

# The Power of Scholarships: Transforming Lives through Quality Education

**The fourth goal of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development prioritizes education to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. While university enrollments are rising globally, sub-Saharan Africa is lacking behind. Financial constraints, combined with high tuition fees, cause obstacles for financially disadvantaged students in completing their university studies. To address this challenge, scholarships have emerged as a solution.**

This article explores the impact of scholarship programs in Tanzania, focusing on professional life, financial support, and societal change. The study was conducted in collaboration with the non-profit organization Help to Help and it focuses on former scholarship beneficiaries. By collecting both quantitative and qualitative data through a digital questionnaire and follow-up interviews conducted on-site in Tanzania, the research aims to understand the effects of the scholarship.

## *Empowering professional lives*

The study reveals a key finding: scholarships play a critical role in enabling financially needy students to complete their university studies. Without a scholarship, financial constraints would prevent students from completing their studies. The attainment of a university degree has in turn a major impact on the professional lives of beneficiaries. A significant majority stated that it would not have been possible to get their current employment without their degree. Instead, most would have informal employment, like street vending or small-scale agriculture. Scholarships empower individuals by equipping them with relevant skills and qualifications necessary for thriving in their careers.

## *Promoting financial support*

Beyond professional growth, scholarship programs reduce the financial burden while studying and enable recipients to financially support their extended families after graduation. On average, each graduate supports

7.4 individuals financially and of these, 2.6 are supported with expenses enabling education, either directly such as tuition fees, or indirectly by for example money for food and accommodation. By sponsoring students, scholarships create a snowball effect, enabling families to improve their life situation.

## *Driving change in society*

Scholarships influence beyond individual beneficiaries since it impacts society at large. Through knowledge sharing, such as career and healthcare advice, graduated beneficiaries contribute to the overall development of their communities. A significant majority stated that they have the possibility and willingness to create change in society because of the scholarship and the education it enabled. In this way, scholarships act as a catalyst for societal transformation.

*“I see very hopeful [on the future] because as I was evaluating myself, I have changed a lot. And like now I'm dreaming very big, seeing that everything can be possible. If I work, I hope that my future will be great because I studied, I have the certificate, a degree so I can go, I can work anywhere. I can do what I want to do. [...] I value so much the education I got and I think it is making a lot of changes in my life.”*

*- A graduated scholarship beneficiary*

In summary, scholarships serve as a fundamental driving force in enabling financially needy students in Tanzania to graduate from university. This achievement becomes a springboard towards unlocking new career possibilities, providing support to families and communities, and developing societies. One can say that the scholarship ensures education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all, and thus, aligns with the core objective of the fourth sustainable development goal. By empowering individuals through university education, scholarships transform lives and contribute to building a brighter future in sub-Saharan Africa.

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