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FINAL REPORT

Impact Assessment: Evaluation of Jobs-Based Programming for Stability

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Table of Contents

Tables

Figures

Summary

Youth unemployment is one of the main challenges for economic development in fragile settings. To tackle this, SPARK has implemented "Local Employment in Africa for Development" (LEAD 2), a 4-year Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs-funded programme (2020/2023). The programme aims "to develop higher education and entrepreneurship to empower young, ambitious people to lead their conflict-affected societies into prosperity." LEAD 2 focuses on job creation, aligning and connecting local labour demand and supply in Tunisia and Somalia/Somaliland, where youth unemployment is an acute challenge.

The LEAD 2 programme has three specific objectives. First, to strengthen the institutional capacity of local partner organisations and government agencies to better support small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) development, boost employment, and to reinforce a more effective business environment. Second, to create new job opportunities alongside supporting business start-ups and SMEs growth, supported with coaching and better access to finance and markets, with a focus on vulnerable and at-risk youth. Third, to enhance the skills of young people to be better prepared for the job market. These interventions are designed to contribute to the stability of the communities where the programme is implemented by promoting socioeconomic inclusion, achieved through tackling unemployment and idleness.

This report contains attributional findings from an impact assessment (IA) of the programme LEAD 2, focussing on its success in supporting new entrepreneurs. Additionally, it includes descriptive results for a component that aims to support existing SMEs. It also seeks to highlight challenges and obstacles encountered during the evaluation to allow SPARK and its implementing partners to draw lessons on the programme's implementation and future evaluation work.

This analysis relies on baseline and endline surveys, which were collected from individuals before the start of the programme and one month after they graduated from the intervention. To estimate impacts attributable to the intervention, we employ difference-in-difference estimation to compare the outcomes of participants and non-participants from the period before implementation until the end of the intervention. We base our analysis on a sample of 480 individuals surveyed from 10 different training sessions, which took place between May 2022 and July 2023. We complement the quantitative findings with the results from endline qualitative interviews with beneficiaries and implementing partners. We estimate the attributional effect of LEAD 2 on several outcomes related to the programme's theory of change: income, employment, business registration, justification of violence, trust, and social participation.

Results from these analyses show that LEAD 2 supported employment and business-related outcomes, particularly in business ownership and formal business registration. Notably, these effects were more pronounced among women and youth. We do not find a direct impact of the treatment on attitudes towards violence. However, among those in the program who experienced improved economic outcomes, results show improvements in attitudes relating to the use of violence as a conflict resolution. Both the economic and social findings show that the programme's impacts are well-aligned with its theory of change.

Acknowledgement

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1. Context

Unemployment, particularly among youth, remains one of the primary challenges for economic development, particularly in fragile and conflict-affect scenarios (FCAS). In the case of Tunisia and Somalia, unemployment of youth aged 15-24 is 37.9% and 33.8%, respectively (according to the World Bank 2019). In both cases, this is more than double the average youth unemployment rate across the globe (16.9%). To tackle the range of social and economic harms that can develop from high levels of youth unemployment, SPARK has implemented the Local Employment in Africa for Development (LEAD 2) programme in both countries since 2020.

In Tunisia, a key challenge among the youth is the need for more job opportunities, particularly in the formal sector. This is partly due to the country's slow economic growth and structural issues, such as a mismatch between skills held by the youth and those demanded by employers. In addition, the youth in Tunisia face significant barriers to starting businesses, including limited access to financing, regulatory hurdles, and a lack of supportive infrastructure such as business incubators and mentorship programmes.[1]

In Somalia, a lack of economic opportunities has left many young people without a means to earn a living, with displacement and migration increasing the challenges and acting as barriers to those who wish to establish or grow businesses. Weak governance and institutions, corruption, nepotism, and political instability have all made it difficult to create an environment conducive to job creation and entrepreneurship. Additionally, limited access to financing and the lack of basic infrastructure further compounds these challenges.

In both contexts, ongoing violence and instability pose significant risks, especially that the youth could be attracted to criminal activities and / or violent or extremist groups.

In Tunisia, several interrelated issues pose significant challenges to the nation's stability. In Douar Hicher, radicalisation and extremism has been on the rise. In Medenine, relationships between the youth and security forces has grown increasingly violent, exacerbating societal tensions. Moreover, the political landscape saw a significant shift in mid-2021 when President Kaïs Saïed consolidated extensive powers, a move widely criticised as unconstitutional. Despite growing opposition, President Saïed still holds a strong base, underscoring a deep-rooted polarisation within the country. This polarisation is now at a critical juncture, potentially jeopardising Tunisia's stability as it intersects with persistent budgetary distress and widespread discontent regarding economic and social inequalities.[2]

In Somalia, the government grapples with complex challenges that underpin regional instability. The nation is marred by internal tension, extensive displacement / forced migration, and a governance structure struggling to assert control. These issues have been exacerbated by ongoing violence, directly impacting employment opportunities, job creation, and the entrepreneurship ecosystem. The delay in parliamentary and presidential electoral processes further amplifies political uncertainty. Al-Shabab, an Islamist armed group, continues to conduct indiscriminate and targeted attacks on civilians and have forcibly recruited children into their ranks. Regions like Lower Shabelle, Banadir, and Lower Juba have become epicentres of political violence, primarily due to

[1] Grundke, R., & Cassimon, S. 2022. Improving skills and employment opportunities in Tunisia.

[2] United States Institute of Peace. 2023. The Current Situation in Tunisia. A USIC fact sheet.

al-Shabaab attacks against Somali security forces. Unemployed youth are often considered at risk from recruitment into al-Shabaab, due to low opportunities in the licit economy. This, in turn, underscores the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to stabilise the nation and ensure the safety and well-being of its populace.[3]

Particularly in these contexts, both social and economic benefits are generally expected to arise from participation in entrepreneurship and job training. However, research in this field remains thin. At the highest level, there are significant knowledge gaps pertaining to well such programmes contribute to increased economic well-being in fragile places (Blattman and Ralston, 2015),[4] let alone how well they contribute to social indicators (Brück et al., 2020)[5]. What evidence has emerged on these linkages remains sparse and, at best, mixed. Blattman et al. (2014) [6]. show the significant economic impacts of the Youth Opportunity Programme in Uganda. However, no significant shifts in integration into communities, collective action, antisocial behaviour, or support for the government were found. Similarly, Mercy Corps, (2015)[7] studied the impact of the New Vocational Education and Skills Training (INVEST) programme in Northern Afghanistan and found that participants were more likely to be employed, report a higher income, and have higher economic optimism. However, their results regarding peace and stability (engagement in political violence and willingness to use violence, justification of the use of political violence) are inconclusive. On the contrary, Lyall et al. (2020)[8] found that participants in the INVEST (vocational) programme and cash grants had positive economic impacts. But notably, recipients of the cash transfer report reduced support for the Taliban and willingness to undertake pro-Taliban activities.

Little systematic and empirical knowledge has been collected on the theories underpinning the expected relationship or on whether employment programmes have successfully delivered peacebuilding outcomes in practice.[9] Despite this, there remain strong theoretical reasons to believe that these programmes can mitigate the risk of violence. Specifically, by: increasing the opportunity costs of engaging in illegal activities[10]; reducing (perceived) inequalities and unfairness, especially between groups[11]; stimulating positive inter-group interactions[12]; or reducing (perceptions of) competition for scarce economic resources[13]. Further, these effects can arise as a direct consequence of the programme taking place; indirectly through its economic effects; or a mix of both. In this sense, the theory of change proposed by SPARK matches the status quo in the

[3] Federal Ministry For Economic Cooperation and Development - GMZ. 2022. State-building efforts being jeopardised by power struggles, terrorist attacks and corruption

[4] Blattman, Christopher, and Laura Ralston. "Generating employment in poor and fragile states: Evidence from labor market and entrepreneurship programs." *Available at SSRN 2622220* (2015).

[5] Tilman Brück, Neil T N Ferguson, Valeria Izzi, Wolfgang Stojetz, Can Jobs Programs Build Peace?, *The World Bank Research Observer*, Volume 36, Issue 2, August 2021, Pages 234–259, https://doi.org/10.1093/wbro/lkaa004

[6] Blattman, C., Fiala, N., & Martinez, S. (2014). Generating skilled self-employment in developing countries: Experimental evidence from Uganda. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *129*(2), 697-752

[7] Mercy, Corps. 2015. Does Youth Employment Build Stability? Mercy Corps Evidence Paper.

[8] Lyall, J., Y. Zhou, and K. Imai. 2020. "Can Economic Assistance Shape Combatant Support in Wartime? Experimental Evidence from Afghanistan." American Political Science Review 114 (1): 126–43.

[9] Brück, T., Ferguson, N. T., Izzi, V., & Stojetz, W. (2016). Jobs aid peace. ISDC, Berlin.

[10] Becker G. S. 1968 Crime and Punishment: An Economic Approach. In The Economic Dimensions of Crime,13–68 United Kingdom Palgrave Macmillan

[11] Collier P., Hoeffler A.. 2004. "Greed and Grievance in Civil Wars." Oxford Economic Papers 56(4): 563–95.

[12] Pettigrew T. F., Tropp. L. R. 2006. "A Meta-analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 90 (5): 751.

[13] Abbink K., Brandts J., Herrman B., Orzen H.. 2010. "Intergroup Conflict and Intra-Group Punishment in an Experimental Contest Game." American Economic Review 100 (1): 420–47.

wider field. SPARK programming could boost both employment and social indicators in their areas of operation but a need for empirical observation on these outcomes remains.

2. Programme Description

2.1 LEAD 2 - Local Employment in Africa for Development

LEAD 2 focuses on job creation and aligning and connecting local labour demand and supply in Somalia and Tunisia. The overall goal of LEAD 2 is to tackle one of the most urgent challenges for developing countries: (youth) unemployment. The programme has three specific objectives. To strengthen the institutional capacity of local partner organisations and government agencies to better support the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME); to boost employment; and to support an effective business environment. Second, to create new job opportunities alongside supporting business start-ups and SME growth, through coaching and better access to finance and markets, with a specific focus on vulnerable and at-risk youth. Third, to enhance the skills of young people to be better prepared for the job market. In combination, these interventions are designed to work towards an overall objective of contributing to stability by promoting socioeconomic inclusion, achieved through tackling unemployment and idleness.

LEAD 2 is a 4-year Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs-funded programme, implemented from 2020 until 2023, building on lessons learned from previous SPARK interventions. LEAD 2 supports entrepreneurs & SMEs through various channels. This includes facilitating access to new markets, bespoke employee training to support business growth, and simplifying start-ups' processes and streamlining the bureaucratic procedures they are confronted with. LEAD 2 focuses on economic sectors with high growth potential in areas with high youth unemployment in the complex settings of Tunisia and Somalia. The programme aims to establish a total of 260 new businesses and to support 1996 SMEs that have a high potential for growth and job creation, all of which will culminate in the creation of 2925 jobs. In addition, LEAD 2 aims to contribute to positive systemic changes within local labour markets, sustainably improving the number of jobs they can create and matching individuals to those jobs, enabling these economic activities to continue after the programme has ended in a sustainable and scalable way. This is done by strengthening local partners and increasing their capacity to be more effective partners in the LEAD programme. Within the concept of SPARK's wider theory of change, it is anticipated that these positive economic outcomes will lead to positive social outcomes.

2.2 The LEAD 2 Intervention

LEAD 2 focuses on job creation and development of entrepreneurs, aligning and connecting local labour demand and supply in Tunisia and Somalia/Somaliland. A significant aspect of the initiative is integrating entrepreneurship into formal education by supporting higher learning institutions to establish and enhance entrepreneurship training within the education system.

Training activities lasted 6 to 7 months, incorporating various instructive activities, including training and supporting partner institutions and organisations; providing essential training and equipment to public agencies, business centres and TVET providers;

developing the market for business development services (BDS) and providers (training, coaching, organising, publicising); creating one-stop online platforms to assist in business creation and expansion; informing SMEs and entrepreneurs about available services and support; training SMEs and entrepreneurs; providing long-term coaching and support to SMEs and start-ups; supporting mature SMEs to promote exports; accompanying SMEs/start-ups through creation and registration; facilitating access to finance for SMEs; supporting locally led events to promote trade; training students and teachers in entrepreneurship; training youth in employability, life skills and job-readiness; and providing on-the-job training, job shadowing and internships/ apprenticeships.

In Tunisia, LEAD 2 involved six partners across eight areas within the country.[14] Meanwhile, in Somalia/land, the programme was executed by three partners across four locations.[15] For a detailed overview of the implementing partners and the timeline of the LEAD 2 programme, refer to Table A1 in the appendix, which provides comprehensive insights into the implementation activities initiated at different time points.

