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D-VETYA PROJECT

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

Project Deliverable 9

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External Evaluation of the SERVE-Young Africa Digital VET For Young Africans (D-VETYA) Project 2023-June 2025

Evaluation Report

Prepared By

EMCAD
EMPOWERMENT FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

16 June 2025

Acknowledgements

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Lastly, special acknowledgement and thanks also go out to the vibrant team of research assistants who worked tirelessly together with the consulting team throughout the entire study.

ACRONYMS

YA	Young Africa
D-VETYA	Digital Vocational Educational Training for Young Africans
ILO	International Labor Organization
PGST	Postgraduate Service Toolbox
MEL	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
SADC	Southern African Developing Countries
SME's	Small and Medium Enterprises
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
PIREP	Programa Integrado daReforma de Educação Profissional
PPPs	Public-Private Partnerships
CPMM	Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods
UFE	Utilisation-Focused Evaluation
FGDs	Focus group discussions.
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
DQA	Data Quality Assurance
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation

Executive Summary

Introduction

The External Evaluation of the SERVE-Young Africa Digital VET for Young Africans (D-VETYA) Project evaluates the effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, impact, coherence, and sustainability of this innovative initiative targeting youth across Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Implemented by SERVE in collaboration with Young Africa (YA) and funded under the EU Erasmus+ program, the project seeks to address youth unemployment and digital skills deficits by providing accessible, flexible vocational education through digital platforms. It prioritizes underserved populations, including women, youth in rural areas, and persons with disabilities.

Methodology

The evaluation utilized a Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods (CPMM) design, incorporating desk reviews, key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and a survey questionnaire administered to 352 respondents. The analysis triangulated data from diverse sources to assess the project's progress against its stated objectives and indicators. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and safeguarding, were integral to the methodology, ensuring respect and inclusiveness for all participants.

Findings

Relevance

Results from the findings shows that the relevance of the D-VETYA project is evident in how it responded to deep-rooted structural barriers facing young people, particularly in the context of educational disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The eLearning platform offered an alternative to traditional classroom instruction, enabling young people to access vocational education without being removed from their communities or daily obligations. This was especially beneficial for adolescent girls and young women, who often face cultural restrictions and caregiving responsibilities that hinder their access to physical learning spaces. The project also addressed institutional priorities by easing pressure on YA's limited in-person enrollment capacities, thereby expanding reach through digital delivery. However, challenges such as lack of internet access, unaffordability of digital devices, and low levels of digital literacy, limited the full utilization of the platform. Despite these constraints, the availability of offline access through Moodle and the inclusion of digital literacy courses strengthened the platform's overall value. The complementary PGST will add strategic relevance by linking graduates to employment opportunities and providing career support, highlighting the project's dual focus on access to education and pathways to employment.

Effectiveness

The project registered over 5,700 young people on the eLearning platform, demonstrating strong initial uptake and potential for growth beyond YA's traditional constituency. The engagement of 23 organizations and licensing agreements with three partners reflects broader interest in the platform. However, the delays in completing digitized modules significantly constrained the platform's educational effectiveness. Country-specific dynamics shaped varying levels of adoption. Mozambique leveraged local library access to mitigate digital literacy issues, Zimbabwe struggled more acutely with infrastructural deficits, and Zambia, while enthusiastic, faced economic and technical limitations. The PGST, designed to facilitate job matching, employer engagement, and graduate tracking, remains behind schedule due to delays in hiring qualified developers. Though its intended design mimics user-friendly professional platforms like LinkedIn, its operational impact cannot yet be assessed. Nonetheless, the system is widely anticipated to offer structured, scalable support to graduates and employers once it is launched.

Efficiency

Project efficiency was hampered by significant implementation delays and underestimation of the project's technical complexity. Despite the project's official start in January 2023 with a planned conclusion by December 2024, key

activities remained incomplete, resulting in a six-month no-cost extension to June 2025. Core components such as curriculum adaptation and platform development were slowed by late recruitment of ICT personnel, delayed onboarding of mentors, and re-contracting of underperforming consultants. The reliance on external technical expertise, in the absence of internal capacity within YA and SERVE, further complicated timelines. Despite budget limitations and staffing challenges, some progress was made, including the deployment of eLearning coordinators at affiliate levels, which improved communication and operational coordination.

Impact

The D-VETYA project has initiated a cultural and operational shift within Young Africa by introducing digital modalities into its training ecosystem. Even in its early stages, the initiative has enhanced digital skills among both students and trainers, promoted digital literacy, and modernized YA's approach to vocational education. While full impact assessment remains premature due to delayed implementation, early signs indicate significant potential. Accredited digital courses in Zimbabwe through HEXCO and discussions with Zambian authorities point to regional policy alignment and system-wide transformation. The platform's ability to transcend geographic barriers, especially in reaching rural youth and marginalized populations such as refugees, marks it as a pivotal tool in democratizing VET. The development of theoretical assessments, quizzes, and student forums within the platform enhances its capacity for continuous learning. Additionally, the digital literacy exposure from this initiative is poised to serve as a gateway to broader opportunities, both educational and professional, for thousands of young people in Africa.

Coherence

Findings show that the coherence of the project was reinforced through centralized coordination by YA International and strong communication across partners. Weekly meetings, real-time coordination between platform and MEL officers, and structured feedback mechanisms ensured alignment around common goals. The appointment of digital learning officers and the conduct of joint training sessions helped mitigate earlier gaps in project understanding and technical capacity. Although the consortium initially lacked specialized expertise in digital learning, ongoing coordination and adaptive planning helped build a more unified project ecosystem. Monthly steering committee meetings and collaborative engagements, including joint travel and co-design of tools, contributed to building trust and institutional memory among affiliates. Despite early-stage inconsistencies, the project ultimately fostered a cohesive, agile, and purpose-driven partnership capable of delivering on its long-term objectives.

Sustainability

The sustainability of the D-VETYA project is anchored in its integration of robust technical systems, institutional capacity building, and strategic alignment with existing programs. Through embedded monitoring tools, training of trainers, and the provision of digital equipment, Young Africa has ensured that the eLearning and PGST platforms can be maintained and scaled beyond the project's lifespan. The incorporation of these platforms into other initiatives like the Skills to Live project, along with new grant proposals and the development of YAYA hubs in underserved areas (all separate to the EU Erasmus+ Funding that supported the D-VETYA Project), further strengthens long-term viability. However, sustainability will depend on continued efforts to address infrastructure gaps, digital literacy challenges, and stakeholder engagement to ensure the platforms remain accessible, relevant, and impactful post-project closure.

Conclusion

The D-VETYA project has laid a strong foundation for digital vocational education in Africa, transforming traditional training models into scalable, inclusive solutions. Despite implementation challenges, the initiative advanced Young Africa's capacity to deliver digital VET through platform development, staff training, and strategic integration. By addressing youth employability, gender equity, and institutional innovation, the project serves as a replicable model

for low-resource settings. Its long-term impact will depend on sustained commitment to access, quality, and cross-sector collaboration.

Recommendations for successful dissemination of the project

1. **Strengthen Capacity Building for Trainers and Staff**
    a. Continuous training and capacity-building initiatives should be implemented for trainers, digital learning officers, and project staff to address gaps in digital literacy and ensure they are fully equipped to facilitate eLearning. Advanced training in digital content development and platform management will further enhance the project's sustainability.
2. **Enhance Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Systems**
    a. Integrating the eLearning and PGST platforms into the broader MEL framework should be accelerated to ensure real-time tracking of key indicators. Refining baseline and follow-up questions, coupled with robust data analysis tools, will provide actionable insights to improve project performance.
3. **Invest in disability friendly digital skills training platforms and resources to ensure inclusivity and the empowerment of youth with disability.**
    a. The project should provide disability friendly digital platforms and software such as code jumper1, Accessible Computer Science Curriculum (ACSC) to cater for people with visual impairment and resources such as keyboards with braille displays, as well as structures with ramps and wide doors that cater for people on wheelchairs.
4. **The project must deliberately reach out to PWDs including through DPOs in order to ensure effective disability inclusion.**
    a. Socio-cultural beliefs that exist within the target countries result in stigmatization and discrimination of PWD which leads to parent/guardians to overprotect
    b. their children and preventing them from participating in social gatherings or other programs that could benefit them
5. **Establish a collaborative platform that informs ICT policy development which includes digital skills development and involves key stakeholders from Government, digital sector, academia, and civil society.**
    a. This platform should facilitate regular dialogue, knowledge sharing, and consensus-building to build a knowledge base from multisectoral expertise that will inform the development of a comprehensive and up-to-date ICT policy that addresses the evolving contemporary needs of the digital skills landscape.

[1] Code Jumper is a physical programming language designed for children with visual impairments, enabling them to learn coding concepts through interactive and accessible tools.

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Introduction

SERVE, in partnership with Young Africa (YA), commissioned the external evaluation of the SERVE-Young Africa Digital VET For Young Africans (D-VETYA) Project 2023-2024, with a no-cost extension to June 2025. This report presents the study purpose and objectives, contextual background, the methodological approach, the findings and recommendations from the evaluation process.

Project Background

SERVE has been working in partnership with Young Africa (YA) since 2008. From 2023-June 2025, SERVE and YA have been implementing the EU Erasmus+ funded **Digital VET for Young Africans (D-VETYA)** project, in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Specifically, the D-VETYA project targeted young women and men aged between 15-35 years who live in the communities where YA training centres operate, and in communities where there are outreach training programs, in the 2 project countries. In addition, YA also targeted young people outside of the YA programmes through dissemination of project results with dissemination partners throughout Africa. To ensure gender equity and equality in project delivery, SERVE and YA targeted a 60% female representation in the beneficiary pool, with emphasis on the prioritization of female applicants for scholarships, on-campus childcare facilities, gender equality training and on-campus hostel accommodation for girls. The project also targeted rural communities and young women and men with disability, delivering outreach mobile training to reach underserved rural communities.

Across the YA training centres in Zimbabwe and Mozambique, the YA network offers as many as 46 courses in the commercial, industrial, agricultural and integral approach sub-sectors that are delivered through centre-based training, industry attached training and outreach training to underserved areas. The project was also designed to benefit VET organizations in South Africa, Lesotho, Eswatini, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda, through the dissemination plan delivered through 23 dissemination partners. The project was delivered through 5 work packages, 3 of which were informed by recommendations from an external evaluation of SERVE and YA's work in the period 2018-2021. These work packages are based on (i) Coordination and Management, (ii) YA eLearning Platform, (iii) YA Postgraduate Service Toolbox (PGST), (iv) Young Africa MEL System, and (v) Impact and dissemination. The specific objectives and respective indicators that have guided the overall implementation of the D-VETYA project are summarized in the table below. In Zambia, Young Africa are registered under the name Skills to Live Zambia, and although their participation in the project was adjusted in an Amendment made with the donor, their input was included in this Evaluation Report as they have valuable insights.

Table 1: Project Objectives and Indicators

	Indicator	Baseline & Target
Objective 1: Coordinating implementation of the Project Workplan and achievement of Project Deliverables in compliance with funding guidelines		
Indicator 1	Number of documented Project Committee meetings	Baseline: 0: Target: 24;
Indicator 2	Number of mid-term internal review	Baseline: 0; Target: 1
Objective 2: Young Africa's eLearning Platform available for 8,150 socially, economically, and educationally disadvantaged youth across southern and Eastern Africa at the end of the project period *(incorporating digitalization of 14 YA VET curricula & sharing with dissemination network)*		
Indicator 1	Number of fully functioning eLearning Platforms available by month 20 of the project period	Baseline: 0; Target: 1
	Number of socially, economically, and educationally disadvantaged youth utilizing the eLearning platform across southern and Eastern Africa	Baseline: 0; Target: 8,150
Objective 3: YA's Postgraduate Service Toolbox (PGST) contributes to a substantial increase in the percentage of graduates in self and formal employment amongst YA students		
Indicator 1	Percentage of YA graduates in self and formal employment	**Baseline**: 30% (2021, Covid affected); **Target**: 50%;

Objective 4: 4 YA Affiliates and 23 dissemination partners using the PGST across Africa		
Indicator 1	Number of YA Affiliates and dissemination partners the PGST is shared with	Baseline: 0; Target: 25
Objective 5: 2 New YA models (eLearning & PGST) integrated into YA MEL system (based on the KoBo-Toolbox) and 73 YA and dissemination partner staff trained in the monitoring system leading to improved data driven performance		
Indicator 1	Number of new components integrated into the YA MEL System	Baseline: 0; Target: 2;
Indicator 2	Number of YA and dissemination partner staff trained in updated MEL system	Baseline: 0; Target: 73
Objective 6: Capture and externally validate the impact, successes, challenges and lessons learned from the Project		
Indicator 1	Number of Internal and External Evaluations Completed	Baseline: 0; Target: 2
Objective 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		
Indicator 1	Number of people reached through our dissemination channels	Baseline: 0; Target: 3,550

Overall, the specific deliverables which the project sought to attain are:

- Young Africa's eLearning Platform is available for 8,150 disadvantaged youth across Southern and Eastern Africa.
- Young Africa's Postgraduate Service Toolbox (PGST) contributes to a substantial increase in the percentage of YA graduates in employment.
- 2 YA Affiliates and 23 dissemination partners using the PGST across Africa.
- 2 new YA models (eLearning & PGST) integrated into the YA Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) system and 73 YA and dissemination partner staff trained in the MEL system leading to improved data driven performance.
- Evaluate the impact, successes, challenges and lessons learned of the Project.
- Increase awareness about Digital VET in Africa amongst 50 policymakers and 3,500 members of the public in Ireland and the Netherlands.

