



Make it
in The Gambia

Tekki-Fii Stories.



#TEKKIFII

BUILD A FUTURE

ABOUT THE

Tekki Fii Project



The “Make it in The Gambia-Tekki Fii” is a program that aims to improve economic development and future prospects for The Gambia’s youth, including returning migrants, by promoting attractive employment and income opportunities. Moreover, the objective is to support the Government to boost economic development with a focus on generating training, entrepreneurship, employment and access to finance opportunities for Gambians. The Tekki Fii campaign is a movement by Gambians, for Gambians. It is about helping young people in the country to see the benefits of choosing to ‘make it’ at home.

For more information visit: www.tekkifii.gm

ABOUT THE

European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa



The European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) supports all aspects of stability and contributes to addressing destabilization, forced displacement and irregular migration in particular by promoting resilience, economic and equal opportunities, security and development, and the improvement and implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies. The EUTF aims at improving living conditions in Africa. It seeks to help people live in a peaceful and stable environment, and to work in dignity.

For more information visit: www.ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/index_en

ABOUT THE

Implementing Partners



International
Trade
Centre

The International Trade Centre (ITC) is a joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations. ITC assists small and medium-sized enterprises in developing and transition economies to become more competitive. Under the Tekki Fii Programme, ITC is implementing the Youth Empowerment Project (YEP).

For more information: visit www.intracen.org / <http://www.yep.gm>



The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) is a German development agency that provides services in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development. The Tekki Fii component implemented by GIZ International Services is targeting youth and youth-led small businesses through skills training and business development.

For more information: visit www.giz.de/en/



Instituto Marquês de Valle Flôr (IMVF) is a foundation for development and cooperation based in Lisbon. Established in The Gambia in 2018, IMVF is implementing a three-years' project targeting the youth and women of North Bank Region, Central River Region, Lower River Region and Upper River

Region. For more information: visit www.imvf.org



Enabel is the development agency of the Belgian federal government, implementing and coordinating Belgium's international development policy. Enabel's intervention in The Gambia through the Rural Infrastructure for Economic Growth is designed to support socioeconomic development and positive prospects for local populations and returning migrants.

For more information: visit www.enabel.be





Absa

Absa returned home with a baby, determined to make her dream come true in the Gambia



Finding a new life at home

I never planned to go to Libya. I went to Nigeria to study catering but the employer I was working for never paid me enough because I was a foreigner. As such, I moved to Libya in the hope of acquiring a brighter future and sought out better working conditions. Unfortunately, my experience living there was filled with a lot of hardships.

I was sold as a slave and had to do hard labor without pay. During that time, I met a Senegalese man who I ended up marrying to enhance my own security. Through this marriage I bore my son who is my greatest blessing. Due to the fact that he was born in Libya, I was able to gain access to information regarding voluntary return and was referred to the International Organization for

Migration (IOM), who assisted me with my journey back home. When I returned to the Gambia, I was faced with a lot of stigma from people. Many people said that I was away for seven years and had brought nothing back but a baby. For me, I'm just happy to be back home alive.

Today, I am training to be a chef at the Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Training Institute, through a fully funded scholarship by YEP. I hope to complete this programme and open my own restaurant someday and employ other young people.





This initiative, offered meaningful occupation to TVET Trainees who otherwise were left with no other option than to remain idle.

TVET Centers Crusade Against COVID-19 In The Gambia



As a result of the State of Public Emergency in The Gambia, all TVET centres suspended skills training. At Insight Training Centre in Sinchu Alagie, although classroom training was not allowed, a team of 7 Trainees in garment-making sponsored by the EU-GIZ Tekki Fii together with 3 of their Trainers were convened by the Centre's Administration. They were invited to meet an important order from the Youth Empowerment Project. The Project, managed by ITC and also funded by the EU, had entrusted the Centre with the

production of 10,000 face masks in the fight against Covid-19.

