

**CHILD AND ENVIRONMENTAL  
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION THE GAMBIA**

USER

**2021**

**ANNUAL  
REPORT**



# Acknowledgements

This 2021 achievements could have not been possible without the support of the following technical and Financial partners and we must say thank you;

- INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SERVICE- WEST AFRICA
- ANPAS – ASSOCIAZIONE NAZIONALE PUBBLICHE ASSISTENZE
- COOPI
- CROSSROAD SHIPMENT
- SAVE THE CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL
- OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
- UNICEF-THE GAMBIA
- FABRRADER FUR AFRIKA V.
- SASLONG FOUNDATION
- CONSORTIUM FOR STREET CHILDREN UK
- Ministry for Gender, Children and Social Welfare
- Child Welfare Unit- Gambia Immigration Department
- Child welfare Unit- Gambia Police
- National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons

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## **1 ACRONYMS**

<b>ANPAS</b>	Associazione Nazionale Pubbliche Assistenze
<b>CEDAG</b>	Child and Environmental Development Association- The Gambia
<b>CCPCs</b>	Community Child Protection Committees
<b>CSC</b>	Consortium for Street Children
<b>CoM</b>	Children on the Move
<b>CWCY</b>	Coordination of Working Children and Youths
<b>CSOs</b>	Civil Society Organizations
<b>CPA</b>	Child Protection Alliance
<b>ICSCATS</b>	International Centre for Street Children and trafficking Studies
<b>DSW</b>	Department of Social Welfare
<b>IEC</b>	Information, Education and Communication
<b>ISS-WA</b>	International Social Service- West Africa
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NAATIP</b>	National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons
<b>GID</b>	Gambia Immigration Department
<b>GPF</b>	Gambia Police Force
<b>PAO</b>	Programme for West Africa
<b>TANGO</b>	The Association of Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>WAN</b>	West Africa Network for the protection of children

## 2 Statement by the Board Chairman—OMAR SEY

Dear friends, let me start the year 2021 annual report by reflecting a little on what happened in 2020. It has been described in many ways, some say it was a year of hell, some said it was a trail period. But it is difficult to encapsulate such a complex year in a word, but togetherness is one word which might be added to the mix. Really COVID-19 disproportionately impacted the disadvantaged and vulnerable especially vulnerable children and their families.

As Chairman of the governing Board of CEDAG, and together with my fellow Board Members, our role is to ensure the essential stewardship of the organization, ensuring that the governance structures and functions of the organization are performing optimally. This pandemic, while exacting such a toll, has also served as a test - a test of the resiliency of our governance, our systems and ourselves. In governance terms, the Board and the Senior Management Team have sought to consult more frequently, both formally and informally, to ensure support, oversight and direction at this critical time.

It is clear, now more than ever that we all need a compelling, hopeful vision of the future to reconcile humanity's relationship with the natural world, and with itself. Through all of the challenges above, people around us with our support and encouragement continued to choose hope. As one result of this, CEDAG finished the year 2021 stronger than we started, with a lot of progress to report.

We saw how action or inaction at the local level can produce global consequences, and how coordination and cooperation through a multilateral system that enables and safeguards civil society participation are essential to promote and remedy situations. During all these times you were there with us and more closer than ever. On many of these issues, CEDAG was at the forefront; a point at which the work of CEDAG and WAN members are perhaps more imperiled but more important than ever.

As in previous years, the governing body of CEDAG found that the quality of reports is generally improving, demonstrating greater institutional commitment and more evidence that we are making progress and delivering as promised. Ensuring that all the commitments of our partners are accountable for in an evidence-based performance.

We would like to thank our technical and financial partners for supporting us. I thank my fellow board members and CEDAG membership groups who contributed time, talent and experience for us to improve on our work and our hard working and dedicated management on the Executive Committee who provide such strong leadership to the sector.

### **3. National Coordinator Morris Ikechukwu O Anyim**

I must start with a heartfelt thank you to our dear partners and friend of the children for their support in this most unprecedented of years. A special welcome also to the many new partners with whom we have had the pleasure of working with. Your patience, adaptability and trust have helped us to plot a safe and secure course through this turbulent year. Despite the obvious challenges of 2020, CEDAG have so many reasons to be proud this year. The resilience and dedication of my colleagues at CEDAG, along with WAN partners has been incredible.

However, when I look back at an extraordinary 2021, the most important thing for me as the National Coordinator is a total validation of the organizational culture we have adopted here at CEDAG. The CEDAG culture I am so proud to talk about is built on three simple core values: to gain the trust of the population that we serve, to work with a quiet determination to always deliver our best and to pull together when the demands placed on us are at their most challenging. We've equally seen these values demonstrated on a daily basis by our beneficiaries and partners, and it's this, above all else, that convinces me that together, we will all come through these incredibly challenging times into a stronger and better future for our children and other vulnerable groups.

However, as they say, the future is for another day. For now, let me again give a huge thanks to you all. It just remains for me, and the whole management team, to send you our best wishes for the years to come. A key objective for me was to ensure that the management team stays apprised of our programming and operating contexts: our effectiveness and efficiency depends on this critical alertness. This past year, we have again put this objective into practice. It gives me great pride that amid the fear of Covid-19, the working from home, the travel bans, the logistical disruption, the relegation of other priorities, and the rapid-response mindset we were able to make great achievements.

Friends and partners, as we begin to see a path beyond the mire of this difficult time, we must remain true to our mission while hopeful for the better and fruitful future. It has always been in our top agenda to support the most vulnerable once among us especially street children, children on the move and young.

This year also offered affirmation of our commitment to partnership, where so many of our enduring partnerships have only been deepened by the shared adversity. In particular, the understanding and constructive engagement of our financial partners, Saslong Fundación, International Social Service-West Africa, COOPI, UNICEF and many others, has been paramount to the successes outlined in this report and speaks to the mutual trust and respect that characterizes these relationships. We are deeply grateful for this continued support.

