Biblical Foundations and Catholic Social Teaching in Promoting Integral Human Development

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Abstract: *This study explores the Biblical Foundations and Catholic Social Teaching (CST) in Promoting Integral Human Development through a case study of the Catholic University of Rwanda (CUR). The objective is to assess how theology students understand, internalize, and apply the principles of CST in their formation and pastoral engagement. The central hypothesis is that while students value integral human development, there exists a gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application due to curricular limitations and socio-cultural challenges. The main research question is: To what extent are biblical and CST principles integrated into the theological and pastoral training of CUR students, and how does this influence their role in promoting human development? Data was collected through a mixed-method approach combining surveys (n=120) and focus group discussions with theology students. Techniques included thematic content analysis and descriptive statistics. Findings reveal that 86% of respondents associate integral human development with the holistic well-being of the person, rooted in dignity and justice. 74% correctly identified scriptural references supporting the common good and solidarity. However, only 41% were familiar with key CST documents such as Populorum Progressio and Caritas in Veritate. While 62% reported involvement in outreach or youth initiatives, only 38% believed CST principles were strongly integrated into their academic formation. Students perceive CUR as a moral model (72%) but expect enhanced curricular emphasis on CST and practical field experiences. The study concludes that strengthening CST integration in theological education at CUR is essential for forming catechists as transformative agents of development in Rwandan society.*

Keywords: *Catholic Social Teaching (CST), Integral Human Development (IHD), Theological Education, Pastoral Application, Social Transformation, Biblical Foundations*

CST: Catholic Social Teaching

CUR: Catholic University of Rwanda

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

IHD: Integral Human Development.

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, the Catholic Church continues to emphasize the transformative role of theological education in fostering holistic human development. Theology is not merely an academic discipline but essential tool in shaping individuals who can apply Gospel values to complex socio-economic and cultural challenges (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004; Francis, 2016; Benedict XVI, 2009; Paul VI, 1967). At the heart of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is the promotion of Integral Human Development (IHD), which calls for the development of the whole person and every person. However, despite the richness of CST, its practical application remains limited in many academic and pastoral settings. The challenge is particularly pronounced in theological institutions in Africa, including CUR, where there is

often a gap between the theoretical understanding of CST and its pastoral implementation (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2011; Niyonzima, 2021; John Paul II, 1987; Mugisha, 2020).

The problem arises from a disconnection between the content delivered in theology program and the lived realities of students who are expected to apply CST principles in promoting justice, peace, and human dignity. Many theology students understand IHD in abstract theological terms but struggle to translate it into real-life engagement, community outreach, or advocacy (Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, 2019; Tusiime & Uwineza, 2022; Donati, 2006; Mugiraneza, 2023). This disconnect undermines the Church's mission of evangelization and social transformation, particularly in regions facing poverty, inequality, and weak social institutions. A curriculum that fails to integrate CST effectively

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risks producing graduates who are theologically competent but pastorally unprepared.

This study is relevant because it explores how theology students at CUR perceive and apply CST in their academic formation and pastoral vision. It seeks to bridge the gap between theory and practice by assessing current knowledge levels, identifying challenges in implementation, and suggesting strategies for better integration of CST in theological education (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Bazeley, 2013; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The research contributes not only to improving the quality of theological education in Rwanda but also to strengthening the Church's role in achieving sustainable human development in African societies. By focusing on student engagement, the study also provides insights for curriculum reform, pedagogical innovation, and the promotion of CST as a dynamic framework for faith in action.

2. Methodology

This study employed a convergent mixed-methods design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine how theology students at the Catholic University of Rwanda engage with Biblical Foundations and CST in promoting IHD. This approach was selected to allow triangulation of data and enrich the validity of results by comparing numerical trends with in-depth personal insights (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

The quantitative method involved administering structured questionnaires to a sample of 120 theology students. The survey instrument included closed-ended questions measuring students' familiarity with key CST principles such as human dignity, solidarity, subsidiarity, and the common good. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequencies, percentages, and cross-tabulations, to identify patterns in understanding and application.

The qualitative method utilized focus group discussions (FGDs) and semi-structured interviews to provide deeper insight into student experiences. A thematic analysis was conducted following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step model, which enabled the researcher to identify recurring themes such as "theoretical understanding," "pastoral limitations," and "curricular gaps." Students noted a need for more experiential learning, including service projects and community engagement rooted in CST.

