

# YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

Q1 2020 Update  
January to March 2020

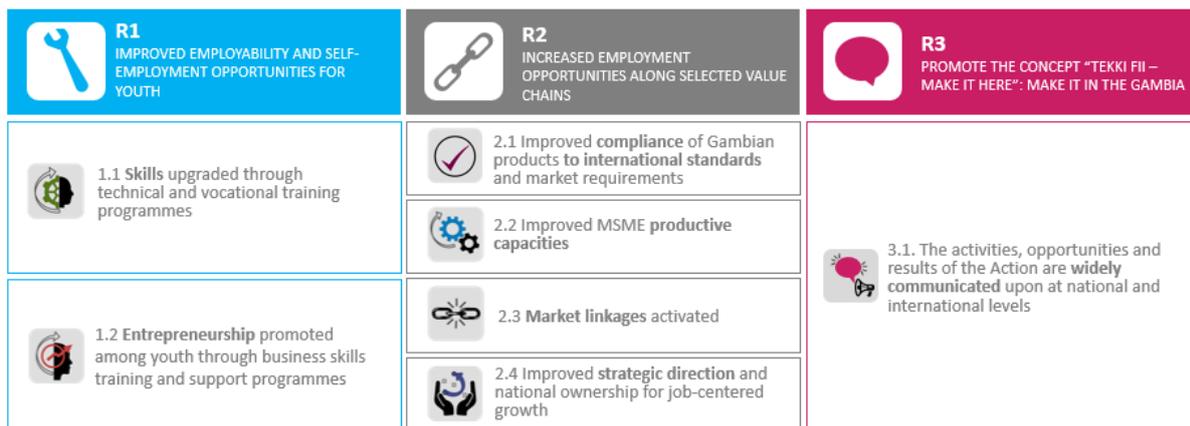


## YEP in a Nutshell

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:



## **COVID-19 context**

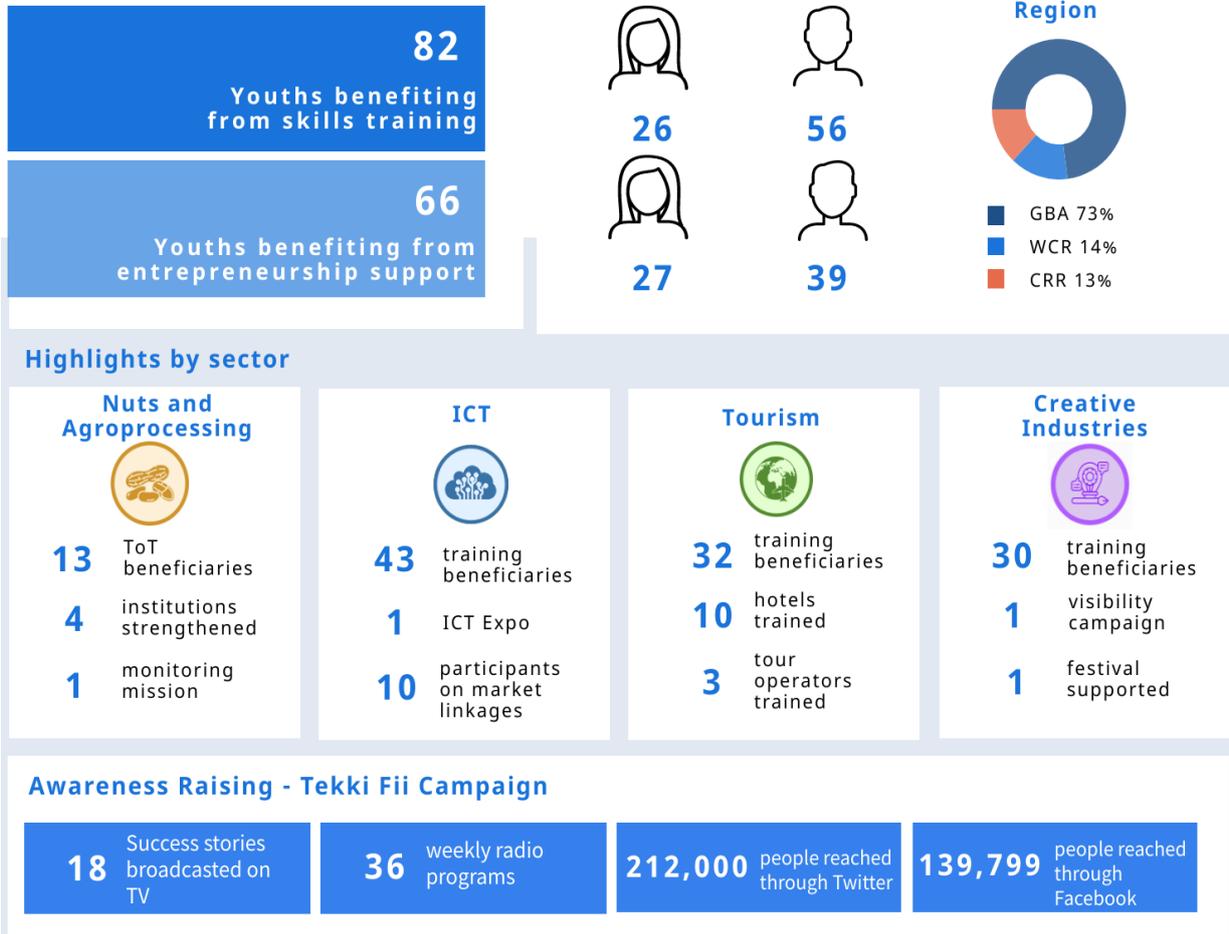
On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic that requires attention at the international level. The WHO urged the international community to adopt measures that prevent and mitigate the spread of the virus. In response, the government of The Gambia declared a state of emergency on 27 March after an initial case was identified in the country and adopted the following measures: suspension of international flights and closure of borders, prohibition of gatherings of more than 10 people, and limiting of passengers on public transportations.

The Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) in accordance with the regulations adopted by the government of The Gambia suspended trainings, mentoring and coaching activities that require in-person gatherings. As a response, a connectivity survey was launched with beneficiaries in order to assess their capacity to participate in online trainings and other virtual activities and results will allow to adjust the format and timelines of planned activities.

In addition, several activities were put in place in order to collaborate with national efforts to raise awareness and prevent the spread of COVID-19 and some others were adjusted in order to include awareness raising information. YEP partners such as GYCC and NYC embarked on national sensitization campaigns through the distribution of handwashing stations, information materials and participation on radio shows. Moreover, YEP beneficiaries such as youth trained on community-based tourism participated on regional campaigns to disseminate information and materials with the objective to prevent the spread on the virus on their communities. YEP social media handles were also used to disseminate information and debunk myths about COVID-19.

Consultations with partners and other stakeholders as well as committee meetings will be carried out in order to adjust the working plan and include relevant activities that respond to the current context result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

## HIGHLIGHTS



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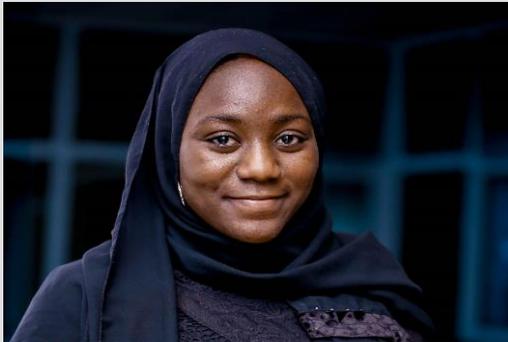
### Project component

Skills	Entrepreneurship	Quality	Productive Capacities	Market Linkages	Strategic Direction	Communication
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## TEKKI FII STORIES

**“I hope that through my restaurant I would be able to bring about some change in the way other young Gambians looked at the entire experience of eating out”.**

[Isatou Jobe](#), 21-year-old, is one of many youths benefitting directly in areas such as skills training, entrepreneurship, business development and access to funding. Jobe runs a restaurant called Firadaws that currently has two employees, a man and a young woman like herself.



