic schools using public resources. The other dimension carved out from policy is the introduction of community-based ECD anchored in two age cohorts (0-3 and 3-6) with particular attention to the holistic and integrated approach to service delivery. The analysis will, however, only highlight the progress registered under the second age cohort (3-6 years), given that a full rollout of the 0-3 years intervention is yet to take place

Summary of Findings: There is unprecedented growth in ECD with an increase in the number of centres from 265 in 1999 to 1,015 in 2014 (Table 1.1). This increase is matched by a surge in enrolment from 29,910 to 87,061 during the same period with a percentage increase of 191% for the enrolment and 283% for the ECD centres. The enrolment distribution across gender has been constant from 1999 to 2014 with the share of enrolment for girls accounting for more than 50%.

Table 1.1: Number of ECD Centres by Region in 1999 and 2014			
	1999	2014	Proportion of Government ECD centres in 2014
Region 1	78	210	9%
Region 2	104	336	21%
Region 3	27	135	60%
Region 4	15	71	83%
Region 5	28	135	81%
Region 6	13	128	64%
National	265	1015	41%

	1999			2014		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Region 1	4,903	5,136	10,039	10,029	10,679	20,708
Region 2	5,822	5,748	11,630	17,472	18,214	35,686
Region 3	1,251	1,608	2,859	4,227	4,320	8,547
Region 4	854	914	1,768	1,913	1,979	3,892
Region 5	1,140	925	2,065	3,464	3,890	7,354
Region 6	809	740	1,549	5,530	5,344	10,874
NATIONAL	14,779	15,071	29,910	42,635	44,426	87,061

Enrolments across regions have also increased significantly as can be seen in Table 1.2 and this is reflected in the regional enrolment rates shown in Table 1.3 with an overall increase in GER from 17.7% in 1999 to 41.1% in 2014. It can be observed that regions 1 and 4 doubled their enrolments while the rest of the regions have had their enrolments more than tripled.

Of special mention is the significant increase registered in the provincial regions (3 – 6) where hitherto the enrolments were low due to unaffordability of the service but with the annexation policy intervention, poor households in these regions have taken advantage of this opportunity to enrol their children in ECD centres annexed to lower basic schools.

	1999			2014		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Region 1	26.9%	26.8%	26.8%	43.5%	46.1%	44.7%
Region 2	31.2%	30.1%	30.7%	44.6%	52.5%	51.1%
Region 3	9.8%	12.8%	11.3%	29.2%	36.1%	35.1%
Region 4	17.5%	18.7%	18.1%	32.3%	41.5%	40.0%
Region 5	9.2%	7.7%	8.5%	20.3%	24.2%	22.9%
Region 6	6.3%	5.8%	6.1%	31.7%	36.3%	37.2%
NATIONAL	17.5%	18.0%	17.7%	36.5%	42.1%	41.1%

Clearly, this rare achievement in growth can be attributed to the policy of annexation, the impact of which, shows a surge in both the number of centres and enrolment in the deprived regions. The challenge, however, is to provide well-trained facilitators to deliver the national ECD curriculum based on the holistic and integrated approach. Coordinating the participation of the relevant Government sectors to contribute to the delivery of this approach continues to challenge the ECD programme.

Indicator 2: Percentage of New Entrants into Grade 1 with ECD Experience

Definition: The number of new entrants to Grade 1 who have attended some form of organized early childhood development programme expressed as a percentage of total number of new entrants to Grade 1. This indicator helps to assess the proportion of new entrants to grade 1 who presumably have received some preparation for lower basic schooling through ECD programme

Policy Context: The policy recognizes the need for lower basic school readiness through access to ECD and therefore supports interventions aimed at expanding the service to deprived regions in order to eliminate the inequities that existed in 1999 between the urban and rural areas. The policy further underscores the value addition in school readiness as it relates to quality education.

Summary Findings: During the period under review, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of Grade 1 intakes with ECD experience from 27.5% to 49.8%. Distributing the proportion across gender shows that the female proportion has been kept constant over the period 1999 – 2014 with a GPI of 1. It must, however, be noted that about 50% of students admitted into first grade in lower basic have not benefitted from ECD service and this takes account of the fact that the urban regions (Regions 1 & 2) where admissions into Grade 1 are higher, households are still grappling with the issue of cost in sending their children to attend pre-schools, which are mainly established and run by the private sector. Given the importance the policy attaches to ECD and the contribution it can make to quality education, it may be useful for the education sector to come up with an intervention that will relieve the cost burden on the urban households so that they are able to register their children in lower basic schools with some preparation on school readiness through ECD provision.

Table 1.4: New Entrants into Grade 1 with ECD Experience by Gender 1999 - 2014

	1999	2014
MALE	27.2%	49.3%
FEMALE	27.8%	50.2%
TOTAL	27.5%	49.8%

2.2 EFA GOAL 2 - UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION

Indicator 1: Gross Intake Rate (GIR) Lower Basic Education

Definition: Total number of new entrants in the first grade of lower basic education regardless of age expressed as a percentage of the population at the official lower basic school entrance age. A Gross Intake Rate (GIR) reflects the general level of access to lower basic education. It also indicates the capacity of the education system to provide access to grade 1 for the official school entrance age population.

Policy Context: The official entry age to lower basic education is seven years, however admissions into Grade 1 are either above or below the official entry age. These cases are permissible due to the fact there is no free ECD service available country-wide and parents may wish to admit their children before or after seven years.

Summary Findings: Table 2.1 shows an encouraging level of increase of the GIR from 76.3% to 123.8% from 1999 to 2014 with ten percentage points increase in one year from 2013 to 2014. This significant increase in one year can be attributed to the abolition of all forms of levies in public lower basic schools in September 2013, the impact of which is much visible in 2014. It may be recalled that one of the findings of the 2010 CSR indicated that 46% of the total expenditure in lower basic education was picked up by the households and with the introduction of the policy of no fee paying and supported by the payments of school capitation grants, the enrolments increased significantly. This will have to be sustained by the provision of school places through the establishment of new schools, the training of more teachers and the provision of teaching and learning materials.

Table 2.1: Gross Intake Rate for Lower Basic Education by Gender – 1999 – 2014

	1999	2013	2014
MALE	73.8%	113.2%	123.4%
FEMALE	78.7%	113.4%	124.3%
TOTAL	76.3%	113.3%	123.8%

Indicator 2: Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) Lower Basic Education

Definition: Total enrolment in lower basic education, regardless of age expressed as a percentage of the eligible official lower basic school-age population in a given school year. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is widely used to show the general level of participation in lower basic education.

Policy Context: Following the attainment of a GER of over 70%, the education sector raised the target to 100% taking into account the gross as opposed to the net given that the policy uses the former and not the latter. The net is however calculated to determine the extent to which the children within the official age bracket access education.

Summary Finding: Similar to the performance registered in the intake rate, the GER according to Table 2.2 has significantly increased by five percentage points in one year – between 2013 and 2014 due mainly to the introduction of the no fee policy in 2013. It must however be observed that both under and over-aged children have accounted for the surge. In terms of gender segregation, the female GER increased from 65.6% to 98.7% while the males moved from 77.8% to 95.4%, increasing the GPI from 0.8 to 1.03 from 1999 to 2014. However, the current value of the GPI does suggest a slight disparity in enrolment in favour of girls which may not be desirable if boys are being withdrawn as a precipitating factor.

Table 2.2: Gross Enrolment Ratio – Lower Basic Education by Gender – 1999 – 2014

	1999	2013	2014
MALE	77.8%	91.3%	95.4%
FEMALE	65.6%	93.6%	98.7%
TOTAL	71.7%	92.5%	97.1%

Indicator 3: Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) Lower Basic Education

Definition: The net enrolment ratio is enrolment in lower basic education of the official lower basic school age group expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population. The NER gives a more precise measurement of the extent of participation in lower basic education of children belonging to the official lower basic school age.

Policy Context: There is no NER target in the policy but the calculation is done to determine the rate of access to lower basic education by the official age cohort (7 – 12 years). .

Summary Findings: From Table 2.3, there has been a steady increase in the NER from 1999 to 2014 with an unprecedented surge in one year (2013 – 2014) due mainly to the introduction of school fees abolition in the public lower basic schools in 2013. The progress registered with the female NER from a value of 55.4% in 1999 to 80.6% in 2014 is by far greater than that of the males which grew from 64.2% to 75.6% during the same period.

