

Chief of
Bwiam Village,
the Gambia



the story of Amul Musa Nyassi

My name is Musa Nyassi, but every single person in this community knows me by the name of Amul. I am the Alkalo, the chief of Bwiam Village. My story is about leadership, about being there to serve the people.

My great-grandparents were the founders of Bwiam. Leadership of the village is by inheritance. Before I took over the throne in December 2005, I was already involved in leadership activities. As a young man, I was the youth coordinator of my village. Assuming responsibilities early on in life made it easier for me to be a good Alkalo.

I was only 36 when I became the village Chief. This came as a surprise to many because normally village leaders are in their 50s, 60s or even 70s. But without boasting, my community knew what I am capable of, based on what I did before. That is why they have trust and confidence in me. What makes me stand out as a leader

“Leadership means being there to serve the people.”

is that I accept change. In the modern world in which we find ourselves today, change is a must. One has to be prepared to face the challenge. If you sit back, you will be left behind. And when you are left behind it is very difficult to catch up. So all you need is to upgrade yourself and to update yourself, if possible, on a daily basis.

Before I became the Alkalo, there was disunity in the village, nothing but selfishness you may call it. I am proud that I have created unity in Bwiam, everybody under one umbrella. In addition, my people are more development-oriented now. Development is an ongoing process I tell my people: you do it, you get stuck, you're tired, and

then somebody else in the community will take it up and we continue together. We were able to get several projects started which already brought a sense of achievement to the community.

I want to emphasize on behalf of my community how much we appreciate each and every individual that stepped into our community, and we thank them for their time and effort.

The Better Future programs in Bwiam have prepared us to face the challenge of change. It made us realize that we have the capabilities, that we have the ideas, and that we can do it. The Better Future people never took the lead, but they enabled us to listen to our own wishes, to see our needs, to recognize what is already available, to think for ourselves and to speak for ourselves. They gave us the tools with which we can tap into resources that were not yet available to us.

Before it was all talk-talk-talk and no action. Now we truly believe in ourselves and we know we can make it happen. We have successfully implemented ideas like the community lodge (www.bwiamlodge.com), the Bwiam market and the onion farm.

My dream for the future is for Bwiam to become a city of its own. And that one day all natives of Bwiam will come back home. If we can continue to cooperate and keep the unity strong, I believe this will surely happen. My own commitment to this community went up from strong to even stronger. Now I know: there is nothing impossible to a willing heart.

“Nothing is impossible to a willing heart.”