



# NIGER DELTA YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS (NDYEP)

## FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

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The findings and conclusions of this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official positions of both the PIND Foundation and Ford Foundation

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## Acronyms

AEC	Advanced Engineering Centre
CAD	Computer Aided Design
CAM	Computer Aided Manufacturing
CBN	Central Bank of Nigeria
DFAC	Doctor Fish Agricultural Consult
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IP	Implementing Partner
KDA	Kiara de Luke Academy
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LEPMAS	Leather Product Manufacturers Association of Abia State
LMA	Labour Market Assessment
MEGP	My Entrepreneurship Goals Program (Abia)
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NDYEP	Niger Delta Youth Employment Pathways
PAC	Program Advisory Committee
PIND	Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta
PWD	People living with disability
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

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## Executive Summary

This independent final evaluation of the Niger Delta Youth Employment Pathways (NDYEP) project was conducted during the period November 2020-January 2021, following three years of project implementation. NDYEP was a collaboration between Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND) and Ford Foundation which was implemented two phases, with Phase 1 from January 2018 to June 2019; Phase 2 from July 2019 to December 2020, and with a close-out period from January to March 2021.

The overall aim of NDYEP has been to contribute to addressing the critical issue of youth unemployment in the Niger Delta by developing models of quality training that equips young people with market relevant skills and supports them into sustainable jobs or enterprise. This final evaluation had the dual purpose of providing accountability and learning, aiming to provide robust evidence on the extent to which the NDYEP project achieved its expected results and to document key learning in order to support youth employment initiatives going forward. Specifically it aimed to assess the project's results at outcome and impact level; assess the enabling factors and barriers towards achieving these; document key factors and recommendations enabling future good practice; and to document and assess NDYEP's response to shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations set out here are intended to be relevant to PIND, Ford Foundation and other development partners to inform future programming for preparing young people for the workforce; to government stakeholders to support advocacy for large scale public-private partnerships and investment in youth employment; to private sector stakeholders to inform shared value strategies; and to other stakeholders more generally engaged with social equity and inclusion.

NDYEP aimed to address youth job readiness, workforce development and job creation in three priority states of Abia, Akwa Ibom, and Rivers which have reported particularly high unemployment rates in a context of generally high unemployment in Nigeria, and especially high youth unemployment. It planned to do this by developing models that offer youth in the Niger Delta the opportunity to secure sustainable jobs through quality training that equips them with market-relevant skills. It set out to demonstrate a demand-driven and evidence based approach to addressing youth unemployment, beginning with research to identify strategic sector entry points for skills development; and continuing with careful documentation of the process. It proceeded with skills development training aiming to reach 4000 young people in three identified sectors of aquaculture, ICT/solar energy, and construction, and adding the finished leather sector in Phase 2. Further, it aimed to demonstrate pathways for these trainees into sustainable employment or self-employment and enterprise. The total budget over the two phases was US\$ 2,165,895, the majority of which was allocated in sub-grants to implementing partners.

The evaluation took a mixed methods, theory based approach, focusing enquiry on the five core features of the NDYEP model, and structuring enquiry on the OECD/DAC criteria of Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability, with the additional dimensions of Equity and Gender Equality, and Resilience. Data collection included a literature review; key informant interviews (28) and focus group discussions (20) with a broad group of stakeholders including implementing partners, trainees, self-employed alumni, interns, employers, government stakeholders, and PIND staff. It also included participant observation at two sites identified for the development of a case study on the Finished Leather sector, and an online survey among trainees which attracted 518 responses. Primary data collection mixed online/remote and face to face

methods, given the ongoing travel restrictions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic; a Nigeria based team undertook 10 days of live fieldwork across all three focus states.

The study articulated the following key findings:

**Finding 1: Adapting to maximise relevance:** During Phase 2, NDYEP has adapted to learning from Phase 1 to fine tune its relevance to young people, implementing partner institutions, and the situation of youth unemployment facing state governments. It has also successfully adapted to the dramatic changes to the global economy triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic during 2020, but the outcomes of this on the local labour market are not yet fully clear.

**Finding 2: Sector relevance:** The Finished Leather sector, even though progress in this was delayed by Covid-19 responses, has been a valuable addition to the portfolio, offering trainees good prospects for earning at least some income quite rapidly after training. All sectors also present some challenges for new entrants.

**Finding 3: Relevance to employers:** Employers have a mostly very positive but somewhat mixed impression of NDYEP trainees; reservations are commonly because the training is considered by some to be short and trainees have much more to learn post-training.

**Finding 4: Responding to evidence:** NDYEP succeeded in adapting to evidence about what was required to help young people succeed – both through adaptations to the target group and approach, and through additional training components to link them to finance for start-ups.

**Finding 5: Coherence within PIND, with implementing partners, and with government:** NDYEP has continued to seek out and establish coherence with other actors in the enabling environment during Phase 2, with a focus in this Phase mainly on identifying and linking with promising government initiatives and departments. This focus has led to some important collaborations and looks set to eventually deliver more in terms of scale and uptake.

**Finding 6: Achievement of targets:** NDYEP has met or nearly met the majority of the targets set for its Phase 2 work, and it has exceeded key targets for training and linking trainees to internships. Some other targets not yet met will continue to be contributed to during the close out phase.

**Finding 7: Strengthening the sector ecosystems:** The emphasis in the NDYEP approach on strengthening the sector ecosystems, especially by supporting implementing partners, has contributed strongly to the attainment of project results. IPs have experienced strengthened organisational structures, improved training facilities, strengthened integrated curricula, expanded reach, and strengthened networks, branding and visibility. All these are contributing to the sector ecosystems.

**Finding 8: The competency focus:** The competency focus of the NDYEP model has spawned training programmes integrating several relevant dimensions; this integrated approach has supported retention and completion of trainees, the acquisition of skills to develop further in their next positions, and a widespread confident outlook. The soft skills dimensions of the training is particularly valued by trainees, who also value the support they derive from being in contact with young people in a similar position.

**Finding 9: Modelling pathways to employment:** The programme has successfully modelled pathways to employment and self-employment for a good proportion of trainees. Pathways to employment include direct routes to employment, as well as via internships / apprenticeships. Pathways to self-employment have often (but not always) included a support system. There is



evidence that support for continued learning is beneficial in the long term through any of these pathways.

**Finding 10: A learning culture:** The continued learning culture, and the documentation of learning, has been important to implementing partners; NDYEP managers, and to the process of disseminating and upscaling the approach.

**Finding 11: Factors hindering results:** Although targets have mostly been achieved, there have been a number of challenges for progressing trainees along the employment pathways and in upscaling the approach. These include meeting a widespread need for business finance for start-ups; the need for more learning in the context of relatively short trainings; difficulties faced by trainers; and challenges in establishing full take up of the approach by state governments.

**Finding 12: Impact on trainees:** There is evidence that the project has achieved transformative and long term impacts at level of individual trainees in terms of use of skills learned; current income; and high levels of confidence in their future prospects.

**Finding 13: Impact on ecosystems:** Although most sectors experience some vulnerabilities to economic shocks and symptoms of 'shallowness', the project has contributed to deep changes in some dimensions. These include more established key organisations several of which are likely to continue training tailored to their local sector markets; and a better local labour supply and market.

**Finding 14: Towards impact for upscaling through state governments:** Establishing engagement with State governments to identify promising collaboration to ensure scale up and replication of the model has contributed to tangible successes and future direction, although there is still work to do to secure this full dimension of impact.

**Finding 15: The sub-granting model:** The project's sub-granting model allowed PIND to select experienced organizations in the sectors and states for project implementation while it focused on its role as an enabler. This model helped partner organisations to build good structures, grow and contribute to the development of the ecosystem.

**Finding 16: Sustainability in implementing partner organisations:** Partners are committed to core aspects of the NDYEP training approach, including an integrated curriculum and a competencies basis: these are likely to be sustained in future trainings. Several are also in strong positions to continue training on a commercial basis. There is also commitment to the approach to inclusion which has been internalised in some cases; but some partners will struggle to reach marginalised participants through commercial training models.

**Finding 17: Sustainability through government uptake and government collaboration with IPs:** There are encouraging signs of state government interest in the approach and some good examples of concrete action. Collaborations between governments and implementing partners also demonstrate a clear pathway to sustainability. These are promising, but deeper government engagement in order to achieve youth policy formulation and allocation of budget for youth development programmes will make a more secure foundation for sustainability.

**Finding 18: PWDs and women:** Targets for inclusion of women and of persons with disabilities in training were overall broadly met, but these achievements were not made uniformly across the sectors, and the construction sector has been particularly inaccessible to both groups. Clearer strategies and a more coordinated approach to these issues may be required where gender labour market segregation is particularly intractable, or where access for PWDs is perceived to be particularly complex.

**Finding 19: Other axes of marginalization:** The project has shown a mixed picture of achievement in responding to other forms of marginalization / disadvantage, including age group, education level and rural disadvantage. It has both responded by flexing its ranges where this was appropriate; and by improving performance in Phase 2. However, there are discrepancies between survey data and registration data which suggest trainees may have underreported certain profile features at registration.

**Finding 20: Response to Covid-19 and other shocks:** A culture of flexibility and high levels of goodwill and accountability were key resources drawn on to respond successfully to the Covid-19 driven lockdown and associated social and economic disruption. For a minority, Covid lockdowns presented opportunities which were promptly taken.

**The report concludes that key elements of PIND’s model for youth employment have been important to the success of the model, which overall works well** to support young people through training that is relevant to the local economy and into positions of employment or self-employment. A key feature of success in this journey has been the model’s **competency focus**; in this case expressed as integrating **soft skills, business skills and opportunities for practical hands-on skill application into the curriculum**. Efforts to align these integrated skills with nationally accredited curricula show promise to standardise approaches. A second feature of success is **building in support for the onward journey**: the post training process is absolutely critical for extending learning, allowing opportunities for saving, and through these making links and forging pathways to sustainable employment and self-employment. These have been enabled through facilitating supported start-up opportunities; building linkages to open up internship and apprenticeship opportunities; and making connections with potential employers to take on trainees directly.

Generating results for NDYEP has also revealed some lessons in areas which the project could have improved. First, there is evidence that in ICT and Construction, the trainings were not long enough to secure the full breadth of learning needed to operate as independent and competent ecosystem actors. This offers more clarity and detail to observations made at the time of the MTE that training does not by itself complete the journey to employment or secure livelihoods. **Getting the balance right between training length and ensuring continued learning in the onward pathway (in internships or new jobs) will be key to secure the benefits in the long term.**

The quality of training is also critical: in some cases, the use-value of potentially good training may have been reduced by insufficient equipment for practical work for the whole group to use, so trainees could not profit from the opportunity to the maximum. Finally, while the project made progress in more deeply integrating the dimensions of the training in Phase 2, the key component of facilitating access to start-up finance post-training has delayed project results. Although COVID 19 has been partly responsible for delays in this step, **linking with loan making bodies, as well as the promising Business Plan Challenge, could also have been delivered earlier**, and to a greater proportion of trainees.

**An ecosystem approach using a sub-granting framework has reaped dividends for both impact and sustainability.** This has paid dividends in a myriad of ways – in terms of bolstering business and therefore labour demand via strengthening grantee organisations; by strengthening expertise in partner organisations embedded in the states, and which state governments are now beginning to draw on; in terms of sustainability of the approach to training in local areas; in terms of commitment and ongoing support to trainees; and in terms of resilience of the project to shocks such as the Covid-19 pandemic. In short, the approach has contributed to strengthening the economic sectors at the

same time as ensuring competent and committed training expertise, located in each state and specialising in each sector.

Lessons to draw from the NDYEP experience include that **sub granting must stay flexible** in order to draw on, and profit from, the particular and emerging strengths of each IP. Facilitating **policies framing the project must be enabled to respond to emerging evidence**. And a **cross project learning culture** which allows for specific peer learning opportunities and cross-fertilization of ideas and approaches among trainees has been an important framework.

**Government engagement by officials and politicians is critical for scale-up, such that an earlier process of Identification of points of contact and promising overlap with policies and departments could have strengthened this transition.** The project was relatively slow to begin concerted and systematic engagement with government stakeholders. This was because the project saw itself as needing evidence of how the model worked before approaching government in a systematic way. Government stakeholders were engaged in Phase 1 through the Advisory Committee and an initial meeting, but there was a much more concerted approach to gathering information and understanding the situation in specific states with PIND's advocacy team on board during Phase 2. Thus the work of liaison and advocacy to identify points of contact, and which policies and departments are relevant in different states was taken up during Phase 2, and there has not yet been time to fully ensure secure take up by the States. It is possible that had this identification and outreach taken place earlier in Phase 1, more linkages could have perhaps been found earlier and progress would have been more secure at the close of the project – notwithstanding that some challenges would still need to be resolved.

**Adapting and responding to evidence and a culture of learning has been a highly facilitating framework.** Flexibility to adapt to emerging evidence has been a strong asset supporting results in Phase 2 in particular – there are clear examples of where this has contributed to maintaining relevance as well as effectiveness in achieving targets. There are two important features of achieving this: the project committed to strong monitoring and documentation of its process; and the management framework has maintained the flexibility to adapt on the basis of emerging evidence.

Examples of adaptations supporting effectiveness include that the project was able to adjust decisions related to the target student profile and make tailored adaptations about offering around student support – such as stipends and transport expenses. These have been particularly important to support inclusion while also getting the age targeting to meet the ground reality. Adding a strategy for linking young alumni trainees to finance for start-ups has also likely been an important adaptation, although results have not yet come to fruition.

**Finally, the programme has generated solid experience in inclusion, with notable achievements in including women in ICT, and in reaching out to and including PWDs in training in aquaculture and ICT.** These achievements were made even where these were perceived initially as challenging and perhaps unlikely, driven by targets for training these groups; and by facilitating learning for how IPs could do their outreach and adapt their training if necessary. This experience will be valuable to efforts to ensure equity in youth employment initiatives going forward. Flexibility in individual training arrangements was important to facilitate these achievements, suggesting that a blanket approach is inappropriate. The project adapted its age targets, and allowed IPs some decision making in how to enable marginalized trainees to undertake the training. The construction sector, on the other hand, has proved quite impenetrable to these groups, despite some attempts – suggesting that **in 'difficult' sectors, a more concerted and persistent strategy, and perhaps more facilitation, may be needed to make progress towards equity.**

The report makes the following recommendations, relevant to PIND and for other initiatives in youth job readiness in Nigeria and elsewhere.

#### **Recommendations for implementation of integrated youth training**

1. Consider carefully the issue of length of training appropriate for the sector, the level of ambition, and the trainee profile. Where training cannot be extended, consider how to make learning a formal and structured part internships and/or entry level jobs (see below).
2. While establishing project principles is important – such as expecting trainees to display grit and self-motivation – policies on the issue of accessing financial help for transportation to training and internships and for essential equipment, should retain flexibility to allow inclusion, at least on a case by case basis.
3. Integrate entrepreneurship training fully into the training process and begin to facilitate business planning and access to finance from earlier in the process. Access to finance is critical to the transitions most trainees need to make from training into sustainable self-employment. The gap between completing training and accessing startup capital should be reduced so that learning and motivation are retained.

#### **Recommendations for the design and implementation of post-training transitions**

4. Seek innovative ways to get disadvantaged trainees access to equipment both during and after the training, so that they can learn and benefit from it in the ways expected. This might, for example, include establishing membership-based equipment libraries, perhaps; or integrating paid tasks into training so that trainees can save a little; or linking with the corporate sector to establish channels for using second hand equipment.
5. Training – particularly in parts of ICT such as software development; and in construction - does not always complete trainees' readiness for work and positioning in the business ecosystem. Continue to seek linkages to a range of positions – internships, or business incubation opportunities, or jobs - which **explicitly** allow for continued learning. This might include, for example, starter jobs or internships which include days off for continued training, or include formal and integrated learning; or learn-while-you-earn structures training frameworks. This might therefore include further demonstration of the model of construction internships developed in partnership with Rivtaf which included an element of specific continued learning.

#### **Recommendations for engaging government for upscaling**

6. Establish a process for the identification of points of contact with youth employment issues in government departments and policies at the outset, and establish connections with both political and administrative government actors as early as possible. Consider (opportunities for) advocating for a Youth Policy to bring efforts in different departments together.

#### **Recommendations for supporting inclusion**

7. Expand the important opportunities offered by youth employment schemes to work towards equity including gender equality. Put in place assertive targets and a range of strategies to draw on so that these schemes can successfully contribute to transforming inequities. These are particularly necessary to address very intransigent gendered labor market segregation in some sectors.
8. Consider the additional support needed to securely establish inclusion approaches and follow these through to consistent results. In the case of a sub-granting systems perhaps consider what

additional drivers are needed to push for these results in bottleneck sectors where gender segregation is very strong and where entry barriers to PWDs are seen as particularly acute / strong.

9. Continue to support the development of a learning and adaptive project culture and leverage this to continue peer to peer exchange among IPs on how to improve and maximize inclusion in their training processes. As part of this, organize a learning session with IPs to exchange and draw out their experience with trying to target non-graduates, focusing on what precisely the challenges have been in this, and how they have tried to address these challenges.



