

Overall information about the project

Project number 300009155	Project name Upper Fulladou women for change	Project type Small grant level 1
Responsible organization Swedish association for economical liberation in the Gambia	Implementing organization(s) Sololo Tabokoto Kankiling Kafoo	Countries / Regions Gambia
Project start date 01/01/2021	Project end date 31/12/2021	Final report date 15/08/2022
Requested grant 267,000	Approved grant 264,000	Currency SEK

Summary

Swedish association for economical liberation in the Gambia (SvEO) and Sololo Tabokoto Kankiling Kafoo, a local womens organisation, in upper Fulladou district (LEO) plan to implement a project in the Upper Fulladou district in eastern Gambia, with activities in Bansang. Bansang is located in Central River Division, 210 km east of Banjul. The project will last between 01/01/2021 and 31/12/2021.

The project goal is that the targeted women rights-holders are well informed on how to influence and participate in public decision-making processes at local level, and through increased knowledge and application of the same, the women rights-holders have developed strategies and tactics to reach their goals. The target group is 150 people, of which 140 are women and 10 are men living in Upper Fulladou. Of the 140 women, 100 are from the partner organisation and 40 from five collaborating women's groups in Upper Fulladou. Of the 140 women, 20 are board members / project leaders, of which 15 are from the partner organisation and the other 5 are one from each of the five collaborating women's groups. Of the 10 men, 5 are from the partner organisation and 5 are one from each of the 5 collaborating women's groups. The partners also expect the participation of some resource persons from other civil society organizations in the seminars, workshops and study circle activities.

The sub-goals are that (1) women have learned to demand for measures and reforms that aim to improve their lives, and create their own income generating opportunities to decrease their poverty, creating conditions for a more active citizenship; (2) women know how public and political representatives are elected at different levels in society and have learned more about different options for organizing, and have started to nominate and/or elect their own representatives; (3) women are aware of the importance of strategic networking and how to search for the information they need; and (3) the board and the project management group in the partner organization have developed management and administrative skills and have capacities to fulfill their responsibilities within the project on equal terms with the Swedish partner, and the partner organisation has learned to be a learning organisation.

In the Upper Fulladou district, where Bansang is the main town, there is only one woman in the local village development council. Women's representation in local, regional and national political bodies is extremely low. Women suffer more from poverty than men, they have less contacts outside the village and travel less and have less education, and now, when The Gambia is building democracy after 20 year of autocracy, women want to demand their right to learn and participate in building society.

The partners will use popular education as a main method to achieve their goals. They will arrange seminars/workshops and provide education about the methodology of study circles for achieving change (identify, analyse, solve, evaluate). They will train study circle leaders to help them create their own plans for the different tasks they need to work with within three areas: poverty eradication, representation and networking/opinion building. The other component of the project is developing LEOs administrative, financial and project management capacity through trainings.

Self-evaluation will be used in each study circle/working group as part of learning. All activities will be documented. Monitoring and evaluation will be done through looking at questionnaires, documented evaluations, documented plans, participation lists, study circle plans, self-evaluations, business plans, strategy plans, follow-up reports, and other sources of documentation. Each sub goal will have an evaluation workshop towards the end of the project; all who have participated will be invited. At the end of the project, the partners will organize an open seminar on what they have learned in the project about women empowerment and the way forward, for the organisations as well as participants. LEOs project-leading group will evaluate the project process and continuously make follow-ups on the project-plan and budget and will share this documentation with the Swedish organisation regularly. An external auditor will be contacted to be able to make a consultation check-up after the first quarter and point out any problems to solve together, as well as another auditor for the final auditing at the end of the project.

Target groups

Primary target groups

Adults
Target group size women: 145
Target group size men: 5
Target group size total: 150

Secondary target groups

Adults
Target group size women: 760
Target group size men: 140
Target group size total: 900

ForumCiv's objectives

ForumCiv finds that the project aims to contribute to the result model for Development Co-operation used by ForumCiv in the following:

Goals

- A.2 Strengthened thematic/strategic capacity
- A.3 Increased administrative capacity
- A.4 Increased networking/new forums
- B.1 Changed attitudes/self-image
- B.2 Increased capacity to claim rights/changed behaviour
- B.3 Increased participation in democratic processes/decisions
- C.1 Changed attitudes

Profile markers

Gender: Principal

Relation to other projects

This project application is based on a pre-study (300007981) that the partners reported on in the spring of 2019. They do not have any other applications, on-going project or reports.

