

FUTURE IN OUR HANDS THE GAMBIA
NEWSLETTER
DECEMBER 2021



NEWS IN SHORT

HAVE YOU MISSED ANY OF OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTERS IN 2021? HERE IS A COLLECTION OF THE MAIN STORIES FROM JANUARY 2021 TO NOVEMBER 2021 .

Education For All Through Community Development

JANUARY: PARTICIPATORY GENDER ANALYSIS; LEARNING BY PRACTICE



PARTICIPATORY GENDER ANALYSIS

The Community Development Unit kicked off its 2021 new year activities with the participatory gender analysis in the Upper River (URR) and North Bank (NBR) regions. In Fatako village, in the Upper River Region, the session started with “the introduction of the concept of gender, gender based violence as well as violence against children especially the girl child”. At the end of the training, a ten member committee was formed to promote gender equity and the end of gender based violation. A similar activity was held in Kulkuleh and Kisskissim in the URR.



Madam Marong, our programme officer observed that “findings as ever, revealed that men's work, unlike women is tedious but less time demanding. Women work...with very little of resting. They are the first to be up from bed and also the last to go to bed at night”. Reporting from Wellingara and Woyawor villages in the Central Badibou district in NBR, Mr. Drammeh observed that the “analysis of gender issues...provided the platform to devise strategies on how to improve gender relations for effective community cohesion and action which includes the formation of gender committees and work plans for follow up activities”.



OUR INTERNS LEARN BY PRACTICE

In our January 2021 Newsletter, we reported the hosting of 4 final year UTG students, Lamin Conteh, Malick Ndimballan, Naffie Jatta and Oumie Singhateh as interns exposing them to numerous office and field exercises to broaden their understanding of the tools they may have learnt in school and others at the core of FIOHTG's rural development approach. At FIOHTG, we spend more time applying theories and tools. Both Oumie and Malick can be seen passionately leading the sessions in the photos. For more stories visit our January 2021 Newsletter: <https://fiohtg.org/newsletter-january-2021/>

FEBRUARY: 480 YOUTH IN URR, CRR, LRR & NBR GRACE FORUMS ; FIOHTG REACHES 100% CEREAL BANK COVERAGE



In February 2021, FIOHTG concluded a 6 day youth forum in Central River Region and Upper River Region. The forums held in Wellingara Yareh, Bayaba, Sare Demba Dardo and Sare Ngallen were facilitated by Rose T. Mendy and Malick Ndimballand of the Community Development Unit to raise awareness and create a platform for young people to discuss issues affecting them. During the forums in the different communities, participants discussed 'illegal/irregular migration', early marriage, teenage pregnancy, gendered roles, conflict, education, female genital mutilation and drug abuse. A similar activity was facilitated by Alimatou Marong in the North Bank Region and Lower River Region bringing together 240 youth in the communities.

FIOHTG REACHES 100% CEREAL BANK COVERAGE FOR ITS VDPS



In February 2021, we also reported that FIOHTG reached its target to establish cereal banks for all the Village Development Project sites. This means that 17 VDPs and their satellites of over 120 villages in North Bank, Lower River, Central River and Upper River regions have benefitted from the scheme. Mr. Ebrima Drammeh who went around the country to implement the scheme broke the news to staff. *"The capitalisation and sensitisation meetings have now been completed...Its a 100 % coverage now which has been achieved in a short time possible thanks to the support received from Kristina Lundhal of the Gambia grupperna in Sweden and forumciv funding"*. FIOHTG will continue to work with partners to strengthen the scheme for more beneficiaries. We know that the communities are growing and demand is increasing. We are looking for partners to provide cereal storages in the communities.

Meanwhile The School Development Unit conducted training for grades 1, 2, and 3 teachers in 4 clusters namely the Chargel Cluster, the Tumana Cluster, Pakaliba Cluster, and Ndungu Kebbeh Cluster. Find more on our February 2021 Newsletter: <https://fiohtg.org/newsletter-february-2021/>

MARCH: FOCUS ON WOMEN AND GIRLS



In March 2021 we reported that Mr. Camara, Manager of our Community Development Unit attended talks held by Goodluck Jonathan and the civil society organisations (CSOs) in The Gambia to discuss the CSOs position on the draft constitution which failed to win a majority vote in the National Assembly. However, most of the activities reported in our March Newsletter focused on girls and women empowerment. Below is a recap.

