

Enhancing most disadvantaged women's access to productive and sustainable resources in Kiang West district (The Gambia): **A Participatory Video Lessons Learned Report**



Women from Kuli Kunda filming their Story. IFRC/M. Tsukamoto

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Acronyms and abbreviations

EU	European Union
GRCS	The Gambia Red Cross Society
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
KRCS	Kenya Red Cross
LRR	Lower River Region
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
PMER	Planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting
PV	Participatory Video
PVLL	Participatory Video Lessons Learned
SRC	Spanish Red Cross
5 W's	(Who, Where, When, What and Why)

1. Introduction

This Lessons Learned piece aimed to capture the feedback from the community of Kuli Kunda on the activities carried out by The Gambia Red Cross Society and Spanish Red Cross Society for the European Union's co-funded Livelihood project *Enhancing most disadvantaged women's access to productive and sustainable resources in Kiang West district (Lower River Region, The Gambia), in an enabling environment for gender equality, equity and women's empowerment*. Participatory video (PV) was used by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to further engage the communities and allow them to create, film, and edit their own community feedback to this project. In an effort to develop more efficient, inclusive and sustainable approaches to monitoring and evaluation, IFRC's PMER Unit in Geneva in collaboration with the Africa region, The Gambia Red Cross Society and Kenya Red Cross Society piloted this Participatory Video Lessons Learned (PVLL) using a mobile video application called [Indaba](#)

This PVLL aimed to:

- Capture feedback from a representative group from the Kuli Kunda community (women, men, youth and elderly) to the activities carried out for the The Gambia Red Cross Society and Spanish Red Cross Society's livelihoods project co-funded by European Union, SRC, Global Environment Facility Small Grant, Cantabria - Spain.
- Understand better any opportunities, successes, challenges and further needs expressed by the community for this project.
- Generate recommendations and lessons learned on the implementation of the project's activities that will be useful for similar projects in the future for the same sector.

This Participatory Video Lessons Learned (PVLL) report is intended to provide qualitative feedback from the communities in Kuli Kunda on the Red Cross livelihood activities carried out there from January 2018 to October 2020, when the PVLL was carried out.

2. Background

In recent years, improvements in health, education and income have been seen in The Gambia, yet the country still ranks 174 out of 189 countries in the 2019 Human Development Index.¹ It is one of the smallest country in West Africa, and the fourth most densely populated country on mainland Africa. It has a population of around 1.8 million, with an economy that is largely dependent upon agriculture, fishing and tourism. Poverty levels are high in the country, with prevalent food insecurity and the region becoming increasingly susceptible to harmful climate changes.

In The Gambia, by law, there is equality of the sexes, but in practice, men tend to still exert control over their wives and female children. Women do have an enormous impact on the well-being of their families and societies, but their potential is sometimes not realized or allowed because of discriminatory social norms, incentives, and legal institutions. Although their status has improved in recent decades, gender inequalities still persist.

In response to this, the GRCS with the support from the Spanish Red Cross, the IFRC, and the EU and other partners focused on activities which contributed to empowering the most disadvantaged rural women in Kiang West District (Lower River Region - LRR). The LRR of The Gambia has the highest levels of household food insecurity directly related to an underperforming agricultural sector where women account for 61.2 per cent of the labour force.

¹ <https://www.wfp.org/countries/gambia>

Women in the agricultural sector face several barriers that prevent them from benefiting from the full potential of agriculture and animal husbandry, namely: i) access and control of land and its quality, ii) low ownership of working animals and low control of their incomes iii) difficult access inputs and modern technology, iv) low credit and its control and finally, and v) low capacity building and low access to extension services such as fertilizers.

It is expected that through the livelihood project, the most disadvantaged women in Kiang West will:

- Become more socio-economically autonomous, allowing them to have access to productive and sustainable resources, and
- Participate in a more gender-friendly social environment, which will allow them to increase their incomes and improve their socio-economic conditions.

The livelihood's project focused on five communities (Jattaba, Jiffarong, Kuli Kunda, Jali and Jula Kunda) in LRR with the following objectives:

Objective 1: Enhancing most disadvantaged women's access to productive and sustainable resources in Kiang West District (Lower River Region, The Gambia), in an enabling environment for gender equality, equity and women's empowerment.

Objective 2: Increased economic productivity and income through sustainable livelihoods and employment opportunities.

