

North Bank Region Citizens' Assembly EVALUATION REPORT



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Executive Summary

In The Gambia, North Bank Region Citizens' Assembly in Kerewan, is a landmark democratic innovation that illustrates how ordinary people can meaningfully engage in complex policy matters if the conditions of fair selection, accurate information, and competent facilitation are met. Some 30 randomly selected citizens from across the region were brought together into the North Bank Citizens' Assembly to deliberate on climate, environmental, and livelihood concerns and to develop collective proposals relevant to policy.

This assessment drew on strong, triangulated data from participant surveys administered before and after the Assembly, public perception surveys, expert speaker evaluations, non-participant observation, Key Informant Interviews, and document review. The results of this study illustrate that the Assembly functioned as an exemplary deliberative process which is comparable in significant ways to citizen assemblies evaluated elsewhere.

The level of internal legitimacy was very high: all participants agreed that the content was clear and balanced, facilitation was neutral, and the selection procedure was fair. Moreover, the large majority reported a better understanding of climate governance and a stronger willingness to participate in public decision-making outside of the Assembly due to evidence-based discourse. This led to measurable learning, opinion change, and enhanced civic confidence. Independent expert speakers attested to the breadth, impartiality, and integrity of the discussion.

The Assembly proposed a new multi-level governance approach for linking community, district, and regional actors together. It also made clear, logical, and implementable recommendations based on relevant evidence. These recommendations were aligned with national climate and development frameworks. Overall, stakeholders regarded the results as credible and policy-relevant.

As the review makes clear, the major barriers to impact lie outside of the deliberative process itself. So far as public awareness beyond direct participation was concerned, little was gained and formal policy reaction mechanisms are still to be established. Global experience has so far shown that the success of citizens' assemblies rests on institutional follow-through.

Overall, the Kerewan Citizens' Assembly is rated as fairly strong with regard to preparedness for policy effect and as very successful concerning process quality and outcomes. Against the background of focused progress being made in policy responsiveness, communication, and institutional embedding, citizens' assemblies have a great prospect of establishing themselves as a long-lasting foundation of inclusive and accountable governance in The Gambia.

1. INTRODUCTION

The North Bank Region Citizens' Assembly is a novel democratic innovation in The Gambia, aiming at enhancing participatory governance, inclusive decision-making, and deliberative democracy at the local level. Operating in contexts where the majority of public decision-making is controlled by institutional actors and political elites, citizens' assemblies are an alternative that places ordinary citizens at the heart of structured policy dialogue, supported by balanced information, skilled facilitation, and a process that encourages respectful reasoning and collective problem-solving.

The model is particularly relevant to the complex, interlinked challenges that face communities in Kerewan and the wider North Bank Region, as these require both local ownership and policy alignment. Environmental degradation, rural livelihood insecurity, and weak enforcement of environmental regulations all affect the everyday life of citizens, demanding solutions that are practical, legitimate, and context-grounded. Citizens' assemblies provide citizens with the opportunity to move beyond informal channels of complaint into a formal space for deliberation, prioritisation, and formulating collective recommendations directed at shaping governance and policy responses.

Box 1: International Experience with Citizens' Assemblies

Citizens' assemblies have increasingly been used around the world as a mechanism for involving ordinary citizens in complex public policy decisions. These assemblies rely on random selection (sortition), balanced expert information, and facilitated deliberation to generate recommendations that are considered both legitimate and informed.

-  **Ireland Citizens' Assembly (2016–2018)**
 - deliberated on constitutional reforms including climate change and abortion laws, leading to major national referenda
-  **UK Climate Assembly (2020)**
 - brought together 108 randomly selected citizens to deliberate on pathways to achieving the United Kingdom's net-zero climate target
-  **France Citizens' Convention on Climate (2019–2020)**
 - produced 149 recommendations for climate policy, several of which were incorporated into legislation
-  **Northern Ireland Citizens' Assembly (2018)**
 - explored complex political and governance issues through structured citizen deliberation.

The North Bank Region Citizens' Assembly in The Gambia represents an internationally recognized democratic practices within the Gambian context, particularly in addressing climate governance and environmental challenges through participatory decision-making.

The evaluated Assembly was convened between 20th to 27th October 2025 by the Great Green Wall Frontline Initiative, comprising of thirty participants who underwent structured deliberations regarding land restoration, ecosystems protection, and livelihood opportunities.

The Assembly process was designed to make certain that recommendations were not simply statements of opinion but the product of informed discussion supported by trained facilitators and expert commentators.

Representative participation is one of the defining features of citizens' assemblies and a central pillar of their legitimacy. The participants were selected to represent variations in age, gender, occupation, education level, disability status, and geographic distribution. Participants of the North Bank Region Citizens' Assembly were selected through a three-stage sortition process designed to ensure fairness, transparency, and demographic representativeness.

Stage 1: Random selection of villages across the districts of the North Bank Region to ensure geographic representation.

Stage 2: Random selection of individuals within the selected villages, resulting in an initial pool of 210 potential participants.

Stage 3: A stratified random sampling process using the open-source platform Panelot, which ensured that the final Assembly of 30 members reflected key demographic characteristics including gender balance, age distribution, and geographic diversity.

This multi-stage process is consistent with international best practices in citizens' assembly design, combining random selection with demographic balancing to ensure both fairness and representativeness.

This is further documented in the sortition report, where the approach to selection, starting with a random identification of the villages, followed by village-level random selection of individuals, included the support of district coordinators and the GGWF team despite logistical challenges like heavy rainfall and long distances between communities.

These deliberations by the Assembly identified five priority thematic areas reflecting the environmental realities of the North Bank Region and the governance challenges associated with sustainable natural resource management: (i) food insecurity, desertification, and soil degradation; (ii) cross-border grazing and pollution; (iii) carbon emissions and waste management; (iv) limited climate education and awareness; and (v) climate law and policy enforcement.

From these, participants developed recommendations and agreed on the consolidation of actions under one umbrella initiative entitled "Enhancing Community Resilience to Climate Change through Sustainable Practices."

Importantly, the Assembly did not stop at producing recommendations but went on to propose a structured governance mechanism for its implementation. It underlined coordinated roles across regional, district, and community levels, aimed at keeping the processes of development more accountable, sustainable, and in tune with national policy frameworks.

The combination of inclusive participation with structured deliberation and an implementation-oriented governance model accounts for the importance of the Citizens' Assembly and the necessity for its rigorous evaluation.

2. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

Citizens' assemblies are increasingly recognised internationally as a credible mechanism through which complex public policy challenges are taken up, particularly those issues which are multi-sectoral, politically sensitive, or require behavioural change and community ownership. However, the effectiveness depends upon the quality of process design, deliberation, and the pathways that link citizen recommendations to governance systems.

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide an independent judgment about the effectiveness, quality, and emerging outcomes of the North Bank Region Citizens' Assembly for participatory governance and deliberative democracy. This is based on the stated objectives and design principles of the Assembly: inclusiveness, transparency, evidence-based deliberation, and policy relevance.

3. CONTEXT AND ASSEMBLY DESIGN

3.1 Context

The North Bank Region Citizens' Assembly in Kerewan comes at a time when climate and environmental pressures are increasing in the region. These range from advancing desertification, soil degradation, cross-border grazing pressures, unmanaged waste streams, and lax enforcement of environmental regulations. These collectively threaten livelihoods, food security, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion.

These conditions underscore the need for governance approaches that effectively combine technical expertise and local knowledge, yielding solutions seen as legitimate, practical, and responsive to community realities. The citizens' assembly model was chosen because it would respond to that need through providing structured citizen deliberation with extensive linkages to formal governance systems.

3.2 Assembly Design

The five-day Assembly was based on a structured deliberative design and included:

- ❖ Expert presentations that are balanced, evidence-based;
- ❖ Small-group facilitated discussions to ensure inclusiveness in participation;
- ❖ Plenary sessions to synthesise perspectives and develop shared understanding.

