

Young Women's Livelihoods and Leadership

Outcomes and Learning from

Camfed's Shaping My Future Programme in Zambia 2013 – 2017

18 January 2018



Executive Summary

Between 2013 and 2017 Camfed supported 3,922 marginalised young women in rural Zambia to make the transition from school to more secure and productive livelihoods. Camfed's Shaping My Future Programme combines business and life skills training with a seed grant and peer support to enable vulnerable young women to generate a sustainable income from enterprise. This report of learning and outcomes brings together evidence from three sources: the 2017 Business Tracking quantitative survey, pre-training data and focus group discussions with participants.

The Shaping My Future Programme builds on the foundations of investment in girls' secondary education. It is delivered by the CAMA¹ network to help recent school graduates – themselves new CAMA members - navigate the transition from school to livelihoods. In particular, it has enabled young women to grow and sustain businesses that generate an ongoing income. That income is enabling them to meet their needs, to support their families and to help vulnerable members of their communities. These young women are saving to prepare for emergencies and to invest in further education and business growth. They have created jobs for themselves and others, and their role as businesswomen is improving their confidence and status within their families and communities. They are spending more on food, education and health, as well as supporting the wider community through voluntary community work and financial support to children in school. Key outcomes, calculated on the basis of findings from the Business Tracking Survey, include:

- Over 3,000 new women-led businesses established in rural Zambia
- Nearly 1,000 new jobs – above and beyond self-employment for the entrepreneurs
- Improved household wellbeing, with the majority reporting increased spend on food, health and education as a result of business income
- Over 10,000 children supported in education by the Shaping My Future participants
- Safer and more productive career paths for the young women trained – with 75% in employment (including self-employment) or education
- Increased savings, financial decision-making and aspiration amongst the young women
- Leadership and activism by young women to help others in their community, including reaching an estimated 11,000 people with financial literacy training
- Greater control over important life choices as indicated by the fact that Shaping My Future participants are less likely to be married and less likely to have begun childbearing than other women of the same age in Zambia.

Importantly, the Shaping My Future Programme is helping young women to break free from the cycle of poverty that trapped them and their families. The average Shaping My Future business provides a better income than a low paid job in domestic work within the first year, and by the end of the second year is generating more net income than many of the jobs in the local area. Strikingly - amongst a group that required financial assistance to attend school themselves - 76% of the women who were currently running a business were able to completely finance the school-going costs of all the children in their care without support from outside the household.

The surveys demonstrate that the positive impact of CAMA enterprise is both rapidly realised, and sustained and growing over time. The newest entrepreneurs surveyed, whose businesses had been running for an average of seven months, were already reporting a number of positive outcomes with regard to income, savings, household expenditure and philanthropy. Businesswomen with more mature businesses, running on average for 38 months, reported significantly greater income, savings and household expenditure on necessities such as food. As their incomes grew, so did their philanthropy; with more experienced entrepreneurs supporting more children in school and spending more money to assist those children.

¹ CAMA is the Camfed alumnae network of educated young women who are committed to “ploughing back” to support others in their communities and to leading positive change.

The research also provides valuable learning and insight about what has most helped the young entrepreneurs to achieve such success, and the challenges that they face. Timely intervention when young women complete school is critical to help them manage this key transition in their lives and avoid early marriage or exploitative work. The seed grant - in conjunction with business, financial literacy and life skills training - gives women the capital, skills and confidence to launch a business. Ongoing mentoring and peer support is associated with business longevity and sustained growth.

Many of the women who had stopped running businesses had done so for positive reasons; typically to continue their education. However, a minority stopped either because of lack of financial returns or because of too many business challenges. The most significant challenges for both those who continue to run their businesses and those who have stopped include; competition from other similar businesses, transport issues, lack of access to capital and customers not paying their bills. Supported and advised by their mentors, participants adopted a number of strategies to help them address these challenges. These strategies include securing a loyal customer base through exemplary customer service, adapting the business focus in response to changing market conditions, joint purchasing with other entrepreneurs and saving in order to invest in business assets.

The CAMA network now exceeds 100,000 educated young African women committed to leading change and it continues to grow rapidly. Supporting young women to transition from school to livelihoods is central to unleashing their potential as activists, philanthropists and leaders. Looking ahead, there are two major areas where Camfed will focus resources and support. Camfed will continue to cost-effectively scale support for young women's micro-entrepreneurship so that many more new CAMA members can safely navigate the transition from school to livelihoods. Camfed will also build on learning and experience from Shaping My Future and other Camfed youth enterprise programmes to help the most successful CAMA entrepreneurs to take their businesses – and their leadership for positive change – to the next level. The result will be more jobs, greater prosperity and more children in school in rural African communities.

Catherine Boyce

Director of Enterprise Development, Camfed International

cboyce@camfed.org

Contents

1. About Shaping My Future	5
2. Context.....	5
3. Methodology	6
4. Programme Outcomes.....	7
5. Case Study – Sandra Maliti.....	19
6. Business Success Drivers and Challenges.....	21
7. Conclusion	27

1. About Shaping My Future

Shaping My Future is Camfed's life skills, financial literacy and business start-up programme for economically disadvantaged young women in rural Zambia. Between 2013 and 2017 3,922 young women participated in the programme and were supported to transition from secondary school to more secure and productive livelihoods.

The Shaping My Future programme reaches young women immediately after they complete secondary school, as they face a profound turning point in their lives. The young women supported on the programme are amongst the poorest in their communities. Reliant upon Camfed bursaries and community support to be able to attend and progress through secondary school; upon graduation they face the daunting responsibility of both supporting themselves and helping their families. Without prompt intervention at this critical life stage, young women are particularly vulnerable to early marriage or exploitative work. The Shaping My Future programme connects them to peer support through CAMA (Camfed's alumnae network of educated young women), equips them with life skills and enables them to earn an independent income through entrepreneurship. Having an income empowers young women, enabling them to make informed life choices, provide for their own needs, start saving, contribute to household expenditure on food, health and education and help vulnerable members of the community. As breadwinners, businesswomen and activists, young women not only improve life for their families, but gain the respect of their families and communities.

The Shaping My Future training is a six day residential course focusing on four subject areas: 1) core business skills; 2) financial literacy; 3) leadership and career planning; 4) women's rights and sexual and reproductive health. The young women learn the fundamentals of planning and launching a business which includes conducting market research, writing a business plan, engaging with customers, budgeting, and keeping financial records. Following the assessment of their business plans at the end of the training, all participants are eligible for a Seed Money grant worth approximately \$50 that enables them to start their own small businesses. The programme includes an orientation to CAMA, with experienced entrepreneurs from within the CAMA network delivering the training and providing mentoring. Reflecting CAMA values, participants make a commitment to 'give back' to their communities through philanthropy, financial education and community activism.

2. Context

Young rural women in Zambia graduate from secondary school into an economy with a dearth of formal employment opportunities. According to the most recent Labour Force Survey, 83.9% of employment in Zambia is informal, and for rural areas, where the Shaping My Future programme is delivered, this is as high as 92.2%. The majority of employed women work in agriculture and many are unpaid family workers.² A 2013-14 survey in Zambia found that 56.6% of young women aged 20-24 had not been employed at all in the previous 12 months.³

Given the lack of opportunities for formal employment, it is important that young women are able to start their own business and join the 41.8% of the working population that is self-employed. However,

² *Zambia Labour Force Survey Report 2014*, Central Statistical Office

³ *Zambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013-14*, Central Statistical Office

women face additional barriers to entrepreneurship compared to their male peers. 19.9% of the male population over the age of 15 has received some skills training, compared to just 10.6% of females.⁴ Marginalised young women also have profound difficulty accessing the capital required to start and grow a business. 97% of the Shaping My Future participants had never borrowed from any source, despite many of them seeking to grow their businesses. Only one respondent had borrowed from a bank, which shows how limited the opportunities are for young women to access capital through formal institutions.

Before their Shaping My Future training, 95% of the young women were not earning money and 98% had no savings.⁵ The vast majority of participants interviewed felt that without Shaping My Future they would have been doing what they described as “nothing”, focused entirely within the household or doing unpaid household chores for neighbours and friends.⁶ In these circumstances, many families “marry off” their daughters to older men. The most recent Demographic Health Survey found that more than 50% of 20-24 year-old women in Zambia were married by the age of 20.⁷ Other young women migrate to urban centres in search of employment, leaving them vulnerable to exploitative work and sexual abuse.