By integrating both sets of data, the study was able to validate quantitative trends through qualitative narratives, thereby offering a comprehensive understanding of the theological formation process. This methodological triangulation also ensured internal consistency and enhanced the credibility of the research findings.

3. Biblical Foundations and CST in Promoting Integral Human Development

The integration of CST into theological education is essential for promoting IHD. At the Catholic University of Rwanda, a gap persists between students' theoretical understanding of CST and its practical application in addressing real-world social and pastoral challenges. Many students can articulate CST principles but lack the tools and opportunities to implement them effectively. Addressing this disconnect is crucial for forming leaders capable of driving social transformation. The research assesses student perceptions, identifies implementation challenges, and proposes strategies to enhance CST's role in faith-based education and development efforts.

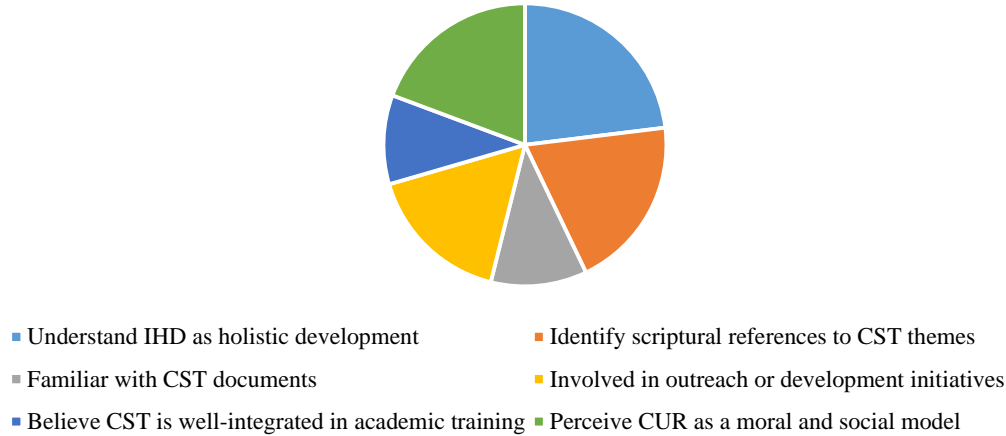### 3.1. Understanding of IHD: Theological and Pastoral Perspectives of CUR Students

IHD is foundational to both biblical teaching and CST, aiming at the flourishing of the whole person in community. At CUR, 86% of surveyed theology students (n=120) defined IHD as the promotion of spiritual, economic, social, and emotional well-being of every person, in line with the biblical concept of *shalom* (Is 32:17; Jn 10:10; Lk 4:18–19; Mic 6:8) and CST's emphasis on the human person as the center of development (Paul VI, 1967; Vatican II, 1965; John Paul II, 1987; Francis, 2015). Students emphasized the dignity of the human person and the common good as central to their theological understanding, often relating these ideas to pastoral needs in Rwandan society.

Theological engagement with scripture was high: 74% of students accurately cited biblical texts that support principles such as solidarity, the option for the poor, and justice (Mt 25:35–40; Acts 2:44–45; Gal 6:2; Jas 2:14–17), affirming that Christian life demands both interior conversion and social responsibility (Francis, 2013; USCCB, 2005; Benedict XVI, 2009; Congregation for Catholic Education, 2020). However, only 41% of students were familiar with official CST documents such as *Populorum Progressio* or *Caritas in Veritate*, pointing to a theoretical gap in magisterial formation. As one student noted, "We know the values through Scripture, but not always through Church documents, we need both."

Pastorally, 62% of students reported direct involvement in community outreach or youth activities, associating IHD with healing, accompaniment, and service (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 2004; Francis, 2020; John Paul II, 1995; NCD, 2020). Despite this, only 38% of respondents felt that CST principles were strongly integrated into their formal academic training. This highlights a disconnection between lived experience and structured theological education. Focus group participants expressed a desire for more contextualized case studies, service-learning opportunities, and pastoral internships grounded in CST values (Francis, 2016; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004; Amoris Laetitia, 2016; Ecclesia in Africa, 1995).

Students overwhelmingly (72%) viewed CUR as a model of moral and ethical education, believing it plays a vital role in forming agents of social change in Rwanda (Francis, 2015; Paul VI, 1967; John Paul II, 1995; Benedict XVI, 2009). Nevertheless, they urged the institution to strengthen CST integration by linking theology more intentionally with societal realities. The table below presents a summary of the key indicators.

