



united  
world  
schools

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# ANNUAL REPORT

## AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS



# 2021/2022



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# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



**To all our supporters, thank you on behalf of the tens of thousands of children who stay safe and continue to learn because of you.**

It is truly an honor to join United World Schools as CEO at such a pivotal time. I am humbled and inspired by the impact of this amazing organisation in improving life opportunities for some of the world's poorest children, living in some of the most excluded communities. Our education model is challenging to deliver, but simple in its essence:

- ◆ We work through highly participative partnerships with the local community and authorities that allows us to build schools successfully
- ◆ Our schools provide quality, inclusive primary education to all local children
- ◆ Our students gain essential literacy and numeracy skills, they develop improved life skills, and they learn to dream!
- ◆ We train local teachers and increase the capacity of local education systems
- ◆ After 5-7 years, we transition our schools to the responsibility of the local government, thus promoting sustainable development for the long term

The events of the past year have once again highlighted the extraordinary commitment and dedication of our teams to deliver for our students and their communities, against the backdrop of a wide range of challenges, including climate, topography and the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. I am proud to lead the development of the next phase of the UWS journey and I am excited at the opportunity to change the future for thousands more children and their communities. I would like to express my deep gratitude and admiration for the extraordinary work of my colleagues across UWS.

Throughout 2021, Covid-19 continued to present significant challenges to the education sector across the world and resulted in continued school closures for much of the year in Cambodia and Nepal. In Myanmar, political upheaval increased the challenges of delivering education and schools remained officially closed throughout the year. UWS built on the learnings from the first waves of the pandemic

in 2020, with dedicated local teams of teachers and support staff using creative ways to teach and safeguard the children in our communities. Distance learning was delivered through a range of radio broadcasts, project learning, forest classes, home visits and even classes delivered by loud speakers.

Last year 22,766 children were enrolled at 223 UWS schools in Cambodia, Myanmar and Nepal. During 2021 we built and opened 30 new schools and transitioned a further 23 to the local authorities. Transition is a growing and vital part of our model, allowing us to have a sustainable impact, empowering local communities to run their own schools over time and giving us the capacity to reach even more excluded children with education for the very first time.

Our work has continued to attract public recognition; we were delighted that UWS Cambodia's Country Director Nan Sitha was honored with the King's Award: the Moni Sarapoin Mohaserey Wat. This is the highest recognition bestowed directly on the organisation by the King of Cambodia in appreciation of UWS' extensive contribution to education and literacy in the country, having reached nearly 31,000 previously out of school children through the opening of 133 new primary schools.

We have launched a pilot project in Madagascar, a country with large numbers of children living in excluded communities without access to schools. We selected Madagascar as our 4th program country because it offers a highly conducive environment for our next successful UWS program. In addition to strong commitment from local communities and authorities, we are also forming significant new partnerships with Axian Foundation, a leading local corporate foundation with an existing program to build new schools, and with Blue Ventures, a leading

marine conservation NGO with strong roots in the local communities where we are opening schools. Our first five pilot schools are opening soon for the new school year, which starts in September 2022. We are excited about the huge benefits to be gained from working in partnerships of this quality for the benefit of the children and communities whom we serve.

Since inception, UWS has reached over 46,000 children in 251 schools. None of this would be possible without the fantastic support and generosity of our donors. Despite the continuing economic challenges, UWS UK achieved income of £3.2m in 2021, a strong year of growth from £2.7m in 2020. To all our supporters - thank you, on behalf of all of us here at Team UWS... but more importantly, thank you on behalf of the tens of thousands of children who stay safe and continue to learn because of you.

Our income in 2021 included our first ever UK Aid Match Campaign, which will generate a further £1.3m from the UK government which will, over time, co-fund education program in Nepal from 2022-2025. We have also secured a further round of UK Aid Match for 2022, as from 2023-2026 this will co-fund education for girls in Cambodia and Nepal in both existing and new schools.

UWS' success in securing UK Aid Match support from the UK government is a significant endorsement of our charity and provides important visibility over future funding streams. I would like to thank the FCDO for their confidence in UWS.

We remain committed to growth and delivery of an exceptionally low-cost, high-impact and sustainable model that strikes at the heart of delivering the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 (inclusive, quality education) for every child.

LIZZY MUNDAY  
CEO, United World Schools

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Earlier this year I returned from visits to our programs in Cambodia and Nepal following the reopening of all UWS schools in these countries. I saw with my own eyes the life changing impact of UWS schools - our students were excited to share their ambitions for the future, empowered by their UWS education. I came away inspired by the extraordinary work of our local teams, working tirelessly to serve our students and their communities, overcoming huge challenges along the way.

