

Mobile Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programming in the Uganda refugee response

A case study



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ACRONYMS

BTVET	Business Technical Vocational Education and Training
DIT	Directorate of Industrial Training
JLIRP	Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
RAISE	Refugee and Host Community Access and Innovation in Skills for Employment
ReHoPE	Refugee And Host Population Empowerment Strategic Framework
SSU	Support to Skilling Uganda
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UAHEB	Uganda Allied Health Examinations Board
UBTEB	Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board
UNMEB	Uganda Nurses and Midwives Examination Board
UVQF	Uganda Vocational Qualifications Framework
VTI	Vocational Training Institute

Executive summary

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is recognised by UNESCO as being part of both the universal right to education and the right to work.¹ However, for many, including refugees based in settlements in Uganda, accessing TVET opportunities remains extremely challenging. These challenges are due to a number of interconnected reasons, including the lack of TVET facilities, the location of TVET centres and the location of the settlements, the cost of TVET courses, and the residential nature of many of the courses.

In contrast to mobile learning TVET – which is defined as using technology to provide TVET on mobile devices, such as a mobile phone or laptop² – mobile TVET is used to describe the process of moving TVET closer to communities that have been identified as being able to benefit from this form of education but are unable – due to logistical, financial, and other constraints – to access the traditional TVET sites.

In settings such as Uganda’s refugee response, where digital inclusion and internet connectivity remains a challenge, mobile TVET is more applicable than mobile learning TVET and results in an “increased or improved learner motivation, engagement, behaviour, retention and achievement.”³

The case study in this report shares learning from the experience of the Uganda-based NGO Africa Non-profit Chore’s (ANCHOR) and its “Refugee and Host Community Access and Innovation in Skills for Employment” (RAISE) project, funded by the German Agency for International Cooperation, through the Belgian Development Agency (Enabel). In this project, ANCHOR implemented a successful mobile TVET programme in an isolated part of Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement in north-western Uganda.

The ANCHOR case study provides a deeper understanding of how mobile TVET addresses some of the barriers faced by last mile populations in accessing traditional TVET opportunities. It is hoped that the case study will allow refugee livelihood and educational sector response actors to incorporate positive and relevant adaptations into their activities.

The ANCHOR case study is also used to highlight the advantages and challenges of implementing a mobile TVET approach, as it is currently used by only a handful of providers in Uganda’s refugee response. Mobile TVET can support refugees, as well as vulnerable host community members and other vulnerable groups, in accessing education and the right to work and being self-reliant both whilst they remain in Uganda, or on their eventual return home.

1 Recommendation concerning technical and vocational education and training (TVET) | UNESCO
2 Mobile learning and TVET for greater inclusion
3 Ibid

Introduction

The primary objective of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is to train individuals on labour market-ready skills. It refers to education, training, and skills development related to a wide range of occupational fields, production types, services, and livelihoods. TVET, as part of lifelong learning, can take place at secondary, post-secondary, and tertiary education levels and includes work-based learning, continuing training, and professional development and may lead to qualifications. TVET is attuned to national and local contexts. Learning to learn, the development of literacy and numeracy skills, transversal skills, and citizenship skills are integral components of TVET.⁴

Box 1: Definitions of TVET

- Technical refers to: subject matters that are technical in nature, relating to hardware and software, including troubleshooting practices and engineering processes.
- Vocational relates to an occupation or an employment, often referring to hands-on skills within professional trades.
- Education refers to: formal education, starting in high school and also including post-secondary education, such as colleges, polytechnics, and universities.
- Training refers to: informal education, also called lifelong learning or continuing education, often used in initiatives of reskilling or upskilling company staff or a wider workforce.

(source: [TVET definition: the TVET meaning and what it stands for - TVET Journal](#))

Business Technical Vocational Education and Training (BTVET) is TVET with additional business skills training and is used interchangeably with TVET in Uganda. This report uses TVET and considers the business aspect to be integrated into the other components.

TVET can be delivered at different levels of sophistication. The training can be tailored to respond to both market demands and – as importantly – the different socio-economic and academic backgrounds of the participants. This tailoring makes it more beneficial for the most vulnerable and marginalised individuals and groups as they can acquire competencies relevant to specific jobs.⁵

However, despite efforts made by public, private, and NGO sector actors, access to TVET remains a challenge for many.

In the second half of 2022, the U-Learn consortium partner IMPACT Initiatives conducted a learning assessment related to TVET. The assessment included the collection of qualitative primary field level data – through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), In-Depth Interviews (IDIs), and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) – and the review of a variety of sourced secondary data. This report presents the results of that assessment and includes a case study on a mobile TVET approach that was piloted in Uganda.

4 See [Technical and vocational education and training \(TVET\)](#)

5 See [Strategy to Revitalize Technical and Vocational Education and Training \(TVET\) in Africa](#)

TVET in Uganda

In April 2021, Uganda published its [Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities in Uganda - 2020/2021–2024/2025](#) (JLIRP). Strategic objective 4 of the plan focuses on “Skilled refugees and host communities capable of harnessing employment opportunities in the country by 2025.”

As part of the [Skilling Uganda Strategy](#) implementation, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), together with humanitarian donors including the German Agency for International Cooperation, the Belgian Development Agency (Enabel), and Irish Aid, have supported TVET activities to tackle unemployment by increasing vocational training access for the most vulnerable refugees and host communities in the parts of the country lacking TVET opportunities.

Uganda’s labour market is “overwhelmingly informal, with pervasive underemployment and stagnant productivity.”⁶ Skills and training often do not match available formal jobs.⁷

There are almost 1,000 TVET centres (“TVETs”) in Uganda. Over 80% (800+) are privately owned, though not all are registered. A total of 145 are government-run TVETs.⁸ Formal TVET is mostly delivered by public and private training institutions, while non-formal TVET is delivered by private training providers, private companies, and informal rural providers.⁹

All TVET targeting those with **secondary level education** are under the authority of the MoES’ Directorate of [B]TVET and are assessed and certified by national assessment bodies, including the Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board (UBTEB), Uganda Allied Health Examinations Board (UAHEB), Uganda Nurses and Midwives Examination Board (UNMEB), and the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT).¹⁰

Box 2: DIT Certification Process

- Students are registered
- Fees are paid, 70–150,000 UGX per head
- Student registration is verified
- Examinations are booked
- Examinations take place on-site
- Worker’sPAS or other DIT qualifications are provided to successful students

Post-secondary level TVETs are managed by relevant line ministries and private providers. The private providers are represented by the Uganda Association of Private Vocational Institutes. Post-secondary level TVETs use the DIT certification process or “have their own assessment and certification processes, sometimes with international certification agencies.”¹¹

