

# TRACER STUDY OF GRADUATES FROM RAPID OF RAPID RESPONSE TRAINING (RRT)

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rapid Response Training is an investor-focused intervention that targets business and public sector projects that require additional skills and knowledge to improve employee effectiveness and increase the scale of production for the company. Rapid Response Training (RRT) has proven to be beneficial in upskilling workers, especially women. In light of this, the RDB-Chief Skills Office has conducted the Rapid Response Training (RRT) tracer study, whose main objective is twofold:

- i) Evaluate the extent to which RRT training has contributed to the employability of RRT graduates;
- ii) Assess the relevance of RRT to both RRT graduates and employers.

An electronic questionnaire using the Kobo toolbox was administered to a sample consisting of 1000 RRT graduates under the National Employment Program (Male: 373; Female: 627) from 2016–2020. The sample was drawn, taking into account different trades and the proportion of males and females in each trade and company. All companies that benefited from RRT in the same period were covered as well. The trades that were covered are cobblestone technology, food processing, biogas, photojournalism, and tailoring. The questionnaire covered different dimensions, including: employability of the graduates after the training; duration of job searches; the use of acquired skills and competences; the market relevance of the acquired skills; the need for further education or training; the level of satisfaction of the RRT graduates with the current employment conditions; and the level of satisfaction of the employers with the performance of RRT graduates.

The findings of the study showed that two-thirds of RRT graduates were employed (63 percent), while 37 percent were not, including 32 percent who were not employed but searching for a job. The likelihood of unemployment was high for graduates from companies that ceased operations. Unemployed graduates remain committed to starting their own businesses or upgrading their skills in order to compete in the market, though access to finance is still one of the main binding constraints.

The proportion of self-employed graduates appeared to be relatively small, and access to finance was pointed out as one of the core binding constraints. Self-employed graduates represent a relatively small proportion of the graduates who were not retained by the companies. Furthermore, a significant number of self-employed graduates are not doing businesses related to their respective fields of study, and many who do want to start their own business pointed out the constraints in terms of start-up funding.

The majority of the companies did not comply with the provisions of the guidelines on the implementation of RRT, especially the retention of the graduation, the duration of the contract, and the minimum payment. As the results show, more than 80 percent of the companies could not retain graduates for at least two years. Less than a third of the employed graduates have at least a 2-year contract with their employer, and only a third of the employed graduates are earning a monthly salary of more than 65000 frw. This therefore calls for strengthened coordination efforts to ensure RRT training institutions comply with contractual obligations.

The majority of employed RRT graduates expressed satisfaction with the rapid response training. More than 80% of graduates expressed satisfaction with their rapid response training. However, some graduates, especially those employed in tailoring, claim that they only master the skills related to the component of the production chain where they operate. As a result, RRT graduates who decide to become self-employed are less likely to be less competitive in the labour market because required skills and experience on the labour market go far beyond the skills required to successfully perform tasks assigned to them within the companies.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. General Background

Currently, there are different funding mechanisms for capacity development, both for public and private sector capacity development. Under Workforce Development Authority (currently the Rwanda TVET Board), the Skills Development Fund (SDF) has supported the operationalization of Pillar 1 of National Employment Program (NEP), especially with regard to Rapid Response Training (RRT), Massive short terms Vocational Trainings (MVT), IBT, and apprenticeships under windows 1, 2, and 3 respectively. Under RDB, the Capacity Building Fund (CBF) supports continuous capacity building in both the public and private sectors through specialized training, with a special emphasis on public sector training.

RDB-Skills Office, in close collaboration with Rwanda TVET Board, has the mandate to coordinate the implementation of short-term training and identify priority investments with potential impact on bridging the skills gaps to benefit from SDF programs, specifically RRT. In this respect, guidelines and procedures for the implementation of short-term training, including rapid response training, were put in place. These guidelines also capture and specify minimum working conditions and pay-thresholds, which companies need to comply with in order to benefit from the scheme. They also specify eligibility criteria for both companies and trainees, the duration of the training, and training implementation and coordination mechanisms.

Rapid Response Training is an investor-focused intervention that targets business and public sector projects that require additional skills and knowledge to improve employee effectiveness and increase the scale of production for the company. Rapid Response Training (RRT) has proven to be beneficial in upskilling workers, especially women and youth. The National Employment Program trained more than 6000 people between 2014 and 2020, with 44 percent of them being women. According to the NEP Tracer Survey (2018), more than 90 percent of RRT trainees were integrated into the labor market.

### 1.2. The rationale of the tracer study

Since the launch of RRT in 2016, a significant amount of money has been invested in Rapid Response Training, and as a result, more than 6000 beneficiaries have been trained. However, the findings of the NEP Audit for the 2018/2019 FY revealed that some companies failed to retain 70 percent of the graduates and give them at least a two-year contract as stipulated in the skills development guidelines, and even some of the retained graduates are being paid less than Rwf 65000, which is less than the amount of money specified in the guidelines. Therefore, the tracer study is aimed at tracking the labour market outcomes of RRT graduates, the satisfaction of the employers with the performance of the retained RRT, and tracking the working conditions and pay thresholds for the retained RRT graduates under the National Employment Program.

### 1.3. The scope of the tracer study

The RRT tracer study covered a representative sample of 1000 RRT beneficiaries under the National Employment Program (disaggregated by gender and trade) from 2016 to 2021. All companies that benefited from RRT in the same period were covered as well. The trades that were covered are cobble stone technology, food processing, biogas, photojournalism, and tailoring. Trainees in Healthcare practicing were not part of the sample because it was hard to get their contact details.

## 2. General and the specific objectives of the tracer study

**The RRT tracer study aimed at answering the following questions:**

- i. Are graduates still employed by the training company?
- ii. What happened to the graduates who left the training company after the training or after getting employed by them?
- iii. Were the RRT graduates able to get better-paid jobs at an acceptable time?
- iv. What forced graduates to leave employment in training companies or institutions?
- v. Do they use the skills and knowledge they have gained in the company? If not, what were the reasons?

**Broadly speaking, the tracer study had two main objectives:**

- To measure the employability of RRT graduates after the training;
- To get feedback from graduates and employers about the relevance of the RRT (retrospective evaluation).

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. The sample size

A sample consisting of 1000 RRT graduates under the National Employment Program (male: 373; female: 627) from 2016–2020 was drawn from a total population size of more than 6000 graduates. The sample size was drawn by taking into account different trades and the proportion of males and females who graduated from different trades and companies. Details about the sample size are provided in the table 3.1 below:

**Table 3. 1 The list of sampled RRT graduates by company**

VISITED HOST INSTITUTION	SAMPLE SIZE	FEMALE	MALE
Atelier mon talent Ltd (Ngoma)	8	6	2
Burera Garment (Burera)	75	50	25
C&D PRODUCTS RWANDA LTD (Gasabo)	65	43	22
C&H (Gasabo)	317	197	120
Galin Business Cooperation Ltd (Kamonyi)	14	7	7
GIP (Rwamagana)	25	4	21
Hema Garment(Musanze)	126	91	35
INEZA TEXTILE INDUSTRY(RUSIZI)	13	10	3
JANIYA INVESTMENT Ltd (Muhanga)	15	11	4
Kigali Today(Gasabo)	11	7	4
NKD (Gasabo)	87	73	14
NPD (Gasabo)	125	59	66
Paving Stone Construction Ltd (Musanze)	13	7	6
REG( Head Quarter to Rutsiro)	8	2	6
UFACO & VLISCO (Gazebos)	25	13	12
Vision garment (Gasabo)	75	49	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>373</b>

#### 3.2 Development and administration of data collection tools

##### 3.2.1. Primary data collection using Kobo toolbox

An electronic questionnaire using the Kobo toolbox was used in the current study. Kobo Toolbox is a free, open-source tool for mobile data collection. It allows to collect data in the field using mobile devices such as mobile phones, tablets, or computers. The use of the Kobo toolbox offers a number of advantages: It is much faster. Data does not need to be transcribed from paper to computers before it can be analyzed. Some analyses can be applied within minutes of the data being collected; it is much more accurate because enumeration errors are minimized because of the data validation that occurs in real time as the data is being collected. In addition, transcription errors are entirely eliminated, and

it is optimized for humanitarian work. It works offline, and as a result, it is easy to use (it requires no technical knowledge to manage, and enumerators can be trained within minutes), and can be rolled out rapidly in even the harshest or remotest situations.

