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**Wezesha  
Impact**

# **Wezesha Impact**

## **Evaluation of 2019-21 Programs**

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# Summary of Findings

**Graduates of the Wezesha Impact program can expect to earn USD 25 more per month, a difference approximately equal to the World Bank poverty line.**

Graduates were less than half as likely to drop out of the workforce (12%) as the control group (29%).

**Employment increased by 17 percentage points in the treatment group versus the control group.**

Wages for those with jobs were higher in the treatment group, by about USD 25 per month.

**Wezesha Impact graduates were equally likely to pursue self-employment (67%) as were the control group.**

The evaluation did not detect an impact on the revenue generated by those businesses.

**The impact of the program on women's wages was greater than on men's wages.**

Women with jobs saw an impact of USD 29 (+76%) on monthly wages, versus USD 23 (+27%) for men.

**The largest businesses were all run by Wezesha Impact graduates.**

All businesses with teams of more than three partners and all businesses with more than five employees were run by alumni of the program. Because the comparison group was smaller, we should interpret this finding with skepticism.

**Wezesha Impact graduates employed one additional employee (1.8) more than the control group (0.8).**

Wezesha Impact graduates employed twice as many women and twice as many youth.

## Limitations

- (1) The control group had a small sample size due to the low number of schools in the control group, low response rates, and poor recordkeeping.
- (2) The control group consists of graduates from schools that intend to offer the program beginning in 2023-24, but did not during the 2019-20 period.





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01

# Overview

# Key Outcomes

<b>Employment</b>	The rate at which alumni find employment (employed workers as a percentage of alumni).
<b>Wages</b>	The wages earned from all types of employment, including casual and temporary work.
<b>Self-employment</b>	The rate at which alumni operate businesses or are self-employed (business owners as a percentage of alumni).
<b>Revenue</b>	The revenues generated by self-employed alumni.
<b>Jobs generated</b>	The number of jobs generated and the wages paid to employees.

Wezesha Impact also reports many outcomes related to its programming that are less straightforward to evaluate: leadership positions, bookkeeping practices, and savings.

Counting savings and income separately risks double-counting the same income once as income and as second time as retained income.

At left, we highlight outcomes measured in the current evaluation.

# Program Description

Wezesha provides training to students in vocational training programs, in the setting of their vocational training programs. The main program is Wezesha Impact Skills and Entrepreneurship (WISE) Academy.

The WISE Academy curriculum is taught by faculty of the schools where the program is offered. Competitions are also organized for participants in tiers from community to regional and national. Implementation partners are selected from partner organizations to run the program.

The WISE Academy program so far is implemented in three regions in Uganda: Northern, Central and Eastern region. Students also receive follow up technical support once they've graduated, along with an access to alumni network for support.

The overall aim of the program is to improve entrepreneurship and employability, in addition to the technical training they receive in the vocational programs.

Students are trained & encouraged to learn practical trade skills, business intuition, and showcase their ideas amongst peers, complementing their technical skills.

Businesses launched and run by Wezesha graduates could range anywhere from a sole founder-led idea or a multi-partner firm with legal, financial, and administrative verticals set in place.

# Program Evolution

## LEAP & VEEP

VEEP ran as a 12-month program that served youth in vocational and technical institutions, whereas LEAP program served the out of work youth where the implementation was carried out within the participating communities.

The programs were designed to equip youth with practical skills they could use to start their own businesses, to find gain full employment during and after their vocational studies (VEEP), and the out of school program (LEAP) start their own businesses during or after the course of the training.

Both programs ran annually for a period of 8 months between March and October each between 2017-2019 for youth aged under 15-30 years of age.

Youth were trained on entrepreneurship skills, employability skills, leadership skills, life skills and financial literacy, with a goal to enable the youth start, manage, grow their businesses or to help them find and keep a job.

## WISE Academy

The two programs, LEAP and VEEP now form the WISE (Wezesha Impact Skills and Enterprise) Academy program.

Overtime, the organisation changed their model - LEAP Program moved from working directly with youth in communities to working with youth that are recruited by community based organizations.

Both programs were previously implemented directly by a Wezesha staff but later changed into implementation by instructors who are selected from the partner organization recruited.

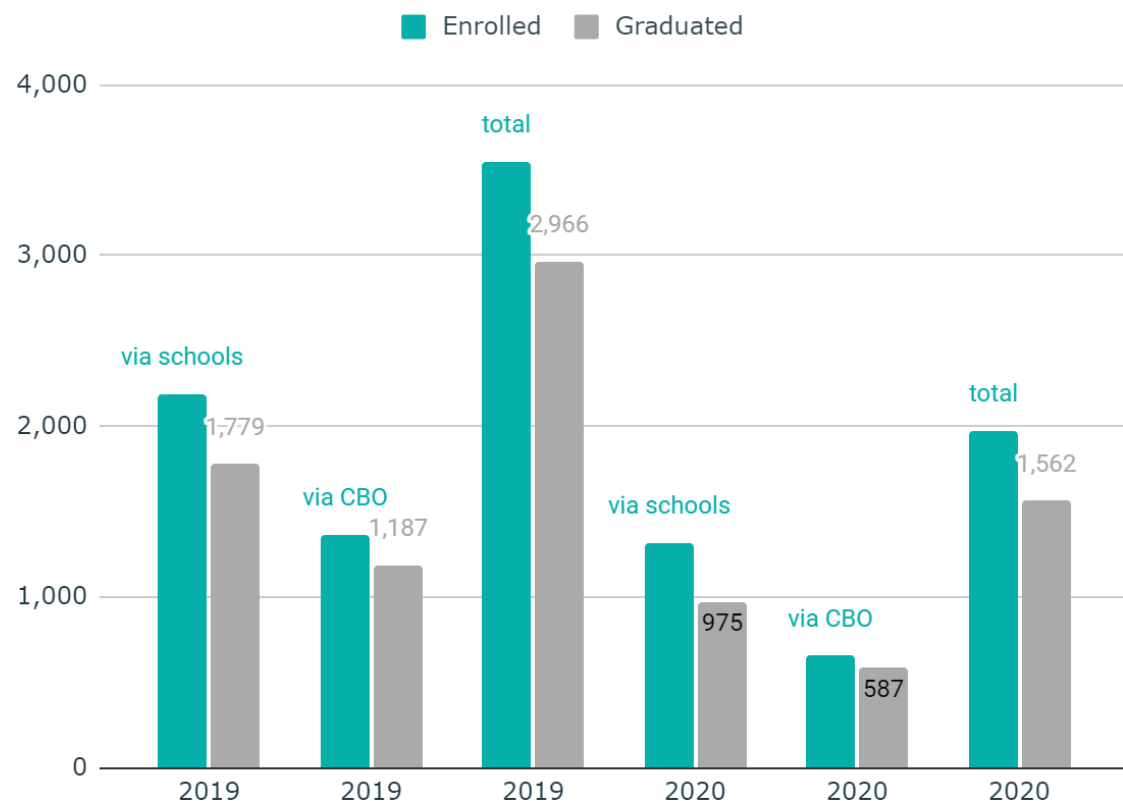
The comprehensive program now aims to address gaps and mismatches in technical, cognitive and soft skills required for self-employment and entrepreneurship.



# Participation during the evaluation period

## Enrollment, 2019-20

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Participation ranged from a low of 2,035 in 2020 — a year interrupted by the pandemic — to a high of 4,919 in 2022.

