



Impact Assessment

Ten Years of Partnership

BSFA and SHUMAS Working Together
to help poor rural communities in Cameroon



Building Schools for Africa and SHUMAS – Ten Years of Partnership

Impact Assessment Executive Summary

October 2017

“This powerful investment will go down for hundreds of years. Every kid that gets an education will educate their own child. This will change society.”

His Excellency Philomen Yang, Prime Minister of the Republic of Cameroon, commenting on the work of BSFA and SHUMAS, Nov 2016

Building Schools for Africa (BSFA) is a UK charity (No. 1127661) run by a small group of volunteers based on the Isle of Wight. The charity works in exclusive partnership with a small Cameroonian based NGO, Strategic Humanitarian Services (SHUMAS), and raises funds to help SHUMAS to construct durable, hygienic and weatherproof classroom blocks, new latrines and clean drinking water supplies at remote rural villages all over Cameroon.

To date, BSFA has funded the construction of 286 classrooms at 91 schools, and other projects related to the well-being of school children, such as the building, refurbishment and equipping of rural health centres and community drinking water projects, as well as ad hoc projects such as the construction of a bridge to enable children safely to attend school.

This document presents the results of an impact assessment carried out during BSFA's 10th year of operation. A pilot study was conducted by trustees of BSFA in November 2015 and data were collected by SHUMAS staff and BSFA trustees over a period of 15 months from that date. Interviews were undertaken with Head teachers, PTA members, Health Centre leaders, water management committee members and other community members at **local level**; local government, religious and traditional leaders at **regional level** and government ministers at **national level**. We concentrated on projects completed by 2015, in order to assess more accurately the impact of our projects at these three different levels. Key SHUMAS staff were also interviewed by BSFA trustees in order to assess the impact of our partnership on that organisation, and regular BSFA funders/supporters were asked about the impact on themselves personally and on their businesses, where appropriate.

Impact data were collected from 62 of the 72 schools constructed by 2015; 6 of the 11 health centres that had received assistance; 3 of the 7 community water projects constructed; the Roh-Kimbo Bridge project and the Rehab Dormitory project.

Numbers of children and teachers in schools have increased and there has been a considerable improvement in the health and well-being of both children and staff. The standard of living for subsistence farming families has generally improved as has the spirit of dynamism and community co-operation. Investment in water and health centre projects, the bridge and the dormitory has proved immensely beneficial to local communities. SHUMAS is becoming well known and its work is admired across all regions of Cameroon, and also at Government level. A summary of the findings is below.

- The majority (75%) of schools with new buildings experienced an increase in school rolls (median 40% increase) and more teachers were employed.
- More girls were being sent to school.
- Many more children now had a birth certificate and thus had access to examinations and progression through the education system

- Children were found to be healthier and better motivated with less absenteeism and better punctuality. Several reports noted improved safety, especially for girls
- Teachers reported better working conditions and the provision of a weatherproof buildings meant less teaching time was lost during the rainy season. Also, life was made easier by the provision of a blackboard and classroom furniture and an office for head teachers. Improved health of children (especially less infestation with the Jigger flea) resulted in better behaviour.
- Very rarely were there reports of jealousy or conflict as a result of these projects.
- Academic results were noted as having improved by the majority of respondents.
- Beneficial impacts were experienced by the wider communities. Of particular note is an improved spirit of dynamism and cooperation. Also, communities were noted to be empowered by these projects and better able to initiate change and development.
- The inclusion of women's groups and support with microcredit has resulted in many improvements both at school and at home.
- The provision of clean water also benefitted the wider communities with improved health and more time for work. Some schools reported up to 4 hours a day being saved when children no longer had to trek for water. Water projects had a huge impact on the quality of life particularly in the rural areas. Better health and hygiene were noted together with improved wider aspects of development and community cohesion
- The provision or upgrading of health centres was repeatedly reported as having a positive impact, regular mention being made of increased vaccination rates and improved perinatal outcomes with wider impacts on the community as a result of outreach programmes. Savings on journey time and cost produced better outcomes for serious disease or illness and cost savings for patients and their families resulted in a general improvement in the standard of living.
- The building of a bridge as part of one project had a huge impact on many aspects of the life of the local community, particularly the safe access to school for children during the rainy season.
- The reasons for a small number of schools failing to thrive included the building of a (free) government school nearby and the reduction or removal of government support, as part of general austerity.
- The reputation of BSFA's partner SHUMAS, is now well established both regionally and nationally at government level. The organisation has benefitted greatly from its partnership with BSFA
- Responses from Community leaders, Regional representatives and high government officials were all very positive
- Of the small number of donors who participated in the study, many positive impacts both on the individuals and on their businesses were noted.

Background to the Partnership

Building schools for Africa is a UK-registered charity which began raising funds to build schools in Cameroon in 2007. From the beginning, an informal partnership was formed with Cameroon NGO Strategic Humanitarian Services (SHUMAS) and that exclusive partnership continues to this date. Initially schools were chosen on the basis of personal observation of need. However projects are now chosen by SHUMAS on the basis of formal needs assessment and feasibility study. SHUMAS also procures materials, motivates local communities to participate in projects, manages these projects and carries out long term monitoring and evaluation. As part of this process, formal reports and budgets are submitted to BSFA for every project that is funded by our donors.

The initial aim of the founding trustees of BSFA was to raise funds sufficient to build just one rural school and it was anticipated that it might take 1 – 2 years to achieve this. However, the money was raised in only a few months and the momentum quickly grew such that, to date, we have funded the construction of over 90 schools, 10 health centres, a bridge, an accommodation block and numerous water projects.

SHUMAS is a well established NGO which is based in Bamenda in Cameroon under the leadership of Stephen Ndzerem. Following a participatory model of working SHUMAS has pursued the goal of sustainable integrated rural development in diverse areas such as forestry, organic farming, water, health and latterly, through their partnership with BSFA, education. Although we are now SHUMAS' major funding partner, they continue to have close links with many other major international funding bodies such as Manos Unidas, Energy Without Borders, UNICEF and the United Nations.

As BSFA was approaching the 10th anniversary of the construction of its first school, it seemed timely to attempt an assessment of the impact of our efforts.

Method of collecting Impact data

The process began during a visit to Cameroon by two trustees to review the progress of various projects in 2016. Semi structured interviews were carried out with school staff, village leaders and community members. On the basis of this pilot, written questionnaires were used by SHUMAS staff at every school that they were able to visit. It was not possible to visit all schools due to restrictions imposed by transport difficulties during the rainy season, distances involved to reach outlying villages and the dangers posed by terrorist groups near the borders with Nigeria and other countries.

