

Culturally Responsive Teaching: Gambia Region One Schools' Professional Development Plan - A Solution Orientation.

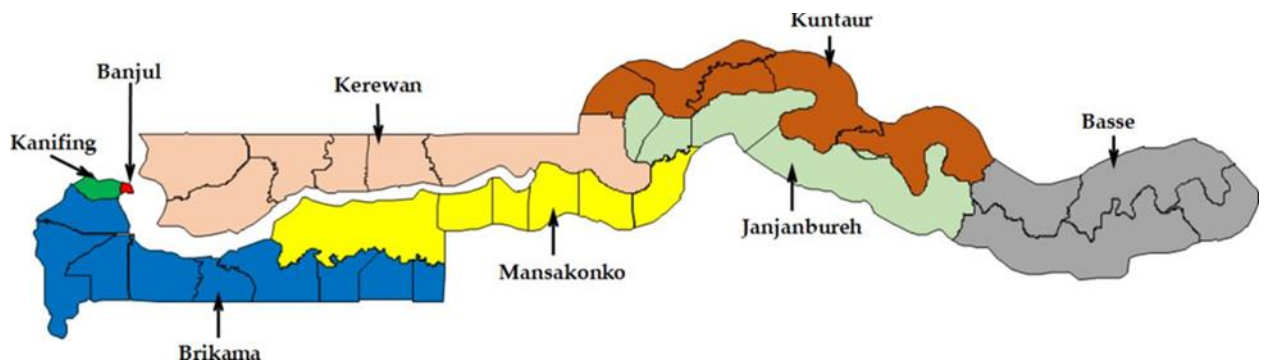
Abstract

The writer of this summarized piece (Salieu Bojang) presents a comprehensive strategy for enhancing the professional development of teachers in the Gambia area. The program emphasizes culturally responsive teaching, which emerged from the outcome of seminars on mathematics' relevance in the Gambia by Prof. Bukhari Sillah, Dr. Bubacarr Bah, Dr. Edrissa Gassama, Lamin L. Dibba, Nafy Aidara and Atta Lowe, and that for National languages in The Context of Sustainable Development of The Gambia by Amie Ceesay Jallow, Besenty Gomez, Prof. Chernon Omar Barry, Fakebba Kujabi, Lamin Jarjou, Raki Jallow, and Richards Jammeh.

Furthermore, the author incorporates insights from Adama Makasuba's report on ARPS Media titled "Joint Statement by MoBSE & UNICEF: Over 46,000 Children in the Gambia Are Out of School" and a WASSCE report from 2023/2024, as documented by Kerr Fatou. These adaptable and practical plans can be replicated in other regions, providing a clear roadmap for improvement based on their unique circumstances. The author also got clues from "purposeful education: My bet against poverty," a topic that was thoroughly discussed in a conversation with Ebrima B. Sawaneh on an in-depth program with ARPS Media.

Introduction

The Gambia, located in western Africa, is a small nation surrounded by Senegal. The Gambia Bureau of Statistics (2013, p.6) estimates its population to be around 1.89 million. Due to rural-urban migration, settlement patterns are uneven across the country's 11,300 Km² land area. Interestingly, most migrants do not settle in the Banjul and Serre-Kunda (Kanifing) districts, which together form region one.



Region One: Banjul and Kanifing Municipal Council (KMC)

The capital city of Gambia, Banjul, was previously known as Bathurst and is sometimes referred to as St. Mary's Island. It is home to a population of 31,301 people and is connected to the Kanifing Municipal Council (KMC) via a bridge. The KMC has the second-highest population in the country, with a total of 382,096 people (GBoS, 2013, p.9). When combined with Banjul, the two councils have a population of 413,397. Region one, which comprises Banjul and KMC, has almost 45% of all schools in Gambia. This means that Region One has a larger student population than the other five regions in the country, with approximately 475,763 students out of the 1,057,250 school-going population in Gambia. This data presents an opportunity for Region One to develop its educational leadership potential and better serve students and the community.

Educational System and Leadership Structure in Gambia

The education system in Gambia is renowned for its distinctive approach, which is in line with other nations' core principles and objectives but implemented uniquely. It requires a lot of dedication, investment, and guidance to foster individuals' understanding of themselves and their surroundings. The learning framework of the country is governed by state and local councils, laws, and policies, indicating a solid commitment to institutionalized learning structures and processes. However, there are still significant challenges to overcome before the goals are achieved, and for now, the country faces an uphill battle to achieve them.

The education system in The Gambia follows a 6-3-3-4 structure. After passing the Grade 6 exams, students spend six years in primary school and three years in junior secondary school. They then move on to senior secondary school for another three years before progressing to a four-year college or university. Students must pass an exam to ensure a smooth transition between each level.

The Gambia Ministry of Education manages the education system, and its responsibilities are decentralized to regional levels. Each regional directorate office has a regional board of Directors, clusters, principals, teachers, and students, all working together to maintain and improve the educational system.

Gambia Region One Schools Professional Development Plan

Educational leaders must strategize, create, and execute plans for implementing ideas or changes for practical system leadership and management. The chart below outlines a development plan for the councils of Kanifing Municipality and the City of Banjul within Region One. To accomplish this, Region One must form a development planning team consisting of a regional director, a steering planning committee, a regional administrator, an evaluator, a building principal, and a project coordinator. This collective undertaking is imperative in

achieving our shared goal of serving 413,397 students, and we welcome the participation of all stakeholders in this critical initiative.