6 See [Strengthening Education and Learning Systems to Deliver a 4IR-ready Workforce in Uganda](#)

7 Ibid

8 The private training providers include NGOs, faith-based organisations, and for-profit firms. See Sustainable Skills - [Technical Vocational Education and Training system in Uganda - Sustainable Skills, List Of TVET Schools In Uganda – 2023/2024](#), ILO SKILLS, and [Full Occupation Assessment Centers – Directorate Of Industrial Training](#)

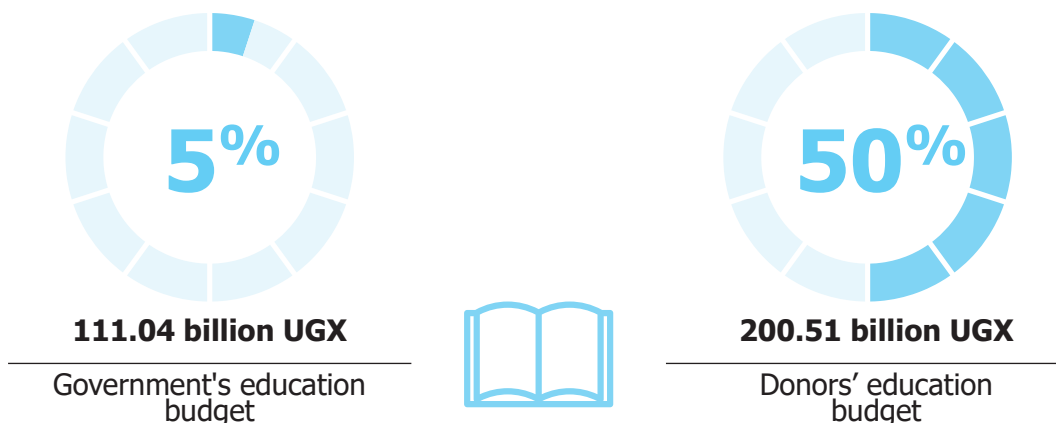
9 See footnote 6

10 These are being combined as a result of the 2019 TVET Policy see below for more details. See MoES - [Technical Vocational Education and Training](#)

11 For instance, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries manages agricultural colleges, and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism manages a tourism college. See UNESCO - [Dynamic TVET Country Profiles](#) and ILO SKILLS

As in many other African countries, TVET programming in Uganda receives around 5% (111.04 billion UGX) of the Government's education budget and is fourth out of the five educational sectors in terms of funding.¹² However, donors are heavily focused on TVET, spending double what the Government does (200.51 billion UGX), representing over 50% of their educational expenditure.¹³

Total yearly TVET budget for Uganda in 2022, per contributor



Box 3: The gender dynamics of TVET

TVET is proven to contribute to women's economic empowerment and improve their quality of life. Yet, women remain significantly underrepresented in TVET training. They constitute only around a third of the participants, even though MoES' [Gender in Education Policy](#) has a 40% enrolment requirement for females. When they access TVET, women mostly enrol in training courses that are socially and/or culturally perceived as being directed towards women, such as hairdressing, baking, and tailoring (see [The contribution of technical and vocational education and training to women's economic empowerment in Kampala, Uganda](#) and footnote 6).

TVET still faces a strong community bias towards women not being learners and "many people still believe that technical education is for male learners."⁶ In addition, the residential nature of TVET centres often exclude women who find this incompatible with their household responsibilities, childcare, and/or their income generating activities. (see footnote 28 and [ILO's occupations and skills assessment](#))

Studies have shown that women who are provided with employable skills to enter labour markets are better included socially and economically. The economic benefit is even greater for those who pursue professions traditionally associated with men rather than traditionally and stereotypically female professions (see above article on the contribution of TVET to women's economic empowerment). Whilst some efforts to break down gender stereotypes are ongoing, more women should be encouraged and supported to access TVET, especially courses traditionally targeted towards men (see [article on vocational education for girls](#)).

12 Skills for Employability and Productivity in Africa (SEPA) - Action Plan, 2022–2025 | African Development Bank
 13 See footnote 6

Despite Government and donor funding to TVET and other skills development programmes in Uganda is still “limited by the small size of the sector with few training providers and insufficient capacity of firms ... to train their employees” and due to the “concentration of the training supply in urban areas.”¹⁴ It also suffers from a perception issue, where TVET is seen as “the last choice for students who fail to enrol in university or to pursue general education.”¹⁵

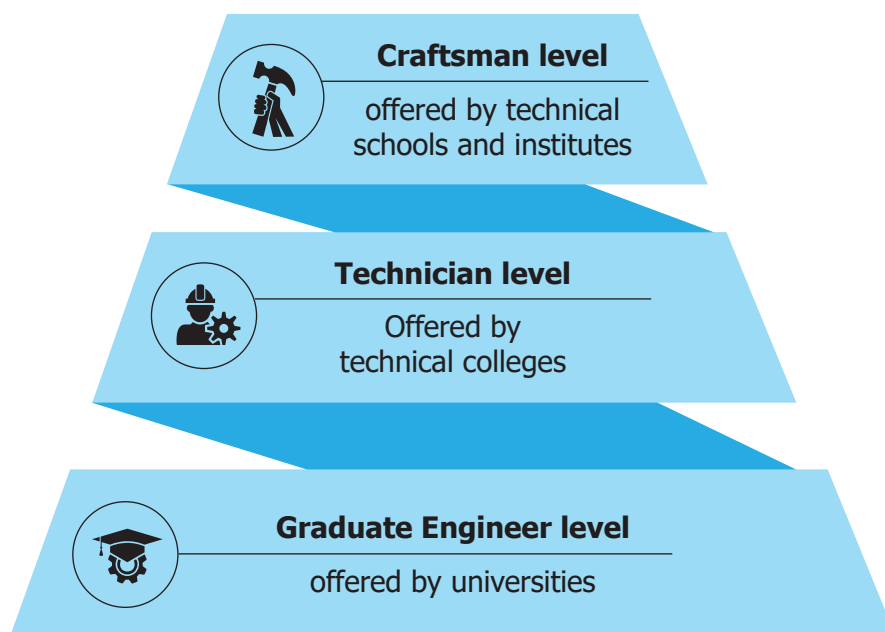
An enabling policy environment

Uganda’s development policies – which include TVET – are framed by the [Uganda Vision 2040](#) which describes the failures of the education and training systems as “major impediments to development.”

Vision 2040 is complemented within the refugee response by the [Global Compact](#), [Uganda’s Refugee Act 2006](#), and the [Refugee Regulations 2010](#), as well as other policies, such as the [Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework](#) and [Refugee And Host Population Empowerment Strategic Framework \(ReHoPE\)](#). These policies, in theory, give refugees the same access to education – including TVET – as Uganda nationals.