So many times this year I have had my spirits lifted by the actions of a colleague. How the staff has pivoted in the direction of the task at hand, while ensuring the continuity of the task before, has left me so proud. I also want to make special mention of the remarkable dedication of my fellow board members and the senior management team, who adapted tirelessly, and who have committed evermore of their time and energy to ensure what this report outlines. With every ounce of gratitude I possess, to all of our people, I want to thank you most sincerely for the extraordinary lengths you have gone to this year to continue our vital work.

## **4. Major Activities and Achievement**

### **4.1 Children on the Move and Young Migrants**

The problems encountered by Children on the Move and Young Migrants are becoming complex and their causes interconnected. In order to appropriately address this reality, CEDAG and its WAN partners are putting effort to ensure that these children are identified and reunited with their families before the abusers arrives. With activities at local, national and regional level aiming to attack the issue from different angles. Over the past 12 years of working with this sector of children, our initiatives and stories from our beneficiaries themselves have motivated many to support us in order to support these children.

During the year in review, CEDAG facilitated the identification and reunification of 286 Children on the Move and Young Migrants. 89 out of this number of children are children from other countries such as Senegal, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry. Others are Gambian children who left their home unaccompanied by their parents. Some of them left their home in search of economic gain, for education, violence and abuse, early child marriage, sexual exploitation and force labor. Other categories include peer pressure and cultural practices such as FGM.

Our local structures have helped us in making this work easier hence they are claiming the ownership of protection their children. The Community Child Protection committees have helped us in family tracing and monitoring of the situation of these children after reunification with their families. Thanks to their dedication, hard work, quality and open minds, their support has made a difference for many children and young people. Save the Children International and UN office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights assisted us in providing these services to the children

There have been more commitments at the community level ranging from women groups, youth groups and many outstanding individuals took the our issue of protecting children on the move and young migrants as a challenge and as an obligation to give support to children and young people in need, to stand by them day after day, through thick and thin. Without them, the activities simply would not have made sense. At the end of the support, they are the ones who are still there, trying hard to go on with their activities.



*Cross section of Village Development Committee.*

## **4.2 Education and vocational skill development**

Vocational, or skills-based, education is becoming more and more important today in the Gambia, as many young people drop out of school because of one reason or the other. With many employers expecting new employees to have all the practical skills they need to start work and also for those who have to support their families immediately after senior secondary education. Vocational courses are typically more practical and skills-based than academic degrees, but they are often taught at universities as well as colleges and technical institutes. Vocational Education and Training (VET) is an important element of the nation's education initiative. Vocational education has to be viewed from different multi-layered practices. All these have been some of the factors that have motivated us to develop and support the training of young people in different vocational and skill training.

In the year 2021, with the support of ISS-WA, ANPAS and other partners CEDAG supported 150 children in Basic education and 20 young people received support for various vocational and skill training. This is one of the initiatives to support some of the children and young people who are reintegrated with their families.

### 4.3 Humanitarian and Relief support

CEDAG is still supporting children, young people and their families to overcome the burden of rough economic situation through the provision of humanitarian assistance. This program have been supported by Crossroad Shipment. Crossroad shipment have help CEDAG with different type of items. Through this support, CEDAG have been able to provide school materials such as reading and writing materials, bags, shoes, clothing and other items for school support.



This assistance have been extended to their families by providing the families with house hold items more especially during the peak period COVID-19 period when there was total economic confuse.



### 4.4 Training, Awareness and Advocacy Program

CEDAG advocates for social change and service improvement focusing on, but not limited to, Care and support to Children on the Move and young migrants, Youth empowerment and education, and access to health services and information. Through our advocacy engagement CEDAG assists and supports people vulnerable children and their families to achieve social and individual change, empowerment, justice and human rights. We believe that advocacy means “standing by” or “speaking out” for someone’s rights when they are treated unfairly and that vulnerable children and their families have the same rights and responsibilities as human. CEDAG advocates with and for Children on the move and street related children in order to safeguard (and protect) their capacity to speak out and ensure that those rights are negotiated in practice.

CEDAG model of Individual Advocacy works to empower and support children and young people to achieve positive outcomes and make informed decisions when faced with difficult situations. We do this by listening and consulting; sharing information; assisting access to agencies and services; encouraging self-advocacy through empowerment and generally working with the client. All this is done whilst maintaining client confidentiality. Each client is assigned an Individual Social Worker who assists and supports the client until their issue has been resolved.

During the year 2021 and through the financial support from Saslong Foundation, we were able to carry out an awareness and advocacy program on Sexual Reproductive Health Rights. This have been a program that CEDAG have been conducting in schools since 2009 under the support of Saslong Foundation. This program have been able to reach 1870 student, 320 out of school youths, 8 communities within three regions of the Gambia namely; North Bank Region, Lower River Region and Greater Banjul Area of the Gambia.

CEDAG conducted awareness and advocacy program on children on the move and young migrants through radio program and one to one discussion which aimed at informing the targeted audience the need for care and support for this sector of children including how to refer them when they are identified. This awareness program is conducted in Farafenni and Soma. These two communities are hot spot for migratory route from children.

## **5. Conclusion**

We would like to end this report by reminding our partners and beneficiaries that the purpose of this report is to show-case what we have done with their support and how we did it. To further enhance the idea of the obstacles that is facing us while we try to do the different task given to us, the activities we have completed and the remains to be done.

We don't know how much energy it will required to accomplish the task ahead, but we know that together we can create the synergy needed to provide the best opportunities for success as per previous years. We are sure that partnership and friendship built on trust will help to meet efficiently our organization's mission and vision.