

THE STATUS OF FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION, TRAINING AND AWARENESS PROGRAMMES IN THE GAMBIA AND THEIR PROSPECTS FOR SUPPORTING PRIORITY CLIMATE CHANGE POLICIES AND PROJECTS IN THE CONTEXT OF ARTICLE 6 OF THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE.

1.0 Introduction

This paper provides a general background to aspects of education, training in the formal and non-formal education system of The Gambia, which can be used as the basis for discussion of the current opportunities, challenges or strategies that could be considered in developing a national strategy and work plan for climate change policies and programs.

1.1 Demography¹

The Gambia, a signatory of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, is a densely populated country (128 persons per square kilometre) and has a population growth rate (approximately 2.8%), and an estimated population of 1.36 million. Average life expectancy has risen to 60 years from 47 years in 1988. Access to health facilities has increased. Regular immunisation programmes have been carried out. Only half of the population has access to safe water.

Almost half the population is under the age of 15 years. The population is increasingly concentrated in urban areas, the illiteracy rate among the 15-39 year old age group is estimated at 46.5% based on available data. The illiteracy rate is high especially among the women.

Poverty is widespread, particularly in rural areas where an estimated 75% of the population falls below the food poverty line during August and September each year.

1.2 Vulnerability to Climate Change

Like the other least developing countries (LDCs), The Gambia has contributed the least to the emission of greenhouse gases and yet is most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and has the least capacity to adapt to these changes.

The country will suffer from a possible increase in natural disasters such as droughts and floods resulting from climate changes. Unfortunately too there is also lack of the necessary institutional, economic and financial capacity to cope with climate change impacts or to build the infrastructure damaged by natural disasters.

When affected by a natural disaster we have to be dependent on external aid, as we do not have the necessary funds to deal with the problems ourselves.

Furthermore as a typical LDC we lack the least capacity to cope with or adapt to climate change, as we lack the resources and money both to carry out adaptation studies and to implement strategies emerging from such studies.

It is therefore somewhat gratifying that the international community has recognised the vulnerability of LDCs to climate change and their low adaptation capacity and has put in place the necessary funds and programs of action with the aim of assisting with the eradication of poverty and promoting sustainable development in LDCs like The Gambia.

¹ Based on Population and Housing Census of 2003 (Dept of Statistics)

1,3 Some examples of climate change impacts on The Gambia

In general the main impacts of climate change will be on water resources, food security and agriculture, natural resources management and biodiversity, and human health (Diedone 2001)².

The impact of climate change on water resources is particularly relevant to the Gambia. There is evidence that The River Gambia is very sensitive to climate change, and that climate change alone could cause a 50% change in the Gambia River catchments. Furthermore, a 1% change in rainfall can cause a 3% change in runoff for the Gambia River and this could have serious impacts, such as increased salt-water intrusion (IPCC, 2001)³.

Similarly a 1metre sea level rise is projected to cause the loss of 92 km square of land in The Gambia (IPCC 1998)⁴

In terms of Food Security, it has been projected that global warming will not only affect the production of certain crops, such as rice, wheat, corn, beans and potatoes which are major food crops in Africa, but also affect the fishing sector. It is projected that a warming of 3-5 degrees centigrade will increase the productivity of the Gambia River by about 13-21 percent. However, some fish species might be more sensitive to temperatures, and increases of 3 to 4 degrees could negatively affect catfish and herring populations, whereas shrimp yields are estimated to increase significantly (IPCC, 2001).

2.0 Current Programs of Non-Formal System of Education, Training and Awareness building.

Perhaps it is needless to mention that in The Gambia it is the mandate of the Department of State for Education (DoSE) to determine who teaches what to whom when where and how, whether through schools, training centres or at work; whether they are pre-school children school-going, or grown-ups (adults).

The Adult and Non-Formal Education Unit (ANFEU) has the special responsibility for adult and non-formal programs whether these are public, charity or private. The unit is part of the Basic Education Directorate, one of eight directorates of DoSE; the current staff includes an Acting Principal Education officer, senior education officers, a VSO Education Adviser and 6 focal points in the six regions of the country.

The unit collaborates with all stakeholders, and co-ordinates all literacy activities and interventions. Its activities are supported by Multi Sectoral Working Groups for Adult Education in each region.

Its main targets are all sectors of society who lack literacy skills, including adults, youth and out of school children the majority of whom have not had the benefit of participating and successfully completing formal education.