From the outset, a pragmatic approach was taken given the extreme difficulties under which many of the people involved have to live and work. This includes absent or intermittent and irregular electricity supply, lack of paper, books, records and virtually no access to computers.

Given the circumstances, it was somewhat astonishing that 61 schools responded (only schools completed by the end of 2015 were included in the study). However, many data items were missing and open questions elicited a wide variety of responses according to language and abilities of the respondents. This required a degree of interpretation to discern the true meaning of some responses involving reading between the lines and personal knowledge of the people and circumstances in question. This was carried out by one of our founding trustees.

Impact at Local (Village) Level

i) Impact on Schools

By the end of 2015, 72 schools had been funded by BSFA supporters and data were collected from 61 of these (38 primary, 19 secondary/technical, 4 nursery).

On the whole, the reported impacts on the schools themselves were very positive. The number of respondents for each impact are in brackets. These include:

- More primary school children now having birth certificates - mechanism not clear. (25)
- Less absenteeism due to ill health and less disruption to classes due to jigger flea infestation (22)
- Less teaching time lost due to water ingress during the rainy season (8)
- More families paying the PTA levy for each child (8)
- Less teaching time lost due to water collection for drinking and cleaning (7)
- Books and equipment easier to protect and keep safely (2)

The few negative impacts that were reported include:

- Collapse of latrines or inadequate latrines (5)
- Damage to other areas of the buildings such as verandas (2)
- Water pump failure due to incorrect part being fitted (1)
- School still noisy in rainy season - ceilings needed (1)

Notes.

1. Possession of a birth certificate is a prerequisite for sitting exams and progression to secondary education. Many families find the cost of travelling from remote villages to town, in order to register their babies, prohibitively high.
2. Ill health due to malaria and water-borne diseases such as cholera and typhoid is very common amongst the children in rural Cameroon. Deep pit latrines, clean water and hygiene education have had a major impact on reducing the incidence of these diseases. The far less serious but very common infestation with the 'Jigger flea' is a major cause of distress and disruption. Provision of dust-free concrete floors has greatly reduced the incidence of this problem.
3. The rainy season in parts of Cameroon can last more than 6 months during which time, the torrential downpours make the old schools completely unusable much of the time, many of them having only flimsy thatched roofs or no roof at all.
4. The mandatory PTA levy of about £6 per year on average, is a huge investment for most parents, involving financial sacrifice for the whole family. The fact that more are now paying this is a proxy for how much they value the school. The levy is used, amongst other things, to employ extra teachers.
5. The PTA levy varies from school to school but an average figure would be about £6 per year. This varies according to many factors but in some cases, a rise has been necessary because of reduction or withdrawal of government support ('subvention') in recent years. One interviewee stated that the total government subvention was just £3,200 for all the 63 schools in the region!
6. School fees are also variable but in government schools, such fees do not apply. The recommended fee in a faith-based primary school is about £14 per year, per child. Such a figure could represent one year's disposable income for some

families. We have found some instances where a new government school has been built within the catchment area of one of the schools in this study. Not surprisingly, many children move to the government school where no fees are payable. However, notwithstanding the fact that government schools are less expensive for parents, many still choose to send their children to a faith-based school because they are perceived to offer a higher standard of education.

7. In many of the old schools, pupils had to trek several miles to carry water for the school, for drinking and for damping down the mud floors. This could result in the loss of several hours per day teaching/learning time.
8. Theft of books and equipment is not uncommon in the old schools where there is no possibility of keeping them safe from thieves and also protected from the elements. There is also often a problem of grazing animals causing damage to the buildings.



GS Mbande – Pupils in the old classrooms 2008



Increased pupil numbers in the new classrooms 2009

ii) Impact on Pupils

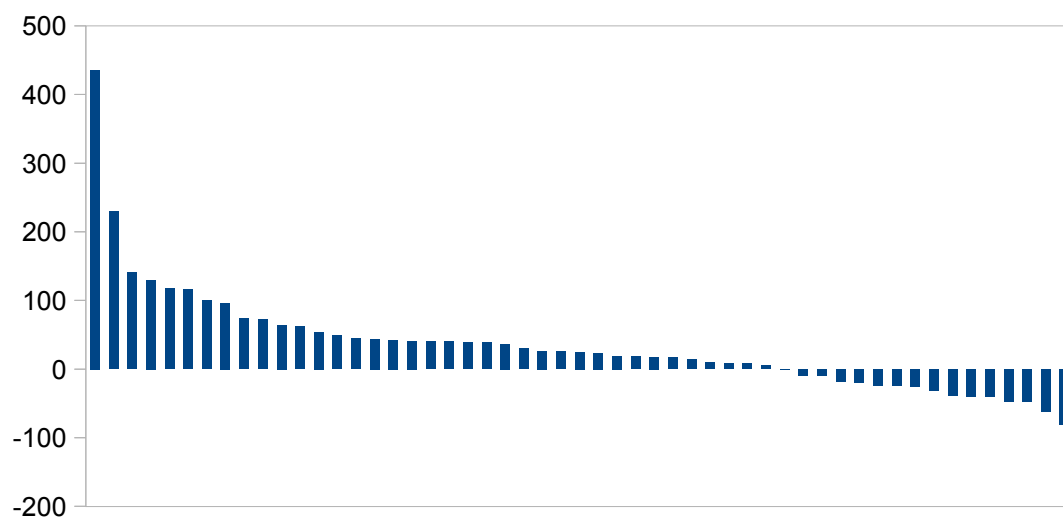
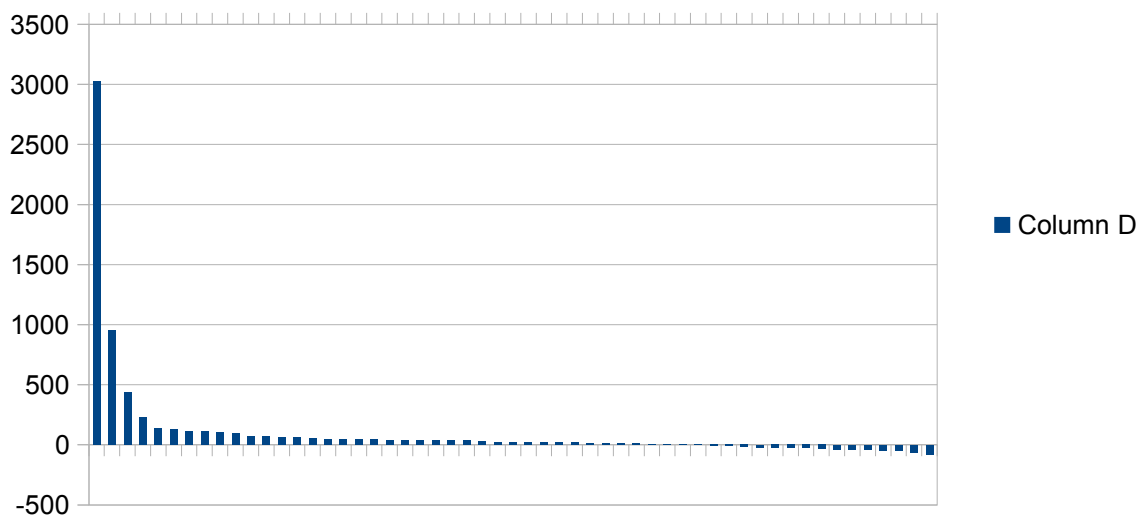
Data were available for 62 schools.

