



WTS VETS UNITED
Project Evaluation Summary
2015–2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the project	3
Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) activities	4
M & E processes	5
Tracking of study quality and satisfaction	6
Immediately after the training:.....	6
Student feedback.....	7
Education staff feedback	10
CPD participant feedback.....	12
Distance learning.....	13
Use of knowledge and skills and future improvements	14
Student Tracer Studies and Evaluation	14
Findings Student Tracer Study.....	14
Evaluation of the Gambia project in 2017	17
Status quo professional demands and curriculum improvements	20
Gaps / Needs Analysis	20
Findings summary	23
Limitations to the M & E work	24
Next steps	25
Imprint	26

ABOUT THE PROJECT

In 2015, the **VETS UNITED** program from the Welttierschutzstiftung (WTS) was launched with the goal of sustainably improving veterinary care and raising awareness of animal welfare. The program emphasizes both formal academic education and continuous professional development (CPD) for veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals.

A total of nine projects—seven focused on education and two on CPD—were implemented across eight countries—Gambia, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe. In the early stages, workshops for education staff, veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals were also conducted in Gambia, Sri Lanka, Romania, Tanzania and Uganda. The role of WTS was to initiate the process of formal and practical integration of animal welfare into the training by providing technical support, networking opportunity and financial support for the curriculum adaption process, capacity building for lecturers and improvement of students training.

Formal Integration: Including animal welfare into the academic curriculum/CPD Training (e.g. academic/training curriculum review to identify gaps and needs regarding animal welfare, curriculum adaptation by adding all missing content and official accreditation).

Practical Integration: Continuous provision of animal welfare training (e.g. training education staff/CPD providers, teaching students/CPD participants, securing quality and quantity of teaching).

Once the curriculum was adapted and accredited and the education staff trained, the local partners took over organizational and financial responsibility and continued the training independently. Between 2023–2025 VETS UNITED, withdrew step-by-step from the projects and the responsibilities were fully handed over to the project partners.

Participant data and feedback were collected from the outset. Starting in 2017, formal monitoring and evaluation frameworks were introduced to guide data collection and assess progress toward intended outcomes. This report summarizes all monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities and findings from 2015 to 2024.

A comprehensive overview of the seven main VETS UNITED projects across six countries can be found in the [VETS UNITED Pilot projects report \(2015–2024\)](#), available on the WTS website.



VETS UNITED Program Countries



Figure 1: Overview VETS UNITED project activity locations

MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E) ACTIVITIES

- **Routine Data Collection:** Collection of demographic information, contact data and feedback from students, education staff and veterinary professionals on an ongoing basis
- **Evaluation:** One project evaluation conducted
- **Survey:** One distance learning survey with students, education staff and animal health professionals conducted
- **Student-Tracer-Studies:** Three surveys with former students conducted
- **Gaps-/Needs Analysis:** Four surveys with veterinary and paraveterinary professionals conducted

M & E PROCESSES

To establish a shared understanding of each project’s objectives, logic models—simplified visual representations of activities and their intended outcomes—were developed. These models served as the foundation for formalized reporting structures, ensuring that only relevant and meaningful information was collected. Formal monitoring frameworks outlined data collection instruments, frequencies, and responsibilities.

VETS UNITED Animal Health and Welfare training

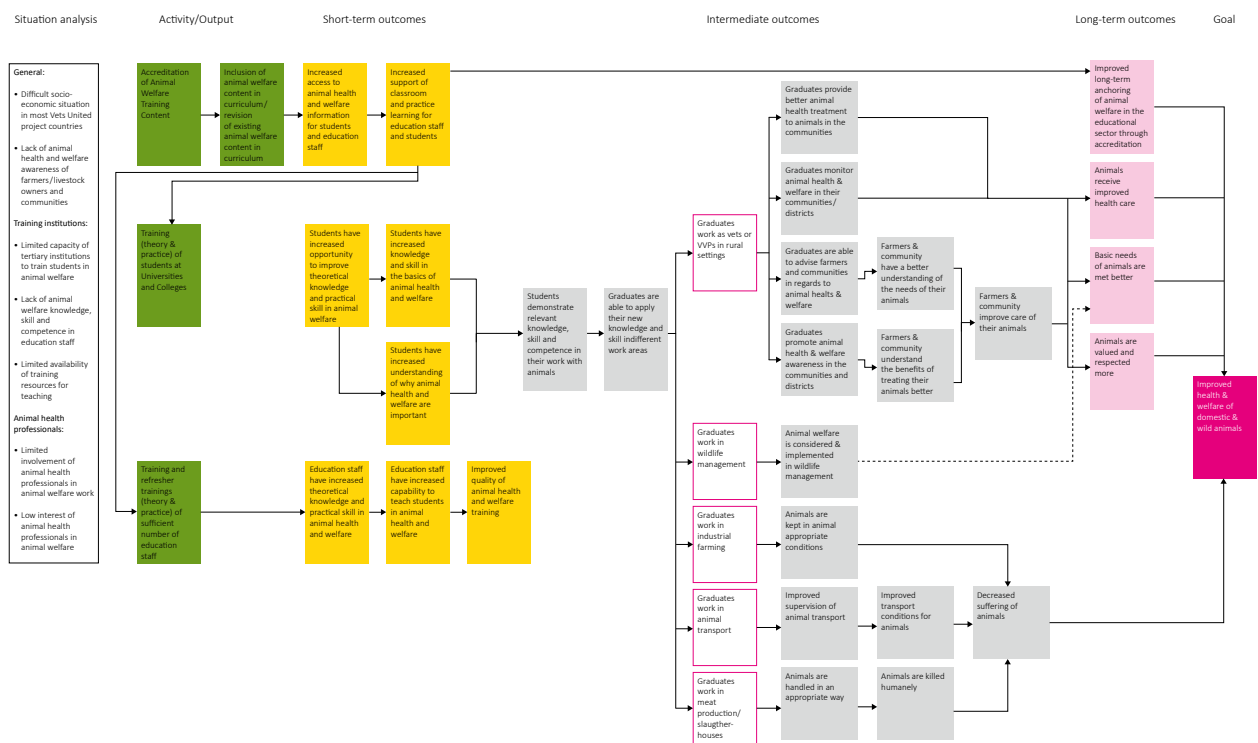


Figure 2: Example of a logic model for the academic education project in Kenya

TRACKING OF STUDY QUALITY AND SATISFACTION

Immediately after the training:

Routine feedback was collected at the end of each semester or training period to ensure the quality of the program. This feedback was also used to assess participant satisfaction, determine whether the training met their needs and expectations, and identify potential areas for improvement.

Feedback

Represents the number of times feedback was collected. For train the trainer approaches (CPD & education staff) trainees were asked on several occasions to provide feedback (multiple feedback on different aspects from individuals). Therefore, the number of feedback collected does not equal the number of individuals that provided feedback.

