

Final reflections

Achievements and lessons learned

CAMFED International projects

The Virtuous Cycle of Girls' Education

TANZANIA, ZAMBIA, ZIMBABWE
APRIL 2017 - JANUARY 2022

Girls Learn, Succeed and Lead

TANZANIA
AUGUST 2017 - JANUARY 2022



Girls' Education Challenge



CAMFED

“This is what we want, as a Ministry... We will stand with you to make sure [the Learner Guide Programme] is launched at national level, so that we get this programme as part of the Ministry of General Education agenda.”

Permanent Secretary,
Zambia Ministry of General Education



- Tanzania
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

What did the CAMFED projects do?

CAMFED is a pan-African movement, revolutionising how girls' education is delivered. The aim of its model is to radically improve girls' prospects of becoming independent, influential women.

CAMFED has implemented two projects under Girls Education Challenge Transition (GEC-T) window; *The Virtuous Cycle of Girls' Education (VCGE)* and *Girls Learn, Succeed and Lead (GLSL)*. Both projects were central to developing and delivering CAMFED's wider organisational strategy to support girls to attend and thrive in school, by leveraging the 'Multiplier Effect' – whereby women who have been supported by CAMFED through and beyond school, provide social and economic support to the next generation of girls. The strategy implements a three-pronged approach:

1. Embed the Multiplier Effect by investing in the capacity of young women in the CAMFED Association, the 208,000 strong network of leaders who in turn will lead the provision of social and economic support to the next generation of girls.
2. Scale the Learner Guide Programme – Partner with government ministries to roll out and scale the flagship life skills and mentoring programme, through which young women lead on providing social support to girls in school, supporting improved learning outcomes and retention.
3. Invest in Enterprise Development – Expand young women's livelihood opportunities and in turn, their capacity to provide economic support to girls.

The two GEC-T projects allowed CAMFED to explore and test the conditions for scaling the Learner Guide Programme, fuel the CAMFED Association pipeline that drives the multiplier effect, and invest in young women's economic empowerment and leadership to drive the multiplier. *The Virtuous Cycle of Girls' Education* is one of the projects in its second phase of the GEC; it was implemented in 44 rural districts across Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Zambia. The project aimed to unleash *The Virtuous Cycle of Girls' Education* in Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe through interventions that enabled a critical mass of marginalised girls to transition to progress through and succeed at secondary school and create the bridge for them to transition from school to a secure and fulfilling livelihood. *The Virtuous Cycle of Girls' Education* built on the 2013-2017 project under the first phase of the GEC, following a cohort of 269,389 marginalised girls through the post-secondary transition in Tanzania and Zimbabwe and into secondary education in Zambia.

The project interventions were designed to support improved learning outcomes, successful transition of marginalised girls to/through and beyond secondary school and to work with key stakeholders to sustainably improve the learning environment and welfare of marginalised girls. Key activities included the introduction (in Zambia) and continued delivery (in Zimbabwe and Tanzania) of the *My Better World* life skills curriculum. The curriculum is delivered in schools over a period of 12-18 months by female school graduates (supported to complete school under GEC1) and trained as Learner Guides to strengthen participatory learning approaches and provide important role models for girls.

“The CAMFED vision tells a message of sustainability of what it does. When girls are educated and valued in the community, they use their knowledge and skills to help families tackle poverty.”

Community Development Committee member, Zambia



On graduation from school, girls were invited to join a six to 12 month transition programme, led by young women in the role of 'Transition Guides' who delivered training covering aspects such as financial literacy, sexual and reproductive health and entrepreneurship and who supported the recent school graduates into productive post-school pathways of further education, employment or enterprise.

The second project running in parallel was the four-year CAMFED Tanzania *Girls Learn, Succeed and Lead* project which commenced in August 2017. This project specifically targeted marginalised girls in peri-urban communities of Tanzania with a focus on enabling a critical mass of marginalised girls to transition through secondary and on to a secure and fulfilling livelihood. Unlike CAMFED's other GEC-T project, the *Girls Learn, Succeed and Lead* project built on the foundations laid by Building Resources Across Communities (BRAC) at primary level under GEC1, with CAMFED introducing their successful model of decentralised, community-led governance structures working in support of girls' enrolment, retention and progression at secondary level.

The most significant constraints CAMFED has faced in relation to delivering on the projects' outcomes of learning, transition and sustainability were primarily contextual. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the final two years of delivery was significant, with learners in Zimbabwe and Zambia in particularly missing out on months of learning. Particularly in *Girls Learn, Succeed and Lead*, that operated in peri-urban areas, distance to school and transport challenges were reported as barriers to regular attendance and acted as constraints on girls' attendance and transition through school. Girls were at risk of violence and sexual abuse travelling to and from school, and arriving at school tired, late and hungry. Lack of school capacity further put constraints on learning and progression – with crowded classrooms acting to limit teachers' and Learner Guides' ability to deliver interactive small-group sessions – particularly the case in Tanzania since the introduction of Fee Free Education. CAMFED mitigated these constraints through a number of project adaptations, such as increased Learner Guide recruitment and adjustments to entitlement packages, along with advocacy at national and local levels.

