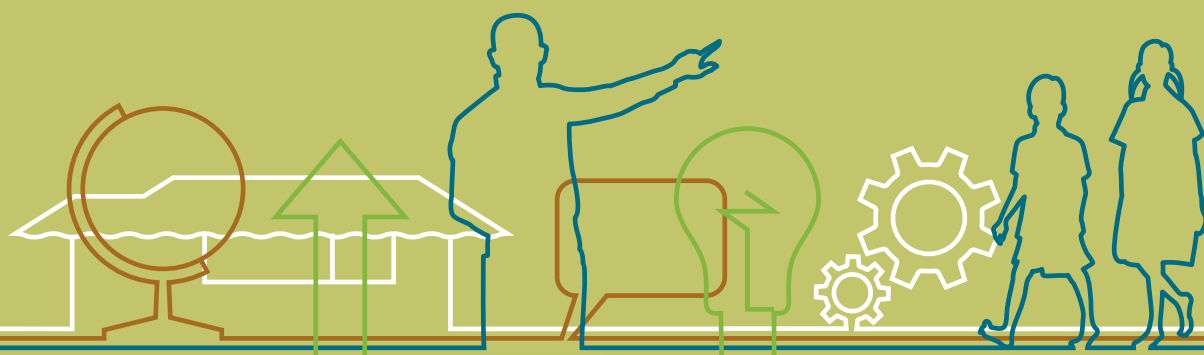


Summary Report
by Serena Rossignoli and Anna Riggall

Innovation and achievement: the work of four not-for-profit school groups



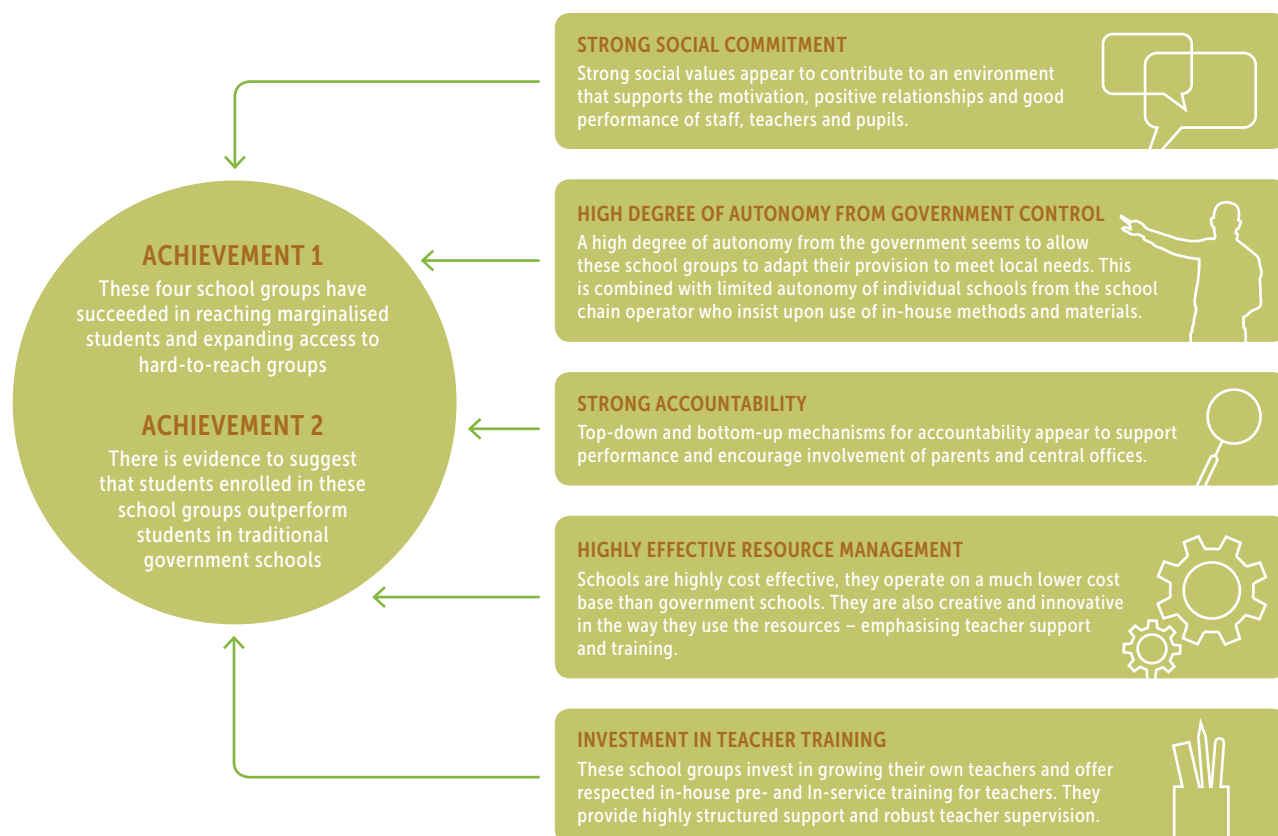
As educators, there is much we can learn from the systematic analysis of the work of effective schools and the policies used by improving education systems.