Our schools in Myanmar remained officially closed throughout 2021, however our teachers continued to provide invaluable teaching and learning on a 'remote' basis, to the extent permitted by local conditions in the context of ongoing civil conflict. More recently in June 2022 we were delighted to reopen our schools in Myanmar after more than two years of enforced closure. We have been inspired again by the response of our students, excited by the opportunity to return to school with their friends from the local community.

We look forward to the opening of our first pilot schools in Madagascar, working via innovative partnerships with a leading corporate foundation and a conservation NGO with strong roots in our target communities. This model has the potential to scale rapidly in Madagascar, and to create an exciting template for future development in other countries.

**To date, we have reached over 46,000 children. This success is a testament to the exceptional quality and high-performance ethic of our diverse global team.**

Over the past decade UWS has developed a highly scalable, low-cost model for growth, financed by a diverse mix of income, for which we are eternally grateful to our many supporters. To date, we have reached over 46,000 children. This success is a testament to the exceptional quality and high-performance ethic of our diverse global team.

Over 98% of our staff work in our program countries, including 1,261 teachers, supported by our teams in the UK and US. I am proud that our program country teams are staffed and led by local nationals with their unique proximity to the communities whom we serve.

We have welcomed outstanding new leaders and board members to the UWS family in 2021, strengthening our capability and capacity in key areas of planned growth. Not all changes went exactly as planned, however we are well placed to drive UWS forward with an excellent global team under the new leadership of Lizz Munday as CEO.

Thank you to our highly committed board members who all share the team's passion for the UWS mission. Thanks also to the board members who have stepped down during the last year; your contribution has

played a key part in making UWS who we are today.

Moving into 2022, the fundraising environment is becoming more challenging as we face into increasing economic and political headwinds. UWS is responding to these challenges with an even tighter focus on cost-effective delivery and organisational agility.

The quality of our team, combined with the continuing strength of support of our donors and partners, together provide an excellent platform for continued delivery of high-quality programs and further growth as we reach even more out-of-school children. My colleagues and I look forward to working with you on the exciting next steps of our journey together.

PETER TAYLOR  
Chair of the Board of Trustees,  
United World Schools

# EDUCATION TRANSFORMS LIVES

**Education transforms lives; unlocking potential and breaking the cycle of poverty. United World Schools works in some of the world's poorest regions to give every child access to a quality, inclusive education.**

In collaboration with local people, we build primary schools and train community teachers. We work in partnership with communities, supporting and empowering them to take increasing control of their school. Over time, we transition each of our schools to be community and government run. This means we have a long-term impact in each community, and gives us the chance to reach even more children with the education which is their right.

In 2021, the remote communities we serve were still reeling from the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic has taken an economic toll on some of the most impoverished families in the world and deprived billions of children of their education.

Through these challenges, the global United World Schools team have continued to fight for children's right to education in the world's most remote and marginalised communities.



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# 2021

## IN NUMBERS

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**22,766**  
children reached  
(46,028 total  
historic reach)

**1,261**  
UWS teachers

**223**  
UWS schools

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**300**  
children in UWS  
secondary school  
dormitories

**24**  
schools in  
construction

**23**  
schools transitioned  
to the state education  
system



# WHERE WE WORK



## MADAGASCAR

**5**  
UWS schools

**1,000**  
UWS students



## NEPAL

**46**  
UWS schools

**5,424**  
UWS students\*

**377**  
teachers



## MYANMAR

**79**  
UWS schools

**4,300**  
UWS students

**111**  
teachers



## CAMBODIA

**126**  
UWS schools

**12,323**  
UWS students

**773**  
teachers

\*Number of children enrolled in UWS schools at year end

# HOW WE MEASURE OUR IMPACT



We are investing in our monitoring, evaluation and learning processes to evidence and scrutinise our impact.

In 2021, we launched an updated data management system, using our own data collection app. UWS Education Officers capture individual student data via mobile phones, improving reporting capability and analysis on the data collected. This also supports our inclusion plan, creating an enhanced capability to identify and track vulnerable students. This help us develop quicker intervention plans to prevent school drop out.

We also worked in partnership with the NFER (National Foundation for Educational Research) to produce high quality assessments for entry level, Level 2 and Level 4 students. These are globally standardised assessments which enable us to monitor and report on learning outcomes, evidencing impact and enabling us to constantly improve the quality of our education.

