

# Sustainability in African Cities: A Review of Banjul, the Gambia

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**Abstract:**

This review article is to highlight gaps and peculiar problems facing Banjul, The Gambia, as an example of most of the urbanising cities of Africa. Banjul is the capital of The Gambia, the smallest anglophone African country. The objectives of reviewing sustainability in Banjul, The Gambia are to assess the current state of sustainability in Banjul, to identify the challenges facing sustainable development in the city, to highlight best practices and success stories in sustainability, and to propose recommendations for improving sustainable development in Banjul. The paper posits that collaborative programmes of activities involving various stakeholders ensure proper attention and provision in critical areas for development such as infrastructure development like road networks, electricity supply and distribution, water supply, and sewage systems. Others include economic development such as training and capacity building for local businesses and entrepreneurs. Social issues such as sanitation and gender equality are also critical for consideration. These are the identified areas that must be addressed for Banjul to achieve the status of a model city in Africa. It concludes that it is essential that government, private sector, international organisations, and well-spirited individuals collaborate to make the situation in Banjul workable as a model capital city.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Development, Sustainability, Poverty, Development, Urbanisation

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## Banjul, The Gambia – Background

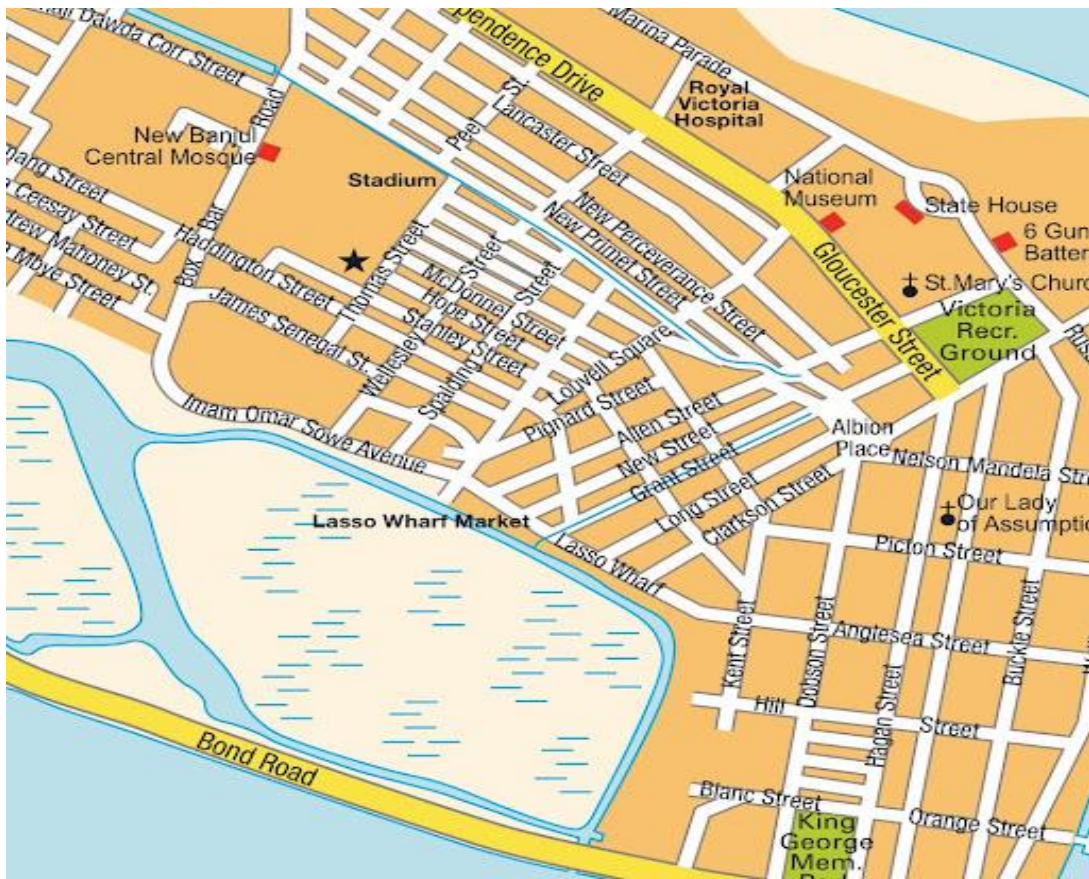
**Location:** Banjul is located on the estuary of the River Gambia. Banjul is the political and economic capital of the Country.

**Geography:** Rainfall is from June to October. The average temperature is about 31 Degrees Celsius. The geography of Banjul is very similar to those of other West African neighbors. This is because they share very similar challenges and opportunities as well as historical circumstances.

**Historical Development:** Contact between The Gambia and Europe commenced in the 15th Century. By the mid-18th Century, the country became a British protectorate. The Gambia became a sovereign Republic in the Commonwealth in 1970.

**Regional Significance:** Bordered on the East, North, and South by Senegal, The Gambia maintains a very cordial relationship with her francophone neighbour.

Figure A. Street Map of Banjul, Capital City of The Gambia - Source: Google Maps



I. INTRODUCTION

The topic of sustainability in urbanising Africa is an important and complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach. Banjul, the capital city of The Gambia, is one of many cities in Africa facing rapid urbanisation and a growing population. To study sustainability in Banjul, it is essential to look at the city's current infrastructure, economic development, and social issues. Tables 1 and 2 show the demographics of Banjul citizens on a daily basis.