Instead of passing time at home and losing their newly acquired skills, the 7 trainees, were invited to the Centre to produce masks daily and in full compliance with the Government's as well as WHO safety precautions. The trainees couldn't be happier engaged in a project which appeared to be so much more than just a practical exercise. It took them two weeks to put together 10,000 face shields which undoubtedly came with so much pressure, but none of that mattered as they explored their first professional assignment as tailors. ***"I saw it as a great opportunity in my career because it involved working under pressure and required a lot of professionalism,"*** says Anna Sambou one of the trainees involved in the production.

For Nyima Ceesay, one of the 7 Trainees, it was indeed a worthy cause as a young person adding her voice to the fight against Covid-19. ***"This was my first time sewing face masks and even understanding the importance of the masks. The process was fulfilling because I felt that I was doing my quarter in the fight against Coronavirus,"*** she explains. It is the same feeling for another Trainee, Isatou Saïdy. She explained the relevance of the masks and why young people should be active players in the fight against Covid-19: ***"The face mask is very important in protecting affected people as well as those not affected, so I felt very proud of myself at the end of the challenge even though it wasn't easy at all."***

This was also an opportunity for the trainees to learn how to deliver timely services and, at the same, earn a good profit, which most of them said was very important for them at a time when there aren't enough jobs in the market. The CEO of Insight Training Center, Dr. Ismaila Sisay, explains that Covid-19 cannot be defeated without the involvement of all, especially the youth, whilst adding: ***"We felt proud that youth who a year ago were not skillful, are today able to produce quality masks of international standard to fight against the deadly pandemic and earn a living out of their work."*** He went on to challenge young people to know the answers to global issues and be ready to stir the affairs of the world.

This initiative, offered meaningful occupation to TVET Trainees who



otherwise were left with no other option than to remain idle. On the part of the trainers, it had to work well due to the division of labor and a thoughtful approach of making the work creative which helped to deliver on time. ***“I thank our partners for coming up with this initiative because I enjoyed every bit of the process as it was much like a service to my country,”*** states Mamajang Camara one of the trainers involved in the project. For Amie Gaye, another one of the trainers, this was an opportunity for the young people to realize that they have to be ready to take on challenges at unexpected times, adding that they should always be ready to give a helping hand.

Now the students are expected to keep up the momentum and continue sensitizing their communities on the WHO preventive measures, which include the use of face masks to protect both the infected and non-affected persons. Even though many have been laid off their jobs, this is an opportunity especially for Tekki Fii beneficiaries, to diversify their skills and explore innovative ways of generating income.



Isatou Foon

The burgeoning tourism industry in the Gambia and the Tekki-Fii campaign provided Isatou with the opportunities she was looking for.

Come with us to The Gambia

At just 23 years, Isatou Foon is quite sure of a few things about herself. One of these is her love for her country, the Gambia. Her creativity and passion in bringing the world to experience the undiscovered beauties of the country has been the spark in igniting her to become a youth leader for new sustainable and inclusive tourism experiences.

The burgeoning tourism industry in her country and a youth empowerment campaign gave her the opportunities she was looking for. With a background in computer science and communications, her passion for telling stories from the country brought her closer to becoming a professional tour guide and youth trainer in community-based tourism.

Isatou connects communities of youngsters to create awareness about how the tourism industry could be an agent in bringing about sustainable development in the Gambia, particularly leading the way for young women to take part in the movement.

Amongst other activities, Isatou and her community are all set to contribute to the promotion of the popular Ninki Nanka Trail. Available as day or weeklong excursions, the trail offers adventurous, responsible river-based and overland excursions where visitors can experience the way of life at Fula, Mandinka, and Wolof villages while discovering diverse natural and cultural heritages along the River Gambia.

The Gambia Tourism Board, along with partners such as the International Trade Centre, are developing this trail which offers a range of interesting and informative activities such as birdwatching, spotting wildlife such as hippos and baboons, village community-based tours, craft making, local food cooking lessons, West African history tours, river-based kayaking and bike tours.

