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| Danish organisation | FANT – Football for A New Tomorrow |
| Title of the intervention | ‘Backway’ is not the solution |
| Partner name(s) | YAIM (Youth Against Irregulated Migration) |
| Amount applied for | 256.626 |
| Country(ies) | The Gambia |
| Period (# of months) | 01/01/2022 – 30/06/22 – 6 months |

**1.1 Overall objective and challenge:**

The overall objective of this intervention is to strengthen the organizational capacity of YAIM to make it an attractive partner organization for government institutions and national and international organizations at the same time as improving its capacity in mobilizing target group of young men through football activities.

* Project goal 1: YAIM has strengthened its organizational capacity and has built a strong management team that will make the organization an attractive partner for government institutions and national and international organizations
* Project goal 2: YAIM has implemented a pilot project with 30 young men either in the danger of partaking in irregular migration or returnees and have through this pilot project gained experience about how to use football as a tool for mobilizing target group

Worldwide, the issue of migration from South Saharan Africa to Europe has become a highly politicized and controversial matter. Thousands of young Gambian boys and girls have left for the ‘backway’ – a popular Gambian expression for the overland journey towards Europe. The ‘backway’ relates to notions of traveling with limited funds without the required papers during parts of the route and with tremendous risk taking.

The local partner of this intervention, YAIM, knows of rural villages, where nearly every young boy has left for the ‘backway’ with the hope of a more promising future. These boys, of which you can still call many of them children, are going on a highly dangerous journey, risking abuse, kidnapping, prisoning, torture, rape, thefts etc. They travel through some of the most politically unstable countries in Africa and end up in Libya, which becomes the ending point of the journey for most. As of today, very few succeed in taking the ‘backway’ and making it all the way to Europe. The majority is sent back to the Gambia from Libya with the IMO (International Migration Organization). When they return, they deal with stigmatization after having failed to reach Europe and at the same time having spent most – if not all – their family savings.

YAIM is a small grass root organization founded by two young men from the Gambia, Bai Mustapha and Karamo Keita, after they repatriated from Libya in 2017. The aim of YAIM is to increase awareness on irregular migration and to help reduce the incidences of irregular migration in the Gambia. YAIM is frequently working with government institutions and international organizations on specific projects regarding irregulated migration, but YAIM also wishes to capacity build their own organization and not “just” implement activities.

This intervention therefore seeks to build organizational capacity of YAIM to help them become a stronger civil society player and to elaborate on already existing methods of using football as a tool for mobilizing the target group. Through workshops, meetings, and football activities, two different groups are placed together. We call them *Returnees* and *Risks.* Returnees are people who have returned to the Gambia after having tried to take the ‘backway’ to Europe. Risks are young boys and girls at increased risk of leaving for Europe in the nearest future.

**1.2 Context of the intervention:**

Migration

The intervention will take part in the Gambia, a small West African country with a population of only 2,35 million people. Despite its size, migration plays a significant role in the Gambian society. Overseas remittances from an estimated 118,000 of Gambians living abroad, account for over 20 percent of the country’s GDP. Over the past years, the pursuit for socio-economic advancement – especially among the youth – has driven many to undertake irregular migration with the aim of reaching Europe or other westernized countries. Over 35,000 Gambians arrived in Europe by using irregular means between 2014 and 2018, and many others have ended up in Africa along the Central Mediterranean Route opting for voluntary return[[1]](#footnote-1). In 2016, approximately 10,500 Gambians entered Italy after crossing the Mediterranean Sea from North Africa. That makes the Gambia the fifth-largest sender of migrants to Italy from sub-Saharan Africa in 2016 despite being the smallest country on the African mainland.[[2]](#footnote-2) What sparked this immense migration phenomenon is presumable a combination of several cultural, political, and social factors. Representatives from YAIM point at two major factors for the increase in young boys taking the ‘backway’. First and foremost a high unemployment rate and secondly social media.

Between 1991-2019 the average unemployment rate for youth (age 15-24 years) was 13.05 percent[[3]](#footnote-3). Young boys are frustrated with not being able to create a financial decent life for themselves, and this has a huge impact on them going for the ‘backway’. Also, because they see on social media that others, who have left their country behind, are living improved lives in Europe, the eagerness to try for themselves has grown. The representatives from YAIM explain that they are aware that the pictures of ‘the happy life’ as an illegal immigrant in Europe do not tell the truth, but that it is something very easy to put on social media. One of them explains: “This dream is an illusion and not the solution”.