- ❖ On the fifth and final day of the assembly, participants formally presented the consolidated recommendations to policy makers, stressing the significance of their involvement and actions in the country’s development plan. They also participated in consensus building activities for prioritisation of issues and development of collective recommendations.

Deliberations were organised around the five thematic areas identified by participants and culminated in a consolidated umbrella initiative: "Enhancing Community Resilience to Climate Change through Sustainable Practices." The design put emphases on deliberative depth and practical orientations, with a view to ensuring that recommendations remained firmly based on lived experience, yet informed by policy and implementation imperatives.

3.3 Participant Selection (Sortition Process)

A defining feature of citizens’ assemblies is the use of **sortition (random selection)** to ensure that participants represent a broad cross-section of society rather than self-selected or politically appointed individuals.

Box 2: Participant Selection Process

The North Bank Region Citizens’ Assembly used a **three-stage sortition process** designed to ensure fairness, transparency, and demographic representativeness.

Stage	Description
1	Random selection of villages across districts of the North Bank Region
2	Random selection of individuals within selected villages (resulting in an initial pool of 210 potential participants)
3	Stratified random selection using the open-source platform Panelot to ensure demographic balance across gender, age groups, and geographic representation

This approach combines pure random selection with demographic balancing, a method widely used in citizens’ assemblies internationally to ensure both fairness and representativeness.

The North Bank Region Citizens’ Assembly in The Gambia represent an internationally recognized democratic practices within the Gambian context, particularly in addressing climate governance and environmental challenges through participatory decision-making.

This process ensured that the Assembly reflected the diversity of the region while maintaining the fairness and transparency required for deliberative legitimacy.

The use of the Panelot platform enabled transparent and replicable stratified random sampling, ensuring that demographic quotas were met while maintaining the integrity of the random selection process.

4. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS

4.1 Overall Evaluation Design

This evaluation follows a mixed-methods design, blending quantitative and qualitative evidence to appraise both the quality of the deliberative process and early outcomes of the North Bank Region Citizens' Assembly. This approach reflects internationally recognized best practice in the evaluation of citizens' assemblies [outlined by the OECD](#).

The evaluation is designed to address issues not only of what happened but how and why given outcomes emerged. In particular, it examines:

- ❖ inclusiveness and procedural legitimacy;
- ❖ quality of deliberation and facilitation;
- ❖ participant learning, engagement, and confidence;
- ❖ coherence and policy relevance of recommendations;
- ❖ governance integration and implementation readiness;
- ❖ public awareness and external perceptions.

The triangulation of findings across sources is a strength in ensuring conclusions are based upon the weight of evidence rather than any single method.

4.2 Evaluation Framework

The integrated analysis proceeds with an analytical framework that embeds three different, complementary elements commonly adopted in the evaluation of citizens' assemblies and deliberative democratic processes.

OECD-DAC Criteria (Adapted)

Any selected OECD-DAC criteria are applied in a manner appropriate to deliberative democracy, with a focus on:

- ❖ **Relevance** – whether the Assembly addressed priority challenges facing communities in the North Bank Region;
- ❖ **Effectiveness** – whether the informed deliberation and the collective recommendations were realized;
- ❖ **Inclusiveness and Legitimacy** – fairness, representativeness, and equality of participation;
- ❖ **Coherence** – alignment of citizen recommendations with existing policy frameworks;
- ❖ **Sustainability** – the likelihood that results will be sustained through institutional follow-up.

Theory of Change

An underpinning Theory of Change approach links inputs (sortition, facilitation, expert evidence), deliberative processes (learning and discussion), outputs (recommendations and

governance proposals), short-term outcomes (learning, trust, confidence), and longer-term impacts (strengthened participatory governance and policy legitimacy). The evaluation tests whether or not observed outcomes are consistent with this causal logic and the extent to which key assumptions hold in practice.

Deliberative Democracy Standards

Performance is also weighed against internationally accepted deliberative standards, including inclusiveness, informed and evidence-based deliberation, facilitation neutrality, equality of voice, and transparency.

4.3 Data Collection Methods

To capture perspectives from the participants, experts, observers, and wide public, different data collection methods have been used.

Pre- and post-assembly participant surveys:

Surveys measured baseline knowledge, learning gains, opinion change, confidence, perceptions of fairness, and overall satisfaction.

Public Perception Survey:

A survey of non-participant observers gauged awareness, legitimacy, trust in recommendations, and willingness to support Assembly-generated policies.

Expert Speaker Survey:

The experts reviewed deliberative balance, participant engagement, and the policy relevance of recommendations.

Non-Participant Observation :

Structured observation measured the quality of facilitation, equality of participation, group dynamics, and use of evidence in deliberation.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Semi-structured interviews with participants, facilitators, and institutional stakeholders covered legitimacy, learning and feasibility of recommendations and governance integration.

Discourse Analysis:

Qualitative analysis of the plenary and small group discussions assessed the depth of reasoning, use of alternative views and collective problem-solving capacity.

Review Document:

Review of Assembly documentation assured that objectives and implementation were aligned with the outputs.

4.4 Data Analysis and Triangulation

Quantitative data were analysed descriptively for patterns and pre–post changes. Qualitative data were thematically analysed. Findings across the methods and respondent groups were triangulated to confirm consistency, identify divergence, and strengthen evaluative judgment. No source of data was treated as definitive in itself; the conclusions reflect the cumulative weight of evidence.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

The assessment followed core ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, non-interference with deliberative processes, respect for dignity, and the cultural context in which participants lived.

4.6 Limitations

Evaluation places a focus on process quality and early outcomes; longer-term impacts of policy require extended follow-up. Public awareness findings are limited by a low exposure beyond the attendees of the Assembly, whereas some data collection activities were affected by logistic conditions.

Public awareness findings are limited by limited exposure beyond the attendees of the Assembly, while logistic conditions impacted certain data collection activities. These limitations are realised and inform recommendations for future monitoring.

4.7 Methodological Assessment

All in all, the methodology has created a robust and credible basis for this evaluation, which aligns with international best practice. The mixed-method design supports accountability and learning through the clear evidence provided to inform future citizens' assemblies in The Gambia.

5. KEY FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION

5.1 Overview of Findings

The evidence indicates that the North Bank Region Citizens' Assembly demonstrated the characteristics of a high-quality deliberative process on all the dimensions assessed, compared with other citizens' assemblies that have been evaluated internationally. The Assembly achieved very strong internal legitimacy, high deliberative integrity, and clear learning and empowerment outcomes for participants.

Participants reported extremely high levels of satisfaction, trust in the fairness and neutrality of the process, and increased confidence and understanding. These findings were independently reinforced by expert speakers and institutional stakeholders who recognised both the quality of deliberation and the policy relevance of the Assembly's outputs.

According to the evaluation, the key limitations lie outside the deliberative space itself. As with other comparable international processes, these have focused on public communication, formal policy response mechanisms, and long-term institutional embedding rather than the quality of the Assembly process or the recommendations themselves.

5.2 Inclusiveness and Legitimacy

5.2.1 Participant Selection, Representativeness, and Procedural Fairness

The evaluation finds that, on the whole, the three-tier sortition process used to constitute the North Bank Region Citizens' Assembly was fair, transparent, and credible and constituted the key to its legitimacy. Participants were chosen by randomly identifying villages from all districts of the North Bank Region, with subsequent village-level random selection including demographic balancing.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Kerewan Citizens' Assembly Participants (N = 30)

Category	Sub-Category	Count	Percentage
District	Lower Niumi	8	26.7%
	Upper Baddibu	6	20.0%
	Sabach Sanjal	4	13.3%
	Central Baddibu	4	13.3%
	Jokadu	3	10.0%
	Lower Baddibu	3	10.0%
	Upper Niumi	2	6.7%
	Age Group	18–24	4
	25–34	7	23.3%
	35–44	11	36.7%
	45–54	3	10.0%
	55–64	5	16.7%
Gender	Female	15	50.0%
	Male	15	50.0%
Marital Status	Married	26	86.7%
	Single	4	13.3%
Total Participants		30	100.0%

The total number of participants in the Citizens' Assembly was 30, drawn from all districts of the North Bank Region, none of which dominated the representation. The gender balance was equal, and the range of age groups represented supported intergenerational deliberation. Overall, the participant profile reflected a broadly representative cross-section of local communities, reinforcing the legitimacy of the process and confidence in its outcomes.

