



THERE IS ABILITY IN DISABILITY P22



DTSG AS RECRUITER FOR CORPORATE ORGANISATIONS P40

# OkowaPlus

A PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JOB CREATION OFFICER

NO. 6 MARCH 2020



## Marching Towards a Stronger Delta

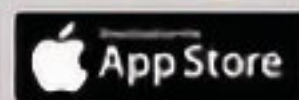
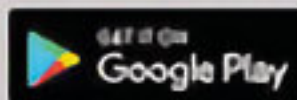
*More youths tell their success stories as the Job Creation Scheme enters fifth cycle P14*



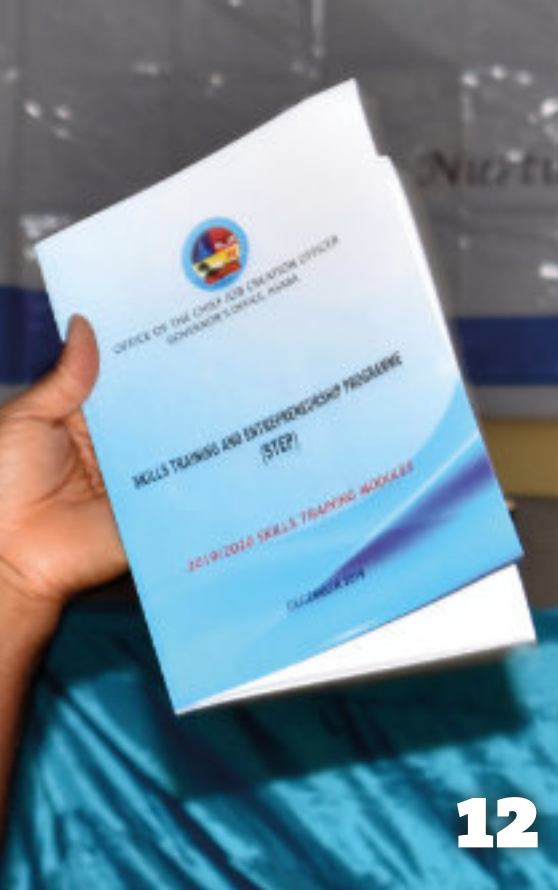
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**OkowaPlus**

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JOB  
CREATION OFFICER

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# Relishing the OkowaPlus Series

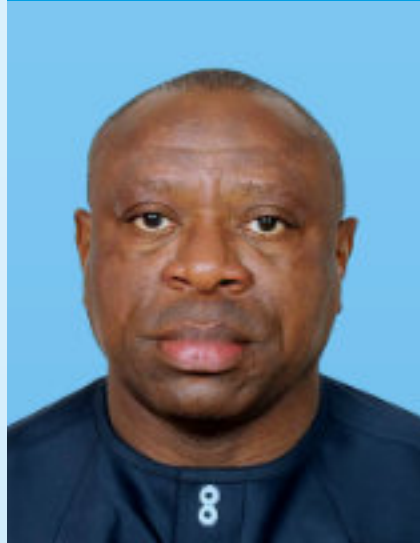
**H**insight observation shows that the decision to institute this periodic magazine that communicates the activities, progress, achievements and outlook of Governor Ifeanyi Okowa's Job Creation Scheme implemented by the Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer is a bold step in the right direction. Over the four years since the first publication in January 2016, *OkowaPlus* has continued to play an instrumental role in informing and enlightening a variety of stakeholders on the scheme. In addition, it has provided a channel of obtaining valuable feedback from stakeholders regarding the activities, performance and challenges of the Job Creation Scheme.

Equally important is the fact that this magazine has become a principal tool for tracking, publicizing and disseminating the scope, achievements and impacts of the Job Creation Scheme as well as the job creation programmes of other Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). In this regard, *OkowaPlus* is a legacy document that gives robust historical narratives of the job creation strides of the Okowa administration.

Today, we are happy to have the sixth edition of the magazine, a feat which has been achieved through determination, diligence and tenacity for the continuity and sustenance of concept. Moreover, much encouragement has been received from the extensive and expanding use of and demand for the magazine, within and outside the state. *OkowaPlus* has become a valuable information tool used by officials and MDAs of the State Government at national and international events, conferences and exhibitions. Underlying the sustained value of and demand for the magazine is its rich legitimate content, factual nature, editorial quality, simplicity of approach and reader-friendly style.

The maiden edition in January 2016 was themed "YAGEPreneurs, STEPpreneurs Emerge" in recognition of the maiden harvest of graduands of the Job Creation Scheme. It was followed by the second edition captioned "PPSP: Steering the Wheel of Economic Diversification" to highlight

**by Eric Eboh**  
Chief Job and Wealth Creation Officer



the administration's special subsidy-based interventions in the agricultural value chain, implemented by the Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer.

In the third edition we featured "Real People, Real Stories, Real Change," which headlined success stories and testimonies of graduands of STEP and YAGEP. The edition demonstrated the outcomes and impacts of STEP and YAGEP in an evidence-based manner. In the same vein, the fourth edition in December 2017 was a special publication, timed to correspond with the Exhibition and Business Fair that held from December 13-14, 2017. It featured robust cumulative evidence of the remarkable impacts of STEP and YAGEP on the lives and future of youths.

The last edition, fifth in the series, captioned "Bountiful Harvest" was published in January 2019, also timed to correspond with the second Exhibition and Business Fair that took place from January 24-25, 2019. This special edition contained the profiles of outstanding alumni of STEP and YAGEP, showing their progress milestones coupled with the transformational impacts of the Job Creation Scheme on their personal lives, families and communities.

Against the backdrop of the past five editions, this edition, provides up-to-date facts and assorted information on the success stories and significant strides of STEPpreneurs and YAGEPreneurs. Perspectives from different stakeholders of the Job Creation Scheme are reflected. The edition also features the cumulative progress of the scheme as well as the footprints and landmarks Of the Governor in giving our youths a new sense of direction.

Convinced of the legitimacy and value of this magazine, encouraged by the growing demand by stakeholders and the public, inspired by the leadership and support of the Governor, we will work to uphold the relevance, quality, potency and continuity of this publication. We relish the fact that stakeholders within and outside the State enjoy and use this publication.

Happy reading.





A CROSS SECTION OF TRAINEES IN UGHELLI

# 2019/2020 STEP Beneficiaries Laud Gov. Okowa on Programme Sustainability

**S**ome beneficiaries out of the 551 youths enrolled into the Skills Training and Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP) for the 2019/2020 Cycle have commended Governor Ifeanyi Okowa for sustaining the job creation programme in his second tenure. They spoke to us during the Orientation and Personal Effectiveness Workshop held in Asaba.

Kenneth Onwuegbuosa (Ughelli North LGA), a trainee in Event Decoration and Management, was full of praise for the Governor noting that the opportunity would equip

him with the necessary business knowledge and skills in Event Management. In the same manner, John Anwuzia (Aniocha South LGA) a trainee in Fashion Design and Textile Design described the programme as the “best opportunity any government can create for its youths,” adding that his wife benefitted from the Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP) in 2015.

Precious Ajibade (Isoko South LGA) a trainee in Fashion Design and Textile was optimistic that “within seven months of training, I will achieve my purpose of becoming my own boss,

being self-employed and self-dependent.” For Blessing Ajueyitsi (Uwvie LGA) a trainee in Hairdressing, Makeover and Braiding who became successful after several failed attempts to enlist in the programme, the youth should be patient with the Government as “it cannot provide for everyone at the same time.”

In his remark, the Commissioner for Youth Development, Comrade Ifeanyi Egwueyenga, charged the trainees to be committed to the programme in order to return the State Government’s investment on them. Mr Egwuyenga described the

programme as a seed that would propel them to realise their goals, urging them to seize the “life changing opportunity to become great entrepreneurs.”

The Commissioner also admonished them to “shun materialism. Imbibe the right values and mindset to determine how far you will grow. Government provides fund, the Office of the Chief Job and Wealth Creation Officer provides the process, but it is you that will determine the success,” he remarked.

While congratulating the beneficiaries on behalf of the Governor, the Chief Job and Wealth Creation Officer, Prof Eric Eboh, reiterated the administration’s commitment to curbing youth unemployment through the job creation programmes. Prof Eboh said the Orientation and Personal Effectiveness Workshop was designed to make them “productively engaged, masters of their destinies and self-employed business owners.”



A CROSS SECTION OF STEPNEURS TURNED STEP TRAINERS

The Executive Assistant to the Governor on Youth Monitoring and Mentoring, Mr Eddie Mekwuye, while urging the beneficiaries to be focussed, informed them that the Directorate of Youth Monitoring and Mentoring would visit their training centres regularly to ensure that they abide by the rules and regulations guiding the programme. He warned

that any trainee who failed to abide by the established code of conduct would be delisted from the programme, urging them to report whatever challenges they encounter at their training centres early enough.

The trainees were enrolled in various skills such as Catering and Confectionery, Decoration and Event Management, Fashion Design and Textile Design, Cosmetology (Skin and Facial Care), Hairdressing and Make over, Information Technology Services (Open to youths with a minimum of OND/NCE) and Welding and Fabrication. Other skills are Electrical and Solar Works; Carpentry and Joinery, Tiling and Interlocking, Plumbing, Production of Cleaning Agents, POP, Screed-Making and Painting and Audio-visual Services.



CJWCO, PROF ERIC EBOH GIVING A TALK DURING THE ORIENTAION PROGRAMME IN WARRI





## DTSG Begins Training of 259 YAGEP Beneficiaries

**T**he 2019/2020 cycle of the Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme has commenced.

At least 259 persons have been screened and selected for the programme. The list of beneficiaries includes existing small holder farmers (known as Brown YAGEP) and youths intending to pursue a career in agriculture (known as GREEN YAGEP).

The programme kicked off with a two-day training workshop for Brown YAGEP beneficiaries covering agricultural enterprises and commodities such as poultry, piggery, fish production, cassava, maize, rice, plantain and vegetables. All beneficiaries of Brown YAGEP must have an active and ongoing agricultural enterprise, verified, suitable land space with unhindered access and secured tenure, and good source of regular water supply.

Addressing the beneficiaries, the Chief Job and Wealth Creation Officer, Prof Eric Eboh, said "the workshops were based on previous training needs assessment of the skills gaps of youth agriculturists in the State." According to him, "the training workshops would be followed with excursions to model agricultural centres and enterprises in order to give you practical exposure to best agricultural practices. You would be supported with efficient production inputs, labour and mentoring; of which the overall objective is to enhance your productivity, outputs and incomes in line with the job and wealth creation agenda of the Okowa administration."

Responding, Owolabi Ebiere (Patani LGA) in Cassava Production and Olubade Pounmi (Ethiope East LGA) in Vegetable Farming expressed their gratitude to the State Government

for the training. They promised to use the knowledge acquired to improve their agricultural enterprises in order to make a living out of it.

Meanwhile, at the Orientation Programme to flag off the 2019/2020 YAGEP cycle, Professor Eboh disclosed that the "provision of YAGEP support packs will be done in stages as progression from one stage to the next stage is prerequisite to the release of support items in subsequent stage."

Presenting the "2019/2020 YAGEP Process and Guidelines," he reiterated that "the State Government's philosophy of initiating the Job Creation Scheme was to create a lasting legacy of a new generation of youth entrepreneurs who are well motivated, inspired, skilled and adequately enabled to become self-employed and business owners."



A TRAINERS WORKSHOP

## STEP Trainers Tasked on Professionalism

**T**he Chief Job and Wealth Creation Officer, Prof Eric Eboh, has charged accredited trainers for the 2019/2020 cycle to adhere strictly to the training guidelines and code of conduct.

At a one-day Orientation Workshop for Trainers organised by his office in Asaba, Prof Eboh pointed out that

the philosophy of the Job Creation Scheme was to create “a new generation of youth entrepreneurs who are well motivated, inspired, skilled and adequately enabled to become self-employed and business owners.” He gave the three dimensions of the job creation skills training as entrepreneurship skills, occupational skills and personal effectiveness, tasking the trainers to

uphold the tenets of “professionalism, quality, integrity and discipline.”

Prof Eboh informed the trainers that these qualities were the reasons the Job Creation Scheme earned Governor Ifeanyi Okowa, several national and international awards as well as national and international endorsements from organisations

## DTSG Introduces Completion Proficiency Test for STEP Participants

**P**articipants in the Skills Training and Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP) now pass through a Completion Proficiency Test (CPT) before they are certified good for Entrepreneurship and Business Management Training, which qualifies them to be given Starter Packs.

The two-day test, the first of its kind in the programme took place simultaneously in different training centres in Asaba, Agbor and Kware for 48 trainees in Fashion Design and Tailoring; ICT; Welding and Fabrication and Electrical Installation and Repairs of the 2018/2019 Programme Cycle.

The STEP Co-ordinator in the Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer, Mr Onyeisi Nkenchor, disclosed that CPT is an innovation packaged to strengthen the capacity of the STEP trainees and to ensure that trainees who participated in hands-on training at different training centres in the state were fully empowered to utilise the experience and skills acquired during their training.

“The Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer has added a new element to the cycle of training. This is called the Completion Proficiency Test which entails practical



and development agencies including the World Bank, European Union and United Nations. He advised them to refrain from “colluding with trainees on absenteeism, denying trainees the use of equipment and training facilities, and non-use of training modules.”

Speaking on “The Role and Activities of Directorate of Youth Monitoring and Mentoring in Relation to STEP Trainees,” the Executive Assistant to the Governor on Youth Monitoring and Mentoring (DYMM), Mr Eddy Mekwuye, urged the trainers to act responsibly to ensure programme sustainability.