The village of Njaba Kunda on the north bank of the River Gambia is unfortunately a perfect example of a community with very few young men left. In a few years, some of 700 villagers out of a population of 3,600 left for the ‘backway’. In three years, more than 90 young boys lost their lives *en route* and many more are still missing[[4]](#footnote-4).

Politics:

The Gambia has a history of long-term ruling Presidents since its independency in 1965. The current President, Adama Barrow, became the third president of the Gambia in January 2017. The Gambia was run by Yahya Jammeh from 1994 to 2016, which is 22 important years to look at, when trying to understand why irregulated migration has increased so rapidly within the past 10 years. The ‘backway’ emigration took off during the rule of President Yahya Jammeh. It is commonly known in The Gambia that President Jammeh led a repressive regime, where media critics, positioning politicians, dissidents within the security forces and civilians, who openly did not favour his ruling tactics, were brutally silenced. When asking returnees directly, few of them say that the political repression under Yahya Jammeh had anything to do with their choice to take the ‘backway’. But at a deeper level, some of them recognize that the powerlessness under Jammeh’s regime to express their opinion or to be part of a wanted change, made them feel like it was impossible to change anything from within The Gambia. They needed to go to Europe to get a better life.

After many years of political repression, the population of the Gambia wanted change; both democracy and institutional change. There was a broad conception among the population that the government was not working towards the best of the country, but in stead working for their own pockets. Unfortunately, when you ask around in the Gambia today, they have still not seen the change that they were searching for, when they elected the current president Adama Barrow.

Bai Mustapha Sallah from YAIM explains how many things has actually changed to the worse. The level of corruption has increased, and there is political division which makes it difficult to get something implemented politically. Before, everyone was afraid of the President, which is Bai’s answer to why level of corruption has increased. He points to freedom of expression as the only immediate benefit from the political change. But freedom of speech is an important change that makes it realistic for the youth to advocate for the change in society that they wish for. There is a political election for government in December 2021, and YAIM is among other organizations working to help returnees register as voters for the election, because they want to help this group participate in the democracy and to be a part of the change that they want to see for their country.

Most of the youth that FANT spoke to in the Gambia while visiting in April 2021 expressed a disbelief in political leaders based on experiences of being economically, politically, and socially marginalized. The ‘backway’ is perceived as an escape from the results of decades of political mismanagement, which has characterized the country since independency. “We go backway, because we don’t want to be poor like our parents,” one of the returnees explained to the FANT representative.

Youth in the Gambia

As for many other African countries, youth constitute most of the population in the Gambia. More than half of the population is under the age of 20 years. Besides the numerous amounts of young people in the Gambia, it is not wrong to say that being young puts you at the margins of the society. Nearly 60 percent of the poor in the Gambia are under the age of 20 years[[5]](#footnote-5). The transit from education to work is extremely difficult, both because of a lack of good and useful education, but also because of an exorbitant unemployment rate. Youth in the Gambia finds it difficult to establish financial independency, hence affording housing, basic necessitates, getting married, forming families and for some, even having a boyfriend or a girlfriend, becomes close to impossible. They live in uncertain spaces of day-to-day survival, where they depend on friends and relatives, and take jobs in the informal sector[[6]](#footnote-6).

98 percent of the Gambian society is Muslim, and the young men in particular are expected and obliged to support their families as a part of a social system of intergenerational reciprocity. Women usually remain in the home until they marry, and then move to the family compound of the husband. In the face of limited opportunities for social and economic mobility, many young men, including their families, see migration to Europe as a pathway towards a better future. Migrants based in the Western countries hold high status due to their ability to provide a steady source of remittances back to the relatives in the Gambia[[7]](#footnote-7). Because of the above-mentioned issues for young men in the Gambia, we understand this group as marginalized when standing outside their society, seeing only the solution of escaping their home country as an approach to improve life conditions (politically, socially and economically).

