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Perceptions of Success:  
Cultivating Social and Emotional Learning  
to Promote Girls Empowerment and Sustainable  
Economic Development

By

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## **Abstract**

Pursuing sustainable development through investments in education and gender equality has emerged as a key strategy of many countries and nongovernmental organizations, including the United Nations, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization. In response, an array of programs and policies in the Global South have adopted an approach of investing directly in young girls and women through empowerment and education interventions intended to combat intergenerational poverty and myriad barriers faced by marginalized girls; doing so is thought to generate what has become known as ‘the girl effect,’ whereby economic growth and poverty reduction follow as a result. However, I argue that by focusing disproportionately on economically-oriented interventions, many of these programs neglect a key lever that may have important long-term consequences for human capital and economic development: social and emotional learning (SEL). Through interviews, I examine whether a program that the Dominican Republic – a country that has long suffered from economic underdevelopment and vast gender inequities – has pursued is not only effective with regard to traditional outcomes such as generational poverty, access to education, and women’s empowerment, but crucial social and emotional learning outcomes as well. Interviews revealed that despite the program’s specific focus on traditional development outcomes, it appeared to indirectly accrue socioemotional benefits to its participants. Not only did all participants report having graduated high school and either attending post-secondary education or working with the foundation, they also reported that the time spent at the foundation gave them a safe space for socioemotional development. It served as a sanctuary where they could be themselves, develop their interests and skills, be independent and in control of their lives, cultivate the ability to make decisions, and build relationships with others. I conclude that development programs and related research that place

a higher weight on socioemotional development will generate a higher degree of sustained benefits for participants and countries at large when compared to traditional development programs focused solely on economic development.

## **Introduction**

Education remains the key to high living standards across the world, yet children – especially females – who are born into or live in poverty face many barriers to educational access. Globally, there are 129 million girls who are not enrolled in school, including 32 million of primary school age and 97 million of secondary school age; 15 million will never enter a classroom (World Bank, n.d). For girls in developing countries like the Dominican Republic, the path to accessing a quality education is riddled with formidable challenges such as traditional expectations, teen pregnancy, poverty, and gender-based harassment (UNICEF, 2022).

Barriers to educational attainment have long been recognized as barriers to economic development. For instance, the World Education Forum held at Dakar, Senegal in April 2000, declared education a fundamental human right, with the specific goal of ensuring free primary education of quality for all by 2015. Special attention was given to disadvantaged groups such as girls, youth in especially adverse circumstances, as well as ethnic minorities. More specifically, the gender gap was mentioned; 60% of the world's schoolchildren who are out of school are comprised of girls, and 2/3 of the world's adult illiterates are women (UN, 2000). In response, a global initiative to educate girls was launched in Dakar, beginning with the notion that girls receiving an education cannot be an option but instead is a necessity. Girls' disproportionate exclusion from the education system has important implications not only for them as individuals,

but also for countries, especially developing countries, and the world's economic and social development. Past research highlights that a key economic benefit of educating girls is more participation in the labor force with higher lifetime earnings, though this is premised with the notion that education changes attitudes of women's willingness and ability to enter the workforce (Floro,1990). Economic impacts of expanding girls' education appear to be reinforced by related social impacts: for example, women's role in reproduction appears to shift as they become more educated. Educational attainment appears to decrease fertility, as women opt to postpone childbearing in pursuit of careers (Floro,1990). Having less children means women are able to dedicate themselves to careers with higher lifetime earnings, and invest in their children's nutrition, education, and development, which comprises the outcome called the "girl effect." Research suggests that as women have become more educated their time has increased in value, which leads to them being more likely to engage in activities that yield higher returns (Rigillio, 2011). This means greater participation in the labor market rather than performing reproductive labor such as domestic housework.

There are clear intergenerational benefits from higher levels of educational attainment among girls as well. Higher educational levels are correlated with child health and decreased child mortality, as mothers are more knowledgeable about nutrition and hygiene. There is also a positive impact on children's education as more educated mothers are more likely to encourage education in their children, particularly for their daughters, perhaps by setting greater expectations or ambitions beyond what they themselves achieved; this is especially true given that education is more accessible than ever before. "Women were thought to be particularly influential forces in the formation of the human capital of their children, both because of their role in shaping their life chances biologically prior to birth, and also because of their role as

primary caretakers in the early years of life” (Becker 2000). In contrast, lower levels of educational attainment among girls make them more likely to get pregnant and/or drop out of school, and children whose parents did not finish schooling are more likely to be out of school. Overall, there is a growing recognition that education is a vehicle of empowerment and sets off a wide range of cascading effects such as increased likelihood of financial independence and security, not just for women but the society at large. As a result, many programs and policies in the Global South have specifically aimed to empower girls by boosting their participation in the education system and improving their academic skills.

However, academic skills are necessary but not sufficient to maximize the economic productivity and social wellbeing of girls and their families. A growing body of research suggests social and emotional learning (SEL) is also a crucial component of human development that helps generate long-term benefits by boosting academic achievement, encouraging career advancement, and reducing mental and behavioral issues such as depression and/or criminal behavior. Yet there are few programs in the Global South that target these particular skills, at least directly, which may in turn limit their effectiveness in driving girls’ outcomes and the economic development trajectories of their countries, more broadly. This is the core intuition motivating this thesis. Here, I examine the extent to which SEL and associated capacities are promoted directly, or indirectly, within an emblematic nongovernmental organization program within the Global South.

To examine these dynamics, I conducted eight interviews with participants of an archetypal developing-world program aimed at educating and empowering girls. Specifically, the empirical case is the Mariposa DR Foundation in the Dominican Republic. The Dominican Republic has long been marked by low levels of economic development and gender inequities,

emphasizing the importance of the work being done at the foundation. The Mariposa DR Foundation is inspired by the United Nations SDG goal of quality education and gender equality. They have a principal aim in shaping girls to become empowered young women through education. Although SEL is not an explicit goal of the organization, this study examines whether related capacities are built among participants through its programs.

