

SCHOOL AID SHIPMENT TO LESOTHO

Despatched 28 November 2013 (027LO.13)

REPORT ON STAGE 3 MONITORING & EVALUATION FEEDBACK

'This has been an outstanding gift.' *Head Master, St James High School*

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 of 2015, some 18 months after the books arrived in the schools, two of our partner organisations – Dolen Cymru and Sentebale – asked some of their nominated schools 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.

Responses to the questionnaires were received from a total of 12 schools. Of those, 14 also submitted an interview with a student, and six an interview with a teacher.

Together, the questionnaire and interviews form the third and final part of School Aid's monitoring and evaluation process (ME3). This report is based on that feedback.

SCHOOL PROFILES

The tables below provides summary details of the number of pupils, teachers and classes and class sizes for a) all 36 schools that received resources as part of this shipment, and b) those 17 schools that responded to all or part of the ME3 questionnaires and interviews.

a) Summary data of students, teachers and classes for all recipient schools

	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

b) Summary data of students, teachers and classes for schools participating in ME3

	Total	Min/max	Average
No students	8282	37–1453	461
No girls	4543	94–838	249
No boys	3743	32–615	210
No teachers		2–48	19
No classes		3–20	9

OVERVIEW OF RESPONSES

This final stage of feedback indicated a continuing positive response from both teachers and students, benefiting both whole classes and individual pupils.

'There was this one vulnerable student who had no book at all and was in Form C. He was helped by the resources to catch up every day after school and was able to pass with second class.' *Sekonyela High School*

USAGE OF RESOURCES

Almost all respondent schools reported that the resources were in frequent use, although one – Mokhotlong High School – stated that access was limited because the books are stored in a small office rather than a library.

Teachers across the age groups reported that School Aid resources were relevant, and accessible in terms of content. Eight schools considered that teachers were using them regularly, or 'all the time', both in lesson planning and in the classroom. In the classroom, some were used on a whole-class basis, some with individual pupils, and some in small groups.

Access to the books is key to their usage both for students and teachers, and libraries can play a key role. At St James High School, 'every student is allowed to borrow a book for two weeks'. At Mokhotlong High, however, there is no library, but the feedback is similar, whereas Seeiso High School limits use to the teachers, stating that 'for the books to last longer ... cannot share with students'.

Although some schools reported that they shared resources with the community, this was unusual; most reserve them for their own students and teachers. At St James High School, however, 'youth groups preparing themselves for external exams borrow books'.

'Teachers are using them as resources for teaching and preparing lessons, while learners borrow the books.' *Emmanuel High School*

Quantitative data

Question	Average Response*
What difference have resources made to teaching and learning in your school?	3.5

*See end report for key

BENEFIT OF RESOURCES

Benefits derived from use of the School Aid resources vary, but many schools noted that opportunities for individual research have contributed to an overall willingness to learn.

The availability of reference material where before this was insufficient was another plus. For 'challenging subjects' (maths, science and English) at Emmanuel High School, 'it is easy to access information and exercises for learners' activities', and as a result, there is 'no longer a phobia among learners' in relation to these subjects. They summarised by stating that 'we have seen a significant improvement' in these subjects.

Mapholaneng High commented on benefits across the board: ‘Fast learning students are advancing and slow learners seem to improve.’

Among the primary schools, the development of their learners’ English speaking’ was cited by Qacha’s Nek Government Primary School. Teachers at Malefiloane Primary say that ‘the colourful stories and useful information arouse learners’ interest’, as does the presence of pictures in books covering health and home economics.

‘Both science and development studies teachers and students have benefited a lot from GCSE science - comprehending global-warming issues... such that individual students were able to develop their own science projects in recycling, so as to reduce pollution (land and air).’
Seeiso High School

GENDER BENEFITS

Of the 8,282 students in schools that participated in this survey, it is interesting to note that more than half – around 55% - were girls. This is particularly noticeable in high schools, where girls outnumbered boys in all but one of the seven that participated.

All schools were asked if there had been any specific benefits of the resources to boys or girls. Of the four possible responses (none, a few, some, a lot), the average from the ten respondent schools was ‘some’, indicating a significant positive outcome.

However, most respondents pointed out that there was no gender bias in the resources, and that both boys and girls had benefited to similar levels.

‘They benefit as learners, not as a gender.’ *Emmanuel High School*

When asked if the achievement of girls had improved, the response was similar, although the average quantitative score dropped slightly to ‘a few’.

Quantitative data (10 respondents)

Question	Average response*
Have there been any beneficial effects specific to girls?	3.5
Have there been any beneficial effects specific to boys?	3.8
Higher achievement for girls	2.6

*See end report for key

TRUANCY

The impact of resources on truancy cannot be measured, but improvement in the quality of books appears to be improving motivation to attend school.

While most responses were positive, social concerns were also raised, leading to lack of motivation and/or attendance. Among these are the high number of students, ‘pregnancy and vulnerability’, difficulties of access to school, and lack of home supervision.

‘Love for the subject increased and the classes were attended regularly.’ *Qacha’s Nek High School*

SUMMARY OF DATA FROM INDIVIDUAL TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Teacher profiles

Interviews were conducted by Dolen Cymru with six primary-school teachers. Their experience varied from 2–5 years to up to 40 years. Every teacher interviewed was aware that School Aid had donated resources to their school.

Benefits identified

Teachers continued to be exceptionally positive about the resources received, and all said that they used them ‘a lot’.

With just one exception, the standard of English was considered to be appropriate. Most were judged suitable for the curriculum, and/or relevant to the children, and some were helpful with subject knowledge.

Both fiction and non-fiction books were in regular use. At Hermitage Primary, the learners have free choice of story books then share the stories, and there is also a reading club held for older classes. In many schools, older children are permitted to take books home overnight.

Generally teachers would like access to more workbooks for literacy and numeracy, as well as requesting rhymes and riddles.

‘We use them every day – easy reader and storybooks. Also science books.’ *Grade IV teacher, Phahameng Primary School*

Quantitative data (6 respondents)

Question	Average response*
What difference have the resources made to literacy?	3
What difference have the resources made to numeracy?	3
How often do you use the resources in the classroom?	4

*See end report for key

SUMMARY OF DATA FROM INDIVIDUAL STUDENT INTERVIEWS

Student profiles

A total of 14 students were interviewed, from eight primary schools, five secondary schools, and one shepherd school. Every student interviewed was aware of the resources from School Aid, and had used the books in some way.

Favourite subjects varied widely, but English featured prominently among all students, and maths/science subjects also popular. Aspirations to be teachers, doctors, nurses and soldiers were high on the list, but one student wished to be a poet or author, and another was a budding actress.

Benefits identified

All students interviewed had noticed a change or new activities in their school in the last two years, with almost all considering that they had affected the school ‘a lot’. Improvements in English were cited among high school students, along with a greater interest in reading, better performance, and an improvement in examination results.

There was a similarly positive response to the effect of the resources on the students as individuals. Secondary students appreciated in particular the opportunities for personal study, the value of illustrations, and the impact on their exam results.

'These resources, especially the books, have accelerated my English learning and its confident use. The pen falters at the attempt to describe my delight.' *Matsoso Telang, St James High School*

A perhaps unexpected but very pertinent benefit in a country with a high number of orphans was identified by a student at Mapholaneng High School, who commented that 'the story of the miserable mills taught us to care for and support each other when the parents do not exist any more'.

Younger children enjoyed the illustrations, too, along with favourite story books. They were also helped to broaden their horizons. At Malefiloane Primary, for example, one reader said that 'this [land travel] book helped me to know and see most of transport that are not used in my village, eg: ship, airplane and train'.

'[I enjoyed] the adventure of Princess Ariel because it was about my favourite things and I could understand it. I liked the pictures of the mermaids and the ships.' *Palesa Paneng, Qacha's Nek United Primary School*

Quantitative data (14 respondents)

Question	Average response*
How have these resources affected your school?	3.9
How have resources affected you as a student?	3.6

*See end report for key

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this final report on School Aid's 2013 shipment to Lesotho, it is gratifying to note that the resources sent to the schools are continuing to make their mark a full 18 months after they were received.

Alongside improvements in literacy and numeracy have come improved exam results in some schools, creating a boost in confidence and having a positive effect on attendance levels. That said, there are some schools where confidence is lacking, and – often for social reasons – teachers continue to struggle to motivate their students.

For the latest shipment to Lesotho, which was despatched from the School Aid warehouse in December 2015, our partner Sentebale will be revisiting the same schools as those targeted in 2013. This gives us a further opportunity to support these schools, and to assess over the coming months the impact of additional resources on these schools.

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

Tricia Hayne
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Key to quantitative data

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