

**Evaluation  
of  
Luta Pela Paz's  
Vocational Training and  
Recruitment Services Project**

*Final Report*

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In March 2021, a team of external researchers evaluated the Vocational Training and Recruitment Services (VTRS) project being implemented in the Complexo da Maré *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro by Luta Pela Paz (LPP), with funding from the Julius Bär Foundation.

The evaluation comprised:

- A review of LPP documents
- An online survey of participants regarding their experience with the project
- Group interviews of project participants, their instructors in public vocational training colleges, and employers of project graduates
- Individual interviews with LPP personnel
- A site-visit to the LPP base in Maré

From the data gathered through these activities, the evaluators drew the following conclusions about the VTRS project:

### Relevance:

The project is relevant and appropriate to the socio-economic context in which it is being implemented. It addresses two of the most pressing needs of young people in the Maré community – namely, employment and income. LPP's strategy for doing so – vocational skills training followed by labour market insertion – is widely employed internationally and is considered by many experts to be an effective approach to tackling the challenges of unemployment and social exclusion amongst youths.

LPP provides vocational guidance and psycho-social support to project participants, which have proved to be valuable interventions for them because they have received little or no vocational guidance during their basic schooling and their personal and home circumstances are often very difficult.

The VTRS project is exemplary in incorporating features identified by the international research literature on facilitating the transition of marginalised youths to work, including the tailoring of the programme to meet the particular needs and circumstances of the target group and the use of a multi-disciplinary approach with a broad spectrum of interventions.

### Efficiency:

LPP's financial records show that funds received from the Julius Bär Foundation are fully accounted for. The cost of the VTRS project works out at CHF3'000 per participant, which is a reasonable price to pay for the inputs and services rendered to the participants. LPP's lean implementation team has ensured that its organisational overhead costs are about 12% of the total budget, which is within the generally-accepted norm of 10-15% for this kind of project. The evaluation team found no evidence and heard no suggestion from anyone inside or outside the LPP organisation of fruitless or wasteful expenditure.

### Effectiveness:

Until the COVID pandemic struck, the VTRS project was on track to achieve its primary objective of assisting 120 youths to secure decent, skilled work and then continue on the path of self-betterment. However, with the restrictions on travel and association imposed as a result of the pandemic, many of the project activities – especially the vocational training courses – had to be suspended or shifted to the extent possible to digital platforms. Thus, by December 2020, the original termination date for the project, only about a third of the 121 participants had completed the programme, another third were awaiting the resumption of training in order to complete the programme, and the remaining third had left to seek employment on their own.

Participants who completed the programme showed a significantly higher rate of employment than non-completers and a far higher rate of employment in a job related to their field of study than Brazilian youths in general.

There is overwhelming evidence that the VTRS programme profoundly and positively affects participants' view of themselves, their place in society, their prospects for the future and their ability to make turn those prospects into reality. This, in turn, has a powerfully beneficial effect on their plans and behaviour.

#### Sustainability:

The original project plan envisaged making the VTRS project financially self-sustainable by charging employers a fee for each graduate of the training programme whom they hired. Here again, the plan was seriously impacted by the COVID pandemic. With companies everywhere curtailing their operations, suspending or terminating the employment contracts of existing staff and in many cases closing down altogether, it became impossible for LPP to charge employers a placement fee for the VTRS graduates. As a result, this idea had to be shelved and LPP accepted whatever employment slots it could get that were a match for the VTRS graduates. The financial sustainability of VTRS is therefore undeterminable at this stage.

These conclusions from the data collected for this evaluation lead the evaluators to the following recommendations for LPP and the Julius Bär Foundation.

#### Recommendations to LPP:

- Expand the range of technical training courses to more occupations in high demand by the Brazilian economy. This should include training in digital skills leading to specific occupations that can be practised online.
- Include accredited short courses in the technical training offerings.
- Develop more partnerships with state agencies and higher education institutions that can serve as force multipliers.
- Tap into perennial funding streams through a fees-for-services model.
- Establish an alumni association that can serve as a network of advocates in local businesses and linkages to decision-makers in the firms they work for.

#### Recommendations to the Julius Bär Foundation:

- Extend LPP's existing non-financial extension to the end of 2021 to allow the 44 participants still in the programme to complete their technical training courses.
- Grant LPP a further CHF75'000 in 2021 to help VTRS transition to digital training for online employment and a fee-for-service model that can generate sufficient revenue to make the programme financially viable on an ongoing basis.

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## 1. Purpose of this Evaluation

This report presents the findings of an evaluation of the Vocational Training and Recruitment Services project in Rio de Janeiro, conducted in March 2021 by Duncan Education on behalf of the project holder - Luta Pela Paz (LPP), part of the international Fight for Peace youth development organisation - and the project funder, the Julius Bär Foundation, a Swiss-based, private-sector philanthropy.

The evaluation was designed to have both formative and summative components, addressing developmental and accountability purposes respectively. The formative component looks at the operational planning and implementation of the project and is intended to inform thinking on how these could be improved in future. The summative component assesses the extent to which the project has produced the desired outputs and outcomes or is likely to do so. It will inform decisions on whether and to what extent this project should be replicated in future.

## 2. Overview of VTRS and Its Context

VTRS was a three-year project (1 January 2018 - 31 December 2020) implemented by Luta Pela Paz (LPP) with funding from the Julius Bär Foundation targeting 120 young people in the Complexo da Maré *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro who have completed, or are in the process of completing, their primary or secondary education. As a result of disruptions created by the COVID pandemic in 2020, the project was granted a six-month, no-cost extension by the Foundation, from January to June 2021.

LPP describes the programme's objectives as being to improve young people's access to stable and sustainable formal employment opportunities, providing them with the skills and resilience to overcome risks factors and social barriers. Specific objectives are to:

- Identify participants' skills and abilities and help them to plan a way ahead for their lives
- Assist participants' implementation of their personal development plans through career guidance and vocational training courses
- On completion of these courses, direct the participants to job opportunities, assist them to secure work and then continue on the path of self-betterment.<sup>1</sup>

LPP was established in 2000 in the Complexo da Maré *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro, as a community-based response to the arming and employment of young people by drug trafficking gangs. Its programmes combine martial arts, education and personal development to help young people living in communities affected by crime and violence to realise their personal potential, break down the economic and educational barriers facing them, transcend the invisible barriers between areas dominated by rival gangs, and thereby contribute to greater social integration, cohesion and movement across the community.<sup>2</sup>

LPP describes the 'Five Pillars' of its approach as being:<sup>3</sup>

- **Boxing and martial arts**, through which young people gain strength and discipline, learning that success comes from hard work and dedication
- An **education program** for youths who, for various reasons, have abandoned their studies.
- **Training in skills for employability**, both technical/occupational and behavioural, thereby enabling them to find employment

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<sup>1</sup> LPP: *Funding Proposal to Julius Bär Foundation* (2017)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> LPP: *Employees' Manual* (2020)

- **Social support**, provided by psychologists, social workers and mentors who help young people to overcome the constraints of traumas and limiting beliefs
- **Youth leadership**, with young people themselves assisting in program creation, strategic development and decision-making at various levels in our organization.

In essence, LPP's theory of change is that changes in a young person's behaviour, activity or situation are directly related to how they see themselves, relate to others and perceive their future. Personal growth and empowerment of the individual therefore become drivers of improvement in that person's personal conduct, circumstances, relationships with others and, ultimately, in their families and communities. LPP seeks to provide an environment within which this personal development can take place. Preparing for, and then securing, stable employment in the formal economy is viewed as one of the most important transitions a young person can undertake to ensure a positive future for themselves and their families.<sup>4</sup>

Drawing on LPP's previous experience of skills training for employment – such as that gained through its *Maré United* project of 2011-18 and its *Na Ativo* project of 2016-19 - VTRS comprises six main elements:

1. **Targeted selection of participants:** From an existing waiting list of applicants and referrals from its outreach personnel in Maré, LPP selected 120 participants considered to have a high potential to benefit from the VTRS project. All participants were interviewed by the project's social worker, in order to identify their personal needs and capabilities.
2. **Career Guidance:** Through a series of three two-and-a-half hour, small-group meetings, participants are helped to analyse their personal interests, talents and capabilities and then identify occupations that match them. The meetings include discussions, research and interaction activities, objective behavioural tests and individual interviews. The end-product is the construction of a 'professional decision plan' which describes the career the participant intends to pursue and specific steps that he or she will now take to do so.<sup>5</sup>
3. **Occupational Training (Technical courses):** Participants are enrolled in one of 12 nationally-accredited occupational training courses offered under the Brazilian government's National Commercial Training Service (SENAC). These courses, with a duration of 12-18 months, lead to national certificates widely accepted by industry as entry-level qualifications to their respective occupations. Available fields of study are accounting, beauty therapy, business administration, construction, electrical and electronics, environment, logistics, mechanics, media, nursing, pharmaceuticals and workplace safety.
4. **Life and professional Skills:** In parallel with the technical training, LPP provides participants with information, tools and skills designed to help them build the resilience required to respond to the challenges they are likely to face in their personal and professional lives. On the life-skills side, critical thinking, coping skills, self-management and interpersonal social skills are emphasised. Teamwork, time management, work ethics, communications and the 'housekeeping' of business form the bulk of the professional skills. With these inputs, LPP seeks to minimise the gap that business-people often complain of - between the requirements of the workplace and the skills and capabilities of many young people emerging from the national education and training systems.
5. **Job Placement:** LPP uses its extensive network of business partners and contacts in the private sector to connect participants with local companies willing to host them for work-exposure, work-based training opportunities such as apprenticeships and internships, and to consider them for job vacancies.

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<sup>4</sup> LPP: *Funding Proposal to Julius Bär Foundation (2017)*

<sup>5</sup> LPP: *Technical Module/ Vocational Guidance*

6. **Follow-Up:** Even after a participant has found employment, LPP follows up with them and their employers to ensure that both parties' needs are being met: those of the young worker, who is now progressing towards financial independence and personal maturity, and those of the company, which wants competent professionals on its payroll. During this period, the newly-employed youths are given guidance on how to progress in their careers, including how to take advantage of opportunities for further training and promotion. Difficulties with employers are mediated where necessary and considerable effort is put into breaking down common misconceptions and prejudices associated with young people living in *favelas*.