Isatou is now the first female youth trainer in community-based tourism in the Gambia. She has been trained by a project focused on creating jobs for youth and women. This has given her an advantage in encouraging young women to become associated with community-based tourism in roles ranging from tour guides and trainers to service providers. These young women now have jobs they can contribute to their household income. Women and men work together to develop community-based tourism in a way that generates income from tourism for the entire community.





Sering Ceesay

Takku Ligaye has the best of both worlds. They bring a smile to the faces of fellow villagers and make a profit too.

A glass of chilled Wonjo does the trick



Anyone who has been out in the open on a hot day would know how delicious a glass of chilled wonjo could be. Prepared from dried hibiscus leaves, the flavor comes out only once some ice is added to the drink.

If you happen to be in Nyagen village in The Gambia, and need a good satisfying glass of wonjo, find the way to Takku Ligaye Youth Group's small but solar - powered store. You will not have to worry about finding ice here.

This store gave the youth of this village, all that they always needed. The youths of Nyagen, kept their passion alive for contributing to the lives of others even when the going was tough.

One of the youth leaders, Sering Ceesay, always kept it positive and



never quit even when he had to work as an electrician going around fixing electricity problems in the village and even help in the fields during the rainy season.

“I have sacrificed a lot to get things done for my family and my vision has always been to have an impact in the community.”

The result of their determination is the store where they use solar power to meet electricity needs of their fellow villagers. The store is everyone’s favorite spot. Women come to use the solar powered mill while others like to buy chilled drinks.

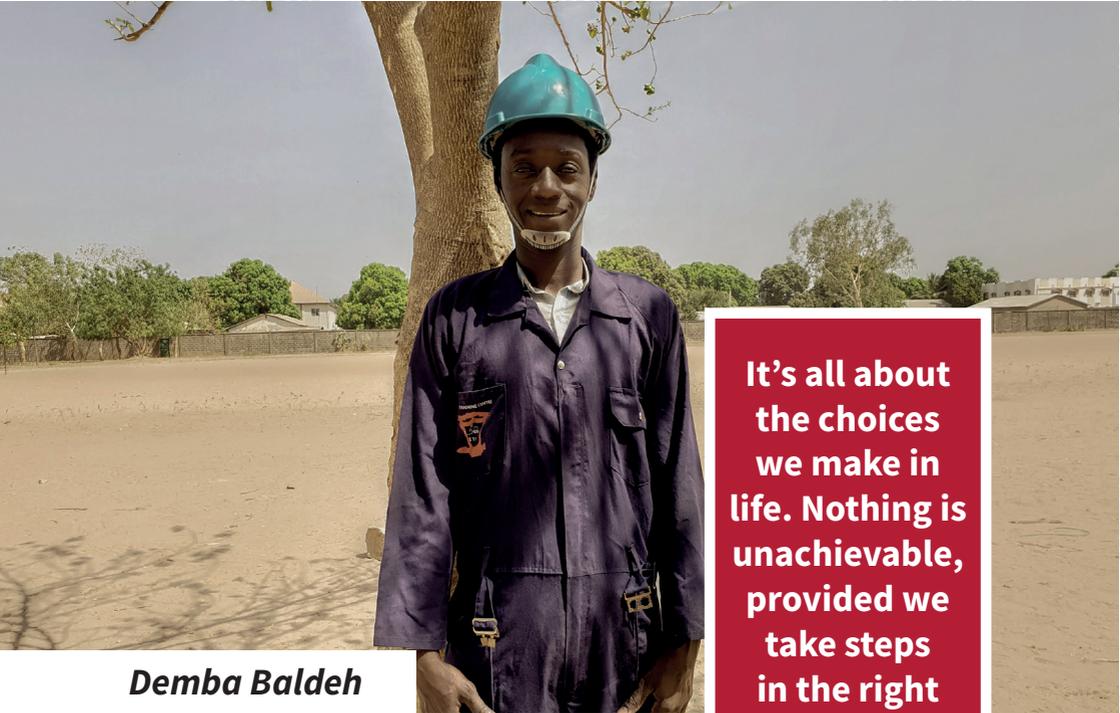
“It was difficult for villagers to properly charge their mobile phones as they do not have ample connections. This is now a thing of the past and they no longer have to walk to neighboring villages to get cold drinking water.” One of the youths said.