Trained / Training numbers

Represents the number of unique individuals trained

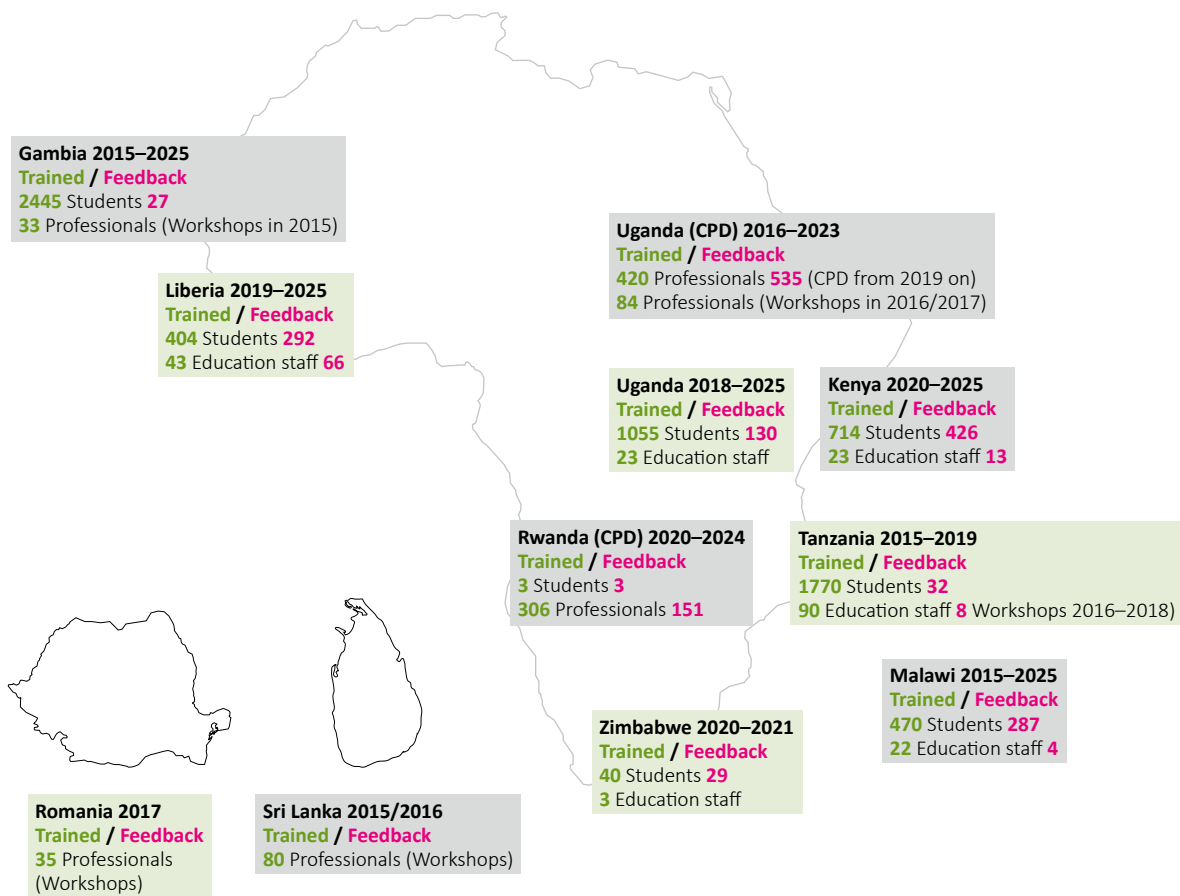


Figure 3: Overview VETS UNITED project activities and feedback collection

Animal Health & Welfare training - Student Feedback

Institution: Cullington University Lufa County Community College

Name or other identifier (e.g. enrolment number): _____
 Study programme: _____ Study year: _____ Date: _____

Please rate the following areas of the training (please tick what applies)

1. General

	Very good	Good	Acceptable	Poor	Very Poor
Overall satisfaction with the training					
Ratio between practical work and theoretical in class					
Gain of new knowledge from attending the training					
Gain of new skills from attending the training					
Overall value of the training for your future work					

2. Theory (in class)

	Very good	Good	Acceptable	Poor	Very poor
Amount of information received (quantity)					
Clarity and relevance of information received (quality)					
Quality of the theory training (facilities, equipment in lecture, teaching strategies, support for students)					

In this section, please think about how much you know **before** the training compared to what you know **now**. Please circle what applies.

a. **Before the training** – How knowledgeable were you in animal health and welfare theory?
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 Not Not Not Not Not Not Not Not Not Not
 knowledgeable knowledgeable knowledgeable knowledgeable knowledgeable knowledgeable knowledgeable knowledgeable knowledgeable
 at all at all at all at all at all at all at all at all at all

b. **After the training** – How knowledgeable are you now in animal health and welfare theory?
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 Not Not Not Not Not Not Not Not Not Not
 knowledgeable knowledgeable knowledgeable knowledgeable knowledgeable knowledgeable knowledgeable knowledgeable knowledgeable
 at all at all at all at all at all at all at all at all at all

3. Practical work (during the practice clinics)

	Very good	Good	Acceptable	Poor	Very poor
Amount of practical training received (quantity)					
Opportunity to participate hands-on in the practical training					
Diversity of practice scenarios (quality)					
Quality of the practical work (facilities, equipment in lecture, teaching strategies, support for students)					

In this section, please think about your practical skills **before** the training compared to your practical skills **now**. Please circle what applies.

a. **Before the training** – How good were your practical skills in animal health and welfare?
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 Not Not Not Not Not Not Not Not Not Not
 good good good good good good good good good good
 at all at all at all at all at all at all at all at all at all

b. **After the training** – How good are your practical skills in animal health and welfare now?
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 Not Not Not Not Not Not Not Not Not Not
 good good good good good good good good good good
 at all at all at all at all at all at all at all at all at all

4. What was most valuable for you about the training?

5. In what professional role would you like to work after graduation? _____

6. Do you see value in having Animal Welfare permanently in your curriculum?
 Yes No Maybe

7. What are your preferred Social Media channels to stay informed about animal welfare and health?
 Facebook Instagram Twitter TikTok
 Others (please name) _____

8. Please make any comments you feel will help us to improve the course!

Thank you for providing feedback. Your input is much appreciated and will help us to improve our work.
 Your training material is based on the VETS UNITED training resource, which is (free of charge) available online. If you are interested, please get to <https://teaching.vets.uni-wuerzburg.de/>

VETS UNITED follow-up training feedback form for lecturers

Name: _____ Role: _____
 Institution: _____ Country: _____ Date: _____

Please rate the following areas of the follow-up training (please tick what applies)

Your opinion about the follow-up training

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Overall, I was satisfied with the training					
The training was relevant for me					
I feel sufficiently informed on the topic(s) covered in the training					
The training format (training delivery) was suitable for me					
The training frequency is sufficient for me					

Development since the last training

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I have been able to include the theoretical animal welfare part from the last training(s) in my teaching					
I have been able to include the practical animal welfare input from the last training(s) in my teaching					
I feel confident and comfortable teaching others in animal welfare					
The teaching on animal welfare (theory & practice) has been well received by my students					

Are there any barriers to including animal welfare in your teaching? If yes, please describe:

Are there any enablers to including animal welfare in your teaching? If yes, please describe:

Is there any other type of support you would like? If yes, please describe:

How often do you have a follow-up training? Every 3 months Every 6 months Once a year
 Other

How often would you like to have a follow-up training? Every 3 months Every 6 months Once a year
 Other

Are there any other comments or suggestions you would like to make?