3. Methodology

This report presents findings from the 2017 Business Tracking Survey in Zambia, complemented by insights from the end of programme qualitative evaluation and data from the 2015 pre-training survey conducted with participants.

The Business Tracking Survey was conducted with a sample of young women selected from across the full range of cohorts (year groups) participating in the Shaping My Future training between 2013 and 2016, enabling us to assess the short and medium term outcomes of the programme. A preliminary questionnaire provided basic information about Shaping My Future participants and enabled Camfed’s Monitoring and Evaluation Team to select a survey sample that was broadly representative in terms of region and age of business, and that included those who were still running their businesses and those who had stopped. The sample was made up of 342 Shaping My Future participants from across the four Provinces in which the Shaping My Future Programme was delivered - Luapula, Northern, Western and Muchinga. The sample was divided into four groups for comparison:

- 99 young women who received their training and seed money grants between April 2013 and August 2014 and were still running their business at the time of the survey. Their businesses are referred to in this report as **‘established businesses’** and had been running for an average of 38 months at the time of the Survey.
- 78 young women who received their training and seed money grants between November 2014 and November 2015. Their businesses are referred to in this report as **‘young businesses’** and had been running for an average of 24 months at the time of the Survey.

⁴ *Zambia Labour Force Survey Report 2014*, Central Statistical Office

⁵ Camfed pre-training survey, November 2015

⁶ Shaping My Future project evaluation, 2017

⁷ *Zambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013-14*, Central Statistical Office

- 97 young women who received their training and seed money grants between August 2016 and November 2016. Their businesses are referred to in this report as **‘new businesses’** and had been running for an average of seven months at the time of the Survey.
- 68 young women from across the training cohorts who were no longer running businesses. They are referred to in this report as women who **previously ran a business**.

The survey was administered by 18 Monitoring and Evaluation Resource Persons. M&E Resource Persons are young women who receive training from Camfed Zambia in survey administration and who, to ensure independence, conducted the Survey outside their home districts. They interviewed each Survey participant in person and uploaded her responses, via tablet, directly into the online data collection tool used by Camfed. The Survey results were then analysed by Camfed’s Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Teams in the UK and Zambia. The Survey results provide a wealth of insight about the impact of the Shaping My Future Programme on young women, their families and communities. Applying data from the Survey to the population of women trained enabled Camfed’s M&E Team to quantify the outcomes achieved. It also generated significant new learning and insight about how the programme is supporting young women’s income generation and self-sufficiency, which Camfed will apply both in Zambia and across sub-Saharan Africa.

The Shaping My Future end of project evaluation was a qualitative study designed to complement the Business Tracking Survey’s quantitative approach. It was conducted in 2017 in Samfya (in Luapula Province) and Sesheke (in Western Province) which were selected on the basis of their differing business contexts and the large number of Shaping My Future entrepreneurs located in each district. Camfed staff worked with CAMA leaders to conduct 12 focus group discussions, which reached Shaping My Future participants from across all year groups trained. There were eight focus groups for women still running businesses and four for young women who had previously run businesses. Each group followed an evaluation questionnaire designed by the Camfed M&E Team. The questionnaire covered the training, grant and mentoring processes, and prompted discussion of the programme outcomes. Camfed staff also conducted in-depth interviews and business visits with four Shaping My Future businesswomen.

The 2015 pre-training survey was conducted with 244 women before they started the Shaping My Future training course in November 2015. The questionnaire collected information about participants’ circumstances and their knowledge and views prior to the training, providing a starting point from which Camfed can measure change. The survey included employment and economic activity, saving habits, background details about the family, financial decision-making and activities within the community.

4. Programme Outcomes

Outcome 1: Over 3,000 new women-owned businesses

Under the Shaping My Future Programme, 3,922 young women received business skills training. 3,875 women subsequently developed their business plans and applied and received a seed grant of between \$35 and \$75. The vast majority of these had succeeded in launching a new business by the time they

were contacted for the Survey.⁸ Indeed, 31% had expanded from there and were running more than one business at the time of the survey. On average, these ‘repeat entrepreneurs’ are running two businesses each, with some running as many as six.⁹ This represents a significant increase in women-led businesses in the rural Zambian communities where the Shaping My Future entrepreneurs are based.

The majority of CAMA businesses started under Shaping My Future sell food products. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of Shaping My Future businesses by sector. Businesses selling fresh fish, tomatoes, vegetables, maize, maize meal or rice are popular, partly because the barriers to entry are low – there are limited specialist skills or large capital inputs required to start a business in these sectors – and also because there is demand for essential food products. These foods can sell quickly at low unit cost, as do prepared foods, which include popcorn, fritters, bread and scones. Running a business with fast stock turnover means that the entrepreneurs are able to adapt their product offering in line with demand, mitigating the risk to their limited finance. Other Shaping My Future businesses sell shoes, second hand clothes, chitenge (traditional fabric wraps), soap and general groceries, with a number of the young women running hair salons, restaurants and bakeries.

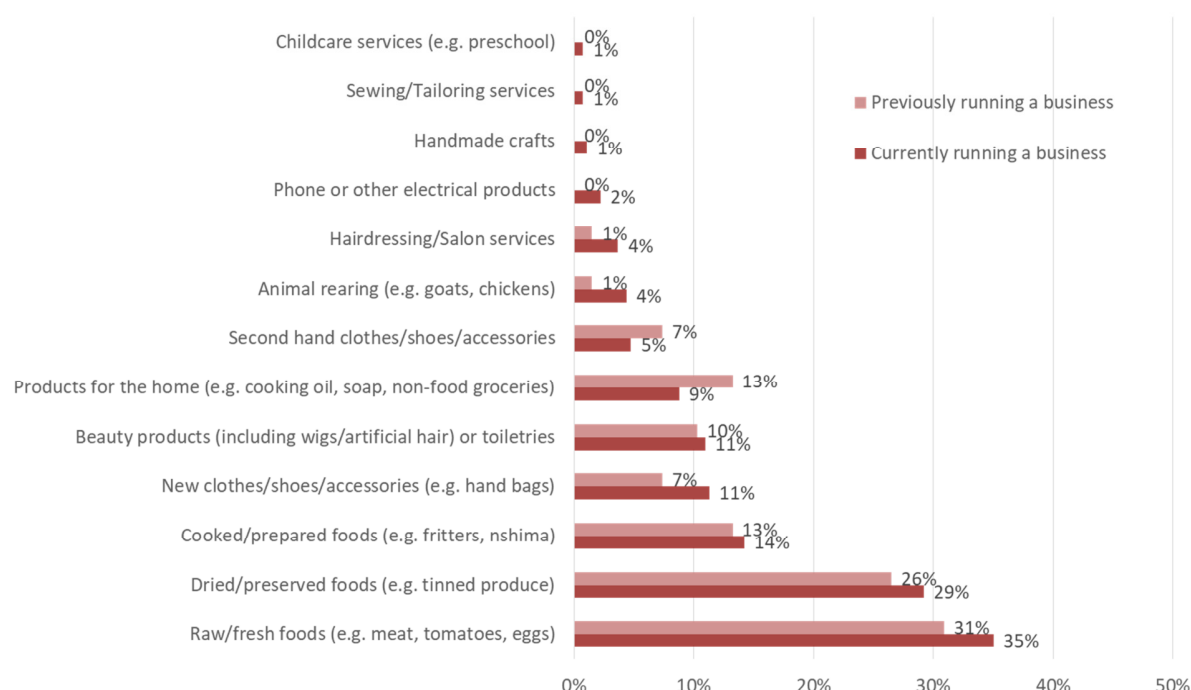


Figure 1. Main business product or service

As part of the qualitative evaluation, young women were asked how they chose their businesses. Their answers showed that they had applied learning from the Shaping My Future training and conducted market research, with considerable thought for their location, local purchasing power, seasonality and personal skillset. Some had looked for a product that was not available in their immediate area or

⁸ Findings from the 2015 and 2017 Business Tracking preliminary and in-depth surveys indicate that 83% of training participants had successfully launched businesses by the time they were contacted, of which 97% were entirely new businesses

⁹ The outcome number of 3,000 does not include multiple businesses by the same entrepreneur. It is therefore a conservative estimate of new business creation

identified an unmet demand. These considerations informed the set-up of the more innovative businesses, such as those producing and selling sausages, freezits (popsicles) and herbal remedies. Interviews with the entrepreneurs indicate that the creation of multiple businesses is a tool for diversification, thereby managing business risk and fluctuating seasonal supply and demand.