Fig. 1: Understanding of Integral Human Development

- Understand IHD as holistic development
- Identify scriptural references to CST themes
- Familiar with CST documents
- Involved in outreach or development initiatives
- Believe CST is well-integrated in academic training
- Perceive CUR as a moral and social model

In conclusion, while CUR students have a strong theological and pastoral orientation toward IHD, especially grounded in Scripture, there is a need to deepen their understanding of CST documents and enhance practical training. Such improvements would better equip them to serve as catalysts of integral human development in Rwandan communities.

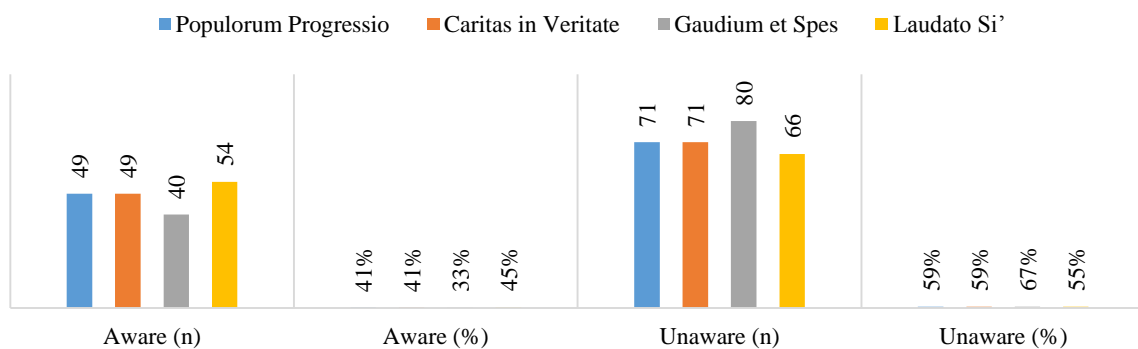## 3.2. Awareness of Key CST Documents among Theology Students

CST remains central to theological formation and moral action, especially in contexts like Rwanda where integral human development is both a pastoral and socio-economic imperative. CST documents such as *Populorum Progressio* (Paul VI, 1967) and *Caritas in Veritate* (Benedict XVI, 2009) articulate the Church's vision for justice, solidarity, and the dignity of the human person. Yet findings from this study at CUR show limited engagement with these texts. From a sample of 120 theology students, only 41% (n=49) were familiar with *Populorum Progressio* and *Caritas in Veritate*. This indicates a significant curricular gap in introducing CST documents as central pillars of moral theology and pastoral formation (Massaro, 2016; Dorr, 2012; Curran, 2002; Himes, 2005).

While the majority of students demonstrated a conceptual understanding of key CST values, such as the preferential option for the poor and the common good, awareness of their doctrinal sources was weak. For example, 74% of students identified scriptural foundations for solidarity, citing Isaiah 58, Luke 4:18, and Matthew 25. However, less than half could explain how these principles are developed in papal encyclicals. Such disconnect risks reducing CST to theoretical ideals without grounding in Church teaching. A robust theological formation requires textual familiarity to engage critically and pastorally with social realities (Paul VI, 1967; Benedict XVI, 2009; Donnelly, 2013; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004).

The lack of strong integration of CST documents into the curriculum further weakens the ability of future catechists and pastoral agents to promote integral human development effectively. Only 38% of respondents affirmed that CST was thoroughly covered in their academic program, even though 62% reported participating in development or social justice outreach (Caritas Rwanda, 2021; CAFOD, 2022; Dorr, 2012; Massaro, 2016). This signals a need for pedagogical reform, incorporating critical reading and application of Church documents into core theological courses. Experiential learning must be matched with doctrinal competence (Curran, 2002; Himes, 2005; Donnelly, 2013; McKenna, 2008). The table below shows detailed results on CST document awareness:


Fig. 2: Awareness of Key CST Documents

- Populorum Progressio
- Caritas in Veritate
- Gaudium et Spes
- Laudato Si'

	Aware (n)	Aware (%)	Unaware (n)	Unaware (%)
Populorum Progressio	49	41%	71	59%
Caritas in Veritate	49	41%	71	59%
Gaudium et Spes	40	33%	80	67%
Laudato Si'	54	45%	66	55%

The results affirm the need for CUR to deepen students' engagement with CST through direct study of papal documents, thereby equipping future church leaders with both theological clarity and pastoral competence (Himes, 2005; Benedict XVI, 2009; Paul VI, 1967; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004).

