

BFSS

BRITISH & FOREIGN SCHOOL SOCIETY
Educational Opportunity for All



THE IMPACT OF BRITISH AND FOREIGN SCHOOL SOCIETY GRANTS

Seventh report and analysis based on data received in 2021

2021 PROJECTS

BFSS Occasional Publication

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Foreword

It is my very great pleasure to introduce the seventh in our series of annual Impact Reports which this year takes on a new look. Whilst the format of the report may be different from that of the previous six years, the fundamental message conveyed remains the same: **our grant-holders do a truly amazing job of improving the lives and educational opportunities of countless young people around the globe.**

The report focuses on the 21 final reports from grant holders received in 2021, a number which is fewer than in the previous six years. That said, the amount of money distributed to the charities is higher than in previous years, and the overall impact on the lives of individual children, their teachers, families and communities is colossal.

The report eloquently describes the impact on young people and their education in 14 different countries of the world spanning four continents. The scope of impact covers construction projects, teacher training, equipment and resources, libraries, literacy and digital learning, vocational training, mentoring, trauma and behaviour management, and supporting families. Each element is described and well illustrated with case studies which truly bring to life the impact on such things as educational achievement and standards, on the quality of life and potential of individual recipients, on their families and on whole communities.

In last year's Impact Report, I commented on the devastating effects that the Covid-19 pandemic had had on the rollout of projects, causing disruption, delays, and cancellation of planned work. This year we read of the continuing pandemic story and of the immense dedication of grant-holders who have adapted or radically changed plans so they may continue to meet the needs of some of the world's most vulnerable young people. Success in the face of such adversity is remarkable.

As a whole, the report provides a wonderful summary and illumination of the outcome of our endeavours as a grant-giving charity. It is vehicle for the sharing of good practice and supports our goal of capacity building among our grant applicants and holders.

The thanks of us all in the Society are due to our Grants Manager, Ashley Kuchanny, who has this year reviewed and analysed the final reports and compiled this impressive overview. I know from the experience of having undertaken this task for the past six years just how incredibly time-consuming it is. Thanks are also due to members of our Grants Committee for their hard work serving as lead trustees on the applications and for contributing much to the Society's relationships with the charities who receive our grants; also to our professional staff for all of the ongoing work they do liaising with and supporting our charities.

Finally, I offer most sincere thanks on behalf of the Society to the charities themselves. This Impact Report demonstrates without doubt the dedication and hard work which contribute to the improvement of educational opportunity and quality of life of so many.

Professor Joy A. Palmer Cooper
Vice-Chair of Council and Chair of Grants Committee



Scope of 2021 impact report

The creativity, perseverance, and adaptability of so many BFSS-funded organisations working through incredibly turbulent environments continues to be inspiring. Their hard work and determination have meant that thousands of young people around the globe and in the UK have been given the best possible opportunities to succeed in life, despite the ongoing challenges of a global pandemic and worldwide school closures.

Every organisation receiving grant funding from BFSS is required to report on their progress, their spending, the challenges that they have faced and whether their intended outcomes and outputs have been achieved.

Each final report contains a range of quantitative measures such as direct and indirect beneficiaries, attainment levels and itemised contributions of buildings and resources. Statistical data can only ever provide a snapshot of success, and the richness often stems from the many stories of change in young people's lives and their communities. Not only does the final report establish the success of a project and provide accountability, it is also a critical time for reflection and learning both for the grant holder and BFSS.

This Impact Report is an overview of the impact of BFSS funded projects which were completed in 2021, taken from the data within their final year reports. 21 final reports were received in 2021, which is significantly less than in previous years¹. However, the total value of the grants that these final reports represent is £552,109, which is an increase on previous years' reports².

Although there were fewer reports to draw upon, it is clear from the many illustrations of success presented within them that BFSS grants have continued to enable many charities to have an incredible impact on the lives of vulnerable children and young people in the UK and internationally, as well as transforming families, education and social care professionals, and entire communities.

It is our hope that this Impact Report and the stories contained within will inspire organisations to continue to innovate and seek new approaches, encourage the many organisations and communities who have contributed to it, and provoke continued commitment to transforming the educational opportunities and lives of some of the most vulnerable young people, internationally and within the UK.

