Investigating the Feasibility of Incorporating TVET (including Life Skills) in the Madrasah Curriculum

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Abbreviations

ACCA  Association of Certified Chartered Accountant
CIMA  Chartered Institute of Management Accountant
ED  Early Childhood Development
ERNWACA  Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa
GBoS  Gambia Bureau of Statistics
GER  Gross Enrolment Rate
GOTG  Government of The Gambia
GSIAE  General Secretariat for Islamic and Arabic Education
GTTI  Gambia Technical Training Institute.
HIV/AIDS  Human Immuno Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HNC  Higher National Certificate
HND  Higher National Diploma
ICDL  International Computer Driving License
ICT  Information Communication Technology
KMC  Kanifing Municipal Council
LCM  London Certificate of Marketing
MCSE  Microsoft Certified System Engineer
MDGs  Millennium Development Goals
MOBSE  Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education
MOYS  Ministry of Youths and Sports
MTT  Madrasah Teacher Training
NBR  North Bank Region
NEPAD  New Partnership for African Development
NFE  Non-Formal Education
NGO  Non Governmental Organization
NTA  National Training Authority
NYSS  National Youth Service Scheme
PRSP  Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PTA  Parent Teacher Association
QSCs  Qur’anic Schooling Centers
ROG  Republic of The Gambia
SAW  Sallalahu Alaihi Wasallam
SPA  Strategy for Poverty Alleviation
TANGO  The Association of Non-Governmental Organization
TVET  Technical/ Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO  United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UTG  University of The Gambia.
WAEC  West African Examination Council
WANEP  West African Network for Peace building
WASSCE  West African Senior Schools Certificate Examination
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Executive Summary

This research was aimed at exploring the feasibility of introducing technical, educational and vocational training (TVET), as well as Life Skills in Madrasah schools.

TVET is used as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. In this broad definition, TVET refers to a range of learning experiences which are relevant to the world of work such as Agriculture, Building and Construction services, Water and Sanitation system maintenance, Welding and fabrication, Electrical/Electronic repair, Handicraft, basic ICT skills and business entrepreneurship. Life Skills are a set of human skills (acquired via teaching or direct experience) that are used to handle problems and questions commonly encountered in daily human life such as Numeracy and literacy, Hygiene, Nutrition, Sanitation and disease prevention, Family life skills, Creative thinking, Human relation, Communication and language skills, Human rights, Politics, Culture and History.

The researchers were asked to look at the feasibility of incorporating TVET and Life Skills Training in the Madrasah curriculum. Within this broad mandate the teams endeavored to objectively and rationally examine the strengths and weaknesses of the Madrasah system to complement the Gambia national Educational system to deliver the national educational policy goals and, further, the MDG goals in education. The study looked at the financial viability of the proposed incorporation and ultimately the prospects for its success.

The study revealed a genuine need for TVET in Madrasah schools and explored how it might be introduced into the system. At present there is some limited emphasis on Life Skills but as yet no vocational education taught in Madrasah in The Gambia. As a consequence of this lack of vocational training graduates of the Madrasah continue to have limited employment opportunities.

The General Secretariat of Islamic and Arabic Education (GSIAE) which oversees and regulates Islamic education in the country has undertaken a series of progressive steps towards the development of the sector since its inception in the mid nineties. In collaboration with the Department of State for Education (DOSE) within the Gambia Education policy vision for Education Access, Quality and Relevance it has fostered the integration of some prominent Life Skills components in the curriculum of Madrasah schools. The step towards the inclusion of technical and vocational education has yet to be taken mainly due to resource constraints which limit it to other pressing priorities within the sector. Some of these priorities include the incorporation of the less formal majlises and
Daras (Islamic nursery schools) into a holistic integrated Madrasah system which can operate smoothly within the national educational system.

The scope of the study covers two of the seven regions in the country namely Region 1 and Region 2. These two regions were selected because of their strategic position and because they are the most densely populated areas in the country with more than 75% of children of school going age.

A series of research instruments were designed to enable the team to achieve the two (2) fundamental goals of the research, i.e.

- firstly to investigate a sample of Madrasahs where TVET are not included in the curriculum, and find out the reasons for the exclusion and
- Secondly, to investigate relevant substantive issues, such as the availability of human, material and financial resources for implementing the national Policy requirement for introducing Life Skills and TVET subjects in the Madrasah curriculum.

The instruments designed included;
- questionnaires and interviews for those who are literate in English or Arabic;
- One on one interviews as well as participatory group discussions with those in the school communities and members of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) who may not be literate.

Further stakeholder institutions were targeted: the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, the National Training Authority (NTA), two conventional technical institutions, five graduate technical students and The General Secretariat for Islamic and Arabic Studies in The Gambia (GSIAE) otherwise referred to as ‘AMANAH’ which forms part of the Arabic equivalent of its title.

The findings show that Madrasahs students, proprietors, administrations and the seven umbrella Islamic Education organizations that make up the GSAIE acknowledged the importance of TVET and have long had the desire to implement technical and vocational programmes within their curriculum. However, the challenge has always been the availability of capacities and resources to run such programmes. It was proven during the exercise that trainable capacities do exist - there are numerous graduates in these institutions who are willing, trainable and capable to operate, monitor and supervise TVET programmes. The successful introduction of Life Skills training in many of these schools in the last decade testifies to the viability of incorporating new material into the madrasah curricular. With adequate restructuring and training TVET programmes can be operationalized.

In Conclusion the study recommends that, with a component for adequate comprehensive upgrading and training for trainers from the current Madrasah teacher cohort, could yield plausible results in the aim to introduce TVET in Madrasahs.
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Country Profile

The population of The Gambia is recorded as 1,364,507 in the 2003 National Population and Housing Census (ROG, 2003). The population growth rate is estimated to be 2.8% per annum, and 40% of the population is concentrated in the urban areas. The country has a predominantly 92% Muslim population, whilst Christians and animists form 5% and 3% of the population respectively. About 60% of the country’s inhabitants are less than 25 years of age and the population of young people (15 to 35 years) is estimated to be around 40%.

In general, Islamic education plays an important role in the lives of Muslims in Sub-Saharan Africa. As elsewhere in the Muslim world, Islam is a powerful factor for promoting education because of the religion’s impact on the value system of the family and because of Islam’s contribution to the extension of literacy and intellectual development of young people and adults. However, the education provided in Qur’anic schools is insufficiently researched at present. Education statistics ignore it and its potential is underrated. Without a change in this trend the country will not be able to meet the social demand for education within the formal system of state education in spite of the human and financial resources devoted to Education in this country. The requirement to attain the education-related Millennium Development Goals by the year 2015 is imposing new education policies, in particular the policy of bringing together all organizations that contribute to education (formal and non-formal), including Islamic education (New Education Policy 2004 – 2015, The Gambia Government).

1.2 Education Profile

There are two forms of educational set-ups in The Gambia:

- The common conventional system of education by which the primary and secondary schools and tertiary institutions of the state operate using the English language as the medium of communication

- Educational institutions that use Arabic as the medium of instruction. These institutions started as forms of kataateeb\textsuperscript{1} which were eventually developed into functional

\textsuperscript{1} These were the first types of educational institutions in the Islamic world before the Madrasahs.
Madrasah schooling systems, and thus they recently were adapted to the formal schooling system with curricula activities and functions (Madrasah Country Report 2007).

Beside these two sets of schooling there are some non-formal education set-ups in The Gambia which include non-formal education and skills training institutions. (A Synthesis of Studies of Madrasahs and Other Qur’anic Schooling Centres in Gambia, Mali, Niger and Senegal).

Madrasahs in The Gambia are institutions that operate like conventional schools with some differences in languages and the courses offer. These institutions were introduced in The Gambia when the first group of Gambians and others arrived in the country from different countries of Arab Africa and the Gulf. This was so because they felt that what they had in Arabia could not be easily disseminated in their home country if the trend remains in the former system of karantaas or daaras.

Madrasah education dates back to the 5th century of the Islamic calendar or 10th century AD by one of the Saljugian ministers called Nazzaamul Malik. This was so because Muslims used the mosques as teaching places, and the population of these students was on the increase. It became practically impossible for worshippers to concentrate on their prayers (History of Islamic Civilization, Vol.3, P. 223). As a result the government in Baghdad, Iraq, decided to open such institutions, called Nazzaamul Malik, the schools were named after the above minister, to replace the mosques as teaching places. These institutions started in Baghdad and they have produced great scholars like Imam Ghazali and Imam Sheerazy. Muslims competed in the establishment of these schools. According to Maghreezy, one of the Islamic middle-age historians, in Cairo alone there were 63 schools. Another historian Ibn Jubair said: ‘I have counted 20 schools of this kind in Damascus, 17 primary and 12 high schools in Gharnatah and 27 schools in Cordova in Islamic Spain.’

