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Multidimensional livelihood pathways across space:

the Mastercard Foundation scholarship tracer study

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Background to the study



- Mastercard Foundation sponsors secondary and tertiary scholarships for young Africans
- Talented young people from disadvantaged backgrounds (SES, gender, disability)
- 5-year tracer study
- Survey administered in years 1, 3 and 5
- Qualitative annual in-depth interviews (n=117) in Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, South Africa, Rwanda and the diaspora

Research question and conceptual framing



- How do scholarship alumni generate livelihoods across time and space?
- Livelihood pathways for young graduates are multidimensional & shaped by complex relationships between education, work, mobility and geography
- Non-linear pathways (wayfaring, threads and genealogies) and navigational capacities
- “Non-standard work”; the gig economy, hustle, kukiya-kiya

Provisional findings from the longitudinal study



1. Survey results: main activities- studying, working, unemployed, entrepreneurship/self-employed or some combination
2. Livelihood complexity from the qualitative research
3. Mobility



1. Survey results: main categories (% Alumni)

Statement	Secondary Alumni (N=8650)			Tertiary Alumni (N=839)		
	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022
Unemployed	27	13	14	9	7	5
Studying	60	75	66	27	30	36
Working	9	9	19	60	70	74
Entrepreneurship	18	18	18	42	34	36

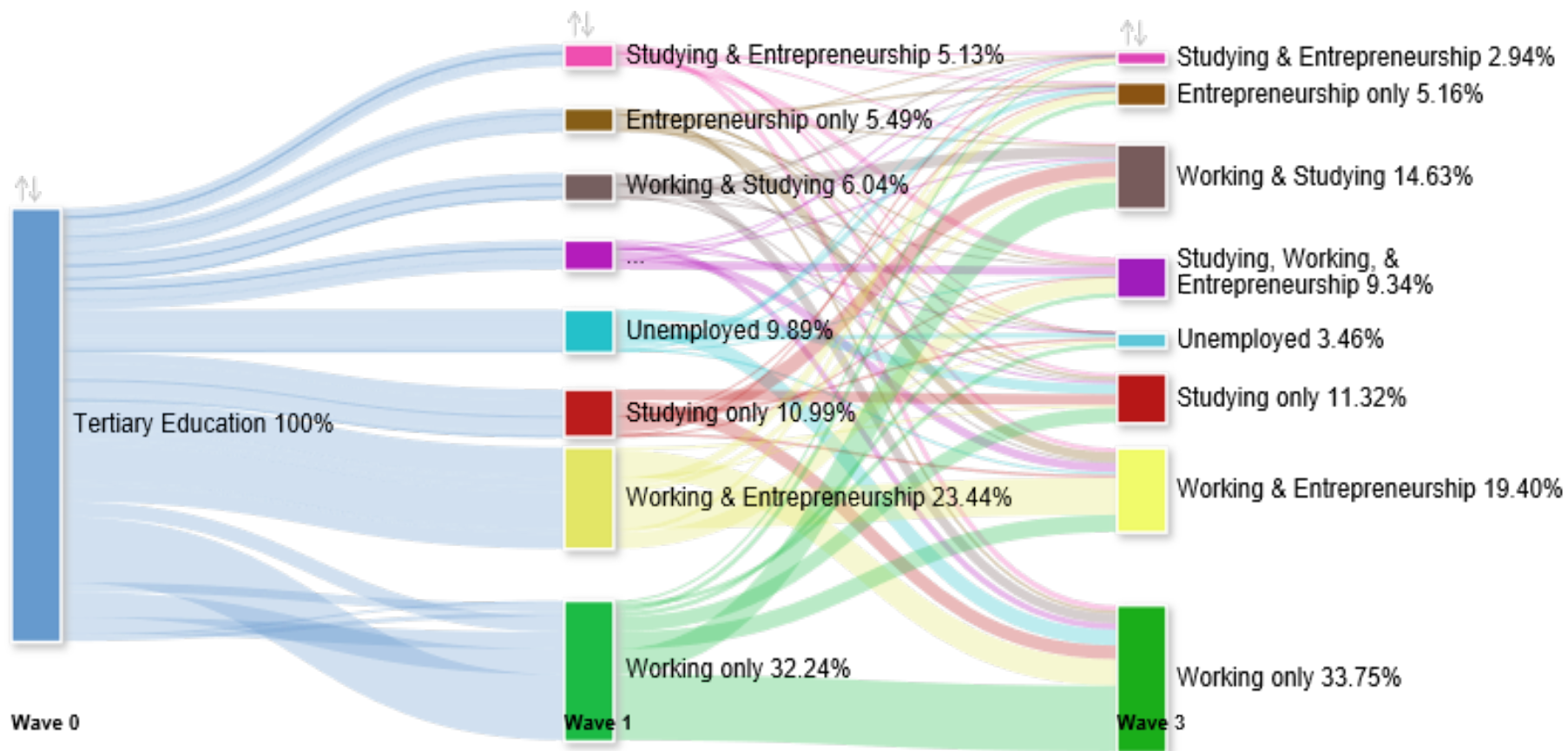
Most TA are pursuing Master's (39%) and PhD (36%)