What are your preferred Social Media channels to stay informed about animal welfare and health?
 Facebook Instagram Twitter TikTok Others _____

Thank you for providing feedback. It will help us to improve our animal welfare education!

Figure 4: Example of student lecturer training feedback form

Student feedback

Students were asked to provide feedback on various aspects of their training (e.g., theoretical and practical components), their overall satisfaction, and the perceived value of the training for their future. A total of **6901** students from 19 universities and colleges were **trained** in the time from 2016–2024 and **1223** unique students from 15 institutions gave **feedback** on the VETS UNITED training content. The findings were consistent across different countries and study programs; therefore, selected results from different project countries are presented as examples.

These representative responses from Kenyan students indicate that the training was highly appreciated. Students reported gaining valuable knowledge and skills and viewed the training as beneficial for their future work. Generally, the ratio between practical work and theory was always rated lower, with many students expressing a need for more hands-on sessions in their studies. Students frequently mentioned now enhanced understanding of animal welfare and appreciated the practical skills gained through hands-on training and the deeper comprehension of theoretical concepts through applied learning in real-world contexts.

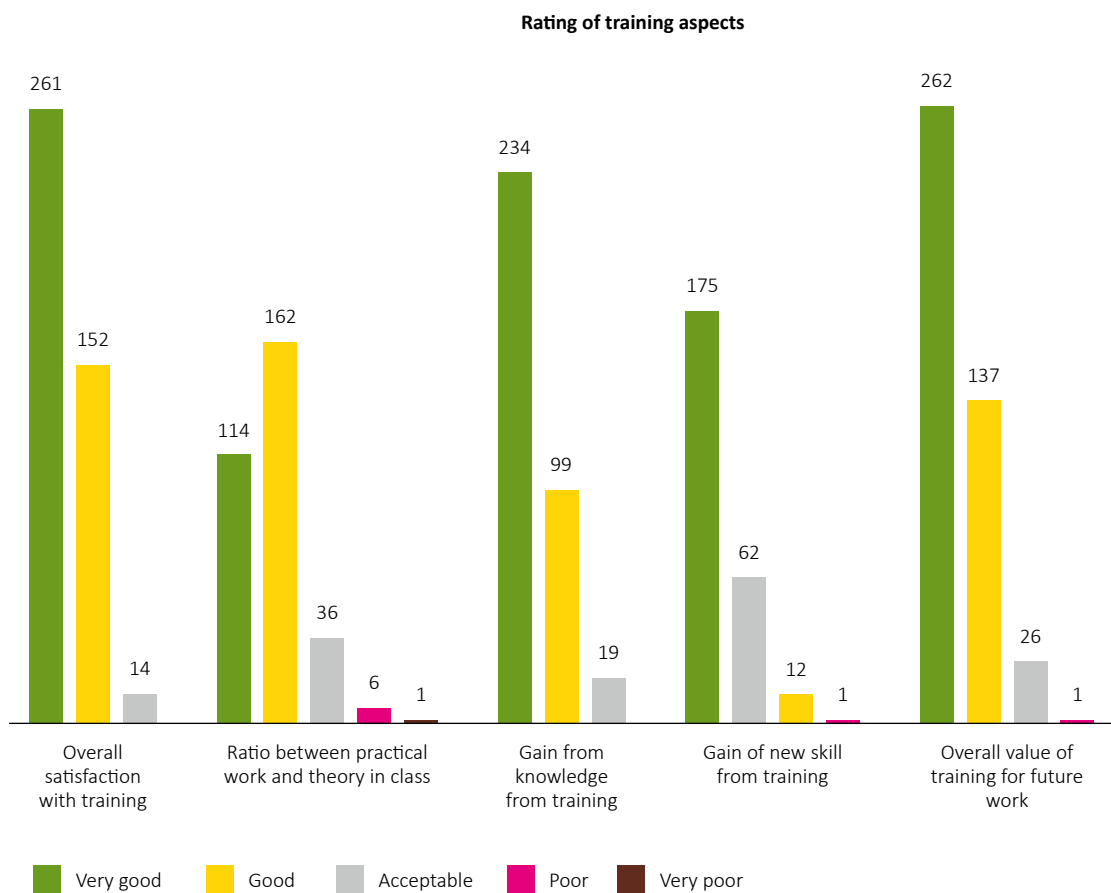


Figure 5: Kenya (2020–2025) — student rating of general aspects of the training (n = 427; 319; 352; 250; 426)

This feedback from Liberian students highlights the knowledge and skills gained through the training. Students were asked to rate their theoretical knowledge and practical skills before and after the training.

The average ratings show a clear improvement: according to their self-assessment, students progressed from an average score of 3–4 to an average of 8 on the rating scale, more than doubling their perceived knowledge and skills.

When asked whether they saw value in permanently adding Animal Welfare to their curriculum, students across various countries and programs overwhelmingly responded with “yes.”

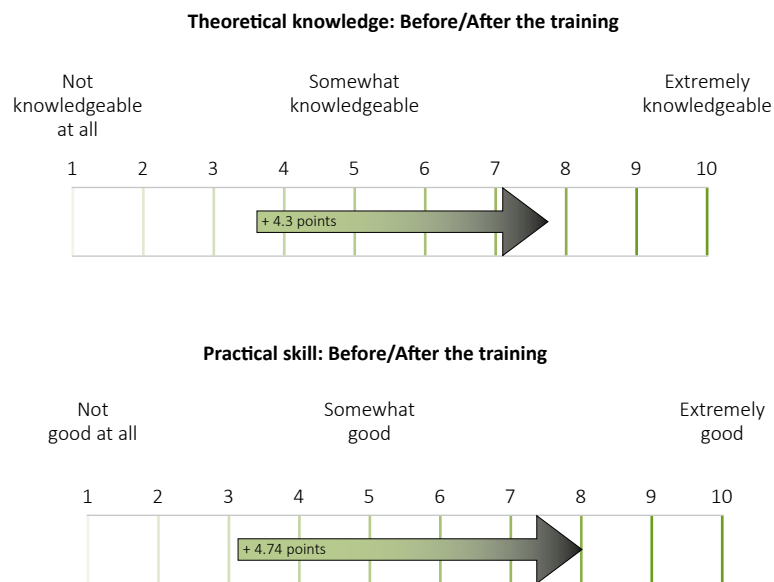


Figure 6: Liberia (2019) — Example student rating of knowledge and skill gain before and after training (n=27)

Student quotes (Malawi, 2021)

“The course lecturer was able to explain the concept theoretically, and later do the activity practically while involving the students step by step.”

“We are quite equipped with the information learnt theoretically and we are able to carry out different activities through the skills learnt during practical.”

Education staff feedback

Education staff were regularly invited to provide feedback on their training—both initial and refresher sessions—as well as their perceptions of student training and progress.

A total of **227** education staff were **trained**, and **107 feedback** submissions were collected (with some individuals providing feedback multiple times). Feedback covered various aspects of the training, including satisfaction levels and the ability to apply learnings in their teaching. The findings were consistent across countries and study programs, and the examples provided below are broadly representative.