## 1. Introduction



This document reports on the independent final evaluation of the Niger Delta Youth Employment Pathways (NDYEP) project. NDYEP was a collaboration between Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND) and Ford Foundation which began implementation in early 2018 after an inception period in 2017 and, following extensions for a number of reasons, is now set to close in March 2021. The project was implemented in the three Niger Delta states of Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Abia and was broadly conducted in two phases, with Phase 1 from January 2018 to June 2019; Phase 2 from July 2019 to December 2020, with a close-out period from January to March 2021. The evaluation itself took place during the period November 2020-January 2021, with data collection in December 2020 and January 2021. At this time, all youth training had been completed but work focused on enabling start-ups through a Business Plan challenge and linking trainees to finance opportunities; documentation; on engaging state governments and scaling up to other states in the Niger Delta region was ongoing.

The overall aim of NDYEP has been to contribute to addressing the critical issue of youth unemployment in the Niger Delta by developing models of youth quality training that equips them with market relevant skills and supports them into sustainable jobs or enterprise. As a final evaluation, this exercise had the dual purpose of providing accountability and learning. It aimed to provide the donor, PIND, the expected beneficiaries and all stakeholders with robust evidence on the extent to which the NDYEP project achieved its expected results. It also took into consideration the 2019 mid-term evaluation report and recommendations that informed the scale up of project implementation.

Evaluation findings and learning set out here are intended to be relevant to PIND, Ford Foundation and other development partners to inform future programming for preparing young people for the

workforce; to government stakeholders to support advocacy for large scale public-private partnerships and investment in youth employment; to private sector stakeholders to inform shared value strategies; and to other stakeholders more generally engaged with social equity and inclusion. Recommendations articulated here are intended to help PIND and its partners in future decision-making regarding youth employment; and specifically as PIND develops this work into engagement in Delta State and others going forwards.

The process of design and data collection for the mid-term evaluation in 2019 was synergised with research for three case studies, one on each of the sectors in which training was being implemented. These were developed into Practice Papers on Construction, ICT and Aquaculture in May-June 2019, presenting the work undertaken by the Implementing Partners - the E&I Masters/RU Consortium in Rivers State (Construction); Clintonel Innovation Centre in Abia State (ICT); and Dr Fish Agricultural Consult in Akwa Ibom (Aquaculture).

The design and data collection for this final evaluation was synergised with research for a Case Study on a new sector added in Phase 2 – Finished Leather. Case Studies for the original (Phase 1) three sectors of Aquaculture, ICT and Construction were developed alongside the mid-term evaluation process in February-March 2019. In addition, concurrent with this final evaluation process a series of short video documentaries were developed, one on each of the four sectors. These, like the written case study, are intended to serve as advocacy tools to promote the approach further. The evaluation process was coordinated with this video production process at a conceptual level to ensure consistency, but was separated from the evaluation data collection for reasons of respondent confidentiality among others.

### Evaluation Objectives

The overall purpose of the evaluation was to assess the project's achievements at impact and outcome level and document the key learnings from the project implementation processes.

More specifically, it set out to:

1. Determine the merit of NDYEP in terms of achievement of expected results related to impact, outcomes and outputs of access of youth in workforce development and the quality of learning outcomes of vocational training as planned within the initial business case and operational plan;
2. Document the project's contribution towards connecting job seekers to dignified and fulfilling work;
3. Assess the enabling factors and/or barriers to achieving the desired outcomes or impacts (both positive and negative) of the project on the target population;
4. Assess the NDYEP preparedness and response to external shocks such as COVID-19 pandemic;
5. Document lessons learnt and good practices for organizational learning, policy directions on youth employment, replication as well as provide strategic recommendations for future investment and inform future programming to advance youth employment in the Niger Delta.

## 2. Project Overview



NDYEP was designed as a two year project and began formally in September 2017. It effectively got underway in January 2018, and both ‘years’ or phases of the project in the event spanned about 18 months through extensions. In Phase 2, extensions were brought about in particular by the Covid-19 Coronavirus pandemic and associated national and regional lockdowns. Nigeria and specifically the Niger Delta was locked down from end March to early June 2020, with some restrictions remaining in place until October 2020.

The project aimed to address youth job readiness, workforce development and job creation in three priority states of Abia, Akwa Ibom, and Rivers. It planned to do this by developing models that offer youth in the Niger Delta the opportunity to secure sustainable jobs through quality training that equips them with market-relevant skills. The total budget over the two phases was US\$ 2,165,895. In the first phase, Ford Foundation contributed \$700,000 and PIND directly contributed \$165,895.73. Phase 2 was funded by a \$1,300,000 grant from Ford Foundation. In both phases, the majority of the grant was awarded to partners in sub-grants for implementing training and follow up activities. In Phase 2, this amounted to \$840,000 in sub-grants.

### Context

These objectives were set in a context in which ‘youth unemployability’ has been a significant phenomenon. Nigeria in general and in particular the Niger Delta suffers the phenomenon of jobless growth, with an expanding population. Despite decades of reasonably steady economic growth (until recession in 2016), unemployment remains very high at 27.1% in the second quarter of 2020, with peaks in Akwa Ibom, which reported the second highest unemployment rate at 45.2%, and Rivers State and Abia at 43.7% and 35.5% respectively. Underemployment combined with unemployment rates suggest a national rate of 55.7%. Women are disproportionately affected by



this phenomenon, as more than 50% of unemployed youth are female. Notably, unemployment rates are generally high regardless of education: people with a BA/BSc/Bed/HND have a higher unemployment rate (40.9%) than people with primary education (21.4%) or who never attended school (23.6%) in 2020.<sup>1</sup> More than half of Nigerians are under the age of 30.

The Labour Force Survey in 2018 conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics<sup>2</sup> found a labour force of 90.47 million nationwide and the highest unemployment in the Niger Delta region. Available evidence reveals that unemployment, particularly youth employment, is a critical issue related to both economic development and de-escalation of conflict in the Niger Delta. Studies suggest that traditional modes of youth workforce development have not been successful.

### Project implementation

The NDYEP programme began in January 2018, focusing on the three priority states of Abia, Akwa Ibom and Rivers. Designed as a two-year programme, it has in the event been implemented over 3 years in two phases. Following an inception period, Phase 1 ran until June 2019; and Phase 2 ran until December 2020, now extended to March 2021.

To achieve this, the project articulated four strategic change objectives expressing the implementation logic of the project, to:

1. Develop an understanding of the employment and skills landscape in the Niger Delta region to inform strategic investments in skills development programming;
2. Promote a demand-driven approach to skills development in the Niger Delta through partnerships between youth employment ecosystem players, especially employers, policymakers, development partners and training institutions;
3. Develop programs that demonstrate model pathways from skills training to employment through the provision of direct vocational training in three sectors of the economy, ICT, agriculture and construction, and other sectors where opportunities are identified; and
4. Monitor and evaluate the project and document, and disseminate key learnings.

Following an inception period during which labour market assessments (LMAs) were carried out in the three priority states of Rivers, Abia and Akwa Ibom, Phase 1 of the project saw the identification of 13 sub-grantee implementing partners (IPs). These each worked in one of the three identified promising growth sectors of Aquaculture, ICT and Construction. Within ICT, some variation in focus took place including for solar technology; computer aided design (CAD) and manufacturing (CAM). Within construction, the focus in phase 1 was mainly in tiling and plumbing. Each IP developed a curriculum appropriate to the sector; and sessions to develop trainees' soft skills were added to these curricula and carried out by specialist organisations in each of the three states.

Phase 2 saw the addition of Finished Leather as a new focus sector in Abia state, and the addition of sub-sectors in the Construction trainings, including masonry, carpentry, electrical, welding and fabrication; and painting. It also saw some changes in the group of IPs, with 5 new IPs implementing the original sector trainings; and two new IPs implementing Finished Leather training. Three Phase 1

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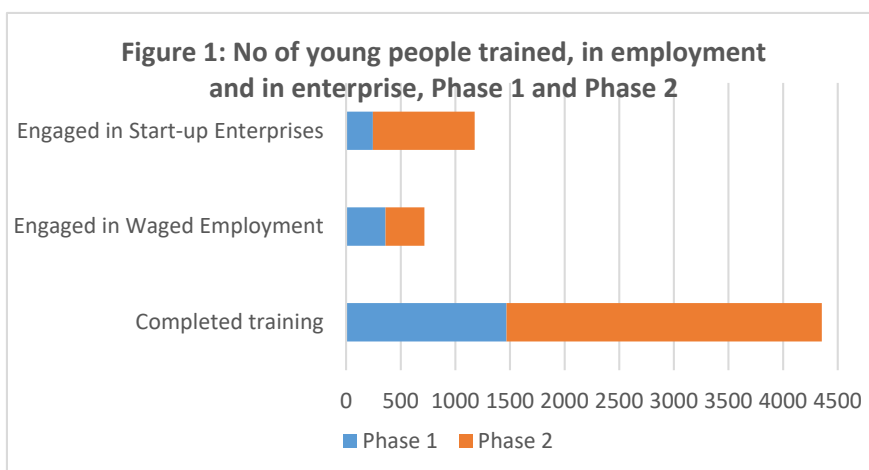
<sup>11</sup> National Bureau Of Statistics, Labor Force Statistics: Unemployment and Underemployment Report (Q2 2020), August, Abridged labour force survey under Covid-19.

<sup>2</sup> National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) 'Labor Force Statistics – Volume 2: Unemployment and Underemployment by State Q3 2018', April 2019.

IPs did not continue into Phase 2. For this Phase, the approach to soft skills was also significantly developed, with the three specialist organisations in this case training and mentoring the IPs to deliver soft skills training to participants in stages integrated into the sector curriculum. Two new IPs were also contracted to deliver business and finance training to select trainees.

Specifically, the project set targets to reach 1000 young people in Phase 1 and 3000 in Phase 2. Beyond simply training, however, it included an emphasis on a competency focus and hands-on approach to training which included soft skills – in order to prepare trainees more appropriately for the labour market. More broadly it also emphasised an evidence-based approach to sector selection; and emphasis not just on the training phase but on the whole pathway to employment – which included elements of support into internships and employment; and various inputs to support entrepreneurship both in groups and for individuals. In addition, it specifically set out to implement this approach in ways which could strengthen the sectors’ ecosystems – of employers, policy makers, trainers and job seekers; and to document progress to support advocacy for scaling up, and particularly for engagement with state governments for sustainability of the approach at policy level.

While good progress had been made through Phase 1 in most of these elements, efforts to engage with state government actors were taken on more assertively during Phase 2 through a series of engagement activities.

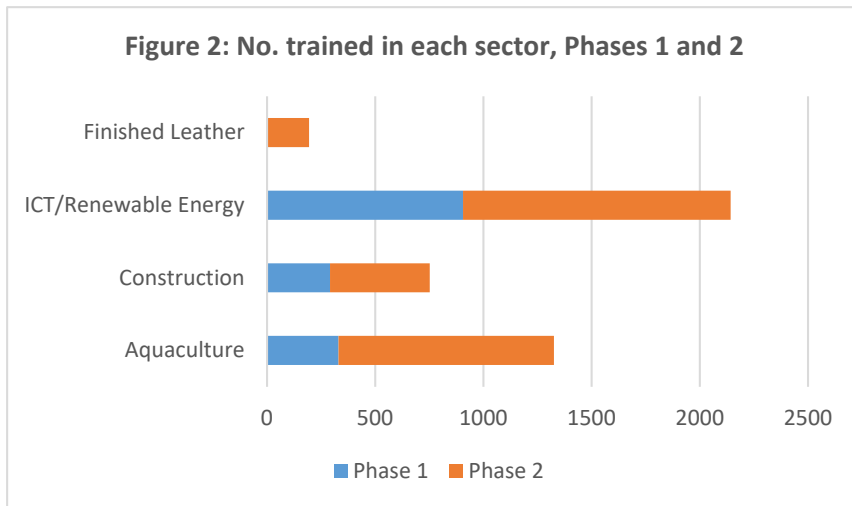


As shown in Figure 1, over the two phases, nearly 4500 young people were trained, and of these 717 have found employment, while 1177 are engaged in start-up enterprises. Together these therefore constitute nearly 44 % of the trainees.<sup>3</sup>

As shown in Figure 2, of these 4355 completing

training (Figure 1), the majority (2142) were trained in ICT/renewable energy, with 1326 Aquaculture trainees and 752 in Construction across the two phases. 194 participants were trained in Finished Leather during Phase 2.

<sup>33</sup> A further 671 are in apprenticeships / internship in Phase 2



NDYEP has worked with 25 IPs over the two phases, with 15 partnerships in Phase 1 and 23 in Phase 2.

As shown in Table 1, 4 of these worked in Construction; 6 in Aquaculture; 8 in ICT, of which 1 also trained in renewable energy; and 2 organisations trained in Finished Leather during

phase 2. All of these were supported by 3 soft skills training organisations, and 2 entrepreneurship training organisations operating online in Phase 2. In terms of location, 6 of these organisations were based in Akwa Ibom; 6 in Abia; 11 in Rivers and 2, though based in Rivers, delivered their support remotely.

Table 1: NDYEP Implementing Partners						
	Name of Organization	Phase	Location	State	Sector	Projects
1	Aspirants Consult	2	Port Harcourt	Rivers	Construction	Construction Skills (Masonry, Tiling Electrical, Plumbing, Painting & Carpentry)
2	Azure Gold Ltd	1 & 2	Uyo / Abak	Akwa Ibom	Construction	Construction Skills (Cabinetry, Masonry & Tiling, Piping & Plumbing, Wall & Ceiling, Earthworks and Concrete, Iron bending & Rebaring)
3	Entrepreneurship & Innovation Centre	1 & 2	Port Harcourt	Rivers	Construction	Building Construction Skills
4	Kiara De-Luke Academy	1 & 2	Near Aba	Abia	Construction	Building Construction Skills
5	Develop You Foundation	2	Port Harcourt	Rivers	Aquaculture	Improved and Sustainable Aquaculture
4	DFAC	1 & 2	Uyo	Akwa Ibom	Aquaculture	Aquaculture Enterprise
7	Ibiteinye Int. Farms	1 & 2	Port Harcourt	Rivers	Aquaculture	Aquaculture Enterprise
8	Ibom Int. Farms Ltd	2	Onna	Akwa Ibom	Aquaculture	Aquaculture Enterprise + Addon training
9	Alpha Vision Logistic Nig. Ltd	2	Near Eket	Akwa Ibom	Aquaculture	Aquaculture Enterprise
10	Aqua Green Int. Farming Support	2	Port Harcourt	Rivers	Aquaculture	Developing young entrepreneurs in Aquaculture
11	Clintonel Innovation Centre	1 & 2	Aba	Abia	ICT / Renewable Energy	Skill-up Abia
12	Innovation Growth Hub	1 & 2	Aba	Abia	ICT	Digital/E-Commerce Fellowship
13	KIR Foundation	1 & 2	Port Harcourt	Rivers	ICT	Hardware Repairs
14	Meranos	1 Indirectly (Nettops) 2 directly	Port Harcourt	Rivers	ICT	ICT Training + Certification
15	Endip	1		Rivers	ICT	
16	Nettops	1		Rivers	ICT	
17	StartHub Tech	1 & 2	Uyo	Akwa Ibom	ICT	CREATE
18	Cinfore Ltd	1 & 2	Port Harcourt	Rivers	ICT	ICT Professional Skills Training
19	Living Earth Nig Foundation	1 & 2	Port Harcourt	Rivers	Soft Skills	Behavioural & Enterprise Development
20	Wider Perspectives Ltd	1 & 2	Aba/Port Harcourt	Abia/Rivers	Soft Skills	Behavioural & Enterprise Development
21	Youth Alive Foundation	1 & 2	Uyo	Akwa Ibom	Soft Skills	Behavioural & Enterprise Development
22	The Footwear Academy	2	Aba	Abia	Finished Leather	Aba Mastering Footwear Program
23	Advanced Engineering Centre (Clintonel Consortium)	2	Aba	Abia	Finished Leather	Computerised and Automated Leather Manufacturing (CALM)
24	Online Entrepreneurship Training (CAD Consulting)	2	Port Harcourt	Online	Enterprise Development	
25	Online Entrepreneurship Training (Develop You Foundation)	2	Port Harcourt	online	Enterprise Development	

### 3. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation used a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to explore key evaluation questions related to design, approach, implementation and impact of the project. This mix allowed triangulation of evidence across different sources, as well as breadth of consultation across different types of stakeholders in an approach intended to be inclusive as well as strengthened by different perspectives.



#### Theory of Change

The evaluation took a broadly theory-based approach, aiming to build on – and build learning around - the elements of a Theory of Change developed during the MTE process in 2019.

This noted that the NDYEP programme works on the broad logic that:

If sector targeting and skills development content can be sufficiently tailored to local economic context

→ Then a combination of

- 1) Capacity support to existing training organisations and
- 2) Tailored training for young people which includes technical and soft skills and
- 3) Support into employment or entrepreneurship

→ Will move a cohort of young people from unemployment into employment

→ This process will also stimulate the local economy through upskilling enterprise

If the approach used engages local stakeholders, empowers actors, and generates evidence

→ Then it will provide the basis for scale up to benefit further youth cohorts.