16% TA have more than 1 job

1% of TA are employed in the informal sector

Positions are not mutually exclusive. Some Alumni occupy 2 or 3 at a time

SURVEY RESULTS: TERTIARY ALUMNI PATHWAYS



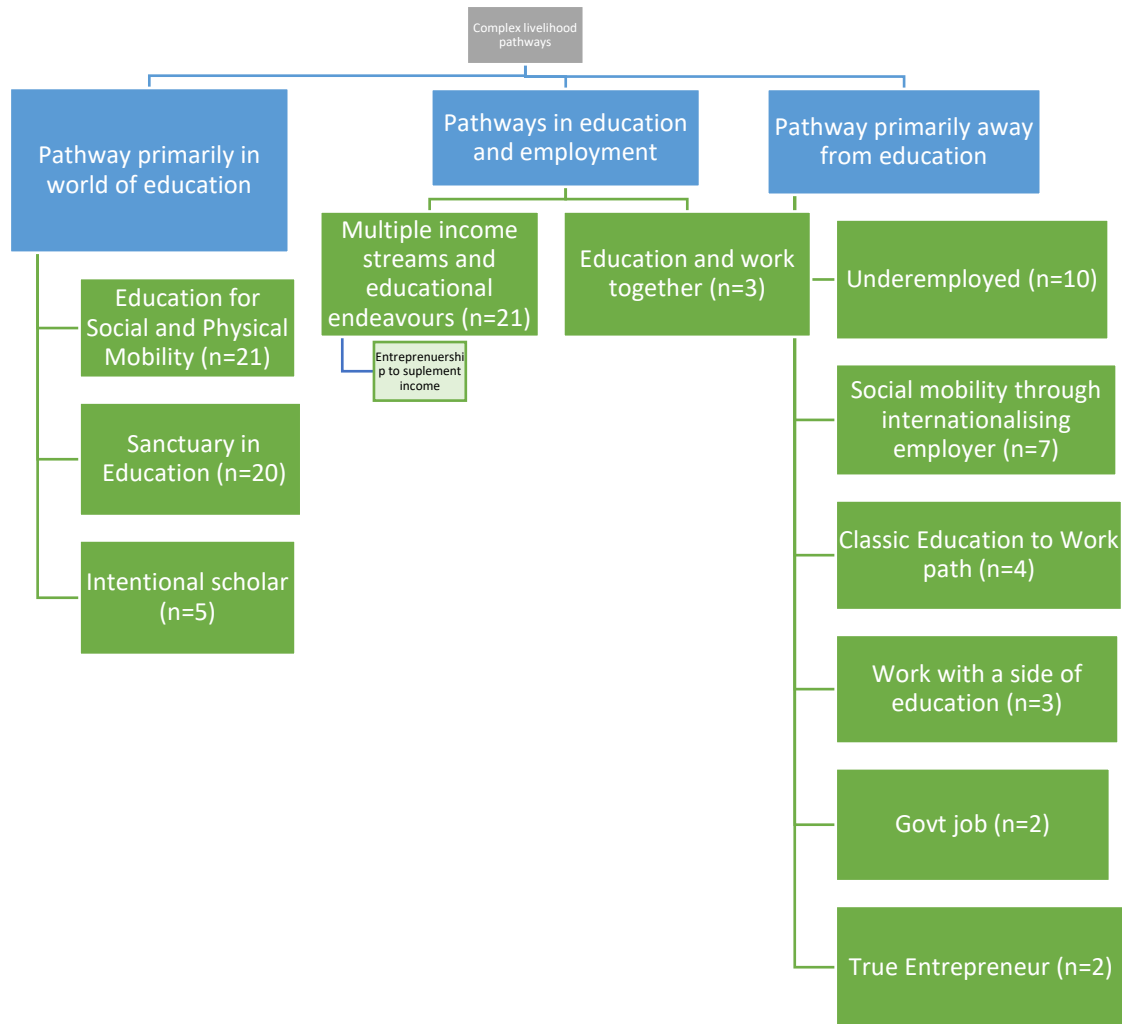
2. Qualitative analysis: complexity of Tertiary Alumni livelihoods



1. The relationship between education and work complex
 - rather than education leading to work, the relationship is multi-directional and co-existent
2. Sanctuary in education, education for social and physical mobility, underemployment, multiple income streams with education
3. Further complicated by geography and mobility
 - opportunities are context specific

Complex categories from Tertiary Alumni interview data in 2022

n=107



SANCTUARY IN EDUCATION and INTENTIONAL SCHOLARS



1. Many using education for income: multiple post-graduate degrees, PhDs and Post-docs
2. The pressures of supporting kin
3. Income from scholarships
4. Work in educational institutions: universities and schools; designing curricula
5. Small number intentionally seeking long-term careers as scholars

SANCTUARY IN EDUCATION



- My plan for the next six years... is well laid out... finish my Masters this year. Work for eight months. Then ... I will do a PhD for four years, then... a post- doc for two years, so at least I'll have that (Salma/DiasporaKU _2017_F26_Par3_2021_III).
- I want to get a second masters. I have already gotten an opportunity in Illinois... (I could) help my sister complete her school and I'd do a second masters. (Eugenie/DiasporaGI_2018_F27_Par7_2021_III).