The TVET system in Uganda is part of the National Curriculum Development Centre Directorate of Education Standards and several Sector Skills Councils.¹⁶ According to UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, the system consists of three overlapping tiers:¹⁷

Levels of the TVET system in Uganda



14 ILO SKILLS

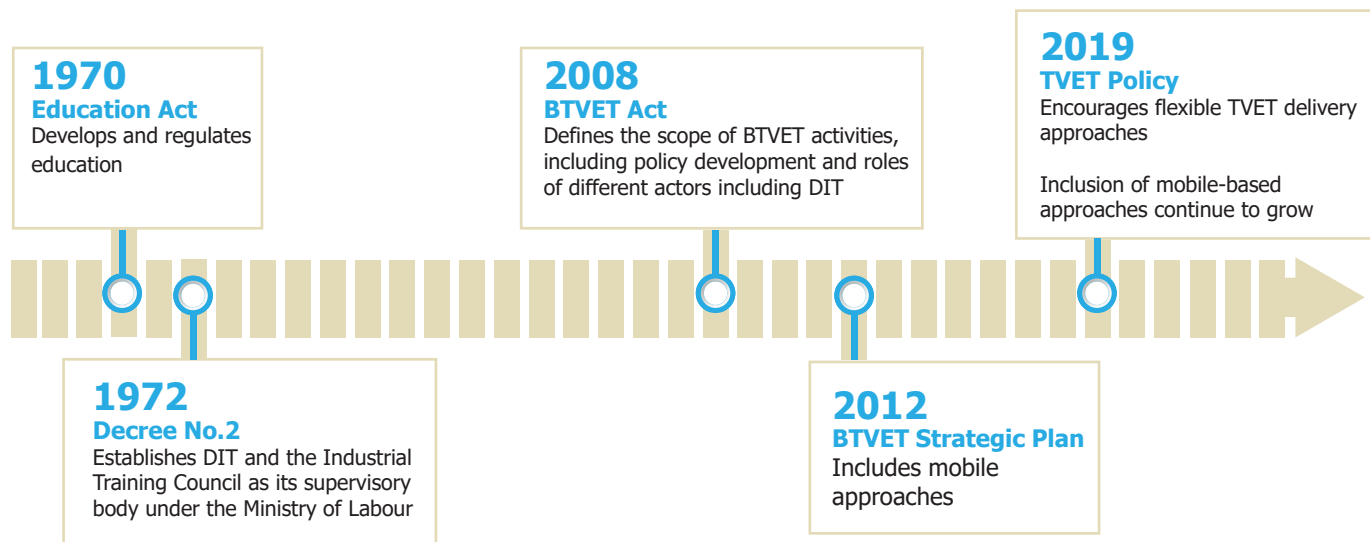
15 [Skills for Employability and Productivity in Africa \(SEPA\) - Action Plan, 2022–2025 | African Development Bank](#)

16 There are three Sector Skills Councils, in Agriculture, Construction and Manufacturing. Sector Skills Councils, in Tourism and Oil & Gas were constituted in 2017. See MoES - [Technical Vocational Education and Training, World Bank - Skills Development Project \(P145309\)](#) and [UNESCO Dynamic TVET Country Profiles](#)

17 See UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training – [Uganda Country Profile](#) cited in [Technical Vocational Education and Training system in Uganda - Sustainable Skills](#)

The evolution of TVET policies in Uganda

The 2008 BTJET Act provides the legal and institutional framework for TVET in Uganda and established the Uganda Vocational Qualifications Framework (UVQF) to facilitate the development of occupational standards and the assessment and certification of skills acquired by trainees.¹⁸ The UVQF has five levels (see Annex for more details) and two pre-levels, including the Worker'sPAS (see box 4 below).¹⁹



Box 4: Worker'sPAS

The Worker'sPAS ("Worker's Practically Acquired Skills") is a DIT approved booklet that recognises and certifies an individual's skills and competences relating to a specific occupation. It is meant for people who have never had the chance to pass a formal vocational assessment and provides them with an opportunity to evidence the skills they have acquired informally.

The Worker'sPAS "outlines the expected skills and competences" the holder has acquired in their occupation and can be updated as new skills are acquired. It "provides a certification opportunity to transfer skills acquired informally into the formal qualification system" and enhances the link between informal and formal training.

The Worker'sPAS enables recognition of the knowledge and experience held by individuals, irrespective of where their learning originally took place and is intended to recognize "continuous training and lifelong learning."

"The Worker'sPAS is recognized within the UVQF standards of the DIT. The BTJET Act 2008 mandates the DIT to assess and certify formal and informal skills training."

The Worker'sPAS is "being implemented by a consortium of private sector stakeholders led by Swisscontact and the Private Sector Foundation Uganda in partnership with Uganda Association of Private Vocational Institutions, DIT, and other stakeholders."

18 See UNESCO - [Dynamic TVET Country Profiles](#) and footnote 14

19 See [Qualifications Standards – Directorate Of Industrial Training](#) ; UNESCO - [Dynamic TVET Country Profiles](#) and [Worker'sPAS](#)

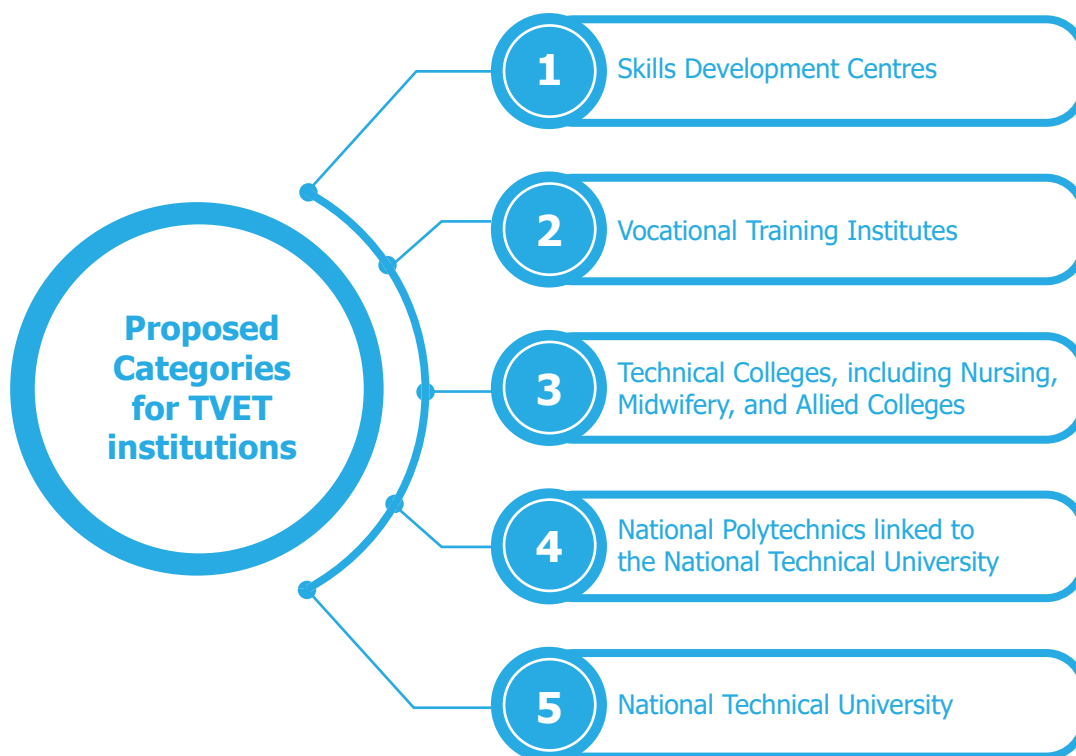
In 2012, the BTVET Strategic Plan 2012/13 to 2021/22 “Skilling Uganda” was introduced with the aim of moving TVET “from an education sub-sector into a comprehensive system of skills development for employment, enhanced productivity and growth.”²⁰ The plan also aimed to increase TVET supply through both public and private institutions as well as improving the quality and accreditation. The plan also focused on increasing access for girls, people with disabilities, and other disadvantaged groups.²¹