Table 1. Banjul, The Gambia – Profile Information:

Source – The World Bank

Total number of residential properties with a title deed	n/a
Number of formal dwellings completed annually	n/a
Number of residential projects certified by EDGE	n/a
Price of the cheapest, newly built house by a formal developer or contractor in an urban area in local currency units [h]	1 776 000 GMD
Size of cheapest, newly built house by a formal developer or contractor in an urban area [h]	70m <sup>2</sup>
Typical monthly rental for the cheapest, newly built house [h]	6 660 GMD
Cost of standard 50kg bag of cement in local currency units [h]	350 GMD (US\$6.48)
Type of deeds registry: digital, scanned or paper (2020) [i]	Paper
World Bank Ease of Doing Business index rank (2020) [i]	155
Time to register property (days)   Cost to register property (2020) [i]	73 days   7.8%
World Bank DBI Quality of Land Administration index score (0-30) (2020) [i]	9.5

NB: Figures are for 2022 unless stated otherwise.

- [a] Xe.com
- [b] World Bank World Development Indicators
- [c] Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center
- [d] United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)
- [e] Demographic and Health Surveys, USAID
- [f] Home Finance Company of The Gambia Limited
- [g] Central Bank of The Gambia
- [h] Blue Ocean Properties Limited
- [i] World Bank Ease of Doing Business Indicators

Table 2. The Gambia in Brief: Source – The Gambia Country Report

TABLE 1: The Gambia in Brief – Key Figures and Indicators

INDICATOR	VALUE	SOURCE
<b>DEMOGRAPHY</b>		
Population (thousands)	2,347.7	WDI based on 2019 data
Urban population (% of total population)	61.9	WDI based on 2019 data
Youth population (% of total population, aged under 25)	65	National census, 2013
Life expectancy at birth (years)	61.7	WDI based on 2018 data
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	35.9	WDI based on 2019 data
Adult literacy rate (% of people ages 15 and above)	50.8	WDI based on 2015 data
Youth literacy rate (% of people ages 15-24)	67.2	ibid.
Learning adjusted years of schooling	5.4	WB Human Capital Index 2020
Labor force participation (% of total population ages 15-64)	50.5	Modelled ILO estimates, as reported by WDI for 2019
Employment in agriculture (% of total labor force / estimated % of pop.)	46 / 72	Integrated Household Survey (IHS), 2015/2016
<b>ECONOMY &amp; SHARED PROSPERITY</b>		
GDP, 2020, market prices (\$M national)	979	CBG <sup>a</sup>
Real GDP per capita, 2020 (US\$)	680.9	WB calc. based on CBG <sup>a</sup> data
Real GDP growth, 2020 (%)	-0.2	CBG <sup>a</sup>
Poverty rate, international poverty line, 2015 (US\$1.90 per capita per day)	10.3	IHS, 2015
Poverty rate, national poverty line, 2015	48.6	ibid.
Gini coefficient, 2015 (%)	35.9	WB estimate based on IHS 2015
Access to electricity, national / rural, 2018 (%)	62 / 26.7	DHS 2019-20

## II. DISCUSSION

### 2.1 Existing Infrastructure

Banjul's infrastructure is inadequate to meet the needs of its growing population. The city's roads are poorly maintained and lack street lighting, which makes it difficult for pedestrians and drivers to navigate the city at night. Figure 1 demonstrates different modes of transport in Banjul, The Gambia. The city's water and sewage systems are also inadequate, leading to poor sanitation and the spread of disease. This is evident from Figure 2 showing access to potable water consumption in Banjul.

