

Evaluation of overseas¹ vocational and education training support programmes supported by the ESF OP 2014-2020

Evaluation Summary for Integration into the 2019 implementation report of the ESF operational programme

For more than 50 years, the overseas vocational and education training programme has supported the personal and professional development of the inhabitants of Reunion. Over the 2014-2020 programming period, 20% of the European Social Fund (ESF) envelope has been dedicated to mobility, i.e. 113 million euros of public funding, including 94 million euros from European funds.

These programmes benefit both students desiring to study in mainland France or abroad, as well as jobseekers wishing to train or seek a job in mainland France or abroad. These programmes are implemented by different actors: The Department Council, the Regional Council, as well as LADOM and the CNARM. The estimated number of beneficiaries from these programmes is more than 45,000 people for the period 2014-2020.

Since the launch of the latest ESF operational programme in 2014, the measures have already benefited over 7,000 students and jobseekers. ESF-financed overseas education and vocational training impacts 37% of Reunion students. Vocational training programmes support 1.2% of jobseekers annually in Reunion and job support programmes about 1% of job seekers in Reunion.

An evaluation of these programmes, which was contracted to the firm EY in 2018, highlighted the relevance and effectiveness of the overseas vocational and education training programmes. The aim of the evaluation was to assess to what extent these programmes allow the Reunion population to acquire a higher level of training and facilitate access to employment: access to overseas training programmes significantly improves a jobseeker's social and professional skills in a way that benefits their opportunities for employment. As such, 97% of the beneficiaries surveyed have a positive view of the impacts brought about by being able to go overseas and 75% of the beneficiaries interviewed have employment two years after their having travelled overseas for their training.

The beneficiaries are generally satisfied with the support received. It should also be noted that significant support is provided by stakeholders and institutions that promote programmes for mobility, notably by the CNARM. This support covers the preparation and departure of jobseekers and helps limit the number of beneficiaries who return prematurely from their training programmes. Given this support, the overseas training opportunities are thus a success in Reunion and the programme could be extended to more beneficiaries.

The study also highlighted areas for improvement, linked to the multitude of actors involved in mobility. The number of actors renders it more difficult to administer support, especially to the beneficiaries, and undermines the efficiency of the training programmes. The need for joint steering and the adoption of a shared strategy was also raised by most stakeholders. Finally, students seem to be a more vulnerable category of beneficiaries. When students benefit from participating in the overseas education programmes, they often face difficulties adapting to everyday life in their destination. These difficulties become obstacles in their successful completion of their programme. Greater support for students could help overcome some of these difficulties.

The findings, conclusions and recommendations formulated have been formalised in an evaluation report as well as in a summary document.

¹ Overseas includes Metropolitan France and foreign countries where the job and educational trainings take place.