

Youth First Kenya: Evaluation of an Evidence-based Resilience Programme on Psychosocial Wellbeing and Education in Kajiado and Tharaka Nithi

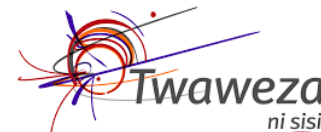
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Evidence-based Education Reforms for Sustainable National Transformation

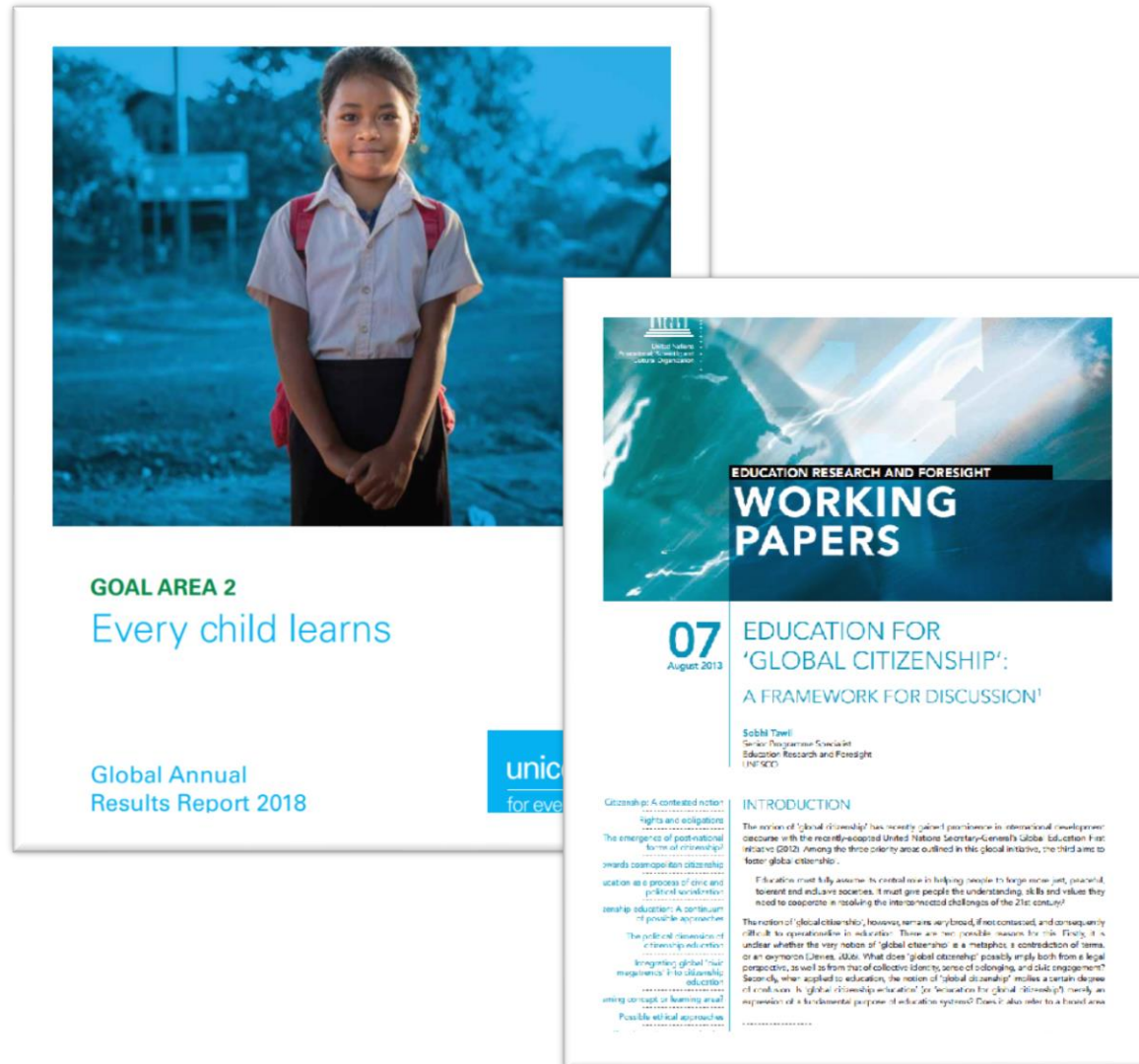
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Shifting Global Focus in Education Sector