Most schools (75%) experienced an increase in pupil numbers (range 5% - 3000%). A sustained increase was recorded in the total number of pupils attending these schools - from 11,616 to 15,915.

The largest increase was seen in GSS Kimbo (48 to 1500 i.e. slightly over 3000% increase), and a particularly large increase was seen in GBPS Koumenke (58 to 612 ie 950% increase). Both these are shown in the top graph (below) but are excluded in the following graph in order more clearly to illustrate changes elsewhere

Of the 75% of schools which experienced increasing pupil numbers there was a huge variation in the size of this increase but the median of almost 40% suggests a significant impact in most cases. In the case of Government Secondary School (GSS) Kimbo, the school grew almost exponentially after the provision of the first 6 classrooms with subsequent addition of a science facility (all funded by BSFA) and further classrooms (some funded by government, but most funded by the PTA). In this case, it seemed to be a case of 'Success breeding success' against a background of a real and evident need for secondary education in an urban setting (Kumbo).

%change in pupil numbers



%Change in pupil numbers (excluding two exceptional cases in order better to illustrate changes elsewhere)

In other cases, increased pupil numbers seemed to be associated with a number of factors, including:

- Improved, weatherproof learning environment
- Increased teacher numbers. 50% of schools where teacher numbers increased, also experienced an increase in pupil numbers but it is not known which is cause and which effect
- The provision of clean water obviating long daily treks to the nearest waterhole. Six schools reported this as a benefit and claimed up to 4 hrs daily being saved

About a quarter of schools have experienced falling pupil roles, even though in the period after the building of the new school numbers had increased significantly. This seemed to be due mainly to the following factors:

- Increased school fees and/or PTA levy
- Reduction or removal of government support ('subvention')
- Subsequent building of a government school (which is free to attend), in the neighbourhood

Other changes noticed in the school children subsequent to the provision of new school include (in rank order of frequency of response to an open question):

- Children keep cleaner (55)
- Children happier to go to school (43)
- Academic results improved (40)
- Attitude to learning improved (36)
- Children keeping school clean (24)
- Behaviour and manners in school improved (23)
- Health/Hygiene/Jigger infestation improved (22)
- Attitudes to learning improved (21)
- Overcrowding reduced (17)
- Reduction in unwanted pregnancy, sexual harassment and delinquency (16)
- Better timekeeping (15)
- Children better behaved at home (15)
- More children wearing shoes (11)

Just one school reported an increase in bullying and one school noted the negative impact of jealousy amongst pupils with those in the new classrooms insulting those in the old classrooms. These and all other impacts on children are included in the appendix.

The following selected quotes from respondents better illustrate some of these changes:

"Pupils now do practice personal hygiene and this has greatly dropped the spread of cholera in the school and in the community"

"Behaviour has changed. There is no more urinating against the wall"

"The children are very clean from head to toe and their behaviour towards mates and elders has been remarkable"

"The new building feels safe. It now feels safe to come to school"

"The children are doing very well in their exams and they are very outstanding among the other primary schools around"



Class 2a at GBHS Kimbo (High School) 2016



Proud pupils at the opening of GS Nkartsen (Primary School) 2010

iii) Impact on Teachers

Data were available for 52 schools. Most schools (35 = 67%) experienced an increase in the number of teachers. 11 schools (21%) reported no change and 6 (12%) reported a fall.

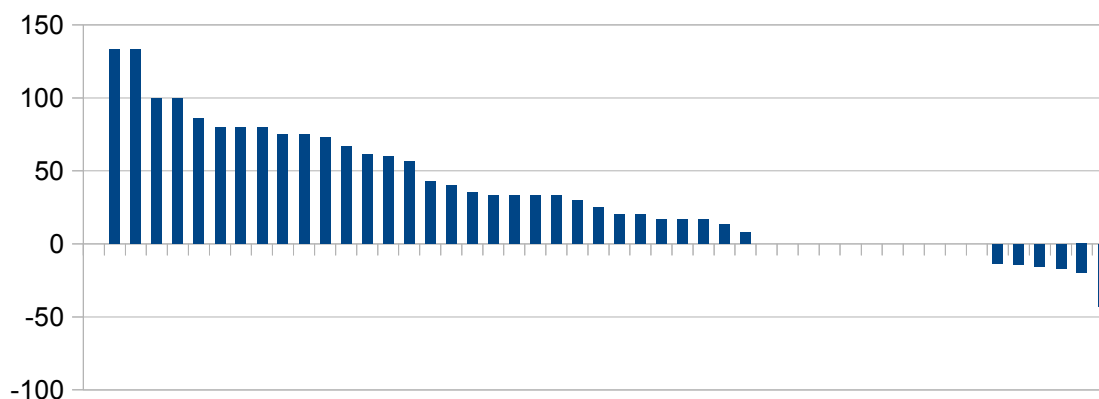
Even in those schools where there was no increase in the total number, and in some of those where the total number fell, there was an increase in the number of trained teachers as opposed to voluntary or PTA-employed teachers.

The reasons why teacher numbers fell in some schools were various but include:

- Teachers being moved from government schools and sometimes not replaced.
- Even in new schools, teachers' pay is still often a problem. Many do not get paid for several months at a time and thus leave the post, which is then difficult to fill
- Recruitment to some of the very rural village schools is difficult because of the professional and social isolation

The graph below excludes the extreme case of GSS Kumbo (see above) where the number of teachers increased from 2 to 51 (almost 2500%) as inclusion of this figure would obscure the overall picture when presented graphically.