In The Gambia there are 280 Madrasahs, owned by seven main institutions. These schools were the pioneers of the Madrasah Secretariat known as Amanah (The General Secretariat for Arabic and Islamic Education in The Gambia).

AMANAH acts as the umbrella organization of all the Madrasah schools in the country. This organization is responsible for:

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2 These are the Arab-speaking countries of the Gulf including Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, and similar countries in north Africa including Mauritania in West Africa.
3 These are the types of institutions that normally teach Islamic studies on an informal basis; basically on Quranic Studies and Figh (Islamic Jurisprudence).
4 Ibnul Atheer narrated in his writings in one of the mosques that a man called Ja’afar Ibn Muhammad used to lecture about thirty thousand in a single Majlis of this kind.
• Availing and sustaining quality education to those learners who choose Madrasah as their option for formal education in The Gambia
• Sustaining Islamic culture and practices for the Muslim population of The Gambia.
• Ensuring the availability and sustainability of nationals to serve as imams, diplomats in Arab diplomatic missions, and legal practitioners in the justice/legal fields where “Shariah” justice is an option.

Students who graduate from these institutions, like their partners in the conventional system of education, have unemployment problems (Strategy to Revitalize TVET in Africa, 2007). It is important that these students are given an alternative livelihood so that they can earn their living respectfully, since the government cannot absorb all of them in its conventional schools as Arabic and Islamic studies teachers or as imams of the relatively limited mosques in The Gambia. Therefore, it is high time these institutions looked for alternative means of securing employment for this fast-growing set of Gambians.

Unfortunately, the Secretariat of Madrasahs has no adequate pragmatic plans for these students.

1.2.1 The Education System in The Gambia

The first state education system that came with national independence in 1965 was six years of primary education and six years of high school or four years of secondary technical school. The six years of primary school ended with the Common Entrance Examination of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC). Successful candidates in these examinations went straight to a six-year high school. Those who failed to get the national cut-off went to secondary technical schools where the emphasis was on technical and vocational education and training. However, students were given a second chance to pursue their education when they excelled in the Secondary School Leaving Certificate Examination. Such successful candidates went to high school (now called senior secondary school) to start in Form 3. High school education ended with GCE ‘O’ level exams. After ‘O’ levels, students who wanted to further their education went to the two-year Sixth Form ending with GCE ‘A’ level exams. From ‘A’ levels, successful candidates proceeded to university, but there was none in The Gambia and so they had to go abroad for their first degrees and postgraduate studies.

The education system has substantially picked up since 1994 when the current government drastically increased the number of schools and spread them across the country for easier access. However, there is still a large back-log of people who have not undergone any form of schooling. Many have little formal schooling, especially the adults. In addition, there is an alternative Arabic/Muslim schooling system called Madrasah where people, until lately, did
not learn any English but Arabic/Qur’anic teachings. Now, Basic English and maths have become compulsory also in the Madrasahs\(^5\).

The Government of The Gambia has made tremendous efforts so that basic schooling has become available to all, and programmes have been established to improve the retention of girls in school. Special efforts were undertaken to improve girls’ education by paying their school fees to motivate parents to send their daughters to school. Further programmes were established specifically to support the girl child in order to reach gender equity. In addition, a large number of public schools have been established in order to give every child a chance to be educated. There are numerous private schools at all levels of the education system attracting students as they promise better quality education. Parents can hardly afford schooling costs at all levels. Children dropping out of school due to lack of funds is common. Those are mostly taken to non-formal apprenticeship. Others stay at home hoping for sponsorship by private or organizational donors. In almost every publication of the major newspapers, there is an article for a needy student appealing for help.

Education in The Gambia is now based on a 4-tier system with 6 years of lower basic education, 3 years of upper basic and 3 years of senior secondary education and 4 years of university education (6-3-3-4). Higher education institutes like TVET training institutes, Gambia College and the University of The Gambia usually serve people who finished their senior secondary education. However, there are exemptions for senior students with respective work experience. Schooling usually ends with the WASSCE\(^6\) conducted by WAEC\(^7\). Students may choose up to 9 subjects but English Language, Mathematics, Science are compulsory. Only a few private schools offer internationally recognized examinations like Cambridge IGCSE/ ‘O’ Levels. Otherwise children who prefer to study abroad would have to undergo private/distance learning examination or subscribe to one of the numerous colleges for additional certificates.

The NTA, together with the other institutions and policymakers, has since the Madrasah Teacher Training (MTT) exercise strived to work towards a national Qualifications Framework. This would be helpful to allow credit transfer between the various institutions and permit youths either from school or TVET training institutes to proceed to higher education institutes.

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\(^5\) GBoS: Census Reports, 2000


\(^7\) WAEC = West African Examinations Council, The Gambia http://www.waecgambia.org/
1.2.2 TVET in the Gambia

TVET in The Gambia is delivered in 5 different ways namely, through:

1. The traditional, informal apprenticeships.
2. Pre-vocational TVET within the curriculum framework of Senior Secondary Schools. This includes subjects Engineering Science, Home Economics, Art and Craft, Technical Drawing, Metalwork, and Woodwork.
3. NGOs providing training in different TVET aspects mainly in the rural area in an informal, mostly non-certificated, non-standardized and often short-track manner.
4. Formal TVET schools, private or government owned, leading to national and international certificates licensed by NTA.
5. Formally organized apprenticeship under NTA supervision.

According to NTA statistics, the main TVET providers are mainly situated in the greater Banjul area (Banjul and KMC), the areas with the highest population in The Gambia (GBOS statistics).

**A. The traditional, informal apprenticeship**

Traditional technical vocational skills training in The Gambia and other countries in West-Africa is an unstructured process where the trainees acquire knowledge and skills relevant to their trade from their work environment. Formerly, the trade was passed from parent to child. The apprentice would be watching the father and would gradually be involved in the work, hopefully acquiring the skills depending on his ability to learn and understand. This is a scheme known as “sitting by Nelly”.

The general practice is that the parents decide whether and which type of training a child should learn. They take children to a workshop. The workshop master is given the child, sometimes with kola nuts. In most cases, the master is responsible for feeding and housing the child. In return, the child will be part of his workshop and will run errands for the master. There is no formal structure as to the content of the training. The duration is not specific. It may last as long as the workshop owner thinks it is necessary. Finally, when the workshop owner is convinced that the child is grown to a stage where he is fit to operate his own business and he is ready to release the apprentice, he will take kola nuts to the parents and eventually assist with some tools for the youth to start his trade independently.

**B. School based pre-vocational training**

TVET related subjects are offered at the senior secondary school level. Subjects like engineering science, home economics, arts and crafts, technical drawing, metalwork and woodwork are part of the subject choices for the Grade 12 final exams (or WASSCE). Formerly, they were offered at the junior technical secondary level.
The disadvantage of this system for TVET was that the secondary technical school was perceived as a choice for under-achievers. Nevertheless, those who went through technical training had a means of livelihood.

C. NGO run TVET activities

According to The Association of NGOs (TANGO) an umbrella organisation for NGOs, there are about 150 organisations that are officially registered with them. Legally there are four types of organisations: faith-based organisations, community-based organisations (CBOs), charitable organisations and national and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs and NGOs). In addition, there are women’s groups, youth groups and interest groups. Many of them are involved in TVET. NGO Affairs, the government NGO regulating body, registers NGO and oversees their activities, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts, and facilitates the distribution of assistance where it makes the most impact. All activities should be undertaken hand in hand with The Gambian government in the sense that each organisation needs an official memorandum of understanding to operate in its chosen area. The chosen areas are many and cover all aspects of education for sustainable development. Examples are Peace Corps, training mainly in rural areas dealing with health, literacy, basic life skills and ICT. The West African Network for Peace building (WANEP) trains the police, judges and in human rights issues etc. Future in Our Hands trains the teachers in regions 4, 5 and 6 in teaching methodology. Adult education and training of specific skills in a chosen field of advocacy and intervention are mainly in the hands of NGOs.