Results suggest that the program indeed boosted not only traditional educational outcomes, but indirectly supported socioemotional outcomes as well. Participants reported that the foundation gave them a safe space to be themselves, develop their interests and skills, be independent and in control of their lives, cultivate the ability to make decisions, and build relationships with others. These SEL-related benefits may have resulted not only from access to traditional resources such as scholarships, food, tutoring, and transportation, but also access to mental health services and enriching experiences such as community service, sports, dance, arts and culture. The latter types of programming promoted the opportunity for social and emotional learning. Non-academic activities allowed them to discover their interests and what it is that they would like to do with their lives, an opportunity they otherwise would not have had in their regular schooling and lack of finances. These benefits may partially explain why all participants report having graduated high school and either attending post-secondary education or working with the foundation. I conclude that research and programming related to development programs in the Global South should strive to include socioemotional development in addition to traditional economic development-oriented programming to better generate sustained individual, community, and country-level benefits.

## **Literature/Background**

### *Education as a Driver of Economic Development at the Individual and Societal Levels*

Education is *a*, if not *the*, key driver of contemporary economic development; it enriches people's understanding of themselves and the world around them, and provides them with the skills necessary to be successful. It effects labor productivity, poverty, trade, technology, health, income distribution, and family structure (Wodon, 2018). Quantity and quality of education is a prerequisite for rapid economic development as it stimulates economic growth and improves the lives of people through many facets (Glaysen, 2000). Education stimulates economic growth and improves people's lives through many channels: by increasing the efficiency of the labor force, by fostering democracy and thus creating better conditions for good governance, by improving health, and by enhancing equality (Barro, 1997; Aghion et al., 1999). Potential impacts of girl's education specifically include higher earnings and standards of living, a decrease in child marriage and early child bearing, a reduction in fertility and population growth, increased quality in health, nutrition, and wellbeing, increased agency and decision-making, and social capital for functioning institutions (Wodon, 2018). On the other hand, not educating girls is costly because of the relationships between educational attainment, child marriage, early childbearing, and the associated risks for young mothers and their children (Wodon, 2018).

A growing body of literature specifically examines the benefits of educating women. It finds that higher educated women are more productive within the workplace and at home. They raise healthier families, due in part to their superior ability to apply health and wellness practices such as nutrition and hygiene. Moreover, more educated women typically have better employment opportunities, which increases the incomes they can bring into the household. Research suggests these higher incomes make a real difference for child development. For

example, Gershoff et al. (2007) tested a sample of 21,255 kindergarteners and found that as family income increased parents invested more in their children, enhancing their cognitive and academic skills. Moreover, higher family income led to a decrease in material hardship and stress which resulted in increased positive parenting and reduced negative behaviors in the child (Gershoff et al, 2007). Nurturing, well-resourced environments that minimize biologically and psychologically toxic events, promote self-regulation, and provide psychological flexibility can reduce mental and emotional disorders (Biglan et al., 2012). Thus, supporting children's developmental and educational trajectories contribute directly to countries' economic productivity. However, educational attainment alone is insufficient as income is determined by the total level of education completed. While primary education is required, this in itself is insufficient. Having only a primary education is not significantly different from having no education at all for many metrics; only with a secondary education do the benefits of educational attainment typically become significant (Wodon, 2018). For example, the loss in human capital wealth today resulting from adult women not participating in secondary education in their youth is estimated to range between \$15 trillion to \$30 trillion USD globally (Klasen, 2002). The conclusion is that, while basic education establishes the groundwork for later learning, it is crucial to support females in continuing their education through the secondary level and to make sure that learning takes place in order to benefit from higher levels of education.

Recognition of these benefits, as well as growing concerns with gender inequality, have fueled a shift among researchers and policymakers toward boosting girls' education in particular. Countries across the Global South have created interventions, programs, and policies to improve women's educational attainment under the assumption that doing so will ameliorate the



intergenerational transmission of poverty and increase the economic productivity of their populations.

### *A Missing Lever: Socioemotional Learning*

Historically, schools and students, as part of economic development policies pursued by countries and nongovernmental organizations, have primarily been labeled on the basis of standardized test results, which has created a singular focus: cognitive skills and related educational outcomes. However, children and youth require more than just academic and vocational skills to succeed academically, at work, and in life. Schools have the opportunity to serve as vital sources of support vis-a-vis students' subjective well-being. A growing body of research suggests that the current education and economic development paradigms ignore the social and emotional needs of children; many scholars and educators advocate for refocusing schools towards holistic development. *The Missing Piece*, a report on how SEL empowers children, outlines findings from a national survey of teachers along three major themes: (1) *Teachers Understand, Value, and Endorse Social and Emotional Learning for All Students*, which shares the views of teachers on the benefits and use of SEL in schools; (2) *Teachers Believe Social and Emotional Learning Helps Students Achieve in School and Life*, which identifies the key goals SEL advances and the challenges SEL helps to overcome; and (3) *Teachers Identify Key Accelerators for Social and Emotional Learning*, which shares teacher-identified levers to advance SEL in schools (Bridgeland, 2013).

Many researchers have attempted to operationalize the nebulous notion of socioemotional learning in recent decades. One particularly notable effort, *The Collaborative for Academic,*

Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), was launched as an organization with the mission to establish evidence-based SEL to be essential from preschool through high school. They have argued that Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is a fundamental part of education and human development. It has been defined as the ability to understand, regulate, and express the social and emotional facets of life in ways that enable success. There are five core capacities according to CASEL: self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.

- (1) ***Self-Management***: the ability to control one's own emotions, thoughts and behaviors.
- (2) ***Self-Awareness***: the ability to identify one's own emotions, thoughts and values.
- (3) ***Social Awareness***: the ability to take others perspective and empathize with them.
- (4) ***Relationship Skills***: the ability to form and maintain healthy relationships.
- (5) ***Decision-Making***: the ability to make conducive choices. (CASEL, 2015).

Evidence shows that SEL, operationalized in this or a similar manner, predicts higher levels of academic achievement, positive behaviors, mental health, attitudes of self, and long-term success as high levels of SEL help prepare schoolchildren to navigate and adapt to the challenges and opportunities that will inevitably arise throughout life (CASEL, 2015). High levels of SEL were also found to have decreased negative behaviors that compromise academic and life success. For example, students with higher SEL levels saw a 10% decrease in emotional distress such as anxiety and depression and a 9% decrease in conduct issues such as aggressive behaviors and criminal activity (CASEL, 2015). Moreover, the results of Durlak's 2011 meta-analysis of 213 studies looking at more than 270,000 students found that SEL interventions that address the five competencies above improved academic performance by 11% (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Taylor, Oberle, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2017).