Growing global recognition:

- Focus on academics is insufficient to support learning
- Must also support life skills, social-emotional skills, transferable skills, 21st century skills, soft skills, mental and social wellbeing

Youth First (YF)

- Evidence-based teacher-delivered health & resilience model researched & developed by **CorStone** (USA)
- Successfully piloted in India with 100,000+ pupils
- Currently at the scale up stage in 26,000 public primary covering 2.6 Millions adolescent pupils (PPP –GOI/CS)
- Studies in India Indicate that YF improves mental & physical health, & social wellbeing resulting in improved education performance



Youth First Kenya (YFK)

- Is a partnership project between CorStone, SOWED Kenya and Basic Needs Basic Rights Kenya, & TSC & Ministry of Education
- Adapted in 2017, YFK targets at risk adolescent pupils between the ages 12-14 transitioning from primary to secondary schools
- Currently YFK is undergoing the scaled (4:9:25) piloting & trials in three phases in rural public primary schools in ASAL regions of Kajiado & Tharaka Nithi Counties



Youth First Kenya: A Partnership

Rural government schools and teachers in Kajiado and Tharaka Nithi Counties **conduct Youth First Kenya** with pupils in Class 7 and 8.

Teachers, principals & pupils in government schools

Non-profit headquartered in Baltimore (US). Conducts programs to improve health and education for youth worldwide. Has **developed and conducted Youth First** among 100,000+ children in India. **Technical lead.**

CorStone



Non-profit in Kenya that seeks to **improve mental health**. Main point of contact for Youth First Kenya in **Tharaka Nithi County**.

BasicNeeds
BasicRights
Kenya



SOWED
Kenya



Non-profit in Kenya that seeks to **empower marginalized populations**. Main point of contact for Youth First Kenya in **Kajiado County**.

Youth First Kenya Engagement

2017

- Youth First adapted as Youth First Kenya (YFK)
- Small program and measurement pilots in 4 schools

2018

- YFK conducted in 9 schools in Kajiado and Tharaka Nithi counties
- Assessed acceptability, feasibility, pre- to post-test change for pupils and teachers