1. Total final reports submitted in previous years: (2020:30; 2019:25; 2018:33; 2017:36 2016:27.)

2. Total grant funding within previous five years of final reports: £488,869; £454,635; £516,216; £495,475; £451,153



Highlights of the year

21
COMPLETED PROJECTS

VALUE OF GRANTS:
£445,932
International

£106,177
UK

7
Projects constructed schools, classrooms
and gender appropriate hygiene facilities

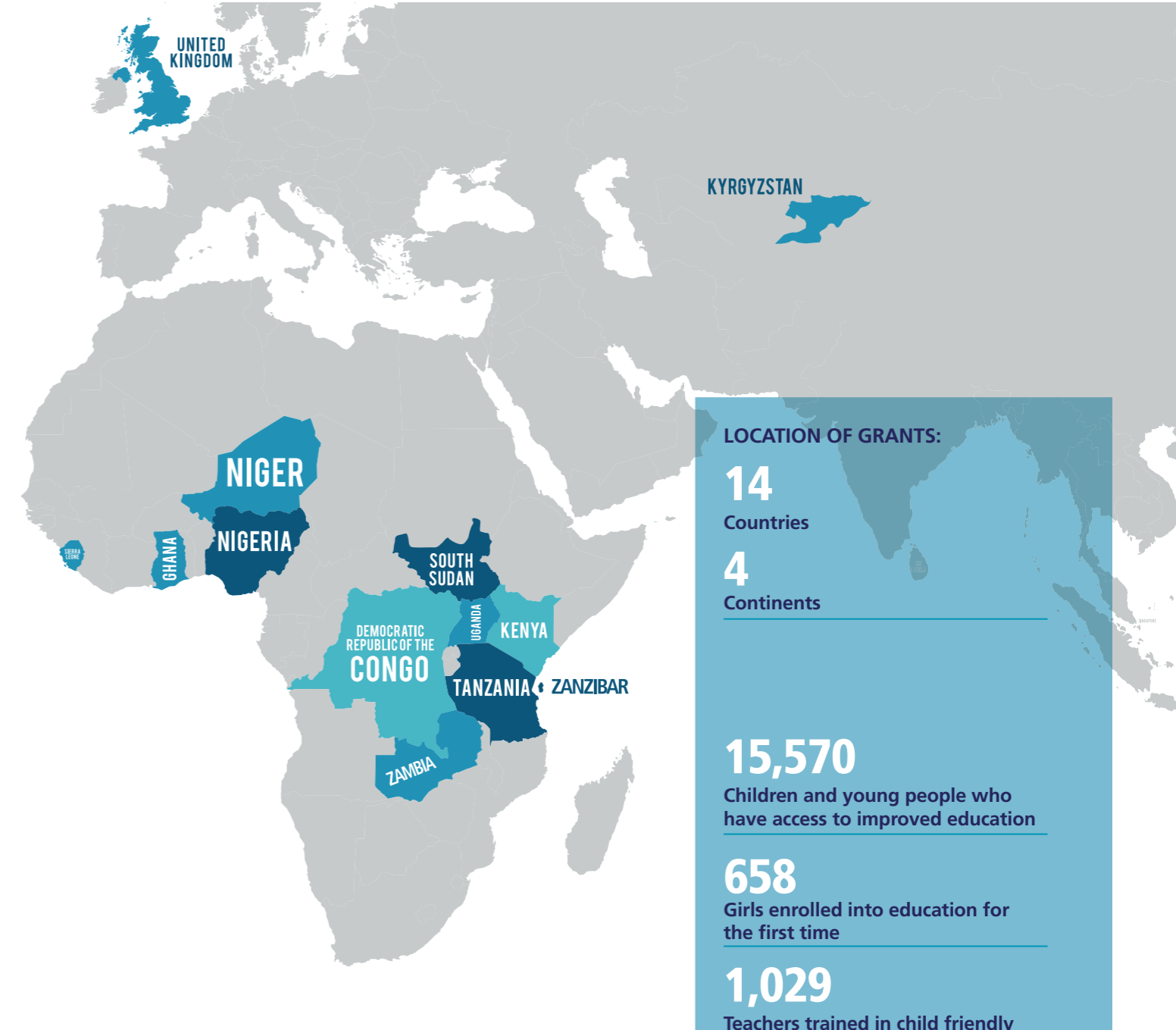
10
Projects focussed on teacher training

3
Projects supported care experienced
young people in the UK

300+
Schools supported



Locations of grants



LOCATION OF GRANTS:

14
Countries

4
Continents

15,570
Children and young people who
have access to improved education

658
Girls enrolled into education for
the first time

1,029
Teachers trained in child friendly
pedagogy, discrimination and
inclusion, or trauma awareness

42,201
Indirect beneficiaries such as siblings
and parents directly accounted for

Covid emergency support – impact

One of the greatest casualties of the Covid-19 pandemic is the education of children around the globe. Over 90% of the world's student population (1.5 billion children) have been affected by school closures³. In some areas, schools were closed for up to 20 months, with an estimated 168 million children having had their schools closed for more than a year⁴.

School closures have devastating consequences for children's learning and wellbeing; vulnerable children and those unable to access remote learning may never return to the classroom, and untold numbers of girls have been forced into child marriage.

BFSS responded by offering an additional package of Covid support to our grant holders in April 2020, which almost half of the organisations that submitted their final reports in 2021 had taken advantage of. The impact of this has now begun to emerge.

Three organisations received additional funding from BFSS. In London, one charity invested in a virtual platform which enabled young people with additional needs to continue to receive business mentoring and build positive relationships in a safe online environment.

3. www.unicef.org/press-releases/children-increased-risk-harm-online-during-global-covid-19-pandemic

4. www.unicef.org/press-releases/schools-more-168-million-children-globally-have-been-completely-closed



Team Kenya: Girls reading clubs meeting in safe, outdoor space to continue learning through Covid

One project from Uganda adapted its early years training model to an interactive radio broadcast rather than in-person teaching, enabling children to access learning whilst unable to physically attend their settings. This was a phenomenal success and had a far greater reach and impact than originally planned. In non-UK settings where furlough schemes were not available, additional funding for salaries also prevented the loss of highly valuable skilled teachers and staff, who otherwise would have had to seek alternative employment.

Four projects reallocated portions of their original budgets to adapt to the new landscape. One project in Kyrgyzstan, for example, reallocated funding that was intended for textbooks to mobile phones which enabled their students to access remote learning.

Seven organisations paused their BFSS funded projects in order to conserve funds whilst schools were closed, providing space to plan and adapt without the pressures of reporting and draining staff budgets.

Our grant holders have pivoted, adapted, paused and in some cases totally overhauled their plans to continue meeting the needs of some of the most vulnerable children around the globe, and their success and sacrifices have been utterly remarkable.

Case Study: Team Kenya

Team Kenya were one year into their project to improve literacy in remote areas of Kenya when the pandemic hit. In March 2020 schools were closed and remained shut until January 2021.

BFSS provided Team Kenya with a grant for additional resources to enable their librarians and peer mentors to run local tuition and reading clubs, setting up a number of safe spaces where children could meet librarians and borrow books.

Librarians also expanded the reading clubs to include girls in their final year of primary school. To help them improve their chances of success in graduating when exams resumed, they printed and marked practice exam test papers for them.

As a result, an astonishing 98.7% of the girls supported by the programme returned to schools when they reopened in January. Teachers report that these children had not lost ground and assessments for the final year pupils showed that despite nationwide school closures, the students maintained and in some cases even improved their results.

Due to the diligence of the project staff, 560 girls and 140 boys across 14 schools continued to benefit from literacy support and free access to books whilst the schools were closed.



Team Kenya: Students enjoying resources from mobile book boxes outside

FCDO support

In March 2021 the government reduced their commitment to aid spending from 0.7% to 0.5% of GDP and consequently cut or cancelled almost all UK aid funding streams. The impact to some of our grant holders was devastating, particularly as this included funding which was already committed. Contracts with local organisations had been signed, staff had been recruited, and local communities, schools and education authorities were expecting services to be delivered after many months of relationship building. Some organisations were given 90 days to terminate projects that were already well under way.

