Codevidhya

Indian Students Have Ideas.

What happens when an ideathon gives them a chance to use them?



500+
schools reached

4,000+
students taught

10+
locations across India

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1. Executive Summary

India's skills gap does not begin at the workplace door. It begins years earlier, in classrooms where students rarely get to apply what they learn. Only 4.2% of people aged 15 to 59 have received formal vocational or technical training (PLFS Annual Report 2025), while employers expect 39% of workers' core skills to change by 2030 (WEF Future of Jobs Report 2025). Schools cannot close this gap alone, but they can give students regular chances to solve problems, work in teams and present their thinking.

This report studies one such chance: the student ideathon, a team event in which students take a real problem, build an idea around it and pitch it to a panel. It draws on surveys of teachers, students and principals, testimonials from partners and school leaders, Codevidhya's programme records and national data. It follows the evidence from wide to narrow: the national gap, the classroom gap, the ideathon itself, the students who took part, and the ideas they produced.

1.1 Key findings

- **Teachers see a gap.** Of 16 teachers surveyed, 6 (38%) said the curriculum does not equip students for today's job market. That included all 5 government-school teachers, against 1 of 11 in private schools. Nine of the 11 teachers who suggested a change asked for more hands-on, project-based learning.
- **Practical time varies widely.** Three of the 5 government-school teachers report under 20% practical class time; none of the 11 private-school teachers do. Teachers who rated the curriculum well reported more practical time.
- **Students value the experience.** Of 25 students who gave feedback, 18 (72%) felt much more confident using their skills in real life and the other 7 felt a little more confident. No one reported being unchanged. Twenty-one (84%) said they learned quite a lot, and 21 would join another ideathon.
- **Confidence stands out.** Nerves, stage fear and speaking up were the most common themes in students' written answers. Students also said the ideathon let them use their creative side to build something meaningful.

- **Students tackle everyday problems.** The winning idea addressed monsoon waterlogging; the runner-up was an AI tool that builds a personalized study plan.
- **Demand outstrips places.** At one event in Kota, 36 of more than 450 registered teams reached the final pitch.

1.2 What the evidence cannot show

The samples are small and were not drawn to represent India. The student form asked what helped and never what was difficult, and no measure was taken before the event. Codevidhya organised the events and collected the data. We therefore treat the results as early signals, and make no claim of causation or national representation.

1.3 Recommendations

Schools should start with one small ideathon, give every team a chance to pitch, and use a real problem with a real audience. Everyone involved should measure what changes, including what students found hard. Policymakers should fund small, repeatable formats alongside large national events, and government schools should be prioritized (Chapter 13).

2. Introduction

Schools are increasingly expected to prepare students not only to perform academically, but also to think critically, solve problems, collaborate and apply what they learn to real situations. This has made experiential, skill-based learning central to Indian education.

The need is clear. Only 4.2% of Indians aged 15 to 59 report formal vocational training [3], while NEP 2020 places greater emphasis on experiential learning and skill development [5]. Large initiatives such as the Viksit Bharat Buildathon, which brought more than 3 lakh schools together in October 2025 [7], show growing interest in giving students a way to work with ideas beyond the textbook.

This report asks what happens when a school-level version of that idea is run well.
It examines Codevidhya's ideathon initiatives through the experiences of participating students, teachers and school leaders, and asks what they gain and how such formats are perceived within schools.