Features of the NDYEP approach deemed to be central to following this change pathway are noted as an approach which is:

1. Evidence-led and demand driven (with supportive monitoring as part of systems strengthening)
2. Competency focused
3. Modelling multiple pathways to employment
4. Strengthening the ecosystem of actors (employers, jobseekers, policy makers and trainers)
5. Establishing entrepreneurship plus support system

Practice papers developed regarding the Construction, Aquaculture and ICT sectors in 2019 provided more detail on item 3 above: specifically, the pathways IPs have taken, and the strategies for support used, in order to help alumni trainees into actual jobs, internships and start-ups. In combination, these suggest that post-training, successful pathways provide 1) opportunities for young people to gain **experience** in a supportive environment and 2) ongoing support with **key inputs** such as advisory services, market linkages, and/or loans or opportunities for **saving**.

The evaluation process therefore focused partially on further investigating these pathways and opening up evidence on ‘what works’ for youth employment readiness. However, at the time of the mid-term evaluation it was considered too early to assess how far this ‘training to employment or enterprise’ process has successfully been calibrated to impact **more broadly on the sector ecosystem in transformative ways**. This final evaluation was therefore designed to investigate and draw out learning relevant to this part of the Theory of Change more thoroughly.

### Key questions

**The 5 features of the NDYEP model** formed the core units of enquiry for the evaluation. In line with the specific objectives and this analytical framework, the evaluation was guided by evaluation questions structure according to OECD/DAC criteria for evaluation, with the addition of criteria for equity and gender equality, and resilience. As follows:

**Relevance:** To what extent has the NDYEP project expected results (Impact, Outcomes and Outputs) and design responded to beneficiaries and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities considering the evolving circumstances (is NDYEP doing the right things?)

**Coherence:** To what extent other interventions (particularly government policies and programs) support or undermine the NDYEP intervention including internal and external coherence (How well does the NDYEP project fit)?

### Effectiveness

- To what extent the NDYEP project achieved its expected results (Outcomes and Outputs) including differential results across states in the five main feature of the NDYEP model (which would include influencing the state governments to adopt the NDYEP model)?
- What are the factors (internal and external to PIND) that contributed the most to the attainment of the NDYEP project and results?
- What are the factors (internal and external to PIND) that hindered the most the attainment of the NDYEP project and results?

**Efficiency:** How far has the sub-granting model been and efficient approach to achieving results, and to sustainability?

**Impact:**

- To what extent the NDYEP has achieved expected results related to results defined in the Business Plan and if NDYEP has generated significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects at community/sector and state level?
- What long term transformative change or difference did the project make on communities/sectors, institutions (employers, government/policy makers and TVET/trainers) and youth?

**Sustainability:** to what extent are the net benefits of interventions likely to continue after PIND/Ford Foundation has stopped? How likely are the benefits (including resilience to risk) to last and under which conditions?

**Equity and Gender Equality:** To what extent the NDYEP project addressed inequalities in youth employment, incorporated gender equality and social inclusion and the empowerment of women and persons with disabilities into the design, implementation and results achieved?

**Resilience**

- To what extent was the project resilient to internal and external shocks (economic, conflicts, pandemic, etc.)?
- To what extent has the NDYEP project responded effectively to risks and threats?

**Evaluation team, data sources and tools**

The evaluation questions were addressed through a number of data collection tools (See Evaluation Matrix, Annex 3). These included a mix of remote and face to face data collection methods, selected to adapt to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions particularly on international travel during the evaluation period.

The evaluation team consisted of:

- A team leader, based in UK, who designed the evaluation approach, led on remote data collection events, provided guidance to the on-site field work team, and led on analysis and reporting
- A co-evaluator, based in Nigeria (Lagos), who led the field work team and developed the Finished Leather case study
- Two NDYEP/PIND staff who supported the field work as research assistants.

Fieldwork was carried out from 1<sup>st</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> December, beginning with 2 days in a partially remote format, and followed by face to face work by the 3 Nigeria-based team members in Port Harcourt, Aba and Uyo. Four IPs had been selected for this more intensive field work through a selection process set out during the inception period. In the event, travel disruptions meant that all intended interviews could not be carried out at one IP in Rivers State. A limited number of substitute interviews was sought at a different IP in Akwa Ibom so that the data collection would retain broad perspectives, and especially so that PWD perspectives would be adequately included. An intensive data collection process was also carried out among the two IPs in Abia implementing training in the Finished Leather sector, for the purposes of developing the Case Study.

In total focus IPs for data collection were as shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Focus implementing Partners for data collection				
	Name of Organization	Location	State	Sector
For evaluation – Training Ips				
1	Kiara De-Luke Academy	Near Aba	Abia	Construction
2	DFAC	Uyo	Akwa Ibom	Aquaculture
3	Aqua Green Int. Farming Support	Port Harcourt	Rivers	Aquaculture
4	KIR Foundation	Port Harcourt	Rivers	ICT
5	StartHub Tech	Uyo	Akwa Ibom	ICT
For evaluation – support Ips				
6	Online Entrepreneurship Training (CAD Consulting)	Port Harcourt	Online	Enterprise Development
7	Online Entrepreneurship Training (Develop You Foundation)	Port Harcourt	online	Enterprise Development
8	Living Earth Nig Foundation	Port Harcourt	Rivers	Soft Skills
9	Wider Perspectives Ltd	Aba/Port Harcourt	Abia/Rivers	Soft Skills
10	Youth Alive Foundation	Uyo	Akwa Ibom	Soft Skills
For Case Study				
11	The Footwear Academy	Aba	Abia	Finished Leather
12	Advanced Engineering Centre (Clintone Consortium)	Aba	Abia	Finished Leather

Data collection tools consisted of:

- 1. Literature Review:** including NDYEP design and inception documents; PIND annual reports; recent IP progress reports; NDYEP reports from recent roundtables and exposure visit events; and the NDYEP monitoring data base. Altogether 62 documents were reviewed.
- 2. Key Informant Interviews:** semi-structured interviews were carried out using interview guides (See Annex 4). These were carried out remotely among PIND and NDYEP stakeholders, and select government stakeholders and Advisory Committee members. They were carried out face to face among IP staff, trainees, employers and internship providers associated with the selected training IPs (above). Altogether 28 KIIs were carried out.
- 3. Focus Group Discussions:** 8 online FGDs were carried out over 3 days among different groups of IPs and involving all of the 23 Phase 2 IPs. These were a mix of thematic and plenary events. In addition, 12 face to face FGDs were carried out among trainees, start-up groups, interns and partner staff associated with the selected focus IPs.
- 4. Participant Observation:** was carried out at the 2 Finished Leather implementation sites for the purposes of the case study development
- 5. An online survey** was carried out using Survey Monkey among all trainees who had provided an email address on registration. This amounted to 2780 addresses, of which 2334 did not bounce – in other words, the survey reached out to 54% of trainees from both phases. The survey received 518 complete responses, giving a response rate of 22% - comfortably exceeding the anticipated rate of about 15%. Outreach and responses had some bias towards those with access to technology (smart phone or computer) and internet, and therefore towards trainees in the ICT sector and in urban areas (49.7% and 68.7 % of respondents, respectively). Nevertheless, results provide some broad



and valuable insights into the training at outcome and impact level, particularly because respondents included a good number of peri-urban residents, a smaller number rural residents, as well as 130 aquaculture, 60 construction, and 36 finished leather trainees.

### Analysis

Transcripts of KIIs and FGDs, and a selection of documents were analysed and thematically coded using the social science analysis software Dedoose; this analysis was used as the basis for developing findings structured around the Evaluation Questions. Findings were developed into a Draft Report and PPT which was used as the basis for presentation and discussion of findings during an online session at the end of January 2021. Following this, the report was reviewed on the basis of comments received, and resubmitted.

### Ethical considerations

#### ***A participatory learning approach***

The evaluation took an open, participatory approach involving consultation with a range of stakeholders: this was in part to enhance the validity of the knowledge generated by the process by the inclusion of a number of perspectives. At the same time, this approach intends to generate an opportunity for reflection and learning on the part of project participants, hence aiming to build-in internal benefits of the approach, beyond extracting information for the wider dissemination of knowledge, and for accountability.

#### ***Covid aware fieldwork***

To minimize both international and national travel in the context of the pandemic, data collection was partly online: all IPs were consulted in this way, and they therefore did not have to travel to different states.

Face to face fieldwork was carried out by a small Nigeria-based team. Members of the data collection team observed all COVID-19 non-pharmaceutical interventions to prevent infection during the face-to-face fieldwork. The team members wore face masks, used hand sanitizers and maintained physical distance most of the time. In a few instances, it was not possible to maintain the two-meter minimum distance on account of space.

#### ***Confidentiality and Data Security***

Confidentiality has been maintained for all KII and survey respondents. Data was kept in a secure online folder, with access only by the evaluation team. Data relating to PIND respondents was kept separately and only accessible by independent team members.

### Limitations

#### ***Online data collection***

About half the primary data for this evaluation was collected remotely using online methods. Online data collection has some qualitative limitations: There is a level and type of communication beyond the verbal in face to face interactions that is documented and is then drawn on in the interpretation/articulating findings stage. This includes body language which facilitates dimensions not expressed verbally, for example, related to observations on the (power) relationships between stakeholders; observations on the degree of stakeholder engagement; observations on issues of capacity and visibility. An absence of face-to-face interactions can also be a challenge to establishing coherence and in articulating the 'right' story. It therefore increases the risk that 'findings' are articulated in ways that are distant from the context and do not resonate with stakeholders and

limits the ability of the evaluators to credibly triangulate data findings. Limited participant observation of context might especially impact on evaluative interpretation of responses on relevance, effectiveness, etc. This limitation was mitigated through collecting about half the primary data face to face / in the field by the Nigeria-based team.

### ***Time frame***

The time frame for data collection and analysis was set quite tight as when the evaluation began the project was due to close just a month later. There was therefore there some pressure to complete fieldwork and produce of interview transcripts quickly, which affected the ability of the team to follow up on some consultations that were planned but did not take place. There are some small gaps in the breadth of the data – a few government stakeholders and some members of the advisory committee were not available for consultation in the tight data collection window.

### ***Survey bias***

Survey responses, as mentioned above, have some inbuilt bias. Of recipients of the survey, a few email replies were received stating that the recipient had never taken part in a training. In other words, the trainee database used to source the contact email addresses was not completely clean: it can be assumed that more people contacted had not in fact taken part in the training.

While the response rate was more than acceptable, both outreach and responses had some bias towards those with access to technology (smart phone or computer) and internet, and therefore towards trainees in the ICT sector and in urban areas (49.7% and 68.7 % of respondents, respectively). It also had limited responses from those who did not complete their training (13 respondents of 2.5%). Nevertheless, each sector did receive a reasonable number of responses (130 or 25.1% Aquaculture; 36 or 7% Finished Leather and 60 or 11.6% Construction). Types of onward placement were also reasonably represented: 37 respondents answered as interns; 86 as employees; and 121 as self-employed. Rural trainees were underrepresented (47 respondents or 9%) but semi-urban trainees were well represented (115 responses or 22.2%). Therefore despite some bias, the results provide some broad and valuable insights into the training at outcome and impact level. If anything, understanding brought about by the survey may be slightly biased towards positive results at impact levels, given that rural respondents are somewhat more likely to be currently unemployed (42% against 27% and 23% for urban and semi urban respectively) and are less likely to be currently in the top income earning brackets.



## 4. Key Findings

### Relevance

*1.To what extent has the NDYEP project expected results (Impact, Outcomes and Outputs) and design responded to beneficiaries and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities considering the evolving circumstances (is NDYEP doing the right things?)*

#### Finding 1: Adapting to maximise relevance

**During Phase 2, NDYEP has adapted to learning from Phase 1 to fine tune its relevance to young people, implementing partner institutions, and the situation of youth unemployment facing state governments. It has also successfully adapted to the dramatic changes to the global economy triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic during 2020, but the outcomes of this on the local labour market are not yet fully clear.**

Building on the experience of Phase 1 and the findings from the mid-term evaluation (MTE), the project has made a number of adaptations to fine-tune its relevance. The MTE had found that:

- The project was designed to respond to economic issues and opportunities within each of the three target States via research to produce the Labour Market Assessments which identified the Aquaculture, ICT and Construction sectors as main targets for training.
- Government stakeholders in each state recognised potential relevance for policy.
- Employer need was factored into design as far as possible from the information available on forecasts for labour requirements.
- The trainings and overall approach was relevant to trainees, who face extreme unemployment prospects. However, targets for inclusion of women in all sectors and of people living with disabilities (PWDs), and an objective to reach a rural cohort and in general unemployed school-leaver young people, had invoked needs not explicitly addressed, but which were raised consistently by trainees. These included most clearly difficulties affording transport to training and internships; and support to access finance and / or equipment to support start-up businesses. The project had explicitly avoided using the Starter Packs common in other youth entrepreneurship approaches based on a diagnosis that the focus should rather be on the skills produced, and their relevance to the local labour market, rather than on offering inducements to training.

Each of these dimensions has evolved to some extent during Phase 2 as detailed in the following Findings 2, 4 and 5.

#### Finding 2: Sector relevance

**The Finished Leather sector, even though progress in this was delayed by Covid-19 responses, has been a valuable addition to the portfolio, offering trainees good prospects for earning at least some income quite rapidly after training. All sectors also present some challenges for new entrants.**

Finished Leather products was added as a new/ additional sector in Phase 2. These trainings were located in Abia only, where a leather products industry is well established, but with some opportunities for targeted expansion and upgrading. While training for this sector was delayed by COVID lockdowns, two batches of training were completed, and the sector has demonstrated good absorption of these trainees into self-employment in particular: (90% according to the NDYEP database). Survey results suggest that Finished Leather trainees are **more** likely to be earning at least some income than other trainees (See Finding 13), and therefore that outcome results have been good. There are also suggestions that the combination of manual and technology driven production

processes offers a particularly rich set of development opportunities, with technology adoption promising to enter new markets by raising quality and speed of production,<sup>4</sup> while manual production training engages with the existing vibrant sector.<sup>5</sup>

This sector is well supported by the state government, which recognises its potential for employment and revenue generation, and has, for example, attracted a Bank of Industry (BoI) facility, Aba Finished Leather Cluster Financing Scheme, to the State. The State Governor also announced in December 2019 the establishment of an automated shoe factory in Aba, which was being installed at the time of fieldwork in late 2020.

Information collected on the other sectors at this more mature stage for the final evaluation suggests that all sectors have a) some particular challenges for start-ups or b) some apparent limitations on absorbing new entrants: survey results suggest a fair proportion of trainees in all sectors remain currently unemployed, even while a good proportion continue to make their way in these sectors. Unemployment – a reflection of limitations on absorption – may well have been exacerbated by the economic uncertainty brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sector specific limitations for start-ups include that:

- In aquaculture, the price of fish feed is consistently cited as a challenge to profitability in the sector. This input is also volatile in price, and was adversely affected by the Covid-19 lockdowns, for example.<sup>6</sup> There are some suggestions that some scale is needed to enter profitability for fish production – and that scale is hampered for many trainees not just by lack of start-up finance (for buying fish /feed etc.) but also by lack of space to make or put a pond. (Secure space is needed so that fish are not stolen)<sup>7</sup>. More broadly, although demand clearly outweighs production, the sector is affected by fluctuating government policy on fish imports. Policies for a gradual ban on imports since 2013 have not been effective; continued announcements reinforcing the ban by 2022 have not been backed with consistent action.
- In ICT, the length of training is cited as a particular challenge (55% of 292 ICT survey respondents said the training was not long enough. These made up 71% of the 160 respondents who said the training was not long enough<sup>8</sup> (–see also Finding 11). This implies that trainees are not fully ready to compete in the sector at the end of the current training. Nevertheless, ICT remains a government priority sector, attracting public investment to drive effective and efficient public service delivery. There continues to be a massive deployment and utilization of ICT as a tool to enhance national development.

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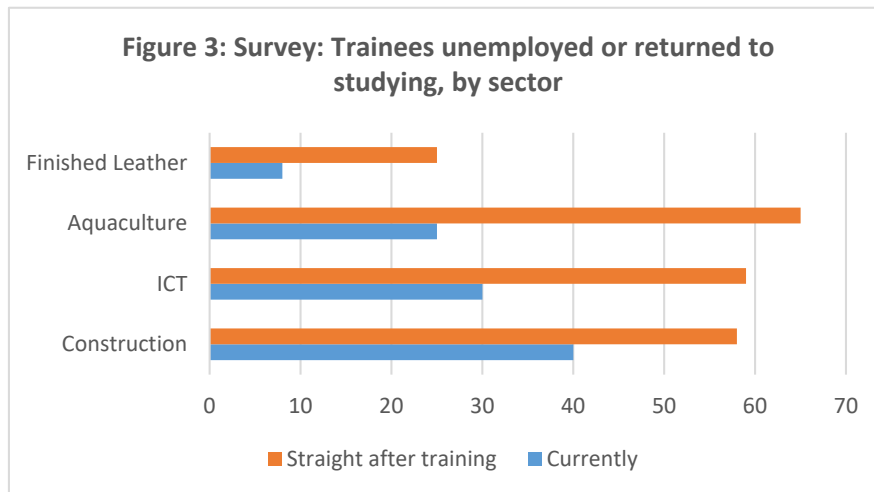
<sup>4</sup> Participant Observation/31

<sup>5</sup> Key Informant Interview/35; /34; Participant Observation/36

<sup>6</sup> Focus Group Discussion/50/45/FGD 42/43/25

<sup>7</sup> Focus Group Discussion 50/45

<sup>8</sup> ICT trainees made up only 61% of survey respondents, so 71% of respondents saying the training was not long enough is a disproportionate amount.