In 2019 the Technical Vocational Education and Training Policy was introduced to support the Government’s efforts to restructure and merge a number of the TVET related institutions and agencies. The policy provides the legal grounds for establishing the TVET Council that is “representing employers and guiding skilling reforms”²² and a TVET curriculum and assessment board. The TVET assessment board will take on functions of the DIT and the UBTEB, UNMEB and UAHEB will merge to become the Health Professionals Assessment Board.²³ When the assessment boards are merged, TVET institutions will be categorised into five levels:

- Level 1 - Skills Development Centres
- Level 2 - Vocational Training Institutes
- Level 3 - Technical Colleges, including Nursing, Midwifery, and Allied Colleges
- Level 4 - National Polytechnics linked to the National Technical University
- Level 5 - National Technical University

The TVET Policy was approved by the Cabinet in 2019, however, for the proposed changes to be implemented a new TVET Bill must be approved, which as of April 2023 has not happened.²⁴

Proposed Categories for TVET institutions



20 See footnote 18

21 See ILO - SKILLS

22 See footnote 18

23 See *The Independent* - Gov’t to restructure TVET agencies, institutions

24 Ibid.

TVET in Uganda's refugee response

Uganda's refugee hosting policy environment does not impede refugees' ability to access work, however refugees' poverty rate is higher than that of the host communities and "[e]ven after considering differences in age, gender, and education, refugees are 35 percentage points less likely than Ugandan nationals to be employed" with refugee women and youth facing the greatest barriers.²⁵ Currently, 91% of refugees in Uganda are economically vulnerable and refugees are 20 to 30% less likely to participate in the labour market than host community members and are almost five times more likely to be unemployed.²⁶ This disparity also exists with regards to opportunities for refugees to attend secondary school, their school completion rates, and access to tertiary education.²⁷

Self-employment is high for both host and refugee communities due, in part, to their lack of opportunity to find paid employment. When employed, refugees earn less than the host community with the equivalent education.²⁸ Even when employed, refugees are almost twice as likely as host community members to be below the poverty line, as they are often only able to access jobs that are below their skill and/or education levels.²⁹

Refugees' ability to find viable work is hampered by a range of factors, including information gaps for both refugees and potential employers, the inconsistent messaging around and application of regulations, the cost of compliance, and discrimination.³⁰

For the many refugees who arrive in Uganda with skills and qualifications from their home countries, obtaining recognition for these qualifications and/or the poor transferability of skills and professional experience remain important challenges.³¹ It can often be quicker and easier to requalify refugees rather than credit their prior learning. This makes TVET a viable and cost effective option for those refugees already with skills to get certification, whilst at the same time, being a valuable opportunity for others to gain new skills to help them lead independent lives.³² However, as the [2018 Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities](#) notes, "[b]oth refugees and host communities have very limited access to formal [BT]VET, due to high entry requirements (learners can only access formal BT]VET at craft levels after completing senior four), unattainable tuition fees, lack of adaptation to the refugee context, and limited provision."³³

Investment in TVET activities for refugees is increasingly important to ensure refugees' longer-term resilience and self-reliance. TVET is becoming especially important for sectors with increased demand, such as construction, tourism and hospitality, carpentry, bricklaying, painting, welding, and blacksmithing and metal fabrications.³⁴

25 See [Uganda Refugees | ACAPS and UNHCR - UNHCR Uganda - Knowledge Brief: Improving employment outcomes for refugees - July 2021](#)

26 See [REACH - Research Terms of Reference: TVET mapping \(UGA2301\) Uganda \(January 2023\) and UNHCR Uganda - Knowledge Brief: Improving employment outcomes for refugees - July 2021](#)

27 See [Uganda: Supporting Refugees and Host Communities to Become Secure and Self-Reliant and Refugee education: Refugees' perceptions of educational challenges in Uganda](#)

28 See [U-Learn - Labour Market Assessments covering refugee hosting districts in Uganda – A desk review](#)

29 See [UNHCR Uganda - Knowledge Brief: Improving employment outcomes for refugees - July 2021](#)

30 Ibid

31 See [British Council - Inclusion of refugees in TVET | British Council](#)

32 Ibid

33 See [Education Response Plan For Refugees and Host Communities in Uganda – Sept 2018](#)

34 See footnote 28

TVET also fits with the increased application of the humanitarian-development nexus in Uganda's refugee response. However, more work needs to be done on sensitising refugees to the benefits of TVET because, amongst refugees the "general perception on TVET is negative" with TVET being "conceptually stigmatized and considered a lower-level educational path."³⁵

In addition, it is important to ensure the TVET curriculum is designed to respond to livelihood opportunities. The 2019 TVET Policy envisioned an employer led TVET system meant to design trainings that respond to a market need. However, it has already been recognised that the current curriculum does not produce an "...appropriately skilled workforce" and does not "...adequately respond to market needs."³⁶

Reaching 'last mile' and vulnerable refugees

To create sustainable and inclusive livelihood strategies for all refugees, it is important to target and reach the last mile and vulnerable refugee populations and provide them with market-relevant training. TVET is one of the ways to ensure the skills learned by refugees are relevant to market demand and thus increase potential work opportunities.

