

THE REPUBLIC



OF THE GAMBIA

DEPARTMENT OF STATE FOR EDUCATION
BEDFORD PLACE BUILDING
BANJUL, THE GAMBIA



EFA 2000 Assessment REPORT

THE GAMBIA

TECHNICAL TEAM

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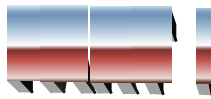
National Co-ordinator

BABOUCARR BOUY

Mail address	DIRECTOR
	Planning, Policy Analysis, Research and
	Budgeting Directorate,
	Department of State for Education
Telephone	(220) 228889
Fax	(220) 228889, 224180
e-mail	bbouy@qanet.gm

TEAM MEMBERS

JAWARA GAYE
MUHAMMED JALLOW
VICTORIA DIARRA SAVAGE
LAMIN FATTY
SIAKA CAMARA



1.1 EDUCATION AND THE POPULATION POLICY

The Gambia's high population growth rate is one of the dominant factors that adversely affect most of its social, economic and environmental indicators. This rapid population growth is due to a high rate of natural increase and migration. Sectors such as health and education could hardly contain this population pressure, as services in these sectors have been stretched to their limits.

The Gambia's population is growing at an annual rate of 4.2 per cent according to the 1993 Population and Housing Census. A natural increase of 2.7 per cent per annum and a net migration rate of 1.5 per cent account for this. The pattern and level of demographic indicators experienced in the Gambia over the past twenty years, has been explained by persistently high fertility level compounded with declining mortality rates. For example, data from the 1983 and 1993 censuses, revealed

that fertility rate have been persistently high at 6.4 and 6.0 children per woman respectively. Infant mortality has dropped from 167 per thousand in 1983 to 84 per thousand in 1993, and life expectancy at birth for males and females from 41.3 and 44.2 years in 1983 to 54.0 and 56.7 years in 1993 respectively; averaging, for both sexes, at around 55 years in 1993. The three decennial censuses also revealed that the population of the Gambia is characterised by a youthful structure. This is evident from the estimate of the proportion of persons below the age of 15 years (over 41 percent) and a median age of 18 years.

The peaceful nature of this country at a time when crisis brewed in the sub-region coupled with economic opportunities, as a result of favourable macroeconomic policies in place, has attracted migrants during these two decades.

The 1993 census revealed that the economically active population is made

up of a little over 33 per cent (33.27) of the country's population of which 96 per cent are employed. Examining the economically active population across categories that are characterised by little or no education. For example, almost 49 per cent females and 74 per cent male who are Crop producers and Skilled Agricultural Workers have no education, compared to 3.07 per cent and 1.70 per cent females and males respectively in the same category with post secondary education. The same pattern is observed for Plant and Machine Operators, persons in Elementary Occupation etc.

The fore going confirms the fact that the country really needs to invest in the education sector so as to increase the existing level of education in order to boost the quality and level of participation in the labour market. The development requirements of this country as contained in the mission statement of "Vision 2020", calls for, among other things, tapping from a well-educated, trained, healthy, self-reliant and enterprising human resource (1996). This is in line with one of the Education Policy's specific goal, to increase access

the various occupation categories, there is evidence to show that more economically active persons are classified in job and improvement of the quality and relevance of education.

From these discussions, it is obvious that the formulation and adoption of a National Population Policy in 1992 was eminent as an influencing factor of the demographic trends of this country. The overall goal of the policy, which is to improve the quality of life and raise the standards of living of all Gambians, is also in tandem with other sectoral policies and programs including the Education Policy.

EXPANDED VISION OF BASIC EDUCATION

“Every person – child, youth and adult – shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. These needs comprise both essential learning tools (such literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning. The scope of basic learning needs and how they should be met varies with individual countries and cultures and inevitably, changes with the passage of time”.

(Article 1 of the World Declaration on Education For All)

The National Population Policy underscores the role of education as key to the formation and sharpening of beliefs and attitudes.

This statement goes to support earlier points, thus confirming the pressing demands, within the context of the country's development objectives, for education.

