

Case Study No. 2: The Book Bus “Improving children’s lives one book at a time”

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Contents

Introduction.....	1
History.....	1-2
Activities	2-3
Impact Tables.....	4-6
Impact Map.....	7
Sustainable Development Impacts	
<i>Economic Impacts.....</i>	8
<i>Environmental Impacts.....</i>	8
<i>Social Impacts.....</i>	8-12
Conclusions.....	12-14
Suggestions.....	14-17

Introduction

The Book Bus Foundation is a registered UK charity which aims to improve child literacy in Africa and South America by providing children with books and the inspiration to read them. The Book Bus Foundation currently operates three mobile book buses which tour schools, hospitals and orphanages in Zambia, Malawi and Ecuador, promoting reading and storytelling to children who would otherwise have little or no access to books. In addition to providing a mobile library service, onboard volunteer crews travel with the Book Buses and engage with children and teachers to promote literacy. Since its inception the Book Bus Foundation has furthermore donated over 39,000 books to schools in Africa and more than 8,000 to schools in South America. While this case study focuses in

particular on the activities of the Book Bus Foundation in the South Luangwa Valley and Zambia, the operations and sustainable development impacts of the organisation as a whole are also reflected upon.

History

The Book Bus Foundation was established in 2007 by Tom Maschler. Over the course of four decades in the publishing industry Tom nurtured the careers of many of the twentieth century's most esteemed authors, as well as coming up with the idea for the Booker Prize. His inspiration to start the Book Bus came after a trip to Zambia where he witnessed firsthand the role of literacy as a key life skill in uplifting a child from poverty to prosperity. Through Tom's hard work and the assistance of donors and supporters, including children's author and illustrator Quentin Blake who remains a charity trustee, the first Book Bus (Tiger) was purchased and equipped. After a send off party in Trafalgar Square London, Tiger arrived at Southampton docks stocked with over 5000 donated books. It was at this stage that the Book Bus Foundation entered into partnership with the for-profit travel company VentureCo. VentureCo specialises in adventure travel and was set up in 1999 by David Gordon and Mark Davison. Each has over 25 years of experience driving overland trucks and running expeditions around the world. VentureCo brought a wealth of knowledge and expertise to this partnership, as well as relevant Air Travel Organisers' Licensing (ATOL). Through this partnership the present Book Bus volunteer programme

was devised, which is administered through VentureCo as a strand of their wider portfolio of volunteer and adventure tourism activities.



Tiger Book Bus

Tiger, the original book bus, was shipped to South Africa in 2008 before being driven up to Zambia through Botswana. After 5 years of service Tiger is now based permanently in Livingstone Zambia, where it has been retired and acts as a static classroom and library. Since its inception, the Book Bus Foundation has expanded and extended its activities. Three new buses have been added to the Book Bus fleet, Charlie and Matilda in Malawi and Zambia, and the BISEE book bus in Ecuador which was founded in remembrance of Beci Logie, Indira Swan, Sarah Howard, Emily Sadler and Elizabeth (Lizzie) Pincock who tragically lost their lives in a road accident in Ecuador in 2008. In Zambia, the Book Bus continues to be active in and around Livingstone, but from 2009 also started working with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to carry out literacy schemes in the Meheba refugee settlement in North West Zambia. The Book Bus also works in South Luangwa Zambia and in Malawi. In Ecuador the Book Bus works in partnership with a local NGO, Ecuador Tierra Viva (ETV), to deliver its

programmes across 4 regions of the country: Amazon, Andes, Southern Coast and Northern Coast. In 2013 it is planned that the Book Bus Foundation will begin activities in Rajasthan India.



BISEE Book Bus

Book donation has and continues to be an important aspect of the Book Bus Foundation's work. In 2010/11 it launched its first major book appeal with around 5000 books given to recipients in Malawi. The book appeal for 2011/12 was refocused on Zambia and branded under the name "a book in every hand", over 24,000 books were donated. Currently the Book Bus sources its books for donation from major international publishing companies.

Activities

Books, Libraries and Resources - The Book Bus Foundation donates brand new books supplied by publisher partners to schools, libraries and homes in Zambia, Malawi and Ecuador. Monetary donations are used to cover the costs of transporting these books and also to purchase local curriculum books as well as supplying schools with stationary supplies and creative art materials. Donations are furthermore used to refurbish school classrooms, to provide secure book storage spaces, and to create reading

corners with shelving, posters and bright decoration that transform dull classrooms and inspire young reader's imaginations and creativity.