The findings show a general high satisfaction of education staff with the training. A few participants (n=3) were less satisfied with their ability to include theoretical and practical learning in their teachings due to external influences (see barriers to teaching).

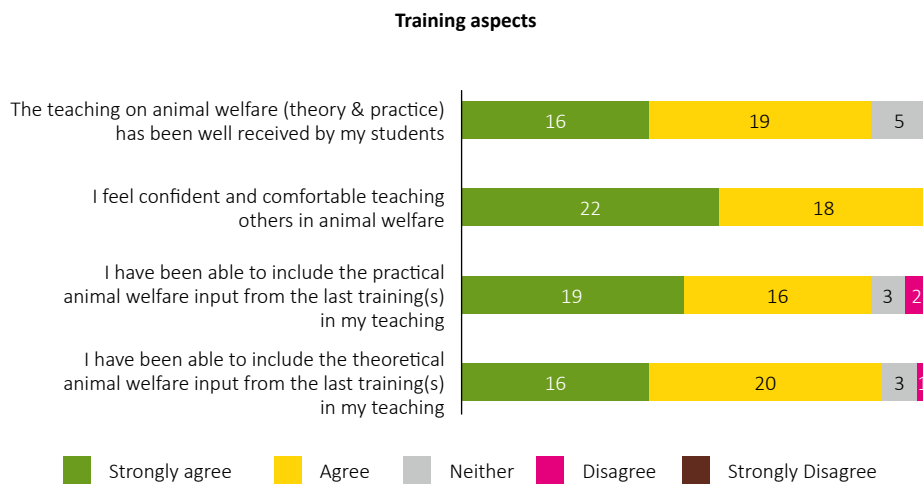


Figure 7: Rating of training aspects (Gambia, Liberia, Kenya, Malawi; n=40)

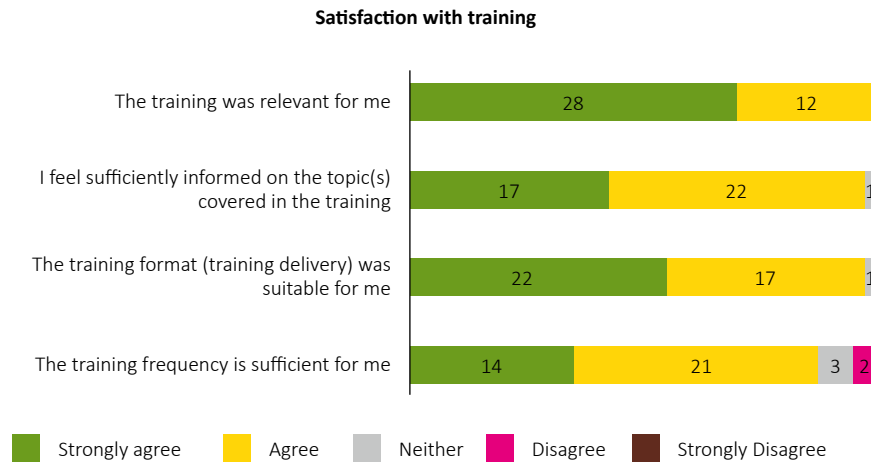


Figure 8: Rating of training satisfaction (Gambia, Liberia, Kenya, Malawi, n=40)

Education staff quote (Liberia, 2024)

“Animal welfare is key to keeping our animals healthy and productive so including it in our curriculum will enable students to know how to treat animal appropriately.”

Barriers to animal welfare teaching

- Insufficient teaching/training time as animal welfare is often not a stand-alone subject, but part of another course (e.g. animal health)
- Insufficient teaching materials, specifically for practicals
- Not all aspects of animal welfare are represented in curriculum, inclusion of new themes only during curriculum review (every 5 years) possible
- Not sufficient time allowance for practicals in teaching schedule

Enablers to animal welfare mentioned were often the reverse of the barriers, e.g. sufficient teaching materials, animal welfare as a stand-alone course and the general support/interest of the university or college.

Type of further support needed

- Support with teaching materials and field trips
- Professional enhancement of education staff

Changes over time:

Assessing changes in teaching conditions remains challenging due to ongoing staff turnover, recent curriculum revisions, evolving training methodologies, and shifting project parameters. The integration of animal welfare into university and college curricula, as well as the enhancement of existing animal welfare courses, has established a formal framework for its instruction. However, to ensure long-term impact and effectiveness, these developments must be systematically monitored and evaluated over time.

CPD participant feedback

Participants in CPD trainings (Rwanda and Uganda) were also asked to provide feedback on their training. Feedback collection comprised multiple levels including feedback from facilitators on the training and an assessment of trainees’ abilities to become trainers, feedback of trainees on their initial animal welfare training to become trainers (stage 1), feedback from the same individuals in their role as trainers (stage 2) and the people that were trained by them (stage 3). Most training participants provided feedback on multiple occasions. A total of **958** professionals were **trained**, and **686 feedback** submissions were collected.

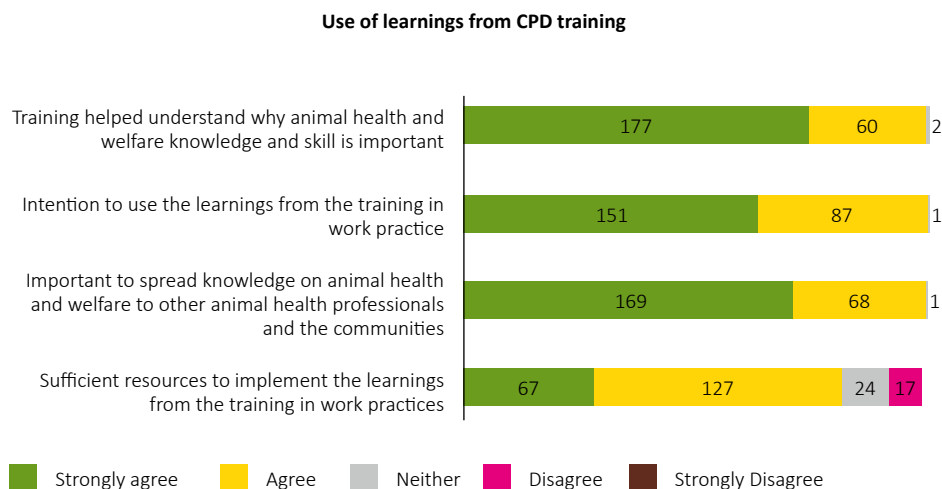


Figure 9: Ability to use learnings in work practice (Uganda CPD 2016-2023, n=240)

This graph shows the feedback from veterinary paraprofessionals, that were trained by vets that previously had received training using the training of trainers’ approach. The findings show a good understanding of animal welfare and use of animal welfare knowledge and skill in their work.

Findings from the training of trainers in Uganda and Rwanda show similar results.

Feedback from a refresher training for trainers in Rwanda (n=12) show 100% use of theoretical and practical animal welfare knowledge and skill in the work practice, confidence in training others in animal welfare and the ability to share information from the training, by training others in animal welfare.

