



REPORT

T&C IMPACT EVALUATION



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Presented By
GOP Consulting Center

ACKNOWLEDGMENT



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ABBREVIATIONS

FGDs	: Focus Groups Discussions
GDP	: Gross Domestic Product GPS: Global Positioning System
KIIs	: Key Informant Interviews
M&E	: Monitoring and Evaluation
MINECOFIN	: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MINEDUC	: Ministry of Education
NST	: National Strategy for Transformation
RDB	: Rwanda Development Board
RESSP	: Rwanda Education Sector Strategic Plan
T&C	: T&C Rwanda
TVET	: Technical, Vocational, Education Training
UNICEF	: United Nations Fund for Children

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of Trust and Care (T&C) Rwanda's education support programs, measuring their impact on students' academic performance, socioeconomic development, and overall well-being. It also aims to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current programs and interventions, while providing evidence-based recommendations to strengthen T&C's educational support initiatives in Rwanda. The findings demonstrate T&C Rwanda's significant role in improving academic outcomes, enhancing employability, and fostering entrepreneurial motivation among young people.

Evaluation Design

A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative data. Surveys were conducted with students, graduates, and households benefiting from T&C Rwanda's support. Key areas of analysis included academic achievement, household income, and employability, providing a comprehensive assessment of the program's impact.

Key Findings

Student Demographics: The majority of students supported (96.1%) are between the ages of 12 and 22, with girls making up over 65% of beneficiaries. Most students come from rural, low-income families reliant on farming, with household incomes between 300,000 and 500,000 Rwf annually. T&C's support is essential in dismantling financial barriers for these vulnerable populations and closing educational gaps by providing access to quality education that would otherwise be unattainable.

Impact on Academic Performance and Well-Being: The program has substantially improved students' academic performance, with 98.8% reporting significant academic progress due to T&C's support. Contributing factors include access to high-quality educational materials, mentorship, and personalized guidance, all of which create a conducive learning environment. Students have also reported positive effects on their overall well-being, enabling them to excel both academically and personally.

Personal Growth and Behavioural Change: The evaluation highlights notable improvements in personal growth, particularly among vocational training students. A remarkable 98.6% reported enhanced self-esteem, health awareness, and well-being,

reflecting the success of T&C's holistic approach. By emphasizing personal development alongside academic and technical skills, the program equips students with the resilience and life skills needed to make informed, positive life choices.

Impact on Employment and Entrepreneurship: T&C's support has significantly enhanced graduates' employment prospects and entrepreneurial ambitions. Among surveyed graduates, 64.9% secured employment, with 29.7% in full-time positions. Additionally, 65% of students in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs reported increased motivation to pursue entrepreneurial careers, spurred by the practical skills and knowledge gained from the program. This underscores T&C's role in promoting self-reliance and economic innovation.

Satisfaction with Employability Outcomes: Most (80.1%) of high school students expressed high satisfaction with the employability outcomes of T&C's comprehensive support. This includes academic assistance, life skills training, career guidance, and vocational education, all of which have enhanced students' readiness for the job market. Students reported increased confidence, practical skills, and successful career placements, reflecting the program's positive influence on their future employment prospects.

Impact on Household Socioeconomic Well-Being: T&C's support has also positively affected household economic conditions, with 85.7% of households reporting improvements. By alleviating the financial burden of education, families can redirect resources to other critical needs, improving their overall livelihood.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The evaluation confirms that T&C Rwanda's support has had a transformative impact on students' academic achievements, personal growth, and their families' socioeconomic well-being. To strengthen the program's effectiveness, several key recommendations have been made:

- Expand student support by increasing the number of beneficiaries by at least 5,000 annually to meet the high demand from vulnerable families.
- Strengthen organizational capacity by hiring additional qualified staff to enhance resource mobilization, communication, and program sustainability.
- Prioritize support for vulnerable groups, including girls and children with disabilities, to address challenges like early pregnancy and gender discrimination.

- Establish a comprehensive extracurricular program for Senior 3 to 6 students focused on entrepreneurship and confidence-building, requiring additional resources.
- Create a coordinated alumni network to monitor graduates' progress and promote continued youth engagement.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Rwanda Country Context of Education

Since the period after the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis, Rwanda's education sector has undergone a significant transformation, with the government recognising education as a fundamental pillar of national development¹. Despite notable progress, challenges such as disparities in access, quality gaps, and equity issues persist across various groups. To address these challenges, the government has implemented several strategies, including substantial investments in infrastructure development, teacher training program, curriculum enhancements, and the integration of technology into education delivery².

One of the key initiatives in this transformation is the Twelve-Year Basic Education program, which aims to ensure universal access to primary education and enhance the quality of teaching and learning outcomes. Efforts to expand access to secondary and higher education through the construction of new schools, along with scholarships and financial assistance for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, have also contributed to more inclusive education.

In 2019, the Rwandan government introduced a Comprehensive National School Feeding Policy to provide nutritious meals to students in pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools. This government-subsidized program has had multiple benefits, including promoting children's enrollment, attendance, retention, and learning; improving health and nutrition; enhancing social protection and gender equality; and generating positive multiplier effects for local economies through agriculture.

Furthermore, vocational and technical education has been prioritized to align with the evolving needs of the labor market, equipping students with practical skills and competencies for employment and entrepreneurship. Collaborations with international partners, including non-governmental organisations, have played a crucial role in supporting education reform efforts and enhancing the effectiveness of these interventions.³

¹ Rwanda Education Sector Strategic Plan (RESSP) 2018/19 - 2023/24 Available at: https://www.mineduc.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/ES_SP_English_Signed_Version.pdf

² 7 Years Government Program: National Strategy for Transformation (NSTI) 2017–2024.