The Survey showed that the Shaping My Future businesses are almost completely owned and run by women. 91% of the female entrepreneurs surveyed were the sole owners of their business and were working for themselves. Some co-owned their business with female family members, but 323 of the 342 Shaping My Future participants surveyed considered themselves to be the top manager of their business. Most of the remaining 19 were being managed by a female family member.

It is widely recognised that it can be challenging for micro-entrepreneurs to accurately calculate profits and to separate business and household finance. Therefore, the Business Tracking Survey asked young women to detail their business income and expenditure over the previous month, drawing upon their business records. The entrepreneurs' average monthly business income was 1,417 ZMW (\$140).¹⁰

The Business Tracking Survey found a clear association between the length of time a business had been running and revenues, with longer-established businesses generating a higher income on average (see Figure 2).

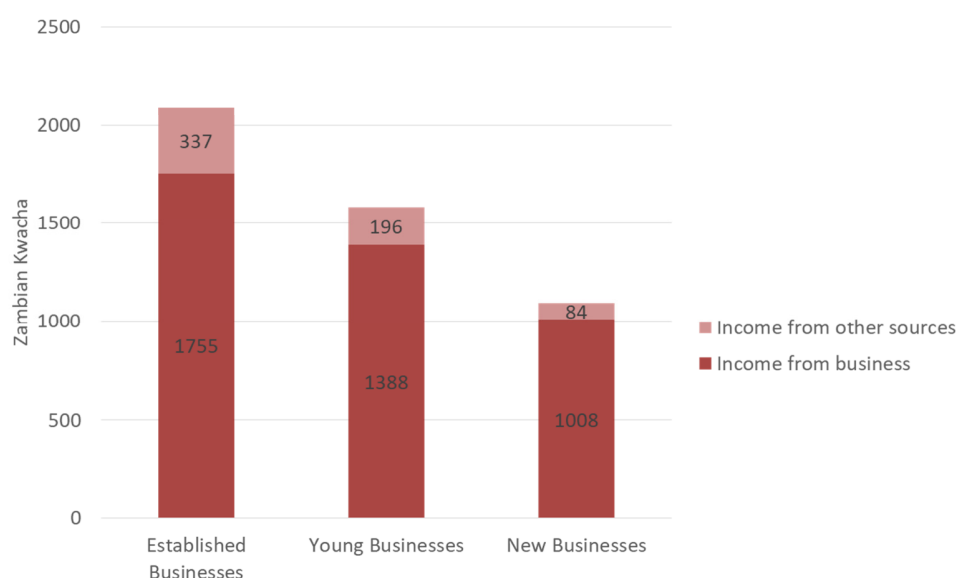


Figure 2. Income from business and other sources

Established businesses also had a higher level of expenditure (averaging \$71), which is consistent with larger businesses turning over more stock and being more likely to have employees. Established businesses were making an average of 688 ZMW (\$68) per month in profit, compared to 629 ZMW (\$62) for young businesses and 409 ZMW (\$40) for new businesses (see Figure 3). As a point of comparison, the monthly National Minimum Wage for domestic workers in Zambia is \$30.6 and for general or shop

¹⁰ Currency conversions from <https://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/> accessed on 25/11/2017

workers it is \$51.¹¹ The average Shaping My Future business therefore provides a better income than a low paid job in domestic work within the first year, and by the end of the second year is generating more net income than many of the jobs in the local area. These findings demonstrate the success of the Shaping My Future Programme in enabling disadvantaged young women to establish new and enduring income-generating opportunities in poor, rural communities.

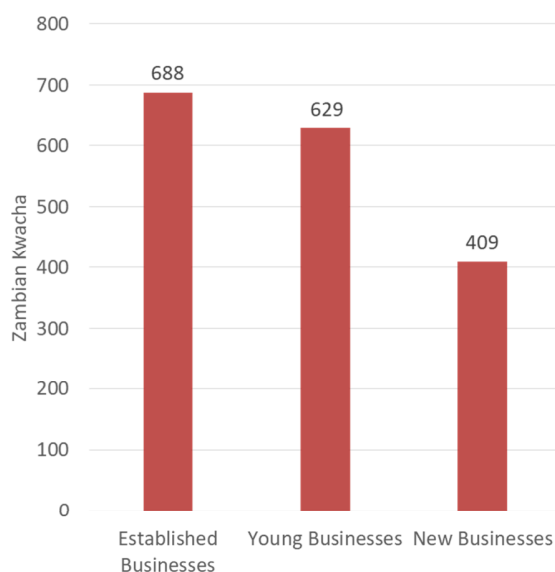


Figure 3. Difference between income and expenditure

Outcome 2: 950 new jobs in rural communities (in addition to self-employment for the entrepreneurs)

Having created employment for themselves by starting their businesses, young women also provide employment for others as their businesses grow, maximising the positive impact of these businesses on the wider community.

The Business Tracking Survey found that 35% of the young businesswomen surveyed had paid employees in the last year. Indeed, four agricultural businesses employed over 20 seasonal agricultural workers each. Excluding these as outliers, the businesswomen who employed paid staff had an average of 1.6 employees each. The majority of these jobs were part time, occupied by women (52%), and paid an average of \$19 per month.

The qualitative study found that there were certain types of businesses that were more likely to provide employment than others. For example, the businesswomen who ran hair salons or grocery stores found they needed help to keep their shops open long hours to provide reliable service to customers. They

¹¹ See <https://alrei.org/home/education/minimum-and-living-wages-in-zambia-some-analytical-considerations-for-improving-workers2019-conditions-by-grayson-koyi> accessed on 11/12/2017.

were most likely to have permanent employees who were paid monthly and typically employed other young women, often other CAMA members. Businesswomen selling convenience foods such as fritters, scones or freezits often also employed others to sell their products in different communities. These were usually young people employed on an informal basis.

More mature businesses tend to create more new jobs (see Figure 4). As the Shaping My Future businesses continue to mature beyond the end of the programme, we can therefore anticipate that they are likely to continue creating additional jobs for others in the community – testament to the programme’s sustainability.

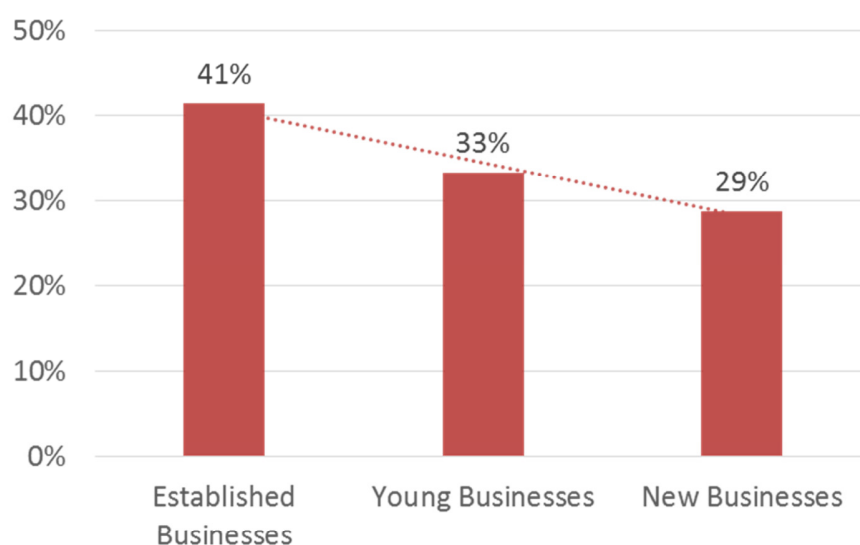


Figure 4. Businesses employing others

Outcome 3: Improved household incomes from business revenues averaging a 140% increase in contributions¹²

Before they participated in Shaping My Future, young women’s economic agency and ability to contribute to household income was very low. Prior to the training, only 25% of young women participated in day-to-day decisions about expenditure in their households. As 95% were not earning any money, they can be assumed to have been making little or no contribution to household income.