It became clear that this would have a huge impact, not just in terms of being able to deliver existing projects, but also the viability of organisations that rely on Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) funding for a significant portion of overheads and salary costs.

As the scale and impact of these cuts became clear, BFSS released emergency funding to help relieve some of the pressure on our affected grant holders whilst they urgently sought alternative funding. We provided £127,489 to ten eligible grant holders, supporting them to deliver on their existing commitments and enabling them to continue working in their respective areas.



Case Study: FCDO response

In Uganda, project plans for a new initiative were completed, skilled staff had been recruited and they were about to begin their project when they received notice that the FCDO was terminating their grant offer. This was compounded by the loss of further funding from an additional grant funder who had also been the subject of FCDO cuts.

Initially, the charity used some of its reserves to cover project staff salaries, but it was clear that this could not continue for long and staff costs would need to be reduced:

“Highly-trained staff members, if lost, are a huge loss to the organisation. This is because it takes up to three years to train new members of the team to the level we need to deliver quality projects with good outcomes for the teachers and children.”

BFSS provided a one-off grant of £10,000 to help retain staff members whilst the charity sought further funding.

These staff have already been instrumental in supporting the delivery of professional development sessions to teachers and assisting the District Education Department in encouraging children to return to their classrooms when schools reopened.

“After the first lockdown, there were hugely reduced numbers in the schools in which we work as children had not returned. Clearly this will impact heavily on their educational progress and long-term futures so this kind of work is essential in supporting the recovery of schools, teacher professional development and children’s learning.”

Whilst the funding environment remains highly competitive and the charity is yet to re-secure the full cost loss, BFSS is delighted that with the support of this additional funding, experienced staff were retained and could support children returning to school.



Staff Member supporting learning

Impact in numbers – International projects

16
FINAL REPORTS

VALUE OF GRANTS
£445,932

658
GIRLS ENROLLED INTO EDUCATION for the first time

14,875
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE who have access to improved education



- 792** Pre primary girls
- 866** Pre primary boys
- 7021** Primary and secondary education girls
- 6003** Primary and secondary education boys
- 114** Further education young women
- 79** Further education young men

LOCATION OF GRANTS:
13 COUNTRIES **3** CONTINENTS

Kyrgyzstan, Kenya, Honduras, Uganda x 3, Ghana, South Sudan, Nigeria, Sierra Leone x 2, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Zanzibar, Niger, Zambia

13,848
CHILDREN WHO HAVE DIRECTLY BENEFITTED from improved resources



CHILDREN WHO HAVE DIRECTLY BENEFITTED from improved resources

754
TEACHERS TRAINED from over 200 schools



41,801
INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES directly accounted for (in reality, probably twice this number at least)



3 BRAILLE MACHINES

58
New or repaired WHEELCHAIRS

48
LAPTOPS & COMPUTERS



500+
BOOKS



800+
DESKS & CHAIRS



1919
Young people enjoying EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES



1194 girls
725 boys

7 CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS directly benefitting **13,061** children



- 21** classrooms
- 13** toilets
- 3** teacher accommodation units
- 1** girls dormitory

Scope of international projects

10

Projects delivering teacher training

742

Teachers trained in child friendly teaching methodologies

656

Teachers trained in inclusive or non-discriminatory practices

200+

Schools received training and support in improved practices

Teacher training

Equipping teachers to provide child-friendly, enjoyable and inclusive education remains one of the most powerful tools in improving the educational outcomes of young people and ten final reports included this as a key part of their work.

Training around diversity and enabling children with additional needs to fully participate in education was a strong focus in the reports. As well as learning about different needs and how to support these within classrooms (including use of braille machines and mobility aids), teachers have learned how to adapt methods to include children with disabilities in sports and leisure times. Other reports focused on the importance of girls' rights in education settings and how to promote these within schools and local communities, and many reports included sensitisation for teachers on gender-based violence, early marriage, and the effect of menstruation on girls' education.

Teacher training in child friendly teaching methods included play-based learning, creating positive and engaging learning environments and positive behaviour management. Many reports showed the transformative effects of this on the educational outcomes of the young people being taught.

Case Study: Hope for children

Hope for Children developed a large-scale teacher training project in Northern Ghana to run as a three-year teacher training programme in 10 schools, in partnership with the Ghana Education Service. At their baseline, none of the teachers were using child-centred teaching methods.

The approach included an initial three-day teacher training for teachers and Ghana Education Service officers, in-school support and further training to embed learning. A training manual was developed that focussed on being culturally and contextually appropriate, and the training was augmented by appropriate teaching materials to support quality teaching. The results have been fantastic.



“Teachers have made active, positive changes in the way that they prepare and introduce lessons; the way that they prepare the learning environment; regular use of active learning activities; attention to the clarity of concepts and content they deliver; the range and type of teaching and learning resources used; inclusivity and gender responsiveness; and creating room for a shared evaluation of lessons with their pupils.” Hope for Children

Hope for Children Teacher Training.

Construction

2021 saw the completion of seven construction projects funded by BFSS. These included the construction of an entire primary school in the DRC, two classroom blocks for children previously studying in dilapidated conditions in Zambia and Uganda, a six-classroom school for child labourers in Sierra Leone, a girls dormitory in South Sudan and a solid perimeter wall that has made a series of scattered classrooms safe for students to study in without fear of harassment in Zanzibar.

Two projects focussed specifically on accessibility and inclusion; in Sierra Leone, the construction of a six classroom community school and latrines for 300 child labourers became the first school in the country to make disabled access a requirement to all spaces and activities. A three-classroom block in Uganda also focussed on this by installing ramps and grab handles throughout.



Signpost International – Low carbon, environmentally sensitive school building.

Case Study: Signpost International

In one of the poorest regions of Uganda, a community founded an informal school in 2013 within semi-permanent grass/timber structures. These were unsafe particularly during the rainy seasons, pupils sat on the floor or under trees when it was too hot, and students were missing more than one in five school days due to adverse weather.