Objective 3: Raised gender equality awareness in the targeted intervention area.

This PVLL will focus on the feedback from the community of Kuli Kunda to the outcomes mentioned above.

3. Methods

Desk review: A document review was carried out looking at the overall project and related documents to better understand the project, the background and logistics needed for this participatory video lessons learned.

Indaba Training for Volunteers: A pilot training was held with National Society branch staff, volunteers and partner agencies on the Indaba process in Banjul on 13 October 2020. The aim of this training was to prepare the 2 volunteers and staff who would accompany the team to the field on the Indaba process, as well as to capacitate others interested in using a mobile video application for gathering community feedback on project/programme activities.

Data collection in the field: The PVLL team then spent five days with the community of Kuli Kunda (14 to 18 October) to capture their stories using a participatory timeline, photo walk and story cards focusing on questions related to what the community has learned from the project complemented by the Indaba app.

Onsite capacity building: The participatory video making process itself also aimed to build the capacity at all levels (IFRC Geneva, Region, and National Society) and incorporated elements of sustainability and peer to peer exchange, to ensure that this method can be used post departure of PVLL for monitoring and evaluation in the Africa region. In support of this, it was agreed that a Programme expert and an IT specialist come from The Gambia Red Cross Society, along with an IT specialist from the Kenya Red Cross Society.

Community Feedback

Each group who participated in this initiative had an opportunity to present back their video story to the community. The team also provided the community and the National Society with their localized video stories before leaving the community.

Data Analysis

In both locations, the data analysis focused on extracting the main themes which surged from the stories created by the women, men, youth and elderly.

Selection of the community

The following criteria was used for the selection of the district area of the targeted community for filming in LRR, in consultation with the IFRC Africa region and The Gambia Red Cross Society.

- Communities where Red Cross livelihood project activities have been implemented.
- Communities judged by IFRC and The Gambia Red Cross to have reasonable security.
- Communities which score highly vulnerable to a range of different natural disasters.

Selection of the community representatives

To limit bias, community representatives to participate in the Participatory Video Lessons Learned were selected onsite and on a voluntary basis, from the community facilitation which took place on the first day.

4. Findings

There were **22** assisted participants (7 women, 5 men, 4 youth and 6 elderly) who provided their feedback to the project through their stories. Overall, there were **14** stories created by the participating groups in (women (2), men (5), youth (3) and elderly (4)). The findings have been categorized according to how the feedback related to the context of the project and its objectives.

4.1 Context

Under the 1997 Constitution, women were accorded equal rights to men in Gambia. The policy "...provides a legitimate point of reference for addressing gender inequalities at all levels of government and by all stakeholders."² Although this was a step forward for women in Gambia, this policy did not take into consideration the limitations that this policy would face throughout the years through issues such as poverty, cultural barriers and gender gaps still existing between women and men.

For this project, Kiang West, a district in the Lower River Region (LRR) of the Gambia, was selected as "...it has the highest levels of household food insecurity directly related to a clearly underperforming agricultural sector where women account for 61.2% of the labour force."³ Although women dominate the labour force, they are faced with several barriers including their lack of access and control of land, low ownership of working animals; their difficulty in accessing modern technology; little credit available; and limited access to learn farming skills, etc. This is further exacerbated by gender constraints in the region, including high sexual gender-based violence; a high rate of female genital mutilation

² <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/docs/1958/Gambia%20national%20gender%20policy.pdf>

³ European Commission Application Form

(94%); high fertility rates, large number of births; high illiteracy rates: and high unemployment.

The project aimed to improve and empower women in this region and provide them with the knowledge, tools, assets and resources needed to increase their incomes as well as sensitize the community around them to their potential in playing a central role in the agricultural sector.



"Out of the benefits, some of the harvest can be eat at home and some can be sold and solve some family problems together with our husbands..."



"Our women for 30 years they are fetching water through a manual pulley, but when Red Cross comes they give us this. They give us this project. They give us help so we see that our women will now be relieved from the problem..."

4.2 Objective 1: Enhancing most disadvantaged women's access to productive and sustainable resources in Kiang West District (Lower River Region, The Gambia), in an enabling environment for gender equality, equity and women's empowerment.