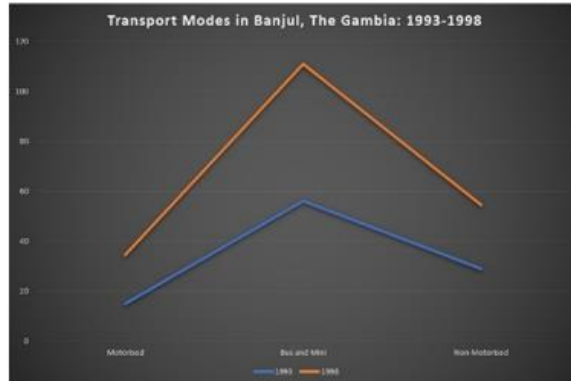


Figure 1: Transport Modes in Banjul, The Gambia

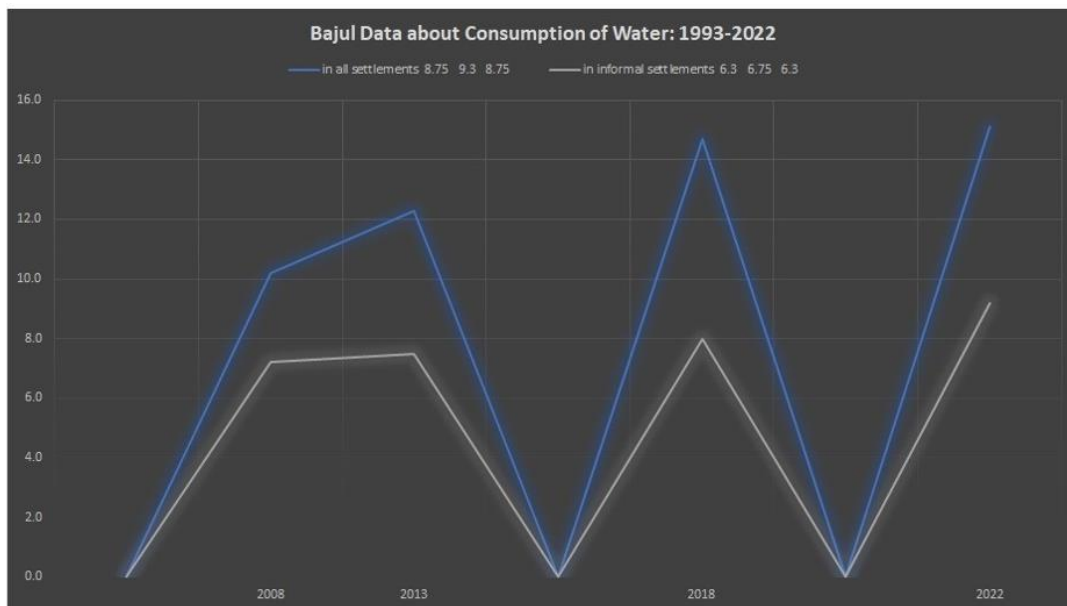


Figure 1: Banjul, The Gambia - Data About Water Consumption 1993-2022

Figure 3 shows the gross reduction in the number of people with access to managed sanitation from 2000 to 2021.

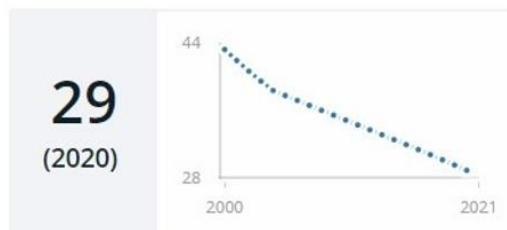
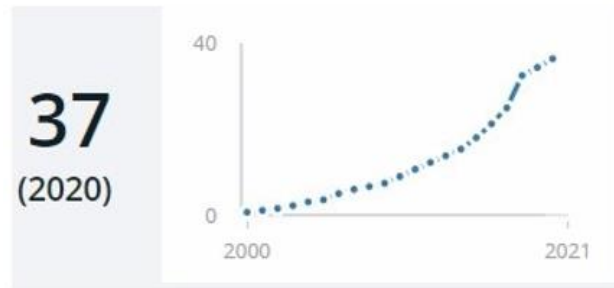


Figure 3: Banjul - People with Access to Managed Sanitation

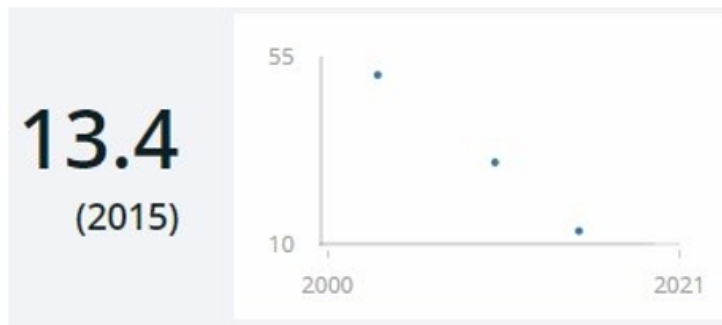
The lack of reliable electricity and internet connectivity makes it difficult for businesses to operate and for individuals to access information (Arimah, 2017). Figure 4 shows people in Banjul with access to the Internet



**Figure 4: Banjul - People with Reliable Electricity and Internet**

## 2.2 Economic Development

Banjul's economy is heavily reliant on the service sector, with tourism being a significant contributor to the city's GDP. However, the city's tourism industry has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the need for economic diversification (The World Bank, 2022). The city's informal sector is also an essential part of the economy, but it faces challenges such as limited access to credit, a lack of legal recognition, and inadequate infrastructure. The Poverty Head-Count as shown in Figure 5 shows the level of poverty in Banjul.



**Figure 5: Banjul Poverty Head-Count at US\$2.15 per Day**

## 2.3 Social Issues

To promote sustainability in Banjul, there needs to be a concerted effort by the government and other stakeholders to address these issues. This could involve investing in infrastructure development, promoting economic diversification, and implementing social policies that promote equality and inclusion (African Development Bank, 2019). The city could also adopt sustainable practices such as promoting renewable energy and improving waste management to reduce its environmental footprint. Ultimately, achieving sustainability in Banjul will require a collaborative effort from all stakeholders, including government, businesses, and civil society.

# III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

## 3.1 Infrastructure In Banjul

The infrastructure in Banjul is currently inadequate to meet the needs of its growing population. The city's road network is poorly maintained, with potholes and cracks making it difficult for vehicles to traverse. Many of the city's streets lack adequate lighting, which poses a safety hazard for pedestrians and drivers, particularly at night (The Automobile Association (AA), 2022). Figure 6 shows more people are investing in the private motorised modes of transport in Banjul, The Gambia.

