Funding Equitable and High-Quality Early Childhood Education: Highlights from The Gambia

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Rationale

• Funding ECE scale-up is a major challenge
• Lack of ECE cost and financing data is a big problem
• The Gambian MoBSE & IIEP undertook two joint studies:
  • Cost-effectiveness
  • Funding for ECE to support the development of relevant evidence on ECE
• With COVID-19, financial resources (incl ODA) for education & ECE in particular expected to drop
• To “build back better” we need to understand where financial leeway stands
Key questions

• What was spent on ECE (2018)?
• Who is financing ECE?
• What is the prevailing ECE financing structure?
• Is current ECE financing pattern equitable, efficient and sustainable?
Methodology

• Based on existing methodologies, including:
  1) Mapping major ECE services providers
  2) For each provider, identifying financing sources & mechanisms
  3) Collecting relevant data from financing unit & services providers
  4) Consolidating & analysing data

• Various sources of data used
  - EMIS
  - Actual budget data from MoFi and MoBSE
  - Report from DPs and NGOs
  - Dedicated survey to capture financing from private sources incl. households
  - Interviews with key informants
The situation of ECE in the Gambia

- ECE enrolment on the rise
- Yet, sharp disparities prevail; gender parity reached

**Trend in gross enrolment ratios, by education level, 2013-2019**

- **ECE enrolment on the rise**
  - Gender Male/Female
    - ECE: 0.97
    - LBE: 0.97
    - UBE: 0.86
    - SSE: 1.07
    - Tertiary: 1.60
  - Location Urban/Rural
    - ECE: 1.5
    - LBE: 1.2
    - UBE: 1.5
    - SSE: 2.1
    - Tertiary: 3.0
  - Wealth Richest/Poorest Quintile
    - ECE: 2.4
    - LBE: 1.3
    - UBE: 1.7
    - SSE: 3.1
    - Tertiary: 4.3
  - Region Region1/Region 5
    - ECE: 3.1
    - LBE: 1.9
    - UBE: 2.3
    - SSE: 2.3
    - Tertiary: 4.3
The situation of ECE in the Gambia

- Multiple ECE service providers
- ECE provision dominated by private providers
- Public enrolment share stable over 2013-2019 (25%)
A multiplicity of ECE financing sources and mechanisms

- **Financing sources & mechanisms**
  - **Government:** funds from central level - domestic revenues (e.g. taxes)
    - Direct support of government and community ECD centres (all expenses covered)
    - Subventions to religious umbrella organisations (teacher salaries)
    - School improvement grant targeted to public primary schools indirectly benefiting annexed ECD centres
  - **Households:** Direct in-kind of in-cash (e.g. user fees) contributions to providers
  - **Other private entities** (e.g., NGOs, FBOs, philanthropists, proprietors, communities): Direct in-kind or in-cash contributions to providers
  - **Development partners (DPs)/donors:** Transfers to MoBSE budget (e.g. on/off sectoral budget support (project grants)) and NGOs; direct in-kind contribution to schools
What was spent on ECE in The Gambia in 2018?

- Total ECE funding in 2018: 650.3 Million GMD (0.8% of GDP)
- Household financing is dominating (67%)
- Government: 2nd next largest at only 11%

Other private (14%)
ECE financing structure: who is getting what from whom?

- Funding allocation somewhat aligned to ECE enrolment
- Skewed: private ECD centres absorbing the bulk of financing (61%); 0.5% for community-based
- Private ECD centres relied heavily on households (HH) (82% of their total funding)
- CB centres have more balanced funding sources
- Gov. centres: high reliance on HH (27%) and DPs (27%)
Low level of public ECE financing

- Government: second financer (11% of total ECE financing)
- ECE = 4% of MoBSE total expenditure
- Patchy evidence of public funding increase
- Recurrent public cost per child lowest in ECE

Distribution of public expenditures (Government only) on basic and secondary education by education level, 2018

- ECE, 4%
- LBE, 43%
- UBE, 29%
- SSE, 24%
- NFE, 0.02%

Per student public recurrent expenditure (unit cost in GMD) by education level, 2018

- ECE: 1,918
- LBE: 2,337
- UBE: 5,579
- SSE: 7,701
High burden on household

Proportion of government and household recurrent spending by level of education, 2015 and 2018

- ECE 2018: 86% Government, 14% Household
- ECE 2015: 77% Government, 23% Household
- LBS 2015: 58% Government, 42% Household
- UBS 2015: 57% Government, 43% Household
- SSS 2015: 71% Government, 29% Household

Household per child ECE expenditure (GMD), by nature and household wealth quartiles, 2018

- Q1: 54% School Fees, 17% Meals, 25% Extra curricula, 34% Private tuition
- Q2: 42% School Fees, 25% Meals, 27% Extra curricula, 34% Private tuition
- Q3: 14% School Fees, 27% Meals, 27% Extra curricula, 34% Private tuition
- Q4: 6% School Fees, 29% Meals, 27% Extra curricula, 34% Private tuition

• Current financing pattern raises major equity/sustainability issues
Other private sources

- Diversity of other private financers reflecting the diversity of providers
- 14% of total ECE funding in 2018
- Often one-off contributions
- => Sustainability issue over time

Development partners

- Donor support for ECE is on the rise (positive signal)
- However, support
  - limited in size
  - Often project-driven
  - few actors
- => Sustainability at stake

Trend in the distribution of donor ECE spending by education level, 2015-2018 (% and million GMD)

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<th>Without WFP*</th>
<th>With WFP</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECE</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>LBS</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>UBS</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSS</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total amount (ml GMD)</td>
<td>223.9</td>
<td>105.5</td>
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Key take away points

• The Gambia achieved relatively high ECE coverage with little government financial support

• HH bear disproportionate share of cost, raising sustainability & equity issues

• Low levels of school readiness suggest inefficient use of existing resources & inadequate levels of ECE funding

• ‘Building back better’ requires sharp increase of ECE funding (public & private) & better use of resources for (a) cost-effective quality investments (b) inclusion of most vulnerable

• Simulation financial education models are useful tools for assessing and testing the financial, human, technical and feasibility of alternative polices options

• Data challenges : ECE data is multi-sourced, not centralized. Data/information often inconsistent or missing. Strengthening ECE data including financial data tracking critical to monitor ECE and advocate for more resources
Thank you for your attention

Brief available on: