



Qualifying for Quality

Unqualified teachers and qualified teacher shortages in The Gambia



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The International Task Force on Teachers for Education for All (Teachers for EFA)

The International Task Force on Teachers for EFA is an international alliance of partners working together to address the global teacher gap. Its creation was officially endorsed by participants in the Eighth High-Level Group meeting on EFA (Norway, December 2008). Recognising the critical role that teachers play in providing Education for All, the Task Force aims to foster collaboration on teacher provision worldwide and to provide focus and impetus in the drive for EFA. The Task Force is supported by several key EFA partners, including the European Commission and the Governments of Norway and Indonesia. Its Secretariat is hosted at Unesco. Its Action Plan is structured around the three major gaps facing countries: a policy gap, a capacity gap and a financial gap. For more information, please visit: www.teachersforefa.unesco.org

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Acronyms and abbreviations

BESPOR	Basic Education Support for Poverty Reduction
CBO	community-based organisation
CSO	civil society organisation
CPD	continuing professional development
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EFANet	Education for All Campaign Network – The Gambia
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GMD	Gambian dalasis (national currency)
GSIAE	Gambian Secretariat for Islamic/Arabic Education
GTU	Gambia Teachers' Union
HTC	Higher Teachers Certificate
INSET	in-service training
MoBSE	Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NUT	National Union of Teachers, UK
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PTC	Primary Teachers Certificate
RED	Regional Education Directorate
SNEU	Special Needs Education Unit
UTG	University of The Gambia
WAEC	West African Exams Council
WASSCE	West African Senior School Certificate Examination

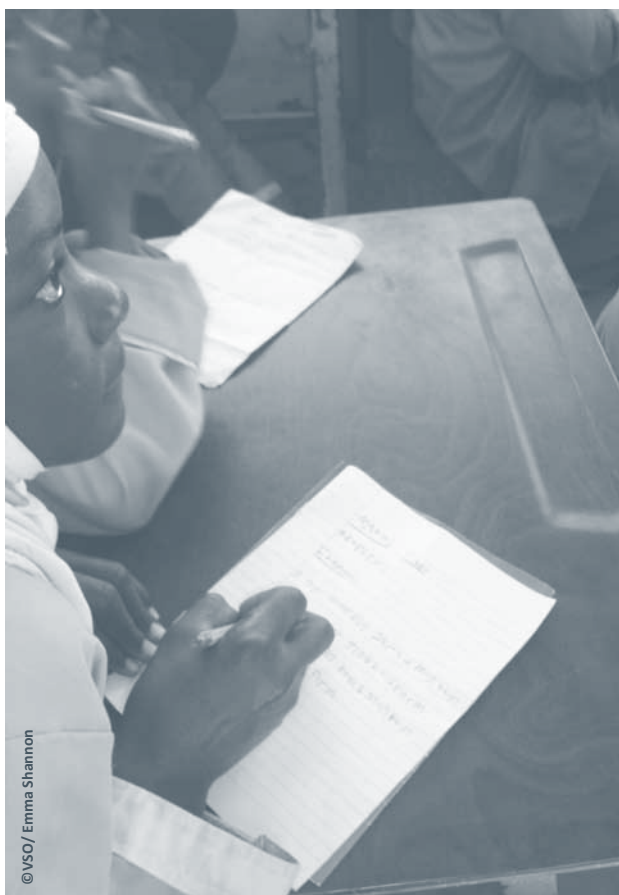
Executive summary

In countries around the world, the employment of unqualified¹ and contract² teachers has been introduced as a measure to address qualified teacher shortages. There is serious concern that the practice of hiring unqualified teachers to increase access to education may compromise education quality. Quality teachers alone are not sufficient for the delivery of quality education; however, they are a prerequisite, and quality teacher training is certainly an essential requirement for the development of quality teachers.

Therefore, in terms of education, the big questions facing many developing countries now are how to attract, train, distribute and retain a qualified teaching workforce. This study³, which was funded and supported by the UK's National Union of Teachers (NUT) and is part of VSO's Valuing Teachers research and advocacy initiative, focuses on the matter of qualified teacher supply and recruitment in The Gambia – especially as it relates to the employment of unqualified teachers. The report also examines the contributions that unqualified teachers are making to education in The Gambia and the challenges they face, as well as their personal and professional situations and the positions of education sector stakeholders regarding the employment of unqualified teachers in The Gambia.

“Good progress has been made in expanding access to education across all levels of the schooling system, particularly in basic education...The quality and relevance of education has increasingly become a matter of concern. It is constrained by a shortage of well-trained teachers, inadequate teaching materials in schools, weak management of schools, as well as the difficulty of retaining qualified education personnel. Quality education is the key to the country's growth and socio-economic development.”

(Republic of The Gambia, 2008:13)



Madrassa students taking notes during a lesson

There are three main categories of schools which provide basic education⁴ in The Gambia: lower basic schools (grades 1-6), upper basic schools (grades 7-9) and basic cycle schools (grades 1-9 – providing lower and upper levels of basic education). The Gambia has two main types of basic education: the government (or conventional) school system and the Islamic Arabic school system. Enrolment in education has increased in The Gambia, especially over the last decade. Total enrolment in basic education was reported to be 223,328 in 2000-01, increasing to 303,281 in 2009-10 (World Bank, publication expected 2011).

However, the value of access to education is limited by the quality of education accessed. Despite increased access to education, student learning achievements in The Gambia remain an area of concern – an indication that quality in education is lacking. Various national reports about education in the Gambia identify education quality as an enduring issue, and recent student test results offer further basis for concern.

The Gambia's *Poverty Reduction Strategy 2007-2011 Synthesis* argues that the quality and relevance of education "is constrained by a shortage of well-trained teachers, inadequate teaching materials in schools, weak management of schools, as well as the difficulty of retaining qualified education personnel" (Republic of The Gambia, 2008:13). Therefore, education quality is one of the Ministry's top policy priorities, and an adequate qualified teacher supply is noted as a key priority for achieving quality education.

1. In The Gambia, only those who attain formal qualifications such as the Primary Teachers Certificate are known as qualified teachers. The term 'unqualified teachers' therefore refers to teachers who have not achieved a formal teaching qualification.
2. In The Gambia, the term 'contract teachers' can refer to either qualified or unqualified teachers who are employed on short-term contracts and who do not receive the same benefits as permanent teachers.
3. Data for this qualitative research was collected from primary, secondary and tertiary education stakeholders using participatory tools. The research considers basic education only and includes stakeholders in conventional, Madrassa, ECCE and special needs schools. Private schools serving basic education (grades 1-9) were not consulted, nor were informal Islamic schools. One hundred and forty-five primary stakeholders (including students, teachers, teacher trainees, and community members) were consulted through 20 focus group discussions around the country. Over 100 interviews were conducted with primary, secondary and tertiary stakeholders (including teachers, teacher trainees, school-level teacher managers, regional-level teacher managers, national education officials, national policy makers, national and international NGO/CBO staff, and representatives from international organisations). Fifteen lesson observations also took place in conventional schools, Madrassas and ECCE centres. For more details regarding methodology, please refer to page 14.
4. The Ministry has now adopted an expanded vision of basic education to include ECCE and adult and non-formal education; however, this study has not considered adult and non-formal education.

Qualified teacher supply

In conventional schools⁵, there was previously a considerable gap between the number of teachers needed and the number of teachers qualified to teach the increasing number of students. In recent years, that gap has been narrowing. In Madrassas, however, a serious qualified teacher shortage remains. The country’s most recent Poverty Reduction Strategy includes a target for an additional 6,297 Primary Teachers Certificate (PTC)⁶ qualified teachers in The Gambia by 2015 (Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs, 2006). Although there have been improvements in the rate at which The Gambia is producing qualified teachers, the country is not yet on course to meet this target by 2015.

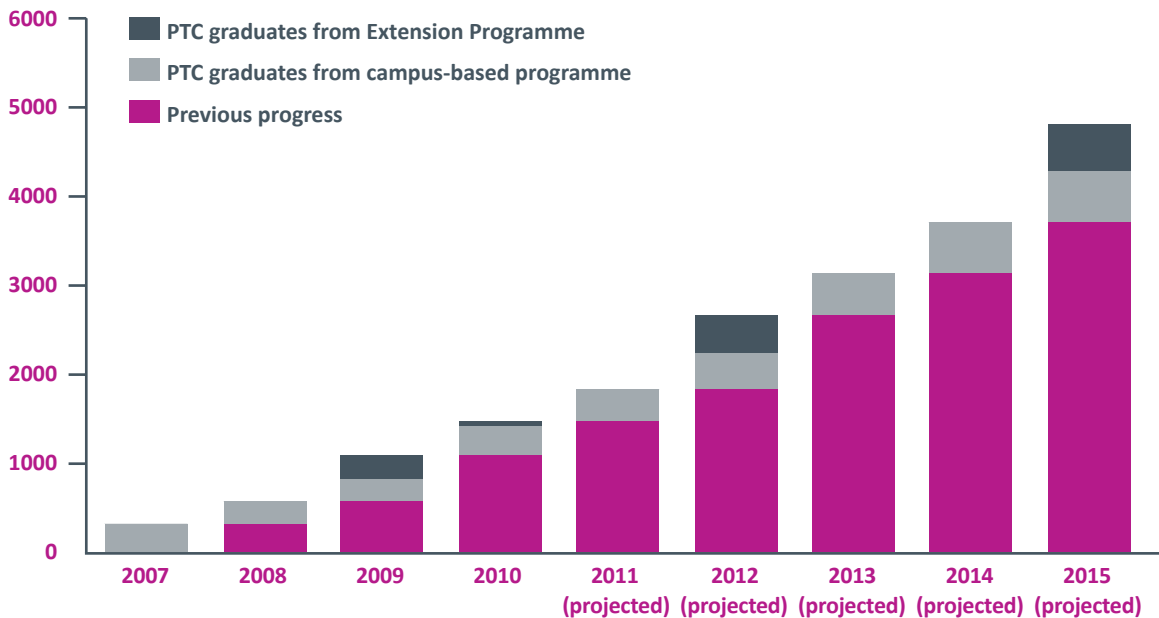
The respondents consulted in the course of this research indicated that there are three primary causes of qualified teacher shortage in The Gambia. The main factor highlighted was demand: the rapid expansion of access in the effort to provide universal primary education has required the recruitment of considerable numbers of teachers at an

unprecedented rate. The other two factors which respondents noted can exacerbate this challenge are: the attrition of qualified teachers and the small pool of potential candidates (coupled with their disinterest in taking up the career).

Respondents reported three common strategies that are employed for coping with the shortage of qualified teachers in the country: double-shift timetables, informally combined classes⁷ and the employment of unqualified teachers. Respondents also reported that sometimes no strategy is available or implemented for a long period of time, resulting in unsupervised classes. Each of these strategies (or the lack of a strategy) can have implications for teachers, students and the teaching and learning process. Respondents also expressed some general effects that teacher shortage can have: they cited effects on the quality of education and standards, on students’ learning and performance, general damage to the schools, and broader effects including contributing to the failure of education and implications for national development.

Figure one

Progress and projected progress toward 2015 target of 6,297 new PTC qualified teachers



Source: Gambia College School of Education.

Note: 2014 and 2015 projections based on increased intakes in 2011 and 2012 by 20 per cent of 2010 intake (campus-based programme) and 2009 intake (Extension Programme). All projections based on 95 per cent completion rate of new intakes.

- Throughout this report, schools within the government’s system are referred to as conventional schools and Islamic schools are referred to as Madrassas. Mission schools/grant-aided schools are grouped with the conventional schools for the purposes of this report.
- The PTC is the general teaching certificate for basic education in The Gambia.
- Where this report refers to informally combined classes, it refers to a situation where classes which are each meant to have a teacher are combined due to a teacher shortage. It is important to note that informally combined classes as a strategy to cope with teacher shortage are distinct from multi-grade teaching, which can lead to improved utilisation of the teaching workforce when the class size and grade level combinations are appropriate, and when teachers are adequately trained to employ multi-grade teaching strategies.

Managing the employment of unqualified teachers

The employment of unqualified teachers appears to be the Ministry's favoured strategy to cope with the qualified teacher shortage, and is being managed in different ways in the different types of schools studied in this research. In conventional schools, distribution of unqualified teachers is managed at the regional level. Despite efforts to distribute qualified teachers evenly during the posting process, there remains a higher proportion of qualified teachers in the country's urban area than in rural regions.

In contrast, Madrassa schools have a more flexible recruitment and distribution process. Some Madrassas undertake their own recruitment, but the majority of teachers in Madrassas are recruited through the Gambian Secretariat for Islamic/ Arabic Education (GSIAE)⁸ and distributed at national level. Teachers in Madrassas retain the ability to decide where they will teach. Therefore, the distribution of qualified teachers among Madrassas cannot be regulated. This results in a higher concentration of qualified teachers in the wealthier urban region than in the poorer up-country regions, thus reinforcing rather than addressing inequality between regions.

In the conventional schools, applicants must meet a minimum requirement of at least three passes in the WASSCE exam (senior secondary certificate)⁹ to be considered for employment as an unqualified teacher. Indications are that this requirement is closely monitored, though it does appear that school-level teacher managers can find ways around the requirement. In the Madrassas, the minimum requirement to become an unqualified teacher is a Madrassa senior secondary certificate. The teacher shortage in Madrassas is so significant and the pool of eligible candidates so small that even this relatively low minimum requirement is being overlooked in order to fill the vacant posts.

In conventional schools, unqualified teachers cannot progress beyond their initial salary level. They are, however, eligible to receive other forms of remuneration (such as certain allowances), though they do not enjoy some of the other benefits that qualified teachers are eligible to receive (such as pensions and other allowances). The remuneration of teachers in Madrassas is made by the Madrassas themselves and this amount varies from school to school, although the GSIAE does make recommendations.

The Ministry's policies and procedural guidelines encourage unqualified teachers to contribute fully in the schools where they are employed, and teacher managers are advised to consider and cater for the specific professional needs of unqualified teachers. All unqualified teachers in The Gambia are eligible for membership of the Gambia Teachers' Union (GTU) and are offered support and training opportunities from the GTU, as well as from the MoBSE and other organisations and institutions.

Consultations for this research confirmed that some unqualified teachers are receiving training; some reported having received useful training in a range of areas, although

others reported having received no training at all. Additionally, research consultations suggest that school and regional-level teacher managers agree that unqualified teachers require more management support than qualified teachers.

There are no limits to the number of times an unqualified teacher's contract can be renewed in any of the school types studied in this research. Unqualified teachers consulted during this study reported having been teaching for up to eight years in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) centres, up to 10 years in conventional schools and up to 29 years in Madrassas.

In conventional schools, unqualified teachers do not enjoy the opportunity to progress in their teaching career without first earning their teaching qualification; they cannot be promoted or serve in official leadership roles. Unqualified teachers in conventional schools work on short-term contracts of 11 months (though they are paid for 12) and are not entitled to receive pensions. Despite these limitations, unqualified teachers now have considerable opportunities to become qualified and subsequently progress in the teaching career.

The GSIAE recommends that Madrassas pay their unqualified teachers for a full 12 months in order to retain them from year to year. Additionally, unqualified teachers in Madrassas are eligible to take on leadership roles in their schools and have the ability to progress in terms of salary.

An understanding of who the unqualified teachers are, what their attitudes to the profession are, what their contributions are and what challenges they face is essential for developing relevant and effective policies and practices for the recruitment, management and training of unqualified teachers. In conventional schools and ECCE centres, the unqualified teachers we consulted were younger than their qualified colleagues. These respondents also reported having been teaching for less time and generally living nearer to their immediate families than the qualified teachers in these schools. The majority of unqualified teachers consulted reported that they had not received any training before they started teaching.

Unqualified teachers reported joining the profession in order to help the community, help address the qualified teacher shortage and increase access to education. Unqualified teachers from all types of schools consulted consider teaching to be an opportunity to learn more – and perhaps even to get further education. The vast majority of unqualified teachers consulted for this research reported an interest in pursuing further training, indicating an interest in remaining in the profession. When asked how long they expect to continue teaching, on the whole there is no notable difference between the length of time the qualified and unqualified teachers intend to remain in the profession. Unqualified teachers in each school type also reported similar motivation levels to their qualified colleagues.

8. The GSIAE is the umbrella organisation for Madrassas in The Gambia.

9. Or the equivalent if the person was educated prior to the commencement of these exams.

Contributions of unqualified teachers

Consultations conducted for this research indicate that unqualified teachers are making a number of contributions to education in The Gambia. While it is quite clear that their role in addressing the qualified teacher shortage and expanding access to education is valued, it is also clear that their contributions are not limited simply to filling gaps in the classrooms. However, respondents stressed that while unqualified teachers make contributions, these are limited by their lack of teaching qualification.

Respondents reported that unqualified teachers make contributions in the areas of teaching and learning – including contributions involving pedagogical skills such as classroom management and active learning through games. Respondents also reported that unqualified teachers make contributions

in the general area of helping and caring for children. They suggested that unqualified teachers' personal characteristics enhance their contributions and emphasised that they serve as role models in the classroom, school and community. Respondents also highlighted unqualified teachers' role in promoting education in the community.

Respondents in conventional schools reported that unqualified teachers prepare and use teaching and learning materials, monitor and maintain the physical environment of the classroom, manage resources and provide a good learning environment for students. Unqualified teachers were also reported to contribute to the promotion of education in the community and were said to be making contributions to do with general school operations and development.



Students and their unqualified teacher in a semi-urban ECCE

Challenges faced by unqualified teachers

While respondents recognised a range of contributions being made by unqualified teachers, they also agreed that unqualified teachers face challenges – even in some of the same areas where they are making contributions. Some challenges were reported to be particular issues for unqualified teachers, whereas others appear to be faced by qualified teachers as well.

Some respondents – particularly regional-level teacher managers in the conventional system, as well as qualified teachers in Madrassa schools – reported that unqualified teachers face challenges to do with planning and preparing lesson notes and schemes of work. Adequate planning and preparation is the foundation of good lesson delivery; poor planning and preparation is likely to affect the quality of teaching and learning. Qualified teachers were not reported to face these challenges.

Similarly, school-level teacher managers reported that unqualified teachers face challenges to do with teaching and learning and pedagogical skill – specifically in the areas of classroom management and teaching methodology. Qualified ECCE teachers agreed that unqualified teachers face challenges to do with pedagogical skill – but also reported facing such challenges themselves.

School-level teacher managers across school types suggested that subject and general knowledge are a particular problem for unqualified teachers, though other studies indicate that subject knowledge is also a problem for qualified teachers. Additionally, teacher managers and unqualified teachers reported that unqualified teachers face challenges in the areas of training and support – citing their lack of initial teacher training, lack of in-service training opportunities and lack of assistance from their colleagues.

Barriers to qualification were also reported to present challenges to unqualified teachers. Although some improvements have been made to address the financial barriers to qualification, some unqualified teachers reported an inability to meet the entry requirements of their desired training programme. It is also possible that some of these reported barriers to qualification are perceived barriers only; a considerable number of opportunities are available for unqualified teachers to become qualified – including opportunities to meet programme entry requirements.

In conventional schools, qualified teachers and school-level teacher managers agree that unqualified teachers face challenges to do with respect and status; some unqualified teachers in these schools and in Madrassa schools also reported facing these challenges. It is not clear that there exists any one sentiment from communities towards unqualified teachers; some community members have negative ideas about unqualified teachers while others do not seem to know or mind the difference between qualified and unqualified teachers.

Demotivation was also highlighted as a challenge for unqualified teachers, but some respondents indicated that it is also a challenge for qualified teachers. However, respondent descriptions suggest that demotivation may affect qualified and unqualified teachers differently.

Qualified and unqualified teachers reported facing challenges relating to resources and their environment – including to do with the provision and use of teaching and learning materials, the physical classroom and/or school environment, class arrangement, resource management and the broader learning environment.

Qualified and unqualified teachers from all school types reported that they face challenges relating to student attendance. Unqualified teachers from Madrassa schools and ECCE centres stated that teacher shortages present challenges to them. Teachers in conventional schools reported that school funding is a challenge for teachers. Challenges relating to community involvement and citizenship were also reported by qualified and unqualified teachers – primarily by ‘up-country’ teachers (working outside urban areas).

School-level teacher managers across school types noted that qualified and unqualified teachers face challenges relating to their salary and terms and conditions of employment. Other respondents – including unqualified teachers and teacher trainees – also indicated that this is especially a challenge for unqualified teachers. Additionally, while unqualified teachers themselves did not generally report facing challenges to do with living conditions and amenities, other respondents indicated that both qualified and unqualified teachers face challenges in this area. Respondents reporting this challenge were working in up-country regions.

Ministry measures to address qualified teacher shortages

In recent years, the Ministry has introduced measures to address the qualified teacher shortage. Encouragingly, these strategies have been specifically targeted toward teacher retention, making teaching a more attractive profession and upgrading unqualified teachers. Teacher retention efforts have included improvements to teacher remuneration. Non-financial incentives, such as the Best Teacher Award, are also in place. Additionally, a bonding arrangement has been introduced to retain newly trained teachers within the Ministry, and a higher teachers' certificate for lower basic level teachers has been developed to help address internal attrition of teachers from the lower basic schools to the upper basic schools.

The Ministry has also made efforts to make teaching more attractive – especially in rural areas where the qualified teacher shortage is more severe. These efforts have included a Hardship Allowance for teachers working in certain areas and the construction of staff quarters. The Ministry also reports that steps have been taken to make the promotions process more transparent.

Regarding upgrading unqualified teachers, specific steps are being taken to train them in the Madrassas, but a more general programme has been introduced for the in-service qualification of unqualified teachers in the rural regions. The in-service qualification programme (known as the PTC Extension

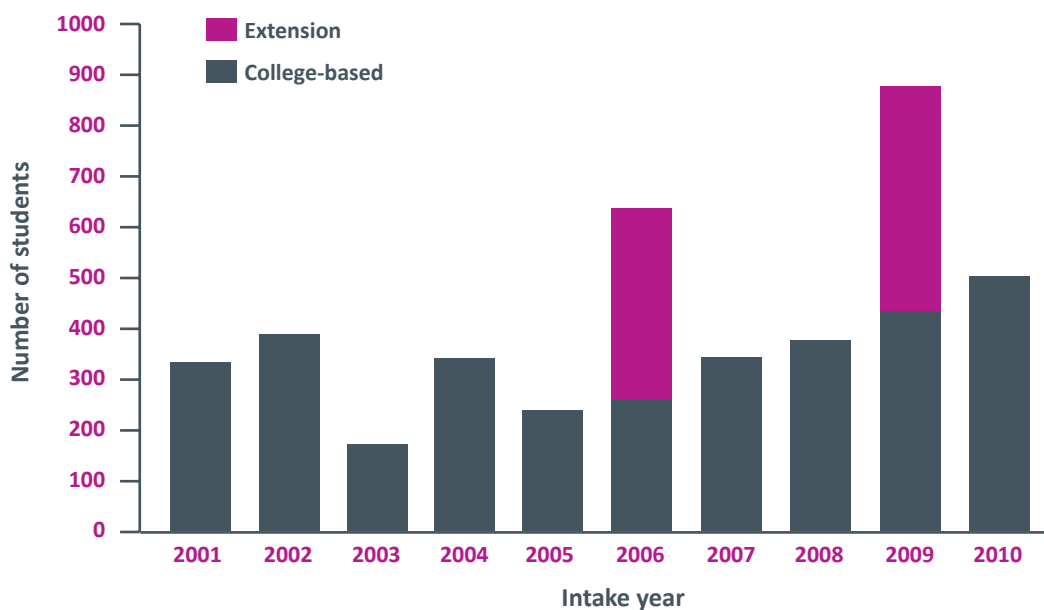
Programme) has significantly increased the number of qualified teachers who graduate in a three-year period. Preparatory courses are also in place to address challenges that hopeful teacher trainees have had in meeting the entry requirements for their desired training programme.