Signpost International worked with the community to replace this with a three-classroom block to accommodate 180 pupils, including a library and study room for senior pupils. Classrooms were fully equipped with benches, desks, and blackboards and the library stocked with a wide range of books. The school was made accessible for children with disabilities throughout. In addition to the construction itself, they also introduced activities to improve the school experience of these young people including sport, drama, music, and raising awareness of child rights and protection.

This construction project has been especially notable because of its focus on the environment from the outset. Not only did they carefully consider resources to have minimum effect, using locally made burnt bricks and timber from sustainably managed local forest, BFSS also provided funding to invest in a carbon offsetting scheme to counter the carbon footprint of the project.

Classroom related equipment and resources

Improving learning environments, access to child-appropriate learning equipment and teaching resources continues to be a key feature of BFSS funding. Reports do not always quantify the exact numbers of resources procured therefore it is difficult to estimate the true scale of this, but the volume is significant.

In Kenya, a mobile literacy programme was equipped with more than 4,000 books and mobile book boxes to provide literacy support across a district. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 350 children now have desks and chairs that are fit for purpose. In South Sudan, girls at a secondary school have been provided

with 25 laptops and 380 books. In Kyrgyzstan, after school clubs were provided with eight computers, a camcorder and smart phones so that children could access remote learning. In Tanzania, three classrooms were furnished with desks and chairs and in Uganda a library and study space was furnished with cupboards, shelving, chairs and desks and 240 books.

Over 50 ramps were fitted against 22 school structures in 12 schools and 20 pit latrines modified to make them accessible for children with disabilities. In addition to this, many items of sports equipment, colourful learning charts, blackboards, teaching aids, storage shelves and cupboards and other child friendly, creative resources have been provided around the globe.

Case Study: International Needs

In Uganda, International Needs completed a project to promote disability inclusion in 40 schools across two districts. This project included training in inclusivity, identifying children's needs and providing resources and accessibility facilities.

18 partner schools were equipped and provided with training on using learning aids including braille machines, braille paper, building blocks,

sign language charts and manuals, puzzles and a wide range of other learning resources and sports equipment. 40 children received new wheelchairs and 18 had wheelchairs repaired, enabling them to access classrooms with their peers.

By equipping classrooms and libraries with these resources and providing guidance to staff in creating child and disability friendly learning spaces, 350 children with disabilities now have access to improved learning environments.

"The school learning environment is now conducive for children with disabilities, and they have hope for a bright future."

Headteacher, project school in Uganda.

5,000+
Books

800+
Desk and chairs

48
Laptops/computers

58
Wheelchairs

3
Braille machines

9
Cartons of braille papers

13
Solar panels



International Needs - promoting inclusion for children of all abilities



Erayim Trust - IT suite for children of internal migrants in Kyrgyzstan

Libraries, literacy and digital learning

Out of school and digital support has never been more relevant, with many children's only option of accessing any form of education during the pandemic being through remote learning. Whilst many reports feature literacy or IT support in some way, this has been a key theme for six of our projects this year.

In Nigeria, a new reference library was established and provisioned with 300 books. A library was created in Kenya to provide resources and learning support across 14 local schools. In Kyrgyzstan, children of internal migrants who live in the makeshift camps were provided with a small IT suite and a full time IT teacher. 196 students accessed these after school clubs, with each child receiving three after school lessons a week in English and IT. Two projects also established IT centres within schools with trained teachers, enabling students to study for IT exams and learn crucial ICT skills for the future.

Case Study: Team Kenya

Team Kenya established a Learning and Resource centre within a government building in the centre of town, which 700 students across 14 schools could easily access this to participate in reading clubs, debating clubs and additional tuition. This also became a centre where teachers across the schools could meet and receive training. When Covid forced its closure, staff took these resources out to communities where they established safe spaces for children to borrow books and receive support.

Vocational Training

Equipping young people with the skills to transition from formal education into sustainable and progressive livelihoods has been the primary feature of two reports this year, one focussing on IT based vocational training for young people and the other delivering classes in business management to secondary school students.

In Sierra Leone, Feed the Minds established an ICT suite within its existing vocational training centre in order to integrate IT skills into its programmes. This upgrade to the centre has enabled 193 young people to complete a 12-month ICT based vocational training course providing them with skills for progressive job opportunities. Access to the internet has enabled them to find job-related information and many have created their own marketing pages and adverts online as part of their business plans. Another 140 young people from the community have also accessed the centre to develop ICT skills and access the internet to build businesses, find resources and search for jobs.

In Honduras, Teach a Man to Fish supported 560 students and 66 teachers to run student-led school businesses which are both profitable and educational. Students learnt practical business and workplace skills whilst also generating extra income for their schools. Students learnt how to conduct a resources assessment and market research, submitted business plans and were supported to set up and run their businesses.



Teach a Man to Fish: Student-led school businesses

Impact of international projects

The final reports demonstrate how widespread and varied the impact of these projects have been. There have been direct improvements in educational attainment and standards, and inclusive and safe learning environments. There are clear improvements in quality of life, such as the inclusion of girls and children with disabilities, improved health, and better opportunities for parents and carers to seek sustainable incomes.

In some cases, it is no exaggeration to say that whole communities have been transformed, including ending the practice of children working in quarries, the total eradication of child marriage within one community, and even an entire community of slave descent reshaping their whole identity and future narrative.

Educational Standards and levels of attainment

Skilled teachers, safe and comfortable learning environments and appropriate learning and teaching resources have led to significant improvements in the levels of attainment and educational standards. Statistical evidence from the final reports includes clear improvements in enrolment, attendance and pass rates. Examples include:

19%

Increase in enrolment of children with disabilities (Uganda)

51% to 90%

Improvement in children's attendance rate (Niger)

82%

Increase in teachers using child friendly teaching pedagogy (Ghana)

"At supported schools, the rate of completion of the programme is 70-80%. At non-supported schools, this rate is 40-58%... The pedagogical support has improved the teaching and the bonuses have meant that teachers do not participate in strikes... The learning level of pupils is highly satisfactory"

Statement from the Primary Education Inspector (Niger, teacher and community rights based training)

Of course, many changes simply cannot be quantified, such as confidence in reading, motivations to learn, a deeper understanding of the individual needs of a child and fostering a love of literature. Examples from the final reports include:

"One girl wrote that she now reads both for pleasure and knowledge. Her teachers report that her communication skills have benefited, and the tuition and tests have helped improve her performance in class. Teachers report increased confidence in reading, improved oral skills, good motivation and greater enjoyment of learning due to the reading programme."

