



ChildFund
The Gambia

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

www.childfund.org

Our Vision

A world where every child realizes their rights and achieves their potential.

Our Mission

HELP deprived, excluded and vulnerable children have the capacity to improve their lives and the opportunity to become young adults, parents and leaders who bring lasting and positive change in their communities.

PROMOTE societies whose individuals and institutions participate in valuing, protecting and advancing the worth and rights of children.

ENRICH supporters' lives through their support of our cause.

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From the Country Director



> For 40 years, ChildFund The Gambia has been driven by one purpose: For every child to grow up healthy, educated, skilled and safe.

For 40 years, ChildFund The Gambia has been driven by one purpose: "For every child to grow up healthy, educated, skilled and safe."

This is why we remain committed to implementing programs that create meaningful connections for children to ensure they attain their full potential.

These programs include child sponsorship, which is at the heart of our operations, child protection, access to quality education, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, climate action, and programs that strengthen lives and livelihoods of families and communities to live dignified lives.

Financial Year (FY) 24 was an important year in ChildFund The Gambia's history as we were able to reach over 1,130,387 children, family and community members with programs that continue to impact positively on children and their families.

With a formidable team and reliable partners who demonstrated exceptional success in planning, execution and monitoring, we were able to achieve tremendous impact in the communities we work across The Gambia.

Working with our donors and other partners, ChildFund was able to reach and support over 580,000 children and their families and community members during the period under review.

Working with our donor partner, Books For Africa, we delivered supplementary textbooks, education kits, solar lamps and other learning materials worth over USD 1.1 million to the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education for onward distribution to children in schools and colleges across the country.

Through our Local Partners, over 10,000 children in our sponsorship program received learning materials including school bags, exercise books, pens, colors, and pencils at the start of the 2023/24 academic year.

From our non-sponsorship grants, we donated 1,218 bikes to school children traveling long distance to school to improve their performance.

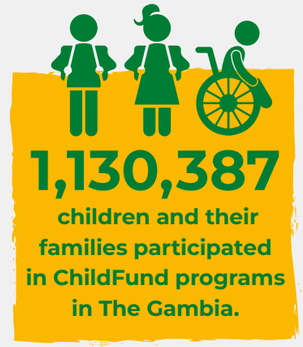
Our long fruitful partnership with MAP International enabled us to deliver three shipping containers (40 feet each) of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies to the Ministry of health through its Central Medical Stores to support public health facilities.

At the local level, ChildFund supported the construction of three boreholes, five safe and secure playgrounds for children, and established/ supported three community gardens and 18 family backyard gardens for families for sponsored children.

These successes and many others during FY24 could not come without challenges.

ChildFund's key intervention area, child protection, was seriously threatened when attempts were made to repeal a law banning Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in The Gambia.

The "Women's Amendment Bill" was tabled at Parliament to lift the ban on FGM which would have resulted in girls would have lost their protection by the law and would have continued to be subjected to the harmful traditional practice.



Without delay, ChildFund joined partners and engaged government and law makers, and after several joint advocacy efforts, parliament voted to uphold the law.

This decision by law makers was a victory for children!

The strategy that led to these successes by ChildFund is rooted in our belief that as the needs of children and their families increase, so is the need for more partnership and expansion in our areas of operations.

Nonetheless, these achievements would not have taken place without your (donor) support which fuel our programs and projects in The Gambia.

Let me seize this opportunity therefore, to thank you for your commitment to the cause of children, as we continue to count on your continuous support to enable us to provide more opportunities for children to thrive in The Gambia.



MUSUKUTA KOMMA-BAH

About ChildFund

ChildFund International is a child-focused international development organization that works throughout Asia, Africa, and the Americas to connect children with what they need to grow up healthy, educated, skilled and safe, no matter where they are.

Last year, we reached 21.1 million children and family members in 23 countries.

ChildFund International is a member of ChildFund Alliance; a global network of 11 organizations helping nearly 36 million children and their families in 70 countries around the world.

With funding from sponsors and governments, corporate and individual donors, we work long-term in communities to help them transform themselves into places where children have what they need to live at their potential throughout their lives.

ChildFund operates in 9 countries in Africa – Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Zambia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Guinea and Mozambique.

85+
Years of Service

23
Program Countries

21.1 million
Lives Changed

160+
Local Partner Organizations

ChildFund The Gambia

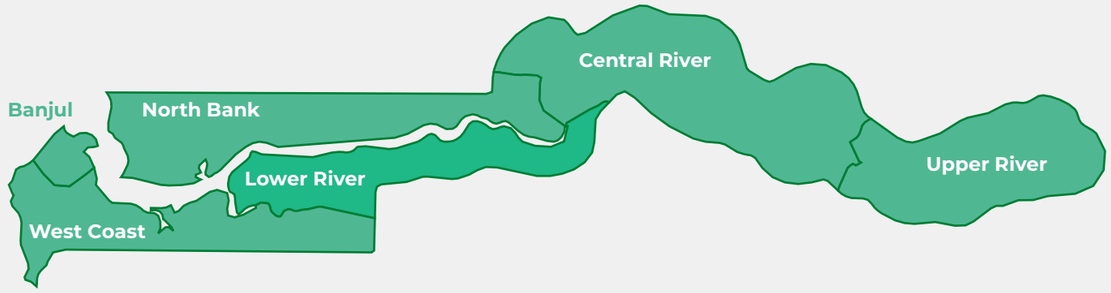
ChildFund has been operating in The Gambia since 1984, and receives funding through subsidy, Non-Sponsorship Funds (NSP), Grants and Gift-In-Kind. In FY24, we enrolled 14,526 children in our child sponsorship program, with a sponsor count of 9,875.

In the Gambia, ChildFund works mainly through 3 local partners in 11 districts, where we have total of 32 community associations.

Our sponsorship program focuses on 13 districts in the Western and Lower River Region, but our programs in general reached over 1.1 million people during FY24.

Our programs also reach tens of thousands across the country through our Non-Sponsorship Funds, Gift-In-Kind and Grant-Funded Projects.

