Social Investment Programme and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria: A Case of DAKKADA Skill Acquisition Programmes, Akwa Ibom State

Imoh-Obong Nsikak Akamba
Department of Public Administration
Akwa Ibom State University, Nigeria
Email: akambaimoh@gmail.com

Ekong E. Daniel
Department of Public Administration
Akwa Ibom State University, Nigeria
Email: ekongdaniel@aksu.edu.ng; ekong.e.daniel@gmail.com

Ofonmbuk Etido Atakpa
Department of Public Administration
Akwa Ibom State University, Nigeria
Email: ofonmbukatakpa@aksu.edu.ng

Unwana-Abasi S. Udoh
Department of Public Administration
Akwa Ibom State University, Nigeria

Abstract
This study investigated the effect of the Dakkada Skill Acquisition programs on employment generation and household income in Akwa Ibom State. Primary data were gathered from the respondents through a questionnaire on social investment program and socio-economic development. The responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, while descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used for data analysis. PPMC analysis was used to test the two null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings were that Dakkada Skill Acquisition programs had a significantly positive effect on employment generation and household income in Akwa Ibom State. The study concluded that the social investment program has a positive effect on socio-economic development in Akwa Ibom State. The study recommended, among others, that the Akwa Ibom State Government ensure that qualified graduates from the Dakkada Skill Acquisition Programs receive the right start-up equipment and tools. Without access to these essentials, beneficiaries might struggle to leverage their newly acquired skills. Moreover, the Akwa Ibom State Government should set up a structured post-training support and mentorship program for Dakkada graduates. This support should include business mentoring, technical assistance, enterprise management training, and regular check-ins with beneficiaries after they have completed their training. This will promote human capital development.

Keywords: Social Investment program, Socio-economic Development, Dakkada Skill Acquisition programs, Employment generation and Household Income

Introduction
The quest for socioeconomic development is a top priority for governments around the globe. This is one of the reasons why modern development thinking increasingly acknowledges that sustainable development cannot be measured by merely examining economic growth metrics, such as gross domestic product (GDP), industrial output, or government spending. Instead,

development is viewed as a process that involves enhancing human welfare, reducing poverty, creating more opportunities, promoting social inclusion, and empowering citizens to engage in both economic and social spheres. This broader perspective has played a key role in the rise and growth of social investment programs, which are essential tools for tackling socioeconomic issues, especially in developing nations.

In the late 1980s, social investment began to gain ground in discussions of development. Governments and international development agencies are on the lookout for more sustainable options than traditional welfare policies. Social investment differs from the traditional welfare approach, which primarily emphasises income redistribution and short-term solutions to poverty, by emphasising human capital development, strengthening productive abilities, promoting social inclusion, and creating opportunities for people and communities to become economically independent. The social investment framework was born to look at social policy as an investment rather than a cost, given that it can also have long-term economic and social benefits (Mahon, 2019; Atakpa, 2024; Utok et al., 2025).

This strategy gained the attention of major international institutions, such as the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which started to promote investments in education, healthcare, skills development, entrepreneurship, and social protection as key channels to inclusive growth and sustainable development (Nalado & Sunday, 2026). Nigeria provides a backdrop to the discussion of the role that social investment programs play in socioeconomic development. Despite its massive oil and gas resources and other mineral resources, the country faces significant socioeconomic development challenges. These include widespread poverty, unemployment, income inequality, inadequate health care, education failure, and a lack of infrastructure.

Various governments at the federal and state levels have implemented several intervention measures to improve the living standards of the population and stimulate socioeconomic development. They cover various aspects, such as poverty alleviation and job creation programs, education and child protection, agricultural projects, enterprise development, and social safety nets (Atakpa, 2016). The state governments in Nigeria have instituted specific social investment schemes to address state-level developmental challenges. The Dakkada Skills Acquisition program, a brainchild of the Akwa Ibom State Government, is a very notable program. The program began in 2015 as a comprehensive socio-economic development program to encourage citizens to have faith in themselves, increase productivity, encourage entrepreneurship and promote collective development (Olabiyi, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

Employment, poverty, and survival challenges related to sustainable livelihoods are yet another critical socio-economic challenge in Nigeria and Akwa Ibom in particular. While the government and various development partners have introduced several social investment schemes targeting vulnerable groups with the aim of generating employment and increasing beneficiaries' income levels, there are some concerns regarding the effectiveness of these schemes in generating jobs and livelihoods for participants. This is particularly important because financial assistance without practical skills and opportunities to participate in the economy may be a short-term palliative, without actually improving individuals' socioeconomic status. One issue is the quality of the vocational and technical skills provided by these social investment courses.