³ Rwanda Annual State of Skills Supply and Demand (August 2022) Available at: <https://rdb.rw/files/state-of-skills-report-2022.pdf>

However, despite these efforts, challenges remain, including inadequate infrastructure in remote areas, teacher shortages, and the financial burden of higher education on vulnerable families. According to the World Bank, education funding in Rwanda is not sufficient to meet the country's ambitious goals, with education spending accounting for less than 5 percent of the total GDP⁴. This shortfall is a key factor contributing to weak implementation capacity, particularly in a country with a large population of children and youth and significant infrastructure needs⁵.

1.2. About T&C Rwanda

T&C Rwanda launched its education sponsorship program in 2007 intending to provide educational opportunities to vulnerable children and youth in Rwanda who have been impacted by poverty, conflict, or the loss of family support. The initiative was designed to support children from underprivileged families with financial assistance and essential resources, enabling them to pursue their academic goals and break the cycle of poverty through education.

Through these efforts, T&C Rwanda has played a crucial role in facilitating access to education for disadvantaged individuals, thereby contributing to their personal development and broader socio-economic progress. The program was specifically developed to address barriers to education, such as poverty, lack of resources, and social challenges. In partnership with district officials, children from the most impoverished families are identified and selected to receive comprehensive support, including school fees, uniforms, lunch, and other necessary school supplies. Additionally, T&C Rwanda subsidises the cost of the medical insurance scheme, ensuring that these children and their families have access to medical care.

According to data from T&C Rwanda, approximately 1,200 students participate in the sponsorship program each year. Among these, 50 students (4.1%) are in primary school, while 1,150 students (96.9%) are in secondary school. This includes 630 students in boarding schools, 535 in day schools, and 186 students engaged in technical and vocational training through TVET. Notably, the top-performing students in the national final examinations for the 2023 academic year, at both primary and secondary levels, were beneficiaries of T&C Rwanda's support. Each primary student

⁴ UNICEF 'Situation Analysis of Children in Rwanda: Summary report (2018)', Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/rwanda/media/391/file/Situation-Analysis-of-Children-in-Rwanda-Summary.pdf>

⁵ The World Bank 'Quality Basic Education for Human Capital Development in Rwanda' (2020).

receives support for an average duration ranging from 6 to 12 years, while secondary students are assisted for 6 years.

The table below illustrates T&C Rwanda's impact in comparison to other organisations providing educational support in the country:

Table 1: Comparative analysis between T&C's support and that of other organizations.

Organisation name	Support provided	Districts of intervention
T&C Rwanda	Financial support to cover school fees, uniforms, textbooks, medical insurance, and other educational expenses. T&C support focuses on children from poor families that have shown good academic performance.	Bugesera, & Kayonza district.
Compassion International	Tuition fees, uniforms, and other school materials, medical insurance, nutritional support, vocational training, financial literacy education, spiritual guidance and discipleship activities, mentorship, and support for income-generating activities to help families break the cycle of poverty. Compassion's support focuses on vulnerable children's members of partner churches.	Countrywide
Imbuto Foundation	Offer scholarships and educational grants to support students pursuing higher education or vocational training. Imbuto Foundation's support is focused only on best-performing girl students.	Countrywide

Rwanda Education Assistance Program (REAP)	Provides scholarships and financial assistance to support students from low-income families in accessing primary, secondary, and tertiary education. The scholarships cover school fees, uniforms, textbooks, and other educational expenses.	Rwamagana district
Bridge2Rwanda	Provides scholarships and financial assistance to outstanding Rwandan students to pursue higher education opportunities both within Rwanda and abroad. These scholarships cover tuition fees, accommodation, and other related expenses, enabling students to access quality education and expand their horizons.	Rwanda & abroad
SOS Children's Villages Rwanda	Offers educational support programs to ensure that children have access to quality education. This includes providing scholarships, school supplies, tutoring, and extracurricular activities to help children succeed academically and develop essential skills for the future.	Kigali City, Gicumbi, Nyamagabe districts
Rwanda Girls Initiative	Provides scholarships and financial support to girls from underserved communities, enabling them to access quality education from primary school through secondary and higher education levels. The scholarships include covering school fees, uniforms, textbooks, and other educational	Bugesera district

