



REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

National Assembly, New Assembly Building, Rev . Pye Lane

Banjul, The Gambia



CONSOLIDATED REPORT BY THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING & ICT ON:

1. Report on Public Institutions from – 2017 to2020
2. Visit to schools on Hard-to-reach areas: CRR & URR-

JULY 2021

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Introduction

In compliance with the provisions of sections (102), (109), (110) and (175) of the 1997 Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia, the Select Committee on Education, Training, and ICT of the National Assembly considered the annual activity reports and audited financial statements, as well as the external auditors' management letters of all the institutions and agencies under the purview of the committee.

This exercise is to ensure accountability, transparency, and probity in all public institutions and agencies for efficient service delivery.

Five public institutions were summoned to appear before the Committee: The University of the Gambia (UTG), National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA), Management Development Institute (MDI), The Gambia College, National Council for Civic Education (NCCE) and the National Library.

The Committee received and considered testimonies and evidence from key witnesses including board members, management, external auditors, and staff of Gambia Public Procurement Authority (GPPA). In addition, other issues and queries were considered and subsequently, the committee made recommendations.

As part of our oversight functions, the committee also visited schools regarded by the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education as "Hard to Reach" in the Upper River and Central River Regions of the Country in July 2021.

The Gambia Education Policy aims to provide access to quality basic and secondary education for every Gambian child. This visit is therefore essential for the Committee to perform effective oversight on policy and budget implementation geared towards providing equal access to education and opportunities to children in remote areas and areas that are extremely difficult to access.

During this extremely intensive exercise, the Committee, in partnership with the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education and the Gambia Teachers' Union Cooperative Credit Union (GTUCCU) were able to complete most of the tasks we set out to perform.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Committee is grateful to the Office of the Speaker and the Office of the Clerk of the National Assembly in providing technical support during the whole process. I wish to express my appreciation to the Honourable members of the Committee, the Committee Secretariat, subject matter specialists, school heads and teachers for the valuable information provided to us that culminated to the production of this report.

The committee wishes to acknowledge with appreciation the invaluable support and cooperation of all the public institutions/agencies that complied and submitted themselves to legislative scrutiny as established by law.

Similarly, we are also indebted to all aides, subject matter specialists, the Clerk and support staff of the Committee for their support without which the committee would not have succeeded.

On behalf of the Select Committee on Education, Training and ICT Committee, it is my pleasant privilege and honour to present to this Assembly a consolidated report of the Committee on the activities of the public institutions under our purview as well as visits to “Hard-to-Reach” schools in URR and CRR.

UNIVERSITY OF THE GAMBIA (UTG)- (2015 - 2019)

The Vice Chancellor and the board Chairman presented the activity reports of the institution for the year ended 31st December 2015 to 2019 to the Select Committee on Education, Training, and ICT. The report covered the activities, constraints, recommendations, and updates on implementation of previous recommendations of the then PAC/PEC.

The Director of Finance and the auditors presented the financial statements and the audit reports respectively, whilst the GPPA presented a compliance report of the institution with procurement regulations.

FINDINGS/ ISSUES

• GOVERNANCE

- The committee observed that the governing council was an interim body since 2015.
- The committee observed that there were vacant senior management positions.
- The Committee observed that the University of the Gambia (UTG) was found to be **50% compliant as at 2017 which denotes FAIRLY COMPLIANT** with the Public Procurement Act 2014 and the Regulations 2003.
- The committee observed from NAQAA report that there is no consistent and systematic approach to the development of curriculum within the University. There was no policy indicating the frequency of policy review.
- The committee observed that the internal audit department is a member of the contracts committee.
- The audit team should concentrate on their responsibilities on the procurement chain.
- The internal auditors should prepare and submit quarterly reports to governing council.

- **REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES**

- The committee observed that with reference to the purchase of air tickets in 2015, a transaction was approved by the contracts committee for D120, 000.00, but the tickets purchased was over D300, 000.00.
- The institution-maintained an overdraft of D10million in a bank when they had more than D25million equivalent in foreign currency in the same bank.

- **RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

- The committee noticed with great concern that there was no evidence of documented policy on research and development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee recommends the following:

- The UTG should set up a permanent governing council by end of June, 2021.
- The Governing Council should set up various sub-committees by the end of July 2021.
- All vacant senior positions at UTG are filled by July 2021.
- The UTG should conduct special procurement training for all members of the Contracts Committee, Finance Unit, and the internal auditors by end of March 2021.
- The UTG should comply with all GPPA regulations particularly issues relating to single sourcing.
- The UTG should desist from offering courses that are not accredited by NAQAA and fulfil all the requirements demanded by it.