As the findings under Outcome 1 demonstrate, business profits are providing young women with an independent income, which is often linked to participation in household decision-making. In the early

¹² Because most of the training participants household contributions were zero prior to the training, this increase is calculated by comparing the household contributions of women who have been running businesses for several years (established businesses) compared to those who have recently launched new businesses. This is therefore a conservative estimate of the increase to household contributions.

stages of a new business, 83% of women take part in day-to-day decisions about household expenditure, increasing to 97% as the businesses mature. One young woman described how her involvement had changed over time:

“When we are making a family budget they include me because I also give them money. They have to ask me, “How could you spend your money this month, how much have you taken this month?” They see how much I have, how much I am going to keep for my savings, and what we are going to use at home. I participate in making family decisions, I am included. This is from when I started running a business, it did not happen when I was just not doing anything.”

The Business Tracking Survey demonstrates that young women choose to spend the largest portion of their income on their families:

Figure 5. Monthly allocation of resources by young women running a business

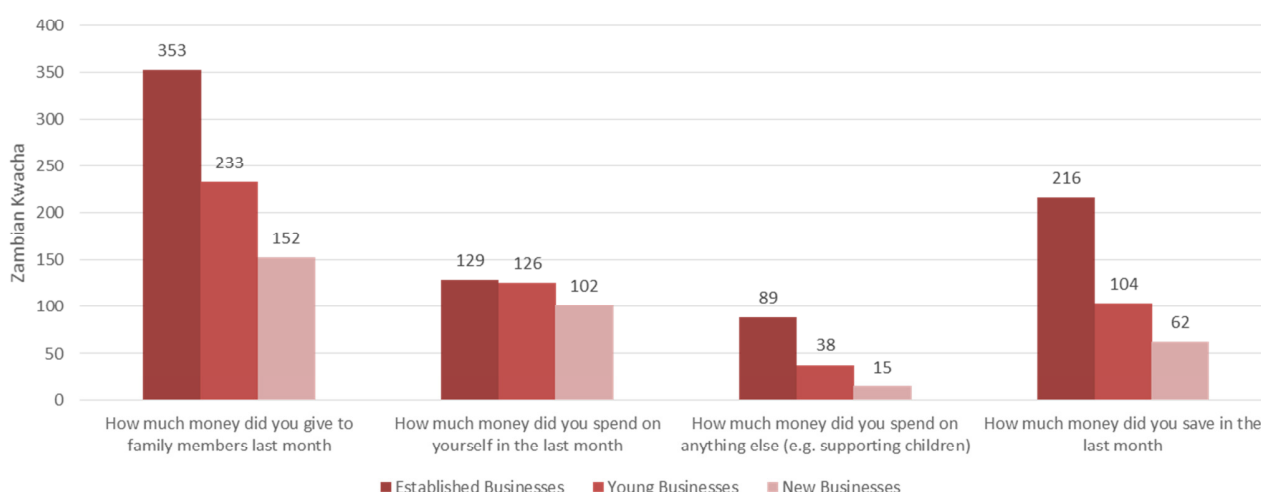


Figure 5 also shows that, as business income increases, young women increase the amount they spend on their families and save more but they spend very little additional money on themselves. Young women with businesses that had been running for less than a year contributed on average \$15 (152 ZMW) per month to their household, while those that had been running for two years contributed on average \$23 (233 ZMW) per month, and those that had been running for over three years contributed on average \$35 (353 ZMW) per month. In a context where 57.5% of the population live below the international poverty line (defined by the World Bank as \$1.90 per day) these contributions are making a huge difference to family wellbeing.¹³

The Business Tracking Survey also explores how households are using this extra income. Overall, 68% of participants currently running a business said that their household’s spending on education, health and food had increased since they started their business. One CAMA entrepreneur explained how she takes

¹³ World Bank: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.DDAY?locations=ZM>

turns with her aunt to buy the week's food for the whole household. Another reported that *"I help at home in buying things which are needed, things like mealie meal, tomatoes and other food stuffs."*

It is noteworthy that the household spend on food, education and health - per household member - was greatest for the most mature businesses, affirming the growing returns to running a business over time.

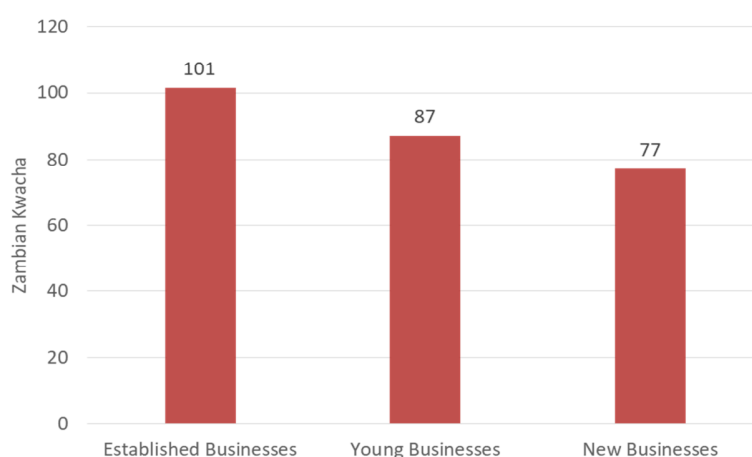


Figure 6. Average monthly household food spend per household member

Some young women had, very sadly, lost parents since they started their businesses and taken on additional responsibilities as heads of households. 25% of young women surveyed were the only income earning adults in their households. They contributed an average of 60 ZMW (\$6) per household member per month, more than double the contribution of participants with four or five other working adults in their homes. For those who were supporting others in this way, household spend on food, healthcare and education may not have increased, but it was the Shaping My Future businesses that were preventing the households from dropping below the subsistence level. One participant reflected:

"Without the grant I would be a nobody, I would not have been able to pay for my brothers' school fees, since my parents died I have been responsible for their school requirements, fees and clothes, my uncle only helps us with shelter."

Young women's participation in the Shaping My Future Programme has also enabled them to save and to understand safer places to save their money. Prior to the training only 2% of participants had any savings. In comparison, 53% of those currently running a business specified an amount for "cash reserves" as part of their monthly business expenditure and 39% stated an amount that they had saved in the last month. 58% of current business owners are saving in a bank, a credit union or with a microfinance group and 48% are using mobile money. Shaping My Future participants who are currently running businesses have an average of 953 ZMW (\$94) of personal savings in addition to their business capital and, as Figure 5 above demonstrates, the young women increase the amount they save as their businesses mature.

Young women are saving money for multiple purposes. 61% said that they are saving partly for emergencies. For example, one young woman who took part in the focus group discussions had paid for her sister to travel to the next district for urgent medical treatment. Another had put 500 KMW (\$49) towards her father's care in hospital in Lusaka. Others are saving for events such as family weddings, large purchases like land or a building, or for education costs for members of the family. Young women are also saving towards their own futures. 75% are saving for further education and 57% to invest in their businesses.

A clear trend is the extent to which Shaping My Future participants prioritise education – supporting both children within their household and other vulnerable children in the community. One participant recalled:

"I have used the business profits to pay for my young brother who is completing grade 12 this year. I feel proud and important."

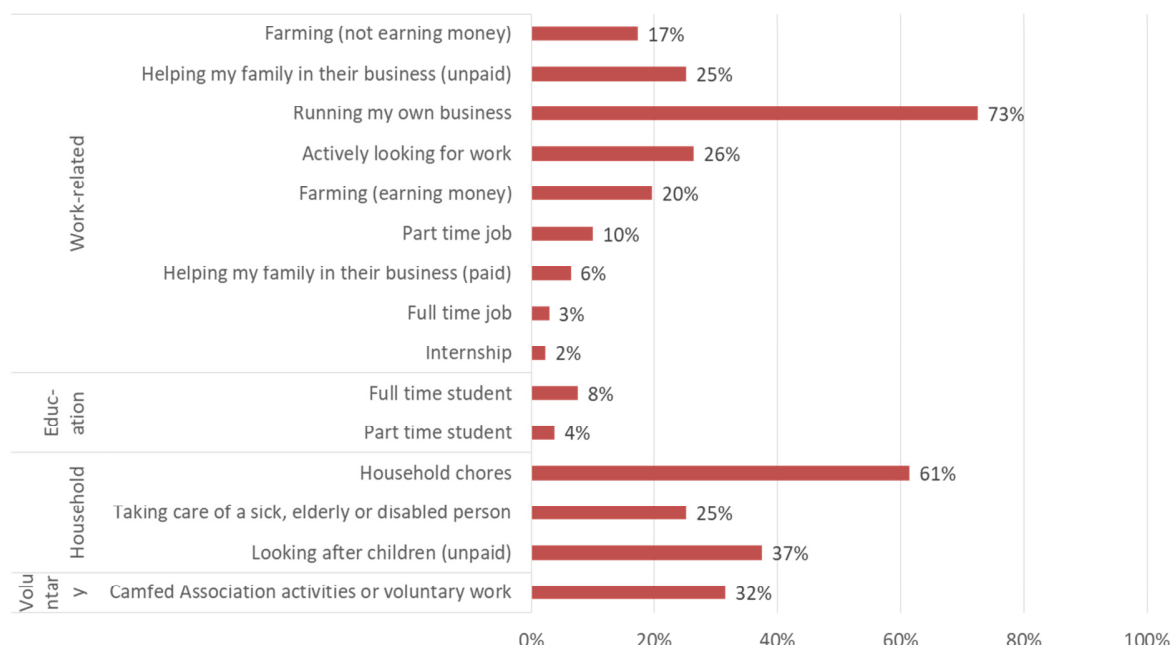
67% of Business Tracking Survey participants had parental responsibility for one or more children - 2.6 children each on average. It is a testament to the drive of these young women to assist the vulnerable that 65% of the children they cared for were not their own. Three-quarters (76%) of participants who were currently running a business were able to completely finance the school-going costs of all the children in their care without support from outside of the household. This is a remarkable achievement given that the entrepreneurs themselves had required financial assistance to attend school when they were children. It suggests that, with the proceeds from their businesses, these women have broken the cycle of poverty that trapped their families.

