

Final Report

Migration MPTF

Final Report

PROJECT INFORMATION											
Joint Programme Title:	Addressing the drivers and causes of migration-related vulnerabilities among border communities along the Trans-Gambia transport corridor										
Country(ies)/Region (or indicate if a global initiative):	The Gambia (North Bank Region and Lower River Region)										
Project Identification Number:	00129729										
Start and Planned End Dates	<i>January 01 2022 – 30 December 2024</i>										
Convening Agent (Lead PUNO):	International Trade Center										
PUNO(s) (PUNOs):	International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)										
Key Partners: <i>(include Implementing Partner)</i>	Ministry of Interior (MOI), Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (MOTIE), Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Welfare (MOGCSW), Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MOFEA), Ministry of Justice (MOJ), Gambia Immigration Department (GID), Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA), National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (NAATIP), Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS), The Gambia Songhai Initiative, The Gambia Women’s Chamber of Commerce (GWCC), The Gambia Youth Chamber of Commerce (GYCC), The National Youth Council (NYC)										
Project Period (Start – End Dates):	<i>January 01 2022 – 30 September 2025</i>										
Reporting Period:											
Total Approved Migration MPTF Budget: (breakdown by PUNO)	<table> <tbody> <tr> <td><i>ITC</i></td> <td><i>1,000,000 USD</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>IOM</i></td> <td><i>700,000 USD</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>UNDP</i></td> <td><i>400,000 USD</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>UNICEF</i></td> <td><i>250,000 USD</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Total</i></td> <td><i>2,350,000 USD</i></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<i>ITC</i>	<i>1,000,000 USD</i>	<i>IOM</i>	<i>700,000 USD</i>	<i>UNDP</i>	<i>400,000 USD</i>	<i>UNICEF</i>	<i>250,000 USD</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>2,350,000 USD</i>
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Report Prepared by:
(Name, title, email)

Yusupha Keita, Project Manager and Project Coordinator, yusupha.Keita@intracen.org

Ousman George Badjie, National Project Officer (IOM), obadjie@iom.int

Maimuna Jaiteh, Project Coordinator (UNICEF), mjaiteh@unicef.org

Samba Jallow, Head of Inclusive Growth (UNDP), samba.batch.jallow@undp.org

Executive Summary

The project “Addressing the Drivers and Causes of Migration-Related Vulnerabilities among Border Communities along the Trans-Gambia Transport Corridor,” implemented by ITC, UNDP, IOM, and UNICEF under the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund, achieved significant results across its three core outcomes and throughout the duration of the project from governance, activity implementation to partnership and sustainability.

To reinforce the inclusive development and strategic alignment with national priorities, the joint programme established a multi-stakeholder Project Steering Committee (PSC), co-chaired by the Ministry of Interior and MOTIE, which convened five formal meetings to provide high-level coordination, approve workplans, and guide programme implementation. Complementing this, two Local Programme Committees (LPCs) were formed in the North Bank and Lower River Regions, offering decentralized oversight and monthly feedback that enhanced delivery, particularly for TVET and cross-border trade interventions. Joint monitoring missions were also done with government counterparts and UN agencies that engaged beneficiaries directly, fostering transparency, accountability, and adaptive management. Additionally, a rapid assessment of border communities informed targeted interventions—such as poultry initiatives, market revitalization, and safe spaces for youth and women—ensuring evidence-based, locally owned development was done prior to activity implementation. These coordinated efforts reflect the programme’s holistic approach to results-based management and its commitment to sustainable, inclusive outcomes.

Under Outcome 1, which aimed to enhance the effectiveness of border authorities and promote safe migration for women and youth, 90% of respondents reported improved conduct by border officials and better facilitation of cross-border trade (CBT), exceeding the 70% target. Infrastructure improvements were completed at Misera Border Post, including the installation of the MIDAS system and hygiene facilities. A total of 134 border officials, including 21 women, were trained on MIDAS, and 150 officials received training on protection issues, meeting the target.

Outcome 2 focused on increasing awareness among rights holders. Here, 90% of women and youth expressed readiness to claim their rights and access protection services, surpassing the 70% target. Knowledge of rules, risks, and rights related to movement increased significantly, with 326 individuals (76 women) reporting improvements—well above the target of 200. Media engagement was strengthened through training of 100 media actors (39 women), and 298 individuals were trained on the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), protection issues, and migration options. A reporting mechanism was successfully established through the Gender Management Information Centre and a dedicated phone hotline.

Outcome 3 aimed to equip women and youth with life skills and livelihood opportunities. Thirty individuals were trained, and 24 received cash grants, enhancing their employment prospects and business growth. Support for female informal CBT actors exceeded expectations, with 74 women benefiting from entrepreneurship support, including 24 cash grants and professional training for 20 food vendors. Additionally, 116 community members, primarily youth, received TVET and entrepreneurship support. Three women- and youth-friendly centers were established, including a GBV One-Stop Shop, a Lumo market in Farafenni, and a hospitality training center in Mansakonko. Finally, 125 individuals were linked to national networks and digital opportunities, surpassing the target of 100.

The results of the project directly contribute to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), by enhancing border governance, empowering women and youth, and improving access to protection and livelihood opportunities. These outcomes align with the UN Gambia Country Framework’s priorities on inclusive governance, human rights, and economic empowerment, and support the Government of The Gambia’s National Development Plan by addressing migration-related vulnerabilities, strengthening institutional capacity, and promoting community resilience along the Trans-Gambia transport corridor. The project’s integrated approach reinforces national efforts to ensure safe mobility, economic inclusion, and social protection for marginalized border populations.

Despite the strong results achieved, the project faced several implementation challenges that impacted timelines and delivery. Prolonged community consultations and heavy seasonal rains delayed construction activities, resulting in two non-cost extensions, with one infrastructure component still pending completion (to be completed next month). Reshuffling within several government institutions also disrupted progress on key activities, requiring the project management team to repeatedly reintroduce and re-engage ministry counterparts to maintain momentum. Additionally, the scale and ambition of the interventions—spanning migration rights, human trafficking prevention, border post management, and cross-border trade—require sustained and adequate funding to ensure long-term impact. While the joint initiative strengthened collaborative delivery and promoted the “Delivering as One” approach, there remains room for improvement in joint data management, back-office coordination, and harmonized implementation modalities. Strengthening these areas will be critical to ensuring the sustainability and institutionalization of programme outcomes.

To enhance the sustainability and create pathways to overcome the challenges and scale up the intervention, the Joint Programme embraced a multi-stakeholder, whole-of-society approach that fostered inclusive collaboration across government institutions, civil society, private sector actors, and local authorities to ensure effective delivery and national ownership. Key government partners included MoTIE and MoI as co-chairs of the Project Steering Committee, alongside MoGCSW, GID, NAATIP, and the Department of Community Development, all of whom played vital roles in policy coordination, border management, and child protection. Youth and women-focused institutions such as NYC, GWCC, and GYCC led awareness campaigns and entrepreneurship initiatives, while Local Programme Committees in priority districts ensured grassroots engagement and oversight. Civil society organizations like Peace of Mind supported GBV response services, and sectoral institutions like GTHI provided vocational training for displaced vendors. The programme also aligned with complementary UN initiatives, notably the Human Security Trust Fund Project, reinforcing resilience and economic inclusion for vulnerable populations along the Trans-Gambia Corridor.

Overall, the project demonstrated strong performance, with most targets met or exceeded, reflecting effective collaboration among implementing partners and meaningful impact on the lives of border community members.

End-of Project Progress

1. Summary and Context

The three-year pilot joint programme “Addressing the drivers and causes of migration-related vulnerabilities among border communities along the TransGambia transport corridor” (hereafter referred to as the “Joint Programme”) aims to address the drivers and causes of migration-related vulnerabilities among border communities, enhance the cross-border environment and improve trade facilitation along the Trans-Gambia transport corridor. The joint programme enhanced border posts in Jarra West (Lower River Region) and Upper Baddibou (North Bank Region) districts, strengthen the capacity of border authorities, increase awareness among women and youth of their rights, and strengthen skills and opportunities for women and youth.

2. Results.

Outcome 1: Border authorities at key border posts of the Trans-Gambia transport corridor effectively facilitate safe and orderly migration for women and youth.

Output 1.1 Better equipped border posts

Over the course of the project, the joint program supported the refurbishment, and renovation works at the targeted border post along with installation and operationalization of the Migration Data Analysis System

(MIDAS¹) It has also fully furnished Keur Ali, Misera and Amdalai border posts with office furniture. The support for these buildings has helped officials to address administrative and operational challenges arising from limited office space and infrastructure, lack of Information Communication and Technology (ICT), office furniture, document examination and surveillance equipment, inadequate air conditioning and ventilation. The installation of MIDAS at Misera has led to improved data collection at these border crossing points and would enable GID to easily analyze migration data and provide informed and accurate policy decisions in the prevention of cross-border crimes. In addition, seventy-eight (60m,18f) immigration officials benefited from 4 rigorous training courses have proven to contribute towards streamlining and improving the processing of traveler's information and obtaining real-time data and addressing immigration and border security challenges.

Additionally, the joint program supported Gambia Immigration Department (GID) with conducting seven meetings of Inter-Agency Border Coordination Committees (IABCC) at, Misera, Keur Ali and Amdalai, where border authorities from different border agencies benefits from information exchange to combat transnational organized crimes like trafficking in person, smuggling of migrants and joint efforts for institutional, technical, and operational capacity building, joint border patrol activities carried out by law enforcement agencies of the respective border posts .

Similarly, the joint program, in collaboration with the Gambia Immigration Department and other stakeholders, conducted sensitization activities with border communities on the ECOWAS Protocol relating to the free movement of persons Residence and Established protocol and issues like irregular migration and human trafficking. Further to that, IOM The Gambia, in coordination with its Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), supported participation of the Government of The Gambia (represented by senior officials from the Ministry of Interior and GID) in the 7th Border Management and Identity Conference (BMIC7) held in Bangkok, Thailand, December 2024. Hosted by IOM and Asia Pacific Smart Card Association, the Conference was based on the theme of 'The Future of Borders and Borders of the Future: Accelerating Seamless and Secure Cross-Border Travel and Trade with Technological Solutions and Re-engineered Identity Management Process' and provided the Gambian officials with an opportunity to exchange information and learn from best practices on advancing border and identity management processes. The Conference also comprised of an exhibition on cutting-edge solutions and technologies aimed at facilitation of cross-border movements while strengthening national security. It provided the delegates with a platform to exchange knowledge, exposure to technological solutions, capacity building and networking opportunities to connect with international counterparts and experts in border and identity management.

In line with IOM's Institutional Strategy on Legal Identity as well as priorities of the Government of The Gambia on Digital Transformation and Digital Identity, joint program conducted a comprehensive evaluation of The Gambia 's legal identity system. covering civil registration, national ID systems, digital infrastructure, management, interoperability of identity databases for citizens and non-citizens. This assessment provided recommendations to enhance efficiency and inclusiveness in legal identity systems. Furthermore, the joint program supported participation of GID in the Regional Legal Identity Consultation for West Africa, held in Abidjan, Ivory Coast November 2024. This event enabled discussions on shared challenges, gaps, and opportunities in legal identity systems, fostering regional partnerships. The consultation addressed challenges faced by migrants in accessing documentary proof of legal identity and shared good practices to improve access for undocumented migrants. These efforts align with The Gambia's priorities on digital transformation and aim to strengthen legal identity systems for all citizens and residents.

[Activity 1.1.4: Build on existing structures and provision of materials to manage cases of child protection along borders](#)

¹ Developed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 2009, the Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) is a high-quality, user-friendly and fully customizable Border Management Information System (BMIS) for States in need of a cost-effective and comprehensive solution

To ensure improved child response for children on the move, joint program supported the training of 35 staff from Care Institutions together with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare (MoGCSW). The training focused on how to manage child protection cases, plan care and introduce them to the minimum standards of the children's residential care institutions. As a results of the training, 35 shelter staff (22 female, 13 male), including government social workers and CSOs, have improved knowledge and skills on providing care services in the main Shelter in Bakoteh, Greater Banjul area which is the only referral care centre in the country.

Upon completion of the training, there was an assessment to gauge the trainees' understanding to implement case management in their daily tasks. Participants were able to highlight improved knowledge on the minimum care standard. They were also able to explain effective strategies to handle children in care appropriately and be more vigilant as well as to proactively in identifying and preventing risks to children on the move.

Activity 1.2.3 Strengthen inter-agency border coordination committees

The joint program, in collaboration with the Gambia Immigration Department (GID) as chair of the Border Management Thematic Working Group (TWG) under the National Coordination Mechanism on Migration (NCM), convened seven Inter-Agency Border Coordination Committee (IABCC) meetings. The sessions brought together 91 officials (79 men, 12 women) from key agencies, including GID, Gambia Police Force (GPF), Gambia Revenue Authority (Customs), State Intelligence Services (SIS), Drug Law Enforcement Agency-Gambia (DLEAG), Food Safety Authority, Planned Protection Services, Ministry of Health (MoH), Gambia Armed Forces (GAF), Department of Forestry, and the Gambia Red Cross Society. Participants represented major border posts such as Misera, Amdallai, Farafenni (Keur Ali), Sabi, Nyamanarr, Tabanding, Giboro, Darsilami, Kartong, and Dimbaya. The IABCC meetings served as a platform for stakeholders to address operational challenges, share best practices, and strengthen coordinated responses to border management issues. Regional governance structures, including Technical Advisory Groups (TAG), also participated, reinforcing an integrated and inclusive approach to border security.

Following these engagements, the joint program supported GID in hosting quarterly TWG meeting on Border Management on 22 November 2024. The meeting gathered 22 participants (20 men, 2 women) from 14 institutions, including GID, GPF, NAATIP, SIS, DLEAG, Gambia Commission for Refugees (GCR), GAF, Ministry of Interior (MOI), Gambia Red Cross Society (GRCS), National Youth Council (NYC), Department of Social Welfare (DSW), Ministry of Health (MoH), National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), and IOM. Key outcomes included the development of the TWG quarterly workplan, progress reports from IABCC meetings, and actionable strategies to address common border management and security challenges

Activity 1.2.4 Train local authorities on accountability, governance, child protection & enhanced processes

To ensure that a child rights-based approach is mainstreamed in the government, law enforcement, and service providers' response to children on the move, Joint program supported the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare (MoGCSW) in conducting relevant training on the latest migration trends and response mechanism for children on the move. Joint Program supported the Directorate of Children's Affairs and Social Welfare under MoGCSW to conduct a refreshment training for 40 local authorities (25 female, 15 male) in the Greater Banjul Area (GBA). This included law enforcement and key stakeholders who were trained on the newest migration trends and response mechanisms for children on the move.

Building on UNICEF's programmes to enhance the capacity of the decentralized structures and supporting their coordination mechanisms, Multi-Disciplinary Facilitation Team members, (23 male and 7 female participants) working at the regional levels, were trained on Child Protection Case Management, The Standards Operating Procedures (SOPs) on Vulnerable Children in The Gambia including children on the move; and had their knowledge and skills in these areas improved through trainings implemented over the years. The objective of the training was to enable effective coordination of child protection issues, particularly children on the move

within the regions, especially for the identification and referral of these cases. Orientation on the guidance of the SOPs was also done to achieve efficiency, quality output and uniformity of performance in the national child protection system and to avoid duplication of services and resources in The Gambia. The coordination mechanism provided proper referral systems among key child protection actors and ensure a proper recording of tools, files and services provided to children in The Gambia. A pre- and post-test was conducted to assess the participants' level of understanding on the topics. The results indicate that there was an overall increment in the knowledge gained from training with a pre-test score of 37.5% and a post-test score of 95%.

Activity 1.2.5 Build the capacity of border officials on cross-border coordination for child protection measures

To create a child protective sensitive entry system that is considerate of the needs and rights of children on the move, the joint program together with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare trained border officials. 80 Border Officials were trained on the Implementation of the ECOWAS Support Procedures and Standards for the Protection and Reintegration of vulnerable children on the move and young migrants. Lower River Region had a representation of 27 male and 13 female participants and in North Bank Region there was 25 male and 15 female participants. The training provided the border officials with a stronger understanding of children on the move and to provide the required back-up and access to child protection services, whether these are provided through the national authorities or civil society; to ensure that vulnerable children are identified and also that unaccompanied or separated children can be identified as soon as possible.

