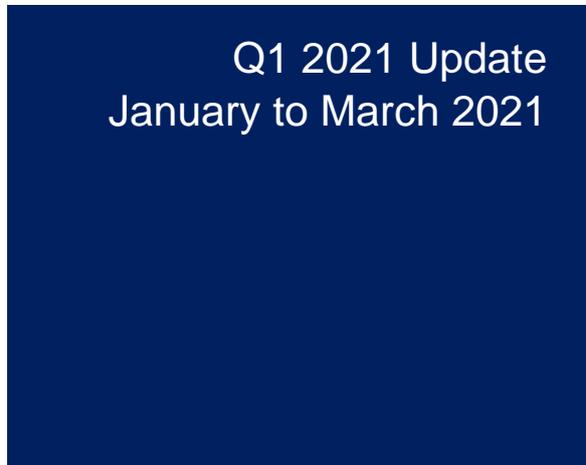


YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

Progress Report



YEP 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 and 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 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:

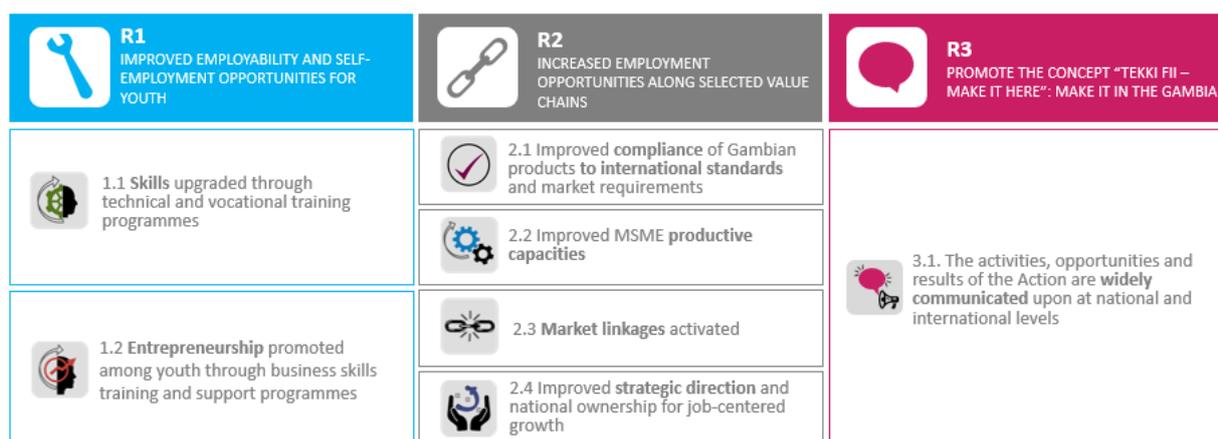


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HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights by sector in Q1



Agribusiness

29

Poultry farmers participated in a 5 weeks advanced training



ICT

4

YEP Tech ideation start-ups benefited from a 3-months coaching and training programme



Tourism

8

Businesses presented their best deals and products at Go Experience Gambia



Creative industries

10

Youth were prepared to set goals and receive further career coaching.

COVID-19 crisis mitigation in Q1

70

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

8

enterprises and institutions supported

15,000

pandemic-related supplies provided and/or distributed

Access to finance

Grants disbursed in Q1

37

USD of private capital unlocked for youth-owned businesses since project start

GMD 11,485,400

USD 224,280.41

TEKKI FII STORIES

Luczy Nichol grows with YEP Andandorr

"The Andandorr business training gave me the professional push I needed for the growth of my business. It helped me develop my business brand and packaging of my products." – Lucy Nichol

Inspired by her love for jackets, Lucy Nichol ventured on establishing her own business. Boosted by the Andandorr Programme, her brand The Jacket Lady has seen major growth in profit in just a few months.

<https://yep.gm/blog/belief-what-gets-you-started-keeps-you-going-and-gets-you-where-you-want-be>



Ramatoulie Mbye takes her brand online

"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

Beaten down by the lack of comfortable and affordable clothes for an informal work event, Ramatoulie Mbye ventured to found her brand Dignified. Two years later, she takes her collections online and abroad, with the support of YEP.

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



Isatou k. Jallow fulfilled her dreams

“The Andandorr Programme has been a great improvement and benefit to my work and business. I have learnt a lot and acquired valuable experience”. – Isatou Jallow

The veterinary clinic opposite the house of Isatou K. Jallow was not just a clinic, it was the home of her dreams to become a poultry farmer. In the YEP Andandorr training, Isatou improved her management skills and averse the loss of animals due to heat. Today, she has about 250 chickens providing her with a stable income. Plans for expansion are already made.

