

Youth Training and Employment Programme The Gambia

 SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES
UNITED KINGDOM

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A proposal to The PD Foundation

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE GAMBIA

The Gambia gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1965 and has since experienced relative political stability. Despite substantial improvements in access to basic education and steady economic growth, The Gambia still faces considerable challenges.

The country is among the poorest in the world: the United Nations *Human Development Index*¹ rates The Gambia 173 out of 187 countries and around 49 per cent of the population live in poverty.

The quality and access to education is clearly linked to the future employment prospects of young people. 29 per cent of children aged 7-15 years have never attended school and learning outcomes are low compared with other African countries at all levels: 54 per cent of grade 2 students and 27 per cent of grade 3 students cannot read a single word².

Once children begin basic education, the challenge is to keep them in school for as long as possible. One barrier to retaining children in education is the low learning outcome. The Gambian government and its development partners have recognised that greater onus needs to be placed on ensuring that young people are adequately equipped with the skills they need for life-long learning, personal development and national advancement³. Poor learning outcomes influence parental and community perception of the value of education which limit access to further education and the chances of obtaining a decent job⁴.

48 per cent of The Gambia's population is young and youth unemployment is one of the most significant challenges in the country, with limited opportunity for gainful employment, education and skills training. Almost 50 per cent of young people aged between 14-24 were unemployed in 2017. When young people do find work, their jobs do not pay adequate wages, neither do they provide job security or give the opportunity to further develop skills.

Young people also face significant barriers when transitioning from education to work. Many leave school early, especially in rural areas, which is often related to the perceived low returns on education⁵. Low levels of education are closely linked to high levels of unemployment. Only 0.4 per cent of The Gambia's young people complete university and only 2.6 per cent undertake post-secondary education⁶.

A recent report published by the International Labour Organization (ILO)³ emphasised the extent to which underemployment reinforces poverty. Further research suggests that countries with prolonged high levels of youth unemployment are at risk of social instability. On a personal level, being young and unemployed often leads to an increase in poverty and social exclusion.

As demonstrated in this proposal, equipping disadvantaged young people with the skills, competencies and qualifications to increase their employability helps them live a fulfilled and independent life, while advancing their social inclusion and ability to contribute to their communities.



Illegal Migration

Since the civil war in Libya opened a gateway for human smuggling in 2011, thousands of young Gambians have attempted the dangerous journey across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe⁷. Many, including children, have died trying.

As recent reports and research by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) suggest, there is a direct link between high rates of youth unemployment and rates of illegal migration.

The number of youths leaving the country through illegal means has increased dramatically over the last few years. Globally, The Gambia is one of the top ten nations worldwide and the second highest among African countries taking boats illegally across the Mediterranean. This is directly linked to one of the greatest challenges for The Gambia: to create fulfilling jobs, offering young Gambians a reason to stay in the country, rather than risk their lives in an attempt to have a future.

The majority of those undertaking treacherous journeys to reach Europe are young men, who often leave with the aim of supporting their families. This usually means that families – often parents and spouses are left behind. This has led to the rise of social problems faced by those left behind. Social care systems in The Gambia do not have the capacity to assist those affected by the illegal migration of a family member.

Women are left behind to provide for their families. Women, who are often less educated and skilled, are forced to take on unfamiliar new responsibilities in an environment that does not prepare them or accept them in this role. Therefore, illegal migration also increases the social vulnerability for the women and families left behind.

SOS Children's Villages

SOS Children's Villages has been working in The Gambia since the early 1980s. We have established SOS village communities in Bakoteh and Basse, providing family-like care, education, vocational training and family strengthening programmes (FSPs).

In response to the challenges associated with youth unemployment, one of SOS Gambia's core strategic

¹United Nations Development Programme *Human Development Reports, Gambia*

²The Gambia Education Country Status Report 2010,

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000215246/PDF/215246eng.pdf.multi>

³UNDP, The Gambia, national Human Development Report, 2014

⁴According to the International Labour Organization (ILO)'s definition, decent work 'involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organise and participate in the

decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.' (ILO 2016)

⁵World Bank: *The Gambia Youth Employment and Skills Development Study, 2010*

⁶International Labour Organization *Decent Work Country Programme The Gambia 2015-2017*

⁷European Asylum Support Office, *Country of Origin Information Report, The Gambia*

objectives is to *increase youth employability, empowerment and self-reliance*. Education, training and the wellbeing of vulnerable youth are integral to achieving this objective.

