Impact Assessment Report

AU Skill Academy

AU Small Finance Bank

FY: 2021-22

CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

India is a fast developing economy and difficulties have led the Government to conclude that far more needs to be done to engender more employment opportunities for the majority of Indians, to enable them to participate in the benefits of growth and to contribute to that growth. To do this they must have education and training that equips them for the labor market. One of the sources of the skilled workforce is the vocational education and training system.

India currently reports an 8% unemployment rate, with Rajasthan facing a more significant challenge at [1]28.5%. To harness this demographic advantage, a strategic focus on skill development among the youth is imperative. This not only fosters personal growth but also becomes a catalyst for the nation's economic advancement. As a result, the Skill India Mission was initiated by the Government of India in 2015 with aim to empower the youth with skills that enhance employability and productivity. The Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna (PMKVY) was launched as part of this broader Skill India Mission.

The AU Small Finance Bank as part of their CSR policy has been intervening to skill local communities and youth on banking and financial services. AU Skills Academy program, like Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna (PMKVY) imparts skills training to the youth on banking and financial services and places them. AU Skill Academy centres are established at different locations. 5 of the centres, namely Kota, Jodhpur, Sikar, Bhilwara, and Bikaner are governed by the AU Small Finance Bank. Whereas other centres are operational through the tie-up with the local implementing partners such as Ambuja Cement Foundation (ACF). Through the program, the AU Small Finance Bank is bridging the gap between the employers and unemployed youth by providing skills training and then aligning them with the jobs in the relevant sector, it has helped youth to become productive as well as provide a boom to skilled workforce requirement. AU Skills Academy selects youth from economically unprivileged backgrounds and transforms them into industry professionals with a focus on overall holistic development of the students.

The impact assessment undertaken by the team of Give Grants assessed the current status of the youth who were enrolled in AU skills academy during the FY 2021-22, including their earning capability, employability, current economic status, the challenges faced by them, and the impact created. The program aligns with the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in the United Nations Agenda 2030.

1 NO POVERTY

No Poverty

End poverty in all forms by 2030 by targeting the most vulnerable, increasing basic resources and services, and supporting communities affected by conflict and climate-related disasters.

04 - Quality Education

The program promotes inclusive and equitable quality education, as they provide individuals with practical skills and knowledge that enhance their employability, empower them for lifelong learning, and bridge the gap between education and employment.

05 - Gender Equality

Provide equal opportunities to both males and females and need all sorts of discrimination against females.

08 - Decent Work and Economic Growth

Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labor-intensive sectors.

10 - Reduced Inequalities

Empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status.

1.1 Key Highlights of the Program

The AU Skills Academy program has been instrumental in bridging the employment gap by providing comprehensive training in banking and finance. Taking responsibility for student placements, the program has not only contributed to improved quality of life but also triggered a positive shift in mindset towards education. The program provides an employment opportunity for semi-skilled unemployed youth and pursuant to an employment. The program's key highlights include:

Program Design

99.6% of the participants express that the program is highly pertinent in terms of its impact on job prospects and career advancement. The program aligns itself with the vision of providing 1) Livelihood opportunities and 2) Bridging skill's need gap.

The enrolment process was seamless and straightforward, characterized by a dearth of excessive formalities or complications.

While the infrastructure currently possesses all the essential equipment and tools, the addition of supplementary elements such as mannequins and bookshelves at Kota, Bhilwara, Sikar, and Bikaner is recommended. These additions will further enhance the overall learning experience and contribute to a more conducive educational setting.

Program Delivery

The course deployed both offline and online formats during the COVID-19. The bilingual instruction in Hindi and English facilitated easy comprehension of concepts, enhancing students' English-speaking skills.

97% of participants reported maintaining attendance levels exceeding 70% throughout the program indicating meticulous record-keeping by the centre staff and trainers, showcasing their commitment to minimizing student dropouts.

Impact & Sustainability

The training program reports a placement rate exceeding 75% at all centres. The employers comprise of the large banks such as SBI, UCO, ICICI, HDFC, Yes, Bandhan, RBL and IDFC First, small finance bank such as AU Small Finance Bank, Equitas Small Finance Bank and Fincare Small Finance Ban and microfinance such as Kamal Fincare, Satya Micro Finance, Fusion Micro Finance to name a few.

The trainees witnessed **an increase in annual income ranging from 40% to 60%** subsequent to program participation. An encouraging development is the positive shift in the mindset of parents who, inspired by the program's success, actively advocate for community members to pursue the training.

The program employs semi-skilled unemployed youths in the banking and financial sector, retail, and entrepreneur among others.

The program has played a pivotal role in elevating students' interpersonal skills and deepening their expertise in finance and accounting, leading to a notable transformation, both personally & professionally.

The program is in strong alignment with AU Small Finance Bank's overarching mission, aiming to empower willing and talented individuals by providing them with the essential skill sets necessary for leading purposeful lives. It resonates deeply with the foundation's commitment to fostering personal and professional growth. Additionally, the program upholds the core values of trust and integrity, ensuring a foundation of ethical and reliable practices in its implementation. Through this alignment with the foundation's mission and values, the program becomes a meaningful contributor to the broader goals of AU Bank's in enabling positive change within the underprivileged communities.

During the on-ground assessments of the five centers, the Jaipur center stands out notably due to its impressive infrastructure and the highest placement rate of 81%. The program's systems and processes, including the enrollment process, mode and medium of delivery, and record maintenance, are effectively established and functioning well. However, to enhance the program's effectiveness, it is recommended to introduce a structured on-the-job training framework, provide additional resources for knowledge dissemination, and conduct regular training sessions for the trainers.

An indicative OJT framework is suggested herewith:

1. **Orientation**
   - Introduce trainees to the workplace environment, policies, and code of conduct.
   - Provide an overview of the specific department they will be working in (banking, finance, or COPA).
   - Familiarize trainees with the organizational structure, key personnel, and their roles.

2. **Goal Setting:**
   - Establish clear and measurable learning objectives for the OJT period.
   - Align individual goals with the overall curriculum objectives.
   - Encourage trainees to articulate their career aspirations and how the OJT aligns with them.

3. **Mentorship Program:**
   - Assign each trainee a dedicated mentor from the workplace.
   - Ensure mentors have relevant expertise in the trainee's field of study.
   - Facilitate regular check-ins and feedback sessions between mentors and trainees.

4. **Rotational Exposure:**
   - Implement a structured rotation program across different functional areas within the chosen sector (banking, finance, or COPA).
   - Allow trainees to gain hands-on experience in various tasks, ensuring a holistic understanding of the industry.

5. **Task Assignments:**
   - Gradually increase the complexity of tasks assigned to trainees.
   - Ensure tasks are aligned with the skills acquired during the theoretical training.
   - Provide opportunities for trainees to work on real-life projects and problem-solving.

6. **Shadowing Opportunities:**
   - Organize shadowing sessions with experienced professionals in the workplace.
   - Encourage trainees to observe and learn from industry experts.
   - Facilitate networking opportunities for trainees to build professional relationships.

7. **Regular Assessments:**
   - Conduct periodic assessments to evaluate trainees' progress.
   - Use a combination of written evaluations and practical assessments.
   - Provide constructive feedback and identify areas for improvement.

8. **Skill Enhancement Workshops:**
   - Offer specialized workshops to enhance specific skills identified during the OJT.
   - Provide additional training as needed to address any gaps in knowledge or practical skills.

9. **Industry Seminars and Events:**
   - Encourage trainees to attend industry-related seminars, workshops, and events.
   - Foster a connection between the academy and industry professionals to enhance networking opportunities.

10. **Final Evaluation and Certification:**
    - Conduct a comprehensive final evaluation to assess the overall performance of trainees.
    - Provide certificates to those who successfully complete the OJT program.

11. **Continuous Improvement:**
    - Collect feedback from both trainees and mentors to improve the OJT framework.
    - Regularly review and update the curriculum to stay aligned with industry trends and demands.

2. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF STUDY

The study aims to understand the direct and indirect impact of the skills training provided to the youth of Rajasthan by AU Skills Academy. The impact assessment study tries to capture ways in which activities under the training programme were executed and highlight their outcomes.

