



Annual Narrative Report

SERVE

SERVE Development Programme (SDP) 2018-2021

Zimbabwe and Mozambique

Year 2

CSF Ref: CSF 26-18

Reporting Period: 13/08/2019 to 30/09/2020

(No Cost Extension granted due to COVID-19)

1. Project Summary

SERVE is implementing the SDP 2018-2021 with our partner [Young Africa](#) (YA) in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. It focuses on the provision of holistic and effective Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to a total of 8,990 marginalised young people over three years. The main components include: (i) Skills for Economic Resilience – to boost employability and income by investing in training equipment & facilities; improving access for the poorest through a Scholarship Programme and the pilot ‘Achieve Programme’; core staffing needs; mainstreaming ILO Start Your Business training and microcredit support; (ii) Skills for Personal Development through mainstreaming of holistic Life Skills training and providing support to core HR needs. This component is strengthened by training all YA staff in best practice Youthwork; and (iii) Strengthening the sustainability and effectiveness of the YA Model through extensive capacity building at YA HUB and Centre level.

In Year 2, the project was seriously affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In line with government directives, the YA centres that are part of the SDP were shut from mid-March to September. The lockdown meant that almost all project activities were affected and No Cost Extension to the end of September 2020 was required. However, the extended time frame did not allow for completion of as many activities as initially planned because reopening of the training centres was further delayed. The pandemic has affected the project design, especially in Zimbabwe where the viability of Centre based training is affected, at least in the short term. As of September 30th, the YAZ Centres remained closed (they reopened on October 12th). As the report will outline, YA Zimbabwe are developing an alternative training model called Industry Attached Training, whereby students will complete their practical learning at an SME rather than at the YAZ Centre. The impact is less severe in Mozambique where, from 7th September 2020, the government allowed the YA Mozambique Beira training centre to operate, although with very strict guidelines. The YA Agri Tech Centre remains closed pending government approval and is only likely to reopen in November 2020. The inability to undertake international travel has also affected some capacity building components, especially the work of YA HUB and the SERVE Volunteer Programme.

The situation and context analysis underpinning the project design remains very relevant because of the suffering endured by the poorest communities from the direct and indirect consequences of the pandemic. For example, in Zimbabwe, the informal sector (upon which our target group is reliant) was shut down completely. Young people continue to live in or close to poverty, and they lack skills, knowledge and coping mechanisms to reach their potential. The need for accessible, effective and holistic vocational training programmes that have strong links to the local business community is stronger than ever but YA must adapt to the new operating context. SERVE are committed to helping them to do this.

2. Project Progress

The following table provides an overview of Project Progress at Output Level.

Achieved	Partially Achieved (>50%)	Not Achieved/Off Track (<50%)
1.1.1 5 training Departments upgraded with improved facilities/training equipment. These included Cosmetology, Electronics and Motor Vehicle Departments at YAZ and Refrigeration and Auto Mechanics Departments at YAM	1.1.3 204 scholarships were disbursed against the annual target of 306;	1.1.2 In Mozambique, YA Agri Tech were unable to start work on the Egg Laying Project
1.1.4 8 key roles were supported at YAZ and YAM. This strengthened performance at each centre.	3.1.2 10 YAZ staff are 70% through their Further Education Training Certificate course	1.2.1 No microcredit loans were disbursed to students at YAM – the target was 40;
1.2.2 & 2.1.1 The number of young people (4,905) who have completed their Start Your Business and Life Skills Training Programme is 4% below the Year 1 & Year 2 target (5,120), and would have been exceeded had COVID not impacted on the YA Centres. The result is impressive;	3.1.3 15 YAM staff are part way through their Certificado Training. It was affected by COVID. They can complete within 4 months.	1.2.3 & 2.1.2 The Outreach Entrepreneurship and Life Skills Training component run by YAZ reached 70 young people against a target of 500.
1.3 YAZ successfully completed upgrades to its training centres to comply with government COVID requirements		3.3.1 The SERVE Volunteer Programme to Mozambique was cancelled in early 2020;
3.1.1 10 staff & Board members from YAZ, YAM & YA HUB completed a governance training programme at YA HUB		
3.2.1 4 key roles were supported at YA HUB which enabled them to provide oversight and capacity building of the YA affiliates. SERVE's ME Officer was placed at YA HUB during the Year 2 period which is an excellent example of capacity building and maximising resources;		

The following table provides an overview of Project Progress at **Outcome Level**.

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved/Off Track
1.1(a) In Mozambique, 79% of graduates reported being economically active in a monitoring exercise completed in September 2020 – this is above the target of 75%;	1.1(a) 42% of YAZ graduates reported being economically active, in a monitoring exercise completed in September 2020 – this is below the target of 75%.	1.2 Microcredit repayment rate
2.1 & 2.2 The Life Skills component delivered strong results for graduates – over 90% of graduates at YA Zimbabwe and YA Mozambique reported acting responsibly regarding their SRH; and 93% of graduates stated they had stronger levels of self confidence, problem solving skills and plans for the future;	1.1(b) Income growth amongst graduates was below target, although there were improvements against baselines.	3.2(b) The percentage of income generated from the Franchise Model to cover running costs was below target
3.1 YA Centre Directors and Board members reported increased knowledge of and competency on issues of Governance;		
3.2(a) YA HUB completed internal audit processes with YA Mozambique and YA Zimbabwe;		

At the end of the Year 2 period, there is €80,700 of unspent Irish Aid funds (28% of Year 2 Irish Aid funds, including Year 1 carryover), all caused by COVID-19 and the lockdowns. We are requesting that these be carried over to Year 3 and this is outlined in a separate note.

3. Analysis of Project Results

The following section will provide a descriptive analysis of the results contained in the Results Framework. It includes a higher level analysis of trends and emerging results but the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic has limited the impact and stalled some emerging trends. We are also making a comment about the likelihood of each output being reached by the end of Year 3, but this is on the assumption that COVID-19 does not force training centres to close. Objective level information is discussed first, followed by output level information.

Outcome 1: Young Africa graduates and beneficiaries have improved levels of economic resilience as a result of strengthening Young Africa TVET Programmes

Objective 1.1 - 85% of YA graduates have stronger economic resilience through improved employment and income levels by 2021

Although there was welcome improvement against baseline figures, and evidence that the YA training model is having a positive impact on young people, the results for economic resilience are generally only partially achieved. The shortfall against targets is unsurprising considering the impact of COVID-19 lockdowns on the economies of Zimbabwe and Mozambique. In Zimbabwe, 42% of graduates are **economically active** compared with a baseline figure of 19%, but below the target figure of 75%. 30% of graduates are in full time employment; 10% are in part time employment and 2% are self employed. In Mozambique, 79% of graduates are engaged in productive work, compared with a baseline figure of 42% – 33% are in formal paid employment and 46% are self-employed. The target was 75%. As in recent years, there are significantly greater levels of self-employment amongst graduates in Mozambique compared with Zimbabwe.