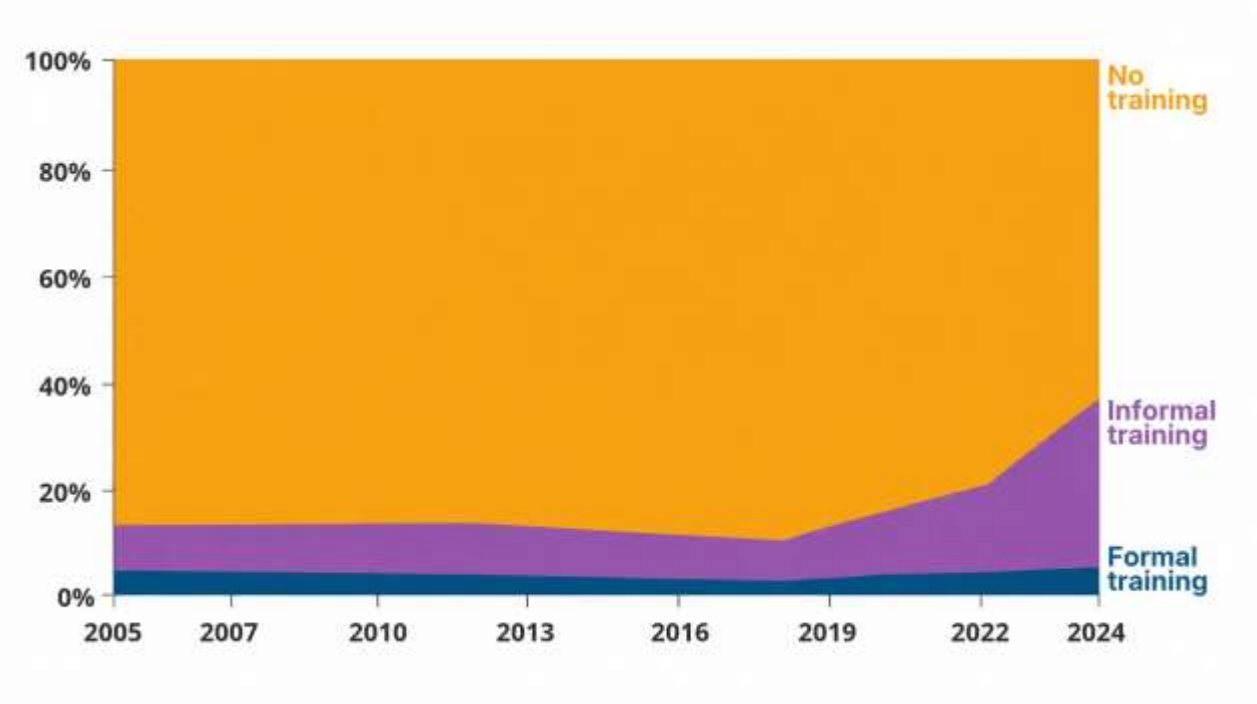


Figure 1 Type of vocational training (2024) Source: Data for India

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Aim of the study

This study asks what happens inside a student ideathon and what it says about how Indian students learn skills today. It looks at how teachers see the skills gap in their own classrooms, what students say they gained from taking part, and how principals and partners view the format.

3.2 Approach and data collection

The report uses a mixed-methods design that combines survey data with qualitative testimonials and a review of secondary sources. The primary data came from four Google Forms: one for teachers from government and private schools, two for students who took part in Codevidhya ideathons (one of them a feedback form on the ideathon itself), and one for school principals. Responses were collected over a short field period in September and October 2026. Every form opened with a consent statement, and anyone who declined or left consent blank was excluded.

Qualitative depth came from video testimonials by participants and partners, and from Codevidhya's programme records. Hindi press coverage of the Kota event added narrative context.

Secondary sources set the national picture: the Future of Jobs Report 2025, the PLFS Annual Report 2025 (MoSPI), the India Skills Report 2026 and ASER 2024 (Pratham). NEP 2020 and the 2024 bagless-days guidelines supplied the policy context.

Every figure shows the count first, with the share in brackets, such as 18 of 25 (72%). Written answers were grouped by theme and no statistical tests were run. Because Codevidhya runs these ideathons, readers should weigh the findings with that in mind.

3.3 Data sources

Source	Who	Size	Collected
Teacher skill-learning survey	Government and private school teachers	16 (17 submitted, 1 duplicate removed)	23 Sep to 1 Oct 2026
Student post-event feedback form	Ideathon participants aged 11 to 15	25 usable (27 received; 1 declined consent, 1 left it blank)	20 to 27 Sep 2026
Ideas used	Winning team and runner-up	2	Ideathon 2026
Principal survey	School principals	5	23 to 29 Sep 2026
Partner and stakeholder testimonials	Partners, school leaders, officials	5 each	Final Ideathon 2026
Video testimonials	Students, principals, policymakers	10	Final Ideathon 2026
Programme records and press coverage	Codevidhya; Hindi newspapers	n/a	n/a

Published sources	National and international reports	8	Reviewed Oct 2026

4. How This Report Works

The chapters move from the widest question to the narrowest, so each one answers what the previous one raised.

