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Tekki-Fii STORIES



International
Trade
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YOUTH
EMPOWERMENT
PROJECT
UNLOCKING POTENTIAL TO CREATE WEALTH

Enabel



www.tekkifii.gm

MAKE IT IN THE GAMBIA — TEKKI FII

ABOUT TEKKI FII

The “Make it in The Gambia - Tekki Fii” programme aims to improve economic development and prospects for Gambia’s youth, including returning migrants, by promoting attractive employment and income opportunities. The objective of the programme is to support the Government boost economic development with a focus on generating training, entrepreneurship, employment, and access to finance opportunities for Gambians.

For more information visit: www.tekkifii.gm and www.ysd.gm

ABOUT THE FUNDER

The European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) supports all aspects of stability and contributes to addressing destabilization, forced displacement and irregular migration 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.

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

ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS



International
Trade
Centre

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 and <http://www.yep.gm>

IMVF



IMVF
Instituto Marquês de Valle Flôr

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 the Tekki Fii programme targeting the youth and women of North Bank Region, Central River Region, Lower River Region and Upper River.

For more information: visit www.imvf.org

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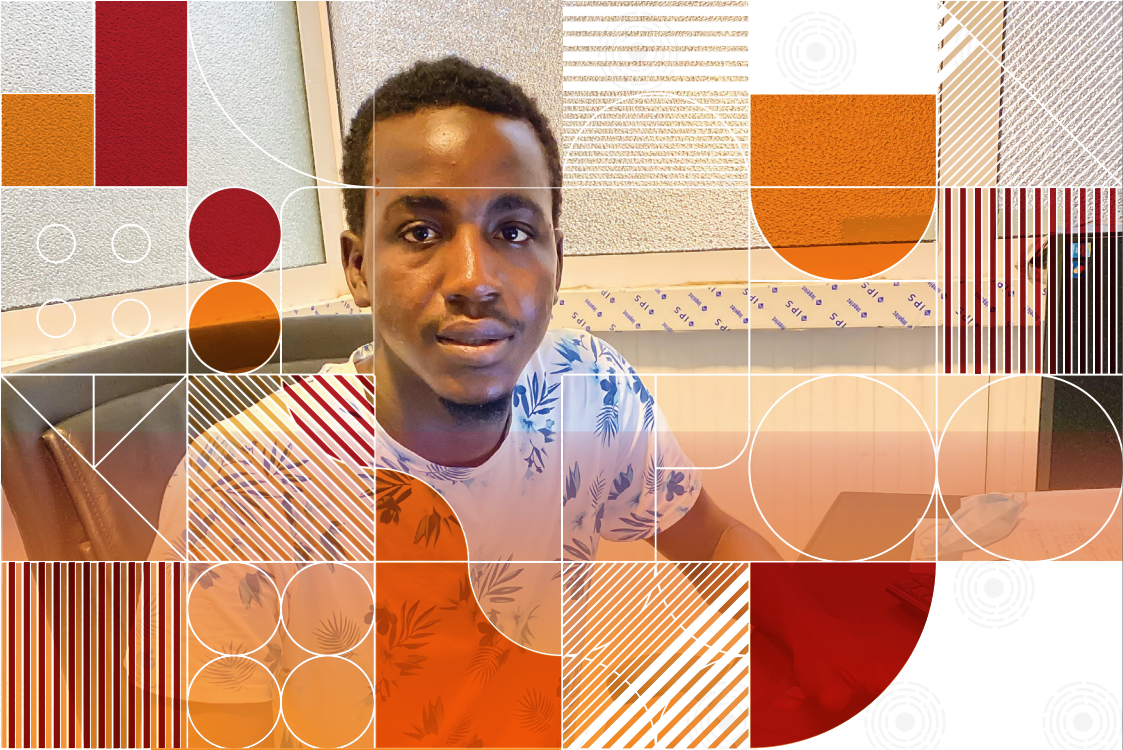
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Enabel is the development agency of the Belgian federal government, implementing and coordinating Belgium's international development policy. Enabel's intervention in The Gambia through the Rural Infrastructure for Economic Growth is designed to support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

For more information visit www.enabel.be



INSPIRING STORIES



MOMODOU KHAN

ON BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL TECH DEVELOPER

ON BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL TECH DEVELOPER

At age 21, Momodou held the belief that people who work hard can make it in the Gambia without having to go overseas. He began detaching himself from this flawed narrative that one can only make it outside of the Gambia, and drove his ambition towards becoming different. Someone with a clear agenda of what the future should look like for him.

