

CONTACT:

Office of the UN Resident Coordinator
5 Kofi Annan Street, Cape Point,
PO Box 553,
Banjul – The Gambia

Email: abdoulie.badjie@un.org

@UNGambia



2024 ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT

Building Pathways to Sustainable Development

www.gambia.un.org

Key Development Partners of the
UN Development System in the Country

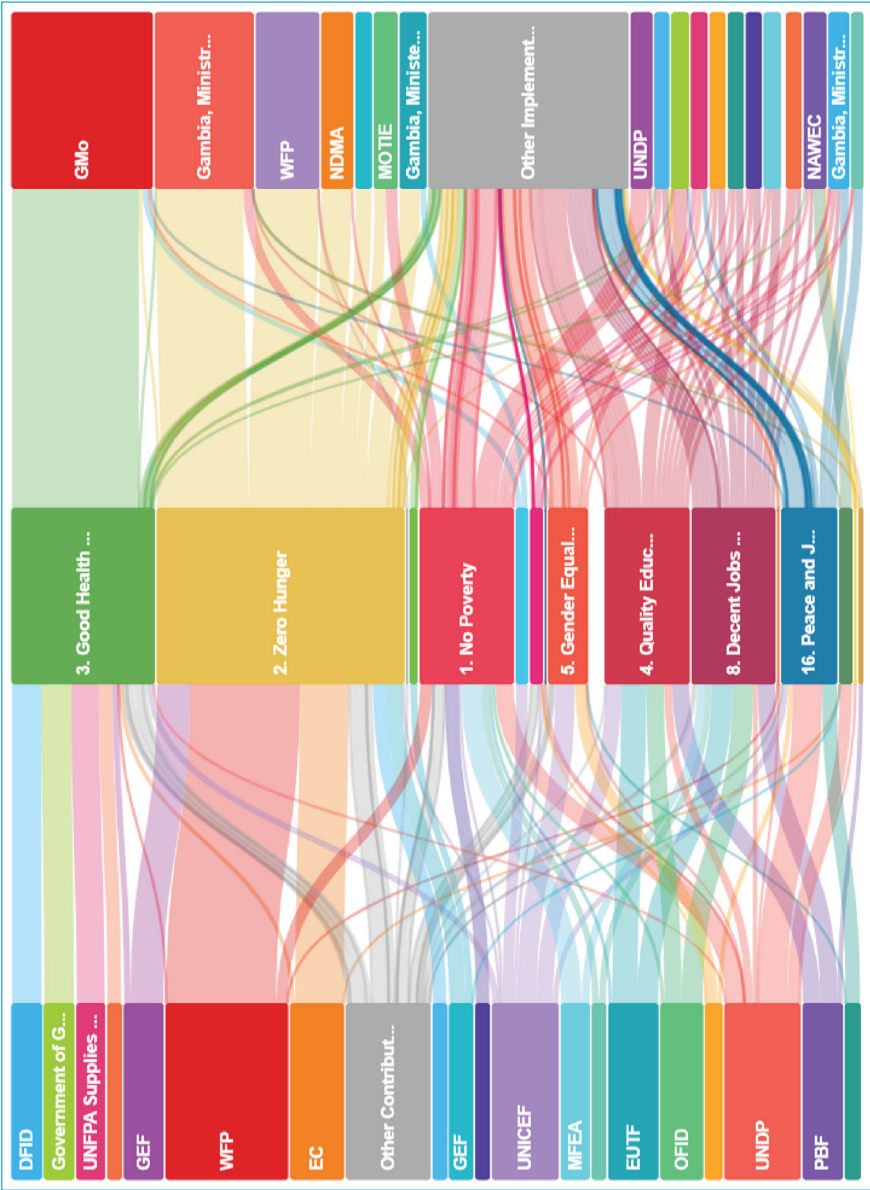


TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 FOREWORD

02 UNITED NATIONS IN THE GAMBIA

02 OUR DONORS

03 CHAPTER 1: THE GAMBIA'S CONTEXT AND HOW WE WORK

05 CHAPTER 2: EMPOWERING EVERY (HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND PEOPLE-CENTRED GOVERNANCE)

09 CHAPTER 3: GROWING GREEN FUTURES (BUILDING GREEN, RESILIENT, AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES)

12 CHAPTER 4: HEROES HELPING US MAKE DREAMS POSSIBLE IN THE GAMBIA

15 CHAPTER 5: FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

17 CHAPTER 6: WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED ABOUT MAKING CHANGE THAT LASTS

FOREWORD



Karl-Frédéric Paul

UN Resident Coordinator
The Gambia

Across The Gambia, steady and sustainable improvements are unfolding. In rural health facilities, midwives now rely on digital tools to enhance maternal care. In community gardens, women cultivate nutritious crops that support school feeding programmes and boost household incomes. In local tribunals, justice is being delivered more efficiently and equitably, reaching individuals who were previously under-served. These outcomes are not isolated—they reflect the strength of what can be achieved when central government, local leadership, national priorities, and international cooperation are aligned and working in unison.

This 2024 Annual Results Report tells the story of how the United Nations system in The Gambia is working alongside the Government, communities, local leadership, civil society and development partners to create progress that lasts. Our collective approach is grounded in the understanding that sustainable development is not just about delivering services—it is about strengthening systems, building trust, and creating opportunity anchored in the sustainable development goals. Throughout this report, you will see how the United Nations connect investments in one area to improvements in many others. These are the pathways enabling

the transitions to the sustainable development goals. By making justice more accessible, we empower women to start businesses and participate in community leadership. By improving water access, we keep children—especially girls—in school. By supporting climate-smart agriculture, we enhance food security, increase incomes, and support local economies. These are practical, measurable outcomes, and they matter deeply to the families and communities we serve.

Our results demonstrate the value of this approach. A mangrove restoration project now supports over 2,000 entrepreneurs while protecting vital coastlines. A modest investment in digital justice systems has reduced case processing times by 60%. A network of trained midwives and health workers has helped reduce maternal mortality and improve early care for thousands of mothers and babies. And so much more.

None of this would be possible without strong partnerships. The Government of The Gambia continues to set the direction, bringing vision and leadership to our shared work. Local organisations and communities bring deep knowledge and commitment. And our development partners provide the resources and trust that make progress possible.

As we look to the future, one message stands out: The Gambia is making meaningful strides, and the groundwork for sustained progress is firmly in place. The path ahead calls for us to build on this momentum—deepening our efforts, broadening our reach, and ensuring that every community shares in these hard-won gains. No one should be left behind as we continue advancing together.

We invite you to explore this report not only as a record of progress, but as a reflection of what is possible when we work together—with shared purpose, mutual respect, and a clear vision for the future. In The Gambia, sustainable development is not just a goal—it is a reality in motion. And together, we are making it happen.

A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink that reads "K. Paul". The signature is fluid and modern, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Karl-Frédéric Paul
UN Resident Coordinator
The Gambia

UNITED NATIONS IN THE GAMBIA



OUR DONORS





Women celebrate the launch of a new project, marking a milestone in their collective journey toward progress and empowerment.

