

Conducting AMPLa: The Gambia Experience 2023

Focus on SDG 4.1.1

Assessment Systems, AMPL Studies, and Future Strategies

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Overview of The Gambia's Education System"

Key Points

- The Gambia, a small West African country, has a basic education system that includes primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education
- The Gambia faces challenges in its education system, including issues related to access, quality, infrastructure, and teacher training.
- However, efforts are being made to address these challenges through government initiatives and support from donors and international organizations.

Education Transformation in The Gambia

- In the late 1990s, The Gambia's education system underwent a significant transformation by shifting its focus from prioritizing access to a renewed emphasis on quality and learning outcomes.
- This strategic shift prompted the development of new assessments aimed at better supporting and monitoring learning within the country.
 - ❑ The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), launched in 2007, was designed to assess and improve early-grade reading skills.
 - ❑ The National Assessment Test (NAT) was implemented in 2008, serving as a comprehensive tool for monitoring learning outcomes at the national level.
 - ❑ In 2013, the Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) was introduced, specifically targeting early-grade mathematics skills

International Benchmarking for Educational Effectiveness - AMPL

- The Gambia recognizes the pivotal role of assessments in tracking students' progress and adhering to the assessment triangle to inform education planning for improved learning outcomes
- It is crucial to highlight as a country, that meaningful international comparisons serve not only to bolster student achievement but also to cultivate a professional and high-quality educator workforce.
- Active participation in and evaluation of the outcomes from comparative international assessments such as the AMPL can prove instrumental in the establishment of effective accountability mechanisms.

AMPL Study in The Gambia

Assessments for Minimum Proficiency Levels (AMPLs) are groundbreaking and robust tools targeted at measuring the attainment of a single proficiency level for each of the reading and mathematics domains at a given level of the education cycle.

AMPL tools allow us to identify the proportion of children and young learners in each level of education who are achieving at least the Minimum Proficiency Level (MPL).

This gave The Gambia the opportunity to produce internationally comparable learning outcomes data to report on the global indicator SDG 4.1.1.

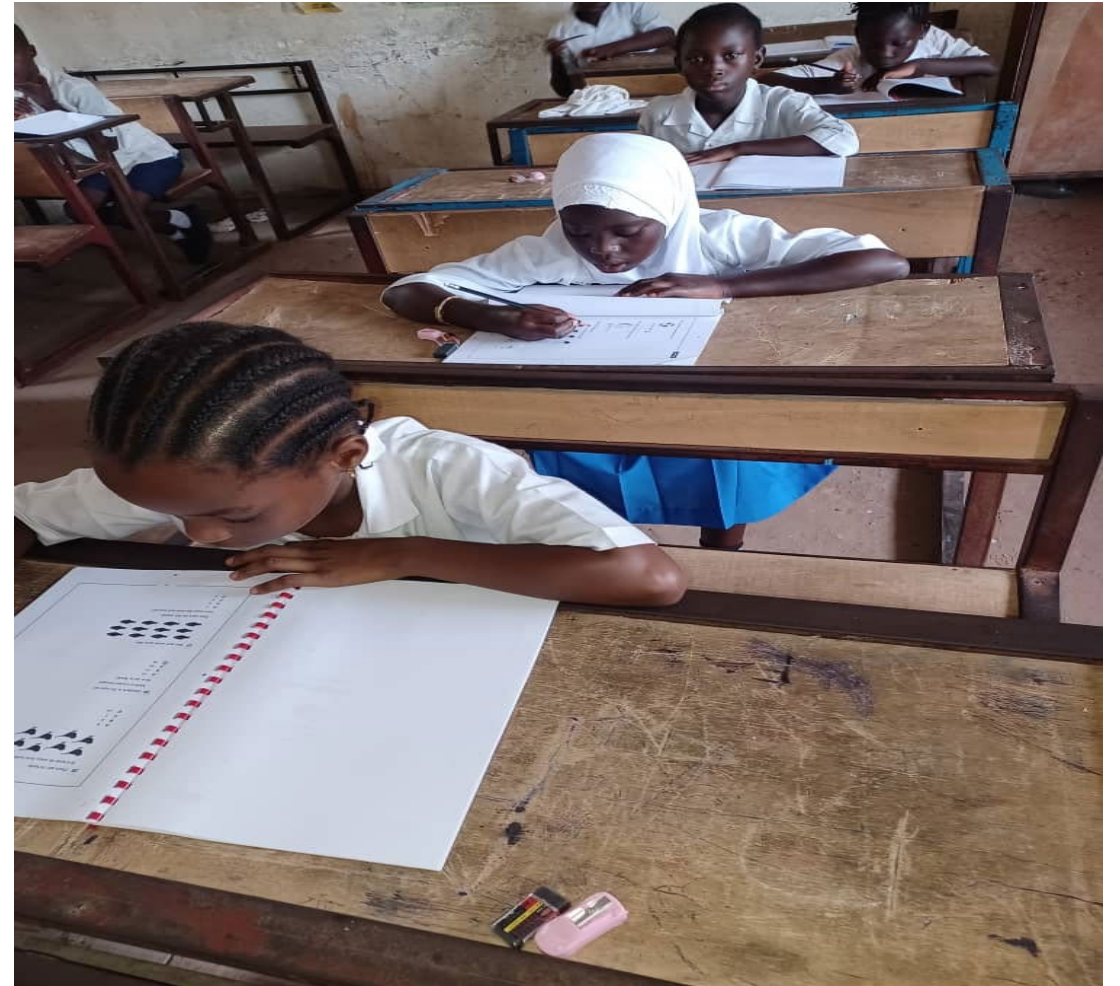
	Number of personnel
National Project Manager	1
National Center Team	15 Staff
Quality Monitors	5
Test Administrators	60
School Coordinators	250
Number of regions	6
Number of centers	250
Number of students assessed	4400
Data Administrators	4
Data entry clerks	20