// KHADIJA'S STORY



My name is Khadija, I live in Morogoro Rural District in Tanzania. I live with my father, mother, grandmother and my two brothers. My mum and dad are farmers. When I started school I didn't dress like my peers because my parents couldn't afford to buy me a uniform. This really affected my confidence. My life changed when I reached Form 2 and I was selected to receive support from CAMFED. I was given a new uniform and other items I didn't have, like exercise books and pens. CAMFED changed my life, I could go to school wearing uniform and feel equal to my fellow students.

Another person who has really helped me at school is Madam Dotto. Madam Dotto is a Learner Guide, and she is different from our teachers. Instead of normal classes, she teaches us using *My Better World* – a book that educates us about our 'powers' – the abilities we all have inside of us. I love the topic of self-esteem. This topic teaches how a girl should value herself.

I have changed through this programme because I have learned how to value and support others. Now if I discover that another girl does not value herself, I can talk to her and help raise her self-esteem. The programme has also given me confidence to ask for help when I need it.

I see Madam Dotto as my guardian because she helps me with so many things. She has helped me with money for food, bought me socks, and made me feel good like other students. She is someone I trust and can talk to about my personal problems outside of the classroom.

One problem I had was that I was missing school every month because I couldn't afford menstrual pads. Madam Dotto noticed my absence and asked me about it. Now she makes sure I have pads every month and I don't miss any school.

"Khadija had been coming to school some days and not others because she had no money for pads. So when she approaches her days she informs me and I give her some pads, which has even contributed to the improvement of her attendance. She is progressing well!"
Dotto, Learner Guide

I know education is important and will help me in life. My favorite subject in school is Swahili because it is my language, and one that is used by all people here in Tanzania. I want to study hard so that I can become a teacher like my teacher Madam Mukanda, or a nurse or doctor. I want to be a role model to the community, like Madam Dotto, and work with CAMFED so all children can have an education.

How did the CAMFED projects adapt during COVID-19?

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic affected households, income and girls' ability to learn, however learning and transition results demonstrate the project was effective in mitigating the impact of the pandemic on some of the country's most vulnerable learners and young women.

School disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic continued till 2021, in most of the countries the two projects were in operating in. The most severe disruptions were in Zimbabwe, where school opening was delayed for several months at the beginning of the year due to another lockdown. Countries changed their school calendars, prioritised exam classes, and postponed openings in response to the continuing crisis.

In all three countries, Learner Guides and Teacher Mentors continued to engage learners even during school closures. In Zambia, Learner Guides and Teacher Mentors supported learners with learning circles and help desks. In Zimbabwe, 92% of examination re-sit learners were reached with support by Learner Guides while they were out of school. Learner Guides demonstrated their true value during the pandemic through their deep integration within communities. The young women were able to adapt their activities quickly and effectively in response to locally identified need and opportunities. CAMFED continued to work with schools, communities and government ministries, supported by the activism of the young women in the CAMFED Association, to reach out to vulnerable children, help students to catch up in the lead-up to their exams, and prevent girls from permanently dropping out of school.

My Better World radio broadcasts significantly extended the reach of the life skills curriculum to families and communities with whom its messages on child protection, resilience and adaptation resonated. Young women from the CAMFED Association also engaged closely and effectively with local and traditional leaders, building awareness of COVID-19 risks and mitigation and drawing on their authority to encourage attendance at community-based study groups.

Below are just a few examples of their work to mitigate the effect of school closures in each of the countries.

- **CAMFED Tanzania** which experienced the shortest school closures of all the countries of operation, and none in 2021, worked with schools to enable them to provide extra or extended lessons for children and supported students to attend these lessons. CAMFED also helped by collating appropriate learning materials, e.g. by printing past exam papers, while Learner Guides continued to deliver life skills and wellbeing sessions via local radio in collaboration with the government.

“CAMFED programme activities supported schools and districts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector. The evidence is that students loved to come to school when they reopened because of the support provided by the CAMFED organisation.”

Teacher Mentor, Tanzania



- **CAMFED Zambia** launched a Back-to-School campaign and collaborated with leading EdTech company and global teacher community Tes to create accelerated curriculum learning resources and train teachers in partner schools to be better able to support students to catch up on lost learning. CAMFED worked with partners to provide financial support to the most vulnerable families to ensure girls would not drop out of school permanently, while also investing to improve school facilities, implement school meal programmes, and distribute self-study kits for home learning.