The cost per seat in the program also fluctuates in US dollar terms from a low of USD 80 to a high of USD 170.

Wezesha Impact recruits participants from vocational and technical institutes (VTI) and from community-based organizations (CBO). Here, we illustrate enrollment and graduation from each source in 2019 and 2020.



# Evaluation Methodology



We conducted a mixed-methods evaluation targeting alumni and a comparison group who had completed technical secondary schools between 2019-2020. The latter were recruited from schools intending to offer the current Wezesha programs but that have not yet begun to offer them.

The study had three data collection modalities: a screener interview to verify contact details and ascertain their availability; an in-person survey to understand their employment status, earnings, and feedback on Wezesha training; and finally, an in-depth interview with a subset of graduates.

This survey was conducted by our partner, AKEM Consulting, in Kampala.



We used a clustered sampling approach, exhaustively recruiting all known graduates from the 59 participating schools in the relevant years. Response rates were lower than expected, at 60% and 20% respectively among graduates and the comparison group. We completed screener interviews with 689 (78%) graduates and 198 (22%) in the comparison group.

For the main survey, we held 520 interviews with graduates and 97 with the comparison group. The qualitative sample consisted of 48 interviews with graduates.

On average, the screener interview took 8 minutes, the main interviews took 15-17 minutes, and the qualitative interviews lasted for 30-40 minutes. In-depth interviews occurred on the same day as survey interview, immediately following.



Our sample consisted of 34% females across the treatment and comparison groups. Respondents have been in the workforce for an average of 3 years since graduation.

The study is intended to inform rates of self-employment; earnings from self-employment; rates of employment; and earnings from employment.

Qualitative research informs how the Wezesha program and related components support alumni in their careers; which components of the program are reported by participants to be beneficial, and why; and how the alumni valued mentorship.

02

Insights

# Social Return on Investment

Based on the rate of employment and wages earned by alumni, the social return on investment is 3.9 over a two-year period.

This figure is derived from two sources of benefit, wages and revenues. The wages are what is **earned from employment** (among those employed) and revenues are what is **generated by self-employed individuals and businesses** owned (among self-employed and employers).

The benefit-cost ratio compares earnings beyond counterfactual to the cost per seat in the program. Both current income and historic program costs are converted to USD at then-current interest rates. No adjustments have been made for inflation or social discount rates.

Timeline	Impact	Cost	SROI
0	\$ -	\$ 153.00	0.0
1	\$ 25.00	\$ 153.00	0.2
24	\$ 600.00	\$ 153.00	3.9
60	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 153.00	9.8

## Limitations

1. The comparison group is a group of alumni recruited from schools that intend to join the program in 2024. Schools could not be matched nor assigned at random.
2. Impacts are observed approximately three years after graduation. This may tend to overestimate the earnings of recent graduates.

Definition: social return on investment (SROI) is a cost-effectiveness ratio that divides the expected impact of the program per participant by the cost per participant.



# Impact per participant

Wezesha has a social impact of USD 25 per participant. Graduates have an expected monthly earning of USD 76 versus USD 51 for the comparison group.

We estimate social impact as revenue generated per participant. Revenue means either (1) wages from employment or (2) revenue per co-owner for self-employment.

Wages from employment are calculated in USD per month, reflecting our best estimate of what they can expect to earn, and adjusting for the volatility in their wages.

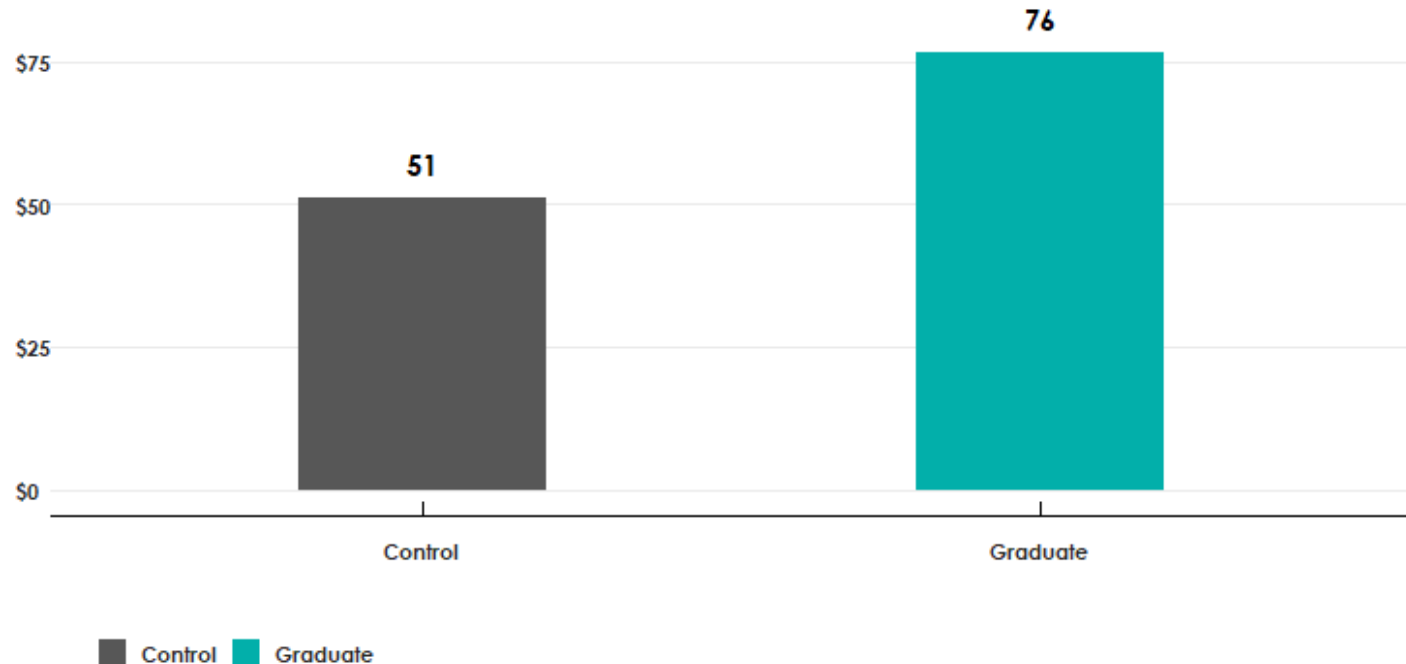
Earnings from self-employment adjusted for the number of co-owners of a business. So a revenue from partnership of two is divided in half; a partnership of three into thirds, etc.

We estimate impact separately for those who are employed versus self-employed. Reported revenue per participant in each study arm is the weighted average of revenue, weighted by the sample frequency of employment (or self-employment).

Self-employment and owning a business are used interchangeably on this slide.

