



REPORT OF INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY 2018 TREE PLANTING EXERCISE

GROW A TREE TO SAVE A LIFE



1TH SEPTEMBER 2018. FONI BULOCK, WEST COAST REGION (WCR)



BULOCK KOPONGHA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

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Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	4
2.	Opening ceremony.....	5
3.	Tree planting exercise.....	6
4.	Interviews of representatives.....	7
4.1.	Nema representative.....	7
4.2.	Department of Forestry representative	7
4.3.	GYIN representative	7
4.4.	BKYDA representative.....	8
4.5.	National Assembly Member Foni Berefet.....	8
4.6.	Green-up Gambia representative.....	8
5.	Weeding in Youth garden.....	9
6.	Closing ceremony.....	10
7.	Recommendations.....	10



BULOCK KOPONGHA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Report of International Youth Day 2018, Tree planting exercise

List of Abbreviations

CBO	Community-Based Organization
BKYDA	Bulock Kapongha Youth Development Association
GYIN Gambia Chapter	Global Youth Innovation Network Gambia Chapter
Nema	National Agricultural Land and Water Management Development Project

Acknowledgement of supporters

Global Youth Innovation Network Gambia Chapter
Department of Forestry
GreenUp Gambia
Other private individual supporters



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Report of International Youth Day 2018, Tree planting exercise

1. Introduction

Bulock Kapongha Youth Development Association (BKYDA) is a Community-Based Organization (CBO) operating in Bulock Village, Foni Berefet District, in the West Coast Region of The Gambia. The association was formed on the 10th November, 2014 with the aim of bringing together young people of the village to spearhead their own development.

It is to this backdrop that the association in collaboration with Global Youth Innovation Network Gambia Chapter (GYIN Gambia Chapter, National Youth Council, Green-up Gambia and Departments of Forestry, celebrated the International Youth Day on the day of **September 1st, 2018** in **Bulock Village**. The program entailed three components namely: **CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY AND TREE PLANTING EXERCISE, SPOT WEEDING IN YOUTH GARDEN.**

The celebration gathered three hundred youth across all regions of the country; GYINers from the various regions, as well as members of Bulock Kapongha Youth Development Association.

Objectives of the event

- Plant trees to combat climate change
- Weeding in Youth Garden
- Celebrating International Youth Day





BULOCK KOPONGHA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Report of International Youth Day 2018, Tree planting exercise

2. Opening ceremony

The opening ceremony was held early morning in the centre of the Bullock Village where the youth arriving from different regions of The Gambia were greeted in celebratory manner through local music and dance by BKYDA members and local people. Upon the arrival of the participants the BKYDA's general secretary Sarjo Jarju and GYIN Gambia Chapter executive director Mamadou Edrisa Njie made an opening statement and orientation of the Event, namely:

- Meet in an appointed venue to have a breakfast
- Plant the trees in the forest
- Weed in the Youth Garden
- Have lunch
- Closing ceremony





BULLOCK KOPONGHA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Report of International Youth Day 2018, Tree planting exercise



3. Tree planting exercise

The tree planting exercise was conducted by the participants and some of the members of the village who from the meeting point, proceeded to the forest where the tree planting took place. This exercise was graced by Departments of Forestry, Green-up Gambia representative, National Agricultural Land and Water Management Development Project (*Nema*) representative, GYINers and members of BKYDA.

Different trees were planted in the forest, such as, baobab, teak, *Gmelina arborea*, mahogany and bamboo. The bamboo trees were brought by Department of Forestry in Brikama and planted on the edges of the forest neighbouring with rice fields. The reason for planting the bamboos on the edges was to fence the rice fields from sand erosion, that is spread especially during dry season. Approximately, 3000 trees were planted in about 1 hectare land.





BULLOCK KOPONGHA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Report of International Youth Day 2018, Tree planting exercise



4. Interviews of representatives

4.1. Nema representative

The first interviewed person was Bakary Jammeh who is a Climate Change Adaptation Assistant in *Nema*. Jammeh highlighted that tree planting exercises are of a high importance. It is because trees are integral part of our life; we need trees as timber, firewood not to mention their importance to ecosystem functionality. Moreover, restoring forests is one of the most effective tools to combat climate change, he said. Thus, restoring the forest for the community bring only positive results. Sadly, the depletion of the forests in The Gambia is evident and it is caused by illegal logging. That is why, he highlighted that the protection of the planted trees is also very vital.

4.2. Department of Forestry representative

Babanding Sanyang who represented Department of Forestry was interviewed to ask questions on department of forestry's role in tree planting exercise. Sanyang highlighted that the department of forestry is collaborating with BKODA and wants to ensure high participation of the community in such exercise. He said he can witness the youth response to a national call due to International Youth Day and local community members' participation in the event.

