

# **STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD) WORKFORCE IN PLAY-BASED PEDAGOGIES: A CASE OF THE GAMBIA**

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**THE GAMBIA:**

**Play-Based Curriculum implementation**

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# Outline

- Introduction
- Motivation
- The objective of the Study
- Materials & Methods
- Results
- Challenges
- Recommendation

# Introduction 1/3

- The educational system In the Gambia consists of four levels: ECD (ages 3-6), basic education (ages 7-15), secondary education (ages 16-18) and higher and tertiary education (age 18 and above).
- The ECD consists of three levels (level 1-3).
- Basic education consists lower basic and upper basic.

# Introduction 2/3

- The lower basic consists of six levels (Grade 1-6) and the upper basic consists of three levels (grade 7-9). Secondary education consists of three levels (grade 10-12).
- Schools are usually categorized as follows: Lower Basic Schools, LBS) (provides lower basic education); Upper Basic Schools, UBS) (provide upper basic education); Senior Secondary Schools, SSS, (provide secondary education).

# Introduction 3/3

- While the government is the largest provider of educational services in the Gambia, there is significant private sector participation as well.
- In particular, the ECE level is dominated by the private sector.
- The 2030 agenda is also focused on achieving quality education at the ECE level.
- This is captured by SDG 4 which aimed to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.”

# Motivation 1/2

- Because they often offer a better structured ECD curriculum than public ECDs, private ECD centres are more desirable than public ones.
- Also, private ECD facilities offer their teachers more attractive salaries.
- As a result, as opposed to those working in public ECDs, they draw the top ECD instructors.
- Public ECD facilities frequently lack employees, both in the context of the Gambian nation and in various other African nations (Atmore Eric et al., 2012).

# Motivation 2/2

- Although governments in Africa have pledged to incorporate learning through play into national policies and ECE standards, it is unclear how teachers and other stakeholders may be better supported to promote learning through play.
- This study aims to fill this information gap because efficient play facilitation is essential to high-quality ECE.

# Objective

- The main objective of this study is to create a play-based learning method for the ECD and increase the knowledge of teachers and other ECE workforce members about the new approach through stakeholder engagement, knowledge gathering, and knowledge sharing.



# Target Group (ECD Schools and Parents) 3/6

## ❖ Curriculum development

- A review of the existing curriculum was done through which it was revealed that the curriculum lacked clarity on its delivery.
- Furthermore, there were lesson planning difficulties for facilitators related to instructional activities being perceived as too academic.
- The curriculum also had a little guide on the delivery of play-based lessons.



Figure 1: Curriculum refinement meeting

# Target Groups(ECD Schools and Parents) 4/6

## ❖ Baseline Survey

- A baseline evaluation was carried out upon the receipt of the play-based curriculum's draft.
- This evaluation was based in part on the Gambia team's decision to evaluate the new curriculum in an experimental manner.
  - *This slightly deviates from the consortium's study protocols, yet this was brought on by the study team's decision to keep working with the government of The Gambia.*
- Hence, the government have a strong intention to scale up this curriculum if its success is supported by rigorous research evidence.

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Figure 2: Training of data collectors

# Target Groups (Stakeholders and Policymakers) 5/6

## ❖ Curriculum Validation

- A two-day validation workshop in collaboration with the Curriculum Research Evaluation Development Directorate (CREDD) of MoBSE.
- They focused on the appropriateness of approaches and suggested content for the LtP methods.
- Other areas of focus included language appropriations and clarity of objectives and learning outcomes.
- Consensus was developed on the issues identified.



# Intervention Strategies (Materials and Methods) 6/6

## ❖ Play base interventions

- The intervention includes the piloting of a new play-based curriculum in selected structured public ECDs of The Gambia.
- The new play-based approach was modelled on the Teyari ECE Model successfully tried in Kenya.
- The Tayari (which is a Swahili word meaning “ready,”) Early Childhood Development Programme in Kenya is a four-year ECD and Education (ECDE) intervention funded by the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) and implemented in four counties in Kenya (Nairobi, Laikipia, Siaya, and Uasin Gishu).

