

## Lessons Learnt SKIES Implementation

### 1. Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement

Continuous collaboration and communication with beneficiaries including Intermediaries, Students and Universities is essential in ensuring alignment and ownership of the project's objectives.

### 2. Adaptability in Performance Monitoring

The need for flexibility in the performance monitoring framework became apparent as the project progressed. Initially set indicators and milestones required periodic review and adjustment to remain relevant and achievable. This adaptability ensured that the performance management system could respond to evolving circumstances and feedback from stakeholders, maintaining its effectiveness and ensuring that project goals remained on track.

### 3. Comprehensive and Continuous Training

Thorough training and codeveloping Performance Improvement Plans with Intermediaries on was key for smooth contract implementation. This highlights the importance of ongoing capacity-building efforts to equip partners with the necessary knowledge and skills.

### 4. Integration of Practical Training

The inclusion of hands-on, practical training in the Rapid Tech Skills Curriculum greatly enhanced students' understanding and application of technical skills. Future programs should emphasize real-world applications to bridge the gap between theory and practice, with a flexible curriculum that adapts to emerging industry trends and allowing students to specialize in specific tech modules (Cyber Security, Software Engineering or Data Science and AI) would further enhance the program's effectiveness and relevance.

### 5. Student Engagement and Retention

Personalized support, including mentorship and regular check-ins, played a key role in maintaining high retention rates. However, there is room for improvement in engagement strategies to reduce the dropout rate further, particularly for students facing personal challenges. The provision of stipends was effective in encouraging participation and completion. However, timely disbursement and adjustments to the stipend amounts to better meet living costs would improve overall satisfaction and reduce financial stress on students, enabling them to focus more on their studies.

## 6. University Partnerships:

Collaborating with eight regional universities expanded the program's reach and diversity. Coordination challenges that arose including administration of common evaluations, timely implementation of curriculum highlighted the need for clearer communication channels and standardized processes across all participating institutions. Improved inter-university collaboration and more streamlined operations could enhance the program's efficiency and impact, ensuring that all partners work cohesively towards shared goals.

## 7. Industry Engagement

Industry involvement in lectures and mentorship added significant value to the program by providing students with insights into real-world applications and career pathways. There is an opportunity to deepen these partnerships. Establishing more structured internship or job placement pipelines could greatly enhance the program's impact on employability. The program's success in equipping participants with technical skills led to job placements and entrepreneurial ventures. To sustain this impact, post-program support, such as career counseling and business incubation, should be expanded, ensuring long-term success for participants.

## 8. SKIES GRM

The Grievance Redress Mechanism was instrumental in creating a transparent and responsive environment for both students and facilitators. By offering a formal channel for raising concerns, the GRM enabled prompt resolution of issues, which was crucial for maintaining program momentum and participant satisfaction. The GRM helped build trust among students, knowing their voices were heard and their concerns were addressed. This mechanism also provided valuable insights for SKIES Team, enabling them to make informed adjustments and improve the overall program experience.

## 9. Data-Driven Decision Making

The use of data to monitor student progress and program effectiveness was invaluable. This data-driven approach allowed for informed decision-making and adaptive management, ensuring that the program remained aligned with its objectives. Future programs should invest in more robust Monitoring & Evaluation frameworks that offer real-time insights, enabling more dynamic and responsive program management. This approach will help maintain the relevance and effectiveness of the program over time.