



Final report

British and Foreign School Society Grant

Amount: £3,915

Objective: The development of a Library inclusive of furniture and books at Saria Primary School

Location: Basona Worena woreda, North Shoa Zone of the Amhara National Regional State, 130 kilometres north of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Beneficiaries: Four hundred and fifty pupils, five teachers, four classrooms, one school Director and the wider community

a) Outputs achieved against outputs proposed

Output proposed:

The grant would provide:

- Wooden tables, chairs and shelving.
- Cultural and curriculum sensitive literature – exercise books, fiction and reference books in both Amharic and English.

The target was to stock the new Library with reading material for four hundred and fifty children, five teachers and a Director (Headmistress). The stock would include: teaching sets of exercise books, reference books to support the student's work and fiction books to encourage reading/literacy. The stock would be a helpful tool/teaching aid for the staff who previously had little or no access to books.

Output achieved:

The grant provided:

- Wooden tables, chairs and shelving.
- Cultural and curriculum sensitive literature – exercise books, fiction and reference books in both Amharic and English.

The stock was sourced in Addis Ababa. The range of books included: Science, Geography, Maths, English and Amharic fiction, English Language books, dictionaries and geographic maps.

The wooden shelves around the walls of the Library allow the stock to be displayed in a well ordered way, giving easy access to the readers.

The strong wooden chairs and tables create an excellent and practical environment for study and help to create a good working atmosphere.



The grant has been completely realised.

b) Outcomes/Benefits

Saria School now has a functioning stocked Library, offering teaching/learning support to the children and staff. The pupils now have the opportunity to read, discover, research and develop in an encouraging environment. This is an important step to addressing the low national adult literacy rate of 39% (UNICEF). The shelving offers a well ordered display of reading matter which is now readily available to both students and teachers.

The tables and chairs are placed in the centre of the Library, giving the readers ample space to browse the shelves.

The Director (Headmistress), teachers and pupils have all confirmed they have access to the library on a daily basis with girls and boys having equal opportunity to use the stock.

At this time, the books are utilised only within the library as borrowing is problematic for the following reasons:

- Ethiopia has a twelve hour clock: twelve hours of light and twelve hours of dark. With the sun going down at approximately 6.00 o'clock our time each evening.
- Electricity is almost non-existent in the rural area of Saria in Basona Worena woreda, North Shoa Zone of the Amhara National Regional State.
- Children walk up to two hours just to get to school. This takes a large chunk out of the daylight hours.
- When children go home they need to work to help support the family. Girls have to collect firewood. The UN estimates that this takes up to six hours per day, due to de-forestation.

Although Amharic is the national language of Ethiopia, English is the most widely spoken foreign language and is taught in secondary schools. Increasingly, it is being taught in primary schools, as is the case at the Saria Primary School, and the English books supplied through this grant will immensely improve English literacy amongst the pupils. This will give these pupils an advantage when they attend secondary school. The children are all very keen to learn the language. On field trips LUCIA has been encouraged to find that the children very readily speak limited English and our LUCIA held focus group discussions and individual interviews with representatives from the students, teachers, the Librarian and the School Director attained a sample size of just over 20%. The students were asked what difference the library had made to their studying and the responses were very positive. Responses indicated that the Library has made a tremendous difference, and every child, at some stage through the day has access to the library stock. Discussions also indicated that there was no issue with boys and girls sharing the library space. In fact, there may be positives arising from this as the library provides a space where both boys and girls have equal access to learning.

It was clear that before the library was built the children had very little access to books; teaching was very difficult with little availability of teaching references, story or text books other than the few in their classrooms. Before the Library was built, if they wanted a quiet place to study the children could go outside but had no books to study from. The climate is such that working outside in the shade is always an option. The Library has added another dimension to the children's studying and has given them and the wider community more options.

When we interviewed the Headmistress and staff, their answers verified what the children had already told us. They confirmed that teaching without books of reference had hindered their ability to offer the best education to the children. Now, with the Library and stock, teaching is very much enriched and improved.

It is expected that in the long term, the improved literacy for the children of the Saria Primary School will have an impact on their ability to participate as active citizens in society. The improved literacy will further increase their potential to gain an income and will likely be further prioritised for the following generation as a result.

c) Out of hours use of the building by the local community

The children and wider community have access to the Library at weekends for group discussions on topics such as:

- Harmful practices
- Women's rights
- Sexual abuse
- Drug abuse
- HIV/Aids
- Local farming topics

The stock will not be used by the community; however the furniture and building will be accessible for community forums and discussions on wider social issues. In turn, the indirect results on the health and educational development of the entire community has been enhanced through this project.

d) Lessons learned

The Ethiopia Education Department signed a contract promising a Librarian when the Library was built and stocked; it took nearly one year for the post to be filled. This was unfortunately outside of LUCIA's control; however this had no impact on the achievement of the project objectives as outlined in the initial proposal document. From this we have come to realise things move very slowly in Ethiopia.