Outcome 2: Border authorities at key border posts of the Trans-Gambia transport corridor effectively facilitate safe and orderly migration for women and youth

Output 2.1: Increased awareness among rights holders

The joint Program trained 90 participants (54 males and 36 females) border officials, civil society, local government authorities, and Community Child Protection Committees (CCPCs) on the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for the Protection and Assistance of Vulnerable Migrants, including Victims of Trafficking in The Gambia. Leveraging on the commemoration World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 2024, the joint program in partnership with NAATIP, ISRA, and CPA, conducted awareness activities and workshops from July 23-27, 2024, in Soma, The Gambia. The focus was on strengthening identification, referral, and support mechanisms for child victims of trafficking, targeting 60 Majalis and communities along the Trans-Gambia corridor. Themed "Leave No Child Behind," the event involved 140 key child protection participants, including Majali instructors and community leaders. Discussions covered child trafficking concepts, rights-based approaches, and NAATIP's mandate. Participants developed key messages and explored aligning TIP referrals with community structures using the National Referral Mechanism.

Similarly, the joint program in collaboration with Student teachers Association of Gambia College Basse Annex (STABA) conducted awareness campaigns and symposium focused on irregular migration, labor migration, and human trafficking in five schools (300M, 250F) across the Upper River Region: Diabugu, Baja Kunda, Sabi, Nasir, and St. George's Senior Secondary Schools. These school outreach and symposium on irregular migration and Trafficking in five raised awareness among students, teachers and other stakeholders in the Upper River Region.

Further to the work with student association the joint program collaborated with the Social and Environmental Studies Department of The Gambia College through a creative and entertaining format held a beauty pageant to effectively sensitized youths on the irregular migration and Trafficking in persons. This platform targeted the ongoing students, school dropouts and youths for creative engagement on irregular migration and trafficking in persons.

Promoting Human Rights and Safe Migration Complementing these governance efforts, the joint program, in partnership with the National Human Rights Commission to host the Fifth Edition of the Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International Human Rights Moot Court Competition. This event brought together 20 participants from

ten African universities to debate migration-related human rights issues, fostering greater awareness and advocacy for migrant rights.

In celebration of International Migrants Day on 18 December 2024, the joint program and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized a ceremony recognizing the contributions of Gambian migrants to national development. The event featured a photo exhibition—later extended to Alliance Française—that engaged civil society, youth, and returning migrants, further promoting dialogue and understanding on migrant rights

Under the trade front, the joint program in partnership with the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration, and Employment (MOTIE), strengthened the capacity and awareness of cross-border traders and border officials on regional integration frameworks, trade facilitation, and harassment prevention. The intervention deepened understanding and compliance with the AfCFTA, ECOWAS Protocols, and related trade agreements, thereby promoting safer and more transparent cross-border mobility for women and youth. Through targeted capacity-building and awareness raising interventions, 80 informal cross-border traders (68 women and 12 men) and 60 border officials acquired practical knowledge and skills that are transforming the dynamics of cross-border trade. By deepening participants' understanding of the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol, Trade Liberalization Scheme, Common External Tariff (CET), and the AfCFTA, the initiative has strengthened the enabling environment for regional integration and inclusive economic participation. The initiative also bridged information and trust gaps between traders and border officials, fostering a culture of fairness, transparency, and gender sensitivity at border points. Evidence from participant feedback points to tangible behavioural shifts, including increased confidence among women traders to assert their rights, and stronger institutional commitment by officials to uphold equitable practices—resulting in fewer cases of harassment, reduced clearance delays, and more efficient border management overall.

Activity 2.1.4 Sensitize parents, caregivers and community leaders on how to identify children on the move and protect them from violence, abuse and exploitation while referring/linking them to formal spaces

Children on the move face numerous challenges including exploitation, abuse and lack of access to social services. In its effort to protect children, the joint program through the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare conducted community sensitizations in the project targeted regions. Engaging with the communities is crucial in addressing these issues and to ensure the protection and well-being of these vulnerable children. This sensitisation targeted parents, caregivers, Alkalos, Women groups and Village Development Committees where 220 females and 180 males were sensitized across the North Bank and Lower River regions. During this engagement, participants reacted by raising concerns over the increasing number of children on the move specifically those who are unaccompanied. They highlighted the need for behavioural change, to address the situation sustainably.

To further strengthen the work for children on the move in cross border town, the joint program hosted a panel discussion with 200 adolescents through the Children National Assembly the Gambia (CNAG) on the risks of child trafficking and smuggling, focusing on unaccompanied and separated children. The event emphasized the theme "leaving no child behind in the fight against trafficking," highlighting the vulnerabilities of children with disabilities in migration contexts. Information on reporting trafficking and accessing government protection services were also provided.

Additionally, the joint program conducted 10 days community sensitization in 2024, reaching 910 community members (388 female, 522 male) across North Bank and Lower River regions. The sensitization and awareness sessions were in the form of dialogues which targeted adolescent and youth to educate them about the rights and risks of children on the move. The engagement integrated sensitization activities into existing youth programs like the awareness and sensitization activities on the dangers and risks associated with migration that have been implemented by the National Youth Council (NYC) Migration Information Centers (MICs) and schools which are enhancing the mainstreaming of child protection and migration issues.

In strengthening community level actors, 46 participants drawn from the Village Development Committees (VDCs), Mothers' Clubs, Gambia Supreme Islamic Council, Gambia Christian Council and Village Support Groups (VSG) received orientation on the child protection system and their roles in supporting the Community Child Protection Committees (CCPCs). 27 participants from LRR and 19 participants from NBR were part of the exercise. The orientations were followed by open discussions allowing the community voices to be heard on child protection issues such as non-discrimination, best interests of the child, right to life, survival and development, respect for the views of the child, case management and children on the move.

Activity 2.1.5 Implement key activities in the Children on the move communication strategy

The dissemination of information on the perils of unsafe migration is crucial to ensure that children and youth on the move can make well-informed decisions about their migration, both in the initial decision to move and throughout their migration journey (including awareness of available services), thereby mitigating the risks associated with unsafe migration practices. The joint program supported a radio program on Q-Radio as part of the Communications strategy for Children on the Move. It was a panel discussion on Education linked to Children on the Move (Migrant children). The discussion focused on large number of children on the move in The Gambia, and how they are particularly affected by the learning crisis and have a lack of access to quality education; the multiple discrimination faced by girls on the move and how this impacts their education and recommendations were made to accelerate inclusion in the national education system to improve learning outcomes for these children (CoM).

In the efforts to improve capacities on human trafficking and ECOWAS Free movement among youth, the joint program supported the Gambia National Youth Council in training 200 (124 male and 76 female) youth champions across 13 districts in the North Bank and Lower River Regions from April to May 2024. The training enhanced their understanding of migration, human trafficking, and ECOWAS free movement protocols. Empowered to be change agents, they will now lead their peers' awareness sessions and collaborate with security and community leaders to prevent irregular migration and report trafficking cases.

Following the youth champion training, the joint program supported a series of radio programs to promote safe migration, with five broadcasts in Soma (Lower River Region), three in Kerewan (North Bank Region), and two in Farafenni (North Bank Region), coordinated by the Regional Youth Committee. The media engagement has an estimated number of 1,200 people reached during the programs.

The joint program in collaboration with Gambia Immigration Department (GID), NAATIP and other key stakeholders, implemented a series of sensitization activities aimed at strengthening border security and promoting safe migration practices. To raise awareness among border communities 200 (124 male and 76) on the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol and address critical issues such as irregular migration and human trafficking.

Output 2.2: Strengthened protection and reporting mechanisms.

Activity 2.2.1 Train civil society partners & border authorities on the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for protection & assistance of vulnerable migrants, including victims of trafficking

For commemoration of the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 2024, IOM supported a panel discussion on 26 July 2024, bringing together 60 national authorities, civil society actors and community representatives to discuss protection of children against trafficking. Moreover, in partnership with National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (NAATIP), IOM organized awareness raising workshops from 23 to 27 July 2024 in Soma, The Gambia. The workshops focused on strengthening identification, referral, and support mechanisms for child victims of trafficking, targeting 60 Majalis (religious schools) and communities along the Trans-Gambia corridor. Themed "Leave No Child Behind," the workshops comprised discussions on topics such as identifying signs of trafficking, rights-based approaches to addressing the issues, available support mechanisms and role of community structures.