Responding separately on behalf other trainers, Mrs Bridget Chineze and Mr Akpomreta Akpobome expressed their gratitude for the patronage by the Government. They pledged to put in their best to help the Government achieve its vision of building a new generation of entrepreneurs.

Present at the workshop were 141 trainers out of the 215 accredited for the 2019/2020 STEP. They were selected based on their capacity, availability/willingness, functionality and accessibility.

testing of the graduates to ensure that they have reasonable proficiency in the skills for which they were trained,” he explained.

He said 48 graduates of the 2018/2019 six months Green STEP trainees comprising 30 persons in Fashion Design and Tailoring; 11 in Welding and Fabrication; three in Electrical Installations and Repairs and four in ICT were taken through the tests at different centres in Asaba, Agbor and Kwale.

## Grade Us, *STEP*reneur Tells Okowa

**A**n appeal has been made to the Delta State Government to grant special interventions to STEP/YAGEP beneficiaries to help them upscale their businesses to international level. *STEP*reneur Stephen Illoba made the appeal in an interview in his fashion home in Asaba, Stephen Africa.

While affirming that many of the *STEP*reneurs and *YAGEP*reneurs were doing well, he observed that they require huge capital to expand their businesses. “I am planning to go into exportation of my products,” he disclosed. “The reason we need Government’s intervention in terms of capital is to break into new frontiers by procuring machines to meet international standard. We can help Government to create more jobs, but we need finance to achieve our goals.”

He suggested that the Directorate of

Youth Monitoring and Mentoring (DYMM) could help determine those that qualify for such Government assistance in terms of special grants or facilitating access to credit facilities.

“Government has trained thousands of youths,” he stated. “I suggest that through the DYMM, a scorecard be provided for all beneficiaries to assess and measure our performances and success rate in order to assist those doing well to upscale their businesses. I have met with Bank of Industry in the past two years, but I have not been able to access their products. In this regard, the State Government’s Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency should make access to state credit facilities flexible. Our scorecard should be the yardstick to measure our success, and further support package given to facilitate our business growth.”



ILLOBA



THE PRESIDENT, MRS ETHOR ODEMERO (FIRST LEFT) IN A GROUP PHOTOGRAPH WITH TRAINEES AND COLLEAGUE

## STEP, YAGEP Beneficiaries Organize Training for 40 Youths

In a move that underlined the multiplier effect of STEP and YAGEP, some beneficiaries of the programmes have packaged a training programme for 40 youths in Isoko land.

The trainees, including non-indigenes, were drawn from Isoko North and Isoko South Local Government areas and are to be trained in fish farming, Bead Making,

Catering, Decoration and Event Management, Hair Dressing, Tying of Gele and Makeover, Cosmetology, Fashion Design and Tailoring. Meanwhile, an orientation/awareness campaign was held on February 1, 2020 at Oleh Civic Centre in which 30 of the trainees and seven facilitators were in attendance.

A press statement issued by the President of the Nigerian Initiative

for Accelerated Development of Youths in Entrepreneurship, Mrs Ethor Odemero, disclosed that the body is a non-governmental organization set up by young entrepreneurs that were trained and established by the State Government through STEP and YAGEP. Mrs Odemero was beneficiary of YAGEP in Crop Production in the 2015/2016 Cycle.



## Ogwashi-Uku Poly Appoints STEPreneur Eterigho Resource Person

**S**TEPreneur Joshua Eterigho has been appointed as a resource person for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development (EED) 216, ND II in the Department of Civil Engineering at the Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku.

The appointment letter dated October 24, 2019 was signed by the Director of Entrepreneurial Studies and Students Resource Centre, Sir Timothy Oni.

While expressing delight over the appointment, Eterigho thanked Governor Ifeanyi Okowa for giving him the platform through which he was recognised for an appointment in such a great institution. He was trained in Barbing in the STEP 2015/2016 programme cycle and has long diversified into Hairdressing and Makeover. He owns a flourishing unisex salon at Azagba-Ogwashi where he has capable staff to take care of his business when he is teaching.



JOSHUA ETERIGHO TEACHING EED AT DELTA POLY, OGWASHI-UKU

## STEPreneur Nwaise Continues to Shine



PRECIOUS NWAISE WINS LAPTOP AT NEXIM RAFFLEDRAW

**T**he Chief Executive Officer of Mega Eco Fashions, STEPreneur Precious Nwaise, has won a HP Laptop. Mrs Nwaise won the prize during a raffle draw as part of the activities to round off a three-day South-South Export Enlightenment and Engagement Forum held in Asaba recently.

Speaking on the benefits of the export enlightenment forum, Mrs Nwaise said the programme granted her the opportunity to meet lots of people especially renowned exporters in the State, to learn the processes involved in export business and how to access NEXIM credit products.

"I am inspired with lots of ideas on export and have made lots of contacts and links to help my business. I have been enlightened on how to access their loan. I have an important contact with a key exporter who promised to partner with me. The beautiful part is about the HP Laptop I won in the raffle draw," she enthused.

The emerging fashion star said she would use the laptop to promote her fashion business online and to begin her export business in a formal way, adding that she had been exporting her products informally.

"All my achievements have been by deliberate effort and hard work, she said. "This is the first time I am winning something for free. I dedicate it to the Delta State Government, the Office of the Chief Job and Wealth Creation Officer and to my family."

# OkowaPlus Gets a Makeover

*The Job Creation Scheme a.k.a OkowaPlus is getting better and better*

BY GERTRUDE ONYEKACHUKWU-UTEH

**M**an's activities in life are subject to constant reviews. Reviews are geared towards achieving more positive and impactful outcomes. One of the positive milestones in the implementation of the Delta State Job Creation Scheme is constant reviews of the programme since inception in 2015. These reviews form the hallmark for reassessments and revaluation of the Skills Training and Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP) and the Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP) to ensure better results, enhance capacity, viability and sustainability of the business enterprises.

Over time, through self-assessments and evaluation of the STEP and YAGEP by the Job Creation Steering Committee and critical stakeholders involved in the implementation of the programmes such as the trainers and key officers in the Office of the Chief Job and Wealth Creation Officer, the programme has been going through an evolution. Regular meetings, workshops and briefings are held by all stakeholders to brainstorm

on how best the programme could be implemented to ensure quality control, value for investment, cost effectiveness, enterprise sustainability/productivity and better time management among others. Such regular stakeholders' meetings birthed the following innovations, which have not only enhanced the quality and integrity of the programme but also made the programme more flexible for the implementers and generated more demand.

#### **Brown STEP and Brown YAGEP**

In line with the vision of all-inclusiveness and building a Stronger Delta where everybody is carried along in the prosperity train of Governor Ifeanyi Okowa, the Brown STEP and the Brown YAGEP were introduced into the scheme. Earlier, the 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 Programme Cycles were entirely focused on the Green STEP and the Green YAGEP. As stated in the agency's, Implementation Guidelines (Revised) for 2019/2020 Programme Cycle, "Green STEP is designed for persons who are freshers or newcomers to their skills of interest and are desirous and ready to acquire the skills as the basis to start, own and run

business enterprises." Brown STEP was introduced in the 2017/2018 Programme Cycle to incorporate youths who already have skills into the scheme. According to the guidelines therefore, "Brown STEP is designed for persons who have already acquired the relevant skills, on the basis of which they are desirous and ready to start and run own business enterprises." Also, to qualify for admission into Brown STEP, the candidate should have been verified to have recently completed training or close to completion of training either in government or private skills training centres.

On the other hand, "Green YAGEP refers to YAGEP candidates who are freshers or newcomers to agricultural skills and desire to be trained afresh and thereafter established with Starter Packs to own and run their enterprises". Before now, the majority of Green YAGEP beneficiaries were in YAGEP Farm Clusters located across the three senatorial districts of the State. As part of the reviews injected into the scheme, it is noteworthy that Green YAGEP beneficiaries would have to provide suitable private land in locations of



their choice to bridge the gap of being located in clusters far away from their places of residence among other attendant challenges. Their locations must have water supply and energy, which must be physically verified by the Office of the Chief Job and Wealth Creation Officer.

The Brown YAGEP category refers to those who already have practical knowledge, skills and experience in the relevant agricultural enterprise and existing agricultural enterprises but need support for expansion.” They must own and show the live farm enterprise for which they applied for support. The farm and its ownership must be verified by the office too.

#### **Admission Proficiency Test (APT)**

The Admission Proficiency Test is basically for candidates who applied for Brown STEP. It is an entry point proficiency test to verify if a candidate rightly possesses the skill as stated in the application form. Candidates must pass the APT to be admitted into Brown STEP.

#### **Completion Proficiency Test (CPT)**

The Completion Proficiency Test is designed for both Green and Brown STEP trainees on completion of their training programmes. The CPT was introduced in the third quarter of 2019 for six months Green STEP graduates. It is to ensure discipline and quality control during training. All STEP graduates are subjected to a test to qualify them for the fourth phase of the job creation training programme, which is the Business Management and Entrepreneurship Training (EBMT) before establishment with Starter Packs. Prior to this review, every STEP graduate got established

	STEP Skill/Enterprise	TRAINING DURATION	
		Green STEP	Brown STEP
1	Catering and Confectionery	3 months	2 months
2	Decoration and Event Management	3 months	2 months
3	Fashion Design and Textile Design	7 months	3 months
4	Cosmetology (Skin and Facial Care)	4 months	2 months
5	Hairdressing, Makeover and Braiding	4 months	2 months
6	Information Technology Services (Open to only youths with a minimum of OND/NCE)	6 months	3 months
7	Welding and Fabrication	8 months	3 months
8	Electrical and Solar Works	8 months	4 months
9	Carpentry and Joinery	6 months	3 months
10	Tiling and Interlocking	6 months	3 months
11	Production of Cleaning Agents	3 months	2 months
12	Plumbing	6 months	3 months
13	PoP, Screed-Making and Painting	3 months	2 months
14	Audiovisual services	4 months	3 months

automatically after hands-on training. There was no assessment whether they were proficient or not, but they were all established with Starter Packs having been cleared by the Directorate of Youth Monitoring and Mentoring for regular attendance in their respective training centres and as reflected in their Logbooks. It is hoped that CPT will inspire in the trainees the can-do- attitude to learn well in order to qualify to receive Starter Packs. Failure to pass the CPT means that the trainee would have to repeat the training at personal cost or forfeit the opportunity.

#### **Merging of Skills/Extension of Training Period for STEP**

Some previously stand-alone skills have been merged with related skills and the training periods extended to make STEP enterprises more viable and sustainable for the beneficiaries. Before now, training period for Green STEP ranged between three to six months depending on the enterprise, but that has been reviewed upward to

three to eight months. Conversely, Brown STEP was reviewed from being between six weeks to three months to run between two months to four months. The current STEP enterprises and training durations are illustrated in the table above as published in the guideline.

#### **Publications of STEP Skills Training Modules/Implementation Guidelines (Revised)**

Documentation of job creation programmes and activities have received boost with the publications of the STEP Skills Training Modules as well as the revised edition of Implementation Guidelines for 2019/2020 Programme Cycle. These, of course, are additional milestones in the implementation of the Job Creation Scheme in the State. The publication of the STEP Skills Training Module in December 2019 especially offers a first-hand information for other States and development partners who want to copy the template of the Delta State Job Creation Scheme.

# Distinguished ALUMNI

NAME: **ENYENAKPOR, LOVETH** (2016/2017 CYCLE YAGEP)

LGA: **ETHIOPE EAST**

ENTERPRISE: **FISH PRODUCTION**

**Loveth Enyenakpor** is the CEO of JJ Enyens Farms Enterprises. She attended Delta State University, Abraka where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Fine and Applied Arts. She was jobless for nine years before her enrolment in YAGEP. As one of the 2016/2017 Cycle beneficiaries trained and established in Fish Production at Ugbokodo-Okpe YAGEP Fish Farm Cluster, she had upon her first harvest relocated to her family land in Abraka, where she continued in business. She has grown into a reputable farmer with specialty in catfish and fish feed production. She trains her fish to table size before sales. She currently has three employees and five interns from the Delta State University, Abraka and has been able to acquire a plot of land in Abraka for use as her permanent site.

She diversified into Fish Feed Production, procuring a pelleting machine and has the vision to become the major fish feed producer in Delta State. She feeds her fish from two months till maturity with self-made fish feed. In 2019, she joined the fifth cohort of the Tony Elumelu Foundation Programme (TEF). Currently JJ Enyens Farms Enterprises have four tarpaulin fish tanks with at least a thousand fish stocked in each. The farm is equipped with modern aquaculture equipment. She rears her catfish using fortified fish feeds.

#### **Her story.**

"When I graduated from the University 10 years ago, I never knew I would become an entrepreneur. I had wanted to work either in the State or Federal Civil Service, but it did not work out till I got enrolled with the State Government's Youth Agriculture Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP). I did not know anything about



LOVETH ENYENAKPOR

managing a business. All I know and have are because of the training I received. This has had positive impact on my family as my kids attend one of the best schools in Abraka.

"It is good news to be part of the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme. Out of over 216,000 applicants across African countries, I was among the 3,050 selected. No doubt, my training under the Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP) gave me



an edge. I am grateful and I believe this is the beginning of my entrepreneurship journey. Going by our current rate, we intend to achieve 85% of fish stocked and make over 200% profit by using natural methods to prevent fish death. We ensure proper feeding of fish and not over feeding them because if the fish is unable to consume the feed, the leftover will pollute the water, and this can lead to death. With the injection of the \$5,000 funding received from TEF, JJ Enyens Farms Enterprises has two additional tarpaulin fish tanks that can conveniently stock 2,000 fish to maturity and a pelleting machine that can produce 500 kilogramme of feeds in one hour. The quality of fingerlings and table sized fish produced is my unique selling point. I take time to identify fast growing and disease resistant fingerlings through proper consultation either with a specialist or physical evaluation from several farms before making a pick on the fingerlings.”