We concluded a regional women's conference, as a follow-up to the 'Women Deliver Forum', which was jointly organized by the WMD, CIPE, and FIOHTG on 2nd March 2020, at the Kairaba Beach Hotel in Banjul. In fulfilment of one of the recommendations from that Conference, FIOHTG with partners organised a regional conference in Basse to give rural dwellers and stakeholders in rural development the lead in discussing a way forward for the attainment of national development.

Meanwhile, our School Development Unit trained school girls, members of the Mothers' Club, and teachers on Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) in two schools namely Kabakoto and Chargel. The main highlight of the training was the production of reusable sanitary pads. A 2019 survey by FIOHTG had found knowledge in menstrual hygiene (MHM) to be very low amongst students; and sanitary pads were largely unaffordable; prompting it to pilot a MHM project to address the issue, thus the training was geared towards promoting proper menstrual hygiene management.



Also, a five day village-based food processing and preservation training was held in Kerr Omar Manneh in the North Bank Region attracting forty participants, male and female from the community as trainees. The training was geared towards preventing post harvest lost, wastage of fruits and vegetables, and to ensure availability once they are out of season. During the training, participants were trained on best hygiene methods, personal and food handling and care as well as the processing and preservation of pepper, tomato, hibiscus, and banana. Participants also learned how to label products.



Finally, a six day gender based violence sensitization for six communities benefitting from the World Bank project on schools was concluded. The beneficiaries were contractors and community youth from the project sites and the satellite villages of Futayel, Ndingiri Kunda, Sare Chewto, Bakadagi Mandinka, Sare Futa and Boraba. They were sensitized on gender based violence and abuses such as rape, harassment etc. Find out more here: <https://fiohtg.org/march-newsletter-2020/>

APRIL: DID YOU FORGET THAT WE REPORTED OUR HR DAY IN OUR APRIL NEWSLETTER? HERE IS A PICTORIAL AGAIN



MAY: SENSITIZATION ON ACQUISITION OF NATIONAL DOCUMENTS, TRAINING ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP, & ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY



Here is a recap of our three main stories in the April Newsletter. First, our School Development Unit concluded a sensitization programme on the acquisition of birth certificates. The programme held in Tumana, Chargel, Pakaliba and Ndungu Kebbeh clusters brought together the School Management Committee and members of the Mother's Club. Participants were sensitised on the importance of acquiring a birth certificate, means of acquiring it amongst others. Also, teachers in the clusters benefited from training on pedagogy and material production.

Meanwhile, a training on entrepreneurship was conducted in Bayaba. The training which was attended by 30 participants was meant to equip them with basic skills and knowledge needed to thrive as small entrepreneurs or starters in their community. Record keeping, profit making, branding amongst others were discussed.

Also, our Social and Environmental Safety Officer to the World Bank funded school project concluded a sensitization programme in Sarreh Abdou, Jawo Kunda and Njie Kunda. The programme was meant to protect communities and their environments from any intended or unintended damage as a result of the project. Community members were exposed to their rights for redress in the event of damages in line with the World Bank regulations and national environmental regulations of the Gambia.

Finally, Teach For The Gambia paid a courtesy call to our office to share their programme with us. More can be found here: <https://fiohtg.org/newsletter-may-2021/>

JUNE: EFA CAMPAIGN IN NBR, CRR & URR; SOCIAL & ENV'TAL SAFEGUARD TRAINING CONCLUDED; MR. CAMARA RETIRED



In our June 2021 Newsletter, we reported that our School Development Unit had embarked on an Education For All Campaign in the North Bank, Central River, and Upper River regions. The campaign was aimed at promoting the enrolment and retention of children in schools.

We had also reported the implementation of a waste management training and support programme to four communities, namely Kerr Omar Manneh, Kerr Sidiki, Toro Tayam and Nyofelleh, all in the North Bank region.

Meanwhile, a six day Social and Environmental Safe Guard procedures' sensitization was organised in the Central River Region. The sensitisations held in Bush Town, Tankong Kunda, Sare Nyanga, Bakadaji Mandinka and Manjumba, was meant to equip communities with the information necessary to conduct social accounting and to monitor changes in their environment as a result of the projects being implemented in their communities.

