

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

Progress Report



Q3 2021 Update
July to September 2021



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 July to September 2021

895

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

197

youths benefiting from entrepreneurship services and business advisory support



Vocational training

- 7** curricula developed and validated
- 148** Security personnel trained and employed
- 710** Spots for vocational training made available



Quality

- 24** Government staff and food operators trained on export to the US
- 89** MSMEs trained on Good Hygienic Practices and packaging



Market linkages

- 43** Entrepreneurs completed Export Advancement Programme
- 4** Staff recruited for Visitor and Information Centre Janjangbureh



Communication

- 39,840** people reached on Facebook
- 80,100** impressions on Twitter

TEKKI FII STORIES



The tailored YEP digitalisation support takes entrepreneurs further

Beaten down by the lack of comfortable and affordable clothes for an informal work event, Ramatoulie Mbye ventured to found Dignified.

"The YEP digitalisation support has benefited my business. I now have an online store for my products. We can see the different countries our store visitors are coming from, which has also helped in running targeted advertisements", Ramatoulie Mbye tells and excited.

<https://yep.gm/blog/ramatoulie-mbye-creating-comfort-out-discomfort>



Football teaches life skills for employability

"As a football coach, I have picked up valuable knowledge on critical thinking, resilience and self-motivation" - Adama Sanyang.

Being more than a sport, football has a tremendous potential to unify and to positively impact youth. In partnership with the UEFA Foundation, we are using football as a medium to develop and harness transferable life skills and employability.

<https://yep.gm/blog/kick-4-trade-through-one-individual-and-one-community-development-certain>



Young founders look back on victory and success

"It was like climbing a mountain." - Kara Jagne

Kara Jagne describes the moment he won last year's Kanifing Municipal Council Mayor's Challenge. The YEP sponsored challenge decorated impact-driven innovative solutions which tackle socio-economic challenges caused by the pandemic. Kara developed and launched an academic quiz gaming app that helps students practice standard examination questions. The popular app had more than 5000 downloads, and he now employs six people and has acquired office space.

<https://yep.gm/blog/kmc-mayor-challenge-growth-trajectory-year>



Buba Sabally is building up his shoe production company

"Every human being should learn a skill in their youth. It is only through your skills that you can mark your position in this world." - Buba Sabally

Growing up with limited access to resources, Buba Sabally has seen many dead ends in life. However, as owner of BS Production, he is now making a difference in Abuko. Today, he employs one fixed staff and five young apprentices. With YEP, he improved his digital marketing skills and is successfully advertising his products online.

<https://yep.gm/blog/story-persistence-and-self-belief>



Progress in Q3 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

- In collaboration with the National Accreditation and Quality Association (NAQAA), YEP has supported the development of seven new standards and curricula for TVET in high growth areas. The project funded the development of three standards and curricula for creative industries, music production and management, photography and filming, and event planning and management. The curricula were validated in a 7-day workshop with 140 participants and adopted as national standards.



The Skills for Youth Employment (SkYE) Fund

- Through YEP funding, the second round of the SkYE Fund has graduated over 526 trainees in sectors with high employment potential, such as construction, ICT, agriculture, and hospitality. The graduates are now either going through internships and job placements or being supported to create their own business. The SkYE Fund aims to ensure job creation for minimum 50% of trainees.
- The partnership with Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI) under SKYE I has been concluded with 149 youth graduates in 5 skill areas.
- Fajara Skills Development Centre and Insight Training Centre graduated 72 students in garment construction.
- In collaboration with the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MOBSE) and the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MOHERST), the Ndemban Skills Centre Engineering 1 workshop was concluded. The institution is now prepared to launch several skills training programmes. More than 50% of the target improvements agreed on in the workshop have been implemented.

- For the third round of the SkYE Fund, ITC has started the recruitment process in partnership with 8 training providers to deliver 26 programmes to a total of 710 trainees. The institutions are the Gambia Technical Training Institute, Sterling Technical Training Centre, GayeNjoro, 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.

ICT

- The project is rolling out an 18-months App Developer & Tester Course under the Sector Skills Council (SSC), a programme aiming to equip young Gambians with programming skills. A call for application was launched and 12 students will be onboarded in Q4 to start the training which will be accompanied by internship opportunities.

