

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

Progress Report



Q1 2022 Update
January to March 2022



The Youth Empowerment Project in a nutshell

In 2017, the Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) was launched to support the development of the Gambian economy by (i) enhancing employability and self-employment opportunities of youth, with a focus on vocational training and the creation of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), (ii) creating and improving employment opportunities in selected sectors through value addition and internationalization, thereby addressing the root causes of irregular migration among youth in The Gambia, and by (iii) coordinating a broad communication campaign of the joint programme “Make it in the Gambia” that aims to promote attractive employment and income opportunities for Gambian youth.

The project takes a market-driven approach and focuses on traditional sectors such as agriculture and tourism while also helping to diversify the Gambian economy by supporting “new” promising sectors including the creative and digital services industries. YEP is implemented by the International Trade Centre in collaboration with the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (MOTIE) and the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) of the Republic of The Gambia.

The graph below provides an overview of the YEP results areas:

 R1 IMPROVED EMPLOYABILITY AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH	 R2 INCREASED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ALONG SELECTED VALUE CHAINS	 R3 PROMOTE THE CONCEPT “TEKKI FII – MAKE IT HERE”: MAKE IT IN THE GAMBIA
 1.1 Skills upgraded through technical and vocational training programmes	 2.1 Improved compliance of Gambian products to international standards and market requirements	 3.1. The activities, opportunities and results of the Action are widely communicated upon at national and international levels
 1.2 Entrepreneurship promoted among youth through business skills training and support programmes	 2.2 Improved MSME productive capacities	
	 2.3 Market linkages activated	
	 2.4 Improved strategic direction and national ownership for job-centered growth	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

						
Skills	Entrepreneurship	Quality	Productive Capacities	Market Linkages	Strategic Direction	Communication
p.5	p.7	p.9	p.9	p.10	p.12	p.14

HIGHLIGHTS



Highlights in January to March 2022



122 youths completing a technical and/or vocational training programme or apprenticeship



122



226 youths benefitting from entrepreneurship services and business advisory support

226



Skills development

1 Gambia's first apprentice framework in tailoring validated

710 Spots for vocational training made available



Entrepreneurship

104 Women and Youth participate in a mentorship component next to entrepreneurship training

70 Enterprises participated in a B2B matching



Market linkages

58 Enterprises participated on Market linkage activities

1 Trade Fair with a Green Village constructed using CSBE technology



Communication

47,900 people reached on Facebook

47,500 Impressions on Twitter

TEKKI FII STORIES



Inmates profit from micro gardening and soap making training

Inmates of Mile 2 Central Prison participated in a three-week programme on micro-gardening, soap production and entrepreneurship. The training promoted their re-integration into the community. The importance of the trainings in reducing a cycle of recidivism has been recognised by a visit of The First Lady of the Republic of the Gambia.

“Mistakes have been made. We are now learning from them and ready to make amends. This project is a life-changer”, one inmate shared.

<https://yep.gm/blog/chance2change-youth-empowerment-project-facilitates-skill-development-behind-bars>



Kankurang Festival promotes tourism in The Gambia

The Kankurang Festival is a cornerstone for tourism while preserving the cultural heritage on the Janjanbureh island. The festival is about the Kankurang, a protective spirit and guarantor of young boys. The event provides revenue streams to hospitality providers, tour guides and souvenir vendors. Presiding over the official opening ceremony held on 29 January 2022, Vice President Ms. Isatou Touray said: *“The support by YEP has been a big boost and the Janjanbureh Festival has grown to be one of the most anticipated festivals in the year.”*

<https://yep.gm/blog/janjanbureh-kankurang-festival-promotes-gambian-culture-and-heritage-boost-tourism>



Trade Fair Gambia International boosts Adama Ceesay's sales

Adama Ceesay participated for the first time in the Trade Fair Gambia International, the biggest annual trade event in The Gambia and sponsored by YEP. Ms. Ceesay is one of them with her businesses in groundnut oil, groundnut paste and roasted groundnut. Within the first week, she sold nearly all her products. Currently, Adama Ceesay is employing eight young employees. For the future she is planning to have a larger factory to grow her business.

"It [Trade Fair Gambia International] was a surreal experience for me.", Adama Ceesay shares.

<https://yep.gm/blog/trade-fair-gambia-international-window-opportunity-adama>



Progress in Q1 2022



1.1 SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The skills development component of YEP focuses on strengthening the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions in The Gambia, enhancing training curricula and rolling-out training programmes and apprenticeship schemes to youth. The training programmes primarily aim to provide youth with the skill sets required to find employment and to fulfil the skill needs in priority sectors of YEP. The component builds on the findings of the Youth and Trade Development Roadmap, which was developed under YEP, including its findings on occupations demanded in the priority sectors.