Although the project focuses on empowering disadvantaged women in Gambia, the focus is not on women alone. The project recognises that to improve women's livelihoods and wellbeing, it is important to also include other community members in the project, so that the actions are sustainable and accepted by all.

The stories shared by the women, men and youth do focus on the challenges faced by women, as well as the increased understanding in the community on the importance of

gender issues based on the community talks carried out, radio shows and school visits, etc.



"Out of the benefits, some of the harvest can be eat at home and some can be sold and solve some family problems together with our husbands..."



"Our women used to pull water manually until they finished watering their garden beds. We come to see that Red Cross comes to help our women to relieve them from the manual pulley and to give them a borehole where they fetch water from a trough to water their beds. They are very happy about it."

4.3 Objective 2: Increased economic productivity and income through sustainable livelihoods and employment opportunities.

Women, men, youth and elderly all highlighted the importance and value of the gardens, the tools/skills provided for gardening and the borehole brought in by the project towards securing a better livelihood not only for the women, but for the whole community. Challenges though still appeared to be faced by women in accessing skills and other forms of livelihood, outside of gardening and selling their produce in markets. Concerns with the management of the livestock (mainly sheep) provided was mainly shared only by the men, youth and elderly, and the youth, expressed interest in wanting to learn the same gardening skills/training being provided to the women by the project, so that they too could benefit from this.



"When it comes to skills, job and other types of jobs we also have challenges on those areas too.."



"Children are learning because of the work we are doing in the garden supports them."



"It will be very important if we can have skill center for men because garden is only for the women and this something that will make the young men happy."



"They help us dig one borehole. We want them to help us manage there for us. To put the gardens there, the village can benefit from it."

4.4 Objective 3: Raised gender equality awareness in the targeted intervention area.

Through the stories, it appears that gender equality awareness sessions had taken place in the schools, in the community and to wider audiences through the use of awareness raising sessions and radio. The stories expressed appreciation of these sessions by the various community representatives, and the contribution of these sessions to a better understanding of women of their own rights, increased awareness of men on the roles played by women in their community, and increased sensitization on gender equality in schools.



"When it comes to gender, we did not understand gender before. Between men and women, men would be on their own and women would also be on their own which was making them to be left behind."



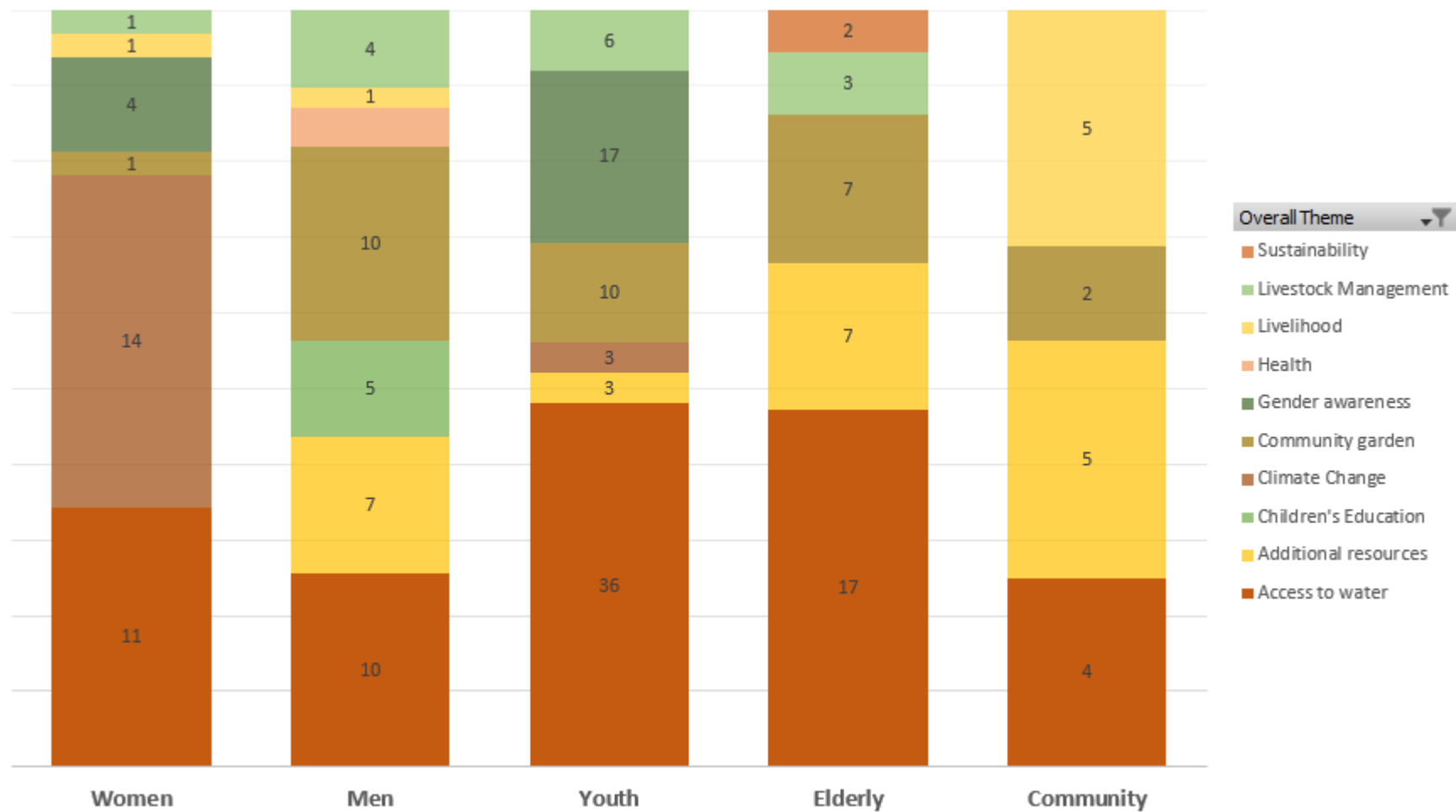
"We thank and praise them because the benefit they give us we see it."