Professional Development Plan

<p>Culturally Responsive Teaching Gambia Region One Schools Professional Development Plan From 2025 – 2027</p>
<p>Mission: To cultivate a culture of learning Vision: Become a knowledge hub for innovation and invention by 2050.</p>
<p>Professional Development Plan From 2025 – 2027 Set-Standard #1: Increase Student Achievement in all Subject Areas</p>
<p><u>Target Area: Family, Parents and Sponsors Engagement</u> To increase student learning and performance through 'meet the parents, families, and sponsors of students' development program' to know and identify student weaknesses, strengths, and educational best practices.</p> <p><u>Schedule:</u></p> <p>In 2025: (1) The regional office should collaborate with sponsors, parents, families, and educators to prepare a catalog that outlines all the knowledge areas related to school activities. This includes processes, code of ethics, frameworks, mentorship training, and best educational practices. (2) Regional principals, senior staff, and educators will receive training based on this catalog. (3) Professional development meetings should be held at the regional office every four weeks to discuss updates, concerns, and assignments. (4) Meetings and orientations should be held for educators, families, and parents.</p> <p>In the year 2026: Update and maintain the current catalog that outlines the standard knowledge areas for school activities, including processes, code of ethics, frameworks, mentorship training, and best educational practices. (2) Hold meetings at the regional office to provide briefings, updates, and assignments. (3) Develop the capacity of all educators and staff in the Region through training programs. (4) Continue holding meetings and orientations for educators, families, and sponsors.</p> <p>In 2027: To improve student learning, Region One school administrations should conduct (1) effective workshop brainstorming and (2) harness family, parent, and sponsor networks, ideas, and resources.</p>

Area of Professional Development: (1) To improve parental, sponsor, and family knowledge of the region, (2) Student activities and educational requirements, and (3) Data accessibility and usage.

Appraisal: (1) Feedback from sponsor, family, and parents. (2) Workshop and meeting outcomes. (3) Student performance. (4) End of term surveys

Target Area: Student psychological and communal Development

To promote acceptance and resilience, students must persevere through challenges and engage with parents, families, and sponsors during the development tour program.

Schedule:

In 2025: (1) The regional office will develop a manual for student counseling and guidance in collaboration with sponsors, parents, families, and regional educators. (2) Develop and train teachers in dealing with emotional intelligence; (3) Incorporate good parenting practices to mentor and guide students; and (4) Engage in meetings and workshops for rehearsals, updates, and problem-solving.

In 2026: (1) Work in close collaboration with sponsors, parents, families, and regional educators to create a comprehensive manual for student counseling and guidance. (2) Committed to providing ongoing development and training for teachers in emotional intelligence. (3) Integrate effective parenting practices into teacher mentoring and student guidance. (4) Continued engagement from educators, families, and sponsors in meetings and workshops.

In 2027: (1) Mentorship and volunteering programs for community engagement (2) Teacher training on social and moral ethics.

Area of Professional Development: (1) To enhance social-emotional development and (2) increase peer coaching for (3) advanced teaching and learning.

Appraisal: (1) Student volunteerism (2) Student feedback and surveys from students (3) Complaints from parents.

**Professional Development Plan
From 2025 – 2027
Set-Standard #2: Increase Student Graduation and Enrollment to 4-year Colleges or
University Institutions**

Target Area: Teacher Training and Student Enrichment

To improve student performance in reading and math through enrichment programs and professional development for teachers.

Schedule:

In 2025: (1) The regional office, in partnership with teachers, should launch instructional review and training programs for teaching. This initiative is designed to enhance teaching methods and ensure the best possible education for students. (2) In collaboration with teachers, staff administrators, and students, the regional administrators should seek suitable outside operators for off-school enrichment programs in math, English, and science. These programs aim to address gaps in student learning areas and provide additional support where needed. (3) performance review meetings should be conducted to assess progress and make necessary adjustments, underscoring the importance of collective efforts in achieving the educational goals.

In 2026: (1) Keep working with teachers to develop teaching and instructional review and training programs. (2) Measure student progress in summer and spring enrichment against standards to hold students accountable. (3) Collaborate on learning and share information to identify and address gaps in student learning. (4) Keep conducting performance review meetings.

In the year 2027: (1) Developing a positive attitude towards teaching and learning, and (2) Providing mentoring and coaching support.

Area of Professional Development: (1) Develop leadership, teaching, and motivational skills, and (2) Improve student proficiency in math, science, and reading.

Appraisal: (1) Test scores. (2) Teacher-student feedback. (3) Student report cards

Target Area: Learner-centered education

To increase district and teacher focus on student success, learning, and Development.

Schedule:

In 2025: (1) To coach and educate regional administrators and educators on district ethics, rules, and laws. (2) Seminars for teachers on sacrifice, selflessness, and human motivation (3) Educating students on the purpose of education

In 2026: (1) Continued coaching of regional administrators and educators on district ethics, rules, and laws. (2) Seminars for teachers on patriotism, sacrifice, selflessness, and human motivation (3) Continued student education on the purpose of education.

In the year 2027: (1) Focus on developing student competency and improving love for learning.

Area of Professional Development: (1) Peer reviews and questioning (2) Problem-solving (3) Art and music

Appraisal: (1) Test scores. (2) Teacher-student feedback. (3) Report cards

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