Matilda Book Bus

Teacher Support Workshops - The Book Bus Foundation runs teacher support workshops with the aim of encouraging dialogue and shared best practice between Zambian teachers and visiting international counterparts. These workshops also allow local attendees to become familiar with the Book Bus Foundation and its resources, and offer a forum for exploring ways in which Book Bus visits and programmes can be better integrated into schools and within weekly teaching timetables, minimising the disruption they cause. It is furthermore considered how such visits can better complement and add value to existing teaching and learning activities.



Volunteering – Book Bus volunteers commit to a minimum of 2 weeks, and in some instances spend much longer, travelling with the Book Bus and working to encourage child literacy in disadvantaged communities in Zambia, Malawi, Ecuador and India. School visits within the project area are a key part of their programme, with volunteers leading small group learning activities including assisted reading, arts and crafts and organised fun around books. In Zambia, volunteer programmes run in Livingstone, in the South Luangwa Valley as part of the Book Bus Safari which also includes time in the South of Malawi, and at the Meheba UNHCR refugee settlement. In Ecuador, volunteers on the BISEE Book Bus work with schools in biodiversity hotspots. In collaboration with these schools and ETV the volunteers are also helping to establish environmental fieldwork projects. In India the Book Bus is starting to work with a cluster of 5 schools in Rajasthan.



Table 1: Economic Outputs and Impacts

OUTPUTS			POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS			
			Economies	Markets	Institutions/ Services	
Economic	Employment	Direct	Local staff in South Luangwa and Livingstone	+ Wage spend in local and national economy	+ Reduction in unemployed positive impact on labour market	+ Increased ability to pay for local services i.e. school fees, healthcare
	Purchasing	Local	Purchasing from local businesses in South Luangwa, Livingstone and Meheba i.e. food, fuel, activities etc.	+ Procurement from local businesses supports local economies	+/-	+/-
		National	Purchasing from Zambian businesses	+ Supports national economy	+/-	+/-
	Investment	Infrastructure and Resources	Donated books; donated teaching/ learning materials; investment in library corners and wider school infrastructure	+/-	+/-	+ Improved education provision in partner/recipient schools in Livingstone, South Luangwa and Meheba
		Capacity	Teacher support workshops	+/-	+/-	+ Skills and capacity in recipient school. Improved education provision

Table 2: Environmental Impacts

NATURAL CAPITAL		IMPACT CHANNELS		
		PRODUCTION/ OPERATIONS	PRODUCTS AND SERVICES	PROGRAMMES
Environment	AIR AND CLIMATE	- Carbon emissions from Book Buses	- Carbon emissions from volunteer air travel	- Carbon emissions related to collection and transport of books.
	WATER	+/-	+/-	+/-
	LAND (MINERALS, SOIL, LANDSCAPE)	+/-	+/-	+/-
	HABITATS (FLORA AND FAUNA)	+/-	+/-	+ Education and learning activities about nature, conservation and the environment. Work with Chipenbele Wildlife Education Trust; +Donated books reduce pulping and waste; (+ Environmental research projects in Ecuador)

Table 3 Social and Poverty Alleviation Impacts

Social and Poverty Alleviation Impacts	Impact Areas	Stakeholders ¹			
		Employees	Volunteers (Customers)	Communities	
				Learners	Teachers
Assets, Income and Livelihoods	+ Income and assets from employment; + Support to extended family	- Cost of time spent on Book Bus.	+/-	+/-	
Mental and Physical Wellbeing	+ Ability to pay medical bills employees and families; + Job satisfaction.	+ Enjoyable working vacation. Feeling good and helping people.	+ Enjoyment from Book Bus and volunteer visits “lots of smiling faces”; +Improved attendance leads to better nutrition	+ Enjoyment from Book Bus and volunteer visits; + Greater resources lead to more job satisfaction	
Opportunity and Choice	+ Gain language skills; + Experience of other cultures; + Ability to pay for education; + Opportunities i.e. business start-up	+ Experience and understanding of developing world; + Personal development (i.e. confidence); +Future job opportunities i.e. connections with the UN, experience of development work, teaching experience	+ Increased enthusiasm for reading and learning; + Improved attendance; + Exposure to other cultures and new experiences; + Potential for longer term improvements in learning outcomes (Book donations, library improvements); +Adult learning.	+ Skills, development and capacity building through teacher support workshops.	
Networks and Relationships	+ Support extended family	+ Friendships with other volunteers and locals, ongoing relationships.	+ Potential to engender greater parental buy in and forge stronger links with schools	+ Supportive relationships with other teachers locally and internationally.	
Implications of Environmental Practices	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	

¹ Stakeholders are understood to be groups that are impacted by the activities of a social and or environmental enterprise. We identify 10 potential stakeholder groupings, these are: Employees; Distributors; Customers; Shareholders; Partners; Communities; Service Users; Suppliers; Donors, Funders and Investors; and Others (i.e. the state, advocacy groups).

