



standing4youths
Initiatives



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What is the *Standing 4 Youths* entrepreneurship program?

To improve the self-sufficiency of aspiring young entrepreneurs in The Gambia, IOM supported 364 youth with professional coaching, mentorship and a cash grant to overcome challenges associated with launching and sustaining a business. Funded by the UK Government through the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, the program was implemented in four locations in three regions: Kanifing Municipality, Lower River Region and Upper River Region.

Over ten weeks, participants were guided by a professional coach to create their own business plan through one-on-one coaching. This provided them insight into government services, the regulatory environment, industry know-how, market networks and access to further capital or support. The program also had group coaching sessions, where participants met on their own to support each other. Finally, mentorship sessions guided participants on the reality of the Gambian market, with the support of professionals with industry experience. Participants with sufficient attendance and progress were granted access to two tranches of cash grants for a total value of GBP 1,755 (roughly GMD 125,000).

BABUCARR
DARBOE



“I strongly believe that I can make it here, just as any other young person in the country can”.

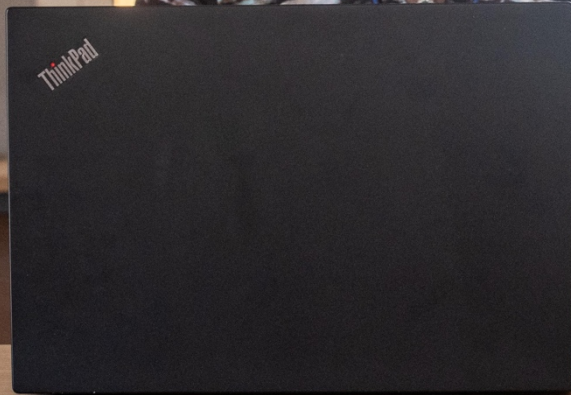
I live in a village called Pakaliba, Lower River Region. I am a farmer and an entrepreneur, and I am involved in integrated farming, animal husbandry and gardening. As a young entrepreneur, when I first heard about this opportunity, I decided to go for it. I recently started my business and I need the necessary knowledge to achieve better results. The initial stage of the program was hectic, and I thought I could not do it.

However, when the program started, my passion and motivation grew. I understood that it was fine to have fear and to feel unprepared. Thanks to my farming activities, I gained a lot of experience on the ground, but I needed the knowledge to run a business. The training taught me many things: the risks involved in managing a business, the knowledge needed for an entrepreneur to be successful and how to carry out market research to set targets.

To be a successful entrepreneur, you have to take risks, be innovative and know the wants and needs of the customers. This training taught me all these things that I never considered before. I am now ready for a new challenge by taking up the responsibility to change the mindset of the youth in my community—convincing them that they can make it in The Gambia rather than taking the risky journey. I strongly believe that I can make it here, just as any other young person in the country can.

I am currently supervising five young people. I will make sure to pass the knowledge I gained from this course to them, encouraging other youth who want to be entrepreneurs by supporting them through the techniques of business management.

BINTA KHAN BADJIE



“As an entrepreneur, knowledge is crucial. I decided to enroll in this program to get a better understanding of business dynamics.”

I am the CEO of Nopal Jegg Enterprise. I started my business in 2020, and I have two full-time employees and one part-time employee. All of them are women. *Nopal Jegg* is a Wolof phrase which means “give the lady a break”—a break from the tedious process of preparing the millet, which impacts women nationwide on a daily basis. The idea to set up this company, whose focus is to provide cereal in the Greater Banjul Area, came from my mother, with whom I share the enthusiasm for women empowerment.

The rolled millet we produce has low fat and calories, so it is very good for elderly people, diabetic persons or those with low blood pressure. I am also targeting young mothers with babies, as they need healthy food to have a balanced energy diet.

I learned about the program through a WhatsApp group, and I was later invited for an interview by IOM. As an entrepreneur, knowledge is crucial. I decided to enroll in this program to get a better understanding of business dynamics.

When I was selected for this program, I was full of joy. It was not an easy journey, but I managed to come this far. I felt empowered throughout the program. The coach was always mentoring us, keeping a close eye on our workplan. I improved my skills in different areas, such as management, finance and customer care. Each of these skills will help me to enhance my work with partners and associations. Thanks to the different classes I attended, I am finally able to come up with new ideas for product development.

I am currently supplying some local supermarkets and a pharmacy with my products, but I want to expand my business and create new job opportunities. Producing a healthy product like rolled millet, from production to distribution, in the Gambian market is a great cause. I am now planning to reach all corners of The Gambia, enhancing food security in my own country.



BINTA
TOURAY

“I will create more jobs for the youth. I will also train more youth on entrepreneurship, so that they can be self-employed and be job creators.”

I am from the Upper River Region in The Gambia., a student of community health nursing and, at the same time, engaged in cosmetics. When I started my business selling cosmetics, it was not an easy journey. The introduction of this program has lifted and strengthened me in business management, providing me with the necessary skills to run my business effectively.

I believe that what I learned in this program will bring many positive changes to my life. I now have the required knowledge to manage my business finances and relations with customers. When I first started, I had no idea about business management, but I can now draft a business plan alone. Most of us also didn't know about business ethics before enrolling in this program.

After the completion of the training, I am planning to expand my business, because as an entrepreneur you should not only focus on one thing. I have only two young employees at the moment, but I will create more jobs for the youth. I will also train more youth on entrepreneurship, so that they can be self-employed and be job creators.

Business is all about challenges, just like life is a challenge. You have to move with these challenges to expand and progress. This training has given me the opportunity to realize my potential. In the same way, I would encourage all young people to take up these opportunities because they can be useful for their future endeavors. Young people should be more involved in entrepreneurship so that we can create more jobs to reduce unemployment in our country.



JUDITH
A. FOON

“I believe this program will help many people. They might have rough ideas, but they need guidance and coaching to get a vision of how their business will take shape.”

I started my own business in January 2021 when I began offering graphic design services to clients and creating handmade products, such as notebooks covered with African material and textiles. After graduating from an arts school in 2009, I naturally improved my skills and started to be more engaged in graphic design and handicraft.

Although I had long dreamed of turning my passion into a job, I did not have time yet to realize this dream. However, in February 2020, I decided to start working on my first textile crafts during my maternity leave. Only my husband helped me from time to time, but I am thinking of hiring someone as soon as the shop I own is completely renovated.

I had many doubts at the beginning of the program, and I didn't know what to expect. However, during the first classes, I gained confidence and I learned a lot.

Thanks to my personal coach, I enhanced my communication skills, carried out market research and set up targets to start envisioning my business plan. I believe that these skills will have an impact on my future enterprise and on the needs of my clients.

The program gave me many ideas that I did not consider before, like selling my products internationally by opening an e-commerce shop and attracting foreign customers that I can eventually reach via international couriers. I am confident that my background in sales and social media will help me to achieve these results. I am also looking forward to hiring some employees and to open my shop in town, as many customers are asking me when it will be operational.

I am grateful to have taken part in this program. It means a lot to me. I am ready to start my own business and to gain a steady income. I believe this program will help many people. They might have rough ideas, but they need guidance and coaching to get a vision of how their business will take shape.

KALIFA
NJIE

Task needed	Time / to achieve	When	Who	Cost
What will help me achieve this?		What do we need in March	Lulu Keston	10, 100
Writing a business proposal to sell it and for support		Want to start this April		
Action Plan	Quantity	Unit	Cost	Sample
pieces	200	Unit	\$1900	
kg	15 bags		\$22,500	
pieces	4 pieces		\$260	
pieces	10 pieces		\$2100	
	229		\$35,260	
	225,020			

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“I will dialogue with the youth to invest in business and be financially independent, so they can sustain themselves.”

I am a teacher and an entrepreneur engaged in fashion (buying and selling of clothes). I decided to join the program because I realized that it could help the development of my business.

Before applying for the program, I was hesitant, and I thought that I wouldn't be selected. When I was invited to participate, it was like a dream come true, because this was the opportunity of a lifetime for me. The program has equipped me with a range of skills and knowledge that I will apply in and out of my business. Some things I have learnt include how to establish a successful business model, how to set sales and customer relations and how to better supervise my three employees.

The reason I ventured into fashion is because I noticed that it is a problem in my community. People in my community and from the surrounding villages need clothes. They travel a long way to buy my products, so bringing clothes to them will reduce their problems.

I am also thinking of expanding my network to other neighboring countries. I believe my business will impact the communities in various ways. It will save time and costs, especially for those that have to travel all the way, and it will also motivate many people to venture into this type of business. In this way, I can be a source of inspiration for young entrepreneurs.

I would like to encourage young people to be entrepreneurs, to be employed and to improve our living standards. My goal is to employ more people and to produce more clothes in The Gambia. I will dialogue with the youth to invest in business and be financially independent, so they can sustain themselves.