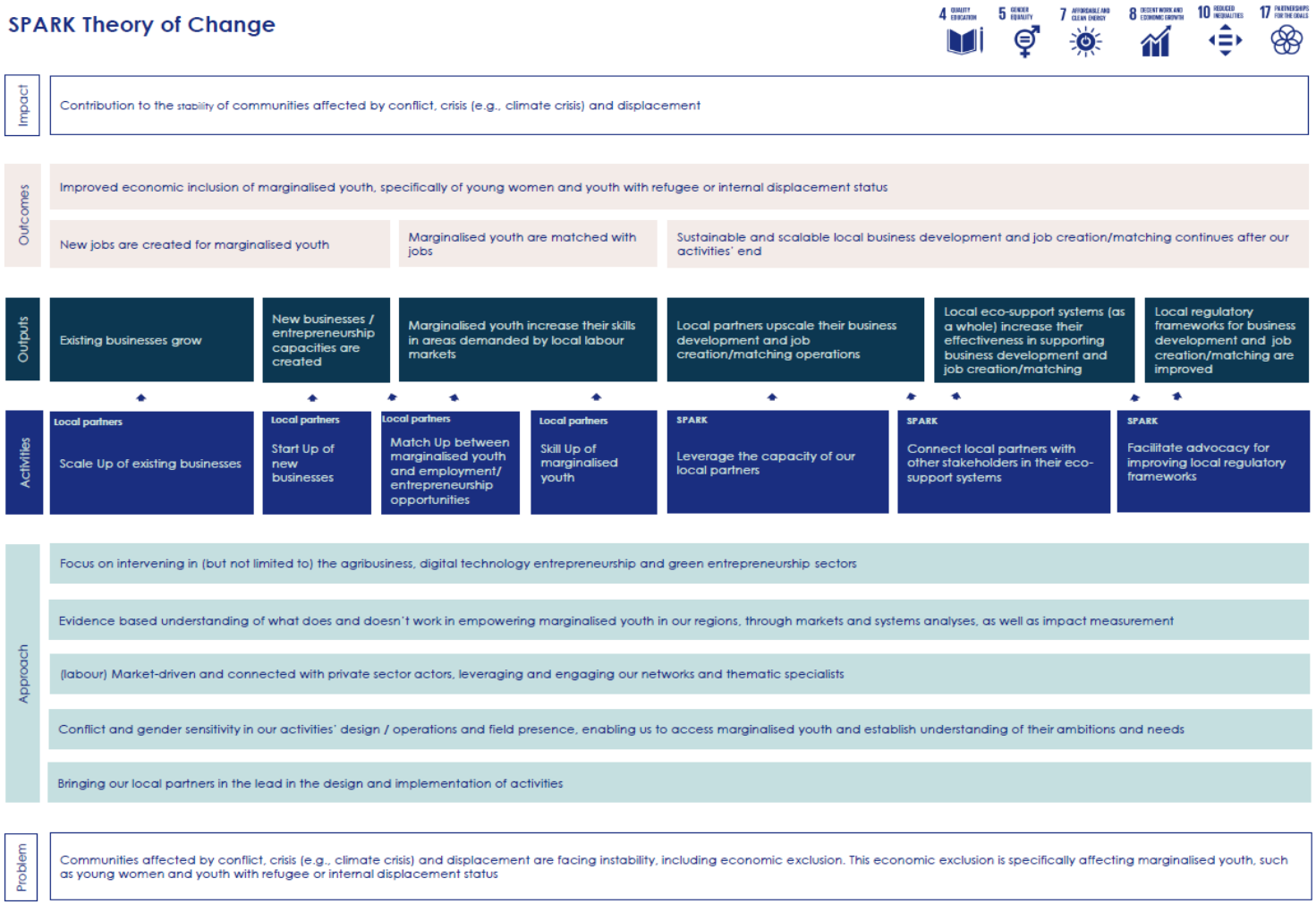
2.3 Theory of Change

The Theory of Change (ToC) is a logical mapping describing the required steps to achieve the long-term goals of the intervention and the necessary assumptions linking one step to the next. Figure 1 depicts SPARK's global ToC, which is the guiding principles covering SPARK's work worldwide

[14] The areas where LEAD2 took place in Tunisia were: Tunis, Seliana, Sidi Bouzid, Sfax, Mahdia, Gabes, Tozeur, Zarzis.

[15] The areas where LEAD2 took place in Somalia/land were: Hargesia, Mogadishu, Garowe, and Bosaso

Figure 1 . Theory of change



Impact for SPARK is, therefore, achieved when "young women and men – including vulnerable groups such as refugees – are **socioeconomically included** in and **contribute to the stability** of their communities in fragile and conflict-affected settings." To test achievements towards this goal in the LEAD 2 programme, SPARK and ISDC conducted an impact assessment of the programme's economic and social outcomes.

Some key differences arise between this high-level ToC and the more specific processes surrounding LEAD 2. For example, LEAD 2 does not explicitly seek to develop leadership and does not have a core anti-radicalization component. However, some LEAD 2 activities are very strongly aligned with those captured in this high-level ToC. For example, the high-level ToC focuses on "contributing to the stability of communities affected by conflict, crisis and displacement" as its headline outcome, directly linking instability / crisis and economic exclusion. For example, the ToC states: "In the absence of opportunities, youth – especially those from excluded… groups – are likely to be among those left behind. Moreover, extremist and radical groups increasingly try to pull marginalised youth, strengthening division and fueling conflict." By supporting economic inclusion of young people, LEAD 2, makes explicit how SPARK expects this programme to contribute to the ToC. Through creating impactful jobs and supporting educational and entrepreneurial opportunities, through strengthening local eco-support systems to become more effective - better integration of vulnerable youth, including women and refugees, is ensured. As a result of economic inclusion and the general operation of the programme, the ToC contends that this will result in a range of social outcomes that bolster stability.

In the impact assessment, we seek to provide important new information on LEAD 2's contribution to this change theory. Specifically, we will test whether LEAD 2 successfully contributed to the economic inclusion of its participants, whether it has led to positive 'systemic change', and whether it has impacted social attitudes among beneficiaries, such as perceptions of resorting to violent forms of dispute and conflict resolution.

3. Quantitative Assessment

The quantitative analysis aims to assess compliance of LEAD 2's implementation with its implementation plan and to estimate the impact LEAD 2 has had on specified outcomes. To do so, we aim to contrast and compare the outcomes of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries from the period before implementation until the end of the intervention. This is designed to allow us to fully attribute any effects that emerge to the LEAD 2 programme, rather than to other factors (such as broader local economic development). To do so, we collected data both before (baseline) and after the implementation (endline) of the intervention from individuals entering the programme and from a valid reference group. The reference group is constructed from an over-subscribed list – that is, from individuals who wished to participate in the LEAD 2 programming but were not selected to do so. This approach ensures that beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries are as similar as possible, apart from their assignment to the programme. In turn, this allows the analysis to be confident that the effects are directly driven by LEAD 2 and not by unobserved difference between those selected into the programme and those not.

In the following subsections, we elaborate in detail on the quantitative methodology for the impact assessment, describing the evaluation design based on the difference in

difference technique, the survey sampling strategy, the sample structure at baseline and endline, and the data collection tools.

3.1 Evaluation Questions and Indicators

The ToC and regular project implementation updates were crucial in formulating evaluation questions (EQs). These EQs are rigorously examined to assess the extent to which LEAD 2 has influenced the desired outcomes of the programme. The evaluation's focus was carefully aligned with the programme's nature and objectives. Implementation of LEAD 2 for existing SMEs was executed at the firm level, with focus on new firms at the level of individual entrepreneurs. This approach resulted in the participation of various individuals and firms in both the evaluation surveys and the training. As it is difficult to compare existing SMEs in terms of growth, due to scale differences, the report will provide only descriptive results pertaining specifically to outcomes for SMEs. The report aims to provide full attributional findings for outcomes of individuals who wish to start their own businesses.

Table 1. Evaluation questions

Outcome	EQ	Description
Income	1	To what extent did the programme lead to better income for the beneficiaries?
Employment	2	To what extent did the programme lead to better employment opportunities for the beneficiaries?
Business and business registration	3	To what extent did the programme lead to the formalisation of new businesses?
Justification of Violence	4	To what extent are participants in the programme more averse to the use of violence?
Trust and social participation	5	To what extent did the programme improve trust in the community and local authorities?

The main research questions to be answered by the impact assessment, derived from the ToC, are listed in Table 1. Key indicators are compared treatment and reference (control) groups to answer these questions among four main outcomes: income, employment, business registration and social indicators (specifically, justification of the use of violence as a conflict resolution mechanisms, trust, and social participation).

Table 2. Indicator descriptions and measurements

EQ	Indicators	Type	Measurement
1	Income above the subsistence level	Dummy	1 if monthly income is 300 dollars per month in Somalia and 1500dt in Tunisia, 0 otherwise
1	Income aspirations above subsistence level 1	Dummy	1 if an individual would like to achieve an income above subsistence level in the future, 0 otherwise

1	Income aspirations above subsistence level 2	Dummy	1 if an individual believes he/she would be able to achieve an income above subsistence level in the future, 0 otherwise
2	Employment	Dummy	1 if individual is employed, 0 otherwise
2	Formal contract	Dummy	1 if individual has a formal contract, 0 otherwise
3	Own a business	Dummy	1 if individual owns a business
3	Business registration	Dummy	1 if the business is formally registered with the authorities
4	Justification of Violence: Personal gain	Categorical (1-5)	1 if individual thinks the use of violence for personal gain is completely unjustified and 5 completely justified
4	Justification of Violence: No clear motive	Categorical (1-5)	1 if individual thinks the use of violence without a clear motive is completely unjustified and 5 completely justified
4	Beliefs justification of violence for personal gain	Categorical (1-5)	1 if participants believe that other people in their communities think the use of violence for personal gain is completely unjustified and 5 completely justified
4	Beliefs justification of violence without a clear motive	Categorical (1-5)	1 if participants believe that other people in their communities think the use of violence without a clear motive is completely unjustified and 5 completely justified
4	Index of violence	Categorical (1-5)	The average score of individuals between Justification of violence for personal gain and no clear motive
4	Index of Community Violence	Categorical (1-5)	The average score of beliefs justification of violence for personal gain and without a clear motive
5	Trust in the community	Categorical (1-5)	1 low level of trust, 5 high level of trust
5	Trust in the national government	Categorical (1-5)	1 low level of trust, 5 high level of trust
5	Trust in the local government	Categorical (1-5)	1 low level of trust, 5 high level of trust
5	Trust in courts/judges	Categorical (1-5)	1 low level of trust, 5 high level of trust
5	Trust Law enforcement institutions	Categorical (1-5)	1 low level of trust, 5 high level of trust
5	Trust in financial institutions	Categorical (1-5)	1 low level of trust, 5 high level of trust
5	Trust in community leaders	Categorical (1-5)	1 low level of trust, 5 high level of trust
5	Participation in civil society groups (neighbourhood groups or NGO)	Dummy	1 if individual participate in civil society groups in the last month

5	Participation in social groups (sports or game groups)	Dummy	1 if individual participate in social groups in the last month
5	Participation in community-saving or credit groups	Dummy	1 if individual participate in saving or credit groups in the last month

The EQs were translated into measurable outcome indicators, setting the impact assessment's scope. Table 2 presents the main indicators. EQ1 to 3 estimates the benefits LEAD 2 has had on the economic inclusion of its participants. Meanwhile, EQ4 and 5 focus on the programme's effect on social indicators.

To answer EQ1, we capture whether better employment opportunities and entrepreneurship training are expected to improve participants' income. We asked participants about their actual monthly income, the income they think they would like to achieve in the future, and the income they believe they would be able to achieve. For comparison purposes between the two study countries, we classify individuals as having a high income if their monthly income is above the subsistence level. The subsistence level refers to the income that allows individuals to pay monthly for basic needs such as rent and food. This threshold is 300 dollars per month in Somalia and 1500dt in Tunisia[16].

Better employment opportunities are one of the main goals of the programme. Therefore, under EQ2, we look at the employment status of individuals at the time of the survey and whether individuals have a written contract for this job. In EQ3, we capture whether individuals own a business and the proportion of formally registered businesses with the authorities.

Under EQ4 and 5, we focus on the social aspects of the programme. We are particularly interested in analysing attitudes towards violence, trust, and social participation as proxies that shed light on the programme's association with stability. We focus on such indicators as it is unlikely that individuals who do (or might) perpetrate acts of violence will enter into such a training programme or admit their activities conditional on their choice to do so. Rather, we seek to understand a series of attitudes, behaviours and experiences that link to a broader climate of violence. For example, individuals who are more tolerant, or accepting, of violent forms of conflict resolution might be more likely to indirectly support violent actors in their community (e.g., by not cooperating with security forces), which could increase risks of violence, instability, and conflict. First, we use an innovative approach based on vignettes to assess the level of justification for using violence among the respondents. Vignettes are a research tool that uses short stories about a (hypothetical) person or situation to gather information regarding respondents' beliefs.

We have developed vignettes to present an example of a situation that reflects the local context. In other words, it is a story participants can relate to. We presented two situations: one in which a used violence ostensibly for personal gain and one in which violence was used as self-defence in a potentially threatening situation. Participants were asked to express how justified the character's reaction was. All participants were presented with both vignettes, with the order of their presentation randomised to

[16] These thresholds were developed by Spark staff in Tunisia and Somalia/land, based on local context knowledge.

maximise the number of individuals responding to each vignette while also allowing the modelling of any effects of exposure to repeated, similar information. Vignettes can be advantageous in exploring sensitive topics where the participant may not reveal the truth about their actions or beliefs when asked directly. Specifically, they allow respondents to comment on the appropriateness of the actions of others, which is often less sensitive. Additionally, respondents were asked about their beliefs regarding what others in their communities thought about the same situations. This is designed to capture the extent to which individuals accept or sanction violent action and to use that as a proxy of wider stability within a given location.

Second, we use different trust and social participation indicators to answer EQ5: 1) respondents' trust in the government and other institutions, and 2) respondents' participation in community groups such as neighbourhood, sports or saving groups in the last month.

3.2 Evaluation Design and Strategy

This subsection presents the evaluation design for the impact assessment. The focus will be on estimating effects directly attributable to LEAD 2 on the outcomes of new entrepreneurs' beneficiaries.

3.2.1 Identification of Attributional Effects

To identify the impact of LEAD 2 as causally as possible, we rely on difference-in-difference (DiD) methods. DiD allows the comparison of changes in the outcomes between treatment and control groups by observing the relative evolution of the two groups' outcomes over time. This requires the collection of data both before and after the implementation of the intervention and the assumption of parallel trends – that is, that the outcomes of treatment and control group would evolve differently were it not for the introduction of the intervention. Based on DiD estimators, the effect of the programme on new entrepreneur beneficiaries is identified via the following equation (1):

$$Outcome_{it} = \Theta + \gamma_1 Treat_i + \gamma_2 End_t + \gamma_3 Treat * End_{it} + \gamma_4 X_{it} + \epsilon_i$$

where *Outcome* is the variable of interest for individual 0 at time t. θ is the regression constant. *Treat* is a binary indicator taking the value of 1 if an individual is assigned to the treatment group. *End* is a binary indicator taking the value of 1 if the data is observed in the endline. *Treat * End* is the interaction of these two variables and captures the programme's impact. *X* is a matrix of control variables comprising age, gender, education level, GRIT score[17], and IMR indicators[18], ε is the idiosyncratic error. *Outcome* includes the range of social and economic indicators previously defined.