With regard to **income changes**, although there were some meaningful improvements for graduates, the results are partially achieved. In **Zimbabwe**, as in Year 1, there was another change in currency as they reverted to the USD. In February 2019, the RTGS Dollar (also known as ZWL, Zimbabwean Dollar) was introduced overnight as a local currency to operate alongside the USD. In June 2019, the RTGS Dollar became the official currency in Zimbabwe and the USD was discontinued (although it remained in circulation unofficially). In response to this SERVE adjusted the RBF for Year 2 to report in RTGS Dollar/ZWL rather than USD. The official USD/RTGS rate was pegged at \$1/RTGS2.5 at introduction but by March 2020 had been changed to \$1/RTGS25 – this was a fraction of the ‘real’ exchange rate used for transactions. By March 2020, the Zimbabwean government abandoned the RTGS Dollar and reintroduced the USD as legal tender. This situation presents a challenge in reporting on the Year 2 targets. For the Year 2 period, SERVE set baselines in RTGS Dollar/ZWL and intended to report in this currency. However, as students completed the monitoring process in September 2020, results were reported in USD. To resolve this issue, we are comparing these results with a baseline exercise done in January 2019 which was done in USD. This shows that the proportion of students with no weekly income fell from 84% to 62%; the percentage earning between \$1-\$20 increased from 10% to 33%; and the percentage earning \$21+ declined from 6% to 5%. With regard to attribution, 61% of graduates said their training programmes was ‘helpful’ or ‘very helpful’ in finding work; 42% said it directly led to increased income; when assessing their technical training, 87% said that the training contributed ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ to improved income.

In **Mozambique**, the percentage of graduates with no weekly income fell significantly from 70% to 20%; the percentage earning between \$1-\$20 increased from 20% to 49% and the percentage earning over \$20 increased from 10% to 31%. The Year 2 results for Mozambique are a significant improvement on the Year 1 results and indicate that the local economy is rebounding from the devastating effects of Cyclone Idai in March 2019, even though the damage caused by the Cyclone remains very visible. With regard to attribution, 69% of all graduates said their training programmes was 'helpful' or 'very helpful' in finding work; 60% said it directly led to increased income; when assessing their technical training, 85% said that the training contributed 'somewhat' or 'a lot' to improved income.

It is important to note that all monitoring exercises were completed in September 2020 – a time when some COVID-19 restrictions were still in place. The government of Zimbabwe enforced a much stricter lockdown than in Mozambique. In Zimbabwe a full lockdown was imposed from March to June 2020, with a gradual reopening of the economy continuing into September 2020. The informal sector was particularly badly hit with markets, road side stalls, small and informal business premises and traditional transport links all closed. This is the sector that YAZ graduates are reliant on and compounded an already incredibly harsh economic environment that is prone to volatility, liquidity crises, new currencies and inflation.

The trends are consistent with Year 1 results and there is strong evidence that the training model supported by the SDP is effective in improving the economic resilience of young people. The repeated improvements against baseline figures are a testament to the Young Africa training model and the determination and ability of young people. Monitoring data shows that for over 83% of graduates the income they earn supports their households.

These results, that aim for stronger economic resilience, are coherent with SDG 2, Zero Hunger (Target 2.3) and SDG 8, Decent Work and Economic Growth (Targets 8.3, 8.5 & 8.6).

Output 1.1.1 - 12 training departments in Zimbabwe & Mozambique have improved training equipment by August 2021 and Motor Mechanics Training Department at YA Mozambique has developed an expanded training area by end of Year 1

This objective was achieved in Year 2, though later than anticipated due to the lockdowns. At YA Zimbabwe, the Cosmetology Department, Electronics Department and Motor Vehicle Department (Year 1 carryover) all benefited from improved training infrastructure and training equipment. There were challenges in the procurement process due to the inflation of the Zimbabwean dollar and difficulties in using USD, but YA Zimbabwe were able to complete procurement. At YA Mozambique, the Refrigeration and Auto Mechanics Departments were upgraded. This means that 9 training departments have been supported in two years and this output is on track to be achieved by end of Year 3. It remains an important component of ensuring students can complete their training in a safe environment and on modern training equipment, once Centre Based Training resumes. The SDP is the most consistent source of funding for YA for this essential component.

Output 1.1.2 - YA Agri Tech campus (Mozambique) has improved training infrastructure to benefit students by August 2021

The plan for Year 2 was updated due to the destruction caused by Cyclone Idai in 2019. In order to rebuild the income generation capacity of Agri Tech, an expanded Egg Laying project was to be developed. This would also provide students with practical experience. However,

this output has not been achieved. This component was delayed as SERVE were only able to transfer funds in December 2019. Due to heavy rains it wasn't possible to lay the foundations between January and March. As Agri Tech planned to implement the work in mid-March, the centre was closed (to students and staff) in line with COVID-19 restrictions affecting the education sector in Mozambique. As of September 30th, the Centre remains closed to students with opening only likely in November following government approval. Staff have now returned to the Centre so work on the project can start and be completed within 2 months if a carryover is approved. With co-funding, YAAT plan to lay the foundations before end of October 2020, allowing above ground work to proceed at any time.

Output 1.1.3 - 1,012 young people accessing YA Training Programmes through the Scholarship Programme and pilot Achieve Programme by August 2021

In Year 1, the target was exceeded (target: 257; result: 306). In Year 2, the target was 306. A total of 204 scholarships (49%F/51%M) were processed. This output is partially achieved.

At YAZ, 115 (57%F; 43%M) accessed training through the SDP Scholarship Programme. All recipients are considered amongst the most marginalised within the target communities and could not afford training without the Scholarship. As training was interrupted for many of the scholarship students, since late August they are being supported to access training through the new Industry Attached Training model (See **Changed Context** section below).

At YAM, 89 scholarships (38%F/62%M) were disbursed and training completed before COVID-19 shut down the training centres. A further 97 scholarships were close to being disbursed in March 2020 but this process was halted because of the lockdown. Without the disruption of COVID, the annual target would have been met. The remaining scholarships can be disbursed in January 2021, if a carryover is approved.

With regard to the 'Achieve' students who participated in Year 1, monitoring work shows that 35% are economically active, 20% have returned to formal education to acquire their 'O' Level and 45% are actively looking for employment. The students attributed their progress to the training they obtained from YAZ. This component was co-funded by EU Erasmus+ and used youthwork methodologies to mentor very vulnerable and out of school youth over 12 months so they built confidence to return to education and/or seek employment.