2.1 Objectives of the study:

The major objectives of the study were:

- Assess the relevance and efficiency of the intervention and review the implementation pathways
- Understand the effectiveness of the intervention
- Understand the major success factors and challenges in the intervention.
- Find the areas of improvement across all the factors from program design to implementation
- Provide an assessment framework to be able to capture impacts in a manner that is an effective recommendation.

2.2 Limitations of the study

- No limitations

2.3 Ethical Considerations

Following were the key ethical considerations for the independent assessment conducted:

1. ***Informed Consent***
Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they understood the purpose of the study, their role, potential risks, and how their data will be used.

2. ***Voluntary Participation***
Participation in the study was voluntary, and individuals were free to withdraw their participation at any stage without facing negative consequences.

3. ***Fair Treatment***
All participants were treated fairly and with respect, avoiding any form of discrimination or bias based on race, gender, ethnicity, religion, or other characteristics.

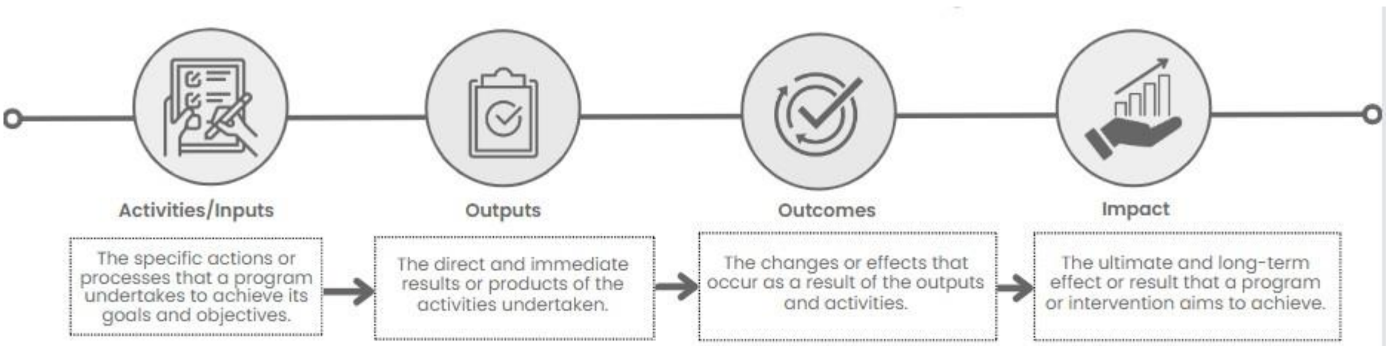
4. ***Data Security***
The collected data was safeguarded against unauthorized access, ensuring that it is securely stored and only accessible to those involved in the research

5. ***Reporting Results Responsibly***
The results were presented objectively and responsibly, avoiding exaggeration or manipulation of findings

3. ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

To create an overall framework for the impact assessment, following activities were undertaken. We began by establishing the scope of the assessment in terms of stakeholders to be engaged and topics to be discussed with them. Based on this and the understanding of the project activities, we developed stakeholder-wise detailed questionnaires to understand several factors such as rationale for supporting the program, the implementation process, roadblocks in operations and beneficiary feedback about the efficacy of the program. The findings and recommendations arising out of this process are mentioned in the subsequent sections of the report.

3.1 Theory of Change



The THEORY OF CHANGE FRAMEWORK (ToC) for the given program is illustrated below

Table.1 Theory of Change for AU Skills Program

The Need
A significant challenge faced by Rajasthan is its status as the state with the second-highest unemployment rate, following Haryana. This challenge is exacerbated by the absence of quality educational institutions in rural and remote areas, coupled with entrenched orthodox mindsets.

↓

Activities/Inputs
• Setting up regional AU training centres • Recruitment & training of the program team • Equipping the centres with necessary infrastructure • Placing appropriate systems & processes for the functioning of the centres

↓

Outputs
• No. of centre staff & trainers hired • Systems & processes in place • Well-equipped centres • Efficient operation of the training program

↓

Outcomes
• Beneficiaries access to the tools & equipments • Improved access to quality education • Enhancement of skills required in the banking sector • Increase in monthly income

↓

Impact
• Improved quality of life • Reduction in poverty & income inequality • Decrease in the unemployment rate • Increased access to quality education to the disadvantaged communities

Log Frame Analysis (LFA)			
	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Activities/Inputs	• Identification of districts for setting up the training centres • Procurement of the tools & equipments • Installation and setting up of the equipments in the centres • Conduction of outreach/Awareness activities • Design of the course curriculum, M&E framework • Design of hiring & training processes for the trainers	• Program Documents • Needs assessment report	• A Needs assessment was conducted before the design of the program
Outputs	• Well-established and fully functioning centres • Competent & qualified teaching staff • Well designed systems & processes in place • High level of awareness among community about AU Skills Academy	• Primary data (Quantitative & Qualitative interviews with the beneficiaries) • Program documents: Attendance registers, track records, Enrolment forms, Infrastructure observations	
Outcomes	• Targeted outreach and accessibility for a diverse pool of potential learners • Conducive learning environment & enhanced quality of training • Delivery of high quality education • Efficient management, coordination, and execution of the training initiatives • Sustained platform for skill development and employment opportunities within the community		NA
Impact	• Increase in the family income and overall quality of life • Enhanced interpersonal skills of the students • Change in skills & domain knowledge • Change in the perception about education among the community • Increase in the enrolment rates • Decreased dropout rates • Higher retention rates of the students in the organisations • Well-established brio with the employers	• Primary data (Quantitative & Qualitative interviews with the beneficiaries)	NA

The program is in line with the Theory of Change (ToC) and Logical Framework Approach (LFA). However, there is room for enhancing the structure of the training of trainers and on-the-job training for the trainees, introducing more organization and clarity to this particular aspect.

3.2 Three Point Assessment Framework

Based on the TOC and the LFA created, the relevance of services, the preparedness for program activities, qualitative and quantitative assessments, efficiency, and effectiveness of delivery of services as well as any innovations that may have been implemented on the ground were examined. The impact assessment findings are anchored around Give Grant's Three-point Assessment Framework as illustrated here:

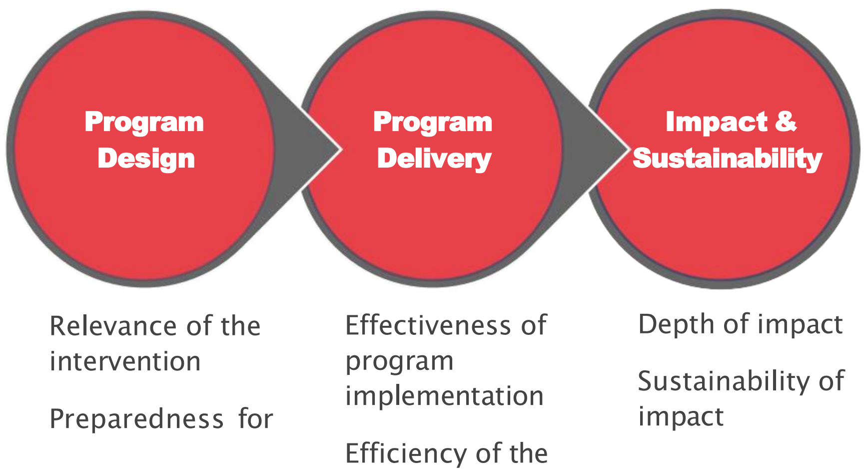


Figure 4: Pictorial representation of Give Grant's Three Point Framework

Program Design:

We study program design through program strategies, inputs and resources, assumptions, outreach mechanisms, and much more. We also consider if the program design attends to specific needs of the stakeholders, program locations, social categories, site and situation, among other development needs. Give Grants's Impact Assessment approach for program design is based on assessment criteria like relevance and preparedness using methodologies such as assessment of baseline survey.

Program Delivery:

Give Grants assesses the program delivery to understand the success of the program delivery mechanism in attaining the overall objectives such as cost effectiveness, resource efficiency, equity in service delivery, best practices and challenges, perception about the services among the relevant stakeholders, among other factors.

