



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

UNEVOC

International Centre
for Technical and Vocational
Education and Training



Mobile Learning and Assessment Services

Promising Practice 2021

Context

The potential of TVET

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) can be a key driver of economic and social development within a country. In Jamaica, where there are high rates of youth un- and underemployment, there is a growing need for flexible and accessible TVET models.

Barriers to training

Among those enrolled in TVET courses across the island, HEART/NSTA Trust noted a high attrition rate, with only 45% going on to complete the course and gain a qualification at the end. This was due in large part to the socio-economic background of the trainees, where paid work and family commitments were often prioritized out of necessity, over studying and training. The distance from and the costs of getting to training centres also acted as barriers for those living in more marginalized and remote communities.

Improving accessibility

HEART/NSTA Trust established the Mobile Learning and Assessment Services Programme to address the lack of TVET access for those in vulnerable communities. The infrastructure is set up to work with stakeholders across Jamaica to enhance the quality of skills development and employability of trainees through flexible courses and assessments.

Objectives

The main objectives of the programme are to:

- provide quick and efficient training and assessment services
- allow participants to learn and be assessed anywhere
- particularly target and encourage trainees that had previously dropped out of training due to socio-economic circumstances
- improve literacy and numeracy rates in Jamaica (also identified as a priority in the country's COVID-19 recovery plan)
- help alleviate oversubscription at the institutional course centres
- ultimately improve the HEART/NSTA Trust's completion and certification rates in TVET

Overview

Implemented by: The Human Employment and Resource Training /National Service Training Agency Trust (HEART/NSTA Trust)

Where: Jamaica

Themes: Digital training; promoting entrepreneurial learning

Status: Programme active since January 2019

The Human Employment and Resource Training/National Service Training Agency Trust (HEART/NSTA Trust) is Jamaica's leading 'human capital development agency' and the largest TVET provider in the Caribbean. HEART/NSTA Trust focuses on practical, competency-based training that facilitates the seamless transition of trainees into the labour market. This has been operationalized through twenty-six institutions and seventy-nine Community Training Intervention (CTI) programmes across the island.

Mission statement:

The HEART/NSTA Trust exists to build and sustain a globally competitive Jamaican labour force, responsive to the demands and complexities of the modern workplace.



Mobile Learning and Assessment Services

The Mobile Learning and Assessment Services Programme is making TVET accessible for those living in at least 100 underserved Jamaican communities, while providing employers with an expanding skilled workforce.

Training and assessment are carried out inside refurbished coaches that provide:

- classroom space, bathroom facilities and other conveniences, as well as sanitation stations due the COVID-19 pandemic
- an internet-enabled space for trainees to connect to learning platforms for training
- on-the-spot assessments and results in real time (via the use of automated grading technology)
- instant access to career development services

The mobile units increase access through flexibility of learning environment and time. Trainees who need to combine work, family time and study can do so without the hindrance of having to travel to the physical institution.

The programme has also expanded the organization's reach to vulnerable trainees, including those working in the informal sector.

Outcomes and impact

Increased certification of unattached youths in underserved communities

- In the academic year 2019-2020, certification increased by 6% or 3042 persons across 55 underserved communities.
- In 2021, 2,423 certifications were achieved, despite the challenges posed by COVID-19.

Client engagement

- Client engagement increased by more than 15% in the areas of recruitment, applications and career services.
- Upskilling and reskilling programmes expanded to include workers from a greater cross-section of industries.
- Collaboration with industry experts is continuously being strengthened through the undertaking of various TVET interventions.

Feedback from trainees and employers

According to a recent survey, the overall satisfaction rate among graduates was 73.1% and it was slightly higher among trainees at 73.8%. The employers' satisfaction with HEART/NSTA Trust's business services was 66.5% and that rate rose to 76% for satisfaction with graduates.

Overall, the survey showed that HEART/NSTA Trust is most positively embraced for being valuable to Jamaica and Jamaicans (93%) and providing opportunities for persons to develop skills needed by corporate Jamaica (91%).



Challenges and insights

Access to remote communities

Some of the marginalized communities where a skills-shortage was identified were in hard to reach areas of the country. Using a vehicle that was already mobile and retrofitting it to make it into a classroom/lab made accessing these communities easier without the need to build temporary, physical structures.

Literacy and numeracy

Low levels of literacy and numeracy in some areas of Jamaica posed a challenge to the training model and caused a number of trainees to want to withdraw from the programme. To mitigate this, the programme developed a partnership with the Adult Education Department aimed at upskilling individuals who were literacy- and numeracy-challenged. An assessment to determine literacy and numeracy levels at the beginning of all training was introduced.

On-the-spot assessment

Trainees are assessed within the mobile units and provided with quick and/or real-time evaluation results. The initiative also utilized new technology to expand online training, assessment and certification.

Collaboration with industry

HEART/NSTA Trust developed avenues for collaboration with industry experts and analysed economic and social survey data to make decisions aligned with national priorities and the needs of communities across the island. Throughout this process, concerted efforts have been made to formalize the grey economy through capacity building of both workers and employers.

The future

The Mobile Learning and Assessment Services Programme plans to innovate and adapt to meet changing demands. Through ongoing programme feedback, alongside research into international and local best practices, the programme will continue to advance and prioritize TVET within Jamaica. Additionally, a strengthened partnership with the Labour Market Research Department will help to identify the specific demands of the Jamaican economy.

The HEART/NSTA Trust plans to acquire a larger fleet of specialized coaches in the future to ensure the sustainability of the initiative and further expand its reach across the country.

Learn more

Contact details:

Kenesha Campbell, Acting Deputy Managing Director, National Programmes and Training Division (NPTD), HEART/NSTA Trust, helped to compile this document.

For more information, please contact:

kenesha_campbell@heart-nta.org

To learn more about HEART/NSTA Trust, a UNEVOC Centre, visit:

www.heart-nsta.org

Discover other practices

The UNESCO-UNEVOC promising and innovative practices database presents inspiring projects tackling key themes in TVET, such as Entrepreneurship, Youth Employment, Greening, Digitalization, Private Sector Engagement and more.

Learn more on our website at:

<http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/promisingpractices>

Questions or comments? Contact our team at: unevoc-pp@unesco.org