Geographically, SOS Gambia is focusing on developing and strengthening programmes in Basse, in the Upper River Region (URR). As a result, we established two sustainable nutrition programmes (funded by the European Union) and a new family strengthening programme in this region in 2018. These new programmes have created a stronger community environment for raising awareness of and promoting the importance of educating and training young people.

Within the international non-governmental organisational sphere, SOS Gambia is recognised as one of the leading organisations for youth empowerment projects. This perception was recently reinforced when, as part of a global conference on Decent Jobs for Youths, SOS was complimented for its effectiveness in empowering young people in The Gambia through technical vocational training programmes.

An application to the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs by SOS Finland which focuses on improving youth employment in The Gambia has recently been successful. We have been in close communication with the team and will work with SOS Finland to ensure we coordinate programme activities and maximise impact for vulnerable young people.

SOS Gambia's experience in successfully implementing multi-year funding from donors such as the EU further strengthens our ability to deliver large scale programmes that address significant challenges.

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

As the ILO report referenced above demonstrates, skills training in market relevant vocational and technical areas is the key to better preparing young people for a productive and fulfilling life. **In line with this, the proposed SOS Gambia Youth Training and Employment Programme will enable the development of the Upper River Region (URR) local economy by increasing training and employment opportunities for young people and supporting them in transitioning into permanent employment, while creating incentives for them to contribute to their local economy.**

The proposed programme is an expansion of the SOS Regional Mothers and Adults Training Centre (RMATC), based in Bakoteh. This centre has proven to be immensely successful in breaking down barriers to skills and vocational training for the most vulnerable youth in the community, enabling them to enter the job market. The proposed Youth Training and Employment Programme in URR will draw on these achievements and further extend lessons learnt.

PROGRAMME DESIGN

The design, rationale and beneficiary location identified for this project is based on feasibility studies conducted by several government agencies. These include:

- Gambia Bureau of Statistics: *The Gambia Labour Survey Report, 2013*,
- National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority: *Employer Survey on Skills Needs, 2018*,
- Gambia Bureau of Statistics: *Integrated Household Survey*,
- *Statistical Survey 2015/16*,
- Ministry of Higher Education Research, Science



and Technology: *Education Policy 2016-2030*.

The project is also aligned with several national development policies and strategies, ensuring that it is addressing local needs and priorities. These include:

- The government's National Youth Policy (2009-2018) and National Enterprise Development Initiative, which focuses on the issues of youth employment, skills training, access to loans and leadership.
- The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper II (2007-2015 PRSP II): recognises the need to improve youth employment outcomes through specific policies and support documents, such as:
- 'Vision 2020', which seeks to transform The Gambia into a middle-income country.
- Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE): The Gambia's medium-term plan aimed at reducing poverty through employment.
- The National Employment Policy and Action Plan, which acknowledges high rates of youth unemployment as a key challenge.

The Upper River Region (URR)

The URR has some of the worst development indicators in The Gambia (6). There are only four secondary schools and one university in Basse, which is the URR's administrative centre. The government secondary schools' resources are stretched and employing and retaining good teachers is a challenge. The lack of quality education has resulted in a high drop-out rate in schools as young people and parents do not see the value of continuing education.

The only available further training or education is the one university in the region, however entry requirements are very high, and the majority of young people do not have the grades to meet them.

According to the 2012 Gambia Labour Force Survey, only 10.9 per cent of young people aged 15 and older had received a vocational training qualification and only 1 per cent of the working population in urban areas had a university diploma.

Currently most of the young people who have the economic means to migrate, find their way to the Greater Banjul area (over 300km away) to access vocational training.

The significant youth unemployment challenges in the region have contributed to the illegal migration crisis. While many young people try to reach Europe, a significant number are also migrating to countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola to work as unskilled labourers in the mining industry.

The proposed programme is designed to make a long-term sustainable impact, enabling the URR's youth to become economically and socially resilient, independent, integrated and contributing members of their communities.

SOS Gambia has identified a specific need for a vocational training centre in Basse, which was further affirmed by the Governor of the URR, Fanta Bojang Samateh Manneh, who has expressed support for the project and is keen to bring youth employability training to the region.

To ensure young people inject their skills back into the local economy, a key pillar of the programme is to work in collaboration with local businesses to create incentives for young people to remain enrolled in the training and stay in the region.