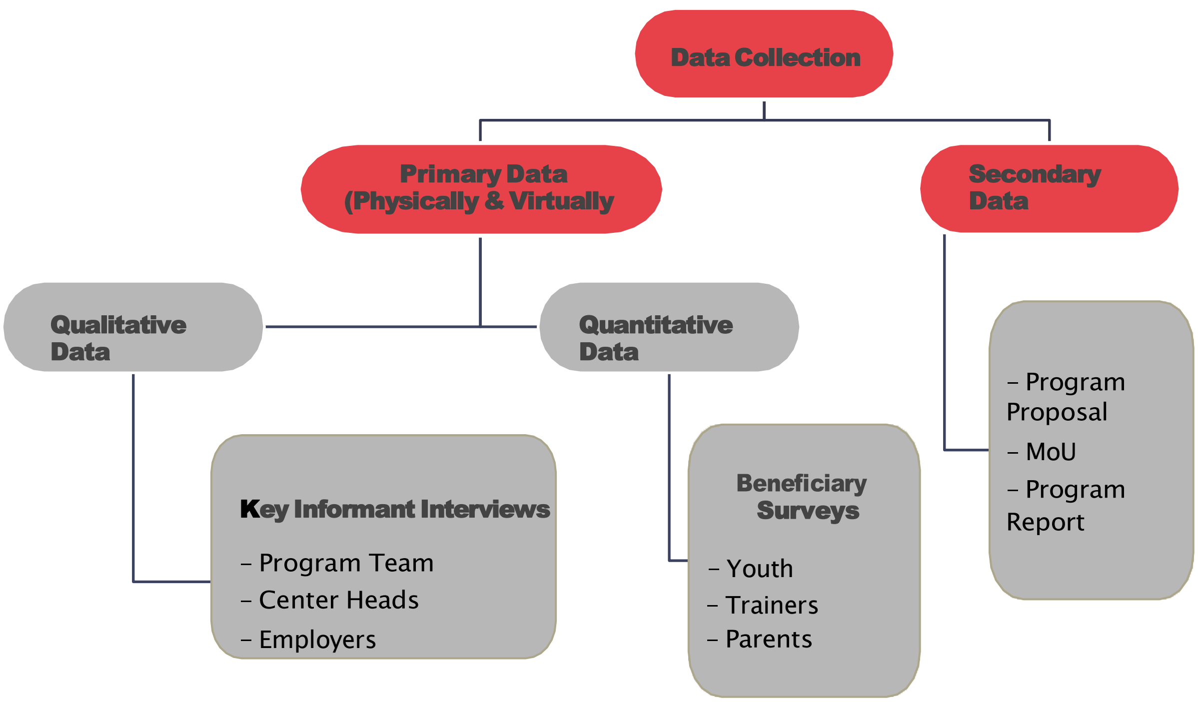
Impact & Sustainability:

We study a program's impact potential to assess if the change or the desired outcome can be attributed to the program intervention. Goodera uses criteria involving scale of Impact and sustainability of the intervention to understand the impact potential of the program

4. METHODOLOGY ADOPTED

We initiated the impact assessment study by identifying the key stakeholders for the project. These stakeholders were ratified in consensus with the implementing partner. The study takes a 'mixed method' approach which includes both qualitative as well as quantitative data capture and analysis.

The quantitative tools provide values to key indicators related to access, awareness, and quality. It also maps the outputs against the targets and outcomes perceived by the beneficiaries. On the other hand, the qualitative method and approaches provide a better understanding and help to build a storyline for the achievements and gaps in the program from the lens of immediate stakeholders involved in the program implementation, other than the beneficiaries. A qualitative study gives substantiated evidence for a better understanding of the processes involved in the program implementation. Thus, the 'mixed method' approach also helps in developing a framework for gap identification and course correction.



4.1 Data collection

- **Primary data:** Primary data is the key to collecting first-hand information as evidence from the beneficiaries and stakeholders on the interventions. It allows us to understand the benefits delivered, its effectiveness and key challenges to assess the impact created by the program and arrive at recommendations that enhance it.
- **Secondary data:** For secondary data collection, the program proposal, MoU, and program report, Reports on skills development and online articles were referred. These documents gave

high-level insights about the projects including the inception and implementation phase along with the processes followed.

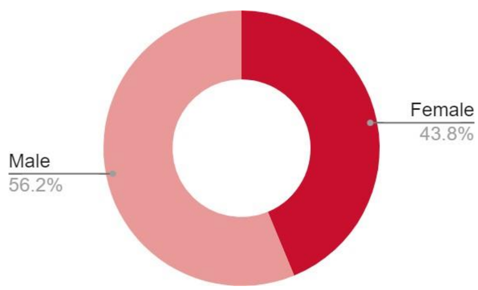
4.2 Sampling Strategy

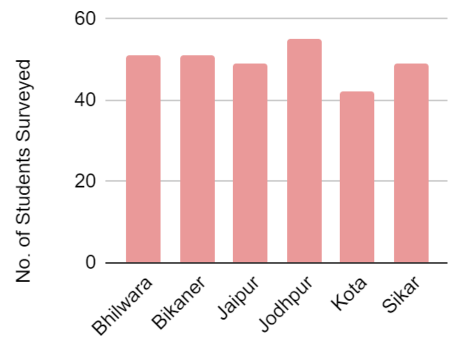
For the impact assessment of the project, on-ground surveys were conducted in Kota, Bhilwara, Bikaner, Sikar, Jodhpur and Jaipur locations of Rajasthan.

S. No.	Stakeholder Designation	Mode	No. of Interviews
1	Students	Survey	297
2	Trainers	Survey	15
3	Parents	Survey	12
4	Centre Heads	KII	6
5	Employers	KII	17
6	Ambuja Cement Foundation	KII	1

5. FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

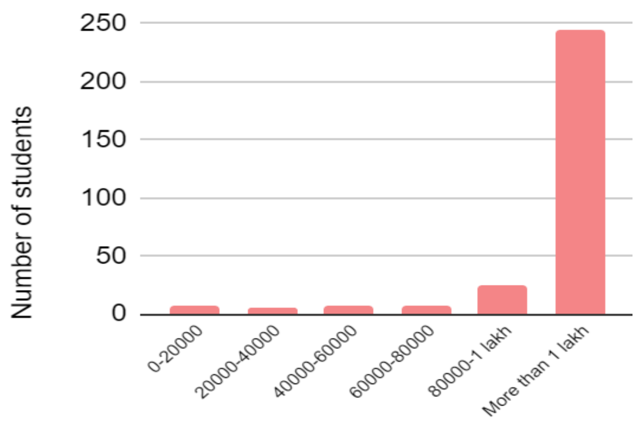
5.1 Student/Trainee Profile



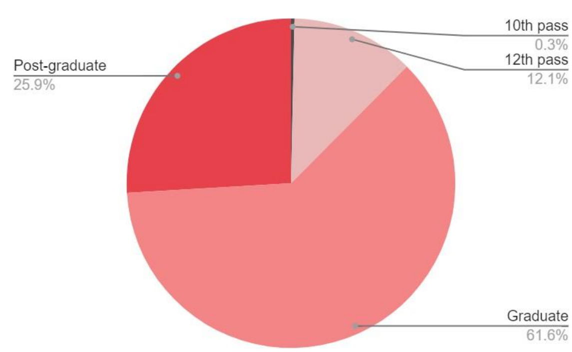


Location

The survey of 297 students revealed that 56% of the trainees were male, while 44% were female. The survey covered 51 students from Bhilwara, 51 from Bikaner, 48 from Jaipur, 55 from Jodhpur, 42 from Kota, and 49 from Sikar. The participants in the survey fell within the age range of 20 to 35 years.



Annual Household Income



Qualification of the Students

The majority of students predominantly come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, with an annual household income varying between ₹ 1 lakh to ₹ 5 lakhs. Their families are often engaged in labor-intensive occupations, involving agricultural work and other blue-collar jobs such as construction, manufacturing, maintenance, and logistics. Among the respondents, 61% had attained graduation with B.A and B.Com, whereas 25% held post-graduate degrees such as MA and M. Ed. The remaining participants had completed 10th and/or 12th grade levels.

