



REPORT OF THE GAMBIAN MISSION ON THE NATIONAL CAPACITY-
BUILDING OF LEAD TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTIONS PROJECT.

SUBMITTED BY

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The opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the official position of UNESCO or its Member States and do not imply a commitment on the part of the Organization.

1.0

Introduction

I was in the Gambia from March 17 to March 22, 2003. The Registrar of the Gambia College was at the Airport to receive me. A few hours later, the focal point, Mr. Saim Kinteh, who doubles as the chairman of the Gambia College Council, visited me in my hotel room and we had a very useful discussion. He impressed me as somebody who has been fully involved in the development of education in the Gambia. He was a great asset to me. I also found the Principal, Vice-principal and Registrar of the college very cooperative. So too was Mr. Musa Sowe, the Head of the School of Education. I thank them all for their contributions to the success of the project.

2.0

The Mission

The general terms of reference of the mission required the consultant to hold discussions with the focal point; identify and evaluate the programmes of a lead teacher-training institution; visit some stake-holder establishments and bodies; carry out preliminary analysis and negotiations and discuss recommendation with the identified stakeholders; and prepare a report.

During my initial interaction with the focal point, we identified the Gambia College as the lead teacher-training institution to use as the subject of the study. We also identified the Department of State for Education, the Finance Department, Economic Planning, the Gambia Teachers' Union, the Catholic Mission and the UNESCO office as some of the places to be visited. We drew up a plan of action for the week. This plan was streamlined and finalized during my first meeting with Management of the Gambia College on Monday morning.

By the approved schedule, Monday was set aside for the initial briefing by College Management, and collection of college records and relevant publications. The visit to DoSE and Finance was also scheduled for Monday, Tuesday was set aside for meeting with heads of department of the School of Education, and inspection of the facilities at the Gambia College. The visit to the G.T.U and other identified shareholder organisations and bodies was slated for Wednesday and part of Thursday. Another meeting with the management staff of the college was scheduled for Thursday afternoon. Friday, the last day of the mission, was set aside for a Seminar on Research Methodology for academic staff of the college, especially those in the School of Education. (The details of these are contained in the Evaluation of the Mission which has been forwarded to you).

Efforts were made to execute the project according to the agreed schedule. My first interactive session with the management of Gambia College was quite informative. The College also made available to me a copy of the Gambia College Act, copies of the syllabuses and study modules for all its P.T.C and H.T.C programmes, as well as other relevant documents and reports. Later that Monday, the focal point took me to some of the ministries and units, including Finance and Economic Planning. On Tuesday, the Vice-principal piloted me on a tour of the facilities available at the Gambia College. Later I met with the staff of School of Education. On Wednesday and part of Thursday, we visited the G.T.U, the Catholic Secretariat and the Gambia National Commission for UNESCO. Later that day, we had another interactive session with College

Management at which we analysed the situation and identified priority needs of the College.

In spite of the efforts made by the focal point, Mr. Kinteh, I was unable to meet the Secretary of State for Education in person. She had other official engagements which made our meeting impossible. There was also the protracted Cabinet meeting which lasted till late on Thursday and Friday. We however, met some officials of DoSE who provided relevant information. Similarly, we could not hold the Seminar scheduled for Friday as it was the last day of College term and a lot of activities, planned and unplanned, cropped up. Besides, my stay in the Gambia was too short for the College to put in place the necessary logistics for such a Seminar.

However, on that Friday, I had an unscheduled but welcome opportunity to meet with the executive members of the Gambia Students' Union who had come to interact with the Principal on some issues pertaining to the effective administration of their programmes. Most of the issues discussed related to the management of the apprenticeship aspect of the teacher-training programme and the need to ensure the quality of the programme.

The rest of this report attempts to summarise my observations, findings and recommendations arising from the various sources and interactive sessions identified above.

3.0 **Education in The Gambia**

This part of the report presents an overview of education in The Gambia.

3.1 Vision and Mission

The Gambia Government is a signatory to the Jomtien Declaration on education for All by the year 2000 and is fully committed to its attainment. Similarly, Vision 2020, a policy statement of the Government published in May, 1996, set the goal for the development of the Gambia in the next two decades; thus:

... to transform the Gambia into a financial centre, a tourist paradise, a trading, export-oriented agricultural and manufacturing nation, thriving on free market policies and a vibrant private sector, sustained by a well-educated, trained, skilled, healthy, self-reliant and enterprising population...

