



*Matching UK skills and potential
to African youth development needs*



A KORI Programme

The Vessel

Gambia, Summer 2015

A report on the Vessel journey, working with young professionals from the UK to deliver personal development programmes for young people in The Gambia.





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FOREWORD

The Vessel matches UK based skill and potential to African development needs. It is a programme run by London based youth development charity, KORI.

The Vessel's second journey took place in Gambia this summer. We worked with 140 young people and some exciting new partners. The team started as a group who were nervous, barely knew each other and who, bar one, had never set foot in West Africa before. They shared an eager feeling of excitement and, whilst anxious, couldn't wait to get the programme started. After *6 months* of training and preparation, led by KORI practitioners and experts from the charity sector, our team arrived in Gambia.

OUR TEAM

China Nicole West: Teaching assistant, & English Literature Graduate. With The Vessel she led Poetry and Story Writing

Sharifa Mccog: Behavioural Specialist, Former Pro Footballer (Fulham FC). With The Vessel she led Football & Personal Development

Jonathan Ratner: Business Development Manager. With The Vessel he led

Leadership & Communication.

Jerome George: Regional Business Development Manager, Bic

Canan Hussein: KORI Volunteer. With the vessel she led the First Aid course

Onome Edgeworth: KORI Staff, Programme Leader



FUNDRAISING

Each member of the team was tasked with fundraising for the full cost of their journey. They covered the cost of their travel, accommodation and food, equipment and also raised enough to sponsor a group of young people from Abuko to attend the programme.

The fundraising was completed in various ways, but largely through JustGiving campaigns and generous donations. The team spent days out engaging with the public, offering free hugs and friendly conversation to drum up support for the programme. They also ran events and got support from colleagues, some managing to raise way beyond the amount needed.

ARRIVAL & FIRST IMPRESSIONS

We arrived to a few days of rest, spending our time planning, getting to know the area and relaxing. We stayed in a house that was in the middle of Abuko, the area that the majority of young people we would be working with were from. This enabled us to meet and mix with the group early, and gave us extra insight of what was to come.

The group seemed comfortable very quickly and spoke of a 'feeling of calm and contentment'. China said 'I feel free, I love the place and the people' and. We were welcomed by the Abuko Youth Association, a forty strong group set up by KORI in 2014. The house and the front garden fast became a mixing spot for young people from the association and our vessel team.



PROGRAMMES

YMCA

The Vessel team delivered a six day summer camp programme with our partners *YMCA Gambia* and *SOS*. We had 68 young people, aged 11 - 23, divided into four classes - Football & Personal Development, Poetry & Drama and Storytelling & Communication & Leadership.

On the first morning we left our base in Abuko with a loud bus full of young people from the Youth Association who would be taking part in the programme thanks to the teams fundraising and some free spaces offered by the YMCA. The group from Abuko joined three other groups from ***YMCA Kaninfinfing***, ***YMCA Brikama*** and ***SOS Children's Village***. The groups were from three very different areas and demographics and were quite obviously divided at the beginning of the programme. We started with a whole group meeting and you could feel that the young people were as nervous as our team. We divided them up, got them to their rooms and all of a sudden the space for nervousness was gone - classes started and from the get go all 68 young people were engaged, learning and visibly enjoying themselves.

This programme was a great success, with all of the young people completing the programme and receiving Vessel certificates. We learnt a lot from this part of the programme and through it encouraged social mixing and delivered some great, skills focused workshops.

FIRST AID & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

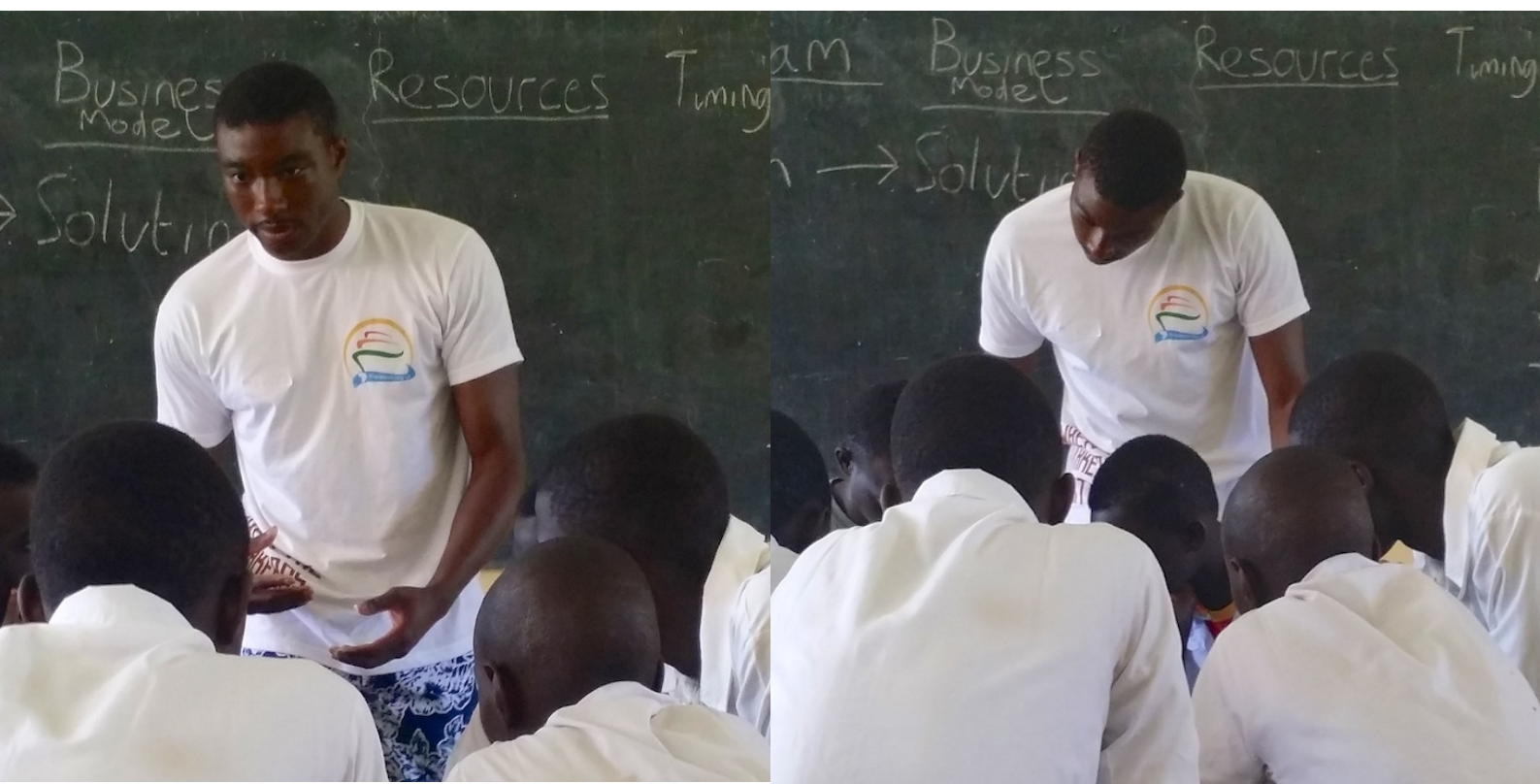
The second part of our programme delivered first aid and business development programmes to local groups and organisations. We had Canan Hussien and Jerome George working with smaller groups, delivering targeted, skills based work. Learn more about their programmes below:

Jerome George - Regional Business Development Manager, BIC

Jerome came to Gambia with two intentions: to run an introductory business development course and gain an understanding of the barriers and opportunities for grassroots business development in the country. He worked with a group from Abuko, Brikama and Eburnjan Theatre, developing their ideas around business, their skills and supporting them in undertaking research. He held his sessions at The Vessel' residence, delivering every afternoon. The sessions were very intimate, a mixture of formal delivery and conversational and experiential learning.

Jerome worked with the group to build their own business plans. He had them research the local area for opportunities, and find ideas that were achievable and sustainable. There was a noticeable buzz amongst those involved, they were visibly inspired and energised and laughed and shared jokes throughout.

Jerome also provided a short, introduction to business to young people from Toujereng High School, courtesy of the Marcus Garvey Foundation. This workshop was designed to spark an interest in business and Jerome, being a young man who has achieved obvious success, provided a relatable role model. The feedback from the class was wholly positive and was part of a programme that achieved national news coverage.





Canan Hussein - First Aid Trainer

Canan spent the months leading her journey to Gambia learning to teach First Aid. She got her qualifications, then managed to talk herself into shadowing her instructor for the next few months. She also received some amazing donations - including full size dolls - from 'Actual First Aid', the company who trained her. First aid seemed an important skill and qualification for local groups and professionals to attain, but even we underestimated the value of offering these skills.

Canan started her work with the Abuko Youth Association & Tujereng High School, delivering training and getting comfortable teaching in Gambia. Some of her groups had people who spoke limited English and had little or no first aid experience. These classes went well and her students were obviously happy with what they had learned - staying engaged and asking questions throughout. She then went on to teach professionals from SOS and New Life Teachers, again receiving very positive feedback.

The most impactful part of her work took place after this however. Canan worked with a group of Mothers from Abuko, many of whom were raising young children. These mothers shared stories of incidents in which basic first aid training could have saved people, especially children, from some serious difficulties, some even life threatening. They came in laughing and joking, and left on more of a high, speaking of how important the training had been. Knowing how to deal with burns, wounds, injuries and more was invaluable, and they were convinced that all mothers should have this training. We were then notified of an accident that had happened locally, in which a young child had been burned and the parent had underestimated the severity of the situation.

The mothers that had had the training immediately notified Canan, newly aware of the correct procedures. The child was in a lot of danger, and needed immediate medical help, but this had not been recognised. She had burns that were heading towards infection and were being mishandled. Seeing this emphasised the need for mothers to develop a proper understanding of first aid - in a community that has so many children that is without real affordable healthcare options, the population needs an understanding of first aid and a guide to providing basic support and knowing when professionals are needed.



WHAT DID WE ACHIEVE?

- 100% retention! Everybody came back and completed the programme.
- Classes actually grew as the week went on. Young people showed wonderful commitment
- A presentation that included all the young people - some of whom were too shy to speak in class for the first two days
- National media attention (Radio & TV)
- Social Mixing
- Real skills and confidence development
- Lots of fun!

WHO DID WE WORK WITH?

- 68 Young people from Abuko, YMCA Kanifing & SOS Children's Village
- 28 Young People from Brikama YMCA
- 25 Young people from Toujereng
- 19 Young people from Ebunjan Theatre
- 12 Women from Abuko
- 25 Teachers from New Life
- 177 people received certificates!

COMMENTS

From the participants

Young people on the programme spoke of enjoying it and learning a range of skills and all said that they felt programmes like this are important. Below are some comments from them.

On why workshops like this are important:

"They help youth to harness themselves. That is important!"

Christopher Tijan Smith

"They are important because they encourage young people like us to be confident, hardworking, so that we will be able to reach our goals in the future."

Isatou Gassama

"Because of this workshop I am sure of who I am. So this work shop could change a lot of lives that's why it's so important."

Peter M. Gomez

On what they gained from the workshops?

"To help pupils/ students who are in need of first aid in the school. Also the workshop is useful for individuals who want to acquire knowledge in the use of first aid."

Esther Orimugonje

"I have gained a lot concerning presentation style and skills. I wrote my first poem. I'm excited!"

Assan Jobe

"The best thing was the teachers were very friendly, active and most of all courageous because of their wonderful contribution."

Ousmane Jallow

"The young people learnt a lot from the vessel team. Most of them were shy at the first day but through what they learnt and the encouragement from the team most of them are now out spoken, confident.

I personally have learnt a lot during this one week, you guys are great! I'm gonna use what I learnt in the after school program that we run. Thank you!"

Haddy Touray

"Our facilitator, Miss China, has taught us many things that will really help us both in schools and in the future. We've exchanged skills learned about poetry, speeches and storytelling. She really helps us. Most of us have overcome the shyness and fear of speaking in public and the mentality that I "can't do this" She made us believe in ourselves, believe that we can do anything if only we believe in ourselves and have the confidence. Thank you "

Ida Mbye

COMMENTS

From The UK Vessel Team

"I feel like as a British Caribbean person it was nice to feel that connection with Africa - a feeling of going back to the roots. I learnt about the value of community in a different way. Very different to the way we speak about it here ... [I also] think differently about identity. I always felt a connection to Africa - my parents are pan-Africanists. In Gambia, that connection was very natural - just something I felt. Everyone there said that I was home now. It was a very spiritual journey..."

"I would like to develop organisation here to help people in Gambia to get involved in sport - a continuation of fundraising activity I did here before going. Part of that was running a football tournament... I'd also like to encourage young diasporic Africans to travel and see life in a different way."

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THANKS

In our time in Gambia we have found partners and youth capable of enabling this programme to run. We created the Abuko Youth Association, a group of 17 - 23 year olds from the Abuko area in Gambia who elected a committee that became responsible for enrolments from that area. One of their committee members, Haddy Njie, took responsibility and almost single handedly recruited the majority of that group. Haddy also liaised with partners and gave us somebody on the ground who could contact the people we were working with and help us prepare. The programme couldn't have worked without her.

We also worked with more established partners from Gambia, listed below. We used their local expertise and worked alongside their staff to develop and deliver a programme that fitted Gambian young people. These partners supported recruitment and provided spaces for us to work

PARTNERS

SOS & YMCA

Special thanks to:

Haddy Njie

Morro Fatty

The Abuko Youth Association

Priscilla and the YMCA Gambia Team

SOS Villages Gambia

And all the wonderful people who enriched and supported our journey along the way