



EMPLOYABILITY OF YOUTH IN THE CONTEXT OF TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) IN THE GAMBIA

Conducted by the Research Department of the National Assembly
With Technical support and funding by the International Republican Institute (IRI)

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ACRONYM

GBA	Greater Banjul Area
GTHI	Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute
GTTI	Gambia Technical Training Institute
GSQF	Gambia Skills Qualification Framework
IRI	International Republican Institute
LEGIT	Legislative Integrity & Transparency
MoHERST	Ministry of Higher Education Research Science and Technology
NAQAA	National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority
NYSS	National Youth Service Scheme
PGVS	Presentation Girls Vocational School
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SFSC	Star Fish Skill Centre
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
USET	University of Science, Engineering and Technology
WCR	West Coast Region

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From the Clerk's Desk

This research is one of the two studies embarked upon by the Library and Research Department of the National Assembly with support and funding from our longstanding and committed partner, the International Republican Institute (IRI).

The research report aims to assess the employability of youth in The Gambia within the context of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) across five TVET delivering institutions. The primary objectives include evaluating the alignment of TVET curricula with



job market demands, assessing the quality of TVET programs, identifying challenges related to youth employability, and proposing recommendations for enhancing TVET programs.

A thorough review of relevant documents such as the Tertiary and Higher Education Act 2016, The Gambia TVET Road Map (2020 – 2024), The Gambia TVET Policy (2021 – 2030), the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016 – 2025), and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 4 and 8) revealed gaps in the recognition of TVET institutions' roles and responsibilities in facilitating apprenticeships for students, as well as inconsistencies between the legal framework and policy pronouncements proffered by Government.

Key findings from the research indicate several challenges faced by TVET students and institutions. These include:

- Accessibility to TVET institutions, particularly for rural students, is limited due to the centralization of TVET institutions in the Greater Banjul Area;
- Both government-funded and private TVET institutions struggle with inadequate financing, thus hindering program expansion;
- Apprenticeship programs are not effectively integrated, and job placement after graduation remains unpredictable;

- Entrepreneurship is not sufficiently emphasized, and seed funding for business startups is scarce.

Despite these challenges emanating from the research findings, it is to be noted that the National TVET Policy 2021 – 2030 has increased the recognition and female participation in TVET education, and resource mobilization efforts have also expanded funding opportunities from development partners.

The research recommends that:

- The Tertiary and Higher Education Act 2016 be reviewed to include and emphasize internship and apprenticeship in TVET;
- A National Higher Education Policy on Internship be developed to include apprenticeship in TVET institutions;
- TVET centers be decentralized across all regions to curb the problem of rural-urban migration;
- Business start-up-capital for promising young apprentices and entrepreneurs be prioritized.

Overall, this research underscores the significance of TVET in addressing youth unemployment. It highlights the importance of aligning TVET curricula with labor market needs, expanding access, and improving the financing mechanisms. Collaboration among stakeholders, public-private partnerships, and a market-driven approach are considered essential for enhancing TVET and fostering skills development in The Gambia.

At this juncture, I take this opportunity to thank the IRI, sincerely and unreservedly, for their technical and financial support. Moving forward, we eagerly anticipate the continued support of the Institute, particularly in expediting the implementation of the recommendations that are closely aligned with the National Assembly's sphere of influence. IRI's ongoing partnership will undoubtedly contribute to the timely realization of these initiatives. I thank the consultants for the training, coaching and mentoring services rendered throughout this process which is of high quality and highly appreciated.

Finally, I wish to express my profound appreciation to the dedicated staff of the Library & Research Department for their unwavering commitment to conducting this research and attaining such laudable outcomes. Without a doubt, these achievements will play a crucial role in consolidating the gains we have made thus far and will also instill greater confidence in the National Assembly's legislative research endeavors.

Momodou A. Sise
Clerk of the National Assembly

Acknowledgement

The Library & Research Department extends its heartfelt gratitude to the Office of the Clerk of the National Assembly for its foresight and visionary initiative in fostering this collaborative partnership with IRI.

A special and profound acknowledgment is extended to IRI for its invaluable support and generous funding of this research endeavor. Our deepest appreciation resonates with the administration and dedicated personnel of the IRI country Office (Gambia) for their unwavering and prompt response whenever we have reached out for their assistance.



We equally wish to recognize and express our sincere gratitude to the dedicated mentors of this project, Mr. Omar Ousman Jobe and Mr. Mohammed Hassan Loum, whose tireless guidance and unyielding commitment have been instrumental in bringing our efforts to fruition.

Special thanks go to Ms. Mary T Mendy, a Research Officer, for her resilience in embracing the challenge and stepping up to the task to lead the team for this research (Team 2) through the rigorous process of collecting data, collating the results and producing a good report.

Furthermore, we deeply appreciate the collaborative spirit of the administrations of GTTI, GTHI, NYSS, Star Fish Skill Center, Presentation Girls Vocational School, NAQAA and MoHERST. Without their unreserved cooperation, the relevance of this entire undertaking would have been diminished.