- According to the survey, the construction sector trainees have the highest levels of current unemployment or trainees who have returned to studying etc. Figure 3 shows that while levels immediately after training are similar or lower than the ICT and Aquaculture sectors, they are 'currently' higher than other sectors (i.e. at the time of the survey, at

varying lengths of time after training, depending on when respondents trained). Despite this, the sector remains in principle relevant, generating 10% of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the first quarter of 2020; and continuing to attract large government expenditure budgets for 2021<sup>9</sup>

### Finding 3: Relevance to employers

**Employers have a mostly very positive but somewhat mixed impression of NDYEP trainees; reservations are commonly because the training is considered by some to be short and trainees have much more to learn post-training.**

Qualitative data suggests that NDYEP trainees are playing a useful and needed function in the various sectors. Employers are on the whole happy with the performance of employees trained by the programme, except in some limited cases. For example, in construction they represent 'cheap labour' who know the specific tasks needed and understand also about issues like safety and communication;<sup>10</sup> where there are reservations about the trainees it is because they are perceived to have not had long enough training to be fully responsible for all tasks.<sup>11</sup> Implementers of the Entrepreneurship training conducted for selected trainees from all sectors after the end of the training find that NDYEP trainees have a clear edge over other young people in technical skills to convert into business ventures: *'The beneficiaries sent to us from NDYEP are already grounded in technical skills, so it's easy for us to connect with them. In the open market most people do not have this sensitivity, so we need to attach them to a mentor. Converting NDYEP students was much easier'*.<sup>12</sup> In ICT, employers feel positive that NDYEP trainees were trained by experienced mentors with hands on practical lessons, but that some trainees (not all) need more input: *Working with junior developers mean you will need to teach them. Some of them were able to adapt but some couldn't and needed to go back and learn more.*<sup>13</sup> This triangulates strongly with information from the survey suggesting employed trainees, in the course of their current jobs, do get theory training alongside their work (23.3%); practical training in new areas (34.9%) and help from seniors to solve problems and carry out responsibilities (47.8%).

This reinforces the important role played by internships and the support offered to start ups by the programme, as these are commonly functioning as post-training learning extension opportunities.

<sup>9</sup> National Bureau of Statistics

<sup>10</sup> Key Informant Interview/22

<sup>11</sup> Key Informant Interview/17

<sup>12</sup> Focus Group Discussion/6/7

<sup>13</sup> Key Informant Interview/27

#### Finding 4: Responding to evidence

**NDYEP succeeded in adapting to evidence about what was required to help young people succeed – both through adaptations to the target group and approach, and through additional training components to link them to finance for start-ups.**

##### Young people

NDYEP responded to specific further support required for trainees, and particular groups of trainees, by moderating the approach in some key dimensions. In Phase 2, IPs were allowed more flexibility in deciding whether and how to support trainees with transport stipends or other perceived necessities: this may be one reason why the proportion of rural trainees recruited increased during Phase 2.

The target age range was also increased from 26 to 30 years old and under, in response to the challenges IPs had faced limited recruitment to the Under 26 age range during Phase 1. Further leeway was given to recruit PWDs over 30, on the basis that people living with disabilities often undertake education later and are therefore older when they reach a similar education levels as their non-disabled peers. These changes are clearly reflected in the profile of the young people receiving training in Phase 2.

NDYEP also added a strategy in Phase 2 to support alumni trainees to access finance. Develop You Foundation (which was also implementing aquaculture training) and CAD Consult were contracted to run online entrepreneurship training for a select group of promising ex-trainees. These trainings included taking trainees through identifying a business opportunity, developing business plans and then – crucially – supporting them to make applications to the Central Bank of Nigeria, which operates a process for application for small business loans. At the time of evaluation, a large number of these applicants had been called for interview at the CBN; however the bank's decision making process had not completed so loans had not yet been awarded.

#### Coherence

*2. To what extent other interventions (particularly government policies and programs) support or undermine the NDYEP intervention including internal and external coherence (How well does the NDYEP project fit)?*

#### Finding 5: Coherence within PIND, with implementing partners, and with government

**NDYEP has continued to seek out and establish coherence with other actors in the enabling environment during Phase 2, with a focus in this Phase mainly on identifying and linking with promising government initiatives and departments. This focus has led to some important collaborations and looks set to eventually deliver more in terms of scale and uptake.**

During Phase 1, the main focus areas of the project for establishing 'fit' with the context into which it was evolving were its integration into PIND's goals, policies and project management structures; and also into the specific labour markets in each target state. The MTE reported that engagement with state actors and agencies had, on the other hand, as yet been less effective, particularly in Abia and Akwa Ibom.

During Phase 2, **NDYEP's integration into and fit with PIND's overall mission has deepened further** – reflected in the fact that PIND's Economic Development programme has three main dimensions – Access to Energy, Market Systems Development, and Youth Skills Development.<sup>14</sup> In addition, PIND's advocacy team has been engaged to support parts of the project; and PIND has recently taken on supporting the Delta State government to take on aspects of the approach through a different

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<sup>14</sup> Key Informant Interview/14/12

funding stream. In other words, PIND is continuing to maintain the project's approach after the withdrawal of Ford Foundation funding.<sup>15</sup> In addition, PIND has strengthened a partnership with an established business linkages partner for the new Entrepreneurship training in NDYEP.<sup>16</sup>

### **Implementing Partners**

As documented in the MTE report, initial Labour Market Assessments of each state in 2017 aimed to ensure fit with state level labour markets and with the needs of employers - such as for soft skills. This was followed by an approach which prioritised immersing the project components in the ecosystem, and taking an approach which intrinsically aimed to strengthen this system. As a result, NDYEP has on the whole achieved and maintained strong coherence with the wider objectives of its implementing partners – whether these are focused on expanding and improving training, or on growing as an ecosystem resource / business market player. For instance, Start Innovation Hub in Akwa Ibom was to a large extent already used an integrated training approach which included soft skills and a business/ entrepreneurship approach in their trainings, although at a smaller scale than that enabled by NDYEP.<sup>17</sup>

NDYEP has also profited from relationships with implementing partners which are increasingly well respected and established in the sector. For instance, the CEO of Aqua green International, implementing aquaculture training, is also the national treasurer of the Catfish and Allied Farmers Association. The Founder of Clintonel Innovation Centre, implementing ICT training, is an inventor with three Patents, who has been recognised by several national and international organizations including Ford Foundation (USA), Ministry of Trade and Investment (Nigeria), Re: 3D (USA), Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME).

Through the course of Phase 2, the fit of the training programmes with nationally recognised certification programmes has also increased – for example, Kiara de Luke Academy (KDA), training in construction, uses the NBTE curriculum and N-Power, and the collaboration with PIND enabled KDA to certify NDYEP trainees with NABTEB certificate.

### **Government programs and priorities**

Phase 2 has seen substantial effort and significant progress in exploring and seeking out coherence with government priorities and existing policies and plans through government engagement activities (See Finding 15). Initiatives to establish government engagement are now underway in 7 of the 9 Niger Delta states; these include a Roundtable meetings held in 2019, then again in February and June 2020; a virtual learning platform held in September 2020; and site visits for government representatives to various partner sites arranged in October 2020.<sup>18</sup>

PIND's advocacy team was also brought on board and began to profile the Ministries of Planning, Youth Empowerment, Agriculture etc. in the various Niger Delta states to arrive at more granular detail on levels of coherence in the different states. In the Stakeholder Meeting July 2020, an

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<sup>15</sup> Key Informant Interview 12/14/16/38

<sup>16</sup> Key Informant Interview/14; Focus Group Discussion 6/7

<sup>17</sup> Key Informant Interview/30; Focus Group Discussion/40

<sup>18</sup> PIND/ NDYEP – Report of Vist by Government Representatives to NDYEP Project Sites, October 2020; PIND/NDYEP - Report On The Niger Delta Youth Employment Pathways Project Regional Roundtable With Niger Delta State Governments And Other Stakeholders, August 2020; PIND/NDYEP - Lessons Learned from the Niger Delta Government Learning Forum held on September 22, 2020 in collaboration with the Lagos State Employment Trust Fund, October 2020.

objective was to actively look for a meeting point, which aspects of the model might be included in their own programmes.<sup>19</sup>

Phase 1 had seen initiatives by IPs to liaise with government training systems – for instance in E&I Masters Consortium in Rivers State which liaised with Rivers State University to implement construction training; and Cinfores which used government training premises in Port Harcourt to deliver ICT training. By Phase 2, by some accounts, these trainings had become well in line but indeed more ‘regular and consistent’ than government training programmes, at least in Rivers State.<sup>20</sup> Also in Phase 2, steps were taken to integrate with government systems in the implementation of post training support, thereby seeking coherence with key institutions. For example, a partnership was established with RIVTAF Nigeria Limited to absorb some NDYEP trainees into apprenticeships. RIVTAF is a public-private partnership in Rivers State which manages labour including apprenticeships for public construction works.<sup>21</sup>

## Effectiveness

*3. To what extent the NDYEP project achieved its expected results (Outcomes and Outputs) including differential results across states in the five main feature of the NDYEP model (which would include influencing the state governments to adopt the NDYEP model)?*

### Finding 6: Achievement of targets

**NDYEP has met or nearly met the majority of the targets set for its Phase 2 work, and it has exceeded key targets for training and linking trainees to internships. Some other targets not yet met will continue to be contributed to during the close out phase.**

As shown in Table 3, NDYEP has made notable achievements in terms of its Phase 2 targets, some of which were comfortably exceeded – including key targets for the number of young people trained, and the number of internship/apprenticeship placements opened up for post-training experience. 3180 young people were reached by training; and 2887 of these completed training with skills designed for the 4 sectors. The dropout rate was thus just 9.4%. Those completing trainees were fairly evenly spread across the States, with 980 in Abia; 803 in Akwa Ibom and 1104 in Rivers. By sector, however, there was more differentiation as shown in Figure 2 (Section 2, Project Implementation): for Phase 2, 996 young people completed Aquaculture training; 461 Construction training; 1236 ICT/renewable energy training. 194 completed the Finished Leather training, which was new in Phase 2 and had a delayed start due to the Covid-19 related lockdown.

	Indicator	Milestone for the period	Cumulative to date	RAG Rating
1.	# of youths linked to employment and income-earning opportunities or who start an enterprise after completion of training	1500	1288	Likely to be met when loan application process complete.

<sup>19</sup> Key Informant Interview 16; PIND/NDYEP - Report On The Niger Delta Youth Employment Pathways Project Regional Roundtable With Niger Delta State Governments And Other Stakeholders, August 2020;

<sup>20</sup> Key Informant Interview /10. This is consistent with information from trainees which suggests they are a mixture of individuals who have accessed training before and who have never accessed training (2 x case study phase 2; 1 case study phase 1; 1 case study phase 2 had done photography training previously but “when I get home, I find out that I cannot practice it”). One aquaculture trainee was drawn to the training because he had come across other trainings which he thought might driving him away from the existing farming approaches he was already practicing (Focus Group Discussion 46).

<sup>21</sup> Key Informant Interview 1/2



2.	# of research outputs adopted by state and non-state actors	2	1	
3.	Adoption of PIND's model for youth job readiness and workforce development	2	2	
4.	# of job-to-job internship, apprenticeship placements	326	671	exceeded
5.	# of private-sector partnerships established to support youth employment	5	2	
6.	# of young women & men (aged 16 – 30 years) accessing PIND facilitated learning opportunities	3,000	3180 enrolled	exceeded
7.	# of youths with applicable skills for employment in selected sectors	2,172	2887 completed	exceeded
8.	# of published analysis illustrating demonstrable evidence of what works and what does not for young employment creation and entrepreneurship development	6	4 + 1 underway + video case studies	Will be met
9.	# of research reports commissioned, published and disseminated	3	1	Will be met

Overall, across Phases 1 and 2, 4817 young people were reached; 4355 completed training; and 2798, or 64.2% of those completing, were placed in either employment, internships or supported into self-employment, as shown in Table 4.<sup>22</sup>

Table 3 also shows that four of the nine Phase 2 targets were, at the time of evaluation, only partially met. Three of these are however likely to be met or exceeded (indicators #1, #8, #9) by the end of the close-out period, although with some adaptation: two of the envisaged case studies for #8 are replaced by a series of four video case studies and 12 video testimonials for use in the ongoing advocacy effort to support other Niger Delta states to adopt (parts of) the approach.

For indicator #1, # of youths linked to employment and income-earning opportunities or who start an enterprise after completion of training, there is ongoing work which is expected to come to fruition during the close out period. 512 alumni trainees have completed Entrepreneurship training; most of these have been supported to submit loan applications with business plans to the Central Bank of Nigeria; and several have been called for interview during the evaluation period. Those who are allocated loans as a result of this process will then add to the total number of youths linked to income earning opportunities counted under monitoring for indicator #1. A further 60 trainees selected from among those entering a Business Plan Challenge currently being implemented by PIND will also be supported into income-earning opportunities (see Finding 11).

**Table 4: NDYEP training and post training results, Phases 1 and 2**

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Total
<b>Trainees Enrolled</b>	1637	3180	4817
<b>Trainees completing training</b>	1468	2887	4355
<b>Trainees placed in waged employment</b>	361	356	717
<b>Trainees supported into start-up enterprises</b>	245	932	1177
<b>Trainees placed in apprenticeships or internships</b>	233	671	904

*4. What are the factors (internal and external to PIND) that contributed the most to the attainment of the NDYEP project and results?*

<sup>22</sup> Data from NDYEP results database

### Finding 7: Strengthening the sector ecosystems

**The emphasis in the NDYEP approach on strengthening the sector ecosystems, especially by supporting implementing partners, has contributed strongly to the attainment of project results. IPs have experienced strengthened organisational structures, improved training facilities, strengthened integrated curricula, expanded reach, and strengthened networks, branding and visibility. All these are contributing to the sector ecosystems.**

Strengthening implementing partner organisations through the instrument of sub grants has been a key building block of effectiveness. Implementing partners were carefully selected on the basis of experience and potential for training, as well as their positioning in the sector ecosystem and business orientation. This approach has facilitated a number of elements, each of which has supported progress towards objectives including:

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*Partnering with PIND has helped scale up our programmes and beyond the city of Uyo into Oron and Eket and PWDs which we have never worked with before (KII ICT)*

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- The development of **trainings which reflected a business approach and outlook**, and which were rooted in the practical considerations of running businesses in the four sectors. This has strengthened the competency basis of the trainings. Survey results confirm that trainees perceive themselves to have benefitted from all main dimensions of this competency focus (soft skills, business skills, practical skills and theoretical skills – see Figure 4 and Finding 8 below).
- Implementing partners were able to strengthen their capacity both as trainers and as employers, variously through:
  - Training expansion into higher numerical capacity and new geographical areas, as a result of being challenged to meet NDYEP training targets, especially in the context of lockdown – for example, Start Innovation Hub in Akwa Ibom previously worked only in Uyo, but in Phase 2 expanded into training sites in Oron and Eket, increasing their completing trainees from a target of 290 to 438 and from 155 completing trainees in Phase 1.
  - The project has enabled the procurement of key equipment used for training for some IPs, and sometimes simply stimulated IPs to invest in equipment themselves. For example, equipment purchased for the Finished Leather training for the Advanced Engineering Centre can be used for future training and to support the business. Expanded business opportunities have also enabled the expansion of the organisation’s employees, including from the NDYEP trainee pool.
  - Greater visibility and reputation via involvement in NDYEP, which has opened up expanded training opportunities for some IPs.<sup>23</sup>
- For some IPs, involvement in NDYEP had required and enabled strengthened organisational structures, policies and management systems.<sup>24</sup>
- These contribute to facilitating strengthened positioning in the ecosystem for IPs, bolstered by requirements embedded in the project to develop and expand relationships and networks. IPs needed to build and draw on networks across the sector to establish placement

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<sup>23</sup> Key Informant Interview/23/19

<sup>24</sup> Key Informant Interview/37

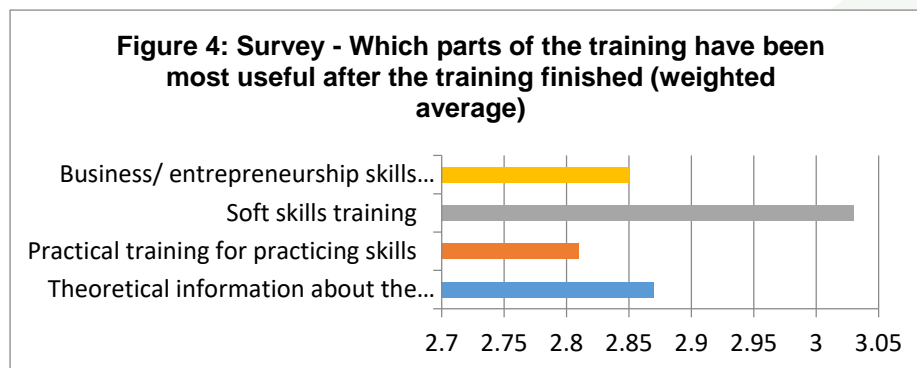
opportunities for IPs; other relationships created through the project have strengthened the reputation of IPS and connections across the ecosystem. For example, a partnership has been established between the Advanced Engineering Centre (AEC) with the Leather Product Manufacturers Association of Abia State (LEPMAS), which provided monitoring for AEC as well as supervising internships and arranging mentorship placement.<sup>25</sup>

### Finding 8: The competency focus

**The competency focus of the NDYEP model has spawned training programmes integrating several relevant dimensions; this integrated approach has supported retention and completion of trainees, the acquisition of skills to develop further in their next positions, and a widespread confident outlook. The soft skills dimensions of the training is particularly valued by trainees, who also value the support they derive from being in contact with young people in a similar position.**

An essential factor supporting results has been the focus on practice-oriented training integrating theoretical skills with practical application and with both soft skills and business orientation. Survey results clearly demonstrate trainee endorsement of this approach, with 74% of 518 trainees asserting that the theoretical part of the training ‘mostly met’ ‘fully met’ or ‘exceeded’ expectations; 69.6% for the practical part; 75.5% for soft skills and 70.7% for business/entrepreneurship training.