Chapter	Question	Evidence
5. The national skills gap	How big is the gap?	Published reports
6. The classroom gap	Do teachers see it in class?	Teacher survey
7. The ideathon model	What is an ideathon, and how does Codevidhya run one?	Programme documents
8. Participation funnel	How many took part, and how many reached each stage?	Programme records, press coverage
9. What students built and gained	What did they create, and what did they say they gained?	Idea slides, student feedback
10. Voices from schools and partners	How do adults around the event see it?	Principal survey, testimonials
11. Ideas and people	Who are the students behind the ideas?	Idea slides, case study, survey
12. What this means	What do the pieces add up to?	All of the above
13. Recommendations	What should schools, parents and policymakers do?	All of the above

5. The National Skills Gap

India's skills gap is wide. Few people get formal training, employers expect skills to shift fast, and school-age digital access is not turning into learning.

5.1 The labor market is changing fast

The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2025 draws on a survey of more than 1,000 employers representing over 14 million workers across 55 economies. Employers expect 39% of workers' core skills to be transformed or become outdated between 2025 and 2030 [1]. Alongside technical skills such as AI and big data, they expect creative thinking, resilience, flexibility and curiosity to grow in importance, and 63% named skill gaps as a major barrier to transforming their businesses.

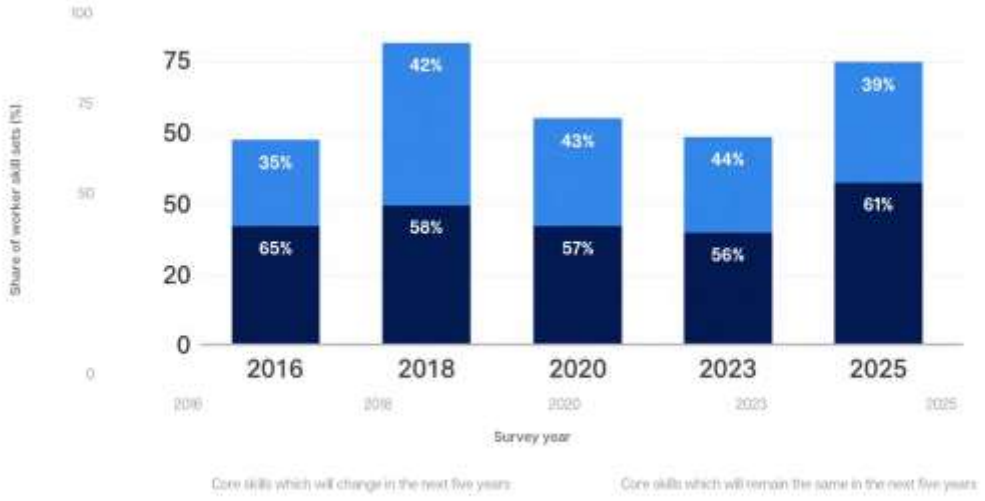


Figure 2" Source: Future of Jobs Report

5.2 Employability is rising, but the base is uneven

The India Skills Report 2026 (13th edition, produced by ETS with CII, AICTE, the Association of Indian Universities and Taggd) puts national employability at 56.35%, up from 54.81% the year before and 46.2% in 2022 [2]. It draws on more than 100,000 candidates who took a global employability test and on over 1,000 organizations across seven industries.

Two cautions apply. This is an industry report that measures readiness among those tested, not a census of all young people. And readiness on a test is not the same as a job: PLFS 2025 reports youth unemployment of 9.9% [3].

5.3 Very few Indians get formal skill training

The PLFS Annual Report 2025 (January to December 2025, published by MoSPI) found that only 4.2% of people aged 15 to 59 reported formal vocational or technical training, and 5% of those aged 15 to 29 [3]. PLFS notes that its 2025 estimates may not be strictly comparable with earlier years because of changes in survey design, so we treat the figure as a snapshot, not a trend.

5.4 Digital access is not the same as digital learning

ASER 2024 (Pratham) covered 649,491 children in 17,997 villages across rural districts [4]. Among rural 14- to 16-year-olds, 82.2% knew how to use a smartphone, but only 57% had used one for an educational activity in the previous week, while 76% had used it for social media. The tools are in children's hands; the structured chances to use them for learning are not.

5.5 What policy has done

NEP 2020 (paragraph 4.26) recommends that all students in Grades 6 to 8 take part in a ten-day bagless period, interning with local experts such as carpenters, gardeners, potters and artists [5]. The Ministry of Education released implementation guidelines, developed by PSSCIVE (a unit of NCERT), on 29 July 2024. They allow the ten days to be spread across the year and include arts, quizzes, sports and skill-based activities [6]. In October 2025 the Ministry, with the Atal Innovation Mission, ran the Viksit Bharat Buildathon, a 120-minute live innovation challenge for Classes 6 to 12 that, according to the Ministry, had over 3 lakh schools taking part at the same time [7].