## Revenue generated per participant

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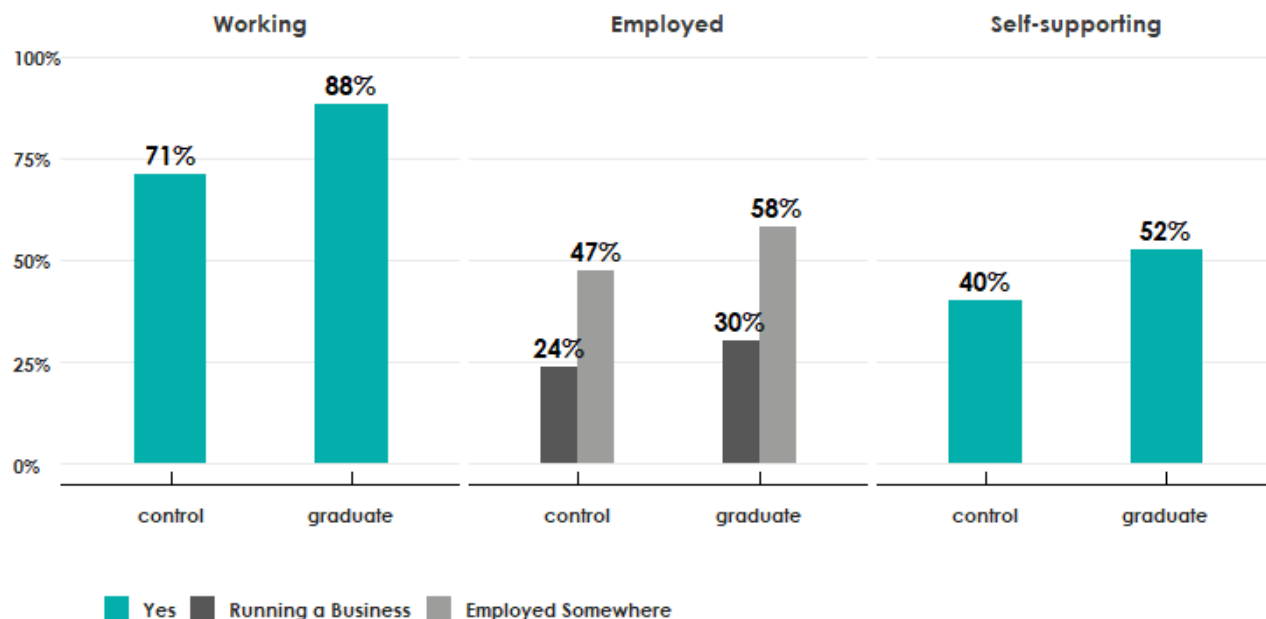


Average revenue per participant based on employment and self-employment revenue, weighted by labor participation.

# Success finding work and livelihoods

## Labor participation

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Are you currently working?  
Are you running a business or employed somewhere?  
Is that job your main livelihood?

Graduates were systematically more likely to participate in the labor force (88%). It is helpful to think of this as reducing the rate of abandoning work by over half, from 29% to 12%.

Graduates were more successful at finding work both when searching for jobs (58%) and when running their own businesses (30%).

Graduates were also more likely to report that their wages were sufficient to support themselves (52%).

# Why people choose jobs versus self-employment

## CHOOSING JOBS

**Raising capital.** Employment can be a means to accumulate the capital, which they needed to initiate their independent businesses (n=8).

**Family connections.** 5 graduates highlighted that their family members operated companies aligned with their skill sets. It was easy for them to find employment as a result.

**Dependent children.** Only 2 graduates, *both women*, mentioned their children's needs as a reason to seek employment. Finding a job, rather starting a business, was linked to their responsibilities as caregivers.



**“Before, I used to work as a teacher but left that job because of poor pay and decided to work here in this store because I had expertise in this job.” Gee**

## CHOOSING SELF-EMPLOYMENT

**Independence.** Being one's own boss was a primary reason for choosing to start a business (n=5). Some even selected occupations where self-employment is the norm for that reason.

**Encouragement.** A common story was that relatives and friends influenced the decision to start a business (n=5).

**Bad jobs.** A bad experience working for a previous boss can lead people to start a business instead (n=4).

**Fulfillment.** Some respondents simply said their work was more fulfilling that way (n=3).



# Gender disaggregated wages

Women earned more (USD 67) after completing the program than did women in the control group (USD 38), a difference of USD 29.

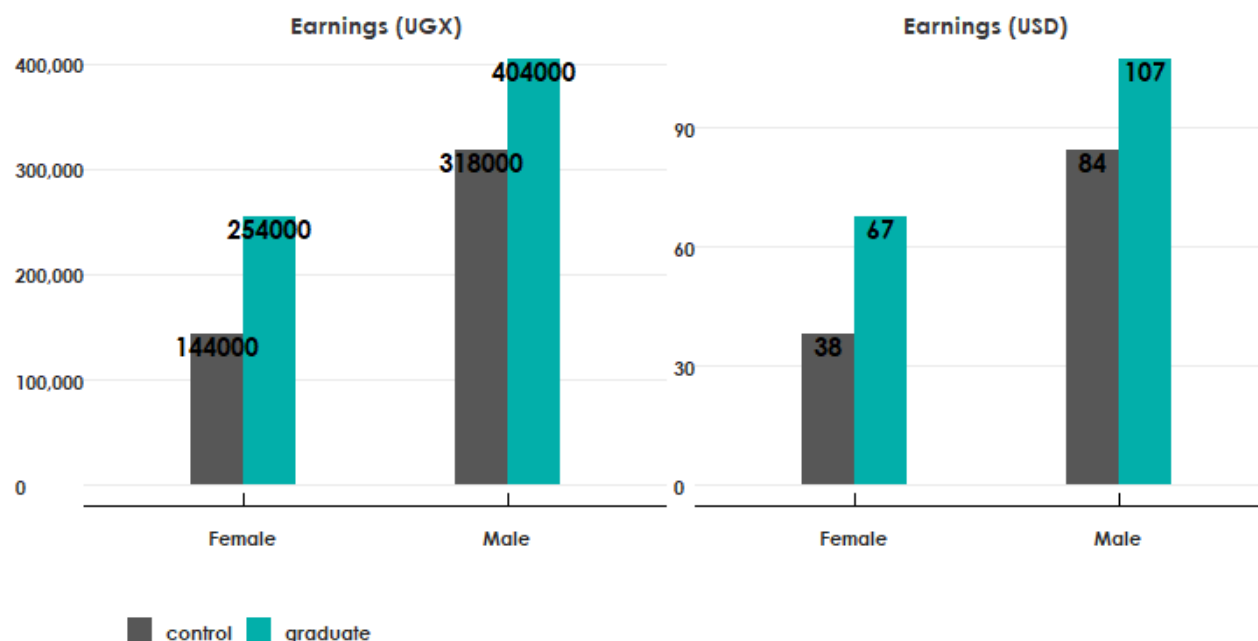
The same was true for men (USD 107), versus the control group (USD 84), a difference of USD 23.

Although men earned more, the impact on women's wages was greater both in absolute terms (USD 29) and as a percent of initial earnings (76%) for women. The corresponding changes for men were USD 23 and 27%.

These figures describe only the wages paid to women working as employees.

