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Stakeholders’ perspectives on the provision of vocational training for youth with disabilities in Sri Lanka: The protocol for a mixed method study

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Abstract

Introduction The quality and the variety of courses for vocational training (VT) for youth with disabilities (YwD) in low-middle-income countries are less explored. This study protocol describes a study designed to gather the perceptions of a range of stakeholders about the quality and the relevance of the VT programmes conducted by a state-run department in Sri Lanka with the aim of informing the relevant authorities on the need to modify these courses to meet the needs of stakeholders.

Methods and analysis: A mixed-method study will be conducted at eight (8) vocational training institutes (VTIs). The quantitative data will be collected from five groups of participants through a survey; YwD presently enrolled in VTIs and their caregivers, YwD who completed the VT and their caregivers, and educators at VTIs. Qualitative data will be collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion from three groups of participants: educators, caregivers of potential YwD for future VT, and key informants from state, private and non-governmental sectors. The quantitative and qualitative data will be analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics and thematic analysis respectively.

Ethics and dissemination This study has received ethical clearance from the Ethics Review Committee, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya (Ref. No: P/15/02/2021). The highest quality data will be collected despite COVID 19 pandemic restrictions abiding the health safety measures. Results from this research will be disseminated to the local stakeholders and participants and through local and international conferences and publications in peer-reviewed journals.

Article summary

Strength and limitations of the study

- This is a protocol studying a variety of stakeholders' views on current vocational training (VT) opportunities available for youth with disabilities (YwD) identifying the demands and challenges in a lower- middle- income country-Sri Lanka.
- This mixed methods study design will enable the researchers to perceive the depth and breadth about the present status of VT opportunities for YwD within the public sector in Sri Lanka.
- The diverse range of stakeholders are expected to give a multifaceted perspective about vocational training in Sri Lanka.
- The full-scale comprehensive methodological design can be adapted in other contexts for similar research and the findings of this research will be applicable to other countries with similar socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.
- This would be a model study on conducting similar research during a worldwide pandemic and or in our ‘new normal’ world.

Introduction

Children with disabilities as a vulnerable population often have limited access to education, among many other missed opportunities for basic needs. This results in higher rates of unemployment among youth with disabilities (YwD), creating a financial dependency of this marginalized group on their families and communities. The International Labor Organization (2014) estimates 15% of the world population to live with a disability of which 80% are of working age.¹ The majority of people with disabilities live in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) and belong to the poorest populations. Across the globe, disability, economic inactivity and unemployment comprise a triple burden faced by them, making disability the cause and the effect of poverty.² Therefore, World Health Organization (2011)³ emphasizes the importance of initiatives to promote unlocking the vast potential of YwD while removing the barriers for participation in order to resolve the challenges faced by YwD and denied access to health, rehabilitation, education, and employment globally.

Similar to many other South Asian LMICs, the majority (96%) of people with disabilities in Sri Lanka do not engage in education nor in employment.⁴ They are marginalized from mainstream education and training provisions due to multiple barriers generated by economic, social, geographical, physical, and political constraints.⁵ In Sri Lanka, cultural and religious beliefs on people with disabilities as ‘dependents’ on ‘abled’ family members often lead the families to be sympathetic towards YwD, who keep them at home without providing any formal education or VT to prepare them for employment.⁶

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) defines employment as an indicator for participation, enabling YwD.⁷ Multiple environmental, attitudinal, political and cultural factors together with families are well defined within the contextual factors of this

framework. Therefore, role of families and political commitment for employment and opportunities for inclusive and fair education and VT may be pivotal in achieving this goal.^{8,9}

VT along with supported employment, sheltered employment and inclusive redesign of work processes are identified to enhance employability of YwD around the world.^{10,11} United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) supported VT as a pathway to employment for YwD¹² and is operational in Sri Lanka under the Government’s legislation. VT is defined by UNESCO as “those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various sectors of economic life.”¹³ VT on specific skills is more likely to enhance employability of YwD whilst receiving directed training will invariably enrich their standards of living through the exposure to many other life skills such as socialization, financial management and entrepreneurship etc. Further, formal VT will augment an individual’s ability to embark on lifelong learning which will initiate economic growth within their communities. In a systematic review, Tripney and Hombrados¹⁴ reported a positive association between involvement of VT and employment outcomes in LMICs.

Globally YwD often get limited opportunities for VT of their own choice.¹⁵ Multiple factors act as barriers for them to voluntarily access options of their own choices. Social stigma is a primary contributor whilst rigidly planned courses, negative attitudes and misconceptions among caregivers and the lack of awareness among the employers of the full potential of YwD may contribute towards this.¹⁶ Such factors discourage and demotivate the YwD and diminish their self-confidence, inhibiting their desire to access VT options. Lack of connection between village

level structures and vocational training institutes (VTIs) is also a major barrier to make referrals for VT in some settings.¹⁷

When viewed through a lens of social justice, inclusion, access to and provision of VT is disconcerting for YwD, threatening their mental and physical wellbeing. Similar to other settings in the world, most YwD are deprived of primary education and are not included in mainstream VTIs in Sri Lanka. This is due to the lack of basic educational qualifications, lack of training institutes catering for a variety of disabilities and lack of awareness of training providers etc.¹⁸ Further, people with disabilities have limited opportunities for market-oriented VT and skills development. As a result, they contribute to the informal economy and most often experience exploitation in many forms and deny them a decent income or working conditions whilst exposing them to vulnerabilities.

Sri Lanka is a signatory of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (2006) which recommends the societal inclusion of people with disabilities.¹⁹ It clearly identifies the right for employment for people with disabilities. There is a national standard to employ 3% of employees with disabilities in the state sector organizations in Sri Lanka.²⁰ However, there is no standard defined for the private sector. Such requirements are reported from other LMICs in the world.^{21,22,23} Yet, it is well known that there are many attitudinal and other barriers among the employers that need addressing to achieve these standards.^{24,25,26}

There is a growing interest among the private sector employers to recruit YwD in mainstream employment.²⁷ However, most of the literature is from high-income settings with little published evidence from the South Asian region and local literature. In Sri Lanka, the Department of Social Services (DSS) manages VTIs with residential VT courses, as the largest recognized institute to offer courses for YwD.²⁸ Though the quality and the relevance of the training they provide to

YwD is questioned and requires updating. Therefore, it is timely and appropriate to understand the perspectives of stakeholders including the individual YwD, caregivers, policy makers and employers to comprehend the quality and the relevance of these services. This knowledge identifies the needs, demands and challenges of providing VT programs for YwD with the aim to augment their employability. Further, it is essential to explore the job market opportunities and the views of the employers when designing such programs.

It is essential that we look at opportunities for VT for YwD with the intention of providing inclusive and fair training opportunities to all YwD in Sri Lanka. Therefore, it is imperative to aim mainstreaming this cohort of youth during employment by containing competencies in knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate and specific for their own social and economic contexts within these programmes.^{23,24}

This paper describes the protocol for a mixed method study we designed to explore the perspectives of a diverse range of stakeholders, namely the YwD, their caregivers and the potential employers on the vocational training opportunities at the vocational training institutes in Sri Lanka. We believe this protocol will promote researchers from similar contexts and research intentions to build their research design and methodologies to uplift VT for YwD.

Aim and objectives

The overarching aim of this study is to explore whether the vocational training programs offered through the vocational centers affiliated to the Department of Social Services, Sri Lanka meet the expectations of the youth with disabilities, their caregivers and the job market.

Our specific objectives in the study are

1. To describe the socio-demographic characteristics and the disability profile of the youth with disabilities trained at the vocational training institutes.
2. To explore the perspectives of youth with disabilities, their caregivers, and educators on vocational training.
3. To explore the perceptions of policy makers, disability right advocates, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and employers on vocational training and employment opportunities for youth with disabilities in Sri Lanka.

Methods and analysis

Study design

We will conduct a mixed methods study²⁹ consisting of a cross-sectional quantitative study and an exploratory qualitative study from January 2021- December 2021. This combined methodology will enable us to perceive the depth and breadth about the present status of VT opportunities for YwD in the Sri Lankan government sector. At present, we have initiated the data collection process.

Study locations

The study will be conducted in eight VT institutes (VTIs) in five districts of Sri Lanka i.e., Telabuyaya, Kalawana, Katawala, Madampe, Ragama, Seeduwa, Waththegama, and Amunukubura, and in the Ayati, National Centre for Children with Disabilities, Faculty of Medicine, Ragama, Sri Lanka. Figure 1 illustrates the location of the VTIs, and the distribution of trainees enrolled in the year 2020/2021 in Sri Lanka.

<<< Insert Figure 1>>>

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3 **Study participants**

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6 The cross-sectional quantitative study will be conducted among five groups of participants while

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8 the exploratory qualitative study will be conducted with three groups of participants as

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10 mentioned in the figure 2.

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12 << Insert Figure 2>>>

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15 **Quantitative phase:** The cross-sectional study will include following participants: 1) YwD

16 currently enrolled in the VTIs and 2) one of their caregivers; 3) YwD who completed the VT

17 within the last two years and 4) one of their caregivers; and 5) all educators attached to VTIs.

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19 The DSS follows a specific recruiting criterion. Accordingly, the prospective trainees should be

20 unmarried men and women with any type of disability and aged in between 16 to 35 years old. A

21 complete list and contact details of presently enrolled YwD and their caregivers, and YwD who

22 have completed training and their caregivers will be obtained from the DSS following ethical

23 clearance and institutional clearance. Trainees’ attendance will be checked for regular and

24 present participation at training in order to exclude any dropouts from the training programmes.

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26 Every eligible YwD and one of their caregivers who is living with them will be invited and

27 included in the survey with informed written consent. All educators of the eight VTIs will be

28 invited to participate following institutional and ethical clearance and if they are consenting, they

29 will all be recruited.

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46 **Qualitative phase:** Selected educators from each VTI will be also invited to the qualitative

47 phase of this study. Caregivers of potential YwD for future VT will be recruited from the Ayati,

48 National Center for Children with Disabilities, a community-based health facility providing

49 services for children and youth. The study investigators will actively connect with their existing

50 professional networks (such as governmental and nongovernmental organizations, institutes, and

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associations). These key informants (KIs) will be selected to represent employed or graduated YwD, potential and current employers of YwD, disability rights advocates, policy makers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working with YwD.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Table 1 summarises the inclusion and exclusion criteria of this study.

<<<<Insert Table 1>>>>

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria of the study

Inclusion criteria	
Participatory groups in quantitative phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All YwD presently enrolled in VTIs and continuing the training for a minimum of one month irrespective of their gender, disability or the training course, and their caregivers. • YwD who completed the training in the past two years (2018 to 2020), who are contactable through telephone, email or word of mouth irrespective of their present employment status, disability, gender and the type of employment. • Caregivers of the eligible YwD. • All educators presently employed as instructors or heads at the VTIs.
Participatory groups in qualitative phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected educators presently employed as instructors or heads at the VTIs. • Caregivers of YwD presently attending services at the Ayathi National Center for Children with Disabilities for a minimum duration of 3 months. • Private and public sector employers presently employing YwD or have the potential or plans to employ them. • Policy makers directly or indirectly involved in providing services or employment of YwD.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• YwD with any type of severity of disability will be included with no discrimination.• Disability rights advocates/ legislators in Sri Lanka.• NGOs presently providing services for employment and VT for YwD.
Exclusion criteria	
Participatory groups in quantitative phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• YwD Presently registered at the VT institutions but not attending the courses on a regular basis.
Participatory groups in qualitative phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presently employed YwD attending the National Center for Children with Disabilities.• Not experienced working with YwD.

Sample size calculation and sampling procedure

Quantitative phase: We aim to recruit the entire population of all stakeholder groups except the group of YwD who completed the VT and their caregivers. Therefore, it does not involve a sample size calculation or sampling procedure. The total number of YwD that completed the course during the last two years was approximately 456. Hence a 10% of youth who completed the VT and their caregivers will be recruited using proportionate stratified random sampling. The sampling frame was obtained from the DSS. It included the names and contact details of the participants who completed the training in 2019 and 2020 in all VTIs, Sri Lanka.

Qualitative phase: The exploratory qualitative study comprises both semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). Participants are chosen based on purposive sampling mechanisms to ensure all stakeholder groups are included in the study. Participants for the FGDs will be categorized to maintain homogeneity according to; working experience, type of courses and the interests shared by educators; socioeconomic background, skill levels and interests shared by caregivers of potential YwD for VT. Accordingly, thirty educators and thirty

caregivers of potential YwD for future VT will be recruited to conduct several FGDs.