%change in number of teachers



Eight schools reported that it was now easier to recruit and retain teachers, however eleven schools reported difficulties despite the new school building. Of those who mentioned pay as a factor affecting teacher recruitment and retention, just under a half (8/17) said that teacher's pay was regular or better than previously. The remainder (9/17) said that difficulty paying teachers an adequate salary continued to be a problem. Only one Head Teacher mentioned the remote village location as being a reason for poor teacher recruitment, however all regional education managers and some regional governors recognised this as a significant problem.

Other impacts on the teachers included:

- Teachers not having to stand all day (because of provision of classroom furniture)
- Better teaching environment - eg new blackboards, children seated at desks and less overcrowding
- Improved health and behaviour of children
- Less time needed to organise water collection
- Permission to take time off when sick

Just one school reported jealousy between teachers in the new and in the old buildings

These and all other impacts on teachers are included in the Appendix.

iv) Impact on the Community

The range of changes in the local communities were reported as including:

- Improved 'spirit and dynamism' (39)
- Parents happy to send more children to school (33)
- Parents more readily collaborate in community projects (33)
- Parents more involved with school PTA, (37)
- New community groups being formed (32)
- New business opportunities (23)
- More frequent meetings in school building (22)
- Literacy rates in villages improved (19)
- Improvement in families income and standard of living (17)
- Parents involved with school cleaning and maintenance (16)
- Women's groups increasing in number and influence (15) - see below
- Improvement in quality of houses being built (14)
- People feel better equipped to do things for themselves (10)
- Community benefit from water / electricity at school (10)
- Project attracts further government support for more facilities (10)
- Parents involved in microcredit scheme as part of project (9)

The following quotes from respondents illustrate some of these benefits to communities

"This project has brought people together as never before"

"The school is now a source of pride to the community"

"This new school has brought in educational light into the community and our children become eager to go to school"

"Many businesses are cropping up - eg foodstuffs, sale of books and pens and pencils. Some farmers come to sell foods to be prepared for the boarding students"

"One big change is the interest of the community in developing the village, for example, regular meetings to participate in the maintenance of the main road"

"There are now some newly created women's groups in the community and ... they are working together for the development of themselves and the community"

"All are working together collaboratively and all the children attend the same school"

"People are able to learn farming skills from the school"

A complete list of benefits to the communities is included in the appendix.

A small number of disbenefits were also reported. These are:

- Jealousy between other communities/ schools/ religious groups (8)
- Parents don't want to pay increased PTA fees (3)
- Disputes over land use for school use (2)

v) Impact of the School Environmental Program

Most school projects include an environmental programme which includes education about various aspects of farming and the environment. As part of this impact assessment, SHUMAS staff assessed that 80% achieved the programme's objectives. Detailed data obtained from a sample of 10 schools showed that income generated eg from sale of produce, ranged from £75 - £200pa. These funds were used to purchase farm equipment/seeds, purchase school teaching materials, refurbish equipment and to fund a range of sporting activities.

Further details are included in the Appendix.

vi) Impact of the inclusion of Village Women's Groups

Each project includes a small amount of money (About £250) to pump prime a micro credit scheme for a local village women's group. This money circulates amongst the group who are, in turn, enabled to start a small business and then pay back the loan at minimal interest, to the group. In order to benefit from this start-up loan, the group members must agree to be actively involved in the school, specifically to help keep the buildings clean and/or to help maintain the school market garden.

At the time of this study, of the 42 women's groups which had benefitted from the scheme, 35 were described as being 'active'. Detailed responses were received from 15 groups. The reported changes/benefits were very similar for all 15 respondents, differing mainly in minor details. The major themes were:

- Women able to stock up on good productive seed and most owned a sheep or a pig. Such animals also a source of manure which helps reduce reliance on chemical fertilizer and increase crop yields.
- Women better able to support husband in financial support of home and family including paying school fees
- Many, probably the majority, actively involved in selling produce in markets
- Some groups reported being able to support marginalised members of the community
- Association with SHUMAS brings other benefits such as access to training session on farming techniques and also access to health care information via SHUMAS-sponsored nurses
- All groups reported benefits from working together as a group. Members were able to support each other and to share in family celebrations. They were also able to buy cooperatively and to negotiate reduced prices for bulk purchase a various commodities.
- The power resulting from negotiating as a group allowed some members to achieve high status positions within their communities. Some became part of village councils whilst others acted as intermediaries between farmers and retailers to ensure fair prices are paid for produce.

vii) General changes/benefits noted:

- Schools cleaner and better maintained
- Women more empowered both within the family and within the community
- Equal educational opportunities given to girls and boys because women supporting husband to pay school fees.

These benefits are illustrated by the following (verbatim) quotes:

"The group have been continuously together and celebrate new born babies, marriages as well condoned during the death of a member"

"Women are integrated into the development arms of the village"

"80% of women own micro-business and sell in an open market"

"Support their husband to pay children fee and medication for a member of the family when sick"

"Bought dresses for an insane man"

"Some five members of our groups supported their husband to buy zinc and roof their house"

"Our society is a men dominated society. We women were never given room to join our counterpart. Since the construction of our school our husband have allowed us to join the scheme and we realised that we had been missing a lot from the development of our community and empowering ourself for a better tomorrow."

"Our farm produce has tripled ... we are selling the surplus to the market and are engaged in food processing and storage"

"Part of the proceed from the microcredit had been used to purchase proper seed as most of the seed in the community had lost its vitality"

None of the women's groups reported disbenefits from the micro credit scheme but some groups had become inactive due to 'conflict within the group' or because of 'loss of a charismatic leader'.

viii) Impact of the Bridge at Roh Kimbo

The Roh Kimbo bridge was constructed in 2013 as part of a large integrated project which also incorporated the construction of classroom blocks at 5 schools, a health centre and a water project. The needs assessment study for this project had identified the need for a replacement bridge to enable children from the village safely to cross a river to reach their school. During the rainy season it was noted that the existing structure was very dangerous: children often fell into the torrential waters and some had drowned. In addition, the standard of living of the community was adversely affected because farmers were not able to reach the market at such times.

Summary of impacts reported:

- No reported drownings or non-fatal accidents since bridge opened

- School attendance greatly increased and better timekeeping
- More development in village as now possible to transport building materials
- Reduced cost of foodstuffs resulting in increased disposable income. Parents better able to pay school fees on time
- Increased awareness of benefits of cooperative working leading to more communal projects

No adverse impacts reported.

Verbatim interviews are in the Appendix, but below are observations by the Head Teacher and the PTA Chairman at the local High School, GBHS Kimbo.

