
Experience with AMPL: The Gambia

Global Alliance to Monitor Learning

25-26 February 2025

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Outline

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Introduction

The Gambia's education system spans from primary, secondary, and to tertiary levels.

In the late 1990s, the country shifted its focus from expanding access to enhancing the quality of education and improving learning outcomes, leading to the development of new assessments to better support and monitor student learning. Despite persistent challenges related to access, quality education, inadequate infrastructure/ learning environment, and weak teacher training, significant progress is being made through government initiatives and international support. Indeed, such initiatives that recognized the critical role of assessments in tracking progress and adhering to the assessment triangle and meaningful international comparisons did not only boost student achievement but also helping the country in developing a professional and high-quality education workforce.

Articulation of AMPL within the national policy of student assessment

The Gambia Assessment Policy 2024-2030 reflects the country's new orientation on Assessment and defines the goals, purpose and uses of assessments including AMPL.

The national policy on the provisions and goals of student assessments:

The Education Sector Policy 2016-2030 indicates a shift in the sector's focus from examinations to the establishment of a well-strategic assessment system for improved teaching and learning. The aim is to move from "learning for assessment" to "assessment of learning" and "assessment for learning".

Policy on student assessments connection with different tools: curriculum and teaching:

The national assessment policy aims to closely align assessments with the curriculum and learning goals. The policy advocates for the use a variety of appropriate assessment methods that ensures the validity and reliability of such assessments tools. It promotes the use of such assessment data to inform teaching and learning. Furthermore, data is used as a proxy to determine areas of improvement during teacher inservice and preservice training.

How the AMPL fits within the student assessment policy, provisions and goals:

AMPL assessment fits within the national assessment policy as a standardized, sample-based tool that provides data on minimum proficiency levels in literacy and numeracy. This supports the policy's aims of using a variety of assessments to comprehensively understand student performance and inform decisions to improve teaching and learning.

Experience of administrating/piloting AMPL

Operational: Managing AMPL from sample design, items adoption, test administration and data management

- The Gambia was supported during the implementation process by the ACER which led to the setting up a National Centre. The country's experience involved conducting policy linking exercise, study design of the assessment, sampling schools and students. The process also include adapting manuals, preparing materials, training of Assessment Monitors, training of test administrators, school coordinators to ensure standardized field operations, and actual collecting data.

Data analysis and use: Reporting to SDG indicator 4.1.1 indicators and use for national purpose

- The National Centre compiled and entered the data which was analysed by ACER. the data anlysis results/report was share by the UIS team for dissemination. The National Centre shared the outcome with managment for decision-making. For the first, data from AMPLa was used for reporting minimum professency in numeracy and literacy of children in levels 2 and 3 for SDG 4.1.1 for The Gambia in 2023.

Capacity-building: Strengthening institutional and individual capacity

- A pool of staff from the Assessment Unit, Curriculum department, and selected teachers were trained and equiped on data management, data entry, and cleaning by ACER.

Challenges, opportunities, and sustainability of national and international assessments

Challenges:

Implementation challenges:	Equity and Inclusivity	Misalignment with the curriculum
Resource Constraints, Technical Capacity, and Logistical Issues	<p>Students with disabilities were disadvantaged in taking assessments under equitable conditions and could not participate in AMPL.</p> <p>It would require additional cost to facilitate them to participate</p>	Some international assessments may not fully align with the national curricula, making interpretation of results challenging.

Opportunities:

Data-Driven Decision-Making	Capacity Building	Benchmarking and Global Comparisons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved Policy Planning: Identification of Learning Gaps: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearer policy direction and much guided Professional Development needs. Strengthening National Assessment Systems and using assessment data for improving teaching learning. Further capacity building for NC team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Evaluation and comparison of country performance with other countries Encouraging new innovation and learning good practices from others Aligning other national assessments to the GPF

Sustainability of National and International Assessments:

Financial and Institutional Sustainability	Policy and Governance Support	Environmental and Social Considerations
<p>Long-Term Funding:</p> <p>Institutional Capacity:</p>	<p>Establishment of Clear National Assessment Strategies and sustainable by government</p> <p>Sustained stakeholder Engagement and maintaining national capacity for continuity.</p>	<p>adopting a paperless Assessment system</p> <p>Equitable Access to the assessment</p>

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