



**REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FOR EDUCATION**

**REPORT
ON THE
EDUCATION FOR ALL/
FAST TRACK INITIATIVE**



December 2006

Background

It has been six years since the community of nations converged on the capital of Dakar to re-commit themselves to the attainment of universal primary education along with other education for All goals. As a catalyst to accelerate progress toward the goal of universal primary education, the Education for All/Fast Track Initiative (EFA/FTI) was created as a global partnership within the framework of the Monterrey Compact.

The Gambia alongside 27 low income countries has been endorsed as an FTI beneficiary country with support provided through the Catalytic Trust Fund of the FTI during the calendar years 2005 and 2006 as an effective vehicle for accelerating progress toward universal primary completion.

This report therefore gives an account of the implementation of the 2006 grant paid out from the Catalytic Trust Fund as support provided to the education sector of the Gambia.

Prior to the disbursement of the first tranche of the grant in March 2006, a Letter Agreement was signed and counter signed by the World Bank and Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs of The Gambia respectively agreeing, inter alia, to pay the grant of four million US Dollars (US\$4,000,000) to the recipient in two tranches, the first in the amount of two million five hundred thousand United States Dollars (US\$2,500,000) and the second in the amount of one million five hundred thousand United States Dollars (US\$1, 500,000).

It is important to note that that this grant supports the Gambia Education Sector policy using the policy-based adjustment mode of disbursement. The component areas of the programme under the grant are:

1. Expansion of primary education through maximum utilisation of existing facilities, construction of additional classrooms where necessary, and staff quarters in the most deprived regions;
2. Increasing the enrolment and retention of girls through the implementation of gender equity initiatives targeting the poor, increased advocacy through Mothers' Clubs and female teachers associations;
3. Improve the quality and relevance of education provided through pre-service and in-service training, provision of teaching and learning materials, curriculum improvement, provision of incentives to teachers serving in deprived communities;
4. Strengthening management capacities both at the centre and the decentralised structures through a well coordinated sector management programme which puts in place a comprehensive implementation, monitoring and evaluation framework.

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The first tranche of two million five hundred thousand United States Dollars (US\$2,500,000) was disbursed during March 2006 while the remaining tranche of one million five hundred thousand United States Dollars (US\$1,500,000) was received during the first week in September 2006. The allocations below show the distribution of the grant by component area and priority.

COMPONENT	GMD	USD
ACCESS & EQUITY	25,840,248	922,866
GIRLS EDUCATION	6,346,676	226,667
QUALITY OF TEACHING/LEARNING	70,657,076	2,523,467
CAPACITY BUILDING	9,156,000	327,000
TOTAL	112,000,000	4,000,000

COMPONENT AREA 1 (GMD25,840,248 / USD922,866)

PROGRAMME COMPONENT (1): ACCESS & EQUITY TO BASIC EDUCATION

During the year under review 111 new classrooms have been constructed using the framework agreement with Future In our hands (FIOH). Alongside these classrooms, adequate furniture and sanitary facilities have been provided.

Amongst these, sixty-six (66) classrooms were constructed in Region 1 of which, the construction of forty-eight (48) classrooms is complete and furniture supplied while the construction of eighteen (18) new classrooms is currently on going. In Region 2, thirty (30) classrooms have been constructed with furniture supplied while Regions 5 and 6 benefited from nine (9) and six (6) with furniture respectively.

Under the rehabilitation programme, a total of forty-seven (47) classrooms with staff quarters and administrative offices have been rehabilitated during the period under review. The breakdown of these is as follows: seventeen (17) classrooms and two office buildings in Region 1, twelve (12) classrooms in Region 2, six (6) classrooms in Region 3, four (4) classrooms and a staff quarters in Region 4, four (4) in Region 5, and eighteen (4) classrooms with an office complex and a staff quarters in Region 6.

The impact of the support on this programme is the increase in capacity of the regions to accommodate more children in school thus increasing both the gross intake and enrolment rates particularly in deprived regions.

COMPONENT AREA 2 (GMD6,346,676 / USD226,667)

Increasing participation and retention rates for girls

As indicated in previous reports, gender issues have been given enormous attention during the implementation of both the 2005 and 2006 grants, and the returns are evident. During the year under review, gains for girls in basic education have been maintained while the decline in the enrolment of boys in lower basic has been addressed. The recruitment of women teachers for the basic education level has been a priority under this programme, and hence support was provided to the Gender Education Unit for the implementation of a comprehensive recruitment drive targeting one hundred and fifty-five (155) female students in grades 11 and 12. The resultant effect of this strategy is the increase in the enrolment of female teacher trainees by twenty-five (25) on the PTC and HTC programmes at the Gambia College.

