





# **D-VETYA PROJECT**

**MID-TERM REVIEW REPORT** 

**Project Deliverable 1.3** 

### **Deliverable Description Sheet**

Deliverable: D1.3 Mid-Term Review Report

**Due Date:** Month 11 (30<sup>th</sup> November 2023)

Actual Completion Date: 29th November 2023

Work Package Concerned: WP 1 - Coordination & Management

Deliverable Type: R - Report

**Dissemination Level**: PU – Public (shared on project websites – <u>https://serve.ie/digital-vet-youngafrica/</u> and <u>https://youngafrica.org/en/project/digital-vocational-education-and-training-for-young-africans/</u>)

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#### 1. Background

The Digital VET for Young Africans (D-VETYA) project will be implemented by SERVE and Young Africa (YA). The project timeframe is January 2023 to December 2024. SERVE is an international development NGO based in Ireland. YA is a confederation of independent NGOs and includes YA International Netherlands, YA International Africa Hub Trust (Zimbabwe), YA Zimbabwe, YA Mozambique, YA Zambia and YA Namibia. YA has a dissemination network with 23 organisations across 11 African countries whereby it shares successful models of its work. YA provides holistic and accredited VET to marginalised youth through 6-12 month training courses in 46 disciplines, life skills, entrepreneurship and ICT.

The objectives of the D-VETYA Project are (1) Coordinating implementation of the Project Workplan and achievement of Project Deliverables; (2) YA's eLearning Platform available for 8,150 disadvantaged youth across southern and Eastern Africa; (3) YA's Postgraduate Service Toolbox (PGST) contributes to a substantial increase in the percentage of YA graduates in employment; (4) 4 YA Affiliates and 23 dissemination partners using the PGST across Africa; (5) 2 new YA models (eLearning & PGST) integrated into YA MEL system and 73 YA and dissemination partner staff trained in MEL system leading to improved data driven performance; (6) Evaluate the impact, successes, challenges and lessons learned of the Project; and (7) Increase awareness about Digital VET in Africa amongst 50 policymakers and 3,500 members of the public in Ireland and the Netherlands.

There are five Work Packages – (1) Coordination and Management; (2) Development of the YA eLearning Platform; (3) Development of the YA Postgraduate Service Toolbox (4) Improvement of the YA Monitoring Evaluation and Learning System; (5) Impact and Dissemination. SERVE is the Coordinator, YA International (YA NL and YA Hub) are Beneficiaries, and the four YA Affiliates are Affiliated Entities. YA's dissemination network will also benefit.

#### 2. Project Summary

This section presents a brief overview of project progress to date, with a more detailed breakdown of each milestone and deliverable provided in Section 3. Overall, the implementation of the D-VETYA Project has gone well in the first year and is broadly on track to achieve its deliverables by the end of 2024.

The Coordination and Management of the project (WP1) has gone well, helped by the strong partnership between SERVE and Young Africa which has been running since 2008.

Significant progress has been made on the development of the Young Africa eLearning Platform (WP2) and the Improvement of the YA MEL System (WP4), with technical work led by Spur Technologies in Uganda.

Work on the Post Graduate Support Toolbox (WP 3) is slightly behind schedule, as the recruitment process for the technical development work took longer than expected. In October 2023, TBC was recruited to complete this work and they are working hard to meet milestone and deliverable deadlines.

Our Dissemination & Communication Work (WP5) has focused on providing updates about project progress through the SERVE and Young Africa websites and social media channels. When we approach completion of the work packages in 2024, the project's Dissemination & Communication work will expand to Young Africa's dissemination network who will benefit from the project's deliverables, ensuring that the benefits of the project reach as many young people in Africa as possible.

With the approval of the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), the delivery dates of some deliverables and project milestones were adjusted.

In December 2022, SERVE received 40% ( $\in$ 159,890) of the project grant from the EACEA. As of October 2023, 82% of this amount has been utilised. 33% of the overall grant of  $\in$ 399,725 has been utilised.

#### Status of Deliverables Due by November 2023 (Month 11, Year 1)<sup>1</sup>

No	Deliverable Name	Due Date	Status
1.1	Project Committee Terms of Reference	Month 1 (Jan 2023)	Completed 21-01-2023
1.2	Induction Meeting Report	Month 1 (Jan 2023)	Completed 15-02-2023
1.3	Mid Term Review Report	Month 11 (Nov 2023)	Completed 29-11-2023

100% of the required Deliverables have been completed by Month 11. 66% of the Deliverables were achieved on time; 33% of the Deliverables were achieved slightly late.

#### Status of Milestones Due by November 2023 (Month 11, Year 1)

No.	Milestone Name	WP	Due Date	Status
1	Project Committee ToR	1	Month 1 (Jan 2023)	Completed 21-01- 2023
2	Induction Meeting Report	1	Month 1 (Jan 2023)	Completed 15-02- 2023
3	Mid Term Review Report	1	Month 11 (Nov 2023)	Completed 29-11- 2023
4	Hired Sub Contractor for review of 10 Centre Based Curricula	2	Month 7 (July 2023)	Completed 18-07- 2023, but difficulties have led to delays in full completion
5	Hired Subcontractor for test phase to deliver 4 eLearning curricula and then deliver full YAeLP with 14 curricula	2	Month 2 (Feb 2023)	Completed 18-04- 2023
6	Test (Pilot) of eLearning Platform Finalised	2	Month 6 (June 2023)	Completed 09-08- 2023
11	Report of Post Graduate Services in Vocational Training Available	3	Month 3 (Mar 2023)	Completed 10-05- 2023
12	Post Graduate Service Toolbox Prototype finalised	3	Month 11 (Nov 2023)	Off Track
16	Development of Key Indicators finalised	4	Month 2 (Feb 2023)	Completed 16-03- 2023
17	Sub Contractor Hired (YA MEL System)	4	Month 3 (Mar 2023)	Completed 18-04- 2023
20	Communication & Dissemination Strategy	5	Month 2 (Feb 2023)	Completed 24-02- 2023
21	Dedicated Website Pages on SERVE & YA websites	5	Month 1 (Jan 2023)	Completed 31-01- 2023

83% of the required Milestones have been completed by Month 11. 42% were completed on time; 42% were completed slightly late; and 16% are Off Track.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Green = Completed By Original Due Date; Amber = Completed, After Due Date (EACEA proactively informed of delays when this occurred); Red = Not Completed, Off Track

#### 3. Review of Project Deliverables

#### **Deliverable 1.1 Project Committee Terms of Reference (Completed)**

The Terms of Reference for the Project Committee was finalised on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2023. Briefly, the main task of the Project Committee is to ensure complete and efficient implementation of the D-VETYA Project in line with the Grant Guidelines outlined by the EU. The Project Committee has lead coordination and management of the five project Work Packages, and utilisation of the Project Budget.

There are five members – SERVE's Development Programmes Manager; Head of Programmes (YA International); Grants and Projects Coordinator (YA International); DVETYA Project Coordinator (YA International) and the Finance Manager (YA International). This team has worked very well together to date and it is not seen as necessary to add any new members to the Project Committee at the moment. The roles of SERVE and YA International are clear. The Terms of Reference outlines administrative issues related to quorum, decision making, frequency of meetings, agenda and minutes and dispute resolution.

The Project Committee has met every month since February 2023. There is also very regular communication in between these meetings. There is clear and transparent communication between SERVE and YA and this has ensured that the management of coordination of the project has gone well to date. This approach will continue into the Year 2 period.

#### **Deliverable 1.2 Induction Meeting Report (Completed)**

The DVETYA Induction Meeting was held via Zoom on 14th February 2023. There were 4 representatives from SERVE - Chairperson, Development Programme Manager, Regional M & E Officer and Programmes & Administration Manager. There were 9 representatives from YA International - CEO, Head of Programmes, Head of Operations, Finance Manager, Grants Coordinator x 2, DVEYTA Project Coordinator, Programmes Assistant and Communications Intern.

The meeting covered (1) Background to the application; (2) Detailed review of the 5 Work Packages; (3) Detailed review of the Project Budget; (4) Overview of reporting processes and key compliance issues; (5) Review of Project GANNT Chart.

The meeting was well received and all participants reported a full understanding of the roles and requirements of all participants.

A second Induction Meeting with four YA Affiliates (YA Zimbabwe, YA Mozambique, YA Zambia and YA Namibia) was held in June 2023. This meeting followed the outline of the first induction meeting. It also focused on the Affiliates contribution to the project - specifically (1) supporting the testing/piloting phase of the YAeLP development; (2) supporting the recording of training videos: (3) supporting the development of a VET teacher training course for digital learning; (4) participation in the co-creation workshop for the PGST Work Package; (5) supporting the testing phase of the PGST; (6) establishing linkages with micro-credit institutions.

#### **Deliverable 1.3 Mid Term Review Report (Completed)**

This report marks the achievement of this Deliverable, which aims to provide an update to the EACEA and to our key stakeholders and the public. We will be sharing this report on the project websites. The successful completion of Deliverable 1.3 provides valuable insights into the project's status, challenges faced, and lessons learned, ensuring that adjustments and improvements can be made for a successful second year of implementation.

#### 4. Detailed Review of Project Milestones

#### MS 1 Project Committee TORs (Completed)

This Milestone replicates Deliverable 1.1 and the relevant details are outlined in Section 3 above. The completion of the Project Committee ToR signified a crucial initial step in the project's execution. The close collaboration between SERVE and YA International has played a pivotal role in the successful management and coordination of the project during the first year.

#### MS 2 Induction Meeting Report (Completed)

This Milestone replicates Deliverable 1.2 and the relevant details are outlined in Section 3 above. The Induction Meetings were important moments during the initial stages of the project, providing valuable insights into the project's early progress and setting the foundation for effective collaboration. Effective communication and alignment among participants are critical elements for the success of a complex, multi-year project like D-VETYA. Although the milestone was slightly behind schedule, it did not significantly impact the overall project timeline.

#### Milestone 3: Mid Term Review Report (Completed)

This Milestone replicates Deliverable 1.3 and the relevant details are outlined in Section 3 above.

# Milestone 4: Hired Sub- Contractor for Review of 10 Centre Based Curricula (Completed, but challenges in implementation)

This milestone was initially completed in July 2023 but the curriculum review process has not been fully completed. This has been due to challenges with regards to time management on the part of the consultant that was hired as they couldn't achieve any of the set deliverables over time. The project team agreed that the initial consultant be replaced with another consultant. This meant restarting the recruitment process. The sourcing of the new consultant started in October 2023, and the new consultant started work on 27th November 2023. It is expected that this will be completed by the end of April 2024.

SERVE and YA will be prioritising this area so that there are no negative impacts on the ongoing completion of the e-Learning platform.

# Milestone 5: Hired Subcontractor for test phase to deliver 4 eLearning curricula and then deliver full YAeLP with 14 curricula. (Completed)

SERVE and Young Africa hired Spur Technologies (<u>https://spurtechnologies.com</u>) to complete the development of the Young Africa eLearning Platform (Work Package 2). A comprehensive and competitive tender process led to the shortlisting of seven technology companies who submitted detailed proposals and completed interviews with SERVE and Young Africa. A second round of calls were held with three companies who provided product demonstrations. Spur Technologies emerged as the leading candidate, and after further correspondence to clarify technical and logistical queries they were chosen to undertake this work. Given the close coordination between this Work Package and Work Package 4 (Integration of Updated MEL System), Spur Technologies were also chosen to complete the technical work of WP 4 - see Milestone 17.

The YA eLearning Platform is available at https://yaelearning.org/

Spur Technologies have visited the YA Zimbabwe training campus to understand their training programmes and have recorded content for use on the YAeLP.

#### Milestone 6: Test (Pilot) of eLearning Platform Finalised (Completed)

The test phase was completed in August 2023. It took longer than expected due to some challenges in gathering user feedback as they became familiar with the Platform. However, this was an extremely useful process and a comprehensive User Testing Report was provided to SERVE and YA.

The testing phase focused on four courses – entrepreneurship, catering, life skills and welding. One trainer and 5-10 students per course participated in the testing phase. The Learnings and Recommendations include: (1) User experience needs to be improved so that the 'flow' within the course is intuitive; (2) the content team will embed sections for asking questions. They provide detailed instructions on how to navigate through course materials to ensure learners can view tutorials and learn how to use the platform on their own; (3) Further training of trainers and students will be completed so that both groups are confident in using the system; (4) Respondents noted that some sections of the course are unclear and some parts have very complex language. The content team will review each course to ensure language is clear and simplified where possible.

# Milestone 11: Report of Post Graduate Services in Vocational Training Available (Completed)

The Report of Post Graduate Services in Vocational Training was completed in May 2023. Although behind the original due date, this did not adversely affect project implementation. The <u>full report</u> is available on the Project Websites.

The report was completed by an external consultant based in Zimbabwe. It was an important first step in the implementation of Work Package 3. The Report reviewed existing post graduate services on offer from YA affiliates and undertook a desk review of international and regional

good practices in the post-graduate sector that can be adapted or adopted by YA. Seven recommendations were made by the Consultant.

The Report set the foundation for Young Africa's internal work on the development of the PGST – see Milestone 12.

#### Milestone 12: Post Graduate Service Toolbox Prototype finalised (Off Track)

As an initial step, YA held a Co-Creation Workshop held in Harare in June 2023. The workshop was attended by Project Coordinators, M&E officers, Business Development Officers (BDO) and Country Directors from YA Affiliates in Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe as well Young Africa International staff. The SERVE Regional M&E Officer also attended. The Workshop led to YA being able to collaboratively develop and refine a prototype toolbox for post-graduation services. Through shared expertise and experiences, the Workshop addressed the challenges faced by young entrepreneurs, focusing on enhancing employability and fostering business success. The student journey analysis and monitoring and evaluation framework provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of the services and allowed for data-driven decision-making. Furthermore, the integration of postgraduate support services into mobile training showcased adaptability and innovation to cater to the diverse needs of youth across different regions. The PGST prototype, with its user-friendly interfaces for both administrators and young people, can be a comprehensive and accessible platform.

Finding the right company to complete the technical development of the PGST has been challenging, and as of November 2023, the achievement of this milestone is off track. YA have a strong preference for the use of open source technology (e.g. Moodle or alternative) which means the PGST can be delivered cheaper, faster and have lower maintenance and support costs. A recruitment effort between September and October 2023 led to three applicants who did not offer an open source technology solution. A second recruitment effort in November 2023 has led to the identification a company who can provide an open source solution and SERVE and YA are exploring this option.

Despite these delays it is still possible that the PGST will be delivered well before the end of the Year 2 period, allowing YA time to disseminate the model. SERVE will engage with the EU if further changes are needed to the due date for this deliverable and related milestones.

#### Milestone 16: Development of Key Indicators finalised (Completed)

Updating the YA MEL System so that it is aligned with, and can take advantage of, the eLearning Platform and the PGST, is the focus on WP 4. The first step of this process was to develop a <u>Project Logframe Matrix with Key Indicators</u>. This work was completed in March 2023.

It outlines 7 Specific Objectives, 7 related outputs and 25 associated indicators to track progress. Briefly, the 7 Specific Objectives are:

1. Coordinating and implementation of the Project Work Plan and achievement of the Project Deliverables in compliance with funder guidelines;

- 2. Young Africa's eLearning Platform available for socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged youth across southern and Eastern Africa;
- 3. YA's Postgraduate Service Toolbox contributes to a substantial increase in the percentage of graduates in self and formal employment amongst YA students;
- 4. YA affiliates and dissemination partners using the PGST across Africa;
- 5. New YA Models (eLearning & PGST) integrated into YA MEL system for improved data driven performance;
- 6. Capture and externally validate the impact, successes, challenges and lessons learned from the Project;
- 7. Increase awareness about VET in Africa amongst policymakers in Europe, Ireland, the Netherlands and amongst members of the public in Ireland and the Netherlands.

This is an important internal tool for reviewing project progress.

#### Milestone 17: Sub Contractor Hired (YA MEL System) (Completed)

For budget, time management and operational reasons, SERVE and YA agreed that SPUR Technologies in Uganda should complete this work alongside their work to develop the YA eLearning Platform. This decision will improve integration of YA's MEL needs with the digital learning platform, whereby it will be possible for YA to use the platform to gather and analyse key monitoring data from students. This process is on track.

#### Milestone 20: Communication & Dissemination Strategy (Completed)

The DVETYA Communication & Dissemination Strategy was completed in February 2023. It provides SERVE and YA with guidance to ensure high visibility, accessibility and promotion of the Project. It defines our target audiences – the youth vocational training sector in Africa; Policymakers in the EU and the general public in our countries of operation. The specific Milestones and Deliverables that are needed to achieve the Communications & Dissemination Strategy are outlined.

Most of the Communication & Dissemination work will take place in the second year of DVETYA when the YAeLP and PGST are finalised and can be shared with Young Africa's dissemination network. The aim is to share the platforms with at least 23 partners in 11 African countries by the end of 2024.

#### Milestone 21: Dedicated Website Pages on SERVE & YA websites (Completed)

Dedicated project websites were developed in January 2023. The project website for SERVE is <u>https://serve.ie/digital-vet-youngafrica/</u> The project website for Young Africa is <u>https://youngafrica.org/en/project/digital-vocational-</u> <u>education-and-training-for-young-africans/</u>

#### 5. Summary of Main Achievements

The main achievements are:

- 1. Significant progress has been made on the development of the YAeLP. There is very strong engagement from the sub-contractor, Spur Technologies, who have shown great commitment to the work and understanding of the needs of the young people who will use the platform;
- 2. Work to update and integrate YA's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning system is progressing well;
- 3. The Project Committee is working very well to provide the support and oversight that project requires. The existing relationship between SERVE and YA has helped immensely;
- 4. The project budget has been well managed and cash flow forecasts for the Year 1 phase have been met, allowing for good progress to be made against milestones and deliverables.

