

BFSS Occasional Publication

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# **AN ANALYSIS OF BRITISH AND FOREIGN SCHOOL SOCIETY GRANTS AWARDED AND THEIR IMPACT**

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**BFSS**

**BRITISH & FOREIGN SCHOOL SOCIETY**  
Educational Opportunity for All



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FOREIGN SCHOOL SOCIETY GRANTS  
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This Publication is dedicated to the work of Imogen Wilde, the Society's Director who stepped down at the end of March 2016 after seven years of service to the Society. The idea of Society Occasional Publications was Imogen's and so it is fitting that this publication, commissioned during her period of office, should recognise this aspect of her contribution to the Society.

That an analysis of reports from such a wide range of grant recipients has been possible owes much to the developments led by Imogen carefully to agree specific project outcomes with grant applicants and the introduction of an evaluation reporting framework for all grants.

The Society's thanks are due to Professor Joy Palmer Cooper, Society member and newly elected Councillor, who has carried out this analysis over the past months alongside her wide-ranging contribution to charitable and public service work both in the UK and in Sri Lanka.

**Professor Steve Hodgkinson**  
Chair, BFSS Council  
May 2016

## **AN ANALYSIS OF BRITISH AND FOREIGN SCHOOL SOCIETY GRANTS AWARDED AND THEIR IMPACT**

This summary report provides an overview of the successes and impact of 30 separate projects which benefited from BFSS grants over a period of twelve months, concluding in December 2015.<sup>1</sup> The summary derives from an analysis of the Final Reports from the grant holders.

Inevitably, such an overview can only provide a 'snapshot' of the immensely varied and significant contributions that have been made and the undoubted impact on the lives of many thousands of people around the world. We are very aware that an overall measure of the success of BFSS impact should be determined by the success (or otherwise) of each individual project. Indeed, each final report provides the evidence that intended outcomes have been achieved, thus establishing the integrity of the project as a whole. That said, we consider that this synthesis provides an extremely interesting and insightful overview of the ways in which BFSS funding has impacted upon the lives of people and their communities.

Much of the data provided in the 30 final reports which have been analysed is quantitative by nature, allowing for statistical summaries to be given. Yet it is very obvious from reading the individual reports and accompanying statements and photographs, that huge impacts have been made on people's lives and the quality of their education that are unquantifiable. Thus we have endeavoured to provide a fascinating glimpse into the range of qualitative achievements detailed by the grant holders and other relevant stakeholders.

The 30 reports that form the basis of this analysis were in receipt of a total of £424,747 in grant funding from the BFSS over the twelve months' period under scrutiny. It should be emphasised that the grant aid and beneficiaries referred to in this document relate to the year ending December 31st 2015 and hence figures do not represent the full grant support given to multi-year projects which terminated at this time. For such projects, data relevant to the final year have been extracted in order to enable valid comparability of data over the period.

Grants awarded during the 12 months' period under scrutiny ranged in size from £2,500 for work in Ghana through to £30,850 for work in Afghanistan. It is pleasing to note that 22 of the 30 grant holders acquired balance of funding from other sources and 'in kind' contributions.

Our funding made a direct impact on the education and lives of over 27,000 young people and on 800 teachers, head teachers and teaching assistants. The reports indicate that some 38,484 individuals were indirect beneficiaries of the grants, though this figure is undoubtedly underestimated. Several reports simply say that there were 'thousands' of indirect beneficiaries and where no precise figures have been given, these generalisations are not included in the statistical summary. What is very clear is that in a twelve months' period, the BFSS contributed to the enhancement of the lives and educational provision of well over half a million people; very likely more than this.

The beneficiaries are situated in 17 countries of the world in 20 separate locations, with a distribution detailed in Appendix 1.

Tangible contributions provided by BFSS funding over the twelve months included various building projects, for example a 3-classroom school building, provision of new or complete refurbishment of 40 classrooms, refurbishment of two schools, the setting up of an IT training room, an administration block and community meeting rooms, a solar panelled IT centre, and a hostel for female students. Numerous items of equipment and resources were provided including classroom basics of approximately 300 desks, several hundred chairs, tables, benches and storage cupboards. In addition to basic furniture, grants supported the acquisition of resources including white boards, visual aids, a classroom-based tool-kit, projectors, printer, copier etc. Grants also covered building-related needs and equipment including an electric generator, a water point, portable solar power and 20 latrines/toilets.

