



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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Acronyms

WANEP- West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
GPU- Gambia Press Union
NHRC- National Human Rights Commission
UNDP- United Nations Development Programme
NYC- National Youth Council
ATJLF- Africa Transitional Justice Legacy Fund
IRI- International Republican Institute
TRRC- Truth, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission
LRR- Lower River Region
URR- Upper River Region
CRR- Central River Region
NBR- North Bank Region
NGO- Non-Governmental Organization
CPA- Child Protection Alliance
YHRG- Youth for Human Rights International
VDC- Village Development Committee
PWDs- Persons With Disabilities
Badinbung- Family House
Bantabas- Village Forums/Sessions
Alkalos - Village heads
GAF - Gambia Armed Forces

About Beakanyang

Beakanyang (BKK) is a voluntary, not for profit, non-partisan and non-governmental organization. BKK works for the promotion, realization, protection and enforcement of human rights through human rights awareness, advocacy and capacity building. BKK also promotes good governance and environmental sustainability with specific focus on climate change mitigation and adaption.

Beakanyang is a local palaver meaning equality. It was founded in 2001 and began full operation in summer 2004 after registration with the ministry of justice. It was in 2016 upgraded to a local NGO and also registered with other like-minded organizations such as Network against Gender Based Violence, Child Protection Alliance, CPA, and National Youth Council.

Beakanyang currently chairs the CSO Dialogue Platform (a network of all NGOs working on human rights issues in the Gambia) under the National Human Rights Commission. Beakanyang aims to and enhance and promote the participation of disadvantage people in issues relating to good governance, human rights and environmental sustainability, as well as women and youth development in The Gambia. The organization has been actively working over the last years to enhance the participation of young people and women in issues relating to human rights, good governance, environmental sustainability and peacebuilding.

BKK Objectives

- To empower women and young people to serve as an effective catalysts for social transformation in The Gambia.
- To help promote a culture of peace, human rights, good governance, open societies and sustainable environment.
- To promote the participation of young people and women in making decisions that affects their future.
- To serve as a public policy voice and advocacy mechanism on behalf of young people and women and other vulnerable groups in the society to influence policies, promoting and mainstreaming their participation in local and national agenda.

Core Values



Mission

To educate and empower citizens to know, defend and champion their fundamental human rights and development.

Vision

A country where rule of law, accountable democracy, human rights culture and sustainable community development are attained and respected

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIRMAN



Beakanyang is an embodiment of hope for the environment and human rights in the Gambia. Each day, we strive, work, and pray that all rights are respected as guaranteed by the constitution of The Republic. We seek to develop a bold and courageous theory of change that embraces an enlightened vision and achievable plans that are animated, not by our differences, but by our collective survival instincts, shared past and common future, and that are passionately devoted to protecting all rights, respect for the rule of law and the well-being of our planet while assuring that freedom, justice and democracy will strive in our beloved nation.

The past year has been very busy for our staff. I wish to commend them for their selflessness, steadfastness, commitment and dedication to duty. I wish to take this opportunity to commend our regional representatives for their tremendous efforts over year.

Much cannot be achieved without the support of our development partners. I am very thankful to our donor partners for their continued trust, confidence and support while assuring them of our uncompromising desire for a better Gambia where all rights are respected without prejudice.

Meanwhile, BKK's board, is committed to maintaining a high standard of cooperate governance and is collectively responsible for ensuring delivery of the organization's mission, setting its strategic direction and upholding its core values.

I commit to upholding the mission and vision of our great institution. In the coming years, we hope to increase our interventions to more rural communities, increase our human resource capacity for a more productive and meaningful impact in The Gambia and beyond.

In our collective aspirations, I remain committed to your service.

Mr. Omar Malmo Sambou, Board Chairman

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



I'm full of gratitude to God and all our partners, stakeholders, board and staff, as I share this report. The year 2021 was indeed very challenging for many organizations including Beakanyang. The outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic has had a serious impact on our work especially our community engagements which require face-to-face interaction with communities. However, despite these and many other challenges brought by Covid-19, the year under review, in general was a success subsequently, we are pleased to present our annual report which highlights our major undertakings and accomplishments for the year 2021. I am glad to report that remarkable successes were registered in the year under review as documented in this report. Our human rights education program continued to impact lives and livelihoods across the country.

In the areas of democratic governance and peace building, our programs reached out to hundreds of young people, women and persons with disabilities in all regions of The Gambia.

Our environmental activities have already started paying dividend for people especially in the Upper River Region of the country.

Finally, I urge you all to read the full account of the summary of Beakanyang's success during 2021.

