TERMS OF REFERENCE

CONSULTANCY TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR

Endline evaluation of the "Leading, Teaching and Learning Together in Secondary Education in Rwanda" (2018-2021)

1. Summary position

Position Title: Consultant(s) to provide technical support for an endline evaluation of the Programme on "Leading, Teaching and Learning Together in Secondary Education in Rwanda" (2018-2021); This includes a mixed methods endline study applying a longitudinal approach.

Location: Desk work + Rwanda (Kigali and 14 project districts)

Consultancy Budget: Max. $42,000

Duration: 28th February 2021 till 30th November 2021

Start Date: 28th February 2021

Reporting to: Researcher, VVOB Rwanda & Country Programmes Manager VVOB Rwanda

2. Tendering Organization

This Call for Proposals is issued by VVOB – *education for development* duly represented by Dr. Jef PEERAER, VVOB Country Programmes Manager in Rwanda.

VVOB is a non-profit organisation with over 35 years of experience in improving the quality of education systems from a rights-based perspective. VVOB currently has long-term partnerships with education actors in 9 countries in the South (Cambodia, DR Congo, Ecuador, Rwanda, South Africa, Suriname, Vietnam, Zambia and Uganda) and in Belgium/Flanders. Its annual budget is around 13 million euros.

VVOB's vision is to strive for a sustainable world based on equal opportunities through quality education. For VVOB quality education means: *"… one that provides all learners with capacities they require to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual wellbeing."*

In Rwanda, VVOB currently implements the following programmes/projects:

- Mathematics Achievements in Rwandan Schools (Girls on MARS), funded by the Belgian Federal Government, Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGD)

- Induction system for Newly Qualified Teachers (2017-2021), funded by ELMA foundation and Belgium (DGD)

- Leaders in Teaching (2018-2021), funded by Mastercard Foundation

- Building Resilience through Leading, Teaching and Learning Together (BR-LTLT) (2020-2021), funded by Mastercard Foundation (COVID-19 Recovery and Resilience Program)

- Supporting Coding among Rwandan Adolescents & Teachers through the Curriculum & Clubs Heading for Rwanda 2050 (2020-2022), Wehubit (implemented by Enabel; financed by Belgium)

This call focusses on the Mastercard Foundation -funded programme "Leaders in Teaching" that started in 2018 and will be completed in 2021. The Call shall be followed up by Dr. Ilse FLINK, VVOB Researcher in Rwanda.

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All correspondence regarding this call should be sent to: ilse.flink@vvob.org

3. Background

In Rwanda, VVOB, implements the umbrella programme "*Leading, Teaching and Learning Together (LTLT)/Umusemburo w'Ireme* ry'Uburezi programme" (2017-2021). The main objective of the programme is to improve the quality of education in Rwanda by strengthening the competences of key education actors through improved Continuous Professional Development (CPD) support systems for these actors. Actors that are directly targeted by the programme are: Sector Education Officers (SEOs), School leaders (headteachers and deputy headteachers), School Based Mentors (SBMs) and School Subject Leaders (SSLs) in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Actors that are indirectly targeted include (new) teachers and students. Ultimately, the programme aims to provide young Rwandans with the skills and competences to succeed in the 21st century. The programme in secondary education runs from 2018 till 2021 and is a collaboration between VVOB, the Rwanda Education Board (REB) and the University of Rwanda College of Education (UR-CE). It is funded by the Mastercard Foundation.

The programme is implemented in all secondary schools in 14 districts (approx. 680 schools). School Head Teachers, Deputy Head Teachers, Mentor Teachers and STEM Subject Leaders take part in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Courses on effective school leadership, coaching and mentoring and engage in Professional Learning Communities (PLC) at the level of the administrative sector and in schools. Professional Learning Communities are action-oriented networks of school leaders (sector level) and teachers (school level) that are facilitated by trained SEOs and SBMs. The CPD Courses are organized in four cohorts. The first three cohorts started in 2018, 2019 and 2020. The final cohort will start in 2021.

The programme consists of two pillars and has six outputs:

Pillar 1 on School Leadership (LEAD)

- ➢ *Output 1: A CPD Diploma course on School Leadership **for Head Teachers and Deputy Head Teachers in charge of Studies**;*
- ➢ *Output 2: A General CPD Certificate course on Coaching, Mentoring and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) **for Sector Education Officers** and engagement of **District Directors of Education**;*
- ➢ *Output 3: CPD support in PLCs of School Leaders at sector level, with coaching by trained Sector Education Officers and supervision by District Directors of Education.*

Pillar 2 on Teacher Support (TEACH)

- ➢ *Output 4: A General CPD Certificate course on Coaching, Mentoring and PLCs **for School Based Mentors**;*
- ➢ *Output 5: A STEM CPD Certificate course on Coaching, Mentoring and **PLCs for STEM Heads of Department or School Subject Leaders**;*
- ➢ *Output 6: CPD support in PLCs for teachers in schools, with coaching by School Based Mentors and STEM School Subject Leaders, and supervision by Deputy Head Teachers.*

A summary of the project document can be found in annex 1 of this ToR.