Similarly, IOM contributed to the UN Country Team's activities for the 16 Days of Activism 2024 campaign by supporting a workshop organized in coordination with the Gambia Police Force Female Network (GPFFN). The workshop targeted security and justice sector actors with the aim of strengthening their understanding of gender-based violence (GBV) and fostering dialogue on prevention and response efforts in The Gambia. Held on 5 December 2024, the session generated concrete recommendations, including the establishment of specialized GBV units across all security agencies; the delivery of comprehensive trainings on GBV case management and survivor-centered practices; the rollout of nationwide sensitization programs to reduce stigma and encourage reporting; the allocation of adequate funding for survivor support services such as safe shelters, counseling, and legal aid; and the enforcement of gender-sensitive policies within security institutions, supported by robust monitoring systems to track progress, identify gaps, and guide future interventions. In addition, utilizing cost savings under this output, IOM organized three capacity-building workshops aimed at strengthening the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) through whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, with a focus on protecting and promoting the rights of migrants in vulnerable situations. These workshops were convened for government counterparts from 14 to 15 November 2024 (4 men and 11 women), for the UN Country Team from 18 to 19 November 2024 (6 men and 12 women), and for civil society actors on 20 November 2024 (15 men and 7 women).

Activity 2.2.4 Improve the access to integrated social and child protection services and information on available safe migration options and risks of irregular migration for vulnerable children and youth

In ongoing efforts to sustainably enhance child protection prevention and response services for vulnerable children, including those on the move, the joint program supported the revitalization and capacity building of Regional Child Protection Committees. This initiative aimed to elevate the awareness and application of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the protection of vulnerable children and young migrants, focusing on case management for unaccompanied and separated children, as well as mandatory reporting and privacy protocols.

This targeted training brought members of the Regional Child Protection Committees from both the Lower River Region and the North Bank Region. A total of forty (40) participants (24 males and 16 females), with twenty (20) from each region, attended the three-day workshop. The workshop was designed to bolster the competencies of Committee members in addressing migration issues, particularly concerning Children on the Move and the referral system. Given the Trans Gambia Corridor's reputation as a hotspot for vulnerable children on the move, the training also aimed to refresh stakeholder understanding of child protection, case management, and the mechanisms for reporting violations of children's rights in these regions.

Moreover, to empower youth with access to integrated social and child protection services and information on safe migration options, we have continued to conduct awareness-raising and sensitization activities. In collaboration with the National Youth Council and support from the joint program a four-day workshop was organized for youth champions. This training focused on safe migration, available social services, and the risks of irregular migration for vulnerable children and youth. A total of 120 youth benefited from this training, targeting both the North Bank and Lower River Regions, with participation from 44 male and 16 female from NBR and 36 males and 24 females from LRR. These young individuals committed to disseminating the knowledge acquired during the sessions and to act as Ambassadors of safe migration, furthering our collective goal of promoting the well-being and safety of children and youth in vulnerable situations.

The joint program through Peace Ambassadors The Gambia conducted regional engagements with media personnel and journalists across all the targeted regions. The program aimed to enhance media engagement in promoting youth and children's leadership and participation. The initiative addressed critical issues like children-friendly reporting, advocacy for youth leadership, and the importance of showcasing children's achievements and challenges in the media. A total of 100 media personnel, across the country, 61 male and 39 female participated in the engagements.

During the engagements, the participants engaged in interactive discussions, and case study analyses. The facilitators prompted participants to reflect on their roles as journalists and their potential impact on children's lives through ethical reporting and media representation.

Further to the child protection initiatives, the joint program, in partnership with UNFPA (non-PUNO) and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Welfare (MoGCSW), successfully developed the Gender-Based Violence Case Information Management and Response System (GIMS). This initiative, supported by multiple agencies including UNFPA, ITC, UNDP, and UNICEF, is a comprehensive reporting mechanism offering support, care, and case management services to survivors of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment at borders. GIMS, an online web-based platform integrated with a phone-in-call system and a toll-free number (199), was introduced in December 2022 and officially launched on March 22, 2023, during Women's Month celebrations. Since its launch, GIMS has recorded 800 cases of GBV demonstrating the need for the support.

Outcome 3: Women and youth along the Trans-Gambia transport corridor demonstrate effective life skills and access to livelihood opportunities.

Output 3.1: Improved livelihood opportunities of informal cross-border traders.

Activity 3.1.1: Rapid assessment on Small-Scale Cross Border Traders

A rapid assessment conducted in April–May 2022 explored small-scale cross-border trade, migration, and livelihoods in The Gambia, aiming to inform inclusive development strategies for border communities. The study, which included stakeholder consultations, focus groups, and 457 trader interviews, found that many traders are young Gambian mothers with no formal education, importing low-value goods from Senegal. Despite operating informally, these traders contribute meaningfully to government revenues. The Keur Ali and Missera borders were generally supportive environments, though traders—especially women—faced challenges such as informal payments and occasional harassment.

The resulting policy brief, validated during an October 2022 workshop in Mansankonko, outlined five key recommendations: introducing a Simplified Trade Regime, combating corruption, investing in gender-sensitive infrastructure, strengthening trader representation, and offering targeted training. These recommendations were systematically incorporated across the three outcomes of the joint programme, ensuring that project implementation remained responsive to the needs and realities of small-scale cross-border traders.

Activity 3.1.2: A comprehensive entrepreneurship, digital, and financial literacy training

Thirty female small-scale cross-border traders successfully completed a pilot entrepreneurship programme that provided training in basic entrepreneurship, digital literacy, and financial literacy, followed by three months of coaching and mentorship. As a result, 80% of participants formally registered their businesses, marking a significant milestone in their entrepreneurial journey. To further strengthen their ventures, an Access to Finance (A2F) package through mini grants was introduced, aimed at enhancing financial stability and business growth.

A Grants Committee comprising key government ministries, trade and gender institutions, and international partners was established and held its inaugural meeting on 1st November 2023 to finalize its terms of reference, application forms, and workplan. Out of 29 applications received from the Lower River Region and North Bank Region, 24 cross-border traders were ultimately supported with cash grants. This support has proven transformative, with all beneficiaries reporting improved business capacities in agro-food processing cosmetics. Clothing and textile and income increases ranging from 30% to 50%. However, the evaluation also identified several operational challenges, including low literacy levels among beneficiaries, seasonal fluctuations in trade, informal procurement practices, and cases where grant utilization did not align with business objectives.

In addition, joint programme also supported strengthening of existing women-led small businesses in border communities of Dasilami and Misera. The support included construction of pavements for feed and groundnut processing units, digging of manhole for toilet facilities, provision of alternate power solutions including provision of solar power equipment

Activity 3.1.4: Support to BSOs: Provision of IT equipment, data support, and payment of membership fees to strengthen regional chapters.

To enhance service delivery and institutionalize support for women and youth entrepreneurs in the Lower River and North Bank regions, the joint program supported Gambia Women Chamber of Commerce (GWCC) AND Gambia Youth Chamber of Commerce (GYCC) with IT equipment, data support and payment of membership fees of 100 members. This support has strengthened these BSOs to offer sustained support and advocacy for their members. The Joint program also facilitated training of Trainers in entrepreneurship and packaging including regional chapters of GWCC in the regions to strengthen capacities and access to business support services in the regions.

Equally 10 laptops were provided to the Ministry of Youth and Sports and 4 laptops, 2 tablets, and 3 HP Mini printers to the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration, and Employment. This equipment enhanced data management, reporting, and coordination capabilities, improving the Ministries' ability to track and manage migration-related initiatives, facilitate youth engagement, and support evidence-based decision-making for inclusive development interventions

Activity 3.1.5: Support women-led enterprises to participate in national trade fairs

Through the partnership with the different chambers of commerce the joint program supported the participation of over 12- 25 women cross border traders in two trade fairs. These fairs enhanced market access, visibility and networking opportunities for small businesses. The trade fairs facilitated over \$25,000 in business transactions and enabled traders to secure contracts independently. Traders gained the confidence and networks to participate in fairs independently, as seen with subsequent GCCI participation.