(Kenya, literacy report programme)

"The training and support provided to the teaching staff has, according to them, increased their confidence and soft skills, to not just teach the children but to 'meet them where they are', recognising individual needs."

(Uganda, construction and teacher training)

95%+

Attendance rates (DRC)

100%

Of children re-enrolling after Covid school closures (Ghana)

90%

Of children achieved a pass. Record number of children completed secondary education. "For a long-term under-performing school, this is a remarkable turnaround." (Niger)

Case Study: Redearth

In Uganda, Redearth aimed to transform early years provision through the professional development of teachers from 40 nursery settings. This developed over the course of the pandemic into radio broadcasted early years lessons. The impact has been phenomenal, both in terms of quantifiable measures such as phonics knowledge, language development and increased enrolment, but also in terms of social skills and enjoyment of learning:

"Due to improvements in teaching children were showing much greater levels of enjoyment and engagement with the activities provided by their teachers. They were observed to be increasing their social interaction skills and their confidence. Children's knowledge of letter sounds doubled in the first year of the project. Parents reported their children being keen to attend nursery school and pupil numbers in these schools greatly increased, increasing overall numbers of nursery boys and girls attending school."

Director, Redearth



Redearth – child listening to early years education through the radio during school closures in Uganda

Quality of learning environment

The impact of improvements to schools and provision of resources cannot be overstated, from affecting children's ability to learn and their enjoyment of their education experience to teachers' stress and motivation levels. Children learning in inappropriate structures often miss school when the weather is adverse and the lack of sanitation facilities particularly affects girl's attendance, as well as increasing health related absences such as diarrhoea and vomiting.

In the DRC, new classrooms and furnishings to replace a school that was so poorly constructed that it needed to be rebuilt every two years has led to an increase in attendance rates of more than 95%. Teachers reported that children are more motivated to attend and more focused during lessons.

Buildings and resources have little value however without skilled staff, and high rates of teacher turnover remain one of the biggest challenges

to rural and under resourced schools. These reports have demonstrated that improved learning environments have also led to significant improvements in teacher's morale and confidence; in one project two experienced teachers who were thinking of leaving the area to seek employment in the city have now changed their mind.

In Tanzania, teachers have described that improved class sizes have meant a 95% decrease in their stress levels at work - to the extent that all six teachers have been retained, a remarkable achievement in an area with historically very high turnover rates. The teachers have also reported that students' participation in class has improved, as has their enjoyment and confidence in class.

Increased use of child centred pedagogy and positive discipline methods have also made enormous differences in the quality of learning environment, enabling children to learn in a safe and enjoyable environment that fosters a love of learning.



Team Kenya: Students studying in their new Learning and Resource Centre

Case Study: Signpost International

Signpost International replaced a rundown, dilapidated school with an environmentally conscious three-classroom block with disabled access. This has had a profound effect on the children, teachers and parents alike, as detailed on page 17.

"To say that the project has sown the seeds to radically transform the community is not hyperbole. For eight years pupils have sat on the ground under trees and in makeshift thatch structures for their lessons, with students missing an average of 40 days annually through adverse weather (more than a fifth of school days). Teachers, pupils, and parents alike struggled motivationally under these conditions, stalling enrolment numbers, and leading to poor completion rates. These high-quality structures have provided much-needed confidence, encouraging strong attendance rates from the upper primary classes able to attend regularly since early 2021."

CEP, Signpost International.



Signpost International: Staff and community receiving sports equipment and resources at their newly constructed school

Impact on wider community

Wider community benefits

Many projects have become community hubs by opening their schools or services after hours to run activities including adult literacy classes, women's sewing groups, women's support groups and access to IT facilities. In Nigeria, young adults make regular use of the IT centre after school hours and are gaining IT skills for the first time. Some have begun studying for IT exams, many are learning software courses, and one young person has started learning French for beginners.



Hope for children – Secondary school girls develop community action plans

A common thread through the years has been the significant impact on parents and carers to work and enter gainful employment when their children are in regular education. This year's reports included 85 caregivers of children with disabilities were supported to engage in flexible income generating activities that worked around the additional needs of their children. In Honduras, there is evidence that 1,160 wider family members now have practical skills in business record keeping and other practical skills which have already improved their family businesses.

Projects often also have quite unexpected wider impacts. In Sierra Leone, parents of young people attending a vocational training centre reported that they believed the project was leading to a reduction in the high crime rates across their city, with young people avoiding negative behaviours and no longer disturbing civil order.

A shift in community attitudes and values towards education

Transformations in community attitudes towards education were most obviously evidenced through significantly increased enrolment rates of working children, girls and children with disabilities. It is also evident more subtly too, such as parents of pupils paying school fees on time and citing increased confidence in the safety and learning opportunities at the school, and parents actively participating and asking what they could do to help support the education of their pre-school children at home.

A shift in community attitudes towards women and girls

The impact of these projects on women and girls goes far beyond their education, with final reports also demonstrating enormous progress in women in leadership, attitudes towards women in business and the eradication of early marriage.

In Niger, three communities have expressed serious commitment towards the systemic abandonment of the practice of child marriage, and as a result no cases of early marriage had been registered in any of the three communities this year which is a phenomenal achievement.

There has been an increase in women in leadership positions, holding senior roles in school management committees and other community structures, and women holding their local governance structures to account by advocating for health centres and land regeneration projects. Increased awareness of the ability and power of women to be successful in the workplaces has come both from young women themselves and from their family members: One student in Honduras stated:

"I think it is very important that we as women get to be recognized for being successful entrepreneurs in fields that for years have been dominated by males. Women also have the capability and even the talent to do it better, because gender doesn't define our talent, disposition, or capacity."