Areas of Operation



Child Sponsorship
Western Region and Lower River Region

Early Childhood Development
Country-wide

Education
Country-wide

Child protection
Countrywide

Health & Nutrition
Country-wide

Water, Sanitation & Hygiene
Country-wide



1,130,387

Children, youth and families reached in all 6 regions across the country

14,526

Children enrolled in sponsorship program

Working with

3

Local Partners

USD 6,249,322

Financial Investment

28

Country Office Staff

Program Priorities

- Child Protection
- Early Childhood Development
- Health and Nutrition
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- Food Security
- Household Economic Strengthening
- Emergency Response
- Education
- Climate Action
- Youth Development
- Advocacy

Programming Approach

Our programs are designed according to life stages to meet children's needs as they grow.

We work within and across three child development stages ("life stages") to tailor our interventions to meet children's evolving needs as they develop from infancy through young adulthood.

Our Life Stage Approach is driven by a theory of change per "stage," outlining the conditions that need to be met to support children in achieving a core set of developmental outcomes.

These outcomes focus on infants and very young children in Life Stage 1 (ages 0 to 5) being healthy and secure; children in Life Stage 2 (ages 6 to 14) being educated and confident; and adolescents and youth in Life Stage 3 (ages 15 to 24) being skilled and involved.

LIFE STAGE 1

Healthy and Secure Infants (0 to 5 years)



LIFE STAGE 2

Educated and Confident Children (6 to 14 years)



LIFE STAGE 3

Skilled and Involved Youth (15 to 24 years)



FY24 Highlights

Over 1.1 million children and their families and community members participated in ChildFund programs.

4 containers of education materials were handed over to the government for school children.

2 (40-feet) containers of medical items and pharmaceuticals handed over to the Ministry of health to complement public health facilities.

Over 50,000 children received learning materials (bags, exercise books, pens, colors, and pencils) at the start of the 2024/25 academic year.

5 safe and secure playgrounds were constructed for children to play.

3 community gardens and 18 family backyard gardens established / supported for families in 8 districts.

Provided direct healthcare support to **6 community clinics** through purchasing of essential drugs.

Over 1,500 children in 9 districts, supported through 32 community associations, have had their medical bills paid directly.

Over 15,000 people at grassroots level sensitized through Community Child Protection Committees (CCPC) on harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM), Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, and child marriage.

Over 5,000 people in 5 communities had direct access to clean potable water.

Expanded the **shoemaking and training facility** for youth to acquire skills, enrolling 32.

USD 1 million grants raised for programs to promote the welfare of children and their caregivers.

1, 218 bicycles provided to school children who trek long distances to school in rural communities.

140 youth enrolled into TVET Centers for skill acquisition and work readiness.



Seven-year-old Mariama accesses clean water from a tap installed by ChildFund in the Western Region. ChildFund installed a solar powered water pump that included 10 distribution points throughout the village of over 2,400 people, so that no one has to walk long distances to access water.

ChildFund also set up a Water Users' Committee, which raises maintenance fees from the community and insures the longterm sustainability of the system.

Healthy and Secure Infants (0-5 Years)

Responsive and Protective Parenting



ChildFund's Responsive and Protective Parenting (RPP) model is a childcare program active in four regions. The program improves parents' and caregivers' Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) regarding the nurturing care framework and positive parenting education.

While the program targets both male and female caregivers, it places greater emphasis on engaging men, who are often less involved in the nurturing and care of infants at home.

The RPP trains facilitators to lead caregiver sessions and equip them with knowledge on all aspects of child protection.

In FY24, the RPP sessions enhanced the KAP of 1,620 parents and caregivers on the nurturing care framework and positive parenting skills. Through these engagements, parents who attended the sessions dedicated more time and resources to stimulating play activities for their children. They also learned to make toys using locally available, child-friendly materials and to prepare nutritious meals for their children using local cereals.

Construction of Outdoor Playgrounds

Playgrounds actively challenge children to improve their physical abilities. Some of the equipment encourages the use of less commonly exercised muscles, helping to build overall fitness. Additionally, these playgrounds are constructed outdoors, allowing children to play in natural environments that contribute to their well-being.

In FY24, ChildFund, in collaboration with its local partners, constructed five outdoor playgrounds for children. These playgrounds and play equipment are designed to support the holistic development of children, encompassing physical, cognitive, and social growth. To ensure the safe and sustainable use of the equipment, 10 ECD teachers and facilitators received training on how to use and maintain the play materials and equipment.

Backyard Gardens: A Path to Nutrition and Income

ChildFund provides funding to support the strengthening of backyard gardens at households with space for horticultural activities. In partnership with our Local Partners, we establish or strengthen these gardens, which provide nutritious food for the families of our sponsored and enrolled children, as well as a modest income from the sale of extra produce.

A total of 15 backyard gardens received support during the fiscal year. Testimonies from our program participants show that caregivers fund most of their children's basic needs with earnings from these gardens.

> I am very happy to have received these gardening tools. This has enabled me and my family to work on our garden and produce vegetables for food and income generation. From my garden, I harvest vegetables that I cook for the family and sell the surplus, which serves as a regular income for me.
>
> My older son, who supports the family, is a taxi driver employed by taxi owners, but he doesn't remain in employment for long because it's either the taxi breaks down, or the owner fires him. I used to go to the fish landing site to offload fish from the boats to the shore, and I was paid per pan of fish I offloaded. I gathered these fish and gave them to my husband, who would dry and sell them the following day.
>
> This was a very hectic and time-consuming job. Since the Federation learned about our situation, they supported us in establishing this garden, which has now made life very comfortable for me and my family.

Musukebba, a mother of 5 from Kombo South, Western Region.

Amplifying Children's Voices

Each year, The Gambia commemorates its independence on February 18, with celebrations held in schools across the country. ChildFund, in collaboration with our local partners, ensures that children in ECD centers also participate in these and other national events.

In FY24, ChildFund supported 9,048 children to participate and engage meaningfully in key national celebrations involving children. These included the Day of the African Child, International Children's Day of Broadcasting, and World Children's Day.

These events presented children with an opportunity to raise their voices on issues affecting their lives, advocate for their rights, and share their perspectives on critical topics such as education, health, child protection, and climate change.

Through these platforms, children actively participated in discussions, showcased their talents, and highlighted their aspirations, ensuring their voices were heard by policymakers, stakeholders, and their communities.

Sensitization of Parents/Caregivers on the Importance of Early Childhood Education

Research has shown that children who attend pre-primary education perform better than those who start at the primary level. However, despite this important finding, Early Childhood Education (ECE) has not been prioritized in The Gambia.

