

Brussels, 16 June 2022

VIA Don Bosco Management Response Letter

This document concerns the VIA Don Bosco Management Response to the final evaluation of our 2017-2021 programme, titled “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”. The evaluation was conducted by Humanya, and led by Nancy Jaspers.

1. Introduction

The **objective** of this final evaluation was to examine and better understand two concepts that are key in all our (international) programmes: the empowerment and socio-professional integration of young people. The **central research question** was twofold: (i) to what extent have young people, involved in the VIA DB 2017-2021 programme been strengthened/empowered through comprehensive training (and skills development)? (ii) To what extent does youth empowerment lead to social and professional integration?

After the inception phase with first a methodological note, data collection took place through: an online questionnaire sent to all countries, six country visits, and a desk study of the remaining five countries. Following the OECD-DAC criteria, the evaluation further focused on the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the VIA Don Bosco country programmes. Special attention was given to gender, environment and digitalisation as transversal themes.

This management response is the result of an extensive and participative process, where we consulted both international partners and relevant VIA DB staff. After the country studies and before drafting the meta and country reports, an online “sensemaking” workshop was held between the international consultants of Humanya and VIA DB international programme staff (January 2022). When the draft meta and country reports were drawn up, three online workshops were organised (one in each language of our partner countries) to share the evaluators insights and gather feedback from the partners (March 2022). This way of working was appreciated as it implicated all relevant staff members of the different partner organisations in a participative manner. The different workshops provided input for the evaluators to finish the reports, but also for us, to create this management response. After this preparatory work – and while we were waiting for the final versions of the evaluation reports – the steering committee (and 2 international project coaches) analysed each recommendation (with a focus on relevance/feasibility/priority) in order to define an action plan for VIA DB. Finally, all gathered insights were processed and compiled into the present document, which was validated by VIA DB’s board of directors and administrative council.

The present management response is structured as follows:

- 1) Introduction.
- 2) Conclusions, recommendations and lessons learnt from the evaluation’s meta-report.
- 3) A brief overview of the recommendations per country, as well as resulting action points.
- 4) Conclusion.

2. General Management Response

Generally speaking, the evaluator concluded that VIA DB has made a difference with the 2017-2021 programme in terms of youth empowerment and socio-professional integration in all 11 countries. VIA Don Bosco has made visible and commendable efforts to follow up programme progress and to support and strengthen its direct partners where possible.

VIA DB is very pleased with this external evaluation and the rich insights that resulted from it: the final reports are very comprehensive and of high quality. As such, we wish to express our gratitude and recognition towards the evaluation team for the thorough exercise they conducted. Particularly considering that the evaluators faced various obstacles throughout the evaluation, such as the widespread Covid-19 restrictions, the political situation in Haiti, and natural disasters in both Madagascar and Haiti. These factors affected some of the agreed upon deadlines for the meta report and the country reports (especially Peru and Ecuador).

Unfortunately, given the time frame of this end evaluation and unlike the mid-term evaluation, we could feed its conclusions and recommendations into the formulation process of the new programme 22-26. Nonetheless, as the subsequent part of this response will show, we had already taken into account many elements highlighted by the report. The recommendations linked to the overall structure of our intervention strategy are very instructive and will help us to reorient our international cooperation programmes and projects in the future.

Recommendations

In what follows, we will run through the different recommendations made by the evaluators, linking them to certain conclusions and lessons learnt. Where relevant, we have restructured the order in which recommendations were shared, sometimes combining several recommendations. In certain places we have made a distinction between the 22-26 period, and post-26 perspectives.

2.1 Check the assumptions of the theory of change annually at country and even partner level and adjust the programme strategy accordingly when needed (I).

The evaluation stresses that, while the Theory of Change (ToC) of the programme is both relevant and valid, some challenges remain. In order to strengthen its relevance, the underlying assumptions that substantiate the Theory of Change should be reviewed annually both at country and, even, partner level.

Response VIA DB: The evaluation has pointed out correctly that the ToC's assumptions do not always appear to be entirely valid on both country and partner level. We completely agree that, when assumptions are no longer valid, then the ToC (programme strategy) should be adjusted. The 2017-21 programme was the first where we worked with a ToC, and although we were congratulated for the quality and comprehensiveness of our overall ToC structure and quality, some underlying assumptions might have lacked a more solid basis. Throughout the programme we became aware of this weakness, which is why the 22-26 country programmes are founded on a more robust ToC, where (almost) every

hypothesis has been validated externally. The few hypotheses that are not a 100% confirmed yet, have been included in our Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) strategy and in the planning of the 22-26 programme's mid-term evaluation. As a part of the DGD's annual performance measurement system, these "weaker" hypotheses will receive special attention during the evaluation of the pertinence of the country programmes. If any of these, or other, hypotheses turn out to be invalid, the programme strategy will immediately be adjusted. However, in order to avoid an excessive workload (and in line with 2.9), we may not check all the assumptions with every partner organisation annually but prioritise those that are more in need of review. This links to another recommendation (XI-XII) of this evaluation, which emphasises that "less is more" regarding MEAL: we do not want to burden our partners with non-essential MEAL-related tasks.

2.2 Move the measurement of professional integration to the impact level or reformulate the indicator on socio-professional integration (II); Formulate results and indicators in such a way that their contribution to the specific objective cannot be questioned (IV).

The evaluation suggests, either, pushing the monitoring of socio-professional integration one step further in VIA DB's intervention logic - that is to say, to the impact level- or another option would be to reformulate the professional integration indicator at specific objective (SO) level. This would improve the link between the influence (the contribution) of the programme and the SO level. If reformulating the indicator at SO level, the evaluation suggests not measuring professional integration through "employment", but rather through "to what extent the graduate is ready for socio-professional integration" (as a proxy for professional integration at SO level). The evaluators accompany this recommendation with a list of concrete suggestions (IV), of how both results and indicators can be formulated.

General response VIA DB: As mentioned in the general introduction, we were pleased with the evaluator's efforts to challenge us on the overall structure of our intervention logic; questioning the level of interest vs. level of influence, and whether we are not too ambitious with our specific objective on socio-professional integration.

Response VIA DB 22-26: For the current 22-26 programme, we will maintain the same intervention logic (that has proven its relevance for many years). However, we have significantly improved both the quality of our results and indicators (cfr. IV)

Response VIA DB post-26: Humanya's feedback on the architecture of VIA DB's logical framework corresponds perfectly to our own observations when developing our new strategic plan. Over the next few years, we will gradually shift our focus away from the general dream of integrating young people socially and professionally in society, to a more delineated approach where VIA DB will, first of all, become an expert in quality education, in order to better collaborate with schools that support young people. Hereby, we pull our dream closer to our own sphere of influence.

"The ultimate goal of VIA Don Bosco is to provide young people in vulnerable situations with the necessary skills to integrate society both socially and professionally. (...) VIA Don Bosco is convinced that the core of the solution lies in the creation of strong learning environments where every young person actually learns when they are in school. (...) The central challenge of VIA Don Bosco is to support schools so that they can better fulfil their role as engines of development. (...) In order to improve the quality of education, we will design an 'education compass'. With this tool, we will analyse the entire

educational context of schools, from access to employment.” (VIA Don Bosco Strategic Plan, 2022-2031).

This shift in organisational perspective will be translated into a new programmatic approach for 27-31.

2.3 Continue to strengthen the role and capacities of the local JSO (VIII); Bring the workplace as close as possible to the learning environment of the VTC and vice versa (IX).

Relevance can be strengthened by strengthening the Job Service Offices (JSOs), because they constitute the crucial link between the Vocational Training Centers (VTCs) and the world of work. The JSO 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.

Response VIA DB 22-26: We agree with this observation and during the online restitution workshops, held with VIA DB’s African and Latin American partners, the strengthening of the role and capacities of the (local) JSOs was seen as a top priority. Consequently, the 22-26 country programmes will invest considerably in the JSOs, with a special focus on their capacity to accompany students towards entrepreneurship.

Response VIA DB post-26: As aforementioned, VIA Don Bosco will shift its principal focus more towards the quality of education in its new strategic plan (2022-2031), reducing somewhat its own role when it comes to capacity building of JSOs. However, this does not mean that JSOs and accompaniment to the world of work will not be supported anymore: the abovementioned education quality compass will still include a part on employability, because we firmly believe that the link to the world of work is crucial in every skills development programme. When it comes to capacity strengthening however, we will not further develop our internal expertise on the subject, but rather find alliances with relevant networks and initiatives (such as Don Bosco Tech Africa).

2.4 Rethink the methodology on how to measure empowerment (III).

The evaluation concluded that the VTCs have played a major role in empowering students. However, this conclusion is based on their own interviews, focus groups and the Sensemaker analysis, rather than on the analysis of VIA DB’s empowerment indicator. This indicator does not seem to have grasped the full complexity of the concept of empowerment. It has, indeed, been difficult to understand how graduating students interpret “empowerment”, when it has been measured by only one question. The measurement of empowerment needs improvement to better illustrate what lies underneath this concept. Additionally, the contribution of the VTCs towards youth empowerment should be included more explicitly in this measurement.

Response VIA DB: We fully agree with this observation and have already tackled the improvement of our empowerment indicator and how we want it to be operationalised and measured in the different countries. We have reviewed, both, the empowerment survey and the way we will calculate the % of young people who consider themselves empowered. Our collaboration with Voices that Count and the Sensemaker project in Bolivia and Madagascar also taught us a lot about the concept of empowerment and its different dimensions. The insights of this external evaluation confirm that we are on the right

track with the changes we have enacted. To summarise what we have changed and will do in the 22-26 programme: (i) we have identified the four most significant aspects of empowerment; (ii) we have contextualised the empowerment survey with the partner organisations in each country; (iii) we have developed a time frame where we will alternate the survey with focus groups to gain more in-depth narratives and experiences from the students. Besides that, we have formulated more type-activities that are directly linked with empowerment within several programmes (such as Bolivia, R1 AT3).

2.5 Develop a more differentiated gender strategy (V).

Even though the evaluators conclude that girls and boys seem to be equally empowered at the end of their studies, they observe an important difference between both sexes when it comes to enrollment rates and professional integration. Overall, proportionally, more male students are enrolled in the VTCs and more male students find a job after graduation. The evaluation recommends, for the next programme, a greater emphasis on the creation of an enabling context for girls, that ensures their enrolment in TVET programmes and increases the chances for female students to find or create a job once graduated.

Response VIA DB. The promotion of gender equality and inclusion has been identified as one of our main priorities in the new strategic plan 2022-31, and will become a domain where we want to further develop our own internal expertise. Our main focus will be on the access and retention of girls in TVET programmes, and in a next phase, the promotion of inclusive, safe and non-violent educational environments. Concretely, in a first phase (before the end of 2023) we want to finalise our MEAL manual with the KPI's on gender and socialise it with our partners. Partners will be supported in the implementation of measures that enhance both access and retention of girls in the partner VTCs. With respect to the 22-26 programmes, each country programme has at least 1 indicator dedicated to increasing gender equality in its logical framework. Next to that, all data on persons -students, teaching and other staff - will be disaggregated by gender and the analysis of their results will include a gender specific analysis. More information on gender inclusion will be shared in the next chapter about the management response per country.

2.6 Adjust the TVET programmes and the surroundings of the VTC to prepare them better on environmental and climate change challenges (VI).

In all countries, activities have been carried out to stimulate changes in behavior in favour of a more environmentally friendly way of working. However, it is important to give the protection of the environment a stronger place in VIA DB's new programme.

Response VIA DB 22-26: We agree with this observation and continue to work on environmental practices and topics throughout the current programme. With respect to the 22-26 programmes, each country programme has at least 1 indicator dedicated to the environment in its logical framework. As shown in the chapter on the country reports, several countries will make an extra effort when it comes to environmental protection and mitigation of climate change. It is important to share in this context, VIA DB's Andean pilot programme in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia that will focus exclusively on greening TVET and green entrepreneurship. We are sure that this new programme will give us many new insights on how to work with our partners on environmental sustainability in the future.

Response VIA DB post-26: Contrary to the topic of gender equality, the environment was not retained as a strategic priority around which we want to further develop our own internal expertise. We would rather make the most of existing and new strategic partners and alliances to work on environmental projects (such as Jugend Eine Welt or Don Bosco Green Alliance). This is not to say that we do not find the environment extremely important, and we will continue to consider it as a transversal theme in our programmes. On a global level the Salesian congregation is putting a lot of focus and effort in greening the SDB and FMA initiatives world-wide and this is an initiative we will support

2.7 Continue the reinforcement of digital skills with youth and strengthen investment in digitisation of data management (VII).

Digitalisation in the school environment has been significantly accelerated by the Covid pandemic. Nonetheless, the extent to which digitalisation has been embedded differs from VTC to VTC, and a lot of work still has to be done. Since the job market increasingly demands more complex skills related to automatised processes and electronics, it is important that the VTCs also respond to this. The evaluators also recommend that the Centres invest more in data management systems for student information (considering, of course, the privacy legislation in the concerned country).

Response VIA DB: Both for VIA DB and its partners, the process of digitalisation is both inescapable and essential. We will continue to make efforts to reinforce the digital skills of both youth and (partner organisations') staff. Additionally, we will continue to investigate how we can digitalise our data management. For example, VIA Don Bosco is currently transitioning to Salesforce as a new system to conduct our data project management and monitoring in order to facilitate digital interactions with our partners and to improve the efficiency of our MEAL processes. By the end of 2022, this new platform should be operational.

2.8 Ensure that support at partner level takes place according to their needs and in a differentiated and tailor-made way to the extent possible (X)

Based on the learning needs of VTC/local JSO and priorities of the programme, the role of the Planning and Development Office (PDO) should be unfolded more in some countries and expand to other roles such as support in fundraising, networking, external communication, strategic bridge builder. It should become clearer how VIA DB's programme supports the strengthening of the PDO and national JSO and how this is monitored. At the same time, no specific indicators have been included in the results chain that make the work of the national JSO and PDO explicit and visible.

Response VIA DB: On the one hand, we agree that VIA DB needs a tailor-made approach towards the PDOs and national JSOs, and that the PDOs and national JSOs are crucial for the programme to succeed and achieve its targets. In VIA DB's new strategic plan, the international team will focus more on becoming project coaches that guide each organisation according to their needs. We realise that there are major differences between countries, but also between VTCs within a country, so a uniform approach is simply not viable. On the other hand, when reading the evaluators ideal description of a PDO's role, we believe it is not a 100% realistic. Financing for both PDO and JSO staff is hard to find, and we do not want to put those organisations in a position where they become even more dependent on VIA DB, by financing new team members so they can respond to all challenges and play all the roles

they should ideally be playing (this comment also applies for 2.3). In the future, we want to focus the capacity building efforts of our project coaches and PDOs on facilitating the optimal implementation of the programme and achievement of the logical framework's results.

2.9 Start using the M&E system more as a learning-oriented system (XI); Optimise further the M&E system, methods, and instruments (XII)

VIA DB's multitude of monitoring tools mean that a lot of time and energy are going into collecting and processing data. At the same time, little time is spent learning from the results of this data. The evaluation points out that investing in building capacities that would allow VIA DB and its partners to use monitoring data more strategically, would stimulate ownership and reflection, as well as overall strategic steering of programme implementation. It is further suggested that we optimise M&E tools to improve programme management through the collection, consolidation and analysis of relevant data.

Response VIA DB. MEAL is a main priority for VIA DB when it comes to project management. Up until 2021, we gathered an enormous amount of data, but we and the operational partners lacked time to analyse and use this data for evidence-based management. Also, with all data being stored in (separate) Excel files, this analysis was almost impossible. We decided that a switch towards an integrated databank was necessary to drastically improve our project management. With the new Salesforce system, we plan to take a big leap forward when it comes to MEAL efficiency. VIA Don Bosco is currently compiling an overall MEAL vademecum with the support of an external consultant, to improve our knowledge of key MEAL's concepts. Additionally, we are drawing up integrated MEAL manuals that will be contextualised per country (and ideally, per partner organisation) to improve data quality and processes, facilitate project management and ultimately learning and decision-making processes.

2.10 Execute the budget as cost-efficiently as possible (XIII)

Response VIA DB. VIA DB will evaluate, in dialogue with its partners, how some activities can be carried out differently (e.g., capacity building), because the way this is carried out in practice can cause sub-optimal cost efficiency. For the 22-26 programme, we have also reviewed our budget categories and the restrictions of the previous programme, to allow for more flexibility and less emphasis on certain budget categories (such as capacity building) to facilitate the partners' implementation of the programme. With the use of a budget tool per partner organisation, we improved our budgeting exercise and established a clearer link between the budget, the type activities, results and indicators. With respect to the recommendation to invest more resources into the JSOs, we prefer to be cautious (see also: 2.8).

2.11 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. (XIV)

Sustainability is the only criterion that was evaluated as “sufficient” by the evaluating team, whereas the other criteria were considered as “good”. The covid pandemic has had a significant negative impact on the financial sustainability of partner organisations, including the partners in Ecuador and Peru were not able to fully execute their exit strategies as planned.

Response VIA. Sustainability will be a central theme in the 22-26 programme. Different aspects of sustainability (financial, institutional, environmental, technical and social) will be covered, and we will continue the learning process on how to improve the sustainability within our programmatic strategy. Moreover, VIA DB has identified financial sustainability as one of the main priorities of our new strategic plan 2022-31 and will become a domain where we want to further develop our own internal expertise as of 2027.

In the upcoming chapter, we will also share some country-specific recommendations and initiatives related to sustainability.

3. Management response to the country reports

In addition to a general meta-report, we also received 11 country reports, covering all outcomes of the 2017-2021 programme and highlighting a number of context-specific observations and recommendations.

During our programme launch workshops (April-June 2022), the recommendations were shared and discussed in most of the countries, and different action points were immediately included in the 2022 operational plans. Generally speaking, a considerable number of recommendations that were shared by the evaluators, had already been picked up by VIA DB and its partners throughout the formulation process, and were already included in the design of the new programme 22-26.

3.1 Case countries

We will start by discussing the six countries that received in-person visits from the evaluators: Benin, Madagascar, Tanzania in Africa and Bolivia, El Salvador, Haiti in Latin America & the Caribbean. It should be noted that all visited countries were all very positive about the evaluation and the way it was conducted, and they wish to thank the evaluation team for the valuable insights that were generated.

3.1.1 Benin

We agree with the conclusion that the first three outcomes were achieved and that the fourth outcome on gender equality lacked concrete results. The programme 22-26 has started to focus more on integration of gender, with, for example, the positive discrimination in favour of girls through a reduction in school fees, the hiring of a Gender Focal Point and the development of an organisational gender policy in the VTCs. Nevertheless, these efforts have not translated to significant results yet. In the future, the programme will further align with the strategic pillar of gender equality in the strategic plan 2022-2031 to refine the approach in Benin.

We agree with most of the recommendations, and have already implemented the corresponding measures, such as the revision of monitoring tools, the implementation of life skills trajectories and the revision of the role of the JSO. We do not agree with the assessment of the role of the PDO ADAFO,

as we believe it already plays a proactive and innovative role in supporting indirect partners and is a key partner contributing to the success of the programme in Benin.

3.1.2 Madagascar

Several recommendations are connected with the management capacities of the PDOs and how they can coach in a more tailormade way their partners to achieve their results. The accompaniment of VIA DB will therefore be focused on the strengthening of the PDOs capacities. Additionally, to create more systematic reflections and approaches, for example, on gender and environment - two areas also identified as weak - the PDOs will first create policies and strategic guidelines that will then be translated to action plans by the VTCs. Implementation of these plans will be followed up with specific indicators.

The role of the JSO is considered as crucial to realise the outcome of the PRG. Therefore, Humanya recommends investing more in their capacities. This will get specific attention in our PRG 22-26 and their progress will be followed up with a specific indicator (R3IND2).

