



Technical and Vocational Education Training Reforms Taking Shape

UGANDA SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (USDP)

Developing and producing highly demanded and skilled manpower



COUNTRYWIDE

UGANDA SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (USDP)
 Technical and vocational education: Developing and producing highly demanded and skilled manpower

Daily Monitor
 www.monitor.co.ug

Overview

Matching skills and labour market needs

Since gaining independence, Uganda has faced a shortage of skilled manpower, particularly among its trained indigenous people. This was because most of the professional, technical, and skilled manpower by then was not of African descent.

The situation was aggravated by the negative societal perception of Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET). TVET had been considered for those students who fail to make it through formal education.

The public perceived TVET to be for intellectually inferior students. Further, TVET was associated with non-prestigious blue-collar employment.

The country continued to face shortages of skills and a misalignment of skills in key sectors of the economy like agriculture, manufacturing, construction, oil and gas, tourism, and hospitality.

The TVET subsector has undergone encouraging reforms aimed at leveraging the inherent strengths of the skills development agenda.

In 2012, President Museveni launched a 10-year Business, Technical Vocational Education and Training (BTJET) strategic plan (2012/13-2021/22). The strategy aimed to transform the TVET system from an educational sub-sector into a comprehensive system of skills development for employment, enhanced productivity, and growth.

To implement the strategy, reforms aimed at ensuring that the skills development system was first re-oriented towards labour market needs.

The Uganda Skills Development Project (USDP) was, therefore, designed in 2015, to initiate the initial reforms envisioned by the BTJET strategic plan. Its objective was to build the capacity of institutions to deliver high-quality driven programmes in the priority sectors of the economy. The project was financed through a credit from the World Bank.

The project was meant to initiate reforms that will ensure that TVET systems, quality and relevance of skills development improves.

Among the reforms was to initiate the transformation of four colleges to become Centers of Excellence (CoEs) offering high-quality competency-based training for artisans (low-level), craftsmen (medium level), and technicians (higher-level) to equip them with skills demanded by selected trades in the manufacturing, construction, and agriculture sectors.

Together with the colleges, at least 12 public vocational training institutes were upgraded to provide relevant and high-quality training for artisans, and crafts persons to increase access to training by the general public.

The modus operandi was that CoE focus on producing highly-demand and skilled manpower for a specific sector. Each CoE network is affiliated with three technical institutes. UTC Lira was selected to become a CoE for highway and road construction, UTC Elgon for general construction, UTC Bushenyi for manufacturing and Bukalasa Agricultural College for agricultural skills.

TVET institutions are given some sovereignty to take action on their own within the confines of the industry environment, pulling together different management and regulation functions and bodies for skills development.



A trainee in a juice processing workshop at Bukalasa Agricultural College. Under USDP, learners are equipped with skills to enable them become job creators.

COURTESY PHOTO

USDP key achievements

A paradigm shift in TVET. The main purpose is to create employable skills and competencies relevant in the labour market.

BY JOAN SALMON

jsalmon@ug.nationmedia.com

The objective of USDP was to build the capacity of institutions to deliver high-quality demand-driven programmes in the priority sectors of the economy.

The project became effective in October 2016 and closed on December 31, 2022.

Remarkable achievements have been made in reforming various institutions to support the new approach to skills development in the country.

TVET system reforms Four Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) instituted

The councils were constituted to steer skills development for agriculture, manufacturing, construction, tourism, and hospitality. It is the first time in history that sector organisations are at the forefront of skills development.

Highly technical persons were nominated by umbrella organisations under the different sectors into the Sector SSCs. A total of 39 technical people from the four sectors were members of the sector skills councils and were trained by international experts in occupational standards profiling and development which led to the overall achievement in the development of occupational standards.

TVET Policy developed

The policy defines the direction and institutional framework that will guide skills development in Uganda. It lays a foundation for a TVET system that is flexible to the changing labour market demands.

The policy also provides for a structure to coordinate, regulate, and harmonise TVET at all levels, a framework for resource mobilisation, utilisation,

and sustainability for quality TVET provision and delivery; and, career path and linkages between general education and TVET.

A robust communication, rebranding and marketing strategy was developed

The strategy was developed along with an implementation plan and a capacity development plan. The strategy when fully implemented will ignite and promote a mindset change of the general public towards TVET.

The process to align and strengthen TVET assessment to international standards commenced

A diagnostic study was carried out to assess the current TVET assessment system and bodies (DIT, UBTEB, UAHEB, and UNMEB) against international practice. Identified gaps were recommended for resolution and addressing. A total of 25 Competence-Based Assessment Tools (CBT) were developed with the help of international TVET experts.

A total of 516 assessors from the industry and 16 training institutions were trained in CBT assessment techniques. The trained assessors were able to successfully assess the first and the second cohort of TVET students.

TVET management information system developed

The system was developed with the capability to link with other legacy systems of government as and when required. It is to link with the Education Management Information System, and the Labour Market Information System when fully developed as well as TVET institutions across the country.

At the moment, the system contains information on government-owned TVET institutions. It can be accessed at <https://tvet.go.ug>.

Reforms for quality and relevance improvement

A total of 72 prioritised occupations identified

The councils in collaboration with international experts from Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) of Canada, Dalhousie University of Canada, and Sferre/ AFPA of France and independent consultant firms undertook capacity skills needs assessment which identified 72 priority occupations in the sectors of agriculture, manufacturing, and construction. Moving forward curricula will be developed in line with the identified occupations.

Seventy two occupational standards developed

Occupational standards define sets of competencies and skills knowledge and understanding that an individual must have to perform the task or job.

Twenty five modularised, competence-Based Training (CBT) curricula were developed

Each curricula comprised of modules or blocks of competencies with each block of competence or module possibly leading to employment in a given environment. At the end of every module, assessments and validation of competence are carried out.

Various facilities constructed/upgraded

To facilitate the successful delivery of the newly developed CBT curricula, over 88 facilities were constructed or upgraded across 16 public TVET institutions. These include state-of-the-art workshops, classrooms, laboratories, administration blocks, libraries, hostels, staff houses, toilet blocks, multipurpose halls, kitchens, generator houses, pump houses, connectivity to the national grid, un-

derground water harvest, and maintenance shades among others.

Equipment supplied

Assorted categories of equipment were supplied. Each curriculum defines the categories of equipment required for the successful delivery of the training. The main categories of equipment supplied under the USDP included workshop equipment, ICT equipment, vehicles, furniture, plant and machinery.

Seventy three new instructors recruited

These included 12 female instructors who played a pivotal role in training through the new curriculum.

204 instructors trained/re-tooled

To equip the instructors with the competencies to develop CBT curricula, as well as its delivery, 204 instructors were trained, of which 148 were trained by international expert master trainers. Furthermore, 56 other instructors were also trained by the master trainers by the time the project closed in December 2022. Additionally, a total of 116 instructors and 32 supervisors across the 16 institutions were trained in France, Canada, and India.

Increased enrollment

The number of students in the 16 USDP institutions increased from 4,438 in 2018 to 8,168 in 2022. The number of female students also increased from 770 in 2018 to 2,969 by 2022.

The increase was largely attributed to the improvement in facilities, equipment, instructors, and training environment brought by the USDP.

Increased enrollment in the new courses

The number of new students enrolling in new courses rose from 674 in 2018 to 3811 in 2022, exceeding the end goal of 2,772 by 37.9 percent.

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3,811
LEARNERS
WERE ENROLLED



Upgraded. Under the reforms in Technical, Vocational Education and Training, Bukalasa Agricultural College was upgraded into a Centre of Excellence to train skilled manpower for the agriculture sector.

BY DAN WANDERA
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Bukalasa Agricultural College offers hands-on agricultural skills



Museveni (right), and First Lady, also Education Minister Janet Museveni at the commissioning of a training facility at Bukalasa Agricultural College in Luweero District on January 31, 2023, built under USDP, Ministry of Education and Sports. PHOTO BY DAN WANDERA

Bukalasa Agricultural College (BAC) was established in 1928 as the cotton breeding farm institute.

The institution has metamorphosed from a farm institute into a training institute and attained agricultural college status in 1960. By 1954 the College had started formal training with a total enrolment of 24 male trainees from across the East and Central Africa region.

Under the reform in TVET, BAC was upgraded into a Center of Excellence (CoE) to train skilled manpower for agriculture sector.

This was achieved through the Uganda Skills Development Project (USDP). In the same year, BAC partnered with Dalhousie University (Canada) to realise the process of transforming BAC into a CoE.

Dalhousie University is one of the leading CoEs in agriculture in Canada. The collaboration with this university offered valuable technical support to BAC serving as a solid cornerstone in the transformation of BAC into a CoE.

Mr Gelvan Kisolo Lule, the Principal of BAC remarked that before BAC was upgraded to a CoE, Bukalasa was majorly offering national diplomas in crop production and management, animal husbandry and management and floriculture among other courses.

However, when the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES)

launched the USDP at the institute, the first step was to understand the sector skill needs. The process was spearheaded by Dalhousie University.