Table 2.3: Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) – Lower Basic Education by Gender – 1999 - 2014

	1999	2013	2014
MALE	64.2%	72.6%	75.6%
FEMALE	55.4%	76.3%	80.6%
TOTAL	59.8%	74.5%	78.1%

Indicator 4: Rate of Transition from Lower Basic Education to Upper Basic Education

Definition: The number of graduating students in Lower Basic Education transiting to the first grade of upper basic education expressed as a percentage of total lower basic education graduates. This indicator assesses the capacity of the education system to respond to the policy of providing nine years of uninterrupted basic education.

Policy Context: Transition to upper basic gives an indication of the extent to which the capacity of upper basic can accommodate the graduates of lower basic education within the overall framework of universal basic education. This is important because the policy puts a lot of emphasis on universalizing basic education rather than lower basic education. In 2004, the target for access to lower basic education was replaced with 100% GER for basic education by 2015. However, there was no baseline in 1999 even though the concept of nine years of uninterrupted basic education was conceived and implemented but the target for universal basic education was only reflected in the Education Policy 2004 – 2015.

Summary Findings: The analysis of this indicator takes account of the lack of a baseline value in 1999 due to unavailability of accurate data and therefore uses the period from 2010 to 2014. From Table 2.4, it can be noticed that there are fluctuated rates from 2010 to 2012 followed by a steady minimal increase from 88.0% in 2012 to 90.9% in 2014. As regards the gender pattern, males suffered fluctuations throughout the period while the females picked up from 2013 after experiencing similar fluctuations. In 2014, it does seem that about 10% of the graduates are not transiting into Grade 7 which may require further investigation.

Table 2.4: The Transition Rate from Lower Basic to Upper Basic by Gender – 2010 – 2014

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
MALE	89.5%	88.5%	87.1%	91.1%	90.6%
FEMALE	89.6%	89.9%	89.0%	88.6%	91.1%
TOTAL	89.5%	89.2%	88.0%	89.8%	90.9%

Indicator 5: Gross Enrolment Ratio Upper Basic Education

Definition: Total enrolment in upper basic education, regardless of age expressed as a percentage of the eligible official upper basic school-age population in a given school year. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is used to show the general level of participation in upper basic education. It is also an indication of the capacity of the education system to respond to nine years of interrupted basic education.

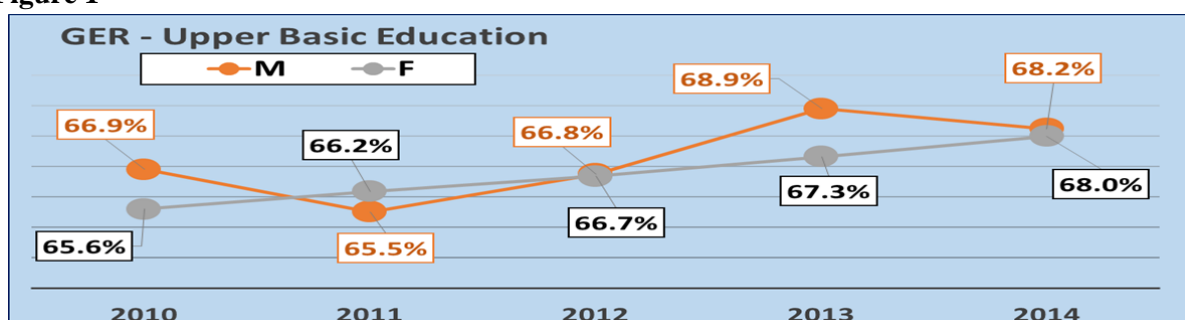
Policy Context: Access to upper basic education implies capacity for continuity from lower basic education thus contributing to nine years of uninterrupted basic education.

Summary Findings: In the absence of an accurate data for the period 1999 – 2009, the analysis looks at the period from 2010 to 2014 to give an indication of performance. Table 2.5 shows a drop in the GER from 66.2% in 2010 to 65.8% in 2011 but shows a steady increase thereafter to 2014 from 65.8% to 68.1%. There is fluctuation among the males throughout the period while the females show a steady increase from 2010 to 2014.

Table 2.5: Gross Enrolment Rate Upper Basic Education by Gender (2010 – 2014)

Gross Enrolment Rate - Upper Basic Education					
Gender	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
M	66.9%	65.5%	66.8%	68.9%	68.2%
F	65.6%	66.2%	66.7%	67.3%	68.0%
Total	66.2%	65.8%	66.7%	68.10%	68.12%

Figure 1



While this indicator may not sufficiently give a clear indication as to the status of universal basic education, Table 2.6 attempts to show progress from 2013 to 2014 with the regional variations. Region 1 shows values of more than 100% while Region 5 indicates the lowest values for the two years (slightly above 50%). Apart from Region 5, all the regions have had significant proportions of their school-aged populations pursuing basic education with the remotest region (Region 6) showing an increase from 67.2% to 71.3% over the two-year period. Clearly, Region 5 is seriously off tracked in attaining universal basic education, hence the education sector conducted studies to investigate the factors responsible for the low performance in access to all levels of education. Given that the cost for basic education is now a thing of the past, traditional beliefs and perceptions on conventional and even madrassah education are partly to account for the low values in Region 5. Hence, it may be prudent to identify interventions aimed at further diversifying the educational provision from the current conventional schooling and madrassah education to schemes such as the majalis education.

Table 2.6: Gross Enrolment Ratio for Basic Education by Region and Gender 2013 & 2014						
	2013			2014		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Region 1	108.1%	104.6%	106.3%	107.7%	106.5%	107.1%
Region 2	92.4%	91.0%	91.7%	96.8%	96.3%	96.5%
Region 3	81.5%	84.0%	82.7%	85.5%	89.4%	87.4%
Region 4	87.5%	93.7%	90.6%	84.9%	90.9%	87.9%
Region 5	48.1%	60.0%	54.1%	49.9%	63.0%	56.4%
Region 6	70.0%	64.6%	67.3%	73.3%	68.9%	71.2%
NATIONAL	84.4%	85.4%	84.9%	87.0%	89.1%	88.0%

2.3 EFA GOAL 3 - GENDER PARITY IN ENROLMENT

Indicator 1: Gender Parity Index (GPI) in Education

Definition: The ratio of the female enrolment as a proportion of the ratio of the male enrolment. The GPI reflects females' level of access to education compared to that of males. This is calculated for each education cycle. A GPI of less than 1 indicates that there are fewer females than males

Policy Context: Before the advent of the Education Policy 2004 – 2015, emphasis was placed on girls' education, the reason being that a wide disparity in enrolment in favour of boys existed in all levels of the education system. However, in 2003, the lower basic GPI improved in favour of girls resulting from interventions anchored in the Girl-Friendly School Initiative (GFSI). Thus there was a shift in focus from girls' education to gender education in order to cater for boys' withdrawal but at same time address the disparities in upper basic and secondary education.

Summary Findings: In the absence of a baseline data for upper basic and secondary education in 1999, data from 2010 is used in this analysis to illustrate the trend in the GPI values for a period of five years while the lower basic analysis picks from a baseline in 1999. It is clear from Tables 3.1 and 3.2 that the parity targets set for 2015 for basic education have indeed been surpassed while the target for secondary has almost been achieved in 2014. It can however be observed that there has been a drop in the GPI for upper basic education from 1.01 in 2011 to 0.98 in 2013 while the secondary education GPI shows a steady increase from 2010 to 2014. It will therefore be important to sustain the gains registered in the improved levels of girls' access to education but at the same time, watch out for any further backlash resulting from the withdrawal of boys.

Table 3.1: Gender Parity Index for Lower Basic Education 1999 - 2010

1999	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
0.84	1.02	1.02	1.03	1.02	1.04

Table 3.2: Gender Parity Index for Upper Basic Education 2010 - 2014

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
0.98	1.01	1.00	0.98	1.00

Table 3.3: Gender Parity Index for Secondary Education 2010 – 2014

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
0.82	0.85	0.86	0.89	0.91

2.4 EFA GOAL 4 - LITERACY

Adult literacy is defined as the percentage of the population aged 15 years and over who can both read and write with understanding of a short simple statement on his/her everyday life. Generally, the term 'literate' embraces also 'numeracy', the ability to make simple arithmetic calculations. The adult literacy rate reflects the accumulated achievement of lower basic education and adult literacy programs in imparting basic literacy skills to the population, thereby enabling people to apply such skills in daily life and to continue learning and communicating using the written word. Literacy represents a potential for the individual's further intellectual growth and enhanced contribution to socio-economic and cultural development of society.

Indicator 1: Percentage of the population aged 15-24 years that is literate

Definition: The number of persons aged 15 -24 who can both read and write with understanding a short simple statement on their everyday life, divided by the population in that age-group. The literacy rate of the 15-24 year-olds has a special significance in reflecting the recent outcomes of the basic education process. It is a summary measure of the effectiveness of the basic education system.