"...going to the radio to talk to people about Gender issues was great benefit for me enlighten people the peaceful co-existence with men and women from homes to anywhere..."

4.5 Findings Matrix by Theme

As can be seen by the table below, the following **THREE** themes had the most frequent mentions in the community stories: **Access to water** (community challenges in accessing water for the people, gardens and livestock; past difficulties for women in drawing water; and the importance of wells/boreholes in the community); the importance of **community gardens** (community benefits from the garden; appreciation for fencing but the need for more and stronger fencing which can last and keeps animals out; how the produce from the gardens have helped send children to schools and helped people with their livelihoods); as well as the **additional resources still needed** (to help the women with weeding in view of the size of the gardens; adding of troughs; sharing of gardening skills with other members of the community, such as youth; and extending the livelihood project to other districts so other communities can also benefit).



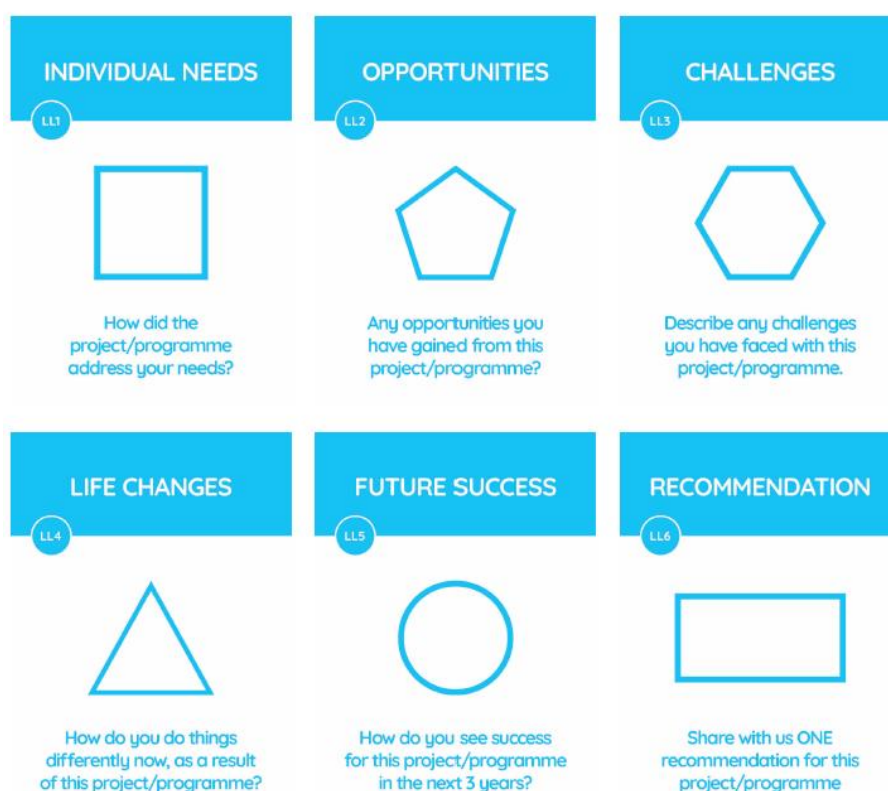
4.6 Findings Matrix by Objective

Objectives	Women	Men	Youth	Elderly	Community	Grand Total
O2: Increased economic productivity and income through sustainable livelihoods and employment opportunities.	0	31	38	39	15	123
O3: Raised gender equality awareness in the targeted intervention area.	8	14	35	0	0	57
O1: Enhancing most disadvantaged women's access to productive and sustainable resources in Kiang West District in an enabling environment for gender equality, equity and women's empowerment	24	0	4	0	6	34
Grand Total	32	45	77	39	21	214

The overall objective of this livelihoods project is to: "Support social economic initiatives through improved jobs and other income activities for the most disadvantaged women of the Kiang West region". It aims to do this through the three objectives mentioned in the previous **Findings** section. Activities mentioned in stories were arranged according to project objectives and by order of greatest mention. **Activities for Objective 2 received the greatest mention, followed by activities for Objective 3 and then for Objective 1.**

4.7 Bringing out the Lessons Learned

In order to allow the groups of women, men, youth and elderly to dive deeper into their stories, a three-phased approach was taken using story cards and facilitated group discussions.



First phase: The PVLL team piloted story cards with localized questions related to lessons learned (**Individual Needs**, **Life Challenges**, **Opportunities**, **Challenges** and **Recommendation**) coupled with localized questions related to cross-cutting issues (Disabilities, Community Engagement, Gender and Protection).

