Impact Assessment Report – LEAD Program (Leadership for Equity)

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List of Abbreviations

BEO	Block Education Officer
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DIET	District Institute of Educational Training
DS	Development Solutions
ETM	Effective Team Management
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IDI	In-depth interview
ICGP	India Cash Grant Program
KII	Key informant interview
LFA	Log frame analysis
LFE	Leadership for Equity
MIEPA	Maharashtra Institute of Education Planning and Administration
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MGD	Mini Group Discussion
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PLC	Peer Learning community
SCERT	State Council of Educational Research and Training
SEL	Social & Emotional Learning

Executive summary

This report presents the results of an **impact assessment** conducted for the **LEAD program,** wherein **Cisco** partnered with **Leadership for Equity (LFE)**. LEAD is a blended learning program that helps state education department officers build their capacity. By providing online courses along with peer learning circles, the program aimed to strengthen the academic and administrative cadre of system leaders in the state.

The impact assessment methodology encompassed developing a set of research questions incorporated from the OECD-DAC framework to assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the LEAD program. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected through surveys, interviews, and group discussions.

Key findings

The LEAD program has led to significant improvements in leadership skills among officers, particularly in areas such as program design, execution, work collaboration, and developing strong leadership at the school level. The program has been instrumental in creating a more responsive and adaptable educational environment. It helped officers in understanding the complexities faced by teachers and adjusting their approach accordingly. These enhancements have been crucial in fostering more effective educational programs and driving positive changes in schools.

The LEAD program's curriculum and design were highly relevant and beneficial to officers, aligning with their roles and needs. One of the key aspects of the LEAD program was its emphasis on impact assessment and the development of a robust framework for evaluating program design. Officers have notably adopted new practices that have not only enhanced the effectiveness of their school-level initiatives but also contributed to their all-round development. Additionally, the program has introduced technology-based solutions and streamlined processes, which have significantly increased efficiency in daily operations. This has allowed officers to manage their tasks more effectively and with greater ease.

The program effectively incorporated feedback and utilized a variety of teaching methods to ensure accessibility and engagement, making it valuable for officers with different skills and experiences. The LEAD program's implementation was efficient and effective, with timely completion and positive stakeholder feedback. The program's relevance and practical focus contributed to its success. Officers valued the flexibility and accessibility of the program and found the content and materials to be useful and engaging. The program's impact is evident in the improved knowledge, skills, and practices of the officers, as well as its positive influence on educational program design and implementation.

The program has led to the establishment of a sustainable framework for ongoing professional development. However, there is still a need for systemic sustainability through program institutionalization and ongoing support.

Recommendations

The recommendations include ongoing learning and training support through refresher courses and access to course content even after program completion. Improvements in course content on M&E, improved Marathi translation of materials and additional courses on English communication are recommended. Finally, it would be useful to structure the course and engage with the Government, to enable officers to manage their workload, while pursuing the course.

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Context setting

Cisco's purpose as a company is to create an inclusive future for all. **The India Cash Grant Program (ICGP)** was conceptualized to drive problem-solving through innovation and integration of technology. Partners associated with the grant program create technology-based solutions that improve the lives of communities and professionals for an inclusive future. The Flagship Grant program is executed through strategic partnerships with nonprofits, non-governmental organizations, and community-based organizations.

In India, the program is executed in compliance with the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Act and rules of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India. As per the amended CSR rules (2021), impact assessments were made mandatory for companies with CSR funds of INR 10 crore and/ or CSR projects with funds of INR 1 crore or above. It was also stated that impact assessments had to be conducted within one year of project completion.

In this context, the Cisco India Cash Grant Program has commissioned Development Solutions (DS) to undertake an impact assessment of the LEAD program (Leadership Enhancement and Academic Development). Implemented in partnership with the Leadership for Equity (LFE) in Maharashtra, the program was designed to strengthen capacities and enable professional development for state education officers. This was done through a certified blended learning course.

This report outlines the program context and findings from the impact evaluation of the LEAD program.

1.2 About the LEAD program

The LEAD program was started by LFE (a not-for-profit organization) in partnership with the Maharashtra Institute of Education Planning and Administration (MIEPA)[1] in 2020. LEAD is a blended learning program that helps state education department officers build their capacity. The program provided online courses along with peer learning circles, enabling officers to hone their professional skills.

The program aimed to strengthen the academic and administrative cadre of system leaders in the state with improved knowledge, skills and mindset to design and lead effective academic and administrative programs.

Under the LEAD program, three courses were offered:

- **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)** – This course provided a thorough understanding of different tools and concepts such as using Task Trackers, creation of Log Frame Analysis (LFA) for program monitoring, Basics and use of monitoring frameworks, understanding on data collection methods and evaluation tools such as "Kirkpatrick method" and "Counterfactual method", among others.
- **Effective team management (ETM)** – This course aimed to introduce core concepts of team management like the importance of co-working and co-creating Skill-Will Matrix, situational leadership and team accountability.

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[1] A state level institution, established under the ministry of human resources and now education, to deal with capacity building and research in planning and management of education

- **Social and emotional learning (SEL)** – This course aimed to introduce various concepts of the SEL such as the CASEL framework, facilitation techniques, stress management and a few activities to manage personal self.

The courses were designed based on a training needs analysis conducted by LFE and SCERT (State Council of Educational Research and Training) in 2019, in which approximately 1000 officers took part via a survey and focus group discussions. The officers identified four broad areas where training was needed:

- Documentation and knowledge management of existing data
- Impact evaluation of programs through effective structures
- Personal development through self and time management
- Team management

Based on the identified areas, the LEAD program was conceptualized to enable contextual courses and training programs such that:
- The officers were motivated, engaged, and aligned with the social-emotional skills and competencies needed to support their peers and design effective programs that prioritize students' well-being.
- Officers were well-aligned with the skills and competencies of the 21st century and understood the pedagogies to effectively teach students.
- Officers could implement various lean techniques to make their work and related processes and activities more efficient.
- Teachers' support structures were effective, resulting in better classroom practices.
- The education programs were effective, which would lead to better student learning outcomes.

Implementation approach of the LEAD program

LFE adopted a two-pronged approach for the implementation of the LEAD program.

<u>Training</u>

- **LEAD blended course for officers:** Officers completed online courses, participated in online professional learning circles, and worked on projects to thoroughly understand the concepts.
- **Professional development workshops:** Officers regularly met to share their experiences, reflect on them, and work together to solve problems and develop their skills, creating a strong sense of community.

<u>Doing</u>

- **Co-implementing government programs:** The program supported officers to design and implement contextual programs for Covid-19 response to education.

About LFE – the implementation partner for the LEAD program

LFE is a systems change and research organization that supports governments with structural reforms and their implementation to improve the quality of education at scale. LFE's fundamental belief is that public education systems are, by definition, 'gatekeepers' of equity and that effective and sensitive public systems will ensure that quality education is provided to every child. One of LFE's core focuses is to strengthen the academic and

administrative cadre of system leaders in the state with improved knowledge, skills, and mindset to design and lead effective academic & administrative programs and drive effective people management structures.

Section 2: Impact assessment objectives and methodology

The objectives of the impact assessment are as follows:

- To assess the impact of the LEAD program in having improved capacity of the middle management in the state education department

- To understand stakeholders' perspectives on the program activities and impact

- To evaluate processes and approaches undertaken by the program

2.1 Impact assessment framework

Given the objectives, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) framework was used to guide the impact assessment. **The framework was used as guidance to assess program impact, processes, and approaches by understanding – program relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.** An understanding of program relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability enables reflection and assessment of the program processes and approaches. Effectiveness and impact –speak to the impact of the program on target stakeholders.

An overview of the framework in the context of the impact assessment, is provided in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: OECD–DAC framework – used to guide the impact assessment
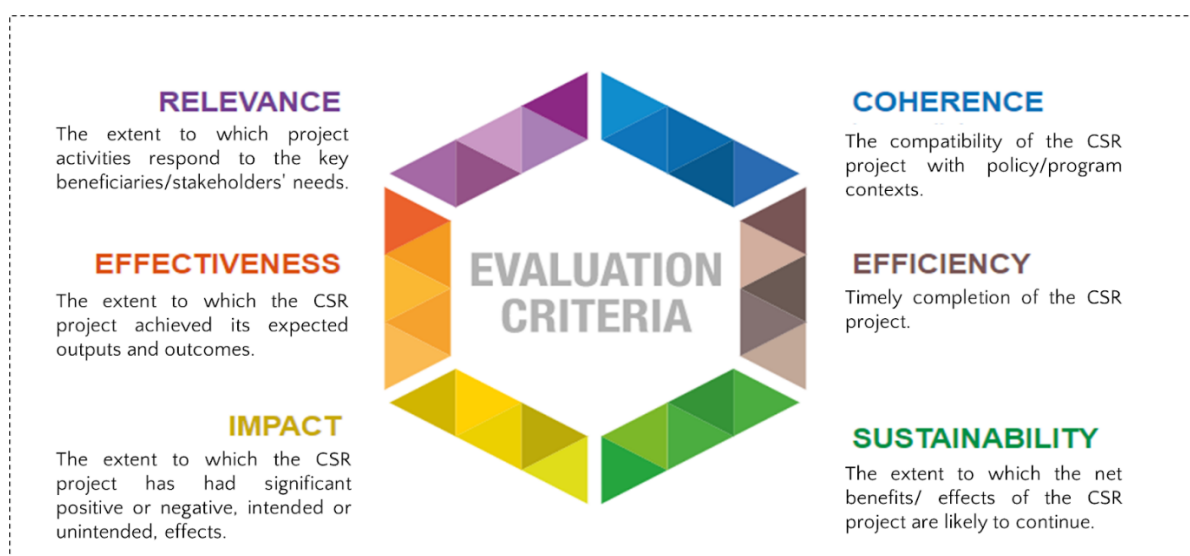
2.2 Areas of enquiry and impact assessment methods

Based on the OECD–DAC framework, Table 2.1 presents the key areas of enquiry and methods used to gather data for the proposed areas of enquiry.

Table 2.1: Areas of enquiry and methods

Areas of enquiry	Areas of enquiry – Sub-themes	Data collection methods
Relevance		

1. What is the extent to which the LEAD program responds to the needs of the education officers?	1) Was the program relevant in improving the day-day work of the education officers? 2) Relevance of course content in line with needs shared by the officers in the training need analysis	1) In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) with education officers, extension officers, cluster heads, LFE team 2) Desk review of program documents 3) Quantitative survey with education officers, extension officers, and cluster heads
Coherence		
2. What is the compatibility of the LEAD program with the policy context and government programming?	1) Alignment between the program's content and the current educational priorities and systems	1) IDI with MIEPA team 2) Mini-group discussion (MGD) with the program implementation team at LFE
Efficiency		
3. Timely completion of the program activities	1) Was the program completed on time, as planned? 2) Were concerns of the education officers, if any, addressed and accommodated promptly?	1) MGD with the program implementation team at LFE 2) IDIs with education officers, extension officers, cluster heads, and LFE team 3) Quantitative survey with education officers, extension officers, and cluster heads
Effectiveness		
4. Was the program implemented as intended? What were the successes and challenges? What is the extent to which the LEAD program achieved the expected outcomes?	1) Participant satisfaction with the delivery format 2) Improvement in the knowledge and skills of education officers.	1) MGD with the program implementation team at LFE 2) IDIs with education officers, extension officers, cluster heads, LFE team, and MIEPA team 3) Quantitative survey with education officers, extension officers, and cluster heads
Impact		
5. The extent to which the program has had positive or negative intended or unintended effects on the education officers and educational programming in the state.	1) Incorporation of newly learned techniques into the day-to-day activities of education officers 2) Observable positive changes in educational program design and implementation at the middle management level. 3) Case studies or success stories highlighting the positive outcomes resulting from middle	1) IDIs with education officers, extension officers, cluster heads, LFE team, MIEPA team 2) MGD with the program implementation team at LFE 3) Desk review of program documents 4) Quantitative survey with education officers, extension officers, cluster heads

	management's application of training.	
Sustainability		
6.The extent to which the net benefits/ effects of the program are likely to continue.	1) Establishment of a post-training support system and access to continuous professional development resources. 2) Existence of a structured feedback loop for continuous improvement.	1) IDIs with education officers, extension officers, cluster heads, LFE team, and MIEPA team 2) MGD with the program implementation team at LFE 3) Desk review of program documents 4) Quantitative survey with education officers, extension officers, and cluster heads

2.3 Impact Assessment – Methodology

The impact assessment employed a mixed method approach for data collection.

Primary data

Primary data was obtained from state education officers and stakeholders who were involved in program design and implementation (program team at LFE, MIEPA, among others – please see table 2.1). This served as the main source of information for this assessment.

- Qualitative interactions: In-depth interviews (IDIs) and Mini-Group Discussions (MGDs) were conducted with state education officers, implementing partners, and other stakeholders involved in project design or delivery.
- Quantitative Survey: An online self-assessment survey form was distributed to state education officers identified with support from LFE and MIEPA.

Secondary data – desk review

Review of project documents: Project documents made available by Cisco and LFE were reviewed to understand program conceptualization and implementation.

Qualitative data collection

Table 2.2 outlines the stakeholder groups, methods of data collection and sample covered for the impact assessment. Based on the review of program documents, relevant stakeholders were identified for the impact assessment and a sample proposed. This was shared with the LFE team, and their feedback sought.

Table 2.2: Stakeholders and sample – qualitative data collection

Stakeholder groups (Selected based on mapping and validation)	Method of data collection	Sample proposed	Sample covered
Education officers/teachers (e.g. lecturer, senior lecturer–DIET)	IDI	11	10
Education extension officers	IDI	6	6
Cluster heads	IDI	2	2
State government officials (Deputy Director)	IDI	1	1
Project team (LFE)	IDI	4	4
Total		**24 (target)**	**23 (achieved)**

One education officer was unavailable prior to the data collection, and hence could not be covered in the sampling.