3. Mobility: further complexity for the interaction between education and work



1. 65% of TA live in their country of birth.
2. 21% of TA lived in a country outside Africa
3. Main reasons for moving
 - Education opportunities, Job opportunities
4. Opportunities geographically situated: on the continent and abroad
5. Approximately two thirds of Secondary and Tertiary Alumni have considered moving to another country (predominantly in Europe or North America) in the next five years.

MOBILITY, OPPORTUNITIES AND SOCIAL RELATIONS



a) Many pursued mobility for “opportunity”

b) Opportunity abroad often = education, income and stability;
opportunity at home often = contribution to society and social
development

c) “The visa”, is perceived as shaping opportunities (and transitions)

a) Opportunities



- In the complex categories analysis, 21 Alumni were deemed to be using education for physical and social mobility; education as an opportunity to enter another country
- “Opportunities” informed many decisions to go abroad:

Habtamu/Ethiopia[USA]_2019_M28_Par10_2022_III: opportunities are also very limited in the continent,

Kenya_2018_F30_Par14_2021_III: I think there are more opportunities there [USA]. They appreciate somebody’s expertise and education, but here, here in Kenya things are a bit different. Nobody appreciates your certificates.

a). Opportunities



But opportunities also interpreted as contributing to development at home:

- I would actually love to be outside of the Continent and get as much refinement, like professionally, financially, and in every other regard and then use that to sort of like build on what I have started on the continent and in my home country (SouthAfrica_2017_F30_Par2_2021_III).
- What I would like to get is experience from overseas by staying around two years or more. It may be for a PhD or something... I would like to bring the experiences from overseas, adapt it to our situation and work here (Ethiopia_2020_M29_Par9_2021_III).
- My plan is to actually go out, study and then come back, I don't believe in moving and staying outside of my family, I believe in working in Ghana, helping Ghana, that is where I am born and that is where my service is needed (Ghana_2020_M42_Par12_2021_III).

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But... return also associated with diminished opportunity: reliance from extended family and expectations



Joseph/DiasporaGC_2019_M28_Par9_2022_III :

- So, if I return back to Africa and I'm not successful, I've not just disappointed myself, but I've disappointed the whole family

MartiaDiasporaKC_2018_F28_Par8_2022_III:

- I just keep saying, what, you've got to acknowledge that for many of us, besides just being scholarship recipients, we are also the income earners for our families. So, if I'm to move back and just go on and start hustling in Nairobi, there are so many livelihoods that are depended on me... so many of us just have so much responsibilities.

The politics and pathways of the visa:



Ashley/DiasporaRU_2017_F29_Par12_2022_III:

- Many Americans survive by working in something that is not related to your studies... But when you're an international student, you can't do that....they give you three months after graduation to find a job (or)... you have to leave the country...I came here in 2013. I'm still on a F1 visa....so you basically graduate and then have that work permit for one to three years and then if your employer likes you, they sponsor your H1B visa which is a five year visa and then after that you can apply for a green card, which is permanent residence .

Mobility:



- Enhanced opportunity to find a “proper job” ie. not mixed income kind of livelihood
- African urbanisation without industrialisation has shaped labour markets (not necessarily “skills not valued”)
- Mobility enhances personal career fulfilment
- Less (perceived) opportunity to contribute in a meaningful way to community/society abroad
- Mobility also shapes pressures, perceptions of success and perceptions of “responsibility”
- The visa/permanent citizenship: changes the nature of opportunities (and transitions)

Mobile transitions: a conceptual framework for researching a generation on the move

Robertson, Harris and Baldassar



Three 'domains' of transition – economic opportunities, social relations and citizenship practices.

But...these domains intersect:

- Citizenship related to economic opportunities
- Visas/residence permits and citizenship enable economic opportunities and stability
- Economic opportunities shape citizenship practices (and return)
- Social relations- especially those related to education- shape economic opportunities
- Social relations also shape economic responsibilities

Mobile transitions: a conceptual framework for researching a generation on the move

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Three 'domains' of transition –
economic opportunities, social relations and citizenship practices:

- How these domains influence each other key to understanding mobile transitions of African youth on elite scholarship programme

Conclusions



- Non-linear, multi-faceted transitions amongst African youth: Education and work shaping one another in multiple intersecting ways
- The interaction between education and work is complex, multi-directional and the meaning of “education” and “work” highly context dependent and fluid
- In many cases, especially for these academically talented youth, education is their most potent capital and used as income generation rather than for income generation in the future

Conclusions



- Mobility adds further complexity to this mix of factors
- Rearranges the ways in which work and education interact with social, economic and political relations
- The notion of “opportunity” is related to numerous contexts that are regularly interacting
- For African youth, borders are not easily crossed and education is one pathway to cross them: this may not be beneficial to African countries (nurses Nigeria-UK)
- Decisions around mobility and return very stressful and uncertain for these young people