From May 2021, CAMFED Zambia began distributing 2,620 solar radios to support distance learning in partnership with UNICEF and the Ministry of Education. CAMFED Association members continued to participate in radio broadcasts focused on children's rights and welfare, introducing wider audiences to CAMFED's *My Better World* life skills and wellbeing curriculum. The CAMFED presenters led discussions on topics such as child protection and the importance of girls' education.

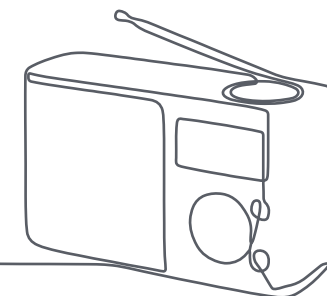
While learning assessments were not completed at end line due to travel restrictions and safety concerns associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, exam pass rates among supported learners in Tanzania and Zambia were in line with those among CAMFED supported learners the previous year and only slightly below the national average – and in peri-urban districts above the national average – indicating that the programme helped to mitigate the impact of the pandemic among some of the countries' most vulnerable learners. COVID-19 can also be seen to have had a significant impact on in-school transition: in-school transition rates declined in comparison schools across both projects, however CAMFED's programme mitigated the impact for GEC-T schools, resulting in a less severe decrease in transition rates within *The Virtuous Cycle of Girls' Education* schools, and reversing the trend in *Girls Learn, Succeed and Lead* schools.

- **CAMFED Zimbabwe** provided thousands of learning materials, including *My Better World* workbooks and Maths study guides, to support learning during lockdowns. To help schools to reopen safely in March, they distributed two thermometers and 20 litres of liquid soap to each of 1,083 partner secondary schools, to ensure they could comply with COVID-19 protocols. 497 of the least well-resourced schools were supported with reopening kits comprising stationery, teaching materials, and textbooks.

Learner Guides were at the forefront of supporting delivery of learning during lockdowns and school closures through study groups and online platforms. The value of these young women, who are embedded in their communities, was demonstrated once again when there was need to pivot between school and community support for students – particularly during periods of schools adopting rotational attendance in order to deliver an accelerated curricula. They worked with girls retaking their exams by facilitating Maths and English revision, for example, collaborating with subject teachers to offer support and plug any gaps identified together.

“Because of the CAMA network we became more than sisters and came up together to fight the common enemy which is poverty. No CAMA member would suffer in the presence of other CAMA members.”

CAMFED Association member



“As Learner Guides, we take an interest in each and every child’s life as a whole. We become the friend and sister they need, creating the necessary support structure until they finish school.”

Petronella, Learner Guide



What did the CAMFED projects achieve?

Improving learning outcomes – *The Virtuous Cycle of Girls' Education*, at midline, recorded substantial improvements in literacy and numeracy skills among CAMFED supported learners. Findings from the midline survey confirmed that marginalised girls' learning outcomes in maths and literacy, as well as those of other student groups, improved at higher rates among learners in partner schools in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Tanzania, than in comparison schools. The endline evaluation indicates that the project was effective in supporting the learning of marginalised girls through multiple challenges made worse during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Girls Learn, Succeed and Lead* endline evaluation showed broadly similar results. Specifically, the pass rate of Form 2 supported students was 91% compared with a national pass rate of 91.6%, while pass rates among supported students at Form 4 and Form 6 both exceeded the national pass rate at 86% and 100% respectively against national pass rates of 85.8% and 98.4%. This is a significant achievement given the marginalised backgrounds of CAMFED supported students. The higher pass rate of CAMFED supported students in peri-urban districts than those in rural districts points to the higher degree of connectivity in urban areas, which supported student's access to government provided distance learning resources.

Effectively using learning resources, teaching practices and strategies to keep students learning – In both of the CAMFED projects the endline points to the impact of study groups, study guides, the *My Better World* life skills curriculum and 'Learning to Learn in English' guide, and interactive teaching and learning approaches, which were all seen to have contributed to girls' improved academic performance and girls' confidence. To support students to engage with remedial classes, CAMFED worked with its network of Parent Support Groups, Learner Guides and Transition Guides to provide marginalised girls with food hampers and hygiene kits to stay in school and attend remedial programmes.

The success of Learner Guides – in *The Virtuous Cycle of Girls' Education*, during school closures, the evaluation found a high level of activism among Learner Guides in providing continued support and encouragement to learners: in Zambia and Zimbabwe 83% and 85% of Learner Guides reported that they had supported students with their revision during school closures, while CAMFED's internal monitoring showed that 92% of girls re-sitting examinations in 2021 were reached with support from Learner Guides while they were out of school. Across all three countries, Learner Guides undertook a range of activities including home visits, community based *My Better World* sessions and study groups, working with teacher mentors on lesson planning and sensitising parents about school re-opening.