## Monthly earnings from employment

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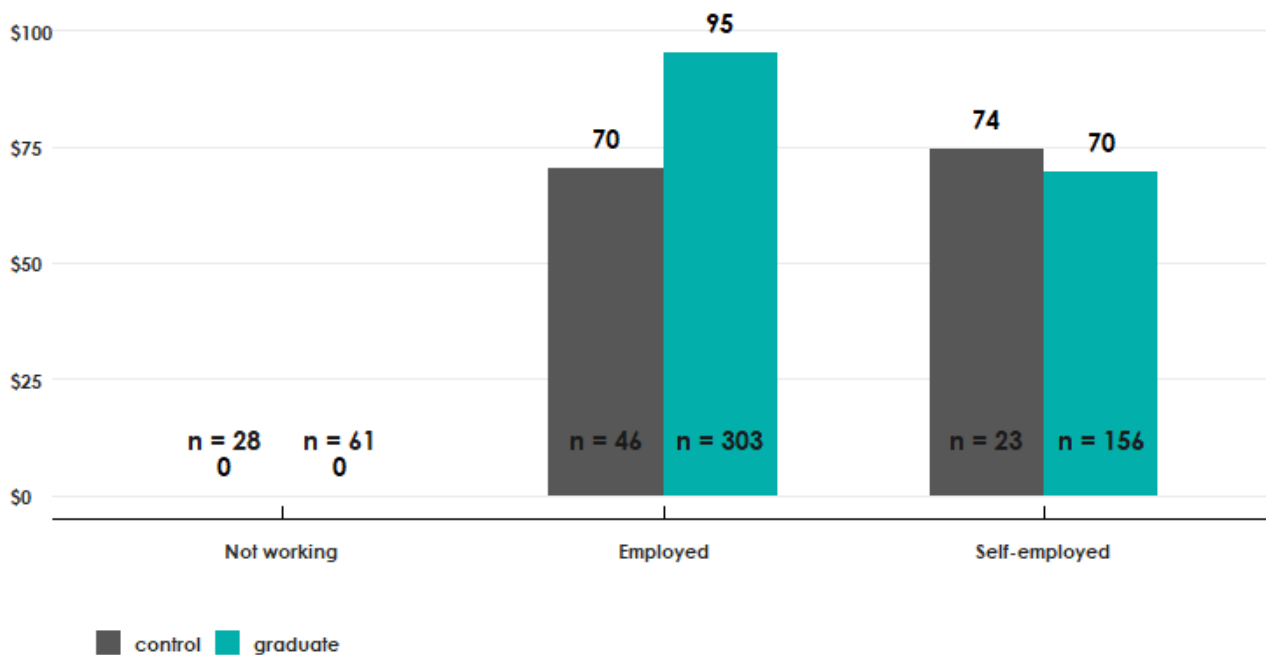


How much do you typically earn in a month?  
Variable incomes estimated from self-reported data.

# Wage impacts are far higher for employees (USD 25) than for the self-employed

## Revenue generated per participant

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Average revenue per participant based on employment and self-employment revenue.

Wezesha graduates earned more than the comparison group, but the impact was greater when working as employees (USD 25) than when self-employed (USD -4) .

Often, self-employment occupies a middle ground between low-wage, casual labor and higher income from the best jobs.

Here, we report just the turnover per owner for self-employed individuals. That is, a sole proprietorship reports monthly income; whereas a partnership of two would divide that figure in half.

This masks some of the complexity of what small businesses earn. Revenues are volatile. Some businesses carefully track owners' wages and distributions; others do not.

Yet overall, turnover per owner should be higher than take-home pay. The observed effect is not simply a byproduct of accounting conventions.

# Generating jobs by operating businesses

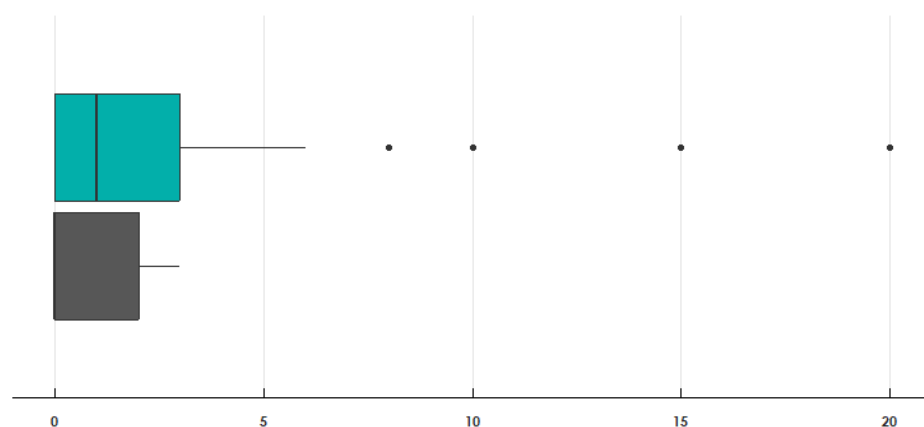
Wezesha Impact graduates generated more jobs as employers than did the comparison group.

The average number of new jobs worked out to about one per firm.

All of the largest firms (more than 5 employees) were in the Wezesha Impact group.

## Employment increased

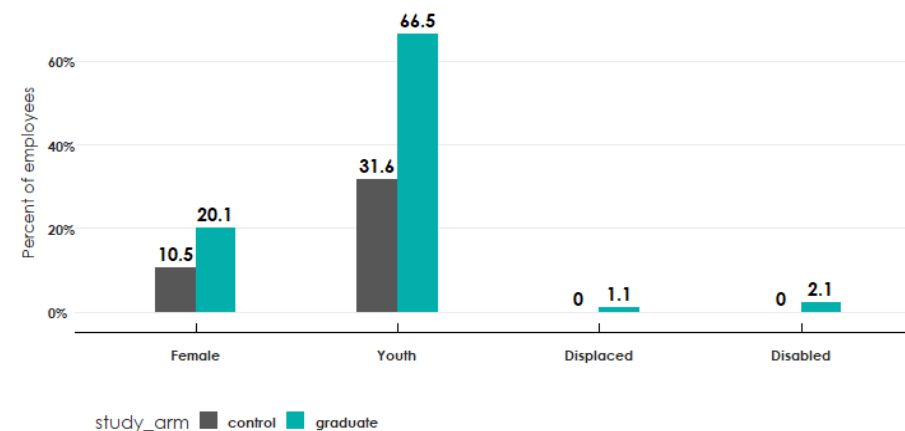
Wilcoxon test,  $W = 1353$ ,  $p = 0.048$ ,  $n = 179$



study\_arm control graduate

## Vulnerable groups

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Female employees  
Youth employees  
Displaced or refugee employees  
Specially abled employees

