

## **CAMFED: Transition to Adulthood with Peer-Led Learning**

### **March 2026 Fact Sheet**



[CAMFED](#) – the Campaign for Female Education – is a pan-African, grassroots-led movement tackling poverty, inequality, and injustice through girls’ education and women’s leadership. Its focus is on vulnerable girls and young women in rural areas of Africa – where girls face acute disadvantages and where unlocking their power will have a transformative impact.

### **Christina’s Story**

Christina lives in Mwanza District in Malawi with her siblings and parents where poverty is the norm and opportunities for girls are nearly nonexistent. But with support for her education and help moving from school to adult life, Christina is showing her community what is possible and giving back to help others achieve their dreams.

“Before CAMFED, I was facing a lot of challenges. I lacked school fees, groceries, and once I was disqualified from school as my parents were not able to pay all the fees for boarding\*. Since I couldn’t board at the school, I had to walk the long distance from home without any food. I wasn’t doing well in my homework because at home there was a lot of noise. I often had to help out at my parent’s business, leaving less time for my schoolwork. I was envious of my friends who boarded and didn’t have these responsibilities.”

CAMFED paid Christina’s school and boarding fees and provided supplies, uniforms, and other items including menstrual products and soap. And it made a stark difference in her life. Christina’s school



performance improved, and she received top scores in most of her classes – “I was able to beat boys,” she said – and became an inspiration to others.

“When a girl child is educated in our communities, it’s a big deal,” she said. “Like, for example in my community, it’s known everywhere. My name is everywhere – ‘that girl has been educated and she put Mwanza on the map.’”

After graduation, Christina opened her own business – which is successful and allows her to have her own savings – and she joined CAMFED as a Transition Guide to help other young women follow suit.

“Being a Transition Guide is part of my plowing back as a member of the CAMFED Association. Giving back is our passion! I provide learning sessions to my fellow friends, because after finishing school, we young women face a lot of challenges – for example there may be gender-based violence in our respective homes, financial problems or business problems. In the sessions we discuss different topics and my friends gain skills on how they can deal with their challenges.

“There are a lot of different modules in the Transition Guide Manual. The most important topics are ‘Business Skills,’ ‘My Rights, My Choices,’ and ‘My Wellbeing.’ In ‘My Rights, My Choices’, we learn about sexually transmitted infections and how to prevent early pregnancy. Being part of the CAMFED Association, I’ve learned that women can do what men can do. We can be successful in business. We can be academically successful. But what we need is to be hard-working, to have role models, to have greater self-confidence. With these things, you will succeed.”

\*Many students living in rural areas of Malawi attend schools with boarding facilities due to the very long distances students would otherwise face travelling to school on foot every day.

## Understanding the Issue in Context

Much like in Christina’s community in Malawi, the period immediately after girls finish secondary school in rural Zambia is an extremely vulnerable time. The systemic issues of poverty and gender inequality that can keep girls from accessing school, or learning when they get there, continue to create significant financial and social barriers after they graduate. In Zambia, two-thirds of children live below the poverty line of \$2.15 per day. The young women assisted by CAMFED typically graduate into low-income communities that depend on subsistence agriculture and are characterized by a lack of quality employment – a precarious situation which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the impacts of climate change.

Formal employment opportunities are rare, and young women often lack knowledge about financial management and their own rights. They lack the capital, connections, and assets to create their own employment through entrepreneurship, and there are few local women leaders to act as role models and mentors. This means that urban migration or early marriage – both of which leave women extremely vulnerable to abuse and exploitation – are often their only perceived options.

This transition period from school to work is made more difficult by the current economic context, which has worsened in recent years. After an ease in the inflation rate in Zambia in 2025, it has begun to increase once again, hovering at more than 11% in December 2025. The instability of climate events such as droughts, floods, and cyclones adds to the uncertainty not only around employment but also around reliable access to sufficient food and water. While the labor market in Zambia is a challenge for both young women and young men, women face additional barriers when trying to find dignified, decent work. And although the young women who have been supported through school by CAMFED have the advantage of education, they still face acute challenges after graduation. Having been selected for support through school based on their extreme vulnerability, their need for support and resources continues as they transition into the next phase of their journeys.

## Community-Based Solutions in Action

Together Women Rise’s grant of \$50,000 funds an expansion of the Transition Guide Program – supporting Zambia’s most vulnerable and marginalized young women as they transition from secondary school into secure and productive livelihoods.

*“We say ‘It’s all about ubuntu.’ Ubuntu means thriving together. Ubuntu means togetherness. Ubuntu means humanity for others. This is exactly what CAMFED’s sisterhood is all about. We meet together, and then we go out in the community, we plow back...”*

*– Harriet, CAMFED Association National Chairperson, Zambia*

Through the Transition Guide Program, young women become peer educators, providing mentoring and skills support to younger peers as they get ready to leave school and helping them to develop their economic independence and leadership. Led and facilitated by members of the CAMFED Association who were supported to go to school by CAMFED and who now spearhead CAMFED’s programs, these Transition Guides support girls over a 6 to 12-month period to help them transition safely to higher education, vocational training, entrepreneurship, or employment. The CAMFED Association is Africa’s largest and fastest-growing peer support and mentorship network of young women leaders. The Transition Guide Program is designed around practical learning. Guides deliver their sessions in small groups, connecting young women to their peers, and helping them to improve their health and well-being and make important life decisions.

