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ON THE ROAD

How Business 2 Schools is changing children's lives



Schools are such an established part of our lives and that of our children that it may surprise some of us to discover that

a number are underfunded to such an extent that they are lacking the most basic equipment, *writes Katie Gilfillan.*

Contrary to this, the world of finance and wealth management is often portrayed to be extremely fortunate and affluent, with access to up-to-date equipment and many offices fantastically furnished. The two may not usually be compared side by side, however they have crossed paths as David Johnson, assistant director at EFG Private Bank and Lindsey Parslow, chief executive of Business 2 Schools joined forces by chance 18 months ago.

Johnson: 'As a Swiss bank, we hold a privileged place in society and we need to recognise this. It's the right thing to do to help others along the way. These schools are where the business leaders and entrepreneurs of the future are going to come from.'

WHAT IS BUSINESS 2 SCHOOLS?

A charity that connects businesses donating unwanted office furniture and technology to schools in need across the UK.

Johnson: 'Rather than waste going to landfill, a business can feel good knowing their old equipment is going to a worthy cause, as well as fulfilling its corporate social responsibility and ESG goals. It's win-win!'

Parslow: 'There is no downside. Businesses get to recycle their unwanted furniture and electronics. The data gets



wiped and the schools get things they desperately need. It also teaches children from a young age in a very tangible way about sustainability'

WHY WAS THERE A NEED FOR THIS?

Johnson: 'Computers in the finance industry are replaced on average every 3-5 years. However in schools, they are replaced every 10 years. Can you imagine that? Trying to do work now off a computer that has Windows 7, or even Windows Vista?'

Parslow: 'The infrastructure budget in schools is very low. 80% of it goes on teaching. If we can help in any way to enhance the learning facilities so they are able to spend their budget on more important things, like the students and their education, it's worth it. It's not

just furniture, even pens, folders are all massively appreciated.'

HOW DID IT GET STARTED?

Eighteen months ago, EFG's office was undergoing a refurbishment and the firm wanted to donate some old furniture and computers but did not want it to go to landfill.

Having worked closely with Parslow for years, Johnson enlisted her help and she knew that the Bishop Luffa School in Chichester desperately needed some tech and made it happen.

'They were so overwhelmed with the donation as funding is critical for education.'

This sparked Parslow's interest in the project's massive potential, and she turned to Johnson to get it off the ground. He introduced her to the partners at EFG as well as Richard Snowball, its head of IT.

Together with the help of EFG, as well as other finance firms, they put together the legal framework and the initiative has grown vastly through word of mouth.

Parslow: 'It's fantastic! It all started at one school in Chichester and now there are 250 participating schools and 56 partners across the UK who have significantly benefited from the programme.'

HOW DO YOU MEASURE THE EFFECTS?

Parslow: 'It truly is tangible and the best measure of ESG we have seen yet. The impact of what we're doing and the incredible reactions we get from the schools and the students themselves; the thank you letters and photos we receive, are phenomenal.'



A DAY IN THE LIFE



PUB CLUB



ROOM 101



DIARY DATE



CITYWIRE EVENTS



CHARITY



TESTIMONIALS

'Business has a really important role to play in our communities and I want to add my thanks to EFG for sponsoring the new container hub, and all the other sponsors who have supported our schools. This is a real win-win and I will continue to lend my support to these inspirational projects.' *Gillian Keegan MP Chichester, West Sussex*

'By helping companies to not simply throwaway items that they no longer want into landfill, Business 2 school is ensuring that it really is getting a fantastic second lease of life. We are incredibly grateful to the wonderful Lindsey and her team.' *Jane Coley, Head Teacher, Brakenhale School*

DONATIONS

- EFG business donated 100 monitors that went to two schools
- After a donation of Gensler furniture and samples, Felpham Community College was able to grow its art department and refurbish their special educational needs and disability department
- Arundel CE Primary School in West Sussex was able to create an after-school club after a football table and sofas were donated
- Two 70 inch plasma TVs went to Bourne Community College from Wendel Partners. Until then they didn't have any TVs
- Entrust Global sent sixth formers folders, pens and notebooks from their re-brand so students didn't have to buy them themselves
- Bishop Luffa School received 30 laptops for sixth-form students to rent out like library books
- After receiving old Blackberry phones from EFG, teachers were able to use them on school trips
- Houlihan Lokey donated furniture to the Pield Heath School in Uxbridge, a special school that is in RI (requires improvement)



'Since March 2019 we have saved over 400 tonnes of goods going to landfill and donated in the region of £5 million worth of furniture to schools.'

'Not only this, but since the first primary school took part, the Rose Green Junior School in Bognor Regis, their SAT grades went above the national average for the first time last June! It just goes to show how important this project is and the impact it is having.'

HAVE YOU ENCOUNTERED ANY PROBLEMS?

Parslow: 'Logistics-wise, we solved a massive potential problem early on with shipping containers. Say a company has furniture available to donate for a school but the school is unable to accept it for another couple of weeks. A firm can sponsor a "hub", which are shipping containers that hold the goods on school grounds until the school is ready for them. EFG have sponsored the first one, they have been amazing in helping us find ways to make everything happen.'

THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE PROJECT

Parslow: 'The one that sticks out most for me is a company that donated sit-and-stand rising desks. Two of these went to Amery Hill School in Alton. The school wrote back such a heartfelt letter saying that it was the first time the children in wheelchairs were able to sit with the other children in the dining hall.'

AND THE FUTURE PLANS...

Parslow: We would like to become the biggest sustainability project in the UK. All the furniture is currently coming from London so sustainability-wise it will be better if local businesses in each region can get involved so there's less movement to the schools.' •

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GET INVOLVED, PLEASE CONTACT LINDSEY PARSLOW ON: INFO@BUSINESS2SCHOOLS.COM OR VISIT THE WEBSITE WWW.BUSINESS2SCHOOLS.COM