The questionnaire covered different dimensions, including employability of the graduates after the training, duration of job searches, the use of acquired skills and competences, the market relevance of the acquired skills, the need for further education or training, the level of satisfaction of the RRT graduates with the current employment conditions, and the level of satisfaction of the employers with the performance of RRT graduates.

### 3.2.2. Primary data collection through Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

The interview guide and focus group discussion were administered to a sample of 220 graduates, including 140 graduates still working with companies and 80 graduates who are no longer working with companies, among whom 20 graduates from Burera Garment and 20 graduates from Hema Garment, who were interviewed to have an understanding of their current situation because both companies closed their businesses. The purpose of interviews with graduates was to get in-depth information about the graduates' current employment and working conditions, the relevance of the acquired skills and competences, and potential areas of improvement; the need for further training; the appraisal of industry-academic linkage; and proposed solutions.

The interview guide was also administered to 16 employers of the RRT graduates to get an in-depth understanding of their perception about the performance and current working conditions of the RRT graduates, the relevance of the RRT training, their experience working with graduates, the industry-academia linkage, and their plan for further on the job training of the employed RRT graduates.

Overall, the tracer study was conducted over a period of fifteen (15) days including 10 days meant for field visits in Kigali (3 days) and outside Kigali (7 days); and 5 days dedicated to calling graduates and filling the questionnaires.

### 3.2.3. Data analysis

While quantitative data used in the current study was analysed using Microsoft Excel and Stata to create tables and figures, qualitative information was manually analysed to identify emerging themes and important quotes to substantiate trends and information that emerged from the analysis of the quantitative data. The combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods therefore increases the reliability of the results, whether it is adding quantitative research to have “real numbers” to back up your qualitative data, or adding a “voice” from qualitative data to back up your quantitative data.

## 4. Findings

The main objective of this Rapid Response Training (RRT) tracer study is twofold: i) Determine the extent to which RRT training has contributed to the employability of the RRT graduates; ii) assess the relevance of RRT training to both RRT graduates and employers. The current section presents the findings of the current tracer study, focusing mainly on demographic information of the respondent, employment outcomes of RRT graduates and the extent to which RRT graduates were satisfied with the RRT.

### 4.1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

#### 4.1.1. Distribution of RRT graduates by Gender and Age

Table 4.1 below shows that the proportion of females was almost twice the number of male graduates. Most graduates were between 25 and 35 years of age, whilst a minor group were over 40 years of age. On one hand, this can be attributed to the fact that the National Employment Program targeted mainly youth and women, but on the other hand, most companies that trained a large number of people were engaged in tailoring, which tends to attract a big number of females (See table 4.2 for more information about distribution of trainees in different trades).

**Table 4.1 Age groups of the RRT graduates**

AGE GROUP	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	% FEMALE	% AGE
20-24	89	28	117	76	12
25-29	237	123	360	66	36
30-34	185	93	278	67	28
35-39	82	42	124	66	12
40-44	28	15	43	65	4
45-49	16	25	41	39	4
50+	11	20	31	35	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>648</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>994</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 4.1.2. The distribution of the surveyed RRT graduates by gender and major age groups

Table 4.2 below illustrates the distribution of fields of education of RRT graduates. It clearly indicates that by far the most training was conducted within the textile industry, specifically in tailoring. This is in line with the results in table 2, according to which the majority of the graduates were females and trained in tailoring.

**Table 4. 2 The fields of RRT training by gender and major age groups**

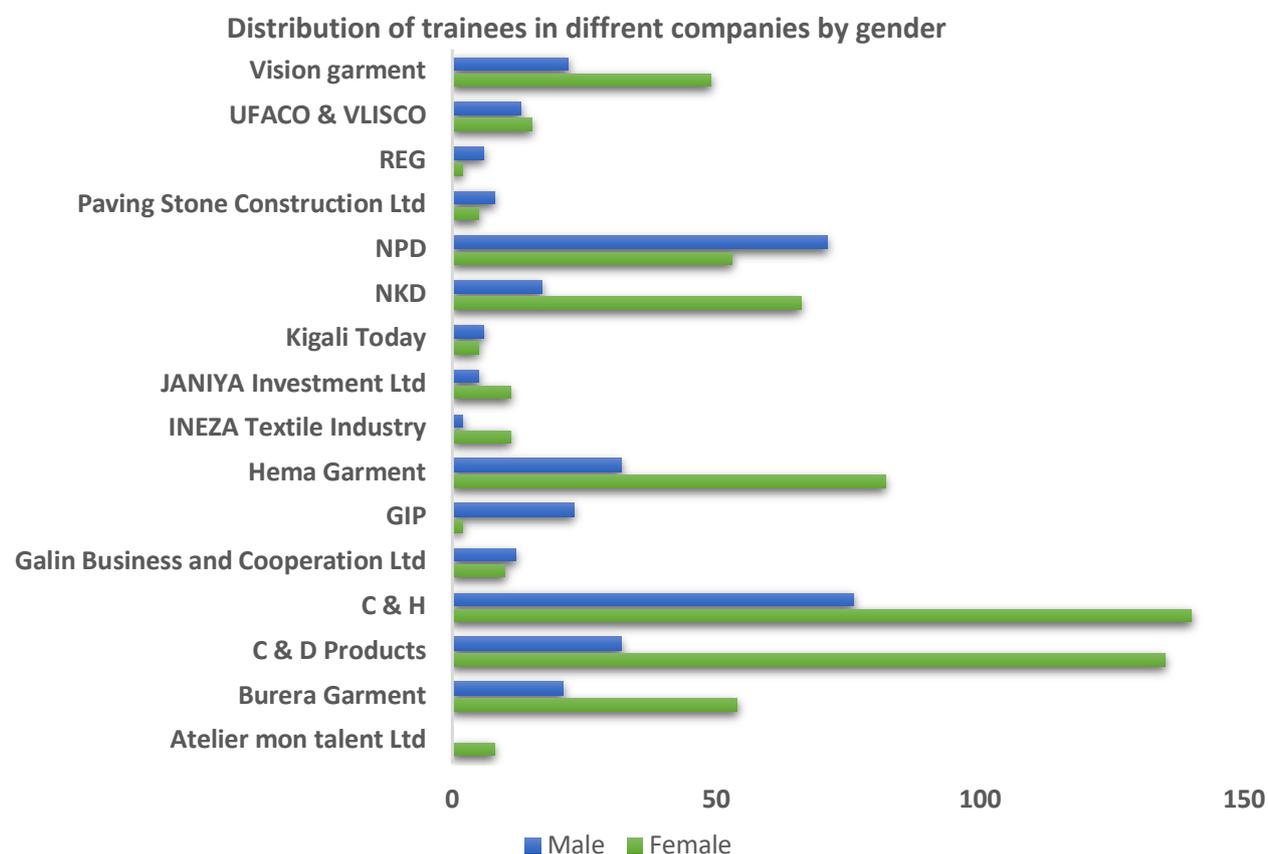
TRADE	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	FEMALE (%)	20-29 (%)	30-39 (%)	40+ (%)
Biogas	2	6	8	25	38	63	0
Cobble stone technology	58	80	138	42	20	41	38
Firefighting and rescue	2	23	25	8	24	72	4
Food Processing	10	11	21	48	86	14	0
Photojournalism	5	6	11	45	45	55	0
Tailoring	571	220	791	72	53	40	8
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>648</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>994</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>12</b>

Table 4.2. illustrates the distribution of the graduates in different age categories and by gender. The proportion of young people (20–29) was higher in food processing and tailoring, while a large proportion of adult people (30+) was in firefighting, biogas and cobble stone.