A rapid labour market survey was conducted in the agriculture sector and six key occupations were identified. These included crop production technician, livestock production technician, agri-processor, crop production assistant, livestock production assistant, and agri-processing assistant.

Occupational standards were developed for each of the identified occupations.

From the occupational standards, Dalhousie University supported BAC and its networking Vocational Training Institute (VTIs) to develop modularised and Competence-Based Training (CBT) curriculum for the six occupations.

The new CBT requires 70 percent in practical and 30 percent in theory for students to gain competences. This has made it relatively expensive as compared to the traditional approach.

State-of-the-art facilities were constructed at the college to deliver the newly developed courses.

Mr Lule says USDP has transitioned BAC to an international training Institution.

In a recent visit to BAC by Dr John Chrystom Musingo, the State Minister for Higher Education together with the officials from Dalhousie University confirmed that any student who completes the new courses at BAC would automatically qualify for advanced studies at Dalhousie University Canada.

Mr Enock Abigaba Kayongo, a trainer and industry focal person at the college, says under the USDP, more than 50 instructors from BAC and networking VTIs were taken through vigorous training and technical guidance by experts from Dalhousie University. They gained competencies to develop CBT curricular and short courses (which are not necessarily for progression purposes).

Their pedagogical skills were polished and refined through series of training that challenged the old traditional ways and enlightened them to embrace, appreciate and practice modern, hands-on practical CBT that gives trainees relevant skills required by the labour market.

CBT training was effectively introduced to the instructors and it demystified the old approach to the extent that today, instructors can improvise ways of providing hands-on training, amidst limited

resources.

Overall, BAC enrolled 1,017 learners in the new courses.

The college has developed more than 10 short courses, which provided farmers' groups, or individuals with quick and complete competencies. About 722 learners have been enrolled in short courses.

Mr Abigaba says the college established an industry liaison office with a working Industrial Advisory Committee (IAC) chaired by the former Finance Minister Syda Bbumba. The IAC consists of industrial players who play the role of harmonising the instructors' actions with the industrial labour market demands and trends.

He says the new training ap-

proach where industries are consulted for the skills required is yielding tangible results.

A recent tracer study conducted in 2022 on behalf of the MoES indicates that graduates and their employers are satisfied with the skills and competencies imparted to the trainees under the new courses.

The satisfaction is evidenced by the fact that 75 percent of the graduates were already employed.

The trainees are assessed both at the college and by Uganda Business Technical Examination Board (UBTEB). The assessment involves assessors from the industry as well.

Mr Ivan Suule, one of the instructors at BAC, says the training conducted for the instructors in India, Canada, Netherlands among others has greatly boosted the teaching abilities at the college.

"Throughout this process, I was able to realise that working closely with the industry is critical if institutions are to offer relevant training that suits industrial needs," he said.

Success stories

Mr Denis Tibenkana, one of the pioneer students under the USDP course successfully ventured into agri-processing. While his journey into the field of agri-processing was first interrupted by Covid-19, Mr Tibenkana took advantage of the break to conduct market research about agri-processing.

"Through the Bandera Farmer Network International, a farmer organisation founded in 2019, we engage farmers in postharvest handling practices, and value addition among other farm-related training," he says.

Mr Tibenkana attributes his suc-

cesses to the training he got under the USDP at BAC.

"I had trained more than 300 farmers by 2020 at a paid-up service. As a result, I was hired by farmer organisations to train farmers in developing sustainable systems for agriculture," he says.

He adds; "One of the remarkable achievements is teaming up with colleagues with whom we signed a Memorandum of Understanding to conduct farmer exhibitions in Kamuli District."

Because the district produces a lot of maize, the group wrote a proposal that earned them a maize mill from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Under the Kamuli Maize Cooperative Society, they have purchased land for a planned agro-processing facility. Their dream is to have a fully-fledged agro-processing facility by 2030 and in all this, "I give thanks to USDP and BAC."

Community outreach

While BAC opened its doors for short courses to the community, the outreach programmes targeting organised farming groups seeking technical assistance in business management among other services have been more than a blessing to the community.

Mr John Kibalama, the team leader at Bakyabumba Farmers Group in Butuntumula Sub-county, says his team benefited from training undertaken by the college in bookkeeping and coffee value chain among other farming basic practices. "We are more empowered as a farmer group after the training, he says.

722
LEARNERS
ENROLLED IN
SHORT COURSES

SHORT COURSES OFFERED

- Coffee production and value addition
- Bee keeping practices and apiary management
- Greenhouse vegetable production and records
- Outdoor/urban vegetable production and record keeping
- Value addition of bee products
- Queen rearing
- Bee equipment
- Commercial poultry keeping, feed formulation and mixing
- Fish farming and poultry keeping
- Livestock feed formulation and processing
- Maize post-harvest handling



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Training. Kaberamaido Technical Institute is one of the institutes that the government earmarked to train and equip students with skills in the agricultural sector.

BY SIMON PETER EMWAMU
 editorial@ug.nationmedia.com

Kaberamaido Technical Institute delivering demand-driven skills

Kaberamaido Technical Institute is one of the institutes that the government earmarked to train and equip students with skills in the agriculture sector.

Mr Christopher Uluge, the Principal of Kaberamaido Technical Institute, says at first, the institute did not have any agricultural course, but because of the government's interest to start channeling out students who are relevant to the current global needs, the institute was given the mandate to teach agri processing and business management course. For one to qualify for a placement for the Certificate in Agri Processing and Business Management, and Natural Certificate in Agricultural Production, they should have obtained at least three credits in O-Level.

Mr James Okure an instructor at the institute, says the success of the Agri-processing and Business Management course is anchored on spot assessment.

"We observe what the students do and we assess them," he says.

According to the instructor, each student who graduates with a certificate passes through three cluster assessments, which are fruit and vegetable processing, dairy processing, and feed processing.

Success stories

Ivan Oyuru, aged 23 years and a



Kaberamaido Technical Institute students acquire baking skills.

PHOTO BY SIMON PETER EMWAMU.

resident of Olumai B village, Kaberamaido District would be a job seeker now if he had not considered taking a skills development course.

His decision was prompted in 2012, when President Museveni launched a 10-year Business, Technical Vocational Education and Training (BTNET) strategic plan.

Oyuru is one of the graduates of this institute. He attained a Certifi-

cate in Agri-processing and Business Management in 2022. Later, he ventured into the bakery business.

His dream to succeed as a self-employed person is anchored on the government's ambitious plan for skills development.

He says the course is so rich practically, that he can also add value to almost all agro produce, make animal feeds, and organic fertil-

izer among other products that are highly demanded on the market.

It was fortunate for him to undertake this course.

"Initially I had secured a placement in another institution but later my uncle advised me to join Kaberamaido Technical Institute; I'm not regretting," he adds.

He plans to hire modest premises in an urban setting within Kaberamaido to expand his business using locally available resources. He plans to go for a Diploma in Agri processing and Business Management.

In the sub-county of Alwa, Kaberamaido District, lives Jude Elamu 23, who has ventured into passion fruit growing and is a pioneer student who wants to use the skills he has to add value to passion fruits and start producing juice.

"The two-year practical course earned me a lot of knowledge in value addition, I can make organic fertilisers and animal feeds, and the knowledge can make me earn a living with little ease," Elamu who graduated in 2022 with a certificate says.

He later obtained another placement at Bukalasa Agricultural College for a diploma in Agri processing and Business Management.

His passion is to attain academic qualifications in the same field which will enable him to become an instructor.

"I want to inspire the youth to undertake this course because, in the world where theoretical jobs have been hard to find, practical courses are the way out."

Having secured better grades at Kaberamaido Technical Institute, Bryan Komaketch hailing from Nebbi District has been retained and is currently serving as the farm manager. He is among the first cohort who undertook, the Natural Certificate in Agricultural Production (NCAP) in 2020. Despite the upset caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, Komaketch soldiered on.



"Initially, I had secured a placement in another institution but later my uncle advised me to join Kaberamaido Technical Institute; I'm not regretting,"

Ivan Oyuru, alumni who ventured into bakery.

Rwentanga Farm Institute setting pace in agro-processing training

BY RAJAB MUKOMBOZI
 editorial@ug.nationmedia.com

Rwentanga Farm Institute in Mbarara District was networked with BAC to train skilled manpower for the agricultural sector.

According to the Principal of Rwentanga Farm Institute, Mr William Tukwasibwe, the institute aims to become a world-class training centre in crop production.

This will enable it to produce skilled graduates who can fit in the job market demands as well as become job creators.

Because of the enhanced curricula, first class facilities and equipment provided under USDP, the institute registered a surge in the students population as many were yearning for learning and acquiring skills.

"The trainees enrollment grew from 286 in 2015 to 322 in 2019 and to 750 in 2023," he says.

Two laboratories, soil testing and animal science laboratory were rehabilitated and equipped, a library



Students of Rwentanga Farm Institute at the banana micropropagation section.PHOTO BY RAJAB MUKOMBOZI.

and computer laboratory were constructed.