Cross-sector

- In partnership with the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA), ITC held a workshop with sector experts to review and validate the Gambia's first apprentice framework in tailoring. The framework aims to strengthen quality and the standardisation of skills training and to improve products and services in the garment sector to better compete internationally.



The Skills for Youth Employment (SkYE) Fund

- The second round of the SkYE Fund phased out as all students have completed their theoretical and practical training components. Out of the 666 students who graduated from 16 different programmes, 379 either found an employment or became self-employed.
- For the third round of the SkYE Fund, 8 training providers continue to deliver 26 programmes to a total of 710 trainees. The institutions are the Gambia Technical Training Institute, Sterling Technical Training Centre, Gaye Njoro, Indian Institute of Hardware Technology, Crab Island, Gambia Telecommunications and Multimedia Institute, Smart Professional and Golden Hands. The training programmes cover a broad range



of technical skills sought after in the Gambia labour market such as mechanics, construction, electrical and satellite installation, catering, tailoring, hairdressing, or digital technology.

- In total, 100 TVET graduates benefitted from skills training delivered in partnership with Gamjobs. The training included elements of interpersonal and management skills as well as good techniques for the job search and interviews.
- On 15 January, 300 trainees graduated from Gaye Njoro Skills Academy in Farafenni Centre in the North Bank Region. The training covered tailoring, catering and hairdressing under the SkYE 2 training. The ceremony was attended by the Regional Governor.
- On 18 January 2022, 138 youth graduated from the Sterling Technical Training Centre under SKYE 2. During the graduation ceremony, 168 youth trained at seven TVET centres received toolkits to start their own businesses.



ICT

- Together with IT ecosystem players, the Sector Skills Council ran a Software Development Course for 12 students. The course is facilitated by YEP partner Binibii and include a learning curriculum and a 3-month internship at eight top software firms in the country.



Tourism

- The Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute (GTHI) commenced a country wide training programme in hospitality for 714 tourism professionals. The programme includes backstopping support for ITC supported youth centres and the training of hospitality service providers in communities along the Ninki Nanka Trail. The aim is to create employment, and a skilled workforce to strengthen the quality of hospitality products and service and extend the economic benefits of tourism upriver.



- ITC in partnership with the Institute for Travel and Tourism of The Gambia launched a training of trainers on Community Based Tourism (CBT). The trainees include master trainers from public tourism institutions, community youth leaders and tourism lecturers from training institutions.



Construction

- On 5 February 2022, 24 youth graduated from a training on CSEB production and use and masonry in partnership with Kanifing Municipal Council and Earth Builders' Association. The training included the construction of a dome making for a bakery. Followed by the graduation, the 24 graduates received immediate employment offers by three companies present during the graduation.



1.2 ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The entrepreneurship component of YEP is a cross-sectoral component aiming at developing the entrepreneurship support ecosystem in The Gambia and at supporting young Gambians in starting and growing their businesses. Activities under this component include cross-sectoral, as well as sector-specific initiatives in the priority sectors.

The Andandoor Programme

- To enhance the training capacity of entrepreneurship trainers across the country, Gambia Chamber of Commerce (GCCCI) implemented a training of trainers with support of YEP. The training included modules on generating a business idea, starting a business, and formalising a business. The 10 trainers were drawn from all regions of the country except the Central River Region (CRR).
- In partnership with YEP, Coaches of Influence Foundation (COIF) conducted an entrepreneurship training for 62 women and for 92 youths from Central River Region,

North Bank Region, Lower River Region, and West Coast Region. In addition, 42 youth are youths' beneficiaries are taking part in a virtual mentorship programme and 62 women participate in an onsite one-on-one as well as group mentoring.

Access to finance

- GAIN organised a day network session for potential investors and MSMEs. The event was a good platform for GAIN to showcase its work and selling the idea for potential investors to join the network. Members of the banking sector, of relatively big companies and of the MSMEs took part in GAIN's activities to prepare them for investors met at a cocktail evening.

ICT

- The YEP Tech cohort welcomed four new start-ups: Mam Binta Janneh, founder of Brightworld Modest; Hadik Joshic, founder of Baytech; Lamin Darboe, founder of SkyNet and Adama Marong, founder of Smartworld. The entrepreneurs are undergoing a 3-months ideation coaching.
- On 24 March 2022, the YEP-supported Open Innovation Event organized by ITAG in collaboration with GCCI took place. The event under the theme "Digital Transformation" was dedicated to B2B matching between SMEs in different sectors. The event opened by Minister Ebrima Sillah of the Ministry of Communications & digital economy (MOICI) gathered more than 70 participants, including 20 tech companies.