Hope for Children: women in the community being supported with teaching in financial literacy

Case Study: Anti-Slavery International

An incredible project in rural Niger, led by Anti-Slavery International, aimed to improve the education of 300 children of slave descent by focussing on intensively educating adults in the community about racial justice and girl's education in a community where slaves are often taught that education is forbidden and girls often marry very young. The results have been astounding.

As a direct result of the inter-community meetings, five new communities of slave descent have established themselves independently away from their traditional masters. There are more than 6,000 people who have taken the brave step of emancipating themselves to set up new villages where they can live in freedom.

The project's long-term success depends on communities' continuous enjoyment of life outside of slave-owners' control, and their self-perception as citizens entitled to equal rights. To this end, Anti-Slavery International are focussing on increasing access to education, raising awareness on gender equality, democratic processes, child participation and deconstructing harmful systems.

"This learning is embedding; pupils and adults speak with pride of children's education, professional ambitions, and women's leadership and influence. The radical change in communities' cultural behaviour is best evidenced in their proud and determined participation in inter-community meetings during which they deconstruct the ideology of slavery and describe the liberties they enjoy." Anti-Slavery International

Quality of life

Vulnerable young people (children with disabilities, girls and working children)

Almost all the reports focus in some way on levelling the playing field for particularly marginalised young people. There are a numerous example of girls being able to access education and advocate for their own rights, and two projects focussed on transforming the lives of children with disabilities.

Another theme from this year's reports has been the determination of organisations to lobby and work with government structures to abolish harmful practices. In one area of Uganda, parents have been supported to lobby their local district councillor to challenge the common cultural practice of parents selling their young daughters for cows and in Sierra Leone they have successfully advocated for law change, making it now unlawful for children to work in quarries.

Case Study: Practical Tool Initiative

In Sierra Leone, Practical Tools Initiative constructed a community school to reach child labourers involved in stone-breaking for the building industry in the city. Children as young as five were spending as much as nine hours a day collecting and breaking stones, at risk of appalling injury.

Practical Tools Initiative has been advocating at high levels against this common practice and as a result of its close working partnership with the Ministry of Social Welfare, the government have now made it unlawful for children to work in quarries. This is another phenomenal accomplishment and has seen immediate results; combined with significant levels of community based education many parents have now stopped taking their children to work on stone breaking sites, and are instead sending them to school.

Case Study: International needs

A sports festival in Uganda showcased the abilities of children with disabilities who took part in games, sports and play alongside their school peers. This focus on increasing the inclusion and self-worth of these children has led to an increase in their confidence from 48% at the baseline to 82% at the end, a fantastic achievement. Taken as part of a wider project run by International Needs to improve disability inclusion in 40 schools, this has led to a significant shift in attitude with many schools continuing to develop their inclusive policies so that children with disabilities are included.

Health-related benefits

Improved community and child health has been a wonderful additional impact seen in the final reports. Several school buildings were used as a hub for immunisations, nutrition awareness campaigns and to vaccinate children against polio, meningitis and TB. In Sierra Leone, an unintended impact of their ICT centre was the ability of their team to educate the young people on Covid and the health practises and protocols which could keep them and their families safe.

Social skills and life confidence

It is almost impossible to measure the transformations in pride and self confidence that so many young people and their communities experience. In the DRC, the construction of a primary school was reported to have been a huge boost to the sense of pride in the local community, and reviving hope that their area might improve and see development. There were young people with promising futures who were planning to migrate to bigger cities but are now reconsidering this. Many parents have increased confidence and optimism for their children's futures, and we have already mentioned the increase in confidence of so many teachers. These final reports give a strong sense of how confidence and optimism in the future can transform communities and the wellbeing of children within them.



Hope for Children – Girls right's club

UK projects

Five of the final reports in 2021 are from BFSS funded projects in the UK. It has long been a priority of BFSS to focus on children who have experienced care* and these young people feature regularly in these reports, with two projects aimed exclusively towards them.

There is a wide range in the scope of projects, with activities ranging from employability skills for teenagers with special educational needs to a forest school programme designed specifically for children struggling to cope with mainstream education. The main themes found in the 2021 final reports can be broadly categorized into three areas: mentorship, training the education sector, and supporting families.

*Note: Since 2021, all new grant applications for UK funding must focus exclusively on improving educational outcomes or improving life chances for children who have experienced care or who are young carers.

695 **YOUNG PEOPLE**
have received mentorship



172 
CARE EXPERIENCED
young people supported

 **24**
WORKSHOPS
delivered to professionals or families

 **53**
VOLUNTEERS providing services to
vulnerable children and young people

221 
FAMILIES DIRECTLY
RECEIVING ADVICE
and training to support their children

275 
TEACHERS TRAINED
in effects of trauma and behaviour
management/coping strategies


102
SCHOOLS
TRAINED

3210 
HOME
SUPPORT VISITS



Scope of UK projects

Mentoring young people

Building a relationship with a trusted adult can help vulnerable young people to make sense of traumatic events and help them to navigate complex emotions, behaviours, and consequent mental health issues.

Three of the final reports focussed on this.

In Tower Hamlets, 608 young people with special educational needs and disabilities were given key skills for employability through corporate volunteer mentors from local businesses supporting them in skills such as CV writing and interview techniques.

In deprived areas of Hampshire and Southampton, 14 young people aged 11-16 who were either school refusers or who displayed complex behaviours that

could not be managed in school were given intensive one to one support to help manage their anxieties and behavioural issues. These sessions helped young people with coping strategies and worked with schools to agree a safe 'cooling off' space where young people could go and then return to classes without repercussions. Once trust had been established, mentors worked with them to focus on wellbeing, aspirations and resilience, and the impact of risky behaviours.

Case Study: Scotswood Natural Community Garden

Scotswood Natural Community Garden has developed a unique approach to forest schools that supports young people struggling to engage in mainstream education. These children can struggle with social interactions, stress and anxiety and find it hard to process and make sense of what has happened or is happening to them.