Other research shows that, over time, developing SEL competencies leads to acting in accordance with internalized ideas and values, showing concern and care for others, making wise judgments, and accepting responsibility for one's actions rather than being controlled by external factors (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Taylor, Oberle, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2017). Overall, a consensus is emerging that SEL-based interventions are an effective way to promote learning, health and wellbeing among youth. Although there is a growing awareness among researchers and policymakers that SEL plays a crucial role in driving long-term success for individuals, especially those who grow up in poverty, little research has examined whether and how programs and policies in the Global South directly or indirectly promote SEL as opposed to traditional academic skills (i.e., those measured by standardized test scores). In this study, I argue that SEL is essential in achieving key goals of economic development agendas within the Global South, namely access to quality education, gender equality, and poverty reduction. I use an empirical case from Central America to assess these dynamics.

### *An Empirical Case: The Dominican Republic*

The Dominican Republic is an emblematic case of a low-income country within the Global South that has gradually recognized the potential value of boosting women's education as a strategy for reducing poverty and increasing economic productivity. Today, approximately 23.9% of people in the Dominican Republic are below the poverty line. The 2020 Human Capital Index estimates that a child born in the Dominican Republic today will be only half as productive over her lifetime as she would have been had she received a complete education and proper healthcare (World Bank, 2022).

The Dominican Republic has made significant efforts to expand access to education and healthcare, but quality still plays a major role in economic growth and human capital development. Although improvement efforts are underway, progress has been uneven. Dominican law mandates that 4% of GDP must be spent on education, but reports suggest that only about 2% of GDP is actually invested (The Borgen Project, 2017). As a result, educational institutions in the Dominican Republic endure teacher shortages, overcrowded classrooms, poor infrastructure, and outdated curriculums (The Borgen Project, 2017). In the Dominican Republic there are over 100,000 girls out of school and only 56.7% of girls finish high school due to obstacles such as traditional expectations, teen pregnancy, poverty, and gender-based harassment preventing them from accessing quality education (Unicef, n.d.). Approximately 40% of students drop out of school before the eighth grade, and one in four girls drop out due to pregnancy (The Borgen Project, 2017). Public education in the Dominican Republic is free, but the teacher to student ratio is high, leading to lack of individual attention for each student. Furthermore, parents often times still cannot afford the supplies and uniforms for all of their children.

For most of its history, educational opportunities in the Dominican Republic were sharply stratified by gender. In the Dominican Republic, when financial means are tight, education is prioritized for the boys; they are thought to be the better investment, given that girls typically get pregnant at a young age and drop out. Traditional expectations and cultural norms play a role as well: girls typically stay home to help out with domestic duties such as cooking, cleaning, or caring for siblings. According to the Mariposa DR Foundation, a 10-year-old girl who is growing up in poverty has, on average, already worked more than 1,000 hours of household chores. These circumstances create formidable challenges in empowering girls to be confident, self-reliant, and driven.

However, in recent decades, the government has attempted to reduce these gender-based disparities. According to the Ministry of Women, the National Plan on Gender Equity and Equality (PLANEG) was developed in 2000 with the goal of mainstreaming gender equality into public administration policies, plans, programs, and initiatives. This first official framework for establishing gender equality in the Dominican Republic served as a guide for the creation of PLANEG II, a medium-term plan to be implemented from 2007 to 2017 spanning several government terms, with the goal of becoming a state policy (Gender Equality Plans in Latin America and the Caribbean, n.d.). PLANEG II aimed to produce outcomes that assist in resolving the primary issues that women experience as a result of gender inequality or inequity. The plan was up for review in 2017 and has an upcoming budget which will include new categories in 2023. Alongside these expanding government efforts to promote the quality and equity of the educational system, a plethora of programs have emerged in the Dominican Republic to fill in the system's existing gaps. For example, The DREAM Project, which originated in Cabarete and has grown to 15 other facilities throughout the nation, educates over 8,000 children, youth, and young adults through 17 programs. They offer literacy, early childhood education, youth leadership, the Bachata Academy, and other community programs. Another example – the World Bank Dominican Republic Youth Development Program – aims to improve employability of poor and at-risk youth by focusing on developing their work experience and life skills and expanding second chance education programs in order for those who have dropped out to revisit and complete their formal education. Mariposa DR Foundation, a nonprofit organization located in Cabarete, Dominican Republic, is one of few explicitly girl-focused development programs in the Dominican Republic. They aim to empower girls through education by offering financial aid, tutoring, and a variety of non-academic programs. Given its

girl-specific focus in driving educational outcomes and economic development more broadly, Mariposa DR represents a unique empirical case to assess whether and how a program in the Global South may indirectly support socioemotional health, which recent research suggests is crucial to individuals' long-term success.

The organization was officially founded in 2009 by local volunteers and children in Cabarete who saw a need to provide community-based solutions to help end poverty. Cabarete, a region on the North coast of the Dominican Republic, is emblematic of the difficult circumstances faced by many girls in the developing world. This region struggles with poverty, low literacy, and sex tourism; without guidance and intervention, adolescent girls are especially vulnerable and at high risk to teen pregnancy, sex trafficking, and HIV/AIDS, all of which in turn can perpetuate the generational cycle of poverty. The current adolescent fertility rate of 91 births per 1000 women aged 15-19 is one of the highest rates in Latin America (The World Bank, 2020). According to the 2017 National Human Development Report for Dominican Republic, data indicates that 22% of women between the ages of 12-19 have been pregnant.

### *Mariposa DR Mission and Programmatic Elements and Their Potential SEL Benefits*

To address these challenges, Mariposa DR has pursued a mission inspired by the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Its ability to achieve these goals is dependent on quality education and empowerment of women and young girls. Specifically, the organization is focused on assisting poor and marginalized local Dominican and Haitian Descent girls between the ages of 8 and 21. The program uses grant money to help pay for 150 girls' attendance of private school for one year, as well as uniforms and school supplies. Additionally, schools may

be far and conditions may be dangerous for girls to commute by foot, so transportation is provided to their schools in the morning and again for drop-off at the foundation's facility for after-school programs. The education support includes academic and personal enrichment initiatives like tutoring, experiential learning, sexual and reproductive health education, as well as encouragement to engage in sports, the arts, community service, and cultural activities such as dancing and participating in festivals.