Snowballing techniques will be used to invite approximately thirty (30) relevant and appropriate KIs to participate representing all categories mentioned in figure 2.

Study instruments

Table 2 and 3 present the type of study instruments proposed, mode of administration and a brief description about each instrument prepared for the use in all participatory groups in this study for quantitative data and qualitative data collection respectively. In summary, five separate survey questionnaires will be used to collect quantitative data while interview guides will be used to conduct FGD or semi-structured interviews.

<<<Inset Table 2>>>

Table 2. Proposed study instruments to collect quantitative data from each participatory group

Participatory group	Mode of administration	Description of the instrument
YwD currently enrolled in the VTIs	One-to-one or telephone administered questionnaire*	Consists of close-ended and Likert scale questions to gather information on socio-demographic characteristics, the nature of VT programme currently enrolled in and the experiences with it, employment history, and their future prospects.
Caregivers of YwDs' presently enrolled in the VTIs	One-to-one or telephone	Consists of close-ended and Likert scale questions to gather information on socio-demographic characteristics of the caregiver, views on their

	administered questionnaire	child’s VT and their expectations.
YwD who have completed the VT	Telephone administered questionnaire	Consists of close-ended and Likert scale questions to gather information on socio-demographic characteristics, the nature of VT programme currently enrolled in and the experiences with it, employment history, and their current satisfaction.
Caregivers of YwDs, who have completed VT	Telephone administered questionnaire	Consists of close-ended and Likert scale questions to gather information on socio-demographic characteristics of the caregiver, about their child’s VT and employability and satisfaction.
Educators	Online administered questionnaire	Includes questions about their demographic characteristics, education and VT qualifications and experiences.

Key: YwD, youth with disability; VTIs, vocational training institutes; VT, vocational training

Note: All these five questionnaires include several open-ended questions to explore their perceptions about the current training, their expectations, and the experiences.

*Adapted from the vocational profile developed by the European Union of Supported Employment³⁰.

<<<Inset Table 3>>>

Table 3. Proposed study instruments to be used to collect qualitative data from each participatory group.

Participatory group	Qualitative data collection instrument and mode	Description of the instrument
Educators	Online FGDs	Interview protocols will be used to conduct the FGDs and KI interviews
Caregivers of potential YwDs for future VT	Online FGDs	
KIs	Online semi-structured interviews	

Key: FGDs, focused group discussions; KIs, key informants; NGOs, non-Governmental organisations; VT, vocational training; YwD, youth with disability

Data collection

Research assistants were recruited from a background of disability related fields and allied health specialties including psychology, speech and language therapy, audiology and physiotherapy with an undergraduate degree with a training on research methodology. They underwent several training sessions with quantitative (DDS) and qualitative (TH) methodologists on data collection and interviewing techniques. Specific instructions on communication techniques with YwD were given by ID, a professional Speech and Language Therapist with specific qualifications in supported employment.

Quantitative phase: The cross-sectional study will be conducted on each participatory group using different modes and instruments as mentioned in table 2. These will be conducted by UC, MG, and NA. Data collection of the YwD presently enrolled at the VTIs and their caregivers will

take place at a quiet room in the VT center based on an interviewer administered questionnaire on one-on-one basis. Necessary accommodations and adaptations are considered and provided to collect data from YwD, who are current trainees at the VTIs. They will be given adequate time to answer, and the smiley face responses will be shown for any satisfaction related questions. Trainees with hearing impairment will have the questionnaires read to them in sign language through an interpreter. At present, during protocol development, the VTIs function with restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, there may be a chance to miss some of the eligible participants from the above two groups during on-site face-to-face data collection. In that case, we propose to conduct a telephone administered interviews to complete the questionnaires. Additionally, data collection for trainees with hearing impairment will be conducted as an interviewer-administered questionnaire through video conferencing, with adequate support using visual aids and sign language by trained research assistants. Quantitative data collection from educators will be performed through an online survey system (Google survey).

Qualitative phase: FGDs and KIs interviews will be the two main data sources. Interviews with caregivers of potential YwD for future VT and educators in VTIs will take place as online video conferences due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation. These will be conducted by ID, UC, MG and NA. There will be two silent observers while the third researcher conducts the interviews. TH will be a silent observer at several interviews to ensure the trained researchers conduct interviews appropriately. The KIs interviews will also take place as audio or video interviews through online platforms. All interviews will be conducted in the language of preference of the participants i.e. Sinhala, Tamil or English. All interviews will be conducted over secure

platforms using online facilities. These will be audio-recorded and stored with password protection.

Data processing

There are a number of quality control mechanisms in place to minimize the errors occurring in the quantitative data entry phase. Manual double-key data entry will be performed by two RAs. First, a simple exploratory analysis will be performed in SPSS version 25.0 independently to identify missing values, invalid values and out of range values. Necessary corrections will be done by revisiting the original questionnaires. Then, a validation report for data entry errors will be obtained from EpiData (3.1) software³¹ and inconsistencies will be corrected. Percentage of records and fields with data entry errors will be recorded.

The RA's will start coding audio transcripts of qualitative data using NVIVO-12 software. The coding protocol will follow both inductive and deductive methods iteratively in developing codes and themes. A code book with definitions will be maintained throughout the study. Furthermore, all the RA's will be maintaining a research field notebook in which they will write their observations and reflections of the data collected. The first round of coding will be done individually. The research team will meet at least once a week to discuss their codes and themes, compiling and adjusting the code book to reflect their findings. The successive rounds will be conducted using the code book, which will be expanded and defined collectively during research team meetings. NVIVO memos will be maintained for all codes and themes. Furthermore, all analytical queries will be run using NVIVO.

Data analysis

Quantitative phase: Statistical analyses will be performed using the Statistical package of social science (SPSS) software, version 24.0. Both graphical and statistical methods will be used to present and analyse data. The distribution characteristics of all continuous variables will be visually inspected using histograms. Descriptive statistics include frequencies, percentages, mean (SD) and median (IQR) will be used. Data with normal distribution and non-normal distribution will be presented as mean (SD) and median (IQR) respectively. The Chi-square test of Fisher’s exact test (small cell numbers) will be used to test the relationships between categorical variables. All statistical tests will be two sided with significance level set at 0.05.

Qualitative phase: The main themes built during the analysis phase will be translated and transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically using the six steps outlined by Braun and Clarke³²: 1) become familiar with the data, 2) generate initial codes, 3) search for themes, 4) review for themes, 5) define themes and 6) write-up. Open coding will be used, and initial codes will be generated iteratively by going through the entire dataset systematically. Thematic analysis will be assisted by the NVivo 12 software. A sample of documents will be coded by two independent researchers to ensure reliability of codes and themes. Furthermore, a member check will be conducted with a sample group of participants, before finalizing and interpreting data gathered.

Ethics and dissemination

Ethical clearance for this study was obtained from the ethics review committee of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka (Ref. No: P/15/02/2021). Institutional clearance was taken from the Director, DSS and the individual VTIs. This study involves a vulnerable

population. All eligible participants and their parents/ caregivers will be provided an information sheet about the objective of the survey/FGDs/ interviews. The procedure, benefits, risks, hazards, discomforts and freedom to withdraw from the study or termination of study participation have been clearly defined in the information sheet. The information sheets available in all three verbal languages used in Sri Lanka (Sinhala, Tamil and English). In the case of difficulty in reading the information sheet, research assistant will read it out and explain to participants. Sign language support will be provided to any participant with hearing impairment.

The participants will be given access to communicate with the research team and ethical review board to clarify any queries. Informed written consent will be obtained prior to participation by all participants including the YwD. It is assumed in this research that the youth who are capable of undergoing VT have the capacity to consent to participate in a survey, hence an assent form is not included in this study. All data will be entered and stored anonymously. Sampling frames received from the DSS, Sri Lanka will be kept as password protected Excel documents. The computer-stored data will be kept under password protection and will be accessible only to the research team. The confidentiality of collected data will be maintained during and after the study.

Special COVID-19 considerations

Precautions will be taken to minimize the spread of COVID-19 pandemic during the data collection process. Due to the travel restrictions during this period the research will be conducted using hybrid methods and this was clearly mentioned during the ethical review procedure. Due to the challenges of meeting the participants in-person, the research team will contact the participants via phone and emails and provide information by speaking to them individually and will obtain consent via Google sheets, through SMS or by getting down pictures of consent

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3 sheets filled as photographs through email or social media platforms. They will be given time
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5 and opportunity to obtain more information regarding the study and to clarify any matters. All
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7 online conference meetings will be protection encrypted and closed password only
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10 meetings. Virtual data collection methods would follow the same in-person questionnaire
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12 structures and will be consistent.
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17 **Participant-public involvement**
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19 From the stage of conceptualization some groups of prospective participants including educators
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21 and some parents of YwD contributed towards designing and perusing study protocol and study
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23 instruments several times prior to the confirmation. The study participants are public and YwD
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25 and specially during the qualitative process the interview guides underwent several alterations
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27 during the iterative process to include stronger opinions of the participants. All findings of the
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29 study will be shared with members of the public who contributed towards the study.
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35 **Implementation**
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37 This study is conducted as a tripartite collaboration among,
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41 (1) The academic institution, Department of Disability Studies is the only institute of its kind
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43 that has pioneered research on people with disabilities in Sri Lanka and has also taken the
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45 lead to establish many services for children and YwD including supported employment.
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47 (2) The DSS is the present key player in the government sector of Sri Lanka providing VT
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49 for YwD. The VT in the state sector were established more than three decades ago and
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51 have undergone only ad hoc changes in the curricula and the courses offered.
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- (3) The NGO proposed and initiated this project with the aim of creating job opportunities catering for the needs of YwD and their families and aligning those with the expectations of employers and the present job market.

Discussion

This will be the first study on VT for YwD in Sri Lanka with systematic collection of qualitative and quantitative data through a mixed method study. The study also will become a pioneering effort to involve multiple stakeholders representing many spheres from youth to employers and policy makers and advocates. Therefore, based on this study we plan to inform the policymakers on the needs for VT of YwD in Sri Lanka and their future dreams. We shall also try to understand the present challenges and facilitators for such from the perspectives of the VT center educators, present and future employers, advocates and activists.

The extensive study design is expected to capture the true aspirations of these youth with immense potential and to provide them opportunities to contribute to the economy of Sri Lanka and for them to participate at their fullest potential to become financially stable. Therefore, through this project we aim to meet the employment needs of the prospective YwD and the requirements of the future employers. The study will be completed by early 2022 and we expect to disseminate our findings in late 2022 with multiple forums and in form of academic publications.

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Kelaniya for handling logistics, and all KIs for their contribution towards the success of this study.

Contributors

All authors- (UTC, ID, DDS, TH, MG, NA, SPS) made substantial contributions to the conception and design of this protocol. SPS, UTC, ID- drafting of manuscript and revision, DDS, TH- critical revision of the manuscript for intellectual content. All authors- read and critically reviewed this manuscript, made revisions and have all approved this final version for submission. All authors- agree to be accountable for the future integrity of this study.

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Map disclaimer

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Competing interests

None declared.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Figure 1 Distribution of vocational training institutes in Sri Lanka.

Figure 2 Main participatory groups of the study.

Key: N, number; VT, vocational training; VTIs, vocational training institutes; YwD, youth with disability



Figure 1 Distribution of VTIs in Sri Lanka
15x18mm (600 x 600 DPI)

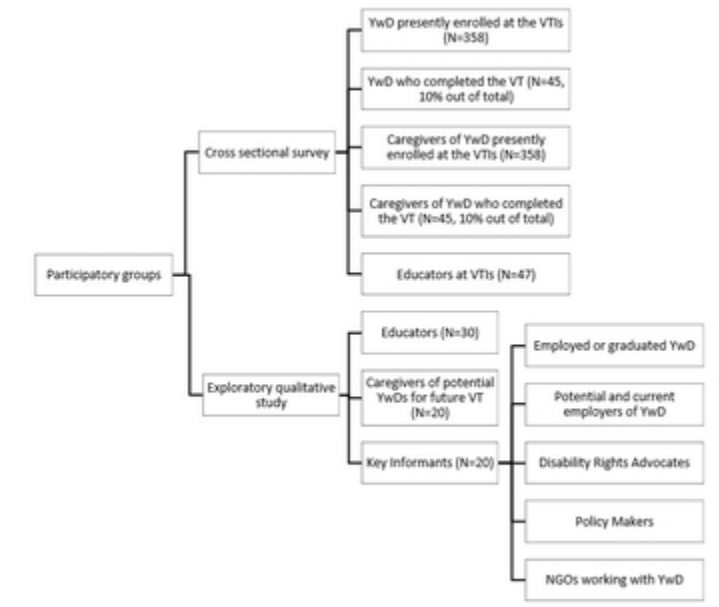


Figure 2 Main participatory groups of the study

Key: N, number; VT, vocational training; VTIs, vocational training institutes; YwD, youth with disability

15x12mm (600 x 600 DPI)

Supplementary 1: Survey Questionnaire – Current Trainee Youth with Disabilities
Interviewer administered questionnaire (one-to-one or telephone administered)













Code			
Date			
Center			
Training subject/area		Fabric Weaving Technology <input type="checkbox"/>	Massage Therapy <input type="checkbox"/>
		Refrigeration and Air Conditioning <input type="checkbox"/>	Motor Mechanics <input type="checkbox"/>
		Radio, Television Technology and Associated Equipment Technology <input type="checkbox"/>	Mechanics <input type="checkbox"/>
		Handicrafts (cane and coir) <input type="checkbox"/>	Bakery and Food Technology <input type="checkbox"/>
		Handicrafts (ornamental) <input type="checkbox"/>	Motor Bicycles and Three-Wheeler Technology <input type="checkbox"/>
		Handicrafts (Brooms and Ekel Brooms) <input type="checkbox"/>	Batik crafts <input type="checkbox"/>
		Handicrafts (Bamboo / Coconut Shells) <input type="checkbox"/>	Electronics <input type="checkbox"/>
		Carpentry and woodcarving <input type="checkbox"/>	Masonry <input type="checkbox"/>
		Computer course <input type="checkbox"/>	Cement Based Product Techniques <input type="checkbox"/>
		Dressmaking <input type="checkbox"/>	Beauty Culture <input type="checkbox"/>
		Tailoring <input type="checkbox"/>	Food technology and packaging <input type="checkbox"/>
		Operating Industrial Sewing Machines (Factory) <input type="checkbox"/>	Carpentry and woodcarving <input type="checkbox"/>

		Footwear and Leather Goods Industry <input type="checkbox"/>	Welding craft <input type="checkbox"/>
		Massage Therapy <input type="checkbox"/>	Automotive Painting <input type="checkbox"/>
		Home Gardening and Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/>	
Demographic Details			
	Age	.....
	Sex	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Female <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Hometown	.....
	Ethnicity	Sinhalese <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Sri Lankan Tamil <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Indian Tamil <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Sri Lankan Moor <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Burgher <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Malay <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Family income		
		>10,000 <input type="checkbox"/>	
		10,000 - 30,000 <input type="checkbox"/>	
		30,000 - 50,000 <input type="checkbox"/>	
		< 50,000 <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
Health Information	Primary disability		
		Hearing <input type="checkbox"/>	Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/>
		Hearing/Speech <input type="checkbox"/>	Mobility/Dexterity <input type="checkbox"/>
		Communication <input type="checkbox"/>	Learning <input type="checkbox"/>
		Visual <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
	Other medical Issues	
	Aids Needed		

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Lifestyle	Residence	Family Home	<input type="checkbox"/>	Own home	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Supported Home	<input type="checkbox"/>	Related accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Hostel	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Home support given by	Family	<input type="checkbox"/>	Friend	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Assistance Required	Personal hygiene	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Dressing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cleaning/grooming	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Shopping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Able to travel by Independent means	Public transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	Family transport	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Own vehicle	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Walking	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Communication Skills	Verbal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Braille	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Sign Language	<input type="checkbox"/>	If other, specify	.....
		AAC	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Language/s	Sinhala	<input type="checkbox"/>	English	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Tamil	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Social Interests/Hobbies				
Educational History	School/s				
	Duration				
	Qualifications				
	Year				
	Coping skills:	Good (1) Fair (2) Poor (3) Need Assistance (4)			

		Reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Math	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Money	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Vocational Training	Previous Training	Center	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Course	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Status		Completed <input type="checkbox"/>
				Not completed <input type="checkbox"/>
		Qualification		Certificate <input type="checkbox"/>
				Diploma <input type="checkbox"/>
				Degree <input type="checkbox"/>
Current Training		Center		.....
		Course Duration		.....
		Duration Completed (No of year)		.....
		Areas you like most		Content <input type="checkbox"/> Practical <input type="checkbox"/> Working in a group <input type="checkbox"/>
				Exams <input type="checkbox"/>
		What areas need to be changed		Content <input type="checkbox"/> Duration <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>
		What courses have you enjoyed/ do you enjoy?		
		What courses were difficult to follow and why?		

		What instructors did you like best and why?
		What do you plan to do after this training program?
		What are some difficulties you face when following the training program?
Satisfaction in theoretical aspect/ content of the syllabus:		
Happy  Neutral  Unhappy 		
Reason:.....		
.....		
Satisfaction in practical training:		
Happy  Neutral  Unhappy 		
Reason:.....		
.....		
Satisfaction in duration of training:.		
Happy  Neutral  Unhappy 		
Reason:.....		
.....		
Satisfaction in training environment:		
Happy  Neutral  Unhappy 		

Reason:.....
.....

Satisfaction in facilities:

Happy 😊 Neutral 😐 Unhappy 😞

Reason:.....
.....

Overall Satisfaction:

Happy 😊 Neutral 😐 Unhappy 😞

Reason:.....
.....

Proposed Changes		What are the other training opportunities you prefer to have? Give 3 opportunities
		1. 2. 3.

Employment History	Were you employed before?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	If yes, Company	
	Job Description	
	Duration	
	Hours Per Day	

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	Days Per Week	
	Work Pattern	
	Mode of Transport		
	Distance Prepared to Travel		
	Salary		
Future plans of the students	Job		
	Specific Job Task/s		
	Hours per day		
	Days per week		
	Work pattern	Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Night/day shift <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Mode of transport		
	Distance to travel		
Salary	Current		
	Expecting		

Supplementary 2: Self-administered Questionnaire- Caregivers of Current Trainee Youth with Disabilities

Interviewer administered questionnaire (one-to-one or telephone administered)

Code				
Date				
Center				
Child's Code?				
Demographic Details				
	Age			
	Sex	Male <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Female <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Hometown			
	Ethnicity	Sinhalese <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Sri Lankan Tamil <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Indian Tamil <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Sri Lankan Moor <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Burgher <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Malay <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Marital status	Married <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Separated <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Divorced <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Unmarried <input type="checkbox"/>		
	No of healthy children			
	No of children with disabilities			
	Family income	Less than 10,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		10,000 - 30,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		30,000 - 50,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		More than 50,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>		

	Highest education qualification			
	Current employment			
	Main language			
	Need/not communication aid/s			
	Do you need your child to do a job? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
	What do you expect from your child’s Vocational Training? Employ in a job in the same field of training <input type="checkbox"/> Employ in a job in the separate field of training <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Employ <input type="checkbox"/>			
Child’s vocational training	Do you think that the training offered the expected choice of train Your level of satisfaction on the fairness of the selection criteria for Vocational Training Program? Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>			
	For what extent do you agree with the training duration? Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>			
	For what extent do you satisfy the knowledge gained by your child’s at the moment? Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>			
	For what extent do you satisfy the training/practice gained by your child’s at the moment? Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>			
	For what extent do you satisfy the practicability/relevance of the training? Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>			

	For what extent do you satisfy in the child's safety of the during the training period: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Satisfaction in child's future job security: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Satisfaction in facilities provided by the center: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Satisfaction in special benefits (sports/leadership training etc.) provided by the center: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Any other comments

Supplementary 3: Telephone-administered Questionnaire: Passed-out Youth with Disabilities











Telephone-administered Questionnaire

Code				
Date				
Center				
Training Subject/Area		Fabric Weaving Technology <input type="checkbox"/>	Massage Therapy <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Refrigeration and Air Conditioning <input type="checkbox"/>	Motor Mechanics <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Radio, Television Technology and Associated Equipment Technology <input type="checkbox"/>	Mechanics <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Handicrafts (cane and coir) <input type="checkbox"/>	Bakery and Food Technology <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Handicrafts (ornamental) <input type="checkbox"/>	Motor Bicycles and Three Wheeler Technology <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Handicrafts (Brooms and Ekel Brooms) <input type="checkbox"/>	Batik crafts <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Handicrafts (Bamboo / Coconut Shells) <input type="checkbox"/>	Electronics <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Carpentry and woodcarving <input type="checkbox"/>	Masonry <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Computer course <input type="checkbox"/>	Cement Based Product Techniques <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Dressmaking <input type="checkbox"/>	Beauty Culture <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Tailoring <input type="checkbox"/>	Food technology and packaging <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Operating Industrial Sewing Machines (Factory) <input type="checkbox"/>	Carpentry and woodcarving <input type="checkbox"/>	

		Footwear and Leather Goods <input type="checkbox"/>	Welding craft <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Industry		
		Massage Therapy <input type="checkbox"/>	Automotive Painting <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Home Gardening and Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/>		
Demographic Details				
	Age	.....	
	Sex	Male <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Female <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Hometown			
	Ethnicity	Sinhalese <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Sri Lankan Tamil <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Indian Tamil <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Sri Lankan Moor <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Burgher <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Malay <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Marital status	Married <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Separated <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Divorced <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Unmarried <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Children/No			
	Income	>10,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		10,000 - 30,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		30,000 - 50,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		< 50,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
Health Information	Primary disability			
		Hearing <input type="checkbox"/>	Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Hearing/Speech <input type="checkbox"/>	Mobility/Dexterity <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Communication <input type="checkbox"/>	Learning <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Visual <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	

	Other medical Issues			
	Aids Needed			
Lifestyle	Residence	Family Home <input type="checkbox"/>	Own home <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Supported Home <input type="checkbox"/>	Related accommodation <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Hostel <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Home support given by	Family <input type="checkbox"/>	Friend <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Partner <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Assistance Required	Personal hygiene <input type="checkbox"/>	Mobility	
		Dressing <input type="checkbox"/>	Cleaning/grooming <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Shopping <input type="checkbox"/>	Communication <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Able to travel by Independent means	Public transport <input type="checkbox"/>	Family transport <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Own vehicle <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Walking <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Communication Skills	Verbal <input type="checkbox"/>	Braille <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Sign Language <input type="checkbox"/>	If other, specify	
		AAC <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Language/s	Sinhala <input type="checkbox"/>	English <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Tamil <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Social Interests/Hobbies			
Educational History	School/s			
	Duration			

	Qualifications		
	Year		
	Coping skills:	Good (1), Fair (2), Poor (3), Need Assistance (4)	
		Reading <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Writing <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Math <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Money <input type="checkbox"/>	
Vocational Training	Previous training received other than DSS	Center	
		Course	
		Course Duration	
		Status (Completed/not)	
		Qualification	Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Degree <input type="checkbox"/>
	Previous training in DSS	Center	
		Course	
		Course Duration	
	Was this the course of your choice If not, What other courses would you have preferred?		
		Areas you like most	Content <input type="checkbox"/> Practical <input type="checkbox"/> Working in a group <input type="checkbox"/> Exams <input type="checkbox"/>
		What areas need to be changed	

			Content	Duration
Satisfaction in theoretical aspect/ content of the syllabus:				
Happy		Neutral	Unhappy	
Reason:.....				
.....				
Satisfaction in practical training:				
Happy		Neutral	Unhappy	
Reason:.....				
.....				
Satisfaction in duration of training:				
Happy		Neutral	Unhappy	
Reason:.....				
.....				
Satisfaction in training environment:				
Happy		Neutral	Unhappy	
Reason:.....				
.....				
Satisfaction in facilities:				
Happy		Neutral	Unhappy	
Reason:.....				
.....				

Overall Satisfaction:

Happy 😊 Neutral Unhappy 😞

Reason:.....
.....

	Proposed changes	1. 2. 3.
	Expected plans after the Vocational Training	Employed in the same area of trained <input type="checkbox"/>
		Employed in a different area than the field of training <input type="checkbox"/>
		Non-Employ <input type="checkbox"/>
Previous employment environment	Company	
	Job description	
	Duration	
	Hours per day	
	Days per week	
	Work pattern	Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Night/day shift <input type="checkbox"/>

	Mode of transport		
	Distance prepared to travel		
	Salary		
Current employment environment	Company		
	Job description		
	Duration		
	Hours per day		
	Days per week		
	Work pattern	Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Night/day shift <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Mode of transport		
Preferred employment environment	Preferred jobs (e.g. Catering)		
	Specific job task/s		
	Hours per day		
	Days per week		
	Work pattern	Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Night/day shift <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Mode of transport		
	Distance to travel		
Salary	Current		
	Expected		

Supplementary 4: Interviewer Administered Questionnaire: Caregiver of Passed-out Youth with Disabilities

Telephone administered questionnaire

Code				
Date				
Center				
Child's Code				
Demographic Details				
	Age			
	Sex	Male <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Female <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Hometown			
	Marital status	Married <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Separated <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Divorced <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Unmarried <input type="checkbox"/>		
	No of healthy children			
	No of children with disabilities			
	Income	Less than 10,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		10,000 - 30,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		30,000 - 50,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		More than 50,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Highest education qualification			
	Current employment			
	Main language			

	Need/not communication aid/s			
	Did you want your child to do a job? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
	What do you expect from your child’s Vocational Training? Employ in a job in the same field of training <input type="checkbox"/> Employ in a job in the separate field of training <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Employ <input type="checkbox"/>			
	Do you think your child received the most suitable training for his/her current job? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
Child’s vocational training	For what extent do you think the fairness of the selection criteria? Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>			
	For what extent do you agree with the training duration? Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>			
	For what extent do you satisfy the knowledge gained by your child’s at the moment? Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>			
	For what extent do you satisfy the training/practice gained by your child at the moment? Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>			
	For what extent do you satisfy the practicability/relevance of the training? Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>			
	For what extent do you satisfy in the child’s safety of the during the training period: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>			
	Satisfaction in child’s future job security: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>			

	Satisfaction in facilities provided by the center: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Satisfaction in special benefits (sports/leadership training etc.) provided to students by the center: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>

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Supplementary 5: Online administered questionnaire - Educators (Teachers and Principal at Vocational Training Institute)

Online administered questionnaire

Code				
Date				
Center				
Teaching subject/area		Fabric Weaving Technology <input type="checkbox"/>	Massage Therapy <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Refrigeration and Air Conditioning <input type="checkbox"/>	Motor Mechanics <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Radio, Television Technology and Associated Equipment <input type="checkbox"/>	Mechanics <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Handicrafts (cane and coir) <input type="checkbox"/>	Bakery and Food Technology <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Handicrafts (ornamental) <input type="checkbox"/>	Motor Bicycles and Three-Wheeler Technology <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Handicrafts (Brooms and Ekel Brooms) <input type="checkbox"/>	Batik crafts <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Handicrafts (Bamboo / Coconut Shells) <input type="checkbox"/>	Electronics <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Carpentry and woodcarving <input type="checkbox"/>	Masonry <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Computer course <input type="checkbox"/>	Cement Based Product Techniques <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Dressmaking <input type="checkbox"/>	Beauty Culture <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Tailoring <input type="checkbox"/>	Food technology and packaging <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Operating Industrial Sewing Machines (Factory) <input type="checkbox"/>	Carpentry and woodcarving <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Footwear and Leather Goods Industry <input type="checkbox"/>	Welding craft <input type="checkbox"/>	

		Massage Therapy <input type="checkbox"/>	Automotive Painting <input type="checkbox"/>
		Home Gardening and Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/>	
Demographic Details			
	Age		
	Sex	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Female <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Hometown		
	Ethnicity	Sinhalese <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Sri Lankan Tamil <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Indian Tamil <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Sri Lankan Moor <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Burgher <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Malay <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Fluent language/s	Sinhala <input type="checkbox"/>	English <input type="checkbox"/>
		Tamil <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
Health Information	Primary disability		
		Hearing <input type="checkbox"/>	Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/>
		Hearing/Speech <input type="checkbox"/>	Mobility/Dexterity <input type="checkbox"/>
		Speech <input type="checkbox"/>	Learning <input type="checkbox"/>
		Visual <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
Educational and relevant professional qualification	Highest educational qualification	O/L <input type="checkbox"/>	Diploma <input type="checkbox"/>
		A/L <input type="checkbox"/>	Higher Diploma <input type="checkbox"/>
		Certificate <input type="checkbox"/>	Degree <input type="checkbox"/>
		NVQ <input type="checkbox"/>	Postgraduate <input type="checkbox"/>
		Other	
Relevant training in qualification			

	Duration of training			
	Training field	Special education <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Discipline <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Vocational Training <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Rehabilitation <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
Professional experience in Vocational Training	Previous experience in VT	Name and area of the centers		
		Total no of students trained		
		Duration		
		Teaching subjects		
	Current experience in Vocational Training Institute	Duration		
		Teaching subjects		
		Total no of students trained		
	Experience in teaching students with impairments	Hearing <input type="checkbox"/>	Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Hearing/Speech <input type="checkbox"/>	Mobility/Dexterity <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Communication <input type="checkbox"/>	Learning <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Visual <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	

Perception on service provided by the VT center	<p>Fairness of the student selection criteria</p> <p>1. Age range to be between 16-35 Years of Age</p> <p>Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Reason</p> <p>2. Marital status being Single</p> <p>Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Reason</p> <p>3. Being a person with disability (a certificate from a registered medical practitioner)</p> <p>Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Reason</p>
	<p>Students safety measures taken by the center during the training period:</p> <p>Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p>Access facilities for students with disability at the Vocational Training Institute</p> <p>Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Areas of training:</p> <p>Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Satisfaction in teaching and learning methods being used:</p> <p>Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/></p>

	Satisfaction in examination preparation: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Satisfaction in conducting examination: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Facilities provided by the center: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Monthly wage provided during the training period Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Already provided/not Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfaction in special benefits (sports/leadership training etc.) provided to students by the center: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
Perception on VT programs	Training duration adequate/not? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Any other subjects to include? Satisfaction in available subject areas. Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Relevance of the subjects to the job market: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	If you are granted another training opportunity, what are the training areas you prefer to learn?

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Supplementary 6: Interview & Focus Group Guide for Educators (Teachers and principals)

Online FGDs

Rapport Building Prompts

- Tell us a little bit about your role and your current position at this center?
- Tell us a little bit about your views on instructing/teaching youth with disabilities?
- What expectations do you have for these youth at the end of your course?

Prompts

- **Program Information**
 - a. What is your view on the programs/courses they offer at this center?
 - b. What is your view on the programs/courses you teach at the center?
- **Curriculum and Instruction**
 - a. What teaching methods do you use with youth in your course?
 - b. What type of learning opportunities do they get in your course? (Please give examples)
 - c. How do you design your curriculum for the course you teach?
 - d. Tell us about some successes you have had in your class?
 - e. Tell us about some challenges you have had in your class?
- **Improvement Suggestions**
 - a. Do you have any suggestions for improvement of the administrators of this center?
 - b. What are some things you would like to see happen differently at the center?
 - c. What type of support would you like in order to improve the courses you teach?

Supplementary 7: Interview & Focus Group Guide for Caregivers of Potential Youth with Disabilities

Online FGDs and/or online semi-structured interviews

- Journey so far

- a. Tell us a little bit about your child's education/ learning up to this point?
- b. What were some of the hardships you faced?
- c. What kind of support did you receive so far? Give examples.

- Daily Routines of young adult youth

- a. Tell me about what a regular day for him/her looks like?
- b. What does he/she seem to enjoy doing?
- c. Tell us a little bit about what your child is good at? Give us examples?
- d. What are the challenges your child faces on a daily basis?

- Expectations

- a. What does your child want to do in future? (Your child's perspective)
- b. Tell us a little bit about your views on Vocational Training and if that is a path you would choose for your child? Why? Why not?
- c. What expectations do you have for your child in future?
- d. What steps have you taken to support your child's future? Examples.
- e. What persons/ organizations have helped you to make these decisions? How have they helped?
- f. What advice would you give parents who have younger children, what should they be mindful of when preparing their children for the future?

Supplementary 8: Focus Group Interview Guide for Key Informants (Employers who presently have YWDs, policy makers, disability right advocates, NGOs working for YwDs)

Rapport Building Prompts

- Tell us a little bit about your role and your current position?
- Tell us a little bit about your views on supporting youth with disabilities?
- What expectations do you have for these youth at the District, Provincial and National Level?
- What are the expectations you have for these youth as potential employers?
- What skills and knowledge do you think youth with disabilities need to possess in order to be successful at your workplace?

Prompts

Awareness: Program Information

- a. What is your view on the programs/courses they offer at this center?
- b. Describe the relationship between this center and your role?
- c. What type of support does your institution provide to the center?
- d. Are the goals and purposes of this center clear to your institution, and how does that help your institution make decisions?

Improvement Suggestions

- a. Do you have any suggestions for improvement of the administrators of this center?
- b. Do you have any suggestions for improvement of the instructors of this center?
- c. What are some things you would like to see happen differently at the center?

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Stakeholders' perspectives on the provision of vocational training for youth with disabilities in Sri Lanka

To be completed by the participant

The participant should complete the whole of this sheet himself/herself.

1. Have you read the information sheet? (Please keep a copy for yourself) YES/NO

2. Have you had an opportunity to discuss this study and ask any questions? YES/NO

3. Have you had satisfactory answers to all your questions? YES/NO

4. Have you received enough information about the study? YES/NO

5. Who explained the study to you?

6. Do you understand that you have the right to not to participate in this study? YES/NO

7. Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason and without affecting your future medical care? YES/NO

8. Any personal document given, or detail provided may be examined by other research assistants. All personal details will be treated as **strictly Confidential**. Do you give your permission for these individuals to have access to your records? YES/NO

9. Have you had sufficient time to come to your decision? YES/NO

11. Do you agree to take part in this study? YES/NO

Participant's signature..... Date.....

Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

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To be completed by the investigator/ person obtaining consent

I have explained the study to the above volunteer, and he/ she has indicated her willingness to take part.

Signature of investigator..... Date.....

Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

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BMJ Open

Stakeholders' perspectives on the provision of vocational training for youth with disabilities in Sri Lanka: protocol for a mixed-methods study

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Manuscripts

Stakeholders’ perspectives on the provision of vocational training for youth with disabilities in Sri Lanka: protocol for a mixed-methods study

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Abstract

Introduction The quality and the range of vocational training (VT) courses offered to youth with disabilities (YwD) in low-middle-income countries are underexplored. This protocol describes a study designed to gather perceptions of a range of stakeholders related to the quality and relevance of VT programmes conducted by the Department of Social Services in Sri Lanka. The purpose of this study is to communicate with authorities the ways in which they can improve their services by paying close attention to the needs and recommendations of all stakeholders.

Methods and analysis A parallel mixed-methods study will be conducted at eight (8) vocational training institutes (VTIs). A survey will be conducted with five participant groups; YwD presently enrolled in VTIs (n=358) and their caregivers (n=358), YwD who completed the VT (n=45) and their caregivers (n=45), and educators at VTIs (n=47). The qualitative component includes semi-structured interviews and Focus Group Discussions. The three groups of participants include: educators, caregivers of potential YwD for future VT (6-10 per group), and key informants from state, private and non-governmental sectors (total of 20). Quantitative and qualitative data will be analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics and cross-thematic analysis, respectively.

Ethics and dissemination This study received ethical clearance from the Ethics Review Committee (ERC), Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya (Ref. No: P/15/02/2021). All data collection processes will abide by health and safety measures required by the national government. Written informed consent will be obtained from all participants. Results from this research will be disseminated, including to local stakeholders and participants, via local and international conferences and publications in peer-reviewed journals.

Article summary

Strengths and limitations of this study

- The aim of this parallel mixed-methods study is to explore the depth and the breadth of the ways in which vocational services are provided and the ways in which they influence the future prospects of youth with disabilities (YwD) in Sri Lanka.
- The study will include a variety of stakeholders including YwD, their parents, potential and present employers, parents of potential youth who will seek vocational training and authorities from government, non-governmental and private sector.
- The interview methods will include specific accommodations for participants who cannot verbally communicate as well as those unable to fill forms on their own (eg, data collection tools will include visual aids and sign language).
- A single questionnaire is designed to obtain information from all YwD, irrespective of the types of impairments they present, thus limiting the study by making impairment-specific information unavailable.
- There may be some technological barriers to some participants during data collection, as online methods will be used due to COVID 19 restrictions.

Introduction

Children with disabilities have limited access to education. Education is only one among many basic needs that are inadequately met in relation to youth with disabilities (YwD) in Sri Lanka. This results in higher rates of unemployment among YwD, creating perpetual financial dependency of this marginalized group. The International Labor Organization (ILO) (2014)¹ estimates 15% of the world's population lives with a disability, of which 80% are of working age. The majority of people with disabilities live in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) and belong to the poorest populations. Across the globe, disability, economic inactivity and unemployment comprise a triple burden, making disability the cause and the effect of poverty.² Therefore, World Health Organization (WHO) (2011)³ emphasizes the importance of initiatives to promote unlocking the vast potential of YwD by removing the barriers that deter participation. It is predicted that resolving these challenges can improve health, rehabilitation, education, and employment globally.

Similarly other South Asian LMICs, the majority (96%) of People with Disabilities (PwD) in Sri Lanka do not engage in education nor in employment.⁴ They are marginalized from mainstream education and training provisions.⁵ Furthermore, in Sri Lanka, cultural and religious beliefs in relation to PwD often frame them as 'dependents' on 'abled' family members. This leads families to be sympathetic towards YwD, rather than working toward making them viable participants in society. For instance, families that see PwD as dependent keep them at home without providing any formal education or vocational training (VT).⁶

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) defines employment as an indicator for measuring participation in society.⁷ Therefore, the role of families and political commitment in terms of employing YwD becomes pivotal in achieving this goal.^{8,9}

VT along with Supported Employment, sheltered employment and inclusive redesign of work processes are identified to enhance employability of YwD around the world.^{10,11} United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) supported VT as a pathway to employment for YwD¹² which is currently operational in Sri Lanka under the purview of the government of Sri Lanka. VT is defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as “those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various sectors of economic life.”¹³ VT increases the likelihood of employability of YwD, focusing on specific skills whilst receiving directed training. This invariably enriches their standards of living through exposure to many other aspects such as socialization, financial management and entrepreneurship. Further, formal VT will augment an individual’s ability to participate in lifelong learning, initiating economic growth within their communities. In a systematic review, Tripney and Hombrados¹⁴ reported a positive association between involvement of VT and employment outcomes in LMICs.

Globally YwD get limited opportunities for VT of their own choice.¹⁵ Multiple factors act as barriers for them to voluntarily access options based on their own choices. Social stigma is a primary contributor in limiting choices, including rigidly planned courses, negative attitudes and misconceptions among caregivers and the lack of awareness among the employers of the full potential of YwD.¹⁶ Such factors discourage and demotivate YwD diminishing their self-confidence and inhibiting their desire to access VT options. Furthermore, the lack of connections between village level structures and vocational training institutes (VTIs) is also a major barrier in making referrals to VTIs.¹⁷

From the perspective of social justice, inclusion and accessibility, the ways in which VT is currently provided threatens the mental and physical wellbeing of YwD. In LMICs, YwD are typically deprived of primary education. This in turn results in being excluded from mainstream VTIs in Sri Lanka. This is partly due to the lack of resource personnel who can cater to the needs of YwD in mainstream VTIs.¹⁸ As a result, PwD have limited opportunities for market-oriented VT and skills development. This relegated PwD to contribute mainly to the informal economy, exasperating exploitation such as denying them equitable income and working making them even more vulnerable in society.

Sri Lanka is a signatory of the UNCRPD (2006) which recommends the societal inclusion of PwD.¹⁹ It clearly identifies their right for employment. Sri Lanka has a national standard, indicating that the state sector must employ 3% PwD into the workforce.²⁰ However, there is no standard defined for the private sector. Similar standards are reported from other LMICs in the world.^{21,22,23} Despite these strides in improving employment opportunities for YwD there are many attitudinal and logistical barriers that continue to make employers weary of providing equitable opportunities for YwD.^{24,25,26}

While there is growing interest among the private sector employers to recruit YwD in mainstream employment,²⁷ most of these trends seem to be seen in high-income settings. In Sri Lanka, the Department of Social Services (DSS) manages the VTIs. DSS provides residential VT courses, the largest recognized institute to offer such courses for YwD.²⁸ Nonetheless, the quality of services provided along with how relevant these courses are to YwD requires further exploration. One of the ways in which to begin to address the question of quality and relevance, is to obtain the perspectives of stakeholders such as YwD, caregivers, policy makers and employers. The knowledge obtained by being in conversation with stakeholders can help identify

needs, demands and challenges in the delivery of VT programmes for YwD. Further, it is essential to explore job market opportunities and the views of current and potential employers when designing and modifying VT programmes for YwD.

VT opportunities for YwD in Sri Lanka must be framed within the imperative of providing inclusive and fair training opportunities. Ways in which to mainstream youth within the employment sector requires enhancing competencies in content, skills and attitudes appropriate and specific to their own social and economic contexts.^{23,24}

This paper describes the protocol for a mixed-methods study designed to explore the perspectives of a diverse range of stakeholders, namely the YwD, their caregivers and the potential employers on VT opportunities at the VTIs in Sri Lanka. We believe this protocol will promote researchers from similar contexts and research intentions to build their research design and methodologies in enhancing VT opportunities for YwD.

Aim and objectives

The overarching aim of this study is to explore whether the VT programmes offered through the VTIs affiliated to the DSS, Sri Lanka meet the expectations of the YwD, their caregivers and the job market.

The specific objectives of this study are:

1. To describe the socio-demographic characteristics and the disability profile of the YwD trained at the VTIs.
2. To explore the perspectives of YwD, their caregivers, and educators on existing VT.

3. To explore the perceptions of policy makers, disability right advocates, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and employers on VT and employment opportunities for YwD in Sri Lanka.

Methods and analysis

Study design

A mixed-methods study will be conducted²⁹ consisting of a cross-sectional quantitative study and an exploratory cross-thematic qualitative study. This study will be conducted from January 2021-December 2021. This study will be carried out using a parallel mixed-methods design. This approach allows researchers to conduct quantitative and qualitative components concurrently. The data collection and analysis of the two components will be done independently and both quantitative and qualitative results will be interpreted together at the end.³⁰ This methodology will enable us to explore the scope and depth of the present status of VT opportunities for YwD in Sri Lanka.

Study locations

The study will be conducted in eight (8) VTIs located in five (5) districts (Figure 1). They are Amunukubura, Kalawana, Katawala, Madampe, Ragama, Seeduwa, Telabuyaya, Waththegama, and at Ayati, National Centre for Children with Disabilities, Faculty of Medicine, Ragama, Sri Lanka.

<<< Insert Figure 1>>>

Study participants

The cross-sectional quantitative study will be conducted among five (5) groups of participants while the exploratory qualitative study will be conducted with three (3) groups of participants (Figure 2).

<< Insert Figure 2>>>

Quantitative phase: The cross-sectional study will include following participants: 1) YwD currently enrolled in the VTIs and 2) one of their caregivers; 3) YwD who completed the VT within the last two years and 4) one of their caregivers; and 5) all educators attached to VTIs. The inclusive criteria is determined by the recruiting criterion set by the DSS. The criteria maintains that prospective trainees should be unmarried men and women with any type of disability and aged between 16 to 35 years old. A complete list and contact details of presently enrolled YwD and their caregivers, and YwD who have completed training and their caregivers will be obtained from the DSS following ethical and institutional clearance. Trainees’ attendance will be checked ensuring that programme dropouts are excluded from the study. Every eligible YwD and one of their caregivers (who is living with him/her) will be invited and included in the survey with informed written consent. All educators of the eight VTIs will be invited to participate following institutional and ethical clearance. Only consenting participants will be recruited.

Qualitative phase: Educators from each VTI will be invited to the qualitative component of this study. Caregivers of potential YwD for future VT will be recruited from the Ayati, National Center for Children with Disabilities, a community-based health facility providing services for children and youth. The study investigators will actively connect with their existing professional networks (such as governmental and nongovernmental organizations, institutes, and

associations). These key informants (KIs) will be selected to represent employed or graduated YwD, potential and current employers of YwD, disability rights advocates, policy makers and NGOs working with YwD. Qualitative data collection will proceed once informed written consent is obtained.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Table 1 summarises the inclusion and exclusion criteria of this study.

<<<<Insert Table 1>>>>

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria of the study

Inclusion criteria	
Participatory groups in quantitative component	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All YwD presently enrolled in VTIs training for a minimum of one month irrespective of their gender, disability or the training course. • YwD who completed the training in the past two years (2018 to 2020), who are contactable through telephone, email or word of mouth irrespective of their present employment status, disability, gender and the type of employment. • Caregivers of the eligible YwD. • All educators presently employed as instructors or heads at the VTIs.
Participatory groups in qualitative phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators presently employed as instructors or heads at the VTIs.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Caregivers of YwD presently attend services at the Ayati National Center for Children with Disabilities for a minimum duration of 3 months.● Private and public sector employers presently employing YwD or have the potential or plans to employ them.● Policy makers directly or indirectly involved in providing services or employment of YwD.● YwD with any type of severity of disability will be included with no discrimination.● Disability rights advocates/ legislators in Sri Lanka.● NGOs presently providing services for employment and VT for YWD.
Exclusion criteria	
Participatory groups in quantitative phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● YwD Presently registered at the VTIs but not attending courses on a regular basis or are enrolled for less than one month.
Participatory groups in qualitative phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Presently employed YwD attending the National Center for Children with Disabilities.● Not experienced working with YwD.

Sample size calculation and sampling procedure

Quantitative phase: We aim to invite the entire population of YwD presently enrolled in VTIs (n=358), their caregivers (n=358), and educators at VTIs (n=47) and recruit consenting members to participate. The total number of YwD who completed the course during the last two (2) years was approximately 456. Hence a 10% of youth who completed the VT (n=45), and their

caregivers (n=45) will be recruited using proportionate stratified random sampling, and consented participants will only be included. The sampling frame was obtained from the DSS. It included the names and contact details of the participants who completed the training in 2019 and 2020 in all VTIs, Sri Lanka.

Qualitative phase: The exploratory cross-thematic qualitative study comprises both semi-structured interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Participants are chosen based on purposive sampling mechanisms to ensure all stakeholder groups are included in the study. Participants for the FGDs will be categorized to maintain homogeneity according to; working experience, type of courses and the interests shared by educators; socioeconomic background, skill levels and interests shared by caregivers of potential YwD for VT. Accordingly, 30 educators and 30 caregivers of potential YwD for future VT will be recruited to conduct several FGDs. Snowballing techniques will be used to invite approximately 30 relevant and appropriate KIs to participate representing all categories mentioned in Figure 2.

Study instruments

Table 2 and 3 present the type of study instruments proposed, mode of administration and a brief description about each instrument are described. In summary, five surveys (Supplementary files 1-5) and participant specific interview guides (Supplementary files 6-8) will be used to conduct FGDs and the semi-structured interviews.

<<<Inset Table 2>>>

Table 2. Proposed study instruments to collect quantitative data from each participatory group

Participatory group	Mode of	Description of the instrument
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	administration	
YwD currently enrolled in the VTIs	One-to-one or telephone administered questionnaire* (Supplementary file 01)	Consists of close-ended and Likert scale questions to gather information on socio-demographic characteristics, the nature of VT programmes currently enrolled in and their views of said programmes, employment history, and their future prospects.
Caregivers of YwD presently enrolled in the VTIs	One-to-one or telephone administered questionnaire (Supplementary file 02)	Consists of close-ended and Likert scale questions to gather information on socio-demographic characteristics of the caregiver, views of their child’s VT and their expectations.
YwD who have completed the VT	Telephone administered questionnaire (Supplementary file 03)	Consists of close-ended and Likert scale questions to gather information on socio-demographic characteristics, the nature of VT programme currently enrolled in and the experiences with it, employment history, and their current satisfaction.

Caregivers of YwD, who have completed VT	Telephone administered questionnaire (Supplementary file 04)	Consists of close-ended and Likert scale questions to gather information on socio-demographic characteristics of the caregiver, about their child's VT and employability and level of satisfaction.
Educators	Online administered questionnaire (Supplementary file 05)	Includes questions about their demographic characteristics, education, VT qualifications and their experiences.

Key: YwD, youth with disability; VTIs, vocational training institutes; VT, vocational training

Note: All these five questionnaires include several open-ended questions to explore their perceptions about the current training, their expectations, and the experiences.

