



GAMBIA: Phase 2 Private School Implementation

External Quarterly Update: December 2024 – February 2025

Programme Overview:

The Think Equal Program in the Gambia is currently being implemented in five hundred and seventy-six (576) private ECD level 2 classes across eight regional education regional directorates in The Gambia (to complete the rollout across all of Gambia's classrooms on one level). It is jointly implemented by Future in Our Hands The Gambia (FIOHTH) as the local implementing partner and the Think Equal Organisation.



Thank you so much for your generous and fortifying support!

Highlights & Achievements:

- ★ **Two further levels funded by the World Bank:** Thanks to the successful rollout of the THINK EQUAL programme across one level, and the close engagement and relationship this afforded us to build with the Gambia Education, ministry, equal has now been commissioned by the ministry, and funded by the World Bank, to bring the Think Equal program to 2 further levels (a further 2000 classrooms), thus, completing the embedding of Think Equal into the national curriculum. This means that from now on all of the Gambia's children aged 3 to 6 will learn THINK EQUAL's social and emotional learning programme for three consecutive years.
- ★ **Completion of Baseline Assessment:** To measure the impact of the Think Equal programme, a baseline and endline assessment is conducted to evaluate learners' social and emotional awareness before and after their exposure to the programme. During this quarter 246 children participated in the direct child assessment and 224 caregiver forms were completed. Results and analysis of the baseline assessment will be shared in the next quarterly report. The endline assessment will be conducted at the conclusion of the project to assess overall progress and impact and shared at the end of the project report.



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- ★ **Additional Teacher Training Sessions:** To ensure all teachers had the necessary skills for effective implementation, supplementary training was conducted for those who missed the initial sessions as well as those deemed unprepared. A total of 76 teachers participated in group training across Regions 1 and 2, while 23 teachers received individualized training from Pedagogical Advisers.

Monitoring Visit to Implementing Classes by the Pedagogical Advisers:

Regular classroom visits by Pedagogical Advisers (PAs) play a crucial role in supporting teachers and ensuring quality implementation of the Think Equal programme. This quarter: 187 classrooms were visited, 68 of these were from the 300 ECD Level 2 classrooms implemented last year. PAs provide ongoing support by observing lesson delivery, offering feedback, demonstrating sample lessons, and conducting additional one-on-one teacher training when necessary.

- ★ **★ Quarterly Monitoring feedback by the Think Equal Project Manager at Implementing Partner (IP) level (FIOH):** The Project Manager of the Think Equal Project at Future In Our Hands, (FIOH, the local IP) conducted her first quarterly monitoring of ten schools. The report from her visit indicates some positive life-changing impact that the Think Equal programme is making on the children. One such change was highlighted by the mother of a blind child who narrated that her child is now supported and helped by her peers. We are happy to share the gratitude of one of the schools visited which is entirely dependent on the Think Equal materials to teach their students because it is the only material available to them.
- ★ **Collaborative Monitoring Visit by the Think Equal Country Officer and Think Equal Project Manager at IP level (FIOH):** The team visited ('dropped in' on) sixteen schools across regions 3,4,5 and 6 to check on fidelity of implementation. All schools visited are fully implementing the programme. The feedback from the schools indicate that the programme is effecting positive behavioural changes in the lives of children. Children are now sharing with their colleagues, caring for one other, greeting elders with warmth and respect, showing empathy to their friends, managing their feelings, etc.

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Testimonies/Feedbacks from the Teachers /Head Teachers/Parents:

"A big thank you to Think Equal; nowadays children are sharing", Mr. Ali Cham, head and Think Equal Class teacher, Chamen Helping ECD, Region 3.

"One day a child in the Think Equal class met me seated by my office and gave me D5.00. I asked why he gave me the money. He replied that his teacher taught them to be helping each other", Mr. Morikebba Suwareh, Deputy head teacher, Foday Ba Jabbi Madarassatul Islamic School, Region 4.

"The mother of Awa Singhateh, a stubborn student, informed me that her child's bad behavior has changed because she is learning "Think Equal", Mr. Nfamara Singhateh, teacher, Ousman Bun Afan Islamic school, Region 6.

"Marvelous Me" is related to my story. It added value to my life. The one in the wheelchair looks like me because I am also in a wheelchair", Mr. Mamudou Kandeh, teacher, Sare Ngallen LBS, Region 5 South.

"With the coming of think equal we record less reports about crimes among children and more surprisingly children are very enthusiastic about picture interpretation and reading. Since the teacher started teaching the Think Equal children are taking it as a fun way to build friendship", Mr Barry, Mamud Fana.

"Since the implementation of this program I have started experiencing a different behaviour among our children. These children are more friendly, supportive and caring to each other. Many times I see them talking to their friends about helping each other and the danger of fighting in and out of the schools. In fact, even the head teacher always tells me that this program should be taught to grade one so

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that all of them can benefit because it is so important”, Mr Lamin Marong, the head of the English Department of Darul Quran Wal Hadith of Gambisara.

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school, instead it is a child adoption tool that can help maintain peace and love in a household. For me, even the parents at home need to be trained about it so that every parent can be a social and emotional teacher at home to help every child to benefit from it. I recommend even the ministry to strictly incorporate it in all the curriculum,” Isatou P Jallow –Head Teacher Daru LBS.

Challenges & Mitigation:

- **Challenge: Limited Programme support by Some School Heads:** Despite initial orientation, some school head teachers were reluctant to fully implement the Think Equal programme in their schools, opting to conduct sessions only once a week instead of the recommended three times.
- **Mitigation: Engagement with School Administration:** Pedagogical Advisers proactively engaged school administrators to emphasize the importance of full programme implementation. As a result, these schools have now adopted the programme as intended, ensuring learners receive the full benefit. Now that we

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are working with the Ministry of Education much more closely with the World Bank rollout, we intend to suggest to the Ministry that they communicate with all school heads of all 3 levels of infant classrooms (Infant 1, 2, and 3) with a letter from the Minister or PS informing them that this program is now a part of the national curriculum, and requiring them to implement the programme with purpose and fidelity and explaining the benefits of the programme to communities and country.

Reach Update:

Beneficiary	Classrooms	Children	Teachers
Anticipated Reach this period	740	17 020	740
Actual Reach	576	13 248	576
<i>The target could not be fully achieved because some schools from the original MoBSE data had closed, others could not be reached due to missing contact information, and some did not meet the requirement of having Level 2 classrooms. Now that the Ministry is taking over the programme, with our continuing support over the next two years, we will ensure that the missing classrooms from wave 1 (2024/2025) will be equipped, trained and capacitated so that no child in the Gambia is left behind.</i>			

Upcoming Project Activities:

- ★ Daily monitoring visit to schools by the Pedagogical Advisers to monitor and support teachers' lesson deliveries.
- ★ Collaborative monitoring visits phase 2 by the Think Equal Country Officer and Think Equal Project Manager at IP level (FIOH) to selected schools in regions 1 and 2.

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