Social and Poverty Alleviation Impacts	Impact Areas	Stakeholders					State (Other)
		Local Suppliers	Donors		Partners		
			Private	Publishers	Local NGOs	VentureCo	
Assets, Income and Livelihoods	+ Income and assets from local purchasing by Books Bus and volunteers	- Money and goods donated	+ Cost saving on disposing of books.	+ Potential income stream for project activities Ecuador Tierra Viva (ETV)	+ Source of income for company and shareholders.	+ Local education assets	
Mental and Physical Wellbeing	+ Potentially increased ability to pay for medical bills	+ Satisfaction and good feeling from doing good	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	
Opportunity and Choice	+ Potentially increased ability to pay school fees or invest	+/-	+/-	+ Support for local environmental research and education schemes in Zambia and Ecuador	+/-	+/-	
Networks and Relationships	+/-	+/-	+ Reputation protection and enhancement	+ Collaboration and partnership on development activities	+ Reputation protection and enhancement	+ Partnerships to improve education delivery and outcomes	
Implications of Environmental Practices	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	

Zambia (Livingstone, South Luangwa, and Meheba) and Malawi (Blantyre, the Shire Valley)

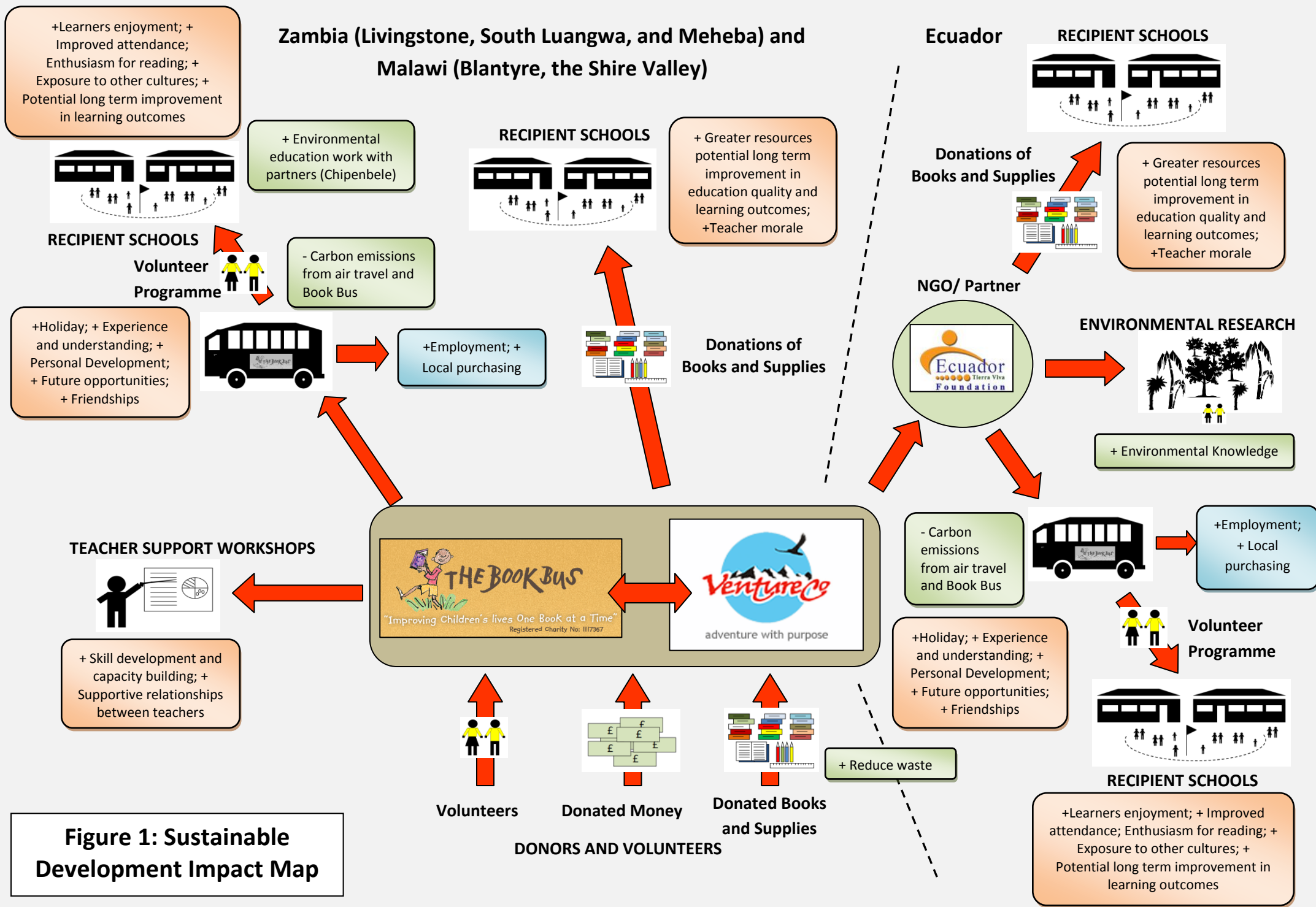


Figure 1: Sustainable Development Impact Map

Sustainable Development Impacts

Economic Impacts

Table 1 provides an overview of the Book Bus Foundation's economic outputs and impacts in Zambia, Malawi and Ecuador, with some of these also mapped in Figure 1. These outputs and impacts both positive and negative are relatively small. Given the nature of its work, local employment generated by the Book Bus Foundation is limited. However for those employed it provides a secure source of income for them, their households and extended families. The Book Buses operating in Zambia and Malawi also purchase the majority of their daily consumables i.e. food for volunteers, from local small and micro enterprises, while visiting volunteers also buy from local businesses. There is thus a net injection of money into local economies. Finally through the donation of books, teaching and learning resources, and support for infrastructure upgrading, the Book Bus Foundation is contributing to improved education provision in partner schools.

Environmental Impacts

The environmental impacts of the Book Bus Foundation's activities are identified in Table 2 with some also highlighted in Figure 1. As with the economic sphere these impacts are limited. Negative impacts can be noted in relation to carbon emissions stemming from volunteer air travel and the operations of the book buses themselves. Positive impacts can be seen in relation to environmental

