

## CONCEPT NOTE

*MoEYI Jamaica Workshop*

### **“Strategies for continuing Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Jamaica”**

*Date: Thursday, November 19, 2020*

*Time: 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.*

## Introduction

### *Socio-economic impact of COVID-19 and implications for TVET sector in Jamaica*

Jamaica has a mixed economy with both state enterprises and private sector businesses. Major sectors of the Jamaican economy include agriculture, mining, manufacturing, tourism, and financial and insurance services. Tourism and mining are the leading sources of foreign exchange. Half the Jamaican economy relies on services, with half of its income coming from services such as tourism.

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Jamaica boasted a stable macroeconomy. Based on the October 2019 Labour Force Survey conducted by the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN), Jamaica’s unemployment rate fell to a record low of 7.2 per cent (women: 8.6 per cent; men: 6.0 per cent)<sup>1</sup>. The unemployment rate increased to 7.3 per cent (women: 9 per cent; men: 5.9 per cent) based on the January 2020 Labour Force Survey conducted by STATIN. The employed labour force also peaked at 1,269,100, the highest level ever recorded. On the social side, the poverty rate for 2018 was 12.6 per cent, a decline of 6.7 percentage points compared to 2017.

Today, the COVID-19 pandemic, which started out as a severe and acute public health emergency, is inflicting high and increasing social and economic costs. In the case of Jamaica, COVID-19 has significantly disrupted the country’s socio-economic sectors and livelihoods. As at October 15, 2020, Jamaica has 8067 confirmed cases of COVID-19 (approx. 55 per cent women, 45 per cent men) in the island with 160 deaths and 3481 recoveries. In order to suppress the spread of COVID-19, the Government of Jamaica (GOJ) began, in February 2020, to implement a range of tools and approaches to respond to the threat posed by the pandemic, including declaring a country-wide state of emergency under the Disaster Risk Management Act (2015), which allows the state extraordinary powers related to enforcement of social distancing and other pandemic control measures;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://statinja.gov.jm/PressReleases.aspx>  
<https://jis.gov.jm/unemployment-rate-falls-to-7-2-per-cent/>

establishing island-wide curfews and bans on some economic activities that pose significant risk; lockdowns (for the parish of St. Catherine only); and closure of schools and TVET centers to slow the spread and flatten the curve. These measures while necessary resulted in the disruption of economic and social activities.

Like other countries, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed existing structural fragilities and gaps exacerbating pre-existing challenges in education and industry in Jamaica, but at the same time creating a unique opportunity to address these issues and gaps in a more sustainable way.

The COVID-19 crisis is also spurring trends, such as the digitization of the workplace, and these call for major shifts in the demand for skills in the labor market - that TVET systems will need to address. In addition, different forms of online learning and collaboration have become the focus of attention in an effort to ensure continuity of learning. While some institutions and members of the TVET community in Jamaica may have already garnered valuable experience with online learning strategies and are set-up to offer large-scale online solutions without much delay, others are still in the learning phase and may find it useful to benefit from working solutions that can be adapted to local contexts and implemented quickly.

These emerging issues and challenges as well as those pre-existing which are being exacerbated by the impacts associated with COVID-19, have implications for revisioning the TVET sector in Jamaica. How can TVET leaders address the different impacts of the pandemic and support the implementation of the national development plan, education strategy and attainment of skills development within the framework of SDG4? The TVET sector can leverage the unique opportunity being created to address in a sustainable way the structural fragilities and gaps being exposed and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This concept note is aligned with the education sector strategy and focuses on revisiting TVET to enable communities to build back better, by securing more sustainable livelihoods that are able to withstand exogenous shocks.

### **Links with ongoing regional policy dialogue**

In the Caribbean region, technical and political dialogue on TVET has been convened, which clearly demonstrated strong commitment and corresponding action by Governments with the support of international, regional and national organizations. The various dialogues held during the first month of pandemic then highlighted three common central themes that require immediate and longer-term political and programmatic support:

1. Important advances and innovation in the area of distance education have been made through the use of technologies in recent weeks more than at any other time. However, there are still important challenges to guarantee equity and inclusion, considering the most vulnerable and marginalized population groups;
2. There is need to move towards flexible educational systems, with a focus on preparedness; and
3. A new paradigm shift towards interdisciplinary and intersectoral response beyond education sector-focused planning and implementation. Cooperation and collaboration across different sectors and actors is paramount.

## Purpose and Objectives

The overarching purpose of this workshop is to highlight emerging challenges and opportunities in relation to TVET given the COVID-19 pandemic, with a view to strengthen the capacity of TVET educators and school leaders and administrators in Jamaica to prepare a response that enables continuity of learning and skills development.

Specifically, the objectives of the Jamaica workshop are to:

- Highlight challenges and emerging opportunities for TVET resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes the showcasing of promising practices for TVET systems in the Caribbean region for ensuring the continuity of learning.
- To facilitate national cooperation and exchange of ideas and experiences towards a repository of tools and resources on TVET to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic and other shocks to education.