NAME: **AFAKWU, IFEYINWA** (2018/2019 CYCLE BROWN STEP)

LGA: **IKA NORTH EAST**

ENTERPRISE: **PRODUCTION OF CLEANING AGENTS**

**Ifeyinwa Afakwu** is the CEO of Sparkling International Cosmetics. She has an OND from the School of Health Technology, Ufuoma. She was jobless five years after graduation. Though she had previous knowledge on how to produce laundry and cleaning agents as well as cosmetics from a company, she could not start a business because of lack of funds. Ifeyinwa’s engagement in Brown STEP changed her story. Barely one year after establishment with Starter Pack, she has distinguished herself with 12 branded products to her credit and has begun certification of one of them with NAFDAC. She has two employees and two trainees.



**AFAKWU IFEYINWA**

“Help came through the job creation office when I couldn’t help myself. I was established with a generator, an automated mixer for soap, a double boiler method for cream, a mini mixer for cream, a measuring scale, a set of blender, a heat gum, a sealing machine, an industrial thermometer, an oven for drying of organic products, a mould cutter for cutting bar soap, a big mixing bowl, a mini water drum, three buckets and ₦55,000 for shop rent subsidy and transport fare.

“I have been able to put them into good use as you can see from my products. At present, I have 12 products, branded in my business name and three of them are in the market. I am working on the certification of one of them with NAFDAC. Some of the products are in high demand and I have exported to Libya. They have been used widely in Abuja, Akwa Ibom Lagos, Kaduna and here in Asaba. Thanks to Governor Okowa for making me a manufacturer, a producer and a CEO of a company which I never thought I would become.”

NAME: **OFEGO,**

**BEST OKEH**

(2016/2017 CYCLE STEP)

LGA: **ISOKO**

**SOUTH**

ENTERPRISE:

**AUDIO-VISUAL TECHNOLOGY**

**Best Okeh Ofego**, the CEO of Waplink Global Enterprises, has

a BSC in Sociology from Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. He searched fruitlessly for job for eight years after university education. Fortune came his way when he was successfully admitted into the Skills Training and Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP). Three years after, he has grown his business into enviable height. Walking into Zach Photo, its ambience suggested one who has good taste and value for aesthetics as it occupies a three-bedroom apartment, perhaps one of the best in Oleh. It is a full-fledged photo studio. Though he faced challenges at the onset and had to start small in a one room shop through what he received from the State Government and family members, he survived. All that is history now; he is passionate about his line of enterprise.

So far, he has acquired more equipment including three cameras and two large lightening systems. He covers all



**BEST OKEH OFEGO**

kinds of events including weddings, birthdays, graduations, matriculation, film and musical production among others. He is diligent to give his clients value for their money, affirming that photography is lucrative. He is still ploughing back his profit to grow his business. He has three employees and have trained three persons.

"The business is lucrative. I am still building my business into what I want it to be. So, I have not made any other investment. On training, I have trained three persons and I have three employees. I want to use this opportunity to appeal to the job creation office to retrain and establish them through the Brown STEP"

NAME: **AKABA, PATRA** (2017/2018 CYCLE BROWN STEP)

LGA: **UGHELLI NORTH**

ENTERPRISE: **HAIRDRESSING AND MAKEOVER**

**Patra Akaba** is the CEO of Ricky Makeover and Cosmetics. She has an HND in Accounting from Delta State Polytechnic, Otefe-Oghara. She tells her success story after one year of having been trained and empowered with a Starter Pack.

"Before my enrolment into Brown STEP, I had knowledge of makeover, tying of gele and bead making. Brown STEP exposed me to production of bridal hand fan, facial treatment, cap wig and braiding. Since establishment, I have trained eight persons out of which two have started their own businesses. I currently have three trainees and one employee. The impact of being my own boss has been amazing. I enjoy lots of patronage and the payment by clients has been rewarding. My family is so happy with me and has always commended the job creation



programme. My clients are also satisfied with the quality service I render to them. I am already saving to buy a land. I remain grateful to Governor Okowa for training and establishing me with quality Starter Pack to own and manage my business."

NAME: **NWANYASI, PATRICIA** (2016/2017 CYCLE GREEN STEP)

LGA: **ANIOCHA NORTH**

ENTERPRISE: **CATERING AND CONFECTIONERY**

**Patricia Nwanyi** is the CEO of PN Kids Venture. She is an NCE holder. She shares her experience after four years of managing her restaurant located at Nigerian Immigration Service office in Asaba.

"The past four years have been glorious, and I have been able to employ three persons and train four persons who have also set up their restaurants. I can say that catering is one of the best businesses because feeding is life. I am satisfied with what I do. Financially, I have imparted on people by offering them employment to enable them to provide for their families. My catering business has helped to improve my culinary skills, pay my bills, increase my client base who engage me for outdoor services. Through this business, I have trained two university graduates and I am saving towards acquiring a land. The calibre of Nigerians who visit immigration office daily has helped to boost my business. I prepare three to four kinds of soup daily as well as stew, rice, jollof rice and pepper soup."



NAME: **CHIMA, EMMANUEL OGE** (2017/2018 CYCLE GREEN STEP)

LGA: **ANIOCHA NORTH**

ENTERPRISE: **FASHION DESIGN AND TAILORING**

**Emmanuel Oge Chima** has a BSC and is the CEO of CEO Fashion. Emmanuel is an inspiring young man who is determined to excel in the world of fashion. He is calculative and does his work with so much precision. He has lofty ideals about fashion as he shares his experience after two years of operation.





"I am yet to reach my peak. I am still desirous of improving my skill in terms of colour combination and textiles. So far, I have trained three persons with two of them already established and doing well. I have two employees on my payroll and currently training two persons. I am still working on expansion. I have been able to acquire one additional industrial machine, two manual machines and one generator."

**NAME: UMUKORO, TOM PEACE** (2016/2017 CYCLE GREEN STEP)

**LGA: ISOKO NORTH**

**ENTERPRISE: CATERING AND CONFECTIONERY**

**Tom Peace Umukoro** is an Accountant by profession and the CEO of Emy's Catering and Confectionaries. She began her catering and confectionery business immediately after her training. She marketed her products in a transparent bucket which she carried from shop to shop. Gradually, she made enough contacts through that means and people began to make orders for supplies. She gets enough jobs and engages the services of five contract staff wherever she has elaborate jobs to cater for guests at weddings, funerals and birthdays.

According to her, "I work from home. I do both catering and confectionery. I have five casual staff who work for me when I have wedding, burial jobs among others. The



pay is good. Catering services is lucrative."

**NAME: OKEH, GRACE** (2017/2018 CYCLE GREEN STEP)

**LGA: OKPE**

**ENTERPRISE: FASHION DESIGN AND TAILORING**

**Grace Okeh**, a beneficiary of Green STEP in the 2017/2018 Cycle hails from Okpe Local Government Area and has an OND in Secretariat Administration from Benson Idahosa University, Okada. She is the CEO of Gracie Delux Fashion Home. Though only a year in business, she has built her business to an enviable level far beyond her contemporaries. From being a housewife, she is now a business owner, an employer of labour and living quality life by contributing meaningfully to the upkeep of her family. Apart from having employed two persons within so short a time, she has diversified into sale of fabrics and tailoring accessories. She also retails water and soft drinks.

According to her, "To strengthen her proficiency in her skill, she had to engage a different trainer other than the job creation trainer she was posted to. With my Starter Pack and support from my husband, I was well established. Because the demand for male wears is high, I employed male and female designers. In addition, I have bought a weaving machine, three manual machines, a cover button machine and a double-door fridge. I also sell fabrics, tailoring accessories, drinks and water."



GRACE OKEH

**NAME: APHIA, ROSELINE** (2017/2018 CYCLE BROWN STEP)

**LGA: UGHELLI NORTH**

**ENTERPRISE: FASHION DESIGN AND TAILORING**

**Roseline Aphia** is a trained teacher but her passion for entrepreneurship and self-employment motivated her to skill up in Fashion Designing and Tailoring. She belongs to



ROSELINE APHIA

the first category of Brown STEP. The CEO of Fitstyle Fashion Enterprise's love for creativity took her further into acquiring skills in Fashion Craft. This of course makes her works unique as her wears have bags, hats and other accessories to go with them. She is also known for making of female hats and fascinators.

After two years of practice, she has an extensive client portfolio, bought three additional machines, maintains two shops, has two trainees and one employee. She does online training on Fashion Craft through which she has trained four persons whom she confirmed are doing well. For her aspirations, she has this to say, "In five years' time, I hope to establish a skill acquisition centre where I will train people on how to make purses, bags, souvenirs and modern trends in fashion."

**NAME: UDOMA, HELEN** (2017/2018 CYCLE YAGEP)

**LGA: ISOKO SOUTH**

**ENTERPRISE: FISH PRODUCTION**

**Helen Udoma** is a Mass Communication graduate from the National Open University. She is the CEO of Dihelinic Ventures and was established immediately after a six-



HELEN UDOMA

month training programme at the YAGEP Fish Farm Cluster located in the Delta State Agricultural and Rural Development Agency (DARDA) in Ibusa. Just two years in fish farming, Helen displays great enthusiasm and passion for her enterprise and is very optimistic that the opportunity will improve her livelihood and that of her family.

"I was empowered with three in-door tarpaulin fish tanks, 2,000 juveniles and 145 bags of fish feeds among other support packages. There were challenges of security, energy, water and other issues for a whole year. But when one is passionate about something, one must make it work. But I persevered. From three ponds, I now have 10 ponds with over 4,550 fish. I have put into good use the ponds of colleagues who relocated to private locations due to the high cost of travelling from Okpanam or Asaba to Ibusa daily. In the past, I lost some of my fish to theft, but I have learnt from experience. I have fish all year round. I have done eight successful cycles. I stock 1,000 fish monthly so that I can sell fish back to back. Together with my colleagues, I have two employees who work as security men and as helpers. I engage them to wash my ponds and to help sort the fish from time to time."

**NAME: ABOJE, HELEN** (2017/2018 CYCLE YAGEP)

**LGA: IKA NORTH EAST**

**ENTERPRISE: FISH PRODUCTION**

**Helen Aboje** is the CEO of Cheku Fish Farm located in Asaba. She attended Delta State Polytechnic, Otefe-Oghara where she obtained HND in Accounting. She resigned from a white-collar job in Port Harcourt to be trained in entrepreneurship. Since establishment with Starter Pack at YAGEP Fish Farm Cluster at the Delta State Rural Development Agency (DARDA) in Ibusa, Helen singled herself out as a diligent and dedicated YAGEPpreneur.

She speaks on her success. "From three tarpaulin ponds



HELEN ABOJE



and 2,000 juveniles as my start-up in DARDA, I have expanded to using 10 concrete ponds in a private location in Asaba. At a time, I had a stock of 11,000 fish. At present, I have one full time staff and I have trained one person who now owns a fish farm. I have diversified into hatchery, fish processing and poultry. I hatch fish and sell them as fingerlings and juveniles. The highest number I have ever hatched was 14,000. I never knew anything about Fish Production before YAGEP. All I know I learnt through job creation. In my poultry, I have 250 birds."

NAME: **OLOKOBI, SANDRA** (2017/2018 CYCLE BROWN STEP)

LGA: **UVWIE**

ENTERPRISE: **HAIRDRESSING AND MAKEOVER**

**Sandra Olokobi** has HND from Our Saviour Institute of Science, Agriculture and Technology, Ossissa. She was a mobile hair and makeover stylist before her enrolment into Brown STEP because she lacked the basic equipment to establish herself and could not afford the cost of renting a shop in Warri. All that changed with the re-training and Starter Pack she received from the State Government.

"Since the Government established me, I have been able to rent a shop in Ekpan. It has been progressive. I have trained someone who has established herself at PTI Road in Effurun. I currently have five trainees. I engage in lots of online advert which has increased the number of clients that patronize me. The impact has been positive in my life and that of my family. I plan to expand to the sale of cosmetics soon."



**SANDRA OLOKOBI**

NAME: **IRABOR ARNOLD** (2016/2017 CYCLE STEP)

LGA: **IKA SOUTH**

ENTERPRISE: **AUDIO-VISUAL TECHNOLOGY**



**ARNOLD IRABOR (M) SHOOTING A MOVIE**

**Arnold Irabor** is the CEO of Epoch Art Audio-Visual, the Director of Extreme Reloaded Art House and a Commonwealth Ambassador for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG.) A Fisheries and Aquaculture graduate from the Delta State University, Abraka, he had his second degree from the University of Scotland and is studying for his PhD in Sustainable Aquaculture at the University of Plymouth, United Kingdom. Despite his educational background in Agricultural discipline, his passion for the arts is overwhelming.

"My training and establishment by the State Government enhanced my relevance in the entertainment industry. As a trained editor, producer and director, I now edit events, movies and have produced and directed notable movies and stage plays. Through these, I have been able to generate some money which contributed to my Master's degree and at present my Doctorate. I hope to have a lecturing job while the movie industry is to complement it. To succeed, one has to be innovative. Everyone knows how to edit and hold the camera, but what keeps one on the limelight is how one does it. Because the production of a standard movie is capital intensive, I do photography and



**ARNOLD IRABOR (LAWYER)  
ON SET IN OGA LANDLORD**

cover events to augment what I make from acting. I have an event coverage squad comprising a DJ, an MC, a photographer, a videographer (myself) and a makeup artist. We are a network of friends who work together to spice up events. All these I learnt through the job creation training.

