

## EXCEPT from the DEEPEN Challenge Fund Project Closure Report – March 2018

### W-Holistic Business Solutions Limited

<b>Grant Amount</b>	£102,182		
<b>LGAs</b>	State-wide		
<b>Subject(s)</b>	N/A		
<b>Classes</b>	1-6		
<b>Innovation</b>	Improved on the Graded Assessment of Private Schools system by introducing 'schools as a business' indicators; use of a cluster model to encourage competition and inter-school collaboration;		
<b>Pilot numbers</b>	<b>Schools</b>	<b>Students (projected)</b>	<b>Teachers (projected)</b>
	620	58,405	4,416
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://w-hbs.com/">http://w-hbs.com/</a>		

*Table 1: W-Holistic Business Solutions Limited - key facts*

#### 1.1.1. Product Description

The Sustainable Education and Enterprise Development (SEED) model ranks low-cost schools across six parameters ranging from business strategy to academic processes and provides bespoke training, mentoring and business development services aimed at transforming them into effective, sustainable, profitable institutions.

The SEED programme comprises four stages:

**Quality Assessment:** the SEED Quality Assessment Tool (SQAT) is a diagnostic tool that ranks schools' performance in six areas: strategy and governance, leadership and management, academic processes, the learner and learning environment, community and partnerships, and financial management in order to ascertain the current level of performance and support required by each school.

**Boot Camp:** school owners attend a three-day boot camp designed to help them develop a school transformation plan. The boot camp, facilitated by experienced education professionals, provides practical training to participants in addressing the areas of improvement identified in their SQAT scorecards, and detailed guidance on developing school transformation plans for their institutions.

**Mentoring:** using a cluster-mentoring model (W-Holistic organised schools into WhatsApp groups), school owners are assigned mentors who support them to take actions listed in their school transformation plans and monitor their progress.

**Access to Finance:** SEED implements its interventions with a view to helping them develop a profile that is attractive to microfinance institutions.

#### Activities

W-Holistic Business Solutions Limited (W-Holistic) selected 600 low-cost private schools across Lagos, using three methods to identify schools:

**Acquisition Partners:** SEED worked with two associations: AFED and the League of Muslim School Proprietors.

**Call for Nominations:** the project promoted its offering through social media, encouraging citizens to nominate schools in their communities.

Community Mapping: JAKIN NGO, a non-profit working with vulnerable groups in Africa, was engaged for the community mapping exercise. 33 mappers (30 field staff and three supervisors) were deployed to locate schools in hard-to-reach areas that might otherwise be overlooked.

The outreach was impressive – by the end of the exercise, 986 low-cost schools registered for participation in the SEED project. Because the emphasis was on schools who were yet to benefit from any DEEPEN interventions, 23 of these schools could not be included in the results monitoring for this grant.

While the schools verification exercise was ongoing, W-Holistic trained twenty trainers on the SEED methodology in a four-day training session on 18-20 December 2017. The trainers provided school owners with boot camp sessions in February 2018, running a range of professional, engaging sessions. Unfortunately, turnout was low, with only 350 of the anticipated 600 schools in attendance. This was despite the fact that the training sessions were offered for free. W-Holistic conducted further outreach and identified and trained another 272 schools in March. For those schools that had attended February sessions, W-Holistic began mentoring sessions in March, creating six WhatsApp groups, one in each educational district. The mentorship included training for 300 school owners by the British Council Connecting Classrooms project on academic process and outcomes and developing a learning environment, two key metrics in the SQAT mechanism. By signing up to the network, school owners received benefits beyond those funded by the grant.

W-Holistic originally anticipated that its budget would mean that physical mentoring would need to be clustered. However, it was successful in securing 61 interns from ReadySetWork (an initiative of the Ministry of Education) to provide a mix of one-on-one mentoring and cluster mentoring to participating schools. In addition to the interns, the project engaged 60 Volunteer Mentors to conduct on-site face-to-face mentoring from 21st March 2018.

### **Observations**

As a result of the scope of the project and challenges with school engagement, mentoring commenced in the same month that midline evaluations were conducted; at the time of project closure, just 104 schools had received mentoring support. Given that the mentorship element of the SEED project is what is likely to generate real results, is difficult to evaluate the performance of the mentorship element of the project at this time.

Despite the delays in mentorship, a number of schools have already begun implementing the changes recommended in their school transformation plans. They have identified ‘quick wins’ that will nevertheless have a dramatic impact on the learning environment for children in low-cost schools. One school acted on recommendations that they segregate toilets for staff and students, and further segregate toilets for students based on gender. Acting on such simple advice increases the degree of comfort for female students enrolled in the schools and has the potential to drive increased enrolment.