Generally, a state-led empowerment program is invariably constrained by budget, non-uniform flow of funds, or inadequate allocation of funds in comparison with the number of youths in the 31 local government areas. Training centres such as the Dakkada Skills Acquisition Centre are providing vocational and digital skills to youth, but a gap is observed where youth are left without follow-up after training or enrollment to advanced enterprise programs. Since there are no strict tracking systems, quantifying the actual rate of

socioeconomic development of the program beneficiaries from trainees to self-reliant entrepreneurs is difficult. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effect of social investment programs on socio-economic development in Nigeria, with a focus on Dakkada Skill Acquisition programs in Akwa Ibom State.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of the social investment program on socio-economic development in Nigeria, with a focus on the Dakkada Skill Acquisition programs in Akwa Ibom State. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To investigate the influence of Dakkada skills acquisition programs on employment generation in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.
2. To examine the effect of Dakkada skills acquisition programs on household income in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are developed to guide the study:

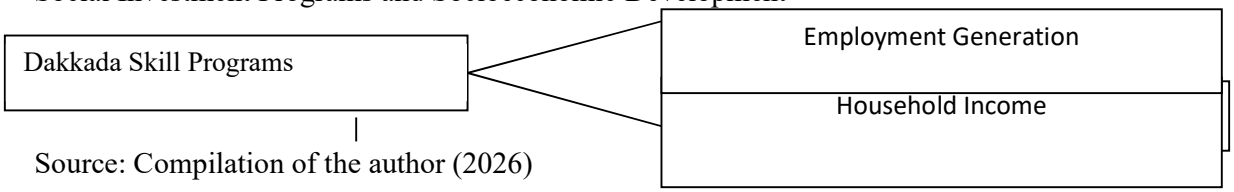
Ho_1: Dakkada skills acquisition programs have no significant influence on employment generation in Akwa Ibom State.

Ho_2: The Dakkada skills acquisition program has no significant effect on household income in Akwa Ibom State.

Conceptual Framework

Independent and dependent variables

Social Investment Programs and Socioeconomic Development



Source: Compilation of the author (2026)

Social Investment Programs (SIPs)

The National Social Investment, as opined by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has been cited as government-led policies and programs that seek to improve social welfare and promote inclusive development, especially for marginalised and economically disadvantaged groups. Such investments tend to be directed toward social protection, employment, and capacity development programs and projects aimed at enhancing people's well-being, reducing inequalities, and achieving economic inclusion. In recent years, social investment has been a key policy solution for developing countries to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 1: Eradication of extreme poverty in recent years (UNDP, 2022).

According to Agboola et al. (2017), social investment programs are public policies that are geared toward human development by judiciously using human capital, particularly in the area of labour-market participation. Social investment means the government's efforts to boost its citizens' economic and social capabilities. Wakili and Lamidi (2019) argue that welfare state programs must help build a skilled and flexible workforce that can easily adapt to a constantly evolving knowledge-based economy. According to Hemerijck (2018), social investment is a new paradigm in the new welfare state, and its main purpose is to improve the lives of the poor and reduce poverty and inequality in society (Nishimwe-Niyimbanira & Ferdinand, 2021). Social investments are built on the presupposition of high employment, low poverty and inequality, and high economic growth, with an active state to build the foundation of a high economic growth rate (Morel et al., 2012). The core of social investment is the change in social

policy for protecting underprivileged individuals by providing monetary compensation and empowering them economically to participate in the market, as much as possible.

Socio-Economic Development

According to Kapur (2018), socio-economic development refers to the improvement of individuals' lifestyles through improved education, income, skill development, and employment. It is a process of change in the economy and society that is related to cultural and environmental factors. Thus, it may be viewed as social and economic development in society. It is measured using indicators such as gross domestic product, life expectancy, literacy, and employment levels. Social development is a process that leads to changes in social institutions in a way that increases the ability of society to reach its goals (Abili & Zare, 2012).