Findings were similar in *Girls Learn, Succeed and Lead* with 70% of Learner Guides reporting being active during school closures. Learner Guide led *My Better World* sessions were formally integrated into the school timetable within the majority of schools: 95% in Tanzania, 87% in Zambia and 79% in Zimbabwe, exceeding the target for each country.

Achieving high transition rates across countries – At endline, *The Virtuous Cycle of Girls' Education* was successful in supporting in-school transition in intervention schools in Zambia achieved a +6.6 percentage point improvement above the comparison group, against a +2.7 percentage point target. While transition rates in both intervention and comparison schools decreased from midline to endline – reflecting the challenging context presented by COVID – the rate decreased by much less among CAMFED supported students, demonstrating the project's effectiveness in supporting resilience among the most vulnerable learners, even during times of crisis. The endline evaluation found that young women felt more confident and able to succeed in the next stage of their transition, largely through

“My being a medical student now, and soon a medical doctor, shows young women's resilience in the face of adversity, if only we get the opportunity.”

Tendai, Medical Student, Zimbabwe”



the *My Better World* sessions led by Learner Guides and encouragement by CAMFED structures such as the Parent Support Groups. The impact of the project on transition was even more marked in *Girls Learn, Succeed and Lead*, where in-school transition rates of CAMFED supported students steadily increased from 86.5% at baseline to 89.9% at endline. Conversely among students in comparison schools, transition rates declined from 95.7% at baseline to 77.1% at endline, with a substantial drop between midline and endline, attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Creating productive post-school pathways – The endline evaluation found that the post-school support provided through the project helped many students to choose fruitful post-school pathways. In *The Virtuous Cycle of Girls' Education*, the proportion of transitees (recent school graduates who took part in CAMFED's transition programme) surveyed who satisfied one or more economic empowerment criteria following school completion was 85% for Tanzania, against a target of 39%, and 77% for Zimbabwe against a target of 29%. In *Girls Learn, Succeed and Lead* the two most common routes of transition were enterprise – accounting for 57% of transitees – and education – accounting for 45% of transitees. While the overall levels of economic empowerment were very similar across the urban and rural projects, a higher proportion of transitees in rural district opted to move into enterprise, likely reflecting the more limited availability of further education or employment in rural communities. Many marginalised women reported positive financial impact as a result of the transition support they received after completing lower secondary.

Curtailing dropout associated with early marriage or pregnancy – In *Girls Learn, Succeed and Lead* the dropout rate associated with early marriage and pregnancy dropped from 0.4% midline to 0.3% at endline, while many marginalised girls reported that their safety had been enhanced and that the risk of early marriage and pregnancy had been reduced. Stakeholders pointed to the project having a community wide impact in reducing early marriage and pregnancy. Both these results point to the effectiveness of the project in supporting girls retention and transition, even over the period of the pandemic and associated school closures

Building ownership at all tiers of the system – At community level, Community Development Committees – programme delivery structures which draw together representatives of existing education and social welfare systems such as district education managers, social welfare officers, victim support officers, traditional leaders – were found to be highly engaged and embedded within the programme

and demonstrating a high degree of ownership and empowerment. At school level, CAMFED's Planning for School Excellence programme played an important role in drawing together parents, students and teachers in support of an improved and safer school environment and is credited with supporting increased engagement of parents in school activities. Income generation grants supplied to Parent Support Groups have given parents and other stakeholders the capacity to invest in long-lasting improvements to learning environments, including classroom renovations, school meal programmes, and supplies for learners, all while increasing the ownership of girls' education among community members. At system level, CAMFED Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe are actively engaged in discussions and next steps on Learner Guide scaling with education, youth, local government and employment ministries across the three countries.

The power of the CAMFED Association network – across projects, CAMFED Association members' empowerment impacted positively on families and other needy members of the community. Across the three countries an additional 194,030 girls benefited from community and CAMFED Association initiatives such as provision of money, food, toiletries, clothes, shoes or school supplies – surpassing the target of 116,603. Over the course of the project, young women joining the CAMFED Association demonstrated increasing ownership of programme activities and commitment to ploughing back their time and efforts in support of the next generation of children. In 2019 CAMFED found that even within a year of joining the CAMFED association, the young women were supporting an average of one student to attend school – with that increasing to three to four students among more established members.

The importance of psychosocial emotional support to the girls – Community and traditional leaders interviewed as part of the endline evaluation pointed to a change in parental attitudes and praised parents for taking on board the principles of child protection, noting a reduction in the number of children living in vulnerable homes and difficult conditions. Teacher Mentors reported increased confidence among students in reporting the challenges they face, attributing this to the impact of the Learner Guide led *My Better World* curriculum. Marginalised girls and young women also pointed to the important role of Teacher Mentors and Transition Guides in enhancing their well-being and resilience through psychosocial support and support for their transition to a successful adulthood.