research undertaken by volunteers in Ecuador, and also education work in Zambia with partners like the Chipenbele Wildlife Education School. While such partnerships were formative, and at the time of the research there was no specific component of volunteer teaching activities which addressed themes like conservation and human wildlife conflict, there is considerable scope for development in this area.

Social Impacts

A number of social and wider poverty alleviation impacts are identified stemming from the activities of the Book Bus Foundation in Zambia, Malawi and Ecuador with these impacts spread across a range of stakeholder groups. These impacts are identified in Table 3 and mapped in Figure 1. As discussed earlier the Book Bus Foundation employs few local staff in Zambia, while its programme in Ecuador is run by an independent NGO. Nevertheless those that are employed are paid a locally competitive and commensurate wage, with benefits for them and their dependents in terms of income and assets, health and wellbeing, and opportunities and choice.

The Book Bus volunteers are a key stakeholder group. In Table 3 they are also identified as customers reflecting that they pay for their volunteer experience. A number of positive social if not explicitly poverty alleviation impacts can be identified for these volunteers. The interview quotations below illustrate some of the potential benefits for

volunteers in terms of experience, change in outlook and personal development:

"I mean the whole project I thought was really good and I think it did feel like we were making a difference in Meheba to all those kids. Great interactions and I just learnt so much from being there. It was my first time going to this part of Africa ... and suddenly, you're just surrounded by Angolans, people from Burundi, Rwanda, Congo, so it's a huge melting pot, and it was such a great way to first go to Africa because they tell you all their different stories about their different cultures and it's just, you can't generalise about Africa any more when you meet all these different people" (Interview Book Bus Volunteer)

Every time I leave the school, I feel really happy. It's nice to be able to interact with the kids and see that they're actually enjoying doing what you have brought over and they're enjoying the things you're trying to teach them... I am learning a lot from them as well to be fair. They're teaching me a lot" (Interview Book Bus Volunteer)

Improved future career prospects is another suggested benefit for volunteers, with time spent on the Book Bus a positive addition to CVs. The potential to make contacts and gain experience directly relevant for future employment was also highlighted in interviews, as illustrated by the following quotation where a volunteer discusses why they signed on to work at the UN Meheba Refugee Settlement:

"If I'm very honest, it is the working for the UN later. I mean, I do care about children. In China I was teaching children, it was about the environment. I had done that before so it wouldn't have been the only incentive to be with children. On the one hand it was I want to work for the UN, and on the other it was like getting to know countries through the people and not just as a tourist. It's a mixture of both but at the end it's my job". (Interview Book Bus Volunteer)

A frequent criticism of voluntourism is that while it may be an enjoyable and valuable experience for volunteers, the benefits for recipient communities are often more limited. In the case of the Book Bus these concerns were recognised by staff who also understood the need to produce and be able to communicate the results of their activities. This is illustrated by the following interview quotation:

"I mean to an extent this project is run as a sort of a mix of adventure travel and charitable stuff and literacy, it is only recently that I started speaking to people who said you know you have really got to start producing results that you can tell people. People say "oh what are your results", and if I say "lots of happy smiley faces" well that is not enough. You have got to have things that people can assimilate and understand and digest" (Interview with Book Bus Foundation Chairman)

The social and poverty alleviation impacts of the Book Bus Foundation on recipient communities are not limited to "lots of happy smiley faces". Several key impacts

are first identified in relation to its volunteer programme. The enjoyment learners derive from visits by Book Bus volunteers were witnessed firsthand. This benefit should not be discounted. In a learning environment characterised by limited resources, large class sizes and in many instances teachers with limited training, a visit from Book Bus volunteers represents a break from the norm for learners. Such visits generate excitement and enthusiasm, including after the visit. Related to this, in numerous interviews it was suggested that they also encourage better attendance.

At present Book Bus volunteer programmes generally entail a visit to a partner school for several hours, with a different school visited each day. Volunteers design their own individual session activities. The children they work with may change on return visits, volunteers also come and go. In Zambia the Book Buses operate on a seasonal basis linked to volunteer demand and conditions on the ground. Undertaking work in the rainy season can be challenging and it may not be possible for Book Buses to reach remote rural schools. Reflecting these factors contact time with individual students and particular schools is on the whole quite limited. This is a greater limitation in Book Bus programmes in South Luangwa which are not as well established as interventions in Livingstone. Because of these present limitations it is difficult to identify, or definitively state or demonstrate that Book Bus volunteer visits have a substantial positive impact on literacy

levels, language skills or exam results in partner schools. Although anecdotal evidence from the schools suggests that there is. A more sustained engagement with partner schools with established baselines and mechanisms for assessing performance is needed to verify this. This will be discussed in more detail in the recommendations section of the report.

While recognising these difficulties, an impact suggested in numerous interviews was that volunteer visits acted as a catalyst for increasing enthusiasm about reading and literacy amongst learners and even within the wider community. The various impacts identified are illustrated in the following interview quotations:

“Well, we aim to make books more accessible to kids and get them enthusiastic about them and find out this other aspect of books that they don't necessarily get to see as much. And that's where they can practice their reading and have fun with it really... so hopefully the kids do feel that it's interesting, that it's fun, and they will remember the different things they do with us and then go to their library” (Interview Book Bus Volunteer)

“It has a lot of benefits, maybe just to mention a few. One they are trying to help us to reinforce reading in the learners ... At the same time the learners also they are being exposed to different teachers so that maybe the way that we teach and the way that they teach might add value to one another and eventually the child will catch up in reading.” (Interview Deputy Head Book Bus Partner School)

“What they do is very encouraging. Number one their focus is on reading, writing and a bit of speaking. What I can call it as a language two English to our pupils because here language one is the local language. So when they come they do that with the pupils and the pupils always feel very happy. Whatever we teach them, then they receive extra lessons from the Book Bus so there is a good atmosphere that the Book Bus has brought... we have always appreciated when the Book Bus visits”. (Interview with Partner School Principal)

“So I think that the Book Bus does inspire them a little bit to want to read more and learn more. That's why they also ask “are you bringing us any books that we can read?” And I think it's nice that they're actually asking for it because it means that we're actually inspiring them to want to read more after we leave”. (Interview Book Bus Volunteer)

“Showing them that these books lead to other things and these books contain things that matter and don't be afraid of books, some of them are afraid of books. I mean sometimes if they naughty they are told to go to that corner and read that book so it is a punishment... and you get them used to opening books, so things like how do you actually hold a book, how do you physically turn the pages” (Interview Book Bus Foundation Chairman)