D. TVET in the formal sector of Education

Formal TVET is offered mainly in private institutions, primarily in the GBA offering courses leading to international examinations like the City and Guilds of London Institute, the Royal Society of Arts, Cambridge, Stockport College, HNC, HND, LCM, ACCA, CIM, CIMA, MCSE, A+, and ICDL. As a former British colony, the country’s strong affinity to the British systems is clearly visible. Their curricula are mainly determined by the requirements of the external certificate provider. The NTA has tried to take all that into account and to amalgamate these requirements into The Gambia Skills Qualifications Framework, providing a standard framework to ensure quality and value.

The training targets principally senior secondary school graduates. This training is supposed to be an alternative to university education or intended to be used as a stepping stone for education abroad, mainly in the UK and the US.

A small number of courses are offered at a basic level mostly in technical fields such as electrical, plumbing and carpentry. They lead only to qualifications awarded locally.
Fewer institutions still offer TVET courses for early school leavers (school dropouts) or basic technical training. Among these are the President’s Award Scheme that provides training and the National Youth Service Scheme (NYSS) at the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) which only sponsors registered members. GTTI has a special access programme to cater for students with knowledge gaps who had to leave school prematurely.

E. Approved Master Craft Persons Providing Structured Apprenticeship in TVET

Previously, there were no guidelines or set standards for the content of the training of apprentices. The NTA is tasked to regulate TVET in The Gambia; it has decided to restructure the informal apprenticeship system. Master craft persons, i.e. persons with approved skills and educational records, have been identified to offer practical training in a structured and organized way, including theory elements, leading to a formal certificate at the end of the training. This initiative is being funded by Gamjobs.

The National Training Authority (NTA)

The National Training Authority was established by an Act of Parliament in 2002 and inaugurated in 2003. At inception, it was under the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MOBSE). However, it has been transferred to the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MOHERST). The organisation is governed by a board consisting of members of government, industry and education authorities in order to ensure that all views are considered.

Today, the NTA is a well established institution mainly funded through a national training levy – a special funding facility set up by the government. Funding raised is still insufficient to cover costs.

The NTA has established a national Skills Qualifications Framework, which sets quality standards for accreditation and operation for both training providers, and trainers. It also introduced national certificated examinations based on international standards.

Every training institute has to officially register with the NTA for accreditation. The institutes are compelled to fulfill a number of requirements in order to ensure proper management, accountability and quality of the instruction. Non-accredited training institutes which cannot comply with the registration requirements will subsequently be
The process of registration and accreditation usually takes 6 to 12 months and is subject to renewal every three years. Monitoring is an ongoing process and includes on-site verification visits by NTA officials. Accredited TVET institutes may only use teachers who are accredited. There are currently about 60 institutions accredited or are in the process of accreditation.

Teachers need to individually apply and tender their credentials and references. After thorough screening by a board, they are given accreditation which is renewable on an annual basis. Currently about 500 (mostly Gambian) teachers are accredited as trainers.

In order to alleviate the burden on students of paying high fees for external examinations, the NTA has created a national certification system, which is in line with international standards.

Certificates obtained by the students are verified and countersigned at the NTA, to prevent abuse and faking. For the period of 2008, there were 3224 certificates verified.

1.3 The Context

In 2007, ERNWACA, in partnership with UNESCO, undertook a study of Madrasahs and other Qur’anic schooling centres (QSCs) in The Gambia, Mali, Niger and Senegal. UNESCO was interested in the development of an innovative curriculum for Madrasahs and other Qur’anic schooling centres in non-formal education (NFE) settings, through incorporating them into the curriculum:

(a) Additional basic education content and
(b) Vocational skills training.

The recommendations of the study were presented in the form of Concept Papers for possible follow-up studies in each country. One of the Concept Papers developed by The Gambia concerned the introduction of technical/ business vocational subjects in the curriculum of Madrasahs and other QSCs. This Concept Paper is at the basis of the present research. The paper was developed on the premise that, as already implied above, The Gambia will not be able to meet the social demand for education within the existing formal system of state education, but that, the Madrasahs have the necessary hidden potential for combining education with the search for the basic means of survival among the less affluent in society. The study had already revealed the desire of such schools to incorporate technical/ business vocational subjects into their traditional curriculum in accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education and the General Secretariat for Arabic/Islamic Education in 2005.
1.4 Justifications

After a decade of economic recovery initiatives, the living standard of the average Gambian had not improved. Therefore, reduction in social expenditure, combined with a rapidly increasing population and job losses in the civil service, have increased the level of poverty. The modern sector was unable to provide jobs for the growing economically active population. The agriculture sector continued to decline and migratory patterns saw population movements towards the urban and peri-urban areas, thus increasing open unemployment in these areas. Declining productivity and real incomes led to a general decline in the quality of life of the citizens. As a result, poverty alleviation became the primary concern of the government. However the informal sector witnessed a rapid expansion during this time.

The above concerns prompted The Gambia Government to initiate urgent strategies, to address the situation because “a weak human resource base and substantial shortages of skilled labour will constitute a major constraint to economic growth and poverty alleviation in The Gambia”. (NTA, 2007, p. 2). Education and skills development is therefore seen as a key priority within the country’s Strategy for Poverty Alleviation (SPA II) and in addition the thrust of the current national New Education Policy (2004 – 2015 see p. 3) is about “Rethinking Education for Poverty Reduction”.

The policy intends to investigate how it could support the development of an innovative curriculum within the context of Madrasahs and Qur’anic schooling centres in non-formal settings through:

(a) Additional basic education
(b) Vocational skills to enhance easy transition from these centres to the job market.

The flexibility of the non-formal framework for basic education in the Madrasahs and the other Qur’anic Schooling Centres is considered by Government as convenient and appropriate for the less affluent in society who are forced to combine education with the search for the basic means of survival.

In 2007, UNESCO contracted to ERNWACA regional chapters a status study of Madrasahs in The Gambia, Mali, Niger and Senegal. The baseline survey in these countries has enlightened us to some of the hidden potential of the Islamic schools. A Review of the ongoing curriculum has revealed some constraints. Vital strategies and action plans would have to be in place if the objective of incorporating secular subjects and livelihood skills into Islamic schools is to be achieved. (From Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of State for Education and the General Secretariat for Arabic / Islamic Education in 2005).
The New Education Policy and the National Training Act (2002) also give serious emphasis to TVET vis-a-vis the job market, in both the formal and informal sectors of training providers. However, The Gambia Government is now seriously looking at the potential of Madrasahs and Qur’anic Centres, possible contribution towards the development of its Human capital.

1.5 Aims and Objectives

In view of the foregoing, the aim of this research is to widen the scope of the curriculum provided in the Madrasahs and enhance its relevance to national development by including life skills (already in) and TVET in the curriculum of these “schools”.

The specific objectives are:

To investigate a sample of Madrasahs where these subjects are not included in their curriculum, and find out the reasons for the exclusion;

To investigate the feasibility of implementing Government’s policy with regard to introducing life skills and TVET subjects in the Madrasah curriculum in order to obtain further clarifications and insights about relevant substantive issues, such as the availability of human, material and financial resources.

1.6 Limitations of Study

• The study was focused on the research objectives, given the limited resources (including time) allocated to it. Of all Madrasahs targeted for the survey, only nine of them were intensively studied. They were selected from Region 1 and 2 but due to financial constraints we were not able to go beyond these two regions.

• It was really hard to obtain information from some authorities. Numerous visits were made before the completed questionnaire could be collected that delayed the final report.

• Some of the respondents have no idea of life skills and TVET and this made it difficult for them to give information on the availability of Life Skill and TVET component in their schools.
1.7 Expected Outcomes

- The research will inform us on the feasibility of integrating TVET/life skills into the Madrasah curriculum.
- It will allow us understand the mode of integration.
- It will identify the various elements needed to be included in the programme as well as the training and capacity needs of Madrasahs.
- It will help decision makers to take informed measures in a bid to introduce/enhance TVET and life skills in this sector.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Literature about TVET

According to The Gambia’s vision for human resource development in the public sector’s strategic plan, the of the University of The Gambia (UTG) shall pursue programmes that are relevant to the demands of the labour market while GTTI shall focus on technical and vocational training that will meet The Gambia’s middle-level human resource requirement (African Education Development Issue. No. 1, 2010).

