



Building Resilience Against Food and Nutrition Insecurity in The Sahel/P2RS

P2RS-1 IN THE GAMBIA
**PROMOTING CHANGE,
IMPROVING LIVES**
OUTCOME STORY SERIES



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Momodou Gassama
Project Director

The multinational Programme Building Resilience against Food and Nutrition Insecurity in the Sahel (P2RS) is an initiative of the African Development Fund that seeks to address underlying causes of poverty and food insecurity in the face of challenges of climate change. The implementing agency, CILLS, is coordinating the implementation of the Programme in multiple countries in the Sahel Region, including The Gambia. Phase 1 of P2RS is in line with the CILSS Food Security Strategic Framework (FSSF) to fight poverty; the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) Agricultural Policy (WAP); and the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP). The project also serves as a tool for implementing the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP/NEPAD) and the Regional Agricultural Investment Programme (RAIP), which seek to boost the productivity, production and income of agricultural value chains.

P2RS-1 The Gambia Project is consistent with the National Agricultural Investment Programme (GNIAP), which is further anchored on country's National Development Plan (NDP 2018-2021). It is also consistent with two strategic pillars retained under the 2012-2015 AfDB/World Bank Joint Assistance Strategy Paper, namely: (i) strengthening production capacity and competitiveness in order to enhance resilience to external shocks, and (ii) building institutional capacity to improve economic governance and public service delivery.

Over the past 2 years, implementation of P2RS-1 project in The Gambia has focused on addressing key issues of infrastructure and value chain/regional market development. The intervention in The Gambia has been undertaken in the Lower River, Central River/South, Central River/North and North Bank Regions of the country, albeit the project has its footprints in the West Coast Region when called upon by the Government. In partnership with key stakeholders, the project has made significant investments to promote resilience to food and nutrition insecurity in the intervention regions.

Coming thus far, an assessment of key project results point to significant progress in improving the lives and livelihoods of beneficiaries. There is no doubt that the project continues to address key livelihood challenges of beneficiaries across the country. We are extremely pleased to share this first edition of a series of short stories on selected project outcomes. The object is to provide relevant information on the advances of the project. The focus of outcome stories is designed to illustrate how the project is having direct effects on people's lives, with a personal touch that puts human faces to the data being collected and reported at project intervention communities.

I hope you will enjoy this story series and encourage you to share it with stakeholders engaged in rural and agricultural development.

BEEKEEPING: AN EFFECTIVE OPTION FOR PROMOTING INCOME DIVERSIFICATION, EMPLOYMENT AND RESILIENCE

Background

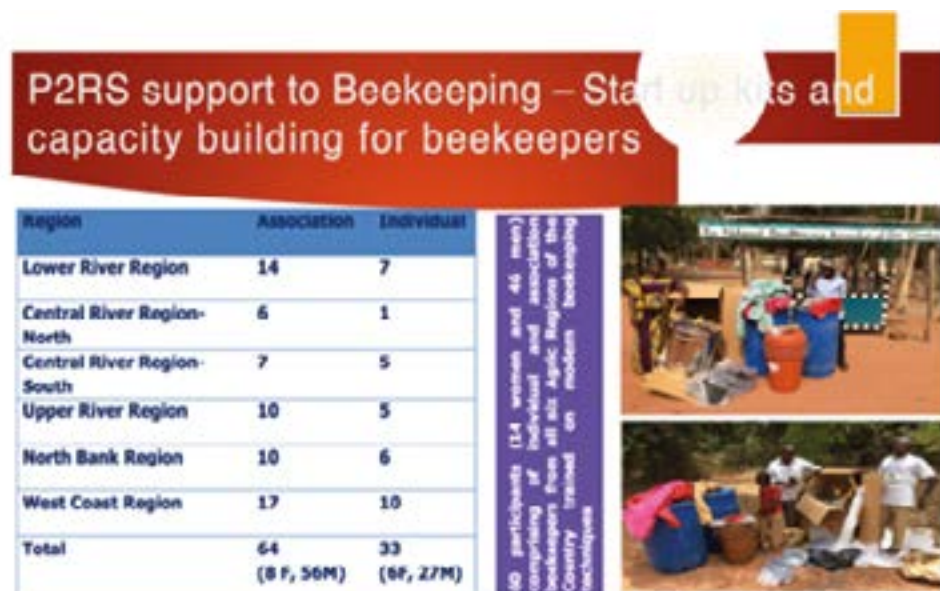
Income and revenue diversification is an important element of the overall strategy for strengthening resilience against food and nutrition insecurity of vulnerable populations. As rural populations continue to grapple with the challenges of climate change, alternative sources of revenue are needed to meet household and individual food and nutrition security needs.

