



Link Community Development



Ethiopia Annual Report 2010

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1. Background and introduction

Link is a group of partner organisations working across Ghana, England and Wales, Ethiopia, Ireland, Malawi, Scotland, South Africa, Uganda and the USA. Link works to improve rural education by running development projects with schools and educators, in partnership with local education departments and other non-governmental organisations. Link is currently working with over 2500 schools, improving the life chances of more than half a million children in Africa.

Link has been implementing the Woreda School Improvement Project in the Southern Region (SNNPRS) of Ethiopia since June 2007. The project is a partnership between Link, the SNNPRS Bureau of Finance and Economic Development and the SNNPRS Education Bureau. The aim of the project is to improve the quality of elementary education in four woredas of the Wolaita Zone. Phase one has worked with Damot Gale and Bolosso Sore woredas and for phase two we have just introduced Damot Pulasa and Damot Sore woredas. The project design also includes sharing of lessons learned with regional and federal policy-makers.

WSIP is fully aligned with the School Improvement Programme (SIP) component of the General Education Quality Improvement Programme (GEQUIP). A key project aim is to build capacity of the WEOs, cluster supervisors, school managers, teachers and community members such that SIP innovations and project outcomes can be sustained into the future. SIP involves school assessment according to indicators and collaborative planning by all school stakeholders. These are our key areas of organisational expertise and the project has become known as a pioneering initiative which facilitates and adds practicality, value and innovation to education policy in Ethiopia.

2. Programmatic Report

2.1 School Improvement Programme

Our focus since 2009 has been on consolidating and fine-tuning the innovations we have developed around the MOE's School Improvement Programme and on sharing the lessons we have learned up through the system at zone, regional and federal levels. Our cycle of learner testing and detailed data collection (using questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and lessons observations) to obtain objective rankings against all of the SIP indicators, standard and domains is now well-established. Our phase one woredas are also now very confident to facilitate the School Performance Appraisal Meetings with 120 stakeholders per community to review progress towards SIP targets and set new priorities for the year ahead.

During 2010, the second round of SIP was completed in our phase 1 woredas and 67 schools. Training was conducted for all woreda staff in conducting data collection, and detailed data was collected against all four domains in all 67 schools. This year Link also supported the woredas to train over 335 School Improvement Committee members at cluster level, facilitated a workshop to develop test items, and conducted learner tests in English, Maths and Science for all grade 4 learners and in Maths, English, Physics, Chemistry and Biology for all grade 7 learners (a total of c.11,500 learners).

We have improved documentation of our work through developing a series of presentations and reports, including a School Improvement Programme reflection paper, woreda conference reports, training reports and a poster presentation. Towards the end of 2010 we expanded the project to its full capacity of four woredas. We are looking forward to initiating the third full round of the full SIP cycle in our phase 1 woredas and the first cycle in our phase 2 woredas during 2011.

2.2 Woreda-Capacity-building

This year we have continued with our regular monthly woreda senior management team meetings and supervisor skills development sessions at zone level. We also facilitated an exchange visit for supervisors from Damot Gale to visit cluster in Bolosso Sore and vice versa.

The second Woreda Planning Workshops were facilitated in October 2010, with great success. Each phase 1 woreda now has an updated woreda improvement plan endorsed by representatives of all stakeholder groups and building on the school / cluster plans developed at the SPAM in April / May 2010. We have also printed and disseminated the most recent SIP reports and printed and distributed woreda level newsletters highlighting progress during the last year.

We also partnered the zone around a 'quality of education' workshop in November 2010. Three WEO officials (the head, deputy and head of quality assurance) from all 15 woredas in Wolaita Zone took part in training around SIP, continuous assessment and learner testing. The Zone also supported a representative from each woreda to attend Link training for our target woreda school directors to see what lessons they can replicate back in their own woredas.

We were awarded another certificate of good practise by Wolaita Zone Education Department for "maintaining a high level of support for the improvement of education and the implementation of GEQUIP".



Initial Stakeholder meeting in Damot Sore Woreda



Quality Education for All!!

2.3 School Capacity-Building

We introduced several new school training modules in 2010, (English across the Curriculum, Director Leadership and core subject knowledge for first and second cycle teachers) and have trained over 850 teachers and school directors this year.

The training courses for teachers and school directors were evaluated very positively by school participants and woreda facilitators and represented a new approach to participatory and practice-based learning. One teacher told us that she had found the training to be more like a spiritual training in the art and science of teaching. Others said they were enchanted by the insights into their profession and stimulated by the exciting techniques to teach literacy, numeracy and science such as card tricks, bouncing eggs and bubbles that don't burst!

We have set up in-school training days for participants to share knowledge acquired with other teachers in every school and we have established cluster mentoring forums where school directors and teachers meet to share successes and challenges and support each other. This follow-up training and cluster-based peer mentoring have set the scene for ongoing professional development at school and cluster level.

We have also worked closely with over 335 school improvement committee members and with over 120 school directors and deputy directors to ensure that every school has a competent team to drive the performance assessment, planning and implementation process.