Youth Centres

- In January 2022, the youth centre in Janjanbureh was handed over to the Centre Management Committee after completion of the renovation works. The youth centre is now operational and includes accommodation, a resource centre with a fully equipped IT lab, a recreational hall, a craft workshop, and a restaurant.
- The reconstruction work at the youth centre in Farafenni is ongoing. Works are expected to be completed in August 2022. Like Janjanbureh, the Farafenni Youth Centre will have a new accommodation block, recreational hall, a restaurant, a basketball court, and training rooms.



2.1 QUALITY

The quality component of YEP aims at promoting quality, productivity improvement and food safety in businesses by Gambian youth, as well as across the focus sectors of the project.

Poultry

- YEP delivered a 3-days packaging training for 24 members of the Young Poultry Farmers Association at NaNA Hall. The training provided guidance on appropriate packaging of eggs, processed poultry meat and related safety to access new and more distant markets.



2.2 PRODUCTIVE CAPACITIES

This component of YEP aims at supporting companies in the YEP priority sectors in enhancing their productive capacities, aiming to strengthen the businesses and the employment opportunities.

Fashion

- YEP in partnership with the Bakoteh Community and Kanifing Municipal Council continue to make significant progress in the establishment of centre of excellence (Bakoteh Production and Innovation Centre). The centre will support the production and commercialisation of textile products, training in garment construction and woven textile, serve as a hub for MSMEs to source production of standard and quality fashion products while fostering market linkages and export.



Tourism

- On 23 March, a community-based tourism facilitation manual was launched. Based on experiences and best practices from the ITC supported community-based tourism initiatives in Myanmar and The Gambia, ITC have developed a community-based tourism universal manual for inclusive tourism., The manual will foster tourism development, assist CBT facilitators, and support curriculum development of training institutions on CBT.

- The Tourism Livelihood Programme supported by ITC made progress in improving livelihoods and MSMEs in the informal sector. So far, 415 MSMEs received training in business plan and proposal development, 100 MSMEs in digital literacy and 100 MSMEs in marketing and digitalisation. 28 executives of 8 tourism associations were individually coached and are currently supported in developing 3-year strategy plans for their associations. The support to improve critical infrastructures for sector associations have also commence.



Poultry

- A PUM poultry expert provided onsite advice and coaching to 6 poultry farms. The expert conducted a training session with four poultry farms that were training a group of young entrepreneurs on poultry management.
- With the support of ITC, five poultry farmers from the Young Poultry Farmers Association and a representative from the Department of Livestock Services went on a 3-day study mission to Dakar. The objectives were to learn and observe from the Senegalese poultry sector and visit the SIAGRO agro-food exhibition. The participants also visited a hatchery and a breeding farm.



2.3 MARKET LINKAGES

The market linkages component of the project aims at connecting companies in the priority sectors with domestic and international markets, with the aim of increasing the income of entrepreneurs and the employment opportunities in the sectors.

Trade Fair Gambia International

- The Gambia's Vice President Dr. Isatou Touray inaugurated the Gambian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCl) Trade Fair Grounds and opened the YEP Trade Fair Gambia International. On her visit of the TekkiFii Youth Pavilion, the SheTrades Pavilion, and the Green Village, she explored the great products and services young Gambians have to offer. Tekki Fii supported the 65 youths including 46 women owned businesses in exhibiting at the fair.



- For the first time, a pavilion dedicated to enterprises and organization working towards a green economy was constructed using CSEB technology.
- This year's Youth Day on 26 March, organized by YEP, had the theme of green economy and sustainability. The event inspired visitors with a sustainable art exhibition and several interactive workshops on green and circular economy such as seed ball making, and a climate crisis escape room. Visitors were very interested in learning more about circular economy and sustainable businesses.



Tourism

- Five years from its maiden edition, the Janjangbureh Kankurang festival has become an inherent part of the Gambia's cultural calendar. The Vice President of the Gambia and the Minister for Tourism and Culture arrived for the opening ceremony on 28 January. The YEP supported festival is part of a wider effort to boost inclusive and sustainable tourism, enhance the tourism product offering and creating new opportunities in the rural Gambia.
- As part of the EU-Africa Business Forum week, the EU in partnership with ITC and industry stakeholders organised a side event focusing on investment opportunities in The Gambia's tourism sector. With the Gambia 'The Smiling Coast of Africa' being the world's climate leader and a destination striving for inclusive and sustainable tourism, the event was well attended by the private sector, diaspora including business leaders, and investors across Europe and Africa.
- On 4 February, the second edition of Dance Gambia Championship held its final performance. The series supported by YEP included skills and business training in branding and entrepreneurship to 75 participants. Flex Fusion Entertainment with support of YEP continues to further leverage on linkages with the tourism sectors for employment of participants.