Visits by Book Bus volunteers also provide an opportunity for a different more imaginative kind of learning than often occurs within classrooms. This was again highlighted in interviews:

“if you can get 5 or 6 kids around one volunteer then that for that hour they can explore stuff that they couldn't do normally... and you show them stuff and say this came from a book and from that book you go to that book and find out more and just some little processes are starting to happen there, which as long as they continue once we have left then it is having a positive effect. But they certainly wouldn't get those opportunities just by sitting in the classroom all day” (Interview Book Bus Foundation Chairman)

“I also like the fact that having worked in South Africa with younger kids, like here, it's so much chalk and talk, there's no time for reading and pleasure and there's no time for using your imagination. So I think that's quite important.” (Interview Book Bus Team Leader)

Donations of books and teaching and learning materials, and funding for the construction of classroom reading corners, are a second major strand of the Book Bus Foundation's activities. This more material support has the potential to positively impact on teaching and learning outcomes in recipient school in the short and longer term, as illustrated in the following interview quotation:

“Well I think in the long term, if out of 100 kids we work with 5 of them start reading because they got access to books then I think we are making a difference. We are encouraging kids to read. There is no way we are going to get 100 kids reading out of 100 but if we can get 5 that is a good start” (Interview Book Bus Foundation Chairman)

In 2012 in Livingstone the Book Bus Foundation ran its first teacher support workshop. The aim of this workshop was to capacitate teachers in local partner schools, but also to collaboratively devise ways in which Book Bus Foundation activities could more effectively complement and be integrated into teaching and learning programmes in recipient schools. Another teacher support workshop will occur in 2013 in Livingstone, with one also planned in South Luangwa. These teacher support workshops are part of a wider strategy of engagement with local school teachers and head teachers. Gaining greater local buy in and participation is seen as an important step in the development of the Book Bus Foundation's work in Zambia. It is viewed that working to improve local teacher capacity and leadership in schools, and getting greater buy-in including from communities, will improve the overall effectiveness of interventions and ultimately have a positive impact on learning outcomes. This is illustrated by the following interview quotation:

"The whole idea of the workshop is to explore, it is really to start from scratch what is the Book Bus, what does the Book Bus do for your school, how can we make it better, what suggestions have you got for us. Here are some suggestions that we have for you so it is very much teacher to teacher stuff and we don't look upon it as the UK teachers in anyway training the Zambian teachers but it is a dialogue... I think the big thing is the difference has got to be, it has got to be working with the

teachers. It is not just working with the kids it has got to be working with the teachers and also the adults in society. What really want is when a child goes home from school his mum and dad say pick up a book and read and even if mum and dad cannot read they understand the importance of it, for the teachers to open the school library up after school so that they can come in and read" (Interview Book Bus Foundation Chairman).

Conclusions

Bus Book Foundation staff regarded the organisation as a charity and in interviews suggested that in the future they would like to move towards a more social enterprise type model. This perception and desire is illustrated in the follow interview quotation:

"I have been looking into turning it into a social enterprise as an entity in the UK because I think more and more charities are being expected to support themselves as opposed to just you know "give me money" and if a charity can get involved in some way in some sort of a trading business or trading format that creates income, generates income that is acceptable then you tie a social enterprise to a charity for example and the two can somehow support one another" (Interview Book Bus Foundation Chairman)

However in terms of locating the Book Bus Foundation in relation to prevailing understandings and definitions of what constitutes a social enterprise, we believe that it already demonstrates many of these attributes and characteristics.

According to many social enterprise definitions an organisation should gain at least some of its income through trading, with surpluses reinvested or used for social purposes. The Book Bus Foundation sells experiential voluntourism, with this product used to fund the Book Bus Foundation's programmes and running costs. The Book Bus Foundation is a not-for-profit charity with its surpluses reinvested for social purposes i.e. funding donations of books and learning materials, paying for their transportation, or setting up new volunteer programmes like the Book Bus India. As demonstrated in the previous section, the volunteer programme itself also has social and poverty alleviation benefits.

