



# COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING



## The key to increasing access & improving quality in TVET

INVEST challenges TVET teachers, managers and policy makers to change the way they think about how to provide technical and vocational skills training. INVEST involves educational media and technology in flexible approaches to teaching and learning. By investing in staff capacity building and ICT infrastructure, creating new organisational structures and designing new strategic objectives, TVET institutions are increasing the quality of their courses, becoming more efficient and opening up provision for learners who have historically been locked out of the TVET system.

INNOVATION IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING





## Why does Africa need INVEST?

The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) Triennale 2012 agreed that technical and vocational education and training (TVET) systems in Africa are characterised by:

- Expanding informal sector and shrinking wage employment opportunities
- Huge numbers of poorly educated, frustrated and unemployed youth who are 'locked out' of the formal skills training system
- Unequal training opportunities fostered by inequities based on geographical location, gender and socio-economic factors

The flexible and blended approach to TVET which is advocated by INVEST Africa partners aims to mitigate these challenges at the local level. At Commonwealth of Learning (COL), we believe that formal TVET institutions will never be able to meet the demand for skills training through 'bricks and mortar' approaches. Innovative flexible and blended TVET programmes which benefit from the application of information and communication technology (ICT) offer the potential to increase access and make quality and efficiency gains.

## What needs to change?

INVEST supports innovation in TVET institutions to bring about change: change in the way teaching and learning happens, change in the way courses are designed, change in organisational structure and change in the types of students who gain an opportunity for skills training. Through educational media and appropriate technology formal TVET systems are becoming more flexible and responsive to the needs of their local community and are meeting national policy objectives.

## Who's involved?

The 13 partner institutions from seven countries (The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia) all belong to the Commonwealth Association for Polytechnics in Africa.

Teachers, managers and support staff are all involved in INVEST as new ways of teaching and learning are introduced. Policy makers also have a role to play to ensure quality assurance mechanisms are in place and adequate resourcing is available.



## Innovative Staff Development

Capacity for innovation in vocational education and skills training is being built through workshops and institutional visits but in our flexible and blended approach to capacity building we also offer online training. Teachers, policy makers, managers and other TVET stakeholders are engaged in learning through specially designed online courses on the COL Moodle Learning Management System (LMS). The INVEST Community Learning Network is an online informal learning and social networking platform offering a community of practice for 700+ members.



## What changes are happening in institutions?

### Strategic

- Flexible approaches specified in strategic plans
- Converting courses to open and distance learning (ODL)
- Targets set to increase learners through ODL
- Achieving government performance contracting targets
- ODL policies in place

### Organisational

- Establishing Flexible and Blended (FaB) Champions and teams
- Creating FaB and FSD Centres to provide support and resources
- Creation of an Institute for ODL
- Strengthening ICT Technical Support units
- Establishing satellite and outreach centres

### Infrastructure

- Loan scheme for teachers to purchase laptops
- Expanding WiFi networks on campus
- Installing Moodle LMS
- Upgrading servers
- Increasing bandwidth
- Increasing computer lab capacity through virtualisation
- Use of campus radio in course delivery
- Establishing television and radio stations

### Teaching & Learning

- Integrating educational media into classroom teaching
- Integrating open educational resources (OER) into teaching and learning materials
- Developing eLearning components and courses
- Focus on quality assurance
- Developing new flexible courses for working people
- Developing courses for the informal sector

SINCE 2011, AN ADDITIONAL 6,800 LEARNERS HAVE GAINED AN OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY THROUGH FLEXIBLE TVET COURSES

## New Organisational Structures



*Being the FSD Champion has transformed the way I think, handle, relate to and lead people in exploring innovation in flexible and blended learning.*

Francis Wambua, Masai TTI

Introducing a new teaching and learning paradigm requires not only a new way of thinking but also new organisational structures. Each INVEST partner has an institutional Champion for flexible skills development (FSD) and most have departmental FSD teams that support and champion the integration of technology in teaching and learning.

Restructuring the organisation to support the new approach leads to sustainable change. Koforidua Polytechnic in Ghana has established an Institute for Open & Distance Learning with a staff of 10 to support flexible skills development in campus-based programmes. This includes new radio lessons and the installation of the Moodle LMS to provide eLearning opportunities. They also provide courses for the informal sector. Their first enrolment offered training for 300 people working in the informal sector.

