

## Building capacity of artisans in Malawi's informal sector to address skills gaps and improve productivity



### Background

A large proportion of employment of Malawi is in the informal sector. The skill levels of the artisans are variable and enterprises often lack the knowledge and skills necessary to maximise their profit and grow their business. To better understand the current skill levels among established artisans, the Directorate of Technical and Vocational Training requested VET Toolbox support to conduct a training needs analysis and to develop a capacity building programme to support the growth of micro, small and medium enterprises.

### Our solutions

We partnered with the British Council and the Ministry of Labour on a project to address this challenge and identify skills gaps and build capacity of artisans through upskilling and reskilling.

The project involved three stages:



**Strand 1:** Identification of target sectors and analysis of current challenges

The desk-based research identified construction and renewable energy as two key sectors that are critical to the growth of the economy in Malawi.



**Strand 2:** Design and undertake a training needs analysis for the identified beneficiaries and design and deliver a pilot model of curricula design for upskilling / reskilling

To inform the curricula design, a training needs analysis was conducted via one-to-one meetings and focus groups with employers from the informal industry.

A working group of key stakeholders including TEVETA personnel, Malawi Institute for Education, industry writers for construction and renewable energy, a Community College and a Skills Development Centre was formed to support the design and delivery of the pilot model. This group of professional TVET education and industry writers were invited to a workshop to assist curriculum writers in creating short modular competency-based learning material for the two priority sectors.

In line with Malawi's already established STEP manual to create technical vocational curriculum, we developed a series of four modules delivered over two days to 17 participants on how to develop curricula suitable for the informal sector, with a focus on developing detailed lesson plans.

To support the ongoing delivery, we developed clear guidelines and a toolkit for the curricula redesign workshop model that could be applied by other sectors and colleges and delivered to other writers of informal curricula.



**Strand 3:** Disseminate findings, finalise toolkit and set out action plan for further support

A dissemination event was run to share the outcomes of the training sessions and findings of the project.

## Outcomes and impact

The programme and toolkit will now support the writers of curriculum and master crafts people in these local communities to develop robust, quality assured curriculum suitable for the informal workforce. It is also available to roll out to other local providers to support them in adapting technical vocational curriculum to suit the informal workforce. Having delivered the programme to a wide mix of writers, teachers, trainers and master craftsmen who came from different geographical locations in Malawi means it will be easier to build capacity across Malawi in the future.

The intervention provided an opportunity for writers, teachers, trainers and master craftsmen to share with TEVETA some of the key challenges they are facing when delivering training to the informal sector. This feedback has been analysed and developed into an action plan for project partners to prioritise and act on. The outcomes of the project will also support a new TEVETA initiative to deliver short modular informal training in all Malawi constituencies for up to 500 individuals.

Ultimately, artisans trained in the priority sectors are expected to exhibit higher productivity, and the replicable model can be adopted for other sectors.

## About People 1st International

People 1st International partners with industry, development banks, government agencies, NGOs and education providers to create sustainable approaches to workforce development. Providing consultancy, research and training solutions globally, we develop skilled, productive and inclusive workforces that help drive social and economic growth.

With over 50 years' experience in developing effective skills models and technical vocational education and training strategies, we use our unparalleled expertise to develop collaborative partnerships that foster positive change.

People 1st International  
Vertigo  
Cheese Lane  
Bristol BS2 0JJ  
United Kingdom

 [www.people1st.co.uk](http://www.people1st.co.uk)

 [info@people1st.co.uk](mailto:info@people1st.co.uk)

 [@p1stgroup](https://twitter.com/p1stgroup)

 [People 1st](https://www.linkedin.com/company/people1st)

