EAD CONNECTING EDUCATION WITH LIFE

ADVANCED PROJECT WORKBOOK · RESEARCHER PATHWAY

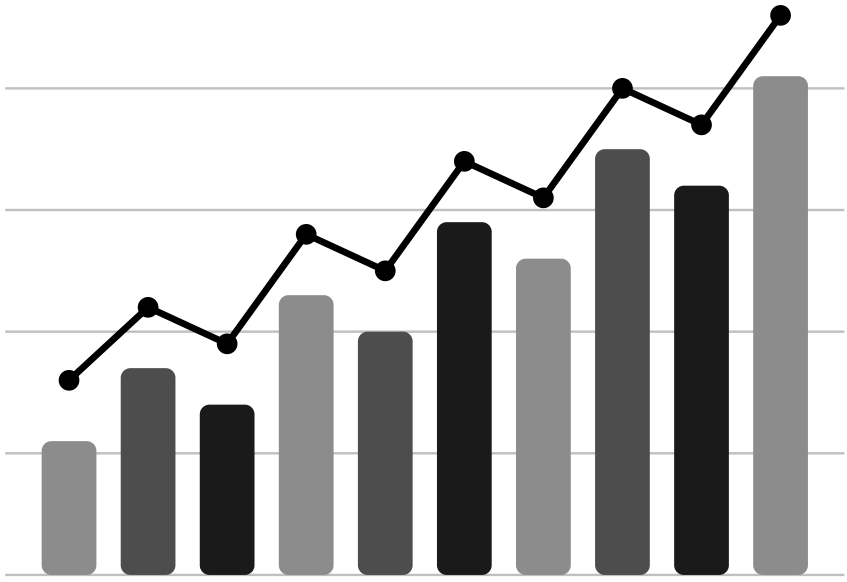
Impact Innovators

Research. Automate. Connect.

Authority in one niche
Ten projects, one problem area, measured results

Agentic AI and automation
Agents do the legwork; you check the evidence

First assessment free
Written feedback from EAD



Pick a niche. Solve its problems. Become the person people ask.

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A TECHNO GROUP PRODUCT

EAD CONNECTING EDUCATION WITH LIFE

EAD IMPACT INNOVATORS · RESEARCHER PATHWAY

This book belongs to

Name _____

School, college or organisation _____

My niche: the problem area I want to master _____

Start date _____ Mentor or teacher _____

What this book asks of you

Choose one niche and go deep. Every project adds to your evidence, your knowledge and your network, until people in that industry start asking for your view.

Pick a niche
one problem area to master

Research deeply
methods, data, three angles

Solve with AI
agents and automation, checked by you

Build relationships
that last beyond one project

> **Authority is earned one measured project at a time.** Evidence before confidence. People before assumptions.

INCLUDED WITH THIS PRINTED WORKBOOK

Your first project assessment is free. Finish one Researcher project, send it to EAD and receive written feedback on every part. See page 47.

FOR PARENTS, TEACHERS AND MENTORS

How this workbook works

This is EAD's advanced pathway. The aim is not one project or a job application: it is authority in one niche, built through many measured projects, responsible use of AI and real relationships.

ROUTE A · PROGRESSION

Complete an Investigator portfolio and pass the EAD level assessment.

ROUTE B · DIRECT ENTRY

Learners with relevant experience can ask for a readiness assessment. EAD reviews earlier projects and checks readiness for research, data, business thinking and stakeholder work.

WHO IT SUITS

Suggested from about 14. Age alone does not decide entry: readiness, safeguarding and the ability to work responsibly with evidence and people matter more. Younger learners start with **EAD Young Innovators**.

YOUR ROLE

- ✓ Arrange and supervise contact with organisations and experts.
- ✓ Check consent, data handling and safety on each project.
- ✓ Challenge the learner's reasoning; never do the work.
- ✓ Approve every AI tool and every outside contact the learner uses.

WHAT COMES WITH THIS WORKBOOK

- ✓ A path to authority in one niche, project after project.
- ✓ Chapters on advanced research, AI agents and automation, and lasting relationships.
- ✓ 8 industry challenges, record pages and worked examples.
- ✓ **One free project assessment** (written feedback, not a certificate), a route to certification and teacher-guided semester projects.

Questions? WhatsApp +92 333 4520616 (Pakistan) or +971 50 125 1929 (UAE), or email haroon@earlyagedevelopment.com.

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LEVEL 3

Researcher

Build authority in one niche

Choose one niche and go deep. Research its problems, solve them with evidence, AI agents and automation, and build the relationships that make you the person your industry asks.

01 Choose your niche

02 Research like an expert

03 Turn data into insight

04 Use AI agents and automation

05 Build a business case

06 Test a small intervention

07 Build lasting relationships

08 Publish and defend

From projects to authority

Authority is not a title you give yourself. It is what happens when people in an industry ask for your view, because your record shows you understand their problems and have helped solve them.

The authority loop

Pick a niche

Research deeply

Solve with evidence and AI

Share back and connect

Repeat, harder

Milestones to aim for

STAGE	WHAT YOU HAVE	THE SIGN IT IS WORKING
Projects 1 to 3 Understand	You can explain one problem in your niche with numbers, and how the industry works around it.	You can answer questions about the problem that most people in the room cannot.
Projects 4 to 6 Improve	Some projects run with a real organisation. You hold data, contacts and results others do not have.	An organisation shares data with you or invites you back.
Projects 7 to 10+ Lead	Your work is published, your network spans the niche and people use your solutions.	People bring you their problems, and your work is reused or cited.

These are targets, not certificates or guarantees. Authority is recognised by other people, never claimed.

WHAT COUNTS AS CREDIBLE

A polished presentation is not proof. A large spreadsheet is not insight. A clever idea is not impact. Your work is credible when another person can follow your evidence, understand your assumptions and challenge your reasoning.

YOUR RULE

Evidence before confidence. People before assumptions. Measurable outcomes before big claims.

Choose your niche

A niche is one problem area narrow enough to know deeply: not “healthcare” but “missed appointments in small clinics”; not “agriculture” but “post-harvest loss of tomatoes”.

Score three possible niches

Score each line from 1 (weak) to 5 (strong).

CRITERION	NICHE A	NICHE B	NICHE C
Name the niche			
I care about this problem and will still care after ten projects			
Its problems can be measured			
I can reach people in it safely (through an adult if under 18)			
Data exists or can be collected with permission			
Solving it creates real value for someone			
It is deep enough for ten projects, not one			
AI tools and automation could help solve it			
Total			

MY NICHE STATEMENT

I want to become the person people ask about … in …, because …

THE FIRST THREE PROBLEMS I WILL WORK ON

PREFERENCE CHECK

Your research style

This is not a psychological test and does not measure ability. Tick what you enjoy today. Your preferences may change.

