

Building an Assessment of Community Defined Social-Emotional Competencies from the Ground Up: A Tanzanian Example

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Core Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies



Current understanding of SEL, based on research in WEIRD contexts, may not be applicable to Tanzania where the predominant cultural model is likely different.

Locally Generated SEL Measures

Two levels of 'locally generated':

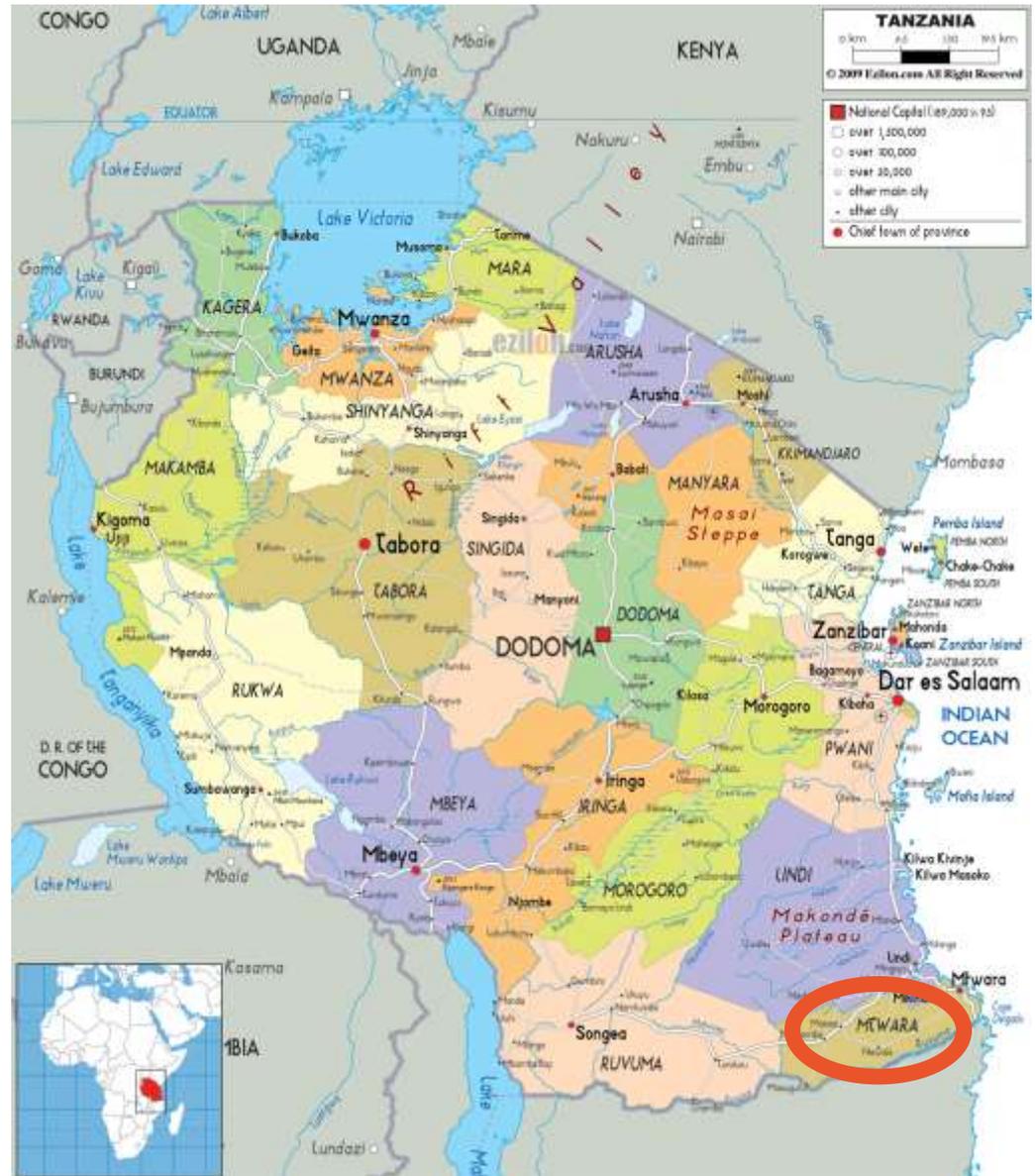
1. "I want to measure empathy ... What are examples of empathic behaviour in Mtwara?"
2. "What should I measure in Mtwara? What competencies are important to people there?"