In the area of the expansion of Child/Girl Friendly School Initiative (GFSI) in regions 2 and 3 where the lessons of the 2005 interventions have been quite encouraging, support has been extended to ten schools in each of the regions where the cost burden on the parents has been greatly minimized through the purchase of uniforms, shoes, schoolbags, pencils, exercise books and variety of teaching and learning materials. In addition, ten mothers' clubs in regions 2 and 3 have already been set up with the provision of seed money to each club, the proceeds of which are expected to be ploughed back to support the education of their children, particularly girls.

Evidence of this is the engagement of the clubs mainly in communal farming and gardening whose cascading effects generate substantial income sufficient for investment in loan schemes for the benefit of the entire membership. The returns from these interventions have greatly increased the rates of enrolment and retention of both boys and girls in the targeted schools located within deprived communities. The following enrolment figures in Region Three can attest to this: with the first set of five schools targeted since 2005, there has been an increase from six hundred and forty (640) boys to seven hundred and thirty-six (736) while the enrolment of girls rose from seven hundred and four (704) to eight hundred and seventy-one (871).

Since the component deals with issues of both access and retention, the Gambia Teachers' Union (civil society organization) has also been supported to develop information, education communication and behavioural change communication messages aimed at increasing the rates of participation and retention of children in schools. It is hoped that the regional structures of the GTU female wing will be used as an effective vehicle to execute the implementation of the IEC and BCC strategies in the communities within which they serve as role models for the education of girls. The expected result of this support is to reverse the declining trend of enrolment in a number of deprived communities where the GFSI has not covered.

COMPONENT AREA 3 (GMD70,657,076 USD2,523,467)

Quality of Teaching and Learning

The main thrust of the FTI proposal is the improvement of quality of teaching and learning in schools hence the allocation of 59.5% of the grant to this component. In order to implement the activities under this component efficiently, the component is divided into two sub-components, namely: Teacher Training and Quality of teaching and learning.

Teacher Training (Sub-Component 1)

Consistent with the Catalytic Trust Fund's overall objective to help accelerate the improvement of access and quality of universal primary education, the Gambia College Teacher Training Component of the Program is divided into 4 areas as follows:

- Teacher Trainee Observation
- Production of Distance Education Modules for Teacher Trainees in the schools
- Provision of teacher trainee stipends
- PTC Extension Programme

Gambia College Teacher Trainee Observation

Teacher Trainee Observation is geared towards improving the quality of delivery of content and support to the trainee. Funding from the FTI Catalytic Fund has provided opportunity for college staff to visit and interact with trainees in the schools more often than was previously possible. This has improved the turn around time for feedback from lecturers to get to the students and consequently has improved the quality of the support system for students. .

Provision of Distance Education Modules

Each teacher trainee in the Primary Teachers' Certificate (PTC) received 5 modules in each of the 4 core subjects namely, Science, Maths, English and SES, within a two year period while on teaching practice. Funding provided by FTI under this category was used to print these modules and to distribute them to students in the schools.

Student Stipends

The Students are provided with stipends to help support their learning activities. A total of 1,423 students were provided stipend for one month from funds provided by the FTI under this category. This contribution by the FTI has helped bridge the shortfall in this category for this period.

PTC Extension Programme

The PTC Extension Programme has been initiated in Region 5 where over four hundred (400) unqualified teachers are being trained to become qualified teachers. This is an attempt to reduce the unacceptably heavy presence of unqualified teachers in the system. The pilot of this initiative is currently in Region 5 but plans are afoot to roll it out in all the regions through a gradual phase-in programme. The funding of this activity is jointly provided by BESPOR and FTI.

Quality of Teaching & Learning (Sub-Component 2)

Teaching / Learning Materials

As regards the other sub-component (quality of teaching and learning), the following titles of supplementary readers have been purchased and distributed to all public schools:

Mathematics for The Gambia books 1 – 7

English for The Gambia Book 6

Letter Writing & Composition Book 5

English Grammar Book 5

Social & Environmental Studies Book 6

Social & Environmental Studies Book 7

Science Book 9

Library corner books

All the purchased supplementary readers are authored by Gambian nationals in accordance with the policy drive to encourage the use of supplementary readers written by Gambians for the attainment of an education which is quite relevant to the socio-economic needs of the country.