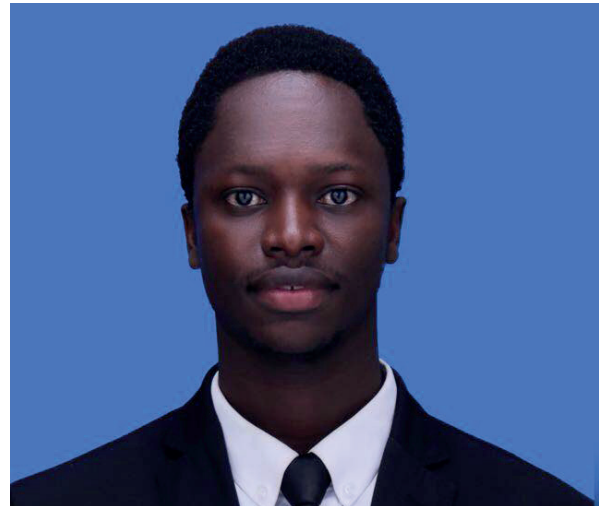
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nfamara Jawneh'.

Nfamara Jawneh, Executive Director

Appointment of New Board Chair

In April 2021, Beakanyang announced the appointment of Mr. Omar Malmo Sambou as its new board chairperson. Mr. Sambou replaces Mr. Yaya Sumareh who successfully served as our chair for two consecutive terms.

Omar Malmo Sambou is a Lecturer and program coordinator of environmental science at the University of The Gambia. He is currently a Ph.D student at the University of Brawijaya, Malang, Indonesia. Omar has over ten years of experience in voluntarism and activism on environmental protection, social justice and climate change in The Gambia. He has a verse experience in working with communities, action and awareness-based NGOs and CBOs on contemporary environmental issues in The Gambia. He is an Accredited Multidisciplinary



Researcher and has been involved in climate change negotiations for The Gambia at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Omar holds a BSc (Hons) and Master's (Hons) in Environmental Science from the University of The Gambia and University of Brawijaya respectively. He is a former President of the University of The Gambia Students' Union (UTGSU) and National Union of Gambian Students (NUGS). A former Teacher and Course Instructor at The Gambia College.

Mr Sambou is not new to BKK as he had previously supported our environment programs in URR. Mr. Sambou brings to Beakanyang his wealth of experience, leadership and deep understanding of climate action and social justice. He is the youngest member of our board and the first young person to serve as our board chair.

Commenting on the development, Chairman Sambou said: "It is a great pleasure and a challenge for me to be appointed board chairperson of a renowned organization like Beakanyang. Such appointments are done on trust and confidence. I am thankful for the trust and confidence they have in me. To the best of my abilities, I will give the institution all the support I can. I hope to contribute and to learn from the team."

Human Rights Promotion and Education

One of the thematic areas of intervention for Beakanyang is human rights promotion and education. The objective of our human rights program is to promote a just and fair legal and policy environment that guarantees non-discrimination and equality. The goal is to have a citizenry that has a human rights culture imbibed in them and human rights becomes a reality for all.

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION SCHOOL TOUR

During the year under review, as part of our efforts aimed at promoting human rights education in the country, particularly in schools, Beakanyang in partnership with Youth for Human Rights (YHRI) The Gambia, embarked on an educational tour of senior secondary schools in the country.





During the tour, students were introduced to UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and also had the opportunity to learn more about child rights.

The tour provided an opportunity for our staff to meet our school based human rights teacher coordinators in the regions and shared ideas as to how to promote human rights education in schools. Also, during the tour, schools were also given copies of human rights booklets courtesy of YHRI.

Students in the schools were further inspired to build more interest in their rights and were encouraged to join human rights clubs in their respective schools.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY COMMEMORATION IN GRAND STYLE

Annually, Beakanyang joins the rest of the world to commemorate International Human Rights Day. The day set aside by the United Nations to honor the UN General Assembly's adoption and proclamation on 10th December 1948, of the Universal Declaration HR the first global enunciation of human rights.

Beakanyang in partnership with Youths for Human Rights The Gambia, a subsidiary of YHRI commemorated the Rights Day under a local chosen theme; Role of Young people in Mitigating Post-Electoral Violence.

The commemoration held at Masroor Senior Secondary School in Old Yundum brought together young people from various walks of life including young politicians, political parties, human rights activists as well as teachers and students mainly from Nusrat, St. Peters and Masroor senior secondary schools.

The local theme chosen was informed by BKK's recognition of the country's polarization and the major opposition parties' refusal to accept the 4th December, 2021 Presidential result announced by the IEC.

The aimed of the 2021 celebration of BKK was aimed at promoting social cohesion and political tolerance within the context of human rights and rule of law. The daylong event was marked by a march pass led by the scout band, a symposium, panel discussion and presentations by human rights experts.

The guest speaker on the occasion was Ms. Matilda Mendy, the Deputy Executive Secretary of National Human Rights Commission.

NHRC deputy boss used the opportunity to hailed BKK for its efforts in inculcating a culture of human rights among Gambian youths.

BADINGBUNG INITIATIVE

Badingbung (family house) is a people centered and traditional community-led truth seeking, conflict resolution and reconciliation mechanism. The initiative was launched in 2020 by BKK with supported from the Africa Transitional Justice Legacy Fund (ATJLF) and covers three districts in the Upper River Region namely; Wuli East, Wuli West, Sandu and Tumana.

In 2021, few important remaining activities were held and includes, community Bantabas (community dialogue sessions), unity festival and project phase out interface meeting.