Outcome 4: Safer and more productive career paths for young women including tertiary study and employment as well as business set-up and growth

Module 6 of the Shaping My Future training course is entitled *"Choosing Your Career Path"*. As they undertake this module, the young women are asked to think about their plans for the future and to set career goals. They are encouraged to be ambitious and to consider the full range of career options that may be open to them, including further education. This is intended to raise their aspirations and to guide them to put steps in place to achieve their goals. The businesses they start using the Shaping My Future grant could be the start of careers as entrepreneurial businesswomen, but could also be the means by which they save funds to invest in tertiary education or build up experience for employment. The Business Tracking Survey shows that the young women are pursuing a variety of positive career paths. This contrasts with their expectations of a life spent doing household chores followed by marriage had they not had opportunity to participate in Shaping My Future.

Participants of the Business Tracking Survey were given a list of economic activities and asked which they had done in the last month, selecting all that applied. The most common activities were running a business (73%) and household chores (61%). 13% were in part or full-time employment and 12% were studying.

Figure 7. All activities engaged in by participants



Overall, 75% of the women trained are estimated to be either in employment (including self-employment) or education. Put in context, across the country as a whole, 30% of young Zambian women are not in education, employment or training, and this includes those in urban centres and from better-off backgrounds.¹⁴ Those young women who were not, at the time of the Survey, in education or employment, reported that they were predominantly occupied with household and family responsibilities and the majority (86%) planned to start a new business in the future.

Business careers

The Business Tracking Survey showed that the majority of young women who were currently running a business expected still to be running their business in a year's time (see Figure 8). Separately, 73% said they would still like to be a businesswoman in five years' time. Almost three quarters (74%) had ideas for business expansion and 62% had ideas for starting a new business. As cited above, 57% of businesswomen were saving in order to invest in their business. Interestingly, even though the majority of young women said that they started their business in order "to make money to do something else", most (83%)

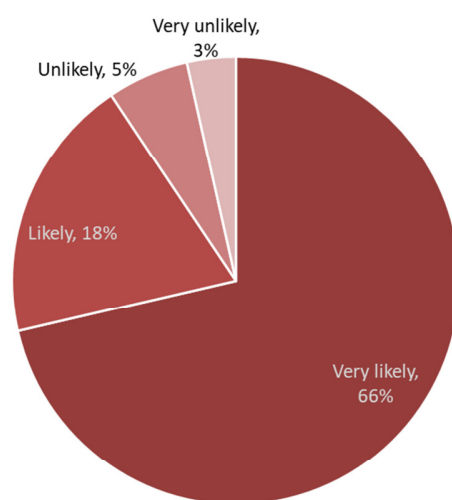


Figure 8. How likely is it that you will be running this business one year from now?

¹⁴ 2014 data cited by the ILO: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_429080.pdf

of the entrepreneurs enjoyed running their business most or all of the time.

The qualitative study also highlighted the extent to which Shaping My Future has already transformed the career paths of the young women who are under the most pressure to generate an income to support their families. Their businesses allow them to do this from home, on their own terms. One woman trained in 2015 explained:

“For me, things have changed. My parents were not working, so I was worrying that when I finished school I would have to go to Namibia as a maid. Even with my Grade 12 education I would have been a maid because we don’t have money. But now I am better. They have given me a grant so I have started my business.”

Another commented,

“I thought I would be just doing anything, just working for someone in order to sustain my mother, going in the streets and searching for jobs. But since I got the grant I am able to do something myself.”

Further education

At the time of the Business Tracking Survey, 13% of the young women surveyed had a tertiary education qualification and a further 10% were studying for one.¹⁵ Overall, 46% of participants have either retaken their secondary school exams with a view to improving their grades or pursued some form of post-school education. This figure was even higher for those who were no longer running a business (63%) in line with the finding that the main reason young women had stopped running a business was to continue their education. Young women participating in the qualitative study described how they planned to combine education with entrepreneurship, asking family members to support their businesses while they were away during term. 75% of businesswomen said they were saving to invest in their further education.

Aspiration and agency

Having completed secondary school and started a business, young women who have taken part in Shaping My Future are already seen by their families as high achievers. 78% of young women who are currently running a business agreed that their family sees them as someone who has already achieved a lot, and over 90% of all young women interviewed believed that their families see them as someone they will be able to count on for financial support in the future. When asked about their self-perceptions, the participants showed a high level of optimism and self-confidence: 96% saw themselves as on track to achieve their ambitions, 92% saw themselves as a role model, and 74% as a community leader.

Positive life choices

According to the Business Tracking Survey, only 18% of participants had ever married. By comparison, according to the 2013 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), 55% of women in the 20-24 years age bracket (the age bracket which best reflects our survey group) were married. Similarly for child-bearing,

¹⁵ Camfed assisted many of these women to take-up tertiary education opportunities, connecting them to scholarships provided by the Government of Zambia and Camfed funding partners.

41% of Business Tracking Survey participants had one or more children. By comparison, according to the 2013 DHS, 74% of women in the 20-24 age bracket had had a child. These data indicate that the Shaping My Future programme is enabling more young women to choose to delay and plan their marriage and childbearing. As one respondent said of what her future would have looked like without the training and grant: *"I would not have started the business. I would probably be married because I was going to be lacking in a lot of things."*

Outcome 5: Leadership and philanthropy by young women to support the development of their communities

Shaping My Future participants have supported approximately 10,800 children in education and reached an estimated 11,400 people with financial literacy training as well as many other forms of outreach to support children and their communities. The total reach is conservatively estimated at over 22,000.

The CAMA network is the pan-African alumnae network of educated young women who were supported by Camfed in secondary school and who have made a commitment to help others. CAMA now has over 100,000 members, including 9,455 in Zambia by the end of 2016, and represents a remarkable force for positive change.

The Shaping My Future Programme is run by CAMA business trainers and, as part of the programme, all participants receive an orientation and welcome to the CAMA network (which they will already be familiar with from support received as schoolchildren). All participants commit to "plough back". Running a business provides them with the economic agency and resources to do this. This activism and philanthropy by the entrepreneurs widens the impact of the Shaping My Future programme so that it extends beyond the participants and their immediate families. In the words of one participant:

"Firstly I can now provide for my own need, secondly I am able to help my family members, and I help some of the children in my community by buying them food, clothes and books."

53% of all the young women surveyed during the Business Tracking Survey had given children money, food, clothes, shoes or other school support so that they could attend school in the last term. For those with established businesses, this was significantly higher at 70%, compared to 45% of those with new businesses and 37% of those who were no longer running businesses. Women with established businesses also supported more children, averaging 4.6 children each compared to 3.2 for women with new businesses. Using these data, we can estimate that the number of children supported with school-going supplies and costs by Shaping My Future participants to be 10,864. Of these, 3,415 were unrelated to the Shaping My Future participants.

