

Education For Youth and Women Empowerment: Mentoring, Skills Training, and Leadership Development

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Abstract

This study examines the integrative role of mentoring, skills training, and leadership development within a community-based empowerment program for youth and women. The program was designed to transform educational participation into sustainable personal, organizational, and community capacity through coordinated pedagogical interventions. Using mixed qualitative and quantitative monitoring, the analysis demonstrates that mentoring establishes relational stability and identity formation that sustain long-term engagement. Skills training converts learning into measurable productive capacity, reflected in improved employment transition, income growth, and enterprise formation. Leadership development synthesizes these processes by aligning technical competence with ethical authority and collective coordination. Empirical evidence indicates that participants exposed to the full intervention cycle display higher leadership uptake, stronger professional resilience, and increased civic participation. At the institutional level, the program contributes to organizational learning and governance reform. At the community level, leadership diffusion enhances collective problem-solving and economic diversification. The findings confirm that empowerment is not the outcome of isolated activities but the product of an integrated developmental architecture. This model offers a transferable framework for sustainable empowerment initiatives across diverse socio-economic contexts.

Keywords: youth empowerment, women empowerment, mentoring, skills training, leadership development.



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INTRODUCTION

The empowerment of youth and women through education oriented toward skills formation and leadership development has emerged as a central priority within contemporary social development agendas across diverse geopolitical contexts. Persistent structural constraints in the form of economic marginalization, uneven educational access, and limited social mobility continue to restrict the productive potential of young populations in many developing societies. Abdelmoteleb, Badar, and Mason (2025) demonstrate that education framed as an instrument of empowerment functions as a decisive mechanism for disrupting intergenerational cycles of disadvantage among economically marginalized youth. This perspective establishes a foundational rationale for educational interventions that integrate cognitive learning with applied competencies and leadership cultivation.

The formation of character and leadership dispositions during early developmental stages constitutes a decisive determinant of long-term civic engagement and social responsibility within transforming communities. Learning environments that emphasize discipline, ethical reasoning, and reflective practice generate enduring patterns of behavior that extend beyond formal educational settings. Tham (2025) provides empirical evidence that sustained leadership training among youth athletes produces durable transformations in self-regulation, responsibility, and collective orientation. Such findings underscore the necessity of positioning character formation as a core objective within community-based empowerment programs.

In many developing regions, the institutional capacity of community organizations remains insufficient to sustain complex empowerment initiatives that demand continuity, adaptability, and accountability. Weak organizational governance, fragmented program management, and limited monitoring mechanisms frequently undermine the long-term impact of training and mentoring interventions. Kazanskaia (2025) argues that systematic capacity building constitutes a prerequisite for the sustainable growth of non-profit institutions engaged in social development. This framework legitimizes the integration of organizational strengthening within community service programs focused on youth and women empowerment.

The advancement of women's economic participation and leadership representation continues to confront entrenched barriers rooted in gender norms, unequal access to capital, and restricted professional networks. Educational programs that combine entrepreneurial training with confidence building and strategic mentoring generate measurable gains in women's economic agency and social visibility. Ankita, Seth, and Mishra (2025) reveal that the rise of women entrepreneurs contributes directly to household resilience and community-level economic stability. These findings situate skills training and leadership education as pivotal instruments of gender-responsive social transformation.

Mentoring relationships occupy a central position within youth development programs by shaping learning trajectories, identity formation, and long-term motivation. Dialogic engagement, reciprocal learning, and sustained interpersonal support create developmental spaces in which young participants negotiate aspirations and competencies with greater autonomy. Maxwell et al. (2025) illustrate that mentors conceptualize their roles as co-learners engaged in a shared process of growth rather than as hierarchical instructors. This relational orientation strengthens the pedagogical foundation of empowerment initiatives that privilege mentorship as a structural pillar.

The participation of young women in science, technology, and innovation has become a critical indicator of national competitiveness within knowledge-based economies. Educational interventions that align technical training with leadership development expand the pathways through which women contribute to innovation ecosystems. Tankabayeva (2025) documents that women's engagement in STEM sectors significantly enhances both the quality and social reach of technological innovation. This evidence supports the strategic inclusion of technical skills training within empowerment programs targeting young women.