BADINBUNG BANTABAS

During the year under review, Beakanyang conducted three Badinbung Bantabas in the districts of Wuli East, Tumana and Sandu in the Upper River Region. These Bantabas are a component of the project titled: *'Promoting Communal Healing in Post-dictatorial Gambia using local Badingbung Initiative'*.

he goal was to promote communal peace and reconciliation through the use of traditional spaces and methods of conflict resolution and reconciliation.

The objectives of the Bantabas provided a community platform for victims of human rights violations to narrate their stories and encourage perpetrators to accept the truth and seek for forgiveness from their victims. It also aimed at promoting multi-party and multi-ethnic community engagement for victims, survivors and perpetrators while fostering unity, political tolerance and pluralism.

The participants at the Bantabas comprised not only victims of human rights violations and perpetrators but also, regional authorities such as District chiefs, Alkalos, vulnerable religious leaders, National Assembly Members, security personnel, women and youth leaders.

The Bantabas were an open interface dialogue between victims of human rights violations and their perpetrators. Through the use of local facilitators chosen from within the communities in the districts, victims were given the opportunity to narrate their stories first, followed by perpetrators confessing and reconciliation. The facilitators were mainly respected elders, religious leaders and other prominent members of the district some of whom are constituents of the Badingbung committees and were initially trained for the task.

Some testimonies from the Bantabas

“It was very heart breaking for me knowing that I reported someone but my intention was not to put them in trouble. I made a statement against the ex-president saying he keep taken elderly people to work at his farms. someone heard of that and it didn’t go down well with him then he also responds and I report the case to the police through phone call then they sent investigators we were all arrested, the people I reported spent a day in custody whiles myself I was kept for two days. But am still asking for their forgiveness and ready to pay back the money their charge monies they paid during custody,”
says Bakary Drammeh.

“I am seeking forgives from anyone whose rights were violated in which I might have had hands in and I also forgive anyone who might have wronged me in the past,”
says Lankoro Jawneh.





"I was dragged, cuffed and thrown on the pick-up; my family members were crying because I was not feeling well and haven't done anything wrong. Since that day, I have sworn to kill Mawdo Cessay - who reported me to the police because of my opposition to the Jammeh government, anywhere we meet. I have come to listen to this session and thank God, it is the first public platform I have to be able to narrate my ordeals. I have heard the objectives of our session and the presentations made, hence the Badingbung Bantaba is meant to reconcile people and foster peace, I have wholeheartedly forgiven my perpetrators including Mawdo," Maska Kora, a victim, Tambasansang.

Overall, a total of nine hundred (900) participants were directly reached and further 2638 people indirectly benefited at community levels from the project activities during the year under review. Also, through the video trailers on our social media handles, 8340 people have listened to the testimonies of both victims and perpetrators of human rights violations.

USING CULTURE AND TRADITION TO FOSTER UNITY

Earlier in April, Beakanyang staged a Unity Festival in Taibatou village, Wuli West District, Upper River Region. The use of culture and tradition as a vehicle to foster peace and tolerance was informed by importance the people in the region attach to culture and tradition and their potential to unite the people.

The festival fostered community healing for sustainable peace and development through cultural manifestations.





The unity festival attracted cultural groups from different ethnic groups and other stakeholders such as: Mandinka, Fula, Sarahule, Victims of human rights violations and their perpetrators. Apart from the cultural manifestations, presentations of religious and political tolerance, ethnic diversity and how united and reconciliated community can attain self-development we were.

It's important to note that after 22 years of dictatorship, a lot of communal conflicts emerged thus leading to big divisions in many communities across the country. Though a lot of work has been done by Beakanyang through the Badingbung and other initiatives, a lot more needs to be done to bring the entire country together.

PROJECT CLOSING CONVERGENCE

The formal phased out of the Badingbung project could not be completed without an interface with the beneficiary communities.



Cross-section of participants

In June 2021, beneficiaries gathered at Taibatou Village in Wuli West District of URR for an assessment meeting of the project that gave birth to Badingbung.

There is no doubt that the successes registered by the initiative are numerous and includes the restoring many broken relations, reduction of village level conflicts, amplifying the voices of victims of human rights violations just to a few.

Meanwhile, the lessons learned was that the whole Badingbung Concept resonates very well with communities and is being used a tool for fostering lasting social cohesion and peace in the communities.

The assessment meeting brought together Badingbung Community Facilitators and some beneficiaries/victims of human rights violations under the former regime.

Commenting on the development, Alhagie Bemba Jabby, the Chairman of Badingbung says: "It's also important that we come together as key players in this to evaluate ourselves by going back to the project goal, objectives and outcomes and that is exactly why we are gathered here today."

"We are happy that the concept is bringing religious dimension to the mediation which I think is helping us resolve more problems and mitigating much more," says Vice Chairman Oustass Makeh Jagne.