Output 1.1.4 - 8 key TVET programme roles at YA Zimbabwe and YA Mozambique supported by the SDP to retain skills base within YA by August 2021

This output was achieved. At YA Mozambique, SDP funding supported the roles of Marketing Officer, Life Skills Trainer, Entrepreneurship Trainer & MEL Officer. At YA Zimbabwe, SDP funding supported the roles of Programme Officer, Director, Finance Officer and Entrepreneurship Officer. SDP funding accounted for an average of 32% towards these roles.

During the lockdown, YA staff continued to work from home and those with student engagement roles were in regular contact with students. YA Zimbabwe tried to establish an online training programme for students but this was not viable due to poor internet access for the target group – 55% had access to a phone with an internet connection and just 23% could afford to buy phone credit to access the internet. YAZ are in the process of establishing a formal Distance Learning Programme to support their Centre Based and Industry Attached Training models and SERVE are seeking donor support for this initiative.

Objective 1.2 - 80% of microcredit funds supported by the SDP are repaid to YA Mozambique by August 2021

In Year 1, the microcredit component performed well and was On Track. However, this has been badly affected by COVID-19 and the progress made during Year 1 has been lost. Disbursements to graduates and to Franchise Holders was lower than in previous years, and below target (see Output 1.2.1 below). The overall repayment rate on loans disbursed during the SDP Year 1 and Year 2 periods is 40%. However, this figure is heavily influenced by the disbursement of 3 loans to Franchise Holders in early March 2020 (accounting for 44% of total loans given during the SDP to date), just prior to the lockdown. No repayments have yet been made on these loans. In the past, repayment levels from Franchise Holders have been very high (91% in SDP Year 1 period) and in normal circumstances we would expect this to continue. Their inability to repay is an outlier in terms of past performance and is directly due to the closure of the YAM campus from March to September 7th which seriously undermined their businesses. YAM are engaging with them to develop more flexible repayment plans and are confident that repayment in full will be made over the next 12 months. The repayment rate on loans given to students and franchise holders during the Year 1 period is an impressive 72%, which is in line with repayment levels in a normal year.

A survey completed with Franchise Holders in May 2020, outlines the concerns they had for their businesses as a result of COVID-19. In Mozambique, the average number of employees for each Franchise Holder was 10. They all expressed severe concern for the future of their business, ability to pay staff, mental wellbeing of staff and were experiencing stress in trying to deal with these issues. The Franchise Holders also expressed concern for the students – their mental health, future prospects and regression in learning. The reopening of the Centre in September and resumption of economic activity was greatly welcomed.

Output 1.2.1 - 135 graduates and 10 Franchise Holders at YA Mozambique receive microcredit by August 2021

In Year 1 the target was to disburse 25 loans to graduates and 5 loans to Franchise Holders and the result was 12 loans disbursed to graduates and 7 to Franchise Holders. The loans to students helped to establish businesses in the disciplines of carpentry, tailoring, construction, snack bar, take away service and locksmith. In Year 2, the target was to disburse 40 loans to graduates and 8 loans to Franchise Holders. The output is not achieved. Due to the impact of COVID, no loans were disbursed to students. SERVE received funds for Year 2 in December 2019 and transferred immediately to YAM. Students who graduated in December 2019 submitted proposals to YAM in early 2020. However, the planned disbursement for March 2020 was cancelled because of the enforced closure of the campus, and YAM's preference to take a cautious approach with these funds. A request has been made to Irish Aid to carry these unspent funds over to the Year 3 period. Three loans were disbursed to Franchise Holders in early March 2020, just before the lockdown began. The loans were disbursed to the Auto Mechanics, Electrical and Refrigeration Departments. The average loan size was €3,690. Due to the impact of COVID, the number of loan disbursements is lower than normal.

Output 1.2.2 - 7,740 students at YA Zimbabwe and YA Mozambique complete accredited ILO Start Your Business training by August 2021

In Year 1 the target was 2,500 and the result was 3,919. In Year 2 the target was 2,620 and the result was 986. A further 1,340 students were part way through their programme when the Centres were closed. They will complete training in the SDP Year 3 period. Overall, the output can be considered achieved.

At YA Zimbabwe, a total of 897 students (62%F;38%M) enrolled in the Year 2 period. The number is lower than the target because the lockdown meant they lost out on planned recruitment in March 2020. 498 students were able to complete their SYB training programme. From this cohort, 71% said that the Entrepreneurship Training contributed significantly to improved economic resilience after graduation. 399 students who enrolled in January 2020 were only able to complete 50% of their programme before the lockdown started in March 2020. As of September 2020, they are yet to complete their training. YAZ expect the centre to reopen in October 2020 and will prioritise completing training for this cohort before the end of 2020 (in SDP Year 3 period). YAZ is not able to offer microcredit funding to graduates but has referred students to the Ministry of Youth Covid-Relief Fund which is being funded by Plan International for young people who have registered business whose operations have been affected by the Covid-19 outbreak and subsequent national lockdown. At the time of this report, the applications are still in progress for 5 groups of 4-6 people YA graduates from Dressmaking, cosmetology, carpentry and Motor Mechanics.

At YA Mozambique, a total of 1,429 students (43%F/57%M) enrolled in Year 2. Like YAZ, they lost out on a recruitment in March 2020 which means numbers are lower than expected. 488 were able to complete their SYB training. From this cohort, 79% said that the Entrepreneurship Training contributed to improved economic resilience after graduation. 941 students who enrolled in January 2020 were only able to complete part of their programme before the lockdown started in March 2020. As of 7th September 2020, students at YA Mozambique Beira resumed their training and will complete in the SDP Year 3 period. These students are eligible for the microcredit fund supported by the SDP.

With enrolment numbers likely to be restricted in the Year 3 period, it will not be possible to reach the overall target of 7,740 by the end of the SDP. An adjustment has been proposed to the Year 3 target and we await Irish Aid's decision.

Output 1.2.3 - 1,250 young people (50%F/50%M) (non-YA students) complete ILO Start Your Business Training through the Outreach Entrepreneurship & Life Skills Programme (OELSP)

In Year 1 the target was 250 and the result was 531 (60%F/40%M). In Year 2 the target was 500 and the result was 70. Overall, against the two year target of 750 students, 601 students outside of YA Zimbabwe's programmes have been reached. The output is partially achieved. The shortfall in Year 2 is due to COVID-19. YA Zimbabwe completed the Entrepreneurship Training Programme with 70 young people from a local organisation called SOS Children Village. YAZ has agreements with Ruwa VTC, Mt Hampden VTC, Norton VTC, Chitungwiza VTC (all run by Ministry of Youth), Ruwa Rehabilitation Centre (run by Ministry Higher & Tertiary Education) and Raffik VTC (independent) to train 430 young people in Entrepreneurship Training between April and July 2020. However, this was not possible because of the national lockdown and it was not possible to make progress on this before the end of September 2020. If the Centres can reopen and remain open, the training can be completed before the end of

2020. The overall target of 1,250 is no longer valid as student numbers are likely to be lower in Year 3. An adjustment has been proposed and we await Irish Aid's decision.

