



AFLATOUN
INTERNATIONAL

SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH

An exploratory study on child social and financial education playing a role beyond social and financial concepts¹

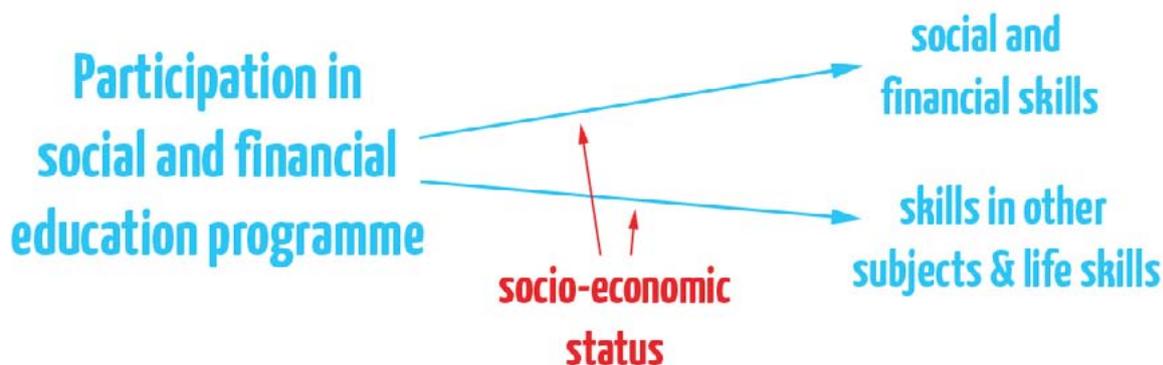
OBJECTIVES

The outcomes of social and financial education for children and young people are well examined and described in previous research². Among other things it has shown positive impact on life skills, e.g. improved self-efficacy and financial behaviour. In addition, Aflatoun's participatory teaching methods have shown to positively improve quality of education³. This study examines whether the Aflatoun programme in Bangladesh, provided by BRAC, has an effect on social and financial topics, but also is an exploratory study examining the programme's potential benefits to other subjects, e.g. mathematics and social sciences. The second objective is to understand the influence of the socio-economic background of the child, and whether and how this affects potential outcomes of the programme. This is

important as BRAC schools are designed to focus on vulnerable children rather than on children with a high socio-economic status. The hypothesis suggested that participating in the programme would increase both social and financial skills, and positively influence other subjects as well, but the socio-economic status would moderate these effects, either positively or negatively⁴.

THE AFLATOUN PROGRAMME

Aflatoun International offers Social & Financial Education through a social franchise model. The mission is to inspire children and young people, who become socially and economically empowered and act as agents of change for a more equitable future. Aflatoun International is currently working through a network of 192 partners in 117 countries delivering educational



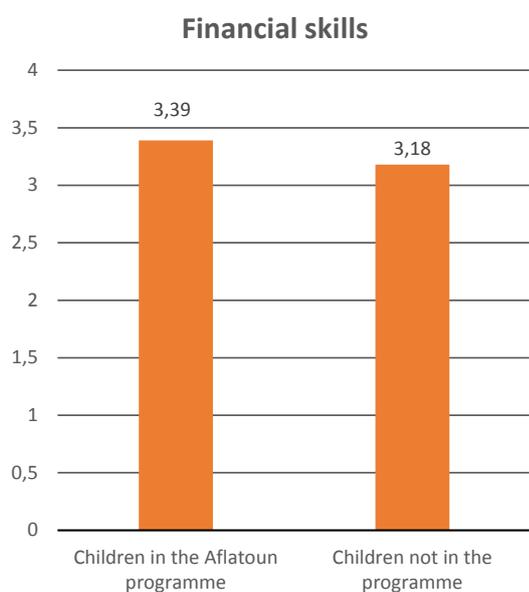
curricula for different age groups: Aflatot (3-6 years old), Aflatoun (6-14 years old), Aflateen (ages 15 years and older), in both formal and non-formal settings. Aflatoun International delivers education to over 4 million children and young people per year.

The Aflatoun International programmes are rights-based and learner-centred, and offer a unique blend of soft skills, financial literacy and enterprise education. These components are balanced by letting children explore their own identity and talents as a first step to building a foundation of self-confidence, emotional awareness, empathy and resilience. After that, they are introduced to financial concepts, and

learn in practice by saving water and other resources, and by starting a social or financial enterprise. Each programme around the world is unique and contextualised to local needs.

METHODOLOGY

A considerable part of primary education in rural Bangladesh is provided by Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC). BRAC is an NGO that focuses on high-quality education for vulnerable children and children from a lower socio-economic background, increasing girls’ enrolment, and hiring female teachers. BRAC schools generally focus more on life skills than most other schools in Bangladesh. All children in this study are enrolled in BRAC schools and one third of the students who were surveyed participated in the Aflatoun programme (400 children), and two third (800 children) did not.



The data for this study was collected at the end of the Aflatoun programme cycle, in 2012. Four surveys – household survey, a financial and social literacy test, skills of the children for other subjects (mathematics, science, social sciences, general knowledge, and life knowledge), and a teacher survey – were used to collect data. Propensity score matching was used to make twins – one child in a BRAC school with the Aflatoun programme is matched to one child in a BRAC school without the Aflatoun programme.

The twins are matched on other variables like their age, gender, socio-economic status of the household, and on an indication of their cognitive abilities (measured through English skills and Bengali skills) so they will be as equal as possible – and the only difference is participation in the Aflatoun programme.

KEY FINDINGS: SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL SKILLS

The figure shows the average number of financial questions answered correctly, measured on a scale from 0 (no questions answered correctly) to 4 (all questions answered correctly). We see that children in the Aflatoun programme scored significantly higher than children in other BRAC schools. We find that this difference was mainly caused by a significant increase for children from a lower socio-economic background. This means the Aflatoun method is effective to teach vulnerable children about financial concepts. For social outcomes, it was found that for two questions, the children in other BRAC schools performed better than the children in the Aflatoun schools. The reliability of the questions was however not high enough to measure this with a construct, so the analysis is limited in power.

KEY FINDINGS: THE EFFECT ON OTHER SUBJECTS

Effects on 5 other subjects were measured: mathematics, social sciences, science, and general knowledge and life knowledge. The results indicate that children who participated in the Aflatoun programme performed better on mathematics and social sciences than other children. The opposite was found for general/life knowledge and science. All these findings are based on single item analysis. For mathematics and social sciences, the significant difference was found for only one question, and shows that children who participated in the Aflatoun programme performed better than other children. Again we find differences between lower and higher socio-economic groups. For mathematics, the difference between the Aflatoun group and the control group was mainly found for children

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HAS A POSITIVE EFFECT ON FINANCIAL SKILLS
AND A POSITIVE SPILLOVER EFFECT ON
MATHEMATICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES.**

from higher socio-economic groups, whereas the difference for social sciences was mainly found for children from lower socio-economic groups.

For science and life knowledge the results indicate that children who did not participate in the programme performed better than children in the Aflatoun programme. When focusing on socio-economic status, this was found for both children from a higher and a lower socio-economic background.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Children in BRAC schools following the Aflatoun programme scored better on financial outcomes, mathematics, and social sciences. This was as expected, but not all hypotheses were confirmed by the study; children who did not participate in the programme scored better on social skills, general/life knowledge and science.

The more positive outcomes of the programme on the financial as opposed to the social side can be explained by the fact that the BRAC Aflatoun programme focuses mainly on financial education rather than social or life skills education. As financial education is more closely related to mathematics, this may explain the increase for Aflatoun participants on that subject as well. The first recommendation is therefore to balance both financial and social concepts. Social education – particularly where it promotes child rights and increased self-esteem – is well established within the broader life skills context. The Aflatoun International programmes pair

social education with financial education as they have proven to be mutually reinforcing and cross-pollinating.

An important limitation of this study is the number of respondents in the analysis; although information about 400 children that participated in the programme was collected, only 74 matches were made based on age, gender, socio-economic status and language skills, as we did not want to compromise the quality of the matching process. It is, therefore, recommended for future research to collect more data to create more matches and have a stronger analysis.

It is important to keep in mind when interpreting these findings that baseline data was never collected. Hence it is not possible for us to take those levels into account when looking at endline data. For future research, baseline data collection is essential, as for the current study we cannot guarantee a representative selection of schools for the Aflatoun programme.

This study is a first step towards the exploration of the role of child social and financial education on indicators beyond social and financial concepts. It shows that it is important to include socio-economic background information as it can explain some of the variation. In addition, it is recommended to include indicators about the quality of the education, and ensure internal consistency of concepts, and reliability of scales. For this, testing the surveys with the target group is essential. It will improve the quality of future research on this topic and thus the quality of social and financial education for children and young people.

1. This brief is based on a report written by Madeleine Dijkman, supported by Mahbub Kabir, Hasib Reza, and Aukje te Kaat. **Aflatoun International** would like to thank the BRAC Bangladesh' research department for designing the study, collecting the data, and supporting in analyzing and reporting. Preferred reference: Dijkman, M.A, Kabir, M.M., Reza, M.H. & te Kaat, A. (2016). Social and Financial Education in Bangladesh. Aflatoun International Research Brief, Amsterdam. .

2. See for example O'Prey, L., & Shephard, D. D. (2014). Financial education for children and youth: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Aflatoun International Working Paper; accessible [here](#).

3. Kaneza, Y., Shephard, D.D. & Moclair, P. (2015) Teaching Social & Financial Education in Rwanda. Aflatoun International Working Paper; accessible [here](#).

4. See for the rationale behind these hypotheses the [full report](#).