**Rationale and Purpose**

**The Interdependence of School Culture and Climate and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)**

- The role of context in fostering SEL is well known. Positive relationships, emotional, physical, and social safety; and responsiveness to diversity are among the many learning conditions that promote SEL (Berg et al., 2017; Garbaldé & Jonas, 2015; Thapa et al., 2012).
- Social and emotional skills are learned and practiced in social institutions of school and community (Jones & Bouffard, 2012).
- In turn, socially and emotionally competent students and adults reinforce and enhance school conditions that promote SEL (Osher & Berg, 2018).

**Problem Statement**

The depth of understanding about how the school culture and climate promote and interact with SEL in high-income countries has not been achieved in low-resourced settings. Teachers, parents, and students from different cultures often define and prioritize social and emotional skills differently (Jukes et al., 2018).

**Purpose of the Research**

To understand how the school culture and climate in rural settings in Malawi and Uganda are perceived to help children develop culturally valued social and emotional competencies.

**Methodology**

**Research Questions**

- What social and emotional skills and personal qualities are important for children to become happy and successful adults?
- What school and classroom characteristics help students develop these skills?
- Of these school and classroom qualities, which are considered the most important for fostering students' positive social and emotional development?

**School Selection**

- Schools were selected based on high performance (95th percentile) on measures of safety and protection, inclusion, gender-responsiveness, and absence of bullying, harsh punishment, sexual violence (school-related gender-based violence, or SRGBV).
- 3 schools in Malawi—USAID/Malawi Early Grade Reading Improvement Activity (ME Rich), National Assessment of Safety and Inclusion in Schools (NASIS).
- 3 schools in Uganda—USAID/Uganda Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity, baseline data on school climate, gender attitudes, and SRGBV.

**Approach to Data Collection**

- Qualitative methods
- Develop concept of social and emotional development
- Identify “most important” school qualities for promoting SEL
- Define social skills and personal qualities locally
- Determine learning conditions that help students develop these skills
- Focus group discussions
- Participatory processes

**Findings**

**Country Comparisons**

What social and emotional skills are valued in the most positive schools?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Malawi</th>
<th>Uganda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What teacher characteristics best promote SEL?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Malawi</th>
<th>Uganda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What school values and structures best promote SEL?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Malawi</th>
<th>Uganda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**References**


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**More Information**

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