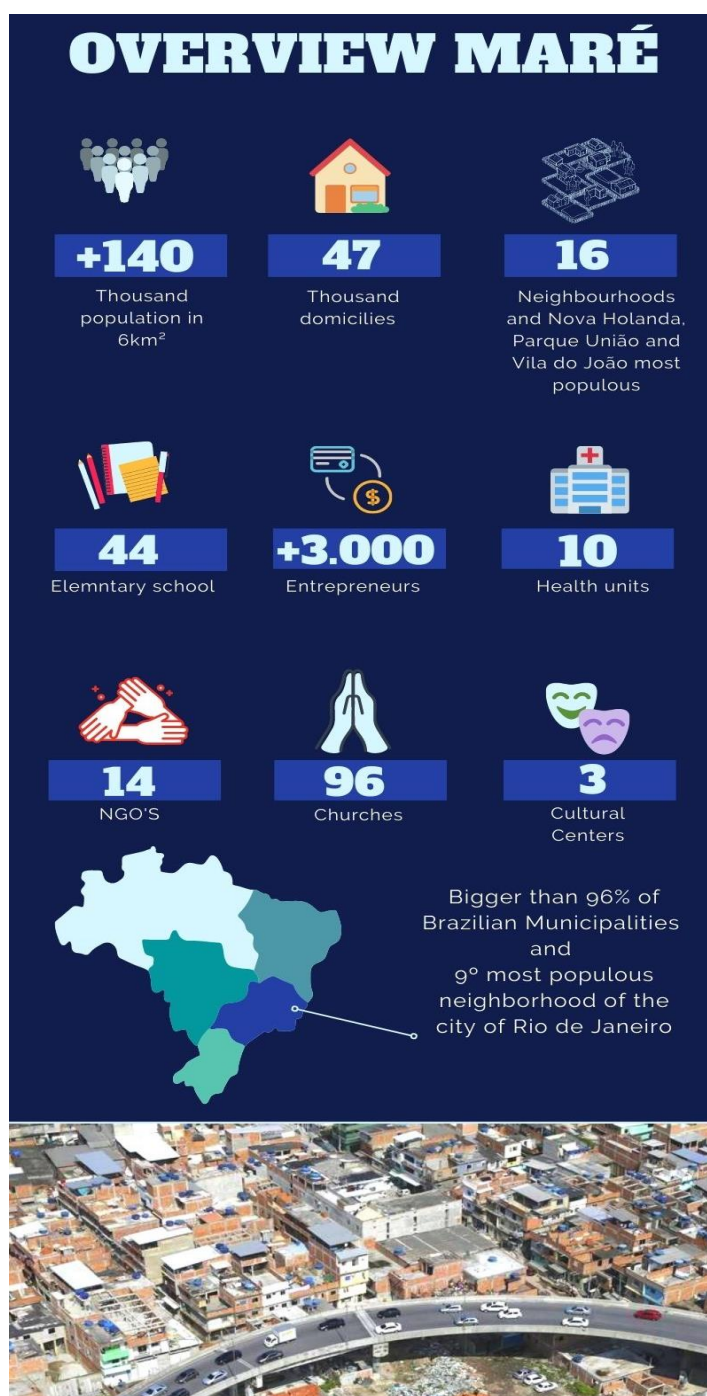
In short, VTRS aims to equip young people with a comprehensive set of skills to gain and retain decent employment in the formal economy via a competitive labour market.

The environment in which VTRS operates is complex and challenging. The set of sixteen favelas that make up the Complexo da Maré is situated in the northern zone of Rio de Janeiro, at the intersection of major axis roads from the airport to the city and between southern and western zones. Its 140'000 inhabitants occupy 80 km<sup>2</sup> in the former tidal zone, from which the name is derived, and parts of the *favela* are still subject to flooding.

Though Maré has been a site of permanent habitation since the 1930s, recognition as a formal settlement was only granted by the city authorities in 1994. As a result, the pattern of its houses and roads is mostly unplanned and its infrastructure and social services lag far behind that of established neighbourhoods. There are few public amenities.

It hosts a small number of formal businesses, mostly retailers, and many informal ones covering almost every sort of human activity imaginable. It is renowned for its vibrant community life, including street fairs, local festivals, music and dance. That said, it is still one of Rio's notable centres of poverty and marginalisation.

Brazil as a whole enjoyed strong economic growth and social progress between 2000 and 2014, with GDP per capita growing at an average of 3.5% p.a - in line with most of Latin America and significantly above the OECD average. Since 2014, however, the country has experienced a lengthy economic recession with mainly negative GDP growth rates and unemployment rates rising annually. Low productivity levels hinder Brazilian firms' competitiveness in global markets, resulting in a contraction of Brazil's manufacturing sector and the many service industries that feed off it.<sup>6</sup>



Adapted from Linares (2021)

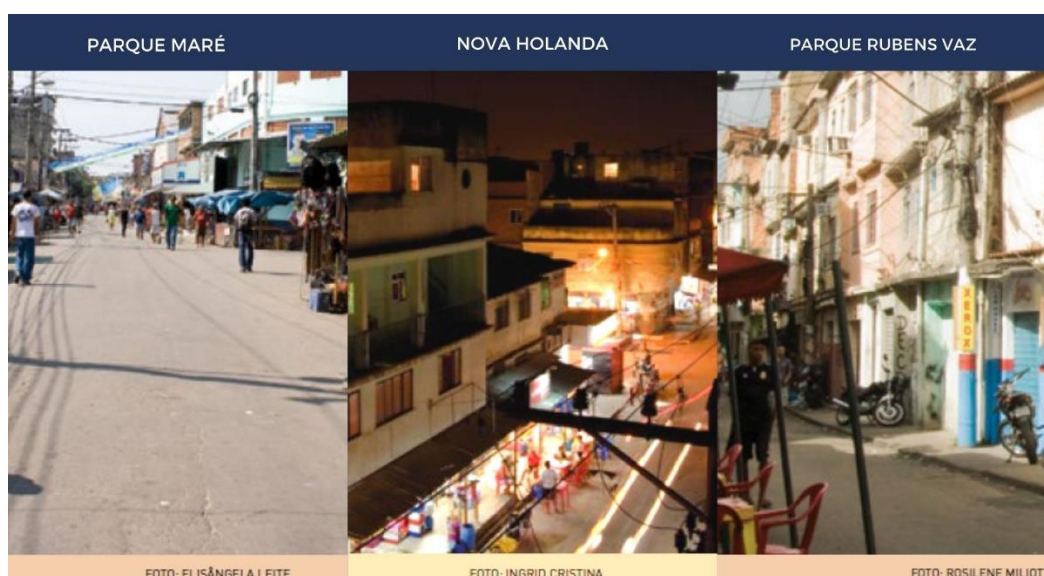
<sup>6</sup> OECD (2018)



According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the country's official statistics institute, Brazil's unemployment rate in January 2020 was 11.2% and, even without factoring in the effects of the COVID pandemic on the economy, is expected to remain in double digits for the next few years.<sup>7</sup>

Outcomes of Brazil's public educational system are weak, as measured by the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) – a tri-annual, worldwide study of 15-year-olds' ability to use their mother-tongue reading skills and knowledge of mathematics and science to perform real-life tasks. Brazil's average performance in the most-recent (2018) PISA study was 400, the second-lowest (after Argentina) in South America and considerably below the OECD-countries' average of 480.<sup>8</sup> Only 59% of Brazilians are expected to complete upper secondary education before they turn 25 and quality is not assured for those who do. Only 4% of Brazilians enrolled in upper secondary education opt for a vocational track. This is in sharp contrast with OECD countries as a whole, where on average one out of four upper secondary students on average is enrolled in a vocational programme. Brazil actually has the second-lowest (after Canada) percentage of all its students in technical and vocational education and training - just 11% - compared to an OECD average of 41%.<sup>9</sup> The lack of vocational training at secondary level in Brazil is a major impediment to the integration of high school graduates into the labour market, especially in a context where tertiary education is inaccessible to most youths.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps in part because of this strained connection between Brazil's education and training system and the skills needs of the economy, inter-generational mobility in Brazil is low: the number of generations it would take the offspring of a low-income family to reach the national mean income is estimated at 7 in Brazil (the same as in China, India and South Africa), compared with 6 in Argentina and Chile, and an OECD average of 4.5.<sup>11</sup>

The Complexo da Maré is a microcosm of Brazil's urban problems. Slightly more than half of its residents are under the age of 30, making it a community with a high rate of dependence.<sup>12</sup> The average per-capita income is \$160 per month, or a little over \$5 per day, compared to the national average of \$762 per month. Adult illiteracy is two-and-a-half times the city-wide average. Overall, its human development index is ranked 123rd out of Rio's 126 neighbourhoods.<sup>13</sup> The following photographs show some of the neighbourhoods that make up the complex.



<sup>7</sup><https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-02-28/brazil-s-troubled-labor-market-will-take-time-to-turn-the-corner> 3 Feb 2021

<sup>8</sup> OECD (2020)

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Linares (2021)

<sup>13</sup> LPP: *Funding Proposal to Julius Bär Foundation* (2017)





Perhaps the most serious problem in Maré, at least as far as young people are concerned, is the extent to which everyday life is dominated by criminal gangs and the violence that they engender. Drug trafficking and extortion, the gangs' main activities, are profitable and young men in particular are attracted by the income and status that gang membership brings. The high mortality rate amongst gang members ensures that there is a constant demand for new recruits. As a major market for drugs and a battleground between gangs and law-enforcement agencies, Rio de Janeiro is one of the most violent states in Brazil and its *favelas* are the epicentre of deaths at the hands of both criminals and of security forces. The annual murder rate per 100'000 people is typically around 35 for Rio, compared to 28 for the country as a whole.<sup>14</sup> A UN report in June 2018 noted that 31 children and young adolescents are killed every day in Brazil, the highest teen homicide rate in the world.<sup>15</sup> Police killings in Rio reached a record in 2019, when 1'810 people – an average of five a day - died as a result of police action, the highest number since official records began in 1998.<sup>16</sup> That figure dropped in 2020 following a decision by the Supreme Court of Justice that banned police operations during the COVID pandemic since June last year. At least nine times since 1992, the Federal government has sent the armed forces into Rio to supplement police operations, generally occupying the larger favelas such as Maré for a while before withdrawing and allowing the gangs to retake control after some more in-fighting.<sup>17</sup>

In Maré itself, a local community-based organisation tracks and analyses data armed violence there and publishes the results in a periodic "*Bulletin on the Right to Public Security in Maré*". According to the *Bulletin*:

- There were 16 major police operations in Maré in 2020, a 59% reduction from 2019
- 19 Maré residents were shot dead in 2020 and another 26 wounded by firearms; 36 other shooting incidents involved no fatalities
- This means that, on average, one person in Maré is shot dead every 19 days and another wounded by gunshot every 14 days
- The average age of those killed is 24 years, meaning that the violence is disproportionately affecting youths

<sup>14</sup> Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/263763/total-population-of-brazil/>

<sup>15</sup> United Nations in Brazil, 'É urgente preservar a vida de adolescentes no Brasil, afirma ONU', 26 June 2018: <https://nacoesunidas.org/e-urgente-preservar-a-vida-de-adolescentes-no-brasil-afirma-onu>

<sup>16</sup> *BBC News* 23 January 2020; sourced from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-51220364>

<sup>17</sup> *Washington Post*, 2 March 2018

- As a result of the violence, public schools in Maré were closed for 3 days in 2019 and public health clinics for 8 days

Particularly worrying from a public safety point of view is that deaths due to interventions by security agencies are abnormally high. In almost every police operation in Maré, a person dies.<sup>18</sup> As indicated by the table below, Maré's casualty rate is higher than that in the rest of the city or state of Rio de Janeiro:

|                             | <i>Number of people killed in security force action</i> | <i>= rate per 100'000 inhabitants</i> |
|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Complexo da Maré</b>     | 19  | 13.7                                  |
| <b>Rio de Janeiro City</b>  | 556   | 8.4                                   |
| <b>Rio de Janeiro State</b> | 1'532   | 9                                     |



Police operation in Nova Holanda section of Maré.