KEY PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

- More people in the communities are now aware of their human rights and what constitute human rights violation.
- More communities are now living in peace with their neighbors thanks to the institution of Badingbung.
- Community mediators trained for conflict mediation are becoming more recognized and have so far successfully resolved many misunderstandings and potential conflicts.
- Badingbung has promoted communal healing and reconciliation by providing community platform for victims of human rights violations to narrate their stories and encouraged perpetrators to accept the truth and seek for forgiveness.
- Participants gained more understanding about transitional justice, human rights and vows to continue leaving in harmony with one another.
- Key outcome of this communal healing and reconciliation efforts was that they have led to a permanent creation of Badingbung committee that continues to advocate peace in the URR.
- The activities have also led to the restoration of seventy-four relationships that were broken either on social, economic or political grounds. Furthermore, they were an alternative TRRC for them because they have not had the opportunity to appear at the TRRC but this platform became an opportunity for them to share their stories..
- The Badingbung Initiative is now a permanent local structure in the Upper River Region

Stengthenining Democratic and Peaceful Elections

Ahead of The Gambia's 2021 Presidential elections campaign, political tensions were fast building up. Insults, hate speech and bullying were a common feature in political debates and discussions on the mainstream media, online media and social media platforms.

Cognizant of these potential threats to peace, UNDP supported Beakanyang to engage young women and men as stakeholders in ensuring peaceful democratic processes and advocates for the prevention of violence and hate speech.

The objective was to mobilize youth as key actors to engage in community dialogue initiatives to enhance inclusion and sustainable peace including prevention of electoral violence.

Meanwhile, it was noticed at the time that one of the biggest threats to Gambia's young and emerging democracy is intolerance. This intolerance is to a large extent fueled by hate speech which is not only putting in jeopardy the country's transition to democracy, but also emboldens antagonist of freedom of expression and press freedom to use the veil of covertly fight hate speech to suppress any form of dissent.

Hate speech in the public sphere takes place online, but also offline. Anecdotal evidence showed that social media were rife with hate speech. And a quick glance through Gambian Facebook and Twitter posts and comments of politically-charged and opinionated youths, activists and politicians showed how pervasive the problem was/is.



Meanwhile, as part of the UNDP funded project, several activities were carried out and are highlighted as follow:

TOWNHALL MEETINGS

In September 2021, a nation-wide town hall meetings on hate speech was launched. The aim of the activity was to engage communities on the dangers of hate speech to our development and also to ensure that there is a peaceful election in the country.

The town hall meetings were mainly conducted in the administrative areas of various regions of the country and draw participants from various districts and wards. In the seven (7) town hall meetings, a total of two hundred and ten (210) direct beneficiaries were reached. This` included: youth wings of political parties, regional youth leaders, artists, traditional communicators, and local authorities.

Participants discussed how to mitigate political violence by countering hate speech and bullying in the country.

The meetings provided participants a rear opportunity to engage each other in a frack and honest discussion



SENSITIZATION OF STUDENTS ON SOCIAL BULLYING

In an effort to make teaching and learning environment conducive for both students and their teachers, a sensitization of students on social bullying was carried



out in October. The activity took place in schools of Masroor Senior Secondary School in Old Yundum and St. Peters in Lamin respectively.

Over eighty (80) students were sensitized and it included participants from not only the host schools but also from Nusrat Senior Secondary School, Asalam Senior Secondary School and Yundum Barrack Upper and Senior Secondary School.

TRAINING OF TEACHERS

In addition to promoting academic success, teachers also have the responsibility of behavior management and socialization of their students. In fact, a common source of behavior problems teachers regularly encounter is aggression in the form of bullying. To enable them to effectively manage these behaviors, support in the form of training is required.

Teachers play a central role in ensuring the existence of an enabling and effective teaching and learning environment which guarantees the rights and dignity of every person. Towards this end, in October, a training workshop was organized for seventy (70) teachers from Regional Education Directorate 6 and 5 (South and North) respectively to expand their knowledge on how to effectively promote non-discrimination but more so protect the fundamental rights.



Teachers also explored efforts to strengthen systems in schools to make their learning environment harm free for children. Individual plans were also developed by the participants thus showing their commitment to implementing what they have learned from the training.

ENGAGEMENT WITH NATIONAL INFLUENCERS

As part of our efforts to reach wider audience and be able to make impact for the campaign to end hate speech in the country, individuals with community influence were identified by BKK to serve as anti-hate speech crusaders. A national influencers engagement was organized in October for the group including religious leaders, musicians, media personalities and comedians at African Princess Hotel in Kololi. We are with



the belief that having these key influencers it would no doubt scale up our reach and impact in the fight to combat hate speech, social bullying and political tolerance in The Gambia Also, it was meant to recognize and celebrate the work that these people do in peace promotion and protection. The event brought together twenty (20) National Influencers who all reaffirmed their commitment to combating hate speech in the country.

“We will use of various platforms to speak against hate speck,” says one of the participants Ms. Fatou Camara, CEO of Fatu Network Media Company.

TRAINING OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Due to the vulnerability of girls to social bullying and cybercrime in October, thirty (30) adolescent girls were gathered at Baoba Hotel in Bijilo for training on countering social bullying. Participants also discussed the role of young women in ensuing peaceful elections. The theme for the two days training was “making online space safer for young women”.