Concerning the job creation programme, while thanking the State Government for its efforts, he appealed to them to ensure that only those who have passion for their chosen skills are admitted into the programme.

**NAME: IKIBOR, SUNDAY** (2018/2019 CYCLE BROWN YAGEP)

**LGA: ISOKO NORTH**

**ENTERPRISE: FISH PRODUCTION**

**Sunday Ikibor** just like other Brown YAGEpreneurs was a small holder fish farmer before he got enrolled in the programme. He is the CEO of Sunny Star Fish Farm and an SSCE holder. He has been in the programme for one year, so he is in his second cycle with a stock of 2,150 fish. With a support package of 2,500 post fingerlings and 145 bags of fish feed from the State Government, he was able to transform his fish farming experience for the best.

In his words, "I appreciate Governor Okowa for the re-training and the support package which boosted my business. My only regret was that the feed though from a renowned company did not grow my fish. This affected my profit margin considering the huge investment made by the State Government. However, I have restocked my tarpaulin ponds with 2,150 fish. I look forward to expansion as I grow."

**NAME: OLOKOR, BERNARD** (2018/2019 CYCLE BROWN YAGEP)

**LGA: ISOKO SOUTH**

**ENTERPRISE: FISH PRODUCTION**

**Bernard Olokori** is a small holder fish farmer, the reason he qualified for Brown YAGEP. He has an OND from Federal Polytechnic, Oko where he studied Business Administration. He is the CEO of Uyoyou Farms. Prior to his enrolment in the programme, he had only one pond of 12 X12 feet for 1,000 fish.

He received from the State Government a support package of 135 bags of fish feed and ₦110,000 with which he bought 1,500 juveniles. From the proceeds, he was able to acquire a second tarpaulin fish tank of 12 X 14 feet. At present, he has a stock of 1,200 fish, having sold off at Christmas.



BERNARD OLOKOR



SUNDAY IKIBOR





PHILIP ODIMEGWU AND HIS TEAM

**NAME: ODIMEGWU PHILIP** (2017/2018 CYCLE BROWN STEP)

**LGA: OSHIMILI SOUTH**

**ENTERPRISE: FASHION DESIGN AND TAILORING**

A Political Science graduate from the Delta State University, Abraka, **Philip Odimegwu** is the CEO of Adam Eze Executive, a fashion home that specialises in building wardrobe for clients. His major clients are celebrities, the majority of whom do not know his office location because he uses online platforms to market his business. He shares his success story.

"Job creation office laid the foundation I am building on. Since establishment with an industrial sewing machine, an industrial weaving machine, one generator from the government and personal savings of ₦300,000 and two manual sewing machines from friends, I have bought three industrial sewing machines, a button hole machine, a 10KVA sound proof generator of



PHILIP ODIMEGWU

₦900,000, office furniture and a medium size generator. I have five employees and eight apprentices. In Adam Eze Executive, aka the ideal man, we teach men how to dress. My clients do not necessarily need to know where my shop is. I go out in search of them to take their measurements as far as Lagos and deliver to them same way. I meet most of my clients online through the social media. As a fashion designer, I am my own model. I ensure that I am the best dressed person in every ceremony I attend. Most of my clients are celebrities and high-profile Instagram personalities. I have clients in the United Kingdom, South Africa, Uganda, Namibia and Ghana. Despite that my prices are fair and affordable. I make suits, natives, shirts, trousers, Ankara crazy stuff etc. We have developed capacity and we deliver within two to seven days because we work night and day."

His advice is the need for everyone to acquire a skill for self-employment and for government to upscale the job creation programme to engage more youths in order to save them from crime and internet fraud. He is giving back to society by training two persons for free. He also intends to go back to the Government-owned vocational training centre, Asaba where he trained and to job creation orientation programmes to mentor the trainees as part of his community service.

# The Will to Win

**Amechi Udemba reports on the life changing stories of People Living with Disabilities who defied the odds to become successful business owners**

AUGUSTINA AIVENOGBUAN

Over the years, there have been countless successful Persons with Disabilities (PWD) who have proven that with a positive frame of mind, a resilient spirit and official support either from Government or Corporate bodies, there are no barriers that cannot be surmounted. In Delta State, there is a growing army of People Living with Disabilities who have proved that they are as intelligent and enterprising as every other person.

Take for example, the story of 29-year-old Augustina Aivenogbuan who became disabled at the tender age of three, but with support and encouragement from the Delta State Government is now an employer of labour and a proud owner of a flourishing hairdressing business: “I lost the use of my two legs in 1981 after I was given an injection as a result of the convulsion I had at the age of three,” she recalled. “According to my parents I couldn’t walk again after a nurse administered me with a substance.”

In a society with little or no welfare package, growing up was tough for Augustina. “Going to School was very tough for me. People made jest of me all the time. And that was enough to discourage me, but I was determined to acquire education. Sometimes, my father would carry me on his back to School and if for any reason he was unable to come on time to take me

home, I had to crawl home.” With the inability to walk and coupled with the absence of a wheelchair, Augustina stopped going to School and for the next 28 years of her life, she depended on her parents and some kindhearted relations for survival.

In 2018, however, fortune smiled on her courtesy of the Okowa administration’s Job Creation Scheme. “I had gone to Ogbegonogo market to see my aunt when the Oshimili South Local Government Chairman, Uche Osabede, saw me and inquired if I would like to learn a skill. I answered in the affirmative. He took my phone number and two days later, I was given a form to fill and that was the beginning of my life changing journey with the Job Creation Office,” she narrated.

Regardless of their physical status, all trainees are subjected to the same training regimen so there was no exception for Augustina. She had a compulsory three months training in hair dressing with all expenses paid for by the Delta State Government. “The government trained me for three months, gave me accommodation near where I had my training so that I would not have problem accessing the place. They also paid my helper”, she said amidst smiles.

Today, Augustina has overcome her physical challenges and now lives a normal life. Aside having trained three other persons who had gone ahead to establish hairdressing



businesses of their own, Augustina has since married. So profound is her phenomenal growth that she is now a toast of the community she lives in: "Some of my friends who have physical challenges like me wanted to discourage me; that it is not possible to be an entrepreneur or even employ a worker. Having seen that I have succeeded, they have enlisted with the Ministry of Women Affairs to see if they can also become an entrepreneur and an employer of labour."

In faraway Emede, in Isoko South Local Government Area, Isaac Ugoro who was born blind in 1982 is a now a successful entrepreneur in craft and home products. His shop located at 20 Ouro Emede street, is a beehive of activities, as customers besiege his business outlet to either make purchase or place orders to produce handcraft products:

Due to lack of formal education, Isaac Ugoro lived at the mercy of members of his church and family. That was until 2015 when he came in contact with the Job Creation Office through the instrumentality of the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and Social Development. "My meeting with the Job Creation Office was divine because before now, nobody gave me a chance to prove that I could do anything productive with my hands because I am blind." Now respected by members of his community in Emede, Isaac has a worker he pays a monthly salary. With a stable income, he got married recently and he is looking forward to the arrival of his first child.

Eloho Ibeke was born deaf from both sides of her ear. A native of Ugborikoko in Uvwie Local Government Area of Delta State, she is another successful story of the Job Creation Scheme, a.k.a *OkowaPlus*. Through an interpreter, she told her story: "I was trained for four months in catering, soap making and juice production. After my empowerment, things started turning

around for me. Today, I cook for many families either for birthday or burial events in Effurun and other cities". Without formal education, Eloho says nothing could have been better than aiding vulnerable Deltans to be gainfully employed as STEP.

Her interest in soap making, catering and the production of juice dates to her Secondary School days. For 36 years, the dream had remained just that, a dream, until the Job Creation Office came to her rescue. "Nobody," she said, "was willing to help. All the while, people would make promises to assist with a small capital to start, but at the end of the day, nothing came out. I resigned myself to fate, until in 2018, I got a call from Job Creation Office Asaba to come for training even when I knew no government official to push my case".

Her interpreter interjected at this juncture: "there is no more dull moment in Eloho's life. Every weekend is a beehive of activities for Eloho and her staff. They are either cooking to serve in parties or packaging soaps to supply to supermarkets around Effurun and environs."

The success story of the Job Creation Office on the lives of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) has also resonated deep into the Umutu community of Ukuwani Local Government Area of Delta State, where Isemede Moses, has become a toast of the community as a result of his rising profile in the fishery and Shoe making business. Born a cripple, Isemede had a rough time growing up as a child. But through sheer determination to become someone in life, Moses took up shoemaking early in life on a smaller scale until he met officials of the Job Creation Office. "Since 2017 that I enrolled with the Job Creation Office, things have improved tremendously. My shoe making business has increased in volume and I have also gone into fishery as a

result of the empowerment I got from the State Government."

So far, 51 Persons with Disabilities have been trained and resourced across the three Senatorial Districts in the 2016/2017 cycle and 2017/2018 cycle. Depending on the enterprise, training for those with disabilities ranges from three to eight months during which monthly stipends are paid to them and their helpers.



ISAAC UGORO



MOSES ISEMEDE

# PHOTO *Splash*



RESOURCE PERSON, MRS CHINEMEREM OMONIGHO, TEACHING TRAINEES AT ORIENTATION WORKSHOP IN UGHELLI



STEP COORDINATOR, MR ONYEISI NKENCHOR INTERACTING WITH THE TRAINEES



SSA ON WEALTH CREATION, HON EDEWOR OMONEMU (R), SSA WEALTH CREATION, EMMANUEL OSAZUWA AND RESOURCE PERSON, PST AFOLABI ADUN IN UGHELLI



A CROSS SECTION OF STEP TRAINERS



PROF EBOH (R) SHARING IDEAS WITH A RESOURCE PERSON, PST AFOLABI ADUN





A CROSS SECTION OF TRAINEES IN UGHELLI



CJWCO, PROF ERIC EBOH, PRESENTING THE JOB CREATION TRAINING MANUAL TO THE TRAINEES



BENEFICIARIES POSE IN FRONT OF FISH SMOKING KILNS



BIRD FEEDS FOR BROWN YAGEPRENEURS IN POULTRY



BROWN YAGEPRENEURS ENGAGE IN HANDS-ON TRAINING ON FISH PROCESSING



BROWN YAGEPRENEURS IN POULTRY TAKING DELIVERY OF BIRDS FEEDS IN ASABA



FISH BEING PROCESSED IN SMOKING KILNS



BROWN YAGEPRENEURS IN POULTRY

# STEP & YAGEP: Building Blocks for a Stronger Delta

**F**rom 2015 to date, Governor Ifeanyi Okowa has continually fulfilled his promise to plan, design and implement job creation programmes for youths as a dual strategy to tackle the scourge of youth unemployment and diversify the economic base of the State away from crude oil. As factual evidence of promises kept, the Job Creation Scheme is now running its fifth consecutive cycle, that is, 2019/2020, without any disruption or interruption whatsoever since the first cycle was inaugurated on the August 26, 2015.

Since harvesting the first set of Skills Training and Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP) and Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP) graduands on January 14, 2016, the huge beneficial impacts of the Job Creation Scheme are self-evident throughout the State. While the success rates across the enterprises are less than one hundred percent, the scheme has created and triggered a new generation of youth entrepreneurs that are now driving the business landscape and economic diversification of the State. Moreover, the continuous annual increase in stakeholder demand for programme slots is indicative of the relevance and credibility of the programme credibility and high acceptability by target beneficiaries and the public.

Across the State, testimonies abound of successful start-ups and growth of programme beneficiaries. Some have grown to become employers of labour and are training other youths to become self-employed. Others have innovatively

**by Eric Eboh**  
Chief Job and Wealth Creation Officer



diversified into other businesses/trades or formed business partnerships and relationships to enhance their incomes. Still, many have achieved greater employability through the programme and are now gainfully employed in the industrial and other sectors.

Specifically, the creation of farm enterprises clusters, owned and managed by youths, is transforming the State's agricultural landscape and having a demonstration (positive spillover) effect on agricultural modernization. Currently, there are more than twenty YAGEP farm enterprises clusters with varying combinations of enterprises including poultry, piggery, fishery, rice and

tomato production. The cluster model of youth agricultural employment has restored previously idle agricultural resources to economic use and boosted agricultural productivity and wealth generation in the State.

The Job Creation Scheme is enhancing financial inclusion in the State. Through its payments system, the programme has caused the creation of more than 3,500 new bank accounts belonging to its beneficiaries. These bank accounts have grown in numbers and volume as a result of growth of the businesses of job creation beneficiaries.

The spillover benefits to micro and small enterprises in the State are enormous. Through its partnership and collaboration with private sector training centres, the job creation programmes are also impacting positively on the growth and development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector. By providing services as training centres, facilitators and mentors to trainees, hundreds of small and medium enterprises have been



stimulated and supported to upgrade their technical, entrepreneurial and managerial capacities, increase visibility/patronage and improve the quality of their services and achieve enterprise development.

Another proof of success is that World Bank Nigeria adopted the Job Creation Scheme for partnership and support under the World Bank-European Union SEEFOR project. The support was provided in the third programme cycle through the funding for skills training and Starter Packs. In addition, some State Governments have indicated interest in learning and replicating the Delta State job creation model.

Economic statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) confirm the overall economic impact of STEP and YAGEP. NBS data shows that there was accelerated growth of the services sector from average annual rate of 8.9% from 2013-2015 to annual average rate of 13.2% from 2015-2017. Similarly, YAGEP and other agricultural sector interventions resulted in agricultural growth from annual average of 8.6% from 2013-2015 to annual average of 13.3% from 2015-2017. This growth acceleration in agriculture and services sectors is attributable to a range of government policies, programmes and interventions, including STEP and YAGEP.