Takku Ligaye Youth Group provide service to the villagers in need and makes good income in return, right in their own village.

Sering is aware of the plight of youth around him who not being aware of ways to do well in their own country, risk their lives to migrate abroad in search of better livelihood.

Sering has a message for them *“Believe in yourself, work towards something and do not give up on your dreams of making it in The Gambia, as the project goes “Tekki-Fii”. We have all the potential in making it here. We have to rely on our talents and skills. We, the young can do it and make it happen. Many of our young ones perished on perilous journeys. They could have been aspiring leaders in our communities.”*

Takku Ligaye Youth Group of Nyagen, is one of the many youth groups benefiting from IMVF and Enabel's Tekki-Fii project support to develop agribusiness activities in rural areas of The Gambia.



Demba Baldeh

It's all about the choices we make in life. Nothing is unachievable, provided we take steps in the right direction.

Life after prison



It was a mistake. But it was difficult circumstances that led to it. Demba Baldeh went through a tough time providing for a family of 12. His wife, four children, and seven younger siblings had more needs than his income from subsistence farming could meet.

The trouble began after one of his friends introduced him to the timber trade. All it took to embroil himself in illegal business was a brand new motor saw.

After spending three years of unlawful activity between the Gambian and Senegalese borders, Demba was arrested and detained at Mile 2. Whilst he served his five-year sentence, Demba's main preoccupation was how to avoid going back into the vicious cycle that had got him into Mile 2. *"When I was in prison,"* he recollected, *"I was thinking of how to lead a respectable life once I am out."*



Two years after his arrest, the EU-GIZ Tekki Fii Project began supporting the skills training program at Mile 2.

“Utilizing this training opportunity, I applied and completed the six months satellite installation training. After the training, I knew I could now contribute to my family’s sustenance and nation building without anything to hide”.

His honest hard work paid off. He was not only granted an early release from jail but also permitted to complete his six-month course at the training center in Sinchu Alagie.

After graduating, and just two months into his industrial attachment, Demba had already won the trust of the manager of a construction company. A job offer soon followed.

Although Demba now works full-time for a school construction project he still installs satellites. This brings him additional income that helps him take care of his family comfortably.

“I want to inspire prisoners. I want them to understand that acquiring the right skills is important. Once they have something to offer, society will accept them with open arms.”

He goes on to say. *“If I can make it in prison with the Tekki Fii skills training program, Gambian youth in the street can take it higher. Just rise to the challenge and seize the youth empowerment opportunities available!”*



Fatou Jallow

It's never too late to go after your dreams. Having a plan and some guidance is all it takes to make it big.



The pursuit of passion

After graduating from Gambia College, and embarking on a short teaching career, 26-year-old Fatou Jallow took a new direction and decided to become an entrepreneur.

She still remembers her early days as petty trader. She would leave her husband and their two boys in Bakoteh and set off on trips to Senegal where she would buy women's accessories and sell them in the Kombos. This was not only exhausting, but business was slow and many of her clients would pay either late or not at all. These challenges made her rethink her choice of business and aspire to something more sustainable: *"The situation made me think about changing. I wanted a business where I wouldn't have to depend on anyone, something that would allow me to create my own products and sell them."*



This is when she heard about the EU-GIZ Tekki Fii program. What caught her attention was the entrepreneurship training combined with 6-months of business coaching. She leaped at the chance, applied and was accepted right away.

The training helped Fatou to gain a deeper understanding of the strategies needed to run a business. In order to build upon her knowledge and skills, Fatou joined another initiative under Tekki-Fii managed by the International Trade Centre and GIZ on food processing and packaging, along with a 3-month coaching on market-linkage. This allowed Fatou to start her own food processing business.

Fatou received support under this training program to participate in the 2020 Youth Agribusiness and Tourism Exhibition. She displayed her products and services, and made valuable contacts with others in her line of business.