Policy Context: Interventions in this area are aimed at providing opportunities to adults within this age bracket to access non-formal education that is both functional and integrated. It also creates a second chance opportunity for drop outs from the formal system to further their education in a non-formal setting. Hence, the policy target is to reduce illiteracy by 50% by 2015.

Summary Findings: Tracking regular progress in literacy has been a significant challenge, given that data on literacy is only available every ten years from the national census. Thus the 1999 literacy rates were based on the 1993 national census figures and this analysis therefore takes account of the 1999 rates compared to 2013 census figures. It can be observed from Table 4.1 that the literacy rates have appreciably increased from 47.5% to 71.7% thus reducing the illiteracy rate by 46% for the 15-24 age-group which shows the impact of formal basic and secondary education provision. In terms of the 50% target for illiteracy reduction for this age cohort across gender, the males have achieved a reduced illiteracy rate of 23.4% against the 2015 target of 20.8% while the females registered 32.6% against a target of 31.5%. The progress the females have registered is indeed higher than that of the males during the period 1999 – 2013 which indicates 30.3 percentage points for the former and 18.2 for the latter.

Table 4.1: Literacy Rates of 15-24 years by Gender 1999 - 2013

	1999	2013
MALE	58.4%	76.6%
FEMALE	37.1%	67.4%
TOTAL	47.5%	71.7%

Indicator 2: Percentage of the population aged 15+ years that is literate

Definition: The number of persons aged 15+ years who can both read and write with understanding of a short simple statement on their everyday life, divided by the population in that age-group.

Policy Context: Literacy for both age cohorts has a target of 50% reduction but it is important to note that the 15+ year group has a more population value than the 15-24 Group. Hence, the 15+ gives a clearer picture of a country's status in terms of adult literacy.

Summary Findings: In view of the fact that literacy rates in The Gambia are provided every ten years (national census), this analysis looks at three census figures, the 1993 used for the last EFA assessment in 1999, 2003 and 2013 to discern the progress between the three censuses. There has a steady increase from the 1993 census to the 2013 registering 5.4 percentage points for the first ten years (1993-2003) and 12.3 percentage points for the following ten years (2003-2013). This progress shows an overall increase by 19.9 percentage points for females and 17 points for the males. In terms of illiteracy reduction by 50%, across gender, the males have registered a reduced value of 34.3% missing the target of 25.6 % by 8.7 percentage points while the females missed theirs by 17.6 points

(55.1% - 37.5%). In spite of the progress made in the two age groups, the literacy goal will not be achieved by 2015, however, the 15-24 cohort is much closer to attaining the goal than the 15+. These interventions currently being implemented must be scaled up and consolidated.

Table 4.2: Trends in Literacy Rates of 15+ years by Gender from 1999 - 2013

	1999	2003	2013
MALE	48.5%	55.1%	65.5%
FEMALE	25.0%	30.6%	44.9%
TOTAL	37.1%	42.5%	54.8%

2.5 EFA GOAL 5 - TRAINING IN ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND FURTHER LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE YOUTH

Indicator 2: Gross Enrolment Ratio Secondary Education

Definition: Total enrolment in secondary education, regardless of age expressed as a percentage of the eligible official secondary school-age population in a given school year. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is used to show the general level of participation in secondary education. It also examines to what extent learning opportunities are created beyond basic education.

Policy Context: It may be construed that the emphasis of EFA is placed on basic education but Goal 5 challenges countries to cater for the graduates of basic education through the creation of opportunities for further learning. Secondary education is a cycle that absorbs basic education graduates and also feeds the tertiary and higher education institutions and it can therefore be described as a hub for lifelong learning opportunities. The policy target for transition from basic education to secondary education is a minimum rate of 52% bearing in mind the quality of the intakes into Grade 10.

Summary Findings: In secondary education, there is no indicator value for 1999, hence the use of the period 2010 – 2014 to determine the rate of growth in providing access to secondary education. From Table 5.1, the GER has consistently increased from 2010 to 2014 and this is manifested in the distribution of the GER across gender. However, the female GER increased by 8.6 percentage points while the males' grew by 5.8 points due mainly to the provision of scholarships to girls at this level. Another intervention that facilitated growth in enrolment, particularly among girls, is the establishment of additional secondary schools in deprived regions taking secondary education provision closer to the doorsteps of disadvantaged communities. While it is noticeable that secondary education graduates are now competing for higher education places, it must however be underscored that the issue of quality education remains a significant challenge.

Table 5.1: Gross Enrolment Ratio for Secondary Education by Gender from 2010 to 2014

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
MALE	37.4%	37.7%	39.1%	41.1%	43.2%
FEMALE	30.6%	32.2%	33.5%	36.9%	39.2%
TOTAL	33.9%	34.9%	36.2%	39.1%	41.2%

Indicator 2: TVET Graduates as a percentage of enrolments in TVET programmes

Definition: The number of graduates in TVET programmes expressed as a percentage of total enrolment in TVET programmes. This indicator helps to illustrate the internal efficiency of the delivery of TVET programmes in The Gambia. There is no indicator for access to TVET programmes due to paucity of data.

Policy Context: TVET provision consists of several dimensions, including pre-employment training provided in government institutions, by NGO providers and private training providers. In addition, enterprise-based training is a major source of skills acquisition for those in employment, both wage employment and in the informal sector. The vast majority of skills training is provided outside the public sector. The majority of training providers are, in order of prevalence: private training providers, community based organizations/non-governmental organization (CBO/NGO) providers and finally public training providers. In addition, enterprise-based training, or “traditional apprenticeship”, is a major source of skills acquisition for those in employment, especially for males in the informal sector. Public training institutions tend to be concentrated in Banjul and at the post-secondary level. The premier institution is the Gambia Technical Training Institute which provides certificate and diploma courses at the post-secondary level (Grade 12 entry).

Summary Findings: From Table 5.2, about 7,900 trainees were enrolled in 2006 with a total of 5,000 graduates. Of these, ICT accounted for most of the trainees (35.2 percent; and about 80 percent of the graduates), followed by commercial subjects (management, bookkeeping/accounting, secretarial, banking and finance)¹ at about 38 percent. Thus, ICT and commerce accounted for over 70 percent of all trainees. Females made up almost half the enrollments at 49 percent. Females were strongly represented in bookkeeping and accounting, secretarial, home science (sewing, tailoring and cooking) and horticulture. Enrollments in traditional vocational courses appear to be undercounted in the database. For example, it is unlikely that only 16 people are enrolled in the country in motor mechanics. Enrollment in agriculture/horticulture seems particularly low given the dependence on this sector for employment and GDP. The output to enrollment ratio may probably reflect more the length of the training course than completion rates. However, the low ratios for secretarial, tailoring/cooking, banking/finance and welding/fabrication may warrant further investigation.

¹ Including management, bookkeeping/accounting, secretarial, banking and finance.

Table 5.2: TVET Enrolment by Subject, (in descending order) and Graduates, 2006

Subject under study	Total Enrollment Subject	% of Total Enrollment	% of Female Enrollment	Total Graduates	Graduates as a % of Enrollment
ICT	2779	35.2	44.3	2110	75.9
Management	1102	14.1	47.4	754	68.4
Bookkeeping & Accounting	1048	13.3	52.3	765	73.0
Secretarial	784	9.9	84.3	197	25.1
Tailoring, cooking	760	9.6	55.8	230	30.3
Languages	694	8.8	42.8	493	71.0
Travel & tourism	272	3.4	31.6	253	93.0
Electrical & Electronics	200	2.5	12.0	79	39.5
Horticulture	52	0.7	78.8	42	80.8
Banking & Finance	50	0.6	34.0	11	22.0
Construction	42	0.5	4.8	20	47.6
Welding & Fabrication	29	0.4	3.5	8	27.6
Motor Mechanics	16	0.2	12.5	9	56.3
Other	60	0.8	30.0	30	50.0
Total	7888	100		5001	63.4

Source: NTA MIS

While there is no accurate data to determine the access rates in TVET, it must be understood that public provision is limited to a few training centers: Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI); the Gambia Hospitality and Training Institute ; Gambia College (agriculture); Rural Skills Training Center at Mansa Konko; Julangel Skills Training Center; Kotu in-house Training Center; President's International Award Scheme Training Center; Gambia Telecommunication and Multimedia Institute; and the Management Development Institute.

The National Youth Service Scheme (NYSS) also provides training for youth. A tracer study conducted by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) found that 57 percent of the graduates of the program were unemployed and that the program was not cost effective.