As regards, Madrasahs concerning TVET, according to the Education Policy of The Gambia, Madrasahs are supposed to have 8.4% technical/business subject areas compared to the upper basic/junior secondary schools in the conventional system. This cannot help Madrasahs achieve the educational goal of The Gambia as stipulated in the Education Policy 2005 – 2015. Thus, it will not favour the country’s development aspirations if Madrasah conditions are not adequately studied, i.e. self-employment by providing the skills for sustainable livelihood.

As it has been said earlier there schools aim venture into this sector. But there are constrains for reaching their ambition, a lot of which will be featured in the analysis of the survey material in this research.

2.2 The UNESCO/ERNWACA Study: Madrasah/Qur’anic Schooling in The Gambia, Niger, Mali and Senegal

Islam, like all heavenly religions, enjoins its believers to search for knowledge before they can truly worship Allah the Most High. The injunction was made on the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in his first encounter with the angel Gabriel – “Read...read in the name of your lord...” The injunction by both implication and extension is a call on believers to acquire knowledge in order to be able to rightfully worship Allah. In the same vein, it is of utmost importance that Muslims look for their livelihood through lawful means. Thus, the importance of work prevails in the life of Muslims. Seeking livelihood in Islam is worship in itself, so as Muslims are urged to seek knowledge to know God they are urged to work for their livelihood (Holy Qur’an, Suratul Jum’ah).

According to the research, “A Synthesis of Studies of Madrasahs and Other Qur’anic Schooling Centres in The Gambia, Mali, Niger and Senegal”, Madrasah Islamic schooling can trace its roots to the spread of Islam in Africa from the Arabian Peninsula. This phenomenon
was given rise by the need, among others for guidance of the non-Arabic speaking Muslims as Islam expanded outside Arabia. The spread also necessitated the need to translate the prophetic traditions of Sunnah, Hadith, and Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) with the aim of creating permanent records as the Prophet (SAW) had passed away. According to Uzama, 2003, this development marked the beginning of the Madrasahs as the centre of higher learning with the objective of preserving conformity through uniform teaching of Islam.

Historians posit that Islam was introduced in Africa as early as year 6 of “hijrah”. The Khalipha Uthman ordered Abdallah Ibn Sa’ad to go on an expedition to Egypt to spread the “deen”. Hiskett (1984) also threw light on the early history with the suggestion that there is significant historical evidence that points out to the presence of Islam in the Kanem-Borno Empire around modern-day Chad since the seventh century. People got converted to Islam which warranted the learning of basic Qur’anic texts not just for prayer, but also for learning the religious precepts of Islam and the ways of imparting its knowledge. From Egypt, merchants and Muslim scholars introduced Islam in the states bordering the Sahara via home teaching and mosques before the establishment of Qur’anic schools. The latter were meant for rote learning and memorization of the Qur’anic verses.

A leap forward was attained through the pilgrimage and sending of students to Fez and Cairo who would return to propagate the teachings of Islam. The initiatives of Sheikh Othman Dan Fodio of Sokoto to institute Qur’anic schools at the end of the 18th century and El-Kanemi who instituted a system of government based on the Islamic precepts in Borno were big boosters to Islamic education in sub-Saharan Africa. Other contributors to the venture were such iconic figures as El Hadji Omar Tall, Sekou Amadou, Cheikh Mohammad Lamine Drame, Cheikh Ahmad Hamadou Lahou and Samory Toure.

In peroration of this historical perspective it is important to give attestation that Europeans and Arab travellers reported the presence of Islamic schools in sub-Saharan Africa. Key among these were Ca Da Mosto (in 1455), d’Almeida (1578), Mungo Park (1799), and Ibn Batutta (1861).

The Gambian Scenario

The earliest form of educating children in The Gambia, especially for Muslims, was Islamic education. The method used was children sitting around a bonfire and each chanting verses from the Holy Quran. These learning centres are locally called karantaas or daaras originating from the Arabic system of kataateeb. The curriculum was centred on Qur’anic studies, Islamic jurisprudence and faith. These centres historically played important roles in education, spreading and preserving Islamic education and culture and producing imams, preachers and scholars who devoted their lives to Islamic missionary activities.
Changes in the *karantaa or daara* system were witnessed by the early 1960s when a semi-formal style was adopted to teach learners during the day instead of the night and in groups. The style later developed into the formal type of educating children in Islam by sitting in a classroom using structured timetables and several teachers teaching the same cohort of children. These schools enrolled groups of children in academic sessions, with syllabi and specialized teachers. This formal Islamic-Arabic school, a development of the obligatory *karantaa or daara* system of studying Islam, became known as Madrasah.

Madrasah is the Arabic word for school. However, in The Gambian context and for the National Education Policy 1988 – 2003, the “Madrasah is a formal and organized Arabic-Islamic educational institution with physical environments similar to the formal western-style school” (GSIAE 1996).

The Madrasah system of education was given much impetus with the return of scholars from Egypt, Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries. On their arrival, such scholars saw the need to set up a modern schooling system different from the one prevalent in the country i.e. karantaaas. In 1963 Tallinding Islamic Institute was set up followed by a proliferation of other such institutes as Muslim Islamic High School in 1975, Brikama Islamic Institute, and Tadaamun Islamic Institute.

Madrasah schooling, as an organism, has also undergone quantum transformations in the sense that it used to cater for Qur’anic education only. However, in present-day Madrasahs one would find learners studying subjects such as Islamic law, Hadith, history, geography, arithmetic, grammar and the official language of the state in addition to Social and Environmental Studies and Qur’anic education.

A further development was attained with the implementation of the government’s revised Education Policy (1988 – 2003) where a unified syllabus for both formal sector schools and Madrasahs was developed for basic education (Grades 1 – 9). This development was partnered by the Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education and the General Secretariat for Islamic and Arabic Education. Now the Madrasahs would teach Islamic Studies, Arabic Language, English, mathematics, science, physical and health education and Social and Environmental Studies.

The above are welcome developments. The challenge however is whether the graduates from these schools have equal opportunities as their counterparts from the formal schooling system in terms of securing jobs in the formal sector. Nonetheless, what has been attained in the Education for All (EFA) campaign is worth noting. A graduate from a Madrasah can do sums in mathematics, speak admirable English; locate the geographical features of the country and this could not occur should the “karantaa” system be the main conduit of Islamic schooling system.
2.3 The Gambia, Policy Documents and Strategic Plans, and the Islamic Secretariat Document on Madrasah Curriculum

2.3.1 The Gambia Policy Documents and Strategic Plans

The main thrust of these documents and plans is to provide a policy framework that sets out the national agenda for education in The Gambia for the period 2004-2015.

Outlined in this document are the aims and objectives of education in this country which are synchronized with the education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Education for All (EFA) goals, the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) education-related goals and the country’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP 2). Policy priorities are identified to allow the growth of educational opportunity and improve the effectiveness of education at all levels and in all systems, from early childhood development (ECD) to higher education bearing in mind both conventional and Madrasah education systems.

2.3.2 Background to the Education Policy

A. Rethinking education

The development of the Education Policy 2004 – 2015 is premised on The Gambia’s Vision 2020 and PRSP 2, both of which are the development agenda of government. They seek to improve the human capital of the country by reducing the number of people living below the poverty line. Thus the theme of the policy consultations was “Rethinking Education for Poverty Reduction”.

B. Policy Dialogue

The participation of all stakeholders in education was central in the policy dialogue process. The process attempted, in a variety of ways, to include children as well as adults; illiterate as well as literate members of society; government departments; civil society and private sector representatives.

Fora were organized to bring together schoolchildren, teachers and parents from both the rural and urban areas of the country to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the Education Policy 1988 – 2003 for the development of a new education policy for the next twelve years. These fora included a television bantaba, children’s forum and regional conferences supported by a series of television and radio programmes.
Feedback from these consultations provided the basis for debates of the third National Conference on Education, for this policy framework. Concerns included:

1. Improving access to quality education for all, particularly girls, for greater gender equity.
2. The re-defining of basic education to embrace Madrasahs, non-formal, early childhood and special needs education.
3. Development of life skills and creation of awareness of killer diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.
4. Provision of relevant vocational education and technical training based on labour market intelligence.