**1.3 Strengthening of civil society**

This intervention will be strengthening civil society in the Gambia in two main areas; Firstly, when capacity building the grass root organisation YAIM to become a more professional organisation. As for now, YAIM is functioning as an organisation with great knowledge and outreach to target groups of returnees and risks, but they have a strong dream of professionalising the organisation so it can become an even stronger civil society player and attract more partners in the future. YAIM consists of around 20 main members of the organisation (which we call *the management*) and additionally around 50 volunteers that are activated when YAIM implements different activities that have been outsourced from other bigger organisations or institutions. YAIM hopes to take more ownership and responsibility in some of these outsourced activities but acknowledges that certain capacitates within the organisation must be built beforehand. When supporting YAIM in professionalising their organisation, it will benefit target group of returnees and risks in the future, because they can create an even higher impact for target groups, and reach an even higher number of young men. Out of the management in YAIM, 14 will be working on a volunteer basis.

Secondly civil society will be strengthened when implementing a pilot project in the region of Kanifing Municipal Council (KMC) In the Gambia. This pilot project also includes radio awareness programs where listeners can call in and share their opinions and experiences and so get input from a larger group than the 30 young men. The pilot project will help YAIM to get experience about how to mobilize target group in football associations and through football activities which can be used in the future to reach out to an even higher number of young men. YAIM wishes to create a network of young men (and women when relevant) in the Gambia that fosters participation and equality. Young boys are in general frustrated about being unemployed, and this project will (as a pilot project) help them seek solutions to the problems that are keeping youth in poverty and help them get a voice that can challenge people in power. This project takes the first step of mobilising target group through football teams and will reach the amount of 30 persons, but it is expected to reach much more in the future.

**1.4 Climate- and environmental considerations**

In all FANT projects, we are always aware of trying to minimize our footprint on the environment. There are many considerations like how many flight trips are necessary and could we use online platforms for some activities that have earlier called on face-to-face meetings. FANT also talks to partners about local transportation, printing and general behaviour that can help taking better care of our planet. FANT will do a close monitoring of projects, because it is the first project in this partnership and will be aware of talking to YAIM about climate- and environmental issues when planning activities. Again, because this project is the first between FANT and YAIM we have found it necessary to plan two monitoring trips to the Gambia (one with Cecilie Hauerberg implementing and monitoring activities, and one with Josephine Touray for financial monitoring and check). For Cecilie’s visit (act. 1.1.1 Introduction workshop) it will be planned in connection with other monitoring trips to Sierra Leone to reduce flight traffic and our CO2-emissions. This trip is therefore only planned from Freetown to Banjul and not from Copenhagen to Banjul. Through the monitoring visits, FANT will get an improved insight into local environmental conditions in the Gambia that could be useful to incorporate or at least discuss along the project period.

**2. Partnership**

This project is a partnership between FANT – Football for A New Tomorrow – and YAIM – Youth Against Irregulated Migration. It is the first project for the partners to implement together, and the partnership is therefore very new. The background for the partnership happened randomly, when Cecilie Hauerberg from FANT through her private network heard about an MA-thesis written at CAS (Center for African Studies) at Copenhagen University regarding specifically young boys partaking in irregulated migration from the Gambia. After reading the thesis and talking to the writer, Rebecca Bannor-Addae, about her experiences in the Gambia, FANT decided to investigate this area further. This led to Cecilie Hauerberg travelling to the Gambia in April 2021 (in connection with a trip to Sierra Leone). The purpose of the visit was to meet with representatives from YAIM, get an understanding of the organization and the field that they are working in, and to consider if the organizations could benefit from a potential partnership. In three days, representatives from YAIM and Cecilie Hauerberg held several meetings to discuss a potential partnership and project, and YAIM showed Cecilie some of their activities with young boys involved in poem writing. Cecilie also attended a workshop orchestrated by the IMO for returnees about painting their experiences. Afterwards, Cecilie and representatives from YAIM have held several online meetings discussing this project application.

The application has mainly been formulated by FANT, but on the background of the meetings, dialogues and dreams with/of YAIM.