Honeybees are exploited in all parts of The Gambia for economic, social and cultural reasons. Honey hunting is practiced predominantly by men who hunt bee colonies in their natural habitats. However, traditional methods of using fire to harvest colonies result in absconding and killing of bees with occasional causes of bushfires. These methods are generally unproductive and undermine opportunities for income diversification especially for low income earners in rural areas. Improved honey production practices will go a long way in providing employment and income generation opportunities for poor households that are often most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

P2RS: Supporting the modernization of beekeeping in The Gambia

Since 2017, P2RS is supporting the emergence of a modern and productive beekeeping sector with the ultimate goal of improving the socioeconomic status of rural and peri-urban populations through beekeeping. The initiative seeks to transform beekeeping from the traditional form of production to a modern production system through strengthening practical knowledge and capacities of actors. The initiative also seeks to improve skills of beekeepers in processing technology through value addition on beehive products.

Over the last 12 months, the initiative has benefitted a total of 60 beekeeping associations (of which 8 are female owned) and 33 individuals (6 females). All targeted beneficiaries have received startup kits and KTB (Kenyan Top Bar) beehives for the production, collection and processing of honey, whilst 60 beneficiaries (14 females) have received capacity building support.



Achievements and Effects

The beekeeping development support is emerging as a dynamic engine for income diversification and employment creation across multiple communities in rural and peri-urban areas of the country. With improved management, packaging and labelling, honey and related bee products are widely available in local Gambian markets and commercial outlets.

The case of Saikou is a good illustration of how support for income diversification and self-employment can contribute to building resilience against food and income insecurity for vulnerable groups. In 2017, Saikou benefitted from additional training and was able to access beehives and start-up kits/materials in the framework of the P2RS beekeeping development initiative. He is emphatic that this has been a life-changer for him and the other beneficiaries of the initiative.

In less than 2 years, he has evolved from a struggling beekeeper to a proud manager of a growing small-scale beekeeping enterprise. From his 'office' under tree, Saikou gets enthusiastic when discussions turn to how he has benefitted from his partnership with P2RS, providing detailed information on his honey production business and how he is generating revenue to support himself and his family.



In less than 1 year, 3 honey harvests of 10 litres each have enabled him to process and market up to 30 liters of honey at a market price of 250 dalasis per litre. Bee wax also provides good income for Saikou as he has since generated more than 10,000 dalasis from his operations in this short period. With his honey finding its way into local canteens and minimarkets, he says he can now cover his basic household financial needs and intends to expand his business. Saikou notes that the benefit of beekeeping goes beyond the sale of honey. Bees, he noted, support crop pollination and subsequently enhance crop yields. In addition to this, the improved beekeeping technique is helping to curtail destructive practices that often result in damage to the environment and frequent bush fires.

Lessons

- Beekeeping is a viable option for resilience building, employment creation and poverty reduction
- Capacity building and support are critical for modernization of beekeeping
- Increasing the population of bees can result to increased crop productivity and thereby promote resilience to climate change
- Beekeeping is an effective mechanism to reduce and prevent bush fires and deforestation.

Perspectives

- Strengthen capacity building to include field monitoring and support
- Support the established Beekeeping Platform to promote exchange and interaction among actors
- Support introduction of beekeeping for women in horticulture to increase crop yield quantity and quality and create opportunity for diversification

SMALL RUMINANT SCHEMES PROVIDE EFFECTIVE RESILIENCE OPTIONS FOR RURAL POOR WOMEN

Background /context

Gambian women make up 52% of the country's population and account for half of the national labor force. The majority of Gambian women live in rural areas, where agriculture is the principal source of livelihood. Rural women in The Gambia operate actively across all agricultural value chains, engaged in production, processing and marketing of agricultural products. In the livestock sector, they are the key actors of the small ruminant and poultry value chains. Poverty in rural Gambia is more prevalent among women, hence the emphasis of government and donors on gender inclusion for sustainable poverty reduction.