The adolescent girls were recruited from the different youth/women led organizations and tertiary institutions within the Greater Banjul Area. The two days training provided participants an introduction to basic cyber security concepts and vulnerabilities that may exist in the technologies they commonly use. Participants were also introduced to importance of cyber security for end users as well as how to assess risks and protect information. The girls were satisfied with the training and vows to use the skills and knowledge acquired to protect them when using online spaces.



TRAINING OF JOURNALISTS

Recognizing the crucial role of journalists and media as a whole, BKK also trained Seventy-five (75) journalists from across media platforms were trained on countering hate speech. The objective for this specific

activity was to ensure journalists are conflict-sensitive in their reporting by identifying hate speech, factors that fuel hate speech; and are equipped to combat hate speech.

The participants were drawn from print and online media platforms, commercial radio and television stations, and community radio stations. At least 40 percent of participants were women journalists. The training modules covered conflict-sensitive reporting, how to identify hate speech, factors that fuel hate speech, and how to deal with hate speech in news production. Participants were also trained on the Revised GPU code of conduct for journalists which includes general and

specific guidelines on children reporting, gender-based violence, migration and election reporting, and also guidelines specific to online, and broadcast media platforms. The training was jointly organized with GPU.



RADIO AND TV TALK SHOWS

Cognizant of the power of the media and their importance in advocacy work we do, in October, several radio and TV talk shows were organized on combatting hate speech and social bullying, and fostering tolerance in The Gambia. The objective of these sessions was to be able to reach another section of the society who may not have the opportunity to attend our trainings.

These talk shows expanded the discussions and engagement of the members of the public on issues of hate speech and social bullying in addition to the trainings, conferences and town hall meetings.

These programs were aired on GRTS TV, Eye-Africa TV, The Fatu Network, GRTS Radio, Paradise FM, City Limits FM, West Coast Radio, Brikama FMB Community Radio, Gunjur Community Radio, and Kuloro Community Radio.

In the same vein, GPU and Beakanyang sent different mass text messages to more than two hundred thousand (200, 000) people to counter hate speech and social bullying ahead of the December 4 presidential elections.

Two network service providers with large subscriber bases, namely Africell and Gamcel, were contracted to



send these messages to members of the public.

Furthermore, short videos were also produced in English and five other local languages (Wolof, Mandinka, Fula, Jola, and Manjago) to raise awareness on hate speech and online bullying. The videos also featured influential personalities, targeted at all social media users including politicians, young men, women and girls and were shared on WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. They were aimed at enlightening social media users to not only refrain from hate speech and social bullying but also empowering them with knowledge of hate speech and social bullying.

TRAINING OF COMMUNITY INFLUENCERS

Aware of the important role of influential leaders in peace promotion, mediation and maintenance of social cohesion, thirty (30) community influencers were recruited in the communities across the Upper River Region. They were introduced to the concepts and explored ways of countering hate speech and social bullying and anti-hate speech massaging and counter mechanisms.

The participants include alkalos, artists, prominent religious leaders, women and youth leaders.

The objective of the two days training was to build the capacities of participants to know, understand and counter hate speech in their communities.

They were also meant to use their acquired knowledge and skills to serve as anti-hate speech champions at community level.

Meanwhile, participants were also provided knowledge and skills to help them address issues of potentials communal conflicts using the traditional dispute resolution mechanisms.

“I don’t look at the number of participants of events if I’m invited but instead the issues that are to be discussed and that is why I’m here myself,” says the Governor of URR Mr. Samba Bah at the start of the training.

Meanwhile, focus group discussions and presentations were the main highlights of the training held at Mansajang Kunda.



NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON HATE SPEECH

Following various activities implemented under this project, it wrapped up with a successful nation dialogue on the 30th, October, 2021, at the Paradise Suits Hotel, Kololi that was attended by one hundred (100) participants from across the country. The primary aim of the important national discourse was to build a national consensus as to what constitute hate speech in the Gambian context and what actions could be taken by various stakeholders and recommendations on how to work and raise awareness among citizens in



Participants at the National Dialogue on Hate Speech at the Paradise Suits Hotel

countering hate speech.

The activity was attended by participants from diverse walks of life including men and women in uniform, community and national influencers, students, youth leaders, activists and religious leader.

The national engagement that lasted for several hours following the presentations and discussions, several recommendations were also made.

They include the need to organize more National Dialogues like this one, and disseminate the message on hate speech and its effects to the society.

Delegates also called for a need for people to refrain from sharing hateful messages or contents; Promote political tolerance; Create more divergent view about hate speech; Promote peace and social cohesion; Strengthen the capacity of institutions and

organization that do civic education and awareness raising; Engage more religious leaders to preach people about hate speech, tolerance and social cohesion.

Meanwhile, some participants further suggested the need for a legislation against hate speech but some including freedom of expression advocates do believe that could undermine free speech.