In addition to understanding the direct effect of the program on social indicators, we seek to understand if it delivers such outcomes indirectly as a product of its economic benefits. To analyse this, we further estimate the following equation (2):

[17] The GRIT score measures an individual's level of resilience, dedication, and passion when it comes to achieving goals in a business setting. It focuses on individual's perseverance, determination, and ability to work through difficult challenges.

[18] The IMR or Inverse Mills Ratio is derived from a first-stage Heckman-style selection analysis that aims to account for any biases introduced into the survey as a result of uneven attribution from the sample. Attrition is discussed in more detail below.

$$Outcome_{it}=\theta + \sigma_1 Treat_i + \sigma_2 End_t + \sigma_3 Channel + \sigma_4 Treat * End_{it} + \sigma_5 Treat * Channel_{it} + \sigma_6 End * Channel + \sigma_7 Treat * End * Channel_{it} + \sigma_8 X_{it} + \epsilon_i$$

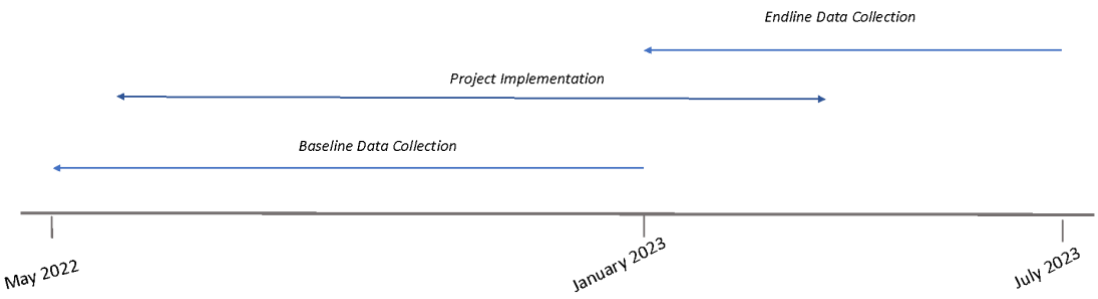
where *Outcome* is the variable of interest for individual 0 at time t. θ is the regression constant. *Treat* is a binary indicator taking the value of 1 if an individual is assigned to the treatment group. *End* is a binary indicator taking the value of 1 if the data is observed in the endline. *Treat*Time* is the interaction of these two variables and captures the programme's impact. *Treat*Time*Channel* shows the impact on those experiencing economic improvements after participating in the programme. *X* is a matrix of control variables comprising age, gender, education level, GRIT score, and IMR indicators, ε is the idiosyncratic error.

Furthermore, we extend the analysis to explore heterogeneous treatment effects across the two countries, across genders, and across different age classifications.

3.2.2 Sampling Strategy and Data Collection

Two waves of data collection were carried out. Figure 2 shows the evaluation timeline. Baseline data collection in Tunisia started in May 2022 and in Somalia in June 2022 and lasted until November 2022 in both countries. Data collection was adjusted according to the planned activities of each partner and the setting. In some cases, surveys were collected online; in other cases, in person; and in a small number of cases via telephone. Noting that different ways of collecting surveys can influence responses, we were careful to ensure that individuals in treatment and control groups within each "session" answered the survey in the same way. This is designed to ensure these concerns do not affect the internal validity of the evaluation. Baseline date was collected shortly before each partner began their implementation. The end of all activities was between December 2022 and January 2023. Therefore, the endline took place between January and July 2023. Table A2 in the appendix presents details on the timeline of the evaluation by implementation partner.

Figure 2. Evaluation timeline



In the following subsections, we describe the sampling strategy at baseline and at endline, as well as the attrition and characteristics of the final sample used for analysis.

Baseline Survey Sample

The unit of analysis for the main impact assessment is the individual, but surveys at the firm level were also collected as part of the study. The baseline sampling for both start-ups and existing SMEs targeted all potential participants. A total of 1695 applicants

expressed their interest in partaking in the programme, corresponding to our sampling frame (1226 new start-ups and 469 existing SMEs). All programme applicants were invited to participate in the impact assessment baseline survey before selection into the programme took place. We refer to those taking the survey as respondents. Respondents selected for intake into the programme are part of the treatment group (also called beneficiaries). Those not selected for intake are assigned to the comparison group – the control group or non-beneficiaries. This approach of comparing individuals motivated to enter into the programme is designed to minimize differences between the treatment and control groups, particularly in terms of indicators, like determination or drive, that could influence outcomes, regardless of the programme's inputs.

A conscious decision was taken by SPARK and its implementation partners to select participants for the programme who were likely to achieve the most through their participation. This was designed to afford the LEAD 2 project the maximum opportunity to achieve its headline goals. For this reason, randomisation into control and treatment groups was not an option. In theory, this could suggest potential differences between the treatment and control groups, but our analyses show that our data is conditionally unconfounded – that is, that the treatment and control groups are very similar across a range of observable criteria. To draw these groups, we collected baseline from all interested individuals. Individuals first expressed their interest in partaking in the programme, then answered our survey, and, at some stage after that, were informed whether their application to the programme had been successful or not. This approach allows us to believe that differences between individuals in the treatment and control groups are observable and, thus, can be controlled for. Further, collecting baseline before treatment assignment took place ensures that we do not capture the fact that even entry into the programme – for example, by signalling a better future to participants – does not influence responses to key outcome variables.

All respondents at baseline satisfied the basic intake requirements of the local partners (e.g., literacy/numeracy skills, age, and gender requirements and so on). The baseline sample comprised 1049 respondents from 702 new start-ups and 347 existing SMEs. Table A3 in the appendix displays the sample structure for both new start-ups and existing SMEs in both countries.

Endline Survey Sample and Attrition

The endline survey was designed to track and re-interview all participants interviewed at baseline. 676 respondents were successfully re-interviewed, 483 from new start-ups, and 193 from existing SMEs. Attrition arose from respondents who could not be traced or refused to participate in the endline survey. As shown in Table A3 in the appendix, the attrition rate was more pronounced in the treatment group than in the control group but is fairly even across both at approximately one third of the sample.

If attrition was affected by observable indicators, and if those indicators varied from treatment to control group, it would affect the internal validity of the impact assessment; that is, the endline sample may not be representative of the targeted individuals and results could be explained by the structure of attrition, rather than the impacts of the intervention. To test and minimise this risk, we conduct a multivariate analysis to check if given indicators predict an individual's probability of leaving the sample while controlling for the relationship of that indicator to other variables to which it might be correlated.

Table 3 presents the regression results of the multivariate analysis, which corresponds to the correlation between attrition and characteristics of participants, socio-demographic

controls, GRIT indicators, and self-reported risk. The dependent variable equals 1 if the participant did not respond to the endline survey and 0 otherwise. The coefficient corresponds to the extent of the correlation between that variable and the outcome, holding all the other variables constant.

Table 3. Attrition - Multivariate analysis

	Attrition	
Predictors	*Coefficient*	*CI*
(Intercept)	0.32 **	0.05 – 0.59
Women	-0.03	-0.11 – 0.05
Age 1829	0.03	-0.05 – 0.12
High School	0.18 **	0.00 – 0.36
Depressed	-0.01	-0.05 – 0.02
Ingenious	-0.02 *	-0.05 – 0.00
Nervous	0.01	-0.02 – 0.04
Sociable	0.01	-0.02 – 0.05
Commitment	0.02	-0.03 – 0.07
Persistent	-0.00	-0.04 – 0.03
Diligent	0.01	-0.04 – 0.05
Hard-worker	-0.04	-0.09 – 0.01
risk	-0.01 **	-0.03 – -0.00
Observations	570	
R^2 / R^2 adjusted	0.029 / 0.009	

Note: Coefficients with stars indicate statistical significance
p-values p<0.5 ** p<0.05 *** p<0.01*

We find that only a few characteristics significantly correlate with not participating in the endline survey. Particularly, respondents from the baseline with high school or further education, those reporting they are less ingenious and those reporting lower risk preferences were more likely to not respond to the endline survey. In general, we see no differences in the structure of attrition across treatment and control status. In this sense, we conclude, broadly, that attrition is not structural, but it was relatively high (31% for the new start-ups' sample), which reflects the complexity of working in fragile settings. To control for any bias this could introduce into the impact assessment, we predict selection into the endline survey using a Heckman-style correction and including this as an additional control in the main analyses. Specifically, use a Heckman procedure to generate an inverse mills ratio that defines the probability of an individual with particular characteristics participating in the endline survey.[19]

[19]We use the Heckman procedure to correct for sample bias. The first step consists in estimating a probit model, i.e., calculating the probability that an individual will not respond to the endline survey. We use an

The final sample for the analysis amounts to 483 new start-ups and 139 existing SMEs.

Data Collection Tools

The quantitative evaluation is based on a survey collected from all potential participants at baseline and repeated at endline. Two slightly different questionnaires were developed, each tailored to the "unit" that should benefit from the intervention: new start-ups and existing SMEs. In the case of existing SMEs, a firm-level questionnaire focused on the outcomes of the firms rather than the individuals. For the components that focused on jobs and skills training, an individual-level questionnaire was developed that focused on the outcomes of beneficiaries (e.g., potential entrepreneurs). In the individual survey, we collected information on perceptions and beliefs, which lacked a firm-level analogue (e.g., asking a "firm" question about its attitudes towards violence, for example, makes little sense). Consequently, such information was not collected at the firm level, on the sensible assumption that the firm – the unit of analysis in this survey – has no subjective perceptions or beliefs.

- Section 1 collects respondents' sociodemographic characteristics (gender, age, and education level). This is collected to allow us to control key demographic factors and test the balance between treatment and control groups.
- Section 2 collects information on respondents' residency and migration perspectives. This is collected to allow us to answer donor questions about migration intentions.
- Section 3 focuses on respondents' personality characteristics. These are important for balance checks.
- Section 4 focuses on respondents' employment status and information regarding their business (such as ownership and size). There are additional questions for existing SMEs regarding detailed business characteristics, such as sector, business environment, capacity to operate the business, needs, and challenges. This corresponds to outcomes 2 and 3 in Table 1.
- Section 5 collects respondents' income level and aspirations, allowing us to answer outcome 2 in Table 1.
- Section 6 asks for respondents' participation in community groups. This allows us to evaluate Outcome 5 in Table 1.
- Section 7 asks for respondents' trust in the government and other institutions. This allows us to evaluate Outcome 5 in Table 1.
- Section 8 identifies respondents' attitudes towards the use of violence, the experience of violence in their communities, and the course of action to resolve disputes. This allows us to evaluate Outcome 4 in Table 1.

Sections 1-7 rely on standard survey tools. We use an approach based on vignettes to assess the level of justification for using violence by the respondents in Section 8. The endline survey captured information on all sections covered at baseline, with only a slight change in section 8, regarding the situation presented in the vignette, plus additional questions regarding empowerment, self-confidence, and relationships. The survey additionally asked participants whether they were part of any other program at the same organisation or a different one to understand potential reasons for control and treatment group's behaviour.

indicator of whether or not the baseline survey was answered over the phone as the exclusion restriction in the selection equation, along with the controls in the main analysis. The second step consists of calculating the inverse Mills ratio and including it as an additional control in the analysis.

3.2.3 Quality Assurance and Validation of Data

During the preparation for the data collection, the questionnaires and additional material (e.g., communication email with participants and partners, informed consent) were reviewed by SPARK, ISDC, and local partners in Tunisia and Somalia/Somaliland. At baseline, a field mission with local partners was used to finalise the data collection structure and the individual questions that constituted the questionnaire and to train partners on enumeration standards. Questionnaires were then translated into French and Somali and reviewed by SPARK and local partners. Local partners provided feedback on the baseline data collection throughout the process. Further training was conducted in Istanbul with Tunisian partners and online with Somali partners at the end of 2023, which allowed the ISDC team to review the endline quantitative evaluation. Some measures were implemented as described below:

1. Endline data collection started one month after the end of the programme-related activities for each intake group.
2. Partners conducting offline surveys suggested running the interviews in the Tunisian dialect. The questionnaire was translated from French to the Tunisian dialect with the support of the SPARK team.

Before and during data collection, ISDC and SPARK continuously monitored data-collection activities to ensure high response rates and quality. We took the following approach to collect the data:

1. Partners in each country sent a notification email to participants one or two days before the actual links to the survey were shared. This helped guarantee that participants were informed and expected to receive the survey link.
2. Individual emails with links to the survey were sent to participants, allowing us to monitor response rates and promote contact with participants for their responses in the endline.
3. Some data were collected in person in some situations where internet connectivity posed problems. The participants' names, emails and phone numbers were collected for data collection at the offices or on paper. Through this, the researchers could crosscheck our participants' identity and status in the programme with the lists provided by the local partners.
4. ISDC shared a list of participants not answering the survey within the following 4-5 days, with the objective that the local partners could contact participants over the phone to remind them about the survey.
5. Additional phone surveys at the endline were required to increase the response rate from all partners in both countries. Individual training with partners was conducted to guarantee the understanding and familiarisation of enumerators with the questionnaire.
6. Data quality checks were performed for data analysis and report writing. Particularly logical checks, checking for duplicates, the time of the interview, and how to treat missing values.

Data was enumerated by the local implementation partners, with support and training from ISDC, embedded within broader M&E processes.

Somalia/Somaliland data collection occurred during significant instability (before and during local elections), while the evaluation entailed politically sensitive topics. Therefore, special considerations, such as in paper surveys, for ensuring adequate data quality and protecting the respondents' confidentiality in Somalia/Somaliland were taken in

consultation and coordination with SPARK's local partner organisations that facilitated the data collection processes.

3.3 Results

The results section is divided into two parts. First, we focus on the results for the new start-ups for which the impact assessment results are presented. Second, we present the descriptive statistics for the existing SMEs sample.