According to the Youth Employment and Skills Development Study conducted in 2010 by the World Bank, about 15 NGOs and CBOs provide skills training. In comparison to the public and private for-profit provision, the output of the non-profit providers is low. They mainly focus on low-income students and those with more basic education qualifications or no education at all. About 45 private for profit training institutions exist; most of these give certificate and diploma courses in the fields of commerce, management, accounting, finance, and IT. No regulated system of apprenticeship exists in the formal sector. However, enterprises do provide in-house training when skills are lacking. According to the National Training Authority (NTA) enterprise training needs assessment survey of 2007, most skills acquisition takes place partly or wholly on the job. About 61 percent of enterprises provided in-service training to their workers.

According to the 2010 Youth Study, the main challenges are inadequate financing of TVET including an unsustainable levy system, lack of tracer studies on labor market outcomes, inadequate

opportunities for access to skills development by the youth, inadequate coverage in priority areas (e.g. horticulture), lack of management information about TVET, wide variance in quality of provision, and insufficient entrepreneurship training. In addition, the NTA does not have a streamlined system of accreditation, no management information system on training is presently available and capacity to provide support to training institutions on curriculum development.

In addressing these challenges, MoHERST is currently developing systems and undertaking reforms to raise the profile of TVET in the country. In terms of accreditation of programmes, the development of a system of Accreditation and Quality Assurance is at an advanced stage with the process of enacting the Higher Education Bill whose benefit can mobilize resources for tertiary and higher education including TVET.

2.6 EFA GOAL 6 - QUALITY EDUCATION

Indicator 1: Percentage of lower basic teachers who are certified to teach

Definition: The number of lower basic teachers with at least the minimum academic and professional qualification required to teach in lower basic schools, expressed as a percentage of the total number of lower basic teachers. This indicator measures the proportion of lower basic teacher who meet the basic requirements to teach as a qualified teacher.

Policy Context: With a policy drive to universalize basic education, there must be a corresponding effort to increase the stock of qualified teachers in basic education. Accordingly, teacher training at the Gambia was expected to produce qualified teachers through the PTC and HTC programmes for the lower and upper basic respectively.

Summary Findings: In the absence of accurate data for basic education in 1999 and 2014 to illustrate the trend in the stock of qualified teachers to deliver curricula from Grade 1 - 9, data on lower basic is used to show progress during this period. Table 6.1 shows considerable progress registered in the stock of qualified teachers in lower basic education, where a significant increase is recorded from 73.8% in 1999 to 90.7% in 2014. In terms of gender segregation, the stocks in both males and females have also increased with a faster growth registered among the females from 73.7% in 1999 to 91.4% over the males from 72.4% to 84.9% during the same period. This significant increase may be attributed to the implementation of the Remedial Initiative for Female Teachers (RIFT) in the case of the females while the overall increase may be partly claimed by a shift in the mode of teacher training at the level of PTC from the regular programme to the extension mode.

With regards to Table 6.2 which illustrates the percentage of qualified teachers in public schools across the three levels of education (LBS, UBS & SS), there is a reasonable proportion of qualified teachers in each of the levels in 2014. Similarly, the regions have a considerable pool of qualified teachers well above 80% which is the policy target for 2015. Thus the target for the stock of qualified teachers in lower basic has been surpassed with no worrying variations across regions.

However, targets for upper basic and secondary education may not be met by 2015, but all the regions have registered above 90% in upper basic and secondary education with the exception of regions 3 and 6 registering 89.0% and 83.6% in upper basic respectively.

Table 6.1: Percentage of Qualified Teachers in LBS by Region and Gender 1999 - 2014

	1999	2014
MALE	72.4%	84.9%
FEMALE	73.7%	91.4%
TOTAL	72.8%	90.7%

Table 6.2: Percentage of Qualified Teachers in Public Schools by Region, 2014

Region	Lower Basic	Upper Basic	Secondary
Region 1	96.2%	92.9%	93.7%
Region 2	94.3%	95.3%	92.1%
Region 3	89.2%	89.0%	97.9%
Region 4	97.5%	97.2%	96.6%
Region 5	87.3%	92.3%	90.8%
Region 6	87.6%	83.6%	93.8%
Total	92.7%	93.0%	93.6%

Indicator 2: Average Correct Words per Minute

Definition: Counting the number of words each student read aloud correctly in one minute. Familiar word reading tasks required students to read a list of 50 one-syllable (2-3 letters) familiar words selected from early grade reading materials.

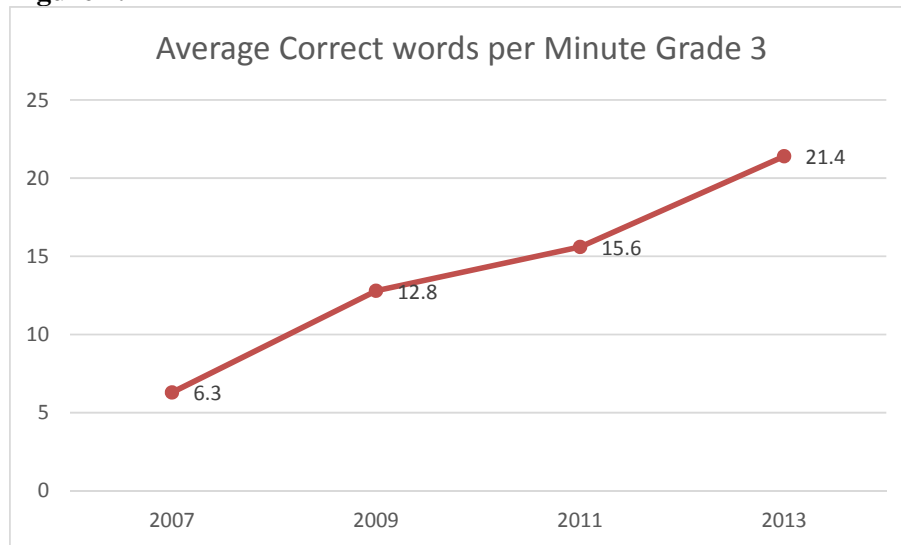
Policy Context: In the delivery of quality education, the foundational skills, particularly, in reading is absolutely critical because the performance in the upper grades is determined by the strength of the foundational grades (grades 1, 2 & 3). The policy therefore puts a lot of emphasis on the foundational skills in literacy and numeracy through the early grade literacy skills – (Reading) and early grade numeracy skills (Mathematics). This policy was informed by the appalling results of the Early Grade Reading Assessment conducted in 2007. The scope of the challenges in literacy as shown in the 2007 EGRA assessment was shocking:

1. 32% of Grade 3 students had correct letter identification
2. 34% of Grade 3 students had correct phoneme pronunciation
3. Average third grade reading levels were ten words per minute with virtually no comprehension
4. 46% of Third Grade students could not correctly read a single word of connected text

Following the release of these results, the MoBSE developed strategies for interventions in teacher training, teaching and learning materials and monitoring and assessments. In addition, the introduction and use of national languages to enhance early grade reading through an incremental pilot scheme across the country.

Summary Findings: The progress registered in this indicator cannot be traced to 1999 because the policy on foundational reading only came into existence after 2007 and thereafter, biennial early grade reading assessments have been conducted to track the impact of the interventions. Fig. 2 therefore shows the results of these assessments from 2007 and also provides an indication as the responsiveness of the early graders to the reading programme. It is indeed clear that the values in 2007 were unacceptably low but there has been a steady increase among the Grade 3 students who could read 6.3 average correct words per minute from 2007 to 21.4 in 2013.

Figure 2.1



The national language programme was identified as one of the many interventions to address the literacy challenge based on the assumption is that children can learn to read faster in their own language and that the skills and reading strategies they develop can be easily applied in learning to read in other languages. 125 classes with a maximum of 30 pupils per class across all the six educational regions took part in the pilot. Five National languages were selected and piloted: Mandinka, Olof, Pulaar, Jolaa and Saranhuley.