Activity 3.1.6: Refurbishment of the Jarra Soma Youth Centre

The refurbishment of the youth centre in Jarra Soma was carried out to create a safe, multi-functional space for youth trainings, advocacy, and community activities. The key partner in implementing this activity was the National Youth Council. The centre which now benefits over 500 youth in the region, hosts skills training, youth-focused meetings, and serves as a community hub. Managed by the local community and council, the centre is a permanent asset for youth development in the region and will continue immensely to youth Empowerment and creating awareness about legal migration pathways and cross border Trade.

Hygiene Facilities

In the efforts to make trade infrastructure modernise the joint program constructed two modern hygiene facilities at Missera and Farafenni Border Post. With one concluded and the other near completed, the facilities comprise separate male and female toilets, disabled persons toilet, a baby changing area, showers, and an ablution space, improving public sanitation and hygiene standards for travellers, residents, and border personnel. By providing safe, clean, and gender-responsive sanitation infrastructure, the project promoted dignity, safety, and inclusion, particularly for women, children, and youth, who often face heightened risks and discomfort in public spaces lacking proper facilities. The design ensured privacy, accessibility, and usability for all, addressing specific hygiene needs and contributing to a healthier and more secure travel environment. This has contributed to improved quality of life and livelihood opportunities for border communities by reducing health risks, supporting small-scale commerce, and making the corridor safer and more accessible for women and youth. The hygiene facilities thus represent a tangible step toward inclusive and sustainable border development. Collectively, these outputs have enhanced the efficiency,

inclusivity, and dignity of cross-border trade, contributing to safer mobility, healthier communities, and more enabling conditions for women's economic empowerment and sustainable border development

Modernization and Upgrading of the Farafenni Lumo

The Farafenni Lumo, located along The Gambia–Senegal border, serves as a major cross-border market hub for over 500 vendors and attracts more than 5,000 wholesalers and buyers every week from both countries. Despite its economic vibrancy, the market's infrastructure has long fallen short of meeting the needs of traders and customers.

Through the Joint Programme, the market has now been modernized and upgraded with the construction of 200 stalls, an office space, a wet market, and improved hygiene facilities. This significant investment is expected to boost cross-border trade, enhance market efficiency, and promote women's entrepreneurship, as women constitute the majority of the vendors.

It is strongly believed that this initiative will serve as a catalyst for government action to modernize other lumos across The Gambia—an effort already underway with the development of the Bureng Lumo.

Agriculture skills and entrepreneurship support training.

The joint program expanded sustainable livelihood opportunities for youth and women through the Gambia Songhai Initiative (GSI) and the National Enterprise Development Initiative (NEDI). The intervention equipped 95 people (54 females and 41 males) from Upper Baddibou and Jarra West Districts with practical skills in sustainable agriculture, agribusiness, and entrepreneurship, enabling them to translate knowledge into viable income-generating ventures. As a result, the initiative increased youth engagement in productive agriculture, reduced dependency on traditional employment, and stimulated local economic activity. Beneficiaries, particularly young women, gained confidence and financial independence, applying sustainable agricultural practices that enhance food security and resilience in their communities.

Graduates received start-up support, including day-old chicks, drinkers, and feeders, which facilitated the immediate application of training skills and accelerated the establishment of small-scale agribusinesses in poultry and market gardening. This support not only reinforced self-employment and income generation but also contributed to local food production and supply, creating positive ripple effects across community value chains. Similarly, the community of Pakalinding and Genoi had 23 poultry farmers (10 female and 13 men) trained and provided with startup kits to support the implementation of the skills acquired with the support of the Young Poultry Farmers Association.

Construction and operationalization of the OSSEC and Safe Space in Farafenni.

In response to the demand from rural MSMEs and the Ministry of Trade, Regional Integration, and Employment, the project implementation team collaborated closely with local government authorities—including the Governor's Office and the Area Council and the localising SDG project—under the leadership of GIEPA to establish the first One-Stop Shop in rural Gambia. GIEPA engaged with the Governor's Office and the Chairman of the Council, leading to their in-kind contribution of land for the entrepreneurship hub. This support not only helped manage the project's limited resources but also fostered a sense of ownership and commitment from the local authorities. Additionally, UNFPA joined the partnership by building a GBV Centre on the same site, allowing economic and social support services to complement each other. The OSSEC also houses the Trade Information and Border Assistance Desk (TIBAD) and a GBV- safe space.

Since the launch, the centre has already hosted three training programs, a networking event, set up two Trade associations, provide weekly training to Cross border Women on special topics and regular weekly visits traders in the local markets (lumos). Additionally, 30 businesses have been registered through the Single Window Business Registration. Looking ahead, the centre is expected to provide services to 250 MSMEs in the region annually exceeding the initial target of 100 MSMEs. This progress underscores the centre's gradual growing impact on rural enterprise development in The rural Gambia.

Construction and Operationalization of the Hospitality Center in Mansakonko

Like the OSSEC, the centre in the Lower River Region was established through a partnership with local authorities, including the Area Council, which provided the land, GALGA, and the localising SDG project which facilitated collaboration between the PMU the Area Council, and the Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute (GTHI), which delivered the training program. The partnership ensured the smooth implementation of the project while raising awareness of its impact, with the chairman of the Area Council taking a leading role in championing the initiative.

Since its completion, Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Training Institute has delivered three training programs at the centre, equipping 15 youth with skills in baking, 40 in professional cookery, five in room services, 30 Food processors, and training 40 food vendors. These programs have not only provided participants with new professional skills, enhancing their service delivery but have also helped many secure employments within the hospitality industry. Additionally, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed between the Mansakonko Area Council and GTHI, establishing the operational framework for the centre.

Commemoration of International Women's Day

The joint program in partnership with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare, hosted a high-level event to commemorate International Women's Day, leveraging the platform to raise awareness and advocate for women's rights. The event was geared towards celebrating women's achievements, raise public awareness about gender-based violence, and officially launch the GIMS as a key tool for protecting women's rights. This served as the official public launchpad for the GIMS, directly linking the celebration of women with tangible action against GBV and reaching a national audience. The celebration brought together a wide range of participants, including government officials, civil society and survivors. The annual commemoration provides a sustained platform for advocacy, while the GIMS launched- during the event offers a permanent mechanism for support to women right protection.

Gambian businesswoman's journey from migration horror to trade success



Ndey Fatou Ceesay once tried a dangerous journey to Europe. When that didn't go as planned, she returned home and started a successful beauty business.

Ndey Fatou Ceesay left her home in The Gambia on a perilous journey to Libya, with the goal of reaching Italy. But her journey did not go as planned. Human traffickers in the Niger desert town of Agades kidnapped Ndey and demanded a ransom to free her.

When she was finally released, Ndey returned home to start a business to make ends meet. She is now a trader who deals in cosmetics, Gambian incense, and handcrafted beauty items. Ndey's business is located in the central town of Soma, where she mostly sells her products in the town and surrounding communities, with little access to bigger markets.

But after showing her work at the National Youth and Women's Agribusiness and Tourism Trade Fair, she said her customer base is growing.

"I have never participated in a trade fair. That was my first time," Ndey said. "I am very happy to have participated in the trade fair because I was able to share contacts with other businesses and customers. I was also able to learn from them to support the growth of my business."

Better sales and visibility

In addition to generating income, trade fairs provide entrepreneurs with a unique opportunity to increase visibility for their businesses, growing their customer base and their networks. But few businesses, especially those operated by women, can afford the costs of participating.

As part of its work with women cross-border traders, the International Trade Centre (ITC), through a joint project with the [UN Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund](#) is improving their access to markets so they can network and learn from other businesses. The project is called [The Gambia: Addressing the drivers and causes of vulnerability in migration among border communities along the Trans-Gambia transport corridor](#).

The project partnered with the [UN Trust Fund for Human Security](#) to support the participation of 25 women cross-border traders at the trade fair.

The trade fair jointly organized by the [Gambia Youth Chamber of Commerce](#) and the [Gambia Women's Chamber of Commerce](#) is the country's second-biggest trade show. The event brings together entrepreneurs, especially women and youth, to sell their goods and services. Over 300 businesses participated in the event.

Beyond building networks and learning from other businesses, Ndey said the event also boosted her sales.

"The sales have been great. I have been able to generate over \$1,344," the 31-year-old said with a bright smile. "I never thought I was going to make that amount of money."

