

Marie Bennett's Skills Center The Gambia

Final report , August 2007

1. Activities carried out during the reporting period

The project aimed at improving and strengthening existing activities at the skill training centre as well as introducing new courses (metal work, wood work and cookery) in order to bring quality, accessible and affordable skills for employment opportunities to children, especially to school leavers/dropouts and unemployed youths.

With the purchase of equipment and materials as well as the staffing and enrolment of students in the various units, operations got under way in earnest during this reporting period. Those in the technical units (metal and wood works) attend lessons from the morning up to 4pm, whilst those at the sewing/tailoring have two shifts (morning from 8:30am to 1:30pm and afternoon from 1:30pm to 6pm) due to the large number of students enrolled in it. Due to no facilitator being available, the cookery (food and nutrition) studies were not started. We have been promised by the hotel school administration that as soon as the trainees complete their course we will be given one.

2. Results

2.1 New courses with impact, but enrolment behind expectation

Of the four teachers recruited, the one for the cookery unit left. Presently the remaining three are conducting classes for their various units. There are 26 students in the sewing/tailoring whilst in the metal workshop five students are enrolled and three in the woodwork section. The reason attributed to this lower enrolment than expected is due to the low awareness of people about the existence of the outlet. Sensitisation and publicity moves will be made to overcome this.

During the six-month period of operation, the carpentry workshop and metal workshop have realised a positive impact as they have gained substantial contracts for making doors, windows, tables, chairs etc. A net profit of D34500.00 (about € 1050) was made over the period.

The sewing section has recently sewn all the computer covers for sister organisation NICE The Gambia IT section and has successfully completed sewing 250 mosquito nets for the Program Area. We have given a resettlement package to one outstanding student in the form of providing a sewing machine.



2.2 Committed students learning new skills

The students are very much committed and dedicated to the training. In the technical workshops and the sewing units they are taught the basic knowledge and engaged practically in the activities that help them develop skills professionally. They are now developing skills in planning, preparation, tools/ equipment usage/ handling, as well as product finishing and safety precautions required.

2.3 Number of children reached

A total number of 34 students are enrolled in the sewing section and metal and woodwork shop.

2.4 Benefit to the children

Those enrolled in the project have now got the sense of responsibility inculcated in them and their behavioural attitudes have improved as a result of the disciplinary measures laid by the project. Those without previous knowledge and or experience in the various units now know-how to work professionally and teachers can give students assignment/jobs, which they do under minimum supervision (measuring, cutting, making simple joints welding, design assembling, finishing etc.) Students now make products such as simple dresses; stools or tables which they either sell to get some income to help themselves or use in the households, thus saving the cost that would otherwise have been used to buy them. In the carpentry and welding, apprentices make for themselves items that they sell to sustain themselves especially in the payment of school fees.

The story of: AFANG LAMIN CEESAY, 22 YEAR OLD

MY NAME IS AFANG LAMIN CEESAY. I AM A YOUNG MAN OF 22 YEARS OLD AND A STUDENT AT THE MARIE BENNETT'S UNIT. AFTER COMPLETING GRADE 11 AT SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL I DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL BECAUSE I WAS UNABLE TO MEET THE HIGH COST. I WORKED AT A LOCAL METAL WORKSHOP FOR FOUR MONTHS BEFORE ENROLLING AT THE CENTRE. NOW I AM MORE INVOLVED WITH PRACTICAL WORK THAN AT MY PREVIOUS PLACE MAKING ME MORE SKILLFULL AND CONFIDENT. MY EXPERIENCE HAS ALSO INCREASED BOTH IN TERMS OF THE TECHNICAL KNOW HOW AND THE EXPOSURE TO AND PROPER HANDLING AND USAGE OF TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT. I NOW WORK UNDER MINIMUM SUPERVISION AND I MAKE SMALL ITEMS LIKE CANDLE STANNS, LOCAL COOKING STOVES ETC, WHICH I USE AT HOME AND OTHERS I SELL TO GET MONEY FOR MY SCHOOL FEES PAYMENT AND BASIC NEEDS. I NOW SPEND MY TIME MORE PRODUCTIVELY AND MY SELF-ESTEEM HAS INCREASED. I THANK THE KOMBO NORTH PROGRAM AREA FOR THEIR SUPPORT. I WILL NOT MAKE JUSTICE IF I DIDN'T THANK THE NET4KIDS ORGANISATION FOR THEIR WONDERFUL CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITIES OF KOMBO NORTH AND US THE STUDENTS IN PARTICULAR.



3. Analysis

3.1 Results that not have been achieved or not fully:

As mentioned above, the cookery section was one of the major planned projects that was unable to start due to lack of facilitators. This was because of unavailability of qualified personnel from the Hotel school.

3.2 Unforeseen (side) effects:

Unreliable power supply (intermittent power cuts) hinders the progress of the work some days, as there is no standby generator. The workshops are not spacious enough to cater for more students and working and storage space. Any substantial increase in rental charges on premises will bring about constraints as not much funds are available to meet this.

4. Concluding comments

4.1 In conclusion, the project will create a source of employment for children so that they can also run their own workshop and fully train other children through apprenticeship training or even further their education to higher level to acquire diploma certificates.

B. Some more pictures:



Seedy is cutting the design for apartment furniture.



Toddlers impressed with new furniture





Prospective students busy with their assignment Sainey in high concentration....

C. Financial report:

Table 1 Expenditures

Items/Description	Budget (planned)	Actual expenditure
No. 1 Sewing Section	197,995	138,716
No. 2 Carpentry Section	490,176	305,960
No. 3 Metal Workshop	226,665	299,290
No. 4 Cookery	69,000	154,002
Total	983,837	897,968

Table 2 Income for the project

	Date received	Amount in local currency	Amount in Euro
Received from Net4kids		569,711	16,208
First installment			
Second installment, etc		394,684	11,309
Received from other donors			
Own contributions		30,000	
Total		994,395	

Table 3 Income and expenditure

	In local currency	In Euro
Total Income	994,395	27,517
Total Expenditure	897,968	
Balance	96,427	

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