Quantitative data collection

Based on data shared on enrolment and completion for each of the three courses under the LEAD Program by LFE, it was proposed to target a total of 750 officers for quantitative data collection. This total was distributed amongst the three courses as follows:

- M&E enrolled: 308
- ETM new participants enrolled: 215.
- SEL new participants enrolled: 227.

The aim here was to cover officers across the following categories who were a part of either one, two, or all three courses:

- Enrolled and initiated/not initiated.
- Enrolled, initiated, and completed /not completed.
- Enrolled, initiated, completed, and obtained credits for certification/did not have sufficient credits for certification.

On receiving the final database from LFE and MIEPA, in tandem with obtaining all required permissions for data collection, it was observed that a total of 828 officers could be included in the data collection exercise. A self–filled survey link was shared with all officers (i.e., prospective respondents) over email, as per a) contact information provided by LFE and MIEPA and b) by prospective respondents themselves.

The database included various officers of the state education department, such as extension officers, lecturers, cluster heads, and block education officers. The self–filled survey form was monitored for a period of ~30 days, which also included reminder calls and obtaining their correct contact information in case of missing or incorrect information provided in the database. Due to the low response rate, only a total of 47 responses were collected and used for data analysis.

The final sample included 28 male and 19 female officer respondents, with an average age of 46 years for both gender categories. The average years of professional experience was 18.5 years for males and 21 years for females. Out of the 28 male respondents, the highest education for 24 male respondents was postgraduate studies and above, and for 3 male respondents was undergraduate studies. Out of the 19 female respondents, the highest education for 15 female respondents was postgraduate studies and above, and for 3 female respondents was undergraduate studies.

Data analysis and triangulation

Qualitative data analysis

For analysis of the data from qualitative interactions, we followed a mix of inductive and deductive coding approaches to identify themes based on the OECD framework.

- Step 1 – Familiarization with Data: Interview transcripts were comprehensively reviewed. A thematic analysis framework was developed based on the adapted OECD framework.

- Step 2 – Coding: To analyze the qualitative data, common themes were identified across collected data and coded as per the OECD DAC framework indicators.

- Step 3 – Theme Development: Codes were grouped into broader themes to capture significant and nuanced patterns across the data.

Quantitative data analysis

Data from the online quantitative survey was cleaned and then analyzed and tabulated to generate frequency tables.

Data and insights from the qualitative analysis were triangulated with the quantitative survey results and the desk review to generate the insights and findings. The findings are contextualized and presented in line with the OECD-DAC impact assessment framework.

2.4 Data collection challenges, their mitigations, and limitations of the impact assessment

Qualitative data collection

- <u>Challenges in conducting in-person interactions</u>: Initially, the impact assessment plan involved collecting primary data from all stakeholders through in-person interactions. However, due to unavailability and the wide distribution of stakeholders across the state, the project team adapted to collecting data both virtually and through in-person interactions. With the onset of the monsoon season in Maharashtra, the team had to shift entirely to virtual interactions.
- <u>Challenges with recall</u>: Since the LEAD program ended in 2022 and this impact assessment was undertaken in 2024, recall bias among officers was a challenge. In some cases, officers did not actively participate in the data collection. Where possible, focused effort with accurate probing helped overcome this hurdle.
- <u>Response bias</u>: Since stakeholders in the data collection exercise were purposively selected, social desirability bias was an identified risk. To mitigate this, the interview guides prepared for qualitative data collection contained well-phrased and clear questions, ensuring no statements or probes were leading or tempted the stakeholders to provide socially acceptable responses.

Quantitative data collection

- <u>Challenges in completing quantitative data collection</u>: A self-filled survey form was circulated among officers through email, considering that they were spread across districts of Maharashtra. Despite this, very few responses were received within a fortnight. To improve the number of responses, the project team onboarded a third-party agency to conduct a follow-up round of calls to the officers. However, the improvement in the response rate was insignificant, with only 47 responses.
- <u>Challenges with recall</u>: Since the LEAD program ended in 2022 and this impact assessment was undertaken in 2024, recall bias among officers was a challenge. During the follow-up round of calls, many officers mentioned that they did not remember much about the program.

2.5 Implementation of the impact assessment and quality assurance

The impact assessment was executed in three broad phases, as illustrated in Table 2.3. below.

Table 2.3: Overview of implementation of the impact assessment

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Interaction with program implementation partners	Translate, script, pre-test data collection tools as needed	Data collection (virtual/in-person) – This includes qualitative data collection and quantitative data collection via self-filled survey.
Desk review of project documents/data provided by Cisco and program implementation partners	Coordinate with program implementation partners to prepare for on-ground data collection (e.g. scheduling, permissions, etc.)	
Stakeholder mapping and validation	Recruit qualitative researchers for data collection and undertake training as needed	Daily debrief calls to get overall field updates, identify challenges, and strategize to resolve the same
Finalization of inception report, impact assessment design, and data collection tools	Finalize field plan for data collection	

The qualitative data collection for the CSR project was conducted between July 3rd and July 12th, 2024. The quantitative data collection was launched on July 8th and incoming data was monitored and accepted for the next steps on August 10th, 2024.

Quality assurance

For this impact assessment, quality assurance protocols were put in place to minimize the risks associated with the data collection process. These quality protocols were developed by Development Solutions for each phase of the assessment and proper adherence was ensured throughout.

Recruitment of project team	- A rigorous process of recruitment was ensured to identify experienced and qualified field researchers.

Pre-data collection	- Review and translation of developed tools (quantitative and qualitative) for data collection has been undertaken. - A full day of training was conducted with researchers to get familiarized with and better understand the interview guides. - Data collection team was provided field kits as needed, with all project details, field plans, consent forms, hard copies of the tool, checklists
Data collection	- Fieldwork plans with timelines and milestones were developed and finalized for everyone's perusal. - Daily debriefs were scheduled to discuss field challenges and communication channels were kept open so that any changes affecting data collection could be swiftly shared with the project team and resolved. - Data security norms were shared with all concerned individuals involved in data collection.
Review of data and analysis	- Data sanity checks were performed to maintain clean data. - Data analysis plan was drafted and finalized in tandem with the assessment matrix.
Quality in documentation	- Ensured that the requirements of the assignment were adequately met. - Standardization of fonts, use of acronyms, and formatting was followed, and Illustrations/graphics were used as needed.

Section 3: Findings from the Impact Assessment

The findings from the impact assessment – both quantitative surveys and qualitative interactions are presented in this section. The findings are structured, as per the areas of enquiry, in line with the OECD DAC framework.

This section first presents details of course enrollment and completion, followed by findings and insights on the program's relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability.

3.1 Program enrollment and completion

This section includes findings from data collected using the self-filled survey form. As stated earlier, the total sample is 47 officers.

Course enrollment

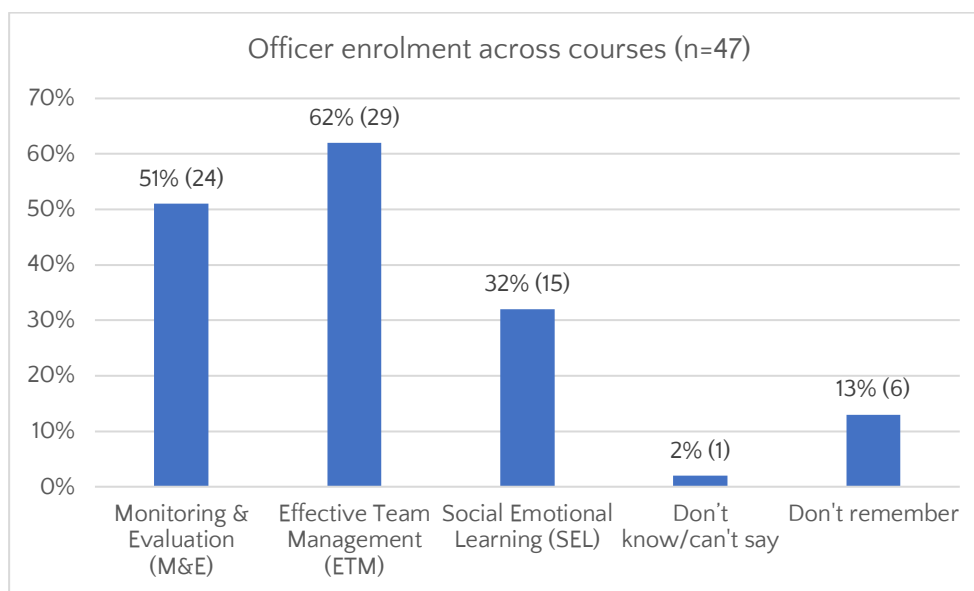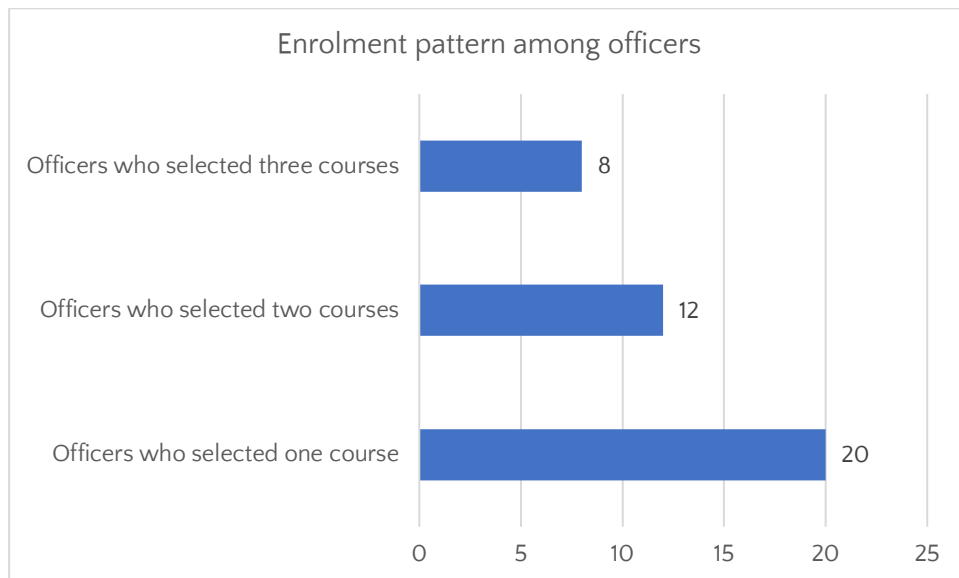*Figure: 3.1 Officer enrolment across courses*

Figure 3.1 illustrates the enrollment rates in various LEAD program courses. Effective Team Management (ETM) was the most popular course with 62% enrollment, followed by Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) at 51%. Social Emotional Learning (SEL) had a moderate enrollment of 32%, while a small percentage either didn't know or didn't remember the courses they enrolled in.

Enrolment pattern among officers

Category	Value
Officers who selected three courses	8
Officers who selected two courses	12
Officers who selected one course	20

The majority of officers (20) enrolled in only one course, followed by 12 officers who enrolled in two courses. A smaller group of 8 officers enrolled in all three courses (see Figure 3.2).

Figures 3.3 and 3.4 show the details of officers who enrolled in one course and two courses, respectively. The most popular course among those who enrolled in a single course was ETM, followed by M&E. Similarly, among officers who enrolled in two courses, M&E and ETM were the most chosen.