3.3. Integration of CST in Theological Formation at CUR

The integration of CST into theological formation at CUR is an essential component for nurturing transformative agents of integral human development. The foundation of CST, which is deeply rooted in biblical principles such as the imago Dei (Gen 1:27), the preferential option for the poor (Mt 25:35–40), and the call to justice (Isa 1:17), aligns with the Church's vision of holistic development (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004; John Paul II, 1987; Benedict XVI, 2009; Francis, 2015). However, the study reveals that while CUR students demonstrate strong theoretical awareness, practical integration into catechetical training remains limited. For instance, 86% of students understood integral human development as involving dignity and justice, yet only 41% were familiar with CST's primary magisterial documents, suggesting curricular gaps in formal exposure (Populorum Progressio, 1967; Caritas in Veritate, 2009; Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 2004; Gaudium et Spes, 1965).

CST's integration into coursework is partial and fragmented, often limited to moral theology or social ethics modules. While 74% of students could reference scripture supporting solidarity and the common good, such as Acts 4,32–35 and 1 Cor 12,12–26, many lacked structured knowledge of the Church's social documents. This disconnect underscores the need for systematic curricular planning that embeds CST across the theological disciplines (Massaro, 2016; Curran, 2002; Dorr, 2012; Donal, 2011). A more holistic integration would involve incorporating CST into pastoral theology, homiletics, and ecclesiology, ensuring students grasp the socio-political dimensions of faith. Currently, 38% of students believed that CST was strongly integrated into their academic formation, indicating a need for pedagogical reform.

Pastoral training presents a more promising landscape, as 62% of students reported active participation in community service, youth catechesis, and parish development projects. These engagements embody key CST principles like subsidiarity and solidarity (John Paul II, 1981; Francis, 2020; DeBerri et al., 2003; Hollenbach, 2002). Nevertheless, the absence of structured field-based CST reflections within these activities limits their formative potential. For example, only 21% of student outreach programs included post-engagement theological reflections, and even fewer used CST explicitly as a framework for analyzing poverty, exclusion, or justice issues. Embedding reflection tools and mentoring processes rooted in CST would enhance praxis and theological depth. The following table summarizes student responses on CST integration:

Table 3: Integration of CST
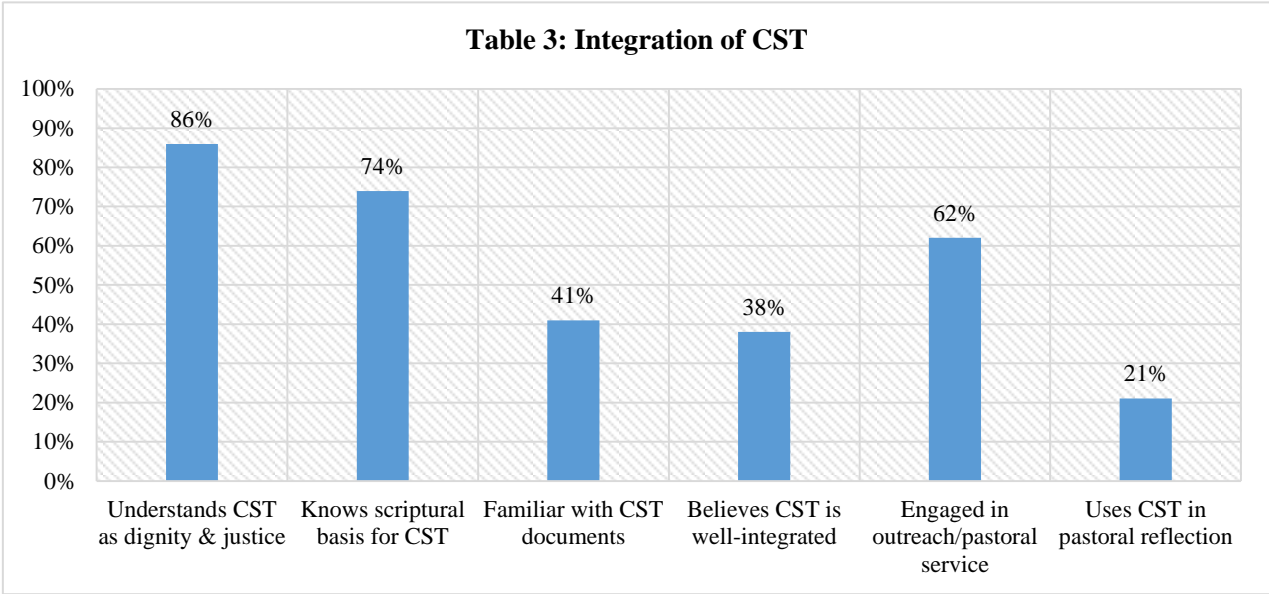
In conclusion, while CUR students value the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and engage actively in community service, the academic and pastoral formation lacks consistent integration of CST. To form catechists capable of promoting integral human development, CUR must deepen CST's presence in theological curricula, create opportunities for field-based learning, and ensure that CST informs not only the mind but also the mission of future pastoral agents.