Most refugee settlements are located in less accessible areas – far from the established towns and cities where Vocational Training Institutes (VTIs), that traditionally provide the TVET are located. Travelling to VTIs daily or staying at the institute for the length of the training is rarely a viable option for settlement-based refugees, especially mothers and persons with disabilities. Even when there are VTIs providing TVET in refugee hosting districts, the number varies quite considerably as does their proximity to the settlements.³⁷

These accessibility issues are compounded as, traditionally, VTIs, especially in Government accredited training schools and centres, have a residential element. This often excludes the most vulnerable refugee and host community students because of the cost of accommodation and other financial and social barriers associated with relocation or transportation to the training centres. These barriers make traditional TVET less favourable to refugees in general and refugees in remote and already underserved areas in particular.

TVET provision by refugee response actors has traditionally followed one of two methodologies:

1. Taking refugees to the VTIs – through the facilitation of daily transport or financing residential training.
2. Taking VTIs to the refugees – through the construction of VTIs in refugee settlements. For example:³⁸
 - In 2016, Finn Church Aid built a training centre in Rwamwanja
 - In 2012, Windle Trust established the Nakivale Vocational Training Centre
 - In 2019, the Don Bosco Vocational Centre was established in Palabek.

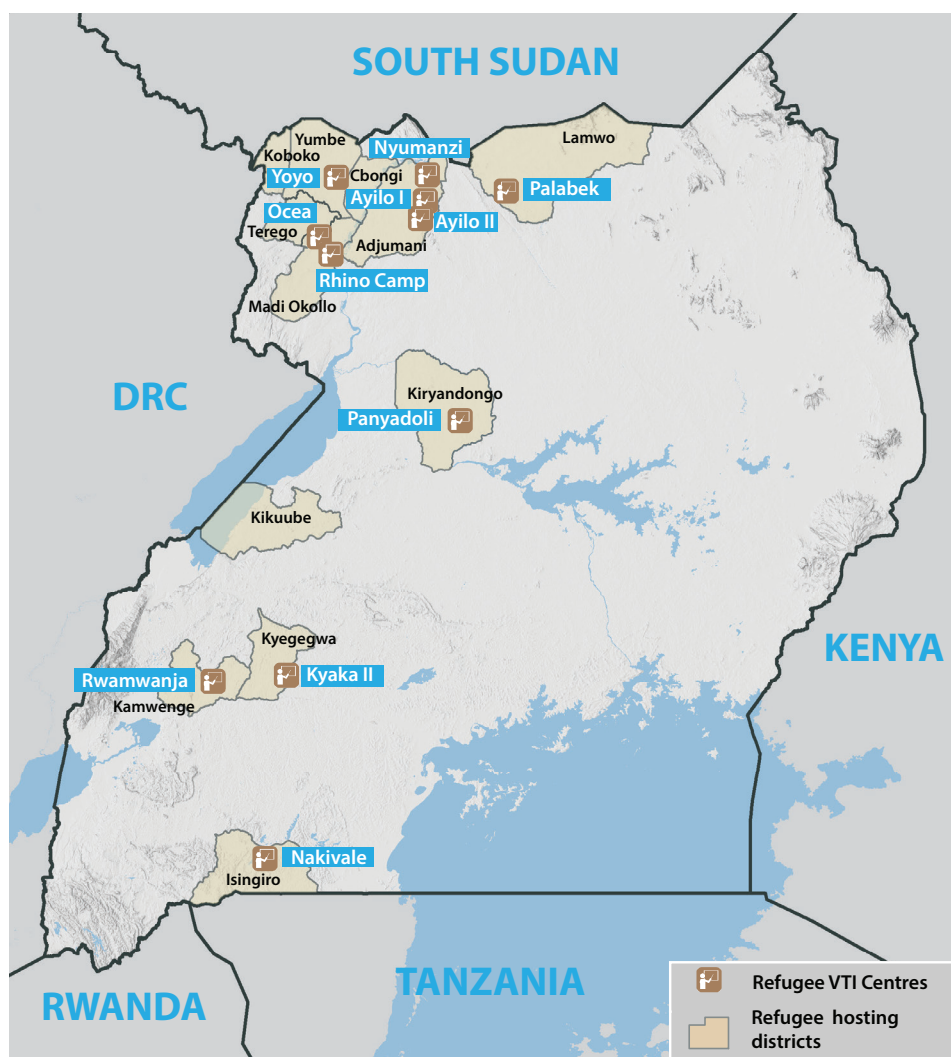
35 See [Skills and labour market transitions for refugees and host communities](#)

36 See footnote 6

37 See [Occupations and skills assessment for youth in selected refugee settlements of Isingiro, Arua and Madi Okollo districts in Uganda](#)

38 See [Palabek: Salesians of Don Bosco spreading Hope to YOUNG Refugees through TVET Education – AGL PDO](#)

Map of Uganda showing accredited vocational training institutes (VTI) in refugee settlements



IMPACT Initiatives, 2022

What is mobile TVET?

To address training gaps and limitations, various actors have recognised that it is “easier to take good TVET to refugees than the other way round.”³⁹ Hence, the last few years have seen a shift to providing community-based training through temporary satellite TVET centres. This approach is known as mobile TVET. This is in contrast to mobile learning TVET, which is when TVET is provided over digital/mobile devices such as a mobile phone or laptop.⁴⁰

Both mobile TVET and mobile learning TVET can help to remove, minimise, or mitigate the economic, social, and physical barriers that prevent many refugees from accessing existing traditional TVET opportunities. In settings such as Uganda’s refugee response, where digital inclusion and internet connectivity remains a challenge, mobile TVET is more applicable than mobile learning TVET.

In the Uganda refugee response, a number of mobile TVET activities have been successfully piloted. These include by Africa Non-profit Chore’s (ANCHOR), Youth Alive, Caritas, and NRC under the Support to Skilling Uganda Strategy project (SSU) project, by AVSI with its Kyangwali TVET programme, and by the World Bank funded Uganda Skills Development in Refugee and Host Communities under the Ministry of Education and Sports.

39 See footnote 31

40 Mobile learning and TVET for greater inclusion

Mobile, community, or outreach TVET aims at addressing the above-mentioned challenges and gaps of regular TVET programmes, including costs, distance, and demographic and social status. However, mobile TVET remains, for the most part, poorly documented and thus poorly understood. What the few available documented examples show is that, despite different situations and locations resulting in different responses overall, the mobile aspect is consistently shown to improve access to TVET and retention of TVET students (see box 5 showing examples from around the world).⁴¹

Box 5: Case Studies from Jamaica and Zimbabwe

In Jamaica, the Human Employment and Resource Training/National Service Training Agency Trust identified that there was a 65% attrition rate between enrolment and successful completion of their TVET courses. This was “due in large part to the socio-economic background of the trainees, where paid work and family commitments were often prioritized out of necessity over studying and training” combined with the distance and costs of getting to the training centre. Vulnerable households were missing out on the opportunity to improve their self-reliance, so to address this, the Trust provided training and assessment in mobile TVET centres “inside refurbished coaches.” These coaches had classroom space, bathroom facilities, internet access, and provided on-the-spot assessments as well as instant access to career development services. The coaches resulted in an overall satisfaction rate among graduates of 73.1% and 73.8% amongst trainees.