Document review, demographic analysis, and observation confirm that there is representation along key dimensions, including gender, age, occupation, geographic location, and educational background; logistical and facilitation adjustments have been made to include persons with disabilities. This diversity strengthens deliberation by incorporating different lived experiences and perspectives.

The quantitative evidence strongly reinforces this. In the post-assembly survey, 100% of participants rated the selection process as “Very Fair.” This is a striking result in a context where public processes are often perceived as illegitimate. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) provide some insight into this perception: participants repeatedly identified random selection as operating to reduce hierarchy and status, as creating equality and a sense of shared responsibility. In the words of one participant, “Because none of us chose ourselves, everyone felt equal in the room.”

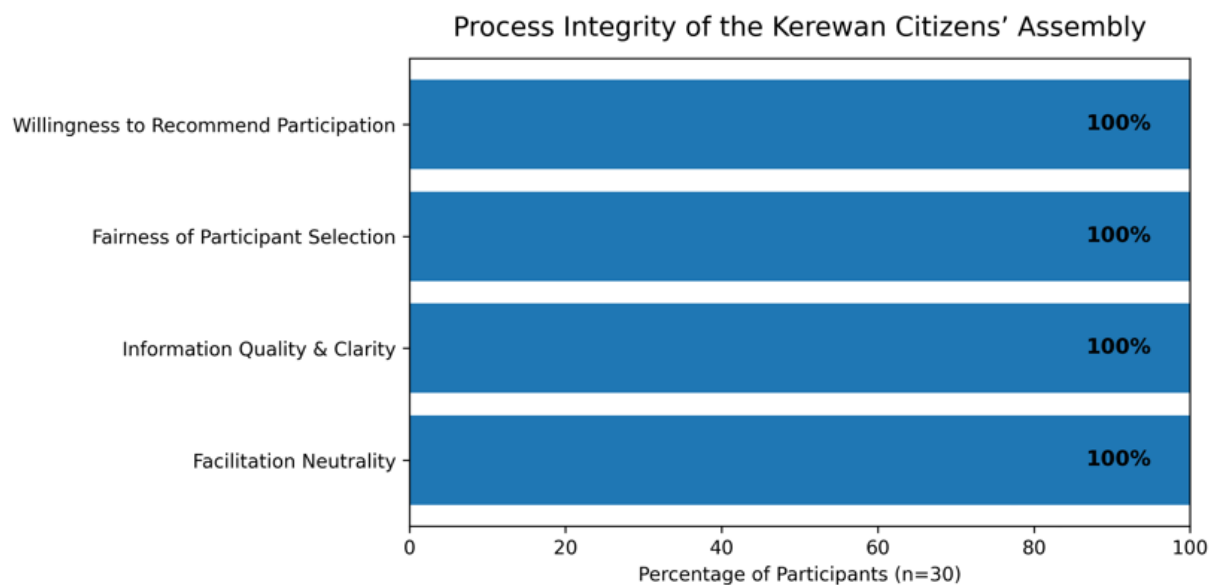
Facilitators and organizers are on record confirming that such equality nurtured open participation, attentive listening, and a focus on collective rather than personal interests. This echoes findings from other international cases that have demonstrated sortition to enhance both legitimacy and deliberative depth. In aggregate, participant selection emerged as one of the key strengths of the Assembly and an important enabling condition for high-quality deliberation.

5.2.2 Transparency, Trust, and Internal Legitimacy

Transparency in the process design also enhanced the legitimacy of the Assembly. Participants consistently reported that the purpose of the Assembly, the facilitator's role, and how recommendations would be used were explained at the beginning, thus contributing to very high levels of internal trust.

Follow-up survey results after the Assembly show a remarkable belief in the integrity of the process: all participants (100%, n=30) scored facilitation as completely neutral and the quality and clarity of information as excellent. All respondents also indicated that the participant selection process was very fair, would recommend participation in a similar citizens' assembly, and be willing to participate again.

Figure 1: Process Integrity of the Kerewan Citizens' Assembly



Participant feedback does indeed reflect uniformly strong process integrity across all core dimensions, reflecting a high level of internal legitimacy, trust, and procedural robustness. These results align quite closely with international standards observed in comparable citizens' assemblies.

Expert speakers also independently validated these observations. All the experts believed that the guiding questions for the Assembly were neutral, the discussions were fair, respectful, and the participants interacted constructively with evidence as opposed to advocacy or positional debate.

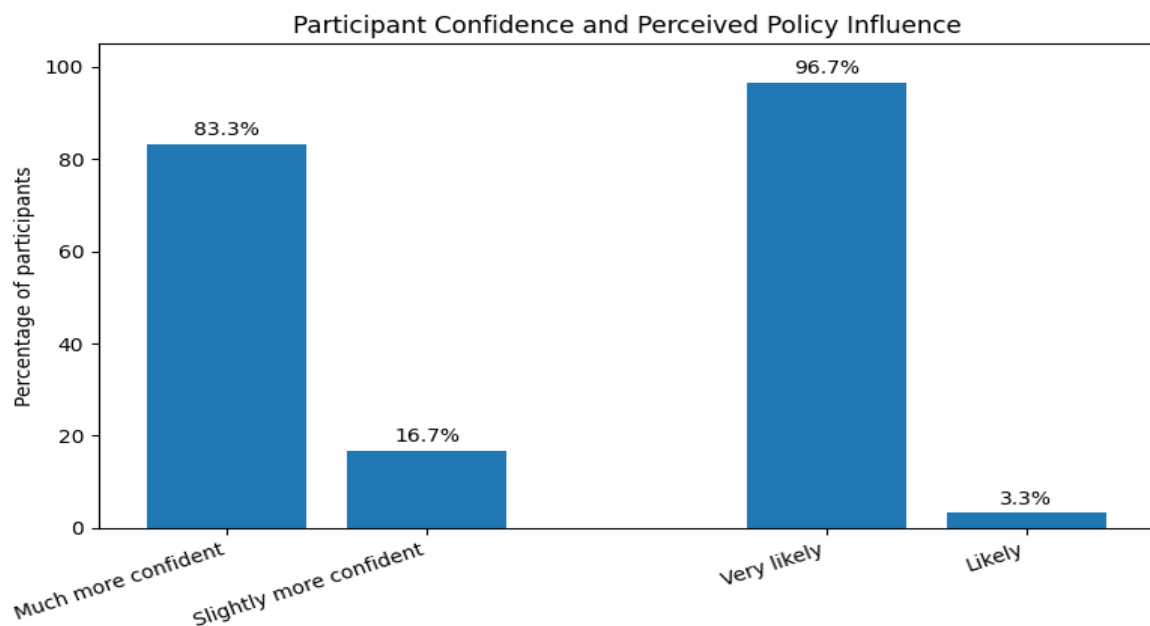
However, triangulation with the public perception survey brings out a legitimacy gradient between audiences: while non-participant attendees had high trust in the Assembly's output, general public awareness remained at a moderate level, and most respondents learned about the Assembly via institutional channels rather than wider community or media outreach. This implies internal legitimacy was extremely strong but that broader societal legitimacy would be assisted by proactive dissemination - an issue also identified in international evaluations of citizens' assemblies.

5.3 Deliberative Quality

5.3.1 Facilitation Quality and Equality of Voice

Triangulated evidence from nonparticipant observation, participant surveys, and expert feedback highlights facilitation quality as one of the most evident strengths of the Assembly. Facilitators consistently maintained neutrality, structured the discussions appropriately, and were particularly keen on ensuring that participation in all sessions was well balanced.