On a question whether it is enough to plant the trees, he responded that nurturing planted trees is equally important. Moreover, during dry season occurrence of the bush fires is high, which is why they also encourage community to create a fire belts.

4.3. GYIN Gambia Chapter

Executive director of GYIN Gambia Chapter, Mamadou Edrisa Njie had spoken to the press and responded to few questions on their collaboration with BKODA. As a partner organization to BKODA, GYIN Gambia Chapter initiated the idea to conduct tree planting exercise in 2014- 2015. The reason behind that was, GYIN Gambia Chapter is an organization that specializes on rural developments which includes capacity building, leadership, information communication technology and entrepreneurship, which agricultural activities is one way of being an entrepreneur, he observed that there was a low profit from agriculture.



BULOCK KOPONGHA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Report of International Youth Day 2018, Tree planting exercise

The reason for that is climate change. Thus, tree planting exercise as means of combatting climate change was suggested to BKYDA.

If you look at the state of the forests and compare it with how it was 70 years ago, you can see that massive deforestation have taken place in the Gambia. This program of planting trees does not give short term results but rather has a long term impact on climate.

As an Award Winner 'Youth of the Year 2017', I want youth to have safe spaces when it comes to environmental adaptation, mitigation and protection from climate change.

4.4. BKYDA representative

Sarjo Jarju who works as a general secretary in BKYDA had spoken to the press. Jarju introduced BKYDA to the press and was asked about the previous projects that were carried out by the association. Last year, said Jarju, Tree Planting Exercise was combined with opening of Bulock community market, which was aimed to assist women to sell their products since they experienced some issues with other market, like long commuting and not canopy cover which made it impossible to sell their products during rainy season.

The Association also carried out training programs, for instance, training on forestry and compost chamber training funded and carried out by *Nema*.

He mentioned that according to the recommendation of the forestry department, spot weeding exercise was carried out three months after tree planting exercise. The importance of that exercise was to ensure that planted trees are being nurtured and protected from the bush fires. Spot weeding exercise has become an annual event ever since.

4.5. National Assembly Member FoniBerefet

Honorable Sunkary Badjie who is the National Assembly member spoke to the press where he highlighted the importance of the event. He said that when you say youth, it relates to the people from all ages. People of respected age are also affected by youth since they may have their children who are in this category. Through such initiatives, youth are being supported. Agriculture is important sector in the country and tree planting is the integral part of it, stated he.

As a lawmaker and consultant, there were some problems in last law. He promised to improve it.

4.6. Green-up Gambia representative

The volunteer of Green-up Gambia Alkali Camara in the position of public relation and partnership officer spoke on the forest degradation. If you have a look at the entire forest cover, you can see a massive degradation of forests, said he. Activities like these, which involves planting trees is very significant. When community takes part in planting trees, the quality of the forests will improve. Special importance is that youth take part in forest restoration; this exercise teaches youth to take responsibility for surrounding forest.



BULLOCK KOPONGHA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Report of International Youth Day 2018, Tree planting exercise



5. Weeding in Youth garden

After planting trees in the forest nearby the village, participants headed to 5 hectare Youth Garden which is sponsored by Nema. There a weeding of the field, namely melon plot and replanting chili, eggplant and bitter tomato from the nursery beds took place. With the help of great number of participants the activities that were planned in the garden were successfully accomplished.





BULLOCK KOPONGHA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Report of International Youth Day 2018, Tree planting exercise

6. Closing ceremony

Upon the completion of the weeding in the Youth Garden, participants headed back to the venue to relax and get lunch. After having lunch and relaxing the participants engaged in the festive closing ceremony which entailed drumming and dancing of the participants and organizers.



7. Recommendations

1. For next Tree Planting Exercise make an opening ceremony which contains the speeches of village heads and organizations' representatives highlighting the importance of forest and forest maintenance.
2. Next year organizations should be informed about the exercise earlier, and receive the proposals in time to be able to provide better support.
3. If the budget of the programme allows, print more T-Shirts, so that more participants can receive them.
4. Contact and involve more organizations to receive a support for the exercise.
5. Apart from the donated saplings, maintain the association's own tree nursery involving the community to have a more sustainable and reliable supply tree planting exercise for the next years.
6. Conduct spots weeding exercise after three months of Tree Planting Exercise
7. Set up a Committee on Forestry
8. Conduct sensitization programmes in the village on climate change
9. Caravan in Foni to replicate the programme in other districts