



iLEAD

**2024 Endline
Evaluation Report**

Partners



The iLEAD programme was implemented by LEAP Africa in Sokoto, Nigeria, in 2024, in partnership with Junior Achievement Nigeria and The Sustainable Impact Hub. However, the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the official position of LEAP Africa or its implementing partners.

This report was prepared by the Evaluation Team of LEAP Africa. The findings, interpretations, conclusions, and recommendations are based on the evaluation conducted by LEAP Africa's Evaluation Team and Junior Achievement Nigeria's Evaluation Team. These do not necessarily represent the official views of LEAP Africa, Junior Achievement Nigeria, or their project partners.

Images in this report were sourced from Teachers, Programme Sessions and Convenings. The Evaluation Team apologises for any errors or omissions of copyright and would be grateful if notified of any corrections to be incorporated.

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Foreword

At LEAP Africa, we believe in the power of young people to shape their own futures when given the right support, skills, and opportunities. The iLEAD Programme is more than just an intervention—it's a movement to equip young Nigerians with the leadership, entrepreneurial, and vocational skills they need to thrive.

This year, we took a bold step forward, expanding into Sokoto State, reaching 10 public secondary schools across five Local Government Areas. This was not just about scaling numbers but about deepening impact—ensuring that students in underserved communities have access to quality mentorship, skills development, and pathways to a brighter future.

The stories and data in this evaluation report affirm what we already know: when young people are empowered, they rise. We've seen students gain confidence, teachers transform into mentors, and communities rally around the programme's success. These outcomes were made possible through the incredible partnership with Junior Achievement Nigeria (JAN), our dedicated research collaborators, and the commitment of school administrators, teachers, and students who embraced iLEAD with open arms.

I am deeply proud of what we have accomplished together. To my team at LEAP Africa, whose dedication drives this impact—thank you. To our partners, who continue to invest in the vision—thank you. To the young leaders stepping boldly into their futures—you are why we do this work.

This expansion is just the beginning. As we move into new frontiers, we are committed to scaling impact, strengthening partnerships, and ensuring that no young person is left behind. The journey ahead is exciting, and I look forward to all we will accomplish together.

D. Amabelle Nwakanma

Director of Programmes, LEAP Africa



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We acknowledge the vital role of our partners, including Junior Achievement Nigeria (JAN), Sustainable Impact Hub (SiHUB), the Sokoto State Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, the Sokoto State Ministry of Science and Technology, the Sokoto State Ministry of Commerce, the Sokoto State Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, the Sokoto State Ministry of Innovation and Digital Economy and Caliphate Computers Sokoto (Dan Anini Digital Solutions).

In Sokoto State, Nigeria, we appreciate the school administrators (principals and vice-principals), iLEAD teachers, parents and guardians, whose commitment and enthusiasm have been instrumental in the programme's success. Our gratitude also goes to the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) partners and private sector collaborators such as Flour Mills NG, and BUA Cement Group who contributed significantly to skill development initiatives.

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A warm thank you to our programme volunteers, Auwal Hassan and Yahaya Ibrahim, and our data entry volunteers, Julius Afolabi, Esther Solagbade, and David Nwankwo, for their dedication and support in ensuring a seamless data collection process.

Finally, we express our deepest gratitude to the young people participating in the iLEAD Programme, whose resilience, enthusiasm, and determination continue to inspire our mission. Your stories of growth and transformation reinforce the significance of this work, and we remain committed to equipping you with the skills and opportunities needed for a brighter future.

Joy Godwin

Programmes Lead, LEAP Africa





Executive Summary

The iLEAD Programme was developed to address critical gaps in leadership, entrepreneurial skills, and vocational training for students in underserved public secondary schools while equipping teachers with the capacity to mentor and inspire their students. The programme operates on the principle that empowered teachers create empowered students, fostering an education system where leadership, innovation, and self-reliance thrive.

Nigeria faces significant youth unemployment challenges, with many students struggling to transition from school to meaningful employment or further education. Limited access to mentorship, career guidance, and practical skills training exacerbates this issue, particularly in underserved communities. The iLEAD Programme seeks to bridge this gap by integrating leadership development, business mindset, and vocational training into the educational experience of students.

The 2024 edition of the programme was implemented across 10 public secondary schools in five Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Sokoto State: Sokoto North, Sokoto South, Wamakko, Bodinga, and Dange-Shuni. It focused on equipping Senior Secondary School 1 and 2 (SS1 and SS2) students with essential life skills while providing teachers with professional development to serve as effective mentors. A structured, multi-component approach was employed to ensure maximum impact, including teacher training, student engagement sessions, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), business pitch competitions, and the establishment of iLEAD Clubs for peer-to-peer learning and sustainability within the 10 schools.

This Endline Evaluation Report examines the programme's impact on students, teachers, and the wider school ecosystem. The findings highlight key achievements, challenges, and lessons learned, while also offering strategic recommendations to enhance and sustain the initiative for long-term youth development in Nigeria.

Programme Overview

The programme consisted of five key components:

1. Training of Trainers (TOT): Conducted over five days in February 2024, this initiative trained 100 teachers, equipping them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and tools to effectively teach, mentor, and coach their students. The training empowered educators to deliver high-quality instruction in leadership and entrepreneurship.

2. Student Engagement and Curriculum Delivery: From March to October, trained teachers conducted cascading sessions, reaching 2,150 students. Using the iLEAD Manual (available in both English and Hausa) teachers facilitated interactive learning covering leadership, goal-setting, creativity, communication, competitive advantage, and business planning.

3. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET): To enhance practical skills acquisition, 100 outstanding students, 10 from each participating school, were selected for a 5-day digital skills training and a 15-day vocational skills programme during the August-September school break. Students gained hands-on experience in areas such as fashion design, catering, hairdressing, rewiring, welding, graphic design, and digital marketing.

4. Business Pitch Competition: A total of 100 students, 10 from each school, participated in a business pitch competition, applying their acquired entrepreneurial skills. During the grand finale on graduation day, the top 10 students were awarded ₦100,000 each to support their business ideas and plans.

5. Practice Hub (iLEAD Club): To extend impact and ensure sustainability, iLEAD students formed practice hubs and learning groups under the guidance of their teachers. These hubs, operating as part of iLEAD Club activities, provided opportunities for students to cascade their learning to peers and junior classes, fostering a culture of peer-to-peer mentorship and continuous skill development.

Key Findings

Student Outcomes

- **Leadership Development:** Students demonstrated increased self-confidence, problem-solving abilities, and leadership competencies, with many assuming informal leadership roles in their schools and communities.
- **Entrepreneurial Mindset:** 76% of students had developed a business idea by endline compared to 55% at baseline, reflecting improved financial literacy and business mindset.
- **Vocational Skills Acquisition:** TVET training equipped 100 students with marketable skills, with some already generating income through tailoring, baking, and barbing.
- **Improved Career Clarity:** 91% of students reported being better prepared for life after secondary school, compared to 84% at baseline.

Teacher Outcomes

- **Capacity Building:** Teachers demonstrated enhanced leadership and mentorship capabilities, with 91% of students feeling more supported by their teachers at endline compared to 79% at baseline.
- **Pedagogical Transformation:** Teachers adopted more student-centred and mentorship-based teaching approaches, fostering a more engaging learning environment.
- **Entrepreneurial and Financial Awareness:** Teachers expressed strong interest in vocational training, digital skills, and financial literacy to enhance their professional and personal development.

Outcomes for Schools

- **Sustained Learning through iLEAD Clubs:** The introduction of iLEAD Clubs facilitated peer-to-peer knowledge transfer, ensuring programme continuity beyond direct interventions.
- **School Leadership Development:** Many school prefects were iLEAD participants, showcasing a shift from authoritarian leadership styles to mentorship-oriented leadership.
- **Improved Teacher-Student Relationship:** Teachers demonstrated greater engagement and mentorship, fostering stronger connections with students and creating a more supportive learning environment.

Evaluation Outcomes

The programme was assessed against the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, demonstrating notable achievements across key dimensions:

- **Relevance:** The programme effectively addressed skill gaps in leadership, entrepreneurship, and vocational training, aligning with students' and teachers' needs.
- **Effectiveness:** Notable improvements in leadership perception, business knowledge, and career readiness highlight the programme's value for both students and teachers.
- **Efficiency:** The cascading training model ensured cost-effective delivery, leveraging trained teachers to maximise student reach.
- **Coherence:** The integration of leadership, business, and vocational training strengthened the holistic learning experience.
- **Sustainability:** The iLEAD Club structure, teacher engagement, and school support indicate strong potential for long-term impact.
- **Gender:** Female students demonstrated high participation rates in leadership and business activities, with shifting cultural attitudes towards female education and entrepreneurship.

Recommendations

For the Programme

- **Expand Reach:** Scale participation while ensuring quality; strengthen partnerships for financial sustainability.
- **Enhance Teacher Capacity:** Future cohorts could include vocational and digital skills training for teachers.
- **Institutionalise iLEAD Club:** Advocate to establish iLEAD club as a structured extracurricular activity with mentorship and school support.
- **Expand TVET Opportunities:** Strengthen partnerships with local businesses and technical experts to provide more students with TVET experience and pathways for post-programme skill development.
- **Boost Parental & Community Engagement:** Future cohorts should improve parents and community engagement for greater buy-in and support.

For Schools and Educators

- **Integrate Leadership & Entrepreneurship:** Advocate for leadership and career training in curricula.
- **Foster a Supportive Learning Environment:** Encourage mentorship-based teaching and peer learning.
- **Provide Vocational & Digital Literacy Training:** Equip teachers with financial, digital, and entrepreneurship skills.
- **Encourage Inter-School Collaboration:** Facilitate knowledge-sharing for leadership and entrepreneurship education.
- **Strengthen Parental & Community Support:** Organise engagement sessions and celebrate student achievements.

For Parents and Community Stakeholders

- **Deepen Parental Involvement in Learning:** Encourage parents to actively engage in their children's education and career aspirations.
- **Support Vocational Training and Entrepreneurship:** Promote vocational and entrepreneurial skills as viable career pathways.
- **Address Cultural Barriers to Education:** Work with communities to challenge gender biases that hinder education, particularly for girls.
- **Foster a Community Support System:** Partner with schools and businesses to provide mentorship, internships, and apprenticeships for students.

For Students

- Engage in iLEAD Club and Peer Mentorship: Actively participate in knowledge-sharing and skill-building activities.
- Leverage iLEAD Skills for Career and Business Growth: Apply leadership, entrepreneurship, and vocational skills to real-world opportunities.
- Adopt a Mindset for Financial Independence: Use acquired vocational skills to generate income and explore digital platforms for business growth.
- Commit to Lifelong Learning: Seek further education, vocational training, and mentorship for continuous personal development.

For Government and Policymakers

- Institutionalise Leadership and Entrepreneurial Training in Schools: Integrate leadership and business education into the public school curriculum for long-term impact.
- Strengthen Trade Subjects and Vocational Education Infrastructure: Invest in well-equipped workshops, skilled instructors, and stronger industry linkages for practical learning experiences.
- Support Teacher Development in Leadership and Digital Skills: Allocate resources for continuous teacher training and professional growth.
- Promote Youth Entrepreneurship: Establish funding opportunities and policy support for student entrepreneurs transitioning from school into business ventures.
- Ensure Gender-Inclusive Education Policies: Promote equal access to vocational and entrepreneurship training for both male and female students.



01

Introduction

An iLEAD teacher taking students on Values and Moral Ethics as part of the iLEAD programme.



1.1 Background

The Global Youth Surge: Opportunities and Challenges

The global youth population is experiencing an unprecedented surge, with projections indicating that by 2030, the number of young people aged 18–23 will exceed 1.3 billion.¹ This demographic shift presents immense opportunities for economic growth, innovation, and social transformation. However, it also poses significant challenges, particularly in regions where education systems and labor markets are struggling to keep pace with the demands of a rapidly growing youth population. Nowhere is this more evident than in Sub-Saharan Africa, where eight countries, including Nigeria, are among the ten countries projected to account for 74% of the global increase in youth population, reaching an estimated 377.4 million students by 2030.²

Youth Unemployment in Nigeria: Bridging the Gap Between Education and Labor Market Demands.

Despite this demographic advantage, Nigeria faces a persistent youth unemployment crisis. Many young people experience delayed school-to-work transitions, leading to prolonged periods of underemployment and economic inactivity.³ The gap between formal education and labor market demands remains a critical challenge, exacerbated by limited access to skills development, mentorship, and career guidance. In underserved communities, students often lack the necessary support systems to navigate their academic and professional journeys, resulting in lower educational attainment and reduced economic mobility.

Secondary Schools as Key Intervention Points

In response to these challenges, secondary schools serve as critical intervention points for fostering youth development. Beyond academic instruction, secondary education provides a crucial foundation for character-building, leadership development, and the acquisition of essential soft and technical skills. Recognising the transformative potential of targeted interventions at this stage, the iLEAD initiative was developed by LEAP Africa to bridge critical gaps and equip young people with the competencies needed for success.

Empowered Teachers make Empowered Students

A fundamental principle of the iLEAD Programme is that empowered teachers create empowered students. Teachers play an essential role in shaping students' aspirations, attitudes, and future trajectories. When educators receive adequate training, mentorship, and resources, they become effective facilitators of knowledge and skill-building, helping students develop confidence, critical thinking, and career readiness. Research has consistently shown that teacher quality is one of the most significant predictors of student success, particularly in underserved communities where external support systems may be weak.⁴ By investing in teacher capacity-building, the iLEAD Programme ensures that educators are not just instructors but also mentors and role models who can inspire students to explore their potential and seize future opportunities.

1. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA). (2019). [World Population Prospects 2019: Highlights](#). UN Reports.

2. Arnhold, Nina; Bassett, Roberta Malee. (2022). [Steering Tertiary Education : Toward Resilient Systems that Deliver for All \(English\)](#). Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.

3. International Labour Organization (ILO). (2020). [Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020: Technology and the future of jobs](#). ILO Publications.

4. Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., Gardner, M. (2017). [Effective Teacher Professional Development](#). Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

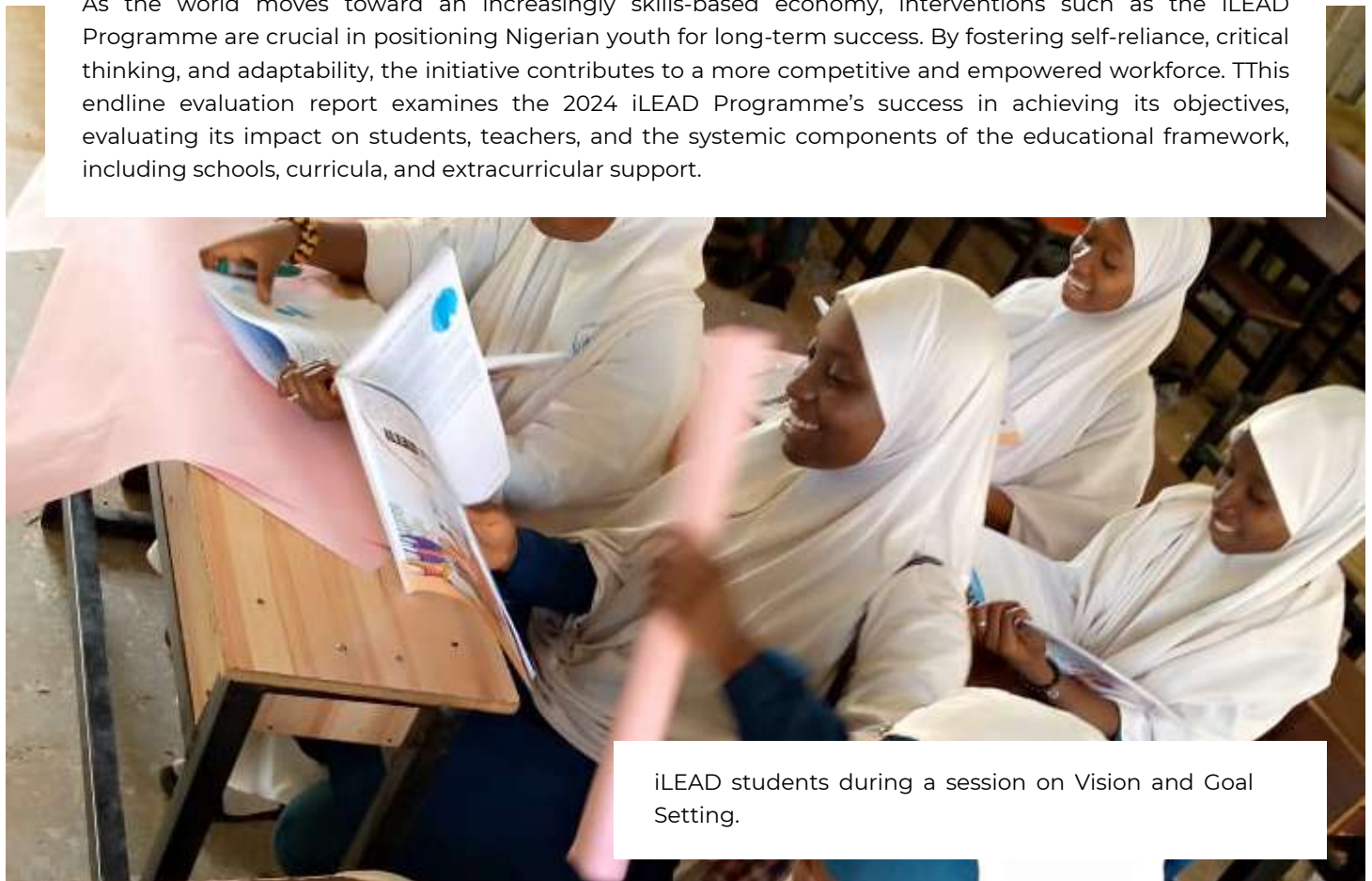
iLEAD: A Holistic Approach to Youth Development

The iLEAD Programme is a strategic and transformative initiative designed to empower students from underserved communities, ensuring their successful transition to post-secondary education and careers. The programme not only focuses on students but also on equipping teachers with the skills to serve as exemplary mentors. In 2024, iLEAD was implemented across 10 public secondary schools in five Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Sokoto State, Nigeria: Sokoto North, Sokoto South, Wamakko, Bodinga, and Dange-Shuni. Through partnerships with leading organisations such as Junior Achievement Nigeria (JAN) and Sustainable Impact Hub, the programme specifically targeted Senior Secondary School 1 and 2 (SS1 and SS2) students and educators.

