

**Alignment between Learning goals, curriculum and teachers'  
education and professional development  
The Gambia**

Alignment between learning goals, curriculum and teachers' education and professional development.

## Policy background:

The 2016 – 2030 new education policy has given prominence to key aspects of the SDG4 in providing quality education by 2030. A better articulation between learning goals, curriculum relevance, teacher training needs, materials development and students' learning outcomes is being promoted.

*« curriculum is defined as the totality of the experiences the pupil has as a result of the provisions made in terms of content, teaching and learning material development, pedagogical approach, assessment, school culture and organisation, and teaching and learning environment. » (Education Policy 2016-2030)*

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## **Learning Goals**

**The learning goals for the Basic education level and the secondary education level derived from the National Curriculum framework, serve as a guide for the determination of learning targets, for refocusing teacher training programs and for the development of instructional materials : syllabi, teachers guide, text books and other supplementary teaching and learning resources**

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# **Learning Goals**

## **BASIC EDUCATION (GRADES 1-9)**

This is a cycle of education that accords the learner 9 years of free and un-interrupted education ie 2 years of pre-primary and 6 years of LBS the objectives of basic education include the following:

- Development of literacy and numeracy skills
- To develop basic knowledge in science, mathematics, environment, health, information technology, and life skills.
- Preparation for the global Citizenship
- To develop basic knowledge and skills in English and at least in one local language necessary for self expression and communication with others.
- To develop life skills such as problem solving, creative thinking, inductive thinking, decision-making, safe health practices, and teamwork.

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# **Learning Goals**

**SECONDARY EDUCATION (GRADES 10-12) Builds on to the experience on the previous levels ( Basic education level).**

Learning goals at this level includes the followings:

- To prepare productive citizens who are confident, self-reliant, skilled, and trained human resource needed for national development.
- To develop language abilities such as listening, speaking, reading, writing and comprehending needed for social living and effective participation in the day-to-day activities.
- To develop knowledge on mathematical operations and science and ability to think inductively to solve daily life problems.
- To develop basic occupational skills and the capacity to earn a livelihood to be self dependent.
- To be able to pursue post secondary education in both academic and skills and to compete at national and international

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## **Learning Goals, and teacher training**

The teacher training program mirrors the curriculum and the realities of the classroom. The Initial teacher education program reflects the principles and orientation set out in the national curriculum and it is evaluated on that basis.

The in-service teacher training program equally reflects the curriculum but it is more focused on trying to address mismatches between the planned curriculum and implemented curriculum as well as students' learning gaps as provided in assessment feedback

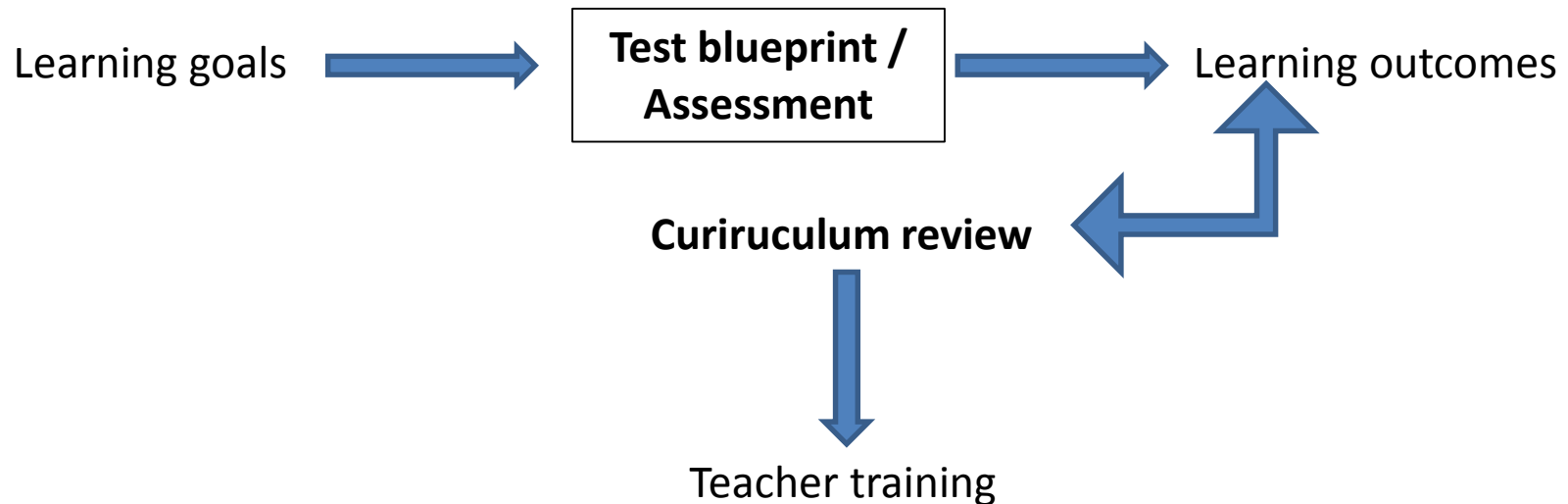
***The Teacher training programme objectives are as follows :***