MARIAMA
JOBARTEH



“I am driven by a burning desire to help the nation be eco-friendly and sustainable by offering natural and organic cosmetics and food.”

I am the founder and CEO of Project Mr. Gambia. We produce natural and organic cosmetics and food. In partnership with civil society organizations, we try to be as eco-friendly as possible. I am driven by a burning desire to help the nation be eco-friendly and sustainable by offering natural and organic cosmetics and food.

My source of inspiration was definitely my father, mainly because he also worked in agriculture. We had a big house when I was young, with chicken and other animals wandering around the house. He did a lot for sustaining the community, providing others with the organic products we cultivated. He taught me how to help others in a sustainable way.

I always had the passion for farming and cooking using organic ingredients. However, it was only in 2020 when I started my business. I have five full-time employees who support me now. My goal is to open my own restaurant, specialized mainly on *ebbeh* (local Gambian delicacy) and pastries like chocolate or sweets, without losing my responsibilities in agriculture.

At Project Mr. Gambia, we grow many plants in our garden. In addition, we get extra raw materials from six other gardens we manage in the Greater Banjul Area and sometimes from local markets.

Before starting this program, I didn't know much about business management, and my marketing skills were lacking. Thanks to the classes and the personal coaching sessions, I learned how to do market research and how to be a successful entrepreneur who looks after her product, from production to distribution. One of the main challenges I faced was connected to time management. Sometimes, you have to drop some things and focus on what is important. Thanks to this program, I learned how to organize myself and my time by prioritizing certain tasks over others.

This program also taught me how to be resilient. No matter what challenges you might face, with the right approach, you will always endure and be successful. Youth: you have the ideas and the capabilities. It's possible to make The Gambia a better, more eco-friendly and sustainable place.

MODOU LAMIN
DARBOE



"I was not very good at management, but now, thanks to the program, I am able to plan my business priorities in advance."

I am the president of the Young Poultry Farmer Association of The Gambia, which comprises almost all business owners involved in marketing, feed processing and distribution of chicken in the country. The association involves young and adults including myself, since I am also the founder and main manager of Royal Prince Farm, a farm located in Lamin and specialized in poultry farming and agriculture.

Thanks to the experience of our team, we also provide poultry consultancy to other enterprises in the Great Banjul Area—helping their businesses development, advising them on how to medicate and vaccinate their animals, helping with injections, trimming and more. To diversify our services and products, we have recently increased our production of vegetables and fruits, including bananas and papayas. Although the business is going well, there are some challenges to solve on the farm, such as the stale water supply. We are aiming to have a well and a solar system to grow better vegetables.

I decided to enroll in the program to improve some aspects of our business, like planning, management and marketing strategies. I was inspired to participate in the program after I talked to a friend who showed me the link to register through a poultry farm association page. I learned about business model and pitching, how to carry out market research and how to explore different communication tools to attract new customers.

This was totally new to me and, at the beginning of the course, I was quite nervous. However, the learning material was great, and I received amazing coaching from my business coach, who was always there for me when I was making mistakes. The program really impacted me in different ways. I think this was the experience of a lifetime.



SHERIF
TOURAY

“I am so motivated to expand the business, thanks to the skills I learned during the coaching sessions. I will make the best out of it.”

Moving from one place to another is one of the basic needs of humans. Since I started my taxi business in 2020, my family and friends have been counting on me, and I am proud of this. I provide different types of services, including taxi service, shipping and delivery.

The idea of starting this business crossed my mind when I couldn't find transportation to get to school one morning. This made me think about the importance of having a car and the opportunity to transport others for profit. I am still going to university where I study tourism and hospitality management. I am also learning French, in order to communicate with more people and expand my business in the future.

I was worried when I started the program, because I thought I would not be able to keep up with the load of tasks and work. However, I decided to try my luck and get new ideas on how to expand my business.

I spent many hours preparing homework, while losing income from my job due to the schedule. Fortunately, I was able to look at the bigger picture and learn new skills in a program that was really worthwhile. I learned how to set up a business profile, how to manage the resources I have and how to maximize my customer base. My coach was always there for me. He made me understand that there is always a way to come up with a solution when we are facing a problem. I am so motivated to expand the business, thanks to the skills I learned during the coaching sessions. I will make the best out of it.

Overall, I learned how to remain resilient and how to cope with challenges, so I can say that this program provided me with new skills that I will also use outside my working environment. I now have a clear plan for my future. Six months from now, I hope to buy a second car with a driver and open a carwash to have more income.