Career advancement for women within male-dominated industrial and technological sectors remains constrained by organizational cultures and informal exclusionary practices. Leadership education that emphasizes adaptive capacity, strategic negotiation, and professional identity formation strengthens women's resilience in competitive occupational environments. Thaiduong (2025) demonstrates that sustained mentoring and educational support exert a decisive influence on women's career persistence and upward mobility in manufacturing and technology sectors. These insights reinforce the relevance of leadership development as a central component of empowerment-oriented educational interventions.

Drawing upon these theoretical and empirical foundations, the community service program entitled *Education for Youth and Women Empowerment: mentoring, skills training, and leadership development* is conceptualized as an integrated intervention addressing structural, institutional, and individual dimensions of inequality. The convergence of mentoring, skills acquisition, and leadership formation is designed to generate durable capacity at both personal and community levels. This approach positions participants as active agents in a transformative learning process oriented toward social sustainability. Within this framework, the program aspires to cultivate an inclusive empowerment ecosystem capable of producing long-term developmental impact.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive mixed-methods design to examine the implementation and outcomes of an integrated empowerment program combining mentoring, skills training, and leadership development for youth and women participants. Data were collected through structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, direct observation of training activities, and analysis of program documentation across three implementation cycles. Quantitative data were used to measure changes in employment transition, income growth, leadership uptake, and community participation, while qualitative data captured participants' experiences, identity formation, and institutional dynamics. The sample consisted of program beneficiaries, mentors, trainers, and institutional coordinators selected

through purposive sampling to represent diverse demographic and professional backgrounds. Data analysis integrated descriptive statistics with thematic coding to ensure triangulation between numerical indicators and narrative evidence, thereby strengthening the validity and reliability of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mentoring as the Core Mechanism of Youth and Women Empowerment

Mentoring constitutes the structural backbone of empowerment programs because it establishes a sustained relational space in which knowledge, values, and aspirations are transmitted through guided interaction. The presence of experienced mentors reshapes learning from a transactional process into a developmental trajectory marked by trust and accountability. In community-based initiatives, mentoring mediates the translation of abstract training content into lived practice and adaptive decision making. Maxwell et al. (2025) document that mentors in after-school programs perceive their role as a reciprocal learning partnership that evolves alongside the participants' personal growth. This relational orientation transforms mentoring into a formative social institution rather than a temporary instructional device.

The effectiveness of mentoring is closely associated with the consistency of interaction and the depth of interpersonal engagement established between mentors and participants. Regular dialogue enables the identification of latent capacities that remain invisible within conventional classroom settings. In empowerment-oriented programs, mentoring functions as a bridge between individual aspiration and collective responsibility. Tham (2025) illustrates that sustained mentoring within leadership academies produces durable internalization of discipline, ethical conduct, and civic orientation among youth participants. These findings reinforce mentoring as a mechanism that stabilizes identity formation across transitional life stages.

Within women empowerment initiatives, mentoring addresses not only skill acquisition but also the negotiation of social roles and professional identities. The mentor becomes a symbolic reference for possible futures that participants have not previously envisioned as attainable. Structured mentoring sessions cultivate strategic thinking, self-efficacy, and long-term planning capacities. Ankita, Seth, and Mishra (2025) demonstrate that women entrepreneurs who receive continuous mentoring display higher persistence and stronger network integration. This evidence situates mentoring as a catalyst for expanding women's agency within constrained socio-economic environments.

At the institutional level, mentoring programs demand governance structures that guarantee continuity, supervision, and quality assurance. Weak coordination frequently fragments mentoring relationships and reduces program coherence. Organizational capacity determines whether mentoring evolves into a sustainable practice or remains a short-lived intervention. Kazanskaia (2025) emphasizes that capacity building within non-profit organizations conditions the durability of mentoring systems embedded in community development programs. This insight frames mentoring as both a pedagogical and managerial enterprise requiring integrated oversight.

Empirical monitoring of mentoring outcomes reveals differentiated impacts across gender, age, and socio-economic background. Longitudinal tracking demonstrates that participants exposed to intensive mentoring exhibit higher retention in training programs and stronger leadership aspirations. The insertion of visual documentation within the analytical narrative strengthens the evidentiary basis of program evaluation.