- In subsequent reports, table of content should be provided, as it is necessary to guide the readership through the voluminous reports;
- Reports from various schools should include the courses offered, achievements, and constraints as well as the way forward;
- An organogram showing the management structure of the University and the members of the governing council should be included in the report.
- The registrar to give a summary report on various statistics of the University including but not limited to current student registration by faculty, gender, number of graduating students, staff etc. This will show the readership the overall figures.
- The finance unit should prepare quarterly management accounts and various analytical reports, which should be made available to the internal auditors and the governing council.
- The committee recommends that the University review all undergraduate programmes after every five years. This should be explicit in the strategic plan and funds should be committed to it

BROAD RECOMMENDATIONS

Broadly, the committee recommends that the management of the University of the Gambia should:

- Ensure all new courses are proposed by the Deans of individual faculties and approved by the Senate.
- All new courses to be accredited by NAQAA;
- Well-equipped labs must be provided for all science-based courses as a matter of priority;
- Staff intending to go on study leave with salary must fulfil all the bonding requirements and must be cleared by the Vice Chancellor in writing.
- All pending bonding cases must be regularized immediately.

- The finance and procurement units must not process any payment without proper documentation as required by GPPA procurement guidelines.
- All requested information should be submitted to external auditors, GPPA and NAQAA within 7 working days so that they can complete their work on time.
- Annual reports to be submitted within three months of the end of the financial year as dictated by Section 175 (5) of the 1997 Constitution.
- The UTG should create a Health and Safety unit with clear terms of reference to guide its operations by the last quarter of 2021.
- The committee recommends that an up-to-date research strategy be developed to reflect University's current research aspirations and infrastructure to support the coordination and direction of UTG's research and knowledge transfer activities.
- The Committee recommends that the University of the Gambia should ensure that all the recommendations made by the Education Committee are fully implemented before the deadlines given.

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE AUTHORITY (NAQAA) (2018 – 2019)

ISSUES/ CONCERNS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Executive Officer of National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA) presented the reports of the institution for the years ended 31st December 2018, and 31st December 2019, to the Select Committee on Education, Training, and ICT. The report covered the activities, constraints, recommendations, and updates on implementation of previous recommendations of the then PAC/PEC.

The Director of Finance and the Auditors presented the financial statement and Auditors' report respectively whilst the GPPA presented a compliance report of the institution with procurement regulations.

The committee is also delighted to note that NAQAA has implement 90% of the recommendations and issues raised in the previous reports.

- **JOURNALS FOR NON-CASH TRANSACTION**

The Committee observed from the management letter of 2019 that journal vouchers were not raised for the following transactions before posting into the accounting system.

Dates	Details	Amounts (GMD)	Ledger
31.12.2019	Fuel	66,050	Fuel and Lubricants (90-0500)
31.12.2019	Being cost of 2019 audit fees accrued	250,000	Professional fees (90,2200)
31.12.2019	SPLIT	473,705	Accruals and other payables (40-0500)
31.12.2019	PAY	10,155	Withholding tax payable 40-0600
31.12.2019	NETTLE for Sept to Dec	1,574,644	NETTL – 80-0100
15/05/2019	Interest Received	135,000	Interest received & receivables
13/02/2019	NETTL Accrued	5,502,380	Accrued Revenue (20-0601)

19/02/2019	Personnel Cost	683,646	Salaries, Wages & All (90-0100)
19/02/2019	Personnel Cost	79,643	Salaries, Wages & All (90-0100)
19/02/2019	Personnel Cost	63,000	Salaries, Wages & All (90-0100)

• **FUEL DISTRIBUTION POLICY**

The committee observed that the management does not maintain fuel distribution policy to guide management on distribution of fuel.

• **GPPA COMPLIANCE LEVEL – Not Available**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee recommends the following:

- NAQAA should ensure that annual reports and financial statements are submitted to National Assembly in line with section 175(5) of the 1997 Constitution.
- The Authority should perform quality audit visit of all institutions under their purview at least once every year to ascertain compliance.
- The authority should ensure that all licenses relating to trainers and institutions are renewed in accordance with the policy guidelines.
- The Authority should review and set guidelines on curriculum development for all Institutions to ensure alignment in standards.
- The Governing Council should approve overspending on any budget line.

- The Finance and Admin department should generate quarterly reports including variance analysis on budget utilizations to ensure management is fully updated.
- The authority should ensure that all withholding taxes are paid to GRA promptly.
- The committee recommends that the National Accreditation & Quality Authority should ensure that all the recommendations made by the committee are fully implemented.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CIVIC EDUCATION (NCCE) (2017 – 2018)

ISSUES/ CONCERNS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (2017-2018)

The Administrative Secretary of the National Council for Civic Education (NCCE) presented the reports for the years ended 31st December 2017 and 2018, to the Select Committee on Education, Training and ICT. The reports covered the activities, constraints, recommendations, and updates on implementation of previous recommendations.

The Director of Finance presented the financial statement, and the auditors reported the audit findings, whilst GPPA presented compliance report of the institution with procurement regulations.

FINDINGS:

- **ACCOUNTING MANUAL**

- The committee observed in the 2018 management report that the accounting framework used in the preparation of the accounts was International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) cash basis. However, the finance and accounting procedures manual does not state the accounting policy or framework that the council should use in preparing the receipt and payments.

- **VACANT POSITIONS**

The committee observed that there are some vacant positions and thus not showing the true picture of the council's structure.