“I am grateful to CAMFED for giving me a loan... I can run a business and meet the needs of my family. I am applying for another loan so that I can grow my business and achieve my dreams of becoming a great entrepreneur”

Lucia, CAMFED Association Member and Learner Guide, Tanzania

// PETRONELLA'S STORY

My childhood years were pleasant until 2005, when I lost my father. He was the sole breadwinner in our family, and even the extended family looked up to him as the provider. Losing him meant that there was no one to cover my school fees from Grade 5 up to Grade 7 (the final three years of primary school).

Like many rural African women, my mother did not have the education or opportunities to seek employment or start a business, and had no income. More often than not my siblings and I went to school barefoot, and there was not enough to eat at home. Eventually I was sent home from school after writing Grade 7, because I owed the school two years of fees. I remember the pain of having to sit at home for one full year. After some pleading and negotiating, my mother went to work at school as a way to pay off the debt.

I still remember the day that I finally went to secondary school. My home is 4km (2.5 miles) from school, but this did not stop me from going! It did present challenges though, and sometimes I could not do my homework because I got home too late. The rainy season was the most difficult, and at times I was forced to miss school because of floods.

A way of hope was opened up when a female teacher took note of my potential at Form Three and helped me to secure accommodation at the teachers' college. CAMFED took care of my fees and uniforms, and for the first time I looked smart and happy like other teenagers. When it sunk in that I could attend lessons without worrying about being sent back home for fees I was ecstatic. I was so relieved that I could learn normally like other children. Thanks to these interventions, I completed my examinations without any hindrance and started believing in myself. The highlight of my school life was the day I was elected as the Head Girl – it was a major boost to my self esteem and helped so much when I proceeded to tertiary level to pursue teacher training.

After I graduated from school, I joined the CAMFED Association – the network women leaders educated with CAMFED's support – in January 2014. Through the network I had the opportunity to train as a Learner Guide (a role model and mentor for marginalised children) in October 2020 and started volunteering four times a week, delivering the *My Better World* curriculum to 60 students. As a trained teacher, I find that being a Learner Guide gives new meaning to my role, especially the guidance and counselling component.

I work closely with the head teacher, the CAMFED-trained Teacher Mentor and the School-based Committee, to understand in detail the day-to-day challenges that learners and teachers encounter, and what needs to be done to address them. The approach is different from that of a teacher, whose main focus is the child's academic performance. As Learner Guides, we take an interest in each and every child's life as a whole. We become the friend and sister they need, creating the necessary support structure until they finish school.

If a child does drop out of school the Learner Guide is usually the first to become aware of the reason, which could be lack of funds, abuse, or another serious challenge. Sadly, child marriages are common in my community. CAMFED Association members and community stakeholders run awareness campaigns to enlighten young girls about their rights. I also refer them to the right authorities that will help them, and if they have school-related financial or material challenges I recommend them for support through our CAMFED Association philanthropy fund, or other safety nets at the school. If there are issues to do with their studies, I facilitate creation of effective study groups and link them up with subject teachers.

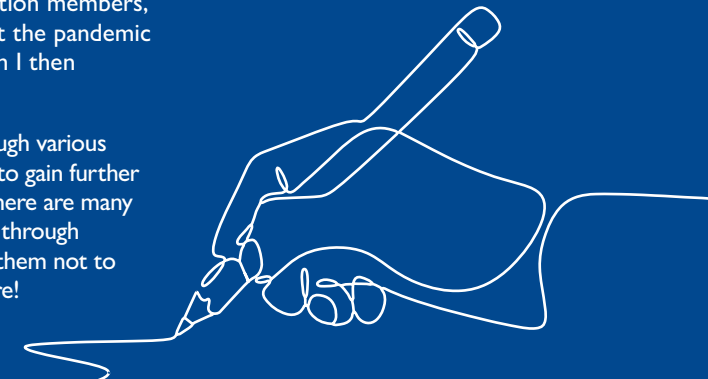
In exchange for volunteering as a Learner Guide I was able to apply for an interest-free loan through CAMFED and Kiva. It allowed me to shift from selling groceries from home to opening a tuck shop. I have two employees to run the business for me. I'm hoping to save money, expand my business, employ more people from my community, and support vulnerable children's education. Even before opening the tuck shop, I was able to cover fees for a boy whose mother died and ensure he could progress to secondary school.

Another example of our community initiatives was when the cases of coronavirus started rising. With other CAMFED Association members, I conducted group discussions with the community about the pandemic to raise awareness. I made alcohol-based sanitisers, which I then distributed to mothers in the community.

As a CAMFED Association member I have learnt a lot through various workshops and projects facilitated by my peers. My wish is to gain further leadership skills so I can empower more girls. I know that there are many other vulnerable and disadvantaged girls, who may be going through situations similar to, or worse than, mine. I want to inspire them not to despair – your background should not determine your future!