Finally, our gratitude extends to the staff of other units and departments of the National Assembly, who willingly embraced their roles in this research and mentorship program. We anticipate that this experience will hopefully provide profound insights that will enhance our daily endeavors and interactions with relevant information that informs legislative research.

Alhagie M. Dumbuya
Director of Library & Research Department

1. Introduction / Background

The National Assembly of The Gambia serves as the legislative arm of Government, entrusted with the functions of enacting laws, conducting oversight functions to ensure good governance, and advocating for the interests of the Gambian populace. National Assembly Members (NAMs) in the execution of their roles and responsibilities, especially in legislation, require access to accurate, impartial, timely and up-to-date information in the right formats. This ensures informed decision-making and robust policy formulation. Within that context, the Library and Research Department of the National Assembly of The Gambia provides credible, timely and impartial research service to members and staff of the National Assembly to help them in the effective execution of their mandate.

The choice of this research topic was as a result of consultations with National Assembly Members who are very much interested in gauging the relevance, performance and productivity of post-secondary education institutions in the country. Under this Legislative Integrity and Transparency (LEGIT) project supported and funded by the IRI, one of the identified research topics focused on Internship at Higher Education Institutions, a case study of the University of The Gambia. Similarly, NAMs wanted to know if the appropriate programs, the right skill sets among other important considerations, are being dispensed by TVET institutions to churn out the right products required by the job market.

The importance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in nation building cannot be overemphasized. TVET is a pivotal catalyst for industrial advancement and societal progress within any nation. The growing recognition of the undeniable nexus between a country's socio-economic development and the cultivation of skills has ignited renewed interest in the enhancement of TVET systems. This importance of TVET is underscored by various national, sub-regional, regional and global development policy agenda such as The Gambia's National TVET Policy (2021 – 2030), the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025, the African Union's Agenda 2063, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 4 and 8 specifically).

2. Rationale/Justification

The absence of appropriately skilled workforce especially from among Gambian youths; the inadequacy of TVET institutions and technical universities with properly

trained personnel and appropriate teaching and learning tools/equipment; and a generally low investment in TVET by the public and private sector, has led the Government of The Gambia to prioritize the TVET sector through the validation of a National TVET Policy (2021 – 2030) and the establishment of a technical university, the University of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology (USET).

Government acknowledges that strengthening TVET is vital for cultivating the technical and skilled human resources urgently needed for rapid economic growth and poverty reduction in The Gambia. TVET is an essential driver of socio-economic progress. TVET enables individuals and societies to unleash potential, broaden horizons, adapt and compete in the evolving world dynamics.

In light of the above, the Library and Research Department of the National Assembly, in collaboration with the International Republican Institute (IRI), undertook this research project to evaluate the employability of youth in the context of TVET. The study examines challenges faced in TVET institutions, the suitability of the curricula employed, and the opportunities for apprenticeship among other pertinent considerations.

3. Objective of the Research

The principal objective of this research is to evaluate the employability of the youth in the TVET context across the five institutions under examination. This endeavor seeks to furnish National Assembly Members with current insights into the implementation status, challenges, and potential resolutions regarding the employability of youth in The Gambia. Specific issues addressed include:

- I. Assessing the congruence between the current curricula and the demands of the job market in TVET institutions.
- II. Evaluating the relevance and quality of TVET programs offered by the aforementioned institutions.
- III. Identifying challenges pertaining to the employability of skills acquired in The Gambia.
- IV. Proposing recommendations to enhance TVET programs for better alignment with job market needs and the promotion of youth employability.

4. Problem Statement

The high level of unemployment, especially among youths, even from alumni of TVET institutions puts in question the effectiveness of the existing TVET curriculum. It is therefore important to understand the dynamics of TVET institutions and the

challenges they face in terms of development and to be in a good stead to roll-out appropriate, tested and approved curricula; take measures to facilitate the employment of qualified trainers; build relationships with student during and after TVET education and establish the relevant linkages to the employment industry.

The employability of TVET graduates is also questionable. Due to the high attrition in the technical and vocational industry, it is assumed that there is perhaps a mismatch in the levels of skills required by the job market and the actual skills being taught at TVET institutions. The phenomenon of low completion rates in TVET institutions is also worth considering. There are reports from migration agencies working to support illegal migrants with documentation abroad and or reintegration when deported to their home countries, that the majority of illegal migrants who claim to have acquired some form of TVET education, cannot demonstrate basic skills when given opportunities to perform.

TVET institutions have complained of inadequate financing as a major constraining factor towards progressive and sustainable development. In order to deal with the issue of affordability, TVET institutions are not charging “high” student tuition fees. An adequate and a healthy budget will enable TVET institutions employ qualified trainers, assessors and verifiers, procure state-of-the-art equipment and further build capacities of such technical staff where and when needed.