Vacancy Name	Grade point
Executive Director	12
Monitoring and Evaluating Officer	9
Administrative Assistant	7

- **GPPA COMPLIANCE LEVEL**

- The Committee observed that the National Council for Civic Education (NCCE) was found to be 98% compliant, which denotes 'fully compliant' with the Public Procurement Rules and Regulations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee recommends that:

- The NCCE update their finance and accounting procedures manual to indicate the type of accounting policy or reporting framework the council should use in preparing the receipts and payments.
- The NCCE should fill all vacant positions by end of July 2021 to ensure smooth operation of the institution.
- The NCCE should ensure that all the previous recommendations made by the committee be fully implemented by end of 2021.
- NCCE in consultation with Parliament and Ministry of Justice should urgently review and amend the Act which is grossly inadequate.
- The Governance structure and the organogram should be included in future activity reports.

- The FPAC in consultation with Ministry of Finance should ensure that all budget agencies segregate the budget of all subvented institutions including NCCE and clearly show them in the national budget.
- The office of the Vice President should, as a matter of urgency, make arrangements for NCCE to have land for the construction of a permanent Head Office.
- The NCCE to conduct assessment on the impact of Civic education activities in communities
- Consider migrating from IPSAS cash base accounting framework to IFRS accrual accounting.
- All audit recommendations should be implemented

MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (2017-2019)

ISSUES /CONCERNS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM REPORT

The Director General of Management Development Institute (MDI) presented the activity reports of the institution for the year ended 31st December 2017, to 31st December 2019, the report covered the activities, finance and constraints as well as updates on implementation of previous recommendations of the then PAC/PEC.

The Financial statement was presented and the auditors reported on the audit findings, whilst GPPA presented the compliance report of the institution with procurement regulations.

FINDINGS

- **FIXED ASSETS**

- The committee observed that, during the years under review, the institution never maintained an up-to date assets register. Assets purchased/acquired were not recorded in the register, however fixed assets of substantial value donated to the institution were recorded in the register.

- **BANK RECONCILIATION**

- The committee observed that the institution did not perform bank reconciliation exercises.

- **STUDENT FEES**

The committee observed that student fees have increased exponentially to D16.7 million in 2018 from D6.9 million in 2017, fees outstanding are proportionate to about 30% of combined revenue generated from regular and tailor-made courses.

- **GPPA COMPLIANCE LEVEL**

The Committee observed that the MDI was found to be **50% compliant, which denotes fairly COMPLIANT** with Gambia Public procurement Authority (Amendment) Act 2018 and the regulation 2003.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee recommends that:

- The management of MDI should ensure that all assets of the institution are properly recorded and accounted for to safeguard them and to help prepare a summary financial report. Assets donated to the institution during the financial year be valued fairly and incorporated in the books of the organization. This needs to be completed by year-end 2021.

- The management should devise a recovery strategy to enhance collection of fees due from students, particularly those that are long overdue. Debtor's accounts should be regularly checked to identify and address doubtful and recoverable debts.
- The accounts department of MDI must ensure bank reconciliation is done on a monthly basis and all issues resolved with the respective banks.
- The activity report of MDI should include organogram, vision and mission statements, list of academic and administrative staff by gender, nationality, and qualification, and the student population disaggregated by gender and on all the programmes offered.
- The management of MDI should fully implement all the recommendations from NAQAA with immediate effect.
- The Committee recommends that Management should ensure all the previous recommendations are fully implemented.
- Develop policies and strategies that will address the issue of tuition fees and arrears.
- Develop an MOU with the University of the Gambia to address the issue of sharing facilities and resources.

BROAD RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Higher Education ACT should be reviewed so as to address the administrative and procedural challenges of the institution.
- The composition of members of the Board should be consistent with the ACT;

- The budget allocation for the research department should be increase in order to enable the institution to conduct effective and efficient research to realize its objectives;
- Concerted efforts should be made to Strengthen the Human Resource Department;
- Regular board meetings should be conducted according as dictated by the Act
- As directed by the Act various committees' must be establish by the council with clear terms of reference and indicate the membership for each committee;
- With effect from 2021 NAQAA should accredit any degree programme offered by MDI;

GAMBIA COLLEGE

ISSUES /CONCERNS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM REPORT (2014-2018)

The Principal of Gambia College presented the activity reports of the institution for the year ended 31st December 2014, to 31st December 2018, to the Committee. The report covered the activities, financial statement and constraints, as well as updates on the implementation of previous recommendations of the then PAC/PEC.

The Director of Finance presented the financial statement; the auditors reported on the audit findings, whilst the GPPA presented a compliance report of the institution with procurement regulations.

FINDINGS

- **BANK RECONCILIATION**

- The committee observed that bank reconciliation statements for the period 2014 to 2018 were never done as indicated in the cashbooks.

- **FIXED ASSETS**

- The committee noted with great concern that previous auditors suggested to management to develop its fixed assets register and this was never implemented;
- Most of the fixed assets acquired were (either through outright purchase or grants) and were never incorporated in the accounts of the College, apart from the pre-2013 assets which were valued at D33, 000;
- **MANUAL ACCOUNTING SYSTEM**
 - The committee observed that the College still maintains a manual accounting system, which is out-dated and prone to errors.
- **MISSING / UNSIGNED PAYMENT VOUCHERS**
 - Some payment vouchers (mainly cash payment vouchers) were missing from 2014 to 2018.
 - The committee also observed that some are without signature of the approving authority and relevant supporting documents.
 - The committee noted that the problem of missing payment vouchers persist for quite a long time. Despite several request by the committee for justification to such practices management can't still provide justifications.
- **STAFF LOAN**
 - The committee observed that loans issued during the second half of 2017 were not deducted up to January 2018 contrary to the policy.
 - For some staff, 50% of their salaries were deducted and in some cases over 80-90% of their salaries were deducted leaving those staff vulnerable with very little to take home. The committee also noted that some loans were issued but no repayments were made.