# Results 1/8

## Table 1: Balance Test on Primary Outcomes

		(1)		(2)		(3)		(2)-(3)
		<b>All</b>		<b>Control</b>		<b>Treatment</b>		<b>Pairwise t-test</b>
<b>Variable</b>	N Clusters	<b>Mean</b> (SE)	N Clusters	<b>Mean</b> (SE)	N Clusters	<b>Mean</b> (SE)	N Clusters	<b>Mean difference</b>
<b>Age</b>	3500	5.103	1750	5.140	1750	5.065	3500	0.075
	100	(0.035)	50	(0.052)	50	(0.047)	100	
<b>Female</b>	3500	0.519	1750	0.522	1750	0.516	3500	0.006
	100	(0.010)	50	(0.013)	50	(0.016)	100	
<b>Emergent math score (percent) [0-1]</b>	3500	0.513	1750	0.519	1750	0.506	3500	0.012
	100	(0.010)	50	(0.015)	50	(0.013)	100	
<b>Emergent literacy score (percent) [0-1]</b>	3500	0.354	1750	0.352	1750	0.357	3500	-0.005
	100	(0.008)	50	(0.013)	50	(0.011)	100	
<b>Executive function score (percent) [0-1]</b>	3500	0.545	1750	0.539	1750	0.551	3500	-0.012
	100	(0.015)	50	(0.021)	50	(0.022)	100	
<b>Fine motor score (percent) [0-1]</b>	3500	0.464	1750	0.461	1750	0.467	3500	-0.005
	100	(0.014)	50	(0.022)	50	(0.019)	100	
<b>Emotional awareness score (percent) [0-1]</b>	3500	0.473	1750	0.469	1750	0.478	3500	-0.009
	100	(0.007)	50	(0.011)	50	(0.010)	100	

# Results 2/8

## Table 2: Balance Test on Sub-Indicators of the Primary Outcomes

Variable	(1) Total		(2) Control		(3) Treatment		(2)-(3) Pairwise t-test	
	N Clusters	Mean (SE)	N Clusters	Mean (SE)	N Clusters	Mean (SE)	N Clusters	Mean difference
Spatial ability score (percent)	3500	0.571	1750	0.568	1750	0.573	3500	-0.006
	100	(0.009)	50	(0.014)	50	(0.012)	100	
numerical vocabulary score (percent)	3500	0.299	1750	0.325	1750	0.273	3500	0.052***
	100	(0.013)	50	(0.018)	50	(0.017)	100	
Arithmetic score (percent)	3500	0.557	1750	0.555	1750	0.560	3500	-0.006
	100	(0.015)	50	(0.021)	50	(0.021)	100	
Expressive vocabulary score (percent) [0-1]	3500	0.408	1750	0.396	1750	0.420	3500	-0.024
	100	(0.010)	50	(0.015)	50	(0.014)	100	
Print awareness score (percent) [0-1]	3500	0.361	1750	0.371	1750	0.352	3500	0.020
	100	(0.015)	50	(0.022)	50	(0.021)	100	
Letter identification score (percent) [0-1]	3500	0.134	1750	0.153	1750	0.115	3500	0.039**
	100	(0.012)	50	(0.017)	50	(0.017)	100	
First letter sounds score (percent) (0-1)	3500	0.153	1750	0.163	1750	0.144	3500	0.019
	100	(0.011)	50	(0.017)	50	(0.015)	100	
Emergent writing score (percent) [0-1]	3500	0.161	1750	0.175	1750	0.148	3500	0.027*
	100	(0.010)	50	(0.015)	50	(0.015)	100	
Oral comprehension score (percent) [0-1]	3500	0.497	1750	0.497	1750	0.497	3500	-0.000
	100	(0.013)	50	(0.021)	50	(0.016)	100	
Short term memory score (percent) [0-1]	3500	0.553	1750	0.558	1750	0.549	3500	0.009
	100	(0.019)	50	(0.027)	50	(0.028)	100	
Inhibitory control score (percent) [0-1]	3500	0.543	1750	0.535	1750	0.551	3500	-0.017
	100	(0.018)	50	(0.025)	50	(0.026)	100	
Copying a shape score (percent) [0-1]	3500	0.445	1750	0.441	1750	0.450	3500	-0.009
	100	(0.018)	50	(0.026)	50	(0.025)	100	
Drawing a person score (percent) [0-1]	3500	0.430	1750	0.432	1750	0.428	3500	0.004
	100	(0.017)	50	(0.026)	50	(0.023)	100	
Folding a paper score (percent) [0-1]	3500	0.543	1750	0.534	1750	0.553	3500	-0.019
	100	(0.012)	50	(0.020)	50	(0.015)	100	

# Resources: Tools, Manuals (play-based)3/8

## ❖ Capacity building

- Training of the national trainers leading to the step-down training of the ECD Facilitators at the regional level was conducted in three training sessions.
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- The capacity of six (6) regional ECE trainers and six (6) regional ECE Focal Persons enhances the effective and efficient utilization of the new play-based curriculum.
- Eighty-nine (89) ECD Facilitators were trained on how to plan and deliver effective and efficient early childhood education activities using the thematic approach.