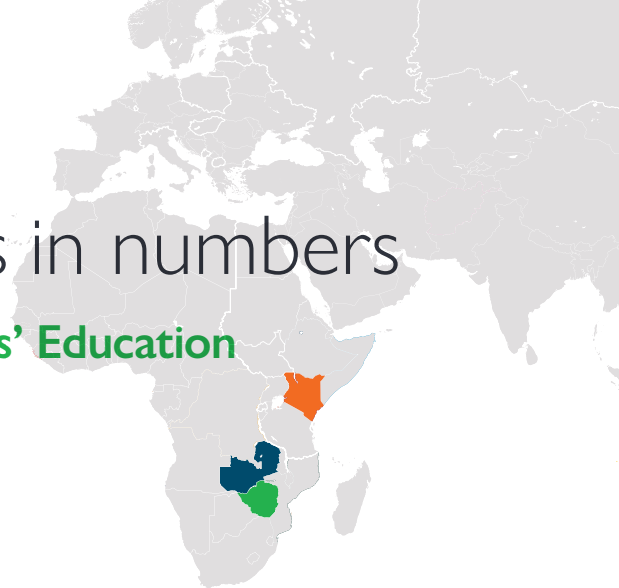


“The challenges at home suppressed any positive thoughts of having a better future. Education seemed like a distant dream, something that was not meant for people like me.”



CAMFED projects in numbers

// The Virtuous Cycle of Girls' Education



Number of girls benefitting from support to attend school and learn

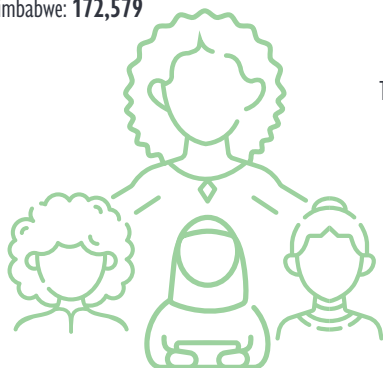
270,845

Tanzania: 88,061 Zambia: 10,205 Zimbabwe: 172,579

Number of community and school leaders trained:

5,022

Tanzania: 3,238 Zambia: 98 Zimbabwe: 1,686



Number of government employed teachers trained in active learning approaches

2,765

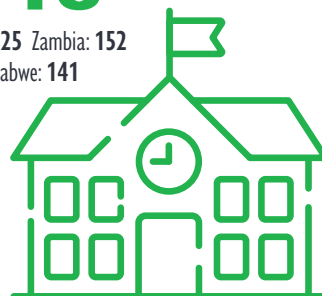
Tanzania: 960 Zambia: 434 Zimbabwe: 1,371



Number of schools developing school improvement plans

418

Tanzania: 125 Zambia: 152 Zimbabwe: 141



Number of girls supported to transition to employment, enterprise or further education: **102,492**

Tanzania: 27,549 Zimbabwe: 74,943

Proportion of recent school graduates who have gained more knowledge and skills to start and manage a business, following transition training:

Tanzania: 98% Zimbabwe: 93%

Number of young women trained as Learner and Transition Guides: **7,505**

Tanzania: 1,163 Zambia: 491 Zimbabwe: 5,851

Proportion of Learner Guides using active teaching techniques:

Tanzania: 82% Zambia: 100% Zimbabwe: 100%

Percentage of schools where Learner Guide sessions were formally integrated into the school timetable:

Tanzania: 95% Zambia: 87% Zimbabwe: 79%

Proportion of students returning to school after pandemic related school closures:

Tanzania: 100% Zambia: 97% Zimbabwe: 96%

Proportion of Learner Guides in leadership positions at the end of the project:

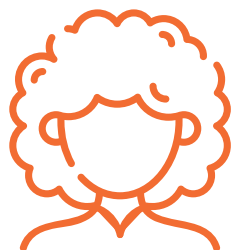
Tanzania: 49% Zambia: 63% Zimbabwe: 54%

Number of additional girls benefitting from community and CAMFED Association led initiatives to attend school:

Tanzania: 59,777 Zambia: 4,603 Zimbabwe: 129,650

CAMFED projects in numbers

// Girls Learn, Succeed and Lead



Number of government
employed teachers
trained in active
learning approaches

835



Number of girls
benefitting from support to
attend school and learn

7,009

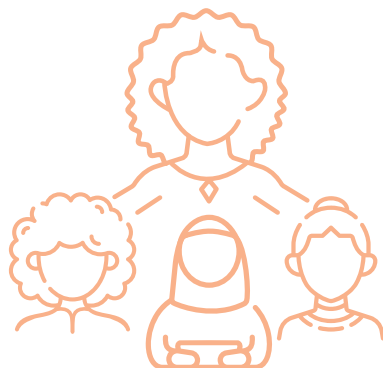
Number of schools
developing school
improvement plans

144



Number of
community and
school leaders
trained:

69,534



Number of girls supported to transition to employment, enterprise or further education: **2,816**

Proportion of recent school graduates who have gained more knowledge and skills to start and manage a business, following transition training: **99%**

Number of young women trained as Learner and Transition Guides: **724**

Proportion of Learner Guides using active teaching techniques: **97%**

Percentage of schools where Learner Guide sessions were formally integrated into the school timetable: **91%**

Proportion of students returning to school after pandemic related school closures: **100%**

Proportion of Learner Guides in leadership positions at the end of the projec: **42%**

What did CAMFED learn from implementing two projects across multiple countries?