Distance learning

Distance learning was introduced in 2020 as a response to the Covid-19 teaching and learning restrictions to mitigate the cancellation of classes and trainings. **1550** students, education staff and veterinary professionals were **invited to participate in the training**, **224** people provided **feedback** on their learning experience.

The implementation of distance learning was successful, considering it was a new approach to knowledge exchange for the VETS UNITED team. In several project countries, this teaching method is not yet culturally well-established, and common challenges such as limited internet connectivity, high mobile data costs, and lack of technical devices posed additional barriers.

Despite the constraints, participants found the training relevant to their studies or work and rated distance learning as an effective method for knowledge exchange—though not a full substitute for traditional theory-based teaching and hands-on practicals. Facilitators reported that the time and effort required to deliver the training were reasonable. However, not all target group members could be reached due to limited access to devices or internet. Participation levels fluctuated weekly, and the absence of formal assessments made it difficult to verify engagement and learning outcomes. While distance learning has limitations as a stand-alone method in this context, the overall positive results from the pilot suggest it could be a valuable complement to existing teaching models.

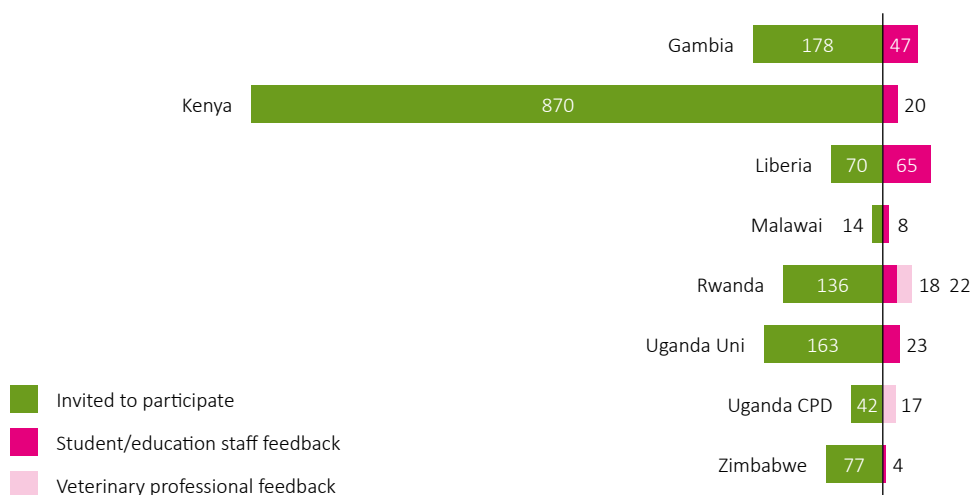


Figure 10: Overview target group distance learning and feedback across countries and projects (2020)

USE OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AND FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Student Tracer Studies and Evaluation

The purpose of the Student Tracer Studies and the evaluation was to gain insights into the employment and professional fields of former students, their ability to apply what they learned during training, their current work-related needs, and their suggestions for improving the VETS UNITED training — now that they have gained practical experience in the field.

Below an overview over studies and evaluations conducted.

Date	Country/Project	Evaluation activity	Nº of Participants
2017	Gambia	Evaluation	5+
2019	Gambia	Student Tracer Study	81
2020	Malawi	Student Tracer Study	66
2022	Liberia	Student Tracer Study	41

Table 1: Overview Student Tracer Studies and evaluations conducted

Findings Student Tracer Study

Participants in the Student Tracer Studies represented about 20 percent of the total number of reachable graduates. A portion of former students could not be contacted due to bounced emails, changed mobile phone numbers, or unavailable contact details. The student tracer study was conducted via an online survey. Findings here are presented across countries and projects. As the findings of the evaluation are similar to the Student Tracer Study, results are presented together.

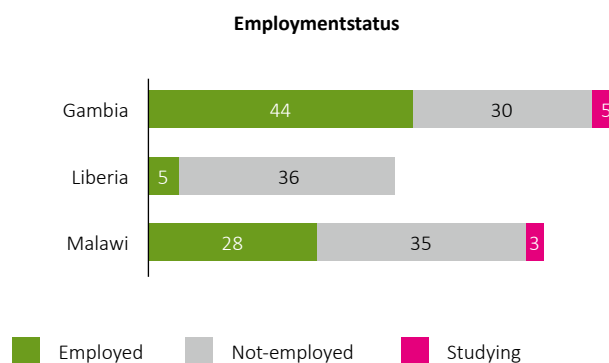


Figure 11: Employment status former students across project countries

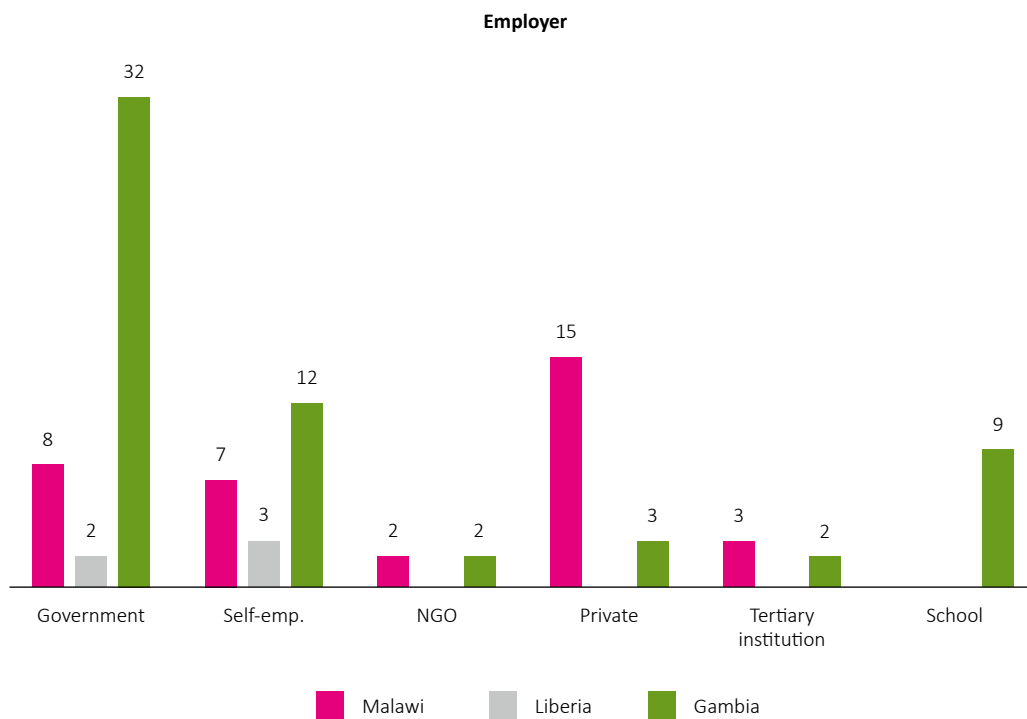


Figure 12: Employer of former students across project countries

Responses indicated that a significant number of former students were not employed. In Gambia, some of those who identified as unemployed were likely self-employed (n=12), while in Liberia, many survey participants had only recently graduated in the year the survey was conducted. Some of the unemployed participants had previously held jobs. Among those who were employed, most worked for the government, private sector organizations, or were selfemployed. All five for the evaluation selected paraveterinary professionals worked as livestock assistants for the government.