Some new trends are emerging – perhaps as a result of the steps that have been taken. Due to the successes of the PTC Extension Programme, the Ministry is now considering shifting the traditional programme to this new model and doing away with the traditional pre-service teacher training programme. The recruitment and distribution of qualified teachers has traditionally been administered on the national level, but the introduction of this new qualification model is creating a more regionalised system. A shift towards this model could potentially be a step towards addressing teacher frustrations with the current system of nationally distributing qualified teachers. However, this potentially beneficial trend must be weighed against the shortcomings of the model – including the institutionalisation of the practice of employing unqualified teachers.

Enrolment in the PTC course at the School of Education is steadily increasing – with significant increases every three years with the commencement of each new cohort on the PTC Extension Programme. Previously, the enrolment was very low due to insufficient numbers of interested and eligible

Figure two

School of Education PTC enrolment



Source: Gambia College School of Education.

candidates, but this year the College took its largest ever intake and even turned away eligible candidates due to insufficient numbers of lecturers.

There are indications that improved PTC enrolment trends may also lead to worrying new trends in managing PTC candidate intake. For example, a senior-level MoBSE official stated that serving as an unqualified teacher for one year may become a requirement for entry to the PTC course.

Remaining challenges

Despite steps taken and some encouraging emerging trends, challenges relating to teacher supply, recruitment and training remain. The new training model has experienced problems to do with materials, mentors and lecturers. These issues are a particular concern in light of the plans to expand the model. Also, while improved enrolment on the PTC course is an encouraging trend, the quality of candidates remains a concern. Attracting more highly qualified candidates to the teaching profession may also present challenges in light of the proposed new system of relying on interest in unqualified teaching as the pathway to the profession. It is clear that good candidates are attracted by good salaries, terms and conditions, among other things. Therefore, improving the unqualified teachers' remuneration package may have the effect of attracting better candidates. However, unqualified teaching must not be made so attractive that qualified teaching is not sufficiently more attractive.

No pre-service training is currently being conducted for unqualified teachers. Pre-service training is essential. Without a pre-service training element, it is difficult for VSO, EFANet and GTU to endorse the proposed plans to shift toward the proposed in-service only training model; on-the-job training must be preceded by some form of pre-service training.

There is room for improvement in the area of determining requirements for unqualified teachers and appointing unqualified teachers at the beginning of each academic year. This should be a priority area as it currently has implications for the ability to offer pre-service training to unqualified teachers. However, there are several complications in improving this system – not least of which is the timing of the announcement of the WASSCE results, which is often after the commencement of the academic year.

Teacher retention will likely continue to present challenges. New efforts to retain teachers may themselves be effective; however, ensuring the sustainability of these new approaches is essential and is likely to be a challenge without maintained donor attention and support. Improved utilisation of teachers will also be necessary for the realisation of a fully qualified teaching workforce. Determining how best to do this may be a challenge. Additionally, finding a suitable and achievable way to prepare teachers to teach special needs students presents challenges in light of the limited capacity of training institutions.

Finally, senior-level officials at the Ministry have reported that the Regional Education Directorates (REDs) are starting to have an easier time recruiting unqualified teachers, enabling them to fill the vacancies more quickly and to 'pick and choose' the best unqualified teacher candidates for the vacancies they were unable to fill with qualified teachers.

The situation in the Madrassas poses many challenges to the Ministry. The way forward in addressing such a severe qualified teacher shortage is not clear and is likely to be very expensive. However, the Ministry should benefit from the lessons learned in the process of addressing the qualified teacher shortage in conventional schools as it attempts to do the same in the Madrassas. In light of increasing Madrasa enrolment, these challenges must be addressed as a key priority.

As ever, the Ministry will face the challenge of competing priorities, but must maintain its commitment to a fully qualified teaching workforce and set a target date to work toward. If the School of Education is running at full capacity, then prioritising PTC candidates by experience would be prudent, but a 'requirement' that would institutionalise the presence of unqualified teachers should not be pursued. The Ministry must continue to take positive steps towards ensuring the quality of teaching and learning by further improving the quality of the teaching workforce. Standards for entry to teacher training should continually be raised – especially once qualified teacher supply requirements are being met and interest from eligible candidates is sufficient and steady.

The Ministry is committed to achieving a fully qualified teaching workforce in the conventional schools; it has set minimum requirements for teachers' employment and has made a concerted effort – together with donors – not only to upgrade the current unqualified teachers, but also to build the capacity of the current qualified teachers. The Ministry has also taken steps towards making teaching an attractive civil service profession.

Although there remains a qualified teacher shortage, the Ministry's continued commitment to quality and its efforts to train and retain teachers – alongside some new, targeted strategies – have a very real potential to enable The Gambia to employ a fully qualified teaching workforce in conventional schools in the foreseeable future. Madrasa schools, however, are lagging behind and require serious attention. With the 2015 target for achieving the Education for All Goals looming, now is a crucial time for action.

Please refer to page 56 for a list of recommendations arising from this research.

Introduction

Study purpose and background

This research study was commissioned to investigate the contributions of unqualified teachers¹⁰ to education in The Gambia. The study was co-funded and supported by the National Union of Teachers (NUT) in the UK and VSO International. It was conducted alongside a similar study in Mozambique (also funded by the NUT and VSO International). The research is part of VSO's Valuing Teachers research¹¹ and advocacy initiative, which supports the achievement of the Education for All Goals and particularly focuses on improving the quality of education. The initiative, which began in 2001, draws attention to the important role that teachers play in the education reform process. Valuing Teachers research into what motivates teachers, what affects their morale and what will help them perform well has been conducted in 14 countries.¹²

Around the world, the employment of unqualified and contract teachers has been introduced as an interim measure to address the qualified teacher shortage; however, what began as a temporary measure has, in many countries, become an accepted solution to qualified teacher shortages. There is serious concern that the practice of hiring unqualified teachers to increase access to education may compromise education quality.

This study examined the contributions that such teachers are making to education in The Gambia. It captures the national circumstances surrounding the employment of unqualified teachers, the challenges unqualified teachers face, the personal and professional situations of unqualified teachers, and stakeholder positions regarding the employment of unqualified teachers in The Gambia.

At the outset, the Education for All Campaign Network (EFANet), Gambia Teachers' Union (GTU), VSO The Gambia and the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) formed a Steering Committee to guide the research process and to secure the participation of all types of stakeholders. Together they ensured the research fulfilled its key purposes as outlined below:

- to give teachers a chance to articulate their views about policies and schemes relating to unqualified teachers in The Gambia
- to build a consensus among stakeholders about how to address qualified teacher shortages in a way that does not compromise education quality
- to provide a solid foundation for advocacy strategies
- to ensure that policy reforms are informed by the views and opinions of frontline teachers.

This report has been produced in order to inform national education policy dialogue on teacher recruitment and teacher training policies. It is also hoped that the research will provide an adequate basis for civil society and government partners to engage in the necessary policy dialogue with development partners and international financial institutions. The key objective of the research is to identify the policy gaps that need to be addressed to enable the recruitment of fully qualified teachers and further investment in the formal training of unqualified teachers already in post.



Lower basic school students at a very rural school

The focus of this report is the matter of qualified teacher supply and recruitment in The Gambia – especially as it relates to the employment of unqualified teachers. The report is the result of participatory primary research into the matter of unqualified teachers in The Gambia – their situation, their contributions, their challenges and, naturally, the larger umbrella issues of teacher training, qualified teacher shortages and access to quality education in The Gambia. Within the context of the Gambian education system, the report describes issues relating to the supply of qualified teachers and explains the causes and effects of qualified teacher shortages in the country. The report also explores matters relating to the employment of unqualified teachers – describing the standards that have been set to manage their recruitment and distribution, providing information about their remuneration, explaining how they participate and are managed and

supported in the education system, and providing information about the career opportunities available to them. The study also provides insight into the profile of the unqualified teacher – including individual profiles of some unqualified teachers consulted in the course of this research. The report highlights the contributions that unqualified teachers make to education in The Gambia and also explores the challenges they face. It also draws attention to the steps that the MoBSE has taken in order to address the qualified teacher shortage in the country and summarises the key challenges that remain with respect to that shortage. Taking into account all factors, the report concludes with recommendations for additional efforts that should be made to complement – and in some cases reinforce – the Ministry’s current strategies to ensure the employment of a fully qualified teaching workforce in The Gambia.

10. In The Gambia, unqualified teachers are individuals who are serving as teachers without a formal teaching certificate or qualification. They may, however, be required to meet a minimum standard in order to be employed as an unqualified teacher. These teachers have often had some sort of teacher training, so to describe them as untrained teachers would, strictly speaking, be inaccurate. Refer to sub-section ‘Participation, management, training and support of unqualified teachers’ on page 33 for more information on this point.
11. To access this and other Valuing Teachers research reports online, visit www.vsointernational.org/valuingteachers
12. For a summary of issues arising from VSO’s Valuing Teachers research, see *Managing Teachers: The centrality of teacher management to quality education. Lessons from developing countries* (Mpokosa and Ndaruhutse, 2008).

Methodology

Research data was collected from primary, secondary and tertiary education stakeholders using participatory tools and following VSO's method for qualitative research outlined in the *Simple Toolkit for Advocacy Research Techniques (START)* (Tweedie, 2005). The Research Plan – which guided the design and implementation of the research – was developed with the input of representatives from 10 national and international institutions (including the MoBSE) and was designed to provide rich, qualitative data from a sample of all levels of stakeholders across the country. The Research Plan stipulated that the research would consider basic education only. In The Gambia, this includes education from Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to Lower Basic (grades 1 to 6) and Upper Basic (grades 7 to 9).¹³ The Research Plan also stipulated that the research should include Madrassa education and consultations with teachers working in special needs education. Madrassas are Islamic educational bodies, which operate alongside the conventional education system. The language of instruction in Madrassas is Arabic, with English taught as a subject. Madrassa enrolment accounts for approximately 16.5 per cent of total enrolment in basic education in The Gambia, and is reported to have increased by 14 per cent since 2005 (World Bank, publication expected 2011); however, currently, the Ministry has limited authority over the day-to-day running of Madrassas. Thus, while stakeholders in the conventional education system were the focus of the research, Madrassa, ECCE and special needs stakeholders were also consulted. Private schools serving basic education (grades 1-9) were not consulted – nor were *Daras*, which are informal Islamic schools that teach the Qur'an and Islamic religious education.

One hundred and forty-five primary stakeholders¹⁴ were consulted through 20 focus group discussions around the country, including:

- students
- teachers
- teacher trainees
- community members.

These participants also completed a short questionnaire under the guidance of the researcher.

In addition, over 100 interviews were conducted with primary, secondary and tertiary stakeholders, including:

- teachers
- teacher trainees
- school-level teacher managers
- regional-level teacher managers
- national education officials
- national policy makers
- national and international NGO/CBO staff
- representatives from international organisations.

Fifteen lesson observations also took place in conventional schools, Madrassas and ECCE centres. The regions visited were stipulated in the Research Plan; however, the schools consulted were selected at random. For more details of consultations, please refer to Tables one and two. For information regarding the teachers consulted, please see Appendix one. For details of interview questions and focus group discussion guides, please see Appendices two to nine.

Throughout this report, where a particular type of stakeholder gave a distinctive response, the stakeholder type is provided. Where a spectrum of stakeholder types gave similar responses, the stakeholders are referred to as 'respondents'.

13. Although the Ministry has now adopted an expanded vision of basic education to include ECCE and adult and non-formal education, this research considers ECCE and grades 1-9 only.

14. The START manual defines primary stakeholders as those people who are currently mainly affected by the policy issue under investigation; secondary stakeholders as those who both affect and are affected by the policy issue; and tertiary stakeholders as those who are affecting the policy issue (eg policy makers).

Consultations conducted

Table one

Number of school-level respondents by position and school type

(including interview, lesson observation and focus group participants)

	Teacher manager (Head teacher)	Teacher manager (Deputy head teacher)	Teacher manager (Senior teacher)	Unqualified teacher	Qualified teacher	Teacher trainee on placement	Students	All positions
Conventional schools	10	8	3	27	39	19	20	126
ECCE centres	7	3	1	11	15	2	0	39
Madrasa schools	10	3	1	18	2	0	0	34
Special needs schools	0	0	0	3	4	0	0	7
Totals	27	14	5	59	60	21	20	206



Participants in a teacher focus group discuss the causes and effects of teacher shortages by creating a problem tree

Table two**Number of other respondents**

Type of respondent	Type of consultation	Number
Individual community members	Focus group participants	2
Mothers' club members	Focus group participants	7
PTA members	Focus group participants	4
Village development committee members	Focus group participants	6
RED cluster monitors	Interviewees	8
RED directors or principal education officers	Interviewees	5
Area council (regional government) officials	Interviewees	4
MoBSE senior officials	Interviewees	9
Personnel management office senior official	Interviewee	1
Catholic education secretariat senior official	Interviewee	1
GSIAE senior official	Interviewee	1
Gambia College School of Education senior official	Interviewee	1
Gambia Teachers' Union senior officials	Interviewees	2
NGO representatives	Interviewees	12
National Assembly members on the Education Select Committee	Interviewees	2
United Nations officials	Interviewees	2
Unesco officials	Interviewees	2
	Total	69

Data analysis

During consultations, responses were recorded manually as well as digitally (using audio and video recording devices). The information collected in the consultations was entered into a bespoke Microsoft Access database and analysed using frequency counts (that is, how often a particular response was offered by different types of stakeholders). The frequency counts were differentiated by stakeholder type (school-level teacher manager, qualified teacher, unqualified teacher, etc) and by consultation type (interview, focus group discussion, etc) to ensure that consultation type did not influence stakeholder responses. For example, respondents were asked, 'What are the contributions of unqualified teachers?'

Their responses were tabulated by stakeholder and consultation type. Unqualified teacher (stakeholder type) responses in interviews (consultation type) were compared with unqualified teacher (stakeholder type) responses in focus group discussions (consultation type) to check that there were no notable differences, and so on.

International context

Since the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar and the development of the Education for All Goals, considerable strides have been made in education in developing countries – especially in terms of access to education. Although some major challenges with regard to access to education remain, according to the 2010 EFA Monitoring Report: *“The past decade has seen rapid progress towards universal primary education. Some of the world’s poorest countries have dramatically increased enrolment, narrowed gender gaps and extended opportunities for disadvantaged groups. School completion rates are also rising.”* (Unesco, 2010:54)

Significant numbers of new teachers have been needed to increase access in the effort to achieve universal primary education. In many countries, the demand for teachers has been dramatically higher than the supply of qualified teachers. A range of strategies has been undertaken by these countries to meet the unprecedented demand. In some cases, efforts have been made to increase teacher supply by making the profession more attractive, through, for example, improved teacher remuneration; however, strategies for meeting the demand for teachers have often followed worrying cost-cutting and time-saving trends. Such strategies have included reduction in entry requirements for teacher training programmes, reduction in the duration or standard of teacher training programmes, the employment of teachers on short-term contracts (usually saving on service conditions and salary), the employment of untrained or unqualified teachers (who lack teacher training or a teaching qualification, and who are generally paid less), and even recruiting volunteer teachers (unpaid teachers who may be qualified or unqualified).

Being the greatest expense in most countries’ education budgets, teacher salaries are often subject to close budget scrutiny and cost-cutting measures; however, as Unicef found in its report *Making Quality Basic Education Affordable: What have we learned?*, “[R]educing the average cost of teachers by recruiting cohorts of cheaper teachers comes at considerable cost. The threat to quality is an obvious and most often cited one.” (Buckland, 2003:37)

Saving money in the areas of teacher training and recruitment is widely considered one of the fastest ways to compromise education quality. And as the 1996 Amman Affirmation articulates, *“Without educational content relevant to current needs, without preparation in the learning skills and new knowledge required for the future, and without efforts to improve learning achievement, access may neither serve the purposes intended nor provide the benefits expected.”* (Unesco, 1996:2-3)

Although quality teachers alone are not sufficient for the delivery of quality education, they are indisputably a prerequisite – and quality teacher training is certainly an essential requirement for the development of quality teachers. Consequently, some of the most significant education-related questions facing many developing countries now are how to attract, train, distribute and retain a qualified teaching workforce. As ever, there is no panacea; the situation in each developing country has its own peculiarities. There are, however, some countries which seem to be finding appropriate ways to address their qualified teacher shortages and are making progress in the development of a qualified teaching workforce.

Education for All Goals

Goal 1: Expand early childhood care and education

Goal 2: Provide free and compulsory primary education for all ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

Goal 3: Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults

Goal 4: Increase adult literacy by 50 per cent

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality by 2015

Goal 6: Improve the quality of education improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Millennium Development Goal 2

Achieve Universal Primary Education: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

The Gambian context

In The Gambia, basic education comprises six years' education at the lower basic level and three years at the upper basic level.¹⁵ There are three main categories of schools which provide basic education: lower basic schools (grades 1-6), upper basic schools (grades 7-9) and basic cycle schools (grades 1-9 – providing lower and upper levels of basic education). The Gambia has two main types of basic education: the government school system and the Islamic Arabic school system. Throughout this report, schools within the government system are referred to as conventional schools, while Islamic schools are referred to as Madrassas. There also exist some mission schools (run by faith-based organisations) which are privately administered but which fall under the authority of the MoBSE. For the purposes of this report, the mission schools are grouped with the conventional schools. Teachers in these schools are remunerated by the MoBSE and work under MoBSE terms and conditions. Students in these schools are included in enrolment figures as 'grant-aided'. Additionally, there are ECCE centres, some of which are annexed to conventional schools, some of which are attached to Madrassa schools, but most of which are private and independent. ECCE is now being considered part of the basic education process in The Gambia and is therefore becoming more incorporated into the Ministry's plans and policies. However, as reported in the *Country Education Status Report*, there is almost no public funding for ECCE (World Bank, publication expected 2011). The Special Educational Needs schools in The Gambia are all private or mission-run and are all based in Kombo (Region 1) – the most urban region. See Table three for information regarding school enrolment at the various levels of basic education in The Gambia.

Education financing

In 2009, recurrent expenditures on education accounted for 17.8 per cent of Gambian government recurrent expenditures (excluding debt service): below the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) target of 20 per cent and well below the ECOWAS average of 24 per cent (World Bank, publication expected 2011). In the 2011 budget, however, it has been announced that recurrent education expenditures will increase to 20 per cent. *"The 2011 Budget will consolidate the achievements so far gained under basic and secondary education programmes and in line with requirements for the Education for All/Fast Track Initiative (FTI), to which Government has pledged undivided commitment. Budget allocations to the education sector in the 2011 Budget are targeted to account for nearly 20 per cent of total expenditures"* (Ministry of Finance, 2010:16). Despite the improved allocation, expenditure is expected to remain below the ECOWAS average of 24 per cent.

Table three

Basic education enrolment in The Gambia 2009-10

School level	School type	Enrolment	Total enrolment at level
ECCE	All	62,145	62,145
Lower basic	Conventional	152,799	227,668
	Grant-aided	17,756	
	Madrassa	42,838	
	Private	14,275	
Upper basic	Conventional	53,553	75,613
	Grant-aided	9,951	
	Madrassa	6,657	
	Private	5,452	

(World Bank, publication expected 2011)

In 2009, donor financing accounted for 38.7 per cent of the total education budget in The Gambia (World Bank, publication expected 2011). Although this represents a significant donor presence, the Aide-Memoire from the December 2010 Joint Donor Review states, *"The Gambia is becoming increasingly a donor-orphan country – IsDB, AfDB, BADEA and DFID have closed their projects in 2010 with no further support in the pipeline for basic education"* (The Gambia Implementation Support Mission for Third Education Sector Project, 2010:2).

15. Although the Ministry has now adopted an expanded vision of basic education to include ECCE and adult and non-formal education, this research considers ECCE and grades 1-9 only.

Access to education and distribution of qualified teachers

As the Education Policy (2004-15) explains, “Throughout the 1990s, significant progress was made in expanding access to primary education” (Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education, 2004:10). Figures three and four demonstrate that enrolment has continued to expand since that period. Free fee-paying primary education was introduced in The Gambia in 1997, and its implementation in 2002 led to a sharp increase in enrolment in basic education. However, based on the 2008 Net Enrolment Ratio, it is estimated that, including Madrassa enrolment, only 69 per cent of the children between the ages of 7 and 11 are enrolled in basic education in The Gambia (Unesco, 2011); thus, there is still considerable progress to be made with regard to access to basic education.

While there had previously been a significant gap between the number of teachers required and the number of qualified teachers available to teach the increasing number of students, in recent years that gap has been closing in conventional schools in The Gambia. This shift is likely, in large part, attributable to targeted policies and programmes the Ministry has put into action with the intention of attracting and training new qualified teachers and upgrading and retaining current teachers. Specific steps taken are highlighted in the section ‘Steps taken to address

the qualified teacher shortage’ on page 46, and Figure nine (page 40) illustrates the increased enrolment at the teacher training college, which has notably increased qualified teacher supply. Despite improvements, there remain particular areas of concern, including a disproportionate number of unqualified teachers in up-country (non-urban) regions (see Figure seven on page 29 for further details).

In Madrassa schools, a more severe qualified teacher shortage remains. A senior-level official from the GSIAE stated, “The number of teachers that we are having, most of them did not have any training. This is because there is a high demand of teachers...When we had our survey two years ago, we found out that more than 70 per cent of our teachers are untrained.” The official continued, “[It is] qualified teachers that we look for, but because of the limited number of qualified teachers, we employ unqualified teachers. That’s why when you visit Madrassas, you find out that the majority of the teachers are unqualified.” The qualified teacher shortage in Madrassa schools is especially acute in the up-country regions; the GSIAE reports that there were as few as two qualified teachers in the entire Madrassa school system (including secondary education) in some up-country regions in 2009-10¹⁶ (see Table five on page 30 for further details).¹⁷



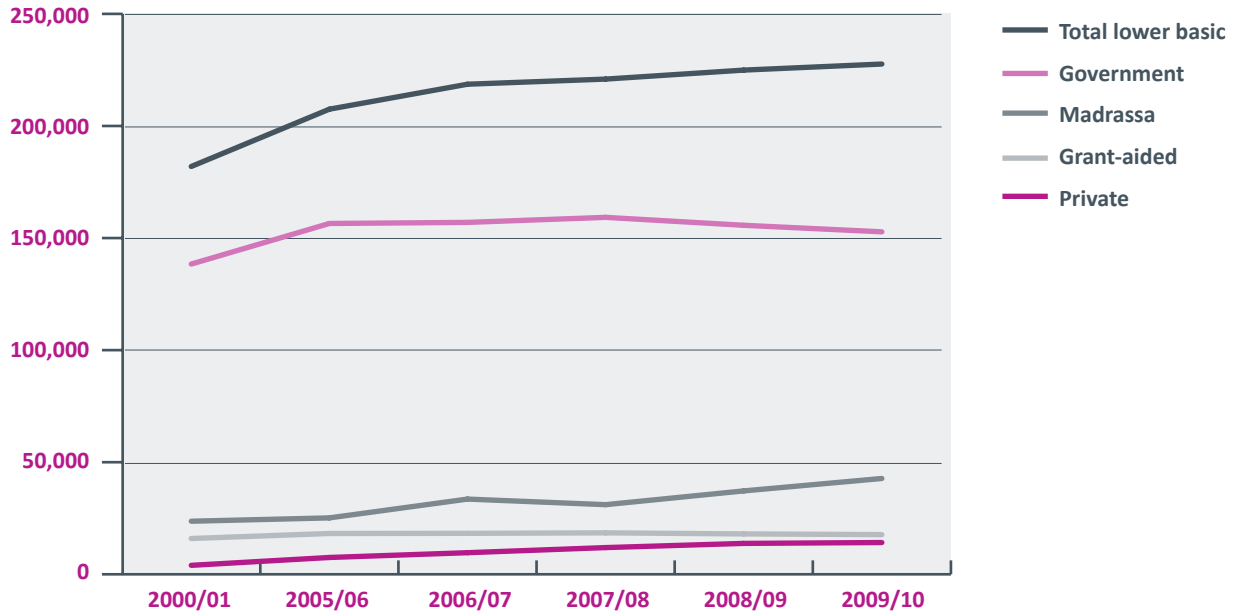
Storytime under the shade of a mango tree: Part of a teacher training session on using books to enhance lessons and utilising the whole school environment

16. This figure includes graduate teachers who may or may not have a formal teaching qualification recognised in The Gambia.