Tourism

- In collaboration with the Institute of Travel and Tourism of The Gambia (ITTOG), the project provided a full-time course on Event Planning and Management to 50 young Gambians. The trainees completed their 6-months academic training and have started 3-months internships for hands-on industry experience. The training programme supports the recovery of the tourism sector and aims for job creation.
- In partnership with the Austrian Embassy in Dakar, YEP supported the National Centre for Arts and Culture and the Institute of Travel and Tourism of The Gambia to deliver an introductory training programme in Museum and Heritage Management to 30 employees of 6 museums in The Gambia. Similar training was last rolled out to national museum staff 17 years ago. The programme covered research, collection, exhibition, interpretation, and conservation skills.

Creative industries

- Through the support of YEP, the Media Academy for Journalism and Communications launched Gambia's first 9-month certificate level programme in film and photography supporting 20 young Gambians. The programme fosters skills trainings in the creative sector to contribute to improved production capacities and quality of creative products to compete internationally.
- The project, in partnership with the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA) launched the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) programmes completed by 20 experienced master craft persons in film, photography, music production and management. The programme formally certifies individuals through an assessment and certification process. This allows them to work with TVET institutions, support formal training, and facilitate apprenticeships and job placements.

Security

- YEP in partnership with Five Star Security and Prestige Security companies has trained 148 youth and facilitated employment. The 4-week training included an introduction to the control of illicit substances, counter terrorism, first aid and CPR, fire safety, emergencies evacuation, self-defence and customer care. 52 more youth will be trained in 2022.



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

- Together with Startup Incubator Gambia (SIG), the project celebrated the graduation of 19 young and women fashion designers from the Andandorr after an intensive six-months fashion incubation program.
- The project partner Buzz Gambia provided training in entrepreneurship, financial literacy and small business management to 79 women entrepreneurs. The participants came from three communities, Kerewan, Kataba, Dutabulu in the North Bank Region (NBR). In addition, participants received follow-up mentorship and guidance from trained community leaders.
- Project partners the Gambia Youth Chamber of Commerce (GYCC) and the Information Technology Association of the Gambia (ITAG) held the 4th session of the digital literacy course for 50 entrepreneurs across regions. Participants were equipped with digital marketing skills and advise on setting up social media accounts to boost brand visibility. Half of the participants received additional support through sponsored radio adverts, online profiling, and one-on-one coaching with industry leaders.
- The project partner Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA) held a six-day entrepreneurship training to support 19 youth across West Coast Region. The objective of the workshop was to equip TVET graduates with entrepreneurial skills needed to successfully grow a business.
- As part of the ongoing Andandorr Creative Industries track, nine young photographers received a training on lighting. The workshop facilitator Jason Florio introduced the lighting styles of four classic and contemporary portrait photographers. In the practical workshop, each photographer had the opportunity to enhance their skills both in the studio as well as at a challenging outdoor location.



Access to finance

- By the end of Q3, YEP and NACCUG concluded the last YEP-funded phase of the Mini Grant Scheme. The Mini Grant Scheme was launched in 2018 and has received over 1,400 applications and supported over 600 entrepreneurs with small grants.
- ITC supported the Gambia Angel Investors Network (GAIN) with a training series called "Insights on Investment". The trainings were delivered by three experts, including Gambian investment professionals in the diaspora, and covered topics such as financial and legal aspects of deal making, and investing in the tech sector.

ICT

- YEP Tech supported the 7th Annual Gambia National Internet Governance Forum (IGF) with the theme "Digital Inclusion and Access for Resilient Gambia". The Internet Governance Forum brought stakeholders together to discuss public policy issues related to the Internet. Panel discussions were centred around the themes Accessibility and Cost, Building a Digital Economy, Data Protection and Privacy, Connecting the Unconnected, and Collaboration and Community.
- The second digitisation cohort commences early June and ran until October. The programme provided 11 companies personalised marketing campaigns through dedicated freelancers. The campaign run across social media platforms. The campaigns turned out very successful in increasing sales.
- The YEP Tech Start-up Support Programme, a one-year programme for Gambian tech entrepreneurs, opened the call for application for its 2021-2022 cohort. The programme aims at fostering digital start-ups through training, individual coaching by senior industry experts, B2B opportunities, international business development and exposure to investors.
- Tech Convos is an event series which covers pertinent topics in tech and features eminent Gambian and international tech leaders. July's panel discussion covered the topic "Leveraging the power of the cloud to improve performance" with the Gambian cloud expert Malik Khan, CEO and founder of PointClick Technologies, Ish Jatta, Senior Cloud Sec Engineer UK, and Pierre Davis, Cloud XForm Leader of West Global.