There are several key principles which guide the success of this approach. Firstly, the children and young people decide how they spend their time, with adults in a supportive role. They found that a higher staff ratio of one adult to two or three children leads to a bigger impact on the young people. This enables them to support young people through challenges and enables adults to focus on supporting the young people to actively practice skills like perseverance, emotional regulation, empathy and compromise.

Enabling the young people to achieve positive outcomes for themselves contributes to the development of a positive self-narrative. Creating a fun, supportive environment and providing young people with exciting, achievable tasks allows them to succeed and build confidence, and develop new skills which support their learning back in the classroom.

This project supported weekly sessions for 73 children and young people (15 of whom were either in or had experienced care).



Scotswood Natural Community Garden: pupils develop confidence at forest schools

Trauma and behaviour management training for the education sector

Training education professionals and supporting schools to understand the impact of trauma and how this affects children's ability to learn and manage behaviours was a key element within three of the UK reports.

In Hampshire, young people were acknowledged as the experts in their own experiences and were supported to train education professionals themselves by developing and delivering two youth conferences on alcohol abuse and mental health, giving teachers and parents the opportunity to learn from their perspective.

Supporting parents and families

Many of the issues that prevent young people from engaging in education successfully stem from their family situations, and this was the focus of two final reports.

In one setting, vulnerable families with pre-schoolers who were not taking up their free nursery places were supported by trained volunteers who regularly met with parents, providing early years books and learning aids, and actively demonstrating how to read to young

children and support play. In total, 3,210 visits were made to 62 families who needed additional support.

In London, 152 adopted children and their parents were given direct support, often in the family home. The focus for parents in particular was on empowering them to make proactive education decisions and achieve positive school experiences.

They were also supported with 'virtual transition meetings', providing a link between the adopted children, supporting families and the new schools.

Case Study: Parents and Children Together

Parents and Children Together (PACT) completed a project to reduce discrimination and improve the educational attainment of adopted children by delivering training, advice and strategies to schools and adopting families.

Through this, 227 teachers were trained through tailored face-to-face training as well as multi-school webinars. Training sessions included understanding attachment and developmental trauma, SEND support, Behaviour Policy advice, facilitating transition planning and coping mechanisms in the classroom.

Alongside this, PACT created an Adopter Hub digital platform for education professionals, social workers and adoptive families to share experiences and learning with each other. They have already delivered 23 education-themed webinars and have more than 900 users sharing knowledge and experience with each other.



Impact of UK projects

A major theme from the UK reports has been the impact on young people with challenging behaviour. Reports demonstrate direct improvements in attendance, concentration, and ability of children to manage their behaviours and re-engage in lessons.

Teaching professionals report feeling more equipped with coping strategies and knowledgeable about the root causes. The effect on young people's confidence and wellbeing cannot be underestimated, and these reports demonstrate transformations in these and the subsequent wider impacts on their families.

Improvements in educational outcomes

Training staff and bringing students and educators together to agree positive coping strategies has been transformational in the educational experience of some young people, with many reports including statistical evidence of improvements in attendance, concentration, and reduction in disruptive behaviour in schools.

In Newcastle, five schools reported that attendance was better for many of the young people on the days when they had forest schools. This was backed up by a number of parent interviews, with one parent sharing: "I have no doubt that without Forest School, it would be a real struggle to get X into school at all".

Helping young people with coping strategies such as agreeing a cooling off space where they could go and then return to classes without repercussions had enormous impact. For two young people in Hampshire, this meant that they were then able to remain in class or return to a lesson after cooling off which was a huge accomplishment for them.

Whilst hard to quantify, the reduction in angry outbursts and disruptive behaviour in young people is well documented within the reports:

"Staff have all reported that behaviour of students for the day after we teach is always improved... In the words of one of the teachers, 'whatever that x-factor you have that makes the kids open up to and relate to you I wish we could bottle it!'"

Case Study: Family Lives

A project that worked directly with vulnerable parents of very young children in their own homes showed clear improvements in early years development. Support workers modelled simple play-based behaviours to support language and development, embedding these into their daily routines and lives.

All parents interviewed were able to identify at least three changes in their child, with their final evaluation showing a significant increase in independence, social cooperation, task orientation, cognitive ability and emotional stability of the children who participated in the project.



Family Lives – Family and Child Support.

Direct impacts:

- Increase in parenting consistency, affection and responsiveness to the child
- Ability to cope with frustration
- Ability to try again without getting upset
- Increased time that parents spent interacting with their child
- Ability to sit and engage in activities
- Using more words to communicate
- Increased parental knowledge of how to encourage positive behaviour in child
- Increased ability to interact positively with a new adult
- Showing interest and enjoyment of books

"These are children that are just saying a very few, simple words. A volunteer last week had just had a session with a boy and he said his first sentence. The volunteer and the mum just looked at each other in excitement and then started clapping, and then the child started clapping because the parent and the volunteer were clapping, and they were both really excited."

Coordinator, Family Lives

Improvements in quality of life

Young people's mental health, their overall enjoyment of life, their aspirations and confidence to explore new opportunities are directly linked to their confidence and self-esteem. Several reports highlighted the effect of their work on these areas in young people's lives.

Additional reported benefits to young people

- Improved friendships
- Calmer at home
- Calmer in school
- Sense of pride
- Better relationships with teacher staff
- Improved attitude towards school
- Better resilience

Improvements in self-confidence and aspirations were evident in Tower Hamlets, where over 90% of 200 SEND students said that they had built positive new relationships and belief in themselves, and 90% reported improvements on skills and attitudes needed to be successful in the workplace.

In one report, a teacher described the changes that she observed:

"I see children run and play who would not usually do so. I see children interact with others and make new friends, share experiences, support each other and depend on each other... I still see children in school talking with the friends they made during Forest School and we will often recount activities and memories of successes and failures"

Teacher, Newcastle.

In Newcastle, one parent described how the project had raised her daughter's self-esteem:

"Her self-esteem was at rock bottom. Now she knows she is able to achieve and successfully manage relationships. She is proud of what she learns and makes, which is so lovely to see. Her teacher has also commented that X is happier and more confident in school."

