

**Pamoja**

**for Transformation**

Building Peace & Development Opportunities

## Impact Report

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## SKILLS FOR JOBS (S4J)

Skills and Enterprise Development Program



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An a number of key beneficiaries in their areas of trade after completing the Skills For Jobs training Program in Kisumu County, Kenya.

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## Executive Summary

This report highlights the impacts of the Skills for Jobs (S4J) Project under the Skills and Enterprise Development program. Developed by Pamoja for Transformation, this partial scholarship program aims to provide funding for youth aged 18-35 to receive vocational training in learning institutions including:

Ahero Vocational Training Centre – (Kisumu County), National Industrial Training Authority – (Kisumu County), YMCA – (Kisumu County), Akado – (Kisumu County), Mariwa – (Kisumu County) and Bondo Technical Training Institute – (Siaya County) Bungoma North Technical and Vocational College – (Bungoma County). The goals of the project is to equip young individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in their chosen areas of trade, thereby contributing to their financial and economic independence and the overall development of their communities.

In order to ensure maximum skills transfer to the beneficiaries, the program consisted of two phases. Firstly, the beneficiaries underwent a 3-month in-class training program, where they received training in technical skills, certifications and soft skills. Thereafter, the beneficiaries were then expected to proceed to 3-month internship program to gain hands-on experience in their areas of trade. The program addresses skill gaps in local communities by offering formal training and certification to artisans and traders (Upskillers), empowering them to enhance their businesses and provide job opportunities to program beneficiaries. We also take them through entrepreneurship, soft skills training and Financial Management. We train them on how best to handle the client and manage their finances.

The results of the program were highly positive, with many of the beneficiaries showing significant growth in both their technical skills and soft skills. The internship program was particularly successful, with many beneficiaries reporting that they felt more confident and prepared for the workforce as a result of their hands-on experience. During the internship, tradesmen got the opportunity to handle real-life jobs and clients that would otherwise be inaccessible in the classroom setup. For instance, the mechanical engineers who didnt have access to modern engines in their labs but got access in the workshops.

In conclusion, given the relative success of the Skills for Jobs (S4J) program in its initial phase, we continue to recieve positive feedback on its spillover effects in the communities. This initiative has contributed to the overall development of the people and local communities in which it was implemented. The program has equipped young individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in their chosen career paths, and has helped to address the challenges faced by young people in finding employment and running succesful informal businesses. It is recommended that this program be continued and expanded in the future to reach more young people and help them break free of the unending cycle of poverty and unemployment among rural youth; that then predisposes them to being exploited by politicians in instigating violence..





The project has given an opportunity for girls to undertake certain courses that are traditionally believed to be male courses... with motivational talks from industry players as previously mentioned. We also get feedback, Ladies who've done mechanical engineering are doing much better. Their level of commitment, their passion into this is much higher than even some of the young men.



**Stephen Kodenyo**  
Executive Director

# Introduction

## What prompted the program?

Established in 2009, Pamoja for transformation is an NGO registered as a trust with headquarters in Nairobi and with branches in Kisumu. Pamoja for Transformation is also registered in Liechtenstein as a charity. Its primary focus after effectively coming into operations in 2014 was to bridge the nexus between peacebuilding and development. This is enshrined in their vision of building a peaceful, just and prosperous society.

Through its core focus area of Peace and Governance, Pamoja for Transformation supports and promotes different governance and policy processes that culminate in the enhancement of peaceful coexistence among communities that are at the highest risk of communal violence or conflict. These efforts also gave special attention to the prevention of gender-based violence among women and girls.

Having undertaken multiple structural and policy interventions in its peace and governance program, Pamoja for Transformation came to the realization that focusing predominantly on Peace and peacebuilding, without giving attention to the development and economic empowerment of communities was counterproductive. The same sections of youth that are unemployed and idle within communities are the ones that fall prey to the conniving politicians. Politicians use idle youth as fodder and perpetrators of violence in settling their political scores with their rivals during the electoral cycles.

Thus, the **skills and enterprise development program** was established. This program bridges the gap that promotes the drivers of the push and pull factors to conflict and violence. The program addresses and offers practical solutions to poverty, unemployment, and underemployment among youth, women, and persons living with disabilities. Through partnerships with learning institutions (Technical and Vocational Education Training institutions – TVETs) and local communities, the program imparts technical skills and soft skills to shortlisted youth, which go a long way in giving them economic self-sustenance.

### Project Objective

To improve the employability rate and economic situation of youth by partnering with Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

The project aims to equip youth with:

- Soft skills.
- Technical skills.
- Work readiness training.
- Entrepreneurship Skills.

Through the program, the beneficiaries are able to experience 2 outcomes that include gaining skills and certifications. Certifications are the prerequisite documentation required by employers to demonstrate academic suitability for specific roles applied. On the other hand, program beneficiaries are also imparted with soft and technical skills that go a long way in further enhancing their suitability to adopt and thrive in the job market. The program addresses the apparent 'skills mismatch' experienced when youth are employed in enterprises or organizations fail to quickly adapt or meet employer expectations.

## Success Stories

# Changing communities, one skill at a time

Pamoja for transformation initiated the Skills for Jobs (S4J) program aimed at supporting individuals in their pursuit of certifications and competencies in different areas of trade by providing partial scholarships and subsidies for tools and equipment. This program is designed to empower and enable individuals who may previously not have the financial resources to pursue their passion and enhance their skills.

The program is open to individuals who demonstrate a genuine interest and commitment to their chosen field of study. Pamoja for transformation carefully assesses each applicant's financial situation and needs before awarding the scholarships and toolkit (subsidies). The program also includes guidance and support from experienced professionals in the field through a 3-month internship, who serve as mentors to help the students develop their soft skills and achieve their goals.

The subsidies(toolkits) provided by the program are specifically tailored to assist individuals in purchasing necessary tools and equipment for their trade or skill. This can include everything from specialized equipment and technology such as sewing machines, hair dryers, welding equipment, commercial gas burners, and more. By providing access to these resources, the program aims to remove some of the financial barriers that can often prevent individuals from pursuing their interests, advancing their skills and increasing productivity and efficiency of their respective trades. This sections takes a look into the individual success stories of some participants of the program.

### Rationale for partnership with TVETs

There's a widespread notion that the Kenyan education system, with its core focus on examination and results, is not only punitive, but highly disenfranchising to a huge proportion of the population. A good majority of the population of students that sit the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) exam each year do not make it through to the Government's university and colleges placement system (Kenya University and Colleges Central Placement Service – KUCCPS). Moreover, stakeholders in the education and employment sectors have also, in recent years, alluded to the fact that the education system is churning out 'half-baked' students with insufficient or unsuitable skills that are

required for the modern workplace. This skills mismatch has resulted in widespread unemployment among.

Given that a majority of the population of students that don't make it to colleges and universities stem from rural Kenya, the cessation of progress in their education condemns them to a continuous cycle of poverty, for generations. Having this in mind, the government, religious organizations and private entities have established TVETs that operate under the state department of vocational and technical training. These institutions award artisan, craft and diploma and higher national diploma certificates, that would otherwise have been out of reach for these young citizens who would otherwise fade away into oblivion in the villages.

Pamoja for Transformation has identified and entered into partnerships with a select number of learning institutions in efforts to bridge the gap in skills and economic empowerment among youth and other disadvantaged individuals. In the partnership, the Skills For Jobs (S4J) program play the following roles:

1. Subsidizing school fees (Partial Scholarship)
2. Subsidizing examination fees
3. Subsidizing tools/equipment for beneficiaries (toolkits) to improve business efficiency/output.
4. Providing technical support to personnel (teams) working in the program
5. Partnering with local authorities and county government at the structural level to develop and implement a TVET policy





## Beryl Perry

### S4J Category: Novice/ Industry player

Trade Area: Hairdressing  
Locality: Kisumu County  
Shauri Moyo Kibuye,  
YMCA VTC

“

This business has really changed my life. I can't compare it with the when I used to do business in the house. At home I would charge very little compared to when in business. It has changed my life and my family's too”

Perry was onboarded as a novice, in the project. However, at the time of onboarding she already had the interest to start her own business; a hair and beauty salon. She was enrolled at YMCA where she undertook her three month technical training on Hairdressing and Beauty therapy. By the time students were expected to proceed for their attachment, Perry went back to running her business after completing her exams.

Through her business, she can also train a few of her cousins who are orphans. "I trained them so that in future they would decide what to do with those skills. I also trained my sister. When Perry joined college, it was hectic for her but however she pressed on, eventually, the project supported her with a hair dryer, because when it was realized that apart from being a novice, she was also operating as an upskiller because, i.e.,

- She had her own business.
- She provided an employment opportunity to a colleague who was with her at YMCA.

From her story, it is evident that if youth are empowered, they can be self-sufficient and even empower more youth into doing businesses or anything that can help them in their lives.

## Testimonial



In January 2022, I met a friend who was my neighbor in the opposite shop who briefed me about Pamoja for transformation and told me that they were offering scholarships.

That very day I went to the cyber, downloaded, filled and dropped my forms at their Institution/Pamoja office. Luckily, I qualified and I was short listed. Earlier on I had lost hope as the students who I had applied with had received positive feedback.

Eventually, I was called to NITA and was told I was to report a day later. I also have a younger sister who was supposed to join college at the time and I thought NITA was far from where I was staying taking into consideration I was also in charge of my salon. I opened the salon in 2020 during COVID. The initial shop was smaller so I moved into a bigger stall in 2021 and expanded. I changed my school from NITA to YMCA where I did beauty therapy.

The salon is mainly very busy during the weekends so on weekdays I can leave someone to manage. Hairdressing is my passion combined with talent. Although currently I don't offer massage services but it's part of the service in beauty. I just love beauty. Like fashion Beauty and hairdressing market trends are constantly changing. Going to school enables one to learn more on emerging styles in the market.

Pamoja paid for my, School fees, Exam fees, Part of my graduation fees. I started the Skills for jobs program as a novice, but now I have a student who came in as an attaché and now I have employed her. She is called Viola Akinyi.

She is cooperative and I can say she is the one who has stayed the longest. I'm not worried that she can also transition elsewhere as you can never really know somebody. I feel safe with her. Whenever I go for stock, she can handle the remaining tasks.

While in school I was self-employed. I believe the main reason for youth unemployment is, lack of skills, Lack of school fees (there are people who are not talented but they are open enough learn skills), lack of determination (I really take this into consideration while employing youth. If one is not determined we part ways. Determination is innate. This is just a personality trait) and Lack of respect (I can't work with a disrespectful person. Respect depends on someone's upbringing)

In as much as soft skills are taught in school, personality traits also contribute towards this. If someone doesn't have good upbringing in the earlier life then it is bound to continue into adult life. Although at a tender age one can be molded. Looking at different alternatives of doing things and embracing different perspectives. These decisions are made by an individual. Someone can make a decision on your behalf but if you reject the advice there is nothing anyone can do. Advice in the form of soft skills can contribute to changes in someone's life.

I would recommend Pamoja for transformation to keep applying soft skills training. Without soft skills even with technical skill one can't survive in the service industry or any other industry for that matter.

I would like to say the program really helped me at least with a tool kit as I never had any hair dryer. Some of the services I was never able to provide I can now offer.