Contextual Background

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), the global youth unemployment rate in 2023 was 13%, the lowest it has been in over 15 years, with Africa having the highest youth unemployment rate in the world. Most young people in Africa, lack skills that can help them find work including foundation skills such as Basic literacy and numeracy skills; transferrable skills such as analysis, communication, problem solving, creativity, and leadership, as well as technical and vocation skills that include agriculture, computers, or carpentry. The youth unemployment rate varies across regions, with some countries experiencing higher youth unemployment than others. Average unemployment rates for SADC have fluctuated between 10.2% and 11.3% between 2009 and 2020.[2]

The majority of jobs for youth in Southern Africa are informal, precarious in nature and characterised by high levels of working poverty. This is attributed to the slow pace of structural change in most countries, and premature deindustrialisation in other economies, which has limited prospects of higher labour productivity across all sectors, notably in industry where the share of manufacturing is declining. In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, having

[2] SADC: Employment & Labour

the necessary skills to navigate and thrive in the digital industry including finding and consuming digital content, digital content creation as well as communicating or sharing digital content, is crucial. Digital skills are a fundamental part of the modern labour market and are essential for the survival of businesses. They are important for both professional and social inclusion, and can help people to be more productive, creative, and resilient.

This is especially true for countries such as Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe, where digital technology has become an integral part of daily life. The ability to navigate digital platforms and tools has become critical for communication, learning, and doing business. Digital literacy can be a tool for empowerment, providing access to information, education, and job opportunities. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the global shift by firms from traditional physical businesses to online platforms. While young people are often considered "digital natives", the reality is that the majority of young people in developing countries do not possess job-relevant digital skills.

Mozambique

The youth unemployment rate in Mozambique decreased by 0.1 percentage points (-1.3 percent) in 2023 compared to the previous year. Nevertheless, 2020 and 2021 recorded a significantly higher youth unemployment rate than the preceding years.[3] The youth unemployment rate refers to the share of the economically active population aged 15 to 24 currently without work but in search of employment. The youth unemployment rate does not include economically inactive persons such as the long-term unemployed or full-time students. In Mozambique, there are not enough jobs for the youth that enter the job market every year.[4] Around 20% of urban youth are unemployed, while in peri-urban and rural areas, youth tend to work in agriculture or in unpaid family jobs. Many have limited skills, and there is an urgent need to provide them with the training necessary to access jobs, wages, and self-employment opportunities.

Digital skills in Mozambique are low, with a large portion of the population lacking the ability to use digital devices and the internet. In 2019, only 10% of the population had adopted digital skills.[5] In 2021, only 32% of the population had access to the internet.[6] More than half of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have not yet started the digital transformation process.[7] Furthermore, a third of mobile phone users are unable to use the internet on their devices. Digital illiteracy is especially prevalent in low-income urban areas and among women. For example, in Beira, one of the country's largest cities, only 15% of young women have regular access to a computer, compared to more than a third of men.[8]

Mozambique faces a number of challenges in its provision of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) including lack of coordination among the various TVET programs, very little flexibility to adapt to the changing labour market needs, as well as insufficient funding to sustain the development and implementation of good quality and relevant training programs.[9] Consequently, vocational training in Mozambique is undergoing changes to make it more relevant to the labour market and to provide better economic opportunities for youth. The Government of

[3] https://www.statista.com/statistics/812262/youth-unemployment-rate-in-mozambique/
[4] https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2024/06/06/youth-entrepreneurship-transforming-afe-mozambiques-future#:~:text=In%20Mozambique%2C%20there%20are%20not,or%20in%20unpaid%20family%20jobs.
[5] Statista: Digital skills adoption rate 2019-2030; 2023
[6] International Trade Administration: Mozambique-Information and Communication Technology; 2024
[7] World Bank: Moving Mozambique towards a digital future; 2022
[8] Ibid
[9] https://clearinghouse.adeanet.org/fr/node/7984

Mozambique is working to promote an Integrated Reform of Technical and Vocational Education (PIREP- Programa Integrado daReforma de Educação Profissional), to create a demand-led system responsive to labour market needs.[10]

Zimbabwe

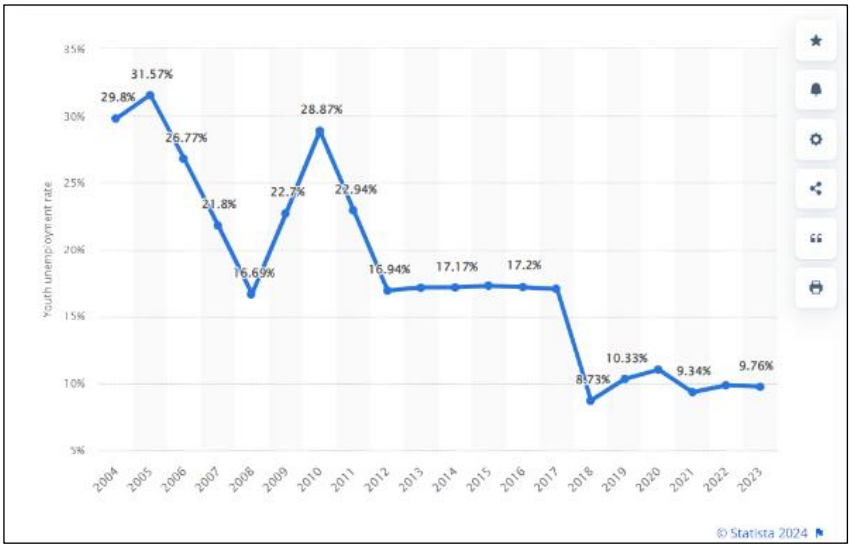
In 2023, Zimbabwe's youth unemployment rate was 14.29%, a decrease from the previous year.[11] According to the Wiley 2021 Digital Skills Gap Index, digital literacy in Zimbabwe is ranked 118 out of 134 countries with a DSGI score of 2.8. This shows that Zimbabwe is amongst countries that are failing to bridge the digital skills divide, particularly the gap between the demand for digital skills and the capacity of policymakers to respond to the talent deficit, as well as education institutions and digital experts to deliver the needed skills. Recent research has revealed the persistent barriers female adolescents and youth face in transitioning from education to the workforce.

Currently, Zimbabwe has a total of 45 vocational training centres on full establishment and 25 satellite centres that support the existing centres. The Government, through the Ministry of Youth, aims to expand vocational training initiatives through setting up new VCT centres across all districts in Zimbabwe. However, a lot still needs to be done to strengthen digital vocational training. Currently, this is done through small donor-supported projects which need to be taken up by Government. The Youth Hub Zimbabwe, for example, is providing digital skills training, equipping trainees with essential competencies that include content creation, digital learning and confidence building among other skills, all of which help them to drive innovation and navigate the digital world with greater proficiency.

Research has shown that despite consensus on the importance and positive impact of e-Learning on the efficiency and effectiveness of knowledge dissemination and access to learning material, there still exists a gap in the adoption and use of eLearning platforms by tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe. Concerted effort by both the public and private sector is needed to narrow down the gap through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in higher education.

Zambia

Unlike many other sub-Saharan African countries, more youth in Zambia are employed in the services sector than the agricultural sector. The distribution of employment by broad sector in 2014 was 51.8% in services, 33.8% in agriculture (up from 25.9% in 2012) and 14.4% in industry. In 2023, the youth unemployment rate in Zambia remained nearly unchanged at around 9.76%. With a decline of 0.1 percentage points (-1.01 percent), there is no significant change to 2022.[12]



Some of the causes of youth unemployment in Zambia include low levels of education and skills, limited access to finance, technology, and markets, low

[10] https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/598881597718972515/pdf/Mozambique-Improvement-of-Skills-Development-Project.pdf

[11] https://www.statista.com/statistics/813214/youth-unemployment-rate-in-zimbabwe/

[12] https://www.statista.com/statistics/813179/youth-unemployment-rate-in-zambia/

absorptive capacity of the labour market and lack of access to tertiary education. Zambia faces technical challenges that include lack or inadequate technical skills on the part of students and instructors, power outages, lack of access/connectivity to electricity especially in remote areas; absence of appropriate eLearning tools and software malfunctions.

With the increasing availability and affordability of smartphones, more and more people are accessing the internet and engaging with digital platforms. This has created a wealth of opportunities for individuals and businesses alike. However, without the proper digital skills, many Zambian youths are unable to fully take advantage of these.

The Evaluation

This external evaluation assessed progress with regards to the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and coherence of the SERVE-Young Africa Digital VET For Young Africans (D-VETYA) 2023- June 2025 project with a focus on its implementation in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The evaluation also covered project performance within the 6 month no-cost extension from January to June 2025. Specifically, the evaluation assessed progress in the:

- delivery of the D-VETYA Project against the milestones, deliverables and Results (outputs, outcomes and to some extent project contribution to impact).
- effect of the D-VETYA Project to date amongst Young Africa staff, students, as well as the dissemination network.
- opportunities for future development of the eLearning Platform and Young Africa's Postgraduate Service Toolbox, and for scaling-up and sustaining the platforms going forward.

The evaluation was conducted against the evaluation matrix in Table 1.

Table 2: Proposed Evaluation Matrix

EVALUATION QUESTION	SOURCE OF INFORMATION	DATA COLLECTION METHOD	INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION (Data Collection/Analysis Methods)	DATA SOURCES
RELEVANCE					
• **How relevant were the objectives and activities, implemented by the project, in addressing the needs of young people?**	Project beneficiaries, Project staff, Selected stakeholders	KII, FGD where informants are more than 10, Self-Administered online Questionnaire, Desk Review of the MEAL System	Number of young people reporting that their needs were met	Analysis of survey responses, interview notes	Survey results, interview transcripts
• **How relevant is the D-VETYA project to the needs of young people and the organizational needs of YA?**	Project beneficiaries, Project staff, Selected stakeholders	KII, FGD, Questionnaire, Desk Review	Alignment of project objectives with youth needs	Review of project documents, participant feedback analysis	Project reports, feedback from beneficiaries
• **To what extent did the project reduce eLearning challenges among young people?**	Project beneficiaries, Project staff, Selected stakeholders	KII, FGD, Self-Administered Questionnaire, Desk Review	Reduction in reported eLearning barriers	Monitoring and evaluation data analysis	Program monitoring data, beneficiary reports
COHERENCE					
• **Is the D-VETYA project approach coherent with national policy approaches relevant to the youth and VET sectors in the target countries?**	Project staff, Selected stakeholders	KII, FGDs, Questionnaire, Desk Review	Consistency with national policies	Policy analysis, comparative review of project approach	National policy documents, project documentation
EFFECTIVENESS					
• **To what extent have the project objectives been achieved to date?**	Project beneficiaries, Project staff, Selected stakeholders	KIIs, Questionnaire, Review	Percentage of objectives achieved	Analysis of progress reports, interviews	Project reports, staff feedback
• **To what extent have the project beneficiaries been reached and what mechanisms were in place to improve coverage?**	Project beneficiaries, Project staff, Selected stakeholders	KIIs, Questionnaire, Review	Number of beneficiaries reached	Project monitoring data, beneficiary feedback	Program records, beneficiary survey responses