While all dimensions of the training are positively assessed by trainees responding to the survey, Figure 4 shows that soft skills in particular are valued for their usefulness post-training, with a significantly higher weighted average than the other dimensions. This is strongly backed up by qualitative data in which soft skills are frequently mentioned as a major benefit of the training. Figure 5 also shows that ‘Learning how to conduct myself well so that I would be able to do a job well’ was the second most frequently cited benefit of the training by survey respondents.

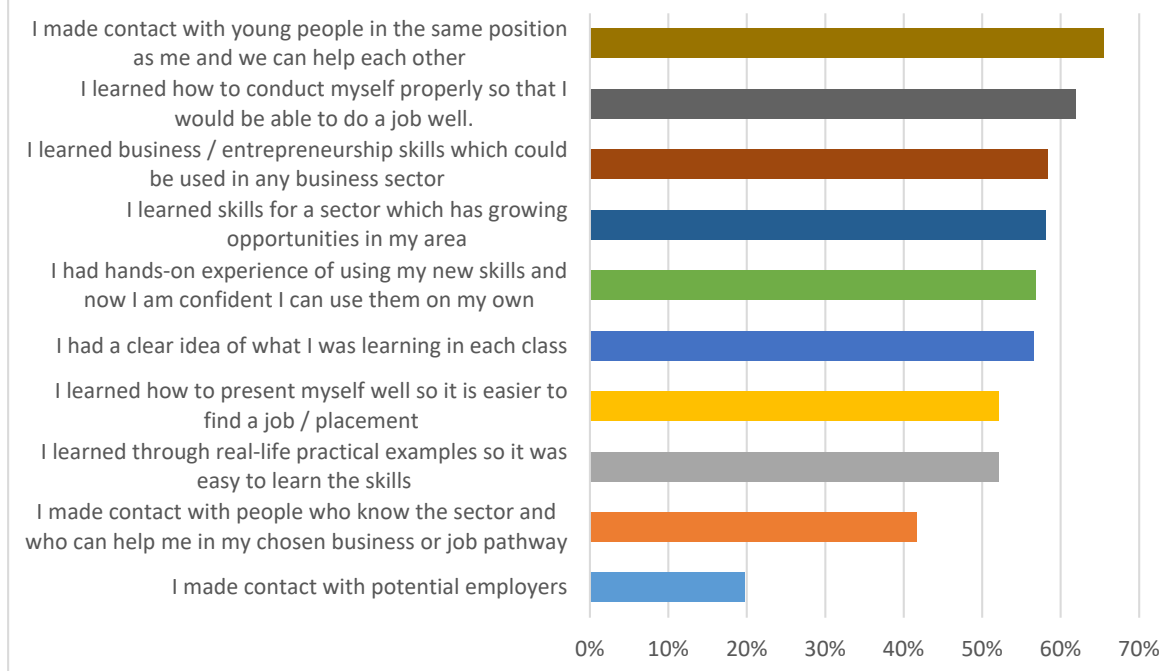


Trainees also clearly found these skills relevant, with 62.4% of respondents saying they had used these theoretical skills ‘fairly’ or ‘very’ often; 59.3% for the practical part; 66.4% for the soft skills part; and 58.2% for the

business/entrepreneurship part. Trainees clearly endorse a series of benefits from the training (See Figure 5), with over 50% endorsing all benefits except making contact with employers and others who know the sector; and in particular, 58% agreeing they had learned skills for a sector with growing opportunities. In particular, however, 65.4% of trainees feel mutual benefit is enabled from being in contact with young people in a similar position.

<sup>25</sup> Participant Observation/31

**Figure 5: How trainees benefited from the training**



A further dimension of establishing a competency focus has been efforts to align NDYEP trainings with nationally and internationally accredited curricula. This was a particular focus of the Construction sector trainings, in which all IPs were required to train in line with the national skills qualification framework set by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and present trainees for exams organised by its examining body NABTEB. In order to facilitate this, a workshop for construction IP trainers and a representative from National Institute of Builders (NIOB) was organised in early 2020 to design standardized construction skills curricula for 6 trade areas (painting, carpentry, plumbing, masonry, electrical, and welding).

Although progress in the accreditation process was disrupted during 2020 by Covid-19 and responses to it, one IP, Kiara de Luke academy succeeded in achieving recognition as an accredited exam centre; and another, E&I, had some of its trainers trained as competency assessors.

#### Finding 9: Modelling pathways to employment

**The programme has successfully modelled pathways to employment and self-employment for a good proportion of trainees. Pathways to employment include direct routes to employment, as well as via internships / apprenticeships. Pathways to self-employment have often (but not always) included a support system. There is evidence that support for continued learning is beneficial in the long term through any of these pathways.**

Project data (Table 4) shows that 64.2% of completing trainees were placed in positions on the onward pathway. The survey broadly endorses this: of 518 survey respondents, making up 18% of completing trainees, 52.4% (249) are currently working either as an employee, an intern, or in their own individual or group business. 36.4% (173) of respondents are placed in the sector in which they trained, and a further 16% (76) in a different sector. Of note about these positions is that the majority of this group state that they are continuing to **get support**, and **continuing to learn** through these positions:

- Of the 37 intern respondents, 56.8% state that they are getting practical training in new areas; 48.7% are getting theory training alongside this practical work, and 40.5% are getting help from seniors to solve problems and carry out responsibilities
- Of 86 employee respondents, these proportions are 34.9%; 23.3% and 47.7% respectively, and only 11.6% said they are not learning anything new because they already know the skills needed for the role.
- Of 118 self-employed respondents, only 5.8% said they were not learning anything new because they already had the skills needed for the role. Many are in positions in which they can access some support in their new ventures. Table 5 shows the types of support received by these respondents – with advice on market linkages being most commonly available. However, not all self-employed respondents are accessing any support.

<b>Full business incubation</b>	10.74%
<b>Advice and contacts on market linkages</b>	35.54%
<b>Help with business planning</b>	33.06%
<b>Help with seeking out and applying for finance</b>	29.75%
<b>Preferential rates for some business inputs</b>	9.09%
<b>Sharing the work of running the business with my group</b>	14.05%
<b>None of the above</b>	33.06%

#### Finding 10: A learning culture

**This continued learning culture, and the documentation of learning, has also been important to implementing partners; NDYEP managers, and to the process of disseminating and upscaling the approach.**

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*What I love most about the program is the learning forum where we NDYEP implementing partners always come together to learn and share from each other. I got to know PIND through their research in 2017 and the relationship has been great. On the learning forum, when some people were having challenges with getting 40% of women and PWDs, in the learning forum we were called out to share what we did to get our 40% and it worked for others. (KII ICT)*

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NDYEP set out to build models of youth pathways to employment and enterprise, and as such it has had a consistent emphasis on working on an evidence basis and on articulating and documenting learning. For implementing partners, this has been an important factor in their ability to adopt an adaptive management approach to training, applying learning as it was generated. Learning and documentation opportunities, and occasions for IPs to collaborate with each other, have been built into the process. IPs took part in learning forum opportunities in both Phase 1 and Phase 2, benefiting from sharing each other's experience, methods and good practice. While these forums have so far been facilitated by NDYEP, the IPs have built relationships and

networks through them which will likely outlast the project: for example, DFAC contracted Start Hub for support with developing an Aquaculture services web platform.<sup>26</sup>

As suggested in the MTE, and reiterated in data for this final evaluation (See Finding 19), this learning culture has been particularly important to bolster IP's efforts to include PWDs and women in their trainings.

*5. What are the factors (internal and external to PIND) that hindered the most the attainment of the NDYEP project and results?*

#### Finding 11: Factors hindering results

**Although targets have mostly been achieved, there have been a number of challenges for progressing trainees along the employment pathways and in upscaling the approach. These include meeting a widespread need for business finance for start-ups; the need for more learning in the context or relatively short trainings; difficulties faced by trainers; and challenges in establishing full take up of the approach by state governments.**

Despite considerable achievements, project data reveals that 35.8% of completing trainees have not found placements or employment. Survey results shown in figure 3 (See Finding 2) suggest that this proportion is higher immediately after training (51.7% of respondents), but had dropped to an average of 25.7% at the time of the survey, with highest levels in the aquaculture sector. While the falling numbers of unemployed generally is likely to reflect the time needed following training to secure jobs, internships and to set up small businesses, it is clear that a number of trained people have not yet secured positions. Aside from the broad challenges of an uncertain economy, the below factors constituted some reasons for this.

The survey reveals a number of areas in which trainees perceive shortcomings, or dimensions which could be improved. These suggest areas that have hindered the maximum achievement of project results, especially in the transitions from training into sustainable livelihoods.

**1. Trainee finance:** Trainees clearly feel hindered in their progression from training to sustainable businesses or jobs by the lack of financial back up (stipend or loan) during, but more commonly following the training. Trainee survey respondents overwhelmingly cite finance or equipment – usually following the training, i.e. as a 'start up' input, as the factor that would have improved the training (76 of 458 written responses); 61% (142 of 231 responses) from trainees currently unemployed or working in a different sector). Note that the higher levels of sustained unemployment in aquaculture likely reflect that entrepreneurship is the most common pathway here, and therefore there is a proportionately greater need for start-up capital.

In post-training positions, the same issue is evident: interns also clearly state financial support as the input needed to help them secure a position or run a profitable business in the sector (22 of 36 intern responses); as well as the biggest challenge ahead (16 of 35 intern responses). Even employees earning a wage see finance as the biggest challenge ahead (29 of 78 responses). For trainees who have moved into self-employment/ start-ups the proportion is even bigger at 89 of 118 respondents, or 75%.<sup>27</sup> While in Phase 2 the programme put in place a separate entrepreneurship training for some trainees, which included support for making loan applications, the high levels of citation of finance as a need suggests a more widespread support facility would be relevant, and including for at least some trainees currently in internships or employment. In its closing months, NDYEP is testing a new Business Challenge initiative which aims to bolster this area of support and stimulus. This has set up a competitive process to select 60 start-ups, the majority from the Aquaculture sector, for grant funding

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<sup>26</sup> Mid-Term Evaluation

<sup>27</sup> Survey analysis, open questions

on the basis of business plans developed by alumni trainees. Trainees are required to develop business plans and submit applications to enter this competition, and shortlisted candidates will be invited to pitch their business ideas. At the time of finalizing this evaluation process, around 250 applications had been received and were being reviewed.

**2. Slow credit applications:** NDYEP made explicit efforts to address the issue of lack of post training finance for trainees during Phase 2 of the project, notably by engaging two IP with experience in facilitating market linkages, Develop You Foundation and CAD Consulting, to deliver an online entrepreneurship training to a select group of trainee alumni. In the latter part of Phase 2, 512 trainees received this training, among whom 15 were PWDs,<sup>28</sup> and were supported through it to develop business plans and then submit a loan application to the Central Bank of Nigeria. Currently, while a number of trainees have been called for interviews at the Bank, loans/credit has not yet been allocated. Interview respondents remark that the length of time needed to process loan applications has been an unexpected impediment to the trainee’s onward journeys (KII 14; FGD 6 and 7). The Business Plan Challenge initiative described above was introduced partly to offset the slow progress of this fund application process.<sup>29</sup>

**3. Training may be too short in construction and ICT:** Analysis for the MTE found that a good deal of effort had been put into organising support for some groups of trainees post-training, and that this period was important for the journey to sustainable livelihoods for a few reasons, including that learning could be extended and deepened through these opportunities. Qualitative data for this evaluation process provides similar indication that important elements post training include mentorship, a trainer continuing to be available to answer questions, and internships with the purpose of extending learning.



The clear implication is that learning through the training while effective and valued (Finding 8) and effective in causing long term impacts (Finding 12) is incomplete at the end of the training. This is strongly triangulated by survey responses. Here, a large proportion of trainees also feel that the training was not long enough (43% of 518 responses), implying that if it was longer, the learning would have been more secure (See Figure 6). This opinion was even higher specifically for ICT trainees, of whom 55% of respondents said the training was too short. Aquaculture trainees, on the other hand,

mostly did not think the training was too short (15%).

<sup>28</sup> Personal communication, EI

<sup>29</sup> NDYEP Business Plan Challenge V3

This issue – and therefore most probably the survey responses on this – has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, both because some trainings were somewhat abridged to adjust to the lockdown related delays, even while covering the same curriculum. In addition, not all of the internships – put in place specifically to address support post –training continuing learning – were able to go ahead on the planned timescales. Internships supplied by Rivtaf, for example, were planned as 6 months starting in March 2020, but in the event started in September 2020 for a much shorter duration. These responses are also likely influenced by the common experience during learning processes that deeper understanding opens up deeper awareness of the scope and further depth available but not yet reached.

#### 4. Other difficulties faced by trainees

*Equipment:* Trainees cite a number of other challenges they faced both during and after the training. During the training, equipment needed for practical work was sometimes a challenge: as Figure 6 shows, 36% of 518 respondents cited this as a difficulty, rising to 41% for ICT trainees and 45% for construction trainees.

This issue extends into post-training situations, with 8% of 231 respondents currently unemployed or working in a different sector citing a laptop as what they need in order to run a profitable business or get a good job, and a further 9% citing other kinds of equipment (in addition to the 61% citing finance in general). Those currently running start-ups also see these as most necessary (finance 37%; equipment 9%) and their biggest challenges (finance 66%; materials 14%) (See analysis in Annex 7)

*Certification and networks:* A small number of trainees cite delays in certification as a difficulty (12); A number, especially those currently unemployed, feel that more support should have been given to make networks and link trainees with employers or internships (53 of 458 general trainees; 41 or 18% of currently unemployed). Both of these were also issues exacerbated by the pandemic, as some certification exams were postponed or suspended; and links to internships and employment were harder to establish in the context of the economic uncertainty.

### Impact

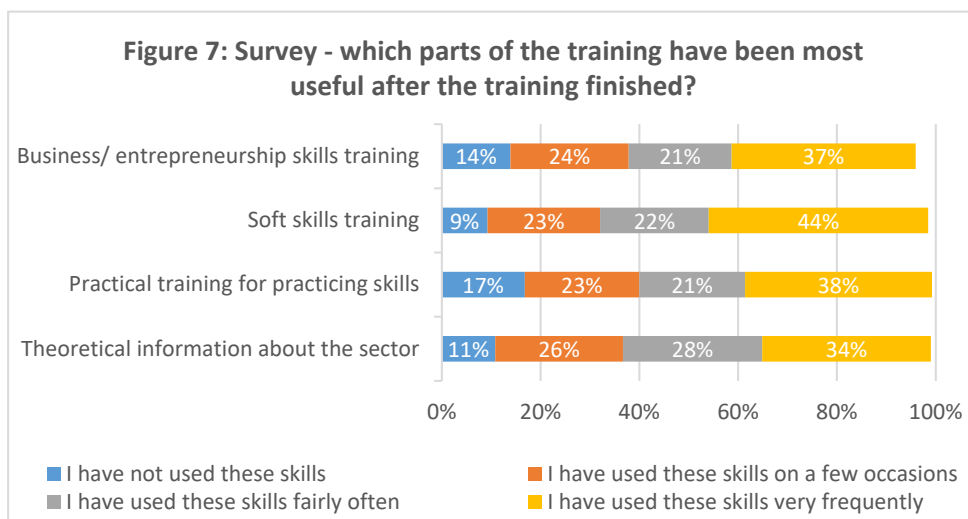
7. To what extent the NDYEP has achieved expected results related to results defined in the Business Plan and if NDYEP has generated significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects at community/sector and state level?

