

Multilingual Education Pilot Conference

17th July 9:00-16.00 @ GTU-CCU Brikama (Hon. B. O. Joof)

Programme

This *Multilingual Education Pilot Conference* brings together students, educators, policymakers and academics to reflect on the outcomes of the *Multilingual Education* teacher training course piloted at Gambia College with over 500 teacher students. The purpose of the conference is to share insights from the training, explore the practical implications of teaching in linguistically diverse classrooms, and discuss how the toolkit can support inclusive, effective education. The event also aims to foster collaboration to inform the next phase of resource development and teacher support.

The *Multilingual Education Pilot* utilised materials currently accessible for free online: Multilingual Resources for Primary Schools in The Gambia toolkit (<https://megambia.com/toolkit/>). The development of this online resource is part of an ongoing project involving Gambia College, CREDD, King's College London and the University of Sheffield.

Time	Activity
8:30 – 9:30	Breakfast
9:30 – 9:40	Prayers
9:40 – 9:50	Welcome address – Dr Aboubacarr Jallow
9:50 – 10:00	Overview of the Multilingual Education pilot – Ms. Isatou Ndow
10:00 – 10:20	Teacher training toolkit in practice Live demonstration – Dr Clyde Ancarno Interactive simulation using the toolkit to demonstrate how it can be used to train teachers.
12.30-1.20	Lecturers and pre-service teachers' insights – Mr Secka, Mr Isaac Samura, Mr Bah, Mr Musa Sillah, Ms Fatoumatta Colley & Ms Naisatou Konteh Reflections from the lecturers who delivered the Multilingual Education course to over 500 pre-service teachers and experiences from pre-service teachers.
1.20-1.50	In-service teachers' voices – Ms Ida Jallow, Ms Sarjo Bojang, Ms Fatou Bojang, Mr Alhagie Cham Short presentations by in-service teachers and headteachers

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	familiar with the toolkit on their experience of multilingual storytelling and multilingual resource development.
1.50-2.20	Prayers
2.40-3.00	Roundtable discussions Participants will break into five small groups to explore key themes: • Theme 1: Integration of the toolkit into pre-service teacher education • Theme 2: Revitalising multilingual storytelling in the classroom • Theme 3: Integrating Gambian Sign Language (GSL) into multilingual pedagogy • Theme 4: Policy alignment and strategic fit • Theme 5: Sustainability and expansion of the multilingual resource bank
2.00-3.20	Plenary report back & reflections Brief presentations by each group (5 minutes each). Mr Momodou Jeng and Lamin Jarjou, our discussants, will synthesise insights and share their reflections on the future of the training and Multilingual Resource Bank.
3.20-3.50	Discussants & Q and A
3.50	Closing remarks Momodou G Jallow will share his personal insights into local language integration in education in The Gambia. Clyde will say a few thanks too.



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Speaker biographies

Clyde Ancarno (BA, MA, MPhil, PhD) is a Senior Lecturer in Applied Linguistics and Education at King's College London. She has been conducting research on multilingual pedagogy and materials development in The Gambia for over seven years. In 2024, she was the overall winner of the Impact Prize Award from the Faculty of Social Science and Public Policy at King's College London.

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Ebrima Bah is an English Lecturer at the University of Education, The Gambia. He also serves as a lecturer in Early Childhood Development. He is currently pursuing an MSc in Educational Management Information Systems at the University of The Gambia and has previously worked with the Peace Corps and other secondary schools.

Musa Baldeh (BSc, MEd, PGDip) is an Education Programme Assistant with Peace Corps The Gambia. He previously served as an education officer with the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education across various regions. A committed volunteer, he has worked with United Nations Volunteers, the African Union Volunteer Corps, and currently serves as President of Fulbe Africa Organisation and a member of the African Language Week coordinating committee under ACALAN. He is a national languages enthusiast and a strong advocate for equitable access to quality education.

Fatou F Bojang (PTC/HTC) is the Headteacher of Tanji Lower Basic School with over 25 years of teaching experience. She plays a key leadership role in the school's academic and administrative affairs. She is also a Red Cross volunteer and has previously trained girls in physical education across schools.

Sarjo Bojang (PTC/HTC) is the Deputy Head 2 at Busumbala Lower Basic School. She is a Grade 3 and 4 teacher with over 22 years of teaching experience.

Alhagie S Cham (PTC) is a Grade 5 teacher at Tanji Lower Basic School with more than 25 years of teaching experience. He was one of the five core educators who led the development of the Multilingual Education teacher training toolkit.

Fatoumatta Colley (BA) is a lecturer in the English Department at the University of Education, The Gambia. She also serves as an administrator and financial director within the School of Education. Known for her strong rapport with students and community members, she plays a key role in supporting academic services and institutional decision-making.

Dr. Aboubacarr Jallow (BA, MA, PhD) is the Rector of the University of Education, The Gambia where he has served since 2015. With a strong background in education policy and agricultural education, Dr. Jallow has led the college through its transition into a University of Education. His leadership focuses on enhancing teacher training, improving infrastructure, and promoting staff development. He is dedicated to providing quality education and creating opportunities for students to thrive in a dynamic academic environment.

