



Crompton CSR Foundation

Impact Assessment Study
of MEP Skill Development Project

Ahmednagar, Maharashtra

Report by NuSocia | August 2023



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Abbreviations

CCF	Crompton CSR Foundation
CMIE	Centre for monitoring Indian Economy
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
ILO	International Labour Organization
MEP	Mechanical, Electric, Plumbing
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

NSDC	National Skill Development Corporation
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Development and Co-operation - Development Assistance Committee
SC	Scheduled Caste
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
ST	Scheduled Tribe
VDO	Village Development Officer

Executive Summary

The impact assessment study of Crompton CSR Foundation's MEP Skill Development Program in Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, for the FY 2022–2023 aimed to evaluate the program's impact and identify areas for improvement. The study utilized qualitative research techniques and involved virtual and in-person data collection from various stakeholders, including the implementing organization, participants, trainers, and employers. The program was initiated in collaboration with Devloka Educational Trust to address unemployment among educated youth in Ahmednagar.

The program curriculum was designed by keeping the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) as a guiding source. It focused on both technical skills (MEP) and soft skills (communication, personality development, and basic computer skills). The Trust's surveys and research prior to the program implementation, helped identify gaps in the job market and determine the training needs. The program's implementation team comprised an administrative team and an on-ground team in Ahmednagar. They managed the program, monitored progress, and ensured smooth operations.

The training facilities and equipment provided a mix of theory and practical learning, earning appreciation from students for the hands-on approach. In addition, the guest lectures and industry visits were incorporated to offer insights into career options and credit linkages for aspiring entrepreneurs. However, the transition from an engineering college campus to a private space caused a decline in female student admissions due to the now shared accommodation.

Regarding job placement support, the Center provided continuous support and guidance ensured successful placements for the students. The program data states to have achieved a high placement rate, with 87% of participants securing jobs in companies, 20% in shops, and 3% starting their own ventures. The primary research interactions with some of the placed students to cross-validate the data gave the insight that they are not currently placed or working yet.

For the employed and earning students, the program's impact was evident in increased employability of participants in the MEP sector. The skills acquired during the training were relevant and applied in their current jobs. HR representatives from employing companies appreciated the students' technical abilities and encouraged them to pursue further education for career advancement.

The program also had positive financial impacts on participants and their families. 86% of the students who participated in the survey stated that they experienced financial relief due to the program. Students became financially independent, relieving their families from the burden of daily expenses. Parents expressed satisfaction with their children's improved livelihood opportunities and increased contributions to household finances.

The following report gives a detailed record of these pointers in six sections. The report first gives an overview of the employment and skilling landscape across India and Maharashtra and an introduction to the skill development program itself. The second part of the report talks about the methodology which has been used in the impact assessment, followed by the findings section. The findings section provides an in-depth reporting across the four themes of –

1. Implementation of the Program
2. Skill development among the youth
3. Increase in the income generation of the youth
4. Impact

The fourth part of the report covers the REECIS evaluation of the impact assessment across the six parameters of – Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Coherence, Impact and Sustainability. The report then covers the last two sections of recommendations followed by the conclusion.

The key recommendation for program is about targeted mobilization efforts for balanced inclusion, ensuring the admission of female candidates, development of formal feedback mechanism and alumni engagement.

Overall, the MEP Skill Development Program in Ahmednagar has demonstrated commendable success in skill development and employment generation for educated youth in the region. The recommendations provided in this study can further strengthen the program's impact and sustainability, making it a model for future skill development initiatives.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

According to the International Labour Organization, “Global unemployment is projected to edge up slightly in both 2023 and 2024, reaching 211 million, although the rate will remain at 5.8 per cent.”¹

With India specifically, Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) records the unemployment rate has crept to a nearly 7.8% in June (2022) which is the highest the country has seen in the last three decades.²

A 2016 paper titled ‘Rural Development and Employment through Skill Development’ shares that “According to the World Economic Forum, only 25% of Indian professionals are accepted by the organized sector to be employment worthy, while the remaining have never received any formal training to cultivate skills. These skills include hard skills as well as soft skills”³.

This turns the attention to understanding the penetration of skill development in rural India. Data from 2017-2018 reflects devastatingly low penetration of vocational training as 93.7% youth have not received any training. Issues such as scarcity of quality trainers, inadequacies in training programs and more focus on the academic pursuits than vocational training form hindrances in skill development. In addition, the location of the training institutes and the commute it incurs, discourages the participation of female candidates.⁴

Maharashtra:

In the state of Maharashtra, the survey shows that the unemployment rate in urban areas of Maharashtra post-Covid has increased from 4.4 % in 2019-20 to 6.5 % in 2020-21. This survey also showed that the contribution of the service sector in employment dropped by 2.2 % during this period. According to the survey, total employment in the State as on 30th June 2022 was 80.36 lakh, of which 28.2 % were female. The proportion of employment in the private sector was 70.8 % of the total employment.⁵

¹ <https://ilostat.ilo.org/assessing-the-current-state-of-the-global-labour-market-implications-for-achieving-the-global-goals/>

² <https://www.forbesindia.com/blog/economy-policy/why-india-needs-an-effective-skilling-programme-to-combat-unemployment/>

³ Patra, Purnendu. (2016). Rural Development and Employment through Skill Development. SMS Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation. 3. 10.21844/smsjei.v3i01.6794.

⁴ <https://www.forbesindia.com/blog/economy-policy/why-india-needs-an-effective-skilling-programme-to-combat-unemployment/>

⁵ [State's urban population and unemployment rate, both see an increase | Mumbai news - Hindustan Times](#)

8.37 lakh informally skilled persons are aware of formal skill development programs. 37.27 lakh are willing to enroll for formal programs, of whom 23.09 lakh would like to enroll if the training is free/sponsored, 6.8 lakh if it is subsidized and 7.39 lakh even if they have to pay. 23.118 lakh are willing to enroll in short-term programs and 4.994 lakh in long-term. There are 4.05 lakh persons who are willing to enroll in formal programs and the duration of training does not matter for them. 504.33 lakh persons (51.84% of population aged 15 years and above) in the state do not possess any skill and are not employed (unemployed or not in the labor force). Females constitute 69.91% (352.6 lakh) of this segment. 47% reside in rural areas.

Within this segment, 7.65 lakh are aware of formal skill development programs- of whom, 5.693 lakh (74%) are 15-30 years of age, and 4.264 lakh (56%) are females. Among those who are willing to enroll in formal training, 66% reported- Yes, if they are free/sponsored and 62% reported preferred training duration - Short-term training program.⁶

Ahmednagar:

Ahmednagar district has a significant opportunity in terms of a sizeable population of the working age spectrum. By 2023, there will be about 19.59 lakh labor force participating in the labor market system of the district. Ensuring adequate skilling of the available workforce will ensure increased productivity in the district economy, thus propelling state growth⁷.

63% of the respondents in Ahmednagar aspire to be self-employed and 37% reported a preference for being wage-employed. Interestingly, amongst the respondents who aspire to be self-employed, there is a higher preference to undertake further education/ training as compared to wage employment aspirants. Additionally, there is preference for acquiring vocational education amongst both categories of the aspirants i.e. those who aspire to be wage-employed and those who aspire to be self-employed.

It can be said that the creation of skill development programs for youth can bring a positive impact on the economy by reducing dependency on social welfare systems and maximizing the potential of the country's human capital. These programs equip young individuals with the skills and knowledge that are in demand. By providing training by professions, youth are better prepared to secure employment or become self-employed. This leads to increased income levels for individuals, reducing poverty and improving their standard of living. When young people acquire relevant skills, they become more efficient and effective in their work. This, in turn, contributes to increased economic output and growth. It also encourages entrepreneurship and innovation. Entrepreneurship stimulates economic growth, creates job opportunities for others, and drives innovation and creativity, leading to overall development in the country.

⁶ [ESTIMATING THE SKILL STOCK IN MAHARASHTRA](#)

⁷ [Micro- Level Skill Gap Study for the State of Maharashtra Final Report](#)
[tate's urban population and unemployment rate, both see an increase | Mumbai news - Hindustan Times](#)

By equipping young individuals with skills, these programs increase their employability and reduce youth unemployment rates. Investing in skill development programs for youth contributes to social development and inclusion. It provides opportunities for disadvantaged and marginalized youth to acquire skills and break free from the cycle of poverty.

1.1 About the Skill Development Program

Crompton is a well-known company that has a rich history and a strong presence in the electrical industry. Founded in 1878, Crompton has established itself as a trusted name in manufacturing and providing a wide range of electrical products and solutions.

Emphasising corporate social responsibility (CSR), the Crompton CSR Foundation (CCF) actively participates in various initiatives, encompassing Water Conservation, Skill & Entrepreneurship Development, Education, and Community care across diverse regions.

It believes in the philosophy of the SDGs and has incorporated them into its business practices. It also recognizes the importance of the SDGs and their potential to create a more sustainable and equitable future for all.

Crompton CSR Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals Limited (CGCEL) aimed at providing vocational training and resources to school and college dropouts and unemployed youth in the local community in Ahmednagar. They decided to address the issue of unemployment and underemployment by providing them with the skills and knowledge they need to get employment in the formal sector or help them to start their own businesses.

Devloka Educational Trust, a local non-governmental organization (NGO) with a track record of successfully implementing development programs in the region, collaborated with Crompton CSR Foundation to implement these programs. They aim to provide vocational training to unemployed youth in Ahmednagar, Maharashtra.

Key Components of the Interventions

1. Providing Skill training to youth of the region

87% of the 240 young people who participated in a multi-skill technician (electrician) training program were hired by various companies. This success demonstrates that the program meets the needs of the local labor market effectively.

2. Awareness on the entrepreneurship

Furthermore, 3% of the 240 students started their own business some, demonstrating the program's impact in developing both marketable and entrepreneurial skills.

3. Improving Socio-economic conditions of the families

The positive effects extend beyond the candidates themselves, as these individuals' placement has an impact on their families as well. Assuming a four-person family, the program's success affects approximately 864 people. These families now have better chances of achieving financial stability, which will lead to improved health outcomes, education, and overall quality of life.

Progress of the project

Project type	Residential training program
Training duration for a batch	3 months
Number of Beneficiaries	240
Center capacity	60 (30 per batch)
Total Budget	Rs. 1,16,25,900/-
Average cost per trainee	Rs. 48,441/-

Table 1: Project overview

Profile of the Beneficiaries

For the eight batches of 2022-2023, of the total 240 students, 49% have completed their 12th and the rest have completed their 10th grade education.

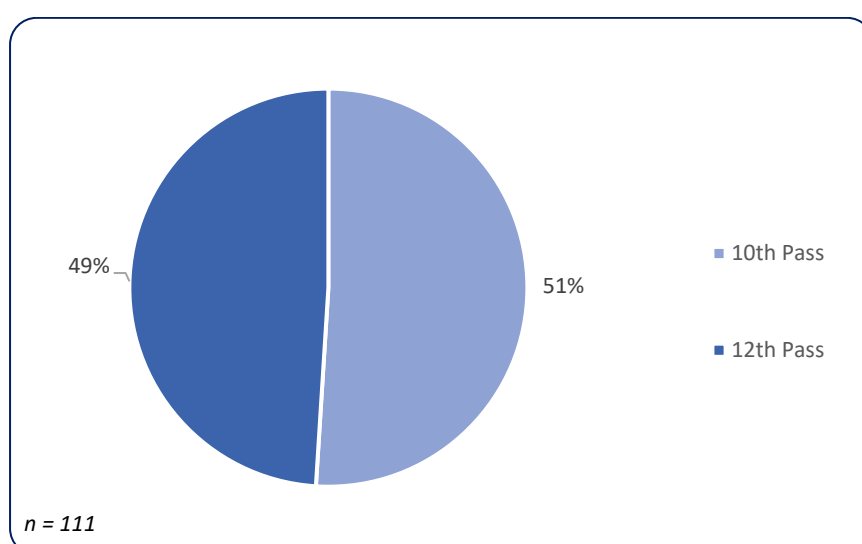


Figure 1: Education qualification of the students from the 2022-2023 batches

In terms of the caste profile of the 240 students, the majority of the students, 95% of the students belonged to the Hindu religion. While taking a look at the caste-wise participation,

54% of the students belong to the General caste, followed by 26% belonging to the OBC community and 20% belonging to the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST).

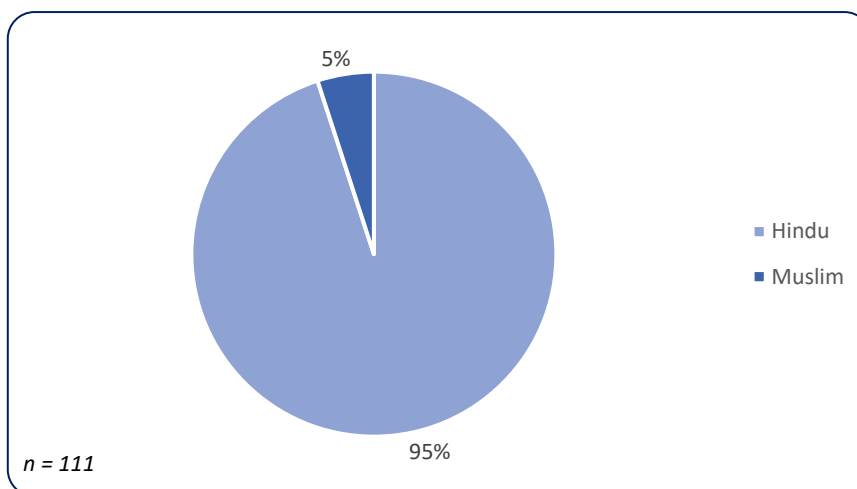


Figure 2: Religion profile of the students from the 2022-2023 batches

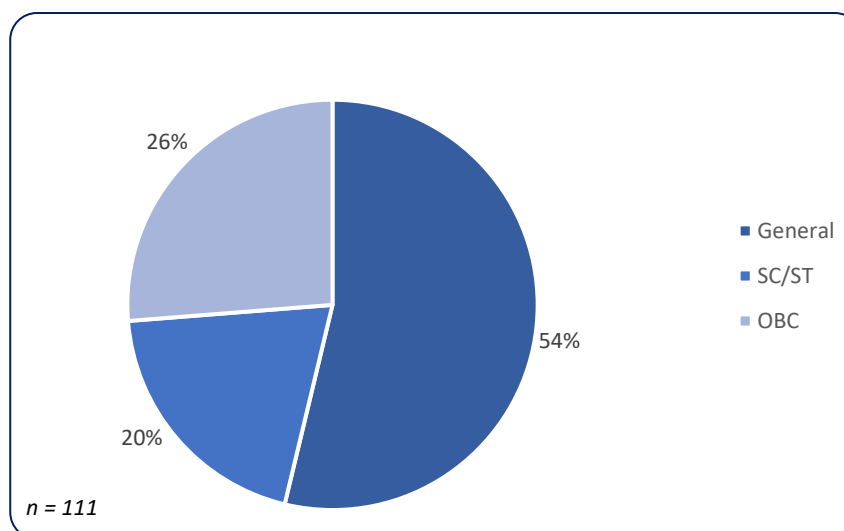


Figure 3: Caste profile of the students from the 2022-2023 batches

The profile representation of the students from the eight batches of 2022-2023 reflect the comparatively low participation from the religious and caste-based minorities.

2. Methodology

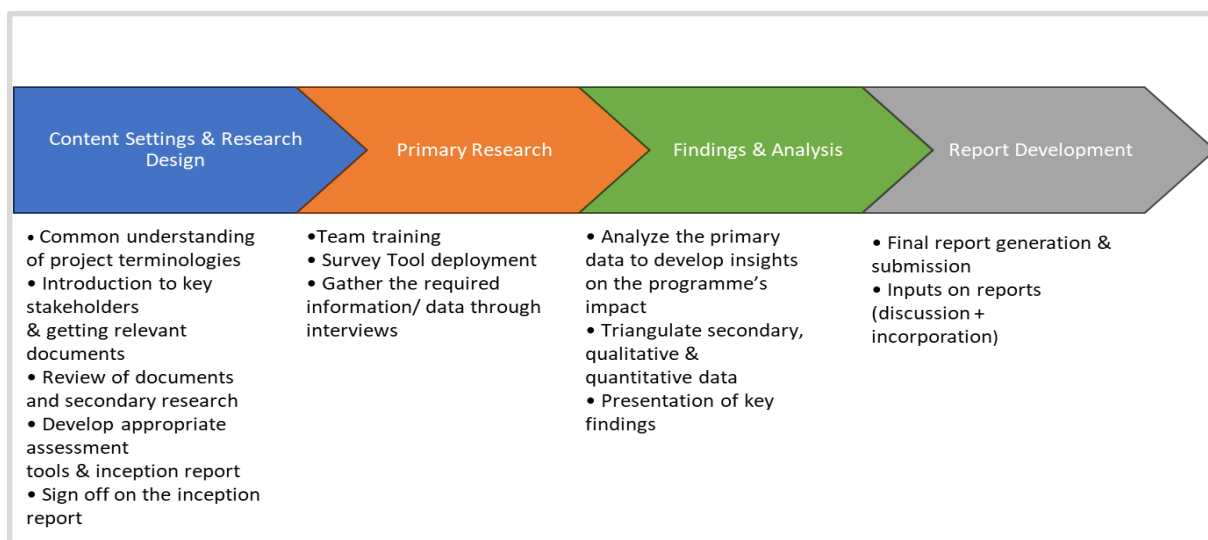
This section will discuss the research approach selected for the impact assessment study. The study started with the content setting and understanding of the project. A review of the project reports, relevant documents and secondary research was conducted to understand the progress of the project.

2.1 Research Objective:

The objective of the impact assessment study is to evaluate the impact achieved by the MEP Skill Development Project in Ahmednagar for the FY 2022–2023.

The project followed the following timeline.

Phases



2.2 Research Approach

The primary research for the impact assessment was rooted in mixed research methodology. A mixed approach of Qualitative and Quantitative methodology has been used while assessing the project. The aim of deploying this research methodology is to gain programmatic as well as organizational insights

The qualitative sampling was achieved through a purposive sampling method⁸. For the quantitative sample, there was a consideration of 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. The Implementation Partner supported the deployment of the digital survey links to the learner database and ensured equitable responses from each batch.

⁸ Purposive sampling is another nonprobability sampling where the selected units have the required sample characteristics.

2.3 Research Sampling

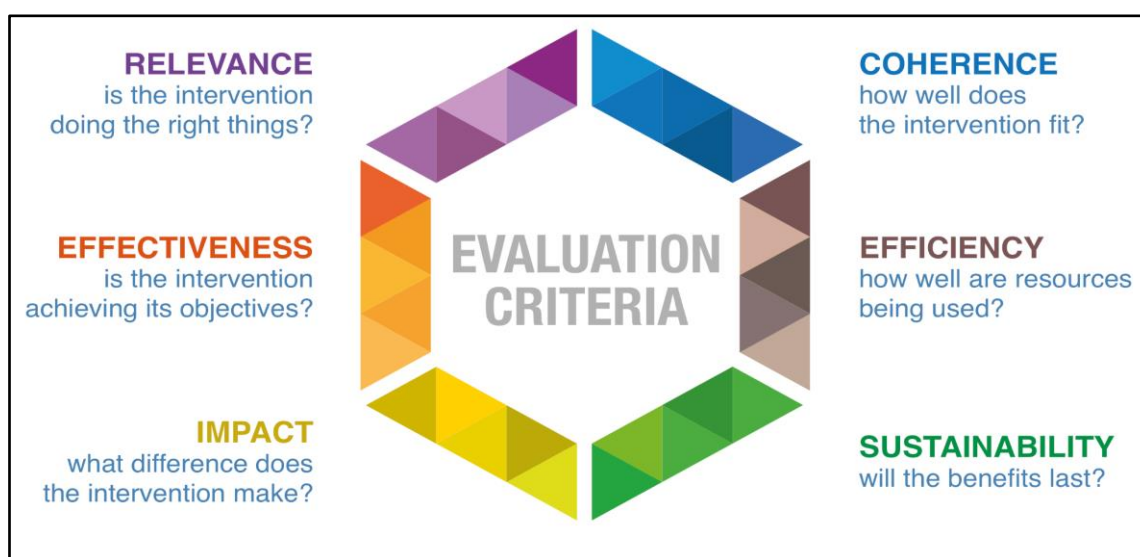
Primary data collection involved both virtual interactions and online survey with multiple stakeholders across the implementation of the program and the beneficiary group.

	Qualitative (Virtual Interactions)	Quantitative (Online Survey)
	Achieved KII	Achieved Surveys
Students	18	111
Self-employed students	4	
Parents	6	
Trainers	1	
Employers	3	
Implementation Partner	3	
CCF CSR ESG Head	1	
Total	36	111

Table 2: Details of KIIs and online survey responses

2.4 Research Framework

The study is qualitative research based on appreciative inquiry and uses the 'REECIS' (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Coherence, and Sustainability) framework to evaluate the program's impact. This framework has been developed by the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC)



REECIS Framework by OECD-DAC

⁹ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

The REECIS analysis provided the following information:

- **Relevance:** In the context of helping Indian youth find secure employment and self-employed, the Crompton's MEP Skill Development Program is crucial.
- **Efficiency:** The evaluation of the processes involved in the implementation of the Crompton's MEP Skill Development Program.
- **Effectiveness:** Actionables taken under the Crompton's MEP Skill Development Program to help achieve the program objectives.
- **Impact:** The impact achieved by the program on all the intended and unintended beneficiaries.
- **Coherence:** The understand the compatibility of the Crompton program with similar interventions happening in the Indian education sector, private as well as non-private.
- **Sustainability:** The long-term effectiveness of the program benefits.

3. Findings

The Assessment explores the findings of the study against the objectives of the intervention as below:

3.1 Implementation of the Program

3.2 Skill development among the youth

3.3 Increase in the income generation of the youth

3.4 Impact

3.1 Implementation of the Program

This section gives insight on the efforts taken before the launch of the project and the efforts taken to ensure its smooth implementation. The section provides details on the identification and gathering of the necessary resources, data, and information required to initiate and execute the project. It includes factors such as the mobilization process, enrollment and trained instructors, curriculum and training facilities available at the training center.

A. Collaborating with Dev Loka Educational Trust for the implementation

The Crompton CSR Foundation (CCF) launched the MEP Skill Development Project to address the pressing issue of unemployment and underemployment among college dropout youth from low economic backgrounds in the Ahmednagar, Maharashtra and to make them employable or enable them to start their own businesses. To implement this project, CCF partnered with a non-profit organization (NGO), Devloka Educational Trust, an organization with extensive experience in the skill development space.

This partnership has proven instrumental in the seamless implementation of the MEP Skill Development Project in the Ahmednagar region, drawing upon the expertise and experience of Devloka Educational Trust in empowering young individuals through skill training initiatives. Together, CCF and Devloka Educational Trust have played a pivotal role in generating opportunities for the youth and effectively fostering their socio-economic development. The project's tangible outcomes stand testament to the efficacy of this collaboration, which has not only addressed the challenges of unemployment but also enriched the lives of the youth by equipping them with the necessary tools to thrive in the modern workforce or entrepreneurship landscape.

B. Stages of Mobilization

The mobilization efforts of the program utilized multiple online and offline approaches such as IEC, social media, surveys, door-door mobilization and even stakeholder engagement.

Surveys and Research: At the inception of the project, the Devloka Educational Trust's team conducted surveys and research to identify the gaps in the Ahmednagar job market to determine the training needs. This survey and study of the ground realities help in designing a training course which aligned with the needs of the industry. This step helped the skills which were being imparted in the program be relevant as well as beneficial for the students from skill development to the actual employment generation.

Stakeholder Engagement: The implementation team engaged with multiple stakeholders from the public and private sector to gain valuable insights on the skill demand on the region. They interacted with local government authorities, employment offices, technical schools, and village representatives to gather information about employment demands and the availability of skilled workers.

Offline mobilization: In the offline mobilization, the mobilization team used to directly visit the villages and set up their stalls during the weekly markets which happen in every village. They set up a camp and hand out brochures to the youths who showed interest in the program. The details of these candidates are stored as their internal database. They also encouraged the interested candidates to talk to their friends and create a WhatsApp group with these candidates and the new ones from their network to share circulars about the program and photos of the Center.

The mobilizers also met with the Sarpanch and the Village Development officer (VDO). They are invited to the Center and are given a tour of all the skill development efforts being conducted. Alumni who have received job placements are also invited on that day to talk about their experience. This helps gain support from the local authorities who also help encourage youths to enroll into the program.

Door-to-door mobilization is also carried out by the team. The team made a habit to carry their laptops and information material to display information about the Center to the parents of the prospective students. It was noted by the Center Manager that there were incidents when the parents did not trust the credibility of such a facility provided at free-of-cost. The mobilizing team then showed information about the Center on their laptops and also extended an invite to the parents to come take a tour of the Center. The parents are also shown the records of the past students to boost their trust.

Online mobilization: In the online mobilization, the team made use of social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp to spread word about the Center.

Overall, it was found that the majority, that is 95% of the survey respondents found out about the skill development program through Devloka Educational Trust with an equal percentage of respondents finding out about it through brochures, social media and their friends or family members (figure 3).

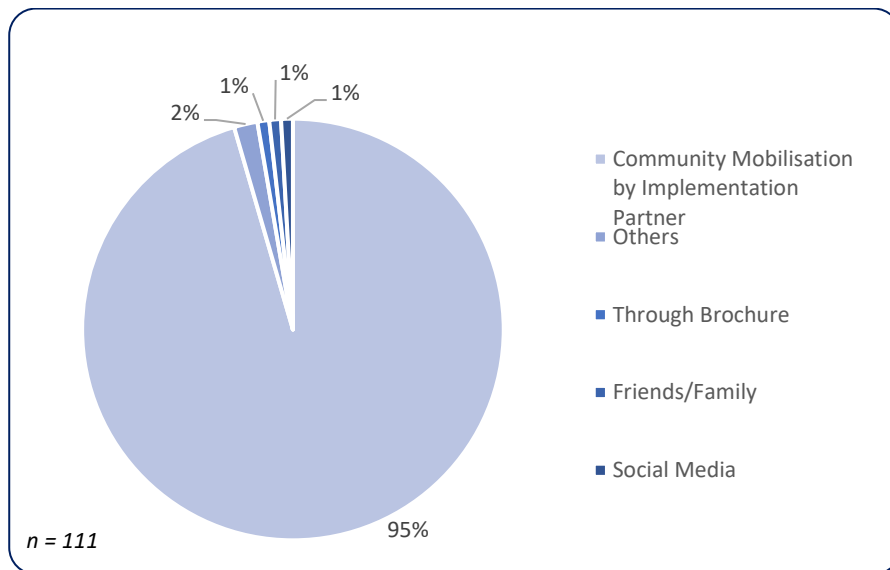


Figure 5: Source of Awareness about the Skill Development Program

The mobilization efforts made sure to reach the youths who belong to poor backgrounds and have had to stop their academic progress due to their financial situation. The implementation partner team shared that they view mobilization as a continuous process which is critical for the success of the project.

C. Project team:

The project team has two groups, one being the administrative team and the other being the implementation team.

The administrative team consists of Devloka Educational Trusts' -

- i. COO of skill division - involved in surveying, identifying skill sets, setting up training centers, managing teams, and providing guidance to the center managers.
- ii. Operations Head - in charge of monitoring the project, monitoring the training progress, daily reporting, counseling, mobilization, and coordinating with placement officers.
- iii. CSR Manager - is in charge of all the ground activities and coordinating with the center managers, trainers, employers of both the locations. Conducts regular visits of the centers and checks the mobilization, teaching process and placement process. He is also in charge of preparing the progress reports.

The Ahmednagar center's implementation team consists of -

- i. Center Head - responsible for daily center management, including planning, budgeting, and monitoring the progress of the project.
- ii. 2 Trainers - responsible for providing vocational training to the participants and ensuring that the training is of high quality and meets the needs of the job market
- iii. Soft skills trainer - in charge of conducting the soft skills training
- iv. Placement manager - responsible for identifying potential employers

- v. Field coordinators - responsible for identifying and recruiting participants, liaising with local communities, and monitoring the implementation of the project on the ground level
- vi. Support staff - Support staff, such as administrative assistants, accountants, and warden, would be responsible for providing administrative support to the team, including maintaining records, preparing reports, and managing finances

Having two teams which undertook different responsibilities helped in smooth operations of the organizational as well as the programmatic elements of the project implementation. The administrative team ensured that the documentation, reporting and monitoring happened on time. The on-ground, programmatic team ensured that the day-to-day activities were carried out efficiently.

D. Selection and enrollment of the participants

The training program sought to cater to educated youth who have faced challenges in securing employment and are seeking opportunities to enhance their skills and generate income. The primary eligibility criterion for prospective students is that they must have completed their 10th grade and be above 18 years of age. This ensures that the program attracts candidates who have a certain level of educational background and maturity to engage effectively in the training.

The process of selecting participants for the program involves a thorough assessment of the collected list of candidates. This list serves as a repository of information about the applicants' skills and aspirations. By analyzing these details, the organizing team gains insights into the interest areas of each candidate. This approach facilitates the matching of candidates with the program's offerings, ensuring that participants are genuinely interested in the training and likely to benefit from it.

Once potential students are identified, they undergo a meticulous three-step counseling process. The first level of counseling occurs during the initial contact with the applicants. This early interaction allows the team to gauge the candidates' enthusiasm and commitment towards the program. The second counseling session takes place when the students arrive at the training center, where they are oriented by the Center Manager. During this session, additional insights into the candidates' motivations and expectations are gathered.

Lastly, during the initial three days of the class, the Trainer conducts further counseling sessions. The objective is to gain a comprehensive understanding of each student's attitude and willingness to actively participate in and complete the program. Students who exhibit a lack of dedication or engagement during this process are politely requested to withdraw from the program. Subsequently, candidates from the waiting list, who have displayed the required commitment, are offered the opportunity to join the program.

The enrollment process also involves parents of the students, who are required to sign a permission form before their children can officially join the training. This step ensures that the students' guardians are aware of and supportive of their participation.

Furthermore, the final count of students in a batch is subject to a psychometric and aptitude test. This evaluation serves as a further measure to ensure that the selected participants are well-suited to the training's objectives and can make the most of the educational opportunities presented.

The survey also highlighted the key motivators behind students' interest in joining the training program (figure 4). Approximately 41% of the respondents cited a desire to learn new skills, recognizing the program as a platform for personal growth and development. Additionally, another 41% expressed an eagerness to seize the opportunity for income generation, acknowledging the program's potential to enhance their employability and financial prospects.

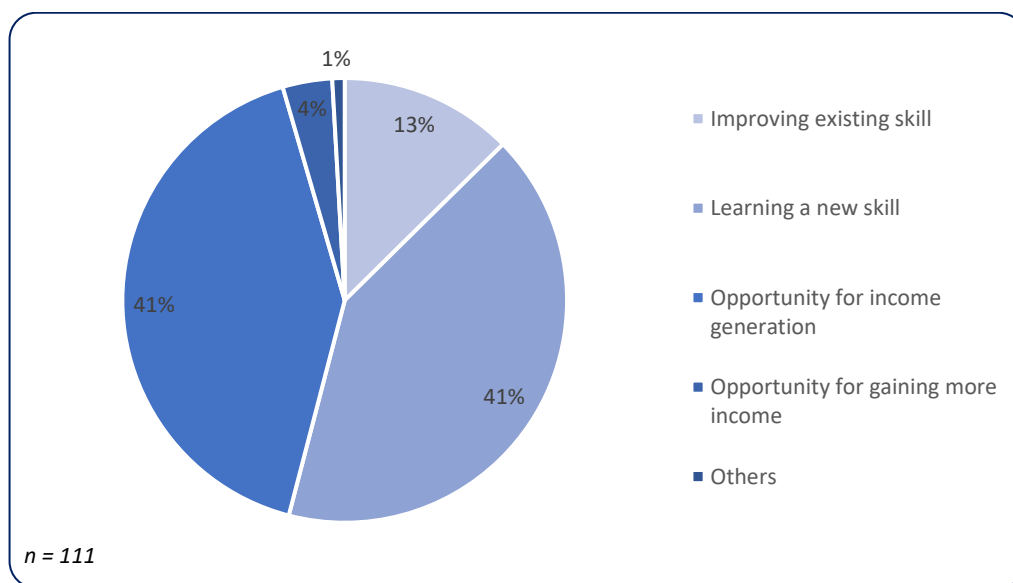


Figure 6: Motivation to join the training program

Overall, the selection, enrollment, and profiling of participants play crucial roles in ensuring the training program's effectiveness and success in empowering educated youth to attain greater prospects for their future. By meticulously identifying suitable candidates and offering tailored counseling sessions, the program sets a strong foundation for its participants to embark on a journey of learning, growth, and socio-economic empowerment.

E. Training curriculum and facilities

Training curriculum:

The training program is thoughtfully designed to provide students with both theoretical and practical knowledge in various sectors, encompassing hard skills like electrical expertise and soft skills such as communication, personality development, and basic computer proficiency. This comprehensive blend of industry-specific skills and soft abilities enhances the students'

employability prospects. Throughout the three-month program, the students acquire essential technical and practical competencies that render them eligible for entry-level positions in companies.

As the technical training commences, the students first undergo safety training, covering crucial aspects like handling fire extinguishers and learning Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) to respond to electric shock incidents. Subsequently, they progress from learning wiring techniques to exploring circuits commonly found in household appliances. The center's trainer takes charge of conducting soft skills training, ensuring interactive sessions through the use of presentations (PPTs) and engaging exercises like puzzle-solving. These teaching methods not only foster active learning but also enhance the students' ability to retain knowledge.

The feedback received from students reflects their satisfaction with the program's teaching approach, valuing the combination of theoretical concepts and hands-on practical training. They express appreciation for the immersive learning experience, where all training sessions are participatory and allow them to apply their skills directly. Comparing the program to traditional ITI (Industrial Training Institute) courses, some students note that ITI programs tend to be theory-focused and lack the essential practical exposure. Additionally, they commend the adherence to a fixed timetable throughout the training program, which contributes to a well-structured and organized learning environment.

Training Facilities:

The training program is designed to be a mix of theory and practical and the infrastructure is built similarly. There are classrooms with a projector set up and a lab where demo sets have been created for the students.

It was found that the Center was initially running in the campus of an Engineering college but had to be moved to a different private space. The new space, apart from the training set-up, has 16 rooms where 4 students share a room, and every room has its individual bathroom. Due to this common accommodation facility, there have been no female student admissions into the program in the past one year.

As the residential nature of the program is a key aspect, the students were also asked feedback about the living arrangements. Majority of the students were happy with the classroom facilities, the accommodation and the provision of 3 meals a day. A minority though did express their qualms about the food quality. It was shared that though complaints were raised, it did not lead to a long-term solution.

F. Trainer selection

The trainers selected for the program are selected after an interview with the Devloka Educational Trust team. It is ensured that the trainers are local, hold a B.Tech and have more than a year's industry experience.

“Selection of the Trainer, selection of the Center Manager; personality counts a lot and it is a bearing on how good or bad they can influence the students. Because with the Trainers and the Center Managers, they are going to stay for three months and every day they (students) see the trainer as an ideal for them...all those things it counts a lot.”

- excerpt from Implementation Partner KII

The students appreciated the selected Trainers in terms of the age category they belonged to. It was noted by a student that having trainers who were around their ages matters as it affects the teaching style. He mentioned that the trainers in ITI are older in age but at the MEP center since they were around his age, he was able to connect and have a friendly bond. The survey reflected that that 96% of the survey respondents were very satisfied with the experience and the knowledge the trainer held.

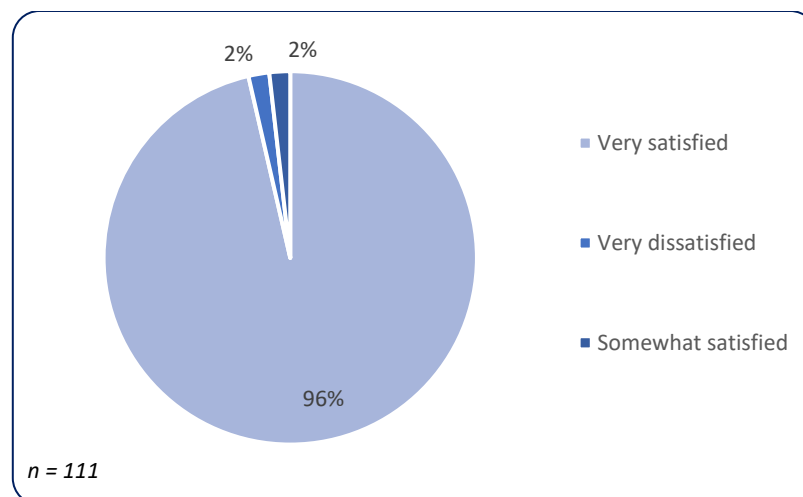


Figure 7: Satisfaction with the Trainer's Experience and Knowledge

G. Monitoring mechanism

The program uses IT software tools for mobilization reporting, candidate selection, counseling, and monitoring daily progress. The Operations Head closely monitors the training delivery, attendance, coverage of chapters, guest lectures, and social activities. Reports are generated on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis to track progress.

Surprise visits are also conducted by the implementation partner where -

- First day - They stay at the center and observe all the activities and maintenance
- Second day - They visit the candidates in the companies
- Third day - They meet the employers and understand their experience and expectations
- Fourth day - Review of all the facilities and what all the facilities they should get
- Fifth day - Speak to all the other project related concerns (from food vendor to employer)

3.2 Skill development among the students

The findings from this section give a detailed insight about the development which happened among the students in terms of skilling, becoming employable and gaining employment.

A. Skills training in MEP (Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing)

The teaching methods emerged as the highlight of the entire training program. The students found the quality of the training to be good and helpful. They felt that they received a high-quality education and were able to learn new things. Speaking of the method of teaching the majority expressed that very minute details have been taught and the trainers were patiently teaching them about the wiring, sockets, etc. Some students even regarded the program better than the paid courses available due to the hands-on training regarding all the appliances, the syllabus itself and the program design.

Given the stretch of the study over eight batches, some interactions also stated that some parts were taught properly but many parts of the syllabus were not covered in the program period. In addition, given the different learning paces everyone has, there were even reports about the trainers not responding to many queries of the students.

For the eight batches from April 2022 - March 2023, all the batches were able to have a full capacity of 30 students per batch, giving a total of 240 trained students in the financial year. At the completion of the program, the students received a certificate which has the NSDC logo and recognition on it. Students shared that the certificate that they receive holds value in the industry job market.

In terms of training programs being able to provide the primary objectives of skills, knowledge and job opportunities, 96% of the respondents stated they were very satisfied.

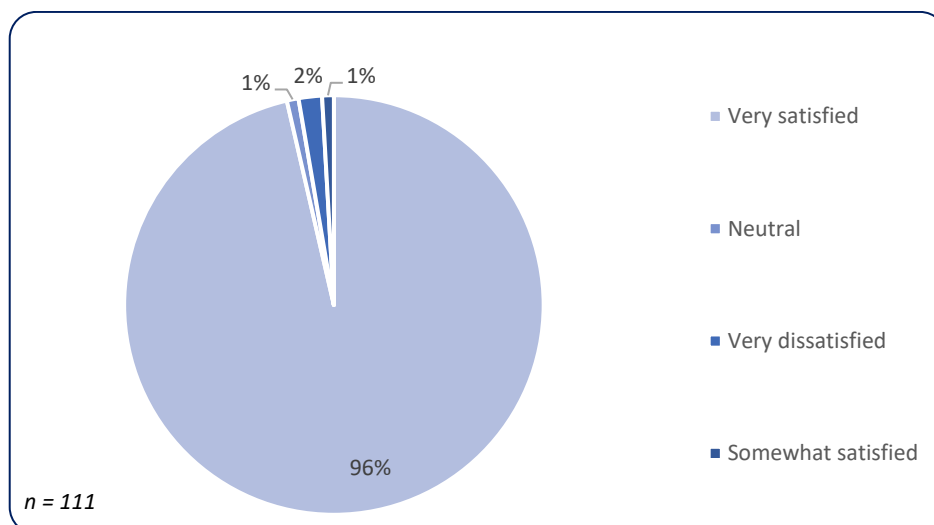


Figure 8: Training program's ability to provide the necessary skills, knowledge and opportunities

In the interaction with the trainers, it was found that over the duration of the program they noticed a change in the interest levels of the students.

“When the students start, they have no idea what they are looking at and have no basic thoughts. Towards the end, they start observing the electric circuits around me. Students have come back to me and stated how they observed the circuit of the fans in their room and tried to understand its functions.”

- excerpt from Trainer KII

B. Guest sessions and industry visits:

The program also incorporated guest lectures from active members of the industrial and the financial sector. The program made sure to integrate one or two sessions in the three-month training. These sessions sometimes invite someone from the direct industry who can provide insight into the functions of the industry and provide career counselling in order to motivate the students. The sessions also invite the speakers from the financial sector to give insight on creating credit linkages such as the SBI Mudra Loan. This was especially useful for the students who were interested in starting their own ventures.

The academic calendar also has scheduled industry visits and plans for social activities. Given the industrial belt present in Ahmednagar, the Center also takes effort to organize at least one industry visit during the program. The Center also takes efforts to involve the students in social activities such as Swachh Bharat cleanliness drives or contribute to blood donation camps.

C. Job placement support and guidance

The placement office of the Center is always in contact with the companies. The Center Manager shared that these prospective employers are made aware that a batch is ending two days before the training ends. Once the batch ends, a campus placement day is arranged where the companies are invited. They call 5-6 companies at once and the students are able to give an interview for the company they are interested in. The selected students are then informed about their selection. The Center provides extended support to the student when they face issues such as their salary, requests to not be assigned late shifts which cause commute issues and even helping students who are moving out of their houses then the center helps them in finding accommodation and a food mess.

For the students who want to work in a shop, the Center team takes them to a few identified shops where their interviews are conducted before joining. After 3-4 days the Center gets their offer letters.

The Center's process considers that a student should be placed in two months, but they aim to do it in 15 days after the program ends. As per the survey findings, in the last financial year, of the 240 students 160 secured jobs in companies (87%), 49 students were able to get jobs in shops (20%), students chose to start their own business (3%) and 24 students were unable to get any placement or job opportunity (10%).

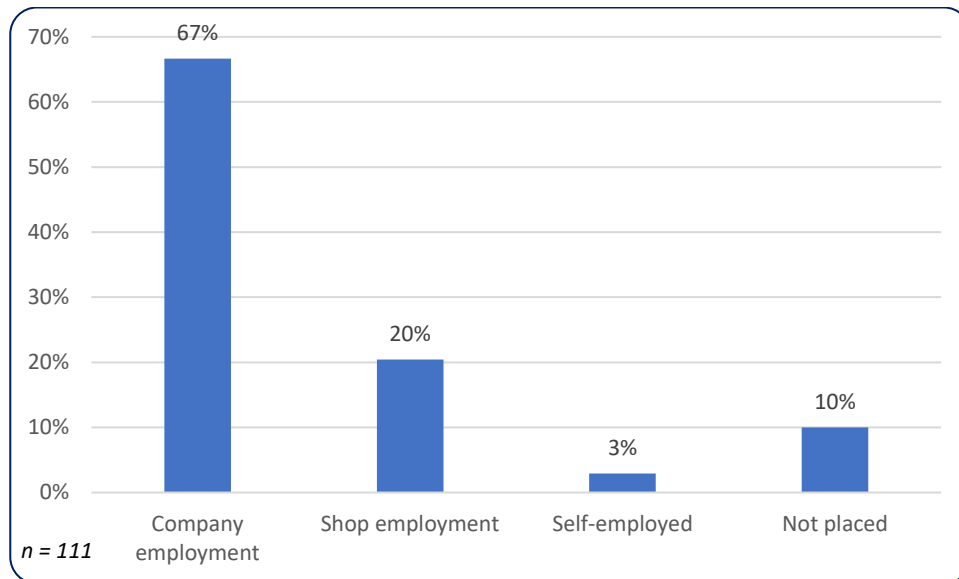


Figure 9: Employment status of students from the 2022-2023 batches¹⁰

A few student interviews from the primary research also provided the insight that the data maintained on student employment status was not recorded correctly. It was found in a few cases that the student recorded to be placed in a company mentioned he was not currently placed or working anywhere yet.

D. Awareness of Entrepreneurship:

The students who were inspired to start their own venture, the Center initially helped them connect with a supervisor who is someone who owns their own business. The student then works with the supervisor for two to three months till all the ropes of running a business and the market practices are understood. The Center further supported in terms of sourcing the materials needed and gaining seed funding from the banks. A student shared that he also received guidance on things such as supply chain and vendor selection. As an additional step, the Center even helps the students gain contracts which can get their work going.

Interaction with the students who started their own business revealed that they were satisfied with the level of support and encouragement received from the Center. A student even expressed being inspired to start his own business after receiving a lot of positive input and encouragement from the Center.

"I was first thinking about getting a job but got influenced by guest lecturers that business has its own benefits so switched to start up.... Whatever I am today is because of this program, I am thankful."

- excerpt from a Student's KII

¹⁰ Company placement here means placement in large scale organizations of Larsen and Toubro, Exide Batteries Ltd and GKN Sinter Pvt. Ltd. Shop employment here means placement in local 'Electricals'.

3.3 Increase in the income generation of the students

A. Increased employability of participants in the MEP sector:

The majority of students have reported that the skills they acquired during the training program are being actively utilized in their current jobs. The knowledge and expertise gained from the program have proven to be relevant and applicable to the positions they secured through the placement process. Even a student who is currently not employed emphasized that the program remains valuable to him as he has acquired new skills and knowledge.

The survey responses further support the program's efficacy, with 95% of the respondents expressing that the training program aligns well with the industry's requirements (figure 8). This high level of relevance demonstrates the program's success in equipping students with practical and sought-after skills, ensuring their seamless integration into the workforce and enabling them to make meaningful contributions in their respective fields.

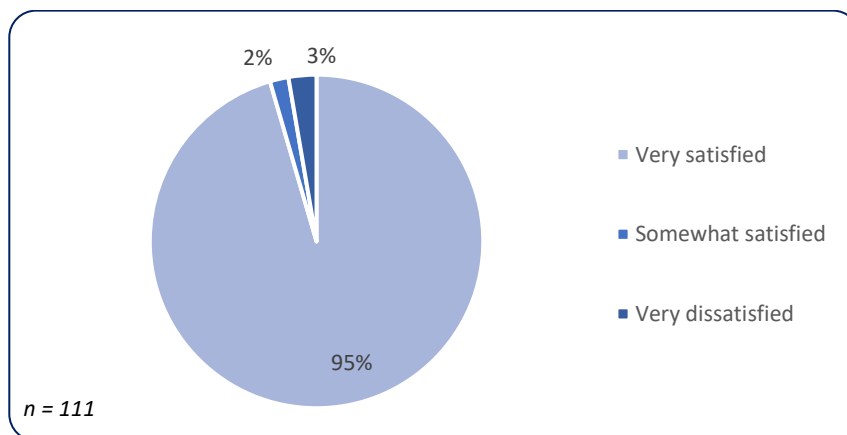


Figure 10: Training program's relevance to the industry needs

The primary research also included conversation with the HR representatives from the companies who come for placements. It was shared that the students enter the stream as semi-skilled labor and involved in technical jobs. Being a part of the technical staff removes them from hard, manual labor and also gets them in the formal, monthly salary system. The representatives shared that these aspects encourage the students to be loyal to their job and work hard. A company also shared that though the certificate which the students have is eligible to get entry-level jobs in the company, they encourage and support the students to pursue more courses and/or formal degrees which can help them get promoted a lot faster.

In terms of the program's skilling capabilities which makes students employable, it was shared that the program syllabus needs some additions or an advanced level. Some students have the opinion that the syllabus does not cover enough topics as they have not been taught about advanced topics like AC repairing. The Center Manager expressed that the students have also attended an advanced program where they can learn more skills.

To understand the additional support which can be provided, the survey asked about additional support required to help sustain and retain a job easily (figure 9). 96% of the responses stated that the current support was adequate.

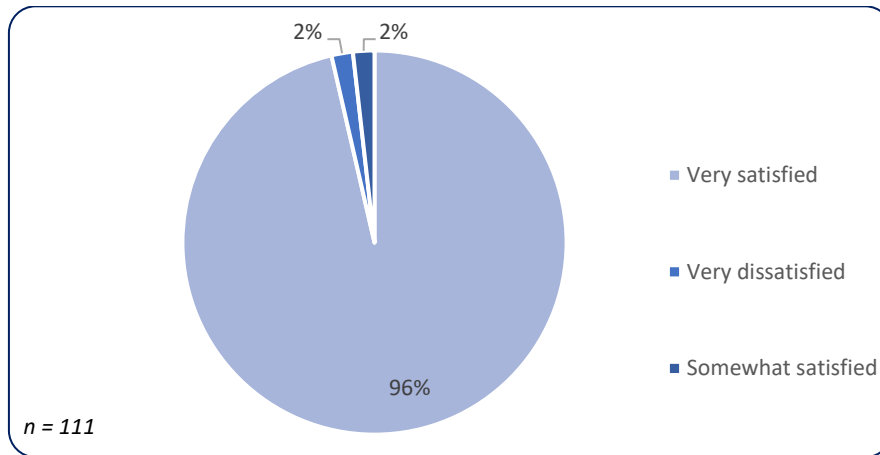


Figure 11: Need of additional support to help sustain and retain a job easily

B. Providing livelihood opportunities

The MEP skill development program aided the creation of livelihood opportunities through direct placements as well as through the skilling and capacity building of the students. It has helped people enter the formal work force as well as become interested in honing their entrepreneurial skills after gaining motivation from the program.

Some of the student respondents stated that they were already working somewhere before starting the program. They stated that now, after the enrolment and completion of the course, they have become eligible to earn a better pay scale. These students were able to switch jobs and start earning more than their previous jobs.

In addition to this, it has also helped students gain the support they need for their initial aspirations and ambitions. One of the student respondents stated that he wants to start his own business. The skills he has learnt through this program have made him eligible for more jobs and are currently helping him earn money and save for the initial investments which are needed.

Moreover, some students also have the perspective of looking at the MEP as an additional skillset which they can leverage as per their requirements and even leverage as a secondary source of income. One of the student respondents who pursues farming as his livelihood stated that he values his skill development from the course as a good development of a new skill set which can be made use of in the future. Another student stated that he has been able to start repairing as an additional offering in the shop that he already owns. This additional offering is now helping him earn more money from the same shop.

Overall, it can be said that the program has helped achieve multiple outcomes such as improvement in the earning capacity, development of an additional skillset, creation of a secondary source of income and being able to earn and save for other aspirations.

3.4 Impact

A. Socio-Economic development among the students

The parents of students living in the remote areas of Ahmednagar's villages have expressed their concerns regarding the limited income-generating opportunities in the region, primarily due to a lack of exposure. They hold a strong aspiration for their children to have more productive livelihood prospects beyond just earning daily wages or idling away their time. However, with the implementation of the training program, their concerns have been addressed, and the parents now experience immense satisfaction as they witness their sons becoming financially independent.

The program's impact on their children's financial situation brings joy and pride to the parents, as they see them taking care of their own expenses. Some parents even shared instances where their sons contribute to the household income by performing electrical work at home, further underscoring the financial benefits derived from the program. This transformation in their children's economic circumstances fills the parents with hope and optimism for a better future.

In fact, the survey results validate the significant financial benefits of the training course, with 86% of the respondents affirming that financial relief was the most prominent benefit they received from the program. This remarkable outcome showcases the program's effectiveness in elevating the economic prospects of the students and their families, contributing to a positive and tangible change in their lives.

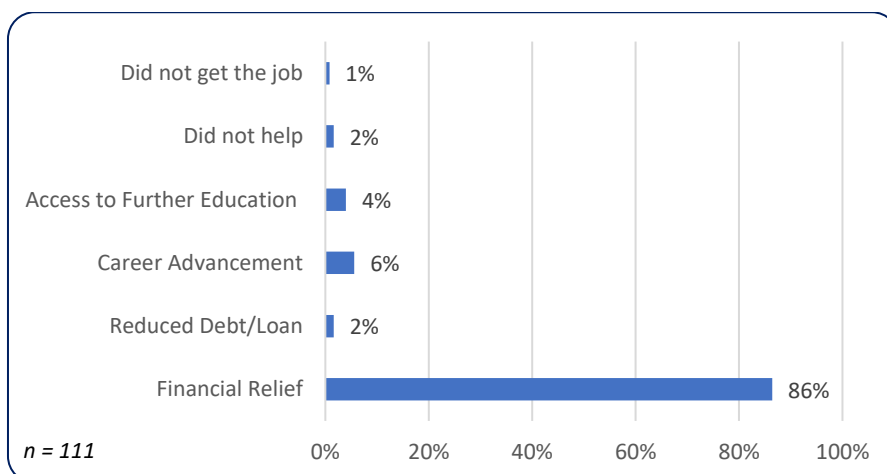


Figure 12: Benefit of the skills learnt from the training course

Moreover, the gain of these skills is also helping students help in the household chores. Due to the skills learnt, the students are now also able to contribute to the household work by carrying out household repairs by themselves.

4. Analysis – REECIS Evaluation

Relevance

The first criterion of the REECIS framework Relevance is to understand how important the program is in the selected locations and how it responds to the needs of the beneficiaries.

The highest relevance of the program comes from its objective of addressing the pertinent issue of skilling the capable youth and building their capacities for becoming employable. According to the Censes 2011 data, of the 4,543,159 population of Ahmednagar, only a total of 2,204,590 were engaged in work activities¹¹. A significant number of the population is engaged in marginal work or not working (table 3).

Type of Work	Total	Male	Female
Marginal Workers	165,135	72,995	92,140
Non Working	2,338,569	1,042,516	1,296,053

Table 3: Ahmednagar population in marginal work or non-working profile

These significant numbers of people engaged in marginal work or no work at all further highlight the need of a skilling program empower the youth of the region.

The location of the program center in Ahmednagar also holds relevance due to its placement of the industrial belt in the region. The prior industry surveys which were conducted by the implementation team ensured that the skills which were being imparted to the students were relevant to the needs of the industries. This benefitted in equipping the students with the skills which are needed to the industry and can boost their chances of employability. This step further stood essential as it bridges the communication gap that Industrial Training Institutes sometimes face with the industry. A NITI Aayog 2023 paper called the 'Transforming Industrial Training Institutes states that "A 2010 report titled "Assessment of Evaluation of Scope of Upgradation of Select ITIs through PPP in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu (For Planning Commission, prepared by Maharashtra Economic Development Council)" argued that communication gaps between ITIs and industry are very wide.¹² . Given this, the industry surveys made by the implementation partner ensured that such gaps will be filled as much as possible.

Effectiveness

The second criterion in the REECIS framework is Effectiveness, which measures the extent to which the program achieved or is expected to achieve its objectives and its results, including any differential results across locations.

¹¹ <https://www.censusindia.co.in/district/ahmadnagar-district-maharashtra-522>

¹² https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-02/ITI_Report_02022023.pdf

The program aimed to impart MEP skill development training to 240 students and has been successful in doing so. The system of maintaining a waiting list of students proved effective in maintaining the class strength in case a student discontinued the training.

The program is effective in achieving its objective of skill development through a mix of theoretical and practical program structure. The focus given to making the sessions interactive through PPTs and puzzle solving helped increase the recall value. This is also an effective way of teaching as the students are out of the conventional education system and need innovative methods which can ensure their attention as well as make the training more engaging.

In terms of mobilization, hiring local staff who have acute knowledge of the geography and can connect with the students is an effective method. Given the free-of-cost provision of a three-month residential program, it was bound to create apprehension among the parents/guardians of the TG. Having local mobilization team and carrying visual support through showing pictures is an effective way to ensure that they are at ease - also opening the doors of the Center to come visit and showing old records. It also needs to be noted that the mobilization strategy can be strengthened. The target beneficiary group which was defined for the program was of students from the underprivileged background. The program saw highest participation from general caste students (54%), followed by participation of 26% OBC students and 20% SC/ST students. The mobilization efforts can work to get more participation from the OBC and SC/ST communities as they tend to face more hindrances to access quality education.

One of the key aspects of the skill development program is the placement support that the students receive. Of the students from the 8 batches of 2022-2023, the Center was successful in creating employment for 216 students through company jobs, shop jobs and self-employment. This record is shared with CCF as a part of the progress reporting. Post-placement, the Center informally collects feedback from the students through whatsapp group to know about their experiences. As this interaction is off the record, it does not get reported. It was found through interactions that this lack of feedback data is creating a gap as CCF remains unaware of the current statuses of the students.

In addition, the feedback mechanism can also provide a verification mechanism to check the latest employment status of the students who have been marked as placed in company.

Lastly, the shift to the newer location affected the accommodation planning of the Center which led to zero female candidates in the last year. Necessary steps taken during the selection of the new Center or communicating the obstacles can help ensure and maintain participation across all genders in the program.

Efficiency

The criterion of Efficiency measures the evaluation of the processes and resource utilization involved in the implementation of the MEP Skill Development Project.

Under the budget utilization, the total budget outlay for the project was Rs. 1,16,25,900. Of this amount the cost per person under this program has been identified to be Rs. 48,441. The budget utilization was tracked and reported on a monthly basis by the Center Head

For the progress reporting and monitoring the implementation team has defined responsibilities on a daily reporting and monthly reporting basis which helps the smooth implementation. A clear reporting structure from the Center Head to the CSR Head also makes the progress reporting efficient.

The daily communication and the frequent Center visits carried out by the CSR head of the Devloka Educational Trust helps ensure the overall hygiene of the Center's functions. The planning of these visits to also include meeting with the employers proves efficient to keep up with the current industry standards and expectations.

Coherence

Coherence is the fourth criterion in the REECIS framework, it understands the compatibility of the MEP Skill Development Project with similar interventions happening in the Indian education sector, private as well as non-private.

The program stands coherent with the national skill development efforts by adopting the program structure created by the NSDC. By aligning with a national entity, the program stands coherent with the national skill development goals. Aligning with NSDC also helps validate and give industry recognition to the certificates that the students receive on completing the program.

Through the industry survey which happens prior to the program and the visits that happen during implementation the implementation team gathers real-time data about the needs of the industry. These efforts also ensure that the skills being imparted to the students align with the industry needs.

Impact

This is the fifth criteria of the framework that focuses on the impact achieved by the program on all the intended and unintended beneficiaries.

The biggest impact that the program has had among the students is about formalizing their professional participation. The students who work in the companies feel a sense of security as they are part of a formal system as a semi-skilled or skilled workforce. Given the nature of their job, the placed students now earn between Rs. 8000 – Rs. 13,000 per month This has given them a sense of security as they are now under a set salary cycle and are able to experience progression in their work. This advancement holds further impact as compared to the low-paying engagement students shared to have in their previous jobs or no financial engagement at all as stated by the interviewed parents.

In addition, 86% of the survey respondents also stated that the biggest benefit to them was the financial relief that they got a result of completing the program (figure 10). This has brought financial independence to them in terms of being able to take their own financial responsibility and make their own financial decisions.

In their personal life, this has helped them be financially independent and be responsible for their own expenses. This financial independence and the shift in household it helps can help

their families now have better chances of achieving financial stability, which will lead to improved health outcomes, education, and overall quality of life.

It has also helped them become more contributing to the household responsibilities. Students have been using their skills to also carry out repairing work that comes up in their own household. With this, they are not only contributing to helping their families but also save the money which they would've otherwise spent on an external resource.

Sustainability

The last criterion of the framework discusses the long-term effectiveness of the program benefits.

The skill and knowledge imparted through the program has helped students start their professional journey and helped them enter the formal professional stream. In addition, the skills which they learnt through the soft skills lessons has also developed their personalities and prepared them to present themselves as confident individuals into the world.

The program also derives its sustainability from the what the students think of the program. The survey asked about their likelihood of recommending the program to others (figure 11). 48% of the students responded that they would highly recommend the program to others.

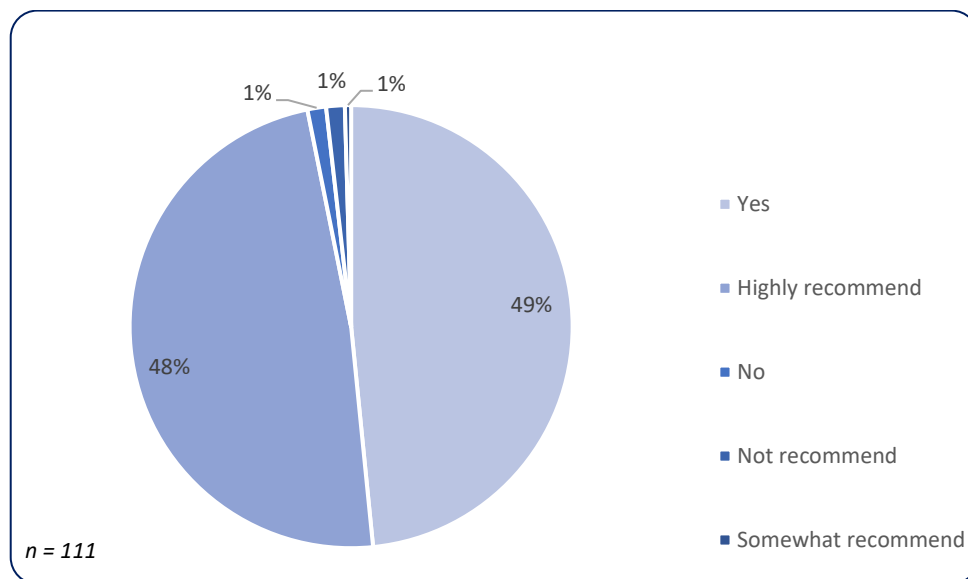


Figure 13s: Recommendation to others

The program has also helped increase their willingness to learn among some students. Students feel encouraged to enroll into advanced courses through the help of their companies and have also requested the Center to start an advanced course to learn working on advanced equipment.

5. Recommendations

Based on the evaluation of the impact achieved by the MEP Skill Development Program, the following recommendations are suggested to further strengthen the implementation of the program.

1. Targeted mobilization efforts for balanced inclusion

Mobilization efforts can be strategized to ensure that the participation from the students of the Muslim community and the OBC and SC/ST castes increases.

Currently, only 5% Muslim students, 20% SC/ST students and 26% OBC students are part of the program. Mobilizing parents and students from these communities can help upliftment of families which face more socio-economic challenges than communities of other castes.

2. Ensuring the admissions of female candidates

The safety measures needed to have girls' accommodation in the Center location were shared to be the reason for no female candidates in the last year. Hiring a female warden and the installation of CCTV cameras is a facility level measure which can create a safe environment for the accommodation of female students.

In addition, as a future practice, the implementation partner can define the infrastructural needs of a training center and ensure that the infrastructural facilities of a center location align with them.

3. Development of formal feedback mechanism

Creating a formal feedback mechanism can help the donor agency understand the latest status of the students who have benefitted from the skill development program. It can also help map impact indicators such as job retention.

4. Alumni engagement

The alumni network can be leveraged to motivate new and current students in the skill development program. The alumni members can come back to the Center to talk about their personal experiences and the benefits that they received due to participating in the program.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the impact assessment report clearly substantiates that such skill development programs targeted at youth yield a considerable positive impact on both the economy and the overall well-being of individuals. These programs play a pivotal role in diminishing reliance on social welfare systems and maximizing the potential of the nation's human capital, thus fostering sustainable economic growth and development.

The strategic implementation of the skill development program in collaboration with the Devloka Educational Trust has proven to be highly effective. By meticulously identifying the existing gaps in the job market and aligning the training program with the industry's requirements, the program has successfully equipped the youth with the necessary skills for gainful employment or entrepreneurial pursuits. The curriculum, thoughtfully designed by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), ensures that participants acquire a well-rounded blend of industry-specific skills and soft skills, significantly bolstering their employability and job prospects.

The program's emphasis on providing quality training has been warmly received by the students, who have found the hands-on teaching methods to be immensely beneficial. The trainers' unwavering dedication and ability to connect with their students have further enriched the learning experience.

The tangible outcomes of the program are evident in the considerable rise in the income levels of the participants. Through job placements and opportunities for entrepreneurship, the youth have achieved financial independence and experienced an improved standard of living. The program's commitment to fostering entrepreneurship is evident in the support and guidance extended to those venturing into their own businesses.

Moreover, the positive impact of the program extends beyond the individual level, with companies benefiting from the availability of a pool of semi-skilled labor. This, in turn, has engendered heightened loyalty and dedication among employees, thus contributing to the growth and prosperity of these businesses.

Nonetheless, the report also identifies areas where improvements can be made, notably the necessity to expand the syllabus to encompass more advanced topics. Addressing these aspects will further enhance the program's overall effectiveness and amplify its impact.

To conclude, the skill development program tailored for youth has unequivocally emerged as a resounding success, empowering individuals with vital competencies, fostering economic growth, and uplifting communities. Continuously supporting and bolstering such programs is of paramount importance in unlocking the full potential of the nation's human capital, thereby ensuring a flourishing and sustainable future for all.