CHAPTER 1: THE GAMBIA'S CONTEXT AND HOW WE WORK



COUNTRY CONTEXT: TRANSFORMING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

The Gambia, with a population of 2,422,712 (51% female and 49% male), is progressing on its development pathway. Between 2013 and 2024, the country experienced a 2.5% annual population growth rate, showing a decline from the 3.1% recorded during the 2003-2013 period. The country's demographic structure is notably youthful, with 40.8% under 15 years of age and only 3.0% aged 65 and over. This dependent population creates significant pressure on the working-age population (15-64 years), which constitutes 56.2% of the total population.

Private businesses are emerging as engines of progress, while improved governance is giving Gambians a greater voice in their future. Economic activity is projected to grow by 5.6% through 2026, creating new opportunities for Gambian families and communities. This growth trajectory is particularly significant given that 47.2% of households engage in agriculture, making economic diversification a critical development factor.

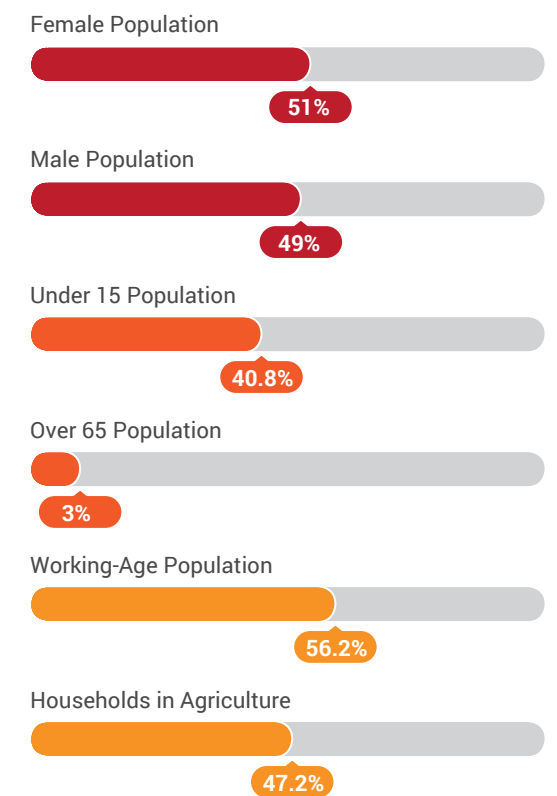
Infrastructure improvements are transforming daily life across the country. More homes and businesses now have electricity, digital technology connects entrepreneurs to markets, and better roads link communities to opportunities. These advances particularly benefit rural areas, where most Gambians live and work.

Despite these positive developments, significant challenges remain. Seven out of ten Gambians depend on farming for their livelihood, making them vulnerable to climate variability and changing weather patterns. Many families rely on remittances from rela-

tives abroad or tourism income to supplement their livelihoods. While food and fuel costs are expected to decrease in 2025, high prices continue to strain household budgets.

The government leads this transformation by strengthening public services and encouraging private sector growth. New policies help struggling state companies become more efficient, while improved systems facilitate citizen engagement with government services. These reforms, combined with increasing citizen participation, create a foundation for sustainable and inclusive progress.

Demographic and Economic Indicators





OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: BUILDING PATHWAYS TO CHANGE

Our work in The Gambia flows from understanding how different challenges connect in people's lives. The UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2024-2028) guides us in creating three interlinked paths to progress.

First, we help create lasting opportunities. This means standing with farmers as they learn to grow sufficient and better quality food while protecting the environment. It means supporting entrepreneurs who turn ideas into businesses that create jobs. It means ensuring women and young people can build secure livelihoods that weather setbacks because communities can only invest in their future when they have reliable ways to earn a living.

Second, we strengthen the systems that serve people. This work takes many forms - from making healthcare more accessible to making access to justice closer to communities. It includes helping government offices work more efficiently and ensuring services reach remote areas. When insti-

tutions work better, citizens can participate more fully in their country's development.

Third, we build partnerships that multiply impact. By bringing together government agencies, community groups, and international partners, we create networks of support that make change possible. We help protect the environment while creating economic opportunities. We connect local solutions to global resources. These partnerships ensure that progress in one area strengthens advances in others.

This framework shapes how we invest resources,strengthen gender equality and measure success. When we help women access legal services, we also connect them to business training. We link farmers to school feeding programs that create reliable markets when we support climate-smart agriculture and markets. As our report shows, each investment builds on others, turning separate projects into lasting progress.

Ayesha Harun Jammeh leading a 'Call for Justice' march, demanding accountability for her father's murder during former President Yahya Jammeh's regime.



The UN's Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2024-2028)

What is the main guiding framework for the UN's work in The Gambia from 2024 to 2028?

The UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2024-2028) guides the UN's work in The Gambia.

What are the three interlinked paths to progress mentioned in the framework?

The three interlinked paths to progress are: creating lasting opportunities, strengthening the systems that serve people, and building partnerships that multiply impact.

How does the UN help create lasting opportunities in The Gambia?

The UN helps create lasting opportunities by supporting farmers to grow more food sustainably, assisting entrepreneurs in turning ideas into business development services and ensuring women and young people can build secure livelihoods.

What forms does the work of strengthening systems take?

Strengthening systems involves making healthcare more accessible, justice accessible, enhancing skills, green economies and helping government offices work more efficiently, and ensuring services reach remote areas.

How do partnerships contribute to the UN's work in The Gambia?

Partnerships bring together government agencies, community groups, and international partners to create networks of support, protect the environment, create economic opportunities, and connect local solutions to global resources.

How does the framework shape the investment of resources and measurement of success?

The framework shapes the investment of resources and measurement of success by ensuring that each investment builds on others, turning separate projects into lasting progress.



A returnee supported by IOM Gambia kisses the ground as he returns home.

©IOM The Gambia

CHAPTER 2:

EMPOWERING EVERY PERSON (HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND PEOPLE-CENTRED GOVERNANCE)



JUSTICE AND GOVERNANCE TRANSFORMATION

As The Gambia continues its democratic transition, prioritizing good governance and equitable justice delivery, UN-supported interventions have catalyzed transformative change. One powerful example is the story of Faye Drammeh, a rural prosecutor whose journey reflects the impact of justice reform.

In the village of Sutima, Faye Drammeh begins her day reviewing case files beneath the shade of an ancient baobab tree. Just two years ago, she recalls, justice for women was slow and uncertain. “When I first joined the tribunal, many questioned whether a woman could lead,” she says, organizing files on domestic violence, land rights, and gender-based violence. “Women would wait months, if they dared to seek justice at all.”

Faye’s turning point came when she was selected from among 90 legislators trained in strategic litigation concerning SGBV and human rights. This capacity-building initiative is part of a broader \$3 million UNDP–OHCHR justice reform programme funded by the PBF, which also established the Post-TRRC Unit, coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the TRRC recommendations and to date, 16% of which have been fully implemented.

As one of the first women to lead a local tribunal, Faye earned community trust. “Now they see how understanding women’s experiences strengthens the justice system.” With UNDP’s support, she embraced digital innovation, reducing case processing time by 60% and launching a WhatsApp network to mobilize legal clinics. In partnership with the National Agency for Legal Aid, these clinics have reached 2,121 people, 802 of them women, in 30 remote communities.

“We bring justice directly to the people now,” Faye says. Her tribunal now resolves 70% of SGBV cases, up from 30% in 2022.