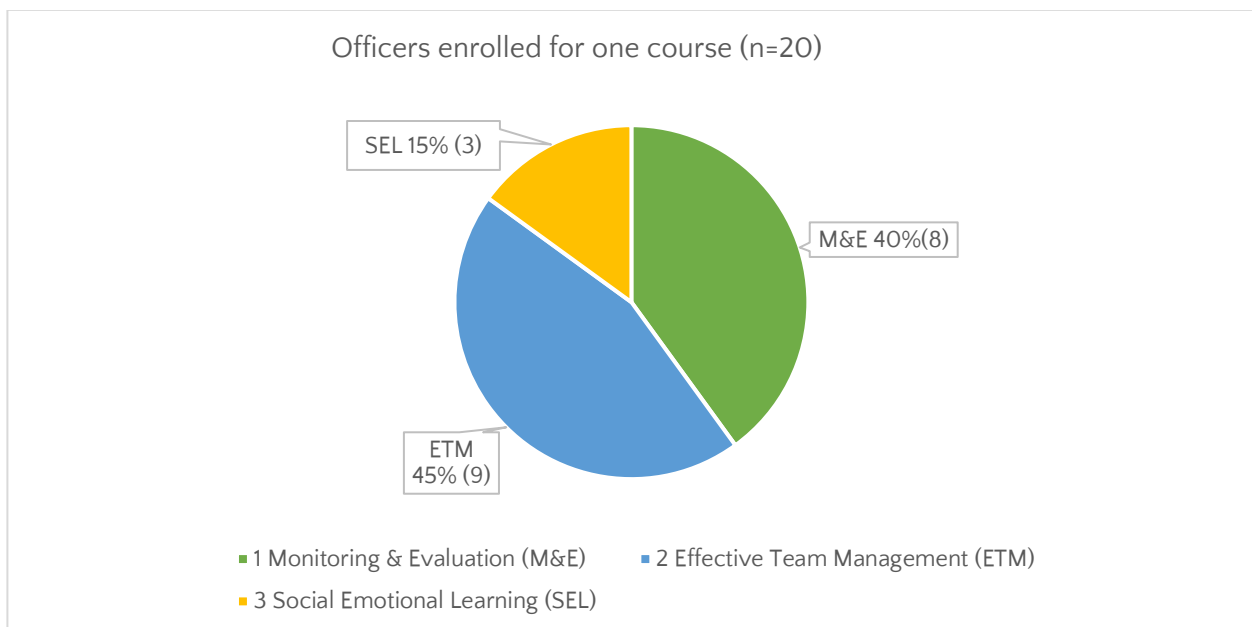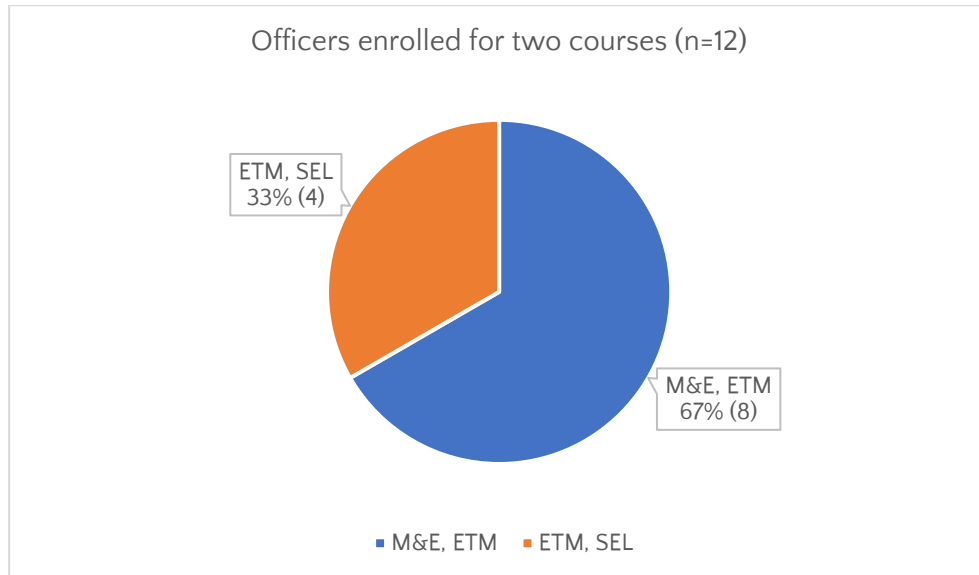Figure: 3.3 Officer enrolment for one course

Officers enrolled for one course (n=20)

SEL 15% (3)
M&E 40%(8)
ETM 45% (9)

■ 1 Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)   ■ 2 Effective Team Management (ETM)
■ 3 Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Figure: 3.4 Officer enrolment for two courses

Officers enrolled for two courses (n=12)

ETM, SEL
33% (4)

M&E, ETM
67% (8)

■ M&E, ETM   ■ ETM, SEL

Looking at the language of enrolment for the LEAD program, 83% of the officers enrolled in Marathi, 10% in English, and 7% in both English and Marathi (see Figure 3.5).

Figure: 3.5 Language Preferred for LEAD courses

Language in which officers enrolled (n=40)

English & Marathi
7% (3)

English
10% (4)

Marathi
83%(33)

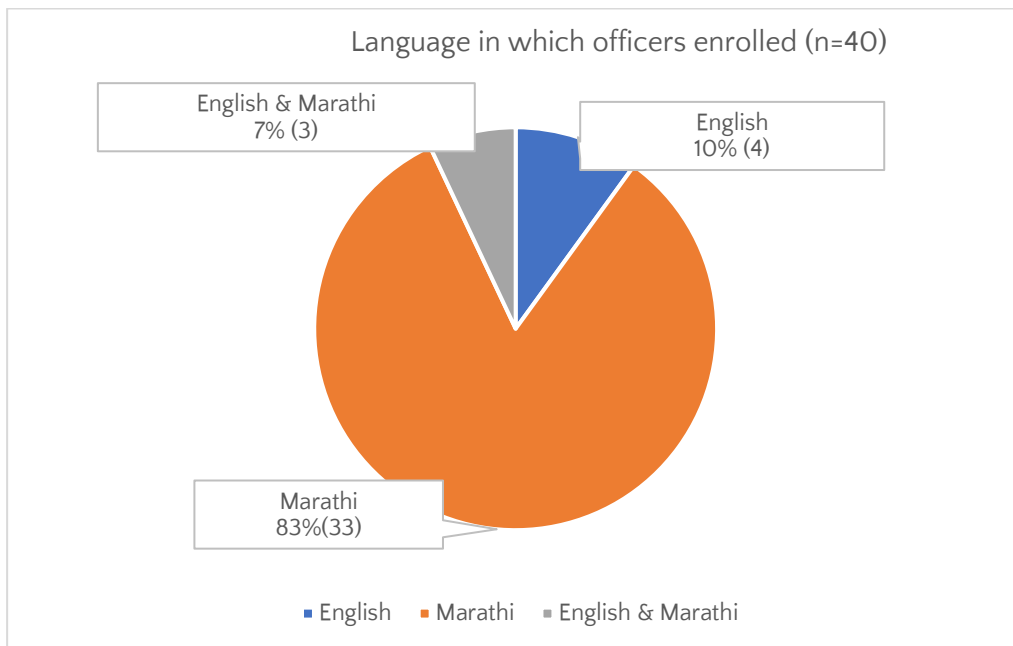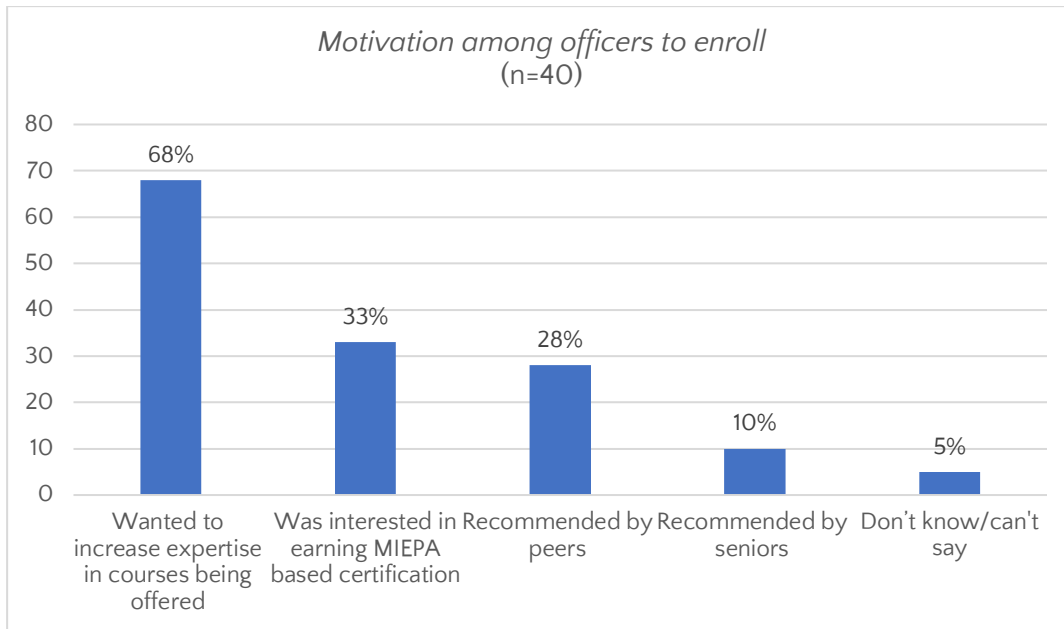■ English   ■ Marathi   ■ English & Marathi

Figure 3.6 Motivation among officers to enroll in the LEAD program

The above figure shows the reason that motivated officers to join the LEAD program. The most common motivation was to increase expertise in the areas for which courses were offered (68%), followed by interest in earning an MIEPA–based certification (33%). Recommendations from peers and seniors were also significant factors, while a small percentage of them were unsure or couldn't say.

Moreover, the majority of the officers reported learning about the LEAD program through official communication from MIEPA (60%) and peer groups (53%). A smaller portion learned about it from their seniors.

Course completion

Table 3.1 LEAD program level of completion (one course)

Level of completion	M&E only	ETM only	SEL only
Enrolled, initiated but not completed	1	1	0
Enrolled, initiated, and completed	4	2	0
Enrolled, initiated, completed and obtained certification	3	6	3
Total	8	9	3

Table 3.1 presents the enrollment and completion rates of officers in various LEAD program courses. Among officers who enrolled in one course, the highest completion and certification was noted in the case of SEL, where 3 of 3 who enrolled in SEL completed the course and obtained certification. The next was ETM, with 6 of 9 officers completing and obtaining certification. Only 3 of 8 officers who enrolled in M&E completed and sought certification.

Table 3.2 LEAD program level of completion (two courses)

Level of completion	Course 1, 2		Course 2, 3	
	M&E	ETM	ETM	SEL
Enrolled, initiated but not completed	1	–	–	–
Enrolled, initiated, and completed	1	2	1	1
Enrolled, initiated, completed and obtained certification	6	6	3	3
Total	8		4	

Of the officers who enrolled in the M&E and ETM, 6 of 8 completed both courses and obtained certification, respectively. Among those who enrolled for ETM and SEL, 3 of 4 completed both courses and obtained certification (see table 3.2).

3.2 Program Relevance

The relevance of the training program, as articulated by officers and stakeholders, was a notable strength, significantly impacting the officer's day–to–day work within the education department.

The curriculum, course design and modules were meticulously tailored to address the specific needs of and align with the responsibilities of middle management in the education department. The courses proved highly relevant and beneficial, with officers reporting that the content was well–aligned with their job functions. As highlighted by one Education Officer, *"These materials were excellent and beneficial. They provided us with PDF files, which we used to create printed copies."* While many reported having prior knowledge in these areas, the course served as a valuable upgrade.

Feedback was gathered during course development to ensure the course was relevant and useful to the officers. Prior to finalization, the modules were reviewed by officials from MIEPA and SCERT, incorporating their extensive field expertise. Additionally, the officers' feedback led to revisions that enhanced the relevance of the courses. For instance, contextual examples and additional multimedia resources were added based on the officers' suggestions.

The modules incorporated problems and best practices through case studies and real–world scenarios. The educational materials, presented in Marathi with straightforward language and relatable examples, further enhanced comprehension. As one officer noted, *"The mind maps and pictorial representations were self-explanatory and were so well presented that just by looking at them, I could understand the content."* The inclusion of context–specific assignments, such as the use of a 6th–grade poem to teach emotions, was particularly appreciated. *"The case studies and videos were highly relevant to our daily work. We've been able to apply these insights effectively in our workplace and interactions with others,"* observed an Education Officer.

The training sessions were designed to be accessible, using simple language and real–life examples to aid understanding. Officers also valued the flexibility in assignment submission methods—written, video, or PowerPoint presentations—which accommodated varying skills and preferences. One officer reflected, *"We were given three options for submitting*

assignments: 1) in writing, 2) through a video, or 3) via a PowerPoint presentation. Initially, many of us lacked the technical skills for options 2 and 3, which were new to us. When we began using these tools during the pandemic, it was challenging at first. I initially submitted assignments as Word files, then switched to PowerPoint presentations, and now use Canva. The technical skills we acquired have also improved our presentations." The training process also **effectively utilized well-designed PDFs and videos**, which provided comprehensive content and engaging visual explanations. Case studies offered valuable insights.

Officers who responded to the quantitative survey also highlighted the use and relevance of the LEAD program. As seen in figure 3.5, 87% of officers who responded to the survey found the program useful and very useful for their role. 95% officers found the LEAD program useful and very useful for their personal growth.

Figure 3.7: Usefulness of the program for officer's role and personal growth
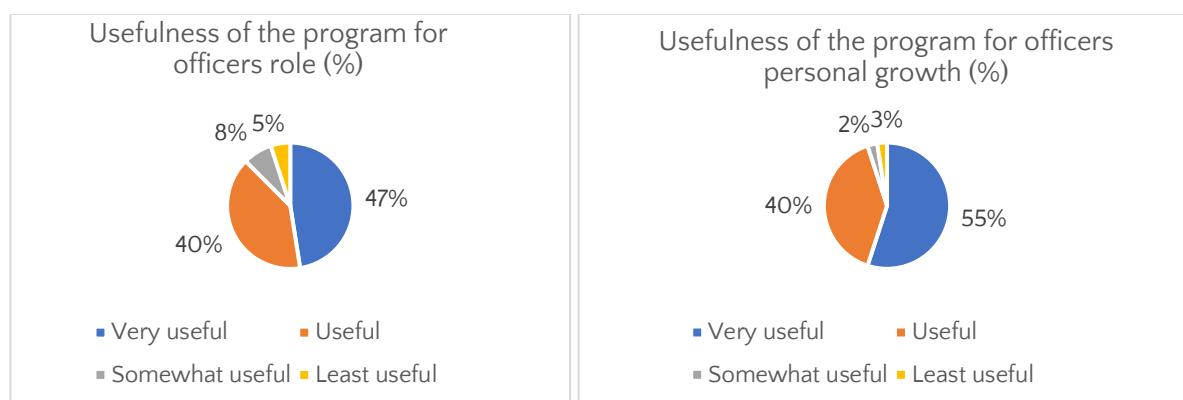
Thus, the program design – design of the curriculum, modules and training processes, took into consideration the needs of the officers. The program curriculum was designed to be relevant – to the day-to-day work of the officers and in line with the training needs assessment. Feedback from the officers and key officials from SCERT and MIEPA was sought to ensure appropriateness. The design of the modules and training process ensured real life examples, flexibility and use of multiple training methods (PDFs, videos), which ensured relatability among officers with different skills, experiences and abilities.

3.3 Program coherence
The coherence of the LEAD program was marked by responsiveness to priorities of the government and officers, and its alignment with established educational principles and standards.