- **TREASURY MANAGEMENT**

- The committee observed that cashbooks are not properly maintained and there were no bank reconciliations in the previous years.
- During the year under review, the two commercial bank accounts (GT Bank and Ecobank) were grossly overdrawn resulting to high commission and interest charges which amounted to D265, 523.91 and D106, 469.04 respectively, while there were other accounts which could have been utilized by management to avoid such high commission and interest charges.

- **PROJECT FUNDS EXPENDITURES**

- The committee observed that Gambia College is running several projects concurrently and management uses projects funds interchangeably with the college's funds as reflected in the audit report from 2016 to 2018. This has serious consequential effects that will negatively impact on the progress of these projects. See below

Item No.	Project	Opening Bal. As at 31/12/2017	Project Income Rec'd. in 2018	Project Payments made	Closing Bal. As at 31/12/2018
1	EFA/FTI	D1,222,734	342,000	1,031,800	D1,912,534
2	CATERING	D140,835	121900	515,375	D534,310
3	PTC Extension Prog.	D857,447	3,776,300	3,765,100	D849,247
4	Training of SR SCM (NAS)	D134,320	0	785,200	D919,520
5	HSSP	0	0	2,510,550	D2,510,550
6	Madarasa (Amana)	D451,599	0	686,950	D1,138,549
7	SPH/HND Special Program	0	0	304,660	D304,660
	TOTALS	D2,806,935	D4,239,900	D9,602,635	D8,169,370

- **ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT ISSUES**

During the year 2018 the committee noted some negative variances in some budget items from the audit report.

A total of D4,084,970 was over spent against the budget. The table below shows the different variances:

Expenditure items for 2018	Budget	Actual	Variances
	GMD	GMD	GMD
	D	D	D
Telecommunication	600,000	1,559,555	959,555
Uniforms / Sundries	200,000	200,520	520
Sitting Allowances & Others	375,000	834,765	459,765
PTC Madarrassa Program	500,000	686,950	186,950
PTC Extension Program	2,500,000	3,768,100	1,268,100
Staff Training – Local	200,000	201,446	1,446
Purchase of Office Equipment	350,000	401,300	51,300
Vehicle & Generator Maint.	825,000	995,880	170,880
Fuel	900,000	1,050,499	150,499
Student Stipend – MOBSE	3,990,600	4,739,880	749,280
Student Stipend – Projects	11,289,600	11,376,275	86,675
TOTAL	21,730,200	25,815,170	4,084,970

- **GPPA COMPLIANCE LEVEL**

- The Gambia College was found to be 59% compliant in 2015 (Partially Compliant), 78% in 2016, which denotes 'Mainly compliant' with the Public Procurement Rules and Regulations and the compliant for 2017-2018 was not presented.

- **NAQAA AUDIT REPORT ON GAMBIA COLLEGE**

- The committee noticed that enrolments were made without due consideration to the available human and physical resources. Thus, rendering some classes overcrowded. The audit report further highlighted that there was no evidence of physical files of students as a backup for the online application form. There were discrepancies in the admission requirement for the entire programme stated in the College's programme brochures.

- **LIBRARY FACILITIES**

- The committee noticed that the College does not have well equipped Library and there is no existing procedure for updating stock of textbooks within the library. During the audit exercise there was no existing communication between the Librarian and the head of schools for compilation and procurement of required textbooks.

RECOMMENDATION

The committee recommends the following:

- For effective budgetary management control, the committee strongly recommends management to prepare budgets realistically, on time and

effectively monitor the quarterly management reports and take necessary measures for timely corrective actions.

- Management should maintain separate cashbooks for each bank, post transactions correctly and perform monthly bank reconciliations for all bank accounts.
- The committee strongly recommends management to determine the assets which existed as at 2017 and their respective value;
- Accumulated depreciations charges and net book value should be incorporation in the next audited accounts;
- The Committee strongly recommends management to computerize its accounting system for proper and accurate recording of all financial transactions;
- The committee strongly recommends management to put stringent measures in place to ensure the safety and availability of payment vouchers for verification and that they are properly safeguarded against unauthorized personnel. Furthermore, management should task the finance unit to trace these missing documents;
- The committee strongly recommends that all loans be deducted on the due dates and college should also have a loan policy. In any case, loan deductions must not go above 40% of the salary;
- The committee strongly recommends for management to reconcile the cashbook and all its bank accounts, regularise and update all the outstanding items on monthly basis;

