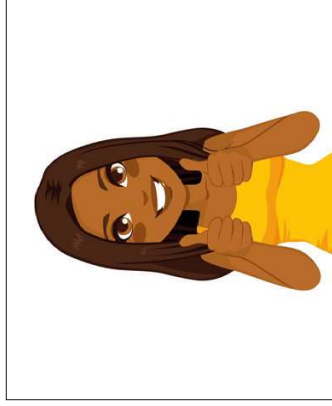


FOOD SAFETY AND GOOD HYGIENIC PRACTICES

HANDBOOK FOR GAMBIAN YOUTH ENTREPRENEURS



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INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE

Foreword

Food, with water and air, is the very basis of life. It is our source of nutrition, growth and health. It not only has socio-cultural significance, but also considerable economic and developmental ramifications. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, and 3 (No poverty, Zero hunger, and Good health and well-being) depend directly on the sufficient availability and affordability of safe and nutritious food.

Due to its universality, and relatively lower start-up costs and investments involved, food offers enormous opportunities for entrepreneurs, and business start-ups in food are very common. At the same time any food operator or business has the responsibility to ensure that the food it supplies will not cause harm to the consumers. Unsafe or unhygienic food can make people very sick, spread diseases, and may even cause death. Due to this, food is also a highly regulated sector where governments assume the responsibility to safeguard the health and safety of their population through laws that set down conditions and parameters for food business operators and their operations. The cost of disease, sickness and premature death takes a heavy toll not only in terms of medical care, but also socially and economically in terms of lost productivity and potential.

Food safety is the foundation of trust in the food business. Entrepreneurs can establish a good reputation built on food safety and quality and derive profit. Small and medium-sized businesses very often do not realize that not applying food safety and quality improvement measures turns out to be more expensive than applying them. In this regard, while hindsight may be good, foresight is better. This means not leaving this important element to chance, or ignoring it, but to actively and alertly plan, implement and pursue food safety from the initial stage of food production, inputs, processing, packaging, storing, distribution.

This guide on food safety has been prepared for Gambia's youth entrepreneurs to support employment generation, micro and small-sized enterprise creation and growth efforts under the Youth Empowerment Project. The programme,

financed by the European Union, is being implemented by the International Trade Centre in partnership with the Government of Gambia.

The project aims to contribute to the economic development of The Gambia through direct support to the development of the local economy by enhancing employability and self-employment opportunities for youth. With 60% of Gambia's population below 25 years of age, the project focuses on vocational training and the creation of micro and small-sized enterprises, and creating and improving employment opportunities for youth in selected sectors through value addition and internationalization.

We hope this guide will inspire young Gambians to adopt and implement a food safety and quality-based excellence approach to their food business endeavours, and contribute to their success.

Khemraj Ramful
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