## Structure of Workshop

This crisis presents itself an unprecedented opportunity to support teacher capacity building and transform national education systems into one of resilience, making the SDG-Education 2030 Agenda more relevant and necessary than ever. This workshop therefore addresses TVET and skills development in the COVID-19 pandemic, aiming to enable discussion and collaboration among TVET authorities and practitioners in Jamaica, with a particular focus on the following key questions:

1. What is the current situation for the provision of TVET programs at different types and levels of education in Jamaica?
2. What tools, resources and materials are available to guarantee continuity of TVET training programs during the pandemic?

3. What are the possibilities/opportunities for exchange of experiences and resources across education and beyond, to include teacher education, parental-support mechanisms, cross- sectoral and public-private cooperation on TVET?

**Beneficiaries:**

The workshop is targeted to TVET Teachers and principals/ administrators, trainers and leaders of TVET training institutions as well as TVET teacher educators.

## Workshop Agenda

Time	Segment	Moderator/ Presenter
3:00 p.m.	Official Welcome	Mr. Everton Hannam, Secretary-General, Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO
	Opening Remarks	Dr. Saadia Sanchez- Vegas Director and Representative, UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean  Dr. Winsome Gordon, CEO, Jamaica Teaching Council, MOEYI Jamaica
3:10 p.m.	<b>Plenary Presentations</b> Exploration of the current situation regarding TVET given the COVID-19 pandemic and sharing of promising practices to exchange knowledge and experiences on practical solutions, tools, and methodologies. (20 minutes)	Mr. Ramon Iriarte, Programme Specialist for TVET, UNESCO OREALC, Santiago
	Implications of COVID-19 for examination for TVET – recommendations and guidelines (15 minutes)	Ms. Pauline Whiteman, CEO Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies (CANTA)
	Introduction to concrete tools and technological solutions (5 minutes)	Mr. Damon Clarke Director, NotesMaster Caribbean
3:50 p.m.	<b>Thematic Breakout sessions</b> Discussion: Exploring the gaps and solutions, as well as building strategies for continuity of quality teacher and learning in TVET along following themes:	<b>Moderators</b> Mr. Denworth Finnikin, Director, Center of Occupational Studies, MoEYI Jamaica

Time	Segment	Moderator/ Presenter
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Group 1:</i> identifying approaches, tools/ resources for distance education</li> <li>▪ <i>Group 2:</i> teachers professional development in TVET</li> <li>▪ <i>Group 3:</i> Use of ICT and New Technology in TVET</li> <li>▪ <i>Group 4:</i> Strengthening stakeholder collaboration – parents, industry, private-public partnerships</li> </ul>	<p>Dr. Everton Lewis, Senior Lecturer and Programme Director, University of Technology Jamaica</p> <p>Mr. Ramon Iriarte, Programme Specialist TVET Education UNESCO OREALC, Santiago</p> <p>Dr. Marcia Rowe Amonde Senior Director - TVET Development and Support Systems HEART Trust NTA</p>
4:40 p.m.	<b>Coffee Break</b> (15 Minutes)	
4:45 p.m.	<p><b>Plenary Session</b> Presentations: Four (4) groups reporting back to plenary on each theme towards the building of a repository of tools, resources and stakeholders to respond to the challenges and opportunity for TVET (40 minutes)</p> <p><b>Question and Answers</b> (15 minutes)</p>	<p>Moderator: Dr Faryal Khan, Programme Specialist for Education, UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean</p> <p>Group Presentations by Rapporteurs</p>
5:50 p.m.	<b>Closing Remarks</b>	<p>Dr. Kasan Troupe, Acting Chief Education Officer, MoEYI Jamaica</p> <p>Dr. Faryal Khan, Programme Specialist for Education, UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean</p>

## MEETING ZOOM LINK

*Join Zoom Meeting*

<https://unesco-org.zoom.us/j/92146197207>

*Meeting ID: 921 4619 7207*

*Passcode: 668552*

### Contact Information

UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean

Dr. Faryal Khan

Programme Specialist for Education

Latoya Swaby-Anderson

National Programme Officer for Education

[l.swaby-anderson@unesco.org](mailto:l.swaby-anderson@unesco.org)

Lucet Montgomery

Programme Assistant for Education

Email: [l.montgomery@unesco.org](mailto:l.montgomery@unesco.org)

Ministry of Education, Youth and Information

Jamaica

Dr. Kasan Troupe, JP

Chief Education Officer (Actg.)

Email: [kasan.troupe@moey.gov.jm](mailto:kasan.troupe@moey.gov.jm)

Dr. Clover Hamilton- Flowers

Assistant Chief Education Officer

Email: [clover.hamilton-flowers@moey.gov.jm](mailto:clover.hamilton-flowers@moey.gov.jm)

**Note:** The workshop plenary sessions will be recorded and made available with presentations and reference materials on UNESCO's portal dedicated to COVID-19 at <https://en.unesco.org/fieldoffice/kingston>