# OUR SUSTAINABILITY

We transition each UWS School to the state education system after 5-7 years.

When a child accesses education for the first time, it doesn't only transform their own life. It has a lasting impact on their parents, their future children and their entire community for generations to come.

At United World Schools, we train local teachers, empower students and parents, provide health and sanitation support and partner with regional and national governments. We provide ongoing support and empower communities in governance, leadership and administration until every school is self-sustaining and we are confident in the local authority's ability to maintain it.

We transition each school to the national education system after 5-7 years. Transitioned schools join the UWS 'Legacy School Community' and we continue to monitor their progress and offer support through facilitating schools networks and providing online resources. Our legacy schools strengthen the national education system and continue to provide a life-changing education to the children of the community for generations to come.



# QUALITY AND INCLUSION



The key to giving children a bright future is providing a quality and inclusive education.

We're committed to providing quality inclusive primary education to all children within the communities we serve, while reducing the barriers to and within education for those most at risk of marginalisation, exclusion, and underachievement. We recognise that the hardest to reach children often face multiple layers of exclusion due to factors such as gender, disability, poverty, ethnicity, religion and language. We work with students, schools and communities to provide targeted support, and to ensure all children have the chance to participate and learn in a safe and stimulating environment.

This year, we continued to build on the significant progress we've already made in delivering an education that includes every child and gives them

the skills they need to succeed in life. In 2021, when schools re-opened after the Covid-19, we continued to focus on ensuring that every UWS learning environment is inclusive. We have made great progress in this area, despite many local and cultural challenges. We have done a lot of work in promoting girls' education in particular, and were awarded a significant FCDO grant to further develop our impact in this crucial area.

We have also developed our teacher training programme, working with national teacher training providers to co-produce an accreditation scheme for all our teachers, to ensure that they receive the professional recognition they deserve.



# 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

**JAN**



UWS was featured in a Harvard Paper on Leadership in Development through the Pandemic.

**FEB**

**Keeping Children Safe**  
Setting tough international child safeguarding standards

Received our Level 1 Accreditation from Keeping Children Safe, international leaders in child safeguarding.

**MAR**



Produced high quality student assessments with the NFER (National Foundation for Educational Research).

**JUL**



Led a webinar on Climate Change and Education, hosted by CNBC's Tania Bryer.

**AUG**



Launched our pilot with the Axian Foundation and Blue Ventures to build 5 schools in Madagascar!

**SEP**



Announced our charity partnership with the Council of British International Schools (COBIS).

**APR**



Launched our first UK Aid Match campaign, helping children live Happily Ever Smarter through education.

**MAY**



Schools, supporters and corporate partners raised over £30K for UWS through our fundraising 180 Challenge.

**JUN**



Hosted a Secret Sale with artwork from the UK's favourite children's illustrators - and children's art from UWS Nepal schools!

**OCT**



Hit a milestone of 45,000 children reached with an education!

**NOV**



Featured on BBC Radio 4 with an appeal led by our ambassador Vee Kativhu, raising £16,491 for girls' education.

**DEC**



20 schools were transitioned from UWS governance to local and government ownership in Cambodia!



**blue ventures**  
beyond conservation

Fondation  
**AXIAN**

# UNITED WORLD SCHOOLS IN MADAGASCAR

In 2021 United World Schools was delighted to expand our work into Madagascar!

We have built the first five schools which will open in September 2022 and are now building a further five schools due to open in January 2023. We are working in partnership with Blue Ventures, the Axian Foundation and UNICEF. Our aim is to build 200 schools, employ and train 500+ new teachers and enrol 80,000 students (currently out of school) over the next ten years.

The UWS model is well-suited to the rural Madagascan context, where there is a critical shortage of schools and teachers, and an under-developed state infrastructure. This has resulted in a lack of support and training for teachers and limited capacity in the education system.

We are adapting our model to fit the need by placing greater emphasis on the recruitment and

training of new teachers, and capacity building for local authorities. This modified approach will be achieved through the introduction of Administration Training and Resource Centres (ATRs), each serving 25 schools.

Once this training has been deemed successful, UWS schools will transition into the national education system after five years, adding much needed capacity to local education and ensuring sustainability. Once all schools have transitioned, the ATRs will also be handed over to the government.

The government's commitment to our programme has recently been formalised and we have been warmly welcomed at national and local level.



**"I like going to school and my parents send me there every day. I am in the 11th grade. Now I can count, not like before. One day I want to be a teacher, so I can get a good salary and teach children like me too."**

**Naissa, 10, Madagascar**

# OUR PARTNERS

We're incredibly grateful that despite the global challenges we all continue to face, more people than ever chose to support our work in 2021. We would like to thank each and every member of our incredible supporter network of individuals, institutions, corporate partners and schools who continue to share our commitment to education for all.

Thanks to your generosity and passion, we hit these fantastic milestones in 2021.

## £2.8M to help children live Happily Ever Smarter

including £1,296,677 from the UK government as part of our UK Aid Match appeal in 2021.

## 50+ fundraisers raising over £60K

by running, hula-hooping, litter-picking, cycling, hiking and everything in between in aid of United World Schools.

## 48 school partners

Teachers, students, parents and staff around the world are partnering with United World Schools to provide an education to thousands of children in Cambodia, Nepal, Myanmar and Madagascar.



Students at Scarisbrick Hall School ran the distance from Lancashire to Cambodia for UWS!



Our partner Tropic Skincare has now funded over 5 million days of education!

## “SCHOOL IS MY DREAM” PUNTHEA’S STORY

11-year-old Punthea lives in a house made of bamboo with her family in Lamery village, in the beautiful northern Veun Sai District of Cambodia.

Punthea is part of the indigenous Kavet group, which make up only 0.03% of the Cambodian population. The Kavet people live in poverty, surviving from subsistence farming. Traditionally, their people have not been included in the national education system. Most people in Lamery speak the Kavet language, and do not understand the national language of Khmer, which limits their opportunities.

When United World Schools built a school in the neighbouring La Muey village, Punthea’s family were delighted. Although farming and housework became even more difficult without Punthea’s help, her family worked hard in order to allow their child to attend UWS La Muey School.

“I am really happy when I get to school as I see my friends and teachers. I like reading books and watching children playing and drawing pictures in the library.

I like Khmer and Mathematical subjects. My family push me to go to school to study and they don’t want me to stop studying.

I want to be a teacher, as teaching will bring me a bright life. I feel warm and happy when I get the chance to go to school, as it is my dream.”





# FINANCE SUMMARY

We had another successful year financially in 2021, despite the continued challenges caused by Covid-19 in our operating countries and in the UK.

Total income increased by 17% from 2020 to £3,229k, representing our highest level of income recorded to date in an individual year. Total expenditure also increased by 17% from 2020 to £3,340k. We continued to manage costs efficiently, whilst allowing for some growth and mitigating some of the inflationary increases in our cost base due in part to the impacts of Covid-19.

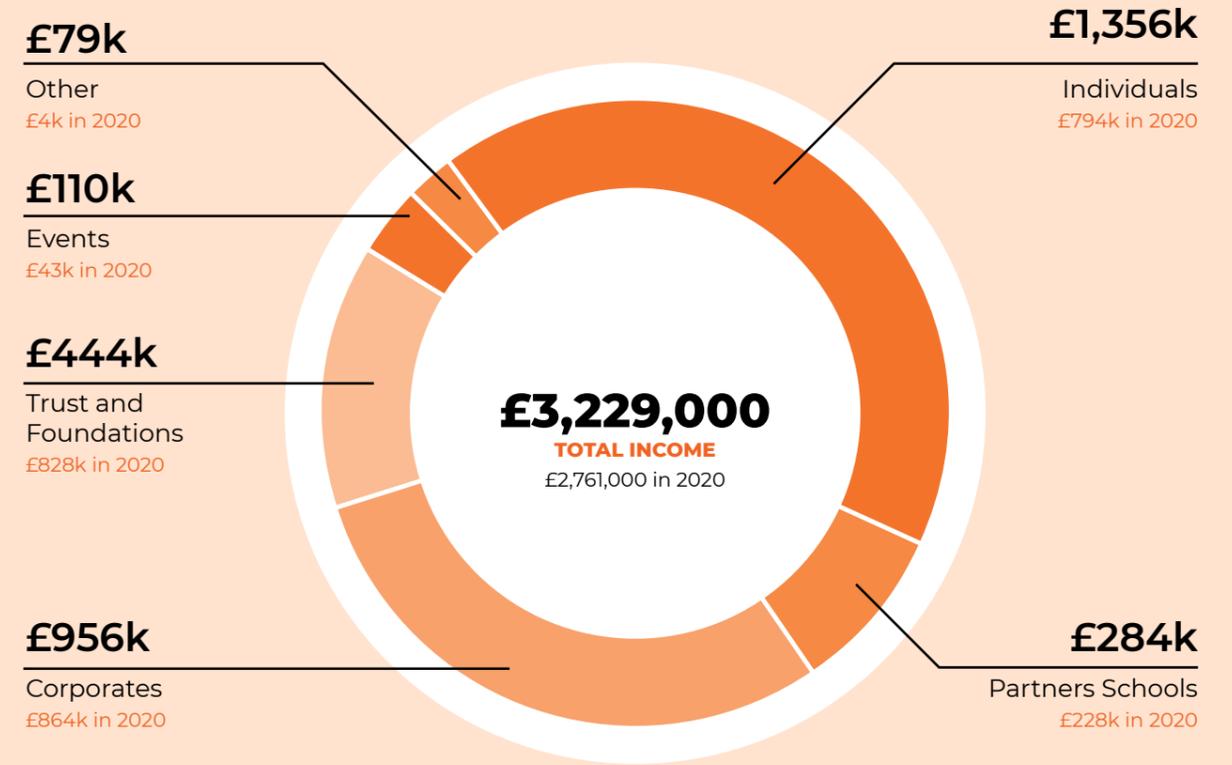
2021 saw a larger increase in central cost, specifically salary driven by the recovery of full-time activities by our staff. During 2020 salaries were