Socio-economic development is a qualitative and quantitative process of improvement in the social and economic reality of the society in a qualitative and quantitative manner. It is the relationship between economic and social life (Udoms et al., 2015; Ibanga & Uwah, 2021). According to the NEPAD Declaration, socio-economic development means 'the continuous improvement of the welfare and standard of living of the people." It is about meeting the basic needs necessary for living a decent life. In line with this, Rodney (2009) sees it as a multi-faceted process that comprises an increase in skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility, and material well-being. More recently, socio-economic development has been identified with distributional justice as a means of reducing poverty among the masses or satisfying their basic needs.

Dakkada Skills Acquisition Programs and Employment Generation in Akwa Ibom State

The Dakkada skills acquisition program focuses on vocational education, providing participants with marketable skills, such as tailoring, carpentry, welding and information technology, to empower people to remain self-reliant and to lessen their dependence on outside sources of income (Akpan & Bassey, 2020). In 2022, an estimated 70% of participants had employment or started businesses within one year following training in 2022, while 35% of these participants successfully increased their average income by 25% (Akpan, 2021; Akwa Ibom Bureau of Statistics, 2022). The programs not only increase employability but also foster entrepreneurship, thus providing more jobs and generating new opportunities for economic development.

The Dakkada Skills Acquisition Program (SAP) has been crucial in driving job creation in Akwa Ibom State by encouraging entrepreneurship, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and self-employment among the youth. The project is designed as an overall socio-economic empowerment plan with an emphasis on sustainable livelihoods as opposed to short-term employment. According to Akpan (2022), the Dakkada Initiative has been instrumental in setting up many small enterprises through capacity-building initiatives, vocational training, and start-up funding. This has helped to increase the productive capacity of the state's economy and people to establish enterprises that, in turn, provide opportunities for others to work. The initiative directly tackles unemployment by promoting innovation and productivity through agricultural schemes, industrial training, and enterprise development programs.

The Dakkada skills acquisition programs align with national employment strategies and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 8, which ultimately promotes decent work and economic growth. Udo and Effiong (2023) state that the provision of jobs through skills has significantly reduced youth unemployment in the country, minimised youth delinquency, and enhanced the youth's standard of living by offering alternative means of economic engagement.

Dakkada Skills Acquisition Programs and Household Income in Akwa Ibom State

The average household income among participants in Dakkada skills acquisition programs rose by 30%, with 70% of microfinance recipients reporting a 20%–40% increase in earnings within six months of receiving support (Bassey & Essien, 2021; Akwa Ibom Bureau of Statistics, 2022). It reduced the poverty gap and improved access to economic opportunities, with 50% of those who participated moving from low to middle income (Uduak, 2021). The success of the initiative in building financial independence is reflected by the fact that 40% of the beneficiaries reported self-sufficiency, meaning that they no longer needed the state's help (Akwa Ibom Ministry of Finance, 2022).

Dakkada skills acquisition programs in Akwa Ibom State have been found to boost household income by creating market-oriented skills acquisition programs that cater to those who are economically active and are beneficiaries of the training programs, thereby enabling them to become self-employed, improve business performance and ensure financial stability (Mkpanam et al., 2026). Umo and Eyo's (2025) analysis of vocational training and enterprise support indicates a strong positive effect of vocational training and enterprise support on an individual's income-generating ability. Significant differences in successful business start-up and self-employment among participants are attributable to capacity development. Technical education is usually integrated with strategic partnerships and business grants in programs to ensure that participants can start micro-enterprises.

The Dakkada Skills Acquisition Centre (DASAC) has created market-relevant skills for the training of youths and adults in Akwa Ibom State, thereby making them self-employed or gainfully self-employed in society. Ubah (2023) noted that practical training, for instance, in the manufacture of blocks, plumbing, and tiling, transforms raw labor into certified trade skills. The centre is also producing quality commercial cement blocks, and the hands-on training models used in production are directly applicable to business income generation. Vocational training and economic empowerment programmes like DASAC and Dakkada Economic Empowerment Program have been reviewed in academic and government circles, and their impacts on the income-earning potential, business performance, and financial sustainability of beneficiaries are statistically significant (Udo & Effiong, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

The Human Capital Theory by Becker (1964) and Schultz (1961) were used as the theoretical support for this study. Schultz's Human Capital Theory (1961) and Becker's (1993) extension of this work were the major influences on the theory's development. This theory argues that an investment in education, training, knowledge, and skills is an investment in human capital, which is an investment in individuals' productive power. This implies that people who acquire knowledge and skills relevant to their economic activities are better equipped to participate in these activities. Furthermore, investments in education and training in organisations and governments can significantly increase productivity and economic growth.

