



FUTURE IN OUR HANDS - THE GAMBIA

SIDA-SUPPORTED PROGRAMME

PRESENTED DURING GAMBIA GROUPS MEMBERS' MEETING

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Prepared by Future In Our Hands - The Gambia (FIOHTG)



Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	3
2. Programme Overview and Objectives	4
3. Programme Performance at a Glance	5
4. Thematic Results	6
4.1 Community Health.....	6
4.2 Education and Youth Empowerment	7
4.3 Democratic Governance and Civic Participation.....	9
4.4 Agriculture, Food Security and Sustainable Livelihoods	10
4.5 Institutional Capacity Strengthening and Organizational Development	12
5. Cross-Cutting Results.....	13
6. Stakeholder Engagement	14
7. Safeguarding and Accountability	15
8. Challenges, Mitigation and Lessons Learned	16
9. Conclusion and Recommendations	17
10. Photo Gallery	18
10.1 Community Health.....	18
10.2 Education and Youth Empowerment	19
10.3 Democratic Governance and Community Dialogue	20
10.4 Agriculture and Sustainable Livelihoods	21
10.5 Institutional Capacity Strengthening	22

1. Executive Summary

During January-June 2026, Future In Our Hands - The Gambia (FIOHTG), through its Community Development Unit, School Development Unit, Administration and Human Resources Unit, implemented integrated SIDA-supported **interventions to improve community health, strengthen education systems, promote democratic participation, enhance sustainable livelihoods through climate-smart agriculture, and strengthen institutional capacity and organisational effectiveness.**

The programme applied participatory, rights-based and gender-responsive approaches. It engaged communities, schools, government institutions and local leadership structures, with particular attention to women, adolescents, youth and vulnerable groups. Activities combined awareness raising, practical skills development, community dialogue and institutional capacity strengthening.

Activity sessions	Direct beneficiaries	Female participants	Male participants
37	1,096	701 (64.0%)	395 (36.0%)

Implementation progressed broadly according to plan and contributed to improved health awareness, strengthened civic engagement, enhanced school governance, increased youth participation, greater gender inclusion, improved agricultural knowledge and livelihood opportunities, and stronger staff capacity in gender-responsive programming and performance management. Follow-up mentoring, referral tracking, access to practical inputs, and continued staff development remain priorities for the next reporting period.



2. Programme Overview and Objectives

Overall Objective

To improve the wellbeing and resilience of communities through integrated interventions that strengthen health, education, democratic participation, gender equality and sustainable livelihoods.

THREE-YEAR SIDA FUNDING FROM JANUARY 2026 TO DECEMBER 2028.

Programme Objective 1: STRENGTHENING HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Programme Objective 2: WOMEN LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING

Specific Objectives

- Improve community awareness of sexual and reproductive health.
- Promote healthy behaviours among adolescents.
- Strengthen menstrual hygiene management in schools.
- Increase civic awareness and democratic participation.
- Promote gender-balanced representation in School Management Committees.
- Strengthen youth leadership through peer health clubs.
- Improve agricultural production and climate-smart farming practices.
- Enhance household food security and livelihood opportunities.



3. Programme Performance at a Glance

No.	Training / Activity	Sessions	Female	Male	Total
1	Community sensitization on STIs	5	166	67	233
2	Puberty changes sensitization	4	63	24	87
3	Menstrual hygiene and reusable pad production - Kabakoto	3	55	5	60
4	Menstrual hygiene and reusable pad production - Madina Sasita	3	60	0	60
5	Community civic education training	7	180	124	304
6	Formation and training of peer health clubs	4	53	47	100
7	Equal representation in School Management Committees	4	40	30	70
8	Horticulture production training	1	50	30	80
9	Tree nursery management training	1	3	9	12
10	Beekeeping training	1	2	8	10
11	Animal management training	1	0	10	10
12	Gender training on the harmful use of "TABA"	2	15	19	34
13	Staff performance appraisal/capacity assessment and orientation	1	14	22	36
14	Staff Training on Gender-responsive report writing	1			
Grand Total		37	701	395	1,096

4. Thematic Results

4.1 Community Health

Objective: To improve community knowledge and promote positive health-seeking behaviour relating to sexual and reproductive health.



A facilitator delivering a school-based session on puberty and adolescent development.



Activities and Results

- Community sensitization on sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Sensitization on puberty changes among children and adolescents.
- Menstrual hygiene management and reusable sanitary pad production.

Result area	Achievement
Reach	12 health-related sessions; 380 participants reached through STI and puberty awareness; 120 participants trained in menstrual hygiene management and reusable pad production.
Knowledge	Improved understanding of STI prevention, treatment, referral pathways, puberty and personal hygiene.
Practical skills	Girls and women acquired practical skills in reusable sanitary pad production.
Social change	Inclusive discussions with girls and boys helped reduce stigma and myths surrounding menstruation and reproductive health.

Key Outcomes

- Increased awareness of STI prevention, symptoms, treatment and the importance of early testing.
- Improved confidence among adolescents to discuss puberty and reproductive health.
- Improved menstrual hygiene knowledge and practical management skills.
- Greater understanding among boys of menstrual health and supportive behaviour.

Priority Follow-up

Continue community sensitization, strengthen referral links with health facilities, expand menstrual hygiene programming to additional schools and increase targeted engagement of men and adolescent boys.

4.2 Education and Youth Empowerment

Objective: To strengthen safe and inclusive learning environments and equip young people with leadership, peer education and life skills.



Students participating in a school-based health and youth empowerment session.

Activities and Results

- Formation and training of school peer health clubs.
- Sensitization on equal representation in School Management Committees.

Result area	Achievement
Peer health clubs	Functional peer health clubs were established and students were trained as peer educators.
Leadership	Young people strengthened facilitation, communication and peer-to-peer health education skills.
Inclusive governance	School stakeholders increased their understanding of women's participation and equal representation in School Management Committees.
Collaboration	Improved collaboration between students, teachers, parents and community structures around school development.

Key Outcomes

- Improved student leadership and peer-to-peer health education.
- Greater awareness of inclusive school governance.
- Enhanced participation of women in school governance discussions.
- Stronger ownership of school development initiatives.

4.3 Democratic Governance and Civic Participation

Objective: To strengthen citizens' understanding of democratic governance and increase meaningful participation in community decision-making.



Illustrative participatory community dialogue approach used during programme sensitization activities.

Activity and Results

Seven community civic education sessions were conducted across target communities, reaching 304 participants (180 female and 124 male). Sessions addressed democratic principles, citizen rights and responsibilities, peaceful participation, accountability and inclusive local decision-making.

Key Outputs and Outcomes

- Citizens received information on democratic principles, rights and responsibilities.
- Community leaders and residents engaged in structured governance discussions.
- Participants demonstrated greater appreciation of peaceful participation and inclusive decision-making.
- Dialogue contributed to improved accountability between communities and local leadership structures.

Priority Follow-up

Continue community-level civic education, strengthen participation by youth and marginalized groups, and document examples of community action or changes in local decision-making resulting from the sessions.

4.4 Agriculture, Food Security and Sustainable Livelihoods

Objective: To strengthen agricultural productivity, climate resilience, household food security and sustainable livelihood opportunities.



Participants undertaking a practical field demonstration on plot layout and measurement.

Training Delivered

Training area	Female	Male	Total
Horticulture production	50	30	80
Tree nursery management	3	9	12
Beekeeping	2	8	10
Animal management	0	10	10

Training at the Prince Agricultural Production Centre combined participatory learning, demonstrations, field exercises and daily reflection. Content covered land preparation, spacing, watering, composting, mulching, nursery establishment, animal feeding and housing, disease prevention, hive management, farm planning and basic record keeping.

Key Outcomes

- Improved practical knowledge of horticulture, nursery management, animal husbandry, beekeeping and farm records.
- Greater confidence in applying improved production practices at the centre and household farm level.
- Diversified livelihood opportunities and stronger understanding of climate-smart agriculture.
- Improved appreciation of the relationship between farm management, productivity, income generation and sustainability.

Priority Follow-up

Conduct mentoring visits, provide practical demonstration inputs, strengthen record keeping and market linkages, and organize refresher training in nursery management, animal disease prevention, beekeeping and production planning.



4.5 Institutional Capacity Strengthening and Organizational Development

Objective: To strengthen the institutional capacity of FIOHTG staff through continuous professional development, gender-responsive programming and improved human resource management systems to enhance programme quality and organisational effectiveness.

Activities and Results

- Gender-sensitive staff training on the harmful use of "TABA", delivered in collaboration with Mothers Health Foundation.
- Staff performance appraisal, gender capacity assessment and orientation on the revised appraisal template and procedures.

Activity	Sessions	Female	Male	Total
Gender training on the harmful use of "TABA"	2	15	19	34
Staff performance appraisal/capacity assessment and orientation	1	14	22	36

Key Outputs and Outcomes

- Three staff capacity-building sessions were conducted, recording 70 staff participations: 29 female and 41 male.
- Staff improved their understanding of the health, social and gender implications of harmful TABA use and strengthened their ability to integrate prevention messages into community engagement.
- The appraisal and capacity assessment identified staff strengths, gender knowledge gaps and priority development needs, informing the review of the Gender Policy and future staff development plans.
- Staff gained greater understanding of performance expectations, documentation requirements and fair, transparent performance appraisal procedures.
- Collaboration with Mothers Health Foundation strengthened technical expertise and engagement with a local women-led organisation.

Priority Follow-up

Conduct regular refresher training on gender mainstreaming and TABA prevention, finalise and implement the revised Gender Policy, complete periodic performance appraisals, and use identified capacity gaps to guide annual staff development plans.

5. Cross-Cutting Results

Cross-cutting theme	Programme result
Gender equality	Women represented 64.0% of all recorded participations. The programme promoted women's participation in school governance and agriculture, while HR activities strengthened staff capacity for gender-responsive programming and informed revision of the Gender Policy.
Youth empowerment	Peer health clubs and adolescent health activities strengthened youth leadership, confidence and life skills.
Participation and ownership	Community dialogue, practical demonstrations and local stakeholder involvement promoted active participation and programme ownership.
Sustainability	Collaboration with schools, government departments, agricultural services and local structures supported continuity beyond individual activities.
Practical learning	Hands-on demonstrations and participatory methods were consistently identified as effective approaches for improving knowledge retention and confidence.
Institutional capacity	Staff capacity-building strengthened gender-responsive community engagement, performance management, identification of training needs and organisational learning.



6. Stakeholder Engagement

Programme implementation was undertaken in collaboration with national, regional, school and community stakeholders, including:

- Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education; head teachers; teachers; School Management Committees and Mothers' Clubs.
- Department of Agriculture; Regional Agricultural Directorate; agricultural extension officers and the Prince Agricultural Production Centre.
- Village Development Committees; Community Development Committees; traditional and religious leaders.
- Community health workers; peer health educators; students; youth groups; women's gardening groups; farmer groups and community volunteers.
- Administration and Human Resources Unit; FIOHTG management and staff; external Gender Policy consultant; and Mothers Health Foundation.

These partnerships strengthened mobilisation, technical quality, staff development, local ownership, safeguarding, organisational effectiveness and prospects for sustainability.



7. Safeguarding and Accountability

FIOHTG mainstreamed safeguarding and accountability throughout programme implementation. Measures included child protection, prevention of discrimination and abuse, gender-sensitive facilitation, confidentiality during sensitive discussions and referral of concerns through established organisational procedures.