As such, research has to be conducted to better analyze and understand TVET education in order to equip NAMs with evidence-based information to develop laws geared towards tackling youth unemployment in general and the unemployability of youths engaged in TVET in particular.

5. Sampling

5 TVET institutions, namely the Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI), Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute (GTHI), National Youth Service Scheme (NYSS), Presentation Girls Vocational School (PGVS) and Star Fish Skills Center (SFSC), were preselected within the Greater Banjul Area (GBA) for the administration of the primary data collection questionnaire.¹

It was targeted that from each of the above-mentioned institutions, there will be 50 respondents, making a total of 250 respondents. In order to ensure gender participation in the research study, which is in line with current national policy and advocacy for the engagement of women and girls in TVET, two of the targeted TVET

¹ See Annex A for sample questionnaire of interviews with individual respondents. See Annex B for guided questionnaires of institutional interviews

institutions have only female students (i.e., PGVS and SFSC). Thus, it was deliberately targeted that out of the total of 250 respondents, 100 would be females (i.e., at least 40% of targeted respondents).

6. Data Collection Methodology

The research used both primary and secondary data collection methods

6.1 Secondary Data Collection

Desk reviews were done looking at the following documents:

- I. The Tertiary and Higher Education Act 2016
- II. The Gambia TVET Road Map (2020 – 2024)
- III. The Gambia TVET Policy (2021 – 2030)
- IV. The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016 – 2025) V. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 4 and 8)

The Tertiary and Higher Education Act 2016 lacks explicit provisions that outline or emphasize the roles and or responsibilities of TVET training institutions and employers to facilitate apprenticeship for TVET students, either during or post schooling periods.

The Gambia TVET Roadmap (2020 – 2024) which is based on TVET and apprenticeship surveys carried out in 2017 and 2019¹, was developed with technical assistance from the International Trade Centre (ITC). There are four Strategic Objectives in The Gambia TVET Roadmap (2020 – 2024). Strategic objective 2 highlights *reinforcing training and learning resources for promising value chains with high youth employment opportunity*.

Bullet number 2.4 under Strategic Objective 2 further underlines enhancing on-the-job learning programmes, to include internships, traineeships and apprenticeships with certification schemes (in particular the GSQF) to meet sector needs.

The third and fourth strategic pillars of The Gambia TVET Policy 2021 – 2030 underscore apprenticeship and on-the-job training for students in TVET. These particular pillars stress the need for a multifaceted approach (i.e., investments in teacher/trainer education and infrastructural development etc.) to elevate the quality and relevance of training, alongside enhancing the employability of learners and trainees. While The Gambia TVET Policy 2021 – 2030 outlines what resources

¹ <https://public.tableau.com/profile/alexandra.golovko>

are / may be required and how TVET can substantially enhance the prospects of youth, practical implementation at various levels is impeded by financial constraints.

6.2 Primary Data Collection

Data collection was done and completed from the 1st to 31st August 2023, targeting a total of 250 students, 50 respondents per institution as indicated in the sample size. Questionnaires were successfully administered to a total of 161 students from the five targeted TVET institutions. Questionnaires were also administered to the five targeted TVET institutions.

7. Limitations / Challenges

Due to budget limitation, the study had to focus on only five TVET institutions within the Greater Banjul Area, namely the GTTI, the GTHI, the NYSS, SFSC, and PGVS. Another major challenge encountered during data collection was the mobilization of students for the administration of the questionnaires. The targeted TVET institutions were already on holiday and recalling students (as well as administrators for interviews with the various TVET institutions) was quite a challenge for data collectors in terms of delay in time and use of resources to make frequent follow-up calls.

8. Findings

Students in TVET and TVET institutions face numerous challenges. Some students, especially those coming from the rural areas who want to enroll in and acquire TVET education, find it difficult to easily access TVET institutions. The concentration and centralization of TVET institutions within the GBA and WCR greatly limits access and accentuates rural–urban migration push and pull factors.

There are government subvented institutions and non-government sponsored private institutions. Both categories of TVET institutions have lamented inadequate financing to support core activities and expand their programs and businesses.

Apprenticeship linked to the TVET job market for completing and graduated TVET students remains hugely problematic. TVET institutions are not mandated or held responsible to support students to participate in apprenticeship programs. Where TVET institutions do offer support for apprenticeship, such support is left at own discretions without any policy guidance and with very minimal supervision reduced to intermittent quality audit reports. Upon completion, finding jobs remain an uphill task owing to the limited number of industries in the country, the mismatch between

what is taught and the requirement/needs of industry and the utter lack of an enabling environment that encourages the private sector to employ TVET graduates and pay them decent wages. Entrepreneurship is not strictly embedded in programs to ensure self-employment after completion. Seed funding to support business start-ups are very few and far in between.