The direction is clear. The open question is delivery: do students in an ordinary classroom actually get these chances? Chapter 6 asks the people who would know.

6. The Classroom Gap

Teachers see the curriculum every day, so we asked them where it falls short. All 5 government school teachers in our survey said the curriculum does not prepare students for work; of 11 private-school teachers, 1 said so.

6.1 Who responded.

Seventeen teachers submitted the survey between 23 September and 1 October 2026. Two submissions were identical and a minute apart, so we counted them once. That leaves 16 teachers: 5 from government schools and 11 from private schools, teaching across Classes 1 to 12. The form did not ask which subject they teach.

6.1.1 Finding 1: Government School teachers see the biggest gap

Statement: *The current curriculum equips students with skills relevant to today's job market.*

School type	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Government (5)	3	2	0	0
Private (11)	0	1	5	5
All (16)	3 (19%)	3 (19%)	5 (31%)	5 (31%)

Six of 16 teachers (38%) disagreed. The groups are small, so we do not say this difference holds nationally, but it is wide enough to look at closely.

6.1.2 Finding 2: Teachers who rate the curriculum well report more practical time

Practical share of class time	Government (5)	Private (11)	All (16)
Under 20%	3	0	3
20 to 40%	1	2	3
40 to 60%	0	5	5

60% or more	1	4	5

All 5 teachers who agreed the curriculum works report 40% or more practical time. Of the 6 who disagreed, 4 report under 40%. The exceptions are two teachers, one government and one private, who disagreed while reporting 60% or more. The form did not define "practical", so these are self-estimates.

6.1.3 Finding 3: Interest in practical learning is rising

Fourteen of 16 teachers (88%) said student interest in practical, skill-based learning has risen in the last 3 to 5 years: all 11 private-school teachers and 3 of the 5 government-school teachers. The 2 who saw no change both teach in government schools. In all, 8 said "significantly" and 6 said "slightly".

6.1.4 Finding 4: Half named AI and digital literacy as the missing skill

Skill most missing (one choice)	Government (5)	Private (11)	All (16)
AI and digital literacy	2	6	8
Problem-solving	1	3	4
Coding or technology	1	2	3
Entrepreneurship	1	0	1

Respondents picked one skill from a fixed list, so this shows priorities among those options only.

6.1.5 Finding 5: The most common request is hands-on learning

Eleven of 16 teachers suggested one change. Nine of them (82%) asked for more hands-on, project-based or workshop-style learning: all 6 private-school teachers who answered and 3 of the 5 government-school teachers. The other 2, both government-school teachers, asked for more awareness of what skill education is and how it helps beyond regular lessons.

> *"Curriculum is mostly repetitive and does not justify future jobs needs." (Government-school teacher, Classes 9 to 12)*
>
> *"Subjects are very theoretical and mostly not relevant for future jobs such as AI, entrepreneurship." (Government-school teacher, Classes 9 to 12)*
>
> *"Students learn theoretical concepts but limited opportunities to apply them in real life situations." (Government-school teacher, Classes 6 to 8)*

6.2 Why it matters

7. The Ideathon Model

An ideathon is a team event in which students take a real-world problem, develop an idea and present it to judges, without building anything big. The name joins "idea" and "marathon". It borrows from the hackathon with one key difference: students do not have to write code or build a working product. They deliver a well-reasoned idea, explained clearly and defended under questioning.

It differs from formats schools already know:

- A science fair rewards a finished project, often by one student or a pair. An ideathon is team-based and rewards the idea and the pitch.
- A quiz or debate tests what students already know. An ideathon asks them to create something new.
- A hackathon usually expects heavy technical skills whereas it is optional in an ideathon.

Codevidhya's ideathons are open to Classes 6 to 12, in teams of up to five around one common challenge theme.

7.1 Four stages of an ideathon

1. **Orientation.** Students receive the theme and learn what is expected.
2. **Round 1 (online).** Teams submit a problem statement, a solution concept, basic market or user logic and a pitch outline, plus an aptitude component. Up to 10 finalists are shortlisted.

3. **Round 2 (final pitch).** Finalists give a live 7-minute pitch, then answer questions from a panel of subject experts, entrepreneurs and industry leaders, in front of an open audience.
4. **Mentorship and incubation.** Selected teams get guidance on refining the idea, building a prototype and connecting with start-up ecosystems such as iStart Rajasthan.