Momodou comes from a small village, Kuntaya and attended one of the most competitive schools in the Kombos, Nusrat Senior Secondary School. “I am now at the University pursuing my bachelor in Information Technology. I have always seized opportunities that come my way to develop myself both professional and personally.” He explained.

His love for using technology to develop new things and solve problems has resulted in his participation in training that will propel the growth of this gift. The Tech enthusiast added that the European Union (EU) funded SkYE Fund scheme helped him learn a lot while developing the skills required to establish a business that he can drive to the peak of its success with the available meager resources. “The training assisted me in lifting myself from a novice to a semi-pro web developer. Today I am capable of developing any kind of website, from basic websites to large complex websites.” He stated.

As someone who took his first course in cyber security while in grade 12, Momodou recalls receiving emails of modules on the cyber security course every two days which were that eventually earned him a certificate. Thereafter he gained the conviction to become a job creator in the future.

“I realized that the world is moved on the wheels of technology. I graduated with good grades, and I decided to choose the Information Technology field. Today I am on freelancing platforms registering my name and bidding on projects. Thanks to the Youth Empowerment Project with support from EU for allowing me to learn the required skills and technology to be a freelancer.”

As a freelancer, Momodou is allowed to work from home while taking projects from clients all around the world irrespective of background and culture. This was all after the training which made him realize that there is goodness in sitting at the comfort of your home to do work.

He believes that he is now able to use his skills and knowledge gained from the Tekki Fii programme to venture into the Web Development and Design business. Momodou is with the strong notion that his destiny lies in the technology field where he can actively drive development at a fast and smarter pace. As his vision grows, he is set out to not back down at any given period.



SAINABOU GAYE

THE FASHION ENTHUSIAST REDEFINING GAMBIAN FASHION INDUSTRY

THE FASHION ENTHUSIAST REDEFINING GAMBIAN FASHION INDUSTRY

29-year-old Sainabou Gaye is the proprietress of the African Swag Collection, a fashion brand she started with just D3000 from which she purchased a domestic sewing machine, scissors, and other necessary equipment. Working from home at the early days of the business was tough on the young Sainabou, “but today my brand can be listed among the top-ten fashion brands in The Gambia.” Proudly adding that it started with a domestic machine to an industrial production center that has a separate showroom and equally employs and trains young Gambians.

Sainabou benefitted from the Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) capacity-building training on mentorship and coaching. As someone whose product is usually in rapid demand by all factions of society especially high-end users, she got the opportunity to be part of the beneficiaries that were selected for The Andandorr Export Advancement Programme (EAP). The EAP is a collaboration between the Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) under the She Trades Gambia project and YEP.

“Through the Andandorr programme, I was one of the 4 selected representatives from The Gambia, in the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) program held in Ghana. She added, “the most important element I learned which is beneficial to my business is

networking as it is the fastest way of building business linkages and maximizing brand visibility.”

Sainabou is not only about making a profit in tailoring and fashion designing, but also trains young people who are passionate about acquiring the skills. “I am doing this because I believe that every young Gambian can make it here. To inculcate this in the minds of the young people, I believe one should practice it continuously.”

Indeed, change starts with oneself, and to solidify that statement, one must be committed to matching words with action. Making the Tekki Fii dream a reality, Sainabou explains, is for the youth to make a deliberate effort towards building and wanting to grow.

“The programme is a big encouragement for every youth, as it will provide you with all the necessary equipment needed and competently pushes you through,” She stressed.

Institutionalizing her business is one of Sainabou’s biggest plans to broaden the creative net while training and employing young Gambians who have the potential to be great.

“My advice to my fellow youth is to stick to their dreams and often take action immediately because an idea remains an idea until the day one implements it. I say no to the Back Way, Tekki Fii by force with pragmatism”.



MUSA SARR

A MEANS TO A SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD THROUGH SATELLITE INSTALLATION

A MEANS TO A SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD THROUGH SATELLITE INSTALLATION

Musa Sarr, commonly known as “MUART” is a 21-year-old Gambian passionate about fine art. His expertise ranges from Mural, Portrait painting, and Graffiti lettering. Musa inherited painting skills from both maternal and paternal grandparents. “I never attended any Art school, I am a self-taught painter,” he puts. Unknowing to him that this could transform into a profit-making venture, Musa started with Carpentry and Welding while growing up to sustain a decent livelihood.

“Growing up, my parents always told me how great my grandparents were at painting. I think my father knew that I will become a great one someday. So, he got me crayons, drawing boards, colors, and a drawing book, which encouraged me to practice from a very young age”.

Musa started painting professionally in 2015 after much discouragement from people who wanted him to focus on his schooling. It was obvious that Musa had a deep passion for painting which meant standing firm to resist the pressure. “I was learning Welding and Carpentry before realizing that painting can be a profession that can earn me money. Now, I am using all those skills in my Art. There are things I like to create that involve both Welding and Carving, so all three have become meaningful. I have been very committed to perfect my Art. It is a passion and I feel alive when painting.”

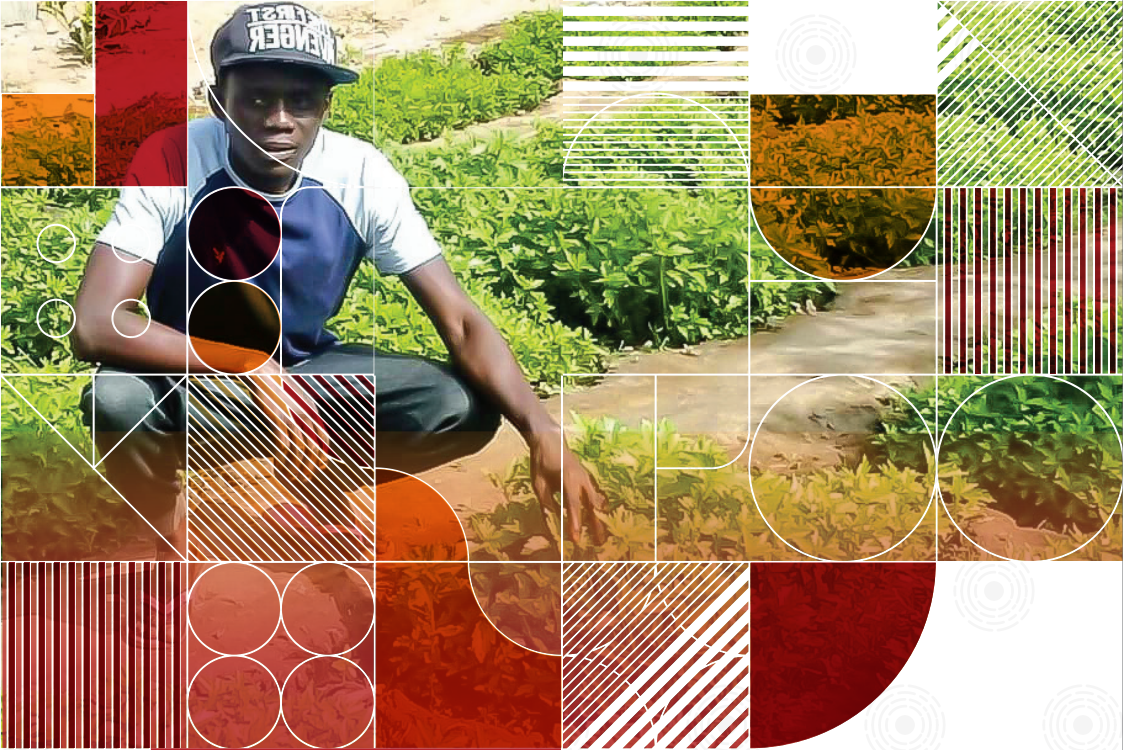
The young painter has harnessed his skills despite facing issues like plagiarism. It has gone to show him that there

is a need to boldly embrace his work and stand firm to protect his identity. Despite these challenges, there was also the challenge of getting frequent contracts as people did not attach much value to artworks. This changed when he got the opportunity to paint the walls of the Janjangbureh Youth Centre.

“YEP was the first institution to enable me to travel across regions just to do my profession. When I look at the work I did in Janjangbureh, I feel so proud. It’s such a huge project considering Janjangbureh’s rich history which I was able to demonstrate through my painting.” Looking back at what he did at the Youth Centre, Musa feels proud that young people can gain inspiration for more engagement by just looking at his painting. This has created dynamism amongst the youth who are now found engaging at the centre which gives a breath of freshness.

“Since I put that work on Instagram, it has overly increased my visibility. I have so many established companies reaching out for my services.” Musa stated. The contract from YEP was not only beneficial for his exposure, but it also built his confidence and gave more people the trust to hire young Gambian painters for innovative designs.

Enthusiastic Musa underscores that he now looks forward to an Art Day where all artists can come together and do things of meaningful impact, especially that which carry social benefits and can transform communities into beautiful eye-catching societies.



OMAR FOFANA

DISCOURAGING RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION THROUGH INNOVATIVE FARMING

DISCOURAGING RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION THROUGH INNOVATIVE FARMING

32-year-old Omar Fofana has grown to become an ardent cultivator on a 50-meter square land. Annually, he cultivates groundnut and has so far expanded to grow cashew trees. For years, this has been the young farmer's source of living. He is also a poultry farmer with 35 chickens and 4 ducks. He has a sizeable plantation of cassava. Farming is a daily activity for Omar.

In the village of Karantaba right at the heart of Kiang West, young people seem to not fancy farming and as such, they do not engage even though it is their best bet for a meaningful life. But Omar is built differently. However, standing out in a youthful population that does not subscribe to your ideals makes work even more difficult in the absence of motivation. So, he takes his work very seriously and capitalizes on any opportunity for growth. "Born and raised in the village, I grew up in farming because my father was a subsistence farmer and he had trained me since childhood."

With the difficulties in accessing water in a country that is highly dependent on rainfed agriculture, the continuous learning of productive ways has helped improve Omar's farming approach. For him, the Youth Empowerment Project Training was eye-opener and a barrier breaker.

Micro gardening is an intensive agricultural solution in which plants/vegetables are grown more intensively, making the best use of limited spaces and optimising water usage. Thus, it can improve livelihood, create jobs, and increase the competitiveness of smallholder farmers and vulnerable communities.

"The Micro Gardening training was intensive. We learnt best practices in Agricultural Production, Compost Making, Pest Control Mechanism, and Vegetable Production. It strengthened my belief that farming is beyond what the ordinary

Gambian thinks, but something that can change the status of a developing country."

Omar is aware of the opportunities in The Gambia's farming industry which however come with the lack of access to markets due to transportation deficiencies. This has over the years deterred prospective farmers from taking this route seriously as he puts it. But he is making a change by utilizing his knowledge to build more dynamism in community members.

"I only cultivate in the rainy season and during the dry season, I work in the community garden to produce some vegetables. I have used this opportunity to train about 30 women farmers in the village. These women now have a proper understanding of vegetable production and have learned to make savings out of their sales which they have efficiently used to sustain their business and maintain a comfortable life." He expounded.

He is open to training and passing on his skills. As some youths prefer going to urban areas to look for more opportunities, Omar is using his skills to train and encourage them not to drift from rural areas, but to stay and be productive using their competitive advantage which is farming. Whilst looking at improving his business plan, the creative ideas gained after the training have convinced Omar that one does not need a big land to be productive in farming, but innovation and dedication can yield results that could last for a long time. "I plan to grow more than I'm doing, and I believe if there is support, it is possible here." He adds.

Omar is now with the impression that he can discourage rural-urban migration. As he progresses in his farming journey, he hopes to inspire more young people in his community to take charge of farming. "With the experience I have now and with much support, the sky is the only limit to build a self-reliant project."



MUHAMMED CEESAY

A MEANS TO A SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD THROUGH SATELLITE INSTALLATION

A MEANS TO A SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD THROUGH SATELLITE INSTALLATION

As a young person growing up in The Gambia, Muhammed Ceesay, a native of Sinchu always thought it was impossible to make it in The Gambia. Thoughts of traveling abroad engulfed him until he started seeing his friends die in the Mediterranean Sea including his childhood friend, which became a point of call for him.

Fast-forward to 2018 he started studying at Sterling Skills Training Center (SSTC). This was after he challenged himself to do better in business and inspire young like-minded Gambian. Through the SkYE Fund, He underwent entrepreneurship training that shaped his business perspective and prepared him for the job market that he was so much looking forward to. "I must say, Tekki Fii is one of the best youth programs in The Gambia. It is encouraging and challenging youth to learn skills, do business and make it in The Gambia. This has ignited my spirit for success."

In 2019 Muhammed received the Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) mini-grant which he used to establish his business-PROSPECTIVE, a digital business that provides satellite services as well as digital accessory needs to customers. The grant of D47,000 got him satellite materials and a shop he is now based at. Though most of the satellite installation needs of people call for one to be present in the field, Muhammed started Prospective

alone. He now has five employees and accommodates interns from SSTC and other schools.

"The satellite installation skills and customer services were the most important elements for me. The business and entrepreneurship training helped transform my business approach into a more solid and standard venture. It would have been almost impossible to operate with my original approach if not for the training I received." Muhammed adds that he is now able to manage his finances, manages work schedules well, and has developed good customer relations.

"I am now a satellite technician working to be financially independent and free," He explains with optimism. Muhammed plans to become a successful wholesale dealer in the coming years. He wants to be supplying satellite materials and other electronic accessories, create employment for 15 young people by 2025, equip them with marketable skills whilst connecting people through digital means.