Despite these challenges, the National TVET Policy 2021 – 2030 has increased the recognition and relevance of TVET in this country, with significant upsurge in female participation in TVET over the past years. The Policy Actions of the National TVET Policy 2021 – 2030 enables every Gambian to have access to quality skills training and acquire needed skills for upward mobility. The Gambia Government under the auspices of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST) has recently launched new TVET Centers in Ndemban and Kanilai and is inviting prospective young Gambians to enroll and be offered scholarships to learn relevant professional skills. Resource mobilization to fast-track implementation of key activities of the various Policy Pillars and corresponding Strategic Objectives. has increased potential funding opportunities from multi partner donors.

9. Data Analyses

9.1 Quantitative & Qualitative Analyses:

- I. 32 interviews were conducted at the GTTI (10 females; 22males)
- II. 41 students were interviewed at the GTHI (27 females; 14 males)
- III. 43 interviews were done at the NYSS (30 females; 13 males)
- IV. 41 students were interviewed at Star Fish Skills Centre (all females)
- V. 9 students were interviewed at the PGVS (all were females)

A total of 165 students were interviewed out of a targeted 250 respondents, representing a 66% coverage rate in primary data collection. 129 female students and 36 male students were interviewed, representing a percentage ratio of 78:12. However, the targeting of girls was deliberate.

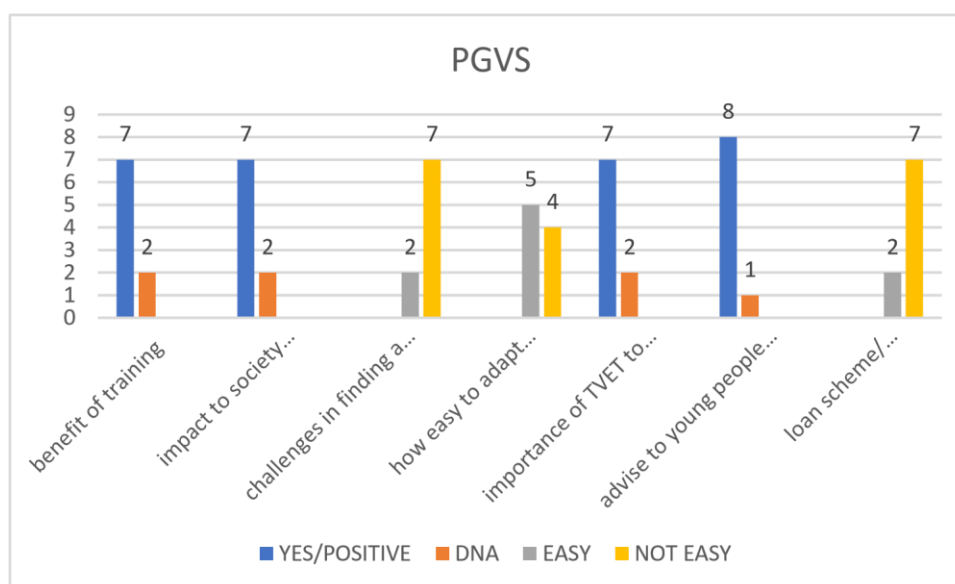
Bar charts showing numbers of respondents per question are featured below as part of the qualitative analysis. Our approach within the framework of this research is to incorporate a preliminary quantitative analysis by showing the numbers of responses per question for each institution visited during the data collection phase. Thereafter, the research team presented justifications for responses where they are provided, as

part of our qualitative analyses. For questions which were not answered, we have indicated DNA (Did Not Answer).

9.1.1 Presentation Girls Vocation School (PGVS)

For the Presentation of the Girls Vocation School, there was a total of 9 respondents. This institution had the lowest percentage (18%) of targeted number of respondents due to challenges highlighted in section 7, page 10.

Fig. 1.1



- I. **For question one¹** on the benefits of their training, the majority responded that the training programs of the institution are beneficial since they enhance skills in computer literacy, hair braiding, cooking, and administrative/secretarial studies.
- II. **For question two** on the impact of TVET education to society, almost all respondents were of the opinion that TVET education is relevant and will help to significantly increase employment opportunities especially for youths, which will improve local economic development.
- III. With regards to challenges encountered in finding a job or starting a business after graduation underlined in **question three**, most of the respondents said that it is not easy to find a job after graduation. Even

¹ See Annex A for the full list of questions.