Human Capital Theory has emphasised that investing in knowledge and skills, such as through computer and digital technology training, is worthwhile, as indicated in the context of this study. The Dakkada Skills Acquisition Centre is a social investment platform where people can become computer and software application literate, learn networking skills, digital entrepreneurship, and other tech-related skills. These skills can have a significant impact on job prospects, entrepreneurship, provision of digital services, and participation in the digital economy. The theory also postulates that the benefits of training do not only benefit the individual. More productive trained workers mean a more efficient use of resources within the organisation, business expansion, job creation, and improved socioeconomic development. In this sense, government investment in computer and digital technology can be seen as a strategic investment that aims to increase the state's productive human resources.

Empirical Literature

Abaikpa et al. (2026) investigated the effectiveness of capacity development and skill acquisition programs in promoting self-employment among youths in Akwa Ibom State. The study focused on the impact of capacity development and skill acquisition programs on the self-employment of youth in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. A structured questionnaire was administered to 384 respondents, and data were analysed using descriptive and regression analyses. The findings showed that the programs had a positive impact on self-employment, with 76.7% of respondents gaining skills to start up businesses and 79.0% overall satisfaction. The least positive response, however, was around post-training support, in terms of mentorship and finance access, at 64.8%. A very strong positive correlation was found between the regression model and self-employment (0.864), and capacity development had a significant positive effect, accounting for 74.7% of the variance in self-employment, with a beta coefficient of 0.793 and a p-value of 0.000. The study findings revealed that significant promotion of self-employment is found in capacity development, but this needs better support after training. The recommendations included enhancing mentorship networks, creating better training facilities, and establishing business monitoring to guarantee sustainability and wider employment influence.

Ekpo et al. (2026) conducted a study on social protection programs and poverty reduction in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria (2017-2026). This study explored the effectiveness of social protection programs in reducing poverty in Akwa Ibom State. Poor funding, corruption, and policy inconsistencies were cited as key factors that hamper the effectiveness of the programs. The study was based on the theories of new public management and human capital development (HCD) and used a survey research design. The respondents were selected from a projected population of 4,979,400 (NPC, 2022), and 384 respondents were sampled. Information was gathered using a 12-item structured questionnaire and reporting frequency (simple percentages) and tables. The results showed that social protection programs are significantly related to the reduction in unemployment in Akwa Ibom State. The programs facilitated access to education by fostering social empowerment, which led to improved employment opportunities, incomes, and living standards for beneficiaries. The study assumed that people-centred social protection programs are aimed at the needs of the poor and vulnerable and not the interests of the elites. It called for adequate funding which is in accordance with the International Labour Organisation social protection benchmark of 19-27% for human capital development, robust monitoring and evaluation to prevent misappropriation, and continued investment in the education, agriculture, and entrepreneurship sectors to provide more employment opportunities to help address youth unemployment and restiveness among the youth.

Habu et al. (2026) examined the effect of vocational skills training on income generation and self-reliance of youths and adults in the Biu Local Government Area of Borno State, Nigeria. The study examined the effects of vocational skills acquisition on youths' and adults' empowerment at the Vocational Training Centre (VTC) in Biu, Borno State, Nigeria. The study was based on two research objectives and two research questions, based on a macroeconomic development perspective of human and economic advancement in the form of the Human Capital Theory from the 1960s. Using a descriptive survey design, all 260 youths and adults who benefited from the training centre were included in the study population, and no sampling was required. A questionnaire developed with the help of experts in Continuing Education and Extension Services was used for validation and was named “Economic Empowerment of Youths and Adults in Vocational Training Centre.” Cronbach’s alpha was used to check the reliability, and the result was 0.74. Frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used for data analysis. The results revealed that vocational skills training had a significant impact on income generation and self-reliance of both adults and youth. The study concluded that by enabling employment opportunities for Nigeria’s youths

and adults, reducing unemployment and reducing the rate of poverty, vocational skills can go a long way in improving the economic conditions of Nigerian youths and adults. In addition, it helps youths and adults identify investment opportunities and explore opportunities to use under-utilised natural resources to generate much-needed goods and services. It was recommended that the government must provide more vocational training centres in the state; introduce vocational programs; integrate vocational training into formal and informal education; and make vocational training a key factor in knowledge acquisition, professional training and self-sufficiency.