## Brian Tete

### S4J Category: Novice

Trade Area: Beauty  
Locality: Kisumu County  
Otonglo Villlage,  
YMCA VTC



I was at the construction site. I told my colleagues that I was going to sit an exam as I had done beauty but had no way of proving I had taken the course as I had no certification, but now I would have something to show and the second thing is when I started working”



Brian Tete is a beautician who completed the 3 months class work and 3 months internship. He is currently employed as a nail technician at a local Beauty Salon called Mwajuma Place, in Kisumu. From the work, Brian is able to earn upto about Kes 2,000 per day on commissions from work done. For an occupation that has no off days, Brian is able to make upwards of about Kes. 25,000 per month. He is now able to support his single mum in finishing up construction of their house.

Although he still considers himself to be learning on the job, he has the confidence of starting his own beauty salon in future.

## Testimonial



I am from the village I haven't lived in the city. We studied in town and commuted to and from the village. I live with our family there (My mum and other siblings.) Currently I am a beautician but not yet as qualified to the highest standard. In this field you can get many challenges every time you step in a salon. When I completed my studies, I was out of school and it was an opportunity to get a job. When you come to a salon you can think that you are perfect but you aren't perfect. That is where you realize you are still learning.

When I left school and used to look for a job, I worked at Kisumu City. I was the only employee at that salon and so I saw myself as the best as what I was doing the boss was unable to do. Even my boss saw me as one of the best.

After I left and went to work in another salon that is when I knew that I still have a lot to learn. That is why to date I keep saying that I am not that perfect. If I compared the two places and rated myself, I would rate at 5/10, but in my former salon I was 8/10.

Before I enrolled on this technical course, I was back home living with my grandfather in Siaya. My grandfather cautioned that because of his advanced age, it was not wise to sit around doing nothing the whole day and feed off him. He asked me what if he passed on? He then discouraged me from sitting doing nothing.

My grandfather advised me to acquire a technical skill. Even though I had good grades to join university, my grandfather advised that in Kenya, it is not about university but what skills you have at hand.

That, in most spaces technical skills are vital. My grandfather was a board member of YMCA thus he advised me to join the institution to atleast train in a particular skill.

That is how I chose beauty. I chose beauty but not that I was interested but only wished to please my grandad and finish the course. We were three boys among 47 girls.

It was then that Pamoja for Transformation came and requested students who were already in training to apply for sponsorship to be assisted to pay for their certification. Pamoja for Transformation did something good for us. At least they left us with something. Some people can sponsor you but cannot pay for your exams. If you find someone who can pay for your exams that is the real sponsor. Kenya is all about papers. At least you can have that paper, if you go somewhere someone will ask what do you have?

It was my teacher who had informed me about Pamoja for Transformation's call to sponsor trainees or their NITA exams, and gain certification. At the time I was still reluctant on beauty.

Trainees who leave the institution can't expect to be perfect. This is what's interfering with our students for now. If you finish your studies and start work one can't be as perfect as someone who has five-year experience in the industry.

When I was in training, I used to attend the beauty therapy classes but however most times I wouldn't show up for class because I had a friend who was an engineer so he would call us and we'd go and do construction work with him and per day he would pay us 500/-. I used to see like field of beauty didn't reward but if I went for construction work, I'd earn 500/- per day which was a sure bet. When the teacher called me, I was at the construction site. I told my colleagues that I was going to sit an exam as I had done beauty but had no way of proving I had taken the course as I had no certification, but now I would have something to show and the second thing is when I started working I had income.

This is my source of income and this is what provides for my family. Since I started this job to date, I work full time at a saloon called Mwajuma place. The salon is the best. Beauty therapy is the source of my daily income.





## Nelly Atieno Kiboga

### S4J Category: Novice

Trade Area: Electrical Technician

Locality: Kisumu County

Kisumu, Akado,

VTC



It is good out there being that Pamoja for Transformation uplifted us we work and get some money. You can sustain yourself. I had interest in Electrical. I wanted to be an electrician as at home people long to have electricity but there is no one who can install for them. My home is Kisumu County Kano."

Through this program Nelly has been able to sit for the NITA exam Grade 3. She demonstrated a lot of potential in her and was retained by her institution just to mentor her as she is was a very good example. She enrolled for electrical engineering, a course previously perceived even by male students as very difficult. The institution she enrolled in supported her to continue with her education so that she could come back to be one of their trainers. Nelly can serve as a good model to tell other girls that they can join the male dominated courses as she did where she is doing better than her male counterparts. So, she can be an encouragement to other girls to take up even motor vehicle mechanics as careers.

## Testimonial

**“** Nelly grasped the concept very fast and her speed is very good. she joined last September and did her exams in December.

She proceeded to industrial attachment for three months and came back to proceed with the next stage (Grade 2.)

### Experience

It is good out there being that Pamoja for Transformation uplifted us we work and get some money. You can sustain yourself. I had interest in Electrical.

I wanted to be an electrician as at home people long to have electricity but there is no one who can install for them. My home is Kisumu County Kano.

### Challenges

Not paid for overtime.

### Skills

I'm still acquiring more skills. The ones I have I use them well.

### Advise to junior students

1. You are in a good place.
2. Have a positive attitude towards teachers, Colleagues.
3. Share out
4. When you have a problem, ask and you will be assisted.

### Advise to ladies

There is no course for men. We can fit in every course. So long as you are ready to learn you can do what the men are doing.

### Recommendations

1. Support us in getting attachment. Looking for attachments can be tiresome.
2. Give us grants so that we can start our own business.

### Attachment

I didn't do in industry but through a contractor.

### Future Plans

1. To open my own company and employ people
2. Open a business selling electrical accessories.

### Tutor Report

She is a role model and through her we are seeing more ladies taking technical courses







## Mercy Masinde

### S4J Category: Novice

Trade Area: Electrical Technician

Locality: Siaya County

Kisumu, Bondo TTI



Passion for the course keep me going. When I joined the course I was looked upon as being inferior and I told myself that if the man can do it then why not me. Currently I see myself progressing well. Passing both 1st and 2nd Year is not an easy feat. I am grateful to still be standing and can see myself somewhere."

## Testimonial

I joined In December 2019. I am now a third-year student Completing my final year.

### Pamoja for Transformation journey

There was a time exam fee was very expensive. I heard the teachers asking at one time about students who had large arrears. I didn't have any fee balance so I let other students take the opportunity. I wanted to defer as I didn't have exam fee so when I heard about the opportunity, I went to the office to inquire.

I applied for the program as a continuing student. I am a government sponsored student so the government pay half of my fee through the HELB support.

### Benefits of the project

Because of the sponsorship, I was able to continue with my studies time would have lapsed if I deferred.

### Challenges.

Unfortunately I did not qualify for a toolkit

Challenges are there but the biggest is capital.

### Youth Empowerment.

Has saved a lot of youth including myself. I can say that I am empowered but cant speak for another person within then institution.

### Future Plans

1. Searching for jobs. I can't say that I will get immediately.
2. Starting a personal business.

If I can raise some money, I can even start a small shop selling foodstuffs.

### Advise to upcoming students

Giving up is never an option.

Always make that step.

### Message to Pamoja for Transformation

I'd wish to request if you could offer a job as I can't come from somewhere and say I want to raise funds and I don't have a place where I can get the funds. If they can offer me a job where I can even get some cash, I will appreciate.

I don't know what kinds of jobs Pamoja offer but any job.

I can be employed in any place but in the future, I can employ myself.

### Five Year Plan

I see myself as an industrious lady who can support herself.

### My Motivation

Passion for the course keeps me going. When I joined the course I was looked upon as being inferior and I told myself that if the man can do it then why not me. Currently I see myself progressing well. Passing both 1st and 2nd Year is not an easy feat. I am grateful to still be standing and can see myself somewhere.



## Vallarie Achieng

### S4J Category: Novice

Trade Area: Hair Dressing

Locality: Kisumu County

Kisumu, Ahero VTC



There are lots of opportunities and people should eradicate the mentality of white-collar jobs. Not everyone can go into employment. If one has technical skills they can still work and earn an income."



## Testimonials

I studied at Ahero vocational. I heard about Pamoja for Transformation when we were in school. Our principal told us about the program and encouraged the ones who could to register. I managed to register, for my exam, and eventually preceded for a placement.

I heard of the program last year in August. But I registered in April and did my exams in July. I had a desire to study so that one day I become successful. Since childhood I always wanted to be self-reliant to inspire other and also to help my siblings.

Back in the day I foresaw myself doing beauty and hairdressing. I went to Nyalenda Girls High school and proceeded to Ahero Vocational Training where I chose beauty and Hairdressing course.

I was born in Nairobi and raised in Kisumu. In my family we are five siblings. My family could not support my education due to financial constraints.

### Pamoja for Transformation journey

Pamoja for transformation explained that if one were to get an opportunity for sponsorship, they would also be assisted to acquire attachment opportunity which could lead to employment.

After completing my exams, I was called by one of their staff called Joshua who inquired whether I had found an attachment opportunity. I hadn't so he directed me to an opportunity in Kisumu.

With regards to the program it is good as it assists people from vulnerable backgrounds a chance to study as there is someone who dreams of studying but they can't afford it. The program helps in this regard.

### Attachment

I usually deal with hairdressing at the salon. This is my third month. I started on 28th June 2022. Some of the roles I do include, Blow-dry, Wash, Shampoo, maintaining cleanliness and interacting with customers.

Of the aforementioned tasks I find nothing difficult. So far, I haven't experienced any challenges.

### Lessons Learnt

Studying is also not easy and it needs discipline and dedication. There is a lot of peer pressure in school. It is just a matter of knowing who you are and your purpose

for studying.

There are lots of opportunities and people should eradicate the mentality of white-collar jobs. Not everyone can go into employment. If one has technical skills they can still work and earn and income.

There are also lots of working opportunities it all depends on how one networks I have learnt the discipline from my employer. She is a hard-working lady. If she is unwell, she will still turn up. She inspires me to work harder to achieve what I want in life.

### Challenges experienced transitioning from school to work

Finding an employer who agrees to give student an attachment opportunities is not easy. Most employers want students to pay for placement opportunities. Although I didn't pay for the placement. Transport is another issue if one lives far away as they commute can be expensive.

### Youth Empowerment

Self-dependency. Having something to keep you busy. Leaving the house in the morning and coming back in the evening knowing you have earned your up keep.

At the moment I feel empowered as in my family am not a burden to my mum. What makes me feel empowered is the satisfaction of having a skill. I have technical skills and if I finish my placement I can be employed elsewhere.

### Plans After attachment

After placement I want to look for employment then in future if it is Gods will then I can get my own space. I complete my attachment by end of the month and there is potential for me staying on.

### Five year plan

I see myself successful having my own space and being an employer who employs staff.

### Parting shot

Thank you for making my dream come true and making my life easier as there are changes in my life compared to before. At least I have studied and am on my way to receiving my certificate.





## Viola Achieng

### S4J Category: Novice

Trade Area: Hair Dressing  
Locality: Kisumu County  
Kisumu, YMCA



Pamoja for Transformation, assisted me with some products that would be more expensive to buy from a shop. They would bring the products and we'd share."

## Testimonial

At YMCA I went to study hairdressing and Beauty therapy, so when I came to the salon, my boss was doing both (hair and nails) so I had to learn from her as I had the passion to do both.

I learnt about YMCA from a guest who came home to visit my dad. The guest asked my dad what I do and my dad said I wasn't doing anything constructive. He inquired from my dad what I was passionate about.

My dad responded that I liked plaiting school children. The guest then proceeded to tell my dad about Pamoja for Transformation and informed him it would be good if I applied.