<https://yep.gm/blog/walking-path-her-dreams-isatou-k-jallow-young-poultry-farmer-basse-santa-su>



Progress in Q1 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

- On 4 January 2021, 500 trainees, enrolled at Sterling Training Center, Gaye Njoro Skills Academy and Indian Institute of Technology, resumed classes after the annual break. Trainees are now in practical sessions and will gain experience in work placements at various companies across The Gambia.
- A tailor-made e-learning course titled "Developing Training to Meet the Needs of the Labour Market" took place on 18 January. This course explored effective ways in which TVET institutions can leverage the expertise of employers and other local stakeholders such as government institutions, trade unions, or even former students to ensure that their training courses actually help their graduates to find work.
- On 5 February, The Women Initiative Gambia (WIG) concluded a pilot craft production training for 30 women and youths in communities along the Ninki Nanka Trail (Kaur, Ndemban & Jufureh). A wide palette of products such as organic tie and dye, soap from natural leaves, recycled plastic purses and paper necklaces were produced.

Fashion

- The training of trainers in the fashion sector begun 18 January and was concluded on Friday 29 January. Coaches were engaging in a constant discussion and evaluation of the Gambian fashion sector, market potential and potential linkages to other sectors. Training sessions were conducted virtually.
- Fajara Skills Center, President Awards Scheme and Insight training have begun training of 170 students on Fashion and Design. The training will take nine months, consisting of six months course work and three months internship.

Tourism

- The Institute of Travel and Tourism of The Gambia (ITTOG) launched on 3 March 2021 a 9-month certificate program in Event Planning and Management for 50 Gambian

youth. The course will consist of a 6-month academic program, and 3 months internship and job placement. The program enrolled 28 female, and 22 male students with monthly stipends provided to 15 students from rural Gambia to facilitate effective participation.

Cross-Sector Training Programmes – The Skills for Youth Employment (SkYE) Fund

- The ITC monitoring team was on a monitoring mission to evaluate the progress of SKYE 2 trainings from 22 to 26 March. Six TVET institutions were visited to review the progress of the trainings, discuss entrepreneurship-training opportunities, and reinforce adherence to COVID-19 protocols.



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

- The Andandorr Export Advancement Programme held its first training on 14 January. Seven coaches from BSOs, the private sector, and individual experts were selected to provide export advisory to export-ready entrepreneurs in the food & beverage sector. The first training of trainers was delivered by the international export consultant James Fitzpatrick, focusing on export auditing. This programme is funded under SheTrades Gambia and YEP, implemented by GIEPA.
- The Senegalese fashion expert Mr Diallo and three trainers from MoStyle organized an intensive technical fashion training for 45 entrepreneurs from 2 to 4 February. The Andandorr (YEP) and SheTrades training included technical drawing, pattern cutting, designing, sizing, etc. The first session in February will be followed by two more sessions in March and April 2021.
- 29 young poultry farmers from the Andandorr programme and Young Farmer's Association (YFA) have participated in five weeks of advanced poultry management training. The sessions are delivered virtually by PUM Netherlands Senior Experts. Key topics are farm economics, avian influenza prevention, poultry anatomy, poultry vaccination and marketing.
- The third Andandorr Talk was held on 26 March. The session featured Talib Graves-Mann, Managing Partner at Partners in Equity and renowned entrepreneur. The monthly series is presented by YEP Gambia and Innovate Gambia and brings

experienced influencers and thought leaders to young entrepreneurs in the creative industries, fashion, agri-business, and ICT.

Entrepreneurship and Business Development Support

- YEP in partnership with Start-up Incubator Gambia and the UTG on-campus Hult Prize Initiative officially launched its first mentorship programme for student entrepreneurs. On 7 January, the team Go-Green Organics met their mentor Mr. Fady Hocheimy to discuss the mentorship plan. This is a six-month mentorship program with seven student teams to be coached by successful business leaders from The Gambia.
- The Ye!Community, in collaboration with ITC's Trade for Sustainable Development (T4SD) team, invited young entrepreneurs to the sustainability focused mini-webinar-series on 21 January, part three of the series under the title "Assessing markets & buyer requirements: target markets, trends, certifications".
- On 4 February, the Ye!Community, in collaboration with ITC's Trade for Sustainable Development (T4SD) team, invited young entrepreneurs to the sustainability focused mini-webinar-series. This was part four of the series "Innovative ways to embrace sustainability".
- On 22 March, ITC Gambia launched a five-day Kick for Trade workshop in partnership with the UEFA Foundation. Many life skills and lessons can be picked up in team sports and applied in our everyday lives. The workshops were designed to support youths in developing employability and entrepreneurship skills.