Finally we also reported Mr. Bubacarr ML. Camara, of Our Community Development would be retiring on 10th June 2021 at his 60th birthday. Until his retirement, Mr. Camara was part of the Senior Management Committee of FIOHTG as the Manager of the CDU. He had also deputized for the Director, in addition to managing several projects. We will fulfil our promise of bringing you a special interview with Mr. Camara. Meanwhile see more on our June Newsletter here: <https://fiohtg.org/newsletter-june-2021/>



JULY: GCCA+ TEAM ON A FAMILIARISATION TOUR; ALL STAFF MEETING HELD; DEBUNKING COVID/VACCINE MYTHS



In July, we reported that a team comprising Mr. Ebrima Drammeh, Mr. Kemo S. Kinteh and Mr. Kebba Jobe has gone on a familiarisation visit to communities who are set to benefit from the European Union funded GCAA+ project on climate change mitigation and adaptation targeting 12 communities in the North Bank, Lower River and West Coast regions of The Gambia. Meanwhile, the team had visited potential phase-in villages where a checklist was administered to inform FIOHTG management on the most ideal Communities to add to its programme.

Finally, we reported that FIOHTG had organised its quarterly all-staff-meeting which brings together all staff where Unit Managers present their quarterly reports and plans while staff present challenges and interventions they require from the Management. The meeting also serves as a forum for peer evaluation and accountability.

DEBUNKING COVID & VACCINE MYTHS

As Conspiracy theories remain in circulation while Covid cases are rising again, here are few myths on the subject that we shared from the Africa Center site.

Myth: there is no COVID

FACT: COVID-19 has been confirmed in every country in the world...There have been 4.7 million positive cases and over 127,000 known deaths from COVID-19 on the continent.

Myth: Vaccines are dangerous

Fact: The...WHO has approved for emergency use listing all vaccines currently available in Africa through the WHO's COVID-19 Global Access (COVAX) facility—AstraZeneca, Moderna, Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, and Sinopharm. The listing is designed to make vaccines available ...while adhering to stringent criteria of safety, efficacy, and quality.

Myth: COVID does not pose a serious threat to Africans.

Fact: African countries were able to slow the virus through early action and high public support for social distancing in the initial stages of the pandemic...

Myth: Traditional tonics will cure me. I have no need for vaccines.

Fact: ...data shows that COVID is not "another type of flu" that can be cured using home remedies. Some highly transmissible variants like the Indian, Kenyan, and Tanzanian ones do not even present flu symptoms and attack the lungs directly.

SOURCE: <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/dispelling-covid-vaccine-myths-in-africa/> [<https://africacdc.org/>]

Find out more on our July 2021 Newsletter: <https://fiohtg.org/newsletter-july-2021/>

AUGUST: GCCA+ PROJECT PROGRESSES



In our August 2021 Newsletter, we reported that FIOHTG's GCCA+ project team comprising Mr. Ebrima Drammeh and Rose Mendy had met with the Turtle Conservation Group in Gunjur where they discussed the construction of the new hatchery and purchasing of equipment. The latter is working with the former to provide safe hatcheries for turtles. The team had also handed over the payment of allowance to the beach monitors.

From Gunjur, the team proceeded to Sanyang for a similar activity. In another development related to the GCCA+ project, Mr. Ebrima Drammeh attended the signing ceremony between SAFMU and GHE company for the rehabilitation and supply of garden inputs, tools and equipment for 3 schools namely Kuntaya, Medina Sancha and Berefet. This component of the project is aimed at enhancing nutritious food accessibility in beneficiary schools and communities. Here is the link to the August 2021 newsletter:

<https://fiohtg.org/newsletter-august-2021/>

SEPTEMBER: GCCA+ PROJECT TEAM CONDUCTS TRAINING ON CLIMATE CHANGE; FIOHTG & PCU ON JOINT MONITORING OF WORLD BANK SPONSORED SCHOOLS/CLASSROOMS; GBV SENSITIZATION CONCLUDED IN CRR



Our September 2021 Newsletter reported that FIOHTG conducted sensitisation on climate change risks, hazards, adaptation and mitigation and disaster preparedness in the North Bank, Lower River, and West Coast regions, as part of the GCCA+ project which is aimed at promoting the development of integrated community-based climate change mitigation and adaptation mechanisms for enhanced livelihood. Beneficiary communities included Kuntair, Kerr Demba Holleh, Prince, Nyawurulung, Fellenkoto, Sibito, Manduar, Madina Sancha and Kerr Ardo. The overall objective of the project is: “to promote the development of integrated community-based climate change mitigation and adaptation mechanisms for enhanced livelihoods in 12 communities, including 3 Lower Basic Schools in NBR, LRR and WCR of the Gambia by February 2022”.

We also reported that the Director of FIOHTG, Jainaba T. Sarr and staff of the Construction Unit as well as the PCU staff of the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education embarked on a joint monitoring exercise to assess the level of progress of the World Bank sponsored school projects.