Lieutenant Colonel Abdoulie Jatta, Director of Operations GAF talking to participants about their commitment to ensure peace and security across the country

KEY PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

Overall, a total of 256,660 people (63% women) were directly reached through the various interventions at the community and national level during the year under review. Furthermore, we have reached another 238,420 people indirectly through our various social media (Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook) platforms as well as mainstream media outlets (Newspapers, TV and Radio).



Key outcomes of this project have been a decline in hateful speech and incitement to violence from various electoral stakeholders during and after elections. So far, since the presidential elections, we have not heard of or recorded hate speech or incitement to violence from politicians, political parties, or candidates. The media also appears to have so far taken its social responsibility to not spread hate speech and incitement in their daily reporting.

EMAM PROJECT

Ahead of the 2021 Presidential elections, the politics was preyed on bitheism, regionalism, ethnicity, citizenship, partisanship and religious sentiments, weakening the social fabrics of communities and The Gambia as a whole. These factors increase the risks of violence and threaten peace, which were likely to affect mostly youth and women. The polarization and proliferation of political parties made the process tension-soaked and volatile in nature. The First Situational Analysis Report of the National Elections Response Group (NERG) for Mitigation of Election Threats in The Gambia's 2021 Presidential Election July 1, to August 31, 2021. The report highlighted growing concerns over rising tensions around the electoral process. Increased incidents of divisive political rhetoric and tensions continue to threaten security ahead of the election.



Conflict and Conflict Resolution. These communities were identified base on the Hotspot Mapping that was done by WANEP due to their histories of tensions over land disputes, inter communal tensions, political intolerance etc. The sessions were well attended in terms of numbers (122) but also its diversity. It was graced by both the community Alkalos, Religious leaders, VDCs, Youth Groups and Women Kafoos; also, the different formal and informal structures in the community.

Meanwhile, in its continue efforts to promote a peaceful environment where citizens could enjoy their democratic rights, Beakanyang partnered with the Elections Violence Monitoring Analysis and Mitigation (EMAM) project of the West African Network for Peacebuilding, (WANEP) supported by the European Union.

As part of the partnership, Beakanyang in November, 2021 initiated peaceful dialogues and community sensitizations in Sanyang and Busumbala communities in the West Coast Region.

The aimed of the community engagements was to discuss issues on Peaceful Election and Drivers of

ENHANCING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Citizen participation is key in a genuine democracy. In fact, there cannot be any functioning democracy without active citizen participation. It's against this backdrop that Beakanyang with support from IRI



Engagement with Banjulinding women gardeners

engaged in a voter/civic education campaign including messaging to mobilize citizens to participate in the general voter registration and education for 2021 presidential election.

The program goal was to see citizens, especially marginalized groups participating effectively and efficiently in good governance and accountability processes. Its objective was to enhance the capacity of marginalized groups and other stakeholders to effectively advocate good governance practices.

As part of the project ducked: Increase Participation of Women, Youth and PWDs in Democratic Process in the 2021 Presidential elections in The Gambia, series of activities were carried out as listed below:

COMMUNITY GARDEN VISITS

Women in the Greater Banjul Area usually spend a lot of time either in their gardens or markets selling their vegetable produce. Many of them have less time for formal community workshops and sensitizations, as such; Beakanyang initiated the garden visits to meet women at their work places. Ten (10) community gardens were visited within the Kanifing Municipality and West Coast Region respectively. Cumulatively, during the garden outreaches, three hundred (300) women were reached, and enlightened on the importance of women in political participation and representation.

Following the discussions surrounding elections and political tolerance, emphasis was laid on the significance of women political participation, political tolerance, electoral violence, and mechanisms to prevention of electoral violence.

Women used the opportunity to also highlight some of their constraints including lack of enough water and secure fence for their gardens.



TRAINING OF TRADITIONAL COMMUNICATORS

Traditional communicators play an important role in educating and entertaining people using their



Participants at URR training

various traditional equipotent.

In light of the above, in November, 2021, Beakanyang recruited eighteen (18) traditional communicators within NBR and URR and trained them to help in voter message dissemination.

At the closure of the trainings, the participants were equipped with requisite knowledge and skills to carry out over education and sensitization the Lumos.

Through the trainings, participants were able to compose the messages into songs, dramas and role plays. After the trainings, the participants had all joined staff of Beakanyang in the ten (10) Lumos to



Participants at URR training

amplify the messages they have been trained using their skills of dramatization, singing and dancing. The trainings were delivered using the Mandinka, Olof, and Fula dialect to the satisfaction of the participants.

RADIO TALK SHOWS

As part of the strategies to attract more people, Beakanyang had conducted four (4) community radios, hosted by the staff of Beakanyang, aired in Farafenni community radio, Soma community radio, Bansang community radio, and Basse community radio respectively.

The radio shows were conducted prior to the Lumo outreaches in order to inform people about the activity, and the reasons for conducting such activities in the Lumos. The panelist provided platform for listeners to ask questions relating to elections, and conflict



prevention through phone calls.