Samples of Assessment centers

Urban center



Rural center



AMPL Implementation in The Gambia

Co-ordinations:

- The Assessment of Minimum Proficiency Level (AMPL) studies aimed at evaluating student learning outcomes and contextual data is being coordinated by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education of the Gambia.

Funding:

- The implementation of AMPL studies receives financial support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation through UIS.

Technical Support and training:

- The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) serves as the technical partner, contracted by UIS, responsible for designing and executing the international technical aspects of the project.

In Country level co-ordination:

- The Directorate of Performance, Management, and Evaluation (PMED), operating under the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, assumes responsibility for all AMPL activities.

AMPLa Study in The Gambia: Three Phases

- Phase 1: Study initiation
- Phase 2: Test Administration Preparation
- Phase 3: Test administration and data submission

Our experience in the following

- Study design
- Set a National Center
- Sampling (schools and students)
- Adaptation of manuals
- materials preparation and printing;
- Sensitization of SCs, HTs, and consultation with education administration staff
- Recruit and training of Test administrators
- Standardized field operations (tools & modalities)
- Collect data
- Data entry and cleaning
- Disseminate, discuss, and use results

Our experience in the following

Meeting/consultations



Team work at the National center



Some challenges in AMPLa Implementation

- Late start of the study
- Adaptation of Test Booklet Terminology
- Aural Comprehension Challenge
- Cultural Sensitivity
- Internet Connectivity Issues
- Changes in weather condition
- Poor road network

Challenges during field work

Vehicle breakdown



Unexpected heavy rain down pour



Addressing key Challenges for Future Success

- Early commencement of the assessment processes
- Capacity Building for National Center Staff
- Translation of Student Questionnaire
- Parental Involvement in Questionnaire Completion
- International Experience-Sharing Conference
- Offline Data Entry Platform
- Allow multiple access for data entry clerks to be able to enter different booklets at a given time
- Support in the provision of Computer Labs

Conclusion

- Sharing of the draft report with ACER
- The information from the analysis will support education in The Gambia
- Optimistic that AMPLb would be successful conducted in 2024

Thanks your attention