- ☐ Working with numbers, patterns, models or datasets
- ☐ Interviewing people and understanding their experiences
- ☐ Building prototypes, testing operations or improving processes
- ☐ Exploring environmental, scientific or technical evidence
- ☐ Understanding business, money, customers and markets
- ☐ Designing, communicating and presenting ideas
- ☐ Coordinating a team and bringing different views together

Possible directions (suggestions only)

IF YOU ENJOY	YOU MIGHT EXPLORE
Data and patterns	Supply-chain performance, energy use, service delays.
People and listening	Access to services, learning experience, how workers or customers are served.
Building and testing	Circular product design, process improvement, low-cost prototypes.
Science and environment	Water quality from safe public datasets, waste streams, climate adaptation.
Business and markets	Small-business operations, fair pricing, inventory, financial inclusion.
Communication and teamwork	Public information, community engagement, behaviour change.

The challenge I will start with _____

Choose the challenge that matters to you, not the one that matches a tick-box. Trying an unfamiliar role is part of becoming a researcher.

My ten-project ladder

Plan the first ten projects in your niche. Each project starts where the last one ended: its “next test” becomes your next question.

#	STAGE	PROBLEM I WILL WORK ON	ORGANISATION OR SETTING	BUILDS ON PROJECT
1	**Understand**			
2	**Understand**			
3	**Understand**			
4	**Improve**			
5	**Improve**			
6	**Improve**			
7	**Lead**			
8	**Lead**			
9	**Lead**			
10	**Lead**			

> **Plans change, and that is fine.** Update this page after every project. The record of how your questions grew is part of your authority.

THE PATHWAY

Your 8-week project

The shape of every project on your ladder. A suggested schedule. A project can take longer when access, data quality or approvals need it.

WEEK	FOCUS	OUTPUT	DONE
1	**Choose a challenge and define the problem**	Problem statement, affected groups, research question	
2	**Map the industry and stakeholders**	Industry map, stakeholder map, source register, first contacts	
3	**Collect data responsibly**	Dataset, interview notes, baseline, data dictionary	
4	**Analyse the evidence**	Charts, comparisons, patterns, limits; AI use logged	
5	**Understand the business case**	Cost model, benefit logic, risks and constraints	
6	**Co-design, automate and test**	Prototype or agent workflow, small pilot	
7	**Measure and refine impact**	Before-and-after comparison, feedback, revised solution	
8	**Present, defend and share back**	Executive brief, defence, close-the-loop notes	

SOLO OR TEAM

You can work alone or in a small team. In a team, agree roles, but every member must understand the whole project and be able to defend it.

CHECK IN WEEKLY

Show your mentor or teacher the week's output. A short weekly check catches a weak question or missing consent before it costs you weeks.

Choose a problem worth solving

A strong challenge is specific, observable and connected to people who live with it. Narrow a big theme into a question you can test.

TOO BROAD	RESEARCHER-LEVEL QUESTION
Reduce food waste	Which change in one school canteen process could reduce edible food waste per lunch served, without raising cost or harming nutrition?
Improve healthcare	What causes missed follow-up appointments in one clinic workflow, and which low-cost reminder or scheduling change could reduce them?
Make transport better	Which route or time window creates the longest delay for a defined group, and what operational change could reduce it?
Help small businesses	Which step in a small retailer's stock process causes the most avoidable stock-outs or over-ordering?
Protect the environment	Which local waste stream is most suitable for a small circular-economy pilot, given volume, contamination and buyers?

WRITE YOUR CHALLENGE IN ONE SENTENCE

The problem is _____

It affects _____

It matters because _____

We can investigate it by measuring _____

A useful change might be _____

Research with integrity and care

Real research involves real people, organisations and sometimes sensitive information. Trust is part of the work, not an optional extra.

Non-negotiable safeguards

- ✓ Get permission before interviews, surveys, observations in private settings, photographs or recordings.
- ✓ If you are under 18, a teacher, parent or approved mentor arranges contact and supervises.
- ✓ Never collect passwords, account numbers, health details, private financial records or unnecessary identifying information.
- ✓ Use anonymised or aggregated data wherever possible. Store files securely and share only what you have permission to share.
- ✓ Never present a simulated dataset as real evidence. Label every synthetic, estimated or teacher-provided dataset.
- ✓ Do not make medical, legal, investment or safety recommendations beyond your competence. Seek qualified review.
- ✓ Do not enter restricted workplaces, handle dangerous equipment or run tests that could harm people or the environment.

The consent check

Before collecting any information, can you answer yes to every line?

BEFORE I COLLECT INFORMATION	YES	NOT YET
I explained the purpose in plain language.	☐	☐
Taking part is voluntary and people can stop at any time.	☐	☐
I asked permission for notes, photos or recording.	☐	☐
I know what information I will keep, and why.	☐	☐
I have a safe way to store and delete it.	☐	☐

> **Any "not yet"?** Pause and fix the process before you collect anything.

Understand the industry first

Every industry has users, suppliers, workers, regulators, costs, incentives and constraints. A solution that ignores the system often fails, even when the technology works.

Your one-page industry map

PART OF THE SYSTEM	QUESTIONS TO INVESTIGATE	WHAT I FOUND
People and users	Who uses the product or service? Who is excluded or underserved?	
Operations	What happens step by step? Where do delays, errors, waste or friction appear?	
Money	Who pays? What are the major costs? Who receives the benefit?	
Data and technology	What is measured today? What tools or systems are already used?	
Rules and risk	What laws, standards, safety rules or permissions apply?	
Competition and alternatives	What do people do now? Why might they keep doing it?	
Environment and society	Who or what could be affected without anyone intending it?	

SOURCE QUALITY LADDER

Stronger: official statistics, audited or published reports, peer-reviewed research, operational records shared with permission. **Useful with caution:** industry reports, reputable journalism, expert interviews. **Weak unless corroborated:** unsourced social posts, marketing claims, anonymous estimates.

Keep a source register: name, publisher or person, date, link, what it supports and its limits.

Research like an expert

Experts do not just know more facts. They know which method answers which question, and how sure they can be.