WEEKLY LUMO OUTREACHES

Following the radio programs in each of the four regions, ten lumo (weekly markets) outreaches were made in the places of Farafenni, Ngayen (North Bank Region); Bureng, Kwinella (Lower River Region); Brikamaba, Wassu, Sami (Central River Region); and Sabi, Sare Ngai, Sare Bojo (Upper River Region). This activity attracted the attention of many people; irrespective their status. Across, more than one thousand (1000) people were directly reached and shared with voter education and sensitization messages.

In each lumo, participants were provided branded IRI/ BKK incentives with voter information and flyers whose content were explicitly explained by staff of BKK. Aside the presence of staff, the traditional communicators were in each lumo to exhibit the knowledge and skills



acquired during their trainings. Effectively and efficiently, they have contributed to the mass mobilization of participants and ease in the dissemination of information.

Concomitantly, for a wider reach and diverse audience, Beakanyang used social media, most especially, Facebook, twitter and WhatsApp, to disseminate messages on political participation, and issues surrounding election, peaceful elections, and conflict prevention.

Overall, the activities under this project have directly reached 2500 beneficiaries; 80% of which were youth and women. It has also reached out to over 50,000 indirect beneficiaries through the influence of our Traditional Communicators and use of their community networks being setup, other participants and social media pages.



KEY PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

The 2021 Presidential election was a resounding success in terms of voter turnout. For the first time, in the history of our (The Gambia) election, about a 90% of registered voters came out to cast their votes. For us, in the four regions (CRR, LRR, NBR and URR) where we have so much concentrated our voter education and sensitization, there has been an increased turnout. In CRR and URR, the turnout was 29% and 23% respectively compared to 2016. While in NBR and LRR, it was 27% and 30% respectively. Also, the project significantly contributed to peaceful democratic processes with a more focus on political tolerance and inclusion of youth, women and PWDs.

The election was rated by both our observers, other domestic and international observers as general peaceful, free, fair and transparent. This would not have been registered with the active roles played by CSOs like Beakanyang.

Research on Youth Policy Brief

In The Gambia, youth constitute about 65% while women about 52% of the population. Despite being the majority coupled with the numerous policy frameworks that seek to guarantee their empowerment, they still face numerous social, economic, and political factors affecting the realization of their potentials. They continue to face numerous challenges in terms of their leadership role and representation in decision making processes, employment opportunities, human rights, and access to and entitlements towards natural resources including land for agricultural and income generating purposes.

Through the support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the four organizations are jointly implementing a sub-project activity for the development of four policy briefs and fact sheets on the following themes: women and youth participation in governance; and leadership and decision-making, employment, human rights, and access to natural resources.

The survey - due to limited finance, was conducted in three regions of The Gambia, namely: Central River Region, North Bank Region and West Coast Region. This recruitment of the regions was made possible through the use of simple ballot sampling. Following the survey and data analysis, questionnaires for Focus Group Discussion were developed. This followed a countrywide regional consultation. The purpose of which was to share the research findings to further substantiate the policy briefs and fact sheets with the perspectives of the stakeholders, and for validation.

KEY PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

Four (4) policy briefs and fact sheet were developed and validated on each of these thematic areas: women and youth participation in governance; and leadership and decision-making, employment, human rights, and access to natural resources. The briefs and fact sheets were shared with policy makers and advocates for use in their work.



BKK monitors observing vote counting process

ELECTION OBSERVATION

Under the Gambian law, every citizen has the right, without any discrimination and without restrictions to take part in the conduct of public affairs, to vote, and to be elected to government. However, while elections are a key opportunity for people to exercise their right to participate in public affairs, respect for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in a country are reflected in the holding of free, fair, and transparent elections sometimes it provides an opportunity for human rights abusers to trample of people's rights. These include: freedom of expression and opinion, freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom of movement, discrimination, freedom from fear and

intimidation.

It was against this backdrop that Beakanyang as part of the CSO Coalition on elections deployed its staff to monitor the December 4th 2021 Presidential elections.

Prior, to the elections our teams were also deployed in various parts of the country to observe the General Voter Registration.

Our staff was deployed in the Kanifing Municipality, West Coast Region and the Upper River Region.

We were also concerned about the gender dimension of monitoring human rights in the context of elections to assess the extent to which women and men are able to equally exercise their right to political participation.

BKK's participation in the whole exercise was to ensure that human rights are enjoyed and protected in electoral contexts.



CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION

The Gambia is one of the most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change. With a population highly dependent on agriculture and forest resources for livelihoods, the communities continue to experience erratic rainfall patterns, windstorms, poor agricultural productivity, wild fires, deforestation, water crises in animal grazing communities and horticultural gardens etc.

Climate stressors are causing significant impacts on forest ecologies as the people seek alternative sources of livelihoods through wood collection, charcoal burning, honey collection, which is a high trigger for wild fires in the area and hunting. These activities has caused irreversible biodiversity loss in the area, destruction of vegetation cover, increased vulnerability to wind disasters, bush fires, food scarcity and rural-urban migration in search for better livelihood opportunities. It is worth mentioning that animal grazing is highly affected in the area due to heat waves, lack of grazing lands and water availability.