Our global programme of education research has this focus on 'bright spots' at the levels of both the school and the national system.

This report examines four not-for-profit school chains, run by non-governmental organisations in low-income contexts. These are *Fe y Alegría*, the *Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee* (better known by its acronym BRAC), *Gyan Shala* and *Zambia Open Community Schools*.

These school chains have succeeded in reaching marginalised students and expanding access to hard-to-reach groups. The evidence also suggests that students enrolled in these school groups can outperform students in traditional government schools. Our analysis provisionally points to some ingredients for success.

Achievements and success: a summary





The four school groups



- Fe y Alegría educates 678,000 students in 1423 schools
- BRAC educates 748,910 students in 22,000 schools
- Zambian Open Community Schools educate 130,000 students in 665 schools
- Gyan Shala educates 45,000 students in 1688 schools

Our study raises some interesting points for policymakers:

The topic brushes up against some contentious debates connected to non-state education provision. In this context, it is important to be mindful of the differences between types of non-state provision and also the range of opinion concerning non-state provision of education and the need to strive towards access to good education for all.

The scale of the challenges around access and quality of education in the global South, particularly for the most marginalised children and families, is vast. The availability of financial support globally to address this challenge is insufficient to meet the need. In this context, philanthropic, NGO-run, not-for-profit school groups appear to have a place in provision – be that in the short or long term.

These schools seem to be driven by an understanding of the power of parental partnership. The proximity of the schools to their communities and the parental contribution in making the school operationally functional create the conditions for local stakeholders to actively participate in school life and supervise teachers' and students' behaviour.

These four school groups also appear to be successful in motivating teachers. This is a topic receiving greater attention within the wider global challenge of teacher supply. They appear to achieve this through the use of non-monetary incentives, social values and strong community ties. Their selection methods for hiring teachers also connect to teachers' motivation and commitment to the social values promoted by the schools.

There are some interesting insights highlighted in the literature underpinning this report that call for an intelligent nuancing of the arguments concerning any mechanistic relationships between investment in infrastructure and teachers and the quality of schooling. Of course, both are important, and here we see examples of cost effectiveness and targeted investment in teacher support and training. Professional development – particularly effective in-service training – is key and lies at the heart of their educational models.

These types of school can work to support state-provided education and need not create a parallel system. The four examples we focus on appear to play a significant role in partnering with governments and contributing to reaching the targets of the post-2015 education agenda in the locations where they operate. Their educational models are aligned with national curricula and often allow students to transition and progress to public secondary schools. More broadly, however, good examples about exactly how states can ensure that providers are supporting the bigger mission to ensure quality education for all needs further documentation.

Accountability in these four school groups may represent an interesting comparative case when reviewing public school accountability mechanisms, particularly in decentralised systems where a similar structure is put in place, with central offices overseeing the performance of single schools. It appears that for these school groups, the balance between autonomy and accountability allows them to activate a virtuous cycle of improvements and continuous innovation.



Thanks to Fe y Alegría Peru for supplying
the photographs used in this report

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