17. Statistics regarding the proportion of qualified and unqualified teachers at the ECCE level were not available at the time of publication.

Figure three

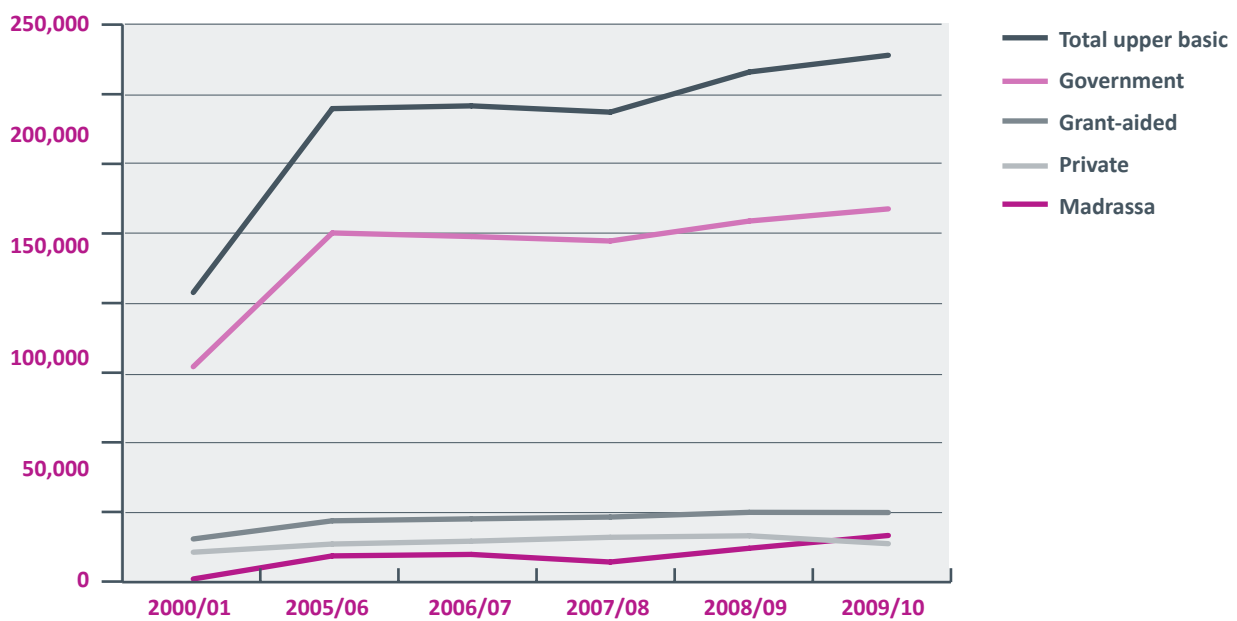
Lower basic education enrolment in The Gambia 2000-10



(World Bank, publication expected 2011)

Figure four

Upper basic education enrolment in The Gambia 2000-10



(World Bank, publication expected 2011)

Education quality

The value of access to education is limited by the quality of the education accessed. VSO defines a quality education as one *“that is appropriate to [the children’s] learning needs and prepares them for their future life”* (VSO International, 2007:4). Quality education requires a variety of inputs, but the output most often expected is the improved learning achievements of students. As expressed in The Gambia’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), the country’s target for quality is that *“by 2015 more than 90 per cent of students in basic and secondary schools achieve grade level competence”* (Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs, 2006:96). Despite increased access to education, student learning achievements in The Gambia remain an area of concern – an indication that quality in education is lacking. The country’s PRSP, Education Policy and Basic Education Strategy Paper all identify education quality as an enduring concern, and recent student test results offer further basis for this concern.

Regarding test results, the Aide-Memoire from the December 2010 Joint Donor Review reports, *“Gambian students in the early grades fare worse than Senegalese on literacy assessment, although Senegalese students fare in the bottom half of the countries in the international learning assessment programs (PASEC). Similarly, Gambian students lag behind the other three WAEC countries in both English and Mathematics on the WASSCE”* (The Gambia Implementation Support Mission for Third Education Sector Project, 2010:6).

As for what affects the quality of education in The Gambia, the Poverty Reduction Strategy 2007-2011 Synthesis explains that the quality and relevance of education *“is constrained by a shortage of well-trained teachers, inadequate teaching materials in schools, weak management of schools, as well as the difficulty of retaining qualified education personnel”* (Republic of The Gambia, 2008:13). As is the case anywhere, education quality in The Gambia depends on a range of factors. Qualified teachers are not the only requirement for education quality in The Gambia; however, it is clear that they are a necessary requirement.

In response to this acute challenge and with due regard to the specific constraints, education quality is one of the MoBSE’s top policy priorities. The Ministry’s Education Policy for 2004-15 outlines eight specific areas for improvement which are expected to contribute to the overall improvement of learning outcomes – with the supply of qualified teachers at the top of the list. Among other things, the Education Policy states that *“The learning outcomes at all levels will be improved through... provision of an adequate supply of trained teachers through cost effective pre-service teacher education and in-service training programmes.”* The Gambia’s Basic Education Strategy Paper places the indicator at 90 per cent of teachers to be qualified by 2015 (Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education, 2004:15).

“Quality education is the key to the country’s growth and socio-economic development.”

(Republic of The Gambia, 2008:13)

“One of the biggest challenges of The Gambia’s education system is the quality and relevance of education.”

(Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education, 2004:12)

Qualified teacher supply

There is one main teacher training institute in The Gambia. It is known as Gambia College's School of Education and it is located in Brikama, a relatively urban town in the Western Region (Region 2) with good access to the country's most urban region, Kombo (Region 1). The Gambia College, which is currently being integrated into the University of The Gambia (UTG), offers several teacher training qualifications including the general teaching certificate for basic education in The Gambia – the Primary Teachers Certificate (PTC). Traditionally, if a person wishes to become a PTC qualified teacher, he or she attends the college for training for a full year before proceeding to teaching practice as a trainee in a school for a further two years, returning to the College for face-to-face instruction during summer holidays. In The Gambia, it is only those who attain formal qualifications such as the PTC who are known as qualified teachers.

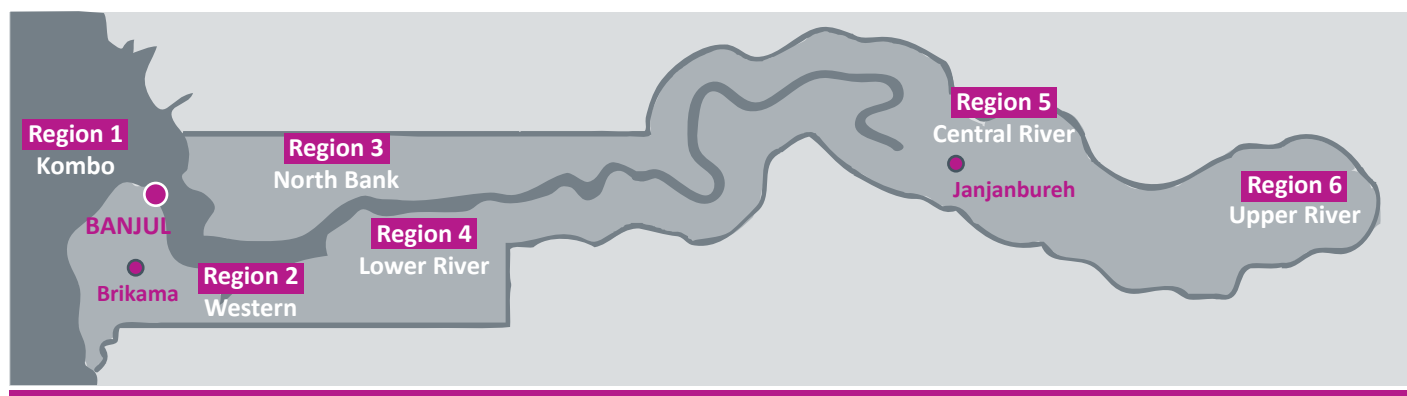
The scale of the challenge

Consultations for this research revealed that teachers and school-level teacher managers believe that teachers need teaching qualifications to enable them to teach effectively. One qualified teacher who expressed this view stated, *"To be a very good teacher you need to be qualified – you need to be trained."* However, realising a workforce of sufficient numbers of qualified teachers to fill all the teaching posts is no small feat in The Gambia; in the 2007 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) II, a key target set for the tertiary education sub-sector was for an additional 10,000 qualified teachers by 2015, including 6,297 PTC holders (Republic of The Gambia Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs, 2006). Before then (2001-06), on average only 290 new students were enrolling in the PTC course each year, with an average of only 257 qualifying each year (2003-06). With some teachers leaving the profession and others leaving the classrooms to embark on further training each year, and with continuing improvements in access to education, the number of teachers qualifying each year was not sufficient to address the qualified teacher shortage. At the rate of less than 300 new PTC teachers each year, it would have taken over 20 years before The Gambia would have realised the 6,297 additional PTC holders which the PRSP states the country requires by 2015.

Today, however, it is estimated that The Gambia is 4,832 PTC qualified teachers away from the 2015 target. This is ahead of the previous rate of 300 new PTC qualified teachers per year, but not yet on course to meet the target. Figure 5 illustrates progress towards the 2015 target of 6,297 new PTC qualified teachers and the projected remaining qualified teacher gap.

Pupil:teacher ratios and pupil:qualified-teacher ratios, as depicted in Figure four, also demonstrate the remaining teacher shortage, and Figure six illustrates the composition of the teaching workforce in conventional schools.

While some progress is being made toward addressing the teacher shortage (as explored in further detail in the section 'Steps taken to address the qualified teacher shortage' on page 46), these figures demonstrate that there remains a considerable qualified teacher shortage.

**Table four****Teaching qualifications available in The Gambia 2010**

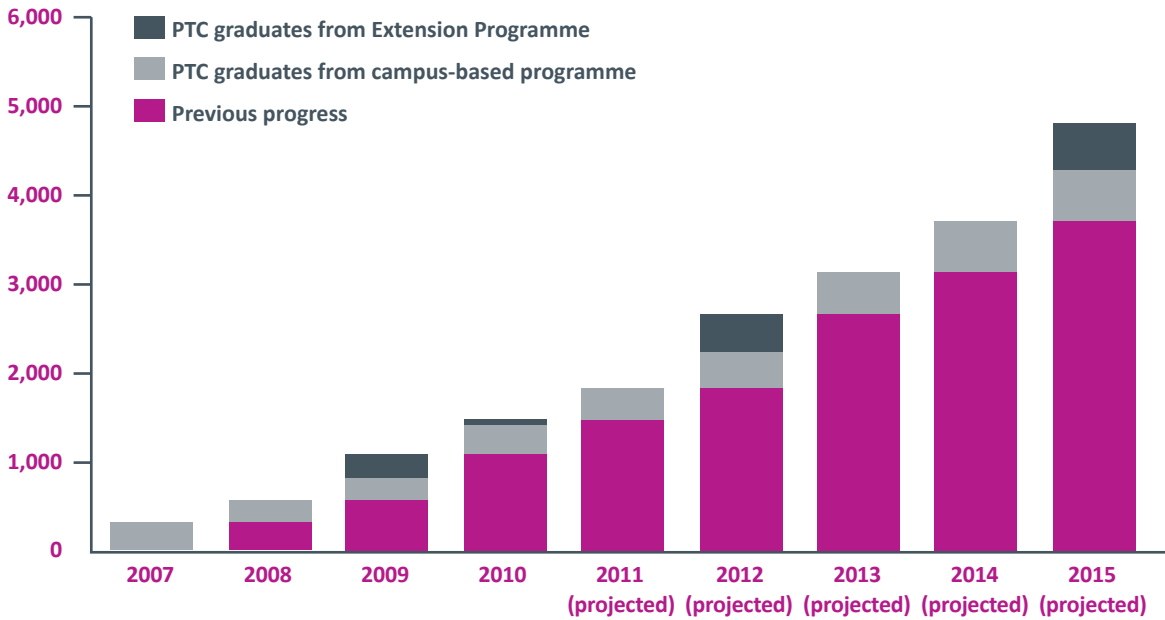
Qualification	Duration and type	Face-to-face instruction	Course entry requirement	Content	2010 enrolment
PTC (Traditional) Gambia College, Brikama	3 years Certificate	Year 1: 100% at college Years 2 & 3: teaching practice, face-to-face during school holidays only Total hours: 1,562*	1 WASSCE credit and 3 WASSCE passes	50% pedagogy 50% subject knowledge	500
PTC (Extension Programme) through Gambia College, Janjanbureh	3 years Certificate	Years 1, 2 & 3: during school holidays only Total hours: 1,026*	1 WASSCE credit and 3 WASSCE passes	50% pedagogy 50% subject knowledge	442
PTC Islamic Religious Knowledge (IRK) Gambia College, Brikama	3 years Certificate	Years 1 & 2: face-to-face Year 3: teaching practice Total hours: 1,536*	Madrasa Senior Secondary Certificate and entrance examination	50% pedagogy 50% subject knowledge	139
Higher Teaching Certificate (HTC) Gambia College, Brikama	3 years Diploma	Year 1: 750, Year 2: 900 Year 3: teaching practice Total hours: 1,650*	4 WASSCE credits (including English and two subjects of specialisation)	50% pedagogy 50% subject knowledge	448
HTC Primary Gambia College, Brikama	2 years Diploma	Year 1: 720 Year 2: 600 Total hours: 1,320*	PTC 4 WASSCE credits (including English and two subjects of specialisation)	60% pedagogy 40% subject knowledge	133
ECCE Certificate Gambia College, Brikama	3 years Certificate	Year 1, 2 & 3: during school holidays only Total hours: 1,200*	1 WASSCE credit and 3 WASSCE passes (flexible to account for experience)	60% pedagogy 40% subject knowledge	124

Source: Gambia College School of Education.

*Note: Hours are calculated according to the number of weeks. Unplanned holidays given by government or even The Gambia College have not been calculated. The hours provided for the PTC, HTC and HTC Primary are the expected number of hours to be covered annually. For the PTC Extension Programme, because it is residential, unplanned holidays are not observed.

Figure five

Progress and projected progress toward 2015 target of 6,297 new PTC qualified teachers

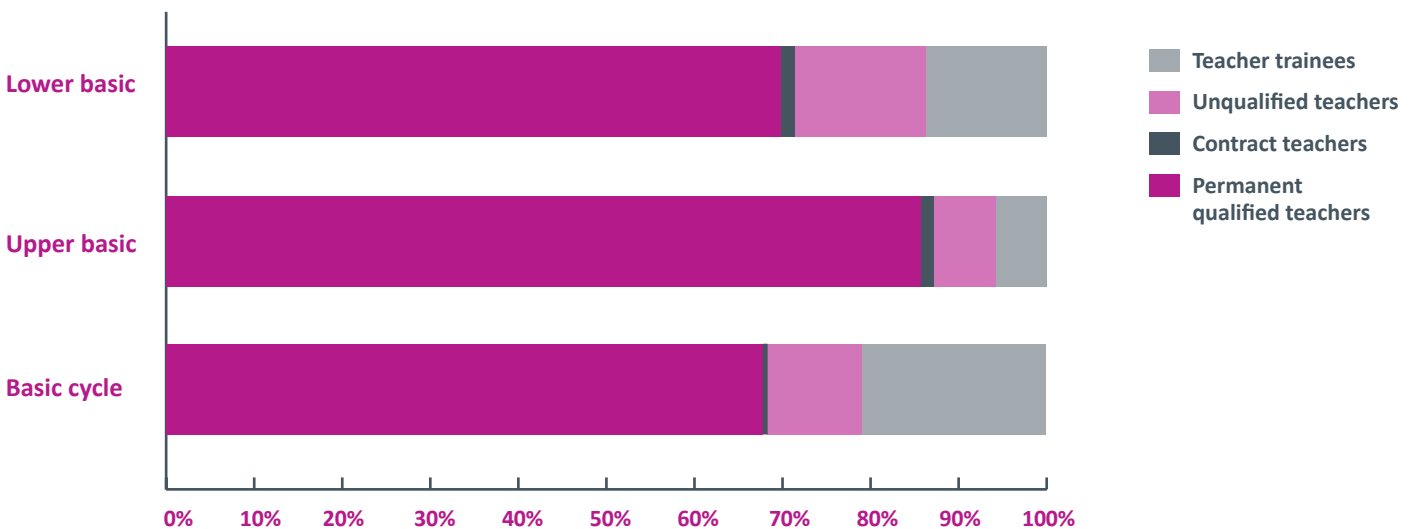


Source: Gambia College School of Education.

Note: 2014 and 2015 projections based on increased intakes in 2011 and 2012 by 20 per cent of 2010 intake (campus-based programme) and 2009 intake (Extension Programme). All projections based on 95 per cent completion rate of new intakes.

Figure six

Composition of teaching workforce by school level 2009-10



Source: World Bank, publication expected 2011.

Note: Figure includes conventional and mission schools only, based on sub-sample of 4,454 teachers.

Causes of the qualified teacher shortage

The respondents consulted in the course of this research indicated that there are three primary causes of qualified teacher shortage in The Gambia. Perhaps the main factor is demand; the rapid expansion of access in the effort to provide universal primary education has required significant numbers of teachers at an unprecedented rate. According to respondents, the two factors that can exacerbate this challenge are (1) the attrition of qualified teachers and (2) the small pool of potential candidates – coupled with the potential candidates' lack of interest in taking up the career.

Although teacher attrition in The Gambia is reported to be relatively low – between 3 and 4 per cent, although the HR Directorate was unable to confirm the rate (Mulkeen, 2010) – research respondents reported it to be a cause of the qualified teacher shortage and suggested that there are many reasons for qualified teacher attrition. Of course, there is natural attrition associated with teacher retirement, illness and death. But respondents also cited attrition associated with voluntary resignation. They explained that teachers' frustrations with slow promotions, problems with school management, salaries, terms and conditions and demotivation can, among other things, lead to teacher attrition through voluntary resignation. A regional-level government official observed, *"Many teachers are leaving for better and more well-paid fields – basically it is just the payment...You end up becoming bankrupt [or even] corrupt."* Additionally, qualified teachers in The Gambia benefit from good access to Ministry-funded higher teaching diplomas and certificates, which can temporarily contribute to qualified teacher shortages and was, in the past, contributing to the qualified teacher shortage in lower basic schools. PTC qualified teachers were pursuing higher qualifications such as the HTC (an upper-basic level certificate for teachers), which led to migration of these teachers from lower basic to upper basic schools.

The other side of the matter has to do with the supply and interest of eligible candidates. With school achievement being poor, a relatively small percentage of students graduate with the programme entry requirements to be considered for the PTC course. Additionally, as one regional-level teacher manager explained, *"There is high competition among sectors. You know, it is the same people...the same group of students being turned out...that all the different sectors in government are scrambling for."* Not to mention the more lucrative non-public service careers in the private sector or with NGOs, which often attract the highest-achieving students. Respondents attributed eligible candidates' lack of interest in the teaching profession to the unattractiveness of teaching compared with other professions – referring to salary, terms and conditions, as well as the difficulties associated with the job and the workload.

A senior-level official at the Catholic Education Secretariat soberly observed, *"There are facilities which other employees are enjoying which teachers are not. And to tell you the truth, gone are those days when people will say, I will sacrifice and teach."* Furthermore, a participant in a teacher focus group explained, *"Some are not interested in teaching after finishing school – some feel it is too tiring."* Respondents specifically suggested that the practice of posting teachers nationally following attainment of the PTC has contributed to disinterest in the teaching career, and an official in the Human Resources Directorate at the MoBSE reported that the Directorate has also observed that teachers find the up-country regions unattractive. (For more information about the practice of posting teachers nationally, please refer to the section 'Managing the employment of unqualified teachers' on page 28.)

Additionally, a lack of respect or regard for teachers was suggested to have contributed to a lack of interest in the profession. Respondents indicated that these factors have also led to qualified teacher attrition. One regional-level teacher manager summarised the situation, explaining:

"You don't have a lot of people opting for the teaching profession. You also have attrition – attrition to other sectors...You go to the banks, trained teachers you find [working] there. You go to other sectors, you find trained teachers."

The issue of the supply and interest of eligible candidates is a particular challenge for the Madrassa schools, which seek Madrassa-educated teachers. A senior-level official for the GSIAE explained:

"Right now in The Gambia they have about 14 senior secondary Madrassas...The demand for teachers is more than the graduates and the graduates also divide themselves – some will go abroad to study in the Arab world and some will go to conventional schools to continue their education, and the others that are remaining are the people that we target to become teachers."

For information about what has been done to address the causes of the qualified teacher shortage, please refer to the 'Steps taken to address the teacher shortage' section on page 46.

Effects of the qualified teacher shortage

The effects of qualified teacher shortage are well known in The Gambia. Respondents reported three common strategies for coping with the shortage of qualified teachers in the country: double-shift timetables, informally combined classes and the employment of unqualified teachers. They also reported that sometimes no strategy is available or implemented for a long time, resulting in unsupervised classes. Respondents explained that each of these strategies (and the lack of a strategy) can have implications for teachers, students and the teaching and learning process.

Double-shift timetables are generally implemented for one of two reasons: insufficient numbers of teachers or insufficient facilities. Where there are insufficient facilities but sufficient numbers of teachers, one teacher can take the first (morning) shift and another the second (afternoon) shift. In these cases, double-shifting is not an effect of teacher shortage. However, where the same teacher teaches two shifts, the strategy is employed to address teacher shortage. Respondents reported that this strategy results in increased teacher workload and can affect teacher wellbeing. Additional remuneration is offered to teachers working a double shift which can make double-shift teaching attractive; however, respondents pointed out that increased payment cannot be expected to increase physical stamina. One regional-level teacher manager explained that the qualified teacher shortage, resulting in double-shift teaching, can sometimes result in *“ineffective teaching because the teacher who operates the double shift is often tired or less enthusiastic in the afternoon”*. Respondents also suggested that double-shift teaching can have the effect of reducing contact hours with students and may also lead to increased difficulty in classroom management. Another regional-level teacher manager stated, *“As a result of the shortages, we have tried to expand the double-shift arrangement. And, for me, even though it is the policy at the moment, I don’t think double-shifts help quality assurance.”*

Similarly, a regional-level teacher manager in an urban region explained:

“If you want to use the same person to teach morning and afternoon, taking that teaching is a very demanding task. The teacher might not be able to be effective the same way both in the morning and in the afternoon. An effective teacher in the morning could be exhausted by the end of the day and would not be able to give his or her best in the afternoon with another group of students. Perhaps I would say it affects quality.”

