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BEING COLLABORATIVE: THE CASE OF CAMFED

Camfed is an international non-profit organisation tackling poverty and inequality by supporting marginalised girls to go to school and succeed, and by empowering young women to step up as leaders of change. In this briefing we showcase Camfed Tanzania’s pioneering collaboration with Worldreader, Kiva and the government of Tanzania that aims to extend rural girls’ access to education and to help young women to successfully navigate the difficult transition between school and adulthood.



Camfed’s holistic and **collaborative** approach has been key to its success. Each collaboration brings something unique to the project: Camfed’s own community-led model with Worldreader’s technology creates new ways of learning; collaboration with national and district education structures help to embed e-readers into the government English orientation programme; Kiva loans strengthen community engagement; and Learner Guides provide both a link to local communities as well as valuable learning support to teachers and students.

In mainland primary schools in Tanzania, children learn all subjects in Kiswahili; when they move on to secondary school the language of instruction shifts abruptly to English. While students have learned English as a second language in primary school, some children find it difficult to listen, read and write in English and this has an inevitably negative impact on their performance. Research has shown that the transition from primary to secondary school is one of the points at which girls in Tanzania are likely to drop out of school.¹ To manage this transition, Form 1 students attend a six-week government-led English orientation programme at the beginning of the



The launch of the HDIF project in Iringa with members of the CAMA alumnae network.

school year. Unfortunately, this is undermined by a lack of learning resources for students and a lack of teacher training.

¹ At primary school girls and boys are more or less equally represented, but the ratio drops to 0.78 at secondary (Global Education Digest, 2011).

Camfed's 'Technology Supported Learning' project brings together the well-established community-led structures of the Camfed model with the innovative use of e-readers to address the change of language of instruction for students transitioning from primary to secondary school. Through Worldreader's technology, Form 1 and Form 2 students have access to tailored learning resources on the e-readers alongside supplementary reading materials, which helps to foster their enjoyment of reading and speaking in English.

Through funding from HDIF the project has been implemented in 25 rural partner schools in Iringa to support girls in their transition between primary and secondary education, testing the combined model for scalability across Tanzania.

PRINCIPLES FOR DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT: BE COLLABORATIVE

- ▣ Engage diverse expertise across disciplines and industries at all stages.
- ▣ Work across sector silos to create coordinated and more holistic approaches.
- ▣ Document work, results, processes and best practices, and share them widely.
- ▣ Publish materials under a Creative Commons licence by default, with strong rationale if another licensing approach is taken.

COLLABORATING AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

Many previous development projects that have attempted to introduce new technology into schools have failed due to a lack of community engagement, cross-sector collaboration and buy-in from teachers. They have also often failed to provide relevant learning content or to integrate the use of the technology into the existing curriculum. Camfed has avoided repeating the same mistakes by collaborating with its partners across sector silos and at different levels.

Prior to receiving HDIF funding, Camfed established a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. They have continued to work closely with the Ministry on key aspects of planning and programme delivery through existing structures at national, district and community levels to embed the use of e-readers into the government-run English orientation programme for new Form 1 students.

During the design phase of the project, Camfed collaborated with Worldreader and other stakeholders to develop an appropriate curriculum and to digitise learning materials to be used on the e-readers. Worldreader digitised six books developed specifically by Camfed to meet the needs of marginalised rural students in Tanzania including curriculum-specific study guides in mathematics, English and biology, and 'Learning to Learn' in English, a core resource for the literacy programme led by the Learner Guides.



Students taking part in Camfed's technology-supported learning programme, Iringa.

WORLDREADER

The project is supported by a network of Learner Guides, Camfed graduates who return to their local schools to offer training to students in the use of e-readers. Learner Guides receive access to small business start-up loans through Kiva. These loans are free of financial interest, recognising the time Learner Guides spend volunteering as 'social interest'. By training young female secondary school graduates as Learner Guides, the project is supporting learning and employment prospects for young women, and helping to ensure the project has strong community buy-in.

Camfed recognised the challenges related to introducing a new technology in an environment where digital literacy levels of key stakeholders are low. English teachers and Learner Guides were trained in the use and maintenance of the e-readers through Camfed's cascade training model. Learner Guides received additional training to support students in school and to help learners improve their English literacy skills while also successfully navigating the transition between primary and secondary school, using the subject-specific and wider reading materials loaded onto the e-readers.

Evidence collected so far suggests the project is having a range of positive effects and is helping students to improve their English literacy and language skills. The results of English tests taken by 3,320 students in all 25 partner schools showed an improvement across two-thirds of the 25 partner schools from Term 1 to Term 2 in 2016. Learner Guides and English teachers are adapting and expanding the way they use e-readers to ensure they get maximum value and use out of them.

Several other districts in Tanzania have shown an interest in the programme. As a result of the successful pilot, Camfed has been awarded funding through the DFID² Girls Education Challenge Transition programme to scale up to an additional 50 schools in Tanzania. The Camfed Learner Guide programme has been selected as one of the six winners in the 2017 World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) awards.



Students with the (former) Director of Education Coordination, Mr. Bernard Makali, at PORALG at the project launch in Iringa.

LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Close collaboration with teachers, Tanzanian education authorities, community-based Learner Guides, Kiva.org and the strong technology and content partner Worldreader has enabled Camfed to gain strong traction in its activities in Tanzania. The technology was carefully introduced within a well-established community infrastructure, with training and capacity-building in its use led by experienced and committed stakeholders. This has allowed Camfed to gain further funding and recognition.
- Working within the existing school system strengthens government schools and ensures the programme has both input from and exposure to relevant government departments.
- Being collaborative includes adopting strategies for leveraging and contributing to a broader commons of resource, action and knowledge. This would include, for example, publishing all educational materials under a Creative Commons licence by default, thereby enabling a much wider audience to access and benefit from them. Camfed needs to consider this when publishing materials and resources in the future.

² UK Department for International Development

ABOUT THE PRINCIPLES FOR DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT

The Principles for Digital Development are designed to institutionalise lessons learned in the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in development projects. They were written by and for international development donors and their implementing partners, but are freely available for use by all. The principles are 'living' guidelines, intended to serve as guidance rather than edict, and are meant to be updated and refined over time.

Further reading

- <https://camfed.org/our-impact/tanzania>
- <http://digitalprinciples.org>
- www.worldreader.org
- www.wise-qatar.org/wise-awards-2017
- www.kiva.org

(All links accessed 9 October 2017)

Credits

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Disclaimer: All opinions included here represent those of HDIF and not those of DFID.



The Human Development Innovation Fund (HDIF) aims to identify and support innovations that have the potential to create social impact in education, health and, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) across Tanzania. With a focus on market driven solutions, HDIF catalyses the development, testing and scaling of innovative models of service delivery, information and communication technologies for development (ICT4D), and product solutions in health, education and WASH.

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HDIF'S APPROACH TO DIGITAL INNOVATION

HDIF's Digital Approach sets out actionable steps for using the Principles for Digital Development to support cross-sector technology adoption and scaling-up for innovation-related practitioners (including HDIF and its partners) and policymakers in Tanzania. The prevalence of digital innovation in the HDIF portfolio presents an opportunity to generate learning from grantees who are putting the principles into practice in a Tanzanian context.



HDIF aims to contribute to the global dialogue on the principles through the Digital Impact Alliance (DIAL), the stewards of the digital principles, who facilitate lesson-sharing around digital development and promote their adoption globally. The HDIF digital framework for learning borrows from DIAL's materials and content. For more information see <https://digitalimpactalliance.org/>

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