**2.1 FANT Denmark**

FANT DK was founded in 2012 and consists of a Board of Directors, who has the overall responsibility for the direction of FANT DK. FANT DK has two full-time employees: Head of Secretariat Cecilie Hauerberg and Administrative Leader Josephine Touray. Cecilie Hauerberg is the co-founder of FANT DK, and she has worked on development projects and with partners in south since the beginning of FANT DK. Josephine Touray has been a part of the secretariat of FANT DK since fall 2019, and has worked as a fulltime employee since June 2020. She is responsible for most administrative functions and task including financial monitoring of both FANT DK and partner organizations. She has experience from conducting financial monitoring and checks from Ghana with FANT’s partner organization HOPin Academy from a visit in October 2020 and from a visit to Sierra Leone in September 2021 and is planned to oversee these assignments for all FANT DKs projects in the future.

FANT DK also has a dedicated team of volunteers. The volunteers are divided into three groups: Project monitoring, Campaign, and freelance trainees. The volunteers, trainees, board, and employees have different expertise within theoretical and practical knowledge about development work, SoMe strategies, press and media, marketing, project administration, financials, fundraising, sports management, and communication. Through previous collaborations and partnerships with various organizations, FANT DK has gained important experience in organizing and mobilizing people through sport. FANT DK has knowledge on how to organize people in sports clubs and how to include marginalized groups as well.

For this application, FANT DK is the main applicant and carries the responsibility of the overall intervention. FANT DK is responsible for the overall monitoring of the project, reporting to CISU, and participating in relevant online meetings/workshops/activities. FANT secretariat and volunteer groups will provide technical advice and assistance to YAIM during the project period when needed. FANT DK is also accountable for the final report to CISU at the end of the project. Both employees from the secretariat will be visiting Gambia during the project to participate in different activities. FANT will facilitate act. 1.1.1 introduction workshop together with a representative from YAIM. This has been prioritized to make sure that the relationship between the partners evolves, that partners have aligned expectations and to ensure that everyone has the same understanding of projects and activities. Online meetings have been held between few members of each of the organizations, but we wish to include the total management team of YAIM in this introduction workshop, so everyone feels included, have had the opportunity to give their input and have met representatives from FANT DK in person. Also, FANT will be working with the management team of YAIM about financial structures, routines etc. to make sure that they live up to expected standards and are also improving these areas of the organization. This is only a part of the budget with the monitoring visit because it does not need extra budget when using YAIM office facilities etc. Lastly, it has been prioritized for FANT DK to participate in the evaluation of the project to make sure important lessons learned and experiences are collected, saved, and can be used both in the partnership between FANT DK and YAIM, but also in future partnerships with others. The plan is for FANT to participate in the evaluation through online meetings and sessions, which will not demand another physical visit to Gambia.

**2.2 YAIM – Youth Against Irregulated Migration**

YAIM was set up by Gambians while in detention in Libya after taking the Backway. En-route they experienced first-hand many human rights abuses and economic exploitation, inspiring them to establish an organization that aims to dissuade people from embarking on such life-threatening journeys. Awareness-raising campaigns generally have limited success as they are perceived of as inaccurate, biased Western propaganda or poorly informed. YAIM’s awareness raising counteracts these assumptions, however, since the imparters of the information are people that have taken the journey and face the same issues that the average person in the Gambia faces. People only trust information if they share a relationship or trust the transmitters and YAIM members not being part of the elite reinforces that trust. Also, YAIM can contribute to creating a more sustainable return process by providing guidance and information.

YAIM members have travelled to Libya with the hope of crossing to Europe through the Mediterranean in search of jobs, but now they are back because that dream has not been achieved. Now urging the government to provide job opportunities for Gambian youth to prevent them from endangering their lives looking for greener pastures abroad.

YAIM has partnered with the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners working to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration, to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced people. A part of this project is to support YAIM in becoming an even more attractive partner for some of these above-mentioned stakeholders. This project involves several other institutions and stakeholders from the Gambia; In act. 1.2.1 & 1.2.2 representatives from Red Cross Gambia will be facilitating the workshops, in act. 1.3.2 representatives from National Youth Council will be facilitating the workshop and in act. 1.1.2 representatives from Gambia Participate will be facilitating the workshop.