Judges score each idea on five criteria: innovation and originality, real-world relevance, feasibility, impact potential, clarity and teamwork.



Figure 4 The Ideathon Model

7.2 Why schools care

NEP 2020 asks schools to move away from rote memorization and towards learning by doing. For classes 6 to 8 it specifically calls for experiential learning, naming hands-on work as one way to deliver it. The Department of School Education has since made experiential learning pedagogy one of its tracked implementation areas. A principal who wants to follow the policy still has to find a practical format, and an ideathon is one.

The format has also run at national scale. The Viksit Bharat Buildathon 2025 (Chapter 5) put students in teams of 3 to 5 from the same school, set no limit on teams per school, and welcomed schools with and without an Atal Tinkering Lab. Its live event on 13 October 2025 drew more than 1 crore students from over 3 lakh schools [7]. A school running its own ideathon is therefore using a team format that national policy already recognizes, and its students get practice for larger events of that kind.



The format also suits schools with modest resources. It needs a problem, a team, a mentor and an audience. Its core is an idea and a presentation, so a school without a tinkering lab or robotics kit can still take part. Students practice framing a problem and working in a team, and they speak before people outside their own class, which a normal timetable rarely allows. Teachers get a structured way to run project-based work, and the school gets an event it can show to parents and the community.

A model is only as useful as its reach. Chapter 8 shows how many students and schools Codevidhya's ideathons have actually drawn in.

8. Participation Funnel

Codevidhya's ideathons have reached 500+ schools and 4,000+ students across 10+ locations. At the one event with public numbers, more than 450 teams entered and 36 were selected to pitch to industry experts.









8.1 The reach

Measure	Figure	Source
Schools reached	**141** (Ajmer (10), Bilaspur (1), Kota (80), Sikar+Bharatpur(50)	Codevidhya records
Locations	**Total 7 Locations** (Sikar, Kota, Bharatpur, Ajmer, Rajsamand, Pali, Bilaspur)	Codevidhya records
Students	**Total 1,36,100 students reached.**	Codevidhya records
Ideathons held	6 - 2023(Sikar, Bharatpur, Pali) 2025 (Ajmer) 2026 (Ajmer & Bilapsur)	Codevidhya records

8.2 One event, stage by stage: the iStart Ideathon, Kota division

Press reports describe an ideathon run by iStart Rajasthan (the state IT and Communications Department) with Codevidhya and other partners. More than 450 teams from schools and colleges registered, and a competitive shortlist put 36 of them in front of industry experts.

Stage	Teams	Share of registered
Registered (schools and colleges)	450+	100%
Selected to pitch to industry experts	36 (21 school, 15 college)	Under 8%
Prize-winning teams	[6: 3 school, 3 college]	About 1.3%

8.3 What the funnel shows

Strong demand. More than 450 teams signed up in one division, well above the 36 places at the pitching stage.

A path beyond the prize. The funnel does not end at the podium. Codevidhya's format adds mentoring and incubation, and its case study follows one student to national recognition (Chapter 11).

Room to widen the pitch experience. With only 36 pitching places, a short class-level pitch for every team could extend speaking practice to many more students (Chapter 13).

Scale in context. The national Buildathon brought over 3 lakh schools into one session [7], which shows the appetite for such events. Codevidhya's ideathons work at a smaller scale, with judging, mentoring and feedback built in.

Reach shows who showed up. The next chapter looks at what the students who took part say they got out of it.

9. What Students Built and Gained

Who answered. The post-event feedback form received 27 responses between 20 and 27 September 2026. One student declined consent and one left it blank, so both were excluded. That leaves 25 students: 9 aged 11 to 13 and 16 aged 14 to 15.

9.1 What students built

The top-ranked ideas all started from problems students plausibly face every day.

Winner: A smart rainwater system. The team noted that heavy monsoon rain floods and damages roads and goes to waste, and linked this to drains blocked by waste and to growing urbanization.



Figure 1 Project: A smart rainwater system

Their idea collects rainwater, drains it underground, filters out waste and plastic, stores the water for reuse and recycles the plastic. They pitched it as a way to make travel safer for students and commuters.

Runner-up: MarksMind AI. Presented in Hindi, this idea starts from a familiar exam-season problem: students do not know which subject is weakest or how much time to give it, so equal time for every subject brings poor results and stress.



