YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT AT A GLANCE

DONOR
European Union
Emergency Trust Fund for Africa

DURATION
4 years, 2017-2020

BUDGET
€11 million

BENEFICIARIES
• Gambian youth (15-35 years)
• Vocational training and technical institutes
• MSMEs and industry associations
• Business and trade support institutions

OBJECTIVE
To tackle the economic root causes of irregular migration through increased job opportunities and income prospects for youth. The project improves skills, fosters entrepreneurship and creates employment along selected value chains.

KEY PARTNERS

ABOUT THE TRUST FUND
The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa addresses the root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa. More specifically, it helps address the root causes of destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular migration by promoting economic and equal opportunities, strengthening security, development and resilience of vulnerable people.

ABOUT ITC
The International Trade Centre (ITC) is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations. Our aim is for businesses in developing countries to become more competitive in global markets, speeding economic development and contributing to the achievement of the United Nations Global Goals for sustainable development.

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International Trade Centre

Unlocking potential to create wealth
**YEP - TRADE FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

The Gambia's economy is built on agriculture and tourism, two sectors that have untapped potential for value addition and employment. For a small country with limited local markets such as The Gambia, trade can provide a powerful engine for socio-economic development and job creation. By improving the employability of youth and helping young entrepreneurs to tap into the opportunities of the service economy, Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) supports the long-term economic competitiveness and well-being in the Gambia. Irregular migration to Europe – referred to as taking the backway – represents a challenge for Gambian society and economy and puts the country's citizens at risk. To stem the current migration trend, it is crucial to step up job creation and create more meaningful income opportunities at home.

Increasing the income opportunities available for youth, especially potential and returning migrants, is key for the future growth of the Gambian economy and inclusiveness of the society.

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**FACTS ABOUT THE GAMBIA**

- **1.991 million**
- **36% are between 15 - 35 years**
- **38% of the youth are unemployed youth**
- **40% of the labour force has a formal education**
- **Large segment of the population of the Gambia is working in the informal services sector**
- **Agriculture is the biggest employer sector represents 20% of the gdp**
- 50% in rural areas

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**SCOPE OF THE YOUTH EMPowerMENT PROJECT**

YEP takes a market-led approach and sets out to strengthen existing youth development systems, structures and services to create employment opportunities. It aims to scale up skills among youth in the workforce in response to market demands.

**Improved employability and self-employment opportunities**

To tackle the skills gap among Gambian youth and to help improve their employment and self-employment prospects, existing technical and vocational skills programmes in selected priority sectors are strengthened to better match the needs of businesses.

YEP builds partnership with industry associations and training institutions and assist in the development and management of their programmes. Improving the effectiveness of learning is increased by adopting accessible and flexible learning models and tools.

The project encourages entrepreneurship among youth through business skills training and support programmes. Targeted business support services, help improve the performance and growth of youth-owned businesses.

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**UNLOCKING POTENTIAL TO CREATE WEALTH**

**Employment opportunities along selected value chains**

By supporting a move from subsistence agriculture towards more productive systems and value-addition, YEP provides smallholders with increased opportunities for value addition, efficiency and quality, which in turn translate into more attractive and better-paid jobs. Enabling value addition in the agri-sector and empowering it as a vehicle for economic growth has a knock-on effect on related sectors, potentially multiplying the employment opportunities.

The aim is to achieve development of local services around agri-businesses such as packaging, logistics, mechanical repairs, web design, IT services and communications.

YEP also supports sectors such as IT, tourism and fashion that offer opportunities to youth leaving the rural areas in search of non-agricultural jobs. Through backward linkages these sectors are enabled to connect the rural producer communities to new markets.