By integrating a holistic approach that combines career preparedness, confidence-building, soft skills enhancement, entrepreneurial thinking, and vocational training, the iLEAD Programme seeks to empower young Nigerians to overcome systemic barriers to employment and education.

The initiative aligns with broader national and global efforts to address youth unemployment and promote inclusive economic growth. Furthermore, its focus on mentorship ensures that educators play an active role in shaping students' aspirations and equipping them with the resilience required to navigate an evolving job market.

As the world moves toward an increasingly skills-based economy, interventions such as the iLEAD Programme are crucial in positioning Nigerian youth for long-term success. By fostering self-reliance, critical thinking, and adaptability, the initiative contributes to a more competitive and empowered workforce. This endline evaluation report examines the 2024 iLEAD Programme's success in achieving its objectives, evaluating its impact on students, teachers, and the systemic components of the educational framework, including schools, curricula, and extracurricular support.



iLEAD students during a session on Vision and Goal Setting.

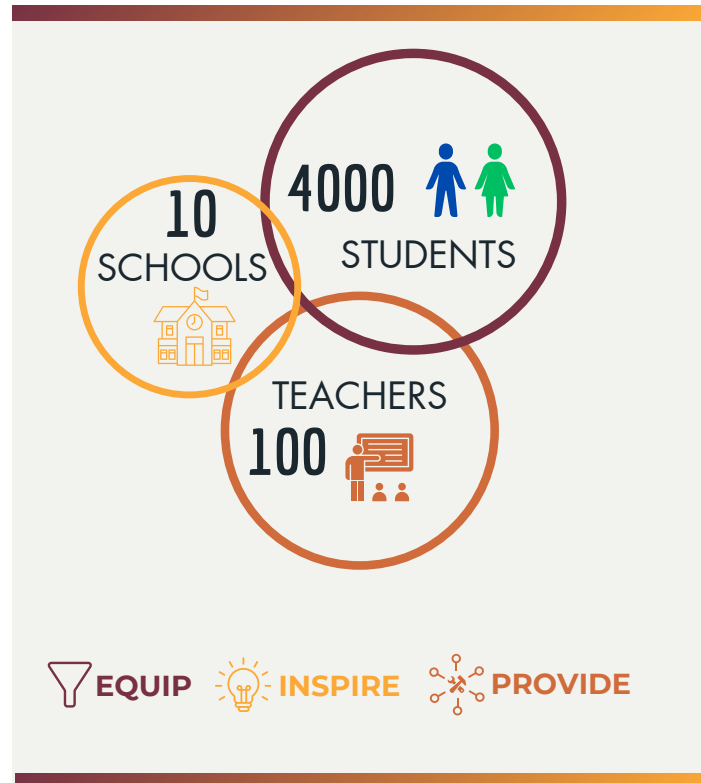
1.2 Programme Components

Goal

Empower students in underserved public secondary schools for a successful transition post-secondary education and inspire and equip teachers to serve as role models of transformative leadership

Objectives

- 01 Equip** students with leadership and entrepreneurial skills to heighten their aspirations and improve their life outcomes.
- 02 Inspire** and empower secondary school educators from underserved communities in Sokoto state to serve as role models for students.
- 03 Provide** cutting-edge mentorship and vocational skills training for students to build relevant technical skills for effective transition into job or entrepreneurship post-secondary school.



Components

The programme consisted of 5 key components

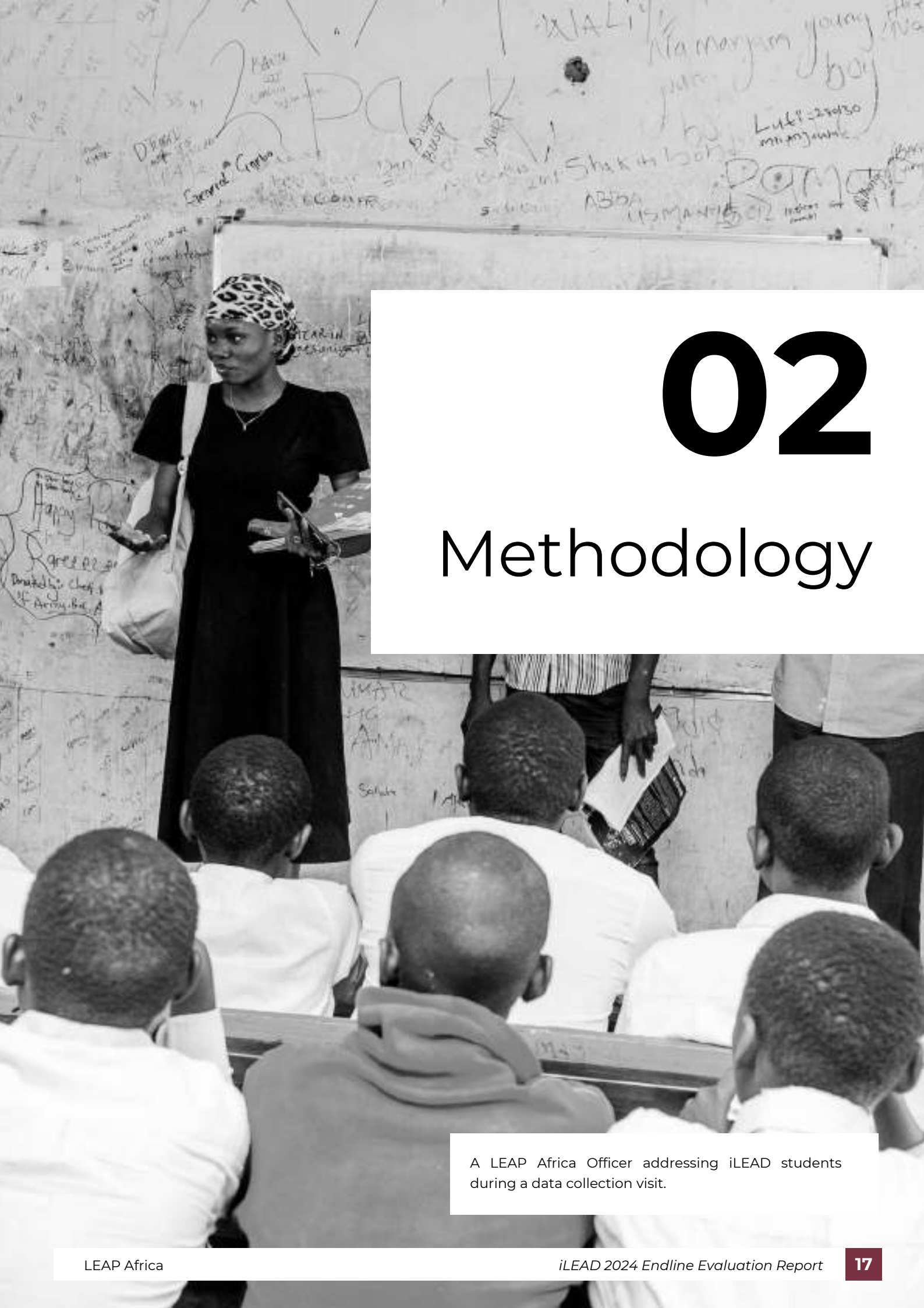
01. Training of Trainers (TOT): The TOT took place over five days in February 2024, where teachers were trained and equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and tools to effectively teach, mentor, and coach their students. This initiative empowered educators to deliver high-quality instruction in leadership and entrepreneurship.

02. Student Engagement and Curriculum Delivery: From March to October, teachers conducted cascading sessions to deliver the curriculum to students, utilising learning aids and the iLEAD Manual, available in both English and Hausa. The curriculum focused on leadership, entrepreneurship, and transition planning, covering modules on leadership, goal-setting, creativity, communication, competitive advantage, and business planning.

03. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET): To provide practical experience, 100 outstanding students, 10 from each participating school, were selected for a 5-day digital skills training and a 15-day vocational skills programme during the August-September school break. During this period, students acquired hands-on skills in areas such as fashion design, catering, hairdressing, rewiring, welding, graphic design, and digital marketing.

04. Business Pitch Competition: In this phase of the programme, 100 students, 10 from each school, participated in a business pitch competition, showcasing the knowledge and skills they had developed. During the grand finale on graduation day, the top 10 students were awarded ₦100,000 each for their business ideas and plans.

05. Practice Hub (iLEAD Club): To extend the impact and ensure sustainability within the schools, iLEAD students formed practice hubs and learning groups under the guidance of their teachers. These hubs, as part of the iLEAD club activities, allow iLEAD students to cascade their learning to their colleagues and junior classes, creating a culture of peer-to-peer learning and ongoing skill development.



02

Methodology

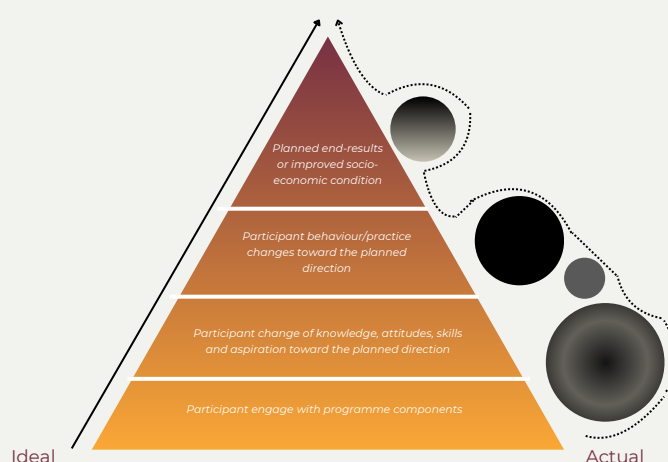
A LEAP Africa Officer addressing iLEAD students during a data collection visit.



2.1 Evaluation Approach and Design

The evaluation was guided by the Theory of Change and Results Chain developed for the iLEAD Programme, ensuring alignment between programme objectives, activities, and expected outcomes. The overarching approach adopted for the evaluation was the **“Distance Travelled”** model. A pre-post evaluation design was utilised, incorporating baseline, midline, and endline assessments to systematically track progress and measure the programme’s impact on participants. The data collection tools incorporated ratings on various modules and topics in the iLEAD curriculum to systematically capture participants’ progress and measure changes in knowledge, attitudes, and skills over time. Responses for the rated sections were measured using a 5-point Likert-scale as follows: 1= ‘strongly disagree’, 2= ‘disagree’, 3= ‘not sure’, 4= ‘agree’, and 5= ‘strongly agree’. Reverse coding was done for negatively worded questions. Total score for each section was computed and expressed as a percentage. Participants were then categorised into three groups based on their scores. Those scoring **below 50%** were classified as having a **“poor”** level of knowledge or attitude, those scoring **between 50% and 69%** were considered **“fair,”** while participants who scored **70% and above** were categorised as **“good.”**

Box 1: The “Distance Travelled” Approach



“Distance Travelled” is a measurement approach that focuses on tracking the progress made by a beneficiary over a specific period. Rather than focusing solely on final outcomes, this approach tracks incremental changes in knowledge, attitudes, and skills.

Note: The concept acknowledges that the metaphorical “distance” a participant travels is shaped by various factors, including socio-economic conditions, and challenges encountered. While the ideal trajectory—suggests steady, uninterrupted progress, the actual journey—is often more complex.⁵

Progress is rarely a straight path, especially for participants from vulnerable or disadvantaged backgrounds. Therefore, variations in measurements may not necessarily indicate a lack of improvement but rather reflect the dynamic nature of personal growth and development, allowing to capture both achievements and challenges encountered along the way.

5. Epstein, S., Konuthula, N., Meyer, T. K., Whipple, M. E., Bowe, S. N., Bly, R. A., & Abuzeid, W. M. (2022). Implementing a “Distance Traveled” Question to Improve Resident Diversity: Process and Feasibility. *OTO open*, 6(3), 2473974X221113847.

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation framework was anchored on the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria and included a gender lens, assessing the programme across six key dimensions:

- 1. Relevance** – To what extent did the iLEAD Programme address the needs of students and teachers in underserved public secondary schools, particularly in leadership development, soft skills, vocational training, and career readiness?
- 2. Effectiveness** – To what extent were the programme objectives achieved? How have students' leadership, entrepreneurial, and vocational skills improved? How has the programme enhanced teachers' capacity to mentor and support students?
- 3. Efficiency** – How effectively were resources, partnerships, and implementation strategies utilised to achieve programme objectives within the given timeframe?
- 4. Coherence** – How well are the different components of the iLEAD Programme integrated to reinforce each other? To what extent does the programme align with and complement existing educational and vocational training initiatives?
- 5. Sustainability** – What is the likelihood that programme benefits will continue beyond the intervention period? To what extent have schools, teachers, and communities integrated iLEAD's training methodologies into their existing structures?
- 6. Gender** – How effectively did the programme address gender inclusion?

Secondary Learning Questions

In addition to the core evaluation dimensions, the assessment explored additional learning questions to generate insights for future programme design and adaptation. These included:

- What were the key facilitators and barriers to programme implementation?
- How did local context, school structures, and teacher engagement influence outcomes?
- What lessons can be drawn to enhance the scalability and sustainability of similar programmes in the future?



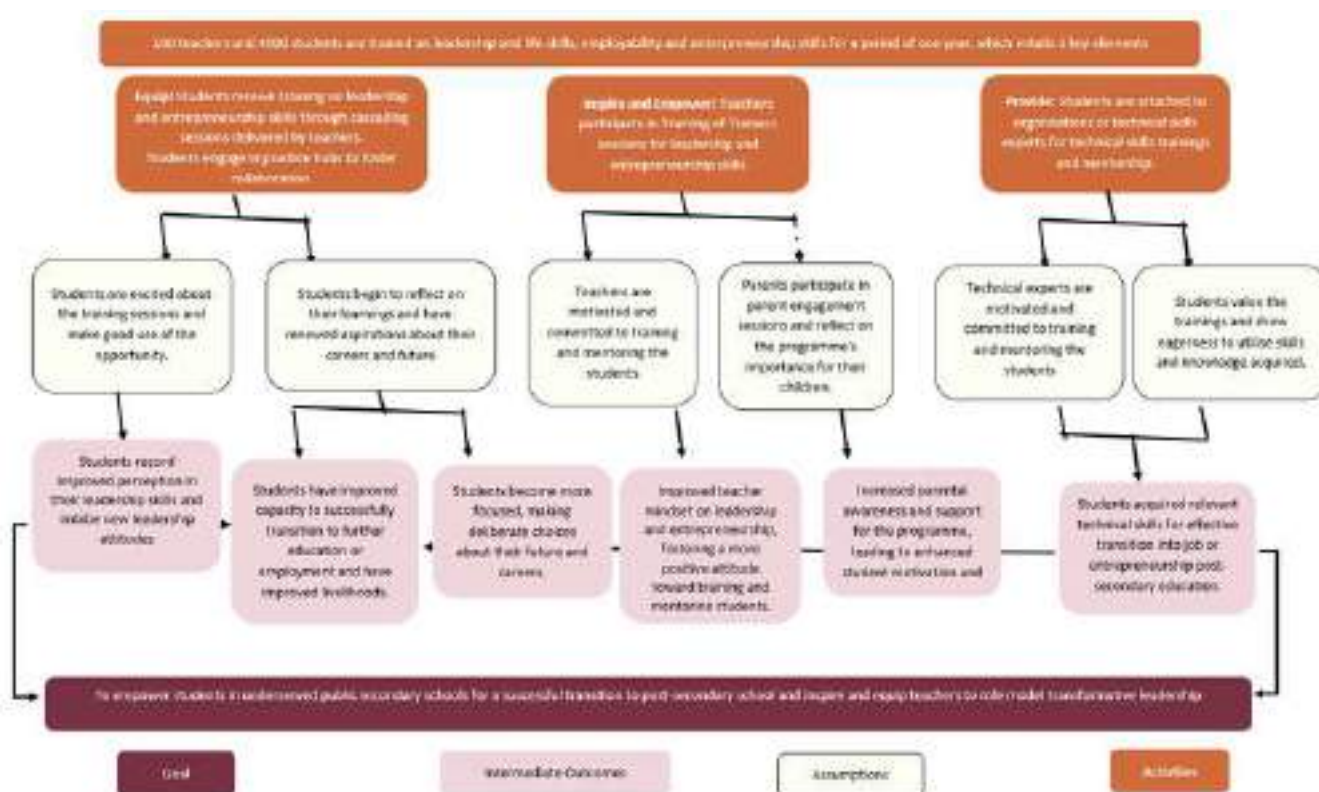
LEAP Africa Officers and an iLEAD Teacher addressing a group of iLEAD students during a data collection visit.

2.2 Results Chain and TOC

Results Chain

	Input	Activity	Output	Outcome
Equip	- Selection of iLEAD Students. - Development of training resources for Students. - Development of resources for Practice Hubs and Learning Groups.	- Teachers organise sessions to cascade leadership and other life skills to students. - Students engage in practice hubs to foster collaboration and strengthen their competencies.	4000 Students are equipped with skills, knowledge, and tools of leadership, life, employability, and entrepreneurship that will enable personal development and successful transition.	- Students record improved perception in their leadership skills and imbibe new leadership attitudes. - Students have improved capacity to successfully transition to further education or employment and have improved livelihoods.
Inspire and Empower	- Selection of iLEAD Teachers. - Development of training resources for Teachers.	- Organise training sessions for Teachers on leadership, soft skills, entrepreneurship skills to cascade to their students - Organise engagement sessions with parents to raise awareness and encourage their support for the program and students' aspirations.	100 Teachers are trained on leadership, life, employability, digital and entrepreneurial skills to cascade to their students. - Conduct at least one parent-engagement session in 10 schools, providing programme information and encouraging support for students' aspirations	- Improved teacher mindset on leadership and entrepreneurship, fostering a more positive attitude toward training and mentoring students. - Increased parental awareness and support for the programme, leading to enhanced student motivation and participation in the programme.
Provide	- Technical and Vocational skills experts - Partnerships with organisations - Training materials and resources - Logistical support	Selected 100 Students are attached to organizations or technical skills experts for technical skills training and mentorship	100 selected students are trained on technical and vocational skills.	- Students become more focused, making deliberate choices about their future and careers. - Students acquired relevant technical skills for transition into job or entrepreneurship post-secondary education.