In February 2019, a baseline study was conducted among a representative sample of 247 schools in the 14 implementation districts. The sample of schools included 95 baseline schools and 152 schools where the school leaders had started their CPD training programme (cohort 1). All beneficiaries of the programme received a survey (in total 256 school leaders, 135 SEOs, 232 SBMs, 249 STEM SSLs, 227 new teachers). In addition, 14 baseline schools (1 school per district) were included in a qualitative study and in-depth interviews and FGDs were conducted with beneficiaries. The baseline study focused on assessing the baseline status of the CPD support system and the competences/motivation of key educational actors. In addition, the intermediate effects of the school leadership programme on the CPD support system and the competences of school leaders were assessed. Main conclusions arising from the baseline study were:

CPD support systems for school leaders and teachers:

- Participation in PLCs at sector level (networks of school leaders) is already high while participation in PLCs at school level (networks of teachers) is low.
- Training SEOs and SBMs to facilitate such PLCs has a positive effect on participation rates in PLCs.
- There are inequalities in the provision of school based CPD, with the headteacher and the SBM receiving more CPD than new teachers and STEM subject leaders. To this end, training provided to the SBM is not always cascaded down to other teaching staff.
- Induction programmes for new teachers are available at schools but such programmes solely focus on introducing the teachers to the school while new teachers require more continuous needs-based mentoring and coaching.

Competences/motivation of key educational actors:

- At baseline, competences of the various stakeholders to lead their schools (school leaders) and coach and mentor (SEO, SBM, SSL) could be considered medium to high.
- The intrinsic motivation of new teachers was generally high though quite a few new teachers indicated to have thought about leaving the teaching profession.
- Though the training programme for school leaders was only halfway, positive effects were already found for new teacher CPD and effectiveness of the school leader.

For further background reading, please see the baseline report summary found in annex 2. The full report is available upon request.

In March 2020, a process-oriented qualitative midline study was conducted, focusing specifically on intended and unintended outcomes, pathways to change, implementation gaps and sustainability. The full midline evaluation report is also available upon request.

4. Overall purpose of the evaluation

VVOB Rwanda is looking for (a) consultant(s) to provide technical support for an endline evaluation of the programme on "Leading, Teaching and Learning Together in Secondary Education in Rwanda" (2018-2021). The evaluation should focus on assessing the effectiveness of the programme in comparison to the baseline findings, which will allow us to draw conclusions about the longer-term effectiveness of the programme.

Expected outputs of the evaluation: VVOB expects *methodologically sound and robust* evidence on the effect at the level of CPD support systems, competences and motivation of direct beneficiaries and impact at school level, focusing on the school as a learning organization.

5. Evaluation questions

The endline evaluation should be aligned with the baseline study design and should focus on the following questions:

- What (longer-term) effects did the programme have on the CPD support system for DDEs/DEO, SEIs, school leaders, SBMs, STEM SSLs and (new) teachers?

- What (longer-term) effects did the programme have on competences and on motivation of key educational actors?

- What (longer-term) effects did the programme and CPD support systems have on the school environment and in particular on the school as a learning organization?

- To what extent did the program have differential effects on different subgroups of beneficiaries or schools (e.g. females vs. males, actors from rural vs. urban schools, actors from public vs. government-aided vs. private schools etc.)?

- Are any non-effects or unintended/unexpected effects observed? If so, what explains these findings?

- Overall, how did the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent closure of schools' influence programme implementation and effects?

6. Intended audience for the evaluation

The findings will serve as input for different audiences:

- The findings will be used by VVOB staff members and operational/implementing partners (REB and UR-CE) to identify successful strategies and lessons learned.
- The findings will be shared with programme beneficiaries to ensure downward accountability and for learning, inspiration and motivation.
- The findings will be shared with local knowledge/exchange platforms (e.g. RENCP)
- The findings will be shared with the donor (McF), academics and practitioners.
- After the reports have become available VVOB will use the findings for a variety of communication purposes

7. Methodology and approaches

The methodology and approach for this endline study should be similar to the approach used in the baseline study. To allow a comparison over time, consultants are expected to use longitudinal analysis approaches. The study should apply a mixed methods approach using pre-developed surveys, in-depth interviews and FGDs among the previously surveyed sample of beneficiaries. To allow for a deeper understanding of the findings, the qualitative study would ideally be carried out *after* the quantitative study.

A team of enumerators have previously been trained for the baseline study. For efficiency purposes, we recommend the consultant to work with these enumerators.

8. Roles and responsibilities

The consultant(s) will work in close collaboration with the Researcher and the M&E officer of VVOB in Rwanda. Specific roles of each stakeholder include:

Consultant

- Review programme documents and literature
- Finetune evaluation questions in consultation with VVOB
- Develop final evaluation plan, including adjusted tools and timelines
- Train data-collectors
- Oversee the data collection process for quality assurance
- Clean, analyse and report on data, including the provision of a comprehensive report that addresses all evaluation questions
- Organise workshops with VVOB and programme partners to facilitate the use of the data.

VVOB

- Provide main programme documents
- Review and approve the evaluation plan, tools and timelines
- Extend the ethical clearance from the Rwanda National Ethics Committee
- Brief stakeholders about the purpose of the evaluation
- Support in organizing missions, workshops and data collection
- Review and approve the reports and research
- Assist in organizing meetings with stakeholders
- Prepare and effect payment for the consultant upon completion of the assignments.

9. Proposed report structure

The report should build on the baseline report findings and should be maximum 40 pages (excluding annexes and references). The following should be included:

1. Executive summary
2. Introduction
3. Study context
4. Methodology
   a. Study design
   b. Sampling procedures
   c. Study instruments
   d. Data collection procedures
   e. Data analysis
   f. Ethical consideration

5. Findings (Besides text it should also include graphs, tables and infographics to illustrate the findings)
6. Conclusions and recommendations

10. Timing of the activities and deliverables

The assignment will consist of two phases. We have spelled out the following activities and tentative timeline:

1. **Inception phase**: **28th February – 31st March 2021:**
   - Development of research proposal for endline study including defining sampling, adjusting baseline data collection tools, defining methods for data analysis and timeline of activities.
   - The design should be aligned with the tools and methods of the baseline study.

2. **Data collection and reporting phase: 31st March-30th November 2021**
   - (Refresher) training for enumerators/qualitative researchers: April 2021
   - Quantitative data collection with direct beneficiaries of the project: April – May 2021
   - Data analysis quantitative findings: May 2021
   - Validation workshop quantitative findings + suggestion for qualitative follow-up study: June 2021
   - Qualitative data collection: June-July 2021
   - Dissemination/ workshop endline findings: October 2021
   - Final report: November 2021

Overview of deliverables and deadlines

Deliverables	Deadline*
Research proposal endline study including research tools and timeline	March 2021
Training report	April 2021
First validation workshop	June 2021
Second validation workshop	October 2021
Endline study report* (including raw data)	30th November 2021

* Draft versions of deliverables should be sent to VVOB Rwanda at least 2 weeks before the deadline in order to provide feedback.

11. Cost Implications

The proposed budget should be all-inclusive. The only costs that will be covered by VVOB are:

- For VVOB Rwanda partners involved in this evaluation, costs and fees are regulated through the Cooperation Agreements with each operational partner.
- VVOB will cover all costs incurred for the organisation of the workshops. These include transport of members, meals, meeting venues and materials.

12. Requirements

The consultant(s) must have:

- Solid experience in M&E and education research, preferably on school leadership and/or teacher professional development
- Experience in qualitative and quantitative research methods, with a preference for experience with quantitative repeated measurement techniques
- Experience with the development sector
- Excellent written and oral communication in English.

The consultant should:

- Be open to thinking about suitable communication and dissemination tools with VVOB in Rwanda.

13. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Technical feasibility: (max. 70 points)
  - Proven experience and expertise of the consultant(s) (relevance of previous work; CV) (max. 30 points)
  - Evaluation approach and methodologies proposed by the consultant(s) (on 40 points)
- Price (max. 15 points)
- Overall feasibility (max. 15 points)

Only proposals that have at least 49 points (or 70%) on the technical part, are considered for the evaluation of the financial feasibility. If deemed necessary, VVOB may decide to further negotiate the proposal with one or more service providers. These negotiations may result in an adapted proposal by the consultant and subsequent modifications in evaluation and ranking of the proposals. All qualified respondents will be notified about the final decision. VVOB reserves the right to re-advertise the Terms of Reference in case no suitable proposal was received

14. How to apply

Interested consultants should submit their proposal by e-mail to ilse.flink@vvob.org by 31st January 2021, 5 PM (UTC+02:00). Proposals should include:

- An overview of the (lead) consultant's past work, focusing on the most relevant. This should include a digital copy of at least one previous report delivered by the (lead) consultant
- A curriculum vitae of the consultant(s)
- If the consultant includes in his/her proposal one or more assistants, the CVs of the latter should be included in the proposal as well
- References and other information supporting the required expertise listed in the qualitative requirements
- An outline of the evaluation approach, including a detailed description of the proposed methodology/methods
- An all-inclusive financial proposal with all figures in USD, detailing number of days x daily fee for each of the proposed consultants/assistants as well as the costs for data collection and missions. Desired insurances and applicable taxes (see further) should be listed separately.

A maximum of 25% of the agreed performance fees can be paid in advance, upon request. Payments will be subsequent to approval of outputs. Payments shall be regulated through the contract with VVOB. Please note that the contract will be concluded with VVOB Rwanda, KG 565 St, Kacyiru, Kigali, Rwanda. Candidates therefore need to include in their financial proposal a 15% withholding income tax in case the service provider is based outside Rwanda and any other VAT or sales tax as due in the country where the service provider is established. In case the service provider is based in Rwanda, local VAT rules apply.

15. Information, Intellectual Property and Confidentiality

- The consultant(s) undertake(s) for the duration of the assignment to grant VVOB immediate and free access to any documents, in written, printed, electronic, or magnetic form, in his/her possession, that may contain information with respect to the assignment.
- Upon termination of the assignment, the consultant(s) shall immediately and on his/her own initiative return to VVOB any documents, in written, printed, electronic, or magnetic form, in his/her possession, that may contain information with respect to the assignment.
- The consultant(s) undertake(s), both during the term of this assignment and after termination thereof, not to disclose to any third parties and not to use to his/her own benefit or to the benefit of any third party, any confidential information with respect to VVOB that the consultant(s) may have acquired or that may have been communicated to the latter during the term of this contract.
- VVOB retain the intellectual property of all products developed as part of this assignment as well as any materials that are made available by VVOB to the consultant(s) such as manuals, videos and other didactical material. Prior permission to publish, present or use the products in any other way must be obtained by VVOB.

Annex 1: LTLT programme descriptions

Teachers and school leaders are the two most critical sets of actors in raising the quality of secondary education in Rwanda, so that young Rwandans have the skills and competencies to succeed in the 21st century. Teachers are crucial when it comes to improving learning outcomes and learner wellbeing. School leaders who support, evaluate and develop teacher quality also have a high impact on learning outcomes. VVOB will raise the effectiveness of teachers and school leaders in secondary education by improving the delivery, sustainability and institutionalization of CPD services to school leaders and teachers.

VVOB's interventions will focus on capacity development of national and local education authorities supporting teachers and school leaders. VVOB will do this in close partnership with URCE and REB. There is full alignment with the priorities and strategies of the Government of Rwanda, including the competence-based curriculum and the teacher development and management policy.

Six _Outputs_ have been identified, which describe Continuous Professional Development (CPD) services for school leaders (core activity "LEAD") and teachers (core activity "TRAIN"). The services (Figure 1) target key stakeholders in the school ecosystem and reflect characteristics of effective CPD: services are sustained and intensive, emphasize learning by doing; start from existing practices and challenges and focus on students' learning outcomes and wellbeing.

Figure 1: Intervention Logic
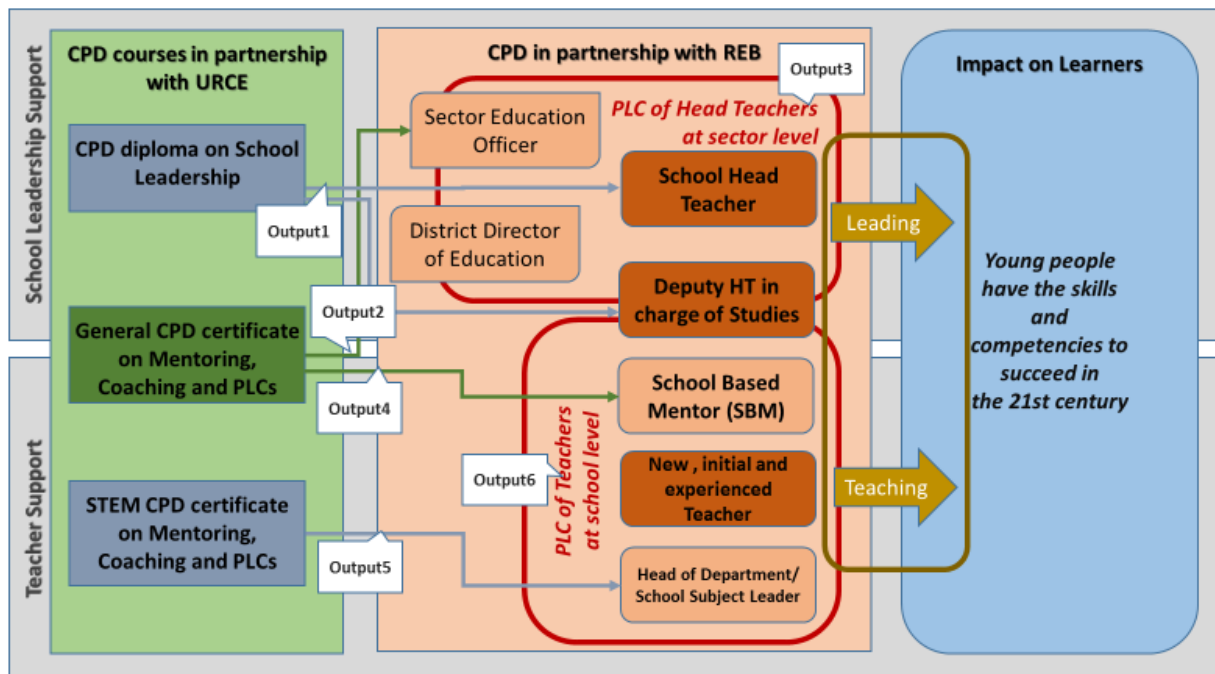
The services will be rolled out in phases in all (about 680[1]) secondary schools in 14 districts.

LEAD pillar: School Leadership Support Interventions

International literature identifies effective leadership as a critical factor in raising the achievement of learners. Research (e.g. Robinson et al, 2008; Leithwood et al, 2008) has shown that school leadership matters for quality education because:

- school leaders who develop, support and evaluate the quality of teaching have a strong indirect influence on learning outcomes
- the impact of school leadership on learning outcomes is second only to the quality of teaching and learning
- effective school leadership is critical for raising learners' achievement
- effective school leadership is particularly important in improving poorly performing and disadvantaged schools
- successful school leadership has a positive impact on the entire school.

Both the draft version of the new Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) and the TDM Policy recognize the key role of school leadership in improving the quality of education.

Professional development of school leaders throughout their careers is one of the linchpins of VVOB's approach to school leadership. Appointed school leaders are often former teachers and don't necessarily have the competences to become an effective school leader. VVOB has already institutionalised school leadership practices in Rwanda's primary education system, and this will now be extended to secondary education. Collaboration between VVOB and URCE lead to the introduction of a CPD Diploma in Effective School Leadership recognised by the Rwanda Education Board. 397 Head Teachers were awarded this CPD Diploma in Effective School Leadership in 2016. An endline assessment of this first cohort was conducted in July 2016, using surveys, self-assessment and observations in schools. Some areas for improvement were identified that are being addressed in the revision of the course in 2017. HTs and DHTs will receive the same course and materials, as the 5 standards of effective school leadership are relevant for both groups. However, we will differentiate in some activities, reflection questions and assessment tasks, reflecting their different roles in school leadership.

VVOB's experience has shown that top-down strategies alone are insufficient and need to be complemented by strategies that provide continuous support and involve school leaders themselves.

Professional learning communities (PLCs) can be an effective form of professional development (e.g. Vescio et al, 2008; Ingvarson et al, 2005). In 2014-2016, VVOB trained 120 SEOs to initiate and guide PLCs. Regular coaching and feedback helped SEOs and HTs to improve the quality of their PLCs. An impact study was done at the end of 2016, showing the effectiveness of VVOB's approach and leading to recommendations for further improvement and finetuning of VVOB's interventions. An important conclusion that has emerged and which is confirmed by other research (e.g. Murphy, 2015; Brodie,

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[1] 680 in 2019, including boarding schools

2013) is the importance of formal leaders (in Rwanda: SEOs) in creating effective PLCs. Other findings included the need for extensive coaching and feedback to help PLC members understand the bottom-up and collaborative nature of PLCs and the positive impact on head teachers' and teachers' motivation. Therefore, the revised CPD Diploma Course will put more emphasis on school collaboration and PLCs.

With support of VVOB, REB developed *National School Leadership Standards* that form the basis of VVOB's support to school leaders since 2014. To ensure school leaders in secondary schools can perform according to these standards, VVOB will initiate a school leadership support system, consisting of three services:

- *Output 1: A CPD Diploma course on School Leadership for Head Teachers and Deputy Head Teachers in charge of Studies;*
- *Output 2: A General CPD Certificate course on Coaching, Mentoring and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for Sector Education Officers and engagement of District Directors of Education;*
- *Output 3: CPD support in PLCs of School Leaders at sector level, with coaching by trained Sector Education Officers and supervision by District Directors of Education.*

TEACH pillar: Teacher Support Interventions

The Rwandan Teacher Development Management policy calls for a better link between pre-service teacher education and Continuous Professional Development (CPD), and a harmonized and free-flowing Initial Teacher Training/CPD teacher development system. Improving the quality of teaching is a career long process. To institutionalise this ongoing process after initial training, the Rwanda Education Board has developed the School-Based Mentor (SBM) Programme Framework (REB, 2016). The support and guidance (including mentoring) provided by SBMs to newly qualified, junior, senior and master teachers is about building the teaching profession, keeping them in the teaching profession and ensuring that they are part of a learning community focused on continually improving teaching and learning. Because of a high workload, many SBMs are unable to provide the expected support and guidance. Within the LTLT programme, successful induction and needs-based continuous teacher professional development are not the responsibility of one person in the school. Professional support is embedded in a school-wide support system, enhanced by a cooperation with teacher education institutions, where (D)HTs, mentor teachers, subject leaders and other teachers (through Communities of Practice (CoPs)) all have a role to play.

To make sure SBMs and STEM SSLs are equipped with the competences to guide and organize school-based CPD and coach and mentor (new) teachers, SBMs and SSLs benefit from a CPD Certificate programme in Educational Mentorship and Coaching and a CPD certificate programme in Educational Mentorship and coaching for STEM SSLs/Heads of Department. Both certificate programmes focus on teacher development as an ongoing process in a teacher's career including the induction of new (STEM) teachers and peer learning through CoPs. The programmes also train SBMs and SSLs to coach fellow teachers, to plan CPD based on teachers' professional development needs, to observe lessons and facilitate lesson study, and to take gender into consideration when facilitating CPD activities. In the STEM certificate programme additional attention is paid to pedagogical content knowledge for STEM and STEM leadership.

Similar to what happens at sector level through PLCs, CoPs are organized for teachers at schools by the SBMs, in collaboration with the STEM SSLs, the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. Activities within CoPs may include collaborative lesson preparation, lesson study/observation, case discussions, analysing student work on assessments, analysing marking and record keeping systems, or developing strategies for teaching learners with special educational needs (SEN).

In summary, the teacher support system consists of the following three interventions:
- *Output 4: A General CPD Certificate course on Coaching, Mentoring and PLCs for School Based Mentors;*
- *Output 5: A STEM CPD Certificate course on Coaching, Mentoring and PLCs for STEM Heads of Department or School Subject Leaders (aligned with school level support by AIMS);*
- *Output 6: CPD support through induction programmes and CoPs for (new) teachers in schools, with coaching by School Based Mentors and STEM School Subject Leaders, and supervision by Deputy Headteachers.*

Overview of programme indicators

Project Objectives	
Outline specific and measurable project objectives this project will achieve in order to address the problem identified in the Project Note. *Maximum 300 words.*	
Objectives and indicators are formulated at different levels in line with the intervention logic (see executive summary), starting from the overall objective to "improve learning", via "improved teaching" and "improved leading" to "improved CPD services". Indicators describe both the reach of CPD services and the impact on competencies of direct beneficiaries.	
Objective	**Indicator**
Improved learning (as a result of LEAD and TRAIN components)	
Improved learning of students	• % of S3 and S6 learners with improved grades in STEM assessments/exams • Drop-out rates in targeted schools
Improved teaching (TRAIN)	
Improved teaching competencies of new teachers	• % of new teachers reporting high intrinsic motivation to conduct main teaching roles
Improved leading (LEAD)	
Improved competencies of HTs and DHTs to lead their schools effectively	• % of HTs/DHTs reporting high competence in applying the five standards of school leadership.
Improved CPD support systems	
Improved SL support/ LEAD (CPD services): resulting in improved leading	
Reach/scope of SL support	• # of HTs and Deputy HTs passing the CPD Diploma Course on school leadership

	• # of SEOs passing the CPD Certificate Course on Educational Mentoring and Coaching • # of PLCs of HTs initiated • # of PLC sessions held for HTs per sector • Attendance rate of HTs and DHTs in PLC sessions throughout the year
Improved Competencies of SEOs	• % of SEOs reporting high confidence to coach and mentor HTs.
Improved Teacher support/ TRAIN (CPD services): resulting in improved teaching	
Reach/scope of Teacher support	• # of SBMs passing the General CPD EMC Certificate Course • # of HoDs/SSLs passing the STEM CPD Certificate Course • # of CoPs of teachers initiated and maintained in schools • # of CoP sessions held by SBMs for teachers • % schools with a formal induction programme for new teachers
Improved competencies of SBMs	• % of SBMs who report high ability to coach and mentor teachers.
Improved competencies of HoDs/SSLs	• % of HoDs/SSLs who report high ability to coach and mentor new STEM teachers

Annex 2: Executive summary baseline report (September 2019)

This report presents the baseline findings of an outcome evaluation of the Leading, Teaching and Learning Together (LTLT) in secondary education programme. The LTLT programme runs from 2018 until 2021 and is rolled out in 14 districts in Rwanda targeting a total of 680 secondary schools. The main objective of the programme is to improve the quality of secondary education in Rwanda by strengthening the competences of key education actors through improved Continuous Professional Development (CPD) support systems for these actors. Actors that are directly targeted by the programme are: Sector Education Officers (SEOs), School leaders (headteachers and deputy headteachers), School Based Mentors (SBMs) and School Subject Leaders (SSLs) in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Actors that are indirectly targeted include (new) teachers and students.

To establish improved CPD support systems for key education actors, the LTLT programme offers CPD support through two modalities:
1. Training Programmes on effective school leadership for school leaders and on educational mentorship and coaching for SBMs and SSLs;
2. Professional Learning Communities for headteachers at sector level and Communities of Practice for (new) teachers at school level.

Ultimately, the programme aims to provide young Rwandans with the skills and competences to succeed in the 21st century. The programme is a collaboration between VVOB, the Rwanda Education Board (REB) and the University of Rwanda College of Education (UR-CE). It is funded by the Mastercard Foundation (McF).

This baseline study is part of a larger evaluation which aims to assess the effectiveness of the LTLT programme interventions through a longitudinal mixed methods approach. In line with the programme's main objective, the three main objectives of this baseline study were:

1. To assess the baseline status of the CPD support system for SEOs, school leaders, SBMs, STEM SSLs and (new) teachers, looking specifically at the following interventions:
    - Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for headteachers;
    - Continuous Professional Development for school staff;
    - Professional networks;
    - Induction programmes and Communities of Practice for new teachers.
2. To assess the competences/motivation of key educational actors looking specifically at the following:
    - School leaders' competence to effectively lead schools;
    - SEOs' competence to coach and mentor headteachers through Professional Learning Communities;
    - SBMs' and SSLs' competence to coach and mentor teachers including STEM teachers.
    - Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of (new) teachers to conduct their main teaching roles.
3. To understand whether the participation of school leaders in the CPD diploma programme has any intermediate effects on:

- The participation of school leaders in Professional Learning Communities;
- Continuous Professional Development support system for new teachers;
- The competence of school leaders to lead their schools effectively.

A mixed methods study using surveys, in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) was conducted among the beneficiaries (school leaders, SEOs, SBMs, STEM School Subject Leaders, new teachers and students) in a representative sample of 247 schools which will be followed over time (baseline and endline). The sample of 247 schools includes all 95 schools where none of the education actors had been trained yet under the LTLT programme at the time of the baseline (baseline group) and all 152 schools where headteachers and deputy headteachers started the diploma programme in September 2018 (school leadership group). 14 Schools from the baseline sample (1 per district) were selected for the qualitative research. To answer objectives 1 and 2 we only study the sample of baseline schools (n=95) while for objective 3 we study the full sample (n=247) and compare the two groups.

Baseline status of the CPD support system

Building a CPD support system at both school and sector level is one of the major expected outcomes of the LTLT programme. The baseline findings on the **Professional Learning Communities** (PLCs) at sector level show that participation rates in PLCs are high, that school leaders are motivated to take part in such PLCs even without taking part in the diploma programme and that school leaders greatly value such networks. We further found that training SEOs helps to initiate PLCs and may also be the main reason why participation rates in PLCs are so high. Indeed, trained SEOs are more likely to initiate PLCs and promote participation in PLCs.

When it comes to **school based CPD**, findings show that CPD for teaching staff is still limited and that there is inequality in the provision of CPD. Some school actors (i.e. headteachers and SBMs) have more access to CPD than others and report larger social networks. We also note that CPD is mostly organised through formal timetabled staff meetings and that personalised need based CPD is uncommon. At a majority of the 14 schools where the qualitative study took place, CPD was found to never takes place or was organised in a very adhoc manner. A concerning finding is that especially new teachers and STEM school subject leaders have limited to no access to formal training, including training on Pedagogical Content Knowledge and classroom and behaviour management. In general, the time available for CPD is very limited and SBMs and STEM SSLs find it very challenging to combine the organisation of CPD with their teaching.

We also studied whether **induction programmes** were available for new teachers. More than half of the baseline schools already have formal induction programmes for new teachers in place. Although it is positive that such large numbers of schools already have induction programmes, in-depth interviews with new teachers reveal that the content of such programmes could be improved. Currently, the induction programmes focus on familiarizing new teachers with the work environment and addressing direct concerns. A more standard oriented induction (i.e. providing support to new teachers so that they can grow in their profession based on a shared understanding of teaching and learning) and attention for personal/emotional support seems to be lacking.