Project: MarksMind AI

A student enters marksheet scores; the tool gives each subject a "weakness score", divides weekly study hours accordingly, and updates the plan after each test. In the team's worked example, a student with 38 out of 100 in maths gets 6 hours a week, while one with 88 in English gets 1.

Both are early-stage concepts. The slides show no costs, testing or pilot, and feasibility is one of the five judging criteria, so we describe them as ideas, not working solutions.

9.2 What students said they gained

Question	Result (25 students)
Confidence using these skills in real life now	Much more confident: 18. A little more: 7. About the same: 0
How much they learned overall	Quite a lot: 21. Some: 4
Would join another ideathon	Yes: 21. Maybe: 4. No: 0

Would tell a friend to join	Yes: 23. Maybe: 2. No: 0

Skill the ideathon helped them use most	**Students**
Creativity and new ideas	10
Teamwork	7
Pitching or explaining an idea	5
Problem-solving	3

Part, they enjoyed most	**Students**
Working with their team	8
Building or designing the idea	8
Coming up with ideas	5
Presenting to others	4

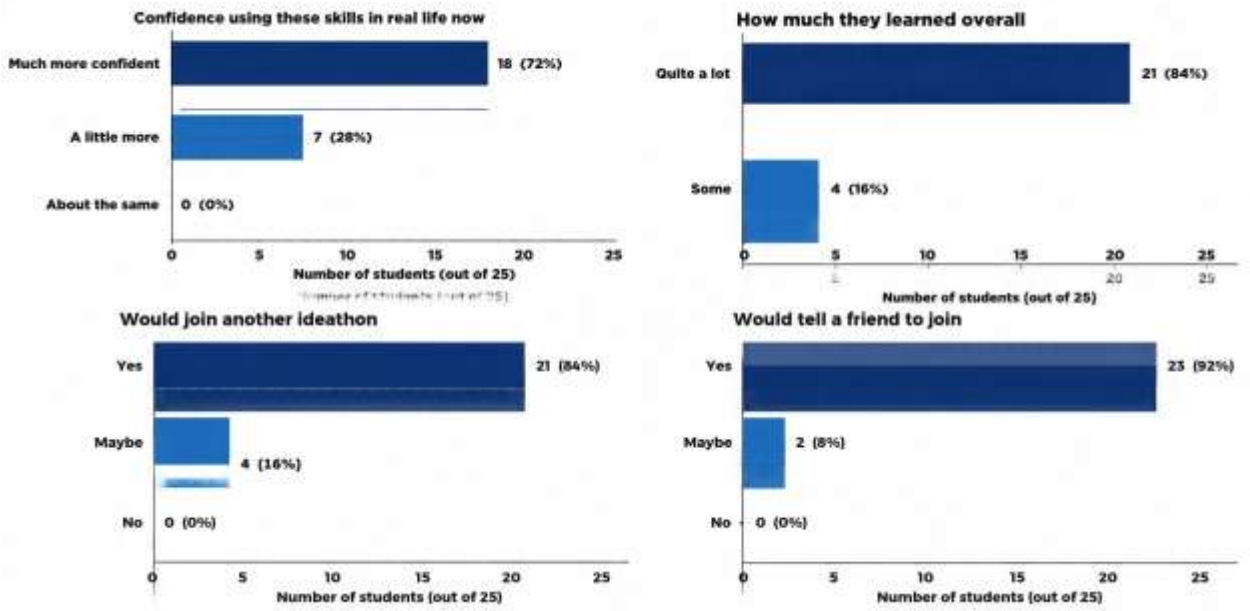


Figure 5: Ideathon Student Response

Younger students were more likely to say "much more confident": 8 of 9 aged 11 to 13, against 10 of 16 aged 14 to 15. The groups are too small to read much into this.

9.3 In students' own words

Of the 24 students who wrote an answer, about 10 described nerves, stage fear or speaking confidence. That was the most common theme, ahead of teamwork or problem-solving.

> *"I used to get very, very nervous during my presentations. But Ideathon helped me improve this." (Student, 14 to 15)*
>
> *"I had stage fear which I have now also but it has decreased." (Student, 14 to 15)*
>
> *"I learned how to turn a real-life problem into a practical solution and present it confidently." (Student, 11 to 13)*
>
> *"I learned that not everyone in your team may be perfect, but you need to understand their situations as well as helping them to learn." (Student, 11 to 13)*

A few answers named technical skills instead: using Canva and AI tools, coding, GitHub and making presentations. One named entrepreneurship.