The National Conference generated recommendations and resolutions aimed at addressing the above concerns. Having been guided by these recommendations and resolutions, the drafters developed the policy write-up into various drafts, the fourth of which was presented to stakeholders for validation. Regional validation workshops were held across all the regions of the country to ensure, among other things, that:
1. The policy addresses the priority needs and challenges of education in this Country.
2. The policy objectives are pertinent to the country’s needs and aspirations.
3. The policy statements are realistic and implementable.
4. The policy takes into account factors that are likely to enhance the sustainability of expected results.
5. The policy addresses the concerns raised during the consultations Madrasah education system into the National Education Policy.
6. The stakeholders are ready to take ownership of the policy.
7. The policy objectives are harmonized with Vision 2020, the Country’s PRSP, the Education for All and the MDG education-related goals.

C. Aims of Madrasah Education in The Gambia

Madrasahs aim to equip learners with Islamic education/knowledge, Islamic culture, and the Arabic language for the sustenance and the proper practice of Islam. It is deemed that this can only best be attained by giving Islamic education and inculcating good Islamic culture, morals and attitudes in children at the early stages of child development. The Madrasah system, therefore, teaches children the obligatory Islamic virtues required of all Muslims, including modern subjects like science and technology, and training them to acquire relevant knowledge and skills that will enable them to participate in national development as a result of the relevant education acquired that goes beyond religious facets.
The guiding principle for education is premised on:

i. Discriminatory and all-inclusive provision of education underlining in particular, gender equity and targeting of the poor and disadvantaged groups

ii. Respect for the rights of individuals, cultural diversity, indigenous languages and knowledge.

iii. Promotion of ethical norms and values and a culture of peace.

iv. Development of science and technology competencies for the desired quantum leap.

These guiding principles are in conformity with the national development agenda of The Gambia as articulated in Vision 2020:

“To transform The Gambia into a financial centre, a tourist paradise, a trading, export-oriented, agricultural and manufacturing nation, thriving on free market policies and a vibrant private sector, sustained by a well-educated, trained, skilled, healthy, self-reliant and enterprising population, and guaranteeing a well-balanced eco-system and a decent standard of living for one and all, under a system of government based on the consent of the citizenry.”

To translate the above vision into reality, the sector is guided by a Mission Statement embodied in the following statement: “A Provision of Responsive, Relevant and Quality Education for All Gambians for Poverty Reduction.”

D. Vocational and Technical Education

Programmes of technical and vocational education and training are being strengthened, expanded and diversified to meet the emerging needs of a growing labour market. Efforts are made to ensure that the quality and relevance of training and skills development match the demands of the market. There is an increased private sector participation in the provision and financing of training and skills development, especially of the rural youth.

2.3.3 Policy Objectives

With these priority areas and key strategies in mind, the policy seeks to attain, among others, the following objectives:

i. Increase the basic education GER to 100% by 2015, taking into account enrolment in Madrasahs Improve the quality of teaching and learning at all levels.

ii. Improve learning outcomes at all levels and in all systems of education - at least 80% of students should attain minimum grade competencies/mastery levels by 2015.
iii. Provide marketable and social skills to enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.

iv. Strengthen the institutional and management capacity of the TVET system.

v. Establish a sound financial basis for the long-term development and sustainability of TVET.

vi. Improve the organizational structure of the sector for efficient and effective service delivery.

The attainment of these targets requires the employment of a combination of strategies. Primarily, expansion at the lower basic level will necessitate the creation of places for the estimated 9% of out-of-school children of school-going age. The Madrasahs are supported and strengthened to cater for children whose parents opt for instruction in these institutions. Such support includes the provision of teachers of English, instructional materials, upgrading and training of Madrasah teachers for quality assurance.

In the strategic plan of the Madrasah education system emphasis is made on the provision of TVET and life skills. “Strategic Plan for Islamic Arabic Schools (Madrasah) in The Gambia” July, 2009. Section 7.8 – 7.9, p.20.

The available life skills component in the conventional schools is integrated into the Madrasah curriculum. However, the component of TVET which prepares graduates to become self-reliant and productive citizens in national development is still missing. The only limited opportunities open to these graduates are becoming religious instructors and imams in very few mosques in the country.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Data Collection Procedures

Certain schools and institutions were targeted for information on Madrasahs and the availability of the components of life skill and TVET. These are:

- Nine schools in Regions 1 and 2. The two regions were selected because they constitute the highest Madrasah concentrated area of school going children in the country. The aim of targeting these schools was to obtain information on the availability of:
  a) TVET and life skills in these schools.
  b) The readiness of the staff in terms of their technical and academic ability.
  c) The possibility of introducing the programme.
- The communities of these schools – teachers, students, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), head teachers and school proprietors – were targeted for interviews. Among the schools selected were the mother schools of all the Madrasahs in The Gambia, whereby if one of these schools is covered all the schools under it are automatically covered. These mother institutions are the founding members of the General Secretariat of Arabic and Islamic Education in The Gambia (Amanah), and they form the executives of the said Amanah.
- The officials of Amanah were targeted for questioning as an institution.
- MOBSE, who has signed a memorandum of understanding with Amanah, were targeted and a questionnaire was given to officials concerned in the Ministry.
- The Focal Point of Madrasahs at the Ministry was incorporated in the exercise.
- The NTA was targeted for information on the status of the current trend concerning the TVET in the country in its capacity as the wing mandated to oversee all trainings - including TVET in The Gambia.
- Two conventional schools were visited and observed. One of the schools was offering the programme which eventually depreciated. The other is still operating the programme and graduates students who are managing their own income-generating businesses and/or their workshops in The Gambia. The objectives here are to have firsthand knowledge of the cause of depreciation and appreciation in the two schools, based on the observational analysis of the two schools.
- The focus group discussion was done with the communities of the schools to measure the strength of willingness in these communities towards TVET and life skills.

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8 Amanah has succeeded in introducing a comprehensive curriculum in all these schools, and has provided locally prepared textbooks of all the schools. It has gained a milestone in an effort to unify the examinations among these schools.
Two technical graduates of similar programme were targeted for an interview to see how best these interviews could help in assessing the expected outcome of the research.

### 3.2 Research Instruments

The instruments used to conduct the research were:

- **Questionnaires** for the General Secretariat for Arabic and Islamic Education in The Gambia (Amanah), the National Training Authority (NTA), MOBSE, curriculum officers and the Focal Point of Madrasah Education.
- **Interviews** with the rest of the selected 9 schools, their Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), heads of these schools, their proprietors, schoolteachers and the graduate technical students.
- **Focus Group Discussion** was conducted with the communities of the schools.
- **Observations** were conducted on the two technical schools of Latrikunda and Saint Peters.
Chapter 4: Analysis and Interpretation of Data

4.1 Analysis of Data

It is important to note that 9 school teachers, 9 heads of schools and 8 Madrasahs’ proprietors were interviewed, hence, the differences in the total number of respondents.

![Figure 1: Distribution of Respondents by Knowledge of TVET and Life Skills](image)

Figure 1 shows that 77% of all respondents had no idea of TVET and life skills. According to them it is due to the fact that TVET and life skills programmes are yet to be introduced in their schools. However, according to the curriculum officers interviewed, life skills is already part of the Madrasah curriculum through their study of Islamic education and other functional literacy programmes.
Table 1: Level of Operation of Schools / Category of Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Lower Basic School (LBS)</th>
<th>Upper Basic School (UBS)</th>
<th>Senior Secondary School (SSS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schoolteachers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heads of Schools</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proprietors of Schools</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to categories of schools (LBS, UBS and SSS), there are three schools that operate at upper basic school only and one school at senior secondary school only. Respondents, 4 schools in the case of proprietors and 5 schools in the case of schoolteachers and heads of schools operate at all the three levels.

Figure 2: Distribution of Respondents by whether they are teaching TVET and Life skills in their schools

Figure 2 shows that the responses from schoolteachers from 9 schools surveyed differ from responses of their heads of schools and proprietors of Madrasahs. In the case of schoolteachers only 2 schools teach TVET and life skills, whereas four heads of schools indicated that they had introduced TVET and life skills in their schools. About 35 per cent of all respondents reported to have been teaching TVET and Life skills in their schools and 65% had not started the programme.
As shown above, 64% as shown in Figure 3 of respondents, who indicated that TVET and life skills are taught in their school, thought that TVET and life skills should be taught in upper basic schools. All the respondents whose responses were negative indicated that lack of funds prevented them from introducing TVET and life skills in their schools.

All respondents agreed that it is very important to have TVET and Life skills Programmes in their schools.

The reasons given by the respondents are as follows:
   a. It would make their graduates have the necessary skills for gainful employment.
   b. They could be self-employed.
   c. It would reduce youth unemployment.
   d. It would contribute to national development.