8. What long term transformative change or difference did the project make on communities/sectors, institutions (employers, government/policy makers and TVET/trainers) and youth?

#### Finding 12: Impact on trainees

**There is evidence that the project has achieved transformative and long term impacts at level of individual trainees in terms of use of skills learned; current income; and high levels of confidence in their future prospects.**





There is strong survey evidence that the training and subsequent support has had a long term, transformational impact on a good proportion of trainees, although this does not constitute all trainees. These impacts have

occurred despite some consensus that the trainings in Construction and ICT would be better if they were longer.

Figure 7 shows that between 59% and 66% of respondents have used each category of skills ‘fairly frequently’ or ‘very frequently’ since the training; thus for this group, the outcome of the training has gone beyond skills acquisition to skills use. Only on average 13% of respondents had not used the skills at all (these are likely to include some of the 136 respondents currently working or self-employed in a different sector, or returned to studying).

In addition, survey data also show that the training has transformed a significant proportion of unemployed young people into income earners. More than 55% of 475 respondents made some level of income in the last month (See Figure 8), and a small but important minority made more than 65,000 Naira. There is some variation across the sectors in this: Aquaculture

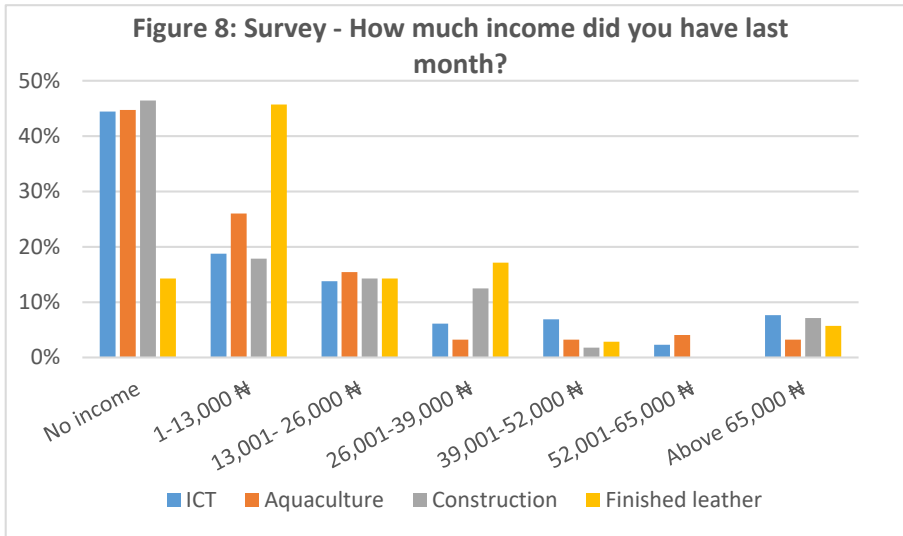
*“I so much thank PIND so far for their wonderful deed towards my life and also upgrading me to another level.”  
(KII – Intern (Construction))*

trainees were more likely to be making lower levels of income, but no more likely than construction or ICT trainees to be making no income. Finished Leather trainees were most likely to be making some income.

*I was with my parents after my secondary school, my father died so we had no other support apart from my mum. I was doing other minor jobs – farming for someone or called to dig. My friend here ... told me about the training. After the training, I went out to Umuoba to learn more, after then I opened my own shop. (KII Phase 1 intern – Construction)*

Employees are also more likely to be earning more than the self-employed or interns: of 518 survey respondents, 37 are currently in internships; 86 are currently employed; and 121 are running their own businesses either in groups or individually: together these make up 47% of respondents.

Those who are employed had a notably higher income last month than others, with over 50% making more than 26000 N and 23% making more than 65000 N. Of the 41 survey respondents earning more than 52000 Naira in the last month, 25 (61%) were employees and 13 were self-employed. 26 (63%) of them were ICT trainees.



There is also evidence of impact in terms of business commitment among trainees: For self-employed survey respondents, while income levels are somewhat lower than for the employed, the priority is reinvesting in the business: while less than 5% make no profit most months, nearly 40% reinvest all profit in the business, while the remaining 55% save

something over 2000 or over 5000 Naira most months.



Perhaps most striking is the confidence that trainee respondents have that they will succeed in the future, whatever their current status. As shown in Figure 9, on a scale of 1 to 10, the average level of confidence that they will succeed later, for all types of post-training position,

including unemployment, is over 7.5, rising to 8.8 out of 10 on average for those currently running their own businesses. This confidence suggests high levels of perception that the skills acquired were relevant and of value.

**Finding 13: Impact on ecosystems:**

**Although most sectors experience some vulnerabilities to economic shocks and symptoms of 'shallowness', the project has contributed to deep changes in some dimensions. These include more established key organisations several of which are likely to continue training tailored to their local sector markets; and a better local labour supply and market.**

For some implementing partners, the strengthening offered by the project has shifted them into commanding positions in the sector ecosystem – as discussed also in Finding 7. Apart from the more immediate issue of growth and reach, some IPs feel that the more transformational issue of visibility and branding has also been strengthened through the project: *“Before we started working with NDYEP, no one knew who we were. Right now, the organisation has become a national brand when it comes to hardware in Nigeria, in fact, we are the leader of hardware hub spaces.”* (KII) In combination, these mean that some IPs are in strong positions to continue training using the NDYEP principles, and potentially on a commercial basis. For example, CIC has become an authorised Autodesk implementing partner, enabling trainees to get international certification for CAD and CAM – clearly enhancing their competitiveness. CIC has also seen trainees win start-up funds from Rockefeller

Foundation and from All-On, a company founded by Shell. These successes also enhance competitiveness. Ibom Integrated Farms has developed a training department from scratch over the course of the project, such that they have become ‘a very strong force in training in aquaculture’.<sup>30</sup> Others also feel their experience in including PWDs and women in their programs puts them in a good position to compete for future funds for training.<sup>31</sup>

The availability of trained labour in specialist sectors has also made labour supply easier in some sectors: ICT organisations, for example, have stated that they no longer have to seek skills from beyond their state. The survey also suggests that most employed and self-employed trainees are finding opportunities locally within the three focus states of the project: of 518 respondents, only 50 (9.6%) are currently living in states other than Rivers, Abia and Akwa Ibom. Of the 86 employee respondents, 15 are currently living outside these states.

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*This program has helped us produce more technical talent in the Niger Delta and made hiring of talent accessible and easier and so most people look within now and not outside the Niger Delta’ KII ICT*

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#### Finding 14: Towards impact for upscaling through state governments

**Establishing engagement with State governments to identify promising collaboration to ensure scale up and replication of the model has contributed to tangible successes and future direction, although there is still work to do to secure this full dimension of impact.**

Phase 2 saw a concerted focus in the project on engaging with government stakeholders in all three states and at different levels. PIND’s advocacy team was brought into the project to support this process. Outreach and collaboration took place at the level of project strategy and events, as well as through individual activities and collaborations with IPs. Government stakeholder meetings brought government representatives from a number of different Ministries together with IPs for approach demonstration and discussion, in two major sessions in February 2020 and again in June 2020 to identify areas of overlap. These were perceived to be particularly promising in Cross River, Edo and Delta states. In October, a field visit was organised for government representatives to visit implementing partner projects and to see the approach in action.

IPs have also hosted government stakeholders at an individual level in all states and sectors. While in many cases, engagement has been difficult to sustain or convert into tangible action and several IPs have hosted visits that they do not perceive significant consequences of,<sup>32</sup> there are also multiple examples of small collaborations which have contributed to an increasingly enabling environment for deeper potential collaborations. Examples include concessions / discounts granted by government officials to Finished Leather trainees wishing to register their own businesses;<sup>33</sup> alliances with specific government agencies, such as the Common Facility Centre in Aba, a garments and leather training centre, and the association sector LEPMAS (a public-private partnership)<sup>34</sup>, and plans to send interns to a government institution in the shoe industry.<sup>35</sup>

Achievements have in some cases been made in collaborating with state agencies for the provision of internships and employment for NDYEP trainees. Kiara de Luke Academy, for example has sent over

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<sup>30</sup> FGD 49

<sup>31</sup> KII 30

<sup>32</sup> Focus Group Discussion/49

<sup>33</sup> Participant Observation/36

<sup>34</sup> Key Informant Interview/37

<sup>35</sup> Participant Observation/36

30 trainees for employment at the Abia State Civil Service Commission.<sup>36</sup> In other ways, IP staff have been drawn into advisory roles for government schemes – such as Aqua Green, which sits of a committee with the Ministry of Employment Generation in Rivers State to design youth training.

Challenges encountered to achieving sustained government engagement include that:

- It is necessary to bring both political and administrative government goodwill on board. PIND’s advocacy team notes that it is necessary to engage with both politicians and civil servants at the outset, and in different ways which speak to their different types of accountability (political drivers and policy effectiveness). Political positions are also subject to change, such that efforts to engage individuals may need to be repeated when they are replaced: this is particularly the case with high level political positions such as the Commissioner.
- An expectation of funds on the part of the government for project collaborations is commonplace.<sup>37</sup> This challenge is made more acute in the absence of an overarching Youth Policy, which would necessitate some budget allocation for implementation.<sup>38</sup> Collaborating on developing or reviewing youth policy can offer a way forward which can bring different government actors and can be a focus for allocating resources to support market linked training.

Although progress in establishing government uptake has perhaps not met all expectations, Phase two has seen some scattered but significant successes, and the foundations of further work in other states: The Akwa Ibom government initiative **Ibom 3000**, which plans to train 3000 young people during 2021, is modelled on the programme and uses expertise from Start Hub staff as consultants on the programme.<sup>39</sup> Akwa Ibom State government’s My Entrepreneurship Goals Program (MEGP) has also included a 40% quota for women in their programme after learning of NDYEP’s approach to this issue.<sup>40</sup> It is said to be ‘Very likely’ that the government will adopt the approach further, beyond the Ibom 3000 programme.<sup>41</sup> There are also examples of a deep, policy level engagement in some cases: in Rivers state, a Stakeholder Working group was set up by the Ministry to consider employment generation pathways, following the presentation of the NDYEP model at the State’s employment summit organized by PHCCIMA and the Ministry of Employment. While action has stalled in this group because of the change in leadership at the Ministry, considerable progress was made.

Beyond the three implementing States, a strong collaboration has developed in the last months of the project with Delta State, where some aspects of the approach were already being implemented, and the government want to adapt some other aspects, in particular the linkages to employment and the collaborations with the private sector, and a strengthened soft skills component to the graduate employment enhancement programme of the Job Creation Agency.<sup>42</sup> Following the 2019 Roundtable with private sector stakeholders, PIND collaborated with Edo state to develop the technical capacities of 200 young people in solar installations which may be further developed. Ondo state has also expressed interest in carrying out the Labour Market Assessment which would form the evidence basis for selecting sector focus.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Focus Group Discussion/42/44

<sup>37</sup> Key Informant Interview/10/14

<sup>38</sup> Key Informant Interview/16/38

<sup>39</sup> Key Informant Interview/30

<sup>40</sup> Key Informant Interview/17

<sup>41</sup> Key Informant Interview/17

<sup>42</sup> Key Informant Interview 1/2/38

<sup>43</sup> KII 38; NDYEP ‘Government engagement for Adoption of NDYPE Model and Framework v4’ document.

## Efficiency

*6. How far has the sub-granting model been an efficient approach to achieving results, and to sustainability?*

### Finding 15: The sub-granting model

**The project's sub-granting model allowed PIND to select experienced organizations in the sectors and states for project implementation while it focused on its role as an enabler. This model helped partner organisations to build good structures, grow and contribute to the development of the ecosystem.**

The sub-granting approach of the NDYEP had three principle benefits. First, it supported reach, allowing traction on project across three states; while it enabled PIND to focus on its facilitation role. Second, it provided the framework in which PIND could support implementing partners, building confidence and capacity, and contributing to strengthening the ecosystem (See also Finding 7). Third, as organisations embedded in the ecosystem, it allowed depth and authenticity to the trainings.

Many of the partner organizations, on their own, would not have been able to leverage such resources to grow their organizations. The sub-granting model provided the needed funds, and grant requirements helped the partners to institute good structures, practices and processes. Many partners now have good organizational structures and practices; many for the first time have learnt to keep accounting books, pay tax and get tax clearance certificates.<sup>44</sup> This organizational strengthening, two years of continuous experience in providing services, alongside growth and increased visibility, has enabled some of them to meet requirements to seek and get grants from other grant-making organizations.<sup>45 46</sup>

In addition to building the capacity of implementing organization, the sub-granting model and continuous engagement, enabled the partners to strengthen the ecosystem, ensured project monitoring and feedback process. The model enabled the partner organizations to build a cordial relationship with PIND and learnt how to relate with donors.<sup>47</sup>

The model also enabled reach: it would have been difficult for PIND to implement by itself across those three states, particularly Akwa Ibom and Abia where it does not have a presence, hence this arrangement was instrumental in enabling the project to access the required number of trainees. It also enabled depth; allowing PIND to leverage the experience and embeddedness of partners in the different sectors. This has been central to the development of appropriate approaches for the training for each sector; while also allowing the training and some trainees to make sector relevant connections, undertake 'real' work tasks, and experience market linkages and other parts of the value chain: 52.1% of survey respondents, for example, noted that they had learned through real-life practical examples, making skills easy to learn.

The model experienced some challenges as late fund disbursements at times **delayed project kick-off for some partners, especially in Phase 1**. Some partners were able to source funds on their own, however, some could not.<sup>48</sup>

## Sustainability

*9. To what extent are the net benefits of interventions likely to continue after PIND/Ford Foundation has stopped? How likely are the benefits (including resilience to risk) to last and under which conditions?*

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<sup>44</sup> FGD Session 2B, FGD 37

<sup>45</sup> KII 19, 30

<sup>46</sup> KII 23

<sup>47</sup> KII 19, 23

<sup>48</sup> FGD Session 2B

### Finding 16: Sustainability in implementing partner organisations

**Most partners are committed to core aspects of the NDYEP training approach, including an integrated curriculum and a competencies basis: these are likely to be sustained in future trainings. Several are also in strong positions to continue training on a commercial basis. There is also commitment to the approach to inclusion which has been internalised in some cases; but some partners will struggle to reach marginalised young people who cannot afford to pay, when it becomes necessary to charge for training.**

In general, the project provides a best practice for youth employment schemes. Sustainability of this best practice depends on the ability of IPs to continue training in this form, and expansion reinforcing long-term sustainability is premised on its adoption by government, and continuous engagement of government by the implementing partners and PIND/NDYEP team.

All IP organisations believe the competency approach has produced more competent trainees with the right orientation to work. Going forward, most intend to structure their programs using the NDYEP approach; incorporating soft skills and business skills in their training curricula, provision of post-training support and mentoring, and other strategies such as pre-ordering the products of trainees in supported start-ups to facilitate business take-off.<sup>49</sup> As stated in Finding 13, some organisations are in very strong positions to continue training on a commercial basis after the close of the project, or by attracting funding from other sources, and most plan to do so.

There is also a strong commitment among some partners to continue working with an inclusion approach, especially regarding supporting women into male-dominated sectors and continuing to work with PWDs. However, several partners will struggle to put this commitment into action after the close of the project, insofar as it requires them to subsidize or provide free training. In a context of paid training, the opportunity will become less accessible to young people across types of marginalization, and perhaps particularly for rural people, the less educated, women entering sectors with risks to their success, and PWDs.

### Finding 17: Sustainability through government uptake and government collaboration with IPs.

**There are encouraging signs of state government interest in the approach and some good examples of concrete action. Collaborations between governments and implementing partners also demonstrate a clear pathway to sustainability. These are promising, but deeper government engagement in order to achieve youth policy formulation and allocation of budget for youth development programmes will make a more secure foundation for sustainability.**

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*'The joy of seeing women in tech repairs was fulfilling as it is a male dominated sector .... This is something we will sustain in our organization after the NDYEP programme. .... Right now, there is no team now in our organization that doesn't have a woman, and female-led teams now are emerging. We will look out for business opportunities, partnerships and grants that have a special interest on women and we can apply for that' ICT implementing partner*

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<sup>49</sup> PO 31, KII 19, 23, FGD 37, Session 4. For example, Advanced Engineering Centre supports trainees by pre-ordering some of the start up groups' finished leather products.

As documented in Finding 14, there are some good examples of adoption of (parts of) the approach by State government in its training programs.<sup>50</sup> For example, Ibom 3000, a youth capacity building and empowerment programme of the Akwa Ibom State government is modelled after the NDYEP. Start Innovation Hub has been engaged as a training consultant on the project.

The results of the program have led to visibility and positioned some of the implementing partners to provide service to government. Some partners have been engaged by the government at the national and sub-national levels to train youth, or as consultants to the government. For example, Kiara De Luke Academy is involved in training some N-Power students (Federal government vocational training and apprenticeship program), Start Innovation Hub has been engaged by the government of Akwa Ibom State to train on the Ibom 3000 program and Cinfores has an ongoing agreement with government; the organization has been involved with ICT training with the government in Rivers State.

