

# Mobilizing Environmental Education in The Gambia, West Africa

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## Abstract

From November 2013 to January 2014 two Masters of International Development candidates from Saint Mary's University travelled to The Gambia, West Africa, to deliver a community-based environmental education project. The goal was to mobilize knowledge, within the coastal community of Tujereng, concerning local environmental issues. The adverse effects of climate change have had many negative impacts on this community, which have threatened the livelihoods of many of its citizens. However, many people were not fully aware of the wider global scope and interconnected nature of these issues, as they were not frequently or openly discussed amongst all community members. This project was designed to create a dialogue within the community, concerning environmental changes affecting their daily lives. It also aimed to increase capacity building by enhancing the understanding of these complex environmental issues from a local standpoint. This project was facilitated by Nova Scotia-Gambia Association Staff Members, Teacher Coordinators and Peer Health Educators. The background research conducted to implement all components of the project also helped to inform the Masters research for both project facilitators.



## Partner Organizations



The Robin Rigby Trust has facilitated collaborative international research since 2008. Canadians have been encouraged to work with overseas coastal communities while researchers outside Canada have been encouraged to connect with coastal community partners in Atlantic Canada.

[www.robinrigbyfund.info](http://www.robinrigbyfund.info)



CCRN is a network of diverse community members, researchers and NGOs that collaborate to strengthen existing knowledge regarding community-based conservation. This network leverages innovative knowledge and expertise from around the world and across cultures.

[www.communityconservation.net](http://www.communityconservation.net)

## Project Summary

This three-part project was designed to promote sustainable development in the community of Tujereng by enhancing environmental awareness and stewardship through education.

### 1) Film Creation

A short educational film, entitled *Environmental Change Over Time in the Community of Tujereng*, was produced in Mandinka, one of the most widely spoken local languages.



### 2) In-School Training

Tujereng's Peer Health Educators (PHEs) were trained on issues of climate change, focusing on the impact on coastal communities. Lessons were designed with an emphasis on the Gambian context, while local issues were connected to the wider global phenomenon. This component aimed to foster environmental stewardship amongst youth, while providing insight into sustainable resource management and conservation practices at the community level.



### 3) Community Film Show

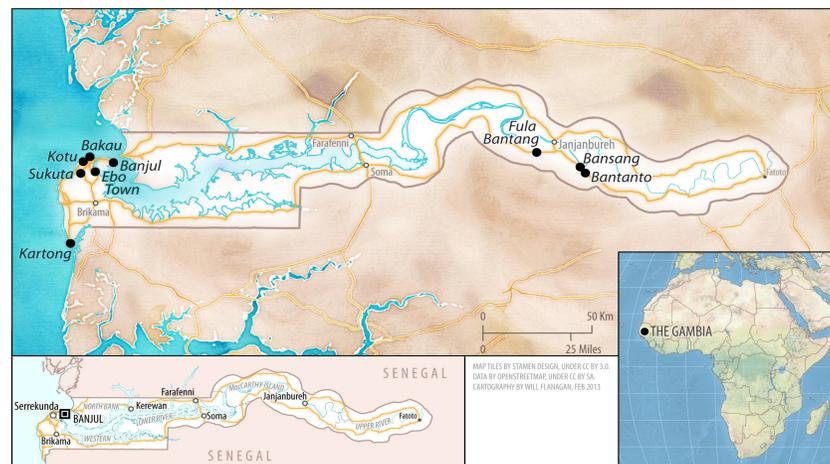
Approximately 250 people attended the film premier, which facilitated community discussion regarding local environmental concerns. The PHEs also presented skits as an introduction and conclusion to the film. Drama is an important part of Gambian culture and therefore, the skits added greatly to the success of the evening.



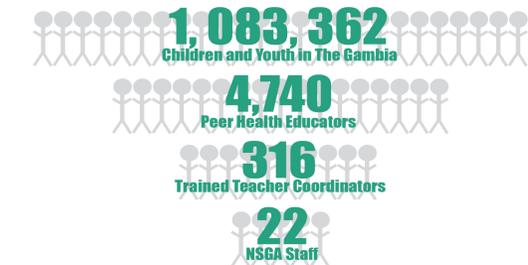
## Project Location



Tujereng, The Gambia  
Population: 4,689 (2003)



## Peer Health Education Model



The Nova Scotia Gambia Association (NSGA) is an international development organization of West Africans and Canadians working together to build healthy communities in The Gambia. Through education and health promotion initiatives, NSGA staff and volunteers have become a major force in youth and community education in West Africa, since 1985.

The NSGA's Peer Health Education and interactive Community Film Show models have helped the organization in successfully implementing and promoting its health and environmental education curriculum in over 158 schools and more than 300 communities across the country.

Some of the important topics that the NSGA covers include:

- Maternal Health
- Environmental Stewardship
- Landmine Safety
- Sexual Health
- Water and Sanitation
- Gender Equity
- HIV/AIDS
- Youth Leadership
- Human Rights
- Malaria

For more information or to donate to the NSGA please visit [www.novascotiagambia.ca](http://www.novascotiagambia.ca)