The pie chart shows that the majority of respondents indicated that the programme should be introduced in upper basic schools representing 47% of all respondents.
All the schoolteachers interviewed indicated that the programme should be taught as a separate subject. The heads of schools and Madrasah proprietors 86% of those interviewed thought that it should be taught as a separate subject. (See Figure 5)

![Figure 5: Percent distribution of Respondents by how they would like the Programme to be taught in schools](image)

All the schoolteachers interviewed indicated that the programme should be taught as a separate subject. The heads of schools and Madrasah proprietors 86% of those interviewed thought that it should be taught as a separate subject. (See Figure 5)

Only two teachers out of the 9 teachers interviewed indicated that they are ready to teach the subject. However, 78% of teachers interviewed thought that they are not adequately trained and further training would be necessary.

All the heads of schools and Madrasah proprietors said that they are ready to support and supervise such programmes.
Figure 7 shows that the majority of respondents indicated that sources of funding should come from The Gambia Government and International donors. It was clear from the research that all heads of schools and Madrasah proprietors interviewed said that they have a lot of authority to introduce the Programme. All teachers interviewed indicated that they would support the programme when it is introduced in their schools.

Of all the Madrasah proprietors interviewed 7 of them have plans to introduce TVET and life skills in their schools. Three of them indicated that they have already started in a small scale and are in need of funding to extend the programme. The rest of the proprietors have difficulty in acquiring funds to implement their plans.
4.1.1 Amanah Officials

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>No. of schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secretary General</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Coordinator</td>
<td>280 but 131 are examinable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two officials of Amanah interviewed (the secretary general and the exam coordinator) who gave the figures of the schools as 280 registered and 131 examinable.

They were further asked about the availability of TVET programme in the schools registered with Amanah. The two respondents gave the following reasons.

- Lack of capacity
- Lack of equipment
- Lack of human resources

Asked about the plan to introduce TVET in schools, both respondents said they would do so. The two officials agreed that the programme should be introduced at both junior and secondary school levels.

On the question of funding for this programme both officials suggested the following:
1. Government funding
2. Local funding
3. International funding

On the question of how much authority Amanah has in the introduction of the TVET programme both of them said they have a lot of authority.

4.1.2 Curriculum Officials

On the feasibility of introducing TVET in the Madrasahs, both respondents said “yes” and the reasons advanced are as follows:

i. Enable students to acquire vocational skills.
ii. Possibility for self or institutional employment.

As to what level it should be introduced, both said upper basic and one said senior secondary schools.
On their familiarity with the current Madrasah curriculum one of the respondents said he is “very familiar” while the other is not quite familiar.

When asked whether the introduction of TVET could negatively affect other areas of the school curriculum both of them said “no”.

On the relevance of TVET in Madrasahs, both said they are relevant. On the question of whether Madrasahs are better coordinated to stand on their own in managing this programme, only one responded “yes, they need to be helped”.

Only one official responded by recommending changes in the Madrasah as follows:

- Provision of TVET/life skills classrooms
- Equipment
- Training and retraining of TVET/life skills teachers

When asked to suggest the role of government and NGOs in Madrasahs only one responded as follows:

- Pay teachers for all core subjects
- Build and provide TVET facilities
- Provide trained teachers

 Asked whether the community is supportive of the Madrasahs only one responded “yes” and said the Madrasah has always been a community initiative and hence is supported by the community.

4.1.3 TVET Graduates

According to the five TVET graduates interviewed, they have attained a tertiary and two attained university education. On the question of whether they studied TVET all said “yes”. They also said they like the programme because:

- It provides them with livelihood skills
- It enhances and promotes their technical skills.

Asked whether the introduction of the programme can negatively affect other areas of the curriculum all responded “no”.

When asked about the relevance of TVET to the Madrasahs they said it is very relevant and explained as follows:
• It gives them employment opportunities
• It produces skilled people

On the question of coordination of Madrasahs one said it should be coordinated by MOBSE and the other said it should be coordinated by an external body.

When asked to suggest the role of government and NGOs in the Madrasahs both suggested financial support and coordination of the TVET/life skills programme.

Asked whether the communities are supportive of the Madrasahs, one said “yes”, the other said “no”.

4.1.4 Focus Group Discussion

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Have Idea</th>
<th>No Idea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Institute Brikama</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imam Malick Senior Secondary School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Birr Islamic Senior Secondary School</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tampoto Upper Basic School</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim Senior Secondary School</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tadaamun Islamic Senior Secondary School</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omar Bun Jeng Senior &amp; Junior Secondary School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khalid Bun Walid Senior Secondary School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows 50% of the respondents said they have been well introduced on TVET/life skills.

### Table 4

**Discussion on the Introduction of TVET and How it Should be Taught**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>No Idea</th>
<th>Taught Separately</th>
<th>Integrated into Various Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Institute Brikama</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imam Malick Senior Secondary School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Birr Senior Secondary Schools</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tampoto Upper Basic School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim Senior Secondary School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tadaamun Islamic Senior Secondary School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omar Bun Omar Bun Jeng Brikama Senior &amp; Junior Secondary School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khalid Bun Walid Senior Secondary School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100% of the respondents agreed that it is feasible to integrate the programme into the Madrasah curriculum and they all preferred the subject to be taught separately.

When we discussed what the introduction of TVET would bring to their community all the respondents said employment opportunities and vocational skills to alleviate poverty.

### Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Level Attained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Institute Brikama</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td>Theory stage on paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imam Malick Senior and Secondary School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td>We have only introduce a computer training centre which is not yet operational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Birr Islamic Senior Secondary School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td>Theory stage on paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tampoto Upper Basic School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td>Started but at the moment on halt due to lack of funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim Senior Secondary School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td>Only an operational carpentry workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tadaamun Islamic Senior Secondary School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td>Functional TVET/life skills subjects such as woodwork, arts &amp; crafts and home science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omar Bun Jeng Brikama Senior &amp; Junior Secondary School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td>Theory stage on paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khalid Bun Walid Senior Secondary School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td>Theory stage on paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When we discussed with them their intentions/plans, as a community, to introduce TVET into their schools, out of the 9 schools 4 indicated that they had the idea on paper but had not implemented them. Others have only one functional TVET subject in their curriculum.
When the desired level of introduction was discussed with them, out of the 9 schools surveyed, 3 prefer the introduction of TVET/life skills at the lower basic level and 4 prefer upper basic level while one prefers both lower and upper basic levels.

### Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Lower Basic School</th>
<th>Upper Basic School</th>
<th>Senior Secondary School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Institute Brikama</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imam Malick Senior and Secondary School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Birr Islamic Senior Secondary School</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tampoto Upper Basic School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim Senior Secondary School</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tadaamun Islamic Senior Secondary School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omar Bun Jeng Brikama Senior &amp; Junior Secondary School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khalid Bun Walid Senior Secondary School</td>
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It is understood from the survey that all schools are ready to see the programme through by assisting in the following ways:

- Advocate community participation in sponsorship and labour
- Any available means at their disposal
- We will provide the most suitable environment for the smooth running of the programme.
- Provision of land when needed

In a further discussing about the possible ways of funding, out of 8 survey schools, 4 prefer international funding, 3 prefer government funding and one prefers an alternative means of funding citing the most sustainable and simplest source of funds.

### 4.1.5 Observation of Schools

#### A. St Peter’s Senior Secondary Technical School

During the observational process the officer in charge was asked about TVET subjects they had in schools. He said they teach woodwork, metalwork, auto-mechanics, applied electricity and technical drawing which involve building and mechanical drawing.

It was observed that contact hours for theory and practicals for the programme are as follows:

- Junior Secondary Programme: 2 hours per week
- Senior Secondary Programme: 2 to 3 hours for some subjects
The officer in charge was asked whether the TVET programme is integrated into other subjects or whether it is treated separately, he replied that it is integrated into other subjects and is being monitored by the school administration and the head of the technical department.

It was observed that there is success registered in the programme with the school. Then he was asked about the factors that contributed to the success of TVET in the school. The respondent said: commitment and sacrifice on the part of teachers: exposure and practice on the part of students. He added that there is a continuous monitoring of the programme by the administration.

He was asked what advice he would give if an institution like the Madrasah Secretariat wanted to offer TVET in the school, the respondent said:

- Make feasibility study
- Consult technical experts for advice
- Solicit strong cooperation

When asked about the possible funding source for the programme in and outside The Gambia the response was “no idea”.