The research stack

1. Scan
What is already known: reports, studies, datasets, who publishes in your niche.

2. Gather
Interviews, observation, surveys or measurement, with consent.

3. Analyse
Rates, comparisons, segments and limits.

4. Triangulate
Check each finding from three angles: data, people and observation.

5. Peer check
Ask someone in the niche to challenge your findings.

Choose the right method

METHOD	BEST FOR	WATCH OUT FOR
Interview	How a process really works, and why	Leading questions; too few people
Observation	What people actually do, not what they say	Being watched changes behaviour; needs permission
Survey	How common something is	Biased samples; unclear questions
Records and data	Trends, rates and costs	Missing data; different definitions
Field test	Whether a change works	Other factors changing at the same time
Published research	What is already known	Out of date; marketing dressed as research

> **One finding, three angles.** A result you can see in data, hear from people and observe yourself is far stronger than one you only read.

Turn data into insight

Data analysis is not decoration. Every chart should answer a question. Start by checking what each field means, how it was collected and what might be missing.

Your minimum data workflow

1. **Unit of analysis**
   One order, one learner, one delivery, one day or one plot.
2. **Data dictionary**
   Field name, meaning, unit, allowed values and source.
3. **Clean**
   Check missing values, duplicates, outliers, inconsistent units and date ranges.
4. **Separate**
   Facts, estimates, assumptions and opinions.
5. **Compare like with like**
   Use rates or per-unit measures when totals could mislead.
6. **Segments**
   Look for sub-groups and exceptions, not just the overall average.
7. **Uncertainty**
   State uncertainty and alternative explanations.

Useful analysis tools

TOOL	WHEN IT HELPS
Count or percentage	How common is the issue?
Average and median	What is typical, and are extreme values distorting the average?
Before and after	Did the measure change after the intervention?
Rate per unit	Cost per order, waste per meal, delay per delivery, energy per unit produced.
Segment comparison	Does the issue differ by place, time, product or user group?
Trend over time	Is the pattern stable, seasonal or changing?

> **Correlation does not prove causation.** A before-and-after change can be affected by season, sample size, behaviour or other events. Be precise about what your design can prove.

Practise with a transparent sample dataset

The table is fictional and created for learning. It is not a real business record. Practise here, then find or build a suitable dataset for your own challenge.

WEEK	ORDERS	LATE DELIVERIES	LATE RATE	COMPLAINTS
1	120	18	**15.0%**	14
2	135	20	**14.8%**	15
3	128	13	**10.2%**	10
4	142	12	**8.5%**	9
5	150	15	**10.0%**	11
6	160	10	**6.3%**	7

Ask the data

1. What happened to the late-delivery rate from week 1 to week 6?

2. Did complaints move in the same direction as the late rate?

3. Why is the rate more useful than comparing late-delivery counts alone?

4. What else would you need to know before claiming a process change caused the improvement?

5. What could make this dataset misleading?

YOUR INSIGHT MUST INCLUDE

The pattern, the evidence, a plausible explanation, an alternative explanation, and the next data point you would collect. See a worked brief on page 37.

My niche knowledge base

Keep one page of what you know about your niche, and update it after every project. After ten projects, this page is why people ask you.

Key numbers in my niche

NUMBER	WHAT IT MEASURES	SOURCE	DATE

Who's who

ORGANISATION, REGULATOR, EXPERT OR COMMUNITY	ROLE	WHY THEY MATTER

WORDS MY NICHE USES

QUESTIONS NOBODY HAS ANSWERED WELL

AI agents: your research and operations team

An AI agent is an AI system that can plan steps and use tools such as search, spreadsheets, documents and forms to complete a task you set. Used well, agents do the legwork, so you can spend your time on judgement and people.

RESEARCH

Scan sources on your niche, summarise them with links and build your source register. You check every claim against the original.

DATA

Clean and combine datasets, flag gaps and draft charts. You check the method and the numbers.

AUTOMATION

Run a repeated task inside your intervention: reminders, alerts, logs and weekly summaries.

DRAFTING

First drafts of interview questions, briefs and follow-up notes. You rewrite them in your own voice.

FIVE RULES FOR USING AI AGENTS

1. You are responsible for every output. An AI claim is not evidence until you have checked the source.
2. No private or identifying data goes into an AI tool without permission. Use anonymised or sample data.
3. A person approves before anything reaches a real person or changes a real process.
4. Agents never contact stakeholders for you. Relationships are yours.
5. Declare every AI use in your submission: tool, task and how you checked it.

WHAT TO MEASURE WHEN YOU AUTOMATE

Time saved per week, errors caught and errors missed, response time, and the number of people affected. Record what went wrong as carefully as what went right. Log every use on record page 5.

A stock-alert agent

EXAMPLE · FICTIONAL

An automation for Challenge 06, written up the way an assessor wants to read it. The shop and the numbers are invented to show the format.

TRIGGER › STEPS › CHECK › APPROVE › OUTPUT › MEASURE

Goal	*Fewer stock-outs of the 20 fastest-selling items in a small shop.*
Trigger	*The owner updates the daily sales sheet at closing time.*
Inputs	*Anonymised sales and stock counts. No customer details.*
Steps	*1) Work out the days of stock left for each item. 2) Flag items with less than 3 days left. 3) Draft a reorder list from the last four weeks of sales.*
Tools	*A spreadsheet, and an AI assistant that can read that sheet only.*
Checks	*For the first two weeks, the learner compares the flagged list with a hand count twice a week.*
Human approval	*The owner reviews the list and places the order. The agent never orders.*
Measure	*Stock-outs per month: 9 before (from the owner's notebook), 3 after. Checking time: 20 minutes a day before, 5 after.*
Limits	*A festival week raised sales. One item was miscounted in week 1. Only one shop.*
Next test	*Try a two-day threshold for fresh items.*

WHY IT IS STRONG

A measured baseline, a narrow job for the agent, a human check at every step that matters, and honest limits.

QUESTIONS TO EXPECT

What happens if the sheet is not updated? Who is responsible if the list is wrong? Would a simple formula have done the same job?

Design your agent workflow

Give the agent a narrow job. Keep people in charge of every decision that affects people.

TRIGGER › STEPS › CHECK › APPROVE › OUTPUT › MEASURE

PART	QUESTION	MY DESIGN
Goal	What will be better, and by how much?	
Trigger	What starts the workflow?	
Inputs	Which data, and who gave permission?	
Steps	What does the agent do, in order?	
Tools	Which tools, and what can each one access?	
Checks	How will you verify each output?	
Human approval	Who approves, and at which step?	
Output	What is produced, and for whom?	
Measure	Before-and-after number and unit	
If it goes wrong	How will you notice, and what will you do?	