Figure 1: Mentoring Session with Youth Participants

Such documentation anchors abstract claims within observable practice. Quantitative indicators further substantiate these qualitative observations.

Table 1. Selected Mentoring Outcomes Across Participant Groups

Indicator	Youth Male (%)	Youth Female (%)	Adult Women (%)
Program Retention	82	88	91
Leadership Role Adoption	46	53	67
Post-Training Employment	58	61	74
Community Initiative Participation	41	49	62

The distribution of outcomes in Table 1 demonstrates a systematic gradient in leadership uptake and community participation across demographic groups. Higher retention among women reflects the stabilizing function of mentoring in sustaining long-term engagement. The integration of quantitative evidence with field observation strengthens the analytical coherence of mentoring evaluation. Visual reinforcement within the narrative consolidates the interpretive linkage between data and practice. These patterns indicate that mentoring exerts differentiated yet consistently positive effects across participant categories.

Mentoring also mediates the transfer of tacit knowledge that remains inaccessible through formal training modules. Decision heuristics, conflict management strategies, and ethical judgment are cultivated through observation and guided reflection. In innovation-oriented programs, mentoring accelerates the translation of technical competence into leadership performance. Tankibayeva (2025) reports that women in STEM fields who receive structured mentoring demonstrate higher innovation output and professional visibility. This reinforces mentoring as an accelerator of both technical and leadership trajectories.

In male-dominated professional environments, mentoring mitigates institutional exclusion by offering navigational support and strategic guidance. Participants acquire tools for negotiating authority, managing bias, and constructing resilient professional identities. Thaiduong (2025) shows that mentoring significantly enhances career persistence among women in manufacturing and technology sectors. The alignment between mentoring and career resilience situates this practice as a protective mechanism within competitive labor markets. Such evidence positions mentoring as a structural intervention rather than a supplementary service.

Across program cycles, mentoring reshapes organizational culture by embedding norms of collaboration, accountability, and continuous learning. Mentors themselves undergo professional transformation as reflective practitioners within evolving communities. This reciprocal development stabilizes mentoring networks and multiplies their long-term impact. The circulation of leadership values through mentoring establishes an intergenerational transmission of civic responsibility. In this sense, mentoring becomes an institutional memory sustaining empowerment beyond program boundaries.

The cumulative evidence affirms mentoring as the central architecture through which empowerment initiatives generate durable personal and social transformation. Its relational logic integrates cognitive learning, emotional development, and leadership formation within a coherent developmental pathway. The convergence of qualitative insight and quantitative measurement demonstrates mentoring's systemic influence across multiple outcome domains. By positioning mentoring at the core of program design, empowerment initiatives secure both depth and sustainability of impact.

Skills Training as Capacity Formation

Skills training represents the operational core through which empowerment initiatives convert educational vision into measurable productive capacity (Abdelmoteleb, Badar, & Mason, 2025). The

acquisition of technical, entrepreneurial, and managerial competencies enables participants to reposition themselves within labor markets and community economies. Training programs that are aligned with local economic structures generate higher transferability of skills into income-generating activities. Abdelmoteleb, Badar, and Mason (2025) demonstrate that targeted skills training significantly enhances economic resilience among youth facing structural disadvantage. This evidence situates skills training as a principal driver of socio-economic mobility within empowerment frameworks.

The design of skills training must reflect the dynamic requirements of contemporary labor markets characterized by rapid technological change and occupational fluidity (Mani & Manoharan, 2025). Modular curricula that integrate practical simulation with problem-based learning increase adaptability and long-term employability. Participants exposed to iterative training cycles develop stronger learning autonomy and strategic career orientation. Training environments function not only as sites of instruction but as laboratories of professional identity formation. Such configurations transform skills training into a continuous capacity-building process rather than a finite instructional event.

Within women empowerment programs, skills training mediates the transition from informal economic participation to formal entrepreneurial and professional engagement (Ankita, Seth, & Mishra, 2025). The mastery of financial literacy, digital competence, and production management expands women's control over economic resources. Training sessions structured around real market scenarios reduce the cognitive distance between learning and application. The cultivation of technical competence strengthens bargaining power within household and community decision-making arenas. These dynamics position skills training as a redistributive instrument operating through knowledge and practice.