Funds were also provided and used to establish a five-acre banana plantation, start macro-propagation of bananas, a mushroom house, construct a girls' dormitory, and establish an urban farm and extension of water.

Thirty seven students were skilled

and graduated with certificates in crop production and business management and 130 in short courses.

"The short courses takes between three weeks and one month and didn't require any academic-qualifications," Mr Tukwasibwe says.

Some of the skills that were trained include poultry, cattle rear-

ing, banana micropropagation, chick brooding, mushroom production, tractor operations, and urban farming technologies.

"We have started adding value to some of our products such as tomatoes, banana wine, mushroom wine, other mushroom products, banana cakes, organic fertilizers, organic pesticides, spices, liquid soap, and these skills students go with these skills," he adds.

Upon completion of the course, some students leave the institution when they have registered their companies, ready to implement what they have been taught.

Mr Abel Mugume, an instructor at the institute, says the skills development programme has enabled them to equip learners with job market skills.

"What is taught in class at the point of acquiring a degree is not exactly relevant to what is required in the world of work. At Rwentanga, we were enlightened to see that there is a skills gap. So instructors are all attached to the fields in the world of work to get more skills so that when they are training they are sure of what they are training and not directly dependent on book-

work," he says.

He adds that they offer training based on real-life projects where it require that each student does a real-life project such as chick management.

"We encourage students to engage in production. When they come here, we assign them projects and support them to produce and later go to the market," he says.

During training, instructors focus mainly on innovation and the use of ICT.

"Technology changes every day, what is done today by next year would be different. So to move with others you have to be innovative and do research," he says.

Success story

Bobin Ainebyoona joined Rwentanga Farm Institute in 2021 for a Certificate in Agricultural Production and Business Management and is now pursuing a Diploma in the same course.

"I am capitalising on the skills I obtained earlier, which have enabled me to work while studying. I sell banana planting materials, brood chicks to farmers, I also treat birds," Mr Ainebyoona says.

750
STUDENTS AT
RWENTANGA
FARM INSTITUTE



UTC Elgon has a well-equipped workshop where trainees can get hands-on training. PHOTO BY FRED WAMBEDE

New approach to skilling takes shape at UTC Elgon

Cluster. UTC Elgon Mbale was networked with Kasodo Technical Institute, Kaliro Technical Institute and Butaleja Technical Institute to for skilling in the construction sector.

BY MICHAEL WONIALA & FRED WAMBEDE
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Mr Moses Obong, the Principal of Uganda Technical College (UTC) Elgon Mbale, says under USDP, the process of transforming UTC Elgon into a Center of Excellence (CoE) started in January 2019.

The college partnered with Northern Alberta Institute of Technology of Canada (NAIT). NAIT is one of the highly regarded TVET institutions in Canada. It offers several programmes, including oil and gas, highway and road construction, and general construction among others.

UTC Elgon was networked with three vocational training institutions to train in sufficient number of the manpower required for the general construction sector.

Mr Obong says USDP with its multidimensional approach has rewritten the script for skills training steering it towards training for immediate employment.

The college offers plumbing and gas line installation, electrical installation, welding and fabrication, soil and material testing, topographical land survey, concrete work, steel bending, bricklaying, and roofing disciplines.

Mr Obong says the project has offered a new hope with the construction of an administration block.

"The imposing structure stands as a beacon of modern skills training symbolising the commitment to transformative training," he says.

Mr Obong says the challenge

of accessing essential tools and equipment has also been solved.

"Workshop and tools were a big challenge. Their acquisition breathed life into hands-on learning, igniting students' passion for practical application," he says.

Mr Obong adds that the project brought in many instructors and technicians. The infusion of skilled personnel has invigorated the training process, fostering an environment conducive to effective learning.

The project has also introduced a forward-thinking curriculum that emphasizes practical work rather than theory. This shift is poised to bridge the gap between education and employability.

About 80 out of 500 students will graduate from this programme this year. These students have gained the necessary skills for the world of work and will obtain a certificate awarded by the Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board (UBTEB).

Success stories

Mr Cypriano Osillo, a 36-year-old, says his journey with USDP speaks to the transformative power of vocational training. Hailing from Tororo, Osillo, and a former security officer at UTC, Elgon found a new path through the electrical installation programme.

Previously, due to financial constraints, he had lost hope of pursuing education. Armed with new-found electrical skills, he plans to

venture into the field and contribute to electrical work.

His course choice is backed by practicality. "I believe I can easily secure a job in my village due to my knowledge," he says with optimism.

For Mr Gasper Okurut, aged 41, a former student awaiting graduation, the decision to do an electrical installation course was fuelled by both a desire for financial growth and a passion for the subject matter.

Previously working with Saracen Uganda, Okurut recognised the potential in pursuing technical education and mastering the intricacies of electrical work. Starting with his home in the village, he extended his expertise to his family, gradually widening his circle of influence.

His newly acquired skills have opened doors and inspired him to consider alternative employment avenues, moving away from his previous job, permanently.

"I began by wiring my house and then my uncle called me to work on his. This course has opened up so many opportunities for me," he says. Mr Luke Eyobe, is another student who found hope and empowerment through the skilling programme. It has become a beacon of opportunity, offering skills that empower individuals to have a brighter future.

Mr Joseph Oboi, a lecturer in the civil department, says there is a need for more improved instruments in land survey due to a surge in student numbers.

"Practical skills empower students to tackle real-world challenges with confidence. After theory classes, we take them for fractional lessons. With increasing numbers, there is a need for additional equipment for a good student-to-equipment ratio," he says.

More students enroll for vocational education in Kasodo Technical Institute

BY MUDANGHA KOLYANGHA & FRED WAMBEDE
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In the past, there was a negative societal perception towards Technical, Vocational Education and training (TVET).

Many considered it fit for students who fail to make it through the formal secondary to university.

That continues to affect access to skilled labour, contributing to the high unemployment levels that are now at 9.3 million (41 percent), according to the Uganda National Labour Force Survey.

That prompted the need to transform TVET in Uganda.

One of the institutes under USDP through which the government is piloting the reforms is Kasodo Technical Institute in Pallisa District.

The institute started as a junior technical school in 1983 with three courses; Carpentry and Joinery, Brick Laying and Concrete Practices, and Tailoring. However, in 1995, it was upgraded to a technical institute.

Currently, it offers an additional seven courses, including, a National Certificate in Building Construction, Woodwork Technology, Automobile Mechanics, Fashion and Design, Electrical Services, Agricultural Production and Plumbing.

It also offers two to six months of training for non-formal students and has a staffing of 37 teachers with an enrollment of 375 students.

Kasodo Technical Institute Principal, Mr Charles Tionde, says through USDP, the institute constructed a plumbing workshop,

a plumbing laboratory, a water-borne toilet, and also got the provision of a transformer and extension of electricity.

The training components tackled areas of how to develop institutional development planning, strategic and operation plans, needs assessment and survey, training of management and information systems, institutional relationship officers, community strategy, and marketing strategy.

He says plumbing instructors received both in-country and offshore training, adding that collaboration with other stakeholders has promoted a good relationship with the community, institute, and local governments.

"We signed a memorandum of understanding with institutions such as Steel and Tubes, Delight Uganda LTD, Electrical Control and switch gears Ltd, and Uganda Technical College (UTC-Elgon)," he says.

Increasing outreach

At Kasodo Technical Institute, Mr Tionde says the institute engaged in massive sensitisation, which has seen an overwhelming turnout of students.

"Previously, we used to plead with parents to enroll their children. However, with facilities and equipment supplied, we got more students than the institute's capacity of 400. It was so painful to turn down those students," he adds.

He says if the second phase is rolled out, more emphasis will be put on addressing the accommodation for the girl-child, work-

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TRAINED IN
SHORT COURSES

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Kasodo Technical Institute has a well-equipped workshop where trainees get hands-on training. PHOTO BY FRED WAMBEDE



**EASTERN
REGION**

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More students enroll for vocational education in Pallisa

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shops, library, and increasing the number of computers.

Qualification

The students eligible to join the institute should have a Uganda Certificate of Education or its equivalent for Uganda Junior Technical Certificate.

Success stories

Mr Nackett Okinong, one of the instructors at the institute, says students are trained in demand-driven skills.

"Students are assessed internally and externally by the Uganda Business Technical Examination Board (UNEBC) to ensure that they match with the job market demands both locally and internationally. The institute has produced 50 skilled Ugandans under the USDP who are gainfully employed," he says.

Ms Aisha Tikawula, a former student who enrolled for a plumbing course in 2022, says the plumbing skills acquired have helped her shine. She worked as a self-employed teacher in various technical institutes before being taken to work as a workshop attendant at Kasodo Technical Institute.

"The exposure has made me marketable in the field of plumbing in the community as I offer quality services, even to the communities," she says.