Where there is a shortage of teachers in a school, teachers may teach more than one class. Respondents explained that this situation can manifest itself in different ways: the teacher can move from one classroom to another, for example, setting one class a task while offering instruction to the other class and vice versa. It is also sometimes the case that all the students are in the same classroom and the teacher either teaches one class

while the other completes an assignment, or may attempt to employ multi-grade teaching strategies to teach both classes at the same time.

Respondents reported that where a teacher is teaching more than one class, teacher shortage can have the effect of increased class size and pupil:teacher ratio, reduced contact hours, increased difficulty for the teachers in covering the syllabus, overcrowding, increased difficulty in classroom management and increased teacher workload. A school-level teacher manager explained:

“At some schools even the head has to teach because the teachers at his school are not enough...or it will also result in double-shift teaching sometimes...or they go for multi-grade teaching...Some teachers may not even have the skills to teach for multi-grade and sometimes the...two grades in the same class may not match up. Some may not understand what you are trying to put across. Or sometimes classroom management could be a problem, too, because people of a different level are put together in the same classroom. Sometimes to cover the syllabus could also be another problem. And teachers’ work [is] also too much – because you are teaching at the same time different grades in the same classroom.”

A regional-level teacher manager in an urban region reported:

“What we do is when there is no teacher we tend to slot the others into the other classes...All the students are attended but class size is increased. Job load is increased on the other teachers...There is also the problem of completion of the syllabus. Because when the class size is increased [the] teacher has more load to take and then the work is slow so [the] syllabus is not covered. When [the] syllabus is not covered results are affected. Poor results: examination results. And poor results, you know the quality of people becomes basic – it becomes poor. It is interwoven. From one state it affects the other.”

It is important to note that informally combined classes as a strategy to address teacher shortage is distinct from multi-grade teaching, which can lead to improved utilisation of the teaching workforce when the class sizes and grade level combinations are appropriate, and when teachers are adequately trained to employ multi-grade teaching strategies. It is part of the MoBSE’s Education Policy (2004-15) and Medium Term Plan (2008-11) to maintain multi-grade teaching in an effort to improve access and teacher utilisation – especially in the rural areas (Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education, 2004, 2008a).

According to respondents, the employment of unqualified teachers has also happened as a result of teacher shortages in The Gambia. As one regional-level teacher manager in a very rural area noted: *“I don’t think it’s a secret to anyone that the reason that we have unqualified teachers in the system is to complement the shortage of qualified teachers. If there were*

enough qualified teachers there wouldn't be a need for any unqualified teachers." While respondents reported that unqualified teachers are contributing to addressing the teacher shortage, they also suggested that they make other contributions to education in The Gambia (as explored later in the report).

Although a small handful of respondents indicated that the contribution or presence of unqualified teachers in schools is *"definitely negative"* (as one stakeholder described it), the overwhelming majority of respondents expressed a general appreciation for the contributions of unqualified teachers. As one school-level teacher manager explained, *"They contribute positively, they have the 'stuff' but they lack the training."* While recognising their contributions, respondents also described many challenges that unqualified teachers experience due to their lack of qualification. Some of these challenges are likely to limit unqualified teachers' ability to contribute in the same ways or to the same extent as qualified teachers. The contributions of and challenges faced by unqualified teachers are explored in detail in the 'Managing the employment of unqualified teachers' section on page 28.

As discussed previously, in the absence of unqualified teachers, school managers may be forced to combine classes or introduce a double-shift timetable. Where a strategy for coping with the qualified teacher shortage is altogether lacking in a school, respondents reported that classes often go without any teacher at all. According to respondents, this situation presents very significant problems in schools and for the quality of education; among other things, it is reported to lead to decreased student attendance, disturbances to other classes when those students remain unattended on the school grounds, reduced contact hours and the development of bad habits in students. One regional-level government official in a semi-urban area explained:

"Where there are not enough teachers in a school we are just going to start from square one again. Because those classes without teachers will be going to school and they will lose the required contact hours... Where they don't have the required contact hours it is unfortunate... They will be there, time will be going, and at the end of the year they have to be promoted with or without the required contact hours... It is happening."

Additionally, respondents suggested teachers' free periods, which could otherwise be spent planning, may be spent supervising classes without a teacher. Similarly, school-level teacher managers may supervise these classes, reducing the amount of time they are able to devote to their management responsibilities and likely resulting in further challenges for the school.

Respondents also expressed some general effects that teacher shortages can have. They cited effects on the quality of education and standards, on students' learning and performance, general damage to the school, and broader effects including contributing to the failure of education and the impact on national development. Referring to the various effects of teacher shortages, one regional-level teacher manager stated, *"All of that is going to affect the quality of students that we graduate from our schools, which will have a negative impact on the social and economic development of the country. And it will [be] those poor-quality students that are going to become teachers themselves."*

Students themselves are keenly aware of the problems caused by teacher shortage. Students in a focus group in an upper basic school gave the following responses to the question, "What are the effects of teacher shortages?"

"When the teacher is not there, some students are playing, others are going out, some are reading, others are fighting."

"When you are reading and you have a question there will be no one to answer it."

"If the teacher is not in the classroom, students may spy on others' work."

"Some students will learn and some students will not learn."

"Some students will say 'I don't have a teacher. I am not going to school.'"

"The students go to the school empty and they go home empty."

"They just share the blackboard – one part another grade, one part another grade."

Managing the employment of unqualified teachers

The employment of unqualified teachers appears to be the Ministry's favoured strategy to cope with the qualified teacher shortage, and is being managed in different ways in the different types of schools studied in this research. This section will consider in detail issues related to the recruitment and distribution of unqualified teachers; minimum requirements for their employment; remuneration; and participation, management, training, support and career opportunities for unqualified teachers. It also includes profiles of unqualified teachers and explores their attitudes to the profession, the contributions they are making and the challenges they face.

Recruitment and distribution of unqualified teachers

In order to recruit and distribute teachers to conventional schools across the country, the MoBSE maintains "a two-level deployment system. At the central level, teachers are deployed to the six regions...Regional authorities are allowed to post the teachers to specific schools and to recruit unqualified teachers to fill the remaining posts" (Mulkeen, 2010:49 and 130). The Gambia Education Country Status Report further explains the posting practices, stating that teachers are meant to stay in the school where they are posted for a minimum of three years before requesting a transfer (World Bank, publication expected 2011).

The distribution of qualified teachers to conventional schools is regulated by the Human Resources Directorate at the MoBSE. The REDs inform the Human Resources Directorate of their teacher requirements and the Human Resources Directorate subsequently posts qualified teachers to the regions. Despite efforts to distribute qualified teachers evenly during the posting process, as Figure seven demonstrates, there remains great disparity in the proportion of qualified teachers in the urban area (Region 1) and the rural regions (Regions 2-6).

A senior-level official in the Human Resources Directorate explained:

"[Newly] qualified teachers are evenly distributed at the time of the national distribution...Some teachers may find it very difficult to go because 1) they already have their families here – they find it very difficult to leave their family or to travel with their family to up-country...2) other people may say that... 'I am suffering from a sickness, I should be very close to a place where medication is available'. Others will say – the majority

will say – that the condition of service is not favourable up-country: for instance, the staff quarters where they will live, although the government is making a giant stride to build staff quarters in some of the schools across the country – particularly in rural areas."

At the beginning of every school year, a 'stabilisation' process takes place in order to determine whether any teachers have not reported for duty at the schools where they were posted. Through this process the requirement for unqualified teachers is ascertained and unqualified teachers are subsequently recruited and distributed within their region of recruitment. The employment of unqualified teachers does not generally happen all at once. Rather, it can take the best part of the academic year to find teachers to undertake these roles. One regional-level teacher manager explained:

"You have to go round all the schools to stabilise them, know your teacher gaps, establish the number of extra teachers you require and then start the recruitment. But ...it is ongoing because you keep on receiving them – one application, two applications, etc. So it's a big challenge."

Another regional-level teacher manager described the challenges:

"Some teachers may decide to leave and go and do other things – other business. And when they are leaving they do not notify the office so when school resumes and there are gaps, then the office stabilises and these gaps are filled...They are difficult to fill – it is not easy to get a teacher immediately. You have to scout for a teacher for some time before you can get them filled."

When a vacancy arises in a conventional school during the academic year, the school is meant to contact the RED to request a teacher. In consultations conducted for this research, schools also reported making requests directly to the public for those interested to serve as unqualified teachers. One regional-level teacher manager explained that unqualified teachers are sometimes *“recruited from the community and are encouraged to send their application to the Regional Office”*. The REDs, in conjunction with the Human Resources Directorate, are responsible for ensuring that the unqualified teachers meet at least the minimum requirement to serve before they post the applicants to a school.

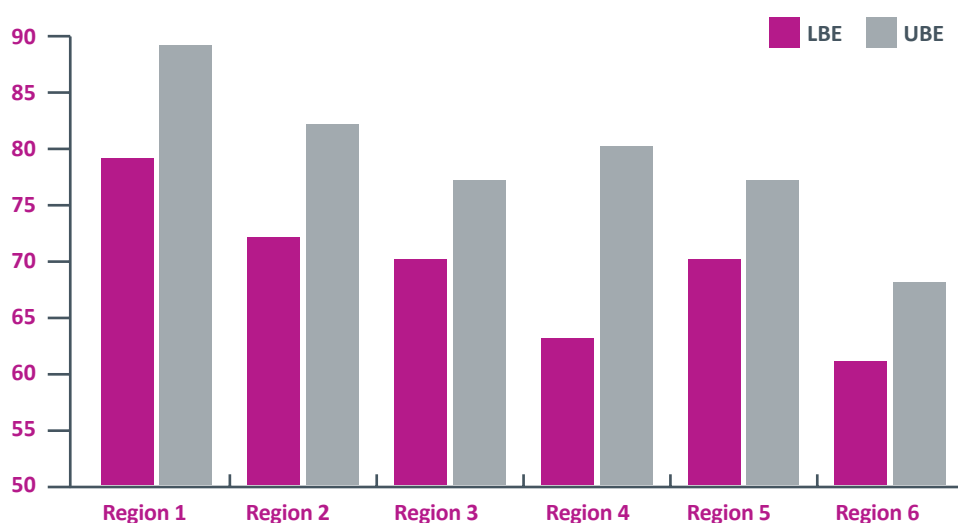
In contrast with the conventional system, Madrassa schools have a more flexible recruitment and distribution process. Some Madrassas undertake their own recruitment but, according to the GSIAE, the majority of teachers in Madrassas are recruited through the Secretariat. A senior-level GSIAE official explained that when a Madrassa contacts the Secretariat to request a teacher, the Secretariat identifies a teacher and asks the teacher to *“go and negotiate with the school management in terms of their salary”*. If the teacher is content with what the Madrassa agrees to pay,

then the teacher will stay at that Madrassa. Otherwise, the teacher can request to transfer. While the Secretariat makes recommendations regarding teacher salaries, Madrassa teachers are paid by the Madrassas – at whatever rate is agreed between the teacher and the Madrassa. These factors create a system where the GSIAE does not have the authority to ‘post’ teachers. Because Madrassa teachers retain the ability to decide where they will work, the distribution of qualified teachers among Madrassas cannot be regulated. According to a senior-level GSIAE official, *“Those qualified teachers, most of them don’t want to stay in the provinces...They always want to be in the urban areas. So that is one of the problems.”* As Table five details, in the Madrassa schools there is huge disparity in the proportion of qualified teachers working in the urban region as compared with the up-country regions.

Most ECCE centres are privately run or community-owned. Therefore, teachers in ECCE centres are generally privately recruited. No patterns in the recruitment of ECCE teachers were identified in the course of this research. Additionally, no data regarding the distribution of qualified and unqualified teachers in ECCE centres was available at the time of publication.

Figure seven

Per cent of qualified teachers by region (2009-10)



Note: Figure includes conventional and mission schools only.

Source: World Bank, publication expected 2011.

Table five**Regional distribution of qualified and unqualified teachers in Madrassas 2009-10***

Region	Graduate teachers**		Qualified teachers		Unqualified teachers	
1 (Urban)	154	(30.3%)	90	(17.7%)	265	(52%)
2	–	(–%)	–	(–%)	–	(–%)
3	4	(2.7%)	0	(0%)	144	(97.3%)
4	2	(1.9%)	0	(0%)	106	(98.1%)
5	1	(1%)	2	(2%)	97	(97%)
6	4	(1.2%)	3	(0.8%)	337	(98%)
TOTAL (excluding Region 2)	165	(13.6%)	95	(7.9%)	949	(78.5%)

Source: GSIAE (Region 2 data missing).

*Includes secondary education teachers. **Graduate teachers may or may not hold a teaching qualification.

Minimum requirements for employment

In conventional schools, applicants must meet a minimum requirement of at least three passes in the WASSCE exam (a West African terminal exam administered by the West African Examinations Council)¹⁸ to be considered for employment as an unqualified teacher. This standard was introduced several years ago, but in 2008 the MoBSE began enforcing the standard as part of its operational policy. It was established in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning, but a senior-level official for the MoBSE indicated that the standard may also be having the additional benefit of increasing community members' respect for unqualified teachers. When the standard was introduced, any unqualified teacher who did not meet the minimum requirement was dismissed from his or her post. At the time, the enforcement of the standard was widely viewed as drastic and controversial; even if the unqualified teachers were well experienced, they were dismissed if they lacked the minimum requirement. According to a senior-level MoBSE official, there were fears at the time that the policy would exacerbate the teacher shortage and perhaps even reduce access, but the Ministry moved forward, resolving that even if it meant that some schools would close, it was an essential step to take to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Today the policy is implemented at the regional level and requirements are verified through the Human Resources Directorate when the unqualified teachers are recruited. According to one regional-level teacher manager:

“With the present policy of recruiting unqualified teachers with a minimum of three passes at WASSCE, the contribution of unqualified teachers now is better than it used to be in the past, when all sorts of people were recruited for the job just because of the demand for teachers.”

However, in consultations for this research there was some misunderstanding – even among regional-level teacher managers – as to the minimum requirement for unqualified teachers. While most respondents understand the requirement to be at least at the level of the operational policy (three WASSCE passes), some understand the requirement to be stricter than it is – for example, some believe the standard includes requirements for specific subject passes and/or a credit (a standard higher than a pass). Additionally, at the time of writing, the MoBSE's Scheme of Service for Teachers (2009) does not clearly and accurately state the Ministry's current minimum requirements for unqualified teachers in lower and upper basic education (MoBSE, 2009).

The REDs are also responsible for monitoring this standard; throughout the year, cluster monitors regularly visit the schools and the REDs conduct monitoring visits during which they review staffing situations in schools, among other things. It was beyond the scope and capacity of this study to investigate and validate serving unqualified teachers' WASSCE passes. Indications are that the standard is closely monitored; however, it seems that teacher managers can find ways around the recruitment process and minimum standard in order to address the shortage in their schools. One school-level teacher manager in an urban conventional school reported that in order to address the teacher shortage at her school, she recruits volunteer teachers, admitting:

“Sometimes we encourage the outgoing students to come and do voluntary jobs in the school. Then after we find the means for the Regional Education Office to take them. Right now we are having one volunteer in the school.”

18. (or the equivalent if the person was educated prior to the introduction of the WASSCE exam).

Volunteer teachers do not report to the regional office prior to commencing teaching in a school. Therefore, their requirements for employment are not verified. While this research did not reveal significant use of volunteer teachers, it has revealed that teacher managers can find ways to use them.

In the Madrassas, the minimum requirement to become an unqualified teacher is a Madrassa senior secondary certificate. Although Madrassa senior secondary schools now share a common syllabus, according to the GSIAE, each school sets its own grade 12 (final year) examination and conducts the examination according to its own rules. Alarming, the teacher shortage in Madrassa schools is so significant and the pool of eligible candidates so small that even this relatively low minimum requirement to teach is being overlooked in order to fill the vacant posts. According to an official in the GSIAE, *“Sometimes somebody will come with less than that – somebody will be even appointed without the [senior secondary] certificate if the need arises.”*

For private ECCE centres, the minimum requirement for employment may vary from centre to centre. In ECCE centres attached to conventional schools, teachers must meet the minimum requirement of the conventional schools.

Minimum requirements for teachers by qualification and school type are summarised in Table six.

Table six

Minimum requirements for teachers by teacher qualification and school type

School type	Minimum requirement for unqualified teachers	Minimum requirement for qualified teachers
Conventional schools	3 passes in the WASSCE exam (or equivalent)	PTC
Madrassas	Madrassa Senior Secondary Certificate	PTC
ECCE centres	Varies	ECCE Certificate
Special needs schools	3 passes in the WASSCE exam (or equivalent)	PTC

Remuneration of unqualified teachers

In conventional schools and Madrassas in The Gambia, unqualified teachers earn less than their qualified colleagues. The initial amount teachers in conventional schools are paid is determined by their level of teaching qualification, and actual payment of teachers is made by the Government of The Gambia. For the conventional schools, unqualified teacher salaries are fixed at pay scale grade 1.5; their basic salary cannot progress beyond this level (see Table seven).

Unqualified teachers in conventional schools are, however, eligible to receive other forms of remuneration, such as allowances. In April 2010, the Ministry introduced a new incentive for teachers in conventional schools called the Retention Allowance. Although the allowance mostly targets qualified teachers who can receive up to an additional 1,000 dalasis per month through this allowance alone, unqualified teachers also benefit from it, receiving an additional 250 dalasis each month.

Cost of living in The Gambia: How much is a dalasi worth?

1 US dollar = 28.16 Gambian dalasis*

1 GB pound = 43.45 Gambian dalasis*

The World Bank calculates the international poverty line at \$1.25, ie those living on less than \$1.25 per day are considered to be living in poverty.** In Gambian dalasis, this is approximately 54.31 dalasis per day or 1,656.53 dalasis per month (calculated for 30.5 days).

* Exchange rate average over 327 days, ending on 31 January 2011 exchangerates.org.uk

** Ravallion, Chen and Sangraula 2008:16.

Table seven**Remuneration of teachers in the conventional system**

Pay scale grade	Notes	Starting salary amount	Monthly payment (gross)	Yearly increment
N/A	Teacher trainee stipend	N/A	500	N/A
1		9,922	827	288
1.5	Unqualified teachers	11,076	923	N/A
2		12,211	1,018	288
3		14,472	1,206	360
4		17,150	1,429	619
5		21,672	1,806	792
6	Qualified teachers (PTC)	27,475	2,290	922
7	Qualified teachers (HTC)	34,128	2,844	922
8		41,256	3,438	936
9		48,830	4,069	936
10		56,434	4,703	1,109
11		66,139	5,512	1,109
12		74,549	6,212	1,728

Note: All amounts in Gambian dalasis (GMD).

Sources: MoBSE (2009); Republic of The Gambia (2010); and consultations.

Table eight**GSIAE recommended monthly remuneration of teachers in the Madrassa schools**

Description	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
Unqualified teacher	1,200	1,238	1,273	1,312	1,351	1,391	1,433	1,476
Qualified teacher	2,000	2,060	2,122	2,185	2,251	2,319	2,389	2,460
Graduate teacher	2,500	2,575	2,653	2,732	2,814	2,899	2,985	3,075
Graduate teacher with a Diploma in Education	2,800	2,884	2,971	3,059	3,151	3,246	3,343	3,444
Graduate teacher with a Master's Degree	3,100	3,196	3,295	3,397	3,502	3,610	3,721	3,836

Note: All amounts in Gambian dalasis.

Source: Gambian Secretariat for Islamic/Arabic Education.

Unqualified teachers are also eligible to receive the Civil Servants' Special Allowance which is for all employees of the civil service and amounts to approximately 217.18 dalasis each month. Additionally, if unqualified teachers are working in lower basic schools in designated hardship areas they are eligible to receive the Hardship Allowance which ranges from 30 to 40 per cent¹⁹ of their basic salary, depending on the area. Furthermore, the MoBSE reports that unqualified teachers are now being paid for 12 months a year (despite being contracted for only 11 months) in order to encourage them to return in the subsequent school year. A senior-level MoBSE official explained the reason for the improvements:

"We discovered that what they were receiving was less than what some of the maids were receiving in the households. So if you really want to attract people into the teaching profession and you realise that you earn more by becoming a maid than becoming an unqualified teacher, there is a serious issue to look at."

Unqualified teachers do not enjoy some of the other benefits which qualified teachers are eligible to receive, including pensions and certain allowances (such as the graduate allowance). However, an official in the MoBSE Human Resources Directorate stated that if an unqualified teacher becomes qualified, their service as an unqualified teacher is considered in promotions and included in their period of service when their pension is calculated at the time of retirement.

The remuneration of teachers in Madrassas is made by the Madrassas themselves, rather than by the GSIAE, their umbrella organisation. Therefore, although at the time of their initial employment the GSIAE makes salary recommendations for teachers, Madrassa teacher salaries are determined by the amount recommended by the GSIAE as well as negotiations which take place between the teacher and the school leadership. Subsequently, salaries vary from school to school. A GSIAE representative explained:

"Many Madrassas cannot afford [the recommended amount] so it's all based on the negotiation between the teacher and the school management. So that's why in some areas you will find that they pay less than 1,000 [Gambian dalasis]. So we visited one school [where] I found out that teachers are getting 500 [Gambian dalasis] per month, which is very serious."

Table eight demonstrates GSIAE's recommended remuneration scale.

As for teachers in ECCE centres, payment of teachers in private centres is not managed by the MoBSE. Therefore, remuneration of qualified and unqualified teachers in these centres is at whatever level the proprietor sets. Some ECCE centres are annexed to conventional schools and staffed with MoBSE employees. These teachers are remunerated according to the conventional school system's scale.

Participation, management, training and support of unqualified teachers

The Ministry's policies and procedural guidelines encourage unqualified teachers to contribute fully in the schools where they are employed, and teacher managers are advised to consider and cater for the specific professional needs of unqualified teachers. The Gambia's 2008 School Management Manual acknowledges the extra support required by unqualified teachers and advises head teachers to take the needs of unqualified teachers into consideration when assigning teachers to classes. It encourages head teachers to "build effective teams" and advises head teachers "...where there is more than one class per grade, [to pair] inexperienced or unqualified teachers...with more experienced colleagues". (Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education, 2008b:24). The manual instructs head teachers to consider unqualified teachers as "full members of the teaching staff" and states that "unqualified teachers should also be given the same levels of support" as other teachers (Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education, 2008b:63 and 62 respectively):

Teacher trainees and unqualified teachers are full members of the teaching staff. The head teacher should:

- ensure that they are seen as such by senior staff, teachers, pupils and parents
- include them in any staff meetings, induction programme and school or cluster-based training
- make it clear that they are expected to contribute as much to the school as the qualified staff
- ensure that they adhere to the same code of conduct and rules of punctuality and regularity, including signing the staff time book
- provide them with syllabuses, textbooks, timetables and all other relevant materials
- supervise their work and give constructive feedback
- ensure that they are supported and encouraged by staff members, especially when they find their workload demanding.

School Management Manual for Lower Basic and Basic Cycle Schools p 63

19. Teachers in one particularly remote school receive an additional 60 per cent of their basic salary in the form of Hardship Allowance.

The School Management Manual also encourages head teachers to develop “an induction programme for new and unqualified teachers and those new to the school, and [to produce] a staff handbook to ensure that all staff are familiar with the school’s systems, routines, expectations and rules” (Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education, 2008b:61).

Additionally, all unqualified teachers in The Gambia are eligible for membership in the only national teachers’ union, the Gambia Teachers’ Union (GTU), and are offered support and training opportunities from the GTU as well as from the MoBSE and other organisations and institutions.