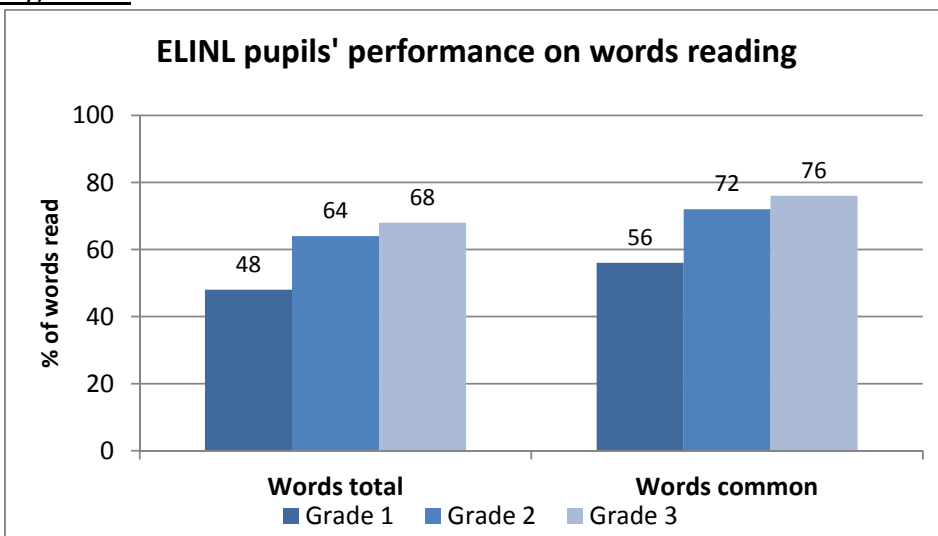
Results of the pilot:

Pupils were asked to read 25 words on the reading sheet given, five of which are frequently used words that are common across all five national languages (baba, kaba, mama, Aba, booli). The graph (Fig. 2.2) shows, at Grade 1, ELINL pupils were able to read around half of the national language words given. They were able to read around two-third of the words by the time they were at Grade 2.

The results also suggest an advantage of the ELINL programme. Students in the pilot group performed better on the reading tasks than those in the comparison group. Students in the ELINL programme also perform better in English reading and comprehension when compared to the EGRA national average score.

From this evidence, the MoBSE has now taken the decision to integrate national languages in all the reading strategies (Jolly Phonics and SEGRA).

Figure 2.2



Pei-tseng Jenny Hsieh, The Early Literacy in National Language Pilot Programme, Year III Evaluation, Preliminary results, August, 2014.

2.7 FINANCING

The core element of the EFA agenda in any country is the financing of interventions to achieve the EFA goals by 2015. Thus, the Dakar Framework for Action challenges both countries and development partners to demonstrate commitment in allocation of financial resources to advance the cause of EFA.

In 2012, Government expenditure on education as percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 4.3%. The indicator has more than doubled between 2006 and 2012. The figure compares favorably to that of other countries, which indicate an average of 2.9% in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Figure 3.1

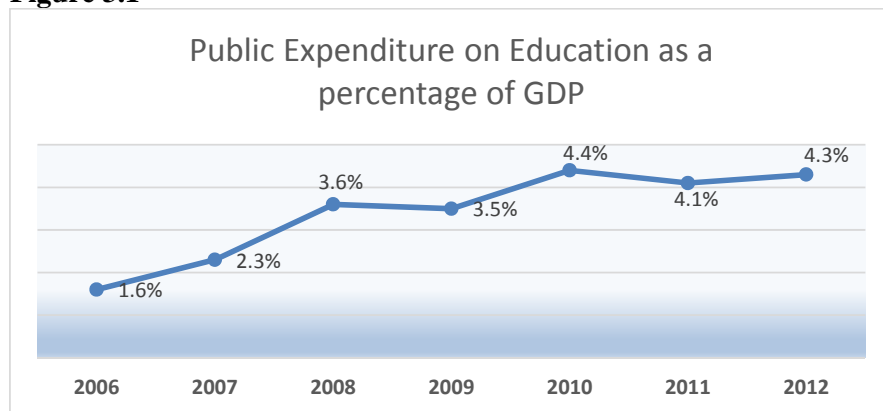
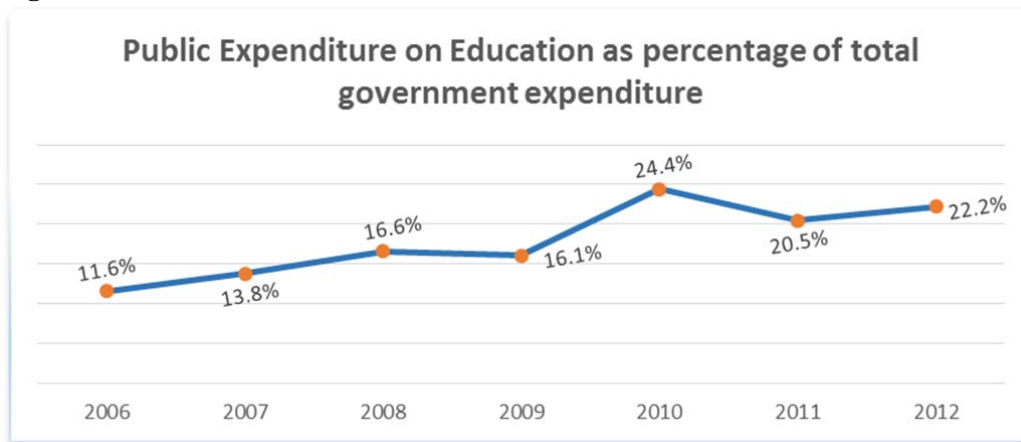


Figure 3.2



Public current education expenditure as percentage of total government current expenditure is observing a growing trend since 2007, which reflects an increasing priority to education sector in government agenda. The FTI target for current education expenditure as a percentage of total government current expenditure was 20% and this has been achieved by The Gambia since 2010. In 2012, almost 22% of government recurrent expenditure is dedicated to education financing. The highest share of the budget is allocated to lower basic education with 52% of the overall recurrent education expenditures. The upper Basic share represents 25%, and 12% for secondary and 9% for Tertiary education.

SECTION 3: IMPLEMENTATION OF EFA STRATEGIES

3.1 EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Under ECD, the annexation policy was introduced to support the delivery of ECD in deprived communities at no cost to households by attaching ECD centres to existing lower basic schools that are located in those communities. This was basically necessary because the 2000 EFA Assessment Report revealed very low enrolment rates in the provincial regions due mainly to the fact that the ECD national strategy in terms of provision at the time was private sector-led, hence affordability was an issue for the deprived regions.

3.1.1 Annexation: In formulating the 2004 - 2015 education policy, the issue of expanding ECD provision in regions 3, 4, 5 and 6 at no cost to households was catered for through the establishment of ECD centres in existing lower basic schools under one administration and school management committee. This was found to increase the number of centres from 265 in 1999 to over 1000 in 2014 with a substantial enrolment increase already highlighted under Section 2 (Progress towards the EFA Goals). Supporting this intervention was necessary to mainstream the ECD module training within the PTC training at the Gambia College. This was necessary to ensure that the PTC teacher trainees graduated with knowledge and skills in the delivery of the ECD curriculum within lower basic schools where ECD centres are attached. The annexation strategy is an innovative model that has already been replicated all over the country due to its efficacy to deliver encouraging results in increasing access to ECD with the elimination of inequities that exist between geographical locations and socio-economic groups. This is an interesting case study under ECD.

3.1.2 Community-based Provision: Next was the issue of inadequate curricula for the two cohorts under the national ECD strategy (0 – 3 years and 3 - 6 years). Accordingly, with support from the Japanese Social Development Fund (JSDF), a community-based ECD pilot programme was implemented for <3 year olds through the Baby Friendly Community Initiative (BFCI) and the BFCI+. The pilot comprised the following interventions:

1. Development of ECD programme curriculum/syllabus for <3 year olds with emphasis on parental education and cognitive stimulation and 3 – 6 year olds that focus on school readiness,
2. Development and provision of teaching materials,
3. Construction of 90 sheds in Regions 2 and 6,
4. Training of facilitators,
5. Pilot testing of community-based ECD programme
6. Management and monitoring of ECD sites.

Some of the baseline results of the programme show that Region 6 children scored higher on the language and fine motor dimensions while the Children of caregivers who attended school performed better than the children of caregivers who had no education on either dimensions.

The significant challenge of scaling up the initiative resides within the availability of sufficient financial resources to roll out the programme to all the deprived regions of the country.

3.1.3 Multi-Sectoral Working Group: Following the formulation of the National ECD Policy Framework, it became eminent that implementing this policy was indeed beyond the mandate and capacity of one single sector. It was for this reason that a Multi-Sectoral Working Group (MSWG) was established and launched to coordinate the policy issues on the integrated and holistic ECD provision in the country. This Group comprises government sectors such as Education, Health, Local Government, Nutrition Agency and Justice. Other members of the MSWG are UN agencies (UNICEF, UNESCO, WFP), NGOs and civil society. The participation of this Group has indeed helped in galvanizing sectoral commitment and participation at the level of implementation,

however, the challenge is to mainstream ECD cost items in the budgets of the relevant sectors in order to support the implementation of the harmonized approach.