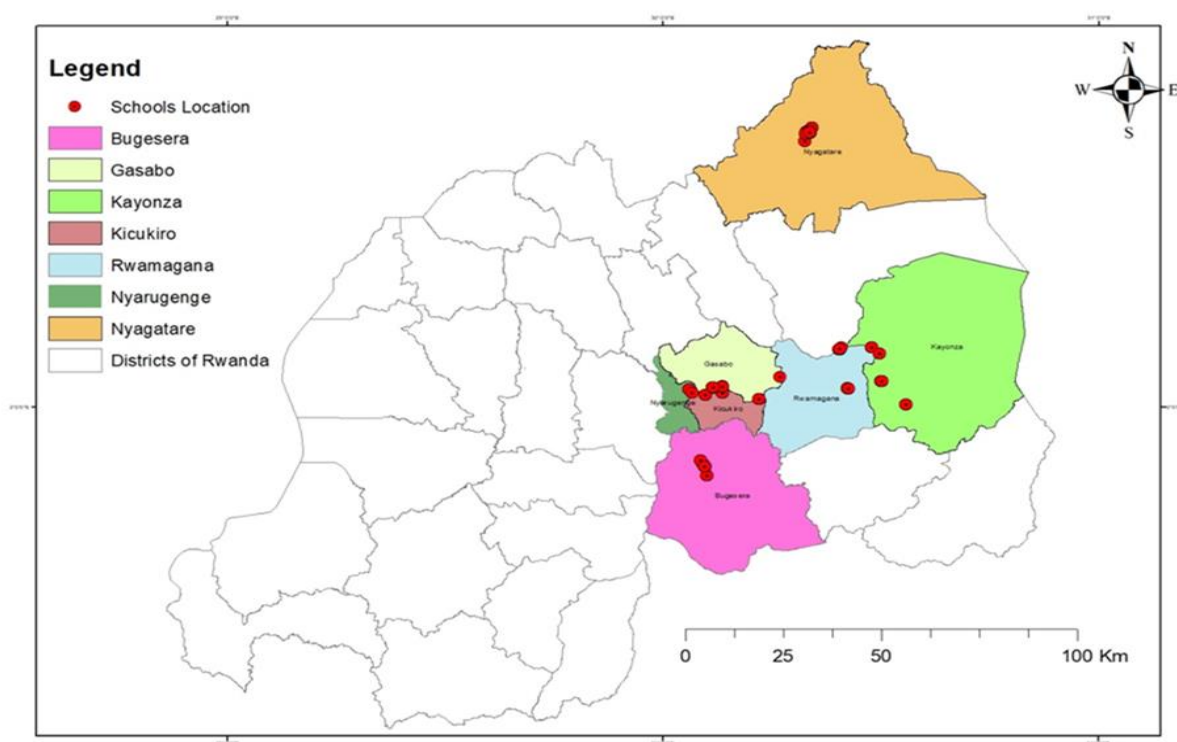
	expenses to ensure that girls can stay in school and complete their studies.	
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CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

2.1. Geographic location of respondents

The map displays the geographic distribution of interviewed respondents in schools located across various districts, color-coded by area: Bugesera (pink), Gasabo (green), Kayonza (light green), Kicukiro (red), Rwamagana (light blue), Nyarugenge (dark green), and Nyagatare (orange). Red dots indicate school locations, with notable clusters in Gasabo, Kicukiro, and Kayonza. The map shows a concentration of respondents in Kayonza and Bugesera, suggesting a significant number of students from these districts, while Gasabo and Kicukiro also have students' locations highlighting the presence of T&C support in urban areas as well. The distribution includes both urban and rural areas, capturing diverse perspectives, with Nyagatare being relatively isolated. This broad geographic spread ensures a comprehensive assessment of the program's impact across different districts accommodating supported students.

Figure 1: Respondent location map



2.2. Study design and sample

The assessment utilised a mixed-method approach, carefully tailored after considering the operational context of T&C Rwanda. Information was gathered through desk research with key informants, and interviews with program's beneficiaries with a sample of 728 participants, drawn from an estimated study population of 2,275 individuals.

2.3. Data Collection Techniques

Both quantitative and qualitative techniques were used in data collection to assess the effectiveness of T&C education support:

2.3.1. Quantitative Data Collection

Quantitative data was collected using a structured survey administered across district, school, and household levels, leveraging GPS technology integrated into the Kobo Collect tool. This approach aimed to gather numerical data from a broad sample of supported children, representing various educational stages including primary, secondary, and university students, and those already employed. The survey was meticulously designed to ensure comprehensive coverage and to measure the impact of the sponsorship program from multiple perspectives within each cohort. Special attention was given to the selection process to avoid gender bias, ensuring that the data collected was representative and balanced across different demographics.

2.3.2. Qualitative Data Collection:

2.3.2.1. Desk Review

Desk research involved an in-depth analysis of existing literature and national education indices relevant to Rwanda's education system. This process included reviewing and synthesizing available information about the education sector and comparing it with national education indicators. The objective was to evaluate the impact of the Trust and Care (T&C) Rwanda support program by contextualizing its effectiveness relative to broader educational benchmarks and understanding its contributions to the national education landscape.

2.3.2.2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

A total of eight FGDs were conducted across seven districts, including Bugesera (two FGDs) and one each in Kayonza, Nyagatare, Rwamagana, Kicukiro, Gasabo, and Nyarugenge. These discussions involved 20 schools and aimed to capture qualitative insights from 8-15 participants per group. The focus was on gathering success stories, lessons learned, and challenges faced by supported students. Gender balance was maintained in each group, with at least 50% females and 50% males, to ensure diverse perspectives and a comprehensive understanding of the educational experiences and the support program's impact.

2.3.2.3. Key Informant Interviews

The study included 33 key informant interviews, comprising 2 project staff from Trust and Care, 12 district officials (such as Vice Mayors and Directors of Education), and 19 head teachers from various schools. These interviews provided expert opinions and detailed information from a diverse set of stakeholders involved in the education sector. The aim was to gain a holistic understanding of the program's impact, incorporating feedback from individuals directly involved in or overseeing the educational initiatives, thus enriching the overall evaluation of the support program.

