



“Inspiring the leaders of tomorrow. That is my dream.”



Sona Jobarteh's
Gambia Academy

IS SEEKING TO HIRE A

LITERACY CURRICULUM DEVELOPER

REMOTE CONTRACT POSITION
MARCH – DECEMBER 2023

APPLICATION DEADLINE
15 JANUARY 2023

The Gambia Academy is looking for an experienced literacy curriculum developer to launch our curriculum initiative by creating a series of core literacy documents serving the purpose of a teacher instructional manual and teacher/volunteer training document.

About The Gambia Academy

Drawing from her background as educator, performing artist and griot, Sona Jobarteh launched The Gambia Academy in 2015. Her goal: to decolonise the current education systems in Africa by creating a new academic education model that centres students around their own history, culture, and traditions. Four pillars of the academy:



What started with 21 young students, selected from over 400 candidates, is fast becoming a more sustainable model for other education and vocational efforts across Africa. Here, young Gambian girls and boys are acquiring the requisite tools, knowledge, and experience they need to pursue any profession within their own country to a high level of excellence and recognition.

Recent investments from UNICEF, Zakat Foundation of America, and others have enabled the academy to break ground on a brand new 50-hectare campus and simultaneously develop customized curriculum in four core subject areas: Literacy, African History, Science and Maths.

Situated in a rural area on the southern edge of The Gambia this will enable us to expand The Academy's junior enrollment to 200 students and launch a comprehensive senior program in specialized areas of study for those 18 or older.



If you're a literacy curriculum specialist and you think you are able to help us create a transformative program that we aim to see replicated across the continent, please read on.

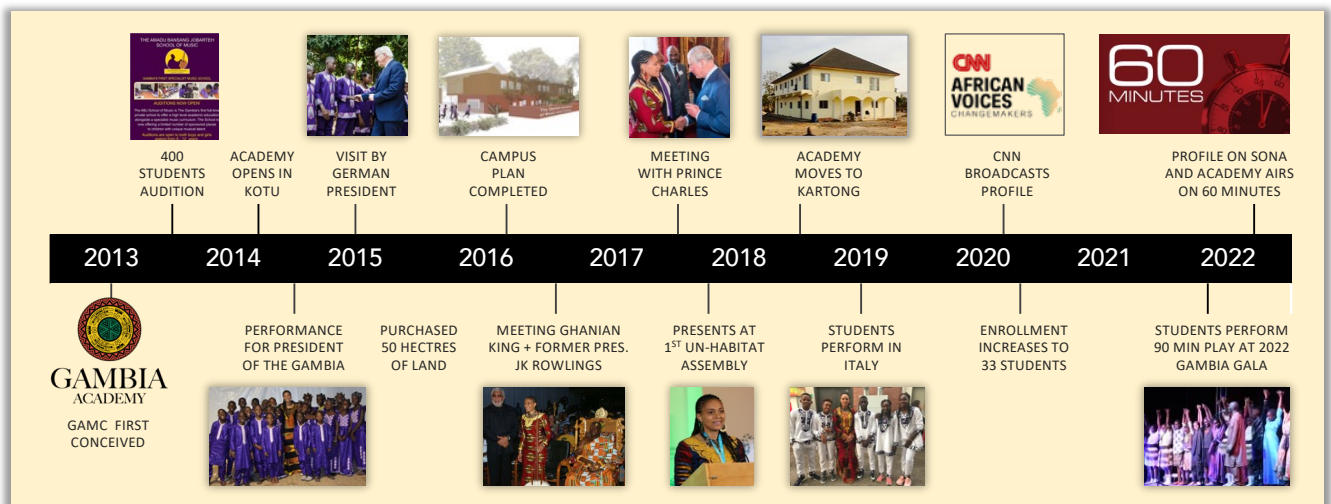
Current education models are ones that have been transplanted onto the continent from Europe. By their very nature and orientation around European value systems, they naturally set students on a trajectory away from Africa and towards Europe.

Through what they are exposed to within this system, students learn from a young age that success is synonymous with either being or emulating the European. Powerful messages relating to their identity are being conveyed when it is expected for African students and teacher to wear European clothes to school; to speak, read and write only European languages; and to learn European history before their own.

The Gambia Academy vehemently rejects this deeply entrenched narrative. To this end, the academy is dedicated to driving much-needed educational reform in Africa by:

- Centering curriculum on the identity, culture, history, and social needs of the students
- Drawing on beneficial aspects of African cultural value systems
- Fostering entrepreneurship, innovation, and critical thought
- Nurturing self-confidence and pride in identity
- Developing the students holistically, not compartmentally

Our past accomplishments serve as great preparation for the road ahead.



Quoting Ms. Jobarteh: “It is of utmost importance to demonstrate tangibly and constantly that to be successful and educated is also synonymous with being a proud African.”

Curriculum Purpose-built for Success in Africa

The Gambia Academy’s unique curriculum fosters the holistic development of each child, incorporating skills in leadership and a range of vocational disciplines while centering on African values, culture, and history. Three central tenants of our pedagogy are:

1. The curriculum is demonstrative rather than instructional

Children learn best through active participation rather than behind their desks. For this reason, lessons are structured in such a way that students are required to actively engage by applying the information taught in the classroom to solving and dealing with real-life challenges. It is important to note that the learning practice of active participation resonates with the cultural values in many African countries.

2. Lessons are concept-based rather than subject-centric

Instead of teaching subjects in isolation, we choose themes and topics that run throughout all concurrent classes. We deploy an inquiry-based, hands-on approach that relates directly to the society focusing, for example, on infrastructure, waste management, healthcare, and nutrition. These experiences develop students holistically instead of compartmentally.

3. A campus that celebrates being African

Students are in a place of learning that resonates with their own heritage, fostering self-assurance and pride in identity. For example, engraved paving stones, adorned walkways and corridors celebrate important historical moments in African history as well as influential African personalities. Other examples include:

- Uniforms that proudly reflect their African heritage
- A library that preserves and celebrates African literature, history, art and culture
- Buildings that infuse modern architecture with an African aesthetic
- Studios that showcase the most vibrant aspects of African culture
- Statues and artwork interspersed throughout the academy grounds



The Gambia Academy and its founder, Sona Jobarteh, were recently profiled on 60 MINUTES.

To watch on YouTube, [click here.](#)

New Curriculum Developed from the Ground Up

The Gambia Academy is dedicated to developing new “Africanized” curriculum that empowers our next generation with the education, skills and mindset required for achieving professional and personal success here in West Africa. The education framework centres on four core content areas: Literacy, African History, Science, and Maths. All learning, regardless of age or ability, reflects the needs of the society, whilst integrating African culture, history, values and traditions within its core.



Literacy is the Cornerstone of All Other Learning



At the academy, expressing oneself and finding one's voice through one's first language is seen as a step towards empowering each student to fully embody their culture and identity. Thus, this serves as a catalyst to foster active and empowered agents of change in their communities and beyond.

While reading and writing are both essential parts of literacy education, it is the first and foremost recognized social practice that embodies ideology, culture, and language. It is a means of communication in each student's first language that will allow them to make sense of the world around them.

Here, the mastery of literacy falls into two concentrations - Essential Literacy Skills and Expressive Literary Skills. The former covers the foundational skills of reading and writing, while the latter focuses on critical thinking, creative thinking, and spoken literacy skills.

Responsibilities of the Literacy Curriculum Developer

The ideal candidate takes an ethnographic approach to better understand the context in which the learning and teaching takes place while considering the essential outcomes of the curriculum delivery. The literacy curriculum, itself, should provide both the conceptual framework alongside learning outcomes, unit scope and sequence maps, as well as the practical day-to day-lessons and activities.

The Scope and Volume of the Product

The final product is a complete academic year's worth of curriculum documents contextualized for African learners. The units will be differentiated and mapped out for the three levels of student competences where these groups are based on the ability rather than actual age: Beginner (approx. grade 2), Intermediate (approx. grade 5) and Advanced (approx. grade 8). The British Curriculum is used as a base reference for the content and the topics covered. The structure of practical literacy components should draw from, but not be limited to, best practices of the Balanced Literacy approach and inquiry-based programs. Final deliverables consist of one overarching document containing conceptual framework, methodology, procedures, and resources as well as scope and sequence maps of the yearly units. There are also three additional, first-term instructional documents with units' learning outcomes and detailed lesson plans (approximately for 16 weeks) for each level of learners: Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced.

Curriculum Writing Methodology

The literacy curriculum should be created using the principles of *Backward Design* or any similar approach that allows for planning *with the end in mind*. It is highly recommended that the specialist be familiar with the *Universal Design for Learning* and/or able to apply this framework when creating the content of the curriculum .