In order to concretise this vision, the Department of State for Education (DoSE), has adopted the following mission statement:

A Responsible, Relevant and Quality Education for All Gambians

To achieve this goal, the DoSE plans to provide access to quality education to develop a Computer literate and technologically competent populace with renewed emphasis on Science, Technology, Agriculture and the Arts in developing a productive and capable human resource base for the new millennium.

In The Gambia, Education is regarded as an investment since its most precious resource is its people. Education is a major tool both for the rapid

development of the country and the well being of the people and the capacity to better themselves and improve their environment. It is this guiding principle that informed the ten basic aims of education in the Gambia, as spelt out in the National Education Policy (1988 - 2003)

- ◆ to promote a broad - based education which will enable learners to develop their full potential and thereby contribute to life in their community and the nation at large;
- ◆ to promote opportunities for all to acquire literacy, vocational and life skills and to utilise these skills in order to earn a living and become economically self - reliant members of the community;
- ◆ to develop the physical and mental skills which will contribute to the nation building - economically, socially and culturally in a sustainable environment;
- ◆ to encourage creativity and a critical mind;
- ◆ to further an understanding and appreciation of the contribution which science and technology can make to development;
- ◆ to cultivate sound moral, religious and ethical values;
- ◆ to develop a healthy body and an appreciation of a healthy mind;
- ◆ to create an awareness of the importance of peace, democracy and human rights and the responsibility of the individual in fostering these qualities;
- ◆ to foster an appreciation of and respect for the cultural heritage of The Gambia;
- ◆ to promote a sense of service, loyalty, integrity and dedication to the nation.

In addition to these aims, the policy thrust of Gambian education was also conditioned by a number of considerations which include the high population growth rate and the high cost of education which is beyond the reach of the poor, necessitating Government's continued funding of the sector. There is also the gap between the education of boys and girls, which would need to be closed or reduced. These and other considerations informed the mid-term review of the 1988 - 2003 plan and the formulation of new national priorities and objectives. Today, the national educational priorities in the Gambia are to;

- [a] increase the gross enrolment in the basic education to 85% of 7 - 15 year olds, by taking into account enrolment in the Madrassas;
- [b] improve learning outcomes at all levels through:
 - improved curricula at all levels;
 - improved facilities and learning environments:
 - [i] appropriate training of teachers
 - [ii] increased availability of learning materials, and
 - [iii] improved monitoring, assessment and evaluation strategies;
- [c] increase access to, and improve the coordination of vocational, technical and university education programmes;
- [d] increase access for adults to functional literacy and numeracy programmes;
- [e] in the medium and long term, increase opportunities for higher education to meet the required human resource needs.

To achieve these objectives, four key strategies were envisaged:

- [i] restructuring of the school system so that the 9-3-4 system would replace the 6-3-3-4 system;
- [ii] maximizing resources for education, such as through judicious use of existing facilities and involvement of NGOs and other relevant stakeholders;
- [iii] Capacity Building, which involves the professional development of all education personnel - teachers, managers, teacher trainers, inspectors, school heads, etc;
- [iv] improving the management of the education sector, in order to reduce bureaucracy in the DoSE and enhance the management culture;

In order to make up for identified disparities, Government similarly established priority target groups as well as regional priorities. Such priority groups include girls and such regions as the Central River Division and Upper River Division [Regions 5 and 6] which had all along returned very low enrolment figures.

3.2 The Gambian Education System

Today, education in The Gambia is organised on the 9-3-4 system. Basic education covers the first nine years of schooling and is for children aged roughly six to seventeen years. Lower Basic schools cover grades 1 to 6, while Upper Basic schools cover grades 7,8 and 9. Most schools are either lower or upper basic, although there are also a number of Basic Cycle Schools which cover both the lower and upper levels. In these schools, one head teacher is responsible for the two levels which are housed within the same premises,

In addition to public schools, there are also grant - aided schools and private schools. Grant - aided schools are mission schools which receive grants-in-aid support from Government to cover salaries, gratuities and allowances. Such schools are privately managed through Boards of Governors appointed by the Secretary of State for Education. Private schools do not receive any subsidy from Government; rather, they are financed through fees and other contributions. Parents are free to send their children to any of the school types. The comprehensive statistics of Lower Basic schools are presented in Appendix B. Appendix C is a list of the schools run by the Catholic Mission.