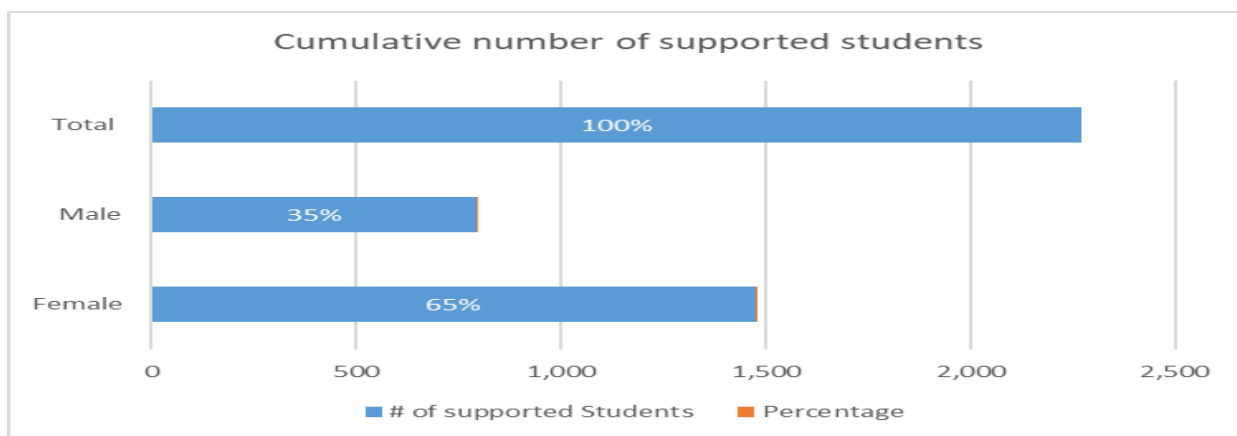
CHAPTER 3: IMPACT

This section presents and analyses the impact evaluation results on key areas: education access, academic performance, socioeconomic empowerment, and psychosocial development of students supported by T&C. It examines how the intervention has improved school enrollment and retention, enhanced students' academic achievements, and contributed to their economic empowerment through skill development. Additionally, it assesses the program's influence on the students' emotional well-being, self-esteem, and social relationships. The findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted benefits of the support provided by T&C, offering insights into the program's overall effectiveness and areas for future improvement.

3.1. Student profiles - by age, gender, and socio-economic conditions

The demographic profile of students supported by T&C Rwanda reflects the organization's commitment to empowering youth, with 96.1% of beneficiaries aged between 12 and 22. This strategic focus is based on the understanding that providing support to children in this age group, maximizes the transformative potential of education in creating future opportunities. By targeting this demographic, T&C Rwanda addresses immediate educational needs while also laying the foundation for long-term socio-economic empowerment. The organization's dedication to gender equality is also evident in its support structure, with 65% of beneficiaries being female and 35% male. This focus on inclusivity ensures that both girls and boys have equal access to educational opportunities, contributing to the development of a more equitable society.

Figure 2: cumulative and disaggregated percentage of supported students



Source: Desk review, November 2023

3.2. Impact of Support for increasing annual households' income

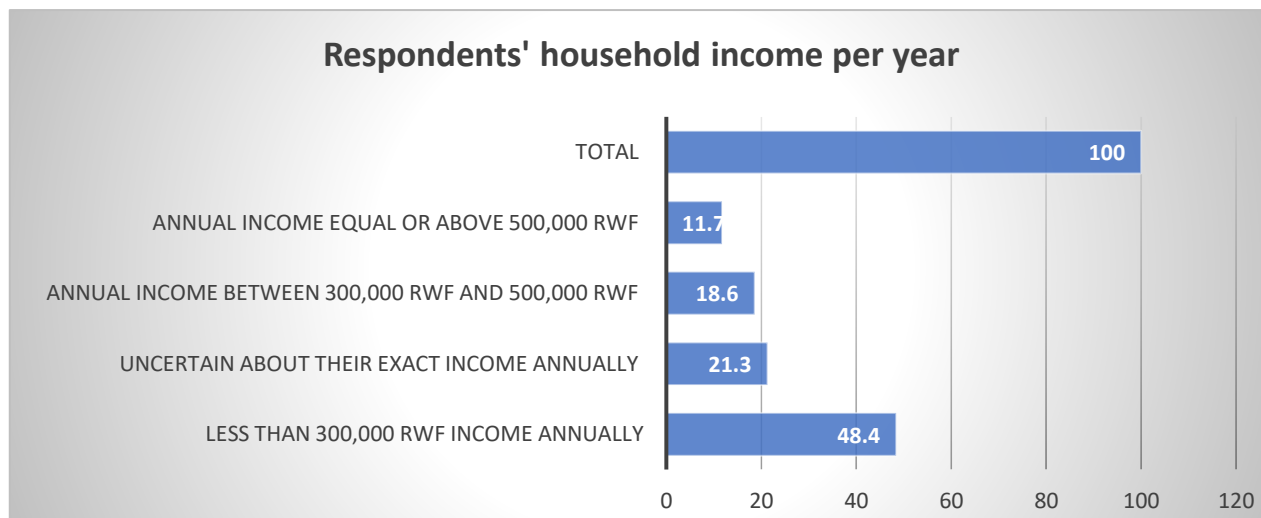
The most recent multidimensional poverty index report for Rwanda publicly available estimates that 48.8% of the population in Rwanda is multidimensionally poor while an additional 22.7% is classified as vulnerable to multidimensional poverty. Over 70% of the above numbers are located in rural areas. According to the definition of World Bank with monetary poverty measured, a poor household is defined as populations living below \$2.15 per day.⁶ From this perspective, it is to conclude that all the supported students by T&C are considered to belong to the categories of extremely poor households. According to our findings, obtained statistics relating to respondents' annual income fall into the reality and economic landscape of the surveyed population. Among the surveyed parents, a notable portion of 11.7% reported an annual income equal to or surpassing 500,000 Rwf. This segment represents individuals with higher economic stability within the community.