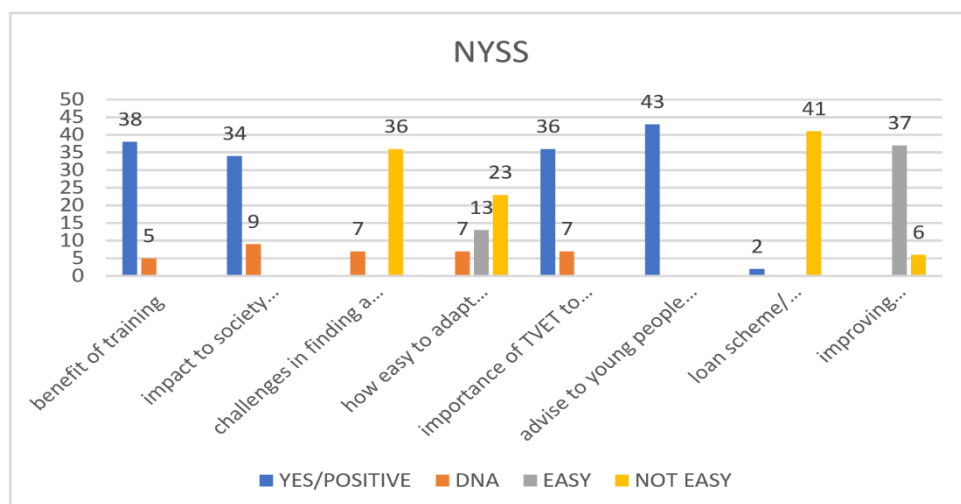
though respondents are continuing and not yet graduated students, they explained that they know of colleagues who have completed (some even two to three years after completion) and are still looking for jobs. Capturing the perspectives of respondents pertaining to work rate absorption after graduation was deemed important by the research team.

- IV. With regards to skills adaptation (**question number four**) after finding a job, a little above average stated that it is easy to adapt after finding a job.
- V. In **question number five**, the majority of respondents agree that TVET education is important since it increases employment opportunities (especially self-employment), enhance skills acquisition / employability, and improve overall socio-economic development of the country.
- VI. Almost all respondents stated (**in question six**) that they will advise youths to enter TVET education because of obvious reasons stated in question four above.
- VII. Regarding availability of a loan scheme (**question seven**), the majority of students highlighted that there are almost no financial loans to support students who have graduated to establish their own businesses. This brings to the fore the issue of financial inclusion.

9.1.2 National Youth Service Scheme (NYSS)

There was a total of 43 respondents for the NYSS, making it the only institution which acquired above 80% of targeted number of respondents. All other institutions were at 80% or below.

Fig. 1.2

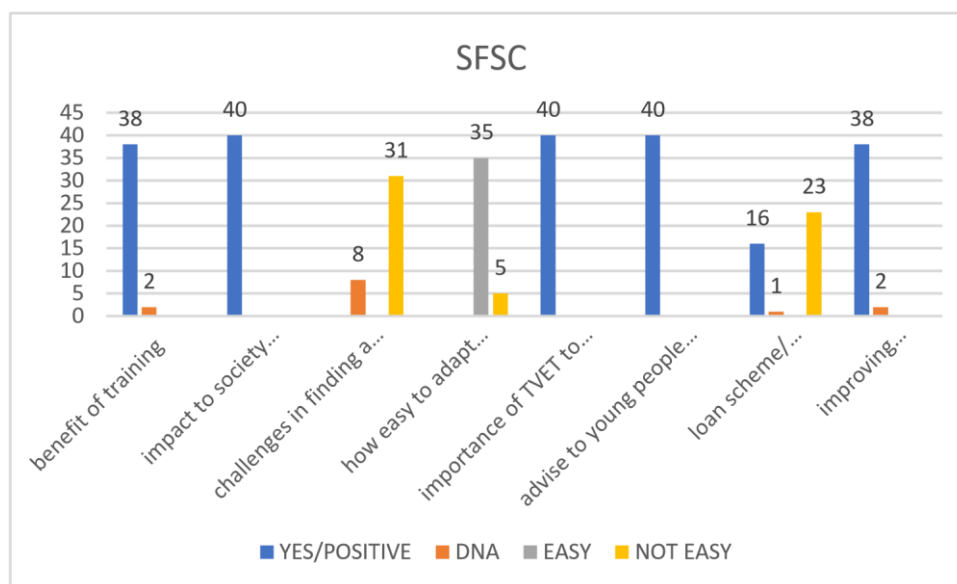


- I. **Question one** on the benefits of the program to students, 88% of students responded that the programs in the institution are beneficial to them by virtue of the skills and knowledge they have thus far acquired. As such and upon completion, they will also be able to transfer the knowledge acquired through small-scale own businesses after graduation.
- II. **Question two** regarding the impact of training on society, almost 80% respondents stated that by virtue of the skills acquired, they will be able to be self-employed and create job opportunities for others.
- III. On challenges faced by TVET students (**question three**) to find employment and start a business, 83% of respondents stated that it is very difficult. The respondents underscored the limited opportunities which exist to support youth business start-ups and the fact that most employers generally prefer employees with some form of work experience.
- IV. On the importance of TVET (**question five**) almost all respondents emphasized the importance of TVET on the lives of the youths and how it will be useful in terms of professional development.
- V. Regarding advice to the youths (**question six**), all respondents answered in the positive to advise youths to engage in TVET, for this will reduce idleness and delinquency due to joblessness.
- VI. **Question seven** highlighted that there is little or no loan scheme for the students, be it graduates or ongoing students to be able to launch startups for themselves, which is expected to have an impact on socio economic development.
- VII. Regarding question eight on ways to improve the rate of employment and support entrepreneurship, many of the students stated that there should be more skill centers; that TVET institutions should be decentralized; and that financial support should be given to young entrepreneurs to start their own businesses as a way of promoting financial inclusion.

9.1.3 Star Fish Skills Center (SFSC)

There was a total of 40 respondents at the SFSC, which represented 80% of targeted number of respondents.

Fig. 1.3

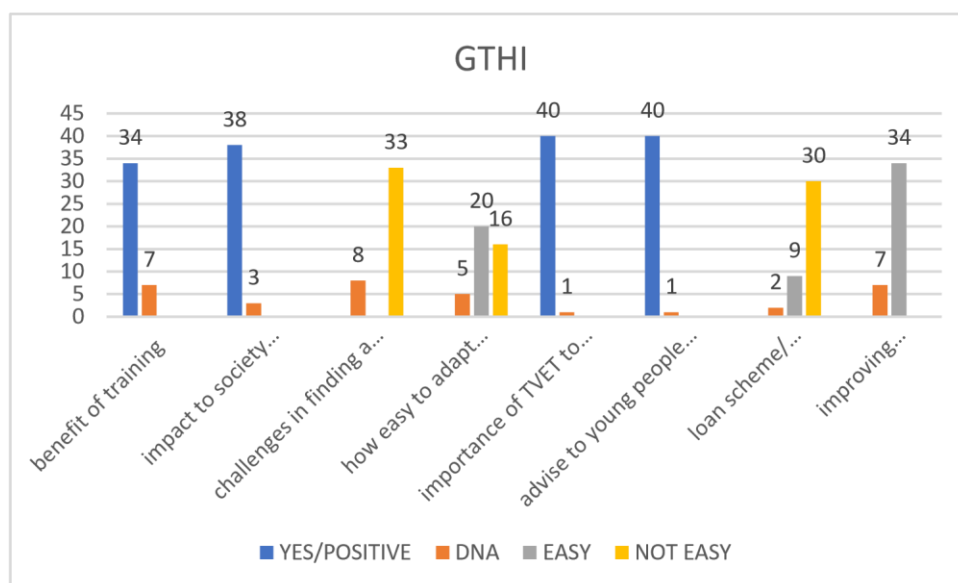


- I. 95% of respondents stated that the programs taught at the SFSC are both relevant and beneficial. They have been able to acquire different skills such as cooking, braiding, catering, and facial make up skills since enrolling in the program.
- II. All respondents stated that skills acquired would have a positive impact to society since there would be employment opportunities and the possibility to transfer and share the knowledge gained during the training programs and the sensitization phase.
- III. Regarding question three on challenges encountered, we see similar responses already given such as general lack of finance to launch startup businesses and the difficulty to get employment since there are not many options available and employers seek employees with skills and experience.
- IV. For question five on the importance of TVET, all respondents emphasized the need for youths to be supported and encouraged to embrace TVET education.
- V. Loan schemes for business startups as an instrument for financial inclusion are practically almost non-existent. Furthermore, youths in addition to skills acquisition through TVET, should also be trained in the principles and practices of entrepreneurship to be at the cutting edge.

9.1.4 Gambia Tourism & Hospitality Institute (GTHI)

Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute (GTHI), was first established as The Gambia Hotel School (GHS) in 1981. The GTHI offers training in **(i)** Bar & Restaurant Service; **(ii)** Housekeeping & Laundry; **(iii)** Front Office & Reception; **(iv)** Cookery & Pastry.

Fig. 1.4



- I. 90% of respondents stated the training programs of the GTHI are equally relevant and beneficial to them. As part of their training program, students go on internships. In addition to the skills learnt, students are now better aware of the important issues concerning food safety, hygiene and sanitation.
- II. 92% of respondents were of the opinion that the training programs of the GTHI will be impactful to the Gambian society since it provides the skills training required for a sector that contributes immensely to the Gambian economy. In 2022, the Gambia Tourism Board stated that 42,000 people benefit directly from the tourism industry and that the industry annually contributes significantly to GDP; and it is one of the largest sources of foreign exchange earnings in the country.
- III. The majority of respondents believed in this particular industry and are of the view that there will not be much challenge to find a job after graduation.
- IV. 99% of GTHI students believe and would advise youths to enroll in and acquire practical as well as applicable skills through TVET education, which