Figure 2: Participant Confidence and Perceived Policy Influence



The survey findings on strong empowerment and confidence in the Assembly's potential impact are remarkable. More than four-fifths of participants reported that, as a result of the Assembly, they felt much more confident about speaking publicly, while almost all thought it very likely that the Assembly's recommendations would affect real policy decisions. These findings show both individual empowerment and collective confidence in the relevance of the Assembly.

Observation data underlined a consistent set of facilitation practices in support of voice equality, including proactive encouragement of quieter participants, firm but respectful management of dominant speakers, small group formats reducing participation barriers, and clear framing and synthesis of discussion questions.

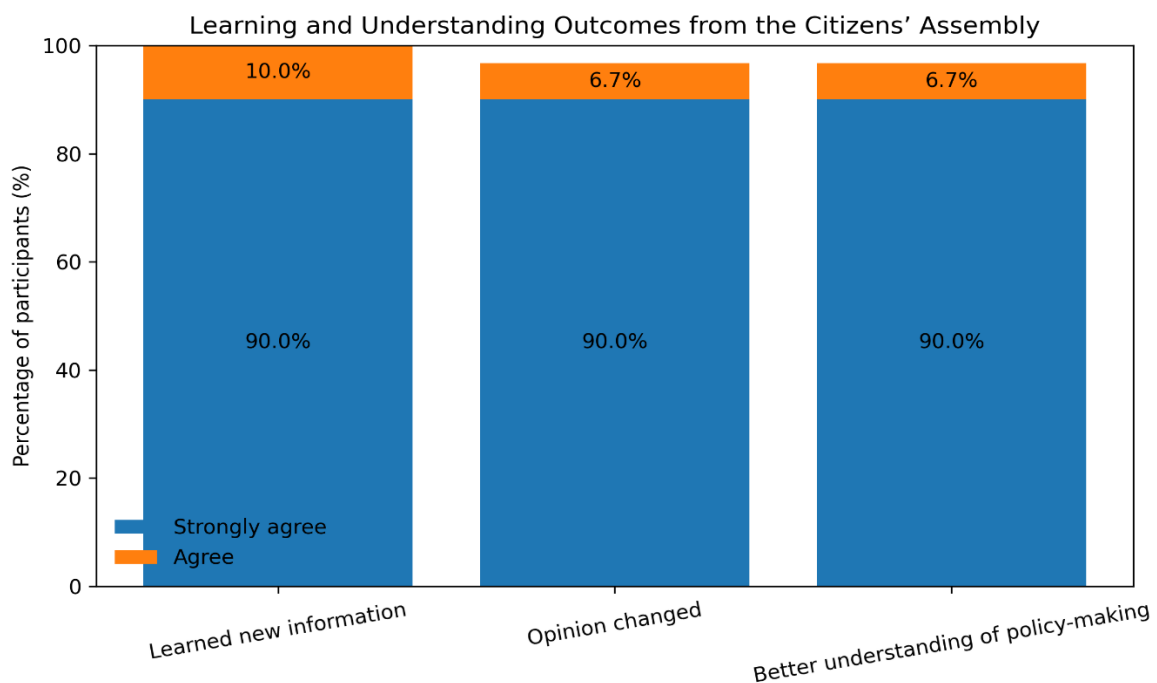
Quantitative data from the survey strengthens these findings: 96.7% of participants reported that in the discussion they always had sufficient opportunities to speak, while 83.3% felt they could speak in public much more confidently after the Assembly, with the rest feeling a little more confident.

All expert speakers unanimously confirmed that disagreement was handled constructively, and there was an encouragement to explain reasoning rather than defend fixed positions. The emphasis on reasoned justification over persuasion is a core principle of high-quality deliberative dialogue and very close to international standards as observed in comparable citizens' assemblies.

5.3.2 Informed and Evidence-Based Deliberation

The evaluation shows that deliberation within the North Bank Region Citizens' Assembly is consistently informed and evidence-based. Structured learning sessions and expert inputs supporting this outcome had complex issues related to climate, environment, and governance presented in formats that are easy to access, enabling participants of any educational background to engage meaningfully in the process.

Figure 3: Learning and Understanding Outcomes among Assembly Participants



Survey results demonstrate strong learning and reflective deliberation outcomes. Nine in ten participants (90%) strongly agreed that they learned new information that changed their understanding of the issues, that their opinions evolved during the Assembly, and that they now better understand how local policy decisions are made. The remaining participants agreed with these statements. This pattern of evidence-based opinion change is a key indicator of high-quality deliberative engagement and aligns closely with findings from international citizens' assembly evaluations.

Discourse analysis strengthens these findings and suggests a clear sequential development in the nature of deliberation across the life of the Assembly. Thus, early discussions tended to draw more on personal experiences and local anecdotes, mid-stage deliberations increasingly invoked expert evidence and comparative examples, and final recommendations integrated this into reasoning that combined community realities with policy feasibility.

All together, the convergence of survey results and qualitative analysis suggests that this Assembly succeeded in fostering learning, reflection, and reasoned judgment rather than entrenchment or polarisation - the hallmark of effective deliberative democracy.

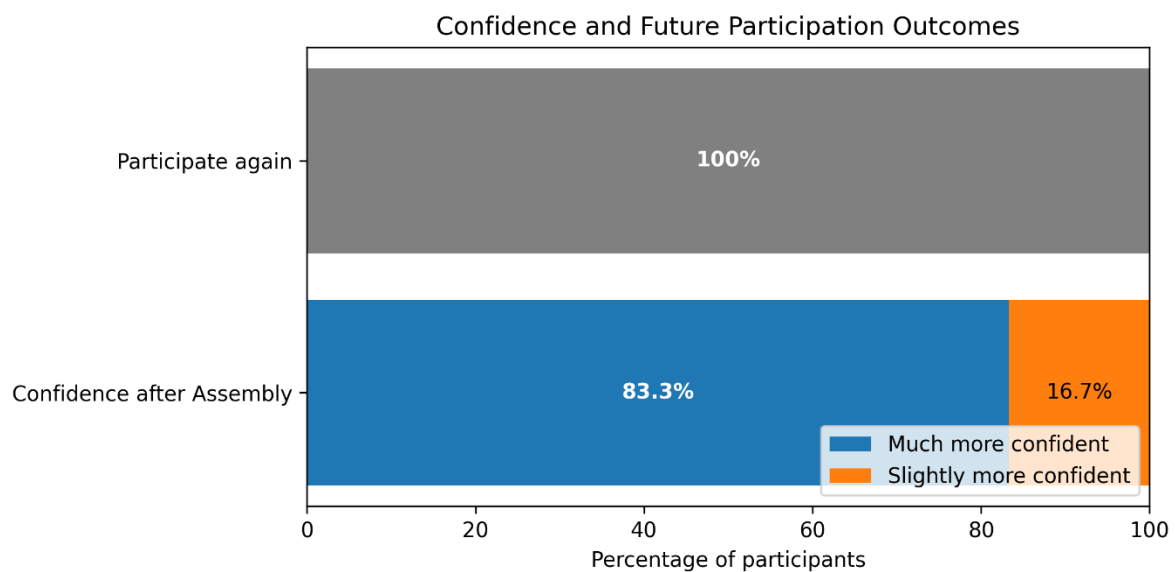
5.4 Learning, Empowerment, and Civic Outcomes

Beyond deliberative quality, the Assembly spawned significant learning and empowerment impacts. Comparisons before and after the assembly reveal that many participants began the process with limited knowledge of climate governance, policy tools, and institutional mandates, whereas post-assembly results reveal near-universal gains in understanding. Specifically, participants reported increased awareness of local drivers and consequences of climate, interlinkages of environmental degradation and food security and livelihoods, and the use of policy tools such as bylaws, enforcement mechanisms, and inter-district coordination.

These results are deepened by qualitative KIIs. Multiple participants described the Assembly as “the first time we sat and learned why these problems exist, not just that they exist,” driving home the shift from issue awareness to causal and policy understanding.