Second phase: Story cards were also facilitated with the different community representatives on the 5 W's (Who, Where, When, What and Why) and **Recommendation** to help them further build their story narrative.

Third phase: Tags for Lessons Learned used in the first phase were also created in the Indaba app which allowed the men, women and youth to tag their own stories with these criteria. The different colors in the tags allowed the groups to recognize the different areas of inquiry used for lessons learned which was useful for those groups who could not read or write.

The following table shows of how each group tagged their stories using the Lessons Learned areas of inquiry:

	Community	Elderly	Men	Women	Youth	Grand Total
Individual Needs: How did the project/programme address your needs?	0	0	1	1	0	2
Opportunities: Any opportunities you have gained from this project/programme?	1	0	2	0	1	4
Challenges: Describe any challenges you have faced with this project/programme.	2	2	1	0	1	6
Success: How do you see success for this project/programme in the next 3 years?	1	1	1	2	1	6
Life Changes: How do you do things differently now, as a result of this project/programme?	0	0	0	1	0	1
Recommendation: Share with us ONE recommendation for this project/programme.	1	1	1	2	1	6

4.7.1 Table 2: Stories tagged by Lessons Learned Areas of Inquiry

Success, **Challenges** and **Recommendations** were the tags most frequently used to describe feedback, followed by **Opportunities**, **Individual Needs** and **Life Changes**.

Individual Needs: The men described how the livelihoods project has contributed towards stabilizing the community's health, as well as making children's schooling more accessible. The women highlighted the importance of the wells which has facilitated their access and their drawing of clean water.

Opportunities: In terms of opportunities, the men discussed the benefits of the garden and the sheeps provided by the Red Cross for them individually, but also to the wider community, as it was "...adding up to the feeding and also lunch for the school going kids." For the youth, the gender equality awareness raising sessions were valuable and strengthened relations not only within the community, but also between communities, as "...the relationship between us and other villages is strengthen that is because the Red Cross livelihood project..."

Challenges: There were challenges expressed concerning the community's access to water, the community gardens and livestock management. The women highlighted the challenges they faced with water and their lack of access to a market. Both the men, the youth and elderly expressed challenges with the fencing surrounding the community gardens and the difficulties in feeding and maintaining the sheep given to them from the Red Cross. Apparently, as the sheep were

brought in from Senegal, many were dying or falling ill from difficulties in adjusting to the Gambian weather and/or the feed provided.