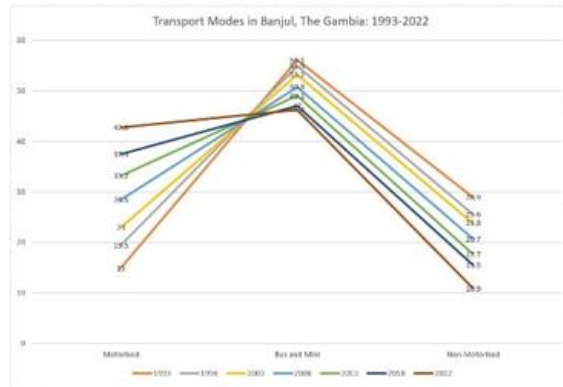


Figure 6. Transport Modes in Banjul, 1993 - 2022

### 3.1.1 Road Networks in Banjul, The Gambia

Banjul is the capital city of The Gambia, a small country in West Africa. The road network in Banjul consists of both paved and unpaved roads, and the overall infrastructure is still developing.

The main road in Banjul is Independence Drive, which runs along the coast and connects the city to the neighbouring towns of Bakau and Serrekunda. There are also several other main roads in the city, including Kairaba Avenue, Kombo Sillah Drive, and Bertil Harding Highway, which connect different neighbourhoods and suburbs (Britannica, T., 2019).

The majority of roads in Banjul are unpaved, which can make them difficult to navigate during the rainy season when they can become muddy and flooded. However, efforts have been made to improve the road infrastructure in recent years, and several major road construction projects have been undertaken.

In addition to the road network, Banjul also has a ferry terminal that connects the city to the southern bank of the Gambia River, which can be a more efficient means of transportation for those traveling long distances within the country. There is also an international airport, Banjul International Airport, located about 30 kilometres (18.6 miles) outside of the city (Culture Trip, 2018).

### 3.1.2 Water Supply and Sewage Systems

Banjul's **water supply and sewage systems** are also inadequate, leading to **poor sanitation and health problems** for residents. Many households do not have access to a reliable supply of clean drinking water, and the wastewater management system is insufficient, leading to the contamination of water sources and the spread of diseases such as cholera.

Access to clean water and proper sanitation is a challenging and important issue in Banjul, as it is in many developing cities of The Gambia. In 2017, an estimated 502,000 deaths occurred as a result of non-potable water. 280,000 died from poor sanitation, and 297,000 from poor hygiene, nationwide. The city has a water treatment plant that supplies water to the majority of residents, although some areas still rely on wells or other sources (Hutton & Chase, 2017). As shown in Figure 7, poor sanitation and health problems take their turn easily on children under the age of five years. This is clearly demonstrated in the reference figure showing a gradual improvement from 1998 to 2022.

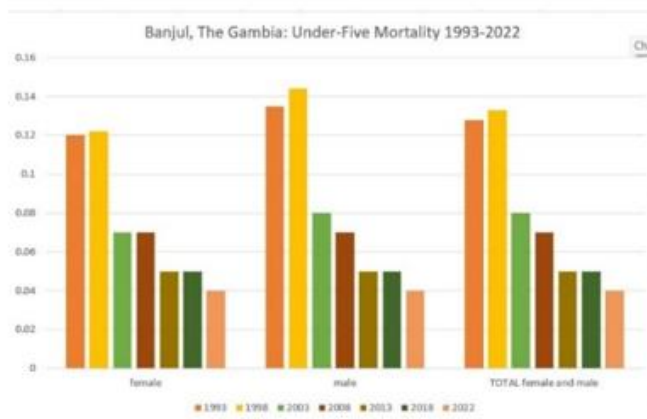


Figure 7. Under-Five Mortality in Banjul, The Gambia



The water supply system in Banjul has faced challenges, such as aging infrastructure and limited resources, resulting in periodic water shortages in some areas. To address these issues, the government has undertaken various projects to improve the water supply and distribution network.

Sewage disposal is also a significant issue in Banjul, with many residents relying on pit latrines or other basic forms of sanitation. The city has a sewage treatment plant, but it has been reported to have limited capacity and struggles to meet demand. This has led to issues with waste management and environmental pollution (Ekanem, 2023).

Efforts are being made to address these challenges, including the construction of new sewage treatment facilities and the implementation of sanitation programs aimed at improving waste management practices. However, there is still much work to be done to ensure access to safe and reliable water and sanitation for all residents of Banjul.

### **3.1.3 Poor Sanitation and Health Problems**

Poor sanitation can lead to a variety of health problems, and Banjul is no exception. The lack of proper sanitation infrastructure in many parts of the city has contributed to issues such as waterborne diseases, respiratory infections, and other illnesses. 1 per cent of The Gambians still practice open defecation, while less than 30.9 per cent practice hand washing with detergents or soap (UNICEF, 2023).

One of the primary concerns related to poor sanitation in Banjul is the spread of waterborne diseases such as cholera, typhoid fever, and dysentery. These diseases can spread quickly through contaminated water sources, which are more likely to occur in areas with inadequate sanitation facilities.

In addition to waterborne illnesses, poor sanitation can also contribute to respiratory infections and other health problems. When waste is not properly managed, it can release harmful gases and pollutants into the air, which can exacerbate respiratory conditions and other health issues (World Health Organization (WHO), 2022).

### **3.1.4 Access To Supply Of Clean Potable Water In Banjul**

The impact of poor sanitation on public health is a serious concern in Banjul, and efforts are being made to improve the situation. The government has implemented various programs aimed at improving access to clean water and proper sanitation facilities, and international aid organizations are also working to address these issues. However, progress has been slow, and more work is needed to ensure that all residents of Banjul have access to safe and healthy living conditions (UNICEF, 2023).