Small ruminants play a critical role in rural economies of the Gambia and are important for poverty alleviation. They are an important source of revenue for rural women and a major source of meat protein and organic fertilizer for poor rural households. Promoting sustainable small ruminant development will contribute directly to improving livelihoods of rural households. Since women are the key actors in small ruminant management, development of the sector contributes directly to building their resilience against food and nutrition insecurity.

Key Achievements and Effects

Since the launching of the initiative in 2017, small ruminant ownership is on the increase in the areas of project intervention. The project distributed 500 sheep and goats to beneficiaries in 2 batches, of which more than 180 off-springs are already realized and 59 are ready for redistribution to additional beneficiaries. Information below on total outreach show that communities, associations and individuals have all benefitted from the initiative.

Small ruminant scheme to build resilience among rural women

The P2RS small ruminant development scheme focuses on the distribution, maintenance and multiplication of sheep and goats in partnership with the Department of Livestock Services (DLS). Since 2017, the small ruminant scheme has benefitted **11 communities, 13 Group Associations and 62 individual small ruminant owners** across the four Regions of the project intervention: Upper River, North Bank, Central River/S and Central River/N. In collaboration with DLS, the project provides medication, veterinary services and monitoring support for the maintenance and multiplication of the animals. To enhance sustainability and increase outreach, off-springs of the distributed animals will be made available for redistribution to other beneficiaries (mainly women) across the country. The overall strategy of redistributing off-springs to new beneficiaries will increase the small ruminant stock as well extend overall project outreach.

500 Sheep and Goats distributed to: 11 communities



Women of Group Jubo at Gallleh Manda (CRR/S) pictured above are going through life-changing experiences as a result of their participation in the small ruminant scheme. They proudly make reference to key effects such as:

- Increased household food supply
- Additional incomes from the sale of milk
- Less reliance on men to cover their basic needs: clothing, medication, etc.
- Ability to pay school fees and buy books for children

Lessons

- Small ruminants provide viable options for resilience to food and nutrition insecurity especially for rural women
- P2RS support is increasing indigenous stock of small ruminants and promoting household income security in the Gambia
- Targeting rural women for the scheme is a sure way of creating incomes and reducing household poverty

Perspectives

- Consolidation by increasing investment in the small ruminants schemes
- Support access to feed and water
- Provide beneficiaries with capacity building support to strengthen management of upstream value chain and upkeep of the animals

ACCESS TO QUALITY RICE SEED IS A SURE WAY TO ACHIEVE INCREASED RICE PRODUCTION AND PRODUCTIVITY IN THE GAMBIA

Background /context

Agriculture is the backbone of Gambia's rural economy and the principal determinant of food and nutrition security for the country's rural population. Over 70% of the country's population is dependent on agriculture for food and income. Crop production is the main agricultural activity, followed by livestock, fisheries and forestry respectively. Despite its socioeconomic importance, agriculture continues to lag behind other sectors in productivity, growth and commercialization.

The major food and cash crops in the country are millet, sorghum, maize, rice and groundnuts. Rice is the staple food of the country, with a per capita consumption of 117Kg per year. Local production accounts for only 17% of the country's consumption needs. The crop is produced principally by women farmers in rural areas, with cultivation characterized by low yields due largely to the use of poor quality seed, low soil fertility, limited access to production inputs and the effects of climate change among others.



Foundation Seed Production: National Seed Secretariat field

Making Quality Seed Available to Rice Farmers

In partnership with the National Seed Secretariat (NSS), P2RS is supporting a nationwide initiative to promote access to and use of good quality seed of key crops (rice, maize and groundnuts) as a mechanism for improving productivity and increasing the overall domestic supply of these important crops.

The quality rice seed initiative seeks to ensure access to high quality seed for rice farmers in the country. The initiative targeted the production of 60 tons of foundation seed of the main rice varieties (Sahel 134, WAB105, IET3137 and IR19746) for distribution to certified seed growers in the North Bank, Central River/South and West Coast Regions. Certified seed produced by the out-growers would then be made available to rice farmers across the 6 agricultural regions. The NSS had responsibility for the production of foundation seed as well as supervision of certified seed production.



Photo 2: Certified rice seed, ready for distribution to farmers

P2RS then implemented a seed buy-back scheme for the purchase and redistribution by DoA of certified seed to rice farmers across the country.