The average monetary value of support given to children in the last term was \$21 per participant. Support given included: paying for school fees, uniforms, groceries, pens, books, sanitary protection and lotion. Participants running young and established businesses contributed the greatest monetary value in the last term, with an average of \$26 per young woman. In comparison, young women who had recently started new businesses contributed \$9.

Young women's philanthropy and community work extends beyond financial support for children in school. 86% of all participants in the Business Tracking Survey had engaged in at least one activity to support children or their community in the last six months. On average, participants each engaged in four different activities to support children and three different activities to support their community, including advising students on their studies or career, advising students on reproductive health, visiting the elderly or patients in hospital, and conducting community advocacy on women's rights. 65% of participants had delivered financial literacy training to members of the community. Assuming – conservatively – that each woman delivering financial literacy training reached two people per year, we can estimate that 11,374 people have received financial literacy training from Shaping My Future participants. In practice the outreach is likely to be significantly greater since a number of young women have reported working with large groups to share financial literacy knowledge and skills.

The Business Tracking Survey found that 37% of participants had taken on a leadership or decision-making role within the community. The qualitative study gathered greater detail on the kinds of community leadership roles young women are playing. For example, one young woman is representing CAMA in community discussions with traditional chiefs. Another is the Treasurer of a film production group advocating against early marriage, and had been selected for her understanding of financial management as a result of the training. Other responsibilities undertaken include membership of the Executive Committee of a local youth work group, leadership of a savings group, and participation in community groups tackling issues including HIV/AIDS transmission and alcohol abuse among young people. This shows the strength of active citizenship within the CAMA network, a concept that is explored as part of the training and encouraged by the CAMA leadership who run the programme. A CAMA leader from Samfya district described the esteem in which CAMA is held by her local community:

"We are really respected, we are really role models. Even to the chief we are seen to be role models because of the teaching we are doing and also because after being empowered we are doing something, we are giving back to the communities. So we are seen as hard workers as well...it's a strong group of young rural women."

5. Case Study – Sandra Maliti

My name is Sandra Maliti from Sesheke district in Zambia. I was trained as part of the Shaping My Future business training programme in April 2013. The training gave me the entrepreneurial skills I needed to open my salon. Now, I sell hair extensions and plait hair. I am lucky, because I know how to manage my business. The training taught me to identify the difference between ‘needs’ and ‘wants’, make good financial decisions, calculate profit and loss, keep accurate business records and do a cash flow forecast. I use all of this knowledge to run my business successfully.

My salon is well known in the district. It particularly attracts other young women of around my age. I’m located at the main district market in Sesheke town. It is at the centre of the main business area, which means it is easily accessible, even to those who are travelling into Sesheke on public transport. Because of my location, my salon is popular with public sector employees like teachers and health workers, who have regular income and are good customers. I make between 200 and 300 ZMW per day [\$20-\$30]. My hair salon business is registered with Sesheke District Council.

There are three salons close to mine, but I am able to keep running my business despite the competition because I provide quality services and take time to do my work well. I did a short course in hair plaiting, and my customers are satisfied. I also keep my prices affordable. For example, I charge 15 ZMW [\$1.5] to plait corn rows. I know that in the other salons they often charge 20 ZMW [\$2].

I work hard to advertise my business. Whenever I attend a gathering of lots of women I talk to people about my salon, and I have posters up at nearby schools and churches. I also use text messages and phone calls for marketing. However, it’s the quality that matters most, so that my customers will spread good news about my business wherever they go. My services speak for me everywhere. I believe that the work I do helps rural women to feel confident and proud. The idea that I have built my business around is that the average rural lady should be able to feel beautiful for an affordable price.



I have now been an employer for three years. I have one employee who supports me with the day to day running of the business. She is hardworking and committed, and I can trust her to work on her own if I have to go out. I pay her a salary.

I’m very proud of my business, but I still face challenges. My business can be slow and requires patience, because so many customers do not have a regular income so they cannot come consistently. Sesheke is also a border town. This means that the price of stock can change due to unstable exchange rates, which can negatively affect my business. Inflation is a threat to all entrepreneurs here, not only myself.

My business provides much needed income for my family. I am the oldest of five children, and we lost our father while I was still in primary school. I am the only one who has set up a business, and the profits enable me to meet my family's needs. I have already managed to build a permanent two-roomed house with the profits I have made. My family are proud of me because I am a young lady in charge of her own business, and I am a role model in my community.

I have a plan to empower other young women by training them in vocational skills like hair plaiting. I know these skills can go a long way in the life of a village girl who is trying to establish herself. I have spent my whole life in the rural areas and I know that we rural girls sometimes lack skills and confidence. Most of my peers grow up timid. For me, confidence comes from outside, from the support of people with experience who had a similar upbringing. I want to provide that, even if just for a handful of girls. I will feel proud of myself I achieve that. I will lead other CAMA members to remain focused in whatever they do.

For myself, my dream is to excel both academically and in business. I want to pursue tertiary education alongside entrepreneurship, although I will need to increase my profits to meet the cost of tertiary education. I also dream of building a permanent, spacious hair salon by the end of 2018. I want to be one of the most outstanding entrepreneurs in my community.

6. Business Success Drivers and Challenges

The Business Tracking Survey and accompanying focus group discussions provide valuable learning on what has helped young women to make a success of their businesses as well as identifying the challenges they have faced. Given the strong and growing positive returns when young women launch and continue to run their businesses, it is particularly important to understand these factors as they apply in the rural Zambian context. This learning will inform future programme design and enable Camfed, CAMA and our funding partners to invest more deeply in the most effective forms of support.

Timing of the intervention

The majority of Shaping My Future participants received the training very quickly after completing their secondary education. Indeed most of the training courses commenced in November, the same month that young women completed their final secondary school exams. This was done purposely, to connect young women to sources of peer support through CAMA and the skills and resources to start generating an income in those critical first few months when young women are particularly vulnerable to early marriage and rural-urban migration.

Seed grants

The seed grants provided under the Shaping My Future Programme provided vital capital to the young women to enable them to launch their businesses. Early participants in 2013 and 2014 received a grant of approximately \$36 while, in response to feedback that the amount was insufficient, young people trained in 2016 received a bigger grant worth \$74. Despite the modest value, 80% of the Business Tracking Survey participants said that the grant made a big difference to them and their business.¹⁶ Participants explained that they would have been unable to start their business without the seed grant.

98% of participants said that the only business grant they had ever received was from the Camfed Shaping My Future programme. Of those who said they had received another business grant, the majority (six) said it was from a family member. Nearly every participant, 97% overall, said that they had never borrowed money from any source.

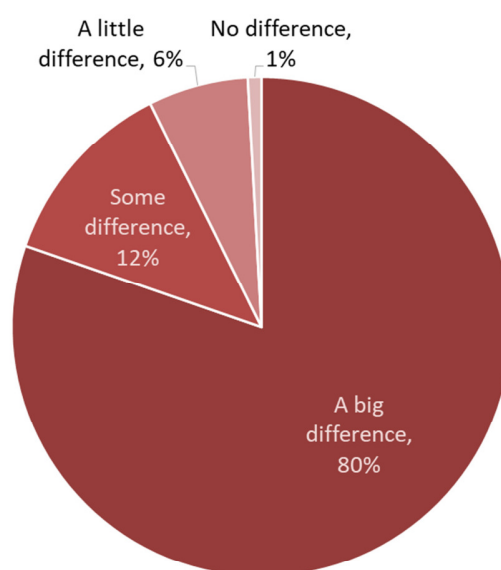


Figure 9. How much difference has the Camfed Seed Money Grant made to you and your business?

¹⁶ Only 1% said it made no difference. These individuals were either running seasonal businesses (and explained they had yet to sell any produce) or had been sick and therefore had not been able to run their business. In other words, it was because they had not yet used the grant for an operating business.

Young women reported how the grant size was an important factor in planning their business. For the most part, Shaping My Future participants chose small businesses in buying and selling rather than production and one reason for this was that the grant did not cover the required outlay on equipment or machinery.

Many of the entrepreneurs are now in a position to benefit from further capital to grow their businesses. Camfed's partnership with Kiva to provide zero financial interest loans to growing entrepreneurs in Zambia represents a huge opportunity for them. Entrepreneurs benefitting from the loans repay the capital plus "social interest" in the form of volunteering and support for the more vulnerable in their community. Two Shaping My Future entrepreneurs have already benefitted from loans under Camfed's pilot with Kiva in Zambia.

