



Hello all,
Welcome to the second edition of the PACD newsletter. PACD is a community development programme initiated by the Government of The Gambia to address some of the development challenges faced by rural communities. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the implementing agency. Phase I, also called the Pilot Phase, ended in December 2021, The results achieved are being used to transit to Phase II.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- PACD Updates
- Increasing access to water in rural Gambia
- Meet your PACD team



PACD UPDATES

DIFFUSING THE RESULTS OF THE PACD WATER PROJECT AMONG COMMUNITIES ACROSS 5 REGIONS

From the 19th to the 23rd of September 2022, a visibility tour was carried out in all the thirty-one (31) communities across the country that were provided boreholes with water distribution networks as part of the Programme for Accelerated Community Development in 2021. The purpose of the tour was to diffuse results of the water project among communities, share the stories of beneficiaries on the results and the impact of this support, and provide significant visibility to the commitment of the PACD to the sustainability of the project, particularly highlighting the benefits from water source improvement by borehole drilling. Erstwhile overshadowed by concerns about safe and clean water, people are now examining their communities with microscopes as the boreholes materialise. The villages were clustered for the visibility tour based on population and size. The *tour* raised awareness on the importance of culture as a driver of sustainable development. Improved water resource management, water supply and sanitation contribute significantly to increased economic productivity. The biggest potential gains are in time-saving, especially for women, who are mostly affected by water shortages. (See whole story on page 9)

INCREASING ACCESS TO WATER IN RURAL GAMBIA



Binta fetches water from the tap near the compound of the village Alkalo at the centre of Maduar, a long distance from the main Soma Highway in the Lower River Region. The tap is one of many installed in the village by a community development programme initiated by the Government of The Gambia in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme called the Programme for Accelerated Community Development, PACD. The tap is an essential item the village cannot do without nowadays. It stands next to a discarded water hand pump, which used to be the principal source of drinking water for households in the community.



The water hand pump, powered by a manually operated borehole available at the centre of the village has been a challenge for a majority of the households due to its distance. In addition, after many years of usage, the water table level has dropped resulting in very low output making it less likely to bring water at the desired pump flow rate. This presented many challenges to the community. The significant **physical exertion** required to pump water as a result of low water levels also had a major impact on the women. Many lost first trimester pregnancies because of undue pressure from such physical exertion. As the water pouring from the tap fills the container, Binta calls on her neighbour, Khady Jammeh alias MBee, to assist her to lift the container onto her slightly tilted head. She stood upright and walks majestically to her home, a short distance away.

A fundamental human right.

Whereas access to safe and clean water has improved a lot in The Gambia, it has not progressed as steadily in the rural areas. According to a survey by The Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 86% of rural communities have access to improved sources of drinking water in The Gambia.

However, due to inadequate water supply, the time spent to fetch water can range between an hour to 3 hours. The lack of a comprehensive water network in rural Gambia means that the drinking water needs of rural communities are met through ground water sources. This means that the construction of boreholes and standpipes are required. As a fast-track programme, PACD is designed to deliver quick dividends to the rural population, particularly those hard-to-reach communities that still face serious challenges. PACD has provided clean and safe drinking water to 31 communities reaching 2,917 households and 17,576 people (9,888 Males & 7688 Female) in the five regions of LRR, NBR, CRR, URR and WCR. It seeks to fill the projected water requirement based on estimated population of The Gambia in 2020, of 127,665 m³ per day which requirement is set to go up to 170,035 m³ per day, a 33% increase.

A Women's Crisis

The timeline of access to water history in Manduar is riddled with things that, in hindsight, seem downright painful.

Access to water is particularly a women's crisis.

The burden of collecting water disproportionately falls on women and girls. There were unfortunately countless examples of donated pumps and boreholes being abandoned as a result of a poor or incorrect use and/or lack of maintenance. At one point, the women in Manduar pivoted to figure out the best ways to access water using other means. The choice was dug-out wells, which had many risks, including the risks of people, and children, falling into open wells. In fact, with most water hand pumps suffering from inadequate depths, therefore insufficient water, the wells became the prop that held the villagers at bay. And with it, brought its own challenges such as reduced conditions of hygiene and increase in diseases associated with contaminated water. Lack of sufficient water also resulted in animals perishing during the dry-season and low productivity of the village gardens. Among its aims, PACD provides the linkage between access to clean water and gender equality by supporting rural communities with the existential water crisis through unlocking new sources of capital using innovative financing. By doing so, PACD seeks to unleash the power and potential of girls and women in the rural areas.