The PIND/NDYEP team has also carried out sustained engagement with the government of seven states in the Niger Delta region during Phase 2. PIND has also engaged in ongoing work to develop long term development plans in Abia and Edo States in which the NDYEP approach to youth employment is embedded. However, more is required to ensure action, and bringing dispersed policies together under a youth policy umbrella would greatly facilitate the allocation of government budgets to embedding and implementation of the approach. The provision of technical support to the government, now that the model is evidenced, will likely help to build capacity, allow for the integration of the NDYEP approach into States TVET education and youth employment programs.

## Equity and Gender Equality

*10. To what extent the NDYEP project addressed inequalities in youth employment, incorporated gender equality and social inclusion and the empowerment of women and persons with disabilities into the design, implementation and results achieved?*

### Finding 18: PWDs and women

**Targets for inclusion of women and of persons with disabilities in training were overall broadly met, but these achievements were not made uniformly across the sectors, and the construction sector has been particularly inaccessible to both groups. Clearer strategies and a more coordinated approach to these issues may be required where gender labour market segregation is particularly intractable, or where access for PWDs is perceived to be particularly complex.**

At the time of the MTE, the 40% targets for a combination of women and PWDs were met except for in the Construction sector (21.9%). For Aquaculture, these targets were exceeded. It was noted at this point that one specialist PWD organisation (Keeping it Real) accounted for most of the PWDs in this total however, raising the question of how far other organisations had responded to inclusion issues.<sup>51</sup>

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*There was a time in our office we did not have women but now we have females in all teams. We also created adverts targeting women online on Facebook where males will not see the adverts. We also first selected the women we wanted before we balanced up with the men. (KII – IP (ICT))*

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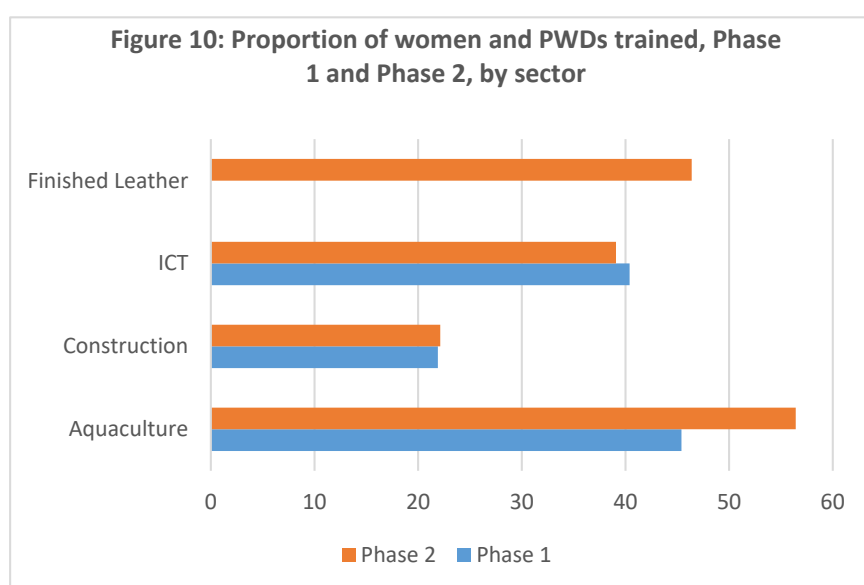
<sup>50</sup> KII 30

<sup>51</sup> See data as reported in the MTE:

For phase 2 (as shown in Table 6 and Figure 10), Aquaculture increased this proportion even further from a combined 45.4% to 56.4%, but the construction sector did not significantly change. For ICT the proportion slightly reduced – although almost met the 40% target in both phases. Overall, targets fell a little short in Phase 1 at 36% and were met in Phase 2 at 42%.

**Table 6: Phase 2 Trainees - equity profile**

	Total	Male	Female	% Female	PWD	%PWD	PWD+ Women %
<b>Aquaculture</b>	996	547	449	45.08%	113	11.35%	56.43%
<b>Construction</b>	461	366	95	20.61%	7	1.52%	22.13%
<b>ICT</b>	1236	791	445	36.00%	38	3.07%	39.08%
<b>Finished Leather</b>	194	106	88	45.36%	2	1.03%	46.39%
<b>Overall</b>	2887	1810	1077	37.3%	160	5.54%	42.8%



While this incremental improvement does suggest that over the course of the project, IPs learned to target and support PWSs and women somewhat more effectively, - as testified by some IPs in qualitative evidence (See Finding 11) – the low level of progress particularly in construction suggests that more is needed to ensure inclusion in some ‘difficult’ sectors in which gender segregation is

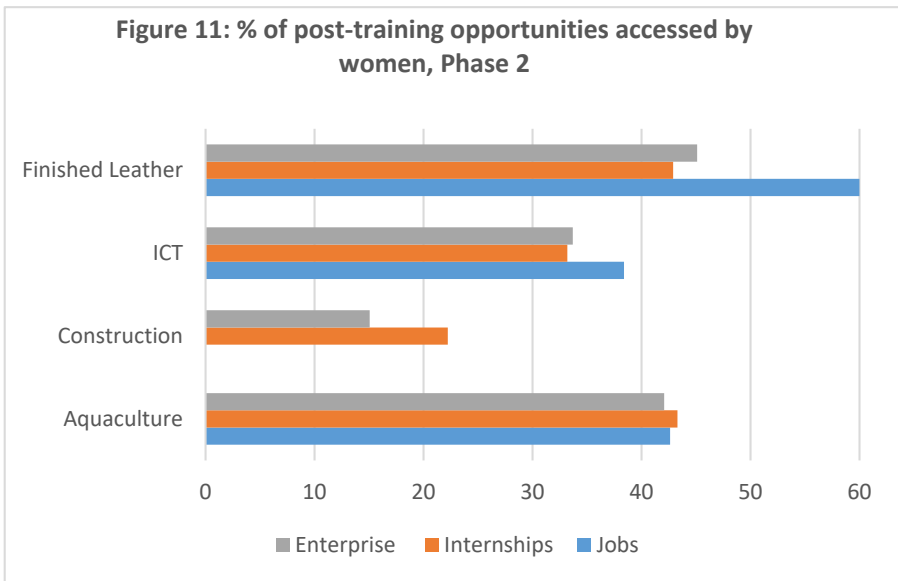
strong.

### Beyond training - gender

Beyond training, there have been overall broadly similar proportions of post training opportunities (jobs, internships and enterprise) accessed by women, with women in 38.5% of the jobs secured; 31.3% of the apprenticeships/ internships; and 37% of the enterprise positions. However, as Figure 11 shows, these overall figures mask important differences by sector, with the Construction sector also failing to provide onward opportunities to its women trainees (who make up 15.1% of trainees going on to apprenticeships; and 0% of those in employment) even in proportion to its low female trainee

Trainee profiles for Phase 1 by sector, as reported in MTE					
	Age range of trainees	Proportion of women successfully trained	% PWD trained	% rural trainees*	Proportion of women in placements
<b>Aquaculture</b>	16-28	38.0%	7.4%	7.4%	30.0%
<b>ICT</b>	16-29	35.5%	4.9%	6.2%	40.1%
<b>Construction</b>	16-29	21.6%	0.3%	64.6%	20.3%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>16-29</b>	<b>31.7</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>21.1</b>	<b>30.1</b>





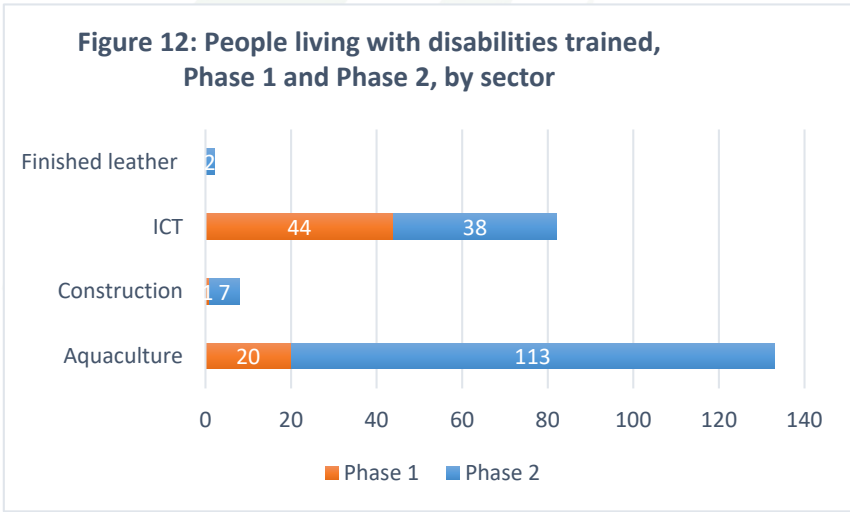
intake (20.6% in Phase 2). Finished Leather has offered the biggest share of opportunity to women, with over 60% of jobs and over 40% of internships and enterprise positions taken by women.

While there are undoubtedly challenges supporting women to enter the highly male dominated

construction sector, and strong dimensions of gender segregation to tackle, it is of note that the IPs do not all display the same low levels: Kiara De-Luke Academy stands out with 35% of apprenticeships / internships occupied by women. This suggests a level of intentional support, and conversely an absence of such intentional support in some organisations: for example, Aspirants Consult had no women take up jobs or enterprise, and only 8.7% of apprenticeships were taken by women – all related to the fact that only 12% of its trainees were women in the first place. The Enterprise and Innovation Centre has similar levels of post-training support for women, who are 16% of its Phase 2 trainees.

**People living with disabilities**

By contrast, there was a significant increase in the number of persons with disabilities accessing training between Phase 1 and Phase 2: in Phase 1, there were in total 61 trained; while in Phase 2 this more than doubled to 160. As Figure 12 shows, much of this increase was driven by large numbers of PWD participants in the Aquaculture training, for which DFAC significantly increased its PWD batch by partnering with a cooperative delivering training to deaf people in addition to its Phase 1 partnerships with church based organisations to reach PWDs <sup>52</sup> Ibiteinye Int Farms also made efforts to reach PWDs, with 60 in its Phase 2 trainings. While the Construction sector made some increase in the number of PWDs reached between Phase 1 and Phase 2, the numbers were still very small.



<sup>52</sup> FGD 26; See also MTE;

### Finding 19: Other axes of marginalization

**The project has shown a mixed picture of achievement in responding to other forms of marginalization / disadvantage, including age group, education level and rural disadvantage. It has both responded by flexing its ranges where this was appropriate; and by improving performance in Phase 2. However, there are discrepancies between survey data and registration data which suggest trainees may have underreported certain profile features at registration.**

**a) Age:** NDYEP's objectives explicitly included reaching young people, identified as the group with significant unemployment. For Phase one, this age range was specified as including youth age 16-26. But the MTE noted that there were a number of challenges with this age range, particularly in the Aquaculture and ICT sectors, and that in fact IPs had been admitting young people up to the age of 29 in their cohorts. For Phase 2, the age range was formally changed to 16-30 to adapt to this reality. As a result, 31% of the intake in Phase 2 was over 26 years old. The age range of those responding to the survey was somewhat older on average: while at the time of registration for Phase 2, 44.3% of trainees were 25 or over (and therefore would be 26 or over at the time of taking the survey), 57.2% of the 518 trainees responding to the survey were 26 or over. This likely suggest some underreporting of age in order to fulfil eligibility criteria, but it is not certain to what degree.<sup>53</sup>

**b) Rural disadvantage:** The MTE reported that rural trainees had been hard to reach in Phase 1, except by one partner located in a rural area. Overall, the proportion of rural trainees was 21.1%, but only 12.9% on average if excluding this partner. In Phase two, rural trainees were on the other hand successfully targeted, with an average of 34.7% rural trainees (27.8% in finished leather; 19.6% in ICT; 61% in construction and 42.8% in aquaculture). This was achieved in part by the inclusion of a greater number of rural based IP organisations – such as Alpha Vision - and by explicit efforts by some existing IPs – such as Aqua Green in Rivers and Start Hub in Akwa Ibom - to operate training centres in and semi urban areas.

The profile of survey respondents does not match this proportion well, however. Of these 518 respondents, only 47 or 9.1% said they live in a rural area. However, the survey included a 'semi-urban' category not covered by the programme data base, in which 115 respondents or 22.2% said they live. 68.7% of survey respondents were urban. The rest of the difference between these data sources may be explained by bias in the survey towards urban trainees because of the need for a functioning internet connection in order to respond.

As mentioned (Section 3, Limitations) survey responses suggest that impact level results have been somewhat muted for these rural trainees. Rural survey respondents were somewhat more likely to be currently unemployed (42% against 27% and 23% for urban and semi urban respectively) and were less likely than urban and semi urban trainees to be currently in the top income earning brackets. They were also more likely to have returned to studying after training (21% against 13% and 12% in urban and semi urban areas respectively). In other respects, however, impact results seem enhanced for rural trainees: for example, rural survey respondents now in self-employment are somewhat more likely than their more urban counterparts to save more than 5000 Naira a month from their business income (36% against 25% and 17% of urban and semi-urban respondents)

**c) Education:** The issue of age targeting is somewhat related to education levels, as older trainees (in their mid-late twenties) are more likely to have some tertiary education than younger trainees (in

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<sup>53</sup> Although the majority (65%) of survey respondents trained during 2020, the remaining 35% trained earlier, and could therefore have crossed two birthdays or more since registration; therefore trainees registering as 24 among this group may now be over 26.

their teens or early twenties). The project nominally targeted unemployed school leavers, or at least young people not currently in education, but the MTR noted that in the same way that meeting the 16-26 age target had been challenging, particularly in ICT there appeared to be good reason to accommodate older young people with higher levels of prior education. Alongside the extension of the target age range to 30, according to the database, 34.2% of trainees in phase 2 had a bachelor's degree or diploma (HND) or some other tertiary education.

As with age and rural/urban location, these proportions are different among survey respondents, and in the case of education levels very significantly so. Of 518 survey respondents, 117 (22.6%) were currently studying at university or polytechnic, 284 (54.8%) had completed their first degree or diploma, and 13 (2.5%) had completed a Master's degree – altogether 79.9%. While 64 of these said they returned to studying after the training, this still leaves 67.6% as in or completed tertiary education, or 33.3% more than suggested by the database. This is likely to suggest some underreporting of education level at registration.

## Resilience

*11. To what extent was the project resilient to internal and external shocks (economic, conflicts, pandemic, etc.)?*

*12. To what extent has the NDYEP project responded effectively to risks and threats?*

### Finding 20: Response to Covid-19 and other shocks

**A culture of flexibility and high levels of goodwill and accountability were key resources drawn on to respond successfully to the Covid-19 driven lockdown and associated social and economic disruption. For a minority, Covid lockdowns presented opportunities which were promptly taken.**

The project was confronted towards the end of Phase 2 as it was originally projected, with a six week lockdown in the face of the early stages of the Covid-19 Coronavirus pandemic. Nigeria was relatively quick to respond to the pandemic with lockdown from late March 2020, and began opening up slowly from early May. This situation affected ongoing training and placements in a number of ways, delaying some training and involving rearrangement to others.

Most IPs were able to adapt well and went on to fully complete their project responsibilities. There is some evidence that good target setting and high levels of accountability to these, combined with commitment to the spirit of the project, were factors in ensuring that the project was not derailed.<sup>54</sup> Increased costs incurred, for example by splitting sections for training due to social distancing measures, were mostly absorbed by IPs, and qualitative data suggests that this was enabled by goodwill and a real investment in training outcomes.

Other adaptations included:

- Online mentoring continued for the soft skills training of trainers' process, although the main part of the programme and monitoring had been completed before the March lockdown.<sup>55</sup>
- IPs still delivering training adapted by adopting socially distance space use for training; this was a challenge for several because more space was needed; students could not participate properly if seated further away;<sup>56</sup> some trainings had to split into double or triple shifts which was expensive for them<sup>57</sup>. In aquaculture, it fell to a few trainees living near to demonstration farms to take responsibility for maintaining fish feeding and cleaning<sup>58</sup>.