Usman et al. (2026) investigated the role of skill acquisition in employment generation in Nigeria with special reference to the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) in Jos. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (tables and simple percentages), and the objective was tested for its significance using the GLM. The findings revealed that being involved in ITF programs and the relevance of the skills were positive and statistically significant in employment generation with coefficients of 0.3641 and 0.1445, respectively, whereas technical proficiency, soft skills and relevance to the industry were not significantly relevant with coefficients of 0.131, -0.1655 and 0.580, respectively. The research concluded that formal attendance at skills acquisition schemes, such as the ones adopted by the ITF, has a significant positive impact on the beneficiaries' employment opportunities, creation of entrepreneurial possibilities, and income generation of the beneficiaries. Nevertheless, the bottlenecks of poor facilities, limited connections with the private sector, and poor industry alignment still hinder the best results. Therefore, the research recommended that government and other stakeholders should increase the ITF's institutional capability through adequate funding, regular curriculum updating, and regular collaboration with industries. Furthermore, the need for the institutionalization of training programs, such as business start-up grants, mentorship programs and access to microfinance programs, is of critical importance for making the acquired skills sustainable in order to achieve long-term self-employment, and inclusive national development, is of critical importance.

Research Methodology

A survey research design was appropriate for the study as it was designed to examine the relationship between the SSIP and socio-economic development of the study area, which is the Dakkada Skill Acquisition programmes in Akwa Ibom State. This enabled the researcher to obtain the information needed from the participants in the study and evaluate the relationship between participation in the skill acquisition programmes by the participants and the various outcomes of socio-economic development. This study's participants were a group of 1,345 people trained by the Dakkada Initiative from 2017 to 2026. The study sample size was 294, determined through the Taro Yamane (1967) formula. Primary and secondary data sources were used. A structured questionnaire was the major instrument for data collection, with a 5-point Likert scale used to rate the responses. The completed questionnaires were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the analysis.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Administration and Retrieval of the questionnaire

Response status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Questionnaires administered	309	100.0
Questionnaires returned and usable	294	95.1
Questionnaires not returned or invalid	15	4.9
Total	309	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

A questionnaire was administered to 309 selected beneficiaries of Dakkada Skill Acquisition programs, Akwa Ibom State. Of these, 294 were completed and returned, but 15 were either not returned or not fully completed.

Data Analysis

Test of the Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested using Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient (PPMC) at the 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis One

H_{o1}: Dakkada skills acquisition programs have no significant influence on employment generation in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 2: PPMC analysis of Dakkada Skills Acquisition Programs and Employment Generation

Variables	N	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Dakkada skills acquisition programs and employment generation	294	0.621	0.000	Reject H_{o1}

Table 2 shows a correlation coefficient of r = 0.621 with a significance value of p = 0.000. Since p < 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result indicates a statistically significant positive influence between Dakkada skills acquisition programs and employment generation.

Hypothesis Two

H_{o2}: The Dakkada skills acquisition program has no significant effect on household income in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 3: PPMC Analysis of Dakkada Skills Acquisition Programs and Household Income (%)

Variables	N	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Dakkada skills acquisition programs and household income	294	0.701	0.000	Reject H_{o7}

The result indicates a statistically significant positive effect of Dakkada skills acquisition programs on household income (p = 0.000).