3.3.1 New Start-Ups

Sample and Balance Checks

DiD approaches rely on the "parallel trends" assumption. This assumption requires that things would have evolved similarly for the treatment and control groups in the absence of the treatment while allowing for observable differences between the groups at baseline. By testing for balance in baseline characteristics of the control and the treatment group that could otherwise predict outcomes, we can provide good reasons to believe that, in the absence of the programme, parallel trends would have held and that any observed differences, therefore, can be attributed to the presence of the programme.

We use statistical tools to compare the means of key indicators across the control and treatment groups. More generally, by testing the sample balance, we can analyse the extent to which the treatment and control groups are directly comparable. Table 4 illustrates the balance test at baseline between the control and treatment groups for the final sample in the analysis. As shown in the table, the sample comprises 61% women, and 67% of the individuals are between the ages of 18 and 29. Additionally, we observe that overall treatment and control groups are balanced regarding personality characteristics and residency. However, it is important to highlight some significant differences between the groups. Overall, we find that a significantly higher proportion of beneficiaries in our sample (66% compared to 35% in the control group) are from Tunisia. Lastly, the reference group has a bigger proportion of individuals between the ages of 18 and 29 than the group of beneficiaries. We ensure these factors are robustly controlled for in the main analyses.

Table 4. Sample summary statistics and balance checks (Start-ups)

Variable	N	**Overall**, N = 481[1]	**0**, N = 282[1]	**1**, N = 199[1]	p-value[2]
Women	459	0.61 (0.49)	0.61 (0.49)	0.60 (0.49)	0.80
Age 18-29	481	0.67 (0.47)	0.72 (0.45)	0.61 (0.49)	**0.010**
High School	481	0.90 (0.30)	0.92 (0.27)	0.87 (0.33)	0.11
Tunisia	481	0.48 (0.50)	0.35 (0.48)	0.66 (0.47)	**0.001**
Depressed	472	1.65 (1.14)	1.76 (1.28)	1.50 (0.89)	0.17
Ingenious	473	3.69 (1.39)	3.64 (1.43)	3.77 (1.32)	0.43
Nervous	472	2.00 (1.26)	1.94 (1.21)	2.10 (1.31)	0.22
Sociable	471	4.19 (1.26)	4.15 (1.32)	4.24 (1.17)	0.71

Variable	N	Overall, N = 481[1]	0, N = 282[1]	1, N = 199[1]	p-value[2]
Commitment	472	4.30 (1.18)	4.28 (1.24)	4.33 (1.09)	0.45
Persistent	471	3.84 (1.44)	3.81 (1.49)	3.88 (1.36)	0.94
Diligent	472	4.13 (1.31)	4.06 (1.38)	4.22 (1.21)	0.35
Hard-worker	472	4.28 (1.18)	4.28 (1.21)	4.29 (1.13)	0.73
Risk taker	462	6.8 (3.2)	6.6 (3.3)	7.0 (2.9)	0.42
Born and lives there	481	0.74 (0.44)	0.72 (0.45)	0.76 (0.43)	0.34
Would like to stay there	481	0.71 (0.45)	0.72 (0.45)	0.70 (0.46)	0.61

[1]Mean or Frequency (%)

[2]Wilcoxon rank sum test. P-values lower than 0.1 indicate statistical significance.

Note that the balance in key personality indicators, especially the "Big 4"(Depressed – Sociable) and GRIT (Commitment – Hard-Worker) allow us to ensure that our treatment and control groups are comparable in these key indicators. Additional concerns regarding differential motivations among participants for the programme are taken care of by the fact that we sampled the treatment and control groups from an oversampled list, that is, all applicants to the LEAD 2 programme. Therefore, there is already a high degree of comparability between individuals in the treatment and control group more generally on standard socio-economic and demographic indicators.

While it is theoretically possible that other unobservable characteristics exist in the data, it is unclear how these were (implicitly) observed in the in-take decisions made but not in our data. In other words, there is no reason to believe that we should expect there to be structure to these unobservables across treatment and control groups, except in how it shows up in the data. For this reason, we conclude that difference-in-differences is appropriate for approximating an attributional effect in the work in question.

The Impact of Participation in LEAD 2

i. Employment and Business Registration

As shown in Table 5, we see an overall increase in ownership of a business for beneficiaries of LEAD 2, an increase in business registration with the formal authorities and no change in employment status after the treatment. This, broadly, suggests that the programme has successfully delivered on its key desired outcomes.

Table 5. Employment and business registration (Start-ups)

	Employment		Own a Business		Business is Registered	
	Estimates	*p*	*Estimates*	*p*	*Estimates*	*p*
Control mean	0.46**	**0.013**	0.39***	**0.004**	0.17	0.137
Overall	0.09	0.385	0.16***	**0.002**	0.10**	**0.038**
Observations	864		918		918	
Control mean	0.06	0.781	0.32**	**0.043**	0.13	0.338
Women programme-participants	0.25***	**0.002**	0.25***	**0.000**	0.17***	**0.001**
Observations	531		558		558	
Control mean	0.78**	**0.042**	0.47	0.101	-0.02	0.937
Men programme-participants	-0.13	0.603	0.01	1.000	-0.02	1.000
Observations	333		360		360	
Control mean	0.29	0.355	0.53**	**0.024**	0.14	0.423
Programme-participants in Tunisian	0.20	0.141	0.27***	**0.002**	0.21***	**0.002**
Observations	415		440		440	
Control mean	0.47**	**0.027**	0.33**	**0.017**	0.21	0.081
Youth (18-29)	0.07	0.329	0.13***	**0.008**	0.13***	**0.002**
Observations	605		644		644	

Note: p-values are corrected for multiple hypotheses using Bonferroni correction. Coefficients with stars indicate statistical significance p-values* *p<0.1 ** p<0.05 *** p<0.01*

For ownership of a business, the analysis shows an increase of 16 percentage points[20], a result that is significant at the 95 per cent confidence level after adjusting for multiple hypothesis testing.[21] Relatedly, the results show that beneficiaries of LEAD 2 registered

[20] This represents an increase of 16 percentage points for the treatment group, over and above any trends experience by the control group. Business ownership increased from 39% to 47% for individuals in the control group, while business ownership increased from 39% to 63% for individuals in the treatment group.

[21] Because of simultaneous testing of multiple outcomes (hypothesis) the probability of finding an effect just by chance is increased. To adjust for multiple hypothesis, we use Bonferroni p-value corrections in which the p-values are multiplied by the number of comparisons.

their business with the formal authorities more than in the control group, a result also significant at the 95 per cent confidence level after adjusting for multiple hypothesis testing.

For some subgroups, the estimated effects are larger. Among female beneficiaries, employment increased by 25 percentage points, and there was an increase of 17 percentage points in business registration. In the relatively patriarchal societies under study, this suggests much can be achieved for women entrepreneurs. For beneficiaries in Tunisia, the increase in business ownership and registration is estimated at 27 and 21 percentage points, respectively. Furthermore, the youth (aged 18-29 years) experienced a 13-percentage-point increase in business ownership and a similar increase in formal business registration.

These results are significant at the 95 per cent confidence interval and underscore the successful targeting and benefits of LEAD 2, notably towards women and young individuals.

ii. Income and Income Aspirations

As shown in Table 6, we see a decrease in income and proportion of beneficiaries above subsistence level, as well as adjustment in income aspirations of beneficiaries, particularly regarding the income they would like to achieve (Income aspirations 1). The biggest effects in these outcome variables are seen among the male participants.

Table 6. Income and income aspirations results (Start-ups)

	Income		**Income above subsistence level**		**Income Aspirations 1**		**Income Aspirations 2**	
Predictors	*Estimates*	*p*	*Estimates*	*p*	*Estimates*	*p*	*Estimates*	*p*
Control mean	3.18***	**0.001**	0.52***	**0.006**	0.71***	**0.001**	0.54***	**0.001**
Overall	-0.97***	**0.005**	-0.21***	**0.005**	-0.09**	**0.061**	-0.05	0.519
Observations	849		918		918		918	
Control mean	3.59***	**0.002**	0.38	0.110	0.59***	**0.001**	0.55***	**0.001**
Women programme-participants	-0.42	1.000	-0.12	0.626	-0.03	1.000	-0.02	1.000
Observations	503		558		558		558	
Control mean	2.94	0.067	0.98	**0.005**	1.08	**0.000**	0.67	**0.001**
Men programme-participants	-1.70***	**0.000**	-0.32***	**0.001**	-0.19***	**0.000**	-0.09	0.158
Observations	346		360		360		360	
Control mean	1.03	0.252	0.16	0.550	0.70	**0.001**	0.20	0.361
Programme-	-0.02	1.000	0.01	1.000	-0.05	1.000	-0.09	0.756

participants in Tunisia								
Observations	374		440		440		440	
Control mean	2.95**	**0.013**	0.39	0.090	0.78***	**0.001**	0.47***	**0.001**
Youth (18-29)	-1.00**	**0.040**	-0.21**	**0.039**	-0.14***	**0.003**	-0.08	0.113
Observations	612		644		644		644	

Note: p-values are corrected for multiple hypotheses using Bonferroni correction. Coefficients with stars indicate statistical significance p-values* *p<0.1 ** p<0.05 *** p<0.01*

The results show that 21% fewer beneficiaries of LEAD 2 reported an income above the subsistence level with 95% confidence level after multiple hypothesis testing. Similarly, 9 per cent fewer treated respondents reported the income they would like to achieve in the future to be above the subsistence level. While these results may indicate less optimistic views about the future, they could also reflect the income adjustments occurring as one starts a new business or participates in a relatively time-intensive training process.

These treatment effects were also bigger among male participants. 32% less of the treated men reported an income above the subsistence level, while 19% fewer men stated they would like to achieve an income above the subsistence level in the future. Similar figures are found for the youth.

In contrast, aspirations regarding income above the subsistence level that individuals think they would be able to achieve (Income aspirations 2) were not significantly bigger between treatment and control participants. We also do not find treatment effects by country.

iii. Justification of the Use of Violence

As shown in Table 7, our analysis does not show any differences between treatment and control participants in the justification of violence after correcting for multiple hypotheses. Possible explanations for these results relied on the initial levels of justification of violence, which, on average, were very low and had little variation between participants. In other words, there is a ceiling effect present – that is, simply, very little space for such effects to emerge in the data.

While our results show improvements in work-related outcomes for programme participants, on average, this does not strictly hold for everyone in the sample. Consequently, social effects may be somewhat "diluted" when considered through the lens of the employment effect, meaning we do not capture these relationships in the full sample. This follows notions of the "employment effect" in the literature (Brück et al., 2020), suggesting that jobs-based programming need to have jobs-based effects to deliver social outcomes. Further analysis looking at the role of jobs are discussed below.

Table 7. Justification of the use of violence results (Start-ups)

	Index Violence		Index Comm Violence		Personal Gain		Personal Gain Comm		Unclear Motive		Unclear Motive Comm	
Predictors	*Estimates*	*p*	*Estimates*	*p*	*Estimates*	*p*	*Estimates*	*p*	*Estimates*	*p*	*Estimates*	*p*
Control mean	0.95***	**0.004**	1.21***	**0.001**	1.19***	**0.001**	1.68***	**0.001**	0.46	0.302	0.71	0.160
Overall	-0.08	0.445	-0.02	0.837	-0.09	0.453	0.03	0.821	-0.02	0.894	-0.03	0.835
Observations	848		831		883		866		856		845	
Control mean	1.06***	**0.010**	1.51***	**0.001**	1.70***	**0.001**	2.14***	**0.001**	0.37	0.512	0.97	0.134
Women programme-participants	-0.11	1.000	-0.22	0.932	-0.18	1.000	-0.30	0.515	-0.02	1.000	-0.15	1.000
Observations	524		512		539		527		527		517	
Control mean	1.09*	0.095	1.11	0.225	0.51	0.425	1.07	0.159	1.13	0.202	0.88	0.374
Men programme-participants	-0.00	1.000	0.28	0.742	0.09	1.000	0.51**	**0.024**	0.02	1.000	0.15	1.000
Observations	324		319		344		339		329		328	
Control mean	0.54	0.205	1.23**	**0.014**	1.01**	**0.032**	1.89***	**0.001**	0.07	0.910	0.56	0.396
Programme-articipants in Tunisia	-0.14	0.286	-0.06	0.673	-0.05	0.721	0.09	0.585	-0.18	0.316	-0.17	0.408
Observations	410		401		417		407		411		406	
Control mean	0.96**	**0.021**	1.39***	**0.003**	1.21***	**0.009**	1.99***	**0.001**	0.43	0.438	0.82	0.195
Youth (18-29)	-0.10	0.425	-0.08	0.610	-0.12	0.429	-0.01	0.938	-0.05	0.768	-0.09	0.645
Observations	592		580		620		610		599		591	

Note: p-values are corrected for multiple hypotheses using Bonferroni correction. Coefficients with stars indicate statistical significance p-values** p<0.1 ** p<0.05 *** p<0.01*

Consequent to this, we look at whether or not the measured attributional impacts of the program income, employment and business creation translate into better social outcomes for those who experienced improved employment outcomes. To explore the notion of "employment effect", we therefore present summary results of an analysis in Table 8 that looks at social outcomes for the samples experiencing and not experiencing improved outcomes as a consequence of the program. Our results show that the assumption that jobs contribute to peace and stability is partially confirmed. Specifically, we show having improved income and owning a business due to the LEAD 2 training are associated with positive social outcomes, particularly on violence and community participation. This suggests the potential that LEAD 2 is delivering on its social goals but is doing so indirectly, via the economic outcomes of the program. Given difficulties in working in complex environments and in measuring complex outcomes, relating to social stability, the emergence of such a finding is an important contribution to wider literature (which

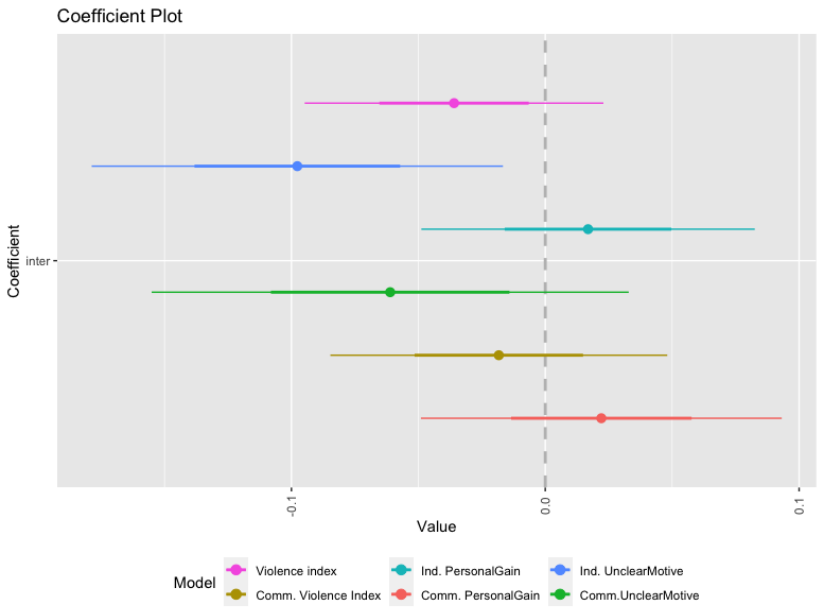
has often failed to show jobs programmes delivering on social impacts – see: Brück et al., 2021[22]), as well as to SPARK's programming.