Assignment Duration

From 1st March to 10th October, a minimum of 350-400 writing hours are expected plus several Zoom meetings. Some additional hours will also be required in December for an end of term review session and an additional round of modifications to the materials.

Professional Qualifications

The ideal candidate is an experienced curriculum writer-practitioner from any of the following educational backgrounds ... literacy, linguistics, anthropology, or teacher education. The candidate holds an extensive record of curriculum development for specific school contexts, exhibiting knowledge of best practices in curriculum writing such as Backward Design and Spiral Approach to unit writing.

Although the posting for this job is focused on writing the literacy curriculum for The Gambia Academy in The Gambia, the candidate should have experience researching or studying other education systems within the continent of Africa. The candidate will also have an active interest in decolonising education systems and student-centred learning.

- Prior experience in curriculum writing and implementation
- B.A. in education-related field plus, preferably, a graduate degree (master's or doctoral degree) in educational leadership and/or curriculum and instruction
- Classroom teaching experience, including experience in international schools or a multi-cultural setting
- Record of engagement and professional collaboration, teacher-leader initiatives, professional learning, curriculum review and development, assessment and course design, and technology integration
- Knowledge of West Africa is a plus

Personal Characteristics

- Outstanding written and oral communication skills
- Well-developed interpersonal skills
- Cultural sensitivity
- Intelligence and creativity
- Integrity and fidelity
- Approachable and flexible
- Willingness to be an agent of change in decolonising education through the literacy curriculum

Technical Skills

- Reliable computer equipment and internet access
- Well-versed in using Google Drive
- Adobe and Microsoft Suite license

**“Education is the key to changing mindsets
and enabling the journey to self-determination,
and economic self sustainability.”**

Sona Jobarteh



Work is Remote, Except for Two Trips to The Gambia

The chosen specialist will be able to work remotely (assuming they have high-speed WiFi) with the exception of two 7-10 day trips to The Gambia. At the start of the project (March 2023), we want s/he to meet our students and teachers, experience our unique learning environment and gather critical input to produce the most effective end result. A return trip (October 2023) will focus on testing some of the new material and teacher training alongside Ms Jobarteh.

Project Timeline

The project activities follow the indicated timeline below. The dates reflect the assignment's progression and completion.

Key Dates	Activity / Milestone
1 February	Successful candidate selected.
15 February	Orientation begins.
1 March	Curriculum assignment commences.
1 – 15 March	Gambia Trip 1: Gain context and visit with students.
1 April	Literacy Curriculum Conceptual Framework, Methodology, Common Vocabulary and Understandings
1 May	Literacy Curriculum Overview - Scope and Sequence. Lesson plans for Sept-Dec. term – Beginner, Grade 2.
1 June	Literacy Curriculum Overview - Scope and Sequence. Lesson plans for Sept-Dec. term – Intermediate, Grade 5.
1 July	Literacy Curriculum Overview - Scope and Sequence. Lesson plans for Sept-Dec. term – Advanced, Grade 8.
1 August	Literacy Curriculum delivered.
Test and Refine Phase	
11 September	Official Start of the School Year.
1-10 October	Return to campus for in-person teacher training.
15 December	Review term feedback and refine materials accordingly.

Compensation and Benefits

Compensation will be very competitive, commensurate with experience.

“Education is the most powerful weapon
which you can use to change the world.”

Nelson Mandela

How to Apply

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to send following documents as one continual PDF file no later than 15 January 2023 to the **emails provided** below.

- Letter of interest (cover letter) specific to this position and no longer than two pages. Please tell us why you are interested in The Gambia Academy and how you believe your professional experience aligns with this Literacy Curriculum Developer position.
- Current CV/ resume (no longer than two pages).
- Three references no older than three years, who can be contacted upon the receipt of the application.
- 2-3-page work sample (curricula, curriculum maps, professional development materials, brochures, course syllabi, lesson plans...)

APPLICATION DEADLINE 15 JANUARY 2023

Mr Todd Hoffman (Director of Gambia Academy US) and Ms Vesna Radivojevic (independent educational consultant) are leading this search effort. Please email your application to both of them at the following addresses:

- Todd Hoffman: thoffman@thegambiaacademy.org
- Vesna Radivojevic: info@train-and-teach.org

We kindly thank you for the interest in this position. Your candidacy is highly appreciated and will be given due time and careful consideration. All properly submitted applications will receive a response.

The Gambia Academy reserves the right to close the selection process at any time if an ideal candidate is found.



Gambia Academy

www.thegambiaacademy.org