Basse

Basse is a lively town in eastern Gambia and is the final crossing point for large ferries before reaching Senegal and its popular Parc National de Nilokolo-Koba. The tourism sector in the region is growing and there are increasing opportunities for employment within this sector.

It is a popular destination for visitors to stop on a trip to the neighbouring country. There are old trading houses, intact from the turn of the century, along with a busy market and waterfront.

Workshops and boutiques are located in large warehouses where visitors can purchase local clothing, crafts and wall hangings. Basse is of particular interest to keen birdwatchers, who travel to the area to observe rare birds such as the Egyptian Plovers and the Carmine Bee-Eaters which can be frequently sighted along Basse's river banks.

Apart from attracting keen bird-watchers, there are other places of interest for tourists visiting the region, such as an old warehouse which has been converted into a museum, bookshop and restaurant. Every Thursday the main streets turn into a thriving market day or 'Lumo'. Basse has a tradition of weaving and dyeing and workshops in the crafts can be arranged with local artisans.

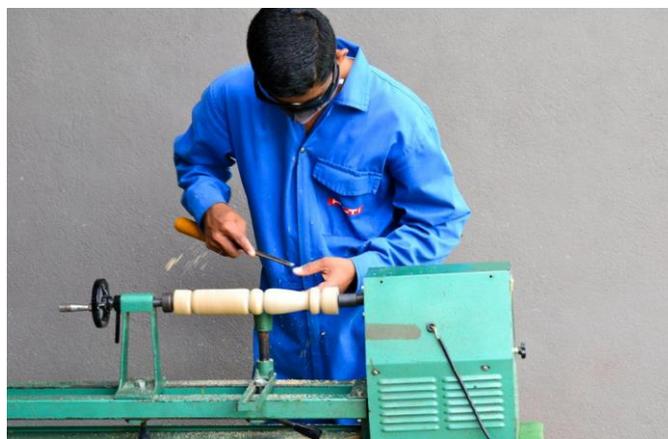
There are many organised excursions to Basse departing from Banjul. Several guest houses can be found in the area as well as the Fulladu Camp, a bush lodge located next to the river. There is a vibrant food scene which is known for its local cuisine.

Currently, opportunities are growing within most government and private sectors, expanding and trying to be more innovative to address the growing youth unemployment. Taking the local market into account we are focusing on three key educational areas: tourism, social work and information communication technology.

Focus on tourism, social work and Information and Information Communication Technology (ICT)

The proposed programme aims to empower 1,000 young people with training and employability skills over five years. This will include literacy, ICT skills, social care, catering and hotel management, sewing and craft work and include counselling and mentorship. The key focal areas are:

Tourism: the growing tourism industry is vital to the Gambian economy. Training will focus on all areas of hotel and hospitality management and catering.



Social work: Social workers play a significant role in helping vulnerable people in communities deal with challenges including teenage pregnancy, poverty, drug and alcohol addiction. Despite this, there is currently a significant lack of trained social workers.

ICT: The ICT sector is still developing in The Gambia. Though in its infancy the sector presents signs of strong potential. The *Youth and Trade Roadmap of The Gambia, Information and Communication Technologies Sector 2018-2022, Republic of The Gambia*, sets out a plan which focuses on equipping Gambian youth with the digital skills needed to take advantage of the opportunities the digital world offers and turn them into economic benefits. Computer literacy not only qualifies young people for jobs in conventional sectors, but also opens the door for them to participate in rapidly growing markets.

For a list of current and potential private and public partners please see appendix I.

SPECIFIC PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Teaching modules

1. Class-based teaching

- Entrepreneurial skills
- Guidance, counselling and mentorship (see appendix III)
- Sewing and craftwork production (see appendix IV)
- Catering and hotel management (see appendix V)
- Social work (see appendix VI)
- ICT (draft curriculum appendix VII).

2. Functional literacy

Schools in The Gambia teach in English and children are often exposed to the language at a young age, however due to the high school drop-out rates, once children leave school (often without completing their education) their proficiency for the English language also declines.

Providing functional literacy training will increase young people's proficiency in English, and this in itself will be key to securing formal employment.

Not being able to read, write or speak English proves to be a major barrier for individuals and non-fluent individuals often avoid using services which are run in English, such as government departments, travel services and banking institutions, further limiting an individual's life opportunities.

3. Work experience

The vocational skills training will give students hands-on practical experience. From the second-year of training, they will begin producing items such as slippers, pillow cases and

jewellery. The catering and hotel management students will also open and run a canteen in the training centre, where they will sell their self-made food. This will enable students to develop practical skills that are attractive to employers. The income from the sales is expected to be around £3,000 from sewing and craftwork and £4,700 from catering and hotel management, per annum. The income will be reinvested into the project to benefit the students.