# Play-Based Curriculum and Manuals 4/8

- **Capacity building**
- Eighty-nine (89) ECD Facilitators trained on how to use and can create their own play-based learning content using the new play-based curriculum as a guide on play-based learning in consideration of their context.
- The capacity of eighty-nine (89) ECD Facilitators enhanced the development of competency-based learning experiences anchored on LtP within their classroom context and practices.



# Play-Based Curriculum and Manuals 5/8

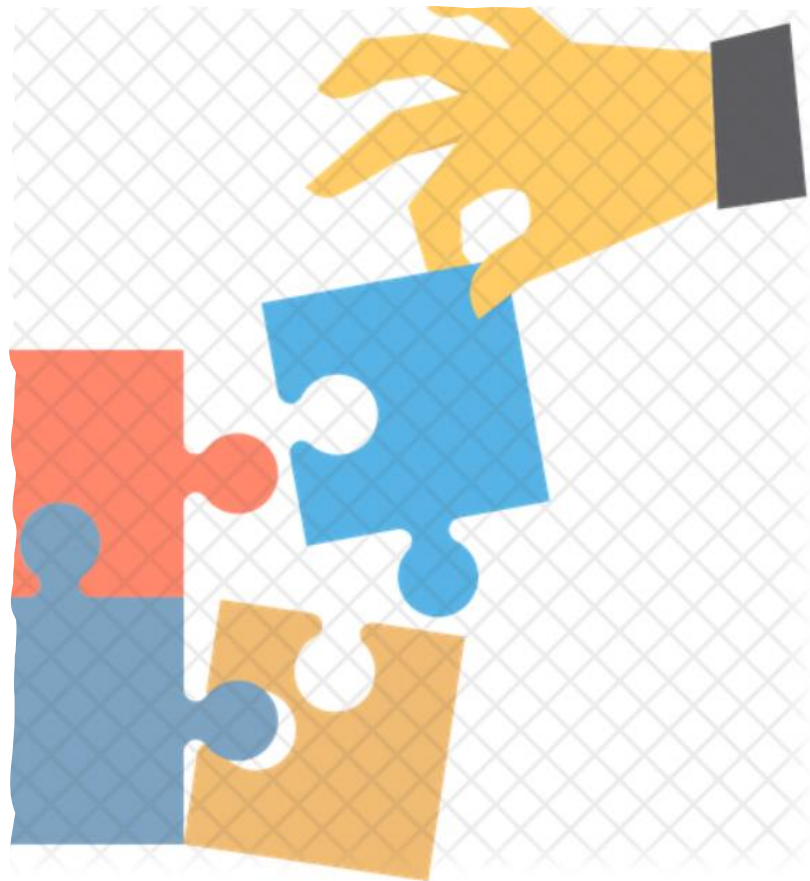
## ❖ Capacity building

- Eighty-nine (89) ECD Facilitators trained on how to identify and create an all-inclusive teaching and learning environment thereby ensuring an inclusive, participatory and non-discriminatory learning process.
- The capacity of Eighty-nine (89) Facilitators enhanced in utilizing child-centred teaching strategies/methods in delivering appropriate and effective lessons.

# Implementation experiences

- What have been the achievements and the facilitating factors?
- What have been the challenges and mitigating measures?
- In adequate funds.
- Reduction in Governments' budget and financial support even by philanthropies and communities in public education has declined teacher facilitators' performance and affected children's learning, hence reversing the hard-won gain for early childhood education, nutrition and health.
- Most schools in the pilot are faced with the lack of available basic play and appropriate teaching materials compounded by a lack of the creative inability to explore school-based training on material production

# Recommendation



- It will be wise and very prudent for Governments allocations for ECD is increase and given better policy consideration both in strategy and finance
- Adequate professional development and training are provided to both ECD school managers and teachers/facilitators this will greatly enhance the workforce.
- Indeed, children enjoy living and learning through play, but most schools in The Gambia lack basic play materials and playgrounds.
- Finally, play-based learning or LtP should be in all schools since children learn better through structured play and play is central to how children learn.

# Sustainability & Scalability of the model

- Is the model sustainable and scalable to support learning through play and playful parenting scale?
- What has been the experience with scaling up what are the next steps?
- What policy changes has your program contributed to or what have you observed