In 2018, Young Africa Zimbabwe implemented an outreach TVET programme to reach “marginalised, remote and outlying areas.” The mobile units, which contained “equipment, trainers and training consumables,” moved from location to location to deliver 12-week long training programmes.

Mobile TVET can help to address some of the negative perception issues TVET has – by bringing the training to the communities, it raises the awareness of the benefits of TVET and similar educational opportunities.

Different types of TVET	
Formal TVET	is within the school system, has a prescribed training guide, and takes place in an approved location
Non-Formal TVET	is training that takes place outside the school system but has a prescribed training guide. Admission does not depend on prior schooling, (see footnote 11). It usually refers to training that is around 90% practical and 10% theoretical and that integrates creative learning approaches, such as group cross-learning to bypass language and illiteracy barriers.
Informal TVET	is intentional training that is more flexible and may not follow a prescribed training guide. It can be assessed and certified, and often recognises prior learning as part of certification. It is also often largely practical, making it more inclusive to those with language and/or literacy barriers
Mobile, community, or outreach TVET	Can be either formal, non-formal, or informal. It is implemented by a registered TVET provider transposed to another, often remote and temporary location

41 See [Mobile Learning and Assessment Services](#) and [See Mobile Outreach Training](#)

Mobile TVET in Uganda

Mobile TVET is not necessarily a 'new' phenomenon within the Uganda refugee response, but it has not been well documented nor recognised as an intervention in its own right. Mobile TVET programmes have been implemented in a number of settlements – for example, Rhino, Imvepi, and Adjumani (see Box 6) – though the design and implementation of these programmes differ. Some programmes replicate the VTI TVET in the remote location, using the same teachers, training materials, and methodologies. Others hire local artisans to train students, and others, place students in existing workshops to learn from the artisans and business owners. The 2019 TVET Policy means the modality of learning does not affect the assessment and validation, by the DIT, of training, so mobile TVET can be conducted outside accredited training schools.

Most mobile TVET programmes take advantage of pre-existing facilities, such as schools. This has the advantage of providing a more secure and appropriate training environment but does limit the time when training can occur (e.g., only during school holidays).

The COVID-19 pandemic increased the limitations and restrictions on people's mobility and intensified the need to diversify and implement mobile TVET. Today, more actors are looking at ways to increase the reach of their TVET activities through a diversified approach.

Box 6: Examples of mobile TVET in the Uganda refugee response

Caritas

[Caritas Uganda](#) has implemented TVET activities through institutional and community-based and outreach approaches in partnership with its sister organisations, the St. Joseph and Flaminio vocational training schools in Arua, since 2016. However, during the COVID-19 lockdown, when movement was severely restricted, Caritas adopted a mobile TVET approach to bring aquaculture training to refugee and host community students in Maracha. Caritas' trainers travelled periodically to Maracha to conduct training for a fixed number of days each month until all training modules were completed, then students sat the DIT examinations and were awarded DIT certificates.

Key characteristic of this mobile approach variant: similar set-up to ANCHOR but implemented as a direct response to the COVID lockdown.

Youth Alive

In 2020, [Youth Alive Uganda](#) implemented vocational skills training in Imvepi, targeting youth from refugee and host communities. To deliver the training in Imvepi – which lacked an existing vocational training centre – the organisation utilised five classrooms at Ikuru Community Secondary School and recruited skilled artisans from Arua to deliver the training. During the training programme, the artisans moved to Imvepi during the week and returned to Arua every weekend. Students were required to intern at existing businesses or workshops after completing their training, however, because Imvepi lacked relevant businesses, Youth Alive gave the students start-up kits to enable them to establish their own workshops and showcase their talents to the local community. The students sat the DIT examinations, which the majority passed and were issued a Worker'sPAS.

Key characteristic of this mobile approach variant: set-up of local workshops to allow industrial training within the community.

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

NRC Uganda implemented TVET activities through its vocational training centres in the Ayilo and Nyumanzi Refugee settlements (in Adjumani District) and in Ocea Zone in Rhino Camp (in Terego District). In addition to these institution-based vocational trainings, NRC implemented a workplace-based training in Imvepi Refugee Settlement in 2021. Through the workplace-based approach, NRC identified local artisans to deliver training in Imvepi instead of taking students to a vocational training school. As this was only a short training, the students did not sit the DIT exams.

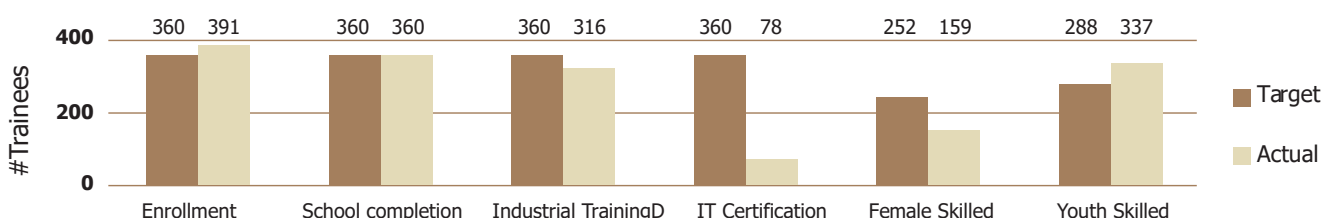
Key characteristic of this mobile approach variant: workplace-based training combined with industrial placement

Case study: Mobile TVET as implemented by ANCHOR

Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement in Madi-Okollo District in North-West Uganda currently hosts 9% of the registered refugee population in Uganda. It comprises seven zones: Ofua, Omugo, Ocea, Odobu, Siripi, Tika, and Eden. Rhino Camp Settlement is a series of villages and zones covers 85,500 km² and is located over 70 kilometres from Arua Town.

From 2020 to 2022, ANCHOR, with Enabel and EU Trust Fund funding,⁴² partnered with the St. Joseph Vocational Training School in Arua to provide TVET for refugees and host community members in Arua, Madi-Okollo, and Terego Districts through their Refugee and Host Community Access and Innovation in Skills for Employment (RAISE) programme. The TVET project aimed to provide refugees and host community members with practical and marketable vocational skills and provided 143 places for refugees and 248 host community members, on five different courses.⁴³

Target and actual numbers of ANCHOR TVET project⁴⁴



42 RAISE FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT - Period covered: from 21st October 2019 till 31st July 2021 (on file with the author)

43 Ibid

44 Ibid

The training was at two locations – St Joseph’s College Ediofe in Arua City and Tika Primary School in Tika Zone of Rhino Camp Settlement. ANCHOR was able to use the existing facilities at Tika Primary School through engagement with community leaders and government officials.