Regarding experiences that YAIM has working in the field of irregulated migration and with different partners can be mentioned:

* Youth Against Irregular Migration and Gambia Returnees from the Backway (GRB) has partnered with IOM to conduct a nationwide survey on the Perception of Youth in Migration during the Pandemic and Awareness Raising activities on how to engage communities and local stakeholders in reintegrating returnees and deportees the amount of the budget was 5000 Euros in 2020. IOM was doing the payment directly to the participants from YAIM and GRB why it did not go into the organization of YAIM.
* YAIM partnered with National Youth Council and UNICEF in a project call Children On the Move. It was a nationwide awareness raising project focusing on the dangers of irregular migration and its alternative. The activities targeted school children and minors within the communities who are potential migrants. During the activities YAIM also use football as a tool to engage the youth within the communities and it is always a fun and good approach to mobilize the youth. The amount of the budget was D869,000. All the financial management was done by National Youth Council and YAIM was responsible for the implementation of the activity.
* Members of YAIM are participating in the Migrants As Messengers Volunteers Network, operating in seven different countries in West Africa created and funded by IOM and its partners. The network is there to amplify the voice the returnees in combating irregular migration within the sub region.
* YAIM partnered with COOPI in a 3-day community awareness raising and 6 months radio program in 2019. The community activity was held in two regions North Bank Region and Central River Region with the objective to create more awareness on the effects of irregular migration and the opportunities available. The amount of the budget was all together D521,100.
* Between 2018 to 2019 YAIM received 3 million Dalasi funding from The Federal Republic of Germany through its Councilor office in Banjul to conduct a nationwide awareness raising activity on the dangers of irregular migration and they were funding the activity region by region.

YAIM is responsible for implementing the project in the Gambia, as well as writing reports to FANT DK and provide necessary information for FANT DK to monitor the project, and to obtain and nurse a good relationship to the important partners in the project like schools, government institutions, IOM Gambia, etc.

**2.3 Developing of the partnership**

We believe that this project will help the partnership grow in several significant areas. As explained, the previous acquaintance between the partners is limited, and this creates the foundation for the partnership to really expand and develop. The psychical visits are prioritized but we have also realized the need to use online tools to a certain degree. As for now, the communication between FANT and YAIM has been good, and we believe there is potential for a great and strong partnership. YAIM is dreaming of becoming a more professionalised organisation, and we believe that FANT is able to support this process. YAIM in its nature is an independent organisation with dignity and good communicative skills. They have been clear about own dreams, wishes and partnership expectations, which has made it easy for FANT to know how to best assist the development this seek for their organisation.

**3.1 Target groups**

There are two primarytarget groups for this intervention:

Management team of YAIM consisting of 20 persons between 18-35 years (25% female, 75% male)

30 young men between 12-35 years, from KMC region in the Gambia

The management team in YAIM will be going through different training sessions to secure the capacity of the organisation. They will be reaching out to KMC region and help community members to form a local football team. Management team of YAIM is both implementing partner but also target group when strengthening organisational structures and capacities. Six out of the twenty persons in the management team will be on a minor salary while 14 persons of the management team are participating on a volunteering basis. 90 percent of the management team of YAIM are returnees themselves. YAIM will benefit from the intervention:

* By creating more formalized structures and professionalising the organization
* By building personal capacities within English, leadership etc.
* By getting more experience about how to mobilize target groups
* By becoming a stronger organisation and therefore increasing the potential for important partnerships with other organisations, government institutions etc.

The aim of the pilot project is to mobilize target group of primarily young boys in a mix of returnees and young boys in the risk of taking the ‘backway’ (50/50 division). Even though we divide this target group into two (Risks & Returnees) they can also be seen as a part of the same group - just being at two different stages in their lives. All of them are young men with a relation to the ‘backway’ and the dream about escaping poverty. Some of them have already tried the ‘backway’ and some of them will maybe try if nothing changes.