**“Since I started with YEP, there is an ongoing monthly market, the Gambia’s Good Market, and this has really helped us to get a lot of visibility”**

[Maimuna Jahateh](#) started her all natural, organic line of products, called MaiyaMuna’s Skin and Hair Care, two years ago in The Gambia. From making small batches of products in her room to now selling at trade fairs and monthly markets, she’s living out Tekki Fii.

**“I have not seen any reason why I cannot make it in here. Be you. Be bold. Be a risk taker. Set up goals. That is the advice I am giving to the youth here”.**

[Awa Bling](#), a hip hop artist and activist in The Gambia, uses music to change mindsets and empower young people, especially women. Her song is called Tekki Fii which means 'Make It Here' in Wolof and tells young Gambians to believe in themselves, start a business and create jobs at home.



**“You can be in The Gambia and make it here. It all depends on you as a person.”**

[Neneh Isatou Jallow](#) noticed many women travel to neighbouring towns to buy clothes and cosmetics, so with a mini loan of \$2,000, she opened a business in Jarra Soma. Her dream is also to buy wholesale and being the main service provider in the country.

## Progress in Q1 2020



### 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 Training Programmes – The Skills for Youth Employment (SkYE) Fund

- The National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA) of The Gambia has concluded its assessment of the training institutions that were selected under the second round of the SkYE Fund. The assessment aimed at ensuring trainings meet national quality standards so that trainees can be certified accordingly. Following the assessment, NAQAA provided a report to the training institutions outlining its recommendations for improvements before the trainings can be advertised.
- For the third round of the SkYE Fund, ITC will work even closer with NAQAA to incorporate national standards in the assessment of proposals. The application process is currently being re-designed and the call for applications is expected to be launched by Q2 2020.
- Following the decision of the Government of The Gambia to suspend all training activities to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus, the recruitment of trainees for the SkYE Fund training programmes is on hold until further notice.

#### Training Programmes – ICT Sector

- Under the YEP Tech component, a training of trainers (ToT) on ICT User Skills (IC3) took place from 6 to 17 January 2020 to give the participants the skills to be certified as IC3 trainers. The training was facilitated by Smart Tech in close collaboration with the Information Technology Association of the Gambia (ITAG).

#### Training Programmes – Tourism Sector

- In partnership with The Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute (GTHI), 10 youth participated in a bakery-training programme from 22 November 2019 to 23 February 2020. During the programme, participants gained the technical skills needed to meet the high demand for bakery services in the country and to improve the hospitality services available in



rural areas, thereby contributing to the creation of new jobs and micro-enterprises.

- In an effort to create new job opportunities for rural youth in the tourism sector by developing additional tourism activities along the River Gambia, YEP organised a 10-day technical skills training from 20 to 29 January to equip the 22 participants with the skills to become the kayak tour guides of the new river-based excursion, the Ninki Nanka Trail.

### Training Programmes – Creative Industries and Fashion

- As part of YEP's support to the 2020 Janjanbureh Kankurang festival, the National Centre for Arts and Culture (NCAC) delivered hands-on training on event planning and management to 30 youth involved in the organisation of the festival.
- A tender for trainings in Garment Construction has been finalized. Three training institutions have been selected out of five applications, which together will train approximately 170 students. Contracts are currently being issued, and recruitment of trainees will start once the national suspension of training activities is lifted.

### Institutional Strengthening

- A Training of Trainers (ToT) on Poultry Management for staff of four training institutions (Njawara Agricultural Training Centre, the Gambia Songhai Initiative, the Gambia College School of Agriculture and the Rural Development Organisation) was held from 31 January to 6 February 2020. This is the second phase of the ToT in poultry. The programme aims to equip the participating institutions with the latest technical knowledge in poultry management and thereby enhance the organisations' training capacity. The training was developed in partnership with PUM Netherlands Senior Experts and consisted of an assessment of capacity and gaps in terms of training infrastructure and facilities, poultry farm visits and face-to-face training sessions.
- An online course "Developing Training to Meet the Needs of the Labour Market" targeted at managers of TVET institutions has been prepared and is expected to start on Q2. The course explores ways in which TVETs can leverage the expertise of employers and other stakeholders such as government institutions, trade unions, or former students to ensure that their courses help graduates to find work. The course was promoted in partnership with NAQAA and nine Gambian TVET managers have enrolled.