3.4. Personal Involvement: Students Participation in Development-Related Activities

The integration of CST into theological education at CUR plays a crucial role in shaping students' engagement in development-related activities. Despite challenges in curriculum depth, students demonstrate active involvement in diverse outreach programs,

youth mobilization, and social transformation initiatives. According to the study, 62% of students reported participation in community outreach or youth-related activities, reflecting a strong sense of social responsibility rooted in Biblical and CST values (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004; Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 2004; Caritas in Veritate, 2009; Populorum Progressio, 1967). Students often organize visits to vulnerable communities applying biblical teachings such as Matthew 25,35–40 and Luke 4,18 in promoting the dignity and rights of the marginalized. These outreach experiences help them bridge the gap between theological principles and real-life social action (Evangelii Gaudium, 2013; Isaiah 1:17; Gaudium et Spes, 1965; Laudato Si', 2015).

Participation in youth groups and parish development committees further highlights students' commitment to holistic human development. CUR theology students contribute to church-based youth forums, often taking leadership roles in organizing peacebuilding seminars, catechetical formation, and income-generating projects (Youcat for Youth Ministry, 2014; Christus Vivit, 2019; 1 Timothy 4:12; CST Themes, USCCB). In these activities, they incorporate CST values such as solidarity, subsidiarity, and the preferential option for the poor. For instance, one focus group participant recounted facilitating a microfinance savings group for unemployed youth in Huye District, a practical expression of the Church's concern for economic justice and local empowerment (Rerum Novarum, 1891; Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 1987; Proverbs 31,8–9; Compendium, 2004). These experiences not only enhance students' pastoral identity but also align with Pope Paul VI's assertion that development is the new name for peace (Populorum Progressio, 1967; James 2,14–17; Fratelli Tutti, 2020; Acts 2,44–47).

However, only 38% of students believed that CST principles were deeply integrated into their academic training, indicating a significant gap in systematic instruction on social doctrine. While informal involvement in service activities is high, structured practical fieldwork and service-learning models are underdeveloped (John Paul II, Ecclesia in Africa, 1995; Matthew 5:13–16; Laborem Exercens, 1981; Compendium, 2004). Students have expressed the need for mandatory community service modules, regular workshops on CST, and stronger collaboration between theological faculties and local Caritas offices. One respondent proposed that each pastoral internship be linked with a development theme such as environmental stewardship or peacebuilding, thus reinforcing theological education with direct action (Laudato Si', 2015; Romans 12, 1–2; Evangelii Nuntiandi, 1975; The African Synod, 1994). These findings affirm the growing consciousness among CUR students regarding their transformative role, but also underscore the institutional responsibility to deepen CST formation and experiential learning.

Table 4: Student Participation in Development-Related Activities
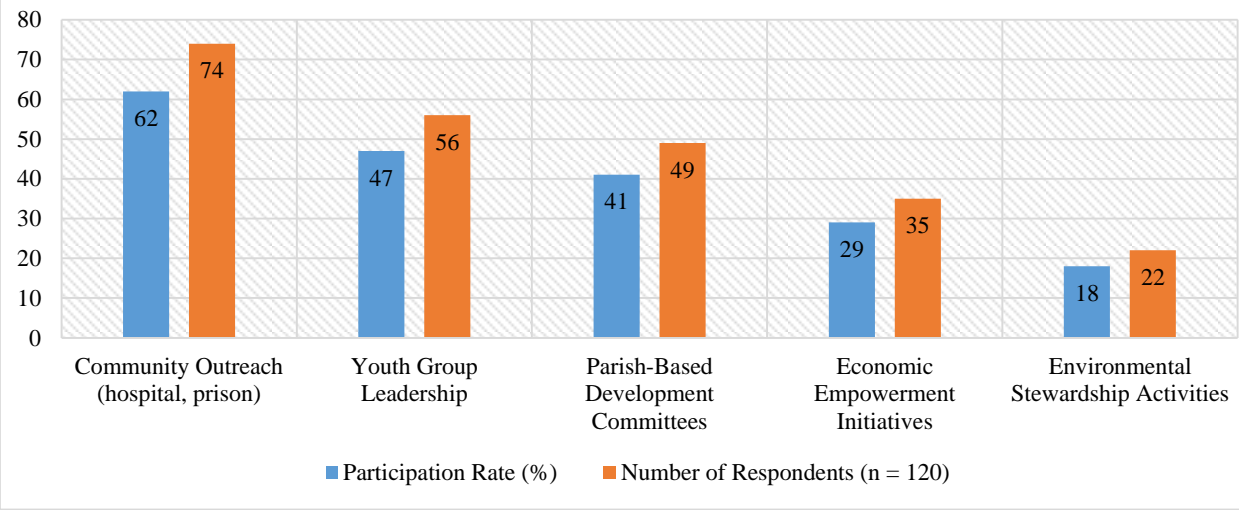
This data confirms that while participation is commendable, broader and deeper CST-rooted engagement can be fostered through structured curriculum reform and institutional support.