#### 4.1.3. The distribution of graduates in different companies by Gender

The figure 4.1 below depicts the distribution of trainees in different companies by gender. As the table shows, the proportion of female is higher than males in almost all companies. Companies that trained a higher number of graduates than others include C&H, C&D products, Hema Garment, NKD and NPD.

**Figure 4. 1 The distribution of graduates in different companies by Gender**



#### 4.1.4. Year of RRT training by gender

Table 4.3. below illustrates the distribution of the trainees in different FYs. As indicated by the table, the proportion of females has been significantly higher than that of females across different FYs since 2015/2016, and the proportion of graduates has been higher in 2017/2018, and 2019/2020, which can be attributed to the fact that the programme had started to gain momentum. A large proportion of females across different FYs can be explained by the fact that almost all companies that trained a large number of trainees were in tailoring, which attracted more females than males. A marked increase in training in the tailoring may be a consequence of the drive of the Government of Rwanda towards the “Made in Rwanda”.

**Table 4. 3 Year of RRT training by gender**

Year	Female	Male	Total	% Female	% Total
2015 / 2016	46	22	68	68	7
2016 /2017	95	101	196	48	20
2017 / 2018	196	119	315	62	32
2018 / 2019	126	39	165	76	17
2019 / 2020	185	65	250	74	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>648</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>994</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 4.1.5. RRT Trainees by field of training and educational level.

RRT graduates were also requested provide information about their level of education. table 4.4. below indicates that the majority of the graduates had a primary or certificate level of education (72 percent). One possible reason to explain this is that most of the company did not require a formal degree for trainees to join. However, as highlighted by some companies, holding a degree was an added advantage as it facilitates trainees to easily acquire new skills.

**Table 4. 4 The RRT graduates by educational level.**

Education level	Frequency	Percent
Certificate	714	71.8
Advanced diploma	213	21.4
Bachelors	64	6.4
Masters	2	0.2
PhD	1	0.1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>994</b>	<b>100</b>

## 4.2. Employment outcome of the RRT graduates

The results in this sub-section provide important insights into the employment conditions of the RRT graduates including the current employment situation, nature of the contract, payment conditions and the entitlement to the fringe benefits. It also reflects on the extent of RRT graduates satisfaction with the RRT training.

### 4.2.1. Description of the current employment status of the RRT graduates by Gender and Age

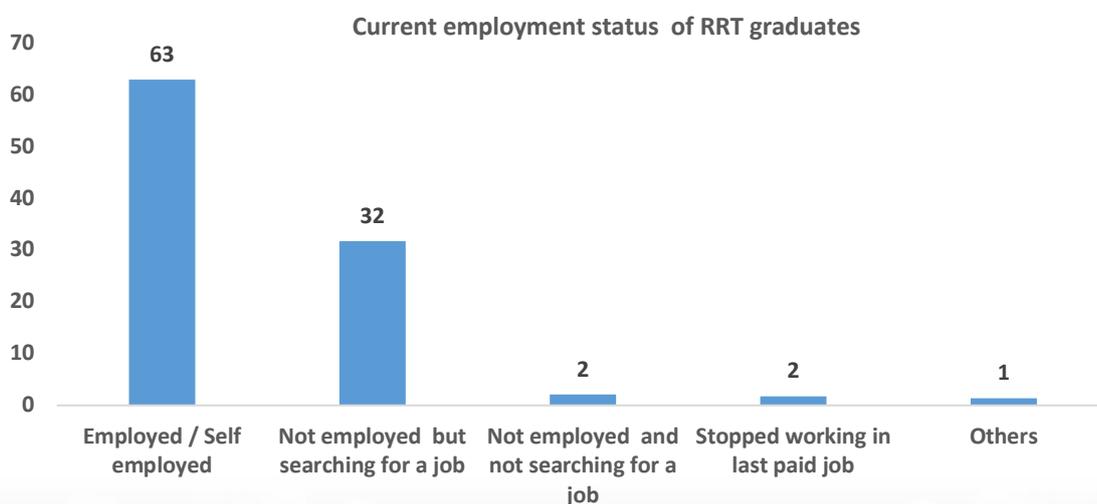
The results in the table 4.5 indicate that RRT was not necessarily a straight pathway to a permanent job as 354 of the 994 respondents (37%) were not in employment at the time of the study.

**Table 4. 5 Trainees by age and current employment status**

Employed or self-employed				Not currently in employment			
Age group	Female	Male	Total	Age group	Female	Male	Total
20-24	50	19	69	20-24	39	9	48
25-29	159	85	244	25-29	78	38	116
30-34	118	63	181	30-34	67	30	97
35-39	51	27	78	35-39	31	15	46
40-44	16	9	25	40-44	12	6	18
45-49	10	14	24	45-49	6	11	17
50+	5	14	19	50+	6	6	12
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>354</b>

Figure 4.2. below presents the employment status of the RRT graduates during the time of the tracer study. As indicated by the results, 63 percent of the RRT graduates were employed while 37 percent were not, including 32 percent who were not employed but searching for a job. Though more than one third of the RRT graduates were not employed, they remain committed to starting their own businesses or upgrade their skills to become more competitive on the market despite the constraint of accessing finance.

**Figure 4. 2 Description of the current employment status of RRT graduates**



The following quotes solicited from respondents during the focus group discussions back up this notion:

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*i030: “The company committed to offer the job, but I was not able to get it, and I have been unemployed for 2 years.” The challenge I have is that I am unable to work and use skills acquired in the company, because they are not applicable in our local village using sewing machines. The machines that were used in Burera garment were advanced and had their own ways of maintenance which is different from the local ones. As a solution, if I were able to get a job from another tailoring factory, it would be very helpful for me to use acquired skills.”*

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*i032: “The challenge I have is to be able to buy my own sewing machine and then become fully self-employed. I am paying a rent for a sewing machine of RWF 20,000. If I would get any support to buy my own machine, it would be very helpful.”*

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*i040: “I am not employed, but searching for job. I tried to be self-employed, but I did not manage, because of expensive materials (food processing). I believe I possess enough skills, but whenever I try to search for job, many companies tell me that I am not qualified because the training was for short term and not enough.”*

#### 4.2.2. The Current employer of the RRT graduates

The table 4.6 below portrays the current employer of the RRT graduates. Companies employ more than 50 percent of the graduates while self-employed graduates represent 23 percent of the employed graduates and 14 percent of total graduates.

**Table 4. 6 The Current employer of the RRT graduates**

<b>Current Employer</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Another company or business entity other than RRT training institution	21
RRT training institution	56
Self- employed	23
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 4.2.3. The current employment status of RRT graduates by training institution

Table 4.7. below portrays the distribution of employment status of RRT graduates in different companies. As indicated in the table, none of the companies have been able to retain 70% of their graduates, as required by the guidelines for the implementation of skills development interventions. From the table, it is also evident that the proportion of graduates who have either joined other institutions or become self-employed was higher for graduates in some companies, such as NPD, C & H, Hema Garment, and Hema. On one hand, this can be explained by the fact that some companies have closed doors (Hema Garment, Burera Garment) or are no longer implementing RRT (NPD), but on the other hand, some companies could not retain the required percentage of graduates due to the lower demand for their products than expected.