Ida Jallow (PTC/HTC) is the Deputy Head 1 at Busumbala Lower Basic School. She has over 40 years of experience in primary education and more than 25 years of experience in national language literacy, particularly in Olof.

Momodou A. Jallow (BA, MEd) is the Head of the School of Education at the University of Education, The Gambia. He has played a key role in advancing teacher education and promoting blended learning approaches. He is a strong advocate for innovation in curriculum delivery and inclusive education.

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Lamin Jarjou (HTC, BA) is a Senior Programme Officer at the Gambia National Commission for UNESCO and the National Coordinator of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet). A former Head of the English Department at Gambia College, he is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Educational Administration and Management. His work spans cultural heritage preservation, media and information literacy, and environmental education. A UNESCO Fellow, he also chairs the Gambia Teacher Prize Selection Committee, reflecting his commitment to educational excellence and innovation.

Momodou Jeng (HTC, BA, MA) is the Director of Curriculum, Research, Evaluation, and Development (CREED) at The Gambia's Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education. His distinguished career includes roles as a teacher, school inspector, INSET coordinator, and Director of Science and Technology.

Naisatou Konteh (ADS) is a lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Education, The Gambia. She has over 25 years of experience teaching national languages (Mandinka and Wolof): Peace Corps volunteers, Voluntary Service Overseas volunteers, the St Mary's College of Maryland study abroad programme students, and private tuition. She is currently preparing a BA in Education.

Isatou Ndow (PTC, HTC, BA, MA, MPhil) is the Vice Principal of the University of Education, The Gambia. She previously served as Head of Education at the same institution. She was recently awarded the 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award during the Teacher Prize Award ceremony, in recognition of her decades-long dedication to teacher training, curriculum development, and gender inclusion in education.

Isaac Samura is a first-year student at the University of Education, The Gambia where he is pursuing an Advanced Diploma in Education – Primary. He is the President of the *Great Thinkers Media* and Vice President of the *African Leadership Hub* at the University of Education. He is driven by a simple yet powerful mission: to inspire growth, pursue excellence, and leave every space better than he found it.

Michael Hamadi Secka is an English Lecturer at the University of Education, The Gambia. He is a senior educator with over four decades of teaching experience. He previously worked at the Curriculum Development Directorate at the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education and has published several literary works and educational materials. He is widely recognised for his contributions to Gambian literature and secondary education.

Musa Sillah is a student at the University of Education, The Gambia where he is pursuing an Advanced Diploma in Primary Education. He is the Vic President of The Great Thinkers Media at the University of Education. Passionate about teaching and community development, Musa is dedicated to equipping young learners with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed.

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The Whispering Baobab by Musa Sillah-

Long ago, in a small Gambian village named Kembujeh, there stood an ancient baobab tree. It was so enormous that five grown men, holding hands, could not encircle its trunk. The elders said it had been there since the beginning of time, long before the first huts were built along the riverbanks.

Children believed the baobab could whisper secrets to those brave enough to sit beneath it alone at midnight. Some said it was just the wind rustling through the hollow branches. Others were certain the whispers came from the spirits of the ancestors.

One evening, as the last rays of sunlight touched the river, a curious girl named Fatou decided she would discover the truth herself. Fatou was only twelve but known across the village for her fearless spirit and her endless questions.

That night, she wrapped herself in her mother's woven cloth, tiptoed past her sleeping brothers, and slipped outside. The moon was full, casting silver light over the sandy footpaths. She reached the baobab and pressed her palm to its rough bark.

"Great Tree," she whispered, "if you truly speak, tell me something no one else knows."

At first, there was only silence. Fatou's heart thumped. She wondered if the stories were just old tales to keep children from wandering at night. But then...

Huuuummmmm...

A low sigh floated down from the thick branches. Leaves shivered as if shushing the world to listen.

"Fatou," the voice breathed, deep and warm, "you are destined to carry the stories of your people far beyond this village. Your voice will remind them who they are."

She gasped. "How will I do that?"

But the baobab only sighed again.

Huuuummmmm...

Fatou waited, but no more words came. Finally, she thanked the tree and hurried home, her mind racing.

The next morning, she told her grandmother what she had heard. The old woman smiled and pressed a beaded necklace into Fatou's hand.

"These are storyteller's beads," she said. "They belonged to your great-grandmother. She, too, heard the baobab's whispers."

From that day, Fatou began gathering stories—tales of love and sorrow, courage and triumph. She memorized the old proverbs and learned songs that hadn't been sung in decades. And when she grew up, she traveled from village to village, sharing the stories beneath many trees, so that no one would forget where they came from.

And though she grew old, whenever she passed the ancient baobab, she would pause, place her hand on its trunk, and smile—because she knew that some trees really do whisper, if you are patient enough to listen.

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