## 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 Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

- YEP signed a Memorandum of Understanding with GIEPA to deliver the EMPRETEC training, facilitate pieces of trainings for the implementation of the CRM shared database, and offer capacity building training for BDSs advisors. Given the current context of COVID-19, the calendar and modalities of operation will be adapted.
- YEP will support SIG to offer six-month incubation programmes for entrepreneurs in the fashion and agribusiness sectors. The target beneficiaries for the activity are women and youth entrepreneurs, who are already in business and who have previously completed a basic entrepreneurship training.
- GCCI and YEP signed a Memorandum of Understanding to promote an entrepreneurial mind-set within the skills graduates supported by YEP through a post-graduation entrepreneurship training using the Start and Improve your Business (SIYB) methodology. The target beneficiaries are youths who have recently graduated from the TVET training and have benefitted from none or minimal entrepreneurship training.

## Entrepreneurship and Business Development Support

- YEP supported 40 graduates of skills programmes from the Great Banjul Area to undergo SIYB training facilitated by the Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI). The six-day training, which was held from 24 to 29 February, supported young people with business ideas to transform them into viable enterprises and to become self-sufficient while creating jobs for their fellow youths.
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- YEP supported three students, the winners of the Hult Prize Campus competition at the University of the Gambia (UTG), to compete in the Hult Prize Regional finals. Their social enterprise idea, Green Waste, recycles agro and organic waste to create eco-friendly charcoal and alternative sources of energy. By participating in the regionals, the team competed to obtain USD 1 million in start-up funding to launch a sustainable social venture.
  - As a consequence of the COVID-19 context and in order to adapt and continue to carry on planned activities, YEP launched a Connectivity Tools Survey for beneficiaries. This survey aimed at assessing the connectivity devices of users, in order to evaluate and adapt the best possible e-learning tools. 193 beneficiaries completed the survey and the biggest challenge expressed was connectivity challenges and the high costs of data.

## Access to Finance

- The Tekki Fii Mini Grant Scheme received 94 applications during the first quarter of 2020. 29 grants were approved, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only four were disbursed in Q1. To date, the scheme has received over 1,000 applications and ITC has disbursed 301 grants. The Grants Committee will meet remotely in April to discuss

implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for the scheme, as well as how to further support access to finance to MSMEs during this period.

- As of end January 2020, ITC has unlocked over USD 140,000 of private capital in loans to youth-owned businesses through the Mini-Loans Scheme. Since the inception of the initiative, the Social Development Fund (SDF) has disbursed 25 working capital and six equipment loans. Four loans are currently in default. SDF is assessing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Mini Loans Scheme portfolio. This assessment will inform potential new measures to mitigate losses and support MSMEs.
- The Gambia Angel Investors Network (GAIN) has been formally incorporated as a company limited by guarantee with 13 founding members. The company's branding has been finalised and accounting and HR guidelines have been developed. Since the last pitch session held in December 2019, three companies have been selected for deep dives. One company has progressed to term sheet negotiation. Another four companies were shortlisted to pitch at GAIN's next pitch session planned for April 2020. Due to COVID-19, pitch sessions and board meetings will be held online.



## 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.

- The Gambia Standards Bureau has advanced in the development of the draft standards against which the certification services will be performed and they are now being finalised. Once this is done, the certification audits of the enterprises are foreseen.



## 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.

### Cross-sector

- In coordination with the Gambia Horticulture Enterprise (GHE), YEP continues to support start-ups and business to develop standard packaging and improve their sales. At the end of the programme, an impact assessment will be conducted to evaluate the improvement on packaging and its impact on sales and competitiveness.
- The digital literacy training and freelancing services is a joint activity under tourism and ICT sector. The training programme launched with ITAG in February is now a webinar series providing 10 hotels and 3 tour operators with the fundamentals of digital marketing, including provision of 25 licences to IC3, a leading learning software in digital

literacy, preparing the group to receive more online training and business coaching support in response to crisis management and COVID19 recovery.