Consultations in this research confirmed that unqualified teachers receive training, once in their posts. Unqualified teachers reported having received useful training in a range of areas (see Figure eight). However, some unqualified teachers reported having received no training (with the highest proportion being unqualified teachers in ECCE centres).

Since 2006 a new training opportunity has also become available to unqualified teachers. It is an in-service qualification programme especially designed for unqualified teachers in the rural regions.

Further details of this qualification programme (known as the PTC Extension Programme) are offered in the ‘Steps taken to address the qualified teacher shortage’ section on page 46.

The consultations undertaken in the course of this research suggest that school and regional-level teacher managers agree that there is a difference in the amount and type of management support required by unqualified teachers as compared with qualified teachers. These respondents reported that unqualified teachers require more management support than qualified teachers. One regional-level teacher manager in a semi-urban region described his perception of unqualified teachers:

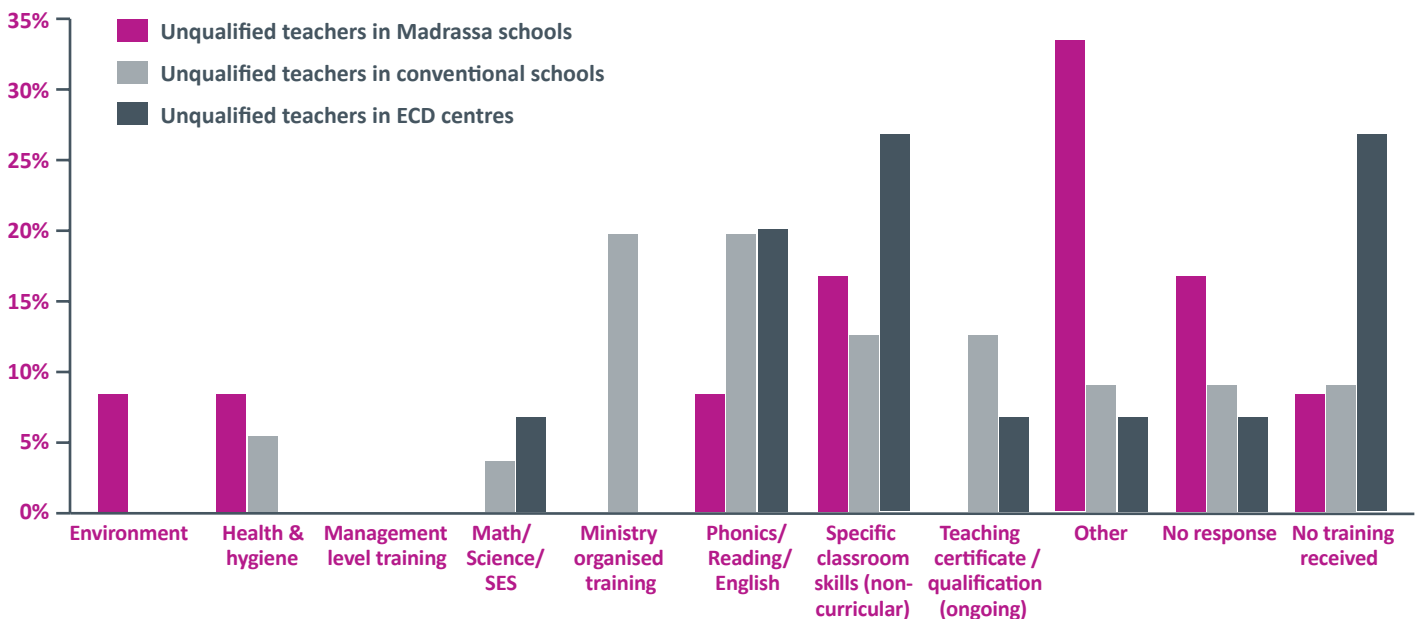
“The unqualified teacher has just come from school and has not had the opportunity to attend any professional training – management training. So the skills are different, you see. We call them ‘school boys into the classroom.’”

While general support was cited by school and regional-level teacher managers alike, school-level teacher managers also reported that unqualified teachers require additional management support such as management and administration support, classroom management support, support with lesson

Figure eight

Unqualified teacher responses:

What were the three most useful trainings you received after you started teaching?



Note: Responses include 24 responses from unqualified teachers in Madrasa schools, 56 responses from unqualified teachers in conventional schools, and 15 responses from unqualified teachers in ECCE centres.

Source: Unqualified teacher interviews and administered questionnaire responses (responses from both methods are combined in figure).

planning and training. One regional-level teacher manager recognised that unqualified teachers require additional support but questioned whether they, in fact, receive it:

“Unqualified teachers require more management support and that’s because they are of less experience than qualified, trained teachers in terms of management. Whether they get more management support than the qualified teachers is another thing. It may vary from school to school.”

In poorly resourced and sometimes under-staffed schools, it seems unlikely that school-level teacher managers can find the time or energy to provide the additional support that unqualified teachers may require.



A lower basic student in a semi-urban area

Career opportunities for unqualified teachers

There are no limits to the number of times an unqualified teacher’s contract can be renewed in any of the school types studied in this research; thus, career unqualified teaching is permitted in every school type. Unqualified teachers consulted during this study reported having been teaching for up to 10 years in the conventional schools, up to 29 years in Madrassa schools, and up to eight years in ECCE centres. An official from the Standards and Quality Assurance Directorate of the MoBSE noted that although there is no limit to the number of years an unqualified teacher can serve, if an unqualified teacher in the conventional schools does not perform well, he or she will be dismissed from the role.

In conventional schools, unqualified teachers do not enjoy the opportunity to progress in the teaching career without first earning their teaching qualification; they cannot be promoted or serve in official leadership roles. Unqualified teachers in conventional schools work on short-term contracts of 11 months (though they are now paid for 12) and are not entitled to receive pensions. Despite these limitations, unqualified teachers now have considerable opportunities to progress in the teaching career by becoming qualified. The ‘Steps taken to address the qualified teacher shortage’ section on page 46 explores these opportunities in more detail.

The GSIAE also recommends that Madrassas pay their unqualified teachers for a full 12 months; a GSIAE senior-level official explained:

“Our recommendation is to pay them for 12 months.... What we always say to them is that these are your employees and you need to take care of them in order to get them next year. So that’s why...the majority of them are paid 12 months. But there are some who said they cannot pay 12 months.”

Additionally, unqualified teachers in Madrassa schools are eligible to take on leadership roles in their schools; a representative for the GSIAE reported:

“We have very few qualified teachers...Even now when you go to the provinces you find that the head and the deputy head are all unqualified teachers. Sometimes you visit some Madrassa there is no qualified teacher – they are all unqualified teachers.”

Furthermore, unlike unqualified teachers in the conventional schools, unqualified teachers in Madrassa schools can progress in terms of salary – though the recommended progression is negligible and at its highest level does not amount even to the starting salary of a qualified teacher (refer to Table eight on page 32 for details).

Similarly to Madrassas, in private ECCE centres, unqualified teachers are often eligible to take on leadership roles. Their contractual situation varies from centre to centre (as ECCE centres are generally privately managed).

Unqualified teacher profile

Male unqualified teacher in a rural conventional school

Harouna Dibba is a male unqualified teacher working in a rural school. He is 24 years old and just started teaching this year. The school where he teaches is about 30 kilometres from his immediate family. He travels by public transport and this takes around an hour. Harouna stated that he did not receive any training before he started teaching and has had no training since. He wants to pursue the PTC qualification and eventually to attain the qualification to become a head teacher. He reported that improved earning and 'regard' (or status) serve as incentives to become qualified; however, he said he has not found the time and the financial means to pursue the qualifications he desires. Harouna reported feeling neither motivated nor demotivated regarding teaching, but he expects to teach for life. When asked why he became a teacher, Harouna said, *"I want to help the young ones have a better country as my teachers did to me."*

Unqualified teacher profile

Female unqualified teacher in a very rural conventional school

Aminata Faal is a 23-year-old female unqualified teacher. She has been teaching for two years at a conventional school located in a very rural area. It takes her two hours to travel from the school where she works to a family member's home in the regional capital – a trip that she usually makes on foot each weekend. She stated that she received no training before she started teaching. Since starting, however, Aminata has benefited from some training at the cluster level and has received specific training on the 'Jolly Phonics' teaching method. She is also currently enrolled in the in-service qualification programme for unqualified teachers (the PTC Extension Programme). She believes that teachers need good subject knowledge and training on teaching methods in order to be able to teach effectively. Aminata wants to improve her own subject knowledge by going to university, but she must improve her WASSCE passes before she will be eligible. She explained that she became a teacher to improve her own knowledge and to help her brothers and sisters. Aminata reported feeling motivated in the profession and said that she wants to remain a teacher forever.

Profiles of unqualified teachers²⁰

An understanding of who the unqualified teachers are, their attitudes to the profession, their contributions and what challenges they face is essential for developing relevant and effective policies and practices pertaining to their recruitment, management and training. This study has investigated these aspects, and the following pages provide insights into these areas.

The unqualified teachers consulted in conventional schools²¹ were, on average, about 10 years younger than the qualified teachers consulted in the conventional schools. They also reported having been teaching for less time; unqualified teachers had been teaching for approximately three years on average, while qualified teachers had been teaching for approximately 13 years on average. Qualified teachers consulted in conventional schools lived further, on average, from their families and were more likely to live very far (five hours or more) from their families than their unqualified colleagues. This is perhaps attributable to the practice of recruiting and posting unqualified teachers on the regional level, and recruiting and posting qualified teachers on the national level.

The majority of unqualified teachers consulted in the conventional schools reported that they had not received any training (such as an induction or short pre-service course) before they started teaching. Although regional-level teacher managers in the conventional school system in two regions suggested that a special induction for unqualified teachers is provided in their regions, and the delivery of such an induction is stipulated in the Regional Directors' Service Level Agreements, it appears that many unqualified teachers do not benefit from this assistance before they start teaching.²²

20. In order to maintain the confidentiality of respondents, teachers' names have been changed.

21. As detailed in Appendix one on page 60.

22. Refer to the section 'Remaining challenges' on page 52 for details of the challenges associated with arranging pre-service training for unqualified teachers.

Unqualified teacher profile

Female unqualified teacher in a semi-urban Madrassa

Aja Bintou Ceesay is a female unqualified teacher aged 31 years. She has been a teacher for three years at the same Madrassa in a semi-urban area. Her immediate family lives near to the Madrassa where she works – about a five-minute walk. She stated that she has completed grade 9 in a Madrassa but has had no teacher training – neither before nor after she started teaching. Aja Bintou believes that she needs to go to college in order to teach effectively, but said that fees have prevented her from doing so. She reported spending about 14 hours each week vegetable farming to supplement her wage; however, she believes that this does not affect her teaching. She described feeling very motivated as a teacher and intends to remain in the profession. When asked her reason for becoming a teacher, Aja Bintou said, *“I love it!”*

Unqualified teacher profile

Male unqualified teacher in a rural Madrassa

Mohamed Touray is a 57-year-old male unqualified teacher who has been teaching for 15 years. He has taught in two Madrassas. The school where he currently teaches is a rural Madrassa located just off the main road only a short walk (seven minutes) from his immediate family. He did not disclose what grade he completed in school and did not report having had any teacher training. He does, however, want to become a qualified teacher. When asked what has prevented him from becoming qualified, Mohamed explained, *“I cannot afford going to the college for I need to leave [a] good sum amount with my family to use during my period of staying away from them.”* He reported that he farms during school holidays to supplement his wage but he does not believe that this work affects his teaching. Mohamed said he feels motivated as a teacher and has plans to carry on teaching until he retires. He said, *“I want to share the little knowledge I have in Arabic with my fellow Muslims – especially young children. I also like the profession.”*



An unqualified teacher takes a class in a rural Madrassa

In this study, comparatively few qualified Madrassa teachers were consulted.²³ Qualified Madrassa teachers are not as prevalent as unqualified Madrassa teachers. Additionally, where qualified Madrassa teachers were found, they were often serving in leadership roles in the school and were interviewed in that capacity. Therefore, a comparison between the qualified and unqualified teachers consulted in Madrassa schools is not possible. It is interesting, however, to note the differences between unqualified teachers in Madrassa schools and unqualified teachers in conventional schools. Unqualified teachers consulted in Madrassa schools were, on average, nearly 10 years older than unqualified teachers consulted in conventional schools and had, on average, been working in the profession for approximately three times as long (with the longest at 29 years).

Both types of teachers consulted in the Madrassa schools lived very near to their immediate families – between 19 and 39 minutes – and most reported travelling by foot. The majority of unqualified teachers in Madrassa schools reported that they had not received any training before they started teaching. It is not apparent that pre-service training or induction is available to or stipulated for unqualified teachers in Madrassa schools.

Of the ECCE teachers consulted,²⁴ qualified ECCE teachers were older than unqualified ECCE teachers by more than 10 years on average. Qualified teachers consulted in ECCE centres had been in the profession much longer than the unqualified teachers – approximately four times as long on average. Qualified ECCE teachers reported living very far from their immediate families, while unqualified ECCE teachers reported living nearer to their immediate families. The majority of unqualified teachers consulted in ECCE centres reported that they had received no training before they started teaching. It is not apparent that pre-service training or induction is available to or stipulated for unqualified teachers in ECCE centres.

Unqualified teacher profile

Male unqualified teacher in a very rural ECCE centre

Alhassana Camara is a 30-year-old male unqualified teacher who teaches ECCE in a school in a very rural area. He has been teaching there for six years. He didn't receive any training before he started teaching but has since enrolled in the in-service qualification programme for unqualified teachers (the PTC Extension Programme), which he said he has found very useful – especially the English language and integrated studies components. After he finishes the PTC qualification, Alhassana would also like to attain the HTC qualification. He did not claim to be especially motivated nor demotivated, but he plans to continue teaching for the rest of his life. Alhassana said, *"I like the profession – in my heart. I also want to contribute to the development of my country and I feel that this is the only way."*

Unqualified teacher profile

Female unqualified teacher in a semi-urban ECCE centre

Mariama Colley is a female unqualified teacher. She is 31 years old and has been teaching at the ECCE level for eight years – seven of which she has spent at the ECCE centre where she currently works, in a semi-urban area. Mariama's family lives near her place of employment, so it takes her no more than 30 minutes to travel to work. She did not receive any teacher training before she started teaching, but has since had some ECCE training and is currently completing her second year of the three-year ECCE certificate at Gambia College. She would also like to obtain university-level training, but would require financial assistance to do so. Mariama described feeling very motivated as a teacher. She said, *"I always used to see my teachers – how they behaved in the school or with their colleagues. So that's why I wanted to be a teacher – so that I can encourage my own children, other children, and also assist the community – even the whole country at large...I want to be a teacher for the rest of my life."*

23. As detailed in Appendix one on page 60.

24. As detailed in Appendix one on page 60.



Lower basic students in a semi-urban area

Unqualified teachers' attitudes to teaching

When asked their reasons for becoming a teacher, teachers qualified and unqualified across school types reported a desire to share knowledge and educate children. They also frequently described a general fondness for the profession as their reason for becoming a teacher. Unqualified teachers reported becoming a teacher in order to help the community, to help address the qualified teacher shortage and to increase access to education. It is also clear that unqualified teachers from all types of schools consulted consider teaching to be an opportunity to further their own education. An unqualified teacher working in a rural ECCE explained that his interest in teaching is primarily in improving his own knowledge and qualification: *"My reason of becoming a teacher is one only to upgrade myself and have [the] PTC. That was the main reason. As a challenge – I want to learn."*

Across school types, the vast majority of unqualified teachers consulted reported an interest in pursuing further training (especially the PTC and HTC qualifications), indicating an interest in remaining in the profession. They reported that the opportunity to be able to teach more easily and more effectively serves as an incentive to attain further qualifications. Unqualified teachers also reported that the opportunity for personal development is an incentive to become qualified. Interestingly, unqualified teachers reported these incentives more frequently than they reported improved remuneration as an incentive to attain qualifications. Figure 9 depicts unqualified teacher responses to this question of the incentives to become qualified or further trained.

When asked how long they expect to continue teaching, on the whole there were no significant differences between the qualified and unqualified teachers. Where teachers reported an intention to leave the profession, their reasons varied; however, unqualified teachers and teacher trainees across school types and locations frequently reported an intention to pursue further training (presumably in other professions) as their reason for intending to leave the profession.

"There was a shortage of teachers in my school, so I decided to help."

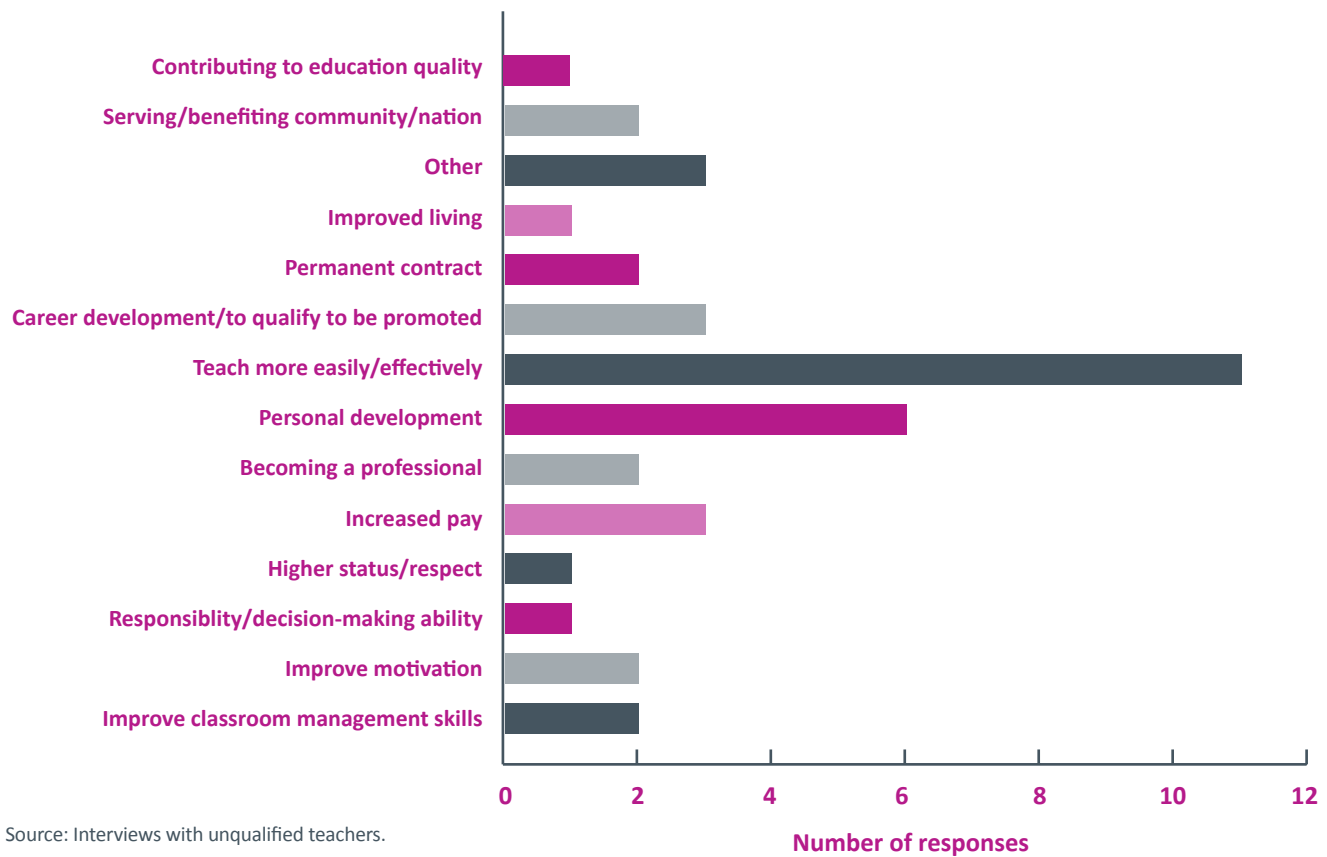
Unqualified teacher working in a rural Madrassa

Unqualified teachers in each school type reported similar motivation levels to those of their qualified colleagues; however, teachers working in ECCE centres and Madrassas reported feeling significantly more motivated than teachers working in conventional schools. Additionally, where teachers in conventional schools reported an intention to leave the profession, they often reported low motivation as a reason. This study did not investigate the reasons for teacher motivation or demotivation.²⁵

25. For information on teacher motivation and demotivation in The Gambia, please refer to *Teachers Speak Out: A policy research report on teachers' motivation in The Gambia*, 2007, Sara Cowan, VSO The Gambia.

Figure nine

Unqualified teachers’ interview responses: What do you believe are the incentives or reasons for teachers to attain qualifications and further training?



Source: Interviews with unqualified teachers.

Contributions of unqualified teachers

Consultations conducted for this research indicate that unqualified teachers make a number of contributions to education in The Gambia. As one school-level teacher manager described the situation, *“The number of trained teachers is so limited; without [unqualified teachers’] contribution the gap would be too big. They are helping Gambian children.”* However, respondents stressed that while unqualified teachers make contributions, their contributions are often limited by their lack of qualification; this is explored in the sub-section ‘Challenges faced by unqualified teachers’ on page 42. While it is quite clear that respondents valued the unqualified teachers’ role in addressing the qualified teacher shortage and expanding access to education, it is also clear that their contributions go beyond simply filling gaps in the classrooms.

Respondents reported that unqualified teachers make contributions in the area of teaching and learning. One unqualified teacher in an urban school explained, *“We teach like any other teacher in the classroom.”* According to one regional-level teacher manager in an urban region,

“They are teachers and they teach the children...The qualified teacher has undergone training and he has got the methods to be able to teach perfectly well. But you also have got some unqualified teachers that love the job and because they love the job they go all out to.... try by all means to teach a lesson at least to make the children understand.”

Across school types, respondents reported that unqualified teachers also make contributions as a result of their pedagogical skill; specific pedagogical skills highlighted included classroom management and skills to do with active learning, such as learning through games. A school-level teacher manager in a very rural school stated that unqualified teachers *“contribute very well. They teach in class, control their class and engage children in activities.”* Lesson observation findings supported these reports; unqualified teachers were observed employing good behaviour management techniques and their classes were observed to be attentive. It should be noted, however, that respondents reported that unqualified teachers also face challenges to do with pedagogical skill. These challenges are described in the sub-section ‘Challenges faced by unqualified teachers’ on page 42.

Respondents also reported that unqualified teachers make contributions in the general area of helping and caring for children. As one unqualified teacher in a semi-urban conventional school put it, *“Their contributions are so great because they work hard and also they give assistance to the children.”* Participants in a school-level teacher manager focus group discussion reported that *“teachers are seen as ‘all-rounders’ – they are nurses, they are counsellors, etc, etc,”* suggesting that both qualified and unqualified teachers make a wide range of contributions.

Respondents reported that unqualified teachers’ personal characteristics enhance their contributions. They especially emphasised that unqualified teachers serve as role models – in the classroom, the school and the community. A participant in a teacher trainee focus group discussion stated that unqualified teachers *“act as good pictures for pupils to copy from”*. One regional-level teacher manager explained the particular role that female teachers play:

“[Unqualified teachers] serve as role models – especially the ladies. In some communities some parents...were reluctant to send their children to school – especially the girl child...In such communities, if you have the female teacher sent there, the female teacher can serve as a role model. It can motivate some other parents to send their children to school.”