1. A girl-focused, multi-faceted, adaptive approach that is driven by data and learning delivers results

Multi-country programming and cross-country learning under the GEC-T has allowed CAMFED to understand what has worked well in each country – as well as what has not worked well, what can be improved, what is applicable to one country, and how to overcome any limitations.

The success of both projects is due to CAMFED's ability to adapt programming and provide rapid response mechanisms to the most pertinent needs of the students, especially marginalised girls as circumstances changed in each country and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. CAMFED has used monitoring and evaluation data as a strategic management tool and for data-driven decision making, enabling the projects to be responsive to emerging beneficiary needs over time. Significant adaptations were implemented: earlier in the project, regular monitoring revealed that despite initial training, teachers were still deploying didactic teaching styles. In response CAMFED facilitated further training in participatory child-centred pedagogies facilitated by Ministry of Education trainers and arranged for learning visits where schools that performed well in baseline learning tests visited their counterparts in schools where results were poorer.

2. Working with established structures and governance systems is more impactful, cost effective and sustainable as compared to creating parallel structures

At the core of successful girls' education programmes is a truly bottom-up process of programme design and implementation. This ensures a needs-based design that addresses the core challenges girls face, while at the same time respects the deep knowledge and understanding that resides at the grass roots. Situating project delivery within these

same grassroots structures will ensure that the programme continues to respond to local needs and is able to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. This approach also builds and embeds local capacity, helping to secure sustainability post project closure. Working with and respecting established structures and governance, rather than imposing alternative structures on top of what is already there, generates cost efficiencies, builds effectiveness and embeds sustainability.

3. The power of young women's activism demonstrated through the CAMFED Association (CAMA) – a sisterhood that continues beyond school

The CAMFED Association has proven to be a powerful peer support and leadership network for young women activists for girls' education. CAMFED Association members bring their lived experience and expertise to every aspect of CAMFED's work – volunteering as specialist "Guides" to provide skills, mentorship and social support to girls in school and young women in the transition to independence. Post school, young women graduating in to the CAMFED Association clearly feel connected and supported, with some pointing to examples of how CAMFED Association members came together to help pay off the loans of their CAMFED Association sisters or give loans to start businesses. This essential lifeline thrown to the girls after completing their schooling, is an important motivator for completing schooling. It maps a pathway beyond school and connects the CAMFED girls to a powerful peer network which will help them chart this course.

"The CAMFED Association means changing from depending on others to self-reliance and abolition of poverty."

Sophia, Learner Guide and Kiva loan recipient, Tanzania



4. The Learner Guides are the lynchpin of the system

The Learner Guides underpin the achievements of both projects. The integration and embeddedness of the Learner Guides within the school and community enables each young woman to leverage external resources and multiply her impact. The Learner Guides' collaboration with teachers, helps in establishing trust and respect with parents and ensures the access of learners to sessions. Similarly, positioning programme oversight and monitoring with Community Development Committees ensures that Learner Guides' activities are visible to and supported by recognised authorities. This firmly establishes Learner Guides as part of a student-centred 'learning team' that strengthens connections between homes and schools and targets the needs of the most vulnerable girls.

In the context of the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath, governments in all three countries will face long-lasting fiscal challenges and need to adapt systems to ensure that vulnerable children, particularly girls, have a pathway back into education and explore new, cost-effective ways of meeting the education needs of marginalised children. The Learner Guide Programme offers a tried-and tested solution capable of adoption within existing Ministry strategies and budgets.

5. Learner Guides Model is rapidly adaptable and scalable across different contexts

In *Girls Learn, Succeed and Lead*, which was taken over from BRAC, the Learner Guide and CAMFED Association structure was only created as part of the project, whereas *The Virtuous Cycle of Girls' Education* drew from an established CAMFED Association network. This project represents the first time CAMFED's Learner Guide model has been implemented in peri-urban districts and with young women who had not been previously supported by CAMFED through school. The results achieved across learning, transition and sustainability are testament to the effectiveness, adaptability and scalability of the programme.