2.4 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Strategic Direction component of the project has three objectives. Setting up engagement platforms for stakeholders for sector development planning; formulation of strategic trade development action plans for priority sectors; and building capacities and provide tools for implementations of sector development initiatives.

Tourism

- In early 2022, engagements continued with the Gambia Tourism Board, the Spanish Red Cross Society, and the Gambia Red Cross Society on the Tourism Livelihood Support Programme. The entrepreneurship training programme was launched in the first quarter to be followed by the activation of the grant's component in the second quarter. This joint programme targets executives from eight tourism associations and 415 members affected by the COVID 19 pandemic, including juice pressers, hairdressers, fruit sellers, boat owners at Denton bridge, bird watchers, national tourist guides as well as craft producers and vendors.
- The ITC worked with stakeholders notably the EU, Gambia Tourism Board (GT Board) Gambia Hotel Association (GHA), Gambian Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA) and the Belgium Luxemburg Gambia Chamber of Commerce to prepare The Gambia for the EU Africa Business Forum "Invest in The Gambia" workshop described above. Stakeholders jointly developed a presentation and video for the event.
- On 2 March, the Institute of Travel and Tourism of the Gambia (ITTOG) and ITC held jointly a meeting with the Mayoress of Banjul to discuss potential collaboration to enhance community-based tourism in Banjul. Discussions focused on the programme scope and objectives. The Banjul City Council welcomed the initiative and agreed to also link it to the Greening the City Project in Banjul.

Agriculture

- Building on the successes achieved in 2020 and 2021 in connecting onion farmers to markets by using the services of logistics companies contracted by ITC, SheTrades and Instituto Marquês de Valle Flôr (IMVF), ITC, Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), and United Purposes held several meetings with MOTIE to explore how to support sourcing from local onion farmers by providing data to inform policy decision on the option of a moratorium. The presentation ITC made to MOTIE on March 25 highlighted the 2020 and 2021 results, looked ahead to 2022 by presenting three scenarios and lessons learned, and provided a path forward including consideration of a moratorium during the peak harvest season.

Operation of production centres

- On 13 January 2022, the Joint Management Board of the Bakoteh Production and Innovation Centre (BPIC) was inaugurated in the presence of the Deputy Mayor of the Kanifing Municipal Council (KMC). The Board is chaired by Bakary B. Darboe, the Manager for Community Services at KMC, and has seven members. The board consists

of representatives from the private sector, representatives of the community, and the Ministry of Trade, Industry Regional Integration and Employment. It is the highest policy-making body and will support the implementation, management, growth, and sustainability of the centre. During the first quarter, the constitution was adopted, and significant progress was made in developing a three-year strategy plan including a six-month acceleration phase to kick start operation.

Project team & governance

- YEP supported the annual MOTIE retreat that was held during the first week of January. On 7 January, the ITC team joined MOTIE and provided a presentation of the annual workplan followed by a discussion on synergies to ensure interventions are anchored the national development agenda.
- In March, the EU Ambassador travelled several days within the Gambia and visited sites supported by the Tekki Fii Programme. Engagements included discussions with beneficiaries, implementation partners as well as other stakeholders. Positive feedback received was particularly related to the work on hospitality and community-based tourism in Janjanbureh.
- On 31 March, the ITC Gambia team held a retreat to strengthen team building and work on the strategic outlook both at the corporate level and in the Gambian field office. The team shared key milestones for 2022 and discussed possible improvements for internal knowledge management.





3. COMMUNICATION

This component comprises the communication, awareness raising and visibility work under YEP. It has the goal to promote economic opportunities in The Gambia amongst youth and to promote the Tekki Fii campaign both locally and internationally.

Capacity building at partner institutions

- At the beginning of 2022, YEP initiated a training on Media and Communications for implementing partners to address challenges and increase sustainability. The training partner Centre for Policy, research, and Strategic Studies (CepRass) has completed the pre-training consultation. CepRass conducted an online survey and focused group consultation to understand underlying challenges and develop a curriculum to best suit the needs of the organisations.