Build a business case, not just a prototype

A solution has to work for the people who use it and for the system that must pay for, run and maintain it. Estimate carefully and label every assumption.

QUESTION	YOUR ESTIMATE OR EVIDENCE
Who is the user or customer?	
Who pays, funds or approves?	
What does the current problem cost?	
What will your solution cost to build or run?	
What measurable benefit could it create?	
Who carries the ongoing workload?	
What could stop adoption?	

USEFUL CALCULATIONS

Net benefit = estimated benefits – estimated costs.
Unit cost = total cost ÷ number of units.
Payback period = initial investment ÷ expected net benefit per period.

These are estimates, not guarantees.

KEEP IT HONEST

Do not invent a market size or claim revenue you have not validated. A small pilot with a clear cost and outcome is more credible than a billion-rupee projection.

Design a small, testable intervention

Do not try to transform a whole industry in one project. Choose one process, one setting, one target group and one change you can test safely.

DESIGN QUESTION	YOUR ANSWER
What exactly will change?	
Who will use or experience the change?	
What must stay the same for a fair test?	
What could go wrong or cause harm?	
Who must approve the test?	
How long will the test run?	
What result would make you stop, adapt or continue?	

> A prototype can be a process map, a paper interface, a revised checklist, a message, a small operational change or a narrow agent workflow (page 19). **It does not have to be an app.**

Measure impact honestly

Impact is not activity. “We held three meetings” is an activity. “The share of orders delivered on time went up” is an outcome. Choose a measure connected to the problem.

LEVEL	EXAMPLE
Input	Time, money, materials or people used.
Activity	Interviews completed, prototypes built, training delivered.
Output	A process map, a new tool, a pilot or a service change.
Outcome	Less waiting, lower waste, fewer errors, better access.
Longer-term impact	Lasting improvements in wellbeing, resilience, opportunity or environmental performance.

Before-and-after scorecard

MEASURE	BEFORE	AFTER	UNIT OR SOURCE
Primary measure			
Cost or resource use			
User or stakeholder experience			
Unintended effect			

> State the time period, sample size and method. If other factors changed, say so. **A small pilot can show promise; it rarely proves long-term impact.**

Build relationships with emotional intelligence

Stakeholder work is not collecting names. It is listening carefully, understanding different incentives and treating people with respect, especially when they disagree with you.

Map the people around the problem

STAKEHOLDER	WHAT THEY CARE ABOUT	WHAT I NEED TO LEARN
People affected by the problem		
Frontline workers or operators		
Decision-maker or manager		
Technical or subject expert		
Community or public interest		
Possible funder or buyer		

INTERVIEW WITH CURIOSITY

- Start with: “I’m trying to understand how this process works. Could you walk me through it?”
- Ask for a recent example, not only general opinions.
- Follow up: “What happened next?”, “How often?”, “What makes that difficult?”
- Do not lead: never ask “Wouldn’t this app solve it?”
- Reflect back: “Have I understood correctly that…?”
- Thank the person and explain how you will use their input.

RELATIONSHIP QUALITY CHECK

Did you listen without interrupting? Did you make room for a different view? Did you explain your purpose? Did you follow through on what you promised? Did you protect confidentiality?

Emotional intelligence in real projects

Strong researchers manage their own reactions and notice how other people experience the work. It is a practice, not a personality label.

SKILL	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	A MOMENT I USED IT
Self-awareness	Notice when you are defensive, excited or attached to your idea.	
Self-management	Pause before replying. Separate criticism of the idea from criticism of you.	
Empathy	Understand the pressures, risks and priorities each stakeholder faces.	
Listening	Ask open questions and check you understood.	
Handling conflict	Name the disagreement respectfully and identify what evidence could settle it.	
Collaboration	Share credit, agree roles and make decisions openly.	

When someone challenges your idea

Pause
Do not answer straight away.

Clarify
“Which part concerns you?”

Reflect
“So the main risk is...”

Explore
“What evidence would help?”

Agree
a next step.

> **A researcher is allowed to change their mind.** Updating your view when the evidence changes is a strength.

Relationships that last

One project needs a few interviews. Authority needs people across your niche who know your work and trust it. That trust is built the same way every time.

How a relationship grows

1. Contact
You are introduced and explain your purpose.

2. Conversation
You listen, ask good questions and take notes.

3. Collaboration
You work on a problem together.

4. Trust
They share data, time or access.

5. Advocacy
They introduce you to others.

Six habits

1. **Give before you ask.** Share a useful finding, summary or source first.
2. **Close the loop.** Send everyone who helped a short note on what you found and what changed.
3. **Follow up within 48 hours.** And keep every promise small enough to keep.
4. **One ask at a time.** A clear, small request is easier to say yes to.
5. **Introductions both ways.** Ask for introductions, and make them for others.
6. **Respect the channel.** Under 18? A teacher, parent or mentor sends or approves every message.

FIRST MESSAGE

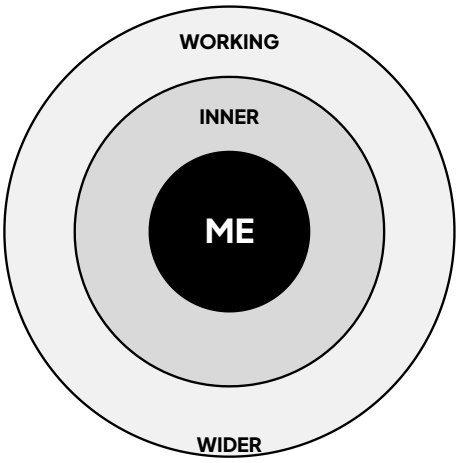
Hello [name], I am [name], researching [problem] in [setting]. I found [one finding]. Could I ask you three questions for 15 minutes on [day]? I will share my results with you when the project ends.

CLOSE-THE-LOOP NOTE

Thank you for [what they did]. We found [one number] and changed [what]. Your point about [detail] made the difference. Here is the one-page summary.

My niche network

Map the people in your niche and track every relationship across projects. Use initials or roles in this book; keep contact details separately and securely.



Inner circle
Mentors and collaborators who know your work in detail

Working circle
People you have interviewed or worked with

Wider circle
People who know your work: readers, audiences, organisations

Relationship ledger across projects

INITIALS OR ROLE	HOW WE MET	WHAT I GAVE	WHAT THEY GAVE	LAST CONTACT	NEXT STEP

RESEARCHER

Industry challenges

Eight starting points

Each challenge can become a niche. Narrow it to one setting, one measurable change and the people you can reach safely. Every challenge includes an automation idea.

