

# YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

## Progress Report



Q2 2021 Update  
April to June 2021



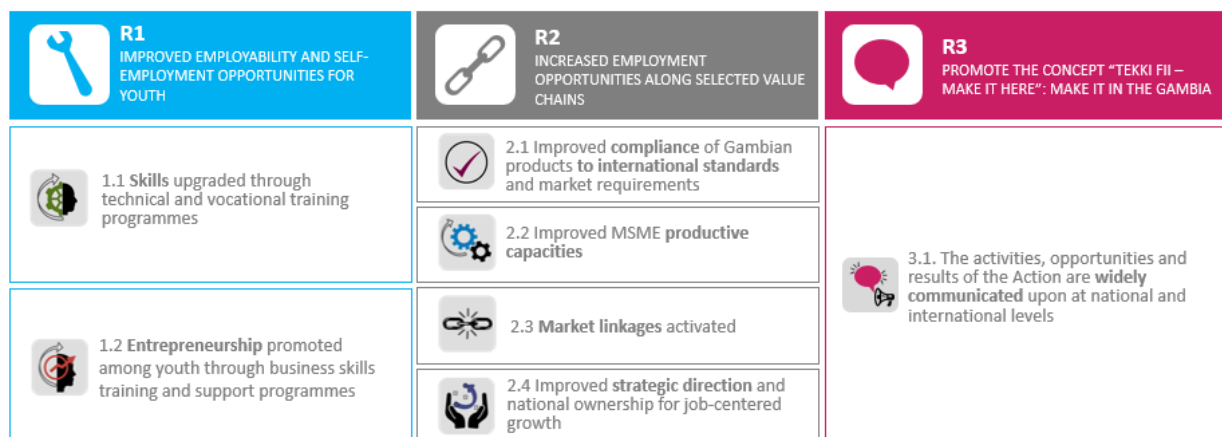
This project is funded by the European Union




## 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:



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## HIGHLIGHTS

### Highlights in Q2

**170**

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

**171**

youths benefitting from entrepreneurship services and business advisory support



#### Vocational training

- 620** youths started practical work placements
- 100** youths graduated from food processing training



#### ICT sector

- 134** youths graduated from Indian Institute of Hardware Technology
- 8** tech-entrepreneurs supported



#### Market linkages

- 38** Entrepreneurs prepared for national trade fair
- 10** Export coaches trained
- 46** MSMEs coached on export



#### Communication

- 40,598** people reached on Facebook
- 44,300** impressions on Twitter

### Covid-19 crisis mitigation in Q2



**65,000**

reusable face masks produced for YEP in Q2

**20,000**

facemasks handed over to the Gambia Tourism Board to support the tourism industry in its recovery

**1,364**

People benefiting from health prevention and/or socio-economic mitigation response measures

## TEKKI FII STORIES



### Fatou Lowe harnesses her sewing skills

*“Often, I got to the verge of closing my business because I could not see the benefits and returns. Now, with this programme, I have the right skills and expertise to properly manage my business, support myself and my family.”*

- Fatou Lowe

At the age of 15, Fatou Lowe had to drop out of school. She decided to join a tailoring shop in her area to learn sewing. Today, at the age of 30, Fatou is a well-known seamstress. Through YEP, she improved her financial management skills.



<https://yep.gm/blog/end-one-road-led-fatou-lowee-new-promising-path>

### Modou Korka grows his hairdressing business

*“Through the Andandorr Programme, I have learnt better ways to manage my business and maintain a standard record of my earnings.”* - Modou Korka

Modou Korka currently manages two barbershops called China Man Barbershop in Bakau where he earns a living and trains other young people. Participating in the Andandorr Programme, he has developed skills to better manage his business.



<https://yep.gm/blog/tekki-fii-stories-instilling-hope-every-haircut>

## Ndey Fatou Jabang stirs up The Gambian entertainment industry

*“People think dance doesn’t pay the bills. I had to work on changing minds, not only on the importance of dance but also on its role in creating jobs.” - Ndey Fatou Jabang*

Ndey Fatou Jabang is the founder of Flex Fuzion Entertainment and The Dance Academy, The Gambia's first dance company. With the support of YEP, her team works on empowering youth in the creative industry.