UNDP’s people-centred and inclusive approach to democratic governance has extended well beyond legal aid. With funding from the EU, over 10,000 citizens joined townhalls and sensitization campaigns, shaping constitutional reform and strengthening democratic participation. These efforts empowered citizens to make informed contributions to the constitutional reform process.

Additionally, eight gender-responsive conflict resolution networks have been formed, with 32 trained mediators resolving over 50 cases. These networks offer trusted, community-based avenues for resolving disputes, easing pressure on formal courts and fostering reconciliation.

UNDP, in partnership with the Ministry of Gender, has reached over 20,000+ people with awareness on gender equality and women’s political participation. Women now increasingly engage in town hall dialogues, and decision-making on legislative reforms and politics. Many trained women leaders are emerging as mentors, aspiring political candidates and advocates for inclusive governance.

The impact of strengthened governance and justice systems is profound and far-reaching. Through Faye Drammeh’s story and many like hers, we witness how empowered individuals and communities, especially women, are shaping more just, inclusive, and peaceful societies. When citizens have access to justice and a voice in decision-making, they become active agents in governance, peacebuilding, and democratic reform.



ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND YOUTH INNOVATION

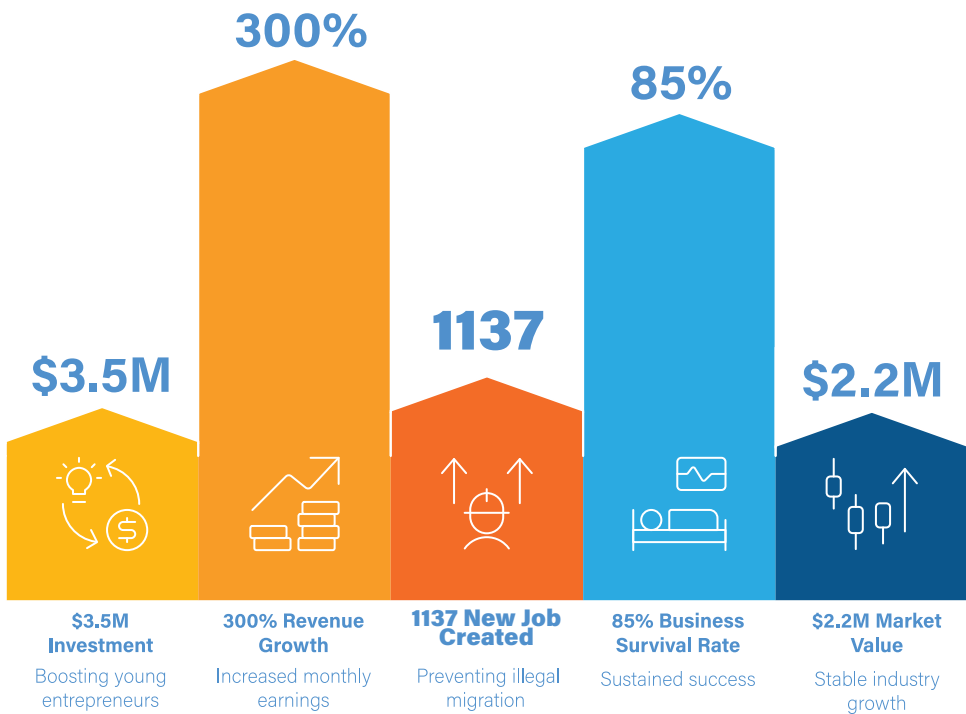


Ya Fatou holding samples of processed food items from her business

The rhythmic hum of machinery fills Ya Fatous's workshop, where equipment provided for her helps run her business where she provides meals and sells processed food additives.

Because of the IOM's \$3.5 million investment in young entrepreneurs, she has increased her monthly revenue by 300%. Additionally, she now employs three people who had been contemplating migrating illegally. Her success exemplifies the return on investment in youth enterprise—eighty-five per cent of the 150 youth-led enterprises launched through this initiative continue to thrive after their first year.

In her quality control lab, Ya Fatou demonstrates the rigorous standards that have made her business a trusted supplier for a lot of families. "Each batch of food represents our ability to turn challenges into opportunities," she says. Small businesses like hers now supply the majority of WFP's home-grown school feeding programme, creating a stable market worth over \$2.2 million annually.



SAVING LIVES THROUGH BETTER HEALTHCARE



Senior Midwife Ida Cham begins her morning rounds at Bansang Hospital, pacing around the maternity ward checking on admitted women as usual. "When I started here," we tracked everything on paper. Sometimes, critical patient information wouldn't reach us really late.

Her transformation began when she joined WHO's comprehensive maternal health initiative, which was implemented with UNFPA and UNICEF. As one of twenty-five midwives

selected for advanced training, she learned to use new early warning systems that help identify high-risk pregnancies before complications arise. Digital health systems have become the stethoscope of our time especially as a midwife working in rural Gambia. We're not just responding to emergencies anymore, we're preventing them."

To strengthen health system care system and delivery resilience, WHO continues to support the country. The Gambia emergency preparedness and response efforts have aligned with the AFRO flagship initiative, resulting in the development of a SURGE roadmap and the training of 68 AVOHC-SURGE personnel in public health emergency management using a One Health approach.

But Ida's influence extends beyond individual patient care. She supports a network of five hundred and forty trained health personnel, 78 per cent women, who share information and support through the digital health system. "This morning alone," she says, reviewing the latest updates, "I've monitored fifteen expectant mothers through our early warning system. When I spot potential complications, I can immediately connect with community health workers to ensure mothers get care before problems become serious."

The transformation reaches into the smallest villages. Aminata mentors community health workers like Mariama Baldeh through the digital network, who bring prenatal care directly to women's homes. "Before, some women never saw a healthcare provider until delivery," Ida explains. "Now we can track every pregnancy from the beginning, ensuring mothers get the right care at the right time."

Back in her office, Aminata points to a wall chart tracking the ward's progress: zero maternal deaths in the past six months, a 95% vaccination rate for newborns, and complications detected and managed before they become emergencies. "Each number represents a mother who went home healthy, a baby who got a strong start in life," she says. "But what makes me proudest is seeing young women in our community now dreaming of becoming healthcare providers. They see us saving lives and know they can do the same. With WHO, Worldbank and UNDP's support, oxygen plants were installed at Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital, and Bansang General Hospital, improving access to life-saving medical oxygen for approximately 1.5 million people, 75% of the population. This intervention has strengthened emergency care, especially in rural areas, enabling timely treatment during respiratory crises and enhancing the overall resilience and responsiveness of The Gambia's healthcare system."



BRIDGING THE GAPS AND TRANSFORMING EDUCATION



Our integrated approach is most effective for keeping children in school. At Misera Lower Basic School, 14-year-old Halimatou Ceesay is happy to be back in school together with her peers. She is part of the students back in school through the Zero Out of School Programme. UNICEF supported Zero Out of Schools Programme has transformed education across the region. "I had to drop out of school after moving around a few times with my family. Upon returning, I was just at home helping with the chores. Through this initiative, I am happy to be back in school learning with my mates and working hard to ensure I become an independent woman that supports her family in the future."

UNICEF's \$1.129 million support in education services has transformed learning across the region, including 34,346 children in school through the zero out of school programme, community engagement for education, service demand 52 per cent of whom are girls. This strategic investment, in addition to education policy strengthening and capacity development, has achieved and increased improvement in student engagement.

These initiatives highlight carefully coordinated UN support to enhance the holistic development of children from vulnerable communities. To create comprehensive change, UNICEF's educational initiatives combine UNAIDS' advocacy programmes, WHO's school health programs, and UNFPA's adolescent development work.

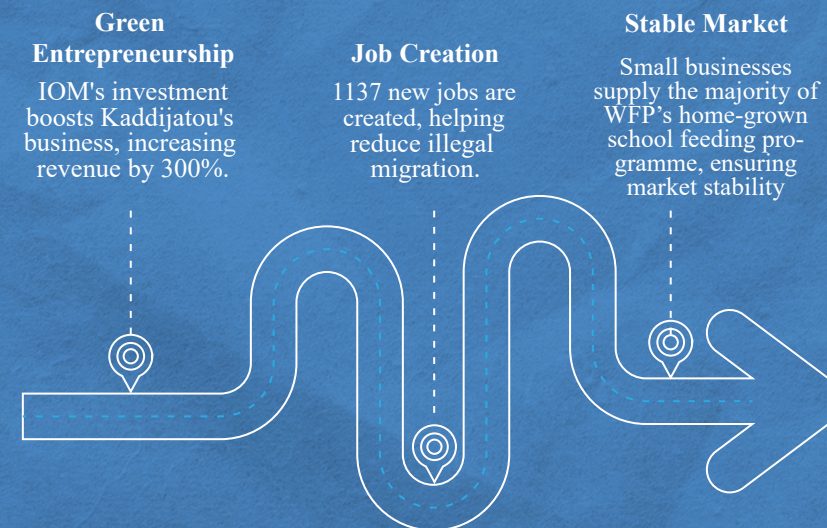
In Janjanbureh, where the local school meets the community health centre, 45-year-old Mariama Suso witnesses this integration daily. "When UNAIDS and WHO trained our health workers in disease surveillance," she explains, watching students file into the new digital learning centre, "it meant fewer sick days, better attendance, stronger performance." The numbers validate her observation: across 42 districts, school feeding programs now reach 75,000 vulnerable children, and health monitoring has reduced illness-related absenteeism by 35%. Each of our investments builds upon the others, like lines of code creating a robust program for success.

As The Gambia moves forward, these digital foundations promise to compile into a future where every child can program their path to success.

As The Gambia move forward, these initiatives creates a future where every child has a clear path to success.

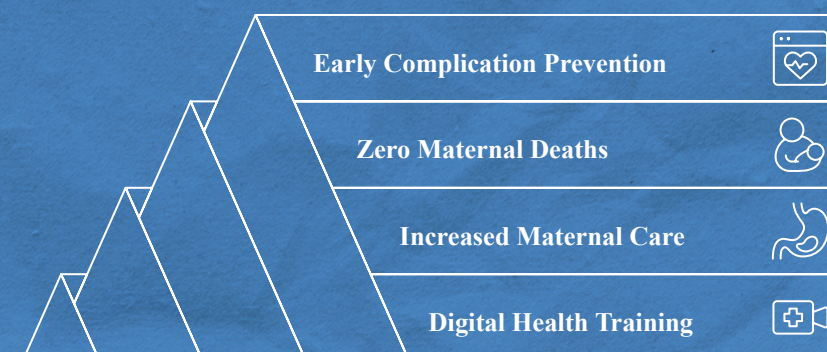
01

Achieving Economic Empowerment



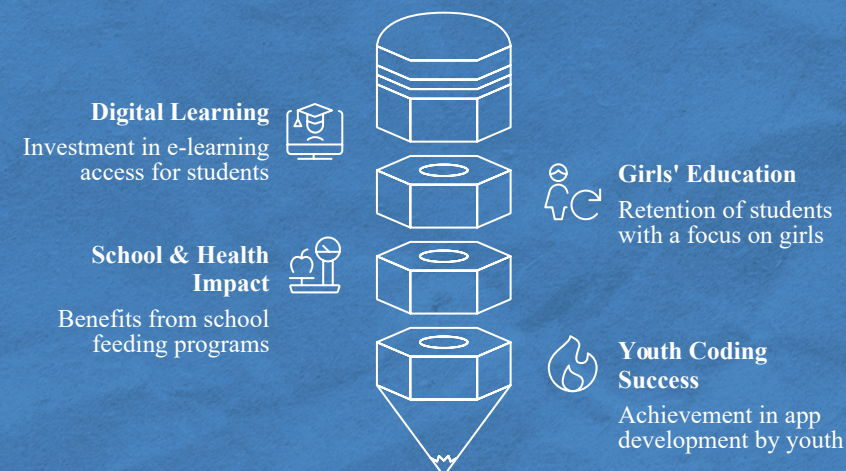
02

Achieving Safer Healthcare Outcomes



03

UNICEF's Educational Initiatives Overview



STRENGTHENING JUSTICE THROUGH COLLECTIVE ACTION ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

When legislative challenges threatened The Gambia's hard-won ban on female genital mutilation (FGM) last year, the United Nations mobilized an unprecedented coalition that demonstrated the power of collective resolve. This alliance—bringing together development partners, civil society organizations, and government stakeholders—successfully protected the rights and wellbeing of girls and women across the nation.

The resilience of civil society in upholding women's rights through legislation emerged as a defining achievement of 2024, amplified by a coordinated UN Country Team effort that delivered both immediate protection and long-term change.

UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES LEAD MULTI-LEVEL RESPONSE

UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, WHO, and UN Women joined forces to orchestrate a comprehensive advocacy campaign operating simultaneously at high policy levels and within grassroots communities. This approach effectively connected regional and national women's rights organizations in defense of critical legal protections, particularly the Women's (Amendment) Act.

In partnership with the Government of The Gambia, these efforts ensured that protection from harmful practices remained firmly embedded in national law. The coalition's strength came from bridging policy and practice—translating legal principles into real protection for women and girls.

STRATEGIC COORDINATION DELIVERS RESULTS

The UN aligned technical expertise and political support across its agencies, working alongside the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and through the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on FGM. This coordi-

nation ensured maximum impact through community outreach sessions that transformed public understanding, strategic engagement with policy makers, presenting compelling evidence; rapid media advocacy campaigns that shaped national discourse and the deployment of international frameworks to strengthen local protections.

Through joint action with WHO, OHCHR, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNAIDS, and UNDP the coalition strengthened the National Assembly's understanding of human rights obligations under the Maputo Protocol. This created the conditions for a landmark victory: the successful defense of the FGM ban through civil society advocacy and international solidarity.

UNESCO complemented these efforts by countering online hate speech targeting women human rights defenders, ensuring that civic space remained safe—reinforcing The Gambia's voice in regional and global gender equality platforms.

SPOTLIGHT: LEADERSHIP THAT INSPIRES CHANGE

The coalition's success was amplified by the extraordinary leadership of Ms. Fatou Baldeh, Executive Director of Women in Liberation and Leadership, recently named among TIME's 100 Most Influential People of 2025. Ms. Baldeh's tireless advocacy transformed local resistance into national resilience, mobilizing communities across The Gambia.

Her strategic coordination of grassroots initiatives provided the crucial momentum that preserved the ban, demonstrating how individual courage, when connected to collective action, can safeguard human rights against powerful opposition.