"I am thanking ITC for supporting my participation and for creating the opportunity for all of us to come to sell our products," she said. "Today, I have built a customer base that I am able to sell my goods to in many parts of the country."

Small businesses like Ndey's are at the forefront of driving innovation and job creation, which boosts incomes and eases poverty. Her ambition is to continue growing her business so that she can employ more people. Currently, Ndey employs two young people. Ndey anticipates taking part in subsequent trade fairs because of the many opportunities the event presents.

Empowering Women Through Migration Support: A Success Story from Jeriko Wollof

On October 25, 2024, the monitoring team visited Jeriko Wollof, a quiet rural village nestled in Chamen, to assess the impact of the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund Project. What they found was a story of transformation, resilience, and hope.

Among the beneficiaries interviewed were Amie Ceesay and Malanka Touray, two women whose lives have been significantly uplifted through the project's support. Each received GMD 50,000 in assistance a sum that became the seed for sustainable change.

Amie Ceesay used her grant to launch a poultry business, starting with over 300 chicks. She also cultivated a garden, cleverly using poultry waste as organic fertilizer. This integrated approach not only boosted her income but also allowed her to support the education of her children and grandchildren. "Before this support, I had no stable income, I struggled to make ends meet" Amie shared. "Now, with my poultry business, I can feed my family and send my grandchildren to school. I feel proud and independent". Today, Amie stands as a symbol of financial independence and self-sufficiency in her community.

Beyond individual success, the project has sparked a broader social shift. Women in Jeriko Wollof now feel more empowered, face less discrimination, and are increasingly contributing to the welfare of their families and the community at large. The ripple effects of this support are evident from improved livelihoods to strengthened social

Results Stories:



The nature of the borders – incapacitated posts and a plethora of the porous – along the Trans Gambia corridor and the inauguration of the Senegambia Bridge in 2019 have contributed to an overwhelming increase in migration and mobility trends in the area. The vast porous and sparse monitoring of the borders of the corridor amidst the reduced transit times and increase in

the number of migrants, exacerbate vulnerabilities particularly among women and youth who use the route. "Our interventions seek to increase the safety of community members, cross-border traders including women and youth through improved border infrastructure and enhanced knowledge and skills of border officials to effectively manage and control the borders along the transport corridor," says Sukai B. Cham, National Programme Officer, IOM The Gambia.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in close collaboration with the Gambia Immigration Department (GID) is strengthening the capacity of border officials in Kerr Ali and Misera, the north and south recognized borders of the corridor respectively, through training, refurbishment, and installation of Migration Information Data Analysis System (MIDAS) at the posts. So far, through IOM's intervention, which is aimed at improving security, cross-border cooperation, and safe, orderly and regular migration, GID officers were trained on Basic MIDAS as frontline users, Secondary Inspectors, and Training of Trainers (ToTs). With these MIDAS trainings for officers, GID is now able to collect travellers' information in real-time to better understand mobility patterns and provide a comprehensive statistical basis for migration policy-related planning.

"The trainings improve our skills and MIDAS enhances easier and faster registration of traveller information at the border, and these are critical in ensuring security and effective immigration and border governance," says Yankuba Bediie, GID Officer, Misera Border Post. Considering the important role of community members, including women and

Results Stories:

New centre tackles social, economic challenges for Gambian youth and women



Women who have suffered gender-based violence (GBV) need a range of services, from health care to psychological support to finding ways to make a living. A new centre in The Gambia pulls together all of those services, in the One-Stop Shop Entrepreneurship and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Support Center in Farafenni.

Built by the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency, UNFPA, the centre aims to address both economic and social challenges.

This initiative supports entrepreneurship, cross-border trade and survivors of violence.

'Our vision for this center is to be a hub for nurturing business ideas, addressing GBV issues and fostering economic growth,' said ITC country representative Baboucarr Sallah. 'ITC remains committed to working with partners to advance women and youth economic empowerment for national development.'

The centre offers training to help women register a business, and to help them package and label their goods professionally so they can make better sales. Supporting these small businesses helps create desperately needed jobs.

The centre was built in partnership with the Kerewan Area Council, Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA) and Gambia Association for Local Government Authorities.

Some \$100,000 in funding was provided by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security and the United Nations Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

The launch of this center is not just the unveiling of a building, it is the opening of sets of opportunities. The center will support small businesses and provide services to those affected by GBV.

Madi Kambai, GIEPA, Director

"The first One-Stop Shop Entrepreneurship and Gender-Based Violence Support Center in rural Gambia will provide comprehensive economic and social support services."

Lamin Dampha, Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment, Permanent Secretary

"Many women in the region work as cross-border traders. The centre provides them with crucial trade information and resources through a Trade Information and Border Assistance Office."

In addition, the centre provides health, legal and psycho-social services to survivors in a safe space, with a view to promoting prevention as well as justice and healing.

'This center is more than just an economic initiative,' said UNFPA Country Representative Ndeye Rose Sarr. 'It is also a safe space for survivors of gender-based violence, providing comprehensive support services in collaboration with local authorities and partners.'

Objectives and Project Indicators	Target	Achieved	Variance	Remarks
Outcome 1: Border authorities are more effective and facilitates orderly and safe migration for women and youth				
Women and youth report improvements on conduct of duty bearers	70%	90%	20%	Result includes "highly satisfactory 3,55% and satisfactory 86,78%"
Women and youth report improved CBT facilitation	70%	90%	20%	Approximated from evaluation survey
Output 1: Better equipped border posts, improved knowledge of border authorities, and increased awareness among rights holders				
Number of BPs provided better infrastructure	1	1	0	MIDAS and hygiene facility established at Misera BP. Hygiene facility handed over and operational
Number of border official Is trained on MIDAS	150	134 (21W)	16	MIDAS systems are used at 8 out of 10 land BPs and ToT are present at all these locations. 50 officials training on document security.
Number of border officials with increased knowledge and understanding of protection issues	150	150 (XXW)	0	Sex disaggregation not available
Outcome 2: Increased awareness among rights holders				
Women and youth ready and willing to claim rights and protection services	70%	90%	20%	Women reported significant understanding of their rights
Output 2:				
Women and youth reporting increased knowledge of rules, risks and rights relating to movement of people and goods.	200	326 (76W)	126	The results affect improvements of duty bearers' behavior
Stronger protection and reporting mechanisms related to media	100	100 (39W)	100	Media training conducted in local languages and outlets
People trained on the NRM, protection issues and migration options	200	298	98	Participants include Majali's and security actors

Reporting mechanism on non-tariff measures and/or harassment established	1	1	0	Gender Management Information Centre (GMIS) supported and phone hotline established
Outcome 3: Women and youth along the Trans-Gambia transport corridor demonstrate effective life skills and access to livelihood opportunities				
Women and youth demonstrate life skills and livelihood opportunities	30%	30%		A total of 30 youth and Women were trained and 24 provided with a cash grant which has tremendously enhanced the employment capacities of the youth and Women, livelihood and growth of their business
Output 3:				
Female informal CBT benefitting from entrepreneurship support	40	74 (20)	34 (20)	24 CBT women received cash grants. Additional 20 food vendors received professional training which was not initially targeted
Community members (mainly youth) supported with TVET and entrepreneurship support	60	116	56	TVET Hospitality Center and GSI (Shonghai) provided skills to youth and Women
Women and youth friendly training centers and market	3	3	0	OSS GBV and Lumo market in Farafenni, Soma Youth Centre and Hospitality training center in Mansakonko
Women and young people linked to national networks and digital opportunities	100	125	25	Digital training was included in business related training supported by GWCC.