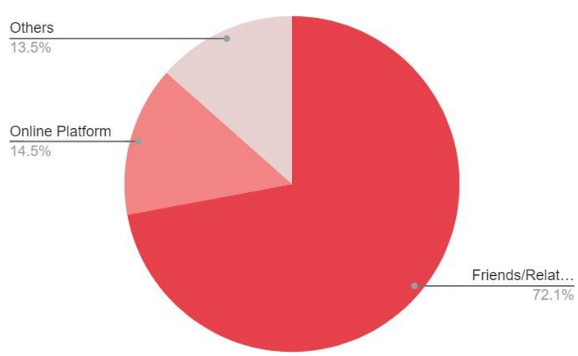
5.2 Program Design

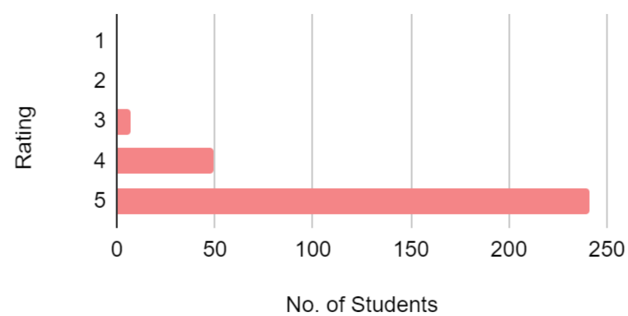
5.2.1 Relevance

The genesis of the program has been laid on the foundation of:

1) Livelihood enhancement: Assisting or approving loans to the underserved and marginalized communities for building an asset and thereby having a source of an income.
2) Bridging the skill's need gap: Imparting the skills to both, unemployed urban youth in wage employment and the unemployed rural youth in self-employment.

From these perspectives, AU Skills Academy program is extremely relevant for the beneficiaries at the targeted geographies.





Information received about AU Skills Academy through course curriculum on a different mediums

Students' rating on the relevance of scale of 1-5 (1: Not at all relevant , 5: Highly relevant)

The program's average duration was three months. Students reported making a registration payment of ₹600 (General category) and ₹300 (OBC, SC, ST category) with some indicating an additional fee of ₹1200 for the Tally Certificate for Account Executive course in Jaipur location. 99.6% of the participants perceived the program as highly pertinent in terms of its impact on job prospects and career advancement. These fees were in line with the Rajasthan Skill & Livelihood Development Corporation's (RSLDC) requirement of the fee structure for the course. The course of Tally Certification of Account Executive is offered entirely by the AU Skills Academy.

97% of the participants rated 4.8 on the relevance of the course content regarding current banking and financial services jobs. 72% of the trainees got to know about the AU Skills Academy through friends/relatives. This shows a high level of awareness about AU Skills in the respective locations. The Deccan Herald Report, Rajasthan states [2]18,40,044 registered unemployed youth, out of which 14,40,916 are graduates and at least 1,01,956 who have studied beyond graduation as on February 21, 2023. The AU Skills Academy program has played a key role in decreasing the employment gap through taking accountability of the placements. The program is highly relevant on account of the following reasons:

- ***Employability:*** Acquiring skills in banking and financial services enhances the employability of the youth. As the banking sector is a significant contributor to the economy, there is a constant demand for skilled professionals in roles such as banking associates, financial analysts, customer service representatives, and more.
- ***Industry Growth:*** Rajasthan's economic development is closely tied to the growth of various industries, and a well-trained workforce in banking and financial services can contribute to overall economic progress. Skilled individuals can support the expansion of financial institutions, leading to increased investment and economic stability.
- ***Financial Inclusion:*** Education in banking and financial services plays a key role in promoting financial inclusion. It equips individuals with the knowledge needed to access and utilize financial services effectively, fostering economic development at the grassroots level.
- ***Entrepreneurship:*** Financial literacy and skills empower youth to become entrepreneurs. Understanding banking services, loans, and financial management is crucial for those looking to start and sustain their businesses. This, in turn, contributes to the growth of the local economy.
- ***Globalization and Technology:*** With the globalization of financial markets and the increasing integration of technology in banking, there is a growing need for individuals with up-to-date skills. Educating the youth in Rajasthan on these aspects ensures they are prepared for the evolving landscape of the financial services industry.
- ***Personal Financial Management***: Skills in banking and financial services are essential for personal financial management. Educated youth are better equipped to make informed decisions regarding savings, investments, and debt management, leading to improved financial well-being.
- ***Career Progression:*** A workforce with skills in banking and financial services can pursue diverse career paths within the industry. Continuous learning and upskilling are crucial for career progression in this dynamic field.
- ***Financial Stability:*** Sound financial knowledge contributes to individual and societal financial stability. It helps in making informed decisions, managing risks, and mitigating the impact of economic uncertainties.

5.2.2 Preparedness

Enrollment Process

All the trainees reported a smooth and easy enrolment process. The process involves a brief orientation of the students about the program by the centre staff including career counselor, trainers, and centre heads. This is followed by filling in an enrolment form entailing details such as name, address, gender, signature and attaching a passport size photograph.

We observed lack of maintenance of physical documentation and enrolment forms in one of the centres at Bhilwara.

Attendance and Student Record

Prior to the onset of the Covid pandemic, attendance was recorded manually. However, in the post-Covid period, the system was transitioned to biometric methods. It was noticed that attendance registers were well-kept across all centers, with a few using Excel sheets to document attendance for the entire duration. It's recommended that attendance should be maintained on Excel sheets or any other software for ease of tracking.

Infrastructure

The infrastructure comprises both necessary and non-essential features as outlined below:

Essential Features						
Infrastructural Features	Jaipur (ACF)	Kota	Bhilwara	Sikar	Bikaner	Jodhpur
Counseling Room	☑	☑	✗	☑	☑	✗
Computers, Projectors, Smart board	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
AU Bank's Logo	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	✗
Training material	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Additional/Optional Features						
Additional Features	Jaipur (ACF)	Kota	Bhilwara	Sikar	Bikaner	Jodhpur
Mannequin wearing AU Skills Uniform	☑	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Library/ Bookshelf	☑	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Wall Graffiti on	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	✗

Banking concepts						
Wall of Fame/ Achiever's Wall	☑	☑	✕	☑	☑	✕

- Having a counselling room is crucial as it provides a private and conducive space for individuals to receive confidential guidance, support, and counseling. This dedicated space enhances the effectiveness of counseling sessions, ensuring privacy and a comfortable environment for those seeking assistance.

- Mannequins adorning in AU Skills uniforms should be installed in all the centres. The installation of such mannequins serve as a motivational tool for students, encouraging them to adhere to a proper dress code and fostering a positive atmosphere within the AU Skills premises.

- All centres should have 'Learning Corner' or Library. This will contribute to creating a conducive learning environment.

5.3 Program Delivery

5.3.1 Effectiveness

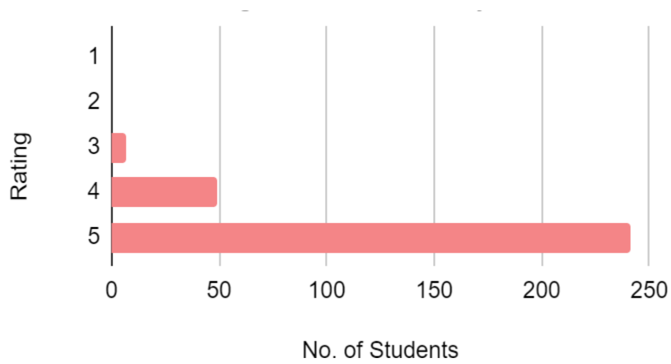
Mode of Delivery & Instruction

- The medium of instruction was reported to be bilingual, incorporating both English and Hindi. This approach created a comfortable learning environment, allowing students to grasp concepts clearly while simultaneously improving their proficiency in English speaking skills.
- Given that 2021-22 was a pandemic year, 44% of the trainees attended sessions in person, 31% participated virtually, and 25% engaged in both physical and virtual mediums.

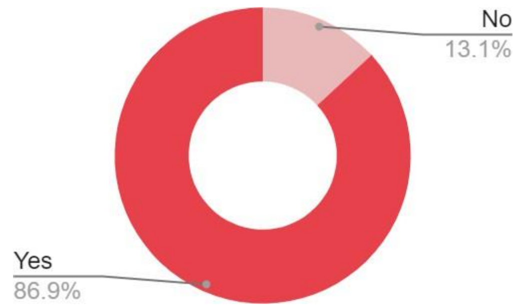
Training Material

- 97% of students stated to have received the training material in a timely manner but the lack of hard copies posed a challenge. The trainers and centre heads were involved in providing the training material.
- The trainers suggested constant upgradation of the training material to advance the learning level by subscription of monthly banking magazines to enhance knowledge of the students.

