

## Special Case Study

# How Pearson BTEC is helping CAMFED to educate and empower young women

*CAMFED is an international non-profit organisation tackling poverty and inequality by supporting girls to go to school and succeed. Their primary goal is to empower young women to step up as leaders of change. CAMFED invests in girls and women in the poorest rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa, where they face acute disadvantage, and where their empowerment is now transforming communities.*

*As part of its Learner Guide Programme, CAMFED uses specially developed Pearson BTEC resources in their classrooms. The BTEC qualification forms part of a sustainable incentive package that supports learners in making their own next steps towards further education, enterprise or employment.*

*We spoke to Alex Logan, Development Officer for CAMFED International in May 2021 about the aims of this inspirational organisation to learn more about how the BTEC underpins their Learner Guide Programme.*



### What are the aims of CAMFED?

We have a simple goal. Through a gold-standard system of accountability to the young people and communities we serve, we have created a model that radically improves girls' prospects of becoming independent, influential women. Our impact increases exponentially through the Association of young women educated with CAMFED's support. Together, we multiply the number of girls in school and accelerate their path to livelihoods and leadership.

### What Partnerships do you have?

CAMFED has forged effective partnerships with government ministries in the countries we operate in, including ministries of education, health, community development and gender, and national institutions including universities, vocational education and training authorities, higher education student loans boards and small industry development organisations.

In each country where it works, CAMFED seeks to shape policy at national level and collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders in a variety of sectors. For example, CAMFED actively contributes to groups such as the Gender and Equity Committee in Zambia, the Education Coordination Group in Zimbabwe, and the Tanzania Education Network board (which the National Director of CAMFED Tanzania chairs).

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## Can you tell us more about the CAMFED Learner Guide Programme?

CAMFED Guides are young women, drawn from the CAMFED Association - the network of women leaders educated with CAMFED support – who are specially trained to support vulnerable children and young people with learning, life skills, and enterprise development in their local schools and communities.

*“The teachers in the school where I go, they are very good, they are impressed with me and they love the programme. The learners love it too!”*

**Naomi** (one of the first young women to be trained as a Learner Guide and take the BTEC qualification in Zambia)

The Guides use their lived experience to deliver CAMFED programmes within schools or communities. These CAMFED Guides include: Learner Guides, para-educators who are volunteering in rural schools to deliver the My Better World life skills curriculum and support vulnerable children with learning and life skills; Transition Guides, who support young women completing secondary school with life skills, sexual and reproductive health skills, and business and financial literacy training; Agriculture Guides, who support communities

to develop climate-smart techniques to improve the productivity, sustainability and profitability of their businesses; and Business Guides, who offer training and ongoing support to female entrepreneurs as they launch and grow businesses. CAMFED Guides receive extensive training to prepare them for their role.

CAMFED Learner Guides use bespoke resources developed in partnership with Pearson to deliver the My Better World life skills curriculum and support vulnerable children with learning and life skills.

The My Better World curriculum and workbook help students to build self-knowledge, discover their talents, build resilience, select role models, set goals, and learn how to achieve them. They also provide vital health information, working to prevent HIV/AIDS and keep girls safe from exploitation.

CAMFED and Pearson collaborated to develop a bespoke BTEC (the Pearson SRF BTEC Level 3 Advanced Diploma for CAMFED Guides), which is accessible to all young women who volunteer as CAMFED Guides. By the end of 2020, 3,596 CAMFED Guides had achieved the BTEC qualification.



## What are your learners' experiences of the programme?

We know that the CAMFED Guide BTEC, and wider CAMFED Guide programme, allows young women to build their personal and professional skillsets and gain valuable work experience.

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*"I love the Learner Guide Programme because I so much wanted to work with school children and help them to be focused on their schoolwork so that they can better their future."*

**Ottilia** from Zimbabwe (Learner Guide)

They also develop technical expertise, soft skills such as self-knowledge, critical thinking, resilience, communication and interpersonal skills, and the programme raises their profile and standing within their families and communities.

In a context where further education and employment opportunities are in short supply, and social norms can act to restrict the progression of young women, training as a CAMFED Guide offers female school graduates a structured and productive post school pathway, which they find fulfilling and meaningful.

To give you just a couple of examples. Naomi, one of the first young women to be trained as a Learner Guide and take the BTEC qualification in Zambia, decided to take the BTEC because she believed she could use it as a tool for her professional development. It has really helped her in her goal of becoming a teacher. In the rural sub-Saharan African contexts in which CAMFED works, opportunities for education



beyond secondary school remain limited, particularly for rural women. In this context, qualifications such as the BTEC are particularly valuable.

Ottilia, from Zimbabwe, trained as a Learner Guide in 2015 and earned her BTEC certificate in 2017. She went on to complete training as a Nurse Aide in 2019 and recently applied to nursing school, using her BTEC certificate to bolster her application. She hopes that the BTEC certificate, her experience as a Learner Guide and her commitment to volunteering in the local community along with her fellow CAMFED Association members will secure her place.

### **What value do you see in your association with Pearson BTEC?**

We see Pearson BTEC as a key partner. The BTEC qualification is highly valuable to CAMFED Guides as it certifies their skills and experience, and supports them to gain access to further education, employment, or entrepreneurship opportunities.

It is also key to the sustainable incentive package for CAMFED Guides and as such plays an important role in CAMFED's strategic objective to scale up the Guide programmes in our partner countries, with a view to supporting five million girls to attend and thrive in school by 2025.

CAMFED is currently working with Pearson to explore the accessibility of Pearson's online platforms for CAMFED Guide BTEC candidates in order to support further scaling of the qualification.

**Learn more about the CAMFED programme here:** <https://camfed.org/our-impact/learner-guide-program/>

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