Alignment with priorities – the program was designed and implemented in collaboration with the MIEPA, a government institution, whose role is to build and implement capacity building initiatives to improve the educational workforce. The program was thus designed to speak to priority areas of capacity building, identified by the state and MIEPA. A training needs assessment was undertaken, to determine the specific needs of the officers, based on which the program content and design were finalized.

Alignment with educational principles and standards – The collaboration between LFE, MIEPA and SCERT ensured a program design, consistent with current principles and standards followed by the Department of Education, in Maharashtra state. Local examples, to the extent possible and best practices were included, to ensure that the curriculum

enables officers to apply their learnings practically. The training pedagogy ensured adult learning principles.

Thus, by ensuring buy-in of and aligning with government institutions for design and implementation, the LEAD program is coherent with the larger policy and program contexts of the state education.

3.4 Program efficiency

Program efficiency speaks to the timely implementation and completion of the course offerings and schedule. All officers part of the program, and the MIEPA stakeholders noted and appreciated the timely delivery and execution of the program. As one education officer stated, *"It was a good experience because the timings were flexible & it wasn't compulsory to attend. The self-paced structure and clear timelines made it easy to stay on track and find time during holidays to complete the tasks"*. Officers noted that the initial marketing of the course and enrollment were done in a smooth manner, ensuring timely access to the learning material and content.

98% of the officers (n = 40) in the quantitative survey also reported that the LEAD program course content and learning materials were made available in a timely manner (see figure 5.1 in annexure).

The program implementation team from LFE ensured adequate resource allocation, such that initial emerging issues at the time of program launch were effectively managed. The program team also ensured flexibility, such that officers were able to access the program at timings convenient to them; and hence, finish the course on time. An example was cited by one of the officers, who said that – to accommodate their schedules, Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings were rescheduled to weekends and holidays, resolving initial conflicts with professional commitments. *"The training was incredibly convenient because I didn't need to take any leaves or travel to Pune or Nashik. There were no strict time constraints, such as a fixed number of days requiring me to stay away from home."*

Thus, adequate resource allocation to manage initial challenges, and flexibility and adaptability in the program design ensured that the program was implemented in a timely and efficient manner.

3.5 Program Effectiveness

The program's effectiveness is reflected if the program was implemented well and the way it was intended. It also reflects the achievement of outcomes – i.e. to what extent it was the program successful in improving the knowledge and skills of the officers. This section presents stakeholder perspectives on the program implementation and processes, and achievement of outcomes.

Success in program processes and implementation

Course orientation and marketing: Officers and stakeholders highlighted the thorough orientation and effective marketing strategies, which ensured that officers understood the course's value and relevance. Marketing efforts, including an introductory video and promotional content, effectively communicated the course's relevance and the state government certification, facilitating smooth and timely access for the officers.

Course content and delivery

- As seen in the earlier section in relevance, the course was designed to meet the needs and address the ongoing challenges faced by the officers. 93% of officers who responded to the quantitative survey (n=40) reported that they found specific topics, resources and the course content useful (see figure 5.2 in annexure).

- **Practical application of the course content**: The program's emphasis on practical application, through assignments and real-life scenarios, enhanced the relevance and utility of the training for officers.

- The innovative design of the course, which eschewed simple question-and-answer formats in favor of real case studies and creative methods, was well-received. This approach made the training more practical.

- Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, such as increased workload and fatigue, the high quality of the training content ensured motivation. The observation that officers "*never felt that the course was a burden,*" despite the considerable time required for assignments, underscores the nature of the training and its value for officers.

- **Interactive and innovative delivery of the course content**: Officers expressed high satisfaction with the delivery format of the course. This led to high engagement and active participation in the course.

   o Officers found the introduction of innovative techniques, such as the ABC method and mind maps, particularly valuable in managing stress and understanding complex concepts.

   o Similarly, the process that required officials to answer questions before progressing to the next module, they believed ensured thorough understanding.

- **The PLCs were highly appreciated as a platform for interaction, engagement and cross learning**. One education officer noted, "Unlike traditional training, where one person speaks and other officers merely listen, the LEAD program involves active participation through PLCs and assignments" post-COVID-19, in-person PLCs were particularly valued for their enhanced personal connection. Collaborative PLCs sessions provided a platform for officers to engage with the content and receive feedback and insights from trainers and peers.

- **The use of breakout rooms and collaborative online tasks allowed officers to work together, revising and learning collectively**. During these sessions, breakout rooms facilitated discussions where officers explored the benefits of various aspects of the training. As one Education Officer noted, "*During collaborative sessions, time was spent in discussion, allowing us to reach conclusions collaboratively. Each officer shared their opinions and experiences, enriching the learning experience for everyone.*"

- **The accessibility of course materials was highlighted as a success**. The course content was made available in advance, facilitating assignment preparation and completion. One officer appreciated this aspect, stating, "*It was easy to access, and the materials were circulated to us before the training sessions.*"

- **The practical assignments were highly appreciated. The assignment submission process was designed for convenience, allowing submissions in various formats**—soft copy, hard copy, or even photos and videos. This flexibility contributed to a smoother and more accessible experience for the officers.

- Mandatory attendance, deadlines, and public accountability fostered a sense of achievement. *"This approach allowed for constant monitoring of our' understanding and learning progress,"* said an officer.

Data from the quantitative survey provides further insights on specific aspects of the course that the officers found useful.
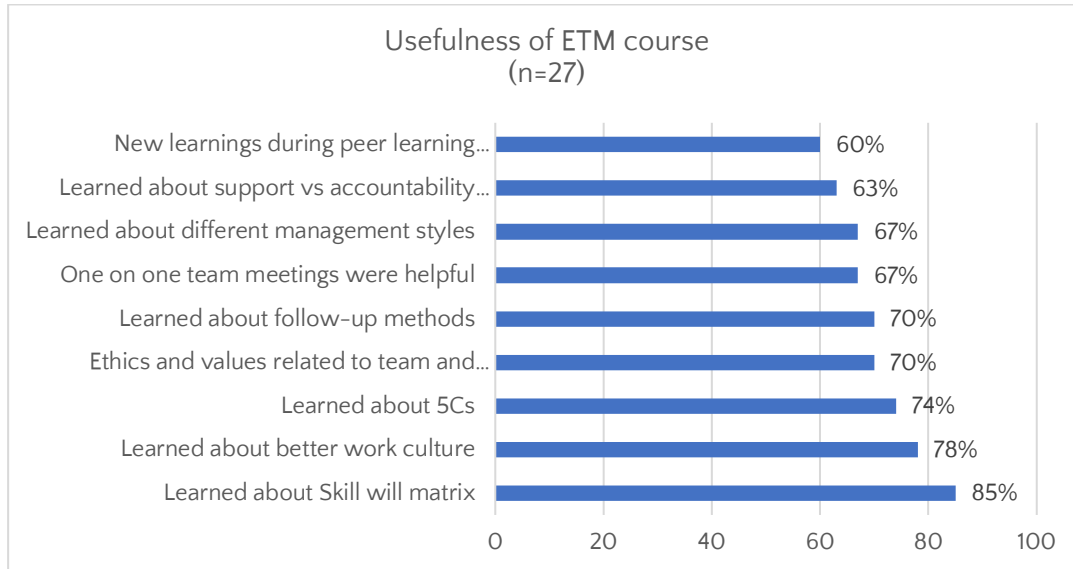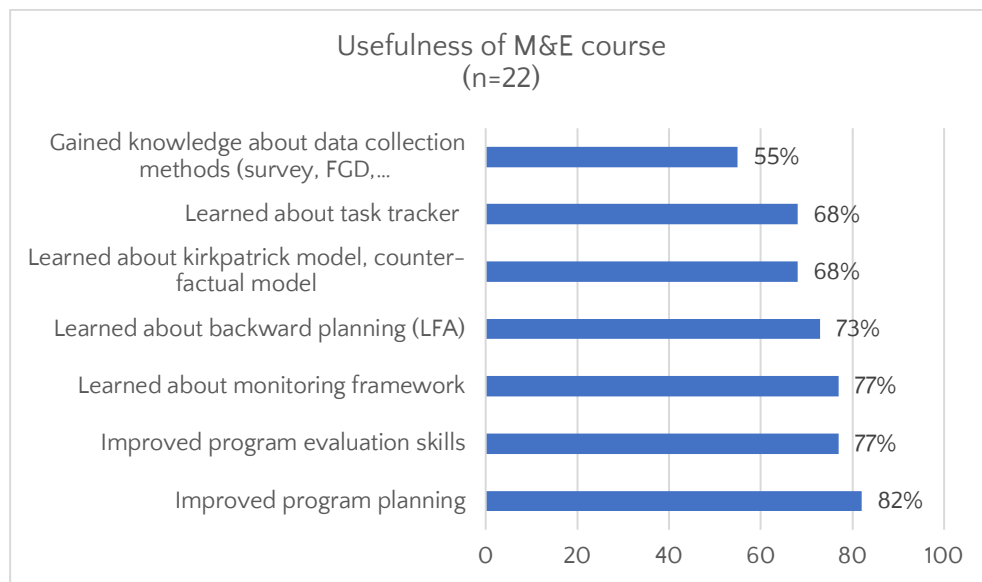
Figure 3.8 Usefulness of the ETM course

Figure 3.8 highlights the perceived usefulness of various aspects of the ETM course. Officers found the course particularly valuable in learning about skill-will matrix (85%), better work culture (78%), and follow-up methods (70%). Other key areas of perceived value included support vs accountability, management styles, team meetings, and ethics and values.

Figure 3.9 Usefulness of the M&E course

Officers found the M&E course particularly valuable in improving program planning (82%), monitoring framework (77%), and program evaluation skills (77%). Other key areas of perceived value for M&E included backward planning (LFA), Kirkpatrick model, task tracker, and data collection methods (see Figure 3.9).
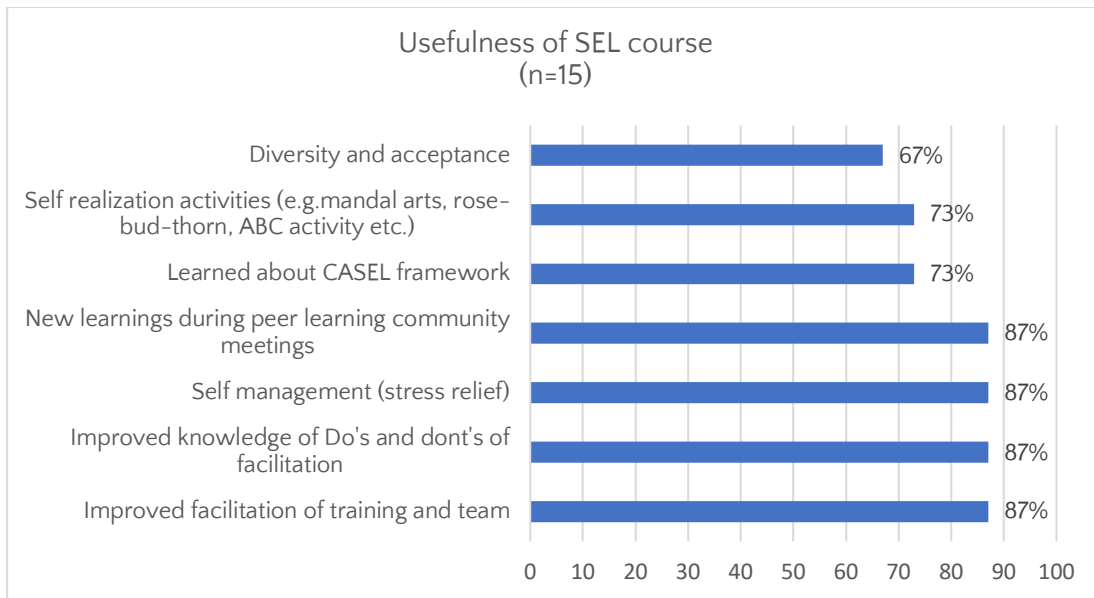
Figure 3.10 Usefulness of SEL course

Figure 3.10 highlights the perceived usefulness of various aspects of the SEL course. Officers found the course particularly valuable in improving facilitation skills (87%), self-management (stress relief) (87%), and new learnings during peer learning community meetings (87%). Other key areas of perceived value included diversity and acceptance, self-realization activities, and understanding the CASEL framework.

Figure 3.11 LEAD program relevance to their day-day work
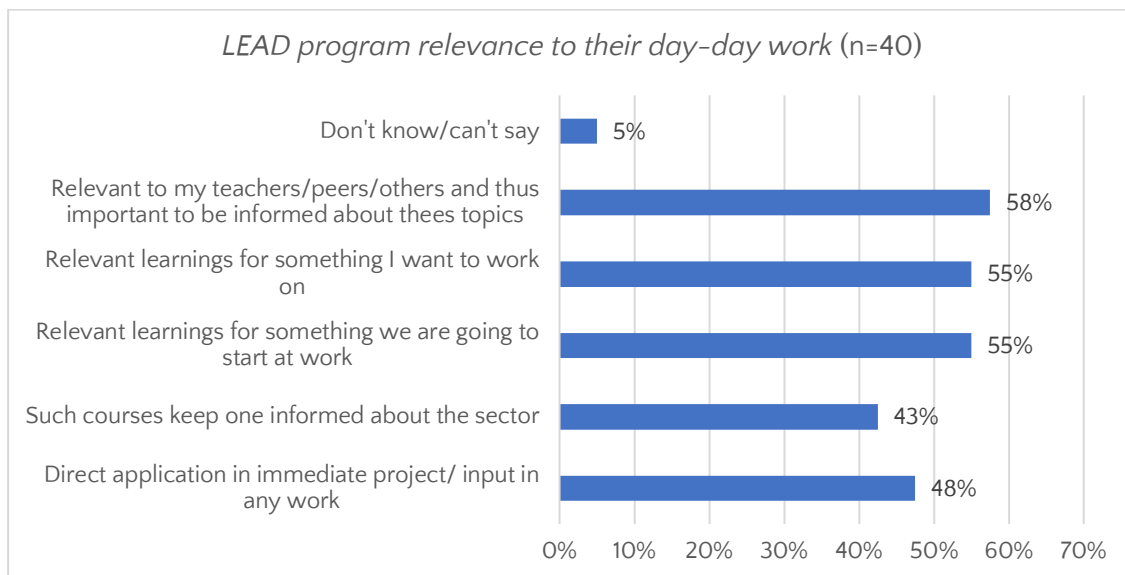
With respect to the relevance of the LEAD program in day-to-day work, the most common response was that the learnings were relevant to teachers, peers, or others (58%) (see Figure 3.11). Nearly half the officers, or more, also found the learnings applicable to their current or future work (55% each). Additionally, 48% of officers reported directly applying the learnings in their projects or work, while 43% mentioned using the learnings to stay informed about the sector (see Figure: 3.11).