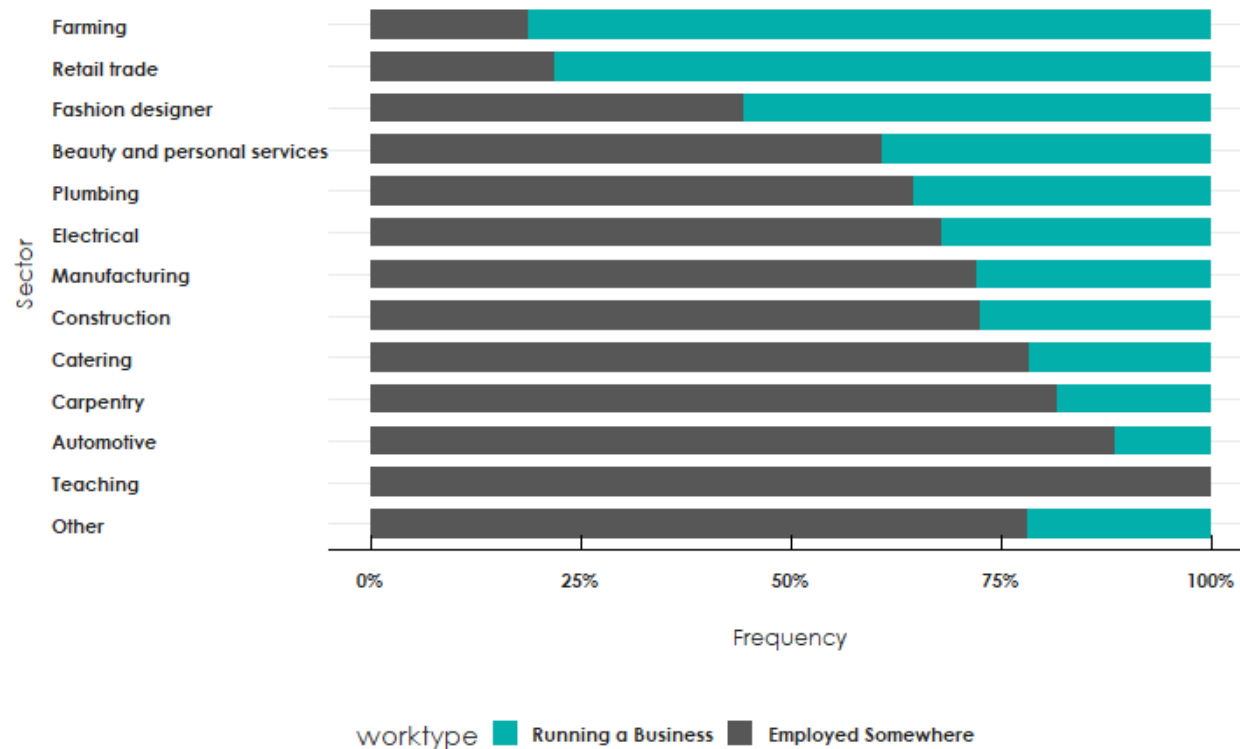
Wezesha Impact graduates reported twice as many female employees (20%) and youth employees (67%) as did the comparison group.

They were the only employers that reported any displaced or disabled workers at all.



# Sectoral patterns of employment

## Top sectors for self-employment



Patterns of employment are highly correlated with industry sectors.

Workers in farming and retail are much more likely than the average to own their own businesses, or to work on their own account.

None of the educators in our sample ran their own businesses; and very few of the automotive and carpentry tradespeople had yet opened their own shops.

# Top business sectors and what drives them



**“Entrepreneurial skills helped me to bring about the best flows of income in my business.” Robert**

## Popular business choices

Retail shops emerge as the top business choice for surveyed graduates (5), indicating a prevalent inclination toward this sector. Tailoring (4) and salons (3) closely follow.

## Barriers and accessibility

Graduates favor businesses with low barriers to entry, such as retail, tailoring, and salons fitting this criteria. Entrepreneurs in these verticals referred to the low barriers to entry as making self-employment accessible.

## Skill-driven selection

The program is typically offered to students in their final year of study. By that point, they have often obtained training for a specific industry sector; so the choice of industry is often complete.

## Lessons from the curriculum

Self-employed graduates valued the entrepreneurship-related modules of the training program (n=10). They used their soft skills to build effective customer interactions (n=5). They mentioned that they learned communication skills and how to treat their customers well from Wezesha.

# Sectoral differences in wages

Daily wages are higher in certain skilled trades, such as electrical, plumbing, and other construction trades.

Wages in food service and farming were among the lowest in the sample.

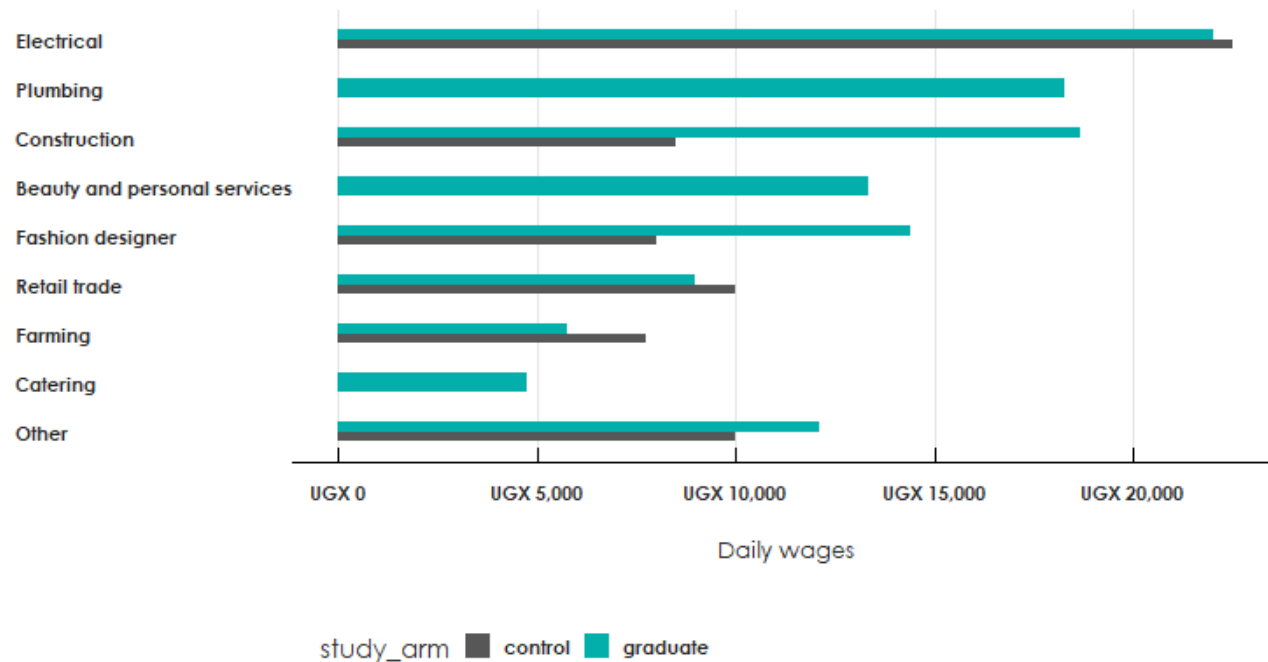
While electricians consistently earned good wages across both treatment and comparison groups, disparities arose in two cases, where graduates earn more:

- Construction
- Fashion design

Small sample sizes may interfere with statistical inference about the remaining sectors. Note the absence of plumbing, beauty, and food service trades in the comparison group.