Relevance

The intervention is relevant for the agreement strategy/result model

The intervention meets requirements for ForumCiv's profile issues

The intervention meets requirements for ForumCiv's context-dependent issues

Overall, this project aims to strengthen the capacity of women to influence and participate in public decision-making processes at a local level through different means, and to develop LEOs capacity in project management and administration. In summary, target group is women and men living in communities located in Upper Fulladou, which includes LEO's members, board, and project management group; and members of local women's groups.

This project is based on a pre-study that was implemented in 2018, during which problem and goal trees were developed and shared with the Swedish Partnership Program (SPP). The pre-study final report highlights a need to address poverty, representation, networking and organizational development for women. These topics are assessed to be directly linked to the focus of this project application.

SPP finds that this application fulfils the program criteria in that it aims to strengthen the local civil society by developing technical skills and fostering cooperation between women's groups; raising awareness among women about their rights and facilitating their mobilization to achieve change; and initiating dialogue with local duty bearers.

This project focuses more on mobilization and opinion building, as the initiative is in its beginning stages. The partners are nonetheless encouraged to use the project year as an opportunity to start discussing the possibility of further developing advocacy towards duty bearers. As stated above, this application is based on a pre-study implemented in 2018. After having received the pre-study final report, SPP was concerned with the extent to which this local partner organization would have ownership over the upcoming project, since the pre-study was initially planned together with another organization (Walda) which could not implement the pre-study in the end. The Swedish organization instead implemented the pre-study with this current partner organization which was introduced to the Swedish organization through the former partner organization (Walda). The pre-study final report states that:

"The new LEO knew about the activities discussed and planned in Wulli together with Walda and we were able to continue developing our idea together with the new LEO without delay. The work we carried out together with Sololo Tabokoto Kankiling Kafoo was a success. They understand the need for education to change their situation and they are eager to cooperate and participate in popular education activities, learn and take responsibility."

Whilst it is positive that a new partnership has formed, there was still a need for information about the current partner organization's role in further developing the idea and its leadership in the initiative. This project application provides further information, which leads SPP to assess that there are good possibilities for the partner organization's ownership of the project. This assessment is based on the description provided in the project application, of the planning process together with this new partner organization:

"At our first meeting we concentrated our discussions on our two organizations - situation, goals, strengths and weaknesses - to learn more about each other and our possibilities to work together. From SvEO we were 4 people and from LEO 16 [...] On December 8 LEO had invited interested members to an LFA-workshop. While planning the workshop we, SvEO, estimated the number of participants to 20-30, but 60 people came and participated the whole day. We described what we mean by a rights-based project. And together we produced a problem-tree and discussed study circles as a method for change. The following day the board of LEO and SvEO participated in transforming the problem tree into a goal tree. We discussed subsequent steps in the planning process, and we talked about what is required by the two organizations to be able to share the responsibility for an upcoming project."

As stated above, 60 members (women) from the partner organization participated in the planning. It is highly positive that there is a high engagement from the organisation's membership base, which is also a target group for this project. Based on the monitoring and evaluation plan described in the application, the target group is assessed as also having an active role in the monitoring and evaluation of the activities.

Effectiveness

Either intervention goal/objective or all sub-goals/outcomes are specific (S in SMART – is it clear who is targeted by what change?)

Yes

Partly

No

Set goals/objectives are assessed as

Likely to achieve

Partly likely to achieve

Not likely to achieve

The intervention has a baseline of sufficient quality as to allow follow-up (Does it give an accurate description of the situation against which progress can be assessed or comparisons made?)

Yes

Partly

No

The goal and risk matrix provides a clear presentation of what the partners intend to achieve and the methods they will employ. In short, the project goal is to strengthen the capacity for women to take part and influence decision-making processes at a local level and to work strategically to reach their goals. The sub-goals aim to strengthen accountability actions, income generating opportunities, increase the number of female political representatives, strengthen networking and access to information, and strengthen the partner organisation's administrative and project management capacity (including in bookkeeping and financial management). The primary methods used are study circles (for women empowerment), seminars (to strengthen the partner organisations capacity), and contact with various key stakeholders. This plan is assessed as being reasonable for a one-year project, as it focuses on raising awareness, strengthening capacity, and developing plans for ways forward.