The centrality of a social or wider ethical mission is another commonly recognised trait of a social enterprise. Such a mission is apparent in the Book Bus Foundation with its goal of improving children's lives through literacy. The Book Bus Foundation is registered in the UK as a charity. It was set-up through a mixture of donations and money from the founder Tom Maschler, with its initial funding strategy very focussed on donations. However as VentureCo became involved and entered into partnership with the Book Bus Foundation, and as the volunteer programmes have been established, this funding strategy has shifted. We suggest that what defines a social enterprise is less to do with legal status and is more a question of how an organisation operates, what it uses its surpluses for, and the relative importance it ascribes to social value creation. Even in

the UK, which has been at the forefront of policy and legislative engagements with the social enterprise sector, there is no universally recognised legal form or status a social enterprise should take. Whether the Book Bus Foundation is a social enterprise, a charity or both is to an extent a semantic question. However we regard the Book Bus Foundation as in many ways operating in a way consistent with our understandings of a social enterprise, and perceive that there may be a lag in perceptions within the organisation, between how the Book Bus Foundation was initially conceived and the way in which it presently exists.

A central dynamic in the evolution of the Book Bus Foundation since its establishment has been the non-profit/private sector partnership between the Foundation and VentureCo. It is questionable how far the first Book Bus would have got, and where the Book Bus Foundation would now be without the expertise and experience of VentureCo staff. Their private sector background also appears to be a driving factor in efforts to make the Book Bus Foundation more self sustaining. These efforts are manifest in the establishment of the volunteer programme, in the Book Bus Buddies scheme which seeks to solicit ongoing donations and support from Book Bus alumni, and also the online sale of Book Bus merchandise. However the more private sector and adventure tourism background of many senior Book Bus Foundation staff also means that they are perhaps less familiar and have less expertise in designing interventions and

programmes to improve education provision and literacy. This limitation was fully recognised by Book Bus Foundation management, who were actively seeking outside guidance and expertise to help them develop their programmes and interventions with the aim of increasing impact.

The Book Bus Foundation has numerous positive economic, environmental, and particularly social impacts in the countries it operates in and the communities it works with. While many of these impacts are difficult to quantify or conclusively demonstrate, we nevertheless firmly believe they are there and have attempted to map and highlight them in the previous section and in Figure 1. We identify scope for the Book Bus Foundation to develop and enhance its programmes, particularly in relation to its work in South Luangwa Zambia, and make a number of suggestions in the following section.

Suggestions

- At present the majority of Book Bus volunteer programmes, particularly in South Luangwa and Malawi, follow an approach of visiting a different school in a region each day for several hours before returning the following week. It should be considered whether a more extended visitation and engagement with each school is a better approach. Visiting the same school for several days in a week, and possibly working with the same children may increase the potential long term impacts of volunteer visits. Volunteers would also
- develop stronger relationships with individual learners. This approach could be trialled with pre-existing groups i.e. youth groups who collectively volunteer for the Book Bus.
- A strength of the current Book Bus programme is that during volunteer visits learners are removed from the traditional classroom environment and given the opportunity to express themselves and use their imaginations. While this freedom should be retained volunteer visits could be made more focussed and structured. Teaching by the volunteers could be better connected with the curriculum and made to compliment the subjects learners are presently studying. This would require greater communication between Book Bus staff and local teachers, perhaps adding to the case for visitation with particular schools to be extended. Teachers at partner schools also suggested that Book Bus volunteers could set some kind of homework assignment; this would again work better if visitation with schools was more frequent.
- If a more structured programme was devised, each visit by the Book Bus in a week or over a longer period could be used to build towards a final project or outcome. For example if the Book Bus visited a school each day in a week, at the end of the week a prize giving for the best projects, or the top or most improved students could be held. At this point books could also be donated to the school, with the

parents of learners also invited. This could be a way to encourage greater parental and community participation, it might also be used to highlight other issues i.e. Safe sex and HIV/AIDS or the importance of education for girls. Prizes could be presented by local traditional leaders. In South Luangwa lodges and local tourism providers could be encouraged to contribute to prizes, for example game drives for winning students. Outside of formal prize giving game lodges could also be encouraged to donate their vehicles and staff for short periods to allow students to visit the South Luangwa National Park. There may be similar scope for leveraging local businesses to assist the Book Bus Foundation in its work in Livingstone and Malawi.

- Currently the vast majority of Book Bus volunteers are female. To attract more male volunteers, additional activities could be added to volunteer programmes. An example might be football/sports coaching. In this area there may be scope to link up with amongst others football related social enterprises like Alive and Kicking, which is also active in Zambia. More science or technology based teaching activities could also be added to the volunteer programme, for example volunteers mentor older learners in a science competition.
- There is scope for the Book Bus to develop closer links and working partnerships with other organisations in South Luangwa and potentially some of its other regions of operation. Project Luangwa is an example of this;

it is firmly embedded within the area and has strong links with lodges, tour operators and NGOs. At present Book Bus volunteers in South Luangwa are free in the afternoons. There may be scope for them to use that time to work with organisations like Project Luangwa. Additional activities like afterschool reading clubs or sports coaching could also be arranged and undertaken during these free periods.

- Recruiting volunteers for the Ecuadorian Book Bus has proven more difficult than for Book Buses in Zambia. Given issues around language it may be fruitful for the Book Bus Foundation to develop deeper links with universities in Spain and the USA, as well as specifically targeting Spanish language students at UK universities who are often required to spend extended periods in a Spanish speaking country as part of their degree programme.
- At present the Book Buses in Zambia operate on a seasonal basis and are put into storage during the rainy off season. While it may not be financially viable to run the vehicles during this period using international volunteers, alternative sources of donor funding could be sought for the buses to be used as mobile libraries for both children and adults. Local partner organisations could be enlisted to help oversee and manage such activities. Local tertiary education institutions could also be approached about their staff or students volunteering on the Book Buses, as might churches and

larger businesses in both Zambia and regionally.

- To access donor funding, organisations are increasingly expected to demonstrate and communicate the impacts of their activities and interventions. The Book Bus Foundation needs to develop a more rigorous and cohesive approach to understanding and as far as practicable measuring its impacts. While this is difficult some proxy measures and techniques could include recording trends in exam results in classes and across partner schools receiving support from the Book Bus. A survey amongst teachers at partner/ recipient schools asking their opinions on the impacts and benefits of Book Bus interventions might also be useful. It may also be worthwhile keeping a record of exactly how many extra teaching hours are provided by Book Bus volunteers. It might also be useful to record changes in learner attendance, in attendance of extra curricular activities i.e. homework clubs, and male versus female exam results.
- The Book Bus Foundation's programmes and activities would benefit from greater local input and buy-in, described by one respondent as "Zambianisation". The teacher support workshop in Livingstone in 2012 is a step in the right direction as are proposed workshops in 2013 in Livingstone and South Luangwa. At the time of this research the Book Bus was also registering as a charitable organisation in Zambia. The support

and involvement of prominent Zambian authors or non-politically aligned figures might raise the organisation's profile and help it to become more locally embedded, as well as countering potential criticism that the Book Bus Foundation is overly UK based. At present there is a Book Bus "godmother" in the UK and Ecuador but does not seem to be one in Zambia.

- The Book Bus Foundation entered into partnership with VentureCo to access its expertise and experience in the field of adventure travel. The Book Bus has now been running successfully for over 5 years. In the future it may make sense for it to bring back in-house some of the administration and functions currently outsourced to Venture Co. Particularly given the increased experience and skills now embedded within the organisation. This may make more funds available for social purposes.
- Over time the way in which the Book Bus Foundation donates books has evolved. Most if not all of the books now donated are brand new and supplied by supporting publishers. Nevertheless we believe there is still scope for the Book Bus Foundation to be more innovative in its donations. Huge literary resources are now available online. Thousands of textbooks and millions of classics are freely available for download on sites like archive.org. A small number of e-book readers donated to a rural school and preloaded with a selection of classics and textbooks could provide

an invaluable resource for learners and teachers. E-readers are now robust, relatively inexpensive and can be recharged using solar technology. The need for donated books to be relevant in an African context is a consideration recognised by the Book Bus Foundation and there are an increasing number of books available written by African authors and designed for African children that could be targeted for donation. Particularly those with messages around public health or social issues i.e. gender based violence or HIV/AIDS.

- Finally through the Book Bus Buddies scheme, returned volunteers meet regionally and nationally to fundraise for the charity and catch up and share memories of the project. While we have no data on the number of active Book Bus buddies or their fund raising activities, our sense from conversations with Book Bus staff was that this scheme could be developed and made more prominent. It might also be extended to particularly supportive non-volunteers, schools, libraries and businesses.

Contact Details



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Acknowledgments

The authors would like to acknowledge the financial support of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC grant reference RES-061-25-0473).

We would also like to thank all the participants in our interviews and the access granted to us by The Book Bus Foundation.

All views expressed in this article are those of the authors only.

This case study can be cited as:

Holt, D. & Littlewood, D. 2013. Case Study No. 2: The Book Bus
"Improving children's lives one book at a time". Trickle Out Africa Project Case Study Series,
Queen's University Management School, Queen's University Belfast ISSN 2052-0026 (Online).
Available at <www.trickleout.net>