As the people seek alternative sources of livelihood, they appear to be doing more harm to the environment and exacerbating the impacts of climate change in the local communities. Therefore, creating sustainable alternative sources of livelihoods and providing climate change information through education and awareness is essential.

As part of our strategy, community outreach programs and field visits were conducted to give clear understanding of the challenges of the communities. The traditional communicators will be trained to produce songs, dramas and other forms of information dissemination to the masses. These will help in raising awareness and increase climate change resilience in communities especially in Wuli. Peer tutoring through environment radio listening clubs will be introduced.

ANNUAL TREE PLANTING LAUNCHED

During 2021, Beakanyang Environment unit through the Basse field office and in partnership with regional forestry office, Basse and community of Nyakoi Kerewan, Wuli West District, embarked on a tree planting exercise in Nyakoi.

Hundreds of fruits and non-fruit trees were planted in the community. The exercise was meant to support the community with climate change mitigation and



adaptation efforts.

Meanwhile, following the successful launched massive tree planting and distribution of trees was also held in Barrow Kunda.



Acknowledgements

Just like the previous year, 2021 was dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic which changed the way of life and work of people and organizations all over the world. Beakanyang like many other organizations was greatly affected by the changes necessitating a complete change of approach to ensure that the organization remained relevant and able to serve our communities. We could not have done this without the support of our partners, allies and networks, and for this we are grateful.

First of all, we thank our beneficiaries who have continued to build confidence and trust in our work.

We are grateful for all the support, feedback and the trust placed in Beakanyang and for playing an active role in making our society much better for all. We also thank our donors for standing with us during this period, and for supporting the necessary innovations that enabled us to continue working during this difficult period.

The following partners supported our work directly in 2021: UNDP through the Peace building Fund; Africa Transitional Justice Legacy Fund; International Republican Institute; Youth for Human Rights International, The Gambia National Youth Council, and West African Network for Peace building.

Finally, we thank all our partner organizations and networks, National Human Rights Commission, other government agencies, who worked with us in 2021

Impact Testimonies from Beneficiaries

Binta Kah-Student of Tallinding Annex, Kanifing Municipality

My name is Binta Kah, a grade six student of Tallinding Annex Lower Basic School. Human rights are things we are entitled to as human beings. They protect us from harm and help us to live in peace with one another. I thanked my teacher coordinator and special thanks to Beakanyang for bringing human rights education to our school. Before, I do not know my human rights but after Beakanyang's human rights education program was launched in our school, I was able to learn so many things about my rights. In fact, I should say now I know all my rights. Our human rights club in the school continues to sensitize and educate more students to know their rights."

Maa Ansa Kijera, Nyakoi Kerewan, Upper River Region

"Firstly, I would to thank and extend my sincere appreciation to Beakanyang for their role in Wuli and The Gambia at large. Since the establishment of Beakanyang, we the women and youths benefited a lot from their projects, especially on capacity building. Beakanyang has helped us know more about our human rights especially as women, provide us with livelihood skills and sensitizing us to maintain peace through its famous Badinbung which has so far mend a lot of family relationship since the fall of former President, Yahya Jammeh. Personally, as a traditional communicator, I'm using the knowledge acquired from the trainings to share widely during our social gathering like naming and marrying ceremonies in my community. I do request the organizers to spare me few minutes to talk to people about the dangers of hate speech, importance of women political participation etc."

Mr. Yusupha Cham, Human Rights Teacher Coordinator, Masroor Senior Secondary School, West Coast Region

"The human rights education program by Beakanyang has helped me and my students to learn more about our rights. The sensitizations, seminars and workshops conducted in our School by Beakanyang has a lot of positive impacts in the life's of Masroor students and teacher-coordinators likewise.

These numerous programs have gone a long way in educating and enlightening students on their fundamental rights and responsibilities. Sensitization of students on social Bullying and cyber bullying seminar gave dept enlightenment to students to desist from all sorts of bullying as it is a crime and against the fundamental human rights."

Manneh Kijera Nyakoi, Sutukonding, Upper River Region

"Well for me, I like and appreciate all the intervention programs of Beakanyang in URR but one program stands out for me is the Badingbung. The importance of Badingbung cannot be over emphasized. Firstly, it has helped settle a lot of communal issues that have to do with the autocratic regime of Jammeh. This was a platform for most victims who would have wanted to be heard at the TRRC but could not. They wanted a closure of what has had happened to them. A moment that gave the opportunity to meet with their perpetrators. This has helped our communities to reconcile and open up a new chapter."

Ansumana Sanneh Chief of Kiang East, Lower River Region

"Well, the training I attended was on hate speech and social bullying and I can attest to the fact that it was very important and educative. It came at the right time when needed, as we all know after gaining new democracy from the former government of Yahya Jammeh people started to do and said anything they feel like in the name of democracy, unknowingly violating certain provisions of the constitution or other laws of the country. The issue of hate speech in particular has led to so many quarreling among people for many years. So, if Beakanyang came out to teach and educate people about its effects and with all what we learned, we need to thank and pray for Allah to strengthen and provide more resources to the organization to be able to reach out to more and address hate speech in the whole country.

Our Board Members



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