1.2 EFA goals and targets for The Gambia

Mandate was given by the SMT¹ of DOSE to the National Team to review the Technical Guidelines against the background of available national data. Data has been available for the core indicators dealing with primary education from the annual Education Statistics compiled and published by the Planning, Policy Analysis, Research and Budgeting Directorate (PPARBD) of DOSE. Data on Early Childhood

¹ SMT comprises the Secretary of State, the Permanent and Deputy Permanent Secretary, all eight Directors, Principal Gambia College and Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI), Head of School of Education at Gambia College, Project Managers of Project Co-ordination Unit (PCU) and Training Information for the Protection of the Environment (TIPE). This team meet monthly to monitor progress made in implementing the sector program.

Education was collected through a survey covering all ECD centres, while data for Adult Literacy Education was compiled from the census data base of the Central Statistics Department. A data collection exercise was done to gather information on Training in Essential Skills and Education for Better Living while the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (conducted by West African Examination Council) results were used as a measure of Learning achievement.

The EFA goal and targets for The Gambia could be summed thus:

Early Childhood Care:

To establish a database on ECD activities to help inform policy about its intensity and coverage, and to identify possible government interventions. ECD was not a policy priority at the start of the period and achievements in this area have largely been demand driven. This has led to the evolution of a policy framework, which includes amongst other things, government's role in setting the necessary policy guidelines for the provision and management of ECD programs.

Primary education:

Against the background of rapid population increase and limited resources, the Government at the start of the decade had set the following objectives and targets for 2003:

to increase access to basic education from 60% to 75% of school-aged children;

to increase the transition rate from Grade 6 to 7 from 35% to 60%;

to lower the school-age entry from 8 to 7 years;

to evaluate and revise the grades 1-6 curriculum and introduce a new grade 7-9 curriculum to complete the continuous basic education curriculum;

to increase the output of trained teachers and to phase out unqualified teachers; and

To increase functional literacy programs and to offer alternative educational opportunities for young people who are outside the formal system.

Mid way through the policy, in 1995, a national conference was convened following regional consultations to

review the targets. The result was a Revised Education Policy 1988 - 2003. The emphasis is laid on increasing access to and improving the quality and relevance of primary education, particularly for girls, through a more efficient utilisation of existing facilities - human and material. 600 new classrooms were constructed between 1990 - 1996, and 200 rehabilitated. Following the gains made in increasing access to education (i.e. 68.4% GER by 1996 as opposed to the target 65%), the target is 79% GER for grades 1-6 in the formal sector or 87.6% including madrasas² by the year 2000. The corresponding figures are 90.1% and 93.1% respectively by the end of the Revised Policy period (i.e. 2003).

Learning Achievement and Outcomes:

The policy aims at the provision of a nine-years of uninterrupted basic education to all school aged children by 2005. This would imply that the terminal examination at Grade 6 used as a selective cum screening mechanism for

² Madrasas are a formal system of education with a defined curriculum and syllabi that uses Arabic as a medium of communication.

onward transition into the second level would be phased out. The policy provides for the use of Continuous Assessment, and Learning Achievement Test to measure standards and achievements of students. Given the stress on quality in the Education Policy, the DOSE is working on a framework to institutionalise Monitoring of Learning Achievements at the primary level in the four core subjects (English, Mathematics, Science and Social and Environmental Studies). Already, achievement tests have been developed for these subjects at Grade 4 level. Sets of four questionnaires to assess factors that may influence learning achievements are also developed. The administration of these tests and questionnaires is currently under way and the findings of the MLA will be reflected as an addendum to this report. Meanwhile, the results of the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination have been used as a substitute for MLA in this exercise.

Adult Literacy:

The term literacy is defined herein as 'the ability to read and write in any language'. Though the main focus of the

Education Policy is the formal sector, a large proportion of the youth and adult population remains outside this range. The provision of non-formal education programs - any organised, systematic educational activity that takes place outside the framework of the formal system in order to provide selected types of learning to particular target populations - is one response to this situation. The Education Policy (1988-2003) aims "to continue to promote and co-ordinate a selective-intensive approach in order to increase functional literacy" (DOSE, 1988). The Revised Education Policy, however, shifts from this approach into a more demand driven and community focused functional literacy; literacy which helps to create new attitudes and forms of behaviour in support of economic and social development.