To address this, ChildFund continues to work with our partners to ensure children are enrolled in ECD centers. During FY24, we conducted a series of sensitizations to encourage parents and caregivers to prioritize ECE. A total of 9,000 people were reached through meetings and radio talk shows as part of these sensitization efforts

I have benefitted from this training twice and it has improved my understanding of how to prepare nutritious meals for my children. Even though all the cereals that we use in this demonstration have been available in our homes, we never know that we can prepare these kinds of food for our children.

That is why I said in the beginning that this training should continue so that all women in The Gambia are reached for them to understand that they don't need to be rich in other to provide nutritious food for their young children.

My children love the food, and it keeps them very healthy. They don't fall sick frequently as their elder sisters used to do when I did not have the knowledge I have today in preparing nutritious meals for children. I want to thank Saama Kairo Federation and ChildFund for the wonderful job they are doing for our children We cannot pay you, but just to continue to thank you for everything.

Aminata, a caregiver



Educated and Confident Children (6-14 Years)

Safe and Positive Environments for Learning and Growth

ChildFund programs for children aged 6 to 14 focuses on ensuring a violence-free environment that promotes safe learning, positive mental wellbeing, and positive caregiver and teacher relationship. We build children's confidence and ensure they are protected at home, in schools and in their communities. We can do all the community development work we want, but unless children are protected from violence and other harms – and unless the government prioritizes children's best interests in their policies and funding – our programs' sustainability is at risk. So, we work with government, other nonprofits and the private sector to advocate for and with children and protect their rights at the global, national and community levels.

Back to School Packages for Children

Access to learning materials remains a significant challenge, causing many children to miss out on school.

The cost of uniforms, books, school bags, pencils, and other basic necessities for attending school is out of reach for many Gambian parents and caregivers.

To address this challenge, ChildFund, in collaboration with three local partners, initiated the annual 'Back to School' package for children.

This package contains essential items to enable children to attend school. The school materials are distributed to children at the start of each school year in September.

In FY24, over 10,000 children received the package, allowing them to continue their education without the barrier of missing basic learning materials.



Social and Financial Education for School Children (Aflatoun)

ChildFund is partnering with The Gambia's Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Aflatoun International, and other partners to integrate social and financial education into the country's education curriculum. The goal is to identify essential competencies among students alongside traditional subjects, contributing to the global shift toward a skills-based curriculum.

The initiative has been approved by the government, and integration is now underway.
In addition to learning about their rights and responsibilities, and saving and spending, children also acquire valuable skills in their schools.

To ensure the success of this program, ChildFund provides training to headteachers, classroom teachers, cluster monitors, and regional coordinators.

In total, 300 teachers, headteachers, cluster monitors, and regional coordinators across seven regions were trained on the Aflatoun core elements and active learning methods.

> When we piloted Aflatoun in some of our schools a few years ago, the results were so encouraging, we decided to integrate it into the new national curriculum for sustainability because Aflatoun teaches children problem-solving skills, critical thinking, innovation, and Social and Financial Education (SFE) among other skills.
>
> Momodou Jeng, Director of Curriculum Research, Evaluation, and Development, Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, The Gambia, during the official launch of the "Aflatoun Randomized Control Trial Project" in Mansakonko, Lower River Region.



Improving Children's Literacy and Numeracy Skills



ChildFund Children's ability to apply reading, writing, and listening skills across subjects has significantly decreased.

Their ability to understand and apply mathematical concepts, processes, and skills to solve problems and make decisions in real-life situations is also lacking, according to the Gambia Education Facts Sheet 2020.

The survey reveals that among children aged 7 to 14 years old, only 12 percent demonstrate minimal learning outcomes for reading, and 9 percent demonstrate the same for numeracy. Only 9 percent of children in Grade 3 have the expected level of reading skills for that grade, and just 6 percent possess the expected numeracy skills.

In response, ChildFund established reading clubs that mobilize students to the seven well-equipped community libraries ChildFund set up in previous years.

This initiative aims to enhance children's literacy and numeracy skills. In total, 140 students formed four reading clubs across four community associations.

Additionally, ChildFund trained 46 teachers on pedagogy to improve their teaching skills.



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Social Financial Education Randomized Controls Trial (RCT) Project

Donor: **Aflatoun International**

Cost: **$ 141, 015**

Duration: **2 years**

Regions: **Countrywide**

Implementing Partners:

ChildFund

Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education

University of The Gambia

ChildFund is partnering with Aflatoun International and the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MOBSE) to expand the country's curriculum by incorporating social financial education.

Since ChildFund introduced the Aflatoun program in the country in 2018, its successful implementation has had a visible and positive impact on the lives of participating children and their families.

Through the program, children have learned essential social and financial skills, including saving, spending, petty trading, gardening, and other income-generating activities. They use these skills to generate income for their Aflatoun clubs and channel the proceeds to support their peers who need basic learning materials and other educational resources.

Following the success of the program's pilot, as reported by MOBSE, the "Randomized Control Trials" project was launched.

This initiative focuses on independent research to assess the social financial education program's effectiveness and ensure its sustainability within the education system.

The research, conducted in collaboration with the University of The Gambia's research unit, aimed to ensure that the data and findings were accurate and unbiased.

The project also involved extensive training and interventions:

- A total of 20 Master Trainers and 300 teachers were trained.
- Additionally, 150 of the trained teachers received further instruction, spread across 90 schools—30 controlled schools and 60 intervention schools.

As a result of these efforts, MOBSE officially integrated Social Financial Education into the new curriculum, which was launched in September 2023.

Bikes for Children Trekking Long Distances to School

As part of the Zero Out Of School Children (ZOOSC) project in The Gambia, ChildFund distributed 1,218 bikes to the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education for onward distribution to children who trek long distances to school.

The project, funded by the Education Above All Foundation and implemented by UNICEF Gambia, the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, ChildFund The Gambia, and EFANET Gambia, aims to enroll 66,745 school-age children who are out of school.

A significant barrier to enrollment has been the long distances children must walk to and from school. ChildFund pledged to provide 3,000 bicycles as part of this three-year project.