Finally, we have facilitated three links between project target schools and schools in Europe and supported an ongoing 'special project' with Chocha Elementary School around construction of an additional classroom and toilets.



Construction of toilets at Chocha school



Teacher CPD training, April 2010

2.4 Dissemination of Lessons Learned

Link is committed to dissemination and lesson sharing with both government partners and other NGOs: this is an integral part of the project design. This year we have disseminated the findings from our work this year through a regional conference and a presentation to the Ministry of Education (MOE) Donor Assistance Group. We have also shared learning within the international Link group through the participation of our Senior Programme Officer in a workshop in Edinburgh in November 2010. In early 2011 we are taking this work forward through a regional education exhibition, a presentation to the Child Research Policy Network, and a 'feedback from the field' event in Addis Ababa, including MOE GEQUIP policy-makers.

Link gave the key note presentation at the regional GO-NGO conference and this set the tone for the whole two days. Other NGOs were encouraged to emulate LINK and engage at grassroots for more detailed support. The Wolaita Zone president gave an extremely glowing endorsement of our approach. The fact that Link's was the only logo on all the publicity apart from the SNNPRS regional government and the REB indicated our role as a key development partner.

Link is now recognised by the MOE and donors groups in Ethiopia as a partner. We have participated in major events like the MOE Donor Assistance Group, the MOE Consultation and Validation

Workshop of ESDP IV (Education Sector Development Programme), the World Bank 2010 Education Strategy, the 2010 Joint Education Sector Review Mission and a UNICEF supported discussion forum about the education MDGs. We were also asked to participate in a federal level SIP review organised by the MOE. This is evidence that our experience is increasingly being recognised and valued. This engagement is already bearing fruit in terms of encouraging replication of core work innovations in new woredas and will hopefully lead to application of learning in new zones and regions in the future.

3. Project Impact

Over two phases, Link's programme in Ethiopia is impacting on 111 schools and four Woreda Education Offices (WEO). Specifically, the project is developing skills among community members, school managers and woreda education officials to collect, store and use data effectively to inform planning and decision-making. In doing so, the project has succeeded in improving access to school performance information for parents and local communities and increasing stakeholder demand for improvements. Our capacity-building with the woreda education offices (WEOs) has helped develop more responsive and effective service delivery, and our school level training and support activities have enhanced school effectiveness as centres of learning and community development.

Although we are awaiting the results of our forthcoming external evaluation (planned for June 2011), it seems that the project (external factors notwithstanding) has had a positive impact on learner performance. This is critical since it must be the bottom line for all education initiatives. An independent researcher conducted an in-depth analysis of our learner test data and found that when the 2010 scores are compared with the baseline data collected in 2007, gains are observed at grade 7 level that range from 0.7% in mathematics to 18.8% in English and at grade 4 level that range from 2.1% in mathematics to 4% in Science. The average scores were found to be higher by 3.9% at grade 7 level and by 0.7% at grade 4. In addition, enrolment increased by 19% in phase one target woredas from 67,995 to 81,182 pupils.

A key success of this project has been the logical and precise methodology employed by WSIP to create platforms for community involvement in schools based on accurate data. The SIP reports have been extremely well-received at all levels – never before has so much evidence-based detail about school performance been available. These comprehensive reports include a statistical analysis of performance against the MOE indicators across all domains, qualitative comments made against each standard during data collection, lessons observations, as well as the detailed learner test result analysis. All schools now have annual prioritised improvement action plans and three year strategic plans and school and woreda stakeholders are using these to guide all efforts in each school.

In terms of challenges, the main one must be around learner performance. Although significant gains are recorded, the mean score for each subject was still found to be below the passing mark set by the MoE (50%) for both Grade 4 and 7. This is not surprising due to the socio-economic and population density in Wolaita but still, our project aimed to bring achievement levels closer towards the MOE pass rates. In addition, there is still gender disparity: In Grade 7, boys achieved mean scores that were higher by 6.2% in the average score and 4.4% to 7.1% in the five subjects than girls. In Grade 4, boys achieved mean scores that were higher by 6.1% in the average score and 4.8% to 7% in the three subjects than girls. These are issues that need more detailed focus in follow-up phases to WSIP.

Another key challenge has been in the timing of our project delivery. Delays were caused by the long process of NGO registration (in years one and two) and then re-registration (which took unplanned time in developing the documentation such as an additional audit), and more recently by the elections held in 2010 and numerous government training courses which kept our woreda and school partners busy and which caused us to continuously postpone the activities. Our learning here is around realistic planning for future phases of the project.

Our project also supported learners, parents, community members, school managers and teachers to engage with school assessment and planning so that grassroots skills and ownership were developed. Stakeholders now have enhanced access to better information and are increasingly confident to influence school development and to engage with woreda authorities around improving standards of education delivery. Likewise, through their participation in the project, woreda and zone education staff have been provided with platforms to engage with regional and, more recently, federal policy makers.