Literacy and numeracy programs are targeted at illiterate adults, out-of-school children and youths particularly women. Provision will be expanded through government/private sector partnership that permits public financing and service delivery by the private sector to target 4000 adults per year up to the end of the

policy period. This assessment on adult literacy is based on growth rates estimated from previous censuses (1983 & 1993).

Training in Essential Skills:

The National Vocational Training Board develops policy in respect of technical education and vocational training and, through its Directorate, runs vocational training programs. The private sector, NGOs and religious bodies are also involved in the provision of these programs. The Revised Education Policy target is geared towards improving the collection and analysis of labour market and training needs data. The PPARBD has developed questionnaires for vocational and technical education institutions and have administered them during the 1998/99 academic year. However, the collection has been marred with problems, mainly lack of co-operation from these institutions, and therefore the analysis (which is still in progress) would be based on the available data. For the purpose of EFA 2000 Assessment, information was gathered in this area using the NESIS guidelines to supplement available data.

Education for Better Living:

Though education for better living is not explicitly pronounced in the Education Policy 1988-2003, the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and values required for better living is embedded in the policy in the areas of library services, educational broadcasting services, guidance and counselling, and other means of communication. Conscious of the potential of the media in educational development, the policy aims at exploiting this avenue and to further develop a strategy for advocacy and information exchange in collaboration with the Department of State for Works, Communication and Information. Though there is continued usage and reliance on broad-based sensitisation methods to enhance knowledge and awareness; data on its effectiveness in terms of behavioural change is none existent. The information gathered during the EFA Assessment exercise indicates the need for such a survey to empirically determine the effectiveness of current strategies and thereby inform policy accordingly. There are policy plans to develop an Educational Broadcasting Unit, while the

curriculum will be revisited (by 2000) to make it more gender sensitive and relevant to socio-economic realities of our time.

1.3 EFA strategy and/ or plan of action

To achieve the objectives of the 1988-2003 policy, four strategic measures were outlined:

Restructuring of the school system.

It was proposed that a 6-3-3-2 system be introduced to provide a nine-year broad based basic education and made accessible to all Gambia children. Transition to higher levels is based on selective examinations.

Maximising resources for education.

Given the resource constraints, maximal utility must be derived from the use of existing resources and facilities, introduction of double shift, user charges, increasing community and NGO participation, reallocation of funds in favour of basic education, and ensuring that external assistance matches policy priorities.

Training education sector personnel.

The effective implementation of the policy required the professional

development of personnel including teachers, senior and middle level management officers, using low cost training strategies.

Improving the management of the education sector.

Implementation required improvement in the co-ordination of educational services to enhance capacity. The strategy included the integration of the Ministry and the Department of Education, strengthening the Planning Unit, rationalising the organisation of the regional administration and build up capacity, and improving co-ordination and management of non-formal and post-secondary education.

The Mission Statement of the Department of State for Education is embodied in the statement “A responsive, relevant and quality education for all Gambians”. Conscious of this aspiration and its mandate, the DOSE over the past two years has developed a Revised Education Policy 1988 – 2003 which was guided by a Public Expenditure Review and complemented by a Master Plan and an Investment Program (1998 – 2003). These documents form the pillars upon

which educational development in the coming years would be based. The preparation of these documents started off at the grassroots through consultative workshops at community and regional levels culminating in a national conference in September 1995. The outcome of the conference was the Revised Education Policy and a sector program developed to enhance the realisation of policy objectives. Together with the accompanying documents, consultations and sensitisation meetings were held with communities and regions, unions, teachers, a cross section of the private sector, the donor partners and the National Assembly members to sensitise all stakeholders on the future strategies for education.