3.5. The Role of CUR in Modeling and Promoting CST

CUR plays a critical role in modeling and promoting CST among its students, particularly those in theology. The perception of students about CUR as a moral model is generally positive, with 72% affirming its commitment to ethical values rooted in the Catholic tradition. CUR is viewed not merely as an academic institution but as a community that embodies the Church's mission of integral human development (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004; John Paul II, 1987; Francis, 2009; Second Vatican Council, 1965). This role is affirmed by 86% of surveyed students who associate CUR's identity with the Church's call to promote justice, peace, and the dignity of the human person. CUR's pastoral environment, liturgical life, and community service initiatives serve as experiential platforms for embodying CST principles, especially solidarity and the common good (Gaudium et Spes, 1965; Caritas in Veritate, 2009; Populorum Progressio, 1967; Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 2004).

Despite this positive perception, there is a noted gap in the integration of CST in the academic curriculum. Only 38% of

students reported strong integration of CST into their theological formation. While doctrinal content is often covered in courses such as moral theology and social ethics, there remains a lack of sustained engagement with key CST documents. For instance, only 41% of students are familiar with *Populorum Progressio* and *Caritas in Veritate*, indicating a need for deliberate curricular enhancement (Paul VI, 1967; Benedict XVI, 2009; Curran, 2002; Massaro, 2016). Focus group discussions revealed that CST is frequently treated as a supplementary topic rather than as a foundational framework for pastoral mission. This perception challenges CUR to rethink its pedagogical strategies and ensure CST is not only taught but lived as a praxis-oriented discipline.

Furthermore, CUR's influence extends beyond the classroom through student-led outreach initiatives. Approximately 62% of respondents participate in youth programs, theological instruction, and community service projects. These experiences are informed by biblical principles and CST values such as the preferential option for the poor, subsidiarity, and human dignity (Matthew 25,31-46; James 2,14-17; Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 2004; USCCB, 2005). However, students expressed the need for more structured field placements and supervised pastoral work to effectively link theological knowledge to real-world challenges. Currently, only 45% of students reported

receiving consistent mentorship during their practical engagements.

To address these concerns, students proposed specific institutional reforms. These include the creation of a CST-focused module, increased collaboration with parishes and NGOs, and the development of a CST resource center. CUR is thus challenged to evolve from a perceived moral exemplar to a transformative agent that explicitly embeds CST into its academic and pastoral formation (Groody & Gutierrez, 2007; Holland & Henriot, 1983; McKenna, 2008; Dorr, 1992). As the data suggests, a university-wide commitment to CST would significantly empower future theologians to become credible witnesses of integral human development in Rwandan society.

CUR in Modeling and Promoting CST
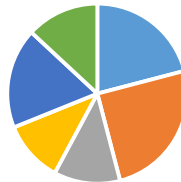
- CUR perceived as a moral model
- Students associating CUR with integral human development
- Familiarity with CST documents
- Reported strong CST integration in academic training
- Student participation in outreach programs
- Access to consistent pastoral mentorship

The table presents the perceptions of 120 theology students at CUR regarding the university's role in modeling and promoting CST. A significant majority (86 students, 72%) view CUR as a moral model aligned with Catholic values, and 103 students (86%) associate the university with the Church's vision of integral human development. However, only 49 students (41%) are familiar with major CST documents like *Populorum Progressio* and *Caritas in Veritate*, and just 46 (38%) feel that CST principles are strongly integrated into their academic training. While 74 students (62%) participate in outreach activities, only 54 (45%) report having consistent pastoral mentorship. These figures highlight a strong alignment with CST ideals at the institutional level, but also point to gaps in curriculum integration and practical pastoral support.

