VOCATIONALISATION OF SECONDARY EDUCATION: A CASE OF PANYADOLI SELF-HELP SECONDARY SCHOOL
Vocational training, also known as Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Career and Technical Education (CTE) is education that provides job-specific technical training for work in trade or a craft. The programs availed focus on providing students with hands-on skills, and can lead to certification.

In 2017 given its longstanding commitment to providing education for refugees, Windle International Uganda (WIU) led Vocationalisation of secondary education to offer a comprehensive package of education for the students of Panyadoli Self-help Secondary school. Panyadoli Self-help Secondary school is a WIU supported school located in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement with the majority student population refugees from South Sudan.

WIU is a registered International NGO operating in Uganda whose primary mission is to provide access to quality education and training for refugees and other persons affected by conflict through advocacy and direct programming. Whilst WIU makes it possible for over 622,156 refugee children to access quality education, many of them are unable to go past secondary education due to limited resources. As a result, these children remain idle and disorderly in the communities posing a greater burden to the nation given the current unemployment rate. It is situations like this amidst others that brought light to the lack of technical/vocational skills among the refugees that would help to combat the unemployment and skills gap hence Vocationalisation of Secondary Education.

With a focus on Catering and Hotel Management, Welding and Metal Fabrication and Motor Vehicle Mechanics, Vocational training was rolled out in Panyadoli Self-help Secondary school in 2017 and with this meant construction of training facilities including a Kitchen, Welding and Metal Fabrication Workshop, and a Garage. At least 100 students between S.2-S.5 enrolled for the initial training in 2017.

The courses are undertaken in two levels and spread out within a period of two years where each level is covered in 12months. Level one is meant for students with a Primary Leaving Certificate and Level two is for students with Uganda Certificate of Education Certificate. Some students however
move from level one to two thereby studying for two years. The Vocational training is incorporated into the students timetables to avoid interference with national curriculum secondary school activities.

For two years now, the students have been subjected to Global Industry Training Examinations from the Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board and 78 students graduated with vocational skills in 2017 and 110 in 2018.

**Table showing the number of students who have graduated per course**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>GIT Level</th>
<th>No. of students 2017</th>
<th>No. of students 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welding</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catering</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>78</strong></td>
<td><strong>110</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Currently the enrollment is at 140(104 Refugees and 36 Nationals) students out of which 58 are training in Motor Vehicle Mechanics, 41 in Welding and Metal Fabrication and another 41 in Catering and Hotel Management.

Many of the students that started the vocational training are currently candidates and are not yet practicing even though we were able to catch up with two graduates now practicing.

**Loponi Emmanuel** graduated in Welding and Metal fabrication in 2018 and is currently running a Metal Fabrication workshop.
from which, he hopes to raise tuition for his university education. Unlike many of his colleagues that are sitting back in the absence of funds to continue with university Education, Emmanuel is working. He remains grateful for the opportunity to have skills training and intends to become a Trainer himself once he graduates from the University.

Similarly, Kinyera Jackson is a practicing Mechanic at a makeshift garage where he is putting his acquired skills to use. Kinyera undertook training in Motor Vehicle Mechanics in 2017 where he graduated with a GIT Level II certificate. However, after finalizing his secondary education he could not afford to proceed with University Education so he opted to start up the garage. Like Loponi, he is grateful to have crossed paths with Vocational training while undertaking his secondary Education because today he can earn a living.

According to Loponi and Kinyera, vocationalisation of secondary education is a worthwhile opportunity as their colleagues that didn’t have the opportunity are now stuck with no hope for the future. “This training is very good because my friends who did not train are just seated at home,” Loponi Emmanuel.

Vocational Skills training is no doubt a necessity for the refugee students but there are a few challenges that if ironed out will make Panyadoli Self-Help Secondary School a model school from which other institutions can learn from. Also, this will go a long way in bridging the ever-growing rate of unemployment and poverty whilst creating better livelihood opportunities for the refugee communities.

Some of the challenges cited were;
- Lack of equipment for training more so in the Catering and Hospitality course. Some of the students admitted to have never physically seen an oven and a few other equipment they only heard of in theory.
- Lack of study trips to give the students an understanding of what they are learning for example the students that undertook Hotel management expressed their interest in visiting hotels to see and understand better what they learn.
- No planned internship opportunities to enable students practice what they have learnt.
- Insufficient time allocated to the training activities and yet the students are subjected to the same National Examinations taken country wide.
- The training we also realized is insufficient without startup kits. The students we interacted with said they would be in better position to start their own businesses if they were supported to start up.

Vocationalisation of secondary education cannot be over emphasized given the potential it stretches to refugee students.
Catering class in Kiryandongo underway. Photo by WIU

Students from the Welding and Metal Fabrication Class in Kiryandongo during training. Photo by WIU

Loponi Emmanuel at his workshop in Kiryandongo. Photo by Dionne. K/WIU

Kinyera Jackson at work in his garage. Photo by Dionne.K/WIU