

The Represent Foundation

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Monitoring and Evaluation Report, 2021–2023

July 2023

Overview

In July 2023, The Represent Foundation surveyed 20 of the 21 Represent Scholars who have received assistance in order to gauge the effectiveness of our interventions and determine future giving policies.

Survey Questions

Scholars are grouped according to what they received. Wherever possible, we have also noted extenuating circumstances that may have contributed to the outcome.

1. **Did you complete your education?**
2. **Are you employed? If so, is it in your field of study?**
3. **How many people do you support as a result of receiving assistance from The Represent Foundation?**

Survey Information

	Mentoring for Study Abroad	Public College Degree	Private College	Two-Year Teacher Training	Technical School	Secondary School	School Supplies	Small Business Grant
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		Program		College				
Number of recipients	2	4	3	5	2	4	2	1
Cost per Scholar per year*	N/A (covered by external institution)	\$488 – \$731	\$559 – \$710	\$418	\$67.82 – \$180	\$99	\$25 – 50	\$91.88
Completed educational program (percent)	100%	N/A (all in progress)	2 in progress, 1 dropped out	100%	1 completed, 1 in progress	50%	1 completed, 1 dropped out of school	N/A
Employed after graduating (percent)	100%	N/A	100% (1 student)	60%	N/A**	25%	50%	0
If employed, number of people they support	8 and 15	N/A	15	0, 6, and 10	N/A**	0	2***	N/A

*TTC and secondary school fees current as of 2019

**Employed in another field (teaching) for which she also received a Represent Scholarship

***The Scholar was already employed in a lucrative position before seeking further education, and thus supports more than 2 people. However, The Represent Foundation had nothing to do with her prior success. This number reflects the number of people the laptop was able to assist after she was done using it.

Notes

Study abroad: 1 Scholar ended up advocating for her own education, earning a full scholarship for a B.A. at Earth University in Costa Rica and an M.S. at the University of Edinburgh online. She pays school fees for 6 siblings (2 in secondary school, 4 in primary) and supports her parents occasionally.

1 Scholar is living and working in Canada. He pays school fees for 9 people, and has provided occasional support to at least 6 others.

Public college: 1 Scholar received application fees, tuition, room, board, and school supplies for one year at Bunda College. He was able to secure funding for the subsequent three years on his own. The other 3 Scholars are currently in school.

Private college: 1 Scholar is currently employed and working toward his diploma so he can be qualified for a promotion. 1 scholar is currently in school. 1 Scholar dropped out but has been employed as a community health worker assisting with HIV tracing, diagnostic assistance, and follow-ups since 2018. It's a contract position renewable annually. He has helped 15 people, including paying for a friend's passport and transport to South Africa, another friend with his small business, and 4 people with secondary school.

TTC: Primary school teachers are assigned to school by the Malawian government, but in recent years these assignments have been delayed due to Covid-19 and Cyclone Freddy. As a result, 1 Scholar is working as an auxiliary teacher. "We are given peanut allowances. Not able to support my young sisters and brothers even relatives. I am just managing to eat daily, pay for rent etc. Even to save, it becomes difficult because the paycheck is inadequate. Just imagine K80,000 the whole month, and sometimes we are paid late. ... Few years back, TTC was a good [investment]. Now it seems the government has got so many challenges to address thus affecting our profession."

2 Scholars have not been assigned to a school, are unemployed, and cannot support anyone.

2 Scholars are working full-time as primary school teachers. 1 supports 6 people ("Three are supported regularly and the other three relatives including my mother are supported occasionally") and 1 supports 10 people.

Technical: 1 student attended technical school as well as TTC. She explored technical school when she could not find a job as a teacher, but ultimately was hired full-time as a teacher.

1 student is currently in school.

Secondary school: 1 Scholar is employed at a village nursery school; the money is enough to supplement some of his own needs, but not to support anyone else. "It doesn't [pay well]," he says. "I just do it because I don't have something to do."

We could not reach 1 Scholar. 1 Scholar dropped out.

