

The Global Youth Innovation Network Gambia Chapter (GYIN Gambia Chapter)

Report on Second Cohort Youth Mentorship Graduation for 50 Youths ON Enterprise Management

On 15th -16 March 2019, The Global Youth Innovation Network (GYIN) Gambia Chapter held a graduation of 50 young Gambians on Enterprise Management, at a colourful graduation ceremony held at the Jenoi Agricultural Rural Farmers' Training Centre, Lower River Region (LRR).



GYIN Gambia has since its inception as a national youth network specialises on youth led rural developments programs and activities.

The six months Youth Mentorship Programme was bankrolled by the Youth Empowerment Project (YEP).

The programme has been designed to provide support for the mentees on Understanding Business Ecosystem, Banking and Finance, Applying Grants and Loans, as well as Records Keeping.

The aim of the programme is to boost Gambian rural entrepreneurship and agribusinesses, as it supports young people in their efforts to establish sustainable investments, in order to become self-reliant. It is anchored on coaching and career counseling rather than the single method of structured trainings.

The Graduation Ceremony brought together dignitaries from various ministries and partners, including YEP, Nema Project, Gambia Youth Chamber of Commerce (GYCC), GYIN Gambia Regional Coordinators, GYINers, youth organisations, as well as the community of Jenoi and Jarra Soma.

The Scout Band led a March pass from the Trans-Gambia highway to the Centre grounds, where speeches were delivered by various dignitaries, and culminated with a 'Youth Bantaba' Forum by the famous 'Yiriwa Kafoo' Team from The Gambia Radio and Television Services (GRTS).

The event also witnessed presentation of certificates of merits and completion to outstanding participants who performed extremely well during the course of the six months programme.

Mrs. Fatou Jammeh Touray the Lower River Region (LRR)- Governor in delivering the keynote remarks acknowledged the efforts of youth organisations in their contribution to national development.



Governor of LRR, Fatou Jammeh Touray

Landing B. Sanneh, Chairman, MKAC

Mrs Touray commended GYIN The Gambia for focusing on rural development adding that the initiative of having mentoring is virtuous.

She called on development partners to continue supporting youth initiatives, citing mentorship as key in one's life.

Mr. Landing B. Sanneh, the Mansakonko Area Council Chairman who served as the Guest Speaker advised graduates to apply knowledge and skills gained into practice.

Mr Sanneh hailed GYIN The Gambia for championing the fight against traditional stereotype of youths, by accusing them of being lazy.

He said Youth Entrepreneurship is prerequisite for national development, as it also makes youths to be independent and self-reliant.

Raimund A. Moser, YEP Project Manager commended GYIN Gambia for successfully completing the programme, adding that the six months' mentorship programme was realized through Agreement- MoU signed by YEP and GYIN Gambia Chapter.

Mr. Moser stated that: "At YEP, we consider you as our partner and we will continue supporting your initiatives based on the impact that you- GYIN Gambia has registered for the past years."



Raimund A. Moser, YEP



Mamadou Edrisa Njie, GYIN Gambia

Mamadou Edrisa Njie Executive Director GYIN Gambia in his statement gave a brief background of the mentorship programme saying that the programme provided one-to-one mentoring of youth entrepreneurs and monthly workshops of sharing experiences.

Mr. Njie challenged emphasized that mentors should advice and guide the mentees on the right path of enterprise management, which had immensely equipped them with

best practices of running a venture such as taxation, business registrations, bank savings etc.

He further said the programme has also unlock the hidden potentials and abilities in the mentees saying that as a result, in the fourth month of the Youth Mentorship Programme, most of the mentees have registered tremendous successes as per their undertakings.

GYIN Gambia Executive Director also commented on the successes of the programme, noting that in the beginning, 30 Mentees were unregistered, but by the end of the one-to-one mentoring, 41 out of the 50 Mentees secured business registration certificates and Tin numbers.

Adding: “24 mentees have now created separate business accounts different from their personal savings accounts’. This will help them to know their profits and losses thus giving them the opportunity to assess the profitability of their businesses,” Mr Njie said.

On business expansion, he explained that the supervision questionnaires have shown that a good number of the Mentees have expanded their businesses from one stage to another. Some of the Mentees who had wonderful business ideas but only starting up capital crippled them to turn their dreams into reality, have now able to put things together by applying for the YEP Mini Grant Scheme.

Njie further noted that the program has enrolled youths who are into poultry, ICT, horticulture, rice and field crops production, small ruminates, fashion and design, tailoring, salon, carpentry, welding and apiculture.

The Best Mentee, Mr. Ahmad M. Ceesay, speaking on behalf of the mentees, expressed their delight and gratitude to GYIN Gambia, the Youth Empowerment Project-YEP Gambia, Managers` Prescription Consultancy Firm, Mentor and all those who stood for them in one way or the other, in order to successfully complete the Youth Mentorship Programme.

“GYIN Gambia is always at the forefront when it comes to youth empowerment, entrepreneurship and innovation. All the fifty mentees before this program, had undergone entrepreneurship trainings and already started their various ventures, putting ideas into action. It was through the GYIN Annual Summer Camp on Entrepreneurship, Leadership and Information Technology-ELIT, that we were able to realize our potentials. The training helped us become job creators for ourselves rather than job seekers.” said Ceesay.

He added that:” this mentorship program on enterprise management could not have come at a better time. The mentorship program was funded by the Youth Empowerment Project-YEP. It has enabled us understand business ecosystem, banking and finance, applying for grants and loans, record keeping and also helped us become aware of the opportunities around us and how to benefit from those opportunities”, stated Ceesay.

“We therefore urge the government and other stakeholders to support these initiatives. We want this program to continue, so that other youths out there can get the opportunity to benefit from the programme.”

According to Ceesay, the number of youths engaging in entrepreneurship and innovation is rapidly growing, shows the readiness of Gambian youths to contribute to the economic growth when given the opportunity.

He stated that in Africa and the Gambia in particular, governments should invest in youths saying that “no matter how great our visions are, no matter how huge our resources are, we cannot succeed without investing in the youths and preparing them for the future.”

In conclusion, “I will tell my fellow mentees that from today we are no more mentees, we are now mentors, with great responsibilities. It is now our duty to serve as mentors and inspire other youths at our various communities and country at large”.

Five mentees namely- Ahmad M. Ceesay, Aminata Jallow, Babucarr Janko, Musa Jaiteh, and Musa Dambelleh gave testimonies.



Certificates of merit and completion were awarded to deserving mentees who perform extremely well during the course of the six months' mentorship programmes. Furthermore, certificates of Appreciation were also given to development partners in recognition of their long-term support financially, logistically and technically to GYIN Gambia.

Certificates of appreciation were awarded to partners, namely - The Youth Empowerment Project (YEP), The National Agricultural Land and Water Management Development Project (*Nema*), National Youth Council (NYC), The Gambia Youth Chamber of Commerce (GYCC) and Agricultural Rural Farmers' Training Centre.