Access to clean and safe drinking water is a critical issue in Banjul, as it is in many other developing cities. While the majority of residents in Banjul have access to the municipal water supply, there are still many areas that lack reliable access to clean water.

One of the main challenges facing the water supply in Banjul is the aging infrastructure, which can lead to leaks and water losses. Additionally, the water treatment plant has limited capacity and struggles to keep up with demand, particularly during periods of high usage or drought.

As a result of these challenges, many residents in Banjul rely on alternative sources of water, such as boreholes, wells, or rainwater harvesting systems. However, these sources may not always be reliable or safe, particularly during periods of drought or when groundwater becomes contaminated.

Despite government efforts, access to clean and safe drinking water remains a significant challenge in Banjul, particularly in informal settlements and low-income areas. Further investment in water infrastructure and sanitation facilities is needed to ensure that all residents have access to safe and reliable water supplies.

### **3.1.5 Wastewater Management System in Banjul, The Gambia**

Wastewater management is an important issue in Banjul, as it is in many other cities around the world. The city has a sewage treatment plant, but it struggles to keep up with demand and has limited capacity. This has led to issues with sewage overflow and contamination of water sources.

In addition to the limited capacity of the sewage treatment plant, there are also challenges related to the aging infrastructure and inadequate collection systems. Many residents in Banjul rely on pit latrines or other basic forms of sanitation, which can lead to groundwater contamination and other environmental issues (Gudda, Moturi, Oduor, Muchiri, & Ensink, 2019).

Efforts are being made to address these challenges, including the construction of new sewage treatment facilities and the implementation of sanitation programs aimed at improving waste management practices. The government is also working to improve the collection and transportation of wastewater, particularly in informal settlements and low-income areas.

### **3.1.6 Contamination of Water Sources and Spread of Diseases**

Despite many efforts, there is still much work to be done to improve the wastewater management system in Banjul. Investments in infrastructure and technology, as well as education and awareness-raising initiatives, are needed to ensure that all residents have access to safe and reliable sanitation facilities and to prevent environmental

pollution. Contamination of water sources is a significant concern in Banjul, as it frequently leads to the spread of waterborne diseases and other health issues. The lack of proper sanitation infrastructure, combined with aging water supply systems and inadequate waste management practices, contributes to the contamination of water sources in many parts of the city (Barrow, Corr, Mustapha, & Kuye, 2021).

Efforts are being made to address these issues, including the implementation of programs aimed at improving sanitation infrastructure and waste management practices. Despite these efforts, the contamination of water sources and the spread of diseases remain significant challenges in Banjul. More investment in water infrastructure and sanitation facilities is needed, along with greater awareness of the importance of clean water and proper waste management practices for public health.

### **3.1.7 Electricity Supply and Frequent Power Outages in Banjul, The Gambia**

Banjul city's electricity supply is unreliable, with frequent power outages that can last for hours. This has a significant impact on businesses and households, as it affects productivity, disrupts daily routines, and can lead to losses in revenue. Electricity supply and frequent power outages are significant issues in Banjul, as they are in many other cities in sub-Saharan Africa. The electricity supply in Banjul is primarily provided by the National Water and Electricity Company (NAWEC), which struggles to meet the growing demand for electricity due to inadequate generation capacity and aging infrastructure (Steinbuks, Timilsina, & Alberini, 2022).

In addition to the inconvenience of power outages, the lack of reliable electricity supply can also have serious implications for public health and safety. Hospitals, schools, and other critical facilities may be unable to function properly during power outages, and residents may be forced to rely on unsafe or unreliable sources of lighting and cooking fuel.

### **3.1.8 Businesses and Households' Productivity in Banjul, The Gambia**

Productivity in Banjul is adversely affected by poor infrastructure. Improving infrastructure in the city will require significant investment and planning. Table 1 shows the Key Figures and Indicators in The Gambia as a whole. Infrastructure alone would involve upgrading the road network, installing streetlights, improving water and sewage systems, and investing in renewable energy sources to provide a reliable electricity supply. It is also essential to prioritize infrastructure development in the city's informal settlements, where residents often lack access to basic services such as electricity and water (Nduhuura, Garschagen, & Zerga, 2021).

## **3.2 Economic Development In Banjul**

### **3.2.1 Service Sector in Banjul**

Banjul's economy is heavily reliant on the service sector, particularly tourism. The city's strategic location on the Atlantic coast and its historic landmarks such as Arch 22 and the National Museum of The Gambia make it an attractive destination for tourists. The city's tourism industry provides employment opportunities and generates revenue for the local economy.

The service sector is an important component of the economy in Banjul, contributing to the city's economic growth and development. The service sector encompasses a broad range of activities, including finance, tourism, transportation, telecommunications, and other professional services (Khanal, Rahman, Khanam, & Velayutham, 2022).

The **financial sector** is an important part of the service sector in Banjul, with several commercial banks, microfinance institutions, and other financial services providers operating in the city. These institutions provide a range of services, including savings and loans, insurance, and investment products.

**Tourism** is also an important part of the service sector in Banjul, with the city attracting a growing number of visitors each year. The city is home to several hotels, resorts, and other tourist facilities, as well as a range of cultural attractions and historical sites.