Discussion of Findings

Objective One: Dakkada Skills Acquisition Programs and Employment Generation

The study revealed that the Dakkada Skills Acquisition program has a positive and statistically significant influence on the generation of employment. The descriptive analysis yielded a grand mean of 3.98, which comfortably surpassed the criterion mean of 2.50. Additionally, the PPMC results indicated a strong positive correlation between the Dakkada Skills Acquisition programs and employment generation, with an r value of 0.621 and a p value of 0.05. This finding implies that Dakkada Skills Acquisition programs equipped beneficiaries with practical skills that can help them start small businesses, find jobs, or pursue self-employment. Moreover, the results indicates that Dakkada skills acquisition programs play a significant role in socio-economic development, especially when training is combined with hands-on skill acquisition. Allocating resources to practical vocational training can significantly enhance beneficiaries' ability to engage in productive economic activities.

According to Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Labour and Manpower Planning (2024), the Dakkada initiative accounts for a large proportion of the total employment growth in the state, citing some instances where SMEs and SMEs account for over 95% of firms, 60-70% of employment, 55% of GDP and generate the lion's share of new employment. According to the Dakkada Coordinating Office, Table 4 represents findings from a 2026 stratified survey study conducted in 2026 assessing the localised impact of the Dakkada Skills Acquisition Programs framework among Akwa Ibom State that are directly in entrepreneurship or active employment.

Table 4: Dakkada Skills Acquisition Programs and the Employment Workforce.

S/N	Training Phase	Number of graduates	Government Sponsorship and Stipend Support	Employment Status
1	Cohort 1 (main)	240	200 Sponsored Trainees	Transitioned to active entrepreneurship, cluster cooperatives, and cottage industries.
2	Cohort 2	427	200 Sponsored Trainees	Advanced directly to the Ibom-LED for startup incubation.
3	Cohort 3	568	State-wide local government subsidies	Absorbed into technical sectors, digital economy roles, and mechanized agriculture.
	Total Impact	1,235		Direct reduction of unemployment in Akwa Ibom State

Source: Dakkada Coordinating Office, 2026

Objective 2: Dakkada Skills Acquisition Programs and Household Income

The study showed that the Dakkada skills acquisition programs have a significant and strong impact on household income. The descriptive analysis revealed that the r value obtained from the PPMC analysis was 0.701 with a p-value < 0.05. This implies that the overall perception of the participants is that Dakkada skills acquisition programs are an important contribution to the enhancement of household income. Having digital, entrepreneurial, and vocational skills will enhance participation in today's job market, entrepreneurship, online business ventures, information management, and other tech-driven economic activities, which will in turn improve household income. Overall, the mean responses were relatively high, reflecting respondents' awareness of the relevance of skills in today's socioeconomic fabric. This discovery is consistent with human capital development, where training in technical, vocational, and digital technology improves human knowledge and skills. Beneficiaries can leverage their skills in areas such as business management, communication, marketing, online services, and office tasks.

These results indicated that Dakkada skills acquisition programs had a statistically significant positive effect on beneficiaries' income, their capacity to self-employ, and their financial stability in Akwa Ibom State. Assessments of the Dakkada Skills Acquisition Centre (DASAC) and other empowerment schemes reveal that vocational training is effective in enhancing the capacity of people and families to earn a livelihood on their own. Sector-based programs such as agriculture, information and communication technology (ICT), hospitality, and wood/steel technology seek to empower dependent citizens and foster self-sustaining entrepreneurs and employers of labour to improve the baseline levels of household welfare.

Table 5 shows how Dakkada skills acquisition programs boost household income streams.

Table 5 Dakkada Skills Acquisition Programs Household Income Streams

S/N	Program /component	Target / Focus Area	Household Income Indicator
1	Technical and vocational training	Building, welding, carpentry, electrical, plumbing, etc.	Equips youths with market-relevant skills, raising their monthly income-generating capacity.
2	Agricultural and livestock production	Keywords: poultry, fisheries, crop production, greenhouse farming	Directly supplies local markets, yielding independent streams of sustenance and commercial profit.
3	Digital and Soft Skills	Keywords: ICT, basic business math, literacy, customer service	Employability enhancement in modern micro-enterprises and remote digital tasks
4	Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Support	Business management and financial literacy	Translates technical training into profitable ventures, reducing reliance on external jobs.
5	Post-Training Starter Packs and Mentorship	Provision of micro-grants or other tools	Acts as a major motivation; robust distribution correlates with sustained household poverty reduction.

Source**:** Dakkada Coordinating Office Statistics (2025).

