

SCHOOL AID SHIPMENT TO LESOTHO Despatched 28 November 2013 (027LO.13)

REPORT ON STAGE 2 MONITORING & EVALUATION FEEDBACK



A teacher at Auray Primary School, in the mountainous district of Thaba Tseka, hands out School Aid books to her students.

INTRODUCTION

On 28 November 2013, in collaboration with Dolen Cymru, Sentebale and the Rotary Club of Maseru, School Aid's second consignment of educational resources was despatched to Lesotho.

The majority of the consignment consisted of reading, reference and textbooks, plus stationery, sports equipment such as tennis balls, and some warm clothing suitable for temperatures in Lesotho's mountain regions.

The resources were distributed among 36 recipient schools: 15 primary schools, 17 secondary schools, and four 'herd-boy' schools (small evening schools for shepherd boys who look after the family animals during the day).

During the summer and autumn of 2014, some six months after the books arrived in the schools, each recipient school was asked to complete a questionnaire about their use of School Aid resources. In addition, individual teachers and students in selected schools were interviewed to establish how the resources had affected their work and progress. Together, the questionnaire and the interviews form the second part of School Aid's three-part monitoring and evaluation process, which covers a period of 18 months following receipt of resources. This report is based on that feedback.

SCHOOL PROFILES

Between them, 33 of the 36 recipient schools are educating a total of 15,499 students, almost 20% more girls than boys. Almost a third of these students – 4,272 students at the time of application – have been designated as orphans or vulnerable children (OVCs).

The table below provides summary details of the number of students, teachers and classes:

Summary data of students, teachers and classes

	Total	Min/max	Average
No students	16613	37–1453	461
No girls	8981	94–838	249
No boys	7561	32–615	210
No teachers		3–46	15
No classes		1–21	9

OVERVIEW OF RESPONSES

Initial feedback from the schools indicated a positive response both from teachers and students. This stage 2 feedback confirms that initial response.

Stage 2 feedback was received from 75% of the recipient schools, representing 27 schools out of 36. Of those, the majority – 25 schools – noted that the standard of books received was suitable for their students, with two considering that they were suitable in part. Malefiloane Primary School commented that their books ‘are relevant and liked by both teachers and students’: one of many responses along these lines.

‘Children are exposed to things that are not available locally, hence create curiosity in their learnership.’ *Villa Maria Primary School*

LITERACY

Similarly, 24 out of the 27 respondents felt that the level of English matched the ability of the students, with the other three qualifying its suitability for just some of their learners.

Individual responses were almost universally positive. Villa Maria School reported that ‘since teaching of phonics, children are able to learn quickly and the education standard of students who were low performers has improved’.

In many cases, the style of books has made a difference to readers. In some cases, the impact of illustrated books has been marked. Two of the herd boy schools, which educate boys who spend their days looking after animals, commented that ‘it is easy for ... students to read as there are pictures in them’, while at Malefiloane Primary, ‘the stories help learners to become enthusiastic and eager to learn because some books capture their attention with pictures’.

Significantly, the attitude of Moyeni High School, whose ‘priority is to encourage students to adopt a reading culture’, is shared by other schools.

‘Our learners helped learners in nearby primary school to read and a trophy was awarded to such learners.’ *Mopholosi High School*

GENDER BENEFITS

Every school was asked if there had been any specific effects of the resources that were beneficial to boys or girls. Of the four possible responses (none, a few, some, a lot) the average was 'some', indicating a significant positive outcome.

For the girls, eleven schools commented on improvements in reading, speaking and English skills, while others noted 'significant strides in building interest in reading' and that 'social skill is built'.

'From different stories they read from the books, they [girls] get motivated and develop self esteem.' *Senkoase High School*

In one secondary school, the 'sports spirit' of boys is said to have improved since the resources were received. Another school, in the primary sector, notes 'behavioural change' among the boys; and a third that the boys are 'competitive towards the girls' and their level of education has improved. Two commented on the value of the resources as reference materials for the boys, and seven noted improved reading skills or interest in reading.

Several commented positively on the overall enjoyment of the resources, and the positive implications of this. At Waterfall Primary, the girls are able to 'read on their own and avoid a lot of peer pressure activities', while the boys 'are competitive towards the girls' and 'their level of education has improved'. At Moyeni High School, both boys and girls have been borrowing books to read in their spare time.