Institutional alignment determines whether skills training produces isolated competence or integrated workforce readiness (Kazanskaia, 2025). Partnerships with local industries, cooperatives, and public agencies anchor training content within actual employment pathways. Weak institutional coordination frequently results in skills mismatch and underutilization of graduate capacity. Program governance structures shape the coherence between training objectives and labor market absorption. Effective skills training therefore presupposes systemic linkage between education providers and economic institutions.

Quantitative monitoring reveals differentiated outcomes across training domains and participant categories (Wuryan et al., 2025). Performance indicators demonstrate variation in employment transition, income growth, and enterprise formation following program completion. The inclusion of visual documentation reinforces the analytical connection between training activity and observed outcomes. Such triangulation strengthens the evidentiary integrity of capacity formation analysis. Aggregated results are summarized in the following table.

Table 2. Selected Skills Training Outcomes by Competency Domain

Competency Domain	Certification Rate (%)	Employment Transition (%)	Income Increase (%)
Digital Skills	86	72	38
Entrepreneurship	79	68	44
Technical Production	83	74	41
Financial Management	88	70	47

The distribution of outcomes in Table 2 indicates that financial management and entrepreneurship training generate the highest post-training income effects (Wuryan et al., 2025). Employment transition rates reveal the strategic relevance of technical production skills in labor market absorption. The alignment between certification and income growth confirms the functional value of standardized competency assessment. Visual reinforcement within the narrative consolidates the linkage between training practice and economic outcome. These patterns confirm that skills training operates as a measurable engine of capacity formation.

Beyond economic indicators, skills training reshapes cognitive structures related to problem solving, planning, and risk assessment (Mukau, 2025). Participants acquire procedural knowledge that stabilizes decision making under conditions of uncertainty. Repeated exposure to practical challenges

cultivates resilience and adaptive learning strategies. This cognitive transformation enhances long-term employability across shifting occupational landscapes. Skills training therefore functions simultaneously as technical instruction and cognitive reconfiguration.

The sustainability of skills training depends on post-program support mechanisms that prevent skill depreciation and occupational disengagement (Kazanskaia, 2025). Follow-up coaching, refresher modules, and peer learning networks preserve competence and stimulate continuous improvement. Programs lacking post-training support frequently experience rapid erosion of acquired capacity. The institutionalization of alumni networks extends the life cycle of training effects. Such arrangements transform short-term training into long-term professional trajectories.

At the community level, aggregated skill acquisition alters local economic structures by expanding the pool of competent producers and service providers (Gaithuma et al., 2025). Micro-enterprises emerging from training programs diversify income sources and reduce vulnerability to economic shocks. Skills diffusion across social networks multiplies program impact beyond direct beneficiaries. The collective upgrading of competence enhances community-level productivity and innovation capacity. In this sense, skills training operates as a meso-level development intervention.

The cumulative evidence positions skills training as the primary mechanism through which empowerment initiatives materialize capacity into economic and social performance (Mani & Manoharan, 2025). Its effects span individual competence, organizational productivity, and community resilience. The integration of quantitative outcomes and qualitative transformation affirms its centrality within empowerment architecture. By embedding skills training within coherent institutional systems, programs secure both effectiveness and durability of impact.

Leadership Development as Integrative Transformation

Leadership development represents the integrative dimension through which mentoring and skills training are synthesized into coherent patterns of agency and social influence (Oyedare, Kaufman, & Council, 2025). The formation of leadership capacity enables participants to coordinate personal competence with collective responsibility in complex community environments. Leadership education reshapes participants' orientation from task execution toward vision articulation and strategic coordination. Through structured reflection and guided practice, leadership development stabilizes ethical judgment and decision coherence. This integrative function positions leadership as the culminating architecture of empowerment.

Leadership formation is anchored in experiential learning processes that expose participants to real decision-making scenarios and accountability structures (Clarke, 2025). Simulated governance exercises cultivate anticipatory reasoning and adaptive response under uncertainty. Participants gradually internalize the norms of deliberation, transparency, and responsibility. Leadership training transforms authority from positional privilege into relational legitimacy. Such processes embed leadership capacity within both cognitive and moral domains.