2019

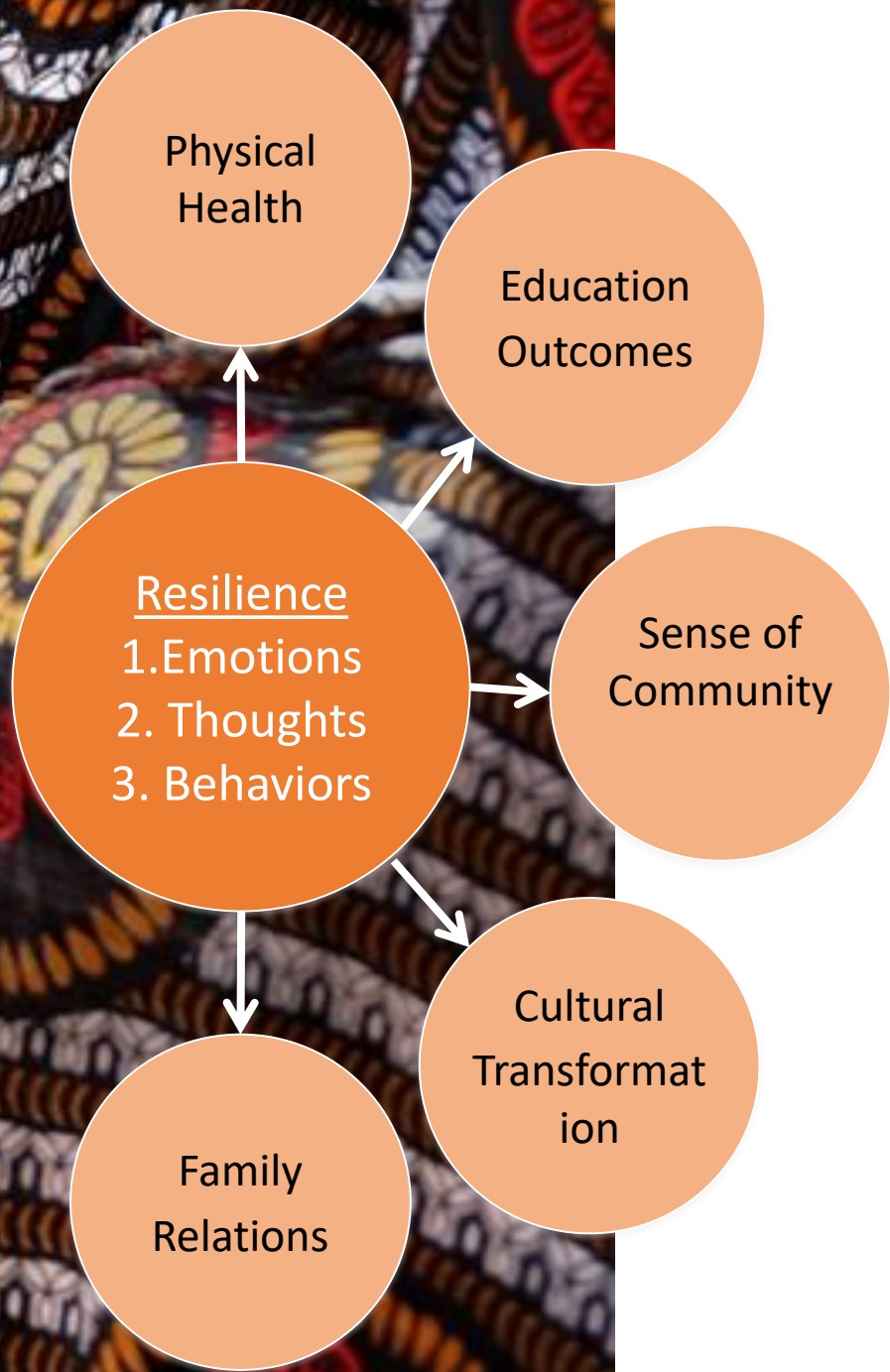
- YFK conducted in 25 schools in Kajiado and Tharaka Nithi
- Assessed pre- to post-test change for pupils and teachers

Today

Results forthcoming

Content of Youth First Kenya

Session	Resilience	Session	Adolescent Health
1	Introductions and group formation	15	Resilience for better health
2	Listening skills	16	Practicing healthy behaviors
3-4	Character strengths	17	Changes in adolescence
5-6	Life stories and planning to reach our goals	18	Positive relationships
7	Identifying emotions & emotional awareness	19	Taking care of my body
8	Benefit finding	20	Promoting rights and gender constructs
9	Managing strong emotions	21	Gender-based violence
10	Assertive communication	22	Substance use and abuse
11	Restorative practices for conflict resolution	23	Conclusion and celebration
12	Group problem solving		
13	Identifying and opposing violence		
14	Forgiveness, apologies, and appreciation		



Resilience is the ability to bounce back, thrive from difficulties & move up to a better place in life & to be a more fulfilled individual.

Resilience is not innate; rather, it's a set of skills that can be taught & acquired

Resilience impacts at 3 levels resulting in 5 outcomes.

Research Questions

How do psychosocial, health and educational outcomes of eligible adolescent pupils in YFK schools in ASAL regions change before & after interventions (pre- to post-test)?

How feasible and acceptable is YFK as an adaptable & scaleable model in Kenya?



