

The Gambia

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About The Gambia

- 1.4 million people live in The Gambia. 59% of them live on less than one dollar a day.
- Average per capita income is \$270, compared with the UK's \$27,147 (Human Development Report (HDR) 2005).
- Constitutional government was re-established in 1997 following a military takeover in 1994. Recent Presidential and Parliamentary elections were peaceful and well organised.
- 86% of children are enrolled in primary school compared with 100% in the UK (HDR 2005).
- The average life expectancy is 55.7 years compared with 78.4 years in the UK (HDR 2005).
- 123 children out of every 1,000 children die before the age of five. The equivalent UK figure is 6. (HDR 2005)
- 730 women die in childbirth per 100,000 live births compared with 13 in the UK.
- Around 3% of the population are living with HIV/AIDS. Up to 10,000 children are orphaned by AIDS.
- The average annual growth rate over the past 5 years has been around 5%, rising to more than 7% in 2006.
- 77% of the rural population and 95% of the urban population has access to safe and clean water.

DFID: Working to reduce poverty in The Gambia

In the past 5 years The Gambia has received around \$250million in aid. Of this DFID has provided £5.52 million in bilateral programmes, plus additional contributions of around £9.6 million through multilateral agencies. In the coming financial year DFID plans to give £3million of aid to The Gambia.

Making aid effective

- DFID is supporting the development of the Gambia's new 5 year national plan for reducing poverty, the Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy.
- DFID aid is used on government priorities. DFID focuses its efforts in areas where our international role, knowledge and experience mean we bring a comparative advantage and the ability to make a real difference.

Governance

Poor governance is a cause of poverty. People suffer when governments don't allow participation in political life, provide access to justice, deliver adequate public services or control corruption.

Through its work with the Gambian Government

- DFID is encouraging better public financial management, through support to the Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs, the Gambia National Audit Office and the Treasury Directorate.
- DFID is providing support to civil society, to ensure that the needs and priorities of the poor are reflected in government budgets, and that the public is able to hold government to account.

Health

The Government of The Gambia has steadily increased spending on health over the past decade, with around 10% of total government expenditure now going to the sector. The Government of The Gambia also received support from a number of donors and \$30million has come from global health partnerships which DFID contributes to. These combined efforts have helped The Gambia to achieve the following results:

- improvements in mortality rates and child health,
- 90% coverage for childhood immunisations
- 91% utilisation of antenatal care
- The establishment of a Gambian medical college, with the first graduates expected this year

HIV and AIDS

HIV/AIDS prevalence in The Gambia is one of the lowest in the region (less than 3%), although it is showing signs of increasing. The Government of The Gambia has received almost \$15m for HIV/AIDS from global health partnerships which DFID contributes to. Current projects in the sector include prevention of mother to child transmission, voluntary counselling and testing, and access to safe and well managed Anti-Retroviral therapy.

Education

The Government of The Gambia spends around 15% of total expenditure on education. DFID is currently providing more than £3 million over 5 years to support the Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education in achieving its Education for All objectives.

In addition external partners are providing \$32 million over 5 years to the education sector and \$4 million has come from global education initiatives which DFID contributes to. These combined efforts have helped The Gambia to achieve the following results:

- primary school completion rate of 62%
- gender parity in primary education
- thousands of text books purchased
- 400 unqualified teachers enrolled on a programme to achieve qualified status

Hunger and Humanitarian

- 27% of the population is undernourished. 17% of under 5s are underweight for their age.
- 80% of the population depend on agriculture. The agricultural sector is weak due to environmental degradation; lack of access to credit and appropriate technology; and market stability being undermined by cross-border trade. Late or low rainfall can have a significant effect on production.
- Improving food security, particularly by focusing on fisheries and livestock, is a government priority reflected in their Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy.
- A number of donors, NGOs and private organizations are working to support the agricultural sector
- The World Food Programme provides a school feeding programme in the poorest rural areas.

Making progress against the Millennium Development Goals...

The Gambia is making strong progress on education, with 86% of children (equal numbers of boys and girls) enrolled in primary school. The majority of the population now have access to safe drinking water. Improvements are being seen in child and maternal health.

For more information about DFID's work in The Gambia please visit www.dfid.gov.uk

If you are a journalist and wish to know more about DFID and its work to reduce poverty in Africa please call DFID press office: 0207023 0600.