<https://yep.gm/blog/championing-dance-entrepreneurship-gambia>





## Progress in Q2 2021

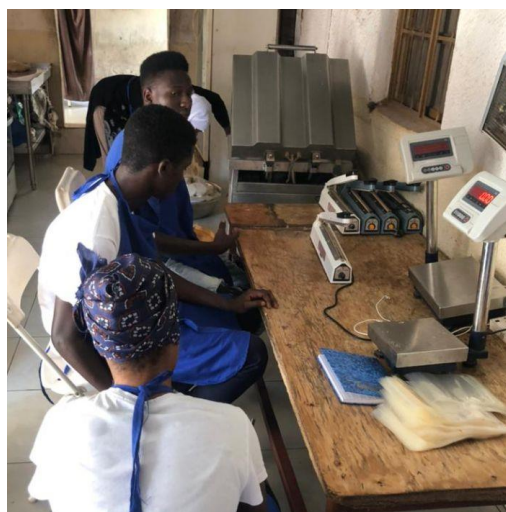


### 1.1 SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

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

- By June, 620 youths have completed their technical courses and started work placements in companies across the country, allowing them to gain meaningful work experience. Upon completion, the trainees will return to the training providers for their final examination and graduation.



#### ICT

- 134 youths graduated from Indian Institute of Hardware Technology Gambia (IIHT) in four ICT areas (Diploma in IT Technical Support, Diploma in Network Support, Diploma in Graphic Design and Diploma in Web Application Development). The graduation ceremony was held at the Baobab Hotel in Bijilo.

#### Security sector

- Two Gambian private security companies, Five Star Security and Prestige Security Gambia Limited, have partnered with YEP to train 200 to take up jobs in the private security sector. The 4-week training is starting in Q3 includes an introduction to the control of illicit substances, counter terrorism, first aid and CPR, fire safety, emergencies evacuation, self-defence and customer care.

#### The Skills for Youth Employment (SkYE) Fund

- In the last 3 months, 100 motivated Gambian youths graduated from a three-month training on food processing and vegetable production, provided by our partner Gambia Horticultural Enterprises (GHE). The trainees are expected to use the new skills to start their own businesses in their communities.
- For the third round of the SkYE Fund, ITC has concluded the selection of partners and courses to be delivered. Through SkYE 3, YEP will support 8 training providers to

deliver 26 programmes to 710 trainees. Trainings will start in September, following the school calendar in The Gambia. Training courses focus on growth sectors with high employment potential. The SkyE is a market led and performance-based funding mechanism for skills training. Selected training partners commit that at least 50% of the trainees get employment opportunities immediately after the training through different partnerships with the private sector.



## 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 Andandorr Programme

- YEP in collaboration with Innovate Gambia celebrated the completion of the first cohort of the **Andandorr Creative Industries Programme**. The 9-months accelerator programme included mentorship support, sector-specific training, and networking opportunities. At an exhibition, the 20 artists who showcased their products and competed in a pitch contest. Earlier in Q2, 20 entrepreneurs received monthly coaching and mentorship empowering them to build sustainable businesses in the creative industries. Awamary Khan, founder of Innovate Gambia provided the training in financial and staff management, business plan review, growth strategies, and digital marketing. In May, Nine photographers and videographers benefitted from a documentary storytelling masterclass as part of the Programme.
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- YEP partner Innovate Gambia continued hosting the Andandorr Talks, a monthly series engaging young entrepreneurs in the creative sectors to learn from leaders in their respective trade. The event series took place from January to May 2021 and featured, amongst others, the accomplished international actor Babou Ceesay, entrepreneur Talib Graves-Mann, and best-selling author Naya F. Powell.
  - In June, the **Andandorr Agribusiness Incubation Programme** was launched in partnership with Startup Incubator Gambia. The programme includes hands-on training on business development, competitiveness, sales, financial management, team building, business plans, strategy, and marketing. In addition, industry experts are invited to share their insights with the next generation of business leaders.

### Entrepreneurship ecosystem support

- In May, the Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA) staff participated in a training of trainers for the new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system that was adopted by the Gambian business support organizations.
- At the end of June, the CRM was officially launched by the Honourable Minister of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration & Employment (MOTIE). The CRM provides an ecosystem-wide tracking mechanism for entrepreneurs and business support organisations. It will help to monitor results, increase collaboration, reduce duplication and improve the service offering. The platform is part of the project's work on institutional strengthening and knowledge management in the Gambian entrepreneurship ecosystem.