² Dieudonne G. (2001) Afrique le continent le plus vulnérable. *Bulletin Africain* No 14

³ Climate Change 2001 Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability. Chapters 10,11,17 &18. Contribution of Working Group 1 to the 3rd Assessment Report of the IPCC

⁴ IPCC (1998) *The regional impacts of climate change: an assessment of vulnerability*

In summary, the current programs of non-formal education, training, and awareness building which have great potential as conduits for the proper implementation of Article 6 of the UNFCC in The Gambia include:

- 2.1 The Basic Literacy Program
- 2.2 The Integrated Basic Services Program
- 2.3 Work Based Provision
- 2.4 The Community Skills Improvement Project (CSIP)

2.1 The Basic Literacy Programme:

This is a government-funded programme, co-ordinated and supervised through the regional education offices. The programme is based at local schools and delivered by qualified teachers, who are given additional training in teaching adults and literacy. The target participants are food vendors, housewives, maids and out of school youths. Currently the programme is operating in Region 1 (in 12 lower basic schools) and in Region 2 (in 10 lower basic schools). Monitoring and feedback from the pilot Programmes indicate good progress and interest in expanding programme to include post literacy skills and other income generating activities.

In Region 2 a working group has been established by the facilitators with the aim of meeting on a regular basis to promote exchange of ideas, good practice and to organise in-service training.

This provision will be extended to all regions, starting with Regions 3 and 4, where teachers are already enrolled for training. This has been further extended to include Contract Retired Teachers as facilitator's in Regions 1 and 2. These have been identified and classes started, training in adult learning, orthography etc, needs to be arranged.

2.2 The Integrated Basic Services:

This programme is part of the UNICEF initiative targeting the Mother's Clubs members at Girl Friendly Schools in regions 4,5 and 6. Currently, there are a total of 25 communities operating this programme (Phase 1 = 10 communities, Phase 2 = 15 Communities). Facilitators come from within the community and are given 2 weeks initial training in teaching adults and literacy. A total of 27 facilitators completed initial 2 week training at the Rural Development Institute in Mansakonko during March 2003. The programme is co-ordinated and supervised through the regional Education offices, with support for training and sensitisation from ANFEU.

2.3 Work Based Provision:

The Medical Research Council (MRC) and the Adult Literacy Association (ALA) provide work based literacy training in English for members of their staff who lack basic literacy skills. The MRC programme has recently completed the first phase, with 66 participants from 4 field stations successfully completing training. ALA has also completed the first phase of an ongoing programme with GAMBEGA and has commenced another programme for UNDP drivers. ANFEU are currently planning A programme for DOSE drivers. It is intended to further expand work-based provision and ANFEU is collaborating with MRC and ALA in developing a vocationally relevant basic skills curriculum.

2.4 The Community Skills Improvement Project (CSIP)

The literacy component of this project is targeting 250 communities across all 6 regions over a period of 6 years (2000 – 2005). Following the training of community selected facilitators programmes are now running in 191 communities in regions 3,4,5 and 6, delivering literacy in local languages followed by skills training and micro-financing activities. It is planned to launch a further 59 centres this year in Region 2 and Kombos, St Mary.

2.5 Other provision:

In collaboration with ANFEU, Regional Education Offices (REOs) and Community Development Organisations (CBOs) literacy interventions are provided by NGO's and CBO's in all regions, delivering the functional literacy programmes. ANFEU supports these providers in providing training, materials and technical advice. The providers, REOs and ANFEU undertake monitoring and evaluation of provision. Currently there are 23 NGOs/CBOs delivering adult education across the country. (See literacy providers list).

3.0 Successes

Recently accomplished activities:

- Preparation of New Education Policy for Adult Education 2004 – 2018
- Sensitisation of 15 Mothers Club members and communities
- Monitoring of Phase 1 Integrated Basic Services literacy programmes (Mothers Clubs)
- Training of 27 Literacy Facilitators for Phase 2 of Integrated Basic Services programme
- Established Multi Sector all Working Groups in each region
- Completed project proposal for World Bank IDA programme
- Submitted proposal for EBEP (Educators for Basic Education Programme)
- Attended graduation ceremonies for work based provision at GAMBEGA and MRC
- Sensitisation of Divisional Commissioners, Mayors, Chairpersons and Local Council members
- Participated in the 3rd National Conference for Education in The Gambia
- Inventory and base line study of existing provision nationally, preparatory World Bank programme activity
- 2-day workshop for ANFEU staff, central and regional – capacity building including roles & responsibilities at regional and central level, introducing procedures for monitoring and evaluation of literacy interventions.