Head Teacher

- Roh Kimbo bridge has stopped drowning en route to school (2 of their students lost last year). It has also reduced absence at school due to flooding of the old bridge which used to result in 2 weeks a year that children on the other side of the river were not able to get to school. But it also entails a longer walk for some children, which can make those students late.

PTA Chairman

- People feel much more secure now. The river crossing has always been a very big threat during the rainy season. The children don't come late to school like before. They missed school before usually one to two weeks when river was very high, so their academic performance is improving. People acquiring land on other side now to construct houses and the population is growing.

ix) Impact of the Water Projects

The feedback below, was received from:

Village President of a water management committee - Mubang water project

Two villagers benefitting from the Mubang water project

A villager benefitting from Lam Road water project

SHUMAS' water engineer – Taa Mbve water project

- Before the project people had to carry water many miles - one child killed when fetching water during rainy season
- Before the project approximately 1500 people had no access to potable water. Now the supply is reliable and water flows all year round
- There were minor problems with broken pipes but these were fixed immediately – the committee has provided a permanent maintenance technician
- Now this is the only reliable source of drinkable water for miles around and people come from far away. Unable to estimate total numbers who benefit – but it is a very large number
- Water project has promoted development of the whole area
- It has motivated young people to embark on house construction and to start new businesses
- A new road has been built connecting the village to the water supply constructed by

everyone in the community working voluntarily for 2 hours before church on Sunday mornings, and further roads are planned.

- There has been more tree planting
- The standard of living has generally improved
- More people are now keeping animals
- General hygiene has improved - people now able to take baths.
- No cases of water-borne disease have been reported since the project. Previously, such diseases were common
- Charges for water supply have now been introduced - each household charged about £2.50 per year plus about £12.50 to connect water supply to house
- A water management committee has been formed which is perceived as being effective in maintaining the water supply
- The water supply is reliable even in the dry season
- There are many benefits for children who are healthier and no longer have to travel long distances for water
- There are financial savings for parents who no longer have to buy bottled water
- There have been no problems or disputes. Pity is felt for those who have to come long distances, especially nursing mothers
- It is estimated that 6000 people in the area now benefit from project (Villagers estimate of population of immediate district)
- The water is very clean and had a reputation for purity in the whole region.
- Some additional money was donated by CARITAS (Catholic NGO) to the Taa-Mbve water project, comprising a water catchment, filtration system, 1.5 kms pipe and 12 taps. Whilst their involvement added a layer of complexity and delay, it provided water for thousands more people in the area.
- The community dug all excavation and provided local materials - sand, gravel and stones.
- On-site training was given to an identified water caretaker.

"My life has been transformed by these water taps close to home. Previously I had to walk 2 km for water and carry it back" (respondent was elderly and infirm)



Example of a new stand-tap, provided at GS Fungeh



Example of a new borehole, provided at CES Biakoa

x) Impact of the Health Centres

Feedback was received from eleven interviewees relating to six health centres. The scope of the BSFA/SHUMAS intervention varied widely from building a fully equipped facility to renovation of existing buildings and/or provision of new equipment and furniture.



New equipment provided for Mandankwen Health Centre (2016)

Several themes emerged from these interviews

- only a minority had reliable water or electricity. Both were seen as high priority for future provision
- the new facilities were popular and were better used than hitherto
- the uptake of vaccination was generally much better - often ascribed to health education programmes delivered by health centre staff
- more antenatal care was reported by all respondents - mainly due to improved facilities and/or less travelling
- more deliveries were reported where the facilities were close to home. Also, charges were generally reported to be half those in the government health centres. Conversely there were fewer home deliveries and the impression was that there were fewer adverse incidents although reliable numbers were not available
- improved health was reported amongst the general population but especially amongst children. Hitherto, long and expensive journeys were needed to receive treatment which often led to neglected illness or injury as well as financial loss
- health education and outreach programmes were seen to be improving home hygiene as well as many areas of health awareness, including acceptance of vaccinations, infant care and nutrition. Of particular note is the increased use of mosquito nets
- there was evidence of good relationships with government health centres with examples of sharing facilities (e.g. refrigerated storage of drugs)
- drugs were largely sold at cost or at small profit which was used to improve facilities - examples include:
 - purchase of photovoltaic panel
 - employment of laboratory technician / microscopist

employment of cleaner

- improved facilities sometimes attracted further support from other agencies eg one centre subsequently received funding for the construction of 3 wards and other facilities from a Performance Based Finance scheme
- the only 'negative' impact reported was that of increased workload for existing staff

"Before the health centre was constructed and equipped by SHUMAS we used to carry people on carriers and on bikes to very far distance health centres ... this was never easy, especially at night"

"Now people come from neighbouring communities to consult...they have seen the good services rendered by the nurses there."

Impact at Regional level

Interviews were conducted with various Regional Leaders, including Government representatives at regional level, education managers, religious leaders and traditional chiefs. Full interviews are in the appendix, but extracts are included below.

i) Senior District Officer for Bui Division

- The idea of community development has been strengthened
- Increased pride, motivation and aspirations amongst young people and wider community
- New buildings are multifunctional and used by communities for a variety of uses
-

"I cannot emphasis enough the importance of the (Roh Kimbo) bridge"

"All the projects you have put in place, including the health centres, have made some real positive changes to the environment"

ii) District Officer for Nkum

- Improved cleanliness has been noted
- Reduced incidence of water-borne disease noted
- Parents are learning from children
- People are happier since building the new school
- Marginalised ethnic groups are now attending school
- There is improved gender equality amongst children
- There is a move towards increasing the age of marriage for girls
- The projects are perceived as helpful to government efforts
- A huge increase has been seen in the number of pupils gaining the First School Leaving Certificate
- Government has provided additional help for new schools such as extra classrooms
- The projects have attracted support from other NGOs such as 'Knowledge for Children' (textbooks)

iii) Delgate of Basic Education, Bui Division

- There is pride in the new buildings which were never available before

- Children like coming to school and now feel safe in weatherproof buildings
- There is increased awareness in community of the needs of young children
- More children are progressing to secondary education (no statistics available)
- More girls are going to school

iv) Delegate of Secondary Education, Bui Division

- There is less need for children to travel away from home to attend secondary school
- Many more children, including girls, are being educated (at secondary level)
- More money is available (now capital costs have been covered by building projects) to concentrate resources on improving teaching
- In schools where solar power has been installed, pupils and teachers are now starting to have access to computers
- The spirit of giving is now being inculcated as a result of projects
- There has been a large reduction in drop-out rate ie pupils leaving school early
- Married girls are returning to school
- Business opportunities have around the schools eg transport, clothes, foodstuffs

v) Mayor of Bamenda

- The benefits of the participatory model of development have now been introduced to communities through these projects
- The skills being taught in the new technical colleges are much needed
- Through SHUMAS' intervention, disabled children in the municipality are more readily identified and included in development plans and disabled people are now becoming independent (see report on dormitory for disabled people)
- SHUMAS projects are reaching parts of the community that the government is not yet able to reach
- Water projects are improving the lives of women and children especially
- Marginalised ethnic groups are now attending school in great numbers
- Committees have been set up to care for new water supplies

"When SHUMAS comes into a project everything goes right to the end"

vi) Bishop of Kumbo

"Because SHUMAS does not discriminate when choosing which communities are to benefit from a new school, this has helped to break down barriers between different faith groups"

"In a country where resources are so very scarce, ANY attempt to improve conditions is very valuable and helps to increase people's aspirations"

vii) Traditional Leaders (Chiefs)

Fon of Nkwen

- Everyone is now willing to educate their children
- The community is more ready to help themselves
- Disabled people (using SHUMAS dormitory) are helped to be self sustaining and to integrate into community

"The past 10 years (of SHUMAS activity) have been very positive ...bringing development

to the people so that they can change themselves and be empowered"

Fon of Bamunka

- Children no longer have to travel long distances to school
- Children have greater aspirations. There is talk of building a university
- Health has improved "by about 85%"
- Community now gathering materials to build a nursery "in the style of the SHUMAS building"
- There has been a change in community members now wanting to work together and starting cooperative groups such as 'Farming Group'
- There has been a huge increase in numbers of pupils and teachers at the new (secondary) school

"Everybody wants their child to go to a well-constructed school"

Fon of Nsoh (Paramount Fon of the NW Region)

"More children now going to secondary school. There are more jobs for them after school"

"There have been improvements across the whole Fandom"

Impact at National Level

Interviews were conducted with the prime minister and members of the government ministerial teams. (Interview transcripts and notes in the Appendix)

i) Prime Minister

"This powerful investment will go down for hundreds of years. Every kid that gets an education will educate their own child. This will change society.

"Once you educate a girl you change the world. The impact will be felt down the road.

"Anything that touches on education is what changes society. All inner change is good for society. By giving a water point, pregnant women will have healthy babies who will be educated children

"The far north didn't embrace education. There were young marriages and the only way to change this world is through education."



BSFA and SHUMAS with the Prime Minister, His Excellency Philomen Yang

ii) Regional Governors

- Almost every village now has a primary school
- Some religious schools are closing because there are now more government schools which do not charge fees
- There is a big clamour today for education, especially for primary education
- It is still difficult to recruit teachers to rural areas - this is being addressed at government level
- There are difficulties in posting Anglophone teachers to Francophone areas and vice versa
- There is increased awareness that girls can be economically productive and thus they are more readily gaining access to education
- SHUMAS is seen as hard-working and accountable
- In the far North (where fundamental Islamist group Boku Haram is active) education is the most effective way to prevent the radicalisation of the population

"I do not know what God looks like but you people are next to God. I'm not exaggerating... in the world of capitalism, everyone (usually) wants to grab everything for themselves..."

"I would just like to thank you people so much for coming and making the provision for other benefactors to help our communities. If you had not come up with the idea and if you were not trustworthy, the benefactors would not have given you the resources to help us... it is a great mutual trust between BSFA and SHUMAS that is very inspiring.

iii) Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development

- BSFA/SHUMAS schools cost only a quarter of the cost of a government school
- The model of participatory development accords with government approach of promoting self reliance
- It has been noted that our projects occur in all parts of the country including all ethnic and regional groups
- It has been noted that some government departments feel that SHUMAS should pay taxes on donated funds and this is a continuing issue which requires diplomacy to resolve
- The impact of the water projects has been very big. Government technicians lack skill and expertise – his department will consider the possibility of the SHUMAS team providing training to government teams

"...the assistance from BSFA has had a wonderful impact...the model that is in place should be fully documented to share with others...because it is such a brilliant model"

iv) Minister of Youth affairs

- These projects accord with the government's promotion of 'volunteerism' and teaching the value of philanthropy
- SHUMAS is now highly valued by government and will be funded partners in future youth training initiatives
- SHUMAS' work in the poorest areas is highly respected by the government
- Projects help counter the ignorance that provides the recruiting ground for groups such as Boku Haram

- A 'Spirit of solidarity' has been noted in isolated communities in far north following building of new schools

"I want to see SHUMAS installed in each and every department in Youth and Employment centres"

v) Minister of Regions and Decentralisation

This minister suspended a planned meeting of Security Services in order to meet with impact assessment team

- The impact of projects has been particularly great in the poorest regions such as the Far North where it is beyond the means of the government to provide adequate educational infrastructure
- Education provides protection against recruitment by Boku Haram
- The participatory model encourages a spirit of solidarity in communities
- SHUMAS' activity provides young people with example of 'volunteerism' in practice - "...it is our mission to encourage volunteerism..."

"It can be a model for all the actors all over the national territory and they can give us the feedback of what works in the field, hear the lessons that have been learned and then we, as the policy makers can orientate the policies in the domain of education and rural environment and volunteerism"

"We think that what you are doing is wonderful!"

"I would like to see SHUMAS involved in each locality...being in charge of the development of youth in the youth training centres"

Impact of the partnership - BSFA and SHUMAS

i) Interview with founders/directors of the organisation (Stephen Ndzerem and Billian Nyuykighan)

Arguably the most important component of this study is an interview with the founder and director of SHUMAS, Stephen Ndzerem and his wife Billian Nyuykighan and the reader is encouraged to read the complete transcript of this interview in the appendix. Listed below are just a few of the reported impacts on the organisation as a result of their partnership with BSFA.