Empowerment outcomes were similarly strong. The survey data show 83.3% felt much more confident speaking in public after the Assembly, and all participants were willing to take part in such processes again. The KIIs suggested that such confidence spilled well beyond the confines of the Assembly itself, with the participants reporting greater willingness to speak in community meetings, to engage local authorities, and to share information with peers. These results are of special importance within rural contexts, where formal civic participation opportunities would be especially limited.

Figure 4: Confidence and Future Participation Outcomes



Participation in the Citizens' Assembly resulted in dramatic increases in civic confidence and engagement. Well over four-fifths of participants indicated they were much more confident speaking publicly as a result of the Assembly, and all participants reported a strong likelihood of participating in future deliberative processes.

Put differently, the evidence presented suggests that the Assembly served both as a policy forum and also as a civic capacity-building intervention, building democratic skills, confidence, and readiness for continued engagement.

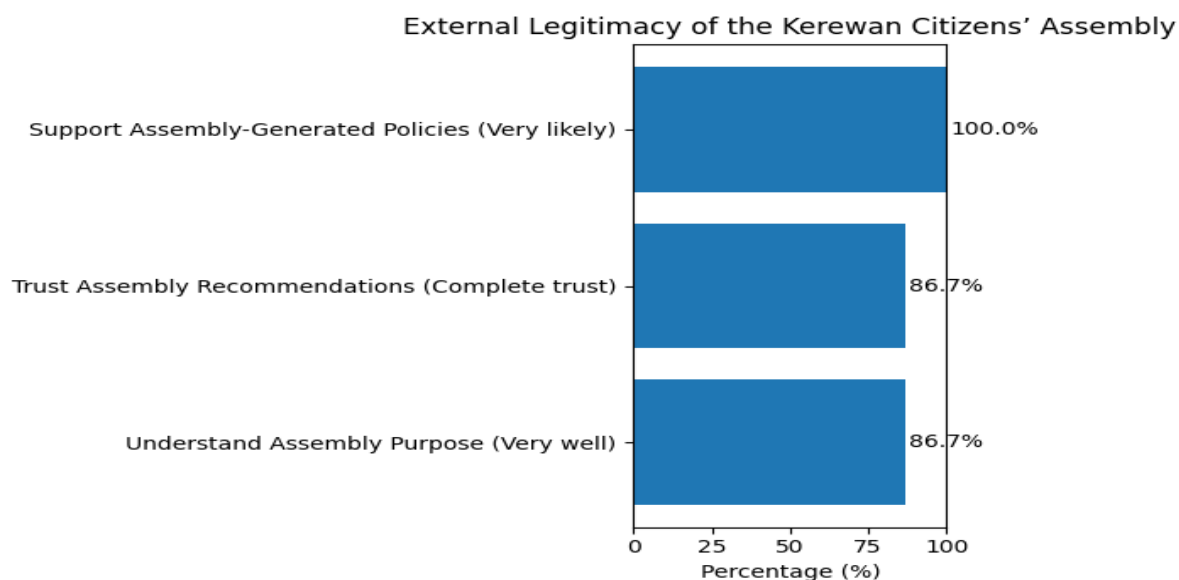
5.5 Public Awareness and External Perceptions

External legitimacy brings together public survey findings on awareness, understanding, trust in Assembly recommendations, and willingness to support policies generated through the Assembly. Presented as a single composite, the figure provides an integrated assessment of the Assembly's external legitimacy.

The figure shows that members of the public who were exposed to the Citizens' Assembly reported very high levels of understanding, trust, and willingness to support policies emerging from the process. Confidence in the Assembly's purpose and outputs was consistently strong among those who attended sessions or were otherwise aware of its work. At the same time, the evaluation finds that overall public awareness of the Assembly remained limited beyond direct observers and institutional networks. This contrast points out a clear legitimacy gradient between internal and external audiences. The evidence suggests that the main constraint to broader legitimacy is not the credibility or quality of the Assembly or recommendations but the reach and effectiveness of communication and public engagement efforts.

This pattern closely resembles international research findings on citizens' assemblies, whose internal trust and deliberative quality were high, but in which wider societal visibility required targeted dissemination and formalised outreach strategies.

Figure 5: External Legitimacy of the North Bank Region Citizens' Assembly



5.6 Quality of Outputs and Recommendations

The Citizens' Assembly, therefore, considers five priority thematic areas that reflect the lived realities of communities in the North Bank Region, as well as the strategic focus of national environmental and climate policy frameworks. Issues related to food insecurity, desertification, and soil degradation; cross-border grazing and pollution; carbon emissions and waste management; lack of climate education and awareness; and the enforcement of law and policy on climate issues were other themes represented. These themes aptly capture the interlinked nature of the environmental, livelihood, and governance challenges facing this region.

This assessment evidences that recommendations developed under these themes were clear, coherent, and strongly oriented toward implementation. Unlike most participatory processes that culminate in broad statements or statements of aspiration, the recommendations from North Bank Region Citizens' Assembly outlined specific actions, identified responsible actors, and proposed practical coordination mechanisms across the community, district, and regional levels. Such specificity testifies to the quality of deliberation and effective facilitation guiding participants toward actionable outcomes.

Review of documentation and expert feedback has further confirmed that such recommendations best align with the existing national policy frameworks related to climate and environment management strategies and development strategies. This already enhances their credibility and increases the likelihood of policy uptake, provided appropriate institutional follow-up mechanisms are established. Expert respondents reported that the recommendations unanimously received an assessment of being policy relevant and informed by realistic pathways toward implementation.

A strong and particularly innovative feature of the Assembly's outputs is the proposed multi-level governance structure linking community-level actors with district and regional institutions. For a number of experts and institutional stakeholders, this was viewed as an effective mechanism through which citizen recommendations could be translated into coordinated action, monitoring, and accountability. In general, the quality of the outputs testifies to the fact that the Assembly was deliberative not in nature but in fact could also create policy-ready recommendations with clear implementation potential.

5.7 Policy Relevance and Public Resonance

Evidence from the key informant interviews and document review confirms that there is strong alignment between the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly and the existing national climate and development frameworks. For institutional stakeholders, the fact that participants' priorities, together with proposed actions and governance arrangements, were aligned with current policy directions lent additional weight to the credibility of the Assembly and associated potential for policy uptake. Finally, there were strong indications from participants themselves that their recommendations could meaningfully influence policy decisions; they trusted both the process and its intended linkage to governance structures.

Public perception findings reinforce this assessment further. Among members of the public who were either aware of, or who attended, the sessions of the Assembly, levels of trust in citizen-generated recommendations were high, and the disposition to support policies emerging from the Assembly was very strong. This suggests that where the Assembly was visible, it commanded significant public confidence and social license.

However, the assessment also underlines a clear limit in terms of larger public resonance. Awareness of the Assembly beyond the participants and observers was limited, and therefore the impact it had on society at large was also very restricted. Internal legitimacy and policy relevance are high, while the critical gaps involve external visibility and formalised policy response mechanisms. These are gaps that will be necessary to fill if the Assembly's

recommendations are to result in public support that is sustained over time and in more concrete policy action.

6. QUALITATIVE FINDINGS FROM KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS (KIIs)

6.1 Purpose and Scope of KII Component

The KII component of the design was meant to add explanatory depth to the quantitative findings by exploring how the Citizen Assembly functions in practice, is experienced by different stakeholders, and how its outputs are perceived within existing governance structures.

KIIs were carried out in October 2025 on a purposive sample of:

- ❖ Assembly participants;
- ❖ Facilitators and organisers;
- ❖ Expert speakers;
- ❖ Institutional and policy stakeholders;
- ❖ Non-participant observers.

The qualitative analysis, consistent with international practice in evaluation, used a structured thematic approach and focused on process quality, legitimacy, deliberative dynamics, learning effects, and governance integration. The KIIs do not duplicate the findings from the survey but rather explain why particular outcomes emerged and how deliberation was experienced by those involved.

6.2 Purpose, Design, and Framing of the Assembly

KIIs indicate that the design of the Assembly, and its guiding question, was intentional, iterative, and institutionally anchored. Experts and organisers portrayed a structured preparation process jointly steered by the Great Green Wall Frontline Initiative, facilitators, and technical experts, including a stand-alone facilitation and design workshop prior to participant selection.