The guest brought me forms, I filled and requested I bring the following documents: KCSE Certificate, ID and Passport. On 9th January I received a call informing me to go to YMCA to study. I wasn't aware it was a surprise phone call. On Monday 10th January I reported to YMCA and registered. Everyone was there to attend the different courses they had chosen. There were many people so I decided to stick to hairdressing course.

At the institution, I saw they had machines, we were taught how to use A blow drier, A hair drier, Washing hair and Braiding styles

When I came here, the only skill I had was plaiting small children.

I met Beryl Perry at YMCA. Although I knew her before. She told me that she had also been sponsored by Pamoja for Transformation and she was at YMCA studying beauty therapy. She informed me that I could come and assist her after school. When I had no classes, I'd come to her salon to assist her.

I did the KNEC exams and my tutor was placing students on attachment. My boss told my tutor that she would take me as her attaché. It wasn't attachment as she had employed me and would pay me for work done.

I decided to stay at the salon instead of waiting to be taken for attachment elsewhere. She is Friendly, Not one who speaks much, Corrects you where you go wrong, She is keen on time management.

### Working for a former student

I don't find it strange, as I knew her before school and luckily, we reconnected in school. I am a very patient person and here at the salon, the commission I earn I

can do one or two things with it.

### Skills

In terms of skills, I would like to know more about nail art through my boss and also learn more about pedicure. When I see my boss doing pedicure, I can master it.

### Youth Unemployment

As for me, had the guest not visited our house, I would be whiling away. Some youth have skills but they don't want to show up and are waiting for opportunities to find them. They are not interested in looking for information. In my case I would say it was luck. If it wasn't for the guest I would not have gone to school. I am determined. Where we used to live I would plait someone and they would be indebted to me but at the salon, you give service to a client and they immediately pay.

### Pamoja for transformation

Pamoja for Transformation, assisted me with some products that would be more expensive to buy from a shop. They would bring the products and we'd share. They have assisted me by paying for my exam fees, as I would see people who weren't sponsored paying more exam fees. They have reduced for me, some requirements. Growing up, aside from hairdressing, I wanted to do a course in ECD. It is as if Pamoja for Transformation has helped as I am no longer interested in ECD. In future, once I have gained more skills the I would like to start up my own shop. Right now, I'm still learning most hairstyles.

### Challenges

At times when the clients walk in and don't find the boss, they feel like I can't provide the service they want.

Some clients, once you quote for them prices, they feel like you are charging higher than the boss normally would. The client returns when the boss is around and the boss quotes higher prices. When it comes to pricing, I normally leave that to the boss to quote the price once I have completed the service.

I feel like clients are not used to me when my boss isn't available so they prefer to come back when she is around. I have to convince them to let me provide them the service and show them my capabilities so the next time they don't have to wait for my boss.







## Paul Othim

### S4J Category: Industry Player

Trade Area: Mechanic  
Locality: Kisumu County  
Kisumu.



Our main objective at the end of the day is to empower a youth. Empowering a youth does not mean that one associates with that youth for a period of six months or one year, then abandon the youth. It is until such a time that the youth is productive and can produce."

## Testimonial

“ We are in a general garage where we deal with, Mechanics, Auto wiring, Panel beating, Spray painting and Upholstery. Work is 50/50 due to COVID and economical situation in our country.

We got to know about Pamoja for Transformation through an NGO known as Undugu society, who we have been working with for a long time. The most interesting part they had is placing beneficiaries for attachment. They have brought us so many people for attachment, more so on Motor vehicle mechanics and Auto wiring.

The attaches were not so skilled as they were from Vocational Training Centers as in these centres are mostly based on theory not practical. At the garage we are mostly based on practical, so it was like we were starting with them a fresh on practical.

### Role of an industry Player

As an industrial player we are imparting knowledge to the youth to make themselves reliant. We do this by offering them training opportunities. We are not like the formal sector. This is actually an informal sector. In an informal sector we do something known as on job training. When attaches come we train them then we offer them job opportunities.

I agreed to partner with Pamoja for transformation because of the way they came, their vision and intention. We actually talked to other trainers also, so that we could accept them.

After a stipulated period, we release them back to the training institute where they have come from with a:

- Recommendation letter.
- They usually bring us a log book., where everything is indicated.

After attachment some students call us in the hope of being offered job opportunities.

### Industry Readiness

The informal sector I would say, we also give them opportunities to train. As earlier mentioned, the job on training. Students brought to us directly, we give them incentives after three months. That motivates them to like whatever they are doing. It is not like the formal sector where you go to class, you do the theory part of it then go for practical.

## Challenges

We start with students afresh.

Some students fear practicals. It could be that they think it is a white-collar job which it is not. When one is a mechanic, one must accept to be dirty at times. Some students don't want to be dirty. A white-collar job one would expect to go back home as they came where as in an informal sector one should expect to go home with stains.

## Soft Skills

Soft skills and customer service are very important as they are exposed to clients as we don't have a board written "no entry staff only" where it is only one person dealing with the clients. They are all exposed to clients. To us the most important skills are:

- Safety precautions- whoever comes here should adhere to that.
- Customer relations: After the end of the training we expect the trainee to be able to relate with some customers and you can only serve customers when you relate very well with them.

## Experience

I would encourage Pamoja for Transformation to also consider bringing the beneficiaries directly to the informal sector (Jua Kali), so that they can be trained directly on job on training because:

1. If the student is brought here, we don't have a set period where they eventually leave.
2. Immediately we start giving the student incentives, that will enable the student to enjoy what s/he is doing.

To us that is very important for the youths, then taking one year without getting anything knowing their backgrounds. Some of them are very vulnerable and in urgent need of the money.

We are well organized to the extent that if I am not there you will find responsible people who will always attend to clients. We encourage the mechanics to move if they get better opportunities elsewhere and we usually write them very good recommendation letters.





## Amos Ouya Mahugha

### S4J Category: Upskiller / Industry Player

Trade Area: Tailoring & Dressmaking

Locality: Vihiga County

Ekwanda Market, Mariwa VTC



I never use to keep track of finances. After training I now try to keep track of finances. Even if I use the money, I am able to track finances. It enables me to know where I am okay and where I'm going off track with regards to finances"



## Testimonial

“ A father of five, he works with his wife in the business. He currently has two interns in his shop. Amos is a theologian. He stopped practicing theology and decided to focus on tailoring. Over the years being employed Amos gained experience but had no certificate, whereas his wife had certification to grade 3 level but no experience.

### Pamoja for Transformation journey

My journey with Pamoja started when I heard that Mariwa vocational training needed people without certification to go and sit for exams. I was interested in certification that Pamoja was offering. Together with my student (Josephine) we went to inquire at the institution and was did exams. Mariwa vocational training held a three-day seminar and during the seminar they provided us with:

1. Food and transportation.
2. Pamoja paid for their examination fees. (Cost of examination is usually very expensive.)
3. Pamoja bought me an over-locking machine which brought value to his business.

Pamoja has brought me four interns for attachment. The Interns have completed their internship and resumed their studies.

### Reasons for seeking more skill

Education has no end. It only ends with ones transitioning. If I go somewhere and see one at work, I try to study how they are handling the task.

I could be experienced in one way and the other person could be knowledgeable in another way. I can learn from the other person and combine the new ideas I have learnt with the experience I have to surpass them.

I am expecting to get Grade 3 level certification and would desire to get Grade 2 and Grade 1 level certifications. If possible, to get a degree.

### Goals

I have had some past struggles in setting up businesses. I previously:

- Set up a shop and thieves broke in.

- tried boda boda business.

I then circled back to tailoring which I have done since.

1. I don't want to remain stagnant. This is just the beginning.
2. My main target is to have my own tailoring company as it will enable me to be somewhere.
3. I can also mentor others and assist them in gaining employment.
4. I also want to have a company that makes candles as I feel the two companies (tailoring and candle making) complement one another.

### Soft skills attained

We were taught Customer service skills and How to deal with conflict in the workshop. Talking to clients I am okay with. My weakness was handling conflict e.g. you have not made the clients garments. After training I am now trying with every means to avoid conflict with a client.

One of the things we were taught is that if you have a temperamental client. If they raise their tone, as a service provider you remain calm and not raise your tone to the client. Instead listen to the client and then calmly explain what happened and reach an amicable resolution with the client.

If a resolution is reached ensure that your work is of the highest standard that will leave the client complementing your workmanship.

I believe soft skills in a business are important as it is not all about making clothes. It is about dealing with clients and looking for new business.

Computer technology is also very important in this business as a client might send you some designs on a digital platform e.g. WhatsApp and one should be able to navigate in the digital space.

Some things we were taught in the seminar included:

1. Being an entrepreneur: Be creative and flexible to market changes.
2. Being business savvy.



## Josephine Auma Apuoka

### S4J Category: Upskiller

Trade Area: Tailoring & Dressmaking

Locality: Vihiga County

Ekwanda Market, Mariwa VTC

“It is important to gain skills, for instance I didn't get proper education but where I went for training, has contributed towards me gaining more skills compared to how I previously was.”

## Testimonial

I always had a passion for sewing when I was in class eight. I then joined form 1 and proceeded to form 2 then both my parents passed and I couldn't continue with school and since sewing was always a passion of mine, I decided to follow this path. I have been a tailor for three years. I taught myself how to sew, then stopped and decided to get married then started to teach myself once more to this point, I have opened my shop.

At the time I didn't know how to stitch and I also didn't have a machine. I decided to continue learning so that in future, if I got a machine, I would start up my own shop.

### My Pamoja for Transformation journey

As Pamoja for Transformation were doing their registration processes, a student from Mariwa came and told me about them and explained to me that there was a form upskillers were filing. I decided to go and apply. I was later called by a tutor who told me I had qualified next step was to go for a three-day training and sit the examination.

When I got the chance to upgrade my skills, I was ecstatic as in my life I never knew I would get such a chance.

During this time, I was still learning how to sew, and in this shop, I had made it into a store, I used to sell shoes.

Based on the training I received and upon completing exams, I saw it best to open my own shop immediately after. When I was starting up the shop, I only had one machine and it was on loan. I paid of the loan slowly.

The second machine, I bought it off someone which I also paid off slowly.

The third machine, I was lucky as Pamoja for Transformation gave it to me. I was happy when they gave me the machine as in my life, I never knew I could ever get such a machine. It is an electrical machine and one doesn't require a lot of energy to use.

### Relevant Soft Skills Gained

When we went for training, we were taught a lot of things, and the point at which I had taught myself I could get employment and the rate I was being paid I discovered was very little. I could make a dress and earn 100/- and you'd spend a whole day making the dress. For making a shirt you'd be paid 50/- and at times you'd make two shirts in a day which I would earn 100/-.

I was a wife and I had kids so surviving on 100/- a day was difficult.

I realized that if you haven't gone to school you will largely persevere on a lot of things as you have no insight. If you go to school you will have more knowledge.

It is important to gain skills, for instance I didn't get proper education but where I went for training, has contributed towards me gaining more skills compared to how I previously was.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

I would like to thank the people of Pamoja for Transformation, they attended to us well when we started training our tutors were very good.

Being in the upskillers category, they understood us and did not put us in the same category as ones who are highly educated. The use language that every one can understand. The teachings were okay and where one didn't understand you raised your hand and you were explained for properly.

They took us as little children and as upskillers we also humbled ourselves. We were quite happy. As for Pamoja for Transformation, I am very happy for how they have impacted my life. My life has taken a step from where I was. If it wasn't for Pamoja for Transformation, I wouldn't be where I am today.