### Creative Industries and Fashion

- In 2020, NCAC and YEP once again supported the Janjanbureh Kankurang Festival. With YEP support, the organising committee became a legally registered association and it increased its membership to include an additional 10 youth.
- Through the partnership with NCAC, YEP engaged Gambian artists who created paintings in selected places around the island depicting the historical, cultural and natural heritage of Janjanbureh. The initiative aims to empower local artists, foster employment creation and support the visibility of the island including by boosting the branding of the town based on its historical, natural and cultural heritage.

### ICT

- The Tech Start-up cohort of Round 1 was closed. A call for applications was launched on February to on-board the 2020 cohort. Currently, the YEP Tech component is carrying on the assessment, selection and categorisation of the Round 2 beneficiaries. A consultant will be hired to develop this assessment through the 360 diagnostic tool.



## 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

- The Gambia's Good Market implemented two markets in January and March 2020. A combination of 38 entrepreneurs exhibited of which 30 were female. The market received 381 visitors.
- The Trade Fair Gambia International and the related trainings expected to be held at the end March were postponed until further notice over the concerns related to the COVID-19 outbreak.

## Tourism

- From 16 to 22 January, the YEP team arranged a tour for three international tour operators to test the new cultural-wildlife excursion, the Ninki Nanka Trail, with the objective to facilitate direct business contact between international buyers and Gambian tourism suppliers. New sales of the trail will be key results from the trip. Project activities planned at trade fairs in London and Berlin will be postponed because of the COVID-19 outbreak.



## Creative Industries

- The Cotton Trail Project aims to revive the Gambian cotton industry through arts. The initiative is a two-phase programme supporting ten artist in the Greater Banjul Area and eight artists in rural Gambia. The initiative held its first exhibition in Senegambia from 23 to 26 January. It promoted the production and infusion of the cotton textile with works of arts using the cotton fabric as the canvas to produce hand-painted fabrics. The project implemented by the Green Box Charity supports beneficiaries including artists, weavers and photographers.
- The third edition of the Kankurang Festival, held from 17 to 19 January, registered approximately 8,000 visitors and showcased a variety of masquerades and other cultural activities. It contributed to the development of Janjanbureh as a tourist destination, promoted youth employment and created economic opportunities in the areas of creative tourism and arts. At least 318 youth and other community members gained direct financial benefit from the festival by providing services as part of this year's edition. The total reach of the festival through online and traditional media totalled at 19,186 this year. Due to its popularity and impact, the festival is now part of the national calendar of activities, the list of festivals of The Gambia and it has attracted two international partners, Nature Friends International and Penchum Niani-Kopentum Group from Senegal.



## ICT

- YEP partnered with ITAG to organise the Gambia's first ICT Expo, which took place on 6 February at Paradise Suites Hotel. It attracted 191 attendees and over 20 exhibitors. During the Expo, a B2B event linking tech start-ups to buyers was held, as well as competitions and workshops addressing digital payments and technology and development.



## 2.4 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

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

### Agribusiness

- A six member team of the Agribusiness Core Team embarked on a monitoring visit of 20 YEP-supported companies in the agribusiness sector throughout the country from 12 to 15 January. The aim of the visit was to assess project progress in the sector, promote cross fertilisation of models of success and understand the needs and challenges of beneficiaries.
- From 4 to 6 February, YEP developed and coordinated a collaboration with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) to conduct consultations in the creative industries and tourism sector to evaluate the national and stakeholders capacities in intellectual property (IP). The consultations were led in partnership with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Employment and Regional Integration (MOTIE), Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA), and the National Centre for Arts and Culture (NCAC) as part of a process to assess national capacities in the area of intellectual property (IP) to ascertain needs and modalities for technical support in the implementation of Plan Of Action on IP in the Youth and Trade Roadmaps for the Creative Industries and Tourism. The consultations held with the partner institutions and beneficiaries focused on the use of branding principles under IP as a framework for value addition of products and services by women and youth entrepreneurs. The consults concluded with an understanding that WIPO will lead the way forward.