From: <https://mareonline.com.br/comando-de-operacoes-especiais-coe-realiza-quarta-operacao-na-mare-em-20-dias/>



Armed youths in Maré

From: <http://comproourorj.com/video-traficantes-comemoram-chegada-de-armas-deguerra-na-mare/>

A college instructor interviewed for this report gave a vivid picture of the prevailing situation in Maré when he said: “The sort of thing you see all the time here is a youngster carrying a weapon bigger than he is, drinking coffee at the side of the road at 7 o'clock in the morning!” The photos above show that this was no exaggeration.

All of this makes Maré a difficult place to live and to undertake social development work. The decision by LPP to locate itself in Maré was therefore a bold one, in line with its stated value of having the courage to work where there is a need.

### 3. Previous Evaluations

LPP's work has been the subject of three previous evaluations by external researchers:

- in 2006 by the Latin American Centre for the Study of Violence and Health (CLAVES)
- in 2014 by independent consultant Conor Foley, worker and researcher in the fields of human rights and humanitarian aid
- in 2018 by Kieran Mitton, Research Director of the Conflict, Security and Development Research Group and founding director of the Urban Violence Research Network

All three evaluations were overwhelmingly positive about LPP's activities and outputs. The most recent, by Kieron Mitton, is of particular interest because it focuses on a prior project called “Maré

<sup>18</sup> *Boletim Direito à Segurança Pública na Maré* (2019)

*United (Phase 2)*” that, like VTRS, sought to extend young people’s access to formal education and employment opportunities. The evaluation found that:<sup>19</sup>

- LPP’s interventions enjoyed strong support within the community and were relevant to its needs.
- LPP was efficient and effective in delivering its programme of interventions, despite numerous external constraints arising from the nature of the social context.
- The *Maré United* project had enabled young people to cross ‘invisible boundaries’ corresponding to gang territories and socio-economic divisions in the city, thereby contributing to improved social cohesion. It also had a significant positive impact on young people’s thinking and behaviour.
- The results of the *Maré United* project were potentially sustainable but would require continued support and investment to consolidate progress and achieve lasting results.

While these evaluations mainly looked at the work of LPP through the lens of its potential to promote peace in the community through increased social cohesion, this evaluation of the VTRS project will concentrate on its potential to increase the employability of young people in Maré and thereby improve their socio-economic status.

#### 4. Methodology of this Evaluation

The evaluation addresses five key issues:

- **Relevance:** Is this project appropriate to the socio-economic context in which it is being implemented and to the circumstances of the participants?
- **Efficiency:** Has the project been implemented well, with optimal use of resources?
- **Effectiveness:** Have the inputs led to the desired outputs/outcomes or are they likely to do so?
- **Sustainability:** What are the prospects for continuing this programme of activities beyond the period of funding by the Julius Bär Foundation?
- **Lessons learned:** What can be learned from this experience? What were the strengths and successes of the project? What were the weaknesses or failures? How can we account for them? Were there any other outcomes that may have not been anticipated? What lessons learned from this project could inform the planning and implementation of similar initiatives in future? Would this model be worth scaling up in future?

Data were collected in accord with the following rubric:

| <b>Evaluation Questions</b>  | <b>Assessment Criteria</b>   | <b>Performance Indicators</b>  | <b>Sources of Verification</b>   |
|--|--|--|--|
| <b>1. What evidence is there of demand for the occupations targeted by the training?</b> | Evidence of demand for skills in fields/ occupations targeted by the VTRS                              | Depending on available data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Growth of sectors and demand for labour in the fields targeted by the VTRS</li> <li>○ Vacant positions in the selected occupations per year</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Statistics</li> <li>▪ Studies (if available)</li> <li>▪ Stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Media Articles</li> </ul> |
| <b>2. Are local businesses involved in financing the training? If so, in</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of involvement of local businesses, e.g.:</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Quality and variety of involvement of local businesses/partners</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project leader</li> <li>▪ Business partners</li> <li>▪ Project reports</li> </ul>                         |

<sup>19</sup> Kieron (2018)

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <b>what kind of partnership/ scheme?</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provision of funding</li> <li>• assistance in developing curricula, providing training, or recruiting and selecting of trainees</li> </ul>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Availability of Grant Agreements or MoUs between businesses and training providers</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Other documents</li> </ul>  |
| <b>3. How are the trainees selected for the VET?</b>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of the selection process of the trainees</li> <li>• Transparency of the selection process (e.g. with regard to payment for accommodation by family members)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Selection is based on objective criteria related to objectives of VET</li> <li>○ Selection process is transparent and fair</li> <li>○ Selection process takes account of education, attitude and motivation of candidates</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Questionnaire for interviews</li> <li>▪ File of each trainee</li> <li>▪ Project Leader</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>  |
| <b>4. Are agreements with participants in place (e.g. road map) and of high quality?</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rights and duties of each trainee are clearly co-defined and individualized</li> <li>• Trainees know that they 'made a deal' with the organization</li> </ul>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Percentage of trainees with signed agreements</li> <li>○ Quality of agreements</li> <li>○ Graduates sign 'Contrato Honorario', that defines different pay-back formulae</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Signed agreements</li> <li>▪ Interviews with trainees</li> </ul>  |
| <b>5. How many trainees in the defined target group started the training?</b>            | Viable numbers of trainees enrolled in each training course   | Number and ages of trainees who started training in one of the selected professions:   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Records of enrolled trainees</li> </ul>   |
| <b>6. Is the curriculum well-structured and of high quality?</b>                         | Quality of the structure and content of the curricula   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Target skills and competences are covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In the classroom (theory)</li> <li>▪ In training centre (simulated practice)</li> <li>▪ In the workplace (work experience)</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Sufficient time allocated to each skill/topic/section in curriculum</li> <li>○ Assessments are valid and reliable</li> <li>○ Assessments are conducted regularly and trainees receive regular, formal feedback</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Curriculum for each profession</li> <li>▪ Timetable for each VET course</li> <li>▪ Exam results</li> <li>▪ Assessment reports</li> <li>▪ Records of meetings</li> </ul> |
| <b>7. How is the institutional collaboration with JBF perceived?</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of reports and other communications</li> <li>• Clarity and fairness of the JBF Grant Agreement</li> <li>• Competence and value of JBF's inputs</li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Beneficiary organisation values collaboration with JBF and seeks dialogue/ feedback/ further collaboration</li> <li>○ JBF staff demonstrate understanding of the</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reports, correspondence and other documents</li> <li>▪ JBF Program Manager</li> <li>▪ Administrator</li> </ul>  |

|  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General collaboration</li> </ul>  | context, work and complexity beneficiary organization   |   |
| <b>8. How many trainees have completed their course successfully?</b>                            | <p>Percentage of students who complete the training and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) pass the final assessment on first attempt</li> <li>b) pass the final assessment on second or third attempt</li> <li>c) qualify for further education or training</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reliable data are available on pass and throughput rates of each course</li> <li>○ Data indicate high pass and throughput rates</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ List of trainees enrolled</li> <li>▪ List of exam candidates</li> <li>▪ Exam results</li> <li>▪ Record of certificates awarded</li> </ul>  |
| <b>9. Do graduates of the training find employment in their field of expertise? How quickly?</b> | <p>Percentage of former trainees who are working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) in the occupation they were trained for</li> <li>b) in some other occupation</li> <li>c) in their own community</li> <li>d) outside of their community</li> <li>e) for an employer for themselves (own enterprise)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Data indicate high employment rates, especially in occupations for which graduates were trained</li> <li>○ Most graduates find employment within 3 months of completion of training</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Former students</li> <li>○ Employment contracts</li> <li>○ Tracer studies (if any)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>10. What effect has the programme had on the living conditions of the students?</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extent to which graduates of the programme have been able to improve their social and economic situation</li> <li>• Increase in economic independence</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Graduates have better prospects of employment and/or higher levels of income than peers who did not receive the programme</li> <li>○ Graduates less likely than peers who did not receive VT to engage in self-harming and anti-social behaviour (e.g. substance abuse, crime, delinquency)</li> <li>○ Graduates demonstrate greater self-confidence and more developed personalities than before VTRS</li> <li>○ Graduates play a more active role in society than before VTRS and/or peers who did not receive the VTRS</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Graduates and their families</li> <li>▪ Project staff</li> <li>▪ Community leaders</li> <li>▪ Social workers (if any)</li> <li>▪ Data on local crime and delinquency (if available)</li> </ul> |

Data-sets for the evaluation were drawn from:

- A review of LPP documents
- An online survey of participants regarding their experience with the project
- Group interviews of project participants, trainers from SENAC and employers of project graduates



- Individual interviews with LPP personnel
- A field visit to the LPP academy in Maré

The documents were supplied by LPP management at the evaluators' request and covered LPP's organisational structure, policies, procedures and overall programme, as well as project-specific plans, activities, records, and financial and operational reports. The evaluators believe that they were able to get a good overview and understanding of LPP and the VTRS project from the documents they saw. The data collected from the online survey of participants and group interviews with them, project implementers and other project partners corroborated the accuracy of the reports.

The online survey of project participants and the interviews with them were intended to give maximum exposure to the experiences and perspectives of the project participants. The survey was structured around three types of questions:

- Fact-reporting questions about participants' backgrounds, their choice of technical training modules, whether they are currently working and, if they have left the programme, why.
- Open-ended questions to elicit their opinions about aspects of the project, how they think it has affected them and what their future plans are.
- Viewpoint questions in which the respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements, using a five-point scale. These questions focussed on
  - Whether and how respondents felt they had been helped by the project
  - Their perceptions of the value of certain aspects
  - What aspects they found difficult

The final version of the survey is attached to this report as [Appendix A](#). Also attached, as [Appendix B](#), is a detailed analysis of responses to each question.

The link to the online survey was sent by email to all 120 participants in the programme, and then by WhatsApp in order to boost the response. 52 responses were received, a 44.3% response rate. The evaluators believe that this was sufficient to draw some valid conclusions about participants' experience of the project, which are presented in the Findings section of this report.

In the week 19-26 February 2021, a total of 12 individual and group interviews were held with:

- 4 current participants
- 3 graduate-participants
- 3 former participants who did not complete the programme
- 6 trainers from SENAC institutions with experience of project participants
- 4 employers of project graduates
- 7 LPP management and project implementation staff

Owing to the restrictions on movement and meetings imposed by the COVID pandemic of 2020-21, all but one of these meetings was held virtually. This had the advantage of allowing interviewees to participate from a location chosen by them – home, office or elsewhere – and the atmosphere in the interviews was generally very relaxed. LPP personnel were not present for most of the interviews with participants and other stakeholders, which also promoted freeness in expressing opinions.

All interviews with participants and partners were conducted in Portuguese by the local evaluator, while the overseas evaluator listened in with simultaneous interpretation. Two interviews with LPP managers were conducted in English by the overseas evaluator. The interviews typically lasted 1½ -2 hours and were semi-structured – that is, the interviewer had some prepared questions to hand but allowed the discussion to flow quite freely, thereby giving the interviewees the opportunity to contribute whatever they wished to say and give particular weight to points they considered important. The local evaluator visited the LPP academy in Maré to interview project

implementers there. The prepared questions for each category of interviewees are attached as [Appendix C](#). A detailed analysis of interviewees' responses is also attached as [Appendix D](#)

## 5. Lessons from International Research on Training Youths for Employment

In addition to the specific criteria described above, the evaluation took into account some key lessons from research internationally on training young people for employment and mediating their transition into work. These lessons and their implications for the VTRS project are summarised below.

Skills training and job placement are widely considered to be essential strategies for tackling the challenges of unemployment and social exclusion amongst youths.<sup>20</sup> A 2007 review by the World Bank of 289 interventions supporting the entry of young people into the labor market across 84 countries found that skills training was the single most common strategy employed, especially in Latin America and with regard to young people with low levels of formal education and from low-income households.<sup>21</sup> Luta Pela Paz's VTRS project, with occupation-specific skills training and support in accessing jobs at its core, is therefore following a well-trodden path.

The effectiveness of this approach has been investigated in numerous countries. A 2013 meta-analysis by USAID of 54 studies of youth employment, workforce development and school-to-work transition in developed and developing countries considered their attainment of a variety of outcomes such as employment, earnings, re-enrolment in education or training, increase in skills or knowledge and changes in attitudes and behaviours.<sup>22</sup> Amongst its findings were that:

- Youth workforce development programs in developing countries are having a positive impact on employment and earnings. Such interventions are more likely to have a positive impact in developing and transitional countries than in developed countries.<sup>23</sup>
- Particularly in Latin America, the most significant gains are to be found amongst specific, 'high-priority' target populations such as young women or youths from disadvantaged backgrounds. In these programmes, participants are much more likely than non-participants to find employment or to transit from informal to formal employment with better benefits. Improved earnings are a common outcome, in increased wages and incomes that at least bring participants above the poverty line in their country.<sup>24</sup>
- Integrated programmes that combine on-the-job and classroom-based instruction, life skills training and counselling are the most effective.<sup>25</sup>

In the same vein, an earlier meta-analysis of 97 studies across developed and developing countries likewise found that workforce development programmes – that is, interventions aimed at equipping existing or prospective workers with the capabilities needed for success in the workplace – often led to improved employment and earnings outcomes for participants. This was especially true for female, low-income, at-risk, and out-of-school or minimally-schooled youth.<sup>26</sup> A common factor in the most successful programmes was their comprehensive menu of interventions for participants, including vocational skills and job readiness training, psycho-social support, networking with employers and job-matching or mediation.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Goldin *et al* (2015); OECD (2014); McQuaid & Lindsey (2005)

<sup>21</sup> Adams (2007); Betcherman *et al* (2007); Puerto (2007)

<sup>22</sup> USAID (2013)

<sup>23</sup> USAID (2013). See also: Aedo & Nunez (2004); Attanasio *et al* (2008); Blattman *et al* (2011); Card (2007); Delajara *et al* (2006); Diaz & Jaramillo (2006); IYF (2006 & 2011); Janke *et al* (2011); Murray & McKague, (2010); Monk *et al* (2008); Nopo, (2007); Whalen (2010); UYF (2007 & 2009)

<sup>24</sup> USAID (2013). See also Alzua & Brassiolo (2006) and Ibarra & Rosas (2007)

<sup>25</sup> USAID (2013)

<sup>26</sup> Card (2009)

<sup>27</sup> Betcherman *et al* (2007)



Significantly, there is evidence that systemwide interventions (such as economic stimulus and stabilization packages, education system reforms, infrastructure development and so on) do not help young people as quickly or surely as do micro-interventions – that is, programmes tailored and delivered to small groups of youths with specific common circumstances. Solutions to the youth employment challenge pitched at the level of the household unit or individuals – as VTRS does - are now attracting considerable attention from policy-makers and their advisors.<sup>28</sup>

Most youth development programmes incorporate training in life skills (also called ‘soft skills’), which generally fall into three basic categories: (1) social or interpersonal skills such as communication, negotiation, assertiveness, cooperation and empathy; (2) cognitive skills, such as problem solving, understanding sequences, decision-making, critical thinking and self-evaluation; and (3) emotional coping skills, including a positive sense of self, self-control and managing pressure.<sup>29</sup> Such psycho-social support to youths in programmes facilitating their transition to employment has been the subject of much research, particularly with the aim of understanding which non-cognitive skills matter for work success. There is widespread evidence of a strong correlation between the so-called “big five” personality traits of openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and (surprisingly) neuroticism – which, in the context of workplace behaviour, equates to a willingness to examine oneself critically and strive to meet others’ expectations - and positive labour market outcomes in terms of employment and wages.<sup>30</sup> The most valuable ‘big five’ trait in the eyes of employers seems to be conscientiousness, which incorporates being responsible and well-organized. Adaptability or flexibility also score highly with them.<sup>31</sup> Amongst researchers into youths’ trajectories in both the labour market and life in general, there is a longstanding consensus that counselling and support programmes should proactively address the five most risky behaviours for youths – namely, alcohol, drugs, sex, tobacco and violence.<sup>32</sup> The VTRS interventions include a substantial amount of personal counselling, with a strong focus on developing a sense of personal agency and accountability in facing the omnipresent issues of drug trafficking and gang violence in the Maré community.

Rapidly changing demands in the labour market seem to be making youth transitions from education to work increasingly complex.<sup>33</sup> These transitions are becoming more protracted and non-linear owing to the growing diversity of work and of education and training opportunities.<sup>34</sup> Traditional routes between school and work are being replaced by a variety of pathways that are less predictable and involve frequent breaks, backtracking and risk of marginalization or even exclusion from the labour market.<sup>35</sup> Whether young people succeed in finding a job that matches their skills or get a job at all depends on many individual factors and social circumstances. Thus, any intervention aimed at improving young people’s employability must look beyond their personal attributes and take account of external, socio-economic factors that affect their ability and willingness to take up employment, such as their home environment and their access to transport, financial resources, social networks and social capital. This is especially important in a context of social inequality, where the competition for jobs does not take place on a level playing-field.<sup>36</sup> The VTRS project, with its provision of a comprehensive programme of technical and workplace-behavioural skills training along with individualised psycho-social support, is therefore adopting a well-founded approach to skills training and labour-market insertion that is appropriate for its target population of young people from the Maré *favela*.

Naturally, having access to a network of relationships that can facilitate exposure to employers is a great asset in the labour market. This is something that youths from disadvantaged backgrounds –

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<sup>28</sup> Goldin *et al* (2015)

<sup>29</sup> Naudeau *et al* (2008)

<sup>30</sup> Goldin *et al* (2015); Kautz *et al* (2014)

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

<sup>32</sup> Carnegie (1992)

<sup>33</sup> O’Higgins (2003); Raffo & Reeves (2000)

<sup>34</sup> Furlong *et al* (2003)

<sup>35</sup> Vogt (2018); Furlong *et al* (2005)

<sup>36</sup> McQuaid & Lindsay (2005)

such as those targeted by VTRS - conspicuously lack, with the result that they are often confined to the narrow channels for employment and advancement offered by their immediate contacts.<sup>37</sup> In this context, employment intermediaries can serve a critical bridging role in bringing young job-seekers into contact with employers. Value-adding services that can be offered by intermediaries include maintenance of a database of employers and job vacancies, face-to-face career counselling, assistance in compiling CVs and job applications, assistance with accessing public training grants, facilitation of unpaid or temporary work experience, job-readiness training, and the provision of information on labour relations and wage-rates. In most countries, public agencies are a major provider of such labour intermediation services, especially at the lower end of the market where they cannot pay for themselves<sup>38</sup>. But it is increasingly recognised that state-run agencies, with their tendency to bureaucracy and their inherent disconnect from the dynamics of the market, are not in the best position to respond quickly, flexibly or creatively to the ever-changing personnel needs of commerce and industry. Thus, the trend in many countries over the past decade or so has been for labour intermediation services to be provided less by public agencies and more through some form of outsourcing or partnership arrangement with NGOs and private-sector organisations.<sup>39</sup> With the experience in intermediation that LPP has gained through the VTRS project, it would seem to be well-placed to enter into such partnerships in future. This point is taken up by the recommendations contained later in this report.

The research literature on employability and school-to-work transitions highlights the complexity of effective programmes, particularly in a context of social inequality and unemployment. A 2004 study by the ILO of 50 such projects around the world concludes that best practice includes:<sup>40</sup>

- Mechanisms for awareness-raising and information-sharing amongst prospective participants and partners, aimed at dispelling misconceptions around youth issues and highlighting the advantages to each party of the services available through the programme
- A high level of co-ordination amongst the partners to ensure that trainers, counsellors, administrators and employers understand their respective roles and adhering to common principles, and that there are systems in place to track participants through the programme and beyond, and thereby measure progress
- Consistent focus on a definable target group, with clear selection criteria for participants to ensure they come from that group and the tailoring of the programme to meet their particular needs and circumstances.
- A broad spectrum of interventions that includes occupational and workplace behavioural skills training, job search skills, job-market information and linkages to employers
- Social support for participants during and for a while after training, especially career counseling and guidance on personal issues and concerns
- Using market mechanisms to attract training providers and ensure that they deliver training of the required quality and relevance to employers
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the programme to ensure that the needs of beneficiaries and of employers are being met and take corrective measures as soon as the interests of any partner are perceived to be insufficiently addressed.

To this list, other studies add:<sup>41</sup>

- A multi-disciplinary approach and organisational flexibility in crossing traditional professional or jurisdictional boundaries
- Easy-to-use services

<sup>37</sup> Marock & Gewer (2008); Stone *et al.* (2003); Battu *et al.* (2004)

<sup>38</sup> NB Ideas (2008) p10

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

<sup>40</sup> Brewer (2004)

<sup>41</sup> Schorr (1988)

- Committed, caring, results-orientated programme staff

These points summarise the main trends emerging internationally in employability and labour market development for youths. This report on Luta Pela Paz's VTRS project will, amongst other evaluative criteria, assess the extent to which it reflects good practice and has achieved favorable employment outcomes as a result.

## 6. Findings

### 6.1. From LPP records:

LPP has kept detailed records of the progress of participants in the VTRS project. The information they contain is corroborated by the data from the online survey of participants and the interviews with stakeholders.

As of the end of February, a total of 121 participants, out of over 200 applicants, had been enrolled in the VTRS programme, one more than the target number. Of these:

- **38** had completed the programme, of whom:
  - 20 were employed, at least 15 of them in a job related to their field of study
  - 4 were self-employed, all of them having studied business administration, which will presumably benefit their enterprise
  - 14 were unemployed
- **39** had left the programme before completing it, of whom:
  - 12 were employed
  - 1 was self-employed
  - 26 were unemployed
- **44** were still in training, of whom:
  - 19 were employed, all but 2 in a job related to their field of study
  - 1 was self-employed

It is important to note that the project was severely impacted by the COVID pandemic, which disrupted movement, meetings, employment and almost every other aspect of life. Training colleges suspended their courses and LPP itself was compelled to convert its inputs to a digital format with online meetings and workshops, and to maintain contact participants through telephone calls, SMSs and WhatsApp messages. Inevitably, this had a negative effect on the VTRS programme and may have led to a higher drop-out rate than would otherwise have been the case. Project monitoring reports – confirmed by responses to the online monitoring survey and interviews with participants - refer to participants expressing an urgent need to find employment as the original end-date for the programme was passed with the vocational training in abeyance, existing jobs of participants or their family members were lost and the data costs of online study grew. Under these circumstances, it is to LPP's credit that, at the time of writing, 31% of the participants had completed the programme, 36% were still actively involved and only 33% had dropped out.

The participants' success rate in their technical training courses is encouraging. The average, pre-COVID completion rate for SENAC courses in Rio de Janeiro is 60-70%.<sup>42</sup> VTRS participants look set to come in at the high end of that – perhaps 68% - in spite of the pandemic.

Accepting the online survey's indication that 30% of participants already had a job of some sort at the time of joining the programme, the figures cited above imply that participation in VTRS doubled the chances of finding a job in the case of those who completed the programme and increased the chances of those still in the programme by 50%. These figures do not include self-employment, which also increased significantly among 'completers', evidently because the programme gave them

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<sup>42</sup> OECD (2018)

a new sense of purpose and agency (This comes through strongly in the online survey and interviews). The employment rate amongst ‘absconders’ remains unchanged at 30%, suggesting that most of them have been unable to improve their situation since leaving the programme.

It is also noteworthy that 75% of ‘completers’ with jobs are working in a field related to their chosen field of study. Other research has found that 52% of all employed Brazilian youths are in jobs related to their field of study.<sup>43</sup> The significantly higher level of match between training and employment achieved by the VTRS graduates suggests that the vocational guidance they received from LPP has achieved its purpose.

According to research by the OECD, ‘S-system’ courses in Brazil yield a considerably higher return to trainees than courses from other institutions - 28.3% versus 10.4% - in the form of a ‘premium’ on increases over time in their monthly labour earnings.<sup>44</sup> In other words, graduates of any post-school technical training course in Brazil can expect to get progressively higher pay than their untrained counterparts; but graduates of S-system courses can expect to get more still. This certainly justifies LPP’s decision to make SENAC courses a central part of the VTRS programme.

## 6.2. From the Online Survey of Participants

Participants’ responses to the online survey provide a broad-brush picture of their personal circumstances, their experiences and perceptions of the VTRS project, and how they have benefited from it.

Regarding the participants’ personal circumstances:

- Women slightly out-number men (56% to 44%). This proportion in the responses to the survey corresponds almost exactly to the full enrolment data (55:45 in favour of women), thereby giving grounds for confidence that the online survey drew upon a representative sample of participants. Interestingly, the preponderance of women undertaking SENAC courses through the VTRS project is in contrast to SENAC courses generally, where trainees are disproportionately male.<sup>45</sup> Thus, through the VTRS project, LPP is enabling young women in particular to get technical and vocational skills training that they would not otherwise have had access to.
- The online survey did not enquire into the ethnicity of the participants. However, LPP’s application and enrolment records indicate that 80% of them self-identify as being Black and 12% of them as White; 2% say that they are of ‘other’ ethnicity and 6% chose not to declare. The VTRS project’s focus on black youths is both significant and justifiable in view of the fact that ethno-racial divide is still substantial. Afro-Brazilians lag behind in almost every social indicator. Afro-Brazilian poverty rates are twice those of white Brazilians. Their unemployment rates are typically 35% higher than those of whites and their income per capita is about 50% less.<sup>46</sup>
- Participants are young in comparison to the general population: 61% are under 24 years old (compared with 9% in the 18–24-year age-group nationally) and another 33% are aged between 25 and 30 (compared to 9% nationally). Just 6% are over 30 years of age (compared to 45% nationally). This indicates that LPP is meeting its objective of primarily helping young people.
- Most participants are long-time residents of Rio: 88% have lived there for more than 10 years and another 8% for 5-10 years. Most also live in crowded households, with almost a third sharing their bedroom with 4-6 other people and another 63% sharing with 1-3 people. Only 8% have a room to themselves. This is a significantly higher rate of overcrowding than

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<sup>43</sup> Mourshed *et al* (2014) p47

<sup>44</sup> OECD (2018)

<sup>45</sup> OECD (2018)

<sup>46</sup> Pereira (2016)

is normal even in Maré - where 10.6% of households have more than four people per bedroom - and far higher than the city-wide average of 5.3%.<sup>47</sup> It is strong evidence that VTRS is reaching some of the poorest families in its target territory.

- Almost 40% of these young people are supporting other people besides themselves. Ten of them say that they support one other person, three support two other people, three support three and one person supports four. The implication of this is that any improvement in the employment and income situation of a project participant benefits, on average, 1.7 other people as well.
- Less than a third of participants (30%) had a job before joining the project, a reflection of the high level of unemployment amongst youths in the Maré community.

As to how participants got involved in the project:

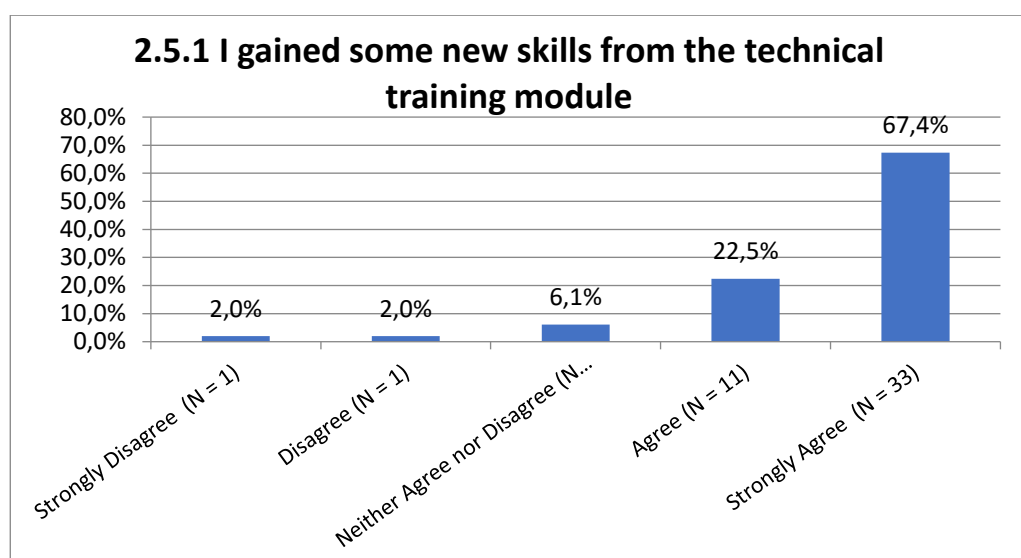
- Almost two-thirds heard about it directly from LPP via social media or direct contact, while another 24% were told about it by friends. Only 10% of participants learned about it from an advert.
- The main reasons for participating were to learn a technical skill (45%) and to get a job (40%). A much smaller number (7%) gave as their main motivation for joining a desire to learn how to organize their lives better, while the remaining 7% cited other (not unrelated) reasons such as:
  - *To get a job and help my mom and achieve my dreams*
  - *To have more knowledge about my area*
  - *To have more knowledge, to keep studying to find a job and maintain my focus on good professional development*

It is therefore clear that the technical skills training component of the VTRS project is a major attraction for its participants. Business administration was by far the most popular technical module chosen (81.4%). Small numbers chose logistics, multimedia, electronics and environmental modules.

Participants' perceptions of the project are overwhelmingly positive. The survey measured their perceptions of specific aspects of the project by asking them the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements. Statement scores were converted into a number out of 100 which can be interpreted as a percentage. A higher percentage means a more positive view of the project. For example, the table below indicates that 89% of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the proposition that they benefited from the technical training model.

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<sup>47</sup> LPP (2017)



Respondents said that they found the whole programme very enjoyable, believe that it has helped them and was pitched at the right level of difficulty for them – namely, difficult enough to be challenging but not so difficult as to be overwhelming. This is indicated by the following data from the online survey:

**Participants' Perceptions – Scores by overall dimension**

|  |           |                           |
|--|-----------|---------------------------|
| <b>Total Score</b>                             | <b>78</b> | <b>Very Good</b>          |
| <b>How Respondents have been helped</b>        | <b>78</b> | <b>Very Good</b>          |
| <b>Enjoyment of certain aspects</b>            | <b>90</b> | <b>Excellent</b>          |
| <b>Levels of difficulty of certain aspects</b> | <b>64</b> | <b>On the right track</b> |

An analysis of the data on their perceptions, contained in [Appendix C](#), indicates that:

- Participants overwhelmingly believe (92%) that the VTRS programme has helped them. They particularly credit it with increasing their levels of self-confidence, giving them a more optimistic view of their future and enabling them to organize themselves better.
- The most-enjoyed aspects of the programme were the technical modules (94%), interacting with project personnel (93%) and receiving vocational guidance (92%). These data indicate that two central pillars of the VTRS programmes – the technical training and the vocational guidance – are highly appreciated by participants and that LPP field staff are held in high regard by them.
- Participants are somewhat less positive about the programme's effectiveness in helping them to get a job (58%). This probably just reflects conventional wisdom amongst Brazilian youths in general, of whom 59% say their postsecondary studies improved their employment opportunities, compared with 50% of their counterparts internationally.<sup>48</sup> The fact is that 53% of VTRS participants who have completed the programme to date found jobs within a relatively short period.

<sup>48</sup> Mourshed *et al* (2014)

- Men were more positive overall, especially about being able to organise themselves better, in which there was a marked difference between their scores and those of female participants. Men also reported greater increases in self-confidence and positivity about their futures.
- There were no gender differences in participants' perceptions about the value of new technical skills gained.
- Soft skills such as personal development, self-knowledge and the ability to focus on the future were most frequently cited by respondents when asked how else the programme had helped them.
- Unsurprisingly, men enjoyed the sports and martial arts (87%) more than women (77%) and younger participants enjoyed them more than older ones. (88% vs 68%)
- An interesting footnote is that participants living in more crowded homes were more likely than those in less crowded homes to experience difficulties with the technical training but much less likely to experience difficulties with learning about themselves. This is probably because having more people around all the time makes it difficult to study but compels one to deal with interpersonal friction and indeed with oneself in a much more varied and immediate way.

Nine former participants gave reasons for leaving the programme prematurely: two needed to earn money straight away and another two got job offers. Other reasons given were:

- *I became pregnant and therefore had difficulty getting to the location for the course*
- *I didn't really give up. I am waiting for the classes to resume as I didn't have internet at home*
- *I'm working in... a totally different sector from the one I was studying. Unfortunately, I haven't had an opportunity [in the one I was studying] yet.*

Yet even these 'absconders' report benefits from what they had experienced in the project before leaving it:

- *The project has helped my professional development, improved my ability to work in a team/group, develop my people skills, and know for sure what career path to take*
- *It has helped me to have better expectations for my life, to be flexible, to be optimistic, to make good use of my time, to manage professional projects and my personal life.*

Regarding difficulties experienced by respondents:

- Vocational guidance was rated as the least difficult aspect of the programme.
- Technical training and learning about oneself were rated as the most difficult aspects. Participants managed reasonably well with the martial arts and sports, and meeting project staff.
- As one would expect, younger participants experienced fewer difficulties generally, with the under 20 group being the most buoyant. Of particular concern to older participants were the technical aspects of the programme, learning about themselves, and meeting project staff. Their comments also referred to the difficulty of having to adjust to studying again after a gap of several years.

Respondents' plans for the future centre around further study and learning (9 responses), believing in themselves and their potential (6 response), finding work (2 responses) and starting their own businesses (2 responses). Typical responses were:

- *In the past I had expectations of finding a job in a technology company, but this has become my secondary plan, today I am thinking of starting my own company.*
- *Push to stabilise myself financially. Achieve all my dreams and objectives.*
- *Work at my profession with love, financial freedom in an ever-changing life.*



- *Have more patience when things escape my grasp.*
- *Correct my mistakes, trust myself more and never give up.*
- *Learn to listen more*
- *Focus better on my objectives and go beyond my dreams!*

### 6.3. From the Interviews with Stakeholders

The primary purpose of the stakeholder interviews was to elicit the views of the project participants, implementers and external partners (technical college instructors and employers) on the project's model and underlying philosophy, the manner in which it was being implemented, lessons to be learned from experience to date and ideas on how things might be done in future.

There was consensus from the start that VTRS is unique amongst NGO projects in the Maré complex in the degree to which it provides a 'total package' of interventions to change participants' trajectory in life:

- *"A big differentiating factor is the extent of LPP's efforts to uncover and unlock the potential of the youths, providing psycho-social support tailored to their strengths and weaknesses, and matching them to suitable employers... LPP has run this project not just as a technical training exercise but as a behavioural change intervention, giving students a mind-set change about themselves." (Implementer)*
- *"LPP offers a path to technical qualifications tailored to each participant and sticks with them throughout their journey into the job market and beyond: they must get in and stay in." (Implementer)*
- *"We have lots of young people who live in difficult situations but other social projects tend to focus on short-term benefits, whereas LPP immerses the youth in a programme that offers wider focus, more support. This gets ingrained into the LPP students and stimulates them to look at their long-term goals and careers." (College instructor)*
- *"[LPP] gives strong support to their students, checks their attendance, one complements the other and the student feels important. And they realise there's someone out there who's worried about their future." (College instructor)*
- *"Everything in the course is aimed at systematically improving the young person's vision of the future, pushing oneself to improve." (Participant)*
- *"I enrolled because I wanted to do interesting things, but I didn't expect as much as we got. They supported our transport costs and that helped a lot. It's good to know that we can get to a better place... The course broadened my perspectives so much and I have a clearer view for the future" (Participant)*
- *"What differentiates [LPP] is the close communication they have with the community, with the other partners too... Unlike other organizations, Luta concerns itself with selecting candidates who have the potential to fill vacancies." (Employer)*

LPP's 'full service' approach to getting young people to see themselves differently and then to equip themselves to take control of their own destiny is widely considered to be of special relevance and value to the target community.

- *"Employability is major issue for the [Maré] community, not only for income but also to combat gangs, create a positive view of the future and give [young people] a sense of agency." (Implementer)*
- *"We take a community action approach that brings benefits beyond the individual because any individual's problems are usually universal in the community." (Implementer)*

- *“LPP people are known in the community and are viewed as local successes” (College instructor)*
- *“The entire community benefits from having a professional in their midst, which is source of pride as well as role model for both family in wider community. It’s common to hear comments from families along the lines of ‘This child is our first one to have a proper job’”. (Employer)*
- *“When young people enter the labour market, it has an impact on him and his group. He becomes an example. Others think, ‘If he succeeded, I can too’. And so it begins to generate a chain of possibilities.” (Employer)*

A number of participants remarked that wearing their LPP shirt and saying that they are doing a SENAC course gives them a certain prestige in their community because LPP is well-regarded there and SENAC courses are associated with business professionals. Several respondents credited the VTRS project with helping to break down prejudices amongst business-people about the capabilities of favela residents:

- *“This type of project allows prejudices with regard to the population of the favelas to be challenged. Perhaps the perception before was not so positive, but now this is all making companies understand that with these people we can go further.” (Employer)*
- *“[The participants] do their job very well. There is this idea that within the community things are done without any care – but LPP breaks that preconception. I saw that in practice.” (Employer)*

And it seems that the negative preconceptions challenged by the project are sometimes found amongst favela residents themselves:

- *“People are surprised when I talk about my course and they say, ‘This is a course in [our] community? I also need this course. I need to make the change you’ve been making!’.” (Participant)*

Respondents were unanimous that the project has had a major impact on the lives of the participants. Typical comments were:

- *“The technical training changes the lives of participants and this in turn changes their self-perception – for example, giving rise to a desire to study further and the confidence to shape own future and deal with setbacks.” (Implementer)*
- *“The training transforms the family situation by creating someone who is professional and employable. They see themselves differently, with more self-esteem and confidence in their own ability to acquire skills and competence. This can be first step to taking on bigger challenges in other aspects of life, such as a participant who wanted to study medicine, which was unaffordable, but is now doing so with assistance from her family.” (Implementer)*
- *“The beneficiaries – especially the women – change in how they see themselves, in their self-confidence, in their view of future, their autonomy, their sense of agency. Participants go back to school and plan farther ahead as regards their own lives and careers.” (Implementer)*
- *We really see how this programme helps people from very poor circumstances has been really great for us. (College instructor)*
- *“The discipline that LPP introduces into their lives makes it possible for these students to succeed. When they complete the technical course they are really ready to enter the job market.” (College instructor)*
- *“Students from LPP are often more interested and determined than other students because they grasp opportunity to change their lives and transform their future”. (College instructor)*
- *“In summary, the difference LPP makes is ‘the dream’; for many youths life is not about living, it’s about surviving. But when they see what they can do, they start to dream about how they can improve their lives even more. Before they perhaps thought the best they could do would*

*be to work in a bakery. Now they think about how they can start a bakery. This programme opens up the world to them.* (College instructor)

- *“Young people that come from LPP know how to behave and are more mature.”* (Employer)
- *“I think it’s really cool that they gain this maturity. These young people already go to interviews with a more mature demeanour.”* (Employer)

This transition by many participants is all the more significant because, as one of the project implementers explained:

- *“SENAC courses have fixed schedules and deadlines that are not an easy match for the lives of many participants – for example young mothers. The fact that their drop-out and failure rates are slightly lower than that of the general student population is an important success considering the profile of LPP students: lower education, unstable homes, anti-social life experiences and low self-confidence.”*

The participants themselves were extremely positive about the effect of the programme on their thinking and actions:

- *“It is an environment that encourages our best, from the moment we gain the awareness that we can reach new heights.”*
- *“If it wasn’t for the opportunity that we received, if it wasn’t for that, I don’t know where we’d be today.”*
- *“The way you talk, you become disciplined, the way you interact, speak to people; everything changes.”*
- *“I started to see things differently, I noticed a change in my behaviour, and learned to manage my life better.”*
- *“I have learned to see things more calmly, to have higher goals. Before I didn’t know how to achieve them. Today I am planning, and I see how important it is to be patient.”*
- *“To see people speaking in front of others and doing it yourself was important. A few months ago, I couldn’t have done that.”*
- *“As the group was very diverse, I began to learn to listen more to others. I learned to deal with different opinions.”*

An especially common theme in the participants’ statements was how much the course had given them new perspectives in life at a time that they had been directionless, not knowing what to do:

- *“It made me more confident, before I didn’t have that emotion, it just wasn’t in me.”*
- *“A few years ago, I didn’t have that boldness, and the course gave me the power to achieve what I want.”*
- *“In such a short time I didn’t know I was going to reach the maturity that I have today. And honestly, today, I’m studying... Without the course I don’t know if that’s what I would’ve been doing.”*
- *“I was lost, I didn’t know what I wanted, and I didn’t know anything about administration. I fell in love with the course... The doors into the job market have been opened.”*
- *“[Before,] we didn’t know what to do; today we have direction.”*

Many participants said they felt more confident, gained maturity and developed a belief in their ability to achieve their ambitions:

- *“From the moment I started to take the course I felt I had a more positive attitude; more enthusiasm and I became less shy - because the SENAC method is to learn by doing.”*

*Students are often tasked with explaining what they have learned. This really contributed to the learning process."*

- *"At first it was difficult. Many people do not have this natural dynamism to speak publicly. But the training provided the resources for us to do so".*
- *"The course is so broad-reaching that it is not only beneficial in the work arena, but also in everyday life."*

Some participants seem particularly to have appreciated the opportunity to interact and learn from qualified professionals during the course of their technical training:

- *"It's important to mention that we received a wonderful opportunity... to be there and have access to a wealth of experience, as well as contact with reputable professionals."*
- *"the networking [that we got] is also a positive thing because before we had difficulty in connecting."*

Others valued learning about the subtle behaviours that can facilitate or impede advancement in the formal world of work:

- *"We learned about body language in public presentation. Before it was all very superficial. As we head towards the end of course our attitude is a different one. We've gained maturity through commitment."*
- *"In the community have our own way of speaking, a language different from what you would use outside. We've been learning how to speak, learning how to behave, thinking about learning to develop as people."*

Almost all spoke of the profound change in their view of the future and how they can shape it.