Figure 3.12 LEAD program networks
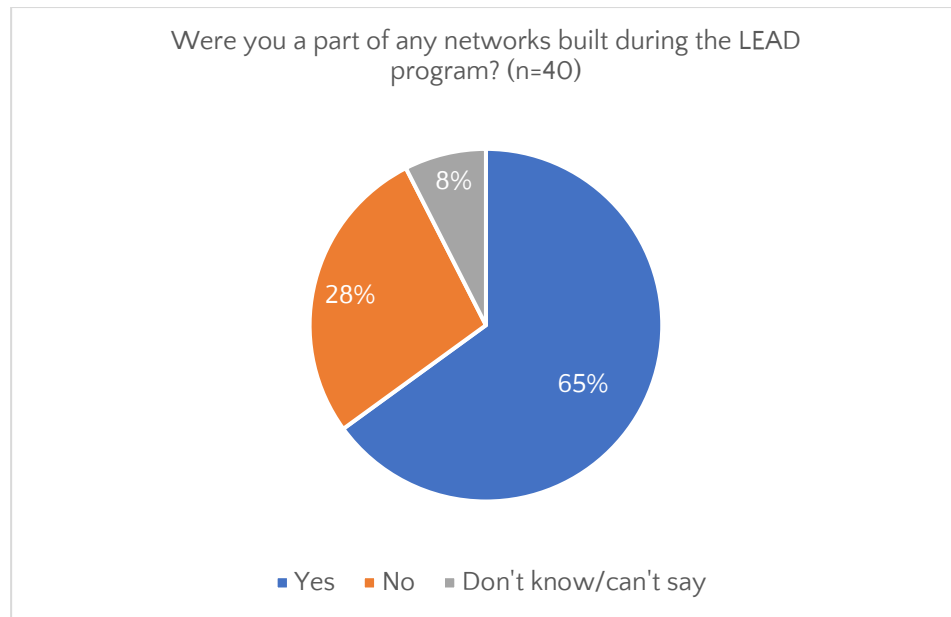
As can be seen in Figure 3.12 above, more than half (65%) of the officers were part of networks built during the LEAD program. Of those who were a part of such networks (n=26 out of 40), 96% shared that in their experience being part of these has been helpful overall with their role and daily work. It is also interesting to note that of the officers who were not part of such networks (n=11 out of 40), 82% shared that they would like to join a peer network in the future.

Figure 3.13 Perspectives on LEAD program course content and learning material
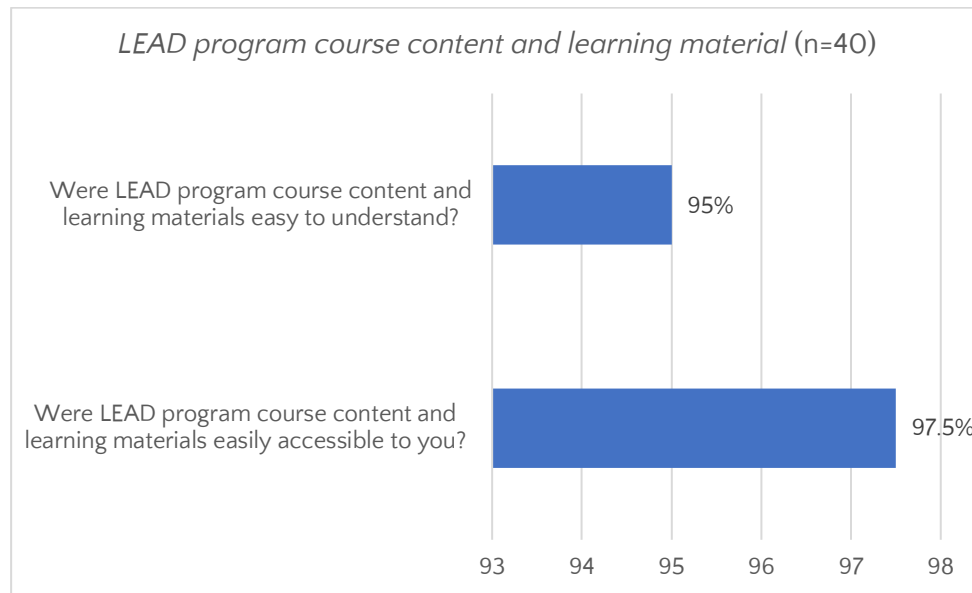
The figure presents feedback on the LEAD program's course content and materials. An overwhelming majority of the officers (97.5%) found the materials were easily accessible, while 95% found them easy to understand. These positive responses indicate high satisfaction with the program's resource accessibility and clarity. This corroborates the responses during qualitative interactions.

Thus, as seen from the qualitative interactions and quantitative survey, the course content and its delivery were seen as a significant success of the program.

Feedback and improvement in program implementation and course delivery

- Feedback mechanisms were integral to program implementation. The LFE team actively collected data through feedback forms, which provided valuable insights for ongoing adjustments. As noted by an officer, *"The LFE team collected data through feedback forms, and based on this feedback, adjustments were made to the programs."* This iterative approach allowed for real-time improvements, ensuring that the program remained responsive to stakeholders' needs.

- The initial challenges faced with the technology-based platform were addressed by the LFE team. Initially, with the Firki App, there were challenges, such as login issues and video playback problems. These challenges were addressed over time. Officers were eventually able to download PDFs and other materials directly from the app, improving accessibility and reducing reliance on alternative methods like WhatsApp. An Education Officer noted, *"All the material was conveniently available on the app and accessible whenever we needed it."*

- The program also initially faced issues with lengthy and time-consuming assignments, leading to participant attrition. To address this, assignments were redesigned into smaller, more manageable tasks that focused on specific challenges faced by the officers. This adjustment contributed to higher engagement and completion rates.

- The introduction of the '*Meet the Leader*' series, where officers were interviewed about their experiences and challenges, provided additional insights into the program's implementation, and allowed for further refinement based on real feedback.

Challenges in program design and implementation

Despite the LEAD program's overall success, several challenges impacted its effectiveness and sustainability. One of the key issues highlighted by officers was the **absence of follow-up or refresher training** since the course ended. Officers noted that it had been nearly 2-3 years without any subsequent support, with one cluster head stating, *"It's been almost 2-3 years since I attended the training, and there has been no follow-up from the team's end. A follow-up should have been conducted."*

Technological difficulties also posed a barrier. Many officers, especially those new to online learning, struggled with logging in and navigating the course. Issues such as ensuring that usernames matched email addresses created initial confusion. Additionally, limited computer skills among some officers led to higher dropout rates.

The generational gap between the facilitators and officers created challenges as well. Facilitators, being from a younger generation, were adept with modern technology, which sometimes left senior staff feeling disconnected and uncomfortable. This disparity contributed to some opting out of the program.

The online, self-paced format, while flexible, also led to time management issues. **Officers found it challenging to balance course assignments with their heavy workload** and overlapping state-level training. The suggestion to allocate specific times for sessions was made to improve the learning experience. Additionally, **the evening scheduling of sessions after long workdays made it hard for officers to stay focused**, resulting in some dropping

out. A cluster head expressed, *"The online format took up time after office hours, weekends, and holidays, making it hard to balance with family responsibilities."*

The complexity of assignments also proved challenging for some. Officers found the requirement to watch numerous lengthy videos and complete multiple activities daily overwhelming. This complexity, combined with time constraints, made it difficult for many to keep pace with the course.

Issues with course development and scheduling, along with **language barriers in the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) training due to unfamiliar terminology and lack of Marathi-speaking trainers**, was the challenge.

The PLC interactive methods, while were received well by some officers, those with a higher ranking, did not find them as useful. Another suggestion was to ensure that all PLC meetings were face to face. As one education officer noted, *"PLC meetings would be more effective if conducted face-to-face. Online meetings often result in limited engagement."*

These challenges highlight the need for improved follow-up, technological support, course scheduling and workload management for future training courses and programs.
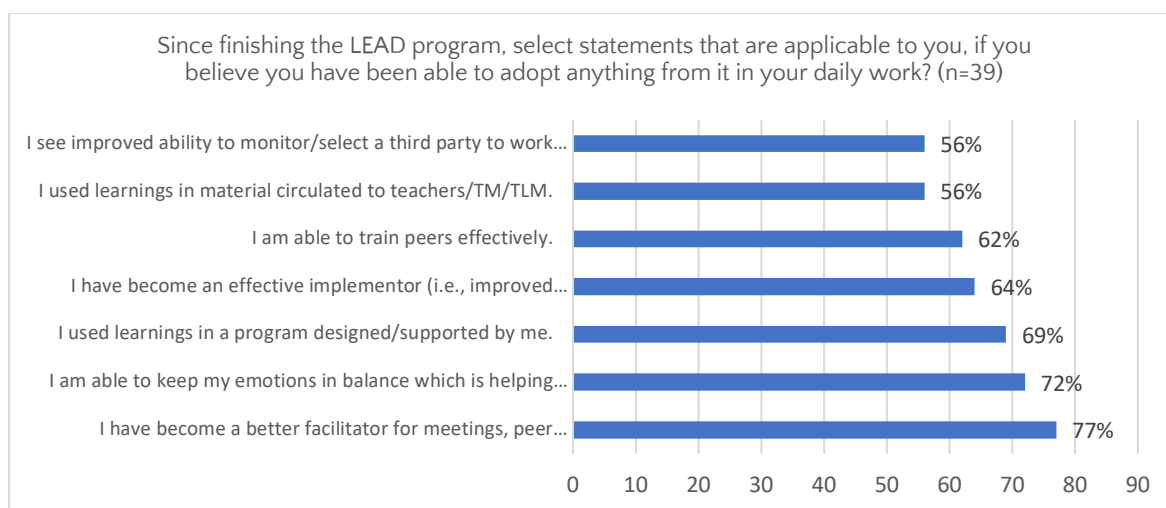
Achievement of program outcomes

The primary outcome of the program was to improve the skills and knowledge of education officers, and through this to improve and enhance their day-to-day activities and functioning. Perspectives from stakeholders indicate that these outcomes were achieved.

The course significantly enhanced the knowledge and skills of education officers. **Officers reported substantial gains in various areas, including stakeholder management, stress management, and the use of technology**. For instance, the Skill-Will Matrix and M&E modules were highlighted as particularly beneficial. An education officer shared, *"In the ETM course, we learned about the Skill-Will Matrix, which categorizes individuals into four types. This concept helped us understand how to manage and interact with different people in our field."*

Education officers also reported to have **successfully incorporated newly learned techniques into their daily activities.** 98% of officers who responded to the quantitative survey (n=40) reported to have adopted learnings from the program in their daily work (table 5.3 annexure). Some of the aspects that officers reported to have adopted are presented in Figure 3.14 below.

Figure 3.14: Learnings adopted by officers from the LEAD program in their daily work

Since finishing the LEAD program, select statements that are applicable to you, if you believe you have been able to adopt anything from it in your daily work? (n=39)

Statement	Percentage
I see improved ability to monitor/select a third party to work...	56%
I used learnings in material circulated to teachers/TM/TLM.	56%
I am able to train peers effectively.	62%
I have become an effective implementor (i.e., improved...	64%
I used learnings in a program designed/supported by me.	69%
I am able to keep my emotions in balance which is helping...	72%
I have become a better facilitator for meetings, peer...	77%

The most common applications because of the LEAD program were in training peers effectively (62%), becoming effective implementers (64%), and using learnings in programs they designed or supported (69%). Other notable applications include improved facilitation skills, emotional balance, and the ability to monitor and select third parties for projects.

During qualitative interactions, officers highlighted the practical application of concepts, such as the Skill-Will Matrix, task trackers, and stress management techniques, in their daily work. One officer reflected, *"While working as a department head, I applied the task tracker methods taught in the Team Management training to organize and manage tasks, setting deadlines and defining responsibilities."*

Officers reported that the **LEAD program equipped them with skills to build better interpersonal relationships, understand diverse personalities, and manage teams effectively**. One officer noted, *"Due to a shortage of staff at the officer level and numerous vacant positions, effective team management became crucial. Officers were needed to achieve targets with fewer people."* Another education officer reflected on his growth, highlighting improved confidence and communication skills: *"Before the LEAD course, I struggled to communicate with teachers and lacked confidence. Since then, I have learned many things that have significantly developed my personality and improved my communication skills. Reflecting on my journey, I see a notable improvement from where I was before the course to where I am now. People appreciate my speeches, which is a direct result of what I learned in the LEAD course."*

The program also led to **improvements in officers' communication and work methods**. Officers reported a noticeable improvement in their ability to start training sessions, involve people in discussions, and select appropriate examples to make their case. An education officer remarked, *"The course not only provided information and knowledge but also taught how to apply that knowledge, leading to significant learning. Post-course, there has been a noticeable improvement in my communication skills."*

Overall, officers reported to have to have seen changes in themselves after the program. 88% of officers (of 40) reported this (Figure 5.4, annexure). 65% (of 40) said that they were doing things 'differently' now, after the program (figure 5.5, annexure). 93% said it helped them reflect and grow as a leader (Figure 5.6, annexure).