### Access to finance

- Due to the large demand, the Tekki Fii Mini Grant Scheme suspended applications for two months in the beginning of 2021. The National Association of Cooperative Credit Unions Gambia (NACCUG) used the time to review a backlog of applications and prepare them for review by the Grants Committee. The scheme re-opened on 1 April and disbursements of grants are expected to resume in Q3 2021. Since its launch, the Tekki Fii Mini Grant Scheme has received over 1,200 applications and disbursed 421 grants.
- As of April 2021, ITC had unlocked over USD 225,000 of private capital in loans to youth-owned businesses through the YEP Mini Loans Scheme. Since the inception of the initiative, Social Development Fund (SDF) has disbursed 37 working capital and 8 equipment loans.
- The Gambia Angels Investors Network (GAIN) is growing as a player in the entrepreneurship ecosystem in The Gambia. GAIN is playing a role as an important actor for knowledge sharing and capacity building of companies and business support organizations. In Q2, GAIN offered one-to-one support to 13 entrepreneurs on the use of financial models and pitch deck templates.
- GAIN hosted their first annual general meeting, bringing together member investors t Birame Sock, an investment expert from San Francisco, shared her knowledge of investing in tech start-ups as special guest. From the discussion, the idea of rolling out a masterclass on investment topics related to the tech sector emerged.
- In April, GAIN and Vertis Capital in Dakar trained 24 high-growth entrepreneurs on investment. The six-day workshop focused on financial statements and investment documents such as term sheet, shareholder agreement, and convertible notes. The training equipped the participants with the required knowledge, tools, and frameworks for identifying fitting investment opportunities and grow their companies.



- Five BSOs completed a training of trainers "Building suitable Investment Readiness Programmes for Start-ups" in May. The training delivered in partnership with GAIN will help the organisations to support their clients in becoming ready for attracting external funding through training, mentoring, and networking.

## ICT

- In April, the YEP Tech component hosted its first virtual meetup which brought together participants from the 2020 KMC Challenge and the 2020/2021 tech start-up cohort. The goal of the event was to foster cooperation between the entrepreneurs and diversify their current networks.
- YEP Tech published its 2020/2021 start-up directory which shines the spotlight on bright and upcoming entrepreneurs of the Gambian tech scene. The directory shows milestones and important details of the featured start-ups. Explore the directory here:



- <https://www.yep.gm/storage/app/uploads/public/608/28a/f03/60828af031ec9812770175.pdf>
- YEP Tech has teamed up with Start-up Genome to feature the Gambian start-up ecosystem in the The Global Startup Ecosystem Report 2021. Startup Genome is a world-leading policy advisory and research organization for governments and public-private partnerships committed to accelerating the success of startup ecosystems across the world.
- The coaching of tech start-ups continued throughout the second quarter of 2021. An interactive training on start-up business valuation was facilitated by Adramé Ndione, an Africa focused finance and investment executive. The workshops focused on practical valuation methods. Four YEP Tech ideation start-ups benefited from a three-months coaching and training programme facilitated by Serign Omar Lowe, an experienced management coach. As result, three out of the four businesses were able to increase their number of staff. The participating companies reported substantial progress and even completion of their applications and websites during the coaching period. Six more advanced tech start-ups went through a coaching programme with a successful entrepreneur, business coach and angel investor. Birame Sock coached YEP Tech entrepreneurs on financial management, investment readiness, and scalability
- As part of the coaching series, the programme collaborated with some of the finest young Gambians excelling in the tech field and working for fortune 500 companies. Oumie Jawo, a senior software engineer at Microsoft, Serign Jobe, engineering leader at Facebook, and Tolulope Lawal, programme manager at Google, shared best practices for tech start-ups and SMEs.
- A second phase of digitalisation packages was rolled out to a cohort of eleven entrepreneurs. YEP Tech also organised a photography training supporting start-ups to visually improve their digital footprint including webpages and online trade show appearances. The virtual sessions were delivered by Aidan O'Neill, an experienced photographer and filmmaker.