The program includes:

- financial literacy training
- business planning and advice
- reproductive health and well-being information, and
- leadership training.

After the initial training, young women can gain access to additional expert training in specialized skills, including in climate-smart



agriculture delivered by CAMFED Agriculture Guides and more in-depth business training and support provided by Business Guides.

This funding supports programming delivered by 109 trained Transition Guides, young women from the CAMFED Association who themselves have experienced the challenges of rural poverty and exclusion. Each Guide will mentor 20 graduates, equipping them with tools to pursue education, employment, or entrepreneurship. These women then cascade their learning within their communities, extending impact to an estimated 23,489 additional community members. Importantly, the Guides not only deliver the curriculum but also help shape it, ensuring relevance through their lived experiences and collaboration with CAMFED staff and education partners.

Grounded in peer-to-peer mentorship, the Transition Guide Program creates a powerful ripple effect that helps young women make informed decisions, access new opportunities, and lead change within their families and communities. Transition Guides can also earn vocational qualifications to recognize their work, which can improve their own employment and higher education prospects.

*“I remember when I got to university with CAMFED’s support, I saw a completely different version of myself – I could lead and I excelled. That is why I became a Transition Guide. We help girls figure out what’s next after school. I have personally seen girls who were once too scared to speak in public go on to run businesses and mentor others.”*

*– Fatimata*

## Impact and Transformation

This two-year project will focus on Muchinga Province in Zambia – specifically Lavushimanda, Shiwang’andu, and Isoka districts – where demand is high as more girls graduate each year.

**Together Women Rise’s support will enable 2,180 young women (109 Guides mentoring 20 women each) to participate in the structured curriculum covering wellbeing, sexual and reproductive health, financial education, core business skills, career pathways, and active citizenship.**

- The goal is for at least 80% of participants to secure a livelihood – through employment, entrepreneurship, or further education – within one year of completing the program.
- CAMFED provides holistic support, both financial and psychosocial, through its programs that support young women on their path to becoming leaders in their communities. CAMFED’s most recent program data shows that 39% of program graduates who are part of the CAMFED Association in Zambia had taken on leadership roles within the education system and the broader community, influencing local and national policies. This is a key indicator of success because in these roles they work alongside teachers, government officials, social workers, traditional leaders, and others to amplify their own voices and those of the young women they represent.
- CAMFED Association members in Zambia tend to marry later and have their first child later than their peers. The most recent program data shows this can be up to six years later.

- Each young woman supported by CAMFED typically goes on to support three more girls, creating a powerful ripple effect of leadership, opportunity, and change that extends to future generations.
- CAMFED has a long history of success with nearly 650,000 students supported with secondary scholarships, 1.2 million supported through primary school, and tailored financial aid and social support across 4,710 schools. More than 4 million students have been supported to attend school or further education directly by CAMFED Association members, often using profits from businesses they created because of the support of CAMFED.

By the end of 2024:

- Transition Guides had already supported more than 321,000 young women graduates.
- Nearly 125,000 CAMFED Association entrepreneurs had successfully set up their own businesses.

**EXPECTED IMPACT OF TOGETHER WOMEN RISE'S GRANT:**

**DIRECT: 2,289 WOMEN AND GIRLS**

**INDIRECT: 16,000+ WOMEN AND GIRLS**



## Mission Alignment

Gender equity is at the heart of CAMFED's mission, with a core focus of supporting girls and young women through education and leadership – recognizing that these opportunities are crucial for achieving broader societal goals, including poverty reduction, improved health outcomes, and sustainable development.

CAMFED is deeply rooted in the communities it serves by partnering with teachers, parents, and community leaders, collaborating with government ministries, and drawing on the expertise of young women leaders who know their communities best. Community-led programming fosters a sustainable model designed to serve and uplift the people it supports.

## Budget

Item	Description	Cost
Training	Training of Transition Guides	\$18,243
Monthly Expenses	Monthly expenses for Transition Guides, including transport and communication	\$11,471
Review	Transition Guide review meeting to bring guides together to reflect on achievements and challenges and make any program adjustments	\$11,330
Staff and Overhead	Program staff and overhead costs	\$7,579
Program Resources	Transition Guide manuals for guides and school graduates; session resources	\$1,377
<b>Total</b>	Total project cost: \$220,561. Rise funding: \$50,000 (approx. 23%)	<b>\$50,000</b>

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## Source Materials

[CAMFED](#)

[Trading Economics](#)

[International Labor Organization](#)

[World Bank Global Trends in Child Monetary Poverty](#)