Senior secondary education covers grades 10 - 12, Schools in this category are either grant - aided, private or publicly owned. Public and grant - aided schools are governed by Boards of Governors appointed by the Secretary of State for Education. Appendix D provides detailed statistics on this category of schools.

The Gambia College, the Gambia Technical Training Institute, the Management Development Institute, and, of recent, the University of the Gambia provide various forms of tertiary education. Before the establishment of the University, tertiary education was offered in the above-listed middle-level institutions. University education was acquired outside the country. The newly-established University of the Gambia provides courses in four areas: Humanities, Social Sciences, Medicine, and Economics and Management. The Gambia College [particularly its School of Education] was the institution chosen for this project.

3.3 The Gambia College

The Gambia College evolved out of the Yundum Teachers' College which offered only the P.T.C programme. The College was established to provide further education beyond what was hitherto available at Yundum Teachers' College. The Gambia College Act empowers the College to award certificates, diplomas and other academic awards in Agriculture, Health, Education, and any other areas as may be approved under the Act.

The academic and administrative head of the college is the Principal who is assisted by the Vice-principal, the Registrar and the Deputy Registrar. The College comprises four schools: Agriculture and Life Sciences, Education, Nursing and Midwifery, and Public Health. All the schools offer programmes of between one to three years: duration for the training of various categories of middle-level manpower. The School of Education and the School of Agriculture and Life Sciences are located at the Brikama Campus of the College. The focus of this report is on these two schools, for reasons that would become obvious in the succeeding sections.

3.3.1 The school of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The School of Agriculture and Life Sciences offers a three-year Higher Diploma Course in Agriculture, in addition to the two-year certificate programme in General Agriculture and Livestock Production. The school has just completed a comprehensive review of its programmes to include a programme in Agricultural Education, leading to the award of the Diploma in Agricultural Education. Courses to be offered are in the following areas: Communication skills, Biological Sciences, Pure Sciences [maths, chemistry, physics], Agricultural Business, Education, Extension, Animal and Crop Production and Animal Sciences.

The broad objectives of the programmes are:

- [a] to train personnel for the agricultural sector and help promote agricultural rural development in the country;
- [b] to assist the education sector increase/improve on their manpower requirements;
- [c] to help increase agricultural production in the Gambia and hence improve the status of farmers and entrepreneurs, thus contributing to the economic well being of the communities.

The plan of the School of Agriculture to commence the HDA [Education] Programme is a welcome development. There is a need, however, for close collaboration between the School of Agriculture and the School of Education for the successful implementation of this programme. Government would also need to come out boldly in support of this programme, especially in the area of staff development and adequate funding. The school would need to produce course materials for students on attachment after the full-time college-based exposure. A list of staff of this school is enclosed in this report as Appendix E.

3.3.2 The School of Education. The school of Education is specifically charged with the responsibility of training teachers as stipulated in the 1979 Act of Parliament which established the College. According to the subsisting Education Policy [1976 - 1986] the following courses were to be offered:

[a] Teacher Training 'A' - Pre-Service Primary Teachers' Course [P.T.C] for teachers at the primary level.

[b] Teacher Training 'B' - Pre-Service Higher Teachers' Certificate Course [HTC] for teachers in the secondary schools and lower forms of high schools.

[c] Teacher Training 'C' - Pre-Service Arabic and Quranic teachers.

3.3.2[a] Teacher Training 'A'- PTC Initially, the PTC was a three-year programme targeted at

products of the Secondary school with four credits, including English. With increased demand for trained teachers, the need arose to accelerate the output. The programme duration was reduced to two years and the entry requirements raised accordingly to four G.C.E 'O' Level passes, the assumption being that such candidates would have acquired the required level of content and focus would be on pedagogy during training. Teaching practice was reduced to one term in the field during the second year of training.

It soon became clear that this category of students needed much remedial coaching to raise their knowledge base. The school day was extended to 6.30pm to enable the school combine teaching of content with pedagogical skills.

The yearly intake into the PTC Programme was tied to the number that could be accommodated in the halls of residence rather than the actual needs of the sector. So, even when the intake was increased to 100, and students stayed three in a room, the number of trained PTC teachers produced yearly was still not high enough to meet the national requirements. There was also no meaningful collaboration between the Ministry of Education and Gambia College.