"To my fellow youth, no one will develop The Gambia for us, let us challenge ourselves to do something beneficial for ourselves and our society. Be it skills or an entrepreneurship venture, just do something beneficial."



**ABDOURAHMAN
JOBARTEH**

A YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR DEFINING THE TEKKI FII PATH THROUGH POULTRY AND TRANSPORTATION

A YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR DEFINING THE TEKKI FII PATH THROUGH POULTRY AND TRANSPORTATION

Abdourahman Jobarteh like a lot of his friends had the intention to travel abroad for a better life until a family member convinced him to stay and find a meaningful job in The Gambia. Nothing made sense to him at first until he was told to apply for a Gambia Investment Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA) supported program on poultry. "I learned about poultry from GIEPA. I was involved in layers and later saw myself in broilers. But the programme took us to the livestock farm in Abuko where we learned in both theory and practical," he said, which has been very meaningful in shaping his understanding of the field.

During his time in school, Abdourahman realized he was not doing well academically. After much thought and with the guidance of his family, he was convinced that his love for chickens could become a profession. "I remember the training and how we were taught to medicate our animals. I received a certificate from GIEPA after 6 days of training then later saw the Tekki Fii advert which I applied for and received." The grant enabled him to set up his poultry farm with 150 chicks, some feed, and other items. The young poultry lover benefitted from Tekki Fii training sessions and gained valuable insights into the entrepreneurial world.

"I learned so much but most importantly, the marketing lesson was great in getting me to understand how to make good customers. I was involved in the business, but I did not have a viable market. So, we were taught the different strategies to reach customers including branding and visibility measures to promote the business."

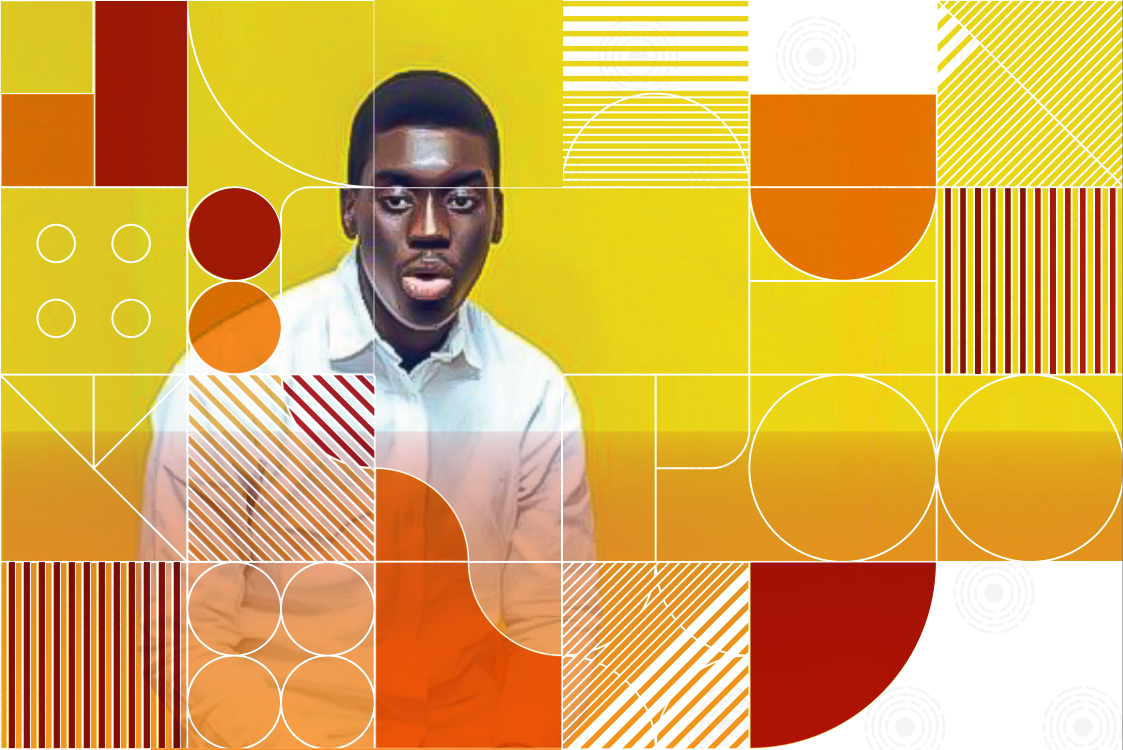
Abdourahman is not only relying on the poultry as the chicks need some time to grow before they can hatch and begin to

sell. He wanted to take his entrepreneurship journey further by applying for the pilot Youth Tricycle Initiative.

The Kanifing Municipal Council (KMC) in partnership with the Youth Empowerment Project (YEP), Social Development Fund, and Tuk Tuk Transport Concept launched the Youth Tricycle Initiative in 2020 to support young people with employment opportunities and address the constraints in transportation through a youth-led approach.

He was selected as one of the two beneficiaries of the pilot scheme which requires them to pay the loan in a year. "I am now driving a tricycle alongside pushing my poultry business, which is still in its crawling state as I am waiting for the chicks to grow before I can slaughter them. So, I am utilizing the tricycle business to make up for the waiting time. I have employed one of my friends to handle the poultry farm and look after it while I do the transport business." He explained. He has become a Tekki Fii champion as he continues to encourage his relatives and friends to tap into available opportunities. "The tricycle is doing well and in fact, a lot of young people have expressed their interest," he laughs. "So, this has been inspirational" he added.

Abdourahman is convinced that no one can encourage him to embark on the irregular journey to Europe in search for greener pasture. "It is very possible in this country. All you need is the aim and intention to want to do better for yourself and your family. Instead of idling in the streets, you can learn a skill. Nobody expected such immense growth within a short period. Now young people are realizing the importance of business."



BABOUCARR NJIE

A YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR MOVING BRANDS AND STORIES IN THE GAMBIA THROUGH IMPROVED ADVERTISING

Driven by the need to move brands and tell stories, Baboucarr Njie founded Outboost Media Analytics in January 2020 to support businesses and institutions reach their target audience and sell their services efficiently.

The business started in a pandemic brought forth its unique setbacks. "The COVID-19 had just begun and Outboost had an extremely low capacity due to being a privately funded business with no funding facility." He outlined. In the beginning, Outboost focused only on one product which was taxi advertising, despite the overarching aim of making other businesses more visible to their audience using offline mediums and digital technologies.

The KMC Mayor's challenge held in partnership with International Trade Centre (ITC) through its Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) availed Baboucarr the amount of over four hundred thousand dalasis (400,000), which subsequently helped the company to boost its capacity to run bigger campaigns with more established clients within The Gambia. This fund is a critical part of the programme considering the low access to capital facing many startups.

"We partnered with taxi drivers and lobbied for campaigns from businesses to advertise using our network of drivers. The fund came in handy as we aimed for growth through rolling out more campaigns. This also addressed a few problems faced in the transportation industry as we helped taxi drivers earn alternative revenue from our campaigns." Baboucarr explained as he reflects on the KMC Mayor's Challenge held in 2020 to support young vibrant businesses to leverage technological-driven solutions bent on solving various challenges facing the municipality.

Baboucarr also had the opportunity to attend workshops and mentorship sessions with both local and international consultants, attended international events and had the opportunity to pitch to a series of investors. "I would say, the program has created a platform for us to think globally and build globally competitive businesses." He underscored.

Aside from the numerous networks built over the past months, "Outboost has evolved to become a full suite advertising company. A Tech agency with 3 departments serving clients in marketing consulting (Outboost Media), technology solutions (Outboost Analytical), and branding (Outboost Studio). In addition to our new partners and clients, we managed to retain our early adopted clients who hopped on and fell in love with our services after we boosted our capacity through the KMC Mayor's Challenge Fund." He added.

In 2021, Outboost launched their first-ever private office and studio, featuring full suite media, advertising, and marketing facilities such as commercial photo studios, printing & bespoke photo booths to enhance the quality of marketing and branding amongst corporate businesses and SMEs.

Adopting a sustainable approach towards promoting a greener economy, Baboucarr is hoping that Outboost will contribute towards city infrastructure to make cities clean, green, and smart through innovative outdoor advertising concepts while anticipating major collaborations across the sub-region to expand his reach.

"So Far, our taxi campaigns impacted at least 100 drivers over a 6-8 months' period. Our clients also gained impressive attention within the transportation ecosystem through our taxi campaigns."

Baboucarr, advises young people to "build globally competitive businesses which are scalable, viable and innovative and have an element of contribution towards community development."



ELLEN SAMBOU

A YOUNG WOMAN SET TO INSPIRE A GENERATION OF WOMEN THROUGH HER TECHNICAL VENTURE

A YOUNG WOMAN SET TO INSPIRE A GENERATION OF WOMEN THROUGH HER TECHNICAL VENTURE

“My biggest motivation has been wanting to do things that people think cannot be done by a woman.” Ellen S. Sambou has the zeal to defy the odds in a male-dominated field. Studying Refrigeration and Air conditioning at GTTI was an undertaking meant to encourage more women to challenge the norm and realize their full potential. “I chose this because it is a field widely dominated by men and women should not be left behind,” she shared.

In the beginning, it was not easy for Ellen as the stereotypes kicked in, but her drive to achieve measurable results in this field for a fair workforce kept her moving. Like many students who juggle adult life and higher education, the financial burden almost became unbearable. However, the determined Ellen knew she was meant to overcome every obstacle that was to serve as a deterrent in achieving her vision.

“As a woman, I found the beginning of my technical career very difficult. Imagine going to learn with no lunch money sometimes and being an apprentice at a workshop with no transport allowance.” She added and added, “but today I thank God for every little thing that I have. Indeed, faith and self-conviction can move mountains, whatever you believe that you can do, try hard and you shall see the results.”

Ellen is a recipient of the Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) mini grant. The amount of D50,000 presented to her through NACCUG was able to rent her a shop and get her relevant materials to begin operating her new venture. “The Youth Empowerment Project boosted my potentials as I got to buy some materials such as Long ladder Oxy-acetylene, Vacuum pump, Manifold gauge, Cordless drill, Tools set, Allen key set, Socket set, Rotary hammer, Stoning hammer, Machinist hammer, AC voltage detector to name a few.”

Ellen believes that the #TekkiFii slogan has been working well in practicality as it has become a motivation for Gambian youth to invest and create meaningful jobs in the country. What the grant was able to do for her repairing and servicing of cooling items has been immense in boosting her capacity and income, she highlighted.

“Before receiving the grant, I did not have the proper tools, but that narrative is in the past now. With knowledge of the opportunities in the sector, and the enormous impact it can create, I want more women to be part of it.”

With intentions to set up a company and train more women technicians, Ellen has set a decent path of living for her staff and three apprentices under her supervision.



KAWSU JAITEH

THE MIGRANT RETURNEE WORKING TO MAKE IT IN THE GAMBIA

THE MIGRANT RETURNEE WORKING TO MAKE IT IN THE GAMBIA

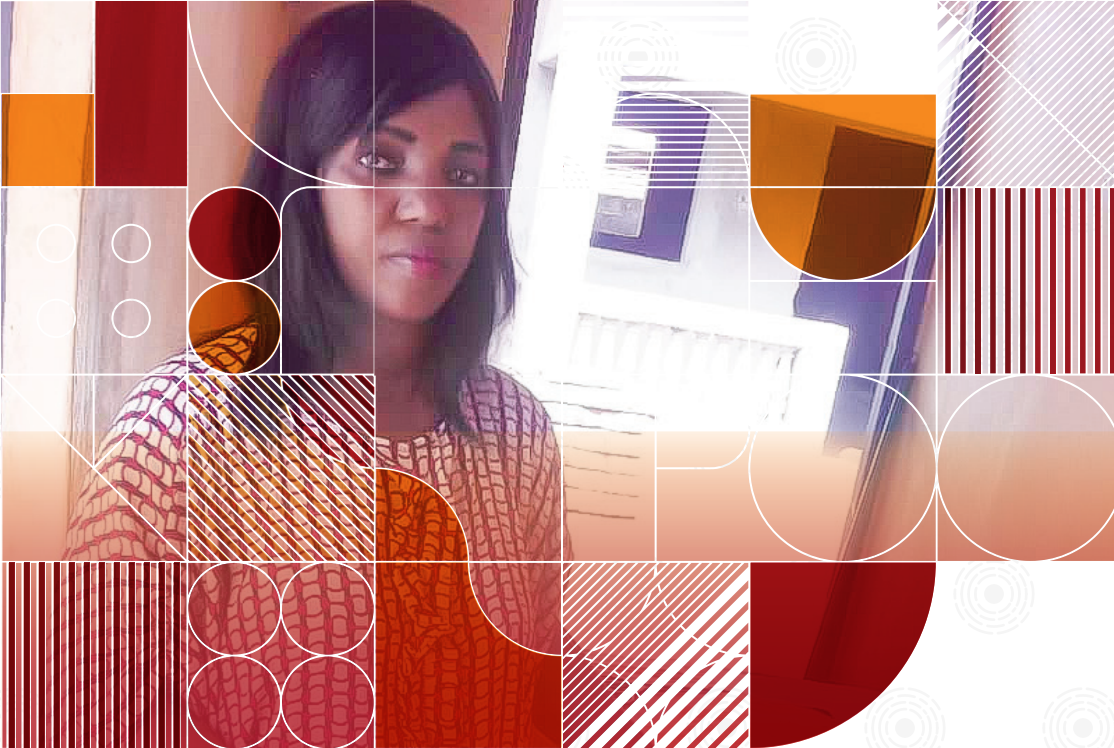
When the journey to Europe became the only hope for survival, Kawsu Jaiteh did not mind if that meant taking the irregular route. After much struggle, he made it to Libya through the Mediterranean Sea. Kawsu travelled with only a skill in painting which rendered his hopes for success futile. With so many challenges and unpleasant experiences he made his way back home. Going back to his childhood days, Kawsu would gather old radio parts to assemble as though he was an expert in electrical repairs. He grew up with this passion for electronics and eventually started repairing mobile phones. After returning to The Gambia, with support from the Youth Empowerment Project's SkYE Fund programme, he enrolled in a six-month training program at Sterling Technical training Center in Bansang.