The officer in charge was asked how the school acquired its teachers and tools. He said:

Tools – In the country
Tutors – GTTI and other West African countries

When asked how TVET tools are maintained and managed, the response was:

I. Periodical checking of department inventory of tools
ii. Heads of department are the custodians

C. Latrikunda Junior Secondary School

It was observed that there is a decline in performance, and the head was asked whether the school still has a TVET programme. The response was “yes”.

It was observed that the technical subjects the school is offering include metalwork, woodwork, home science and agricultural science with contact hours of 1 to 2 per week/class for both theory and practicals. Concerning the teaching of TVET as integrated or
separated, it was observed that it is done separately but integrated into the school curriculum.

It was observed that MOBSE takes care of the monitoring aspect Concerning Madrasahs intention to introduce TVET in their curriculum, she advised nothing should stop them if space is available for well-equipped workshops.

The principal was asked about the source and maintenance of their tools. She said:

Tools – Previously from the Ministry but now the school purchases its own tools
Tutors – MOBSE

But tools are managed by:

i. Periodic checking of department inventory of tools
ii. Heads of department are the custodians.

4.1.6. Analysis of Data on Madrasahs Offering Vs Madrasahs Not Offering Life Skills and TVET

There is no Madrasah that is offering TVET. On the other hand, all Madrasahs under Amanah are offering life skills in one way or the other. In fact there was a huge exercise in 2003-2005 which resulted in translating components of life skills in Gambian conventional schools and integrated them into subjects like Science Fiqh, Social and Environmental Studies and Arabic Language in Madrasah schools. This was successfully done and Madrasahs under Amanah consider these skills as examinable areas of the curriculum.

4.2 Data Discussion and Interpretation

The exercise covered 9 schoolteachers, 9 Heads of schools and 8 Madrasah Proprietors. It was clear that 78% of all the respondents had no idea about TVET/life skills, whilst copies of the questionnaires received from education related institutions like Amanah and the Curriculum Unit of MOBSE revealed otherwise (figure 1 and section 2). The reasons for this disparity in responses are the level of awareness about TVET/life skills. The fact is that in the exercise carried out by Amanah in collaboration with the Department of State for Education in 2003 includes the integration of the life skills component into Madrasah curriculum. Thus

9 Islamic Jurisprudence of worship and dealings.
It was integrated in thematic areas like: Fiqh, Seerah, Arabic Language, General Science, Social and Environmental Studies and Mathematics.

In the case of introducing TVET in their school curriculum, there are attempts to introduce by individual Madrasahs. However, such attempts did not take place due to numerous constraints such as lack of funds and lack of capacity.

Four proprietors, five teachers and heads of schools indicated that they operate all the three categories of schools (LBS, UBS and SSS). There are three out of nine schools that operating at upper basic schools only, and one school operates at senior secondary school level.

It is from the research findings that none of the schools, even the conventional type of schools in The Gambia has introduced this programme below upper and senior secondary school levels. As shown above, the majority of respondents would prefer it to be at upper and senior levels. However there is a concern that the programme can even be introduced at an earlier stage, as shown in the charts above. This could be feasible when the option of apprenticeship is adopted, because one of the Quranic Studies center in Daaru Rilwan in the North Bank Region is operating on this.

It is clear from the responses that almost all schools acknowledged the importance of having TVET and life skills programme in their schools. Therefore, the willingness and conviction are already there as shown in the chart. They further stressed that this programme, if introduced, will result in the following:

1. It would make their graduates acquire the necessary skills for gainful employment.
2. They could be self-employed
3. They will be self-reliant
4. It would reduce youth unemployment
5. It will contribute to National development.

As to how they would like the programme to be taught in their schools. Schoolteachers interviewed indicated that the programme should be taught as a separate subject. Eighty-eight per cent of Madrasah proprietors and heads of schools thought that it should be taught as a separate subject. (See charts above)

Asked whether they are academically and professionally ready to teach the subject, only two teachers out of the 9 indicated that they are academically and professionally ready to teach the subject. However, 89% of them thought that they are not adequately trained and would therefore require further training.
On the level of readiness of their schools in terms of capacity to supervise such a programme, majority of the heads of schools and Madrasahs’ proprietors said they are ready to support and supervise a programme. The reality for an effective programme for this set of schools is the great need of capacity building in all aspects. Graduates of Arabia who normally teach in these schools did not have the academic and professional ability to teach TVET. Except a few who are serving in other countries, the remainder is graduates of Shari’ah, Jurisprudence and other religious areas.

This will further highlight the possibility of bringing instructors from outside The Gambia, if the skill is going to be taught in Arabic.

The targeted schools were asked to suggest funding sources for this programme. The majority of respondents indicated that the sources of funding can be the government of The Gambia and the International community (See the chart above).

The authorities of the schools were asked in the event of introducing this programme in their school, all heads of schools and Madrasah’ proprietors interviewed said that they have authority to introduce the programme in their schools. However, the schoolteachers indicated that they are ready to participate with all means available to support the programme, if it is introduced.

**Relevant Institutions**

Based on the research findings, the two AMANAH officials interviewed were the secretary general and the exam coordinator. Both gave 280 as the registered number of schools under AMANAH. In their schools curriculum there is no TVET component but life skills programme has been integrated into various subjects of the Madrasah curriculum. The reason for the lack of TVET is due to the following:

- Lack of capacity
- Lack of equipment, and human resources.

Despite this deficiency, the Secretariat has plans to introduce the TVET in the various Madrasahs, at different levels of the education system. Amanah has much mandate on curriculum design and programme implementation, therefore it has plans for such a programme. They all agreed that this would improve employment opportunities for the young, whether paid or self-employment. The officials interviewed indicated their interest in introducing technical subjects into their curriculum, if the lack of funding to acquire the necessary tools, equipment and qualified teachers is adequately addressed.
The introduction of this programme in Madrasahs will bring lots of benefits to the sector, and these will include the following:

- Enable students to acquire vocational skills
- Possibility for self or institutional employment
- Self reliance.

Both Amanah officials see the need for TVET/life skills in the Madrasah curriculum as it is feasible to incorporate it into the school system. One of the respondents said the programme can be introduced as early as the upper basic level while the other offered for the senior secondary school level. The biggest role the NGOs can play in the realization of this programme is to provide support to Madrasahs in order to achieve the main objectives of the study. Generally, Amanah officials lack the requisite knowledge to carry out such an undertaking. Therefore, more funding and commitment on the part of the central and donor agencies are needed in order to develop vocational and skills development programmes. They can also support to pay teachers, provide Skills facilities and trained teachers. This will be relevant to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of The Gambia.

**Curriculum Officials**

On the question of whether Madrasah should be better coordinated independently, one responded yes, but intimated they need to be helped, the other did not respond.

On what changes they would recommend for the Madrasahs, one responded by recommending the following:

- Provision of TVET/life skills classrooms
- Equipment
- Training and retraining of TVET/life skills teachers

Asked whether the community is supportive of the Madrasahs, only one responded “yes” saying the Madrasah has always been a community initiative and is hence supported by the community. Therefore the programme require government, local and international funding in order to materialize.
TVET/Life Skills Graduates

Graduates of TVET/ Life Skills were interviewed during the survey. It was evident that during the survey all these graduates hold key positions in various areas in the job market. The reason why they studied the programme is because of the following:

- It provides them with livelihood skills
- It enhances and promotes their technical skills.

Owing to the benefit they gained, the respondents see the need for TVET in the Madrasah curriculum as it is a step to livelihood outcomes. It is imperative to have TVET/life skills as it is relevant for development and they explained it as follows:

- It gives them employment opportunities
- produces skilled people

The respondent further said that the programme can be better coordinated by MOBSE and the other said an external body operating in the area, the changes they would like to see in the Madrasah sector is the integration of TVET/ life Skills into their curriculum. This further shows the eagerness of people in support of the programme as it is appropriate for this type of students.

Asked what role government and NGOs can occupy for the effective introduction of TVET/life skills in the Madrasahs, they suggested financial support and coordination. One of the respondents further reiterated that the communities are in support of Madrasahs while the other said they received no support from the community. Therefore, the support from the public will be crucial to the success of TVET/life skills in Madrasah schools.