Special Needs Education

As part of the commitment to integrate children with special needs into the education system, the DoSE has made special education an integral part of the basic education program. The Education Policy aims to increase access and opportunities for special learners to maximize their potential for self-development and employment. Access to education for disabled children is very much constrained by a variety of circumstances, chief among them, is the transportation of the students to and from school.

Responding to this constraint, two new mini buses have been purchased to transport students attending the Methodist School for Learning Difficulties (special school) and blind and low vision children who have been mainstreamed in lower and upper basic schools.

Pedagogical Development Workshops

One of the approaches to the improvement of quality education is the engagement of subject associations in the area of strengthening the abilities of teachers to deliver the curriculum at the level of the classroom. It is in view of such thinking that funding has been provided to the following associations to train teachers in the various regions:

- Mathematics Teachers Association of The Gambia (MATAG);
- Science Teachers Association of The Gambia (STAGAM);
- Gambia Association of Teachers of English (GATE)
- Social and Environmental Studies Teachers Association (SESTA)

Teacher Incentives

In a bid to attract teachers to and retain them in very difficult areas, an incentive package has been designed for those teachers serving in the difficult areas in regions 3, 4, 5 & 6. Regions 3 & 4 receive 30% of their salaries while 5 & 6 get 35% and 40 % respectively.

The impact of this incentive package has greatly enhanced the rates of retention of qualified teachers in hardship zones. All the regions have reported incidence of serving teachers in the urban areas where the incentive package does not exist requesting to be posted to hardship zones. This development is quite encouraging since the problems associated with equitable distribution of qualified teachers are gradually being addressed.

Curriculum Revision

Further to the availability of new core textbooks in all lower basic schools for use in grades 1, 2, 3 & 4 in the pupil textbook ratio of 1:1 for English, Mathematics & Integrated Studies, the materials for grades 5 & 6 have been successfully reviewed, revised, validated and piloted and the fully edited copies have been submitted for procurement. Additional support was also provided to CREDIT for the revision of the curriculum for the core subjects for levels 7, 8 & 9 in readiness for piloting and subsequent publication.

In the area of Madrassa education, support has been extended for the synchronization and harmonization of the revised curriculum for grades 1-4. This is to ensure parity at quality and relevance of education provision between the conventional schools and Madrassa institutions.

Support to WAEC

Funding for the purchase of OMR forms and certificates for the Gambia Basic Education Certificate Examination (GABECE) has been provided to West African Examinations Council (WAEC). This is in addition to the procurement of a 4 wheel drive Toyota pickup and a security van whose procurement is being processed by UNICEF through a framework agreement. Such support is expected to suppress WAEC's resolve to levy increases of examination fees on parents, the resultant effect of which may cause extra cost burden.

COMPONENT AREA 4 (GMD9,156,000 USD327,000)

Strengthening Management and institutional capacity at the central and regional levels

The focus of this programme is to strengthen the management and institutional capacities of the central and regional structures to be able to plan and manage the development of the education sector to achieve the EFA, Millennium Development Goals, PRSP Education Policy goals.

Hence the activities supported under this component range from capacity building on planning and implementation strategies for educational programmes, data collection, analysis and validation, and Senior Management Team and Co-ordinating Committee meetings.

The importance of an implementable monitoring and evaluation framework for increased harmonisation at coordination and implementation of educational programmes cannot be over-emphasised. It is for this reason that considerable support under the FTI has been

provided to monitoring and evaluation of sector activities through the facilitation of meetings at the levels of senior management and coordinating committee whose conclusions are fed into each other for necessary follow-up actions to be initiated.

The programme also supported participatory workshops for the development of an Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) for the following programme areas:

- Basic Education;
- Secondary Education;
- Quality Assurance;
- Technical & Vocational Education & Training
- Tertiary & Higher Education;
- Sector Management

The participatory workshops have not only produced the ten-year ESSP but three-year rolling plans have also been introduced and developed in all directorates including the regional directorates. This exercise has witnessed visible evidence of the commitment and participation of all stakeholders in the planning process.

In view of the importance of creating a data-driven culture for efficient and effective monitoring and evaluation of an education system, the FTI supported the collection and analysis of data from the Madrassa, Early Childhood Development, Adult and Non-formal Education and Skills Centres. It is hoped that the data gap that does exist in these sub-sectors will be addressed once and for all.