## Daily wages by sector

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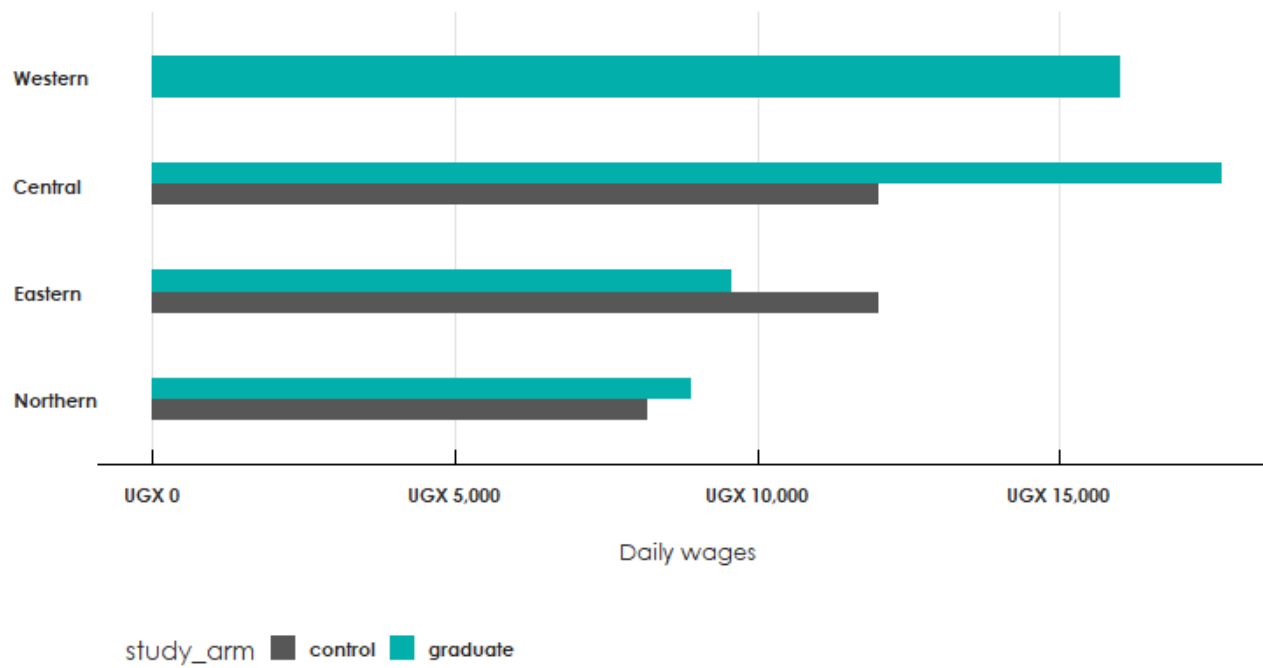
Typically, how much can each worker expect to earn in one day?



# Regional differences in wages

## Daily wages by region

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Typically, how much can each worker expect to earn in one day?

Regionally, graduates saw the greatest impact on wages in the central region. There was no comparable advantage in either the Northern or Eastern regions.

Wezesha Impact historically had more students in the central region of the country. That could indicate that those who return to their home districts after school are less likely to benefit from the training.

03

Personas

# Persona 1: Empowered Entrepreneur

I'm Sarah, running my own small business cosmetics business. The Wezesha Impact program was a game-changer for me, shaping my entrepreneurial spirit and molding me to think outside the box after my vocational training completion.

During this journey, I've had some **important mentorship support** from my teacher, Mr. Kajala, who didn't just teach me about entrepreneurship skills but also encouraged me to help others through charity work. He showed me how to start a small business **even if I didn't have much money**.

I started my business because I love what I do, and I like being my own boss. But it hasn't been all easy. Like many others, my business can do better. I need more money and want to make it bigger. I've noticed that some women who own businesses like mine are not as happy with their businesses as men. **Women face different challenges**, such as childcare, so they need extra help and support.

Even with these challenges, my business will help me make a living in the long run. I'm not alone in this; many others think the same. We want to make a steady income and keep growing our businesses. Getting more capital from the business or accessing credit will be possible.

My business has also helped create jobs in my area. **To keep things running smoothly, I keep good records of my money and customers**. This helps me make better decisions and be more successful.

Reflection 1:  
What is the most effective part of the Wezesha training?

Reflection 2:  
What is the value of mentorship?

Reflection 3:  
Why do business owners believe these businesses will ultimately support their livelihoods?



# Persona 2: Turning Dreams Into Reality

I'm Maria, employed as a dressmaking teacher at a vocational school, and I'm determined to have a successful career. The Wezesha program has been a big help, improving my skills and my way of thinking.

The best thing I learned in Wezesha is how to start my own business (Entrepreneurship skills). **I'm not just looking for a job; I want to create my own opportunities.** My goal is to save money to start my business. I also thought about getting a job because I have to take care of my children. I want to be my boss, and I got this idea from my family, who own businesses. My current job is tough, especially when I have to drop my kids off at daycare, making me late.

Even though I didn't have a mentor from Wezesha, **teachers and my parents gave me good advice to help me choose my career.**

I see many businesses in retail, tailoring, and salons. I like them because it's pretty easy to start, and it fits with what I know. The Wezesha training made me better at talking to people and being confident. **It's not just about what I know; it's also about being better at relating with people.**

Most people, including me, think the Wezesha program is good, but some people aren't happy. They say they need more help during lessons, someone to check on them after the Wezesha program, and money to start their own business. Some think Wezesha can help them find and grow their talents, **while others say Wezesha should support them after the program.**

*These personas have been synthesized from in-depth interviews by our qualitative research team.*

Reflection 1:  
What is the most effective part of the Wezesha training?

Reflection 2:  
How does Maria balance multiple livelihoods, and why?

Reflection 3:  
How has Maria's skill set influenced her decision to start a business?



04

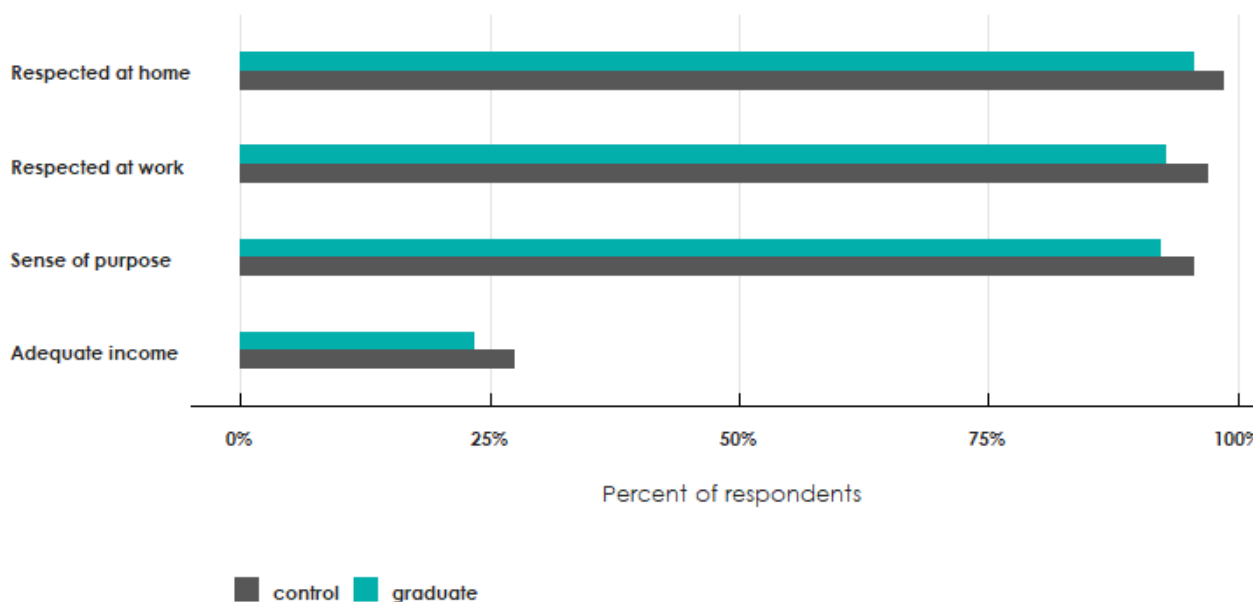
# Additional Outcomes

# Self-respect and meaningful work

The program had no statistically meaningful impact on self-reported respect from coworkers or friends and family. Graduates were no more likely to report that they had a sense of purpose nor an adequate income.