reduced for a 6-month period to adapt to the ongoing Covid-19 impact. In addition, as activities recovered in 2021, the introduction of large institutional donors led to the increase of in-country hiring to successfully meet the delivery of programs from 2021 through to 2025.

Total UWS reserves, excluding reserves held in UWS USA which are not consolidated into our accounts in 2021, reduced to £1,031k at the end of 2021 from £1,142k reflecting the £111k in-year deficit.

UWS policy is to maintain free reserves of at least three months of running costs. Free reserves as at 31st December 2021 of £853k represented approximately 3.5 months of running costs (2019: 5 months).

## Income



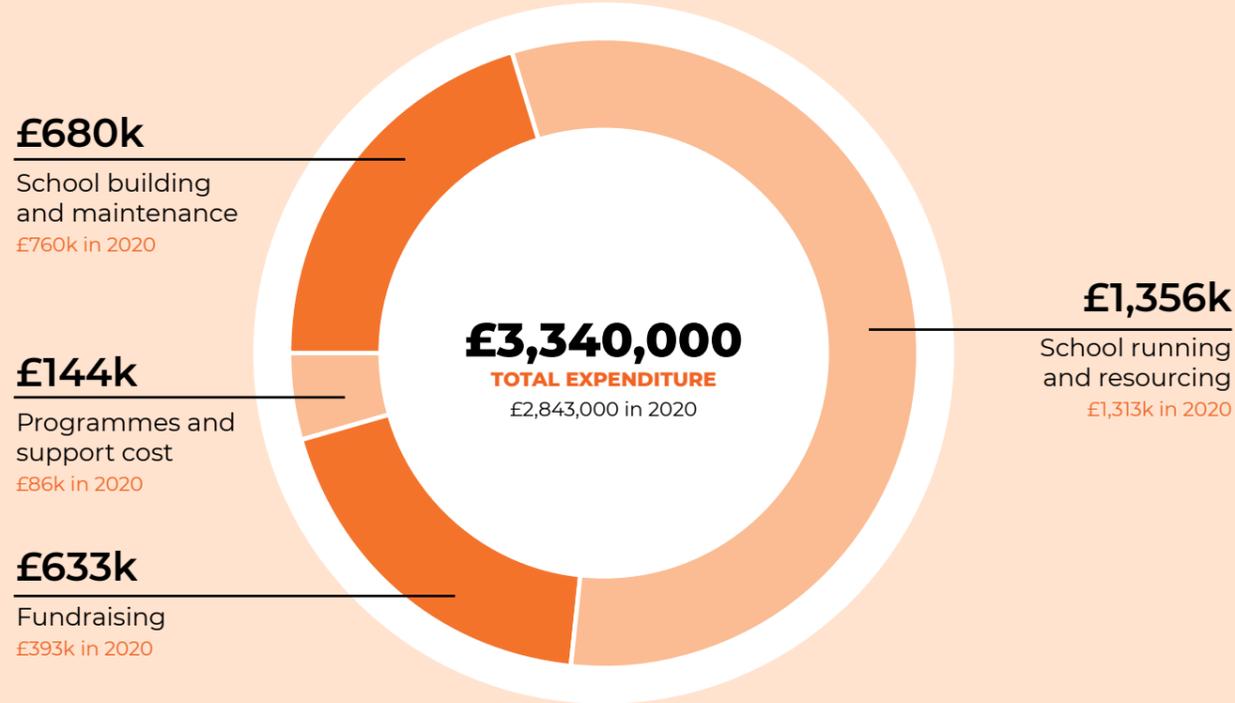
The year-on-year increase in income was principally driven by a successful UK Aid Match campaign which meant that donations from our Individual supporters increased significantly by 71% to £1,356k (2020: £794k). This campaign gives us access to UK Government matched funding to support new schools in Nepal in 2022-25.