Linkages with SDGs

Increasing access to rural water supply affects a total of 9 SDGs, namely SDG1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10 and 16. This is so because of the two simultaneous functions that access to water plays, namely, a consumer and a production factor.



The multiplier effects of the availability of rural water will lead to the following:

1. Improved agricultural production, livestock and aquaculture, thus improve food and nutrition security (SDG2),

-
1. creation of national wealth (SDG8), increasing rural incomes and reducing poverty (SDG1 and 2) and inequality (SDG10);
-
2. Reduced time spent by women in search of water, which improves their health (SDG4) and gives them more time available that they can devote to education (SDG4) and other productive activities to strengthen their autonomy (SDG5);
-
3. Improved access to drinking water of communities, and reduce water-related diseases (SDG3);
-
4. Improved environment through afforestation of irrigated areas around hydraulic structures and choice of species of trees fertilising soil; improving health, education, environment and food security and nutrition to contribute to the fight against non-income poverty and inequality (SDG1, 2 and 10). The availability of water for farmers and ranchers can reduce water-related conflicts and enhance peace and security (SDG16).

Sustainability

A core part of the PACD is the upskilling and training of individuals within communities. Building the capacity within a community sets the conditions for success with regards to the ongoing sustainability of the assets constructed by the programme. Building on the lessons learned from other developing countries, innovative "community corporations" are suggested as the primary mechanism through which the management of infrastructure and other assets can occur. Furthermore, it remains to be commented that any water supply system based on ground water extraction needs to look into the issues of ground water regeneration/raising the water table.



DIFFUSING THE RESULTS OF THE PACD WATER PROJECT

Branding elements, including the PACD logo and logos of key intervention areas were clearly and prominently displayed and highly visible in publicity materials distributed to every cluster of villages and/or hamlets visited in all the 5 regions of NBR, CRR, URR, LRR and WCR. 181 buckets, 84 pans and 24 T-Shirts intended to support project beneficiaries with water collections, milk containers and associated support were handed over to beneficiary communities spear-headed by a delegation from the Department of Water Resources, the Department of Strategic Policy and Delivery and the United Nations Development Programme.



PACD seeks to build and strengthen linkages between peoples by improving their knowledge and skills and enhancing opportunities through the formation of Water Management Committees (WMCs). In communities where Water Management Committees were not yet formed, the Alkalo of the village, i.e. village head, was advised to constitute one with a minimum of 5 members that will cover representatives from every hamlet of the village. All WMCs are supposed to have majority women members (not less than 50%).



The WMCs are responsible for:

- Monthly calculation and collection of user fees from every household based on the number of persons or usage per the meter
- Levying of penalties in case of delayed payments
- Employment and monitoring of staff for operations / maintenance of solar power systems, garden etc.,
- Regular maintenance of the SPDWS – cleaning of tanks, solar panels, etc.

-
- Regular upkeep of accounts / records for funds meant for water collection and utilisation / Installation of newer connections / repairs if any
-
- Convening monthly meetings
-

At one or two meeting points, the rain poured as the team interacted with the communities. The Alkalo's stamp and thumb print impressed on the list shared, confirmed receipt of the materials, and the purpose of the tour to engage at the community level, re-educating communities on how the boreholes are operated and how having the right governance structures in place to manage and monitor the infrastructure is essential for sustainability specified. This would be communicated in the main local language of the cluster visited.

Every stop was different. But all the communities were united in their approval of the programme and their satisfaction with it. Each community member had a tap close enough to their homes. In fact, the average time spent to fetch water has improved from 3 hours to just under 3 minutes.

Thus, we rounded up all the regions, one stop at a time, over the course of the next 5 days.

Meet your PACD team!



Cherno Lamin Jallow
Project Manager, PACD



Marie Chorr Bah
Monitoring & Evaluation Analyst, PACD



Thomas Mugabiyimana
Team Leader, Procurement



Rohey Samba-Jallow
Communication and Visibility Consultant, PACD



Alieu Loum
National Coordinator Programme for Accelerated Community
Programme for Accelerated Community Development (PACD)
Department for Strategic Policy & Delivery
Office Of The President



Ismaila Jallow
National Focal Point Programme for Accelerated Community
Development (PACD)
Department for Strategic Policy & Delivery
Office Of The President



Lamin Nyangardo
Focal Point Programme for Accelerated Community Development
(PACD)
Department for Strategic Policy & Delivery
Office Of The President

Have a contribution for our next newsletter?

Please contact us on:



+220 3353082/7471327



+220 4494774



lamin.jallow@undp.org

rohey.samba-jallow@undp.org