> In my community here, Madina Tunjang, I am the only one who went to school up to senior secondary level. I achieved this in very challenging circumstances due to the opposition to Western education in my community. I had to leave the village and live with relatives in another village. But now, I am happy that our village has a school, and thanks to the Zero Out Of School Children project, which conducted successful sensitization through the Child Advocates established and supported by ChildFund, enrollment is steadily increasing. I want all children in my village to attend school.
>
> Aminata Boye, from Niamina, currently on teaching practice at her village's school established in November 2020.







Protecting Children in Schools, at Home, and in Their Communities: The Education for Protection and Wellbeing (EPW) Project.

ChildFund successfully implemented the Education for Protection and Wellbeing (EPW) project, which was piloted in two schools. This all-encompassing strategy encourages educators and caregivers to interact with children more positively and practice "serve and return" in their daily interactions.

This method fosters harmony at home and enhances the pedagogical abilities of teachers while enabling caregivers to actively participate in their children's education and wellbeing.

Children are taught skills related to self-protection, which boost their confidence and empower them to know their rights, seek help, and prevent violence. They are also introduced to Social Emotional Learning (SEL), a component of the EPW approach, which helps children develop the knowledge and skills necessary to think and feel maturely in their relationships with others.

The success of this pilot resulted in ChildFund receiving a grant of over 400,000 Euros from BMZ to implement a similar project in schools across 7 districts in ChildFund's operational areas.





Skilled and Involved Youth (15-24 Years)

Paying Tuition Fees: Enabling Access to Tertiary Education and Vocational Training

ChildFund works with the government and other partners to strengthen school retention, especially for girls who often drop out of school by 12th grade due to various factors. One of these factors is the lack of funding to continue to university or college, as many families cannot afford the required tuition fees.

In partnership with our local partners, ChildFund supports sponsored children in continuing their education at various colleges and universities in The Gambia. In FY24, 190 children and youth in tertiary education benefitted from tuition fee payments to pursue Technical, Vocational, and Educational Training (TVET) at various skills centers and the University of The Gambia.



Neneh Bojang, a sponsored Accounting Student at the Management Development Institute.

Life Skills Training

ChildFund, in collaboration with its three Federation partners, is committed to enhancing entrepreneurship opportunities for youth in our areas of operation. We have established a Shoe Making Training and Production Center in Brikama to equip young people, including migrant returnees, school dropouts, and other interested youth, with valuable skills. The first cohort of 18 trainees successfully completed the program and are now qualified shoemakers.

Construction of Multi-Purpose Center for Youth

We are constructing a Youth Multipurpose Center in Brikama, the second-largest town in The Gambia. The center will include a conference hall, migrant clinic, career counseling unit, resource center, and playground for children and youth. It will serve as a central hub for information and services related to adolescent and youth reproductive health, career development, and job creation.

The center, which is already open for certain events, is expected to provide crucial resources and support for youth engagement. It will be an important resource to combat irregular migration and foster economic opportunities for young people.

Career Guidance and Counseling

Career guidance and counseling are essential services that help individuals make informed decisions about their future. For sponsored children, these services are critical in shaping their career paths by offering personalized advice, resources, and support that align with their needs and aspirations.

The goal of career guidance and counseling is to equip children with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate the complex world of work, ensuring they can pursue meaningful and sustainable careers.

Over 1,500 young people benefitted from career guidance and counseling during FY24.



190

Children and youth pursuing tertiary education benefitted from tuition fee payments to pursue Technical, Vocational, and Educational Training (TVET) at various skills centers and the University of The Gambia

Child Protection



Source: AFP

Protecting children from conditions that hinder their growth, and development remains central to our work in The Gambia. Children continue to face challenges such as limited access to education, healthcare, nutrition, water and sanitation, and adequate food and shelter, all due to the high rate of poverty. Additionally, deeply rooted cultural practices expose children to harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage.

During FY24, we collaborated with our local partners to raise awareness among community members about violence against children and its harmful effects.
We also sensitized over 150 religious and opinion leaders on child protection, with a specific focus on child marriage.

We established five community child protection committees (CCPCs) that are based in the community and trained to quickly identify and respond to child protection issues.

Additionally, we strengthened the capacity of the all-girls advocacy group, the Girls' Platform, to intensify their advocacy campaigns on issues affecting girls.

The most challenging issue in FY24 was the threat by some members of parliament to repeal the law banning FGM. ChildFund worked tirelessly with the government and other partners to successfully avert this threat, ensuring that parliament voted to uphold the law.

How ChildFund's Education for Protection and Wellbeing (EPW) Program Addressing Violence Against Children

ChildFund's comprehensive Education for Protection and Wellbeing (EPW) program, formerly known as the School-Based Violence Prevention (SBVP) Global Program Model, aims to enhance the ability of children (ages 6–12), caregivers, and educators to prevent, mitigate, and respond to violence against children (VAC).

The model includes four key components designed to reduce various forms of violence that children face at home, school, and in the community. It aligns with ChildFund's Life Stage theory of change, which supports children from ages six to fourteen. Using the school as the entry point, the model fosters healthy social and academic development, as well as positive behavioral patterns and attitudes toward gender and violence.

Many children go outside without their parents or caregivers knowing their whereabouts or who they are with. As a result, they can face threats and abuse because they cannot distinguish between safe and unsafe environments. Additionally, many children are unaware of what constitutes appropriate or inappropriate touch.To protect themselves and others, children need to understand what safe environments look like and the basic safety precautions they should follow.

> A recent baseline study for the ChildFund EPW program surveyed 403 children. The results revealed that 37.2% (149 children) believe that touching, hitting, or pinching their genitals is not abuse. Moreover, 84% (336 children) believe that teachers would hit a student for misbehaving.

Since its pilot in two schools in, the EPW program has focused on children aged 6 to 12, their educators, and caregivers. Enhancing interactions among children, caregivers, and educators within and between the levels of the ecological model is a key component of EPW.

To improve educational outcomes and break the cycle of violence, the program emphasizes collaboration among four key components: children, caregivers, teachers, and the school/family partnership. Together, they work to strengthen social cohesion, improve teaching techniques, promote positive parenting, and increase parental involvement in the educational process.