An upskiller is one who is 34years and above. For me to be considered, they looked at my age and said that I qualified. They also considered if you were older and you didn't have any certification.

With these jobs, it requires one to make personal decision on what they want to do. If it is forced upon them, it will get to a point one becomes tired.

### PARTING SHOT

In regards to my job, if Pamoja for Transformation can support me to get to the next level, it would be good. If they can support us with materials e.g. cotton so that we can make uniforms, it would be good. In the next five years I see myself somewhere different from where I was. I will have moved to a different location. My business and my husbands who also works in the informal sector (Jua kali) is what sustains us. We combine our finances and educate our children.





## Linah Akinyi

### S4J Category: Industry Player

Trade Area: Hotel & Catering

Locality: Kisumu County

Manager, Good Samaritan Inn Hotel Kisumu.



Students are trained for what the industry require but a lot still needs to be done as they are exposed to the industry but are not trained much. We are left to now retrain them on the practical. The practical bit of it is wanting."

## Testimonials

“ We have been in operation since 2013. Since then we have grown to a point that we have extended. We get our employees mainly from our attachés who have come for attachment. The exceptional ones are the ones we take. We also recruit through external application processes. When recruiting we look for these key skills:

- Discipline
- Customer oriented.
- Hardworking
- Good communication skills.

### Challenges to getting skilled employees

1. Sourcing for male graduates is a challenge since most of them do not enroll for hospitality courses. Majority coming in are ladies. In one way or another, we need to balance as we have some jobs that we also feel the gentlemen will do it better than the ladies.
2. When the government begun giving the TVET loans to students, there is an influx of students seeking attachment placements. It is disappointing most of them come and miss attachment placements. As I talk also to my colleagues, they also say it is a big problem to them we wonder how these students are going to cope in the future. The students get so disappointed. It never used to be that way but of late it is a big problem.

We prefer students from vocational Centres to universities. These are the basic institutions where we source our students from and very few from the polytechnics. The students with university degrees are not easily trained and they have discipline issues as most of them come in with a lot of expectation and re not ready to be trained. Where as the students from the vocational centres have minimal training, so when they come in, they are really eager to learn. We find it easier to train them.

### My Pamoja for Transformation journey

Pamoja have been my clients for years. Last year they came and brought me a brochure that they begun a program of sponsoring the youth in various courses. I was very interested and that is how I knew about this program. What drove me to partnership is that they talked about hospitality. I told them that being they have been supporting us and with that kind of a program I

knew there was a gap about it and the only institution I was offering the same was UJIMA.

### Industrial attachment

Students are trained for what the industry require but a lot still needs to be done as they are exposed to the industry but are not trained much. We are left to now retrain them on the practical. The practical bit of it is wanting. Something need to be done on the practical. When they come in Theoretically, they know what needs to be done but practically being that this is a practical oriented profession, something needs to be done.

The industry relies a lot on soft skills especially:

- Communication
- Discipline is key as you are meeting people from different people.

I have talked to other managers around, what they look at is the discipline they say it is easy to rain someone who is disciplined.

Since the program has not run for long, I've not had a lot of student attachees from Pamoja. Currently I have two. One thing I would say stands out compared to other institutions there is:

1. Confidence among Pamoja for Transformation students. The are confident about what they are doing.
2. They are always yearning to learn.
3. They are outgoing.
4. These students were not pushed by their parents. They actually like what they are doing. It shows by how they work.

### Parting shot

Training institutions should have some relationship with employing organisations. There is a gap, students seek for attachments spaces. They need to reach out. Mentorship is also something that is key to the industry that I think Pamoja also needs to do. Youth are facing different challenges. We might not be professionals as employers but it is something that needs to be done right from the college, as some students have Drug issues, Family Issues and Some are young mothers/fathers. They need to be mentored and assisted with such challenges.





## Henry Opiyo Ochieng

### S4J Category: Upskiller / Industry Player

Trade Area: Plumbing  
Locality: Ahero VTC in  
Kisumu County, Plumber.



What drove me to pursue plumbing is that the economic situation is becoming hard and without any letters you can't work for any organisation. You can't be employed, if asked to prove your qualification. I have done my exams so I would like to continue to Grade 2 and then proceed to Grade 1."



## Testimonial

I started plumbing in 2015. My dad used to work in the plumbing industry and when he started ailing, he called me. This was not the course I was going to study.

I used to be a driver in Kisumu. When my farther called on me he told me that he wasn't fit enough and requested that I work with these people. That is why I joined the course. After I joined, I would work with the people, we would draw water from one space to the next. We would work on the Sand pipe and meter.

As a plumber you fix pipes and knows how to redirect water to the house and to fix the sink.

### My Pamoja for Transformation Journey.

Pamoja for Transformation enabled me to get certification as I previously had none. They are an NGO that sponsored me to do my examination. I used to work without any papers. I would like to thank them for assisting me.

After being sponsored by Pamoja for Transformation, I can now effectively supply water in the entire house and ensure the whole house has water supply from the taps. I have a letter from the institution confirming this the certification is yet to be given.

What drove me to pursue plumbing is that the economic situation is becoming hard and without any certification you can't work for any organisation. You can't be employed, if asked to prove your qualification.

I have done my exams so I would like to continue to Grade 2 and then proceed to Grade 1. Grade 2 entails fixing piping in the house.

This is my main income earner. The income I make from this job I use to pay off my loans

This job has helped me, and I am not the same person I was before. I knew nothing, at least nowadays, I am knowledgeable.

For the youth who might have skill in plumbing and have no certification, I would like to encourage them to work hard and come to the institution, register and get certified. Having certification is very important in Kenya. It shows that you are qualified. Most people lack certification as a result of one's low financial capacity to pursue relevant training. Their financial capability determines whether they are are able to register in the

institutions or not.

I would like to encourage Pamoja for Transformation to continue supporting us, so that someone can also benefit as I have gained.

### Work-related challenges

Challenges are there. Someone like myself has a family. As you go for classes it's always at the back of your mind that there are people who you still have to support. During class you are of two minds as you keep thinking what the family will have on the table come evening.

### Industrial attachment

If a student comes looking for an attachment with us, we welcome them. There is a student who came from Nyakach looking for an attachment Right now the student is on attachment and we can't refuse them so they can also gain the skills as I did. We teach each other so that they can also gain knowledge that will help them in the future.

We assist where we can so the student can also understand because when you do for them that is not helping them. They need to do it themselves so they understand how it is done.

In this world everyone needs a skill and it is good for people to learn so as to progress in future to help their families.

### Parting shot

I have a brother who also has a skill and has no certification. I am asking of Pamoja for Transformation has another intake they can give my brother a chance. I would also like to thank Pamoja for Transformation, for what they have done for me as I'd still have no certification but they have helped me. I ask them to continue assisting our people.



## Tabitha Atieno Ouko

**S4J Category: Upskiller**

Trade Area: Hairdressing & Beauty

Locality: Kisumu County



As a youth I am grateful to Pamoja for Transformation. I have something at hand but it's never enough until I get to a space, I can support myself and the skills I have I can share with other youth outside. I am grateful to Pamoja they have made me reach this far."

## “ Testimonial

Being a barber was not my dream but I found myself loving it. I never went to college and stared looking for opportunities in Kisumu. I stayed with my brother. As I only had high school certificates, I would occasionally be asked for college certificates. I stayed with my brother in the hopes that he would take me to a better college which he never did.

A family friend next to Boya Ahero vocational Technical training called me and informed me of a chance with Pamoja for Transformation. She inquired if that would be something of interest to me. I informed my friend that I was tired of sitting in the house and if the chance was still open, I would avail myself the following day. I availed myself and my friend informed me of Pamoja for Transformation and how they deal with the People from vulnerable backgrounds who lacked skills.

I didn't know where to start but I was content leaving my family behind and proceeding with my education. My friend informed that that if I was ready she would take me to Ahero vocational Training Centre to get the form and form there I would know what procedures to follow.

### My Pamoja for Transformation Journey

I was given the exact date to report and I never delayed. I reported. I was given a list of courses to select from. Initially I chose

1. Food and beverage. I was not content.
2. Hairdressing. I was not interested.
3. Barber: My best friend was taking this course and anytime he would ask fellow students to get their hair cut I would request him to let me try. At the time I was not good and peers would get upset but I would try to calm down

Pamoja paid for my NITA Exams and School fees. I worried about fees and Pamoja for Transformation informed me that they would cater for my fees. I knew I had to work hard as Pamoja had taken my burden.

### Industrial Attachment

The tutors had informed us when the time is right, they would call us and link us to our employers. I used to call Mr. Joshua from college linked me to Rosemary. I reported to work on a Monday and on the first day, there were clients and I wasn't sure what to do as I was also nervous. Handling a man is also challenging for

someone who is not used to it. Rosemary encouraged me to shave the men and she also informed me that anything I wasn't sure of anything then I should step aside and watch my colleagues shave and I would catch up later. After three months I was confident.

### Work related challenges

Although I appreciate Pamoja for Transformation assisting me, I am still not financially stable and I would request them to uplift me to a standard, with my job not necessarily in Kisumu. I would really appreciate if they can open for me my own space.

When students leave college, they are novices. I was never perfect when I started. The persistence, I wanted to learn more so I would come daily.

Some men are comfortable with a lady shaving their hair and others wont even accept a lady touching them. It is competitive.

Many women are not in this industry and of given the chance to explore I can do a lot.

### Life changes since the program

1. I can put food on the table.
2. I can walk proudly. When one knows how to do something they have courage to talk about it..
3. I am a happy lady.

My boss is really friendly, has encouraged me to work hard and be persistent in what I do.

I work amongst men who know what they are doing and most are their clients. I am just a recent hire.

### Parting shot

As a youth I am grateful to Pamoja for Transformation. I have something at hand but it's never enough until I get to a space, I can support myself and the skills I have I can share with other youth outside. I am grateful to Pamoja they have made me reach this far.





## Joseph Otieno Mbusi

### S4J Category: Upskiller

Trade Area: Motor Vehicle Mechanics

Locality: Kisumu County



"I ensure there is no conflict between my clients and I. If I am expecting clients, I will inform my colleagues in advance to control how they talk. Having communication skills enables me to negotiate and relate with the client without confrontation."

Joseph successfully completed training in the S4J program as an upskiller. He then wrote down a request for a toolkit, which he received during the the program. It has assisted him in a huge way as it has enabled his work to be easier. The spanners he previously lacked are now available. Prior to this he would waste time going to ask someone else for working tools. Now work flow is a lot more efficient and that is a benefit thanks to Pamoja for transformation.

## Testimonial

There was a training that Pamoja for Transformation took me to. After the training, I wrote down a toolkit which I recently received. It has assisted as it has enabled my work to be easier. The spanners I lacked I now have. Prior to this I would waste time going to ask someone for a spanner. Now work flow is a lot efficient and that is a benefit. My results are back and it indicates that I can enroll for Grade 2 Certification which I can use to look for a job elsewhere. I did this at YMCA training Centre, came back to the garage where I continue to work.

I started working as a mechanic in September 2014. Initially, I had no equipment. I just started off with no idea and recently is when I started investing in tools but I had a few challenges, but Pamoja for Transformation sponsored me and that was to my advantage as the tools I previously lacked I now have.

I specialize in Japanese cars, German vehicles, French automobiles. I mostly work on the smaller cars from pick-ups to saloon cars and smaller cars.

German cars are a challenge as their parts are imported and if working on these cars, they require special tools e.g. spanner. So that leave me having to ask around and if the client is there, they might feel that you don't take your work seriously.