Table 8. Summary jobs for peace results (Start-ups)

	Income	Employment	Owning a business	Business Registration
Violence	✓(-)	X	X	X
Trust	X	X	X	X
Community Participation	X	X	✓(+)	X

Note. (-) indicates negative effect. X indicate no effect. (+) indicates positive effect. ✓ indicates significant effect.

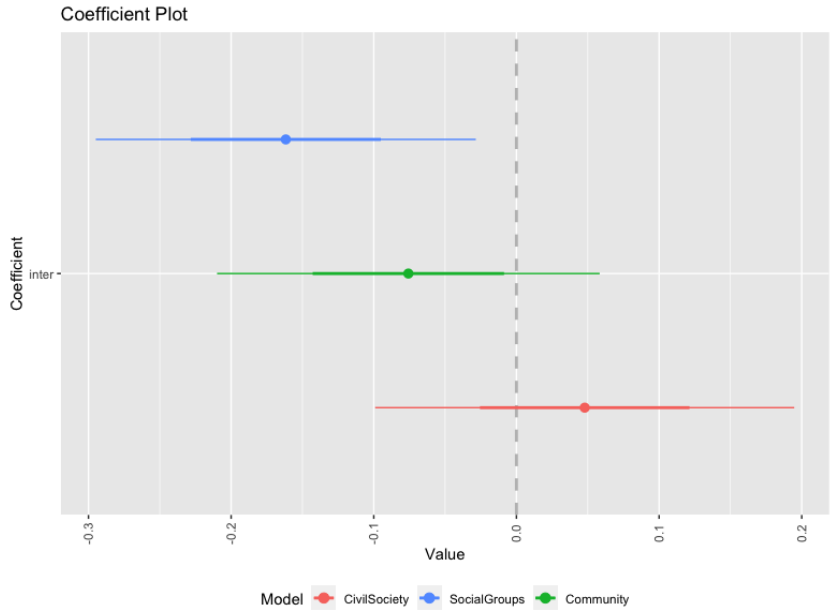
Figure 3. Impact of training on violence for those whose income increase



In Figure 3, we look at the violence indicators for individuals who took part in the LEAD 2 training and experienced a higher income. Justification of violence without a clear motive declined (p-value = 0.097 after multiple hypothesis correction) relative to the comparison group.

[22] Brück, T., Ferguson, N. T., Izzi, V., & Stojetz, W. (2021). Can jobs programs build peace? *The World Bank Research Observer*, *36*(2), 234-259.

Figure 4. Impact of training on social participation for those who started a business



In Figure 4, we look at the impact of the training on social participation for those who started a business. The analysis shows reduced participation in social groups (e.g., sports or game groups). Although negative, this result suggests that individuals starting a new business may have shifted from time spent on social groups to more time spent in their business. We see no further impacts on social participation for the treatment group.

Exploratory Analysis

Impact for SPARK, as stated in the ToC, is achieved when "young women and men – including vulnerable groups such as refugees – are **socioeconomically included** in and **contribute to the stability** of their communities in fragile and conflict-affected settings." In this exploratory analysis, we aim to dig into the program's potential effects on stability by investigating the roles of social norms.

Social norms are a set of expectations about what others are likely to do and what others should do.[23] Furthermore, norms can persist even in the absence of a concrete social practice since most people adhere to these norms, regardless of whether they truly follow them. Occasionally, norms persist due to a pervasive yet erroneous belief that, although one may not support the norm, everyone else does. Consequently, observing changes in the perceptions of these social norms might significantly influence individuals' own behaviour.

Analysing the distance between individuals' own perceptions and their beliefs about others' perception provides interesting insights into the analysis of the effect of LEAD 2

[23] Bicchieri, C. 2006. The Grammar of Society: The Nature and Dynamics of Social Norms. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

on the stability in communities. We start by calculating the social norm for each country as the mean of individuals' justification of violence at baseline. We then calculate the difference between the social norm and individuals' beliefs on how much others in their communities would justify the use of violence. That is the distance between individuals' beliefs and the actual social norm. Table 9 shows the summary results of the estimations of equation 2 after correcting for multiple hypothesis testing.

Table 9. Effects of treatment on beliefs of social norms changes (Start-ups)

Justification of violence	Channel			
	Income	Own a business	Business in registered	Employment
Personal gain	x	x	✓(+)	x
Unclear motive	✓(+)	x	x	x

Note: (+) indicates positive effect. ✓ indicates significant effect. X indicates no effect.

The positive and significant coefficients (+) suggest a shift in individuals' beliefs regarding how others justify the use of violence. Specifically, these coefficients indicate that individuals perceived a reduction in the extent to which their communities justify violence. This is true among those who experienced an increase in their income for the justification for violence without clear motives. And for individuals who underwent training and subsequently registered their businesses with the authorities for justification of violence for personal gain.

These results suggest that even when social norms are slow-moving and most people adhere to them, beliefs about how others adhere to or defect from those norms do change, potentially showing a more cohesive society and a changing belief that others are more bought into that.

3.3.2 Existing SMEs

Balance Checks

Table 10 presents the balance test between the control and the treatment group for existing SMEs regarding selection into the programme and attrition. Overall, from Column 1, we observe that firms in the treatment and control group are balanced regarding business characteristics, skills needed to run a business, and challenges they face in their businesses. However, it is important to highlight some significant differences between the groups. Those selected for the treatment are more likely to live in the same place they were born and to be more likely to think the policies to develop a business are not very supportive. Additionally, those selected for the treatment are more likely to be between 16 and 29 years old. Given that the selection process is supposed to target the youth, this outcome indicates good programme targeting.

Table 10. Multivariate analysis - Existing SMEs

Predictors	**Treatment**			**Attrition**		
	Coeffcient	*CI*	*p-value*	*Coeffcient*	*CI*	*p-value*
Women	0.01	-0.12 – 0.14	0.847	0.03	-0.12 – 0.18	0.668
Age1829	0.13	-0.00 – 0.27	**0.056**	0.08	-0.08 – 0.24	0.332
HighSchool	-0.13	-0.37 – 0.11	0.280	0.09	-0.18 – 0.37	0.509
Residency						
Born and lives there	0.17	0.01 – 0.32	**0.035**	-0.02	-0.20 – 0.16	0.834
Stay there	-0.01	-0.16 – 0.15	0.929	-0.03	-0.21 – 0.15	0.765
Business Characteristics						
Own a business	0.00	-0.14 – 0.15	0.946	-0.15	-0.32 – 0.02	**0.0**77
Business is registered	0.10	-0.04 – 0.24	0.174	-0.02	-0.19 – 0.15	0.842
Buisness is one year or older	0.10	-0.05 – 0.24	0.180	0.04	-0.12 – 0.21	0.607
More than 5 employees	-0.12	-0.54 – 0.30	0.580	-0.01	-0.50 – 0.48	0.970
Agricultural sector	0.02	-0.14 – 0.18	0.819	-0.10	-0.29 – 0.08	0.260
Own other business	0.07	-0.09 – 0.24	0.378	0.18	-0.01 – 0.38	**0.069**
Skills(1-5)						
Easy to find skills in the community	-0.02	-0.08 – 0.03	0.451	-0.04	-0.10 – 0.02	0.211
To run business	-0.01	-0.10 – 0.07	0.722	0.04	-0.05 – 0.14	0.398
To run slighly larger business	-0.04	-0.10 – 0.03	0.277	-0.03	-0.10 – 0.05	0.482
To run much more larger business	-0.02	-0.08 – 0.04	0.575	-0.05	-0.12 – 0.02	0.189
To grow a busines	-0.00	-0.08 – 0.08	0.969	0.04	-0.06 – 0.13	0.472
To develop a plan to grow a business	0.01	-0.07 – 0.08	0.889	0.01	-0.08 – 0.09	0.851
To create profits and loss accounts	0.03	-0.04 – 0.10	0.436	-0.06	-0.14 – 0.01	0.111
Know how to access credit	0.02	-0.03 – 0.07	0.434	0.05	-0.01 – 0.11	**0.078**
Challenges (1-5)						
Supportive envir. To run my business	-0.02	-0.08 – 0.04	0.497	-0.01	-0.07 – 0.06	0.879
Schools produce the people my business need	-0.02	-0.07 – 0.04	0.536	0.02	-0.04 – 0.08	0.468
Supportive policies to develop business	-0.06	-0.12 – 0.01	0.086	0.01	-0.06 – 0.09	0.692
Supportive local authorities	0.04	-0.03 – 0.11	0.256	-0.00	-0.08 – 0.07	0.936
Supportive national government	0.03	-0.03 – 0.09	0.345	0.03	-0.04 – 0.11	0.350
Challeges to access formal credit	-0.03	-0.07 – 0.02	0.230	0.01	-0.04 – 0.06	0.645
Challenges to access informal credit	0.01	-0.04 – 0.05	0.810	0.01	-0.05 – 0.06	0.836
Challenge to register business	0.03	-0.02 – 0.08	0.232	0.05	-0.01 – 0.11	**0.094**
Challenge hiring skilled workers	-0.00	-0.06 – 0.05	0.851	-0.11	-0.17 – -0.05	**<0.001**
Challenge accessing other markets	0.03	-0.02 – 0.08	0.262	0.05	-0.01 – 0.11	0.074
Observations	167			167		
R^2 / R^2 adjusted	0.206 / 0.038			0.215 / 0.048		

Note: P-value lower than 0.1 indicates statistical significance

Across both the treatment and control groups, we see a general reluctance to answer questions about employee status, specifically those relating to the payment of payroll taxes, the nature of contracts, and whether employees are found in the local communities. Regarding attrition, we observe that owners of the business and firms that consider it more challenging to find skilled workers were more likely to participate in the endline survey. On the contrary, firms owning other businesses, expressing knowledge about how to access credit, and how to register a business with the authorities were more likely to not participate at the endline. Results must be considered cautiously since the control sample is relatively small and the treatment and control groups are not well balanced.

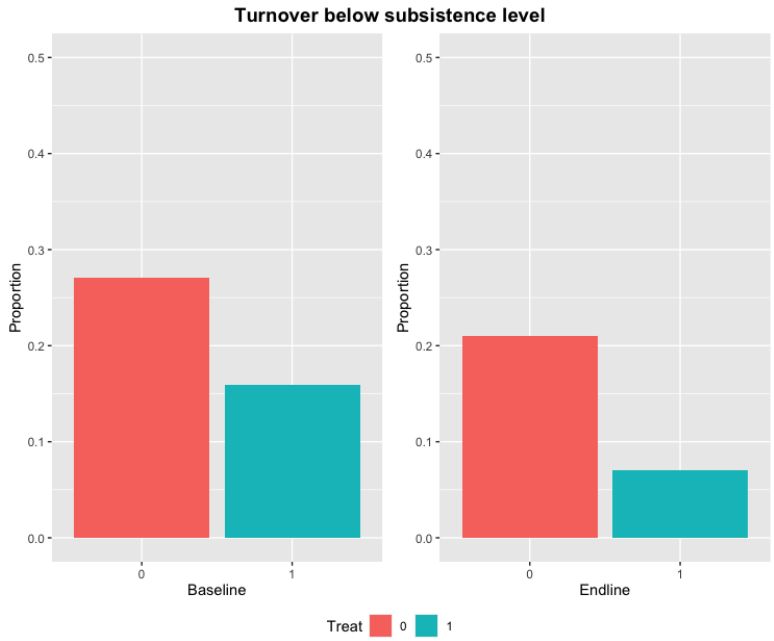
Main Outcomes

i. Turnover and Profits Aspirations

Figures 5 and 6 show the proportion of SMEs whose monthly expected turnover and profit are below subsistence level. At baseline, there are significant differences between

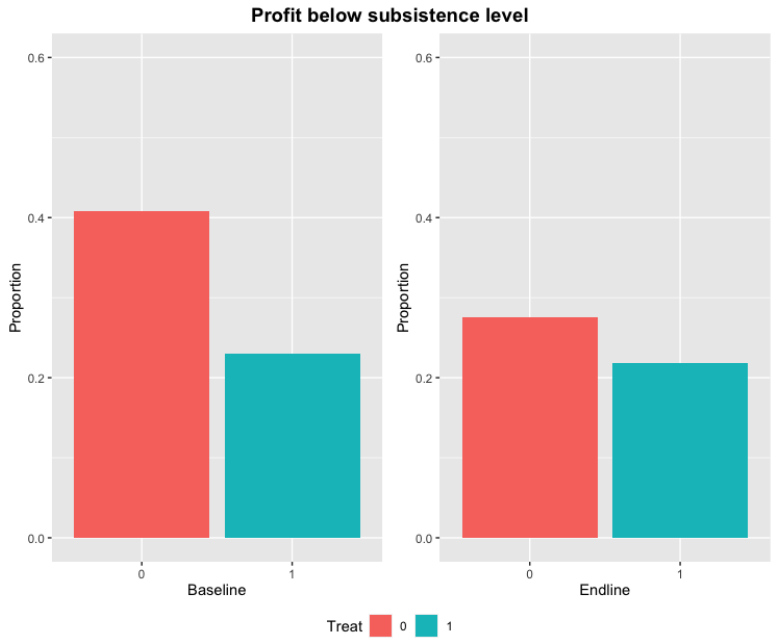
firms in the treatment and the control group. Figure 5 shows that only 16% of firms in the treatment group expect low monthly sales compared to 27% of the firms in the control group. Importantly, from Figure 6, 41% of firms in the control group expect low profits after all expenses have been charged, compared to only 23% in the treatment group. This indicates that a significant proportion of SMEs in the control group have high operational costs. At the endline, the proportion of firms in both control and treatment groups that expect low monthly sales were lower. However, at the endline, significantly more firms in the treatment group expect lower profits than firms in the control group. This finding could be interpreted as superficially surprising since many firms went through specific processes of redefining or improving their businesses as part of the training, but this could lead to high operational costs in the short run or distraction from other (profit-driven) aspects of running the business over the short-term.