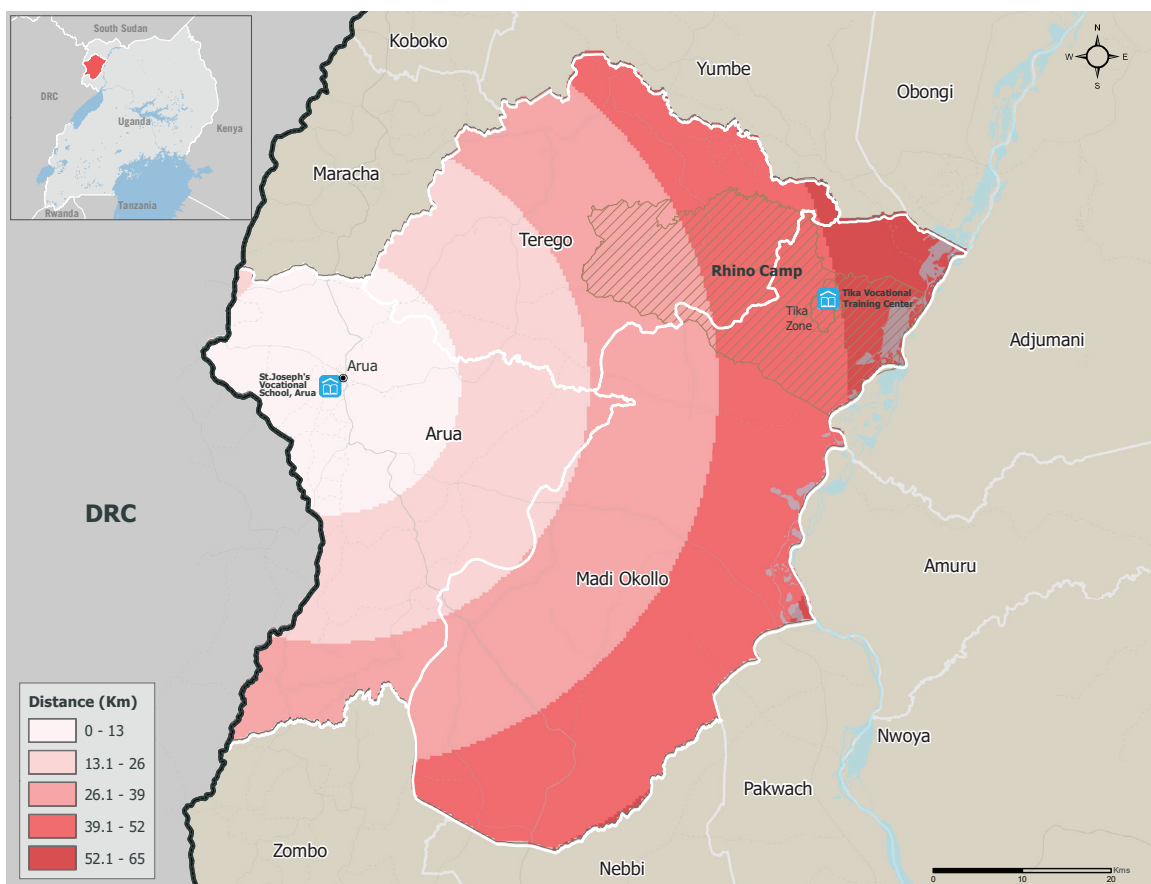
The use of Tika Primary School was a key project innovation as it meant that ANCHOR was able to reach an additional 32%, including women and vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, who would have been otherwise unable to participate in the training due to long distance to the main training facility in Arua City or being unable to relocate to Arua City for training due to “existing domestic obligations, absence of community or family buy-in and lack of funds for upkeep.”⁴⁵ As one female graduate explained:

“I could not go to Arua because if [I] did I would miss food rations. My mother was not around, and I was the one looking after four siblings (aged between 7-12 years). ...The TVET training in Tika allowed me to attend to family responsibilities, while attending the training [I would wake] up every morning to do domestic chores and then go to school.”⁴⁶

And a male graduate said:

“The training in Tika allowed me to look after my family while acquiring new skills.... As a refugee and head of family, I need to stay around to be able to take food rations for my family every month during food distribution in the settlement, as only family heads are allowed to collect food ration.”

Map showing distance between Tika outreach training centre in Rhino Camp Settlement and St. Joseph’s Vocational Training School in Arua City



45 Ibid

46 Interview with female TVET graduate from 1st cohort, Tika

Based on a market analysis undertaken by ANCHOR in 2018, the mobile TVET programme provided courses in bakery and pastry making, bricklaying and concrete practice, and carpentry and joinery. These were identified through a market analysis which assessed employable skills gaps among refugee youth in West Nile settlements. The three courses targeted individuals aged 18–35, with a focus on prioritising access for women. Participants were also given training on soft skills, such as communication, business, and financial literacy, to assist their integration into the job market. In total, 114 out of the planned 120 refugees were trained at the Tika site.

The training courses were assessed by the DIT and were full time (8.30 am to 4.00 pm), Monday to Friday for 12 weeks. The learning materials and equipment were provided by St. Joseph Vocational Training School. The teachers at both sites were St. Joseph staff. In Tika the St. Joseph teachers were supported by locally hired teachers. The St. Joseph staff relocated to Tika for the course, with accommodation provided by ANCHOR.⁴⁷

The mobile TVET students (i.e., those in Tika) were sent to Yumbe, Koboko, and Terego Districts to undertake their one-month industrial placements due to the lack of necessary private sector actors in the settlement. Students, regardless of their learning location, were registered for DIT certification exams, although only 90 out of the total 360 students who completed the training were able to be assessed by DIT staff, due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. Those that were assessed and passed were issued a Worker'sPAS.

The outcome for the TVET participants in Arua City and Tika were broadly comparable with regards to attendance, completion, and success rates.⁴⁸ However, the locations did have an effect on both the industrial placement aspect of the courses and the post training opportunities – those based in or near Arua City better able to access placements and jobs, as these opportunities are not as prevalent in Tika.

Many of the mobile TVET students ended up being self-employed. In one example, some participants joined force to provide services in their location:

“After completing the training, we formed a group of five. Working together, we have been building houses in Tika settlement, helping to build houses for the most vulnerable groups – the elderly and the sick, while charging a small fee to build houses for individuals. ...So far, we have constructed a total of ten houses in Tika settlement, mostly houses for the most vulnerable groups and three for private individuals who paid for our services.”⁴⁹

In addition, at least 15 bricklaying and concrete practice students are working for NGOs in the settlement and two bakery and pastry graduates are running a chapati making business.