Another alumni, Mr Lazarus Ochan, a resident of Kasanvu village, Kasodo Sub-county, has no regrets about enrolling at the institute. In 2022, he undertook a Plumbing and Gas line Installation course.

"The skills acquired have compelled other community members to embrace the skilling project. The gains from these skills have turned my life around for the better," he says.

Mr Thomas Mugerwa, a resident of Kongola village in Pallisa, says the project opened doors of opportunities to unemployed youth.



"Previously, we used to plead with parents to enroll their children. However, with facilities and equipment supplied under the USDP, we got more students than the institute's capacity of 400. It was so painful to turn down those students,"

Mr Charles Tionde, Principal of Kasodo Technical Institute



"The exposure has made me marketable in the field of plumbing in the community as I offer quality services to the communities,"

Ms Aisha Tikawula, Kasodo Technical Institute alumni

"Many of our youth who took the skills training under the project from the institute are now working in different organisations while some are self-employed. It gives us joy that they are gainfully employed," he says.



Geoffrey Idibya constructing a cattle climber in Buyende recently. Right is Mr Francis Keeya, the Principal of Kasodo Technical Institute, showing stacks of bricks that they use to teach students. PHOTO BY PHILLIP WAFULA



Skilling takes root at Kaliro Institute

Cluster. Kaliro Technical Institute is one of the institutes that were networked with UTC Elgon to provide skills in general construction.

BY PHILIP WAFULA
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Kaliro Technical Institute established in 1983 is among the government technical institutes that networked with UTC Elgon to train skilled manpower for general construction.

Mr Francis Keeya, Principal of Kaliro Technical Institute, says the institute is earmarked under USDP to deliver six modularised certificate courses. These include roofing, concrete, rebar, bricklaying, surveying, and surveying soil and material testing.

The institute enrolled students in three courses; Roofing, Rebar, and Bricklaying, and a total of 80 students were trained and assessed by UBTEB.

The new approach to skilling Ugandans does not look at academics but emphasizes prior learning experiences.

Mr Keeya says the project is modular and requires training students to acquire competencies such that they can be able to use them in the world of work, which leads to job creativity.

After the two-month training, Mr Keeya says the graduates can stand on their own and use the

skills to set up their businesses. Mr Moses Mutono, the Director of Training, says for any practical lesson, they should have materials, including bricks, timber, steel or iron bars, and tiles, while for tools, there must be tools and equipment related to bricklaying module, roofing module, rebar, and conducive working area in terms of infrastructure and workshop or site. The assessment is done daily, according to Mr Abbe.

"Every skill taught is assessed, for example, if a module has five joints of different types and each joint has a score, then those are the scores or marks," he says.

He says every skill has its score, and they use the marks to target 40 percent of coursework at the institutional level, while UBTEB brings in 60 percent.

According to Mr Mutono, they have a marking guide that has to be followed, for example, safety, the right use of tools, and procedure for coming up with that specific task.

Mr Abbe a community member, says the community has benefited from the trainees, saying the

trainees move out looking for vulnerable people with structures to be roofed, and work on them according to their demands and needs.

Mr Abbe says not only are all the trainees from the community, but the project has turned the community into a labor market.

"Through the project, the community has managed to earn a survival which has improved their standard of living," he says.

Mr Charles Nampendo, the Deputy Principal, who is also a building instructor, says skills needed for general construction trades include; laying of bricks, plumbing or straightening of walls, neatness or joining and leveling.

Mr Samuel Abbe, another building instructor, says under construction, they target the labour market because, under construction, roofing is paramount.

"Any sub-structure must have a roof and we target the roofs that are in the labour market, including hipped roofs, tile roofs, lean-to roofs, gable roofs," he says, adding that all the aforementioned roofs are trained hands-on and they end up with roofs.

Success stories

Geoffrey Idibya, 33 had no idea of what to do and was reportedly doing every work that came by. It was around that time that he heard an advert on a local radio station, calling for non-skilled youth to join



Plumbing workshop at Kasodo Technical Institute. PHOTO/ COURTESY

STUDENTS ENROLLMENT

The institute enrolled and trained 80 students in roofing, rebar, and bricklaying and were assessed by UBTEB.



Kaliro Training Institute pointing at the

Butaleja Technical Institute specialises in electrical installation

BY MUDANGHA KOLYANGHA
& FRED WAMBEDE
editorial@ug.nationmedia.com

Previously, communities in the rural Butaleja District grappled with limited opportunities, especially for school dropouts. However, the coming on board of the USDP at Butaleja Technical Institute has changed the tide.

Mr Ibrahim Isabirye, the Principal of Butaleja Technical Institute, says USDP brought significant transformation in terms of infrastructure, which has ultimately improved the enrollment of students at the institute.

The institute started in 1983 with four courses; Carpentry and Joinery, Tailoring, Bricklaying and Concrete Practice, and Electrical Installation. However, more courses have been added totalling to nine, to include Building Construction, Woodwork Technology, and Metal Fabrication and Welding.

Under the USDP, Butaleja Technical Institute is specialising in electrical installation. This course has witnessed the highest enrollment of about 100 students.

"It is encouraging to see more young minds eager to learn and become assets to their families and the nation," he says.

Mr Isabirye adds that 48 percent of the students enrolling in the USDP courses are female. This monumental shift from a mere 10 percent in the past signifies a noteworthy step towards empowering women through technical education.

"Out of the 100 students who enrolled for the USDP project, we had 48 girls and 52 boys, which is an improvement from 10 girls. Formerly, it was 10 girls out of 100," he says.

USDP.

He reached out to the institute for details, got admitted, and enrolled in the two-month course to gain skills in general construction.

Idiabya acquired skills in different types of roofs, including hipped roofs, and gable roofs, and he is benefiting a lot.

"I'm currently in Buyende District constructing a cattle climber in the market, on which cattle are supposed to climb before they are loaded onto a vehicle. My standard of living has changed over the past few months I have been in the field, all due to the skills I got from the USDP project," he says.

"People could be creating jobs instead of depending on the government; actually, I have so far taken on about 46 colleagues I undertook the training with," he adds.

Mr Joseph Munyagira, 33, a resident of Namugongo in Kaliro District, says he learned of the project through the area LC1 chairperson, who conducted door-to-door sensitisation looking for potential learners.

Mr Munyagira, who enrolled for two-month training in bricklaying last November, has since acquired skills in mixing mortar and hailed the USDP project as a success.

Alex Wabulembo, 30, a resident of Natwana Village, Namugongo Sub-county in Kaliro District, did not have skills for mixing building materials as well as handling tools. A tip from the Principal of Kaliro Training Institute Mr Francis Keeya changed the narrative.

Mr Bakali Kisira, a resident of Bulondo-Bubogho Village in Kaliro District is one of such beneficiaries who had his roof fixed by trainees under the USDP.

"In July, I approached Kaliro Training Institute to help and re-roof my house which was about to collapse on me, and they promised to help; so, my daughter bought the iron sheets and the trainees re-roofed at no cost for which I am so grateful," he says.

He adds that the general institute enrollment has improved from 200 to 300 and they hope to raise to 400 students.

He says with more students embracing technical training, the nation's skilled work-

force is set to expand, subsequently contributing to economic growth and development.

Mr Isabirye says the USDP impact is also evident in the development of infrastructures such as the electrical workshop and lecture room.

"We now have new structures and state-of-the-art workshops for the students to learn. These have brought a big facelift to the institution," he says.

Butaleja District has had a major issue of water shortages but under the project, Mr Isabirye says water supply was provided and extended to the community within the institute.

Practical exposure has equipped students with marketable skills, making them confident to venture into the field with the right skills.

"Prospective students from diverse backgrounds are increasingly recognising the opportunities that the USDP-backed courses can bring. The students are doing more practice which makes them more marketable and confident in the marketplace," Mr Isabirye says.

He adds that the programme's emphasis on employability and skill development is a result of embedded industrial tours and practical trainings. Therefore, they visit industries through industrial tours and training.

"We make it a point to receive feedback from students after the trips where they compare what is taught and what they learned while in the field. That gives us hindsight of where improvement is needed," he says.

Challenges

Mr Isabirye outlines the challenges the institute faces, particularly inadequate maintenance funds.

"We have one course that is well facilitated and there are other courses that are not facilitated, we ask for more equipment's for other courses as well," he says.

Mr Stephen Hyambe, an instructor at the institute, says USDP unleashed hidden potential that had remained unexploited.

Mr Joseph Kolere, another instructor, says with the USDP support, they were equipped to provide holistic education that combines theoretical knowledge with hands-on experience.

Success stories

Mr Derrick Mulongo, one of the former students joined the institute with a dream of mastering electrical installation.

"Previously, I had lost hope because my parents couldn't afford the tuition fees. This project opened up doors for me. The project not only equipped me with technical skills but also nurtured my confidence and ignited my ambition," he says. Today,

Mr Mulongo stands as a beacon of inspiration for his peers.

Ms Jane Khalifa, a former student says USDP enabled her to achieve her dream of turning her creativity into a successful career. "USDP did not only impart skills but also nurtured aspirations and empowered us to chase our dreams," she says.