• To what extent were accountability and risk management framework(s) used to minimize risks on program implementation?	Project beneficiaries, Project staff, Selected stakeholders	KIIs, Questionnaire, Review	Existence and use of risk management frameworks	Review of framework documents, interview data	Risk management documents, program records
EFFICIENCY					
• Is the D-VETYA project delivering results in an economic and timely way?	Project Staff, Donor, Selected stakeholders	KIIs, Desk Review	Cost-effectiveness of activities, adherence to timelines	Financial analysis, review of activity timelines	Financial reports, project records
• What cost-saving mechanisms could have improved project efficiency?	Project Staff, Donor, Selected stakeholders	KIIs, Desk Review	Number of identified cost-saving measures	Budget review, stakeholder feedback	Financial reports, staff interviews
• Were alterations made to the program design during the implementation phase based on the reality on the ground?	Project Staff, Donor, Selected stakeholders	KIIs, Desk Review	Documented program changes	Review of program change logs, interviews	Program documentation, change logs
IMPACT					
• What has changed for YA as a result of participating in the D-VETYA project?	Project beneficiaries, Project Staff, Relevant Stakeholders	KIIs, FGDs, Questionnaire, Desk Review	Changes in organizational capacity, skills, or resources	Pre- and post-intervention assessments	Organization performance records, survey results
• To what extent did the project interventions contribute to improving digital learning?	Project beneficiaries, Project Staff, Relevant Stakeholders	KIIs, FGDs, Questionnaire, Desk Review	Improvement in digital learning metrics	Review of learning assessments, interview data	Learning outcome data, staff interviews
• Is the project solely responsible for the project results or was there contribution by some similar projects in the program area?	Project beneficiaries, Project Staff, Relevant Stakeholders	KIIs, FGDs, Questionnaire, Desk Review	Attribution of results to the project	Comparative analysis with similar projects	Program reports, stakeholder feedback
SUSTAINABILITY					
• To what degree are the project outcomes sustainable?	Project beneficiaries, Project Staff, Relevant Stakeholders	KIIs, FGDs, Questionnaire, Desk Review	Sustained use of project outcomes	Review of follow-up data, sustainability planning documents	Post-project reports, follow-up assessments

• **To what extent will the project results continue to be enjoyed post-project closure?**	Project beneficiaries, Project Staff, Relevant Stakeholders	KIIs, FGDs, Questionnaire, Desk Review	Long-term benefits observed	Longitudinal studies, follow-up interviews	Monitoring data, stakeholder follow-ups
• **What mechanisms has YA put in place to sustain the key project outcomes?**	Project beneficiaries, Project Staff, Relevant Stakeholders	KIIs, FGDs, Questionnaire, Desk Review	Presence of sustainability strategies	Review of strategic plans, interviews	Organizational plans, staff feedback
• **What are the risks facing the sustainability of project outcomes?**	Project beneficiaries, Project Staff, Relevant Stakeholders	KIIs, FGDs, Questionnaire, Desk Review	Identified risks to sustainability	Risk analysis, scenario planning	Risk assessments, stakeholder feedback
LESSONS LEARNT, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS					
• **What are the all-key main lessons that Young Africa can take from the D-VETYA Project?**	Project beneficiaries, Project Staff, Relevant Stakeholders	KIIs, FGDs, Desk Review	Number of lessons identified	Thematic analysis of qualitative data	Project reports, stakeholder feedback
• **What recommendations can be drawn from the implementation of the D-VETYA project to inform future similar projects?**	Project beneficiaries, Project Staff, Relevant Stakeholders	KIIs, FGDs, Desk Review	Number and relevance of recommendations	Review of evaluation reports, interview data	Evaluation reports, staff recommendations

Evaluation Methodology

A Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Research (CPMM) design was used in conducting the evaluation. The CPMM design involved collecting both quantitative and qualitative data using the same variables, analysing them separately, interpreting the findings, and triangulating the results. The data collection methods that were used included key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and a quantitative survey questionnaire. As an integral part of the data collection process, a desk review was conducted throughout the evaluation to collect and analyse both secondary qualitative and quantitative data as illustrated in Figure 1.

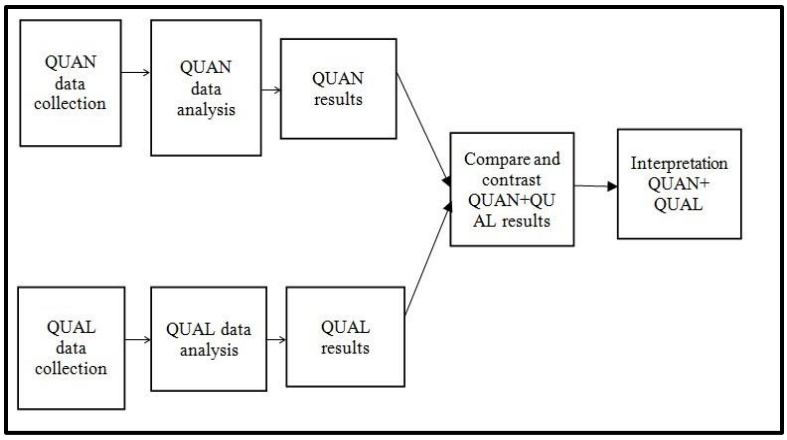


Figure 1: CPMM design evaluation

Evaluation Survey Approach

The Utilisation-Focused Evaluation (UFE) approach was used to generate findings that are useful and actionable for the project partners and other key stakeholders and are tailored to meet the specific needs of the stakeholders, including those involved in decision-making.

The evaluation was delivered across four phases of activities from kick-off to completion. A brief description of each phase and the associated activities follows hereafter.

Phase 1: Inception and validation – This phase focused on the delivery of the inception report and design of all data collection tools that were to be used during the evaluation exercise, and their subsequent validation.

Phase 2: Primary data collection, processing and debriefing – Phase 2 focused on the collection, cleaning, analysis and interpretation of data, delivery of a 2-page field report upon completion of the data collection process.

- **Phase 3: Reporting and validation –** This phase focused on presentation of preliminary findings, delivery of draft evaluation Report, and final Evaluation Report including Annexes.

Phase 4: Close-out—This phase was primarily centred on preparing a summary of the Final Evaluation Report and presenting it to key stakeholders.

Data Collection

This phase comprised of pre-arrangements for field visits with support from SERVE, training of enumerators, alignment of data collection tools, and making appointments for data collection with relevant stakeholders. Explained below, are the data collection methods and target data sources for the evaluation.

Qualitative Data collection Methods

Desk Review

The evaluation team conducted a comprehensive and rigorous review of all relevant documents which were provided by SERVE, documents which were retrieved online and the information available from the MEL system. Documents that were reviewed included project proposal, deliverables, D-VETYA Milestones, project inception

documents, project log frame, the mid-term report among other relevant documents. The desk review was essential in providing a better understanding of the contextual background of the project for a better assessment of the evaluation survey questions and for the development of the final evaluation report.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

In-depth virtual discussions on specific topics with purposively selected key informants were undertaken in-order to obtain information, opinions, and perspectives on the relevance and effectiveness of the project, and its effect within the operational areas. Information-rich individuals with knowledge on the project were primary targets of the evaluation. Key informants were engaged from Ireland, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe using virtual platforms.

Key informants who were interviewed include SERVE staff in Ireland, Young Africa staff at international and affiliate level, as well as subcontractors who contributed to the D-VETYA project.

Key Informant	Target Participant
YA International	DVEYTA Project Coordinator,
YA Affiliates	Zimbabwe (Project Officer, M&E & Finance)
	Mozambique (Project Officer, M&E & Finance)
	Zambia (Project Officer, M&E & Finance)
Subcontractors	E-Learning Platform Developers
TOTAL	**14**

Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with beneficiary students sampled from the three project countries. FGD participants were drawn from Young Africa's pool of students, regardless of whether or not they had enrolled on the eLearning platform by the time of the evaluation. The purposive sampling technique was used in selecting participants for the discussions to ensure participation of young people between the ages of 15 and 37 who were targeted by the D-VETYA project. FGDs comprised 8-12 participants per group and discussions were conducted virtually in Zambia and Mozambique, while physical interactions were done in Zimbabwe. A total of 4 FGDs were carried out.

Qualitative Data Collection Mode

Qualitative data was collected mainly using Google Meet where the meeting proceedings were recorded. Physical engagements were also audio recorded. The recording of audio data allowed verbatim transcription which was instrumental in collecting direct quotations that presented the voice of respondents in its pure form.

Quantitative Data Collection

Survey Questionnaire

A quantitative survey questionnaire was administered through *Kobo Collect* to sampled students from Young Africa students who are beneficiaries of the e-learning platform. The survey was structured to capture numerical data on key project indicators and included both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions to quantify skills, attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours related to Digital VET. The quantitative data provided information from which project performance could be assessed against the set targets. In Mozambique and Zambia, the online questionnaire was self-administered, and a link to the questionnaire was shared with Young Africa project staff in the respective countries to facilitate access by the students. In Zimbabwe, the questionnaire was administered by a team of trained enumerators.

Sample Size

In calculating the sample size for the survey questionnaire, the formula below was used:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \; X \; Deff$$

Where: n=sample size N=population size

e=precision, sampling error

Deff= Design Effect

Given that the total youth population who had registered on the eLearning platform by the time of sample size calculation was 1,156 (562 female and 594 male beneficiaries) across the project countries, a sample size of 290 was calculated at 95% confidence level, 5% margin of error and 95% response distribution using the Raosoft online sample size calculator.[13] This implies that for all the values calculated, one can be certain that of all values to be reported, percentage findings can either be a plus/ minus 5% and there is 95% certainty that these figures will be correct. The random sampling technique was used to select survey participants. The targeted respondents were proportionately distributed across the countries as illustrated in Table 3 above.

Table 3: Sampling Matrix

	Population REACHED		SAMPLE Calculated		SAMPLE +5%	
Country	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**
Mozambique	44	66	28	35	**29**	**37**
Zambia	167	80	52	39	**55**	**41**
Zimbabwe	315	399	60	62	**63**	**65**
Other	36	49	N/A	N/A		
Sub Total	562	594	140	136	**147**	**143**
Grand Total	**1156**		**276**		**290**	

[13] http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html

The Determination of existing Digital Competencies

The determination of the existing digital competencies was guided by the Hub Model as illustrated in figure 2 below.

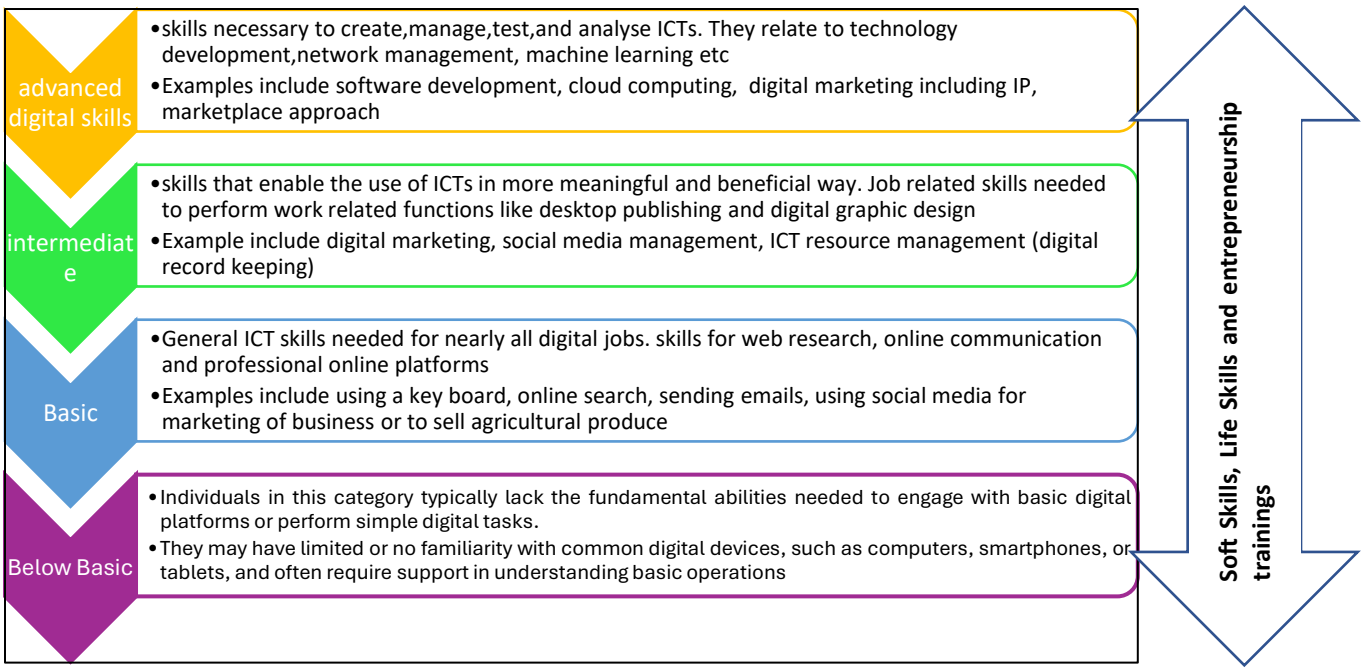


Figure 2: The Hub Model

A digital literacy assessment tool[14] was developed in line with the Hub Model to assess the digital competency levels (Below basic, intermediate, and advanced), of the targeted youths. The tool was designed to classify the current digital competency level of each participant at baseline, prior to project implementation.

Data Quality Assurance (DQA)

The evaluation team followed a well-defined Quality Assurance Plan that included data quality measures that consisted of daily debrief meetings to review progress and address issues, quality spot-checks of uploaded data to ensure completeness, mandatory questionnaire responses to minimize missing data, and skip rules to avoid irrelevant questions for specific respondents. Pre-testing of data collection tools was conducted with non-target beneficiaries to refine and finalize the tools before their use.

Ethical Considerations

The consultancy team adhered to EMCADs Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct, ensuring ethical, safe, and respectful participation throughout the evaluation. Confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent were maintained and obtained from all participants. Participation was voluntary, with no monetary benefits provided, and

[14] See Annex 2 for the Digital Literacy Assessment Tool

no participant was excluded from participating in the study based on their health, disability, or socio-economic status.

Data Analysis and Report Writing

An analysis plan was developed during the inception phase to guide data collection and analysis. Quantitative data collected through online survey tools was downloaded, cleaned in Excel, and analyzed using SPSS for advanced statistical insights. The findings were presented in the form of tables and graphs. Qualitative data collected in local languages was translated into English, verified, and analyzed thematically using content analysis to identify patterns and relationships. The report incorporated results from both primary and secondary data, using tables, graphs, direct quotations and pictures, where appropriate, to support the findings.

Findings

Demographics

This section provides an in-depth look at the demographic and socio-economic profiles of the quantitative survey respondents across Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The demographic section describes the sex and location of respondents, education and employment status, as well as marital status and living arrangements.

Sex of Respondents

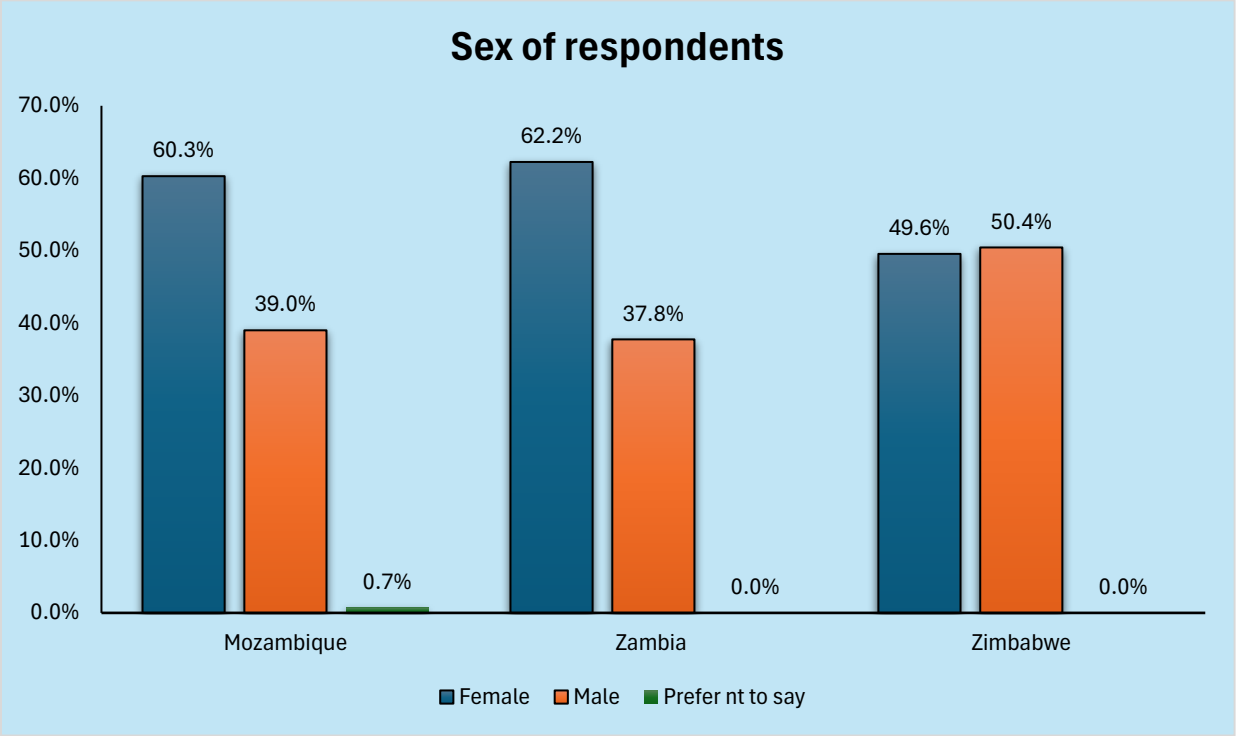


Figure 3: Sex of respondents.

The study reached a total of 352 respondents, with Mozambique contributing n=141 (40.1%), Zambia n=98 (27.8%), and Zimbabwe n=113 (32.1%). Gender distribution varied across the three countries, with female representation being slightly higher in Mozambique (60.3%, n=85) and Zambia (62.2%, n=61), compared to Zimbabwe, where male beneficiaries were slightly more represented (50.4%, n=57). This gender imbalance in Zimbabwe may impact equitable participation in the project, especially for digital learning initiatives.

Residence of participants

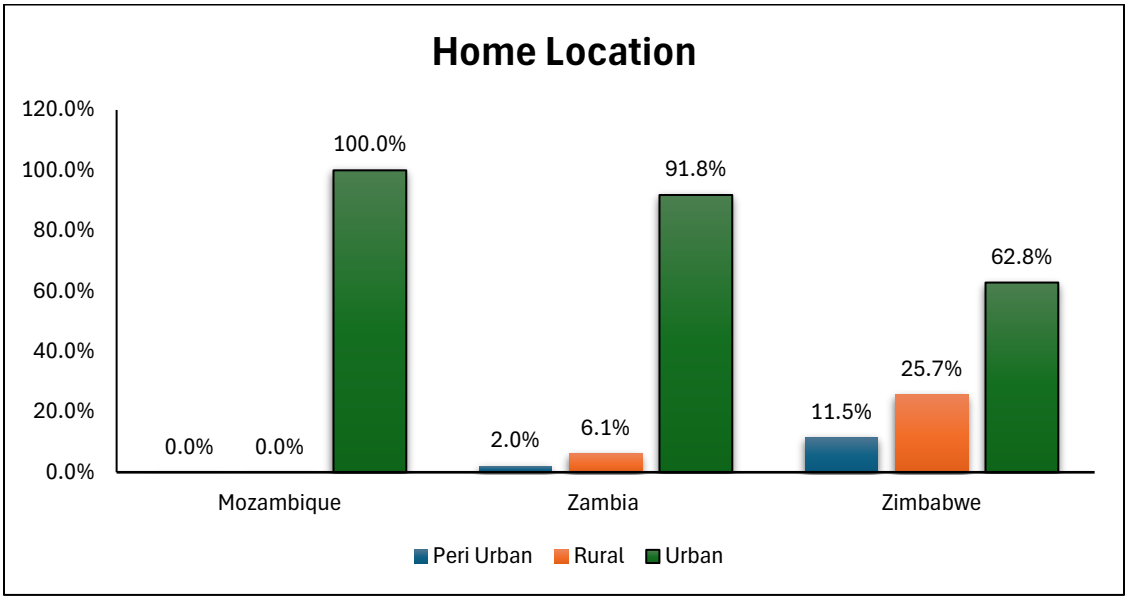


Figure 4: Residence of participants.

In terms of residence, the majority of respondents were urban based, with Mozambique reporting the highest urban representation (100.0%, n=139), followed by Zambia (91.8%, n=90), and Zimbabwe (62.8%, n=71). Rural representation was notably higher in Zimbabwe (25.7%, n=29) and Zambia (6.1%, n=6), while Mozambique had no rural respondents. This urban-rural divide highlights the need for tailored strategies to address access barriers, particularly for rural areas where infrastructure and digital connectivity may limit participation in the eLearning platform.

Educational Level

Educational levels also varied, with the majority of respondents in all three countries having completed secondary school—88.7% (n=125) in Mozambique, 74.5% (n=73) in Zambia, and 86.7% (n=98) in Zimbabwe. Notably, Zambia had a higher proportion of respondents with college/university education (10.2%, n=10), while Zimbabwe recorded more participants with vocational training (13.3%, n=15), reflecting a stronger alignment with the project's focus on technical and vocational education. Mozambique, however, reported no college or university graduates, which may pose challenges for the adoption of digital learning tools that require foundational digital literacy as illustrated in Figure 5 below.

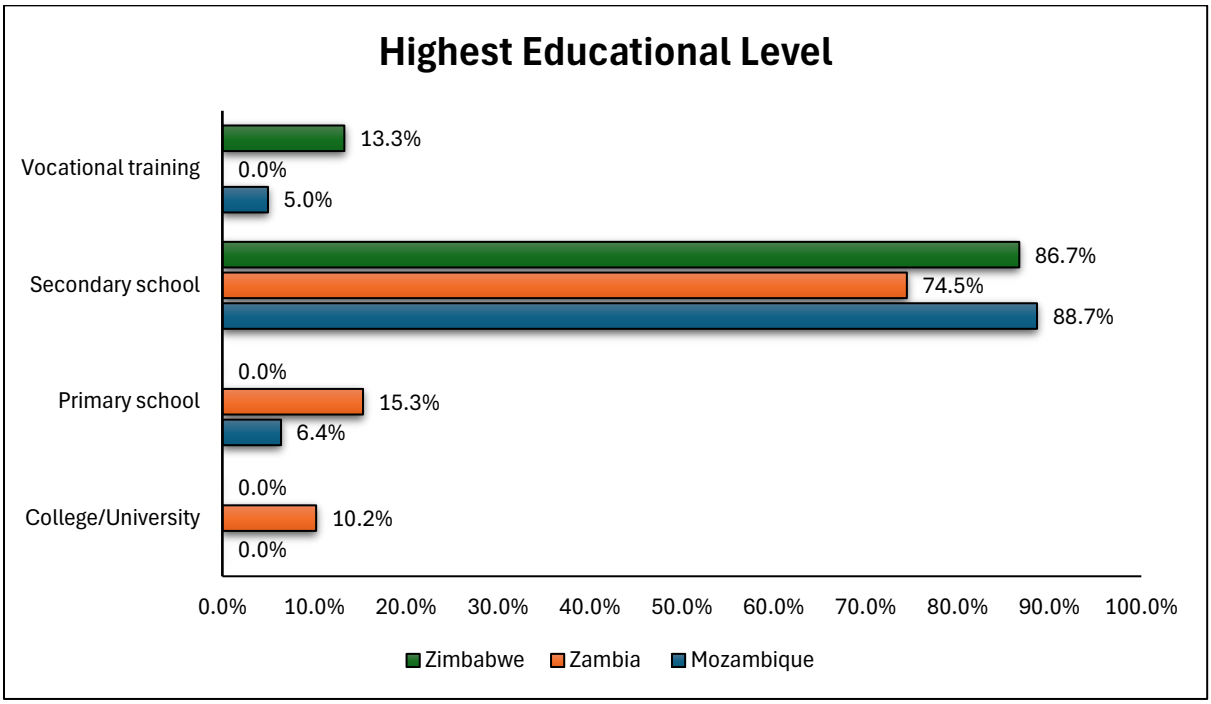


Figure 5: Education Level

Employment Status

Employment status showed significant challenges, with unemployment rates being highest in Mozambique (100.0%, n=139) and Zimbabwe (92.8%, n=103). Zambia had a slightly better employment rate, with 6.1% (n=6) of respondents reporting employment. This highlights a critical need for the project's focus on job readiness, entrepreneurship, and employment-matching services, particularly in Mozambique and Zimbabwe where unemployment could hinder the project's impact on economic empowerment as illustrated in figure 6 below.

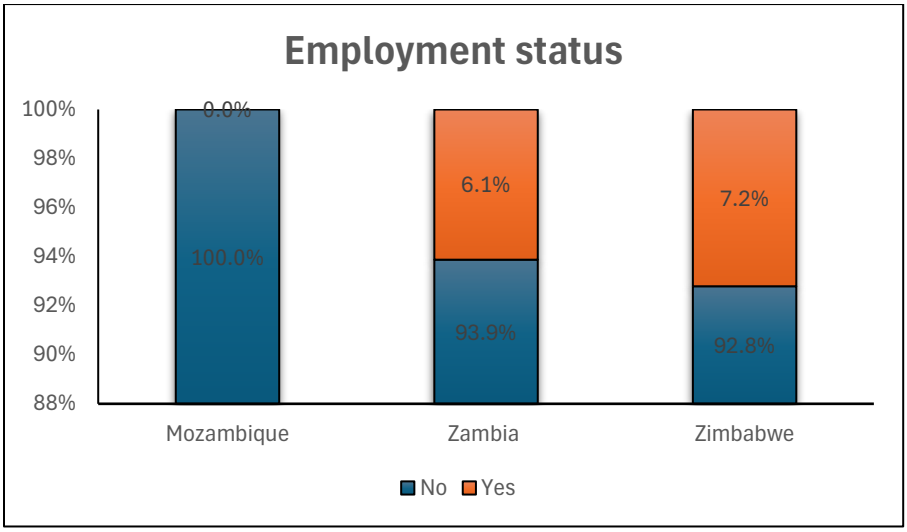


Figure 6: Employment Status

Living Arrangements and Marital Status

Understanding the living arrangements and marital status of respondents provides valuable insights into their socio-economic contexts, support systems, and potential barriers to participation in the D-VETYA project. These factors influence access to resources, availability for training, and overall engagement with vocational and digital learning platforms. Examining these aspects allows the project to tailor its interventions to better meet the diverse needs of its target beneficiaries.

Table 4: Living Arrangements and Marital Status

Question	Response	Mozambique	Zambia	Zimbabwe
Do you have a disability	No	95.7%	88.8%	99.1%
	Yes	4.3%	11.2%	0.9%
Marital status	Cohabitating/living with a partner	3.0%	1.0%	0.0%
	Divorced	0.0%	2.1%	1.8%
	Married	0.7%	2.1%	4.5%
	Separated	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
	Single	96.3%	94.8%	92.9%
Who do you live with?	Alone	3.5%	14.3%	5.3%
	Both parents	56.0%	15.3%	33.6%
	Dad	7.8%	4.1%	2.7%
	Friend	0.7%	3.1%	0.0%
	Mom	17.0%	32.7%	17.7%
	Other	8.5%	0.0%	7.1%
	Partner	2.8%	0.0%	2.7%
	Relative	3.5%	30.6%	31.0%

Living arrangements further revealed socio-economic disparities. In Mozambique, a majority (56.0%, n=79) lived with both parents, while in Zambia and Zimbabwe, many lived with relatives (30.6%, n=30 in Zambia; 31.0%, n=35 in Zimbabwe) or their mothers (32.7%, n=32 in Zambia; 17.7%, n=20 in Zimbabwe). This reflects varying levels of support systems, which may affect participants' ability to engage with project activities, such as accessing digital tools or attending training sessions.

These findings underscore the importance of addressing contextual disparities to ensure the D-VETYA project is inclusive and impactful. The high unemployment rates, urban-rural divide, and varying educational levels require targeted interventions to enhance access, particularly for rural populations, women, and those with limited formal education or employment opportunities.

Main Findings

Relevance

Project Relevance in addressing the needs of young people

The D-VETYA project was primarily designed to provide digital access to vocational education and learning for vulnerable young people in Africa. Although available, digital vocational learning platforms have not commonly been used in Africa, particularly among vulnerable populations. The D-VETYA project therefore has played a pivotal role in filling the void and strengthening the availability of an e-learning platform where young people can access vocational skills training courses.

Discussions with key informants and FGD participants from across the project countries under evaluation revealed the extent to which the COVID 19 pandemic magnified challenges that came with lack of online learning platforms. The closure of schools following the lockdown measures during the pandemic, crippled all traditional avenues for continued learning. This lack of online learning platforms during the pandemic therefore reiterates the value and need for an e-learning platform that provides virtual learning regardless of one's location or time of access. This is apparent not only for circumstances related to national catastrophes such as pandemics, but for enhanced access by all, including those with disability.

The development of the e-learning platform is particularly relevant because it allows young people flexible to access learning material online without taking them away from their daily work and responsibilities. This flexibility was reiterated by a project partner who said.

> *"So, sometimes, some young people want to get professional training, but they don't have the opportunity because the school is far away. And for a young person to leave a remote district for training, it is very difficult, because there are additional costs, such as accommodation and food, among others."* **(KII with YA Mozambique)**

In addition to this, the project also closed a gap especially regarding girls' access to vocational education opportunities. The patriarchal nature of Southern African communities that perpetuate harmful gender norms and prioritize male education over female education, as well as that burden adolescent girls and young women with household responsibilities and care work, limit their opportunities to continue with their education or enroll and complete vocational training within their localities. Through the e-learning platform, adolescent girls and young women are able to take up vocational education and training regardless of their household responsibilities. The flexibility that the platform brings increases the likelihood of girls and young women enrolling and completing their training, thus highlighting the relevance of the D-VETYA interventions. A female FGD participant was quoted saying;

> *"E-learning is very helpful and it's very beneficial. When we're stuck with some other responsibilities, we're able to attend it on our free time and yeah, that's why I'm saying it's very helpful"* **(FGD with Young People, Zambia)**

Findings, as summarised above reflect positively on the relevance of the D-VETYA project in responding to the needs of the target communities particularly through the eLearning platform.

The establishment of the Post Graduate Service Toolbox (PGST) was relevant particularly in terms of its strategic online placement that links trained young people to the job market. The complementarity between the eLearning and the PGST platforms therefore strengthens the relevance of the objectives and activities implemented by the project to address the needs of young people.

Project Contribution to reducing eLearning challenges among young people

While the development and availability of a VET e-learning platform is of critical significance in closing the digital divide that limits young people's access to vocational education and training, it does not come without challenges. One of the major challenges that were found to be downplaying the extent to which the D-VETYA project addressed the needs of the targeted young people, was limited and/or lack of access to digital devices and/or Wi-Fi/data. A key informant spoke on this saying;

> *"Our young people, our beneficiaries are disadvantaged young people. Many of them do not have smartphones and their families are in real need.* **(KII with YA Mozambique)**

Targeting vulnerable young people, including those from poor households, ensures that the target beneficiaries receive interventions that will have positive long-term impact in their lives. Even though the provision of the e-learning platform was relevant, the unavailability of electronic devices such as cell phones and laptops, as well as internet access, negatively affected the extent of project relevance. Findings from the quantitative survey questionnaire show the extent to which the targeted young people have access challenges as is reflected in their responses to the question on which devices they use to access the eLearning platform. Participant responses are presented in figure 7 below.

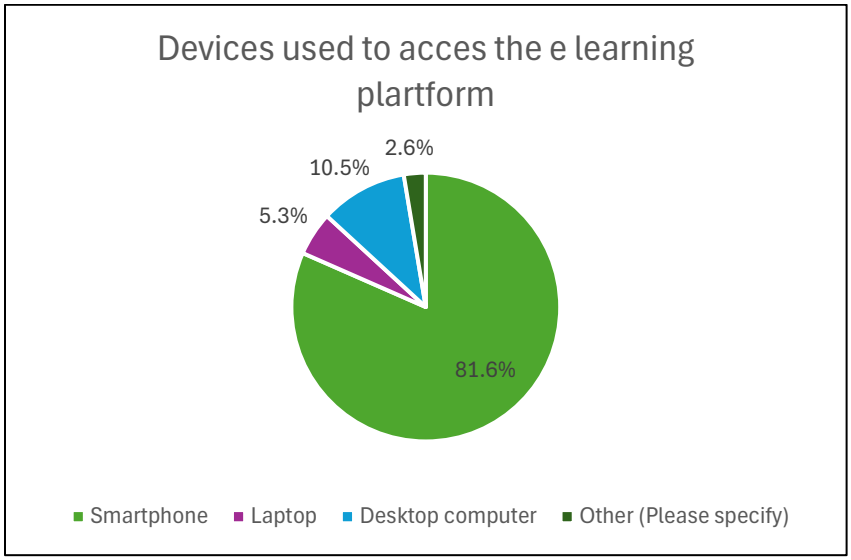


Figure 7: Devices used to access the e learning platform.

Out of the 321 students who participated in the survey questionnaire, only 38 participants indicated that they had accessed the eLearning platform prior to the survey. Of these, 81.6% (n=31) indicated that they access the platform via cell phones, while 10.5% (n=4) indicated accessing the platform using a desktop computer, and only 5.3% (n=2 indicated that they access the platform using a laptop computer. This highlights the intensity of the challenges around access to digital equipment to access the eLearning platform by the targeted young people.

At the time of the data collection exercises, engagement with project staff and young people revealed limited access to electronic devices as a major hinderance to accessing the eLearning platform, with others being quoted saying;

> *"If the target population is vulnerable young people, they are likely to not have access to internet. They're unlikely to have access to smartphones and gadgets that will allow them to be on the platform. So, to that*

extent, a lot more would have to be done to provide resources for greater access by the target population." **(KII with YA Hub Zimbabwe)**

"E-learning is good, but we do not have laptops or Wi-Fi, and data is expensive, but it is good." **(FGD with Boys, Zimbabwe)**

However, the DVETYA project made efforts to enable access to digital devices and Wi-Fi within the Young Africa centres that allows access by registered young people within the surrounding communities. While this is a positive result in terms of ensuring access to digital devices and internet, the coverage remains limited. Although challenges of internet access were repeatedly mentioned by different project stakeholder groups engaged for the evaluation, it is important to note that the platform was designed on an open-source software known as Moodle, which allows offline access once installed onto a digital device. Although the platform can also be accessed offline, there will still be need for internet access for other activities, such as uploading assignments and downloading new material. Quantitative survey participants were asked if they have access to the internet at home, and their responses are summarised in figure 8 below.

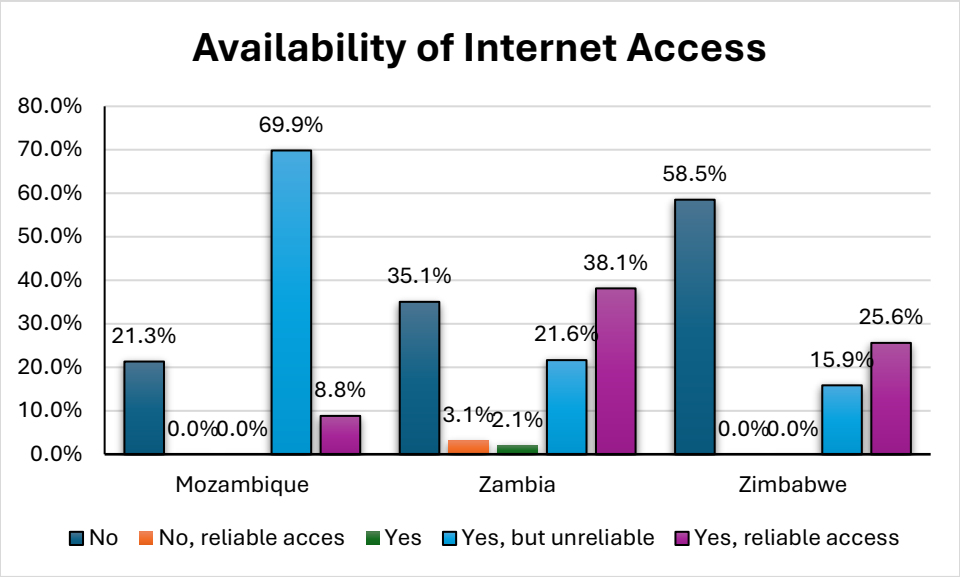


Figure 8: Availability of Internet Access

Participant responses indicate mixed circumstances regarding access to the internet at home. In Mozambique, 69.9% (n=95) of participants indicated having unreliable internet access, while in Zambia, participants were split between not having internet access at all (35.1%; n=34) and having reliable internet access (28.1%; n=37), while 58.5% of the participants in Zimbabwe indicated not having any internet access at all.

It is also not merely a challenge pertaining to access digital devices, Wi-Fi and/or data, but a challenge that also involves the little to no digital skills to effectively maneuver digital interfaces, amongst the targeted youth. Discussions with YA affiliate staff further highlighted this, with others expressing the challenges they faced in trying to get the young people to register on the platform. A key informant said;

"When teaching them how to register, it takes practically 15 minutes with just one person. So, these are people who have never even used tablets before. We have to start teaching them from the basics." **(KII with YA Mozambique)**

Project relevance in this regard reflects in that the project provides an opportunity for the targeted youth to develop digital skills which will not only strengthen their capacity to undertake the different courses provided on the e-learning platform but will also strengthen their employability post certification. The quantitative survey administered to young people for the purposes of this evaluation enquired into the young people's digital competencies.

Across the project countries, survey participants were asked to rate their digital skills in terms of i) device management, use and protection, ii) technology development capacity, and iii) network and internet management. Overall, the majority of learners reached by the survey were found to have sub basic digital skills. Their overall response distribution is presented in figure 9 below.

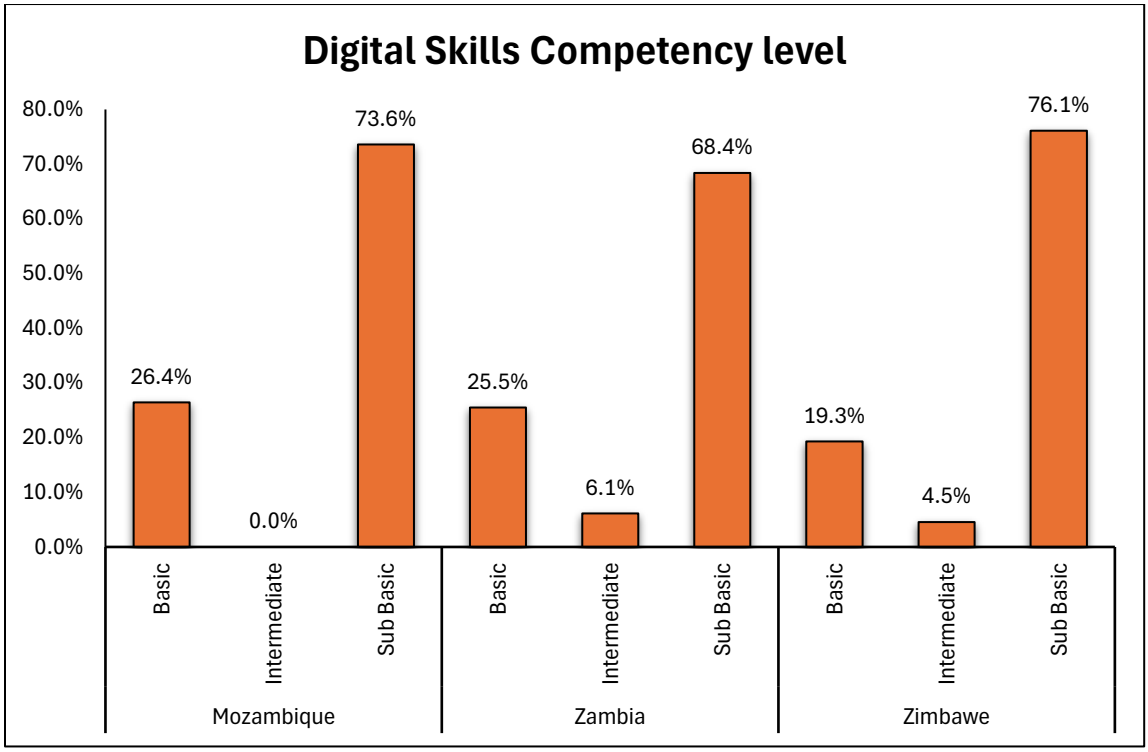


Figure 9: Digital Skills Competency level.

In Zambia, 73.6% (n=103) of participants were found to have below basic digital skills, while Zambia had 68.4% (n=67) and Zimbabwe had 76.1% (n=67) of its survey participants with below basic digital skills competencies. This reflects the need for digital skills development for targeted young people as an entry point to the eLearning platform to ensure that access and use of the platform is not hindered by a lack of digital skills needed to effectively interface with the platform. The availability of ICT rooms at the YA centres is an avenue from which digital skills development amongst students can be strengthened. It is also important to note that the eLearning platform also includes a course on digital literacy that students will be able to access and further develop their computer skills.

Relevance of the D-VETYA project in responding to the institutional needs and priorities of YA

Where project relevance is concerned, it is also important to note that the D-VETYA project has not only been relevant in responding to the needs of the targeted young people, but in responding to the institutional needs and priorities of Young Africa as well. Of particular significance is that Young Africa's enrolment capacity for in-person learning across the project countries, is limited, with some centres only able to enrol up to 120 students per cohort. This

presents a gap that can be addressed significantly through the e-learning platform, as through it, there are improved prospects for increased enrolment of the target population. A project partner spoke on this saying;

> *"The demand for physical training was too big. And so those that didn't have access to the physical training could easily jump onto this project."* **(KII with YA Zambia)**

High enrolment statistics of students (5,709 as of June 2025), indicate that there is high possibility for increased enrolment once the eLearning and PGST platforms are fully complete, and the dissemination efforts strengthened. Mozambique has 2,344 registrations; Zimbabwe has 1,821 registrations and Zambia has 1,269 registrations. There is also significant potential for greater reach across more African countries than those already targeted by the project. A key informant reiterated this saying;

> *"…the target is that we want to reach out to more people than we are already reaching out with the traditional face-to-face. So, we want to reach out to other people that are remotely positioned, that do not have access to Young Africa centres."* **(KII with Project Staff)**

Quantitative results also supported the sentiments as depicted in figure 10 below which illustrates that 57 students have been enrolled in Namibia while 218 are from other countries including Malawi, Botswana, South Africa, Tanzania and Kenya.

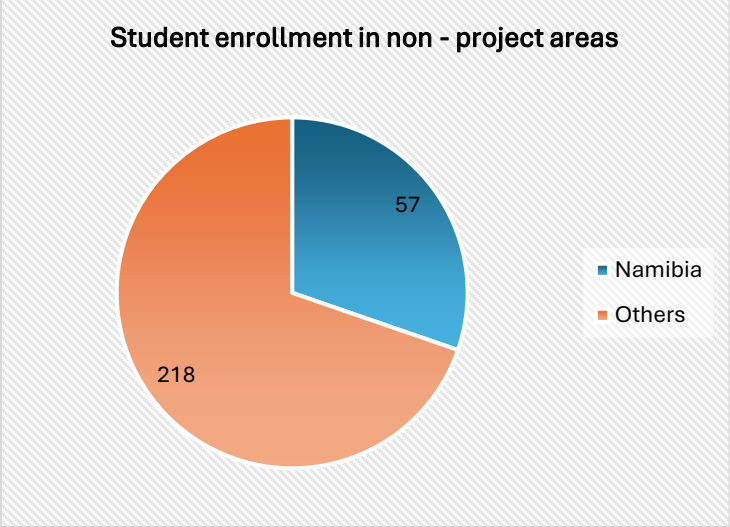


Figure 10: Student enrolment.

Considering that the world is becoming increasingly digital with technological advancements continuously emerging, digitising vocational education and training courses that were already offered physically within the YA centres was a strategic diversification approach that aligned with YAs institutional focus on providing VET to young people. This diversification particularly feeds into ensuring institutional relevance regardless of the advancements that continue to change the delivery of VET world over.

Effectiveness

Objective 2: Young Africa's eLearning Platform available for 8,150 socially, economically, and educationally disadvantaged youth across Southern and Eastern Africa at the end of the project period (incorporating digitalization of 14 YA VET curricula & sharing with dissemination network)

The Young Africa eLearning platform under the D-VETYA project was designed to provide socially, economically, and educationally disadvantaged youth across Southern and Eastern Africa with access to vocational training. By the end of the project, the platform aimed to reach 8,150 youth and deliver a digitalized curriculum of 14 courses. With a target of reaching 8,150 beneficiaries across Southern and Eastern Africa, the platform has made notable progress, registering over 5,700 youth, which represents an important milestone that demonstrates strong initial interest and the potential for future scalability. This section evaluates the platform's effectiveness, focusing on project performance and limitations in Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

Encouragingly, one in ten registrants are from outside Young Africa's training programs, indicating its appeal beyond the identified immediate target audience. Furthermore, 23 organizations have expressed interest in integrating into the platform, with three formalizing their engagement through licensing agreements. These achievements underscore the platform's capacity to attract diverse users and stakeholders. However, delays in uploading vocational courses, central to the project's goals, have significantly limited the platform's effectiveness. By the time of the 2nd phase of the evaluation, not all modules were available on the eLearning platform, which continues to present a small gap attributed to inefficiencies in the curriculum adaptation process.

In Mozambique, the eLearning platform has shown promise in improving digital literacy and life skills among youth. Findings from discussions with FGD participants show that the eLearning platform's role is fostering personal organization and interpersonal skills. Despite these successes, adoption in Mozambique has been hindered by widespread digital literacy issues, digital capacity, and socio-economic barriers. Many participants lacked email accounts or basic knowledge of using digital tools. To address these challenges, the project provided library access for youth near training centers to enhance their digital competencies. Still, access remains limited for those in remote areas. In Zimbabwe, the platform has faced significant infrastructural and socio-economic challenges. Participants frequently cited network instability, electricity to power devices and the lack of devices, such as laptops, as major barriers that limit project effectiveness.

Despite these challenges, some participants praised the platform's content, noting its simplicity and relevance. However, they also emphasized the urgent need for additional courses to maximize its utility. Comparatively, the platform's progress varies across the three countries. Mozambique has leveraged local initiatives like library access to mitigate digital literacy challenges, though rural and remote areas remain underserved. Zimbabwe lags behind in adoption due to pervasive infrastructural and socio-economic barriers, compounded by gender disparities. Zambia demonstrates strong enthusiasm for the platform but is similarly constrained by economic limitations and infrastructural gaps. However, notable efforts in Zambia have been made, with the construction of a new YA training center, which highlights progress in addressing infrastructural gaps. These variations highlight the need for tailored interventions to address country-specific challenges.

YA's Postgraduate Service Toolbox (PGST) contributes to a substantial increase in the percentage of graduates in self and formal employment amongst YA students.

The Postgraduate Service Toolbox (PGST) is a pivotal initiative under Young Africa's efforts to enhance graduate employability by bridging the gap between training and employment. Designed as a comprehensive platform, the PGST aims to support graduates in their transition to the workforce through job matching, profile creation, and employer engagement. Although the establishment of the PGST has been completed, the system has not yet been launched. Thus, its effectiveness remains prospective and contingent on successful roll out.

The PGST is structured to serve as an all-encompassing platform for graduates and employers. Graduates can create profiles detailing their education, skills, and experiences, enabling them to apply for job openings and internships. Employers, on the other hand, can create accounts to post job vacancies with specific qualifications and requirements. The platform integrates features commonly associated with professional networking systems, such as LinkedIn, offering a streamlined and user-friendly interface. A Key Informant had this to say;

"*The application is designed to tackle all aspects of the user's needs, ensuring accessibility across devices, whether cellphone, tablet, or computer"* **(KII with PGST Developers)**

The anticipated benefits of the PGST are extensive. For graduates, it promises to provide continuous support by offering access to job opportunities regardless of their location, while for employers, the platform offers an organized system to track applications, view detailed candidate profiles, and make informed hiring decisions. Despite its promising design, the roll out of the PGST faced significant delays. As of this evaluation, the system has not been launched, and no graduates have accessed its features. These delays stemmed from challenges in recruiting a competent technical partner to develop the platform. One Key Informant indicated,

"We struggled to find a company with the expertise to meet our specific requirements, and it took three recruitment rounds to finalize the selection" **(Key Informant Interview, Zimbabwe)**

The prolonged recruitment process delayed key project milestones, limiting the ability to assess the system's effectiveness within the project timeline. The absence of an operational platform also made it difficult to engage graduates and employers effectively.