Fatou has come a long way from her start processing pepper sauce and seasonings at home. She now runs a store selling locust beans, bay leaf, tamarind, garlic and ginger powder, to name but a few. All her items are packaged and labelled.

“I now have more products than before and I’m also venturing into catering. I don’t want to stop here and God willing, I plan to expand, get machines to process my products in bulk and increase my production to supply mini-markets and other shops.”

She believes in leaving no one behind. With her first employee on board, she encourages young men and women like herself to believe in themselves. *“I believe we can all make it in the Gambia,”* she insists. *“We all have to get up and work hard. You only get gains if you sweat. The little you get from pushing a wheelbarrow is better than having nothing at all.”* she concludes.

EAT WHAT YOU GROW
&
GROW WHAT YOU EAT

Muhammed Kebbeh

Holding hands towards a better future

Business in the Gambian capital Banjul is thriving and young people are improving their lives by engaging in trade related activities.

Muhammed Kebbeh, 29, is from Janjanbureh. Engaged in commercial farming, he sells seedlings to women gardeners in his area. Kebbeh says the mentorship he received from the Youth Mentorship Programme, has improved and broadened his understanding of 'integrated system of farming' in the country.

"I am now aware of many ways to expand my business using latest technology. There is an increase in sales and around 80% higher demand for my products and services."

The mentorship programme has also helped him improve his facilitation and presentations skills, and record keeping.

Kebbeh has plans for the future. *"I bought a plot of land in Lamin Koto village and I will establish a farming centre there and mentor youth including women to shape them into successful entrepreneurs."*





Bintou Colley

Today, I win contracts and install solar panels for clients.

Become the change you want to see



Bintou is changing narratives in The Gambia. She is a budding solar technician thriving in a sector where most of her colleagues are male. However, her gender has never kept her from dreaming big.

“I am proud to be a solar panel technician. I am happy to have benefitted from this training programme arranged by the Youth Empowerment Project. Today, I win contracts and install solar panels for clients. I used my Tekki-Fii mini-grant to open a store in Lamin where I sell electric appliances. I am able to empower other young people by providing them a job at my shop”.



Bakary Fatty

I became the first person amongst the 50 selected people who have completed all his courses and was paid 5 dollars by a client for a service.

Success granted



My name is Bakary Fatty, and I am from The Gambia. My story began when I decided to go to University to pursue a law degree without a penny in my pocket. As a result, I could not complete the programme together with my classmates. Even though I came from a very humble background, I was very determined to be successful. After seven years I completed the program but couldn't graduate because I owed the University more than D100K.

I have applied for several jobs but was never called for one interview. I struggled to pay my bills and would spend the next six months sleeping on the floor of a friend's aunt's house. He also got married, and I had to leave and look for a new place. At that moment, neither do I have a house nor money on me to transport my stuff. I ended



up carrying everything with my own hands. My bags and shoes were later kept in the kitchen of a friend's house when I moved in. When I took a bath, that's where I changed my clothes. I got so broke that I almost sold everything I owned including my suit, textbooks, a wristwatch, and a gas bottle.

My moment of decision was when I went to the bank to receive some money that was supposed to be paid to a friend. At the cash desk, the lady looked in her computer and said to me, *"I am sorry sir, but the amount here is less than what you are requesting for."* I went outside the bank and stood there for almost two minutes asking myself *why am I going through all this in life?"* I want to help my mum and family but I couldn't because of my financial condition. I want to visit some family members but I could not.

That was the moment I said I am going to master the art of success because I cannot afford to live this way of life again. I went online and started searching on how to make money on the internet. I came across tons of information and I didn't know where to start and where to end. When I saw the Yep-Freelancing opportunity, I jumped in and started learning digital marketing. After all these marketing courses and free videos on YouTube, I began connecting the dots together.

I became the first person amongst the 50 selected people who have completed all his courses and was paid 5 dollars by a client for a service. I was so excited, and that's the time I realized that if I could make 5 dollars online, I just need to replicate the same method over and over. This is how my success started, and I began making big money online and I am enjoying this journey.



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