

Meta-report  
Final evaluation  
programme VIA Don Bosco  
2017-2021  
International Cooperation:  
Empowerment and Socio-professional  
Integration in 11 countries in Latin America and  
Africa

Final report

MAY 22, 2022

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I also want to thank the evaluation committee, set up by VIA Don Bosco in Belgium to coordinate and follow up this evaluation and to facilitate and ensure that all necessary information was made accessible. Finally, I would like to thank VIA Don Bosco for the opportunity to conduct this evaluation, which gave us the possibility to gain more insight into how TVET programmes can create opportunities to vulnerable youth living in complex contexts and with no or few alternatives to learn a profession and to find a (decent) job. There is no doubt VIA Don Bosco has made and will continue to make an important contribution to the professionalization of TVET in function of empowering youth in the 11 countries where VIA Don Bosco has executed this programme during the last five (and previous) years.

Nancy Jaspers, Humanya.  
Team leader

## ABBREVIATIONS

DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DB	Don Bosco
GCE	Global Citizenship Education
FMA	Daughters of Mary Help of Christians
I	Indicator
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IGA	Income Generating Activities
JPO	Job Placement Office
JSF	Joint Strategic Framework
MHC	Management Health Check
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDO	Planning and Development Office
PO	Promoting organization(s)
PRG	VIA Don Bosco Programme 2017-2021
R	Result
SDB	Salesiani di Don Bosco
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SM	Sensemaker
SO	Specific Objective
SP	Socio-professional
ToC	Theory of Change

TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VIA DB	VIA Don Bosco
VTC	Vocational Training Centre

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

This meta report analyzes the results of the realization of the 2017-2021 programme of VIA Don Bosco in 11 countries in Latin America and Africa. To this end, six country evaluation reports, based on visits to Haiti, Bolivia, El Salvador, Madagascar, Benin, and Tanzania (denominated as ‘case countries’ in this meta report) were analyzed in detail. The other five countries (Cameroon, Mali, RD Congo, Ecuador, and Peru – the non-case countries) were not visited since they had already been part of a midterm evaluation in 2019. Relevant information about these countries was collected and analysed through a desk study (including an online questionnaire and several interviews with the PDO and programme officers of these countries in Belgium) and included in this meta-report.

VIA Don Bosco is an accredited Belgian NGO, part of the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB) network and active in the education sector, particularly technical and vocational education.

The 11 VIA Don Bosco country programmes are organized around the same outcome or specific objective, described with relatively similar result areas for each partner country:

**Specific objective:** “Vulnerable girls and boys (aged 15-25 and 15-29 for some countries) are inserted professionally and socially into society thanks to high-quality skills development services delivered by partner organizations (and to contribute to local sustainable development, Cameroon)”.

Predetermined results of the programme were formulated as follows

- **R1:** The quality of education and the learning process has been improved.
- **R2:** The management capacities of all partner organizations have been reinforced.
- **R3:** The accompaniment towards decent work and entrepreneurship has improved.
- For African partner countries only - **R4** on Cross-cutting topics: environment, sustainable development, education for global citizenship, gender, peace, or school enterprise.

In each partner country, the **main and direct operational partners** are the Salesian Planning and Development Offices (PDO), while the Technical and Vocational Training Centres (TVTCs) and the Job Placement Offices (JPO) are the partners of the PB and thus indirect partners of VIA Don Bosco.

The PB coordinate at the national level to support the implementation of the programme. They act as a bridge between the international cooperation department of VIA Don Bosco in Belgium and the training centers (and JPO). The **primary target group** of the programme are the direct and indirect partners of VIA Don Bosco, i.e., the training centers of Don Bosco. The **final beneficiaries** of the programme are the students of the training centers. They are vulnerable young people aged 15 to 29 living in complex situations.

The objective of this final evaluation was to better understand the concept of ‘empowerment’ and socio-professional integration, as well as the mechanisms put in place to successfully support young people, based on the following key evaluation questions:

- To what extent have young people, involved in the VIA DB 2017-2021 programme been strengthened/empowered through comprehensive training (and skills development)?
- To what extent does youth empowerment lead to social and professional integration?

The evaluation made use of the OECD DAC criteria to answer the evaluation questions and meet the evaluation objectives. Cross-cutting themes were gender, environment, and digitalization.

### Used methodology and evaluation process

The inception phase ended in May with a methodological note, including a refined evaluation framework and a description of the next steps. Data collection took place through an online questionnaire, sent to the partners in all countries (199 respondents), 6 country visits, and a desk study of the other 5 countries. During the country visits, interviews were conducted with (a selection of) partners and focus groups and in-depth interviews with students/graduates to learn how they perceive empowerment and to what extent the VTC/JPO has supported them in getting empowered and finding a (decent) job. In addition, interviews were held with external actors such as governmental bodies and employers collaborating with the training centers.

Before the submission of the draft country reports and the meta report, an online sense-making workshop was held between the international consultants of Humanya and VIA Don Bosco staff in Belgium, to add value, contextualize and learn from the collated findings and tentative overall conclusions, based on the main findings coming out of all country analyses. By using different data collection methods (desk study, online questionnaire, country visits and sensemaking workshop), the findings were triangulated before coming to conclusions and recommendations in the country and meta report. The evaluation ended with an overall online restitution meeting on 7/3/2022, on which all partners were invited in three subsequent sessions (according to language).

### Main conclusions (C) and lessons learnt

The conclusions below were formulated across all countries. Depending on the situation in each country and partner level, some conclusions may be of greater or lesser relevance for some countries/partners.

#### Relevance

**In general, the Theory of Change and the 2017-2021 programme of VIA Don Bosco is relevant and valid (C1).** During programme implementation, the VTC partners have offered TVET training and courses to vulnerable youth, combined with psycho-pedagogical, social support and guidance towards the labour market. It is this integrative approach, embedded within the Salesian vision of human development, that forms a unique formula and brings about opportunities, with the support of the 2017-2021 programme of VIA Don Bosco, to better integrate youth within society and the labour market.

The theory of change shows that empowerment leads to social and professional integration. In practice, the evaluators have noticed that social and professional integration are also empowering. This means that the theory of change is more like a spiral where empowerment and socio-professional integration interact with one another, in an iterative way.

Overall, the programme at national level has shown to be in line with country policies of national and/or regional/local governments. Furthermore, the transversal themes of gender, environment and digitalization were included within all country programmes. Some countries have placed additional emphasis on themes such as peace, education for sustainable development and active citizenship.

Certain challenges remain e.g. to cope with changes in the labour market. Technological and digital changes continuously occur and the VTC partners are often not always able to respond in time by updating skills and invest in actualized equipment and machines. Additionally, some of the underlying assumptions underbuilding the theory of change are not always true in some countries.

After graduation, in most cases no further support is provided (unless sporadic). The indicator on socio-professional integration illustrates how many graduates have found a job within a certain time after graduation, but not how many are able to keep that job. This is an important aspect of socio-professional integration that is not measured.

**While the theory of change is relevant, the translation of the theory of change into the logical framework in the programme seems too ambitious, particularly the formulation of socio-professional integration at outcome level (C2).** Socio-professional integration of young people is rather a change at impact level, while the programme mainly responds to the needs of the training centers that should contribute to this impact level, through the level of empowerment. The support of the programme to the level of the final beneficiaries is therefore quite indirect.

### Effectiveness

**At the end of 2021, the majority of the four results of the 2017-2020 have been achieved or good progress has been made, although some challenges remain (C3).** The four results are all relevant, although their contribution to the specific objective could not be evidenced to the same extent for all results. Quality of education (R1) scored best, followed by management capacities (R2) and accompaniment by the JPO (R3). The result on transversal topics (R4) scored less. Progress on gender integration has been made but with varying results. In most of the countries, environment was included in one way or another in the functioning of the VTC, but not well embedded yet in an institutional way neither in courses nor job services support. Digitalization has been accelerated by the COVID pandemic

The difference between relevance and real contribution to the programme's specific objective lies in the fact that activities (i) were not always translated into indicators demonstrating the real progress made by partners, (ii) did not give the expected results because of multiple factors or (iii) were less relevant for the result and therefore did not contribute (much) to the results and specific objective.

**Partners in all countries have made progress in empowering the students between 2017 and end of 2021 (C4)** (assuming training centers have had an impact on the extent to which the students feel empowered). Empowerment is not perceived in the same way in all countries, but overall, it is related to feeling reinforced thanks to the strengthening of self-confidence, interactional behaviour and interpersonal competencies. Students perceive financial independence also as an element of empowerment. **The predetermined target on empowerment has been achieved with support of the programme, but dropped significantly in 2020, most probably due to covid (C5).** Luckily, in many countries the situation improved in 2021.

**Measuring empowerment based on one single question makes it difficult to understand the underlying 'story' of empowerment (C6).** Based on the method of measurement developed by VIA Don Bosco, it was not possible to determine to which extent the training centers have had an influence on "empowering" students since this was not explicitly monitored except for Bolivia and Madagascar where Sensemaker was used.



**Progress has been made in achieving professional integration, with results strongly fluctuating among the training centers (C7).** Progress was more pronounced among male than among female students. In most of these countries where the final target was not achieved, it was mainly because the target for female students was not achieved. Compared to the initial situation in 2017, 9 out of 10 countries has made progress on this indicator. Formal salaried jobs are increasingly hard to find, and investments have been made in the training centers to strengthen also entrepreneurial skills and to prepare students for setting up their own business. Between 2017 and 2021 the percentage of students having found a decent job has decreased, compared to the initial situation (2017). Notwithstanding more students have become empowered and more (especially male) students have found a paid job, fewer students find a decent job today than before.

### Efficiency

Overall, **cooperation among partners and with VIA Don Bosco has been functioning well and roles were clear (C8)**, although expectations from the role of the planning bureaus differed between VTC partners. The national JPO supported the local JPO and coordinated the JPO network. Local JPO have played a multidisciplinary role which was sometimes difficult seen the limited resources.

**Notwithstanding the many monitoring tools, progress on the ground was not always made sufficiently visible through these tools.** As already mentioned in previous evaluations, internal learning (among and between partners and with VIA DB) still happened too little, based on the monitoring results and in function of the needs of the partners (C9). Consequently, partners saw little added value in these instruments to themselves (next to reporting). Professional integration was monitored annually by the JPO. Since their capacities were limited during 2017-2021, it can be questioned if this administrative follow up by the JPO was justified if this came at a cost namely less time for guiding young people towards a job.

Overall, **execution of the budget was realized as planned.** Some observations were made at the level of the case countries to feed future reflections on how to use the budget more cost-effectively (C10).

### Sustainability

**Many partners have made progress on sustainability, both institutionally and programmatically. However, the level of sustainability substantially varies among partners (C11).** Through the indicator financial autonomy of partners (not included by all partners as an indicator and not calculated the same way by all partners who used this indicator) it was possible to get an indication of the financial sustainability of partners. This fluctuated between countries and between partners within a country. Many partners have been working on IGA with fluctuating results.

### Overall conclusions

Based on the findings and conclusions above, it can be concluded that VIA Don Bosco has made a difference with the 2017-2021 programme in terms of youth empowerment and socio-professional integration in the countries where VIA Don Bosco has been active during this period. VIA Don Bosco has realized great efforts to follow up on the progress of the programme and to support and strengthen its direct partners where possible. This was not an easy task given that VIA Don Bosco itself did not have any staff in the field (except for Cameroon). The many monitoring tools have allowed to get a detailed (but not always accurate and precise) picture of the field and to engage in dialogue with partners on that basis.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an overwhelming impact on programme results (in some countries more than in others). During the crisis period, VIA Don Bosco has made many efforts to stay (online) in touch with partners and to provide additional support to the final target group and their family where necessary. The consequences of the pandemic remain significant up to today: a decline in financial sustainability of partners (fluctuating results), training centers closed for a long time (some for over a year) and fewer graduates than expected finding a (decent) job. Partners in Peru and Ecuador were unable to implement their exit plan as originally planned.

Notwithstanding setbacks and the many challenges that the partners and VIA Don Bosco have encountered and will still face in the future, it remains very relevant to offer vulnerable young people an alternative in terms of technical and vocational education. The programme does not guarantee employment, but it does offer these young people opportunities to integrate in society and to find a (decent) place in the labour market.

What can be learnt from the programme, is that **“less is more”**. What is being monitored on paper doesn't always adequately show what is happening in the field. Less complex monitoring that measures more of what matters and more clearly demonstrates reality is therefore an important lesson. Secondly, across all country programmes, factors, critical to the success of empowerment and socio-professional integration could be identified. These factors relate to (i) the used approach, (ii) the contributing actors, (iii) the students at the VTC and (iv) the context.

**Main recommendations** can be summarized as follows:

- (i) Check the assumptions of the theory of change annually at country and even partner level and adjust the programme strategy accordingly when needed
- (ii) Move the measurement of professional integration to the impact level, or reformulate the indicator on socio-professional integration
- (iii) Rethink the methodology on how to measure empowerment
- (iv) Formulate results and indicators in such a way that their contribution to the specific objective cannot be questioned
- (v) Develop a more differentiated gender strategy
- (vi) Adjust the TVET programmes and the surroundings of the VTC to prepare them better on environmental and climate change challenges
- (vii) Continue the reinforcement of digital skills with youth and strengthen investment in digitization of data management
- (viii) Continue to strengthen the role and capacities of the local JPO
- (ix) Bring the workplace as close as possible to the learning environment of the VTC and vice versa
- (x) Ensure that support at partner level takes place according to their needs and in a differentiated and tailor-made way to the extent possible
- (xi) Start using the M&E system more as a learning-oriented system
- (xii) Optimize further the M&E system, methods, and instruments
- (xiii) Execute the budget as cost-efficient as possible
- (xiv) Continue efforts to increase sustainability at institutional and programmatic level. Although partners made progress to increase their sustainability, it is recommended to continue efforts in this area.

# 1 Introduction

VIA Don Bosco is an accredited Belgian NGO, part of the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB) network and active in the education sector, particularly technical and vocational education. Within the framework of its current five-year programme (2017-2021) subsidized by the Directorate General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD), VIA Don Bosco awarded Humanya, a Belgian consultancy firm specialized in evaluation of development programmes and facilitation of strategic and learning processes, to conduct the final evaluation of 11 (of 12) country outcomes of this programme. The evaluation of the country programme (or 12<sup>th</sup> outcome) in Belgium is not included here; this programme was evaluated by C-Lever.

This meta report analyzes the results of the realization of the 2017-2021 programme of VIA Don Bosco in 11 countries in Latin America and Africa. To this end, six evaluation reports, based on visits to Haiti, Bolivia, El Salvador, Madagascar, Benin, and Tanzania (denominated as ‘case countries’ in this meta report) were analyzed in detail. The other five countries (Cameroon, Mali, RD Congo, Ecuador, and Peru – the non-case countries) were not visited since they had already been part of a midterm evaluation in 2019. Relevant information about these countries was collected and analysed through a desk study and included in this meta-report.

## 1.1 Main characteristics of the programme

The 11 VIA Don Bosco country programmes are organized around the same specific objective described with relatively similar result areas for each partner country:

**Specific objective:** “Vulnerable girls and boys (aged 15-25 and 15-29 for Peru) are inserted professionally and socially into society thanks to high-quality skills development services delivered by partner organizations (and to contribute to local sustainable development, Cameroon)”.

Predetermined results of the programme<sup>1</sup>:

- **R1:** The quality of education and the learning process has been improved.
- **R2:** The management capacities of all partner organizations have been reinforced.
- **R3:** The accompaniment towards decent work and entrepreneurship has improved.
- For African partner countries only - **R4** on Cross-cutting topics: environment, sustainable development, education for global citizenship, gender, peace, or school enterprise.

In each partner country, the **main and direct operational partners** are the Salesian Planning and Development Offices (PDO), while the Technical and Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) and the Job Placement Offices (JPO)<sup>2</sup> are the partners of the PDO and thus **indirect partners** of VIA Don Bosco.

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<sup>1</sup> Different for Cameroon

<sup>2</sup> Not to be confused with an employment agency or job interim office

The PDO coordinate at the national level to support the implementation of the programme. They act as a bridge between the international cooperation department of VIA Don Bosco in Belgium and the training centers (and JPO).

The **primary target group** of the programme are the direct and indirect partners of VIA Don Bosco, i.e., the training centers of Don Bosco.<sup>3</sup>

The **final beneficiaries** of the programme are the students of the training centers. They are disadvantaged young people aged 15 to 29, having a particularly difficult family situation and/or live on the street and who are socially excluded due to a variety of factors (poverty, illness, social exclusion, violence, etc.). These negative factors complicate their learning process, which is why many of these young people leave the formal education system over the years and end up falling considerably behind in their schooling.

## 1.2 Objectives and scope of the evaluation

In general, this final evaluation needs to respond to a requirement (by Belgian law) for accountability in the light of subsidies received by the DGD. Secondly, the evaluation aims at measuring the realization of the 11 specific objectives (= outcomes in 11 countries) and the achievement of the programme results. Thirdly, this evaluation is meant to demonstrate perspectives for improvement, particularly in practices and monitoring of social integration and citizenship of young people (M&E tools).

More specifically, the objective of this final evaluation was to better understand the concept of 'empowerment' and socio-professional integration, as well as the mechanisms put in place to successfully support young people, based on the following key evaluation questions:

- To what extent have young people, involved in the VIA DB 2017-2021 programme been strengthened/empowered through comprehensive training (and skills development)?
- To what extent does youth empowerment lead to social and professional integration?

The evaluation made use of the OECD DAC criteria to answer the evaluation questions and meet the evaluation objectives, with a focus on sustainability and effectiveness. Cross-cutting themes were gender, environment, and digitalization.

Next to the key evaluation questions, this meta-report aims answering the following learning questions:

What can – overall – be learnt out of the country evaluations of the case countries (and to the extent possible also the non-case countries) regarding

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<sup>3</sup> For the programme in Cameroon, VIA Don Bosco works with other partners. PROCEFFA is the platform of organizations promoting CEFFA (Centres Educatifs Familiaux de Formation par Alternance) in Cameroon and is the direct operational partner in VIA DB's PRG. The indirect operational partners are 11 local promoter organizations, which are part of Cameroonian civil society, and which work with 23 CEFFAs. The CEFFAs enable young people in rural areas to realize a life project, which is supported by the whole local society. They do not yet have an employment office as such. Nevertheless, the objectives remain the same (socio-professional integration of young people). PROCEFFA plays the role of a link between VIA DB and the training centers, which can be compared to the role played by the PDOs.

- the relevance of the programme (in relation to the context)
- the results obtained (including cross-cutting themes)
- main (f)actors influencing the results
- the achieved specific objectives or so-called country outcomes, regarding empowerment/socio-professional integration of involved young people
- the concept of empowerment and socio-professional integration
- the role and contribution of VIA Don Bosco, its partners, and indirect partners in the realization of the country outcomes (through the results)
- the degree to which it is felt that the different results have contributed to the achievement of the SO/impact
- the factors critical to the success of achieving the programme
- the Theory of Change in relation to the logical framework of the programme (including hypotheses)

### 1.3 Used methodology and evaluation process

#### Inception phase

This phase started in January 2021 with a kick-off meeting between the Humanya international consultants and the VIA Don Bosco Evaluation Steering Committee, followed by exploratory interviews with key staff from VIA Don Bosco - ICOPI and WBE team- in Belgium during the months of May and June. These interviews allowed the consultants to get a better understanding of the programme, its priorities, its strengths/ weaknesses, its challenges and to get a first appreciation of the DAC evaluation criteria related to the programme by the different team members. In the same period the consultants carried out a desk study.

Based on a first analysis of collected documents and interviews, the international consultants elaborated a methodological note, including a refined evaluation framework, a step-by-step overview of the evaluation process, a description of the main methodological tools to be used, a proposed itinerary for the countries to visit and a plan B in case these countries could not be visited by the international consultants because of the Covid situation, and a first overview of people to be interviewed in the countries. This note was approved by the VIA Don Bosco Steering Committee on 19 July 2021.

#### Phase 2: Data Collection and Analysis

During the **data collection** phase, an **online questionnaire** was elaborated and sent in the beginning of August to all direct and indirect partners <sup>4</sup>of VIA Don Bosco in the 11 countries (deadline end of September 2021). This questionnaire focused on the achievement of the outcome of the programme: empowerment and socio-professional integration of the targeted young people, and the (f)actors influencing the outcome. The questionnaire was answered by 199 respondents. The results of the questionnaire were used to triangulate the information collected during the evaluation visits in the case countries and as a source of information for the non-case country evaluations.

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<sup>4</sup> The name 'partners' in this report refers to both indirect and direct partners. Were different this is specified.

During the visits on the spot to the direct and (a selection of) the indirect partners in the case countries, following methods were used for data collection: **semi-structured (group) interviews** with staff from the planning bureaus, with the management/DB representatives of the training centers, with training instructors, psychosocial and pedagogical staff and the job placement officers. **Focus group discussions** and **in-depth interviews** were organized with young people<sup>5</sup> participating or graduated in one or more short or longer term vocational or technical trainings. To the extent possible, visits were organized to employers collaborating with the training centers, and interviews held with external stakeholders such as governmental bodies and employers collaborating with the training centers. The country visits ended with a restitution meeting, except for Haiti due to the problematic safety situation which made group meetings difficult or even impossible. In this country, the planned data collection methods were mainly limited to (online) interviews and telephone calls by the national consultant.

For the **non-case countries**, a desk study of the available documents and an online interview with the planning bureaus - direct partner of VIA Don Bosco- were conducted. As mentioned above, the online survey was also sent to all direct and indirect partners of VIA Don Bosco in the non-case countries.

**Analysis of the collected information** was done by using comparative tables in Excel, simple statistics and contribution analysis of factors and actors, contributing to the country outcome of the programme. By using different data collection methods (desk study, online questionnaire, and country visits), the findings were triangulated before coming to conclusions and recommendations.

Before the submission of the draft country reports and the meta report, an **online sense-making workshop** was held between the international consultants of Humanya and VIA Don Bosco staff in Belgium, to add value, contextualize and learn from the collated findings and tentative overall conclusions, based on the main findings coming out of all country analyses. This workshop was held on 11 January 2022. A representative of the consultancy bureau C-Lever, carrying out the evaluation of VIA DB's GCE programme in Belgium, also attended the workshop.

### **Phase 3: Report writing**

6 country reports were written of the case country evaluations and submitted to VIA Don Bosco, next to 5 short notes of the non-case countries with information used for the meta-report. These notes and country reports were submitted to VIA Don Bosco.

On 7 March 2022, the Humanya consultants held an online restitution on the main findings (three different meetings spread over the day: one restitution with French speaking partners, another meeting with the English-speaking partner in Tanzania, and one meeting with the Spanish speaking (ex-) partners in Latin America), to present the main conclusions and discuss the recommendations of the programme evaluations carried out in all 11 countries where VIA Don Bosco implements its programme. Based on feedback given to the country and meta report, the reports could be finalized in April 2022.

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<sup>5</sup> The name 'young people' in this report refers to students and/or graduates of the training centers with a male, female, or any other gender identity. The VIA Don Bosco monitoring information makes only distinction between male and female.

## 1.4 Limitations encountered during the evaluation

Main limitations encountered during the evaluation were the following:

- Covid 19 restrictions in two case countries (Madagascar, Bolivia) resulted in national consultants doing the data collection in the field on their own,
- The security situation combined with an earthquake in Haiti made it impossible to carry out the planned methodologies and field visits to training centers. The methodologies were adjusted (more online and via telephone),
- Several national consultants fell ill in December (Madagascar and Bolivia) and a natural disaster struck part of Madagascar in January (where the national consultant lives), challenging the deadlines for submitting the draft country reports of Bolivia and Madagascar,
- Illness (COVID) of the consultant in Madagascar making it challenging to get the final report on time,
- (Too) short time of period to collect all desired information during the case country visits,
- In Tanzania, some planned interviews with external actors were cancelled for no apparent reason,
- Narrative monitoring information within countries is usually not consolidated at country level on an annual basis, challenging the time plan, foreseen for the desk study. Also, the indicator information (Resumoni) was not always consolidated at country level on an annual basis.

To deal with the first two situations in both countries, a methodological note was drafted in three languages (French, English, Spanish) detailing the questionnaires used, the methodology for organizing focus groups and impact interviews with students. Templates were developed to record and analyze the data. For all countries (case and non-case countries) the same structure was used for reporting, with an explanation of which information needed to be included where in the report. In addition, several follow-up meetings with these three consultants helped steering the analysis and reporting of the collected information in the right direction. The (internal) deadline for submitting the reports of Bolivia and Madagascar was extended to the first week of February (challenging a bit the meta report but the deadline for the draft meta report could be maintained).

Regarding the time for data collection: one week per case country was foreseen on the spot, next to the information collected by the online questionnaire and desk study. This was sufficient to interview the main actors, but not enough to include interviews with family and social environment of some of the students. In some cases where only the national consultant had to do the data collection, priority was given to interview students at the expense of visits to companies. In any case, all sources of information together have provided sufficient information for a solid analysis and building of conclusions and recommendations.

Finally, the evaluation in Bolivia had to start later than originally planned, due to a national strike that particularly affected the mobility of the consultant and programme partners involved. The evaluation could be moved to a later date that same month, thanks to the flexibility of all participating actors.

## 1.5 How to read this report

The report is structured as follows. After the introduction, main findings across all countries are analyzed in Chapter 2, structured around the various evaluation criteria. Based on this, lessons learned (Chapter 3) and conclusions (Chapter 4) were drawn. These served as a basis for formulating recommendations, included in the final Chapter 5. In annex, the questions from the online survey and a summary of the main findings for the non-case countries have been included (based on the desk study and interviews with the planning offices of these countries and VIA Don Bosco programme staff).



## 2 Main findings and analysis

In this chapter, main findings were brought together around the DAC evaluation criteria and questions in the evaluation framework. The extent to which each criterion was achieved has been scored by the international evaluators, based on the analysis of findings related to that criterion:

Excellent	Evaluation questions under the evaluation criterion can be answered in a very satisfactory way. Outstanding results. No or very few remarks to make.
Good	Evaluation questions under the evaluation criterion can be answered in a satisfactory way. Results were achieved to a great extent or in good progress. Some challenges remain.
Sufficient	Some questions remain unanswered or cannot be answered satisfactorily Some progress has been made but challenges remain.
Poor	Most of the evaluation questions cannot be answered satisfactorily Little progress has been made; many challenges remain.

The scores are an average score and given across all countries. This means that at country level, a score could be higher or lower.

### 2.1 Relevance

To assess the relevance of VIA Don Bosco's programme, following aspects were looked at:

- the extent to which the programme responds to the needs of young people.
- the extent to which the programme is coherent with or complementary to other programmes and strategies that also have the same objectives as the VIA Don Bosco programme?

Following overall score was given:

	Good		
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The analysis below explains this score.

#### 2.1.1 Needs of young people

##### Case and non-case countries (all 11 countries)

According to VIA Don Bosco<sup>6</sup>, *"the final beneficiaries of our South operation are disadvantaged populations, including the most vulnerable and excluded youth and young adults of society. Disadvantage is a concept whose interpretation varies in time and space. The specific group of final beneficiaries is identified within each country and then within each training Center: depending on the*

<sup>6</sup> Erkenningsdossier VIA Don Bosco 2017-2026

*context and accumulated expertise, the focus may vary. (For example: youth living in street situations, youth prey to gang related violence, teenage mothers, youth from an ethnic minority, etc.). VIA Don Bosco does not have strict age limits, but most of our final beneficiaries have ages ranging between 15 and 25 years".*

In the case countries the training centers offer training both to young people who want to increase their chances on the labour market, but who are not necessarily disadvantaged (e.g. young people in El Salvador with a technical diploma but no practical experience) or who do not necessarily want to be trained for a job (e.g. in Benin where > 50% of the young people in the training centers follow a training to be able to participate in the state exam so they can continue studying afterwards). Also, sometimes training is offered that is not age-related, but is aimed at increasing professional technical competencies within companies (e.g., in El Salvador). In all the case countries, however, at least part of the training offered was aimed at disadvantaged young people. In Madagascar it is often the parents though who decide which training their children can attend (which is not necessarily always what the student is most interested in).

The country midterm evaluation reports<sup>7</sup>, the meta report of the mid-term evaluation of the VIA DB programme and other available documents, carried out in the **non-case countries**, indicate that also in these countries, the training centers respond to the needs of disadvantaged youth.

Interviews with students and graduates in the 6 countries visited show that they generally feel that the VTC and JPO respond to their needs (see next example, Bolivia).

*During the interviews and focus groups with students in Bolivia, it was noted that the curricular structure of the VTC there responds to the needs and expectations of young people in their training at the Basic Technician (800 hours), Assistant Technician (1200 hours) and Middle Technician (2000 hours) levels. Students interviewed appreciate the skills acquired and consider that it helps their professional and social integration into society, especially with the quality training they receive and the confidence and self-esteem they develop; an aspect that is in line with the Theory of Change (ToC) of the programme.*

*Training is understood by partners and interviewed youth as a theoretical-practical process aimed at broadening and strengthening the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes of young people to be inserted or perform better in the labour market. The relevance of these areas is also related to the demand of students and the labour market, for instance information technology and digitalization are especially relevant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Sewing and industrial and traditional clothing is part of various interests, especially of female students of the VTC, in some cases to work independently from their homes, which enables them to make their work schedules compatible with household chores and childcare; in others to train to work in garment industries in the country as well as in neighboring countries (Brazil and Argentina), including the idea of creating their own business in partnership with other garment makers.*

*In the cosmetologist training, where the participation of women is also high, there is the opportunity to set up their own business, such as being part of a hairdresser's or "beauty salon". It is an area that*

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<sup>7</sup> Carried out by Focus Up

*has started to boom after the lockdown period of the COVID pandemic, as well as gastronomy, which is in high demand by young people.*

*As for the technical branches, there is a high interest of young people to specialize more or to join entities in charge of electrical services (in the case of Empresa de Luz y Fuerza -Elfec in Colpapihua) or electronics (digital, analog, integrated circuits, microelectronics, etc.), automotive mechanics (which has a growing market of automobiles -especially those called "chutos" in the provinces) and industrial (as in the case of VTC Kami) or develop their own service enterprises in the different areas of interest (electronics, etc.). The other disciplines, from accounting to English, are specialties defined in each VTC according to their demand in the local context. (Source: final evaluation, country report Bolivia (February 2022)).*

Being strengthened in technical, vocational, and soft skills does not guarantee yet that graduates will find a job. The installation of a national employment office with local offices integrated in the training centers has started to reduce the gap between education and finding a job. However, not all young people who have turned to the VTC (between 2017-2021) with the desire to find a job has found a job (see further under effectiveness), but the programme as it has been designed has at least created opportunities to increase chances of success on the labour market.

In some cases, training courses and curricula are relevant, but not actualized on the needs of the labour market and therefore not adequately meeting the needs of young people and enterprises. This can be because of outdated material and/or the dependency on national governments curricula requirements and reforms holding back the VTC.

Although training of the instructors is foreseen in the 2017-2021 programme's budget, the evaluation at country level revealed that it is obviously not always tailored enough; there is still a need for more technical training to keep up with the labour market, or for more soft skills training to provide students with the necessary pedagogical support. Some countries found strategies (e.g., in Benin, Haiti, the 'mesas técnicas' in El Salvador) to learn regularly what enterprises need so to adjust courses in the VTC, to develop specific technical modules and train their instructors.

The training centers cannot guarantee that their vocational training will result in a job, but they offer at least a chance to these youngsters to strengthen themselves in different ways and thereby increase their opportunities to get a job on the labour market. Often, these young people do not find other opportunities to develop themselves and learn a profession. The installation of national and local employment offices further improves their chances to find a job. In this sense the training centers respond to the needs of disadvantaged young people.

The theory of change is also constructed in this sense. Through education on technical, social, and soft skills, young people are empowered. This helps them to find their way more easily in society (social integration) and to find a job (professional integration).

The evaluation revealed that the concepts of empowerment, social and professional integration are differently interpreted in the countries where VIA Don Bosco works, resulting in different accents in the approach towards young people. The theory of change is relevant in principle, but with following observations:

- The underlying assumptions, that substantiate the theory of change, could not always be confirmed in some countries. This undermines the realization of the objectives because a theory of change only works when the underlying assumptions are true. When assumptions are not valid, then the programme strategy should be adjusted. This was also recommended in the midterm evaluation report (a yearly update of the TOC and programme risks)<sup>8</sup>. This was not always the case, based on what could be observed during the end evaluation.
- The theory of change assumes that empowerment leads to social and professional integration. In practice, it was noticed that social and professional integration is also empowering, i.e., the application of the theory of change is iterative helping to bring young people to the next level. So, in practice, the theory of change is more like a spiral where empowerment and socio-professional integration interact with one another.
- After training, in most cases no further support is provided (unless sporadic). VIA Don Bosco and their partners hope that with their support, the young people will become sufficiently empowered to be able to find their way in society. VIA Don Bosco does know, from some of the graduated youngsters, how many have found a (decent) job within a certain time after graduation, but not how many are able to keep that job. That can be an important aspect of socio-professional integration as well because it can give an indication of whether someone is persistent, or dedicated to the job, or has found a job that suits him/her. However, these are not guarantees; it is possible that someone stays in a job with poor labour conditions, for example, because there are no other alternatives. This is not monitored by the programme though.

### 2.1.2 Coherence and complementarity

#### Case countries (Tanzania, Benin, Madagascar, Haiti, Bolivia, El Salvador)

One of the criteria used by VIA Don Bosco within its country strategy is that there should be **coherence between the priorities of the partners and those of VIA Don Bosco**. One of the things that is considered important here is the willingness of partners to align with the policies pursued by national and local governments, usually the Ministry of Education and/or the Ministry of Labour. This could effectively be verified during the evaluation in all visited countries.

In Haiti, Tanzania, and Benin for example, it was indicated that one of the strengths of the programme is that it **builds on the current intervention strategy of local partners which is itself aligned with the strategic orientations of the government in terms of vocational training**. In El Salvador, the training programme of the VTC is developed in close cooperation with the semi-public institution INSAFORP, working with national funding but with administrative and juridic autonomy. In Madagascar, the VTC have contributed themselves to the elaboration of the National Policy on Employment, Technical and

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<sup>8</sup> The management response of the midterm evaluation revealed that this should be a task for the PDO in cooperation with the other partners (including VIA Don Bosco). It was decided not to reformulate drastically the TOC anymore within the 2017-2021 programme period (except for the Cameroon TOC which was entirely revised and updated).

Vocational Training (2015-2020), this national policy is adopted by all VTC. Next to alignment with national priorities, in some countries e.g., in Bolivia, alignment with priorities of local authorities (the '*Direcciones Distritales*') was also mentioned. In addition, this general alignment of the programme with the objectives of the local partners allows it to benefit from the synergies that the partners have already established with other actors.

The second strength is that the **programme of VIA DB often supports VTC in integrating these orientations or modernizations which are also emphasized (but not always financed) by the government** e.g., usually through the continuous training of trainers, the introduction of entrepreneurship, support through investment in equipment such as digital technology.

A third strength mentioned in the reports of the case countries is that the **vocational training programmes follow an 'integrated approach'**, which means that they combine technical and soft skills, they are competency based, and closely related to the Salesian educational vision and philosophy. The spiritual approach is considered as a strength by both instructors as students, even if they have another religious background or vision. This could be verified in all case-countries.

Some countries also mentioned the **alignment of the programme with the Belgian Joint Strategic Framework and with some of the SDGs** such as SDG 4 (gender inclusion), SDG 8 (decent work) and SDG 17 (partnership building), although due to the COVID pandemic not all activities as planned could be realized.

Finally, some case country reports give **country specific examples of complementarity** with the VIA DB programme e.g., in Madagascar the programme works in close collaboration with the *Cellule d'orientation et d'insertion* through the JPO (with support from UNESCO). Both PDO are member of and actively participate in the Platform for the Development of Technical Skills; this platform connects all the actors of the technical and vocational education sector. Another example shows that in Tanzania, the national government actively participates in the JPO-initiated 'Employers' Forum' while the local government (through Social Welfare and the Community Development Department) is involved in the identification of 'marginalized' youth. In Haiti, other similar initiatives with (the possibility of) interlinkages with the VIA DB programme and supporting vocational training and job placement exist e.g., with support of APEFE (PACERD programme), the Swiss embassy (SQUAT programme), or interventions that support the VTC in a complementary way (e.g., AECID and ACTEC).

**Coherence at the local level was sometimes difficult to achieve** e.g., in Bolivia where some authorities are strongly centralized (e.g., the Ministry of Education) or where another programme supporting job creation applies criteria that are difficult to achieve by informal, vulnerable entrepreneurs the VTC are working with (e.g., asking entrepreneurs to register themselves formally).

Overall, the sub criterium "coherence" was given a score **good to excellent**, based on the explanation above and achieved collaborations with other programmes and actors (therefore 'excellent'), but with existing possibilities and opportunities to strengthen this even further (therefore 'good').

## Non-case countries (Mali, RD Congo, Cameroon, Ecuador, Peru)

Concerning the non-case countries, performance scores (used to report to the donor DGD) vary between A (Cameroon and RD Congo), B (Peru, Mali) and C (Ecuador). Based on this and substantiated with information from narrative progress reports of partners, coherence/complementarity with other actors can be considered as good. Coherence and cooperation with non-Belgian actors were not further explored for the non-case countries.

### 2.1.3 Inclusion of cross-cutting themes in the design of the programme

The cross-cutting themes of gender and environment are included in the programmes of all partner countries, more explicitly in some than in others. In some partner countries such as Tanzania, Benin, Mali and RD Congo, there exists a result 4 that explicitly addresses the cross-cutting themes of gender and/or environment. In addition, some partners in these countries have also integrated other themes in their programme such as attention to 'peace' in Mali given the fragile situation there, global citizenship and education for sustainable development in Madagascar and global citizenship in El Salvador (the latter not explicitly mentioned in the predefined results).

Another cross-cutting theme is digitalization. Even before the COVID pandemic started in 2020 which accelerated digitalization, activities related to this theme were foreseen in the 2017-2021 programme e.g. in El Salvador with the development of a common database (this exists in Benin since 2014), and in all countries with the enrolment of training of students and staff to use digital media and IT (Benin, El Salvador, Mali, Madagascar, Cameroon, Bolivia, Haiti, Tanzania). Systematizing knowledge and general programme management was foreseen in the programme of Haiti through the digital tool EVALNOTE. In Tanzania, digitalization in the programme was also related to a stronger informatization of the M&E system of the programme. And in In Bolivia, the VTC are also part of the digital database of the Ministry of Work which can improve the chances of employment for the graduates of target group youth.

## 2.2 Effectiveness – achieved results

	Good		
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Although VIA Don Bosco and its direct partner - the planning bureaus- do not directly influence the final beneficiaries of this programme (vulnerable youth between the age of 15-29), in developing this programme VIA Don Bosco chose to formulate the objective at the level of this target group. The fact that VIA Don Bosco works with the final target group through its indirect partners does not make monitoring the specific objective very easy. VIA Don Bosco developed its own M&E system that all partners use to monitor the results and the specific objective of the programme. We analyzed the results coming out of this system further below, triangulating the obtained information with qualitative interviews and group meetings.

The 2017-2021 programme contains 4 results. The fourth result relates to transversal topics, included in the programme of the African partner countries. In the Latin American partner countries, these topics are also part of the programme but not included in result 4. The programme did internally monitor progress on these topics e.g., by using the MHC instrument, and when discussing the performance scores, developed for annual reporting to the donor DGD.

Below, each result of the programme is analyzed separately across all countries, on a meta-level. In addition, the main highlights for each country are mentioned for the three or four results together.

Although main progress can be noticed at country level, the analysis is not meant to compare results between countries, seen the different contexts and backgrounds in which the partners operate.

The analysis below considers the achieved results up to the end of 2021. Input for the analysis below were the internal VIA Don Bosco monitoring instruments, the initial programme document and other documentation, interviews with partners in the countries and online (non-case countries) and with VIA Don Bosco staff (online interviews).

### 2.2.1 Analysis of the achieved indicators result 1- 4

The following table summarizes the extent to which the indicators were achieved. Below the table, each result is analyzed in detail.

Result	Fully achieved end of programme	Progress made (end of 2021) compared to baseline (2017)	No progress compared to baseline (2017)
Result 1: better quality of education	78%	22%	-
Result 2: strengthened management capacities	33%	63%	4%
Result 3: support to formal, paid employment and entrepreneurship	68%	32%	
Result 4: integration of transversal and other topics	54%	38%	8%

Table: degree of achievement of indicators – result level (result 1-4). Source: analysis Resumoni 2017-2021.

#### Achievement of the indicators - Result 1

**Result 1** of the programme aimed to improve the quality of teaching and learning processes in the partner VTC. This outcome was tracked by 23 indicators (2 per country, Tanzania had 3 indicators), see next Table.

**Result 1: The quality of the education and learning process in all VTCs has improved**

	Country	Indicator <sup>10</sup>	Baseline 2017	Expected 2021	Achieved 2019	Achieved 2020	Achieved 2021
	Tanzania	I1: The number of trades incorporating new technology or techniques based on labour market demands annually	2	12	13	15	17
		I2: The number of teachers who can demonstrate that their practice in class has improved within 12 months after having followed a training course (cumulative)	9	45	35	77	127
		I3: The Teacher's Training College (TTC) shows a positive progress	TTC to be established	Third graduation <sup>11</sup>	No activity	No activity	Registration & accreditation
	Benin	I1: The percentage of teachers (male and female) who have the official diploma required to teach	26%	34%	38%	56%	60%
		I2: The percentage of workshops meeting security measures	32%	83%	73%	86%	100%
	Madagascar	I1: Extent to which instructors apply the trainings they have followed in their teaching practices	Not certain if they apply	Increase with 15% compared to 2018	no	no	no
		I2: Number of vocational training courses with a competency-based approach	0	29	33	36	34
	Mali	I1: The number of years of study for all courses in which the competency-based approach is fully applied	0	18	22	27	32
		I2: The percentage of teachers (female and male) who meet the official competency-based approach (CBA) standards	0%	85%	100%	100%	100%
	RD Congo	I1: Percentage of teacher evaluation reports (female and male) that show improvements in teaching practices	0%	100%	89%	87%	76%
		I2: Number of training programmes that have been adapted to the needs of the labour market	7	22	26	14	19
	Cameroon	I1: The qualitative evaluations (score from 1 to 4) show an increasing number of CEFFAs (in % of total CEFFAs=23)) with a satisfactory score (>3) in the application of the alternation pedagogy.	35%	74%	57%	58%	87%
		I2: The cross-cutting evaluations (score from 1 to 4) show an increasing number of CEFFAs with a satisfactory score (>3) in the application of gender and environmental aspects in their teaching and practice.	35%	74%	39%	78%	78%
	Haiti	I1: The number of teachers (male and female) who receive a pedagogic as well as a technical training and a module or seminar on environmental protection during the school year	5	96	48	26	N/A



	I2: The number of courses whose learning content and materials are adapted to the world of work, and which are validated by a committee specially created for this purpose	4	35	37	20	N/A
El Salvador	I1: The % of teachers who can demonstrate that their practice in class has improved, 6 months after having followed a training course	55%	80%	84%	93%	95%
	I2: Percentage of young people (women and men) who participated in a training on life skills	47%	72%	N/A <sup>12</sup>	100%	70%
Bolivia	I1: % of plans and programmes adapted by specialties and updated according to the current regulations of the Ministry of Education	64%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	I2: % of teachers (M/F) who have followed training according to identified needs	66%	90%	83%	99%	85%
Ecuador	I1: The % of teachers who meet official standards, participate in the training process (pedagogy, specialty, etc.). can demonstrate that their practice in class has improved, 4 months after having followed a training course	74 <sup>13</sup> %	90%	98%	100%	100%
	I2: Number of curricula adapted and validated by at least two relevant parties	23	25	32	21	30
Peru	I1: The % of teachers who meet official standards, participate in the training process (pedagogy, specialty, etc.). can demonstrate that their practice in class has improved, 4 months after having followed a training course	35%	91%	86%	98%	100%
	I2: Number of curricula adapted and validated by at least two relevant parties (expressed in %)	28%	87%	69%	64%	89%

Table: Achieved result indicators – Result 1. Source: Country and partner Resumoni 2017-2021.

Overall, 18 of the 23 indicators were fully met at the end of the programme (78%). 5 indicators (22%) made (good) progress compared to the initial situation in 2017 but did not fully achieve the final goal.

In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, three of the five partner countries achieved their targets at the end of 2021.

In **Africa**, four of the six countries achieved the target of the indicators at the end of 2021. Of all indicators in African countries, all indicators showed progress. It is also positive that in these six

<sup>9</sup> Level of achievement result: no color = not achieved; light blue: progress made; dark blue= achieved or exceeded

<sup>10</sup> The same kind of indicators have the same colour in the table

<sup>11</sup> Increasing the qualification of instructors by 60% in all partner VTCs and partner institutions country wide.

Third graduation for teachers with certificates, second for diploma

<sup>12</sup> Not correct in the Resumoni

<sup>13</sup> Adjusted (70% = original value)

countries, all indicators could be measured while in 2017 there were 4 indicators not being measured yet or without baseline information available.

Indicators used to monitor progress made on this result in the 11 countries can be clustered as follows:

- (i) **The number of study programmes or training courses adapted** to aspects relevant for the programme (this can be different per country) for example to the needs of the labour market, to legislation, to a Competency-based approach (not everywhere clear what they are adapted to) and validated by multiple relevant parties (applied in 7 countries)
- (ii) **Being able to demonstrate (by teachers of the VTC)** that their teaching practice has improved x number of months after having followed a training course (applied in 6 countries)
- (iii) Teachers who **meet official standards**; (4 countries)
- (iv) Teachers themselves **following training** according to needs (technical or pedagogical) (3 countries)
- (v) Extent to which teachers **apply a certain approach** in their teaching practice (3 indicators, 2 countries)

These indicators are not formulated in the same way in all countries where they are used. In some countries the description is clearer and more concrete (e.g., I2 Cameroon) than in others (e.g., I1 Madagascar). Some countries used a combination of the above indicators in one and the same indicator (Ecuador, Peru).

As mentioned earlier, 4 of the 5 indicators are about improving the quality of training through ensuring the quality of teaching and thus relate **directly to the teachers**. This quality can include different aspects: being a certified teacher, application of trainings followed by teachers, application of a specific learning approach. The 5<sup>th</sup> indicator relates to the quality of **relevant content of the teaching programme**.

According to the interviews with partners, during 2017-2021 training was sometimes given 'to finish the budget'. Neither did capacity strengthening always respond to the needs of instructors (technical and/or pedagogical needs – this differed from partner to partner).

The indicator "teachers following training according to needs" gives an indication that there is a will to invest in the quality of training, but it does not guarantee that the teachers will also apply what has been learned. That application by teachers of what has been learned during training can be found in another indicator. Although this indicator is relevant, it is also a very difficult indicator to measure, because it is about behavioral change, and return on investment which is rather measured at the level of the specific objective. Further, the way this indicator is measured leaves room for interpretation or subjectivity, since the teachers themselves usually provide the input which is difficult to verify.

Finally, the evaluators noted that there are no indicators in this result that indicate the ways in which the planning office played a role in strengthening the quality of the learning processes within the VTCs.

Based on relevance and degree of objective verifiability, indicators 1 and 4 seem the most appropriate and easy ones to measure this result, even if following a training does not guarantee

actual application of acquired knowledge and skills, which can be followed up through performance assessments, but this is difficult to verify.

Indicator 3- teachers who meet official standards – needs further explanation. What does it mean being a certified teacher; does this guarantee or support the quality of the education process within the VTC in a relevant way? Does a certified teacher have the skills the labour market asks for? The indicator does not guarantee the achievement of the result when the certification doesn't match what the labour market demands.

### **Achievement of the indicators - Result 2**

**Result 2** of the programme aims to reinforce the management capacities of all partner organisations. To monitor progress made on this result, 24 indicators were used (2 per country, Madagascar and Cameroon used 3 indicators), see next table.

**Result 2: The management capacities of all partner organizations have been reinforced**

	Country	Indicator	Baseline 2017	Expected 2021	Achieved 2019	Achieved 2020	Achieved 2021
	Tanzania	I1: Percentage of profit made by Income Generating Activities (IGA's)	3%	35%	13%	46% (35-71%)	67%
		I2: The number of VTCs increasing their score in at least 3 fields of the Management Health Check annually being: Gender, Environment and Financial Sustainability	1	2	2	2	2
	Benin	I1: Number of partner organizations that have improved annually in gender and environment and in at least two priorities of the management health checklist	3	5/5	4/5	4/5	4/5
		I2: Average degree of financial autonomy of all partner organizations	51%	59%	57%	78% (12-93%)	82%
	Madagascar	I1: The extent to which partner organizations are making continuous progress in improving the development, implementation, and evaluation of their HR policies: Have strategic decisions been made and diagnosis of the current situation/practices been prepared? Answer YES or NO.	There is no HR procedure nor HR management tools	HR manual is evaluated and adapted (7/7)	Strategic decisions on HR taken and diagnostic on actual situation prepared (6/7)	idem	achieved
		I2: Percentage of VTC' income that comes from IGAs (income-generating activities) and other TFPs (technical and financial partners)	3,5%	17%	48%	30% (2%-55%)	28%
		I3: The number of partner organizations that have improved their score on the gender and environment subcomponents and at least two other Management Health Check components	7	9	7	6	5
	Mali	I1: The number of partner organizations that have improved their score on the gender and environment components and at least 1 other component of the Health Check	3	5	4	4	5
		I2: The percentage of financial self-sufficiency of partner organizations	48%	63%	106% (22%-136%)	115% (11%-170%)	130%
	Cameroon <sup>15</sup>	I1: Number of CEFFAs+/IFERs with co-management memoranda of understanding signed (expressed as a % of total CEFFAs=23)	4%	74%	39%	39%	39%
		I2: The institutional maturity assessments (score from 1 to 4) show an increasing number of co-managing parents' associations of CEFFAs with a satisfactory score (>3) in terms of institutional maturity (expressed as a % of total CEFFAs=23)	17%	74%	43%	30%	39%
		I3: The institutional maturity assessments (scores from 1 to 4) show a positive average evolution of the 11 sponsoring organizations.	2.4	3.1	2.25	3.37	3.47

RD Congo	I1: Number of partner organizations that improved their Management Health Check scores in the areas of (1) financial management and (2) gender and (3) environment	0	11	7	1	2
	I2: Number of partner organizations that have implemented an HRM strategy	0	11	9	9	10
Haïti	I1: Number of partner organizations that have improved annually in gender and environment and in at least two priorities of the management health checklist	2	8	3	6	N/A
	I2: Average degree of financial autonomy of all partner organizations	7%	30%	58%	37% (17%-54%)	N/A
El Salvador	I1: Average degree of financial autonomy of all partner organizations	31%	65%	106%	54% (44%-108%)	105%(94%-120%)
	I2: Number of partner organizations that increased their score on the components of gender and environment and on at least two other components of the Management Health Check	1	5	5	5	4
Bolivia	I1: Degree of financial autonomy (%) - solvency ratio	26%	49%	54% (22-118%)	38% (2-58%) <sup>16</sup>	31%
	I2: # of partner organizations that have improved the components of gender, environment and at least 2 other components of the health checklist	6	9	7	8	4
Ecuador	I1: Number of partner organizations that have improved annually in gender and environment and in at least two priorities of the management health checklist	2	7	7	6	7
	I2: Average degree of financial autonomy of all partner organizations	43% (original:40%)	60%	69%	62% (20-145%)	49,15%
Peru	I1: Number of partner organizations that increased their score on gender and environment and at least two other components of the Management Health Check	3	8	6	8	8
	I2: Average degree of financial autonomy of all partner organizations	28%	60%	80% (23%-84%)	63% (17-82%)	74%

Table: Achieved result indicators – Result 2. Source: Country and partner Resumoni 2017-2021.

**Overall, 8 of the 24 indicators were fully met at the end of the programme (33%). 15 indicators (63%) have made (good) progress compared to the initial situation in 2017 but did not fully achieve the final**

<sup>14</sup> Level of achievement result: no color = not achieved; light blue: progress made; dark blue= achieved or exceeded

<sup>15</sup> Slightly different formulation of result 2: The CEFFAs+/IFERs are co-managed by the promoting organizations, parents' associations, and local actors in a logic of empowerment (ref. 2017-2021 programme document)

<sup>16</sup> Large fluctuations and differences between end 2019 and end 2020 figures. e.g., Domingo Savio 42% financial autonomy end 2019 and only 2% end 2020; Miguel Magone 118% end 2019 and still 58% end 2020; Yapacani 108% end 2019 and still 39% end 2020).

goal; 1 indicator (Bolivia) fell back at or below the initial situation in 2017 (4%). Looking only at the average % of the indicator on “financial autonomy”, more indicators would have been fully achieved. But since there exist – in all countries - huge differences in level of achievement at partner level within the same country, and some remain far below the target of 2021, it was opted to look at the individual values so to ‘assess’ the overall level of achievement.

Tanzania has been the only country in **Africa** where all indicators have been met at the end of 2021. In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, only El Salvador has met all indicators.

To measure progress of this result, mainly 2 types of indicators were used by the partners:

- (i) The achievement of **financial autonomy**, not counting the grants received from VIA Don Bosco (but counting the costs incurred within the context of the programme)
- (ii) Progress made on **management aspects** with gender and environment explicitly mentioned, as well as two other aspects
- (iii) Two countries explicitly measure the extent to which an **HR strategy/policy and procedures** have been developed and implemented (RD Congo and Madagascar)

**Financial autonomy**<sup>17</sup> is calculated by adding together all income, except grants from VIA Don Bosco and dividing this by all expenses, including those inherent to the programme. To achieve **financial autonomy**, the VTC (and JPO) and the PDO are encouraged within the context of the programme to develop income-generating activities. This is done in different ways: in some countries short training courses are offered to companies (e.g., El Salvador) or through government scholarships young people are attracted for a short training course (e.g., Tanzania). In several countries, agreements are also made with parastatal institutions (e.g., INSAFORP in El Salvador) to generate income for long-term training. School enterprises have been set up to generate extra income (vb. Haiti and Benin). In addition, the technical knowledge, equipment, and machines for vocational training available are in several cases also used to produce products that can be sold (e.g., agricultural products from the VTC of Kami, Bolivia, textile products from the VTC Ciudadela, San Salvador etc.).

Looking at the average progress made by **all the training centers together in terms of financial autonomy** (see next table where the indicator financial autonomy is highlighted), those three African countries (Tanzania, Benin, and Mali) have gradually increased their financial autonomy compared to the initial situation in 2017.

Financial autonomy of partners (2017-2021)						
Country	Baseline (2016-2017)	Target 2021	Achieved 2019	Achieved 2020	Achieved 2021	Range (differences between partners)-end 2020
RDC	-	-	-		-	-
Benín	51%	59%	57%	78%	63%	12%-93%
Mali	48%	63%	84%	115%	141%	11%-170%
Tanzania (IGA profit)	3%	35%	13%	46%	67%	35-71%

<sup>17</sup> See also the chapter ‘sustainability’

Madagascar (IGA profit)	3,50%	17%	54%	33%	28%	2%-55%
Cameroon	-		-	-	-	18
Bolivia	26%	49%	54%	38%	N/A	2%-58%
Ecuador	43%	60%	69%	62%	49,15%	20%-145%
Perú	28%	60%	80%	63%	74%	17%-82%
Haití	7%	30%	58%	37%	N/A	17%-54%
El Salvador	31%	65%	106%	54%	105%	44%-108%

Table: Level of financial autonomy partners (as mentioned in the monitoring table) Source of information – Resumoni country level 2017-2021

The average % in Mali even exceeded 100% at the end of 2021, but these figures fluctuated greatly from Centre to Centre (between 11 and 170%). In other countries, the average progress increased until the end of 2019, before falling back at the end of 2020. The COVID pandemic seems to be the most important reason for this. In several countries, schools were closed for months, sometimes for more than a year.

It is important to nuance these figures to some extent since, as indicated earlier, the level of financial autonomy can vary greatly from Centre to Centre. At the same time, it was noticed that for instance in Bolivia, all Centres recorded a sharp decline in financial autonomy between the end of 2019 and 2020, even with varying levels of financial autonomy between the training Centres.

Since the **planning & development offices** are the direct partners of VIA Don Bosco and primary target group, one would expect that the calculation of financial autonomy of all planning bureaus is included in the values of the indicator financial autonomy in the table below. Within the context of the programme, these planning bureaus are also encouraged to diversify their income and to

Financial Autonomy of the planning & development offices			
Country	Baseline (2016-2017)	Achieved 2019	Achieved 2020
Benín	N/A	N/A	23%
Mali	N/A	0%	38%
Tanzania	N/A	40%	71%
Ecuador	N/A	43%	40%
Perú	N/A	N/A (FMA)/100% (SDB)	N/A (FMA)/82% (SDB)
Haití	N/A	0%	15%
El Salvador	N/A	N/A	66%
Cameroon	N/A	N/A	N/A
Madagascar	N/A	N/A	N/A
RD Congo	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bolivia	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table: Level of financial autonomy - PDO (as mentioned in the monitoring table) Source: Resumoni 2017-2021

increase their financial autonomy. However, the PDOs depend on the Province and, based on how these offices are linked to the Salesian structure and their legal status, they do not always have the mandate or possibility of diversifying their funding.

<sup>18</sup> In Cameroon, financial sustainability is measured with the OCSAT-survey. During the years 2017-2020, financial sustainability increased significantly (2.41/4) to 3.47/4). This is mainly due to the creation of enterprise schools.

When looking in detail to the country Resumoni, it was noticed that only 7 out of the 11 planning offices had provided a value for this indicator, and some did not do so every year either (see next table). Based on the available information, the financial autonomy of the planning bureaus at the end of 2020 fluctuated between 15% (Haiti, 1 of the planning bureaus) and 71% (Tanzania). In Tanzania for instance, the hall and rehabilitated rooms have continued to raise revenue for both PDO and VTC. This is attributed to increased marketing, utilization of the hall for own events and improving the facilities through the on-going upgrading plan (ref. Resumoni Tanzania PDO 2020).

Not all Centers are already actively capturing additional funds. In some cases, there is mention of planning and strategy (e.g., El Salvador), but sometimes that is even lacking (vb. Haiti).

Furthermore, it is also expected that the **employment offices** would become more autonomous and generate financial income over time, since subsidies of VIA Don Bosco are only temporarily provided. At this moment, the employment offices are mainly financed by the VIA Don Bosco programme. However, the financial autonomy of the employment offices is not calculated separately. In the very best case (3 countries namely Haiti, Ecuador, and Tanzania) it was mentioned in the country monitoring tables (the Resumoni) that the income generated by the planning bureaus also applies to the employment office. In one of the monitoring tables, it was mentioned that – because the employment offices work integrated in the training centers – the financial autonomy needs to be considered as part of the autonomy of the training Center.

Financial sustainability remains a major challenge for the VIA DB programme in **Cameroon**. It largely depends on the financial support of VIA Don Bosco as the only donor of the programme. The CEFFAs have not really managed to start Enterprise Schools as a source of revenue: according to the 2020 monitoring reports, only 4 Centers had set up economic activities. Despite official recognition by the ministries, PROCEFFA / CEFFA have not received any financial support from the government so far. The programme (2017 -2021) has not paid particular attention to financial autonomy as there are no results/indicators directly linked to it.

Another indicator used to see if partners have strengthened their management capabilities is measured by the **management health check instrument**, introduced by VIA Don Bosco and to be completed by all partners, including planning offices and employment offices. 5 domains are scored annually (score between 1 and 5) in 4 domains (financial management, human resource management, planning, knowledge management) each of which has several sub-domains. The instrument is well constructed and gives a picture of the management capacities of each partner at a given moment. The scores are meant as an entry to improve the management topics with a low score.

The major disadvantage of this tool is that it is (often) more used as a box-ticking tool by partners, showing a "desirable" picture rather than the actual reality. The scores are discussed and substantiated at the annual meetings between VIA Don Bosco and its partners, after which some scores are adjusted back to a more likely reality. However, it remains a primarily subjective way of scoring and difficult to verify in practice (except for the programmatic skills, translated in abilities to manage and monitor the VIA DB programme through appropriate planning and reporting). There is still a lot of learning potential here - according to VIA Don Bosco and endorsed by the evaluators - for the partners to use the tools based on a positive critical self-reflection process (whereby the scores should also be better explained in the tool itself. This possibility exists but is hardly ever used).



It was noticed that – during the country visits – in some cases learning and knowledge management capacities were strengthened to stimulate exchanges among the training centers, but not everywhere and to the same extent.

### Achievement of the indicators - Result 3

**Result 3** of the programme focuses on the accompaniment of students to decent work and entrepreneurship by the Employment Offices. Although the support of the local JPO may be different from country to country, the objective is the same: to help students find a job (as an employee or entrepreneur) after they graduate from the training centers. The services offered are diverse: assisting in the search for an internship, providing training on entrepreneurship, on applying for a job, on work attitude, and so on. In addition, these services are usually responsible for making the first contacts with companies or other potential employers and for concluding cooperation agreements with them.

An important nuance is that the local JPO services are generally filled by only 1 person, with global support from the national JPO (within the PDO). Sometimes they are assisted by other personnel of the training centers e.g., pedagogical/psychosocial workers. Individual support from the JPO to students is very limited compared to the number of students enrolled. Most students can be reached through the collective training programmes. However, for the students it is not always clear that a separate JPO exists. In terms of visibility and profiling, there is still work to be done. A real and proven risk is also the overload with work of JPO officers. Overall, however, the installation of an JPO is a very good thing, and has resulted in support to

- create greater awareness to make the link between technical-vocational training/education and employment
- pay attention not only to technical training but also to the skills needed to find and keep a job (e.g., work attitude)
- give more concrete content to the aspect of 'entrepreneurship'.

To monitor progress made on this result, 22 indicators were used (2 per country), see next table.

**Result 3: The accompaniment to decent work and entrepreneurship by the Employment Offices is improved**

	Country	Indicator	Baseline 2017	Expected 2021	Achieved 2019	Achieved 2020	Achieved 2021
	Tanzania	I1: Percentage of last year students that passes the test on EJSO <sup>20</sup> coaching activities	50%	80%	71%	86%	91%
		I2: The number of partnerships concluded with a signed “memorandum of understanding” (cumulative but achieved/year)	4	23 (of which min. 6 MoU)	18 (of which 11 with MoU)	22 (of which 11 with MoU) <sup>21</sup>	26 (of which 14 with a MoU)
	Benin	I1: The number of entrepreneurship topics and modules that are validated by reference persons and integrated into the programmes	4	18	15	20	20
		I2: The number of contractual partnerships between training centers and public or private employers	8	28	17	21	33
	Madagascar	I1: Number of VTC that include entrepreneurship course modules in the curricula of all tracks	0	7	4	7	7
		I2: Extent to which a common procedures manual is applied to the work of local BDEs	Not existing	Existing and applied	6	7	7
	Mali	I1: The (cumulative) number of hours of entrepreneurship courses that were taught during the academic year to all students at all training centers.	25	136	220	233	233
		I2: The (cumulative) number of public and private organizations that systematically collaborate with the training centers to accompany young people into the world of work.	3	15	13	19	27
	Cameroon <sup>22</sup>	I1: Average number of strategic alliances per CEFFA+/IFER formalized.	0	3	3.47	4	5
		I2: % of training hours delivered with the support of staff from these alliances	7%	20%	23%	12%	12%
	RD Congo	I1: Number of young people who have completed a minimum of 3 months of internship before the end of their training	0%	70%	89%	78%	97%
		I2: At the end of each school year, 60% of the youth's internship reports show improvements in work attitude	60%	60%	93%	88%	83%
	Haïti	I1: The number of companies that provide internships (during the curriculum or after graduation) or employment to graduating students or alumni each year.	22	48	28	28	N/A
		I2: The number of training centers that increase the amount and duration of their activities around entrepreneurship (= *changed to # trainings instead of number of VTC, short, medium and long duration).	2	6 <sup>23</sup>	3	5	N/A
	El Salvador	I1: % of companies, registered in the JPO database, that have been	7%	30%	45%	43%	44%

	supported by the JPO (through a collaboration agreement) during the search for personnel						
	I2: % of young people (m/v) who are satisfied with the services provided by the JPO after completing their training	38%	70%	90%	95%	85%	
Bolivia	I1: Percentage of young people (women and men) who have achieved the formulated goals in the personal development plan at the end of training	N/A	64%	91% (54-100%)	95% (78%-100%)	72%	
	I2: Percentage of young people (females and males) who have completed an apprenticeship followed in a company, public institution or production unit during training.	21%	61%	30% (9-100%)	19% (0-77%)	16%	
Ecuador	I1: Percentage of students (women and men) who have developed a life project coordinated by JPO in collaboration with other related collaboration with other related departments (compared to % registered that year)	42%	72%	62%	55% (0%-100%)	71,4%	
	I2: Percentage of students (females and males) who participate in JPO's support processes (counseling, internships, entrepreneurship, job placement) (compared to % registered that year)	65%	77%	74,50%	85% (15-100%)	84,50%	
Peru	I1: Percentage of students (females and males) who participate yearly in JPO's support processes (counseling, internships, entrepreneurship, job placement) (compared to % registered that year)	39%	73%	78% (49-100%)	69% (2-100%)	92%	
	I2: % of young people (m/v) who are satisfied with the services provided by the JPO after completing their training	30%	70%	96%	89% (79-100%)	92%(M)-95%(F)	

Table: Achieved result indicators – Result 3. Source: Country and partner Resumoni 2017-2021.

Six countries achieved both indicators at the end of 2021; all other countries have made progress on both indicators compared to the baseline situation in 2017. A total of 15 out of 22 indicators were achieved (59%). The other indicators (41%) all show progress compared to the initial situation in 2017 but did not reach the final target (yet) at the end of 2021.

Some indicators (e.g., participation in an internship, participation in JPO services) show a high variation in results between partners, hence the range is put next to the average result. When the lowest result of one or more partners is lower than the predefined target, even if the average result

<sup>19</sup> Level of achievement result: no color = not achieved; light blue: progress made; dark blue= achieved or exceeded

<sup>20</sup> Explorer Job Service Officer

<sup>21</sup> Based on information received from VIA Don Bosco; the partner Resumoni gave other information

<sup>22</sup> Les CEFFAs+/IFERs travaillent dans le cadre d'alliances stratégiques avec des acteurs locaux pour promouvoir le développement local et l'insertion socio-professionnelle des jeunes

<sup>23</sup> Adjusted from 8 (as originally planned) to 6: the national BDE do not execute training themselves

of all partners together is higher than that target, the indicator was generally considered as not fully achieved by the evaluators.

Next to the indicators that were used only once in a country, six types of indicators could be identified that were used in multiple countries (although not all of them formulated in the same way):

- **Number of partnerships with third parties** (mainly intended to create internships or collaborations). These third parties are usually private companies or public organizations (included as an indicator in 6 countries),
- The indicator linked to **entrepreneurship** within the courses or modules. This is done by counting the number of entrepreneurship topics and modules that have been included by the training centers (e.g., Tanzania, Madagascar), but also by looking at the number of hours spent on entrepreneurship topics (e.g., Mali) (3 countries),
- The indicator on **internships** e.g., the number of companies that provide internships (e.g., Haiti) or the number of young people that have completed an internship (e.g., RD Congo, Bolivia). RDC also measures the extent to which the work attitude of young people who have completed an internship has improved (4 countries),
- The indicator that measures **the % of youth having created a personal development plan** (e.g., Ecuador, Bolivia). Bolivia goes further and does not measure the creation, but the **achievement of the goals included in this plan**,
- The indicator that measures the **satisfaction of young people who used the JPO's services** after they graduated (e.g., El Salvador, Peru) (2 countries),
- The indicator that measures **how many students (graduates) have used JPO services** (Ecuador, Peru) (2 countries).

It is clear from the indicators that the JPO have developed many different activities during the period 2017-2021, to support young people during their job search. The JPO have also served as a bridge between the labour market and the trainings, by getting to know and checking the relevance of the training courses, by getting to know the labour market and the needs of the private and other sectors.

It can be questioned whether the indicators that measure how many of the graduating students are satisfied with the JPO services or who have used the JPO services are illustrating the real work done by these services. Given the number of students and the low work force of the JPO, it is impossible to counsel all students individually. At best, students participate in collective trainings to which the JPO has also contributed. The national JPO need to monitor this and support with standardizing methodologies and approaches, but the workload remains high. The work of the JPO is also not always prominently promoted or made visible to students. Therefore, a low percentage of these indicators does not necessarily mean that JPO are not doing their best to induce changes within their circle of influence.

#### **Achievement of the indicators - Result 4**

**Result 4** was added to the programme to make activities on gender, environment, and global citizenship more visible (see next table). This result 4 only applies to partner countries in Africa. In the partner countries in Latin America, however, work is also being done on these themes, but they have been included more transversally in the operation without making it visible in the predetermined results of the logical framework.

In the narrative reporting by the partners to VIA Don Bosco, there is a specific section that shows the progress of the transversal themes. The MHC also has a section on gender, environment, and human rights. In addition, the performance indicators for DGD assess the progress of the cross-cutting themes.

<b>Result 4: Young people are educated to become global citizens (with a special focus on gender, environment, and global citizenship)</b>							
<sup>24</sup>	Country	Indicator:	Baseline 2017	Expected 2021	Achieved 2019	Achieved 2020	Achieved 2021
	Tanzania	I1: Percentage of girls enrolled in the VTCs	12%	35%	43%	46%	30%
		I2: Number of partnerships concluded to support gender mainstreaming initiatives (cumulative)	0	17	17	19	24
	Benin	I1: The percentage of girls enrolled in training centers	10%	21%	8%	9%	9%
		I2: Percentage of the educational community that is generally supportive of gender equality for all gender components in the VTCs	-	56%	58%	52%	73%
	Madagascar	I1: Number of VTC that integrate at least 1 subject or module related to ECM (Education for Global Citizenship) or ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) in their training offer	0	7	7	7	7
		I2: The percentage of students and staff of the VTC who were involved in concrete actions related to world citizenship education or education for sustainable development	48%	70%	89%	95% (57-100%)	66%
	Mali	I1: The level of application of a policy around gender, environment, and peace	An audit carried out beforehand will help inform the policy on gender equality.	measures are systematically applied, evaluated, and updated	2/3 achieved	idem 2019 no progress with Province validation	idem 2019 no progress with Province validation
		I2: The extent to which young people learn during the school year about issues related to gender inequality, environmental degradation and war/instability	The attention of young people is drawn to these universal problems through specific activities	All young people systematically attend courses and workshops on gender equality, environmental protection, and peace.	2/3 achieved	100% achieved	100% achieved

<sup>24</sup> Level of achievement result: no color = not achieved; light blue: progress made; dark blue= achieved

RD Congo <sup>25</sup>	I1: Number of VTC that have implemented a plan to train and raise awareness of school-to-business concepts	0	7	7	4	6
	I2: Number of VTC that implemented at least 1 IGA related to training and the environment	0	7	6	6	7
Cameroon <sup>26</sup>	I1: The modality of the dual education system is recognized by MINESEC <sup>27</sup>	Letter of interest	Definitive recognition	No evolution	Negotiation of Recognition	Final recognition
	I2: Number of IFER <sup>28</sup> recognized by MINESEC.	0	5	0	5	5
	I3: Number of CEFFA <sup>29</sup> recognized by MINEFOP <sup>30</sup> .	15	18	18	15	15

Table: Achieved result indicators – Result 4. Source: Country and partner Resumoni 2017-2021.

13 indicators were used to monitor progress on this result (2 indicators per country, Cameroon has 3).

- 4 indicators focused on **mainstreaming gender/girls' participation** in the programme (Tanzania, Benin)
- 2 indicators related to the **integration of gender, environment, and themes on peace** (Mali)
- 2 indicators focused developing activities within the training centers that are **environmentally friendly** (RD Congo)
- In Madagascar, both indicators focused on better integrating **global citizenship** within the activities of the training centers
- Cameroon was a special case with a result 4 on the **recognition of the training centers and the dual pedagogy by the government**, rather than on the integration of above-mentioned crosscutting themes

7 of the 13 indicators were fully achieved by the end of the programme (54%). The other indicators (38%) all show progress towards the baseline situation in 2017, except one indicator (8%) in Benin. In Benin, the share of girls in offered training has even decreased compared to the baseline situation in 2017. At the start of the programme, 1 in 10 enrollees was still a girl, by the end of 2021 this was less than 1 in 10. The positive note is that in absolute numbers, the portion of girls slightly increased (from 124 in 2017 to 139 in 2021 which is an increase of 12%). The figures show that within the training centers it is still very difficult in Benin (also in other countries such as Madagascar) to attract more female students.

The management health checklist measures annually, per partner, progress on gender mainstreaming. The score as such does not say much. What is more important is that this is also discussed during the annual partner meetings. These meetings are attended by representatives of the SDB and the VTC/JPO, the planning offices and of VIA Don Bosco.

<sup>25</sup> The financial autonomy of all VTC has been improved through the installation of environmentally friendly business schools

<sup>26</sup> Ministries recognize and support CEFFAs+/IFERs and the integration of students

<sup>27</sup> Ministère des Enseignements Secondaires

<sup>28</sup> Institut de Formation en Entrepreneuriat Rural

<sup>29</sup> Centre Educatif Familial de Formation par Alternance

<sup>30</sup> Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Formation Professionnelle

Highlights regarding gender mainstreaming and environment integration results:

## Gender

VIA Don Bosco's gender policy states that VIA Don Bosco, as an organization, adopts three main principles or guidelines:

- The fight against gender stereotypes is essential to achieve gender equality and counteract a negative impact on women as well as men.
- Sustainable development is only possible through the participation of men and women in decision-making, implementation, and evaluation processes.
- Practice what you preach: It is necessary to integrate the gender approach and to mainstream gender in the operation, in all programmes and in the workplace of VIA Don Bosco.

After the evaluation conducted by South Research (2015), several recommendations were formulated to better integrate gender equality into the operations of VIA Don Bosco. This led to the development of a gender policy within VIA Don Bosco. The findings of this end evaluation reveal that VIA Don Bosco has made progress to realize following measures to increase gender mainstreaming:

- There is a programme manager responsible at VIA DB as knowledge manager in the field of gender,
- Investments have been made to provide gender training of partners in the field,
- Partners are encouraged to implement strategies to achieve more gender equality in the training and their work,
- The management health check tool gauges annually the progress on gender integration. This is also discussed during the annual partner meetings,
- M&E figures are disaggregated by gender where possible.

Further, VIA Don Bosco and its partners have been working to integrate gender equality in different ways (with varying success from country to country and partner to partner):

- Although this cannot always be ascertained from the enrolment figures of the case countries (see next table), it was possible to verify from the discussions with PDO, VTC and JPO that efforts are being made in various countries to achieve a greater balance between enrolment of both girls and boys, for instance through active promotional campaigns. This is important so that both girls and boys can access this type of education.
- At the same time, sometimes explicit efforts have been made by the VTC/JPO to break gender stereotypes, i.e., to attract female students to traditionally male professions and vice versa. This seems to go somewhat easier for partners in Latin American countries than in African countries, but breaking gender stereotypes generally remains a difficult issue. This is also evident from the interviews with teachers, the JPO and students. The social environment is still too often a limiting factor for girls to follow a technical education, and companies are sometimes still dealing with prejudices when it comes to recruiting girls for a technical job.
- Specific activities have been included and executed with support from the programme to increase gender equality awareness at partner level and beyond e.g., through the development of a gender policy, through the organization of training for partners (the OPD, teachers and other staff). Sensitization at community level was executed in some countries (but not everywhere where planned due to COVID). Some partners were supported in the development of a gender

policy. Further, VIA Don Bosco invested in a good practices document with examples of gender mainstreaming from the 11 partner countries. This document was distributed among all partners to promote and stimulate activities to increase gender equality.

- During the field visits of the case countries, it could be noticed that some JPO sensitize enterprises to make sure that girls also can access technical jobs. And during interns, these JPO go and visit enterprises to make sure female students are not discriminated or intimidated in their job.
- In addition, the progress reports by partners and VIA DB show other examples than the ones explained above.

The examples shown above and the interviews with partners during the evaluation illustrate that VIA DB and their partners have been making progress during the 2017-2021 programme period in increasing their awareness about the importance of gender equality. But to what extent did these activities really translate into results? For instance, did it bring behavioural changes among teachers, among JPO and other supportive staff, in terms of how they deal with girls and boys during training and accompaniment processes? Through the interviews with (ex)-students it could be verified that in general, they are satisfied with how they were treated during their training period. What was also possible to verify was the extent to which the number of girls enrolled in technical programmes had increased or not in 2021 compared to 2017. Another way to see results in terms of gender equality was to look at the percentage of girls and boys who found a job after graduation (although this result is not only influenced by the programme itself, see also further in this report).

For the countries visited, the evaluators looked at the extent to which an evolution in the enrollment number of female and male students between 2017 and 2021 and in the ratio between both could be observed (see next two tables):

Evolution # registrations	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	Female	Male	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
El Salvador	1281	2258	1712	2715	2179	2743	1499	1909	833	1732
Bolivia	450	805	480	970	597	1005	1907	1567	1910	2010
Tanzania	401	698	340	501	721	814	777	921	323	801
Benin	124	1006	126	1159	101	1169	128	1303	139	1362
Haiti (FMA)	152	89	179	129	179	101	151	88	189	115
Haiti (SDB)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	350	384	344	390
Madagascar (SDB)	25	916	28	926	31	942	34	869	38	1143
Madagascar (FMA)	590	142	576	131	559	158	426	137	627	174

Table: Number of students registered at the VTC/year, 2017-2021. Sources: PDO of the 6 countries.



Evolution % registrations	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	Female	Male	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
El Salvador	36%	64%	39%	61%	44%	56%	44%	56%	32%	68%
Bolivia	36%	64%	33%	67%	37%	63%	55%	45%	49%	51%
Tanzania	36%	64%	40%	60%	47%	53%	46%	54%	29%	71%
Benin	12%	88%	10%	90%	8%	92%	9%	91%	9%	91%
Haiti (FMA)	63%	37%	58%	42%	64%	36%	63%	37%	62%	38%
Haïti (SDB)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	48%	52%	47%	53%
Madagascar SDB)	2,7%	97,3%	2,9%	97,1%	3,2%	96,8%	3,8%	96,2%	3,2%	96,8%
Madagascar (FMA)	81%	19%	81%	19%	78%	22%	76%	24%	78%	22%

Table: % male and female students registered at the VTC/year, 2017-2021. Sources: PDO of the 6 countries.

Looking at the number in the tables in detail, for instance **Tanzania and El Salvador**, the same evolution can be observed both in absolute numbers and in %: the number of girls enrolled between 2017 and 2021 increased more than the increase among male students. This could indicate that the strategies to attract more female students have worked. In absolute numbers, the number of enrolments increases among both sexes, which may be due to the strengthening and expansion of the educational offer, and/or more confidence in/improved image of the trainings offered by the VTC. In 2020, the numbers increase less, probably due to the COVID pandemic that breaks out then.

As mentioned above, in El Salvador, a sharp decline in enrollment by girls by 2021 could be observed in El Salvador. This is not a general trend across all VTC in El Salvador for that year, but due to a strong decrease in 1 of the Centers (short trainings). We see at the same time a slight increase in number of girls in the long-term training of this Center and all other trainings of the other supported Centers.

In **Bolivia** an interesting evolution could be observed: where in 2017 more male than female students enrolled with the VTC, this number tilted in 2020 when more girls enrolled than boys. In 2021, it reversed again with +- a balance between female and male enrollments.

In **Benin**, the number of male students, significantly higher than the number of female students, increased between 2017 and 2021. The number of female students, which was very low in 2017, remained roughly at this low percentage. There, the gender strategies in terms of getting more girls into the VTC did not seem to have had much effect.

In terms of enrollment in the SDB's training centers of **Madagascar**, the number of girls has remained low throughout the programme period. The number of girls enrolling increased slightly during the programme and then decreased again towards the end of the programme. (See also further below under result 3/transversal themes). Within the FMA VTC, the number of girls and boys has varied among the years. Comparing 2017 with 2021, more boys and girls registered in 2021.

In **Haiti**, the numbers are not completed in the table because they were not available yet when compiling this report. Concerning the FMA training centers, both female and male students'

participation remained - more or less - stable throughout the programme period. Compared to the beginning, the numbers increased for both sexes by the end of the programme.

The evolution of the registration figures above shows that – despite all efforts done – it remains quite difficult to get more girls to participate in TVET education and gender equality to take place.

According to the interviews conducted during the evaluation, this is due to several factors:

- The family, the community, the work environment, society in general makes it difficult to break down stereotypes,
- Teachers think they treat girls and boys equally but are not always aware that this is not the case (based on how they speak about gender equality during the interviews; however, students who were interviewed about gender equality did not think this was a problem during their training period),
- The corona pandemic was a setback in terms of gender equality. Young people could no longer attend school and in many countries girls and boys had to stay at home to contribute to the household. Girls were more susceptible to isolation with all its consequences (a significant increase in domestic violence in those countries where there were often longer periods of lockdown),
- During the programme period, gender training has been realized for partner staff, but it is not sure how the application of the acquired knowledge and skills takes place in practice and how this is monitored (and by who) and if needed adjusted.

## **Environment**

Unlike gender, this topic received much less attention during the programme period 2017-2021. However, within a context of climate change, increasing pollution of all kinds, the disappearance of biodiversity at the hands of man, the programme cannot help but pay attention to this.

As is the case with gender, a knowledge manager was appointed within the team of programme managers in Belgium who is responsible for ensuring that sufficient knowledge and expertise is developed on this theme within VIA Don Bosco. A policy note on environment was developed, and within the MHC the introduction of environment is being followed up. In general, this policy is aimed at bringing environment more explicitly into the programmes at partner level, VIA Don Bosco wants to pursue a more environmentally friendly policy in Brussels and to compensate CO2 for air travel. Within the policy, 2 components are central: sustainability and environmental friendliness.

During the country visits it has become clear that in most partner countries, activities have been carried out around environment. This usually involved raising awareness about the correct separation of waste, conscious water consumption, not printing much, or generating electricity via solar panels. In some countries training modules have been tailored to changing needs in this area e.g., in El Salvador instructors followed a training on the installation of solar panels, which is now also included in the curriculum. Environment as a policy has also been developed by one of the Centers with the intention of rolling out this policy in all Centers.

## Digitalisation

Unlike gender and environment, this theme is not supported through a central policy note from VIA Don Bosco. However, the theme was included as a cross-cutting theme in all countries of the 2017-2021 programme. The focus lied on integrating digitalization within the training courses e.g., teaching young people to work with digital and social media.

In addition, several partners invested in a data management system to better keep track of data about staff and students.

Completely unforeseen and unplanned, the introduction of digitalization was significantly accelerated by the COVID pandemic. VIA Don Bosco supported investments in technology to improve online communication and training through e.g., Zoom, Teams and WhatsApp. See further under 2.2.3. highlights per country.

### 2.2.2 Cooperation with VIA Don Bosco GCE as a tool of empowerment

The GCE programme of VIA DB in Belgium organized several intercultural exchange visits between Belgian Secondary Schools and Don Bosco schools in Tanzania and in Benin between 2017-2021. In September 2019, 4 Beninese students (3 boys and 1 girl from 2 vocational training centers, namely CPET in Parakou and ESJP in Cotonou) and 4 Tanzanian students (2 boys and 2 girls) from Moshi Secondary School) participated in a 10-day exchange programme in Belgium (together with students from India). This intercultural exchange was fully facilitated by the GCE-department in Belgium and focused mainly on the implementation of mini-projects related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and gender equality.

It is difficult to measure to what extent these exchange visits have had an impact on the Tanzanian and the Beninese students' level of empowerment for several reasons : 1) there exists no formal tool to measure the empowering impact of such exchange visits, 2) the information was obtained from a secondary source (local teachers) as all students involved in the exchange visit had already left the school and were not reachable during the evaluation visit and 3) activities took place 2 years ago and teachers interviewed found it difficult to recall much of the experience. Nevertheless, the teachers did recall having noticed some positive changes (at different levels) with the students because of the exchange visits to Belgium in 2019, as described in the conceptual empowerment framework below (as developed by C-lever who realized the final evaluation of the 2017-2021 VIA DB programme in Belgium).

	Tanzania	Benin
Knowledge (to know)	Critical approach to analyse a problem and work out a strategy to solve it	Trainees' awareness of the potential of their own environment to solve their own problems
Competence (to be capable)	Confidence to change things (e.g., environment conservation)	the confidence to express themselves better (in public).
	Increased self-awareness & self-confidence to speak in public (In English)	a sense of responsibility to help solve the problems in their community

	Independence to and self-reliance to carry out tasks	
<b>Attitude (to want)</b>	Open mindedness and respect of other cultures	to leave their comfort zone and develop an open mind: tolerance and respect for the culture of the other
<b>Behaviour (to do)</b>	Acting as 'ambassadors' of the school' at public functions	After their return to Benin, these students engaged in small projects at the VTC to promote a clean school environment (e.g., installation of rubbish bins) and gender equality (e.g., separate toilets for boys and girls) within their VTC
	Representation of the school at inter-school debating competitions.	
	Obtaining excellent academic results after their return to Moshi	

Table: based on interviews with local instructors of VTC partners, Tanzania and Benin. Source: C-Lever, end evaluation VIA DB 2017-2021 programme in Belgium.

Interviews with teachers indicated that these intercultural exchange visits can be a complementary strategy to strengthen the social life skills of a (though limited) number of students in the VTC and thus enhance their empowerment and socio-professional integration.

### 2.2.3 Main highlights and challenges per country - Result 1- 4

#### Case countries

##### Tanzania

The quality of training has significantly improved over the past 5 years. Main contributing factor is the effective capacity building of VTC instructors on various competencies and skills (mainly pedagogical and more general skills). Operational and financial guidelines were improved during the current programme period. Currently both VTC and the PDO are focusing on further increasing the profitability of their IGA (to make them their main source of income) and have therefore employed marketing officers to enhance their revenues. The JPO plays a key role in enhancing the trainees' social and professional integration and their services makes the DB technical training unique and different from other training centers. Their intermediary role between employers and trainees and their involvement in training social life skills determine to a large extent the success rate of the programme and the achievement of the programme's indicators.

The awareness raising campaign on gender equity (mainly through the yearly Binti Thamani campaign by the JPO) has managed to significantly increase the number of girls enrolled at the DB VTC - even in traditionally male-dominated trades (from 10% in 2017 to an average of 40% in 2021). Yet the JSO still has lobby work to do with companies as they generally prefer to employ male trainees: most of the female graduates find it very difficult to get a job.

##### Benin

The quality of training has improved significantly over the past five years. As in Tanzania, instructor training has focused primarily on pedagogical and more general skills. The JPO plays a key role in

improving the social and professional integration of students. However, the JPO performs many different tasks and is clearly understaffed in relation to its responsibilities (organization & follow-up of internships, pedagogical visits to companies, training life skills, empowerment and decent work monitoring surveys, entrepreneurship promotion, ....).

The programme has started to focus more on integration of gender, with positive discrimination in favor of girls (through a reduction in school fees of 20 or 25%), the hiring of a Gender Focal Point and the development of a gender organizational policy in the VTCs. Nevertheless, these efforts were not translated into significant results yet, ending with a 9% enrollment of girls in the training programmes of the VTCs (less than the baseline situation in 2017). This situation is exacerbated by the persistence of cultural stereotypes against the involvement of girls in technical occupations.

Regarding digitalization, further progress was made although the partners in Benin, compared to other countries, were already ahead of the game in terms of digital development at the start of this programme. The Bosco School manager was reviewed again in 2020 with support of the programme, which is an advanced tool in terms of school data management.

## **Madagascar**

Overall, based on the monitoring data, the result indicators are already met or – at the end of 2020- on the way to being met before the end of the programme. Due to COVID though it was a challenge to maintain the programme planning as foreseen. Instructor capacities were strengthened although this can be further improved in function of training needs and needs of the labour market. Efforts were made to put training into practice in a more competency-based way (in line with national priorities).

Management capacities were also strengthened; an HR manual was introduced to better map and harmonize HR processes. Financial autonomy remains a difficult issue for several partners.

Furthermore, the local JPO offices were supported during the programme so to improve their services and to integrate the entrepreneurship component in courses and modules.

In Madagascar, differences are high between % participation girls in SDB and FMA supported training centers, notwithstanding the fact that a training on gender was received in the context of the JSF Madagascar (2019) aimed at improving gender equality in the enrollment of coursed and functioning of VTC and JPO, through e.g. specific attention to the accompaniment of girls to a job and to girls' entrepreneurship and self-employment, support in life skills and sensitization of parents. The pandemic in 2020 hindered most of these planned activities. Initiatives to work towards a more environmentally friendly environment in and around the VTC were carried out. Although planned, there is no overall policy yet on environment.

## **Haiti**

The VDB programme is relatively complex since it involves 10 partners, on three levels of intervention, who face different realities in terms of size, trades, levels of certification and geographical location. Added to this is the fact that the programme has been particularly affected by the social and severe security crisis that the country has been going through since 2019. The targeted results are relevant, but the logic behind them must be adapted to the realities of each Center for it to be fully understood and integrated.

The training of trainers has produced very different results from one Center to another, and the shift from quantitative training to more qualitative, individualized training based on the real needs of trainers seems to be an interesting option to pursue. The improvement of learning conditions through better adapted equipment works well and does not pose major challenges. Strengthening the management capacity of the Centers is perhaps the result that has worked best for the programme in general. However, the logical link between management capacity and financial autonomy remains unclear.

The activities of JPO have produced mixed results across the Centers. It is important to better define the role of the PDO so that their work is more effective, and to better analyze the implications of entrepreneurship, which cannot be taught at the end of the year through a theoretical seminar lasting a few days.

### **El Salvador**

Overall, El Salvador achieved to a great extent the three results of the programme. Quality of technical and vocational programmes was improved through technical and more pedagogical courses followed by instructors although these courses can be adapted still better to the needs of the labour market and can be offered even more according to the needs of the instructors. In addition to the TVET services, the pedagogical and psychosocial support together with the JPO services constitute a unique formula in El Salvador to offer marginalized youth more opportunities in the labour market.

The training centers are generally well managed. In terms of financial autonomy, however, there are significant differences between the Centers. Attention is paid to gender equality although it could be more strongly institutionalized. Two of the three Centers are headed by female laypeople and one of the Centers is coordinated by a woman. The other transversal topic, environment, received too little attention until now. Virtual teaching became a constant during the COVID pandemic and boosted digitalization of some courses and data management.

Overall, JPO services are highly appreciated by students, although not in all Centers these services are known or visible.

### **Bolivia**

The performance and work of the national PDO and JPO is considered satisfactory by the different VTC visited. Despite the adverse context, the expected results have been achieved or considerable progress has been made (with this nuance that results sometimes differ from Center to Center). It has been possible to make capacity building processes viable by taking advantage of the circumstances of the pandemic by investing in virtual training and digitalization. As a result, time, resources, and processes have been optimized. All stakeholders expressed their satisfaction with the quality of results achieved: capacity building (teachers, administrative staff, students), infrastructure, equipment, materials, and inputs for the creation of adequate conditions for their operation.

The development of management capacities at the different levels and actors articulated in the PGR is another explicit achievement (monitoring system established and made compatible with the different VIA Don Bosco projects; different follow-up/monitoring and evaluation tools). Monitoring and evaluation systems are in place to report on the progress and achievement of the proposed goals and indicators; however, they need to be simplified and optimized (prioritizing indicators focused on results/effects; avoiding duplication and information overload -Narramoni/Resumoni, health check,

self-evaluation...). One challenge is the systematization of VTC experiences to contribute to the institutional memory and, above all, for knowledge management and public policy advocacy. There is awareness of the significant investments made, their cost and quality, especially of the infrastructure, as well as concern about sustainability of operations and maintenance in the future (even more since financial autonomy has dropped considerably in 2020 compared to 2019).

## Non-case countries

### Mali

The midterm evaluation in 2019 revealed that the dynamics of change implied by the programme were valued by the involved actors: “It is not only a matter of implementing training courses, acquiring equipment, but changing the approach to economic integration and the development of the environment”. The added value of VIA DB is obvious. At the time of the midterm evaluation, the capacity of the JPO to ensure their role in the programme was not very clear yet, as well as the concept “entrepreneurship”. This seems to have improved in the course of 2020.

A lot of efforts have been made to stimulate entrepreneurship. Several partners established contacts with other actors (e.g., ADAFO with Swiss Contact, Bamako with BIA-Mali) to create employment opportunities for students, to exchange with entrepreneurs-ex graduates, to develop business plans.

By the end of 2020, partners in Mali made also progress on the other results: 2021 targets to improve the quality of training were already met at the end of 2020. Management capacities were improved, including financial autonomy although there are large differences between Centers. The policy notes on gender, environment and peace had not been validated yet by the end of the programme period, which hinders further implementation of these themes (little change since the mid-term evaluation).

### RD Congo

The challenges mentioned during the midterm evaluation remained approximately status quo at the end of 2020. Some activities, meant to improve the quality of courses, were postponed to 2021 due to the COVID pandemic. There were no significant changes to report in terms of improving management capabilities. The HR strategy at partner level was developed but not yet widely implemented.

The mid-term evaluation showed that partners are chronically financially fragile, but the programme in RD Congo - unlike most other countries - did not monitor the financial autonomy of partners. The midterm evaluation mentioned already that IGA were not enough to cover the financial deficit. In terms of employment, the targets were met but there was a slight decline during the second half of the programme, compared to 2019. Due to the pandemic and the temporary closure of companies and government institutions, it was difficult to find internships for young people. In terms of outcome 4, based on the desk study and online interviews little progress was noticed, again the pandemic caused some planned activities to be cancelled. Remote support was given to the extent possible, but this could not replace personal contacts and follow-up on the spot.

Based on the desk study, it appears that investing in gender mainstreaming is starting to pay off, with more enrolment of girls in so far typically male courses and despite the existence of strong stereotypes around gender among local entrepreneurs and employers.



## Cameroon

The 2017-2021 programme has been implemented well by the partner organisations. The results have been achieved or shown a positive evolution. Only for result 2, both targets of the indicators have not been achieved: the active involvement of parents' associations in the co-management of the CEFFAs+ / IFER remains a major challenge for the Centers.

PROCEFFA is recognized as a key player in the promotion of dual learning pedagogy, which is well illustrated by the official recognition of its pedagogy in the CEFFAs by 2 Ministries, namely MINEFOP and MINESEC. However, PROCEFFA's approach and strategy are not (yet) well known with external organisations, state actors, the local community, and companies (which was already noted by the mid-term evaluation of Focus-Up in 2019).

The midterm evaluation in Cameroon, carried out by Focus Up in 2019, resulted in several recommendations: to review the roles between VIA DB and PROCEFFA, to develop a risk analysis in some of the most exposed areas, to develop PROCEFFA's expertise in youth integration strategies towards the PO and CEFFAs, to reinforce technical assistance on IGA within PROCEFFA, to continue strengthening the teachers around dual learning and competency-based learning. As a result of this evaluation, the theory of change of Cameroon was totally revised afterwards.

The transversal themes 'Gender' and 'Environment' are not fully integrated in the programme. Activities in these two areas are rather limited to punctual actions within the different partners. On the other hand, digitalization has received special attention in the programme thanks to the cooperation with the Belgian organisations "Close the Gap" and "Comundos" and aims at promoting the "strategic use of technology and media literacy" in 11 CEFFAs (production of digital media: photos, text, sound, and video by CEFFAs).

Especially on gender, there is still a big challenge and a lot of room for improvement. Although the Centers organise all kinds of gender equality activities, girls still face great challenges in starting their own agricultural enterprises (mainly because of cultural stereotypes: girls are traditionally not entitled to access to cultivable land).

The online questionnaire, executed among the partners during this end evaluation, also clearly indicate that there is a demand from partners for more staff training and awareness raising (of staff and local population) on the cross-cutting themes of 'gender' and 'environment'. In addition, partners ask for more strengthening on digitalisation.

## Peru

In 2020, activities had to be temporarily halted due to the COVID pandemic that hit Peru very hard compared to other Latin American countries with many fatalities. Investments were made in technological tools to improve online communication (Zoom, Teams, WhatsApp, google classroom): during the pandemic (since the end of 2020) the VTC started offering online learning courses e.g., on safety at work, soft skills, working in a team. From the moment this was possible again some courses were given life again, in case of hands-on technical training. This allowed the partners and students to continue their activities despite the crisis and to further improve their skills and knowledge. Themes were also adapted to the situation to keep the morale of both teachers and students high e.g., on how to start a bio garden at home, how to deal with violence, how to cope with mourning.



The financial autonomy of partners was quite good at the time of the midterm evaluation, but fell sharply at the end of 2020, due to the COVID pandemic which caused entire economic sectors to temporarily close their doors.

During the second half of the programme, there were some changes within the JPO. The PDO FMA changed its approach around job mentoring to improve interaction with students and to achieve a more standardized way of working within the VTC. Overall, students who had finished their courses showed their satisfaction with the services offered by the JPO (based on satisfaction surveys carried out by the JPO itself). After the exit workshop (July 2019), it was agreed that for the continuity of the employment accompaniment, the follow-up at national level would be done by each PDO (FMA and SDB).

As planned in the programme, activities to better integrate environment and gender within the VTC and JPO services, were carried out e.g., training on masculinity to parents and husbands of trainees, training on gender for VTC staff, sensitization activities to VTC staff and students related to environment e.g., separation of waste, planting of bio gardens etc.

## **Ecuador**

The situation in Ecuador in the second half of the programme, especially from 2020 onwards, was very similar to that in Peru because of the COVID pandemic. In Ecuador, too, the pandemic hit hard, and schools and economic sectors closed for a time. The programme invested in the necessary technological resources to strengthen the online communication with partners through Zoom, Teams and WhatsApp. As a result, training sessions, adapted to the situation, could be organized again, albeit online, on, for example, safety measures in times of the pandemic, the use of digital tools, dealing with emotions and virtual pedagogy. Funds were shifted within the limits of what was possible to provide food packages, medications, and internet access to target youth during this difficult period. This was to prevent youth from dropping out of school and ending up in a dead-end situation. The activities of the JPO also had to be adjusted due to the COVID pandemic. The focus during the first period of the pandemic lied on maintaining contact with students and ensuring that activities - albeit online - could still take place. The programme results of the JPO support give a good score on average but there are large differences between the Centers.

Although difficult because of the pandemic, progress was made to integrate gender mainstreaming in the activities of the VTC and JPO like e.g., the development of a policy on gender, to pay attention to the application of coexistence standards included in the code of ethics of the Salesians in Ecuador, sensitization of parents, training on women rights etc. Several activities related to better integration of environment in the programme of the VTC and JPO were also realized.

The pandemic reduced (temporarily) the validation of curricula. The financial autonomy of the Centers decreased slightly compared to 2019, but, again, large differences were noticeable between the Centers, based on the available data.

## 2.2.4 Main (f)actors contributing to /hindering the achievement of results

In addition to specific context factors in each country that positively and negatively influenced the realization of the results, following factors were identified which - across all countries - have influenced the achievement of the results positively or negatively. This overview is not limitative but includes these factors with major impact on the achievement of the results.

<b>(F)actors with a positive influence</b>	<b>(F)actors with a negative influence</b>
<p><b>Programme-bound factors</b> i.e., investments in material, equipment, infrastructure, in strengthening the technical, pedagogic/social skills of teaching and support staff and programme management skills of management staff, including skills on transversal and other topics.</p>	<p><b>Contextual factors</b> such as the <b>security situation</b> in Haiti and Mali, and the <b>pandemic worldwide</b>, resulting in changes and delays of programme activities. Schools and economic sectors had to close for a long period of time, having a direct effect on the execution of courses and IGA (e.g., in El Salvador for more than a year)</p>
<p>Extent to which <b>VTC</b> have a long-term <b>strategy and own vision</b> on how to position themselves as training centers with an integrated, competency-based learning and work oriented approach within the DB structure and philosophy</p>	<p><b>Courses that are sometimes outdated</b> and not sufficiently adapted to changes in the labour market (in content and/or material/equipment), resulting in graduates who are not always sufficiently prepared for what the labour market is looking for</p>
<p>The extent to which <b>VTC teams</b> cooperate as a team altogether and create an environment where students feel at home</p>	<p>At the level of <b>VTC training staff</b>: in some countries there is a need to invest more in capacity strengthening of instructors in function of the needs of the labour market or in function of empowering students not only in a technical way but also motivational and on pedagogic aspects (self-esteem, self-confidence, and related abilities)</p>
<p>Support received by <b>VIA DB Belgium towards the PDO and from the PDO towards the VTC/JPO</b> resulting in strengthening capacities in programme and overall management, in creating more awareness and knowledge on integrating the transversal themes in the programme and to pay attention to financial autonomy</p>	<p><b>Regarding JPO</b>: the lack of sufficient staff to sufficiently meet the needs of students to guide them to the labour market (more could be done but resources were limited)</p>
	<p>In some cases, challenges at <b>VTC management level</b> (e.g., because of staff rotation) resulting in lack of continuity of strategy</p>

## 2.3 Effectiveness – specific objective

Empowerment		Good		
Professional integration		Good		

The specific objective of the 2017-2021 programme of VIA Don Bosco focuses on the empowerment and socio-professional integration of vulnerable youth (girls and boys) between the ages of 15 and 29, through the strengthening of competencies with the help of VIA Don Bosco's partner organizations (the Training Centers, the job placement offices, and the planning offices).

Although VIA Don Bosco and its direct partner - the planning bureaus - do not directly influence the final beneficiaries, in developing this programme VIA Don Bosco chose to formulate the specific objective of the programme at the level of this final target group. VIA Don Bosco works with this final target group through its indirect partners (the VTC/JPO). VIA Don Bosco developed a M&E system that all partners used during the programme period to monitor progress of the results and the specific objective at the level of empowerment and socio-professional integration.

This chapter includes following sections:

- An analysis of how the concept of empowerment and socio-professional integration were perceived by the partners and students, compared to how it was developed by VIA Don Bosco,
- An analysis of the extent to which - qualitatively - partners and (former) students feel that the programme has succeeded in empowering young people and helping them to find work, i.e., achieve the specific objective of the programme. We also compare these results with quantitative monitoring information at partner country level,
- The outreach of the programme. This is important to better understand the realization of the specific objective (based on how this has been monitored by the programme):
  - How many of the enrolled students have graduated during the programme? Did all students enregistered also complete their education?
  - Has there been an increase in the number of girls enrolled within the courses offered by the VTC? And more specifically: has there been an increase of girls in more traditionally male oriented programmes or of boys in more girl-oriented programmes?
- In what way have the results contributed to the realization of the specific objective of the programme?

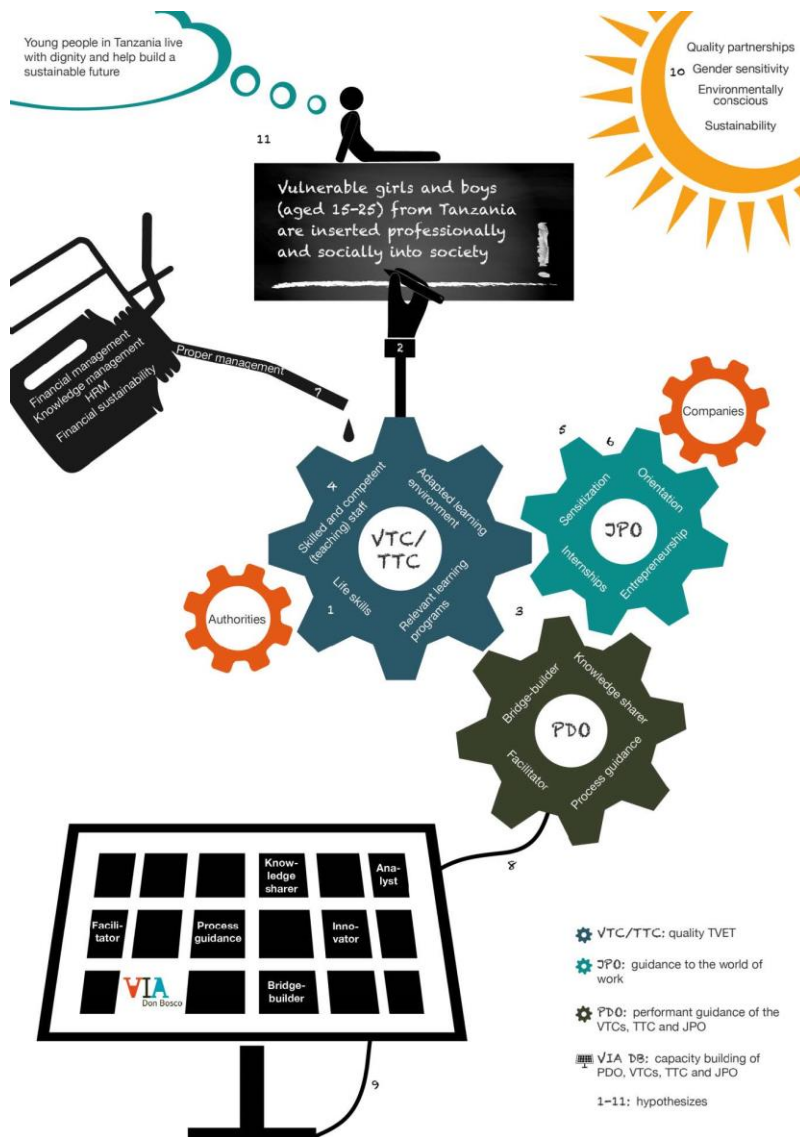
### 2.3.1 Empowerment and Socio-professional Integration – qualitative results

#### **Development of the concept empowerment and socio-professional integration**

Before the 2017-2021 programme was submitted, and building on the results of the 2014-2016 programme, VIA Don Bosco had elaborated the concept of empowerment and socio-professional integration of young people, entering the VTC. The idea behind empowerment is that through short or longer-term technical training, combined with the strengthening of (inter)personal skills, young people could strengthen several competences, "empowering" them as it were. This could help young people, in the first-place vulnerable young people, to learn a profession and increase their chances on the labour market.

According to the model developed by VIA Don Bosco, there are three dimensions to **empowerment at the individual level**: an intrapersonal dimension, an interpersonal dimension, and a behavioural dimension. The first has to do with development of the person (how the person feels), the second with the development of the person in relation to the other (how the person interrelates with others and vice versa) and the third with behaviour of the empowered person. When looking at the interpersonal and behavioural dimension, one could say that both dimensions relate to **development of the person in relation to others or the environment**.

The model also includes a second component i.e., **empowerment at the organizational level** which has to do with the extent of positive influence that the school or work can exert on the well-being of young people. Finally, a third component is about **empowerment at the community level** or the extent to which the broader environment e.g., family, society, friends, community can influence positively the well-being of the youth. It is expected that a young person, who participates in a course at a Don Bosco VTC is optimally empowered when all these levels of empowerment interact in a positive way.



Below is Tanzania's theory of change. Youth empowerment and socio-professional integration of young people in this theory of change is influenced by the interplay between the partner organizations in the first instance and by extension in relation to other strategic actors such as employer organizations, companies, the government, and with VIA Don Bosco and more broadly also the Salesian network. Around all this is also the fabric of the immediate environment (of parents and family) and the social fabric (of friends, the neighborhood, the community) that help empower the young people.

Fig.: Theory of Change, VIA DB. Source: DGD programme 2017-2021 VIA DB.

## An iterative and spiraling way of unlocking potential, empowerment, and socio-professional development

In the theory of change of VIA Don Bosco, empowerment ends when the student leaves the VTC and finds a job. In reality, empowerment is a story that never really ends, in which young people strengthen and develop as if in a spiral, which has a beginning (e.g., when they register at a VTC) but no end. Also, in the period that students follow a course or training, empowerment does not take place in a linear way. We can compare this development of the young person to the Hero's Journey mapped out by Joseph Campbell. The underlying philosophy of the Hero's Journey is that everything needed is already there from the start, when we are born, that this potential is already there but for some reason not or not sufficiently unlocked. To become aware of our own potential, we need to be able to get to know ourselves, but also to face challenges that come up during that learning journey, that need to be overcome, to take next steps.

The Hero's Journey says that there are three stages in this development: **Separation (1)**: see the following figure) which is the awareness by the youngster that something is not right and needs to change, in the case of the programme's beneficiaries this is the situation the youngsters find themselves in at the moment they enroll in the programme), **Initiation (2)** which is the stage they have to go through to learn new things (the 'call to adventure'), stepping into a 'world' they don't know, facing and overcoming their own personal obstacles, and **Return (3)** which is the 'return' to the community in a different way than before, the start of a new job,... The hero in this story (the male or female youngster) does not do this alone but gets help from outside (in this case the VTC, the JPO, VIA DB)). Two 'worlds' can be seen in the figure: **the unknown world (special world)**, when the young person embarks on the adventure of empowerment but does not know what this will be like, and the **known 'ordinary' world** from which the youngster leaves to start the learning journey and returns home to start a job, an enterprise.

The Hero's Journey makes clear that empowerment helps to increase social and professional integration, and that social and professional integration are also empowering, i.e., the application of the theory of change is iterative helping to bring young people to the next level. So, in practice, the theory of change is more like a spiral where empowerment and socio-professional integration interact with one another.

This is what the interviews with young people also revealed during the evaluation (see below). The goal of the support by the VTC and JPO is, however, that the graduates are sufficiently prepared by the VTC and JPO for these challenges without receiving any more support. It would therefore be interesting to know from graduates after some time, besides the employment question at the end of the training, if the preparation by the VTC/JPO was sufficiently relevant and met the needs during that first period in the labour market.

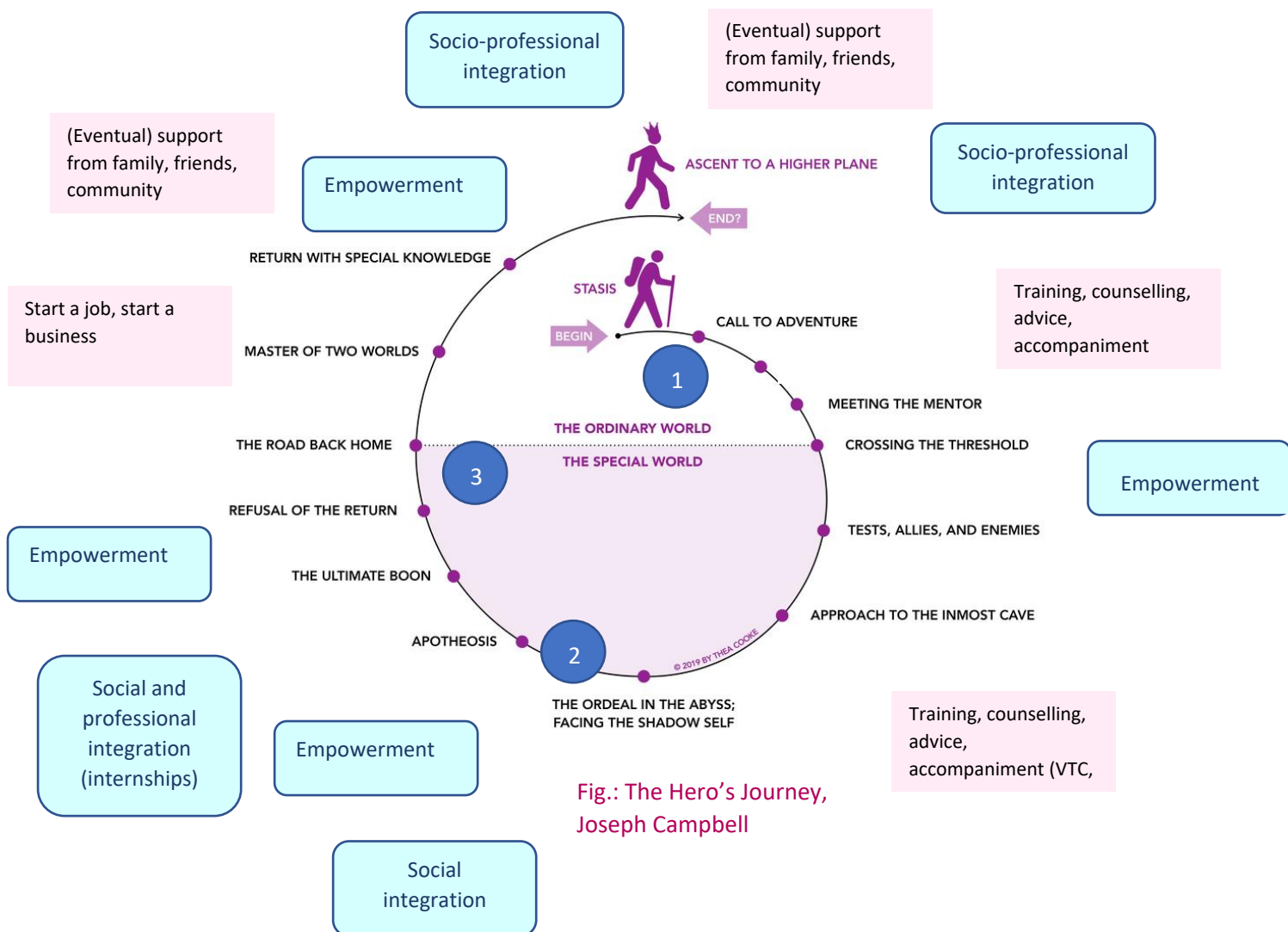


Fig.: The Hero's Journey, Joseph Campbell

### How empowerment and socio-professional integration is being perceived by partners

The empowerment model was not developed together with the partners. The partners are familiar with the idea of empowerment, but they do not necessarily explain it in the same way as the framework described above.

According to partners, empowerment and socio-professional integration are very closely related, interdependent and mutually reinforcing, yet **empowerment is often seen by partners as a necessary condition to achieve socio-professional integration**. Overall, empowerment is related to feeling reinforced thanks to the strengthening of (inter) personal skills, technical abilities, and values (e.g., showing the correct behavior on the work floor like respect, engagement, and work ethics).

The evaluators asked partners about how they would explain empowerment, across all countries.

Summarized, their answers were the following:

**“From when a young person is considered empowered, with support from the training centers and employment offices?”** According to partners from African and Latin American countries, an empowered young person



- Can effectively apply acquired (technical and social) skills and knowledge to become **financially independent and self-reliant** (through stable employment), through a job in a company or through setting up a business themselves
- **Feels self-assured** (no more fear), is free to express themselves, shows more openness, improves behavior/lifestyle/values, can show self-leadership (e.g., being able to make decisions, solve problems) and in this way
- **Has self-confidence** and belief in his or her own strengths
- Can form and **express his/her own opinion**, have a good direction for his/her life, have clear goals
- **Becomes a good and responsible employee/entrepreneur/citizen** in the community and society

Furthermore, partners were asked about their interpretation of social and professional integration. We made a distinction here because socio-professional integration goes further than professional integration = finding a job or starting a business. In the training centers, young people are not only prepared to find a job but also to better maintain themselves in society. This is important as many of these young people come from an environment where violence, at home or on the streets, poverty, teenage pregnancies, single parent families, etcetera are the everyday situation.

We further made a distinction between what partners in Latin America and partners in Africa think about this, because there are some nuance differences between partners from the two continents:

According to the **partners from African partner countries**, **“a young person is considered socially integrated, with support from the training centers and the employment offices”**, when he/she

- Is **financially responsible** for the family's livelihood (thanks to stable employment)
- is **accepted, respected, trusted, recognized** in the family, in the local community and in society
- participates in family and community **decision making**
- participates in **social movements or civil society organizations**, or even at the level of politics.
- is a **catalyst for change** and development in society
- **enjoys an improved social status** within the local community and society, e.g., by getting married, paying the school fees/hospital expenses of family members.

According to the **partners from Latin American and Caribbean countries**, **“a young person is socially integrated, with support from the training centers and the employment offices”**, when he/she

- lives by **certain values**, not only in the job but also at home, with friends
- has become a **‘better’ person to his/her environment** and **knows him/herself better**
- shows more responsibility, takes on more responsibility/**shows more self-leadership**
- has formed a stronger character → adopts **more mature attitudes** toward others
- **engages** in more interpersonal relationships with family, in society
- is **empathetic** towards others

The third question from when a young person, supported by the Training Centers and employment office, is considered professionally integrated was generally answered in the same way by partners from both African and Latin American countries:

**“From when a young person is considered professionally integrated, with support from the training centers and employment offices?”** According to partners from African and Latin American countries, a professionally integrates young person

- **Has the capacity to practice a profession** to acquire financial means to support him/herself and his/her family
- **Can sustain oneself in different work situations** e.g., can negotiate an employment contract, know what to do to keep the job (sustainable employment)
- **Has a job where he/she is valued** and can show what he/she is worth (less in African partner countries)
- **Has a job where he/she can grow/deepen** professionally (less in African partner countries)

### How do graduates and students of the VTC perceive empowerment and socio-professional integration, related to the support received from the VTC/JPO?

A selection of individual interviews and focus group discussions with young people<sup>31</sup> were conducted to gain more insight into the extent to which young people feel that they have become empowered and socio-professionally integrated with the help of the training centers and job placement offices (see the annexes in the case countries). In general, the consulted youth perceive this support as very positive and important in their lives. **The results from the focus groups confirm the partners' responses summarized above** (see next example).<sup>32</sup>

*In Tanzania, all graduates and trainees who participated in the focus group discussions in Oyster Bay and Dodoma VTC reported that the programme is or has been very helpful, it has empowered them to acquire employable skills, both vocational and social skills. They also reported that they feel satisfied with the support they are getting from VTC and JSO. During discussions with them, it was revealed that vocational skills, communications skills, self-awareness, confidence, time management skills, resilience, teamwork are among the most important technical and social skills young people need to learn to look for / to keep a job as well as to stand their ground in society.*

*They also claimed that VTC and JSO have been able to provide those skills to them in an integrated approach. All graduates who participated in the focus group discussions believe that vocational training, life skills, counseling, field attachments, seminars and job placement opportunities have greatly helped them to find jobs, get promotion opportunities and socialize well with people at work, home and in the society. One graduate provided the following testimony: "The Company I am working for, was in need of a supervisor with computer skills, but since I was there with computer knowledge and skills that I obtained from Don Bosco VTC Oyster Bay, I got promoted to supervisor level." while another interviewed graduate mentioned: "Life skills training helped me to adjust easily in different environments at home and workplace" (Source: final evaluation, Tanzania report (Feb 2022).*

<sup>31</sup> Aim was one focus group per visited training center with a mix of male and female graduates and students and minimum one impact interview per visited training center

<sup>32</sup> As a remark, in Haiti, "empowerment", translated as "autonomation", is not always well understood. It is quickly confused with financial independence, or self-employment. The term in English ("empowerment") causes less confusion.



## 2.3.2 Empowerment and Socio-professional Integration – quantitative results

### Empowerment

#### Empowerment, measured by the empowerment questionnaire

To monitor progress toward the specific objective, VIA Don Bosco developed a survey to be filled out by students after completion of their training or course. The survey first explores several aspects related to how the person feels about him/herself and his/her professional future, as well as the extent to which the person feels he/she still needs to strengthen to gain more control over his/her life. Subsequently, the survey asks what has already helped most in finding a job so far. There is no specific reference to the VTC/JPO in the questions, but the survey is conducted when students have completed a training or course. This assumes that the questions can be seen in relation to the completed training or course. A final question explores what young people think they still need to increase their chances on the job market.

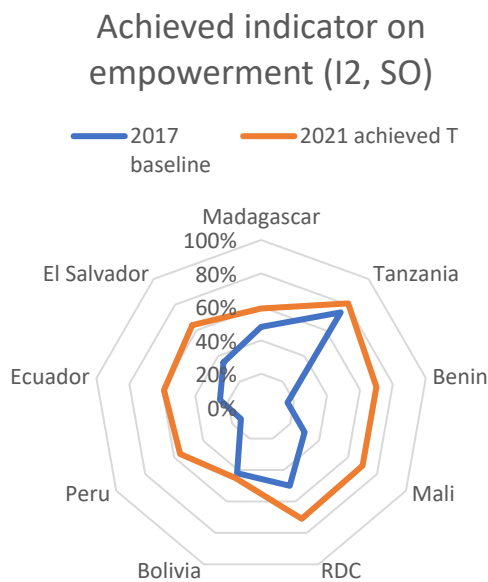
The first part of the survey probes several personal aspects including a question about the extent to which students feel **empowered**. This question is particularly used to measure the specific objective indicator on empowerment. The concept of empowerment is not explained in the question. Students are free to interpret it as they want. The statement about 'empowerment' in the questionnaire does not explore the influence by the support provided by the VTC/JPO since this is not asked explicitly, for example, by adding a statement to know more about the contribution of the VTC/JPO for instance *"Who did influence this acquired state of empowerment"*.

For the respondents who filled out the survey, the statement on empowerment is in fact a very general statement: *'to what extent do you agree with the following statement? 'In general, I feel strengthened, empowered'*. This means that answers to the question on empowerment do not necessarily explain a relationship between support received from the Center and the level of empowerment. Consequently, the student could answer this question without necessarily relating it to the support received by the Centre. However, the results are used by VIA Don Bosco to measure the empowerment indicator in the logical framework which suggests or at least assumes a relationship between empowerment and support received by the VTC/JPO. This is very likely to be the case, but it is not questioned directly in the empowerment survey.

The results of the statement on empowerment in the empowerment questionnaire for the period 2019-2021 were analyzed by the evaluators as follows (see next table and analysis):

% of young people feeling empowered once the training or course has ended											
Country	2017 baseline	2021 target	2019			2020			2021		
			F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T
Madagascar	48%	58%	49%	52%	52%	31%	33%	32%	74%	48%	59%
Tanzania	74%	80%	79%	82%	82%	79%	78%	78%	76%	84%	81%
Benin	16%	32%	57%	67%	66%	68%	58%	61%	62%	71%	70%
Mali	30%	45%	64%	71%	70%	43%	60%	58%	85%	69%	70%
RDC	50%	70%	72%	67%	70%	68%	37%	46%	75%	67%	71%
Bolivia	42%	62%	49%	52%	50%	36%	45%	40%	45%	44%	45%
Ecuador	16%(F)/ 30%(H)	60%	67%	63%	64%	N/A	N/A	51%	58%	59%	59%
Peru	14%	72%	54%	48%	51%	28%	40%	33%	52%	50%	56%
El Salvador	35%	60%	58%	46%	50%	47%	49%	49%	65%	63%	64%
Haiti	15%	50%	49%	47%	48%	50%	45%	48%	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table: Level of empowerment, indicator 2, Specific Objective logical framework. Source: Resumoni 2019-2021<sup>33,34,35</sup>



Comparing the 2021 target with the baseline situation, the expectation in all partner countries was to increase the % of empowerment of graduate students. At the end of 2021, 6 of 10<sup>36</sup> countries had achieved the 2021 target on empowerment (based on the available information when compiling the meta-report). Sometimes this expectation was moderate e.g., in Madagascar with a baseline of 48% in 2017 and a target of 58% in 2021. In other countries, the ambition was higher e.g., in Peru with a baseline of 14% in 2017 and a target of 72% by 2021, or in Haiti with a baseline of 15% and a target of 50%. By working on the quality of the education processes, this

percentage was supposed to increase.

Comparing the baseline situation in 2017 with the situation at the end of 2021 (see figure), overall, the VTC have made progress between 2017 and end of 2021 in empowering the students (assuming the VTC have had an impact on the extent to which the students feel empowered). The differences in % between the partners in one country, which can sometimes be quite large, are not visible in the table above.

<sup>33</sup> Cameroon was not included in this table since the empowerment questionnaire is not filled out there (because of a different institutional setting and manner of execution of the programme)

<sup>34</sup> For Ecuador, the empowerment indicator was not filled out for 2021 at the time of this meta-report

<sup>35</sup> For Haiti, the % of the empowerment indicator for 2021 had not been filled out by all the VTC at the time of this meta-report

<sup>36</sup> See remark 32

Even though an increase could be observed when comparing the starting (2017) and end situation (2021), there was no gradual increase from year to year. Next to the programme, other factors also have influenced empowerment such as age and personal characteristics of the student and the often-precarious context in which students live and study. Each year, other students complete the survey. Sometimes in some countries the sample was very small (see table below) which could also have influenced the results from year to year.

The % of students feeling empowered decline in 2020 in all countries except in Haiti (status quo). This can be explained by the COVID pandemic, which prevented many Centers from conducting their activities as planned for a time, and young people had a very difficult time keeping their morale up during that period. The programme adapted in many countries and started to organize modules (online) and to provide other support to help students and their families and to maintain contacts as much as possible from a distance. Despite these efforts, this did not prevent the % going down in 2020.

Significant differences between girls and boys could not be observed. Sometimes girls feel more empowered than boys, sometimes it is the other way around. In 2021, the percentages tend not to be far from one another.

It is important to notice that the table and figure above are not meant for a detailed comparison between countries, also because there are underlying contextual and institutional differences between partners from country to country. Further, between 2017 and 2021 the number of respondents to the empowerment questionnaire was tied to the number of students graduating each year, and this could vary a lot from partner to partner, year to year and country to country.<sup>37</sup>

### Other components in the empowerment questionnaire

So far in this chapter, particular attention was paid to the evolution of the empowerment component questioned in the empowerment questionnaire by only one statement. This is because particularly this statement on empowerment serves as an input to measure the empowerment indicator in the programme.

In addition to the empowerment statements, three other components are also questioned through a statement in the empowerment questionnaire: **self-confidence, being positive about the future professional career and having control over your own life**. During the 2017-2021 programme, these components were not an integral part of the measurement of empowerment in the programme but measured separately. This was a deliberate choice at the beginning of the programme, even when the scoring of the indicator depends on how students interpret empowerment, which can differ from one person to another. From 2022 onwards, empowerment will be measured otherwise, considering 4 different aspects that altogether contribute to empowerment, leaving less space for free interpretation by the students when filling out the survey on empowerment.

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<sup>37</sup> The information for the empowerment indicator was to be obtained from the empowerment questionnaire, to be filled in by students finishing a course or training. In practice, the data from this questionnaire did not always correspond to the data in the partners' Resumoni, the M&E tool that contains the final values of all the indicators that monitored the progress of the programme 2017-2021.

By way of example, the results of the empowerment survey of three countries (Peru, Haiti, and Mali) were analyzed into more detail to see to what extent the 3 other aspects, mentioned above, fluctuate in the same way as the empowerment indicator. These three countries were chosen because the values in the Resumoni did not raise any questions, the scores were available until the end of 2021, and given their +- similar context (fragile, either due to a security situation or COVID-19). We did not look separately at girls and boys. The idea was not to compare the results of this analysis between countries, but to see whether the same patterns could be observed in the three countries, even with a different context and eventual differences between the target groups.

Overall, it was noticed for the three countries that initially in 2017 students show a very optimistic view of their professional future. Students feel capable of taking life into their own hands and have a lot of self-confidence. For the three countries, the scores of students who give an 8, 9 or 10 on these three statements lie between 80 and 90% for Haiti and Peru and between 73 and 79% for Mali. That is quite high. Comparing to the final situation in 2020, all the scores for Haiti and Peru have decreased but are still high (with a more substantial distribution between 8-10 score), while in Mali all three scores are also more distributed between 8-10, but overall have increased slightly compared to the initial situation in 2017. In Haiti and Peru, the situation worsened contextually from the early 2020 onwards and this may have affected the final scores more than in Mali. When looking at the empowerment score in the survey, it decreases mainly in Peru and Haiti but increases in Mali, in line with the increase of the other three components mentioned above. **This means that while the empowerment score decreased, the other components (self-confidence, having control over your life, being positive about the future professional career) also decreased (in Haiti and Peru) and vice versa (in Mali).**

No overall conclusions can be drawn from these examples since only three countries were looked at. Given the fact though that those components seem related, and that two of the three components were also regularly mentioned by young people and partners in the interviews/focus groups during the final evaluation as being an important element of empowerment and social integration, namely self-leadership, and self-confidence, it may be interesting to investigate the integration of these components into the measurement of empowerment in the future (i.e., as a combined indicator, making empowerment a proxy indicator).

Linking the results of empowerment to what came out of Sensemaker in Bolivia and Madagascar, it is noticed that most of the elements measured through Sensemaker such as personal empowerment (be an active member of society, feel capable, be in control of your own life), behavioural empowerment (making choices, problem solving) were also mentioned in this evaluation during impact interviews and focus groups in countries where Sensemaker is not being used. This means that students and graduates believe that the programme have had an influence on these aspects.

## Sensemaker

In addition to the empowerment questionnaire, two countries, Bolivia and Madagascar used the Sensemaker instrument in this programme. We already indicated that youth who score the empowerment statement in the empowerment questionnaire do so based on their own interpretation of what empowerment is. The components that explain the concept of empowerment in VIA Don Bosco's original empowerment framework are not further developed in the survey except that in addition to empowerment in general, self-confidence and the extent to which students feel they have control over their own lives are also probed.

Sensemaker was introduced in 2017 to better describe the concept of empowerment when presented to students for scoring. The initial concept of empowerment was incorporated into the application and developed, including the component personal empowerment, relational empowerment, and behavioral empowerment.

VIA Don Bosco makes use of SM because of its potential of “seeing the world” through the eyes of their beneficiaries: the young people. It is not only their story that is “voiced” but also their perception of the programme’s key concepts of empowerment and decent work, therefore offering a lot of potential for learning and improving the programme’s strategy.

SenseMaker is a narrative-based methodology that enables the capture and analysis of a large amount of short micro-narratives to understand complex change.

Respondents are asked to situate if their story is about (i) self-confidence, (ii) life skills or (iii) social relations, or a combination between these three options. The desired change of empowerment is that students through their studies get enriched, indicating that their story tells about the balance between self-confidence, life skills and social relations.

As is the case with the empowerment survey, the respondents who completed the survey in 2017, 2019, and 2021 are mostly other youth, as the training within the Training Centers sometimes takes only a few months, and most long-term training lasts 1 to 2 years. In Madagascar, there was a course that lasted three years. Specific attention was paid to the information collected from these students who were able to tell their stories in both 2017 and 2019. The analysis shows that the results follow the overall trends of the other groups. This is an interesting finding because it would mean that the fact that different (groups of) young people, completing the empowerment survey, are not necessarily a factor that explains differences in scores on empowerment.

## Madagascar

In Madagascar, in 2017, a total of 807 youth shared their stories. In May 2019 and July 2021, story collection at the SDB Center in Mahajanga could be added. A total of 1074 and 1077 stories were collected respectively, following the same sampling strategy. All students or graduates of one of the seven Vocation Training Centers supported by VIA Don Bosco in the 2017-2021 programme. The stories were collected in classrooms, with groups of 15 to 25 youth. Also, the evolution among the youth in work/unemployed of 2017, 2019 and 2021 was studied. Always keeping in mind, the gender perspective.

The SenseMaker process in Madagascar gave insight into how students and young graduates perceive their empowerment. It allowed to analyze the schooling process and the entry into the workplace through the eyes of our beneficiaries: the youth themselves. The analysis of the patterns shows that, overall, there is a positive impact of the training on several domains between 2017-2021: **more positive emotions** related to the stories, a greater focus on the position in the middle of "**feeling capable**" and "**being in control of one's life**", **an improvement in life skills (self-confidence, having influence on the situation, being in control of one's professional future)**, and also a **disappearance of the biggest differences between male and female students in terms of personal empowerment**.

The 2021 graduates more often link the feeling of hope/optimism to their story and less often the feeling of sadness, compared to the 2017 and 2019 graduates. This is even more pronounced for the female students between them. This suggests that **the 2017-2021 programme had positive effects on the feelings of young graduates, especially girls, even in a period impacted by Covid**.

## Bolivia

In Bolivia, stories could be collected from 954 youth in 2017, 1042 youth in 2019 and 1759 youth in June 2021. The main findings across the three measurement periods are as follows:

- **More positive emotions** related to the stories are evident as the youth advance in their educational and professional careers.
- There is a positive impact on youth as they **more frequently link self-confidence** to their stories and **assertiveness** for youth in the workplace.
- Graduated students indicate feeling much more **capable and competent** at the end of the programme, a change that is more pronounced for women.
- For female graduates at work the most notable increase in feeling is **feeling capable and competent** and for male graduates at work it is feeling like an active member of society.
- Graduated students in the workplace indicate **having more influence and more control over their future careers in their story situations**.
- In general, there is an **increase in skills and knowledge of young people** involved in trainings in the VTC.
- The trends for youth in the workplace show an impact on providing stronger education/better support for youth, enabling them to be **better positioned in the world of work**.
- In addition, there is an **impact on the influence of parents/family** on the one hand, and **employers on the other hand**, as they become more important during programme implementation, an impact due to the training of young people and job placement offices.

Overall, it was noticed that those aspects in which young people feel empowered – mentioned during the final evaluation and confirmed by programme and teaching staff from the VTC/JPO - are also reflected to some extent in the results of Sensemaker. The advantage and strength of Sensemaker is that this instrument shows the evolution of youth perceives empowerment, gathered through stories ("the eyes") of the final beneficiaries, from the start till the end of the programme. Sensemaker did also explicitly search a potential relationship between empowerment and the influence of the training Center (and other actors such as family, friends, etcetera), which is not included in the empowerment questionnaire.

Through these stories, Sensemaker shows how the training centers in Bolivia and Madagascar have

supported empowerment with youth. The final evaluation can also make visible this evolution, but, based on the available M&E information, not that substantiated and scientifically proven as Sensemaker can and has done for Bolivia and Madagascar. At best, and this is what has been done during the final evaluation, impact cases at the level of the students can illustrate how empowerment has played a role in the lives of students and graduates, particularly related to employment. But these stories are a snapshot, a picture at a given moment at the end of the programme period, showing how the VTC/JPO have influenced the (ex)students, but not showing the evolution of influence. The empowerment survey may give some indication or direction for this but no more than that.

## Professional integration

To measure the professional integration of students, the programme 2017-2021 integrated 1 main indicator, namely the number of students who find a job x time after graduation. This period is different from country to country e.g., in Tanzania this is measured up to 6 months after graduation. In Benin, a person must already have a contract for at least 3 months (but within 12 months after graduation). For Ecuador and Haiti, employment is considered to 12 months after graduation.

Regarding this indicator, both having a job as an employee and being self-employed are considered. Under this indicator, further distinction is made between employment of girls and boys. And within this distinction, it is specified to what extent the employment meets the standards of decent work, both when it concerns a job as an employee and when it concerns a self-employed job. In the analysis, it was decided to look at the first indicator of decent work each time (in some countries two different indicators are calculated based on how decent work is defined, but the values of these two indicators do usually not differ significantly). For Ecuador, the second category of alumni<sup>38</sup> was not considered in the analysis, assuming that, without this group, the indicator on professional integration sufficiently shows the evolution and trends between 2017 and 2021.

The table below shows the evolution of the achieved professional integration in the partner countries (during 2017-2021). The figures on which the findings below are based come from a survey<sup>39</sup>, completed each year by students from the VTC after their graduation. The figure does not automatically correspond to the total number of graduating students, since not all graduating students fill out the survey.

Cameroon was not included in the table below because indicators - other than employment - were used to measure progress on the specific objective. Cameroon is discussed separately (see further in this chapter).

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<sup>38</sup> The “egresados” in the Resumoni

<sup>39</sup> Managed by the JPO of the involved CFP

Country	Year	Indicator: % questioned graduates (female/male/total) having found a paid job/created their own business within x months after graduation/ending their training (compared to all graduates having answered the questionnaire sent by the JPO)
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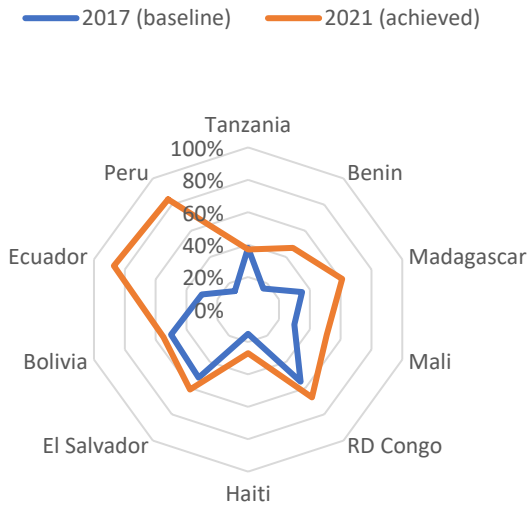
Country	year	Female	Male	Total
Tanzania	2017 (baseline)			38%
	2019	42%	49%	46%
	2020	16%	42%	25%
	2021	36%	46%	43%
	2021 (target)			55%
Benin	2017			16%
	2019	25%	44%	41%
	2020	33%	48%	45%
	2021	17%	52%	47%
	2021 (target)			32%
Madagascar	2017			35%
	2019	36%	59%	47%
	2020	55%	55%	55%
	2021	63%	60,2%	61%
	2021 (target)			45%
Mali	2017			30%
	2019	33%	58%	56%
	2020	38%	52%	52%
	2021	50%	52%	51%
	2021 (target)			45%
RD Congo	2017			55%
	2019	21%	63%	64%
	2020	73%	81%	79%
	2021	57%	72%	67%
	2021 (target)			65%

Country	Year	Female	Male	Total
Haiti	2017 (baseline)			15%
	2019	53%	53%	53%
	2020	41%	66%	51%
	2021	N/A	N/A	N/A
	2021 (target)			50%
El Salvador	2017			52%
	2019	35%	62%	45%
	2020	50%	63%	58%
	2021	39%	85%	61%
	2021 (target)			73%
Bolivia	2017			50%
	2019	50%	69%	58%
	2020	87%	93%	91%
	2021	65%	46%	55%
	2021 (target)			79%
Ecuador	2017			30%
	2019	55%	69%	64%
	2020	59%	74%	66%
	2021	94%	83%	87%
	2021 (target)			67%
Peru	2017			14%
	2019	37%	75%	62%
	2020	35%	70%	48%
	2021	83%	88%	84%
	2021 (target)			60%

Table: Evolution of the indicator on professional integration (SO I1, logical framework). Source: Resumoni 2017-2021.



## Professional integration (I1, SO)



## Employment situation between 2017 and 2021

Although the COVID pandemic did not strike equally across the globe, its effects have been, and continue to be, felt everywhere. In Latin America including the Caribbean countries, for example, the average unemployment rate for young people between the ages of 15 and 24 reached 23.8 percent in the first quarter of 2021. This is the highest level since this average was established in 2006. At the same time, according to the ILO, the youth labour force participation rate also experienced a contraction, also by almost 3 percentage points, to 45.6 percent. By early 2021, between two and three million young people were excluded from the labour force in this region

because of the lack of job opportunities<sup>40</sup>. In Africa, a study of the African Development Bank estimated that overall in the continent, economic growth in the continent shrank by 2.1% in 2020 (-1.5% West-Africa, and a moderate growth of 0.7% in East-Africa).

The last two years (2020-2021) young people across the world has faced specific challenges during the pandemic (in some countries more than in others) which disadvantaged them in comparison to adults – including having less work experience and financial capital, weaker social networks and being prone to higher levels of informality and in-work poverty. For instance, lockdown measures which allowed teleworking helped those already in work but not the young people who were actively seeking work, just leaving school, or entering newly created jobs.

Against this context, social and economic impacts have improved in partner countries, with support of the programme. In 6 of the 10 countries where VIA DB and its partners have been working on professional integration during 2017-2021<sup>41</sup>, the final target on professional integration has been achieved in 2021 (table above ). Compared to the initial situation in 2017 (baseline), the % of professional integration has been improved in all countries. 7 out of 10 countries improved their professional integration target above 50% of the graduated students.

This means that, of all graduates having filled out the survey sent by the JPO, in the course of 2017-2021, more graduates in these countries have found a job or created self-employment (formal and informal) by the end of 2021, compared to the initial situation in 2017.

Assuming that the provided figures on employment are correct, and knowing that not all graduates have completed the JPO's survey on employment, then professional integration can be considered

<sup>40</sup> Jeugdwerkloosheid in Latijns-Amerika is 'tikkende tijdbom' (MO\*, 17th of August 2021).

<sup>41</sup> Not including Cameroon, since this indicator was not measured there during 2017-2021.

as 'good': 6 out of 10 partner countries have achieved their 2021 target on professional integration, while professional integration of students has improved in all partner countries, compared to 2017<sup>42</sup>.

It was noted that a number of students who graduated from a VTC did not seek employment immediately but used the credential to pursue further education. While this was not the primary objective of the VTC, it can also be viewed positively because it indicates that these young people wanted to make an effort to move forward in life (although in a different way than by looking for a job).

Looking at Tanzania as one of the countries where the final goal was not (yet) achieved, the realized employment numbers at the end of 2021 remain rather low, compared to the baseline situation in 2017. The country evaluation report in Tanzania explains this as follows:

*"The job opportunities on the formal labour market are scarce (especially in the Dodoma area where only 11% of the graduates found a job in 2020 while 48% of graduates of VTC Oysterbay secured employment). The market can only absorb about 10% of all youngsters that enter the labour market every year. And this situation got even worse in the past 2 years because of Covid."*

Other reasons are also given for this low percentage - some of which are mentioned by partners in other countries as well - are:

- Trainees' limited interest in entrepreneurship
- Limited initiative / ownership of trainees
- Outdated equipment and machinery
- Limited financial and technical support for self-employment
- Limited accompaniment by the JPO for self-employment
- Limited command of the English language

As for Peru, the decrease in employment figures in 2020 can be explained by the COVID pandemic, hitting hard in Latin America and especially in Peru. Peru suffered one of the highest per capita COVID-19 death rates in the world, despite an initial strict national lockdown between March and June 2020, and subsequent regional lockdowns between July and September 2020. Luckily, the indicator improved again in 2021.

## Differences between female and male graduates

Zooming in on the figures to differentiate between girls and boys gives us an extra perspective on the progress made. Looking at the extent to which female students have been able to find a job or create a job after graduation, often the girls did not achieve the final goal on professional integration.

In the chapter on results, the difficulty of increasing enrollment of girls in TVET programmes was discussed. Based on the figures above, it turns out that there is not only a gap between girls and boys regarding enrollment in TVET programmes, but also after graduation there remains a gap between girls and boys to find a job (in some countries). Looking at the 2020 figures for instance at Peru, male graduates were likely to find a job twice as much as female graduates (this difference reduced in 2021). This is in line with studies in Peru mentioning that there exists a significant gender gap in

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<sup>42</sup> Idem

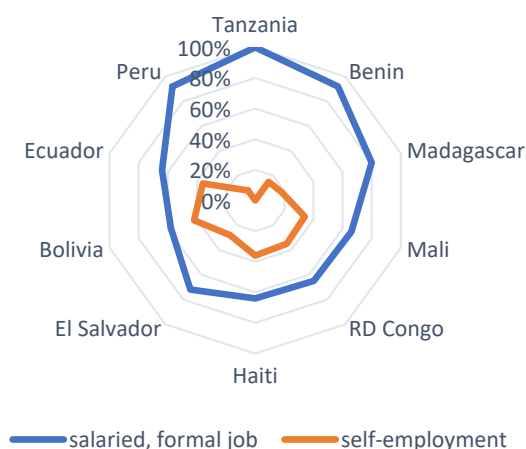
relation to subsequent earnings and employment opportunities.<sup>43</sup> The gap between female and male graduates having found a job was also high in Benin, and in El Salvador (2021).

## Employment vs. self-employment

The professional integration indicator makes distinction between graduates having found a salaried or a self-employed job. Whereas VIA Don Bosco compares the number of graduates having found a (self-employed) job to the total number of graduates responding to the questionnaire, the evaluators compared graduates with a salaried or a self-employed job to all graduates having found a job within a certain period- established by VIA DB- after graduation and who filled out the questionnaire. The evaluators further compared youth with a decent paid job compared to all youngsters having found a job (not including self-employment) and filling out the questionnaire. This analysis was repeated for self-employment.

Initially, the **decent** work indicator was not included in the programme logical framework, but later added (from 2018 onwards). This because young people regularly seemed to find jobs not meeting the established criteria of decent work. These were often part-time jobs, temporary, subcontracted, very poorly paid or without much respect for other labour and even human rights.

### formal (salaried) job vs. self-employment



During the 2017-2021 programme period, of all graduates having found a job and having answered the survey of the JPO, the % of graduates finding a paid job was significantly higher than the % graduates having started their own business. At the same time, a slight increase of self-employment in several countries could be noticed over the last 3 years.

High formal employment rates in Peru were noted among graduates from the partner VTC, while Peru ranks #4 in the world in terms of informal economy (El Salvador ranks #5). This high figure could mean several things. First, that young people who attended a training at

the VTC did not do so primarily to start their own business but rather to find a paid job within a company. Second, young people were trained within the Center to start a business because there were few other employment alternatives in the region. A third reason could have been - and this can differ from Center to Center - that not all Centers were equipped or prepared yet to train young people to start their own business.

<sup>43</sup> Sánchez, Favara, and Porter (2021), mentioned by “the Challenges of Inequality and COVID-19 for Young People in Peru, Young Lives Policy Brief 50, August 2021.

In Tanzania for example, the VTC did not train youth in entrepreneurial skills neither did they give support (yet) in setting up a business on their own. The evaluation also revealed that in Tanzania there does not exist (yet) a culture of entrepreneurship (yet) among the trainees.

Another reason that could explain the high rate of paid jobs among graduates having found a job in the partner countries could be that mainly youth who have found a paid job have filled out the JPO survey, for whatever reason.

Another explanation for the higher numbers on formal employment could be that in some countries, self-employment was not monitored and therefore, the comparison between formal employment and self-employment becomes invalid. In El Salvador, the choice was made explicitly to monitor only those graduates with a paid job and not the ones with a self-employed job. This is an understandable decision knowing that El Salvador is ranked fifth in the world on the list of informal economy with a high rate of self-employed workers. In this context, finding a formal job can be considered as a greater achievement than starting your own business. Attention needs to be paid though that self-employment is not seen as an inferior alternative to finding a paid job. When young people are trained to start their own business, supported with a business and marketing plan, then this is different from starting a business just to survive. In practice, however, it was observed that the latter often happens, also because young people tend to lack starting capital to start their own business, especially young people from vulnerable backgrounds. This, whether or not in combination with no working experience, result in youngster (including those who have the skill and money) who often prefer to work a couple of years (in decent or less decent labour circumstances) to have some experience and network before starting their own business.

## Decent work

The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines decent work as “productive work for women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity”. In general, work is considered as decent when:

- It pays a fair income
- It guarantees a secure form of employment and safe working conditions
- It ensures equal opportunities and treatment for all
- It includes social protection for the workers and their families
- It offers prospects for personal development and encourages social integration
- Workers are free to express their concerns and to organize

It was not possible to determine whether all partners of VIA Don Bosco use this ILO- definition or if they have formulated their own definition of decent work<sup>44</sup>. This may have influenced the results. Anyway, as indicated earlier, results shown below are not intended to be compared between countries.

Looking at the results of the past three years, an overall decline of students having found a decent job (once graduated) could be noticed. Reasons for this could be shrinking formal employment opportunities in the labour market, the COVID pandemic, or other reasons.

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<sup>44</sup> After disseminating the ILO principles in 2018 by VIA DB to the partners, each partner has defined a set of criteria for their concept of decent work in their country PRG (ref. Resumoni).

## Achievement of the Specific Objective in Cameroon

The specific objective of the 2017-2021 programme in Cameroon is different from the rest of the programme. Therefore, a specific paragraph is dedicated to the achievement of the specific objective in Cameroon. Unlike in other countries where VIA DB is active, in Cameroon there are no partners who are part of the Salesian network. VIA DB's direct partner is the Platform for the Promotion of Family Educational Centres for Work-related Training (PROCEFFA). It brings together the Promoting Organisations (POs) and is responsible for helping them to achieve their missions. The POs are the organisers and managers of the Family the Family Centres for Work-related Training (CEFFAs). Of the 17 POs members of PROCEFFA, 11 are supported by VIA DB in the framework of its programme in Cameroon. Three of them are also supported by the French association IECD. The 11 PO oversee the operation of a total of 23 CEFFAs (the 23 CEFFAs are the 18 CEFFAs+ (3-year training) plus the 5 IFERS (*Instituts de Formation en Entreprenariat Rural*, 4-year training). VIA DB's action in Cameroon aims to achieve (specific objective) that young people in rural and peri-urban Cameroon, boys and girls, receive in the CEFFAs+/ IFERS a comprehensive integral quality training that prepares them to integrate into socio-professional life and to contribute to sustainable local development.

The survey responses from partners in Cameroon show that there is **not always a clear distinction among the different partners between the key concepts of the specific objective** (empowerment, social integration, sustainable local development). In terms of professional integration, however, there is a common understanding. Partners consulted during the end evaluation define professional integration as:

- Starting a small farm business,
- Being a farmer taking exemplary action and having a multiplier effect that inspires other local farmers.

According to the PROCEFFA team interviewed during the end evaluation, social and professional integration are inseparable. The two concepts are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. But as young people return to their rural communities/families after their training to start an agricultural activity (farming or livestock), successful social integration is an absolute necessity to enable them to pursue a successful agricultural activity. The programme does not explicitly talk about empowerment but considers social life skills as an important strategy for young people to feel empowered and strengthened to facilitate their socio-professional integration.

The extent to which professional integration takes place depends largely on the degree of integration of the CEFFA in the local environment (= degree of co-management by local organisations, including the CEFFA's parents' associations).

According to the 2021 internal monitoring reports, **the indicators of the specific objective were largely achieved** by the end of the programme in 2021: 97% of learners passed the MINE-FOP exams (against the planned rate of 100%) and 97% of learners passed the MINE-SEC exams (against the planned rate of 45%).

The other two indicators were almost achieved by the partners: 14 out of 23 CEFFAs achieved a satisfactory score in terms of **comprehensive training of young people** (compared to a forecast of

17 CEFFAs) while 16 out of 23 CEFFAs obtained a satisfactory score in terms of **contribution to community development** (compared to a forecast of 17 CEFFAs).

The responses to the survey, filled out by the partners in Cameroon during this end evaluation, also indicate that there are a **multitude of factors** (outside the sphere of control of the programme) that negatively influence the degree of socio-professional integration of learners and their contribution to the development of their community, such as:

- Lacking financial resources to start a micro-agribusiness
- No access to cultivable land
- Politics hindering youth integration
- Little self-confidence of youth to start a business
- Little development of entrepreneurial spirit among youth
- No support foreseen to graduated, vulnerable, youth
- Social environment in some cases
- Other contextual factors such security, effects of the COVID pandemic, corruption among other

### 2.3.2 Extent to which results have contributed to the specific objective

In addition to the factors mentioned above, the final evaluation looked at the extent to which the various results contributed to the achievement of the specific objective. It was mentioned earlier in this report that by the end of 2021, the results were - to a significant extent - either already achieved or making good progress. But does that also mean that these had an impact on the realization of the specific objective? The contribution of the results to the specific objective can be summarized as follows: Based on the country reports and desk study of the non-case countries, the influence of the results on the achievement of the specific objective was scored as follows: (+2) to a great extent, (+1), to some extent, (-1) little influence, (-2) no influence at all. This means that even when a result is very relevant, the score could be low or even negative if the activities carried out could not demonstrate their contribution to the specific objective level.

We recall the progress made on the different results so far (see section results above):

Results of the 2017-2021 VIA DB programme	Fully achieved end of programme	Progress made (end of 2021) compared to baseline (2017)	No progress compared to baseline (2017)
Result 1: better quality of education	78%	22%	-
Result 2: strengthened management capacities	33%	63%	4%
Result 3: support to formal employment and entrepreneurship	68%	32%	-
Result 4: integration of transversal and other topics	54%	38%	8%

Table: degree of achievement of indicators – result level (result 1-4). Source: analysis Resumoni 2017-2021.

### **Result 1: quality of education – score +2**

This result has contributed to the empowerment of students, but the effects are variable across Centers and depend on the courses offered and the experience and technical and pedagogical skills of trainers. The mixed approach of offering short technical courses focusing on specific technical skills related to current market demand with longer courses has enabled some students to gain added value in the labour market by responding to current demand needs.

The improvement of the courses and validated by committees in some countries has contributed to improve the quality of education. Procedures and processes to adapt courses to the reality of a fast-changing labour market are sometimes too slow. In some countries it was noted that additional skills training (technical and /or pedagogical) of teachers is needed to improve the quality of trainings. In some countries with low employment possibilities, the Centers also offer training in entrepreneurial skills and business development, which is relevant to increase chances on the labour market.

### **Result 2: management capacities – score +1**

This result is not so easy to link directly to the specific objective, as it focuses more on sustainability of the training centers and the services offered. In this sense, it is a result that contributes more indirectly to the specific objective. Without income from other parties or donors to sustain the programme and without effective management capacities, the specific objective will not be achieved though.

In Haiti for example, the business schools have had a positive effect on empowerment since they have allowed young people to have practice in the absence of internships, but they have not really had the expected effect on financial autonomy (even though there is no detailed information on the surplus generated by these activities). In El Salvador, cooperation with INSAFORP significantly contributes to financial income for the training centers. Improved collaboration with the other DB education facilities is also very supportive to the services offered to vulnerable youth.

### **Result 3: Accompaniment by the JPO – score +1**

This result is very relevant for the realization of the specific objective, especially at the level of finding a job. The extent to which the result effectively contributed to the achievement of the specific objective depends on the activities developed, but also on the extent to which the JPO aligned its services with the other VTC activities, the labour market, the available jobs in the area etcetera. There are many factors that influence this result. Although the objective of employment was achieved for practically all countries, already in 2020, there is still a gender gap in this area.

Also important is the distinction between accompaniment towards entrepreneurship or employment. In Tanzania, little is being done about this to date, even though the need is certainly there. In other countries, the development of entrepreneurship is increasingly included in the work of the JPO and VTC.

Although the result is very relevant to achieve the specific objective, the contribution to the achievement is not so high (yet). This because activities in the field of JPO are often related to training, and less to accompaniment to the labour market (too limited capacities). Follow up of graduates is also limited by other duties such as reporting: monitoring of the specific objective is time consuming because information of ex-students regularly changes; there is sometimes very little response to the survey so extra efforts need to be done to find respondents; little learning and



reflection is done at partner level and between partners and VIA DB with monitoring information; filling out the information for reporting purposes only is in fact a large investment.

#### Result 4: strengthening of transversal and other topics – score -1

Although a relevant result, the contribution of activities to strengthen integration of the cross-cutting axes of gender and environment to empowerment and socio-professional integration was less visible. It is possible that because of the efforts done by the programme, empowerment rates between male and female students do not differ much, but this causal link could not be evidenced. Registration rates improved for some but not all countries, and in some countries; female graduates were less likely to find a job than male graduates.

Effects coming out of activities related to environment and other transversal topics such as active citizenship, digitalization in courses or education for sustainable development could not be demonstrated at result neither empowerment nor employment level since this has not been monitored. In El Salvador for example, an entrepreneur (interviewed during this evaluation) with an agreement with the VTC to accept interns, explained that students enter the company with only basic skills and that the skills in electronics needed for the job are mainly taught on the job. Another example: only RD Congo has one indicator which links IGA to environment.

## 2.4 Efficiency

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### 2.4.1 Roles, contribution and collaboration among VIA Don Bosco and the partners

In this section the way of working among VIA Don Bosco and the partners is described, as well as the extent to which this collaboration has been efficient throughout the implementation of the programme.

#### Role of VIA Don Bosco

VIA Don Bosco wants to cooperate with its partners, taking up the role of a **facilitator, bridge builder** and **knowledge sharer**. In addition, VIA Don Bosco wants to create complementary alliances with external actors who can influence the changes they want to see. Finally, they want to increase their own expertise and organisational capacity to be able to realize their strategies even better.

The evaluation has proven that VIA Don Bosco indeed plays the above-mentioned roles. During the annual meetings with partners at national level and continental meetings, they often act as facilitator and inspirator. They share examples and good practices from other countries and continents or stimulate partners to share their good practices with others. VIA Don Bosco has introduced, some even before this programme, several approaches that illustrate this role as facilitator and knowledge sharer, like for instance:

- the annual lessons learned meetings and continental meetings with partners
- the INSPI fund where partners can get extra funding based on innovative peer to peer project proposals. Several proposals were approved during 2017-2021



- capitalization of good practices e.g., development of good practices on gender

Programme staff of VIA Don Bosco in Belgium also strengthen their own knowledge on relevant topics. Next to other tasks, specific topics have been assigned to different staff members aimed at improving knowledge management of these topics. For instance, VIA Don Bosco takes part in thematic workgroups on gender and M&E, and membership with Educaid.be allows to learn on specific topics such as TVET, gender, environment, and digitalization with and from other organisations working on the topic education within the context of Development Cooperation. The acquired knowledge and experiences there are further shared with the planning bureaus in the partner countries.

Next to these roles and less explicitly mentioned, VIA Don Bosco is also the **financier of the 2017-2021 programme (co-financed by DGD)**, channeling the funds of the programme to the planning bureaus. Consequence of this is that VIA Don Bosco also plays a role in making sure these funds are used in an appropriate, effective, and efficient way. Therefore, VIA Don Bosco has developed a M&E system allowing all indirect and direct partners to be accountable to the donor (DGD) and VIA Don Bosco (see further below).

### **Role(s) of the Planning Bureaus**

VIA Don Bosco's first contact in the countries are the national planning bureaus, who are the direct partner but also the primary target group. The latter means that the planning bureaus are not only strategically important to VIA Don Bosco as a partner, but they are also subject of the change processes that are part of the theory of change of VIA Don Bosco. In principle, VIA Don Bosco does not interact directly with the VTC/JPO. In practice, there have been regular contacts with these partners throughout the year at physical/online partner meetings.

Overall, the planning bureaus consist of programme staff and management/director. Each planning bureau is followed up by the Economist, who is part of the Salesian institutional structure. Usually, the economists do not play an operational role in the implementation of the programme, but they generally follow up how the programme enrolls. They mainly play a role in the approval of budgets and in the monitoring of financial flows between Belgium and the country. In some countries, the Economists follow up the implementation of the programme more directly than in other countries. In countries with FMA and SDB – VTC partners, there are two planning bureaus (FMA and SDB), except Bolivia with only one PDO for both FMA and SDB partners.

The composition of the planning bureaus varies considerably from country to country. In some countries programme staff is limited to a few persons, while in other countries a bigger team is available. The function of the planning offices is diverse: coordination and M&E of the implementation of the VIA Don Bosco programme including financial follow-up, fulfilling a bridging function between VIA Don Bosco and the Training Centers/JPO. As a bridge function the planning offices ensure that knowledge of VIA Don Bosco also flows through to the VTC/JPO. Representing VIA Don Bosco at country level, they also act as strategic partner in the country. In this sense, they participate in meetings with other Belgian actors in the context of synergy building that is part of the realization of the Belgian Joint Strategic Frameworks. Their task is also to look for other strategic alliances and funders that can support the VTC/JPO in their task. The national JPO follow up the local JPO and support them in the execution of their function. They usually create and coordinate a network of local JPO aimed at supporting and learning from each other in an efficient way.

### **Role(s) of the VTC and JPO**

They are the indirect partners of VIA Don Bosco and work primarily together with the planning offices during the implementation of the programme. They are the first responsible actors to strengthen technical and social skills with the final beneficiaries aimed at empowering them and getting a job.

### **Midterm evaluation – partnership structure**

During the midterm evaluation, the partnership relations were investigated in detail with partners from RD Congo, Mali, Cameroon, Peru, and Ecuador. 4 dimensions were assessed: clear goals, trust, clear roles, and commitment. Therefore, the topic ‘partnership’ was not a major evaluation question for the end evaluation.

The midterm evaluation revealed that setting goals, having clear roles, and showing commitment scored well with most of the partners, while trust among partners scored quite low. The recommendation of the midterm evaluation was directed to the development of activities which should create more trust among partners. The midterm evaluation also revealed that the partnership structure worked quite differently from country to country.

In practice, but this could differ from country to country, it was noted during the country visits, that VTC/ JPO partners have mainly been working on their own to achieve their goals. Exchanges among these partners have sometimes been facilitated by the planning bureaus and considered as useful, but these should not have been realized if it were not stimulated by the planning bureaus. Lack of trust is not necessarily a reason for this to happen. The workload of VTC/JPO was quite high during the previous years, but also geographical distance and in some cases security issues hampered exchange and joint coordination of activities during the year.

**Strengths and weaknesses of the roles, contribution of partners and cooperation among them** - The table below contains a summary of strengths and weaknesses regarding roles, contribution of partners and cooperation among them. The table mainly reflects to what has come out of the six country evaluations (with findings sometimes varying among countries).

	Strengths	Weaknesses
<b>Roles and contribution</b>	<p><u>VIA Don Bosco (towards PDO and to VTC/JPO to a lesser extent)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge sharer, bridge builder, financier/controller of the use of funds and progress made on results and outcomes, facilitator</li> <li>- Mainly visible to all partners during annual/continental meetings, well appreciated</li> <li>- Overall follow up of programme implementation</li> <li>- Helping PDO to play their role towards the VTC/JPO while executing their role described above</li> <li>- Monitor the use of funds and progress made on results and outcomes, financial control</li> </ul> <p><u>Planning bureaus/ central JPO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Active role of the central JPO to support local JPO in different ways) (El Salvador, Haiti)</li> <li>- Close follow up of programme implementation (all countries) Knowledge sharer with VTC mainly in the field of programme management (all countries) and specific knowledge building (Madagascar, El Salvador)</li> <li>- Facilitator of knowledge to VTC by cooperating with external consultancy and training offices (all countries)</li> <li>- Programme managers: training in and monitoring of the use of funds, progress made on results and outcomes, allowing VTC to strengthen their competencies in this area (all countries)</li> <li>- Support of local JPO in search for internship places (Haiti) and other kind of support (other countries)</li> </ul> <p><u>VTC/local JPO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Active role in implementation of TVET programmes and job services support to students</li> <li>- Depending on the VTC, VTC are - more or less- active in fund raising or setting up IGA to increase financial autonomy</li> </ul>	<p><u>VIA Don Bosco (towards PDO and to VTC/JPO to a lesser extent)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sometimes too centralized decision making, leaving little space for local contributions</li> <li>- Ownership for learning meetings by partners could be enhanced</li> <li>- Staff turnover of programme officers in Belgium had a negative impact on continuity of follow up at country level (necessity to build a relationship of trust again)</li> </ul> <p><u>Planning bureaus</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Role of the PDO mainly limited to programme management and overall M&amp;E coordination</li> <li>- In some countries, financial follow up absorbs most of the time leaving less time for strategic and operational follow up (Haiti)</li> </ul> <p><u>VTC/local JPO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- VTC are not always keen in allowing PDO to come close to their work (several countries), which makes it sometimes difficult for PDO to understand the reality in the field and to play another than the programme management role</li> <li>- Some VTC indicated they wish the PDO to play additional roles than mainly the programme management role (Benin, El Salvador), helping them to better face their strategic challenges</li> <li>- Role of the local JPO is clear but multi-disciplinary – sometimes they also play different roles (as technical trainer and job services officer - and therefore much to carry by often one person; it is difficult to include all necessary competencies in often one person</li> <li>- Local JPO are not always well embedded in the VTC structure</li> <li>- Local JPO are not always known by the students</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local JPO are multidisciplinary in playing their role (broker, networker, trainer, coach, etcetera)</li> <li>- VTC are well embedded within the Salesian education structure</li> </ul>	
<b>Cooperation and mutual learning</b>	<p><u>Annual meetings</u> Overall good, annual meetings well appreciated (Haiti, El Salvador) During annual meetings, performance scores for DGD reporting are discussed and substantiated. This is an opportunity to learn more about the previous year.</p> <p><u>In-between coordination/collaboration</u> Takes place, mainly supported by the PDO (Haiti, El Salvador) Good understanding and cooperation with broader Salesian congregation at national and provincial level (El Salvador, Bolivia)</p> <p><u>MHC- instrument</u> meant to define priorities in the predefined management areas. As such a good instrument for self-reflection, learning and auto-evaluation</p>	<p><u>Annual meetings</u> Little to no participation of partners in agenda setting, leaving questions to what extent these meetings sufficiently respond to learning needs of PDO, VTC and JPO</p> <p><u>In-between coordination/collaboration</u> Coordination and interaction throughout the year among VTC take place in most places but limited due to high workload and geographical distance between Centers. The COVID pandemic accelerated online communication and exchanges between partners.</p> <p><u>MHC: instrument<sup>45</sup></u>: filled out too much with ‘desirable’ scores, thus often not reflecting the reality. Partners questioned if learning about management capacities could not be better done in another way than based on a ‘box-ticking’ questionnaire</p> <p><u>M&amp;E – monitoring progress on results and outcomes</u> Narrative and indicator monitoring did not result much in joint learning about progress made on the programme. These activities were overall considered by partners as mechanical exercises, not really contributing to joint learning among and between partners and therefore missing a huge opportunity to better link learning to progress made by the programme implementation</p>

<sup>45</sup> Also mentioned in the evaluation of the instruments of VIA Don Bosco (p.39), by Ace Europe, 2017.

## 2.4.2 Monitoring and evaluation

Under 2.4.1., monitoring and evaluation have been discussed already to some extent including the **empowerment questionnaire** that is applied by the VTC -to measure the extent to which students, having finalized a course or training feel empowered (next to some other questions)- and analyzed by VIA DB.

Instruments being used by the VTC and analyzed by VIA DB to monitor progress on the programme implementation are:

- The **Finamoni**: to monitor progress on the budget realization
- The **Narramoni**: narrative reporting on progress made on the programme implementation
- The **Resumoni**: report on progress made regarding results and outcomes, based on predefined indicators
- **Performance scores**: annual scoring meant for reporting to DGD. During the annual lessons learnt meetings these scorings are substantiated. To the extent necessary the scores are adjusted to reality and a summary of lessons learnt is produced

An additional instrument to substantiate the achievement of results is the **management health check (MHC)**. The empowerment questionnaire contains information of graduating students on how they perceive their empowerment, and several questions on finding a job and support required.

As mentioned above, VIA Don Bosco, through the PDO has invested considerably in strengthening the capacities of partners to ensure an accurate monitoring of the progress made. The main challenge is that many partners, moreover partners who do not financially depend on the programme, see this M&E system, including the MHC as an administrative burden with no added value to themselves. This is a risk because it could influence the correctness of data collection and calculation. When analyzing the figures during this evaluation, inconsistencies were noticed from time to time. Another challenge is that despite capacity building, not all partners are already well capacitated yet in the use of the M&E instruments.

It means that findings and recommendations from Ace Europe's evaluation of the VIA DB instruments have not been translated everywhere in concrete action or that results of actions have not been showed off. This evaluation stated, among other things, that *"capacities to be strengthened at the planning bureaus are consolidating, analyzing and interpreting data and analyzing 'why' something works (double loop learning). This is in line with the (new) idea of VIA Don Bosco to do small research every year on assumptions about how change comes about. This means that planning bureaus are more recognized as actors of capacity building of Centers, in the very specific role of learning from M&E, considering the current limits of most bureaus. A learning-focused M&E system can allow good learning questions to emerge which can then give rise to a specific learning pathway."*

It was noticed that capacities in terms of using the instruments have been strengthened, at the level of the planning bureaus and the VTC, which is a positive point. As mentioned above, no progress could be found in the field of joint strategic analysis and interpretation of data across partners and at national level.

Sometimes, the Narramoni of PDO show analysis of monitoring data, but this is not reported back to the VTC partners (based on what VTC partners mentioned during interviews). This has prevented the M&E system (including the MHC) to be used as a learning system so far and to strategically learn from

M&E by all partners, which could have helped to steer and adjust the programme strategies during the programme implementation.

Other observations:

### Resumoni

- Intraining from partners on “outreach” is collected yearly at partner level but not consolidated at country level, making it difficult to draw conclusions across partners in one country.
- The Excel table of the Resumoni of the PDO and JPO is not tailored to their specific activities (and results). The only relevant indicator included now is financial autonomy.
- Achieved results differ sometimes considerably from partner to partner.

### Narramoni

- Is complementary to the Resumoni with - sometimes - interesting information, specifically at the level of the PDO when a more consolidated picture is given of the progress made at programme level at the end of the year.
- The Narramoni adds value when progress of the programme is well explained and substantiated. Sometimes this is done in a fragmented way or limited to a few lines and pictures. The quality of the Narramoni strongly varies from country to country (even from VTC to VTC). What is missing is an overall, consolidated Narramoni on a yearly basis from the PDO, including the points of view of the partner VTC/JPO. Now there is only the “moral reporting” now on a yearly basis, but this is not an internal partner report.

### Finamoni

- This is a relevant instrument to follow up expenses and extent to which the budget has been used

### S&E tools used in Cameroon

The partner organisations in Cameroon do not apply the same monitoring tools as VIA DB's partners in the other 10 intervention countries. The Cameroon programme applies its own monitoring tools. The main tools are: 1) 'OCSAT' (Organisational Capacity Self-Assessment Tool) which allows partners to self-assess their organisational performance on an annual basis and 2) the evaluation of the CEFFA based on the 4 pillars of the Alternance pedagogy.

In the online survey sent to the partners during this end evaluation, several respondents noted that the information collected was not used very much. According to them, the information is insufficiently analysed at national level (PROCEFFA) and the promoting organisations receive very little feedback on the information collected. Consequently, learning opportunities go lost.

### 2.4.3 Efficient use of resources

The budget, approved by DGD, to execute the programme 2017-2021 in the countries (not considering the budget for the programme in Belgium and budget for coordination) was **24.602.479 euro**. Distribution among countries was as follows:

Country	Approved 5Y Budget (2017-2021)
Tanzania	1.588.120 €
Benin	1.361.621 €
Madagascar	2.397.414 €
Mali	1.272.782 €
RD Congo	2.310.361 €
Haiti	2.485.380 €
El Salvador	1.671.563 €
Bolivia	2.978.727 €
Ecuador	2.161.311 €
Peru	2.913.551 €
Cameroon	3.461.649 €

Table: budget approved per country. Source: info provided by VIA DB, end evaluation 2021-'22.

Per partner a budget was approved for the five years of the programme. The budget was channeled from VIA Don Bosco to the planning bureaus who took care of further distribution to the Training Centers. The follow-up of the budget was done through the Finamoni, a tool introduced by VIA Don Bosco. The PDO taught the Centers how to work with this tool.

Based on the information from the country evaluations where visits have taken place, the programme shows a **good performance rate**, given the rather limited budget of VIA Don Bosco per partner. The staff of the VTC visited mentioned that the financial contribution of VIA Don Bosco has contributed to a qualitative operational improvement of their training centers. For some partners the financial contribution of VIA DB has been more vital than for others. Those who have succeeded in establishing other cooperation agreements with other partners and donors are now less dependent on the contribution of VIA Don Bosco than those who did not (yet) succeed in doing so. This could be noticed e.g., in El Salvador.

In Bolivia, the **overall cost per student** during the programme period was calculated on 254,56 euro per student. This does not mean that this cost was carried 100% by the programme, considering that the Centers also have income from other resources (e.g. (low) student fees, other donors, governmental support). It could not be confirmed if this cost calculation is also done in other countries.

Overall, a relatively small part of the budget has been spent on students in the context of labour market support. The bulk of the budget is spent on training. According to partners, **(too) little money has been invested in the follow-up and support of graduates once they have left the training Centre**, apart from the follow-up carried out by the job placement officers, which has been more for monitoring and reporting than for real support.

Support after training towards job placement has varied a lot. Based on the questionnaire carried out among partners during this end evaluation, support should relate to funding for setting up a business or to giving orientation on where to find microfinance opportunities (provided that this possibility exists) or to setting up collaborations between the PDO/VTC/JPO and financial institutions.

Another form of support could have been the creation of an alumni network (including the admin part of this network), to bring ex-students together from time to time with the objective to learn and

exchange among other activities. Support could also have been individual counselling against a small fee.

During the programme period it was possible to adjust the budget, up to a maximum of 20% (in Haiti 30% was mentioned) within a certain financial budget category. There was thus some flexibility to spend the budget. Shifts between major financial headings had to be approved by VIA DB. Although this flexibility was appreciated, it was mentioned by training centers that the predefined structure of the budget sometimes prevented the real needs in the field from being met, e.g., too much or too little budget for training, too little budget for necessary investments.

In Benin it was mentioned that VIA DB's strict financial procedures (e.g., the requirement to obtain three formal/written offers) has left the VTC with no choice but to purchase their goods/services from formal, well-established companies. Sometimes, these companies turned out to be more expensive than the more informal traders in the market (who were not always able to meet the requirements of formal tenders).

Still in Benin, it was mentioned by the VTC that administrative financial guidelines included requirements which were not always adapted to the level of financial/administrative management of the training Centre and the needs of the particularly vulnerable target group. As a result, for instance, the VTC were obliged to hire formally qualified consultants at excessively high rates. This was also mentioned by partners in Haiti, where Centers indicated that the high requirements imposed by the programme for the choice of trainers increased the cost of training without necessarily increasing its relevance to the target audience, particularly for certain entrepreneurship training courses. In line with this finding, in Tanzania it was indicated that during programme implementation, external consultants often carried out capacity building activities. This reliance on external resources increased the programme's expenditure. Investing in training of the programme's own staff to facilitate these capacity building activities could have been a good strategy to increase the programme's level of efficiency in the future, according to interviewed partners. However, the existing workload could prevent this strategy from being brought in practice.

In Haiti, it was mentioned that -while the programme has opened the door to negotiate some readjustments between the different financial headings in the administrative follow up system - it would be good to think about adapting the modalities to respond to priorities in the event of a crisis. Such a discussion would be desirable to avoid losing opportunities or, on the contrary, spending unnecessarily within headings that are (temporarily) no longer adapted to the situation.

In Madagascar, it was indicated by the Centers that a lack of staff in the Centers (because of the limited budget) sometimes has led to combining different functions within one and the same person influencing the quality of services offered to the students.



## 2.5 Sustainability

		Sufficient	
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**To what extent are achievements of the PRG likely to have a lasting influence on the capacity of key partner organisations, the quality of education and management capacities in the targeted countries?**

**Strengthening capacities at management level** in areas such as Human Resources, Financial Management, Strategic Management, Knowledge management has been relevant to increase sustainability of operations. Within the MHC it was asked during programme implementation whether the organization had a plan to ensure financial sustainability.

As explained already under effectiveness (result 2), the indicator **financial autonomy** measures to a large extent how financially independent the training centers, the PDO and JPO are from financial support by VIA DB. It was noticed during programme implementation, that the PDO/JPO did not always fill out this indicator on financial autonomy. It is not clear why not, since PDO are the primary partner of VIA Don Bosco. Some partners mentioned that the JPO need to be considered as being part of the VTC and not as a separate unit that should have their own financial autonomy.

Overall, it was mentioned that **income generating activities (IGA)**, and especially when these IGA are innovative (ref. Tanzania) provided great opportunities to achieve a long-lasting programme influence, not only on the increased capacity of the key partners but also on the improved quality of education and management capacities.

Within the section on **Human Resources of the MHC instrument**, section 4 (motivation), 5 (learning and development) and 6 (performance management) contribute to retention of staff if well executed, and therefore also to organizational sustainability. Several countries mentioned that staff turnover hampered continuity of PRG activities and was a risk for sustainability at organizational and programmatic level (e.g., Tanzania, Bolivia, Benin).

Examples on **knowledge management** were found in the evaluation report of Benin, where the standardization of procedures has contributed to sustainable operations. This practice has also been mentioned by other countries.

The MHC does not verify if the organization has **capacities in the field of external communication, fundraising, marketing, or advocacy**, which are all relevant for institutional sustainability since these capacities allow building relationships with other, building image, finding external resources, advocate with institutes, communicate with employers. In practice, some VTC and PDO have improved some of these areas. For instance, in Tanzania where a marketing officer was hired by the VTC and a resource mobilization officer by the PDO. Another example is Bolivia, where the updating and advocacy on the curricula of the different careers/areas have been agreed upon and concerted with the respective District Education Directorates, an aspect that -to a great extent- would guarantee the incorporation and continuity of contents promoted by the PGR.

The JPO have widely been appreciated by partners during programme implementation and considered as an entity offering very relevant services. Nevertheless, the fact that the JPO was financially

supported by VIA DB during the 2017-2021 programme was mentioned to be a concern in several countries, since the VTC are not sure yet if they will be able to carry the cost of a JPO themselves once the financial support of VIA DB will end.

### **Programmatic sustainability - What measures have been taken to ascertain the sustainability of those interventions at outcome level?**

The extent to which VTC/JPO and PDO achieve organizational-institutional sustainability will also influence programmatic sustainability. This is part of the theory of change: strengthening partners in certain management areas should allow them to better offer and maintain the services offered to students. Since it was noticed that results regarding management strengthening vary from Center to Center, programmatic sustainability also differs from Center to Center. This requires a differentiated strategy of support from the PDO towards the training centers.

In Tanzania it was mentioned that at **JPO level**, consolidating positive relationships / collaboration with companies will have lasting influence in accompanying trainees to jobs. This could also be confirmed in the other countries visited. The JPO in Tanzania also reported that, in the long run, **maintaining close relationships with graduates** who succeeded to get and keep jobs will also influence other students to get employment more easily as they'll act as ambassadors of Don Bosco.

In Tanzania, VIA DB programme is **fully integrated in the overall Don Bosco work** in Tanzania. The DB network and its different operational partners have adequate financial and human resources to ensure the programme's sustainability.

Another example is Bolivia: the results achieved have the **potential to have an impact on public policies**, to be replicated and scaled up; however, the decision-making levels beyond the Ministry of Education prioritize political interests rather than improving the quality of education.

It was also said (Bolivia) that trained and empowered students are a value created for society and active citizenship who will perform with values, commitment, and Salesian charisma wherever they go. It is **a social sustainability** to which they contribute. They have capabilities, skills and work ethic that will give them a better position and leadership in society. They are expected to generate with their attitude, capacity, and commitment a demonstrative or multiplying effect with their peers.

### **Peru and Ecuador**

Peru and Ecuador are two countries no longer supported by VIA Don Bosco in the next programme from 2022 onwards. Through an interview with the planning bureaus during the second half of 2021, the evaluators gauged the extent to which the programme could sustainably continue without the support of VIA Don Bosco.

#### **Peru**

##### **SDB - Peru**

In Peru, there exists strong state control over subsidies coming from outside, as well as over certification of education. During this programme period, the SDB partners have worked hard to strengthen management, technical and soft skills to update them according to the needs of the labour

market. To this end, there has been collaboration with training institutions, universities, etc. Within the PDO there are several people who do fund raising, through the Fundación Don Bosco.

There was good cooperation with VIA Don Bosco and with the Centers in between the formal learning moments. A CETPRO (*Centro de Educación Técnico Productiva*) network was started which functioned reasonably well. During the 2017-local JPO served the training centers under direct supervision by the Inspectorial. The national office finished its activities in December 2019 though and the job services have been taken over by the teachers themselves of the VTC.

The pandemic has caused many problems. Many young people could not keep their jobs or have now short, temporary jobs. A lot of jobs are informal. Within these informal jobs, decent work is sought as much as possible although difficult to find.

Because the collaboration with VIA Don Bosco will not be continued in 2022, an exit plan was developed in 2019. Because of the COVID pandemic, the implementation of this plan was delayed, reformulated for adapting to remote work, but results were less than expected as indicated by the local partners. Although some Centers did work to improve their financial sustainability, COVID caused many problems in this area. This can also be seen in the indicator financial autonomy (see under effectiveness-results), which resulted around 80% in 2019 but had dropped to 63% by the end of 2020, with differences between partners fluctuating between 17%-82% (the highest percentage was from the PDO). In 2021 the situation improved again until above 70%. Although financial autonomy varies from Center to Center, several Centers will have to reduce their services after 2021 and thus will not reach the predetermined goal of financial autonomy.

At the institutional level it is up to the FMA and SDB Provinces to maintain the programme's activities to ensure institutional and programmatic sustainability after the programme ends in 2021. In addition, with the provided capacity building, the VTC partners should be able to continue the activities developed throughout and with support of the programme, which also contributes to institutional and programmatic sustainability once the programme end.

### **FMA – Peru**

The FMA planning bureau exists since 2006. Unlike the SDB, it has no legal status by itself, but it is embedded in the congregation. The FMA Province could implement an NGO that could be responsible for fundraising but the Sisters in Peru do not wish to start the NGO at a time that the political and economic situation in Peru is complicated due to the current government. It was also mentioned that the FMA in Peru has never been in favor of seeking additional funds, which means that the continuation of the planning bureau with the current team is not certain post 2021. Other funds/projects managed by the PDO are small and not sufficient to keep the PDO going in the future. At the VTC level, the Center Piura is said to be self-sufficient (this could not be verified), other Centres not yet.

Unlike the SDB Province, the FMA do not have a network of CETPROs so no standardization of good practice among the FMA CETPROs have taken place. An exit plan was drawn up with VIA DB and the PDO team, but the congregation did not support it, according to the interview with the national PDO.

The VTC will open their doors in 2022 after 2 years of distance learning. The priority for the CFPs is to implement everything necessary to offer face-to-face training. From 2023 onwards the partners will be responsible for their own financial sustainability strategies.

## **Ecuador**

In Ecuador, the PDO carries out projects within the framework of international cooperation, in consultation with 25 Salesian houses representing 7 sectors and different ethnic groups. The programme of VIA Don Bosco is also coordinated by the planning bureau. The PDO is part of the inspectorial services. It has no legal personality of its own but is constantly looking for funds to be able to continue its work. The PDO does not see itself as an executor of the VIA DB programme but rather as a programme manager. In terms of JPO services and Planning-Monitoring-Evaluation tasks though, it does see itself as an implementer.

Strong efforts were done, during the programme implementation, to certify education at the level of the Centers. This has resulted in a stronger positioning of TVET and the Centers. The national JPO has done a good job, but it is highly uncertain if local JPO will continue to exist without support of VIA Don Bosco post 2021.

Thanks to the programme, alliances were formed with other educational institutions of the Salesians. This has enabled for instance to reduce costs in infrastructure and equipment. It has also resulted in additional support for curriculum development.

Overall, in Ecuador, a lot of work has been done and progress made but the context and COVID caused the results to be not very good. The focus has therefore shifted to encouraging entrepreneurship to create more opportunities for entrepreneurship. In general, it is difficult to obtain financial autonomy at the level of some of the Centers. The figures on financial autonomy show a high variety among the Centers between 20-145% (see under effectiveness- results); the solidary alliances between the Salesian projects are essential in this although this is not easy to sustain. The government states e.g., that universities should not invest in other educational institutes but themselves.

## **Beyond Ecuador and Peru**

VIA DB has submitted a regional post 2021 programme in the Andes to allow exchanges between Ecuador, Bolivia, and Peru. This could support the PDO in these countries in finding new ways to strengthen and sustain themselves (and their partners) in the future. Focus lies less on sustainability but more on systematizing and capitalization of knowledge and experiences.

## **Cameroon**

The calculation of the financial sustainability score of partners is based on an annual evaluation system, the OCSAT survey. The question on financial sustainability focuses on 3 aspects: 1) the commitment of the organisation to sustainability and self-reliance, 2) the development and management of the organisation's sustainability and 3) alternative sources of income and funds.

According to the Performance Scores - 2020 document (based on an internal assessment between VIA DB and partners), the average score of all promoting organisations increased to 3.21/4 (compared to 2.91/4 in 2019, 2.90/4 in 2018 and 2.41/4 in 2017). As in previous years, PROCEFFA continued to accompany the promoting organisations in their empowerment projects in 2020 through the creation of enterprise schools. Particularly, PROCEFFA assisted the volunteer promoting organisations in the development of the business plan of the enterprise school.

At the end of 2020, the results of the creation of the enterprise schools (BS) are as follows: three promoting organisations (out of 11) have succeeded in starting a business school: ASAD Bertoua has

created a children's clothing production workshop, CODAS Caritas of Ngaoundéré and CROPSEC Maroua have set up a laying hen production unit. In summary, it can be concluded that the performance score (3.12/4) seems quite (too?) high, given the rather low implementation rate of the enterprise schools.

### 3 Main lessons learnt

#### Keep it smart and simple

The evaluation shows that the programme has made progress on results and outcome. A multitude of monitoring instruments support the measurement of programme progress. Because of the many instruments, a lot of time goes into filling these out, leaving little or no time to really learn institutionally and strategically from the results of these exercises. What is being monitored on paper doesn't always adequately show what is really happening in the field. Less complex monitoring that measures more of what matters and more clearly demonstrates what is happening in the field is an important lesson.

#### Across all country programmes, several factors, critical to the success of empowerment and socio-professional integration could be identified

The factors and actors having influenced the results and mentioned earlier in the section of results, also influence to some extent (not all in the same extent of course) the results at specific objective level.

In the analysis above, the contributing and hindering factors having influenced the results were explained. Next, a summary is given of main factors critical to the success of the empowerment process of the VTC students, and consequently to the social and professional integration of graduates in the labour market.

Critical Success factors
<b>Approach related</b>
An <b>integrated and integral competency-based training approach, embedded within the vision and pedagogic Salesian model</b> , resulting in an approach that not only prepares students to meet the technicalities of the future job but also to face the professional and social challenges in the environment in which graduates need to find their way.
A <b>holistic human centered approach</b> of development in line with the vision of human development of Don Bosco: spiritually- religiously, culturally, physically (sports), attitude development, behavioral changes.
A <b>strategy that, although already gender inclusive, considers the different needs of both sexes</b> to increase enrollment in the VTC and to improve chances on the labour market afterwards, broadening the “zone of influence” of the gender strategy (but results could still improve)
<b>Relevance of the courses</b> or trainings offered to students = responding to the needs of youth and the labour market and adapted when necessary
<b>Related to the contributing actors</b>
<b>The knowledge, skills and experience of instructors</b> resulting in teachers who do not only teach but also counsel, advice, support: the instructors are much more than a teacher, an instructor. They are a <b>role model for students</b>
<b>VTC management investing in a team</b> and environment where students feel at home

<b>Capacities and skills of JPO staff sufficiently available and multidisciplinary, resulting in qualitative accompaniment</b> and support of students towards a job
<b>Technical and JPO staff and supportive psychosocial/pedagogic staff collaborating closely together</b>
<b>Employers appreciating</b> interns and recruited graduates as fully-fledged employees (not mentioned in African countries)
<b>Related to the students at the VTC</b>
The own, intrinsic <b>motivation</b>
The own <b>personality</b>
The <b>learning attitude</b> /learning abilities (this can be strengthened)
The right <b>work attitude</b> and work ethics (this can be learnt)
<b>Related to the context</b>
A <b>supportive environment</b> (family in the first place, friends, contacts, employers)
<b>Access to financial means/ seed capital</b> to start a business (less in African countries)

Other factors not being critical but also having influenced the achievement of the specific objective are the following:

<b>Factors with a positive influence</b>	<b>Factors with a negative influence</b>
<b>Approach related</b>	
<b>Supportive context</b> e.g., support from the government (e.g., through scholarships)	<b>Hindering context</b> e.g., the security situation in some countries, the pandemic, resulting in delays of programme activities. Schools had to close for a long period of time (e.g., in some cases for more than a year)
<b>An approach tailored at the needs of young people</b> to the extent possible (e.g., programme for single mothers in Bolivia)	Low <b>formal employment opportunities</b> in many of the countries where VIA DB is active

## 4 Conclusions

### 4.1 Conclusions per evaluation criterium

The conclusions were formulated across all countries where VIA Don Bosco has been active during 2017-2021. Depending on the situation in each country, some conclusions may be of greater or lesser relevance for some countries/partners. For more context or concrete examples, the evaluators refer to the 6 country reports of the countries visited for this evaluation.

#### Relevance

##### **1 The Theory of Change and the programme is relevant and valid; some challenges remain**

VIA Don Bosco's 2017-2021 programme has proven to be relevant to vulnerable youth in those countries where VIA Don Bosco works. Vulnerable youth between the ages of 15-29 are more likely than others to drop out of school, face the effects of poverty and violence, and without an appropriate education face serious difficulties finding a decent job, especially in these countries with often low employment opportunities. As a result, some of these young people end up in crime, experience teenage pregnancy and other problematic situations, and so often end up in a vicious cycle of poverty.

The VTC meet these problems through offering adapted TVET to these youngsters, combined with psycho-pedagogical, social support and guidance towards the labour market. It is this integrative approach, embedded within the Salesian vision of human development, that forms a unique formula and brings about opportunities, with the support of the 2017-2021 programme of VIA Don Bosco, to better integrate vulnerable youth within society and the labour market.

The theory of change shows that empowerment leads to social and professional integration. In practice, it was noticed that social and professional integration are also empowering, i.e., the application of the theory of change is iterative helping to bring young people to the next level. This means that the theory of change is more like a spiral where empowerment and socio-professional integration interact with one another, in an iterative way.

The training centers cannot guarantee that their vocational training will result in a job, but they offer at least a chance to their students to strengthen themselves in different ways and thereby increase their opportunities to get a job on the labour market. Often, these young people do not have alternatives to develop themselves and learn a profession. The installation of national and local employment offices further improves their chances to find a (decent) job.

From the evaluation results it can be concluded that the programme is in line with the policies of national and/or regional/local governments. Furthermore, the transversal themes of gender, environment and digitalization have been included in all country programmes. Some countries placed



additional emphasis on themes such as peace, education for sustainable development and active citizenship.

It remains a challenge to cope with (sometimes rapid) changes in the labour market. Technological and digital changes occur continuously and the VTC are often not always able to respond in time by updating skills and invest in actualized equipment and machines. Consequently, young graduates do not always have the necessary skills companies are looking for.

The evaluation shows that the concepts of empowerment, social and professional integration have been used differently in the countries where VIA Don Bosco was active during 2017-2021, resulting in different accents in the approach towards young people. The theory of change is relevant in principle, but with these observations:

- **The underlying assumptions, that substantiate the theory of change, could not always be confirmed in some countries.** This undermines the realization of the objectives because a theory of change only works when the underlying assumptions are true. When assumptions are not valid, then the programme strategy should be adjusted. The midterm evaluation report of Focus Up<sup>46</sup> suggested a yearly update of the TOC and programme risks.
- **The programme has contributed to empowering students, and to socio-professional integration of graduates.** However, monitoring information of VIA DB about empowerment and socio-professional integration does not seem to probe explicitly and strongly the relationship between the training centers and empowerment at one hand, and the relationship between empowerment and socio-professional integration on the other hand.
- **After graduation, in most cases no further support is provided (unless sporadic).** The indicator on socio-professional integration illustrates how many graduates have found a job within a certain time after graduation, but not how many are able to keep that job. This is an important aspect of socio-professional integration that is not measured.

## 2 The formulation of (socio-)professional integration at specific objective level seems too ambitious

Before starting this 5-year programme, VIA Don Bosco translated its ambition and vision into a theory of change. This theory illustrated the vision of changes to be achieved by all actors involved in change processes supported by VIA Don Bosco. Within a Theory of Change, the vision may be as ambitious as VIA Don Bosco and its partners choose to be. This Theory of Change was translated into a programmatic logical framework, as a basis for the programme strategy, translated into 3 or 4 results. In principle (according to the donor guidelines), the specific objective should be achievable within 5 years.

Although the specific objective of the VIA Don Bosco programme will most probably be achieved by the end of 2021, this objective does not lie within the zone of influence of VIA Don Bosco. Socio-professional integration of young people is rather a change at impact level, while the programme mainly responds to the needs of the Training Centers that should contribute to this impact level,

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<sup>46</sup> The management response of this midterm evaluation revealed that this should be a task for the PDO in cooperation with the other partners (including VIA Don Bosco). It was decided not to reformulate drastically the TOC anymore within the 2017-2021 programme period (except for the Cameroon TOC which was entirely revised and updated after the midterm evaluation).

through the level of empowerment. The support of the programme to the level of the final beneficiaries is therefore quite indirect.

Secondly, the VTC/JPO support the youngsters towards the labour market, but their work mainly ends when graduates start looking for a job. For this reason, the formulation of socio-professional integration at the specific objective level seems too ambitious to the evaluators.

## EFFECTIVENESS

### **3 The majority of the four results of the 2017-2020 has been achieved or good progress has been made**

Behind the figures lie the support provided by the programme of VIA Don Bosco, through improvements of curricula, of learning content, of teaching practices. Investments were made in technical and pedagogical skills for teachers, in machines, equipment and didactic material, in infrastructure. This could be illustrated and demonstrated during the evaluation in the countries visited.

The four results are relevant, although their contribution to the specific objective could not be evidenced in the same extent for all results. Quality of education scored best, followed by management capacities and accompaniment by the JPO. The result on transversal topics scored less. The difference between relevance and real contribution lies in the fact that activities (i) were not always translated into indicators demonstrating real progress, (ii) did not give the expected results because of multiple factors or (iii) were less relevant for the result and therefore do not contribute (much) to the result and the specific objective.

#### **Quality of education (result 1)**

It remains a challenge for the programme and its partners to ensure that capacity strengthening for instructors is relevant (no "training for training's sake" while there might be a more stringent need for investments in machinery or, on the other hand, sometimes too little training due to a limited budget) and meets the instructors' needs (technically and pedagogically). Behavioural change is acceptable as an indicator because that is what the change is about. In practice, it appears that the follow-up of the application of acquired knowledge and skills does not always take place or is difficult to verify.

#### **Strengthening management capacities (result 2)**

In addition to improving the quality of education, the programme focused on strengthening management capacities in the areas of HR, financial management, strategic and policy planning, monitored through the management health check instrument and the support provided by the planning offices. This has resulted in the development of policies and strategies and in standardization of procedures, in strengthening programme management capacities that visibly translate into the quality of narrative and financial reporting to VIA Don Bosco. Learning and knowledge management capacities were strengthened to stimulate exchanges among the training centers (not everywhere and to the same extent). In some cases, the programme contributed to a stronger feeling of organisational identity, while in other cases the training centers merged into the Don Bosco structures.

Three African countries (Tanzania, Benin, and Mali) have gradually increased their **financial autonomy** compared to the initial situation in 2017. It is important to notice that the level of financial autonomy differs substantially from partner to partner within one and the same country. Sometimes partners have a clear idea of how they want to generate financial income and do so; sometimes they are not working on it (yet). Financial autonomy of the planning and job employment bureaus was difficult to evaluate since not all Centers provided figures on this aspect to VIA Don Bosco. Financial autonomy of the employment offices is also considered by some of the planning bureaus to be part of the financial autonomy of these bureaus.

### **Accompaniment by the JPO (result 3)**

The installation and strengthening of a JPO has turned out to be very relevant and has resulted in support to

- create greater awareness to make the link between technical-vocational training/education and employment,
- pay attention not only to technical training but also to the skills needed to find and keep a job (e.g., work attitude),
- give more concrete content to the aspect of 'entrepreneurship' next to finding a salaried job.

Establishing contact and networking with companies is an important strategy to introduce young people to the labour market through internships. The internships effectively help young people to get the necessary practical experience.

The JPO serve also as a bridge to check the relevance of the training courses: they know the labour market and basically know the courses, especially if they (in some cases) sometimes teach them themselves. In addition, JPO help in ensuring a flexible response to the labour market: where there are few companies, there is an increasing focus on strengthening entrepreneurship skills. In cultures where this is less valued (e.g., Tanzania) the expansion from support to a formal salaried job to creating self-employment is difficult, within the VTC as well as at the level of youth. Lack of financial means among young people to start a business further hinder the development of businesses. At the same time, personal development plans are gradually becoming more institutionalized (more difficult still in African partner countries). Important to notice is that – in countries where employment opportunities are already rather low – it is even more difficult to obtain a job that responds to the definition of decent work.

Employment offices are sometimes still insufficiently known to young people because – since JPO are not 'real offices' are little visible within the training centers and the DB infrastructure.

Overall, JPO offer valuable work, in sometimes very difficult socio-economic circumstances. Seen the low number of JPO staff compared to the number of students, a risk and reality is the overload and staff turnover of JPO officers in several countries. The national JPO needs to monitor this and supports with standardizing methodologies and approaches. During the evaluation, examples could be found to confirm this, but the workload and challenges of the JPO often remain too high. In addition, JPO officers must fulfill different roles and functions: the role as a bridge builder, facilitator, networker, external communicator, marketer, administrative manager of relevant data... This requires having many different competencies that are almost impossible to unite within one function, let alone one person. The name JPO – Job Placement Office - is misleading in this regard, as in many places the JPO consists of only one person.

#### **Integration of transversal topics (result 4 but also relevant for countries without a result 4)**

In all countries, activities to **mainstream gender** have been carried out to create more awareness and to stimulate changes in behaviour in favor of more gender equality and a more environmentally friendly way of working. In some countries this is visible in the registration numbers of male and female students but in other countries no changes could be noticed. In those countries where VIA Don Bosco works with both SDB and FMA partners, it was noticed that with SDB partners the number of male students strongly continue to predominate where this is reversed with the FMA partners (predominantly female students).

Often, persistent cultural perceptions and stereotypes remain against girls in technical education. Also attracting female teachers to rather 'male' courses remain difficult (and vice versa). Gender training does not always translate into a gender-equal approach in the classroom. Real progress on gender mainstreaming (paying attention to gender stereotypes, making students aware of their environment, etc.) is still limited, mostly by a lack of implementation of gender policies and strategies. Some companies are still reluctant to employ female graduates.

**Environmental practices** are often about how to deal with waste, printing less, generating electricity through solar panels and training in installing them, and saving water. But training itself is, as far as it could be observed, not really focused on learning behavior that teaches young people to look at their environment differently: how to ensure that less plastic is used in everyday life (e.g., when buying drinks and snacks), how to relate environmental topics in training related to work?

Overall, gender equality and environment have become topics that have created awareness among the partners, but that are not yet institutionalized and widespread practiced.

As a rather unforeseen result, **digitalization** has been accelerated by the COVID pandemic. The extent to which digitalization was embedded differs from Center to Center. In some cases, this has been limited to improving communication technology and basic IT training to students, in other cases investments have been done to implement or to improve data management systems or e-learning platforms to support e-learning by students.

#### **4 Partners in all countries have made progress in empowering students between 2017 and end of 2021**

Comparing the 2021 target with the baseline situation, the expectation in all partner countries was to increase empowerment among graduate students. This achievement has been accomplished although there are differences in percentage between partners in one and the same country. Overall, significant differences between girls and boys could not be observed. In addition to internal monitoring information of VIA DB, the interviews and focus groups with students during the end evaluation revealed that the programme has had a positive influence on the empowerment of students.

Empowerment is not perceived in the same way in all countries, but overall, empowerment is related to 'feeling reinforced' thanks to the strengthening of self-confidence, interactional behaviour, and interpersonal competencies. Students perceive financial independence also as an element of empowerment.

According to partners, empowerment and socio-professional integration are closely related, interdependent and mutually reinforcing, yet empowerment is often seen by partners as a necessary

condition to achieve socio-professional integration. Under relevance, it was concluded that this process is not a linear but can rather be considered as a spiral, in which empowerment and socio-professional integration are mutually reinforcing each other, in an iterative way.

## **5 COVID has influenced the results on empowerment**

The predetermined target on empowerment has been achieved but dropped significantly in 2020 in most of the countries, more than probably due to COVID. The programme adapted its planned activities in many countries in 2020 and started to organize modules (online), to provide other support to help students and their families and to maintain contacts as much as possible from a distance. Despite these efforts, this did not prevent the percentage of empowerment going down in 2020. Luckily, in many countries the situation improved in 2021.

## **6 Measuring empowerment based on one single question to students makes it difficult to understand the underlying 'story' of empowerment**

During the 2017-2021 programme, empowerment was annually measured by means of one single question, in a questionnaire to graduating students. Although other components of empowerment were included in this questionnaire (self-confidence, taking control, optimism about the future career), these components were not included in the empowerment indicator of the VIA DB programme.

Although the level of empowerment between male and female students did not differ considerably, more male than female students were able to find or create a job once graduating (see further below). The context could play a role in this, or too little attention to gender specific attention during the empowering process in the VTC.

Based on the monitoring method developed by VIA Don Bosco, it was not possible to determine to which extent the training centers have had an influence on "empowering" students, since this was not explicitly monitored except for Bolivia and Madagascar where the instrument Sensemaker was used. There the relationship between empowerment of students and the influence of the VTC could be confirmed.

Based on the evaluation findings through interviews and focus groups with students in 6 countries (including Madagascar and Bolivia), it can be concluded that the VTC indeed have played a major role in empowering students.

## **7 Progress has been made in achieving professional integration, with results strongly fluctuating among the training centers**

**If empowerment of students has improved, did this then also lead to increased (decent) (self-) employment?**

The last two years (2020-2021) young people across the world has faced specific challenges during the

pandemic (in some countries more than in others) which disadvantaged them in comparison to older adults – including having less work experience and financial capital, weaker social networks and being prone to higher levels of informality and in-work poverty. Lockdown measures which allowed teleworking helped those already having a job but not the youngsters who were actively seeking work, just leaving school, or entering newly created jobs. The COVID pandemic has had (and still has) a social and economic impact in many countries over the past two years, including in the countries where VIA Don Bosco works (although not everywhere and to the same extent).

Based on the available information for this evaluation, 5 of the 10 countries (not including Cameroon because of a different specific objective), have reached their end goal in terms of professional integration. And compared to the initial situation in 2017, 9 out of 10 countries has made progress on this indicator. In most of these countries where the final target was not achieved, it was mainly because the target for female students was not achieved. This leads to the conclusion that it does not only remain difficult to get a higher gender balance during enrollment in the TVET programmes, but also after graduation there remains a gap between girls and boys to find a job (in some countries). Strategies to assist girls in getting a job might be working, but the context for girls seems to be more challenging to them. The question is then how strategies could be adjusted so to work more or differently on the context and to enable girls better to find a job.

It is also important to notice that, although the end target on employment could have been accomplished at country level, at partner level this can be very different. There can be different reasons for this. Geographic location, the mission/focus of the Centre, the context can all play a role. And, as mentioned above, assumptions, initially made in the Theory of Change turn out not always to be true (like for instance the existence of sufficient employment opportunities in the region).

**Salaried jobs are increasingly hard to find, and investments have been made in the training centers to strengthen also entrepreneurial skills and to prepare students for setting up their own business.** VIA Don Bosco monitors both progress on the number of graduates having found a formal, paid job and graduates having created their own business and become self-employed (within a certain time after graduation). The percentage of graduates finding a formal paid job was significantly higher than the % graduates having started their own enterprise. There can be several reasons explaining this result. Therefore, we cannot conclude whether accompaniment towards a paid job works better than the support given to create self-employment.

Based on the evaluation, it can further be concluded that it is harder to find a decent job than a job *tout court*. This is also confirmed by the ILO who regularly studies employment and employability of youth across countries and continents. Furthermore, and this is a worrying evolution, the results show that **during the last three years, the percentage of students who found a decent job decreased, compared to the initial situation. Notwithstanding more students have become empowered and more students have found a paid job, fewer students find a decent job today than before.**

## EFFICIENCY

### 8 Overall, cooperation among partners and with VIA Don Bosco has been functioning well and roles are clear

In some places, VTC are not always keen in allowing the PDO coming close to their work, while in other places VTC expect the PDO to play additional roles than the role of programme manager (strategic, fund raising, networking). In many countries, PDO seem to have had a predominant role as programme manager; in some cases, it was mentioned that the PDO has also contributed to knowledge building, networking and fund raising, but overall, this has been less visible.

The national JPO supports the local JPO and coordinates the local JPO network. Local JPO have a multidisciplinary role to play which is sometimes difficult seen the limited capacities.

### 9 A lot of efforts have been done to monitor progress of the programme. The M&E learning potential among VIA DB and partners can be further exploited

Although VIA Don Bosco plays a role as knowledge sharer among partners, ownership of learning and joint learning based on the learning needs of partners did not appear to be very strong, based on the findings in this evaluation. This resulted in leaving aside a learning opportunity to strategically learn among partners from progress made at result and outcome level throughout programme implementation.

The **multitude of monitoring tools** (the MHC, the Resumoni, the Narramoni, the Finamoni, the performance scores, the empowerment questionnaire) cause a lot of time and energy going into collecting and processing data. At the same time little to no time to learn from the results of these data is invested. Because the added value of these tools mainly remains limited to reporting progress to VIA Don Bosco, these tools are often filled out mechanically and, for the partners at least, miss their purpose and opportunities to really learn from the programme strategy and the results.

Consequently, partners see little added value in these instruments to themselves (next to reporting). The MHC instrument for instance demonstrates this clearly: this is an interesting tool for self-evaluation, but it is often used as a kind of self-promoting tool. M&E is mainly seen as a requisite for the donor and not as an opportunity to learn from it and adjust their strategies in case needed. The evaluators could notice that information provided through this M&E system is not always accurate. It is possible that partners do not pay that much attention to the correctness of numbers because it doesn't add much to their daily work and learning. At the same time, a lot of time is invested in M&E which sometimes creates feelings of frustration among partners. This was already a point of attention, mentioned in the evaluation of the instruments of VIA Don Bosco (Ace Europe, 2017).

The above has prevented the M&E system to be used as a learning system and to strategically learn from M&E by partners and VIA Don Bosco, missing eventual opportunities to better steer and adjust the programme strategies during the programme implementation.

Socio-professional integration is monitored annually by the JPO. Since their capacities are already limited, it can be questioned if this administrative follow up by the JPO is justified if this comes at a cost namely less time for guiding young people towards a job.

## **10 Generally, execution of the budget was realized as planned. In some cases, the budget could have been spent more cost-effectively**

No major adjustments to the budget were identified, based on the country evaluations. The COVID pandemic meant that some budgets were not implemented as planned, but it is generally expected that the budget can be spent as planned by the end of the programme.

In several partner countries in Africa and Haiti, financial procedures were sometimes perceived as restrictive, causing more to be spent on investments and consultants than would be the case without them. These observations were not made in Latin America.

In general, the budget for the JPO is considered low and mainly intended for training, leaving little for guiding young people into the labour market. The budget for monitoring is more used for administrative monitoring (reporting) than for actual follow-up in the field.

Although flexibility to some extent within financial categories (and between with approval of VIA Don Bosco) is appreciated, the predefined budget categories sometimes prevent the real needs in the field from being met.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

### **11 Progress on sustainability has been made, but the level of sustainability varies among partners**

The final evaluation made a distinction between institutional and programmatic sustainability. In terms of institutional sustainability, efforts were made by all countries to increase the organisational sustainability of partners. Through the indicator financial autonomy of partners (not included by all partners as an indicator or in some cases limited to the IGA) it was possible to get an indication of the financial sustainability of partners. This fluctuates between countries and between partners within a country. Many partners are working on IGA, with fluctuating results.

We already saw that the MHC, measuring progress in several management areas that are supposed to contribute to sustainable organisations, is not always filled in correctly. This makes it difficult to estimate what the real progress and sustainability is in these areas among the partners. Staff turnover in some countries puts a strain on the continuity of programme activities.

Some domains that are important in achieving institutional sustainability, such as fund raising, advocacy, external communication, marketing, are put into practice by several partners (examples could be found during the country visits) but are often not made visible in the follow-up of results.



The extent to which VTC/JPO and PDO achieve organizational-institutional sustainability will also influence programmatic sustainability. The better the partners managed to embed their programme activities in their overall Don Bosco work and Salesian structure and network, to find additional resources to ensure continuity of programme activities and to position themselves as strong TVET partners, the higher the chances of programmatic and institutional sustainability. In Bolivia, El Salvador and Tanzania, examples illustrate this relationship well.

## 4.2 Overall conclusions

Based on the findings and conclusions above, VIA Don Bosco has made a difference with its programme in terms of youth empowerment and socio-professional integration in the countries VIA Don Bosco has been working during 2017-2021.

The different results have contributed, although not all to the same extent, to strengthening empowerment and socio-professional integration. Efforts in gender integration were generally visible - not to the same extent everywhere - but these did not translate yet into satisfactory results.

VIA Don Bosco has made great efforts to follow up on the progress of the programme and to support and strengthen its direct partners where possible. This was not an easy task given that VIA Don Bosco itself did not have any staff in the field (except in Cameroon)). The many monitoring tools have allowed to get a detailed (but not always accurate and precise) picture of the field and to engage in dialogue with partners on that basis. Notwithstanding the many monitoring tools, learning and reflection still happens too little on the achieved results and in function of the needs of the partners.

The COVID pandemic has had an impact on programme results (in some countries more than in others). During the crisis period, VIA Don Bosco made many efforts to stay (online) in touch with partners and provide additional support to the final target group where necessary. The consequences of the pandemic remain significant: a decline in financial sustainability of partners (fluctuating results), and fewer graduates than expected finding a (decent) job. Partners in Peru and Ecuador were unable to implement their exit plan as originally planned. Luckily, empowerment numbers improved again in 2021 in most of the countries.

Notwithstanding setbacks and the many challenges that the partners and VIA Don Bosco encountered and will face in the future, it remains very relevant to offer vulnerable young people an alternative in terms of technical and vocational education. The programme does not guarantee employment, but it does offer these young people opportunities to integrate in society and to find a (decent) job in the labour market.

## 5 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the evaluators have formulated following recommendations. Depending on the situation in each country and partner level, some recommendations may be of greater or lesser relevance for some countries/partners. Since recommendations on relevance and effectiveness are closely linked, the evaluators have taken those two criteria together. When the word “programme” is used then this counts for all countries in the 2017-2021 programme. In the country evaluation reports of the six case countries, more contextualized and detailed recommendations at country and partner level can be found.

Most of the recommendations are suggested to be further elaborated in consultation with the partners (since partners are usually the ones who implement them in practice).

### RELEVANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS

#### **1 Check the assumptions of the Theory of Change annually at country and partner level and adjust the programme strategy accordingly when needed**

Directed to PDO in cooperation with VTC/JPO

To ensure that the programme at partner level remains relevant and responds in a coherent way to the needs of vulnerable youth, the labour market, and the partners, it is recommended to strengthen the relevance of the theory of change and the programme strategy at country and even at partner level. The underlying assumptions should annually be reviewed at country and partner level since differences between partners are sometimes significant and the assumptions do not always appear to be valid. It is therefore suggested to revise the programme strategy at country and/or partner level and adjust it accordingly.

Relevance can be strengthened by ensuring that the needs of the labour market are translated well into the TVET programs. This is not done adequately yet everywhere, resulting in outdated curricula or training programmes, not updated to requirements of the labour market.

The JPO should play an even stronger role as a bridge builder between companies and training centers and should find ways to link the needs of companies as much as possible to the training programmes and to keep them up to date. The training centers should have the necessary lobbying capacities if they do not have the mandate to adapt the training curricula.

## 2 Move the measurement of professional integration to the impact level, or reformulate the indicator on professional integration

Directed to VIA Don Bosco in cooperation with PDO

To create a more direct link between the influence of the programme and how the VTC/JPO translate this further into their strategies to empower and accompany the final beneficiaries, the evaluators suggest moving the monitoring of socio-professional integration to the impact level, or to reformulate the indicator on professional integration at specific objective level. This would improve the link between the influence (the contribution) of the programme and the specific objective level. It would also reduce the time needed for annually following up employment.

When reformulating the indicator at SO level, it is suggested not to measure professional integration through “employment” i.e., having found or created a job, but rather **as a condition or combination of conditions at graduate level that facilitate employment**. Examples are: the graduate has the necessary capital to start a business (in case of self-employment), the graduate can demonstrate that his business plan is feasible, the graduate can demonstrate to have a plan to find a job, etcetera. In fact, this is about indicators or a combination of indicators that measure **to what extent and how the graduate is ready for socio-professional integration**. The latter measures a proxy for professional integration at SO level.

Thus, before graduating, it could be an option for instance to conduct an interview with each student to probe this readiness and preparedness for the labour market. During this interview, the student may be asked to give examples of this readiness for the labour market. This interview could be done by JPO staff but could also be conducted by instructors or psychosocial staff. During this interview, the extent to which the programme has contributed to this readiness could also be questioned.

Once graduated, it is suggested to only keep actualized the general information of the graduates i.e., telephone number and eventually address. This could be done with support from the secretariat of the VTC. The employment situation (= what was monitored during the 2017-2021 programme namely graduates having found or created a job) should not be measured once a year anymore, but for instance – through a sample - halfway the next programme, and eventually again – sample wise - at the end of the programme. These evaluations could be executed by an external bureau, provided that the VTC/JPO keep actualized the contact information of graduates. Before graduation, students may be asked if they agree to be contacted again after two or four years to see if they have found a job and to what extent the programme has contributed to socio-professional integration in this longer term, and in what way. In this questionnaire it would also be important to ask what students did do in case they did not start working once graduated (for instance continuing to study at the university).

An additional advantage to keep actualized the general information of students is that it could allow to establish an alumni network (not clear to what extent this exists already; at least the idea exists in some countries), allowing graduates to join occasionally, for instance sector wise to exchange challenges and learn from each other.

### 3 Rethink the methodology on how to measure empowerment

Directed to VIA Don Bosco, in cooperation with PDO and VTC

This recommendation builds on the conclusion that it is difficult to understand how graduating students interpret how they have been empowered by the training Center, if this is measured by only one question, and without questioning the influence of the training Center and the JPO. Measurement of empowerment needs improvement to better illustrate what lies underneath this concept. Further, the contribution of the training centers should be included more explicitly in this measurement.

An option could be to change the indicator on empowerment into a proxy indicator, unraveling it into more components (as has been suggested already by VIA Don Bosco in the new programme) that combine both elements of empowerment not necessarily related to employment (e.g., feeling self-confident) and elements of empowerment related to employment (e.g., feel confident about my professional future). The results of all these indicators together will give an indication of how empowerment is perceived by students and how it shifts over time.

Another suggestion is to include questions in the empowerment questionnaire about how students perceive the influence of the training centers and their immediate environment on how they feel empowered. The first is important since it was concluded that this relationship is not explicitly questioned. Measuring the influence of the context is particularly important in case the context hampers the entry on the labour market.

If the Centers want to contribute to a more enabling environment in which female students need to find a job, it could be an idea to not to measure empowerment systematically year after year, but to limit for instance this measurement to two moments in the programme in a more extensive way, also including questions on how the environment of the students influences their empowerment.

For example, empowerment could be measured with a sample of students entering a course or training (both short and longer courses if possible) and again with the same group of students at the end of their course or training. Time between both measurements could be between a couple of months up to more or a less two years. The same can be done the second half of the programme with other students. This gives the possibility to see per group if and how working on empowerment has evolved and what has influenced this empowerment, and if there are differences between the first group and the second group. It would allow, based on the results of this measurement, to adjust the programme strategy if needed, combining these results with the first midterm measurement on socio-professional integration, as suggested in the previous recommendation.

For the donor, it is not necessary to measure empowerment year after year (only at the start, halfway and at the end of the programme), and this way of working would concentrate the measurement at specific moments, what could limit the efforts needed to be done to follow up this indicator. In addition to this, it could be interesting to collect some impact stories of students having found a job during this midterm and end measurement for instance by using the Most Significant Change Method, or Process Tracing (or another method).

In addition to this recommendation, it is also suggested to dive deeper into the results of Sensemaker. Based on the experience with this instrument for five years now in two countries, it illustrates that students feel empowered and that the training centers have had a certain influence on it. It would be

interesting now to investigate how these results could be linked back to the programme strategy of VIA Don Bosco: what needs to change in this strategy to empower youth more effectively? And could Sensemaker be adjusted and used in a light way in other countries?

#### **4 Formulate results and indicators in such a way that their contribution to the specific objective cannot be questioned**

Directed to all partners

The 4 results on quality of education, strengthening management capacities, accompaniment to a job and strengthening integration of transversal topics all aim at contributing, directly or indirectly, to empowerment and socio-professional integration. Particularly results 1 and 3 appear to be the results having a direct impact on how the training centers and the JPO support and strengthen students. Result 2 supports the achievement of the specific objective in a more indirect way. Result 4 and the transversal results are important, but their effects were still limited.

To make more explicitly visible and to strengthen the contribution of the results to the specific objective it is suggested:

- To translate expected results on transversal topics into indicators, in line with what Centers want to achieve regarding gender equality and environment: a more balanced registration and an increased success rate of female graduates finding a job,
- To redesign activities focused on empowerment so to make sure that gender aspects are more included in the training of skills meant to empower female/male students (see further below) and to adjust the monitoring instruments accordingly,
- To replace indicators that are not relevant to the achievement of the predefined results or too difficult to measure and therefore not very reliable and valid,
- To replace the management health check instrument as an indicator since these scores often not reflect the reality and do not explain how improvement of certain management capacities contribute to the specific objective. The Management Health Check instrument is an interesting instrument as such, but it is given too much weight in proportion to what comes out of it. Emphasis should lie more on the story behind the scoring. Now the scoring, seems to come first with the story only used to illustrate this scoring.

#### **Result 1: Quality of Education**

- It is suggested to link capacity strengthening of instructors more to an evaluation of teachers' performance, and in function of the needs of the labour market. This should be the starting point when organizing training for teachers. 'Training for the sake of training' or 'mass training' where teachers are trained who do not need it are not efficient neither effective.
- It is suggested to better follow up what has been learnt by instructors (this could not always be verified). Although the MHC instrument normally verifies this, it is recommended for those Centers where this point is relevant, to strengthen the tailor-made capacity strengthening and to make sure that the acquired knowledge is also applied afterwards.
- It is recommended that training centers that show with a negative connotation to develop entrepreneurship, consider the development of entrepreneurship skills as a fully-fledged profession, so that young people who want to start a business do not feel that developing

these skills is 'just' an alternative (a second choice) to a salaried job. Entrepreneurship can be promoted as something for which one can really choose, from a drive and spirit to want to do business, and not (only) from a second-choice perspective.

- Even where that negative connotation does not exist, it would be interesting to explore how Centers can promote entrepreneurship even more strongly, making use of the existing infrastructure to the extent possible. For instance, in the logic of better integration of entrepreneurship, the enterprise schools could also be used as practice for the management and development of microenterprises.

### **Financial autonomy**

- To further increase financial autonomy of partners, it is recommended to explore the opportunities for IGA, in the first place within the existing infrastructure. The country evaluations give some examples on this.
- Financial autonomy was not monitored by all partners during the 2017-2021 programme. The % of financial autonomy differs substantially from partner to partner. In cases where financial autonomy is still very low, the planning bureaus should give more emphasis on this and see how they could support these partners in the development or implementation of a plan to increase this financial autonomy. Partners with a good financial autonomy could also inspire with their experience and strategy.
- See also recommendation 10.

## **5 Develop a more differentiated gender strategy**

Directed to all partners

It is recommended for the next programme to emphasize more the creation of an enabling context in which female graduates could increase their chances to get a job. This to ensure enrolment of girls in the TVET programmes and to increase the chances for female students to find or create a job once graduated, to increase chances on the labour market for female students, the relevance of the programme strategy can further be enhanced by differentiating better the strategy to accompany male and female students to a job. The context seems an important factor preventing more girls from entering the labour market, as the programme's monitoring data indicate that both girls and boys feel +- similarly empowered at the end of their course or training. It could also be possible that even though girls feel empowered, not all may sufficiently be prepared to cope with the challenges of their context when entering the labour market.

It may also be appropriate to pay more attention to gender-specific aspects within soft skills training which could help girls to better prepare for the context they will face when entering the labour market.

The programme could more strongly support the monitoring of the immediate environment in which female students live, and act accordingly when noticing that this environment does not empower nor enable female students to get a job e.g., because they must take care of their children or parents, or because their family or husband does not like or allow female students to get a job or because of other reasons. Even though some Centers do pay attention to this, other or more targeted actions could be undertaken to actively involve the immediate environment when it is noticed that this environment hampers female students to get a job.

Improving enrolment of girls in the programme requires a more integrated approach in which it will be needed to not only promote participation of girls in the TVET programmes, but also to develop more or other actions to increasing the awareness and changing the behaviour of family and potential employers aimed at breaking down gender stereotypes, preventing girls from entering the VTC and later the labour market.

To improve monitoring of progress on a more balanced registration of girls and boys in the TVET courses and training modules, it is suggested to keep figures of FMA and SDB partners separate, in these countries with both FMA and SDB partners. This to enable better monitoring of the difference between both, since FMA partners usually have predominantly female participants while with SDB partners the majority are male students. This allows to better follow progress made on how effective gender strategies are regarding registration of both male and female students.

## **6 Prepare the VTC better on environmental and climate change challenges**

Directed to all partners

It is important to give environment a stronger place in the new programme in the future (it is planned to do so), because doing business as usual is nowadays no longer possible without having a negative impact on our environment in terms of pollution, pressure on the use of natural resources and global warming. As humans, we usually act as we were above nature, but in fact we are part of it. It is therefore normal, especially if we want to contribute to a more sustainable living environment, that the care for this environment is not separated from the daily functioning of the partner organizations of VIA DB and the TVET programmes.

In practice, this means that the theme of environment should be brought to the attention even more strongly in the training programmes, e.g., by introducing themes about environment during the training of social or soft skills; by discussing respect for the natural environment during teachings about norms and values; by reflecting together on how students can bring nature into their own, often urban environment; by paying attention to the environmental aspect in business plans, etcetera.

The VTC themselves can also give even stronger attention to an environmentally friendly environment within their daily functioning. For example, by banning disposable plastic on school property, or giving young people a reusable water bottle at the start of the course as a welcome gift that students can bring to class or ensuring that the school environment itself is not too paved and has plenty of greenery (trees, plants, ...), or by setting up a bio garden managed by students during their free time, etcetera.

## **7 Continue the reinforcement of digital skills with youth and strengthen investment in digitization of data management**

Directed to all partners

Since the job market increasingly demands more complex skills e.g., handling car mechanics is increasingly becoming the ability to handle electronics, industrial machines are also more and more

automated, it is important that the VTC Centers also respond to this. Of course, this is highly context dependent and requires close monitoring of the labour market and the needs in this area.

We also recommend that the Centers invest more in a data management system with student information (considering the privacy legislation in their country). Measuring socio-professional integration could be organized differently (see below). For this it is important to keep good records of the students' general data, not only during the study period but also afterwards. These records are not always maintained accurately now.

## **8 Continue to strengthen the role and capacities of the local JPO**

Directed to the PDO/national JPO- VTC/local JPO/ VIA Don Bosco

Given the relevant role and bridge function that the JPO must play, given their guiding role of students towards the labour market, given their role as networker with potential employers, given their role as instructor in several VTC, it is a must to further strengthen the OIL. Many competencies are united in this OIL function: administrative, HR, communication, marketing, economics... The national JPO supports this function by systematizing and helping to standardize the ways of working and promoting exchange among themselves which is certainly good and can contribute to complementary and multidisciplinary learning. In some Centers, the JPO is assisted by psycho-social staff, and instructors sometimes also take on tasks that rather belong to the JPO officers. Nevertheless, overall, the workload of this position is very high and all the tasks that belong to a JPO are often not adequately performed.

It is recommended that the national JPOs play their role to their full extent for instance by helping to create openings for employment through networking with chambers of commerce, employer organizations and so on. They can also help to create links with other programs in the regions to learn from each other and possibly work together in a complementary way. It is important that they realize mutual learning and exchange activities between the JPO (this is not always the case now) so that they feel supported and can learn from each other's complementary knowledge and experience.

The JPO should be able to play their role even more than they do today. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that where needed, the JPO be expanded with more budget and staff (complementing each other in a competency-based way) to better respond to the needs of the youth and the labour market. The administrative role of the JPO should also be limited as much as possible. For instance, if the JPO are responsible today for monitoring the specific objective, it is suggested to measure this specific objective in a different way in the future (see above).

Extra resources (financial, human, logistical) in the next programme - coming from externally, the Province - would allow to strengthen the JPO. In this case it would be interesting, in the light of above recommendations, to investigate the possibility to expand the services of the JPO to graduates e.g., by supporting them to find a job, also after graduation during a certain time, by offering coaching services or any other relevant support. This to further support graduates on the spiral of empowerment – socio-professional integration.



## 9 Bring the workplace as close as possible to the learning environment of the VTC and vice versa

Directed to the VTC and JPO

The theory of change is relevant but empowerment and socio-professional integration spiral into each other from the moment (some) students encounter the labour market during their education. However, in practice, not all students get the opportunity to carry out an internship during the course. This is due to limitations on the labour market and because the JPO does not have the capacities to accompany all students individually.

It is therefore recommended to think about how, in addition to internships, students could be brought into contact with the labour market in a more practical way during their training, e.g. by giving students assignments in which they have to visit companies, by transforming the schools of business into an environment that stimulates the entrepreneurial spirit already during the training, by having students not only write a business plan but also set up a micro business in groups as a practical exercise and so on. This could make the courses even more work-related and give more students the opportunity to experience the working environment (even simulated or during a practical exercise) than only through internships.

## EFFICIENCY

### 10 Ensure that support at partner level takes place according to their needs and in a differentiated and tailor-made way to the extent possible

Directed to VIA DB in cooperation with PDO

Based on the learning needs of VTC/local PDO and priorities of the programme, the role of the PDO should be unfold more in some countries and expand to other roles such as support in fund raising, networking, external communicator, strategic bridge builder.

To the extent possible, the PDO should be able to differentiate the programme strategy where needed e.g., support these VTC with low financial autonomy, and support other VTC with low gender balance etcetera. This means that in one and the same country, not all VTC have the same need to get the same kind of support in for instance fund raising, or in developing a gender strategy. In case capacities of PDO are too limited it is also important to communicate this to the VTC so not to raise false expectations.

It should become clearer how the programme supports the strengthening of the PDO and national JPO and how this will be monitored. The PDO and the national JPO have a specific role towards the VTC/local JPO, and the PDO itself is a fully fledged partner of VIA DB in the programme. It does not make sense to measure their progress in the same way as this is done at VTC level (MHC, financial autonomy). At the same time, no specific indicators are included in the results chain that make the work of the national JPO and PDO explicit and visible.

## 11 Start using the M&E system more as a learning-oriented system

Directed to VIA Don Bosco in cooperation with all partners

This to increase and stimulate ownership and reflection at all partner levels about operational and strategic topics that could contribute to the programme strategy during implementation and to strategic learning across partners and countries. Investing in building capacities that would allow VIA DB and its partners to use monitoring data more strategically, would contribute to link M&E better to joint learning and overall, strategic steering of the programme implementation at country level and at a more strategic level.

When interpreting M&E data at a more strategic level, it is strongly suggested to involve actively the VTC/JPO so to show them the importance of this information (other than a requisite for reporting to the donor) and to let them participate in the learning process about their own results.

## 12 Optimize further the M&E system, methods, and instruments

Directed to VIA DB in cooperation with the PDO and VTC

Optimization of M&E tools should contribute to better consolidation of information, to stronger alignment of the needs of partners with the objective of the programme and to show contribution of the results to the programme's objective through indicators that are more viable, feasible and coherent.

Concretely, it is suggested

- To use only one excel file per country to monitor progress made of the programme. This could easily be done by adding additional columns to the same excel tab page per partner. This would considerably reduce the time needed when consolidating information on the programme execution across years. It would also better allow to see progress from year to year, which is more difficult when using different excel pages for each year.
- To make the Resumoni of the PDO and national JPO more tailor-made, and to add a chapter in the Narramoni giving more insight in how the PDO/JPO are playing their role and are contributing to the VTC and local JPO. What does VIA DB want to know of these partners next to financial autonomy and results from the MHC? This is not very clear at this moment. As mentioned in the report, the PDO and national JPO capacity strengthening is not explicitly made visible in the result chain, while they are the primary partners of VIA Don Bosco and also subject to the change processes of the Theory of Change.
- In addition to the previous bullet point, to review the MHC: is the MHC the best instruments as a M&E basis for capacity strengthening of PDO, JPO and the VTC? The evaluators believe this is not the case. Using the MHC did not result in the desired reflections at partner level. Partners have the feeling their own learning needs are not sufficiently considered at joint (learning) meetings where MHC results (and other) are discussed. The workload of local JPO, how to tackle multidisciplinary tasks by such a small team (often one person), how to integrate JPO better within the VTC and other questions are not necessarily responded by using the MHC. There are better, more qualitative ways to support VTC and JPO. The most important question is: **how can VTC and**

**local JPO be strengthened in such a way – organization wise – that they help empowering vulnerable youth and help them to find or create a job? Are the MHC management domains (all) relevant in function of these questions?**

- To add, in the compiled Resumoni at national level (Resumoni\_samenvoeger), the possibility to enter the range of progress made e.g., 20%-70%. Now the average progress made is calculated for all indicators but sometimes the differences between partners are very significant, resulting in an average % that does not explain the real progress made by partners. Adding this range in the reporting will make differences among partners more visible.
- To replace some of the indicators in the result (see in the report for more details), since not all indicators are relevant or give information that allows to learn about real progress made of that result in function of the achievement of the programme's objective.
- See also recommendations 2, 3 4 which relate to M&E.

### **13 Execute the budget as cost-efficient as possible**

Directed to VIA Don Bosco in cooperation with the PDO

Based on the findings and conclusions, it is proposed to look, in dialogue with partners, at how some activities can be carried out differently e.g., capacity building, because the way how this is brought into practice causes sub-optimal cost efficiency.

Furthermore, it is suggested to strengthen services of the JPO by providing more resources (financial, human, logistical,...), coming from outside or with support from the Province. Activities aimed at guidance to the labour market, with specific attention to female graduates, deserve more attention. See also the recommendations above about the role of the JPO and making the measurement of the indicator socio-professional integration less demanding to reduce the JPO's administrative burden.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

### **14 Continue efforts to increase sustainability at institutional and programmatic level**

Directed to the PDO and VTC, in cooperation with VIA Don Bosco

In line with the midterm evaluation, it is appropriate to pay more attention to certain areas, important for achieving institutional sustainability of partners such as external communication, fundraising, marketing, advocacy, or to make their results more visible. IGA activities or activities resulting in a gradual reduction of the VIA DB dependency, deserve more attention, specifically (but not limited to) in these countries that will not be supported anymore by VIA DB post 2026.

Progress was noticeable in terms of the importance that partners gradually have been attributing to JPO. However, financial resources are not in proportion to the role they play in supporting young people towards employment. It is important to include JPO in the strengthening of the financial self-sufficiency of the Centers (unless the JPO can be included in the broader support of the Salesian work on employment of vulnerable youth).

In terms of programmatic sustainability, it is appropriate for PDO to make further efforts in this area in consultation with the Centers. Examples include embedding programme activities within the larger operation of the Centers and the Salesian work, expanding follow-up of graduates to not only ensure professional integration but also social sustainability (in the field of active citizenship), establishing an alumni network, scaling up programme results by advocating at the level of national or regional education policies etcetera.

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