- As part of the Andandorr support package, the tech entrepreneurs Joseph Gomez, founder of The Webway, Lamin Barrow, founder of Tixibit, and the freelancer Kabir Jallow were provided with a three-months co-working space at the Disruptive Lab. The office space offers a stable and conducive work environment, reliable internet connectivity and the opportunity to co-create with other entrepreneurs.
- As part of the partnership between YEP and Make3D, ten entrepreneurs continued benefitting from the 3D printing services to enhance their businesses.
- In May, Muhammed Ali Gaye, the winner of the YEP-supported competition “3D printing as an enhancement of local businesses” received an original Prusa i3 MK3S 3D printer, 10kg of Filament and operation and basic 3D design training. This support will allow him to boost his business in developing customized prosthetics, an area with great potential for 3D printing.
- Fatou Juka Darboe from Make3D presented their work on 3D printing technologies in The Gambia at the ITC Innovation Fair. In her talk, she introduced several applications of 3D printing and potential areas to incorporate the technology further in ITC’s entrepreneurship projects.
- With support of YEP, the Information Technology Association of the Gambia (ITAG) held its first virtual career fair. The attendees included students, education professionals, IT professionals, and MSMEs.
- The founders from Outboost, Baboucarr Njie, and Tecqil, Astou Ndey, were supported to take part in the West Africa Summit in Senegal and a preceding bootcamp. They exchanged with peers, met with potential partners, learnt from leading West African tech companies, and were invited to pitch to investors.



## 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.

- In June, YEP started a new collaboration with the Gambia Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA). In the coming months, FSQA will roll out training for food vendors, agricultural processing enterprises and tourism establishments on Good Hygiene Practices (GHP) including anti Covid-19 measures as well as export certifications. The capacity building is planned to lead to certification under national frameworks.
- YEP partnered with the Gambia Tourism Board, the Spanish and Gambian Red Cross, the Ministry of Health and others to support the tourism industry in its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The joint programme included a training of trainers for 443 service providers in tourism, both from the formal and informal sector. The training covered the implementation of mandatory and voluntary guidelines of infection prevention and control to ensure a safe environment for staff and tourists. The training also provided an opportunity to sensitise stakeholders on the importance of COVID-19 vaccination and to discuss challenges related to quality, health, and safety.



## 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

- In April, ITC in collaboration with textile experts in India organised a joint workshop for fashion designers in The Gambia and India. The workshop supported the improvement of the product development processes at the Bakoteh Production and Innovation Centre.

### Poultry

- 20 poultry farmers of the Andandorr Programme and members of the Young Farmers Association concluded a 5-week online training on advanced poultry management, facilitated by experts from PUM Netherlands. The training equipped participants with knowledge on avian influenza prevention, vaccination, farm economics, poultry marketing and development of business plans.



## 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.

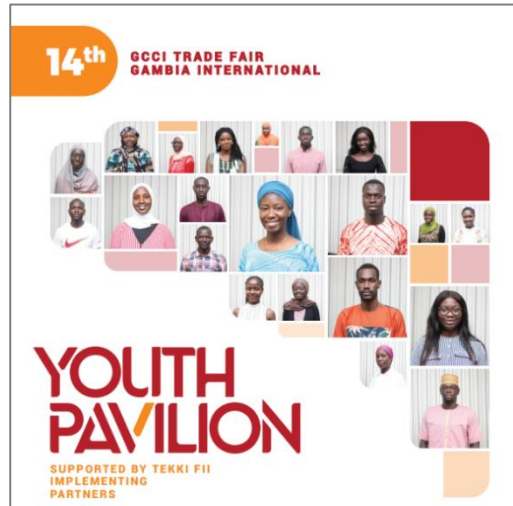
### Cross-sector

- From 22 May to 13 June, The Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI) organised the 14th Trade Fair Gambia International (TFGI) with support of partners including YEP. The trade fair and its Youth Pavilion, sponsored by the Tekki Fii partners, provided young entrepreneurs and associations the opportunity to showcase their businesses and network. The Youth Pavilion housed a wide range of products, services, and innovations from young entrepreneurs determined to make it in The Gambia. The inspiring booklet introducing some of the exhibiting entrepreneurs can be downloaded here:



<https://yep.gm/storage/app/uploads/public/60b/4a4/fba/60b4a4fbae6c1241959279.pdf>