Study Questions

- **What is the best approach to developing SEL measures in Tanzanian context?** How do you combine developmental science with local perceptions to create a culturally relevant instrument?
- **Are the SE competencies of children in rural Tanzania characteristic of rural agricultural economies?** Do they have competencies associated with educated urban populations? Are these two sets of competencies at odds?

USAID Tusome Pamoja

- 2015 – 2021
- Grades 1 - 4 Reading & Math
- Pre-Primary
- \$68 million
- 1.4 million children
- 26,000 teachers
- 3,025 schools, 5 regions



Qualitative Study

Participants from 4 schools in 3 districts in Mtwara Region

	Focus Groups	Interviews
Parents	9	9
Teachers		27
Students Grades 1, 2, and 4		80

Questions about child development in general

- What are the qualities you would like all children to develop?
- What are the characteristics you would want for your child?
 - What are the differences between a good child and a bad child?
 - Describe how you would want your child to behave.
 - What kind of qualities would make a child successful in life?



Discipline and Attentive Listening

- “A child *is* discipline” (“mtoto *ni* nidhamu”)
 - *School 3, Parent FGD 1*
- Discipline is the genesis of other children’s qualities”
 - *School 1, Parent FGD 2*

“He/she who does not listen to elders will break a leg (i. e., face difficulties)”

(“Asiyesikia Mkuu, huvunjika guu”)

- *School 2, Parent FGD 1; School 3 Teacher 4*
- “Attentive listening is like a ‘safe box’ where all other qualities are found”
 - *School 1, Parent FGD 1*

Questions about qualities for school success

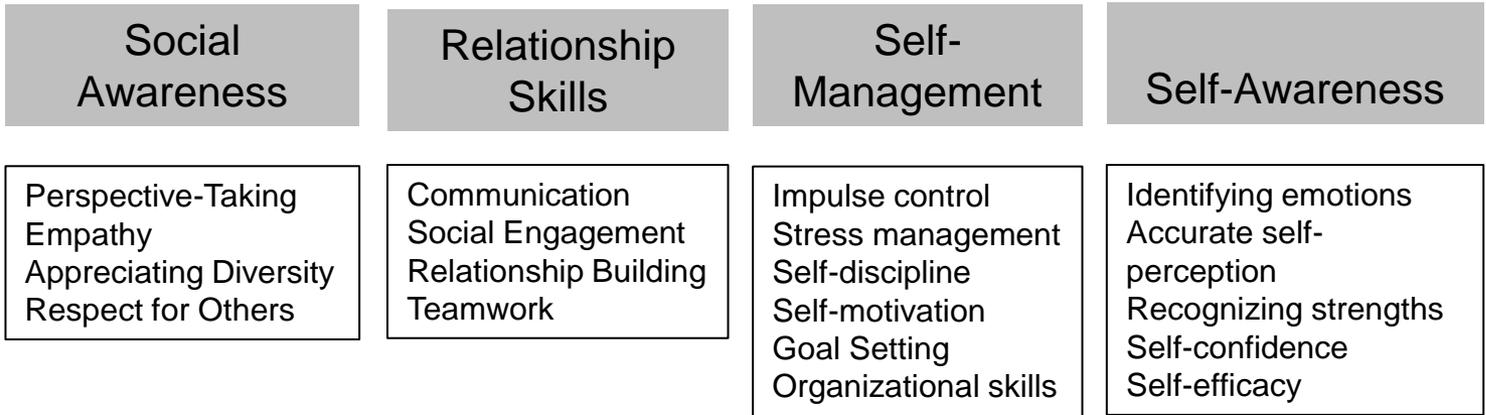
- What are the qualities that help a child to succeed at school?
- What are the differences between a child who succeeds at school and one who doesn't?
- How do these differences appear on day 1 of school?