THE PATH FORWARD

This successful defence of women's rights illustrates the impact of coordinated action balancing international standards with locally-led implementation. The coalition's approach—combining high-level advocacy, community engagement, and strategic media presence—offers a blueprint for advancing women's rights across the region.



An aerial photograph of a coastal village in The Gambia. The image shows a large body of water on the left, with numerous small wooden boats moored along the shore. The village is situated on a narrow strip of land, with several buildings and a dirt road visible. The surrounding area is covered in dense green mangroves and lush vegetation. The water is a mix of green and brown, indicating the presence of mangroves and possibly some pollution or sediment. The sky is not visible, as the focus is on the landscape and the village.

“

When communities are empowered with the right support, they don't just grow—they grow green. Sustainable practices, restored ecosystems, and climate-smart solutions turn challenges into thriving, resilient futures.



A farmer reaps ripe rice stalks, continuing a tradition passed through generations.

©FAO/The Gambia

CHAPTER 3:

GROWING GREEN FUTURES (BUILDING GREEN, RESILIENT, AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES)



HOW INTEGRATED SUPPORT TRANSFORMED A COMMUNITY

In Misera, Sohna's thriving nurseries proves what coordinated support can achieve. But her path to success began with a simple change at the border. "I used to leave home at 4 AM to trade across the border," Sohna recalls. "Life has been much better since we were trained and provided with support to venture into agriculture and have our own community garden as women. We were mainly engaged in petty trading like selling detergents. With what we harvest, we are able to cook for our families a good meal based on the produce here and support our families.

Then came the first breakthrough: improved IOM support for improved border management and reduced crossing times to 30 minutes. With seven more hours in her day, Sohna could explore new opportunities. FAO-supported agricultural experts then stepped in, teaching her the science of sustainable cultivation and processing techniques for value addition. This training merged perfectly with her trading experience. For women like Sohna, these clean energy solutions have transformed daily routines, reducing time spent collecting firewood and improving health outcomes by eliminating harmful smoke from traditional cooking methods.

In Essau, a UNDP-supported initiative provided 997 clean cooking energy-saving stoves to over 6,000 residents, mainly women, reducing carbon emissions and health risks. Additionally, 45 artisans, including 36 women, now earn a livelihood producing the stoves locally.

Elsewhere in Darsilami, a community affected by deforestation benefited from FAO training on forest management. The learning curve was steep, but the results proved worth it. "The training helped me understand how different plants serve different purposes,"

she explains. By applying these improved techniques, she increased seedling survival rates by 40%. Today, her nursery earns her very good money annually while protecting vital coastlines. Each mangrove seedling serves multiple roles: preventing shore erosion, creating fish breeding grounds, and generating income for local families. The community garden gives local women who once lost hours at border crossings with a renewed sense of economic stability. She also trains young people in sustainable cultivation techniques, passing on her knowledge to the next generation.

Musukebba's impact now extends far beyond her nursery. She supplies seedlings to restoration projects across borders through her established trading networks.

This story shows how coordinated support creates lasting change. Better border management created time for new opportunities. Agricultural training turned that time into business success. School feeding programs provided reliable markets. Each step is built on the last, creating change that touches entire communities.



Better border management gave me time. Agricultural training turned that time into success.

Sohna Jallow



STREAMS OF CHANGE: USING WATER TO TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES



In Sinchu Barra, Wally Bah's community exemplifies how improved water access transforms daily life. Through IOM's \$77,000 Community Borehole Expansion project, his village evolved from water scarcity to abundance, showing how targeted infrastructure investment multiplies development impact.

The installation of the expanded borehole system marked the beginning of a transformation. Our community truly understands the value of water because we used to travel kilometres to access it. Through this training, we've learned more than just how to maintain our borehole. We've learned how to work together. Our newly formed management committee ensures every repair is timely, and every community member has a voice in protecting our most critical resource."

Today, the system provides an additional 28,000 litres of water daily, increasing storage capacity from 4,000 to 7,000 litres. But the real impact is shown in the lives of those who have changed. School attendance has increased by 30%, particularly among girls. Seventy-five new household gardens flourish where dry earth once cracked in the sun. Women who once spent hours carrying water now run small businesses.

'Three years ago, girls would walk to Senegal for water, missing school and business opportunities.' Wally explains that the flourishing vegetable gardens have doubled since IOM's \$77,000 Community Borehole Expansion project was implemented. "Now our children spend that time in school instead."



HARVESTING HOPE: NURTURING SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

“

With climate-smart techniques, I now grow for my family and nourish children in my community.

weather patterns meant our old ways weren't enough. Some days, I worried I couldn't grow enough to feed my family, let alone sell at market.' Today, her garden tells a different story. Naba has transformed her small plot into a thriving enterprise as women mastering climate-smart agriculture. 'I've learned that farming isn't just about growing crops it's about nurturing our precious resources. Before, I watched helplessly as my plants withered during dry spells. Now, I carefully manage water for my onions, tomatoes, bell peppers, and cucumbers using sustainable irrigation techniques. My income has grown significantly, but more importantly, I understand how to balance what we take from the earth with what we give back."

Naba's success extends beyond her field. She and other farmers now have reliable buyers thanks to the home-grown school feeding programme. WFP sources produce from 910 local farmers like Naba helps schools provide hot nutritious meals to school children. "Before, I struggled to find buyers," she says. "Now I know exactly how much to grow and when because the school program guarantees a fair price for my vegetables. And knowing I'm helping feed children in my community makes the work even more meaningful."

The guaranteed market means Naba can confidently plan her production and income. This model improves her livelihood and improves nutrition for thousands of school children, creating a win-win for farmers and families. In Chamen, 782 jobs were created through ongoing UNDP-funded support to the Gambia Songhai Initiative, promoting sustainable livelihoods through smart agriculture and youth entrepreneurship in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sport.



In the fertile fields of Nyakoi, Naba Jabbie displays her produce from the garden, remembering the challenges she faced just two years ago. "I used traditional farming methods passed down through generations," she explains, "but changing



GUARDIANS OF THE COAST: PROTECTING NATURE’S BOUNTY

On the coastline at Warf Njago, Marie Sambou steers her boat through mangrove-lined waterways, checking rows of oyster spat collectors (structures that help oyster larvae grow) bobbing in the water. These simple devices are responsible for the 300% increase in oyster production that her women’s cooperative has achieved. “Before, every harvest was risky,” she says, remembering how overharvesting and unstable mangroves made the work dangerous and unsustainable.

Now, things have changed. She points to newly restored mangrove areas: fish spawning grounds have expanded by 310 hectares, and coastal erosion has reduced by 40%. Marie is one of 1,400 women trained in ecosystem restoration and sustainable resource management through FAO’s \$7.5 million climate adaptation program. With new techniques, their cooperatives now produce 4,000

fifty-kilogram bags of oysters annually– roughly 200 tons – without destroying the mangroves that nurture them. This sustainable approach led to a 15% increase in mangrove coverage, creating new habitats that support biodiversity and bolster livelihoods.

The restoration of mangrove ecosystems shows how environmental protection strengthens other development gains. Healthy mangroves protect coastal roads and communities, making cross-border trade routes more reliable. They support fisheries and improve family nutrition and income. And when women earn more from sustainable oyster harvesting, they invest in their children’s education and healthcare.