The study circles are based on a model called 'Find, Analyse, Solve Evaluate' and are assessed as being very action oriented; throughout the study circle sessions participants will take part in learning and will develop strategies for achieving change. To ensure relevance and local ownership of the method, the material should be developed together with the partner organisation, even if the Swedish organisation is highly knowledgeable about the context.

The educational seminars are aimed at 15 members of the project leading group within the partner organisation to strengthen their administrative and project management capacity, whilst the open evaluation seminar is for 150 of the partner organisation's members to discuss ways forward for empowering women. The areas for capacity development are assessed as being relevant. The Swedish organisation has upon request clarified that a Swedish expert living partially in The Gambia will provide the capacity development within project administration, whilst SvEOs chairperson (project manager in this project) will train the study circle leaders in the study circle methodology and its content.

The pre-study final report and the application outline key persons for obtaining important information, potential allies and entry-points for advocacy; these include for instance other local and international civil society organisations, the chairperson of the women's committee in the parliament, members of the national assembly, and a member of the national TANGO network. These contacts are assessed as increasing the effectiveness of the initiative.

Overall, the methodology is clear. The Swedish organisation has upon request provided more information about the extent to which men would be involved and in what way; some men who are already actively supporting the women's group will be invited to the study circle leader education, but not the study circle sessions. As this is the first jointly implemented project by the partners, SPP recommends developing a strategy or more clear approach for men's role in the initiative.

In regards to the technicalities of the goal and risk matrix, the goals are assessed as being clear, measurable and achievable – with some reservation for sub-goal 1, which states that the women have created income-generating opportunities; this may be challenging to achieve within just a one-year project. Both the project goal and the sub-goals were assessed to have corresponding indicators that allow for a solid follow-up, except for sub-goal 4; sub-goal 4 was initially assessed to be missing proper indicators to follow-up the progress and outcome of the capacity development within administration and project management. This was then addressed by the Swedish organisation. When combining the activities outlined in the matrix and the information provided in the application about the content of the study circles, SPP assesses that there is a logical chain between the activities and project aims. The Swedish organisation has upon request added more detail to the target group information for the project goal.

The context analysis is assessed as containing enough information to understand the need for this initiative. The partners appear to know the context very well, including opportunities for achieving change and key political actors.

Cost effectiveness

The intervention is assessed as

Cost-effective

Not cost-effective

Not assessable

The Swedish partner has submitted a budget that is within the maximum amount the organisation can currently apply for within the grant ladder. However, when removing the own contribution of 5% (which is not required in 2021), the total granted amount exceeded the maximum amount of 270 000 SEK – becoming 281 000 SEK. SvEO was therefore asked to either keep the own contribution at 5% or to reduce the budget with 14 000 SEK. The Swedish organisation's decision is to keep the own contribution.

SPP expressed concern that it appeared as though there were no salaries or remunerations for project staff in The Gambia and that the project relied only on volunteers. The Swedish organisation then clarified that these costs are incorporated into the sub-goal budget lines. To

increase transparency and facilitate follow-up of the budget, the Swedish organisation has upon request created separate budget lines for the partner organisation's combined office costs; the partner organisation's combined costs for purchasing equipment; the combined local allowances; the combined allowances for the Swedish organisation; the audit in Sweden; and for audit in The Gambia. SPP has also separated the budget line for the Swedish organisation's travels to The Gambia from the costs associated with the two organisations joint meetings; removed 1000 SEK from the budget allocated to a buffer for equipment from Sweden, as such open-ended budget items cannot be financed within this grant; and has reduced the administration grant with 2000 SEK to ensure it is within the maximum 8%.

With the budget adjustments and clarified detailed budget, SPP assesses the budget to be clear and to contain reasonable costs. According to SPP's budget policy, partners are granted a maximum for 30 000 SEK for one trip to the country in which the project is being implemented, lasting a maximum of 14 days. For this project, the Swedish organisation has requested 29 000 SEK for one of the project leaders to travel to The Gambia on two occasions – for the project start-up and for the project closing. Given that the partner organisation has not previously implemented a project of this nature, and the project leader's expertise in study circle methodology and teaching, an exception can be made for this project. This may however not be granted in the future, as the partner organisation should assume leadership for the project implementation. In a separate budget line, the Swedish organisation has included 9000 SEK in remuneration for providing expertise and for project management (260 SEK per day). SPP finds this cost to be motivated for the same reasons as above.