The Third Education Sector Program contains the future direction of education in The Gambia. The program focuses mainly on Basic Education (first nine years - Grades 1-9). Policy decisions are taken by the Secretary of State, the Permanent secretary and Deputy Permanent Secretary, and are advised by an advisory body, the SMT. Implementation is monitored by a Co-ordination Committee, which is an

extension of SMT and includes all Regional PEOs. At the grassroots level, decentralised implementation includes the Teachers Union, NGOs, Divisional Education Committees, Parent Teachers Associations, Teachers and other partners. Under the Third Education Sector Program, Terms of References and job descriptions have been drawn for Directorates and Directors are held accountable for activities within their domains. SMT monitors progress through a system of reporting.

Between 1988-1996, the priority of the education system was focused on access, relevance and quality. Following the review conference of 1995, and the assessment of the gains and shortcomings during the first part of the policy period, priority target groups changed thus:

"The priority target groups in rank order are:

girls, illiterate women and the disabled;

children of basic education school-age (7 to 15);

youth in both rural and urban areas;

middle and senior level human resources (production & training); and Education sector personnel."(DOSE 1998a, p12)

Regional priorities are based on low enrolment and literacy rates. There are six administrative divisions corresponding to six regional offices³; and Region 6 ranks highest while Region 1 is the lowest priority.

The Third Education Sector program has been launched to provide the logistics/resources for implementation. The Logical Framework (1998) of the program attaches monitoring and supervisory activities and responsibilities to various institutions and bodies such as Cabinet, Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs (DOSFEA), the Personnel Management Office (PMO) and SMT. By this mechanism, Directorates and Units are required to produce progress

³ Region 1 -Banjul and Kanifing Municipal Council; Region 2 - Western Division; Region 3 - North Bank Division; Region 4 - Lower River Division; Region 5 - Central River Division; and Region 6 - Upper River Division.

reports, which would indicate levels of achievements and constraints thereof.

1.4 EFA decision-making and management

Being a signatory to the Jomtien Declaration of 1990, the Convention on the Rights of the Child among others, The Gambia Government has committed itself to provide Basic Education⁴ to all its citizens as enshrined in the 1970 Republican Constitution and reiterated in the 1996 Constitution of the Second Republic. Through an Act of Parliament, the responsibility for the provision and discharge of education is bestowed on the Secretary of State for Education. With technical advise from the Permanent Secretary and SMT, policy decisions are taken by the Secretary of State for Education. Implementation is monitored by the Co-ordinating Committee⁵ through its monthly review

⁴ Basic education covers the period from Grade 1 to Grade 9; thus an uninterrupted nine years of education for every child.

⁵ The Co-ordinating Committee comprise of all Directors, Regional Principal Education Officers, Program Co-ordinators and Heads of Units. Co-ordinating Committee Meetings (CCM) are chaired by the Permanent Secretary and is held once every month on a rotational basis in all the education regions.

meetings. The Department is undergoing reforms, which includes the devolution of authority through a decentralisation process. Various Directorates are responsible for different EFA activities that relate to their functions e.g. Standard and Quality Assurance Directorate (SQAD) is responsible for Monitoring Learning Achievement, PPARBD for providing monitoring indicators. However, given the priority target groups and the continued reliance on accurate and timely statistical data for informed policy decision making, the PPARBD plays a very central role in policy guidance.

"To facilitate the dictates of the policy, the support services of the sector will be rationalised to provide the necessary back-up services and supply. Related logistics will be effectively provided and standards and quality effectively monitored. In line with the performance indicators set, a management information system will be put in place to provide the required data on the state of art answering the critical management issues of what, how, why, when and where to facilitate information sharing" (DOSE 1998a p2).

1.5 Co-operation in EFA

The Master Plan provides the agenda on Education and formulates various strategies geared towards forging a partnership and alliance between government, and the private and informal sectors to ensure that education becomes the concern of every Gambian.