Initially, the curriculum included subjects such as English, Mathematics, Science, Social and Environmental Studies. Home Science, Art and Craft, Physical and Health Education and Islamic Studies were considered specialist subjects/electives and students were required to study just one from the group. This arrangement was eventually changed as it was considered wasteful. Students were now to offer all the subjects on the curriculum. The curriculum was also reviewed in the four core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science and Social and Environmental Studies.

3.3.2[b] Teacher Training 'B' - HTC; Towards the end of the 1976 - 1986 policy period, Gambia College, in collaboration with Bristol University School of Education instituted the Higher Teachers' Certificate Programme. The first group of trainees numbered 25. The course was a two-year programme to prepare teachers for the Junior Secondary schools and the lower forms of the then high schools. Entry requirement was five 'O' levels, including English.

Initially, trainees specialized in just one subject out of English, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geography, History. It was soon discovered that this was a wasteful venture and trainees were later required to offer two subjects, a major and a minor. Similarly, the number of candidates admitted was raised to 50 and this figure has increased ever since. Similarly, in recognition of the need to train teachers more rapidly and in line with the practice in some neighbouring countries, summer schools were introduced to provide another eight weeks of contact time.

3.3.2[c] Teacher Training 'C' - Arabic/ Koranic Teachers; The initial aim of this programme was to

train all the untrained Arabic teachers; but just as those on the field were being trained, more untrained teachers were recruited. Thus, the target could not be met. A training programme was organised for these teachers through the in-service mode lasting 12 weeks of contact each long vacation for three years.

The 1976 - 1986 Policy gave a major impetus to teacher training in The Gambia, and recorded some appreciable achievements. More teachers were trained; the PTC was reorganised and the HTC. was introduced, thus cutting down on cost of training at this level which had hitherto been done outside the country.

However, the programmes could not fully achieve desired objectives. There was no link between supply and demand and the college and the DoSE did not collaborate well enough. Only a small number of trained teachers graduated each year. Science and Mathematics teachers were still grossly in short supply as many of the trainees opted for English and S.E.S

Most of this shortcomings were addressed in the current policy [1988-2003]; especially the mid-term review which led to the Revised Education Policy 1988-2003. For example, the policy recognises the need for 'appropriate training of teachers' in line with the policy objective of 'Access, Quality and Relevance'. Secondly, the DoSE signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Gambia College specifying what services it required from the college, and which the college in turn undertook to deliver on provision of the necessary resources. In this regard, a teacher training schedule has been developed, indicating the projected number of teachers to be on College - based training and those to be on school attachment in each year. Appendix 'F' shows the training schedule for the period 1999-2006.

Similarly, the intake into the School of Education is no longer tied to available accommodation in the students' halls of residence. Innovative methods of training have been introduced into the programmes. The P.T.C has been extended to three years, one year college - based intensive academic work followed by two years school-based apprenticeship with distance learning modules to ensure continued academic and professional growth. Provision has also been made for face-to-face sessions during holiday. Distance learning materials have been developed for the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, S.E.S and Educational and Professional studies. The curricula have been diversified to include development-oriented subjects such as Population and Family Life Education, Gender in Education and Development. The examinations are conducted twice - end of first year and end of fifth term.

The Higher Teachers' Certificate course also lasts for three years - two years college-based and one year school-based apprenticeship. Both the PTC and the HTC are supervised and assessed by the mentors and the college tutors, with support from the Regional Training Officers.

In year one, the HTC students study two main subjects chosen from English, Mathematics, Science, S.E.S, Agricultural Science, French, Home Science and Art and Craft. In addition to these specialist subjects, there are

general subjects; General English, General Mathematics, General Science, Gender in Education and Development, Population and Family Life Education, and Educational Technology. After the first year, General Maths, Science and SES are discontinued. Students identify one major and one minor subject which they now offer along with General English, Gender, Population and Family Life Education, and Educational Technology. Research methods is introduced to prepare students for their extended essays.

Other programmes run by the school include those for Arabic/Koranic teachers, the Pre-school

Teachers' course and other periodic short-term programmes. A full list of the staff of this school is reproduced in this report as Appendix G.

3.4

The Gambia College: An Evaluation

In this section, an attempt is made to evaluate the programmes of the Gambia College with

a view to finding out how these programmes have been operated to meet national objectives. The information for this derived from the documents made available to me by the college, my inspection of the available facilities and my interactions with staff of the college and other stakeholders.

