Wellbeing and Educational Outcomes

Camfed’s vision is of a world in which every child is educated, protected, respected and valued, and grows up to turn the tide of poverty. As the most effective strategy to tackle poverty and inequality, Camfed supports marginalized girls to go to school and succeed, and empowers young women to step up as leaders of change.

Through a major project being delivered in Zimbabwe and Tanzania, Camfed¹ is conducting research in government secondary schools to explore whether a focus on more relevant learning that develops students’ broader life skills and ‘competencies’ leads to enhanced wellbeing, improved educational outcomes and ultimately to an increase in young women’s ‘agency’.

Wellbeing Measures

With the assistance of the University of Cambridge Psychometrics Centre, Camfed has developed two wellbeing constructs (and questionnaires to measure them): General Wellbeing and Academic Wellbeing. Both of these types of wellbeing are constituted by several dimensions:

General Wellbeing

Aspirations. This incorporates the factors that help individuals identify and set goals for the future which are associated with higher levels of individual and community wellbeing.

Self-efficacy. This focuses on the beliefs that individuals have about their ability to influence events that affect their lives.

Self-awareness. This assesses a person’s capacity to become the object of his or her own attention and the capacity to reflect about one’s own actions.

Motivation. This evaluates a person’s capacity to be proactive and take constructive action in difficult situations.

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¹ For further information, please contact Stuart Johnson, Head of Impact, Camfed International at sjohnson@camfed.org.
**Academic Wellbeing**

**Involvement.** This measures the degree to which a student perceives her teachers to be personally interested in her progress and the degree to which they are involved in tackling obstacles to achieving educational ambitions.

**Reward.** This reflects the student’s self-efficacy levels about performing well in school, how worthwhile school is and the enjoyment of school.

**Adjustment.** This reflects the degree to which the student is well integrated to the school’s social environment and the degree to which he experiences school as anxiety free.

**Survey Findings**

The findings presented below are excerpts from a baseline survey carried out by Camfed in Tanzania and Zimbabwe in three phases between February 2013 and March 2014. The survey included nearly 8,000 secondary school students in Tanzania and more than 11,000 students in Zimbabwe. All students completed questions relating to their academic wellbeing, while a sub-sample answered questions about their general wellbeing. The students also completed English and Maths assessments set by the national examination board in each country. Additional information was collected about the student’s socio-economic circumstances and their school attendance.

The survey will be repeated with the same students in September 2015 to assess Camfed’s intervention outcomes with statistical rigour. In addition, the baseline survey findings already reveal insights into the role that wellbeing plays in educational outcomes. Below are findings from the Zimbabwe baseline survey.

**General Wellbeing and educational outcomes**

- There is an association between students’ English and Maths tests scores and the four General Wellbeing subscales. All bivariate associations were statistically significant and moderate to strong (between $r(2745)=0.38$, $p=0.001$ and $r(2745)=0.47$, $p=0.001$). Consequently, all areas of General Wellbeing seem to be associated with academic performance in noticeable ways. This suggests that improving levels of General Wellbeing could result in potential academic gains in this student population.

- There is a small, but significant correlation between school attendance$^2$ and three out of the four General Wellbeing subscales (between $r(1708)=0.10$, $p=0.001$ and $r(1709)=0.17$, $p=0.001$). The exception was Aspirations, for which there was no significant correlation found. These results suggest that the students’ General Wellbeing has a small but significant association with how much the student attends school.

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$^2$ The number of days each student attended school as a proportion of the days the school was open.
Academic Wellbeing and educational outcomes

• Students with higher Academic Wellbeing are more likely to perform better academically. There was a moderate to large significant correlation between the English and Maths test scores and two of the three Academic Wellbeing subscales – Reward and Adjustment ($r=0.40, p=0.001$ and $r=0.43, p=0.001$, respectively). Consequently, students with more positive Academic Wellbeing were more likely to perform better academically.

• There is a small, but significant correlation between school attendance and Reward ($r=0.21, p=0.001$). There was no significant correlation found between school attendance and Adjustment and only a weak, but significant correlation with Involvement ($r=0.09, p=0.001$). There is an indication that an increased sense of Reward and Adjustment is linked to higher school attendance.