With honesty and good work ethics, Kawsu was able to leverage on the lack of solar installation expertise in his home village of Nyani Kunting in the Central River Region. Kawsu used that opportunity to work and earn a living whilst inspiring the new generation of solar installers in his village who would have otherwise sought the services from neighboring country Senegal or faraway villages.

Reflecting on his irregular journey to Europe, he shared "most migrants traveling in search of greener pasture do so due to a lack of skill or proper means of earning. I believe after being trained with the skills, the push to embark on the journey will be narrowed because there is a possibility to make it here."

Kawsu now has eight young trainees and two have recently graduated. "I plan to expand and build a company on electronics so that I can employ more young people." This, he alluded to while pointing out that his previous ambition for embarking on the irregular migration journey to Europe was due to the lack of an established skill, a decision he wished could have been overturned as he now understands his purpose for his country.

With fixed stare at a distance, Kawsu shared these words "My advice for the youth is for them to seek knowledge. Learn a skill and work because what we are searching for in other countries is here in The Gambia. So, we the youth need to stand strong and work towards national development as we are the only ones who can develop our country. I believe with more capital support for start-ups like mine, it is possible to make it."



MARIAMA CEESAY

A BUDDING FASHION DESIGNER WITH IMMACULATE EYE FOR COLOUR

A BUDDING FASHION DESIGNER WITH IMMACULATE EYE FOR COLOUR

Inspired by the natural colors of fabrics, the beauty in nature, and how that can translate into exquisite designs that sit immaculately on the skin, Mariama Ceesay ventured into tailoring and fashion with a hope to enhance beauty embedded in clothing. Her family and community members were her first customers. They would patronize her business and promote it to help expand her customer base.

With just inspiration to fuel her passion, Mariama started her business in 2016, which she called “THEA’s Tailoring and Fashion Designing”. At the start of her business, she saw a need to build and expand, but also nurture her business capacity to enable her to compete in a growing market dominated by energetic young people like herself.

With support from the Youth Empowerment Project (YEP), Mariama improved her knowledge on running a business through entrepreneurship and other sector focused trainings. Reflecting on this journey, Mariama shared “Two years after registering my business, I saw a significant increase in my customer base. As a result, I expanded to employ three young people. The most important element that I learned from the entire process was financial management, and how to re-invest into my business to maximize production which in turn creates revenue.”

In addition to the trainings received, the creative also benefitted from the Tekki Fii mini grant. The amount helped her procure designing machines and other required materials to boost her produc-

tion. According to her, all of these were important in boosting THEA’s goal to grow bigger and empower more young people.

At the period of this interview, she can be seen eagerly putting together clothing garments which are all coming out neatly, designed in special embroidery meant to make a statement.

Fashion Weekend Gambia is the biggest fashion event in The Gambia, and Mariama is super proud to have made the list for the 10th edition back in 2021. Recalling that moment with a wide smile, she said “being able to showcase at the Fashion Weekend to me means working harder to come up with brilliant ideas so that people can value my business, but to also connect with other fashion entrepreneurs as networking is key.”

Navigating this pathway with high ambition can be daunting, but Mariama’s plan she says, is to work diversify her products to attract a wide customer base and win the hearts of fashion lovers both in The Gambia and in the sub-region. Mariama wants her goods to be everywhere, worn by all people who can find a perfect fit.

As part of her drive to keep pushing, Mariama highlighted “I am motivated to stay and make it in The Gambia. I am running my own business and equally creating jobs for others”.

She went on to add this advice; “to my fellow youth, learn a skill. Take a step. This is how you create an opportunity to be employed or even employ.



MAKE IT IN THE GAMBIA —TEKKI FII