Youth Centres

- Together with Tekki Fii partners, YEP supports the refurbishment of two Youth Centres in Central River Region (Janjangbureh) and North Bank Region (Farafenni) to spur social and economic activities of young people in the regions. The refurbishment works at Janjangbureh is completed and planned for inauguration in January 2022 during the Kankurang Festival. Works at the Farafenni Youth Centre are still ongoing

as the scope of work changed from refurbishment to construction of a new structure using environmentally friendly Compressed Stabilized Earth Blocks.



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.

Institutional strengthening

- Government staff and food operators prepare for export to the United States. The project partner the Gambian Food Safety and Quality Association (FSQA) implemented a training for 24 participants, their staff and food operators targeting the US market. The programme focused on the revised American Food Safety Preventive Controls Alliance (FSPCA) Preventive Controls for Human Food Regulations. Through the capacity building, food inspectors could enhance their regulatory functions.

Food & tourism

- 32 tourism food establishments across the country received training on the implementation of Good Hygienic Practices (GHP), including COVID-related measures, by FSQA staff in collaboration with The Gambia Quality Association (TGQA) with selected youth trainers developed under YEP. Activities were implemented in collaboration with the Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute (GTHI).



Packaging

- In collaboration with GYCC, YEP trained 57 entrepreneurs on packaging to boost their competitiveness. Experts from The Gambia Standards Bureau (TGSB) were invited to shed light on requirements related to labelling and certification. The course was part of the preparation support for the National Youth and Women Agribusiness and Tourism Expo (YATE).





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.

Agribusiness

- To support the poultry industry, YEP in partnership with EMPASS Poultry Farm and technical support from PUM addressed the shortage of day-old chicks. YEP procured 25,720 fertile eggs and EMPASS incubated and hatched the eggs to supply youth poultry farmers. Priority recipients were the 700 members of the Young Poultry Farmers Association (YPFA). The partners will revolve the revenue received to buy further fertile eggs and supply farmers.



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

- YEP contributes to the Made in the Gambia initiative by launching the development a product catalogue to enhance market opportunities for Gambian entrepreneurs in arts & design, craft, health & beauty, processed food, fashion accessories, and recycled waste. The booklet will be shared with trade support institutions and international organizations, at international conferences, in high level meetings, at national business events, on arriving cruise ships, in hotels etc.

Food & beverages

- In September, 22 entrepreneurs completed the 6-month pilot Export Advancement Programme (EAP) in the food & beverage sector in collaboration with GIEPA. The entrepreneurs finalized presentation videos and pitches for regional and international showcases. In two hybrid events buyers learned about Gambia as a sourcing region and the products of the featured companies.

- YEP partner GYIN Gambia held a series of consultations with supermarkets and retailers on locally produced products. 8 supermarket owners expressed interest to sell more locally produced products.



Fashion

- In September, 21 entrepreneurs completed the 9-month pilot Export Advancement Programme (EAP) in the fashion sector. With the support of their coaches and an international fashion expert, they improved their collections and showcased at the annual Fashion Weekend Gambia (FWG).
- The Gambia Youth Chamber of Commerce (GYCC) with support from Tekki Fii & YEP supported 35 youth and women enterprises in Central River Region (CRR) to participate in a Regional Youth Exhibition. The exhibition provided entrepreneurs with pre-fair capacity building, product/service exposure, and networking opportunities.

Tourism

- Through the support of YEP, the Janjangbureh Tours Guides Association completed the recruitment of four local staff which will support the operation of the Visitor and Information Centre in Janjangbureh. The project also provides technical support to the staff on implementation and promotion of community-based tourism.
- The Janjangbureh Tour Guides Association implemented a four-day refresher course on community-based tourism in the communities of Jamali and Tabanani in the Central River Region. The training delivered by YEP-trained master trainers reinforces community-based tourism as a mean for empowerment of host communities, employment creation, poverty reduction, and diversification of the tourism sector.



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.

Agribusiness

- The YEP team has concluded the assessment of 31 enterprises in the agribusiness sector to better understand their competitiveness, income generation and employment prospects after receiving support from the project. The observations provide insights on the scope and nature of further support to sustain their growth.
- YEP team members participated in the seminar “Market approaches to Financing Agric Value Chain MSMEs in The Gambia” organised by the ECOWAS RSDF The Gambia Pilot Project. The seminar focused on a new Theory of Change in agriculture and use of a value chain-based and investment led approach. The project shared its work in the sector and is ready to further collaborate and enhance synergies.