Theory of Change



2.3 Data Collection

The data collection process for the evaluation was guided by the programme's monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning framework, ensuring that evidence-based insights were systematically generated throughout the programme cycle. A mixed-methods approach integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques was deployed to assess programme implementation, measure outcomes, and capture key lessons for continuous improvement. These methods facilitated a triangulated analysis, cross-validating findings from multiple sources to enhance data reliability, credibility, and depth.

To ensure comprehensive stakeholder representation, data was collected from diverse groups, including students, teachers, school administrators, and technical/vocational training experts. All data collection tools and approaches were carefully designed and aligned with the programme's objectives and results framework, ensuring that insights gathered were directly relevant to tracking performance indicators, assessing programme effectiveness, and informing future improvements. The following data collection methods were employed:

Baseline, Midline, and Endline Surveys: Semi-structured surveys were conducted at three key stages: baseline, midline, and endline, to track changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors of both students and teachers over time. These surveys captured students' self-reported leadership, entrepreneurial, and vocational skills levels, as well as teachers' self-assessments on leadership and mentoring capabilities. Additionally, they provided insights into students' and teachers' perceptions of the programme's effectiveness.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and In-Depth Interviews (IDIs): Qualitative insights were gathered through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) at the baseline, midline, and endline stages, enabling a deeper understanding of programme implementation and impact. In each of the 10 schools, 8–10 students were selected to participate in FGDs, providing valuable perspectives on their experiences, challenges, and perceived gains from the programme. Similarly, teacher FGDs were conducted in each school with iLEAD teachers, focusing on their perspectives regarding training effectiveness and application. Additionally, one-on-one IDIs were carried out with school principals or designated representatives to explore leadership perspectives on the programme's integration into school structures and its potential for sustainability. These qualitative methods enriched the evaluation by capturing deep-seated perceptions, behavioral shifts, and areas for programme enhancement.

Training of Trainers (ToT) Feedback Forms: Daily feedback forms were administered to iLEAD teachers during the five-day Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop to assess the relevance and clarity of training content, teachers' confidence in cascading knowledge to students, and immediate feedback on training delivery and areas for improvement. This iterative feedback mechanism allowed facilitators to make real-time adjustments, ensuring that the training remained engaging and impactful.

Teachers' Weekly Report Forms: To monitor the ongoing transfer of knowledge, weekly report forms were completed by iLEAD teachers to document the cascading sessions conducted with students, the topics covered, and student engagement levels and challenges encountered. This continuous reporting structure ensured that programme implementation remained consistent with the intended objectives while also identifying any bottlenecks in delivery that needed to be addressed.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Centre Feedback Forms: For students engaged in vocational and technical training, feedback forms were completed by technical training centres. These reports documented students' progress in acquiring technical skills, challenges faced in training environments, and recommendations for improving vocational training components. By capturing real-time data from industry professionals and trainers, the programme was able to adapt and refine the vocational training experience to ensure alignment with industry requirements and students' career aspirations.

Programme Documents and Observations: In addition to the above, a review of programme documents and observational assessments was conducted throughout the implementation period. Programme documents, including training manuals were reviewed to assess alignment with programme objectives, track implementation fidelity, and identify areas for improvement. Field visits to schools provided firsthand insights into programme activities, stakeholder engagement, and overall execution. Direct observations of cascading sessions and student participation helped to validate reported data, offering real-time insights into learning dynamics and instructional effectiveness. Additionally, reviews of students' activities and vocational skill outputs offered indications of their learning progress, skill acquisition, and practical application.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical best practices were upheld throughout the data collection process to protect all stakeholders, particularly the students. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, with parental consent provided for all students involved in the programme and data collection. Students also gave their assent to participate. Additionally, safeguarding measures were implemented by creating safe, non-intimidating discussion environments for the students.

Summary of Data Collection

Data collection tools	Number of responses		
	Baseline	Midline	Endline
Survey	Students: 1282 Teachers: 87	Students: 1073 Teachers: 89	Students: 887 Teachers: 94
FGDs (Number of participants / Number of sessions)	Students: 81/9 Teachers: 43/5	Students: 94/10 Teachers: 89/10	Students: 96/10 Teachers: 89/10
IDIs (Number of sessions)	Principals: 10	Principals: 10	Principals: 9
Training of Trainer Feedback Forms (Teachers)		Day 1: 65 Day 2: 46 Day 3: 36 Day 4: 36 Day 5: 29	
Teacher Weekly Report Forms		Week 1: 66 Week 2: 59 Week 3: 55 Week 4: 63 Week 5: 81 Week 6 (Revision): NA Week 7: 78 Week 8: 91 Week 9: 82 Week 10: 84 Week 11: 80 Week 12: 79 Week 13: 79 Week 14: 75 Week 15: 69	
TVET Centre Feedback Forms		15	

Limitations

One of the key limitations encountered during the data collection process across the ten schools was the language and communication barrier. Many students had limited proficiency in English and faced challenges in reading, comprehending, and independently responding to the survey. To address this, programme volunteers and teachers provided additional support with translating and interpreting some questions to the students. This not only increased the time and resources required for data collection but also introduced a potential risk of response bias, as translations and explanations may have influenced how students understood and answered the questions. Despite these challenges, efforts were made to standardise translations and minimise potential biases.



A group of iLEAD Students responding to survey during a data collection visit.



LEAP Africa and SiHUB Officers during a Stakeholder engagement meeting with principals, teachers, students, parents, community members and government representatives in Sokoto State as part of the iLEAD programme.



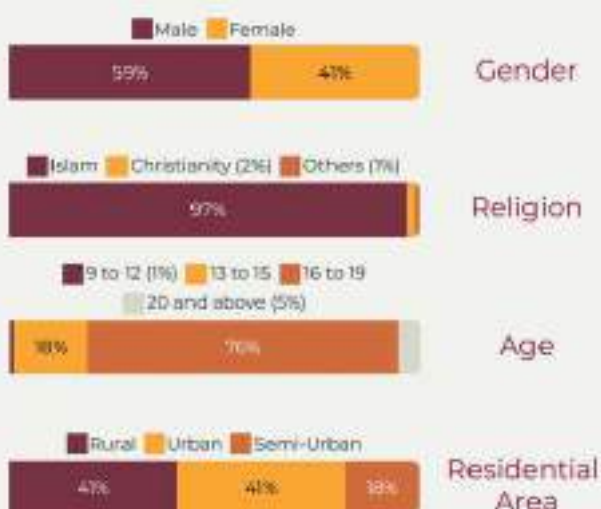
03

Findings

An iLEAD student responding to a survey during a data collection visit.

3.1 Programme Participants

2150* Students



Location: Sokoto State, Nigeria



5

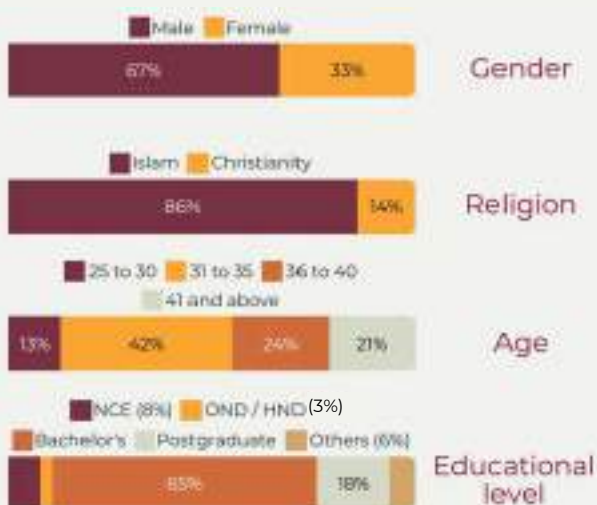
Local Government Area (LGA)



10

Schools

99 Teachers



* : While the programme aimed to enroll 4,000 students, 3,431 submitted completed application forms. However, attendance at cascading sessions remained below 100%, averaging around 60% throughout.

Outstanding Beneficiaries

TVET: 100 outstanding students, 10 from each school, were selected to participate in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). These students gained practical skills in various areas, including fashion design, catering, hairdressing, rewiring, welding, graphic design, shoe making, aluminium works and digital marketing.

Business Pitch: The top 10 students from the business pitch finale were awarded ₦100,000 each to support their entrepreneurial ideas and business plans, recognising their innovation and potential.

Outstanding iLEAD Teachers: The following teachers were honoured for their exceptional dedication and contributions throughout the programme year: Ani Rebecca (Government Day Secondary School Bodinga), Abdulraheem Aliyu (Sokoto Science College), and Halima Sadiya Aliyu (Government Technical College (Idris Koko), Farfaru).

Outstanding iLEAD Champion: Babatunde Christopher Femi of Sultan Bello Secondary School emerged as the Outstanding iLEAD Champion for his exemplary leadership, dedication, and commitment to the programme. His efforts in inspiring, mentoring, and supporting students went above and beyond, significantly impacting the programme.



iLEAD Students during the graduation event for the TVET and Basic Computer Literacy Training as part of the iLEAD programme in Sokoto State.

3.2 Student Findings

A. Transformational Influence on Student Growth and Development

Findings showed that the iLEAD Programme has significantly shaped students' development, equipping them with essential leadership, entrepreneurial, and vocational skills while fostering self-awareness, confidence, and independence. Many students showed improvement in competence ratings in the key modules taught on the programme from baseline to endline. Many students expressed how the programme broadened their perspectives, helping them gain a deeper understanding of their identity and aspirations.

“iLEAD teaches you to know who you are, to work hard for yourself, and to contribute to your society.” – An iLEAD Student

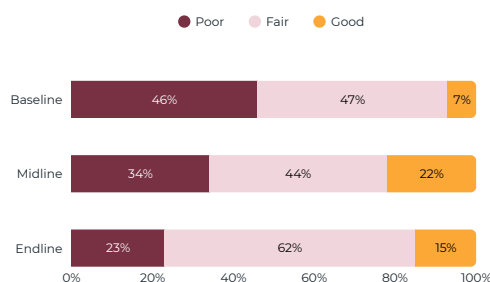
One participant reflected, “It gives us new ideas. Makes us know the things that we did not know before. It gives us the energy and ability to have the idea to solve problems and to also have the idea of leading ourselves and leading others.” This highlights the programme's role in enhancing students' problem-solving skills and leadership capabilities.

Development of Essential Soft Skills: The following sections highlight key areas of development, including self-leadership, vision, confidence, and critical thinking among participants. This growth is evident not only in improved assessment scores but also in the powerful personal testimonies of students who have gained valuable skills and experiences.

1. Leadership Development

A key theme that emerged was self-leadership. Students recognised that leadership is not about holding a title but about guiding oneself and others. One student reflected, “They make us to feel that we are leaders and we can lead people even if we do not have a position.” This highlights the programme's emphasis on leadership as a skill rooted in personal responsibility and initiative rather than formal roles. Some students even took on informal leadership responsibilities in school: “I am not the class monitor, but I lead other students, especially when the teacher is not in the class.”

Student competence scores: The Act and Art of Leadership

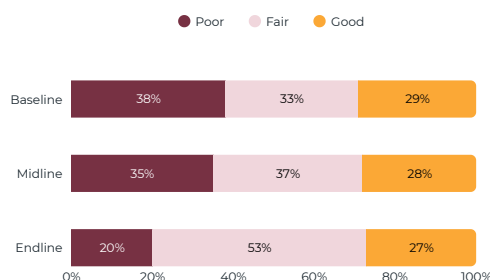


Scores from The Act and Art of Leadership module showed considerable improvement over time. At baseline, nearly half of the students scored Poor, but by midline, Good scores had more than tripled, while Poor scores had declined. By the endline, most students achieved Fair or Good scores, indicating notable progress in leadership competence. Beyond leadership in school, students also experienced a shift in their mindset towards financial independence. One participant shared, “Before iLEAD, I relied on my parents for money. Now, I have started a business and can support myself.” This newfound financial responsibility was accompanied by a broader understanding of personal and social contribution, as another student noted, “iLEAD teaches you to know who you are, to work hard for yourself, and to contribute to your society.”

2. Vision and Goal Setting

Students emphasised the clarity they gained in setting their goals. One student stated, “It helps us to know where we are going, who we are and how we see ourselves. And it also helps us to set our mission and vision.” The programme provided them with tools such as vision boards to help visualise and remain focused on their aspirations: “Anytime I look at it, I remember that this is what I want to become in life. I should remain focused, study my books, and do what I need to meet my goal.”

Student competence scores: Vision and Goal Setting

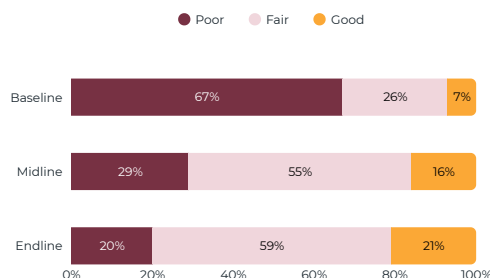


Scores from the Vision and Goal Setting module showed steady progress. At baseline, 38% of students scored Poor, but by endline, this had dropped to 20%, with a corresponding increase in Fair scores from 33% to 53%. Similarly, in the Learning and Choosing a Career Path module, Poor scores declined from 54% at baseline to 23% by endline, while Good scores rose from 26% to 34%, indicating enhanced confidence in setting career goals.

3. Self-Identity and Self-Confidence

Confidence and self-belief emerged as notable outcomes of the programme. Many students described how they had developed the courage to speak publicly and assert themselves in various settings. One student reflected, “Before the iLEAD programme, I don’t talk like that. But when we started iLEAD, iLEAD built my confidence. I can talk in front of the people, in front of thousands of people.” Another participant highlighted how the programme fostered self-leadership: “I learned how to lead myself and others... the teacher decided to make me the leader because my character is better.” This recognition from teachers further affirmed the programme’s impact in nurturing leadership potential.

Student competence scores: Self-Identity and Self-Confidence

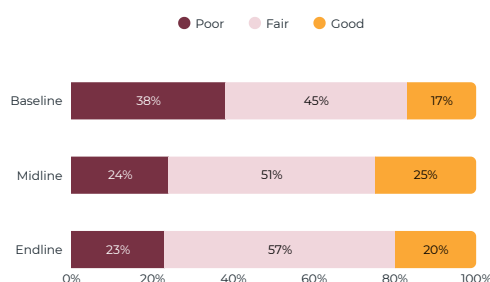


Scores from the Self-Identity and Self-Confidence module demonstrated some improvement. At baseline, 67% of students scored Poor, but by midline, this had dropped significantly to 29%, with Fair and Good scores rising to 55% and 16%, respectively. By endline, Poor scores had further declined to 20%, while Good scores increased to 21%, indicating a steady growth in students’ confidence and self-belief.

4. Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking

Students repeatedly highlighted how iLEAD enhanced their ability to approach challenges with a problem-solving mindset. One participant shared, “Before the iLEAD started, I would have a problem. I would just sit down, crying, thinking, thinking. I don’t know how to solve my business problem. But since when iLEAD started, I know the steps I would take and what I would do to solve the problem.” Creativity and innovation were also key areas of development, as illustrated by a student who applied problem-solving techniques to improve personal projects: “Before the iLEAD programme, me and my brother used to be creating something. But sometimes it wouldn’t work. But with the help of iLEAD and also the method of creativity and problem-solving, as they taught us, I followed the step by step. Now when we create, the thing that we create goes well.”

Student competence scores: Creativity and Problem-Solving



Scores from the Creativity and Problem-Solving module reflected progress. At baseline, 38% of students scored Poor, but by midline, this had dropped to 24%, while Good scores increased from 17% to 25%. By endline, the majority of students scored Fair or Good, demonstrating an overall enhancement in their ability to think critically and apply structured problem-solving approaches.

Box 2: What is the most important thing you have learnt since you started iLEAD? (Open-ended question)



Student responses to the question highlight the influence of the iLEAD Programme, with self-leadership (35%) being the most frequently mentioned learning, helping them develop personal discipline and responsibility. Entrepreneurship and business planning (30%) also stood out, providing practical skills for starting and managing businesses. Goal setting and vision (25%) were key takeaways, enabling students to define their aspirations and take purposeful action. Other notable learnings included time management (15%), leadership skills (10%), communication skills (5%), and values and ethics (5%), underscoring the programme’s role in developing well-rounded, future-ready individuals.

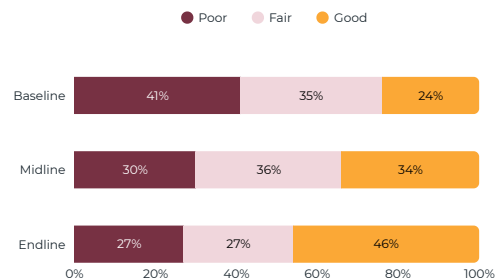
5. Group Collaboration and Teamwork

Collaboration and teamwork emerged as critical components of the students' learning experience. Many activities required them to work together, fostering essential problem-solving and communication skills. One student recounted the challenge of building a "Tower game using broom sticks and chewing gums," an exercise that tested their creativity and perseverance. They reflected on the role of teamwork in overcoming difficulties, stating, "If I was the only one, I would just say, Ah! I'm tired... but as soon as we are trying, this one will say, let's do this, let's do that... and at the end, we made the Tower." This experience highlighted how peer collaboration motivated students to persist through challenges and find innovative solutions collectively.

6. Time Management and Personal Responsibility

Time management was another essential skill that students showed improvement during the iLEAD Programme. They learned to balance academic work, vocational training, and other responsibilities more effectively. One participant shared, "Before the iLEAD started, during the closing hour, I would just go home and drop my bag and go and play football. I don't have anything to do. But right now, I'm a tailor. I used to go to the shop when we close." Another student echoed this sentiment, highlighting a newfound ability to manage time efficiently: "Before iLEAD, I didn't know how to manage time. But when iLEAD started, I learned how to manage time." This shift was reflected in students' improved ability to plan their daily schedules. One participant explained, "It helped me now. I can now manage my time. Instead of sitting or eating, I have to arrange my time."

Student competence scores: Time Management



Scores from the Time Management module demonstrated steady progress. At baseline, 41% of students scored Poor, but by midline, this had dropped to 30%, with Good scores rising from 24% to 34%. By endline, nearly half of the students (46%) achieved Good scores, reflecting stronger time management skills and a greater sense of personal responsibility.