The program has been effectively implemented, leading to enhanced knowledge and skills, as reported by the program stakeholders. The course orientation and marketing, its content and delivery and ongoing improvements in the program, were reported as successes in the feedback. Challenges in managing technology, balancing workload with course work and the need for better training in M&E were some of the areas for improvement.

3.6 Program Impact

This section presents stakeholder perspectives on how the LEAD program has influenced the adoption of effective practices by the officers, leading to better implementation of education programs.

The LEAD program significantly influenced middle management practices by introducing effective program design and monitoring strategies. Prior to the LEAD program, capacity–building efforts, such as the School Leadership Development Program and the Education Leadership Development Program, lacked a focus on impact assessment. The LEAD program addressed this gap by emphasizing impact evaluation and providing a robust framework for assessing effectiveness. As a result, there was a notable adoption of new practices that improved program design and execution. Officers reported that the program enhanced their ability to assess schools more effectively, work collaboratively, and develop strong leadership skills at the school level.

Officers noted improved efficiency through digital solutions, and collaboration in work. Officers reported significant improvements in their daily operations, including increased speed of work and enhanced coordination within departments. For example, one education officer highlighted a shift in data collection methods: "*We applied what we learned in data collection by shifting from traditional methods to using Google Forms. Previously, we relied on questionnaires and hard copies. After attending a Data Analysis workshop, we used Google Forms to collect data and create a region–wise report card*." This transition to more efficient methods exemplifies the positive changes influenced by the training.

The LEAD program contributed to improved flexibility and support for teachers. Officers recognized the complexities teachers faced and adjusted their approach accordingly. One officer mentioned, "*Many of my peers mentioned that they previously enforced strict guidelines on teachers regarding various school-level activities. The training, however, helped them understand the complexities teachers face in executing their day–to–day responsibilities*."

The LEAD program's training also helped officers improve their interactions with teachers and effectively assess school environments. A cluster head mentioned, "*The course significantly helped me improve, build, and maintain good relationships with teachers. Providing feedback and making sure the teacher doesn't react to it negatively was a challenge initially, but now I convey feedback in a way they understand.*"

The LEAD program has also led to officers improving and enhancing their own professional development. For example, one of the officers who took a course on Social Emotional Learning (SEL), has applied her knowledge to great effect. She is now pursuing a Ph.D. in SEL and has achieved notable improvements in her district's performance, illustrating the program's profound and lasting influence. "*One of the candidates, who pursued a course on SEL, is now doing her Ph.D. on the same subject. She applied the knowledge gained from the course to her work, and within 2-3 months, her district moved from being in the bottom five to the top ten.*"

These perspectives were echoed in the quantitative survey. Table 3.3 presents officers' responses to their positive experiences after having participated in the LEAD program.

Table 3.3: Officers' perspective on their own professional development

Question	Yes (%)
Do you think the LEAD program has helped you become more adaptable to different situations?	100%
Has the LEAD program helped improve your impact on students/teachers?	97%
Has the LEAD program helped improve your impact on peers?	100%
Has the LEAD program changed your relationship with your peers?	88%
N	40

The table summarizes officers' responses regarding the LEAD program's impact. All officers reported that the program made them more adaptable and had an impact on their peers. 97% reported the program helped them have a better impact on students and teachers. Additionally, 88% of officers noted a change in their relationships with peers.

Figure 3.15: How has the LEAD program helped improve the relationship with peers
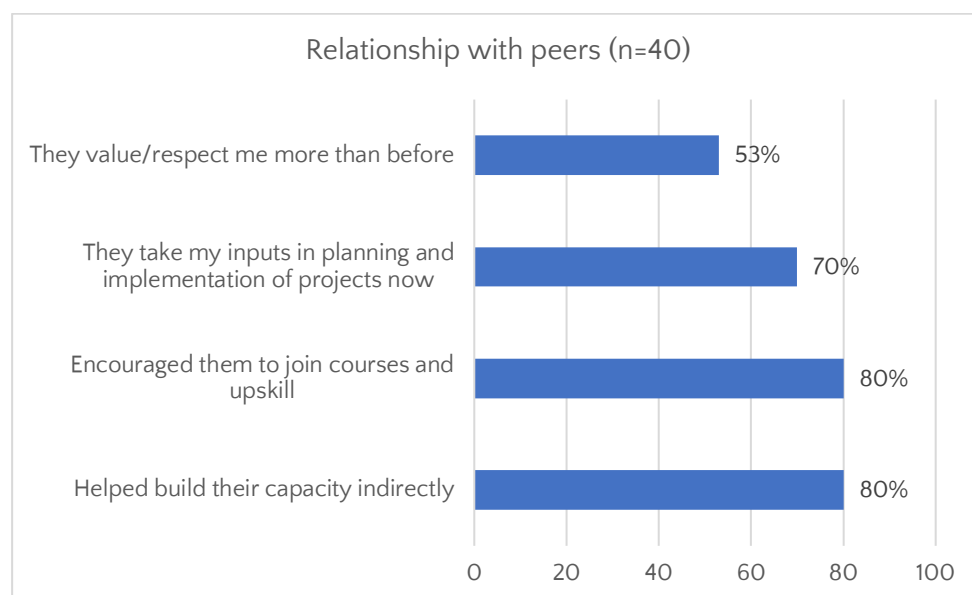

Figure 3.15 presents the reasons officers believe the LEAD program has helped them positively impact their peer groups. After being part of the program, 80% of officers encouraged their peers to join the program and upskill themselves. A similar proportion also helped build peers' capacities indirectly. 70% of officers reported that peers reached out to them to seek their input on project planning and implementation. 50% also reported a greater respect.

The success of the LEAD program – perspectives of a former manager

<p align="center" style="color:orange">A case study</p>

Background

The respondent, formerly a manager of the LEAD program and currently working with the advisory and advocacy department in Pune, Maharashtra, participated in all three courses of the LEAD program. With extensive experience in government training initiatives, the respondent contributed significantly to the program's development and implementation.

The challenge or need that the LEAD program addressed

In the respondent's experience, government officials often resist adopting new methods due to entrenched traditional practices. This resistance, along with challenges related to adaptability and productivity, underscored the need for the LEAD program. The program effectively addressed these issues by introducing innovative concepts and improving interpersonal connections within the government system.

Successes of the LEAD program

A notable success of the LEAD program was the high level of voluntary participation and engagement from government officers. The officers consistently completed assignments and applied learned concepts in their daily roles. The introduction of PLCs proved effective, with best practices from the program being adopted in various government projects.

Impact of the LEAD program

The respondent felt that the LEAD program's impact extended beyond the officers to teachers and students. Officers who underwent the training improved their monitoring and evaluation of educational programs, resulting in enhanced training for teachers and a better overall environment in government offices. The respondent highlighted a "chain reaction" effect, where improvements at the highest levels positively influenced grassroots educational outcomes.

Role of Collaboration with government

According to the respondent, collaboration with the Maharashtra Institute of Education and Public Administration (MIEPA) was crucial to the program's success. The partnership lent credibility to the training, with the MIEPA logo on certificates motivating officers to complete the course. Government support further enhanced the program's reach and effectiveness, demonstrating the importance of stakeholder engagement in scaling and contextualizing government-focused initiatives.

Recommendations for Future Initiatives

The respondent emphasized the value of making programs contextually relevant and credible by involving government officials in content creation and review. Effective stakeholder management and ongoing support post-training are critical. They recommended establishing after-course support to assist officials in implementing their learnings and addressing any doubts, ensuring sustained impact and continued development.

This case study exemplifies how targeted training programs can address specific challenges within government systems, drive significant improvements, and achieve widespread positive impact through effective collaboration and engagement.

A case study

Background

The official, a lecturer at the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) in Jalgaon, Maharashtra, participated in all three courses of the LEAD program. With 45 years of experience, the official was involved in training and mentoring the education officers.

The challenge that the LEAD program addressed

According to the official, a significant challenge with training initiatives was the mentality of teachers who perceived training as merely a formality requiring multiple visits. This attitude often led to resistance and a lack of engagement with training initiatives. The LEAD program addressed these gaps by fostering a more positive and proactive approach to professional development.

Impact of the LEAD program – on the official

The LEAD program had a significant impact on the official herself, increasing her confidence and communication skills. She highlighted that the enhanced presentation skills contributed to her project, the Warli Project, being selected at a national level. Improved content delivery and interaction skills also bolstered her reputation and effectiveness in training roles. Skills gained from the Social Emotional Learning course facilitated better relationships with colleagues, who now view her as a friend rather than just an officer. Additionally, her improved communication skills have made her a valued mentor to teachers across districts. This has enhanced her job satisfaction and fostered a supportive professional network for her.

The success of collaborative PLC

The official emphasized the value of collaboration during PLCs, where sharing experiences and learning from peers was instrumental. These interactions not only provided practical insights for tackling various situations but also refined communication skills of officers.

Recommendations for Future Initiatives

Key lessons learned from the LEAD program include the importance of digital literacy and 21st-century skills. The official recommends expanding training programs to include courses on English speaking to further enhance communication abilities. These additions would build on the successes of the LEAD program and support ongoing professional development in the educational sector.

This case study illustrates how the LEAD program has facilitated significant professional growth and practical benefits for educators, enhancing their skills, confidence, and ability to positively impact their colleagues and students.

Officers' overall rating of the program

37 of 40 officers said that they would recommend the program to others (Figure 5.7, annexure). Of the officers who would recommend the program to others, 46% rated the

program 10 on 10; 30% rated it 9 on 10 and 11% 8 on 10 (see Figure 3.16). This reflects a high satisfaction with the LEAD program.

Figure 3.16: Overall rating of the program
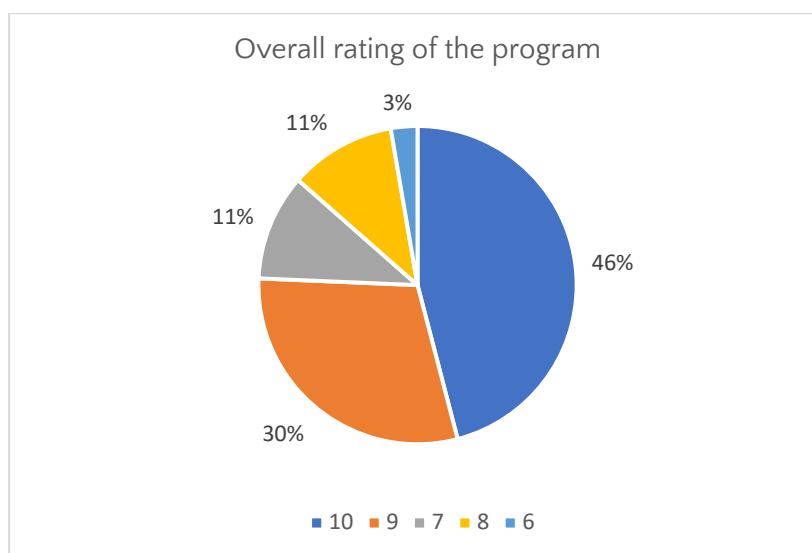
The LEAD program has thus impacted the work and practices of the officers, with them embracing technology and efficient practices, being more adept at program planning, management and assessment. The trained officers are more collaborative and flexible in their work, impacting teachers and students. Finally, the program has enabled officers to be more peer friendly and supportive. A high rate of satisfaction with the course was reported.

3.7 Program Sustainability

The sustainability of the LEAD program was assessed to determine how well its benefits will endure over time and how effectively ongoing support and professional development resources have been integrated.

The program has successfully established a framework that supports long-term growth and continuous learning among the officers.

The LEAD program has built into officers the desire and need for ongoing training and professional development. Officers noted how the course had significantly improved their ability to manage their roles and responsibilities and engage more effectively with stakeholders. **Many have expressed a strong desire for the program to be offered annually, emphasizing the value it places on the continued learning opportunities it provides**. One education officer highlighted*, "Our field requires continuous self-upgradation. To manage effectively and achieve targets, we need to acquire new knowledge and skills before implementing them. I joined this course to stay updated and ensure perfection in my tasks."*

The program also fostered a commitment to lifelong learning. **Officers who underwent the program have actively sought additional training to further develop their skills beyond what was covered in the LEAD program.** As an education officer noted, *"Officials reported attending additional training programs to further develop their skills after completing the LEAD program."* This ongoing pursuit of professional development **underscores the program's role in cultivating a culture of continuous improvement**.

Moreover, the **LEAD program has successfully integrated technology into the officers' professional routines**. Several officers have utilized their new skills to innovate within their

fields, such as creating YouTube channels to share knowledge and enhance their professional practice. This embrace of technology demonstrates the lasting impact of the course and training. For instance, one officer shared, *"We applied what we learned in data collection by shifting from traditional methods to using Google Forms. Previously, we relied on questionnaires and hard copies. After attending a Data Analysis workshop, we used Google Forms to collect data and create a region-wise report card."*

Overall, the LEAD program has established a sustainable framework for ongoing professional development. It has motivated officials to enhance their own professional capabilities. It has also led to officers integrating technology and new and efficient ways of functioning, that they learnt through the program, in their day-to-day work. However, no insights on systemic sustainability of the LEAD program, and ongoing training and support emerged.