The system's anticipated effectiveness lies in its capacity to provide structured and ongoing support to graduates. Unlike previous methods that relied on remote follow-ups via phone calls, the PGST is expected to offer a centralized, accessible solution for maintaining engagement with graduates. Once launched, the platform is expected to significantly enhance Young Africa's ability to track graduate outcomes and measure the impact of its vocational training programs.

YA Affiliates and 23 dissemination partners using the PGST across Africa

The Postgraduate Service Toolbox (PGST) was envisioned to extend its reach beyond the Young Africa (YA) training centers, integrating with two YA affiliates and 23 dissemination partners across Africa. The goal is to create a unified platform supporting graduates from multiple organizations in accessing job opportunities, internships, and entrepreneurial support. However, as the PGST has not yet been launched, its effectiveness remains largely aspirational.

The PGST's design facilitates collaboration between YA affiliates and dissemination partners. These organizations would utilize the system to provide tailored graduate support, leveraging its functionalities to track employment outcomes, post job opportunities, and foster connections between graduates and employers. The platform's ability to centralize data collection during students' time with YA training centers, combined with its postgraduate support features, ensures seamless data continuity. Despite the platform's potential, there are significant gaps in its current adoption. Although the PGST is yet to be fully operational, Young Africa has already began making contact with organizations for dissemination partnership, with up to 19 organizations across Malawi, Uganda, Tanzania, Eswatini, South Africa and Zimbabwe showing interest.

The PGST's robust design and potential for widespread applicability offer promise for ensuring widespread dissemination across Africa once the platform is operational. Moving forward, prioritizing the platform's roll-out and actively engaging affiliates and dissemination partners with clear communication and demonstrations will be crucial to ensuring its adoption and success.

New YA models (eLearning & PGST) integrated into YA MEL system (based on the KoBo-Toolbox) and 73 YA and dissemination partner staff trained in the monitoring system leading to improved data driven performance.

The integration of two new Young Africa (YA) models, the eLearning platform and the Postgraduate Service Toolbox (PGST) into the organization's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system, built on the KoBo Toolbox, is

designed to streamline data collection and analysis processes while enhancing data-driven performance. Furthermore, the integration of the eLearning platform with YA's MEL system represents a significant step forward in improving monitoring capabilities. The eLearning platform includes mechanisms to track critical indicators such as registration numbers, course completion rates, and demographic data. This integration allows YA to align its MEL activities across both physical training centers and the digital platform. One key informant had this say;

> *"We successfully identified and integrated indicators from our global MEL framework into the eLearning platform, ensuring consistency across data collection methods"* **(Key informant Interview, Zimbabwe)**

While the integration process has been technically successful, the scope of monitoring remains limited at this stage. The eLearning platform collects basic baseline data, including demographic and employment information, during registration. However, the number of indicators was deliberately reduced to avoid overwhelming users, with YA choosing to include only the most essential metrics. Although this approach ensures ease of use, some stakeholders expressed concerns about the reduced data granularity, which may impact comprehensive reporting to donors.

The PGST is designed to integrate seamlessly with the MEL system. The toolbox is also expected to enable ongoing monitoring of graduates' career progress, providing longitudinal data that complements the eLearning platform's initial baseline metrics. Developers emphasized the inclusion of advanced features, such as user engagement tracking through Google Analytics, to enhance data insights.

> *"The platform will include a detailed dashboard to track user activities, feedback, and key performance indicators"* **(KII with PGST Developers)**

This integration is expected to support robust tracking of employment outcomes, job applications, and employer engagement. The MEL system is particularly effective in its direct link to the registration process which allows for the generation of monitoring reports and baseline data. The system includes reminders for users to update their information at six-month intervals, which further strengthens the effectiveness of the MEL system. However, the reduction in registration questions has limited the breadth of baseline data available, which may affect long-term monitoring and reporting capabilities.

The training of YA and partner staff on the updated MEL system is a crucial component of this objective. Each affiliate has a dedicated monitoring and evaluation officer, ensuring that local staff are equipped to manage the system. Training sessions have focused on familiarizing staff with the platform's features, including its dashboards and data visualization tools. While initial feedback has been positive, further training will be required once the systems are fully operational to address any gaps in user competency.

In conclusion, while the PGST has not yet been launched, its potential effectiveness is evident in its design and intended functionalities. Delays in implementation have limited the extent to which real time effectiveness can be assessed, but the system holds promise as a key driver of graduate employability. Moving forward, the focus must remain on launching the platform, building stakeholder trust, and ensuring its long-term sustainability. If successfully activated, the PGST could become a cornerstone of Young Africa's mission to support graduates in achieving meaningful employment.

Efficiency

Project efficiency in implementing social and development interventions is critical for development organizations, particularly in maximizing limited resources to achieve significant outcomes. Efficiency is defined as the optimal use of financial, human, and technical resources to accomplish set objectives within specified timeframes and budget

constraints. Efficient project delivery not only provides a roadmap for achieving impactful results but also serves as a basis for aligning organizational resources to achieve set goals. This section examines the extent to which the D-VETYA project was implemented in an economic and timely way, as well as the extent of adherence to the project design.

The D-VETYA project faced notable implementation challenges that significantly affected the timely delivery of key results. Although the project began in January 2023 and was expected to close by December 31, 2024, challenges that affected completion of planned activities resulted in a 6 month no-cost extension that ends in June 2025.

Most critically, the eLearning platform and the Post-Graduate Support Toolbox (PGST), which are central components for delivering the project's digital learning vision, remain incomplete. During the no-cost extension, the project was able to complete the curriculum review process, and the consultants were able to commence curriculum adaptation, with more modules uploaded on the e-learning platform by mid-June, with work ongoing to upload the remaining courses to the e-learning platform. Although the uploading of course content on to the platform is yet to be concluded, the contractors committed to finalizing this process even after the extension period lapses. Additionally, the PGST platform is not yet publicly accessible nor used by the project graduates.

These delays have been compounded by challenges experienced during early implementation stages, including reliance on external consultants for the development of key platforms and curriculum, and a lack of in-house technical expertise to oversee and support these processes. Project partners confirmed that D-VETYA was the first of its kind for Young Africa and SERVE, and the technical complexity of the project was underestimated from the outset.

> *"Between SERVE and YA, we did not have internal capacity or experience to inform the development of any of these platforms or to inform the curriculum development. We had to rely completely on the external consultants."* **KII with SERVE**

Recruitment of key personnel was also delayed. For example, some staff such as ICT officers and digital learning officers were recruited for months into the project, instead of at project inception. Similarly, the recruitment and training of mentors, who play a key role in supporting learners, occurred much later than planned, affecting the support structure intended for students on the eLearning platform.

> *"We started a bit late, very late, even the recruitment of our ICT person. We were supposed to recruit in January or February, but we only managed to do that around July or August this year.* **KII with YA Zimbabwe**

In addition to staffing delays, the performance of some consultants initially contracted for critical activities such as curriculum review was unsatisfactory, necessitating re-recruitment and resulting in lost time. Compounding this was the limited budget, which constrained the ability to attract and retain highly qualified technical consultants. Although some consultants continued their engagement despite the limited compensation, they acknowledged that their motivation diminished over time, further delaying deliverables.

> *"We're just trying to see the work through, not that it is in any way profitable."* **KII with Project Contractor**

On a positive note, the recruitment of e-learning coordinators at affiliate level enhanced the communication and the collaboration between the project and the Affiliates hence contributing to improved project efficiency.

Impact

Change for YA resulting from participating in the D-VETYA project

The D-VETYA project has catalysed a significant shift in Young Africa's (YA) approach to vocational education by integrating digital tools into its training ecosystem. The project initiated a transformative journey for Young Africa (YA) by introducing a digital approach to vocational education. Although the TVET eLearning and PGST platforms are still under finalization, the groundwork laid by the D-VETYA project positions these platforms as transformative tools for expanding equitable access to TVET across Africa. Their full operationalization is likely to catalyze systemic change by increasing the reach, inclusivity, and relevance of VET for young people, as well as post-training employability, particularly in marginalized communities.

One of the most tangible impacts of the project has been the enhancement of Young Africa's capacity to engage with digital learning platforms. The project has equipped trainers with the skills necessary to navigate the new online systems. Despite lingering questions about their readiness to run courses effectively, this training marks a significant step towards modernizing the organization's teaching methods. YA have improved trainer readiness by equipping centres with laptops and initiating internal digital skills training by e-learning coordinators. However, gaps remain in confidence and pedagogical adaptation, indicating a continued need for structured capacity building.

Additionally, the exposure to digital tools and online learning environment is fostering adaptability among students and trainers alike, signaling a gradual cultural shift towards digital integration in vocational education. Furthermore, while organizational capacity has improved, the trainers' ability to independently and effectively deliver courses remains to be tested. The project's ultimate impact hinges on their ability to adapt to and manage this new mode of delivery. While this is a promising development, the unavailability of all the other technical courses on the eLearning platform limits the extent to which project impact can at this stage of implementation be assessed.

Project contribution to improved digital learning

The D-VETYA project is now better positioned to bridge the digital divide by reaching marginalized youth through a hybrid model blending online and hands-on training. Despite persistent barriers like limited device access, YA's strategy to pilot digital hubs such as YAYA Hubs signals potential for increased coverage. However, the impact of the PGST will only emerge if YA can successfully mobilize the private sector to actively populate the platform with real opportunities. While this engagement has started, it remains limited in scope and effect.

> *"The platform will overcome the challenge of accessibility, allowing young people in rural areas to gain vocational training and employment-related information"* **(Key Informant, Mozambique)**

Accreditation with HEXCO in Zimbabwe and interest from Zambia's TVET bodies reflect strong alignment with national systems for greater impact. In Zimbabwe, some courses have already been accredited by HEXCO, and discussions are underway to align others with national qualification frameworks. This signals a critical opportunity for regional harmonization of vocational qualifications and broader policy impact. A key Informant had this to say;

> *"…HEXCO was saying to Young Africa, 'we love this, this is brilliant', but we don't actually have any guidelines around digital learning to give you, but we want to try and develop guidelines in this area, and we want to partner with you or use your experience and learning on this project to help with those guidelines. And HEXCO are open and Young Africa may already have been able to secure accreditation for some of these courses from HEXCO for digital learning, …"* **(KII with SERVE)**

Beyond its current implementation, the platform could significantly benefit other regions, such as Malawi and Tanzania, including marginalized groups like refugees. Its ability to cross physical boundaries is perceived to have a far-reaching impact on regional vocational training systems in Africa. The integration of theoretical assessments on the platform marks another critical step toward modernizing vocational training. The system includes features like

quizzes, assignments and forums, that enable trainers to assess students' theoretical understanding effectively. This capability ensures continuity in education, particularly during disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic, where traditional training methods were interrupted.