Despite its impressive reach, the project faces a number of challenges including:

**Sustainability:** there is a risk that schools’ enrolment was driven by the fact that training was provided free of charge. Although schools did pay for the school transformation plans, it is likely that those schools who were not willing to pay had already self-selected by not attending the training session. They represented more than 50% of the potential training pool. SEED will have to consider alternative funding mechanisms outside of fee payments from schools.

Feasibility: training and school transformation plans are not the only expenditure SEED requires from schools. Many of the improvements (building toilets, training for teachers, etc) require capital that actors in the segment lack. It is possible that the access to finance element of the project will address this by unlocking finance for schools, but there are chronic problems in the provision of microfinance that might require significant intervention to address.

Prioritisation: whilst the SQAT tool is comprehensive and considered, it is yet to weight the factors being assessed. For instance, the creation of a mission statement carries as much weight in the final scores as the schools' record on child protection. To be truly meaningful, SEED must acknowledge that some changes are more important than others.

### Preliminary results

W-Holistic projected that 60% schools attending their boot camps would record improvements in their scores by implementing the changes recommended in their school transformation plan. They projected a total of 7,200 cumulative improvement points across the schools and an average of 20 improvement points per school by March 2018. When the 60% target is applied to the 40-school sample, the minimum number of schools that are expected to improve is 24 with a corresponding number of improvement points of 480. The results demonstrated that 24 schools had implemented positive changes, with a total of 1,133 improvement points and an average of 28 improvement points per school. *Table 2* demonstrates that W-Holistic is performing above target.

Indicator	Target	Achieved	Achievement against target
Number of schools recording an improvement	24	24	100%
Number of improvement points	480	1,133	236%
Average improvement	20	28	142%

*Table 2: SEED preliminary results*

As discussed in Section 0, the scoring system obscures the fact that not all improvements are made equal. Nevertheless, the results achieved in such little implementation time are encouraging and suggest that SEED will deliver significant results by August 2018. W-Holistic is projecting that, by July 2018, 70% of their schools will record an improvement by implementing the changes identified in their school transformation plan. They have also projected that 3,000 students will indirectly benefit from their services by July 2018. This will be the first time that the project is able to meaningfully measure its impact on students and their learning outcomes. The grant recipient will conduct endline assessments in the 40 schools assessed for the midline data gathering and report against the projected number of students.

### Sustainability

SEED's five-year plan is to scale up to 3,000 schools (and 200,000 children). In order to achieve this plan, they intend to continue using the partnership model that they employed during the pilot to continue to train and mentor schools. Existing partners they are working with have been captured in *Table 3*.

Partner	Modes of collaboration
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Partner	Modes of collaboration
ReadySetWork (Lagos State Ministry of Education)	Provision of interns to act as School Transformation Officers
Connecting Classrooms (British Council)	Training of SEED schools (300 school owners and 600 teachers)
Association of Formidable Education Development	Support with registration of association members for the SEED program
League of Muslim School Proprietors	Support with registration of association members for the SEED program
Amazing Amazon Initiative	Provision of child abuse data for the Child Protection, Child Safeguarding and Child Rights module in the SEED curriculum Assisting the SEED Child Abuse Action team in developing the Child Protection, Child Safeguarding and Child Rights module
Global Child Health and Safety Initiative	Provision of child abuse data for the Child Protection, Child Safeguarding and Child Rights module in the SEED curriculum Assisting the SEED Child Abuse Action team in developing the Child Protection, Child Safeguarding and Child Rights module
JAKIN NGO	Provision of child abuse data for the Child Protection, Child Safeguarding and Child Rights module in the SEED curriculum Assisting the SEED Child Abuse Action team in developing the Child Protection, Child Safeguarding and Child Rights module

Table 3: Current SEED partners

SEED is also actively seeking partnerships with the organisations listed in *Table 4***Error! Reference source not found..**

Partner	Modes of collaboration
Microsoft	Hosting the proposed SQAT Online Tool on a cloud storage solution for ease of access on computers, phones, tablets, and other devices
FABE International Foundation	Leveraging the Eco Schools solution to improve conditions in schools Development of eco-friendly playgrounds from recycled materials such used tyres Introducing waste management techniques such as recycling and upcycling
Teach for Nigeria	Placing Teach for Nigeria Fellows in SEED
Elimu Network	Provision of ICT training for teachers in SEED Schools

Partner	Modes of collaboration
Lotus Capital	Islamic finance for Muslim schools
Learning-As-I-Teach Foundation	Provision of continuous education for teachers in SEED schools
Teensed Foundation	Assisting the SEED Child Abuse Action team in expanding the Child Protection, Child Safeguarding and Child Rights module
Christ the Redeemer School Management	Registration of association members for the SEED program
Association of Model Islamic Schools	Registration of association members for the SEED program

*Table 4: Prospective SEED partners*