Quality of Overall Training



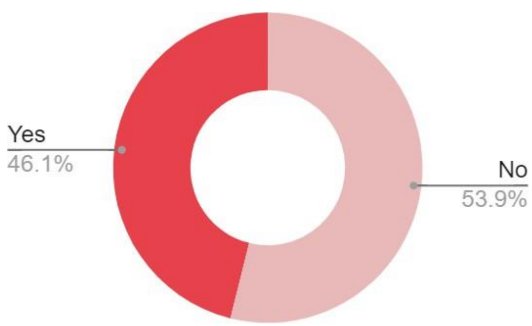
Trainees rating of the training on the scale of 1-5



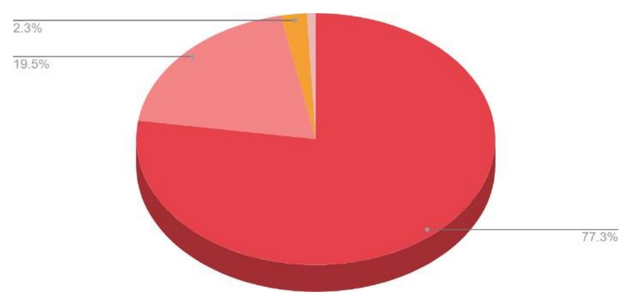
Percentages of trainees who received certificates from AU Skills Academy

- Students held a positive perception of the overall training quality, highlighting that the program addressed various aspects, including enrollment, teaching, counseling support, and placements. They expressed satisfaction with the certificates received, noting that these credentials played a crucial role in facilitating employment opportunities both through AU and independently.

On-the-Job Training



% trainees who received OJT



Five point rating of OJT

- There was no fixed schedule or a set structure of on-the-job training, but the majority of students visited AU Bank branches located in their respective regions during the course of their training programs where they engaged with alumni and gained insights into the work environment. Additionally, they gained practical experience at various microfinance institutions, including but not limited to Yes Enterprises, Aarohan Finance Bank, Digamber Finance Ltd., Edelweiss Ltd., etc. Trainees also stated attending webinars and guest lectures during the course of training. However, trainees have expressed a need for well-defined structure for on-the-job training program.

Attendance & Monitoring

- Attendance trackers and registers were used to confirm that an impressive 96% of participants maintained attendance of over 70% throughout the program. This indicates effective record-keeping by the centre staff and trainers, showcasing their commitment to minimizing student dropouts. The efforts include counseling sessions and personalize 1-1 support, demonstrating a proactive approach to student engagement and success.

- After the completion of the course, trainers maintain communication with students for a duration of six months to keep track on their whereabouts.

Training of the Trainers

- 50% of the trainers reported having Training of Trainers (ToT) certification:
  - 0 out of 2 trainers surveyed in Bhilwara had a ToT certification
  - 2 out of 3 trainers surveyed in Bikaner had a ToT certification
  - 2 out of 2 trainers surveyed in Jaipur had a ToT certification
  - 1 out of 2 trainers surveyed in Jodhpur had a ToT certification
  - 1 out of 2 trainers surveyed in Kota had a ToT certification
  - 1 out of 4 trainers surveyed in Sikar had a ToT certification

33% of them stated to have received proper training for delivering the course. These trainers have acknowledged the importance of specialized training to enhance their proficiency in banking and finance concepts, as well as to familiarize themselves with new teaching methodologies.

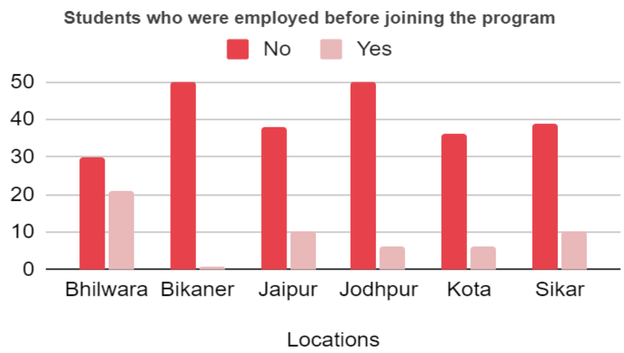
Placement and Post-placement Support

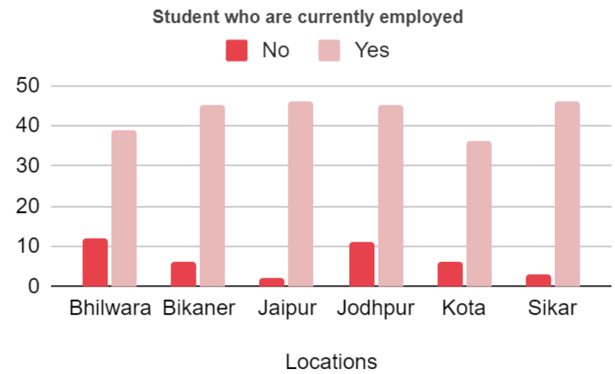
- Observations reveal that all students underwent suitable training for placement, encompassing interview preparation. Additionally, 74% of the trainees reported receiving timely counseling support for a duration ranging from 6 months to 1 year from the commencement of their employment.

5.4 Impact & Sustainability

5.4.1 Impact

Change in the Employment Trend





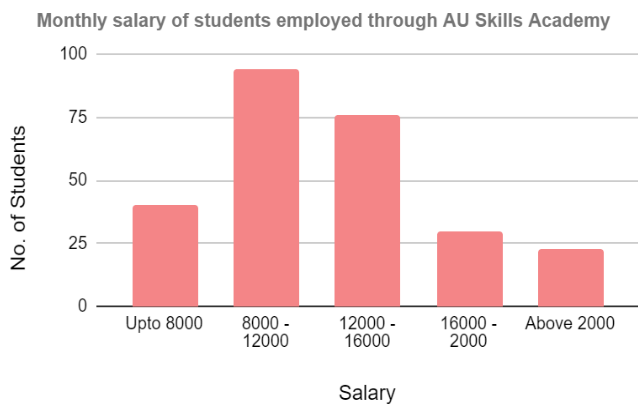
Location	% of students employed before joining the program	% of students placed after the program
Bhilwara	40%	85-90%
Bikaner	4%	85%
Jaipur	21%	81%
Jodhpur	10%	89.4%
Kota	14%	90%
Sikar	20%	85%

- The training program has demonstrated exceptional efficacy in significantly boosting the employment rate. Out of the 297 students surveyed, only 54 were employed before enrolling in the training program. However, there has been a significant shift in the employment trend with 257 out of the total students are presently employed, indicating the program's success in enhancing employment opportunities. Of the students who are currently employed, 84% were placed by AU Skills Academy, 9% found employment on their own. The employment outcomes show a 5% spike in the placement of female and 6% for male candidates respectively after the completion of the program. There is considerable potential for augmenting placements for female candidates, acknowledging the challenges they encounter in relocating to different areas, primarily due to safety concerns.

- A pattern in employment retention brought to the fore: 17% of the students remained in their positions for less than 6 months. 12% of the students retained employment for a duration between 6 months to 1 year. 62% of the students placed through AU Skills sustained employment with the same organization for over 1 year, indicating a high level of job retention among this group.

- Trainees who worked for less than 6 months either switched to another organisation or started their own business or joined a family business.

- 53% of the trainees received an increment after working for 1 year with the organisation.

