

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE MAKING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Youth unemployment is a nationwide problem in Tanzania. In this case study, World Vision Tanzania (WVT) describe how their Cycle of Transformation (COT) programme aims to tackle the issue and provide young people with the skills, experience, and industry connections to grow their economic futures.



Business Partner Summit with Principals, teachers, students and business partners, October 2018

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Introduction

With support from HDIF, World Vision Tanzania (WVT) designed the Cycle of Transformation (COT) programme to improve student learning in secondary schools and vocational colleges, increase employment and enable technology entrepreneurship – all through technology access, ‘21st century’ training, and work-based learning through school-based student-run enterprises (SBSREs).

WVT deliver COT in partnership with Cisco, Intel, the Tanzania Ministry of Education, the Tanzania Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA), the Tanzania Small Industry Development Organization (SIDO).

WVT initiated the first COT by setting up computer labs in five participating institutions. Implementation teams comprising two teachers and two student helpers (‘student aids’) from each school were trained to deliver a digital literacy course and two ICT vocational courses. Graduates from these courses went on to establish school-based student-run technology companies that in turn developed products and services needed by their community. Sales of these products and services to customers generated resources to train more students. In the process, young people gained work-based skills in technology, marketing, accounting, leadership and more. The cycle has since been repeated and adapted based on learning and experience gathered from the previous cycle.

The innovation opportunity

In Tanzania and throughout much of Africa, bright and motivated students who graduate from secondary schools and vocational colleges have difficulty building livelihoods. At the same time, the local market evaluations conducted through this project revealed significant community demand for affordable technology, with few existing businesses to fulfill that demand, especially outside of large urban areas. Most secondary schools also have limited access to computers, and the vocational colleges that do not offer ICT as a specialty provide few practical experiences to go along their theoretical computer training. To build livelihoods in the technology industry and fulfill the local demand for affordable technology products and services, Tanzanian youth must learn relevant technology skills, learn to apply those skills in practical contexts, and be empowered to start their own businesses.

“I was intrigued by the idea of trained youth working with the community and gaining connections with future employers. I also knew they could support our other production units like carpentry and electrical.”

Principal Felix Ole Ndukai, VETA Manyara

The innovation

The CoT Theory of Change states that to gain the skills and confidence needed to achieve successful employment or entrepreneurship in the technology sector, students first need access to technology; then digital literacy foundational training followed by ICT vocational training that provides practical experience; then business skills training needed to design, launch, and operate a business that harnesses their technology skills. Finally, trained youth need computer work experience to learn business models and add value.

During the first CoT, implementation teams comprising two teachers and two student helpers ('student aides') from each school were trained to deliver a digital literacy course and two ICT vocational courses. Graduates from these courses went on to establish school-based student-run technology companies that in turn developed products and services needed by their community. Sales of these products and services to customers generated resources to train more students. In the process, young people gained work-based learning skills in technology, marketing, accounting, leadership and more. The cycle has since been repeated and adapted based on learning and experience gathered from the previous cycle.

The challenge and breakthroughs

The challenges and breakthroughs are best divided into CoT's three components: 'Train Students', 'Produce Products/Services' and 'Sell to Customers'. Each of these can be further categorised by three of the Digital Design Principles: 'Understand the ecosystem', 'Design with the user', and 'Build for sustainability'. They include, but are not limited to, the following:

Training Students

Understand the ecosystem

- CoT has had to mitigate against a high adult teacher turnover. They have done this by cultivating bright and articulate students who completed the training to return as student aides in subsequent classes.

Design with the user

- Input and buy-in of teachers and senior leaders is essential. The Principals and teachers that attended the initial design workshop all insisted on Cisco Academy due to its relevant skills and industry certification. All wanted multimedia because students are interested and communities need it.

Build for sustainability

- Schools need free or low-cost curriculum tools that trained teachers can deliver without support. Intel Learn practical digital literacy lesson plans were donated by Intel while Cisco charged \$250/person for teacher training with an annual \$250 fee per school, plus the cost of internet (\$15/month), which the principals claimed they would sustain. Open source multimedia tools such as Word Press were also used. SIDO delivered the business training free of charge.

Produce marketable products and services

Understand the ecosystem

- Community surveys performed by students revealed a strong demand for basic products and services such as refurbished laptops and computer and phone repairs but few or no suppliers. The students identified a gap in the market and proceeded to plug it.

Build for sustainability

- SBSREs have found it better to focus on work-based learning that is not time consuming and is sustainable. For example, although the students could refurbish computers, it was too difficult to import them due to customs requirements and pre-paying suppliers. Instead, students at VETA Manyara (for example) focus on repairing computers, training community members in digital literacy and producing brochures and business cards.

Selling to Customers

Understand the ecosystem

- SBSREs must be legally registered to sell products and services. The current environment makes it challenging for youth who are still at school to acquire business licenses since some are under age.

Design with the users

- All five Principals were concerned about the risks of young people running a business within the school and agreed to fold the SBSREs into their existing 'production and sustainability' structures; supporting the schools' existing business ventures with any revenue retained by the school.

Learning

By definition, the ecosystem has many facets, and each one of them affect the project. Lessons from the five institutions involved in the first cycle include:

Don't be too ambitious at the start especially if you are innovating a number of untested factors. The initial number of 25 colleges and locations consumed resources and delayed the programme.

Make frequent visits to all the programme locations. Reducing the number of schools and increasing the number of visits to each remaining school (monthly) had a dramatic effect on progress. We were able to respond quicker to schools that had got off-track or needed a little help to proceed, whereas previously they might have waited months for the problem to be solved.

Think deeply about the development impacts of government policies and design programmes accordingly. One idea for CoT's work-based learning was to help Tanzania create a low-cost computer sales, repair, and training channel affordable to the poor while building livelihoods for youth. Yet Tanzania's customs laws, VAT tax, and business license policies make that difficult, especially for SBSREs with little capital and new to business. A better solution would be to affiliate SBSREs with local companies, serving as their agents, using their business license, with no change in ownership. Existing businesses benefit by expanding their market reach through the SBSREs.

Build a self-help network of colleges so that instructors and technicians can share and resolve both technical and pedagogical challenges. Our biggest concern about sustainability was the reliance schools have on WVT's monthly visits. Start early creating regular conference calls, WhatsApp groups, FaceBook pages and other forums to enable collaboration, eventually without the project lead.

"As they were working together, and attending the recommended courses [these students...] were found collaborating in projects they were doing; creative in developing new products and running a business; communicating effectively among themselves and in presentation, and enterprising using ICTs in marketing their products and providing services to their schools and communities."

Study on the impact of CoT, University of Dar es Salaam, February 2019.

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