On the other end of the spectrum, a significant 48.4% disclosed an annual income below 300,000 Rwf, indicating a substantial portion of the population experiencing financial constraints. Interestingly, a considerable 21.3% of respondents expressed uncertainty regarding their exact annual income. This uncertainty emphasizes potential challenges in financial literacy and documentation among certain demographics within the sample. Additionally, 18.6% of participants fell within the income bracket ranging

⁶ UNDP 'Multidimensional Poverty Index for Rwanda' (2023).

between 300,000 Rwf and 500,000 Rwf annually, suggesting a moderate level of financial stability for this segment.

Figure 3: estimate annual income of household for respondents



These statistics reflect the diverse economic realities within the surveyed population, highlighting disparities in income distribution and financial awareness. Understanding such nuances is crucial for designing targeted interventions aimed at addressing socioeconomic inequalities and promoting financial inclusion. By acknowledging the varied income levels and uncertainties among respondents, initiatives can be tailored to better cater to the specific needs and circumstances of different segments within the community.

Based on our collected secondary data, the eligibility criteria for student support included the following conditions: (1) the student's family has no access to land, (2) owns no livestock, and (3) lacks consistent employment. Furthermore, 30.3% of respondents reported an annual family income between 300,000 Rwf and 500,000 Rwf. The findings also showed that all supported university graduates are employed as salaried workers, either on a temporary or full-time basis.

3.3. Impact on reducing school dropout among supported students

The Ministry of Education's 2020-2021 statistics yearbook, released in February 2022, revealed that primary school dropout rates stood at 9.5% during the 2020-2021

academic year⁷. However, by 2023, thanks to substantial improvements in access to primary education, this rate had decreased to 6.8% nationally. Despite this progress, dropout rates remained higher in rural areas, with boys being more likely to leave school than girls. The primary drivers of these dropout rates include economic hardships that prevent families from affording the indirect costs of education, the need for children to contribute to household income, early pregnancies among adolescent girls, the responsibility of caring for siblings, and issues related to education quality, such as teacher absenteeism and overcrowded classrooms.

Against this backdrop, a comparison with national statistics highlights the success of T&C Rwanda's interventions. Among the students supported by the organization, the dropout rate was significantly lower at 5.4%⁸ which explains the effectiveness of T&C Rwanda's strategies in addressing the root causes of student dropout. The organization's targeted efforts to support vulnerable students through financial assistance, educational programs, and community engagement have had a measurable impact on educational retention and success. By alleviating economic pressures and enhancing the quality of education, T&C Rwanda has played a crucial role in keeping more students in school, particularly those at greater risk of dropping out.

3.4. Impact on academic performance, confidence, and general well-being among supported students

Through interviews with key informants, it was affirmed that T&C Rwanda's assistance is attuned to the educational landscape's demands, ensuring students receive tailored aid, aligned with educational structures and requirements. This support encompasses various vital aspects, including tuition fees, uniforms, medical insurance, and essential educational materials. By addressing these fundamental needs, T&C Rwanda not only facilitates access to education but also promotes students' overall well-being (KII, T&C Staff).

Additionally, impact evaluation survey results highlighted the significant value attributed to the mentoring, school, and family visits conducted by T&C Rwanda.

⁷ Ministry of Education, Rwanda (2021). Education Statistical Yearbook 2021. Available at <https://www.mineduc.gov.rw/index.php?>

⁸ T&C Rwanda annual report 2022

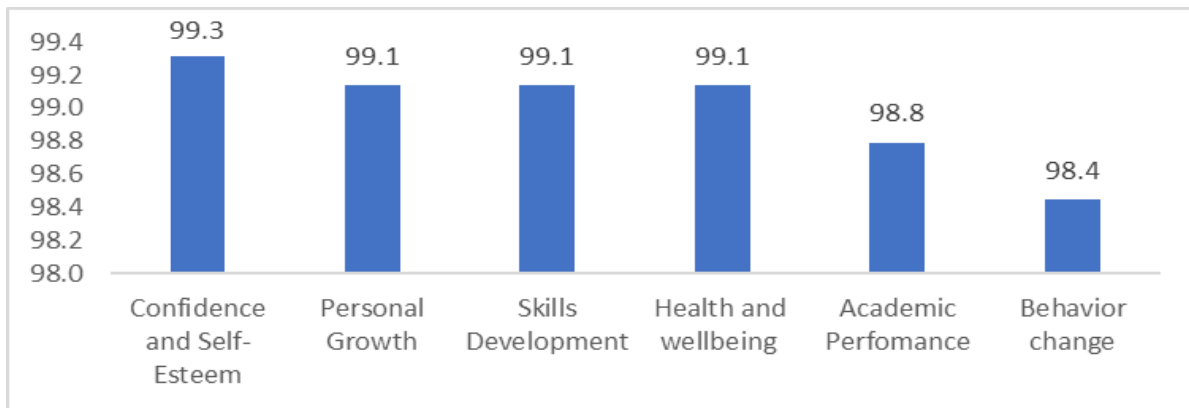
Participants expressed a strong sense of appreciation for these initiatives, emphasizing their positive impact on various aspects of their lives. Mentoring sessions were particularly valued for providing guidance, support, and skills development, fostering personal and professional growth. School visits were seen as instrumental in enhancing educational opportunities, improving learning outcomes, and promoting academic success. Similarly, family visits were highly regarded for strengthening familial bonds, promoting positive parenting practices, and fostering a supportive home environment conducive to holistic development (KII, Teacher, Nyamata Catholic). Overall, the survey underscored the profound significance of these interventions in empowering individuals, enriching communities, and fostering sustainable positive change.