Curiosity and Courage/Confidence

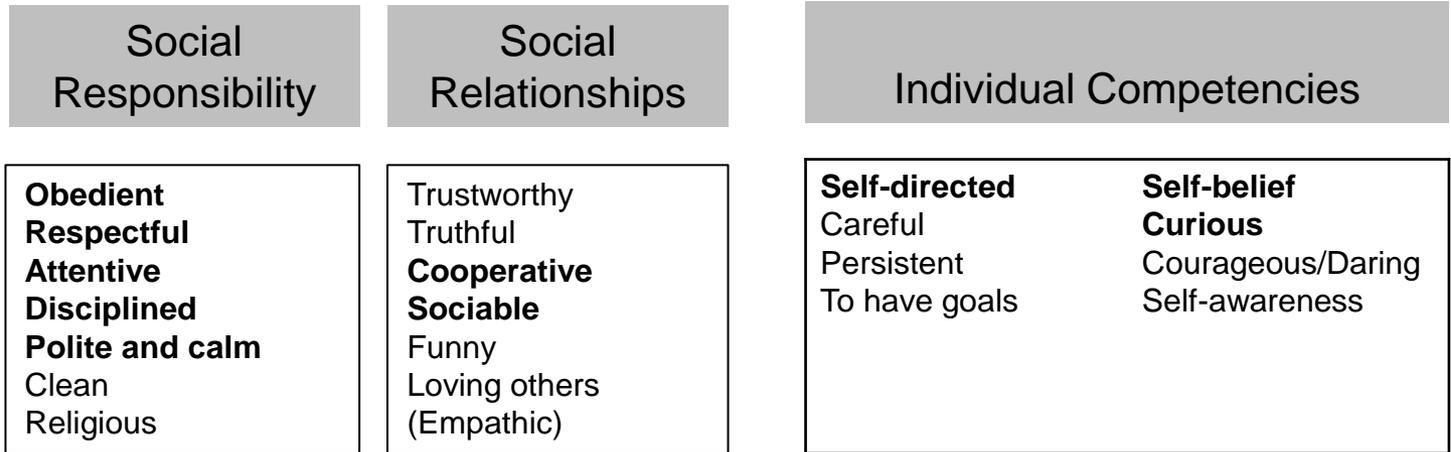
- “My son is very inquisitive, one day he asked me: Mom if all people in the world were of the same sex, would the population stop increasing?”
 - *School 1, Teacher 1*
- “In our villages curious pupils are very few, most of our people are devoted to religious teachings of Islam, there is not much attention given to such education in our families”
 - *School 4, Teacher 1*
- “A pupil who dares to follow teachers in the office or outside the classroom and asks questions is courageous”
 - *School 3, Teacher 1*

CASEL framework



Findings from Mtwara, Tanzania

Bold text = most frequently mentioned



Valued by parents and teachers
Important for life in general

Valued by teachers only
Important for schooling

Children's views on qualities for school success

- “My grandmother told me to be polite and humble in school, and so I am”
 - *School 2, Pupil 3*
- “to love teachers”
 - *School 4, Pupil 2; School 3 Pupil 1*
- “when you love your schoolmates they will love you too and you will feel good in your soul”
 - *School 2, Pupil 3*

Conclusions from qualitative study

- **Social responsibility** – respect, obedience, fitting in – was more important than in research in high-income countries
- **Individual competencies important for school** – curiosity and confidence - are valued by teachers but not greatly by parents
- Even these competencies often have an ultimately **social goal**
 - Teachers will favour the curious children
 - Confident children are more able to help others
 - Sociable children can ensure group harmony
- Children are focused on **pleasing teachers and avoiding punishment**
 - “I was very polite and so all the teachers loved me”