*Adapted from the vocational profile developed by the European Union of Supported Employment.³¹

<<<Inset Table 3>>>

Table 3. Proposed study instruments to be used to collect qualitative data from each participatory group.

Participatory group	Qualitative data collection instrument and mode	Description of the instrument
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Educators	Online FGDs (Supplementary file 06)	Interview protocols will be used to conduct the FGDs and KI interviews
Caregivers of potential YwD for future VT	Online FGDs (Supplementary file 07)	
KIs	Online semi-structured interviews (Supplementary file 08)	

Key: FGDs, focused group discussions; KIs, key informants; NGOs, non-Governmental organisations; VT, vocational training; YwD, youth with disabilities

Data collection

Ten (10) Research assistants (RAs) were recruited from a background of disability related fields and allied health specialties including psychology, speech and language therapy, audiology and physiotherapy with an undergraduate degree and training on research methodology. They underwent several training sessions with quantitative (DDS) and qualitative (TH) methodologists on data collection and interviewing techniques. Specific instructions on communication techniques with YwD were given by ID, a professional Speech and Language Therapist with specific qualifications in supported employment.

Quantitative phase: The cross-sectional study will be conducted on each participatory group using different modes and instruments as mentioned in Table 2. These will be conducted by UC, MG, and NA. Data collection of the consenting YwD presently enrolled at the VTIs and their

caregivers will take place in a quiet room in the VTI based on an interviewer administered questionnaire on a one-on-one basis. Necessary accommodations and adaptations are considered and provided to collect data from YwD, who are current trainees at the VTIs. They will be given adequate time to answer, and the smiley face responses will be shown for any satisfaction related questions. Trainees with hearing impairments will have the questionnaires read to them in sign language through an interpreter. At present, during protocol development, the VTIs function with restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, there may be a chance of missing some of the eligible participants from the above two groups during on-site face-to-face data collection. In such an event, we propose to conduct telephone administered interviews to complete the questionnaires. Additionally, data collection for trainees with hearing impairments will be conducted as an interviewer-administered questionnaire through video conferencing using visual aids and sign language by trained RAs. Quantitative data collection from educators will be performed through an online survey system (Google survey).

Qualitative phase: FGDs and KIs interviews will be the two main data sources. Interviews with caregivers of potential YwD for future VT and educators in VTIs will take place as online video conferences due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation. These will be conducted by ID, UC, MG and NA. There will be two silent observers while the third researcher conducts the interviews. TH will be a silent observer at several interviews to ensure the trained researchers conduct interviews appropriately. The KIs interviews will also take place as audio or video interviews through online platforms. All interviews will be conducted in the language of preference of the participants i.e., Sinhala, Tamil or English. All interviews will be conducted over secure platforms using online facilities. These will be audio-recorded and stored with password protection.

Data processing

There are a number of quality control mechanisms in place to minimize the errors occurring in the quantitative data entry phase. Manual double-key data entry will be performed by two RAs. First, a simple exploratory analysis will be performed in Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 25.0 independently to identify missing values, invalid values and out of range values. Necessary corrections will be done by revisiting the original questionnaires. Then, a validation report for data entry errors will be obtained from EpiData (3.1) software³² and inconsistencies will be corrected. Percentage of records and fields with data entry errors will be recorded.

The RAs will start coding audio transcripts of qualitative data using NVivo-12 software. The coding protocol will follow both inductive and deductive methods iteratively in developing codes and themes. A code book with definitions will be maintained throughout the study. Furthermore, all the RAs will maintain a research field notebook in which they will write their observations and reflections of the data collected. The first round of coding will be done individually by the RAs. The research team will meet once a week to discuss their codes and themes, compiling and adjusting the code book to reflect their findings. The successive rounds will be conducted using the code book, which will be expanded and defined collectively during research team meetings. NVivo memos will be maintained for all codes and themes. Furthermore, all analytical queries will be run using NVivo explore and analyze features.

Data analysis

Quantitative phase: Statistical analyses will be performed using the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) software, version 25.0. Both graphical and statistical methods will be used

to present and analyse data. The distribution characteristics of all continuous variables will be visually inspected using histograms. Descriptive statistics include frequencies, percentages, mean (SD) and median (IQR) will be used. Data with normal distribution and non-normal distribution will be presented as mean (SD) and median (IQR) respectively. The Chi-square test of Fisher's exact test (small cell numbers) will be used to test the relationships between categorical variables. All statistical tests will be two sided with significance level set at 0.05.

Qualitative phase: The main themes built during the analysis phase will be translated and transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically using the six steps outlined by Braun and Clarke³³: 1) become familiar with the data, 2) generate initial codes, 3) search for themes, 4) review for themes, 5) define themes and 6) write-up. Open coding will be used, and initial codes will be generated iteratively by going through the entire dataset systematically. Thematic analysis will be assisted by the NVivo. A sample of documents will be coded by two (2) independent researchers to ensure reliability of codes and themes. Furthermore, a member check will be conducted with a sample group of participants, before finalizing and interpreting data gathered.

Special COVID-19 considerations

Precautions will be taken to minimize the spread of COVID-19 pandemic during the data collection process. Due to the travel restrictions during this period the research will be conducted using hybrid methods which was cleared through the ethical review process. Due to the challenges of meeting the participants in-person, the research team will contact the participants via phone and emails and provide information by speaking to them individually and will obtain consent via Google sheets, through short message service (SMS) or by getting down pictures of

consent sheets filled as photographs through email or social media platforms. They will be given the time and opportunity to obtain more information regarding the study and to clarify their concerns and questions. All online conference meetings will be protection encrypted and closed password only meetings. Virtual data collection methods would follow the same in-person questionnaire structures and will be consistent throughout the study.

Patient and public involvement

From the stage of conceptualization some groups of prospective participants including educators and some parents of YwD contributed toward designing and revising study tools. All protocols and study instruments were reviewed by several YwD prior to finalizing the version used in the study. Qualitative analysis will follow an iterative process. The study instruments will undergo alterations during the qualitative study based on the opinions of the YwD, parents, employers and trainers who are prospective participants of this study. On the completion of the research all findings will be shared with members of the public who contributed towards the study. In determining the validity of the findings, triangulation and member-check processes will be conducted throughout the study.

Implementation

This study is conducted as a tripartite collaboration among,

- (1) The academic institution, Department of Disability Studies is the only institute of its kind that has pioneered research on people with disabilities in Sri Lanka and has also taken the lead to establish many services for children and YwD including supported employment.

(2) The Department of Disability Studies is the present key player in the government sector of Sri Lanka providing VT for YwD. The VT in the state sector were established more than three decades ago and have undergone only ad hoc changes in the curricula and the courses offered.

(3) The NGO proposed and initiated this project with the aim of creating job opportunities catering for the needs of YwD and their families and aligning those with the expectations of employers and the present job market.

Ethics and dissemination

Ethical clearance for this study was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee (ERC) of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka (Ref. No: P/15/02/2021). Institutional clearance was taken from the Director, DSS and the individual VTIs. This study involves a vulnerable population, as such additional precautionary ethical clearing information was provided and approved. All eligible participants and their parents/caregivers will be provided an information sheet about the objective of the survey/FGDs/interviews. The procedure, benefits, risks, hazards, discomforts and freedom to withdraw from the study or termination of study participation have been clearly defined in the information sheet. The information sheets available in all three verbal languages used in Sri Lanka (Sinhala, Tamil and English). In case of difficulty in reading the information sheet, the RA will read it out and explain to participants. Sign language support will be provided to any participant with hearing impairment. Contents of this sheet will be explained prior to all data collection processes.

The participants will be given access to communicate with the research team and ethical review board to clarify any queries. Written informed consent will be obtained prior to participation by

all participants of quantitative and qualitative arms (Supplementary file 09) including the YwD. For online participants consent will be obtained through short message service (SMS). It is assumed in this research that the youth who are capable of undergoing VT have the capacity to consent to participate in a survey, hence an assent form is not included in this study. All data will be entered and stored anonymously. Sampling frames received from the DSS, will be kept as password protected Excel documents. The computer-stored data will be kept under password protection and will be accessible only to the research team. The confidentiality of collected data will be maintained during and after the study.

Results from this research will be disseminated, including to local stakeholders and participants, via local and international conferences and publications in peer-reviewed journals.

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Contributors

All authors- (UTC, ID, DDS, TH, MG, NA, SPS) made substantial contributions to the conception and design of this protocol. SPS, UTC- drafting of manuscript and revision, DDS, TH- critical revision of the manuscript for intellectual content. All authors- read and critically reviewed this manuscript, made revisions and have all approved this final version for submission. All authors- agree to be accountable for the future integrity of this study.

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Map disclaimer

The portrayal of boundaries on this map does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of BMJ (or any member of its group) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, jurisdiction or area or of its authorities. This map is provided without any warranty of any kind, either express or implied.

Competing interests

None declared.

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Figure 1 Distribution of vocational training institutes in Sri Lanka.

Figure 2 Main participatory groups of the study.

Key: N, number; VT, vocational training; VTIs, vocational training institutes; YwD, youth with disability

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For peer review only

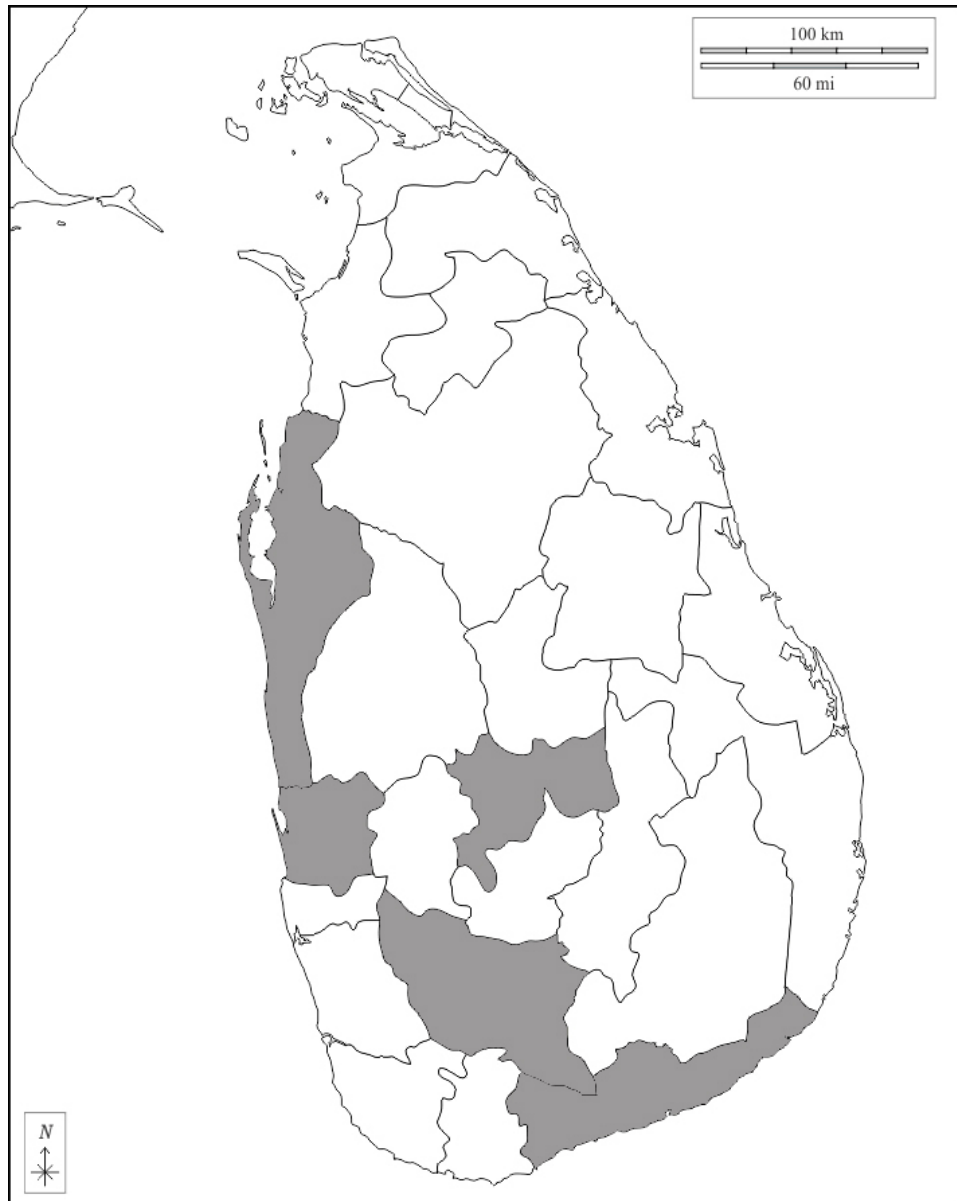


Figure 1 Distribution of VTIs in Sri Lanka

15x18mm (1200 x 1200 DPI)

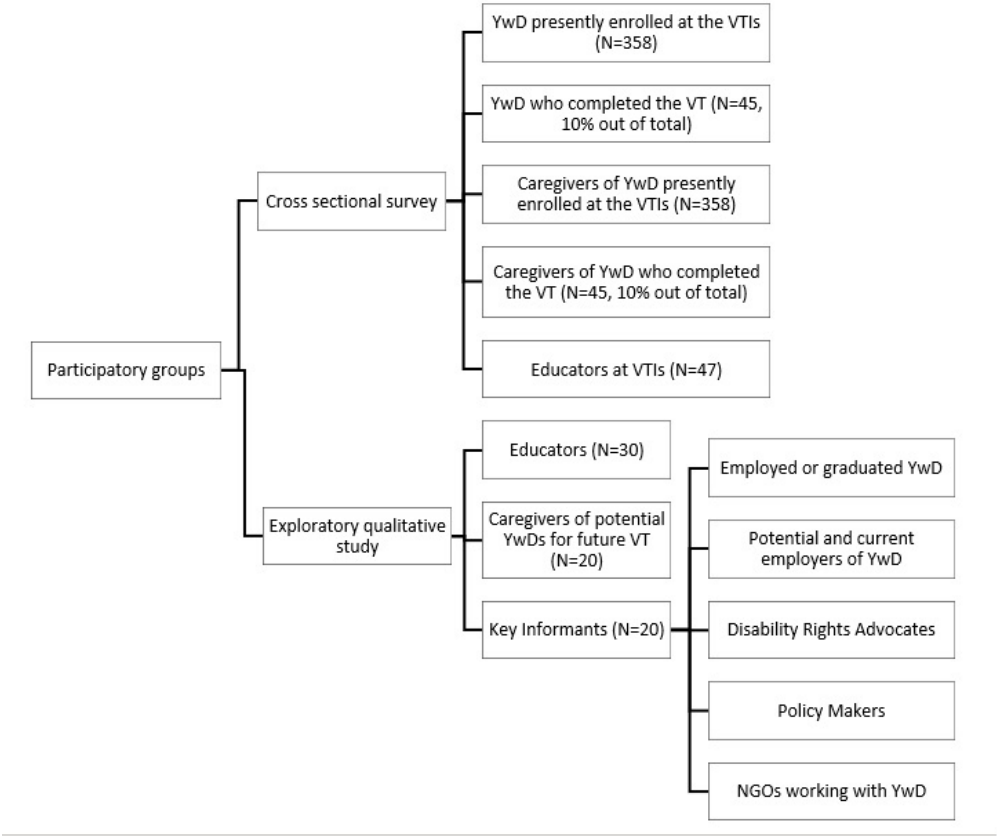


Figure 2 Main participatory groups of the study

Key: N, number; VT, vocational training; VTIs, vocational training institutes; YwD, youth with disability
15x13mm (1200 x 1200 DPI)

Supplementary 1: Survey Questionnaire – Current Trainee Youth with Disabilities

Interviewer administered questionnaire (one-to one or telephone administered)

Code				Remarks
Date				
Center				
Training subject/area		Fabric Weaving Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Refrigeration and Air Conditioning <input type="checkbox"/> Radio, Television Technology and Associated Equipment Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Handicrafts (cane and coir) <input type="checkbox"/> Handicrafts (ornamental) <input type="checkbox"/> Handicrafts (Brooms and Ekel Brooms) <input type="checkbox"/> Handicrafts (Bamboo / Coconut Shells) <input type="checkbox"/> Carpentry and woodcarving <input type="checkbox"/> Computer course <input type="checkbox"/> Dressmaking <input type="checkbox"/> Tailoring <input type="checkbox"/> Operating Industrial Sewing Machines (Factory) <input type="checkbox"/> Footwear and Leather Goods Industry <input type="checkbox"/> Massage Therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Home Gardening and Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/>	Massage Therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Motor Mechanics <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanics <input type="checkbox"/> Bakery and Food Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Motor Bicycles and Three Wheeler Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Batik crafts <input type="checkbox"/> Electronics <input type="checkbox"/> Masonry <input type="checkbox"/> Cement Based Product Techniques <input type="checkbox"/> Beauty Culture <input type="checkbox"/> Food technology and packaging <input type="checkbox"/> Carpentry and woodcarving <input type="checkbox"/> Welding craft <input type="checkbox"/> Automotive Painting <input type="checkbox"/>	
Demographic Details				
	Age	.....	
	Sex	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>		

	Hometown	.....	
	Ethnicity	Sinhalese <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Sri Lankan Tamil <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Indian Tamil <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Sri Lankan Moor <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Burgher <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Malay <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Family income			
		>10,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		10,000 - 30,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		30,000 - 50,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		< 50,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
Health Information	Primary disability			
		Hearing <input type="checkbox"/>	Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Hearing/Speech <input type="checkbox"/>	Mobility/Dexterity <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Communication <input type="checkbox"/>	Learning <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Visual <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other medical Issues	.....	
	Aids Needed			
Lifestyle	Residence	Family Home <input type="checkbox"/>	Own home <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Supported Home <input type="checkbox"/>	Related accommodation <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Hostel <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Home support given by	Family <input type="checkbox"/>	Friend <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>		

	Assistance Required	Personal hygiene	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Dressing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cleaning/grooming	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Shopping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Able to travel by Independent means	Public transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	Family transport	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Own vehicle	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Walking	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Communication Skills	Verbal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Braille	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Sign Language	<input type="checkbox"/>	If other, specify	.....
		AAC	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Language/s	Sinhala	<input type="checkbox"/>	English	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Tamil	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Social Interests/Hobbies				
Educational History	School/s				
	Duration				
	Qualifications				
	Year				
	Coping skills:	Good (1) Fair (2) Poor (3) Need Assistance (4)			
		Reading	<input type="checkbox"/>		
		Writing	<input type="checkbox"/>		
		Math	<input type="checkbox"/>		
		Money	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Vocational Training	Previous Training	Center	<input type="checkbox"/>		

		Course <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Status	Completed <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Not completed <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Qualification	Certificate <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Diploma <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Degree <input type="checkbox"/>	
Current Training		Center	.....
		Course Duration	.....
		Duration Completed (No of year)	.....
		Areas you like most	Content <input type="checkbox"/> Practical <input type="checkbox"/> Working in a group <input type="checkbox"/> Exams <input type="checkbox"/>	
		What areas need to be changed	Content <input type="checkbox"/> Duration <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
		What courses have you enjoyed/ do you enjoy?		
		What courses were difficult to follow and why?		
		What instructors did you like best and why?		

What do you plan to do after this training program?

What are some difficulties you face when following the training program?

Satisfaction in theoritical aspect/ content of the sillabus:

Happy 😊 Neutral 😐 Unhappy 😞

Reason:.....

Satisfaction in practical training:

Happy 😊 Neutral 😐 Unhappy 😞

Reason:.....

Satisfaction in duration of training:.

Happy 😊 Neutral 😐 Unhappy 😞

Reason:.....

Satisfaction in training environment:

Happy 😊 Neutral 😐 Unhappy 😞

Reason:.....
.....

Satisfaction in facilities:
Happy 😊 Neutral 😐 Unhappy 😞
Reason:.....
.....

Overall Satisfaction:
Happy 😊 Neutral 😐 Unhappy 😞
Reason:.....
.....

Proposed Changes		What are the other training opportunities you prefer to have? Give 3 opportunities 1. 2. 3.		
Employment History	Were you employed before? If yes, Company Job Description Duration	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		

	Hours Per Day	.....	
	Days Per Week	.....	
	Work Pattern	.....	
	Mode of Transport			
	Distance Prepared to Travel			
	Salary			
Future plans of the students	Job			
	Specific Job Task/s			
	Hours per day			
	Days per week			
	Work pattern	Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Night/day shift <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Mode of transport			
	Distance to travel			
Salary	Current			
	Expecting			

Supplementary 2: Self-administered Questionnaire- Caregivers of Current Trainee Youth with Disabilities

Self-administered questionnaire (one-to-one or telephone administered)

Code				Remarks
Date				
Center				
Child's Code				
Demographic Details				
	Age			
	Sex	Male <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Female <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Hometown			
	Ethnicity	Sinhalese <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Sri Lankan Tamil <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Indian Tamil <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Sri Lankan Moor <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Burgher <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Malay <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Marital status	Married <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Separated <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Divorced <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Unmarried <input type="checkbox"/>		
	No of healthy children			
	No of children with disabilities			
	Family income	Less than 10,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		10,000 - 30,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		30,000 - 50,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		More than 50,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		

	Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Highest education qualification		
	Current employment		
	Main language		
	Need/not communication aid/s		
	Do you need your child to do a job? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
	What do you expect form your child's Vocational Training?		
	Employ in a job in the same field of training	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Employ in a job in a separate field of training	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Non-Employ	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Child's vocational training	Do you think that the training offered meets the expected choice of training ?		
	Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Your level of satisfaction on the fairnss of the selection criteria for Vocational Training Program?		
	Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>		
	To what extent do you agree with the training duration?		
	Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>		
	To what extent are you satisfied with the knowledge gained by your child's training at the moment?		
	Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>		

	To what extent are you satisfied with the training/practice gained by your child at the moment? Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	To what extent are you satisfied with the practicabilty/relevance of the training? Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	To what extent are you satisfied with the child’s safety during the training period: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Your satisfaction in child’s future job security: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Satisfaction in facilities provided by the center: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Satisfaction in special benefits (sports/leadership training etc.) provided by the center: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Any other comments

Supplementary 3: Telephone-administered Questionnaire - Passed-out Youth with Disabilities











Telephone-administered Questionnaire

Code				Remarks
Date				
Center				
Training Subject/Area		Fabric Weaving Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Refrigeration and Air Conditioning <input type="checkbox"/> Radio, Television Technology and Associated Equipment Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Handicrafts (cane and coir) <input type="checkbox"/> Handicrafts (ornamental) <input type="checkbox"/> Handicrafts (Brooms and Ekel Brooms) <input type="checkbox"/> Handicrafts (Bamboo / Coconut Shells) <input type="checkbox"/> Carpentry and woodcarving <input type="checkbox"/> Computer course <input type="checkbox"/> Dressmaking <input type="checkbox"/> Tailoring <input type="checkbox"/> Operating Industrial Sewing Machines (Factory) <input type="checkbox"/> Footwear and Leather Goods Industry <input type="checkbox"/> Massage Therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Home Gardening and Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/>	Massage Therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Motor Mechanics <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanics <input type="checkbox"/> Bakery and Food Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Motor Bicycles an Three Wheeler Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Batik crafts <input type="checkbox"/> Electronics <input type="checkbox"/> Masonry <input type="checkbox"/> Cement Based Product Techniques <input type="checkbox"/> Beauty Culture <input type="checkbox"/> Food technology and packaging <input type="checkbox"/> Carpentry and woodcarving <input type="checkbox"/> Welding craft <input type="checkbox"/> Automotive Painting <input type="checkbox"/>	
Demographic Details				

	Age	.....	
	Sex	Male <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Female <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Hometown			
	Ethnicity	Sinhalese <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Sri Lankan Tamil <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Indian Tamil <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Sri Lankan Moor <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Burgher <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Malay <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Marital status	Married <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Separated <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Divorced <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Unmarried <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Children/No			
	Income	>10,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		10,000 - 30,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		30,000 - 50,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		< 50,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
Health Information	Primary disability			
		Hearing <input type="checkbox"/>	Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Hearing/Speech <input type="checkbox"/>	Mobility/Dexterity <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Communication <input type="checkbox"/>	Learning <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Visual <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other medical Issues			
	Aids Needed			

Lifestyle	Residence	Family Home <input type="checkbox"/>	Own home <input type="checkbox"/>
		Supported Home <input type="checkbox"/>	Related accommodation <input type="checkbox"/>
		Hostel <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
	Home support given by	Family <input type="checkbox"/>	Friend <input type="checkbox"/>
		Partner <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
	Assistance Required	Personal hygiene <input type="checkbox"/>	Mobility
		Dressing <input type="checkbox"/>	Cleaning/grooming <input type="checkbox"/>
		Shopping <input type="checkbox"/>	Communication <input type="checkbox"/>
	Able to travel by Independent means	Public transport <input type="checkbox"/>	Family transport <input type="checkbox"/>
		Own vehicle <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
		Walking <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Communication Skills	Verbal <input type="checkbox"/>	Braille <input type="checkbox"/>
		Sign Language <input type="checkbox"/>	If other, specify
		AAC <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Language/s	Sinhala <input type="checkbox"/>	English <input type="checkbox"/>
		Tamil <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
	Social Interests/Hobbies		
Educational History	School/s		
	Duration		
	Qualifications		

	Year		
	Coping skills:	Good (1), Fair (2), Poor (3), Need Assistance (4)	
		Reading	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Writing	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Math	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Money	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocational Training	Previous training received other than DSS	Center	
		Course	
		Course Duration	
		Status (Completed/not)	
		Qualification	Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Degree <input type="checkbox"/>
	Previous training in DSS	Center	
		Course	
		Course Duration	
	Was this the course of your choice If not, What other courses you would have preferred?		
		Areas you like most	Content <input type="checkbox"/> Practical <input type="checkbox"/> Working in a group <input type="checkbox"/> Exams <input type="checkbox"/>
		What areas need to be changed	

			Content	Duration
Satisfaction in theoretical aspect/ content of the syllabus:				
Happy		Neutral		Unhappy
Reason:.....				
Satisfaction in practical training:				
Happy		Neutral		Unhappy
Reason:.....				
Satisfaction in duration of training:				
Happy		Neutral		Unhappy
Reason:.....				
Satisfaction in training environment:				
Happy		Neutral		Unhappy
Reason:.....				
Satisfaction in facilities:				
Happy		Neutral		Unhappy

Reason:.....				
Overall Satisfaction:				
Happy 😊 Neutral 😐 Unhappy 😞				
Reason:.....				
	Proposed changes	1. 2. 3.		
	Expected plans after the Vocational Training		Employed in the same area of trained	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Employed in a different area than the field of training	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Non-Employ	<input type="checkbox"/>
Previous employment environment	Company			
	Job description			

	Duration		
	Hours per day		
	Days per week		
	Work pattern	Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Night/day shift <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Mode of transport		
	Distance prepared to travel		
	Salary		
Current employment environment	Company		
	Job description		
	Duration		
	Hours per day		
	Days per week		
	Work pattern	Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Night/day shift <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Mode of transport		
Preferred employment environment	Preferred jobs (e.g. Catering)		
	Specific job task/s		
	Hours per day		

	Days per week			
	Work pattern	Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Night/day shift <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Mode of transport			
	Distance to travel			
Salary	Current			
	Expected			

Supplementary 4: Interviewer Administered Questionnaire: Caregivers of Passed-out Youth with Disabilities

Telephone-administered Questionnaire

Code				
Date				
Center				
Child's Code				
Demographic Details				
	Age			
	Sex	Male <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Female <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Hometown			
	Marital status	Married <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Separated <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Divorced <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Unmarried <input type="checkbox"/>		
	No of healthy children			
	No of children with disabilities			
	Income	Less than 10,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		10,000 - 30,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		30,000 - 50,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		More than 50,000 <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Highest education qualification			
	Current employment			

	Main language			
	Need/not communication aid/s			
	Did you want your child to do a job? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
	What do you expect form your child’s Vocational Training? Employ in a job in the same field of training <input type="checkbox"/> Employ in a job in the separate field of training <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Employ <input type="checkbox"/>			
	Do you think your child received the most suitable training for his/her current job? <div>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></div>			
Child’s vocational training	Your level of satisfaction on the fairnss of the selection criteria for Vocational Training Program? Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>			
	To what extent are you satisfied with the training duration? Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>			
	To what extent are you satisfied with the knowledge gained by your child at the moment? Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>			
	To what extent are you satisfied with the training/practice gained by your child at the moment ? Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>			
	To what extent are you satisfied in the practicabilty/relevance of the training? Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>			
	To what extent are you satisfied in the child’s safety during the training period: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>			
	Satisfaction in child’s future job security: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>			

	Satisfaction in facilities provided by the center: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Satisfaction in special benefits (sports/leadership training etc.) provided to students by the center: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>

Supplementary 5: Online administered Questionnaire- Educators (Teachers and Principals at Vocational Training Institute)

Online-administered Questionnaire

Code				
Date				
Center				
Teaching subject/area		Fabric Weaving Technology <input type="checkbox"/>	Massage Therapy <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Refrigeration and Air Conditioning <input type="checkbox"/>	Motor Mechanics <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Radio, Television Technology and Associated Equipment <input type="checkbox"/>	Mechanics <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Handicrafts (cane and coir) <input type="checkbox"/>	Bakery and Food Technology <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Handicrafts (ornamental) <input type="checkbox"/>	Motor Bicycles an Three Wheeler Technology <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Handicrafts (Brooms and Ekel Brooms) <input type="checkbox"/>	Batik crafts <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Handicrafts (Bamboo / Coconut Shells) <input type="checkbox"/>	Electronics <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Carpentry and woodcarving <input type="checkbox"/>	Masonry <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Computer course <input type="checkbox"/>	Cement Based Product Techniques <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Dressmaking <input type="checkbox"/>	Beauty Culture <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Tailoring <input type="checkbox"/>	Food technology and packaging <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Operating Industrial Sewing Machines (Factory) <input type="checkbox"/>	Carpentry and woodcarving <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Footwear and Leather Goods Industry <input type="checkbox"/>	Welding craft <input type="checkbox"/>	

		Massage Therapy <input type="checkbox"/>	Automotive Painting <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Home Gardening and Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/>		
Demographic Details				
	Age			
	Sex	Male <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Female <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Hometown			
	Ethnicity	Sinhalese <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Sri Lankan Tamil <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Indian Tamil <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Sri Lankan Moor <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Burgher <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Malay <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Fluent language/s	Sinhala <input type="checkbox"/>	English <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Tamil <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
Health Information	Primary disability			
		Hearing <input type="checkbox"/>	Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Hearing/Speech <input type="checkbox"/>	Mobility/Dexterity <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Speech <input type="checkbox"/>	Learning <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Visual <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
Educational and relevant professional qualification	Highest educational qualification	O/L <input type="checkbox"/>	Diploma <input type="checkbox"/>	
		A/L <input type="checkbox"/>	Higher Diploma <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Certificate <input type="checkbox"/>	Degree <input type="checkbox"/>	
		NVQ <input type="checkbox"/>	Postgraduate <input type="checkbox"/>	

		Other		
Relevant training in qualification				
	Duration of training			
	Training field	Special education <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Discipline <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Vocational Training <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Rehabilitation <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
Professional experience in Vocational Training	Previous experience in VT	Name and area of the centers		
		Total no of students trained		
		Duration		
		Teaching subjects		
	Current experience in Vocational Training Institute	Duration		
		Teaching subjects		
		Total no of students trained		
	Experience in teaching students with impairments	Hearing <input type="checkbox"/>	Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Hearing/Speech <input type="checkbox"/>	Mobility/Dexterity <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Communication <input type="checkbox"/>	Learning <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Visual <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	

Perception on service provided by the VT center	<p>Fairness of the students selection criteria</p> <p>1. Age range to be between 16-35 Years of Age</p> <p>Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Reason</p> <p>2. Marital status being Single</p> <p>Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Reason</p> <p>3. Being a person with disability (a certificate from a registered medical practitioner)</p> <p>Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Reason</p>
	<p>Student safety measures taken by the center during the training period:</p> <p>Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p>Access facilities for students with disability at the Vocational Training Institute</p> <p>Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Areas of training:</p> <p>Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/></p>

	Satisfaction in teaching and learning methods being used: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Satisfaction in examination preparations: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Satisfaction in conducting examinations: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Facilities provided by the center: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Monthly wage provided during the traing period Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Already provided/not? Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfaction in special benefits (sports/leadership training etc.) provided to students by the center: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
Perception on VT programs	Training duration is adequate/not? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	Satisfaction in available subject areas. Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Any other subjects to include?

	Relevance of the subjects to the job market: Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
	If you are granted another training opportunity, what are the training areas you prefer to learn?

For peer review only

Supplementary 6: Interview & Focus Group Topic Guide for Educators (Teachers and principals)
Online FGDs

Rapport Building Prompts

- Tell us a little bit about your role and your current position at this center?
- Tell us a little bit about your views on instructing/teaching youth with disabilities?
- What expectations do you have for these youth at the end of your course?

Prompts

- Program Information
 - a. What is your view on the programs/courses they offer at this center?
 - b. What is your view on the programs/courses you teach at the center?
- Curriculum and Instruction
 - a. What teaching methods do you use with youth in your course?
 - b. What type of learning opportunities do they get in your course? (Please give examples)
 - c. How do you design your curriculum for the course you teach?
 - d. Tell us about some successes you have had in your class?
 - e. Tell us about some challenges you have had in your class?
- Improvement Suggestions
 - a. Do you have any suggestions for improvement of the administrators of this center?
 - b. What are somethings you would like to see happen differently at the center?
 - c. What type of support would you like in order to improve the courses you teach?

Supplementary 7: Interview & Focus Group Topic Guide for Caregivers of Potential Youth with Disabilities

Online FGDs and/or online semi-structured interviews

- **Journey so far**
 - a. Tell us a little bit about your child's education/ learning up to this point?
 - b. What were some of the hardships you faced?
 - c. What kind of supports did you receive so far? Give examples.
- **Daily Routines of young adult youth**
 - a. Tell me about what a regular day for him/her looks like?
 - b. What does he/she seem to enjoy doing?
 - c. Tell us a little bit about what your child is good at? Give us examples?
 - d. What are the challenges your child faces on a daily basis?
- **Expectations**
 - a. What does your child want to do in future? (Your child's perspective)
 - b. Tell us a little bit about your views on Vocational Training and if that is a path you would choose for your child? Why? Why not?
 - c. What expectations do you have for your child in future?
 - d. What steps have you taken to support your child's future? Examples.
 - e. What persons/ organizations have helped you to make these decisions? How have they helped?
 - f. What advice would you give parents who have younger children, what should they be mindful of when preparing their children for the future?

Supplementary 8: Focus Group Interview Topic Guide for Key Informants (Employers who presently have YWDs, policy makers, disability right advocates, NGOs working for YwD)

Rapport Building Prompts

- Tell us a little bit about your role and your current position?
- Tell us a little bit about your views on supporting youth with disabilities?
- What expectations do you have for these youth at the District, Provincial and National Level?
- What are the expectations you have or these youth as potential employers?
- What skills and knowledges do you think youth with disabilities need to possess in order to be successful at your workplace?

Prompts

- Awareness: Program Information
 - a. What is your view on the programs/courses they offer at this center?
 - b. Describe the relationship between this center and your role?
 - c. What type of supports does your institution provide to the center?
 - d. Are the goals and purposes of this center clear to your institution, and how does that help your institution make decisions?
- Improvement Suggestions
 - a. Do you have any suggestions for improvement of the administrators of this center?
 - b. Do you have any suggestions for improvement of the instructors of this center?
 - c. What are somethings you would like to see happen differently at the center?

Supplementary 9: Template Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Stakeholders' perspectives on provision of vocational training for youth with disabilities in Sri Lanka

To be completed by the participant

The participant should complete the whole of this sheet himself/herself.

1. Have you read the information sheet? (Please keep a copy for yourself) YES/NO

2. Have you had an opportunity to discuss this study and ask any questions? YES/NO

3. Have you had satisfactory answers to all your questions? YES/NO

4. Have you received enough information about the study? YES/NO

5. Who explained the study to you?

6. Do you understand that you have the right to not to participate in this study? YES/NO

7. Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason and without affecting your future medical care? YES/NO

8. Any personal document given, or detail provided may be examined by other research assistants. All personal details will be treated as **strictly Confidential**. Do you give your permission for these individuals to have access to your records? YES/NO

9. Have you had sufficient time to come to your decision? YES/NO

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11. Do you agree to take part in this study? YES/NO

If your participation is requested for online data collection, kindly confirm your consent through a text message (SMS).

Participant’s signature..... Date.....
Name (BLOCK CAPITALS).....

To be completed by the investigator/ person obtaining consent
I have explained the study to the above volunteer, and he/ she has indicated her willingness to take part.

Signature of investigator..... Date.....
Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)