YAIM will make a thorough mapping of 1. Risks and 2. Returnees, in KMC region through communication with schools, football clubs, elders, mosques, local government institutions etc. Around 30 boys will be invited to join the YAIM football team. Most returnees are in general boys but if the mapping shows there are female returnees interested in joining, they will of course be invited as well. Also, if the mapping shows girls in risk of leaving for the backway they will of course be invited to join the team/network. There will be a democratic election to set a management team consisting of two to four persons that will be communicating with YAIM. The target group of 30 young men will be participating directly in activities related to Project Goal 2; football activities, workshops, media campaigns etc. They will benefit:

* By having their personal capacities built
* By being enlightened with information about the dangers and risks of taking the ‘backway’
* By being a part of a network with other like-minded and share difficult personal stories from when they took the ‘backway’, frustrations, dreams, worries etc.
* By taking part of a movement that strives to end stigmatization of returnees

From earlier implemented projects YAIM has experienced that numerous young persons are ready to participate in projects like this, why we do not believe that it will be a problem to find 30 young men who want to be a part of the team. Because of the stigmatization that some Returnees feel FANT DK has questioned YAIM about the easiness of getting this group to participate in the project, but YAIM argues that Returnees will see this as an opportunity to escape stigmatization when getting a platform to express themselves. YAIM has earlier experiences in mobilizing Returnees for different activities why we believe they have the actual knowledge within this issue.

Secondary target groups are:

* Approximately 1000 young boys at risk of taking the ‘backway’ being reached through media campaigns
* Approximately 50 parents or caretakers will be reached when target group explain about the activities in this intervention and when being invited for act. 2.5 Weekly meetings/training sessions
* Approximately 100 siblings and close friends to primary target groups are expected to be reached with information about the dangers of taking the ‘backway’ through primary target group
* Relevant partners like: Gambia Participate, the IMO, the Red Cross Gambia, Ministry of Justice, National Youth Council, Network of girls against human trafficking, Gambia Returnees from the Backway, Migrant as messenger, Wellingara Bantaba, Nying Talent association etc.

**3.2 Objective, project goals, expected results and activities**

The overall objective of this intervention is to strengthen the organizational capacity of YAIM to make it an attractive partner organization for government institutions and national and international organizations at the same time as improving its capacity in mobilizing target group of young men through football activities

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| Project goal 1: YAIM has strengthened its organizational capacity and has built a strong management team that will make the organization an attractive partner for government institutions and national and international organizations | |
| Output 1.1: YAIM has strengthened its organizational structures | 1.1.1 Introduction workshop  1.1.2 YAIM workshop about 1. Constitutions, 2. Values, 3. Purpose  1.1.3 Creation of documents: 1. anti-sexual harassment, 2. Anti-corruption  1.1.4 Transparency and accountability workshop |
| Output 1.2: YAIM has strengthened capacities within relevant areas like Leadership, volunteers, computer skills and English | 1.2.1 Leadership workshop  1.2.2 Workshop about volunteerism and volunteers  1.2.3 Computer training  1.2.4 English teachings |
| Output 1.3: YAIM has strengthened its brand as a potential collaboration partner for national/international organizations and government institutions | 1.3.1 Weekly radio program  1.3.2 Partnership and networking workshop |

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| Project goal 2: YAIM has implemented a pilot project with 30 young men either in the danger of partaking in irregular migration or returnees and have through this pilot project gained experience about how to use football as a tool for mobilizing target group | |
| Output 2.1: A thorough mapping in KMC region include contact information about 15 young men in the risk of taking the Backway and 15 young men that have returned after trying to take the ‘backway’ | 2.1.1 Mapping exercise in KMC region |
| Output 2.2: 30 young men from KMC region want to be a part of the YAIM football team | 2.2.1 Introduction, membership, and registration workshop |
| Output 2.3: Returnees have a safe space which allows them to share difficult stories to other likeminded but also to young boys in the risk of going for the ‘backway’ and both groups have new faith that a life in the Gambia can become a worthy life | 2.3.1 Sharing of experiences from the ‘backway’ workshop  2.3.2 Weekly meetings/football training sessions |

**3.3 Strategy and activities**

Football as a strategy:

We use the term “team” in this project because we are working with football as the tool to mobilize target group, but we could also use the term “network” or “organisation”. Hence, it is important not to put too much meaning into the word “team”. Football will be a part of different activities primarily to create unity and trust among the team players and to mobilize and attract the young boys in participating. FANT has great experience in how to use football as a tool to create unity and understanding among team players. Sharing of this experience will also be a part of act. 1.1.1 Introduction Workshop.