In line with standard programme culture, the design, implementation and outcomes of the past four cycles have been subjected to various own-appraisals, stakeholder reviews and independent evaluations. The underlying motive is to reinforce/sustain successes already achieved, eliminate distortions, minimize unintended outcomes and maximize lasting impacts into the future. Overall, these reviews have pointed out “what has worked well?”, “what has performed below expectation” and “what needs to be improved?”.

Flowing from these assessments, experiences have been gained and critical lessons have been learned, leading to the introduction of vital improvements to programme design and implementation. Enterprise offerings are now streamlined to ease start-up survival and viability. Tighter

beneficiary selection is helping to avoid/minimize selection errors. Quality of skills training and entrepreneurial development is enhanced by standardized training manuals and training completion tests. Duration of skills training across enterprises is enhanced to achieve higher proficiency and deepen skills accumulation among trainees.

Regarding YAGEP, the emphasis is tilting to Brown YAGEP and YAGEP support pack is now administered sequentially to enforce beneficiary compliance and mitigate programme risks. Green YAGEP beneficiaries are now established in their own respective locations, not in predesignated farm enterprise clusters. Monitoring and mentoring of beneficiaries by Directorate of Youth Monitoring and Mentoring (DYMM) is helping the survival and growth of enterprises. Based on these programme reforms and equipped with better insights on what works and what does not work, we are better poised to reinforce

the observed strengths and sustain the successes of the past four cycles in order to maximize socioeconomic impacts into the future.

Above all, the job creation success story is rooted in the unwavering political support, intellectual leadership, institutional infrastructure and close supervision provided by the Governor. The core element is the creation of Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) called Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer, in the Governor’s Office, with a

special mandate to design, implement and manage the job creation programmes. This special programme office is a classic institutional innovation which has been very effective in enthroning professionalism, minimizing bureaucratic bottlenecks and optimizing programme efficiency.

In sum, the indelible job creation footprints of Governor Okowa are vital building blocks for the envisioned Stronger Delta. Accordingly, the Job Creation Scheme will, in the coming years, amplify its input to Stronger Delta by upholding its success drivers, reinforcing its brand and making progressive self-improvements for sustainable impacts on the Delta State economy and society.

**The Job Creation Scheme will, in the coming years, amplify its input to Stronger Delta by upholding its success drivers, reinforcing its brand and making progressive self-improvements.**



LAUNCH OF HIGH QUALITY DELTA GARRI FOR EXPORT



AT GABBS, ASABA



DELTA EXPORT GARRI IN A GROCERY SHOP IN THE UK



DELTA EXPORT GARRI AT GABBS, ASABA







GOV OKOWA INSPECTS THE ELECTRICAL STAND AT THE EXHIBITION



GOV OKOWA INSPECTS METAL WORKS EXHIBITED BY A STEPRENEUR



R-L: GOV OKOWA, DR EMU & PROF. EBOH



GOV. OKOWA AT METAL WORKS STAND



JOB CREATION CULTURAL TROUPE





JOB CREATION MASS CHOIR



LEATHER WORKS STAND



LEATHER WORKS



GOV OKOWA LISTENING TO AN EXHIBITOR



MR PETER OBI AND GOV. OKOWA ON TOUR OF THE EXHIBITION



STREPRENEURS IN COSMETOLOGY



TOUR OF CATERING & CONFECTIONARY STAND



TOUR OF EVENT & DECORATION STAND





TOUR OF FISH STAND



TOUR OF EVENT & DECORATION STAND



GOV. IFEANYI OKOWA (SECOND LEFT) EXPLAINING THE DELTA EXPORT GARRI INITIATIVE TO THE MD, NEXIM BANK, ABUBAKAR ABBA BELLO (FIRST LEFT) WHILE THE CHIEF JOB AND WEALTH CREATION OFFICER, PROF ERIC EBOH AND OTHERS WATCH ON DURING THE SOUTH-SOUTH EXPORT ENLIGHTENMENT AND ENGAGEMENT FORUM IN ASABA



THE EXECUTIVE (BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT) NEXIM BANK, HON. STELLA OKOTETE (SECOND LEFT) INTERACTING WITH YAGEPRENEUR CHIWEIKE NWANKWO ON PROCESSED FISH WHILE THE CJWCO, PROF ERIC EBOH (SECOND RIGHT) LOOKS ON AT THE SOUTH-SOUTH EXPORT ENLIGHTENMENT AND ENGAGEMENT FORUM IN ASABA



CJWCO, PROF ERIC EBOH, EXCHANGING PLEASANTRIES WITH COMMISSIONER FOR TRADES & INVESTMENTS, MR CHIKA OSSAI AND PROF MONYE



SENIOR POLICY ADVISER TO THE GOV, PROF SYLVESTER MONYE RECEIVING PRODUCTS FROM A YAGEPRENEUR, CHIWEIKE



CJWCO, PROF ERIC EBOH (M) FLANKED BY STAFF AND 2019-2020 CYCLE STEP TRAINEES IN WELDING & FABRICATION



# Thinking Outside the Box

*Gertrude Onyekachukwu-Uteh writes on how some YAGEPreneurs and STEPreneurs are turning setbacks into opportunities for growth and expansion*

REUBEN AZINGE

**L**ife is all about self-realization and self-discovery. As the saying goes, “it is never too late to make a new beginning.” For Reuben Azing, Oreva Uvoh, Dennis Olori and Helen Morrister nothing could be truer. At one point or the other in the lifespan of their enterprises, they realised they were not getting the desired results in their chosen enterprises or that they needed something more to break through financially. Rather than give up, they chose to put the knowledge they acquired during their training by diversifying into another enterprise. Today, they have defied the odds and become highly successful in their businesses. Their stories.

## Reuben Azing

Reuben Azing benefitted from the scheme in the 2016/2017 Programme Cycle. Trained in Crop Production, he was one of the pioneer rice farmers established at YAGEP Rice Farm Cluster at Ugili-Amai. He later lost his farm to flood but got re-established at Mbiri YAGEP Cluster. Though he has a BSC in Computer Science from the National Open University, he has passion for agriculture. “I chose agriculture because it is the way to go,” he enthused. “Every living being needs agricultural products for survival. My knowledge of computer is to

optimize my sales online.”

Somehow, he could not continue with rice farming after the initial setbacks. “I discovered that rice production requires mechanized farming and the tractors were not available all the time. Birds scarring was locally done instead of high technological methods. For these challenges among others, I left rice production for fish production.”

He also opened a laundry and house cleaning services business in Asaba. Speaking on the motivating factor for the establishment of a laundry and house cleaning services, he said it was borne out of his love for cleanliness. “I detest dirt. Because this is what I enjoy doing, I decided to make a living out of it.” He has a registered company, “Creuzing Klin Resources” dedicated to rendering quality laundry and house cleaning services at affordable prices. He said that as soon as he gets the necessary funding, he would diversify into the production of cleaning agents which he has completed training on.

At present, Reuben has 10 contract staff for house cleaning and five full time staff, thereby fulfilling the objectives of the scheme of making them wealth and job creators.



### Oreva Uvoh

Oreva Uvoh was trained in Catering and Confectionery in the 2015/2016 cycle, and now is the CEO of Tonia Reva Fashion Home. Oreva has not only diversified into fashion but has also branched out into Decoration and Event Management. The amazing thing about it all is that she is a secondary school graduate who has not been in the four walls of a university classroom.

She was a home maker before her enrolment into STEP in 2015 where she trained and got established in Catering and Confectionery. Her journey into the world of fashion began when, by intuition, she tried her hands on amending her sister's gown. She carefully amended the oversized gown to a perfect fit. This marked a turnaround in her life as she went ahead to enrol in STEP to be trained in Fashion Design and Tailoring. As a fast learner she was good to go after six months of training in female wears. Being an enterprising and focused woman, she employed a male designer who makes male wears for her. She went further to acquire the skill of Decoration and Event Management to make her enterprise a one-stop shop.

She has built a four-room shop on her husband's land, using two shops for fashion, one for catering and one for decoration after three years in a rented shop. She has acquired additional seven manual sewing machines, one industrial sewing machine, one industrial weaving machine, and stoning machine among others.

Her driving force is the love for success. "I love to work and earn money to contribute to my family upkeep and community development. I have trained five persons for

free; three out of the five have graduated," she told OkowaPlus. According to her, "I have two children in the university and my support has made life easier for my husband and the children too."

Four persons who trained under her have established their own businesses. She currently has 10 trainees and two employees- a male and a female designer on her payroll. Her fashion business has taken precedence over the catering business. She has 10 contract staff who respond to her calls whenever she has a catering job. She has also purchased more cooking equipment for her catering business and is already constructing a restaurant.



UVOH OREVA

### Dennis Olori

From Information Communication Technology (ICT) for which he was trained and established in 2015/2016 STEP, Dennis Olori, unable to find fulfilment in it, migrated to Fish Production and Poultry. As the CEO of Dennis Olori Farm in Oleh in Isoko South Local Government Area where he hails from, his passion for success is unparalleled.

"After establishment, business was not moving. Instead of killing the vision of the Governor to make me a wealth and job creator, I changed my skill. First, I ventured into poultry. I sold my laptop, generator and printer and used the money to buy 100 broilers. My family gave me a private land to use. After four months, I sold my birds at Christmas and made three times what I invested. Since poultry is seasonal, I expanded into fish production which runs all year round. I began with a tarpaulin fish tank; I now have eight. The highest number of broilers I have reared is 500 because my poultry pen is small due to lack of space."

The interesting part of his story is that he was his own trainer through online research and personal



UVOH OREVA AND HER TRAINEES





DENNIS OLORI

experience. Surprisingly, he has a hatchery where he produces thousands of fries, fingerlings, post-fingerlings and juveniles for sale to other fish farmers and individuals in his community and environs. As at the time OkowaPlus visited, Dennis had 60,000 fingerlings and juveniles for sale and 15,000 fish of various sizes which he was training to table size.

From the proceeds of the business, he has acquired a land to be used as his second farm and a minivan to facilitate movement. The major challenge of the business, according to him, is the cost of feeding the fish and birds to table size and the cost of managing the farm. He appealed to the government to help farmers access funds without much hurdles and to ensure that YAGEPreneurs who have excelled in their line of enterprises benefit from governments' interventions and support packages for farmers through the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

### **Helen Morrister**

The story of Helen Morrister is not different. She is the Managing Director of Odhi Technical and Energy Services Fish Farm. Trained and established in Fish Production in the 2015/2016 Cycle, Helen has diversified into poultry farming. Her success started right from the training centre because "I took my training serious. I learnt Fish Production, Crop Production as well

as Poultry."

As a goal getter, she bought extra 2,000 fingerlings in addition to the 2,000 she was given as Starter Pack bearing in mind that the 145 bags of feed, she was given would feed them to table size. It worked for her. At some point, she said she stocked 10,000 fish and continued in that stead till she lost count of the number of cycles she has done. Her business received a big boost when her husband acquired a five-acre land. With this fortune, she diversified to poultry and increased her fishponds. She currently has two concrete fishponds and six earthen fishponds that have the capacity to take up to 30,000 juveniles. She has a large poultry pen that has the

capacity to take 10,000 birds. As at the time we visited, having sold off most of her stock at Christmas, she had 1,000 fish, 1,400 laying birds and 1,100 about to lay birds. From the 1,400 laying birds, she harvests 42 crates of eggs daily.

Her success rate is phenomenal. "I started from a rented plot of land. All proceeds from my fish farm, I ploughed back into poultry and I continued to restock to grow the business. Now, I am self-reliant and greatly contributing to the upkeep of my home."

She is currently thinking of expanding into fish processing.



HELEN MORRISTER





ENDDY SUNNY-UDJOR

# From Job Seekers to Job Creators

*The heart-warming stories of previously unemployed youths that are now proud employers*

BY GERTRUDE ONYEKACHUKWU-UTEH

**T**he passion to acquire vocational skills or training in agricultural enterprises is on the increase. This is evident in the call for youth entrepreneurship development at all levels of government considering the high rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria. The Delta State story of engaging youths in vocational skills training and in agriculture is no exception. To this end, the beneficiaries of the State Government's Skills Training and Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP) and the Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs

Programme (YAGEP) are not only reaping the benefits of entrepreneurship but are contributing to the growth of the economy as employers of labour.

Approximately five years of Senator Ifeanyi Okowa's administration, STEP and YAGEP have continued to record success stories across the three senatorial districts of the State. With over 4,200 previously unemployed youths trained and established in his first tenure from 2015 to 2019 and an additional 850 presently on training in the 2019/2020 Programme cycle, it is obvious that Governor Okowa is committed to nurturing previously unemployed youths into job and wealth creators.

Speaking during the inauguration ceremony of STEP and YAGEP on August 26, 2015 at Songhai Delta, Amukpe, the Governor stressed that "our strategy for making this (Job Creation Scheme) a reality is through focused and concentrated efforts to stimulate the growth and development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs.) The overarching goal of the Job and Wealth Creation Scheme is to equip participants with the technical know-how, vocational/technical skills, values and resources to become self-employed and employers of labour."

Many beneficiaries of the job creation programmes are doing exactly that. The multiplier effect has been nothing short of remarkable. Many of them are not only employers of labour, they have also been very active in training others to establish their own businesses.

## ENDDY UDJOR

Eddy Sunny-Udjour is a graduate of Mass Communication from Delta State University, Abraka and the CEO of NIOC Studios (A Subsidiary of Eddyvisuals Ltd) with 10 employees on her payroll. She hails from Okpe Local Government Area. Eddy is passionate about filmmaking, entertainment and public enlightenment through her documentaries which focus mainly on comparing the African culture with other parts of the world. She is also the publisher of #Wadoo Magazine! She is a presenter, a director and a producer.