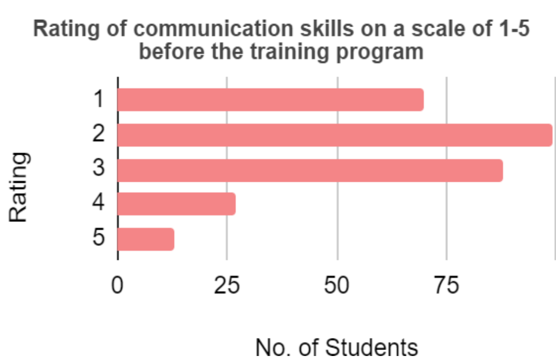


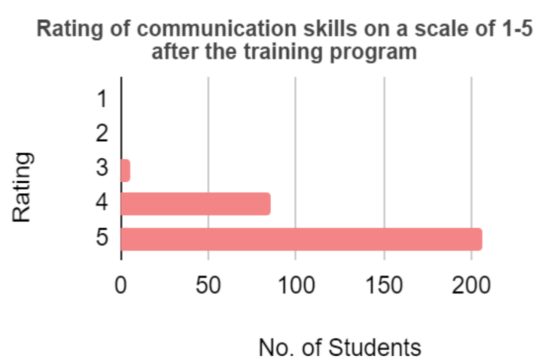
- The predominant income range among the majority of students falls between ₹8000–₹16,000 per month. Students expressed their eagerness to augment their earnings and enhance their income levels. These income ranges are in-line with the compensation offered to semi-skilled employees in the market.

- The literature review of the employment trend of the total beneficiaries placed suggests that around 42% of the trainees are placed in banking and financial services and insurance (BFSI). Around 12.5% of trainees are placed in retail followed by 10% who prefer to be an entrepreneur.

- SBI Bank, UCO Bank, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Yes Bank, Bandhan Bank, RBL Bank, IDFC First Bank are some of the top employers where trainees are placed.

Change in the Skills & Knowledge

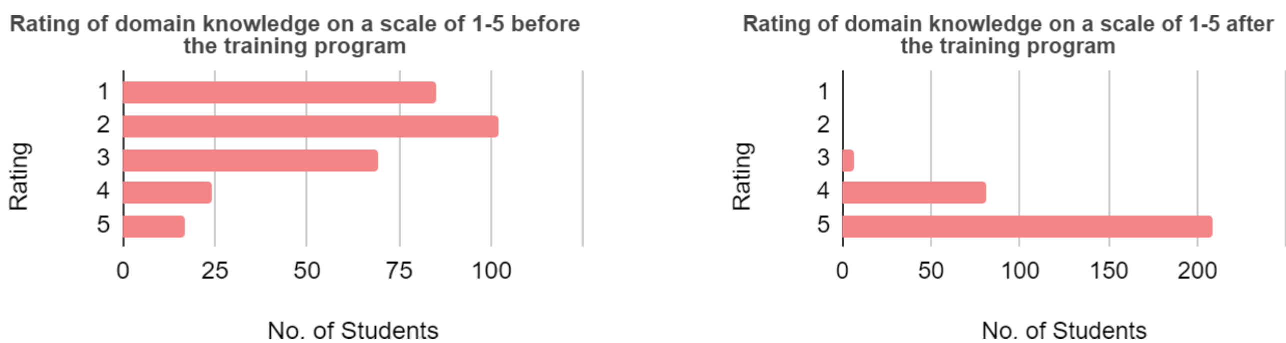




Change in communication skills after the program on a scale of 1-5 (1: Very Poor; 5: Excellent)

- A noticeable observation during the surveys indicates that, prior to the program, a majority of students had communication skills ranging from very poor to average. The program has played a pivotal role in the enhancement of communication and other interpersonal skills, as reflected in self-ratings by the majority of students falling between 4-5 on a scale of 1-5.
    - The observation is backed by the responses from trainers during interaction that trainees are called in front of the class to speak on a topic, trainees prepare PowerPoint presentations and present in class, mock interviews are done and trainees are told what areas they need to improve, all this helps in developing communication skills.
    - The employers mentioned that trainees hired from AU skills academy have good communication skills, which helps the employers in selling their products easily and are satisfied with the performance of the trainees hired from AU skills academy.

Student Testimonials:
"Public speaking has improved and now I do not not hesitate to speak".
"I was extremely shy before joining the program, but now I am very comfortable in interacting with people. This has also helped me in cracking the interviews".



Change in domain knowledge after the program on a scale of 1-5 (1: Very Poor; 5: Excellent)

- It has been observed that, before the program, a majority of trainees (around 250) had little to no domain knowledge in banking and finance. The program has played a crucial role in augmenting their domain knowledge and overall understanding of banking and finance. The shift is evident in the self-ratings provided by the majority of students, with scores falling between 4-5 on a scale of 1-5.

- The gain in domain knowledge was reflected in the values and mindsets of the trainees. 47% stated to have either saved and invested money through Fixed Deposit, or other similar investment schemes/plans.

Student Testimonials:
"We learnt a lot of skills like investing in stock market, fixed deposits, mutual funds, etc. I have started investing in stock markets that is giving me good returns".
"I got knowledge about computer and other schemes that helped me start my E-MITRA center".

Change in the Quality of Life

- The monthly family income of trainees experienced significant upswing, demonstrating an increase of 40% to 60% subsequent to program participation. An

Parent Testimonials:
"We live in a rented house. Now, our son is planning to buy a house as we are financially more capable. The AU Skills program has been life-changing for our family."
"My son is able to earn 22000 as he got placed in Kotak Securities as Assistant Manager, Sales. Prior to this program, he wasn't able to find employment by himself."

encouraging development is the positive shift in the mindset of parents who, inspired by the program's success, actively advocate for community members to pursue the training. This advocacy reflects not only in economic gains but also contributes to an improved quality of life for the families involved. Every trainee affirmed the tremendous benefits derived from the program, expressing its potential to be advantageous for other youth and community members. Notably, many students have enthusiastically recommended the program to a minimum of five friends and relatives, underscoring the positive impact and value they attribute to it.

The current trends in the vocational skill development in banking and financial sector in India mainly focuses on the following:

The employment trends in the vocational banking and financial sector till FY 2022 have been diverse ranging from traditional roles in banking operations to emerging positions in data analysis, risk management, and financial technology. From this standpoint, the program has successfully been able to integrate unemployment youth into formal employment, sometimes leading to being an entrepreneur. The forecast for next five years (from 2024) suggests that the ongoing digital transformation in the financial sector is expected to continue, creating a sustained demand for professionals with digital skills. As the economy rebounds from global uncertainties, there may be an increased need for professionals in areas like risk management and financial advisory services. Fintech is likely to play an even more significant role, with an increased demand for professionals skilled in blockchain, cryptocurrency, and artificial intelligence.

Considering the trend, AU Skills Academy program is contributing to the aspect of financial inclusion in rural and semi-urban areas by providing employment opportunities and enabling an ecosystem of financial literacy in the local communities where it operates. The short course training and placement is imminent to the program which should be scaled up in the rural and aspirational districts of India.

Increased Emphasis on Digital Skills:

The banking and financial sector has been increasingly focused on digital transformation. This includes a growing demand for professionals with digital skills such as data analytics, fintech expertise, and cybersecurity.

Collaborations with Educational Institutions:

Many banks and financial institutions have been collaborating with educational institutions to design and implement specialized vocational training programs. This fosters a direct link between industry requirements and the skills acquired by the workforce.

Focus on Financial Inclusion:

With a push for financial inclusion in India, there has been a trend towards skill development programs that specifically target areas related to rural and semi-urban banking, microfinance, and basic financial literacy.

Adoption of FinTech Skills:

The rise of financial technology (FinTech) has led to an increased demand for professionals skilled in areas such as blockchain, digital payments, and algorithmic trading.

The vocational skill development trend in the banking and financial sector in India is expected to continue evolving, driven by digital transformation and industry-specific demands. AU Small Finance Bank's commitment through AU Skills Academy to skill development aligns well with these trends, positioning the bank to tap into a skilled workforce while contributing to the socioeconomic development of the local communities it serves. It's important for the bank to stay agile, continually update its programs, and adapt to emerging industry needs.

Learnings from the centres functional by the implementing partners

The centres operated by AU Skills Academy and other implementing partners are similar in the nature of functioning. However, the visit to the Jaipur centre operated by the Ambuja Cement Foundation (ACF) provides us a peek into the following areas that can be taken by the Skills Academy:

Capacity Building of Trainers**:** ACF has a dedicated internal capacity building team that ensures timely provision and updation to the trainers at the centre. Each of the trainers are assessed and evaluated for their performance at the end of the last quarter of the financial year.

AU Skills Academy can have capacity building programs for their trainers which will further improve the quality of the program.