01 Food systems & agriculture

02 Healthcare operations

03 Clean energy & buildings

04 Water & climate resilience

05 Circular economy & waste

06 Small business & financial resilience

07 Education & future skills

08 Mobility & inclusive cities

CHALLENGE 01 INDUSTRY CHALLENGE

Food systems & agriculture

THE CHALLENGE

Can a small change reduce post-harvest loss for one crop or food product?

YOUR INVESTIGATION

Map one stage from harvest to buyer. Use approved, anonymised or public data on quantity, time, damage and price. Compare one handling, storage or information change.

MEASURES THAT COULD MATTER

Loss rate; cost per kg; saleable quantity; farmer or trader feedback.

DATA TO FIND

Crop volumes at each stage; damaged or rejected quantity; storage time; selling price; handling costs.

WHO TO LISTEN TO

A grower, packer, transporter or buyer, with permission and an adult or mentor present.

SAFETY AND ETHICS

Do not enter farms, stores or supply-chain sites without permission. Do not handle chemicals or machinery.

FIRST DELIVERABLE

A process map showing where loss occurs, a small cost-of-loss estimate and a pilot proposal.

AUTOMATION IDEA

A loss log for each stage that feeds one sheet; an agent flags the stage with the highest loss each week and drafts a summary for the grower to check.

Narrow it to your setting Your first move: one source, one person, one baseline question

My setting (one place, one process, one group) _____

My research question _____

My baseline measure and unit _____

One credible source or approved dataset _____

One person who understands the process (arranged by) _____

One change I could test, and its success threshold _____

Consent check done (page 11) _____

CHALLENGE 02 INDUSTRY CHALLENGE

Healthcare operations

THE CHALLENGE

How could a service reduce avoidable waiting or missed appointments without compromising care?

YOUR INVESTIGATION

Study a public or simulated clinic workflow. Map each step a visitor goes through, find the bottlenecks and test a low-risk information or scheduling improvement, with permission.

MEASURES THAT COULD MATTER

Waiting time; missed-appointment rate; staff workload; user experience.

DATA TO FIND

Anonymised appointment times; queue length by hour; capacity; reminder delivery and attendance counts.

WHO TO LISTEN TO

Reception staff, service managers and users who choose to share their experience. Never ask about diagnoses.

SAFETY AND ETHICS

Do not collect patient records or health details. Do not diagnose or recommend treatment.

FIRST DELIVERABLE

A step-by-step service map, a bottleneck analysis and a low-risk scheduling or information pilot.

AUTOMATION IDEA

Reminder messages scheduled from simulated appointment data; an agent drafts the wording for staff approval and counts attendance.

Narrow it to your setting Your first move: one source, one person, one baseline question

My setting (one place, one process, one group) _____

My research question _____

My baseline measure and unit _____

One credible source or approved dataset _____

One person who understands the process (arranged by) _____

One change I could test, and its success threshold _____

Consent check done (page 11) _____

CHALLENGE 03 INDUSTRY CHALLENGE

Clean energy & buildings

THE CHALLENGE

Which operational change could reduce energy use in one approved space?

YOUR INVESTIGATION

Use meter data supplied by a facility or a clearly labelled sample dataset. Compare energy per operating hour, or per unit of activity, before and after one change.

MEASURES THAT COULD MATTER

kWh per day or per activity unit; cost; comfort feedback; emissions estimate with a stated factor.

DATA TO FIND

Energy readings by day or hour; occupancy or activity levels; equipment schedule; tariff assumptions.

WHO TO LISTEN TO

Facilities staff, building users and the person who approves operational changes.

SAFETY AND ETHICS

Do not access electrical panels, wiring or restricted plant rooms.

FIRST DELIVERABLE

A baseline energy profile, a cost estimate and a controlled test of one operational change.

AUTOMATION IDEA

Daily meter readings logged through a form; an automation flags any day more than 20% above the baseline for facilities staff.

Narrow it to your setting Your first move: one source, one person, one baseline question

My setting (one place, one process, one group) _____

My research question _____

My baseline measure and unit _____

One credible source or approved dataset _____

One person who understands the process (arranged by) _____

One change I could test, and its success threshold _____

Consent check done (page 11) _____

CHALLENGE 04 INDUSTRY CHALLENGE

Water & climate resilience

THE CHALLENGE

Where could a community, school or business reduce water waste or improve resilience?

YOUR INVESTIGATION

Use public water data or an approved site log. Map the points of use, find a measurable loss or demand pattern and test a safe behaviour or process change.

MEASURES THAT COULD MATTER

Litres per person or per activity; leakage reports; cost; reliability of supply.

DATA TO FIND

Approved meter or usage logs; leak reports; rainfall or supply data; water-use estimates by activity.

WHO TO LISTEN TO

Facilities or water-management staff, users affected by interruptions and local experts.

SAFETY AND ETHICS

Never test drinking-water safety without qualified methods and supervision. Do not enter drains or unsafe sites.

FIRST DELIVERABLE

A water-use map, a prioritised list of opportunities and a measurable conservation pilot.

AUTOMATION IDEA

A leak-report form with photos; an automation logs the time to repair and sends a weekly summary to facilities staff.

Narrow it to your setting Your first move: one source, one person, one baseline question

My setting (one place, one process, one group) _____

My research question _____

My baseline measure and unit _____

One credible source or approved dataset _____

One person who understands the process (arranged by) _____

One change I could test, and its success threshold _____

Consent check done (page 11) _____

CHALLENGE 05 INDUSTRY CHALLENGE

Circular economy & waste

THE CHALLENGE

Can one waste stream become a safer, more valuable reusable material?

YOUR INVESTIGATION

Audit a clean, approved waste stream using categories and weights. Research existing reuse options and test a small sorting, reduction or reuse change.

MEASURES THAT COULD MATTER

kg per category; contamination rate; diversion rate; handling cost; interest from buyers or users.

DATA TO FIND

Waste weight by category; contamination rate; collection frequency; handling cost; possible reuse demand.

WHO TO LISTEN TO

Cleaning or operations staff, waste collectors, possible reuse partners and people using the space.

SAFETY AND ETHICS

Do not handle medical, chemical, sharp, electronic or contaminated waste.

FIRST DELIVERABLE

A waste-stream audit, a comparison of reuse options and a safe small-scale sorting or reuse test.

AUTOMATION IDEA

A collection log by category; an agent charts contamination each week and drafts a notice when it rises.