## Respect, self-esteem, and purpose

Wezesha Impact | BFA Global | LIF 2023

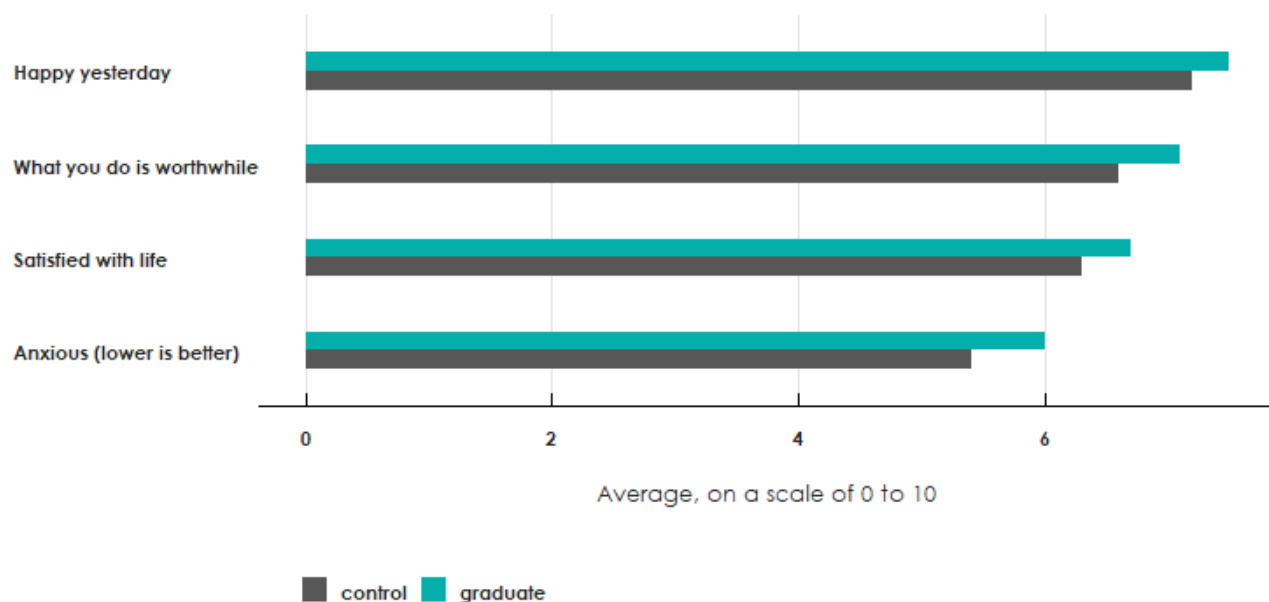


Your work provides enough income for you and those who depend on you financially  
 You feel respected in your workplace  
 Your work is respected by the people you care about  
 Your work gives you a sense of purpose

# Psychometrics

## Psychological wellbeing

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Overall how satisfied are you with your life?  
 Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?  
 Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?  
 On a scale where 0 is "not at all anxious" and 10 is "completely anxious", overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?

There are no significant improvements in general psychological wellbeing after three years from graduation.

Improvements in happiness, a worthwhile job, and life satisfaction are tiny and statistically tenuous.

The most pronounced impact, overall, is an increase in anxiety among the program graduates.



# Elevating businesses through financial literacy and bookkeeping

Financial literacy and bookkeeping are very important skills for self-employed graduates because they help them manage their money and make smart choices for their business.

- In in-depth interviews, **financial literacy and bookkeeping skills** were often cited as the most valuable parts of the Wezesha program (n=12).

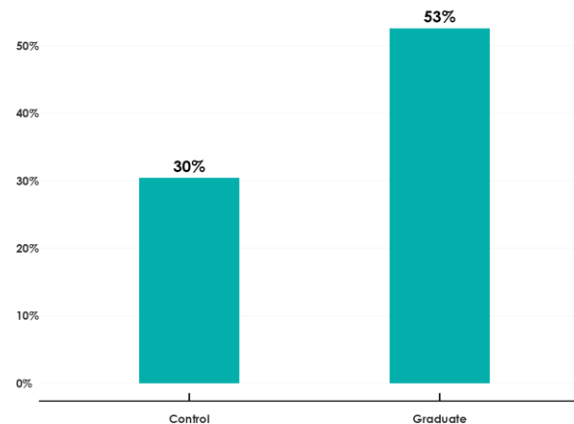
Moreover, the program was effective in teaching basic financial management. Self-employed graduates were more than 20 percentage points more likely to maintain basic accounting records for their businesses, compared to the control group.

	Basic financial records			p-value <sup>†</sup>
	Yes	No	Total	
study_arm				0.048
control	7	16	23	
graduate	82	74	156	
Total	89	90	179	

<sup>†</sup> Pearson's Chi-squared test

## Bookkeeping rates increased

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Do you maintain financial records (such as accounting ledger, bookkeeping) for y



**“To a great extent, bookkeeping has contributed to my business success. It enables me to keep track of all of my financial transactions and how well my business is moving.” Kakai**

# Type of records kept

## Customer lists and orders

Graduates in service trades like tailoring, salon work, plumbing, and electrical work, keep records of what they buy and sell, order details (such as a customer's measurements), price quotes, and contacts. This helps them actively track various aspects of their work to enhance customer service and business efficiency.

## Budgets for larger projects

Graduates as plumbers with a more project-based nature job focused on record-keeping tied to specific job engagements, primarily involving quotations.

## Income and expense reports

Graduates in retail business and farming prioritize maintaining records related to their operations. This includes keeping track of purchases, sales, and various expenses such as rent and wages for casual workers. This organized approach can contribute to better financial management and decision-making.



**Business recording part was so useful because it is how you can know what you have and what you spent so that you don't make mistakes. The part of confidence they gave us because there is a lot of fear in business but they open your eyes about it and you get a hard heart about it.**



**I can be able to differentiate between capital and profits so that i don't waste my capital but instead accumulate it.**



**I don't misuse my capital instead i fight to make sure it accumulates. Before I used to be a good spender and would take my friends out but now i no longer do reckless spending I just keep saving.**



# Barriers to record keeping

- Forgetfulness leads to confusion and reluctance due to perceived time constraints.
- Small businesses perceive record-keeping as insignificant.
- Unpredictable professions necessitate physical records, which some perceive as expensive.
- Workers show reluctance and sometimes lose record books.



Sometimes, I need to remember where I kept the documents I wrote on, but I will still remember the details since I recorded them.



It needs a lot of time, so I don't do it since it's my business and I have not yet employed anyone.



The unpredictability of my profession: I need many books, and I cannot keep records in soft copy because it's hard to move with a laptop



My workers are too lazy to keep records. They do not record when I am not around; sometimes, my workers lose the record books.

Dealers in all plumbing works and installations.

No. 81

Date: 22nd Feb 2023

Mr/Mrs: .....

Job description: APPLIANCE INSTALLATION

DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	RATE	AMOUNT
WASH HAND BASIN	3	95.000	285.000
Shower head and stick	3	35.000	105.000
Thread tape	5	2.000	10.000
Bathroom tap	3	25.000	75.000
Tap holder	3	20.000	60.000
Toilet	3	240.000	720.000
Soap dish	3	25.000	75.000
Transport			80.000
SUB TOTAL			1.410.000
LABOUR			280.000
GRAND TOTAL			1.690.000

# Program feedback

Participants found the program useful, with 71% responding either extremely or moderately useful. Just 8% said slightly or not at all useful. (Nonresponse omitted.)