Another activity which featured in our September 2021 Newsletter is a six day sensitization on gender based violence and violence against children concluded in the Central River Region. The sensitization held in Bani, Njallal, Fitu Fulla, Kibiri, Demba Kally and Demba Faye is part of the regulations of the World Bank’s sponsored school projects. Here is the link to our September 2021 Newsletter on our website: <https://fiohtg.org/newsletter-september-2021/>

OCTOBER: A 5 DAY TRAINING ON NUTRITION & CHILD CARE CONCLUDED; GCCA+ PROJECT TEAM CONDUCTED A TRAINING ON CLIMATE CHANGE; FIOHTG AWARDED CONTRACT FOR SMART AGRIC CENTER



In October, our Community Development Unit organised a five day training on nutrition, child care and hygiene simultaneously in Maria and Samba Nyado and Kerr Ardo villages, targeting lactating mothers, pregnant women and children under five years as well as fathers. Mr Jawo, a facilitator from the National Nutrition Agency reminded participants that “exclusive Breastfeeding is a benchmark in ensuring healthy growth of children”. Meanwhile, the communities benefitted from a grinder which will serve as a labour saving device and a source of income for the villages. Our Programme Officer reported that the materials will go a long way in assisting the communities in their efforts to promote safe nutrition, child care and hygiene. The Alkalos and the Village Development Committee Chairpersons who received the materials on behalf of the communities, expressed delights for the gesture.



We also held a training on Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation, and Disaster Preparedness targeting farmers, women and youth in the Central River Region—North where participants reflected on the causes of climate change and what everyone, from the individual, households to the government should do. Lamin Jobe, a participant argued that: “climate change is everyone's responsibility in the Gambia but the government through the Department of Forestry should bear the greatest responsibility for the deteriorated conditions of our fragile ecosystem...If government is calling for tree planting, then they should make seedlings available to the communities on time”.



Finally, we reported that FIOHTG awarded a contract to Jala-kolong Trading Enterprise for the construction of a climate smart agricultural production center in Prince village in the Upper Nuimi District of the North Bank Region, as part of the GCCA+ Project fund under the Gambia -EU Cooperation for Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation and Disaster preparedness. It is expected that the agricultural production center when completed will contribute to the community's food sovereignty goal. More on our October 2021 Newsletter: <https://fiohtg.org/newsletter-september-2021/>

NOVEMBER: SENSITISATION ON NATIONAL BUDGETING CONCLUDED; VOTERS' SENSITISATION CONCLUDED; FIOHTG CONVENED FORUM TO PROMOTE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH AND WOMEN



In our November 2021 Newsletter, we reported that community members of Maria and Samba Nyaado, Birom kumba, Wellingara and Woyawoor had benefitted from sensitization on the National Budget preparation process, thanks to funding received by FIOHTG from NED to implement a project called: *Promoting Political Transparency For Increased Participation of Women and Youth in National Development*. The sensitization and training was facilitated by Mr. Ismaila Bah of the Budget Directorate of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs. A similar activity was also organised in kerr Katim Fula drawing participants from kerr Katim Wolof, Sare Ello, Birom kardo and Brikama in the central Badibou District. The programme is deemed relevant especially in an election year when voters hear numerous promises from those seeking political office.



Meanwhile, Mr. Lamin Njie of our Community Development Unit represented FIOHTG in the voter education and information sessions held in the Central River Region under the ticket of Civil Society Organisations' Coalition on Elections in preparation for the December 4th Presidential Elections of the Gambia. The activity was aimed at enhancing the understanding of youth especially the first-time voters on the importance of their participation in the electoral processes. While Lamin Njie was with the CSO Coalition, other staff of the Community Development and School Development Units of FIOHTG conducted voter sensitization in the North Bank, Lower River, Central River and Upper River regions. Since 2017, FIOHTG had conducted several activities to promote political pluralism and peace coexistence in the *New Gambia*, thus it was deemed necessary to remind the electorates that peace overrides any other individual goal. The community members were advised to accept political pluralism as it is in the constitution.



