

Youth Advocacy Network Celebrate World Youth Skills Day 2021(theme: skills for a resilient youth)

On World Youth Skills Day, organizations and technical institutions across Koinadugu District share their thoughts on the skills that are the need of the hour and how various stakeholders can contribute to ensure the youth of Koinadugu are future-ready.

On the 15 July 2021, we celebrate the World Youth Skills Day which we began with prayers, wherein Kadiatu Bah introduced the chair person for that occasion who was Foday B Kamara.

Foday B Kamara in his opening statement, greeted and welcomed all organizations, learning institutions, STA, the executives and entire membership of the Youth Advocacy Network and said, the goal of World Youth Skills Day (WYSD) is to acknowledge and celebrate the importance of equipping young people with crucial skills that prepare them for employment and entrepreneurship. In 2021 the focus on skill-based learning has been highlighted by every education institute and government alike. With the government 2020 giving special emphasis on vocational and skill training starting from a young age, institutes and industries have come together to help evolve the Sierra Leone Education system to provide skills and therefore, an opportunity for all.

PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM(LAMIN MANSARAY, PRESIDENT, YAN)

One of the main focus areas for World Youth Skills Day is to highlight the importance of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as a way of helping meet sustainable development, ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. TVET can equip youth with the skills required to access the world of work, including skills for self-employment. But how easy it is to access TVET services may depend on where you live and your relative income status.

A position paper which was drafted by YAN with some recommendations was read by Gibrilla Kargbo.

DISTRICT YOUTH CHAIRPERSON(DEPUTY) MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS

One of their main aim is to support equality and empowerment and advices the youth about the importance of skilled training and name some institutions like GTI, GIZ, EPPI that are engaged in supporting the youth in term of skilled education. He gave references of people that have benefited from skill in the likes of MOESRAY SILLAH who is very rich and has the highest and most powerful house in the district. He advised that the skill like auto mechanic is also good for the women. The Ministry of Youth Affairs promised to support and link the youth on skilled training opportunities and applauded YAN and STA for undertaking this wonderful occasion and awareness rising in the district.

Crucial Skills

WYSD began in 2014 by the United Nations, to not just spread awareness, but to encourage strategically equipping young people with the needed skills and create discourse on the subject. So what are the

skills of the 'new normal'? Mr Mansaray, Lecturer, Government Technical Institute Kabala states that "The careers opportunities are growing and evolving over the years which means the skill needed to do these jobs have also shifted. The utmost crucial skill needed for future demands is critical thinking, creativity, and emotional sensitivity. Adapting to the corporate world, with its set of ups and downs remains a challenge that people fail to tackle. He emphasizes skills that need to be conditioned from early childhood education. He states that the need for skilled manpower amongst the youth in Koinadugu cannot be underemphasized. Technical & Soft skills need to go hand in hand and the only way to have this combination perfected in the youth is to start them at an early age. He further said, he is very happy to attend this wonder occasion which is not too much considered in the country as the G.T.I available now with different technical courses like tailoring, electrical, carpentry, catering, building and construction and many other middle man power courses. He said the first world is taking this day of paramount and said when you are skilled oriented, you are richer than the man in the office because with skills, you can create job opportunities than being a job seeker. We as a learning institute are also in the help to give out the skills education to the young people, submitted by Mrs Banadeth Fatima Kamara, Bursar F.A.W.E.

RADIO SHALOM REPRESENTATIVE

He said the youth empowerment is very instrumental in the society. Them as media house has provide a platform every Friday in a program called Youth Affairs for the youth to talk on their successes and challenges. To him, skilled job is very paramount than formal education spending long time from primary, secondary on to university level and come out searching for job again for another long period whilst with skills, you are learning and already in the job within a short period of time. He encouraged the youth to engaged themselves in skills training than being idle as there is an adage saying " the idle brain is the devil's work shop.

Government and Market

On the occasion of World Youth Skills Day, 2021 organizations and institutions around Koinadugu shared their thoughts on how the pandemic has shifted focus towards skill-based learning and its importance in making people future-ready. To provide the youth with the right skills, professionals need to first decide what those skills are, how they can be attained and who will provide them. This means educational institutes, educators, students, parents, government policies and the job market must work together. The market must demand the skills, the education facilities must prepare themselves to provide these skills and the government and other stakeholders must provide the needed support.

"Preparing youth for the future isn't only about facilitating quality schooling and higher learning, but requires attention to vocational and technical training. The World Youth Skills Day focuses on the aspect of skill development of our youth with quality, affordable vocational and technical education and training. When the youth are properly skilled, it will bring down youth unemployment rates and help resolve future issues." comments District Youth Chairman.

STATEMENT FROM LAMIN MANSARAY (YAN PRESIDENT)

The Youth Advocacy Network was founded in 2017 led by Sajor Jalloh supported by STA in helping the youth in the district. Then Sajor Jalloh (former president YAN) thank Lamin Mansaray and his entire executive for moving this far and also thanks and welcomed all the organizations and learning institutions present in the occasion and said it is not about talking but we really want to see actions in supporting the youths. Skilling is great, but stressing about it is not in the mindset of the youth themselves youth need to acknowledge the importance skills. Talk to your mentor for better guidance before learning something new: While the youth is anxious about the current fluctuating employment opportunities, communicating with a mentor or a professional will give them better insights about the path they choose to opt submitted by Amara Kamara, student representative Government Technical Institute Kabala.

Conclusion

The discourse around skills is crucial to ensure people have the opportunity to participate in the market economy whether it is through employment or entrepreneurship. WYSD offers global leaders a chance to refocus on what the important skills are, and gives young people the knowledge of how to proceed. It is ultimately up to young people to decide how to proceed forward with this information, as knowing the needed skills is the easy part. As Gibrilla Kargbo, secretary Youth Advocacy Network (youth representative) points out, "The survival of youth in this competitive landscape completely depends on the vigour to gain more knowledge, focus on consistent up skilling sessions, leveraging cutting-edge technologies, and develop the ability to unlearn and relearn fresh information." he further added, "As we celebrate World Youth Skills Day, I would like to urge all the young educators to undertake various training programs that will help them stay relevant in post-pandemic world. In addition to this, I take this opportunity to reach out to all the young and bright minds of Koinadugu District who want to choose TVET education as their profession to continue pushing and hold it with all seriousness they will rip the benefit of it in this competitive world. And Sorie Ibrahim Turay gave the vote of thanks.

SUCCESES:

CREATING AWARENESS; in celebrating the world youth skills day, we brings awareness to the youth, stakeholders, institutions and even the young ones about the importance of skills based knowledge.

Organization around Koinadugu and Falaba District are now fully aware that YAN is really existing and STA has been supporting youth on job skills.

The Youth Advocacy Network has creat a platform wherein the Youth Council Chairperson has promised to be linking youths on skills opportunities on their desk.

CHALLENGES:

The covid 19 led to us not to match in the street and host the program in a big hall which should have sent more signals.

TRANSPORT REFUNDS; Not all, but some organizations representative asked for transport refunds which was not even part of our budget or agenda. and also the Semamaia girls were asking for fares since they had wanted to go to their parents.

EXECUTIVES; Sometimes find it difficult to communicate with members and sending information to the donors because of lack of topup.