Videos

- During the Trade Fair Gambia International, 15 short vox pops were produced. This activity garnered the voices, stories, and opinions of young at the trade fair, who in unique ways have been affected by irregular migration. These videos are being shared on the YEP social media platforms. Listen in to one of them: <https://twitter.com/yepgambia/status/1536318333284405248?s=20&t=Op8TfjuQ0XyNq4cwARmIKw>
- To amplify the impact of YEP in the lives of young and the growth trend it has set for them, ten vlogs were produced. These vlogs documented the stories of different entrepreneurs across sectors. Watch one of them: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQFi2oFZhb8&feature=youtu.be>

Social media

- Social media continues to be one of the main channels of communication to reach young people in The Gambia, partners, and stakeholders. On Twitter and Facebook mainly, updates on opportunities, success stories, key results and key messages are regularly shared.
- From January to March 2022, YEP has reached 47,906 people on Facebook and 47,500 impressions on Twitter. The project currently has 12,239 and 8,725 followers on Facebook and Twitter, respectively.

Email newsletter

- Activities and opportunities of YEP were covered in the ITC Gambia newsletter with currently 3,008 subscribers.

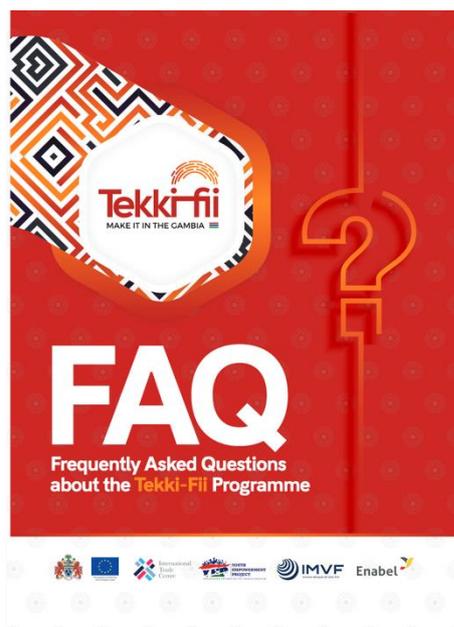
Print material

- As part of this year's Trade Fair Gambia International Communication initiatives, the project produced a booklet with information of vendors supported by the Tekki Fii partners. This booklet, which was widely shared, was set to serve as a visibility tool for young entrepreneurs during and after the trade fair. In addition, selfie frame was provided to encourage trade fair visitors to take pictures and build engagement on social media.

<https://yep.gm/storage/app/uploads/public/62a/b10/a1a/62ab10a1ae13e440749049.pdf>

- To further the Tekki Fii advocacy efforts, ITC produced a frequently asked questions leaflet to address key concerns of the public while providing an avenue for hope and drive for development.

<https://yep.gm/storage/app/uploads/public/62d/14a/874/62d14a874c351987827694.pdf>



Progress against key project indicators

	Progress Q1 2022	Total progress to date	Project Target
R.1.1 Skills upgraded through technical and vocational training programmes			
Number of training institutions that improved training programmes and/or operational performance	0	17	18
Number of youths completing a project funded technical and/or vocational training programme or apprenticeship	122	4,250	5,350
Number of young returning migrants supported through skills training	1	110	300
R.1.2 Entrepreneurship promoted among youth through business skills training and support programmes			
Number of youths benefitting from entrepreneurship services and business advisory support	226	4,547	4,400
Number of young returning migrants supported through entrepreneurship support	13	86	150
Number of youth centres refurbished and offering improved services	0	1	2
R.2.1 Improved compliance of Gambian products to international standards and market requirements			
Number of MSMEs sensitized on programmes on quality improvement and food safety	24	381	250
Number of Trainers trained in quality related programmes	0	108	30
Number of MSMEs certified	0	1	20
R.2.2 Improved MSME productive capacities			
Number of MSMEs demonstrating improved business practices (e.g. sales / production volumes, etc.)	24	987	540
Number of production centres strengthened or created	0	0	1

	Progress Q1 2022	Total progress to date	Project Target
R.2.3 Market linkages activated			
Number of participating enterprises on market linkage activities	61	1,062	270
R.2.4 Improved strategic direction and national ownership for job-centred growth			
Number of stakeholders participating in sector development initiatives	0	339	100
Number of strategic trade development action plans developed	0	5	4
Number of public-private youth platforms created / strengthened	0	5	3
R.3.1 The activities, opportunities and results of the Action are widely communicated upon national and international levels			
Number of Gambian citizens reached by the Tekki Fii campaign - Number of migrants or potential migrants reached by information campaign on migration and risks linked to irregular migration	0 ¹	239,297	200,000
Number of international media pieces published concerning the Tekki Fii campaign	0 ¹	8	50

¹ This indicator is updated at the end of each year.