Conclusion

The findings show that the Social Investment program (Dakkada Skill Acquisition programs) has a positive and significant relationship with different aspects of socio-economic development in Akwa Ibom State. The findings indicate that the practical knowledge and skills acquired in vocational and technical training are essential for securing jobs, self-employment, and engaging in any income-generating activity for beneficiaries. The bonds in shoe making, tailoring, furniture making, agriculture, hospitality management, automobile repairs, and computer and digital technology highlight the importance of skill acquisition in social investment and human capacity development.

Furthermore, the study emphasises the importance of social investment success not only in terms of the number of people trained. It is also essential to ask whether these beneficiaries can apply the skills they have acquired following the training. Factors such as access to equipment, start-up capital, market opportunities, mentoring, infrastructure, and other forms of support after training can significantly impact how well these skills lead to sustainable socioeconomic benefits. Finally, the results confirm the concept of investing in human capacities as a means to socioeconomic development.

Recommendation

Based on the study findings and conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Akwa Ibom State Government should ensure that qualified graduates from the Dakkada Skill Acquisition Programs receive the right start-up equipment and tools. Without access to these essentials, beneficiaries might struggle to leverage their newly acquired skills.
2. The Akwa Ibom State Government should establish a structured post-training support and mentorship program for Dakkada graduates. This support should include business mentoring, technical assistance, enterprise management training, and regular check-ins with beneficiaries after they have completed their training. This will promote human capital development.
3. The Akwa Ibom State Government should team up with private businesses, professional associations, financial institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and other relevant development partners to ensure the sustainability of these programs. This will induce support and patronage to boost business income.

References

Abaikpa, U. A., Ekpo-Ufot, U., & Ubeh, N. S. (2026). Effectiveness of capacity development and skill acquisition programs in promoting self-employment among youths in Akwa Ibom State. *African Multidisciplinary Scholarship Journal (AMSJ), 1*(1), 75-90.

Abili, K., & Zare, K. M. (2012). The relationship between organisational social capital and knowledge management in an insurance governmental company. *Journal of Insurance*, i(2), 129–152. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jia.2012.09.010.

Agboola, T. O., Lamidi, K. O., & Shiyanbade, B. W. (2017). Leadership crisis and nation building in Nigeria: A symptom of governance failure. *Global Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*, *6*(4), 10–19. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gjios.2017.09.010.

Akpan, A. J. (2021). Impact of vocational and entrepreneurship training on youth employment and income generation. *International Journal of Training and Development*, *25*(3), 145–160. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijtd.2021.1020

Akpan, U. (2022). Evaluation of the Dakkada initiative on entrepreneurship and small business development. *Journal of African Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, *12*(3), 45–59. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaei.2018.09.010.

Akpan, U. S., & Bassey, E. E. (2020). Vocational training and economic empowerment: An evaluation of the Dakkada Skills Acquisition programs. *Journal of Vocational Education and Social Development, 5*(2), 45–58. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvos.2020.10.015.

Atakpa, O. E. (2016). Public policy and economic development: An interim evaluation of the subsidy re-investment and empowerment programme (SURE-P) of the Goodluck Jonathan administration (2012), *Uyo Journal for Sustainable Development*, *1*(1), 42-53.

Atakpa, O. E. (2024). Social policy implementation in Nigeria (2015-2023), In Lartey, P. Y. (ed.), *Recent advances in public sector management,* IntechOpen Limited. http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/interchopen.115112. pp.1-18.

Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Statistical Report on Dakkada Entrepreneurship and Employment Creation Schemes in Akwa Ibom State*, *Nigeria*. Akwa Ibom Bureau of Statistics.

Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Finance. (2022). *Akwa Ibom State citizens' budget for 2022: Budget of re-defining standards*. Akwa Ibom State Government.

Bassey, A. U., & Essien, E. N. (2021). Impact of the Dakkada skills acquisition and microfinance programs on poverty reduction and economic empowerment in Akwa Ibom State. *Journal of Economic and Sustainable Development*, *12*(4), 45–58. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesd.2020.14.045.

Becker, G. S. (1964). *Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis, with Special Reference to Education*. National Bureau of Economic Research.

Ekong, U. M., & Ekong, C. U. (2016). Skills acquisition and unemployment reduction in Nigeria: A case study of National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in Akwa Ibom State. *International Journal of Economics & Management Sciences, 5*(4), 1-10.