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<sup>54</sup> (KII 49; KII 4; KII 30)

<sup>55</sup> (FGD 8/9)

<sup>56</sup> (KII 37)

<sup>57</sup> KII 19, 37, 30; 49)

<sup>58</sup> (FGD 26)

- More generally, trainings which had not started were delayed, causing delays to the project overall, and notably to the first trainings for the new Finished Leather sector,
- However, all IPs managed these difficulties, completing trainings either during or following lockdown, meeting targets and continuing to support trainees into post-training positions and opportunities. While PIND did not offer direct additional help to manage Covid, some IPs noted that the support they had received through NDYEP had helped their resilience – for instance by enabling investment in facilities;<sup>59</sup> others noted that in the context of the general business slowdown, NDYEP was a consistent grant and work direction which was not under threat.<sup>60</sup>
- Transport costs became a major impediment for some trainees as public transport costs rose as social distancing was put in place in busses etc.<sup>61</sup>
- Most trainings were not able to shift online. For some, limited parts of training moved online; the Entrepreneurship trainings had been designed as online trainings in the first place, using ICT hubs in each state for trainees to access as needed for connectivity.<sup>62</sup>

In terms of the economy-wide effects of COVID, there was a mixed picture. Although, for instance, the Finished Leather sector was affected by reduced demand for fashion items,<sup>63</sup> survey evidence suggests that trainees in this sector are currently more likely to be earning some income than trainees in other sectors. Lockdown also reportedly affected demand for fish – which was considered a non-essential food item and therefore lower consumer priority – so impacting on some of the aquaculture start-ups.<sup>64</sup>

Conversely, the lifting of lockdown presented a challenge for one IP as some trainees had joined the programme precisely because they had time due to lockdown as other activities were not possible. For at least one IP, the need for social distancing led to solutions with long term benefits for the organisation: Start Innovation Hub, based in Uyo, Akwa Ibom, was led to reach out to partners in remoter areas of Oron and Eket in order to accommodate social distancing and still achieve targets, and achieve training and placement impacts in those areas.<sup>65</sup>

Some businesses associated as potential employers with the Construction trainings managed to find business opportunities in lockdown, for instance by designing and manufacturing an automatic hand washing device.<sup>66</sup>

But overall, economic challenges have affected labour in all sectors; and knocked on to the internship programme as companies were no longer able to absorb ‘extra’ labour or costs. For instance, one ICT IP felt unable to take on more interns itself.<sup>67</sup> Some interns and self-employed alumni trainees had work disrupted and suffered real hardship, struggling to get basic food during lockdown.<sup>68</sup>

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*Everything was times 6 in terms of budget, although it was a times 1 budget that I received. But for the love of the programme, I did not mind. (ICT implementing partner)*

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<sup>59</sup> (KII 19)

<sup>60</sup> (KII 30)

<sup>61</sup> (KII 10)

<sup>62</sup> (FGD 6)

<sup>63</sup> (KII 37)

<sup>64</sup> (FGD 45)

<sup>65</sup> (KII 30)

<sup>66</sup> (KII 22)

<sup>67</sup> (KII27)

<sup>68</sup> (KII 47; KII 24; KII 26)

**Other disruptions include the #EndSars protests during October 2020, which were concentrated in Lagos but included reverberations in the Niger Delta.<sup>69</sup> These also caused brief lockdowns in Port Harcourt and Aba, with some limited impact on operations and on the economy, but the effect was relatively short-lived and the project did not need to make noticeable adjustments.**



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<sup>69</sup> These began as a protest against the police Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) but became about police brutality more broadly, along with protest against the behaviour of the political elite generally.

## 5. Conclusions

NDYEP set out to establish a distinct approach to youth employment in the Niger Delta states; show that and how this approach works; document it; and then advocate for wider uptake of the model, particularly in the State governments in order to address the issue of high youth unemployment in the region.

**Conclusion 1: Key elements of PIND's model for youth employment have been important to the success of the model**

**Based on Finding 6; Finding 8; Finding 9; Finding 11; Finding 12;**

This evaluation has found good evidence that, overall, PIND's model works well to support young people through training that is relevant to the local economy and into positions of employment or self-employment in selected sectors. While not all trainees had found positions, a good proportion had found jobs or set up as self-employed in individual or group businesses. A good proportion were earning; some were saving; and many felt that their prospects for making a sustainable living had been transformed through the project. [Finding 6; Finding 9; Finding 12].

A key feature of success in this journey has been the model's **competency focus**; in this case expressed as integrating **soft skills, business skills and opportunities for practical hands-on skill application into the curriculum** [Finding 8]. Although the process was incomplete, the dimension of this competency focus directed towards developing standardised curricula for the Construction industry also show promise for 'normalising' the building of n business and soft skills into standardised and accredited technical training which maintains its market relevance.

A second critical feature of success is **building in support for the onward journey: the post training process is absolutely critical for extending learning, allowing opportunities for saving, and through these making links and forging pathways to sustainable employment and self-employment** [Finding 9]. These have been enabled through facilitating supported start-up opportunities; building linkages to open up internship and apprenticeship opportunities; and making connections with potential employers to take on trainees directly. [Finding 9].

Generating results for NDYEP has also revealed some lessons in areas which the project could have improved. First, there is evidence that in ICT and Construction, the trainings were not long enough to secure the full breadth of learning needed to operate as independent and competent ecosystem actors. **Getting the balance right between training length and ensuring continued learning in the onward pathway (in internships or new jobs) will be key to secure the benefits in the long term.** (Finding 9; Finding 11]

The quality of training is also critical: in some cases, the use-value of potentially good training may have been reduced by insufficient equipment for practical work for the whole group to use, so trainees could not profit from the opportunity to the maximum. [Finding 11]

Finally, while the project made progress in more deeply integrating the dimensions of the training in Phase 2, the key component of facilitating access to start-up finance post-training has delayed project results. Although COVID 19 has been partly responsible for delays in this step, **linking with loan making bodies could also have been delivered earlier**, and to a greater proportion of trainees. [Finding 11]. The Business Plan Challenge initiative shows promise as a model for driving a competitive environment for business grant provision; an earlier roll out of this initiative would likely made a positive impact.

**Conclusion 2: An ecosystem approach using sub-granting has reaped dividends for both impact and sustainability**

**Based on Finding 2; Finding 3; Finding 5; Finding 7; Finding 13; Finding 14; Finding 15; Finding 16; Finding 20**

Taking an ecosystem approach has been key to the project's areas of success, and the sub-granting model was the framework which enabled this [Finding 15]. This approach has been particularly critical in a situation in which the economy is relatively shallow and therefore vulnerable to economic shocks. It has paid dividends in a myriad of ways – in terms of bolstering business and therefore labour demand via strengthening grantees [Finding 7]; by strengthening expertise in partner organisations embedded in the states, and which state governments are now beginning to draw on; [Finding 14; 17] in terms of sustainability of the approach to training in local areas; [Finding 16] in terms of commitment and ongoing support to trainees [Finding 9; 20] and in terms of resilience of the project to shocks such as the Covid-19 pandemic [Finding 20]. In short, the approach has contributed to strengthening the economic sectors at the same time as ensuring competent and committed training expertise, located in each state and specialising in each sector.

Lessons to draw from the NDYEP experience include that **sub granting must stay flexible** in order to draw on, and profit from, the particular and emerging strengths of each IP. Facilitating **policies framing the project must be enabled to respond to emerging evidence**. And a **cross project learning culture** which allows for specific peer learning opportunities and cross-fertilization of ideas and approaches among trainees has been an important framework.

**Conclusion 3: Government engagement by officials and politicians is critical for scale-up. An earlier process of Identification of points of contact and promising overlap with policies and departments could have strengthened this transition.**

**Finding 1; Finding 2; Finding 3; Finding 5; Finding 14; Finding 17;**

NDYEP carried out thorough groundwork to maximise the relevance for of the interventions for trainees, sectors (employers), IPs and to 'settle' the project into PIND's wider work [Findings 1; 2; 3; 5]. But the project was relatively slow to begin concerted engagement with government stakeholders [Finding 5; Finding 14]. This was because the project saw itself as needed to produce elements showing that and how the model worked before approaching government in a systematic way. Government stakeholders were engaged in Phase 1 through the Advisory Committee and an initial meeting, but there was a much more concerted approach to gathering information and understanding the situation in specific states with PIND's advocacy team on board during Phase 2, as well as a series of meetings, dissemination workshops and other engagements in and beyond the project states.

Thus the work of liaison and advocacy to identify where the points of contact are, and which policies and departments are relevant in different states has been taken up during Phase 2 [Finding 14] with the result that there has not yet been time to ensure secure take up by the States [Finding 17]. It is possible that had this identification and outreach taken place earlier in Phase 1, as well as perhaps the beginnings of advocacy for a consolidated youth policy, more linkages could have perhaps been found earlier and progress would have been more secure at the close of the project – notwithstanding that some of the challenges, such as an expectation of project funds, would still need to be resolved.

**Conclusion 4: Adapting and responding to evidence and a culture of learning has been a highly facilitating framework**

**Finding 1; Finding 2; Finding 4; Finding 10; Finding 20**

Flexibility to adapt to emerging evidence has been a strong asset supporting results in Phase 2 in particular – there are clear examples of where this has contributed to maintaining relevance as well as effectiveness in achieving targets. There are two important features of achieving this: the project committed to strong monitoring and documentation of its process; and the management framework has maintained the flexibility to adapt on the basis of emerging evidence.

Examples of adaptations supporting effectiveness include that the project was able to adjust decisions related to the target student profile and make tailored adaptations about offering around student support – such as stipends and transport expenses. These have been particularly important to support inclusion [Finding 18; Finding 19] while also getting the age targeting to meet the ground reality. Adding a strategy for linking young alumni trainees to finance for start-ups has also likely been an important adaptation, although results have not yet come to fruition.

**Conclusion 5: Inclusion  
Finding 18; Finding 19;**

The programme has generated **solid experience in including women in ICT, and in reaching out to and including PWDs in training in aquaculture and ICT** in particular, even where these were perceived initially as challenging and perhaps unlikely [Finding 18]. This was achieved on the back of required targets for training; and facilitating learning for how IPs could do their outreach and adapt their training if necessary. This experience will be valuable to efforts to ensure equity in youth employment initiatives going forward.

Flexibility in individual training arrangements was important to facilitate these achievements, suggesting that a blanket approach is inappropriate. The project adapted its age targets, and allowed IPs some decision making in how to enable marginalized trainees to undertake the training.

The construction sector, on the other hand, has proved quite impenetrable to these groups, despite some attempts – suggesting that **in ‘difficult’ sectors, a more concerted and persistent strategy, and perhaps more facilitation, may be needed to make progress towards equity.**

Successfully targeting high school leavers (as oppose to graduates) seems to have presented challenges to the IPs, related to the situation that it is difficult to obtain evidence that an applicant has not attended college/university. More inquiry in how to ensure this criteria would benefit future targeting.



## 6. Recommendations

### Recommendations for implementation of integrated youth training

[Based on Conclusion 1]

1. Consider carefully the issue of length of training appropriate for the sector, the level of ambition, and the trainee profile. Where training cannot be extended, continue to build in support for the onward journey and consider how to make learning a formal and structured part internships and/or entry level jobs (see below).
2. While establishing project principles is important – such as expecting trainees to display grit and self-motivation – policies on the issue of accessing financial help for transportation to training and internships and for essential equipment, should retain flexibility to allow inclusion, at least on a case by case basis.
3. Integrate entrepreneurship training fully into the training process and begin to facilitate business planning and access to finance from earlier in the process. Access to finance is critical to the transitions most trainees need to make from training into sustainable self-employment. The gap between completing training and accessing startup capital should be reduced so that learning and motivation are retained.

### Recommendations for the design and implementation of post-training transitions

[Based on Conclusion 1]

4. Seek innovative ways to get disadvantaged trainees access to equipment both during and after the training, so that they can learn and benefit from it in the ways expected. This might, for example, include establishing membership-based equipment libraries, perhaps; or integrating paid tasks into training so that trainees can save a little; or linking with the corporate sector to establish channels for using second hand equipment.
5. Training – particularly in parts of ICT such as software development; and in construction - does not always complete trainees' readiness for work and positioning in the business ecosystem. Continue to seek linkages to a range of positions – internships, or business incubation opportunities, or jobs - which **explicitly** allow for continued learning. This might include, for example, starter jobs or internships which include days off for continued training, or include formal and integrated learning; or learn-while-you-earn structures training frameworks. This might therefore include further demonstration of the model of construction internships developed in partnership with Rivtaf which included an element of specific continued learning.

### Recommendations for engaging government for upscaling

[Based on Conclusion 3]

6. Establish a process for the identification of points of contact with youth employment issues in government departments and policies at the outset, and establish connections with both political and administrative government actors as early as possible. Consider (opportunities for) advocating for a Youth Policy to bring efforts in different departments together.

## Recommendations for supporting inclusion

[Based on Conclusion 5]

7. Expand the important opportunities offered by youth employment schemes to work towards equity including gender equality. Put in place assertive targets and a range of strategies to draw on so that these schemes can successfully contribute to transforming inequities. These are particularly necessary to address very intransigent gendered labor market segregation in some sectors.
8. Consider the additional support needed to securely establish inclusion approaches and follow these through to consistent results. In the case of a sub-granting systems perhaps consider what additional drivers are needed to push for these results in bottleneck sectors where gender segregation is very strong and where entry barriers to PWDs are seen as particularly acute / strong.
9. Continue to support the development of a learning and adaptive project culture and leverage this to continue peer to peer exchange among IPs on how to improve and maximize inclusion in their training processes. As part of this, organize a learning session with IPs to exchange and draw out their experience with trying to target non-graduates, focusing on what precisely the challenges have been in this, and how they have tried to address these challenges.

## **Annex: List of documents consulted**

1. DAI, Identifying Pathways to Employment for Youth in the Niger Delta An Analysis of Abia, Akwa Ibom and Rivers States, 2018
2. Final Progress Reports from Implementing Partners
3. National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) 'Labor Force Statistics – Volume 2: Unemployment and Underemployment by State Q3 2018', April 2019.
4. National Bureau of Statistics, Labor Force Statistics: Unemployment and Underemployment Report (Q2 2020), August, Abridged labour force survey under Covid-19.
5. NDYEP 'Government engagement for Adoption of NDYEP Model and Framework v4' document.
6. NDYEP 2020 Revised Work Plan (Jan-Dec 2020)
7. NDYEP 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Database
8. NDYEP 2<sup>nd</sup> Year List of Projects
9. NDYEP Indicators and Achievements
10. NDYEP M4P Activity Report
11. NDYEP Monitoring Report September-October 2020
12. NDYEP Niger Delta States Youth Unemployment Profile
13. NDYEP Program Status Update Q1 – Q2 2020
14. NDYEP Report August 2020
15. PIND Annual Report (Final) 2019
16. PIND Q2 Progress Report (Final) 2020
17. PIND Participatory Review 2019
18. PIND Report – NDYEP Advisory Committee Monitoring Visits
19. PIND/ NDYEP – Report of Visit by Government Representatives to NDYEP Project Sites, October 2020;
20. PIND/NDYEP - Report On The Niger Delta Youth Employment Pathways Project Regional Roundtable With Niger Delta State Governments And Other Stakeholders, August 2020;
21. PIND/NDYEP - Report On The Niger Delta Youth Employment Pathways Project Regional Roundtable With Niger Delta State Governments And Other Stakeholders, August 2020;
22. PIND/NDYEP - Lessons Learned from the Niger Delta Government Learning Forum held on September 22, 2020 in collaboration with the Lagos State Employment Trust Fund, October 2020.
23. PIND-AKSG Meeting Report
24. State Government engagement report

Annex : Evaluation matrix

	PIND	NDYEP management	IPs		Employers	Trainees		Gov. stakeholders	Advisory Board
			Interview	FGD		Interview	Survey		
<b>Relevance</b>									
1. To what extent has the NDYEP project expected results (Impact, Outcomes and Outputs) and design responded to beneficiaries and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities considering the evolving circumstances (is NDYEP doing the right things?)			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Coherence</b>									
2. To what extent other interventions (particularly government policies and programs) support or undermine the NDYEP intervention including internal and external coherence (How well does the NDYEP project fit)?	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓
<b>Effectiveness</b>									
3. To what extent the NDYEP project achieved its expected results (Outcomes and Outputs) agreed with the Business Plan including differential results across states in the five main feature of the NDYEP model (which would include influencing the state governments to adopt the NDYEP model)?	✓	✓		✓			✓		
4. What are the factors (internal and external to PIND) that contributed the most to the attainment of the NDYEP project and results?		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
5. What are the factors (internal and external to PIND) that hindered the most to the attainment of the NDYEP project and results?		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Efficiency</b>									
6. How far has the sub-granting model been and efficient approach to achieving results, and to sustainability?	✓	✓	✓						✓

	PIND	NDYEP management	IPs		Employers	Trainees		Gov. stakeholders	Advisory Board
<b>Impact</b>									
7. To what extent the NDYEP has achieved expected results related to results defined in the Business Plan and if NDYEP has generated significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects at community/sector and state level?		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
8. What long term transformative change or difference did the project make on communities/sectors, institutions (employers, government/policy makers and TVET/trainers) and youth?		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Sustainability</b>									
9. To what extent are the net benefits of interventions likely to continue after PIND/Ford Foundation has stopped? How likely are the benefits (including resilience to risk) to last and under which conditions?			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Equity and Gender Equality</b>									
10. To what extent the NDYEP project addressed inequalities in youth employment, incorporated gender equality and social inclusion and the empowerment of women and persons with disabilities into the design, implementation and results achieved?		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
<b>Resilience</b>				☐					
11. To what extent was the project resilient to internal and external shocks (economic, conflicts, pandemic, etc.)?	✓	✓		✓					✓
12. To what extent has the NDYEP project responded effectively to risks and threats?	✓	✓		✓					✓



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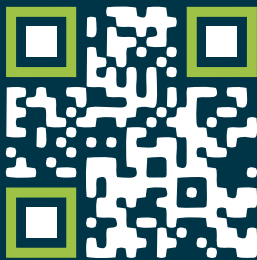
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