

MAJOR ACTIVITIES

Participation Programme, 2002 to 2003

The Participation Programme covering 2002 to 2003 was finalised and sent to UNESCO Headquarters during the middle of January 2002. The format of the document was changed and it was printed in colour. Apart from submitting the document to UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, copies were sent to the Office of the Permanent Delegate in France, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Africa (BREDA), Department of State for Education, Office of the President as well as other relevant institutions.

Independence Anniversary Celebrations, February 2002

The Gambia UNESCO Clubs took part in the celebrations marking our country's 37th Independence Anniversary. The Gambia National Commission for UNESCO (NATCOM) financed the provision of the Club members' tee-shirts, banners, placards and transportation to the venue.

Official Visit of the Director of the UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa (BREDA)

The Director of UNESCO/BREDA, Mr. Armoogum Parsuramen accompanied by Mr. John Nwankwo, a Consultant at BREDA arrived in The Gambia on March 19, 2002 on a three-day official visit. The delegation held meetings with the Honourable Secretary of State for Education and her management, the Vice Chancellor of the University of The Gambia, Principal and senior staff of Gambia College as well as Principal and staff of the Gambia Technical Training Institute. The BREDA delegation also held discussions with the Director of the Gambia Radio and Television Services (GRTS) and the representative of the Executive Director of the National Council for Arts and Culture.

The discussions at the meetings centred on:

- ✓ Strengthening distance learning in The Gambia
- ✓ Assistance to the Department of State for Education in the preparation of the Third National Education Policy
- ✓ Staff training through attachments for staff of tertiary institutions
- ✓ Assistance to NATCOM so that it can better perform in its new role
- ✓ Improvement of science laboratories in selected schools
- ✓ Upgrading of libraries of tertiary institutions

- ✓ Involvement of the media (GRTS) in disseminating activities relating to distance education

The Director was able to pay a courtesy call on the Vice President and Secretary of State for Women's Affairs, Mrs. Isatou Njie Saidy and there he met the Acting Executive Director of the Women's Bureau who is also a member of the NATCOM Commission. The Vice President was briefed on the discussions held between the two parties. In her turn she thanked UNESCO for their intervention in this country and expressed satisfaction that the Women's Bureau has been closely involved with UNESCO and is in fact benefiting from its assistance through NATCOM.

The Director of BREDA also visited the Tanje Village Museum, which benefited from the 2000-2001 Participation Programme, the Kabafita Lower Basic School and Brikama Upper Basic School. He, together with the Secretary of State for Education attended the opening session of the Workshop on "Peace Education and Conflict Resolution" which was held at the Gambia College in Brikama from 20-21 March 2002.

Other discussions held by the Director of BREDA were with the UNDP Resident Representative and the UNFPA Representative. The delegation from BREDA left for Dakar on March 21, 2002 after signing a communiqué with the Honourable Secretary of State for Education.

Workshops/Training Sessions

Three workshops and training sessions were organised on behalf of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) and the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Africa (BREDA). The following constitute the activities:

National Training Session for Teachers of Islamic Education and Arabic Language, 14-20 March 2002

ISESCO in collaboration with the World Islamic Call Society (WICS) financed the National Training Session for 30 Gambian teachers of Islamic Education and Arabic Language, which was officially opened by the Honourable Secretary of State for Justice, Mr. Joseph H. Joof on behalf of the Honourable Secretary of State for Education who was away on official duties. NATCOM and members of its advisory committee on ISESCO matters organised and facilitated the Training Session, which was held at the Friendship Hotel in Bakau. Two Gambian experts, Dr. Omar Jah Jr. of the University of The Gambia and Mr. Mohammed Sanuwo, Senior Education Officer, Region Two together with Dr. Mohammed Awrajee from ISESCO conducted the lectures. Mrs. Baharia Udwan represented ISESCO at the session.

The following areas were covered in the lectures:

- ✓ The teaching of Arabic Sunas

- ✓ The methodology of teaching Arabic Language
- ✓ The methodology of teaching Islamic Education
- ✓ Educational psychology
- ✓ The teaching of Islamic Language skills
- ✓ Methodology of teaching History of the Holy Prophet's life
- ✓ Teaching Arabic to non-Arabs
- ✓ Linguistics
- ✓ Theories of learning and teaching Islamic Education
- ✓ Methodology of educating in language skills
- ✓ Islamic Educational Assessment
- ✓ Micro teaching

Recommendations of the training session

- ✓ The training session should be repeated so that more teachers will benefit from new educational techniques and methodologies in teaching Islamic Education and Arabic Language
- ✓ ISESCO should organise a workshop in the country on curriculum design and development for those teachers involved in writing text books for Madrassas
- ✓ ISESCO should assist in organising training sessions for teachers to keep them abreast of modern teaching techniques in Arabic/Islamic education
- ✓ All training sessions should last for two weeks instead of one week

Workshop on Peace Education and Conflict Resolution for Provincial School Teachers, 20-21 March 2002

A workshop on "Peace Education and Conflict Resolution" was organised for Provincial School Teachers from 20-21 March 2002 at the Gambia College by NATCOM with funding from UNESCO/BREDA. The conducting of this workshop coincided with the official visit of the Director of UNESCO/BREDA

to this country. A total of twenty-four teachers from all the regions in the country participated.