Access to Finance

- Tekki Fii partners launch grants up to D50,000 to facilitate acquisition of equipment, materials, licenses and other business critical inputs and assets. A total of 37 grants were disbursed in Q1 2021. Grants are disbursed either as cash or as assets, but asset disbursements are given priority where feasible. No collateral, interest rate or repayment requirements.
- From 18 to 22 January, NACCUG held a Financial Literacy Training for all beneficiaries of minigrants approved in the last quarter. The 139 beneficiaries were split in smaller classes of max. 30 to follow COVID regulations. The training covered basic recordkeeping and bookkeeping concepts and prepared beneficiaries for the optimal use of the minigrants.
- The miniloan scheme under the SDF also continues to issue affordable loans to youth businesses and applications are received on a rolling basis. The latest reporting circle covering November 2020 to January 2021 4 loans were approved and a total of about D2 million was disbursed.

ICT

- YEP in partnership with ITAG is building the digital Literacy level for youth and women entrepreneurs across the country through an 8 week of training and coaching with experts from ITAG. 8 business have completed with many of them dramatically

increased their sales as a result the increased visibility by number of clicks, likes, enquiries and calls. Previously, social media followers only used to like and comment on their posts, now they like, comment, call and buy. The popular platforms used include Whatsapp Lumo groups, Facebook paid marketing, Instagram and Online stores (sellox).



2.1 QUALITY

This 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 YEP.

- ITC is currently preparing to launch food safety related training and awareness creation in cooperation with The Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA).



2.2 PRODUCTIVE CAPACITIES

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

ICT

- 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.
- In the framework of the partnership between YEP and Make3D, a number of companies received advisory support to use 3D technology in their production and marketing. For instance, Mariam Jobe, the founder of JULÁ Cosmetics, benefited from 3D printed lip-gloss stands. The stands helped her to make her lip-gloss production more efficient. JULÁ Cosmetics manufactures high quality cosmetics and beauty tools in The Gambia, markets them online with worldwide shipping.

Poultry

- Following the outbreak of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) or (H5N9) in Senegal YEP in collaboration with the Netherlands Senior Experts (PUM) organised an online poultry stakeholder conference to sensitise them on the identification and preventive measures of the disease. The project also spearheaded a stakeholder meeting to discuss the challenges, impacts and way forward in the wake of the restrictions imposed on the importation of poultry products from Senegal. Stakeholders

raised concerns on the shortage of day-old chicks and its ripple effects on the poultry sector.

- In addition, the project supported the Department of Livestock Services (DLS) in the efforts to sensitise the general public and poultry stakeholders on the signs and symptoms and the preventive measures of HPAI. The project provided support to produce 3,000 posters and 5,000 flyers for distribution.
- There are ongoing efforts to enhance the capacity of the Central Veterinary Laboratory by supplying laboratory materials for the diagnostic of poultry diseases worth over \$46,000.

CSEB

- The Gambia Standards Bureau (TGSB) was contracted last quarter of 2020 to develop and publish six (6) national standards on Compressed Stabilised Earth Blocks (CSEB). As at January Q1 has completed the draft technical standards was at the stage of conduct public commenting and public sensitisation on the standards. ITC staff participated in one of the regional public sensitisation events in Mansakonko in Lower River Region in January 2021.



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.

- The Go Experience Gambia challenge was concluded. Eight businesses in tourism and the creative industries presented their best deals and products. YEP promoted their packages on social media and invited the public to vote for the best experience. The winners were: First prize - Senegambia Experience Tours; Second prize - Janjanbureh Tour Guide Association; Third prize - Janko Creations. The finalists received digital marketing packages to further boost their marketing and online presence.
- Together with the Cotton Trail Project, YEP rolled out 1:1 mentoring of young artists in January, to prepare ten youths to set goals and receive further career coaching.



2.4 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Strategic Direction component of the project has three general objectives: set up engagement platforms for sector stakeholders for sector development planning; formulate strategic trade development action plans for priority sectors; and, build capacities and provide tools for implementations of sector development initiatives.