Study design

Pre/post-test mixed-methods study

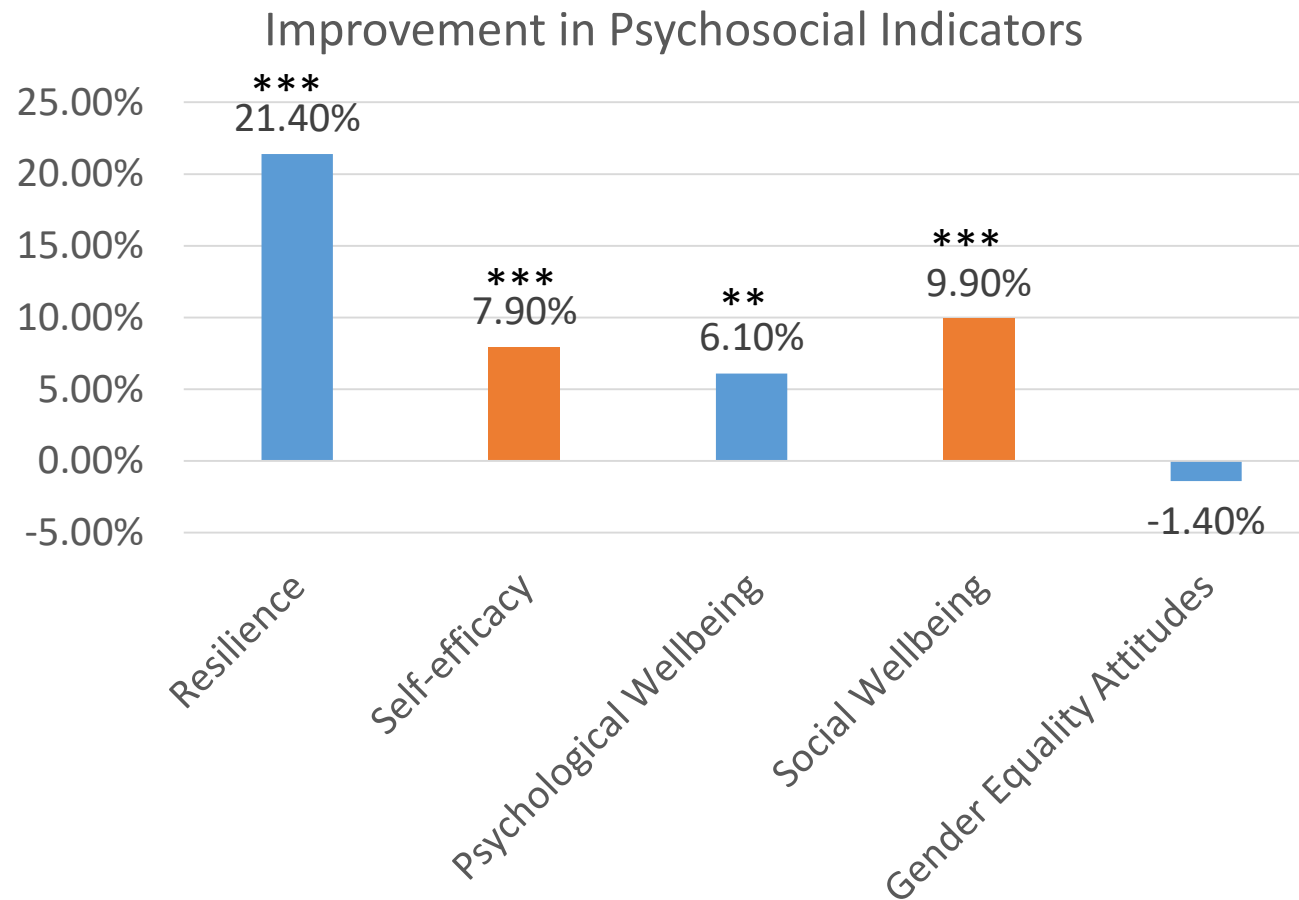
Quantitative

- Pre and post questionnaires for all pupils and teachers in programme (n = 208 pupils; n = 17 teachers)
- Assessed demographics, psychosocial wellbeing, physical health, gender equality attitudes, school engagement, pupil-teacher relationships

Qualitative

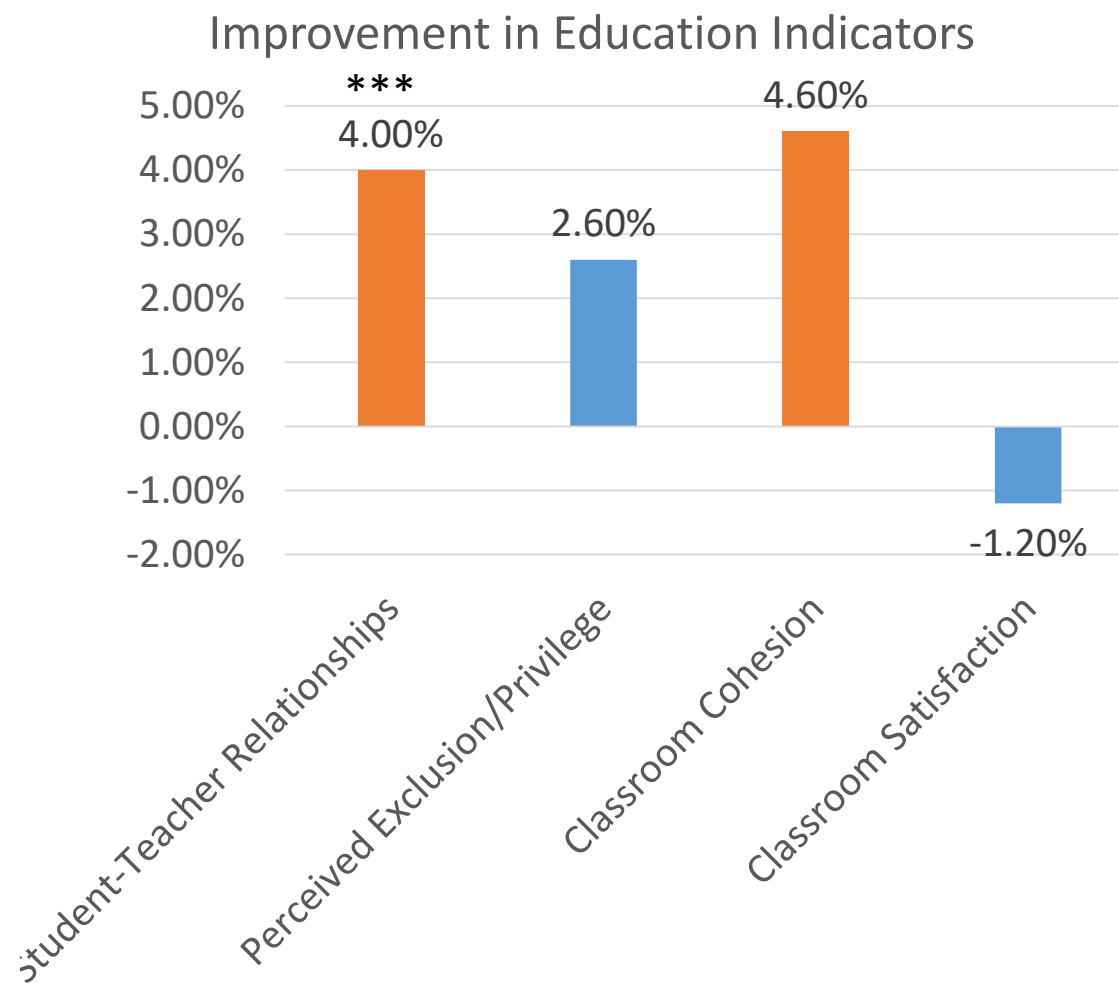
- In-depth interviews with 8 teachers post-intervention at 8 schools
- Explored experiences, perceptions of training, perceived impact on pupils and teachers