The opening ceremony was attended by the Secretary of State for Education, Mrs. Ann Therese Ndong-Jatta, the Director of UNESCO/BREDA, Mr. Armoogum Parsuramen, and Mr. John Nwankwo, a Consultant at UNESCO/BREDA and other senior NATCOM and Education officials. Both the Secretary of State for Education and the Director of UNESCO/BREDA spoke about the essence of peace and enjoined the teachers to facilitate the peaceful resolution of conflicts in schools.

Papers with different perspectives were presented by the following eminent Gambians:

- ✓ Peace Education and Conflict Resolution focussing on Human Rights. This was presented by Mr. Sheikh Tijan Lewis, the Director of the International Society for Human Rights and Co-ordinator of Social Alert Network
- ✓ Peace Education and Conflict Resolution emphasizing on the religious aspect. The presenter was Imam Baba Leigh, a reputable and erudite Islamic scholar.
- ✓ Peace Education and Conflict Resolution focussing on the school. This was presented by Mr. Sulayman Bun Njie, Principal of Gambia Muslim Senior Secondary School. He is the only educationist trained in conflict resolution.
- ✓ Guidance and Counselling was presented by Mrs. Therese Cardos, Head of the Guidance and Counselling Unit at the Department of State for Education

Recommendations of the workshop

- ✓ Dialogue and consultation should be encouraged
- ✓ Guidance and counselling has to be strengthened
- ✓ All religious denominations should advocate for peace
- ✓ More workshops on peace should be organised even in schools
- ✓ Regular exchange of ideas should be facilitated at the school level
- ✓ National Day of Peace should be observed
- ✓ Teachers and students should be encouraged to talk about peace during assembly through drama, essay or quiz competitions, storytelling etc.

ASPnet –TST Co-ordinators’ Workshop, 22-23 March, 2002

In April 2001, a sub-regional ASPnet National Co-ordinators Workshop in this country to design the implementation of the TST and to chart the way forward. The participants made some recommendations that would improve the TST project and make its impact better felt. Hence the TST Teachers’ Workshop which took place on the 22nd and 23rd March, 2002, was actually a follow-up to the National Coordinators’ Workshop of 2001 and the objective was to discuss achievements made and constraints experienced during the implementation of the recommendations of that workshop.

The workshop was chaired by the National Coordinator of ASPnet – TST Project, Mrs Adelle M Sock and the participants were the eight TST teachers who are pioneering the project in the pilot schools. The Permanent Secretary of the Department of State for Education, Mr. Karamo K. Bojang opened the workshop on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education whilst the Secretary General of the Gambia National Commission for UNESCO, Mrs Sukai Bojang, gave the welcome remarks.

The Chairperson remarked that the workshop being held is a direct outcome of the efforts of people like Dr Florence Mahoney who had presented a paper at the launching of the TST Project in Benin in 1994. Dr Mahoney had just published a book “The Liberated Slaves and the Question of the Return to Africa” which indicates that some progress is being made on the 2001 recommendations as this book can be used as a resource material in schools for teaching the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (TST).

During the workshop the following papers were presented:

- ✓ Modern forms of Slavery by Mrs. Patience Sonko Godwin
- ✓ Methodologies of teaching the TST in senior and tertiary institutions by Mr. Nuha Jatta
- ✓ Participants also made presentations on the activities of TST-ASPnet Clubs in their various schools. These experiences were shared with a view to improving the project and this culminated in the formation of a national action plan.

Recommendations of the Workshop

The participants were divided into two working groups and they came out with a National Action Plan covering 2002 to 2003.

Short Term: April – August 2002

- ✓ Intra schools debates, poetry, essay, arts competitions based on the TST and modern forms of slavery.

- ✓ Short skit by all the TST schools for the Roots Home-coming Festival.
- ✓ Cleaning of historical sites by TST groups especially Fort Bullen, which is close to Banjul in collaboration with the National Environment Agency and Department of State for Tourism and Culture.
- ✓ A television programme be organised to create public awareness of the existence and operation of the TST in The Gambia complete with relevant video clips.
- ✓ A march past should be organised to commemorate the 23rd August followed by a symposium of eminent Gambian historians or an open forum.
- ✓ Feed back from the workshop should be given to ASPnet members on the resumption of school.