Eddy's success story started after eight years of unemployment before she got the opportunity to be trained in the STEP programme in the 2016/2017 cycle in Audio-Visual Services. She has since taken her business beyond photography



ENDDY SUNNY-UDJOR, REPORTING

to product branding, photo books production, framing, photo/video editing, documentary production, magazine publishing and event coverage. She has also transformed into an OAP (On Air Personality).

She has trained two youths in her community for free in video/photography. She has also acquired more filmmaking gadgets and equipment, making her photography and cinematography business easier. She enrolls for occasional training and to upgrade herself and her entire staff to meet the demands of her growing clientele.

According to her, "NIOC Studios handled some of the projects that supported the second term electoral campaign of the Governor Okowa such as "Okpe Beneficiaries of STEP/YAGEP, iTestify and a short commentary on the contributions of the Governor to the development of the people of Delta State, particularly the Okpe people. Thank God it was a success. I also covered Governor Okowa's Town Hall Meeting with the youth and elders of Okpe people in Orerokpe, and last year, the Walk with Role Model/Community Service organized by the Directorate for Youth Monitoring and Mentoring (DYMM) for

STEP/YAGEP beneficiaries in Uvwie."

Continuing, she said "I see myself having a full academy that will partner with the State Government and higher institutions to get more youths off the streets and to train them in Cinematography

and Photography. This will be the first of its kind in Okpe. This is my calling and Gov. Okowa has made my dream to come true. He did not only make me self-employed, most importantly, he made me a job creator."

### STEPHEN ILLOBA

Stephen Onyeka Illoba is one of the pioneer beneficiaries of the STEP programme in the 2015/2016 cycle. He hails from Aniocha North Local Government Area and studied at the Institute of Management Technology, Enugu where he obtained HND in Marketing. After four years of fruitless search for white collar job, fortune smiled at him through the STEP programme where he was trained and established with a Starter Pack that began his journey into the world of entrepreneurship and fashion.

Currently, he is the CEO of Stephen Africa. Four years after, Illoba shares his experience of how he has expanded his business, branded his products, began to raise a family, bought a car and grown his enterprise from being just self-employed to training others and becoming an employer of others.



STEPHEN ONYEKA ILLOBA

"Everything has been good. I had prior knowledge of fashion before I enrolled in the programme. Since establishment I have expanded from having two machines to having ten machines, including four industrial ones. The patronage is above average. I make both male and female wears such as English shirts and trousers, suits, senator suits, native wears and bridals."

On training, he has trained 20 persons out of which four are well established in their personal fashion enterprises in locations outside Delta State. He has six employees on his payroll, including his wife whom he met during his days of training at Signature Secret. Having expanded his business to Aba in Abia State, three of his employees are stationed in Aba, where he has three additional industrial machines. According to him, he controls and manages his business by travelling to Aba every other week. He hopes to have his major products dominate African markets in the next five years. His products are branded Stephen Africa with an embroidery of Nigerian flag.

### JOSEPHINE BADEMOSI

Josephine Bademosi is the CEO of Koseut B. Agro Farms located in YAGEP Farm Cluster at Ugbokodo-Okpe. She hails from Ethiopie East Local Government Area. She enrolled into the YAGEP programme in the 2016/2017 cycle and was trained and established in Fish Production.

"Life was meaningless for nine years after my National Youth Service Corps in 2007. I studied Library and Information Science at the Delta State University, Abraka. I

searched in vain a job until 2016 when I got enrolled in YAGEP. I was fortunate to be among those selected to be trained in Fish Production.

"I went through the six months training and thereafter I was established with two 20ft by 40ft earthen pond in YAGEP Fish Farm Cluster, Ugbokodo-Okpe, 120 bags of fish feeds and 2,000 juvenile fish. This was a great start-up for me, being a jobless woman before that.

"At present, I am the CEO of Koseut B. Agro Farms duly registered with Corporate Affairs Commission. My enterprise is growing gradually with an expansion in Udu Local Government Area where I live. I practise Fish Production and Processing. My fish is very healthy for human consumption; I process catfish into barbeque in my little Barbeque Spot in Udu. I sell processed dry fish and fresh fish also. From two ponds, I now have four ponds with 3,000 fish. I have two paid workers and koseut B is hoping to diversify into poultry soon. I sincerely use this opportunity to say a big thank you to Governor Okowa who made me a CEO and an employer of labour. I am indeed grateful."



BADEMOSI, JOSEPHINE



# Here is How We Roll

*Trainers and Trainees share their thoughts on their unique bond*

**H**ands-on training at training centres is the third component of the job creation programme module for the Skills Training and Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP) and the Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP.) To feel the pulse of the 2019/2020 Cycle STEP trainees on their training experience so far, we visited Winnies Classics Beauty World, Warri; SchoolVille and Chommy Confectionery, both in Asaba where the Green STEP trainees resumed training on the 20th of January, 2020.

**FAITH EYEKONIOGAN**

**MANAGER, WINNIES CLASSICS BEAUTY WORLD, WARRI.**

It has been lively. They are learning and catching up fast. We trained five persons last year, but now we have six trainees. I commend the Government for the initiative; it is a laudable programme that gives youths the opportunity to be trained and established to earn their livelihood.



**FAITH EYEKONIOGAN, MANAGER,  
CLASSIC WINNIES, WARRI**

**TRAINEE: EGORO**

**TRACY**

**LGA: UVWIE**

**ENTERPPRISE:**

**COSMETOLOGY**

My experience has been wonderful. I am being exposed to my skill area, Cosmetology, according to the training module and I fill my logbook daily. My aspiration is to learn well and be established in my business and one day become a trainer too.

**TRAINEE: EDESEMI ZIMUGHAN**

**LGA: BURUTU**

**ENTERPRISE: HAIRDRESSING, MAKEOVER AND BRAIDING**

I am learning how to make people beautiful and I am happy with the training centre. The State Government has taken the right step as it will give unemployed youths the opportunity to acquire skills that can help them in life. I thank Governor Okowa for making me a beneficiary of this great opportunity.

**TRAINEE: ABIYERE, LOVETH**



**TRAINEES AT CLASSIC WINNIES, WARRI**

**LGA: WARRI SOUTH**

**ENTERPRISE: HAIRDRESSING, MAKEOVER AND BRAIDING**

I will put in my best to acquire these skills for my future. My challenge is the high cost of transporting myself to and from my training centre. When I am established, my paramount aim is to use the proceeds from the business to further my education on part-time.

**MUKOLU, EMMANUEL**

**HEAD OF TRAINING AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES  
SCHOOLVILLE TRAINING CENTRE, ASABA.**

In the past four years, we have been partnering with the Government. The

partnership has been good and there is always room for improvement. The

trainees have been respectful and are very willing to learn. We have two sets of trainees here in the 2019/2020 cycle-

Information Technology Services and Audio-Visual Services. Tackling youth unemployment through skills training for job and wealth creation is what everyone is clamouring for. When they graduate from the programme and are established, they are bound to employ themselves even if they do not employ others.



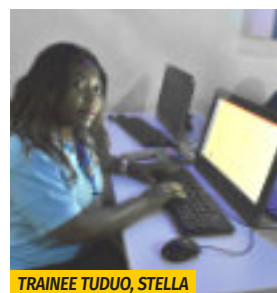
**EMMANUEL MUKOLU, HEAD OF TRAINING  
AT SCHOOLVILLE TRAINING CENTRE**

**TRAINEE: TUDUO, STELLA**

**LGA: BURUTU**

**ENTERPRISE: INFORMATION  
TECHNOLOGY SERVICES**

I have been introduced to computer appreciation, the features- hardware and software, Microsoft word and presentation. We are learning CorelDraw now. I hope to use the knowledge to improve myself as an accounting graduate and to develop the society.



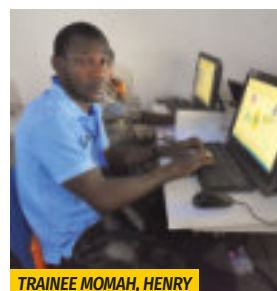
**TRAINEE TUDUO, STELLA**

**TRAINEE: MOMAH, HENRY**

**LGA: OSHIMILI NORTH**

**ENTERPRISE: INFORMATION  
TECHNOLOGY SERVICES**

My instructors are good. They give room for class interaction. We are being carried along. I appreciate Governor Okowa for his magnanimity of ensuring that youths acquire relevant skills for self-employment.



**TRAINEE MOMAH, HENRY**

**TRAINEE: ATHORA, KELVIN**

**LGA: UDU**

**ENTERPRISE: AUDIO-VISUAL SERVICES**

So far, my experience has been good. I have been making



**A CROSS SECTION OF AUDIO-VISUAL SERVICES TRAINEES**



lots of new discoveries and unveiling the new face of photography and editing. I have also been able to take different shots with my camera and camcorder. My expectation through this programme is to be able to own



TRAINEE ATHORA, KELVIN

a studio where I can train and employ other youths to

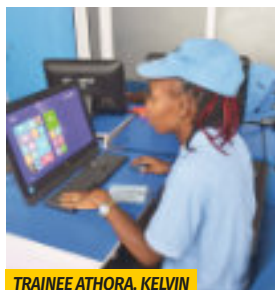
create financial stability for myself. Thanks to Governor and his team.

**TRAINEE: OKUFU, ELOHOR**

**LGA: SAPELE**

**ENTERPRISE: AUDIO-VISUAL SERVICES**

The instructors are doing their jobs perfectly well. They allow us to have access to their cameras and computers. They take time to explain to us the various techniques and applications needed in the skill. I want to be self-reliant and to train others to acquire the skill also.



TRAINEE ATHORA, KELVIN

**TRAINEE: MGBENE, CHIWENDU**

**LGA: NDOKWA EAST**

**ENTERPRISE: AUDIO-VISUAL SERVICES**

We are taught practical demonstration of skill more than the theory. Our trainers are friendly. I hope to partner with my brother in the production of his movies with the knowledge acquired. I want to own a studio where I can be my own boss and employ others to work for me.



TRAINEE MGBENE, CHIWENDU

**ALAEGBU, FRANCA**

**FACILITATOR**

**CHOMMY**

**CONFECTIONERY, ASABA.**

I have been a job creation trainer for over four years. It is a very good concept by Government to help



FACILITATOR FRANCA ALAEGBU



STEP TRAINEES AT CHOMMY CONFECTIONERY RECEIVING TRAINING BY FACILITATOR FRANCA

youths acquire vocational and entrepreneurship training for self-employment. I am proud of majority of my previous trainees. They are making a living out of the skill they acquired. The government is doing its best, but the trainees should take the opportunity seriously by putting in their best. If they have a trainer that is not restrictive, they should learn well not only to qualify for their Starter Pack but to be able to meet their clients taste and uphold the high standard in Chommy Confectionery.

**TRAINEE: ESO-YANYA, NDIDIAMAKA**

**LGA: OSHIMILI SOUTH**

**ENTERPRISE: CATERING AND CONFECTIONERY**

We are being taken through practical tips on how to make small chops, cake and African dishes. I cannot wait to qualify for Starter Pack to explore what I am being taught and to become self-employed.

**NAME: ADOLOR, FLORENCE**

**LGA: ANIOCHA NORTH**

**ENTERPRISE: CATERING AND CONFECTIONERY**

I resumed here on the 20th of January and within the period of three weeks, I have learnt a lot. I have learnt much more than what I am supposed to learn in the training module. The environment is friendly and conducive. After establishment, I will be self-employed and become an employer of labour. STEP is my dream come true. I thank His Excellency for the initiative.



STEP TRAINING SESSION

# DTSG as Recruiter for Corporate Organisations Through GEEP

*Although the centrepiece of the Job Creation Scheme is entrepreneurship development, Gov Okowa has gone a step further by providing employment through job placements*

By **GERTRUDE ONYEKACHUKWU-UTEH**

**A**s part of its strategy to reduce graduate unemployment, the Delta State Government introduced the third package of its Job Creation Scheme, GEEP, which stands for Graduate Employment Enhancement Programme. Prospective GEEP beneficiaries are unemployed graduates in professional courses such as Engineering, Architecture, Building Technology, Surveying, Pharmacy, Accounting, Computer Science and Laboratory Science and who have completed their National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). It is aimed at linking them with companies for internship to make them more marketable and attractive to employers. The first step in its implementation was to create a database of all unemployed graduate professionals of Delta State origin in 2016/2017.

The two subcategories of GEEP comprise Graduate Internship Facility and Employability and Job-Readiness Workshops. Graduate Internship Facility provides industrial/on-the-job experience for these graduates. In synergy with the private companies, they are sponsored by the State Government for a six-month internship with the private company and paid monthly stipend throughout the duration of the internship. The anticipated outcome is gainful employment by the company at the end of the internship. It is worthy to note that one of the success features of GEEP is dependent on the active participation, relevance, performance and output of the beneficiary in the company. On the other hand, Employability and Job-Readiness Workshops provide capacity building workshops and job readiness aptitudes, self-improvement opportunities and real-time market information to facilitate the employability of job seeking graduates.

The overall success of GEEP lies mainly on how receptive the private sector is to the programme. Of course, the administration of Governor Ifeanyi Okowa has good intention by initiating GEEP as one of the job creation programmes but maximum cooperation and goodwill are required from the



**ENGR CHUKWUKA OSUMILI,  
SSA TO GOVERNOR ON JOB CREATION  
AND COORDINATOR, GEEP**

private employers to make it real. A lot of work needs to be done in this angle for greater results. Though a minimal number of persons have benefited so far from GEEP in a single cycle, its impact cannot be over-emphasized. So far, nineteen previously unemployed university graduates have now become gainfully engaged through GEEP. We caught up with some *GEEPreneurs* to share their experiences.