Focus Group Discussion

The four communities of the nine targeted schools were met and a focus group discussion was conducted with them. These are: Khalid Bun Walid Senior Secondary School, Omar Bun Jeng Brikama Senior & Junior Secondary School, Imam Malick Senior & Junior Secondary School and Islamic Institute of Brikama. The following revelations were made in the meetings:

- About their reaction if this programme is going to be introduced in their communities’ schools, all respondents (100%) favours the introduction of TVET/life skill in their Madrasahs.
• On the benefits of TVET/life skills to their communities, the respondents opined that it would provide employment opportunities and vocational skills.

• On the issue of whether they have in mind any plan to introduce TVET/life skills in the Madrasahs curriculum of their community, all the respondents replied in the affirmative.

• On the level of introducing TVET/life skills in their Madrasahs, out of the 9 surveyed schools, 3 preferred the introduction of TVET/life skills at the lower basic level, 4 at the upper basic level, and one preferred both lower and upper basic levels.

• There was a general consensus on the issue of teaching TVET/life skill as a separate subject.

• It is understood from the survey that all schools are ready to see the programme through by assisting in the following ways:

1. Advocacy for community participation in the form of sponsorship and labour by available means at their disposal.
2. Provision of the most suitable environment for the smooth running of the programme.
3. Provision of land when needed.

Four schools preferred international funding, three government funding and one suggested an alternative means of funding for the programme to be improvised by the communities themselves. It was found out from the recording that communities can participate in school farms to subsidize other funding agencies of the programme.

The rest of the five schools were not featured because they are either reluctant to this kind of involvement with the community or they don't have PTAs in place. In fact one of the schools said it would back out from the exercise if we bring "outsiders" into their school affairs. This could be another administrative loophole of these schools, thus there is a serious need for administrative reformation and capacity building for the members and the communities of these schools.

**Two Conventional Schools**

As mentioned in the data presentation, two conventional schools were observed (St Peter’s and Latrikunda Junior Secondary School) in order to get into their various TVET curriculum and what important it would have for Madrasah school. Initially, the researcher intended to conduct a comparative analysis of TVET, its success and failure between these two schools. However we found out that Latrikunda, unlike St Peter’s still offers few TVET courses in its curriculum.

With regard to the progress of TVET at their schools, the result of the observation showed that St Peter’s Technical School offers woodwork, metalwork, auto mechanics, applied
electricity and technical drawing as part of TVET. However, carpentry and joinery, life skills, welding and fabrications, plumbing, engineering, and brick making are not part of the school curriculum.

On the issue of the number of contact hours for the programme, it was observed that two contact hours are allocated for the subject in the junior secondary school and 2 to 3 hours in the senior secondary school. Furthermore, TVET has been integrated into other subjects and not treated separately. It was noticed that TVET is monitored and supervised by the school manager and the head of the technical department.

Identifying the factors that can contribute to the success of TVET, the following were suggested:

- Commitment and sacrifice on the part of teachers
- Exposure and practice on the part of students
- Monitoring and supervision by the administration

Asked what advice they would give to Amanah in case they want to introduce TVET/life skills in their schools, the following were suggested:

- Make a feasibility study
- Consult technical experts for advice
- Solicit strong cooperation

For reasons best known to them they were reluctant to disclose funding sources for the programme. St Peter’s school recruits teachers from GTTI and other West African countries and for the tools it obtained them from the country. The teachers suggested periodic checking of department inventories and custody of the tools as paramount to the maintenance and management of the tools for better programme sustainability.
Latrikunda Upper Basic School

The other school targeted for the survey exercise was Latrikunda Upper Basic School. It was observed that the school offers TVET/Life Skill programme in its curriculum, which includes metalwork, woodwork, home science and agricultural science. For the implementation of the programme it allocates 1 to 2 contact hours for both theory and practicals. That shows the time allocated for students to learn and master all the skill is not enough for just a programme.

The TVET/Life Skill programme in the school was initially taught separately but it is now integrated into the various subjects of the school curriculum. MOBSE, the body that oversee both the basic and the secondary education, monitors TVET/Life Skills in the schools. When asked what advice they would give if an institution like the Madrasah secretariat wants to offer TVET/Life Skill in their schools, the respondent advised that nothing should stop them if space is available for well-equipped workshops.

It was observed that the school acquires its teachers from MOBSE and tools previously from the Ministry but now the school purchases them.

On the maintenance of TVET/Life skills in the school, it was realized that there is periodic checking of the department’s inventory of tools and head of department as the custodian is used for the programme’s sustainability.
Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations:

5.1 Conclusion

It is evident, based on the findings of this research, that there is a strong need for the integration of TVET in the Madrasah curriculum. It is clear that there will always be a considerable percentage of the children of school going age attending Madrasahs as many parents see Islamic education as the preferred one for molding their children in the Islamic way of life (Madrasah Strategic Plan).

In order to realize the aspiration of the MDGs and the Vision 2020 of The Gambia, this stream of education and the students therein, must be brought into the mainstream. This study will act as a catalyst for policy makers and the Islamic Education Secretariat to develop plans and programmes to implement TVET in the Madrasa sector.

The General Secretariat of Islamic and Arabic Education in The Gambia has succeeded in bringing 280 functional schools under its umbrella, and has completed comprehensive draft syllabi for Madrasah schools in The Gambia (Madrasah Strategic Plan). It is apparent that when empowered and sponsored they can effectively do the same with TVET.

The research survey shows the need for TVET programs to be introduced in these schools. There is little exposure to TVET in Madrasah as 78% of teachers have never had training in any of the related fields. The fact that they exhibit enthusiasm during the research would indicate that, with training and capacity building, these teachers they can be the pioneers of this programme.

It is important to start from somewhere. The introduction of basic TVET education is important to these schools. Large portions of the staff of these schools do not have little or not exposure to such training programmes. There is a need introduce more science and related subjects in the system: physics, chemistry, mathematics, technical drawing, human science, tie and dye etc. Most of these schools do not have a strong enough concentration on such subjects, thus they are a few steps behind the conventional secondary schools that have these basics.

The question that may arise is: What shall be the language of instruction for these trainings? Most of the Madrasah instruction is in Arabic and lecturing material may be available from Arabic speaking traditional partners in the Middle East and North Africa. However, since the core subjects shared with the conventional schools are taught in English and teaching materials in English are more readily available, it maybe advisable to intensify English language teaching in the sector starting from low grades in order to give students the ability to cope with terminologies of TVET.
5.2 Recommendations

Based on the result the researchers would recommend the following:

- AMANAH should embark on curriculum review and development for all Madrasah schools in order to incorporate basic TVET in their curriculum.

- It is feasible to incorporate TVET and Life Skills in all junior and senior schools of Madrasah, provided that they receive necessary support from the international partners, Government, Amanah and local communities.

- Collaborating with all schools that have success stories in introducing TVET, in order to learn from their experiences.

- A study for the introduction of Basic TVET in Madrasahs shall be conducted with support of all the stakeholders in collaboration with the National Training Authority (NTA). It is important to see what is available, based on the advice of the NTA to look into the basic TVET programmes of some Arab countries in Africa and Gulf of Arabia.

- Creating awareness about TVET and Life Skills, as 78% of respondents who supposedly have to pioneer this program have no idea of the program.

- That the government of the Gambia should collaborate with the Madrasahs fully so that the shortcomings pertaining to capacity and materials needed for the programme could be resolved.

- The international partners should support financially towards the provision of tools and equipment for skills development, as it is a means of alleviating poverty and minimizing the rate of unemployment.

- Women should be encouraged to take part in TVET. This is so because the research shows low participation of women in TVET in the Gambia

- A gradual systematic approach shall be adopted; that is to start with sample schools based on set criteria in collaboration with the National Training Authority in the Gambia

- The Madrasah should collaborate with NTA in order to have adequate TVET programmes based on the implementing strategies of NTA.
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Annexes

1. Research Instruments

The instruments used to conduct the research are:

- **Questionnaires** for General Secretariat for Arabic and Islamic Education in the Gambia (Amanah), National Training Authority (NTA), Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Curriculum Officials and the Focal Point of Madrasah Education.

- **Interviews** with the rest of the selected (9) schools, Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), heads of these schools, their proprietors, school teachers and the graduate technical students.

- **Focus Group Discussion** was conducted with the communities of the schools.

- **Observations** were conducted with the two technical schools - Latrikunda Junior Secondary and Saint Peter’s Senior Secondary Technical School.
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