Output 1.3 - *SDP Partners able to operate in line with new COVID-19 guidelines and provide safe environment for staff and students.*

Following a reallocation of funds, approved by Irish Aid, this new output was introduced in response to the COVID-19 situation. YA Zimbabwe were able to complete renovations at places where there is high footfall on the campus to make it safer for staff and students. They were able to create an isolation room. They were able to deep clean the centre and provide PPE for staff, as well as install water and sanitation points. These were needed to secure approval to reopen. The output is achieved.

Outcome 2: Young Africa graduates and beneficiaries have improved levels of emotional resilience and empowerment as a result of strengthening YA Life Skills Programme

Objective 2.1 - 90% of 8,990 beneficiaries are more empowered, more confident about the future and make more responsible SRH decisions by August 2021

The objective results are On Track/Achieved. Given the HIV/AIDS context in Zimbabwe and Mozambique, and the fact that young people, especially young women, are in the high risk groups, Sexual & Reproductive Health was a key part of the Life Skills Training Programme. The provision of best practice information and strategies to prevent HIV/AIDS are crucial for YA's target group. Graduates reported adequate knowledge and responsible decision making (Mozambique: 91%, Zimbabwe: 94%).

Feeling empowered, confident, being able to resolve problems and having clear plans for the future are important components of resilience and wellbeing. In May 2020, Young Africa completed a survey with students to assess the impact of COVID-19 lockdowns on their wellbeing. This showed that almost 40% reported that they were struggling to remain at home as they were under pressure to earn money; over 50% expressed uncertainty about their future and 15% were worried about the economy and their job prospects. As of September 2020, the vast majority of graduates (Mozambique: 93%, Zimbabwe: 94%) reported that they felt significantly more empowered, more confident, better able to resolve personal problems and had clear plans for the future after completing YA training. 70% of graduates spend their day working or looking for work and 5% spend their day studying. In Year 1, just 10% reported being idle but this has increased to 25% in Year 2 and is likely a result of the COVID-19 lockdowns. This is an area that we will continue to monitor into Year 3. With 83% of graduates having dependants, it is important that they have a solid foundation to take advantage of their learned skill. Monitoring results from Year 1 and Year 2 suggest that YA's comprehensive Life Skills Programme is helping to provide this foundation, and student evaluations consistently show that they place great value on the Life Skills component. With regard to attribution, 86% of graduates said that the YA Life Skills Training Programme helped 'somewhat' or 'a lot' in improving their wellbeing. These strong results are welcome given the concerns raised by students in the COVID survey.

These results, that aim for stronger resilience and wellbeing, are coherent with SDG 3, Good Health & Wellbeing (especially Targets 3.5 & 3.7).

Output 2.1.1 - 7,740 young people (50% F/50% M) complete comprehensive Life Skills Programmes at YA Zimbabwe and YA Mozambique by August 2021

In Year 1 the target was 2,500 and the result was 3,919. In Year 2 the target was 2,620 and the result was 986. A further 1,340 students were part way through their programme when the Centres were closed. They will complete training in the SDP Year 3 period. Overall, the output can be considered achieved.

At YA Zimbabwe, a total of 897 students (62%F;38%M) enrolled in the Year 2 period. The number is lower than the target because the lockdown meant they lost out on planned recruitment in March 2020. 498 students were able to complete their Life Skills training programme. From this cohort, 97% said that the Life Skills Training contributed to improved emotional wellbeing and resilience after graduation. The 399 students who enrolled in January 2020 were only able to complete 50% of their programme before the lockdown started in March 2020. As of September 2020, they are yet to complete their training. YAZ expect the centre to reopen in October 2020 and will prioritise completing training for this cohort before the end of 2020 (in SDP Year 3 period).

At YA Mozambique, a total of 1,429 students (43%F/57%M) enrolled in Year 2. Like YAZ, they lost out on a recruitment in March 2020 which means numbers are lower than expected. 488 were able to complete their Life Skills training. From this cohort, 81% said that the Life Skills Training contributed to improved emotional wellbeing and resilience after graduation. 941 students who enrolled in January 2020 were only able to complete part of their programme before the lockdown started in March 2020. As of 7th September 2020, students at YA Mozambique Beira have resumed their training and will complete it in the SDP Year 3 period.

With enrolment numbers likely to be restricted in the Year 3 period, it will not be possible to reach the overall target of 7,740 by the end of the SDP. An adjustment has been proposed to the Year 3 target and we await Irish Aid's decision

Output 2.1.2 - 1,250 young people (50% F/50% M) (non-YA students) complete comprehensive Life Skills Programmes through Life Skills & Entrepreneurship Outreach Programme in Zimbabwe by August 2021

In Year 1 the target was 250 and the result was 531 (60%F/40%M). In Year 2 the target was 500 and the result was 70. Overall, against the two-year target of 750 students, 601 students outside of YA Zimbabwe's programmes have been reached. The output is partially achieved. The shortfall in Year 2 is due to COVID-19. YA Zimbabwe completed their 26 lesson Life Skills Training Programme with 70 young people from SOS Children Village. YAZ has agreements with Ruwa VTC, Mt Hampden VTC, Norton VTC, Chitungwiza VTC (all run by Ministry of Youth), Ruwa Rehabilitation Centre (run by Ministry Higher & Tertiary Education) and Raffik VTC (independent) to train 430 young people in Entrepreneurship Training between April and July 2020. However, this was not possible because of the national lockdown and it was not possible to make progress on this before the end of September 2020. If the Centres can reopen and remain open, the training can be completed before the end of 2020. The overall target of 1,250 is no longer valid as student numbers are likely to be lower in Year 3. An adjustment has been proposed and we await Irish Aid's decision.

Output 2.1.3 - 28 staff/teachers at YA Zimbabwe and YA Mozambique complete best practice Youthwork training by August 2021

There were no planned activities for this Output in Year 2. It was planned to repeat training in this area in Year 3, but with the challenges of international travel and changed priorities we have made a request to reallocate the funds elsewhere (see supporting note)

Outcome 3: Staff at YA operate to a higher level of professionalism and the YA Model is more sustainable as a result of targeted capacity building

Objective 3.1 - Staff at YA Training Centres improve their skills base and standard of services available to target beneficiaries across a range of capacity building programmes by August 2021 (implemented at Centre Level and joint training programmes at YA HUB)

In September 2019, YA HUB hosted a one-week training seminar on Governance. The Outcome is achieved. The Centre Directors from YA Zimbabwe and YA Mozambique, and two Board members from each organisation attended. Across issues of understanding of good governance, understanding of YA Governance Standards and Requirements, Board Knowledge of YA activities, support from the Board and level of oversight from the Board, evaluations completed by participants show improved knowledge and understanding of governance issues. A combined analysis of responses shows that baseline results were – Excellent: 0%; Very Good: 11%; Average: 28%; Poor: 50%; None: 11%. Results after training were – Excellent: 11%; Very Good: 61%; Average: 17%; Poor: 11%. YA HUB report that engagement from Affiliate Boards has improved significantly, especially at YA Mozambique. The training led to clarifications on the governance model operated by Young Africa, where the responsibility of each Affiliate and their Boards lie and confirmation of the Affiliate model operated by Young Africa. Under this model the YA organisation in each country is an independent organisation but signs up to standards that are core to the Young Africa model, and to oversight from YA HUB.