The **transportation sector** is also an important part of the service sector in Banjul, with the city serving as a major transportation hub for the surrounding region. The port of Banjul is a key gateway for goods entering and leaving the country, while the Banjul International Airport serves as a major hub for air transportation. Telecommunications and other professional services are also growing sectors in Banjul, with several companies offering services in areas such as IT, consulting, and legal services.

Overall, the service sector plays a critical role in the economy of Banjul, providing employment opportunities, supporting economic growth and development, and contributing to the city's overall prosperity.

### **3.2.2 Economic Diversification in Banjul**

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted Banjul's tourism industry, highlighting the need for economic diversification. The city's informal sector is an important part of the economy, providing employment opportunities for many residents. However, the sector faces challenges such as limited access to credit, a lack of legal recognition, and inadequate infrastructure (The World Bank, 2022). Economic diversification is an important priority for Banjul, as the city seeks to reduce its dependence on traditional

industries such as agriculture and fishing and to develop new sectors that can drive economic growth and create employment opportunities. Some of the key areas requiring focus for economic diversification in Banjul include:

- i. **Tourism:** Tourism has significant potential in Banjul, and efforts are being made to develop the sector further. This includes investments in tourism infrastructure, marketing campaigns, and efforts to improve the overall visitor experience.
- ii. **Information and Communication Technology (ICT):** Banjul is well-positioned to become a hub for ICT. This is because of its strategic location, growing population of tech-savvy young people, and government support for the sector.
- iii. **Manufacturing:** Manufacturing has significant potential in Banjul. Efforts are being made to promote local manufacturing, particularly in areas such as agro-processing, textiles, and light manufacturing.
- iv. **Financial Services:** Banjul is home to several banks, microfinance institutions, and other financial services providers, and there is potential to further develop the sector. This includes expanding access to financial services for underserved populations, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, and promoting the use of digital financial services.
- v. **Renewable Energy:** Banjul has significant potential for renewable energy, particularly solar and wind energy.

Broadly, economic diversification is a key priority for Banjul, as the city needs to build a more sustainable and resilient economy that can create jobs and support long-term growth and development. By promoting new sectors such as tourism, ICT, manufacturing, financial services, and renewable energy, Banjul can unlock new opportunities and position itself for a brighter future.

### **3.2.3 Access To Credit In Banjul, The Gambia**

Access to credit is an important issue in Banjul, as many individuals and businesses struggle to access affordable financing to support their activities. Some of the key challenges to accessing credit in Banjul include:

- i. **Limited Formal Financial Institutions:** Banjul has a limited number of formal financial institutions, including banks and microfinance institutions, which can make it difficult for individuals and businesses to access credit.
- ii. **High-Interest Rates:** Even when credit is available, interest rates can be high, which can make it difficult for borrowers to repay their loans and limit their ability to invest in their activities.
- iii. **Limited Collateral:** Many individuals and businesses in Banjul lack the collateral or credit history needed to access traditional bank loans, which can limit their access to credit.
- iv. **Informal Lending:** In the absence of formal lending institutions, many individuals and businesses turn to informal lenders, such as moneylenders or family and friends. While these sources of credit can be more accessible, they often come with higher interest rates and limited borrower protections.

Efforts are being made to improve access to credit in Banjul, including through the development of microfinance institutions and other alternative financing mechanisms. The government has also established programs to support entrepreneurship and small business development, which can help to promote access to credit and other forms of financing. However, more needs to be done to address the systemic challenges to accessing credit in Banjul, in order to unlock the full economic potential of the city and support its long-term growth and development.

### **3.2.4 Business Support Services In Banjul, The Gambia**

To promote economic development in Banjul, there is a need to diversify the economy beyond the service sector and to support the growth of the informal sector. This could involve promoting the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and providing access to credit and business support services. The government could also invest in infrastructure development and provide tax incentives to attract foreign investment and promote business growth. Business support services are important for entrepreneurs and businesses in Banjul, as they can provide critical assistance and resources to help them start and grow their businesses. Some of the key business support services available in Banjul include:

- i. **Business Training and Education:** Several organizations in Banjul offer training and educational programs for entrepreneurs and small business owners. These programs can cover topics such as business planning, marketing, and financial management, and can provide valuable skills and knowledge to help businesses succeed.
- ii. **Incubation and Acceleration Programs:** There are a number of incubators and accelerators in Banjul that provide support to early-stage businesses, including mentorship, funding, and access to resources such as office space and equipment.
- iii. **Access to Finance:** As discussed earlier, access to finance can be a challenge for businesses in Banjul. However, there are several programs and organizations that provide financing options to small businesses, including microfinance institutions and government-backed loan programs.



- iv. **Networking and Business Connections:** Networking events and business associations can provide valuable opportunities for entrepreneurs and small business owners to connect with potential partners, customers, and investors.
- v. **Technical Assistance and Consulting:** Several organizations in Banjul offer technical assistance and consulting services to businesses, including help with product development, supply chain management, and export/import support.

These business support services can provide critical assistance to entrepreneurs and businesses in Banjul, helping them to overcome challenges and realize their full potential. By promoting entrepreneurship and supporting small business development, Banjul can create new opportunities for employment and economic growth, and help to build a more sustainable and resilient economy for the future.

### **3.2.5 Legitimacy for the Informal Sector in Banjul**

The informal sector plays an important role in the economy of Banjul, as it accounts for a significant portion of employment and economic activity in the city. However, many informal workers and businesses operate without legal recognition or protections, which can limit their ability to access credit, government support programs, and other resources.