Another perceived long-term benefit of the project is its role in fostering digital literacy among both trainers and students. For many youths, the platform represents their first exposure to digital learning. By navigating online courses, they are expected to gain foundational skills that could open opportunities for further education and employment. Similarly, the trainers' capacity-building workshops have introduced them to new tools and methods, positioning them to adapt to future shifts in vocational education delivery. The project's long-term impact will also depend on addressing the challenges encountered during its implementation. Its scalability and ability to serve diverse populations positions it as a transformative tool for addressing the digital skills gap. The anticipated integration of hybrid models combining theoretical and practical training could redefine how vocational education is delivered, making it more flexible and inclusive. The project staff said;

> *"If we have a large number of young people with access to vocational training through eLearning, it means we will also have a greater number of young people who are active in applications and able to get jobs and generate income"* **(Key Informant, Zimbabwe)**

A key long-term impact will be digital inclusion. Many learners are encountering structured digital learning for the first time. As attested by a key informant who said,

> *"For many of these youth, navigating the platform is their first exposure to digital systems and that experience builds skills far beyond the training content itself".* **(KII with YA International)**

The D-VETYA project has laid a strong foundation for future advancements in vocational training. Its potential to expand access, enhance digital literacy, and integrate hybrid learning models suggests that it could become a benchmark for similar initiatives. With sustained investment and iterative improvements, the platform is likely to significantly influence vocational education in Africa, providing opportunities for marginalized youth to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

Attribution of Project Results to the D-VETYA Project

Assessing the impact of the D-VETYA project requires evaluating whether the observed results are solely attributable to the project or if similar initiatives in the program area have also contributed. This distinction is particularly important in understanding how the project outcomes align with broader efforts in the TVET sector. The D-VETYA project's results are closely tied to its innovative approach, particularly its focus on digital learning platforms. However, the unique requirements of TVET, which emphasize practical, hands-on skills building, necessitate physical components that digital platforms alone cannot provide. A project partner noted that;

> *"Since TVET is different from other courses, at some point it needs the physical hands-on component to effectively deliver practical skills and training. Learning from similar projects would help us understand how they managed the practical aspects of the project to make it successful"* **(Key Informant Interview Malawi)**

This highlights the potential interplay between the D-VETYA project and existing TVET initiatives. The project's success in integrating theoretical and practical aspects of training can, in part, be attributed to its alignment with existing practices and lessons from similar projects. While the D-VETYA project introduced innovative elements like the eLearning platform and Postgraduate Service Toolbox (PGST), it has also drawn from established TVET methodologies. Although still to be finalized, these include partnerships with dissemination networks and affiliates experienced in vocational education, which have so far informed project implementation. For instance, the hands-on nature of TVET requires physical infrastructure and in-person mentorship, areas where similar projects in the region have demonstrated success. Leveraging the experiences of these initiatives could offer valuable insights into

overcoming challenges, such as integrating digital tools with practical training, underscoring the role of cross-project collaboration and knowledge sharing in achieving collective goals. Moreover, the presence of complementary projects may have helped normalize the use of digital tools in vocational training, creating a receptive environment for the D-VETYA project's innovations. For example, dissemination partners working across multiple initiatives have brought diverse expertise, enabling the project to refine its approaches and address local challenges.

Sustainability

Sustainability of Project Outcomes

The sustainability of the D-VETYA project outcomes is rooted in the strategic integration of robust technical systems, capacity building for trainers, and institutional mechanisms. These components collectively ensure that results can continue to be enjoyed post-project end. However, challenges such as infrastructural limitations, digital literacy gaps, and inconsistent adoption among stakeholders pose potential risks to project sustainability.

The eLearning platform incorporates an embedded Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system with features that enable Young Africa to track key indicators like course registrations, engagement rates, and completion statistics. This system allows for effective management of data, facilitating informed decision-making and continuous improvement. The MEL user manual is also a key component of sustainability, especially regarding the M&E system as it allows staff, both new and old, to understand the system and use it effectively. One developer noted that,

> *"We ensured the platform tracks all new registrations, user activities, and completion rates, and we created manuals and training videos for ongoing use"* **(KII with External Consultant)**

The system's design minimizes dependence on external developers, increasing their sustainability and through training of trainers, has been central to embedding sustainability. Capacity building has been a central pillar of project sustainability. Trainers have been equipped not only to use the platform but also to digitize content and manage technical aspects. This ensures that Young Africa can independently maintain and update the platform. These efforts reduce reliance on external stakeholders and embed critical skills within the organization. In addition to this, YA has also ensured the provision of computers and laptops for trainers in Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe to enable effective and sustained capacitation of teachers and trainers.

Moreover, Young Africa is actively recruiting technical personnel to oversee the maintenance of both the eLearning and PGST platforms. This institutionalization of key roles is critical to ensuring that the platforms remain functional and relevant post-project.

Sustainability of Project Results Post-Closure

Of note is that the project outcomes are likely to persist beyond the project's end, primarily due to Young Africa's efforts to institutionalize key functions. For example, the platform's integration into other projects, such as the Skills to Live project, ensures its continued use and funding. One stakeholder explained this saying,

> *"We have incorporated the platform into other projects to ensure sustainability and are continuously mobilizing resources to address bottlenecks"* **(Key Informant, Zimbabwe)**

The Postgraduate Service Toolbox (PGST) is another critical element that enhances the project's long-term impact. By providing ongoing support such as job matching, entrepreneurship training, and internships, the PGST can ensure that graduates remain engaged with the system and continue to benefit from its resources. This integration fosters sustained value for participants and aligns with Young Africa's broader mission. A Key stakeholder said;

"The PGST ensures graduates don't just gain skills but are supported in securing jobs and pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities" **(Key Informant, Zimbabwe)**

This ensures that the platform remains relevant to users, fostering long-term relationships between YA and its alumni. Moreover, YA has implemented features that encompass offline access to learning materials and downloadable content to cater for users with limited internet connectivity. This user-focused design enhances the platform's accessibility and usability, even in resource-constrained environments. Through these mechanisms, YA has taken significant steps to integrate sustainability into the project's outcomes.

Complimentary resource mobilization that builds on the gains from the D-VETYA project have also been in effect, including the submission of 2 grant proposals on the capacitation of TVET trainers on digital skills as well as on setting up digital learning applications. These efforts are critical for continued strengthening of the eLearning and PGST platforms, as well as for sustained provision of digital VET. An additional layer of sustainability is seen through YAs YAYA hub prototype that is hoped to be established in underserved locations, providing computers, tablets, Wi-Fi and solar energy, and to ultimately enable young people to register for a course and complete it.

The D-VETYA project has implemented robust mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of its outcomes. Through capacity building, integration with existing programs, user-focused platform design, and strengthened resource mobilization, Young Africa has laid a solid foundation for project sustainability. However, addressing challenges related to infrastructure, digital literacy, and stakeholder engagement will be critical to fully realizing the project's potential. With continued resource mobilization and targeted interventions, the project's benefits are likely to persist well beyond project closure.

Coherence

With a project consortium comprising SERVE in Solidarity Ireland and Young Africa and implemented through YA International and the YA Affiliate organizations in Mozambique and Zimbabwe, the D-VETYA project prioritized effective program coordination and coherence to ensure streamlined operations and alignment among all partners.

Project coordination was centralized at YA International, facilitating close collaboration across affiliates. Robust coordination mechanisms were established, including weekly coordination meetings and daily contact between platform coordinators and monitoring and evaluation officers. A structured communication framework further ensured smooth information flow and alignment with overarching project objectives. This systematic approach enhanced efficiency and reinforced the project's collaborative foundation. For instance, affiliate representatives travelled to Zimbabwe to co-design the postgraduate support toolbox, and all affiliates participated in a joint online training-of-trainers on the eLearning platform initiatives that fostered coherence both within Young Africa International and across the affiliates.

Coordination between SERVE, Young Africa, and the affiliate offices was overseen by a central coordinator based at YA International. This coordinator played a pivotal role in organizing meetings, facilitating feedback loops, and keeping all consortium members informed and aligned. Notably, the coordinator was highly accessible, even offering online support beyond regular working hours.

In the early stages of the project, limited availability of full-time implementation staff contributed to reduced cohesion around the project's goals and objectives. However, this was later addressed through the recruitment of digital learning officers in each affiliate. These officers now work closely with the YA International coordinator to manage the eLearning platform at the national level and provide direct support to young learners navigating the system.

The strong and longstanding partnership between SERVE and Young Africa has also been a key enabler of project coherence. Monthly Steering Committee meetings, chaired by SERVE, have provided an essential platform for

oversight, collaborative task allocation, problem identification, and solution-oriented planning. This structured approach-maintained focus, ensured accountability, and advanced project implementation effectively.

Nevertheless, the project experienced some limitations in technical coherence, particularly due to gaps in digital learning expertise among consortium members. At both the project design and implementation phases, neither SERVE nor Young Africa had staff with specialized technical knowledge in digital learning, and some affiliate staff did not fully grasp the project's scope initially.

Despite these early-stage challenges, the D-VETYA project made significant progress in strengthening coordination and collaboration. The establishment of clear communication frameworks, appointment of dedicated digital learning staff, and consistent Steering Committee oversight fostered a more cohesive consortium. Additionally, during the no-cost extension, continuous meetings between YA International, SERVE, and their affiliates further reinforced alignment and ensured ongoing momentum in project implementation.

By overcoming initial hurdles and fostering structured collaboration, the project laid a solid foundation for achieving its goals and delivering lasting impact across all affiliate organizations.

Lessons Learned

- Greater collaboration and inclusion of all stakeholders in the early stages of project design can enhance clarity and ownership of the project's objectives and processes.

- Having curricula ready for embarking on system development and digital adaptation before developing the e-learning platform is key.

- Simplifying the registration and data collection processes by reducing the number of questions, ensures that the system remains accessible and engaging for users and helps maintain high levels of user participation and data accuracy.

- A combination of both vertical and horizontal program coordination for example at YA international level and at affiliate level enhances program efficiency and coherence.

- Having inhouse institutional technical expertise is essential in the provision of technical guidance to hired consultants and in preventing underestimation of the scope of the work at hand for example the development of an e-learning platform or the PGST.

- A phased project design that sequences activities logically, such as completing digital skills training for teachers and trainers before the rollout of the eLearning platform, can significantly enhance overall project effectiveness. Ensuring that foundational components are fully implemented and absorbed before advancing to subsequent stages promotes smoother implementation, stronger ownership, and better outcomes.

Conclusion

The D-VETYA project has served as a catalytic initiative, laying a strong foundation for the digital transformation of vocational education in Africa. Beyond addressing immediate needs, the project has set in motion a paradigm shift in how technical and vocational education can be designed, delivered, and sustained in low-resource contexts. Its ambition to digitize vocational training and link post-graduate support with real-time labour market opportunities marks a strategic departure from conventional, centre-based models.

While implementation challenges were pronounced, ranging from technical delays to capacity and access constraints, the project's integrated design and responsive adaptations reflect long term sustenance of digital VET by Young Africa. The concurrent development of platforms, systems, and human capacity has not only expanded YA's operational structure but also contributed to a more agile and future-fit organization.

Importantly, the project has demonstrated how digital VET initiatives can intersect with broader social goals, such as reducing gender and geographic inequities, promoting youth employability, and stimulating cross-border learning through a networked model of dissemination. In this way, the D-VETYA project moves beyond being a pilot intervention to serving as a scalable prototype for digital VET ecosystems in similar contexts.

The evaluation findings underscore the importance of sequencing, strategic foresight, and iterative learning in complex digital transformation efforts. The project's true success also lies not just in outputs delivered to date, but in the institutional and infrastructural groundwork it has laid for sustained, adaptable impact. As the platforms approach full operationalization, their transformative potential rests in continued commitment to quality, access, and cross-sector collaboration.

Overall, while the platforms are not yet fully operational, the foundations laid by the D-VETYA project present a significant opportunity for scaling digital VET solutions in Africa. The project has therefore contributed to institutional innovation and demonstrated a viable model for enhancing youth employability in a digital era.

Recommendations for successful dissemination of the project

1. **Strengthen Capacity Building for Trainers and Staff**
    a. Continuous training and capacity-building initiatives should be implemented for trainers, digital learning officers, and project staff to address gaps in digital literacy and ensure they are fully equipped to facilitate eLearning. Advanced training in digital content development and platform management will further enhance the project's sustainability.
2. **Enhance Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Systems**
    a. Integrating the eLearning and PGST platforms into the broader MEL framework should be accelerated to ensure real-time tracking of key indicators. Refining baseline and follow-up questions, coupled with robust data analysis tools, will provide actionable insights to improve project performance.
3. **Invest in disability friendly digital skills training platforms and resources to ensure inclusivity and the empowerment of youth with disability.**
    a. The project should provide disability friendly digital platforms and software such as code jumper [15], Accessible Computer Science Curriculum (ACSC) to cater for people with visual impairment and resources such as keyboards with braille displays, as well as structures with ramps and wide doors that cater for people on wheelchairs.
4. **The project must deliberately reach out to PWDs including through DPOs in order to ensure effective disability inclusion.**
    a. Socio-cultural beliefs that exist within the target countries result in stigmatization and discrimination of PWD which leads to parents/guardians overprotecting their children and preventing them from participating in social gatherings or other programs that could benefit them
5. **Establish a collaborative platform that informs ICT policy development which includes digital skills development and involves key stakeholders from Government, digital sector, academia, and civil society.**
    a. This platform should facilitate regular dialogue, knowledge sharing, and consensus-building to build a knowledge base from multisectoral expertise that will inform the development of a comprehensive and up-to-date ICT policy that addresses the evolving contemporary needs of the digital skills landscape.

[15] Code Jumper is a physical programming language designed for children with visual impairments, enabling them to learn coding concepts through interactive and accessible tools.