During Year 1, YA HUB training focused on M&E and there have been consistent improvements from the Affiliates. YA Mozambique and YA Zimbabwe have both hired full time ME Officers and greater resources are being allocated to this function. SERVE can also attest to improved performance and engagement from YA in this regard.

The COVID-19 pandemic meant that YA HUB was unable to host further capacity building training in May 2020 as planned. This was to focus on the theme of ‘Quality Improvement’ and would address issues of finance, administration, governance, programming and the Franchise Model. This will take place in the SDP Year 3 period, assuming regional travel is possible. YA have developed a formal programme called the Young Africa Quality Improvement Programme (known as ‘YAQIP’) which will encompass their continuous engagement with YA Affiliates. There is weekly contact between Affiliates and YA HUB to address all these issues.

Output 3.1.1 - 10 YA staff members from Zimbabwe and Mozambique complete a range of training programmes at YA HUB covering Finance, Governance and Administration

As noted above, 10 staff and Board members from YA Zimbabwe, YA Mozambique and YA HUB participated in a Governance Training seminar at YA HUB in September 2019. The output is achieved. The seminar addressed good governance models, theories, board structures, practical work to assess how YA Boards function, an overview of the YA Governance Model,

case studies of good governance, assessments of board effectiveness, risk management and development of an action plan to improve board effectiveness. The SERVE Regional ME Officer provided logistical support.

Output 3.1.2 - 15 YA Zimbabwe trainers and staff complete 3 targeted capacity building programmes by August 2021

The SDP supported 10 YAZ technical trainers (5 female, 5 male) to complete a Further Education Training Certificate. The output is partially achieved. This is a 10 month training programme that began in January 2020. The participants were due to sit examinations in October/November 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 lockdown, the training was partially affected when face to face learning was disrupted and training moved to an online model. This has meant that the learning process has been slower and examinations will now be taken in March 2021. As of September 2020, participants have completed 70% of their course. The training will improve pedagogical skills of trainers, improving learning outcomes for students.

Output 3.1.3 - 20 YA Mozambique trainers and staff complete 5 targeted capacity building programmes by August 2021 and ME Officer Role Supported

At YA Mozambique, SDP funding supported ‘Certificado C’ and ‘Certificado A’ training for 20 staff members and teachers. The output is partially achieved. This training was interrupted by COVID-19 and beneficiaries were approximately 50% through the course when learning stopped in March 2020. There are unspent funds related to this output and a request has been made to carry these over. If approved, the course can be completed within 4 months. This training will enhance the pedagogy skills at YA Mozambique, resulting in improved learning outcomes for young people. Under TVET legislation, it is also a legal requirement for YAM to staff to complete this training.

SDP funding also supported the hiring of YA Mozambique’ first dedicated ME Officer. This HR gap emerged from the internal audits completed by YA HUB, and is also an area that SERVE has raised with YA Mozambique in the past. This has significantly strengthened the ME capacity of YA Mozambique.

Objective 3.2 Robust quality assurance and oversight achieved across YA Zimbabwe and YA Mozambique each year to August 2021 improves accountability, sustainability, training standards and policy base

As part of ‘YAQIP’, YA HUB completed its formal Internal Audit Process with YA Zimbabwe during the Year 2 period. The Outcome is achieved. This focussed on areas of financial management, governance, HR and compliance with cores aspects of YA’s model, and YA HUB were able to provide technical support for implementation based on the recommendations. One of the key recommendations was the need to invest in training equipment and facilities at the Epworth Vocational Training Centre and YAZ have implemented this recommendation with support of SDP funding. Additionally, an internal review audit for all reconstruction projects related to Cyclone Idai in Mozambique took place with the aim of identifying improvements for YA’s Emergency Response capacity, including managing a large influx of funds. The process identified a capacity gap in the area of financial management and a new role of Financial Controller at YA Mozambique was created. The process also identified weaknesses in the HR model whereby the boundaries and responsibilities of key roles was

not clear. A new structure has been developed with a Country Director overseeing the work of two Centre Managers.

The Franchise Model promotes the involvement of local business people in the training process and has been acknowledged by UNESCO as a Promising Practice in TVET. The income generated by the Model contributes to the running costs of the YA Centres, promoting financial sustainability. Unsurprisingly, it has suffered greatly during the lockdown period. At YAZ, the Franchise Model covered only 10% of core costs in Year 2, compared with 92% in Year 1. As of Sept 2020, income from the Franchise Model was 58% below target for the SDP Year 2 period. This shows the greater economic impact of the full lockdown in Zimbabwe, compared with the partial lockdown in Mozambique. At YAM, it covered 70% of running costs, compared with 100% in Year 1. Income from the Franchise Model was 67% lower than the previous year. Overall, the Outcome is Partially Achieved. Access to the microcredit fund for Mozambican Franchise Holders has helped them to be more resilient than their Zimbabwean counterparts. Reduced running costs mitigated some of the damage but this issue remains the biggest challenge facing YA in a COVID context. With the Centres unable to open, Franchise Holders have not been able to train students and generally have not been paying rent to YA. Some have been able to operate their businesses at a minimal level and have negotiated reduced rent with YA. Although the IAT model developed by YAZ would enable resumption of training to youth, it would not replace the income lost from the Franchise Model. In response, YA HUB has taken a number of steps – (i) they have been proactive in engaging with YAZ and YAM to reallocate budgets where possible to contribute towards core costs; (ii) a Working Group has been established to review the Franchise Model and see how/if it can be adapted to the COVID context. The SERVE Regional ME Officer is part of this Group; (iii) YA HUB are running a parallel process to access finance for Franchisees through micro-credit organisations, especially in Zimbabwe.

Output 3.2.1 - 4 key programme roles at YA HUB supported by the SDP to build & retain skills base within YA HUB by August 2021 (Roles focus on oversight, capacity building, grant management, MEL)

At YA HUB, the SDP continued to support the following important roles – Director, Programme Officer, Grant Management Officer and ME Officer. All staff were retained during the project period which helped YA maintain organisational knowledge. The output is achieved. Examples of work linked to the SDP undertaken by these personnel include – three of the roles funded by the SDP are involved in the YAQIP initiative and the Internal Audit Process; the Grant Management Officer continues to expand the funding portfolio across the YA network which has grown eight-fold over the past two years including funding from EU and Embassies.