*Being FSD Champion has equipped me to bring creativity and change in the teaching and learning processes of my institution.*

Samuel Okae-Adjei Director,  
IODL, Koforidua Polytechnic



Auchi Polytechnic in Nigeria has created a Centre for Flexible Skills Development to spearhead and support the integration of flexible approaches to programme delivery for both formal on-campus students and short courses for the informal sector.

*Being an FSD champion has transformed my life. I have become a lover and user of ICT. Delivering OER quality learning content has become enjoyable and easy. I have become a virtual learner. FSD changed me from a teacher to a facilitator, from being a giver of knowledge to a guide in the learning process.*

Rose Kiiru, Thika TTI

*An idea becomes an innovation only when it can be replicated reliably on a meaningful scale at practical costs.*

Senge 1999  
The Fifth Discipline



## Gender and equity in TVET

This activity is grounded in a rights-based approach to skills development. COL supports the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All initiatives which acknowledge that people have a right to education and a right to work. Resolving inequity is a central philosophy in INVEST. Urban dwellers access technical and vocational skills development (TVSD) more than rural dwellers; boys more than girls; those with higher levels of basic education more than those with lower levels; and of course, the able bodied more than those with special needs. This activity positively

discriminates towards the previously disadvantaged in order to deliver increased equity and inclusion.

*If the general picture is grim, it is even grimmer for girls.*

UNESCO-UNEVOC  
2006

INVEST Africa partners have established WITED (Women in TVET & Development) Chapters which bring together individuals who work together to

encourage more female students and teachers into

TVET. People working in the informal sector can rarely access TVET. INVEST Africa institutions have addressed this with the offering of 14 new courses this year from institutions in Ghana, Kenya and Zambia – providing opportunities for nearly 900 people, 65% of them women.

Mbeya University of Science and Technology in Tanzania has a very low female student enrolment. To tackle this, they offered a 3-month bridging programme with a guaranteed place on successful completion. As a result, 160 girls gained a place on MUST Diploma programmes and the institution increased female enrolment by 100%.



## What do policy makers say?



So far the flexible skills concept promises a lot of benefit especially for countries like Zambia which is challenged with limited access to TVET. We have a national strategy to develop TVET by open and distance flexible learning and look forward to our partnership with COL. Cleophas Takiza, Director Training Standards, **TEVETA**, Zambia.

## What do teachers say?



Honestly speaking teaching is getting more exciting. I created a class email and am posting all my notes there. I am no longer wasting time dictating the notes. The students write from the net at their own pace and then we discuss. I am saving 50% of my time. Come next term we will discuss over Facebook. Flexible ni mambo yote! (Flexible is everything!) Agnes Karambu Maigallo **TTTI**, Kenya.



For a teacher like me, the use of flexible and blended learning and teaching means students are more motivated. This is because they participate directly in guiding their own learning. The quality of teaching is also greatly enhanced. Jeremiah Agira, **KTTC**, Kenya.



By embracing FSD initiatives my teaching career has been rejuvenated immensely. My trainees no longer complain of old tools, machinery and equipment used for training. This is because I can now access for them nearly all teaching aids online. I am able to shoot, edit and show video clips to my audience using skills acquired through FSD initiatives. As a Champion of FSD, I have improved on the enrolment in my department. We have reached out to the informal sector through short courses thus addressing some issues considered as national challenges. Francis Njoroge Macharia, **TTTI**, Kenya.



FSD is gradually changing my way of instruction from boredom to attentiveness. As a practical teacher with a class size of 100, I used to put the students into groups of 10 and take each group in turn through one practical lesson. But FSD video and audio training have made it easy and more interesting because all the activities are recorded on the CD, I project it in class and we discuss it and they ask questions and respond to them. And they are given a CD each to continue watching in their homes and hostels. So, instead of me using 10 days for a lesson, I now use a day. And students now feel confident in their planning to carry out their practical. Joyce Quaye, **KP**, Ghana.



Flexible and blended skills promote strategies that can be implemented to reach the excluded and disadvantaged groups such as women and youth who are mostly engaged in informal entrepreneurial activities with little or no training available to them. These groups may have been marginalised to a large extent by the traditional system. Lenah Sambu, **RVTTI**, Kenya.