3.6. Challenges: Perceived Barriers to Living Out CST in Rwandan Communities

The integration of CST into community life in Rwanda faces multiple challenges, primarily rooted in educational, socio-economic, cultural, and institutional factors. A key challenge is the limited theological literacy of CST among students and broader communities. While 74% of CUR theology students could associate scriptural values with solidarity and the common good, only 41% were familiar with major CST documents like *Populorum Progressio* and *Caritas in Veritate*. This indicates a significant curriculum gap (Paul VI, 1967; Benedict XVI, 2009; Himes, 2005; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004). Moreover, the lack of CST materials in Kinyarwanda or culturally relevant formats hinders the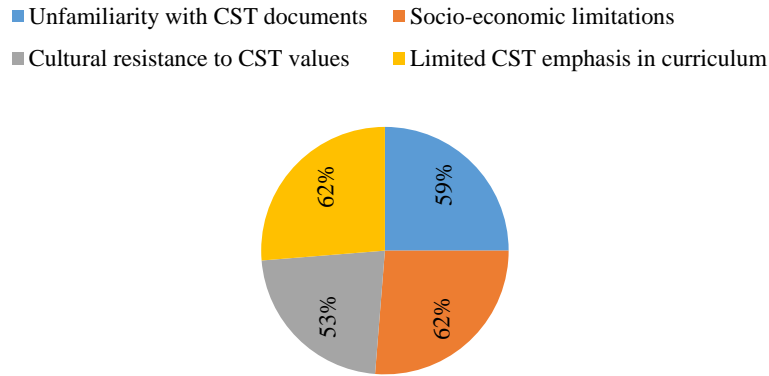ir practical teaching in local pastoral settings (Dorr, 1992; Massaro, 2016; Gutiérrez, 1983; Groody & Gutierrez, 2011).

Socio-economic realities also present a major obstacle. Although 62% of students reported engagement in outreach activities, limited financial and logistical resources hinder effective implementation of CST principles such as the preferential option for the poor (CRS, 2022; UNDP, 2023; Nzabonimpa, 2019; Ndagijimana, 2021). Many parishes and youth groups lack funding to carry out community development initiatives. This leaves students with theoretical knowledge but few opportunities for impactful pastoral practice rooted in CST values.

Cultural barriers further complicate the application of CST. For instance, while CST emphasizes participation, dignity, and equality, many students (53%) noted that traditional social structures, particularly patriarchal norms and elder dominance, limit the agency of women and youth in church and society (Turabumukiza, 2018; Mugisha, 2017; Shorter, 1991; Kagame, 1952).

Finally, institutional inconsistencies weaken CST formation. Although 72% of respondents consider CUR a moral model, only 58% said CST was clearly integrated into the curriculum. This reflects a disconnect between institutional mission and practical pedagogy (Catholic Bishops of Rwanda, 2014; Karamaga, 2006; Massaro, 2016; Groody & Gutierrez, 2011). Students indicated a strong desire for more exposure to field experiences and problem-solving pastoral education tied to human development.

Fig. 6: Barriers to CST Implementation

- Unfamiliarity with CST documents
- Socio-economic limitations
- Cultural resistance to CST values
- Limited CST emphasis in curriculum

In conclusion, advancing CST in Rwanda requires reforms in theological education, improved cultural contextualization, and enhanced institutional support. Addressing these barriers will equip future catechists and pastoral agents with the skills and knowledge to champion integral human development in their communities.