3.4.1 Overall Picture; Until the end of the last century, Gambia College was the only tertiary institution charged with the responsibility of producing teachers for the education sector. The Gambia University came into existence only recently and has started to offer courses in the Humanities, Social Sciences, Medicine and Economics and Management. This is in line with the provisions of the Revised Education Policy 1988 - 2003, which recognises the need for high-level manpower development at University level.

The initial plan was to use the existing facilities and resources of the Gambia College as the nucleus of the proposed University. For one reason, the college has a crop of highly trained staff and facilities that could be mobilized for the take off of the University. Each of the schools of the college would then have been upgraded to schools or facilities of the new University. The establishment of the University did not appear to reflect this original thinking, nor did it take account of the reality on ground. There is evidence, for instance, that most of the courses offered in the University are taught by staff of the college, and the facilities in the college are used by the University. There may be need to reexamine this arrangement.

The Gambia College has a long-standing tradition of higher education, especially in the area of teacher training. With the Revised Education Policy 1988-2003, the activities of the college have been given a sharper focus. Its programmes have been reviewed and made more relevant, in line with the mission statement of DoSE which aims at 'A responsive, relevant and quality education for all Gambians'. More students are admitted yearly and many more trained teachers are produced every year. However, there is a need for a deliberate and aggressive staff development Programme to upgrade the staff of the Gambia

College in their respective areas of specialization. Appendix H summaries staff training needs for the Staff of the School of Education.

Other innovations which have been put in place recently include the apprenticeship system [involving the use of monitors and regional officers], the review of the syllabuses, the production of study modules and the plan by the School of Agriculture to start the Diploma in Agricultural Education programmes. Some of these innovations are discussed below, together with their implications, especially for Distance Education.

3.4.1 Curricula; Curriculum development is a dynamic ongoing process which is predicated on regular formative and summative evaluation. The Gambia College has risen to the challenge in this regard. The curricula of the programmes offered at the Gambia College have undergone periodic review and updating, to reflect local realities. In this process, the college has drawn considerably from happenings in other parts of Africa. The Curriculum Research, Development and Inservice Division of the Gambia College has spearheaded recent efforts at curriculum design and development. These efforts have no doubt been influenced by happenings in other countries such as Nigeria and Ethiopia, to which the college has sent different delegations to understudy the distance learning programmes. The National Teachers' Institute in Kaduna, Nigeria, received one of those delegations. This is an example of the interregional cooperation which the college exploits.

Today, Gambia College has evolved syllabuses and study guides in modules to supplement the College-based experience of the PTC and HTC students. These syllabuses and study materials cover all the subjects on the curriculum of each of these major programmes, that is, the core courses and the minor [enabling] courses. It is a broad-based curriculum which adequately reflects local realities. For example, the SES and Science materials use examples and illustrations from the immediate environment of the students.

The course materials have been carefully prepared in graded modules. They are outcomes-based materials which promote an integrated approach to learning. The language is simple and straightforward enough for students to go through them with little or no assistance.

A recent effort in curriculum development is the work of the Arizona Consortium for International Development which was commissioned under the Third Education Sector Project to evolve a new curriculum for the Gambia. The Report of the exercise was accompanied with a 200- page Curriculum Monitoring and Evaluation Manual. These two documents serve as useful guides to curriculum reviews in the Gambia.

However, some of the study modules would need more through editorializing work. It would also be useful to include a list of references, an activity sheet, and an evaluation sheet to conclude each module. Similarly, for the child-centered curriculum to achieve the desired objective, constant reviews of the PTC and HTC programmes would be necessary to encourage greater awareness of integrated, child-centred classroom methodology and teaching and learning processes. This would provide the trainee-teachers an opportunity to have access to child-centred classroom approaches. Currently, only one small unit of

the Gambia college is responsible for the printing of syllabuses and study materials. The Reprographic Unit of the College should be upgraded to a printing press. Staff of the college, especially those in the CREDIT unit would need to be adequately trained in curriculum development and implementation.

3.4.3 Pedagogic Methodologies; Since the mid-term reviews and the resultant Revised Education Policy 1988-2003, the Gambia College has made concerted efforts to bring innovations into its programmes. According to the present arrangement, the PTC and the HTC programmes now require students to receive full-time college-based instruction during the one-year or two-year contact period respectively. During this period, face-to-face classroom interactions are held between college staff and the students. Conventional lecture method, discussions, laboratory activities and other practical approaches are employed to ensure an integrated, skills-oriented education. There are laboratories for the Sciences, although some of these facilities would need to be updated.

