

Against the Odds

From school dropout to budding engineer.

When Fabian Lawes came to the end of primary school at age 11, his grades were so dismal no high school would take him.

For the next three years, Lawes was out of school and nobody thought he would one day become anything successful.

Today, however, Lawes is a second-year student at the University of Technology (UTech), studying electrical technology, and is well on his way to becoming an electrical engineer. Considering his past, he is already a success.

So what made the difference? How did a man who failed at school from as early as the primary level go on to attain university status? What made the difference in Lawes' life between age 11 when he left primary school, and 21 when he entered the UTech?

In large measure, Lawes' success is as a result of the Jamaican Foundation for Lifelong Learning (JFLL), formerly the Jamaica Movement for the Advancement of Literacy (JAMAL).

"I never really had any interest in schoolwork, I didn't really see any purpose for me to have an education, but after going to JAMAL and learning the reason, that has made me change," said Lawes.

The budding electrical engineer says he attributes as much as 70 per cent of his success to JAMAL.

"I remember a teacher had told me something that motivated me there. I really got the main motivation from there. That is where I started to do well. So because of that motivation, it set the foundation for me to excel," said Lawes.

For Lawes, there were solid benefits from attending JAMAL. One key factor that set the tone for his success was the change in environment. There, he met a mixture of younger and older persons at his level of education, who were also trying to make that important step.

Today, Fabian Lawes is on a path to success. His success, though, has come as a surprise to some, especially his family who knew of his struggles in the classroom.

"I believe especially my father is surprised based on my performance right now because he was the one giving me school money and paying my school fee and I was not excelling. And so I promised him I would make him feel proud," explained Lawes. Source: Jamaica Gleaner