- Have a thorough knowledge of all subjects taught at the Basic level and be able to teach these subjects to pupils.
- Be conversant with a variety of pedagogic principles and techniques for teaching.
- Have the practical classroom skills necessary to teach all subjects effectively in prevailing classroom situations.
- Have knowledge of the theory and principles of education relevant to their work as school teachers in the Gambia.

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## **Assessment Systems and curriculum alignment**

In the Gambia, based on an established system of evaluation/assessment coupled with a rigorous analysis of learning achievement, student learning outcomes constitute the main pretext for curriculum review and alignment, for new teaching material development, and for teacher training program revision.



## **Example: Alignment between assessment & curriculum development/revision .**

### **2014 Impact assessment of the National Language pilot programme led MoBSE to:**

- Take decision to use national languages as platform to teach the basic pre-reading skills from ECD-Grade 3
- Align all the various teaching techniques, monitoring schedules & approaches as well as curriculum materials in relation to reading
- Incorporate the use of national languages to teach reading in the pre-service teacher education program

### **Curriculum revision:**

Based on the results of the 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2016 Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), Early grades curriculum and teacher training curriculum are reviewed. Supplementary materials developed, Handbook on Teaching Early Grade Reading Abilities (EGRA) produced for training of teachers.



**Alignment between curriculum development/revision and professional development of teachers.**

## **Assessment Systems and curriculum alignment**

### **Teaching/learning materials**

Early grade reading materials, flash cards in English and national language are been distributed to all schools for grade 1, 2 and 3. Furthermore, the establishment of school libraries and library corners are strongly encouraged and are being monitored are of the minimum requirement for all schools.

### **In- service training:**

Alongside pre-service teacher training programmes, serving teachers are trained on a more regular basis guided by a structured and well-coordinated in-service education and training (INSET) programme . This programme is responsive to the growing need for upgrading the content knowledge and pedagogical skills of teachers particularly in areas related to early literacy skill.

## **Alignment between assessment and teachers' professional development.**

### **An assessment survey conducted on teacher content knowledge:**

The shocking results of the low content knowledge of teachers in Mathematics and English compelled the Ministry to engage in a nationwide training of all primary school teachers who failed to meet the required standard.

### **Teacher training:**

Pre-service and in-service redirected to address specific weaknesses of the system. The Gambia College training content has been reviewed to capture the pedagogical strategies that teachers need to apply to help students in reading. About 3000 teachers, including head teachers, senior teachers, Grades 1 – 3 teachers and cluster monitors trained using the Handbooks.

# Conclusion

In the Gambia, the call for more quality has triggered a radical shift in thinking and focus on addressing issues related to students' learning achievement.

The introduction of a comprehensive and reliable assessment instruments has redefined the role of assessment. Assessment is more and more treated as an integral part of the teaching and learning process. This is why it is now integrated into capacity building programmes for teachers and feedback from assessment is used in curriculum revision.

Feedback from assessment has also been used significantly in the development of the recent education policy (2016-2030) as alluded to at the beginning of this presentation.