- The project team was very pleased to welcome The Gambian President Adama Barrow at the official opening of the Trade Fair Gambia International which included a visit of the Tekki Fii Youth Pavillion.
- 38 YEP entrepreneurs and 10 skill associations taking part at the trade fair were supported through a pre-fair workshop. The training equipped them with knowledge and techniques in packaging, branding, sales, customer service and stall presentation.
- Similar to previous years, TFGI featured a Youth & Women Day which was supported by the project. During the day young entrepreneurs and skilled Gambians from different were spotlighted through a competition format. Isatou Jagana from Sweet Crepes, Sainabou Jallow from Africa Swag Collection, and the Baobab Youth Association took away the first prizes of the three competitions in food & beverages, fashion, and innovation.
- The Andandorr Export Advancement Programme (EAP) continued throughout Q2 2021. The Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA) recruited ten experienced national coaches who provided export advisory services to entrepreneurs in the fashion and the food & beverages sector with support from international experts.
- 24 selected young fashion designers and 22 entrepreneurs in food & beverages participated in a series of monthly training and mentoring, focused on branding, sustainable work practices, costing & pricing models, marketing positioning, technology, and network mapping. The future exporters also started producing marketing materials to promote their companies, brands, and products at regional and international showcase events to be held in September and October. The fashion designers are currently trained on designing and producing a cohesive collection to be showcases at the annual Fashion Weekend Gambia in December 2021.



### Tourism

- In support of “building forward better” in the tourism sector, YEP organized a press trip featuring the iconic Ninki Nanka Trail and a selection of community-based tourism products. The trip took place 26 to 28 May with international and regional travel journalists.

### Creative Industries

- In May, selected photographers and videographers embarked on a journey to capture The Gambia through their lens, applying various storytelling techniques. In partnership with the renowned photojournalist





and photographer, Jason Florio, participants benefited from on-the-job training, mentorship, and practical assignment. The content and exhibition will also feed into the marketing efforts for the tourism industry, particularly related to sustainable tourism and the diversification of source market and visitors.

- Photographers used the YEP-supported Creative Hub at the Bundung Youth Centre to take photographs of families during the Eid holidays in May. The Youth Centre is a community platform for youth to network and offers sport and entertainment activities. Thereby, the centre enhances community cohesion and youth wellbeing.
- The Gambia Cotton Trail together with YEP invited young talented artists to showcase their hand-woven cotton, used as canvas for their artistic expression. The exhibition opened its doors on 28 and 29 May at the Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute (GTHI).



## 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.

- On 16 June, representatives from the Government, development agencies, and the private sector met to discuss different approaches related to digitalisation in the horticulture and poultry value chains. The retreat which was supported by YEP and the GIZ ECOWAS project reviewed different projects, platforms and upcoming initiatives in support of data collection and management, monitoring, extension support, sharing or market price information and business linkages. The objective was to explore synergies and linkages between different projects while developing an overall government-led framework to drive the digitalization agenda. The retreat led to an agreement on increased inter-ministerial cooperation between MOTIE and MOA and a common approach and principles related to rolling out the digitalization support.
- YEP, in close collaboration with the JSF project, continued to provide technical support to the implementation of the National TVET Road Map through the National TVET Committee, Sector Skill Councils and the technical working group on the national TVET policy.



### 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.

#### Covid-19 awareness

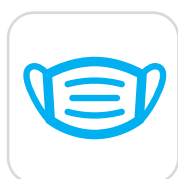
- As part of the project's efforts to raise awareness on COVID-19, videos featuring influential Gambians were produced to support acceptance of prevention measures. Four video clips and audio content are being distributed on social media, radio and TV networks, and through partner organisations.

#### Online and social media outreach

- Social media continues to be a very important means to reach young people in The Gambia, especially during the pandemic. Opportunities, activities, and awareness raising messages are regularly posted on the project's social media channels.
- In Q2, YEP reached 40,598 people on Facebook and had 44,300 impressions on Twitter. The project Facebook page currently has 11,014 followers and 9,568 likes.
- Activities and opportunities of YEP were covered in the ITC Gambia newsletter with currently counts 2,611 subscribers.

#### Print materials

- The project produced a booklet featuring the young entrepreneurs who exhibited at the Trade Fair Gambia International. The booklet does not only increase the visibility of the MSMEs and their products but also encourages young Gambians to follow an entrepreneurial path.



### 4. COVID RESPONSE

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, YEP provides both socio-economic response and health prevention measures against Covid-19. Notwithstanding the lifting of the state of emergency and the roll out of the vaccination campaign, the project continued to adjust activities as well as specific initiatives to support The Gambian population.

