



FUTURE IN OUR HANDS THE GAMBIA

NEWSLETTER

March 2019

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Education For All Through Community Development

GROUP MANAGEMENT TRAINING IN KERR ARDO

The 8th–12th of March in 2019, Rose Mendeh from the Community Development Unit held at raining called "Group Management Training". The purpose of training was to train the Participants in group management which included capacity building, organization, leadership, group characteristics, management and administration, documentation, registration, laws and mobilization. The important of groups and 23 women and 12 men and young people attended the training.



The training was successfully conducted, and all the participants showed interest by participating fully through discussions and questions during the sessions. The training was educative to the participants as they had stated that their working groups were not functioning as they had expected, and many had dissolved completely. The trainings resulted in an enhanced understanding of what a group is and what to observe in a group formation. It exposed participants to legal documentation and functions of groups in the development of their community. They acknowledged that the training was important to their community's capacity building and especially to the Village Development Committee which is the umbrella group. The participants showed great interest in getting the groups registered in order to strengthen their position and to acquire any benefits from either the Government or from NGOs. They were now confident enough to get back to their groups and share the knowledge learn during the five days training. After receiving the training, they promised to reactivate their groups and work hard to incorporate all that they had learnt.



The VDC vice chairman Fatou Touray in the middle and Rose Mendy in the bottom right picture to the left.

BASELINE SURVEY FOR KEEP OUR GIRLS IN SCHOOL PROJECT



UNICEF and independent researchers have revealed that girl's education is often interrupted during menstruation due to cultural, religious and school environments and stigmas. Through a previous project when personal hygiene was discussed in the schools, this issue came to FIOHTG's attention. Through our constant monitoring we found out that a lot of schoolgirls are missing and dropping out of school because they lack knowledge on how to manage their menstruation. They are also facing stigma, discrimination and financial issues connected to their menstruation. Many girls stay at home during this time due to those reasons.

Therefore, we thought a new project called "Keep our girls in school" would help resolve these Issues. The main goal of the project is to ensure that adolescent girls do not have their education interrupted as enshrined in the Education policy, as a result of menstruation and hygiene related issues. We aim to educate schoolgirls, parents and teachers on menstruation hygiene management and make the stigma obsolete.

However, it was deemed necessary to conduct a baseline survey in order to understand menstrual hygiene management in rural Gambia, for better planning, implementation and evaluation of the project. Furthermore, the results can be used to inform partners and stakeholders in the country.

Therefore, a baseline survey report (the data collection, analysis and reporting) was conducted between 24th March 2019 to 8th April 2019. The survey took place in four regions of The Gambia, namely Regions 3, 4, 5, and 6. It was conducted by FIOHTG's Monitor & Evaluation officer Mohammed Lenn who worked in partnership with The Girls Agenda (TGA) which is a youth led movement, founded by young women in 2011 and formally registered in 2014 as a community youth group. TGA promotes the reproductive health rights of girls (mostly adolescents) and young women by demanding for investments in their health and education and eliminate harmful practices.

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This baseline survey was the first activity in the 'Keep Our Girls in School Project'. Therefore, it is natural that special thanks be given to the donor for funding this laudable project. Similarly, Future In Our Hands and The Girls Agenda (TGA) that we are cooperating with must be thanked for their roles in supporting girls and girls' education.

Four schools selected for the survey were Kerr Ardo Basic Cycle School, Darsilameh Basic Cycle School, Chaa Kunda Basic Cycle School and Saint George's Technical Junior and Senior School. The objectives of the survey were threefold. First, to establish students, parents and teachers' knowledge about MHM; second, to establish the environmental factors that are (in)conducive for menstruating girls in schools and finally to establish the impact of menstruation and related matters on the girls learning. The respondents were also asked to suggest solutions for the challenges/problems.

The survey found that knowledge about MHM is generally low among schoolgirls as only 9% of the respondents could detailed the cause of menstruation in scientific terms. Similarly, only 3 out of 8 respondents stated that they had been educated on MHM. Only 1 of the respondents stated that she started discussing menstruation with her child when she was 13 years. All of the rest started talking to their girls about menstruation after they had started menstruated. Therefore, not surprisingly, MHM knowledge is low as both parents and teachers do not discuss the subject.

It was also found that girls converted rags into pieces of clothes to manage their menstrual flow and those who uses them do not frequently change them. From the responses, most girls who menstruate more than 3 days changed once a day. This contravenes best hygiene measures. Furthermore, the schools were not found to be to very conducive to menstruating girls. Where schools have enough toilets, there were no readily available water in the toilets. Where water was at a reasonable proximity to the toilets, there were neither soap nor any form of detergents. This partly explains why menstruating students preferred to change at home instead of the school..

In light of the challenges, the most preferred solutions recommended by the girls, teachers and parents to address the problems faced by girls in school are provision of sanitary materials, training and sensitization for girls and teachers and making water readily available in schools. It is our ardent hope that the findings and recommendations contained here shall inform the partners, stakeholders, government and society about the need to invest in MHM in schools particularly those in the rural areas.



/Mr. Muhammed Lenn
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer,

HUMAN RESOURCE DAY

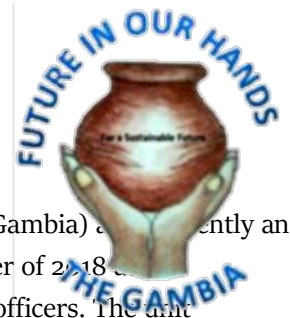
On the 4th of March the FIOHTG had an Human Resource-day with all the staff, the board members, previous interns and invited guests.

The day started with music, prayers and an introduction of the program of the day. It was followed by a summary of the 2018 development of the organization from our lovely hosts, Jainaba T. Sarr and Kemo S. Kinteh and our honorary staff at the high table.

Kebba Jobe from the School Development Unit held an interesting presentation on the importance of advocacy work. Afterwards, awards were given out to the staff and previous interns to show appreciation for their dedication and hard work throughout the year. Awards injects the spirit of competition in an establishment. It promotes best practices and motivates high performing staff to add value to the institution thus helping to overall accomplishment of the mandate of the organization. Proud of FIOH for its path in advancing socioeconomic development in the Gambia



LETTER FROM INTERN LAWRENCE MANDY



My name is Lawrence Matthew Mandy, a graduate in planning and design (University of the Gambia) and currently an intern in Future In Our Hands The Gambia (FIOHTG) an NGO. I started as an intern in October of 2018 in the construction unit. The unit consist of four staff, the head of the unit and three other program officers. The unit recruited two interns, Alfursainey Kaita and I.

The organization has a very friendly environment and atmosphere. The two directors, the country director and the Swedish one are always friendly and their doors are always open to all of the staffs in the organization.

Coming in to the organization has exposed to me to a lot of things in project work and different environments. I was taught on how to calculate building estimates and had the experience to gain more knowledge in site work and got exposed to different cultures and development in other areas of the country. I am also taking part of workshop that are organized to help develop staff and the growth of the organization.

I am happy to see the way the organization is contributing to complement the government's effort in nation building especially in the rural areas. They ensure the opportunity to get an education and bring awareness to many people in the rural areas in the Gambia.

To sum it up I have learned a lot since in came to the organization. I have expanded my knowledge of human rights, health, gender, organizational development, project work and many other areas. As it is said, information is power and as young man am motivated to learn more and become better each day in other to give back to the society that has given me these opportunities in life.

Best regards,

Lawrence Mandy



Lawrence is smiling on top in the middle of the group with his fellow team mates; Muhammed Lenn, Alfusainey and Lamin, ready to play football against Chargels teachers during Advocacy Sports



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Do you have a story or an event for the next newsletter?

If so, we would like to hear from YOU!

Thank you for your support!