***'I couldn't believe how spacious and clean the classroom was when I returned from holiday - this is going to make my teaching role much easier. There is a lot more space for movement and class activities, which now gives me the opportunity to put in practice many ideas I have to enhance the children's learning'. (K2 teacher, Mombasa, Kenya)***

Books were at the heart of a lot of the projects. Three school libraries were established with publications on library management and a learning centre with books as a crucial integral aspect. A total of 14,890 general reading books were given as a result of the grants and 1,700 textbooks directly relating to the school curriculum and examinations.

Grants provided 5 fully equipped science laboratories and in two locations the focus was on information technology. Support was given for the provision of 30 computers with numerous accessories, an IT training room and a computer laboratory with all necessary equipment.

Training and development featured high on the agendas of several projects. The BFSS funded three training courses for teachers, including initial training and in-service provision, a training programme for youth workers, a vocational training programme in sewing for girls, an 'academic night school', a development programme for young carers and an after school reinforcement programme.

An analysis of the overall impact of this significant array of contributions suggests that four areas of impact may be identified, namely the impact on educational standards and pupils' attainment levels, the impact on the general quality of the learning environment, impact on the wider community where grants have been provided and impact on the overall quality of life in the locality. Clearly these four areas are overlapping and inter-related and many aspects are essentially qualitative in nature, yet some powerful examples may be cited relating to each of them.

It is very clear that the majority of funded projects made significant **impact on school pupils' attainment levels**. For example, one report indicates that:

*'the average improvement is almost a grade' (Nairobi, Kenya).*

Others claim that:

*'improved attendance has led to improved grades without doubt'* (Mombasa, Kenya).

*'Over 50% showed grade improvement after participating'* (Israel).

*'29% of our students achieved Grade 1 or 2 compared to 11% in the previous year'* (because more classrooms were available for teaching, Uganda)

*'Our school is now the best performing school among the 12 schools in the District. Last year only 10% of our primary pupils failed to qualify for secondary school'* (Tiwi, Kenya).



In an example of the impact of teacher training it is reported that:

*'student teachers who received the training achieved a 153% improvement in grade attainment compared to those who did not receive the training.'* (Ghana).

Improvement in attainment is clearly linked to an area of unquantifiable yet significant impact, namely **general improvement in the quality of the learning environment**. Many of the reports linked such improved quality to enhanced motivation and achievement. We read, for example:

*'Each pupil now has a desk and chair and each pupil now has a copy of the core text books for all five subjects including English and mathematics. Therefore, we see indirect positive impact on performance in national exams.'* (Bungule, Kenya).

Because of new or refurbished and better equipped classrooms, teachers are delivering more effectively and more creatively because of space and resources available. One school reports that because of smaller class size, there is much better retention of pupils and girls in particular. Another tells that because new teachers have been employed, progress of pupils is now being properly evaluated. We read also that:

*'Teachers are now willing to provide additional classes after school or at weekends and during school holiday times. The new classrooms are used all of the time. Teachers now have far more passion and drive.'* (Gambia).

*'A network of 40 model classrooms has been established. The children are being taught in a more effective and engaging way. Parents are now supplying the teachers with materials to make resources.'* (Ghana).

Similarly, provision of effective teacher training and better resources linked to this (notably books, computers, IT equipment and science equipment) have significantly improved the overall quality of learning environments, attainment and pupil and staff retention rates:

*'We have a significant increase in trained teachers because they want to come here because of the new facilities. Our teaching is extended to Grade 8, so this will increase pupil retention, especially of girls.'* (Zambia).

*'Our laboratories have certainly enhanced the quality of education and our learning environment.'* (Nepal).

One fundamental theme emerging from reports focused on teachers and their training is that teachers have become used to the concept of their own learning. This impacts upon staff retention rates and the decline of teacher absenteeism. Better trained teachers are embracing such matters as the integration of IT across the whole curriculum, the use of appropriately graded reading schemes, use of a variety of learning aids, and the importance of assessment and gaining reliable information about how pupils are progressing. For example:

*'We have enhanced libraries in each school. Teachers can now test reading, writing and comprehension as there are books to read. A general enhancement in the quality of teaching has ensued.'* (Ghana).