EPW adopted a cognitive-behavioral skills training for teachers and caregivers called "Thousands of Hands" (ToH), also known as Miles de Manos. ToH is based on evidence-based teacher training, positive parenting, and violence prevention interventions. It reinforces Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in adults, while children participate in SEL and self-protection (SP) activities through lessons and comic books provided by ChildFund International.

Through monthly sessions, the program trained teachers in positive discipline, which helps establish classroom expectations and create a harmonious environment. It also introduced SEL for the first time in The Gambia.

Weekly activities with children focus on understanding the characteristics of safe places, using hands-on activities in the classroom and school environment. These activities teach six core competencies from our self-protection model:

1. **Types of touch:** Differentiating between safe, unsafe, and confusing touches.
2. **Assertiveness:** Learning how and when to say "no" and seek help.
3. **Unsafe situations:** Identifying safe and unsafe situations and ways to stay safe.
4. **Network of adults:** Identifying trusted adults.
5. **Recognizing, reporting, and protecting:** Knowing when and how to ask for help.
6. **Safety within the community:** Identifying safe places in the community.

The EPW model enables children, teachers, families, and community members to learn and understand protection issues in an effective way, providing maximum protection for children at home, school, and in their communities.

The success of the program has led to its expansion to other schools, funded by BMZ.

Advocacy

In our new advocacy plan (2023 – 2024), ChildFund provides a specific leadership and coordinating role which brings together Civil Society Organizations to identify, discuss, map out and implement strong advocacy initiatives and strategies on child protection issues, including child marriage and other harmful tradition practices affecting children in The Gambia.

A key component of this initiative is supporting the active functionality of the Child Rights Advocacy Group (CRAG). That's why advocacy activities are child centric, with the active participation of the children prioritized.

The Girls' Platform, an all-girls advocacy group which has been at the forefront of community mobilization against child marriage, girl's empowerment and child right promotion, continue to play a critical role in their own protection at the community and school levels during the FY.

No FGM, No Child Marriage!

The Girl's platform, an all-girls advocacy group established by ChildFund in all 3 of the Local Partner Federations we work with, have made significant strides in empowering girls by providing them with a collective voice to address critical issues that directly impact their lives. They mobilized their peers, came together and shared their experiences, and gained knowledge on key topics such as reproductive health, the importance of education, and protection from violence and exploitation.

The Girls' Platform also holds community meetings with their own caregivers and other members of their community to sensitize them on issues affecting girls including harmful traditional practices and myths.

This approach of community members' own girl children speaking to them directly about issues affecting them has had and continues to have significant positive impact by changing their attitudes towards decisions taken about girls.



Promoting Social and Financial Education for Children

ChildFund joined children, our partners and teachers around worldwide to celebrate Aflatoun Day commemorated on March 30, 2024. The annual event marks the strong international network delivering social and financial education to millions of children and youth around the world. ChildFund introduced Aflatoun and its Local Partner, Foni Ding Federation join Aflatoun International to commemorate the day in Bwiam, Western region beginning with a March pass with police escort from the Federation office to the venue.



Household Economic Strengthening

Improving Nutrition and Livelihoods through Community Gardens



In The Gambia, community gardens are collective spaces where women come together to cultivate crops and vegetables for food and sell surplus produce for income.

These gardens are managed and maintained by women, providing them with opportunities to engage in sustainable agriculture while enhancing their economic and social well-being. The gardens play a crucial role in improving family nutrition.

By growing a variety of crops, these gardens ensure a steady supply of fresh, nutritious food for households.

Access to fresh produce helps reduce malnutrition, particularly among children and pregnant women, contributing to overall health and well-being.

Beyond meeting household food needs, women's community gardens offer avenues for economic empowerment. Surplus produce is sold at local markets, providing women with a source of income.

During FY24, we established or supported 3 community gardens in the Western Region.

Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA)

A Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) is a community-based financial group typically made up of 15 to 25 people, mostly women, who save together and take small loans from those savings to invest in small-scale businesses.

This concept is rooted in self-reliance and sustainability, empowering communities—especially in rural areas—to improve their financial security without relying on formal banking systems that may be inaccessible.

ChildFund is working with its local partner, Ding Ding Yiriwa Federation, to pilot VSLAs that support communities in creating their own financial safety nets, reducing vulnerability to economic shocks, and enabling members to invest in income-generating activities, education, and health. For families, VSLAs offer a reliable and accessible way to save money, take loans, and manage household finances.

VSLAs have a significant positive impact on sponsored children and their families. With improved access to financial resources, families can better afford essential needs such as nutritious food, healthcare, and education. The pilot covers Kombo North and Kombo South districts and has a total of 75 women participants.



Goats: The Gift that Keeps on Giving!