Stakeholders underlined that:

- ❖ The Assembly question came out of regional climate priorities, not external agendas;
- ❖ Multiple iterations were tested to guarantee neutrality, clarity, and relevance;
- ❖ The framing process was explicitly intended to translate ongoing projects into citizen-supported action pathways.

Qualitative judgment:

The clarity, neutrality, and policy relevance of the Assembly's purpose and question design follow international standards and strengthened this legitimacy from the outset.

6.3 Perceptions of Inclusiveness, Participation and Procedural Legitimacy

Among all groups of respondents, KIIs uniformly asserted that random selection - sortition - was key to the legitimacy of the Assembly. Participants and observers said that the lack of self-selection diminished hierarchy, political suspicion, and social pressure.

The facilitators and organisers recognised that this procedural legitimacy translated into:

- ❖ More openness in speech across gender, age, and community lines;
- ❖ Stronger listening behaviour;
- ❖ Reduced dominance by socially powerful individuals.

Non-participant observers reported that opportunities to speak were fairly distributed without discrimination in gender, age, or community, either when selecting presenters or group representatives.

Qualitative judgment:

Inclusiveness was realised not only procedurally but actually and meaningfully by participants, hence creating the social conditions for high-quality deliberation.

6.4 Facilitation Quality, Neutrality, and Equality of Voice

KIIs strongly corroborate survey findings that facilitation quality was a defining strength of the Assembly. Commonly, facilitators were described as neutral, structured, and respectful, paying clear attention to the management of group dynamics.

The key facilitation practices emphasised include:

- ❖ active encouragement of quieter voices;
- ❖ Constructive management of dominant speakers;
- ❖ Ground rules that clearly reinforce respect and neutrality.
- ❖ Regular summarising and translation into local languages ensure that everyone understands.

Observers also commented that facilitators did not lead the questions and constantly checked for consensus, not imposing any conclusion. In general, time management was appropriate, allowing flexibility for meaningful contributions while maintaining overall structure.

Qualitative judgment;

Facilitation met core deliberative standards of neutrality, equality of voice, and reason giving in practice, closely mirroring best practice observed in Northern Ireland and other jurisdictions.

6.5 Quality of Deliberation and Use of Evidence

The KIIs, in turn, reinforce that the deliberation was substantive and evidence-informed rather than opinion-driven. Participants continuously blended expert input with the contribution of lived experience, grounding discussions in practical realities of climate impacts, livelihoods, and community constraints.

Observers reported that:

- ❖ Varied opinions came up from the group discussions and plenary sessions;
- ❖ Participants drew on both technical evidence and personal experience in developing arguments;
- ❖ Any disagreement was expressed respectfully and was not personalised or escalated.

Deliberation progressed from individual concerns to collective problem-solving over time, reflecting learning and cognitive shift more than positional debate.

Qualitative judgment

The deliberative quality was high, characterised by respectful engagement, evidence use, and collective reasoning-the hallmarks of effective citizens' assemblies.

6.6 Learning, Opinion Change, and Civic Confidence

KIIs have repeatedly characterised the Assembly as a process of learning, rather than simply as a consultative body. The participants reported increased understanding regarding the causes of the challenges in climate, governance responsibilities, and possible policy responses.

Facilitators observed shifts in issue framing by participants:

- ❖ From personal grievances to community-wide concerns;
- ❖ From symptoms to underlying structural causes;
- ❖ From complaint to solution-oriented thinking.

The participants also reported increased confidence to:

- ❖ Speak in public settings;

- ❖ Engage authorities;
- ❖ Share information in their communities.

Qualitative judgment:

The Assembly served as a civic capacity-building intervention in that it built democratic skills, confidence, and a sense of responsibility.

6.7 Accessibility, Logistics, and Practical Constraints

KIIs present an overall mixed but instructive picture regarding accessibility and logistics. While organisers reported efforts to select inclusive venues and provide translation, nonparticipant observers noted gaps especially in the following:

- ❖ Physical inaccessibility: absence of ramps;
- ❖ Lack of sign-language services;
- ❖ Limited availability of written materials in local languages.

The constraints did not undermine the deliberative quality, but rather provided scope for further improvement in future assemblies.

Qualitative judgment:

Logistical arrangements were adequate to allow deliberation, but need strengthening to fully meet accessibility standards.

6.8 Perceived Feasibility of Recommendations & Governance Risks

Experts and institutional stakeholders broadly agreed upon the recommendations of the Assembly:

- ❖ Practical and context-appropriate;
- ❖ Aligned with existing policy directions;
- ❖ Strengthened by the multi-level governance mechanism proposed.

KIIs did, however, converge on one clear risk - the lack of formal policy response mechanism. The stakeholders warned that in the absence of clearly defined timelines for responses, budget linkages, and institutional ownership, implementation would be a matter of political goodwill rather than obligation.

Qualitative judgment:

Recommendation quality is high; implementation risks are in governance follow-through, not in content.

6.9 Overall Qualitative Assessment

Taken together, the KII evidence strongly reinforces the quantitative findings and provides critical explanatory insight. The Assembly demonstrated exceptional deliberative quality, strong legitimacy, and meaningful learning outcomes. The main limitations to impact lie outside the Assembly room, going to post-assembly governance arrangements, improvements in accessibility, and public communication.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation finds that, within the rural and resource-poor context of The Gambia, the North Bank Region Citizens' Assembly represents a high-quality, credible, and contextually-appropriate application of deliberative democracy. Based on the triangulation of evidence from participant surveys administered both prior to and following the assembly, public perception surveys, expert assessments, observation, Key Informant Interviews, and a document review, the Assembly showed that if ordinary citizens are fairly selected, suitably informed, and supported with neutral facilitation, they can address complicated policy matters coherently and come up with collaborative, policy-relevant recommendations.

In fact, across all the core evaluation dimensions-inclusiveness and legitimacy, deliberative quality, participant learning and empowerment, policy relevance, and governance integration-the Assembly performed strongly. In a number of important respects, its performance closely aligns with internationally recognised standards for citizens' assemblies, including those articulated by the OECD and reflected in evaluations of assemblies in comparable contexts.

It was particularly good at creating a safe and respectful deliberative space with protected equality of voice; ensuring procedural legitimacy through a transparent three-stage sortition process; facilitating evidence-based dialogue supported by balanced expert input; and generating clear, actionable recommendations rooted in local realities, yet aligned with national climate and development frameworks. Finally, the proposed multi-level governance mechanism linking community, district, regional, and national actors further strengthens the relevance and implementation potential of the Assembly.

Beyond its immediate policy relevance, the North Bank Region Citizens' Assembly demonstrates the feasibility of deliberative democratic innovations within the Gambian governance context. The process shows that when ordinary citizens are provided with balanced information, structured facilitation, and an environment of respectful dialogue, they

are capable of engaging constructively with complex policy issues and producing thoughtful recommendations. As such, the Assembly offers a promising model for strengthening participatory governance in The Gambia and could serve as a pilot for similar initiatives at regional or national levels.

Taken together, these strengths suggest that the North Bank Region Citizens' Assembly should not be considered a one-time participatory exercise but a promising governance instrument having very strong potential for institutionalisation, scaling up, and replication within the decentralisation and participatory governance architecture of The Gambia.

The evaluation does, however, find that the main risks to the potential long-term impact lie not in the deliberative process itself, which performed exceptionally well, but rather in the post-assembly phase. Among them, the absence of mandatory mechanisms for policy response, the limited formal embedding in institutions, and constrained public communication beyond direct participants are risks to sustained influence.

Overall Judgment

Taking all evidence into account, the evaluation judges the North Bank Region Citizens' Assembly to be:

- ❖ Highly successful in deliberative process quality and internal legitimacy;
- ❖ Highly successful in producing coherent and policy-aligned recommendations;
- ❖ Moderately strong in readiness for impact, with clear opportunities to strengthen policy uptake and long-term sustainability.