Pre to Post-test Changes (Pupils): Psychosocial Indicators

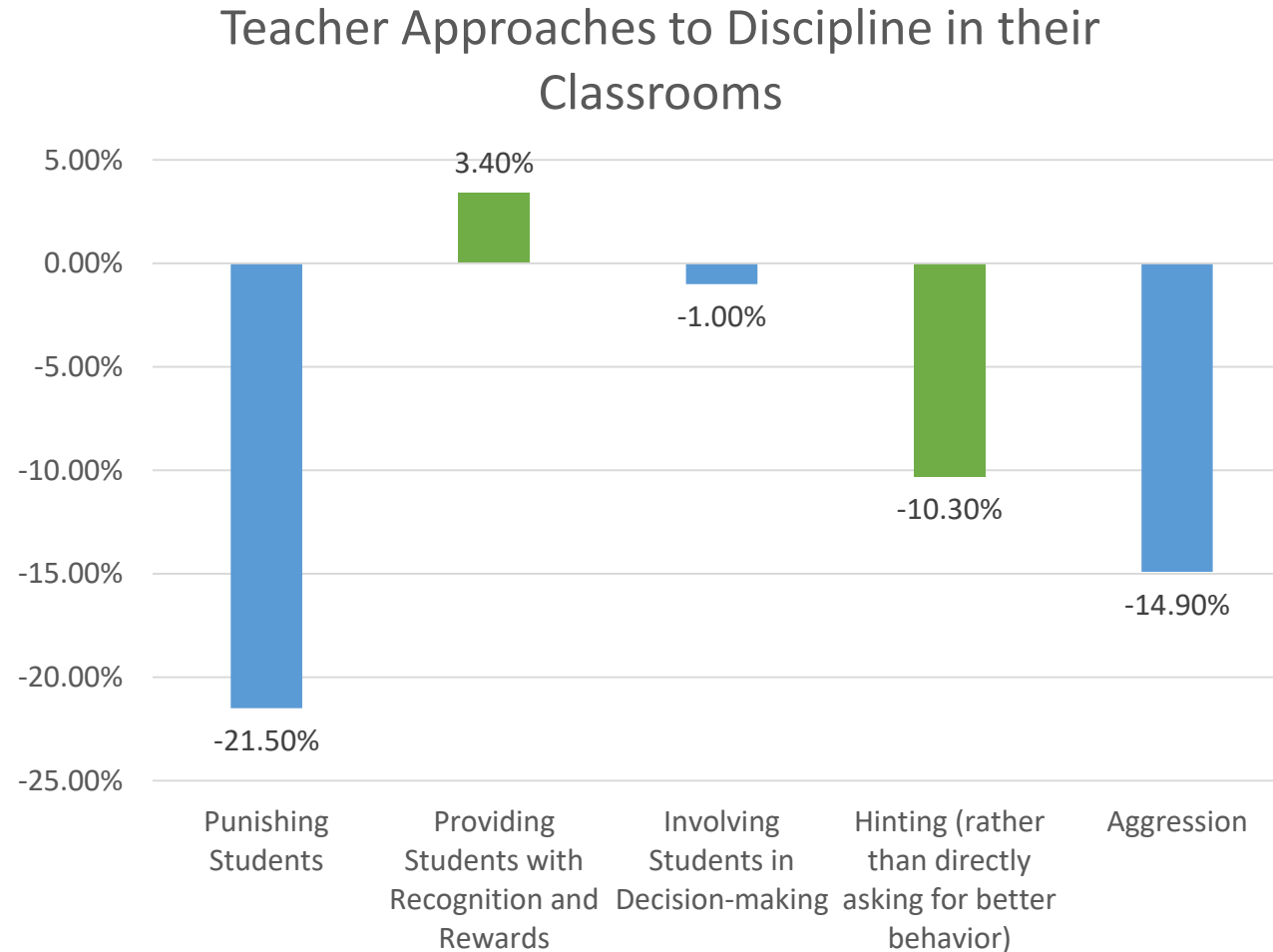


Note: $n = 208$; *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$

Pre to Post-test Changes (Pupils): Education Indicators

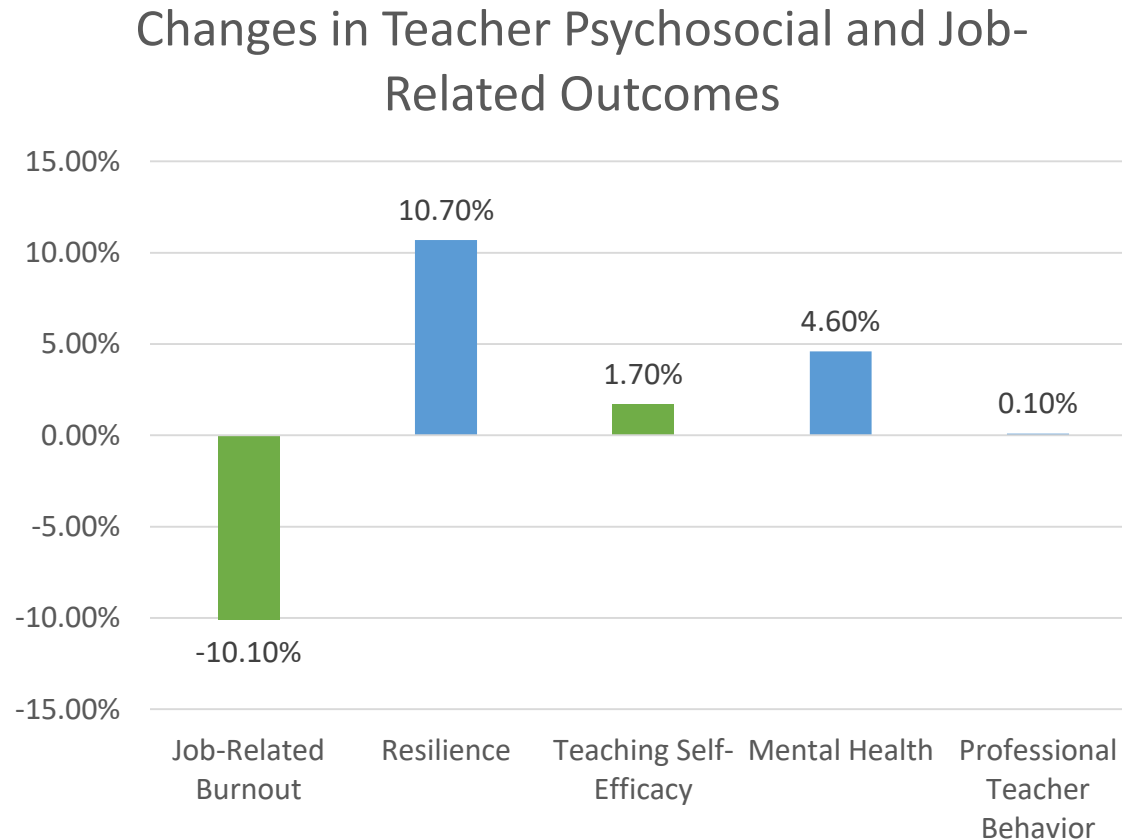


Pre to Post-test Changes (Teachers): Approaches to Discipline



Note: n = 17; exploratory analysis; statistical significance not calculated due to sample size.

Pre to Post-test Changes (Teachers): Psychosocial and Job-Related Outcomes



Note: n = 17; exploratory analysis; statistical significance not calculated due to sample size.

Qualitative findings

1. Teacher Preparation & Training
2. Pupil reception
3. Significance in pupil's lives
4. Support by NGOs
5. Teacher motivation
6. Growth and expansion



Qualitative findings

1. Teacher Preparation and Training

- Teachers felt well-prepared to facilitate (Transition from teaching)
- Trainings helped teachers confidently understand and cover topics

2. Pupil reception

- Although pupils were uncertain about the program at the beginning they received the program positively, & increasingly embraced & owned it

3. Significance in pupil's lives

- Both pupils & teachers reported that YFK was important to their lives
- Pupils felt that YFK helped them focus & shape a brighter future
- Teachers felt YFK helped the students in; 1) personal development &; 2) academic performance

J-PAL | IPA Teachers also felt that YFK helped them in their personal lives

Qualitative findings (continued)

4. Support by Partner NGOs

- The support supervision model adapted & provided by the partners provided adequate handholding for teachers to conduct sessions

5. Teacher motivation

- Teachers were motivated to participate in YFK because they saw; 1) benefits for students & 2) personal benefits for themselves
- Teachers felt that the concepts in YFK were important and not covered in any other parts of the 8-4-4 curriculum

6. Growth and expansion

- Pupils and teachers universally called for expansion of YFK to reach more classes and more schools throughout the country

YFK: A Scalable Model for Kenya's Youth Flourishing in the Face of Challenges

Study supports the **feasibility, acceptability, and initial evidence** for YFK's effects

- ↳ YFK represents a **“resilience” programme**, which is a new model for Kenya
 - ↳ Resilience programmes have great potential in Kenya, with its **rapidly changing landscape** of opportunities and challenges for youth
 - ↳ **YFK is scalable** (the model will be institutionalized in Bihar, India. 26,000 middle schools for 2.6 million pupils/year)