**Table 4. 7 The current employment status of RRT graduates by training institution**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Another institution (%)</b>	<b>RRT training institution (%)</b>	<b>Self-employed (%)</b>	<b>Not employed (%)</b>	<b>Grand Total (%)</b>
Atelier mon talent Ltd	0.00	2.28	0.00	0.00	0.80
Burera Garment	7.46	0.28	12.06	12.77	7.55
C & D Products	0.00	47.29	0.00	0.27	16.8
C & H	24.63	29.06	12.06	17.39	21.73
Galini Business and Cooperation Ltd	4.48	0.00	0.71	4.08	2.21
GIP	6.72	0.85	1.42	2.99	2.52
Hema Garment	3.73	0.00	27.66	19.02	11.47
INEZA Textile Industry	0.75	1.99	0.71	1.09	1.31
JANIYA Investment Ltd	0.00	2.56	2.84	0.82	1.61
Kigali Today	2.99	0.28	1.42	1.09	1.11
NKD	8.96	5.13	14.89	8.70	8.35
NPD	25.37	0.00	13.48	19.29	12.47
Paving Stone Construction Ltd	0.75	0.00	2.13	2.45	1.31
REG	0.75	0.00	4.26	0.27	0.80
UFACO & VLISCO	5.97	1.14	2.13	3.53	2.82
Vision garment	7.46	9.12	4.26	6.25	7.14
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The current proportion of self-employed RRT graduates poses two main questions: Why did only a relatively small proportion of the graduates manage to start their own business and have their businesses been successful? According to the feedback received from the RRT graduates during face-to-face interviews, many actually wanted to start their own enterprise. The constraints in terms of start-up funding facing them are however a barrier. As an example, one of the graduates responded:

*“I am currently unemployed. However, sometimes I obtain short time contracts at tailoring companies. It pays me around 30k per month. I would very much like access to finance to buy my own machine and hence become self-employed. If the Government could help me with the machine, I would be very happy”*

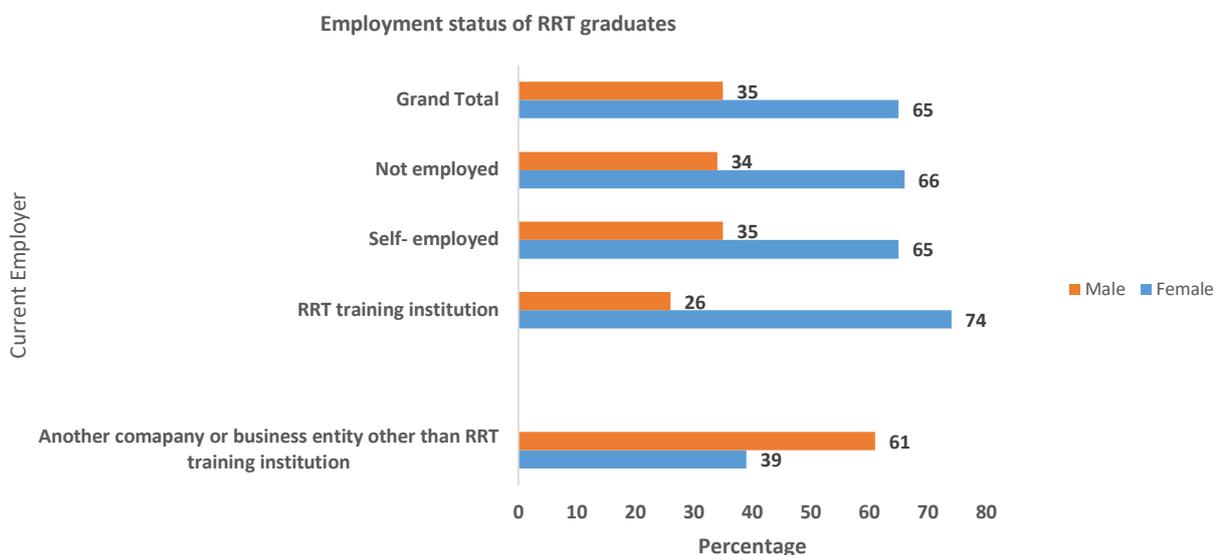
Another respondent said:

*“The challenge I have is to be able to buy my own sewing machine and then become fully self-employed because I am paying a rent for a sewing machine of RWF 20,000. If I would get any support to buy my own machine, it would be very helpful.”*

#### 4.2.4. Employment status of the RRT graduates by Gender

Figure 4.3. illustrates the employment status of RRT graduates by gender. The proportion of females is higher for RRT graduates who were retained by the companies (74 percent), the self-employed (65 percent), and the employed in general (65 percent). The proportion of males is higher for RRT graduates who joined other business entities other than companies that trained them.

**Figure 4. 3 The current employment status of the RRT graduates by gender**



#### 4.2.5. The extent of retention of RRT graduates by companies

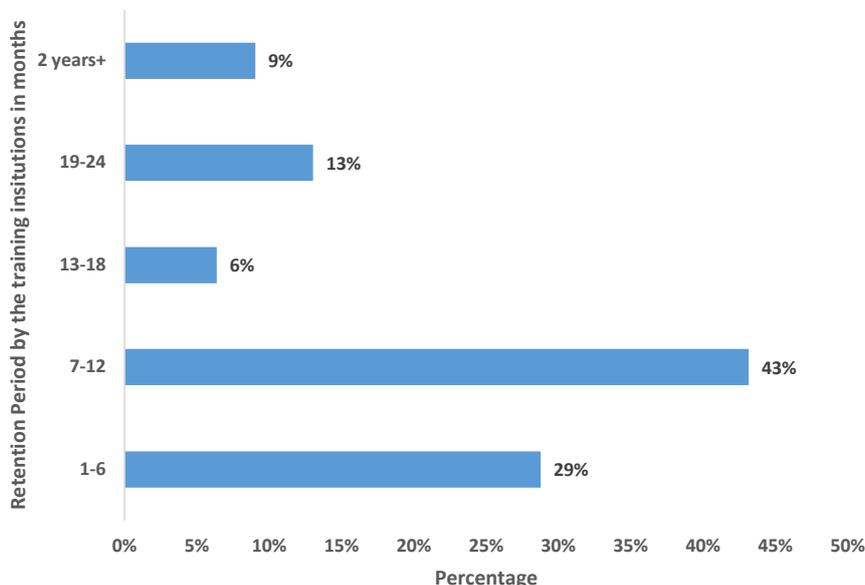
As indicated in figure 4.4 below, more than 80 percent of the RRT companies could not retain graduates for at least two years as stipulated in the guidelines for the implementation of skills development interventions. The failure of companies to retain the required number of RRT graduates can be attributed to various reasons that include the closure of business operations in a few months after the end of the training<sup>1</sup>, the failure to retain even a single graduate<sup>2</sup>, the acquisition of a business by other

1. For example: Burera Garment, Hema garment and NPD

2. None of RRT graduates was retained by R

companies<sup>3</sup> that led to the layoff of some RRT graduates and the low demand that forced companies to reduce the number of employees.

**Figure 4. 4 The retention of the RRT graduates by training institutions**



The failure of the companies to retain the required percentage of graduates can be substantiated by the following quotes of the some interviewed RRT graduates:

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*i020: “I am unemployed and have been unemployed since the closing of the training. I graduated in 2017. I was not selected by the company. The company asked us to apply, but they never returned to us. I am still applying for jobs in the sector.”*

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*i023: “I have never been employed. Burera Garment hired us on short term basis to meet the demand for face masks. However, they have not yet paid us. I am currently searching for a job. The factory is closed”.*

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*i027: “I am working as security officer since the closure of the factory (Hema Garment) in few days after the training. At my current job, I feel like I am not using acquired skills learned at the company. so, if I would get a job at a RRT training-based facility it would be very helpful”.*