Infrastructure Upgradation**:** AU Skills Academy needs to have mini libraries to continue dissemination of classroom concepts through textbooks/reference materials. ACF centre at Jaipur had mini-libraries which are helping students in the course.

Branding: Visuals are proven method of registering a concept, hence promoting the centre by having a mannequin bearing AU Skills uniform suggesting a Skill Development Centre can up the enrolment rate.

6. SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths	Weaknesses
• A well-designed curriculum for the course delivery • Easy & smooth enrolment process for students • The bilingual mode of delivery in both English & Hindi facilitated the ease of information • The program has successfully maintained a placement rate of above 75% across all the centres • The program has positively impacted the overall quality of lives of the students & their families • Effective implementation of proper counseling support for students, enhancing their overall learning experience and personal development	• It was noted that at a few centers, including Bhilwara, there were some challenges in the proper maintenance of physical documentation for the enrolment forms
Opportunities	Threats
• The program can have structured on-the-job training as part of the training • Introduce monthly magazines/newsletters on banking and other aspects to encourage reading among the students and disseminate extra knowledge • Increase the frequency of guest lectures and alumni interactions from 1 -2 to 4-6 • Conduct regular training of the trainers • Introduce missing centre infrastructure such as mannequins, bookshelves in the centres where there is a dearth of it • Focus on interpersonal skills such as critical thinking, agility through increased guest sessions and simulations	No perceived threats

7. CHALLENGES & RECOMMENDATIONS

PROGRAM DESIGN	
Challenges/Observations	**Recommendations**
Enrolment forms were not properly maintained at the Bhilwara centre. The centre staff was found filling the forms during the time of data collection process.	Program team should ask for the enrolment forms from each centres once the program is rolled out.
30% of students in Sikar and Bikaner did not possess smartphones or laptops, leading to the necessity of sharing devices among peers. This sharing of devices disrupted the continuity of their learning experience.	Both physical and digital copies should be made available to facilitate continuous learning
Students in Sikar and Bikaner faced learning disruptions due to the dearth of hard copies of training materials. Many lacked smart devices and were uncomfortable with e-learning methods, impacting the continuity of their education.	Students, engaging in both physical and virtual mediums, should be provided with both hard and soft copies of the training material to support their learning experience. Soft copies can be emailed right after the commencement of the training.
No mannequins in the centres except Jaipur centre	Introduce mannequins in these centres as they serve as visual cues, encouraging students to uphold a proper dress code—an aspect often noticed upon entering the centre.
No/dearth of bookshelves at the centres located in Kota, Bhilwara, Sikar, and Bikaner.	Installation of bookshelves in these centres is recommended to foster a culture of reading and facilitate the dissemination of additional knowledge.
The chairs & desks at the centre in Sikar were not in a very good state	Introduce/Rehaul proper chairs and desks
The absence of air conditioners in the Bikaner centre presented a challenge for providing a comfortable learning environment for students,	Installation of air conditioners is recommended

during the summer months.	
PROGRAM DELIVERY	
Challenges/ Observations	**Recommendations**
There is a need for the upgradation of training materials and additional resources for effective knowledge dissemination.	- Update the course material to an advanced level - Enhance the study material, incorporating booklets and regular updates on developments in the banking sector - Establish a monthly magazine to disseminate updates to both students and trainers
There is a lack of a structured approach to on-the-job training.	Establish a well-defined structure for on-the-job training sessions. A structured approach will not only provide clear guidance to trainers but also enhance the overall learning experience for participants. This includes outlining specific learning objectives, creating a curriculum, and implementing a systematic evaluation process.
Not all trainers were provided with the training for delivering the course and many of them expressed a need for regular training sessions.	It is strongly recommended to prioritize and invest in a robust Training of Trainers (ToT) program. Continuous professional development through ToT is an investment in the sustained excellence of educational initiatives and positively impacts the learning experience for all participants.
The placement rate among females stands at 80%, slightly lower than the male placement rate of 92%. The primary contributing factor is the resistance among females to relocate to other areas due to safety concerns.	- It is recommended to design the placement process with a focus on maximizing placements for females within local areas and in the vicinity of the centre. This should also in lieu with the demand of such trainees locally. This approach aims to address resistance to relocation and enhance female participation in employment opportunities. - Secondly, Parents can be engaged in counseling sessions to help them feel more

	comfortable with the idea of allowing their daughters to explore opportunities outside their local areas in the following ways- **Information Dissemination:** Provide parents with accurate and positive information about the benefits and opportunities available to their daughters in various areas. **Interactive Sessions:** Organize interactive sessions where parents can express their concerns, and counselors can address them effectively. Encourage an open dialogue to build trust. **Success Stories:** Share success stories of individuals, especially women, who have ventured beyond local areas and achieved significant accomplishments.
Many trainees encounter challenges during the initial months of their employment. Insights from interactions with employers suggest that the work required learning new skills, adapting to a fast-paced environment, and maintaining agility under pressure.	It is strongly recommended to implement a post-placement support/training program for students entering the workforce. Recognizing the challenges faced by many students in the initial months of employment, a structured support system can facilitate a smoother transition into the workplace. This post-placement initiative should focus on addressing specific challenges identified, providing ongoing skill development, and fostering resilience in adapting to the demands of the job. Integrate training sessions for students in basic data analysis using Excel and practical skills in drafting formal letters and applications on MS-Word.

8. ANNEXURE

Annexure-I Pictures from the Field

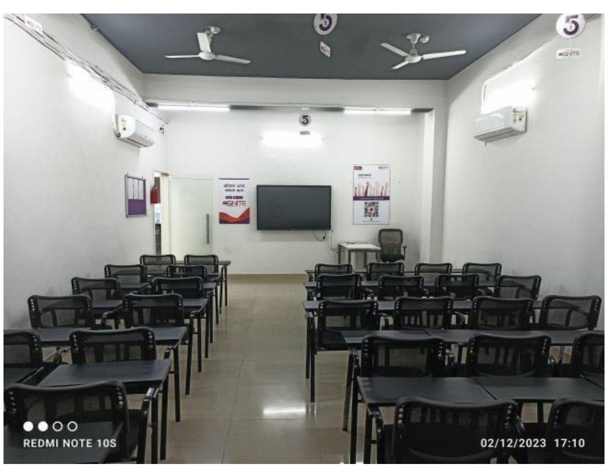
Kota

Pic.01 Interaction with Parents and beneficiaries

Pic.02 Program team of AU Skills Academy

Pic. 03 Interaction with Parents at their home

Pic. 04 Interaction with trainees at the AU skills academy



Pic.05 Classroom

Pic.06 Achiever's wall

Bhilwara

Pic. 01 Interaction with the trainee at the centre Bhilwara.

Pic. 02 Entrance of AU skills academy

Pic. 03 Computer Lab at the Bhilwara centre

Pic. 04 Interaction with the Trainer.

Pic. 05 Interaction with a Parent

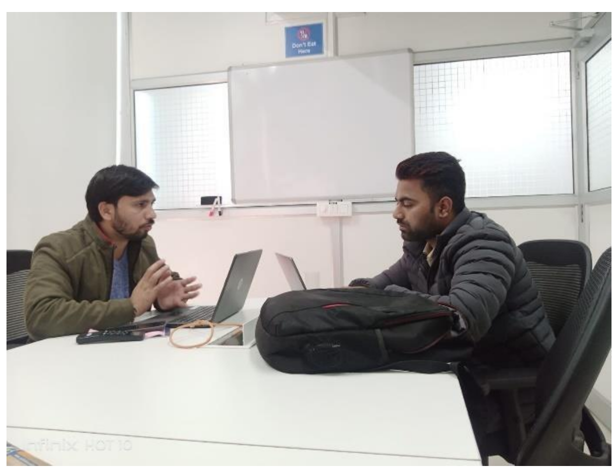
Pic. 06 Interaction with the Employer

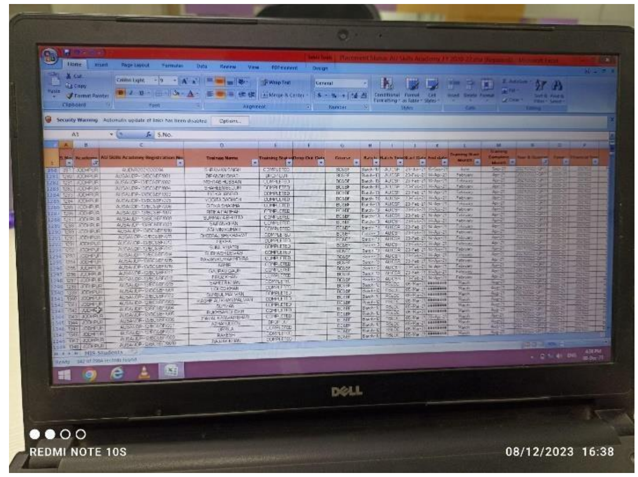
Jodhpur

Pic. 07 With the Program Team, Jodhpur Centre Head

Pic. 08 Checking records with the

Pic. 09 Interaction with the Employer

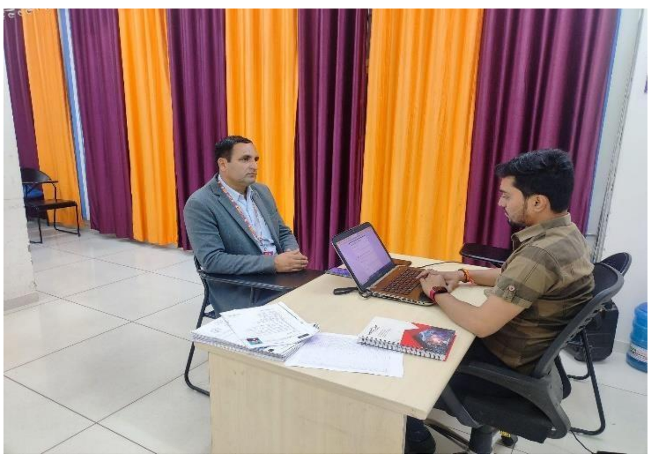




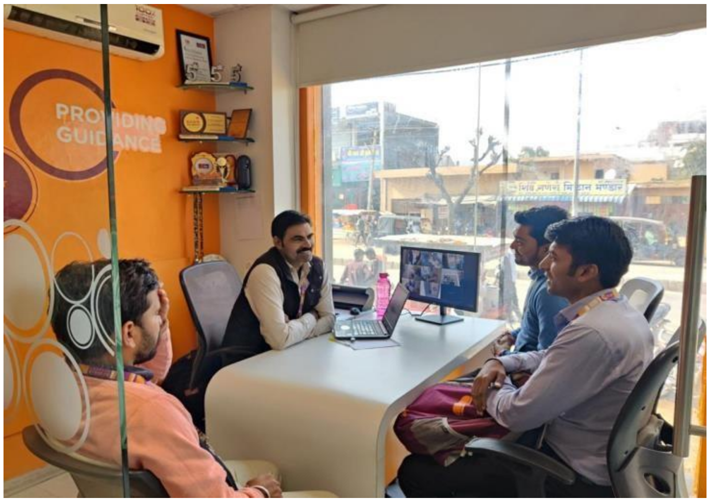
Pic. 05 Interaction with the Trainee at Jodhpur

Pic. 06 Record of Trainees

Sikar

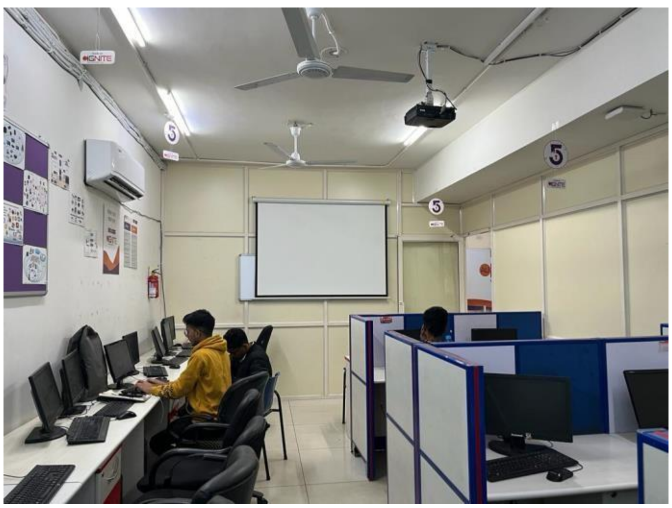


Pic. 01 Interaction with the Centre Head; Picture 2: Interaction with the Trainee



Pic.03 With the Program Team, Sikar

Pic.04 Interaction with the Parents



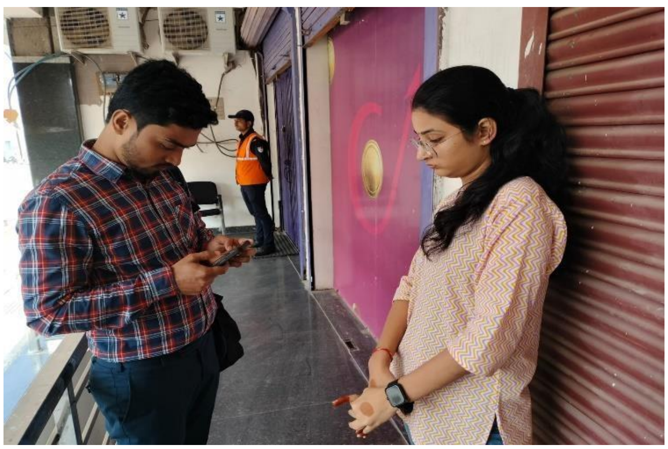
Pic.05 Interaction with the Employer

Pic.06 Computer Lab

Bikaner

Pic. 01 Interaction with the Trainer

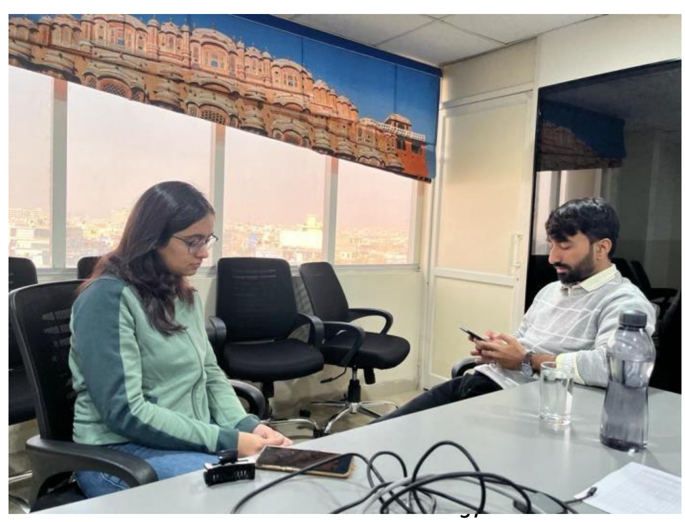
Pic.02 Classroom



Pic.03 Interaction with the Trainee at
Job location
centre

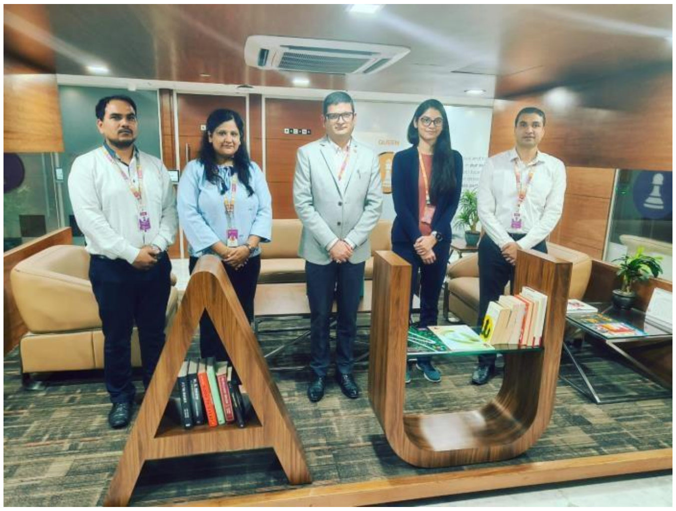
Pic. 04 With the Trainees at the

Jaipur



Pic.01 Interaction with the Program Team Pic.02 Interaction with the
Employer

Pic.03 Interaction with the Trainee Pic.04 Interaction with the centre
Head



Pic. 05 With Program Team

Pic.06 Interaction with a Parent