Achievements and Effects

In 2017, the project supported the production and distribution of more than 117 tons of certified rice seed to farmers, enough to cover more than 2000 hectares of rice-land across the country. This translates into more than 4500 farmers and farm households engaged in rice production accessing quality seed for operations. The associated productivity gains from this will have direct positive effects on overall production. By doubling their yields from 2.5 to an average of 5.5 tons per hectare, rice seed growers and farmers who benefitted from this initiative are reporting significant changes in their lives. The story of Bamba Sanneh below, Secretary General of the Seed Producers Cooperative in the Central River Region/South illustrates how P2RS intervention is changing lives.

The Story of Bamba Sanneh, Secretary General of the CRR/S Seed Growers Cooperative

Bamba Sanneh is a rice farmer located in Wellingara in CRR/S. He has been a farmer all his life, engaged in the production of rice as the principal source of household food and income. Prior to his involvement with the certified seed production initiative, Mr. Sanneh's farming experience was characterized by: subsistence production, low yields and household food insufficiency.

Since benefiting from training and follow-up support in certified seed production, Mr. Sanneh has recorded a dramatic transformation in his life and the livelihoods of his household. In less than 2 years, a motor-cycle has replaced his donkey-cart as his principal means of transportation. What is more important to him, however, is that he is now constructing a new cement block house with proceeds from certified seed production and sales under the P2RS buy-back scheme. He indicated that 'new houses are mushrooming in areas where members of his cooperative used to live in thatched roof homes.

The story of Bamba illustrates how P2RS is changing lives in rural Gambia through support for increased access to certified rice seed. As he noted, 'this is not an isolated story in the region'. Thousands of rice farmers will continue to see their lives transformed for the better with initiatives like this that focus on improving the productivity of their key agricultural systems

Lessons

- Access to quality seed is one of the foundations for increasing agricultural productivity and production
- A structured national seed system with mechanisms for making foundation seed available and supporting the production of certified seed is a win-win for seed-growers and farmers
- At the initial phase, an effective buy-back scheme is required to ensure that certified seed produced by seed growers are available to farmers. The sustainability of this will however depend on the capacity to put in place the mechanism and environment for beneficiary ownership of the process.

Perspectives

- Support for involvement of research in the provision of breeder seed of climate resilient varieties and adoption of climate smart agriculture
- Engagement of seed producer cooperatives across the country
- Linking farmers to certified seed outlets

FOOD PROCESSING AND PRESERVATION PROMOTES RESILIENCE TO FOOD AND NUTRITION INSECURITY FOR GAMBIAN WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Background /context

Post-harvest losses due to inadequate processing and preservation are major causes of food and nutrition insecurity in the Gambia. Data from a recent assessment by the Directorate of Agriculture (DoA) estimate post-harvest losses for key crops across the country to range from 25 to 50%. Combined with persistent low yields and productivity for these crops, this is major food and nutrition challenge for the country. Addressing this problem will contribute significantly to enhancing resilience to food and nutrition insecurity in The Gambia. As noted by the Director of the Food Technology Services (FTS)

'Improving food processing and preservation is a principal mechanism for enhancing access to high quality food as well as improving food and nutrition security for poor rural households in The Gambia'.

Achievements and Effects

More than 350 individuals and associations engaged in food processing and preservation have benefitted from support over the last two years.

Since early 2017, P2RS support in food processing has reached more than 350 beneficiaries, including 20 food processing associations across the country. **Ninety-five percent** of the beneficiaries of this initiative are women.

Local food processors that benefitted directly from the initiative include: Jewshwang Women's Fruits and Vegetables Processing Centre, Bafrow Food Processing Center at Mandinaba, Jal's Healthy Foods, REFESA Food Processing Association at Farato, Brikama Zone Food Processors Association, Ndey's Exotic Food Products and Sahel's Food Enterprise

P2RS investment in food processing and preservation

In 2017, P2RS partnered with FTS to launch a 4.3 million Dalasi or a little over US\$92,000 initiative on the processing and preservation of local agricultural products. The overall strategy focuses on strengthening the capacities of actors in post-harvest processing and value addition for the key crops. The initiative seeks to address and minimize protein-energy malnutrition and micro-nutrient deficiency among vulnerable infants and children by supporting training in baby-food formulation using local cereals and products.