Government is the principal provider and financier of basic education services in The Gambia. In 1996/97, government owned public schools accounted for 86% of total primary enrolment, 10% were grant-aided⁶ while 4% were private (DOSE, 1998b p3). Grant-aided schools are spread across the country and at all levels while private schools are mainly concentrated at the secondary level and around the Region 1 area. Given the subventions to grant-in-aid schools, these schools are privately managed by school boards but supervised by the Department and hence a close collaboration exists between the board of governors of these schools and their

⁶ Grant-in-aid schools are mission (Religious Organisations) schools, which receive an annual grant from Government to cover personal emoluments (academic staff salaries, gratuities and allowances).

religious organisations on the one hand, and government on the other.

The principal external partners in education over the years have been the World Bank's International Development Agency (IDA), African Development Bank (ADB) and UNICEF. Other co-operating bodies include the other UN agencies (UNDP, UNFPA, and WFP), the European Union and a host of bilateral donors. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) involvement in education in The Gambia dates back into history and their participation has been very positive. Key NGO partners are Action Aid, Future In Our Hands, Christian Children's Fund, Catholic Relief Service and FAWEGAM. These NGOs have been actively involved in one or more of the following: classroom construction, providing scholarships to needy students, thereby providing an opportunity for children who would have otherwise been left out of school due to high cost, literacy programs, girls education, and Early Childhood Care and Development. In the Third On average, 47.4% of recurrent expenditure on education went to primary education between 1990 and

Education Sector Programme, NGOs would be involved in classroom construction; an area they are very familiar with.

External donors have been supportive of The Gambia's drive towards the provision of basic education. The capital expenditure of on education is largely financed (over 85%) by external donors through loans and grant. However, no support was received from these agencies, including the UNDP, during the EFA 2000 assessment exercise. UNICEF mainly funded the exercise.

1.6 Investment in EFA since 1990

Government expenditure on education since 1990 reflects an increased public allocation to education. Total expenditure in education grew in real terms at an annual average rate of 9% between 1990/91 and 1996/97, almost doubling in both nominal and real terms.

1996. Given that education is an expanding sector and there is strong policy emphasis on access, the

proportion spent on primary education reflects this emphasis. Basic education continues to receive government's priority and internal reallocation would favour primary education. It should be noted that total expenditure on education captures government recurrent expenditure and does not include other expenditures on education by the private and NGOs to primary education.

Development expenditure fluctuated; averaging 31% of total expenditures between 1990/91 and 1996/97 due largely to the fact that budgetary process for publicly financed investments demonstrate a lack of co-ordinated planning of resource utilisation. However, in the education sector, donor investments tended to support priority programs as primary and teacher training accounted for 32% and 20% of total development expenditure respectively.

Between 80-90% of development expenditures are externally financed.

Under the Third Education Sector Programme, government has demonstrated its commitment towards the attainment of Education For All by not only setting new targets on enrolment and retention in school, but by providing the enabling environment and the necessary financial resources. The financial commitment is shown in the Table (i) & (ii) below.

The sector has followed its priorities in terms of resource allocation. The primary level continues to receive top priority in its share of public expenditure allocation to education, followed by the junior secondary level, hence the emphasis on basic education is matched by resource allocation.

Table i. Indicative Financing Plan (in millions of US \$)

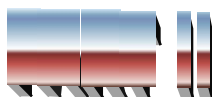
	IDA		Gambia Government		Other Donors		Total
	US \$	%	US \$	%	US \$	%	US \$
Education II (1991-97)	14.6	68.9	1.1	5.2	5.5	25.9	21.2
Phase 1 1999-2003	20	39	9	17.5	22.3	43.5	51.3

Phase 2 2003-2007	20	36.4	10	18.2	25	45.5	55
Total	40	37.6	19	17.9	47.3	44.5	106.3

Table ii. Financing plan for Investment and Incremental Recurrent

Source	Total (Millions US \$)
Central Government	4.6
Local Government and Area Councils	4.4
Communities and NGOs	2.2
Donor commitment	20.1
IDA	20.0
Total Cost	51.3

PART II



2.1 Progress toward goals and targets

Indicator 1

Title: Gross Enrolment Ratio in Early Childhood

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.