- Management should periodically review the bank balances to determine where to make certain payments before cheques are raised this priority should be treated with urgency;
- The committee strongly recommends the board and management of the College to desist from transferring one project funds to another so as to achieve the desired goals of each project;
- The enrolment and application procedure must be done through the online portal application. Students without the minimum requirements should be discouraged;
- The committee further recommends that henceforth, the college must prepare minutes of meetings of the admission and ensure that each page of the minutes is signed by the Secretary;
- The board of directors should employ competent chartered accountants and support staff to take charge of the finance unit.
- The board of directors should employ competent internal auditors to ensure there are checks and balances in all financial transactions;
- The committee recommends that, the college must appoint a qualified Librarian and Library support staff; expansion/building of new library with capacity to accommodate at least 20% of student population;
- The Management of Gambia College must put in place mechanisms to control lateness and absenteeism of lectures.
- The Committee recommends for the Ministry of Higher Education in consultation with National Audit Office to conduct Forensic Audit exercise on Gambia College.
- The Committee strongly recommends with immediate effect that the Ministry of Higher Education to dissolve the current Governing Council and constitute a new one.
- The governing council should approve overspending on any budget line.

LECTURERS' REGULARITY AND PUNCTUALITY

The committee observed the high rate of absenteeism of both full-time and part-time lecturer and the moonlighting of lecturers, which have a negative impact on syllabus coverage and quality of programme.

The committee observed, with grave concern on the appointment of part-time lecturers at the college and management does not do adequate supervision on their operations.

Visit to schools on Hard-to-reach areas: CRR & URR-

Executive Summary

The tour was anchored on assessing and understanding the challenges hard-to-reach schools in CRR and URR are faced with and to identify factors that affect effective teaching and learning as well. It is important to note that schools categorised by the Ministry of Education as hard to reach lack basic social amenities and Human resource capacity to operate as normal school.

The committee recognizes that improving teaching and learning in hard-to-reach schools requires two interventions; increase budgetary allocation and prioritisation of MoBSE's budget with regard to hard-to-reach schools.

Methodology

- The committee was divided into two teams. The first team was tasked to visit Five (5) schools in URR North and five (5) Schools in CRR North whilst the second team visited (5) schools in URR South and two (2) schools in CRR South. The total number of schools to be visited was Seventeen (17).
- A questionnaire was developed
- Consultation meetings were held with Regional Directors and relevant stakeholders within the education sectors
- Meetings and interviews were conducted with school administrators, senior teachers, and staff
- Conducted tour of schools combined with observations.

Courtesy Call on Regional Education Directorate Region VI (RED)

As tradition demands, the team first made a courtesy call on the Regional Directorate of Education in Basse. The Regional Director and his team accorded the team a very warm welcome and made them feel at home. The committee had frank conversations after which a conducted tour of the complex was undertaken.

OBSERVATIONS MADE AT THE RED

Staff of the directorate seemed to be in very good spirit and committed to managing public sector education services in the region effectively. It emerged from the conversation that the team was on top of the issues confronting education in the region. The Directorate did not mince their words to express their concerns.

The Committee noted the following issues and challenges:

- a. Poor state of buildings and the facilities both offices and residential.
- b. Poor hygiene of the compound, particularly waste management and the condition of the sanitary facilities.
- c. The lack of teachers for certain subjects in the upper basic and senior secondary schools across the region
- d. Hard living conditions for teachers in remote settlements.
- e. High cost of electricity due to the heavy consumption of energy.

FINDINGS

The committee observed the following issues and challenges;

- Inadequate toilet facilities
- Lack of, inadequate, and in some cases deplorable staff quarters,
- Inadequate clean drinking water supply
- Poor and inadequate infrastructure such as classrooms
- High enrolment for the Early Child Development component against limited classroom blocks.

Key Challenges

The committee noted the following issues and challenges:

1. Inadequate toilet facilities:
 - a. In some cases staff and students having to share the same toilet facilities
 - b. Disproportionate ratio of number of children/students to number of toilet cubicles

2. Lack of, inadequate, and in some cases deplorable staff quarters,; Armitage Senior Secondary School is a case in point here
3. Inadequate clean drinking water supply
4. Poor and inadequate infrastructure with reference to:
 - a. Classrooms
 - b. School fences
 - c. Recreational facilities
5. Poor hygiene at most schools
6. Inadequate classroom furniture
7. In some worst case scenarios, teachers having to occupy classrooms or other parts of the school for accommodation
8. Inadequate space for the ECD sector, hence the limited number of children schools can take; consequently many children find themselves out of school
9. In some instances, teachers are charged an unrealistic amount of money by landlords for rent
10. Lack of electricity poses a challenge to the effective teaching of science and Technology
11. Low admission rate in Upgraded schools due to the high rate of student transfers to schools like Bansang Senior secondary school and Armitage High School

SCHOOL VISITS: UPPER RIVER REGION (URR)

1. WELLINGARA YAREH LOWER BASIC SCHOOL

The head teacher reported that the total number of students is 322 of which 169 are girls and the total number of teachers is 6 including one female teacher. The school head, highlighted the following challenges:

1. Inadequate water and electricity within the school premises
2. Dilapidated and congested staff quarters
3. Lack of sufficient classroom to accommodate the high rate of enrolment particularly the ECD