“Empowerment is both a value orientation for working in the community and a theoretical model for understanding the process and consequences of efforts to exert control and influence over decisions that affect one's life, organizational functioning, and the quality of community life” (Perkins & Zimmennan, 1995; Rappaport, 1981; Zimmennan & Warschausky, 1998). The notion of *empowerment* is the foundation of Mariposa PR's mission. The idea is that when girls acquire resources, they become more powerful both as individuals and as a group, and they become capable of exercising their voice, autonomy, and self-control. Specifically, they should have the freedom to choose whether to continue their education or enter the workforce, the type of job they choose, as well as if, when, and with whom they have sex or get married (Temin, Amin, Ngo, Psaki, & Gowrinathan, 2018)

“As girls exercise voice, choice, or control, they may start to disrupt social norms. Within supportive families, communities, and policy environments, this can improve girls' health, education, and livelihoods. And if many girls in a given community participate in empowerment programs, this may create a “tipping point” that fosters new norms about girls' value that endure. Ultimately, these shifts will substantially improve girls' well-being and life chances, and promote gender equity.” (Temin, Amin, Ngo, Psaki, & Gowrinathan, 2018)

*“Unleash the Leader in the Girl,”* is one of Mariposa DR’s core programs that boosts girls’ empowerment. It is a day program that invests in the economic potential of girls through improving access to quality of education, health and wellness care, and job and life skills training, which collectively help the girl feel “empowered” (Zimmerman, 2012). Program evaluations completed thus far suggest the program leads girls to marry later, have fewer and healthier children, and to acquire the skills and abilities to earn their own incomes (Mariposa DR Foundation). Educated girls have better job opportunities which means they obtain higher wages, allowing them to adequately support their families leading to a direct result of economic growth, political participation, and social transformation.

This particular program focuses on six key areas: academic enrichment, community engagement, experiential learning, health and wellness, international awareness, and summer programs. Girls over the age of 14 receive about 100 hours of development training per year which includes vocational training, career path counseling, English classes, individual and small group mentoring, and life skills coaching. The girls are also taken on frequent visits to nearby urban areas to familiarize themselves with their country, culture, and resources available to them.

One of the six key areas Mariposa Foundation employs that promotes the opportunity for social and emotional learning is *“experiential learning”*, which is a method of learning derived from life experience, as opposed to that of lecture-based and in-class learning. More specifically, it is centered on local resources including field trips, environmental education, cultural arts leadership development, and job skills training. The *community engagement* program offers students opportunities to work with local people and business within their town. This allows for the girls to learn about their region and understand that they can still make a change despite the hardship they are in. The organization’s *health and wellness* program offer weekly classes on



sex education, hygiene, sanitation, disease prevention, food preparation, and physical education. Additionally, the foundation partners with other local organizations to ensure that all girls visit a doctor and dentist once a year, receive eye exams and glasses, are given a reusable pad, and are provided beds to address sleep deprivation.

## **Methodology**

### *Participants*

The participants selected for this study represent the larger population of girls in the Global South who typically lack access to quality education absent a major programmatic intervention. Specifically, my sample consisted of eight female graduates of the Mariposa DR Foundation, all of whom were of Dominican and Haitian descent and ranged in age from 18-29 years old. All participants in this study were recruited by convenience sampling from a contact log at Mariposa DR Foundation. Based on a low number of responses, recruitment was opened up to snowball sampling. While the study sample was not drawn randomly and thus cannot be assumed to represent the larger population, generalizability was not a primary goal of this study. Instead, the study's key purpose was to determine whether social and emotional learning through extracurricular activities plays a role in girls' empowerment, educational and professional trajectories, as well as sustainable economic development.

### *Materials*

Verbal consent forms, which contained the purpose of the study, information about procedures, benefits and risks of participating in the study, an explanation on how to acquire the results of the research, availability of counseling services, voluntary participation, and contact information for the researchers were provided to all study participants. A semi-structured interview guide was used to assess the participants experiences and opinions (see appendix). Additional materials included a survey (see appendix). The survey was created by referencing CASEL's assessment guide, which aims to assess students from a culturally relevant approach. It includes social and emotional competencies, namely social awareness, self-management, grit, growth mindset, self-efficacy, emotional regulation, cultural awareness, and action. This survey was a Likert scale in which there were 5 adjective pairs. The participants were asked to select the answer they perceived to be most accurate.

### *Design and Procedure*

The research design of this study was explanatory as it studies the relationship of socio-emotional learning in empowerment and its role in achieving sustainable development goals using semi-structured interviews and a supplementary survey. The outcome variables in this study were social and emotional competencies: social awareness, self-management, self-awareness, relationship skills, decision making, and cultural awareness. The predictor variables included the types of experiences they had as a result of participating in the Maricopa DR program.

The participant received a copy of the verbal consent form ahead of time, and as they logged onto the call they were greeted and asked for verbal consent once again for record

purposes. Participants were allowed to not answer any question, as well as end the interview at any point in time. After obtaining verbal consent, the researcher gave each participant a survey measuring social and emotional learning. After the surveys were completed, the researcher transitioned to the semi-structured interviews assessing socio-emotional experiences and opinions through platforms such as Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp, or by phone call, and the interviews lasted anywhere between 45 minutes to two hours long. The interviews were recorded for data reference, coded, and participants' names were substituted with pseudonyms calculated at random using a website. At the end, all recordings were destroyed.

### *Core Hypothesis*

I expect that the Mariposa DR Foundation's development program assists in providing girls with the resources they need to facilitate their growth not only academically through tutoring and financial support, but also personally through opportunities to learn and practice SEL. Because the organization applies a holistic approach, it serves as a model framework that should be adapted around the world to support girl's empowerment and development to address generational poverty at large. Those that successfully completed the program will report a positive change due to the skills they learned around Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making. This may be manifested through increased confidence, more fine-tuned work and communication skills, higher education pursuits, career prospects, and labor force involvement – all of which, in turn, improve the economic development potential of the Cabarete region and the Dominican Republic at large.

## **Results and Findings**

My sample consisted of 8 women aged 18 to 29 of both Dominican and Haitian descent. They all participated in a girl-focused development program called Mariposa DR Foundation, which aims to empower girls through education. Currently there are 105 girls in the program and 25 “Mariposas Volandos” which are girls who have graduated high school and are now in university. The program does not explicitly facilitate social and emotional curriculum; however, the programs and associated activities promote the opportunity to engage in such learning.