Training content

The Shaping My Future training course is designed to equip young women with the business skills and financial literacy necessary to plan and launch a new business. 98% of Business Tracking Survey participants said they found the Shaping My Future training very useful and 97% of respondents said that they had applied at least some of the training to their business. As part of the qualitative study, participants were asked to evaluate the training. Retention of the training content was high. For many of the focus group participants it was several years since their training, yet they described the importance of saving, budgeting, tracking expenses, and paying themselves a salary to create a separation between business and personal funds. They identified market research as an important strategy for choosing the right business for their location and described their assessment of the target market when making business decisions. Customer service skills were consistently raised as an important element of the training that the women still used day-to-day. They credited the training with showing them that it was possible to start a business with a small amount of capital, while preparing them with strategies to respond to challenges. Several participants also felt that it was the training that had led them to be interested in running a business, where before they had not considered it as an option.

Business calculations and record keeping were key topics that the young women found useful, but most challenging. They knew that record keeping would help them to track their progress, plan their spending and manage customer credit. Some of the Shaping My Future entrepreneurs could show meticulous records updated on a daily basis. However, other respondents reported needing more time and support for elements of this topic, including tracking income, cash flow, calculating profit and loss, business planning, and banking options.

Participants also highlighted the importance of the women's rights and sexual reproductive health modules. This content is covered in the school curriculum, but most participants felt that it was necessary to repeat it. Some had used the knowledge they had gained to delay or space out their children and others said that the training had either taught or reminded them that, as women, they have the right to say no to sexual advances and make their own decisions about contraception.

Mentoring

The Shaping My Future programme includes mentoring outreach twice a year. During these exercises, the CAMA Core Trainers who delivered the residential Shaping My Future course travel to each district

to visit young women in their businesses and provide support and advice to many of them. The vast size of many districts and the cost and challenges associated with transport and communications meant that not all entrepreneurs received mentoring visits from the CAMA trainer. Experienced CAMA entrepreneurs located in each district are also encouraged to provide additional mentoring on a voluntary basis. In Samfya district, where there is a particularly active group of volunteer mentors, some entrepreneurs are receiving mentoring support every few weeks.

The Business Tracking Survey indicates that mentoring, particularly during the first twelve months of business start-up, is associated with business success. Entrepreneurs who were still running their businesses at the time of the survey were nearly twice as likely to have received mentoring visits as those who were no longer running their businesses (62% vs. 32%). The vast majority of Shaping My Future participants (98% of those currently and 84% of those no longer running a business) said that the mentoring visits they received had made a difference to them, and the qualitative study confirmed that they found them helpful and encouraging. Shaping My Future participants reported that the expectation of the mentors' visits motivated them to keep their business records up to date. Mentors also helped them to ensure that the records were accurate. The mentors' encouragement to persevere was essential for young women who felt dispirited when they encountered challenges or had to adjust their business idea. Their responses highlighted the significance of meeting with the same mentor regularly and building up a trusting relationship.

Business sector, managing risk and diversification

Figure 1 (see p.8) demonstrates that the majority of businesses launched by Shaping My Future participants are in the food retail sector, which is characterised by low barriers to entry, a broad customer base and rapid turnover of stock. The market for these products is typically already well established, with other similar businesses already operating, which means that young women can be confident of demand for their products. These considerations are critical for young women who have an urgent imperative to rapidly generate an income to provide for themselves and their families.

Many of the entrepreneurs manage risk and the challenging business context by being prepared to rapidly adapt their business focus. One woman described how she had started out selling groundnuts and moved to sell homemade fritters as local competition became more intense, only to adapt again to sell second-hand clothes due to difficulties sourcing cooking oil. Another sold shoes and hair extensions, then switched to selling umbrellas for the rainy season and moved back to hair extensions after the rain. By responding to changes in market conditions, these women are making the most of their limited resources and maintaining a business income.

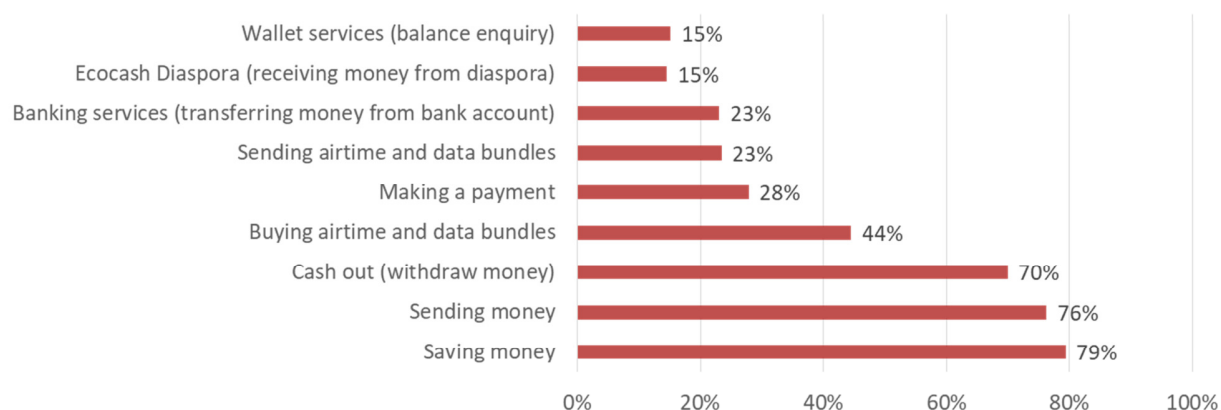
Another strategy adopted by Shaping My Future entrepreneurs to boost their business income is diversification in the form of multiple businesses. On average, 'repeat entrepreneurs' are running two businesses each, with some running as many as six. As is to be expected, the more experienced entrepreneurs are more likely to be running multiple businesses. 48% of the entrepreneurs who were trained over three years previously were running multiple businesses, compared to 33% of entrepreneurs trained an average of two years previously and 11% of women trained less than a year previously. Such a strategy enables the entrepreneurs to take advantage of seasonal fluctuations in supply and demand caused by drivers such as the harvest, rainy season, or the start of school year, and to mitigate the risk caused by external factors such as the cost of transportation and inflationary effects.

Agribusinesses have been identified as an important direction for economic growth in Africa. There is much interest in the scope for young women to be involved in agriculture, as entrepreneurs introducing innovations and generating value rather than as unpaid labourers on subsistence family farms. 44% of businesses that were running at the time of the Business Tracking Survey had an agricultural element, a significantly higher proportion than among businesses that had closed (25% of which had an agricultural element). Of the current businesses with an agricultural element, 69% sold their own produce and 55% sold someone else's produce, with 25% doing both. The qualitative survey indicates that agricultural businesses are often part of diversification strategies. Several Shaping My Future entrepreneurs had acquired a plot of land for farming using the profits from their initial business, and others described plans to do the same.

Mobile phone use and mobile money

99% of participants owned a mobile phone and 96% of current businesswomen said that it was important or very important to the running of their business. Almost half of the survey participants had a mobile money account. Mobile money was mostly used for savings and sending money to others, and 66% of participants who used it said that they did so because it saved them time given the inaccessibility of the bank. These findings demonstrate how mobile technology is impacting savings and enterprise even in very remote rural communities.

Figure 10. Using mobile money



Reasons for business closure

One group surveyed during the Business Tracking Survey was made up of Shaping My Future participants who set up a business and subsequently closed it. The reasons why participants are no longer running their business can be seen as positive – in that the participants are moving on to do some other activity that they prefer – or negative, where participants have been unable to make a financial success of the enterprise.

The Survey allowed participants to select one or more reasons why their business ended. 49% of participants chose “continued my education” or “found other employment” as one of their reasons. These can be seen as positive reasons for no longer running their business. For example: *“I used my business money for the items I needed to carry to college when I was accepted at Kasanga College of*

Education” and “I used the money I made to pay for my exams”. For 44% of participants, business challenges and/or not making enough money were a negative factor in their no longer running a business. Other reasons given speak for themselves of the vulnerability these young women face: “When my grandmother died I had no one to stay with in Mwense and I used all the money to cater for some funeral costs”.