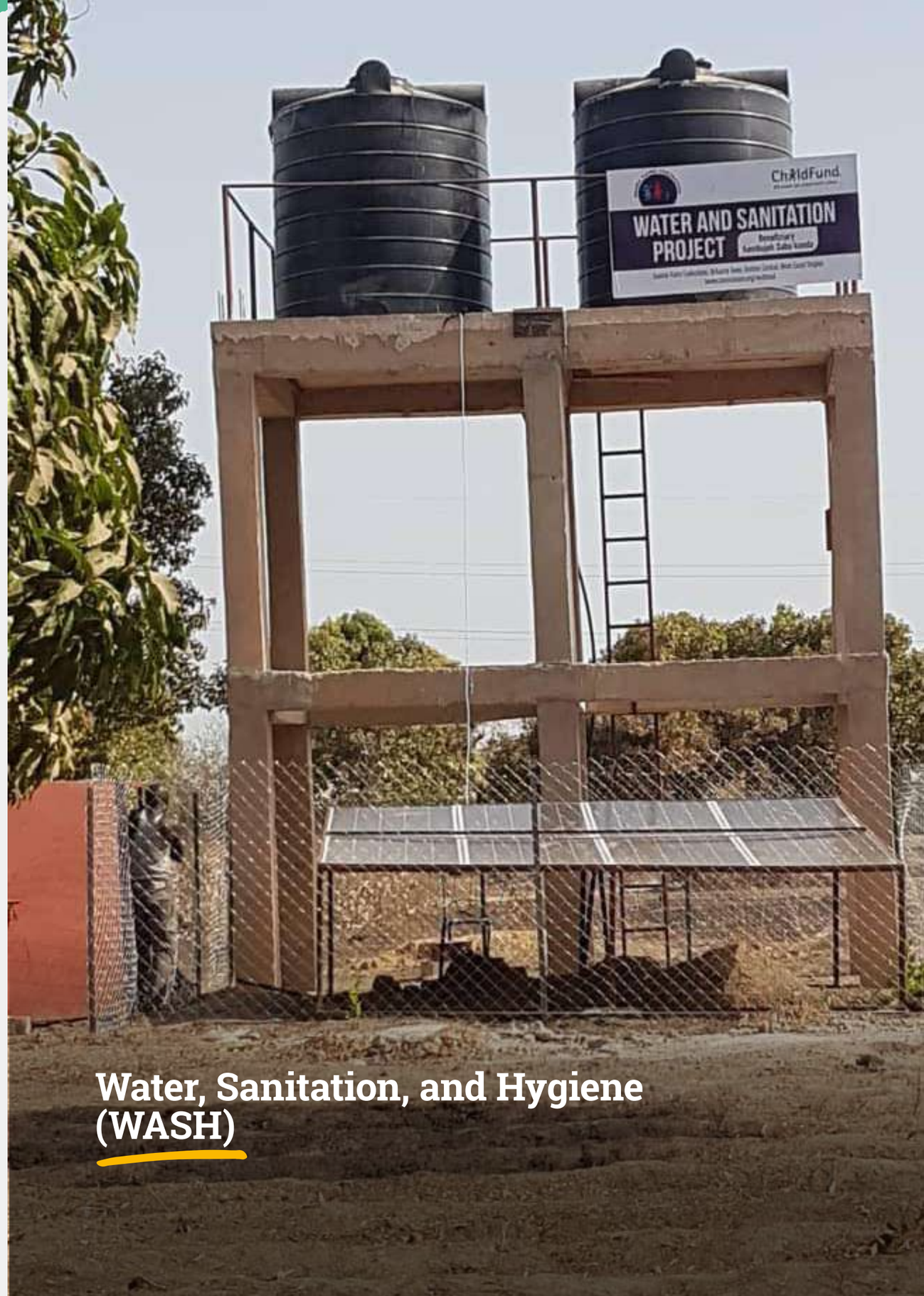
ChildFund continues to provide livelihoods to families of our sponsored and enrolled children through the provision of small ruminants, such as goats and pigs.

With our local partners, Foni Ding, Saama Kairo, and Ding Ding Yiriwa Federations, we purchased these animals for families to raise and use for food and income generation through the sale of animals when they multiply. During FY24, a total of 18 families received ruminants, most of which have now multiplied.

My goats have now multiplied to 9 since I received them from ChildFund two years ago. My parents sometimes sell the he-goat to get money to buy our basic needs, and we also slaughter one during Eid feasts and naming ceremonies. Thank you ChildFund.

Muhammed, 8, of Kombo East, West Coast Region





Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

Access to clean water remains a significant challenge in several parts of The Gambia. In response, ChildFund, in collaboration with our local partners, funded the construction of 4 boreholes in 4 communities in the Lower River and Western Regions to provide clean water to the families of our sponsored and enrolled children, as well as other community members. These water systems are improving the lives of the communities.

My children and I used to suffer a lot in accessing water. We fetched water for washing, cooking, and bathing from an open well, which was far from here. For drinking water, we traveled over 500 meters to fetch it from a public tap, where hundreds of people fetched water daily.

Sometimes, it would take an hour to get access to a 20-liter gallon of water. But since ChildFund provided this borehole, we now have access to clean water at all times. This has changed our lives because we can now also work on vegetable gardens that provide fresh vegetables for the family, thanks to this water system. I also sell some of the vegetables to earn income. We are very grateful to ChildFund for this life-changing intervention.

Jainaba Sarr, Kombo North District, Western Region.



Climate Action

The Gambia is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including rising temperatures, decreased rainfall, and rising sea levels.

These changes significantly affect key economic sectors, particularly agriculture, which relies heavily on rain-fed farming. Additionally, bush fires and charcoal burning for economic purposes continue to exacerbate the effects of climate change.

As part of our 2022-2026 country strategic plan, ChildFund is working with our local partners to implement programs aimed at reducing carbon emissions. During FY24, we conducted sensitization campaigns across various communities to raise awareness about the environmental damage caused by these activities. We also organized youth-led climate action initiatives, including tree planting and community cleaning exercises.

Grants Highlights

ChildFund implemented three grants focused on education, child protection, and climate action, funded by our donor partners. These grants include

Zero Out Of School Children (ZOOSC) Project
Funded by Educate A Child, this grant is valued at over $1,400,000. It is a collaborative effort involving ChildFund, The Gambia's Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, UNICEF, and the Education For All Network (EFANET). The project aims to enroll and retain 66,765 out-of-school children in The Gambia.

Youth Climate Action Program
Funded by LEAP Africa for Youth Day 2023, this $5,000 grant provided young people with the opportunity to mobilize for environmental action. The program involved a massive cleansing exercise and the planting of over 15,000 trees, including mangroves in swampy areas.

Randomized Control Trials (RCT) Project
This Social Financial Education program, funded by Aflatoun International, is valued at $141,015.

The project conducts research to assess the success of the Social Financial Education program and its potential for sustainability within The Gambia's education system.

The study spans 90 schools, with 30 as controlled schools and 60 as intervention schools, and is conducted in partnership with the University of The Gambia research unit to ensure accurate and unbiased findings.







Gifts-In-Kind (GIK) Program

ChildFund The Gambia services to children and their families reach every corner of the country. Thanks to the Gift-In-Kind program which provides essential items including medicines, school materials, household materials and hygiene kits that targets all children who live in deprivation, exclusion, and vulnerability.

In FY24, ChildFund handed over 4 by 40ft containers of books and other learning materials worth over 1.1 million dollars to the Gambia's Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MOBSE) for onward distribution to schools and colleges across the country. The books cover the Sciences, math, and English Language to help improve the low literacy and numeracy skills of school children in The Gambia.

Children living in communities without electricity also received solar-powered torch lights to support their night studies.

The Ministry of Health also received Pharmaceuticals and medical supplies worth over 3 million dollars to compliment government's efforts in providing supplies to public health facilities.





Child Sponsorship

During the fiscal year 2024, a total of 14,526 children were enrolled in ChildFund's sponsorship program in The Gambia.