### The need for skills & certifications

Most people in our location learn in the garage but studying outside are few. There is only one main challenge; In as much as there are people who would want to go outside and study lack of proper education background and certification stagnates their growth. They lack networks who can connect them with sponsorship opportunities as I got.

For one to be able to confidently handle the job two requirements are necessary:

1. Certification: If one is to get employed organizations need their staff to have suitable certification
2. Skill: There are certain clients who don't care much for certification but are keen on one's performance and duration taken.

Some of the skills I learnt at YMCA include:

1. Sometimes when we dismantle an engine we never used to measure/ weigh. We would take that to an engineer. There were some materials we were to buy and I discovered that the engineers had them and the were assessments that we were supposed to be doing in the garage, before taking parts to the engineer so we understand the actual as there were some that the engineer was not responsible for identifying to us. Meaning you can complete service on a car but not to perfection.
2. School is important because in anything one undertakes it requires education. So, if one is skilled and has combines that with education, one is way ahead as the information gained is important and one who doesn't go to school misses out on the knowledge.
3. It is important to have education and skill as we have students who have Grade 1 certification but they don't have mechanical skills.
4. There were times I would dismantle the engine and take it to the engineer directly. Through school I learnt an alternative method through school with equipment that if I buy, I can measure / weigh and can now identify a specific issue without going to the engineer.

I didn't go for attachment I just completed my studies and started directly at the garage.

### Work-related challenges

I did not sit my exams as I had financial challenges. Linking with Pamoja for Transformation I had to also sacrifice my time and complete my exams. Perseverance is key. While I was sponsored by Pamoja, I had classes once a week on Wednesday. I would coordinate with my colleagues at the workshop to hold fort while I was in class to ensure work flow continuity.



## Truphena Atieno

### S4J Category: Upskiller

Trade Area: Tailoring & Dressmaking

Locality: Kisumu County

YMCA Kisumu



I started getting frustrated with life and there was nothing I could do. I started looking around. I would work in local hotels, I also sold fried fish (omena) for a bit. The business wasn't going too well a... I was advised to enroll for a technical skill"





## Testimonial (paraphrased from Dholuo language)



I was born and raised in Suba, where I did not achieve the desired academic results. I then proceeded to Nyalenda Primary School, but my performance did not meet the criteria necessary for secondary school enrollment. I came back to the village in Karachuonyo and sat for my exams at Nyangau Primary. I got a chance to join Siburi secondary. I did form 1 and form 2. I had problems with school fees. My dad was not around it was back and forth so I dropped out in form 2 third term. I then met a man who I ended up staying with for nine years as my husband. God blessed us with children. After we got married, we relocated to Kisumu. He was in a polytechnic.

When he completed his studies, I don't know where the issue was but I would hear him complaining about the gender of children I gave birth to. At the time I also stayed with my sister, and that is what caused a problem my giving birth to girls. He went ahead and married my sister. That's when I started having problems with his association with my sister. He married my sister who was my follower.

I started getting frustrated with life and there was nothing I could do. I started looking around. I would work in local hotels, I also sold fried fish (omena) for a bit. The business wasn't going too well and the person supplying me with the stock was my ex husband's mum. As we were separated with his son, she stopped the supply. That is when I started looking for hotel jobs. I worked in Olunga. I left when I found KYEOP sponsors.

KYEOP started with me, I got my scholarship and training. They asked me to select anywhere to go and I selected ARINA and was trained by a lady. I went for a shorter period and came back. When I was home, I found places I could assist with sewing. In the process of working in different spaces, the lady I was working for at the time is where I came to hear about Pamoja for Transformation.

The lady told me to try my luck. She advised me that if I got luck then I should do Grade 2 as with KYEOP sponsors, I had done Grade 3 in dressmaking. She told me that by having Grade 2 I would have progressed from where I was. She took me to YMCA where I registered.

I got admission and was successfully enrolled at YMCA. I have since completed and am now more organised in the way I make decisions around my business. Education is good because I now have a stable way of earning income and supporting my 5 kids as a single mum.





## Milicent Bugutsa

### S4J Category: Trainer

Trade Area: Electrical Engineering  
Bondo TVC



“The three months I had the Pamoja group I saw how dedicated the students were. They took every minute of the opportunity they had so that they can be able to learn everything. The students were looking to be like me or surpass me.”

Millicent is a trainer in Electrical Engineering, a male dominated course. She confirms that as a female you need to struggle so you can reach where the men are as there are some work that requires male energy and so females struggle in that sense. As a young person and as a lady in engineering courses, she is able to mentor more girls in engineering courses as most of them feel they won't do well in electrical as they fear subjects such as Maths or Physics. However, even if one doesn't perform well in these subjects, they can do well in the skill aspect.

## Testimonial



I feel good being me as I am where I wanted to be. While growing up I wanted to be an engineer but I had no idea what kind of engineering I would pursue.

At secondary level, I ventured more into physics and I thank my mentor, my physics teacher who encouraged me and supported me very much. After completing my high school my physics teacher sponsored me for an electrical engineering course at Rift Valley technical training institute (RVTTI) in Eldoret.

### Lessons Learnt

Electrical is a male dominated course so as a female you need to struggle so they can reach where the men are as we have some work that requires male energy and so females struggle in that sense. The men can be condescending towards their female counterparts and expect them to carry out heavy tasks in equal measure.

Being a tutor is encouraging as a young person and as a lady in engineering courses. I am able to mentor more girls in engineering courses as most of them feel they won't do well in electrical as they fear subjects such as: Maths and Physics. Even if one doesn't perform well in these subjects the skill aspect they can do well.

### My Pamoja for Transformation journey

I taught the Pamoja class for three months. I had a total of 29 students of which four were females. The cohort that arrived in September we see more ladies taking electrical engineering.

I heard of Pamoja for transformation through teaching. I heard them sponsoring student at NITA Kisumu and Bondo Technical Training Institute.

After training the students, trainers went for training of Trainers (ToT) at Nakuru sponsored by GIZ. As trainers we also benefited. We were trained on pedagogy. Take away lessons from the training include Active learning and Learner centered.

We are trying to implement them in our classes so our classes can be Active, interactive, Incorporate the

students, and put into use the many facilities that are around us.

This is all so that our teaching/ training can be more effective.

### Barriers to women in STEM

Some of the barriers deterring ladies from some courses are:

1. The philosophy that the courses are for men. Parents also have the mentality that courses such as electrical, plumbing, are for men. They advise their daughters to take hairdressing or tailoring courses.
2. In the field the men are so rough and that roughness makes ladies shy away from these courses. If the men are rough the ladies need to show the same level of aggression and most ladies don't have it in them so they avoid the courses.

### My recommendations

Give first priority to females who take up technical courses. Sponsor students from vulnerable backgrounds with toolkit which are important in schools.

The three months I had the Pamoja group I saw how dedicated the students were. They took every minute of the opportunity they had so that they can be able to learn everything. The students were looking to be like me or surpass me.

I feel good that I am an inspiration to many because when I walk around and you are stopped by previous students who remember you for teaching them, it feels good and inspiring. I reiterate that if you do something from your heart it touches a lot of people and lives.







## Peter Akello

### S4J Category: VTC Partner

Trade Area: Registrar Bondo TTI  
Registrar - Bondo TTI



“One can see the difference between students within the institution and students sponsored by Pamoja for Transformation. The ones sponsored are more determined and vigorous than the self-sponsored students”

## Testimonial

We have been talking about collaboration with Pamoja since July 2021. In May 2021 the Institution signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Pamoja for Transformation.

Pamoja agreed to Sponsor 100 students to take some NITA courses in Electrical installation, Masonry, Plumbing and Hairdressing.

As a registrar, anything to do with student sponsorship I have to oversee the process. I occasionally visit and find the students well engaged. The trainings are ongoing and are thorough.

The community really appreciate as quite a number of students that were sponsored come from the surrounding community. The community appreciates the work done by Pamoja for Transformation and have been requesting registrar if this partnership can be extended so more students can benefit.

### How we enroll students

We prefer students had to have documents to show that they were from disadvantaged backgrounds. Students have to provide Parents death certificate(s). We had to dig into the student's family background to find out if the students were truly disadvantaged and needed sponsorship. As a registrar who lives in the community it was beneficial as I know majority of the students. For Students who were not from surrounding community I was strict on the documents provided to ensure that they needed sponsorship.

The partnership is good although 20 continuing students were taken by Pamoja for transformation who agreed to pay the students exam fee.

Our only request would be to increase the number of students to be sponsored as it can go a long way in helping vulnerable students around.

### The need for partnership with other organisations

Other than Pamoja for Transformation, we have had another engagement with Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB), who wanted to sponsor some students for the same courses.

It is not only technical courses that require sponsorship. I see most of the sponsors concentrating on technical which is a big challenge as not all students can enroll in

technical courses.

We do tracer study which is a serious requirement by the government that we do Tracer study.

We know where our students are after completing their studies. We have created an alumni wall for students where we:

1. communicate and interact with them
2. find out where they are.
3. assist them to find jobs.

### Our Success Stories

Our students in plumbing majority of them are placed and those who are not in placements have their own jobs. If asked by a company to give them students in plumbing who have passed through our institution, it is difficult to find one that is jobless. So for plumbing I'd like to say all students are placed.

Electrical installation quite a good number are doing well but there are some that are still not placed well but they have something to do. Some are steady some are not steady.

### Clear distinction in Sponsored students

One can see the difference between students within the institution and students sponsored by Pamoja for Transformation. The ones sponsored are more determined and vigorous than the self-sponsored students.

If the government puts good structures in place where education is concerned and practice what they preach, students can learn without sponsorship. Currently they need sponsorship.

Giving the youth opportunities so they can be self-sustainable they have something to do to be self-sufficient. This is an avenue of providing youth with opportunities without necessarily relying on help/ people's donations. I believe we are headed there because the courses are geared towards making the students self-sustainable. The ones we are currently training once they complete, they will also be able to provide mentorship.

There is room for them to grow as Pamoja for Transformation has shown them the way. The students only have to improve on what they have learnt.



## Pamela Kaleka

### S4J Category: VTC Partner

Trade Area: Programs Manager  
YMCA Kisumu County



“Lack of skill causes lack of employment opportunities among youth. Previously young people were not told what to do. Students of yesteryears were only told to pass and go to university. The same students were told to pass and become lawyers as opposed to passing and becoming carpenters.”



## Testimonial

My work involves a lot of administrative task to ensure program continuity. Such as overseeing the activities in the institution and Looking for partners and clients.

The programs offered within YMCA Kisumu branch include youth empowerment program ranging from Health programs, Educational Programs, Skills empowerment programs and Sports.

Community outreach. programs - Sensitizing the community on what affects young people.

We don't have levels required for enrollment to our technical courses. Students can enroll with whatever level of education, they have. The kind of courses we do today are NITA programs that are 90% practicals and 10% theory.

### Under-enrollment to TVETs

Lack of skill causes lack of employment opportunities among youth. Previously young people were not told what to do. Students of yesteryears were only told to pass and go to university. The same students were told to pass and become lawyers as opposed to passing and becoming carpenters.

In those days, occupations such as carpentry and tailoring were generally looked down upon, particularly tailoring. In rural areas, elderly people were often associated with such activities.

A student in fourth form today if asked to become a tailor is reminiscent to the old person in the village and it is not attractive.

As an institution we have made these skills attractive to today's younger generation. A lot of alumni students have done well in the market and we ask them to come and mentor the upcoming students and show them how attractive these courses are and they are making money from these skills.