Consultations also revealed that respondents in conventional schools recognise unqualified teachers making contributions to do with resources and the learning environment. Respondents in conventional schools reported that unqualified teachers prepare and use teaching and learning materials, monitor and maintain the physical environment of the classroom, manage resources and provide a good learning environment for students. A regional-level teacher manager in a very rural region stated that unqualified teachers *“ensure that classrooms are well kept, neat and tidy, and [that] furniture [is] arranged in accordance with the activities designed. They also make their classrooms attractive – they display a lot of teaching aids.”*

Unqualified teachers were also reported to be making contributions to the corporate life of the school including contributions pertaining to monitoring and promoting student attendance and timekeeping, administrative tasks, general supervision and other areas to do with the general operations and development of the school. As one regional-level teacher manager explained, *“They work within the team of qualified teachers and they have the same responsibilities as qualified teachers. They are listened to at the level of the school. They are also assisted. Even though they are assisted they have a voice at the level of the school.”*

While respondents reported that qualified teachers make contributions in the areas of leadership and training and support, it is not clear that unqualified teachers make contributions in these areas – at least not to the same extent as qualified teachers. In terms of leadership in conventional schools, some respondents indicated that unqualified teacher contributions are restricted only by the school management; one school-level teacher manager explained, *“It depends on the head teacher – if the head allows, they can do anything.”* However, in the conventional school system, the policy is clear that although unqualified teachers should be treated like any other teachers, they are not to be promoted to the level of senior teacher and are not to serve as head of department. In contrast, in Madrassa and ECCE schools, unqualified teachers are contributing in management roles, serving as head teachers and deputy head teachers.

Respondents also recognised contributions that unqualified teachers make outside the schools, emphasising the role that unqualified teachers play in promoting education in the community. One unqualified teacher explained that unqualified teachers *“encourage students to come to school [and] talk to the parents about the importance of education.”* A school-level teacher manager stated, *“They are trying to educate the children of the community. They strengthen relationships between family and school.”* Respondents also reported that unqualified teachers generally contribute to the communities where they are teaching. For example, a regional-level teacher manager explained:

“The unqualified teachers in most cases would join the community members when they have occasions to celebrate, or share with them if they have sorrowful events...They also...interact with the community to... foster relationships, they also participate in communal work and sensitisation meetings...They serve as interpreters in some cases and also help writing letters.”



ECCE teachers discuss the contributions of unqualified teachers in a focus group

Challenges faced by unqualified teachers

While respondents recognised a range of contributions being made by unqualified teachers, they also agreed that unqualified teachers face challenges – even in some of the same areas where they are making contributions. Some challenges were reported to be particular issues for unqualified teachers, whereas others appear to be faced by qualified teachers as well.

Some respondents – particularly regional-level teacher managers in the conventional system and qualified teachers in Madrassa schools – reported that unqualified teachers face challenges in the area of general preparation, specifically to do with planning and preparing lesson notes and schemes of work. One regional-level teacher manager explained:

“Their challenges are how to use effectively the teachers’ handbook – how to extract schemes from [the] teachers’ handbook and how to make lessons out of schemes. The most important challenge is regarding lesson plans – that is, how will they achieve their objective at the end of the lesson.”

Adequate planning and preparation is the foundation of good lesson delivery; poor planning and preparation is likely to affect the quality of teaching and learning. Qualified teachers were not reported to face challenges in this area.

Although respondents recognised that unqualified teachers make contributions in the area of teaching and learning, some respondents reported that unqualified teachers also face challenges in this area. Qualified teachers and school-level teacher managers in Madrassas, as well as qualified and unqualified special needs teachers, reported that unqualified teachers face challenges to do with teaching and learning. Respondents did not report qualified teachers facing such challenges. One qualified teacher working in a Madrassa stated that the unqualified teachers’ main challenge is that *“They don’t know how to teach students properly.”*

While respondents suggested that unqualified teachers make contributions as a result of their pedagogical skill, this was also reported by school-level teacher managers to be a particular challenge area for unqualified teachers. These challenges were specifically reported to relate to classroom management, but respondents also mentioned that teaching methodology can be a challenge for unqualified teachers. A regional-level teacher manager stated, *“Because they have not had...enough training, some of them might also find managing their children quite challenging.”* A teacher in a qualified teacher focus group discussion explained, *“They have fewer teaching strategies. If the method they are using doesn’t work, they do not have another method.”* Qualified ECCE teachers agree that unqualified ECCE teachers face challenges to do with pedagogical skill – but also reported facing challenges to do with pedagogical skill themselves.

School-level teacher managers across all school types suggested that subject and general knowledge is a particular problem for unqualified teachers. According to one school-level teacher manager in a very rural conventional school,

“The challenges are great because the unqualified teachers, most of them they are just graduated from high school and they are employed by the Ministry of Basic and Secondary [Education]. So they will find it very difficult to teach certain subjects and to cope with the profession.”

Regarding unqualified teachers, a qualified teacher in a rural conventional school explained, *“Sometimes the children might even give them questions in the class that might be very tough for them to understand or might be very tough for them to answer.”* Findings from the lesson observations conducted for this research also support these reports. In the course of the lesson observations, half of the unqualified teachers demonstrated some level of lack of knowledge of what they were teaching. However, a recent baseline survey commissioned by the World Bank suggests that even qualified teachers teaching at the lower basic level in The Gambia struggle in terms of subject knowledge. In preparation for a new World Bank programme to upgrade qualified teachers’ subject knowledge in mathematics and English, a baseline assessment of 2,819 qualified teachers nationwide was designed and conducted by the West African Exams Council (WAEC). The qualified teachers’ average score in English was 40 per cent and in maths was 33 per cent, indicating that even qualified teachers are lacking in subject knowledge (The Gambia Implementation Support Mission for Third Education Sector Project, 2010).

School-level and regional-level teacher managers in the conventional system suggested that some of the unqualified teachers’ challenges stem from lack of experience. A regional-level teacher manager explained, *“The challenges are because of the young age and inexperience.”* However, many respondents suggested other reasons for their challenges. For example, teacher managers and unqualified teachers reported that unqualified teachers face challenges in the areas of training and support. Such challenges were reported to relate to their lack of teacher training, lack of training opportunities, and lack of assistance from their colleagues. An unqualified teacher teaching at a rural school stated that *“lack of enough support from some qualified teachers”* can be a challenge.

Although there are various incentives for unqualified teachers to become qualified, there also exist some barriers to qualification. When asked why they had not yet attained their desired level of training, funding was the most common reason cited by unqualified teachers. Funding appears to be a particular barrier for ECCE teachers; this, presumably, correlates with the fact that the ECCE certificate is the only fee-paying course offered by the college. While The Gambia College does not charge tuition fees to non-private students on the other courses, the stipend received by trainees on the campus-based PTC programme is minimal (500 dalasis per month) and they must arrange their

own meals, transport and accommodation. An additional 25 dalasis per day allowance is, however, provided during the summer face-to-face sessions to assist with transport expenses.

This barrier to qualification is addressed to some extent through the new in-service qualification programme for unqualified teachers, the PTC Extension Programme, which offers better financial compensation for teacher trainees than the campus-based programme. Trainees on this programme earn the unqualified teachers’ monthly wage and receive two meals and a 50 dalasis allowance each day during the face-to-face sessions over term breaks. (See Table seven on page 32 for more information about the remuneration of teachers.) This may still not be enough for some unqualified teachers – for example, more mature unqualified teachers who must support their families.

While some improvements have been made to address the financial barriers to qualification, respondents reported that other barriers remain. Specifically, unqualified teachers reported an inability to meet the entry requirements of their desired training programme. Some unqualified teachers did not originally perform well on their WASSCE exams and may need to re-sit these exams privately in order to meet the minimum requirements to embark on further training. An unqualified teacher in a rural Madrassa explained, *“I need only one [more] subject pass to enable me to secure a place at the Gambia College in order to become qualified.”* This particular teacher had previously taught in the conventional schools but was forced to leave with the advent of the implementation of the three-WASSCE pass standard. He then began teaching as an unqualified teacher in a Madrassa, but hopes to become qualified and return to teaching in the conventional schools.

A school-level teacher manager stated that although this doesn’t seem to be a financial barrier, finances can present challenges to attaining such necessary programme entry requirements. He explained, *“They need some finance to pay...for subjects in WASSCE and to develop themselves, but there is no finance.”* In light of the considerable number of opportunities to become qualified that are available to unqualified teachers (including opportunities to meet programme entry requirements), it is also possible that, for some unqualified teachers, barriers to qualification are perceived barriers only. The section on ‘Steps taken to address the qualified teacher shortage’ on page 46 explores these opportunities in more detail.

In conventional schools, qualified teachers, school-level teacher managers and some unqualified teachers reported that unqualified teachers face challenges to do with respect and status. An unqualified teacher explained:

“They are not given their due regard – both at school-level and community. Some qualified teachers will say ‘you are just working on contract’, forgetting that they are all doing the same thing, forgetting that they are all going for the same target.”

Unqualified teachers in Madrasa schools also reported facing challenges to do with respect and status. It is not clear that there exists any one sentiment from the communities towards unqualified teachers; some community members have negative ideas about unqualified teachers while others don't seem to know or mind the difference between qualified and unqualified teachers. Nevertheless, consultations with respondents occasionally indicated that negative sentiments toward unqualified teachers do exist; one regional-level government official said, *"Frankly speaking, if you say unqualified, why should he teach?...In our local language we say 'teacher ndingo' – 'small teacher', unqualified teachers. But they have high regards for qualified teachers."*

Demotivation was highlighted as a challenge for both unqualified and qualified teachers. Indications are, however, that the challenge may affect the types of teachers differently. Commenting on demotivation of unqualified teachers, a regional-level teacher manager explained:

"Even though some of them are genuinely interested amongst the cohort of unqualified teachers, you also have some of those who are just taking up the unqualified teacher appointment because they don't have another job...And when interest lacks it comes with challenges – it will definitely affect maximum performance and concentration and these are key challenges that they are confronted with."

For qualified teachers, the motivation challenges appear to relate more to career progression and recognition. A school-level teacher manager explained that qualified teachers face challenges to do with *"lack of promotion, further training, [and] lack of motivation and incentives. Sometimes when we talk of motivation it can be awards. It can also be the community or the parents appreciating the work – what they are delivering to their children."*

Both qualified and unqualified teachers reported facing challenges relating to resources and environment – including challenges relating to the provision and use of teaching and learning materials, the physical classroom and/or school environment, class arrangement, resource management and the broader learning environment. These were very frequently mentioned challenges for both groups. A regional-level teacher manager stated, *"The furniture situation in schools can be a challenge...you can even find pupils sitting down on the floor... That is in the worst cases."* An unqualified teacher confirmed that classroom environment can present challenges, explaining, *"The space in the school is small. Children are congested in the classrooms and effective learning cannot take place."*

Both qualified and unqualified teachers described facing challenges to do with the corporate life of the school. For example, teachers from all school types stated that they face challenges relating to student attendance. A participant in a teacher trainee focus group discussion explained, *"irregularity of children in the classroom presents challenges"* to teachers.

If students do not attend regularly, teachers will face challenges planning and preparing lessons and may have trouble covering the whole syllabus.

Unqualified teachers from Madrasa schools and ECCE centres stated that teacher shortages present difficulties to them. Teachers in a focus group at one rural Madrasa stated that they suffer from *"serious teacher shortages – over 300 students and there are only four teachers"*. This presents a number of challenges to teachers – and to teaching and learning. Teachers in conventional schools reported that school funding is a challenge for teachers – that there is *"a lack of funds to run some school activities"*, as one teacher in an unqualified teacher focus group put it.

Challenges relating to community involvement and citizenship were also reported by qualified and unqualified teachers – primarily by teachers working in up-country regions. While some general challenges were cited, teachers specifically referred to challenges to do with language barriers. The national language – and language of instruction in conventional schools from grade 4– is English; however, local languages are commonly spoken in the communities. Sometimes teachers are posted to schools in a community that speaks a language unfamiliar to them. As a teacher in a focus group discussion explained, this can result in *"communication barriers – if you cannot speak their local language and they cannot speak English"*.

Unqualified teachers in rural conventional schools reported facing challenges serving as a school–community liaison in the communities where they work – teachers specifically cited challenges pertaining to low community participation or interest. In the conventional schools, both qualified and unqualified teachers reported facing challenges relating to parents of students. A teacher in a qualified teacher focus group discussion stated that some parents *"[leave] everything in the hands of teachers for the welfare of their own children"*. For teachers, who are already facing so many other challenges, this can be a particular burden.

School-level teacher managers across school types noted that both qualified and unqualified teachers face challenges relating to their salary and terms and conditions of employment. Other respondents – including unqualified teachers and teacher trainees – also indicated that this is especially a challenge for unqualified teachers (who generally earn less than their qualified colleagues). (Please refer to page 31 and the sub-section 'Remuneration of unqualified teachers' for more information on this.) An unqualified teacher working in an urban school reported that:

"If you are an unqualified teacher you may not get much money to help your family...I, personally, am from a poor background. I am the first born in my family. And [my family] are expecting much from me which I was unable to do for them."

Several teachers consulted also reported that they undertake other income-generating activities to supplement their income from teaching. Nearly 30 per cent of qualified teachers consulted and nearly 40 per cent of unqualified teachers consulted reported undertaking other income-generating activities such as farming. Madrassa and ECCE teachers reported this more frequently than the teachers in conventional schools. This may be because teachers in conventional schools generally earn more than teachers in Madrassas and ECCE centres.

Respondents reported that receiving payment at the beginning of their contracts every year can be a challenge for unqualified teachers in conventional schools. This challenge is related to the short-term contracts under which unqualified teachers are employed in conventional schools. The contracts terminate at the end of the academic year and recommence if the teacher is reappointed after the start of the following academic year – once the requirement for unqualified teachers has been established through the stabilisation process. According to a representative of an education-related NGO working in The Gambia, *“It will take one or two months before they are in the system. So they are working in the system from September without salary.”* This salary is eventually paid to them, but is reportedly delayed due to administrative challenges associated with reinstating such a significant number of teachers.

While unqualified teachers themselves did not generally report facing challenges to do with living conditions and amenities, other respondents indicated that both qualified and unqualified teachers face challenges in this area.²⁶ Respondents reporting such challenges were working in up-country regions. A school-level teacher manager working at a school in a very rural area described the situation of teachers working at his school in this way:

“The community is very far from the highway. Communication is difficult. Also, health-wise it could be dangerous; there is no clinic...Here they eat cous [millet]. [As] for us, we are used to rice and we cannot cope with that. It is a challenge.”

Other respondents described similar challenges – referring to lack of piped water, electricity and other amenities to which they may be accustomed. Some teachers also described challenges associated with living far from their families. A qualified teacher working at a school in a semi-urban area stated, *“Places you are posted [are] so, so far. You stay there for long time and not see family.”* Such personal challenges can be especially taxing for teachers where the professional environment is also not desirable.



An unqualified ECCE teacher in front of her house in a very rural village

26. As described in the sub-section ‘Profiles of unqualified teachers’ on page 36, unqualified teachers consulted in the course of this research generally reported living closer to their immediate families than the qualified teachers reported, which may provide an explanation for why they did not report facing challenges in this area.

Steps taken to address the qualified teacher shortage

In recent years the MoBSE has introduced a range of measures to address the qualified teacher shortage in The Gambia. Encouragingly, these strategies have been specifically targeted toward teacher retention, making teaching a more attractive profession and upgrading unqualified teachers. A senior-level MoBSE official explained:

“We’ve looked at it from two broad perspectives. The first one is to do with the opportunity to build their capacity as a way of motivating them. That’s why we are spending these amounts of money on training – through pre-service as well as in-service. I think [when it comes to] the amount of money that we spend on training for our teachers, you can’t compare us with any sector in this country. And the second area is to do with financial remuneration, because that has been one of the areas that was discovered to be leading people to go to move away from the teaching profession.”

In terms of financial remuneration, the MoBSE has recently made several improvements. In April 2010 it announced a new Retention Allowance. The new allowance amounts to an additional 1,000 dalasis per month for teachers who have spent 10 years or more in the profession, an additional 750 dalasis per month for those who have spent five years or more (but less than 10) and an additional 500 dalasis per month for those who have taught for less than five years. Unqualified teachers are also eligible for the new Retention Allowance in the amount of 250 dalasis per month. According to a senior-level MoBSE official, the introduction of the Retention Allowance has had the additional benefit of attracting teachers who had previously left the profession: *“We’ve started seeing teachers who left coming back, and I think so far we would have nothing less than 50 of them writing to express their interest to come back with the introduction of these Retention Allowances.”* A senior-level MoBSE human resources official was able to confirm that there has been an increase in transfers of teachers into basic-level teaching compared with the previous two years, but was unable to confirm the number of teachers or the reason for their return.

The Civil Servants’ Special Allowance, which was introduced in 2009, has also improved the monthly salary of all teachers – qualified and unqualified – by 217.18 dalasis. A regional-level teacher manager in a semi-urban region noted that:

“This year, there are a lot of improvements when it comes to incentives, but in the past years when there is police selection, paramilitary selection, immigration officer selection, even security companies, it seriously affects us because you see people leaving the field and going in for those things. But since there is good pay now, this year we will all have to observe whether there will be differences.”

Non-financial steps have also been taken to improve teacher motivation. The Best Teacher Award is organised by the Gambia Teachers’ Union and supported by the Government. This programme includes regional and national awards for teacher managers and teachers as a way to thank teachers. Also, following observations during the Coordinating Committee Meetings (bimonthly national MoBSE meetings held at regional level on a rotating basis), head teachers and teachers found to be performing well in the region are formally commended in a letter from the MoBSE.

The current teacher training arrangement is such that the MoBSE funds the teacher training (excluding the ECCE certificate) of those candidates who intend to work in non-private schools. Until recently there was no agreement or bond between candidates and the MoBSE to ensure they continue in the teaching profession after attaining their qualification. The Education Sector Strategic Plan for 2006-15 states that the lack of a bonding arrangement for teachers was leading to *“early exit of newly qualified teachers to greener pastures”* (Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education, 2006:48). Similarly, a senior-level official at The Gambia College’s School of Education explained the previous situation: *“Because most of these teachers are not bonded, they are trained and then they finish, then they just circulate to other sectors.”*

In 2009, however, a new bonding arrangement was put into place to ensure that the Ministry’s investment in the training of teachers is realised in the service of those teachers. Currently the bonding applies to PTC Campus-Based, PTC Extension Programme, HTC and University trainees (The Gambia Implementation Support Mission for Third Education Sector Project, 2010). The length and terms of the bond vary by training type and duration, and the period of the bond commences following the training.

The Ministry also found that PTC qualified teachers who wished to gain further teaching qualifications were returning to the college to attain the HTC qualification – the natural next step in The Gambia in terms of further teacher training. The HTC, however, is a qualification that prepares teachers to teach at the upper basic level. Therefore, when a PTC qualified lower basic teacher pursued further teacher training in the form of the HTC, that teacher would move to teaching at the upper basic level on completion of the training. In 2009, however, a new teacher training diploma, the HTC Primary, was introduced. A senior-level official at The Gambia College’s School of Education explained, *“By creating this HTC Primary for [lower basic] school teachers who want to go ahead and do the HTC – now they will do the HTC [Primary] and go back*



©VSO/ Courtney Gardner

Participants in a teacher focus group discuss the causes and effects of teacher shortages

to the [lower basic] school.” Although the first cohort is yet to graduate, it is expected that the introduction of this new HTC Primary diploma will help curb the internal attrition of teachers from the lower basic schools to the upper basic schools, as it is designed for lower basic level teaching.

Additionally, in light of the fact that the qualified teacher shortage has been more severe in the rural areas, the MoBSE has taken steps to make teaching in rural areas more attractive for teachers. In 2005, the MoBSE introduced an allowance called the Hardship Allowance for teachers teaching at the lower basic level. This allowance is designed to attract teachers – especially qualified teachers – to the most rural lower basic schools. Within the designated areas, the allowance increases teachers’ basic salary by 30 to 60 per cent. The December 2010 Joint Donor Review Aide-Memoire states:

“Approximately 60 per cent of the beneficiaries are qualified teachers. The incentive is reported to be effective and there are still large numbers of teachers requesting transfer to hardship schools. Region 1 is complaining of losing teachers, an indicator of the success of the scheme”

(The Gambia Implementation Support Mission for Third Education Sector Project, 2010:4).

According to the Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education’s Medium Term Plan, *“There is a more equitable distribution of qualified teachers, as shown by the impact reports from the REDs on the ‘Hardship Allowances’ currently paid to teachers”* (Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education, 2008a:15). An official in the Ministry’s Human Resources Directorate suggested that the Hardship Allowance has provided an effective incentive for teachers to take posts in previously unattractive locations: *“Now teachers will come here and they will tell us that ‘We want to go to Fatoto – the farthest end of the country – we want to go to teach there.”* The Gambia’s Education Country Status Report paints a less conclusive picture, though, suggesting that while the Hardship Allowance seems to be effective in some districts (where the allowance coverage is high and the pupil:teacher ratio is low), there are other districts where the allowance seems to be ineffective, where the allowance coverage is high and the pupil:teacher ratio is high (World Bank, publication expected 2011). Additionally, the report suggests that the distribution of the allowance may also be inefficient, and that more research is required into the effectiveness and efficiency of the Hardship Allowance (World Bank, publication expected 2011).

The Ministry has also recognised the effect that living conditions have on qualified teacher supply in the rural areas; the MoBSE's Education Policy 2004-15 states:

“poor housing conditions and inadequate incentives for teachers are factors responsible for the poor retention of trained and qualified teachers in rural areas. Considerations will have to be given to the status and welfare of teachers to improve teaching and learning outcomes”

(Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education, 2004:12).

The MoBSE's Project Coordination Unit reports that construction of quarters to house 268 teachers in up-country regions was completed between 2008 and 2010. The construction of these teachers' quarters was funded by the African Development Bank, Child Fund The Gambia, The European Commission Chargé d'Affaires in The Gambia, and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa. Currently, through EFA-FTI Funding, there are plans for 35 teachers' quarters blocks to be constructed (to house 155 teachers) and 16 teachers' quarters to be rehabilitated in *“extremely deprived communities”*, although a further 130 teachers' quarters have also been identified by REDs as requiring rehabilitation (The Gambia Implementation Support Mission for Third Education Sector Project, 2010:26). A senior-level MoBSE official explained:

“The welfare of the teachers is what we want to look at in greater detail. And we have also even started – and it's going to continue – this construction of staff quarters in these remote areas. And...we have introduced Hardship Allowances for teachers serving in hard-to-reach areas. But really what we want to intensify is this provision of the staff quarters and also, if possible, increase these allowances to really make the remuneration package competitive. We know it is impossible to compete with the private sector, but at least [we] can peg it at a level that will make it attractive for people to come in.”

According to the Ministry, steps have also been taken to make the promotions process more transparent. A senior official in the Human Resources Directorate reported that these improvements began in the 2007/08 academic year and included the creation of a human resources data system. The official explained that the promotions process is now managed by a committee which involves top education officials and includes representation from the Gambia Teachers' Union. A senior-level MoBSE official stated:

“We have reached that stage where for all those that are promoted, you can clearly see that they have an edge over those that are not promoted. So it is that transparent now. And, of course, we have a window that we open to allow people to petition some of the decisions and we respond to them accordingly.”

To address the qualified teacher shortage in Madrassas, an in-service training programme specifically for Madrasa teachers to earn their PTC has been developed. It is designed to enrol 120 trainees each year (though more have enrolled). Currently, the GSIAE estimates that 312 teachers are in this training – of which there are two types: PTC Arabic and PTC English. The PTC Arabic includes teaching methodology and mathematics (taught in English), and other subjects are taught in Arabic. The PTC English follows the traditional Gambia College format.