Teacher training January 2010



Regional Education Conference

5. Financial Statements

Income and Expenditure statement January - December 2010

Income for period		
01/01/2010	Opening balance	451,031
18/02/2010	Transfer from Link Ireland	683,575
26/06/2010	Transfer from Link Ireland	330,811
23/08/2010	Transfer from Link E&W	175,366
19/11/2010	Transfer from Link Ireland	157,134
15/12/2010	Transfer from Link E&W	508,763
19/11/2010	Transfer from Link Ireland	414,727
29/12/2010	Direct payment by Link E&W for vehicle	761,846
30/12/2010	Direct payment by Link E&W for motorbikes	79,035
	Bank interest for period	399
	Total	3,562,688
	Expenditure for period	3,193,392
	Surplus of income over expenditure	369,296
	Closing balance	369,296

Abridged Audited Financial Statement January – December 2010 (ETB)

Capital Costs		
Vehicles	761,846	
Motorbikes	79,035	
Office furniture and equipment	18,134	
Sub-total	859,015	
Programme Costs		
SIP Support	374,447	
Woreda capacity-building	69,648	
School and cluster training	205,976	
Woreda motorbikes	294,370	
Resourcing of cluster centres	0	
Woreda computers	0	
Running costs for woreda motorbikes	40,413	
School partnerships	0	
Special projects	9,598	
Study tour	0	
Audit costs	9,040	
Monitoring and evaluation costs	2,000	
Advisory Committee costs	28,550	
REB / BoFED visits to field	1,120	
Seminars / Networking	3,557	
Publicity materials	7,548	
Field office rental costs	135,240	
Field office maintenance	1,452	
Field office communications (telephone, email, cell)	13,132	
Field office electricity and water	2,827	
Vehicle fuel & maintenance for field work	112,061	
Motorbike fuel & maintenance for field work	0	
Vehicle insurance & licenses	23,895	
Motorbike insurance and licenses	0	
Local travel for field work	42,720	
Accommodation and subsistence for fieldwork	5,618	
Education Advisor operating expenses	11,248	
Sub-total	1,394,461	70.67%
Administrative costs		
Technical staff salaries and benefits	439,736	
Management / administration salaries & benefits	143,995	
Recruitment	18,134	
Professional fees	1,600	
Head office rental costs	117,600	
Head office maintenance	12,387	
Head Office communications (telephone, email, cell)	15,552	
Head office electricity & water	4,901	
Head office local travel	15,903	
Head office accommodation & subsistence	28,255	
Bank charges	1,517	
Postage	580	
International travel (including IMT travel to Ethiopia)	94,522	
Stationery	15,640	
General office costs	22,630	
Withholding tax	6,964	
Sub-total	939,916	29.43%
Total	3,193,392	

Balance Sheet 31-Dec-10

<u>Assets Employed</u>	<u>2010</u>
Current Assets	
Cash & Bank Balance	369,296
Suspense	0
	<u>369,296</u>
Represented By:	
Fund balance	369,296
	<u>369,296</u>

6. Funding

The Irish Aid grant for Link's work came to an end on 31.12.2010. However, the financial future of Link in Ethiopia is still secure following a successful application to DFID's Civil Society Challenge Fund. They are providing a grant of 495,616 STG until May 2014. We also have ongoing funding from the Waterloo Foundation. We are now seeking additional co-funding to the DFID grant and for items excluded from the CSCF funding criteria. Anyone interested in funding our work should contact the Programme Director on laura@lcdethiopia.org

7. Sustainability and the Way Forward

Sustainability is a critical focus that has been built into our project design from the outset. WSIP supports change within the system to provide the framework necessary for enhanced service delivery and community participation in education to be effective in the long term. We are confident that our project outputs will be supported by the regional government, zone and woreda administrations as well as by the communities themselves. We have already seen some attempts at replicating activities during 2010; the ZED is trying to access budgets to roll out some of our innovations to other woredas, and the REB showcased LCD's initiatives at the recent regional education conference.

Another key factor is the small Link team in Ethiopia. We have chosen to invest in a minimal number of highly competent staff and to work closely through existing officials at all levels to maximise the chances for sustainable impact. Link is committed to delivering quality at a reasonable cost to all our supporters and this project has shown our ability to do so in SNNPRS. As mentioned, Link is beginning to be valued as a partner with expertise by various government institutions and we are delighted about the recognition accorded our project through invitations to participate in a national SIP review and through requests to partner the Regional Education Bureau in two dissemination events. We are members of the Child Policy Research Network and the Basic Education Network. We have also been awarded certificates of good practise and named in a regional publication for our approach to government partnership and policy support.

Our profile is certainly developing and this goes hand-in-hand with a very detailed and thorough intervention in our four target woredas. Our support to SIP (data collection, learner tests, reporting and SPAM), our woreda capacity-building activities and our director and teacher CPD training are now well established and it is time to increase the depth in our target woredas and schools as we start to look at HIV/AIDS interventions and introduce PTA training in 2011. A major focus must now

also be fundraising to meet our co-funding commitment. As our woreda based-model develops we are interested in increasing our focus at zone, regional and federal level to upscale innovations in new woredas and zones, and even in new regions of Ethiopia.

8. The Link Ethiopia Team



With thanks to:



Link Community Development

Working together and learning together
to focus on quality education