Narrow it to your setting Your first move: one source, one person, one baseline question

My setting (one place, one process, one group) _____

My research question _____

My baseline measure and unit _____

One credible source or approved dataset _____

One person who understands the process (arranged by) _____

One change I could test, and its success threshold _____

Consent check done (page 11) _____

CHALLENGE 06 INDUSTRY CHALLENGE

Small business & financial resilience

THE CHALLENGE

Which process change could improve stock, cash flow or customer experience for a small business?

YOUR INVESTIGATION

Use a fictional case or anonymised, owner-approved data. Map ordering, stock-outs, waste or payment steps and model a low-cost improvement.

MEASURES THAT COULD MATTER

Stock-out frequency; days of inventory; gross margin estimate; time per transaction.

DATA TO FIND

Anonymised stock levels; order dates; stock-outs; spoilage; unit costs; sales volumes, or a fictional dataset.

WHO TO LISTEN TO

A small-business owner, shop worker or supplier who chooses to explain the process.

SAFETY AND ETHICS

Never ask for bank statements, passwords or customer details.

FIRST DELIVERABLE

A simple process map, a unit-economics calculation and a low-cost stock or ordering improvement.

AUTOMATION IDEA

A stock sheet that flags items with under three days left and drafts a reorder list for the owner to approve. See the worked example on page 18.

Narrow it to your setting Your first move: one source, one person, one baseline question

My setting (one place, one process, one group) _____

My research question _____

My baseline measure and unit _____

One credible source or approved dataset _____

One person who understands the process (arranged by) _____

One change I could test, and its success threshold _____

Consent check done (page 11) _____

CHALLENGE 07 INDUSTRY CHALLENGE

Education & future skills

THE CHALLENGE

Which learning or support activity helps learners apply a skill more confidently?

YOUR INVESTIGATION

Co-design a short learning activity with a teacher. Use voluntary, anonymous feedback and a simple before-and-after task that does not label learners.

MEASURES THAT COULD MATTER

Task completion; rubric score; confidence feedback; time required.

DATA TO FIND

A teacher-approved task rubric; anonymised completion results; time taken; voluntary learner feedback.

WHO TO LISTEN TO

Teachers, learners and learning-support staff. Participation is voluntary and approved by the school.

SAFETY AND ETHICS

No public ranking, shaming or collection of sensitive student data. Get school and parent permission.

FIRST DELIVERABLE

A comparison of learning activities, a simple outcome analysis and a revised activity plan.

AUTOMATION IDEA

An agent drafts practice questions from the teacher's material; the teacher approves every question before learners see it.

Narrow it to your setting

Your first move: one source, one person, one baseline question

My setting (one place, one process, one group) _____

My research question _____

My baseline measure and unit _____

One credible source or approved dataset _____

One person who understands the process (arranged by) _____

One change I could test, and its success threshold _____

Consent check done (page 11) _____

CHALLENGE 08 INDUSTRY CHALLENGE

Mobility & inclusive cities

THE CHALLENGE

How could one route, crossing or public service become safer or more accessible?

YOUR INVESTIGATION

Use public transport data, approved observations or a map audit. Include people with different mobility needs through safe, voluntary consultation.

MEASURES THAT COULD MATTER

Travel time; access barriers counted; service reliability; user feedback.

DATA TO FIND

Public route schedules; accessibility information; travel times observed from safe places; service frequency.

WHO TO LISTEN TO

Transport users, accessibility advocates, service operators or local planners, through approved channels.

SAFETY AND ETHICS

Do not run roadside experiments or photograph identifiable people without permission.

FIRST DELIVERABLE

An access-barrier map, a route or service comparison and an evidence-backed improvement proposal.

AUTOMATION IDEA

An access-barrier report form that maps each report; an automation groups reports by location for the service operator.

Narrow it to your setting Your first move: one source, one person, one baseline question

My setting (one place, one process, one group) _____

My research question _____

My baseline measure and unit _____

One credible source or approved dataset _____

One person who understands the process (arranged by) _____

One change I could test, and its success threshold _____

Consent check done (page 11) _____

Prepare an executive recommendation

Decision-makers need a clear answer, not every page of your research. Write a one-page brief that lets someone grasp the issue, the evidence, the recommendation and the decision needed.

SECTION	WHAT TO INCLUDE
The issue	One sentence: the problem and who is affected.
Why now	The cost, risk, opportunity or evidence that makes it important.
What we found	Three evidence points, with sources and limits.
Recommendation	One practical action and why it beats the alternatives.
Business case	Estimated cost, expected benefit, owner and ongoing workload.
Risks	What could fail, who could be disadvantaged and how you will reduce the risk.
Decision requested	Permission, a pilot site, data access, mentor feedback or funding for a small test.

YOUR 90-SECOND PITCH

"We investigated **[problem]** affecting **[group]**. Our evidence shows **[key finding]**. We tested or propose **[one change]**. The early or expected result is **[measure]**. The main limitation is **[limitation]**. We recommend **[next step]** and need **[specific decision]**."

DRAFT MY PITCH

WORKED EXAMPLE

A one-page executive brief

EXAMPLE · FICTIONAL

Built from the practice dataset on page 15. The bakery, the route change and the driver absence are invented to show the format.

The issue	*Late deliveries at a small bakery delivery service: 15% of orders arrived late in week 1, and customers complained.*
Why now	*Orders grew from 120 to 160 a week. Complaints rise and fall with lateness, so delays will cost more as the business grows.*
What we found	*1) The late rate fell from 15.0% to 6.3% over six weeks, after orders were batched by route from week 3. 2) Complaints fell from 14 to 7, moving with the late rate. 3) Week 5 rose to 10.0% when one driver was absent.*
Limits	*Six weeks, one service and no comparison group. Rising orders may have changed routes anyway.*
Recommendation	*Keep route batching and add a back-up driver rota for absences.*
Business case	*Cost: about one hour of planning a day by the dispatch lead. Benefit: fewer refunds; needs refund data to cost. Owner: dispatch lead.*
Risks	*Batching may delay the first order in each batch. Track first-order times weekly.*
Decision requested	*Approve a four-week trial of the back-up rota, and share refund data so the benefit can be costed.*

WHY IT WORKS

One page. Rates, not just counts. A named owner, a cost and a clear decision. It states its limits before anyone asks.

EXPECT THESE QUESTIONS

How do you know batching, not order growth, cut lateness? What would you do if the first-order delay got worse?

Defend your work with confidence and humility

Prepare for questions you did not write. Strong answers are specific, honest and open to challenge.