In short, protecting nature has become a foundation for broader community resilience.



COAST OF THE GAMBIA



BUILDING BRIDGES: INFRASTRUCTURE THAT TRANSFORMS LIVES

Not all challenges are natural; some come with development itself. In Jarra West, the construction of a new bridge disrupted traditional river ferry livelihoods for many locals. But we turned this challenge into an opportunity. The ITC and UNFPA, working with local authorities, established hospitality training centres and entrepreneurship hubs to help affected community members find new paths to prosperity. These centres have trained 105 youth and women in hospitality and food processing skills and supported 64 local businesses in improving their productivity.

Approximately 75% of those benefiting are women. Thanks to this initiative, what could have been an economic crisis became a story of adaptation. Former ferry operators have opened small restaurants and guesthouses using the new bridge to serve travellers. Others have started food processing businesses, turning local produce into marketable goods. In Farafenni, infrastructure development took a different but equally transformative path with the establishment of a GBV and entrepreneurship one-stop centre through the strategic collaboration of ITC & UNFPA to integrate entrepreneurship and GBV services. This facility provides comprehensive support to survivors of gender-based violence in Farafenni and nearby communities, offering medical care, legal assistance,, psychosocial and entrepreneurship support all under one roof.

At the UNFPA and UNDP supported GMIS Centre in Bakoteh, there were 912 cases registered in the GMIS, with the majority (96.6%) reported by women and 42% involving survivors between 12 and 17 years old. The most common types of cases reported were rape (41%), physical assault (26%), and sexual assault (21%). Similarly, UNDP renewable energy intervention through the installation of a 120kWp solar mini grid in Sare Demba Torro has provided electricity to 5,000+ people (60% women) across three communities. “Before the solar plant, our lives revolved around daylight hours,” explains facility manager Tijan Sanneh. “Now children study at night, and women can refrigerate produce, extending its shelf life and market value. This single intervention has transformed our entire community’s economic potential.” This experience shows how practical skills, business development, and women’s inclusion in infrastructure projects can turn challenges into opportunities.

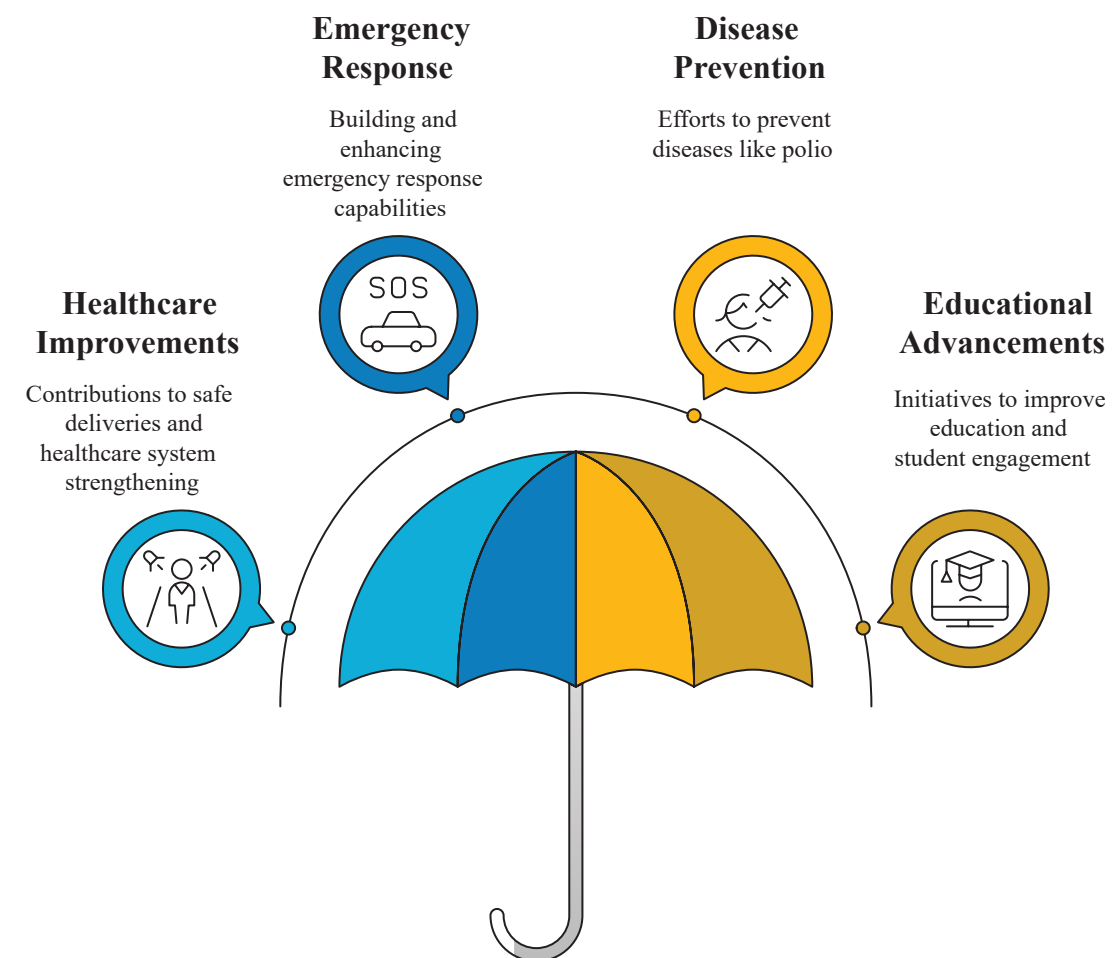




Fishermen push off from shore readying to go to sea.

CHAPTER 4:

THE PARTNERS HELPING US MAKE DREAMS POSSIBLE IN THE GAMBIA



Every morning across The Gambia, thousands of lives are improving because of partners who believe in our work. They spark hope and opportunity and help us transform the communities we serve. When mothers safely deliver their babies, when children return to classrooms, and when families build stronger futures, they experience the direct impact of this collective commitment to The Gambia's development.

Our partners understand that sustainable change requires comprehensive support across

all sectors of society. From healthcare and education, women empowerment. Children rights, healthcare strengthening to environmental protection and economic empowerment, their diverse contributions create interconnected pathways to progress. Whether supporting infrastructure development, capacity building, or community-led initiatives, these partnerships form the backbone of our transformation efforts throughout the country.