Figure 5. Percentage of firms that report a monthly turnover below subsistence level



Note: The subsistence level refers to the monthly income necessary to cover basic needs such as rent and food. The subsistence level for Somalia corresponds to 300 dollars and for Tunisia to 1500dt.

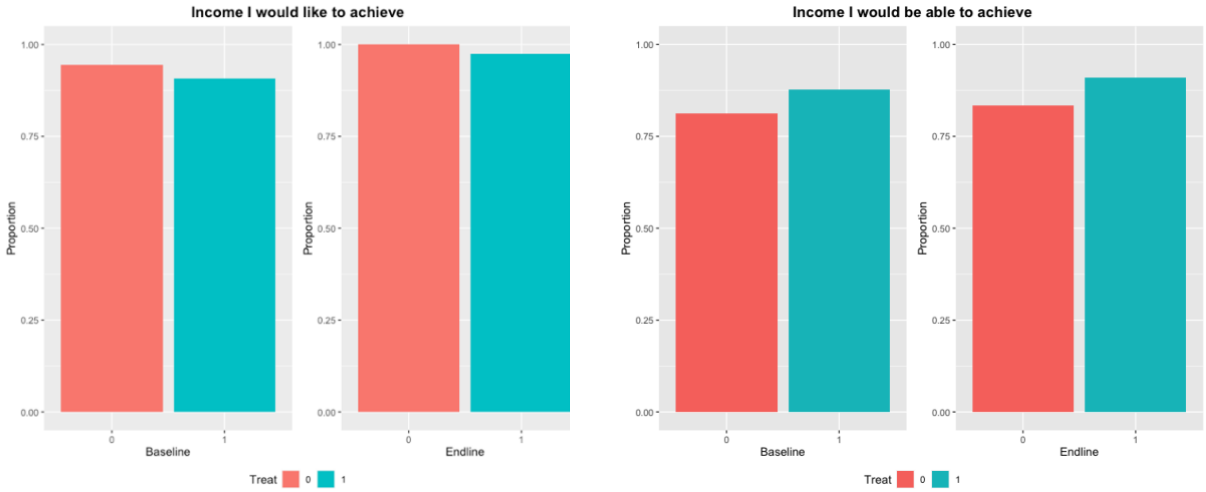
Figure 6. Percentage of firms that report a monthly profit below subsistence level



Note: The subsistence level refers to the monthly income necessary to cover basic needs such as rent and food. The subsistence level for Somalia corresponds to 300 dollars and for Tunisia to 1500dt.

Regarding aspirations, Figure 7 shows firms' positive perspectives of the future. At baseline, firms are highly optimistic about the future in both treatment and control groups. Overall, 91% of the SMEs think they could achieve an income above the subsistence level. Regarding whether this income would be achieved, a higher proportion of SMEs in the treatment group (88%) compared to the control group (81%) have this aspiration. At endline, control and treatment firms continue to express that they would like to achieve an income above the subsistence level. However, it is worth noting that there has been an adjustment in the aspirations of firms regarding what they would be able to achieve, especially in the treatment group. This adjustment in aspirations could suggest that the intervention or factors related to the treatment have influenced firms' perceptions of their potential for financial success. It will be important to consider this shift in mindset when evaluating the impact of the intervention and its implications for the overall outcomes of the study.

Figure 7. Income aspirations (Existing SMEs)



Note: Percentage of SMEs that report they would like to achieve an income above the subsistence level and that report they believe they would be able to achieve an income above the subsistence level in the future. The red bar refers to SMEs in the control group. The blue bar refers to SMEs in the treatment group. Subsistence level refers to the monthly income necessary to cover basic needs such as rent and food. The subsistence level for Somalia corresponds to 300 dollars and for Tunisia to 1500 dt.

Formalisation of Businesses

Overall, formal registration of business is 52% in our sample. Table 11 shows that, at baseline, the proportion of registered firms in the treatment group is significantly higher than in the control group, 56% and 31%, respectively. This difference is interesting since control firms identify firm's the challenge of registering with the authorities on a par with those in the treatment group (See Table 3). Firms in the treatment group are older and more likely to have an owner who has at least one other business.

Table 11. Business characteristics - Existing SMEs

	Baseline					Endline				
Variable	**N**	**Overall**, N= 339[1]	**Control**, N = 54[1]	**Treatment**, N =285[1]	**p-value**[2]	**N**	**Overall**, **N** =193[1]	**Control**, N = 33[1]	**Treatment** N =160[1]	**p-value**[2]
Own a business	303	0.67 (0.47)	0.67 (0.48)	0.67 (0.47)	>0.99	173	0.71 (0.45)	0.69 (0.47)	0.72 (0.45)	0.78
Business is registered	314	0.52 (0.50)	0.31 (0.47)	0.56 (0.50)	0.001	182	0.46 (0.50)	0.38 (0.49)	0.47 (0.50)	0.31
Business is one year or older	305	0.65 (0.48)	0.53 (0.50)	0.67 (0.47)	0.060	176	0.67 (0.47)	0.52 (0.51)	0.70 (0.46)	0.045
More than 5 employees	309	0.04 (0.19)	0.0 (0.00)	0.04 (0.20)	0.14	178	0.04 (0.19)	0.00 (0.00)	0.047 (0.21)	0.23
more 75% of employees full time	188	0.27 (0.44)	0.22 (0.42)	0.27 (0.45)	0.58	111	0.25 (0.44)	0.06 (0.24)	0.29 (0.46)	0.037
Written contracts	186	0.41 (0.49)	0.42 (0.50)	0.41 (0.49)	0.98	113	0.30 (0.46)	0.28 (0.46)	0.31 (0.46)	0.82
Pay taxes for employees	135	0.57 (0.50)	0.48 (0.51)	0.59 (0.49)	0.35	82	0.45 (0.50)	0.15 (0.38)	0.51 (0.50)	0.020
Employees from local community	197	0.63 (0.48)	0.65 (0.49)	0.63 (0.48)	0.83	115	0.62 (0.49)	0.44 (0.51)	0.65 (0.48)	0.10

	Baseline					Endline				
Variable	**N**	**Overall**, N= 339[1]	**Control**, N = 54[1]	**Treatment,** N =285[1]	**p-value**[2]	**N**	**Overall**, **N** =193[1]	**Control**, N = 33[1]	**Treatment** N =160[1]	**p-value**[2]
Agricultural sector	337	0.26 (0.44)	0.24 (0.43)	0.26 (0.44)	0.75	186	0.35 (0.48)	0.29 (0.46)	0.36 (0.48)	0.45
Own other business	302	0.18 (0.38)	0.08 (0.27)	0.20 (0.40)	0.046	173	0.19 (0.39)	0.14 (0.35)	0.20 (0.40)	0.43

[1]Mean or Frequency (%)

[2]Wilcoxon rank sum test

4. Qualitative Assessment

The purpose of the assessment's qualitative component was to contribute complementary insights to those gained from the quantitative component on the impact of LEAD 2 interventions in Somalia and Tunisia. The specific task of the qualitative component was to examine whether 'systemic changes' could be observed as a result of training, mentoring and other programme activities implemented during LEAD 2. LEAD 2 defines systemic change as 'the positive modification, enabled through the programmes, in its local systems of SME development, job creation and job matching, which enables these economic activities to continue after the programmes' end in a sustainable, scalable and resilient way.'

4.1 Methodology

The qualitative component gathered data through key informant interviews (KII). Interviews were conducted in September 2023 with LEAD 2 partner organisations in Somalia and Tunisia and with beneficiaries who participated in one of these partners' interventions. A total of six partner organisations were selected: Shaqodoon, BINA and Bushra in Somalia; Tayssir, TAMSS and WIKI Startup in Tunisia. Among the 19 interviews with beneficiaries, nine were conducted in Somalia (five with males, four with females) and 10 in Tunisia (three with males, seven with females).

Interviews with partners and beneficiaries were based on a guideline of semi-structured questions with interviews anticipated to last about 30 minutes. The guideline was designed to address different aspects of systemic change in relation to LEAD 2 programme activities. This included, for example, the benefits of an intervention for participants, case studies of entrepreneurial success or failure, and shifts in social attitudes.

Audio recordings of interviews were translated and transcribed from Somali, Arabic and French into English. The data was then organised and coded using the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA. A code system with 75 single codes was developed to identify dominant themes and their relatedness.

4.2 Findings

4.2.1 Dominant Themes

Measuring code frequencies indicates which (sub)topic(s) respondents talked about dominantly. The table below assembles the 10 most frequently assigned codes across all interviews. Some codes reflect a direct link to different LEAD 2 interventions, such as networking, employability or marketing/selling strategies. But other codes could be regarded as unexpected impacts, especially an increase in individual confidence and a lesser desire to migrate abroad.

Table 12. Dominant themes

Code	Frequency	Percentage
licensing / registration / legislation	22	7,56
pedagogical approach / quality	19	6,53
needed resources: funding	19	6,53
(less) migration desire	17	5,84
networking	16	5,50
marketing/selling strategies	15	5,15
relationship to authorities	14	4,81
confidence	12	4,12
business knowledge / skills	11	3,78
increase employability	10	3,44
...		
TOTAL	**291**	**100,00**

Code frequencies can alternatively be visualised as a so-called 'code cloud' (see Figure X), which allows getting a quick overview of the most essential topics raised during the interviews.

Figure 8. Code cloud

If disaggregated by country, code frequencies allow for a more differentiated view. For Somalia, one could claim that the basics of entrepreneurial practice are most dominantly emphasised, such as skills development, funding or confidence.

Table 13. Dominant topics - Somalia

Code	Frequency	Percentage
business knowledge / skills	10	6,94
needed resources: funding	9	6,25
increase employability	9	6,25
marketing/selling strategies	7	4,86
confidence	7	4,86
...		
TOTAL	**144**	**100,00**

In contrast, respondents in Tunisia also referred to topics that can be related to a more formalised entrepreneurial environment featuring a stronger presence of the state. Accordingly, matters of licensing, registration and relationships to authorities were considered important[24], but also the specific quality of LEAD 2 trainings and mentors has become a focus.

[24] As mentioned regarding the qualitative assessment's limited ability to arrive at representative findings, the predominance of one theme can sometimes be explained by the fact that among

Table 14. Dominant topics - Tunisia

	Frequency	Percentage
licensing / registration / legislation	19	12,93
pedagogical approach / quality	15	10,20
relationship to authorities	11	7,48
(less) migration desire	11	7,48
networking	10	6,80
...		
TOTAL	147	100,00

We now discuss the main themes that emerge.

Theme 1: Purpose of Interventions

One major theme addressed during the interviews with partners and beneficiaries was their viewpoint on the purpose of the interventions that they implemented or participated in.

Different forms of capacity-building were mentioned as the primary purposes of interventions. Among these three stood out:

- The support to develop enterprise business plans. This was mentioned in both national settings but was more strongly reflected in Tunisia than in Somalia. Consider this voice from a female beneficiary in Tunisia: 'The program did prove valuable in terms of developing a business plan. Even though we already had our business plan in place, we managed to improve it. The part on 'Scrum' [an approach] was particularly beneficial for us. We were able to immediately apply what we learned during the 'Scrum' training to our [...] development plan.'

- Training in marketing and selling strategies, including via social media. This was mentioned in both settings, but especially by beneficiaries in Somalia. This can be illustrated by the following quote by a male training participant in Somalia: 'We benefited from the intervention regarding how to do proper marketing for our services, and this helped us to grow a lot. We do the bulk of our marketing through social media.'

- The acquisition of 'soft skills', which was exclusively mentioned by respondents in Tunisia. Specifically, respondents referred to new capabilities in communication, self-reflection and interaction with (their) employees. In the voice of a female Tunisian beneficiary: 'The soft skills training was very beneficial for me. I had a couple of aspects that served as a refreshment, like communication for example... Still, I didn't know a lot of other concepts like active listening, knowing that you should listen to other people's ideas even if it opposes yours.'

('only') three partner representatives interviewed in each Tunisia and Somalia, one organisation offered trainings exclusively on one specific topic, e.g. 'licensing and registration'.

Another important process identified by respondents was the interventions' approaches to mentoring and coaching. This was mentioned by partners as well as beneficiaries in both countries and will be further elaborated under 'Theme 2: Benefits Gained'.

Beneficiaries in Somalia especially emphasised the purpose of creating jobs and combatting unemployment. This can be illustrated by the following quote of a partner organisation representative in Somalia: 'The…intervention addressed [the matters of] unemployment of youth and helping SMEs to grow. When youth are employed, the socio-economic status of their family improves, and when this happens, this can contribute to the improvement of the socio-economic status of the whole community.'

Other purposes mentioned by respondents were:

- To gain work experience (such as in the form of an apprenticeship), which was mentioned in both countries, primarily by partner organisation representatives.
- The ability to obtain funding for one's enterprise, which was almost exclusively mentioned by beneficiaries in Somalia.