Mr Wilber Kaso, a community member, says USDP project has empowered individuals to break barriers as they have graduated from the project and brought enormous change to the community. A number of the graduates are already employed and they haven't remained the same.

WHAT THEY SAY.....



"We now have new structures and state-of-the-art workshops for the students to learn. These have brought a big facelift to the institution,"

Mr Ibrahim Isabirye, Principal of Butaleja Technical Institute.



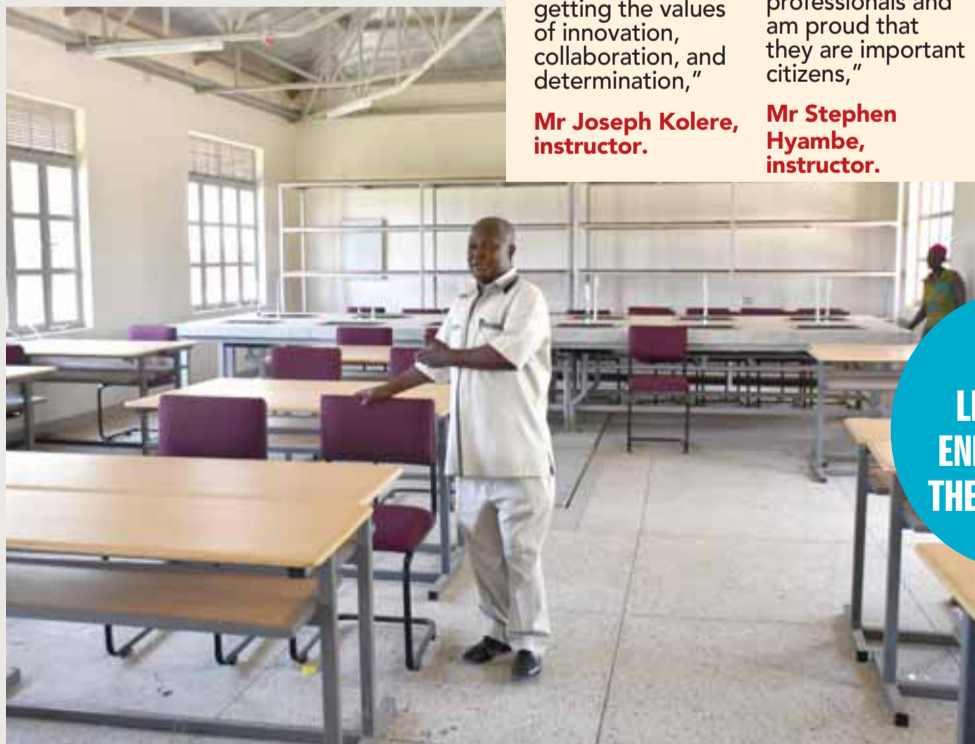
"My students aren't just learning the art; they are getting the values of innovation, collaboration, and determination,"

Mr Joseph Kolere, instructor.



"I have witnessed students blossom into skilled professionals and am proud that they are important citizens,"

Mr Stephen Hyambe, instructor.



Mr Ibrahim Isabirye, Principal of Butaleja Technical Institute in a workshop where students are trained. PHOTOS BY MICHEAL WONIALA

**300
LEARNERS
ENROLLED AT
THE INSTITUTE**


**WESTERN
REGION**
UGANDA SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (USDP)
 Technical and vocational education: Developing and producing highly demanded and skilled manpower

Daily Monitor
 www.monitor.co.ug

UTC Bushenyi imparts manufacturing skills

Admission. Unlike in the past when admissions required academic qualifications, this time, prior learning matters and their level of competence determines the starting module.



A trainee undergoes skills training in welding and fabrication at Uganda Technical College Bushenyi.

PHOTOS/ RAJAB MUKOMBOZI

BY RAJAB MUKOMBOZI
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Under USDP, Uganda Technical College (UTC) Bushenyi was earmarked to be transformed into a Centre of Excellence to train skilled manpower for the manufacturing sector.

The college partnered with Sferre/ AFPA of France in October 2018. AFPA is one of the leading Centers of Excellence in France and trains the workforce for France on behalf of the Ministry of Labour in France.

UTC Bushenyi was founded in 1956 as Kahaya Memorial Rural Trade School by the then Ankole Kingdom.

It was by then enrolling primary six leavers to train in Carpentry and Joinery, and Bricklaying. Later in 1958, it introduced leather turning, shoe making, pottery, and ceramics.

In 1974, it was elevated to Kahaya Technical School and later to Bushenyi Technical Institute in 1982 with a standard entry requirement of O-Level.

In 1984, it was further elevated to a technical college and named Uganda Technical College Bushenyi admitting both "O" and "A" level students.

Under the USDP, it specialises in courses that support manufacturing such as Welding and Metal Fabrication, Industrial Maintenance, and Industrial Production.

UTC Bushenyi was networked with three Vocational Training Institutions to train manpower required for the manufacturing sector. These include Lake Katwe Technical Institute, Karera Technical Institute, and Nyamitanga Technical Institute.

Mr Sam Byagweri, the Principal of UTC Bushenyi credits the government for revamping vocational training.

"UTC Bushenyi is a center of excellence in the manufacturing field. We have competent staff, three workshops constructed and equipped, and automated production. We have already enrolled the first cohort of trainees in the field of Industrial maintenance, he says.

The principal revealed that unlike in the past when admissions required academic qualifications, this time, prior learning matters and their level of competence determines the starting module. That is because the target is having more Ugandans access technical, and vocational training without any hindrances.

He says UTC Bushenyi offers skills in industrial maintenance, automated production, and metal fabrication.

TRAINED INSTRUCTORS

The trainers have been trained from here and offshore in France at AFPA. They received specialised training not only on hands-on training but also how to deliver the modular courses

Mr Byagweri says the competency-based curriculum that they are following is rich in content and has a strong emphasis on competencies. The new curriculum is in modules and students are assessed per module.

In the competency-based curriculum, a student completes a module in three months. However, the whole course is two years.

For example, after finishing a module in health and safety, a trainee becomes a safety and health personnel and will have the necessary skills required to be employed as a safety and health personnel staff using the certificate

attained after the module.

"After each module, the trainees can go to the field of work but can return to complete the other modules at their pace. At the end, they are assessed and certified by UBTEB," Mr Byagweri adds.

Having competent instructors is a crucial factor that has enabled UTC Bushenyi to deliver quality training to the trainees.

"We have had our instructors trained from here and offshore in France at AFPA. They received specialised training not only on hands-on training but also how to deliver the modular courses," he says.

UTC Bushenyi as a centre of excellence has come up with Return to Industry (RTI) where instructors are required to re-learn new technologies and retool.

A multi-purpose hall that accommodates about 1,000 people was constructed at the institute. The college was also provided with a generator house, a generator, a bus, a coaster, and a pickup.

Mr Alphons Ayebazibwe, an instructor, says they have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the manufacturing sector whereby after internal assessment, the trainees go for industrial practice in industrial and manufacturing factories.

"After the internal assessment, our trainees go to industries, we follow and assess their performance. In our assessment 70 percent is practical and 30 percent theory," he says.

He says the institution's three facilities of welding and fabrication, plant maintenance, and manufacturing are all equipped with tools required to train students.

Success stories

Mr Matsiko Rogers, who is among the first cohort of trainees,

applauds government for giving them high quality training equipment.

"The machinery here is first class quality and the skills we are getting will enable us to go into first-class production to satisfy both local and international markets," he says.

However, he appeals to the college to allow them to continue using the workshop for production and marketing even after training.

"We may lack the capacity to keep in production because of limited funding that limits our capacity to have our own equipment," Matsiko, who is undergoing a three-month training in industrial maintenance says.

GROWING TALENT

The new curriculum is in modules and students are assessed per module which is completed in three months. Training covers several essential skills such as safety protocols, life skills, entrepreneurship, quality control, and understanding the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of the workshop.

BY RAJAB MUKOMBOZI
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The Principal of Nyamitanga Technical Institute, Mr Gervase Bafaki, says under USDP, the institute was networked with UTC Bushenyi to train skilled manpower for the manufacturing sector. The institute is specialising in industrial maintenance.

He mentions that they have already instructed over 300 trainees, providing them with a three-month training programme followed by subsequent industrial training.

The majority of the graduates from the institute, according to Mr Bafaki set up their workshops as well as employing others.

"We were supposed to train a curriculum of two years but we picked two modules of this curriculum. The first module had health and safety while the second module had welding and fabrication that were done in three months," he adds.

The instructors for this course were taken to France for training where they learned how to de-

Hands-on employment

Skills. Training covers several essential skills such as safety protocols, life skills, entrepreneurship, quality control, and understanding the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of the workshop.

BY ALEX ASHABA
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Lake Katwe Institute is one of the technical institutions selected under the Uganda Skills Development Project (USDP) to network with Uganda Technical College (UTC) Bushenyi to train manpower for Uganda's manufacturing sector.