It is not about going to school or university but how much do you have in your pocket? This is what we try to emphasize to the students.

### My pamoja for transformation story

Partnership with Pamoja for Transformation started in December 2021. We started with ongoing students doing the same courses. We only partnered with Skills for Jobs training to have them do exams in 2021.

Of the first cohort, 80% of students passed the exam and graduated. The partnership started with the few students the institution had at the time.

The second cohort in January 2022. The population that was taken by skills for jobs training has trained 500 students.

I wish we could spread our wings and put some allowance as the demand for these courses is very high. During recruitment to the program the numbers were to high and unfortunately we couldn't enroll all the students as there were criteria's, conditions, requirements so we only take the ones meeting the stipulated requirements.

The young people that have been trained through this program are doing extremely well in the market. We have:

- Linked them to employers
- Others are on attachment.
- Some are self- Employed.

If you go to the field and experience how these people are performing, it is elating as they are independent as at the point of enrollment these youth were helpless. They were dependent on other people. Today they are independent.

### Success Story

During a graduation ceremony, a student testified that they came in a single person. After electrical installation course, he was able to leave go for attachment got employment in Nairobi and stated he is now a family man. Married with two children. He came for the ceremony with his family. For the institution that was a plus because this was a young person who previously depended on uncles and well-wishers. He had no idea he could sustain a family. This is how the program has proved to be. It has been very successful. Most young people have testimonies.

I have young people in Nairobi, Mombasa who have also undergone the Skills for jobs training. As we send them send them out for attachment we encourage them to be proactive also look for internships opportunities on their own.





## James Etsimile

### S4J Category: Trainer

Trade Area: Motor Vehicle Mechanic  
Mariwa VTC



“Youth are supposed to learn more on life skills. The truth is in Life skills they learn of challenges they face in life. These challenges try to hinder their lives”

## Testimonial

As the Director of Studies (DoS) and Industrial Liaison Officer, my roles are:

- to make sure I do the orientation for the trainees who are supposed to go for attachment. I am supposed to familiarize them on attachment basis.
- to make sure I go for assessment to confirm how they are going on.
- to look for them the areas they are supposed to be attached and
- to write the attachment letter and I issue also the log books.

Most of the students come from a poor background financially and most of them are single parents. When they come most of them used to have problems with the school fees.

### Emerging market needs for skills

What we teach them is exactly what the market needs, but the issue is that we don't give them 100%.

When students for attachment, they go there as freshers from the college. They cannot be given everything to do. I normally tell them to the system there is a point one gets to and the other 10% you gain from the supervisor.

We normally teach them the soft skills.

1. Life skills
2. Communication skills
3. Entrepreneurship – How to relate with the customer.

We normally tell them that the customer is the alpha and omega. They are the everything in their life because if you joke with the customer it means that now, your life is doomed. So we normally tell them, encourage them how to:

- Cope with customers.
- Cope with competition.
- To relate with customers.
- How to communicate – Some of them don't know how to communicate.
- Writing CVs.

### The lack of funding

For students who do not have any sort of funding are encouraged to apply for bursaries whenever available.

We have two bursaries. From the Member of County Assemble (MCA) and the Member of Parliament (MP). We normally use that as our advantage as some students can come without anything but we encourage them to apply for bursary in plenty.

An example: Pamoja they paid one term. We tell them that the fact that they have paid for one term, to also apply for the bursary the same term and the money will be postponed. We normally encourage them so that if they are on attachment, we know that they will come back for Grade 2.

We also tell them to apply for the bursary before going for attachment or comeback apply for the bursary and then go back. When they come back everything is intact. They can go on smoothly with education.

### My Pamoja for Transformation story

Pamoja for Transformation has tried. I can say its God because when they came, we thought it was just a by the way but we realized it was genuine. They came over the vacation and we were not here the security guard informed us told us Pamoja for transformation stated they would comeback. They come back and;

- Involved us to the system.
- Met the students as the first one was continuing.

We thought it was a joke and from there they registered the continuing. i.e. 60 after which we knew they were serious. We were happy about that because its not normal as some of them they'll say, they'll dodge but Pamoja for Transformation did it perfectly. Things that made us be happier included:

Novices were registered for the exam and paid their fees for that term. Students who came with e.g. lunch money we would inform them that their fees were paid in full and so the money we would advise them to shift it around so that it could pay for something else. The students are then comfortable. The problem now is when a student has no fee, they will be uncomfortable even as the learning is going on. The students were comfortable and they did exams well, as the routine of being sent back home was not there.





## Ruth Mango

### S4J Category: VTC Partner

Trade Area: Industrial Liaison Officer  
YMCA Kisumu County



“An empowered youth is somebody who can walk out confidently and say today I can work and do this, and earn something for my life, support their families and even stand in for themselves, Financially, Morally and are able to support others after being empowered.”

## Testimonial

So Far in my class Pamoja for Transformation sponsored around 100 students including: On going students, Novices and Upskillers.

### My Pamoja for Transformation Story

What I would say working with Pamoja is very easy. Other organisations give us such students but follow up is never easy for them. We do follow ups ourselves. Considering that Pamoja for Transformation do the recruitment themselves. They only bring us the names. Working with Pamoja has been a pleasant experience for us when dealing with the students. Whenever we called to notify them that two or three students couldn't attend school due to certain reasons, they were quick to respond in comparison to other organizations.

Working with Pamoja has been easy because they have been in touch. You see some people will bring the students and forget about it. Pamoja keeps calling, coming inside finding out, keeping in touch and we have students who've also had some personal issues, sometimes you share and Pamoja will come to the office so that a resolution can be reached.

We realize most of these issues come into my office as Gender Based Violence or guiding and counselling officer. At times we share and tell Pamoja about the students' issues and to what level the institution can get involved. At the end of the day they will come in and support.

### Recommendations

Personally, as a trainer in my department, I would have wanted if possible, there be a percentage of Pamoja, supporting these students that they are giving us with some of these products. Like now we have what they need but there are some individual needs some of these students have for doing their practicals which becomes a challenge to them.

I wish even the youth that are coming from secondary schools, I wish the government would consider the VTI's, that the same way they post the other students, they would get to a level that even now, in the VTI's there are students that are just able to be posted into the VTI's so that it is also embraced. There will be so much awareness so that people may know, it is not about what people think Vocational Training Centres are places for failures, instead it is a place that can also nurture people

that are important in the society.

I would also like to encourage our male youth to embrace the female dominating trades and vice versa. Interacting with employers is not restricted by gender.

We did market research with another partner, and what we got is that even in the issue of finances, employers want ladies to be managing their finances than boys. This greed for money notion should be eradicated from young men and maybe with our industry, right now we'd wish if young men were able to embrace hair dressing and beauty because every where now is about men with beauty / men with hair.

When Pamoja for Transformation is doing their recruitment, they should also encourage that men should do these other female dominating courses more and vice versa.

### Access to skills and youth unemployment

The youth have the perception that there are no jobs in Kenya. They now feel like there is no need to go to school and would rather just go and start selling things because at the end of the day even if they go to school, they won't get a job. This is because of what they have been hearing.

There are problems with transition from the institutions to the job market. We have taken it differently also with the support of Pamoja and USAID the other partner that we have brought in. Once they finish:

- We attach them ourselves.
- We make sure we do the follow up to the end.

Assume you are now taking a trainee to a place that is not offering that. It becomes a challenge. The employers also they have reached a place where they don't trust what the students tell them, so if the student is going to look for attachment themselves, they are asked why the tutor is not coming/visiting. The employers assume that the student is difficult that is why the tutors don't escort them.

An empowered youth is somebody who is able to stand out there for themselves. Somebody who is confidently for themselves. Somebody who can apply what they have been trained on.





## Martin Owino

### S4J Category: VTC Partner

Trade Area: Center Manager  
Akado VTC



“Organisations such as Pamoja for Transformation coming in with such programs. It is a savior to them as the programs see them through the trainings, linking them to the industry for job placement and pays for them the tuition fees to see them through the training.”



## “ Testimonials

For any young person that aspiring to be a technical person, the vocational training Centre is an entry point.

Looking back at the history of technical education, technical and vocational education has suffered the history of attitudes. The worst hit institution is the technical and vocational training Centre, which were previously known and referred to in our constitution as the “village polytechnic”.

Labelling has made the Centres suffer issues of attitudes that have been viewed as dumpsites for academic failures, which is not true as they are for young people who have been gifted differently and need to have an avenue of support and exposure so they can fully exploit their potential.

### Program Relevance

From the background I have provided, majority of the young people that come to join the Vocational Training Centres (VTC) do it as a last resort as they have it in mind, they are not academically gifted and that they can't amount to anything.

Majority of the students are vulnerable, orphans and have no financial support to see them through education.

Organisations such as Pamoja for Transformation coming in with such programs. It is a savior to them as the programs see them through the trainings, linking them to the industry for job placement and pays for them the tuition fees to see them through the training.

Through the program we have reached out to some who don't have any formal education but are artisans already in the field and practicing but need to have certification and recognition that recognizes them for the skills they have.

To students in the field, we have done imparted them with sensitizations and Life skills. We realized they are already in the field practicing. They have no formal education so issues of soft skills is of great challenge.

We take them through entrepreneurship, soft skills training and Financial Management. We train them on how best to handle the client and manage their finances. These are some of the gaps the program has addressed.

### Industrial & Job linkages

This has been a challenge. We have tried to reach out to the employers and one thing that has been clear to me is that we need to establish a vibrant career Centre that will provide:

1. A career guidance for these young people
2. On the admissions.
3. They are guided properly.

Kenya has so many young people without jobs and vise versa. This is as a result of skill mismatch. Skills acquired are not the skills required.

The program has been looking at what is it that the employer is looking for and through that they have been able to bring on board our trainers for capacity building. We have come up with a curriculum that is responsible to the dictates of the market. Those are some of the success that we have seen this program achieve and also the big element of the soft skill which we started off capacity building of our trainers on the soft skills, thereafter we expected them to cascade the same to our trainers.

### Program related challenges

The biggest challenges we have had in terms if the implementation of the project is the industrial linkages/ job placements. The time is very limited.

The program is taking a short period of time (3 months). In the three months what is to be covered is also a lot as we have to take the student through the Practical, Industry and Soft skills training.

The program is also emphasizing a lot on the students. We need to focus on the trainer. As the tutor's train, we should also get time for them to go for industrial attachment so that they are also acquainted with the current technology and they disseminate the same to the trainers. We have done the capacity building within the program we have gotten an opportunity also to expose them to the industry so that they are acquainted with market trends.



**Nancy K. Wanyama**

**S4J Category: VTC Partner**

Trade Area: Registrar  
Bungoma North TVC



“Something unique about the 67 Pamoja for Transformation students, is that when compared to the other group (Non sponsored students), they are, very committed, equal to the task and they work hard to achieve.”

As the Registrar, Nancy's roles revolve around, admissions, exit of students, attachments, and examinations. She is also a trainer of automotive Engineering and agriculture Engineering. Through her institution, they are able to perform tracer studies to follow up on students that they've trained previously. Nancy reported that students enrolled through the S4J program have been able to demonstrate a higher level of competence and skill. Her main ask was to have more students incorporated into the program as it had proven to be really helpful.

## Testimonials



The first time I heard about Pamoja for Transformation they came to Bungoma North Technical and Vocational College. At the time they told me they had talked to our principal. The principal was out on official duty, and he asked me to meet them. That was the first time I met them, they came and requested for partnership to 120 students along the different trade test areas. This is how we started meeting and communicating with them making sure we got the students.