Engagements in the first quarter were mainly with the core teams and relevant stakeholders in the development and finalisation of the 2021-2022 workplan. The 10th YEP Steering Committee took place on 10 March 2021 and resulted in the adoption of the workplan for the period of 2021-22.

On 25 March 2021 the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MOFEA) convened the first Steering Committee of the Tekki Fii Program. The meeting included a high-level update on program interventions and achieved milestones and outlook and a discussion on strategic priorities including COVID-19 recovery, synergies, and sustainability of program interventions. During the meeting it was decided to have a follow up retreat with key government stakeholders to further discuss the work in key areas, including TVET, entrepreneurship & access to finance, agro-linkages and social cohesion.

On 11 March, ITC in collaboration with the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (MOTIE) and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MOFEA) organized a mini-retreat on access to finance. The workshop brought together stakeholders from the Government, development partners, business chambers, and business support organizations that facilitate access to finance for young entrepreneurs and women. The objectives of the mini-retreat were to share information about the existing instruments, target clients, modalities, exchange lessons learnt, challenges and good practices based on previous experience and discuss synergies and complementarities between different instruments. The retreat also discussed sustainability and explored exit strategies for donor funded schemes. These objectives were largely achieved except for the matter of sustainability of donor funded schemes. However, it was agreed that this will be addressed in a follow up retreat in the second quarter. Stakeholders also expressed the need for an institutionalized platform to allow for a more regular exchange.



3. COMMUNICATION

This component comprises the communications, awareness raising and visibility work under YEP with the goal to promote economic opportunities in The Gambia among Gambian youth and to promote the Tekki Fii campaign both nationally and internationally.

COVID-19 awareness raising

As part of efforts to raise awareness on COVID-19, 10 billboards on COVID19 precautionary measures were put up across the country featuring influential Gambians ranging from medical practitioner, media personel, community and religious leader to social media influencers.

Key messages highlighted on the billboards cut across proper usage of a facemask, social distancing, supporting effective health care delivery, business continuity, destigmatisation of COVID-19 survivors and the role of young people in fighting COVID19.

These billboards were mounted in strategic location in the Greater Banjul Area, Central River Region, Upper River Region, Lower River Region and North Bank Region.

Social media and community outreach

YEP continued to share information about opportunities and provide advocacy efforts on and offline. During the reporting, ITC reached 77,900 people on Twitter and 39,800 on Facebook. The Twitter handle currently has over 7,440 followers whilst the Facebook page has 10,844 followers.

In partnership with the National Youth Council 847 people reached through community engagements by the youth officers located in the regions.



4. COVID RESPONSE

- Seven Technical and Vocational Training Institutions were supported to produce cloth facemasks in our efforts to support the prevention of COVID-19. In the first quarter 2021 15,000 facemasks were produced and delivered by Club Foire and Ida's Ideas Design Institute during the first quarter of 2021. The Gambia Standards Bureau was also supported to provide the inspection and certification of the facemasks produced. Five other institutions are currently producing additional cloth facemasks to be delivered in Q2.
- 70 youth (51 from Club Foire and 19 from Ida's Ideas) were temporarily employed in production of the 15,000 facemasks that were delivered so far. Apart from providing temporary employment the production of the facemasks also provided an opportunity for the on-job-training to 50 tailoring students in the two centres.

Progress against key project indicators

	Progress Q1 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	16	18
Number of youths completing a project funded technical and/or vocational training programme or apprenticeship ²	50	2839	5,350
Number of young returning migrants supported through skills training	0	97	300

¹ Total excludes repeat beneficiaries

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

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	95	3786	4,600
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	0	250	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.)	32	662	540
Number of production centres strengthened or created	0	0	1
	Progress Q1 2021	Total progress to date ⁴	Project Target
R.2.3 Market linkages activated			
Number of participating enterprises on market linkage activities	8	1,009	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

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

⁴ Total excludes repeat beneficiaries

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	98,647	239,297	350,000
Number of international media pieces published concerning the Tekki Fii campaign	0	30	50
Activities to mitigate the risks and take advantage of opportunities for SMEs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic			
Number of farmers with improved livelihood through market linkages facilitation during lockdown	0		N/A
Number of short-term jobs created through production of protective equipment	70		N/A
# COVID-19 pandemic-related supplies provided and/or distributed	15,000		