Other institutions under UTC Bushenyi cluster are Karera Technical Institute in Sheema and Nyamitanga Technical Institute in Mbarara.

The Principal of Lake Katwe Technical Institute, Mr Fred Wako, says the UTC Bushenyi cluster of institutions are armed to train learners to provide human resource for the manufacturing sector.

He says with the support of the twinning partner (Sferre/AFPA), six new modularised and Competences-Based Training (CBT) programmes were developed. These included Metal Fabrication, Industrial Production, Industrial Maintenance, Metal Fabrication, Industrial Maintenance, and Automated Machine Operation.

These courses are categorised in two levels (Level 4 and Level 3). When one completes Level 4, they will be qualified as a technician and one who completes level 3 will qualify as an operator or mechanic or a fabricator, depending on the course. All that is after passing the Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board (UBTEB) exams.

While the technical institutes are earmarked to training learners for level 3, UTC Bushenyi is qualified to train for both Level 3 and 4. Mr Wako says for one to fully qualify as a technician, they should have completed a number of modules.

Each module is a block of competencies a learner should gain to allow him/her accomplish a task/ job, he said.

The advantage with modularised training is that it gives opportunity to learners to be productive even when he/she has not yet completed the full course. At the end of a module, one is free to engage in employment and return for the next module as and when he/she wishes.

The Principal says Lake Katwe Technical Institute is selected to train Automated Production and Welding (Level 3).

Admission into the programme is open to all individuals who possess prior learning and is interested in learning.

He says the first cohort had 40



Nyamitanga passionate about skilling



Trainees undergo skills training at Nyamitanga Technical Institute in Mbarara City.
PHOTO/ RAJAB MUKOMBOZI

300
STUDENTS
ENROLLED IN THE
FIRST COHORT

liver modularised curricula.

"Training under the modular system is demand-driven. Therefore, one does not need to study for two years since training can be done by module and not necessarily in one sitting," he says.

The staff went for training at

AFFPA Agence Nationale Pour la Formation Professionnelle des Adultes (AFFPA). "They were exposed to world-class workshops and training, and currently, we can handle and offer the skills required to the international standards," Mr Bifaki adds.

Mr Pius Asiimwe, an instructor at Nyamitanga Technical Institute, says the skills given to trainees are hands-on and exceptional because of the quality of instructors and equipment.

"Instructors need continuous retooling to offer skills that are

relevant to the world of work. So this project taught us the need to keep training and retooling," Mr Asiimwe says.

He adds that offering hands-on skills that are relevant to the job market is now possible because the institute has all what it takes, including tools and materials.

The institute got a first-class welding and fabrication workshop with equipment, tools and materials that have boosted its training of learners.

He says the first cohort of 300 students were trained and assessed by UBTEB. The institute also received a 30-seater coaster and double cabin pickup.

Success stories

Amos Muhinda 32, a resident of Kakindo in Sheema District did not attain any formal education and was struggling to get employed due to lack of academic qualifications. His misery, however, came to an end when he decided to en-

roll in metal fabrication training at Nyamitanga Technical Institute in Mbarara.

"My parents were poor and couldn't afford to take me to school. One day, a friend of mine tipped me about a skills training at Nyamitanga, I was hesitant to apply because I didn't go to any school but he told me that the training does not require any formal education, so I applied and joined," Mr Muhinda reveals.

He went through a three-month training and gained skills in metal works and fabrication that have enabled him to start a workshop that makes among others metallic doors and windows.

After training, Muhinda got a job in Bushenyi town as a welder. He worked for three months and saved his earnings which he later used with a loan to start a workshop in Sheema Municipality.

Muhinda is among the first cohort of 300 people who were enrolled in the USDP skills training programme at Nyamitanga Technical Institute. The institute was selected by the government to train skilled manpower for the manufacturing sector.

training reshaping landscape in Bushenyi



A student in the workshop at Lake Katwe Technical Institute.

PHOTO/ ALEX ASHABA

students (25 boys, 15 girls) and they completed their training in December 2022. The second cohort of students is ongoing with 15 students; 10 boys and five girls.

The institute has five instructors who underwent specialised refresher training in France, tailored for the project. On return, they also trained five other instructors. Currently, the Institute has 10 trained instructors.

Mr Wako emphasises the relevance of these short skills courses to the local communities, saying many graduates have successfully

transitioned into the workforce and are job creators.

Mr Ernest Everest Kebongzi, an instructor, says students enrolled in the project undergo comprehensive training before they engage in practical work.

The training covers a range of essential skills such as safety protocols, life skills, entrepreneurship, quality control, and understanding the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of the workshop.

These foundational skills are essential for students to effectively manage and maintain the work-

shop's machinery. "It's not a matter of rushing into the workshop to start welding or fabrication," he says.

Explaining the student assessment process, Kebongzi says an internal evaluation is conducted within the school premises. During the evaluation, students showcase their practical skills, putting into practice what they have learned. Additionally, an external assessment takes place, where trainees undertake exams administered by UBTEB.

"The students' practical capabilities align with their academic achievements, and this synergy is evident in the real-world projects they undertake in their respective communities," he adds.

Success stories

In the heart of Katwe-Kabatooro Town Council, nestled within the picturesque landscapes of Kasese, a notable transformation is taking place. Amidst the sun's midday rays, Mr Joward Bwambale, a 23-year-old native of Kigada village, is at work in his newly established welding workshop.

His task on that day was crafting three distinct doors for a client. These doors symbolise more than just utilitarian fixtures; they are the doors of opportunity that swung open for Mr Bwambale through the skills development project at Lake Katwe Technical Institute.

In 2021, as the world grappled

with the aftermath of Covid-19, he found himself at crossroads after completing Senior Four. Due to lack of school fees, he did not go for advanced education, but opted to be a casual laborer at Lake Katwe for three months.

He later joined his uncle's modest welding workshop, a move that would eventually alter the trajectory of his life. His transformation sprouted from a single decision; enrolling in the skills development project at Lake Katwe Technical Institute in the first cohort, for three months.

The institute's halls became Mr Bwambale's crucible of change. Initially envisioning a swift mastery of skills, he encountered a comprehensive curriculum that expanded his limits.

He experimented with various techniques, from welding to fabrication, and even honed his craft in crafting tables and chairs. The institute has proved not only to be a training ground but also a launchpad for new students.

By December 2022, Mr Bwambale's knowledge culminated in a pivotal moment when he completed a three-month course in welding. When he returned to his uncle's workshop, he designed a

unique door that caught the eyes of passersby. This ignited a demand that echoed throughout the town of Katwe-kabatooro, 70km away from Kasese town. This was Mr Bwambale's turning point.

He says most people in the area have ceased buying some of the welding products such as doors from Kasese town opting to buy from his welding workshop.

In January when his uncle left the welding workshop to take up a job in Kampala, he entrusted Bwambale with the responsibility of managing this estate. Bwambale seized this opportunity.

His initial client was the institute where he studied. They entrusted him with a contract to make 56 student beds, each at Shs180,000. The proceeds from this venture played a pivotal role in boosting his business. At present, his craftsmanship extends beyond beds. He skillfully creates an array of products, including doors, windows, chairs, and beds.

His door designs fetch amounts ranging from Shs350,000 to Shs450,000, depending on the size and design. Chairs are priced at Shs80,000, while tables are at Shs100,000.

Ms Anent Akakwa, a 21-year-old alumna of the skills development project, joined Bwambale's workshop, reaping the rewards of her diligence.

"A day's earnings are averagely Shs30,000," Akakwa shared, her voice resonating with gratitude as she thanks the government's investment in skills development had unlocked doors to financial stability.

"It takes me approximately three days to finalise a door and deliver it to the customer. I'm diligently saving to establish my workshop. The demand for skilled craftsmanship is substantial due to the ongoing construction projects," she says.

MODULAR LEARNING

Modularised training gives opportunity to learners to be productive even when they have not completed the full course. At the end of a module, one is free to engage in employment and return for the next module as and when he/she wishes. The students' practical capabilities align with their academic achievements, and this synergy is evident in the real-world projects they undertake in their respective communities.



COUNTRYWIDE

UGANDA SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (USDP)

Technical and vocational education: Developing and producing highly demanded and skilled manpower

Daily Monitor
www.monitor.co.ug

Ssesse Farm Institute equips students with practical skills

BY DAVID SEKAYINGA
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Ssesse Farm Institute was established in 1964 as a small farm school and later in 2011, elevated to a farm institute.

Under USDP it was upgraded to train skilled manpower for the agriculture sector. It is one of the VTIs networking with BAC.

Ssesse Farm Institute is earmarked to train skilled manpower in livestock production and business management at certificate level.

It has enrolled about 132 learners in the new courses.

Mr Stephen Abasa, the Principal of Ssesse Farm Institute, says they received a number of support from the government under USDP, which has enabled them to train students.