## **Aniuchi Ifeanyi Ernest**

Ifeanyi Ernest Aniuchi is one of the GEEP beneficiaries with IMC Oil Palm Plantations, Nsukwa. He hails from Ndokwa East Local Government Area and is an Agricultural Economics graduate from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He also has a National Diploma Certificate in Agricultural Technology from the then Delta State College of Agriculture, Ozoro. Ifeanyi is currently the Out-grower Manager in the company.

"Firstly, I want to appreciate God Almighty for His grace. I want to use this medium to appreciate our smart Governor, Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa for his S.M.A.R.T. Agenda that gave birth to this





ANUICHI IFEANYI

life-transforming programme called GEEP. In 2016, it was announced that all Deltans who studied Agriculture should submit their details to the newly created Job Creation Office. I took advantage of the opportunity and was later invited for an interview in an oil palm estate where I was trained in the oil palm plantation business and employed to work as a Plantation Development Supervisor in IMC Oil Palm Plantations Limited.

"My experience in the oil palm plantation business has been memorable. At first I was completely naïve in that enterprise of agriculture but after a month with the oil palm company. I was trained by different international experts in oil palm namely Solidaridad West Africa and Ghana Sumatra all from Ghana, and also had series of internal training by expatriates in the company.

"Thereafter, my interest in the industry was aroused and I started developing myself on the job. I learned Best Management Practices (BMP) in oil palm production and management. These include modern technologies in planting of oil palm, harvesting, pruning, circle weeding, slashing, types of chemical herbicides and fungicides, three R's of fertilizer application (right time, right place, right quantity and right type of fertilizer). I learned about general field management such as how to manage the field workers, right time and seasons to carry out some particular operations in the field. I also learnt how to make presentations such as daily, weekly, monthly and annual reports, effective use of computer and Excel sheets for reporting. Others are training on bee-keeping for pollination and the use of the E-prod software for out-grower farmer's data entries. Indeed it has been an inexhaustible list experience in the business of oil palm plantation and management.

"Two years later, I was promoted to management position in

April, 2019 where I was saddled with the responsibility of an Out-grower Manager. Out-grower is an integral department of the company where we reach out to all small holder oil palm farmers as off-taker of their produce by providing ready market for them. We also provide the farmers with quality Tenera seedlings, technical advice and other inputs just to help the farmers grow in their oil palm business. This responsibility as the Outgrower Manager is quite challenging, but at the same time it has also given me a lifetime experience in Agricultural Extension service delivery and general management.

"Talking about the benefit and impact of GEEP, it is a life changing programme. My life has changed because I am now a proud consultant in the field of oil palm business. I have been able to register my consultancy business name with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and I comfortably run my consultancy firm side by side without any conflict of interest with my company. I have also been able to acquire two acres of land which I intend to use for oil palm plantation. I am confident that I have built a lasting career in the industry. In 2018, I got married to my beautiful wife whom I have also converted from being a professional broadcaster to a proud oil palm farmer.

"I want to conclude by saying that there is no better profession than agriculture. I plead with the Smart Governor to expand the scope of GEEP by enrolling more Deltans into the programme."

#### **Omoeffe Uche Godswill:**

Omoeffe Uche Godswill hails from Emu-Obedeti in Ndokwa West Local Government Area of Delta State. She attended the University of Port Harcourt where she obtained BSc. in Agricultural Economics. She is one of the *GEEPreneurs* in IMC, Nsukwa.

She has these to say, "I am a beneficiary of GEEP. I was linked with IMC Limited by the Delta State Job Creation Office to work



OMOEFFE UCHE GODSWILL

as a Plantation Supervisor. I have been able to gain experience in the oil palm sector through this programme. Without this programme, maybe I would still be jobless after my graduation from the university in 2012. This programme has helped tremendously by giving me practical experience especially in the field of Agriculture which is my career path.

I have undergone series of trainings in IMC Plantation Limited on oil palm management and, also in Human Resource Management among others. I appeal to the State Government to continue linking graduates to companies where they can make meaningful impact and develop their skills."

#### **Nkechi Sylvester:**

Sylvester Nkechi holds an HND from the Institute of Management and Technology (IMT), Enugu where he studied Accountancy. He hails from Ika South Local Government Area. According to him, his enrolment into GEEP has really been a wonderful experience. Despite the fact that they began as a team of nine interns with Chinedu & Sons Investment Nigeria Limited, he is one of the three standing. Sylvester is currently the Stock Control Officer in the company.

"There were nine of us selected for the internship training at Chinedu & Sons. Two persons stepped down before the commencement of the training for personal reasons. At the end of the six months internship training, only three out of seven participants were retained. Today, I am occupying the position of the Stock Control Officer in the company, courtesy of GEEP. Now I can take care of my family. And with the experience I have acquired so far, I can work anywhere with little or no supervision or better still delve into business with no fear of failure."



SYLVESTER NKECHI

#### **Uchunu Dominica Oge:**

Oge Dominica Uchunu hails from Ndokwa West Local Government Area and has HND in Computer Science from the Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku. She was the only beneficiary of GEEP posted to Animal Care Services Consult Nig. LTD as an intern. After six months of internship, she was



UCHUNU DOMINICA OGE

retained by the company and has been promoted to the position of Senior Officer 1 in ICT.

"I would like to formally thank the Chief Job Creation Officer, Prof Eric Eboh, for his efforts at ensuring success of the programme and to Governor Okowa for initiating such an amazing programme called GEEP to help reduce youth unemployment

"I enrolled in the programme three years ago when I heard about it. I obtained the form from the Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer and I applied to Animal Care Konsult, Asaba. After some weeks, I was invited because they needed a graduate who studied Computer Science to assist them. Indeed, job creation office gave me a letter of recommendation to them as a GEEP candidate. Without any delay, I resumed work as an ICT Support in the company, where I was trained in their mode of operation. The GEEP programme was scheduled to run for six months with a monthly stipend of thirty thousand naira paid into my bank account by the State Government.

"During the training, I was expected to abide with the company's rules and regulations of being a good team player. I was trained on some ethics concerning the job; some tasks were given to me to handle which I did, and succeeded in. At the end of the programme, the company absorbed me as one of their staff, based on my performance during the training. All thanks to God, I was absorbed as a staff in that company and my employment letter issued to me.

"I am excited to work in such a meaningful and creative environment. From an ICT Support staff, I am now a Senior Officer 1 in ICT. I pray for the continuity of the programme to help other unemployed graduates secure a job in order to reduce unemployment in the State, and help them live meaningful lives."



# The Partners Speak



THE GENERAL MANAGER OF IMC PLANTATIONS LIMITED, MR CHRISTOPHER KWASI ISOGBE

**T**he General Manager of IMC Plantations Limited, Mr Christopher Kwasi Isogbe, said GEEP beneficiaries “are learning fast on the job and we are ever ready to accept more graduates from the programme. We have written to Job Creation Office that we need more graduates to be interviewed. The programme has been very useful, and I think government should do more in that direction so that unemployed youths can be helped. They have imparted positively on the company because they are our direct frontline staff in charge of the company’s harvesting, maintenance and evaluation

of the palm plantation.”

On his part, the General Manager of Chinedu and Sons Investment Nig. Ltd, Mr Wilson Okwu commended the State Governor for the initiative, adding that the GEEPpreneurs have added value and ensured more effective service delivery in the company. While appealing to the Government to sustain the programme, he encouraged other organizations to cooperate with the Government to reduce youth unemployment.

The Coordinator of GEEP and Senior Special Assistant to the Governor on Wealth Creation, Engr. Chukwuka Osumili, affirmed that GEEP is on course. “Our mission is to create jobs by leveraging on the private sector to create a minimum of 100 jobs in GEEP,” he stated. He disclosed that letters have been sent out to different private organizations in Asaba and environs while the office is collaborating with PIND Foundation to source for private organizations that will absorb them after internship.

“Last week, we sent out 30 letters to private organizations and we are expecting positive responses from them. Very soon, we shall call for applications or go back to our data base. We also look forward to flagging off the GEEP programme where all the interns and company representatives will be in attendance. The Employability Workshop shall take place as soon as we have enough interns in the field,” he stated.



THE GENERAL MANAGER OF CHINEDU AND SONS INVESTMENT NIG. LTD, MR WILSON OKWU



LAUNCH OF HIGH QUALITY DELTA GARRI FOR EXPORT

# All you Need to Know About Delta Foods Export Initiative

**T**he Delta State Foods Export Initiative is charged with implementing a pilot project on the processing and export of High Quality Garri (HQG) to diaspora consumers in UK and the United States of America. The approval for the project – Delta Foods Export Initiative – was given by the State Executive Council on September 5, 2017. This was followed by the Governor's kind approval of the release of funds on September 29, 2017.

The High Quality Yellow Garri, branded under Delta State Foods was launched by the Governor, on January 24 2019 at the Event Centre, as one of the highlights of the Job Creation Exhibition and Business Fair.

The foods export initiative can be described as a “demonstration project”, justified for Government intervention on two grounds. One, to show “proof-of-concept”, which is to demonstrate the merit, workability and job and wealth creation impacts of market-led agricultural value chain transformation. By the demonstration, cassava-garri value chain operators ranging from cassava farmers, processors, marketers and agribusinesses learn and adopt the systems, practices and standards enunciated. Two, to implement a gap-filling agricultural development intervention model with diverse social, economic and fiscal benefits to the Government and people of Delta State.

Within this framework, the goal of the Foods Export Initiative is to create jobs and wealth through market-oriented development of the cassava value chain. The logic is to link cassava farmers and processors to export markets in order to

ensure better prices and higher incomes. In line with the market-correction and gap-filling rationale for the Government investment in the ‘processing and packaging’ of High Quality Garri (HQG) for export, this initiative has charted the pathway for market-based transformation of the commodity value chain, an example, which is replicable for other commodities.

## EXECUTED ACTIVITIES AND TASKS

The Delta State Foods Export Initiative has, since commencement, undertaken a variety of necessary activities and tasks aimed at processing and packaging high quality garri for export. These activities and tasks are as follows:

- Rapid appraisals of cassava production systems in Delta State.
- Benchmarked assessments of cassava processing mills and technologies in Delta State.
- Needs assessment for the development of cassava-garri value chain in Delta State.
- Meetings with cassava processors and cassava farmers.
- Pathfinding the cassava tuber raw material supply chain in Delta State
- Food quality assessments of marketed garri in Delta State.
- Upgrading and standardization of designated cassava processing mills.
- Training and capacity building for cassava processing mill managers, operators and workers.
- Rectifying the technological and investment gap in garri packaging and branding in Delta State.
- Engagement with off takers (sellers) to diaspora consumers.
- Engagement with product name (trademark) registration institutions and food-quality certification agencies.





DELTA EXPORT GARRI IN A UK GROCERY SHOP

- Engagement with export promotion agencies.

#### LANDMARK ACHIEVEMENTS

##### **Upgraded and accredited three (3) model pilot cassava processing mills**

The baseline situation at the commencement of the Foods Export Initiative was the absence of cassava processing mills that meet the quality standards for international or export market. The pre-project reconnaissance of the existing cassava processing mills around the state revealed the use of traditional and antiquated equipment and technologies, poor and indiscriminate processing and handling practices, weak physical structures and lack of regard for hygiene in the processing operations.

The intervention by the Foods Export Initiative involved the upgrading of processing equipment in the designated mills, training on the use of the modern equipment, training on standard processing procedures and practices from input to output stages. The upgrading of the equipment and training of processing mill operators were carried out based on the prescriptions and standards enshrined in the "Standards for Cassava Products and Guidelines for Export" produced jointly by Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)-affiliated International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON).

The rapid appraisal of the existing cassava processing mills revealed four promising centres that should be designated, upgraded/supported and accredited for the processing of cassava tubers into export-quality garri. The centres are as follows:

- Cassava processing mill owned by Onyemenyenibe Multipurpose Cooperative Society, Owa-Alero, Ika NE LGA.
- Cassava processing mill owned by Winosa Global Resources, Abavo, Ika NE LGA.
- Cassava processing mill owned by Iheonyebuobi Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society, Ute-Enugu, Ika NE LGA.
- Orhoakpor Women Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society, Orhoakpor, Ethiope East LGA.

Deriving from the reconnaissance on cassava processing mills in the State, the Foods Export Initiative prepared the checklist of equipment, tools and items that should be integral components of the processing mill that can meet the quality for international and export market. The equipment, facilities and utilities are as follows:

- A building, comprising a wet section and a dry section.

- Wet section - for fresh roots grating and pressing (dewatering).
- Dry section - for sieving, toasting/frying/roasting, packing.
- Washing bay for washing of peeled roots (either within the peeling section or the wet section).
- Peeling section.
- Mechanical Grater with stainless steel plate.
- Stainless steel fryer with chimney.
- Hydraulic Press.
- Borehole for water (water availability is very crucial).
- Soak away, connected to the wet section.
- Wet section: wall tiled with white tiles, while floor tile is used on the floor.
- If possible, all the floors (which must be German-Floored) should be tiled.
- Store.
- Coverall.
- Cloak room/office.
- Mechanical Sifter.
- Weighing scale.

The upgrading of cassava processing centres owned by cooperative societies or farmer groups was done based on a pre-financing arrangement. Pre-financing refers to a tied credit system whereby upgrading equipment and materials are provided to the processing mills in exchange for mandatory future installment repayments that are executed through successive at-source deductions of the monetary value of the equipment from the sales/deliveries of garri to the packaging factory. This credit technique relieves the cassava processing mill of undue debt burden while committing the cassava processing mill to mandatory repayment thereby minimizing the risk of repayment default.

The tying of credit to production/sales of the processing mills is an innovative financial risk-management technique that can be emulated by other State Government programmes and projects.

The operating capacity of the accredited processing mills: The total operating capacity of the three presently functioning pilot cassava processing mills is about 6.75 Metric Tons of High Quality Garri, every week. The operational capacities are given as follows:

**TABLE 1: OPERATING CAPACITY FOR PROCESSING CASSAVA TUBERS (INPUT) INTO HIGH QUALITY GARRI (OUTPUT)**

NO.	NAME AND LOCATION OF CASSAVA PROCESSING MILL	OPERATING PROCESSING CAPACITY (METRIC TONS) PER WEEK	
		INPUT (CASSAVA TUBERS)	OUTPUT (HIGH QUALITY GARRI)
1.	Onyemenyenibe Multipurpose Cooperative Society, Owa-Alero, Ika NE LGA.	6 Metric Tons	1.5 Metric Tons
2.	Winosa Global Resources, Abavo, Ika NE LGA.	12 Metric Tons	3 Metric Tons

To meet the quality specifications and standards required for high quality export garri, the processing cycle takes a minimum of 96 hours (that is, 4 days) to process cassava into high quality garri. The successive processing stages and required duration are given as follows:

**TABLE 2: DURATION OF PROCESSING STAGES – FROM CASSAVA TUBERS TO HIGH QUALITY GARRI**

NO.	PROCESSING TASK/OPERATION	STANDARD DURATION (HOURS)
1.	Harvesting of cassava tubers, transportation, washing and grating	24 hours
2.	Fermentation time	24 hours
3.	First & Second Pressing and dewatering	24 hours
4.	Toasting, cooling and sieving	24 hours
	Total duration of processing cycle	96 hours (4 days)

### ***Established automated garri packaging factory at Issele-Uku***

One of the most distinctive achievements of the foods export initiative is the creation, from the scratch, of the state-of-the-art automated garri packaging factory at Issele-Uku.

The packaging factory comprises two separate production equipment configuration or lines for 2 kg and 10 kg packs each. The production equipment performs operations beginning from filling, weighing, packaging, sealing/sewing to roll-out of package. The entire process is closely operated by trained and hygienically fitted factory superintendents.

Other component facilities and units of the factory are as follows: input section, product storage section, quality assurance test laboratory, mini-clinic, machine control room, cloak section, office section, rest room and lodge.

The 2-kg packaging line has operational capacity for 5,000 packs a day, that is, 10 Metric Tons while the 10-kg packaging line has operational capacity for 500 packs a day, that is, 5 Metric Tons. Altogether, the packaging factory has operational capacity to handle 15 Metric Tons of High Quality Garri every day.

The food quality test laboratory is the first of its kind in Delta State. The laboratory will in the future be available for food quality assessments regarding other agricultural commodities. The food products that will benefit from the use of the quality test laboratory facilities include processed fish, yam flour, cassava flour, cassava starch and cassava chips.

### ***Product name and trademark registration for garri and other food products***

The Foods Export Initiative has secured an all-embracing all-time product name, label and trademark registration for garri and other food products produced in the state. This is a very



**DELTA EXPORT GARRI ON DISPLAY AT A LOCAL SUPERMARKET**

significant license for food product branding and marketing and the foods export initiative can franchise this product name and trademark to private sector in due course. The product name is DELTASTATE FOODS and the label or trademark is as shown on the 2-kg and 10-kg packs.

The Foods Export Initiative has secured export-targeted off-takers for high quality garri from the State. So far, a total of 36 Metric Tons of high quality garri have been exported to United Kingdom. The feedback from the export off-taker indicates consumer enthusiasm for the high quality garri. In particular, the diaspora consumers report great satisfaction with the quality, decency and ease-of-handling of the product. Currently, additional purchase orders are being awaited from the export off taker in UK. Meanwhile, the high quality garri is now on sale in designated local supermarkets to gauge the domestic market.

While the creation of the packaging facility has bridged the yawning investment gap in the downstream segment of the commodity value chain, the establishment of food quality and standards has solved an age-long market failure of the commodity value chain.

The Foods Export Initiative, particularly the garri project, was never conceived to be run and owned by the State Government or its agencies. The idea is to test-run a market-led commodity value chain transformation model for take-over and wider applicability by the private sector.

With the successful run of the pilot export garri, the Foods Export Initiative has cleared the path and shown the way for private operators. Having accomplished the pathfinding goals, the next logical step is for the private sector to adopt, manage and upscale the processes already established and functioning.

Presently, the processing and packaging operations are ongoing, but on case-by-case basis, in direct response to the purchase orders of the export off-takers as they come.

As the Foods Export Initiative continues to run its course, the next logical step is the concessioning of the packaging factory to a capable private operator through a competitive selection process. The concessionaire private operator will be required to manage and maintain the packaging factory following mandatory guidelines and standards.





EDDIE MEKWUYE

# 'Job Creation has Come to Stay'

**- Eddie Mekwuye**

**F**or programme efficiency and sustainability, Governor Ifeanyi Okowa created the Directorate of Youth Monitoring and Mentoring in 2016. **Mr Eddie Mekwuye**, the Head of the Directorate, spoke to **Amaechi Udemba** on the journey so far.

## Mission and mandate

The Directorate of Youth Monitoring and Mentoring was set-up to monitor the activities of job creation agencies in the State. We are also charged with the responsibility of mentoring beneficiaries of job creation programmes to ensure sustainability of the programme.

## The journey so far

Through the work of our agency, there have been improvements in the

quality of the job creation programmes. Through our monitoring activities, sub-letting of training was eliminated. Our mentoring activities have also helped in providing beneficiaries of the job creation programmes with the necessary guidance required to become successful businessmen and women. Quite a number of them are doing very well in their various businesses. Some of the highflyers are Precious Nwaise, CEO of Megaecos Fashion, Asaba, Oma Ehire, CEO of Oma Beauty Salon and Makeover in Sapele.

We have a very good working relationship with the Job and wealth Creation Office. We work in collaboration on a number of programmes such as the Products Exhibition and Business Fair.

## On Stronger Delta

The stronger Delta mantra is about Governor Okowa finishing strong. For us it is about more Deltans being trained and mentored under the job creation programmes in this second tenure.

## Challenges and Prospects

This is the first time an agency on mentoring is being established in the State. We had to practically start from the scratch, designing programmes and template for mentorship of the beneficiaries.

By the steps taken by the Governor in securing a legal backing from the House of Assembly for the establishment of the Delta State Job Creation Bureau, we believe the job creation programmes have come to stay in Delta State.

My candid advice to Delta youths is to stay focussed and determined to take advantage of the opportunities this administration has given to them through the job and wealth creation programmes. There is an urgent need to change the narratives from rent seeking to adding value and earning a living.



A CROSS SECTION OF STEPRENEURS AND YAGEPRENEURS AT A BUSINESS CLINIC ORGANISED BY THE DIRECTORATE

# From Stagnation to Growth

*Brown YAGEP beneficiaries in dreamland as their fortunes soar*

BY GERTRUDE ONYEKACHUKWU-UTEH

**B**rown YAGEP, a name for existing small holder farmers, was borne out of the State Government's commitment to strengthen its job creation programme and in furtherance of Governor Ifeanyi Okowa's leadership style of all-inclusiveness. The vision is that no Delta youth farmer should be excluded in the administration's agricultural interventions designed to create job and wealth, promote food security, and curb youth restiveness among others. Brown YAGEP covers farm enterprises in poultry, fish production, crop production and piggery. The 2018/2019 YAGEP Programme Cycle had 120 beneficiaries. Four of them share their experiences.

## ELEMOKWU, JOY

Joy Elemeokwu hails from Ika North East and is an Architect by profession. She is the CEO of Divine Cristal Agro-Allied Services in Asaba.

"Immediately after I had my second child, a friend of mine advised me to begin a business that would augment my salary as my family was expanding. Then I was working in an architectural firm. I thought about it and decided to go into poultry. I bought 10 broilers from the market but only four survived. I learnt from that experience, sought knowledge and bought 25 out of which I was able to rear 24 to maturity. Subsequently, I bought 100-day old broilers and the success rate was high and I continued.



ELEMOKWU JOY PACKING GRILLED CHICKEN

"One of the challenges I faced was feed, how to buy feeds for my broilers. To overcome this hurdle, I decided to bring it to my environment by selling poultry feeds. Immediately I did that people were happy, commending me for bringing solution to the problem of going long distances to buy feeds. Gradually, I saw the need to expand to poultry vaccine. Apart from being a poultry farmer, I also sell poultry feeds and vaccine.

"Fortunately, support came my way through the Delta



State Government's Brown YAGEP. The Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer came looking for already existing farmers. I was interested and got enrolled. YAGEP officers inspected my structure. Having met their criteria, I was supported with 400-day old broilers and 150 bags of feeds given by instalments to ensure that they do not expire. This support package transformed my business. I was able to bring them up to table size. From the proceeds, I bought a land of 100 X 50 for six hundred and fifty thousand naira. I continued to stock and restock from January to December 2019. I had birds all year round. Between September to December 2019, I had about 800 to 1,000 broilers. My target is that by the end of 2020, there should be a structure on the land to enable me to relocate from our residence and a rented incomplete building to a permanent poultry farm where I can increase my stock.

"Another major challenge I encountered was that I was always at the mercy of market women who would want to buy less than my production cost. This got me thinking. The idea of grilling came, and my husband advised me to engage a caterer to train me on best practises on meat spicing. Thereafter, I bought deep freezers. I now slaughter and freeze my chicken. I only sell life broilers to market women occasionally. I started grilling and packaging them for sale. I currently supply grilled chicken parts to two supermarkets. People call to encourage me for adding value to the agricultural chain. Recently at the South-South Export Enlightenment and Engagement Forum, I met with exporters who promised to expose me on how best to reduce the moisture content of my product to increase the shelf life, improve the packaging and to make it exportable. I am also researching on it on my own.

"This is where I am. From being someone who did not know where the next meal would come from, I am now an employer of labour, I have two employees, a male and a female. The male takes care of the shop while the female takes care of the poultry. I appreciate Okowa for the initiative and the job creation office for identifying me when I least expected it. Without the support package, I would not have realised my potentials."

### ORITSHEDERE, JULIET

Juliet Oritshedere is the CEO of OnomeFrey Fish Farm located in Abraka. She hails from Ethiopie East Local Government Area and has a bachelor's degree in Languages and Linguistics from the Delta State University, Abraka.

"Before I got enrolled in Brown YAGEP, I was managing eight ponds and had 3,000 fish. The Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer retrained me on fish farming and management in Asaba at different occasions for three months. Finally, I was given support package comprising the sum of one hundred and ten thousand naira only for 2,000 juveniles and 145 bags of fish feed of different sizes given by instalment.

"The impact of this special intervention has been great. It has lots of value to my fish farm. Though I was faced with the challenge of the type of feed supplied, it was huge relief to me as the availability of the feeds made feeding my fish stress free. I have long sold the stock at maturity and have continued to restock. My success is dependent on the knowledge acquired from the job creation office. I now have 10 additional concrete ponds and I look forward to processing my fish to enable me to earn more.

While I appreciate the State Government, most especially Governor Ifeanyi Okowa for the initiative, I appeal that credit facilities be granted to beneficiaries to expand their businesses.



ORITSHEDERE JULIET



ASINI UVIE

**ASINI, UVIE**

For Uvie Asini who hails from Okpe Local Government Area, his enrolment into the Brown YAGEP has not only helped to boost his stock but has broadened his knowledge on fish farming. He is the CEO of Heritage Farms.

"I was farming before now. I had a poultry and a fish farm, but I was supported by the State Government in Fish Production. Before now, I raised about 5,000 fish every four months. The retraining and the support package of 2,000 juveniles and 145 bags of fish feed I received is highly commendable. Since then I have done two cycles. I sold off at Christmas and I am planning on renovation of my farm before I restock.

"I appreciate Governor Ifeanyi Okowa who saw the need to retrain small holder farmers and to support them with inputs to help their businesses grow."

**ONIOVOSA, IGHO QUEEN**

Queen Onivosa has an HND in Marketing from Our Saviour School of Science and Technology, Enugu. She is the

CEO of Oasis Green House Farm and hails from Ethiopie West Local Government.

"Before the State Government's intervention, I had only 200 broilers and 150 layers. I was supported with 400 layers, 60 bags of grower and layers mash. Together with the training I received from the job creation office, this was a major boost to my business. At Christmas, I had 400 broilers and I made good sales from it. I am about to restock.

"I suffered a major setback which affected my business negatively. I was on maternity leave and had to leave my poultry in the care of my employee, but he failed to manage it well. I lost over 100 birds. Poultry business is lucrative, but it is capital

intensive. I am working towards buying battery cages for the layers in order to reduce the rate of infection. I am grateful to the State Government for the support package and I look forward to more government interventions for farmers because agriculture is the key to national development."



ONIOVOSA IGHO QUEEN





OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JOB CREATION OFFICER  
Governor's Office, Asaba

*Creating Jobs and Wealth through*

**DELTA STATE FOODS EXPORT INITIATIVE**

High Quality Export Garri



Moisture content level less than 7%  
Hydrocyanic acid content less than 10mg/kg  
Crude Fibre less than 2%  
Microbial Contaminants 0%  
Extraneous Materials 0%  
Shelf life more than 12 months

[info@deltastatefoodsexport.com](mailto:info@deltastatefoodsexport.com)  
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