The power of child sponsorship cannot be underestimated. A single hand that gives has the potential to completely transform a life, creating opportunities and opening doors that might otherwise have remained closed.

Through sponsorship, children in need can reach their full potential, overcome challenges and pursue brighter futures. It is against this background that we share stories of three former sponsored children who are now thriving adults.

14,526 Children
were enrolled in the sponsorship program in The Gambia.

The Transformative Power of Child Sponsorship



> My sponsors were a selfless and tender-hearted couple. Because of them, I was exposed to several lifechanging opportunities which have greatly contributed to my well-being, social values, and recognition.

Do not be afraid to give up the good to go for the great." These were the words that would forever leave a lasting impression on Lamin. They were from his sponsors - Graham and Liz Wilkenson.

For Lamin, the pursuit of his goals would have remained an elusive dream were it not for ChildFund's timely intervention. Today, he considers this not just a reality but a milestone in his life. "I was enrolled in the sponsorship program at a very tender age and was privileged to have a sponsor in 1993 during my third grade in primary school.

This sponsorship paved a golden path for me to grow and become a productive, responsible, and confident individual. My sponsors were a selfless and tender-hearted couple. Because of them, I was exposed to several lifechanging opportunities which have greatly contributed to my well-being, social values, and recognition.

The life and livelihood skills training, along with other empowerment projects Lamin gained, not only influenced his academic and professional journey but also elevated his social status.

Special thanks to my beloved sponsors Graham and Liz. Wherever you are, be proud of your genuine contributions to my life.

To ChildFund, please pride yourself in knowing that because of this program, I lived my life, I did not just exist. Lamin now juggles the dual role of Clerk and Public Relations Officer at the Brikama Area Council, helping to shine the light on the positive developmental projects the local government authority is implementing to support communities.

LAMIN SINGHATEH
Clerk and Public Relations Officer, Brikama Area Council.



> ChildFund also paid for my university degree. In April 2024, I graduated with honors in Development Studies from The University of The Gambia, becoming the first girl in my family and village to achieve this milestone..
>
> There has been a lot of progress in my community because of you.

My sponsorship journey with ChildFund began in 2008 when I was 8 years old and in primary two growing up in Mandinaba community, Kombo East District. My parents were farmers who struggled to cater to all our needs, including my education.

We were confined by poverty. Back then, ChildFund would regularly embark on a selection of children from underprivileged families to enroll in the sponsorship program.

I was lucky to be among the selected children, and this was a life-changing moment in my life. From then on, with the support of my sponsor, Thomas from Sweden, I received educational materials, medical care, and my tuition fees was paid, enabling me to complete my primary and secondary school education.

Through ChildFund's programs, I gained public speaking skills which built my confidence and attended international events like the Youth Summit in Dakar, Senegal, where I networked with influential figures like ambassadors and senior government officials whom I never dreamed I would ever meet.

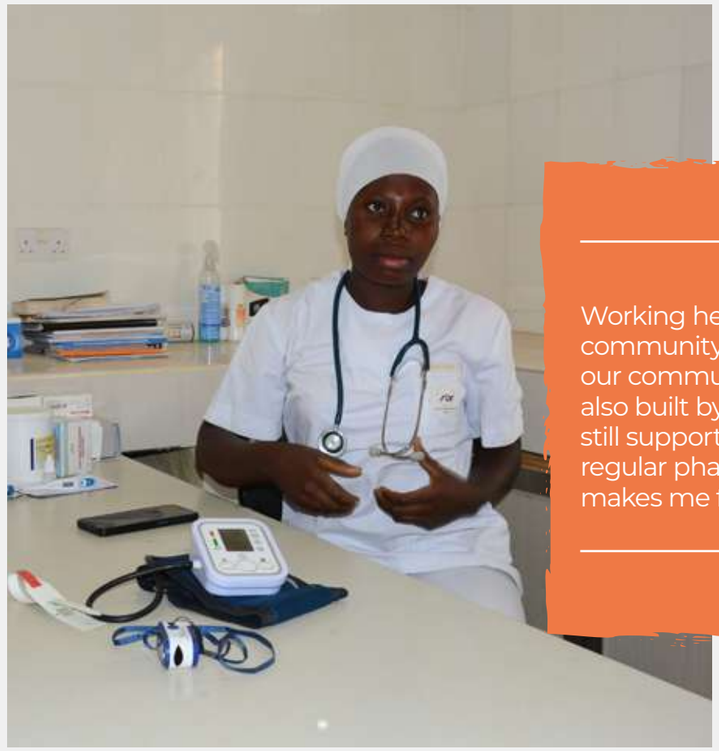
I also participated in a series of life skills training, which empowered me to make informed decisions about my life, including my career and health. ChildFund also covered the costs of my university degree.

ChildFund also paid for my university degree. In April 2024, I graduated with honors in Development Studies from The University of The Gambia, becoming the first girl in my family and village to achieve this milestone. Despite the societal challenges of drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, and genderbased violence, I persevered, guided by mentors who helped me break barriers with integrity and respect.

Now, as a Program Assistant with the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, I manage early warning systems to monitor conflict and human security issues across the region.

FANTA DARBOE

Program Assistant, West Africa Network for Peace-Building (WANEP)



> Working here back in my community today as a nurse in our community clinic, which was also built by ChildFund, and is still supported especially through regular pharmaceutical supplies, makes me feel extremely proud.

I was enrolled in ChildFund's sponsorship program when I was in grade 1. I received essential educational support such as books, pens, school bags, and even a bicycle for transportation.

Moving on to Senior Secondary School, I pursued science, and upon graduation, I opted for nursing. ChildFund continued to fund my nursing program, providing all the necessary materials for practical classes.

I chose to become a nurse because I have seen many people in my community struggle to get medical care. So, working here back in my community today as a nurse in our community clinic, which was also built by ChildFund, and is still supported especially through regular pharmaceutical supplies, makes me feel extremely proud.

Now it all makes sense because we were always told by ChildFund staff that they wanted us to become educated, skilled, and involved in the development of our communities and country. Our clinic receives up to 50 patients a day, and even more on Mondays.

We also offer maternity services, including child delivery at the facility. This has reduced the burden on women who otherwise would have to struggle to reach the nearest health facility. Even reaching the main road from here is a challenge.