3. Partnerships

The Joint Programme adopted a multi-stakeholder, whole-of-society approach, fostering inclusive collaboration across government institutions, civil society organizations, private sector actors, and local authorities. Over the implementation period, strategic partnerships were established and strengthened to ensure effective delivery, sustainability, and national ownership of programme outcomes. Key partners included:

- **Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (MoTIE):** As co-chair of the Programme Steering Committee (PSC), MoTIE played a central role in programme planning and coordination. The Ministry led awareness-raising activities on ECOWAS and AfCFTA rights and obligations and collaborated with ITC to strengthen the Regional Integration Directorate and its associated programmes.
- **Ministry of Interior (MoI):** MoI provided oversight and strategic leadership as PSC co-chair. It was instrumental in the upgrading of the Misira border post, the introduction of the MIDAS system, and capacity development for border officials.
- **Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare (MoGCSW):** As UNICEF's main implementing partner, MoGCSW led the establishment of Regional Child Protection Committees, supported the creation of community child-friendly spaces, and contributed to strengthening the national child protection system.
- **Gambia Immigration Department (GID):** GID served as a key technical partner, contributing to awareness-raising on the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol and overseeing the MIDAS upgrade at Misira. As a member of the PSC, GID provided operational guidance throughout implementation.
- **National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (NAATIP):** NAATIP provided strategic input on counter-trafficking and organized crime. In partnership with IOM and UNICEF, it supported decentralization of the National Referral Mechanism for the protection of vulnerable migrants, including victims of trafficking.
- **Department of Community Development:** A core partner for UNICEF, the Department supported the strengthening of decentralized child protection coordination structures and provided technical assistance to local governance systems.
- **National Youth Council (NYC):** NYC partnered with UNICEF to implement awareness campaigns on the risks of unsafe child migration and to promote access to child protection services along migratory routes.
- **Gambia Women Chamber of Commerce (GWCC):** GWCC led initiatives on border harassment, entrepreneurship training for women, and integration of cross-border trainees into national business networks. The programme supported institutional strengthening and service enhancement.
- **Gambia Youth Chamber of Commerce (GYCC):** GYCC facilitated youth entrepreneurship training, networking, and B2B linkages. Young participants were integrated into GYCC's membership, with continued support to enhance institutional capacity.
- **Local Programme Committees (LPCs):** Two LPCs were established in each priority district, comprising representatives from local government, district chiefs, border authorities, CSOs, and private sector actors. LPCs provided district-level oversight, ensured community engagement, and guided activity planning and implementation.
- **Peace of Mind (PoM):** PoM conducted a needs-based assessment to establish a safe space in Farafenni for survivors of gender-based violence. The organization will continue to support psychosocial programming and rehabilitation services at the facility.
- **Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute (GTHI):** GTHI implemented a three-month training programme for 20 displaced food vendors at the newly established Mansakonko Hospitality Centre, contributing to skills development and reintegration into the tourism value chain.
- **UN Human Security Trust Fund Project – Localizing SDGs:** This two-year initiative, implemented by ITC and UNFPA, supports vulnerable women and youth around the Senegambia Bridge to build resilience and access new economic opportunities. The Joint Programme complemented this effort by reinforcing entrepreneurship ecosystems along the Trans-Gambia Corridor.

Implementation Agreements			
Name & Type of Partner	Type of implementation agreement (please specify if any MOU or agreement was formally entered)	Relevant outcome and/or output; PUNO counterpart	Financial value (if any)
Local government and/or related entities			
GIEPA- OSSEC Operationalization	Formal agreement to fully take the responsibility of the operations of the centre in Farafeni	Outcome 3, provided land for the building of OSSEC and operationalise the centre	Staff cost and Utility and Transport annually is \$15000 provided by GIEPA
National Youth Council	Implementing Partner Agreement	Outcome 2	\$38,076.38 was transferred to support the implementation of the awareness creation
Department of Community Development:	Implementing Partner Agreement	Outcome 2	\$47455.88 was transferred to support the implementation of the awareness creation
Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Welfare (MOGCSW),	Implementing Partner Agreement	Outcome 2	\$54,616.22 was transferred to support the implementation of the Regional Child Protection Committees, supported the creation of community child-friendly spaces, and contributed to strengthening the national child protection system
GWCC- Support to Women Traders	Formal letter of agreement to support the onboarding of Women traders in their network across the country	Outcome 3	Staff time and Travel cost \$1000 provided by GWCC
Hospitality Training Center- Operationalization of the Hospitality Training Centre	MOU signed between Mansakonko Area Council and the Gambia Hotel School	Outcome 3	Maintenance and electricity cost \$3000 annually provided by the Council and
Kerewan Area council Lumo- Management of the Lumo Stalls	Formal letter to manage and maintain the stalls built	Outcome 3	Maintenance and electricity cost
Non-governmental stakeholders			
Startup Incubator Implementing Partner BSO	Service Contract	3.1 Capacity building of the CBT	\$7607.44 was transferred to them to support the entrepreneurship training

<i>Woman Boss Implementing Partner</i> BSO	Service Contract	3.2 Market access to CBT	\$9,290.00 to support the market access of 20 cross border traders
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4. Cross-Cutting Issues

The Joint Programme was intentionally designed around a human rights-based approach, ensuring that all interventions across its three outcomes uphold principles of equity, inclusion, and accountability. This is further demonstrated below

Inclusive Participation and Local Ownership

The Joint Programme prioritized sustainability through institutional capacity development and strategic partnerships. It also ensured that targeted beneficiaries were actively involved in decision-making and implementation—particularly through the establishment of Local Programme Committees (LPCs). These committees, composed of local authorities, CSOs, and private sector actors, provided district-level oversight and facilitated continuous consultation with communities. This participatory model promoted transparency, accountability, and access to information throughout the programme cycle.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Gender equality and women's empowerment were central to the programme's design and delivery. Activities addressed structural barriers to gender equity, promoted equal representation of women and men, and created leadership opportunities for women. Notably, women secured chairperson roles in both LPCs, demonstrating the programme's commitment to inclusive governance and gender-responsive planning.

Child Protection and Well-being

The programme incorporated child protection measures across all stages of implementation and monitoring. Border officials received specialized training to enhance their capacity to engage with children in ways that uphold dignity, resilience, and safety. These efforts aimed to minimize harm and ensure that children's rights and needs were systematically addressed. The programme recognized the long-term developmental benefits of investing in children—not only for individual empowerment but also for strengthening the foundations of inclusive economic growth and social cohesion.

Programme Management and Coordination

As part of its commitment to inclusive development and strategic oversight, the joint programme established and co-chaired a multi-stakeholder Project Steering Committee (PSC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (MOTIE). The PSC was designed to ensure high-level coordination, government ownership, and alignment of programme activities with national priorities. Comprising representatives from key ministries, UN agencies, and the private sector, the PSC convened five formal meetings throughout the implementation period. This government-led structure played a pivotal role in approving workplans, providing strategic direction, and integrating programme outcomes into national policy frameworks.

To complement the strategic oversight of the PSC, the programme organized and led joint monitoring missions to all project sites, engaging both government counterparts and Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs). These missions were instrumental in assessing progress, verifying results, and gathering direct feedback from beneficiaries. By involving a diverse range of stakeholders—including women, youth, and border officials—the monitoring visits fostered transparency, accountability, and adaptive management. They also reinforced a culture of results-based management and collaborative oversight among partners.

At the decentralized level, Local Programme Committees (LPCs) were established in the North Bank Region and Lower River Region in April 2022. These LPCs, composed of governmental and civil society stakeholders, provided strategic and technical recommendations while serving as a vital feedback mechanism for both the UN organizations and the PSC. Their active involvement in beneficiary recruitment and monthly reporting significantly enhanced programme delivery, particularly for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) participants and cross-border women traders.

To further inform programme design and ensure responsiveness to local needs, a rapid assessment of border communities was conducted between April and May 2022. Led by international and national consultants, the assessment explored small-scale cross-border trade, migration dynamics, and livelihood opportunities. It involved 31 stakeholder consultations, two focus group discussions with youth and women, and 457 trader interviews. The findings, validated during a workshop in Mansakonko in October 2022, directly shaped programme interventions. These included the introduction of dual-purpose poultry birds, revitalization of the Farafenni Lumos market, and the establishment of a safe space for youth and women in Farafenni. The assessment also informed the creation of local programme structures at the Misira and Kerr border posts, further advancing inclusive development in these communities.

Together, these coordinated efforts—anchored in strategic oversight, participatory monitoring, decentralized governance, and evidence-based planning—demonstrate the joint programme’s holistic approach to management and its commitment to sustainable, locally owned development outcomes.