3.2 UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION

With regards to universal basic education, the focus has rather been on nine years of uninterrupted basic education than on primary education. To this end, new schools have been opened and existing schools expanded through construction of classrooms, rehabilitation of dilapidated classrooms, provision of sanitary and water facilities. The use of double-shifting and multi-grade teaching strategies have been employed to deal with growing demand for school places with focus on efficient utilization of facilities and teachers.

3.2.1 Classroom Construction: Under the classroom construction programme, The IDA, GPE, ADB, BADEA and UNICEF projects supported the construction of new classrooms across the country and these have significantly contributed to increasing access to basic education, particularly, in remote areas. Alongside the construction of new classrooms, dilapidated classrooms have been rehabilitated and water points and sanitary facilities provided to ensure that school environments are conducive to teaching and learning. A recent strategy to extend educational provision closer to the doorsteps of communities is the construction of multi-grade schools with a package including housing units for teachers and water and sanitary facilities. In spite of all these interventions, the data show that 17% (339 communities) of all communities in the country do not have a lower basic school within 3 kilometres. This is mainly due to the fact that the number of out of school children has not been significantly reduced because of the rapid population growth, distance to school, high private education cost and school readiness.

In an attempt to address the challenges of out of school children, the following interventions are being implemented:

1. The provision of school grants to all public lower and upper schools,
2. The provision of stationery to all lower basic schools in hardship areas,
3. The provision of donkey carts that provide transportation to early graders in remote areas who have difficulty in commuting to school due to long distances,
4. The introduction of a conditional cash transfer scheme to support majalis education
5. School feeding programme
6. Special needs education
7. Madrassah education
8. Programme for Improved Quality and Standards in Schools (PIQSS)

3.2.2 School Grants: Another intervention under this EFA Goal was the elimination of all forms of school levies that militated against access to basic education as highlighted in the 2010 Education Country Status Report (CSR) that 46% of total education expenditure in lower basic was borne by the households. Similarly, the households contributed over 60% of total educational expenditure in upper basic (lower secondary), 71% in secondary education and over 80% in tertiary and higher education. Clearly, it was necessary to abolish all forms of fees in basic education and accordingly, the abolition was pronounced in all public lower and upper basic schools in the country and subsequently, the payment of school grants was introduced to support the public schools undertake school improvement initiatives informed by school development planning process. With this intervention, households have now been relieved of the cost burden in educating their children in public schools and the effect of this policy can be traced to the unprecedented surge in enrolment.

3.2.3 Donkey Cart Initiative: To further enhance access to schooling for communities with very low school-aged population located two or three kilometers away from the nearest lower basic school, a pilot was designed to use customized donkey carts to transport early graders to and from school until they are older and able to walk such distances. 82 donkey carts were fabricated and

handed over for use in regions 2-6. With this intervention, about 700 children who had difficulty in going to school were able to use donkey carts to go to school. Following the success of this intervention, the education sector is replicating this practice in another 100 deprived communities. This practice is driven by innovation and it is one of the best practices of the sector in responding to issues of access and equity in the wake of scarce resources.

3.2.4 Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme: This scheme is aimed at providing an alternative form of education with minimum curriculum standards to children who are in the custody of religious leaders whose responsibility is to teach them the Holy Quran and other Islamic values. The condition attached to the provision of a monthly stipend of \$3 per month per child to the custodian is to release the children to attend classes. The children were exposed to literacy, numeracy, life skills and livelihood skills for about 10 hours per week. The strategy supported the development and printing of teaching and learning materials. About 1,000 children in 12 centers received instructions in numeracy, literacy, life and livelihood skills for 10 hours a week. These children would not have had this opportunity to be educated in these areas if the program had not been initiated and supported. Due to the success of the pilot phase, the education sector has already taken the decision to scale it up in phases. This innovation is rare and has potential to support the diversification of educational provision within the context of EFA.

3.2.5 School Feeding Programme: This programme has also supported the national effort to increase enrolment and enhance the attendance of students in lower basic schools in deprived regions through the provision of daily school lunches to over 180,000 students. In view of the fact that the intervention is heavily driven by donor support, the MoBSE in close partnership with the World Food Programme, is developing a national strategy on a sustainable home-grown school feeding whose implementation will eventually wean the sector from external donor support.

3.2.6 Special Needs Education: Any attempt to universalize basic education must take account of the peculiar needs of students in difficult circumstances. Hence, support to special needs children was in the form transportation to and from school, provision of equipment to blind and low vision, hard of hearing, and students with learning difficulties, mainstreaming of students with special needs in ordinary schools, development of an itinerant teaching programme to support mainstreaming, training of students with hard of hearing and their parents on sign language and monitoring and evaluation of special needs education programme. These interventions, particularly, the itinerant teaching programme, have greatly improved teaching and learning in the schools and also made mainstreaming much easier for the sector and the students.

3.2.7 Madrassah Education: Madrassah education was introduced when it became clear that about 15% of the total enrolment was from the madrassa institutions. Strategies were therefore mapped out to modernize this sub-sector but bearing in mind their identity to preserve the Islamic values and teach the core subjects (Mathematics, Science and SES) using Arabic as a medium of instruction while English is taught using English. Madrassah institutions that have fulfilled the recognition criteria are being supported in the areas of classroom construction with sanitary facilities and water points, teacher training, teaching and learning materials and management systems. Among the achievements in this area, are the transition of madrassah graduates to conventional schools to further their education and the replication of best practices from conventional schools to madrassah education and these include the translation and implementation of the minimum standards, school management systems and school development planning process.

3.3 GENDER PARITY IN ENROLMENT

On Gender Parity in enrolment, interventions were designed to remove barriers that militate against the enrolment, retention and performance of girls from lower basic to senior secondary. Accordingly, the following interventions are being implemented:

3.3.1 Separate Toilets for Girls: The construction of separate toilets for girls in schools has significantly created a safer environment for the girls and this was one intervention that should be replicated in all schools where the location of the toilets for boys and girls is not separate. As a matter of policy, girls should be assisted to learn in an environment that is safe and supportive so that they do not run the risk of being sexually harassed.

3.3.2 Financial Assistance to Needy Boys: Due to the intensification of previous interventions in favour of girls' education, the sector experienced a backlash in terms of the withdrawal of boys from school, particularly, at the level of upper basic where fee paying was already a barrier for them. Supporting 6,000 boys in grades 7- 9 with financial assistance to pay fees and other levies was indeed helpful for these boys to continue their education. It must be noted that without such assistance, these beneficiaries would have dropped out of school.

3.3.3 Provision of Labor-saving Devices: There is national effort to support the education of children through a range of local income generating initiatives conceived and implemented by the mothers' clubs. The provision of labor-saving devices to these clubs has reduced the amount of drudgery to undertake the chores at the level of the household with reduced time. The savings in time was set aside for school homework for both boys and girls.

3.3.4 Provision of Sanitary Supplies for Girls: In the past, girls at puberty experienced difficulty in changing their local sanitary pads during menstruation whilst at school the effect of which resulted in absence from school and lessons. From the study conducted by the Gender Education Unit on the effect of this intervention, girls now feel safer coming to school and attending lessons during menstruation because using these pads raised their level of confidence.

3.3.5 Scholarship Trust Fund: The intervention provided continued support to basic and senior secondary girls' scholarships in Regions 3-6. Approximately 15,000 girls benefited from this activity. The girls receiving scholarships were in upper basic (UBS) and senior secondary school (SSS), representing a third of the country's UBS and SSS female students, respectively, in 2006. The intervention supported, through these scholarships, the payment of school fees and covered the cost of textbooks and examinations for disadvantaged girls in UBS and SSS. This has reduced the likelihood that these girls would drop out of the school system. Percentage of female enrollment in UBS has increased from 46 percent in 2004 to 50 percent in 2013 and in SSS from 42 percent to 48 percent, during the same time period. Although an impact evaluation or rigorous analysis has not been undertaken to explore the impact of these interventions on improved girls' enrollment, there are indications that these scholarships have led to increases in girls' enrollment.

All these interventions have contributed to the significant progress in addressing gender inequality. The traditional gender disparities have been eliminated with a Gender Parity Index (GPI) in enrolment of 1.04, 1.00 and 0.91 in lower basic, upper basic and senior secondary respectively. In spite of all these interventions and achievements, retention and performance of female students continue to challenge the sector

3.4 ESSENTIAL LEARNING SKILLS AND FURTHER LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE YOUTH

Interventions under this EFA goal focus on the following:

1. Essential skills with emphasis on self-employability and
2. Strategies that promote further learning opportunities through the creation of secondary and tertiary education places.