The YA HUB team also played a key role in helping the YA Affiliates navigate the challenges posed by COVID-19 by convening regular meetings, providing support, reallocating budgets and developing strategies for alternative training models and ways of reaching young people. YA HUB's work has also helped to raise the profile of YA – the YA HUB Executive Director is an Ashoka Fellow and presented at an African Union conference on education. YA Zimbabwe has been invited by the ILO to be a stakeholder on developing a 'green training curricula' for Zimbabwe. SDP funding accounted for 43% of these HR costs in Year 2 which strikes a good balance between attribution of achievements and reliance considerations.

Output 3.3.1 - 48 SERVE Volunteers contribute to SDP objectives and partner needs (Unique component that contributes to development results across all Objectives)

The Volunteer Programme to Mozambique was cancelled in early 2020. This is the first time SERVE has not sent volunteers to Mozambique since 2008. The Output is not achieved. With regard to the SDP, the loss of the volunteering programme meant that YA Mozambique did not benefit from physical development of their campus, English lessons for staff and students, computer lessons for students and sports and community festivals. It also meant that 15 Irish young people did not experience development in action, were not able to complete their development education programme with SERVE and were not able to contribute to a North-South dialogue. SERVE did develop a Virtual Volunteering programme to partners outside the SDP for a small number of volunteers, but it was not possible to include YA Mozambique in this. However, this is something we are developing for 2021.

There were two significant **changes in context** since the application and Year 1 report. They have not undermined the need for effective vocational training for young people, but they have created a significantly more difficult operating environment when they graduate, and for Young Africa in running their programmes. This means that income generation opportunities are suppressed and threats to their wellbeing are increased. First, the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed the operating context for YA and the economic context into which students are graduating. A report from the ILO has found that “the impact of the pandemic on young people is systematic, deep and disproportionate. It has been particularly hard on young women, younger youth and youth in low-income countries. Young people are concerned about the future and their place within it”¹. YA has responded to the new context by developing new training models and achieving compliance with new operating guidelines. However, this will be an ongoing process and there is a realisation that further sudden closures are possible which may affect targets and sustainability (see Section 5). With support from SERVE, YA is trying to improve its distance learning options and is exploring different training options. This is more apparent at YA Zimbabwe, where the prospects for the traditional Centre Based Training model over the next 6-9 month are more challenging. Under this model, young students have completed a 6 month training programme on the YA Zimbabwe campus which includes practical training (70% of course content), theory training and soft skills training (life skills, entrepreneurship, ICT). Students then complete a 3 month job attachment with a local SME that is organised by YA. In order to continue offering training to young people, YAZ are developing an Industry Attached Training (IAT) model, whereby the practical training component will take place directly at the SME with close supervision by YAZ. The remaining 30% of course content will be delivered through distance learning. YAZ has engaged extensively with the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education and the Ministry of Community and SME Development, and they strongly support the new approach. This IAT model will be used initially for approximately 300 students who enrolled in January 2020 but never completed their course. From January 2021, a new batch of students will be enrolled. We expect that numbers will be lower than in the past but SERVE are supportive of YAZ's efforts to adapt their programmes to meet the need for vocational training options for marginalised youth. In the medium to long term, the IAT model has potential to be innovative and YAZ foresees that it will become a core part of its operations alongside the Centre Based Training model.

¹ ILO, Youth & Covid-19, Impacts on Jobs, Education, Rights and Mental Wellbeing, pg. 6

Second, although not a change from the Year 1 Report, it is important to reference the post Cyclone Idai context in the Beira region, as this significant change from the original application continues to affect the lives of young people. ReliefWeb report that the international recovery plan was less than 50% funded which has hindered longer term strategies to help communities build resilience and reduce risks associated with disasters. There have been limited repairs to buildings and services, and socio-economic structures remain weakened though there is a clear rebound from the Year 1 SDP period. SERVE have helped YAM with the rebuilding process, outside of the SDP. As with COVID, this has not undermined the need for effective vocational training for young people, but it has created a more difficult environment when they graduate.

With regard to **specific contributions of the SDP to results within shifts in government policy**, the SDP assisted YA Zimbabwe to adapt to new operating guidelines in response to COVID-19. SDP funding was used to purchase PPE, establish a quarantine space, install sanitation points and protect staff through installation of screens at high footfall locations. These changes mean that when the centre reopens they will be able to offer services safely. YA Mozambique Beira secured funding from another donor to make these changes and were proactive in engaging with the governments multisectoral team to reopen the centre on September 7th. In Year 2, the SDP continued to support pedagogy training for YA Mozambique staff so they can achieve ‘Certificado’ qualifications which is a minimum requirement for private vocational training centres to operate according to Mozambican legislation. As outlined above, Zimbabwe experienced more economic uncertainty with the reintroduction of the USD as legal tender in March 2020, bringing an end to inflation prone RTGS Dollar/ZWL experiment. The SDP enabled some improvements in the income profile of graduates despite the challenges caused by this government policy.

The narrative report on Outcomes 2 and 3 above, and the relevant outputs outline **evidence of improved capacity** within Young Africa. In Year 2, 4% of the total budget (8% of the Irish Aid funding) was allocated to capacity building components. The combined figures for Year 1 & Year 2 are **8%** of the total budget, and **12%** of Irish Aid funding – evidence of SERVE and YA’s commitment to capacity building. Some **capacity gaps** have been identified and to respond: (1) YA HUB will run a holistic Quality Improvement Programme for senior YA staff focusing on issues of governance, management, monitoring and performance. This programme is designed to follow up on issues that have emerged from training undertaken during SDP Year 1 and 2; (2) YA Mozambique will provide a training programme for their Franchise Holders focused on management, time management and business performance; (3) YA Zimbabwe will mirror the training programme run by YA HUB at Centre level to cascade the learning in the areas of monitoring, governance, finance and management to staff.