Policy Background:

In the Gambia, provision for Early Childhood Education is demand driven provided by the private sector and NGOs. Within the spirit of partnership, The Gambia Government, through the Department of State for Education, has been committed to ensuring a comprehensive Early Childhood Education and Development (ECD). In

the revised education policy, government will develop, in consultation with providers, NGOs and local authorities, operational policy guidelines

for the opening, management and supervision of pre-school institutions and a comprehensive medium term plan for ECD. It will also ensure that the quality of pre-school education is maintained, increase material for ECD in teachers' resource centres and identify training needs of pre-school staff, and organise training programs for them. Public resources will be targeted at community based and managed programs in the most disadvantaged areas, whilst more cross-sectoral integrated approaches to early childhood care are being developed.

Summary of Findings:

This indicator measures the general level of participation of young children in early childhood development programs. It also indicates a country's capacity to prepare young children for primary education.

Comprehensive data on pre-school enrolment is being collected for the first time in The Gambia by the PPARBD. Hence a trend analysis cannot be done to show developments in this area during the decade under review. However, the

number of centres has increased from 125 in 1995 to 265 in 1998 (Table 1.1). A 'Diagnostic Evaluation of Day Care Centres in The Gambia' (June 1996) intimates that the increasing involvement of women in economic activities, growing awareness of the value of an early start to education and the intensive promotion of ECD provisions, account for the rapid growth.

The GER of 17.7% in 1998 (Table 1.2 & Figure 1.1) clearly indicates that the provision of pre-school education, in spite of its existence in The Gambia for over a decade, is yet to reach the majority of children. Only 17.7% of the official age-group population (3-6 years) are receiving this service; 17.5% for male and 18.0% for female.

The regional distribution highlights serious disparities. Region 1 & 2 accounts for 46.9% of the population at this level but captures a staggering 72.5% of the overall enrolment at this level. This demonstrates that the provision is highly demand driven and hence its concentration in the urban and peri-urban areas. Indeed, the presence of a larger working

population outside the traditional subsistence activities is prominent in these more affluent areas. The regional disparities in GER further buttress this reality. Region 1 and 2 have a GER of 26.8% and 30.7% respectively, compared to 8.5% and 6.1% for region 5 and 6 respectively. At the national level, female participation is slightly higher than male (18% compared to 17.5%) at this level. By region, female participation is higher in both Regions 3 and 4, while males dominate in the other regions.

In terms of Gender Parity Index (GPI), there is a balance between boys and girls at the national level (1.0) and also in both regions 1 and 2. It is interesting to note that in both Region 3 and 4, female participation at this level is higher than male participation; a GPI of 1.3 and 1.1 respectively. The reverse is, however, the case in region 5 and 6 where GPI is 0.8 and 0.9 respectively.

Data Tables:

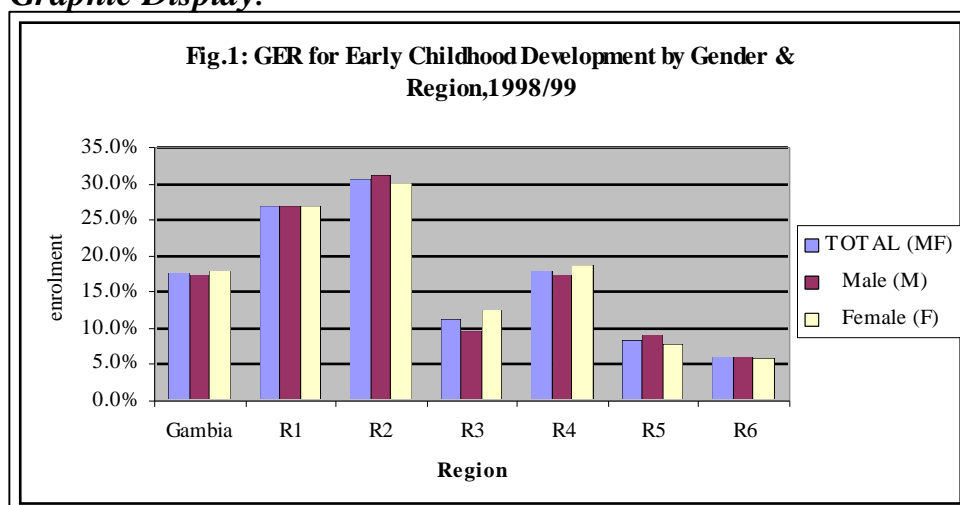
Table: 1.1 ECD centres & population by region, & enrolment by region and gender - 1998