One quote from a T&C official said: *"By employing this holistic support, students can dedicate themselves to their studies with confidence, knowing that their basic needs are met. This approach not only fosters academic excellence but also cultivates a nurturing environment conducive to personal growth and future success"*.

T&C Rwanda's dedication to addressing students' educational and welfare needs underscores its commitment to empowering the next generation and fostering a brighter future for all. An overwhelming majority, specifically 98.8% of supported students, attested having experienced remarkable academic achievements attributed to the assistance provided by T&C Rwanda. These achievements span a broad spectrum of areas, demonstrating the multifaceted impact of T&C's support. Notably, students reported significant enhancements in self-confidence, indicating a newfound belief in their abilities and potential.

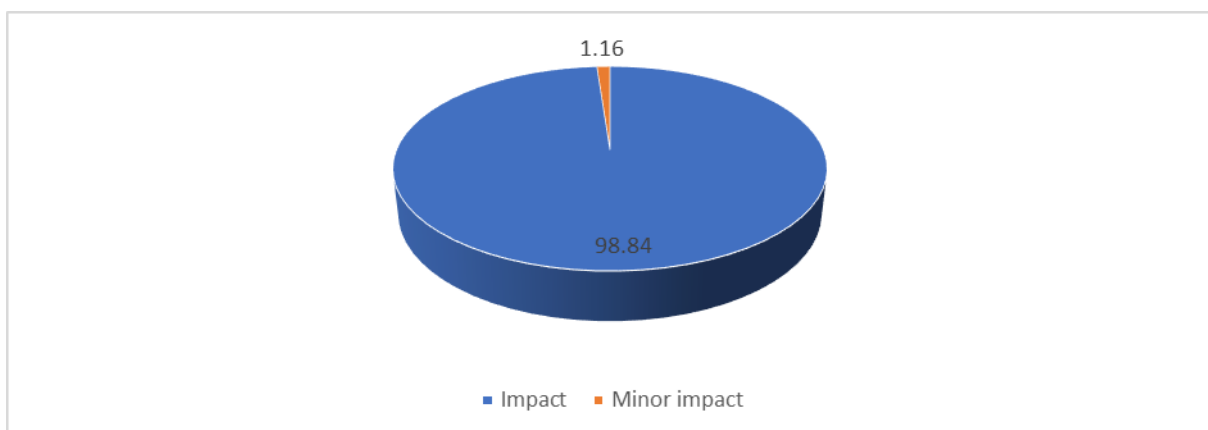
Additionally, they expressed notable strides in personal growth, embodying a sense of empowerment and resilience nurtured through T&C's assistance. Additionally, hands-on skills development emerged as a prominent outcome, with students acquiring practical competencies essential for their academic and professional endeavors. Furthermore, improvements in health and well-being were highlighted, underscoring T&C's holistic approach to student support. Finally, noteworthy shifts in behavior were observed, reflecting positive changes in attitudes and actions fostered by T&C's comprehensive assistance. These collective achievements underline the transformative impact of T&C's support on students' academic performance and overall development, affirming its pivotal role in empowering individuals to thrive and succeed.

Figure 4: Impact of T&C Support on Various Aspects of Student Development



According to the graph below, the study reveals more than just satisfaction levels; it sheds light on the tangible benefits students gain from the program. An overwhelming majority, comprising 98.8% of participants, attested to experiencing a significant impact from this factor. Conversely, a small minority, constituting only 1.2% of respondents are yet to realize the impact as they are at the start of their studies.

Figure 5: Perception of respondents on the overall impact on students' development



There's a noticeable improvement in academic performance, benefiting a large majority of respondents. This highlights the program's effectiveness not only in meeting students' needs but also in boosting their educational outcomes. Such findings underscore the significance and efficacy of the academic support program. By fostering high satisfaction levels and driving improvements in academic performance, it proves essential in supporting student success and educational progress. These insights offer valuable direction for enhancing and customizing similar program to cater to the diverse needs of students, ensuring their ongoing effectiveness in the academic realm.

In support of the above statement, participants in focus group discussions noted that improved access to school materials and timely payment of fees have boosted academic performance (FGD, Kayonza).

This support allows students to focus on their studies, leading to better preparation for exams and overall academic improvement. Furthermore, participants highlighted T&C Rwanda's support, which enhances students' peace and confidence in academic endeavors, freeing parents to concentrate on sustaining their families. Regarding the assistance provided, all FGDs participants acknowledged receiving support from the project, including school fees, materials, and other equipment, prior to the start of the academic year. When asked about their appreciation for the support from T&C Rwanda, students expressed gratitude, stating that it enables them to pursue their studies and fulfill their aspirations. Participants' stories appreciate T&C Rwanda's support:

"Valentin MUGABE, a 17-year-old studying in S5 and residing in Bugesera district, shared that the support provided by T&C Rwanda significantly assisted him in his studies. This aid not only boosted his confidence in the future but also proved crucial. Prior to receiving this support, he faced challenges paying school fees due to his family's limited financial capacity. Despite this, he persevered to remain in school and excel academically."