Most relevant topics for work

- Vaccinations
- Infectious diseases
- Animal care and husbandry
- Parasites
- Wound management
- Hygiene
- Basic surgery

Use of VETS UNITED learnings in work

- Animal welfare and five freedoms
- Clinical examination & case history
- Administration of drugs and antibiotics
- Raising animal health and welfare awareness with farmers in communities
- VETS UNITED training is relevant for work and helps to do a better job

Barriers to use

Responses from survey participants from different projects revealed similar barriers to applying the learnings from the animal welfare training. A lack of resources — both among veterinary/veterinary paraprofessionals and within the animal-owning communities — makes it difficult to provide adequate care. Limited mobility further hinders professionals from reaching communities, and vice versa. Additionally, low awareness and understanding of animal welfare within communities requires time and effort to improve.

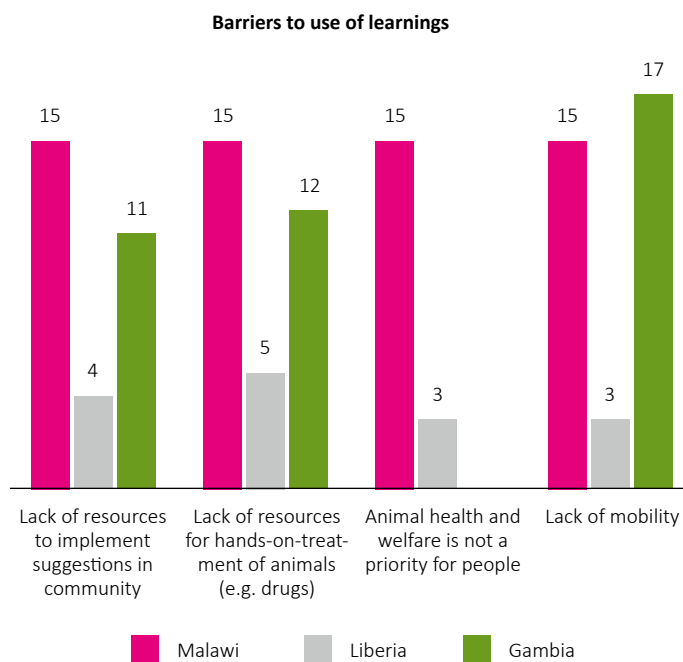


Figure 13: Barriers to use of learnings (n=25; n=24; n=34)

Quotes from participants:

“I’ve farmer groups to whom I do offer livestock health and production lessons. Through these, knowledge is being imparted to farmers and a few of them have shown positivity in adherence” (Malawi, 2020)

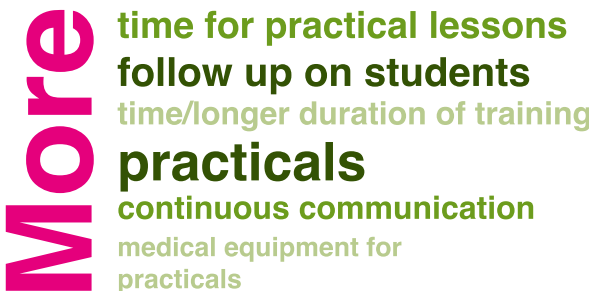
“The people of the community, they lack education and are not very aware. If I tell them about animal welfare, they respond back by saying, before animal welfare, human welfare first.” (Gambia, 2019)

“Limited funding and staffing often make it impossible to provide the level of animal welfare that we would like to achieve”. (Liberia, 2022)

Ideas for improvement of VETS UNITED training

When asked to retrospectively suggest improvements to the VETS UNITED training, participants from all countries shared similar ideas. Their desire for more practical lessons, longer training durations, and additional resources aligns closely with the feedback provided by students during the training itself.

“There is need for more hands on for every student in practice, because animals are living things and they deserve proper care and handling which can only be achieved through more hands-on experience.” (Malawi)



More time for practical lessons
follow up on students
time/longer duration of training
practicals
continuous communication
medical equipment for
practicals

Figure 14: Ideas for improvement of VETS UNITED training

Evaluation of the Gambia project in 2017

The aim of the evaluation was to assess whether former students applied the knowledge and skills gained from the VETS UNITED animal welfare training in practice, actively promoted animal health and welfare in their communities, and contributed to measurable improvements in animal welfare.

Five livestock assistants were selected for the evaluation. Each had prior experience in the role and resumed their duties after graduating. They were employed by the Department for Livestock Services, which oversees animal health services, supports farmers in animal management and production, and handles disease prevention and control. Each assistant served 20–47 villages within their district.

Their previous experience provided valuable insights into how their practices had evolved post-training. Additionally, interviews were conducted with **five to fifteen** animal keepers in each community to gather further perspectives.

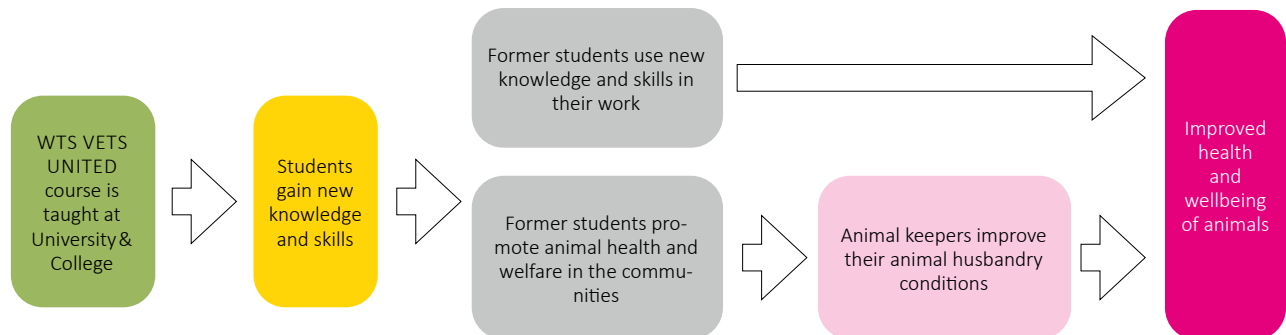


Figure 15: Simplified visualisation of the Gambia project activities regarding students and the desired outcomes

Findings

According to their records, the five livestock assistants treated nearly 5.000 animals in the three months leading up to the evaluation. During the evaluation they showed strong practical skills and a solid understanding of animal health and welfare. When asked about changes in their approach, they noted that animal welfare was a new concept introduced by the training. Previously, their focus was limited to treating illness and injury; now, they also prioritize improving living conditions and handling practices to prevent health issues.