Overall, the Assembly exceeded expectations in inclusiveness, facilitation quality, and deliberative depth; met expectations in generating actionable recommendations; and partially met expectations in ensuring institutionalised pathways for policy response and integration.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS FOR FUTURE CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES

8.1 Recommendation

I. Adopt simple administrative guidelines (rather than new legislation) allowing Ministries, LGAs, and regional authorities to convene citizens' assemblies as advisory inputs to specific policy or planning processes, particularly in climate, environment, and local development.

II. Require the lead institution to issue a public written response to Assembly recommendations within 60–90 days, indicating which recommendations are accepted, adapted, or not taken forward, with brief justification. This can be implemented through ministerial or administrative directives.

III. Allocate modest resources for post-assembly outreach, including:

- ❖ A public summary of recommendations in local languages;
- ❖ Community feedback meetings led by Assembly members;
- ❖ Use of local radio and existing government communication channels.

IV. Integrate agreed recommendations into existing district and regional coordination platforms (e.g. district development committees, sector working groups) rather than creating parallel systems.

V. Formally recognize the proposed District and Regional Climate Resilience Committees as coordination forums, with clear focal persons and quarterly reporting expectations, without requiring new institutions or heavy budgets.

VI. Support former Assembly members to act as community communicators and monitors on a voluntary or modestly supported basis, linking citizens, local authorities, and implementing agencies.

Overall Priority:

Focus on policy response, communication, and follow-up, rather than redesigning the deliberative model itself. The Assembly process is strong; impact now depends on institutional responsiveness and visibility.

8.2 Lessons for Scaling and Replication

Key lessons from the North Bank Region Citizens' Assembly include:

- ❖ deliberative capacity exists at community level when citizens are well supported;
- ❖ random selection enhances legitimacy;
- ❖ facilitation quality is decisive;
- ❖ governance linkages must be explicitly designed; and
- ❖ citizens' assemblies complement representative institutions rather than replace them

8.3 Final Reflection

The North Bank Region Citizens' Assembly provides compelling evidence that deliberative democracy can function effectively in The Gambia, including in rural contexts. This means that, with some targeted improvements in institutionalisation, policy response mechanisms, and public communication, citizens' assemblies hold great promise for taking a leading role in inclusive, accountable, and participatory governance across the country.

ANNEXES

1. North Bank Region Citizens’ Assembly – Evaluation Judgment & Ratings Scorecard



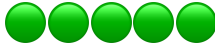
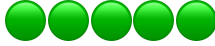



Purpose: This scorecard provides a concise evaluative judgment of the Kerewan Citizens’ Assembly against internationally recognised standards for citizens’ assemblies, drawing on triangulated survey data, expert assessment, observation, and interviews.


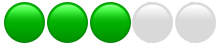

Overall Evaluation Judgment

Overall Rating: 

Assessment: *Highly successful deliberative process with strong internal legitimacy and learning outcomes; moderate readiness for policy impact.*

Dimension-by-Dimension Ratings

Evaluation Dimension	Rating	Evidence Summary
Inclusiveness & Representativeness		Three-stage sortition achieved broad demographic and geographic representation; 100% of participants rated selection as “Very Fair”.
Procedural Fairness & Transparency		Elucidation of purpose, roles, and process; unanimous confidence in neutrality and equity.
Deliberative Quality		High quality facilitation, equality of voice, constructive handling of disagreement; validated by experts and observation.
Learning & Opinion Change		More than 90% of participants reported learning gains, opinion change, and improved understanding of the policy.
Civic Empowerment & Confidence		Significantly increased confidence in public speaking, with 100% willing to participate in future assemblies.
Quality of Recommendations		Clear, coherent, and implementable recommendations that are aligned with national frameworks.
Policy Relevance		Strongly aligned with RF-NDP and climate policies, but uptake depends on institutional follow-up.

Governance Integration		Innovative multi-level governance model proposed, but mandates and resourcing not yet formalized.
Public Awareness & External Legitimacy		High trust among those aware, but moderate overall public visibility.
Readiness for Policy Impact		Strong potential, pending formal policy response mechanisms.

Summary Judgment

The North Bank Region Citizens’ Assembly exceeded expectations in deliberative quality, inclusiveness, and participant learning. It met expectations in producing credible and policy-relevant recommendations, and partially met expectations in ensuring structured pathways for policy response and wider public visibility.

2. Government Policy Response Template

Government Response to the North Bank Region Citizens’ Assembly Recommendations

Issuing Authority:

[Ministry / Agency / Council Name]

Timing/Date: [Insert date – within recommended 3–6 months of Assembly report]

I. Citizens’ Assembly Acknowledgement

The Gambia is grateful for the work done by the North Bank Region Citizens’ Assembly and through this, formally acknowledges the Assembly as a legitimate and representative deliberative process. We commend the citizens for investing their time, commitment, and constructive engagement in addressing complex climate and environmental challenges affecting the North Bank Region.

II. Summary of the Government Consideration Process

This response reflects:

- Review of the Citizens’ Assembly Climate Recommendations Report;
- Consultation with relevant Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs);
- Identify alignment with relevant national development and climate policy frameworks.;
- Feasibility, resourcing, and implementation pathways assessment.

III. Response to Assembly Recommendations

Recommendation-by-Recommendation Response Table

A s s e m b l y Recommendation	G o v e r n m e n t Position	R a t i o n a l e	R e s p o n s i b l e Institution(s)	I n d i c a t i v e Timeline
Recommendation 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted with Modification			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Accepted			
Recommendation 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted with Modification			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Accepted			

(Repeat as necessary)

IV. Promises to carry out

The government agrees to the following for recommendations that are accepted or accepted with changes:

- Include actions in relevant sector plans and budgets;
- Assign lead and supporting institutions;
- Set up ways for coordination at the regional, district, and community levels;
- Report progress to the public at set times.

V. Arrangements for Governance and Follow-Up

Government will:

- Identify a central institution for the coordination of follow-up;
- Collaborate with Regional and District Climate Resilience Committees were suggested by the Assembly;
- Report back on progress and issues identified to the members of the Assembly and the general public;
- Contribute to monitoring and learning processes in order to support future citizens' assemblies.

VI. Talking to the Public

This response will be:

- Made public on official government websites;
- Shared with Assembly members and local officials;
- Spread through community and media briefings.

VII. Final Thoughts

Government looks upon the North Bank Region Citizens' Assembly as an excellent means of engendering popular participation in government in The Gambia and pledges to make the citizen-state dialogue more robust through clear, open, and inclusive procedures.

Signed by:

[Name]

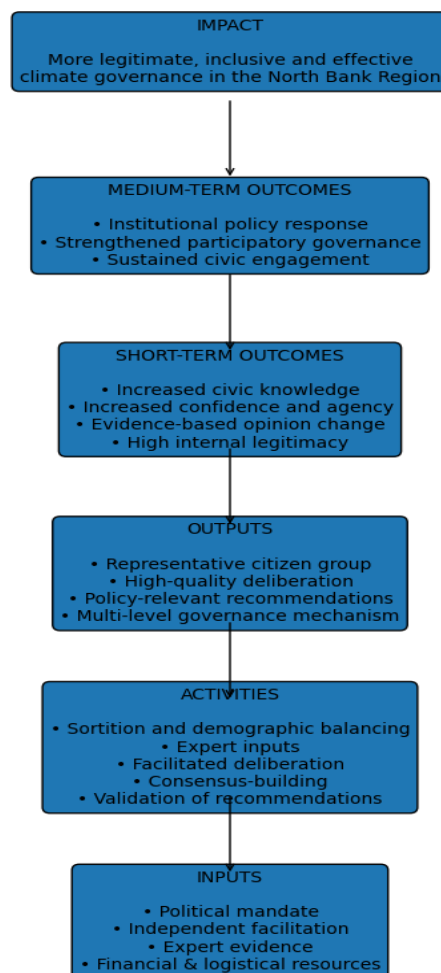
[Title]

[Institution]