Committee's Observations

- Renovate the incomplete building built by the former UNICEF representative

2. GUNJUR KUTA LOWEWR BASIC SCHOOL

The village community of Gunjur Kuta established this school in 1982. According to the head teacher the school constitutes four classrooms with an enrolment of 409 pupils and teaching staff of six including the head teacher. He said due to the unavailability of space, the ECD is using one of the rooms of the village health Centre as classroom with an enrolment of 150 pupils. He noted the following challenges:

- a. Lack of enough classrooms to cater for the growing demand of enrolment
- b. Lack of learning material chairs and table (4 to a desk)
- c. Small classroom size
- d. Lack of teaching staff
- e. Lack of trained ECD Teachers
- f. Congested staff quarters i.e. two teachers per room
- g. Lack of adequate toilet facility
- h. Inadequate water supply

Committee's Observations

- a. The need for the building of a complete structure from grade 1-6
- b. To curb the increase demand of enrolment from the ECD sector, the Ministry should erect a block for ECD.
- c. Increase the number of teaching staff
- d. Considering the distance of the closest Basic Cycle, Marreh Kunda, which is 5kilometers, the school be upgraded to a Basic Cycle.
- e. Lack of Fence causes distractions by passers-by and animals.

3. TOUBA WOPA LOWER BASIC SCHOOL

According to the head teacher, the school roll is 293 with 7 teaching staff including both the female teacher and school head. The head teacher together with his staff highlighted the following challenges:

- a. Lack of enough classrooms,
- b. Inadequate water supply
- c. Poor toilet facilities.
- d. No staff quarters to accommodate the staff

- e. Low capacity and managerial problem of the borehole tank.

Committee's Observations

The committee visited the head teacher's resident to ascertain the condition in which he lives. Unfortunately, they came to notice that his conditions are quite unbearable and unimaginable as well. He lives in a thatch house unfit for human habitation.

Subsequently the committee made the following recommendations:

- The constructions of additional classroom
- Increasing the capacity of the water tank to adequately cater for both villagers and the school
- Building of staff quarters

4.NAUDEH LOWER BASIC SCHOOL

According to the head teacher the school was built in 1981. The school's roll was 312, with four (4) teaching staff including the female teacher and school head with three (3) classrooms. The school runs on multi-grading system. The Head Teacher together with his staff reported the following challenges:

- a. Inadequate teaching staff
- b. Early marriage posed a great challenge for the completion of the education of the girl child.
- c. Inadequate classrooms
- d. Lack of staff quarters and exorbitant rental charges for staff i.e. staff pay a house rent of 800 dalasis per room
- e. Inadequate and poor conditions of toilet facilities
- f. Lack of access to clean drinking water and electricity.

Committee's Observations

- Lack of classrooms to accommodate the growing population of the Nursery sector
- Lack of access to clean drinking water, electricity, and proper toilet facilities.

5. BOLLI BANNA BASIC CYCLE SCHOOL

The school has an enrolment of 221 pupils, with 13 teaching staff.

Committee's Observations

- a. Absence of a school perimeter fence
- b. Insufficient number of teachers for certain subjects, such as Mathematics and Islamic Studies
- c. Shortage of cleaning materials like wheelbarrows, dustbins, rakes etc
- d. Cessation of the school feeding programme
- e. Lack of science or home science laboratories and workshops for technical subjects; consequently lessons for those subjects are only administered in theory and students cannot register for them for the GABECE;
- f. Lack of electricity supply
- g. Lack of or poor network coverage for any of the Gambia's GSMs, resulting to teachers subscribing to Senegalese GSMs
- h. Some teachers having to use a classroom for accommodation owing to non-availability of staff quarters
- i. Poor remuneration for caretakers and other ancillary staff

The Committee was delighted to note through the intervention of GTUCCU, a sixteen-room staff quarter was under construction. Members of the Committee made some observations on the design of these structures and made some on-spot recommendations, which were noted by the school administrator and the GTUCCU representative

6. SONG KUNDA BASIC CYCLE SCHOOL

Situated few kilometres off the trunk road in the eastern part of Kantora district, this school was established in 1977. It has a roll of 668 students, of which 103 are in the Upper Basic. The school has 20 staff, including two females. Furthermore, there is one Early Childhood Development class.

Committee's Observations

- a. Shortage of clean drinking water
- b. Limited classrooms
- c. Absence of electricity supply
- d. An inadequate structure is being used as library
- e. Cessation of the school feeding programme
- f. Absence of a trained ECD tutor
- g. Lack of the following:
 - i. Science laboratory
 - ii. Workshop for technical subjects
 - iii. Essential materials for the effective teaching of mathematics
- h. Acute shortage of cleaning materials such as wheelbarrows, rakes, dustbins and protective gear for caretakers/labourers

The Committee saw a building under construction funded MRC-Holland Foundation. The Committee was certainly delighted to have come across such an exemplary donor initiative.

7. FATOTO UPPER & SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

Although Fatoto Upper and Senior School is not part of the schools considered 'hard-to-reach', the delegation deemed it necessary to visit the institution and engage the authorities. The school was established in 1998, and presently has 509 students on the roll in Upper and Senior Secondary School combined. The school has with 20 teaching staff.