Part of the funds, Mr Abasa says were used to construct a milk processing unit, modern milking shade, zero grazing unit, as well as supplying training materials, a 32-seater bus, and a tipper truck.

Currently, the institute has eight instructors.

"The curriculum we follow favours students, including the community and the teachers themselves. It is unique and grants all stakeholders hands-on training," he says.

He says local agricultural farms such as Delta Farm and Namutebi Farm have partnered with the institute for refresher courses under the skilling initiative.

"The skilling programme has greatly helped us in training staff from here and abroad. It also gave room to the local community including leaders to get training in livestock production and business management," he says.

With improved infrastructure, Mr Abasa says the institute will further increase its intake as it offers advanced skills compared to previous years.

Sulait Mutebi, aged 21 years joined Ssesse Farm Institute in Kalamulungwa District to pursue a Certificate in Livestock Production and Business Management.

The course, he says, had seven modules; parasitology control, animal diseases investigations and control, veterinary public health, anatomy, animal movement and transport, record keeping, and pharmacology.

With all the skills acquired from the institute, Mutebi wants to venture into selling drugs and setting up a livestock farm.

Olivia Namutezi, another trainee, says she joined this institute to acquire skills that could later enable her to become a job creator, especially in the agricultural sector.

"After the course, I set up a poultry farm and currently, I have



A trainee with an artificial insemination container.

COURTESY PHOTO

100 birds," says the 21-year-old Namutezi who acquired modern farming skills; majoring in pig-gery and poultry.

"My dream is to establish a bigger farm and treat animals using the skills I acquired from this institute," she says.

After acquiring modern farming skills in rearing animals from the same institute, Phillip Mugagga, 25, says vocational education is the solution to the mushrooming youth unemployment and advises the government to set up more skills development centres.

"I learned a lot and I was able to gain skills of identifying drugs, constructing animal shelters, and feeding. I also gained skills in artificial insemination and milking using a machine," he says.

Mr Rajab Ssemakula, the Kalamulungwa District chairperson, says Ssesse Farm Institute is equipping and producing graduates with skills that can enable them to compete favorably in the job market.

"Many people who have passed through this institute have ended up becoming experts in agriculture which we are proud of as a district," he adds.

Community members have also benefited from this institute as they are granted the opportunity to acquire agricultural skills.

According to Jacob Ssenyama, the chairperson of Kizzi village, about 930 locals have benefited from the programme.

HANDS-ON SKILLS

The skilling programme also gave room to the local community, including leaders to get training in livestock production and business management.

USDP connects trainees with the world of work in Sheema

Proficient. Trainees are equipped with skills to introduce and enable them thrive both at national and international level.

BY FELIX AINEBYOONA
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Karera Technical Institute located in Kashozi Division, Sheema Municipality was selected among the vocational training institutions to implement the USDP.

The government aided institution started in 1984 by the Church of Uganda with two courses of Carpentry and Building. With its development came more courses including Building and Construction, Welding and Metal Fabrication, Plumbing, Electrical installation, Fashion and Design and Automotive Mechanics.

The principal, Mr Boaz Turyahabwe, said before USDP, the lessons were predominantly theoretical which affected the quality of trainees in the job market.

"The government selected our institution to benefit from USDP in Southwestern Uganda Region under Uganda Technical College (UTC) Bushenyi as Centre of Excellence (CoE)," he said.

Mr Turyahabwe says under the project, a welding and metal fabrication workshop was constructed. It is equipped with high tech equipment which is helping trainees undergo advanced and practical welding training.

"Such equipment include laser machines, CNC machines, advanced welding equipment such as tungsten inert gas (TIG) machines. That helps us produce work that beats that on the streets," he says.

He adds "we are training youth to become more knowledgeable in welding so they can compete with welders both at National and International level."

Under this training, Mr Turyahabwe says they admitted 32 people in their first cohort. These had either completed Senior Four or had simple welding skills.

With the second cohort of trainees, he says they will be taken through advanced welding for three months. "They have been trained on basics of welding including Arc and gas welding. When they return, we train them in advanced welding. This phase will take them through various welding techniques. That will enable them to get employment in gas welding because they will have gained those skills," he said.

Mr Turyahabwe appreciates the practical training under USDP. "Previously, the market place frequently said that our trainers had minimal hands-on skills. This programme enables us to meet their needs."

After the training, the students undergo a one-month industrial training with supervision by their



Students in Karera Technical Institute, under the USDP programme, study in the welding workshop. PHOTO/ FELIX AINEBYOONA

instructors. Thereafter, they are assessed by the institute and by Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board (UBTEB).

Mr Fred Mude, the head of the welding and metal fabrications department and production unit and manager under USDP says they are training youth as well as producing welded products due to the USDP.

"Apart from training both local welders and international welders, we are manufacturing components for the public. These include windows, doors, gates, milling of gears, among others," he said.

Mr Mude says they are currently at advanced welding, using metal active gas, metal inert gas and tungsten inert gas. "As we work on heavy plates which require grooving like how it is done in oil and gas, this welding technique is ideal."

He is thankful for the one month training in France alongside five colleagues as it improved their knowledge. "Apart from getting the skills, I have become a welding and metal fabrications consultant. That helped me to when creating

the short courses curriculum and in requesting machines for oil and gas," he said.

Mr Mude believes with the skills given, the students should ably get work in various welding fields as they have all the necessary skills.

"We give them skills on welding from a flat surface, vertical (up and down) horizontal, overhead welding, and then welding of pipes (5G and 6G). Sometimes, when welding a pipe, one could either use the rotational method or fixed," he said.

Success stories

Mr Mike Nuwaha, a former student at Karera Technical Institute, says he did not have any skills when he joined in 2021 after completing his Senior Four.

"I was taught welding and got exposed to operating different machines such as drilling machines, laser machines and then gas welding. I am well experienced in working with Tungsten inert gas (tig)," he says, "I am thankful for the opportunity as the marketplace is enjoyable because I am knowledgeable."

Mr Turyahabwe says the course is expensive for the locals and is thankful that the students are funded. "We found out that one trainee would require not less than Shs2m for training and materials."

He says the numbers are still very small because we must adhere to international training standards. "We do not want to train the way we did it before where 50 students used one piece of equipment. We want to keep it at a ratio of four or five to one. Therefore, our admissions, at the moment, can only be between 25-30 people."

Nonetheless, overall enrolment has increased from 200 to 300. The hands-on mode of training is now borrowed across all disciplines.

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STUDENTS
IN THE FIRST
COHORT

SKILLED LABOUR

The youth are trained to be more knowledgeable in welding to compete with welders at national and international level. They are taught various skills on welding techniques. These include welding on a flat surface, vertical (up and down) horizontal, overhead welding, and then welding of pipes (5G and 6G). Sometimes, when welding a pipe, one could either use the rotational or fixed method.



Hands-on training takes centre stage in Zombo District

BY FELIX WAROM OKELLO &
CLEMENT ALUMA
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Ora Technical Institute in Zombo District is a government-aided institute that was started in 1982.

It is one of the technical institutes that was networked with UTC Lira to train skilled manpower road construction sector.

Ora Technical Institute, according to its Principal Mr Whickley Booker Okoda, has so far trained 150 students for the two cohorts in skills of highway and road construction. He says, at least 40 students are being targeted for the third cohort.

Mr Okoda says roads are major drivers of the economy and therefore, need highly skilled persons to work on them. The skills needed for highway and road construction trades include technical proficiency and problem-solving skills, hand-to-eye coordination, and proficiency

in mathematics and reading.

Mr Okoda says the course is quite demand-driven since the road construction companies require skilled graduates.

He says to meet the market demand for skilled employment, the entry requirement is a minimum of a certificate in Building Construction, Plumbing or Woodwork/Carpentry, or surveying since they are related to Road construction.

Mr John Onzima, an instructor at Ora Technical Institute, says students are equipped with skills in fixing potholes and cracks on the road, laying pavements and curbs

ASSESSMENT MANUAL

Assessment manual were developed for the road construction curricula. Each manual was inline with the occupational standards and the block of competencies.



NAIT training laboratory and classroom at Ora Technical Institute. COURTESY PHOTO

on the road, painting, road markings, and managing traffic and pedestals close to the construction site, use of hand and power tools, performing drainage works among

others. Learners assessment is done by the Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board (UBTEB). It covers both theory and practical sections. Ms Jane Apio, a

resident of Ora village, says the institute has helped to fight illiteracy among the youth as many are now enrolling to acquire skills such that they can be job creators.

UTC Lira equipping students with road construction skills

Modeled. Uganda Technical College Lira was modeled into a Centre of Excellence in the area of highway and road construction.

BY BILL OKETCH
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Mr Jacob Akunobere, the Principal of Uganda Technical College (UTC) Lira says under the USDP, the college was partnered with the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) of Canada.

The College was modeled into a Centre of Excellence (CoE) in the area of highway and road construction.

Mr Akunobere says the approach the government has taken to reform skills training is the best. It is the approach that many developed countries took on and now they are successful as industrialised economies.