During the school-based apprenticeship, staff of the college occasionally visit students in their schools. There are also Regional staff who coordinate the activities in each region. Monitors are also engaged to provide regular supervision to the students on attachment. There is also the teaching practice exercise which is assessed by experts on the field and staff of the School of Education. All these arrangements are designed for quality assurance and to ensure that there is adequate collaboration and relevance between the programmes and the communities.

As part of its contribution to the Third Education Sector Project, the UNESCO donated a set of computers to the Gambia college. These are being installed for effective use in computer education as well as pedagogical methodologies. Staff would need some training to be able to put these resources to maximum use. The monitors would also need series of in-service training programmes which would expose them to modern instructional techniques and practices.

3.4.4. Library and Research Plants; The Gambia college has a functional library which has two branches on the Brikama campus. The third branch is the School of Nursing and Midwifery library within the premises of the school in Banjul. The School of Nursing and Midwifery has a stock of less than two thousand while the main library has some seven thousand volumes. This stock is definitely inadequate for the user population of some three thousand students. Besides, the library does not subscribe to any journals; the only ones available are the WHO and FAO publications and back copies of journals sent to the library through IOCD and Book Aid International.

Most of the books in the library were donated by various bodies and organizations such as the International Organisation for Chemical Science in Development [I.O.C.D.], the Book Aid International, the World Bank III Educational Project, and the UNESCO which recently made a donation of a container load of books to the Gambia.

The library would need considerable updating and upgrading to enable staff and students engage in meaningful research activities. In this regard, efforts would

need to be made to install the computers to enable researchers access information. Similarly, deliberate efforts should be made to subscribe to relevant journals, especially those published in similar colleges and universities in the sub-region. I am preparing a list of current journals in Nigeria and would soon forward this list and back issues of some of these journals to the college. I am also enclosing, for the information and necessary action of UNESCO, a list of the urgent needs of the Gambia College library. This appears as Appendix I of this report. The library also needs to evolve a systematic and up-to-date indexing style to make for faster information retrieval. When all these have been done, more staff should be employed and the present ones given adequate training in relevant areas of specialization.

3.4.5 Labour Issues: The Department of State for Education has drawn up a Conditions of Service for all employees of DoSE and a Scheme of Service for the Professional cadre. These two documents are currently undergoing review. There is a Public Service Commission which coordinates all appointments into the public service of the Gambia. It is also empowered to interpret the rules contained in the conditions of service and reserves the right to amend, relax, modify, or delete any of the rules.

The Gambia College is administered in accordance with the provisions of the 1978 Act amended in 1989. It has a governing council which has control over, and is responsible for the policy and property of the college. Appointments, promotions and other staff-related matters are handled by the council, although these must be within the salary scales and general conditions of appointment prescribed from time to time by the Government.

My interaction with the Gambia Teachers' Union revealed that the union is not satisfied with the remunerations presently paid to them. The union Executive is however constantly negotiating with Government on this and other matters that relate to the welfare of their members. It plays a mediatory role between teachers and DoSE. The union is adequately represented on sensitive bodies and Commissions such as the Salary Commission, the Constitution Commission, the Coordinating Committee Meetings, the Task Force on Education, and the Admission Committee of the Gambia College. This, perhaps, explains why there has been no teachers' strike in the Gambia since the 1960's.

However, there does not appear to be adequate collaboration between GTU and Gambia College. For example, the G.T.U. is currently planning a programme for the upgrading of Koranic teachers at the same time the college is preparing a similar programme. The G.T.U also undertakes periodic meet-the-teachers tours; but reports of such tours are never made available to the college whose students form a significant proportion of those teachers. Another reason why the G.T.U. leadership should be close to the college is to be able to enlighten final-year students of the college on the need for them to register as members of the union on graduation.

Based on my observations and findings, the following would appear to recommend themselves:

[i] There should be a closer collaboration between the college and the G.T.U. to avoid

unnecessary duplication of efforts and to make the programmes of the college more relevant to the needs of the teachers.

[ii] More concerted efforts should be made towards professionalization of teaching. In this regard, only qualified members of the 7000- strong teaching force should be registered with the union. Similarly, a Code of Ethics should be evolved to govern the activities of teachers. There is also a need to create a separate body, such as a Teaching Service Commission, to take care of appointment, promotion and discipline of teachers. Such a Commission, together with the G.T.U. should work out a separate Conditions: of Service for teachers.