4. ICT training

All beneficiaries will receive basic training in computer literacy, including understanding Microsoft Office, using the internet, searching online for a job and preparing a CV.

Following conversations with The PD Foundation we have worked with SOS Gambia to research the local context and market of information/telecommunication technology.

According to the *Mobile Economy Sub-Saharan Africa 2018 Report*⁸ The Gambia has registered 67 per cent mobile penetration, positioning The Gambia as the second highest mobile phone use in West Africa and one of the top five in sub-Saharan Africa.

Due to the increasing use and dependence on mobile phones there is a clear need and a gap in the URR for local ICT and telecommunications hardware specialists.

Since December 2018, we have been working with SOS Gambia who have researched and approached training providers to deliver ICT and telecommunications hardware repairs training and requested proposals and quotes. The proposals and costs received are too expensive for this current project. A more cost-effective solution is to recruit our own trainers to deliver the training, as we are doing with other courses. We are in the process of developing a curriculum for the PC/mobile hardware repairing course which will include practical training in hardware repairs (appendix VII). SOS Gambia will apply for this course to be accredited once the outcome of this proposal has been confirmed. This will ensure that the course is nationally recognised.

In addition, we have contacted the Information Technology Association of The Gambia (ITAG) which was helpfully signposted to us by Mr Roland Diethelm. ITAG promote the use and development of ICT for the socio-economic transformation of The Gambia. This would be a strong organisation to partner with and The Gambia team have already made initial contact for further discussions.

Training in transferable skills

A programme on transferrable soft-skills, such as work-ethics, communication, time management, teamwork, problem solving and leadership will be included to increase the employability of beneficiaries and help them to succeed in their careers.

Students will receive 27 hours of training a week.

Facility

A facility will be rented in Basse in the URR to deliver the training programme. The project team are currently looking into optimal solutions to deliver the project. As part of her recent visit to SOS Gambia, Alison Wallace, CEO at SOS Children's Villages UK (SOS UK), visited a potential site (see

picture below). Some refurbishment is required; however it is central, accessible and has water and electricity, including solar panels, which would be cost effective and reduce reliance on the grid. This facility is owned by a Community Based Organised (CBO), which is keen to ensure it is utilised to further the development of the community.



Accreditation

All the courses delivered through the training centre will be accredited by the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA), hence, on successful completion of the course, students will receive nationally recognised qualifications. All courses will be delivered by licensed trainers.

Further Project Activities

Community Outreach Programme

Outreach activities will focus on raising awareness within the local communities. Campaigns will include information sessions on the barriers to employment for vulnerable young people. A greater awareness amongst the community ensures that they are supportive of young people and encouraging them to undertake further education/training.

As demonstrated earlier, poor learning outcomes of children and young people in education has led to parents and the wider community questioning the need and value of education.

To address the gender imbalance in education our community outreach activities will encourage girls to apply by involving women's groups in the sensitisation of the programme. In the wider community, Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and women's rights are surrounded with taboos. It can be challenging to discuss these issues openly; however, we will use our learning from current and past programmes in the region and our work addressing gender equality to ensure discussions are sensitive and respectful. The services of partners such as Think Young Women and The Network Against Gender Based Violence, who are experts in these issues will also be sought to support activities related to these themes. Given the particular vulnerabilities of women and girls and the high population growth rate, addressing SRHR is deemed a critical part of improving youth employability in the long run. We will be specifically measuring impact against indicators disaggregated by gender (appendix VIII), to ensure we are helping to empower young women.

Community outreach activities will ensure that negative perception of education is addressed, enabling the maximum enrolment of youth in the training programmes and an increase in student retention within the training programme.

⁸ <https://www.gsma.com/mobileeconomy/sub-saharan-africa/>

Activities will include:

- Running an awareness campaign for direct and indirect beneficiaries, linking them with relevant support institutions in The Gambia, including National Youth Council, Youth Empowerment Programme, National Youth Service Scheme.
- Ten awareness sessions for stakeholders on the importance of vocational training, effects of harmful traditional practices and illegal immigration for young people.
- Campaigns will include a session to raise awareness of specific barriers faced by girls in the community such as early marriage, teenage pregnancy and specific cultural practices while promoting the importance of further education and training.
- Free services on guidance, counselling and mentorship for young people not taking part in the programme in areas that include alcoholism, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, grief, violence and career counselling.
- Literacy classes: graduates from the Functional Literacy Programme will be encouraged to become volunteer trainers for the community literacy programme.