When speaking about purposes of interventions, it is insightful to compare whether the viewpoints of implementing partner organisations align with those of the beneficiaries. The following table shows that there is a strong agreement between partners and beneficiaries about the main purposes of the interventions. The mentions of each group match closely within their respective top 5, meaning for example: mentoring/coaching is the no. 1 topic for partners and no. 3 for beneficiaries, while marketing and selling strategies is the no. 2 topic for both groups. The only exception to this general agreement is that partners mention 'gaining work experience' at no. 2, whereas for beneficiaries this purpose ranks only at no. 9.

Table 15. Comparing code frequencies between partners and beneficiaries

Codes	Frequency among Partners	Frequency among Beneficiaries
mentoring / coaching	6 (no. 1)	8 (no. 3)
gain work experience / apprenticeship	5 (no. 2)	1 (no. 9)
marketing and selling strategies	5 (no. 2)	9 (no. 2)
business plan (development)	4 (no. 3)	13 (no. 1)
capacity-building	3 (no. 4)	7 (no. 4)
job creation (vs. unemployment)	2 (no. 5)	7 (no. 4)
...		
TOTAL	29	56

Theme 2: Benefits Gained

When reflecting on benefits and (dis)satisfactions associated with LEAD 2- interventions, respondents emphasised the following:

- The pedagogical approach and quality of trainings and other interventions. This emerged as a more dominant theme in Tunisia than in Somalia. While beneficiaries in Somalia expressed general satisfaction, their counterparts in Tunisia also remarked on their need for specific, tailored approaches (such as distinguishing between practical and theoretical aspects of training). This is well captured in the following quote by a female Tunisian training participant: 'The one-to-one assistance was a very personalised experience for me and significantly helped in shaping my project ideas, because I had private coaching [sessions] with experts…it enabled me to broaden my horizon and venture into new project ideas.'
- The ability to network was relevant in both settings, but emerged slightly stronger in Tunisia than in Somalia. For beneficiaries, this concerned the chance to tap into the networks of partner organisations, but also to build networks with other participants of an intervention. In the words of one female Tunisian beneficiary: 'It has changed a lot. This is not the first program that I have joined…with [this] program, apart from training and grants, the most important thing is the network that I build.'
- An increase in self-confidence about being an entrepreneur or becoming employed was articulated by beneficiaries in both settings, but more strongly in Somalia. One male Somali beneficiary expressed this in the following way: 'The biggest benefit I got was the motivation that I can start a business, because before joining the program I thought that my business cannot be started for different reasons.'

Some benefits and (dis)satisfactions were exclusively mentioned in one country setting:

- In Somalia, this concerned advancing one's (basic) business knowledge and skills and to increase overall employability. In some instances, this was meant to include the empowerment of entrepreneurs who would then employ local youth.
- In Tunisia, it concerned the improvement of financial literacy, which was emphasised by all beneficiaries who participated in Tayssir's interventions.

Beneficiaries generally expressed satisfaction with the interventions' impacts. Some respondents, more in Tunisia than in Somalia, remarked that the duration of trainings and other measures was 'too short'. But such a request to increase the length of an intervention can also be interpreted as a positive assessment of its quality.

Male and female beneficiaries widely agreed on what they regarded as the main benefits of the interventions. This especially concerns building networks and confidence, but also developing business knowledge and skills. The only noteworthy discrepancy was that male respondents highlighted the increase in employability, while no female beneficiary mentioned this as a benefit.

Table 16. Comparing reflections on benefits - male and female beneficiaries

	Frequency among Females	**Frequency among Males**
pedagogical approach / quality	14 (no. 1)	3 (no. 4)
networking	6 (no. 2)	4 (no. 2)
confidence	5 (no. 3)	4 (no. 2)
business knowledge / skills	4 (no. 4)	2 (no. 6)
financial literacy	3 (no. 5)	1 (no. 8)
length of training period	2 (no. 6)	3 (no. 5)

increase employability	0 (-)	5 (no. 1)
...		
TOTAL	37	23

Theme 3: Factors of Success

Another segment of the interviews was dedicated to collecting narratives of success and failure in entrepreneurship or employment. Some of the codes identified in these case studies overlap with those that have been already discussed as a purpose or benefit of LEAD 2's interventions.

The most dominant factors of success that could be identified from the case studies were:

- Marketing and selling strategies, which was mentioned broadly across the sample by partners and beneficiaries in both countries. A Somali female beneficiary articulated this vividly: 'Since we are an online store, we have a [special] opportunity, because youth…uses the [same] social media that we use. There are bigger stores [than ours], which have started working years before us, but they do not use social media. So using social media is giving us an opportunity to grow fast as we get new customers every day.'
- The matter of licensing and registration, which only few beneficiaries in Somalia referred to, but which appeared in almost all interviews in Tunisia. Consider the voice of this female beneficiary from Tunisia: 'The paperwork, legal procedures, all the formalities, and the expenses I should take into consideration to maintain my authorization and licence; the advantages offered for individuals willing to start their projects, these [aspects] were all new to me. With Ms. [Name of trainer], for example, we learned to distinguish between the types of project licences and authorizations.'
- Understanding the own market positioning, including the awareness for one's own customer base, was articulated less in Somalia and more strongly in Tunisia. This ties to the previously discussed theme of marketing and selling strategies.

Other important factors for success or failure that emerged from the case study analysis were:

- The availability of equipment or other material resources and the (in)correct application of business knowledge. Both aspects were more strongly emphasised in Somalia than in Tunisia. This can be well illustrated by the case of this Somali male beneficiary: 'The biggest challenge I faced was the funding, as I was not able to start the business due to my financial ability. And because I needed a big place to stable the livestock before I can bring it to the market, getting such place was also a challenge.'
- The access to funding, which was a theme that emerged more strongly in Tunisia than in Somalia. This will be further elaborated in 'Theme 4: Future Capabilities'.

What emerges less from these narratives than one might have expected are:

- Cultural barriers for women to become entrepreneurs, which was only mentioned by two partners in Tunisia.
- Individual reasons for failure, such as resistance to be supported or unrealistically high expectations for continued support, which only one partner in Somalia brought up.

Comparing the assessments of female and male beneficiaries, one can again detect strong agreement about which were considered to be the main factors for success or failure. The single divergence concerned the observation that female beneficiaries emphasised the relevance between coaching and attracting funding, whereas this was not mentioned among male beneficiaries at all.

Table 17. Comparing factors of success or failure - male and female beneficiaries

Codes	Frequency among Females	Frequency among Males
licensing / registration / legislation	10 (no. 1)	4 (no. 2)
customer awareness / market understanding	6 (no. 2)	2 (no. 4)
marketing/selling strategies	5 (no. 3)	4 (no. 1)
(coaching to) funding achieved	4 (no. 4)	0 (-)
equipment or other resources	3 (no. 5)	3 (no. 3)
...		
TOTAL	**32**	**16**

Theme 4: Future Capabilities

In another interview segment respondents were asked to reflect about the future and identify factors that they considered could endanger enterprises or contribute to their sustainability.

The most widely mentioned needs to support enterprises were:

- Continued funding clearly ranked as the top priority among respondents. Funding emerged as a significant topic from the conversations with all partner organisation representatives, whereas among intervention beneficiaries it was almost exclusively raised in Somalia. Consider the voice of this male Somali beneficiary: 'I would say that, luckily, I have not faced any challenges so far. But in the future, as I am planning to expand my scope, I anticipate that I will be lacking capital or funding, which I think will be one of [my] main challenges.' This is echoed by the opinion of a Tunisian partner organisation representative: 'The funding was not sufficient for them [the beneficiaries]. Some of them mentioned not having any funds at all. It is important to know that for Tunisian start-ups, the funding, especially at the beginning, is the most important asset.' Funding as a topic for LEAD 2 partner organisations will be covered in 'Theme 6: Viewpoints of Partners'.
- Partner organisations in Somalia especially emphasised that periods allocated for trainings and other interventions should be sufficiently long. This point is vividly captured by the following quote by a partner organisation representative in Somalia: 'We only need to extend the project and the duration of the program to more than six months, [that is] to one year or two years in order to create sustainability.'

The following aspects emerged when respondents reflected about existing resources, which already now contribute positively to the development of an enterprise, or about future stabilising forces:

- Their own professional experience and established expertise: This was almost exclusively mentioned by partners and beneficiaries in Somalia (and might be a euphoric reflection of impactful trainings and other interventions). One male Somali beneficiary articulated this fittingly: 'I got the personnel and the expertise. I just need the funding to expand to the next level. For example, during the past (Islamic) 'Feast of Sacrifice', I was asked if I could organise 1,000 goats [for slaughtering], but I could not due to my lack of my financial capacity.' For partner organisations this will be covered in 'Theme 6: Viewpoints of Partners'.
- The potential to scale-up and expand a business to other regions of the country or even across borders was mentioned especially by beneficiaries in Somalia. Consider this voice of a male Somali beneficiary: 'The opportunities we see is that our business can expand and we can have branches in all the different regions of the country.'
- Specific for some business models, respondents in both countries emphasised the availability of facilities or venues as critical to increase their economic prospects. In Tunisia, a male beneficiary framed this in the following way: 'We started doing our market analysis and aimed to assess the potential success of our project. And we believe that if we had the resources to establish a physical shop in the region, rather than just operating online, we could achieve significant improvements.'

It seems noteworthy that interview respondents only rarely mentioned impact factors that are often relevant in other entrepreneurial environments:

- Political instability was mentioned as a potential challenge for sustainability by only one beneficiary in Somalia.
- Forms of discrimination, e.g., along the lines of gender or clan belonging, were not brought up by respondents (except for one partner organisation representative in Somalia).
- Respondents also did not reveal to be worried about market competitors, as this was mentioned by only one respondent in each country.

Theme 5: Shifts in Attitude

The final interview segment asked about changes in general attitudes influenced by LEAD 2 interventions.

The three most dominant impacts mentioned by respondents in that regard were:

- A lesser desire or intention to migrate abroad was widely articulated by interview respondents across the sample. Partner organisation representatives in particular highlighted this impact, as is illustrated by this quote of a Tunisian trainer: 'Up to this point, we have not come across any instances where our candidates gave up and opted to migrate to other countries, apart from those in the new technologies sector, who were lucky to have developed their project and expanded their horizons abroad.' For Somalia, this point is vividly captured by the response of one male beneficiary: '[My] attitude towards migration has hugely shifted, because I realised that I can find a job in my own country instead of migrating to a different country for jobs.'
- The theme of how respondents perceive governmental authority and depict their relationship towards its representatives was not much addressed in Somalia but emerged rather strongly in Tunisia. While some respondents articulated that authorities should best not interfere in matters of business-making, others reported a change in their attitude towards the public sector. This is vividly captured by the voice of this female beneficiary in Tunisia: 'My participation in

these ['formalities'] trainings made me more confident to…not be overwhelmed by the government administrative processes…Now, I do not see the Tunisian institutions as obstructing the process for individuals. I am quite optimistic, and I believe that I can work my way through all the formalities.'

- Exclusively partners and beneficiaries in Somalia noted a change in practices of self-perception and self-reflection associated with interventions. For example, this referred to new ways of handling diversity, an experience to overcome disadvantage, or the belief in a positive economic future. Such a shift in perspective is adequately captured in the following quote by a male Somali beneficiary: 'My attitude towards others [has changed]: When I was unemployed, I believed that you will not find a job unless someone powerful from your own family employs you or helps you to get employment.'

Additional themes that emerged regarding social attitudes and practices were:

- A stronger sense of community integration was noted almost exclusively by respondents in Somalia (and only by one in Tunisia). A female beneficiary in Somalia articulated this vividly: 'Yes, my attitude towards others has changed. I have become more patient and gentler with other people…I also listened to [my customers'] feedback, started having regular conversations with them and began to address the issues they have.'
- The link between a positive outlook for one's future and the rejection of violence and extremism was made a topic by some few respondents in Somalia and did not emerge in Tunisia. The representative of a partner organisation pointed to the interventions' general impact in that domain: 'Regarding extremism and violence, the unemployment and lack [to cover] basic needs were the main factors leading to extremism and violence. But as [our] program provided seed funding which helped [youth] realise that they can create their own businesses and help their families and community.'

Theme 6: Viewpoints of Partners

The LEAD 2 program aspires to put a particular focus on involving its local partner organisations with the purpose to improve their sustainability. Therefore, this section of the qualitative assessment reflects viewpoints of representatives from those six partner organisations that were selected for interviews in Tunisia and Somalia.

Looking into their future, partners were asked to point out existing or needed resources that would affect their sustainability.

As to needed resources, partners primarily mentioned a (continuous) flow of funding and 'more time' to implement interventions:

- The funding aspect is vividly illustrated by this response of a partner organisation representative in Somalia: 'We were not after any profit when we conducted the project. Instead, we were adding [own resources] to the project to mentor and coach those youth…If we have a budget [in the future] and resources for mentoring, coaching and funding, we will be able to mentor more and more youth.'
- The training period aspect is well captured by this voice of a partner in Tunisia: 'I have been in talks with [a SPARK representative] and explained that the allotted time frame for each project, that is seven to eight months, is relatively short to provide thorough assistance, especially with smaller-scale projects that are just starting. Nonetheless, we remain committed to maintaining active partnerships with our candidates and we conduct regular follow-ups, but this also incurs

substantial costs for us. And that can get burdensome at some point and make it difficult for us to continue our work with these individuals.'

- Another partner representative in Tunisia positively reflected on the adjustment of training periods, from 12 to 15 months, in light of seasonal lows in activity (caused by the Islamic 'Month of Fasting' or summer vacation periods): 'Even with entrepreneurs, during summer vacation, there is a low workflow. We put this matter on the table with Spark in 2021, and in 2022/2023, we had the chance to work over a period of 15 months.'

Among existing resources, partner organisation representatives mentioned especially their human capital and existing expertise, as well as their established networks, generally and regarding job matching.