### 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.

#### Raising awareness through football

- On 1 February, ITC in partnership with the UEFA Foundation for Children, held its [first activity under Kick For Trade \(K4T\) initiative](#). The Stakeholder Engagement on Football for Peace and Development took stock of the power of football to promote peaceful coexistence and tackling social and economic issues affecting young Gambians.
- On 2 February, YEP organised an awareness raising and sensitisation activity at Palma Rima Beach using Beach soccer. The event attracted four academies with 50 footballers from Banjul, Kanifing Municipal Council and West Coast Region and hundreds of spectators who were sensitised on alternatives to irregular migration.



#### COVID-19 awareness raising

- Youth trained in community-based tourism and tour guiding have sprung into action to help protect their communities to the COVID-19 pandemic and build resilience against further impacts to the vulnerable tourism industry. They are placing informational posters on the virus and safety guidelines, campaigning across social media platforms and installing hand-washing stations.
- YEP supported the Gambia Youth Chamber of Commerce (GYCC) to embark on a regional COVID-19 sensitization campaign in four regions; NBR, CRR, URR, and LRR. The main objective for the outreach was to help minimize the spread of misinformation and debunk myths of the COVID-19 in rural areas; raise awareness on proper safety measures using the WHO Guidelines; and lastly, to encourage rural entrepreneurs and youth to unite in the fight against the COVID19. Main activities included: sensitization in public places, distribution of flyers, demonstration on proper hand washing methods, installation of handwashing stations (5 per region), and coupled with evening radio shows through the community radios in each region.



## **Tekki Fii campaign**

- On 19 January, NYC representatives conducted a one day engagement with Gambia Shonghai Students in order to help them understand procedures to fill the TEKKI FII Grant Scheme Forms. This session was attended by 40 students.
- NYC youth representatives conducted information sharing sessions in the CRR region in order to inform potential beneficiaries about current opportunities. Specifically, on 9 February, they met with young entrepreneurs to discuss about current opportunities under the Andandorr project. Additionally, they had a meeting with 11 youth to work together on their projects for applying to the Tekki Fii Access to Finance scheme.
- On 12 March Tekki Fii partners, NACCUG and youth ambassadors met in Jenior Agricultural to discuss about the constrains and possible ways to help youth in filling the forms and provided support in order to increase successful applications to access the grants. NACCUG representatives explained the procedures and key points they consider when the forms are submitted for review.
- Weekly radio programs continue to be an important channel to reach Gambian citizens and specifically youth. NYC representatives led 36 weekly radio shows in Kerewan Community Radio and Farafeni Community Radio. The weekly radio talk keep informing listeners on some current youth programs and opportunities under YEP, Tekki Fii and other programmes.
- As of the end March, Tekki Fii activities were adapted to respond to the COVID-19 awareness raising campaign. Through social media and web content, as well as through the work of youth representatives, the main message has been about COVID-19 prevention, hygienic measures and sensitization –in accordance to the national government and WHO guidelines.
- A total of 18 success story videos of Gambian youth were broadcasted on four television networks (GRTS, QTV, PTV and FTM) during February and March.
- NYC, through their youth representatives, has also embarked to support the fight against the spread of COVID-19. With the support of YEP, they conducted a regional sensitization campaign together with health local authorities. Additionally, they provided water tanks and sanitary materials to be located on key places.

## **Social media outreach**

- Social media continues to be very important means to reach young people in The Gambia. Opportunities, activities and awareness raising messages are regularly posted across several social media channels. During Q1, YEP posts on Twitter and Facebook reached a total of 212,200 and 137,799 people, respectively.

## Progress against key project indicators

	Progress Q1 2020	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	0	10	13
Number of youths completing a project funded technical and/or vocational training programme or apprenticeship <sup>2</sup>	82	2,456	4,600
Number of young returning migrants supported through skills training	1	54	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>	66	2,935	4,400
Number of young returning migrants supported through entrepreneurship support	1	67	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.)	0	540	500
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 2020	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	29	778	270
<b>R.2.4 Improved strategic direction and national ownership for job-centred growth</b>			
Number of stakeholders participating in sector development initiatives	0	298	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	0 <sup>5</sup>	152,215	350,000
Number of international media pieces published concerning the Tekki Fii campaign	0	3	50

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

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