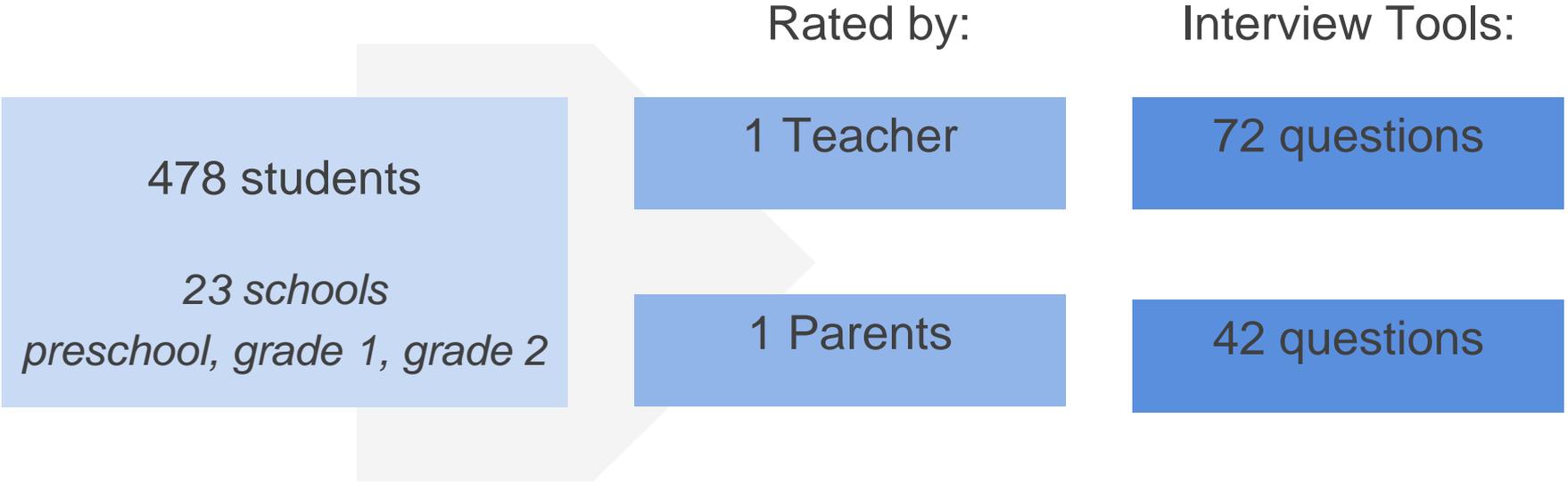
Final List of Competencies

Social Responsibility	Respectful, obedient, attentive listener, polite and calm, disciplined
Social Relationships	Cooperative, sociable, <i>empathetic</i>
Individual Competencies	Curious, courageous/self-belief, <i>creative</i> Self-directed, careful, <i>persistent</i>
Other	Religious, Clean and smart

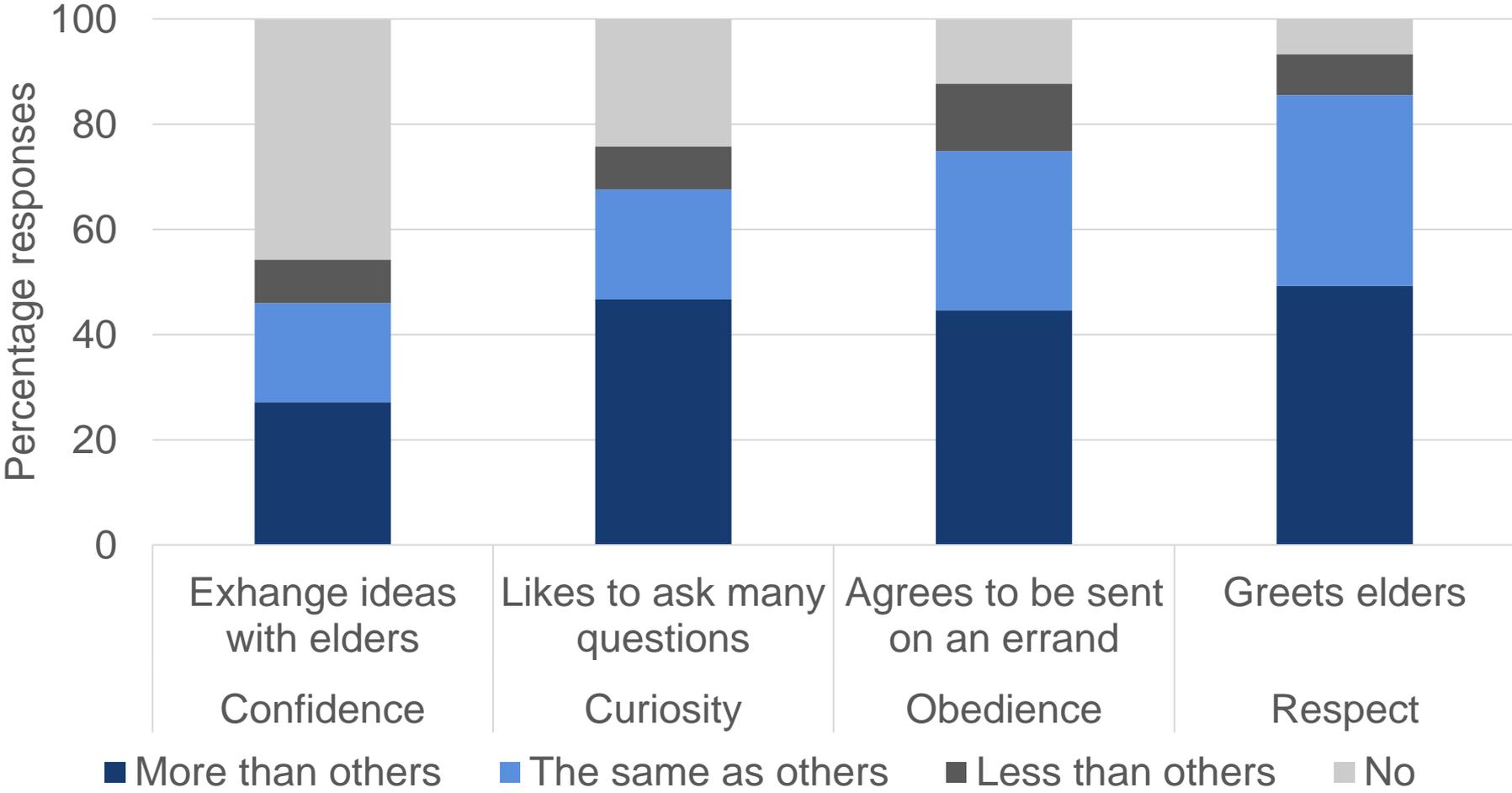
Italics = Less commonly mentioned competencies included based on literature