Supporting young people to start businesses

Based on data from the World Bank, The Gambia is one of the most difficult countries in which to start a business and access credit, ranking 169 out of 189 and 162 out of 189 countries respectively.

The cost of starting a business is one of the highest compared to the average earned income. In addition to upskilling youth, facilitating new business formation and entrepreneurship is a critical element for job creation and will be key to strengthening the local economy in the URR.

Students who excel in their respective vocational training courses will be given the opportunity to establish businesses. They will receive training in transferable entrepreneurial skills, which include decision making, communication, risk management, book keeping, creativity and innovation, resource management and networking. To ensure a joined-up approach and maximise on existing networks, SOS Gambia will collaborate with 'Empretec', a programme run by the United Nations, that aims to foster the motivation and self-confidence of young people who have chosen to start or expand their business. Based on a behavioural approach, it is designed to unleash personal entrepreneurial potential, leading to positive long-term outcomes for local communities.

Students will be invited to submit business plans, which will be reviewed by the Project Steering Committee (see page 8 for further details). After a rigorous vetting process, including formal agreements with the successful candidates, a start-up loan will be granted to 80 successful beneficiaries.

The SOS Children's Villages West and Central Africa (WCAF) Regional office recommends to partner with a local microfinance company who would manage the process of administering the loans and repayments. As his CV (see appendix IX) suggests, Amavi Bada, management executive advisor for SOS International in the region, has a solid background in microfinance and will personally be overseeing this part of the programme.

In line with SOS practice in similar microfinance programmes, the microfinance company will provide flexible repayment plans and only expect repayments from beneficiaries once their business begins to make a profit. Partnering with a microfinancing company that has technical and local expertise reduces the risk of financial exposure for SOS Gambia while supporting entrepreneurial youth and the local economy by investing in long-term, sustainable change.

Microfinance is a key element of this programme as it will contribute to strengthening the local economy. However, we have noted that the PD Foundation would not like to fund this element of the programme.

Sustainability

Beneficiaries will be supported and mentored through the process by the Project Steering Committee (see page 8 for further details).

People from disadvantaged backgrounds often avoid using banks and therefore lack an understanding and the confidence to approach such institutions for start-up loans or saving accounts. Working with a microfinancing company would expose beneficiaries to seeking support from formal financial institutions, gaining experience that will be vital for them as young entrepreneurs.

As we have seen in similar programmes elsewhere, mentoring is vital in building the confidence of beneficiaries, empowering them to effectively navigate banking services to support them as their businesses grow.

We are currently working with the SOS International Regional Office and SOS Gambia to identify the optimal microfinancing solution.

BENEFICIARIES

The project team will undergo a thorough needs profiling assessment to identify youth within the following vulnerable groups:

- Vulnerable youth, who have lost parental care
- Youth that are socially excluded as a result of teenage pregnancy
- Unemployed and unskilled youth
- Young people who left education early
- Drug dependent youth
- Young adults with disabilities

These criteria have been chosen in line with SOS policies to support the attainment of the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): reduced poverty (SDG 1), quality education (SDG 4), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8) and reduced inequalities (SDG 10). As mentioned below, we will ensure the gender imbalance in education is addressed as part of all of the criteria listed above.

Breakdown of beneficiaries

1,000 vulnerable young people over five years will be trained through the employability skills programme. However, the impact of this programme will reach further, as it contributes to building a more resilient community. We aim for 60% of our beneficiaries to be female.

Specific outputs (see logframe in appendix VIII for a detailed breakdown):

- 40 beneficiaries per year trained in functional literacy
- 25 beneficiaries per year trained in social work
- 45 beneficiaries per year trained in catering and hotel management
- 45 beneficiaries per year trained in sewing and craft work
- 45 beneficiaries per year trained in ICT and telecommunications hardware repairs training
- 200 beneficiaries per year to receive guidance, counselling and mentorship services
- 25% of youth to be linked to relevant support institutions
- All beneficiaries in need of psycho-social support will be identified and supported through counselling.

Gender

At SOS Children's Villages we understand that educating and training girls is the key to alleviating poverty. Training girls and enabling them to become economically independent, not only dramatically improves the lives of their family but also their community. The impact of educating and enabling girls within a community to become economically independent, impacts not only livelihoods, but improves children's and women's survival rates and health, delays child marriage and empowers women and communities. That's why gender is an established focus across all SOS Children's Villages' programmes.