Quote livestock assistant: “...initially we were more concerned about clinical intervention. But because of the concept of animal welfare [...] this knowledge sticks in our brain, so we are also taking another direction, by telling the farmers that a clinical intervention is not the only concern, but how to prevent it is also important.” (2017)

Despite their prior experience, the livestock assistants reported noticeable improvements in their skills and approach following the VETS UNITED animal welfare training. They now provide farmers with aftercare instructions, conduct followup visits, and assess the animal holistically rather than focusing solely on symptoms. They gather case histories, inquire about living conditions, and lead treatment decisions with greater confidence—shifting from reactive care to proactive welfare management. Livestock assistants actively promoted animal health and welfare by engaging in regular dialogue with animal keepers, showcasing best practices through role models, and initiating animal welfare groups. Their strong, trust-based relationships with community members made them well-respected and valued.

Quote animal keeper: “When he (livestock assistant) comes, at times we will say this is wrong with my horse, he will say no, the problem with your horse is that it is feeding on the ground. You have to clear this place, so that there is a feeding trough. If the animal is eating sand with the hay, it can develop colic and other problems. He’s always after those type of things to ensure that the place is clean and the animals are fed in clean containers.” (2017)

Quote livestock assistant: “I see that they have appreciated my advice on animal welfare by providing shelter, by giving them feed, clean water. In fact, you see people [...] use barrels and clean them clear and water their animals, this was not the case before. They will go to the well and they will drink for themselves. This is not the case now.” (2017)

Evaluation findings confirm that education is an effective tool for improving animal welfare. Livestock assistants enhanced their practices, and animal keepers are making meaningful changes within their means. However, poverty and limited resources—both private and public—remain significant barriers to further progress in Gambia.

What helps livestock assistants in their work?

- Good, trust-based relationships with animal keepers and communities
- Contribution of animal keepers to petrol costs, payment for medication and vaccines
- Country-wide vaccination campaigns

What makes their work difficult?

- Lack of transport
- Poor availability of medication and vaccines, poor transport- and storage possibilities for medication and vaccines
- Lack of public resources available for animal health and welfare
- Lack of human resources to raise further awareness about animal health and welfare in the general public.
- Lack of access to further learning resources
- Lack of awareness in some animal keepers and general lack of financial means to improve husbandry conditions
- Cultural practices, traditions and values of different tribes can either enable or hinder animal welfare work
- General environmental conditions

STATUS QUO PROFESSIONAL DEMANDS AND CURRICULUM IMPROVEMENTS

Gaps/Needs Analysis

Like to the Student Tracer Study, the Gaps/Needs Analysis targeted veterinary professionals working in the field, aiming to gain insights into relevant topics in their daily work, current educational needs, and gaps in previous training. The study specifically focused on professionals who had not participated in the VETS UNITED program. It was conducted prior to curriculum reviews at universities and colleges in the project countries, with the goal of informing decisions about curriculum changes based on identified educational needs. Most of the studies were conducted via online surveys, with the exception of Liberia, where data was collected through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews.

Date	Country/Project	Nº of Participants	Target group
2020/2021	Kenya	154	Former university students (not VETS UNITED students)
2020	Malawi	20	Veterinary paraprofessionals
2021	Liberia	7	Vets & veterinary paraprofessionals
2021	Zimbabwe	32	Vets, veterinary paraprofessionals & others

Table 2: Overview Gaps/Needs Analysis activities

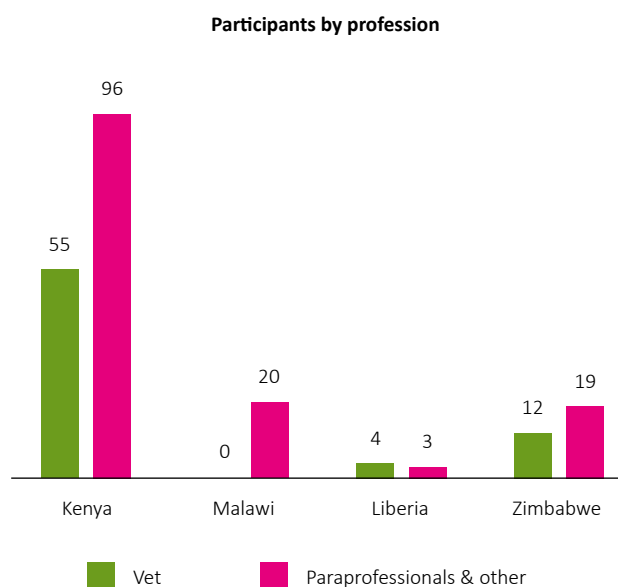


Figure 16: Profession of participants (n=154; n=20; n=7; n=32)

