

= Gambia women 's national football team =

The Gambia women 's national football team represents the Gambia in international football competition . The team , however , has not competed in a match recognised by FIFA , the sport 's international governing body , despite that organised women 's football has been played in the country since 1998 . The Gambia has two youth teams , an under @-@ 17 side that has competed in FIFA U @-@ 17 Women 's World Cup qualifiers , and an under @-@ 19 side that withdrew from regional qualifiers for an under @-@ 19 World Cup . The development of a national team faces challenges similar to those across Africa , although the national football association has four staff members focusing on women 's football .

= = The team = =

In 1985 , few countries had women 's national football teams . While the sport gained popularity worldwide in later decades , the Gambia 's national team only played its first game in 2007 . That game was not FIFA @-@ recognised . As of March 2012 , the team was unranked by FIFA , and as of the following month the Gambia had not played in a FIFA @-@ sanctioned match . The team has not participated in major regional and international tournaments , including the Women 's World Cup , the 2010 African Women 's Championship or the 2011 All @-@ Africa Games .

The country did not have a FIFA @-@ recognised youth national team until 2012 , when the Gambia under @-@ 17 women 's team competed in Confederation of African Football qualifiers for the FIFA U @-@ 17 World Cup , to be held in Azerbaijan in September 2012 . The Gambia had fielded an under @-@ 17 team of 24 players , narrowed from an initial pool of 49 young women . Two girls from the SOS Children 's Village Bakoteh were chosen as a members of the team . The Gambia first played Sierra Leone in a pair of qualifying matches for the tournament . Gambia won the first match 3 @-@ 0 in Banjul , the Gambia 's capital . The return match was delayed in for 24 hours and played in Makeni . The Gambia beat Sierra Leone 4 @-@ 3 to qualify for the final round . The Gambia then beat Tunisia 1 @-@ 0 at home and won 2 @-@ 1 in Tunisia . Adama Tamba and Awa Demba scored the Gambia 's goals . Tunisia 's only goal was a Gambian own goal . The win qualified Gambia for the 2012 Azerbaijan World Cup .

The Gambia also has an under @-@ 19 team that was to play in the African Women 's U @-@ 19 Championship in 2002 . The Gambia 's first match was against Morocco , but the team withdrew from the competition .

= = Background and development = =

The development of women 's football in Africa faces several challenges , including limited access to education , poverty amongst women , inequalities and human rights abuses targeting women . Funding is another issue impacting the game in Africa , where most financial assistance comes from FIFA and not national football associations . Another challenge is the retention of football players . Many women footballers leave the continent to seek greater opportunity in Europe or the United States .

Gambia 's national football association was founded in 1952 , and became affiliated with FIFA in 1968 . Football is the most popular women 's sport in the country , and was first played in an organized system in 1998 . A national competition was launched in 2007 , the same year FIFA started an education course on football for women . Competition was active on both the national and scholastic levels by 2009 . There are four staffers dedicated to women 's football in the Gambia Football Association , and representation of women on the board is required by the association 's charter .