The process of engagement was not that easy as first we were doubting as we thought it would not bear any fruits. After talking and engaging for some time, we saw the benefits and started advertising. They told us to advertise they made for us Posters and gave us application forms.

They did everything for us and our work was to advertise and get students. We started marketing and got students and after engaging with them for some time, we saw that the program was there to grow.

We started to believe Pamoja for Transformation authenticity when they brought the papers, the way they were talking, the engagement and the memorandum.

When we signed an MoU with them then we saw it was binding. We signed this year around May/June.

### Work related challenges

There are some young mothers in class but we have not allowed them to come with children. We call the parents or guardians and tell them to sit with the children as this institution is an engineering place. If they come with children and go to the workshop, the children can be hurt. We don't encourage them to come with children.

Pamoja for Transformation, was giving them tuition fee and examination fee but lunch they don't get anything to do with lunch. Some come from home and don't have anything to eat. They sometimes come to my office crying. In the college we have not started the Lunch programs. We are still thinking of starting, although the population and the government we are looking at them

as most students here are very poor.

Most student look at capitation and HELB. If capitation is not there and HELB is not giving them anything then learning becomes hard for them.

Running the college without that money is hard. For our college the third and fourth quarter did not come so:

- Food is a problem.
- Some courses need more materials. e.g. Fashion design, they need to come with materials every day. If the college buys once then the materials are just used for one week and then they will run out of materials. They have to spend money to buy materials each and every time.
- The electrical students. Electrical materials are very expensive. Every time they are on practical, we ask them to come with some few things of which sometimes they come crying as they don't have.

When they come crying, I feel if I had money I could help, but I can't help the whole group. It is hard.

### The impact

We teach students to be well mannered. We were taken for a training, for soft skills. After training them in the skills that they are supposed to get, we also instilled in them Manners, the positive attitude, time management and money management.

From the institution they just go out and maybe get jobs or they do their own things and get money. We teach them how to behave, speak to people.

When they came they were not confident, now they are confident. As we speak, they can now talk and express themselves.

We do tracer study as an institute, and for Pamoja for Transformation beneficiaries. For other groups we have been doing tracer study. Some have already gotten good jobs out there.







## Pascalia Ouma

### S4J Category: Partner (County Government of Kisumu)

Trade Area: County Director  
Kisumu County, Director TVETs



Pamoja for Transformation came in at the right time as that is when we were stuck. We had students who were not able to pay for their exam fee etc. That encouraged us in welcoming Pamoja for Transformation and so far, so good."

## Role of County Government

Following the implementation of the 2010 constitution, the County governments form an integral role in the implementation of education requirements at the local level. As such, Pamoja for Transformation continuously identifies and activates the different areas of partnership that would be pivotal in realizing the shared goals for communities within which we operate.

For instance, with Kisumu County of Kenya as the focal point, Pamoja for Transformation identified and developed suitable policy interventions to enable the implementation of TVET training within local communities. As a result, we've seen the county government establish career centers within the partner learning institutions that inform interested individuals on training programs that a suitable for the current market. In addition, the career centers also offer a database of potential employer from whom the students can get internship or job placements. In addition, for some successful beneficiaries who complete vocational training, the county government absorbs them into the public service.

At the policy level, the Kisumu County awards Kes. 15000/= tuition fees, directly to the institution, for every student who joins a vocational training center every financial year. This leaves the students with only the burden of paying Exams and Admissions fees. Having the Skills for Jobs Program fills in the gap for examinations fees.

Consequently, having such policy interventions replicated across counties in Kenya will see an increase in uptake and successful outcomes of Vocational Training Programs.

## Testimonial

“What we do in TVET is that I am in charge of all 27 the public vocational training centres in Kisumu county, are spread all across the county. I don't want to talk about percentages around youth unemployment, but we all know the youth are very idle outside here. We have very many youths who are unemployed and that is why TVET is handy because we are targeting:

1. Those who are unemployed.
2. Out of school – whether they have finished or they are dropouts.

We are seeing a lot of these youths outside there and Kisumu county, actually when you look at the Governors manifesto, he really wants to try and engage these youths, by giving them a skill so that they can be able to engage themselves through:

- Self-employment
- They get engaged in the industry.

When we came in there was a lot of negative attitude(s). People were not interested in vocational training simply because they were not sensitized enough. What we have done, we have gone outside there we have sensitized them. We are doing a lot of sensitization. In fact, this year, we had what we call the first annual graduation for all the vocational Training centres which was held

at Rotary vocational Training Centre which as one of our training centres in central. It attracted so many students. Those who graduated on that day were 2,300.

That was just a way of marketing our Vocational Training Centres, after which we have seen a lot of people coming to enquire and getting enrolled in our institutions. Henceforth, we are going to be having those graduations every year.

### The Pamoja for Transformation link

The partnership started in the year 2022. As a county we are approached by many partners. We work with so many partners. The Governor always makes it clear that partners must be welcomed in Kisumu county.

Pamoja for Transformation came in at the right time as that is when we were stuck. We had students who were not able to pay for their exam fee etc. That encouraged us in welcoming Pamoja for Transformation and so far, so good.

Apart from just paying the fee, Pamoja for Transformation came in and found us struggling with our policy. With the support from the project, we have developed the County TVET policy to help streamline TVET programs.



# Methodology

## The approach

### Project Design

The Skills for Jobs project is the brainchild of Pamoja for Transformation in our continuous efforts to support communities with resources to move from crisis and poverty, to peace and development. Through our first strategic intervention sector (Skills and enterprise development), we brought on board a technical consultant to better understand the needs, and growing concerns.

Consequently, Mr. Hezborne Ouma Ongele, the lead consultant was engaged to conduct a preliminary market scan in order to outline the needs including:

- The set(s) of skills/trades needed
- The curriculum that addresses the market needs (including soft & technical skills)
- The certifications required for the skills/trades
- Relevance of identified skills in addressing
  - unemployment among youth and women
  - Income generation and improving livelihoods
- Identifying/Mapping key partners and/or stakeholders suitable for successful implementation of the program including: local communities, county governments, TVETs, industry players

At the onset, the project was designed as a partial scholarship program that caters for examination fees. In addition, upskillers and successful beneficiaries who have completed the course could apply for funding for 'toolkits' relevant for their particular trades.

### Course Delivery

Under the Skills for Jobs program, students in partner institutions were expected to undergo a 3-month training program within the partner institutions. During this time, the beneficiaries would acquire relevant certifications and soft skills. After completing a final examination, the

students would then be expected to complete a 3-month attachment/internship period with industry players within their areas of expertise.

Students are required to complete both the 3-month in-class training and 3-month internship. It is during the 3-month period that the students attain certifications relevant to their trades including: grade 2, grade 3, KNEC or NITA certifications. Worth noting is that grade 2 is superior to grade 3 in terms of skills and competencies.

In order to formalize engagement with the partner learning institutions, Pamoja for Transformation established and signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) that formed the foundation of the partnership.

### Instructors

As a component of capacity building within the team of instructors in the partner institutions, teachers/tutors/trainers at the TVETs were taken through a program sponsored by GIZ. This 'Training of trainers' program took the individuals through the different aspects of pedagogy including:

- Active teaching and learning
- Learner-centered teaching approaches
- Interactive learning
- Efficient use of available teaching resources and tools within campus

All this was in efforts to make the learning experience more effective and efficient. Through the program, tutors are able to get





an additional stipend of Ksh. 2500 in addition to their regular income while dispensing their duties.

Consequently, the role of the instructors within the Skills for Jobs Program include:

- Orientation of newly admitted beneficiaries
- Orientation of beneficiaries who are due for attachment
- Placement: finding suitable industry areas in which beneficiaries can seek attachment
- Preparing recommendation letters and log books for beneficiaries to use during attachment

### Administrators & Center Managers:

The TVET institutions are an integral part in the implementation of the Skills for Jobs program. At the top of these institutions dwell the administrators and center managers who steer the daily running of the institutions.

These include center principals, registrars, managers and other such officials. Given that the S4J program directly touches on student sponsorship/scholarship, center managers have to be involved and oversee the process to ensure seamless implementation. Consequently, the role of center managers in the program revolves around:

- Admission of beneficiaries
- Exit of students.
- Attachment recommendation, placement and supervision
- Examinations.

### Upskillers

Through the program, we identified a gap in skills and certification from among persons currently engaged in businesses/trades within the local communities and townships. A good number of artisans and informal

traders do not have any formal qualifications in spite of having many years running their own trades. This may occasionally reflect adversely in the quality of work outputs, or through their personal interactions with their customers. The lack of formal training and certification may stagnate their growth in the trade.

Consequently, through the Skills for Jobs program, upskillers are able to enroll into TVETs to expand their formal qualifications for their respective trades. This gives them both technical skills and soft skills to run their businesses better including financial planning and management, customer service, personal image and branding and so on.

Given that most upskillers are at an advanced age within the youth bracket, they are treated with a greater sense of empathy and understanding in order to accommodate their learning needs during their 3-month program. Trainers use simple language of instruction and give them ample time for feedback.

Notably, a spillover outcome of having upskillers within the program is that, since these individuals already run their respective trades, they are able to actively offer attachment and/or job placements to their fellow beneficiaries within the S4J program. This eases the pressures in finding attachment placement for both novices and continuing students.

### Toolkits

This refers to the facilitation of program beneficiaries to acquire tangible work inputs for their trades to increase efficiency or work output. For instance, tailors, fashion designers and dress makers would be provided with sewing machines and mechanics would be provided with handy tools such as grinders, power spray guns and pressure washers. All this is with the primary intention of increasing efficiency of service delivery, and improving income generation for the beneficiaries.

Procedurally, the beneficiaries are expected to fill an application form outlining their specific needs that are relevant to their businesses/

trades. After in depth scrutiny, successful applicants receive partial or full subsidies to acquire these work implements.

Worth noting is that this facility is not available to 'novices' as outlined in our target categories of project implementation. It is open to continuing students and upskillers who at the time of application, run their own pre-existing businesses/trades. The only caveat for having novices receive toolkits is that they should also be running existing businesses at the time of application.

### Parents & Community

Within the vocational training value chain, parents play a pivotal role. Importantly, they are the primary financiers and influencers on the choice of training to the beneficiaries. The Skills for Jobs program understood the importance of their input and its role in encouraging more members of the community to be more receptive to getting into vocational training.

With sustained awareness creation at the community level, parents and guardians are able to overcome stereotypes of trades and occupations and be more open and liberal to women pursuing previously 'masculine' trades such as plumbing, masonry, electrical engineering and mechanics.

### Industrial linkages / Job placements

Following the 3-month institutional training at the vocational training centers, beneficiaries are expected to undergo an additional 3-month attachment at the relevant industry/trade. As at December 2022, 30% of all beneficiaries had successfully found placement opportunities, with more initiatives in place to facilitate the rest. These placement opportunities are arrived at through 3 different approaches:

- Trainees reaching out to industry players for placement.
- The institutional Industrial Liaison Office (ILO).
- A Pamoja for Transformation directly driven

process.

## Industry Players

Through the Skills for Jobs Program, traders, entrepreneurs, artisans and business people are able to reap from each new cohort of skilled personnel. As a result, vocational training centers and Pamoja for Transformation have developed a database of industry players with which this partnership enables a seamless flow of skill.

In fact, a lot of the industry players within our areas of focus reported to having preferred employees from vocational training centers due to their skillset, discipline and professional ethic.

## Project focus areas

The Skills for Jobs program by Pamoja for transformation was undertaken in 3 counties in Kenya including Siaya, Bungoma and Kisumu Counties. The program was implemented in partnership with different TVET institutions including:

- Ahero Vocational Training Centre – (Kisumu County)
- National Training Authority – (Kisumu County)
- YMCA – (Kisumu County)
- Akado – (Kisumu County)
- Mariwa – (Kisumu County).
- Bondo Technical College – (Siaya County)

Bungoma Technical College – (Bungoma County).

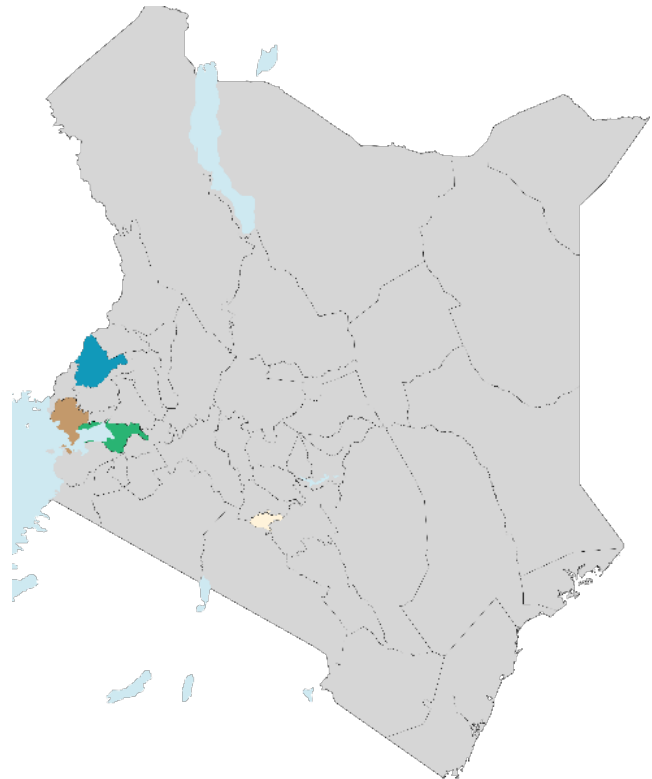
At conception, however, the program was earmarked to be executed in Nairobi, Mombasa, Migori, Bungoma, Turkana, Nakuru and Kilifi Counties of Kenya.

## Program Beneficiaries

Subsequent to completion of primary or secondary school education, most rural youth from underprivileged backgrounds face the imminent possibility of languishing in the uncertainties of poverty and unemployment for the rest of their lives. For this particular group of individuals, the aspiration to break free from the cycle of poverty never ends.

However, for the few that venture out into artisan enterprises and employment, there is apparent widespread lack of technical skills and soft skills

suitable to run or be employed in a successful business. As such, the program targeted youth aged 18-35, who demonstrated financial inability to cover school fees and that had sought or obtained admission at our partnering institutions.



## Types of Beneficiaries

In addition to the academic certification, beneficiaries are accorded internship placements with partnering enterprises and organizations. This goes a long way in providing on-the-job technical skills. Consequently, the program targeted students in the following three categories:

**Category 1 (Ongoing Students):** included youth who are enrolled in and undergoing skills training by the time the project was implementation started. The recipients of this category benefited in, Soft Skills, Work Readiness, Internship and job placement support by Pamoja.



This category of beneficiaries was subjected to certification by a nationally recognized independent certification body such as NITA.

**Continuing/Ongoing trainees** – Are individuals who are already undertaking courses in our partner institutions and that require subsidies in exam fees.

**Category 2 (Upskillers):** Comprise individuals currently running their enterprises or employed in the informal /juakali sector but with no certification. It was meant to enable the youth to grow and expand their business. The youth in this category from the informal sector referred to as Jua Kali, gained:

- Soft skills / work readiness training.
- Business development support by Pamoja for Transformation.
- Examination of certification (through NITA).
- To be issued with trade specific tool kits.

**Category 3 (Novices):** included beneficiaries with no prior experience to be enrolled in the seven implementing institutions so as to acquire:

- Vocational skills.
- Soft skills /work readiness.
- Internship.
- Job placement support by Pamoja for Transformation.
- Examination certificate (through NITA).

**Novices (900)** - are comprised of individuals who have no particular trades/skillsets and that intend to enroll for courses at TVETs.

At inception, the Skills for Jobs project was earmarked to target 1700 beneficiaries. However, after kick-off, the project expanded to Bungoma and Siaya Counties with additional 240 trainees ; subsequently targeting 1940 trainees..

It was worth noting that, in the first phase of implementation, partner TVET institutions reported remarkable successes among beneficiaries. However, given the 100% transition policy by the government, many

TVET institutions remain below capacity, with a lot of opportunity for student enrollment. This also opens opportunity for further engagement with Pamoja for transformation in future.

### On boarding Qualification:

The following were the requirements for one to be shortlisted as a program beneficiary:

1. Proof of financial need
2. Financial background check within the local community
3. Fully completed application documentation

Applications for the program were open to all interested persons who showed interest in enrolling at a local TVET center.

# Conclusions

Having successfully rolled out its first batch of cohorts, the Skills for Jobs program has seen a tremendous level of success, marked by individual brilliance and industry, as more beneficiaries get absorbed into the labor market and a few run successful businesses.

While running the program there was one thing that was immensely cross-cutting. This was the realization that the vocational training and skills transfer sector is very dynamic and so a lot of collaborative effort is needed as opposed to working single-handedly as an organization. This is something we really strive to do as Pamoja for Transformation, and would as well want to encourage other similar stakeholders to embrace it, including designing joint projects and working together around them. We realized that, as a partial scholarship targeting vulnerable students, there were a lot of lessons to be learnt and that shall be carried forward, even if it means redesigning the project. This is to ensure the greatest impact and with minimum financial strain to the beneficiaries.

Through the Program, we have seen young people that would have otherwise been condemned to poverty and unemployment re-emerge and be very productive members of society. It is important to realize as a country that, not every one of our citizens can make it through to university on their first attempt. It is important to thus supplement and empower efforts to give these promising youth a second shot at productivity, life, and income generation through employment or entrepreneurship.

For the beneficiaries of the program, we see this not as an end in itself, but as an entry point for them to be technically qualified and certified in skills, and an opportunity to jumpstart their entry into entrepreneurship, or to further

their education from certifications to diploma and degrees thereafter.

The Skills for Jobs project was very well received across institutions, with pockets of beneficiaries being referred to as 'Pamoja Students'. We would however further advise these institutions not to treat the students any differently as they are still bonafide to their institutions, and to be open to according to them any other opportunities from other partners should they arise.

Furthermore, the roll-out of the program in the 'pilot' institutions gave a 'PR Boost' to vocational training across the region. The previously misconstrued 'congregation of failures' was now seen as a practical avenue for young people to further their education after falling short of grades that meet university enrollment. There was a marked increase in enrollment in TVETs across the region, even in institutions that we did not partner with. The institutions were also able to benefit indirectly because during the time were implementing this project the student population in these institutions showed a noticeable increase. However, there is still significant under-enrollment across most TVET institutions in the region with most classrooms and dormitory remaining below capacity.

We continue to receive a lot of interest from these institutions to partner with them in future roll-outs of the project.

# Recommendations

On the backdrop of a successful first cohort of the project we picked up a few lessons in the process that may inform any future plans to redesign its implementation.

Firstly, we realized that there was a need to establish a vibrant career Centre that will provide career guidance for young people, before, during and after their enrollment onto the program. This shall form a good basis to ensure all beneficiaries are well mentored and that the impact of the project is sustainable and felt beyond the individual beneficiaries themselves. The career center can then serve as the primary liaison between the beneficiaries and industry players, and to make follow-ups on the students beyond the program for further mentorship, and for opportunities for the latest beneficiaries to be future industry players once they establish their own enterprises.

Secondly, we identified that there was a need to establish and maintain a database of 'industry players' who serve as the primary providers of opportunities for internship and job placements. Given their vital role in the skills value chain, it is important that we maintain continued contact and identify more areas of partnership. They, in return for giving internship opportunities, have reported that the products of our training program are individuals that are very well polished in terms of skills, competencies and all round on the job mannerisms. Having a database of industry players will address placement shortfalls as there are students constantly streaming out of other TVET institutions that are in need of placement opportunities.

Thirdly, while on the 3-months internship program, it was apparent that there was need for insurance coverage before proceeding to their respective placement areas. This insurance caters for any eventualities, accidents or incidents while at the work place. The lack of insurance did, in fact, delay some of the beneficiaries from proceeding to the

internship for failure to meet all the relevant requirements.

Additionally, during the internship period, some students had challenges finding accommodation because of placements that were far from their homes. It was recommended that the partnering TVET institutions be open to hosting the students even after they complete their exams and proceed to internship. This is because the confines of the institution offer a safe environment for the students during this period.

In addition, we identified the need to develop post-vocational education pathways. This refers to the fate of the students after they are through with the first phase of the program. We are cognizant of the fact that not all our beneficiaries shall be employed immediately after completion, or that they shall establish and run successful businesses. Consequently, in partnership with the career center and funding from more partners, we can then develop ways to further their academic progression from grade 3, to grade 2 and grade 1, as is required by prevailing market needs. This could then be followed by diplomas or degrees as shall be practically possible.

Moreover, following completion of their internship program, it was recommended that, for future rollouts of the project, it would be important for Pamoja for Transformation to subsidize the students in terms of a seed capital. This can be in terms of a 3-month rent subsidy for promising students to establish their own businesses or toolkits to buy key work implements. The subsidies can be treated as a loan or grant, depending on how feasible either approach is viewed.



**Whenever a business is able to pay its own rent... we can say the business is okay for a start. It doesn't matter if it can't pay other bills as one can have so many other responsibilities that overweigh the business. If the business can pay the rent and you remain with a profit on top of it then that business is good for a start."**  
 ~ Beryl Perry

while they are at an advanced age. Having enhanced skills through vocational training may greatly enhance their productivity as entrepreneurs and create even more opportunity for mentorship and internship placements.

Furthermore, we also came to the realization that by being a partial scholarship, the project was a bit strenuous for very vulnerable needy students. The payment of exam fees only would hardly meet their needs and this saw some beneficiaries drop out before completion. In Kisumu County, the county government supplemented our efforts by providing Kes. 15,000 per student towards tuition fees for any student that gained admission into a TVET. This is a remarkable effort that can serve as a model for all other counties in Kenya. There is need and opportunity for Members of Parliament and Members of County Assemblies (MCAs) to be co-opted as partners through their respective constituency and/or ward funds. Redesigning the project to cover more than the exam fee would be an instrumental addition to the wider objectives of the program. Having more partners coming together to co-design and implement such projects means that more institutions and student beneficiaries can be on-boarded.

It was also important that all partnering institutions, tutors and communicators are well-informed on the limits of the scholarship program. This would address the misconception of the program covering 100% of the student expenses while undertaking their certifications.

In regards to the toolkits, it was recommended that, upon completion of internship and/or resumption to their respective businesses, beneficiaries would send a list of recommended tools that would be suitable for their respective areas of practice. This could be implemented by way of a requisition form that is then approved based on suitability, needs, fitness, and Pamoja's capacity to subsidize that particular item at that time.

Further, there were recommendations from the community that the upper ceiling for upskillers be revised to age 55. This is owing to the fact that most people operating successful informal businesses in the rural setup have more experience and lack certifications

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