For the project activities the partners plan to purchase 4 tables and cabinets, 50 chairs, 10 prepaid cards for phone use, 10 smartphones, 1 amplifier, 1 cable, 1 microphone, 2 speakers, 1 overhead projector, print paper sheets, 2 print cartridges, 1 printer, 5 USB sticks, 1 laptop, and Wi-Fi equipment and fees.

Originally, the total for the 10 smart phones (allocated for study circle leaders) was 20 000 SEK. SPP found this amount to be high and asked the Swedish organisation to reevaluate this cost based on prices for purchasing phones in The Gambia. As a result, the amount was halved to 10 000 SEK. With this adjustment SPP finds the equipment purchases to be relevant and reasonably priced. Study circle leaders need to be able to communicate through social media apps such as WhatsApp, and the remaining equipment is needed for office work and for the seminars, presentations, and meetings. It is important that there is a transparent documentation of how the equipment is handled by the project end. If the equipment remains with the partner organisation, this should be well documented through a deed of transfer. SPP should be notified of how the partners wish to manage the equipment by the end of the project.

Printing introductory study material for the study circles in The Gambia is assessed as being cost effective, as opposed to importing the material from abroad. The remaining material for the study circle will be presented digitally, which is more environmentally friendly and flexible. The total estimated cost for the printing and recording of material is 7600 SEK, which is incorporated in the budget line 'LEO office costs'.

The Swedish organisation has upon request stated that the budget has been estimated based on the exchange rate 0.2000 SEK = 1 GMD. Based on current and historical SPP assesses this rate as being reasonable.

Sustainability

Planned effects are likely to be

Sustainable

Sustainable with conditions

Not sustainable

This project is assessed as having many factors contributing to sustainability and increasing the likelihood of structural changes. Some examples of this is strengthening the capacity for women to claim their rights and partake in decision-making at local level by providing information, resources and concrete tools for action; creating strategic plans for achieving changes; working to increase the number of women being nominated and elected for political assignments; and strengthening the local networking of civil society. In addition to this, participants in one of the study circles will contact the local village development committee to discuss the need and possibilities for increasing the number of women in the committee; changing the composition of the committees is a form of structural change at the duty-bearer level. Village development committees exist throughout The Gambia and are a form of community governance and entry point for development questions for a given area; the committees are composed of community members and are also part of the official local governance system.

Although it is mostly the partner organisations members that are participating in the study circles, SPP assesses that the outcomes of the project activities will have a broader affect and benefit women that weren't directly part of the activities.

In this one-year project, the partners are focusing on awareness raising, capacity development, and the drafting of strategic plans. This is assessed as being appropriate and highly needed for this new project.

As was touched upon earlier on in this assessment, it is important to continue strengthening the partner organisations leadership role in the initiative, particularly regarding strategic short- and long-term planning and in developing educational material. In this project, there will be some support from a coordinator that is external to the partner organisation, with which the Swedish organisation has cooperated with. However, in the future, the project administration and coordination should be able to be managed solely by the partner organisation. SPP is particularly interested in following up on the development of the partnership of the Swedish organisation and the partner organisation, as it is new.

Swedish partner's added value

The Swedish organisation contributes with the knowledge and experience of popular education both in Sweden and abroad, and knowledge of organising, producing study materials and plans as well as educating leaders and organisations to make use of popular education as a tool for democratic change. The organisation has long experience of working with gender equality issues both at work and in non-profit organisations, and knowledge and experience of practical political work at municipal and county council level. Lastly, the organisation has experiences from earlier development projects and a wide network of other actors.

Coordination

There are no other stated donors for this project.

Feasibility

The intervention is assessed as

Feasible

Feasible with risks

Not feasible

Both organisations have important skills and experiences which contribute to the likelihood of success for the project. The Swedish organisation is an expert in study circle methodology and is knowledgeable about the Gambian context, and the partner organisation is composed of women who are from the area in which the project is being implemented and understand and live the challenges being addressed in the project. Both organisations also appear to have a deep understanding of the local and national political systems and mechanisms for increasing political representation for women and who to target for lobbying. Another external factor contributing to the feasibility of the project is the change in government which took place a few years ago and which has opened for political dialogue between the civil society and the local and national governments. The project is based on a thorough pre-study, during which both organisations analysed the root causes of the problems and ways in which these could begin to be addressed in this project.

Whilst there are many important positive factors that contribute to feasibility of the project, there are risks associated with the fact that it is the first time the partner organisation is responsible for implementing a project of this nature with foreign funding. Ways in which this risk will be managed by SPP is outlined in the next section.