Photo: Excited first cohort Tika trainees at JOHAB Training Centre – Yumbe, celebrating after successfully producing the Banana bread DIT assessment module. March 2021 ©ANCHOR



Photo: The Principal JOHAB Training Center, Iziku Jeniva (second right in a blue dress); supervising the trainees. March 2021 ©ANCHOR

47 See footnote 41

48 Ibid

49 Interview with male TVET graduate, Tika,

Challenges and advantages of mobile TVET

Challenges:

Most of the challenges identified or predicted below can be easily addressed, especially if they are considered during the planning phase of the mobile TVET programme.

- **Equipment and learning materials and trainer access:** Some training equipment and learning materials may not be transported to the remote location or there may be delays in delivery of replacement supplies. In addition, some of the trainers may be unable to travel to the remote location.
- **The learning environment:** The environment may not be as suitable as a permanent location and there may be issues around physical capacity and access to electricity and internet. This is especially relevant for training that requires the use of electrical equipment.
- **Impact on the quality of teaching:** Teaching quality could be compromised if, for example, the teachers are travelling back and forth to their homes, there is a lack of suitable materials, or location is prioritised over qualifications when recruiting teachers.
- **Staff turnover:** Some of the teachers may be unwilling to relocate to the mobile TVET location for the length of the training or may leave before the course is completed. This could be due to their own home situation or because of living conditions and other hardships at the mobile TVET site.
- **Communication:** Due to the remote nature of mobile TVET locations, cell phone and internet access may be poor or unreliable. This can impact on communication between the non-mobile VTI and the remote teachers as well as amongst the teachers.
- **Language barriers:** Individuals who are located in more remote areas of the settlements may not have had many opportunities to use or learn other languages. This may mean the teaching language (the language used by the teacher and any learning materials) and the language used by the majority of the participants do not match. This situation means limiting teacher recruitment to those who speak the dominant language in the location or using simultaneous translation. Translation increases the cost and length of training and could impact on training efficacy.
- **Lack of access to industrial placements:** Trainees and graduates of city based TVETs have greater access to placement opportunities. For mobile TVET trainees, the number and quality of the artisans and business in their locale are limited.

Advantages:

- **Increases inclusivity**
 - Proximity to their home location means more women can join the training as they can attend alongside their other commitments, such as childcare and home care.
 - Proximity is also an issue for men, who are often uncomfortable, due to security concerns, leaving their families to relocate to a traditional TVET centre.
 - Participants do not have any additional costs, such as accommodation and food at, and/or travel to the TVET centre.
 - The training does not have to be full time to fit into for the shortest possible period, it can be designed around other responsibilities.
 - The training content and schedule can be designed to especially target and encourage trainees that had previously dropped out of training due to socio-economic circumstances.
- **Can increase and improve completion and certification.**⁵⁰

50 This has been shown to be the case in the Philippine - Profile of Training and Skilling Programs in the Philippines and Jamaica Mobile Learning and Assessment Services

- **Increases customisability** – Mobile TVET can be more flexible than training in traditional TVET centres in terms of trainings offered, allowing implementers to “customise training according to community needs” and make sure “training is targeted to meet the skilling needs of that community.”
- **Increases local employment and procurement** –Trainers and/or support staff - such as cooks and guards– will need to be hired and some can will come from the surrounding area. Some resources, such as food, can be purchased locally.
- **Can reduce costs** – There is no need to provide accommodation for participants, which should reduce the cost of the programme overall. Although relocated staff will need accommodation, they are a smaller number than the participants.
- **Positively changes perceptions of TVET** – The lack of visibility of the training and outcomes of traditional TVET has lessened its impact and acceptance. However, when people are able to witness the implementation of TVET courses, hear about them regularly, and see their impact in their local area, it increases the interest and engagement in TVET.
- **Increases access** – Mobile TVET removes some of the economic, social, and physical barriers that were preventing potential TVET students in remote locations. It can also help alleviate oversubscription at the traditional TVETs, thereby creating more availability.

Conclusion

Despite its challenges, the mobile TVET approach remains an important and viable channel to reach “last mile” and vulnerable refugee and host communities in remote areas, and to address barriers to training access.

As with all innovations, a solid understanding of the needs and constraints of the target population; engagement with, and buy-in of, the local community and authorities; and good planning are vitally important. Lessons learned from other implementers can help address some of the identified challenges.

Mobile TVET must be recognised as the start of a process, not the conclusion, so post-training access to employment opportunities must also be addressed (and assessed before the training itself), to enable training graduates to use their new knowledge to increase their self-sufficiency.

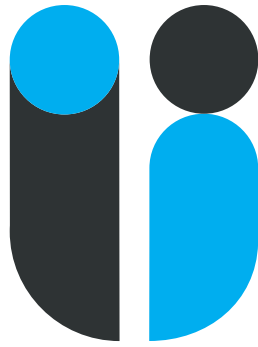
Given the limited number of VTI across Uganda, and the fact that they are primarily located in the larger cities, mobile TVET can and should be implemented as part of scaling up TVET interventions in remote settings and enabling the greater inclusion of vulnerable individuals. Mobile TVET has the added value of potentially being more cost efficient, and certainly more accessible to more individuals and better tailored to local needs and demands, and thus potentially more effective. Mobile TVET’s added value makes the approach especially relevant for refugee response actors.



Photo: Bricklaying by Refugees, March 2021 ©ANCHOR

Annex 1: UVQF levels

Level	Description	Equivalent
Modular transcript	Partial qualification after undertaking modular assessment in a given occupation	
Worker's PAS	It is a partial qualification after undertaking modular assessment in a given occupation most especially for apprenticeship individuals in the Informal sector	
UVQF level 1:	National certificate for individuals who merit in performing the full occupational skills but under supervision.	Polytechnic Certificate
UVQF level 2:	National certificate for individuals who merit in performing the full occupational skills under moderate supervision	National Certificate
UVQF level 3: UVQF level 3·CVTI:	National certificate for individuals who merit in performing the full occupational skills at supervisory level.	Master Craft Certificate
	Certificate in Vocational Training Instruction " (Offered to BTVET instructors after 9 months CBET programme conducted at Nakawa VTI)	
UVQF level 4 UVQF level 4·DVTI:	National diploma for individuals who merit in performing the full occupational skills at technician level.	Diploma or Technical National Diploma
	Diploma in Vocational Training Instruction (offered to BTVET Instructors alter 9 months CBET programme conducted at NakawaVT1)	
UVQF level 5·DTIM:	Diploma in Training Institution Management (Offered to BTVET Principals and Head Teachers alter 9 months CBET programme conducted at NakawaVT1) UVQF awards	Diploma or Higher National Diploma



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