Quantitative data

Key

- 1 = none/not at all/no
- 2 = a little/a few
- 3 = often/many/quite a lot
- 4 = very frequently/most/a lot

Question	Average Response
Have there been any beneficial effects specific to girls?	3.2
Have there been any beneficial effects specific to boys?	3
Overall, what difference have the resources made to your teaching and learning?	4

TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

It is fundamental to the way in which School Aid works that resources benefit not just the students, but also their teachers. This in turn leads to greater motivation on the part of the teachers, and improvements in lesson quality.

The number of teachers using the resources varied, but all schools responded that at least a few were using them, and more than 50% considered that they were being used 'a lot'. The majority of schools, 17 out of 27, reported that teachers were using the resources in small groups, usually allocating one book per group, although there is also some whole-class teaching, and one or two are working with individual students.

Question	Average Response
How many teachers are using the resources?	3.4

Ten of the respondent schools stated that their teachers used the books for study or as reference material. In several schools a positive outcome was recorded. At Matsoaing Herd Boys School, 'the teachers improve teaching skills', and Malefiloane Primary School commented that 'teachers have shown improvement in maths, science, English'.

'Both teachers and students enjoy teaching and learning. Everything is interesting because learning is done in a more relaxed way.' *Waterfall Primary School*

LIBRARY FACILITIES

13 schools announced on initial receipt of resources that they would be setting up a library. For most of these, as well as those schools which already had a library, access is restricted to their own student and teaching body. Very few permitted access to other members of the community or other schools.

With just one exception, no students were permitted to take books home from the library. Respondents stated that this was largely because there were not enough books to go round and, as one put it, other students would suffer.



A new library for Hermitage Primary School

Quantitative data

Key

- 1 = none/not at all/no
- 2 = a little/a few
- 3 = often/many/quite a lot
- 4 = very frequently/most/a lot

Question	Average Response
How often do your students have access to the library?	2.7
Do other members of the community have access to your library?	0.1
Do other schools have access to your library?	0.2

TRUANCY

Twelve of the respondent schools reported a decrease in truancy since receipt of the resources. While it is difficult to assess whether there is a direct correlation here, the motivation of having good reading material is clearly making an impact. At Bothe Botha High School, a teacher commented that the resources 'secure the interest they get through reading'.

SUMMARY OF DATA FROM INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS

Teacher profiles

Responses were received from 11 teachers from a mix of primary, secondary and shepherd schools, most with at least five years experience in the school, and one with 20 years. All but one was a qualified teacher. Every teacher interviewed was aware that School Aid had donated resources to their school.

Benefits identified

Teachers were overwhelmingly positive about the resources received. In addition to reading development, they were finding them helpful as reference material for teaching and setting assignments. One teacher commented in particular that School Aid books were the first choice of pupils visiting the library. Most also considered that standard of English and suitability for the curriculum were acceptable.

Every teacher interviewed said that they would welcome sets of textbooks.

'They have proven more helpful in our daily teaching, especially after our textbooks were burned in the staffroom by rioting students. They have become our rescue.' *Head of English Department, Senkoase High School*

Quantitative data

Key

- 1 = none/not at all/no
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Question	Average Response
How often do you use the resources in the classroom?	3.6
What difference have the resources made to literacy?	3
What difference have the resources made to numeracy?	3.5

SUMMARY OF DATA FROM INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS

Student profiles

A total of 11 students were interviewed, again from a mix of schools. Most specified English as a favourite subject, but maths was also popular, along with individuals who mentioned commerce, science, geography and development studies.

The favourite subject was English followed by mathematics and science. Two specified that they would like to study law in the future, while others were considering development studies, nursing, the military and carpentry, as well as more general further education options.

Benefits identified

All except one of the students had noticed a change or new activities in their school in the last few months, most connecting this to improvements in English. A regular activity appears to be that the students read the books in groups, then present their reading or tell the stories to others. One student commented that since the resources arrived, 'competition among students is very high', and another that their school had 'managed to win the district debate and performed well in commercial fare competition'.

Quantitative data

Key

- 1 = none/not at all/no
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Question	Average Response
How have these resources affected your school?	3.2
How have resources affected you as a student?	3.5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It is clear from analysis of the questionnaires and individual interviews that the resources sent by School Aid are making a positive difference to both students and teachers. This ranges from educational improvements in areas such as literacy and numeracy to social effects, including self-esteem and morale. It also appears that the resources have instilled an element of competition among some students, both in school and in inter-school competitions.

It is gratifying to note that illustrations are a key factor in the enjoyment and usefulness of many books, a fact underlined by individual teachers and students as well as by those completing the overall questionnaire.

The comment from all teachers interviewed that they would welcome sets of textbooks should be borne in mind when planning future shipments to Lesotho.

The full set of responses to questionnaires and interviews is available at the School Aid office.

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