The Young Africa training centres play an active role in their communities. They are well known and respected. They are proactive in finding ways to respond to the needs of these communities, whilst remaining focused on their core mission. Examples of **community participation** included:

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, both YA Mozambique centres have become community hubs for support to vulnerable families. Permission was received from government to partly open the Centres so that a Soup Kitchen could be run (operated by Catering students), and for Dressmaking students to make facemasks. 400 community members have benefitted from the Soup Kitchen and facemasks have

been made and distributed to community members for free. This follows on from their experience of the response to Cyclone Idai where they fulfilled a similar community response role. Through digital messaging, YAZ and YAM disseminated accurate information about COVID to students and their families;

- YA Zimbabwe's Outreach Life Skills and Entrepreneurship Training project is an excellent example of **information sharing** and responding to the needs of young people in the wider community who would otherwise have no access to this material. It also strengthens the link between YA and local government, as participating training centres are government institutions.
- Parents and caregivers were involved in the recruitment process which promoted transparency and helped the family unit to be an important stakeholder;
- Applicants secured references from community members (non-family) which widened the community network with a stake in Young Africa's programmes;
- Despite the difficulties posed by COVID-19, the Franchise Model continued to be an excellent example of participation with local business communities;

The **data collection process** was robust despite the difficulties posed by COVID-19. All data required for the RBF was collected. Following the "do no harm" approach, and prioritising safety of YA students and staff, some monitoring exercises planned in 2020 had to be postponed. YA and SERVE's approach is to allow as much time as possible to pass before following up with graduates. For those who graduated in December 2019, we followed up in September 2020 – 9 months after graduating. This timeframe is sufficient but means that the impact of COVID-19 has to be factored into monitoring results. Getting data from graduates before March 2020 and comparing with the September 2020 data would have allowed for some quantification of the impact of COVID but this is only apparent in hindsight. YA completed a virtual monitoring exercise (increased use of phone/Whatsapp) using the SAP Online Monitoring Tool to assess the impact of COVID-19 and the lockdowns on students. This information was sent to Irish Aid in May 2020. This virtual process was led by the SERVE ME Officer who is placed at YA HUB. At YA Mozambique, the SDP supported the hiring of a dedicated ME Officer which will have a significant impact on the standard of monitoring work. Due to the impact of COVID-19, some changes have been made to the Year 3 targets in the RBF and these have been outlined in a separate note. SERVE's ability to complete monitoring visits from HQ was curtailed due to COVID-19 but our Regional ME Officer and frequent distance monitoring initiatives helped to mitigate this.

4. Lesson Learning

The following **lessons were learned** and incorporated into the ongoing implementation of the project during the project period:

- Distance learning has emerged as a key area that Young Africa needs support in so that it continues to deliver training during expected future lockdowns. Distance learning would also be of benefit in 'non-Covid' times. SERVE are trying to secure funding to support this process at YA Zimbabwe in particular;
- During Year 1 of the SDP, YA Mozambique learned lessons about implementing an emergency response as they coped with the impact of Cyclone Idai. This experience stood to them when responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. They were quickly able to establish themselves as a Community Hub to support families struggling with the

economic impact of the COVID-19 lockdown, sew facemasks and provide accurate information to students and community members. The YA Centres learned that their role in the community is greater than they realised and extends beyond the confines of vocational training;

- During Year 1, SERVE and YA Mozambique highlighted the lack of ME expertise at Centre level and responded by hiring a dedicated ME Officer in April 2020. The SDP is supporting the costs of this role;
- The immediate future for short term volunteering is uncertain, which presents challenges for SERVE from an operational and sustainability point of view. However, there is demand for virtual volunteering opportunities from people in Ireland, and also amongst partner organisations. SERVE are exploring ways to respond to this demand. SERVE are also exploring opportunities for volunteering and advocacy work between European organisations for whom travel is easier.

Unsurprisingly, the most **significant challenge or lesson captured** was the impact of the COVID-19 lockdowns in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. As outlined already, this directly impacted project activity at every level and has presented another challenge to the achievement of the high-level objectives. The impact on SERVE at an organisational level is outlined in Section 5. A second significant challenge was the ever-changing economic environment in Zimbabwe which affects the income generation of students. Outside of the impact of COVID on the informal sector, the ongoing economic volatility, change of currencies and economic contraction contributed to a very difficult operating environment for youth. Finally, in Mozambique, the impact of Cyclone Idai is still being felt at community level. YA Agri Tech remains particularly affected because almost no rebuilding or repair work has taken place. YA are still raising funds to do this in a phased manner. For the moment, the Centre is operating at approximately 50% capacity.

The following **audits/evaluations** have taken place during the project period:

- Financial Audit of YA Mozambique SDP Year 1 Expenditure (12th August 2018-13th August 2019). The work was delayed due to the COVID-19 lockdown but was completed in September 2020;
- Financial Audit of YA HUB for the period 1st January 2019 – 31st December 2019. This includes part of the SDP Year 1 Expenditure and part of SDP Year 2 Expenditure;
- The Financial Audit of Young Africa Zimbabwe SDP Year 1 period will be completed in November 2020. It was delayed by approximately 6 months because of the lockdown;
- An internal evaluation process that was due to take place in Year 2 was cancelled due to the COVID-19 lockdown. SERVE/YA agreed to bring forward an external evaluation of the SDP which took place in September 2020 and will be completed by November 2020. This is being completed by an experienced Zimbabwe/Mozambique based team;

SERVE has a **Complaints** Policy for Partnership Relationships that is shared with our partners (previously shared with Irish Aid). This outlines formal procedures for partners and SERVE to follow in the case of complaints. There were no complaints received during the project period.

There are a number of **barriers to sustainability** for project outcomes and the organisational sustainability of Young Africa (sustainability issues related to SERVE are addressed in Section 5). Some are outside the control of the project, but some can be addressed by Young Africa and SERVE. For **project outcomes**, especially those focused on income generation, the main

barriers to sustainability are (i) impact of COVID and lockdowns focused on the informal sector which is the main sector for employment and income generation for our beneficiaries; (ii) In Zimbabwe, the already perilous economic environment that is prone to high inflation, severe liquidity crises and sudden currency changes, presents a constraint on income generation for graduates; (iii) In Mozambique, the impact of Cyclone Idai is still being felt, especially in rural areas and this acts as a constraint on income generation. SERVE and Young Africa believe that the work done in the areas of youthwork and life skills is reducing barriers to sustainability – it is supporting resilience building and ‘social sustainability’ (quality of life, cultural behaviour) amongst the target group. The target group would not have access to this type of training without Young Africa’s courses and without it we believe that the situation facing beneficiaries would be worse. The External Evaluation that will be completed by November 2020 will explore this area. For institutional sustainability at Young Africa, the main barriers to sustainability are (i) impact of COVID and lockdowns which increases the cost of training due to the need to meet additional requirements and has the potential to close the centres for long periods of time. This means Young Africa is not generating income from student fees or its Franchise Model at this time which affects financial sustainability, as outlined above. The planned enrolment for July 2020 did not happen at YA Zimbabwe or YA Mozambique because of COVID; (ii) Retaining staff in a time of suppressed income is another barrier to sustainability and presents risk of losing institutional knowledge. This may become a real challenge if there are further lengthy lockdowns.

The SDP includes components that support sustainability at YA and it is important to acknowledge this. They include the investment in capacity building referenced above, supporting YA to meet its human resource needs (in a balanced manner), investing in training equipment and infrastructure and supporting YA HUB in its critical role of oversight, capacity building and support to the YA affiliates – this level of support is more critical than ever.