Long Term: September 2002 – July 2003

- ✓ Production of a documentary film on the relevance of the TST and historical sites in The Gambia.
- ✓ A national and international boat trip to historical sites be organised in both The Gambia and Senegal.
- ✓ Inter-schools quiz, debates, poetry competitions be held.
- ✓ Training workshop for new schools and co-ordinators of the ASPnet – TST Project be facilitated.
- ✓ Links be established with other ASPnet –TST schools in other parts of the world.
- ✓ An exhibition be mounted on slavery at the National Museum.
- ✓ A sponsored walk be organised.
- ✓ Enlarged posters of similar slave sites in other parts of the world should be made available to schools e.g. Elmina (Ghana), Banana Island (Sierra Leone) etc.
- ✓ National exchange and holiday camps for regional participating TST groups be arranged.
- ✓ Questionnaires put out to test the attitudes and knowledge of students about the TST.
- ✓ Annual cleaning of historical sites be held.

MINOR ACTIVITIES

Other Meetings/Activities

NATCOM attended the following meetings/activities:

- Celebrations marking the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Two UNDP Country Team development forum sessions
- Study Technology Workshop
- Workshop on appraisal of DFID Education Sector Programme
- The Secretary General of the Islamic Call Society to determine areas of co-operation
- Selection of winners of the 2002 Women's Excellence Award
- First Education for All Co-ordinators Sub-Regional Forum held in Dakar, Senegal and familiarisation visit to BREDA of three NATCOM Secretaries General including that of The Gambia
- The Feasibility Seminar on the Perach Tutorial Project of January 2002 was attended by the Programme Officer of NATCOM, Mr. Ebrima L. Sonko and the Head of Science Department at the Gambia College, Mr. Sawalo Jack.
- Visit of Madam Mane Fall, Secretary General of the African Federation of UNESCO Clubs to discuss the launching of Federation of Gambia UNESCO Clubs
- Participation of the Information and Communications Officer of Gambia UNESCO Clubs, Mr. Mbye Saine at a Workshop on African Integration of UNESCO Clubs which was held in Yaounde, Cameroon in February 2002.

Administrative Matters

We administered the following on behalf of UNESCO and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO):

- Identification of experts for the elaboration of basic literacy textbooks in the national languages transcribed in Quranic script.

- Compilation of curricula vitae of Gambian experts in the fields of culture and communication for a guide book to be prepared by ISESCO
- Compilation of Curricula vitae of some Gambian experts for UNESCO
- The UNESCO/ISRAEL (MASHAV) co-sponsored Fellowships Programme for the year 2002. Ten courses were identified for The Gambia and at the moment the following officers are in Israel:
 - Dr. Almamy Camara, of the Wildlife Conservation Department attending the course on “Conservation of Bio-diversity in desert eco-systems”.
 - Mr. Kebba Sonko of the Forestry Department attending the course on “Conservation of Bio-diversity in desert eco-systems”.
 - Mr. Bakebba Barrow of the Department of Co-operation participating in the course on “Micro-credit and Small scale Enterprises and their role in income generating projects”.

The brochures for the following courses have been forwarded to the below stated institutions so that suitable candidates can be identified:

- Pressurised irrigation systems (Agriculture and Water Resources Departments)
- Bio-technology in agriculture (NARI and Agriculture Department)
- Desert agro-biology (NARI and Forestry Department)
- Drug abuse (Social Welfare Department and Police Force)
- Education for science and technology (Department of State for Education)
- Integrated rural development (Community Development Department)
- Tourism projects in rural areas (Gambia Tourism Authority)
- Sustainable horticultural crop production under climatic constraints (NARI and Agriculture Department)
- UNESCO/Poland co-sponsored Fellowships, 2002 in the field of African Archaeology

- UNESCO/IPDC Co-sponsored Fellowships Programme, 2002 in “Television Documentary Programme Production”

Planned Events

- Establishment of 10 learning centres (ISESCO)
- Regional Seminar on Promotion of Women’s role in Social Development, (ISESCO)
- Support for Activities of NGOs in Social and Human Sciences (ISESCO)
- Support for introducing Islamic heritage in National Museums of member countries (ISESCO)
- Financial support to pilot standardized quranic script in literacy in a Sahelian country (ISESCO)
- Launching of the Federation of Gambia UNESCO Clubs (UNESCO)
- Workshop on Human Rights and Democracy Education (UNESCO)
- Implementation of the 2002-2003 Participation Programme (UNESCO)