Committee's Observations

- a. The school lacks teachers for certain subjects, such as English Language, Government, Visual Arts and Agricultural Science.
- b. Acute shortage of furniture
- c. Ill-equipped metal workshop
- d. School facilities and buildings need renovation.
- e. Insufficient teaching and learning materials
- f. Deplorable condition of the staff quarters-

Committee Observation

The need to place the school under a Board of administrators could perhaps address most of these issues.

8. NYAMANARI LOWER BASIC SCHOOL

The visit further availed the delegation an opportunity to meet the Headmaster of the school who furnished the Committee with the following information:

Committee's Observations

- a. Inadequate furniture for classrooms
- b. The school is fenced with wires, which is grossly inadequate
- c. Serious water shortage as the only source of water is a 30 meter open well; this puts the life of students and staff at risk;

9. SAREH NJOBO LOWER BASIC SCHOOL

Situated about five kilometres south of Mankamang Kunda in the Jimara District, this school was established in September 1993 and has a roll of 303 pupils, including 50 ECD pupils. The school serves 10 satellite communities. There are seven (7) at the school teachers.

Committee's Observations

- a. Absence of perimeter fence
- b. Seriously dilapidated staff toilet
- c. Severe water shortage, as the closest water facility in the village is some 300 meters away from the school.
- d. Lack of staff quarters, which forces teachers to settle for renting poorly constructed houses in the village
- e. Lack of electricity supply; the closest village to access electricity supply is Julangel.
- f. Limited number of classrooms; there are only only six, including the ECD class.
- g. Acute shortage of classroom furniture
- h. Most of the pupils walk for more than 4km to school from villages like Sareh Pateh, Suma Kunda and Sareh Ali.

- i. The closest bank is in Basse; consequently teachers travel to this distant town to receive their monthly salaries.

Committee's Observations

Enrolment at Sareh Njobo has increased sharply as result of an enrolment campaign initiated by the school, especially at ECD level. This laudable initiative should be adopted by other schools in the region as deemed necessary.

ACTIVITIES AND FINDINGS: CENTRAL RIVER REGION (CRR)

10. REGIONAL EDUCATION DIRECTORATE- CRR (SOUTH)

In CRR South, the delegation first paid a courtesy call on the Director, RED Region 5, in Janjanbureh. After a warm welcome, the Director, Mr. Paul K. Mendy gladly informed the delegation that his directorate was battling with structural challenges and other issues, which are not unique to his region. He, however, urged the delegation to make a short visit to Armitage High School, which is a stone-throw from the directorate. The Director lamented issues that were very similar to those raised by the RED 6.

11. ARMITTAGE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

Situated in the town of Janjanbureh, this institute is one of the oldest schools in the country. The school was established in 1927. It is the only Government boarding senior secondary school in the country.

Committee's Observations

- a. Dilapidated staff quarters; putting the health and safety of members of staff risk
- b. Insufficient classrooms
- c. Grossly inadequately dormitories for students; presently, only five-hundred students out of over 800 students are housed in the school's dormitories;
- d. The school is grappling with shortage of quality beds for the students, despite support from the Child Fund- the Gambia
- e. Feeding is also reported to be a crucial issue.
- f. There is a pressing need for improving and expanding the sanitary facilities like toilets at the school;

It is noteworthy that MRC Holland Foundation carried out massive repair and maintenance of the school's infrastructure not too long ago and the buildings look very good. However, the maintenance scheme did not include staff quarters.

12. CHARGEL BASIC CYCLE SCHOOL

This settlement is situated 20km away from Bansang, in the Upper Fulladu West constituency, making it one of the most difficult schools to access.

Committee's Observations

- a. Non-existence of workshop for technical subjects
- b. Lack of sporting gears to support physical education and extracurricular activities
- c. No Home-Science laboratories to support pupils opting for those subjects in external Exams.
- d. Acute water shortage
- e. Absence of staff quarters, making it difficult for staff
- f. Absence of a school perimeter fence.
- g. Acute shortage of furniture for the classrooms;
- h. The challenge in retaining pupils in classrooms, particular during the rainy season, when parents keep their children at home for farming
- i. Absence of computers, accessories and printer/copiers to enable the school to facilitate administration and prepare questions, rather than outsourcing these services;

Committee's Observation

Considering the fact that the nearest Senior Secondary School to Chargel is located 10km away, the Committee observes the need to expand the school to a secondary school to mitigate the risk of pupils dropping out.

13. KARANTABA LOWER&UPPER &SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

The school Principal together with his staff reported the following challenges:

- a. Congested and dilapidated staff quarters
- b. Low capacity of water supply

- c. Difficulties in retaining students at the Senior school
- d. No electricity to support the learning and teaching of sciences and other disciplines.
- e. Senior school level is being taught by higher Teachers Certificates trainees-
- f. The borehole is located 10 metres away from the toilet facilities.
 - a. Committee's Observations
- g. The upgraded senior school lack graduate and competent teachers to run the available field of studies
- h. The absence of basic amenities that support the learning of Science and Technology
- i. Low capacity of the borehole
- j. Inadequate structures to cater for the growing numbers of enrolment
- k. Leaking and dilapidated structure

14. **NYANGA BANTANG LOWER & UPPER BASIC SCHOOL**

The principal together with his staff reported the following challenges:

- a. Deplorable and dilapidated staff quarters unfit for human habitation
- b. Teachers sleep in classrooms during heavy down pour
- c. Low enrolment due to the notion that girl's child is more appropriate to conventional schools
- d. Lack of clean drinking water within the school premise and the prevalence of water contaminated from rust due to the nature of the hand pump
- e. Poor conditions of toilet facilities
- f. Inadequate teaching staff and technical teachers
- g. Women transporting their children from a long distance with the use of Donkey Carts

Committee's Observations

- The need for immediate construction of a Staff quarter to avert the risk and disaster of sleeping under structures that are likely to collapse in no time

15. **NJAU BASIC CYCLE**

The principal together with his teachers reported that:

- a. Some of the classes lack teaching and learning materials

- b. Lack of staff quarters to accommodate and retain staff
- c. Lack of clean drinking water and electricity
- d. Lack of school fence which makes students and staff prone to the adverse effects of the harmattan wind
- e. Inadequate toilet facilities

Committee's Observations

- a. Lack of adequate toilet facilities resulting staff sharing toilets with students.
- b. Lack of solar powered electricity to advance the education of Science and Technology

16. CHAMEN LOWER BASIC AND SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

The principal together with his Senior Management team highlighted the following challenges:

- a. Early marriage as a causative factor for low rate of enrolment
- b. Difficulties in retaining students at the Senior school
- c. Lack of electricity that advances the education of Science and Technology
- d. High rate of student transfers and inadequate graduate teachers
- e. The school lacks the necessities that qualifies as Senior Secondary school
- f. Inadequate classrooms to accommodate the growing demand of enrolment more particularly the lower sector

Committee's Observations

- a. Low storage capacity for the existing borehole tank
- b. Inadequate classroom blocks
- c. Posting graduate teachers to handle Senior Secondary Schools
- d. Low enrolment in the senior secondary School
- e. No fence around the school
- f. Inadequate staff quarters

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To ensure schools have more money on SIG, all ECD pupils should be captured in the nominal roll of their respective schools
2. All upgraded Basic School should be furnished with sufficient classrooms and furniture before they are operational.
3. There is a need to Increase the number of teaching staff especially graduate teachers to ease the load of the other teachers
4. Schools needs to be fenced to avoid animals disrupting sessions and reduce the adverse effects of the Harmattan wind on students.
5. The construction of staff quarters to accommodate and retain young teachers
6. Building of staff quarters and toilet facilities for the teachers should be a priority for MOBSE and should be included in their annual budget.
7. There is a need to build Science labs in all upgraded schools to strengthen the education of science and technology. These labs must be equipped with the relevant materials.
8. There is a need to expand the solar power projects in all schools to advance the teaching of Science and Technology

Members of the Committee that went on the Tour

1. Hon. Yaya Gassama
2. Hon. Alhagie Mbow
3. Hon. Saikouba Jarju
4. Hon. Abdoulie Ceesay
5. Hon. Alfusainey Ceesay
6. Hon. Sainey Touray
7. Hon. Alhagie Darboe
8. Hon. Sidia Jatta
9. Hon. Muhammed Mahanera
10. Hon. Bakary Njie
11. Mr. Sekou O.M Dibba (SMS)
12. Ms. Isatou Sonko (Committee Clerk)
13. Mr. Mamadou A.M Bah (Committee Clerk)
14. Mr. Modika Bah (Research Officer)
15. Mr. Baboucarr Joof (GTUCCU)
16. Mr. Essa Sowe (MoBSE)
17. Mr. Musa Sarr RED Basse
18. Mr. Abdou Bah RED Basse
19. Mr. Janko Sawaneh RED Basse

NAMES OF THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE AND THE SUPPORT STAFF

Hon. Members

1.Hon. Yaya Gassama	-	Chairperson
2.Hon. Alhagie Mbow	-	Vice – Chairperson
3.Hon. Sidia Jatta	-	Member
4.Hon. Alfusainey Ceesay	-	Member
5.Hon. Mahtarr Jeng	-	Member
6.Hon. Bakary Njie	-	Member
7.Hon. Muhammed Mahanera	-	Member
8.Hon. Sainey Touray	-	Member
9.Hon. Fakebba N.L. Ceesay	-	Member (Late)
10. Hon. Ousman Touray	-	Member
11. Hon. Saikouba Jarju	-	Member
12. Hon. Abdoulie Ceesay	-	Member
13. Hon. Ndey Yasin Secka	-	Member
14. Hon. Alh. Sankung Jammeh	-	Member
15. Hon. Alhagie Darboe	-	Member
16. Hon. Alhagie S Darboe	-	Member
17. Hon. Muhammed Magassy	-	Member

Subject Matters Specialist

- Mr. Sekou O.M. Dibba - SMS
- Mr. Mamar M. Samba - SMS

Secretaries

- Ms. Isatou Sonko - Secretary
- Mamadou A.M Bah - Secretary
- Modika Bah - Research Officer

Aides

- Mr. Baboucarr Secka - GPPA
- Mr. Jamila Odoom - GPPA
- Mr. Pa Modou Ann - GPPA
- Mrs. Awa Suso - GPPA