9.4 How this fits the wider research

Research on project-based learning, a close cousin of the ideathon, gives some reason for cautious optimism. A 2019 meta-analysis by Chen and Yang pooled 46 comparisons from 30 studies, covering 12,585 students in 189 schools across nine countries. It found a medium-tolarge positive effect on academic achievement compared with traditional instruction (weighted average effect size 0.71) [8]. Two cautions apply. An ideathon is shorter and lighter than most programmes in that research, so we cannot assume the same effect. And those studies measured academic achievement, while our form measured students' own sense of their skills.

9.5 Reading these results carefully

The form asked about benefits ("which skill did the ideathon help you use") and did not ask what was hard or what to change. Among the 25 consenting students, no one reported no change.

"Much more confident" is how students feel now. We have no measure from before the event.

Respondents chose to answer within days of an enjoyable event.

These results show that students experienced the ideathon as valuable. They do not show how much, or for how long.

10. Voices from Schools and Stakeholders

Students and teachers are two voices. The partners who backed the ideathon, the school leaders who sent their students and the officials who followed it add another. This chapter brings together testimonials recorded on video at the Ajmer Ideathon, which Codevidhya organized, and public statements from the press record.

10.1 Partners and school leaders

Arpan Seva Sansthan. Yashankar Shivhare, Secretary, said Codevidhya gave these children a stage where they could come forward and carry out their ideas.

Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL). Nitin Kumar Singh, General Manager, said the students presented far better than he had expected, and that the presentations surprised him.

Government school. Himani Gotwal, said Codevidhya trainers played an important role in the skill development of students and helped them pitch their ideas with confidence. In her view they learned a lot over the year and finally got a stage to present their ideas.

Rajkiya Uchch Madhyamik Vidyalaya. The Vice Principal said government-school students rarely get a stage like this, and thanked Codevidhya for it. The Vice Principal added that the experience will raise the students' confidence and help them in other ways.

10.2 Government-linked voices

At the iStart Ideathon in Kota, press reports quote Deputy Director Manoj Kumar Meena of the state IT and Communications Department as saying that schools and colleges have talented students with distinctive ideas who often lack the right platform to present them.


आइस्टार्ट-आइडियाथॉन में विद्यार्थियों ने किया प्रतिभा का प्रदर्शन, जीते नगद पुरस्कार

आइडियाथॉन में बेहतर आइडिया देने वालों को मिला पुरस्कार

अगम का बायोवेस्ट प्रबंधन आइडिया रहा श्रेष्ठ

प्रतिभाओं को मंच प्रदान करने का अच्छा माध्यम

आई स्टार्ट आइडियाथॉन में प्रतिभाओं ने रखे स्टार्टअप आइडिया

विद्यार्थियों ने दिखाया टैलेंट, जीते पुरस्कार

Figure 2 Codevidhya Press Release

10.3 Where adults and students agree

The views come from different people answering different questions, yet they point the same way. Teachers asked for more hands-on, project-based learning (9 of the 11 who suggested a change). Students said the parts they enjoyed most were working with their team (8) and building or designing the idea (8). Ms. Gotwal and the Vice Principal both pointed to the value of a real stage for student work, and Mr. Singh described the same surprise from the partner side: given a stage, students delivered more than adults expected.

10.4 A caution on interpretation

These are opinions from people who chose to take part and who have a relationship with Codevidhya. They show how the ideathon is received. They are not an independent evaluation. So far, we have seen the numbers and the views around them. The next chapter looks at the students themselves.

11.A student who went further

According to Codevidhya's case study, Aryan Singh received the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar for his achievements. He created the AgRobot, a rover powered by artificial intelligence. Programme records show a school-category prize at the iStart Ideathon in Kota and, later, national recognition in 2024. His story shows what the funnel's narrow end can look like: a school student whose idea was backed by mentoring and then reached a national stage.



Figure 4 Aryan Singh, 2024

11.1 A student who found their voice

A student aged 14 to 15 said the skill they used most was pitching, and that they felt "much more confident" afterwards: "I never really was confident enough to explain my thoughts or ideas to anyone, but while preparing for the ideathon, when I had to go through all those trial and errors, I realized that I always had it in me."

11.2 A teacher's view

A government-school teacher of Classes 9 to 12 reported under 20% practical class time and disagreed that the curriculum prepares students for jobs. They named entrepreneurship as the missing skill, said student interest in practical learning has risen slightly, and asked for more awareness of what skill education is and how it helps beyond regular lessons. It is the same gap this report started with, seen from the front of a classroom.