Through follow up discussions with the staff of the Saria Primary School, it was identified that more resources were needed to assist staff and students improve their English ability and Amharic grammar. Ethiopia's main language is Amharic and there are approximately 90 individual languages spoken throughout the country, making translation generally very difficult. The Amharic language in itself presents many different spellings, which have been compounded by journalists and scholars who have spelt names and places in many different ways. Staff have requested that LUCIA supplement the current stock with the following resources:

- Dictionaries came top of everyone's list – English to Amharic
- Dictionaries advanced – English
- Grammar teaching books
- Surprisingly: Physical Education books.

LUCIA will try to fulfil this sometime in the future.



A Library is an excellent investment for any school, and the Saria School Library is light, spacious and a pleasant environment in which to study. LUCIA intends to use the experiences from the Saria Library to benefit projects in other regions, including the Nas project. For example, we will ensure recommendation is given to select more dictionaries for their library.

LUCIA did not appreciate the many language problems facing the teachers when teaching English. This was also a major problem when LUCIA completed the monitoring questionnaire. The next monitoring and evaluation exercise will be approached in a very different way: simpler questions requiring focused answers with a wider view to the many problems facing the children, which we did not fully appreciate at the beginning of this project.

Through the building and stocking of the Saria Library, LUCIA has learned to think further than just the building, study space and reading material. The children need access to fresh clean water, a good diet, shoes and clothes to be able to function with a healthy clear mind. Although there are many other problems to be looked at, LUCIA will never be in the position to solve them all. That said, we have tried our best to address many of the underlying issues:

- The diet of the children is not optimal and is lacking many of the required nutrients needed LUCIA has now financed a smallholding project where the children and staff have been trained in good farming practices. The smallholding has been cultivated, fenced and fruit trees have been planted. The crops will be used to supplement the children's diet.



- LUCIA spent two days educating the children in hand washing, using posters, songs, and demonstrations on how to wash your hands. However to increase opportunity to this practice to be taken up by the children, hand washing facilities are needed on the campus. The lack of hand washing leaves the children vulnerable to sickness and diarrhoea.
- At the time of the Library being built there were only four toilets for 450 children. Since completion of the Library a further four more toilets have been built by the community, for the primary children.
- Lucia has also purchased material and two sewing machines to make school uniforms for all 450 of the children and trained two local women in sewing/tailoring to make the garments.
- The eyesight of some of the children is very poor, so LUCIA secured a visit to Saria School from a UK based charity, Vision Aid Overseas, working in Ethiopia. Example: one teenage girl, Tizita, needed very strong spectacles in order to see the blackboard; she was a staggering -13.00D in both eyes, basically unable to focus beyond a couple of inches in front of her nose. The spectacles were provided locally and will bring this young woman life-changing opportunities.



However there are additional issues which could greatly enhance the educational attainment of the children which LUCIA has thus far been unable to address:

- Access to medical support is very difficult. LUCIA is unable to offer any solution to this problem.
- There is no access to running water. All water supplies need to be fetched. At present the pump of the nearest well is in need of repair.
- Some children are without shoes and their health suffers as they can get infections due to their feet being exposed.

LUCIA has tried to solve some of the negative aspects, however there are many other problems to be looked at and LUCIA will never be in the position to solve them all, we do feel that with the improvements in education/literacy which the Library has provided, the children will find they have choices which otherwise would not have been open to them.

e) Future activities and any significant changes likely to affect the funded work

LUCIA does not believe there are any problems at the school that will adversely affect the Library, furnishing or stock in the future. The staff, pupils and community have such pride in their new Library and a burning desire for the children in the area to learn and be educated. It should be noted that the community contributed their labour to the building of the Library which was completed in record time, even though the ground and terrain was hard and very stony. They have all invested time and labour into the project to secure a better future for themselves and future generations giving them ownership over the library and thus the incentive to ensure it remains intact.

LUCIA will try to provide in the future the additional books from their wish list.

f) Sustainability

There was much joy in the completion of this project because of its sustainability. It will not only benefit the present generation but future generations as well. The provision of the Library, furniture and books has improved the children's and wider community's access to education and has encouraged the teachers and the Librarian to use all the new resources now at their disposal.

The new Librarian is making plans for cataloguing the stock. Although it will only require a simple classification system it is proof of her commitment to the future of the school.

LUCIA plans to send more books. However, it is also encouraging that the Director (Headmistress) has plans for sourcing other donors for stock. Given the incentive of the furnished and stocked Library, she and the staff are now actively working towards securing the future of the school. A better education will increase the children's aspirations and give them more choices. Saria Primary School can look forward to a much brighter future.

The stock will be there for many years so new students coming to the school will benefit from them and the sturdy furniture will be enjoyed by future generations.

Financial report

Income and expenditure for the purchase of furniture and books for Saria School Library

	Birr	Birr	Stirling
Income		112,237.57	3,914.90

Expenditure:

Furniture	66,037.80		
Books	35,919.77		
Administration	10,200.00		
		112,157.57	
Balance		80.00	

Number of books purchased: **540**

Carpenter: **PATEK CRAFTS & Co. based in Addis Ababa**