### *What Do Teenage Girls Struggle with in Dominican Republic?*

Many respondents were raised in single parent households, typically raised by their mothers or grandmothers with extended family members living in the home such as cousins, aunts, and uncles. All were from a low socioeconomic background, marked by poor parental education, unemployment, low-income jobs, and the need to support many individuals. They lived in poor neighborhoods which suffered from rampant prostitution, violence, and drugs. Cultural norms around the role of women in society tended to be traditional in the participants’ families; women are expected to stay in the home performing domestic duties and tending to the husband who is expected to be the main source of income. Public school education is poor; the curriculum is outdated and focused on memorization for standardized tests, and there is overcrowding in classrooms leading to lack of individual attention that is needed for each student. Interviews confirmed that prostitution is indeed a major issue in the region. In fact, one respondent claimed that they did not have many social relationships outside of their home and the program as their guardian protected them from the streets. Another respondent reported that

their grandmother encouraged prostitution, while her elder sister who was also in the organization with her needed a means of income and later became pregnant, causing her to drop her studies.

### *Where They Are Today vis-a-vis Traditional Notions of Success*

Despite these formidable challenges, remarkably all eight of the girls interviewed had graduated high school, and six out of eight girls attend post-secondary education at the United World Colleges (UWC) program; there was one drop out due to pregnancy. Clearly, the Mariposa DR program was effective in driving a core objective: increasing educational attainment among participants.

In all interviews the participants claimed that they would not be where they are today without the program's resources, and that the activities that were provided allowed for experiences they otherwise would not have had due to their low socioeconomic status. The sports, arts, cultural engagement, community service, and field trips all created the opportunity for the girl to discover who they are, what their interests are, and build relationships with others who may be going through similar troubles. Furthermore, these activities and experiences helped several girls to learn new skills, find employment opportunities, and get accepted into colleges. One respondent is employed in the athletics department doing administrative work for her university, and another respondent is a freelance illustrator; both gained their passions and experience at the foundation. Respondent #3, who is now studying visual arts in college, says that she discovered her love for art during her time at the foundation. She says, "By joining the arts program I finally had access to resources like colored pencils and glue and sometimes

lessons which helped to build my skills.” She currently makes an income doing freelance work and has contributed illustrations and design skills to many projects such as Mariposa Foundation and ‘She is the Universe’.

Two out of eight respondents work for the foundation full time, and one serves as a barista in their small sister business venture project, Cabarete Coffee Company. She claims that during her youth she was a shy person, and the social skills and relationships she was able to build at the foundation helped her become outgoing and work the customer service job she has today. The other respondent claims to have plans to attend college in the future but is currently a swimming instructor, which is also a skill that she learned at the foundation when she was younger. All respondents who do not work at the foundation full time return to the town in summer time and work at the summer camp as teachers and counselors in one of the areas they are interested in. For example, one respondent enjoys watersports so she will be the surf instructor this summer.

### *Expanding What Success Means: From Educational to Socioemotional Dimensions*

According to the traditional socioeconomic and educational markers that undergird economic development schemes, all eight of the respondents achieved a notable level of success (i.e., vis-à-vis educational attainment). However, the notion of success is inherently subjective, and as such, the interview briefly touched on what the word “success” means. Each participant responded with something different, but most noted that it is defined by working towards and achieving some goal. While all participants ostensibly had access to the same resources, whether or not they enrolled in college was dependent on how they used the resources to their advantage,

how they applied themselves, and fundamentally whether or not they wanted to go to college. This was most directly reflected in a quote by respondent #5, “Mariposa Foundation is an amazing platform for girls’ success, but whether they reach that success it is not up to Mariposa. If you don’t want to follow your goals, even if they support you, you won’t go far.” The variation in success is not only seen in college attendance and employment but was also reflected in the anecdotes of those who had sisters participate in the program. Interestingly, these notions of success incorporate SEL concepts, specifically empowerment, resilience, cultural awareness, and community engagement.

Several respondents expressed that the program helped them to feel *empowered*. Respondent #3 claimed that this is done by providing a space for girls to escape their reality of living in poverty and receive benefits that allow them to reach their fullest potential. “I think empowerment means to want something and go for it. I think that’s what happens in a lot of communities like mine; you are so used to hearing the word ‘no’ because of social norms or how society thinks. There are all these barriers in front of you, and even if you want something with your entire heart you don’t have the support to push you to where you want to be. You need a support system that shows you how you can fly and helps you remove the barriers, whether it is economics or your family who doesn’t believe these opportunities are real. [Empowerment is] having the ability to say ‘yes, I want this’ and take the steps to that goal, even if it is challenging to continue going after the goal.”

*Resilience* was another outcome of the program many respondents reflected upon. When asked about challenges, girls reported a variety of circumstances such difficulty with reading, adjusting to new schools, losing loved ones, and more. The participants then shared how they recover from failure. Respondent #2 reported, “not everything will or has to turn out the way you

want it to. If you fail, you can continue to try again. At first I will feel bad, but my next attempt will be better”. When asked about *community engagement*, respondents shared various projects they engaged in that partner with the people and small businesses of their town of Cabarete. All respondents recalled participating in an eco-brick project; the girls learned about collecting plastic trash and stuffing it into a water bottle to make compact bricks for makeshift construction materials. They were able to see first-hand the contamination problem within their community and see why it was so important to address. At the same time, they got the local community involved by first sharing their knowledge of environmental sustainability and its expected impact, and incorporated a monetary incentive for each eco brick brought back to the foundation. Respondents also recalled instances of visiting hospitals and painting homes.

Respondents claimed *cultural awareness* was incorporated primarily through the intercultural exchange program that partnered with the foundation. Individuals from around the world come to the foundation and volunteer their time. They bring their knowledge and perspective and come to get to know Dominican Republic, its culture, and its people. Respondent #3 claimed that when they visited, they would overhear conversations. She said, “I remember I would say things like ‘Women should get a husband at some point, and if they don’t get one, they won’t do anything with their life. Their life will never be complete’. The volunteers would overhear and correct the thought by giving me new ideas. I didn’t even realize how deep the ‘Machismo’ or patriarchal culture was instilled in my mind”. Respondent #8 claimed that what she learned about culture helped influence her perspective on religion; she says, “Before I was closed off and believed Christianity was the only religion and the right one. Getting to know more people made me change my point of view, and that all perspectives should be respected.” The foundation also engaged in activities to address the racism or biases among Dominican and



Haitian people. This was particularly done to commemorate those lives lost during the Trujillo Massacre by taking a trip to the border of Haiti and Dominican Republic and placing a candle there to demonstrate a sign of peace. There was also a Haitian culture festival where there was traditional African ancestral dancing called “Bagga”, which helped change biases.

Several respondents claimed that the program benefited their *mental health*, by allowing them to participated in mindfulness-based activities such as yoga and meditation, which at the time they did not appreciate or see the value of. They often find themselves today, several years later, still using those techniques. Regarding direct mental health services, participants of the foundation claimed that mental health is a taboo in their culture and an uncommon resource offered at their schools. It was also reported that during their time at the Foundation there was one counselor or social worker on site, and that they appreciated the resource for what it was. However, many said that the professionals could be better qualified, increased in quantity, and be of the same Dominican culture.

## **Discussion**

This study set out to examine whether programmatic interventions in the Global South intended to bolster traditional economic development outcomes by boosting girls’ educational attainment may also foster socioemotional learning in ways that enrich participants’ lives and their countries’ social and economic health. Using the empirical case of Mariposa DR in the Dominican Republic, and eight interviews with participants, I found that the program indeed provided valuable resources for marginalized girls to access opportunities in order to discover who they are and that there is more beyond the life that they were born into. Additionally, for

those girls who do not pursue post-secondary education, Mariposa Foundation often employs them as staff which helps in ensuring a source of income, keeping them independent and off the streets. This supports sustainable economic development by more participation of women in the labor market through either accessing post-secondary education or utilizing the skills learned at the foundation to gain employment.

Primarily, girls were most impacted by the financial support they received to attend private school. Through educational support such as tutoring, they were able to receive the individual support that they lacked in their assigned public or private schools. However, they found that the activities they engaged in at the foundation was what they used to apply for post-secondary education or workforce positions. Extracurriculars like sports, dance, and arts in the Dominican Republic are often seen to be unnecessary to a child's education, and those living in poverty cannot spend their food budget on such activities within their communities. Due to schools lacking extracurriculars or these activities costing some fee to participate in, and considering the financial hardship of low socioeconomic status students, the foundation allowed girls to participate in a variety of extracurricular activities which in turn promoted the opportunity to engage in social and emotional learning. Art activities, for example, promote the opportunity to build social and emotional skills such as self-awareness; art is a way for students to relieve stress and express their emotions in a healthy and positive way. Mindfulness activities such as meditation and yoga touch on self-awareness and self-management by helping students to identify and then regulate their emotions. Community engagement fosters relationship skills and social awareness as participants are working with the local community, who are often part a disadvantaged population as well. Health and wellness, for example, promoted self-management and responsible decision making by teaching girls about nutrition, hygiene, and sex education.

International awareness activities such as cultural exchange programs or study abroad opportunities supported all five core competencies (self-awareness, social awareness, decision making, self-management, and relationship skills) by exchanging one another's knowledge and cultural norms. There is strong evidence that extracurricular activities increase self-esteem and positive social behaviors among children (Durlak, 2011). They are also a suggested strategy to increase social support systems and develop social skills and relationships (Bungay, 2013).

### *Survey questionnaire*

To reinforce the qualitative findings that emerged from the interviews reported above, I conducted a survey with program participants that gauged the degree to which the program boosted their social and emotional learning. As research on SEL has evolved, survey-based measures to assess students' progress vis-à-vis related outcomes have proliferated. CASEL provides an assessment guide that contains several resources for practitioners to select and use measures of student SEL to ensure cultural relevancy to the specific community. For this study, I employed the Panorama SEL Assessment, which is geared towards assessing how supported one feels, as well as their grit, growth mindset, self-efficacy, self-management, social awareness, emotional regulation, and cultural awareness and action (see Appendix B).

***Grit*** is the perception of how well students are able to persevere through setbacks to achieve important long-term goals. An example question includes: "If you fail to reach an important goal, how likely are you to try again?"

***Growth Mindset*** is the perception of whether students have the potential to change those factors that are central to their performance. An example question includes, “How possible is it for you to change your level of intelligence?”

***Self-Management and Emotional Regulation*** is how well students manage their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations. An example question includes, “How often do you remain calm, even when someone was bothering you or saying bad things?”

***Social Awareness*** is the ability to understand others’ perspective, including those from diverse backgrounds. An example question includes, “How carefully do you listen to other people's point of view?”

***Self-Efficacy*** is how much students believe they can succeed in achieving academic outcomes. An example question includes, “How confident are you that you can complete all the work that is assigned to you?”

***Cultural Awareness and Action*** is sensitivity to the comparison between two different cultures and using that sensitivity to effectively navigate society. An example question includes, “How confident are you in having honest conversations with others about race?”

Overall, the data gathered from the survey supported the findings surfaced through the interviews; the participants’ survey responses revealed very high levels of grit, growth mindset, self-efficacy, self-management, social awareness, emotional regulation, and cultural awareness and action.

Recall that interview narratives revealed a widespread focus on success and resilience among program participants. The survey results told a similar story. In terms of grit, the majority of participants reported that they frequently stay focused on the same goal for several months at a time. Additionally, 75% of participants also report that they are quite likely to try again after failing to reach an important goal, with the remaining 25% claiming they are very likely to try again. Similarly, 75% are quite likely to continue to pursue one of their current goals, and 25% are very likely.

Moreover, the survey results confirmed a high degree of growth mindset demonstrated by program participants. All in all, 67% reported behaving well in class was completely possible to change, 57% said putting forth a lot of effort is completely possible to change, 50% responded that your level of intelligence was a little possible to change, and 50% responded liking the subject was quite possible to change.

Another competency that was assessed is self-management, and here too, the program participants appeared to excel. A total of 50% of respondents sometimes get their work done right away rather than waiting last minute; 38% say once in a while, and 13% almost never. 25% of respondents say that they frequently pay attention and resist distractions, with 38% saying sometimes and 38% once in a while. When working independently, 25% remain focused almost always, 63% frequently, and 13% sometimes.

In terms of behavioral indicators, 25% of participants reported almost always remaining calm, 38% frequently, and 38% sometimes. 63% reported being almost always polite to others and 38% reported frequently. 38% almost always keep their temper in check, 38% frequently, 13% sometimes, and 13% once in a while. Social awareness patterns were also broadly positive; about half of participants said that they listen to others' point of view quite carefully and 25%

said they do very carefully. 100% say they get along pretty well with people who are different than them. 75% say they care a lot about other's feelings and 25% care quite a bit. 75% say they always compliment others accomplishments and 25% say they frequently do. Half of the participants said they are very respectful when someone disagrees with them while 37.5% are quite respectful and 12.5% are somewhat respectful. 50% said they have a large extent to which they would stand up for themselves, 25% said quite a bit, 12.5% said somewhat and 12.5% said not at all. However, when asked how clearly they are able to express their feelings, results varied: 25% said not clearly at all, 37.5% said somewhat clearly, 25% quite clearly, and 12.5% very clearly.