[iii] At the College level, Council should be empowered to draw up a Conditions of Service that would recognise experience, expertise and special needs in order to attract high-quality staff. With a Board of Governors, the College should enjoy some amount of autonomy in these matters. This is one sure way to retain teachers in the profession and guarantee the provision of quality education.

3.4.5. Gender Equity: An awareness of the wide gap between education of boys and girls is one of the considerations that informed the mid-year review of the 1988-2003 Policy. Girl-child education therefore forms one of the priorities of the revised Policy. A lot has been done in this regard and there are signs that the gap is gradually becoming narrower.

One of the efforts of Government in this area is the Remedial Initiative for Female Teachers [RIFT], which was started in 1995 at Gambia college. The aim was to increase the number of female qualified teachers in the teaching force in general and in the rural areas in particular. They are trained for basic cycle schools. The programme is funded by the World Bank through the UNICEF.

Under the RIFT programme, the College reserves 30% of its admission to the P.T.C programme for female candidates. As many of them do not possess the entry requirements, they are given extra tuition and financial support to resit the G.C.E.'O' Level examination in those subjects where they did not possess the required entry grades. Available records indicate that the RIFT programme has dramatically increased the number of qualified female teachers in the teaching force. At the college level, the 30% quota reserved for female students on the P.T.C course has been increased to 40% and the programme has also been extended to the H.T.C course.

An evaluation of the programme was conducted by a team of consultants in 2001. The results of this exercise show that the programme is worthwhile and timely in the educational development of the Gambia. It has increased girls' gross enrolment ratio from 59.7% in 1995/96 to 67% in 1999/2000; girls' retention and performance rates have also increased; and more trained female teachers have also been produced. RIFT teachers account for about 10% of the female teachers now in the teaching force of The Gambia.

This programme would need to be sustained and enhanced as female education forms one of the priority areas identified in the Revised Policy. As the enrolment figures increase, the quota for RIFT candidates on the P.T.C and H.T.C should similarly be increased. Other possibilities should also be explored to make the programme more attractive and reduce absenteeism and drop-out rate.

3.4.6. Management Issues: At the head of the Gambia College is a Governing Council which oversees the activities of the college and takes decisions on policy matters. There is below this level, a Principal who is the academic and administrative head of the college. He sees to the day-to-day administration of the College. He is assisted by the Vice-principal, the Registrar and Deputy Registrar. Each of the schools has a Head who coordinates the activities of the various departments and units under him through the unit or departmental heads. In the Gambia College, there is a great deal of understanding and cooperation between and among the different levels of management.

However, with expansion and increased sophistication in its programmes, there would come a time when its activities would be further decentralized. For example, there is a need to create a unit to take full charge of the distance learning programme. Such a unit should be responsible direct to the Principal since its services would not be required by only the School of Education. Other units that provide services that cut across the various schools, such as the Resource Centre, should also be upgraded and placed under the direct supervision of the Principal.

There is also a need for the College to further use to advantage the Committee system. This will further decentralize administration and get more staff involved in the management of the college. A Newsletter would also need to be published on a regular basis to help keep staff abreast of the developments, plans and programmes of the College.

3.4.8 Open and Distance learning and ICT Capacities: Considering the need of the Gambia to

urgently train the untrained teachers in the system and produce more teachers rapidly, it becomes imperative that other means of teacher training are explored. The open and distance learning mode readily recommends itself. The Gambia College is already thinking and planning along this line. The need for this mode of learning is also predicated on the fact that access to education is limited and the Gambia is in a hurry to replace all untrained teachers with trained teachers. Besides, the costs of higher education are high and place a heavy burden on Governments' scarce resources. At present, the Gambia College has not been able to take full advantage of this innovation but the need is urgent for it to do so.

Happily, the conditions would appear to conduce to the introduction of distance learning with the help of I.C.T. The concept of distance learning equates with that of a college without borders. With the assistance of UNESCO, Gambia College was in March 2003, connected to world space through satellites. This would no doubt expand people's access to knowledge. In addition, UNESCO has also donated 100,000 Us dollars for capacity building in the area of distance learning. Similarly, the College has sent delegations to understudy similar

practices in Ethiopia and Nigeria. The College also has a set of computers which can form the nucleus of a resource centre that would be used for information dissemination. All these set the stage for a successful implementation of the distance learning project.