Fundamental to the successful introduction and roll out of the project in peri-urban districts, was its leadership by District Programme Coordinators who were drawn from the CAMFED Association and had existing experience of the Learner Guide Programme. They worked as part of resource teams, which drew together existing Teacher Mentors, Heads of School and district leaders – all with in-depth experience of implementing CAMFED's original Girls' Education

Challenge project. Together they led training and capacity building of Learner Guides, Teacher Mentors, and the school and district level partnerships that sit of the core of programme delivery and oversight. The first Learner Guides in these districts were recruited from among local school graduates, and the recruitment process assessed the same values of community give back and willingness to volunteer that sit at the core of CAMFED's established Learner Guide Programme. The young women were then provided with in depth training in delivery of the *My Better World* curriculum, active-learning teaching approaches, sexual and reproductive health and entrepreneurship. Those young women are now being recognised and respected as leaders within local education and social welfare systems

6. My Better World has worked synergistically with the rest of the project interventions

The endline has shown the *My Better World* programme has clearly had a very positive impact in all three countries on gender equality, appropriate sexual behaviour, girls' safety and girls' self-confidence and independence. Boys have benefited from this intervention as well as girls, which has been fundamental in supporting discussion and challenge of harmful gender norms and stereotypical behaviour. The qualitative research showed evidence that the project interventions have worked synergistically and resulted in the overall impact for marginalised girls through improved attendance and academic performance; fostering collaboration between schools and communities; and improving the self-esteem and opportunities for girls and young women to transition to secure post-school pathways. Learner Guide led *My Better World* sessions have been formally integrated into the school timetable within the majority of schools: 95% in Tanzania, 87% in Zambia and 79% in Zimbabwe, exceeding the target for each country.

A Form 4 student in Tanzania who has used *My Better World* commented, ***“Vulnerability is not inability; being born vulnerable does not mean you have to fail examinations.”***

“The impact of the My Better World has increased academic performance of the students, reduced absenteeism and has increased school attendance.”

Local Leader, Tanzania

7. Technology needs to be adapted to reach the most marginalised

One recommendation coming out of the endline evaluation was around expanding access to online learning resources (recognising the extent to which rural children were excluded from mainstream distance learning provision during the COVID-19 pandemic school closures) made accessible through the wider provision of phones. Phone provision to Guides is something that CAMFED recognises is expensive but can add value – particularly in the context of a pandemic – in terms of their ability to connect with one another; with their students (to an extent) and to coordinate action with community stakeholders. It also supports in the provision of real time monitoring data, ensuring any adaptations to delivery can be made quickly and effectively. Further, with CAMFED's Learner Guide hub coming on-line later this year, phone provision would ease many Learner Guides' access to the curricula, training and resources that the hub will house. However, overall CAMFED felt the resource allocation was fit for purpose – particularly given the extent to which learning and transition outcomes were protected.

8. Strong evidence and partnerships have been central to driving operational excellence

CAMFED's partnerships with leading research bodies such as the REAL Centre and the University of Warwick have generated hugely valuable evidence of 'what works' in the field of development education. Such partnerships have also been critical in examining and ensuring CAMFED's own programme effectiveness – driving internal operational excellence. CAMFED's collaboration with the University of Warwick in Tanzania indicated that lower levels of wellbeing are statistically associated with being female, based rurally and marginalised. Wellbeing levels were also found to be higher among students in Form 3 and 4 than those in Form 1, possibly due to the correlation of higher wellbeing with factors that support school survival (good health, low marginalisation) and low mental wellbeing contributing to dropping out of school. Internally, CAMFED has been able to use this information to guide which forms are best targeted with the *My Better World* curriculum. Externally, CAMFED has shared the findings of the survey with policy makers at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to advocate for the inclusion of mental wellbeing programming in ministry planning.

9. System level sustainability is only possible through consistent engagement with governments

The governments of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe have all expressed support for the wider roll out of the Learner Guide Programme and have committed time and resource to explore pathways to scale. CAMFED Tanzania was invited to a strategic meeting between the World Bank Africa Vice President, and the Minister of Education and other senior government ministers, which focused on solutions to the issue of pregnant girls' return to school. Following the meeting the World Bank agreed to re-commit \$300 million for basic education support in Tanzania, where \$50 million was ring-fenced for support to girls to re-enrol and finish school after childbirth. Similarly in Zambia, following a baseline dissemination presentation at the Joint Annual Education Sector Review, CAMFED Zambia was invited to sit on its working group to improve professional development for teachers in Zambia. In Zimbabwe, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education has recognised the value of psychosocial support in its national Guidance and Counselling curriculum, and when schools reopened after pandemic-related closures, the Ministry prioritised psychosocial provision within catch-up support. To get results and sustain momentum, it is critical CAMFED and other partners keep their seat at the table, continue to share lessons and advocate, to both build trust and also to understand the opportunities and levers for change.



Girls'
Education
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