Within youth empowerment programs, leadership development mediates the transition from dependency toward autonomous social participation (Oyedare et al., 2025). Young participants acquire narrative competence that enables them to articulate collective goals and mobilize peer engagement. Repeated leadership practice consolidates confidence and communicative clarity. Identity reconstruction emerges as a central outcome of sustained leadership training. These dynamics stabilize leadership as a durable personal disposition.

For women participants, leadership development confronts internalized constraints and expands symbolic access to public authority (Lattimore-Walker, 2025). Training modules oriented toward negotiation, conflict management, and strategic influence restructure professional self-concept. Leadership practice reconfigures perceptions of legitimacy within organizational hierarchies. Over time, participants demonstrate increased initiative in governance and enterprise leadership. Leadership education thus functions as a mechanism of symbolic redistribution.

Program-level monitoring reveals patterned variation in leadership uptake across age, gender, and prior educational background (Weber, 2025). Performance indicators document differential growth in decision authority, team coordination, and public representation. Visual documentation anchors leadership formation within observable institutional practice. The integration of visual and numeric evidence strengthens analytical credibility. Aggregated leadership outcomes are presented in the following table.

Table 3. Selected Leadership Development Outcomes Across Participant Groups

Indicator	Youth (%)	Adult Women (%)	Mixed Groups (%)
Formal Leadership Appointment	48	62	55
Team Coordination Competence	71	78	74
Public Speaking Proficiency	69	81	75
Community Decision Participation	52	67	60

The distribution in Table 3 demonstrates higher leadership consolidation among adult women relative to youth cohorts (Najafi et al., 2025). Public speaking proficiency emerges as a decisive predictor of leadership appointment. Team coordination competence exhibits strong alignment with governance participation. Visual reinforcement within the narrative consolidates the interpretive connection between practice and outcome. These patterns indicate that leadership development produces stratified yet systematically positive effects.

Leadership training also restructures organizational culture by introducing norms of participatory governance and distributed authority (Easley-Card & McCray, 2025). Graduates of leadership programs frequently initiate procedural reform within their host institutions. Decision-making routines become more transparent and deliberative over successive program cycles. Leadership diffusion stabilizes institutional learning beyond individual tenure. Such dynamics transform leadership from a personal asset into an organizational resource.

At the community level, leadership development expands collective problem-solving capacity and strengthens civic coordination (Gaihuma et al., 2025). Trained leaders mediate conflict, mobilize resources, and sustain cooperative networks. The emergence of multiple leadership nodes reduces dependence on singular authority figures. Community resilience increases as leadership becomes functionally redundant and widely distributed. Leadership education thus operates as a systemic risk-reduction mechanism.

The interdependence between mentoring, skills training, and leadership formation becomes most visible at advanced stages of program maturation (Maxwell et al., 2025). Participants integrate technical competence with ethical authority and strategic coordination. Leadership emerges as the organizing principle that aligns personal capacity with institutional purpose. This integrative synthesis stabilizes empowerment as a multi-level developmental process. Leadership development therefore consolidates the cumulative effects of prior interventions.

The cumulative analysis affirms leadership development as the transformative core through which empowerment acquires structural durability (Tham, 2025). Its influence spans identity formation, organizational governance, and community resilience. The convergence of experiential learning, quantitative monitoring, and institutional practice confirms its integrative function. By embedding leadership within coherent pedagogical systems, empowerment initiatives secure long-term social return. This completion situates leadership development as the final architecture of sustainable empowerment.

CONCLUSION

The integrated analysis of mentoring, skills training, and leadership development demonstrates that empowerment emerges through a cumulative and interdependent architecture of relational guidance, capacity formation, and institutionalized agency. Mentoring establishes the relational infrastructure that stabilizes identity formation and sustains learning continuity across diverse participant groups. Skills training converts educational intent into measurable productive capacity that reshapes economic participation and community resilience. Leadership development synthesizes these processes into coherent patterns of authority, coordination, and civic responsibility that extend beyond individual achievement. The convergence of these three dimensions produces a durable empowerment

ecosystem in which personal competence, organizational governance, and community transformation are mutually reinforcing. This integrative framework confirms that sustainable empowerment requires not isolated interventions but a systematically aligned configuration of mentoring, capacity building, and leadership formation.

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