This perspective is adequately captured by the following quotes:

- 'As to resources, we have space, a good team, expertise, a network, partners, mentors, coaches and experts who we trained that will facilitate our project...' (partner organisation in Somalia)
- '[Our organisation] is the hub that connects employers and jobseekers… Another thing that makes us confident is that [our organisation] has nationwide and worldwide connections and a huge network of donors, decision makers, employers… In terms of SME, [our organisation] has the experience to provide capacity building programs to SME owners and also to make use of grown SMEs that have also been supported by interventions and now can employ youth.' (partner organisation in Somalia)
- 'In Tunisia, mainly, [we offer] a broad network of experts. Also, our own experience, [i.e.,] we can teach in six months what can otherwise take two years for someone to learn. It saves time, especially for entrepreneurs with low means…Finally, it is continuity! Our participants have the guarantee that belonging to one of our programs means follow-up and continuity. They will always get the first updates and get a head start on opportunities.' (partner organisation in Tunisia)

The extent to which the main findings of the qualitative assessment, which now were structured according to six themes, point towards a 'systemic change' impact by LEAD 2 interventions will be further elaborated on in the following 'Discussion' section.

5. Discussion

In this section, we discuss some key challenges experienced during the data collection and the impact of these challenges on the analysis and results.

A limitation of the quantitative evaluation is that selection of participants was not only not random (which is methodologically advantageous, even if often complicated in real-life settings) but that intake criteria varied across partners. This reduces our capacity to use certain quasi-experimental analytical approaches, such as discontinuity or kinked regression designs. Such approaches need an objectively determined intake threshold. At the same time, it may have facilitated our use of a DiD quasi-experimental approach as there were, on average, there were no signs of underlying differences between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries at baseline. Another critical challenge was attrition. We faced challenges with baseline participation rates ranging from 26% to 94%. For the

endline, we were not able to contact all participants and lost 32% of participants. Biases from attrition were mitigated using statistical selection analyses.

To facilitate the survey implementation, ISDC shared individual links with unique survey access through email. Nevertheless, in-person surveys took place in some cases due to privacy concerns in the technology, weak internet access, and non-receipt of invite emails. We offered the possibility of sharing the survey link in WhatsApp groups with those participants. We can identify the methodology used to answer the survey, which was considered in the endline analysis as a control.

Security and data protection were an additional challenge. Partners expressed that in previous studies, participants giving their contact details were afraid of giving information that could be used or shared with third parties. To reduce this threat, we included consent forms, which explained that personal information was only used to identify participants in treatment and control groups and contact them in the future for the endline survey. Only the research team could access this information, and further analysis does not include information that could personally identify any individual.

The strength of the qualitative assessment is that the open-ended questions assembled in the interview guideline allowed respondents to freely articulate viewpoints and thus generate in-depth insights that illustrate complex interrelatedness. The qualitative assessment's main limitation originates from this same qualitative research design. Due to the small sample size, the findings presented here cannot claim to have reached a level of data saturation (that is, a point where additional interviewees do not introduce new themes). Most significantly, the qualitative findings provide insights based on selecting a few LEAD 2 partners and the specific interventions they implemented.

Another challenge for qualitative assessments is maintaining data consistency because responses to open-ended questions can vary significantly in length and value of information provided between research participants. In this situation, much depends on the quality of follow-up and clarifying questions posed by the interviewer. This balance that is more difficult to maintain if research must be designed to include multiple interviewers who operate in different national settings and with different languages. This impact assessment addressed this challenge by conducting an extensive pre-fieldwork workshop involving all participating interviewers, during which the interview guideline was discussed, exercised, and refined.

6. Conclusion

The primary objective of this evaluation was to assess the impact of the LEAD 2 intervention across various dimensions, in line with the Theory of Change (ToC) and to ensure that these findings could be attributed to the intervention directly. The evaluation focuses on three main areas: first, examining the extent to which the targeting of LEAD 2 participants was implemented as intended; second, assessing the economic outcomes for new entrepreneurs and existing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) resulting from LEAD 2; and third, estimating the causal effect of LEAD 2 on economic and social outcomes that can contribute to long-term community stability. The target population for the quantitative component of this study consists of all applicants to the LEAD 2 programme in Tunisia and Somalia/land, with selected applicants forming the treated group and those not selected serving as the control group.

This analysis shows that positive economic impacts are attributable to LEAD 2, particularly for women and youth, on several intended outcomes, especially employment and business-related outcomes: particularly in business ownership and formal registration. When comparing those who benefited from LEAD 2 to those who did not, we observed a noteworthy 16 percentage point increase in business ownership and a 10-percentage point increase in formal business registration. Notably, these effects were more pronounced among women and youth (18-29 years old), positively influencing these specific demographic groups in situations where social structures may create additional barriers for them. Specifically, among female beneficiaries, employment and business ownership were increased by 25 percentage points, while business registration increased by 17 percentage points. However, it is important to note that we also observed some adverse adjustments in income and income aspirations after participants engaged with LEAD 2, along with more positive business indicators. The reductions may be related to the initial start-up phases of businesses, reflecting a response to the challenges and adjustments faced during the early months of business establishment. This is particularly the case due to the timing of the endline data collection, only shortly after the intervention had taken place, leaving little time for these businesses to develop and become profitable.

Regarding stability, the results partially support the "Employment for Peace" hypothesis.[25] Specifically, this hypothesis posits that improved income plays a role, as beneficiaries whose economic status was positively affected by the programme showed a decrease in justification of violence without a clear motive. This finding is aligned with the ToC, designed at the beginning of the intervention, and it is especially noteworthy because of how difficult jobs and entrepreneurship environments are in fragile places and what this does to business ownership and success.[26] Furthermore, an exploratory analysis allowed us to conclude that those who underwent training and subsequently experienced an increase in their income or registered their businesses with the authorities also perceived a reduction in the extent of violence justification at the community level.

Furthermore, insights from the qualitative component complement the quantitative components in multiple ways. The main themes emerging from the interviews were benefits associated with the intervention, entrepreneurial success parameters, reflections on enterprises' future sustainability and shifts in social attitudes. The comparison of answers by national setting, gender, and beneficiary or partner organisation representative revealed strong agreements among respondents.

Our study shows systemic impact of building confidence, capacities and networks while reducing intentions to migrate among beneficiaries. Respondents articulated widespread satisfaction with the business skills and knowledge gained during the interventions and the pedagogical mentoring and coaching approaches. Aside from capacity-building, respondents emphasised the positive impact of building personal entrepreneurial confidence and networks that increase collaboration and employability. Regarding sustainability, respondents pointed to the relevance of access to funding, sufficient training periods, continued qualification of human capital and opportunities to scale up businesses. Regarding impacts on social attitudes, it is noteworthy that a lesser desire to migrate abroad emerged as a dominant topic, particularly in Tunisia, while Somali respondents more strongly emphasised positive self-perception and community

[25] Brück, T., Ferguson, N. T., Izzi, V., & Stojetz, W. (2016). Jobs aid peace. ISDC, Berlin.

[26] Brück, Tilman, Wim Naudé, and Philip Verwimp. "Business under fire: Entrepreneurship and violent conflict in developing countries." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 57.1 (2013): 3-19.

integration. These observations confirm and refine the 'Employment for Peace' hypothesis.

When focusing on the impacts of LEAD 2 on its partner organisations, the findings of the qualitative assessment suggest a similarly positive contribution towards strengthening professional networks and job-matching capabilities, as well as regarding further professionalisation and capacity-building. When including the positive performance reviews by beneficiaries, one also needs to consider an increase in reputation and competitive advantage for LEAD 2's partner organisations as an impact on systemic change. In terms of future required resources, the responses by partner organisation representatives suggest that a systemic impact could be further increased through a flexible handling of project duration periods and by a continued allocation of funding.

Taken together, these observations outline specific impacts on systemic change for beneficiaries and partner organisations that were achieved by LEAD 2 interventions in regard to making 'local systems of SME development, job creation and job matching' more sustainable, scalable and resilient. At the same time, the findings of this impact assessment's qualitative component support and refine the 'Employment for Peace' hypothesis developed by the quantitative component.

Specific challenges were addressed to estimate the causal effect of LEAD 2. Firstly, significant attrition was observed at the endline, prompting a shift to phone surveys to enhance participant response rates. Around 50% of the applicants answered the endline survey. Of 1041 interview requests, 572 received responses, experiencing significant challenges to outreach participants. Responses were received from 481 new entrepreneurs and 193 existing SMEs across both countries. Consequently, statistical adjustments were necessary to account for any potential biases during the analysis. Secondly, data quality evaluations revealed partial responses to specific survey questions from participants, with a refusal rate of approximately 10%. Thirdly, it is important to acknowledge that the evaluation is susceptible to data quality issues and inconsistencies. Particularly at the endline, some questionnaires of firms and individuals were mixed up, and phone surveys were conducted significantly fast; quality checks and data validation were necessary to ensure the accuracy and reliability of findings. Finally, data collection occurred in politically challenging environments, and participants and enumerators expressed concerns about security and personal data protection.

A more extended evaluation period would be beneficial to comprehensively evaluate the programme's impact, shedding light on intermediate and long-term outcomes. We also acknowledge that these results might also highly depend on the quality of the labour markets the participants face. We cannot, however, explore this due to data limitations and the need for more information on the labour market characteristics, particularly for Somalia/land. Additionally, the data collection occurred during a time of significant political instability in the respective countries, making the topics discussed politically sensitive. This context raises questions about how to interpret the programme's positive results presented above and allows us to consider the practical implications and limitations of the evaluation.

It is important to note that the LEAD 2 programme did not have the primary objective of addressing the broader national job market or the current levels of violence in the countries. Instead, it focused on enhancing economic inclusion at the individual level and further contributing to community stability. Given the historical backdrop of high youth unemployment and political volatility accompanied by elevated levels of political violence and extremist expressions in Tunisia and Somalia, it becomes apparent that there are

inherent limitations to what the LEAD 2 intervention can achieve within the short-term scope of this evaluation.

Finally, the findings from this analysis underscore the importance and timely pertinence of conducting impact assessments for programmes like LEAD 2. Previous studies have not delved into programme-specific pathways illustrating how employment initiatives are expected to influence stability and peace. Moreover, the social impacts of these programmes have often been presumed rather than empirically tested.

7. Appendix

Table A1. Implementing partners LEAD 2 and roll-out

Implementer Partner	Intervention			
	Country	Date	Control	Treatmet
ADDCI	Tunisia	07.2022-12.2022	15	15
WIKI startup (Cohort 1 & 2)	Tunisia	09.2022-12.2022	7	10
Fidel	Tunisia	07.2022-01.2023	20	45
Syres	Tunisia	06.2022-12.2022	32	30
Taysir	Tunisia	07.2022-01.2023	1	20
Betacube	Tunisia	09.2022-01.2023	6	5
Tamss	Tunisia	07.2022-03.2023	18	7
Bushra	Somalia	10.2022-01.2023	22	10
Bina	Somalia	07.2022-01.2023	26	22
Shaqodoon	Somalia	11.2022-01.2023	135	35

Table A2. Details on the survey timeline by implementing partner

New StartUps							
Partner		Baseline			Endline		
	Country	Date	No. Participants	Repsonse Rate	Date	No. Participants	Response Rate
ADDCI	Tunisia	15.06.2022-23.06.2022	37	84%	17.01.2023-04.03.2023	30	81%
WIKI startup (Cohort 1 & 2)	Tunisia	17.05.2022-29.08.2022	25	45%	21.01.2023-08.03.2023	17	68%
Fidel	Tunisia	20.06.2022-25.06.2022	69	92%	09.02.2023-07.03.2023	65	94%
Syres	Tunisia	23.05.2022-27.05.2022	81	76%	19.01.2023-15.02.2023	62	77%
Taysir	Tunisia	07.06.2022-16.06.2022	76	78%	01.02.2023-20.02.2023	21	28%
Betacube	Tunisia	09.09.2022-14.09.2022	16	84%	18.02.2023-22.03.2023	11	69%
Tamss	Tunisia	03.06.2022-11.06.2022	38	93%	04.04.2023-12.05.2023	25	66%
Bushra	Somalia	21.09.2022-29.09.2022	35	58%	10.03.2023-26.03.2023	32	91%
Bina	Somalia	30.06.2022-18.07.2022	64	30%	26.02.2023-24.03.2023	48	75%
Shaqodoon	Somalia	27.10.2022-13.11.2022	261	51%	29.02.2023-23.07.2023	170	65%

Existing SMEs							
Partner		Baseline			Endline		
	Country	Date	No. Participants	Repsonse Rate	Date	No. Participants	Response Rate
ADDCI	Tunisia	04.07.2022-14.07-2022	11	50%	17.01.2023-04.03.2023	10	91%
Fidel	Tunisia	20.06.2022-25.06.2022	45	94%	09.02.2023-07.03.2023	43	96%
Taysir	Tunisia	07.06.2022-16.06.2022	67	84%	01.02.2023-20.02.2023	15	22%
Betacube	Tunisia	09.09.2022-14.09.2022	11	85%	18.02.2023-22.03.2023	7	64%
Tamss	Tunisia	03.06.2022-11.06.2022	18	78%	04.04.2023-12.05.2023	12	67%
Bushra	Somalia	21.09.2022-29.09.2022	8	26%	10.03.2023-26.03.2023	7	88%
Bina	Somalia	30.06.2022-18.07.2022	22	28%	26.02.2023-24.03.2023	16	73%
Shaqodoon	Somalia	23.08.2022-24.02.2022	157	95%	08.02.2023-25.02.2023	83	53%

Table A3. Sample structure for new Start-ups and Existing SMEs

Table - Final Sample							
New start-ups							
	Tunisia		Somalia		Total		Whole Sample
	Treatment	Control	Treatment	Control	Treatment	Control	
Baseline	203	139	92	268	295	407	702
Endline	133	100	67	183	200	283	483
Attrition	34,5%	28,1%	27,2%	31,7%	32,2%	30,5%	31,2%

Existing SMEs							
	Tunisia		Somalia		Total		Whole Sample
	Treatment	Control	Treatment	Control	Treatment	Control	
Baseline	118	34	167	20	285	54	339
Endline	67	20	93	13	160	33	193
Attrition	43,2%	41,2%	44,3%	35,0%	43,9%	38,9%	43,1%