3.7. Future Expectations: Student Ideas on Forming Theologians as Agents of Development
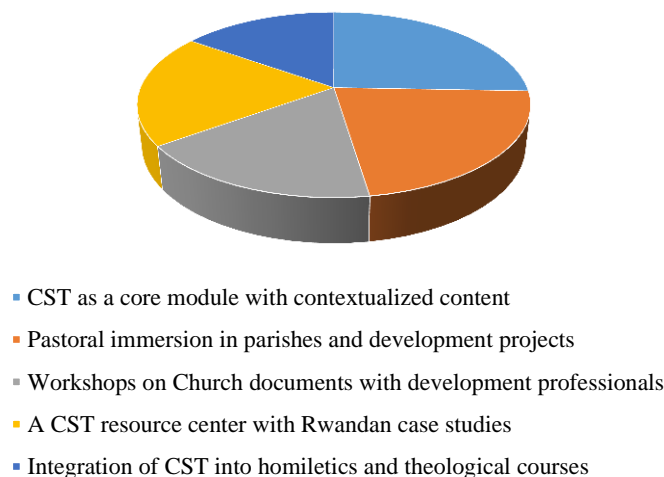
Students at CUR envision a more integrated and praxis-oriented approach to theological education that emphasizes the application of Biblical and CST principles in real-life pastoral and socio-economic contexts. In focus group discussions, 79% of participants stressed the need to deepen the CST module in their academic formation to provide a foundation for ethical leadership and social engagement (Gaudium et Spes, 1965; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004; Benedict XVI, 2009; Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 2005). They noted that while scriptural studies are emphasized, CST documents such as *Populorum Progressio* and *Caritas in Veritate* are often presented without sufficient practical case studies or contextualization in Rwandan realities (Paul VI, 1967; John Paul II, 1991; Catholic Bishops'

Conference of Rwanda, 2010; Rugaragu, 2015). As one student stated, "We study documents, but we rarely discuss how to implement these teachings in our parishes or communities."

Additionally, students suggested increasing field-based learning and pastoral immersion programs. About 68% called for structured partnerships with rural parishes, youth cooperatives, and social justice ministries to enhance experiential learning (Francis, 2015; Catholic Relief Services, 2020; Mvuyekure, 2021; CUR Pastoral Report, 2023). Students believe such initiatives would allow catechists-in-training to engage with communities directly, witnessing and practicing integral human development through service to the marginalized and vulnerable (Is 58:6–12; Mt 25:31–46; Jas 2:14–17; Lk 4:18–19). For example, outreach in reconciliation programs or economic empowerment projects could operationalize CST principles of subsidiarity, participation, and solidarity in the Rwandan context.

The table below presents a summary of key student suggestions, the percentage of respondents endorsing each, and the corresponding number of students:

Fig. 7: Student Ideas on Forming Theologians as Agents of Development

- CST as a core module with contextualized content
- Pastoral immersion in parishes and development projects
- Workshops on Church documents with development professionals
- A CST resource center with Rwandan case studies
- Integration of CST into homiletics and theological courses

Students also emphasized the value of interdisciplinary collaboration, proposing the creation of a CST Resource Center that bridges theology with development studies, social work, and economics. 61% indicated that such a center would support research, reflection, and innovation on faith-based development (Chaves & Anderson, 2018; Himes, 2001; Rukundo, 2019; CUR Strategic Plan, 2025). They also recommended regular workshops involving development practitioners, theologians, and alumni to enhance understanding of CST as a transformative tool (Benedict XVI, 2009; Francis, 2013; Tangwa, 2020; Byaruhanga, 2022). Finally, 47% highlighted the need to revise homiletics and catechetic courses to include CST-based messaging strategies, enabling future theologians to preach and teach with a developmental consciousness.

In conclusion, students at CUR advocate for a more dynamic, practice-based formation that emphasizes CST as a lived theology. By integrating CST principles across courses, outreach, and institutional strategies, CUR can empower future catechists to become effective agents of integral human development in Rwanda.

4. Conclusion

This study explored how the students of the program of theology at CUR understand and apply Biblical Foundations and CST to promote IHD. Using a convergent mixed-methods approach, the research combined structured questionnaires with focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative techniques included descriptive statistics to analyze trends in student familiarity with CST principles such as human dignity, the common good, and solidarity. Qualitative data were examined using thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's model, to uncover deeper insights into student experiences and pedagogical challenges.

The central hypothesis of the study posited that theology students, when adequately exposed to CST, are capable of applying its principles effectively in promoting IHD. The data confirmed that a significant majority of students demonstrated a clear understanding of CST concepts, with 86% linking IHD to holistic development and 78% identifying human dignity as central to their pastoral vision. Qualitative responses further revealed student interest in applying CST to real-world challenges such as poverty, inequality, and youth unemployment, despite expressing a need for more experiential learning and community engagement.

These findings verify the hypothesis that a solid theological formation rooted in CST equips students with the vision and motivation to contribute to social transformation. The study underscores the need to strengthen curriculum design by incorporating more practical CST-based learning strategies. Such improvements will enhance both academic and pastoral training, aligning theological education more closely with the Church's mission of human development. Ultimately, this research contributes valuable insights for educators, Church leaders, and policymakers seeking to integrate faith and action in the context of contemporary social challenges in Rwanda and beyond.

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