"We thank the government for that foresight and it is at the right time that we have a number of our youth looking for what to do," he says.

Under the project, UTC Lira was networked with Kitgum Technical Institute, Kalongo Technical Institute, and Ora Technical Institute. The four institutions are earmarked to provide a sufficient number of trained human resources for road construction in Uganda.

While UTC Lira trained human resources at higher levels programmes, the networking vocational training institutes trained



A vibrating roller is one of the equipment at UTC Lira that students use for training to acquire skills. COURTESY PHOTO

them at lower levels.

The USDP courses are that modularized and competence-Based Training (CBT).

"We all know that because of the nature of the current curricula, it takes someone a maximum of two years to complete a diploma course. The new curriculum consists of training modules. Each module contains a full package of competencies that a learner must acquire to accomplish a task or job," he says.

The emphasis is acquisition of competencies rather than aca-

demical papers. At the end of a module or two, a learner is assessed to ensure that he/she has gained the competencies to accomplish a task. The learner is free to get employed, work, and earn a living. At a later stage, they can come back and move on to the next modules.

"We have already trained over 300 learners since October 2022. I wish to assure you that UTC Lira is committed to supporting the training of technicians in four disciplines; Land surveying and topography, road construction and maintenance, bridge and culvert

construction, and soils and materials testing," he adds.

The Principal says UTC Lira received road construction equipment and motor vehicles in March 2022. The equipment included an excavator, a grader, a wheel loader, a low bed, digital road surveying equipment, a bus, a van, and a pick-up truck that were all procured by the Ministry of Education and Sports under USDP.

"We have used the learners and the equipment to work on all internal roads at the college. As one can see, UTC Lira is not the same," Mr Akunobere says.

In terms of building facilities, UTC Lira received material and soil testing laboratory block, a two-floored classroom block, a state-of-the-art administration block, three-storied girls and boys hostels, four floored staff house, heavy-duty machine shade, firefighting equip-

ment, solar water pump, among others.

Success stories

Mr Fred Ogwang, a resident of Arwot Village, Amolator District, says after being awarded a Certificate in Civil Engineering, he spent some years without a job.

He decided to engage in farming as a way of earning a living.

In 2022, Ogwang heard about a training opportunity at UTC Lira. He enrolled and trained for over six months in road construction and maintenance.

He sat for the Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board (UBTEB) in March this year. Currently, Ogwang is working with the Amolatar District local government as a volunteer supervisor in charge of road construction and maintenance.

Any trainee benefiting from the skills development training is, therefore, getting highly skilled and competent required by the labour market.

Mr Herbert Apita, the Lira City councillor, says the road construction equipment supplied to UTC Lira will aid road construction and infrastructural development in the Lango Sub-region.

He adds that the government is investing in vocational skills training through technical education as one of the steps to address youth unemployment.

Dr Jacob Nyende, the chairman of the governing council of UTC-Lira, says, "A lot has been done by the Ministry of Education and Sports and I feel we have taken off. With all the equipment that the ministry has supplied to us, we believe as an institution, to move on. I feel that the government has done enough for us though we still demand more."

300
LEARNERS HAVE
BEEN TRAINED BY
THE COLLEGE

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Human resource development plan with an organisation structure befitting a centre of excellence in road construction was developed for UTC Lira. It details structure and human resource requirement that should be put in place to propel UTC Lira into a leading road construction centre in the East Africa region.



**NORTHERN
REGION**

UGANDA SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (USDP)
Technical and vocational education: Developing and producing highly demanded and skilled manpower

Daily Monitor
www.monitor.co.ug

Kitgum Technical Institute moots for mindset change in vocational training

Networked. Under the reforms in Technical, Vocational Education and Training, Kitgum Technical Institute was networked to train skilled manpower for high-way and road construction.

BY BILL OKETCH
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The USDP has brought positive changes, including the promotion of infrastructural development growth and the creation of a more skilled and diverse workforce in Kitgum District.

"Many people used to think that the Skilling Uganda project was a joke. When you talked about technical education, people were not interested. People did not look at the benefits of technical education but with this project, the communities are now perceiving technical education positively, and that is why enrollment is also going up," Mr Aldo Kidega, the Principal of Kitgum Technical Institute says.

Kitgum Technical Institute is among the selected institutes which benefitted from the skills development project.

Under the reforms in TVET, Kitgum Technical Institute was networked with UTC Lira which is a Centre of Excellence to train skilled manpower for high-way and road construction.

It was transformed into a modern institute to train in sufficient numbers the manpower required for road construc-



Kitgum Technical Institute soil testing laboratory. PHOTO BY BILL OKETCH

tion and specialised in soil and materials testing.

"The project supplied us with sophisticated soil and material testing equipment. At Kitgum Technical Institute, at least 30 students were enrolled in the first cohort and some are already working," he says.

The institute stands ready to support construction companies to conduct soil and material testing from Kitgum instead of going to far away districts. The institute has well-qualified and trained instructors who can do the testing for clients, he says.

"We have many new infrastructures in place. We have a laboratory block that has two classrooms; one ICT lab with about 30 computers, a soil testing laboratory and a generator house; all thanks to USDP," he says.

The instructor Mr Richard Okullu highlights that essential skills for highway and road construction trades encompass professionalism and a robust work ethic, effective teamwork and collaboration, adapt critical thinking and problem solving abilities, proficient oral and written communication skills, along with a requisite level of physical fitness.

He adds that using the knowledge and skills they have acquired, and certification in highway and road construction obtained, the trainees can be employed by any highway and road construction companies in Uganda.

According to Mr Okullu, physical discussions were held with the trainees, laboratory work, assignments, industrial visits, and external examinations were conducted to assess the students.

The assessment manual was developed for the four road construction curricula. Each manual was in line with the occupational standards and the block of competencies.

"An industrial training which takes three months and a write-up report produced by the trainees is one of the requirements for the examining body; Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board.

Success stories

Sunday Otto, a former trainee at Kitgum Technical Institute, says due to hands-on training, he has skills that can enable him to compete favorably in the job market.

Charles Oryem, another trainee, says the project has helped to widen his knowledge in the field of soil and material testing. After completion of all the modules, a trainee is awarded a certificate of competence in soil and material testing, road construction or bridge and culvert installation depending on the skills one acquired.

ELIGIBLE

Persons holding certificates in building construction, carpentry and joinery and plumbing, diplomas and degrees in construction (civil and building engineering), and water engineering as well as prior learning are eligible.

Kalongo Technical specialises in surveying and topography



NAIT training laboratory and classroom. PHOTO BY JOAN SALMON

BY JOAN SALMON
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Kalongo Technical Institute in Agago District was selected by the government under the USDP to train students in high-way and road construction skills.

Mr Godfrey Wilfred Kisarach, the Principal of Kalongo Technical Institute is appreciative of the USDP as it enabled them get two

extra courses; Land surveying and topography and bridge construction and maintenance.

The institute started in 1983 with two traditional courses; woodwork technology, and building construction.

Through USDP, Kalongo Technical Institute got an infrastructural uplift that included a block that houses five classrooms, and a soil and materials laboratory

to test bridge construction materials. That is not forgetting the boys' washrooms constructed and a transformer that serves the school.

The school also got 72 desktops for their ICT lab and five laptops that aid the instructors in content delivery.

"We got a 30-seater coaster plus a tipper truck. The coaster helps us transport students to the college for training visits and industrial training at the industry. On the other hand, the tipper truck is used in the transportation of materials such as cement, culverts, sand, and stones for practical work respectively," he says.

The institute has so far passed out two cohorts; 24 and 19 respectively.

Mr Kisarach says they have followed up with some of these students, more so those from the surveying course.

"We found that their performance has been amazing. This is

attributed to the improved subject delivery, thanks to the training that our staff members got from France and NAIT under USDP," he says.

Mr Alphonse Ocan Ongom, an instructor for building construction was picked and trained on bridge and culvert installation.

"We were trained in three areas; topographical land survey, road construction and maintenance as well as bridge and culvert installation. It was a two-month on-

line training conducted by the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology of Canada," he says.

Mr Daniel Odele another instructor, says the institute was facilitated with machines such as dumpy level, total station, and RTK which are critical for surveying.

"We also got equipment for soil testing, and culvert installation which eases practical work," he says.

He says the institute has been empowered to churn out specialists which means they have the skill, and attitude needed for the job. That is different from before where a student did brick work, alongside culvert installation and surveying hence no special field.

Mr Odele is appreciative of the training received, "I did not know much about surveying but through the training both here and abroad, I am better equipped to teach as well as serve the country."

Success stories

Mr Ivan Okello, a student of topography and land surveying started in February 2023.

"Through the training, we are learning what the world of work needs such as the necessity to plan for roads and buildings before construction. That has taught me to be creative," he says.

Mr Okello hopes to open up a surveying firm that will serve the community.

Denis Komakech came to Kalongo Technical Institute in 2018 for a Certificate in Agriculture and completed it in 2021.

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LEARNERS
ENROLLED IN THE
NEW COURSE**