All staff, partners, consultants, volunteers, facilitators and other stakeholders engaged in implementation were required to sign the organisation's Code of Conduct. Accountability was reinforced through community consultation, attendance verification, supportive supervision, monitoring visits, participant feedback and complaints mechanisms, and systematic documentation of lessons learned. The HR capacity-building activities were conducted in safe, inclusive and respectful settings, participant feedback was encouraged, and no safeguarding concerns or incidents were reported.

8. Challenges, Mitigation and Lessons Learned

Challenge / Risk	Mitigation undertaken or proposed	Lesson for future implementation
Cultural barriers affecting discussion of sexual and reproductive health.	Use trained facilitators, local leaders and gender-sensitive small-group discussion.	Trust-building and locally appropriate language are essential for sensitive topics.
Lower participation of men in some health activities.	Use male champions, youth groups and targeted mobilisation.	Gender balance requires deliberate mobilisation strategies.
Limited materials and agricultural inputs.	Prioritise demonstration materials and link participants to sector partners.	Practical training produces stronger results when participants can immediately practise.
Transport and logistical constraints in remote communities.	Plan mobilisation and transport earlier and cluster nearby sites where feasible.	Operational planning should reflect seasonal and geographic realities.
Need for post-training mentoring.	Schedule routine follow-up visits and refresher sessions.	Knowledge gains require continued technical support to translate into outcomes.
Limited outcome-level documentation.	Track referrals, behaviour changes, application of skills and community actions.	Future reports should move beyond attendance to document changes attributable to activities.
Staff gender knowledge and performance-management capacity gaps.	Use capacity assessments, refresher training, revised appraisal tools and follow-up implementation of the Gender Policy.	Institutional change requires routine assessment, documented action plans and sustained management follow-up.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

The first six months of 2026 demonstrated substantial progress toward the objectives of the SIDA-supported programme. Through 37 sessions, FIOHTG recorded 1,096 participations, comprising 701 female and 395 male participants, and delivered integrated interventions across health, education, governance, sustainable livelihoods and institutional capacity strengthening. The programme strengthened knowledge, practical skills, leadership, inclusion, staff performance systems and collaboration among communities, schools, government institutions, staff and partner organisations.

Recommendations

- Continue regular community sensitization and structured follow-up mentoring.
- Expand menstrual hygiene management and peer health club interventions to additional schools.
- Promote greater participation of men and adolescent boys in reproductive health programming.
- Strengthen women's participation in leadership, school governance and technical agricultural training.
- Provide post-training technical support, production inputs and simplified farm record-keeping tools.
- Improve referral tracking and documentation of behaviour change and livelihood outcomes.
- Maintain collaboration with sector ministries and local structures to support sustainability.
- Finalise and operationalise the revised Gender Policy and institutionalise regular gender capacity assessments.
- Implement periodic performance appraisals and link identified capacity gaps to annual staff development and organisational planning.
- Continue staff and community awareness on the harmful use of "TABA" in collaboration with relevant technical partners.
- Continue integrating safeguarding, gender equality and accountability across all interventions.

10. Photo Gallery

10.1 Community Health



Facilitated session on puberty and adolescent development.



Women demonstrating reusable sanitary pad production.



Adolescent participants practising reusable pad production.



School-based menstrual hygiene awareness session.

10.2 Education and Youth Empowerment



Students participating in a school learning session.



Participatory outdoor youth activity.



Group photograph following school-based activities.



Students and community participants during practical learning.

10.3 Democratic Governance and Community Dialogue



Facilitator leading a participatory community dialogue.



Women contributing to a community discussion.



Interactive engagement between facilitator and participants.



Community participants following a dialogue session.

10.4 Agriculture and Sustainable Livelihoods



Practical demonstration on plot measurement.



Community members observing land preparation and spacing.



Participants preparing the demonstration plot.



Agricultural tools and inputs displayed during practical training.

10.5 Institutional Capacity Strengthening



Facilitator supporting the staff appraisal and gender capacity assessment workshop.



Staff participants during the institutional capacity-strengthening session.

WORK OUTLINE FOR THE SECOND HALF OF 2026

- STAFF TRAINING ON GENDER RESPONSIVE REPORT WRITING



SIDA- CDU Activity Descriptions & Topics

Women's Empowerment and Governance Programme

No.	Activity	Timeframe	Description	Key Topics	What It S...
2	Women's Conferences	20 September 2026	Regional/community conferences that bring women from target communities together on a common platform to raise awareness, build solidarity, and give women's voices greater weight in community and local governance discussions.	● Women's rights and legal protections ● Barriers to women's participation in leadership and governance ● Economic empowerment and livelihoods ● GBV: prevention and reporting mechanisms ● Networking and peer support among women leaders	<i>To create a... where wom... shared conc... solidarity ne... their voices... and local go... processes.</i>
3	Training of Women's Advocacy Committees	14–16 October 2026	Capacity-building sessions for members of Women's Advocacy Committees to strengthen their advocacy, negotiation, and representation skills in defending women's interests within their communities and with local authorities.	● Roles and responsibilities of advocacy committee members ● Advocacy and lobbying techniques ● Engaging duty bearers and local government structures ● Documentation and referral of rights violations and GBV cases ● Leadership and public-speaking skills	<i>To equip Wo... Committees... confidence... represent an... women's rig... community</i>
4	Interface Dialogue Between Rights Holders & Duty Bearers	21–23 October 2026	Structured dialogue sessions bringing together community members (rights holders) and local government or traditional authorities (duty bearers) to discuss accountability, service delivery, and the realization of community rights.	● Roles and obligations of duty bearers ● Community rights and entitlements ● Accountability and transparency mechanisms ● Grievance redress and feedback channels ● Joint action planning between communities and authorities	<i>To strengthe... understand... accountabili... communities... authorities, responsiveness... community</i>

No.	Activity	Timeframe	Description	Key Topics	What It s
5	Gender Training	1 October 2026	Training sessions designed to build a shared understanding of gender concepts, gender-based violence, and gender-responsive practice among stakeholders, including CBOs, government officials, and community leaders.	● Gender concepts and terminology ● GBV: forms, causes and consequences ● Gender mainstreaming in programming and governance ● Referral pathways and support services ● Positive masculinity and engaging men and boys	<i>To build sta identify, pre gender ineq to promote practice in t and commu</i>
6	Training of District Tribunals	4–6 November 2026	Capacity-building for District Tribunal members on handling disputes and cases — particularly those involving women and vulnerable groups — in a fair, gender-sensitive, and rights-based manner.	● Roles and jurisdiction of district tribunals ● Gender-sensitive dispute resolution ● Handling GBV and family-related cases ● Relevant legal frameworks and referral procedures ● Record-keeping and case management	<i>To strengthe district tribu adjudicate o particular at the rights of vulnerable p</i>
7	Training on Local Government Act (Centralized — VDCs, Women's Leaders, other CBO Executives)	25 September 2026	A centralized training bringing together Village Development Committee (VDC) members, women leaders, and other CBO executives to build a shared understanding of the Local Government Act and its implications for community-level governance.	● Overview of the Local Government Act ● Roles and functions of VDCs and local governance structures ● Community participation in local governance ● Women's representation in local government structures ● Linkages between CBOs and local government authorities	<i>To strengthe actors' unde legal framew government effective an community governance</i>

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT UNIT ACTIVITIES IN SECOND HALF OF THE YEAR:

- Sensitization on equal representation of men and women in the School Management Committee (SMC)
- School Campaign and Elections (Sensitization of girl's participation in school leadership)
- Menstrual Education and Management(Girls agendas keep our girls in school)
- Sensitization on Puberty Changes for Children and Adolescent for Mother ´s clubs
- Formation and Training of Peer Health Clubs in Schools
- Support and Training of Teachers at SOMA FIOH School