~~Crossed out~~ = competencies that were dropped

Quantitative Psychometric Assessment



Responses from Example Questions



Obedience

Does child easily agree to be sent?

Does child willingly follow instructions?

When child is directed to complete a task, does s/he do with heart and complete it successfully?

When child is sent to complete an errand, does s/he return on time?

If child is told to do a chore, does s/he do it?

Does child refuse to stop and continue doing something after being told not to

Respect

Does child offer to assist/receive elders?

Does child kindly greet elders?

Does child get your permission before doing something or going somewhere?

If child makes a mistake, does s/he ask for forgiveness without being told to?

Final Obedience Measure

Does child easily agree to be sent?

Does child willingly follow instructions?

When child is directed to complete a task, does s/he do with heart and complete it successfully?

When child is sent to complete an errand, does s/he return on time?

If child is told to do a chore, does s/he do it?

Does child kindly greet elders?

Persistence

Does child easily become frustrated or angry?

Does child quit working on tasks before s/he is finished?

Does child give up easily when tasks or work seem difficult?

If child cannot do something, do they try again?

If child has chores to do, does s/he like to finish them in one go?

Does child continue with a task at home/school even when it is tiring

Polite and Calm

Is child calm even when disturbed/irritated by others?

Does child respond nicely/politely when asked a question?

Does child speak in a soft, measured way?

Does child react angrily when s/he doesn't get what she wants/ told to stop doing something?

Does child have strong emotions?

Is child calm even when disturbed/irritated by others?

Final Emotional Control Measure

Does child easily become frustrated or angry?

Does child quit working on tasks before s/he is finished?

Does child give up easily when tasks or work seem difficult?

Does child react angrily when s/he doesn't get what she wants/ told to stop doing something?

Does child have strong emotions?