Emotional regulation results showed that about half said when under pressure they can stay under control somewhat easily, and 25% said they can stay under control very easily. 62.5% said they can frequently control their emotions when they need to, 12.5% almost always, and 25% sometimes. 75% said they frequently can relax after being upset, 12.5% almost always, and 12.5% sometimes.

Lastly, cultural awareness and action results revealed that 75% of participants reported teachers almost always encouraged learning about people from different races, ethnicities, and/or cultures, 25% said frequently. 62.5% frequently think about what someone of a different race, ethnicity, or culture experiences, while 25% sometimes do, and 12.5% almost always do. 75% felt quite comfortable sharing their thoughts about race related topics with others, 12.5% felt very comfortable and 12% felt slightly comfortable.

Although these survey results would ideally be compared to those generated from a control group of demographically-similar woman who did *not* participate in the program, these results – when combined with the interview results reported earlier – suggest the program may

have fostered high levels of SEL development among participants, across a wide range of domains.

### *Limitations And Extensions for Further Research*

Although I intended to generate insights relevant to economic development programs across the Global South, this analysis was limited insofar as the sample only includes young women from one girls-focused development program in one particular place: Cabarete, Dominican Republic. This group is not only small, it is also racially homogenous; the sample consists of entirely Latinos, and given this constraint and the qualitative nature of the research, I cannot claim that the results are generalizable to all girls of the Cabarete area or beyond.

Instead, my key contribution is to explore patterns across girls from a holistic development program to identify the role social and emotional learning plays in empowerment and sustainable economic development. My focus on the specific region of Cabarete, Dominican Republic limits our insights into whether similar processes and programs exist in different developing countries. It is also important to note that differences in geography, race, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status, school assignment, and policies all may affect girls' educational attainment and success, and the extent to which SEL programming features may be effective.

Additionally, there are important limitations of the SEL construct. SEL remains plagued by vague definitions, a lack of research-based evidence, ambiguity in promoted attitudes, measurement or assessment, hesitancy from both religious and non-religious parents, and increasingly an issue with the over-diagnosis and over-medication of children. According to a study done by the Pioneer Institute in 2011, there are many problems with Social-Emotional

Learning. Not only is the definition of SEL vague, but it begins to raise significant unanswered questions about what attitudes in particular should be promoted. There is a lack of reliable, objective, research-based methods to measure or assess, for example, students' personality, values, and mindset (Pioneer Institute, 2019). SEL is also said to involve too much introspection for children and is often portrayed as character education, which has always been controversial to both religious and non-religious parents (Effrem, 2019). Moreover, parents believe that it is one thing for they themselves to direct their morals, ethics, and emotional development to their children, but having the government or public-school officials, who may not be appropriately trained, implement SEL curriculum is another (Effrem, 2019). In order to secure quality programs and SEL curriculums, expenditures may be high and public-school budgets are already constricted. Lastly, the SEL movement runs the risk of exacerbating the increasing trend toward over-diagnosis and over-medication.

More data about the various SEL outcome categories is required. Considering that there is no standardized approach in measuring SEL skills, further theory-driven research is needed. Additionally, more research is needed to firmly establish whether social and emotional learning impacts girls' empowerment, success, and economic development, as well as the sustainable development goals at large

## **Conclusion**

This study has analyzed the effects of social and emotional development through experiential learning on girls' empowerment. I argue that social and emotional development is central to girl's empowerment and sustainable economic development. The Mariposa DR



Foundation provided resources and facilitated experiential learning through various non-academic activities allowing marginalized girls to come together and discover their interests. They then applied what they learned in these experiences in pursuit of post-secondary education or workforce positions.

Approximately half of the youth population in developing countries are girls. Many of these 600 million girls are not empowered to participate in large parts social life. One direct consequence is the impact of this imbalance on their quality of life—including mental health, negative behaviors, and access to resources. Beyond social and humanitarian causes, there are also broader economic incentives to correcting the disproportionate exclusion of women from the education system, since women who are not empowered to reach for higher academic goals tend to contribute less to both local and national economies. By approaching sustainable development through a different lens of investment, we are able to clearly see the potential impact social and emotional learning could have on beneficiaries themselves alongside economic growth. Sustainable economic development can be pursued through investing in girls so that they complete the next level of education and through investing in well-being interventions such as social and emotional learning; this would not only benefit the participant, but also maximize economic productivity.

Children and adolescents need to have social and emotional skills such as self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, decision making, and social awareness to be able to succeed. Creating a more structured curriculum where social and emotional learning is integrated into daily interactions will not only boost academic achievement but also provide mental health prevention and intervention. Additionally, integrating social and emotional learning into daily interactions allows for practice in a diverse set of environments, cuts costs as teachers can be

trained to include it within their curriculums, and would reinforce existing education systems and programs. At the same time, ensuring that mental health services of good quality are in place is vital for development, especially for those coming from adverse backgrounds such as poverty and the coupling circumstances that come with it.

### *Recommendations*

The general recommendations for actions to increase sustainable economic development through girls' education from the present study were: (1) fund education opportunities (e.g., private school and/or college) to encourage completion of the next level of education; (2) engage in non-academic activities to promote socio-emotional learning (e.g., relationship skills), for example, by interacting with local girls and/or intercultural exchange programs; (3) including a structured curriculum or program to reduce mental and emotional disorders (e.g., social and emotional learning) in order to decrease negative behaviors and establish healthy habits for development; (4) train local staff to enhance quality and impact (e.g., mental health services), such as by increasing the number of qualified professionals; (5) parent engagement (e.g., workshops or check-ins), such as having parents or guardians participate in the girl's education through their own development, which can encourage learning and serve as another resource to their child. Overall, the objective is to build emotionally resilient individuals. By this I mean women who are empowered to face opportunities and life decisions. Not only will this promote prosocial behavior, but it has the potential to both ameliorate the intergenerational transmission of inequality and transform how we think about human development and the attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs).