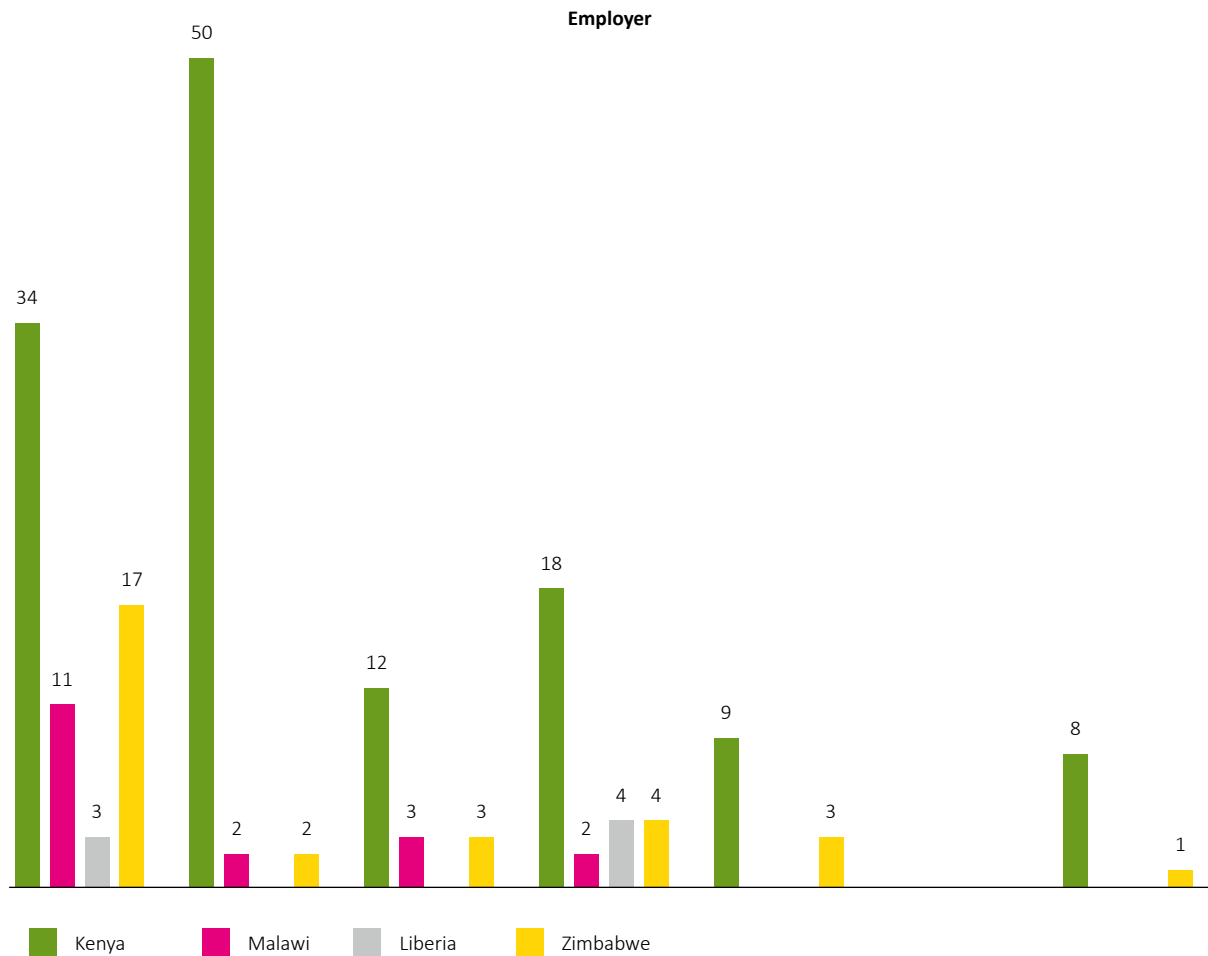


Figure 17: Employer of participants (n=131; n=18; n=7; n=30)

The distribution of employers was, similar to the Student Tracer Study, with government institutions, private sector organizations, NGOs, and self-employment representing the main types of employment.

Most relevant topics for work

- Infectious diseases
- Animal care and husbandry
- Vaccinations
- Parasites
- Hygiene
- Use of antibiotics
- Clinical examination
- One Health

Participants reported that these topics were generally well to very well covered during their studies. However, the connection between the topics and their animal welfare aspects was often addressed less thoroughly.

Reasons for poor coverage of topics during study:

- Not enough information received in the curriculum
- Not enough topics were covered
- Not sufficient opportunity for practical hands-on work on the animals
- Lack of reference material

Topics missing in the education

The topics identified by participants as missing from their education varied by country and profession. Veterinary paraprofessionals were often more interested in subjects such as surgery, euthanasia, and animal management and production, while veterinarians expressed interest in veterinary economics. Commonly mentioned topics included animal welfare and disease management.

Additional topics raised were legislation, One Health, small animal practice, stray population control, and wildlife management.

The topics identified as missing in formal education were also recognized as important areas for further professional development. Although most participants—across the various studies and surveys—had already engaged in some form of continuing education, all expressed interest in additional training. Workshops and seminars (formal, participatory, face-to-face) were the preferred training formats across all participant groups.

FINDINGS SUMMARY

The evaluation of data related to student training, education staff development, and continuous professional development for veterinary and veterinary paraprofessionals has shown that the training provided is of high quality and has improved steadily over the years. Participants consistently acquire strong animal welfare knowledge and practical skills, equipping them well for their professional responsibilities.

Feedback from former VETS UNITED trainees indicates that they are applying their knowledge in their work environments, sharing insights with colleagues and communities, and observing positive changes as a result of their efforts. Unplanned developments, such as the establishment of a Student Animal Advocates group in Gambia that actively tours the country to raise animal welfare awareness, have further contributed to enhancing animal welfare in the project country.

The strategic shift in 2023 from student-focused education to training educators has been effective so far, though it requires ongoing monitoring to ensure long-term success. Upkeep of follow-up refresher training and animal welfare training for new education staff is important to keep animal welfare knowledge and skills adequate.

However, several external factors continue to limit the full achievement of project and program goals. These include:

- Limited employment opportunities
- Resource constraints (private and government)
- Weak enforcement of animal welfare legislation
- Restricted mobility
- Poverty
- Traditional animal husbandry practices

These challenges significantly influence the potential for animal welfare improvements in individual project countries and must be considered in future planning and implementation.

Routine monitoring and surveys offer, due to project contexts, only a snapshot of the current situation, making long-term impact difficult to assess. Student feedback reflects only present perceptions, as cohorts change frequently and lack context on past or future conditions. For example, early student groups requested more practical training — just as current students do — despite increased practice hours over time.

Teaching conditions can be evaluated by educators, but only those with long-term involvement in animal welfare instruction. Existing staff questionnaires focus on satisfaction and general barriers/enablers and must be revised to enable before-and-after comparisons.

Community-level changes in animal welfare are tracked through Student Tracer Studies, but high unemployment and the slow pace of societal change hinder accurate evaluation. Robust, long-term studies will be needed to assess broader societal impact.

LIMITATIONS TO THE M&E WORK

Routine data collection

Initially, attendance and participant feedback were collected in hardcopy due to limited internet access, lack of compatible devices, and time constraints. This created a significant workload for both partners and the WTS M&E team, as forms had to be scanned and emailed for manual data entry. Poor handwriting often led to incomplete data and time-intensive processing. Data collection by partners on-site may have introduced bias in trainee responses .

After transitioning to offline and online platforms (e.g., JotForm, SurveyMonkey), issues with device access and connectivity persisted. “Self-entry” by participants often resulted in low data entry numbers. Data entry into student and staff databases was frequently delayed and required extensive follow-up, with quality and completeness remaining inconsistent. Additionally, the use of online surveys limits control over respondent eligibility.

Since responsibilities were handed over to teaching institutions, data collection has become even more challenging, as partner organisations now depend on the willingness of these institutions to collect and report data.

Monitoring tools and questionnaires have been refined over time. However, due to changes in wording and structure, a direct one-to-one comparison across all questions is not always possible.

Due to long-distance cooperation sometimes needs, requirements and changes were not ideally communicated.

Studies and surveys

Many training participants were difficult or impossible to reach due to incomplete contact data, changes in email addresses and phone numbers. Early-semester participants were less connected (e.g., via WhatsApp groups) compared to those in later semesters. In some cases, participant numbers were very low, rendering the findings less representative.

Data analysis and use of information

Due to the large volume of data and the limited capacity of the WTS side, routine and regular analysis of the collected information was not feasible. As a result, data analysis and summarisation were restricted to specific needs and use cases. Furthermore, the collected information was not always effectively utilised to support decision-making processes, highlighting significant room for improvement in this area.

Limitations in Assessing Change

Changes in educational settings- particularly in formal training- can only be partially assessed, as their true impact often emerges later in practical work within communities. More comprehensive evaluations are needed to capture these longterm effects.

While Student Tracer Studies offer some insight into graduates’ professional realities, their reliability is limited. Responses may reflect socially desirable answers, and there is no mechanism to verify their accuracy.

NEXT STEPS

With the handover of responsibilities to partner organisations and a reduction in project funding, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) activities have been scaled down to the minimum necessary level.

Looking ahead, it will be essential to assess:

- The long-term availability of animal welfare content and qualified education staff
- Whether teaching quality remains consistent and at an acceptable standard

These aspects will be evaluated through periodic activities such as staff surveys conducted every few years.

New projects will receive support in developing their own M&E frameworks and activities. However, this support will be limited to guidance on framework development, with reduced documentation and reporting requirements on the WTS/VETS UNITED side.

Ex-post evaluations of former projects could provide further insights into sustainability and long-term impact of projects.

IMPRINT

Author: Natascha Pancic, Monitoring and Evaluation, Welttierschutzgesellschaft e.V. (WTG)

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