The increase in individual giving was partially offset by a decline in Trust and Foundation income which was boosted by specific Covid-19 campaigns in 2020.

We continued to grow our corporate income in 2021, almost reaching £1m for the year with a continued focus to diversify our corporate partners. School partnerships income grew slightly in the year following a difficult 2020 when partners were impacted by Covid-19.

In 2021, 64% of our income (2020: 34%) was unrestricted, meaning that the charity can use this to fund the running costs of the schools and core costs. We will continue to seek more unrestricted funding to give us the flexibility to direct funds to where they are most needed.

# Expenditure



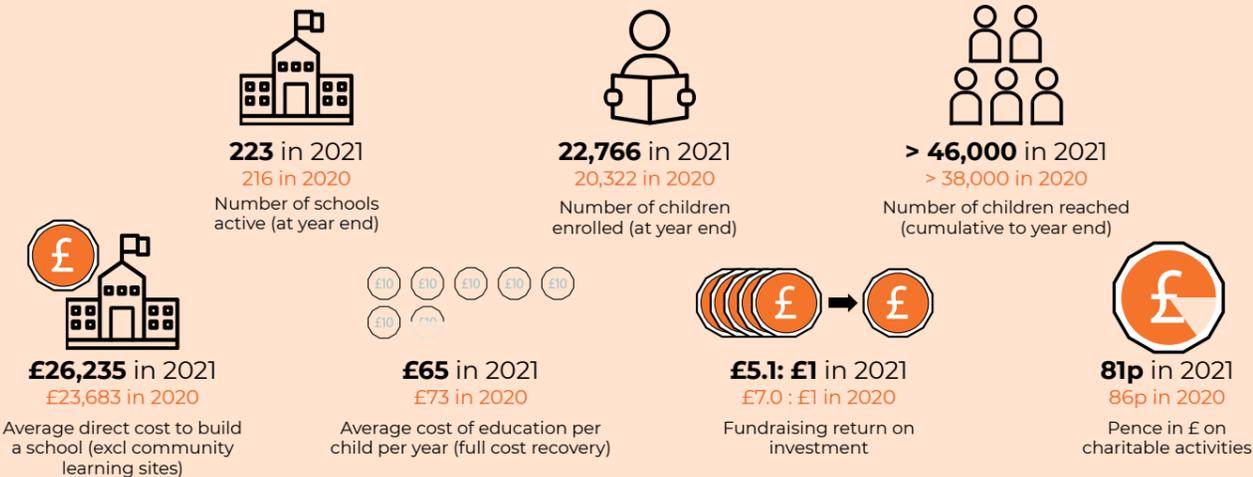
2021 continued to be a year of looking for best value for money across all areas. Average costs associated with the running and resourcing of schools fell year on year as we continued to become more efficient in purchasing resources, transitioning schools to Government in Cambodia, and minimizing non-essential expenditure. This has reduced the average cost to educate

a child from £73 in 2020 to £65 per child in 2021.

However, the average cost to build a school increased in 2021 to £26k, driven by significant increases in the cost of materials and labour in each of our operating countries. We continue to actively manage these costs through developing supplier relationships, but we expect these pressures to continue in the near term.

Fundraising costs have increased by 61% reflecting our increased focus on institutional donors. This has already secured £1.3m of UK Aid Match funding for 2022-5 but has reduced our fundraising return on investment (£5:1 vs £6:1 in 2020) and spending on charitable activities (81p vs 86p in 2020).

# Key Performance Indicators



# THANK YOU

In 2021, thanks to your support, we reached over 46,000 children with a life-changing education across 223 of the poorest communities in the world.

In 2022 and beyond, we are more ambitious than ever. We will not stop until every child has the access to education which is their right.

But we can't continue our work without an incredible team of thousands of dedicated teachers, UWS staff and supporters. United, we will transform our world through education.





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Registered with  
**FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR**