School To-Work

2018 Evaluation Report
Evaluation Team

Oge Okonkwo
Adenrele Owoyemi
Temidayo Falade
‘Femi Balogun

13, Omorinre Johnson Street off Admiralty Way,
Lekki Phase 1, Lekki Peninsula, Lagos, Nigeria.
P.O. Box 75427 Victoria Island, Lagos. Tel: (234) 01-2706541/2. Email: research@leapafrica.org.
Website: www.leapafrica.org
**ABSTRACT**

This report presents the final evaluation findings of the School to Work programme implemented by LEAP Africa in partnership with Dow Chemicals. The School to Work program is an employability skills training program designed to equip young Nigerian graduates who are unemployed with leadership, employability and basic entrepreneurship knowledge and skills; while also creating a platform for them to access work-based learning opportunities that will enable effective transition into meaningful employment or entrepreneurship. Implementing and evaluating programs like these provide the prospect for understanding the issues and structural barriers to youth employment as well as the drivers and enablers of youth transitions into the work place. This evaluation report was conducted between October 2018 and March 2019, and its narrative is centred on the experience of 80 participants having been on the program for 4 months. The evidence contained in the report mainstreams how employability and entrepreneurship skills training contribute to youth development, making them work and business ready as they prepare to transition into the next phase of their lives. The report mainstreams the notion, that amid interrelated and multiple structural conditions that delay and limit young people from reaching their full potential, supporting them with employability skills and leadership mindsets to bypass socially constructed limitations is more than useful exercise in enabling youth transitions.

**AUTHOR’S NOTE**

The authors of this evaluation report deem it an extreme honour to have been afforded the opportunity to conduct this evaluation. The results and suggestions of this evaluation are entirely independent and are firmly grounded on the research evidence collected. We would like to acknowledge the full acceptance of this independence accorded by the management of LEAP Africa. At the same time, we would wish to extend our gratitude to the Management and Board of LEAP Africa for always being supportive and respectful.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We would like to appreciate all the participants of the School to Work program for their support and commitment throughout the evaluation process. We are thankful to all the employers we have engaged for the reception during data collection, attending the career fair and for absorbing participants as employees on various levels.

We extend our deepest appreciation Dow Chemicals for supporting this laudable initiative and liberalness they have demonstrated in the course of this intervention.

We also like to express a heartfelt gratitude to the entire LEAP staff, the project team and facilitators who volunteered their time on this project – Femi Taiwo, Temitope Richard Banji, Chiamaka Oguonu, Daniel Emenahor, Yewande Apatira, Kehinde Ayeni and other staff who supported the project - for their hard work in the execution of the project along with their support in facilitating many of our arrangements with the school.
76 participants completed the training.

53% Males (40) 47% Females (36)

58 participants responded to the employment status update.

55 participants out of 58 respondents are currently engaged either in an employment, business or are furthering their education.

41% (31) Participants are full time employees.

13% (10) Participants are undergoing internships.

3% (2) Participants are currently volunteering.

5% (4) Participants are contract staff.

5% (4) Participants have gone to further their studies.

5% Participants are currently running their business.

- Education
- Agriculture
- Art & Craft

Employment Sectors

- I.T 29.7%
- Telecoms 4.4%
- Health care 2.2%
- Agriculture 2.2%
- Consulting 2.2%
- Finance 7.7%
- NGO 17.6%
- Legal 2.2%
- Banking 7.7%
- FMCG 2.2%
- Manufacturing 2.2%
- Energy/Oil & Gas 2.2%
Executive Summary

The realities of globalisation and technological advancement is altering the nature of work as well as the skill set requirements and processes at the workplace globally. However, its manifestations hold peculiar implications for inequality, productivity and employment in the global south where the youth population is at its highest rates. There is however a lot of attention on Nigeria whose youth population constitutes 63% of about 190 million people. This means that Nigeria is home to more than 100 million young people below the age 24. This could be a catalyst for growth or chaos depending on how the youth capital is engaged. UNFPA suggests that Nigeria could see its economy soar, provided it invests heavily in young people’s education, health and protect their rights.

According to Nigeria’s National Bureau of Statistics, 61.1% of Nigerian youth (15-24) are either unemployed or underemployed. While there are structural conditions limiting youth transitions into gainful employment, the employability of young people and the realities of the work place speaks to the need for fundamental reforms in the country’s education ecosystem. Remarkably, there is an emerging appreciation that the current realities of work require the embedding of employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship skills into mainstream curricular if learners are to transition into a meaningful life and thrive in a competitive global economy.

1. Bath Spa (Online) University Embedding Enterprise and Employability in the Curriculum, An introduction to the pedagogy for creating future-proof opportunity-ready graduates at Bath Spa University
3. Ibid 1
The imperatives of preparing young people to be adaptable, opportunity ready and equipped with tools to transition effectively from School to Work or other pathways forms the crux of LEAP Africa and Dow Chemicals’ partnership to fill this gap. This relationship aims at creating safe spaces where young people can be inspired and equipped with skills and tools imperative for transitioning into the next phase of their lives. Hence, the design and implementation of the school to work programme.

The School to Work program is a 4-month employability skills training for graduates in Nigeria, which focuses on equipping graduates who are unemployed, with specific skills in order to aid their transition from school into the work place. The training mainstreams leadership, employability and basic entrepreneurship knowledge and skills; while also creating a platform for participants to access work-based learning opportunities that will enable effective transition into meaningful employment or entrepreneurship. The program also includes a career fair designed to expose participants to various career pathways, while also providing the opportunity for participants to gain valuable work experience through internship. Through these, participants are introduced to the world of work which is anticipated to broaden their horizon and lift their aspirations about work and what is possible about their futures. Similarly, entrepreneurship is mainstreamed for participants interested in starting or growing their business.

The program trained a total of 76 participants within a two weeks period which included a career fair, and an internship opportunity lasting between 1 – 6 months. Throughout this period, we have continued to learn how employability and entrepreneurship skills training contribute to youth development, especially in a context of interrelated and multiple structural conditions the delay and hamper youth transitions.

Guided by LEAP Africa’s MERL policy which mainstreams the imperatives of promoting accountability, learning and knowledge sharing of project/programme
results and lessons learned, this report presents the independent final evaluation of the School to Work Intervention. It attempts mainstreams outcomes that the School to Work program realised for its participants and provides evidence in relation to the degree to which set objectives were accomplished while also explaining how these outcomes were realised. In addition, the report teases out key learnings while also identifying gaps that will serve as lessons to shape decision making going forward.

Following a rigorous evaluation of the program, we found significant evidence to suggest that the outputs and outcomes indicators outlined in the programme’s evaluation framework were realised to a large extent. The evaluation employed a mixed methodology incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods that engaged 80 participants with 58 responses - 41 Male and 39 Female. It endeavoured a content and execution assessment to evaluate program deliverables and the degree to which program activities were optimised, while also taking a gander at other implementation features in terms of the key drivers and obstructions to delivery, as well as the attendant effects, whether positive or negative, expected or unintended.

From the evaluation, it was determined that 76 participants successfully completed the training many of whom have already began to demonstrate the benefits. Primarily the training provided the opportunity for self-reflection for the first time. Following this opportunity to discover and reflect on their strengths, self-worth and weaknesses, they have come to realise and identify the attitudes that help them become complete and healthy human beings.

The findings suggest that participants have already begun demonstrating the mind set and skills obtained both personally and in their work places. A summary of employer’s feedback indicates that about 70% of the participants were able to display employability skills such as self-confidence, ability to take initiative and solve problems, ability to communicate effectively and willingness to take up new assignments. It was impressive to see the number of participants that have been able
to transition in the aftermath of the training and the career fair. A total of 53 participants - representing 66% of total participants - are currently engaged either in a full-time role, internship, volunteering or started their own businesses.

More so, it is evident that participants are not just getting jobs, but they are able to retain their jobs and move higher in the employment rank. 80% of the trainees who started out as interns have moved up into full time roles, because they were able to demonstrate: self-confidence, problem solving skills, team work, effective communication and were able to demonstrate technical capacity to deliver. With these outcomes, it might be safe to assume that many of the participants will be able to navigate through their working life with success if they continue to improve on exiting knowledge and sharpen their skills.

Conversations with some of the employers, reveal that a common reason for retaining these participants was their drive and energy. They described them as being proactive, creative, self-driven and resourceful. Many of the partner organisations are Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMSE’s) they confirmed that getting talent to fill roles has remained a huge concern, but the interns they absorbed are a different breed. Some of the employers were open to say that they are beginning to think differently about the employment process and philosophy in terms how to ensure that they retain these talents and ensure that the work environment remains challenging for them to manage turnover.

Overall, we could determine that the placement experience was useful for both the participants and the employers. Participants have not only been able to demonstrate keys skills and competencies, they have also been given the opportunity of having work experience with many of them advancing into full time roles within a short time. Similarly, employers are excited about their interaction and engagement with the participants and their reviews of the participants are largely positive. It is also worthy to note that, in the aftermath of the program, LEAP Africa has received unsolicited
calls from a few Human Resource Firms and industry colleagues requesting to engage trained participants from employability programs.

The evaluation in its conclusion, emphasises mainstreams the notion that, designing interventions specific for university graduates around employability is an imperative for youth transitions, following from the number of applications and its attendant process. Hence, this is a huge gap LEAP Africa can fill if supporting youth transitions into the work place is a priority.
The realities of globalisation and technological advancement is altering the nature of work as well as the skill set requirements and processes at the workplace globally. However, its manifestations hold peculiar implications for inequality, productivity and employment in the global south where the youth population is at its highest rates. World Bank estimates show that the labour market in Sub-Saharan Africa will have to absorb about 11 million people every year for the next decade, and this is a race against time.

---

6. Bath Spa (Online) University Embedding Enterprise and Employability in the Curriculum. An introduction to the pedagogy for creating future-proof opportunity-ready graduates at Bath Spa University


8. Ibid 1


There is however a lot of attention on Nigeria, whose youth population constitute 63% of about 190 million people. This means that Nigeria is home to more than 100 million young people below the age 24. This could be a catalyst for growth or chaos depending on how the youth capital is engaged. UNFPA suggests that Nigeria could see its economy soar, provided it invests heavily in young people’s education, health and protect their rights. According to Nigeria’s National Bureau of Statistics 61.1% of Nigerian youth (15-24) are either unemployed or underemployed. Pockets of anecdotal evidence suggests that Nigeria’s peculiar youth situation explains the migration of young Nigerians to North Africa and across the Mediterranean, the radicalisation of young people and extremists’ activities in Northern Nigeria as well as the increasing number of young people engaging in cybercrime and drug trafficking.

While there are structural conditions limiting youth transitions into gainful employment, the employability of young people and the realities of the work place speaks to the need for fundamental reforms in the country’s education ecosystem. Amongst many other issues, this means that school curriculum should leverage technology, improve pedagogy, and embed internships, mentorship, life skills as well as vocational and technical skills training. Furthermore, the country needs to rethink teacher quality and their motivation while also making efforts to increase school enrolment - especially for girls – and prioritise the security of schools in high risk areas.

Remarkably, there is an emerging appreciation that the current realities of work require the embedding of employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship skills into mainstream curricular if learners are to transition into a meaningful life and thrive in a competitive global economy. This is because performance standards are now

---


measured by competences relating to accessing, synthesising and communicating information; teamwork, critical thinking and problem-solving abilities as well as engaging multiple technology tools.  

From the literature we find that employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship education is predominant in the secondary and graduate level through business and empowerment programs organised by non-profits and assisted by the private sector. Unfortunately, there is the paucity of coherent initiatives or educational programs on employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship by state authorities. Consequently, in the face of Nigeria’s youth bulge and projected increases in the youth population, there is a great need to ensure that today’s youth have the right mix of leadership, employability and enterprise skills to navigate the present and future marketplace, and to establish businesses in the face of insufficient job opportunities. If youth are provided with sufficient education, training and jobs, then the growth in their numbers could be highly beneficial for development.

While there have been extensive discourses on the challenges of unemployment and employability in popular and academic literature, the evidence base is still weak and anecdotal. Nevertheless, there is existing evidence that unemployment is prevalent on the continent; there is a skills mismatch between employee requirements and employees; and there are fundamental challenges in Africa’s educational system which impacts on the employability of students. It is therefore imperative to prepare young people to be adaptable, opportunity ready and equipped with tools to transition effectively from School to Work or other pathways.

13 Ibid 2  
14 Ibid 4  
15 Edith Cowen University (2013). Employability – Good Practice Guide, Centre for Learning and Development  
16 Jeff Kee, Prathima Rodrifues, Sudarsana Kundu, Jean Louis Racine, Entrepreneurship Curriculum, project report for the JIP Grant  
17 Ibid 5  
18 Kinash, Shelley; Crane, Linda; and Judd, Madelaine-Marie (2016) "Good practice report: Nurturing graduate employability in higher education" (2016). Learning and Teaching papers. Paper 136  
19 Ibid 1
It is within this context that LEAP Africa in collaboration with the Dow Chemicals forged a relationship to create spaces where young people can be inspired and be equipped with skills and tools imperative for transitioning from school to work. This report presents the evaluation findings of the 2018 intervention.

**Program Summary**

The School to Work program is a 4-month employability skills training for graduates in Nigeria which focuses on equipping graduates who are unemployed with specific skills in order to aid their transition from school into the work place. The training mainstreams leadership, employability and basic entrepreneurship knowledge and skills; while also creating a platform for participants to access work-based learning opportunities that will enable effective transition into meaningful employment or entrepreneurship. Participants of this program are university graduates from diverse educational backgrounds and degrees. The program was designed to train 80 participants from across Nigeria with modules consisting of leadership, life skills, employability skills, career development, values and ethics.

The program also includes a career fair designed to expose participants to various career pathways, while also providing the opportunity for participants to gain valuable work experience through internship. Through these, participants are introduced to the world of work which is anticipated to broaden their horizon and lift
their aspirations about work and what is possible about their futures. Similarly, entrepreneurship is also mainstreamed for participants interested in starting or growing their business. The program therefore consists of 4 components namely;

**Employability skills training:** This is an 8 days training on employability. The skills and abilities needed to be employable in the 21st century world of work, such as communication, creativity and problem-solving skills, writing a CV and how to prepare for an interview.

**Career fair:** The career fair is organized to expose participants to a variety of career opportunities, stir up their interest in multiple career pathways and enlighten them on how they could navigate their way towards actualizing as well as raising their career aspirations.

**2 months Internship:** The program creates a platform for participants to gain valuable practical hands on experience in their areas of interest. The Internship is to enable participants to understand the world of work and raise their aspirations.

**Support systems:** The support system serves as guide to participants in order to engage in a full-time work, part time or establish a business.

In order to also monitor and follow up participants after the program, participants will be adopted into LEAP Africa’s Alumni community. This platform will help provide collaboration amongst alumni and to access opportunities to support their transitioning.

**Problem Statement**

The phase of students transitioning from School to Work is a basic stage in the lives of young people. At this stage, they are starting to distinguish themselves, construct their confidence and enhance their interests. It is also a period where they are experiencing pressure particularly for those with the responsibility to take care of their younger siblings and at the same seeking to transition into the next phase of their lives. In a society where joblessness is at a high rate, young people will have to rise above
financial and basic difficulties and prioritize roles that will enhance their skills, because their experience is still in its budding stages and would need to assemble new skills and abilities that would allow for upward mobility in their careers. However, amidst delayed dissatisfaction, university graduates experience ardent pain and discouragements which in some occasion result in youth engaging their agency through different social indecencies.

Youth transitions is also hampered by their employability - the absence of skills required by employers – as well as the reality of limited jobs. For instance, Nigeria is the world’s 26th largest economy and is expected to become the 20th largest by 2020\textsuperscript{20}. Despite its economic landscape, Nigeria is in a paradox of "jobless development" due to the paucity of jobs to accommodate the increasing number of university graduates that enter the work place on a yearly basis.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics’ Q3 2018 report, youth unemployment rate in Nigeria was 23.1%, while underemployment stood at 20.21%, with an absolute number of 21 million individuals named jobless. This disturbing pointer describes the level of competition graduates must face for the limited number of jobs in the country. A delay in graduates transitioning from school into the work place, has far reaching consequences for the productivity and future of young people. It means they are not able to acquire work related skills, work experience or develop their careers. Entrepreneurship alternatives on the other hand is replete with attendant issues and structural conditions that has implications for the ease of starting and doing business.

The rate of unemployment in Nigeria is, in part, characterized by the lack of employable skills amongst university graduates who unfortunately, are not being prepared adequately for the world of work. This is evident as there is a gap between how graduates are being prepared and the realities for the 21st century work place.

\textsuperscript{20}https://www.britishcouncil.org.gh/sites/default/files/universities_employability_and_inclusive_development.pdf
With the changing nature of the world of work, the university system is hardly able to match industry expectations. There is a tendency across the continent to find that existing school curriculum has hardly been reviewed for decades. Students are basically being bombarded with course related educational programs and are made to peruse, pack and spill out in their tests only for the imprints, with almost no reasonable abilities that can or is identifying with the nature of work.

Employability skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, time management and critical thinking skills are almost non-existent in mainstream curricular. Employers confirm these competencies to be lacking in the entry level graduates entering the labour market. Graduates are hardly able to express themselves, demonstrate confidence or even articulate the value they can bring to the table at interviews with employers. They should be able to take up leadership roles and succeed in them, they should be able to solve problem creatively, manage time effectively and possess high analytical skills. These skills are essential to be gainfully employed in the 21st century. Similarly, these skills are required to sustain one’s job and advance in career.

During the application for the School to Work program, graduates were asked if the university prepares them for the world of work. 2,025 graduates applied for the program. Out of the 2,025 applicants, 67% indicated that they were not properly prepared for the work place. Whilst a larger percentage of applicants indicated the university prepared them for the work place, we tried to understand further the barriers they feel is preventing them from getting jobs. The responses included inadequate work experience, lack of preparedness for the job interview, poor communication skills, Inadequate skills set for the role/job, were amongst the top reasons across all the applicants. Therefore, there is a realization amongst graduates that they lack essential skills which are needed for them to be employed.
Responses from employers of labour on the competencies and performance of recent graduates reveal that these characteristics are lacking in the graduates the university churning out into the labour market. Although many employers reiterate that graduates possess broad and reasonable understanding of the cognitive base in technical disciplines, they express dismay in the preparation of graduates in their non-technical attributes – soft skills. An employability survey was conducted amongst top human resource managers in partner organisations and recruiting agencies to get their perspectives on the realities of graduate recruitment, the key issues they face in
onboarding talent as well as the skills and attributes considered crucial before one can be recruited.

Employers responses suggests that university graduates are neither properly trained to be employable not to become entrepreneurs, which stands as impediments to getting quality jobs. The school curriculum must go beyond just learning but impacting students with skills that are relevant for the world of work. Therein graduates can acquire skills relevant to transition into the next phase of their lives. The survey from the HR Managers, revealed that many university graduates who are not employable lack basic soft skills such as time management, lack of good communications skills, emotional intelligence, lack of confidence, lack of understanding of the job description and a poor CV.

Understanding this skills gap has informed the imperative for LEAP Africa’s employability skills training. The School to Work program seeks to bridge the gap between graduates’ level of skills and industry required skills, which enables transitioning from school to the work place.
At LEAP Africa, project evaluation is guided by a Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) policy which mainstreams the imperatives of promoting accountability, learning and knowledge sharing of project/program results and lessons learned with funders and partners as a basis for strengthening partnerships and organisational effectiveness.

LEAP adopts an evaluation approach that expresses aspects of the Managing for Development Results (MfDR) approach as well as a contributorship approach to attribution. This framework emphasises managing and implementing programs and projects in a way that focuses on the process to judge what went well and what could have gone better which would be useful for improving future designs, delivery and quality, outcomes to measure the program’s impact in the target population, and overall impact to determine program effectiveness in achieving its goal.

The MERL unit is an autonomous part of the organisation and was independent from the delivery and management of the School to Work program. As such, none of the personnel involved in the data collection, data analysis and final evaluation were
personally engaged in the activities evaluated or responsible for the implementation, or supervision of the project.

As a matter of principle, the MERL unit reports directly to the Board and is not involved in operational businesses. This organisational structure ensures the independence of the evaluation function within LEAP, setting minimum requirements for MERL, ensuring oversight of the quality of MERL systems on the project and program levels, and sharing evaluative evidence.

Program Objectives

The primary objective of the School2work programme is to equip young unemployed graduates with leadership, employability and basic entrepreneurship knowledge and skills. The objectives of the School to Work program operationalized into 3 areas which is to;

- **Empower young unemployed graduates with leadership, employability and basic entrepreneurship skills required for personal effectiveness and transformation.**
- **Provide work-based learning opportunities for beneficiaries through a career fair and internship placements, which will broaden their horizon on the world of work and other post-school pathways.**
- **Assist participants by providing support services for personal and professional effectiveness.**

Evaluation Metrics

The evaluation of the School to Work project is informed by a results-based framework which illustrates how the program activities are linked to the expected outcomes in a systematic manner. The framework illustrates how the activities which includes a
training workshop, career fair, internship and post training support is expected to culminate in participants becoming work ready and where possible transitioning into the workplace or starting a business.

At the output level, it is anticipated that participants are equipped with skills and mindsets on employability and entrepreneurship; shifts in aspirations about work opportunities with hands on experience; and knitted within a virtual community for continued interaction, communication and support. Importantly, the internship intends to provide openings in multiple roles so that participants can have an array of opportunities to choose from.

At the outcome level, it is expected that participants can demonstrate these employability and entrepreneurship skills; become focused and begin to make deliberate choices about their future and careers following their experience during the career fair and internship; while also being able to leverage networks within a virtual community and maximize opportunities. The virtual communication system is anticipated to support participants collaboration virtually with other participants to share ideas and opportunities where possible.

Given these expectations, the evaluation therefore seeks to provide reflections on the relevance of a leadership, employability and entrepreneurship skills training and how it supports young people to live effective lives and to transition. It also tries to mainstream the ways in which career counselling and internships raise aspirations as well as how it socializes young people for the world of work.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Empower** | • Call for Applications  
• Select and review participants based on criteria’s  
• Select venue for training  
• Select facilitators  
• Develop School to Work module and manual | • 8 days Training of selected 80 participants | • 80 trained participants who understand basic leadership, employability and entrepreneurial skills  
• Participants have a change of mindset about key concepts and ideas on leadership, life skills, ethics, employability and enterprise skills | • Participants can demonstrate knowledge of leadership, employability and entrepreneurial skills |
| **Expose** | • Identifying and writing letters to organisations for the career fair.  
• Identifying organisations for internship | • Organize Career Fair to recruit participants for Internship positions  
• 2 Months Internship | • Students have broadened aspirations about career opportunities as well as skills and competences required to transition into work life.  
• Students gain hands on | • Participants become focused, making deliberate choices about their future and careers. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Experience of the operations and the competences required in the workplace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identifying and developing a platform for communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Deploying a virtual communication system, through a WhatsApp group chat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Participants are adopted into a virtual communication system, for interactions &amp; collaborations amongst themselves and opportunities are shared with the support of LEAP staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Participants are able to build collaboration and maximize opportunities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Evaluation Objectives

The ultimate purpose of this evaluation report is to determine the outcomes that the School to Work program realised for its participants. It tries to measure the degree to which the set objectives were accomplished and explains how these outcomes were realised. The report also teases out key learnings while also identifying gaps that will serve as lessons to shape decision making going forward. In specific terms the evaluation objectives include the following:
To measure the achievement and effectiveness of the set goals and outcomes of the school to work program

Determine how the employability skills training has enabled transitioning for the participants.

Methodology

To maximize the reach of the input deployed, this evaluation employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches to triangulate data sets which help an appreciation of the richness and complexity of human behaviour from diverse perspectives. Triangulation also strengthens both research paradigms by counterbalancing any weakness, while also reducing researcher bias from having a one-sided narrative of the program being investigated.

In conducting the evaluation, the team, led a procedure assessment to evaluate the adequacy and productivity of the project in three segment parts. To start with, we endeavoured a content assessment to evaluate what the program delivered in relation to the outcomes and deliverables set out in the concept note and the result chain framework. Second, was an execution assessment to evaluate the degree to which the program conveyed the planned activities and how these activities were optimised in facilitating the delivery process. Third, was to take a gander at other implementation features in terms of the key drivers and obstructions to delivery and the attendant effects, whether positive or negative, expected or unintended.
Data Collection

The data collection process was guided by the logical framework (log frame) developed for the project. The evaluation team put into perspective the critical elements of the project and defined the log frame based on the results defined in the concept note (See annex 1). In this regard, the evaluation team considered a wide range of tools that could best speak to the defined results.

With triangulation in mind, the tools employed included feedback forms after training sessions, internship update surveys from participants, and employers’ feedback to help an appreciation of the experience and the outcomes it has realised for them. In addition, Key Informant interviews and Focus Group Discussions were conducted to determine the mind set shifts and skills participants have gained through the training and how they have been able to successfully apply these in the period after the training. The details are explained below:

Limitations

While deliberate efforts were made to reduce limitations in this evaluation, and as is the nature of behavioural research, some limitations are acknowledged:

1. Baseline Survey: Baseline data was not collected before the start of the program. While recognising this as a significant oversight, we tried to approximate pre-existing conditions by engaging secondary data. Especially reports and journals that conducted rigorous research on youth employability. In addition to this, we made use of the information in registration forms, feedback forms and reflections from conversations during the training to help an appreciation of participants skills level and mindsets prior to the intervention. Furthermore, interviews and focus group discussions were employed to obtain additional information relevant to the prevailing
conditions before implementation. The questions were essentially related to knowledge, attitude, behaviour and level of awareness. We acknowledge that recalling historical information may be susceptible to selected memory and bias, hence, we triangulate the data with other data sources received.

2. **Surveys** – The sample size at end line was less by 22 participants which may have hindered things from appearing significant. Hence, following up with other participants will be necessary to further examine and understand the influence of the program. The MERL unit will continue to evaluate the situation with all the participants on a periodic basis to further examine the influence and impact of the program beyond the life of the project.

3. **Employers feedback:** Only a few employers were willing to complete our feedback forms. In many cases, it seemed employers did not fully understand the purpose or perhaps were too busy to find time to complete the forms. Nevertheless, we were able to identify 6 employers whose insight provided useful insights into the performance of participants as well as other issues useful to improve the program.
The School to Work program is a 4 months program for graduates in Lagos. The program focused on equipping young unemployed graduates with leadership, employability and basic entrepreneurship knowledge and skills; as well as create a platform to access work-based learning opportunities that will enable effective transition into meaningful employment or entrepreneurship. Participants of this program are graduates with different educational background and degrees.

The School to Work training was carried out, in order to enable graduates who are seeking for a Job, gain control and mastery of their lives through leadership and life skills, while the employability training prepared them for the workplace, thereby enhancing their capability to secure and retain jobs. It also encouraged enterprising youth to start their own businesses (for-profit and not-for-profit initiatives).
The program included a training which comprised modules and activities that equipped participants with 21st Century Skills (as documented by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills) which includes problem-solving, communication, productivity, social and cross-cultural skills, collaboration/teamwork, leadership, lifelong learning, professionalism, and social responsibility. Participants have gained work readiness skills through group coaching sessions on resume and cover letter writing, interviewing and presentation skills. The career fair at the end of the training served as a platform for program participants to interact with organizations and their representatives. The representatives of partner organization also served as facilitators and coaches to participants.

LEAP’s leadership and life skills curriculum is based on the philosophy which holds that there is a significant increase in the level of knowledge and skills gained when learners are guided through a journey of reflection, imagination and experimentation. This also leads to a more exciting and impactful learning experience. As a result, the curriculum is hinged on innovative pedagogies including role plays, case studies, scenarios, games, and deep reflective activities. Adopting David Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning cycle, the program comprises experiential activities that are explored in groups as well as practical work and opportunities for leadership in each module. These include:

**Concrete Experience:** LEAP uses case studies, role plays, games to create a simulation of scenarios that the teachers will employ in the facilitation of the modules. This encourages them to creatively proffer solutions to challenges that may arise, while trying to transition from the current position to the desired outcome. These
simulations are designed to reflect key learning objectives and outcomes of the various sessions in the curriculum.

**Reflective Observation:** The teachers are guided through carefully crafted questions, to reflect on the simulation experience, identifying what worked, what went wrong and learning points. They share their experiences with the entire class by groups.

**Abstract Conceptualisation:** Using the reflection questions and participants’ responses, the facilitator introduces key concepts, methodologies and insights from the sessions. This addresses participants’ questions and helps them make connections between what went wrong or right during their simulation experience and how it could have been done better to achieve the desired goal. This creates an impactful learning experience that is controlled by the participant and facilitated by the LEAP staff.

**Active Experimentation:** The teachers are then encouraged to apply the knowledge and skills they have learnt into the execution of Social change projects. LEAP provides teachers with Action Plan templates to guide their thought process.
The training workshop took place between 2\textsuperscript{nd} – 12\textsuperscript{th} July 2018 with a total of 76 participants completing the training out of 80 participants at the start of the training. The attrition in the number of participants at the end date, was as a result of some participants getting jobs during the course of the training. Participants were trained on modules covering Leadership, Employability and Entrepreneurship skills. Attendance rate during the 8 days training, was 85% on each day.

Some of the key topics taught during the training includes self-awareness/building self-confidence, values and ethics, visioning and goal setting, networking, creating an effective CV, preparing for an interview, building an effective team, and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, participants were trained on entrepreneurial modules such as identifying and accessing business opportunities, business model canvas for participants who have interests to start a business. The teaching methods were activity based which employed experiential approaches to enable participants get proper knowledge of modules taught. Facilitators ensured that each module had activities in it, and also gave participants time to reflect on what they have been taught.
Case studies helped participants gain insight into real life situations that broadens and sharpens their knowledge in a particular area of concentration. Facilitators made use of case studies as a teaching pedagogy to improve learning.

- **Educative Games**: Educational games were tools that helped enhance learning. Facilitators made use of educational games to help increase the knowledge of participants.

- **Reflections**: During module delivery, participants were allowed to reflect on what they had learnt. The reflection process helped the participants to think through what had been taught and draw concepts and insights from it.

- **Hands on Sessions**: More often than not, facilitators allowed students to practice immediately, what they were taught in class.

To obtain immediate feedback from the participants on the quality and effectiveness of the programme, feedback forms were administered to the participants on each day of the training to glean candid insights from participants and suggestions for improvement. Overall, participants rated the training overwhelmingly high such that on the scale of 1-10, out of the 56 responses 45 participants rated 10 while the remaining 12 rated 9. These numbers suggest that the training was extremely useful for the participants in terms of the learning outcomes as well as the wealth of knowledge they had gained.

To understand these further, the focus group discussions with participants indicate that there has been a range of mind set and skills learning outcomes for many of the
participants. These were mostly in the areas of self-awareness, creativity, networking, communications skills, using social media with a purpose, self-efficacy, visioning and goal setting as well as the panel session.

Participants Rating of the Self-Awareness Module on a scale of 1 – 10 (Where 1 is poor and 10 is Excellent).

Participants Rating of the Creativity Module on a scale of 1 – 10 (Where 1 is poor and 10 is Excellent).
For many of the participants, the training provided the opportunity for self-reflection for the first time. By providing participants with the opportunity to discover and reflect on their strengths, self-worth and weaknesses, they have come to realise and identify the attitudes that help them become complete and healthy human beings. These attitudes have transformed their mind sets significantly and is propelling them to learn skills that not only makes them employable but to also transition effectively in the other areas of their lives.

Prior to the training, many of the participants attest to the absence of intentionality when applying for jobs. Through the training, participants confirmed that they have stopped applying randomly for jobs and are rather seeking jobs where their strengths can be maximised so that they can equally add value and work with a purpose in mind. Consequently, there is an emerging realization amongst participants that volunteering, and internships are useful opportunities to develop key skills and a useful pathway as they prepare to transition into the work place. Participants have been able to glean new ideas and in some cases developed capacity on how to write a CV and also understand the imperatives of writing a cover letter before sending out
their resumes. Developing compelling resumes and cover letters has significantly opened opportunities for participants to be selected for interviews from which more than half of the participants have already gained some kind of employment – whether fulltime, part time, as interns or as volunteers.

We were able to identify 4 participants who have developed entrepreneurial skills and have taken a bold step in starting up enterprises. Although these businesses are still in their incipient stages, participants have developed competencies in business plan writing, as well as understanding the imperatives; customer service and networking. We found significant evidence to suggest that participants have started expanding their connections and networks and that these have been tremendously valuable to their career development and contextual learning. Although, they continue to comment on the need to develop these connections and networks a bit more and some of the snags of doing so.
After the training in less than 2 weeks I was employed for an internship role. The CV writing created a massive avenue for me to be selected and the mock interviews we had helped boost my confidence level for the interviews I went for.

Everything taught all through the program still feels fresh and seems like yesterday, I’ve never had this much of an impact over my life time. As I’ve been living each day consciously by all the things taught and learnt.

- Temitope Balogun
  Program Coordinator, John Ashley

It was a really great experience that has changed my mindset. I’ve gotten two internship offers, through full utilization of employability skills from School to Work. Thank you so much LEAP Africa and DOW!!

- Cynthia Elijah
  Volunteer, LEAP Africa

After the training, I participated in the career fair that followed. Initially I was not called upon by any company. So, I employed something I was taught at the School to Work program. I sold myself in a unique way to my then prospective employer and in no time I got my dream job.

I can only thank LEAP Africa and DOW for putting together this awesome program. The School to Work program was well coordinated and impactful. I cannot forget it in a hurry. I also want to thank DOW specially, as this program would not have been possible if not for their sponsorship. I won’t forget to be a good School to Work alumna.

- Ojotule Opaluwa
  Program Administrator, Propel Grad
Application Details

- Total Number of Applications received: 2,025
- Applicants trained: 76

**Location of Applicants**
- FCT; 2 participants
- Lagos; 77
- Rivers; 1 participant
- Ogun; 1 participant

**Application Details**
- 2,025 applications received
- 76 applicants trained
- 40 males
- 36 females
Participants also identified having a different perspective to using social media platforms. They have moved away from just engaging in vanity and mundane activities into a more purposeful use. They say they are now using social media to learn new skills, build networks, court customers, advertise products and learn from motivational speakers and mentors through TED talks on YouTube for instance.

Furthermore, participants have had significant mind set change about how to effectively manage time and have also adopted skills in doing the same. Many are now using the time management quadrant on a daily basis and have realised that time is a currency that must be optimised.
Photo Voices from School to Work participants

MY POST SCHOOL2WORK JOURNEY

CATERPILLAR

BEFORE SCHOOL2WORK
I WAS A LITTLE ‘CATERPILLAR’
GLIDING THROUGH LIFE...
I THOUGHT I COULDN’T DO STUFF
ON MY OWN.
I WAS NOT SURE OF WHAT
I WANTED TO DO IN LIFE.
ALL I KNOW IS, I WANTED
TO BE A LEADER.
I APPLIED FOR JOBS
RANDOMLY... I NEVER GOT
TO THE INTERVIEW STAGE.
I HAD NO VALUE THAT
DEFINED MY PERSON.

CHRYSALIS

DURING SCHOOL2WORK
I BECAME A ‘CHRYSALIS’
I GROW OUT OF BEING A
CATERPILLAR. I STARTED
SEEING MYSELF IN ANOTHER
LIGHT.
I BECAME SELF-AWARE.
I BECAME EMOTIONALLY-AWARE.
I BECAME MORE CONFIDENT.
I HAD MY FIRST INTERVIEW
& ACED IT! I GOT A JOB.
I WAS ABLE TO DEFINE
MY PERSONAL VALUES
BASED ON MY PERSONALITY.

BUTTERFLY

AFTER SCHOOL2WORK
SCHOOL2WORK HAS BIRTHED
A BEAUTIFUL BUTTERFLY
I AM SELF-AWARE MORE
THAN EVER BEFORE.
I KNOW WHAT I WANT
& HOW I WANT TO
GET IT.
I KNOW THE IMPORTANCE
OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT.
I KNOW THE IMPORTANCE
OF PERSONAL BRANDING.
I KNOW HOW TO ADD VALUE
WHEREVER I GO.
I AM A STAR!

THANK YOU LEAP AFRICA.
Emotional Intelligence "upped"
Self awareness "upped"

During 52DW I got more intentional about what I want to do.

After 52DW

Understood the place of values
Got very intentional about what I want to do.
Understood the place of volunteering.

Mediocre graduate. Valueless
Uninformed
Unintentional about work generally.
Not very well aware of myself.

Not the regular graduate anymore
More self aware
More intentional about what I want
Understood the place of volunteering
More than ever before I want to impact lives across Africa, more than ever before! I want to be in the place of Africa's Intercontinental development at large
All of this because of the awareness and value from 52DW

Social media with a purpose
**My Journey**

Super Woman

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remmy wigs</th>
<th>digital marketing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Intelligence</td>
<td>Networking Time mgmt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My interest in health sector (Repro life)

Now at this point I realised how creative I am. My self confidence was enough for me to relate with people and to educating teenagers on teen age pregnancy and create an online business platform to grow my business.

School 2 Work programme made me realised how special I am. I re-gained my self confidence and communication skills back. I was able to understand the real version of me. Thank you Leap Africa

Before school to work programme

I see myself as a failure, fearful, no self confident, poor communication skills, low self-esteem
Feature Story

LEAP changed my life; my amazing 8 days journey\textsuperscript{21}.

Story by Sophia I. Enwelu (Worked at Diamond Bank and Igloo after the training, and she is currently engaged in a Project Management Certification Course.

You know that feeling you get when you just realize that the last allawee\textsuperscript{22} alert just entered your phone (ex-Corp members can probably relate and intending one’s). Well let’s say you just have to wait till you get there to experience this not-so awesome feeling) Great tales are hard to compose and I am finding it so hard to use words to properly describe my wow experience at LEAP, but like every other life rendezvous, you just have to start.

Exactly 2 months after NYSC, my life in Lagos already had a sick routine to it - wake up, eat, sleep, repress myself further with diseased thoughts, you name it. I just knew in my heart of hearts that baby girl needs to be rescued, if not OYO\textsuperscript{23} is my name and my village people will just play mujuju with my destiny (Sic).

Till one faithful morning (ominous tone attached here...just like home video) I got a message from Victoria - better friend God will bless you for me oh! Victoria sent me a URL address to apply for stuffs and one of those stuffs happened to be LEAP Africa’s School to Work program.

When I saw the application process I almost did not want to apply, apart from my possessed iPhone 4 - displaying witchcraft, they asked for a CV, video upload - my people I had no choice Na, sharp Igbo girl I just Jejely\textsuperscript{24} (Sic) took my time,

\textsuperscript{21} \url{http://igbogirlchronicles.blogspot.com/2018/07/leap-changed-my-life-my-amazing-8-day.html?m=1#comments}

\textsuperscript{22} ‘allawee’ is a general slang use by NYSC corpers in Nigeria to describe the monthly allowance they receive from the Federal Government.

\textsuperscript{23} OYO – Slang abbreviation that means On your Own – refers to having to fend for one’s self without any external assistance.

\textsuperscript{24} Jejely – is a slang that means carefully.
composed words then got to making the video. To cut the story short I applied.

Now note when I applied I was not expecting to be called oh, because I can count first-hand how many applications I have never been called for, but glory to God I was called for the program. Boy was I elated finally one application click, am a superstar (Sic), perhaps this is a beginning to an end. Address, Gbagada25, quite far,

I decide on the spot if I go one day it’s one of those yeye26 (Sic) program I will just save my remaining money and buy makeup instead (yeah makeup is my third love, now you know).

Brethren, I am glad I went, am thankful I was selected, and I would not have missed a day even if I was purging my life out. LEAP School to Work training opened my eyes literally (Sic).

We all are doing so many things wrong on different levels and we expect results, when our inputs are basically garbage. For once I feel all is right in this world after all the series of sessions I got at LEAP, if I don’t ever make it to be a 9-5 person, it’s because I don’t want to cause, I have been equipped with all the tools I will ever need to conquer the work place in all its entirety. I know I won’t be able to capture the moment in its uniqueness nor tell you word for word on how each day went, but DEAR job seeker I will give you pointers on how you can secure that job you are looking for.

A. If your CV is as scattered as fowl house (Sic), sister/brother, if you can’t do it yourself get a professional to. Let me assure you that you won’t regret it.

B. What is your network like, I don’t mean MTN or GLO oh, the people you interact with, are they better people that will take you places and change your life for the better or are they blood suckers AKA suck am, leave am dry27. (Sic).

C. Don’t rely heavily on that your BSc oh, everyone has that this days, attend professional trainings, equip yourself with other professional courses that will boost your hard skills like Duracell battery. (Lol I play too much).

D. I know you like Facebook, aww I do too but right now, at this stage, LinkedIn is what you need, invest in it and sure it’s gonna pay off, if you don’t know how to use YouTube, Google is your friend.

E. Lemme28(Sic) just tell you this last one, know yourself, who are you really? and what do you want out of life?

This few pointers can change your life if you reflect properly, like Mr Daniel Emenahor (LEAP Africa) will say “it’s not what you don’t have that
limits you, it’s what you have that you don’t know how to use”.

I miss my moments at LEAP Africa, every moment was worth it, especially the chowing moments, Bukka hut you guys are sent from heaven, and to everyone that made me smile, I cherish you, Funmi, Sewa, Samuel, Ikenna, Stephen, Mr Daniel, Mr Falade, official sponsors of School to Work - Dow chemical una\textsuperscript{29} too much , excess sauce.

Hoping to write a success story soon.

Sophia’s story above is captured verbatim with some edits and it succinctly captures the experience of many of the School to Work participants, and this is consistent with key learning outcomes summarised in the figure that presents the skills and mindsets participants developed. To understand her experience a little bit more we conducted an exclusive interview with Sophia in February 2019 and to also understand her post training and internship experience in the short term and its usefulness in the current period. The interview went as follows (her responses were captured verbatim):

\textbf{Q1- Compare who you were before the School to Work program. What new skills did you gain?}

Before the School to Work program, I never got any reply from all the jobs I applied for, and this really affected my self-esteem. At the LEAP Africa program, my life changed. When I finished school, I was confused, naïve, overwhelmed as to what I wanted to do. More so I felt I will not be able to get a job in Nigeria if I didn’t have connections. There was already this believe that Nigeria is not a place to strive as a young person. At the School to Work program, I learnt emotional intelligence. Before I was always quick to judge people and access people by the first time you meet them. I learnt that before going for an interview, your CV works magic.

\textsuperscript{29} Slang that means – you are.
Q2- *What changed about you when you attended the program?*

Before the School to Work program I was naïve on how to get a job. My CV was written anyhow, my personality as a person was not encouraging, I was just there. I have learnt to be assertive. I do not just apply to any job anyhow. I take my time to search for jobs that will add value to me. Before LEAP, I hardly check the criteria given, I just apply for any job, but now I take my time to access the job, If I actually meet the criteria’s before applying, My CV is now refurbished. I have been able to develop my communication skills. I no longer follow conventional ways of doing things. I find unique ways to achieve excellence.

Q3 *How did the skills you learnt help you get a job*

After the training, I got a job at Diamond bank. I gained not just knowledge, but skills. The training taught me that there are direct and indirect ways of getting jobs. My interview for diamond bank was where I used all I was taught from the training and I got the Job. I left the Job two months after because I was not able to apply all I learnt from the training. By February I got another job again. As at now, it is not hard for me to get jobs, unlike before where I would have to struggle to get a job. The knowledge from LEAP Africa has made it very easy for me to get jobs.
The world of work is changing, and its implications are very clear - soft skills are important for the future of work. Technology is also changing the skills being rewarded in the labour market. The premium for skills that cannot be replaced by robots is also on the increase—general cognitive skills such as critical thinking and socio-behavioural skills such as managing and recognizing emotions that enhance teamwork. Workers with these skills are more adaptable in labour markets and technology is disrupting production processes by challenging the traditional boundaries of firms, expanding global value chains, and changing the geography of jobs.

Essentially, technology is changing how people work, giving rise to the gig economy in which organizations contract independent workers for short-term engagements. Technology is disrupting the demand for three types of skills in the workplace. First, the demand for nonroutine cognitive and socio-behavioural skills appears to be rising in both advanced and emerging economies. Second, the demand for routine job-
specific skills is declining. And, third, payoffs to combinations of different skill types appear to be increasing. These changes show up not just through new jobs replacing old jobs, but also through the changing skills profile of existing jobs.

In the changing nature of work, soft skills such as team work/collaboration, self-confidence, emotional intelligence, problem-solving and communication skills are fundamental to the world of work. These soft skills were considered as essentials for the School to Work program. Thus, while accessing the impact of the training on participants, we were able to measure changes/development in participants soft skills. Exploring this implication, we focused on key soft skills needed to enable graduates to transition into the work place and thrive in the changing nature of work.

Hence, as part of the objectives for the School to Work program, a career fair was conducted, to expose participants to various career pathways, to help raise their aspirations and define what career path suits them. The career fair enabled participants to understand what the present world of work requires and the necessary steps they will need to take to make this happen. It also served as an opportunity for participants to get interviewed for varied open roles in different organisations; this included recruiting agencies who had open roles to be filled for different organisations. All
participants got the opportunity to be interviewed and organisations, made selection of participants, who fit the roles they sought in their respective organisations.

While the career fair was organised to enable participants find internship roles with organisations, a total of 8 organisations were represented at the career fair. Although, other organisations were able to absorb many of the participants that were trained. The low turnout of organisations present at the career was attributed to the period in which organisations were notified for the School to Work program. The timing was not favourable for many of the organisations invited as they had other competing priorities at the time. From our evaluation, we also realised that some participants in science related fields such as micro biology, pharmacy and engineering did not have a fulfilling experience compared to others in mainstream careers. This made it difficult for them to benefit from the career fair. The implicit notion here is that career fairs going forward must try to be more inclusive of other fields, although some participants were able to get jobs in hospitals and other roles relating to engineering and pharmaceuticals companies. It might also be useful to consider organising careers fairs to last for about two days to allow for some of these short comings, but this will have implications for staff time and budgets.
The impact of an employability program, can only be measured by the number of participants who are able to demonstrate the skills they have learnt into helping them transition into the workplace, retain their jobs and climb through the ranks of employment or start a business. While it is important for participants to get jobs, it is also important to measure how they have been able to sustain themselves in these roles. This usually will require rigorous longitudinal studies to monitor. However, for the purpose of this evaluation, we were able to monitor participants transitioning into the workplace or starting a business for 8 months. During the period, regular follow up interactions were carried out through online surveys, phone calls and leveraging the online platform where participants were clustered.

In the course of getting placements for participants, LEAP Africa played an active role in connecting participants with other network and partner organisations. LEAP Africa’s effort, as understood was not to discourage participants from making their own personal search for placements. Participants were made to realise that they were already well equipped to obtain placements in organisations or roles they desired. In the long run, LEAP Africa was able to reach out to 16 additional organisations who successfully placed 13 participants, while other participants were able to individually search for placements with useful outcomes. The figure below is a list of some organisations were School to Work participants are currently placed;
As at March 2019, we carried out a final survey to get an update on the number of participants who were actively engaged. We found that a total of 58 participants, responded to the survey. Out of the 58 participants, 47 are currently employed. 31 are full time employees, 10 are undergoing internships, 4 are contract staff and 2 volunteers. 4 have started businesses and 4 are currently furthering their education.
As at March 2019, 55 participants were engaged either in employment, business or furthering their education. Out of these, 31 were full-time employees, 10 were undergoing internships, 2 were volunteering, 4 were contract staff, and 4 were currently running their business. Four participants have gone on to further their studies.
In order to effectively monitor participants’ transition journey, we took another approach to understand their experience from the employer’s perspective. In this regard, we administered online surveys to all the employers that supported the program and conducted informal interviews. We received 6 responses from the surveys and had informal interviews with two of the employers. The central question for us was how participants were engaging the skills and mind sets they have acquired during the training, asking questions with regard to how confident they are at work? Do they take initiatives at work? Do they take up roles without been asked to? Are they punctual at work? And How well are they able to work with colleagues, superiors and subordinates at work?

From the responses, we were able to determine that the internship for participants spanned between 1-6 months with an average of 3 months. What we found most interesting was that 80% of the participants were retained in full time roles at the end of the internship period. From the interviews with some of the employers, a common reason for retaining these participants was their drive and energy. They described them as being proactive, creative, self-driven and resourceful. Many of the partner organisations are Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMSE’s) they confirmed that getting talent to fill roles has remained a huge concern, but the interns they absorbed
are a different breed. Some of the employers were open to say that they are beginning to think differently about the employment process and philosophy in terms how to ensure that they retain these talents and ensure that the work environment remains challenging for them to manage turn over.

To understand these a bit more, we asked the employers to rate the participants on a range of competencies and attitudes. Participants were rated high in the communication skills, willingness to learn, team work, self-confidence as well as the quality of their work. Although there is a need for general improvement in their attitude to work, attention to detail, presentation skills and in their ability to take initiative. Understandably, for most of the participants it was their first-time experience in a work environment and the employers say they have started well and contributed significant value to their organisations.
Overall, we could determine that the placement experience was useful for both the participants and the employers. Participants have not only been able to demonstrate keys skills and competencies, they have also been given the opportunity of having work experience with many of them advancing into full time roles within a short time. Similarly, employers are excited about their interaction and engagement with the participants and their reviews of the participants are largely positive. It is also worthy to note that, in the aftermath of the program, LEAP Africa has received unsolicited calls from a few Human Resource Firms and industry colleagues requesting to engage trained participants from employability programs.

Factors that contributed to and affected the program

1. **Well-Equipped/ Experienced facilitators:** The program had a blend of LEAP staff and industry professionals as facilitators. The facilitators were well grounded in the subject matter and the delivery was exceptional. The key lesson here is that the quality and availability of facilitators is central to the realisation of the expected outcomes. Participants recount the several aha moments they had during the trainings as well as the relatability of the facilitators. The

“The intern sent to our organisation was a very resourceful, driven and focused person. Interaction with the intern brought about new drive and passion with his teammates”.

Maimuna Sanda

Human Resource Manager, Nitro 121 (Formerly 141 worldwide)
facilitators were able to inspire participants to be self-motivated and aspire beyond their perceived limitations.

2. **Duration of the training:** Participants noted that the 8 days allocated for the training was not effective for them in terms of giving room for completing assignments, understanding case studies and reflections. Participants shared their concerns about how facilitators had to rush through the modules in order to keep up with time, and this for them had implications of their overall learning outcomes.

3. **Training Venue/Location:** The training venue was very easy for participants to locate. It was in a central location and easy for participants coming from different parts of Lagos. Thus, participants were able to arrive and get back home early. The training room was also very conducive for learning. However, it might be useful if the training was residential, to allow for extended time for the modules and more interactions between participants and facilitators. This holds the potential to enhance the learning outcomes for participants. On the other hand, these kinds of training might benefit from blended learning or full-time e-learning courses.

4. **Career Fair:** The general feedback from the career fair was positive, however, the limited number of organizations present at the career fair, was not very effective to accommodate all the participants. Thus, some participants were not able to have extended conversations with employers. It had to be rushed to enable all the participants to have discussions with the few employers. In this regard it might be useful to plan career fairs to hold for two days perhaps to allow for some of these short comings, but this will have implications for staff time and budgets. Similarly, career fairs going forward must try to be more inclusive of other fields particular the science fields.
5. **Panel sessions:** The panel sessions were a great source of inspiration to the participants. It was a great learning experience for them as well, as participants could relate with the panelist as they shared their experiences. It also provided the opportunity for participants to ask mind bogging questions and understand the world work, the future of work and their role in positioning themselves for the dynamics.
The evidence from the foregoing narrative suggests that employability and entrepreneurship skills training contribute significantly to youth development, making them work and business ready as they prepare to transition into the next phase of their lives. In a world where interrelated and multiple structural conditions delay and hamper young people from living long and living well, supporting them with employability skills and leadership mindsets to bypass socially constructed limitations is more than useful.

This report therefore presents the independent final evaluation of the 2018 School to Work program implemented by LEAP Africa in collaboration with Dow Chemicals. The report mainstreams outcomes that the School to Work program realised for its participants and provides evidence in relation to the degree to which set objectives were accomplished while also explaining how these outcomes were realised. In addition, the report teases out key learnings while also identifying gaps that will serve as lessons to shape decision making going forward.

The evaluation engaged a rigorous approach using a procedure assessment to evaluate the adequacy and productivity of the project as a basis for measurement. It employed a mixed methodology incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods that engaged 41 Males and 39 Females. It endeavoured a content and execution assessment to evaluate program deliverables and the degree to which program activities were optimised, while also taking a gander at other
implementation features in terms of the key drivers and obstructions to delivery as well as the attendant effects, whether positive or negative, expected or unintended.

The findings suggest that participants have already begun demonstrating mind set and skills obtained both personally and in their work places. A summary of employer’s feedback indicates that about 70% of the participants were able to display employability skills such as self-confidence, ability to take initiative and solve problems, ability to communicate effectively and willingness to take up new assignments. It was impressive to see the number of participants that have been able to transition in the aftermath of the training and the career fair. A total of 53 participants - representing 66% of total participants - are currently engaged either in a full-time role, internship, volunteering or started their own businesses.

More so, it is evident that participants are not just getting jobs, but they are able to retain their jobs and move higher in the employment rank. 80% of the trainees who started out as interns have moved up into full time roles, because they were able to demonstrate: self-confidence, problem solving skills, team work, effective communication and were able to demonstrate technical capacity to deliver. With these outcomes, it might be safe to assume that many of the participants will be able to navigate through their working life with success if they continue to improve on exiting knowledge and sharpen their skills.
Recommendations

1. **Establishing relationships with private sector and industry:** The evidence from the report indicates that LEAP Africa needs to expand and deepen establish relationship with private sector and industry colleagues, to provide linkages for the talent emerging from its School to Work and other participants. In the aftermath of the program LEAP Africa has received unsolicited calls from a few Human Resource Firms and industry colleagues requesting to engage trained participants from employability programs. Strengthening these kinds of relations and building news ones will be useful in deepen the impact of LEAP Africa more broadly.

2. **Designing interventions specific for university graduates around employability:** From the application process of the School to Work program, it was realised that there is a great need from such programs. In the first instance, the program received over 2000 applications in a short time. Furthermore, screening participants to 80 was not very difficult because of the quality of the applications. These speak to the gaps that exist in how young people are being prepared and socialized for the work place. Hence, there is a huge gap LEAP Africa to fill in this regard, if supporting youth transitions into the work place is a priority. This comes out strongly, as more than 60% of the applicants confirm that the university is not preparing them effectively for the work place.

3. **Program Structure:** In order to reach out to more graduates and have increased impact, it might be useful for the School to Work program to consider a few options. These includes blended learning, e-learning or residential trainings. These have the potential to provide in depth learning, reflections and allow participants to interact and collaborate more amongst themselves and with
facilitators. Of course, this has implications for staff time and program budget, especially the latter.

4. **Increase in the training days:** Participants were vocal about increasing the number of days for the training. It might be useful to pay attention to this if the training will be non-residential, so that participants have the full complement of the program without it being rushed or shortened. Blended learning or e-learning might also provide the opportunity for participants to take the training at their own convenience, which might also be useful to consider. However, if the training will be non-residential, extending the days might not suffice. The point here is to ensure that the training allows for more comprehensive experience, in terms of the opportunity for participation and reflection.

5. **Number of participants:** At the call for application, a total of 2,025, applied for the program and only 80 were selected – representing less than 4% of the total applicants. The implicit notion here is that young people recognise their employability gap and that there an enormous need for employability skills training. While accommodating the huge number can be overwhelming, engaging an integrated approach to meeting this need might be useful. This may include partnering with government, universities and other development partners.
Evaluation Team Profile

Oge Okonkwo: A social development professional with experience in development programs and project impact evaluation, with interests in developing community projects, leadership and youth empowerment interventions. He has three years’ experience as a Researcher and Campaign Specialist. Oge is currently a MERL Associate at LEAP Africa where he supports research, curriculum development and impact measurement of Leadership, Life Skills and Employability programmes. Oge has an M.Sc. in Defence and Strategic Studies from the Nigerian Defence Academy where he focused on Defence Policy and National security and is driven by a commitment to change the mind-set of people especially youths by promoting ethical leadership across sectors and influencing governance within the Nigerian, African and global context.

Adenrele Owoyemi: A statistician with a multi-cultural blend of educational and work background with competences in data evaluation and analysis, relationship management as well as teaching digital skills. She is currently a Research Associate at LEAP Africa supporting data collection, analysis and evaluation. In her previous endeavours, Adenrele has worked as a sales analyst where she was involved in tracking investments and developing models using in-depth analytical techniques for portfolio and client companies. Adenrele holds a master’s degree in Statistics with Applications to Finance from University of Leeds and a bachelor’s degree in Industrial Mathematics from Covenant University.

Temidayo Falade: A youth development professional with project management and research competences in the social sector. He currently serves as a Monitoring and Evaluation officer at LEAP Africa, where he designs and implements M&E systems and frameworks for all programs while also ensuring consistency between outputs/outcomes and programs strategic intent. Prior to LEAP Africa, Temidayo worked as a Business developer where he was able to develop a business process and developing an effective system and structure for the organisation. Temidayo is a fellow of the Young African Leadership Initiative (YALI) and a global ambassador for thought for food initiative, where he supports Nigerian delegates through research to develop sustainable solutions for food preservation and business value. He holds a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration from Babcock University.

‘Femi Balogun: A researcher and evaluation consultant. He leads impact measurement, research and learning efforts at LEAP Africa. His work supports the development of monitoring and evaluation frameworks as well as research on interventions in the areas of youth leadership, employability, enterprise, and entrepreneurship while also supporting advocacy for strategic partnerships that promote youth transitions. Prior to joining LEAP Africa, ‘Femi worked as a research and policy uptake consultant at the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR), where he supported the management of research and establishing communities of practice around policy issues in parts of Africa. He also served as a visiting lecturer at Riara University, Nairobi where he taught International Human Rights Law and Practice. ‘Femi holds a master’s degree in Security, Leadership and Society from King’s College London, a Professional Master’s degree in Public and International Affairs from the University of Lagos, and a BSc in International Relations from Covenant University. ‘Femi has 7 years private sector experience from the Banking and Telecommunications sectors. He is a fellow at the African Leadership Centre Nairobi/UK, a fellow at the International Peace Institute New York, and is a member of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs.
LEAP Africa is a not-for-profit, non-partisan youth-focused leadership development organisation based in Lagos, Nigeria.

13, Omorinre Johnson Street off Admiralty Way, Lekki Phase 1, Lekki Peninsula, Lagos, Nigeria.
P.O. Box 75427 Victoria Island, Lagos.
Tel: (234) 01-2706512/2.
Email: research@leapafrica.org
Website: www.leapafrica.org

Programme Supported by,