Perhaps the most obvious step the Ministry has taken to address the qualified teacher shortage was to introduce a pilot programme in 2006 for the in-service qualification of unqualified teachers. The programme, known as the PTC Extension Programme, was conceived of and co-funded by Basic Education Support for Poverty Reduction (BESPOR),²⁷ the Fast Track Initiative and the World Bank. The programme implementation was eventually completely handed over to The Gambia College's School of Education. Over the course of the three-year pilot, 325 unqualified teachers in the Central River Region (Region 5) were trained through the PTC Extension Programme and are now PTC qualified teachers. Thus, in 2009, in addition to the 248 graduates of the traditional PTC course in Brikama, another 268 teachers were introduced into the civil service as qualified teachers in the pilot region – more than doubling the output of qualified teachers that year and significantly improving the proportion of qualified teachers in that region. (The other 57 trainees graduated in 2010 after retaking the exam.) On the basis of the successes of the pilot, the Ministry has continued the PTC Extension Programme to train unqualified teachers from all up-country regions with a new intake of 442 unqualified teachers in the autumn of 2009. Despite the inclusion of teachers from other regions, the PTC Extension Programme continues to be based in Janjanbureh in the Central River Region (Region 5).

The PTC Extension Programme combines face-to-face instruction during school holidays with open and distance learning and mentoring during school terms – while the unqualified teacher trainees serve as full-time teachers (unlike teacher trainees on the traditional programme, who are not meant to serve as full-time teachers during their training). Thus the programme addresses the shortage in the short term with a view to addressing it with qualified teachers in the long term. A senior-level BESPOR official explained:

“The Ministry...[does] not have to replace [the unqualified teacher trainees] in the system with other unqualified teachers or even with qualified teachers because they are there. So, for the Ministry, it's a huge benefit that they don't have to go and look for 400 teachers to replace those unqualified teachers in the system...as they are learning.”

27. BESPOR was a DFID-funded programme that aimed to assist with education sector reforms in The Gambia.

According to a senior-level School of Education official, in order to maintain the quality and rigour of the traditional PTC training, the PTC Extension Programme has been designed to ensure the same number of face-to-face instructional hours as the traditional programme, and the PTC programme entry requirement is now being maintained (although no entry requirement was maintained during the pilot – possibly accounting for the comparatively low completion rate of 86 per cent against the campus-based programme’s completion rate of 95 per cent). Table four (on page 23) indicates that the campus-based PTC programme includes over 500 additional hours of face-to-face instruction; however, a senior-level official from The Gambia College’s School of Education suggests that due to the way these hours are calculated (including holidays, etc), they provide an inflated picture of the actual number of hours of face-to-face instruction for the campus-based programme.

Also, the same exam is administered at the conclusion of both types of training. According to the December 2010 Joint Donor Review Aide-Memoire report:

“The students completing the [PTC Extension Programme] had examination scores broadly similar to those of students in the Gambia College PTC course. There was a slightly broader spread of marks in the [PTC Extension Programme], and both the highest and lowest scores came from [PTC Extension Programme] students. Some of the unqualified teachers with very poor WASSCE performance...had difficulty with the content of the [PTC Extension Programme], but this pattern was not entirely consistent, and some teachers with poor prior academic performance achieved acceptable final results.”

(The Gambia Implementation Support Mission for Third Education Sector Project, 2010:3)

Additionally, support is offered to the PTC Extension Programme tutors – including planning and preparation meetings at the start of each session, team teaching where necessary and a system for feedback and reporting. Summarising the successes of the programme, a senior BESPOR official stated:

“The results we have got with the PTC Extension show that it’s more effective than the other system and that is based on a number of reasons. One, we have a more frequent interaction between theory and practice because as they get the theory during the summer breaks, they are more likely to learn the theory, go back and practise and then come back...The second reason is that during the design of the system, we put in place a number of support functions that they didn’t have before with the traditional system in terms of cluster training teams and so on...The other reason is that we are coming closer to their home village, to their area, and that means we attract a number of students that we wouldn’t be able to attract before – specifically female students who will not be allowed to go to Brikama from the upper regions.”

Furthermore, the PTC Extension Programme is addressing the unequal distribution of qualified teachers by training the unqualified teachers who are already based in the up-country regions in order that they will continue working in those regions as qualified teachers after completing the programme. It should, however, be noted that no comprehensive, comparative evaluation has been made of the PTC and PTC Extension Programme, so there is little evidence (other than anecdotal) about the benefits and drawbacks of each course.

In light of the challenges that some prospective teacher trainees have had in meeting the entry requirements for their desired teacher training programme, various preparatory courses have been developed. GTU offers what they call ‘extramural classes’, which are courses for PTC qualified teachers who wish to attain the HTC but do not have the required WASSCE passes. Through these classes, teachers can study to improve their subject knowledge and re-sit the WASSCE exam. GTU reports that they refund the cost of privately sitting exams to those who pass. The GSIAE also offers summer classes for those Madrassa teachers who wish to embark on the PTC. At the end of these classes an exam is administered and those who pass are enrolled in the PTC. Once on the PTC course, trainees also have the opportunity to study to retake their maths and English WASSCE exams to improve their knowledge and qualifications in these areas. These ‘extramural classes’ are offered from The Gambia College for 50 dalasis per month.



©ISO/Courtesy Gairner

Lower basic student in a semi-urban area

New trends

The PTC Extension Programme has been deemed so successful in addressing the qualified teacher shortage that the MoBSE is currently considering changing the traditional, campus-based teacher training from a pre-service training model to an in-service training model. It has been proposed that the traditional PTC pre-service course, characterised by one year at The Gambia College and two years' teaching practice, would cease to exist and would be replaced by the extension model of three years of full-time teaching as an unqualified teacher with face-to-face training during school holidays only. Current discussions indicate that a PTC Extension Programme training site would be maintained in one of the rural regions to serve Regions 3, 4, 5 and 6 and an additional training site would be introduced in the more urban areas – perhaps even at The Gambia College's campus – to serve Regions 1 and 2. Present thinking in the Ministry is that the in-service training model should replace the traditional pre-service training model of PTC teacher training entirely – even after the acute qualified teacher shortage has been addressed. This is a bold proposal which could have some potentially significant implications.

This proposed shift could start a new trend in teacher recruitment and distribution. Whereas the recruitment and distribution of qualified teachers has traditionally been administered on a national level, the introduction of this new model is creating a more regionalised system – as unqualified teachers are recruited and distributed by the REDs, trained through the PTC Extension Programme and retained within the regions. Such a shift could potentially be a step towards addressing teacher frustrations with the current system of distributing qualified teachers nationally. Despite this and other possibilities associated with the Extension Programme, some international stakeholders have expressed concerns that the proposed extension-only model has some serious shortcomings, including the institutionalisation of the presence of unqualified teachers (explored later in this report), which must be addressed.

As demonstrated in Figure ten (on page 51), an encouraging new trend seems to be emerging at The Gambia College's School of Education where enrolment in the PTC course is steadily increasing – including significant increases every three years with the commencement of each new cohort on the PTC Extension Programme. Previously, the PTC enrolment at the School of Education was very low due to insufficient numbers of interested and eligible candidates. However, a senior official at The Gambia College's School of Education reported, *“This year we had so many qualified people we had to just close the door and say no more...Our constraint is more with the lecturers – not with the students any more.”*

While improved PTC enrolment is encouraging, there are indications that this may lead to worrying new trends in managing PTC candidate intake. A senior-level MoBSE official explained:

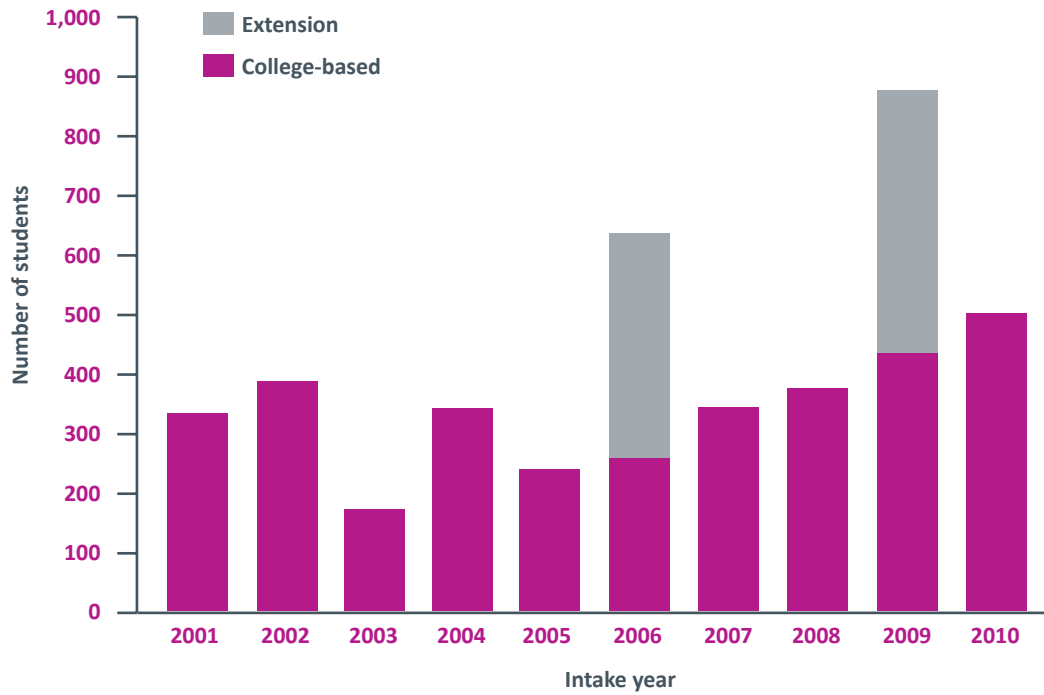
“We feel that the way we are getting numbers we can now afford to say, all right, before you get into the programme you would have to serve one year as an unqualified teacher. Then the following year you get into the programme. It's just a way of preparing them better to start the teacher training. It's not something that we have taken a position on but that's the kind of thing that we are thinking about.”

The official clarified that due to the School of Education's limited intake capacity, this requirement would serve as a way of prioritising candidates for entry onto the PTC course.

Finally, senior-level officials at the MoBSE have reported that the REDs are starting to have an easier time recruiting unqualified teachers. One senior-level MoBSE official explained that this is enabling the Directorates to 'pick and choose' the best unqualified teacher candidates for the vacancies they were unable to fill with qualified teachers.

Figure ten

School of Education PTC enrolment



Source: Gambia College School of Education.

Remaining challenges

While The Gambia has undertaken a number of initiatives to address issues relating to teacher supply, recruitment and training, these developments are accompanied by some new challenges – and more familiar challenges remain.

The new in-service PTC Extension Programme has shown promising results in the pilot. Therefore, plans to change the traditional teacher training from a pre-service model to an in-service model alongside continuation of the PTC Extension Programme up-country may seem a reasonable step. However, the challenges associated with the model must be addressed and potential for risks to quality must be given due attention. Such challenges were highlighted in a recent evaluation of the PTC Extension Programme which was conducted by a private consultancy for BESPOR. The main challenge highlighted in the evaluation was that *“35 per cent of the mentor[s] either left the region or the service”* during the course of the programme (Afri Consult, 2010:6). The PTC Extension Programme relies heavily on the support of mentors who are to advise and guide the unqualified teachers as they implement the theory in the classroom during the school terms. According to the report, the issues with mentors *“affected the [programme participants] and the programme, and [are] a worrying concern for the sustainability of the approach”* (Afri Consult, 2010:6).

In their recent international study of the upgrading of unqualified primary school teachers, Education International found that *“effective in-service upgrading will depend on the availability of support at the school level. On a regular basis, tutors should visit the school for classroom observations, education and joint reflection with the student teachers”* (Kruijjer, 2010:29). The report proceeds to explain that support could be provided by those already present at school level where tutors are not available. Finding a suitable solution to the attrition of PTC Extension Programme mentors is a challenge that must be addressed to ensure the PTC Extension Programme participants have the support they require during term time.

Regarding the implementation of the PTC Extension Programme, a senior-level official at The Gambia College’s School of Education reported that there is another area for concern: *“One of the key challenges is the distance learning materials. Students were not able to get their materials on time...so that was a major challenge.”* Ministry officials report, however, that the distance learning materials have only once been delivered late and that this is not a persistent problem. It is essential that PTC Extension Programme participants receive their distance learning materials in a timely fashion.

The School of Education also faces challenges to do with attracting and retaining lecturers. The Education Sector Strategic Plan 2006-15 outlines the following specific issues to do with The Gambia College School of Education staff and lecturers:

- under-staffing of the School of Education at [The Gambia College], thus undermining management effectiveness
- difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified academic staff at [The Gambia College], partly related to low salaries, benefits and prospects but also attributable to insufficient training resources and capacity-building opportunities
- inadequate/ineffective supervision and support for student teachers on teaching practice (Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education, 2006).

A senior-level School of Education official confirmed that the College continues to struggle with attracting and retaining lecturers. Attracting and retaining more lecturers is necessary to avoid hindering progress toward realising a fully qualified teaching workforce.

While improved enrolment in the School of Education’s PTC course is an encouraging trend, the quality of candidates remains a concern. The annex on Teacher Training and Management to the Aide-Memoire of the December 2010 Implementation Support Mission for Third Sector Education Project states:

“Despite the improved supply, the educational standard of entrants [to the PTC course] remains relatively low. Students can achieve one credit and three passes without a pass in either English or mathematics. Students without passes in English and mathematics are offered extra classes on Friday afternoon and Saturdays, at a charge of 50 GMD per month, and are required to re-sit the WASSCE in English and obtain a credit before graduation” (The Gambia Implementation Support Mission for Third Education Sector Project, 2010:2).

However, a senior-level official for the School of Education explained in an interview for this research that it is difficult to enforce the re-sits at the end of the three-year training. Attracting more highly qualified candidates to the profession will be necessary for improving the standard of the qualified teaching workforce.

Additionally, while the Ministry must aim to attract more highly qualified candidates to the teaching profession, it is possible that the proposed system of relying on interest in unqualified teaching as the pathway to the profession will present challenges to this goal. It is clear that good candidates are attracted by good salaries, terms and conditions, among other things. Therefore, improving the unqualified teachers' salaries, terms and conditions and formalising the unqualified teacher pathway to the profession may have the effect of attracting better candidates. How best to do this may present challenges, though, as unqualified teaching must not be made so attractive that qualified teaching is not sufficiently more attractive. Safeguards such as bonding and limits to the amount of time an unqualified teacher can remain in the system before embarking on training would need to be introduced, but would require monitoring and enforcement, which would also present challenges.

Through the course of this research, it was discovered that the Ministry is currently not effectively implementing the policy to provide even a short pre-service induction for unqualified teachers. Therefore, despite the improvements, under the proposed new model of exclusively in-service teacher training, unqualified teachers would continue to teach in the classroom for even one or more terms prior to receiving an induction or embarking on training.

There are clearly challenges in implementing pre-service training for unqualified teachers. Such challenges include the delay in their postings and the fact that they are generally not recruited as one cohort but rather one-by-one over the first term (and sometimes beyond the first term). However, pre-service training is essential, and without a pre-service training element it is difficult for VSO, EFANet and GTU to endorse the proposed plans to shift toward the exclusively in-service teacher training model. On-the-job training must be preceded by some form of pre-service training.

The current process for determining unqualified teacher requirements at the beginning of each academic year leaves considerable room for improvement. Requirements for unqualified teachers are currently not known until after the school year commences, which has implications for teaching and learning well into the first term. Additionally, because the needs for unqualified teachers are not identified before the beginning of the academic year, there is a rush to get them into the classrooms once the needs are identified. This may be a reason why even brief pre-service training is not being conducted and may be the reason why conducting longer, more comprehensive pre-service training for unqualified teachers (for example, over the summer before the first school term) is not currently deemed possible. Although it will not be impossible, improving this system will, of course, be challenging.



Lesson time at a conventional lower basic school

For example, at the beginning of each academic year, the Ministry does not know how many qualified teachers will not report to their posting until after the start of the first term when the stabilisation process takes place. To project these gaps earlier would require improved communication between the schools, REDs and the Ministry, and improved capacity within the Ministry to manage, analyse and act on the data from the regions. High interest in unqualified teaching would also need to be maintained if earlier projections of unqualified teacher requirements were to result in the ability to conduct a longer, more comprehensive pre-service training for unqualified teachers. Additionally, a senior-level Ministry official explained that the WASSCE exam results – which serve as the minimum requirements for unqualified teachers – are sometimes not released until after the beginning of the academic year. Therefore, candidates who have just completed secondary school and who aspire to enter the profession would not know whether they were eligible over the summer – when it would be desirable to conduct pre-service training for unqualified teachers. Despite these challenges, pre-service training is essential; surmounting these challenges must be made a priority.

Teacher retention will likely continue to present difficulties. These challenges, however, may take new forms: the financial cost of the recent efforts to improve teacher retention is quite high – especially in light of the increased expenditure associated with higher proportions of qualified teachers. While the new efforts to retain teachers may themselves be effective, ensuring sustainability of the new approaches is essential and is likely to be a challenge without maintained donor attention and support. Additionally, retaining teachers in up-country regions – especially after their initial bond expires – may present challenges.

Improving teacher utilisation could also present challenges. While improved use of teachers will be necessary for the realisation of a fully qualified teaching workforce, it is important that strategies for improving teacher utilisation are carefully implemented in order to ensure that teachers are well trained and well utilised, rather than overworked. Improved utilisation of teachers will likely require further training of some teachers and improved resources in some schools – such as training and resources for multi-grade teaching – and will require detailed management of teacher postings to ensure that those teachers trained with such specific skills are employed well in the schools.

According to an official in the MoBSE's Special Needs Education Unit (SNEU), even *“qualified teachers may be unqualified to teach special needs children”*. While the PTC qualification includes some training for teaching special needs students, the training is minimal in light of the expertise needed to teach such students. Additional training for teachers in conventional schools is desirable, but it is particularly necessary that teachers in the special needs schools are qualified (beyond

the PTC) to teach special needs students. Although short, on-the-job training courses are currently available to teachers (conventional and special needs), no teaching qualification specifically for special needs teachers is available in The Gambia, and an official from the SNEU has suggested that there is currently insufficient capacity to start such a qualification. Therefore, finding a suitable and achievable way to prepare teachers to teach special needs students will be challenging.

The situation in Madrassa schools poses many challenges. The way forward with regard to addressing such a severe qualified teacher shortage is not clear and is likely to be very expensive. Madrassas experience huge shortages of both qualified and unqualified teachers – to an extent unparalleled in conventional schools. They also experience a far more unequal distribution of qualified teachers, who are concentrated in urban areas. The private remuneration of teachers in Madrassas and the Ministry's relationship with these schools – in terms of responsibilities and monitoring – further complicate the situation. However, the Ministry should benefit from the lessons learned in the process of addressing the qualified teacher shortage in conventional schools as it attempts to do so in the Madrassa schools. In light of reports that Madrassa enrolment is increasing, these issues must be addressed as a key priority.²⁸

As ever, the Ministry will face the challenge of competing priorities, but must maintain its commitment to a fully qualified teaching workforce and work towards a target date for achieving this. Stipulating a requirement of one year of service as an unqualified teacher for entry to teacher training should be avoided in favour of continued steps towards achieving a fully qualified teaching workforce. If the School of Education is running at full capacity, then prioritising PTC candidates by experience would be prudent, but a 'requirement' that would institutionalise the presence of unqualified teachers would make it impossible to ever achieve a fully qualified teaching workforce.

This research has confirmed that while unqualified teachers are making contributions to education, they face a number of challenges as a result of their lack of qualification – some of which affect the quality of teaching and learning. Once qualified teacher supply requirements are met, other means of ensuring pre-training teaching experience and demonstration of commitment to the profession should be explored. For example, prospective teacher candidates could be required to demonstrate their interest in the profession through involvement in school sports or fundraising events. The Ministry must continue to take positive steps towards ensuring the quality of teaching and learning by further improving the quality of the teaching workforce. Standards for entry to teacher training should continually be raised – especially once qualified teacher supply requirements are met and interest from eligible candidates is sufficient and steady.

28. According to the Gambia Country Education Status Report, Madrassa enrolment increased by an average annual growth rate of 14 per cent at the lower basic level and 16 per cent at the upper basic level between 2005 and 2009 (World Bank, publication expected 2011).

Conclusions

It is clear that unqualified teachers are making contributions to education in The Gambia and playing an important part in addressing the qualified teacher shortage. However, according to respondents, their contributions go beyond simply filling the gap or supervising a classroom. Research respondents reported that unqualified teachers make contributions relating to teaching and learning, the corporate life of the school, resources and the school environment, among other things.

While respondents recognise unqualified teacher contributions and clearly appreciate the role they play in the education system, respondents also noted the many challenges that unqualified teachers face – challenges which limit their contributions and in some cases have undesirable implications for teaching and learning. For example, respondents reported that unqualified teachers face challenges relating to planning and preparation, pedagogical skill, and training and support.

The Gambia's Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education is committed to achieving a fully qualified teaching workforce in conventional schools. The Ministry has set minimum requirements for the employment of unqualified teachers in conventional schools, has made a concerted effort – together with donors – not only to upgrade current unqualified teachers but also to build the capacity of current qualified teachers, and has taken bold and concrete steps towards making teaching

an attractive civil service profession. While the Education Policy 2004-15 may be premature in stating that *“it has been possible to address the critical issue of shortage of trained and qualified teachers in The Gambia”*, the Ministry's continued commitment to quality and its efforts to retain and train teachers – alongside some new targeted strategies – have very real potential to enable The Gambia to employ a fully qualified teaching workforce in conventional schools in the foreseeable future (Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education, 2004:42). Madrasa schools, however, are lagging behind and require serious attention.

Qualified teachers are not a sufficient constituent of quality education; without simultaneous attention to other areas, education quality issues will persist. Notwithstanding this, without a fully qualified teaching workforce, quality education in The Gambia will not be realised. As a regional-level teacher manager in an urban region explained:

“Irrespective of all the investment that is made in quality, if we don't have quality teachers we don't achieve much. Because it is in the classroom that we can realise quality... that is where teaching and learning takes place.”

With the 2015 target for achieving the EFA Goals looming, now is certainly a crucial time for action.



ECCE students at a large lower basic school

Recommendations

The Ministry should develop a formal plan for working towards a fully qualified teaching workforce. While various Ministry policies offer objectives and targets for increasing the proportion of qualified teachers, and progress is being made, there does not appear to be a clear, comprehensive strategy for realising a fully qualified teaching workforce. Within a formal plan, the Ministry must especially take note of the challenges both groups of teachers are facing and address any gaps in teachers' training, terms and conditions, and working environment. The following steps are recommended:

- Outline a comprehensive plan for training new teachers which states:
 - how many teachers will be required
 - how many teachers can be trained
 - the purpose of teacher training
 - how pre-service training, in-service training and continuing professional development (CPD) relate
 - what resources will be required.
- Outline steps that are being and will be taken to ensure that new teachers are attracted and qualified teachers retained:
 - Continue to improve teacher accommodation in up-country regions
 - Continue to provide incentives (and ensure they are efficient) to up-country teachers to help address the disparity in the proportion of qualified teachers up-country compared with the urban region
- Continue to improve teacher promotion and career progression opportunities
- Enhance the CPD process for teachers, using the new in-service training (INSET) unit to ensure that CPD is relevant and cohesive
- Improve teachers' resources and environment, for improved performance
- Ensure that teachers feel motivated
- Review the posting policy alongside the evolution of the teacher training model
- Accelerate the establishment of The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) within the shortest possible time, to ensure qualified teachers are registered as a professional body as are lawyers, doctors, etc
- Ensure that improvements and steps taken are well communicated to all teachers and potential candidates.
- Outline steps that will be taken to improve teacher utilisation, guarding against risks of over-utilisation by appropriately implementing strategies and providing training for teachers in the relevant areas (ie multi-grade teaching, etc).
- Set a target date for the achievement of a fully qualified teacher workforce. Currently the target is at least 90 per cent qualified teachers by 2015. Set a target for reaching 100 per cent.
- Develop a plan for how to manage teacher recruitment and training once a fully qualified teacher workforce is attained; find ways to recruit teachers that will not require the employment of unqualified teachers.
- Remain committed to employing a fully qualified teaching workforce.
- Ensure donor support is sought and any funding gaps closed.