Increasing the legitimacy of the informal sector in Banjul is an important step in promoting inclusive and sustainable economic development, and ensuring that all workers and businesses have the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from the city's growth and prosperity (Güven & Karlen, 2020).

### **3.2.6 Training and Capacity Building for Local Businesses and Entrepreneurs**

Additionally, promoting sustainable tourism practices could help to build a more resilient tourism industry that benefits both the local economy and the environment. This could involve promoting eco-tourism, developing sustainable tourism infrastructure, and investing in training and capacity building for local businesses and entrepreneurs.

Training and capacity-building programs are essential for local businesses and entrepreneurs in Banjul to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed and grow in today's competitive business environment. There are several organizations and initiatives in Banjul that provide training and capacity-building support to local businesses and entrepreneurs.

- i. **The Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI):** The GCCCI is a private sector organization that provides training and capacity-building programs for businesses in Banjul and the wider Gambia. These programs include business management training, entrepreneurship development, and mentorship and coaching.
- ii. **Gambia Youth Chamber of Commerce (GYCC):** The GYCC is a youth-led organization that provides training and capacity-building programs to young entrepreneurs in Banjul and other parts of the Gambia. These programs include skills development, business incubation, and mentorship.
- iii. **National Training Authority (NTA):** The NTA is a government agency responsible for developing and implementing training and capacity-building programs in various sectors of the economy, including business and entrepreneurship. The NTA works with other organizations to provide training programs for local businesses and entrepreneurs.
- iv. **Youth Empowerment Project (YEP):** The YEP is a government-funded initiative that provides training and capacity-building programs for young entrepreneurs in Banjul and other parts of the Gambia. These programs include business planning, financial management, and marketing.
- v. **Start-up Incubator Gambia:** The Start-up Incubator Gambia is a private sector initiative that provides training and mentorship to early-stage businesses in Banjul and other parts of the Gambia. The incubator provides access to resources such as office space, equipment, and funding.

In general, these training and capacity-building programs can provide critical support to local businesses and entrepreneurs in Banjul, helping them to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed and grow in a competitive business environment. By investing in the development of local businesses and entrepreneurs, Banjul can create new opportunities for employment and economic growth, and help to build a more sustainable and resilient economy for the future. This will require a collaborative effort between the government, the private sector, and civil society. It will be essential to prioritize inclusive and sustainable economic growth that benefits all members of the community, particularly those in marginalized and informal sectors.

## **3.3 Social Issues In Banjul**

Banjul faces a range of social issues, including poverty, unemployment, and a lack of affordable housing. These issues are particularly acute in the city's informal settlements, where residents often lack access to basic services such as electricity, water, and sanitation (Ferronato & Torretta, 2019).

### **3.3.1 Poverty in Banjul**

Poverty is a significant challenge in Banjul, with a large proportion of the population living below the poverty line. Many residents struggle to access basic necessities such as food, healthcare, and education. Unemployment

is also a significant problem, particularly among young people, with many unable to find stable employment opportunities (BTI Transformation Index, 2022). Banjul is the capital city of The Gambia, a small country in West Africa. Like many other cities in developing countries, poverty is a significant issue in Banjul. The majority of the population in Banjul lives in poverty, with limited access to basic necessities such as food, clean water, and healthcare.

One of the main causes of poverty in Banjul is the lack of economic opportunities. The Gambia has a high youth unemployment rate, which means that many young people in Banjul are unable to find work and support themselves and their families. Additionally, the informal sector in Banjul is not well developed, which limits the opportunities for small business owners and entrepreneurs.

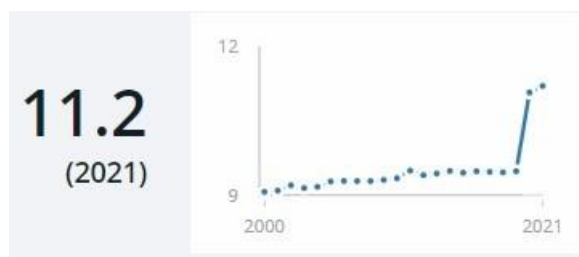
Another factor contributing to poverty in Banjul is limited access to education. Many families cannot afford to send their children to school, which limits their opportunities for future employment and economic mobility. In addition, the quality of education in Banjul is often poor, which means that even those who do attend school may not receive a good education that prepares them for the workforce.

The lack of access to basic services such as healthcare, clean water, and sanitation also contributes to poverty in Banjul. Poor health and hygiene can lead to chronic illnesses and further economic hardship for families who are already struggling to make ends meet.

Overall, poverty in Banjul is a complex issue with multiple underlying causes. Addressing poverty in Banjul will require a multifaceted approach that focuses on improving economic opportunities, increasing access to education and healthcare, and addressing the underlying systemic issues that contribute to poverty in the city.

### 3.3.2 Unemployment in Banjul

Unemployment is a significant challenge in Banjul, as in other parts of The Gambia. The city has a relatively high youth population, and many young people face difficulties in accessing formal employment opportunities. Several factors contribute to unemployment in Banjul, including the limited availability of formal jobs, particularly in the public sector, and the lack of skills and education among many job seekers. The informal sector provides some opportunities for self-employment, but many informal jobs are low-paying and lack security or benefits (Ceesay & Kakengi, 2020). Figure 8 demonstrates the trend of unemployment from 2000 to 2021 as well as the sudden surge.