Finally, FIOHTG convened a forum in the North Bank Region, bringing together local government authorities such as the Governor of the North Bank Region, Alhagie Jawara, National Assembly member, ward councillors etc. During the forum which is aimed at creating an interface between duty bearers and right holders, the former presented their mandate and reported activities that have been taken to that effect while the latter made demands that they expect duty bearers to fulfil. Meanwhile, FIOHTG is advocating for an active role for young people and the youth in national and local development. Speaking at the Forum, the Governor of North Bank Region stated that "its time that women are given support to represent themselves in our contemporary political administration". More can be found on our November 2021 Newsletter: <https://fiohtg.org/newsletter-november-2021/>

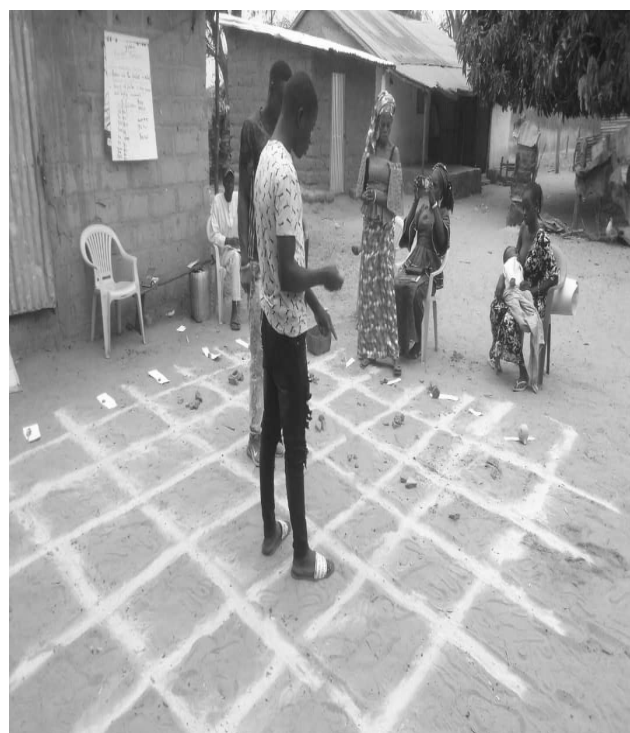
DECEMBER: CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL GAMBIANS & PARTNERS ON THE PEACEFUL ELECTION; FIOHTG FACILITATORS CONVENED LAST QUARTER OF THE YEAR FORUM



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL GAMBIANS AND PARTNERS FOR THE PEACEFUL ELECTIONS

As a member of the CSO Coalition on Elections who had monitors to observe the December presidential election, we wish to reiterate the position of the CSO Coalition, that the December 4th Election remains one of the most contested and peaceful elections in the history of The Gambia. Therefore, we wish to congratulate Gambians for their peaceful conduct of the election. Meanwhile we want to thank our donors and partners who have contributed in voter education/sensitization since 2017 to days before the elections. We are also happy that one of our recommendations in our 2021 Vol II Policy Brief, the provision of security personnel to duly nominated presidential candidates, was realized. While looking towards promoting a more policy centered elections in the future, we are looking towards working with all relevant stakeholders.

FIOHTG FACILITATORS CONVENED LAST QUARTER OF THE YEAR FORUM



FIOHTG Facilitators across the regions gathered for the 2021 final quarter meeting on 18th December 2021 in Kerr Sidiki in the Upper Niumi District of North Bank Region. According to Ebrima Drammeh, Programme Manager at FIOHTG's Community Development Unit, the forum started is: *"an opportunity held on quarterly basis for facilitators to come together and review their past activities, discuss challenges and emerging issues as well as possible solutions. It also serves as a refresher training for more improvements in the learning process particularly. Specific attention will be given to how the cash grants have impacted on participants commitment and participation in moving forward the reflect agenda. Today each facilitator is reporting on what their centers have doing since their last meeting regarding lessons conducted, challenges encountered, emerging issues and proposed solutions particularly with regards to the cash support for the long term sustainability of the centers after phase out"*.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



SEASONS GREETINGS

FROM FUTURE IN OUR HANDS, THE GAMBIA

THANKS TO OUR VALUABLE PARTNERS, DONORS AND SUPPORTERS. THANKS
TO OUR BENEFICIARY COMMUNITIES! WE ARE LOOKING TOWARDS ANOTHER
IMPACTFUL YEAR

*WE HOPE THAT YOU ENJOYED READING OUR NEWSLETTER. WE CAN MAKE OUR NEWSLETTER BET-
TER! WE CAN LET YOU SPEAK ON OUR BEHALF! GOT SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FOR US? PLEASE
REACH OUT TO US, FIND OUR CONTACT BELOW*

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Do you want to share a story with us? If yes, contact us on info@fiohtg.org

Thank you for reading through!