An aim of the project will be for 60 per cent of the beneficiaries to be female. The external baseline survey which will be conducted at the start of the project, will be gender sensitive and will assess the context and different employability needs and gaps for young men and women. All indicators will be disaggregated by sex to ensure that targets and results are assessed in a gender sensitive and equitable manner.

The programme design has been modelled on the RMATC in Bakoteh, the curricular for training courses will be followed and techniques for recruitment will be replicated. As reported in the RMATC 2017 annual report (appendix XI, page 18) **78 per cent of trainees at the centre were women.** This clearly demonstrates how gender equality has been an intrinsic part of the programme design and addresses the needs and skill gaps for women.

We are ensuring that further education and training is promoted to young women through outreach activities promoting gender equality and addressing barriers specifically faced by young women, while also taking care that the training is accessible to them.

Reduction of inequality is being addressed by this project across gender inequality, economic inequality or social inequality. All targeted youth will be selected based on their vulnerability and on the fact that current systems, structures and services are unable to meet their needs.

The project is designed to better integrate marginalised young people into their communities and labour market, through developing their skills and providing them access to resources and networks, thus crucially improving their ability to be resilient, active and independent community members.



DELIVERING THE PROJECT

Recruitment of Staff

SOS Gambia is a well-established and respected non-governmental organisation in The Gambia and is a member of the National Child Protection Alliance and The Association of Non-Governmental Organisations in The Gambia. Education, training and the wellbeing of vulnerable youth are an important part of SOS Gambia's work, with approximately 2000 children and youth attending the organisation's educational facilities.

The SOS Regional Mothers and Adults Training Centre (SOS RMATC) programme staff will support the implementation of this project in the URR to ensure that it is efficiently, effectively and successfully delivered, taking on board maximum learning from the RMATC programme.

The Programme Director, for this project, Ellen Maraizu, has a robust background as her CV demonstrates (see appendix X).

She will be seconded to Basse initially for the first six months on a full-time basis, to assist with hiring staff and ensure the robust set up of the project. Thereafter she will undertake a monthly visit to Basse to support the team and monitor the implementation of the project. Alison Wallace met Ellen as part of her recent visit to The Gambia and was reassured that her experience and entrepreneurial approach will help direct the programme to deliver against agreed objectives.

Along with her support, staff from the RMATC (including from the sewing, catering and social work departments) will also visit the Basse centre monthly, based on a rota system, so that each department in Basse has frequent support from colleagues from their sister department in Bakoteh.

At the project level the national office will have a central role in training the project delivery team. Further capacity-building needs will be determined during the kick-off and annual monitoring visits with the regional office. The regional office of West and Central Africa will have oversight of the capacity building needs of the national organisation.

As per the budget, attached separately and the organogram (see appendix II) programme staff will include:

Programme, Administration and support staff

- 1 project coordinator
- 1 finance and administration assistant
- 1 accountant
- 2 security officers
- 2 cleaners.

Educators and Trainers

- 1 full-time and 5 part-time social work lecturers
- 1 catering instructor, 1 full-time and 2 part-time assistants
- 1 sewing instructor, 1 full-time and 2 part-time assistants
- 1 literacy specialist and 1 literacy instructor
- 1 ICT instructor and 2 part-time assistants.

The SOS RMATC will support the project in the URR through:

- Participation of key RMATC staff at the kick-off phase of the project.
- Identifying and securing the location for the vocational training centre.
- Support in the admission process of the target group based on the principle of need.
- Orientation for staff and students.
- Facilitation of internship/fieldwork placements for beneficiaries as a critical part of the training requirement.
- Appraisal of business plans developed by beneficiaries.
- Facilitation of core courses and training of new trainers.
- Oversight of the Project Steering Committee.

New staff will be hired on the basis that they are well-experienced and experts in their field. The role and quality of staff is imperative to the success of the project, any concerns are mitigated by regular review of conditions of service, support from experienced SOS staff and a competitive salary.

The link between staff and students will be that of supervisory support, with an 'open door' policy. There will be further learning and sharing between the SOS RMATC and URR programmes through:

- Exchange visits by students and facilitators
- Sharing of resource materials
- Joint training sessions
- Combined field trips
- Participation in curriculum development and programme planning.