*'High quality in-service training is now delivered to pre-school teachers. The quality of pre-school education has significantly improved. Areas of educational improvement include better use of learning aids, use of role play, use of the outdoor environment and the teaching of phonics.'* (Ethiopia).

Analysis reveals such recurring themes as the impact of space and resources on pupil motivation and attainment, on teacher motivation and quality, on improvements in monitoring progress of learners, on pupil and teacher retention rates and on the acceptance by teachers of the importance of lifelong commitment to their own learning and development.

These themes are linked to a second area of unquantifiable yet significant impact evidenced in the reports, namely **impact on the wider community**.

As one report makes very clear, and others carry this implicit message, when girls are seen to be educated, parents are more likely to send other children to school and attitudes within communities are shifting in favour of girls' education. One project specifically focused on out-of-school girls, and the report indicates that around 3,500 girls were supported to enrol in school as a result of changes brought about by the grant support. (Rajasthan, India). In another project, girls were taught the techniques of sewing in a vocational training programme with great success, showing that girls can become participant members of their community and can become role models. (Ethiopia).

Along similar lines, the reports highlight changing community attitudes towards the inclusion of pupils with challenged lives and disabilities. Several hundred vulnerable and physically disabled young people were brought into school through community support as a result of improvements made in provision.

***'We were delighted to observe the girls' self-confidence and self-esteem blossom and flourish through both strands of our programme ... at this important juncture it is critical to provide young women with the tools they need to become economically empowered citizens of their local communities and country and to feel that they can make a difference.'* (Teacher, Ethiopia).**

In Siberia, the BFSS supported a partnership inclusion programme for young children with disabilities. Non-disabled people from the community are now participating in events and activities which are organised for the children with disabilities. Empathy, understanding and inclusivity are thus developed through the community.

In a project based in Gambia, 5 classrooms were provided and fully equipped. This school now prioritises enrolment from the most vulnerable young people in its neighbourhood. There are distinctly changed community attitudes towards vulnerable and abused children. More girls are accessing education; also orphans.

In many instances, projects were designed and implemented with community participation and ownership in mind. In these examples of good practice, community members were included throughout the project and the overall result has been commitment to improving the quality and availability of education for all, including girls and 'at risk' young people.

Various reports detail a new commitment to introducing evening and weekend classes for parents and the wider community, to enabling parents to use library facilities, and to opening new school classrooms for community meetings, workshops and festivities. In Afghanistan, the BFSS funded school is used as a place for re-sit examinations for the whole district and has so far accommodated two graduation ceremonies and a wedding.

In another location, the school now holds music and drama festivals at the end of each school term. All of the families benefit from such participatory activities, and from having motivated young people within them. This brings an inevitable community 'spin off' brought

about by a sense of belonging and worth. (Nairobi, Kenya). In another project, the school grounds are used for the growing of food crops which are nurtured by pupils and community members and sold to local families. This initiative benefits health, encourages a sense of responsibility and develops entrepreneurial skills. (Gambia).

As a result of the enhanced learning environment in many locations, there is a significant increase in the number of children with literacy and numeracy skills. Hence there are increased employment likelihoods leading to greater earning capacity and the fact that there are more employable children will have a positive impact on the community as a whole. Overall we sense that a far greater sense of community esteem and cohesion has emerged as a result of funded projects that have been successfully embedded in local life, respecting traditional cultures and values.



Other community-related factors highlighted in the reports include schools which act in an advisory capacity to other less fortunate schools in the district, the education of parents by their children combined with an ability of literate children to help their parents understand such things as medications and prescriptions, changing attitudes towards vulnerable and abused children with the promotion of empathy, understanding and inclusivity, and the significance of placing the school as a 'community hub' where all feel a sense of ownership of the education and facilities it provides.

Closely allied to the range of wider community benefits deriving from the impact of funded projects is the third area of unquantifiable yet significant **impact which may be termed impact on the overall quality of life of those who have been touched by BFSS support**, often illustrated in the reports by powerful quotations from beneficiaries.