Hence, TVET and secondary education programmes have been the main thrust of the policy of essential learning skills and further learning opportunities for the youth.

3.4.1 Technical and Vocational Education and Training: The implementation of these strategies is presented in the form of programmes supported by Government through the establishment of institutions and the facilities therein. It must however be noted that under the TVET programme, training provision by the public sector is relatively limited and such provision is limited to the government-owned training centres

3.4.1.1 Enterprise-based training: No regulated system of apprenticeship exists in the formal sector. However, enterprises do provide in-house training when skills are lacking. According to the NTA enterprise training needs assessment survey of 2007, most skills acquisition takes place partly or wholly on the job. About 61 percent of enterprises provided in-service training to their workers, and about 20 percent provided more organized training through classroom and practical work.

3.4.1.2 Traditional Apprenticeship: Traditional apprenticeship in the trades is probably the largest avenue for skills acquisition in the country for young males, but the quality is uneven and low. Parents often arrange for their children, particularly boys, to be apprenticed to master crafts people in roadside workshops. This includes traditional production such as metalwork, vehicle maintenance, carpentry, furniture making, making cooking utensils, etc. In addition, girls are apprenticed in hairdressing shops, food preparation and servicing, and tailoring/sewing shops. There is no formal contract for the apprentice. The master crafts person is typically not paid for training of the apprentice, but gets virtually free labor for the period of the apprenticeship. The apprentice may be paid a small allowance to cover travel, or may receive small payments when production contracts are fulfilled and paid. The training is essentially to learn by observing and participating in the production process. The length of apprenticeships varies from several months to 2-5 years. Upon completion of the apprenticeship, the apprentice is expected to seek work elsewhere. In some cases, master crafts people use the apprenticeship to identify and select competent workers for their own enterprises.

3.4.2 Secondary Education: The last EFA Assessment saw the domination of the private sector in the delivery of secondary education, hence deprived regions were greatly disadvantaged. Following the formulation of the education policy 2004 – 2015, substantial resources have been invested in the construction of public secondary schools in deprived regions. The distribution of these schools across the country meets the requirement of at least one school per district. Supporting access to secondary education, particularly for girls in deprived regions is the girls scholarship trust fund established to address girls' access and retention.

3.5 LITERACY

As regards the goal of reducing illiteracy by 50%, the Public-Private Partnership Approach (PPPA) as a national strategy has been developed and currently being with key literacy providers taking the lead in terms of programme design and implementation while MoBSE coordinates, monitors and evaluates the programme. These providers are from the NGO community with relative comparative advantage in programme design and delivery with funding provided by the MoBSE through a contractual agreement framework that spells out agreed inputs and deliverables.

3.5.1 Public-Private Partnership Approach: This approach has been implemented under a World Bank funder project: Support to literacy courses through the involvement of local operators. This project initially targeted 6,000 learners but due to delays in implementation, the target had to be scaled down to 3,000 with seven providers. However, the number of learners that attended literacy courses and number of completed hours (with a target of 3,000 learners completing 300 hours) has been exceeded (reaching 4,839, of which 95% were female and all have completed 300 hours).

3.5.2 Community Skills Improvement Project (CSIP): Preceding the World Bank funded project, the African Development Bank (ADB) funded a literacy intervention that was linked to skills and micro-finance components in 250 communities across the country with an initial target of 40,000 learners, of which 80% would be female. However, 32,377 learners were reached with a completion rate of 81%. The experience of this project reveals the added value the skills and micro-finance components have provided to this intervention empowering the learners with literacy, numeracy skills and financial capability to apply the skills and generate income thereby improving livelihoods.

3.5.3 Integrated Functional Literacy Project (IFLP): The IsDB, under the Support to Basic Education Project, funded the review and revision of the national literacy curriculum and the development and printing of teaching and learning materials. This intervention provided the necessary impetus to the delivery of literacy by guiding coverage of learning areas, monitoring and supervision of teaching and learning and above all, the use of single curriculum by all providers.

3.5.4 Basic Literacy Programme (BLP): This is an intervention that is supported by MoBSE from the national budget targeting food vendors in schools who have been provided with literacy and numeracy as a foundation for entrepreneurial skills. In 2003, this intervention has been able reach 1,320, of which 1,311 (99.3%) were female and in 2007 the number increased to 2,193, of which 2,173 (99.0%) were female.

From this narrative, it has become apparent that interventions in literacy provision are mainly driven by donor funding and this has indeed affected continuity of interventions once donor funding wanes. The MoBSE, has however begun mainstreaming cost items in the regular budget to sustain literacy interventions.

3.6 IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The delivery of quality education has been significantly challenged by low content knowledge of qualified teachers, traditional mode of teacher training with insufficient pedagogical skills and weak school management systems, to name but a few. Hence improving students' learning outcomes requires strategies that support the implementation of the following interventions:

1. Early grade literacy programme, which includes the use of national languages and phonics,
2. Early grade numeracy programme
3. Teacher training (pre-service and in-service),
4. Teacher incentive package (attracting qualified teachers to serve in deprived communities)
5. The use of empirical evidence to inform better strategies and approaches to improve learning outcomes
6. School management system that empower communities to participate
7. Curriculum research, review and revision

3.6.1 Payment of Hardship Allowances: The lesson about the payment of hardship allowances to teachers serving in designated areas across regions 3 – 6 has been quite encouraging, however, according to the study that was conducted to assess the impact of the intervention, teachers serving in one region with eligibility to receive the allowance were paid the same proportion of their salaries even though the locations of the schools were different in distance and level of hardship. The other dimension highlighted in the study was the low numbers of female teachers serving in hardship schools. These two issues have now necessitated a new policy in the payment of hardship allowances to teachers serving in the upper limit of the distance and female teachers in both lower and upper limits of the distance. These two issues have now necessitated a new policy in the payment of hardship allowances to teachers serving in the upper limit of the distance and female teachers in both lower and upper limits of the distance. It should, however, be noted that hardship schools have seen the presence of more qualified teachers and are sometimes superior to non-hardship schools on key

indicators such as percentage of teachers who are qualified, pupil-qualified teacher ratio, and National Assessment Test English and Mathematics performance

3.6.2 Construction of Staff Quarters: The schools that have benefitted from this intervention are testimony to the facelift of the status of teachers in those communities where accommodation for teachers was a real challenge. Before this intervention, a good number of these teachers were using the classrooms and offices to accommodate themselves overnight and execute their work in these facilities during the day. The new facilities have therefore changed the image of the teachers and the teaching profession in those communities coupled with an increase in the number of qualified teachers in these locations.

3.6.3 Reading and Foundational Skills: The ability to read is the most basic aspect of knowledge acquisition. It is the basis for further learning and has become a key indicator in assessing the quality of education children receive at the primary school level. To this end, the education sector has made reading proficiency and foundational skills its priority in both the MTP and the ESSP. This is largely informed by the fact that in 2007 the EGRA showed that the vast majority of Gambia children could not read. Strategies were therefore developed and implemented to train teachers in the teaching of reading and comprehension for grades 1, 2 and 3 using the phonics approach. The sector also introduced the Early Literacy in National Languages (ELINL) Program in which students are introduced to reading through national languages. The programme, which is aimed at teaching reading skills in the mother tongue, has indeed provided a strong foundation for learning to read in English. The interventions have been supported by the spirit of partnership in which institutions outside of the MoBSE have been empowered to deliver training to teachers all over the country. These institutions are The Gambia Association of Teachers of English (GATE) in the area of Jolly Phonics and Future In Our Hands (FIOH) in SEGRA.

3.6.4 Primary Teachers Certificate: With interventions, the two models (extension & regular) of teacher training at the level of PTC have produced qualified teachers with virtually no difference in the quality of the graduates. However, in terms of numbers and cost, the extension model is the better of the two and hence a shift in policy in favour of the extension mode for all PTC training. The extension model uses an apprenticeship mode where teacher trainees are placed in schools during the entire period of their training with the taught parts of the programme provided in regional training centres during school vacations. The model has contributed to addressing the teacher shortage with capacity to produce more qualified teachers than the regular model (350 versus 1,200). It also assists in local recruitment of teachers by creating opportunities at the community level for intake into the programme without jeopardizing quality. Furthermore it creates opportunities for a more classroom-relevant teacher training programme.

3.6.5 Curriculum Improvement: This intervention was meant to initiate measures of improving curricula such as the development of a curriculum framework for basic education and the reprinting and publishing of textbooks for basic education. The latter was deemed necessary because the student-textbook ratio is an important indicator in the teaching and learning process and students must therefore access such materials not only for use in schools but also at home. Hence, the education sector invested hugely in the publishing and reprinting of textbooks from grade 1 to 9.

3.6.6 Programme for Improved Quality and Standards in Schools: The PIQSS was developed as a framework to implement school improvement initiatives replacing the Child-friendly School Initiative (CFSI), Sahel Alliance (SA) and Whole School Development (WSD) all of which were funded by different donor to implement the same elements. To avoid duplication of effort and waste of resources, the sector introduced a home-grown framework (PIQSS) to support the schools in their journey to attaining quality education.

3.7 EFA COORDINATING MECHANISMS

In view of the fact that the heart of EFA lies within the country, a national EFA observatory was established to support the coordination of national efforts in advancing the EFA agenda. A National Coordinator was identified to spearhead the coordinating functions at the national level and parallel to this platform is the establishment of the National EFA Campaign Network situated within civil society with responsibility to advocate for relevant policies to EFA from Government and resources from development partners to implement those policies.

SECTION 4: PROSPECTS FOR POST-2015

The EFA progress registered from 2000 to date is indeed without challenges and hence, the revised education policy 2004 - 2015, the MTP 2014 – 2017 and ESSP 2014 – 2022 have highlighted the new policies and programmes required for the consolidation of the gains on the one hand and addressing the inherent weaknesses on the other. It must be noted that both sector plans have sufficiently identified strategies that can engender prospects for post-2015.

In terms of lessons learnt during the period under review, the sector has significantly benefited from innovative models of policy and practice guided by policy decisions informed by empirical evidence. The practice of undertaking research studies and surveys in most of the EFA goals to measure progress and develop further strategies to achieve higher targets is quite commendable. This has led to major reforms such the development of an assessment policy, realignment of all reading programmes in The Gambia and the establishment of rewarding schools through the School Star System

It is noted that cost was a barrier to universalizing basic education and hence when the policy of “no fee paying” was introduced in 2013 and 2014 for the lower and upper basic respectively, surge in enrolment was an outcome. The sector did not only pronounce this policy, but also provide all the public lower and upper basic schools with capitation grants to implement school improvement initiatives as part of the PIQSS initiative.

Under ECD, remarkable progress has been registered from 1999 to 2014 with an unprecedented surge in the number of ECD centres and enrolment, particularly, in disadvantaged communities. This is mainly due to an innovative model of increasing access to ECD in deprived regions which is the annexation of ECD centres to existing lower basic schools in those deprived regions and communities. The lesson from this intervention endorses the fact that the urban strategy of private sector provision cannot be implemented in rural settings to increase access to ECD.

Educational provision must not exclusively be anchored in conventional schooling to universalize basic education. Experience in The Gambia has recognized the diversification of provision of education from traditional conventional approach to innovative models of provision. Such models are the madrassah education system which has evolved from the use of different syllabuses to a synchronized syllabus and a harmonized curriculum and the conditional cash transfer schemes which attract the participation of children under the custody of heads of majalis or daaras with a strong Islamic identity. The lesson learnt from this initiative goes to establish in the minds of policy makers that schooling is one aspect of education and therefore innovation must be promoted to explore other models of educational provision with same quality and standards in learning outcomes.

Literacy may not be a success story in The Gambia but it is certainly one area where great strides have been taken to improve the literacy rates from 1999 to 2013. This is attributed to another paradigm shift in service delivery from the traditional mode to the public-private partnership approach which empowers the NGOs and CBOs with comparative advantage in literacy provision to deliver the service in geographical regions of their choice. The impact of this strategy suggests an increase in the number of providers and a scale up in programme implementation.

Interventions in gender parity have indeed resulted in parity in enrolment at the basic education level and close to parity for secondary education. This tremendous achievement could not have been achieved without focusing interventions on households such as the provision of labour-saving devices for mothers’ clubs to generate income, the proceeds of which are ploughed back to support the education of their daughters. These devices are also helpful in cutting down on the amount of time the girls spent in some of their domestic chores so that sufficient time can be set aside for their homework and other studies at home.

Another important lesson is the meaningful partnership that has been forged in order to coordinate, implement, monitor and evaluate educational programmes. This spirit of partnership is supported by the Ministry's willingness to empower stakeholders including communities to render the sector to account for the outcomes of policy implementation. Through these arrangements, the sector has been able to secure technical support to address challenges that reside in interventions such as early grade reading abilities, teacher training, classroom construction, literacy, school feeding community-based ECD and participatory performance monitoring through the schools performance monitoring (PPM) meetings (SPMM).

The MoHERST is indeed committed to raising the profile of tertiary and higher education including TVET and this is demonstrated by the development of a comprehensive higher policy supported by a legal framework through the development of a higher education bill.

During the period under review, the Government demonstrated its high level of commitment to working jointly with the development partners in order to tackle issues of quality, access and equity in the sector and to ensure a coordinated approach among the various partners and activities. This was evidenced by its leadership in organizing semi-annual joint sector reviews, holding inter-Ministerial SMT meetings and CCMs and maintaining continued cooperation with the partners both in-country and external.

The post-2015 education agenda will require the following policies and interventions under each of the EFA goals:

4.1 Early Childhood Development

1. Scaling up of the community-based ECD and the BFCI+ and provide services to both programmes,
2. Intensifying the annexation strategy (attaching ECD centres to existing lower basic schools),
3. Training of facilitator volunteers and developing a programme to prepare them to gain access to PTC certification at the Gambia College,
4. Supervision and monitoring of the ECD programme,
5. Provision of teaching and learning materials.

4.2 Universalizing Basic Education

1. Scaling up the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) scheme,
2. Scaling up the Donkey cart initiative,
3. Sustain the payment of the school capitation grants to support the "no fee policy"
4. Construction of classrooms for both multi-grade and mono-grade schools,
5. Provision of water points and sanitary facilities to create an environment conducive for teaching and learning,
6. Develop and implement a home-grown school feeding with the availability of domestically generated resources,
7. Further develop the madrassah education programme,
8. Support the special needs education interventions

4.3 Gender Parity in Enrolment

1. Extend the abolition of fees to senior secondary schools,
2. Strengthen mothers' clubs and support income generating schemes,
3. Replicate the construction of separate toilets for girls to schools without separate toilets,
4. Provision of sanitary pads to female students for use during menstruation,

4.4 Literacy

1. Strengthen the capacities of literacy providers,

2. Mobilize resources for literacy provision,
3. Provision of teaching and learning materials
4. Monitoring and evaluation of literacy provision,
5. Linking literacy with formal and create opportunities for transition,
6. Develop and implement ICT in literacy
7. Development of an Assessment system for certification

4.5 Essential Learning Skills and Further Learning Opportunities for the Youth

1. Construct secondary schools in deprived communities
2. Abolish all forms of fees in public secondary schools
3. Enforce a legislative framework to support the implementation and sustainability of the TVET policy and management systems for TVET
4. Strengthen the institutional capacity of the TVET sub-sector
5. Expand and diversify opportunities for technical and vocational education for the increasing numbers of senior secondary leavers
6. Strengthen the GTTI by introducing higher diploma courses
7. Create opportunities for workers to upgrade their skills with specially designed courses using ICT and open distance learning where feasible
8. Strengthen the NTA to regulate, set standards and certify qualifications
9. Make TVET programs affordable and accessible and provide scholarships for needy girls
10. Strengthen quality part-time TVET for lifelong learning
11. Develop a comprehensive apprenticeship system for the informal sector
12. Introduce more relevant training programs for rural TVET trainees
13. Re-introduce trade testing and certification
14. Establish the Labor Market Information System
15. Conduct Tracer Studies
16. Update the National TVET Policy

4.6 Quality Education

1. Conduct reforms at Teacher Training institute at The Gambia College to include ICT competencies
2. Scale up the National Language pilot Scheme and intensify interventions in foundational reading
3. Review curricula, develop a competency-based curriculum and develop relevant curricula materials including digital content and delivery
4. Review current in-service training approach in favour of more cost-efficient and effective models
5. Develop and implement approaches that support ICT in education
6. Sustain the payment of hardship allowances to teachers serving in deprived communities
7. Collect regular data on students learning outcomes and correlates,
8. Conduct training and recruit more certified teachers and
9. Develop and implement teacher retention schemes

4.7 Financing

1. Increase domestic financing for basic and secondary education to 5% of GDP
2. Increase the education share of the national budget beyond 21.6%,
3. Increase investment in skills development to 50 percent of training provided by the private sector

4. Establish a sound financial basis for long-term development and sustainability of TVET

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