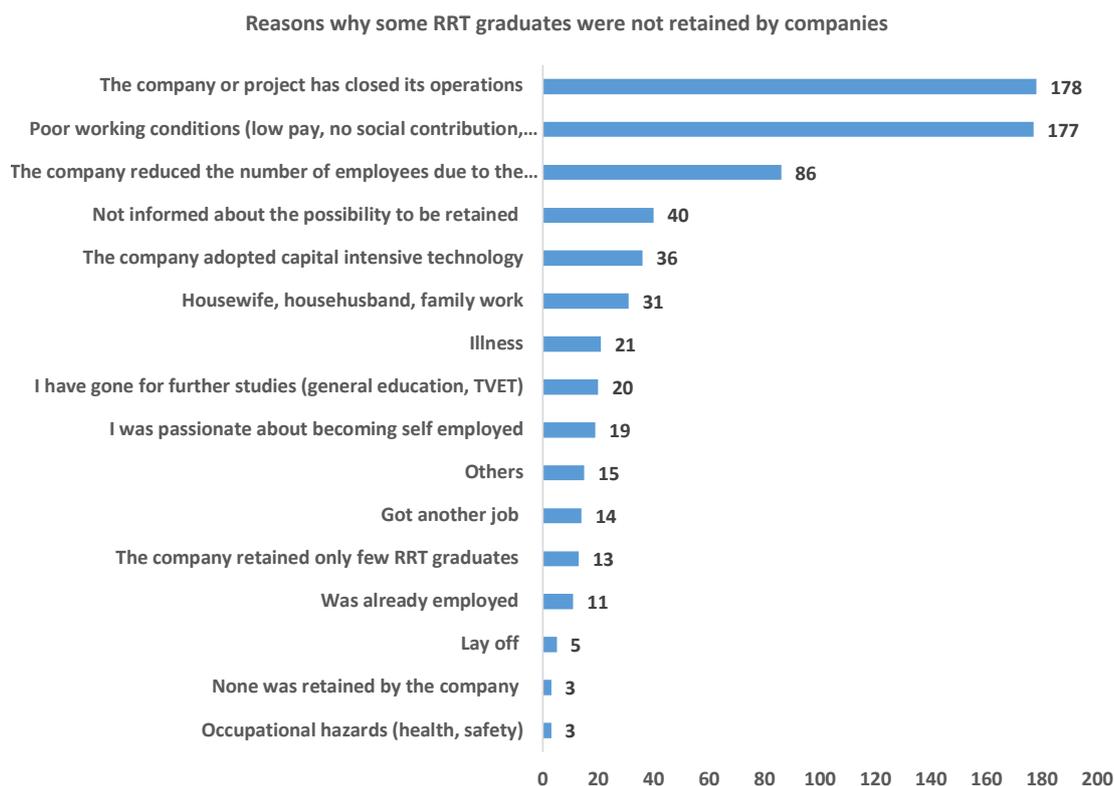
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#### 4.2.6. Reasons why RRT graduates were not retained by the companies

The figure 4.5. below illustrates different reasons why some RRT graduates were not retained by their respective host companies. Unlike what is stipulated in the guidelines for the implementation of skills development interventions regarding the employability of RRT graduates at the end of the training, the results show that some companies could not offer a better working environment to retain their employees.

<sup>3</sup>. C&H was acquired by C&D

**Figure 4.5 Reasons why RRT graduates were not retained by the companies**



As a result, a reasonable number of graduates decided to leave the companies due to poor working conditions, including low pay, working long hours, lack of entitlement to fringe benefits and annual leave, and a lack of any form of written contract. This is consistent with the claims of some graduates in extracts of interviews below:

*One of the respondent said “i029: “The Kigali based companies are offering a low salary compared to the living cost in Kigali. I also tried join hands with my colleagues to set up my own business. we wrote to the Burera garment to help us with the machines, but we could not get a positive feedback. If another tailoring factory could be open in the local area, it would be very helpful.”*

*i047: “I am jobless, but searching for a job. After we graduated, they offered me job, but working conditions were not good for me. The training itself? Well, learning conditions were not good due to lack of sufficient materials and transport.”*

From figure 4.5 above, it is also evident that a significant number of RRT graduates lost jobs because companies closed operations or projects. This can be exemplified by the cases of graduates from companies such as Burera Garment, Hema Garment, NPD, and C & H. Another important reason that forced graduates to leave companies was the economic hardship that was facing some companies, including the effects of COVID-19 and a significant decline in demand. This signals the risk that the RRT intervention is exposed to due to the low survival rate of companies or projects involved in the implementation of RRT.

The fact that graduates were not informed about the possibility of being employed at the end of their training means that most companies are more likely not to inform trainees about the clauses of the guidelines related to employment at the end of training. This also calls into question the transparency of companies in selecting 70% of graduates to be retained at the end of the training.

Besides retaining a small proportion compared to the required percentage of graduates, companies seem to retain the majority of graduates for a relatively short period of time. As shown in Table 12, more than 70% of RRT graduates retained by companies have spent no more than one year with those companies, and more than 80% have not spent no more than two years. Furthermore, to be required to award a least a 2 year contract to not less than 70 percent of the employed RRT A, it even becomes more easier for companies to replace or layoff retained graduates, because the majority of the employed RRT graduates have either no contract (20 percent) or temporary contract of no more than 1 year (more than 80 percent).

#### 4.2.7. The current status of RRT graduates who left companies for self-employment or employment by other companies

Table 4.8. below illustrates the frequency of response for RRT graduates who left their employer for self-employment or employment by other companies. As the table shows, only slightly more than half of the graduates were employed in businesses related to the area of training mainly tailoring (see table 4.8 below), while others have joined businesses that are different from their areas of RRT. The main reasons why they are no longer employed in businesses related to their areas of training include getting better-paying jobs, being laid off, failing to start their own business due to limited access to finance, being assigned to other tasks within the same companies, and the need to explore different business opportunities (see figure 4. 5 above)

**Table 4. 8 Type of businesses owned by RRT graduates who left RRT training institutions**

Type of Business	Total	Percent
Tailoring	72	51
Retail trade	46	33
Masonry	16	11
Transport	3	2
Agriculture	8	6
Administration and support services	2	1
Mechanics	1	1
Welding	1	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>100</b>

The quotes below by some self-employed interviewed RRT graduates highlight some challenges facing them and why they decided to do businesses that are not related to the areas of training:

*i031: “Right now, I am working as a primary school teacher. The skills acquired are not relevant to the current job. Actually, I am doing the current job but I am not happy about the situation, because I have always wanted to be a technician. As a matter of fact, after I finished my secondary studies, I went for a 6 month-training in Tumba College of Technology, and did learn a lot about maintenance of tailoring machinery. Then I went to Burera garment to learn new skills as a technician as it was my passion. Right now, to be working as a primary teacher, I feel like I am not using my skills. If another opportunity would arise to work as a maintenance operator, I would very glad do it.”*

*i033: “I am a farmer now. My business is now agriculture. A portion of the turnover worth RWF 20,000 per month is used to pay a rent for the land. The knowledge acquired from the company is not relevant to the current job. If there would be opportunity for further training, I would be up for it.*

### 4.3 Nature of employment for employed RRT graduates

#### 4.3.1. Type and length of the contract

Though 80 percent of the employed RRT graduates have a contract with the employer (see table 4.9 below), only 27 percent of the employed graduates have at least a 2-year contract with the employer (See table 11 and figure 4.6 below). This is contrary to the guidelines for the implementation of skills development interventions according to which companies are required to award a least a 2-year contract to not less than 70 percent of RRT graduates.

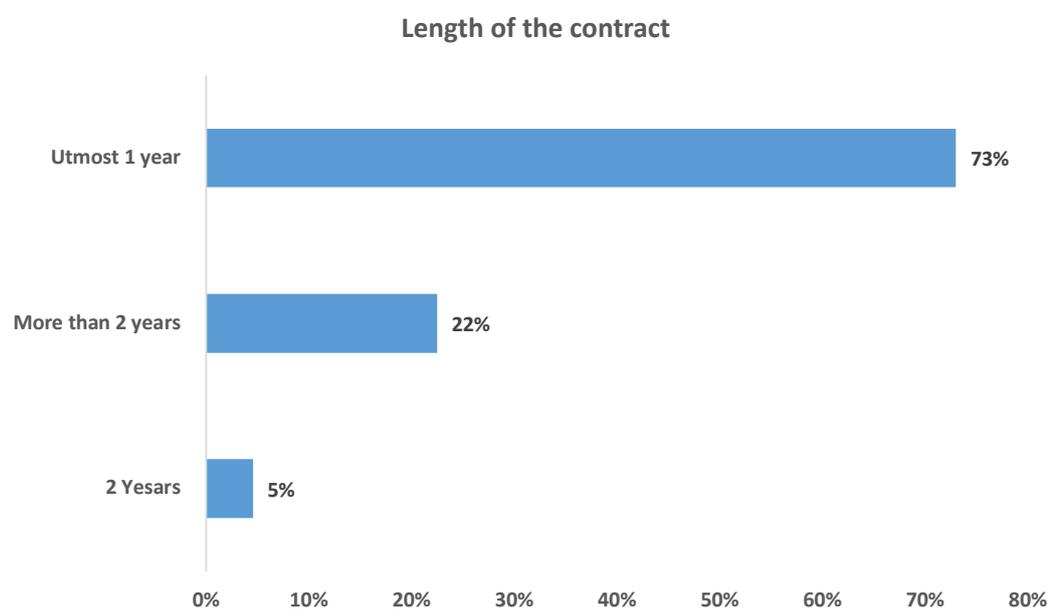
**Table 4. 9 Existence of any form of contract of contract with the employer**

Contract with the employer	Percent
No	20
Yes	80
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100</b>

The following quote substantiate the working conditions of the RRT graduates:

*I057: “I have a contract with the company that is worth 60000 Frw a month. I am supposed to work 8 hours per day and benefit from social security contribution. “The only challenge is the fact that the contract I signed with the company is not obeyed. I am paid less and the company gives me COVID as an excuse, and I am not even sure whether the company pays my social security contribution.”*

**Figure 4. 6 Length of the contract for the employed RRT graduates**



### 4.3.2. Average number Hours of work a week

As depicted by table 4.10 below, nearly two thirds of the graduates actually work more than 40 hours per week. This is consistent with the claims of the majority of the interviewed graduates, who argued that they work 6 days a week, 10 hours per day on average. As a result, most of them are obliged to incur a huge transport cost as the distance from their work place to home is long, and they should be on time the next day despite having left the office late. According to some interviewees, some of them have even been victims of sexual harassment due to the long distance they have to cover to reach home during the night.

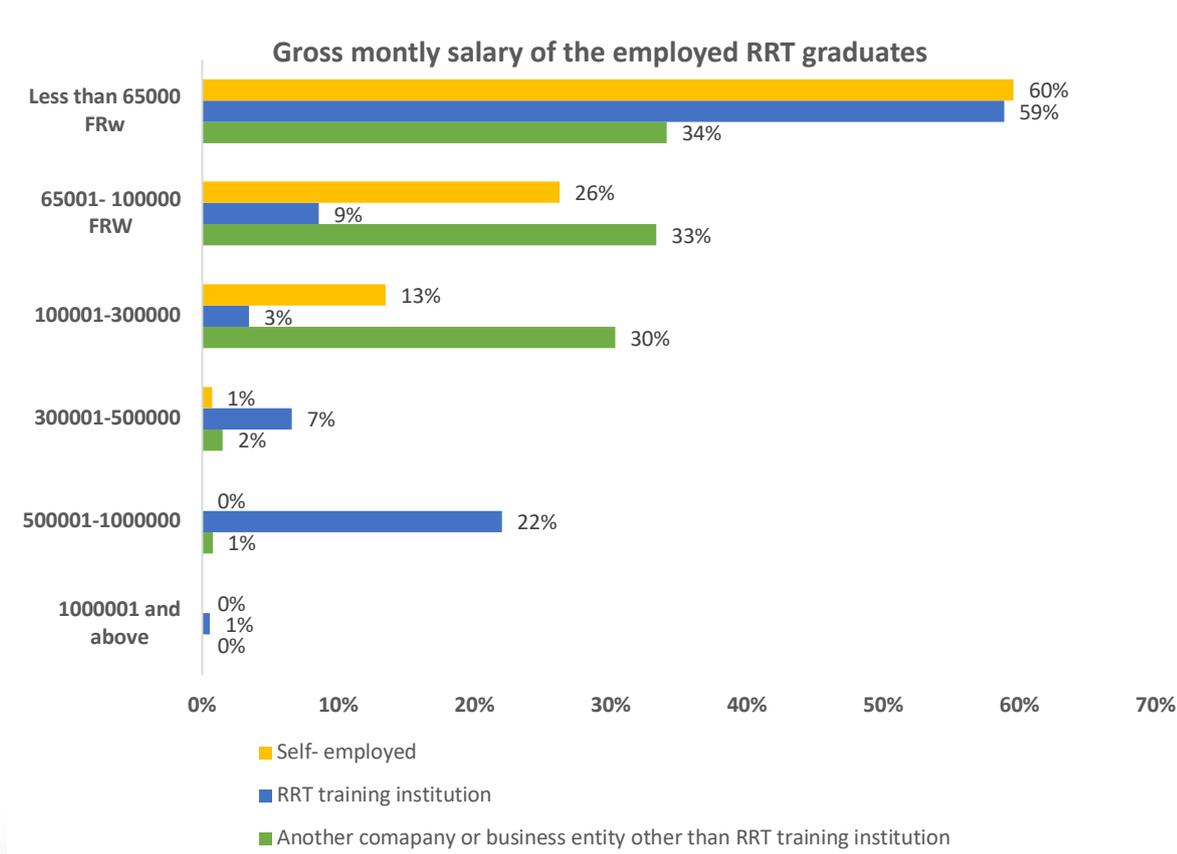
**Table 4. 10 Average hours actually worked by RRT graduates a week**

Actual hours worked a week	Percent
Less than 40 hours	31%
40-55 hours	59%
<b>More than 55 hours</b>	<b>10%</b>

### 4.3.3. Monthly payment for the employed RRT graduates

The figure 4.7 below illustrates the gross monthly salary of the employed RRT graduates. 60 percent of RRT graduates employed by the companies earn less than 65000 Frw. This is contrary to the requirement for the implementation of skills development interventions that stipulates that each graduate retained by the company should be paid a net monthly salary of not less than 65,000 Frw. The results also show that the monthly income is slightly higher for graduates who left the companies to join other institutions. According to the representative of the company, RRT graduates who are more likely to receive better pay are those who have been promoted to supervisor and manager positions.

**Figure 4. 7 Gross monthly income for the employed RRT graduates**



The results in the figure 4.7 above are consistent with the quotes below from the interviews of the RRT graduates:

*i057: “I have a contract with the company that is worth 60000 Frw a month. I am supposed to work 8 hours per day and benefit from social security contribution. “The only challenge is the fact that the contract I signed with the company is not obeyed. I am paid less and the company gives me COVID as an excuse, and I am not even sure whether the company pays my social security contribution.”*

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*i006: “I am quite satisfied with my business because it is operating well, and I obtain around FRW 30000 per month. The skills obtained were very helpful. But I need further training to advance my business and to satisfy my clients, especially the skills in tailoring relating to suits”*

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*i007: “I work at a Tailoring company called CB. I am paid 50k per month, which is not too much. They offer lunch as part of the fringe benefits. The training was relevant. However, Certificates that were issued by the company are not accepted by NESAs. I would wish to be able to access finance to get self-employed allowing me to apply acquired skills. I also wish that the acquired certificates can be accepted by NESAs”*

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*i009: “I work at Uge University as a cleaner. I am paid 70k per month and obtain a free lunch. I would wish to be able to access finance to get self-employed allowing me to apply acquired skills. I also wish that the acquired certificates can be accepted by NESAs”*

*As highlighted by one of the representatives of the companies who was interviewed, the company is offering the trainees a net salary of RWF 45000 plus lunch and a performance-based bonus. The same company only offers one-year renewable contract, insinuating limited retention and job insecurity.*