12. What This Means

12.1 Four ideas run through the evidence

Teachers see a gap, and the ideathon touches the skills they say are missing. Teachers most often named AI and digital literacy (8 of 16) and problem-solving (4) as missing. Students said the ideathon helped them use creativity, teamwork, pitching and problem-solving, and one of the two top ideas was an AI tool built by school students.

Employers expect creative thinking and resilience to grow in importance [1], and only 4.2% of people aged 15 to 59 have formal vocational training [3]. This does not prove ideathons build job-ready adults. It is a reason to take the format seriously as a practice ground.

Confidence may be the quiet outcome. The most common theme in students' own words was not a technical skill but speaking up: nerves easing, stage fear shrinking, ideas explained to strangers. Eighteen of 25 felt much more confident. This is self-reported and unmeasured, but it is consistent across many answers, and it is a skill the final pitch (seven minutes, then questions) is built to exercise.

It helps turn policy into something a school can run. NEP 2020 asks for experiential learning and a bagless period [5][6], and the Viksit Bharat Buildathon showed the format can run at national scale [7]. Codevidhya's version adds mentoring and incubation after the pitch, so the prize is not the finish line. The practical question for most schools is not whether this is a good idea but what the smallest version they can start with looks like.

It complements foundational learning; it does not replace it. ASER 2024 is a reminder of how much basic learning still needs attention: among Class III children in government schools in rural India, 23.4% could read a Class II-level text, up from 16.3% in 2022 [4]. An ideathon does not fix that and should not be sold as if it does. Students who cannot yet read comfortably will find a research-and-pitch task harder. Used well, it gives students a reason to use their skills and builds confidence and teamwork that classroom teaching often has little time for.

12.2 What we are not saying

We are not saying ideathons raise employability, grades or incomes; we did not measure those. We are saying that students, teachers and partners described the experience as valuable, and that this is consistent with wider research on project-based learning [8].

12.3 Limitations

This was a pilot study, and it should be read as one. It focused on a specific group: a small number of students, teachers and principals connected to Codevidhya's ideathons, who chose to take part. The samples were not drawn to represent India, and no before-and-after measure was taken. The findings describe what this group experienced and point to questions worth testing in larger, independent studies. They are not national conclusions.

13. Recommendations

13.1 For schools

- **Start small.** Run one half-day or one-round ideathon for one class band before planning a programme.
- **Give hands-on work a place.** Nine of the 11 teachers who suggested a change asked for more practical, project-based learning, and the 2024 bagless-days guidelines allow activity days to be spread across the year [6].
- **Use a real problem.** Pick something from the neighborhood or student life. Both top ideas started that way.
- **Give students an audience.** Invite parents, local professionals or alumni.
- **Let every team pitch.** A short class-level pitch for every team extends speaking practice beyond the finalists.
- **Collect honest feedback.** Ask what was hard, not only what was good.

13.2 For parents

- Ask what your child learned to do, not only whether they won. Teamwork and speaking up are the point.
- Support the attempt. Help with ideas if asked; leave the pitch to the child.

- Ask your child's school about activity-based days, and offer help if you have relevant experience.

13.3 For policymakers

- Fund small, repeatable formats alongside large national events, so more schools can run them.
- Measure outcomes, not only participation. Counting schools shows reach; a simple before-and-after skills measure would show impact.
- Look at government schools first. All five government-school teachers in our survey said the curriculum does not prepare students for work.
- Support teacher training in facilitating team-based, open-ended work.

14. Conclusion

This report began with a gap: 4.2% of Indians trained formally, 39% of core skills set to change, and teachers who say the classroom is not keeping pace, most strongly in government schools. It then looked at one small, practical response. In an ideathon, students take a problem from their own lives, build an idea as a team, and defend it in front of people outside their class.

The evidence is early and modest, but it points in one direction. Demand is real: 450+ teams chasing 36 places in one division. Students report more confidence, and the most common theme in their own words is finding their voice. Teachers, principals and partners independently ask for the same thing, a real stage for student work. The two top ideas, a rainwater system and a study planner, show what students produce when someone asks them for a solution.

An ideathon will not replace foundational learning, and this report does not claim it can raise jobs or grades. What it offers is a low-cost, repeatable way to give students practice in the skills that classrooms struggle to make time for. The next step is to test it properly: start small, let every team pitch, measure before and after, and ask students what was hard. If the early signals hold, the ideathon deserves a place in the school year, not just on the stage.

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