

MINISTRY OF LABOUR

Sixth Report of the Joint Select Committee on Social Services and Public Administration on an examination of the state of technical or vocational programmes and their contribution to achieving the developmental goals of Trinidad and Tobago

Recommendation:

G. TVET programmes that have been identified as relevant to the development goals of Trinidad and Tobago should be aligned with mandatory internships, practicums or OJT placement with a track path to contract employment upon graduation. Students can opt out of the contract employment option if they so choose.

Response:

The Ministry of Labour (MOL) agrees with the Committee's recommendation, that there should be greater alignment for persons to do their industry practical placement via a structured mapping through the On-The-Job-Training (OJT) Programme.

The OJT Programme continues to provide invaluable training opportunities to young people through its two (2) year programme, where young nationals between the ages of 16 to 35 are afforded an induction into the world of work and employment experience in the labour market, through quality and structured, work-based training in both the public and private sectors. These include graduates of technical and vocational training. The OJT Programme also makes every effort to ensure, as far as is practicable, that Trainees are placed within their fields of interest. This increases the chances of potential sustainable employment for Trainees in their fields of interest in the future.

The MOL is currently in discussion with the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) with the aim of developing a Memorandum of Understanding, to allow graduates easier access into industry upon graduation. The engagement of graduates, in accordance with their areas of certification, will facilitate better placement for training in the OJT Programme, and possible sustainable employment opportunities in these areas, upon completion of the programme. Additionally, Trainees also have the option of venturing into entrepreneurship thereafter, with the aid of the National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited (NEDCO) under the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service.

While the objective of the OJT Programme is to give young persons a foothold into the labour market, no formalised arrangement currently exists that supports the recommendation to provide a track path to contract employment upon graduation. However, the MOL has been making a concerted effort to encourage organisations, including private sector companies, to partner and

facilitate the necessary and relevant on the job training and retain the Trainees in permanent employment.

Recommendation:

H. As part of its Ministerial response, the Ministry of Labour should provide an update on its plans to promote faster assimilation of TVET graduates into the job market through collaboration with key training institutions in Trinidad and Tobago and the On the Job Training Programme.

Response:

The MOL, through the OJT Programme, has embarked on entering into Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) with companies and organisations, which intend to develop specific and deliberate programmes aimed at TVET graduates. The intent of these MOAs is to better facilitate the transition of TVET graduates into the industry of their choice, upon receipt of their certification, which will seek to promote a faster assimilation of TVET graduates into the job market.

One such Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is with the MIC Institute of Technology (MIC-IT), to facilitate TVET candidates. The MOA ensures the diverse placement of Trainees, specifically from the MIC-IT's Engineer-in-Training (EIT) Programme and the National Skills Development (NSDP) Journeyman Programme. The Trainees are supported in two and three-year programmes, with the first year in the class room, and the OJT Programme facilitating their assignment in industry, with the stipend being paid via the Programme.

The Ministry has also signed Memoranda of Agreement with a number of organisations including the National Gas Company, the National Energy Corporation and Trinidad and Tobago Television with the intent to facilitate and promote faster assimilation of graduates, inclusive of those certified in TVET.

Additionally, the MOL, through its National Employment Service (NES), assists job-seekers, including persons with technical and vocational education and training in entering the labour market. This free service is expected to be amplified through the soon to be launched National Employment Online Network (NEON) Portal that will facilitate easier access and registration to both employers and job seekers to register with the NES online, providing a better job-matching service and improved efficiency.