*Another representative of the company said: “, We motivate existing employees through a special performance evaluation that is undertaken to get managers, supervisors and technicians when the company expand the scale of its production “. We are currently employing managers of which 10 of them are Rwandan nationals, who started at an entry level salary worth 45000 Rwf. They are now entitled to a monthly salary worth not less than RWF 300,000 plus lunch and a performance-based bonus”.*

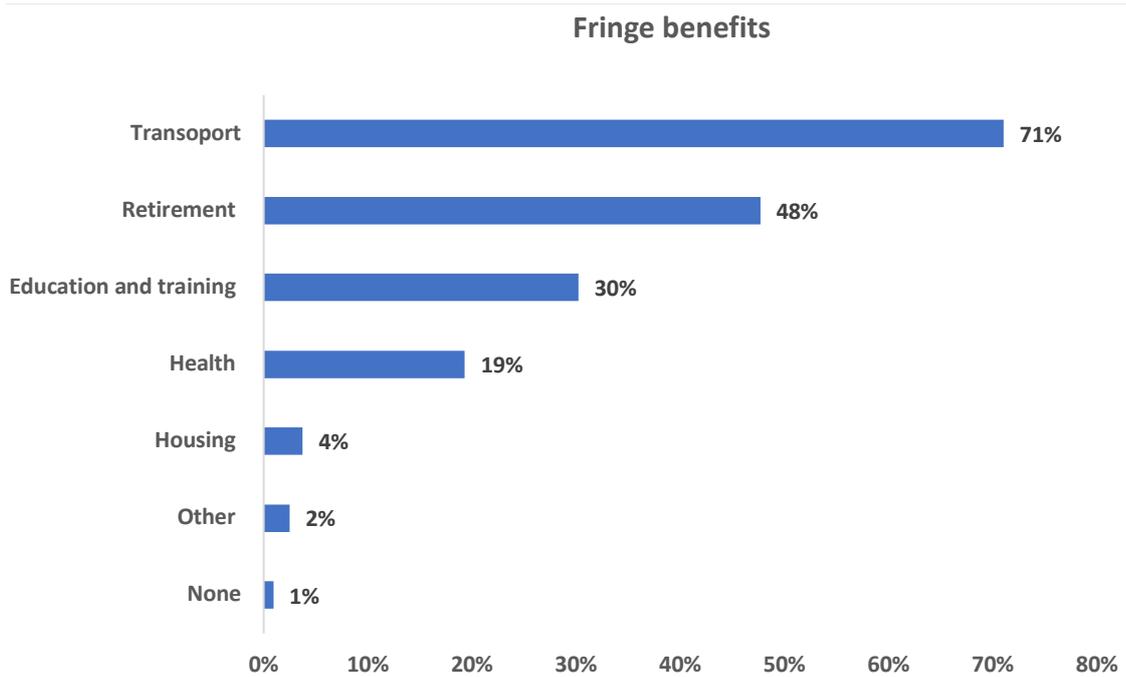
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#### 4.3.4. Entitlement to the fringe benefits

As figure 4.8 below shows, employers of the RRT graduates focus mainly on the transport facilitation (71%) and retirement package that is paid to Rwanda Social Security Board (48%). However, Medical insurance (19%) and housing allowances (4%) has not given much attention by most the majority of the employers. The fact that most of companies do not pay medical insurance and housing allowances expose employees to the risk of sexual harassment such rape given that the majority of them leave the work place during the night or a disability in the case occupational injury.

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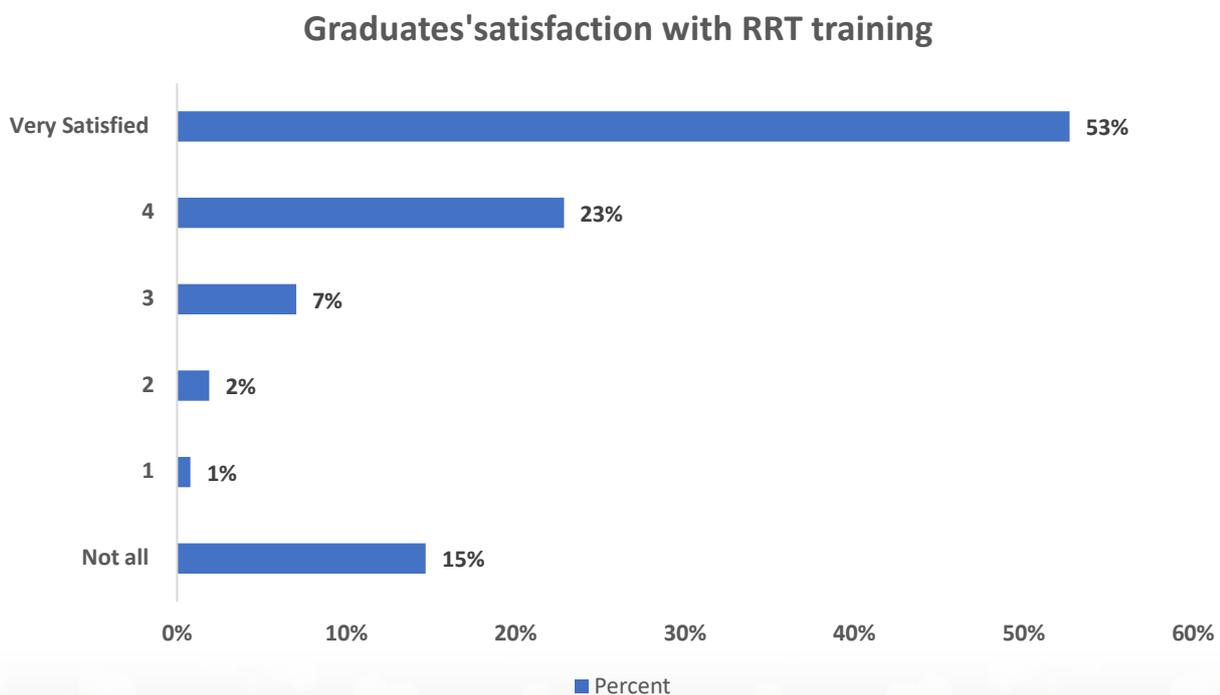
**Figure 4.8 Entitlement of the RRT graduates to the fringe benefits**



#### 4.4. The graduates' satisfaction with the RRT training

The figure 4.9 below illustrates the extent to which employed RRT graduates were satisfied with the RRT training. As indicated by the table, more than 80 percent of the graduates expressed their satisfaction with the RRT. However, some graduates, especially those employed in tailoring, claimed that they only master the skills related to component of the production chain where they operate. In addition, those who decide to become self-employed are more likely to be less competitive on the labour market because the skills and experience required is far beyond the skills required to successfully perform tasks assigned to them. Therefore, the majority of self-employed RRT graduates claim that they need further trainings to be more competitive and diversify products sold on the market.

