



Pathway to the world of work for ethnic minorities

Creating inclusive systems and pathways out of poverty



Photo: Gretchen Robleto/TVET-SAY

In an already high poverty area, ethnic minorities experience even higher rates of poverty. Oliver Solano Britton is part of the Miskito youth population. He is on a path to a brighter future with a scholarship for technical training.

“Opportunities come once in a life time. We shouldn’t let this opportunity pass.”

Sair Solis, Garifuna minority scholarship recipient

Sair Solis Flores and Oliver Solano Britton are both 22-years-old. As ethnic minorities Nicaragua’s multiethnic, multilingual Caribbean Coast region—Garifuna and Miskito respectively—they face structural challenges that limit their employment opportunities.

The United Nations Children's Fund reports that the region has the highest poverty and vulnerability rates in the country due to a history of migration, disasters and exclusion from development.

According to the United Nations Development Programme, more than 50 percent of youth ages 10 to 29 in the South Caribbean live in poverty. These rates are even higher for ethnic minority youth who identify as Afro-descendants (Creoles and Garifuna) and indigenous (Miskitos, Ulwas and Rama). These young people often lack access to education and livelihoods opportunities.

But fortunately for Sair and Oliver and dozens of other at-risk youth, the Technical and Vocational Education and Training for At-risk Youth program is helping to create a pathway to a brighter future and economic opportunity through vocational training in in-demand skills and industries.

The program aims to enhance diversity in youth workforce training programs, with a focus on underrepresented ethnic groups.

At an informational meeting, Sair and Oliver learned about a scholarship opportunity to enroll in an Outboard Motor Repair Training Course in Bluefields, along the South Caribbean Coast.

In a region rich in natural resources and marine-focused industry, Sair and Oliver were eager for the chance to gain these sought-after skills that would be marketable to employers. And for Sair, it would be an opportunity to follow in the footsteps of his family.

“I was influenced by my father and my older brother. They both work in the sea. Is in my blood,” he says.

For Oliver, who is apart from his family while he studies the course, the investment in his future is well worth it. He knows that with the right training, he can be on a path out of poverty and toward a promising profession.

“I want to be a professional with all the required skills,” he says.

Telling Our Story

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