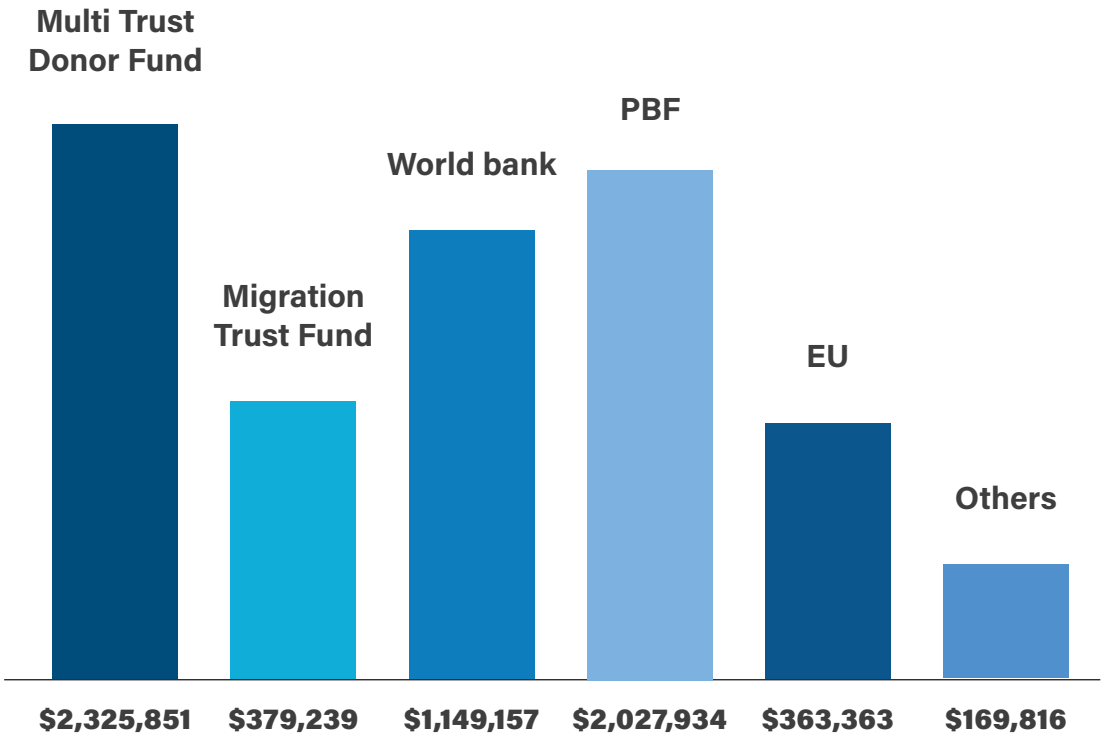
As we look ahead, we are deeply grateful for the continued trust and vision our partners

bring to this shared mission. Their unwavering commitment enables us to expand successful programs, strengthen existing systems, and innovate solutions for emerging challenges. At the United Nations, we remain steadfast in our commitment to collaborative partnership. Working hand-in-hand with the Government of The Gambia and our diverse network of development partners, we are dedicated to implementing transformative programs that address the most pressing challenges facing Gambian communities. This collaborative approach ensures that our interventions are

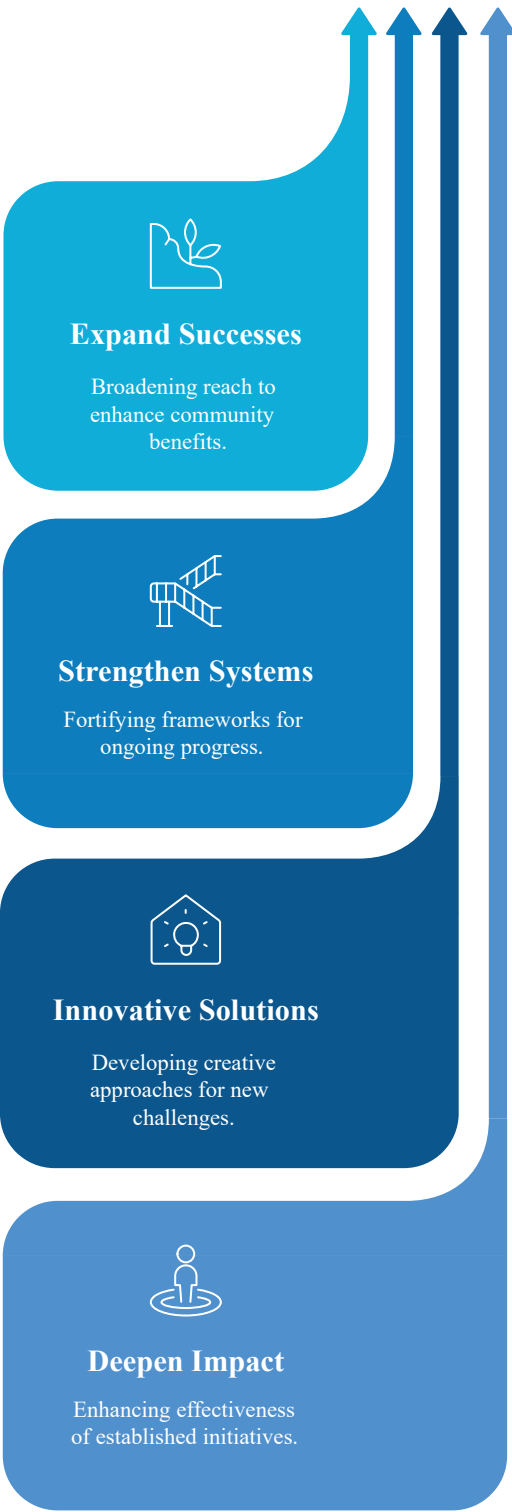
locally owned, culturally appropriate, and designed for lasting impact across all sectors of society.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all our partners who continue to support our collective efforts in accelerating progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda. Their steadfast commitment and shared vision for a more equitable and prosperous Gambia enables us to expand successful programs, strengthen existing systems, and innovate solutions for emerging challenges.

2024 Financial Overview



Looking ahead, we know these heroes will continue standing with us as we:



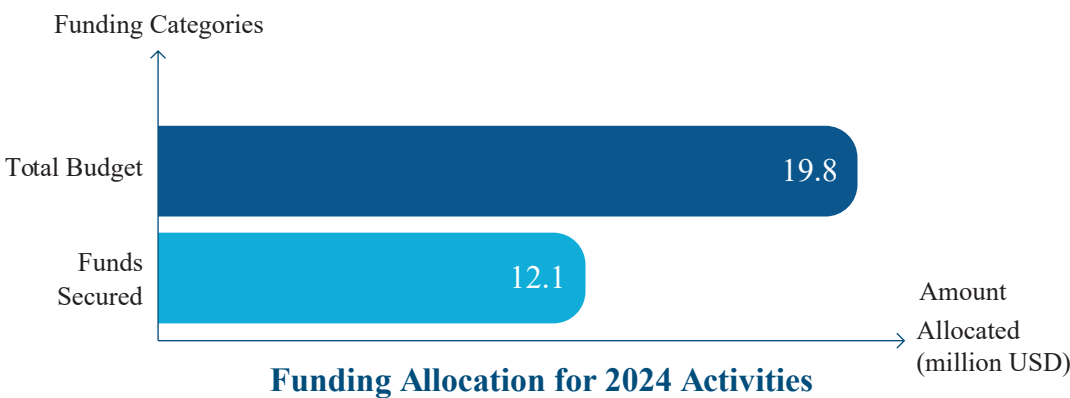


The GBV and Entrepreneurship One Stop Centre in Farafenni

©UNRCO

CHAPTER 5:

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



DOMAINS OF EXPENDITURE

01 CHANNEL ONE: HELPING PEOPLE AND NATURE WORK TOGETHER (\$8.2M INVESTED)

Let's start with Naba's story. She's a farmer who used to struggle to grow enough food for her family. We invested \$64 to help 1,570 farmers like her learn new farming techniques and get better equipment. Now, her farm produces 40% more food while using 30% less water. But here's the clever part - Naba doesn't just feed her family; she sells nutritious vegetables to local schools, earning \$1,013 annually. Every dollar we invested in these farmers created \$16 in new agricultural production. That's like planting one seed and getting sixteen fruits in return.