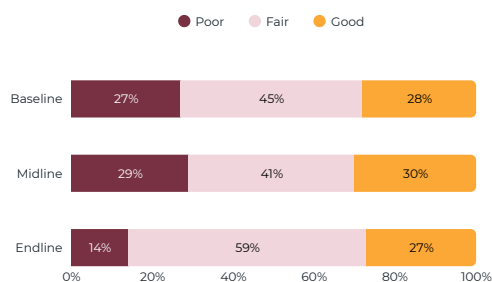
7. Conflict Resolution and Emotional Intelligence

Some students showed the capacity to resolve conflicts and foster positive relationships. One student narrated how they mediated a dispute between two classmates: “I met some two girls fighting. One said that she’s calling me a name that is not even part of Muslim... I solved the problem.” Additionally, some students recognised the importance of empathy and helping others: “If we see our colleague or somebody in trouble, even if it does not affect us, we should help him because in the future, we can also meet ourselves in the same place.”

8. Entrepreneurial Knowledge and Mindset

The iLEAD Programme placed a strong emphasis on entrepreneurship, equipping students with practical knowledge in business planning, and competitive advantage. One student shared, “I learned so many things, especially business plan, like how to set a business. And also how to create a competitive advantage.” The effect of this training was particularly evident among students already engaged in business ventures. A student running a poultry farm described how iLEAD helped him refine his approach: “So many poultry farms used to go out and buy chickens. But for me now, I will be hatching the eggs. So I won’t need to go outside and buy another set of chickens. I will continue hatching the ones that I have. They will also reduce the cost.”

Student competence scores: Introduction to Entrepreneurship



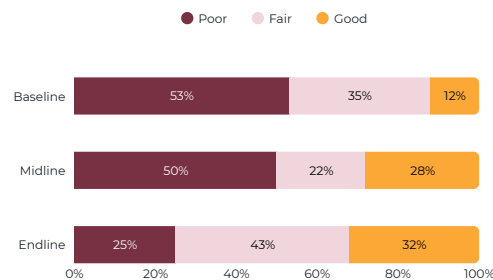
Scores from the Introduction to Entrepreneurship module reflected steady improvement. While Good scores remained stable from baseline to midline, Poor scores increased slightly. However, by endline, Poor scores had dropped significantly from 27% to 14%, with a corresponding rise in Fair scores to 59%, indicating some progress.



9. Core Values and Inspirational Lessons

Some students have internalised key values such as integrity, honesty, and responsibility, which became fundamental aspects of their personal growth. One participant emphasised, “Integrity, honesty, and responsibility... these are words I will never forget.” Inspirational quotes and philosophical reflections also played a significant role in shaping students' perspectives. One student shared a particularly memorable quote: “Your beliefs become your thoughts, your thoughts become your words, your words become your actions, your actions become your habits, your habits become your values, your values become your destiny.” Another student expressed appreciation for the programme's emphasis on self-improvement, stating: “An Asian proverb says ‘When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.’” This reflects the mindset to recognise and seize opportunities.

Student competence scores: Ethics and Values



Scores from the Ethics and Values module showed some progress. At baseline, more than half (53%) of students scored Poor, but by midline, Good scores more than doubled, rising from 12% to 28%. By endline, Poor scores had declined to 25%, while Good scores saw a little increase to 32%.

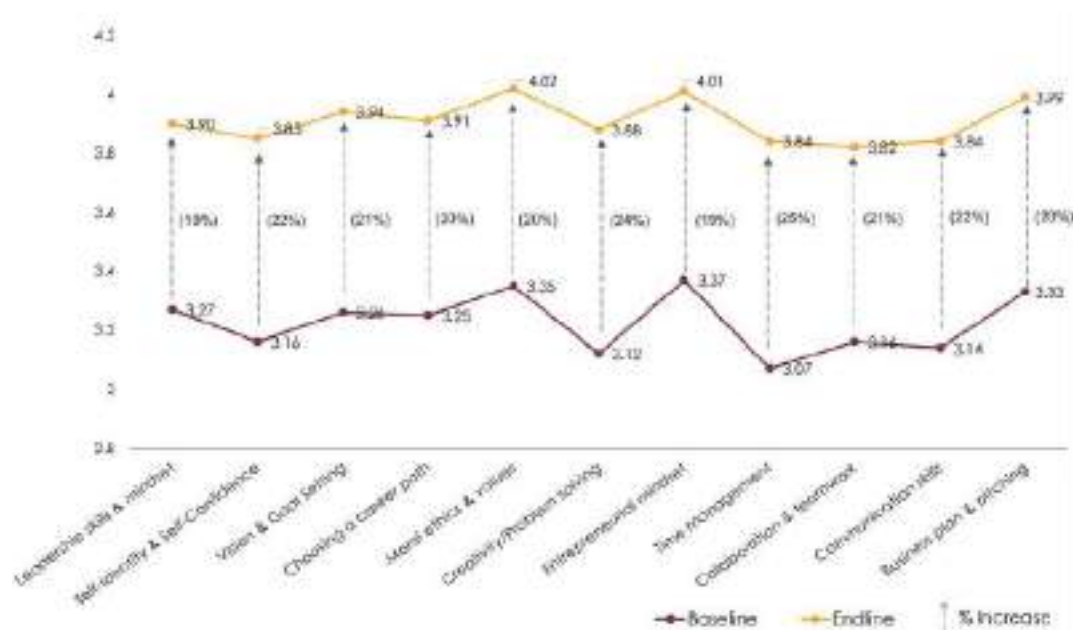


A group of iLEAD Teachers and Students of GDSS Runjin Sambo after a cascading session.

Teachers' Assessment of Students' Progress

Teachers' ratings of their students' skills and competencies before and at the end of the iLEAD Programme indicate considerable progress across all key areas. The average ratings for all categories increased, demonstrating that teachers believed the programme had contributed to their students' development. Notable improvements were observed in leadership skills (19% increase), self-confidence (22%), goal-setting (21%), career decision-making (20%), and entrepreneurial mindset (19%). Creativity and problem-solving skills saw the highest gains (24%), alongside substantial improvements in time management (25%), teamwork (21%), and communication (22%). Moral ethics and values also strengthened (20%), reinforcing the programme's role in shaping students' character. These outcomes highlight the programme's role in equipping students with essential skills.

Teachers' Reflections on Student Knowledge and Attitudes: Baseline vs. Endline (rated on a scale of 1 to 5)



B. Vocational and Entrepreneurial Skills Development

1. Vocational Skills Acquisition and Practical Learning

Students expressed enthusiasm for the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) aspect of the programme, noting that it equipped them with tangible skills that could be used to generate income and enhance self-sufficiency. Several students cited tailoring as a key skill they developed, with one proudly stating, "I made this school uniform myself," demonstrating both competence and confidence.

"I made this school uniform myself!"

— An iLEAD Student

Others spoke about their newfound abilities in fashion design, baking, and hairstyling. One participant remarked, "Before, I know how to bake a cake, but I didn't know how to decorate it. Now, I can decorate cakes, make cream, muffins, and bread." Another student, reflecting on their experience in hairdressing, noted, "Before, when I washed hair, I just put shampoo and rinsed it. Now, I know to apply water first, then shampoo and conditioner."

The excitement surrounding these skills was evident, with students rating the programme highly. One student, particularly impressed with the computer training, stated, "I can give them 5 over 5 because they taught us so many things, and it will help me in the future." The impact of these skills extended beyond the individual, as students saw opportunities to support their families and communities. One student shared, "I want to help my parents, my community, and others," while another noted that their tailoring skills could be a source of financial independence: "Even if I don't finish school, I can continue this skill and earn a living."

2. Entrepreneurial Training and Business Development

Alongside vocational training, the iLEAD Programme placed a strong emphasis on entrepreneurship, helping students to develop essential business skills such as business plan, and customer engagement. Many students spoke about how the training shaped their understanding of business:

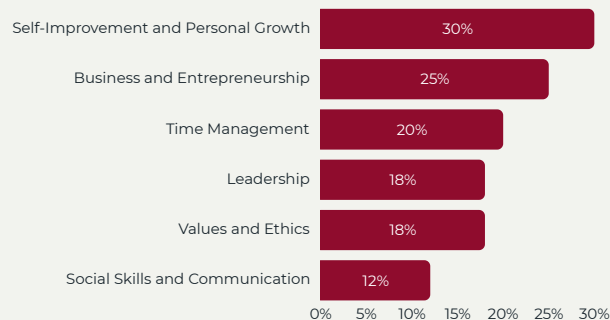
"Before this programme, I didn't have any experience in business. Now, I know how to set up my business."

"It taught us to be honest in our business. You shouldn't buy something at a low cost and sell it at an unfairly high price, because your customers will go elsewhere."

"Business plan is how you can prepare your business... how you can start business."

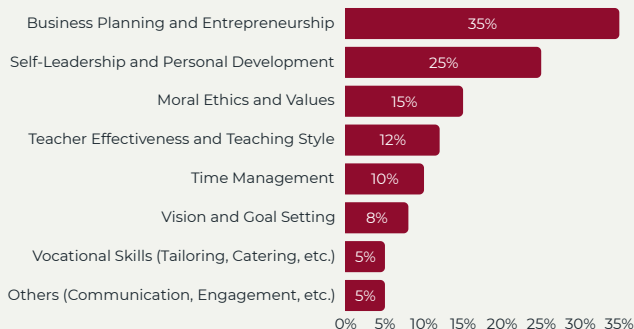
The programme's business pitch competition was particularly impactful, allowing students to present their ideas and gain confidence in discussing their ventures. One participant described the experience, saying, "I feel very confident because I've been able to make my business pitch... even if my pitch is not accepted, I will learn." Another student proudly shared their business idea: "My business idea is the production of reusable menstrual pads to females in Nigeria," demonstrating both entrepreneurial thinking and social impact awareness. Others expressed their belief in their ability to attract funding, with one student stating, "I am sure that I can convince you to give me money to support my business." Students also gained valuable market research skills, as one participant noted, "If you want to start a business, you cannot just go to the area that has nobody. You have to go to the location that is plenty of people that will come and see you and buy the thing that you are selling."

Box 3: In what ways has the iLEAD programme made you a better person or changed you? (Open-ended question)



The responses showed that the students believed the iLEAD programme contributed to their development in different ways. The most common theme was Self-Improvement and Personal Growth (30%), with students reporting more confidence, patience, and self-awareness. Business and Entrepreneurship (25%) was another key area, as students learned financial skills and how to plan and manage a business. Time Management (20%) and Leadership (18%) were also important, with students becoming more organised and taking initiative in leading themselves and others. Values and Ethics (18%) played a role in shaping discipline, respect, and fairness, while Social Skills and Communication (12%) helped students express themselves better.

Box 4: What Do You Like the Most About the iLEAD Programme? (Open-ended question)



Responses showed that the iLEAD Programme strongly resonated with students, particularly in business planning and entrepreneurship (35%) and self-leadership (25%), highlighting its impact on fostering entrepreneurial and leadership skills. Appreciation for moral ethics (15%) and teacher effectiveness (12%) reflected the programme's values-based education and quality instruction. Time management (10%) and vision/goal setting (8%) were also key themes, emphasising essential life skills. Vocational training (5%) and miscellaneous aspects (5%) rounded out the feedback, showcasing the programme's broad benefits.

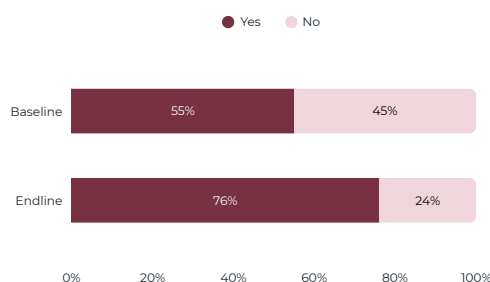


iLEAD students with their instructor during vocational training as part of the iLEAD programme.

C. Career and Future Aspirations

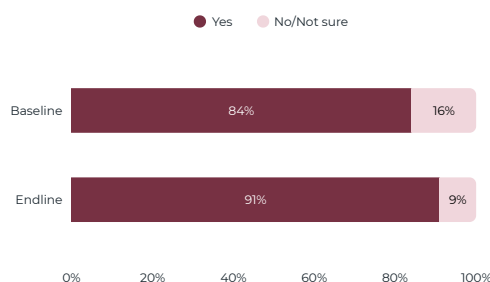
Students revealed that the iLEAD Programme has played a considerable role in shaping their career aspirations and fostering a mindset focused on self-reliance and long-term success. Many participants shared how the skills they acquired through the programme had influenced their plans for the future, with some already taking concrete steps towards their aspirations. For several students, the vocational skills gained through iLEAD provided a foundation for entrepreneurial endeavours. One student, who learned tailoring, expressed confidence in balancing education with a growing business: "Even if I am in school, I can continue [to sew] at home." Another participant shared their ambition to establish a graphic design business, stating, "I want to start my own graphic design business," reflecting the programme's effectiveness in fostering an entrepreneurial mindset.

Question: Do you currently have a business or business idea?



A notable increase in students' entrepreneurial aspirations was observed, as evidenced by the shift in responses to the question: "Do you currently have a business or business idea?" At baseline, 55% of students responded yes, while by the end of the programme, this figure had risen to 76%, with only 24% reporting no. This growth suggests the programme's role in inspiring students to see entrepreneurship as a tangible career pathway, equipping them with the confidence and practical skills to pursue independent ventures. Beyond vocational skills, students demonstrated a growing awareness of financial independence and self-sufficiency. One participant, who had learned how to make pillows, shared their excitement about turning the newly acquired skill into a source of income: "Yes, I am making money from it." This shift in perspective indicates that students increasingly perceive their skills as viable career paths rather than just supplementary activities. Additionally, many students expressed a strong desire to explore opportunities beyond their immediate environment. For some, the programme sparked interest in specific professions, prompting them to align their academic choices with their career aspirations. Others emphasised the importance of taking proactive steps and preparing for life after secondary school.

Question: Do you think that you are being well prepared for life after school?



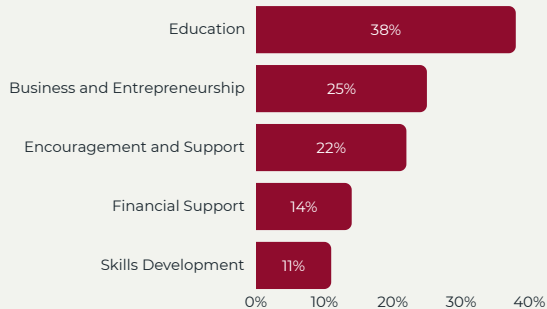
When asked: "Do you think that you are being well prepared for life after school?" the percentage of students who responded yes increased from 84% to 91% by the end of the programme. This rise in confidence may suggest that iLEAD has helped provide clearer guidance and direction for students' post-secondary education transition.

Box 5: If yes, tell us about your business or business idea (Open-ended question)



Student responses highlight tailoring and fashion design (35%) as the most popular business interest, followed by food and catering (15%). Retail (10%) and make-up/beauty services (10%) also emerged as key areas. Agriculture (8%) and various trades like barbing and shoe-making (5%) reflect additional entrepreneurial aspirations. These findings align with iLEAD's focus on fostering entrepreneurship and equipping students with practical skills for sustainable livelihoods.

Box 6: What do you think can be done to help you achieve your goals after secondary school? (Open-ended question)



The most common response was education (38%), with many students emphasising the importance of higher education for achieving their goals. Business and entrepreneurship (25%) also featured prominently, reflecting a strong interest in self-reliance and financial independence. Encouragement and support (22%) from family and mentors was highlighted as a key motivator, while financial support (14%) was identified as a major barrier to education and business startups. Lastly, skills development (11%) was noted as a practical way to prepare for future careers. These findings suggest a diverse range of aspirations, with a strong focus on education, entrepreneurship, and support systems.

D. Teacher Support, Engagement, and Relationships

1. Teacher Support and Student Engagement

Teachers were described as highly engaged and interactive, creating an open learning environment where students felt comfortable asking questions and seeking clarification. One participant shared, "In our class, our teacher used to explain on any part we don't understand. He will make sure we understand it before we go forward." This reflects the teachers' commitment to ensuring comprehension before progressing through lessons.

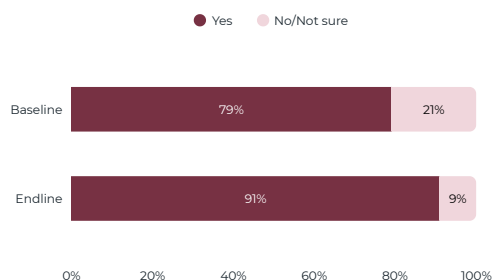
Student satisfaction with the modules they were taught (rated on a scale of 1 to 10)



Satisfaction with the teaching approach was further reflected in students' evaluations of the learning modules. On a scale of 1 to 10, all topics received an average rating above 7.5, suggesting that most students found the sessions engaging and relevant. However, some students also pointed to areas for improvement, with one stating, "I gave them 7 because they teach well, but they could give more assignments."

A notable increase in students' perception of teacher support was observed in response to the question, "Do you feel supported by your teachers?" At baseline, 79% of students responded yes, while 19% were not sure. By the end of the programme, this figure had risen to 91%, with uncertainty dropping to 6%. This upward trend suggests that iLEAD helped foster a more supportive and engaging learning environment, strengthening teacher-student relationships.

Question: Do you feel supported by your teachers?



Approachability and encouragement were particularly valued by students. One participant noted, "Whenever I don't understand something, they always encourage me to ask questions. They are here to teach us, and they try a lot." This demonstrates the strong mentorship role that teachers played in the programme.

Students also highlighted other areas for improvement. Some noted that language barriers occasionally hindered their learning experience, particularly when teachers were not fluent in Hausa. One participant remarked, "They explained in English more than Hausa," reflecting a desire for more Hausa instruction to improve comprehension. Others mentioned that teachers could enhance punctuality and provide more structured lessons to further improve the learning experience.

2. Strengthening Teacher-Student Relationships

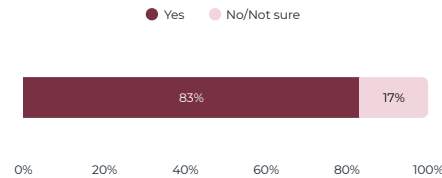
Findings showed that the iLEAD Programme has played a notable role in improving relationships between students and teachers, fostering a sense of approachability and trust. One student reflected on how the programme helped them build a connection with a teacher they had previously not interacted with: "Before the iLEAD programme, I was not the kind of student who talked to teachers... I didn't even know her name. When iLEAD came, I found myself in her class... I can easily talk to her. I can go to her and ask questions."

Students also highlighted a shift in classroom discipline and interaction. Prior to the programme, some teachers were perceived as strict disciplinarians who enforced rules through corporal punishment. However, with the introduction of iLEAD, many students observed a more relaxed and supportive teaching approach. As one student noted, "Before iLEAD, some teachers used to flog, but now, we play with them and understand the topic." This change contributed to a more positive learning atmosphere, where students felt more comfortable engaging with their teachers. A key takeaway from the discussions was the notable improvement in teacher-student relationships during iLEAD. Many students reported feeling more at ease interacting with their teachers, describing an increase in collaboration and mutual respect.

E. Parental Involvement and Support

Students reported a considerable level of parental awareness and support for their participation in the iLEAD Programme. Many parents actively encouraged their children to attend, recognising the long-term benefits of the programme. One student shared, "My parents know about this programme. They really support me... They allow me to go. They give me permission. And they are the ones that give me money for transport." Beyond granting permission, some parents took an active interest in their children's learning by engaging them in discussions about their experiences in the programme. One student explained, "Even if I come back from the programme, sometimes they ask me, 'What did I learn today? What did I gain from the class today?'" This level of engagement suggests that some parents valued the programme and sought to reinforce their children's learning at home.

Question: My parents usually ask me what I learn from iLEAD



Parental involvement extended beyond discussions, as some parents showed curiosity about the programme's materials and content. Some students recalled how their parents took interest in the student manual, asking about its content. However, some parents expressed concerns about the programme's time commitments, particularly when students returned home late during TVET training. One student shared that their father was "very sad" when they arrived home late at night, raising concerns about continued participation if it happened again. Aside from this concern, many parents actively encouraged their children to apply what they had learned. One student explained, "My mother always asks me what I learned in iLEAD and encourages me to use it." This demonstrates parental recognition of the programme's potential benefits and their role in reinforcing its impact at home.

F. iLEAD Club: Peer Teaching and Sustainability

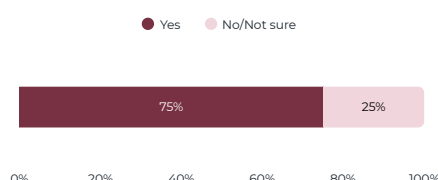
Findings indicate that the iLEAD Club is emerging as a key platform for student-led activities, fostering knowledge-sharing and leadership development among participants. Students took an active role in disseminating the programme's core lessons, extending learning beyond their immediate group. Many described teaching their peers, younger students, and even family members about leadership, values, and business planning. "We have the iLEAD club. And we teach non-iLEAD students. My classmates and I go to JSS1 classes... We meet them. We teach them about iLEAD." Others described how their involvement in iLEAD influenced interactions at home, where they shared lessons with siblings. "At home, every Thursday, when I got back, I used to gather my younger sisters and tell them what they taught us that day."

"The experience is really good, because you are feeling something is coming through you... Like you are the one creating everything." *—An iLEAD Student*

The opportunity to teach others provided a sense of fulfilment and confidence, reinforcing their understanding of key concepts. "When you are talking to the students, you will feel this joy that is coming out of you... It gives you courage to talk to many people." While many students found the iLEAD Club an effective tool for peer learning, some acknowledged initial challenges in engaging with the activities but noted that their confidence grew over time. "At first, it was somehow hard, but now I enjoy it."

Students also observed varying levels of engagement from their peers. While some junior students were eager to learn, others were less receptive, particularly when sessions coincided with break periods. Beyond the club structure, students engaged in active knowledge-sharing within the broader school environment. Many reported making presentations during assemblies or in class, reinforcing key iLEAD concepts. One student recounted teaching a session on "body language," demonstrating how non-verbal cues such as shaking hands or nodding convey meaning. Another student described facilitating discussions on "visioning and goal setting," expressing pride in contributing to their peers' understanding of future planning.

Question: I always share the lessons from iLEAD with my classmates who are not part of the programme



"When I started teaching, I realised how much effort our teachers put into teaching us every day."

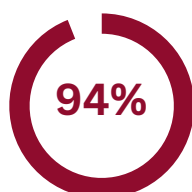
These experiences not only deepened students' grasp of the content but also helped them appreciate the craft of teaching. Students also suggested improvements to enhance the club's structure and appeal. Comparisons were drawn with other school clubs, such as Girls for Girls (G4G) and the Muslim Students Society (MSS), which were perceived as more engaging and structured. To strengthen participation, students proposed integrating iLEAD Club activities into school hours and ensuring consistency by designating specific days for club meetings.

The iLEAD Club was seen as a crucial mechanism for ensuring long-term engagement with the programme's values and lessons. Some students highlighted their efforts to promote iLEAD beyond their immediate school community. "I tell people in my area about iLEAD, and they wish to become iLEAD students too." This enthusiasm underscores the transformative potential of the programme, as students take ownership of their learning and seek to expand its reach to others.

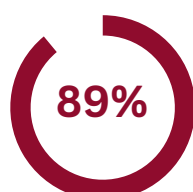
G. Overall Satisfaction with the Programme

Students expressed high levels of satisfaction with the iLEAD Programme, with most participants rating their experience between 7 and 10 out of 10. They particularly valued the skills and knowledge gained, as well as the programme's structure and delivery. While the overall response was positive, some students suggested minor enhancements, such as providing small incentives like pens or exercise books to encourage engagement. "When you do the programme, it should include a small giveaway, something to encourage students to keep coming. Even just a pen or an exercise book would help." Despite these suggestions, students widely praised the programme, noting that it helped them develop confidence, leadership skills, and clearer career goals.

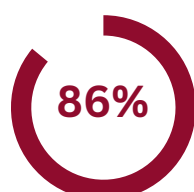
Are you happy at school?



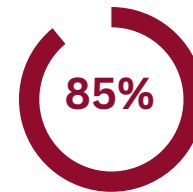
I learn something new in every iLEAD class



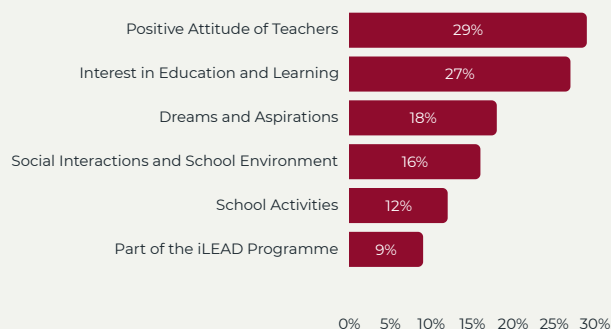
I use what I learn from iLEAD in my daily life



I now take my schoolwork more seriously since I started attending iLEAD

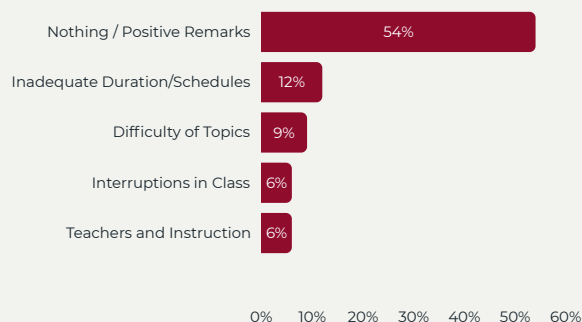


Box 7: (Are you happy at school?) If yes, what is the reason for your answer?" (Open-ended question)



The survey results reveal key factors influencing students' happiness at school. The most significant contributors are teacher support (29%), interest in learning (27%), and dreams and aspirations (18%). Social interactions (16%) and school activities (12%) also play crucial roles, while 9% of students attribute their satisfaction to the iLEAD programme. Overall, the findings suggest that students' happiness within the school environment is deeply tied to educational and extracurricular engagements, supportive environments, and future aspirations.

Box 8: What do you NOT like about the iLEAD programme? (Open-ended question)



A significant majority (54%) of respondents expressed no dissatisfaction with the iLEAD Programme, indicating overall positive reception. However, 12% cited concerns about inadequate session duration and scheduling, while 9% found certain topics such as business topics challenging. Classroom interruptions (6%) and issues with teaching quality (6%) were also noted, highlighting potential areas for improvement in time management, curriculum delivery, and classroom engagement.



A group of iLEAD teachers interacting during a Training of Trainer session as part of the iLEAD programme.



3.3 Teacher Findings

A. Teachers' Professional and Personal Development

The iLEAD Programme has had a profound effect on teachers, enhancing their professional skills, leadership capabilities, and personal development. Many teachers expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to participate, describing it as a transformative experience that broadened their knowledge and improved their effectiveness as educators.

“The aspect of leadership really changed a lot of things for me. It changed my character and made me a better leader to my students and even in my family.” *— An iLEAD Teacher*

1. Professional Growth and Leadership Development

Teachers widely acknowledged that the programme significantly expanded their understanding of leadership, and self-awareness. The training encouraged them to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses, ultimately fostering a sense of self-leadership. Many teachers also recognised the importance of vision and goal-setting in both personal and professional life, stating that these skills were now integral to their teaching approach: *“If you don’t have a vision and you do not know how to set your goal, how will you be able to take up the work that you are doing? Vision and goal setting is a road map for everything you are doing.”*

Furthermore, teachers reported improvements in their pedagogical approach, particularly in fostering student engagement and encouraging leadership within the school community. *“Before, we did not have leadership training, but with the introduction of iLEAD, both teachers and students have improved in leadership.”*

2. Entrepreneurial Mindset and Creativity

One of the most valued aspects of the iLEAD Programme was its emphasis on entrepreneurship. Many teachers noted that they had gained practical business knowledge, which they could pass on to their students. The importance of creativity in entrepreneurship was repeatedly highlighted: *“You cannot be an entrepreneur if you are not creative. You can’t flourish in any business if you are not creative.”* Some teachers reported that they had personally developed an interest in business and financial planning as a result of the programme: *“Before, I only worked as an employee of the state government. But from this programme, I learnt that I need to start up something; now starting a business is a priority for me.”* The programme also provided teachers with the necessary skills to guide students in business planning: *“We taught students how to plan a business, and we asked them to go and do it themselves. From there, we saw that they truly understood business and wanted to start small businesses.”*

3. Mentorship and Role Modelling

Many teachers recognised that their role had expanded beyond just delivering lessons, they now saw themselves as mentors guiding students in personal and professional development. Several expressed pride in their new responsibilities: *“We are not just teachers anymore. We are now role models, helping students see their potential.”* Teachers observed positive changes in students' attitudes and problem-solving skills, attributing these improvements to the lessons taught through iLEAD: *“Before, students would always come to us with problems. But now, they are learning to solve problems themselves and even for others.”*

This transformation extended beyond the classroom, with some teachers noting that their influence now reached into the broader community: *“Before iLEAD, I did not engage much in community development. But due to this programme, I now help my community in new ways.”*

Box 9: In what ways do you think the programme has benefitted you? (Open-ended question)



The iLEAD Programme has benefited teachers in multiple ways, with the most common being leadership development (32%), professional growth (20%), and entrepreneurship (18%). Many respondents also reported improvements in self-confidence (15%) and a stronger understanding of ethics and values. Some teachers mentioned receiving financial or material support (8%), while others (7%) described personal growth across various areas of their lives. The responses highlight how the programme has contributed to both their professional and personal development.

4. Improved Teacher-Student Relationship

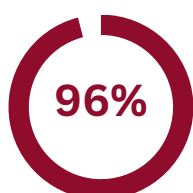
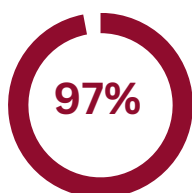
Findings from the discussions with teachers indicate that the iLEAD Programme has significantly enhanced teacher-student relationships within the school environment. Teachers reported that their interactions with students had become more engaging, open, and supportive. They attributed this improvement to the programme's emphasis on mentorship, student-centred learning, and effective communication strategies. Teachers expressed that they now feel more approachable, and students are increasingly comfortable seeking guidance both inside and outside the classroom.

Teacher-Student Relationship

a. Teacher Responses

I allow my students ask questions to be sure that they are following

My students often come to me outside the classroom to ask questions

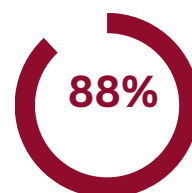
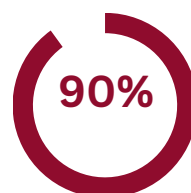
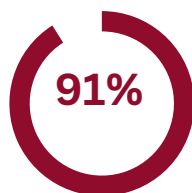


b. Student Responses

My teacher asks us questions to make sure that we are following

My teachers usually take time to explain and listen to the students

My iLEAD teacher inspires me to want to learn more

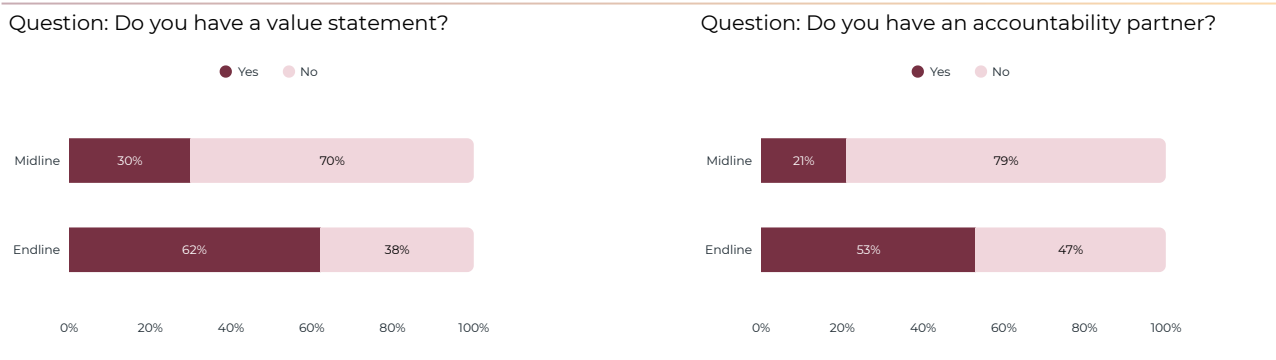


Survey responses from both teachers and students reinforce these qualitative findings. From the teacher survey, an overwhelming 97% of teachers reported that they actively encourage students to ask questions to ensure they are following the lessons. Additionally, 96% of teachers noted that students frequently approach them outside the classroom for further clarification and discussion. These figures suggest a shift towards a more open and interactive learning environment, where teachers are not just instructors but also trusted mentors.

Similarly, the student survey results reflect a corresponding improvement in students' perception of their teachers' supportiveness. 91% of students agreed that their teachers regularly ask questions to check for understanding, indicating an active effort to engage students in the learning process. Furthermore, 90% of students stated that their teachers take time to explain concepts and listen to their concerns, reinforcing the perception of a nurturing and responsive classroom environment. Notably, 88% of students reported that their iLEAD teacher inspires them to want to learn more, demonstrating the positive influence of the programme on students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning.

5. Improved Values and Moral Ethics

Findings from the evaluation indicate a significant improvement in teachers' values and moral ethics as a result of their participation in the iLEAD Programme. This positive change is evidenced by an increase in the number of teachers who reported having a value statement and an accountability partner, as revealed in the teacher survey.

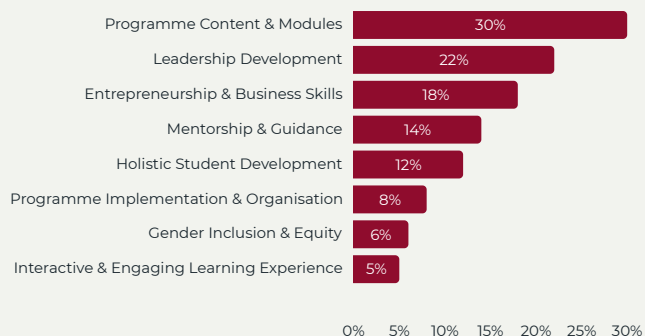


At midline, only 30% of teachers reported having a personal value statement, whereas by the endline, this had more than doubled to 62%. Similarly, the proportion of teachers with an accountability partner increased from 21% at midline to 53% at endline. These findings suggest a growing commitment among teachers to ethical decision-making, self-improvement, and professional accountability.

The value statements shared by teachers reflected key themes of student development, personal integrity, and leadership aspirations. Teachers expressed their commitment to nurturing students' potential, with one teacher stating, "To help a lot of my students to realise their potentials..."; upholding strong personal values, as reflected in the statement, "Do the right thing at the right time", and maintaining a focused and determined mindset, as expressed in, "Nothing in this world is impossible when heart and minds are put towards it". These statements highlight an increased sense of purpose and ethical responsibility in their professional roles.

Furthermore, the development of accountability partnerships indicates a shift towards a culture of mutual support and ethical reinforcement. Teachers identified a range of accountability partners, including colleagues, school leaders, programme officials, and family members. Notably, several teachers referenced iLEAD programme figures such as "My iLEAD Champion" and "LEAP Africa," demonstrating the programme's influence in fostering a supportive and ethically conscious teaching community.

Box 10: What do you like about the iLEAD programme? (Open-ended question)



The iLEAD programme is highly valued for its structured content and modules (30%), which teachers found effective and relevant. Leadership development (22%) was another key strength, helping educators and students build essential skills. Entrepreneurship and business skills (18%) were also widely appreciated for fostering self-sufficiency. Mentorship and guidance (14%) played a crucial role in supporting teachers and students, while holistic student development (12%) was praised for shaping mindsets and decision-making. Teachers also highlighted the programme's strong organisation (8%), gender inclusion (6%), and interactive learning experience (5%).



iLEAD teachers during the Training of Trainers in Sokoto State.

B. Need for Vocational and Digital Skills Training for Teachers

Teachers identified key areas for improvement in the iLEAD Programme, particularly the need for inclusion of educators in vocational training, which had primarily focused on students. They emphasised that equipping teachers with practical skills would enhance their professional and personal development:

“Next time, when it’s time for vocational training, please include teachers. Teach us something that will benefit us, like computer skills or internet training.”

Additionally, some teachers advocated for financial literacy and digital skills training to complement their existing knowledge and better support students: “Next time, please include teachers in vocational training. We also need skills like computer literacy and financial management.”



