



Qualifying for Quality

Unqualified teachers and qualified teacher shortages in The Gambia

Executive summary and recommendations



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.

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.

“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)

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, early childhood care and education (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.
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.

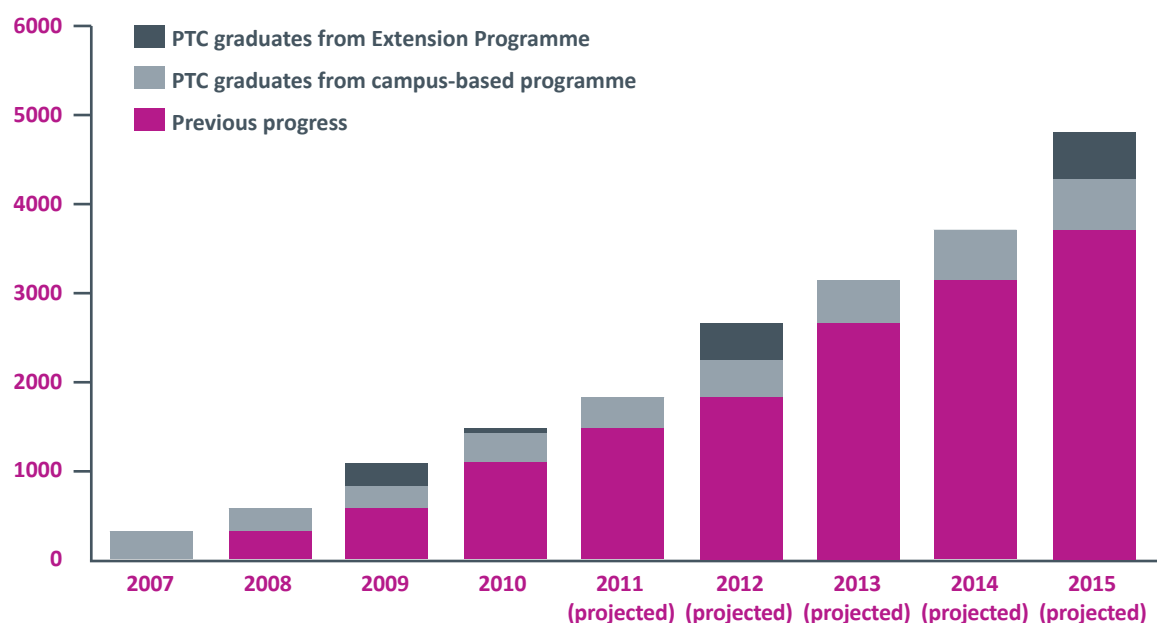
The respondents consulted in the course of this research indicated that there are three primary causes of qualified teacher shortage in The Gambia. The main factor highlighted was demand: the rapid expansion of access in the effort to provide universal primary education has required the recruitment of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

9. The PTC is the general teaching certificate for basic education in The Gambia.

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

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 Madrasa 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 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.

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 Madrasa 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 Madrasa 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.

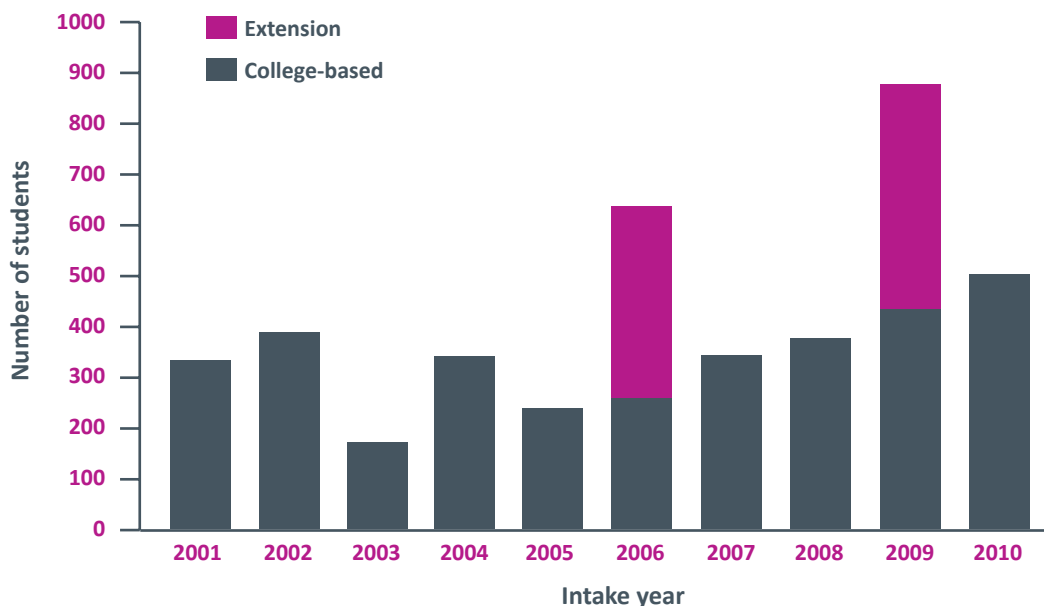
Enrolment in the PTC course at the School of Education is steadily increasing – with significant increases every three years with the commencement of each new cohort on the PTC Extension Programme. Previously, the enrolment was very low due to insufficient numbers of interested and eligible candidates,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

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.

Figure two

School of Education PTC enrolment



Source: Gambia College School of Education.

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.

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 Madrassa 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. Madrassa 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.

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

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)



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