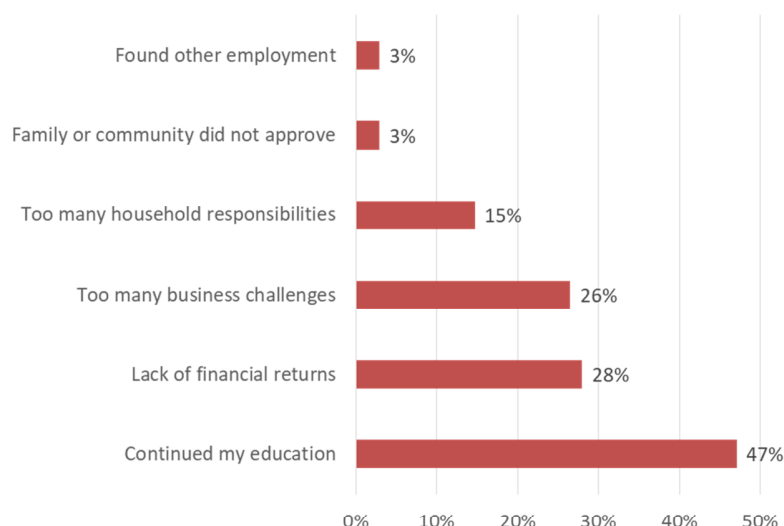


Figure 11. Why did you stop running your business?

Business challenges

Participants faced a range of challenges to their businesses. All businesses, whether current or previous, had faced one or more of these challenges in the preceding year, with participants selecting, on average, 2.7 challenges each. Many of these challenges reflect the rural Zambian context in which the entrepreneurs are operating, as well as the limited resources and capital available to the entrepreneurs. Insights from the Year One and Year Three Business Tracking Surveys flagged similar challenges and enabled Camfed to work with trainers and mentors to help the entrepreneurs manage them. In this section the major challenges are detailed along with approaches adopted by Shaping My Future participants to mitigate them.

Competition was the most common challenge for both current and previously running businesses. This reflects the fact that many of the businesses run by Shaping My Future entrepreneurs sell similar products and services to businesses already operating in their communities (see the section above on “business sector, managing risk and diversification” for the rationale for this). Helping businesses to succeed despite competition was an important focus of the training and mentoring support. The training course included modules on added value and customer service and mentors helped entrepreneurs to trouble-shoot and adapt their business model as necessary. Focus group participants described several strategies that had enabled their businesses to flourish in the context of widespread competition, such as ensuring reliable quality and good value for money, choosing a location with lots of passing traffic and providing outstanding customer service in order to build a loyal customer base (see, for example, Sandra Maliti’s case study above).

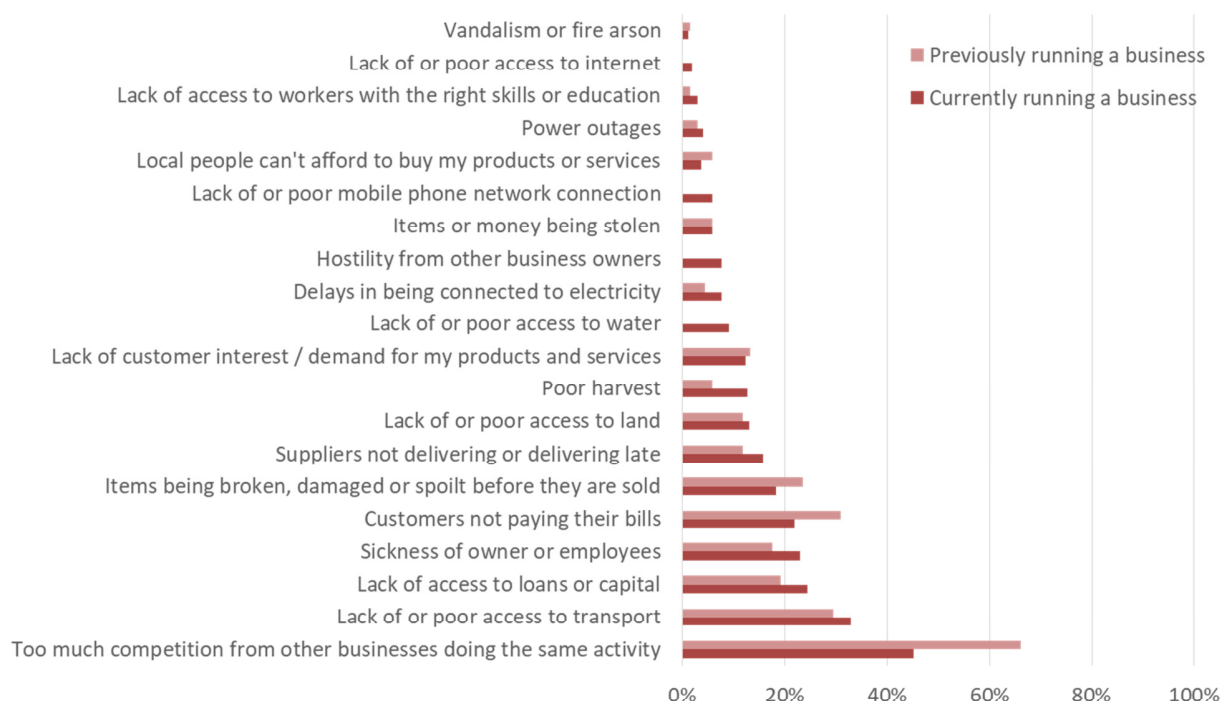


Figure 12. Business challenges faced in the last year

Lack of access to transport is a significant challenge for 33% of currently running and 29% of previously running businesses. This challenge reflects the entrepreneurs' location in rural communities, which means that it is expensive and time-consuming to travel to purchase supplies and to reach larger markets. Some districts (such as Shangombo District) become particularly isolated during the rainy season when roads become impassable. As part of the training and mentoring support, entrepreneurs were encouraged to collaborate to identify solutions to this challenge. For example, some entrepreneurs sent a representative on costly trips to urban centres to purchase stock on behalf of their group of entrepreneurs, rather than all of them travelling and incurring costs to do so. Mobile money is also playing an important role in the entrepreneurs' businesses, enabling them to save and transfer money much more cheaply than via a physical bank.

Lack of capital is a significant challenge – especially for currently running businesses (24% vs 19% for previously running businesses). Young, rural women find it particularly difficult to access affordable finance for business growth because of their lack of collateral, the low levels of financial service provision and the high interest rates charged by many microfinance institutions.

Shaping My Future participants were encouraged to build up their savings to support business investment and 57% reported that they were saving to invest in their business. Some entrepreneurs have succeeded in growing their business from savings capital. For example, one participant invested

her business profits in farming, and now runs a maize plot as well as her hair salon. She also saved up to buy a good quality hairdryer for her salon business and is currently investing in moulding bricks to build a house, which will generate rental income. However, focus group discussions also revealed how the need to pay for emergencies, such as medical or funeral expenses, or to support a relative's continuing education could absorb funds intended for business purposes. The Shaping My Future entrepreneurs face a stream of difficult choices regarding how to allocate the limited funds they have saved.

'Customers not paying their bills' was a challenge for 22% of current and 31% of previously running businesses. The issue of selling on credit was particularly discussed in the focus groups. Most Shaping My Future entrepreneurs preferred not to sell on credit but found it difficult to refuse in some cases, especially when selling door to door. Familiarity and age were also linked to problems collecting credit, as the young women felt disrespectful repeatedly asking elders for money. Support and advice on managing this challenge was an important focus of the training and mentoring support.

Insight into these challenges and the mitigating strategies adopted by Shaping My Future participants provide important learning to inform future roll-out of an adapted programme. This learning will also enable Camfed to provide targeted support to help flourishing entrepreneurs to grow their businesses to the next level.

7. Conclusion

The Shaping My Future Programme has succeeded in transforming opportunities for poor young women. In particular, it has enabled young women to grow and sustain businesses that generate an ongoing income. That income is enabling them to meet their own needs, to support their families and to help vulnerable members of their communities. CAMA members whose families were too poor to support them through school are now funding the school-going costs of their own children and others in the community.

These young women are also now able to save to prepare for emergencies, mitigating their vulnerability and enabling them to invest in further education and business growth. They have created jobs for themselves and others, and their businesses are improving their confidence, wellbeing and status within their families. They are spending more on food, education and health, as well as supporting the wider community through voluntary community work and financial support to children in school.

The CAMA network exceeds 100,000 members and continues to grow rapidly. In the context of such significant opportunity, this analysis contains valuable learning that will inform continued scale-up of Camfed's initiatives to support young women's transition from school to livelihoods, and from micro-entrepreneurship to business growth.