Students expressed heartfelt gratitude to T&C Rwanda as their families have experienced significant rebuilding due to the support provided:

"Dieudonne Bishobokaninkindi, a 14-year-old S2 student from Bugesera district, shared that his parents had struggled to afford school fees. However, with the support from T&C covering school fees and materials, the financial burden has been eased. This has

allowed his parents to save money and invest in small livestock, generating income to support the household and his siblings"

3.5. Impact on encouraging technical and vocational skills.

T&C Rwanda's education sponsorship program has significantly impacted the personal growth, self-esteem, health, and behavior change of students, with the approximate percentage ranging between 98.6% of respondents (for a total of 37 TVET students interviewed which makes 3% of the total students being supported by T&C) affirmed having acquired technical knowledge, improved self-esteem, good health, and good behaviour. In terms of personal growth, beneficiaries have shown progress in self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and goal-setting, leading to improved academic performance and resilience. Skill development, including technical and soft skills, has empowered individuals for success. Health and wellbeing initiatives, such as promoting healthy lifestyles and access to healthcare, have contributed to overall improvement. Behavior changes interventions have fostered positive attitudes and habits aligned with personal and academic goals. David, 16-year-old student from Kayonza district affirmed:

"I have been a beneficiary of T&C's education sponsorship program since 2019. Before receiving support, I was struggling with regular attendance and engagement in school activities, often skipping classes. However, with the support provided, I do receive mentorship supporting my academic commitments, and I do receive advice regularly through extracurricular activities that sparked my interest and motivation. Over time, my behaviours transformed significantly, as I became more committed to studies, participated actively in school events, and demonstrated improved discipline and responsibility".

Similarly, the story of Maria, 17 years old from Kayonza district affirmed:

"As T&C sponsorship program beneficiary, I have experienced positive shifts in my behaviours through this program. Initially, I lacked confidence in my academic abilities and frequently avoided challenging tasks. However, with the support and encouragement provided by T&C, I have gained the confidence to take on new challenges, seek help when needed, and persist in the face of adversity. As a result, my academic performance has positively improved, and I have developed an advanced mindset that propelled me towards success".

T&C's education sponsorship program has proven highly effective in driving behavior change among participants, with significant, considerable, and moderate impacts observed. Through tailored interventions, mentorship, and support, the program empowers individuals to adopt positive behaviors that enhance their academic performance, personal growth, and overall well-being.

3.6. Impact on socio-economic improvements among students' households

The study also explored the extent to which households could better meet basic needs such as housing, food, and healthcare due to the support provided by T&C Rwanda. Parents were asked whether receiving full scholarships for one child had facilitated investment in activities that boosted their household economy. At this point, the study wanted to understand how the services provided by T&C to children could assist other household members in covering basic needs such as schooling of other siblings, health, and sanitation. A substantial 85.7% of households surveyed acknowledged having experienced socioeconomic improvements as a direct result of the support provided by T&C Rwanda (T&C). The findings not only shed light on the tangible benefits experienced by supported families but also emphasised the interconnection between the education support provided and the wider socioeconomic well-being of the entire household.

3.7. Impact on youth's employment among university students supported

This section outlines the findings on the current status of university alumni who received loans, with a focus on their employment situation and their ability to repay the loans as they transitioned into the workforce. A significant majority of respondents (64.9%) reported being presently employed, indicating that the support provided significantly facilitated job opportunities for most graduates. However, some experienced an extended transition from school to employment as they sought positions aligning with their skills and aspirations. Conversely, approximately 29.7% of respondents have secured full-time employment, indicating a substantial proportion of individuals who have entered the workforce on a full-time basis. This implies successful integration into the job market for a considerable segment of graduates. Data from the FGDs supported the above statement with personal stories indicating:

"Josiane graduated from high school and initially struggled to find employment in her desired field. Determined to improve her skills and qualifications, Josiane enrolled in a vocational training program specializing in her area of interest. Through dedication and hard work, Josiane completed the program and secured a rewarding job opportunity, showcasing the importance of continuous learning in achieving career goals".

Similarly,

"Eric, another high school graduate, opted to pursue further education by enrolling in a certificate program relevant to his career aspirations. Despite already securing part-time employment, Eric recognized the value of acquiring additional qualifications to advance in his chosen field. Upon completion of the program, Eric not only enhanced his skill set but also opened up new opportunities for career advancement and personal growth".

Regarding the loan recovery, our evaluation findings have shown that in total 49 students were granted study loans by T&C (one passed away before she completed her studies leaving 48 actively managing their loans). Of these, 10 have fully repaid their loans, 26 have made partial payments, and 12 have yet to make any payments. Given the commitment demonstrated by the remaining students, it is expected that three more will fully repay their loans by the end of the year.