A LEAP Africa Officer facilitating a session during the Training of Trainers workshop as part of the iLEAD programme.

C. Student Engagement and Transformation

1. Confidence, Leadership, and Public Speaking

Teachers reported significant improvements in students' confidence, leadership abilities, and communication skills following their participation in the iLEAD Programme. Many previously reserved students became more vocal, proactive, and willing to take initiative in problem-solving and decision-making: “Before, they were always complaining about their education, unable to solve even simple problems. But now, they take initiative and solve problems.”

The programme fostered leadership qualities, equipping students with the ability to mentor their peers and take on responsibilities within their schools and communities. One notable example was a student who applied her entrepreneurial knowledge to assist her family: “One student advised her mother to start a money transfer business after learning about entrepreneurship in iLEAD. Now, her mother is successfully running the business.”

“Before iLEAD, he was reluctant, uninterested. We had to push him. Now, he has emerged as the best student in the business pitch.” *– An iLEAD Teacher*

Students also demonstrated increased confidence in public speaking, particularly during business pitch competitions, where they effectively presented their ideas: “Before, they could not come out and talk clearly. But now, during the presentation, they have improved in their communication skills.” One particularly inspiring case was of a student who had initially been disengaged but went on to win the business pitch competition: “Before iLEAD, he was reluctant, uninterested. We had to push him. Now, he has emerged as the best student in the business pitch.” These improvements indicate that iLEAD successfully instilled leadership and communication skills essential for future success.

2. Business, Vocational Training, and Entrepreneurial Mindset

The vocational training (TVET) and business pitch competition were highly impactful, encouraging students to actively apply their acquired skills and develop an entrepreneurial mindset: “Before, many of them weren't thinking about business. But now, they want to start something for themselves.” “One student even asked his father to open a shop for him, and his father agreed.” Students demonstrated a commitment to lifelong learning by continuing their vocational training beyond school hours: “Those who learnt mechanics go to mechanics shops after school. Those who learnt sewing are practising in tailoring shops.” Many students also showcased their skills by bringing their handmade products, such as clothing and accessories, to school, demonstrating the practical application of their learning: “We don't even need to ask them what they learned, we see it practically. Some brought pillows, long shirts, and gowns they made.”

3. Increased School Attendance and Student Engagement

The iLEAD Programme contributed to higher school attendance and increased student participation. Teachers observed a decline in absenteeism, as students became more motivated to attend classes, particularly iLEAD sessions: “Before, students were irregular in school. But now, they are eager to attend, especially for iLEAD sessions and presentations on the assembly.”

Even students who were not formally part of the programme showed interest in joining, contributing to the growing popularity of the iLEAD Club. Additionally, students began mentoring their peers, fostering a culture of knowledge-sharing and leadership within the school community: “During the iLEAD Club meetings, students are now teaching junior students what they learned. They are passing the knowledge forward.”



A group of iLEAD students at their vocational centre during the TVET period.

4. Student Leadership Development and Prefectship

A key outcome of the programme was its impact on school leadership structures, particularly among prefects. Many of the students appointed as prefects were from the iLEAD Programme, demonstrating their enhanced leadership skills:

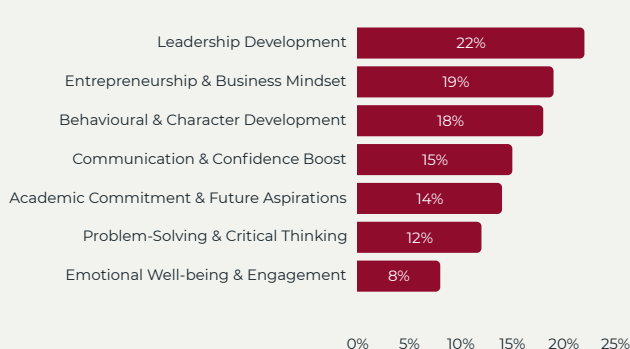
“Almost all our prefects are iLEAD students.”

“Before, school prefects used to lead other students with harsh treatment. But now, the present prefects think before they act. They no longer just take a stick and start beating other students, they call them, advise them, and interact with them.”

— An iLEAD Teacher

Teachers observed a marked improvement in prefects' leadership styles, with a shift from authoritarian discipline to a more considerate and responsible approach: “Before, school prefects used to lead other students with harsh treatment. But now, the present prefects think before they act. They no longer just take a stick and start beating other students, they call them, advise them, and interact with them.” This transformation reflects the effectiveness of iLEAD in promoting leadership qualities that prioritise mentorship, dialogue, and constructive problem-solving.

Box 11: In what ways have you seen the impact of the programme on your students? (Open-ended question)



The iLEAD Programme has had a notable positive impact on students, particularly in leadership (22%) and entrepreneurship (19%), where students are taking initiative and showing business awareness. Character development (18%) and communication skills (15%) have also improved, making students more responsible and confident. Additionally, students show greater academic commitment (14%), better problem-solving skills (12%), and increased engagement (8%), indicating that they not only benefit from the programme but also enjoy participating in it.

D. Sustainability and Expansion of the iLEAD Programme

Teachers acknowledged the iLEAD Club as a key mechanism for sustaining the programme, attracting both iLEAD and non-iLEAD students:

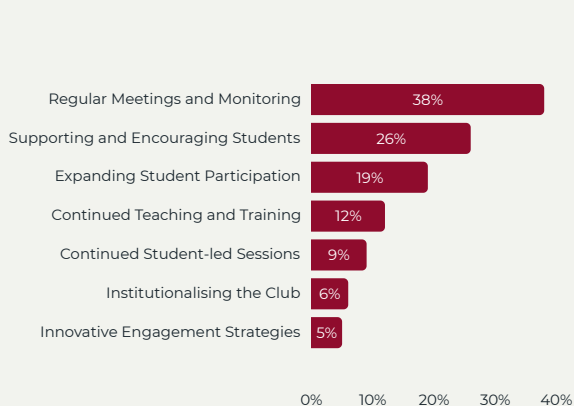
“Non-iLEAD students, they are up to 90, that they want to join the club.”

The club fosters peer mentorship, ensuring continued leadership and entrepreneurship training:

“During the iLEAD Club meetings, students are now teaching junior students what they learned.”

Teachers recommended formal integration of the club into the school’s extracurricular framework and securing Ministry of Education approval. They also called for philanthropic and government funding and suggested providing incentives, such as branded notepads, to sustain student engagement in club activities.

Box 12: What will you do to ensure the iLEAD club continues beyond this year? (Open-ended question)



The most common strategy reported by the teachers was regular meetings and monitoring (38%), ensuring consistency and engagement. Supporting and encouraging students (26%) through motivation and resources was also a priority. Expanding participation (19%) by involving other students aimed to ensure continuity. Other key approaches included continued teaching and training (12%), continued student-led sessions (9%) to promote leadership, and institutionalising the club (6%) for long-term sustainability. A few teachers (5%) suggested innovative engagement strategies, such as competitions and debates, to keep students involved. These responses highlight a commitment to sustaining the iLEAD Club beyond the programme.

Additional Teacher Feedback on their Experience of the Programme

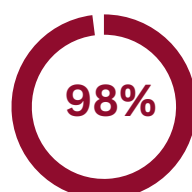
The training of trainers (ToT) has been useful for me in delivering the curriculum



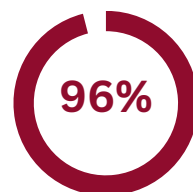
iLEAD programme has made me a better leader than I was before the programme



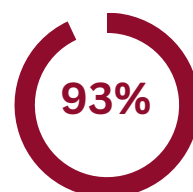
I find the programme useful for my personal growth and development



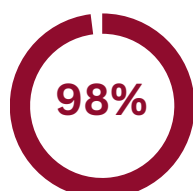
I learn something new every time I teach the students



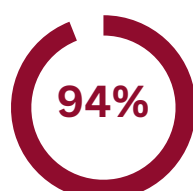
I always share the lessons I learn with my fellow teachers who are not on the programme



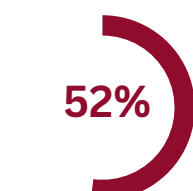
The manual was a useful tool in the delivery of the curriculum



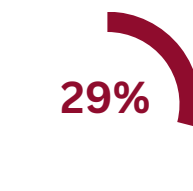
The modules in the curriculum are practical and easy for the student to understand



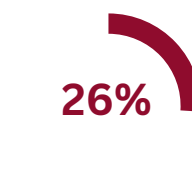
Sometimes we rushed the sessions because of time constraint



The iLEAD programme has been very challenging for me



The curriculum is too advanced for the students



E. Other Insights

1. Challenges of Student Absenteeism: Teachers identified economic hardship as a major factor contributing to student absenteeism, with many students missing school due to financial constraints and household responsibilities. Despite these challenges, teachers observed a notable improvement in attendance following the introduction of iLEAD. The programme's engaging content encouraged some students to be more committed to their education: "Before iLEAD, students skipped school frequently. Now, they are more committed and engaged."

2. Gender Dynamics in Education and Entrepreneurship: A striking theme was the higher engagement of female students in both academics and the iLEAD Programme. Teachers initially expected boys to be more committed to school, but they observed the opposite: "At first, boys were more interested in school, but now the girls are more committed. Girls come to school regularly, while boys' attendance is lower." Female students were also more actively involved in the TVET and business pitch competition: "The girls participated more in the business pitch. Even in the iLEAD Club, their engagement is higher." This shift may reflect a growing sense of empowerment among female students, but it also raises concerns about boys being left behind in education and entrepreneurship.

Teachers noted that boys tend to be more engaged in extracurricular activities like sports, suggesting that integrating business and leadership training with sports-related initiatives might encourage greater male participation: "The only thing that gets boys interested is extracurricular activities like football. If we had sports-related programmes, they would come." Additionally, teachers emphasised the need for balanced youth empowerment, cautioning against over-prioritising girls while neglecting boys: "If we empower only the girl child and not the boy child, there will be problems in the home and society." This highlights the need for a gender-inclusive approach to ensure that both boys and girls benefit equally from programme opportunities.

“The programme is (a) dimensional one that is capable of solving our major challenges as a people. All the areas iLEAD is tackling are critical for the personal and collective development of human resources of a given Nation. In few years ahead iLEAD will help correct most of our social ills. As a father and teacher, I'm as well applying the training on my kids, even though they have passed this level, yet I see it necessary for them in some areas.” _ Shibi Mlumun John (iLEAD Teacher, GDSS, Bodinga, Sokoto)

[In memory of Shibi Mlumun John, a dedicated teacher who contributed to the success of the iLEAD programme before passing away shortly after the end of the programme.]



Mr Shibi Mlumun John, an iLEAD teacher addressing a class during a cascading session.

3.4 Insights from School Administrators

The in-depth interviews (IDI) with school administrators (principals and vice principals) provided valuable insights into the iLEAD Programme's contributions to their schools. The discussions covered key themes such as student outcomes, teacher development, vocational training, programme sustainability, and recommendations for improvement.

“That’s why I say we have seen the impact on the students... they are relating the information to their colleagues here in the school.” *– A Principal*

1. Enhanced Student Engagement, Motivation, and Confidence

One of the most significant observations from the principals was the noticeable increase in student engagement as a result of the iLEAD Programme. Unlike traditional classes where students might be reluctant to participate, students in the programme were highly enthusiastic and eager to learn. “The teachers will not even drive them to the class... They will run when it’s time for the session, sit in the classroom and participate.” This suggests that the programme’s interactive and skill-based approach resonates with students, making learning more appealing and relevant. Additionally, iLEAD has helped students remain productively occupied in school, reducing distractions and improving focus. “The students are occupied throughout the day, and their teachers are actively involved with them.”

The impact of the programme extends beyond regular school hours, as principals noted that students are actively engaged in learning and skill acquisition, even during the holidays. “Even when they are here during holidays, I’m with them. And I see how they are excited about the vocational training.” The business pitch competition was also highlighted as a key contributor to students’ confidence, particularly in public speaking. Through these activities, students have developed critical thinking, communication, and presentation skills, which are essential for their future careers. “Even the way they are presenting... Sometimes, we call the iLEAD students out during assembly to inform other students, and they do it very well.”

2. Youth Empowerment, Leadership Development, and Peer Learning

Another key finding from the interviews was the programme’s role in fostering self-awareness, leadership skills, and a shift in students’ mindsets. The iLEAD Programme has helped students develop a sense of responsibility and recognise their potential as future leaders. “The programme has given them the courage... They now show zeal and believe that, ‘Yes, we are the leaders of tomorrow.’” Rather than seeing school as just an academic requirement, students are now recognising it as an opportunity to discover and develop their hidden talents. “They are not concentrating on just coming to school. The programme has helped them realise that they have hidden potential that they need to bring out.”

Principals also praised the emergence of peer learning through iLEAD club activities, where iLEAD students actively share the knowledge and skills they have acquired with their classmates and junior students. The programme’s influence has extended beyond the classroom, with parents taking notice of the changes in the iLEAD students and expressing interest in enrolling their children on the programme. “Some parents are even complaining about why their own children are not part of the programme.” This growing demand reflects the programme’s effectiveness and its potential to positively impact more students and communities.

3. Teacher Development and Pedagogical Transformation

A key outcome of the iLEAD Programme was the positive transformation in teachers' instructional methods and commitment to student development. Principals observed that teachers involved in the programme demonstrated greater dedication and innovation in their teaching. "The way they teach them during the iLEAD programme is not even the same with the way they teach them in the normal classes, because they have more time to engage with them." Teachers who participated in iLEAD gained exposure to new instructional techniques and effectively transferred this knowledge back into their classrooms, enriching students' learning experiences. "The teachers that you trained on your programme, the training is different from what they had before."

The introduction of new teaching approaches expanded learning beyond the traditional curriculum, making education more dynamic and engaging. "The programme is not just about teaching... Now they have experience of another way of teaching outside their classrooms." These changes indicate that iLEAD's teacher training component has significantly improved teaching quality, benefiting both students and the broader school community.



An iLEAD teacher leading a conversation during the Training of Trainers workshop.

4. Vocational Training and Economic Empowerment

A key theme from the interviews was the impact of vocational training in equipping students with practical skills for self-reliance and financial independence. The iLEAD Programme has provided students with training in tailoring, catering, craftsmanship, and other trades, enhancing their employability and entrepreneurial potential. "Most of the students that went to the vocational centres, most of them have improved. If you give them something to do now, they will be able to do it." Parents also recognised the economic value of these skills, as they provide students with a fallback option beyond formal education. "Even the parents were happy because the children have got the training. Even if they finish their education, they have something to fall back on."

5. Entrepreneurial Mindset and Business Development

The iLEAD Programme has played a crucial role in shifting students' mindsets towards entrepreneurship and financial self-sufficiency. Many students who previously had no business aspirations have now developed an interest in starting their own ventures. One principal shared a compelling example of a student who, before the programme, had not considered entrepreneurship but later formulated a business idea: "I was very impressed with the way I saw a boy coming out and writing what he wanted to do if he had the opportunity to have money." When asked if he had considered this before iLEAD, the student responded: "No. It was through the training that I now developed the interest."

The business pitch competition was particularly impactful in helping students learn how to develop business plans, strategise, and manage risks. "Who fails to plan is planning to fail. So, teaching them how to plan a particular business, it's just like you are showing them to focus. How to achieve, how to make profits. And where there is a problem, how they are going to manage it." This reflects iLEAD's core objective of fostering an entrepreneurial mindset, equipping students with the skills necessary to navigate real-world business challenges.

Additionally, the programme has inspired women to take charge of their financial futures, with some already starting small-scale businesses. One principal highlighted a female student who leveraged her tailoring training to launch a pillowcase business: "There's a girl who produced a pillowcase and came to show me. She wants to continue with it because some female students ask her to produce it for them. They are ready to buy." This example underscores how iLEAD empowers students, especially young women, to become financially independent and self-sufficient. "It's very, very important in the sense that you will earn a living, even if you are in your husband's house... If you have something to do, at least you keep yourself busy. And at the same time, you have something that is coming to your pocket." Through these initiatives, the iLEAD Programme is not only preparing students for employment but also equipping them to create and sustain their own businesses, ensuring long-term financial empowerment.



6 Sustainability of the iLEAD Programme

a. Institutionalising the iLEAD Club for Long-Term Impact: The establishment of an iLEAD Club within schools was identified as a key strategy for sustaining the programme's impact beyond its implementation period. Principals acknowledged that efforts were already underway to integrate iLEAD club activities within their schools. To ensure long-term sustainability, principals recommended embedding the iLEAD Club within the existing school club structure, which already has formal systems for management, including designated meeting times and reporting mechanisms: "Each club has its own coordinator. Whenever they meet, if there is any demand, they have to write to the school. This is what is going on, this is what they are doing."

Additionally, the proposal to introduce an online iLEAD Club was highlighted as an innovative approach to virtual engagement, allowing students to continue learning, networking, and receiving mentorship beyond the classroom setting.

b. Scaling the iLEAD Programme: There was strong advocacy for expanding the iLEAD Programme to accommodate more students and schools. The principals expressed confidence in the programme's ability to reduce youth unemployment and improve students' future economic opportunities: "If students have skills, they can produce something and sell it... This will reduce the number of unemployed graduates."

Given the positive impact of the vocational training component, increasing student and teacher participation was a key recommendation: "We need to increase the number of students, and even the number of the teachers." The demand for programme expansion was evident, as students who had seen their peers benefit from iLEAD were eager to join: "A lot of students are coming to me; they want to be involved in this programme because they have seen how their colleagues are enjoying the programme."

However, limited awareness at the start of the programme resulted in lower-than-expected registration rates, with only about 300 out of the targeted 400 students per school completing registration. To address this gap, principals recommended stronger community engagement to raise awareness about the programme's benefits and encourage greater participation. They also emphasised the need to increase programme capacity to accommodate the growing demand from students.

c. Government and Stakeholder Engagement for Sustainability: Government support and stakeholder engagement were seen as essential for sustaining and scaling the iLEAD Programme. Principals strongly advocated for collaborating with the Ministry of Education to integrate iLEAD into the formal school curriculum: "If the government can collaborate with iLEAD, this sort of programme can be included as part of school activities."

"If the government can collaborate with iLEAD, this sort of programme can be included as part of school activities." _ A Principal

Beyond government support, engaging private sector and community stakeholders was highlighted as a key strategy for ensuring long-term sustainability. Principals identified key stakeholders who could play a role in integrating iLEAD into the broader education system, including: Private school owners' associations and State School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs). These partnerships were seen as crucial for mobilising resources, strengthening programme reach, and institutionalising iLEAD's impact within the education system.

7. Programme Effectiveness and Overall Satisfaction

The iLEAD Programme received high ratings from principals, with scores as high as 9.9/10, reflecting strong approval and perceived effectiveness. “I will score it... 9.9 over 10.” Principals highlighted the programme’s success in enhancing students’ learning experiences, equipping them with essential vocational and entrepreneurial skills, and fostering confidence and leadership qualities. The overwhelmingly positive feedback indicates broad acceptance and appreciation from school leadership, reinforcing the programme’s ability to meet its intended objectives.

Parents also expressed satisfaction with iLEAD, particularly with its vocational training component, which provides students with practical skills at no cost: “I met with the parents, and they were so happy... They know that if they take their children to the training centres, they have to pay before anyone will train them. But here, you are able to train them for free, take them there for free, and bring them back for free.”

Beyond benefiting students directly, the principals described iLEAD as “very beneficial to the school, the students, and the community at large,” emphasising its role in fostering self-awareness, vocational skills, and an entrepreneurial mindset. The programme was seen as a catalyst for enabling students to “contribute their quota to the development of the economy and for themselves.”

One of the most notable changes observed was the increased confidence among students. Many who previously felt hesitant to speak in public or express their opinions became more outspoken after engaging in iLEAD activities. A particularly compelling example was a female student who sought the principal’s intervention to convince her parents to allow her to continue her education beyond secondary school, illustrating how the programme is shifting perspectives on female education.

Teachers also benefited significantly from iLEAD, with principals noting improvements in leadership and initiative among educators. iLEAD-trained teachers were observed to be “helping in different activities in the administration of the school” and demonstrating greater proactivity in decision-making. This shift was described as “a good leadership style toward the development of the school and the community at large.”



A cross section of iLEAD teachers during a Training of Trainer session as part of the iLEAD programme.

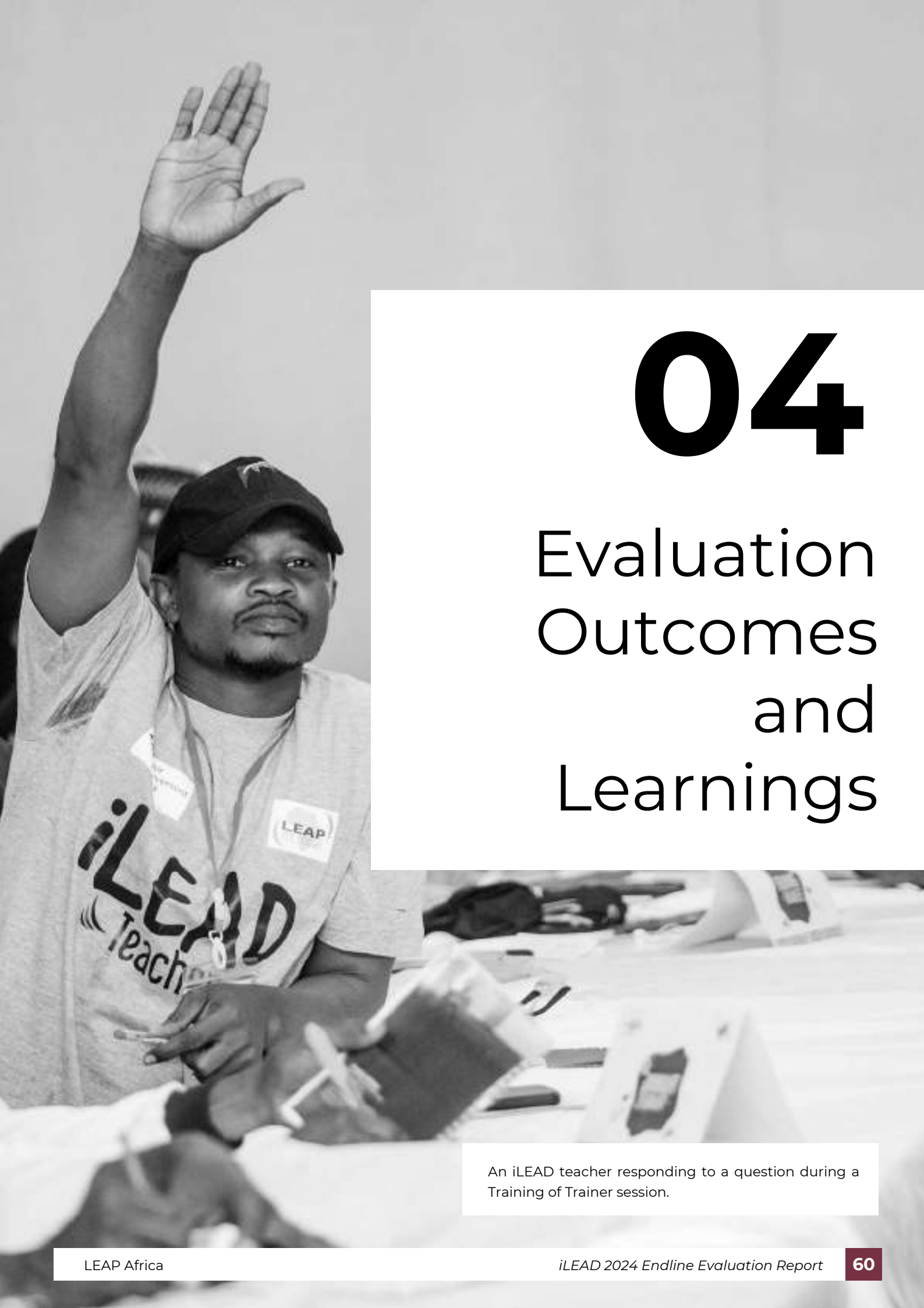
8. Other Insights

a. Experiential Learning and Practical Application: A core theme that emerged from the discussion was the importance of hands-on learning. The principals strongly emphasised that practical engagement enhances students' retention and application of knowledge. One recalled an educational principle: "If you want knowledge to be concrete in the mind of a student, tell him, show him and let him do it." This aligns with the iLEAD Programme's focus on equipping students with practical knowledge and vocational skills. A principal highlighted that the TVET component of iLEAD could serve as a model for revitalising and improving the implementation of Trade subjects in public schools. He recommended taking students outside the school environment for hands-on training, suggesting a batch-by-batch approach to enhance effectiveness. "Taking them out like you did on your programme can be done for the Trade subjects to give them practical experience." This statement underscores the importance of integrating more practical experiences into the school curriculum to strengthen students' skills and better prepare them for employment and entrepreneurship.

b. Addressing the Gaps in Trade Subjects Implementation: Although trade subjects are part of the school curriculum, their implementation has been largely theoretical rather than practical, limiting students' ability to gain hands-on experience. In contrast, the iLEAD Programme introduced practical training, which has been well received by both students and teachers. However, the principals observed that for vocational education to be fully effective across schools, several structural gaps must be addressed, including better-equipped school workshops, hiring skilled vocational instructors and regular hands-on training sessions. Principals highlighted how inadequate infrastructure; resources and manpower have hindered the effective delivery of trade subjects, with some schools forced to discontinue them. One principal cited the discontinuation of Food and Nutrition subject after the only qualified teacher was transferred. These challenges underscore the urgent need for sustained investment in equipment, teacher training, and infrastructure to ensure that trade subjects become practically relevant and meaningful for students..

c. Cultural and Gender Norms in Education: Principals provided important insights into gender-related barriers to education, particularly for female students. They noted that many parents in the community perceive secondary school completion as the final stage of education for girls, often prioritising early marriage over further studies. The iLEAD Programme, however, has begun to challenge these perceptions by increasing awareness of the importance of continued education. "Many of our parents think if you finish secondary school, the next step is marriage. But marriage should not stop you from furthering your education."

By engaging with parents and encouraging them to support their daughters' education, the programme is helping to shift cultural narratives and promote greater gender inclusivity in educational attainment. This was also reflected in the student surveys. At baseline, when students were asked about the assistance they would need to achieve their goals after secondary school, 5% indicated that they wanted to get married. Of this group, 75% were female students, while 25% were male students. At endline, this figure dropped, with only 1% of students stating that they wanted to get married after secondary school, and notably, all of them were female students. This shift suggests that exposure to the programme may have influenced students' aspirations, particularly among female students, by broadening their perspectives on educational and career opportunities beyond marriage.



04

Evaluation Outcomes and Learnings

An iLEAD teacher responding to a question during a Training of Trainer session.



4.1 Evaluation Outcomes

Relevance: *To what extent did the iLEAD Programme address the needs of students and teachers in underserved public secondary schools, particularly in leadership development, soft skills, vocational training, and career readiness?*

The 2024 cohort of the iLEAD Programme was designed to empower 4,000 students in underserved public secondary schools with leadership, entrepreneurial, and vocational skills, while equipping teachers with the necessary capacity to mentor and support students effectively. The evaluation findings highlight both the programme's relevance and the contextual challenges affecting student participation.

Key Findings

a. High Interest, Lower Turnout: The programme generated considerable interest, with 3,431 students (86%) submitting signed application forms endorsed by their parents. While this reflects substantial parental approval and student enthusiasm, it is worth noting that for a fee-free programme, an interest level exceeding 90% would have been more expected. This suggests that some students and parents may have faced barriers to enrolment, with awareness gaps and socio-cultural factors posing significant hindrances to the acceptance and uptake of such programmes in the local context.

Actual participation remained lower than expected, with only 2,150 students (54% of the 4,000 target) actively engaging in cascading sessions. This gap between interest and consistent attendance highlights barriers to sustained participation, including household responsibilities, financial constraints, and competing priorities.

b. Parental Support as a Key Driver of Retention: While parental endorsement facilitated high enrolment rates, ensuring continuous student attendance requires deeper parental engagement beyond initial sign-ups. Future programming could benefit from structured parental awareness initiatives to reinforce the value of consistent participation and incentives to sustain student motivation.

c. Students' Needs Addressed: Students reported gaining self-leadership skills, financial independence, career clarity, and goal-setting capabilities. Many students transitioned from passive learners to proactive problem-solvers and confident decision-makers.

d. Vocational and Leadership Skill Development remains Critical: The programme remained highly relevant in bridging critical skill gaps for students, particularly in leadership, entrepreneurship, and vocational training, areas that are not adequately covered in the standard school curriculum. The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) component was particularly impactful, providing students with marketable skills that align with local economic opportunities.

e. Enhancing Teacher Capacity for Long-Term Impact: Teachers played a pivotal role in delivering the curriculum and mentoring students, demonstrating the programme's relevance in strengthening the school ecosystem. The evaluation also identified a need for continued teacher support and professional development, particularly in digital literacy, financial management, and vocational training, to reinforce long-term knowledge transfer.

f. Gender Inclusion and Socio-Cultural Relevance: The programme made notable strides in promoting gender inclusivity, with higher-than-expected engagement from female students in business competitions and TVET training. Additionally, changing attitudes towards female education were observed, with some female students advocating for continued education instead of early marriage, a shift that underscores the programme's wider social impact.

Effectiveness: *To what extent were the programme objectives achieved? How have students' leadership, entrepreneurial, and vocational skills improved? How has the programme enhanced teachers' capacity to mentor and support students?*

The programme's effectiveness was measured through observed improvements in students' and teachers' skills, attitudes, and behaviours. Findings revealed that the programme has been successful in enhancing students' leadership, career preparedness, and vocational skills while strengthening teachers' capacity to support student development.

Key Outcomes for Students

Objective Pillar	Short-to-Midterm Outcomes	Supporting Evidence from Evaluation
• Equip students with leadership and entrepreneurial skills	• Students demonstrated greater self-awareness, confidence, and leadership abilities, with many taking on informal leadership roles in school and their communities.	• Leadership perception scores improved significantly, with students reporting a stronger sense of personal responsibility and initiative.
• Improve students' ability to transition into employment or further education	• Increased career clarity, business mindset, and decision-making confidence, with students becoming more deliberate about their future pathways.	• 76% of students had developed a business idea by the endline, compared to 55% at baseline, demonstrating a growing entrepreneurial mindset.
• Provide vocational and technical skills training	• Students acquired marketable, income-generating vocational skills, leading to early entrepreneurial activities among some participants.	• TVET-trained students gained hands-on experience in tailoring, baking, digital marketing, and other trades, with some already earning income from their skills.

Key Outcomes for Teachers

Objective Pillar	Short-to-Midterm Outcomes	Supporting Evidence from Evaluation
• Enhance teachers' leadership and mentorship capacity	• Teachers developed stronger mentoring relationships, leading to more interactive, student-centred learning environments.	• 91% of students felt more supported by their teachers at endline, up from 79% at baseline, indicating a positive shift in teacher-student engagement.
• Develop entrepreneurial mindset for educators	• Increased teacher interest in financial literacy, business development, and digital skills, with some seeking further training opportunities.	• Teachers expressed a desire to participate in vocational and financial management training, recognising the importance of these skills in their development and for guiding students.

Efficiency: *How effectively were resources, partnerships, and implementation strategies utilised to achieve programme objectives within the given timeframe?*

The efficiency of the iLEAD Programme was measured through the optimal use of resources, implementation strategies, and sustainability mechanisms within the given timeframe.

Key Findings

a. Resource Utilisation: The cascading training model maximised impact by enabling teachers to deliver sessions to a large number of students, ensuring cost-effective knowledge transfer.

b. Strategic Partnerships: Collaboration with vocational training centres and business pitch competitions added practical, real-world learning experiences that complemented classroom instruction.

c. Programme Delivery & Adaptation:

- The use of Hausa and English in training materials improved accessibility.
- Findings indicate that the implementation of the cascading sessions, TVET, and business pitch competition was efficient in equipping students with leadership skills, vocational expertise, and an entrepreneurial mindset.
- The Practice Hub (iLEAD Club) provided a structured peer-learning environment, increasing sustainability prospects.

d. Challenges & Recommendations:

i) Limited Reporting Compliance Due to Digital Challenges:

- Teachers' weekly reports for cascading sessions averaged 75 out of 100 teachers, indicating a reporting gap among participants.
- This was largely attributed to difficulties with digital reporting forms, reinforcing the need for stronger digital literacy training for teachers, particularly in underserved communities and public schools.
- Future programmes should integrate basic digital skills training into teacher capacity-building initiatives to ensure seamless monitoring, reporting, and engagement with digital tools.

ii) Need for Stronger On-Ground Physical Monitoring:

- The digital reporting challenges highlight the need for stronger on-ground monitoring mechanisms to track programme implementation more effectively.
- Leveraging local partners for more structured on-ground monitoring and programme visits can enhance real-time support, improve data accuracy, and strengthen accountability in programme implementation.

iii) Language Barrier for Broader Uptake:

- While the programme incorporated both Hausa and English in its training materials to reflect the local context, some students still faced language barriers. This suggests that consideration could be given to instructors having a functional understanding of the local language to facilitate revision sessions to enhance learning uptake, and maximise programme effectiveness.

iv) Structured Support for iLEAD Club:

- More structured support for iLEAD Clubs could enhance sustainability beyond the intervention period, ensuring that peer-to-peer learning continues effectively within schools.

Coherence: *How well are the different components of the iLEAD Programme integrated to reinforce each other? To what extent does the programme align with and complement existing educational and vocational training initiatives?*

Key Findings

a. The programme's five core components (Training of Trainers, Student Engagement, TVET, Business Pitch, and iLEAD Club) were well-integrated, ensuring a cascading effect of knowledge from teachers to students and peers.

b. Teachers served as knowledge multipliers, enhancing students' learning experience beyond the classroom.

c. The iLEAD Club emerged as a key sustainability mechanism, ensuring peer learning and continued application of skills.

d. The TVET component complemented the leadership and entrepreneurship modules, allowing students to apply their skills practically.

e. School administrators acknowledged that teachers have actively integrated iLEAD teachings and methodologies into school structures, fostering a more interactive and skills-based learning culture.

Key Outcomes

- a.** Students demonstrated improved leadership, problem-solving, and goal-setting abilities, with significant shifts in confidence and self-awareness.
- b.** Teachers reported enhanced pedagogical skills and adopted a more mentorship-oriented approach to education.
- c.** The programme bridged formal education and practical vocational training, ensuring alignment with existing educational initiatives.

Recommendations

- a.** Formal integration of iLEAD content into school curricula for long-term impact.
- b.** Strengthen inter-school collaborations to create a wider network of leadership and entrepreneurial learning.
- c.** Expand TVET opportunities and align them with evolving industry demands to enhance relevance.

Sustainability: *What is the likelihood that programme benefits will continue beyond the intervention period? To what extent have schools, teachers, and communities integrated iLEAD's training methodologies into their existing structures?*

Key Findings

- a.** The iLEAD Club introduced in schools serves as a peer-learning hub, ensuring continuity and replication of programme lessons.
- b.** Teachers adopted iLEAD's training methodologies, demonstrating a change in teaching style, increased student engagement, and mentorship-focused leadership.
- c.** Some students have applied vocational and business skills to generate income, showing early signs of economic sustainability.
- d.** Parental support for the programme increased, with parents encouraging students to apply iLEAD skills at home.
- e.** School administrators have shown commitment to supporting iLEAD Club activities as part of regular extracurricular activities.

Key Outcomes

- a.** Increased student-led initiatives, with participants mentoring peers and junior students.
- b.** Higher teacher engagement, with educators applying leadership and entrepreneurial skills in their classrooms and beyond.
- c.** Vocational skills sustainability, with some students already leveraging technical skills for income generation.
- d.** Schools demonstrating ownership of the programme, advocating for its long-term inclusion in school activities.

Recommendations

- a.** Advocate for government and private sector partnerships to support long-term funding and scalability.
- b.** Institutionalise the iLEAD Club as part of extracurricular school activities to sustain knowledge transfer.
- c.** Develop a model template to standardise iLEAD Club activities across schools.

Key Outcomes

- a.** Students demonstrated improved leadership, problem-solving, and goal-setting abilities, with significant shifts in confidence and self-awareness.
- b.** Teachers reported enhanced pedagogical skills and adopted a more mentorship-oriented approach to education.
- c.** The programme bridged formal education and practical vocational training, ensuring alignment with existing educational initiatives.

Recommendations

- a.** Formal integration of iLEAD content into school curricula for long-term impact.
- b.** Strengthen inter-school collaborations to create a wider network of leadership and entrepreneurial learning.
- c.** Expand TVET opportunities and align them with evolving industry demands to enhance relevance.

Gender: *How effectively did the programme address gender inclusion?*

Key Findings

- a.** Female students demonstrated stronger participation in leadership and entrepreneurship activities compared to their male counterparts.
- b.** Girls dominated the business pitch competition and TVET training, showcasing a shift towards economic empowerment.
- c.** Students' perception of gender roles evolved, with more girls expressing aspirations for entrepreneurial and leadership roles.
- d.** Cultural barriers affecting girls' education were identified, with iLEAD helping to challenge norms that limit female students' post-secondary opportunities.
- e.** Teachers and school leaders acknowledged the need for a balanced approach, ensuring boys are equally engaged.

Key Outcomes

- a.** Increased female participation in leadership and business-related activities.
- b.** Greater gender awareness, with students challenging stereotypes and advocating for inclusivity.
- c.** Stronger female confidence and self-advocacy, as seen in public speaking, business pitching, and peer mentoring.

Recommendations

- a.** Integrate targeted activities into the programme to enhance male student participation.
- b.** Strong female participation and positive outcomes suggest that expanding female involvement and initiatives could encourage greater parental support, helping to bridge gender gaps in the region.
- c.** Integrate gender-sensitisation elements into engagements with parents and community leaders to sustain the promotion of equal educational and life opportunities for both boys and girls.

4.2 Consolidated Learnings

Building on the evaluation of the core dimensions of the iLEAD Programme and secondary learning insights, the assessment consolidated key learnings to inform future programme design, adaptation, and scalability. This section synthesises insights on facilitators and barriers to implementation, the influence of local context, school structures, and teacher engagement, as well as critical lessons for ensuring programme success, scalability, and sustainability.

1. Leadership Programmes are Valuable for Students' Holistic Development

Insights from the programme indicate that leadership and entrepreneurship programmes play a critical role in fostering students' overall development. The iLEAD Programme contributed to significant improvements in key skill areas, including creativity and problem-solving, entrepreneurship, self-identity, time management, leadership, and career planning. Teachers' evaluations further reinforced these findings, with student knowledge and attitudes showing measurable progress across programme modules from baseline to end line. These improvements suggest that structured leadership programmes equip students with essential life skills, preparing them for both academic and personal growth.

2. Leadership Programmes can Improve Student Focus and Foster a Positive Mindset Shift

As part of the iLEAD programme, 86% of students reported actively applying their learning in daily life, while 85% noted an increased commitment to their schoolwork. Teachers and principals also observed a clear shift in student mindset, with greater engagement, improved classroom behaviour, and a more proactive attitude towards leadership and academic responsibilities. These findings suggest that exposure to structured leadership training can enhance students' focus, motivation, and sense of personal responsibility, reinforcing the importance of such programmes in building well-rounded, goal-oriented youth population.

3. TVET is Highly Relevant for Enhancing Student Aspirations and Post-Secondary Transitions

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) component of the programme has proven to be highly relevant in shaping students' aspirations and preparing them for successful post-secondary transitions. All teachers who participated in discussions highlighted the value of TVET in equipping students with essential, sustainable skills. Similarly, principals affirmed that the TVET programme had provided students with valuable skills that will benefit them and their communities. Notably, 90% of students rated their experience and the perceived importance of the TVET skills as 10/10, with many already applying their newly acquired skills. This underscores TVET's impact on student perceptions of its relevance and long-term significance for their future.

4. Empowered Teachers: Strengthening Educators to Better Support Their Students

A key learning from the iLEAD programme is that investing in teacher development leads to improved motivation, teaching practices, and student engagement. Teachers reported that the programme not only enhanced their ability to support students but also contributed to their personal and professional growth. Many educators found that each teaching session provided new learning opportunities, reinforcing the idea that continuous professional development benefits both teachers and students.

Additionally, student feedback highlighted the critical role of inspired and well-equipped teachers in fostering a positive learning environment, with 88% of students stating that their iLEAD teacher inspires them to learn more and 90% noting that their teachers take time to explain concepts and actively listen to them. These insights underscore the strong link between teacher empowerment and student engagement, demonstrating that when teachers are supported, their ability to mentor, motivate, and positively influence students is significantly enhanced.

5. Case Studies, Stories, and Practical Activities are Key to Learning and Retention among Teenagers

The iLEAD programme's use of case studies, storytelling, and practical activities has proven to be an effective approach for engaging students and enhancing learning retention. In focus group discussions (FGDs), about 60% of students expressed a strong appreciation for the stories in the iLEAD manual, with many recalling specific case studies such as Ben Carson, Husseina, and "The Boy Who Scared Lions." Teachers also found the case studies intriguing and inspiring, reinforcing students' positive feedback. Additionally, many students highlighted practical activities as the most memorable aspect of the programme. Notably, 80% of students who participated in FGDs enjoyed activities such as the Tower Game, Trust Walk, and Vision Board, demonstrating that hands-on and experiential learning significantly enhances student engagement and understanding.

6. Extracurricular Activities Can Strengthen Teacher-Student Relationships and Enhance the School Experience

Extracurricular activities within the iLEAD programme have had a positive impact on teacher-student relationships and the overall school experience. Teachers reported that these activities fostered enthusiastic student engagement and curiosity, leading to more dynamic and effective classroom interactions. As one teacher noted, "The interaction between me and the students also helps me a lot in day-to-day activities." Additionally, 90% of students expressed appreciation for the teaching methods used in the iLEAD programme, with comments such as, "I like the way the teacher teaches us and explains the lessons during iLEAD." These activities, which emphasise teamwork, leadership, and communication, equip students with valuable skills beyond the traditional curriculum, enriching their school experience and strengthening teacher-student connections.

7. Learning and Adaptation Are Key to Effective Implementation

The programme's success in addressing student needs and ensuring effective curriculum delivery was significantly enhanced by the adaptation of the iLEAD manual. Insights from the needs assessment and baseline survey revealed that low English proficiency posed comprehension challenges, potentially hindering student engagement with the curriculum. In response, the curriculum was simplified and translated into Hausa, making it more accessible to students. By midline, 89% of teachers reported that the Hausa version of the iLEAD manual was highly effective in facilitating curriculum delivery. This adaptation has been instrumental in improving students' understanding, engagement with programme modules, and overall learning experience.

8. Parental and Community Support Crucial for Programme Uptake

A key learning from the iLEAD programme is that strong parental and community engagement enhances student participation and retention. Many parents supported their children's involvement, recognising the programme's long-term benefits. Some actively participated in programme meetings and engaged in discussions about their children's progress, reinforcing learning at home and encouraging continued participation.

However, levels of parental engagement varied, with some students receiving limited support, which in turn affected their enrolment and attendance at programme sessions. This highlights the need for more structured parental sensitisation efforts to ensure stronger buy-in and sustained commitment to the programme. Additionally, increasing parental and community awareness through targeted outreach could further strengthen support for students, particularly in overcoming socio-cultural barriers to programme participation, improving retention, and maximising overall impact.

9. School Leadership: A Strong Factor in School Culture and Performance

Findings indicate that school leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping school culture and overall student performance. While some schools clearly benefited from superior infrastructure, facilities, and resources, secondary findings suggest that the intentionality, commitment to excellence, and leadership approach of school administrators could have a greater influence on student outcomes.

In schools where principals and administrators demonstrated a strong commitment to excellence, students consistently performed well and excelled in quizzes, debates, and competitions. Teachers in these schools attributed these achievements to proactive leadership, semi-structured support, and the strategic, objective allocation of responsibilities to selected teachers who were tasked with preparing students for such competitions. This trend of excellence was not merely a result of resource availability but rather the product of strong leadership, motivation, and high expectations set by school administrators.

Furthermore, in schools where principals actively fostered a culture of excellence, there was higher student engagement, stronger teacher-student collaboration, and a greater sense of school pride. A leadership emphasis on goal-setting, discipline, and extracurricular participation contributed to a positive learning environment, motivating students to strive for success beyond the classroom. This pattern was particularly evident in schools where principals and key administrators embodied excellence themselves, leading by example and ensuring that both teachers and students remained focused on academic and personal growth. The findings underscore that strong, visionary school leadership is a key driver of success, even in schools with limited resources. This reinforces the need for leadership development programmes for school administrators as a strategy for improving overall school performance and sustaining a culture of excellence.

10. Language Accessibility Enhances Programme Uptake and Learning

A key learning from the iLEAD programme is that language accessibility plays a crucial role in student engagement and comprehension. While the iLEAD Manual was available in both English and Hausa, some students struggled to fully grasp lessons due to limited Hausa translations during instruction. In cases where teachers primarily used English, students with lower English proficiency faced barriers to effective learning. This highlights the importance of ensuring that both instructional materials and teaching delivery are adapted to students' linguistic needs. Future programmes could emphasise bilingual instruction and provide additional support for teachers to integrate local languages more effectively, ensuring greater accessibility and improving student engagement and learning outcomes.

11. Economic Barriers Can Impact Student Attendance and Engagement

A key learning from the iLEAD programme is that economic hardships can significantly affect student attendance and participation. Students from low-income backgrounds often face competing financial pressures, including household responsibilities, transport costs, and the need to engage in income-generating activities, which sometimes limit their ability to fully participate in the programme. The economic realities of students' households shape their priorities and level of engagement, with some experiencing intermittent absenteeism due to financial constraints. This underscores the need for strong parental support. Future considerations could include providing transportation stipends to reduce financial barriers and promote consistent participation.

12. Gender Norms Influence Educational and Career Aspirations

A key learning from the iLEAD programme is that deeply rooted gender norms continue to shape students' educational and career aspirations, particularly for female students. In some communities, secondary school completion is viewed as the final stage of formal education for girls, with marriage being the next expected step. However, iLEAD contributed to shifting these perspectives by broadening students' aspirations and encouraging female students to pursue further education and entrepreneurship.

Additionally, while female students actively engaged in vocational training, their participation was concentrated in traditionally female-dominated fields such as tailoring and catering, with lower representation in sectors like graphic design and computer programming. This highlights the need for more inclusive career awareness initiatives to encourage gender diversity in vocational training choices and expand opportunities for female students in non-traditional fields.



A cross section of iLEAD teachers taking notes during the Training of Trainers workshop.

05

Recommendations



Recommendations

5.1 Recommendations for the Programme

1. Expand Programme Reach and Scale

The iLEAD Programme has generated strong interest, and there is a need to accommodate more students and schools. Expanding the programme's reach will ensure that more underserved students benefit from leadership, entrepreneurship, and vocational training. To achieve this, the programme should:

- Increase the number of participating schools and students to meet growing demand.
- Strengthen partnerships with government, private sector organisations, and development partners to ensure financial sustainability and wider geographical coverage.
- Develop a phased expansion strategy to maintain programme quality while scaling effectively.

2. Enhance Teacher Capacity-Building Initiatives

Teachers play a critical role in sustaining the impact of iLEAD by mentoring students and delivering programme content. To strengthen their capacity:

- Future cohorts could extend vocational and digital skills training to teachers so they can support students beyond leadership and entrepreneurship.
- Provide refresher courses and professional development opportunities to keep teachers updated on new teaching methodologies, trends, and vocational skills.
- Encourage peer-learning networks where experienced iLEAD teachers mentor new participants, ensuring continuity and knowledge sharing.

3. Strengthen the iLEAD Club for Sustainability

The iLEAD Club has shown to be an effective way for students to reinforce learning and mentor their peers. To institutionalise it as a long-term sustainability mechanism:

- Integrate the iLEAD Club as a recognised extracurricular activity in participating schools, with formal structures, designated mentors, and scheduled meetings.
- Develop a structured implementation model with clear guidelines on club operations, activities, and student leadership roles.
- Encourage schools to provide minimal resources, such as meeting spaces and supervision, to support club activities and ensure continuity.

4. Improve Digital Reporting and Monitoring Mechanisms

Effective monitoring is essential to track programme progress and outcomes. However, digital literacy gaps among teachers affected reporting compliance. To enhance monitoring for future cohorts:

- Integrate basic digital skills training for teachers to improve reporting efficiency and data accuracy.
- Establish stronger on-the-ground monitoring mechanisms, including regular school visits and session observations to verify programme implementation and impact.

- Explore dedicated digital reporting device within schools to increase accessibility to teachers with lack of devices and limited technological exposure.

5. Expand TVET Opportunities

TVET component of the iLEAD Programme has been instrumental in equipping students with practical, income-generating skills. To maximise its effectiveness:

- Improve alignment of vocational training with emerging industry demands to ensure that students gain relevant and marketable skills.
- Establish partnerships with local businesses, technical institutions, and trade associations to provide more students with TVET experience and pathways for post-programme continued skill development.

6. Enhance Parental and Community Engagement

Parental and community support plays a significant role in student retention and success. To deepen engagement:

- Conduct structured parental awareness initiatives to educate parents on the long-term benefits of leadership and vocational training.
- Organise community forums where parents can hear success stories from iLEAD graduates, fostering greater buy-in and support.
- Encourage parents to support their children's entrepreneurial initiatives, whether through financial backing, mentorship, or providing opportunities for practice at home.

5.2 Recommendations for Schools and Educators

1. Integrate Leadership and Entrepreneurial Training into the Curriculum

- Advocate for the inclusion of leadership, career development, and business planning as part of extracurricular activities or elective courses within the school system.
- Encourage educators to embed leadership, self-confidence, and problem-solving elements into everyday teaching.

2. Foster a More Supportive Learning Environment

- Encourage teachers to continue adopting mentorship-based teaching methodologies that foster student confidence, participation, and leadership skills.
- Encourage peer-to-peer learning. Facilitate teacher networking and mentorship programmes where experienced educators can share best practices on leadership, entrepreneurship, and digital skills with others.
- Recognise and incentivise exceptional teachers who demonstrate commitment to student development.

3. Advocate for Vocational and Digital Literacy Training for Teachers

- Sponsor teachers for digital skills training to enhance their proficiency in using technology for lesson delivery, student mentorship, and personal development.
- Organise training in financial literacy and business development to enable teachers to guide students in entrepreneurship.

4. Encourage Inter-School Collaboration

- Facilitate partnerships between schools to exchange best practices and create a wider network of leadership and entrepreneurship learning opportunities.

5. Foster Parental and Community Support for Student Education and Aspirations

- Organise regular parental and community engagement sessions and open days to highlight the benefits of education and extracurricular activities for students growth and development.

- Recognise and celebrate student achievements. Schools should showcase student success stories through community events, and school assemblies to reinforce the value of education and encourage continued parental and societal support.
- Mobilise community support for school facilities and resources. Encourage local businesses and stakeholders to sponsor infrastructure improvements, provide learning materials, or support vocational training initiatives to enhance student learning experience.

5.3 Recommendations for Parents and Community Stakeholders

1. Deepen Parental Involvement in Student Learning

- Strengthen parental awareness through participation in sensitisation sessions and school engagements to discuss students' needs and development.
- Actively engage in and support students' learning and career aspirations.

2. Encourage Support for Vocational Training and Entrepreneurship

- Promote vocational and entrepreneurial skills as viable career pathways, helping students build self-sufficiency beyond traditional academic routes.
- Provide mentorship or financial support for students' small business initiatives.

3. Address Cultural Barriers to Education

- Engage other parents and community leaders to challenge gender biases and societal norms that hinder access to post-secondary education, particularly for girls.
- Provide mentorship or financial support for students' small business initiatives.

4. Foster a Community-Based Support System for Students

- Partner with schools, local businesses, and professionals to offer internships and apprenticeships for students.
- Establish community forums where students can showcase and sell their products and services, providing real-world entrepreneurial experience.

5.4 Recommendations for Students

1. Participate Actively in the iLEAD Club and Peer Mentorship

- Continue engaging in iLEAD Club activities to reinforce learning and mentor junior students.
- Collaborate with peers to develop innovative business ideas and pursue entrepreneurial ventures.

2. Leverage iLEAD Skills for Career and Business Growth

- Apply leadership, entrepreneurship, and vocational skills to real-world opportunities.
- Continue to seek mentorship from teachers, parents, and community leaders to refine career goals.

3. Adopt a Long-Term Mindset for Financial Independence

- Utilise vocational skills to generate income and save for future educational or business needs.
- Explore improving your digital literacy skills and leveraging online platforms to expand learning and business opportunities.

4. Commit to Continuous Learning and Personal Development

- Continue exploring opportunities for further vocational training and higher education.
- Take advantage of available online courses and free learning resources to enhance skills.

5. 5 Recommendations for Government and Policy Makers

1. Institutionalise Leadership and Entrepreneurial Training in Schools

- Integrate leadership, vocational, and entrepreneurial training as part of the formal curriculum for public secondary schools to ensure sustained impact and scalability.

2. Strengthen Trade Subject and Vocational Education Infrastructure

- Invest in improving infrastructure and resources for Trade Subjects and TVET in schools, including well-equipped workshops and skilled instructors to enhance practical learning experiences.
- Facilitate private sector partnerships: Collaborate with the private sector to support student vocational training and apprenticeships, ensuring effective implementation and monitoring of Trade Subjects in schools.

3. Support Gender-Inclusive Policies in Education and Employment

- Implement policies that promote equal access to vocational and entrepreneurship training, ensuring that both male and female students receive adequate support in career readiness.

4. Ensure Alignment of Trade Subjects with Local Labour Market Needs

- Strengthen linkages between the Trade Subjects curriculum and state-level labour market demands to ensure students gain relevant, employable skills.

5. Support Teacher Professional Development in Leadership and Digital Skills

- Allocate resources for regular teacher training in leadership, entrepreneurship, and digital literacy.
- Recognise and reward teachers who excel in mentoring and youth development.

6. Promote Youth Entrepreneurship through Funding and Policy Support

- Establish seed funding initiatives for student entrepreneurs emerging from Trade Subjects or TVET programmes within schools.
- Provide government incentives, such as grants, tax breaks, or startup incubators, to support young entrepreneurs transitioning from school into business ventures.

7. Strengthen Foundational English Literacy in Public Schools from the Primary Level

- Invest in teacher training and professional development to enhance instructional quality in public primary schools.
- Develop and distribute age-appropriate, multilingual learning materials, incorporating local languages to ease the transition into English proficiency.
- Implement remedial learning initiatives to support students struggling with literacy, ensuring they receive targeted assistance before progressing to higher levels.



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