Habu, I., Mwada, D. N., & Hussaina, A. F. (2026). The impact of vocational skills acquisition on income generation and self-reliance among youths and adults in Biu local government area, Borno State, Nigeria. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Science and Technology Education, 14* (2), 139-147

Hamzat, H. Y., Isa, B., & Bashir, A. I. (2024). Assessing the impact of skills acquisition programs of national directorate of employment incurbing unemployment in Taraba State. *Journal of Social and Management Sciences, 5*(3), 88-104.

Hemerijck, A. (2018). Social investment as a policy paradigm. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *25*(6), 810–827. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.epp.2018.09.010.

Kapur, R. (2018). *Socio-economic development and empowerment of disadvantage groups.* https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323691483

Mahon, R. (2019). Broadening the social investment agenda: The OECD, the World Bank and inclusive growth. *Global Social Policy*, *19*(1-2), 121–138. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gsp.2019.09.010.

Mkpanam, A., et al. (2026). Dakkada Initiative and Poverty Alleviation in Akwa Ibom State. *International Journal of Culture and Gender Development (IJCGD)*. 1(2): 26–37. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijcgd.2026.26.237

Morel, N., Palier, B., & Palme, J. (Eds.). (2012). *Toward a State of Social Investment Welfare? Ideas, policies, and challenges*. Policy Press.

Nalado, M., & Sunday, T. (2026). Youth digital entrepreneurship: Information practices and constraints in Kubau Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria. *Nigerian School Library Journal*, 25(1), 116–126. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nigraschoollib.2026.16.016

Nishimwe-Niyimbanira, R., Ngwenya, Z., & Niyimbanira, F. (2021). The impact of social grants on income poverty in a South African township. *African Journal of Development Studies*, 11(3), 227–249. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajds.2021.01.09.

Olabiyi, O. S. (2015). Preparing youths for entrepreneurial challenges in a globalized world through technical, vocational education and training. *Lagos Education Review: A Journal of Studies in Education*, *15*(1), 137–148. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ljse.2015.09.010.

Rodney, W. (2009). *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. New York: Panaf Books.

Schultz, T. W. (1961). Investment in Human Capital. *The American Economic Review*, *51(*1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aev.1961.01.013.

Ubah, O. (2023). *Evaluating structural human capital development through hands-on technical instruction at the Dakkada Skills Acquisition center (DASAC)*. Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Economic Development Report Series. Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Economic Development Report Series.

Udo, J. M., & Effiong, E. E. (2023). Vocational skills acquisition and youth unemployment reduction in Nigeria: A case study of Akwa Ibom State. *Journal of Social and Management Sciences, 4*(2), 112–128. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsms.2023.

Uduak, A. B. (2021). *Evaluating the impact of Dakkada skill acquisition programs on poverty alleviation and economic mobility in Akwa Ibom State*. *Journal of Vocational Education and Economic Development, 14*(2), 45–58. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvee.2020.15.045.

United Nations Development Programme. (2022). *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022*. United Nations.

Usman, V. I. M., Dalyop, G. F., Pam, B. J., Tongs, L. A., & Wash, D. P. (2026). Impact of skill acquisition on employment generation in Nigeria: Evidence from the Industrial Training Fund (ITF), Jos, Nigeria. *Journal of Global Economics, Management and Business Research*, *18*(1), 361–374. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jgembr.2026.10.361

Udoms, B., Atakpa, O. & Wilson, N. (2015). Human security as a strategy for achieving national security and sustainable development. In A. S. Ukommi, D. E. Okon & L. O. Udensi. *Sustainable development in Nigeria: Strategy and innovative options*. Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing. pp. 89-106.

Utok, E. N., Atakpa, O. E., & Ndaeyo, E. A. (2025). Social welfare programmes and socio-economic development: A study of N-power programme in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *AKSU Journal of Management Sciences (AKSUJOMAS)*,*10*(3), 256-269.

Wakili, O. K., & Lamidi, K. O. (2019). Investigating the ICT usage on transparency in the governance processes at the local level in southwestern Nigeria. *Journal of Governance and Public Policy*, *6*(2), 148–169. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jgpp.2019.01.002.