#### Horticulture market linkages

- YEP in collaboration with SheTrades Gambia and IMVF supported four logistics companies to link rural horticulture, mainly onion producers with urban buyers. The scheme allowed 1200 mainly women producers from 27 villages to sell 173.6 tons of produce worth 4.4 million GMD (around 86,000 USD).

### Production of facemasks

Four institutions completed the production of the below quantities of facemasks in Q2.

- Bakoteh Community Skills Centre: 20,000 pieces
- Presentation Girls: 15,000 pieces
- Insight Training Centre: 20,000 pieces
- Fajara Skills Development Centre: 10,000 pieces

The reusable facemasks are provided to implementing partners and government counterparts to meet needs in key sectors. The production of facemasks created 164 temporary jobs for trainees and graduates in garment construction in the various training centres. The TVET Centre *Presentation Girls* located in Banjul, engaged 16 students who were not able to pay their TVET enrolment fees with the production. This allowed them to continue with their certificate level programme. One of the students used the earnings to buy a tailoring machine and is now running her own tailoring workshop.



### COVID-19 preparedness of the tourism sector

ITC in collaboration with the Gambia Tourism Board, the Ministry of Health and the Spanish and Gambian Red Cross implemented a training of trainers series for 443 service providers and establishments in tourism industry. The target populations included both formal and informal sector representatives from the entire country. The training covered the implementation of mandatory and voluntary guidelines of infection prevention and control to ensure a safe environment for staff and tourists. The training also provided an opportunity to sensitise stakeholders on the importance of COVID-19 vaccination and to discuss challenges related to quality, health, and safety. YEP also handed over 20,000 reusable and locally made facemasks to the Gambia Tourism Board with a commitment for another 20,000 in September.

## Progress against key project indicators

	Progress Q2 2021	Total progress to date <sup>1</sup>	Project Target
<b>R.1.1 Skills upgraded through technical and vocational training programmes</b>			
Number of training institutions that improved training programmes and/or operational performance	1	17	18
Number of youths completing a project funded technical and/or vocational training programme or apprenticeship <sup>2</sup>	170	2,959	5,350
Number of young returning migrants supported through skills training	0	97	300
<b>R.1.2 Entrepreneurship promoted among youth through business skills training and support programmes</b>			
Number of youths benefitting from entrepreneurship services and business advisory support <sup>3</sup>	171	3,957	4,400
Number of young returning migrants supported through entrepreneurship support	0	71	150
Number of youth centres refurbished and offering improved services	0	0	2
<b>R.2.1 Improved compliance of Gambian products to international standards and market requirements</b>			
Number of MSMEs sensitized on programmes on quality improvement and food safety	0	250	250
Number of Trainers trained in quality related programmes	0	108	30
Number of MSMEs certified	0	1	20
<b>R.2.2 Improved MSME productive capacities</b>			
Number of MSMEs demonstrating improved business practices (e.g. sales / production volumes, etc.)	25	839	540
Number of production centres strengthened or created	0	0	1

<sup>1</sup> Total excludes repeat beneficiaries.

<sup>2</sup> This figure includes the number of young returning migrants supported through skills training.

<sup>3</sup> This figure includes the number of young returning migrants supported through entrepreneurship support.



	Progress Q1 2021	Total progress to date <sup>4</sup>	Project Target
<b>R.2.3 Market linkages activated</b>			
Number of participating enterprises on market linkage activities	46	1,038	270
<b>R.2.4 Improved strategic direction and national ownership for job-centred growth</b>			
Number of stakeholders participating in sector development initiatives	22	337	100
Number of strategic trade development action plans developed	0	5	4
Number of public-private youth platforms created / strengthened	0	5	3
<b>R.3.1 The activities, opportunities and results of the Action are widely communicated upon national and international levels</b>			
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	na <sup>5</sup>	239,297	350,000
Number of international media pieces published concerning the Tekki Fii campaign	na <sup>5</sup>	0	50
<b>Activities to mitigate the risks and take advantage of opportunities for SMEs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic</b>			
Number of COVID-19 pandemic-related supplies provided and/or distributed	65,000	155,295	N/A

<sup>4</sup> Total excludes repeat beneficiaries.

<sup>5</sup> This indicator is updated at the end of each year.