When it comes to **Communities of Practice (CoPs) at school level**, we note that only a little more than a third of the new teachers took part in a CoP in the past 12 months which is much lower than the participation rates in PLCs. Contrary to the SEOs, the surveyed SBMs and SSLs had not started their certificate programme yet and this is likely to explain this finding.

Assessment of the competences/motivation of key education actors

Within the LTLT programme the capacity of various school actors is built and consequently it is expected that the programme will have an impact on their competence to coach and mentor (SEOs, SBMs and STEM SSLs) and to lead their schools effectively (school leaders). In turn, improvements in the provision of CPD at school level are expected to improve teacher motivation.

Baseline findings on **competences of school leaders to lead their schools effectively** show mixed results. When looking at each individual standard of school leadership, school leaders give themselves a medium to high rating on the application of each of these standards. This opinion is shared by SBMs, SLLs and new teachers who agree that school leaders are already leading their schools effectively. However, when looking at how many school leaders report *high* competence on all five standards simultaneously, only about a third of school leaders indicate that this is the case. This implies that although school leaders can apply each individual standard, they have more difficulty keeping all the standards high at the same time.

A majority of the SEOs in the baseline sample had already been trained. As such, SEOs were asked to report on their **perceived confidence to coach and mentor school leaders** before and after the training programme. Looking at their perceptions, we note large and significant changes in their levels of confidence before versus after the training programme with 70% of the SEOs indicating to feel very confident about mentoring and coaching headteachers after the training programme.

At baseline, around half of the **SBMs and STEM SSLs felt very confident and able** to conduct the various tasks related to their roles as an SBM and STEM SSL. Though it is positive that such a large number of SBMs already indicate that they feel very confident and able, it also shows that quite a significant number of SBMs and STEM SSLs does not feel ready yet to conduct their roles.

This baseline study also assessed the **motivation of new teachers**. We note that on the whole new teachers are motivated and that intrinsic and extrinsic factors are equally driving their motivation. Still, almost one fifth of new teachers indicated to have considered leaving the teaching profession in the past 12 months. SSLs further expressed their worries about the workload of STEM teachers and the ability of the school to retain them. In addition, when considering the three main teaching roles combined (teaching, lesson preparation and administration) only 61% of the new teachers had very high intrinsic motivation across all three roles.

Intermediate effects of the school leadership diploma programme

Though the school leaders were only halfway their diploma programme, we already note a few positive changes. First, there is a positive impact on new teachers' exposure to training on content and behaviour and class management. Secondly, school leaders that started the diploma programme were more often rated as very effective by new teachers. Given that we also note an increase in exposure to training among new teachers, it could very well be that the more positive appraisal of their headteacher is linked to increased satisfaction with the work environment. In contrast, we did not find any relationship so far between participation in the school leadership diploma programme and the competence of school leaders to lead their schools effectively; participation of school leaders in PLCs; and the participation of new teachers in CoPs.

Recommendations

To improve the implementation of the LTLT programme, several recommendations can be made. Important lessons can be learned from the success of SEOs in establishing PLCs and enhancing participation rates. Since parallels can be drawn between the PLCs and CoPs, these lessons can be taken forward in the course material on CoPs. In addition to improving in the implementation of CoPs, it is important to pay attention to equality in the provision of CPD at school-level. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring that trainings provided to the SBM are cascaded down to the new teacher and the SSL. Also, awareness could be created by including equality in the provision of CPD as a topic for discussion in PLCs. Attention should also go to ensuring that CPD remains need based and that time-tabled group sessions do not replace individual coaching sessions. To achieve such goals, it will be essential to keep advocating for more time for the SBM and SSL to organise and facilitate CPD. When it comes to induction programmes, SBMs can be empowered to focus more on the content of such induction programmes and ensure that standard oriented inductions are implemented.

In general, it should be acknowledged at the start and throughout the CPD training programmes offered by VVOB, REB and the UR-CE, that trainees have different starting points and needs. It is wise to tailor support to the specific needs of the trainees. This could imply particularly focusing on weaker performing trainees during field visits. In the diploma programme for school leaders, there could be more focus on the inter-relatedness between the five standards and on ensuring a holistic school improvement plan is developed which addresses the inter-relatedness.

School leaders, SBMs and STEM SSLs appear to have different perceptions about the school environment, retention of (new) teachers and workload. It is of importance to understand more deeply what motivates new teachers to stay or leave the teaching profession and how the LTLT programme can contribute to this decision in a positive way.