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## Appendix A

### Interview Questionnaire:

#### *Opener:*

1. Hi, I'd like to begin by asking you to tell me a little bit about yourself.
  - a. Age
  - b. Children
    - i. How many
    - ii. Ages
  - c. Marital Status
  - d. Highest level of education
    - i. Post-secondary education
      1. what/where schooling was completed?
  - e. Source of income

Transition: [Ok, let us begin...]

2. Tell me about your childhood days.
  - a. Living arrangement
  - b. Friends
  - c. Neighborhood
  - d. Parents source of income
3. How was education viewed in your home while growing up?
  - a. Mother's education
  - b. Father's education
  - c. Sibling education
4. Who did you normally go to for support?
  - a. Family
  - b. Friends
  - c. Program
  - d. School
5. How many years were you in the program for?
  - a. Age entered
  - b. Age exited
  - c. Interests
  - d. Siblings in the program
6. How has Mariposa played a role in your post-grad life?
  - a. Education
  - b. Employment
  - c. Other

#### **Empowerment and Success**

7. The mission of Mariposa Dr foundation is to educate girls to become empowered young women, how do you feel this development program empowers girls?
  - a. Self-Exploration
  - b. Women's studies
  - c. Sexual and Reproductive health
  - d. Extra-curriculars
8. What does empowerment mean or look like to you?
  - a. Leadership
  - b. Self-Control
9. Describe a time where you had the opportunity to be a leader?
  - a. In the classroom
  - b. At Mariposa
  - c. Work
  - d. For a hobby (sports)
10. The word success can mean many different things to different people, what does success mean or look like to you?
  - a. What does it look like?
  - b. 5 years from now?
  - c. 10 years from now?
11. What part of the program or opportunities do you feel made a significant impact on you?
  - a. Academic support
  - b. Mentorship
  - c. Health and Wellness
    - i. mindfulness
    - ii. sexual education
  - d. other
12. How has the health and wellness education that you received impacted you?
  - a. sex education
  - b. disease prevention
  - c. basic hygiene
  - d. healthcare visits

### **Extra-Curriculars and Cultural Engagement**

13. Tell me about your experience with extra-curriculars...
  - a. Sports
  - b. Arts
  - c. Music
  - d. Dance
14. How did extra curriculars play a role in your life?
  - a. Fitness
  - b. Relationships
  - c. Opportunities
  - d. Source of Income



15. Tell me about your community engagement experience?
  - a. kind of work
  - b. what did you learn?
16. How was culture incorporated and engaged with?
  - a. What did studies consist of?
  - b. What did the events consist of?
  - c. What Food was there?
  - d. Where were trips to?
17. How did your experiences and academic knowledge inform your understanding of culture?
  - a. Studies
  - b. Festivals/Events
  - c. Food
  - d. Trips

### **Resilience**

18. What is one of the biggest challenges you have faced in your life?
  - a. how did you feel?
  - b. what helped you overcome that?
19. How do you recover from failure?
  - a. persistence (give up or no)
  - b. approach
20. How did the program prepare you to approach obstacles?
  - a. Resilience
  - b. Problem-Solving
21. How has what you learned prepared you for what you currently have going on in your life?
  - a. Short-term goals
  - b. long-term goals
22. What are some accomplishments that you are proud of?
  - a. academic
  - b. personal

### **Program Recommendations**

23. Considering your whole experience with the program, what do you feel are some pros and cons?
  - a. Opportunities
  - b. Relationships
24. What suggestions/comments do you have that will help improve the program?
  - a. Mental Health Services
  - b. Other resources
25. Now that we have finished, is there anything I did not ask about that you felt I should have?

## Appendix B

### Social and Emotional Learning Survey:

#### *Grit*

1. How often do you stay focused on the same goal for several months at a time?
2. If you fail to reach an important goal, how likely are you to try again?
3. When you are working on a project that matters a lot to you, how focused can you stay when there are lots of distractions?
4. Some people pursue some of their goals for a long time, and others change their goals frequently. Over the next several years, how likely are you to continue to pursue one of your current goals?

#### *Growth Mindset*

5. Whether a person does well or poorly in school may depend on a lot of different things. You may feel that some of these things are easier for you to change than others. In school, how possible is it for you to change:
  - a. Being Talented
  - b. Linking the Subject
  - c. Your level of intelligence
  - d. Putting forth a lot of effort
  - e. Behaving well in class
  - f. How easily you give up

#### *Self-Management*

6. How often do you get your work done right away instead of waiting until last minute?
7. How often do you pay attention and resist distractions?
8. When you work independently, how often did you stay focused?
9. How often do you remain calm, even when someone was bothering you or saying bad things?
10. How often do you allow others to speak without interruption?
11. How often are you polite to others?
12. How often do you keep your temper in check?

#### *Social Awareness*

13. How carefully do you listen to other people's point of view?
14. How much do you care about other people's feelings?
15. How often do you compliment others' accomplishments?
16. How well do you get along with people who are different from you?
17. How clearly were you able to describe your feelings?
18. When others disagree with you, how respectful are you of their views?
19. To what extent were you able to stand up for yourself without putting others down?

#### *Self-Efficacy*

20. How confident are you that you can complete all the work that is assigned to you?
21. When complicated ideas are presented, how confident are you that you can understand them?
22. How confident are you that you can learn all the material presented to you?
23. How confident are you that you can do that hardest work that is assigned to you?
24. How confident are you that you will remember what you learned, next year?

### *Emotion Regulation*

25. When you are feeling pressured, how easily can you stay in control?
26. How often are you able to pull yourself out of a bad mood?
27. When everybody around you gets angry, how relaxed can you stay?
28. How often are you able to control your emotions when you need to?
29. Once you get upset, how often can you get yourself to relax?
30. When things go wrong for you, how calm are you able to remain?

### *Cultural Awareness and Action*

31. At Mariposa, how often did teachers encourage you to learn about people from different races, ethnicities, or cultures?
32. How often do you think about what someone of a different race, ethnicity, or culture experiences?
33. How confident are you in having honest conversations with others about race?
34. How often were you encouraged to think more deeply about race-related topics?
35. How comfortable are you sharing your thoughts about race-related topics with others?
36. How often did you have important conversations about race, even when they might be uncomfortable?
37. When there are major news events related to race, how often did adults at the Mariposa Foundation talk about them with students?
38. How well does the Mariposa Foundation help students speak out against racism?