3.1.3 Tanzania

We were happy to see that Tanzania received evaluation scores from good (for effectiveness and efficiency) to excellent (for relevance and sustainability).

Several of the recommendations referred to a better alignment of the trades (training, equipment, capacity building of teachers ...) with the labour market. To respond to this, an assessment is being conducted of the current trades of the VTCs and of the surrounding labour market. Afterwards, action plans will be developed based on the insights and proposals given in this assessment. The implementation of these plans will be followed up in our new PRG by the indicator (R1 IND2) on the insertion of new techniques and technologies in the trades.

Some other recommendations referred to the problem graduates encounter when trying to insert the labour market, because in Tanzania only 10% of the influx of young people looking for a job can be absorbed. Therefore, to provide an alternative, a specific and practical training in entrepreneurship will be offered to students and followed up by an indicator (R3 IND2).

Special attention will also be given to improvement of the MEAL instruments and the analysis of the results in order to learn from them.

3.1.4 Bolivia

We were pleased with the overall positive evaluation of the programme in Bolivia and agree with most of the recommendations. In the new DGD programme 22-26, Bolivia will be an exit country and, therefore, sustainability, particularly financial and institutional, will be of utmost importance and we will make sure we collaborate with the PDO and the VTCs in every way possible to develop an efficient exit strategy, considering risks and prioritising systematisation and institutionalisation. Special emphasis will also be given, as recommended, on institutionalising the JSOs, developing a clearer alliance and advocacy strategy on a national level to create links with businesses and the state in a more systematic way. We will collaborate with the PDO to consolidate its many networks and synergies, but were, however, surprised to read that they should invest even more in this area when they already manage over 20 NGO projects, tens of networks both nationally and internationally, and have countless agreements and collaborations with civil society, private and public institutions.

3.1.5 El Salvador

We appreciate the overall positive evaluation of the programme in El Salvador and agree with most of the recommendations. We are happy to notice that, together with the partners, we have already taken many of them into account in the new DGD programme 2022-26. For example, by adapting our MEAL tools to ensure a more direct connection between activities, results and objectives, to increase efficiency and to focus on learning. We have also given a stronger impulse to gender equality and the environmental protection with forthcoming institutionalised policies and implementation strategies, as well as clear indicators to follow our progress. Sustainability has and will continue to be a priority, and we are disappointed that no mention has been made of VTC Ricaldone that will no longer participate in the new programme because, thanks to a clear strategy, it has become so sustainable financially and institutionally, including its JSO. We will continue to support the PDO and the VTCs in this direction and all other endeavours they may wish to follow in order to offer the highest quality education and accompaniment to (self)employment.

3.1.6 Haiti

Due to the current difficult context in the country, the evaluation was conducted by telephone rather than face-to-face. This was somewhat a disappointment to the partner organisations and has led, in their opinion, to bias and misunderstanding on the part of the evaluators. However, the evaluators did point out the great relevance of the VIA Don Bosco programme in Haiti.

We agree with most of the recommendations. For example, clarification of the roles of the JSOs, strengthening the employability skills of young people and introducing entrepreneurship modules earlier in the curriculum. These recommendations had already been raised and included in the model activities of the 22-26 programme.

However, we do not agree with the evaluators' conclusion that the concept of socio-professional integration is poorly understood by the partners or that we do not consider certain types of employment (sales and service, Income Generating Activities) in the calculation of our indicators.

For effectiveness, we note that the SO indicators were achieved but not the results indicators. The evaluators recommend clarifying the concepts related to the indicators and choosing indicators that allow a better vision of the real impact of the programme. The participatory development of a contextualised MEAL manual for the 22-26 programme has already been initiated by VIA DB for better appropriation of the indicators by the partners in the future, while considering the reality of the Haitian context.

3.2 Non case countries

3.2.1 Cameroon

The evaluator's main recommendation concerns the strengthening of mechanisms to support students in becoming self-employed. Indeed, the support of VIA DB partners towards the professional integration of students is not yet as developed in Cameroon as in other partner countries. After a learning visit to the employment office in Benin, our partners set up 2 JSOs in Cameroon in 2021, one in the Great North and one in the Great South. These two JSOs will play a crucial role in the professional

integration of young people. Their duties include making training more valued and creating a positive image of entrepreneurship among the general population, in order to foment a true entrepreneurial culture. In addition, they will have to ensure, together with the facilitators and parents of the students, that the content of entrepreneurship training is improved and integrated into the curricula in a sustainable way. Another priority of the JSOs will be to establish partnerships with microfinance institutions (NGOs, private or governmental) so that the graduated have the financial means to create their business. Finally, they will have to do a systematic follow-up of all the post-trainees to collect qualitative and quantitative data on their professional integration, and to enlarge their network of professionals who can give internships and work to the new batch of students.

3.2.2 DR Congo

We agree with most of the recommendations. These recommendations were already mentioned and included in the results and type-activities of the 22-26 programme. For example, we will focus on supporting young people in self-employment, especially girls. We will accompany each JSO in the elaboration of procedure manuals containing key and effective strategies, with the integration of a gender approach. We will also strengthen the digital skills of teachers. Financial sustainability will be another important issue: on the one hand, we will support partner organisations in the development and strengthening of accounting tools and, on the other hand, we will consolidate and diversify Income Generating Activities.

In terms of effectiveness, we note that the SO indicators were largely achieved, but not the result indicators. With the aim of developing a procedure for measuring indicators (for the 22-26 programme) that is representative of Congolese reality, we are currently using a 100% participatory approach in designing the MEAL manual. This will allow for better ownership of the indicators and the data collection process.

3.2.3 Mali

We welcome and acknowledge the overall positive evaluation of the VIA Don Bosco programme in Mali, where we have achieved the programme results, showing excellent progress in the quality of education, management capacity and insertion of young people with the different centers. We welcome the points on financial sustainability (mainly concerning the VTC in Touba and the introduction of the Competence Based Approach (APC), which will be key elements in our Mali exit strategy (after 2026). We are in full discussion with the parties concerned on the mandate and future role of the JSO. We believe that the recommendations mentioned are relevant, but we need to keep in mind the financial sustainability of any intervention or expansion of Human Resources allocated to the JSO.

3.2.4 Ecuador

Ecuador was one of the exit countries of the 17-21 programme along with Peru. While the partners have done an excellent job overall and have made good progress on the indicators and targets, the covid pandemic has had a strong and negative impact.

Nevertheless, great results have been achieved such as the creation of strategic alliances for infrastructure and equipment as well as for curriculum validation. The JSOs have carried out many activities and in view of the declining economic context (accentuated by the pandemic), professional insertion has been mainly oriented towards entrepreneurship. Many processes have been

institutionalized but we do not know if the local JSOs will be able to continue after 2021. Partners will certainly have to follow those recommendations: continually updating the educative offers, improving the capacity on entrepreneurship and giving updating workshop to ex-student who haven't find any job yet.

3.2.5 Peru

The 17-21 programme allowed the Peruvian partners to consolidate and move forward on specific indicators and targets. Unfortunately, Covid-19 had a very strong impact on Peruvian society, all schools were closed for 2 years (2020 and 2021) and Peru was the second most affected country by the pandemic in South America after Brazil. The consequence of the pandemic has been to invest more than before in the psychosocial and relational aspects of young people within the VTCs.

Although financial sustainability could not be consolidated as planned, our partners were able to complete the capacity building that will be the basis for the implementation of the evaluation recommendations.

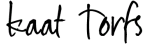
4. Conclusion

Overall, we are very pleased with this evaluation and the process that we have completed with Humanya and its team of evaluators. Although the timing of the evaluation did not really permit us to feed all the recommendations into the formulation process of the 22-26 programme, we do estimate that we have already integrated and can still integrate many of them. We realised that our new strategic plan is closely in line with the recommendations made by the evaluators, and that is very reassuring. Also, during the programme launch workshops we have had in the different countries, we succeeded in reflecting together with the partners about how we can consolidate good practices and integrate the relevant recommendations of this evaluation in the operational planning of our new programme and beyond.

Brussels, 16 June, 2022

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