Future/ ongoing activities:

- Establish National Council for Adult and Non Formal Education
- Collaboration with the private sector in the delivery of adult education
- Identification of sources of funding for interventions in adult education
- Ongoing programme of sensitisation for communities on literacy

- Develop guidelines for the delivery of adult education-draft available
- Identify opportunities for sustainability and build this into all programmes
- Expand Basic Literacy Programme
- Expand Integrated Basic Skills Programme
- Progress World Bank IDA Programme
- Pre-serve training and in-service training for all personnel involved in the delivery of adult education
- Train SQAD officers in teaching adults and literacy
- Develop integrated vocationally relevant work based programmes
- Deliver vocationally relevant, functional literacy training for DOSE drivers
- Introduce literacy programmes in Madarassas
- Develop skills and business management training for all programmes
- Collaboration with other sectors to create an integrated approach to adult education
- Review, revise and development materials/resources
- Collaborate and work with all Basic Education Units in progressing integration and decentralisation

4.0 Constraints:

4.1 Lack of funds

The main activities of the unit are informed by field trips to all communities, meeting with providers and other stakeholders. This is constrained by lack of funding for fuel and other associated costs.

4.2 Sustainability of donor funded programmes.

ANFEU depends almost entirely on donor funding, this makes it difficult to plan ahead and achieve its mandate. In addition, when the programme cycle is completed and financial support for interventions ends, the programmes are not able to continue.

4.3 Lack of resources:

The unit has no budget allowance for stationery and consumables.

4.4 Maintenance of equipment

There is no ongoing maintenance for equipment in the unit, resulting in office machinery not being repaired or maintained. This includes the unit's photocopier and printer.

4.5 . Poor working environment

The building that houses ANFEU is not adequately maintained, and basic facilities are poor or lacking.

4.6 Delays in the release of donor funding – time constraints:

Requests are submitted for the release of funds to undertake planned donor funded programme activities. Due to the time involved in this process, it is not possible to keep to schedules. This not only makes planning of department activities difficult, but also results in budgets being inadequate to meet rising costs due to inflation.

3.0 Some comments on the status of education, training and awareness development in the Formal Education System

- A New Educational policy is in the making covering the period 2004-2015
- The New Policy:
 - Will synchronise the aims and objectives of education with the Millenium Development Goals, Education For All goals, the National Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
 - Identifies priorities that allow for growth of educational opportunity and improve effectiveness of education at all levels, with priority to Basic Education
 - Places special emphasis on improving quality of teaching and learning, for example improving learning outcomes through improvement of the curricula in the areas of literacy and numeracy, science and technology, the arts and the humanities, through improved availability of teaching/learning materials/technology and so on
 - Also emphasises the use of computer literacy and information technology, community participation/involvement in every aspect of education and training, and putting education in the hands of the learners themselves
- A National Training Authority has been set up which will create a pool of persons with technical and vocational skills that will ensure an adequate response to labour market requirements in all sectors and provide opportunities for life-long learning
- A Science and Technology Education Policy, as well as an Early Childhood Development (ECD) Policy are among the various other Policies now in place
- The integration of Environmental education in the all levels of the system is being vigorously followed; and environmental issues is being taught/learned in the school courses, particularly in science, geography and social studies
- Although environmental education is not taught as a separate subject, its principles and methods including non-formal methods are now widely employed by many teachers who have gone through training by the TIPE 1 and TIPE 11, NSGA-CIDA EE Projects, the NEA and others
- However, there is a clear lack of study teaching /learning of climate change or its importance/impact in the curriculum or syllabus of the formal system (there is in fact no geography courses at the new University of The Gambia)

3.0 CONCLUSION

The Department of State for Education aligns itself with the view⁵ that:

- Information of climate change impacts needs to be translated from the scientific research domain into language and time scales relevant for policy makers.
- Research on potential impacts of climate change needs to be supported in country to enable information to be improved and passed onto policy makers.

⁵ Based on Saleemul Huq et al April 2003: Mainstreaming adaptation to climate change in least developed countries,

- All relevant stakeholders need to be involved, but their needs for information may vary and thus information must be suited to the stakeholder group being engaged with.
- Sectoral level policy makers, planners and managers are relatively more likely to mainstream adaptation to climate change into their on-going and planned work (provided the information on impacts is given to them in a suitable form).
- High-level policy makers need to be especially targeted (with suitable material).
- National and international experts and researchers need to share their knowledge with people making decisions and plans on the ground more effectively.

While this workshop translates the above into reality it should also ensure that:

- The relevant stakeholders from the most vulnerable sectors of the economy and regions within the country are involved.
- High-level policy makers are aware of the importance of the issue.
- The general public is made more aware about the issues through all the information channels available in the public and private sector.
- Special focus is given to the most vulnerable regions and populations within each country.
- All relevant institutions with the government as well as civil society need to be made aware of the problem and their respective roles in dealing with it.
- The focus needs to be on building long-term national capacity.
- Adaptation to climate change is also effectively mainstreamed into national and sectoral development.