Teacher focus group participants at a conventional school in a very rural region

The Ministry should formalise the unqualified teacher pathway to the profession in the interim. It is clear that unqualified teaching is a popular route into the profession. Only a small proportion of qualified teachers consulted in the course of this study reported having completed the PTC before they started teaching, indicating that it is common for teachers to start out as unqualified teachers. The PTC Extension Programme has helped such teachers become qualified and has markedly improved the number of teachers who attain the PTC in a three-year period. However, this model and the unqualified teacher pathway to the profession need to be improved. The Ministry should:

- ensure the Scheme of Service for Teachers is kept up-to-date to reflect the minimum standards for the employment of unqualified teachers in conventional schools and ensure that the policy is clearly communicated to teacher managers
- remain vigilant in the monitoring of unqualified teachers in schools, as it was discovered that it is possible for head teachers to flout the minimum standards by recruiting volunteer teachers who are not appointed by the RED
- aim to increase the minimum standards for employing unqualified teachers over time (for example, to include a pass or credit in English)
- ensure the strategic deployment of unqualified teachers at school level (so that the most capable teachers are teaching at the foundation levels and the distribution of qualified teachers between schools is equitable)
- aim to increase incrementally the minimum standard for percentage of qualified teachers in each school (currently the standard set out in the Minimum Standards document is '75 per cent of teaching staff have the relevant qualifications') and set a target of achieving 100 per cent by a defined date
- consider further improving the compensation package for unqualified teachers in order to attract more highly-qualified candidates to the profession
- strengthen the existing career progression for unqualified teachers, ensuring improved qualifications are linked to improved professional development, pay and pensions, and better conditions of service
- impose limits on the length of time a person can remain as an unqualified teacher before embarking on training, in order to prevent unnecessary long-term unqualified teaching
- project teacher supply requirements earlier to facilitate earlier stabilisation and therefore the earlier recruitment and deployment of unqualified teachers; for example, require teachers to report to their postings before the first week of term to allow earlier stabilisation
- conduct pre-service training for unqualified teachers based on a programme of instruction agreed with all key stakeholders that is accredited and recognised as a prerequisite for teaching; despite difficulties in implementation, pre-service training for unqualified teachers is essential
- ensure pre-service training for unqualified teachers provides them with a basic understanding of the fundamentals of teaching and learning, especially aspects of teaching that unqualified teachers have reported as challenging, namely: planning and preparing lesson notes and schemes of work; pedagogical skills; lesson content and general knowledge; using teaching and learning materials, and community engagement
- ensure unqualified teachers are paid on time from the beginning of their contracts
- ensure any barriers to becoming qualified are addressed (especially for Madrassa teachers) and ensure that teachers know what training is available to them
- ensure that the PTC Extension Programme is reviewed once the qualified teacher gap is addressed; if the programme is continued, it must include a quality pre-service training element of no less than six months (but preferably one year).

The Ministry and the GSIAE should pay increased attention to unqualified teacher employment in Madrassa schools. There exists a real disparity between conventional and Madrassa schools with regard to the employment of unqualified teachers. While it is noted that the MoBSE currently has limited involvement in the day-to-day management of the Madrassas, Madrassa enrolment is included in educational access figures and is considered an alternative to conventional education in The Gambia. If the shortage and rural/urban distribution of qualified teachers in Madrassas is to be addressed, the Ministry will need to engage in dialogue with the GSIAE to determine how best to address these problems. The Ministry and the GSIAE should use lessons learned in the conventional system. Specifically, the Ministry and the GSIAE should:

- ensure the minimum requirement for unqualified teachers in Madrassas is implemented and monitored
- increase the minimum requirements for unqualified teachers in Madrassas so they eventually match the minimum requirements for unqualified teachers in conventional schools
- expand opportunities for upgrading unqualified teachers in Madrassas
- address barriers to qualification for unqualified teachers in Madrassas
- improve teacher remuneration in Madrassas
- provide incentives for qualified Madrassa teachers to teach up-country
- phase out the reliance on unqualified teachers in leadership roles in Madrassas.

The Ministry and The Gambia College School of Education should improve and monitor the scale and quality of pre- and in-service teacher training. VSO believes that *“the quality of teacher training dictates the quality of teaching”* (Mpokosa and Ndaruhutse, 2008:11). The Ministry and School of Education must endeavour to constantly improve the quality and relevance of teacher training, seeking assistance from strategic partners where appropriate.

The Ministry’s proposal is that the in-service model of teacher training may soon become the only pathway to the teaching profession, making unqualified teaching the only pathway to the teaching profession. However, VSO, EFANet, and GTU believe that pre-service training is essential and that in-service training must be preceded by pre-service training. While the PTC Extension Programme is accepted as a temporary intervention, any long-term teacher training model should include substantial pre-service training.

It is recognised that national stakeholders have identified some beneficial aspects of the PTC Extension Programme and that these aspects have influenced the proposal to change the traditional campus-based teacher training from a pre-service model to an in-service model. However, VSO, EFANet and GTU recommend that such beneficial aspects of the PTC Extension Programme be carefully integrated into the traditional model in a way that maintains a pre-service training element of at least six months (but preferably one year). For example, six months of pre-service training could be followed by in-service training and further teaching practice. To altogether abolish pre-service training in favour of the proposed model would institutionalise the presence of unqualified teachers, and this is not recommended.

Specifically, the MoBSE and the School of Education should:

- review training content
- ensure necessary attention is devoted to subject knowledge
- attract and retain additional good lecturers at The Gambia College’s School of Education
- attract and retain additional good mentors for teacher trainees/unqualified teachers
- ensure open and distance learning materials are available on time
- incorporate the beneficial aspects of the PTC Extension Programme into the traditional, campus-based PTC Programme, while maintaining at least six months (but preferably one year) of quality pre-service training
- aim to raise the entry requirements to the PTC course, for example, to include a WASSCE credit in English.

Non-governmental and civil society organisations should hold the Ministry accountable to its commitments to education quality.

It is achievable for The Gambia to realise a fully qualified teaching workforce for the advancement of education quality. NGOs and CSOs must advocate for a fully qualified teaching workforce as a priority for working towards quality education. Specifically, NGOs and CSOs should:

- support the Ministry in developing ways to ensure that pre-service training or an induction for unqualified teachers can be conducted in the short term
- support the Ministry in developing ways to improve the traditional, campus-based teacher training so as to incorporate the beneficial aspects of the PTC Extension Programme but retain at least a six-month (but preferably one-year) element of quality pre-service training
- ensure the Ministry develops a time-bound strategy for achieving a fully qualified teaching workforce and keeps to its commitments
- ensure the Ministry reviews the PTC Extension Programme following the achievement of a fully qualified teaching workforce and that if the PTC Extension Programme is continued, it is amended to include at least six months (but preferably one year) of quality pre-service training
- advocate for teachers to be better valued during policy dialogue about education reforms
- help the Ministry to promote the teaching profession in the national media (newspapers, national and community radio, television, etc)
- closely monitor changes to teacher training requirements, ensuring that quality is maintained.
- The Education for All Network should oversee the development of a steering committee to encourage and monitor progress on the recommendations of this report.
- The steering committee should produce annual monitoring reports that review progress against the recommendations made in this report.

Donors should ensure that the MoBSE and the teacher training institutions have sufficient funding to support the development and maintenance of a fully qualified teaching workforce.

It is achievable for The Gambia to realise a fully qualified teaching workforce in the near future, especially compared with the scale of the challenge in other developing countries. It will not be achievable, however, without donor attention and support. Specifically, donors should:

- ensure that sufficient funding is available to secure the necessary supply of qualified teachers while maintaining at least six months (but preferably one year) of quality pre-service training
- ensure that sufficient funding is available to support CPD and other incentives and opportunities which will encourage qualified teachers to remain in the profession
- avoid supporting programmes which would institutionalise the presence of unqualified teachers, favouring instead those which promote the profile and quality of the teaching workforce
- support the Ministry's and the GSIAE's efforts to improve the quality of education in Madrassas, especially through programmes to upgrade the unqualified Madrasa teachers.



An ECCE student

Appendices

Appendix one: Information on teachers

Teachers consulted in conventional schools (based on interviews and administered questionnaires)

	Unqualified teachers	Qualified teachers
Number of participants	27	39
Average age	23.8	34.4
Youngest	18	21
Oldest	35	53
Average years in profession	3.1	13.4
Least	0	1
Most	10	34
Average number of schools worked at	1.6	4.6
Least	1	1
Most	5	14

Teachers in Madrassa schools (based on interviews and administered questionnaires)

	Unqualified teachers	Qualified teachers
Number of participants	18	2
Average age	32.6	36.5
Youngest	23	33
Oldest	57	40
Average years in profession	9.2	10.5
Least	1	10
Most	29	11
Average number of schools worked at	2.6	4.5
Least	1	3
Most	7	6

Teachers in ECCE centres (based on interviews and administered questionnaires)

	Unqualified teachers	Qualified teachers
Number of participants	11	15
Average age	28	40.7
Youngest	24	26
Oldest	33	65
Average years in profession	4.1	16.3
Least	2	2
Most	8	30
Average number of schools worked at	1.5	4.8
Least	1	1
Most	3	20

Appendix two: Teacher interview

Background information recorded: date, region, sex, age

- How many years have you been teaching?
- How many schools have you taught in?
- What school level do you teach at? (options provided)
- Which applies to you: trained or untrained?
- Which applies to you: qualified or unqualified?
- Which applies to you: permanent or contract?
- Which applies to you: university graduate or non-university graduate?
- What teaching qualification have you attained?
(Do not include current courses.)
- What university graduate degree have you attained?
(Do not include current courses.)
- What WASSCE passes have you completed? (options provided)
- What training did you receive before you started teaching?
- What were the three most useful trainings you received after you started teaching?
- Complete this sentence: A good teacher should be able to...
- What are the contributions of unqualified teachers in the classroom?
- What are the contributions of qualified teachers in the classroom?
- What are the contributions of unqualified teachers in the school?
- What are the contributions of qualified teachers in the school?
- What are the contributions of unqualified teachers in the community?
- What are the contributions of qualified teachers in the community?
- What are the challenges unqualified teachers face?
- What are the challenges qualified teachers face?
- What are the three most useful things you learned in your training before you started teaching?
- What are the three most important specific changes your in-service training made to your practice?
- What kind of training/qualification/professional development do you believe teachers in general need to teach effectively?
- Do you believe you need any further training/qualification/professional development to teach effectively? Please describe what you believe you require.
- (If applicable) What has prevented you from attaining your desired level of training/qualification/professional development?
- What do you believe are the incentives or reasons for teachers to attain qualifications and further training?
- What terms and conditions do **teachers in general** need to be able to teach effectively?
- What terms and conditions do you need to be able to teach effectively?
- Do you undertake other income-generating activities to supplement your wage?
- If you undertake other income-generating activities, please state how much time you devote to those other activities on average each week.
- If you undertake other income-generating activities, does it affect your teaching?
- If your other income-generating activities affect your teaching, please state how.
- How far is your posting from your immediate family in terms of average travel time?
- How many days have you been absent in the last month?
- How many days have you been absent in the last year?
- What were the reasons for your absence in each case?
- What were your reasons for becoming a teacher?
- On a scale of one to ten, how motivated do you feel as a teacher?
- For how long do you expect to continue teaching?
- (If applicable) What are your reasons for intending to leave the profession?
- (If applicable) What could encourage you to remain a teacher?
- (If applicable) What profession do you intend to pursue?
- Are there teacher shortages in your school?
- What do you think are the causes of teacher shortages?
- What do you think could be done to address the causes of teacher shortages?
- What are the problems resulting from teacher shortages?

Appendix three: School-level teacher manager interview

Background information recorded: date, region, sex, age

How many years have you been in the profession?

How many schools have you worked at?

What is your current job?

What school level do you work at? (options provided)

Which applies to you: trained or untrained?

Which applies to you: qualified or unqualified?

Which applies to you: permanent or contract?

Which applies to you: university graduate or non-university graduate?

What teaching qualification have you attained?
(Do not include current courses.)

What university graduate degree have you attained?
(Do not include current courses.)

How many unqualified teachers are working in your school?

How many qualified teachers are working in your school?

How many teacher trainees are working in your school?

Are there currently any vacant teacher posts in your school?
How many?

How many students are enrolled at your school?

How many classes are there in the school?

Are there any multi-grade classes in the school?

Does the school use a double-shift timetable?

What are the contributions of unqualified teachers in the classroom?

What are the contributions of qualified teachers in the classroom?

What are the contributions of unqualified teachers in the school?

What are the contributions of qualified teachers in the school?

What are the contributions of unqualified teachers in the community?

What are the contributions of qualified teachers in the community?

What are the challenges unqualified teachers face?

What are the challenges qualified teachers face?

What kind of training/qualification/professional development do you believe teachers in general need to teach effectively?

In what ways do you think the participation of unqualified teachers could be enhanced in the pursuit of quality education?

What do you believe are the incentives or reasons for teachers to attain qualifications and further training?

What terms and conditions do **teachers in general** need to be able to teach effectively?

How does the attendance of unqualified teachers compare with that of qualified teachers in your school?

Is there a difference in the amount and type of management support required from unqualified teachers as compared with qualified teachers? (If applicable: please describe any differences.)

Are there teacher shortages in your school?

What do you think are the causes of teacher shortages?

What do you think could be done to address the causes of teacher shortages?

What are the problems resulting from teacher shortages?

Through what process did any unqualified teachers working at your school seek employment at your school?

Please describe the process you undertake when there is a vacant teacher post at your school.

Appendix four: Regional-level teacher manager interview

Background information recorded: date, region, sex, age

Which applies to you: trained or untrained?*

Which applies to you: qualified or unqualified?*

Which applies to you: permanent or contract?*

Which applies to you: university graduate or non-university graduate?*

What teaching qualification have you attained? (Do not include current courses.)*

What university graduate degree have you attained? (Do not include current courses.)*

Complete this sentence: A good teacher should be able to...

What are the contributions of unqualified teachers in the classroom?

What are the contributions of qualified teachers in the classroom?

What are the contributions of unqualified teachers in the school?

What are the contributions of qualified teachers in the school?

What are the contributions of unqualified teachers in the community?

What are the contributions of qualified teachers in the community?

What are the challenges unqualified teachers face?

What are the challenges qualified teachers face?

What kind of training/qualification/professional development do you believe teachers in general need to teach effectively?

In what ways do you think the participation of unqualified teachers could be enhanced in the pursuit of quality education?

What training or professional development is currently available to unqualified teachers in your region?

Do you believe any additional support for unqualified teachers is necessary? (If applicable: please describe what kind of additional support is necessary.)

What do you believe are the incentives or reasons for teachers to attain qualifications and further training?

How does the attendance of unqualified teachers compare with that of qualified teachers in your region?

Is there a difference in the amount and type of management support required from unqualified teachers as compared with qualified teachers? (If applicable: please describe any differences.)

Are there teacher shortages in your region?

What do you think are the causes of teacher shortages?

What do you think could be done to address the causes of teacher shortages?

What are the problems resulting from teacher shortages?

Through what process did any unqualified teachers working in your region seek employment?

Please describe the process you undertake when there is a vacant teacher post at your school.

* Asked to Cluster Monitors only

Appendix five: Teacher focus group discussion guide

<p>Quality education and teacher contributions</p>	<p>In sub-groups of qualified teachers and unqualified teachers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete this sentence: Good teachers should be able to... 2. What are the contributions of unqualified/qualified teachers (ask each sub-group to answer the question for their own category) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the classroom • in the school • in the community? 3. What are the challenges faced by unqualified/qualified teachers (ask each sub-group to answer the question for their own category) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the classroom • in the school • in the community? <p>If time allows, repeat 2 and 3 but ask each sub-group to answer the question thinking of the other category of teacher.</p>
<p>Teacher supply and deployment</p>	<p>Qualified and unqualified teachers together:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are there teacher shortages in your school? 2. What are the causes of teacher shortages? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) in your school(s)? (if relevant) b) in The Gambia generally? 3. What are the problems resulting from teacher shortages? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) in your school(s)? (if relevant) b) in The Gambia generally? 4. What could be done to address the causes of teacher shortages (identified in question 2)?
<p>Teacher training and professional development, terms and conditions, and attitude to teaching</p>	<p>In sub-groups of qualified teachers and unqualified teachers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What kind of training do you believe teachers need to be able to teach effectively? 2. What do you believe are the incentives or reasons for teachers to attain qualifications and further training? 3. What terms and conditions do teachers need to be able to teach effectively?

Appendix six: Student focus group discussion guide

<p>Quality education and teacher contributions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the recipe for a good teacher? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What qualities does a person need to be a good teacher? • Complete this sentence: Good teachers should be able to... (Alternative questions: What things do teachers do to demonstrate the qualities? What things do good teachers do?) 2. What is the evidence that a teacher is a good teacher? 3. Do you know which teachers in your school are qualified and which are unqualified? (Do you know which of your teachers have gone to the college – Gambia College? Which teachers have just completed Senior Secondary School and begun teaching?) 4. What are the contributions of unqualified teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the classroom • in the school • in the community? 5. What are the contributions of qualified teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the classroom • in the school • in the community?
<p>Teacher supply and deployment</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are there teacher shortages in your school? 2. What do you think are the problems resulting from teacher shortages? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) in your school(s)? (if relevant) b) in The Gambia generally?

Appendix seven: Community focus group discussion guide

<p>Quality education and teacher contributions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the recipe for a good teacher? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What qualities does a person need to be a good teacher? • Complete this sentence: Good teachers should be able to... (Alternative questions: What things do teachers do to demonstrate the qualities? What things do good teachers do?) 2. What is the evidence that a teacher is a good teacher? 3. Do you know which teachers in your school are qualified and which are unqualified? (Do you know which of your teachers have gone to the college – Gambia College? Which teachers have just completed Senior Secondary School and begun teaching?) 4. What are the contributions of unqualified teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the classroom • in the school • in the community? 5. What are the contributions of qualified teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the classroom • in the school • in the community?
<p>Teacher supply and deployment</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are there teacher shortages in your community (communities)? 2. What do you think are the causes of teacher shortages? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) in your community (communities)? (if relevant) b) in The Gambia generally? 3. What do you think are the problems resulting from teacher shortages? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) in your community (communities)? (if relevant) b) in The Gambia generally? 4. What do you think could be done to address the causes of teacher shortages?
<p>Teacher training and professional development, terms and conditions, and attitude to teaching</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What kind of training do you believe teachers need to be able to teach effectively? 2. What do you believe are the incentives or reasons for teachers to attain qualifications and further training? 3. What terms and conditions do teachers need to be able to teach effectively?

Appendix eight: Head teacher focus group discussion guide

<p>Quality education and teacher contributions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete this sentence: Good teachers should be able to... 2. What are the contributions of unqualified/qualified teachers (ask one group to answer the question for one category and the other group to answer for the other) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the classroom • in the school • in the community? 3. What are the challenges faced by unqualified/qualified teachers (ask one group to answer the question for one category and the other group to answer for the other) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the classroom • in the school • in the community? <p>If time allows, ask the groups to do 2 and 3 again but for the other category of teacher.</p>
<p>Teacher supply and deployment</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are there teacher shortages in your school? 2. What are the causes of teacher shortages? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) in your school(s)? (if relevant) b) in The Gambia generally? 3. What are the problems resulting from teacher shortages? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) in your school(s)? (if relevant) b) in The Gambia generally? 4. What could be done to address the causes of teacher shortages (identified in question 2)?
<p>Teacher training and professional development, terms and conditions, and attitude to teaching</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What kind of training do you believe teachers need to be able to teach effectively? 2. What terms and conditions do teachers need to be able to teach effectively?

Appendix nine: Teacher trainee focus group discussion guide

Quality education and teacher contributions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete this sentence: Good teachers should be able to...
Attitudes to teaching	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are your reasons for wanting to be a teacher?
Teacher training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For what reasons are you becoming qualified? 2. What constraints do teacher trainees face?
Teacher supply and deployment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the causes of teacher shortages? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) in your school(s)? (if relevant) b) in The Gambia generally? 2. What are the problems resulting from teacher shortages? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) in your school(s)? (if relevant) b) in The Gambia generally? 3. What could be done to address the causes of teacher shortages (identified in question 2)?
Teacher training and professional development, terms and conditions, and attitude to teaching	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What kind of training do you believe teachers need to be able to teach effectively? 2. What terms and conditions do teachers need to be able to teach effectively?

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VSO is an active member of the Global Campaign for Education, an international coalition of charities, civil society organisations and education unions that mobilises public pressure on governments to provide the free education for all children they promised to deliver in 2000.

www.campaignforeducation.org

Since 2009, VSO has also been a member of the Steering Committee of the Unesco-hosted International Task Force on Teachers for Education for All.

www.teachersforefa.unesco.org

Since 2000, VSO's Valuing Teachers research has been conducted in 14 countries and is currently underway in three further countries. Following the research, advocacy strategies are created, which include the development of volunteer placements in civil society education coalitions, teachers' unions and education ministries.

For more information please contact:

advocacy@vso.org.uk

If you would like to volunteer with VSO please visit:

www.vsointernational.org/volunteer

In addition to this publication, the following research may also be of interest, available from the VSO International website: www.vsointernational.org/valuingteachers

- *Gender Equality and Education* (2011)
- *How Much is a Good Teacher Worth? A report of the motivation and morale of teachers in Ethiopia* (2009)
- *Leading Learning: A report on effective school leadership and quality education in Zanzibar* (2010)
- *Learning From Listening: A policy report on Maldivian teachers' attitudes to their own profession* (2005)
- *Lessons from the Classroom: Teachers' motivation and perceptions in Nepal* (2005)
- *Listening to Teachers: The motivation and morale of education workers in Mozambique* (2008)
- *Making Teachers Count: A policy research report on Guyanese teachers' attitudes to their own profession* (2004)
- *Managing Teachers: The centrality of teacher management to quality education. Lessons from developing countries* (2008)
- *Seen But Not Heard: Teachers' voice in Rwanda* (2004)
- *Teachers for All: What governments and donors should do* (2006)
- *Teachers Speak Out: A policy research report on teachers' motivation in The Gambia* (2007)
- *Teachers Talking: contributions of primary teachers to the quality of education in Mozambique* (2011)
- *Teachers' Voice: A policy research report on teachers' motivation and perceptions of their profession in Nigeria* (2007)
- *Teaching Matters: A policy report on the motivation and morale of teachers in Cambodia* (2008)
- *Valuing School Leaders: An investigation into the constraints facing school leaders in The Maldives* (2009)



Carlton House, 27A Carlton Drive
Putney, London, SW15 2BS, UK.

+44 (0) 20 8780 7500
www.vsointernational.org

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