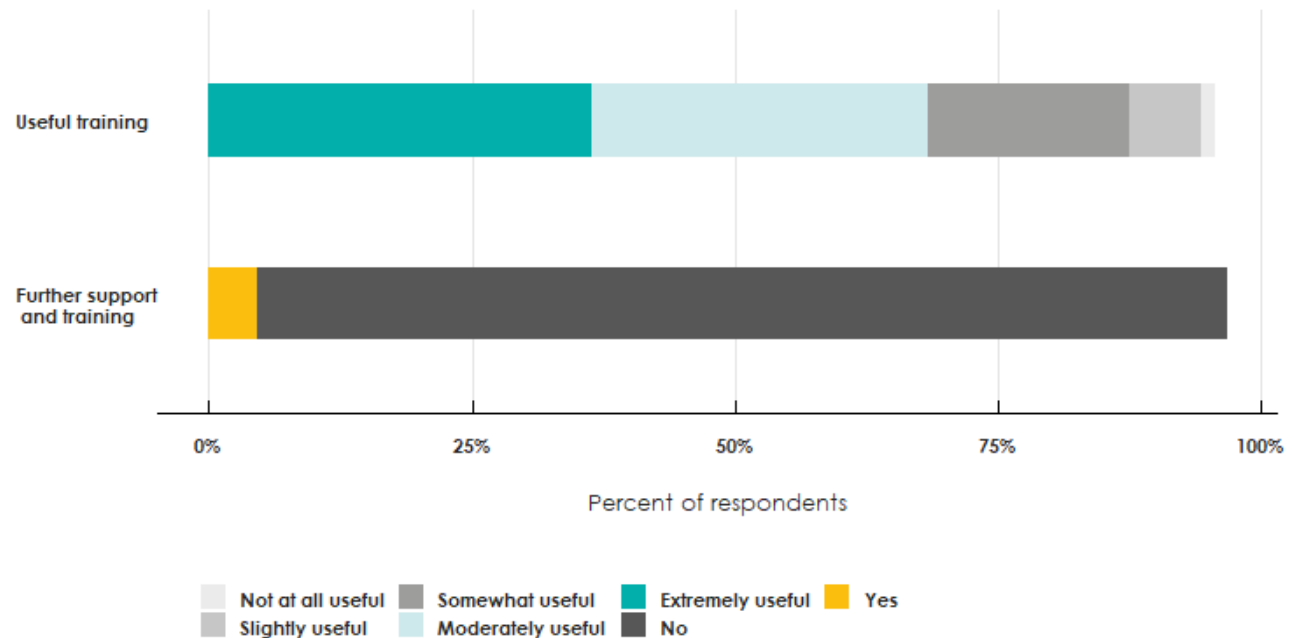
On the other hand, support or training ceased at graduation for the vast majority of respondents. Just 5% said they had received further support or training.

In in-depth interviews, some respondents requested financial support to launch businesses (n=4).

Others said that their instructors and mentors had offered encouragement (n=13). Common themes of advice included how to use resources you already have; how to overcome setbacks; and how to diversify income.

## Program feedback

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How useful do you think the Wezesha training was for what you're currently doing  
Did Wezesha also provide you with any support/training once you'd graduated?

# How entrepreneurs acquire skills

In in-depth interviews, we discussed with self-employed graduates what they had found most beneficial about the program.

They touched on a number of modules that they say influenced their success in the workplace.

- entrepreneurial skills (n=7)
- business management (n=5)
- life skills and self-confidence (n=3)
- customer care, networking, and teamwork (n=2)

Yet, perhaps due to the distance in time since completing the training, some of the respondents struggled to detail the particular lessons from the training that they used in their current work.

A better time frame for detailed discussion of the curriculum might be in the first year upon completion.



# Employment can be a platform for building the capital necessary to launch businesses.

We also discussed the value of the entrepreneurship curriculum with graduates who found a job, rather than opting for self-employment.

The most common theme among employed graduates is entrepreneurial skills, even if they have yet to start their own businesses. Some viewed their employment as a stepping stone to accumulate capital and eventually start their own businesses.

After entrepreneurship, they mentioned communication, financial literacy, and networking as valuable.

- entrepreneurial skills (n=13)
- communication skills (n=2)
- financial literacy (n=2)
- networking (n=2)

Employed graduates found that learning to be entrepreneurs and starting small to grow their businesses made a lot of sense.



**“I plan to accumulate capital with my employment. I could do my own business in my area of profession. My dream is to do an outside catering business”** **Loise**



# How the program helped businesses grow

They helped me to understand what I do and do it to my best.

They taught us that you can have a side business as you have a job.

It gave me skills that many people struggle to get yet for me i got them at a free cost.

It's technically the backbone of my entire livelihood now.

Their training when it came to the management of the business has enabled me to handle my workers as well as keep my business running.

**Diversify**

**Specialize**

**Take initiative**

**Be confident**

**Adapt to losses**

**Collect payment**

**Set goals**

**Manage employees**

**Overcome fear**

**Win customers**

They told us never to do one business. We were encouraged to do multiple businesses so that in case one has a problem, the other can push it.

The training removed all the fear I had and has enabled me get as many customers as I can get.

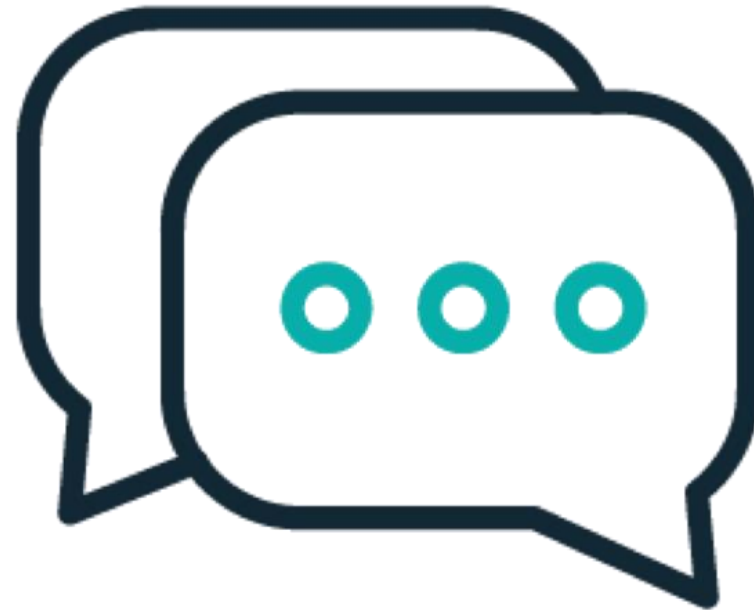
They taught us that we need always to have targets and work to reach them.

Life skills were very important because I can now approach customers to come to my side and enable me to get as many jobs as I can.

# Critical feedback from participants

We heard from 5 out of employed graduates who were somewhat dissatisfied with the Wezesha program. They had some concerns to share.

- Some mentioned that there needed to be **more resources** for the practical lessons, which made it a bit challenging.
- They also wished there was more **follow-up post the program** to keep them motivated.
- Additionally, they expressed a desire for the Wezesha program to provide **capital grants** to help kickstart their businesses, which they believed would be a big help.
- On a positive note, one person thought the program had the potential to identify and **nurture natural talents**.
- On self-employed graduates, we only had one who felt the Wezesha program was so similar to the **entrepreneurship course they got taught** as part of the technical course.



**“In the first place, I am happy that you have made a follow-up on us; Wezesha Impact should keep doing so. It gives us the strength and courage to continue doing our business.” Nic**

# Thank **you!**

Benjamin Mazzotta, Ambika  
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