Exploratory Factor Analysis of Parent Items

Factor	Original targeted constructs	Variance Explained	Cumulative Variance
Obedient	Obedient	29%	29%
Curious	Curious, confident	8%	37%
Conscientious	Persistent, careful, self-directed	6%	43%
Emotional Regulation	Polite, persistent, obedient	5%	48%
Sociable	Sociable, cooperative	4%	52%
Polite	Polite, cooperative	3%	55%
Religious	Religious	3%	58%

Exploratory Factor Analysis of Parent Items

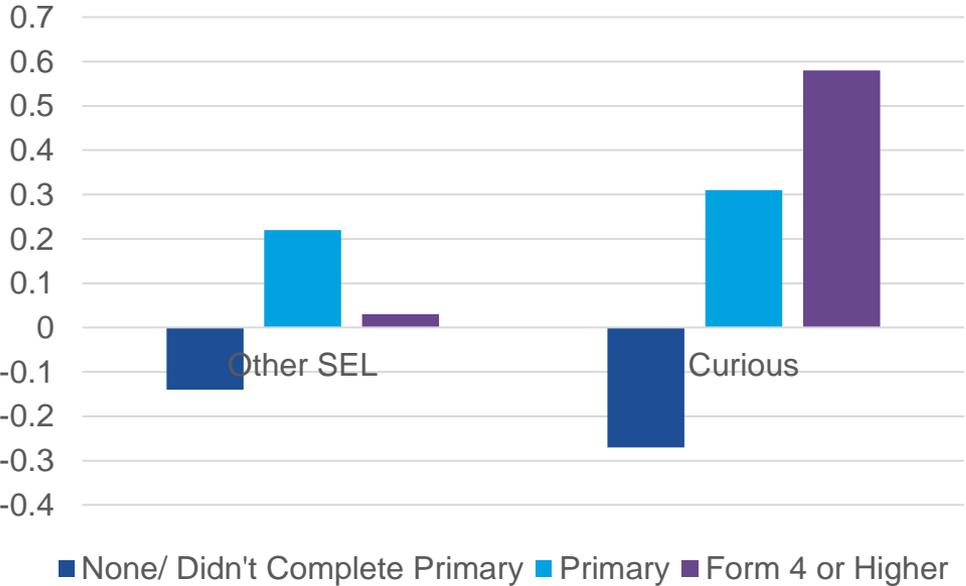
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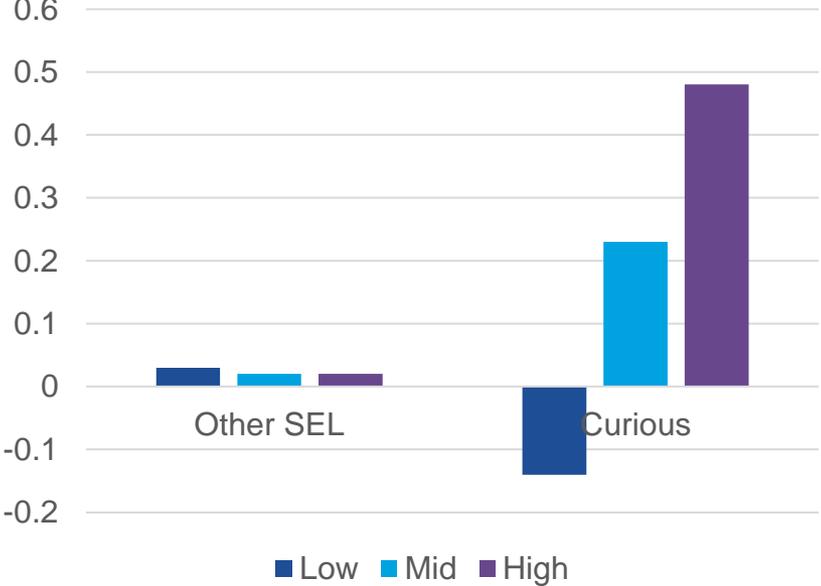
1. Start with a theory
2. Some domains are locally generated but not in current frameworks
 - Social responsibility
3. Some domains are in current frameworks but not locally generated
 - Controlling emotions, conscientiousness
4. Some domains in current frameworks are combined/configured differently in local perceptions
 - Curiosity and courage/confidence

Curiosity prevalent among educated and wealthy

SEL vs Parent Education



SEL Vs Parent SES



Are the SE competencies of children in rural Tanzania characteristic of rural agricultural economies?

- SE competencies are consistent with those of other subsistence agricultural communities
- In line with predictions, curiosity and confidence are more common among urban children of educated parents
- Do students with curiosity/confidence do better in school? Is pedagogy designed assuming students are curious and confident?



Thank you

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