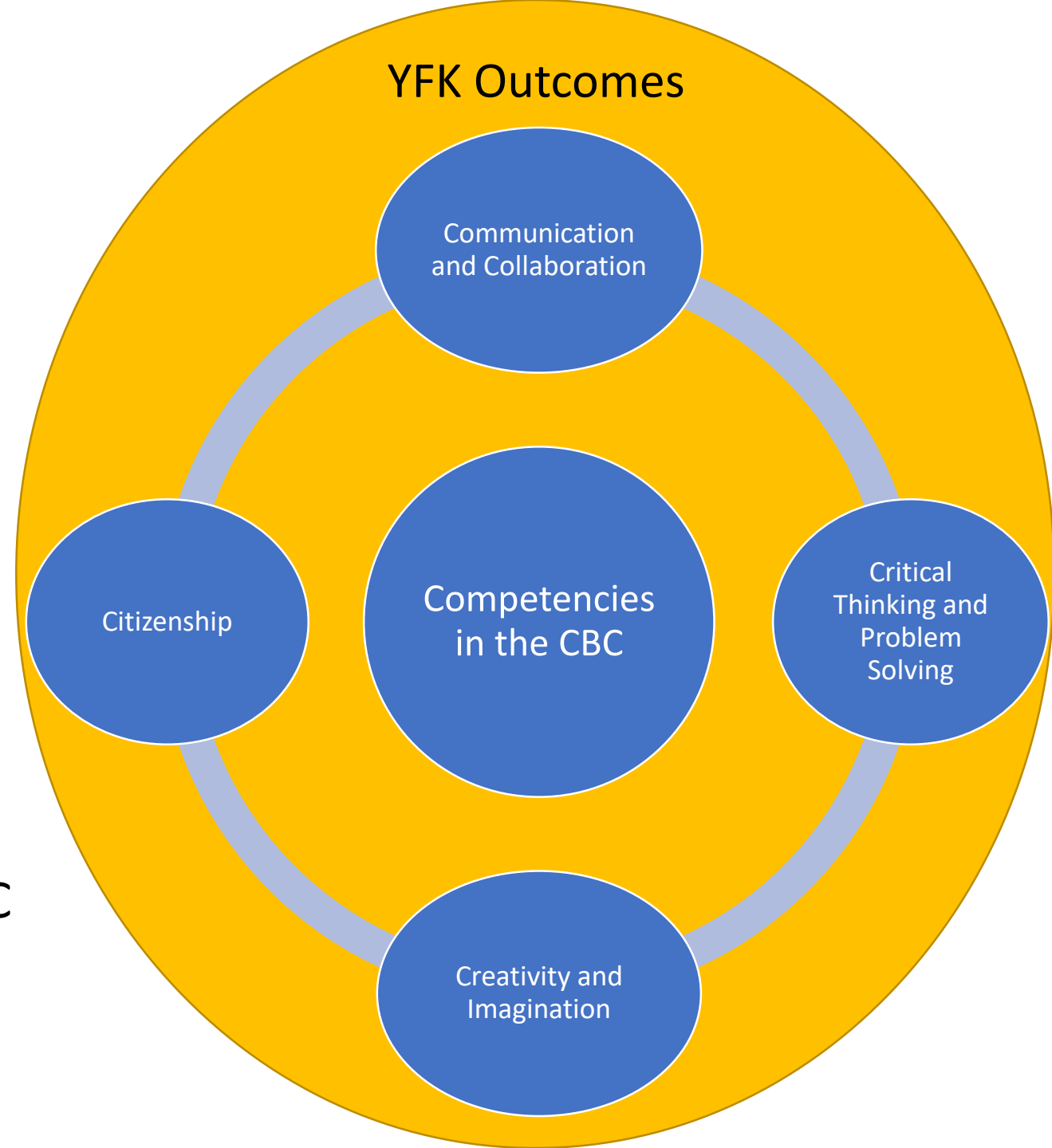
Policy Framework for Nomadic Education

- The policy framework recognizes the myriad of challenges disadvantaging adolescent learners from nomadic pastoralist regions
- Specifically objective one of the policy framework while acknowledging these challenges fails to contextualize the need for resilience building in these regions;
- To realize the goal of universal access to basic education it is important for definition of equity to be broadened to factor in the need for resilience building
- Encourage the adaptation and use of the existing national curricula and training materials in nomadic regions to the local needs and demands in ASAL regions.

Policy Implications

Potential policy synergies particularly within Kenya's curricular reform (e.g., Competency Based Curriculum; CBC)

- CBC targets 4 competencies
- YFK improves ALL 4 of these competencies
- As a well-tested, scalable model for early adolescents, YFK has potential for integration into the CBC



Thank you