*Figure 2. Unemployment Rate in Banjul, The Gambia*

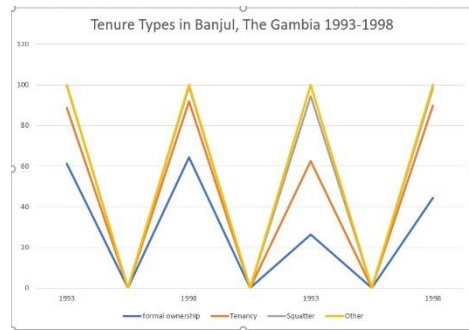
Efforts are being made to address unemployment in Banjul, including through the promotion of entrepreneurship and small business development. The government and private sector organizations are providing training and support services for entrepreneurs, and working to create an enabling environment for small businesses to thrive. However, much more needs to be done to address the root causes of unemployment in Banjul and to create sustainable, formal employment opportunities for young people and other job seekers.

In addition to these efforts, there is also a need for greater investment in education and skills development, particularly in areas that are in high demand in the labor market, such as information technology, health care, and tourism. By investing in education and skills development, Banjul can help to build a more skilled and competitive workforce and create new opportunities for employment and economic growth in the city.

### 3.3.3 Affordable Housing in Banjul

Housing is another major social issue in Banjul, with a lack of affordable housing options for many residents. This has led to the growth of informal settlements, which often lack basic services and infrastructure, posing health and safety risks for residents. Affordable housing is a significant challenge in Banjul, as in other parts of The Gambia. The city has a growing population, and many people face difficulties in accessing decent and affordable housing.

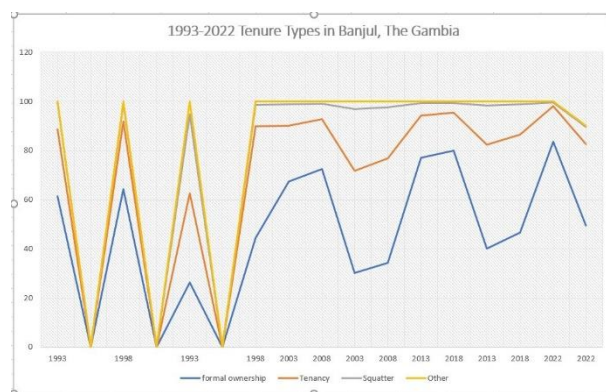
Several factors contribute to the lack of affordable housing in Banjul, including the high cost of construction materials and the limited availability of land for development. Additionally, many people lack the financial resources to purchase or rent housing that meets their needs, particularly in the formal sector. The traditional trend has not changed as seen in Figure 9.



**Figure 3. Banjul Tenure Types: 1993-1998**

Efforts are being made to address the affordable housing shortage in Banjul, including through government initiatives and private-sector investments. Despite these efforts, much more needs to be done to address the affordable housing shortage in Banjul. There is a need for greater investment in housing infrastructure, including the development of new housing projects and the rehabilitation of existing housing stock. Additionally, there is a need for greater support for low-income households to access financing and other resources to help them purchase or rent affordable housing (Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa, 2022). Figure 10 shows the trend of Tenure types:1993-2022

By addressing the affordable housing shortage in Banjul, the city can help to improve the living conditions of its residents, reduce poverty and inequality, and support sustainable economic growth.



**Figure 4. Banjul Tenure Types, 1993-2022**

### 3.3.4 Gender Inequality in Banjul

Gender inequality is also prevalent in Banjul, with women facing limited opportunities for education and employment. Many women are engaged in informal sector work, which often lacks legal recognition and provides little job security or social protection. Gender inequality is a significant challenge in Banjul, as in other parts of The Gambia. Despite progress in recent years, women and girls still face discrimination and barriers to full participation in all areas of life, including education, employment, and politics (Malta, Kolovich, Leyva, & Tavares, 2019). This is very obvious from Figure 11 showing the number of women parliamentarians in the Banjul Parliament in 2021

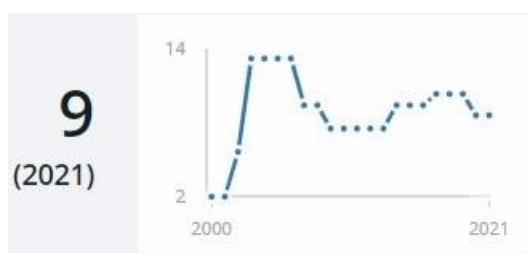


Figure 5. Proportion of Seats Held by Women Parliamentarians

One of the main drivers of gender inequality in Banjul is cultural and societal norms that limit women's opportunities and reinforce traditional gender roles. Women and girls are often expected to prioritize their roles as wives and mothers over their education and career aspirations, which can limit their opportunities and perpetuate gender disparities.

Efforts are being made to address gender inequality in Banjul, including through advocacy and policy initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Despite these efforts, much more needs to be done to address infrastructure, economic development, and social issues in Banjul. Community engagement and participation will be critical in addressing these issues, as it will help to ensure that policies and interventions are responsive to the needs and priorities of local residents. Collaborative efforts between the government, civil society, and the private sector are very essential to achieving sustainable development in Banjul.

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