SOS UK has worked closely with SOS Gambia and have invested in the development of our SOS Children's Villages programmes in the region. We will be providing vital support to both the Basse and Bakoteh teams during the implementation of the project.

SOS UK will:

- Participate in The Gambia for the kick-off meeting: confirming roles and responsibilities including monitoring, evaluations and reporting timelines.
- Fortnightly skype calls with The Gambia team for the first three months of the project: supporting the team as implementation of the programme commences.
- Monthly Skype calls thereafter: monitoring progress and working through solutions to any problems.
- Annual project and planning visit to The Gambia to monitor and report against indicators.



Project Steering Committee

A Project Steering Committee comprising eight members representing all stakeholders (including local government, Regional Education Directorate, Governor's office, one SOS representative from SOS Gambia national office and one from RMATC) will be formed as soon as the project starts. The Project Steering Committee will provide leadership support to the staff including appraising the business plans of trainees.

SOS Gambia will work with the Project Steering Committee to help them register as a Community Based Organisation (CBO) in the second year of the project. To do so, the CBO will be required to meet certain criteria, such as having an executive, a constitution, a work plan and a bank account.

By the end of the project, after rigorous training in financial management and leadership, the CBO will liaise directly with the microfinance company.

OBJECTIVES

Detailed programme objectives can be found in the proposed logframe (see appendix VIII).

In summary:

- Provide vocational skills training to identified vulnerable youth
- Reduce the rate of illiteracy
- Reduce the rate of youth unemployment through entrepreneurship development and support in the transition to long-term employment
- Strengthen the local economy by supporting young people to start small enterprises creating opportunities and sustainable impact
- Empowerment of women
- Improved social and life skills for vulnerable youth.

OUTPUT AND OUTCOME INDICATORS

A full logframe has been developed which outlines the key objectives, specific objectives, outputs and outcomes (see appendix VIII).

In summary:

- 75% of participants trained on vocational skills completed the programme
- 75% of graduates have secured formal employment
- 90% of participants trained in financial management
- 60% of the beneficiaries are women

- Targeted beneficiaries who need psycho-social support are provided with this service, including counselling
- 80% involvement of relevant stakeholders in promoting the programme.

MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING

The draft logframe (see appendix VIII) has been developed to run an efficient and effective project. This will be further informed by a baseline study to be conducted in the first year of the project. Learning from this study will be included in the project logframe to ensure that all indicators and targets are accurate and reflect the local context.

A Memorandum of Understanding (see draft in appendix XII) will be finalised and signed by all partners and will include:

- Agreed roles and responsibilities
- Project timeline
- Reporting requirements.

Project Baseline Study: a baseline study will be commissioned with specific terms of reference directly linked to the project indicators. This will enable the project team to have benchmark data which will be used to assess the progress of the project throughout its lifetime.

Quarterly and Annual Progress Reports: these will include specific and measurable progress on performance indicators, financial metrics and activities such as the number of youth employed, number of youth who have received a start-up loan, how many have participated in delivering training to their communities and other outputs.

Mid-term review (2.5 years into the project): a mid-term evaluation will be commissioned by contracting an external consultant to undertake an assessment of the project that will specifically focus on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and lessons learnt, so that the project team can amend implementation plans based on the findings of the review.

End of project evaluation (2024): a final project evaluation will be conducted at the end of year 5 to measure the success of the project, its sustainability, lessons and best practice. Progress will be measured to ensure agreed outcome indicators have been reached.

Case Story

When Lamin was growing up in The Gambia, his family faced economic hardship. His father could not afford to pay his school fees and consequently Lamin had to drop out of school. Lamin then began to take on menial jobs to help his family survive.

During this time, Lamin never gave up his dream of completing his education. It was at this point that he joined an SOS Family Strengthening Programme. As part of this, SOS supported Lamin to complete his secondary school education.

Lamin was focused and driven. He gained admission into the Social Work Certificate Programme, which was part of the SOS RMATC. He has gone on to enrol in a Diploma Programme in Social Work, because he wants to improve the welfare of children and give back to society.

PROJECT TIMESCALE AND BUDGET

Project duration: five years (2019-2023)
 Total estimated budget is: £891,662
 A draft, fully costed budget is enclosed separately.