When you interact in sports together you create special ties, you are dependent on your team players, and they are dependent on you. Sports is often used as team building methods for good reasons. The aim of this intervention is to put two different groups together as a team to ensure sharing of important *information* – or maybe you could also call it *beliefs*. The Returnees have important stories, experience, and knowledge to share to Risks why the target group is a combination of those two groups. Football will compliment meetings and workshops as a way of creating trust and unity among the two groups. The community around football in KMC region of the Gambia will supposedly lead to young men having a place to share not only the game of football but also more seriously subjects that can lead to improved living conditions for the group. When combining football activities with workshops/debates/education we have experienced how participants who do not know each other from beforehand will quickly build relations and trust among each other which is very useful when debating difficult and sensitive issues. Some young men will participate mostly because of the football activities but along the way find themselves debating about youth unemployment (for one example) and getting different perspectives on these issues which they did not expect for. Through the community of these football teams, they will hear new stories and getting to know people with motivation for being a part of the change in the Gambia instead of leaving.

It is important to point that these young men have lost hope for a life in the Gambia, that is why they end up going on the very dangerous ‘backway’. To make them believe that participating in the change process in the Gambia can actually be a solution will be the hardest part. A combination of football, workshops and meeting Returnees seems to be an advantageous method that YAIM already has had good experiences with. In this project we elaborate further by creating a sustainable team and not just occasionally activities.

From grassroot to a professional organization

YAIM often sees themselves being called on by larger organizations or institutions when outsourcing activities in bigger projects. But YAIM wishes to take greater parts in these projects. The organization has great insight and knowledge about the target group – they are themselves a part of the target group and have tried the ‘backway’ - and believe that they can contribute positively to project formulations, strategies, and methods to increase the successes of the activities. They do not always agree in the strategies used by their partners that are outsourcing activities to YAIM and are frustrated to see projects with very little impact because of a lack of understanding about the target group and local conditions. Unfortunately, they are still a minor grassroot organization lacking important structural capacities but with this project the aim is to move YAIM to a more professionalized organization ready to take up more responsibilities in other partnerships besides the one with FANT.

The strategy to professionalize YAIM is two-folded. First thing is to build up important capacities within the management of YAIM, also meaning educating individuals who have been a steady part of the organization from the beginning. This strategy has its risks because it is always possible that individuals will leave the organization. Most of the management of YAIM has been involved since the beginning of the organization and they are very involved what makes us believe that they will not just withdraw after this project. Of course, the hope is also that this project will help YAIM to get more partners and therefore also the need of using these individuals and their knowledge and capacities. Individuals who receive personal training like computer skills are obligated to pass on useful knowledge and teach the rest of the management team what can be taught. The second part of the strategy is to brand YAIM trough radio programs. It also has the benefit to reach a high number of target group, but the aim is also to show YAIM as a strong, active, and solutions-seeking organization that are not only worth listening to but also collaborating with. By using the medias YAIM can show different stakeholders what they are capable of doing and share their ideas and dreams for the Gambia.

**3.4 Systematising of experiences**

FANT DK will participate in the first planned activity (act. 1.1.1 Introduction workshop) where one part of the workshop is to plan how to systematize the important knowledge and experiences that both organizations will get during the project period. More details about monitoring reports will also be discussed. Throughout the intervention, a continuous monitoring of the activities and expected results will be conducted by the YAIM management team and FANT DK in collaboration. The final evaluation of the project will be done in close collaboration between YAIM and FANT DK and will lay as ground for the final report to CISU and also be shared among other relevant stakeholders in the Gambia and Denmark.

1. <https://gambia.iom.int/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Hultin, Niklas, and Jallow, Baba and Lawrance, Benjamin N. and Sarr, Assan 2017 ‘Autocracy,

   Migration, and The Gambia’s ‘Unprecedented’ 2016 Election’, African Affairs, Vol. 116, No. 463, pp. 321-340 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Gambia/Youth\_unemployment/ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Youth Against Irregular Migration 2018 Report on Youth Against Irregular Migration (YAIM) Nationwide

   Awareness Raising Caravan 2018 in the North Bank Region (NBR) from 15-18 January, The Gambia. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/5923/638450PUB0Exto00Box0361527B0PUBLIC0.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. MA Thesis “Someone to fear and someone to rescue”, Center of African Studies, Rebecca Bannor-Addae [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. MA Thesis “Someone to fear and someone to rescue”, Center of African Studies, Rebecca Bannor-Addae [↑](#footnote-ref-7)