Impact on the professional community

Working with educational professionals to increase their knowledge and provide tools to work with children who have experienced trauma continues to be a major theme of UK projects, and many reports discuss the impact of this not just on young people but on professionals as well:

"Some of my children and their behaviours make much more sense and I feel better equipped to support them now." "Great and valuable resources for me as a teacher to take back to the class."

Results from impact of teacher training on children who have been adopted:

- Increased confidence working with behaviours
- Increased ability to help and supported adopted children to regulate and understand their emotions
- Developed own expertise and knowledge

The impact on this goes far beyond the targeted child. A more relaxed and calmer child vastly improves the quality of life for all other children and adults in the household, with reduced levels of stress, improved ability to work or study at home, and increased enjoyment of life. Young people who have better understanding of risky behaviours and improved coping strategies for managing their emotions has significantly improved parent-child relationships.

This was clearly demonstrated in one report where improved parenting techniques transformed the relationship between two siblings, hopefully laying the building blocks for a future of strong, resilient relationships:

"Because of her big brother, my daughter is now also active as well. She is going to benefit as well. Look at her! She is also so involved with the session. And our son is more friendly with our daughter now. His habits have moved, you know? Before he didn't like his sister. Now, as you see, they are sitting together. He is feeling very changed. They are playing together really nicely, aren't they!"

Impact on Families

The impact on wider families is hard to quantify but comes through clearly in the reports, with calmer, more confident and happier children affecting entire households. Family members of young people attending the Forest School project reported that children were calmer at home on the days when they had engaged with the project:

"On the Forest School day, there are no problems getting her up, dressed and out of the house (totally different to other days!) and she is noticeably much calmer, more relaxed and more playful in the evenings."



Scotswood Natural Community Garden: Building confidence and resilience through outdoor activities



Solent Youth Action – young people learning about risky behaviours.

Sustainability

The long-term success of any project relies on detailed planning during project conception to ensure built in sustainability. Many final reports highlighted their work on this, through forming strong working relationships and partnerships, utilising their facilities to generate ongoing income and ensuring that communities genuinely participate and have ownership of the projects.

Government and agency partnerships

Six reports detail how charities forged excellent working relationships with local authorities or agencies. In Honduras, the Ministry of Education has incorporated much of the project's learning into their own curriculum, and in Ghana the education authorities have adopted their teacher training manual as their own handbook for teacher's professional development. Another report demonstrated how the district education department had drawn lessons from their work to inform some of their own actions in disability inclusion. In several construction projects local authorities committed supplying and funding trained teachers and assumed responsibility for the facilities.

In the UK, one report detailed how their model led to new links with regional adoption agencies which resulted in wider training and support delivered virtually, significantly increasing the number of teachers and families they were able to reach.

Case Study: Hope for Children

Hope for Children actively consulted and heavily involved the Ghana Education Service (GES) in the development of their teaching training manual. As result, the GES saw the manual as their own and started using it to support the teachers.

"Not only does this contribute to the sustainability of the project with the GES and headteachers continuing to use the manual for professional development training, but it has also raised the profile of these schools to GES. Consequently GES are paying greater attention to supervision, teacher rotation, and to timely support for classroom needs such as equipment and building repairs."

This is an excellent example of how mutual working relationships with government authorities can enhance a project. As a result of their ongoing relationship, more teachers than anticipated were reached despite the school closures thanks to the government helping to facilitate this.



Hope for Children – teacher training

Self-generating income

There has been a wide and innovative range of activities to secure ongoing revenue throughout the projects. An online tool from a UK report provided education toolkits that were freely available to families or school partners, but added a menu of wider support services for schools which require a fee paying subscription to access. Two projects capitalised on their enhanced IT facilities by offering services such as printing and internet access to local businesses, and a low-cost membership fee for the wider community. Two projects report utilising school grounds to create income, including introducing a school farm and a fruit tree orchard and planting trees to provide future timber income. In Honduras, 100% of the 33 school business teams generated profit and these will be used to keep the projects running for future cohorts.

Community ownership

School management committees continue to be an effective tool, with groups of local women and men committing to the maintenance of facilities and resources and raising funds locally for their upkeep. These groups are also powerful ambassadors in their communities, advocating particularly for girls and children with disabilities' right to education. Enabling schools to take ownership of initiatives is an equally powerful tool. In the UK, one report detailed how they trained staff from the schools they were working in alongside their own delivery of the project to young people, so that they could continue to deliver specialist support when the project ended. With the skills now in-house, the management of each of these schools have committed to continuing to deliver this.

Using locally available resources

As organisations become more environmentally aware, many are turning increasingly to local resources. In one report, 68% of the resources across 18 schools are now made from locally available, low cost materials after training teachers in how to use these to make sports equipment and learning aids. Several constructions projects chose to make their own bricks, sourced timber from sustainably managed local forests and gave additional consideration of siting to minimise impact on natural habitats. These choices minimise the environmental and financial impacts.



Redearth A Playhouse made entirely from locally available resources

Appendix

Acknowledgements are due to the organisations whose final reports have been the subject of analysis for this publication. Whilst BFSS has supported them with funding, it is their hard work, creativity and commitment to working with communities and young people which has enabled the transformational change in the lives of so many young people that has been demonstrated in this report.

They are:

- Anti-Slavery International
- Baynards Trust Zambia
- Entraide
- Family Lives
- Feed the Minds
- Friends of Ibba
- Hope for Children
- International Needs
- J8
- Made with Hope
- Parents and Children Together
- Practical Tools
- Rural African Childrens Education Trust
- Redearth
- Scotswood Natural Community Gardens
- Signpost International
- Solent Youth Action
- Teach a Man to Fish
- Team Kenya
- The Erayim Trust
- Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership



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British & Foreign School Society

7-14 Great Dover Street

London

SE1 4YR

Web: www.bfss.org.uk

Tel: 020 7922 7814

Email: grants@bfss.org.uk

Twitter: @BFSSCharity

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