School supplies: We bought a refurbished laptop and gave it to 1 Scholar who used it in her degree program. "My university studies were so simple due to the availability of the laptop which on my own could have been so difficult to buy," she wrote. "As a result, I could not be able to pay

university tuition fees.” She went on to lend the laptop to her 2 sons for university studies; it was eventually stolen.

We bought basic school supplies (pens and notebooks) for 1 Scholar in secondary school; as of July 2023 is waiting for her MSCE results.

Conclusions

1. Primary/secondary school support, school supplies, and small business grants don't correlate with long-term success.

In addition to the information presented here, I supported 10–20 students with secondary school fees, pens, and notebooks while serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer. There was not a significant correlation between this kind of support and long-term success – there are simply too many variables facing students in that age range.

A lot can go wrong with electronics in Malawi (shoddy electrical setups, a leak during rainy season, theft, ignorance about how to properly care for it, expense of repair). Although the Scholar who received a laptop seemed grateful for it, ultimately we feel funds would be better reserved for tuition.

We funded one small business in 2019, before incorporating as a 501(c)(3) with the mission to advance educational opportunities for Malawian students. Given that the business failed and that supporting small business is not in line with our mission, we will no longer fund small business ventures.

2. Teacher Training College doesn't guarantee employment.

Due to lack of government funding, students may wait years for employment. Auxiliary teachers don't make enough money to support family members. Although we are open to paying for TTC in certain circumstances, we ultimately feel it's not the best use of funds.

3. Private college is too expensive.

Private college can cost as much as \$1,100 per year – enough to pay two students' tuition at public college – and some institutions may not have the same academic standards as public college. Although we are open to paying for private college in certain circumstances (including partial scholarships), we ultimately feel we can help more students by reserving funds for public college.

4. We cannot yet draw conclusions about public and technical school.

Public schools in Malawi confer credibility, name recognition, and four-year degrees. Currently, we're supporting three students in the fields of: Horticulture and Landscaping Design, Chemical Engineering, and Communication Studies. We will follow up when these students graduate between 2025–2027 to ascertain the success of this program. The success of similar scholarship programs, such as [Wells Mountain Initiative](#), leads us to believe that this is a sound investment.

In 2023, we began supporting a student attending technical school for carpentry and joinery. This was particularly significant because the student is female. Technical school is inexpensive, and there are few female carpenters in Malawi; therefore, we felt this was a worthy experiment and will follow up when she graduates in 2025 to ascertain the success of this program.

5. Study abroad programs consistently correlate with long-term, meaningful success.

Both of our Scholars who studied abroad have successful careers that have enabled them to support their friends and family. One of the scholars even worked for [Camfed](#), using her skills, knowledge, and experience to inspire other young Malawian women to succeed. Study abroad programs have the capacity to inspire meaningful cross-cultural exchanges.

The [MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program](#) (which provided scholarships to the two aforementioned Scholars) created two- and four-year programs for students to attend globally ranked schools. Meanwhile, [World Learning](#) is a semester-long exchange program. Both programs require their scholars to return to their home countries in the name of development.

Action Plan

We would like to pilot a one-year exchange program between Malawian universities and either a community college or a four-year university with educational standards more in line with Malawian universities. Additionally, we will not require students to return to Malawi; instead, we'll let them make their own decisions about how to use their education and live their lives.

M&E Questions: Does a one-year exchange program confer the same educational benefits as a one-semester or four-year exchange program? Will it lead to long-term success? Will Scholars express interest in finishing their education abroad or at home?

Potential Partners: Washtenaw Community College, Eastern Michigan University, and the University of Michigan (colleges local to Executive Director Brooke Marshall); University of Florida and the University of Rochester (colleges personally selected by Board Chair Tawonga Zakeyu); and members of the Work College Consortium (a group of colleges that “engage students in the purposeful integration of work, learning, and service”), including Berea College, Alice Lloyd College, Bethany Global University, Blackburn College, College of the Ozarks, Kuyper College, Paul Quinn College, Sterling College, and Warren Wilson College.