02 CHANNEL TWO: MAKING SYSTEMS WORK BETTER FOR EVERYONE (\$2.3M INVESTED)

Let's look at our investment in Faye Drammeh, who helps people get justice in her community. Before, people had to wait months for their cases to be heard. We invested in digital tools that cut this waiting time by 60%. It now costs just \$14 to help someone resolve their legal problems - less than one-third of what it used to cost (\$36).

03 CHANNEL THREE: INVESTING IN PEOPLE'S FUTURE (\$3.15 MILLION INVESTED)

This brings us to healthcare and education. We've made childbirth five times safer by investing \$15 per birth in better care. That's less than the cost of a basic medical kit, but it saves lives.

We spend \$75 per student in schools to give 34,346 children access to digital learning tools. When these children succeed in school, they help their whole family move forward.

Our \$782,000 investment in maternal health streamlined care delivery by cutting wait times, boosting skilled birth attendance, reducing mortality rates, and enhancing overall community health.

Our demonstrated impact has attracted major partners. The European Union has invested \$553,000 in justice reform, while the FAO contributed \$4 million for climate programs.

Even modest investments show remarkable returns—our \$137,500 mangrove restoration initiative has increased coastal protection by 15% while creating opportunities for 2,170 entrepreneurs.

We seek \$7.7 million to expand our proven approaches across The Gambia. Our track record speaks through numbers: we cut service costs by 60%, reach 16 people with every dollar invested, and maintain an 85% implementation rate. Join us in turning these proven solutions into national transformation, creating a stronger Gambia where more communities can thrive.



Dominic Badjie, an horticultural farmer in Karbekel, West Coast Region poses with his produce.

©IOM The Gambia



Binta carefully removes weeds from her garden in Misera, ensuring her vegetables receive optimal nutrients and sunlight.

©FAO The Gambia

CHAPTER 6:

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED ABOUT MAKING CHANGE THAT LASTS



Our work in the Gambia has revealed crucial insights into fostering lasting change. It emphasises the importance of observing successful strategies and understanding their underlying principles.

Investment Efficiency

Optimizing resource
use for maximum
impact

Local Ownership

Ensuring
community-led
sustainability of
initiatives

Women's Leadership

Empowering women
to drive community
transformation

Connected Support

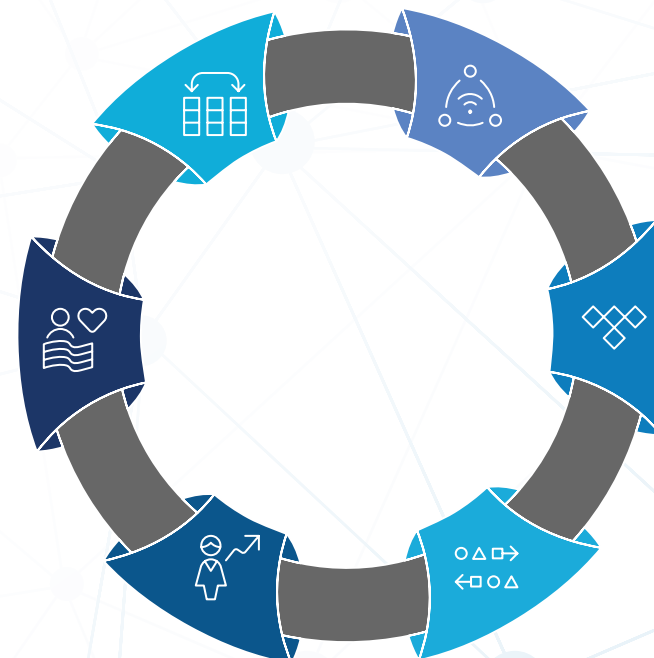
Strengthening links
between
interventions for
holistic impact

Local Wisdom

Integrating
traditional
knowledge with
modern techniques

System Strengthening

Building robust
systems to support
individual successes



BUILDING ON LOCAL WISDOM

We also learned a lot from observing how communities adapt and enhance our interventions. When we introduced improved agricultural techniques, local farmers didn't just apply them – they combined them with traditional knowledge to create even better methods. In Misera, for instance, Sohna's integrated modern drip irrigation with conventional crop rotation practices, achieving results that surpassed our initial projections. This showed us that lasting change happens when we respect and build upon local wisdom rather than trying to replace it.



THE IMPORTANCE OF STRENGTHENING SYSTEMS

Furthermore, we learned that individual success stories, while inspiring, only lead to lasting change when they help strengthen the systems around them. Consider how our maternal health initiative worked: we helped create a comprehensive healthcare network. Ida's success as a midwife became sustainable because improved record-keeping systems, better emergency response protocols, and stronger connections between rural clinics and urban hospitals supported it. We also saw how UNAIDS trained 140 people living with HIV on treatment literacy, including ART benefits and adherence, with one participant sharing how Dr. Sabally's support helped them overcome stigma and find purpose.



THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

We have seen compelling evidence that supporting women's leadership creates powerful ripple effects through communities. For example, Faye's evolution from community advocate to justice leader exemplifies how supporting women's leadership creates lasting change. Her success inspired other women to seek tribunal positions, leading to today's network of twenty-three women leaders. More importantly, her work has shifted community perspectives. Women who received justice through her tribunal have gone on to start businesses, enrol their daughters in school, and speak up at community meetings. She explains, 'When women see justice work, they find courage to pursue other dreams.' This ripple effect demonstrates how strengthening justice systems can catalyse broader social and economic transformation.



THE VITAL ROLE OF LOCAL OWNERSHIP

Another crucial insight came from observing how communities sustain positive changes. Programs that succeeded over the long term invariably had strong local ownership. The school feeding program flourished because local farmers like Naba took pride in supplying nutritious food to their community's children. The water management system in Sinchu Barra remained well-maintained because the community felt genuine ownership of the project. This showed us that lasting change requires communities to see themselves not as beneficiaries but as active creators of their progress.



LEARNING FROM CHALLENGES

Our understanding also deepened through facing challenges. When some early business initiatives struggled, we learned the importance of combining technical training with ongoing mentorship. When specific agricultural programs showed mixed results, we discovered the need to better account for local climate patterns. These experiences taught us that setbacks, when adequately understood, help us design more effective interventions.



THE POWER OF CONNECTED SUPPORT

Our most significant learning is that lasting change comes from understanding and strengthening the connections between different development interventions. We also enhance economic participation by supporting women's leadership in justice systems. When we invest in environmental protection, we create new business opportunities. When we improve healthcare access, we enable greater community participation in development activities.

This understanding shapes how we design and implement programs. Rather than treating challenges in isolation, we look for opportunities to create reinforcing cycles of positive change. Each intervention becomes more effective when it builds upon and strengthens others.



THE IMPORTANCE OF INVESTMENT EFFICIENCY

Our \$13.6 million in strategic investments demonstrate clear patterns of success. The \$200,000 investment in digital case management shows exceptional value for money, reducing processing times by 60% while enabling the handling of over 900 GBV cases annually. Similarly, the \$137,500 mangrove restoration initiative exemplifies efficient resource use, increasing mangrove coverage by 15% while creating livelihoods for 2,170 entrepreneurs for \$63 per direct beneficiary.