5. Governance and Organisational Updates

SERVE exercised **strong influence on project delivery** and an effective balance was achieved between supporting and challenging YA to deliver the agreed programme of work. This was achieved through the formal mechanisms of MOUs, robust project contracts and the mutually agreed Results Framework. This was underpinned by a strong working relationship with YA, that has been developed over 10 years of working together. With their considerable expertise in TVET, YA was responsible for day to day delivery of the project. SERVE provided substantial oversight during the project year to ensure that the project remained focused on the agreed targets. SERVE’s Regional ME Officer completed multiple visits to project sites. YA completed quarterly Results Framework and Budget reports and there was weekly correspondence between SERVE HQ and each YA Centre. When the impact of the COVID-19 lockdowns became apparent, SERVE worked closely with YA to assess project progress, to predict how the remainder of the Year 2 period might look, and to manage reallocations carefully. SERVE secured funding from Electric Aid to help YA upgrade training departments. SERVE have led the process to carry out an External Evaluation in September 2020. SERVE have engaged directly with auditors to complete financial audits. We believe our overall approach strikes a good balance within a partnership and promotes the localisation agenda.

The following significant **changes/developments took place at organisational level** within SERVE during the project period:

- Due to COVID-19 SERVE cancelled all volunteer and school immersion programmes for 2020, the first time since 2003 that we have not sent any volunteers overseas. We had 89 volunteers recruited by March 2020;
- We had to cancel our two main annual fundraising events that usually take place in May and July. A new online fundraising initiative called SERVE Solidarity Games was successfully implemented during July 2020;
- SERVE retained its staffing levels in 2020. The SERVE office has been closed since March 2020 with all staff working from home;

With regard to **adaptations to the current regulatory environment in Ireland and compliance with best practice in governance**, the SERVE Board completed significant work on its founding documents and worked on a new constitution aligning all governance documents with legislative changes and best practice. These documents, along with proposed Board rotation, will go before the SERVE AGM in November 2020.

There were no **changes to the management of the flow of funds** from SERVE to on-granted partners. Detailed contracts were agreed and receipts were received for all transfers.

With regard to **changes to policies**, we have (1) developed a Working From Home Policy. A Back to Work Policy is currently being developed; (2) updated our country strategies for Zimbabwe and Mozambique for 2021-2023; (3) updated our MEAL Policy to strengthen the accountability and learning areas; (4) updated our Gender Policy; (5) a draft GDPR Policy is awaiting Board approval. SERVE will be updating our Strategic Plan in 2021.

Regarding **financial projections**, the SERVE financial outturns for the years ending January 31st 2019 and 2020, were consistent and stable with respective turnovers of €778,802 and €782,602. The SERVE:Irish Aid income ratio was 62:38 in both years. The projected turnover for the year ending January 31st 2021 is €640,000 which will represent an 18% reduction in income. The projected SERVE:Irish Aid income ratio is expected to be 56%:44%. The expected reduction in income and the related ratios are due to COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic will impact SERVE's income generation potential in 2021, as concrete income from volunteering and immersion programmes is at risk. The aspiration is to maintain income at 2020 levels and the **steps being taken to ensure financial stability** at SERVE's organisational level include: (1) SERVE availed of the Government's Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme for 3 staff members; (2) We have increased our virtual fundraising initiatives and are working to develop creative ways of engaging with communities online, especially as we approach the Christmas period; (3) We have submitted a number of funding applications for advocacy focused work with returned volunteers and communities in Ireland including to the EU European Solidarity Corps, the Ecclesiastical Movement for Good Fund and Coca Cola Thank You Fund. These are new funding avenues for SERVE and all applications are pending at the time of submitting this report; (4) We have submitted an application to the EU Europe for Citizens fund to explore how European solidarity can help shape the recovery from COVID-19 for marginalised communities in Europe. SERVE is the lead applicant and the consortium include partners from Germany, Spain, Ireland and the Czech Republic. The results are pending at the time of submitting this report; (5) SERVE has submitted an application to DFID's Small Charities Challenge Fund to support distance learning options at YA Zimbabwe. The result is pending; (6) We are undertaking research into Corporate Business Partnerships in Ireland.

There were no **fraud or material risk events** during the reporting period.

6. Actions Taken in Response to Irish Aid Feedback

SERVE noted the following main issues in **Irish Aid's feedback** on the Year 1 report:

- Regarding microcredit, Irish Aid suggest “making arrangements with appropriate socially oriented third-party micro finance providers”. SERVE and YA agree that this would be the ideal approach. YA Zimbabwe do not provide micro-credit and do refer graduates to third party organisations. In Beira, Mozambique, however there are no such organisations and YAM take on the responsibility of providing microcredit.
- With regard to the achievement of high-level Objective 1.1, Irish Aid stated that it “appears to be at risk because of contextual factors outside of the project in both Zimbabwe and Mozambique”. There is no doubt that the income generation potential of students is affected by factors outside of the control of the project. During the SDP to date, there have been significant changes in context that could not have been predicted. In Zimbabwe, the main operating currency of the country has changed three times. In Mozambique, Cyclone Idai decimated the local economy of Beira and now the informal economy of both countries has been seriously affected by COVID-19. Therefore, it is not surprising that the achievement of targets is at risk. However, the relevance of achieving improvements in these areas is stronger than ever. Our analysis is that there are few viable alternatives for the target group – they need skills and knowledge to operate in the ever-changing informal sector. Setting targets for income improvements in this sector is very difficult – ultimately, we want graduates to be in a much stronger position to generate their own income after they graduate. We believe that the SDP makes a significant contribution to this. This analysis will be tested in an external evaluation in Year 3. The longer term impact of YA's programmes will also be tested in an external evaluation that YA are undertaking in early 2021 which will track impacts on graduates from the very start of their programmes.
- SERVE should discuss the “longer term financial sustainability” of the training Centres. In Year 3, an external evaluation of the SDP will be taking place and this is one of the issues that will be explored. As outlined above, the COVID-19 pandemic has made the operating environment more difficult for the training Centres and the findings from the evaluation will help guide SERVE's future relationship with Young Africa.
- Irish Aid state that “support for robust governance and strategic planning” at the Centres may be one avenue to explore. With support from the SDP, YA HUB facilitated governance training for all YA affiliates (staff and board members) in September 2019. YA Zimbabwe completed a Strategic Plan in 2020.

With regard to the **achievement of benchmarks** as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding:

- The SERVE Risk Register was updated and submitted to Irish Aid in March 2019. The process has strengthened SERVE's risk management approach. Our Risk Register is being updated again in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and we will submit this to Irish Aid when it is approved by our Board;
- As outlined above, SERVE is fully compliant with the Code of Governance for Irish charities

- The SERVE:Irish Aid income ratio for the last two years was 62:38. This outcome meets the Irish Aid benchmark guidelines. In 2020, there will be a deterioration in the ratio with the likely income to be 56:44. We predict that 2021 will resemble 2020 in terms of ratio outcomes. In this COVID-19 era, these outcomes, are considered reasonable.