**Figure 4.9 The level of graduates' satisfaction with the level of RRT training**



The extracts of interviews below substantiate findings in the figure 4.9 above:

One of the respondent who is self-employed said

*i003: "I am very satisfied with the skills that I obtained from Burera Garment. What I am doing now is 100 per cent from the knowledge that I got from there. Unfortunately, my business is not working well. I get very few clients, which results in to very low amount of money per month. I need further training to improve my business, because I am not able to tailor many types of clothes, like suit. I really need further training to improve my skills."*

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Another responded said

*"i006: "I am quite satisfied with my business, because it is operating well, and I obtain around FRW 30000 per month. The skills acquired were very helpful, but I need further training to advance my business and to satisfy my clients, especially the skills in tailoring relating to suits".*

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*i031: "Right now, I am working as a primary school teacher. The skills acquired are not relevant to the current job. Actually, I am doing the current job, but I am not happy about the situation. I have always wanted to be a technician. Once, I finished my secondary studies, I went for a 6 month-training in Tumba College of Technology and learnt a lot about maintenance of tailoring machines. Then, It went to Burera garment to learn new skills as becoming a technician was my passion. Right now, to be working as a primary teacher, I feel like I am not using my skills. So, if another opportunity would arise to work as a maintenance operator, I would very glad do it.*

*i033: "I am a farmer now. My business is agriculture. .... the knowledge acquired from the training is not relevant to the current job. If there would be opportunity for further training I would be up for it."*

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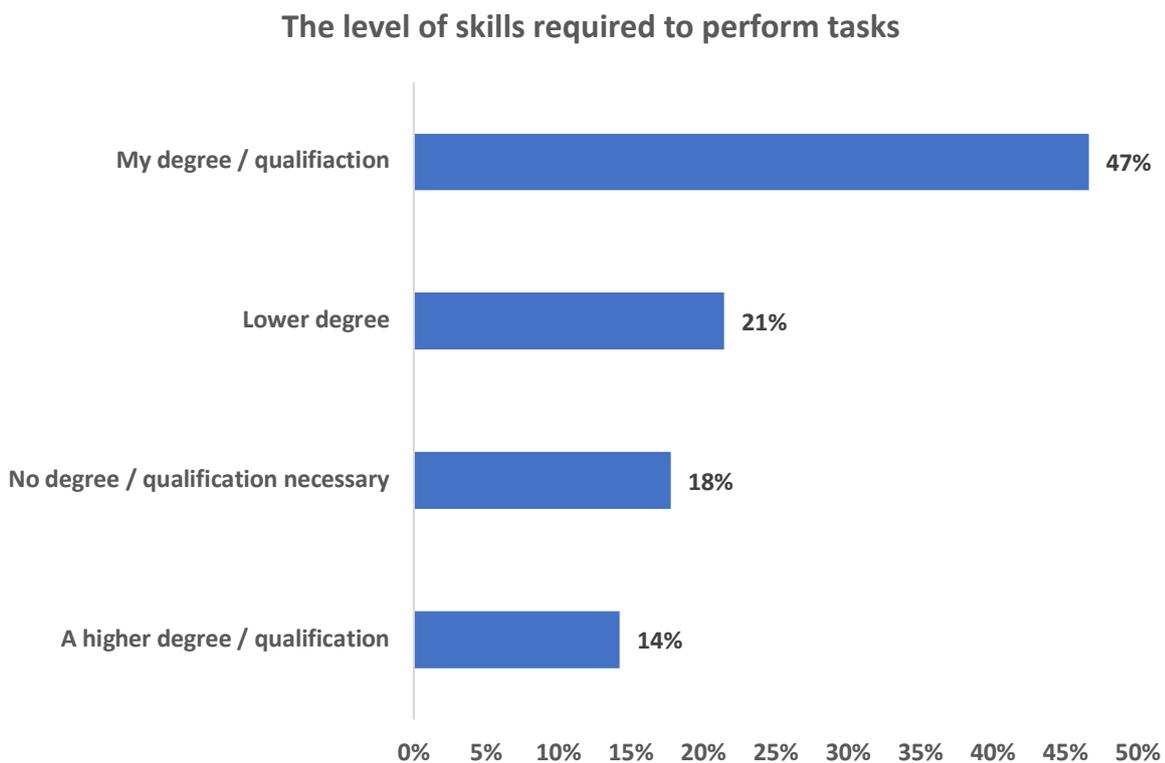
*i030: "The company offered to give me a job, but I was not able to get it, and I have been unemployed for 2 years. The quality of the training was very good, and I was able to learn new skills about maintenance of machinery. The challenges I have is that I am unable to work and use skills acquired in the company. Acquired skills are not applicable in our local village with traditional tailoring machines. The machines that were used in Burera garment were advanced and had their own ways of maintenance, which is different from the local ones. As a solution, if I were able to get a job from another-based tailoring factory, it would be very helpful for me to use acquired skills."*

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#### 4.5. Skills requirements to perform assigned tasks

The figure 4.10 below depicts the level of skills requirements for the RRT graduates to perform tasks assigned to them. 47 percent of the employed RRT graduates argue that the acquired skills were enough to perform assigned tasks while 21 percent said that a lower degree would be required to perform tasks assigned to them. This is in line with the argument of one of the representative of the company who said that “Neither a degree nor experience is required to join the training. We only need committed people.....”.

**Figure 4. 10 The level of skills required to perform tasks**



## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

The evaluation of the RRT targeted graduates trained between 2015 and 2021. The study consisted of a survey administered through an internet-based questionnaire as well as field visits that allowed face-to-face interviews with both employers and RRT graduates including focus group discussions. The tracer study was conducted in December 2021, and its main objective was twofold: i) Determine the extent to which RRT training has contributed to the employability of the RRT graduates; ii) assess the relevance of RRT graduates and employers.

Feedback about the effectiveness of the RRT was collected from 994 respondents using an internet-based questionnaire, 57 face-to-face interviews, and five focus group discussions with multiple trainees. The feedback was collated in a database (quantitative) and transcriptions of the face-to-face and group recorded (qualitative information).

The findings of the study showed that two-thirds of RRT graduates were employed (63 percent), while 37 percent were not, including 32 percent who were not employed but searching for a job. The likelihood of unemployment was high for graduates from companies that ceased operations. The situation varies across fields of training, where 57% of those trained in cobblestone technology and 67% of those trained in food processing remain unemployed. However, unemployed graduates remain committed to starting their own businesses or upgrading their skills though access to finance is still one of the main binding constraints.

The proportion of self-employed graduates appeared to be relatively small and access to finance was pointed out as one of the core binding constraints. In addition, a significant number of self-employed graduates are not doing businesses related to their respective areas of training. Therefore, supporting self-employed RRT graduates to access finance through existing schemes such as micro leasing and other access to finance products under Business Development Fund (BDF) would not only help them to sustain their businesses, but also increase their scale of production and become more competitive in the market. Business Development Advisors (BDAs) and BDF should also visit companies during the training to raise trainee awareness of the trainees on existing access to finance opportunities.

The majority of the companies did not comply with the provisions of the guidelines on the implementation of RRT, especially the retention of the graduation, the duration of the contract, and the minimum payment. The vast majority of the companies could not retain graduates for at least two years. Less than a third of the employed graduates have at least a 2-year contract with their employer, and almost a third of the employed graduates are earning a monthly salary of more than 65000 frw. This is however contrary to the guidelines for the implementation of skills development interventions, according to which companies are required to award at least a 2-year contract to not less than 70 percent of the RRT graduates, and with a payment of monthly income that is not less than 65, 000 frw. As a result, strengthening coordination efforts is required to ensure RRT to monitor and evaluation RRT and ensure companies' compliance with contractual obligations.

Despite the fact that the majority of employed RRT graduates expressed satisfaction with the RRT, the majority of them expressed a need for skills upgrading. Some graduates, especially those employed in tailoring, claim that the acquired skills are limited to the component where they operate, and as a result, RRT graduates who decide to become self-employed are less likely to be competitive in the labour market. Therefore, upskilling self-employed RRT graduates would help them to be more competitive and diversify the products they sell on the market.

The fact that less than half of the graduates were not retained by the companies within the first six (6) months of the completion of the training clearly insinuates that most of the companies have not attained the objectives of the training. Therefore, an in-depth analysis should be undertaken to understand why the majority of the institutions failed to comply with guidelines in terms of employment and pay and why no accountability measures were taken.

The evaluation of labour market outcomes of the RRT graduates were obviously lightly blurred by the time that had passed since the conclusion of the training. Nonetheless, the participants contribute some information that can be used to improve future training. In general, by far the most people found the training useful, the trainers knowledgeable, and the training facilities in good order.

Taken together, the RRT appear to need a reformulation of standards and objectives, perhaps with the insertion of accountability measures for poor performance or the failure of the company to comply with contractual obligations. It goes without saying that those training facilities that exposes graduates to occupational hazards should be thoroughly investigated by the authorities.



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