3. Theory Of Change

A. Graphical Theory of Change

Figure A1. Theory of Change – Kerewan Citizens' Assembly



B. LOG FRAME-STYLE RESULTS FRAMEWORK (DONOR-READY)

Table A1. Results Framework – Kerewan Citizens’ Assembly

Results Level	Statement	Key Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
IMPACT	More legitimate, inclusive and effective climate governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of citizen-informed policies • Improved trust in governance processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy documents • Follow-up surveys 	Political commitment to participatory governance
OUTCOME (Medium-term)	Citizen recommendations influence policy and governance practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal policy responses issued • Governance mechanism operationalised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government response statements • Committee TORs 	Institutions respond formally to recommendations
OUTCOME (Short-term)	Increased civic knowledge, confidence and legitimacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • $\geq 90\%$ report learning and opinion change • $\geq 80\%$ increased confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre/post surveys • KIIs 	Participants engage openly and in good faith
OUTPUTS	Quality deliberation and actionable recommendations produced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations published • Governance mechanism proposed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembly Report • Validation records 	Facilitation remains neutral and inclusive
ACTIVITIES	Structured deliberation and learning process delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sessions held as planned • Expert inputs delivered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation notes • Attendance records 	Logistical and environmental risks manageable
INPUTS	Resources and conditions for Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding secured • Facilitators and experts engaged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial records • Contracts 	Timely funding and institutional cooperation

C. THEORY OF CHANGE ASSUMPTIONS – VALIDATION AGAINST FINDINGS

Table A2. ToC Assumptions and Evidence

ToC Assumption	Evidence from Evaluation	Strength
Random selection enhances legitimacy	100% rated selection as <i>Very Fair</i> ; strong KII validation	Very strong
Neutral facilitation enables equality of voice	100% rated facilitation <i>Completely Neutral</i>	Very strong
Citizens can engage with complex evidence	90% reported learning and opinion change	Very strong
Deliberation builds civic confidence	83.3% much more confident; 100% willing to participate again	Strong
Recommendations are policy-relevant	96.7% believe influence likely; experts agree	Strong
Policy uptake requires response mechanisms	Identified gap across surveys and KIIs	Confirmed risk

4. Qualitative Key Informant Interview (KII) Analysis

4.1 Purpose of the Annex

This annex presents the full qualitative evidence base underpinning the evaluation findings reported in the main body of the report. In line with international good practice particularly the reporting approach used in Northern Ireland Citizens’ Assembly evaluations this annex contains:

- Detailed methodological documentation for the KII component;
- Full thematic coding structure;
- Extended, verbatim-light illustrative quotations;
- A systematic mapping of qualitative findings to the evaluation questions.

The main report retains analytical judgments and concise paraphrases, while this annex provides transparency, depth, and auditability for technical audiences and donors.

4.2 Methodological Detail: KII Component

4.2.1 KII Design and Rationale

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted to generate explanatory qualitative insight into how the Citizens’ Assembly functioned in practice, how it was experienced by different stakeholder groups, and how its outputs are perceived within governance systems.

The KII component complements survey findings by addressing “why” and “how” questions, rather than measuring prevalence or magnitude.

4.2.2 Respondent Categories

KIIs were conducted with purposively selected respondents from four groups:

1. **Assembly participants** (citizens);
2. **Facilitators and organisers;**
3. **Expert speakers;**
4. **Institutional and policy stakeholders** (MDAs, local authorities, governance actors).

This ensured triangulation across experiential, operational, technical, and institutional perspectives.

4.2.3 Data Collection

- Semi-structured interview guides were used (see KII Questionnaire);
- Interviews focused on perceptions of fairness, deliberation quality, learning, recommendation feasibility, and governance integration;
- Interviews were conducted confidentially to encourage candid reflection.

4.2.4 Data Analysis

- Transcripts and notes were coded thematically using a deductive–inductive approach;
- A priori codes were derived from evaluation questions and deliberative democracy standards;
- Emergent themes were incorporated where consistently observed;
- Findings were validated through cross-respondent comparison.

4.3 Thematic Coding Framework

Theme Code	Theme Title	Description
T1	Inclusiveness & Sortition	Perceptions of fairness, equality, representativeness
T2	Facilitation Quality	Neutrality, structure, voice management

T3	Deliberative Experience	Respect, disagreement, reasoning
T4	Learning & Opinion Change	Knowledge gain, perspective shifts
T5	Civic Confidence & Empowerment	Confidence, agency, participation
T6	Recommendation Quality	Practicality, coherence, relevance
T7	Governance Integration	Institutional fit, feasibility
T8	Policy Uptake Risks	Barriers, response gaps
T9	External Legitimacy	Public trust, awareness
T10	Comparative Reflections	International parallels

4.4 Extended Qualitative Findings with Illustrative Quotations

4.4.1 Inclusiveness and Procedural Legitimacy (T1)

Respondents consistently described the random selection (sortition) process as foundational to legitimacy.

“Because none of us chose ourselves, nobody felt higher than the other. That made people speak freely.”

(Assembly participant)

Facilitators emphasised that sortition reduced social hierarchy and political suspicion:

“You could see very early that people were not performing for status. They were reasoning.”

(Facilitator)

Analytical Insight: Inclusiveness was not merely procedural but experientially real, enabling equal participation.

4.4.2 Facilitation and Deliberative Quality (T2–T3)

Facilitation was universally described as neutral, structured, and enabling.

“Even when people disagreed, it never became personal. The facilitators always brought it back to reasons.”

(Expert speaker)

Observers noted deliberate techniques to protect quieter voices:

“Those who were quiet on day one were leading discussions by day three.”

(Organiser)

Analytical Insight: Deliberation met core international standards of neutrality, equality of voice, and reason-giving.

4.4.3 Learning, Opinion Change, and Civic Confidence (T4–T5)

Participants framed the Assembly as a **learning journey**, not an advocacy space.

“Before, I knew the problem. Now I know why it happens and what can be done.”
(Assembly participant)

Institutional respondents observed increased civic confidence:

“These citizens are now speaking like policy people, not complainers.”
(Institutional stakeholder)

Analytical Insight: The Assembly functioned as a civic capacity-building intervention.

4.4.4 Recommendation Quality and Feasibility (T6)

Experts and policymakers consistently rated recommendations as realistic and aligned.

“These are not wish lists. They are things institutions can actually work with.”
(Policy stakeholder)

The multi-level governance mechanism was highlighted as a strength:

“The community–district–region structure makes implementation thinkable.”
(Expert speaker)

Analytical Insight: Recommendation credibility is high; feasibility depends on governance follow-through.

4.4.5 Governance Integration and Policy Uptake Risks (T7–T8)

Respondents identified structural risks outside the Assembly itself:

“Without a response duty, good recommendations can still sit on shelves.”
(Institutional stakeholder)

Analytical Insight: Policy influence is plausible but contingent on formal response mechanisms.

4.5 KII Findings Matrix Mapped to Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Question	Key Qualitative Findings	Strength of Evidence
Was the Assembly inclusive and legitimate?	Sortition reduced hierarchy, enhanced trust, and enabled equality of voice	Very Strong
Was deliberation high-quality?	Neutral facilitation, respectful disagreement, evidence-based reasoning	Very Strong
Did participants learn and change views?	Clear learning trajectories and reflective opinion change	Strong
Did the Assembly build civic confidence?	Increased confidence, agency, and engagement beyond the Assembly	Strong
Are recommendations credible and feasible?	Practical, policy-aligned, institutionally intelligible	Strong
Is policy uptake likely?	Possible but dependent on formal response frameworks	Moderate
What are the main risks?	Lack of response duty, budget linkage, and ownership	Consistent

4.6 Summary Qualitative Judgment

The qualitative KII evidence **strongly corroborates** the quantitative findings and adds explanatory depth. The Citizens’ Assembly performed exceptionally well in terms of legitimacy, deliberation, learning, and recommendation quality. The principal constraints lie outside the deliberative process, particularly in post-assembly governance arrangements and communication.