A good number of indirect health-related benefits are reported as having derived from the projects. New latrines have been provided in order to give sufficient latrines and associated hygiene training for all pupils. One effect of this is reduction in the number of diarrheal cases. In one location, villagers use the school as a place to obtain clean water as two wells have been established with associated hygiene classes for parents. (Afghanistan). Several of the schools are now providing workshops on such topics as malaria, HIV prevention, basic hygiene and first aid as they have new classroom facilities and space for such community participation. Health education such as this will, in the long term, lead to reduction in the number of cases of serious disease. Furthermore, children born to educated parents are less likely to be malnourished and there will be a fall in both child marriage rates and maternal death rates.

The analysis reveals significant impact of the projects on the overall quality of life for vulnerable, 'at risk', abused and disabled members of communities. Already the new and serious commitment to inclusivity in several locations has been referred to and we note that thousands of females and vulnerable young people have been empowered to enrol in school.

A programme in Nepal was funded to enable young marginalised children to enrol in school. As a result, the children can read and do simple arithmetic which has had a significant impact on the lives of their parents. The children can now help to protect the family from the likes of dishonest shop-keepers and money lenders.

Elsewhere we are told: *'A much higher number of children with disabilities are benefiting as a result of the project ... all of the schools express serious commitment to developing inclusive education. Action plans were developed in each of the schools'* (Siberia).

Aside from this, examples are provided of specific initiatives which will benefit members of society with specific needs. For example, in one community a sign language dictionary has been produced which will significantly help deaf pupils, their families and indeed the wider community (Burundi).

Finally, turning to the development of personal qualities, almost all of the reports refer to benefits that are immeasurable yet highly significant. There are many examples of opportunities that have been provided for the development of personal skills and attributes, positive attitudes and social and employment skills including micro-enterprise establishment and financial literacy.

In Manchester, UK, a study and development programme was funded for young carers who are not accessing employment, education or training. Out of 37 young carers aged 16-24 who engaged with the programme, 7 achieved paid employment, 4 a work placement and 8 returned to education. All gained social skills and greater confidence in themselves and their abilities.

The vocational training programme for girls in Ethiopia not only provided employment potential but also a tremendous increase in self-confidence and self-esteem.

A youth development programme in London twinned vulnerable, low attaining young people with toddlers in a nursery, all with social, emotional and behavioural issues. The teenagers acted as mentors and helped with lessons. 93% of the teenagers gained a national

award in interpersonal skills and reported that the programme significantly enhanced their motivation for obtaining a job. The small children also showed numerous positive outcomes of the programme, for example, speech development and better behaviour.

We read of improvements in self-perception, social interaction, self-confidence, motivation to learn and to achieve personal goals. We read of young people developing support for democracy, an appreciation of the values of education in society and of their own self-worth. As one report tells:

*'our pupils (now) show inner contentment, they are less stressed and aggressive, are more co-operative and able to make friends.'* (Israel).

Another reports the words of a child:

*'I don't give up as often, Mummy says I come home happy....'* (UK).

Another describes (when books were provided) how:

*'eyes lit up and smiles spread across hundreds of faces.'* (Ghana).

Inevitably, the 30 reports which have been analysed illuminate not only a vast array of positive benefits but also a number of **'lessons to be learned'** and challenges faced by grant recipients. Some of these might well have been anticipated but were overlooked through insufficient attention to detail in planning a project and others were beyond the control of the organisers. Examples of issues that could have been anticipated include budgeting matters such as fluctuating exchange and inflation rates; lack of built-in funding for such things as on-going maintenance, monitoring, evaluation and translation costs; and reliable costings for transport and workers' time in remote rural locations. Various issues which impacted upon projects' timely completion that were beyond the grant holders' control included terrorist threats, strikes, periods of unexpectedly heavy rainfall, unavailability of contractors because of harvesting seasons, unreliability of local contractors and earthquakes.

***'I am orphaned and I am now going to school. I cannot believe it because I thought I would never go to school' (Girl, Aged 13, Gambia)***

Other lessons to be learned relate to the importance of planning for and understanding the challenges of sustainability, the significance exit strategies, and the need for reliable evaluation of a project's ultimate success. Such matters are complex but the analysis has illuminated ways in which grant applicants and recipients may be encouraged to embrace these issues.

Indeed, all of these various challenges and lessons learned that have been identified through project implementation analysis are of great importance and Society officers are engaging in a process of review of the findings in order to support future applicants avoid or deal with challenges they may encounter.