Success: Despite the existing challenges, all the community representatives considered the livelihood project to be a success. A few groups mentioned the importance of replicating this project not only in Kuli Kunda, but in neighbouring villages.

Life Changes: For the women, the livelihood project did make a difference not only in their individual lives, but also in their family life. For example; Out of the benefits, some of the harvest can be eat at home and some can be sold and solve some family problems together with our husbands..."

Recommendation: There were various recommendations made especially concerning the community gardens, access to water, and the livelihood project itself. The men's group noted that more fencing was required to cover the span of the community garden and the women pleaded for support and access to water in their individual houses. Similar to the women, the youth also wanted to gain skills in gardening, and the elderly felt that the livelihoods project should be extended to the whole of Kiang district.

5. Community Recommendations

The following highlight the recommendations shared by community members:

1. Access to water be provided also in individual households and that people desist from acts (cutting down trees, processing charcoal) which contribute to bush destruction and climate change. (**Women**)
2. Appreciation is expressed for the garden, but more fencing is required to cover the span of the community garden, and more help is needed with the maintenance of the garden. (**Men**)
3. The youth would also like to benefit from a garden, and similar to the women, they would also like to improve their skills in gardening. (**Youth**)
4. The livelihoods project be extended to other neighbouring villages and beyond, and that the community take care and manage properly the resources provided by the livelihoods project (**Elderly**)

6. Community Feedback

At the end of this Participatory Video Lessons Learned on day 5, the community representatives were able to share their video stories with their peers through a community screening.



Community feedback screening in the Gambia. KRCS/K. Mbai

7. Key Observations by the PVLL team

- 🔍 On the first day, there was interest and curiosity by the elderly group to participate in the Indaba process, but apprehension to create a video story in view of the dangers of social media. Once they understood the facilitation process and how the video stories were to be created by the community representatives themselves expressing their feedback to the project, they then changed their minds on Day 2 and decided they wanted to fully participate in the process.
- 🔍 Out of the community representatives, there was high illiteracy in the women and the elderly group. It did not pose a problem in the facilitation/editing process though for them, as the color on the story cards coupled with interpretation/facilitation helped the groups identify and tag their stories.
- 🔍 For the community story, rather than using the video clips created by the different representative groups, this community decided to film from scratch their community story. To the team, this showed high interest from the community in the Indaba process.
- 🔍 The half day training carried out for volunteers prior to the time spent with the community was useful in familiarizing those volunteers supporting the Indaba process and/other interested volunteers with the method.

8. Conclusion

The livelihoods project aimed to “Enhance the most disadvantaged women’s access to productive and sustainable resources in Kiang West district (Lower River Region, The Gambia) in an enabling environment for gender equality, equity and women’s empowerment. Through this Participatory Video Lessons Learned and the stories told by the community representatives, it was possible to see that the community of Kuli Kunda was benefiting from the project; many of the households were increasing their income; and through this accessing education for their children, better health, and more stability within their family life and in relations with other communities.

Through the stories and the mentions of different elements related to the three objectives of the project, it is also possible to see that despite the challenges, the project had achieved a certain percentage of its targets as of October 2019. In order to ensure sustainability of the actions carried out, it would be advisable for the project to take into consideration more why women in Kuli Kunda feel that they are having difficulty accessing the market, and to take into account more the country’s context for project implementation (as it was understood from the stories that many of the livestock provided died or fell ill, in view of the Gambia’s weather and the feed being provided to the animals), etc. Close monitoring of the current livestock provided should take place to better understand these issues and to secure survival of the remaining livestock if possible.

Now that the women in this community have been trained, along with other members of the community; the good relations which appear to exist between Kuli

Kunda and its neighbouring villages could be used to peer to peer skills learned and further raise and spread gender equality awareness in the Kiang West District.

9. Community Stories

Indaba: Participatory Video Lessons Learned (Women) on a Livelihood Project in Kiang West, Gambia



Indaba: Participatory Video Lessons Learned (Men) on a Livelihood Project in Kiang West, Gambia



Indaba: Participatory Video Lessons Learned (Youth) on a Livelihood Project in Kiang West, Gambia



Indaba: Participatory Video Lessons Learned (Elderly) on a Livelihood Project in Kiang West, Gambia



Indaba: Participatory Video Lessons Learned (Community) on a Livelihood Project in Kiang West, Gambia



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