Without ChildFund's support, I wouldn't have reached this level because quality education is expensive, and my family would not have been able to fund my education."

ISATOU GIBBA

Nurse

Forging Partnerships

ChildFund prioritizes partnership in our operations because it helps us bridge the potential gaps that exist in solo operation approach. We leverage the knowledge and expertise that each partner brings to the table.

During FY24, our Country Office led by the Partnership Portfolio Specialist continued to build the capacity of our Local Partners to promote partner effectiveness. Thus, the CO organized a capacity building on Finance, programs implementation and monitoring and Evaluation aimed at enhancing the quality of their work.

On quarterly basis, the CO and its affiliate partners held quarterly partnership reflection meetings during which partners reflect, learnt, realigned their planned activities and budget for the FY to ensure efficient, effective, and quality program delivery.

Communications

ChildFund The Gambia prioritizes communication in the work that we do. The Office of the Communication Specialist works with the CO team to tell the success stories of the organization through different means and channels.

The Gambia Press Union, the umbrella body of journalists in The Gambia works with ChildFund to promote children welfare and wellbeing through their annual Media Awards. The children reporting category, in which reporters reporting stories about children are awarded, is directly associated with ChildFund because of our impact on children.

Through our Communications office, we work with other media partners to share our successes and challenges, and to call people to action to address challenges facing children and their families. We also use social media to reach a wider audience and our donors, where we share with them programs and projects that we implement for children.

Quality Assurance

At ChildFund, quality assurance means strong and effective internal control systems with checks and balances, and protection of the corporate image of the organization. Having been in operations for nearly 40 years in The Gambia, ChildFund remain a strong household name in the country in complimenting government development efforts.

We work under strict internal control of resources entrusted to our organization. The vetting and continuous update of our vendor list in the system provides us safe and reliable partners to work with. We also operate on an e-procurement system which ensures that all procurement activities are done in accordance with the procurement policy.

These controls and efforts are amplified by our programs department's Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist who conducts rigorous monitoring and evaluation of our implemented projects and programs.

All implemented programs are successful, and this has resulted in the CO winning new grants in FY24. We are also expecting more grant funding in FY25 because of the trust and confidence donors and potential donors have in ChildFund.

Human Resource and Administration

Human Resources plays a key role in developing, reinforcing and changing the culture of an organization. They also play an important role in motivating the employees by giving them a purpose to make them understand the organization's vision and mission.

In FY24, the HR department organized a team building session for all staff in the CO aimed at allowing them to bond, which increases employee engagement levels.

The activity also encouraged staff to work together and allow for collaboration rather than competition.

The Staff were given the opportunity to voice their concerns during departmental, as well as general staff meetings, and discuss ways to move the organization forward.







Financials

Total Income

Source of Funds	Amount (USD)
Gifts-In-Kind	3,309,584
Partnership Effectiveness Fund	261,177
Non-Sponsorship Funds	332,771
International Subsidy	1,373,480
Working Fund	243,865
Grants	521,945
Designated Finds For Children	206,501
TOTAL	**6,249,322**

Program versus Administration Costs (USD)

Administration
463,104.59

Programs
5,786,217.41

Investment by Local Partner

Local Partner	Local Parter Expenses (USD)
Sama Kairo (102P02)	524,535.51
Foni Ding Ding (102P01)	455,543.75
Ding Ding Yiriwaa (102P03)	339,320.98
TOTAL INVESTMENT	**1,319,400.24**

Investment by Life Stage (USD)

Life Stage	Foni Ding Ding Federation	Saama Kairo Federation	Ding Ding Yiriwa Federation	Total
0 – 5 years	51,801.57	112,965.25	54,587.67	219,354.49
6 – 14 years	192,752.75	71,151.20	48,747.36	312,651.31
15 – 24 years	85,940.71	128,219.27	63,049.94	277,209.92
Cross Cutting Programs	125,048.72	212,199.79	172,936.01	510,184.52
Total	**455,543.75**	**524,535.51**	**339,320.98**	**1,319,400.24**








Our Team

ChildFund's Senior Management Team (SMT) and all other staff members continuously strive for the success of the organization and the children and communities that we work with. Our staff's individual contribution, hard work, and dedication have been pivotal to every milestone we achieved in FY24 and will continue to achieve in the future.



Musukuta Komma-Bah
Country Director



Nfamara Dabo
Programs and Sponsorship Director



Ndeye Bah
Director of Finance – West Africa



Madlene Ashcroft
Manager II, HR – Sierra Leone and The Gambia

Alagie Yaya Mbye
Specialist II, Admin & HR

Samba Keita
Specialist II, Business Development

Gallo Demba Bah
Specialist II, Partnership Portfolio

Sunkung Danso
Specialist II, M&E

Awa A Gibba
Specialist II, Programs – Early Childhood Development

Mustapha Mbye
Specialist II, Communication

Musa Fadera
Specialist Snr, Finance and Accounting

Mambanick Njie
Analyst I, IT Support, GSS

Bubacarr Jammeh
Specialist II, Sponsorship

Haddy Thomas Accountant - GSS

Kabba Bojang
Specialist II, Child Protection and Advocacy

Onisima Boissy Gomez
Sponsorship Officer

Lamin Jallow
Sponsorship Officer

Bakary Seedy Dampha
Specialist II, Program

Fatou Jassey
Specialist II, Education

Awa Gibba
Housekeeper

Fanding Singhateh
Senior Driver

Sainey Jawara
Housekeeper/Guard

Fatou Cham
Housekeeper

Ebrima AB Cham
Housekeeper/Guard

Alagie Ansu Loum
Housekeeper/Guard

Ismaila Hydara
Housekeeper/Guard

Sait Ceesay
Driver

Musa Ndow
Driver/Mechanic

Our Development Partners

A special thank you to our donors and partners

With a deep sense of appreciation, we would like to extend our sincerest thanks to cherished donors, sponsors and partners across the world.

Your generosity has not only fueled our projects but has also touched the lives of countless individuals who benefit from the programs and initiatives that your contributions make possible. Your belief in our mission has empowered us to reach new heights and accomplish huge milestones that have impacted positively on the children of The Gambia.

On behalf of the children, families and communities we work with, we say thank you for your compassion and dedication to the work we do.



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