Many of the report forms stress the **significance of local networking** and of the vital importance of this for sustainability in various instances. There are some excellent examples

of how partnerships and local networking have transformed the life of a project and have provided 'added value' to the BFSS grant. Several reports highlight very positive outcomes of working closely with the in-country Education Ministry and Local Government Education Officers.

*'The Ministry of Education has confidence in the school and is now considering deploying financial resources for it'* (Burundi).

Others emphasise the significance of developing community partnerships, ensuring whole community ownership and engagement. For example,

*'Engaging all stake-holders was the key to success'* (Afghanistan).

A related point is that of leverage. It is greatly pleasing that 10 of the final reports claim that the BFSS grant enabled the attraction of additional funding from other partners to develop and sustain initiatives, whilst others are actively seeking such partnership provision. One organisation reports that a grant has now been received from the European Commission to continue the work started and develop inclusive education in other regions of the country (Siberia). Other examples are:

*'Your grant enabled us to obtain a grant from a private UK donor for the foundations of the whole building ... it also enabled us to get a grant from a charitable trust to complete phase one of our school'* (Mombasa, Kenya).

*'We were able to secure other funding to pay for staff wages and day to day running costs of the school after having secured BFSS funding for the building'* (Gambia).

Furthermore, we see examples of how BFSS funding has led to some projects being enabled to deliver a stream of successive developments and hence direct and indirect beneficiaries, year after year:

*'We were able to secure a second large grant to extend the school with a library and 23 new classrooms being built on the second floor to accommodate the increasing number of children wanting to attend school'* (Rajasthan, India).

There can be no doubt that the grant funding from one year alone has impacted far beyond the provision of classrooms, resources and equipment. It has without doubt led to improved quality of teaching, improved quality of learning environments and improved academic attainment in many places. It has also brought about far-reaching changes in communities' commitment to education for all and improvements in the quality of the lives of many young people.

Note:

1 In the interests of clarification, it should be noted that the significance of a 12 months' period is that this is the period during which Final Reports in the BFSS new format were received. Final Reports arriving by 31st December (and in various instances before this) were included in the analysis. Some reports were relating to a one year grant and others to a longer period. For multiple year grants whose reports were received by 31st December, data for the final year were extracted in order to establish comparability of data over the period.

**Joy A. Palmer Cooper**

**APPENDIX 1:**  
**PROJECT LOCATIONS**

Afghanistan  
Burundi  
Brazil  
Cambodia  
Ethiopia (3)  
Gambia  
Ghana (3)  
Guatemala  
Israel  
Kenya (5)  
Nepal (3)  
Philippines  
India  
Siberia  
Uganda  
United Kingdom (3)  
Zambia (2)

**APPENDIX 2**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS are due to the 30 organisations whose Final Reports have been the subject of analysis for this document. These are:

Afghan Appeal Fund  
African Promise  
Baynards Zambia Trust  
The British Asian Trust  
The Butterfly Tree  
Challenge Aid  
Chhahari Schools UK  
Childreach Nepal  
Destiny Children  
Disability and Development Partners  
Dominase-Buriton Village to Village Group  
Education for the Children Foundation  
Exeter Ethiopia Link  
Fresh Start Foundation  
HealthProm  
Kajo Keji Educational Trust  
Link Ethiopia  
Lively Minds  
Mustard Seed Project  
Project Pencil Case  
Purple Community Fund (formerly The Philippine Community Fund)  
Resolve International  
The Sabre Charitable Trust  
St Paul's Community Development Trust  
Street Kids International UK  
Teens and Toddlers  
Tesco Development Trust  
United World Schools  
YMCA Manchester  
Youth Aliyah Child Rescue



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The BFSS's vision is educational opportunity for all. We believe in education as a driver for personal development and social improvement. Building on our heritage, we value effective teaching, commitment to learning and sharing of good practice. We are committed to inclusivity, integrity, tolerance and respect for others in everything we do.

We seek to achieve our vision by providing funding and support for educational projects in the UK and throughout the world.

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**British & Foreign School Society**

Maybrook House

Godstone Road

Caterham

Surrey CR3 6RE

[www.bfss.org.uk](http://www.bfss.org.uk)

Tel: 01883 331177

Email: [enquiries@bfss.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@bfss.org.uk)

Twitter: @BFSSCharity

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