Questions to prepare for

1. Why did you choose this problem, and who told you it mattered?

2. Which evidence most changed your original assumption?

3. What is the weakest part of your dataset or method?

4. How do you know the change, not another factor, affected the result?

5. Who benefits, who might lose and who has not been heard?

6. What would it cost to run this for six months?

7. What would make you abandon or redesign the solution?

ANSWER STRUCTURE

Claim › Evidence › Reasoning › Limitation › Next test

THE HONESTY RULE

It is acceptable to say “We do not know yet.” It is not acceptable to disguise uncertainty as certainty.

Publish and share: become the reference

Authority needs a record other people can see. Share what you learn, with permission, so the next person in your niche starts from your work.

ONE-PAGE BRIEF
For the organisation you worked with.

CASE NOTE
The problem, what you did and what changed, with permission.

TALK OR DEMO
At school, a community group or an industry meetup.

ARTICLE OR POST
A short public write-up of one finding, without private details.

OPEN DATASET
Anonymised data, shared only with permission.

SHORT VIDEO
A two-minute explainer of one result.

BEFORE ANYTHING GOES PUBLIC

- ✓ Get the organisation's permission before naming it or sharing its data.
- ✓ Anonymise people. Never publish faces, names or contact details without consent.
- ✓ Credit everyone who helped, and cite your sources.
- ✓ State the limits of your result. Never overclaim.
- ✓ Under 18? An adult approves anything before it goes public.

My publishing plan

WHAT	FOR WHOM	WHERE	PERMISSION FROM	DATE

Problem, notes and sources

Capture the core of your investigation. Add pages, tables or links when needed.

Challenge and setting _____

Research question _____

Who is affected _____

Working notes

Evidence and sources

SOURCE OR DATASET	WHAT IT SUPPORTS	DATE AND LIMITS

Data and analysis

Capture the core of your investigation. Add pages, tables or links when needed.

Data dictionary

FIELD	MEANING	UNIT OR FORMAT	SOURCE

What pattern did you find?

	YOUR NOTES
Main finding	
Evidence that supports it	
Alternative explanation	
Missing data or limits	
What more you would collect	

Stakeholders and relationships

Capture the core of your investigation. Add pages, tables or links when needed.

For each conversation, record the role, date, consent, key learning and follow-up. Use initials or roles in this book; keep contact details separately and securely.

ROLE OR GROUP	DATE	CONSENT	KEY INSIGHT	FOLLOW-UP OR THANKS

Reflection

Whose perspective changed your thinking? _____

Where did you disagree, and how did you respond? _____

What promise or follow-up do you still owe? _____

Business case and impact plan

Capture the core of your investigation. Add pages, tables or links when needed.

ITEM	ESTIMATE OR EVIDENCE
Who benefits? Who pays or approves?	
One-time cost	
Ongoing cost per month or unit	
Expected benefit and how it is measured	
Main operating constraint	
Main risk and how you reduce it	
Success threshold for the pilot	

Before and after

MEASURE	BASELINE	AFTER	UNIT AND DATE

AI and automation log

Capture the core of your investigation. Add pages, tables or links when needed.

Record every time an AI tool or automation contributed to this project. Assessors check this page.

DATE	TOOL	TASK I GAVE IT	HOW I CHECKED THE OUTPUT	KEPT, CHANGED OR REJECTED

Human approval points in my workflow _____

How I kept private data out of AI tools _____

Automation result: time saved or errors avoided _____

BEFORE YOU SUBMIT

Researcher final checklist

A project can be valuable even when the result is inconclusive, as long as the research is honest and well explained.

- [ ] The problem is specific and connected to people or an industry.
- [ ] The research question can be answered with the evidence collected.
- [ ] Sources are recorded; simulated or estimated data is clearly labelled.
- [ ] The baseline and after-measurement use a comparable method and unit.
- [ ] The analysis includes limits and alternative explanations.
- [ ] Stakeholder work was respectful, voluntary and permission-based.
- [ ] The business case names costs, benefits, an owner and operating constraints.
- [ ] The solution was tested at a safe, small scale, or a clear pilot is defined.
- [ ] Impact measures separate activity, output and outcome.
- [ ] The recommendation is clear and can be challenged.
- [ ] Every AI output I used was checked, and AI use is declared on record page 5.
- [ ] Everyone who helped received a close-the-loop note.
- [ ] The project builds on my earlier work in this niche, or starts my ladder.

NOTES FOR MY MENTOR BEFORE I SUBMIT

> **Completing this book does not by itself earn a certificate** or a place in a programme. A Researcher project may need more evidence than a standard project assessment.

ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION

How Researcher work is assessed

Certification recognises demonstrated capability at a level. It is not a reward for attendance or for completing pages.

YOUR PORTFOLIO

Minimum: three finished Researcher projects before applying; three lets you apply, not pass. **Recommended:** five, in one niche: that is how a portfolio becomes authority.

YOUR FREE FIRST ASSESSMENT

Written feedback on one finished project, free. It does not award a certificate. Level assessment reviews your whole portfolio and is charged: ask us for the price list for your country.

COMPONENT	WHAT THE ASSESSOR LOOKS FOR
Portfolio evidence	Your own contribution, question, evidence, sources, process, results and reflection.
Skills review	Problem understanding, evidence, analysis, solution design, collaboration and communication at Researcher level.
Project defence	You explain decisions, answer questions, identify limits and describe next steps.
Decision	Certified at Researcher level, further evidence requested, or more practice recommended.

What each level expects

Explorer	Identify a problem, ask a clear question, carry out a safe test, record simple evidence and explain what happened.
Investigator	Research an industry problem, compare credible evidence, analyse data and costs, and test a recommendation.
Researcher	Evaluate a complex problem in a chosen niche, analyse advanced data, use AI tools responsibly, build a business case and lasting relationships, and defend a measurable solution.

Not ready yet? You receive feedback and a development plan, and can apply again when the missing skills are shown.

Send your free project assessment

You can complete a project independently. When it is finished, send it to EAD for your free assessment.

1. **Put it together**
   Combine your project record, evidence, charts and executive brief into one shareable document or PDF.
2. **Protect people**
   Remove private and sensitive details. Set sharing to “anyone with the link can view”.
3. **Send it to EAD**
   Scan the QR code or go to earlyagedevelopment.com. In the form at the bottom of the page, tick “Others – EAD Labs project submission” and paste your link with the challenge name and route.
4. **Get your feedback**
   EAD reviews your project and sends written feedback on every part.

Scan to submit
earlyagedevelopment.com

NEXT STEP: AN EAD SEMESTER PROJECT

Every semester, EAD teachers run guided industry challenges with expert contact, richer datasets, team roles and business analysis. Places depend on programme dates and capacity: message us for the next intake.