Tourism

- Engagements under the joint GTB-SRC-GRC-MOH Covid Response support for the tourism sector continued during the quarter following completion of training in Q2 for 443 in the informal and formal sector. The partners continued the discussions and planning for the livelihood support Programme with consideration of entrepreneurship and business development support and grants to both individual entrepreneurs and associations.

Security

- The project engaged with the Ministry of Defence to discuss potential support to the security sector reform programme through skills, entrepreneurship, business management, and soft skill training.

Governance

- Core Team meetings for the components entrepreneurship, tourism and creative industries were held in the last week of September. The team shared progress on project targets, implementation of the 2021 workplan including adjustments for 2022. To reflect the increase of interventions in those sectors to mitigate the pandemic and improve coordination, the teams considered the onboarding of new members. The new members identified and proposed to MOTIE for consideration are:
 - *Entrepreneurship*: Isatou Secka (entrepreneur), NACCUG, SDF, GAIN, Bankers Association, ROOTS Project, ECOWAS RSDF Project
 - *Tourism*: Ecosystem Adaptation Project, World Bank, Spanish Red Cross, Gambia Red Cross
 - *Creative Industries*: GCCI, Union of Theatres
 - *ICT*: Alliance Française

Project sustainability

- The Tekki Fii Sustainability Retreat was held on 6 July 2021 and was attended by the government, the European Union, representatives from the private sector and other projects in the country with similar interventions. Sessions with the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration & Employment, the Ministry of Youth and Sport and the Ministry of Finance & Economic Affairs centred on how to further institutionalize and sustain the gains made under YEP. Stakeholders agreed to further drive sustainability of particularly entrepreneurship and skills and to have a follow up consultation on market linkages and social cohesion.
- With the end of the GIZ component under the Tekki Fii Programme, YEP and GIZ teams met to discuss sustainability considerations. Specific interventions in TVET, entrepreneurship and business development will be continued under YEP.



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.

Print material

- A booklet with a collection of project success stories was produced to amplify key stories and inspire partners and beneficiaries. Five hundred copies were printed and distributed. Find the booklet here:
<https://yep.gm/storage/app/uploads/public/61e/837/4ba/61e8374bae656213700505.pdf>



Videos

- Building on the support of the 14th Trade Fair Gambia International, ten success story videos were produced featuring selected entrepreneurs from the Youth Pavilion. The clips highlight their businesses, their growth over the years and the key impact of the

trade fair in their development. The stories were amplified by the project's social media platforms and broadcasted on television and third-party online media. The videos serve as advocacy material for Tekki Fii showing growth trajectories of young Gambians.

- As part of the efforts to amplify Covid-19 prevention and control messaging, five videos produced in Q2 were broadcasted on television and online media platforms. The platforms include Gambia Radio and Television Services, QTV, Paradise TV, The Fatu Network and Eye Africa TV. The videos on precautionary measure drawing on various influential people reached thousands of people in The Gambia and beyond.

Social media

- Social media continues to be a very important means to reach young people in The Gambia. Opportunities, activities, success stories, key results and awareness raising messages are regularly posted on the project's social media channels.
- From July to September, YEP reached 39,840 people on Facebook and had 80,100 impressions on Twitter. The project Facebook page currently has 11,859 followers and 10,133 likes. The twitter handle currently has 8,268 followers.

Email newsletter

- Activities and opportunities of YEP were covered in the ITC Gambia newsletter with currently 2,611 subscribers.

Progress against key project indicators

	Progress Q3 2021	Total progress to date ¹	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 ²	895	3,854	5,350
Number of young returning migrants supported through skills training	0	97	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 ³	153	4,110	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
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	274	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.)	76	915	540
Number of production centres strengthened or created	0	0	1

¹ Total excludes repeat beneficiaries.

² This figure includes the number of young returning migrants supported through skills training.

³ This figure includes the number of young returning migrants supported through entrepreneurship support.

	Progress Q3 2021	Total progress to date ⁴	Project Target
R.2.3 Market linkages activated			
Number of participating enterprises on market linkage activities	83	1,121	270
R.2.4 Improved strategic direction and national ownership for job-centred growth			
Number of stakeholders participating in sector development initiatives	0	337	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 ⁵	239,297	350,000
Number of international media pieces published concerning the Tekki Fii campaign	0 ⁵	0	50

⁴ Total excludes repeat beneficiaries.

⁵ This indicator is updated at the end of each year.