## What do managers say?



We meet the needs of working people who can't study full-time and we earn income to contribute to improved learning resources. INVEST is a lifeline for us; we receive a grant from government which is less than 10% of our operating costs. ODL courses help us to balance our institutional budget. Pascal Chewes, Principal, **TVTC**, Kenya.



Since becoming a INVEST Africa Key Institution in 2010, we have increased the number of learners and training programmes we offer. We now have full-time, part-time and holiday-based programmes, and we are in the process of launching distance learning programmes. John Mwawaza, Principal, **CIT**, Kenya.



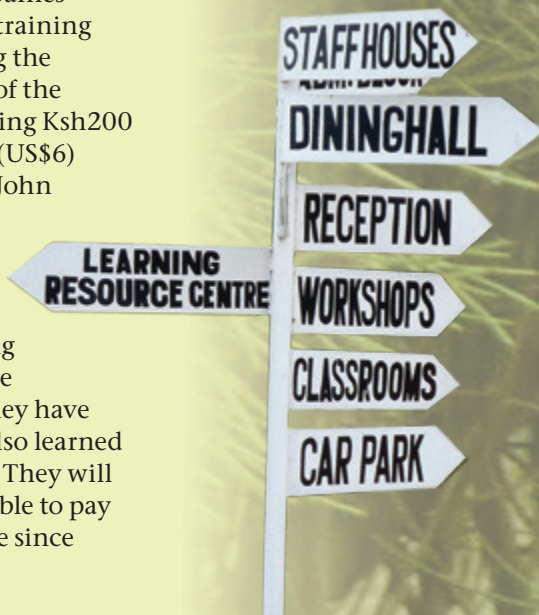
Instead of investing heavily in constructing more classroom blocks, ICT could reduce learning costs by introducing FaB approaches such as the radio and mobile phones programmes to reach the informal sector. Edward Caesar Mansal, Director of Academics, **GTTI**, Kenya.

## Impacting on livelihoods



Fifty-three young people who were either unemployed or working as unskilled labourers on building construction sites were offered a free Building Technology course at Coast Institute of Technology in Kenya. Local companies sponsored training

consumables and for their practical training the trainees built a staff house. On completion of the course, many of the trainees who were earning Ksh200 (US\$2.50) per day are now earning Ksh500 (US\$6) per day as semi-skilled labourers. Principal John Mwawaza, when asked about the efficacy of offering free courses, said “It is part of our performance contract with our parent Ministry to offer courses for local community development. These young people could not afford to pay for this course as they had no, or very low, income. Now they have improved their livelihoods and they have also learned the importance and value of skills training. They will be back for more training and they will be able to pay for courses in the future.” Four trainees have since registered for full-time programmes.



## Critical Success Factors & Quality Assurance

INVEST partners have agreed on a quality assurance framework which evaluates the competence of teachers in FaB approaches and the capability of the institutions. Completion of a portfolio of evidence of achievement regarding policies and strategies, leadership and organisation, curriculum and assessment processes, quality of learning and teaching, and the measurement of impact, will lead to COL recognition.

Critical success factors have been identified as:

- Vision and leadership from institutional heads
- Flexibility enshrined in strategic objectives
- Passion and commitment from educators
- Support from national policymakers

## INVEST Key Institutions

### Our Values

#### Diversity and Inclusion

INVEST partners value diversity and ensure that equity and fairness are embedded in their operations. Access to courses is not determined by age, gender, ethnicity or religious beliefs, and they positively support the rights of women and girls in society and work.

#### Quality and Relevance

INVEST partners are aware of their relevance to all economic stakeholders, including the formal and informal sectors. They take social responsibility seriously and aim to provide the highest quality of service to all learners. They engage with their local community and strive to provide relevant and increasing access to skills training for all.

#### Leadership

INVEST partners are leaders in what they do. Staff are encouraged to innovate by seeking local solutions to national challenges. They strive to improve operating efficiency through collaboration, using OER and sharing experience with others.



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Auchi Polytechnic



Coast Institute  
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Zambia Institute of  
Business Studies &  
Industrial Practice



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