3.8. Impact on Boosting students' career Choice towards entrepreneurship mindset

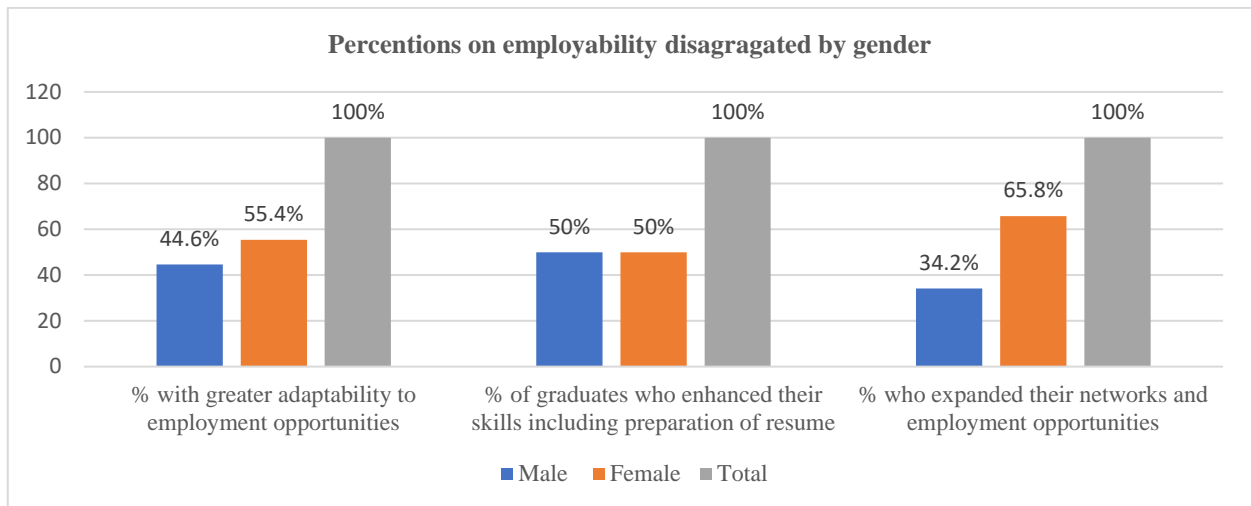
Among the students surveyed in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), a substantial 65% expressed a newfound motivation to embark on entrepreneurial careers. This enthusiasm stemmed directly from the acquisition of technical skills supported by T&C Rwanda. The data highlights a significant impact of T&C Rwanda's assistance in shaping career aspirations and fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among students. The correlation between the technical skills acquired through T&C Rwanda's support and the inclination towards entrepreneurship underscores the practical relevance and applicability of the skills training provided. Students perceive these skills as not only valuable for traditional employment but also as assets for creating and managing their ventures.

This finding reflects a broader trend toward entrepreneurship, driven by the recognition of the potential for self-reliance, innovation, and socioeconomic impact. It also suggests a shift in perspectives regarding career options, with entrepreneurship increasingly seen as a viable and desirable path. By inspiring students to explore entrepreneurial opportunities, T&C's support goes beyond mere skill acquisition, empowering individuals to become drivers of economic growth and agents of change within their communities. This aligns with broader goals of fostering sustainable development and empowering individuals to realize their full potential in the evolving job market.

3.9. Perceptions of enhanced employability disaggregated by gender

The data described in the table below delineates the perspectives of recipients regarding the impact of the assistance they received during their high school years on their prospects for employment and career initiation. A significant 80.1% of respondents affirmed that the support they received during high school substantially contributed to improving their employability and confidence. They emphasized that this support positively influenced their acquisition of skills and knowledge, which they believe will enhance their prospects of securing employment. This underscores the educational significance of the support, playing a pivotal role in the development of practical skills and knowledge among beneficiaries, potentially guiding them toward vocational pathways.

Figure 6. Perceptions of employability desegregated by gender



Moreover, they also recognized that the support would enable them to broaden their professional networks, indicating a favorable perception of the assistance in facilitating the establishment of professional connections. In essence, a majority of beneficiaries acknowledged the support received during high school as beneficial for enhancing employability, confidence, and skill development, with a positive impact on facilitating vocational training. To gain a deeper understanding, it is advisable to conduct follow-up interviews or surveys to delve into specific aspects of the support that have had a significant impact. Additionally, there should be consideration given to refining the support program based on identified strengths and areas for improvement. This approach would allow for tailoring future initiatives to better cater to the diverse needs and preferences of beneficiaries, ensuring a more effective and relevant support system.

CONCLUSION

It is evident that sponsorship in the context of T&C Rwanda is a tool to motivate better performance, reduce dropout rates, and develop aspirations among the supported students to do better academically and professionally. Further, it directly supports their families with immediate relief as their limited resources, which would have been used for school fees and school materials, can now be directed to improving their livelihoods and catering to their other children's needs who are not sponsored.

The program further gives credence to the fact that the family perceives gaining an education as an important means to graduate out of poverty and will support their children's dream to further their studies. The sponsorship is not just the monetary support but has a connected impact on the value of education and the confidence it provides the children to achieve their goals.

PERSISTING CHALLENGES

While T&C's impact has been positive, our evaluation identified implementation challenges and difficulties in improving beneficiaries' livelihoods. Despite the support provided, many students opt out of pursuing higher education after secondary school to focus on temporary jobs or small businesses to support their families, believing that completing secondary education is sufficient. Parents interviewed reported experiencing severe poverty and suggested T&C Rwanda initiate small projects to enhance their economic resilience to address pressing needs. Additionally, T&C faces constraints due to limited human resources, including a lack of qualified staff in areas such as resource mobilization, grant writing, communication, and monitoring and evaluation. These challenges hinder the organisation from diversifying funding sources and meeting the high demand for educational investment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ Due to the positive impact recorded, an increase in the number of students to be supported would be essential to reduce high demand from vulnerable families that are unable to afford education costs. The recommended increase would be at least 5,000 students annually.
- ◆ Expanding human resource capacity is crucial for T&C's growth and the sustainability of its programs. This will require hiring additional qualified and skilled staff to strengthen the organisation's efforts in resource mobilisation,

communication, and branding, as well as in monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning.

- ◆ To ensure effective inclusivity, prioritisation should not only focus on those excelling academically, but also vulnerable girls, and children with disabilities who are capable of pursuing education. This is due to their double vulnerability resulting from social discrimination.
- ◆ Establishing a comprehensive and consistent extracurricular program between T&C and schools is crucial to empowering students in Senior 3 to 6. This program should include organising discussion campaigns designed to inspire entrepreneurship and boost students' confidence. To implement this initiative effectively, additional resources will be required for T&C to support facilitators and provide necessary tools.
- ◆ Creating a well-coordinated alumni network for T&C graduates would be advantageous. This network could enable continuous monitoring of beneficiaries' progress and foster program champions for active youth engagement.

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