

Research, Innovation & Capacity Building Program

3-Year Strategic Plan (2026–2029)

1. Program Goal & Purpose

Goal:

To build a strong ecosystem of knowledge generation, innovation, and local capacity that delivers high-impact, evidence-based health, education, and community development solutions.

Purpose:

- Strengthen institutional and community capacity for research and innovation.
- Generate evidence to inform policy, programming, and advocacy.
- Promote digital and technological innovation in health, education, and youth development.
- Support skill-building for youth, leaders, teachers, health workers, and community actors.
- Build a pipeline of local innovators capable of addressing emerging challenges.
- Create communities of practice that sustain learning, adoption, and scale-up.

2. Context & Rationale

Current Challenges:

Many local institutions, schools, and community organizations face:

- Limited research skills and data literacy.
- Weak monitoring, evaluation, and reporting systems.
- Limited access to innovative tools and technologies.
- Insufficient leadership, project management, and quality improvement training.
- Few pathways for youth innovation and entrepreneurship.

AIWE's Role:

- Deliver evidence-driven programming grounded in real data.
- Foster innovative, locally relevant solutions leveraging technology and creativity.
- Strengthen institutions to sustainably design and implement programs.
- Empower youth with research, leadership, and innovation pathways.

3. Program Components & Strategic Focus

Component	Key Activities	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
A. Research & Evidence Generation	Operational research, community assessments, KAP studies, policy analysis	Conduct baseline studies; develop research agenda	Midline evaluations; policy briefs	Endline evaluations; national dissemination
B. Innovation & Digital Transformation	Innovation labs, hackathons, AI & e-learning pilots, low-cost tech solutions	Launch 2 innovation hubs; pilot 3 digital tools	Scale 5 innovations; expand partnerships	Regional showcase; integration into schools & communities
C. Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) Strengthening	Digital MEL tools, capacity building, learning reviews	MEL training for 50 partners; implement digital dashboards	Annual learning workshops; refine MEL tools	MEL integrated across all program areas; best practice dissemination
D. Capacity Building & Institutional Strengthening	Leadership, governance, project management, QI, digital skills	Train 200 individuals; conduct ToT programs	Follow-up mentorship; institutional development plans	Independent local trainers and strengthened partner organizations
E. Youth Research & Innovation Leadership	Mentorship, innovation hubs, competitions, internships	Recruit 100 youth innovators; launch mentorship	200 youth engaged in projects; incubate top 10 innovations	Alumni network; regional youth innovation summit
F. Knowledge Sharing & Communities of Practice	Conferences, policy briefs, peer learning, online hubs	Publish 5 briefs; host national symposium	Expand communities of practice; peer-to-peer learning	Consolidate knowledge hub; regional collaboration platforms

4. Target Beneficiaries

- Youth and young innovators
- Teachers, school leaders, and education institutions
- Health workers and community health structures
- Local NGOs, CBOs, and community groups
- Local government staff
- Researchers and early-career professionals
- Women and girls seeking digital and innovation opportunities

5. Expected Outcomes

Short-Term (Year 1–1.5):

- Increased research and data literacy.
- Improved organizational skills and leadership capacity.
- Strengthened monitoring and evaluation systems.
- Youth engagement in innovation and research activities.

Medium-Term (Year 1.5–2.5):

- Adoption of innovative solutions in schools and communities.
- Evidence-based decision-making and program design.
- Stronger institutions capable of sustaining programs.
- Expanded funding opportunities due to improved capacity.

Long-Term (Year 2.5–3):

- Robust ecosystem of local innovators and researchers.
- Sustained community-driven development.
- Strong linkages between research, policy, and practice.
- Greater resilience to emerging health, education, and social challenges.

6. Monitoring & Evaluation

Key Metrics:

- Pre/post training assessments for skills and knowledge.
- Number and quality of research outputs (reports, policy briefs).
- Adoption rates of innovations by schools and communities.
- Participation rates in innovation hubs, mentorships, and competitions.
- Organizational development scorecards for partner institutions.
- Annual learning and reflection workshops to inform program refinement.

Evaluation Strategy:

- Quarterly reviews of program outputs.
- Mid-term evaluation to measure progress against outcomes.
- End-of-year assessment with recommendations for scale-up.

7. Sustainability Strategy

- Establish long-term partnerships with universities, research bodies, and tech hubs.
- Train local trainers (ToTs) to multiply knowledge transfer.
- Embed innovation activities in schools, youth clubs, and community organizations.

- Support local organizations in developing independent research agendas.
- Maintain digital knowledge hubs for continuous learning.
- Publish open-access research, tools, and guides to ensure replicability.

Vision:

By the end of Year 3, communities and institutions will possess the knowledge, skills, and resources to independently conduct research, drive innovation, and sustain development initiatives beyond external funding cycles.