- *"Now we expect a better future. The course shows us the value we have, highlighting how hard we had to struggled to get here with the technical course. To be able to receive better wages in the future to reap better fruit."*
- *"Before I never imagined getting a better role in a company, achieving higher more important positions in better known companies. Today I now think it is possible."*
- *"I started to have this thought that we can occupy the spaces that we previously thought we couldn't."*
- *"We sabotage ourselves because society thinks that the slum dweller can't go further, and I had been reinforcing that idea."*
- *"Into each new space we enter into we spread this idea. The course helps us to realise the places we can occupy."*
- *"We all live in the same reality, but the choices we make can be different."*

This sense of having developed emotional skills such as self-knowledge, self-confidence, impulse-control and resilience in the face of adversity came through repeatedly in the interviews with participants.

Interestingly, former participants who had dropped out of the programme seemed to be as appreciative as those who had completed or were still active in it. The absconders said that they had been positively affected even though they had not finished the programme. They had been made aware that they could go further. They had become more organised, learned how to take care of their money and how they could start an informal business. During the discussion they talked about the factors that had led to them dropping out of the course. One left to enrol for a higher-level course at business school, which can hardly be regarded as a step backwards. Another said an urgent need had arisen in his family for him to start generating some income, so he had left to go to work. The third said that personal problems – his own insecurity and discouragement – had overwhelmed him.

They had found the technical training difficult, especially after not having studied for a few years. Two of them had had interpersonal problems with their instructors. All hoped to retain or take back control of their lives in future.

Asked what factors had helped them through the programme, almost all the participants cited the support they had received from LPP staff as the single most important factor in their progress to date. One comment speaks for all:

- *"I felt looked after. Knowing that people were there for us. Someone giving us support, making us feel special. Knowing that there are people looking after us, people willing to help has enabled me to grow a lot".*

They highlighted the unrestricted availability of the LPP mentors and the multi-dimensional support that they provided. Participants said they always got a quick response to their requests for assistance during the course and that the mentors were sensitive to the problems they faced - including issues related to violence, lack of money and, above all, the consequences of the COVID pandemic.

The participants' appreciation for the supportive work of LPP staff was echoed by the college instructors and the employers. It seems to be a major factor in their willingness to put forth the extra effort demanded by their role in project implementation and in their desire to continue to participate in VTRS in future. Two employers noted that LPP ensures that its candidates for job interviews are very well prepared. Another praised the attention and care that the LPP puts into the relationship with her company. Still another highlighted the ease of communicating with LPP through its employer liaison team who, having considerable experience of HR in business themselves, understand the employers' perspective.

For their part, LPP management and project implementation staff stressed the importance to the project's success of their good working relationships with employers, colleges and other external implementation partners.

- *"LPP has a concept of 'the LPP family'. Many staff are from community themselves... Things are much more cooperative than competitive with other local NGOs, CBOs, etc." (Manager)*
- *"Young people deal daily with a series of government agencies and institutions dealing with education, police, justice, health and local government that just don't talk to one another. We try to join the dots." (Manager)*
- *"[The job placement team] have corporate HR experience and strong links with employers. They understand corporate concerns and work hard to strengthen ties with employers, facilitating their experience of employing youths from beginning to end. Brazilian employers have in recent years become more aware of and interested in the value of staff development and in-company training." (Implementer)*

As noted before, the COVID pandemic had a major disruptive impact on the project and every single person interviewed for this report referred to it:

- *The pandemic created an urgency that hadn't been there before - an urgency [for some participants] to earn money or to care for sick family members. We were able to deal with this to some extent... [LPP] organised shared space where there was connectivity and that helped some of [the participants] a lot. Others transferred to shorter courses such as hairdressing and beauty care that they could complete quickly and get employment straight away." (College instructor)*
- *"[Participants] often needed immediate employment to support their families and could no longer undertake long training or turn down any job offers, even if they were completely unrelated to their field of study." (Implementer)*

Although classes for the technical training courses and the LPP support-group-meetings were moved online, this was an imperfect solution as some participants did not have sufficient data, good connectivity or even a device for accessing the internet. Others found studying from home difficult.

- *"Sometimes I'm discouraged from being there because of the noise, I can't study because it's loud, the neighbour screaming. That's the time when it's hard."*

Moreover, as the college instructors noted:

- *"Online classes break the routine and ended up affecting students, negatively affecting their outlook... The context around the course itself became more difficult. The pandemic caused unemployment in the country to increase. This affected the students' daily lives"*
- *"The pandemic messed everything up. It led to dropouts because the students had to find work."*

That said, there was a general consensus amongst interviewees that LPP and the colleges did all they could to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the VTRS programme.

Project implementers noted that, apart from the shift to virtual delivery necessitated by the pandemic, some refinements have been made to the project model along the way.

- *"Initially, applicants assigned themselves to courses. Now LPP is much more directive in matching participants to courses on the basis of the questionnaire and interviews that are part of the selection process."*
- *"In the first cohort of trainees, there was a big focus on how special this opportunity was. This created some unrealistic expectations of participants and created a need for greater support."*
- *"Some participants proved to be missing very basic educational foundations that had been assumed to be present and so they had to be given academic support to step up to the level of the technical training courses."*
- *"Employers find it difficult to aim for social inclusion, not just training inputs, although they are required to meet quotas of trainees by class, gender and race. LPP has had to work hard to communicate these issues to employers, who don't always see the benefit of addressing them. They tend rather to see training and development as expenses to be minimized."*

Finding sufficient host employers for trainees and job vacancies for graduates has been an ongoing challenge into which LPP has put much effort. As the head of its Employability Desk explained:

- *"We have a database of approximately 400 companies, mapped by segments of activity and their corporate contacts. We update the Job Book weekly for an average 74 different 'job profiles', or jobs categorised by the experience, age, gender and education required. The number of vacancies is variable, because some companies do not disclose the number of vacancies offered directly to their staff. We follow up regularly with companies and contact former participants for feedback."*

Looking to the future, the interviewees were unanimous that the VTRS ought to be continued, at the same time incorporating lessons from experience to date. The most common recommendation was that the technical training courses be diversified, perhaps including more options in the field of information technology, programming/coding, digital marketing and the social media. Related to this was the frequent recommendation that shorter technical training courses be introduced to accommodate the many participants whose need to get into employment as quickly as possible, as well as of those who are working and studying at the same time.

- *"We could also extend the training into other [fields of study]. The students often ask about shorter courses, which could be something to add to the programme but without abandoning the longer technical courses.... I would like to expand the number and type of courses available through the project, including shorter ones: culinary courses, hairdressing, beauty care are examples of courses that get youths into employment more quickly. This is something SENAC has always been good at." (College instructor)*
- *"If we can resolve issue of shorter courses, we could take on bigger numbers and get more youths into employment sooner." (Project implementer)*

Project implementers in particular saw benefit in making more use of online technology and digital platforms, notwithstanding the challenges involved:

- *“More innovative approaches could help, such as distance- and/or blended learning, which in the pandemic situation has proved do-able, to everyone’s surprise.”*
- *“We could develop an app to keep in touch with all our partners and bring our services to more people. We could use it to develop more linkages with families and communities.”*  
(Implementer)

They were also clear about the need for more and better labour market intelligence:

- *“We need to understand better the barriers to youths’ entry into the economy and how best to overcome these... We could sharpen our focus on existing job opportunities, maybe looking more closely at the potential of local companies to grow and what their skills and employee needs are.”*
- *“We need more research into current job market, especially in industries where new technologies are shaking things up.”*
- *“We need to get better feedback from trainees on their job interviews to understand where they do well or badly, and also to develop a better strategy for those who can’t get job in their field.”*

In that regard, employers suggested:

- more input for participants on job behavioural skills, e.g. interview skills
- making more use of in-company mentors and coaches
- extending the project to women returning to the job market after a long absence

College instructors suggested more emphasis on entrepreneurship in the programme in order to promote self-employment as an option in a difficult job-market and also to stimulate the local economy. Encouragingly, they expressed a real desire to remain part of the VTRS project:

- *“We [college management] are fully determined to continue in the project. We think it’s effective. It’s efficient and transparent. We see the value of all the value-adding extras that LPP provides in transforming the lives of the students. It produces personal growth in addition to giving them technical knowledge. This partnership between LPP and SENAC really works. We have other partnerships with other organisations and we can carry some lessons across.”*

That determination was echoed as strongly by employers:

- *“My instinct is always to help them. I always want to help them because I’m from their world.”*
- *“The lesson to be learned from this is that it’s worth chasing and making sure you’re with the right partner, not only just to help but so you’re always united behind something worthwhile.”*
- *“For us it is very empowering to be part of project like this. There is an immense joy and pride that comes from sharing in it in any way we do.”*

## **7. Conclusions**

From the data collected and summarised in Section 6 above, the evaluators drew the following conclusions about the VTRS project:

### **7.1. Relevance**

The project is both relevant and appropriate to the socio-economic context in which it is being implemented and to the circumstances of the participants. It addresses two of the most pressing



needs of young people in the Maré community – namely, employment and income. LPP's strategy for doing so – vocational skills training followed by labour market insertion – is widely employed internationally and has produced good results in many instances.

Despite the baleful impact of the COVID pandemic on the Brazilian economy, there are glimmers of an uptick that will create more opportunities for employment. According to the country's statistics institute, IBGE, Brazil's GDP growth is expected to double to about 2.2% this year, translating into 900,000 new jobs in the formal sector even amid coronavirus concerns.<sup>49</sup> If past trends are any guide, 85% of those jobs will be in the services and retail sectors, which are already the focus of skills training under VTRS. The project is well-placed to take advantage of such a development.

The vocational guidance that LPP provides to VTRS participants is especially useful to many of them. The evaluators agree with the observation made by an LPP manager that:

- *“VTRS is blazing a new trail by connecting youths with employers both geographically and culturally; this is especially important because there is little or no vocational guidance in schools.”*

International research confirms that, as work diversifies, career guidance is becoming both more important and more challenging.<sup>50</sup> More complex careers, with more options in both work and learning, are opening up new opportunities for many people. But they are also making decisions harder as young people face a sequence of complex choices over a lifetime of learning and work. Helping young people to make these decisions is the task of career guidance counsellors. But school-based counsellors are often inadequately acquainted with labour market issues and have a bias towards academic courses and the professions they lead to. Most school-leavers – particularly those with limited basic education, as is the case with the majority of youths in the Maré community – need career advice that is much more market-driven and orientated towards industries with jobs that a young person can get into ‘on the ground floor’ and work his way up from there. LPP's Employment Desk is making every effort to provide exactly that.

The VTRS project ticks several other boxes identified by research (and described earlier in the report) as being characteristic of successful youth labour market development programmes, including:<sup>51</sup>

- Consistent focus on a definable target group and the tailoring of the programme to meet their particular needs and circumstances
- A multi-disciplinary approach with a broad spectrum of interventions that includes occupational and workplace behavioural skills training, job search skills, job-market information and linkages to employers
- Awareness-raising amongst employers to dispel misconceptions around youth issues and highlighting the advantages of the services available through the programme
- Co-ordination to ensure that project implementers, trainers, counsellors and employers understand their respective roles and adhere to common principles
- Using market mechanisms to attract training providers and ensure that they deliver training of the required quality and relevance to employers
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the programme to ensure that the needs of beneficiaries and of employers are being met and take corrective measures as soon as the interests of any partner are perceived to be insufficiently addressed.
- Committed, caring, results-orientated programme staff

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<sup>49</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-02-28/brazil-s-troubled-labor-market-will-take-time-to-turn-the-corner> 3 Feb 2021

<sup>50</sup> OECD (2018)

<sup>51</sup> Brewer (2004) & Schorr (1988)

In all these respects, the VTRS is quite exemplary.

## 7.2. Efficiency:

LPP's financial records show that funds received from the Julius Bär Foundation are accounted for. To date, the Foundation has given LPP a total of CHF460'000 in the form of:

- 3 x annual grants of CHF120'000 for the VTRS project in 2018-20
- CHF50'000 from IWC, which has been used towards a pilot e-learning project during the COVID lockdown
- CHF50'000 for a COVID humanitarian response programme in 2020

Of the original project grant, CHF353'660 has been spent, leaving a balance of CHF6'340.

Based on the budget of CHF360'000, the cost of the VTRS is CHF3'000 per participant, which is a very reasonable price to pay for all the inputs and services rendered to the participants. LPP's lean implementation team has ensured that organisational overhead costs are about 12% of the total budget, which is within generally accepted norm of 10-15% for this kind of project. The evaluation team found no evidence and heard no suggestion from anyone inside or outside the LPP organisation of wasteful or fruitless expenditure.

LPP's various policy documents and operational guidelines indicate that it has developed comprehensive sets of ethical standards and efficient procedures for its own personnel and its project partners. The '*Contracto Honorario*' similarly binds each participant to an enforceable code of conduct and a commitment to performance. All indications were that these commitments are being honoured.

It was very clear from the interviews with participants and the external partners (employers and SENAC personnel), as well as from the LPP staff themselves, that LPP's project implementation team are extremely dedicated, hard-working and conscientious. They demonstrate a sense of responsibility towards the welfare and advancement of the young people they work with that goes beyond far mere duty.

## 7.3. Effectiveness:

Until the COVID pandemic struck, the VTRS project was on track to achieve its primary objective of assisting 120 youths, through career guidance and vocational training, to develop and implement personal development plans, secure decent work and then continue on the path of self-betterment. Brazil was one of the countries hardest hit by the pandemic, with, for much of 2020, the second highest number of cases after the United States and one of the highest mortality rates amongst sufferers. A study by the Brazilian business-support agency, SEBRAE, reported that 29% of the country's micro, small and medium-sized companies had temporarily closed as a result of the pandemic, suspending employment contracts in the meantime, and 18% had reduced their workdays with concomitant salary reductions for staff.<sup>52</sup> Most education and training institutions were closed or on skeleton schedules for most of the year.

VTRS could not escape the consequences of all this and its programme of activities – especially the vocational training courses – had to be suspended or scaled down dramatically, with what remained being shifted to digital platforms. Thus, by December 2020, the original termination date for the project, only about a third of the 121 participants had completed the programme, another third were in suspended animation – still interested in completing the programme but

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<sup>52</sup> Global Entrepreneurship Monitor: <https://www.gemconsortium.org/economy-profiles/brazil-2/policy/>; accessed 10 March 2021

unable to do so while COVID-related restrictions remained in place – and the remaining third, unfortunately, had left to seek employment on their own. As noted in Section 6.1 of this report, participants who did complete the programme showed a significantly higher rate of employment than non-completers and a far higher rate of employment in a job related to their field of study than Brazilian youths in general. If we assume – as we reasonably can – that a similar pattern would prevail for the remainder of the participants if and when they complete the programme, this is strong evidence of its effectiveness in terms of its intended labour market outcomes.

In the meantime, there is overwhelming evidence that the VTRS programme profoundly and positively affects participants' view of themselves, their place in society, their prospects for the future and their ability to make turn those prospects into reality. This, in turn, has a powerfully beneficial effect on their plans, their behaviour and their ability to contend with setbacks to those plans.

#### 7.4. Sustainability:

For the purposes of this evaluation, sustainability is understood to mean the potential to continue operations and deliver benefits to more beneficiaries beyond the period of donor funding. It does not mean good prospects for getting more grants from donors, upon whom the continuation of the project remains dependent.

This is a difficult criterion for any non-profit initiative to meet but the funding proposal submitted to the Julius Bär Foundation implicitly adopts it by stating that:

*“[LPP] will test the viability of making the VTRS financially self-sustainable by charging employers a fee per young person successfully recruited. Given the current economic climate and the difficulty employers face recruiting young people with the right skills, [LPP] will test charging employers a percentage of the employee's first month salary (based on current recruitment service models in the market).”*

Here again, the original project plan was seriously impacted by the COVID pandemic. With companies everywhere curtailing their operations, suspending or terminating the employment contracts of existing staff and in many cases closing down altogether, it became virtually impossible for LPP to charge employers a placement fee for the VTRS graduates. As a result, the idea was shelved and LPP accepted whatever employment slots it could get that were a match for the VTRS graduates. The financial sustainability of VTRS is therefore undeterminable at this stage.

Other facets of sustainability often considered in evaluations of social development projects are:

- Operational: Are the organisation's people, systems and processes capable of running the project on an indefinite basis if funding is available?
- Legal / regulatory: Does it comply with relevant national and local legislation?
- Political: Does it fit in with public and governmental priorities?
- Social: Does the community at large support it?
- Environmental: Does it conserve natural resources?

In all these respects, LPP as a whole and VTRS as a specific project are eminently sustainable.

## 8. Recommendations

The findings and conclusions arising from the data collected for this evaluation lead the evaluators to the following recommendations for LPP and the Julius Bär Foundation.

### 8.1. Recommendations to LPP

- **Expand the range of technical training courses to more occupations in high demand by the Brazilian economy.** These include:<sup>53</sup>
  - ICT professionals of all sorts, including software and applications developers, database and network professionals, ICT and audio-visual hardware technicians
  - Personal care and personal services workers, including home care nursing aides, hairdressers, child-care workers, sports and recreation workers
  - Tourism and hospitality workers, including travel consultants, tour guides, cooks, hotel housekeepers, hotel receptionists, waiters and bartenders
  - Health professionals, including nurses, nursing assistants, pharmaceutical assistants, ambulance workers and paramedics
  - Customer service and clerical support workers, including bank tellers, debt collectors, survey and market research interviewers, and library receptionists.
  - Construction industry artisanal workers, including house builders, bricklayers, stonemasons, carpenters, floor layers and plumbers
- **Include short courses in the technical training offerings.** SENAC's "*Cursos de formação inicial e continuada*" ("*Cursos FIC*"), which typically last from three to six months or from 160 to 400 hours of instructional time and may attract the government's worker training subsidy ("*Bolsa formação trabalhador*") could be more extensively used for this purpose.
- **Develop more partnerships that can serve as force multipliers.** LPP has already shown its willingness to work with many partners, including a variety of community-based organisations. This has certainly increased its reach within the community. Nevertheless, many of these organisations face resource constraints similar to those experienced by LPP, so the need now is for more linkages to organisations and institutions that can add to LPP's resource-base. These could include universities and research institutes that would be interested in drawing upon LPP's field activities as a source of research data and a vehicle for their own in-house knowledge-development. In exchange they could provide expert services to LPP such as project monitoring and evaluation, and labour market intelligence. In a similar way, associations and service organisations of business-people and professionals might be willing to include LPP amongst their community outreach programmes, providing LPP with additional human and material resources and access to their informal networks. An LPP manager floated the idea of making more use of public infrastructure and facilities such as schools as bases for service-provision, as has already been done to some extent in another of its projects.
- Following on the above three points, **consider offering training in digital skills leading to specific occupations that can be practised online.** One of the most important developments in the world of work during the past decade has been the emergence of digital labour platforms.<sup>54</sup> Internationally, the workforce doing freelance work in the digital domain economy is estimated to be growing three times faster than the traditional

<sup>53</sup> OECD (2018)

<sup>54</sup> ILO (2018)

workforce.<sup>55</sup> This promises more job opportunities for young workers, along with farther reach and more prospects for partnerships for LPP.

- **Try to tap into perennial funding streams through a fees-for-services model.** As noted earlier, VTRS was originally intended to test this idea with businesses employing project graduates but was prevented by circumstances from doing so. It is still an avenue worth exploring.
  - Reducing the effort and risk involved for employers in reaching their mandatory quotas of in-house trainees and employment equity appointments has a monetary value which LPP should claim for its services in that regard.
  - So, too, does LPP's ability to help companies unable to accommodate their quota of trainees by facilitating secondments to other organisations approved by the Ministry of Labour.
  - Another potential source of revenue could be the provision of vocational guidance services to schools, colleges and government training programmes. As noted earlier, there is an urgent need in Brazil for guidance to school-leavers and job-seekers by personnel experienced in labour market issues, unconnected to academic institutions and able to draw upon linkages to local employers for information and advice on prevailing market conditions. This is a role that LPP could probably fulfil very effectively.
- **Consider establishing an alumni association**, which could serve as a network of envoys and advocates to local businesses, a free source of current labour-market intelligence and, in the longer term, a back-channel to powerful influencers and decision-makers in the firms they work for.

## 8.2. Recommendations to the Julius Bär Foundation

- **Extend LPP's existing non-financial extension to the end of 2021** to allow the 44 participants still in the programme to complete their technical training courses.
- **Grant LPP a further CHF75'000 to help VTRS transition to digital training for online employment and a fee-for-service model that can generate sufficient revenue to make the programme financially viable on an ongoing basis.** As noted earlier, VTRS is potentially self-sustainable, but not in the present economic climate. This is likely to change for the better in the next year or two. For VTRS to fold up in the meantime would not only mean the loss of investment in it to date but also of the opportunity to test a new funding model that holds out the prospect of financial independence.

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<sup>55</sup> Pofeldt (2017)

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