Region	No of ECD Centres	% of Total	Enrolment			% of total enrolment	Population aged 3-6	% of population
			Female	Male	Total			
1	78	29.4%	5,136	4,903	10,039	33.6%	37,406	23.3%
2	104	39.2%	5,748	5,822	11,630	38.9%	37,923	23.6%
3	27	10.2%	1,608	1,251	2,859	9.6%	25,390	15.8%
4	15	5.7%	914	854	1,768	5.9%	9,758	6.1%
5	28	10.6%	925	1,140	2,065	6.9%	24,414	15.2%
6	13	4.9%	740	809	1,549	5.2%	25,540	15.9%
Total	265	100%	15,071	14,779	29,910	100%	160,431	100%

Table: 1.2. GER for ECD by region and gender - 1998

	Gambia	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6
TOTAL (MF)	17.7%	26.8%	30.7%	11.3%	18.1%	8.5%	6.1%
Male (M)	17.5%	26.9%	31.2%	9.8%	17.5%	9.2%	6.3%
Female (F)	18.0%	26.8%	30.1%	12.8%	18.7%	7.7%	5.8%

Graphic Display:



Indicator 2

Title: Percentage of New entrants to grade 1 with ECD experience

Definition:

The number of new entrants to primary grade 1 who have attended some form of organised early childhood development program equivalent to at least 200 hours expressed as a percentage of total number of new entrants to primary grade 1. This indicator helps to assess the proportion of new entrants to grade 1 who presumably have received some preparation for primary schooling through ECD program.

Policy Background:

The policy will ensure that the quality of pre-school education is maintained through increased materials for ECDC in teacher resource centres, and identifying training needs of pre-school staff and organise training programs for them. In many schools in the urban areas, preference is given to intakes with ECD experience.

Summary of Findings:

Of the total enrolment in Grade 1, 46.6% are from Region 1 and 2 (Table 1.1). Like the GER, these two regions account for 72.7% of the new students with ECD experience. In 1998, 27.5% of the new

enrolment in Grade 1 had ECD experience (table 2.1); with female participation marginally greater than male (27.8 and 27.2 respectively). Hence a GPI of 1.0. Regionally, the GPI is balanced in Region 1 and 2, more favourable to girl's (1.1) in Region 3 and 4 and more favourable to boy's (0.8) in Region 5 and 6. The overall percentage participation shows deeper regional disparity when the GER by region is reviewed. In region 1, 53.3% of new entrants to Grade 1 had ECD experience compared to only 11.3% and 9.4% for Region 5 and 6 respectively. Even though ECD provision is concentrated in the urban and peri-urban area, only 53.3% and 39.5% in Region 1 and 2 respectively have ECD experience; showing that about half of the Grade 1 children in Region 1 have ECD experience while 4 out of 10 children have ECD experience in Region 2. Given the total new entrants (13,652) in regions 1 and 2 and those with ECD experience (6,177), only 45.2% have ECD experience with about 182 centres (68.6% of all centres) in these two regions. This clearly shows that there is under utilisation of the currently available ECD facilities. Services at this

level are largely provided by the private sector, NGOs and missions that are largely driven by commercial motive. Hence affordability becomes an issue for the majority of household in these two regions. Of course in the rural areas the problem becomes more pronounced and therefore resort to traditional practices

i.e. leaving children in the care of siblings, grandparents or accompanying mothers to the work fields, becomes the practice.

Data Tables:

Table 2.1. New entrants with ECD experience by region and gender - 1998

	Gambia	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6
TOTAL (MF)	27.5	53.3	39.5	16.0	11.7	9.4	11.3
Male (M)	27.2	53.3	38.9	15.2	11.4	10.2	12.4
Female (F)	27.8	53.4	40.1	17.0	12.1	8.5	10.1

Graphic display:

