SAVE YOUTHS' DREAMS FOUNDATION (SYDF), TECHFORWARD, AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AUTHORITY (VETA) CHANG'OMBE - AI TRAINING SEMINAR REPORT

Theme: "*From Skills to Smart Careers – Leveraging AI for Vocational Innovation"*

Venue: Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA), Chang'ombe

Date: 20 February 2026

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1. INTRODUCTION

On 20th February 2026, the Save Youth Dreams Foundation (SYDF), in collaboration with its partner TechForward, successfully conducted a one-day intensive seminar at the Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) Chang'ombe. The seminar was designed to equip students from various vocational disciplines with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills in Artificial Intelligence (AI). The primary aim was to ensure that students could integrate AI into their vocational training, enhance their productivity, innovate in their projects, and open new pathways for employment, entrepreneurship, and personal growth.

VETA Chang'ombe hosted the seminar, providing a conducive environment for learning, while SYDF ensured the content and facilitation met high standards. Key representatives included Ms. Bahati from VETA, and from SYDF, Ms. Winnie Kaaya, Operations Manager, and Dr. Deogratius Nkanda, Assistant Operations Manager. Mr. Filex from TechForward served as the lead facilitator, taking students through detailed theoretical explanations and practical applications of AI, tailored specifically for vocational students.

The seminar brought together 148 students across civil, mechanical, electrical, welding, and other vocational trades. The participants actively engaged in both the theoretical and practical sessions, ensuring that the knowledge gained could be immediately applied to their studies and future work. The program aimed to bridge the gap between traditional vocational training and modern technological skills, preparing students for a rapidly changing labor market.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE EVENT

The main objectives of the seminar were multifaceted. First, it sought to provide students with a clear understanding of AI, including its history, evolution, and current applications in various industries. By giving students a contextual background, they could understand the relevance of AI to their trades and the wider world.

Second, the seminar aimed to equip students with practical skills in AI tools relevant to their vocational studies. This included learning how to apply AI in creating project proposals, reports, presentations, digital marketing materials, websites, and technical documentation.

Third, the event emphasized Prompt Engineering, a fundamental skill that enables students to communicate effectively with AI systems and generate precise outputs. Students were guided to develop the ability to define tasks clearly, provide sufficient context, and specify personas to get optimal results from AI tools.

Fourth, the seminar aimed to show students how AI could enhance creativity, innovation, and problem-solving within their vocational projects. This included using AI to improve project quality, optimize workflow, and support entrepreneurial initiatives. Finally, the event encouraged students to use AI ethically and responsibly, understanding its limitations while maximizing its benefits for employment, self-employment, and income generation.

3. KEY HIGHLIGHTS

A. OPENING SPEECH BY MS. WINNIE KAAYA

The seminar commenced with a motivational address by Ms. Winnie Kaaya, Operations Manager of SYDF. She began by introducing the Save Youth Dreams Foundation, detailing its mission, vision, and strategic focus areas. Ms. Kaaya emphasized that the organization is committed to ensuring that youth acquire practical, hands-on skills, particularly in technology, innovation, entrepreneurship, and investment. She highlighted that these skills are crucial for success in a rapidly changing, technology-driven world.

Ms. Kaaya encouraged students to view the seminar as a rare opportunity to grow and develop both personally and professionally. She explained that understanding and using technology effectively is no longer optional; it is a requirement for success in the modern world. She stressed that AI tools can help students enhance creativity, improve work quality, implement innovative projects, and even create income-generating opportunities. Students were urged to actively participate, ask questions, and engage fully with the learning content to ensure that the knowledge gained would translate into real-life application.

Ms. Winny Kaaya Operations Manager Save Youths' Dreams Foundaton

B. THEORETICAL SESSION – HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF AI

Following the opening, Mr. Filex led a comprehensive theoretical session on the history and development of AI. He traced AI's evolution from early human innovation (0–1700) through the Agricultural, Industrial, Distribution, Technology, Information, TIE, and Partnership Eras, up to the current AI-driven age.

Mr. Filex emphasized that AI is a tool designed to enhance human capabilities by recognizing patterns and generating outputs based on user input. He clarified that AI does not replace humans but complements their work, making tasks faster, more accurate, and more creative. This historical and theoretical perspective helped students understand why AI is relevant in their vocational fields and how it could be applied to improve their trade-specific projects.

Mr. Filex – Lead facilitator, TechForward-Engage with students during AI theoretical session

C. PRACTICAL SESSION – PROMPT ENGINEERING

The core practical session focused on Prompt Engineering, where students learned the principles of giving AI clear and precise instructions. Mr. Filex taught that a high-quality prompt must include three critical elements:

Task: Define clearly what the AI is expected to do. For example, “Create a business plan for an Electrical Clinic.”

Context: Provide relevant background information to guide AI output, such as location, target clients, budget, or technical requirements.

Persona: Specify the role AI should assume to frame its response, e.g., “Act as a business consultant with 10 years of experience.”

Students practiced writing prompts, observing how changes in clarity and context influenced AI outputs. They were reminded that AI’s effectiveness depends on the quality of instructions it receives and that thoughtful prompt engineering is essential for successful results.

Mr. Filex –facilitating practical AI session with Veta students

D. PRACTICAL AI TOOLS – DETAILED APPLICATION FOR VETA STUDENTS

After mastering prompt engineering, Mr. Filex introduced students to several AI tools and demonstrated their practical application in vocational contexts. Each tool was explained in detail, showing students how it could directly benefit their studies and projects.

ChatGPT, students learned to use ChatGPT to generate written content such as project proposals, reports, and business plans. For example, a civil engineering student could draft a detailed construction project proposal, while an electrical engineering student could produce a step-by-step wiring plan, all enhanced by AI's efficiency and precision. ChatGPT also helps students brainstorm ideas, troubleshoot design challenges, and draft technical documentation quickly.

Grok, this AI tool was demonstrated as a research and documentation assistant. Students learned to use Grok to collect technical information, summarize content, and extract key points from large volumes of data. A welding student, for instance, could research welding techniques or materials specifications, save time while improve project quality.

Microsoft Copilot, students were guided on using Copilot to assist with coding, document automation, and workflow optimization. For mechanical students, Copilot could help simulate processes or automate repetitive calculations, allowing more time to focus on creative and practical aspects of their projects.

Gamma, this tool was introduced as a presentation and data visualization assistant. Students could use Gamma to convert technical data into professional slides or interactive visualizations, improving communication of complex vocational concepts, such as engineering designs or business proposals.

Gemini, Mr. Filex showed how Gemini could support analytical tasks and design optimization. Students in civil and mechanical trades could use Gemini to analyze structural plans, optimize design parameters, and evaluate potential improvements efficiently.

Claud, as an advanced conversational AI, Claude was demonstrated as a problem-solving assistant. Students could ask Claude to simulate project scenarios, propose

solutions, or provide technical guidance, helping them refine their approaches to practical tasks in a safe and controlled environment.

Canva AI, Students learned to use Canva AI for creating marketing materials, visual designs, and project posters. A mechanical or electrical student could design a visually appealing poster to showcase a project, while civil students could create infographics for site plans or construction layouts.

DALL-E: DALL-E was introduced as a creative image-generation tool. Students could generate realistic images for project presentations, visual simulations, or marketing purposes. For instance, a civil engineering student could visualize a completed building or a landscaping plan before actual construction.

Google Flow: Mr. Filex demonstrated Google Flow as a tool for workflow automation. Students learned to map processes, track project tasks, and optimize their work schedules. This is particularly useful for students managing group projects or coordinating multiple trade-specific activities.

Lovable AI, this interactive AI tool was shown as a learning companion, providing guidance, answering technical questions, and supporting brainstorming sessions. Students could use it to practice problem-solving, simulate technical scenarios, and refine project plans.

Gali / Gall, these tools were introduced as engineering and technical support applications. They allow students to design circuits, simulate mechanical components, and validate engineering solutions. A student in electrical trades could test a circuit digitally before physically implementing it, reducing errors and enhancing project accuracy.

During the session, students had the opportunity to practice with each tool, applying the knowledge to their own vocational projects. The practical exercises reinforced learning, allowing students to see tangible improvements in project planning, design, marketing, and workflow efficiency.

Mr. Filex – Engage with students during the use of AI practical tools

5. ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

The seminar was attended by 148 students, representing various vocational disciplines. Participation was enthusiastic and active throughout the day. Students asked questions, experimented with AI tools, and applied prompt engineering techniques. The hands-on approach allowed every participant to engage with the technology, ensuring that learning was practical, applied, and directly relevant to their trades.

6. SUCCESSES

The seminar was highly successful. Students acquired in-depth knowledge of AI theory and history, mastered prompt engineering, and gained practical experience with multiple AI tools. The hands-on sessions allowed students to immediately apply skills to their vocational projects, improving creativity, productivity, and project quality. The event also heightened awareness of AI as a tool for employment, self-employment, and income generation, aligning perfectly with SYDF's mission of empowering youth in a technology-driven world.

7. CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Some challenges included limited prior exposure to AI among certain students and occasional connectivity or device issues during practical exercises. However, the seminar demonstrated that hands-on training is essential for retention and understanding. The key lesson learned is that Prompt Engineering is foundational and must be emphasized in all AI training for vocational students. Tailoring AI tools to the students' specific trades significantly increases engagement, relevance, and applicability.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE EVENTS

To enhance future seminars, it is recommended to extend the duration of practical sessions, introduce advanced AI training modules, implement mentorship programs for entrepreneurial applications of AI, integrate AI into vocational curricula, and ensure reliable internet access and devices for all participants. These steps will maximize learning outcomes and prepare students more effectively for modern technological challenges.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On behalf of Save Youths' Dreams Foundation (SYDF) We extend our sincere appreciation to VETA Chang'ombe for graciously hosting the seminar and providing an enabling environment for learning. Their support in mobilizing students, coordinating logistics, and ensuring smooth participation was invaluable. The commitment of VETA Chang'ombe to facilitating practical training and empowering their students played a key role in the success of this event, allowing all participants to fully engage with the AI training and gain skills that are directly applicable to their vocational studies and future careers.

Lastly, we sincerely acknowledge TechForward as our valued partner in this seminar. Their support and expertise were instrumental in designing and delivering high-quality AI training that was both practical and relevant to the vocational students. Through their collaboration, students were able to gain hands-on experience with a variety of AI tools, understand how to integrate technology into their trades, and explore opportunities for innovation, employment, and entrepreneurship. We are grateful for their commitment to youth empowerment and for ensuring that the seminar achieved its objectives of equipping students with skills needed to thrive in a technology-driven world.