Another important factor is COVID-19. Based on the current restrictions in the country, the project can be implemented. If restrictions are implemented again by the start of the project, the partners will postpone gatherings until later in the process. SPP finds this satisfactory, given that the government lifted the restrictions during the summer this year. However, there is still a need to minimize the risk of contagion, regardless of restrictions. The Swedish organisation has upon request explained how the project activities will be adapted to minimize the risk for contagion; all participants in larger meetings will be given soap and a washable facemask that locally produced, a sufficient amount of buckets with taps and soap will be available for all meetings (to avoid queues), activities will be arranged outside as much as possible, when activities are held indoors distance will be kept, and loudspeakers will be rented. The Swedish organisation has also ensured that these costs have been incorporated in the budget. SPP finds this to be a responsible and appropriate approach to minimize contagion and to support local businesses.

SPP's understanding of the division of roles is that the partner organisation is implementing the activities, with support from the Swedish organisation and the local coordinator. The Swedish organisation is responsible for communicating and reporting to SPP and ensuring agreement compliance and leading the development of the study circle material; as highlighted earlier, it is important that this material is developed together with the partner organisation. Both the Swedish organisation and the partner organisation, respectively, have project management groups consisting of one person with operational responsibility, one person with administration responsibility, and one person with financial responsibility. The boards will decide the limits of the decisions the groups can take and on which occasions the board must be consulted. Overall, this is assessed by SPP as being a straightforward structure. However, there should be more than one person managing the finances for the project on both ends, as the agreement with ForumCiv requires two authorized signatories for managing the grant funds.

ForumCiv's risk management

The intervention context is

Not applicable

Conflict

Post conflict

Partly conflict / post-conflict (only applicable for PCO)

The intervention is assessed as having unacceptable risks associated with inadequate risk management capacity – intervention context

Yes

No

Not applicable

The intervention is assessed as having unacceptable risks associated with inadequate risk management capacity – thematic areas/ profile issues

Yes

No

Not applicable

The intervention is assessed as having unacceptable risks associated with agreement partner's capacity

Yes

No

Not applicable

The intervention is assessed as having unacceptable risks associated with inadequate risk management capacity – corruption

Yes

No

Not applicable

The matrix outlines internal and external risks associated with the project. SPP's analysis is that the relevant risks which may have the most impact are the low experience of the partner organisation in managing this type of project and possible restrictions or infection risks associated with COVID-19.

Given that it is the first time the partner organisations partakes in a development cooperation of this nature, it is important that the Swedish organisation assumes full responsibility for compliance and thoroughly explains all the parts of the agreement to the partner organisation, and provides support with agreement compliance. Capacity development in project management, administration and financial management is very relevant. The Swedish organisation is encouraged to frequently check in with the partner organisation to follow-up on and provide support with the financial management and agreement compliance. In addition to this, it is important that the partners develop an anti-corruption policy and plans tailored to context and the daily challenges of both partner organisations.

The applications states that the local auditor will in the beginning of the project develop the capacity of the project leaders in project finances. SPP assessed that it should not be the same auditor providing the capacity development and also conducting the formal audit at the end of the project, as this could compromise objectivity. The Swedish organisation has therefore agreed that two different auditors would be used.

The partners are recommended to during the course of this project develop their risk analyses in regard to potential backlash against women and COVID-19, and to follow up on the risks they have already outlined.

Recommendation

The Swedish organisation is encouraged to frequently check in with the partner organisation to follow-up on and provide support with the financial management and agreement compliance. The study circle material should be developed by the Swedish and partner organization together.

Decision

Granted

Granted with conditions

Rejected

SPP approves this application as it is fulfils the necessary program criteria and forms a good basis for a long-term rights-based initiative.

The start date has been changed from 01/12/2020 to 01/01/2021 and the end date has been changed from 31/01/2022 to 31/12/2021. This is because the funds cannot be disbursed already in December 2020 by SPP.

The following are important considerations that have been lifted in the assessment:

-It should not be the same auditor providing the capacity development in the beginning of the project and also conducting the formal audit at the end of the project.

-It is important that the partners develop an anti-corruption policy and plans tailored to context and the daily challenges of both partner organisations – in the beginning of the project.

-SPP should be notified of how the partners wish to manage the purchased equipment, by the end of the project.

-There should be more than one person managing the finances for the project on both ends, as the agreement with ForumCiv requires two authorized signatories for managing the grant funds