The key beneficiaries of the initiative are women food processors (associations and individuals) in the 4 regions of project intervention: NBR, CRR/S, CRR/N and URR. Over the past 18 months, FTS has conducted multiple training workshops for individuals and groups engaged in food processing and preservation at the project intervention sites.

The initiative has had significant effects on the livelihoods and socio-economic situations of the women working with and managing these businesses. Improved capacities in food processing and baby-food formulation techniques have resulted in employment and income generation opportunities for them across the country.

This is illustrated by the case of Aja Binta Jaiteh of the REFESA Food Processing Group, a principal beneficiary of the P2RS intervention to strengthen capacities in food processing and preservation.

Aji Binta Jaiteh, President of REFESA food processing group:

Aja Binta Jaiteh is the president of the REFESA Food Processing Group, specializing in the processing of cereals and formulation of baby-food. She notes that access to high quality baby-food is especially important to their community given the high cost of imported baby food. Aja Binta Jaiteh participated in a Training of Trainers' (TOT) programme in baby-food formulation organized by FTS with support from P2RS in 2017 and has provided step-down training to other members of her group.



She emphasizes the significant increase in the demand for their products as a major benefit of this intervention: High demand for our products, increased access to markets and affordability of baby-food have resulted in increased incomes for our group members.



Photo of processed food in local canteen

Other beneficiaries cited improved nutrition and access to markets as key outcomes of the P2RS intervention in their zones:

Mrs. Mariatou Mass, Brikama Darsilami

The availability of locally processed foodstuff now means increased access to high quality food and improved nutrition for women and children. In addition to this, our ability to process, package and label our products means increased market access, employment opportunities and better prices for us.

Mrs. Yassin Jah Mbaye (Jal Healthy Foods)

Since my training under this initiative, I now supply processed food to food outlets and canteens such as Heewal Mini-market in Kanifing. My customers also include personnel of the MRC at Fajara and the FAO Office on Kairaba Avenue. With good packaging and labeling, I have greater access to markets and sell my products easily.

Lessons

- Market exists for locally produced foods in The Gambia
- Packaging and labeling can drive market opportunities
- Capacity building is a critical driver of change and development

Perspectives

- Consolidation of training to strengthen skills in processing, packaging and marketing
- Access to appropriate processing and packaging infrastructure and equipment
- Explore market expansion opportunities

INCREASED ACCESS TO WATERING FACILITIES CONTRIBUTING TO IMPROVED LIVESTOCK PRODUCTIVITY AND INCREASED RESILIENCE TO HOUSEHOLD FOOD AND INCOME INSECURITY

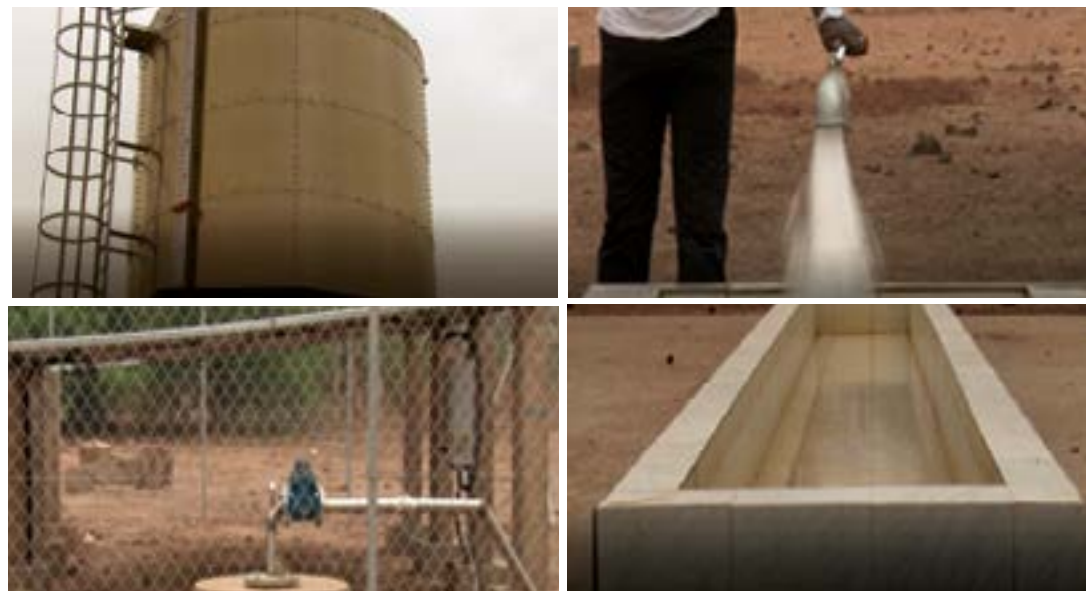
The livestock sector is an important pillar of the Gambia's economy. It contributes an estimated 25% of the country's annual agricultural gross domestic product (GDP) and up to 5% of national GDP. The sector is becoming increasingly important as a source of revenue, employment and household capital in rural areas. The cattle population in the country is estimated at 292,835, whilst the populations for small ruminants are estimated at 172,662 and 328,336 for sheep and goats, respectively. The poultry population in 2016 was 937,951 chicken in the country, of which 95% is managed under traditional husbandry.

A major challenge for the development and modernisation of the livestock sector remains the prevalence traditional husbandry practices, characterized by very limited or no use of improved feed and limited access to drinking water during the long dry season. The low productivity associated with this continues to undermine the overall performance of the sector.

Livestock keepers and owners encounter serious challenges in accessing water for their animals during long periods of the year. According to the 2016 livestock census 64.8 percent of herd owners report that they use ponds as main source of water for their animals during the rainy season. The situation is different to what obtains in the dry season with 59.7% of keepers reporting that their cattle received water from wells, and, 11.9%, 10.%, 9.6% and 7.8% use river, swamp, borehole and ponds, respectively. Addressing the problem of limited access to water during the long dry season that prevails in the Sahel will contribute significantly to improving livestock productivity and its contribution to household food and nutrition security in the region.

P2RS Project provides watering facilities for livestock in The Gambia

The project is easing these challenges by providing drinking points for livestock watering across the four intervention regions: Sika and Medina Sering Mass in NBR, Yero Beri Kunda in CRRS, Ballanghar Kerr Nderie in CRRN and Sinchu Musa in URR. Each drinking point is provided a borehole with accessories, solar power and drinking troughs (tiled), which are placed on a concrete platform, as well as a stand pipe for domestic use. This intervention is aimed at improving access to water for livestock and livestock owners, reducing livestock migration and mortality due to lack of water, increasing income and employment opportunities and improved household nutrition security..



Key Achievements and Effects

Construction and installation works have been completed and the watering facilities are fully operational and being utilised. The investment is currently benefitting up to 228,818 heads of cattle, sheep and goats across the project's four intervention regions.

The narratives by Lamin Sidibeh, Senior Livestock Assistant in posted at YBK in CRRS and Ebrima Jallow, National President of the National Livestock Owners Association (NaLoA), illustrate how significantly the livestock drinking facilities are strengthening the resilience of livestock owners and animals in rural Gambia.



Lamin Sidibeh DLS:

Having a water drinking point in CRRS is very vital..., there are certain periods of the year when feed and water for the animals are very difficult to find here. The facility will benefit not just cattle in this camp, but also livestock farmers and animals in the surrounding villages (more than 8 villages), including donkeys and small ruminants. Livestock population which will have direct access to this drinking point is more than 800 cattle, more than 150 donkeys and over 500 small ruminants. Horses too come by this point to drink.



Ebrima O. Jallow, NaLoA

Livestock rearing is hinged on two key factors: feed and water. Livestock development cannot progress in the absence of feed and water. Up to 38000 herds leave this country annually into Senegal in search of feed and water. Crop production is seasonal and we have seen that bumper harvests are no longer guaranteed. Livestock rearing is all year round and this provides a better resilience option than crop production. Women livestock owners benefit from increased income and women are better care givers at home, engaging in livestock can provide for household food and nutrition security needs. We applaud the P2RS project for intervening in this area and we urge the project to provide more drinking points to further improve animal access to water.

Lessons

- Water is critical for development of the livestock sector
- Land ownership certificates for the land allocated for livestock drinking points are necessary for sustained access to the facility
- Management of conflict between and among users is a recipe for sustainability of the facility

Perspectives

- Consolidation, provide more drinking points
- Optimal utilization and management of the facility
- Sustainability of the facilities



P2RS (Project 1 - Gambia) in Images



P2RS (Project 1 - Gambia) in Images