Information and Communication Technologies [ICT s] are becoming popular on the African continent. The three pillars of ICT are connectivity, capacity and content. Governments, donors agencies and private telecom operators have gone a long way to get many parts of Africa wired and connected to the global information high-way. The Gambia cannot afford to be an exception in this revolution. It is hereby recommended that, for a start, the Gambia should explore satellite broadcasting until such a time the capacity and facilities for web casting and internet-based technologies are available. This way, lectures can be broadcast on a live screen into designated centres or classrooms where local facilitators would then take the students through the lectures and address technical problems. Each transmission can then be recorded and played back in case students need to go over certain points.

Most African countries have limited ICT- related infrastructure and trained personnel. There are frequent power outages. There is illiteracy. There is poor connectivity. Few have access to telephone. Not many can afford computers. These problems are also relevant to the Gambia ,and it is these problems that any meaningful intervention should address in order to ensure that, very soon, there is a national computer networking to serve the Country and link it with the sub- region. The Commonwealth of Learning and the UNESCO are already working along this line.

Another possibility that could immediately be explored for the distance learning programme is the radio scheme with screen. Anybody with a radio can take advantage of this. This would involve having a radio station and zonal centres with radio clusters within each village. Currently, the college relies too heavily on the print media.

The present Resource Centre of the Gambia College could be upgraded to an ICT Centre with branches in the region or other designated centres. Other agencies can also take advantage of this facility. Staff of this unit and other staff of the college would need to be trained in the use of ICT. Similarly, college staff would also need training in distance learning and research skills so that they take full advantage of the facilities provided through ICT. A Distance Education Centre would also need to be established to coordinate distance learning activities. Such a centre should be adequately equipped and manned by trained personnel.

4.0

Recommendations

Based on the observations and findings reported in the preceding sections of this report,

two sets of recommendations are hereby put forward for necessary action by Gambia College and the Government of The Gambia on one hand, and by UNESCO and other relevant bodies and agencies on the other.

4.1 **General Recommendations:**

- [i] The present level of collaboration between the DoSE and Gambia College should be sustained and improved upon.
- [ii] The present structure of The Gambia University should be reviewed such that both the college and the University can play complementary roles. The possibility of upgrading the schools of the college to faculties of the University should also be explored, such that The Gambia College can take over the training of teachers at all levels.
- [iii] A Printing Press would need to be established to take care of the volumes of course materials now being produced by the Reprographic Unit of The Gambia College.
- [iv] The computers donated to the college should be installed and fully connected for effective use of staff and students.
- [v] The monitors, the headmasters, and the regional training officers should be given adequate in-service training or refresher courses to equip them to perform their functions more effectively.
- [vi] The existing laboratories for the pure sciences should be upgraded. Efforts should also be made to establish a language laboratory, a mathematics laboratory and departmental libraries, especially for English where all students have to use the same prescribed texts.
- [vii] The College should be encouraged and assisted to subscribe to journals in relevant areas.
- [viii] A deliberate policy of staff recruitment and staff development should be vigorously pursued. For example, there are only two lecturers in the French department and only one in the EPS department. Staff also need training in research methodology.
- [ix] A Guidance and Counselling Unit should be established in the College.
- [x] There is need for a closer collaboration between and among Gambia College, GTU, and DoSE.
- [xi] A separate body should be set up to handle the recruitment, promotion and discipline of teachers.
- [xii] A separate Conditions of Service should be evolved for the College to enhance efficiency, dedication and professionalization, and reduce the present attrition rate.

4.2 Specific Recommendations

- [i] This report has, hopefully, established sufficient base for the Distance Learning Programme. It has also established the role which ITC can play in this programme. This is the area where I believe UNESCO and other donor agencies can and should intervene urgently and forcefully. Specifically, there is a need to establish an ICT Centre in the Gambia College and equip it adequately to cope with the demands of Distance Education. Zonal or regional offices or centres should also be established and fully equipped and adequately staffed. The staff of the college should be trained to acquire the skills of Distance Education and the use of ICT for distance learning.

[ii] On a medium term basis, an aggressive staff development programme should be put in place for the staff of Gambia College. While training and upgrading those already in the system, new staff in some badly-neglected specialist areas should be recruited. These areas include Guidance and Counselling, Early Childhood Education and Research Methodology.