Overview:

Budget Headings	Estimated Total GMD (local Gambian currency)	Estimated Total GBP £
Capital Investment (including furniture and equipment)	2,939,000	48,441
Working Expenditures & Activities (including maintenance, project activities, office rent, Project management, monitoring and evaluation etc.)	29,586,610	487,649
Human Resources	17,443,316	287,502
Other	4,130,000	68,071
Total	54,098,926	891,662
A grant of 60% requested from the PD Foundation	32,459,338	534,997
40% costs raised from other trusts and foundations	21,639,588	356,665

PARTNERSHIPS

The proposed programme, which is an extension of the programme in Bakoteh, was designed in partnership with Social Service providers in the country:

- Ministry of Health and Social Welfare — Department of Social Welfare
- United Nations Children’s Fund in The Gambia
- University of Gambia
- Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology
- Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, non-formal sector.

Partners were selected through a mapping exercise to discuss areas of commonalities; based on the outcome of these discussions, the most relevant were selected.

One key partnership will involve the National Youth Council and the National Youth Committee in the URR, which will support awareness raising, mobilisation and assessment of the programme. The National Youth Committee (URR) will also facilitate networking with relevant regional government institutions.

The SOS RMATC has already established partnerships with major hotels and resorts in The Gambia through which students have had the opportunity to intern, gain work experience as well as access placement opportunities. As a key component of the programme, we will draw on these existing partnerships for this project while providing local placements in the tourism industry and other businesses in the URR.

We will be collaborating with SOS Finland who have recently been awarded funding by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to reduce youth unemployment in The Gambia, we will be working closely with the team to ensure a coordinated approach to youth employment activities.

Having approached ITAG, we are working to develop this partnership to find an optimal solution to ICT training and implementation.

Collaboration across SOS Children's Villages

SOS Gambia is well placed to deliver this programme. It is a respected national civil society organisation, with over 30 years' experience in working with the country's most vulnerable children and youth, and proven experience of strengthening local communities.

SOS UK will assist in project and grant management and reporting. This includes monitoring and evaluation, overseeing the project globally, and working with SOS Gambia, SOS Children's Villages International and its West and Central Africa regional office to ensure quality assurance, good governance, financial audit and high quality reporting.

EXIT STRATEGY

Based on the implementation of past projects, the planned exit strategy will focus on establishing the Project Steering Committee as a Community Based Organisations (CBO) with the aim to take over the management of the training centre at the end of the five-years.

Staff recruited for the project will continue working at the Centre and there will be a tripartite agreement between SOS Gambia, the Project Steering Committee and the Government of The Gambia to monitor and supervise the management of assets.

SOS Gambia anticipates that the government will support a Community Based Organisation to run the training Centre by providing low-cost premises.

The exit strategy will be further informed by learnings from implementing the project. An alternative might be to hand over the training centre to the government to manage. In other countries, this has also proven to be a successful model resulting in sustainability of SOS programmes.

The exit strategy will be based on:

1. Learning from the first two years of project implementation
2. Ensuring continuity of the benefits of the project to the target groups long after donor funding has terminated
3. Developing the capacities of all actors involved
4. Ensuring the empowerment of beneficiaries.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability and long-term impact are at the heart of everything SOS Children's Villages does in The Gambia. The organisation believes that no individual, community or institution should be permanently dependent on the support of SOS.

The project will not only be beneficial to the youth but also to the community members and other stakeholders.

As such, long term sustainability has been built into this project to ensure a positive impact within the community well beyond the project lifetime.

Key project areas to achieve sustainability:

- The establishment of the CBO, which will continue to run a training centre after the completion of the project.
- The funds generated by the goods sold through the practical training workshops will support the continuation of training.
- The micro finance institution will continue to make loans available to young entrepreneurs in the region enabling them to start a business, making a long-term impact to the local economy.
- Creating employment opportunities for further unemployed adults through investing in small enterprises. As businesses grow, so will employment and training opportunities for other vulnerable young people.
- 'Train the trainer model': trained young people will cascade learning (such as literacy) within their communities through the community outreach programme.
- Partnerships with local businesses to provide job placements for the students.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

The greatest asset for any country is its young people, who grow up to contribute meaningfully to its sustainable economic and social growth.

Rising youth unemployment is one of the most significant problems facing economies and societies in today's world.

The proposed programme has been designed to address this challenge, helping young people build sustainable livelihoods in one of the poorest regions in The Gambia, resulting in sustainable change for their communities.

A grant from The PD Foundation of £534,997 over five years would transform the futures of 1,000 young people. It would further contribute to breaking the cycle of poverty not just for individuals but for whole communities.

Thank you for your kind consideration.



**SOS CHILDREN'S
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