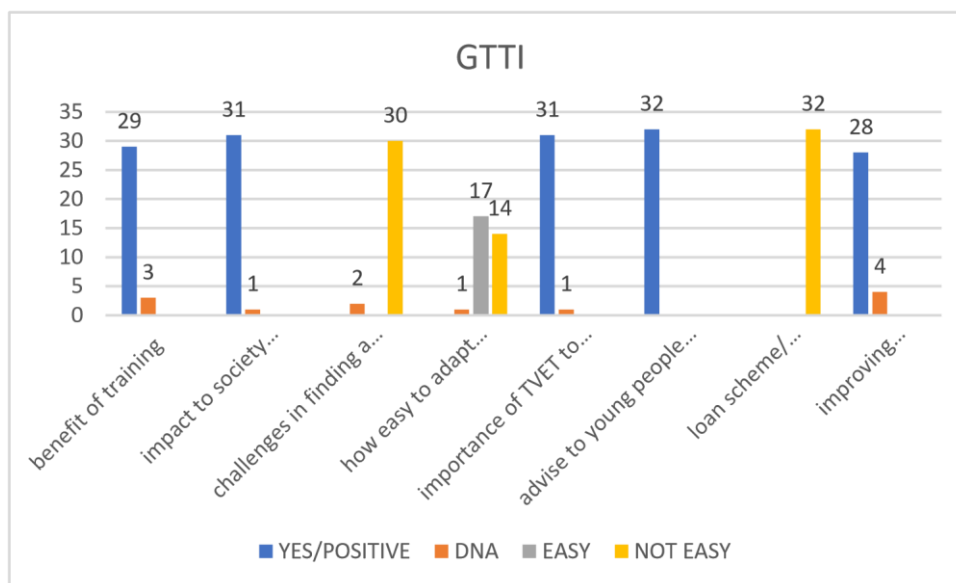
is extremely important to curb problems of youth unemployment and can facilitate self-sustainability.

- V. As for access to loan schemes, the majority of respondents indicated that this was a problem that needed to be addressed.

9.1.5 Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI)

The legal framework establishing the Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI) was instituted by the National Vocational Training Act of the National Assembly in 1980 to provide training opportunities for the middle and subprofessional levels of the technical and vocational human resource requirements of the country. The GTTI started functioning in 1983 and now offers over 60 vocational courses in the areas of construction, engineering and business management. In 1989, the National Vocational Training Centre (NVTC) was merged with the GTTI. The GTTI is undergoing transformation to become an independent school / department within the newly created University of Applied Science, Engineering & Technology (USET) and is now called the Institute of Technical Training (ITT).

Fig. 1.4



- I. The importance of TVET in the country cannot be under-emphasized. More than 90% of respondents agreed that their training programs are relevant and beneficial and will have numerous, overall positive impacts on society

through increased skills and employment opportunities, especially for the youths. Knowledge and skills on how to use tools in the areas of building construction and automotive engineering, to mention a few, are important to kick-start, maintain and sustain industrialization, nation building and sustainable development.

- II. Over 90% of respondents expressed that it is however generally difficult to get an apprenticeship let alone to find a job after graduation. Apprenticeships / internships for most of the technical programs offered at the GTTI are essential requirements, even though these aspects are at most times not strictly enforced or monitored. At best, most options are to establish their own small-scale workshops after completion to create self-employment, but this is fundamentally hindered due to lack of start-up capital.

10. Summary of Responses from Administrative Interviews

10.1 NYSS

- I. TVET is relevant, providing essential skills and enhancing employability. TVET contributes to reducing youth unemployment to some extent.
- II. Funding comes from government subvention and donor support.
- III. Decentralizing TVET centers to rural areas would increase access and ultimately reduce outward migration.
- IV. Skills offered include carpentry, welding, tailoring and auto-mechanics.
- V. Admissions criteria include Grade 9 and 12 graduates, interested in enrolling in an apprenticeship program.

10.2 GTHI

- I. TVET is relevant for employability and career development.
- II. Funding comes from government subvention, tuition fees, and events. Government subvention supports GTHI.
- III. Decentralization would encourage self-employment and reduce urban migration.
- IV. Skills taught include cooking, events management, entrepreneurship.
- V. Admissions criteria involve Grade 12 WASSCE results.
- VI. TVET creates a skilled labor force and promotes self-employment.

10.3 Presentation Girls' Vocational School

- I. TVET is essential, especially for those who cannot access higher education.
- II. Funding comes from school fees and donations.
- III. Decentralization will facilitate easy access and reduce rural-urban migration.
- IV. The school does not receive government subvention.
- V. Skills offered include home science, secretarial studies, hairdressing, etc.
- VI. Admission requirements vary, including Grade 12 and Grade 9 school leavers.

10.4 Star Fish Skill Centre

- I. TVET is crucial to support creativity, innovation and self-employment among young people.
- II. Funding comes from school fees and NGO donations. The school doesn't receive government subvention.
- III. The institution provides support to students after their program of study to start business endeavors.
- IV. Decentralization would ensure access to technical education across the country on an equitable basis.
- V. Skills taught encompass tailoring, hairdressing, cookery, and more.
- VI. Admissions criteria is pegged at Grade 12 completion and certification.

10.5 NAQAA

- I. There are challenges like negative perception of TVET education, inadequate resources, funding, etc.
- II. TVET curricula need to be more responsive to labour market needs.
- III. TVET integration into senior secondary curriculum could encourage participation.
- IV. TVET is gradually improving and requires collaborative efforts from all stakeholders.
- V. Skills like electrical engineering, computer engineering, construction, among others, are vital and needs to be generalized for ease of access.
- VI. The issue of insurance during apprenticeship is important and needs more clarity as a social and environmental safety measure.