- SHUMAS, a well-established humanitarian development NGO - would, in all likelihood, not have survived without BSFA
- The school building programme has expanded from 1 school per year to about 12 per year, together with the construction of many health centres and water projects as well as some innovative projects such as the construction of a bridge and promotion and installation of renewable energy equipment
- BSFA support has ensured a measure of stability in the organisation which now employs around 12 people. In addition, about 60 internships ensure that young talented graduates are helped along the career path in the worlds of national and international development as well as management, finance and technology
- BSFA works effectively and efficiently with SHUMAS in a 'synergistic' relationship which promotes the model of participatory development thus encouraging self-sufficiency rather than dependency

- Personal involvement of BSFA trustees during their regular visits to Cameroon, has facilitated SHUMAS' link with and recognition by the Cameroon government. This has led to continued growth of the organisation and the achievement of international recognition such that the Director has presented the organisation's model to a UN working party.
- The inclusion of a 'contingency fund' (a BSFA initiative - see below) has allowed SHUMAS to develop their operation infrastructure

"There is an empathy between BSFA and SHUMAS which comes from the trust between our organisations. It gives us a lot of encouragement to work. Our staff are very eager to produce results for you...we get people who are very committed - even if they could go to other organisations and get three times the salary, they will stay with SHUMAS"

"The work between BSFA and SHUMAS has changed the whole landscape of the thinking about NGOs in Cameroon... I have heard this both from communities and from top officials in the government... I think that SHUMAS has set the pace but without BSFA we would not have created the impact that called for their attention"

ii) Interview with Deputy Programme Coordinator / Head of Health Programme (Gisela Beri has been in post since 2008)

Madame Beri spoke in an interview about her assessment of the wider impacts of SHUMAS / BSFA work as well as the impacts on the organisation itself

- In all communities, members are more confident as a result of projects
- There is now avoidance of dependency and empowerment to undertake further projects
- There is encouragement of other communities to help themselves
- There has been improvement in hygiene at home - parents learn from children
- There is improved health and prosperity of communities
- SHUMAS' approach is being imitated by other agencies
- Health centres have greatly reduced maternal and infant mortality as well as reducing incidence of infectious diseases (no statistics available)
- Good quality health centres make them eligible for government approval and thus have access to low price drugs
- Good quality health centres attract support from other agencies (eg World Bank) and also attract high quality staff
- The impact of the water projects has been very big
- There is a clear link between provision of drinking water and improved academic performance
- SHUMAS staff are motivated by the observed positive impact of their work
- SHUMAS' fame is spreading and thus attracts many volunteers from other organisations.
- SHUMAS is increasingly being invited to collaborate with other organisations and with the government who no longer view them as competitors but rather as partners
- With increasing numbers of projects, SHUMAS' knowledge and expertise increasing

- Staff are proud to identify with the organisation because of its reputation
- SHUMAS' emphasis on organic farming is being adopted by the government
- Interns are exposed to very intensive work and varied training which greatly improves their opportunities for employment
- School toilets have greatly improved health especially by reducing the incidence of typhoid and hookworm
- SHUMAS' provision of handwashing at school toilets is unique amongst similar development projects in Cameroon

"...SHUMAS came and showed how they could mould their blocks and build a school... (later) everyone got together and built a community hall built on the model of the school"

"When other schools see what they have managed to get done, they want (SHUMAS) to come and work on their school ... and when they move to other schools, they have already worked with SHUMAS and this is how the work of SHUMAS spreads out"

"Where SHUMAS concentrates on various aspects of one community and you have schools, health centres and water - the families are really saving money... they save money on not having to visit the health centres. Then they save money because the books do not get destroyed by rain ... when they do get sick they can use the health centre instead of the hospital - so they get a consultation for 300 francs instead of 9000 at government hospitals and they save money on transport to the hospital..."

"Before these cluster projects (ie building schools, health centre and water project all at the same time) other organisations used to say that you cannot do three things at once, but now more than 70% of those agencies are imitating SHUMAS' approach because of the impact we are having"

"Our model encourages the use of locally available materials (sundried bricks rather than cement blocks for instance) - cement blocks are expensive both to buy and to transport... buildings made from mud last much longer than cement blocks even though many people believe the opposite. Now other organisations are thinking they can use mud blocks too ...you can build 4 classrooms for the same price as 2 classrooms using cement blocks and you are using local materials"

"Before these projects people would carry water from stream that were share with animals to use in their homes. They were constantly sick with typhoid, dysentery etc. The statistics from the health centres record that most patients were suffering from water-borne diseases - but once they have clean drinking water, the incidence falls almost to zero... this impacts on their health, the family income, their ability to undertake other activities which improves their standard of living"

"(an intern) went on to get a job with and American NGO ... and introduced them to the notion of school gardens and toilets...which they have incorporated into their own programmes"

"Clean water and hand-washing - it looks small but the impact is great"

iii) Interview with the Chair of SHUMAS board of trustees and Assistant National Secretary for Catholic Education (Father Zeph Mbuh)

- SHUMAS works in very remote places where no other agencies work
- Communities are changed forever following contact with SHUMAS

- Many more children are enabled to finish their education
- There are improved aspirations particularly for the most impoverished and disadvantaged children

"...the boy in the wheelchair is now on the board (of SHUMAS) representing the disabled trainees...when he speaks of what SHUMAS has done for him he gets very emotional because of how his life has improved... he now lives independently"

"SHUMAS does not have a lot of money, but the bit that it has does the work that it is meant to do. That gives a lot of credibility..."

"It is difficult to say where Boku Haram has come from but if you live in a state of dissatisfaction, anything can happen"

"They now have new skills - how and where to plant what. How to take care of it and make sure it matures and can be taken to market. So people can now plan their food production"

iv) Impact of the Contingency Fund

Funds are transferred to SHUMAS on a project by project basis. In 2008, with the agreement of donors, BSFA suggested that an 8% 'contingency fund' be included in project costs. This allows for a degree budget flexibility which is necessary to deal with the problem of fluctuating exchange rates and cost of building materials as well as damage to building materials in transit. If the project is completed without the need to use this money then, after consultation with BSFA, SHUMAS is able to put it to some other appropriate use. These are listed below:

- Purchase of additional four-wheel drive vehicles
- Car repair
- IT equipment
- Photocopier
- Transport of technical equipment to colleges
- Digital camera
- Purchase of generator for the office

"The contingency fund has had a huge impact on our work because people want feasibility studies before you can have a project proposal and we need to have the vehicles just to go out to the field - so BSFA are really helping us with that. And also with the running costs of the office, we have the photocopier and the printer and the generator too" (*the electricity supply is very intermittent, especially in the rainy season*)

v) Impact of the Dormitory for Rehabilitation Trainees

In 2014 a dormitory was built (with funding through BSFA) to provide accommodation for the disabled trainees attending rehabilitation and skills training at SHUMAS' headquarters in Bamenda. Many of these trainees suffer from profound disabilities and before construction of the dormitory block, often had long journeys to undertake each day to attend the training centre.

Selected quotations from trainees and others regarding the impact of the dormitories are included below:

"I was able to meet and interact with others thanks to the dormitory"

"Living in the dormitory allowed me to learn household chores"

"...his disability was that he was crippled and had to crawl 3 km to come to the centre and back..."

"Coming from home, some very poor trainees used to collapse due to hunger..."

"Without the dormitories, trainees used to suffer from the mean and inconsiderate taxi drivers who would either complain of time, drop them at the wrong place or collect more money for their fare"

"I used to have to push my son 6 km and back in his wheelchair"



Accommodation for the disabled trainees



Innocent (left) was a trainee jewellery maker and is now a member of SHUMAS Board of Trustees

vi) Impact of Abandoned projects

Prior to any project being started there is a lot of preparatory work which includes a needs assessment study followed by a feasibility study. There is a period of negotiation with the community to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of and in agreement with the terms of the contract. All projects that have actually started have been completed, however 21 projects have been abandoned before commencement. Inevitably these have a negative impact, with time and resources being wasted but, whilst they are recognised as an inevitable feature of development work, BSFA and SHUMAS have learned from each of these experiences and have changed and developed the preparatory work for projects over the years.

- 12 were too slow to support the idea of participatory development and did not produce the local materials necessary for commencement of construction work
- 3 were abandoned because of political influence. In one instance a central community leader was demanding a bribe.
- 1 project was sited too close to an area of Boku Haram activity and was deemed to dangerous
- 2 projects stalled because of disputes about land
- 1 community insisted they wanted a 2 story building which was not possible
- 1 community obtained funding from elsewhere

Impact on Funders

The majority of BSFA funds are given by corporate donors. Some of these choose to visit the projects that they have funded, sometimes participating in such events as school handover ceremonies.

The following quotations are from 4 major donors (3 corporate, 1 individual) who responded to a postal request for an assessment of the impact of their involvement with BSFA/SHUMAS. All 4 respondents had visited Cameroon and seen SHUMAS staff in action and had the opportunity to see the impact of their donations.

All 4 respondents stated that their involvement had had a profound positive impact on them personally. One of the corporate donors referred to the positive effect on their business and the private individual referred to the impact on the wider circle of family and friends. Only one negative comment was made which related to the misspelling of the company name.

Some responses contained very personal information and the following quotations are anonymised for reasons of privacy.

"The link with BSFA / SHUMAS is like a friendship that we value very much and want to maintain"

"It was lovely to meet the whole SHUMAS team in Cameroon and to see them in action. To be able to witness everyone's commitment and dedication to such a wonderful cause was fantastic"

"The second lasting impression was 'hope'. We went to some very poor areas and met some people living very tough lives. However my overwhelming impression on leaving was not one of sadness or depression, but instead was one of optimism"

"No doubt the new facilities improved people's standard of living, but more than that, they turbo-charged the self-esteem of the communities"

"It was life-changing, and it's hard to communicate to people who have not been (to Cameroon) just how lucky we are over here"

"We are now in the sixth year of working with BSFA and SHUMAS. It has been such a large part of our organisation: more than we ever imagined. For the company, this work has been a galvanising force. It has brought people together, and the team here love that our organisation is about something bigger than itself. We have completed dozens of fund-raising events, which has resulted in people working with people whom they would not normally have met.

"Lots of companies get involved in charitable endeavours ... it is human nature that some people are sceptical about how well the donations will be spent and when you are raising £50,000 for a £10million charity, it's hard to see what you did make a difference. But with our projects, it's the ownership that is so powerful. We can identify the exact community that needs our help, and we know that it is us or no one! We have to hit our fund-raising targets or the project is not going to happen"

"I came into contact with Stephen and yourselves whom I admire and trust totally and meeting (name of orphan child whom donor met at a project and subsequently supported through SHUMAS) was a real catalyst (divine intervention) to make a long term commitment... you have impacted on my life beyond words"

"I thought charity might bring a new meaning to business life - a life I had become dismayed with"

"Very little impact on our staff"

"What I thought would be a 5 minute introduction (to the Prime Minister) turned out to be a 1 hour audience where we listened with great interest to His Excellency Philemon Yang. This was particularly insightful for two reasons: first, that the Prime Minister explained that donors such as BSFA are genuinely needed because Cameroon does not have the finance to support the rebuilding of schools and the numerous other projects that charities like BSFA contribute to and second, it was clear that SHUMAS stands out among others for its humanitarian activities and alleviation of poverty and is held in high esteem even at high government level."

"The overwhelming impression was the genuine appreciation and gratitude of the community"

"The philosophy and work of SHUMAS was the great revelation for the rest of my trip as I saw for myself precisely why BSFA work exclusively with SHUMAS"

"Personally I was hugely impressed by how SHUMAS operates in ensuring that communities are empowered and take both pride and eventual ownership of the schools and other projects"

"The spelling of (a companies name) wasn't correct on SHUMAS' website. This should be checked as most companies use charitable giving as a PR exercise and it is really important that the business can create links with the charities and vice versa."



Funder and BSFA trustees at the opening of Nchemba2 Nursery school (2015)

Developments and changes in BSFA Projects

The charity BSFA arose out of a perceived need when several of the founding trustees worked in Cameroon with another UK charity (Aidcamps International). A partnership with SHUMAS was forged because these same trustees had the opportunity to see SHUMAS in action and realised that it was both trustworthy and capable. That initial impression has been borne out time and time again since those early days. Thus the modus operandi of this charity has remained fairly stable over the years, however a few minor changes have been made in the light of experience. These are listed below.

- Change from use of cement to concrete for flooring (2008)
- Inclusion of a head-teacher's office wherever possible (2008)
- Inclusion of contingency fund (2008)
- Change in SHUMAS' points system, used to determine the need for a school project and a community's potential for participation in that project at the feasibility study stage. (2008)

- Inclusion of drinking water wherever possible. (2009)
- Use of cement blocks where not practicable to make mud bricks (2009)
- Invitation to Government and Regional ministers as well as press and TV to all project openings (2009)
- Inclusion of money to pump-prime micro credit scheme within local women's group q.v. (2009)
- Inclusion of continuing monitoring of projects for 3 years after completion (2009)
- Decision to undertake projects in all parts of the country (most important in a country where there is sometimes jealousy or animosity between Francophone and Anglophone regions) (2009)
- First cluster projects for general improvement of one area at a time – these include school(s), water and health centre (2010)
- Additional help agreed for a few schools unable to afford local materials (2015)
- Change from inclusion in budget of 'Administration fee' (flat rate of £700) to inclusion of 'Project Management fee' which was set at 10% of total cost of project. (2015)



Community Participation in the projects. Dredging for sand to help build a new school at Lassini (2009)