MY SUBMISSION

Date sent _____ **Project sent** _____

Shared link _____

Feedback received on _____

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EMAIL AND ONLINE

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earlyagedevelopment.com

My niche portfolio tracker

Record every finished project. Three is the minimum to apply for level assessment, not an automatic pass. The last column is your authority signal: who came back to you.

#	DATE FINISHED	PROBLEM IN MY NICHE	RESULT	SHARED WHERE	WHO ASKED OR CITED IT
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

BEFORE APPLYING, CHECK EACH PROJECT HAS

- ✓ A clear problem and who it affects.
- ✓ Evidence, dates, sources and your own contribution.
- ✓ What was tested, changed or recommended.
- ✓ Results, limits and reflection.
- ✓ A short explanation you can defend.
- ✓ Consent records kept safely.

WORDS RESEARCHERS USE

Glossary

Come back to this page whenever a term is new.

Baseline
The measurement taken before any change, with its unit, date and method.

Rate
A count divided by a total, such as late deliveries per 100 orders.

Confounder
Another factor that changed at the same time and could explain the result.

Anonymised data
Data with names and identifying details removed before you receive it.

Consent
Freely given, informed permission that can be withdrawn at any time.

Net benefit
Estimated benefits minus estimated costs, over a stated period.

Pilot
A small, time-limited test of a change in one setting, with a success threshold.

Defence
Explaining and justifying your work in answer to questions you did not prepare.

Authority
Recognition from people in an industry that your view is worth asking for, earned through a record of work.

Automation
A repeated task that runs by itself once set up, such as a reminder, alert or weekly summary.

Triangulation
Checking one finding from three angles: data, people and your own observation.

Data dictionary
A table explaining every field: meaning, unit, allowed values and source.

Correlation
Two measures moving together. It does not prove that one causes the other.

Simulated dataset
Data created for practice or modelling. Always labelled, never presented as real.

Stakeholder
A person or group affected by the problem, the decision or the change.

Business case
The argument for a change: costs, benefits, owner, risks and the decision needed.

Payback period
Initial cost divided by net benefit per period: how long until the change pays for itself.

Output and outcome
An output is what you produced. An outcome is what changed for people because of it.

Niche
One problem area narrow enough to know deeply, such as missed appointments in small clinics.

AI agent
An AI system that plans steps and uses tools to complete a task you set. You stay responsible for the output.

Human in the loop
A person checks or approves an AI or automated output before it affects anyone.

Close the loop
Telling everyone who helped what you found and what changed because of their input.

OPTIONAL · QUR'ANIC RESEARCH REFERENCES

A reason to look closely

This section is optional. It lists reference numbers from EAD's public Architecture of the Word framework and gives no interpretation or ruling.

HOW TO USE THIS SECTION

A verse may help you choose what to examine when you form your question, and inform your reflection at the end. It is never evidence, never a source in your evidence log, and never a reason for someone you interview to agree with you. Cite surah, number and ayah, and name the translation. If your evidence contradicts your reading, report the evidence.

Agriculture, climate and water

Qur'an references: 15:19; 25:2; 54:49; 55:7–9; 2:205; 7:56; 7:85; 30:41; 11:7; 21:30; 23:18; 25:48–49; 67:30; 6:95; 6:141; 13:4; 22:5; 80:24–32; 7:31; 17:26–27; 25:67; 6:38; 16:5–8

Research prompt: Where in one food or water supply chain is loss large enough to measure?

Health and preventive medicine

Qur'an references: 5:32; 2:195; 4:29; 2:168; 7:31

Research prompt: Which service delay or habit could you measure without collecting anyone's health details?

Space and observation

Qur'an references: 55:33; 15:14–15; 41:53

Research prompt: Which public observation dataset could you analyse, and what can it not tell you?

Engineering, robotics and materials

Qur'an references: 57:25; 18:96; 34:12

Research prompt: Which repeated failure could you count before and after one design change?

Energy and smart systems

Qur'an references: 36:80; 24:35; 57:25; 13:2; 34:12; 35:41; 27:40; 72:8

Research prompt: What is the energy use per hour of activity in one space, and what one change could lower it?

Education, knowledge and data literacy

Qur'an references: 96:1–5; 17:36; 39:9; 2:269

Research prompt: How will you show that your sources are reliable and your limits are stated?

A reason to look closely (continued)

FinTech, records and economic fairness

Qur'an references: 2:282; 83:1–3; 4:135

Research prompt: Which records would make a small business's costs and prices transparent and fair to check?

Law, governance and justice

Qur'an references: 5:8; 4:58; 4:135

Research prompt: Who is affected by a rule or process, and whose view has not yet been heard?

Media, deepfakes and verification

Qur'an references: 20:66; 2:204; 7:116; 114:4–5

Research prompt: How would you trace a claim to its original source and test it against two independent ones?

Psychology and behaviour

Qur'an references: 12:53; 75:2; 89:27

Research prompt: Which behaviour could you measure at group level, with consent and without labelling anyone?

Matter, chemistry and measurement

Qur'an references: 99:7–8; 10:61; 25:2

Research prompt: How does the precision of your measurements limit what your data can support?

Sociology and community systems

Qur'an references: 49:13; 3:103; 30:22

Research prompt: Which group's needs are missing from your data, and how could you include them safely?

IF YOU USE A VERSE IN YOUR PROJECT

Surah, number and ayah _____

Translation used _____

What it directed my attention to _____

At the end: what I found, and what my evidence cannot settle _____

Notes



EAD IMPACT INNOVATORS

Become the person your industry asks.

An advanced workbook for learners who want to build authority in one niche: research its problems deeply, solve them with evidence, AI agents and automation, and build relationships that last, one measured project after another.

A path to niche authority
Choose a niche and plan ten projects in it

Advanced research
Methods, triangulation and a niche knowledge base

Agentic AI and automation
Agent workflows with human checks at every step

Relationships that last
Close the loop, build trust, grow your network

WHICH BOOK IS RIGHT?

Explorer and Investigator	from about 7 and 11	**EAD Young Innovators**
Researcher	from about 14	**This book**

Ages are a guide. Learners without an Investigator certificate can ask for a readiness assessment.

Niche
pick one, go deep

Research
three angles

Automate
with human checks

Connect
close the loop

INCLUDED WITH THIS WORKBOOK

Your first project assessment is free.

Finish one Researcher project in your niche, send it to EAD and receive written feedback on every part. Want mentoring and a team? Join a teacher-guided EAD semester project.

Scan to submit

EAD CONNECTING EDUCATION WITH LIFE

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