#### 6. Summary of Main Challenges and Lessons Learned

The main challenges to date are:

- 1. Delays in the achievement of Milestone 4 Review of 10 Training Curricula
- 2. Delays in the achievement of Milestone 12 PGST Prototype Development

Although these Milestones are behind schedule, it is possible to complete these well within the second year of the DVETYA and ensure that the related milestones and overarching Deliverables can still be achieved within the project timeframe, and with enough time to allow us to effectively disseminate the models.

The main lesson learned is that there is a high level of risk associated with reliance on external sub-contractors and consultants. Despite thorough recruitment processes and reference checks, complete 'buy-in' is needed from sub-contractors to ensure that the standard of work is acceptable and that agreed timelines are met. Delays in one milestones can cause delays in other milestones and deliverables so robust project management is needed to ensure the project stays on track.

Another lesson learned is the importance of finding IT companies with sufficient experience, capacity and availability to meet the technical requirements of the YAeLP and the PGST. Factoring in the ongoing maintenance and upgrade requirements has emerged as a major consideration for SERVE and YA, meaning that there is a requirement for open source software over proprietary software solutions.

#### 7. Looking Ahead for Rest of the Project Period

With 13 months left in the project, the DVETYA consortium are in a good position to achieve the project's Milestones and Deliverables. We foresee the following roadmap for the second year of the DVETYA project:

Q1 2024	Q2 2024	Q3 2024	Q4 2024	2025
<ul> <li>Ensure that MS 4 (Curriculum Review) &amp; MS 12 (PGST Prototype) are back on track</li> <li>Complete Milestones 12-15 related to development &amp; dissemination of PGST</li> <li>Complete Deliverable 3.6- PST Development</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Complete Milestones 7 (eLearning partnerships established) and 8 (training and final development of YAeLP)</li> <li>Complete Deliverable 2.4 (YAeLP)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Continue with dissemination of YAeLP &amp; PGST</li> <li>Complete MS 18 &amp; 19 related to YA MEL System Upgrades</li> <li>Complete Deliv erables 4.7&amp; 4.8 related to YA MEL System Upgrades</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Complete MS 10 (report from Centre based to eLearning process)</li> <li>Complete MS 22 – External Evaluation</li> <li>Complete MS 23 &amp; 24 – Dissemination of project</li> <li>Complete related Deliverables 2.5 (Report), 5.9 Evaluation), 5.10 and 5.11 (Project Brochures)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Continued promotion and dissemination of the YAeLP and PGST models within YA Affiliate and Dissemination network;</li> <li>Refining the YAeLP &amp; PGST to make sure they meet training and student needs</li> <li>Phase 2 – uploading of more curricula to digital platform</li> </ul>

SERVE and Young Africa will maintain our approach of proactive communication with the EACEA to inform them of any delays to milestones and deliverables and to request changes to timelines if required.

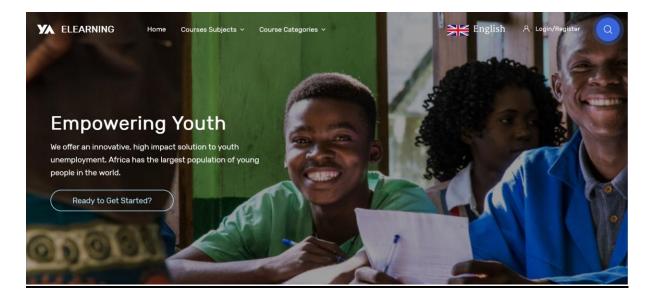
Communication of project progress and dissemination of the eLearning and PGST models will be more prominent in Year 2 as the two models are finalised and are ready for sharing. The approach of sharing within the Young Africa Dissemination network will ensure that the benefits of the project are shared as widely as possible.

#### <u>Annex 1 – Pictures from DVETYA Year 1</u>

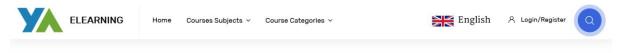
#### **Induction Meeting**



### **YA eLearning Platform Log in Screen**



### **YA eLearning Platform Log in Screen**



#### Young Africa Categories Courses

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#### **YA eLearning Platform Course Screen**

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# YA eLearning Platform Course Screen

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Post Graduate Support Toolbox Co-Creation Workshop, Zimbabwe, June 2023