5. Constraints, Adjustments, Lessons and Good Practices

Key Challenges Faced

1. **Delays Due to Community Consultations and Heavy Rains** Construction activities were significantly delayed due to extended community consultations aimed at ensuring local ownership and buy-in. These delays were compounded by heavy seasonal rains, which disrupted site access and construction timelines. As a result, the project required two non-cost extensions, and one infrastructure component remains incomplete.
2. **Institutional Reshuffling Slowed Progress** Several government institutions underwent internal reshuffling during the implementation period, which affected continuity and delayed progress on key activities. The project management team had to repeatedly re-engage and reintroduce the programme to new officials to maintain momentum and ensure alignment with national priorities.
3. **Insufficient Funding for Comprehensive Scale-Up** While the project achieved strong results, the scale and complexity of the interventions—spanning migration governance, human trafficking prevention, border post modernization, and cross-border trade—require more robust and sustained funding to achieve long-term transformation and national coverage.
4. **Fragmented Implementation and Data Management Systems** Although the joint programme strengthened inter-agency collaboration, challenges remain in harmonizing data management systems, back-office operations, and implementation modalities. Improved integration and coordination are needed to enhance efficiency and sustainability across UN agencies and government partners.
5. **Incomplete Operationalization of Infrastructure** Despite successful upgrades, some facilities—such as the Farafenni Lumo market—require additional support to become fully operational and deliver services effectively. Ensuring functionality and maintenance of these assets is critical to sustaining impact.

Best Practices and Lessons Learned

- **Joint Launch of GBV Toll-Free Line and Reporting Mechanism** All participating UN agencies collaborated to establish a toll-free line and reporting system for gender-based violence. This initiative has strengthened protection services, improved case reporting, and enhanced accountability mechanisms for survivors.
- **Strategic Partnership with GTHI and Mansakonko Authorities** The hospitality training center in Mansakonko was successfully established through a partnership with the Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute (GTHI) and local government authorities. It provided vocational training to displaced food vendors, enabling their reintegration into the tourism value chain and boosting local employment.
- **Collaborative Management of Farafenni OSSEC Center** The One-Stop-Shop for Economic Cooperation (OSSEC) in Farafenni was jointly operated by the local government, GIEPA, and the joint programme.

This center supports cross-border traders, particularly women, by offering business services, training, and market access.

- **Deployment of MIDAS System and Border Staff Training** *The installation of the MIDAS system at key border posts, along with targeted training for border officials, has significantly improved migration data collection, border security, and service delivery. This has strengthened institutional capacity and regional integration efforts.*
- **Modernization of Farafenni Lumo Market** *The joint initiative to upgrade the Farafenni Lumo into a modern facility will enhance the trading environment for cross-border vendors. It serves as a hub for economic activity and a model for inclusive market infrastructure.*
- **Strengthened Coordination with Key Ministries:** *Strong partnerships with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Trade have enhanced strategic coordination, policy alignment, and programme delivery. Their leadership in the Project Steering Committee has been instrumental in driving results.*
- **Decentralized Development Transforming Lives:** *By decentralizing interventions to vulnerable communities, the programme has significantly improved the livelihoods of cross-border traders—especially women food vendors—through entrepreneurship training and cash grants. These efforts have fostered economic resilience and social inclusion.*
- **Integration of gender and human rights:** *considerations from the outset has provided an impetus for inclusiveness. The success of the gender-sensitive hygiene facilities and the empowerment of women traders and entrepreneurs demonstrated that inclusive design and targeted support can yield transformative outcomes.*
- *Another good practice was the use of start-up kits for agribusiness graduates, which enabled immediate application of skills and accelerated the transition to self-employment. This practical support model proved effective in enhancing sustainability and scaling impact.*
- *The programme also highlighted the value of building trust between border officials and traders. By fostering mutual understanding and accountability, the JP contributed to a more enabling environment for safe and orderly migration*

Conclusion and Next Steps

The Joint Programme has made significant strides in addressing migration-related vulnerabilities along the Trans-Gambia transport corridor, achieving strong results across all outcome areas. Through a whole-of-society approach, the programme enhanced border governance, empowered women and youth, and strengthened protection and livelihood systems. Key achievements include the deployment of the MIDAS system and training of border officials, the establishment of a GBV toll-free line and reporting mechanism, the modernization of the Farafenni Lumo market, and the operationalization of the OSSEC center through a tripartite partnership with GIEPA and local authorities. Strategic partnerships with institutions such as GTHI, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Trade ensured high-level coordination and national ownership, while decentralized interventions—particularly in vulnerable communities—transformed the lives of cross-border traders through entrepreneurship training and cash grants.

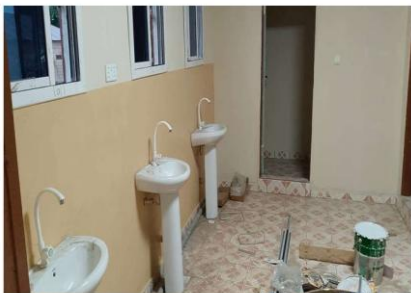
Sustainability was embedded from the programme's design through to implementation. By partnering with strategic government institutions, civil society, and local authorities across all outcome areas, the programme ensured that key investments—such as infrastructure, systems, and capacity-building—are integrated into national structures for long-term continuity. The establishment of Local Programme Committees and the use of national systems for training, protection, and economic empowerment further reinforce this sustainability.

As part of its exit strategy, the Joint Programme will convene a final exit meeting next month to consolidate lessons learned, reinforce institutional linkages, and explore pathways for scaling successful interventions.

Discussions are ongoing with other development partners to mobilize follow-up funding and align future support with national development priorities. The programme's integrated, participatory, and government-led approach has laid a strong foundation for continued impact, and its best practices—such as joint implementation, decentralized delivery, and inclusive governance—offer a replicable model for future UN programming in The Gambia and beyond.



Site Photos



Annex 1: Photos





Launch of Mansakonko Hospitality Training Centre



**Launch of One-Stop Shop Entrepreneurship and
Gender Based Violence Support Center**



Mansakonko Hospitality Training Centre



**One-Stop Shop Entrepreneurship and
Gender Based Violence Support Center**



Cross border trader exhibiting at the GYCC Trade Fair



Start-up Support to young people after completing poultry management training



Training of cross border traders on trade rules, procedures and entrepreneurship



Cross border traders at GYCC Trade Fair

Media links

[Strengthening the capacity of border officials and communities for improved security, cross-border cooperation, and safe migration along Trans-Gambia Transport Corridor](#)

[Outcome 1: Border authorities at key border posts of the Trans-Gambia transport corridor effectively facilitate safe and orderly migration for women and youth.](#)

[Activity 1.2.2 Train border officials on: MIDAS use, document security, fraud detection & protection of vulnerable migrants](#)

<https://x.com/IOMGambia/status/1829098913539776950>

<https://x.com/IOMGambia/status/1863526309214695511>

<https://x.com/IOMROWCA/status/1861785622412701916>

[Activity 1.2.3 Strengthen inter-agency border coordination committees](#)

<https://x.com/IOMGambia/status/1858839271760646187>

[Outcome 2: Border authorities at key border posts of the Trans-Gambia transport corridor effectively facilitate safe and orderly migration for women and youth.](#)

[Activity 2.1.1 Sensitize the community on the ECOWAS free movement protocol, border procedures & irregular migration, including trafficking in persons & smuggling of migrants](#)

<https://x.com/IOMGambia/status/1869414519837254129>

<https://x.com/IOMGambia/status/1870025174067613928>

https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=585614714162118&id=100081407829206&rdraActivity

[2.2.1 Train civil society partners & border authorities on the National Referral Mechanism \(NRM\) for protection & assistance of vulnerable migrants, including victims of trafficking](#)

<https://x.com/IOMGambia/status/1864642368529395853>

<https://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/headlines/un-country-team-trains-security-sector-on-gender-based-violence>

<https://x.com/IOMGambia/status/1862437429157769467>

<https://x.com/IOMGambia/status/1859539106683858987>

<https://x.com/IOMGambia/status/1857395690214707342>

<https://x.com/IOMGambia/status/1816854468882764269>

[Activity 3.1.2 Provide entrepreneurship support for female informal cross-border traders](#)

<https://x.com/IOMGambia/status/1803029769639891442>

https://x.com/ITC_Gambia/status/1735227454883615204

<https://www.intracen.org/news-and-events/news/gambian-women-see-new-opportunities-at-trade-fair>

https://x.com/ITC_Gambia/status/1826251580733366554

<https://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/headlines/d2-7m-grant-to-women-cross-border-traders>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/14KFtJ4emQg/>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/17HBeWjxMX/>