Section 4: Conclusion

The impact assessment sought to understand the stakeholder perspectives to assess – program impact, and program processes and approach. This was done using the OECD DAC framework and a mixed methods approach.

The key insights emerging from the assessment indicate that the LEAD program has been successful in enabling increased knowledge and skills among officers who attended the course. Gains in knowledge and skills were noted in communication, stakeholder management, stress management, managing interpersonal relationships, team management and the use of technology. Officers also successfully incorporated the newly learned skills in their daily activities.

The enhanced knowledge and skills have led to efficient program management and monitoring by the officers. Improved efficiency and the use of technology-based solutions. Officers reported increased collaboration in work, and better team management. The LEAD program also contributed to improved flexibility, support and empathy for teachers by officers.

Program implementation was efficient and effective. The program was delivered on time. The successes in implementation include course orientation and marketing, leading to effective enrolment. The course content and delivery were relevant to the needs of the officers and used innovative and interactive training methods. The program team also sought ongoing feedback and addressed the initial challenges to ensure program improvement. Support to manage technology, balancing workload with course work and the need for better training in M&E were some of the areas of improvement reported by officials.

The LEAD program has also established a sustainable framework for ongoing professional development. However, there is still a need to enable systemic sustainability through program institutionalization and ongoing support.

Recommendations and the way forward

Ongoing learning and training support

- Restoring access to the FIRKI app would be beneficial for officers who wish to revisit course videos and review content. This would also help those who dropped out or could not finish the course owing to challenges or COVID 19.

- Refresher training courses for officers who completed the course could be considered. This would help officers revisit and apply their knowledge, maintaining the relevance and effectiveness of the training over time.

- Providing a reference book of training materials alongside the certificate would be a valuable addition, ensuring that officers have a comprehensive resource for future reference.

It was learnt that while initial plans for after-course support were not executed, the LFE plans to implement this soon. Formal requests have been made to the government to include credits earned in officers' service books, potentially impacting future increments positively. This would be a step forward for sustained implementation of the program.

<u>Improvements to course content and delivery</u>

- Additional courses on English communication, general communication skills, and tools like Excel and PowerPoint were recommended by officers.

- Additional support and handholding to officers on managing technology platforms (such as support for login procedures) and e-learning skills should be provided to ensure that all officers can fully engage with the course materials.

- The Marathi translation in the PDFs was noted to be inaccurate, suggesting that future translations should be reviewed by experts before dissemination.

- While the convenience of virtual sessions was appreciated, many officers felt that in-person sessions could offer additional benefits.

- Officers recommended customization of assignments and training materials to different roles—such as officers, headmasters, and teachers—which would make the content more relevant and effective.

Finally, it would be useful to structure the course and engage with the Government to enable officers to manage their workload while pursuing the course. Perhaps a few hours a week of 'learning time' could be considered for the officers enrolled in the course, linked to course completion in a finite period.

Annexure 1: Supporting figures and graphs

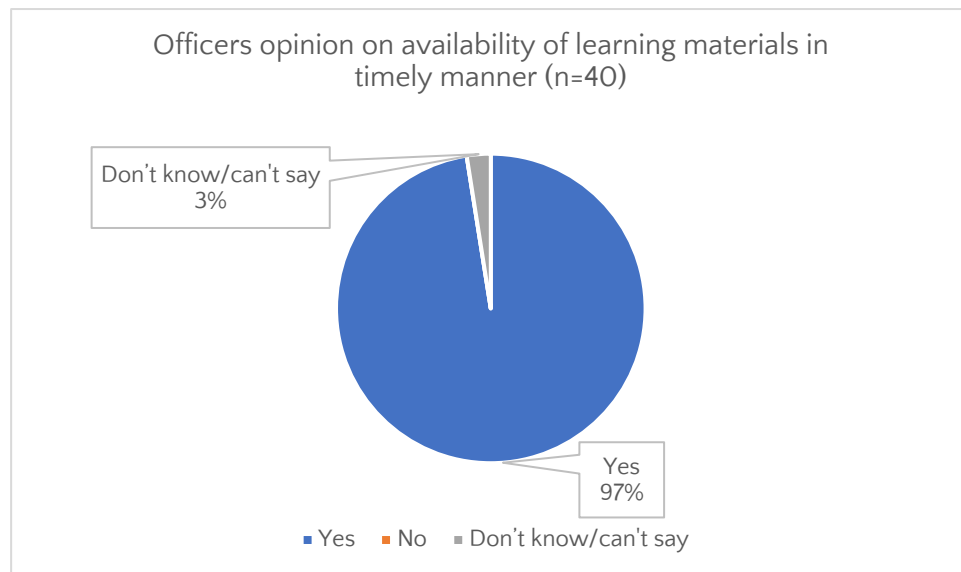*Figure 5.1: Officers opinion on availability of learning materials in timely manner*

Officers opinion on availability of learning materials in timely manner (n=40)

Don't know/can't say 3%

Yes 97%

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know/can't say

Figure 5.2: Officers opinion on specific topics/ tips/ resources in the course/courses that were useful

Usefulness of resources/ tips/ resources (n=40)
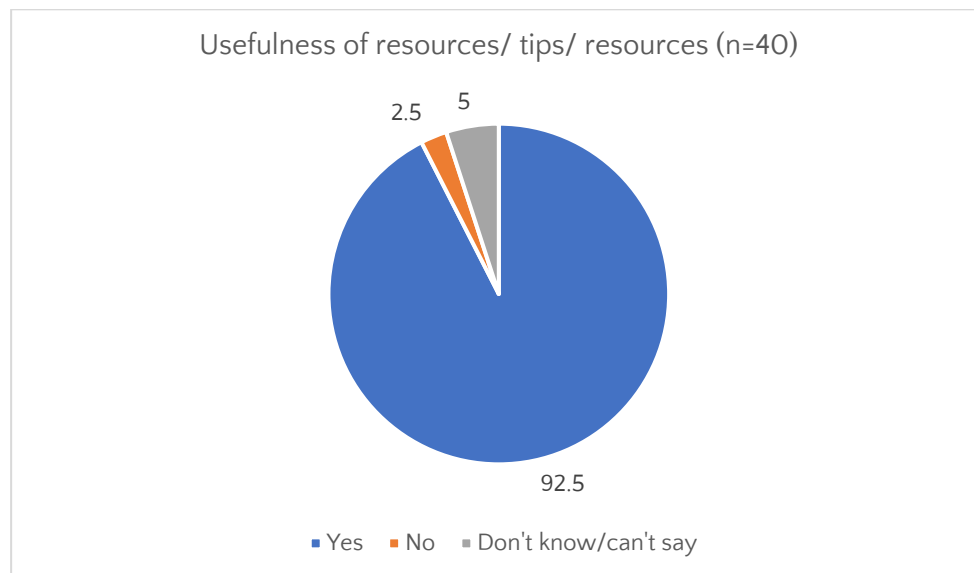
2.5 5

92.5

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know/can't say

Figure 5.3: Have you been able to adopt anything into your daily life since completing the LEAD program

Adopted anything since completing LEAD program (n=40)

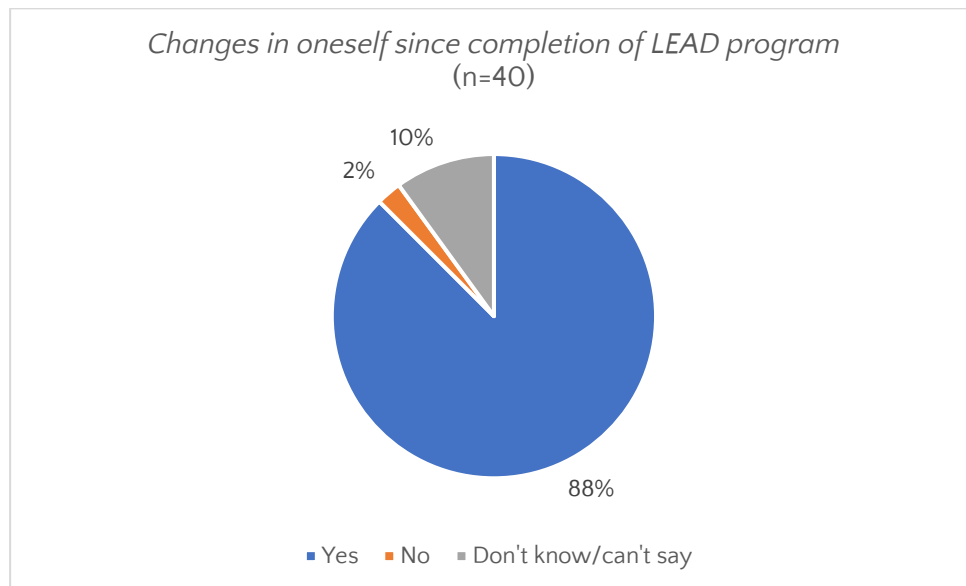2

98

■ Yes   ■ Don't know/can't say

Figure 5.4: Changes in oneself since completion of LEAD program

Changes in oneself since completion of LEAD program (n=40)

10%

2%

88%

■ Yes   ■ No   ■ Don't know/can't say

Figure 5.5: Is there anything the officers doing differently since the completion of LEAD program?

Is there anything officers are doing differently *since the completion of LEAD program (n=40)*

18%

18%

65%

■ Yes   ■ No   ■ Don't know/can't say
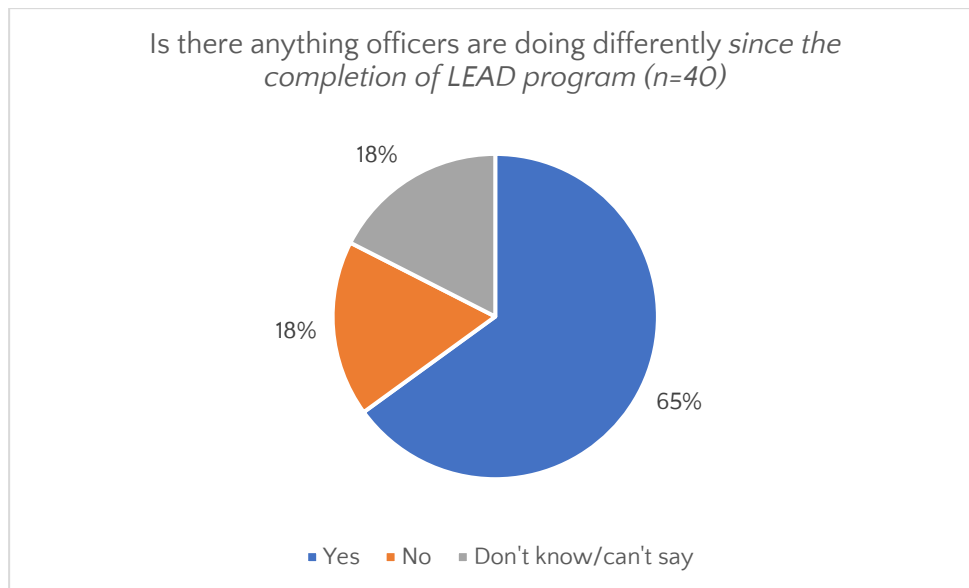
Figure 5.6: Did the program help officers reflect and grow as a leaders

Did the program help officers reflect and grow as a leader*s* *(n=40)*

8%

93%

■ Yes   ■ Don't know/can't say
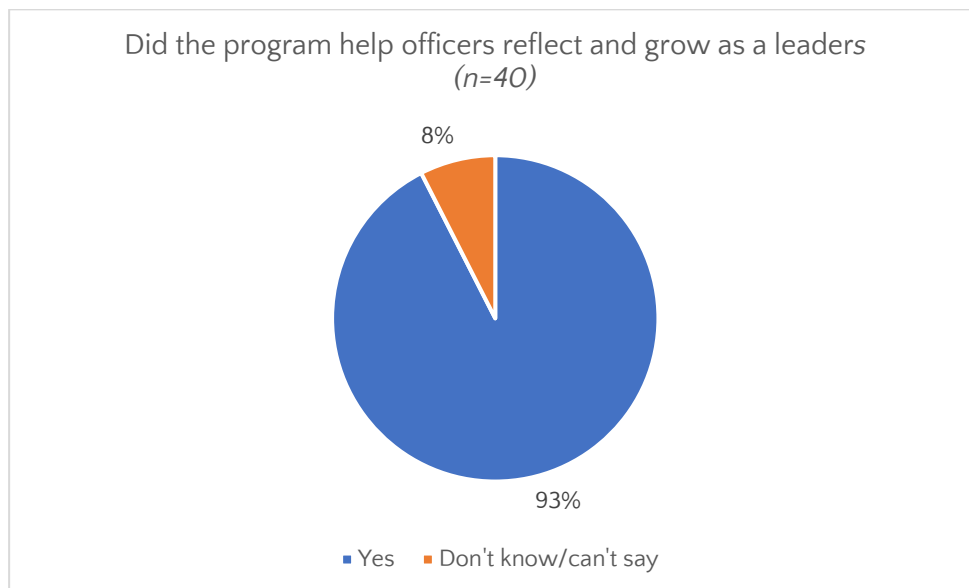
Figure 5.7: Would you recommend this program to others?

Would you recommend this program to others (n=40)

5% 2%

93%

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know/can't say
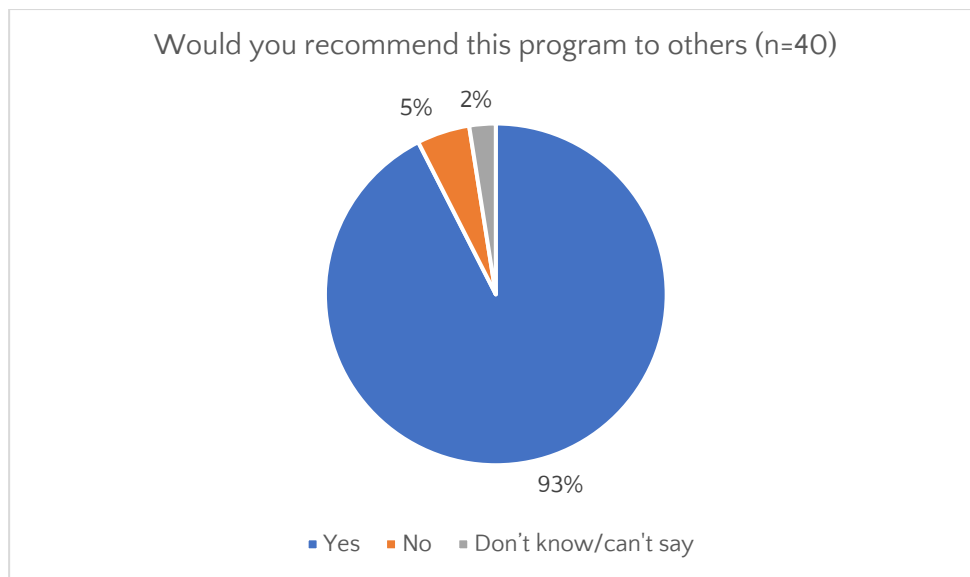
Annexure 2: Qualitative and quantitative survey tools

Qualitative Data Collection: Semi-structured interview guides
CSR project: LEAD Program

Stakeholder group: Project team

Note: LFE team conducted sessions and were also delivering the program PLCs with different groups. Thus, no separate stakeholder group identified as master trainers in the program.

Section 1- Demographic details
- Name
- Gender
- Role in the CSR project

Section 2-About the CSR project
[Project objectives and design]
1. In your words, could you share what the LEAD program comprised and its inception.
- What were its key objectives?
- Who were the different stakeholders involved and what was their role?
- Please elaborate on your role in the program.
2. How did you assess the needs of the target groups before implementing the program? (Probe: A needs assessment was conducted in 2019 before the LEAD program. Inquire about the same and its findings and how that helped to plan for the LEAD program better.)
3. How well do you think the program addressed the actual needs of the targeted participants?
- Why do you think so?
- How was feedback collected from participants about program relevance and impact?
- What did you learn from it?
4. How did you ensure the courses designed were relevant to the educational context in the state at the time?
5. How was the learning material designed and distributed to all relevant participants across courses of the program?
6. How were peer learning community (PLC) meetings organized and conducted?
- Who were the participants?
- What was their frequency?
- What was their key objectives?
- In your opinion, how can they be made better for other similar programs in the future?
[View on key activities and project's impact]
7. In your role with the LEAD program, what were key activities that you undertook during the LEAD program?
8. What implementation strategies were most effective in achieving the program goals?
9. Where there any challenges you encountered with respect to finalizing courses for the program and subsequent learning materials designed for the same?
- If yes, what were they and how were they addressed?
10. How was the allocation of resources managed to ensure efficient delivery of the program?

(Probe: Inquire about human resources, financial planning etc.)

11.   What indicators were used to evaluate the effectiveness of the courses part of the LEAD program?

(Note for interviewer: Effectiveness means the extent to which the program achieved its expected outputs and outcomes.)

12.   What indicators were established to measure the impact of the LEAD program on its participants and the broader educational system?

(Note for interviewer: Impact means the extent to which the program had significant positive/negative intended/unintended effects.)

13.   Could you share with us 1-2 success stories which emerged via the LEAD program?

(Probe: Any specific instances of positive experience or feedback received from participants?)

14.   Lastly, please tell us if there were any strategies that were integrated into the program design to promote the sustainability of its outcomes.

Qualitative Data Collection: Semi-structured interview guides
CSR project: LEAD Program

Stakeholder group: State Government Officials

Section 1- Demographic details
- Name
- Gender
- Role in the CSR project

Section 2-About the CSR project
[Views on the overall project]
Thank you for your time and agreeing to speak with us about the LEAD Program, which you were a part of a few years ago.

1. Could you please elaborate, in your words, what the LEAD program was about, its objectives, its need?

(Probe: Inquire about why it needed to be implemented, how it came about to be, etc.)

2.   Please tell us about the different stakeholders involved in its design and implementation.

3.   Please tell us about your role in the LEAD program and what every day work looked like for you.

4.   How was the LEAD program designed to address the specific needs and challenges of the education system in the state?
- How were these needs and challenges identified?
- How did the different courses serve different purposes with respect to capacity building?

5.   Please tell us how relevant you believed the courses and learning materials to be with respect to the educational context and priorities at the time.
- Was any course more well-received than others?
- If yes, why do you think so?
- For a course that saw low enrolment and/or completion, what reasons were identified for the same?
- Were they tackled effectively during the course of the program?
- Were future needs also kept in mind when designing courses and learning materials for LEAD?

6.   Since participation in the LEAD program was voluntary for targeted participants, how were they encouraged to enrol and complete the program courses?

- What platforms were used to inform them about the program?
- What communication channels were used to remain engaged with the participants during the course of the program?
- Were there any challenges with respect to the program gaining traction amongst targeted participants? If yes, how were they addressed?

7. In your experience, please tell us how well did the LEAD Program integrate with other ongoing educational initiatives and policies in the state, at different levels (district/block)?

8. What role did you play during the peer learning community (PLC) meetings?
- Were they useful? If yes, please elaborate.
- Who were the participants?
- What kind of feedback did you receive from the participants about the PLC meetings?

9. In your opinion, were the courses and related learning materials provided to participants in an easy to understand, accessible and timely manner?
- Did you face any challenges due to the online medium of the program?

[View on project's impact]

10. In your opinion, how effective do you think the LEAD Program was in promoting capacity and skill building in its participants?
- How was this measured?
- Can you share some cases of positive feedback on the same?
- Can you share if participants expressed any concerns/issues with respect to participation in the program?

11. Could you please provide examples, if any, of changes in everyday practices resulting from the program across stakeholder groups which participated in it?
(Probe: These can be positive or negative changes, or no change at all.)

12. Have you observed any significant changes in the skills and performance of education officers/teachers since the implementation of the LEAD Program?
- If yes, please elaborate with examples/success stories.

13. Which areas of the LEAD program do you think need improvement?
- How can similar programs be made better so that they are also positively recommended by participants to other non-participants?

14. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions for enhancing other future programs similar to LEAD?

Qualitative Data Collection: Semi-structured interview guides
CSR project: LEAD Program

Stakeholder group:
(Education Officer (Lecturer-DIET, Sr. lecturer-DIET)/ Block Education Officer (BEO)
/ Extension officer/ Cluster head/cluster resource person (CRP))

Section 1- Demographic details
- Name
- Gender
- Participation in the LEAD program

Section 2-About the CSR project
[Engagement with LEAD]
1. Could you elaborate, in your words, what every day work looks like for you, as part of the Education department with the state government?

2. In our understanding, you were engaged in the LEAD Program a few years ago. In your own words, could you share with us what you remember about the program?
- Which courses were you a part of, in the LEAD program?

(Note for interviewer: There were 3 courses in the LEAD program namely- monitoring and evaluation (M&E), effective team management (ETM) and social emotional learning (SEL).)

- What encouraged you to enrol in the courses you mentioned above?

(Note for interviewer: Since participation was voluntary, we want to understand different reasons which motivated them to sign up for the program.)

- From the courses you were enrolled in, were you able to complete all?
- If yes, did you also receive required credits to obtain certification?
- If not, could you share some key challenges due to which you could not complete the course/courses?
- Could you share with us why you did you not enrol in the other courses?

(Note for interviewer: Ask only if interviewee did not enrol in all three courses.)

[View on LEAD courses and related activities]

Note for interviewer: Ask the following questions for each of the three courses that the interviewee was a part of.

3. In your own words, as elaborately as possible, please tell us about the course content which you engaged with the most.
4. Did you find it to be relevant to your daily responsibilities?
- If yes, why do you think so?
- If no, why do you think so?
5. Was the course content easy to understand?
- If yes, why do you think so?
- If no, why do you think so?
6. Was the course content easily accessible when needed?
- If yes, why do you think so?
- If no, why do you think so?
7. Was the course content made available timely for your use?
- If yes, why do you think so?
- If no, why do you think so?
8. Did you have sufficient time to engage with the course content as per your personal schedule and availability?
- If yes, why do you think so?
- If no, why do you think so?
9. Was the training delivered in a manner that was convenient and time-efficient for you?
- If yes, why do you think so?
- If no, why do you think so?
- If no, what could be done differently to enable a more positive experience?
10. What do you think about the learning material provided to participants of the courses?
- Was it easy to understand?
- Was it easy to access?
- Was it relevant to your daily work?
- Did it contain innovative information which helped you gain new understanding of things?

(Note to interviewer: For each sub-question, probe on reasons also, in case of yes/no responses.)

11. Once a module is completed by participants, a peer learning community (PLC) meeting would be conducted for knowledge and idea sharing through value-added discussions.

- Did you attend any PLC meeting?
- If yes, in your own words, could you tell us what it included?
- If yes, did you find it useful/helpful?
- If yes, would you like to share how it could be made better for the future?
- If no, could you tell us why?

(Probe: Inquire about lack of access, disinterest, ineligibility, or any other possible challenges.)

12. To evaluate the learnings of participants, an assignment would be given after each module which would have to be completed within given duration.

- In your own words could you tell us about these assignments?
- Were they easy to access and understand?
- Did you face any specific challenges while working on these assignments?
- Do you think the difficulty level of these assignments was useful in correctly evaluating learnings of participants?
- In your own words, do you have any suggestions on how such assignments can be designed and administered in more efficient ways for similar programs?

[View on project's impact]

13. Please tell us, in your experience, if the LEAD program addressed any specific needs for you in your role?

- If yes, what and how did it address it?
- If no, what are some gaps you can think of?

14. Could you provide us with some examples of how you have applied the learned concepts in your day–day work since your participation in the program?

15. What noticeable changes have you observed in your day-to-day performance and efficiency since applying the training concepts?

16. What support do you need to maintain and further develop the skills gained from the training?

17. Is there any other course that you would suggest, which LEAD program could have been included in the curriculum?

18. Would you recommend the courses you were a part of to others? Please rate on a scale of 0 to 10.

Qualitative Data Collection: Semi-structured interview guides

Do you consent to participate in this survey?
Consent:
Date:
Section 1: Demography and Course Participation
1. What is your name?
2. Please tell us your age when you enrolled in the LEAD program.
3. What is your gender?
4. What is your current role?
4.1 What is your total years of work experience so far?
4.2 State your highest educational qualification here.
4.3 In which district are you currently based in Maharashtra?
Section 2: Course participation and experience
5. Did you participate in the LEAD program a few years ago?
6. Which course/courses in the LEAD program did you enrol in?
7. What was your level of completion for the course/courses that you enrolled in?
7.1 Can you please share some reasons for not being able to initiate/complete a given course?

7.2. In your experience, were there specific topics/ tips/ resources in the course/courses that were least useful/practical to you?

7.3 For elements that were not useful/practical, select from the following statements that apply to you.

If others, specify.

8. In which language did you participate in the LEAD program?

9. What was your initial motivation to participate in the LEAD program?

If others, specify.

10. How did you learn about the LEAD program?

If others, specify.

10.1 Were LEAD program course content and learning materials easily accessible to you?

10.2 Were LEAD program course content and learning materials easy to understand?

10.3 Were LEAD program course content and learning materials made available timely?

11. Basis overall experience, how useful/beneficial did you find the LEAD program to be for your role? (Respond basis 1–5 scale, where 1 is least useful and 5 is most useful)

12. Basis overall experience, how useful/beneficial did you find the LEAD program to be for you?

13. In your experience, were there specific topics/ tips/ resources in the course/courses that were most useful/practical to you?

13.1 If yes, how were they useful/practical to you for the M&E course?

If others, specify.

13.2 If yes, how were they useful/practical to you for the ETM course?

If others, specify.

13.3 If yes, how were they useful/practical to you for the SEL course?

If others, specify.

Section 3: Course participation and experience

14. Are you currently in the same role as when you had participated in the LEAD program?

14.1 If no, what role were you in previously?

14.2 If no, is the LEAD program participation proving relevant/useful in your current role also?

14.3 If yes, how so?

If others, specify.

15. Since finishing the LEAD program, have you been able to adopt anything from it in your daily work?

15.1 If yes, please select statements that are applicable to you.

If others, specify.

16. Have you seen any changes in yourself after finishing the LEAD program?

16.1 If yes, can you share what these changes have been?

17. Is there anything you are doing differently now, compared to before?

17.1 If yes, can you share what these changes have been?

18. Do you think the LEAD program has helped you reflect and grow as a leader?

19. Do you think the LEAD program has helped you become more adaptable to different situations?

20. Do you think your learning and experience from the LEAD program has helped you improve your impact on students/teachers?

21. Do you think your learning and experience from the LEAD program has helped you improve your impact on peers?

21.1 If yes, why do you think so?

If others, specify.

22. Do you think any of your experiences from the LEAD program have changed your relationship with your peers?

23. Were you a part of any networks built during the LEAD program?

23.1 In your experience, have these networks been helpful overall with your role and daily work?

23.2 If no, would you like to join a network of peers in the future?

Section 4: Recommendations/Suggestions

24. Going forward, would you recommend this program and its courses to others?

24.1 If yes, please rate it on a scale of 1–10, where 1 is poorest and 10 is best rating.

25. Of all the courses that you attended; did you find any difference between the courses?

26. Do you have any suggestions for how the program could be improved for future participants?

27. Do you have any suggestions for how the course content/learning materials could be improved for future participants?