10.6 MoHERST

- I. Modernizing apprenticeship systems and ensuring insurance for apprentices is a priority.
- II. Advocacy, attractiveness, quality, and relevance can promote TVET participation.
- III. Challenges include financing, capacity building, and gender mainstreaming.
- IV. Expanding access, upgrading institutions, and public-private partnerships are crucial to take TVET education to the next level.
- V. Market-driven TVET education based on labor market intelligence is vital for skills development.

11. Conclusion

On the one hand, students who attend TVET institutions have to first deal with perceptions which falsely propagate that school dropouts are those who attend TVET institutions. That image problem needs to be addressed to ensure that TVET is seen in a more positive light using role models in our society like TAF, who are the symbols of success. It is clear that the tertiary and higher education sector is not equitable. Most TVET institutions are concentrated in the Greater Banjul Area. Thus, in addition, financing to complete programs and ensuring accessibility for students coming from the rural areas are major constraining factors.

Upon completion of training programs, seeking gainful employment is another challenge. Establishing own businesses (startups) is equally a formidable daunting task due to the lack of access to business start-up capital. The issue of financial inclusion is thus a critical development challenge that needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. What seems evident is that the unemployment situation is being worsened by a high youthful population (the youth bulge) with increased demands for jobs, highly centralized TVET centers in urban areas, very low levels of job replacements, and even very low levels of new and sustainable employment creation opportunities.

On the other hand, TVET institutions face their own challenges of inadequate financing and lack of other essential resources to run the required programs. There is no National Policy or institutional policies to guide internship and apprenticeship – something that needs to be tackled as a priority.

Despite the challenges at individual and institutional levels, the potential for TVET to be transformational and to create a highly skilled work force, boost employment and socioeconomic development, still remains very promising. Although limited in scope and size, this research has brought out important findings and recommendations towards improving the TVET sub-sector in this country with a view to improving our overall human capital stock.

12. Recommendations / Way Forward

12.1 There should be a review and revision of the Tertiary and Higher Education Act 2016 to generally include Internship and apprenticeship in TVET.

12.2 NAMs working closely with the MoHERST and NAQAA, should expedite the drafting, validation and adoption of a National Higher Education Policy on Internship (to include apprenticeship in technical TVET institutions), which will guide TVET institutions on how to go about internships as well as apprenticeships, clearly listing roles and responsibilities of TVET institutions as well as those of the regulatory authority (i.e., NAQAA) to monitor and ensure quality assurance.

12.3 Alternative funding for TVET institutions, both public and private, is required in the short and medium term to ensure development progress and sustainability.

12.4 There should be cooperation between the public and private sectors in TVET. There is need for collaborative efforts between government and the private sector to address challenges and ensure the quality and relevance of the TVET curricula in institutions (that are linked to job sector needs).

12.5 Decentralization of TVET centers across regions is strongly advocated for in order to reduce rural – urban migration.

12.6 Facilitating business start-up-capital for promising young apprentices and entrepreneurs should be prioritized.

12.7 Making TVET education mandatory was strongly suggested and favored by few respondents, however at what level should this proposal be implemented still remains debatable.

Annex A

1. How have this training program benefitted you?
2. What impact do you think you can make to society with what you have learnt?
3. How easy is it to adapt to the workforce after graduating?
4. How important is TVET to the employability of youths in The Gambia
5. Would you advise young people to venture into TVET education?
6. How easy is it to find a job after school?
7. Is there any loan scheme or financial support provided for you to start up a business after school?
8. How can we improve rate of employment and support entrepreneurship?

Annex B

1. How relevant is TVET to the needs of young people?
2. How does the institution fund or maintain its upkeep?
3. How would decentralization of TVET centers across the regions be beneficial to the youthful population?
4. Does your center receive subvention from the government?
5. What skills do you offer to your students to make them become self-employed and self-reliant at the end of their program?
6. What criterion is used to admit students into your center?
7. Based on your analysis, does TVET reduce the rate of unemployment among the youthful population?
8. Is there any government moratorium on making TVET education compulsory for all students after university education?
9. What are the economic benefits of TVET education?

10. Are there enough spaces to accommodate the students?
11. Do you have a policy on retention of students?

APPENDIX

• ALHAGIE M. DUMBUYA	DIRECTOR, RESEARCH AND LIBRARY
• MARY T. MENDY	RESEARCH OFFICER
• AMIE BARROW	RESEARCH OFFICER
• ALIEU SONKO	PRINCIPAL LIBRARIAN
• MAMADOU AM BAH	SNR. COMMITTEE CLERK
• ISATOU SONKO	COMMITTEE CLERK
• SAINABOU TAMBA	HR INTERN
• SAINÉY KONTEH	TABLE OFFICE CLERK