



Link Community Development
Annual Review
2007-08

STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Education is expensive. For most countries it is the largest part of a government budget. In countries where we work, tax revenues are low because the economies are weak, while half the population is of school age. These facts mean that few countries can afford to enroll all children in school and ensure that what is provided constitutes good education. Moreover, there is very limited employment for school leavers. Yet education is universally seen as a means to getting a job, living a better life and opening opportunities.

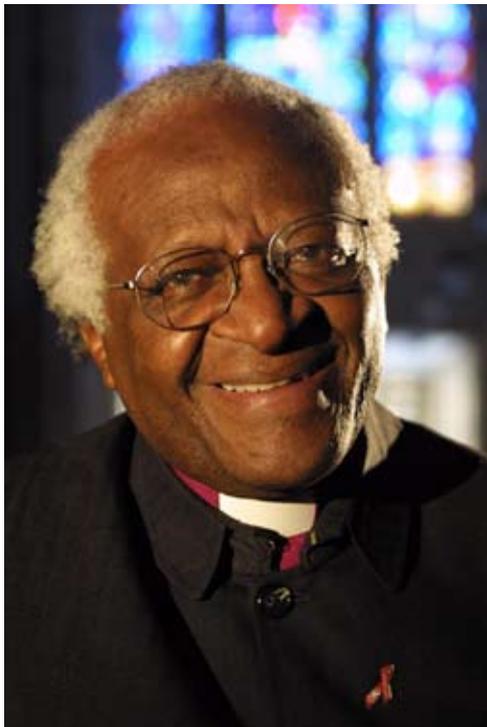
While there has been a strong focus on increasing enrolments, much less attention is given to how to make classrooms better for both children and their teachers. What is it that happens in a classroom so that teachers teach well and children learn? In many ways this is a black box, as we all know from our own experience. The answers to those questions are complex, and many things are important, ranging from government policy to what happens in a community: there is a vast arena of human interaction and motivation in which we have to act to make schools work.

LCD works in this vast arena – we call it a ‘systemic’ approach, looking at the education system and its context as a whole. We have developed technical measures that improve governance in the education sector, strengthen school management, help teachers do a good job, and also give voice to children, communities and civil society. Our experimentation and learning become the basis for wider policy, and we can see our efforts succeed: our ideas and methods have become national policy.

As times become tighter for everyone, we need to remember those whose circumstances can hardly be worse. We are a small organisation that achieves big results, and to do this we rely on your support, for which not only we, but thousands of children, are grateful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Penrose'.

Perran Penrose



There is perhaps nothing more important than the education of our young people. It is through access to quality education that young people can develop to their full potential and extend their opportunities in life. While steps have been taken to encourage our children into schools, there is still a great deal to be done. Link Community Development (LCD) understands this and by working directly with schools and teachers across sub-Saharan Africa, has made real improvements to the quality of education in the classrooms. And through also supporting education officials in their roles, LCD has been able to create change for many hundreds of schools. Since 1989, LCD has worked with hundreds of schools in South Africa and their projects in Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi and Uganda are going from strength to strength; demand is growing all the time. Lessons learned are shared with all the projects to ensure good practice is spread to as many communities as possible. In the current climate this sharing of expertise across borders is vital as it is helping to bring Sub-Saharan African countries together.

I want to thank everyone who supports LCD, as without funding their work could not continue, and I wish LCD well for the coming year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Desmond Tutu'. The signature is stylized and includes a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

The Most Reverend Desmond Tutu



"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
Nelson Mandela

ABOUT LINK COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Link Community Development (LCD) emerged as part of the anti-apartheid movement in UK to support and improve the quality of education available to children in rural Africa. Initially implementing projects in South Africa, LCD has grown over the last 20 years to encompass nine separately registered charities, working together to support a range of educational projects in Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, South Africa and Uganda and school linking programmes in Europe and USA. Each of these organisations is independent with an active board committed to the same vision and mission.

LCD's vision is of a future where all children and young people in sub-Saharan Africa have access to high quality education. LCD's mission is to develop and deliver innovative programmes that promote access to quality education in rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa.

LCD believes that good quality education is critically important to overcome poverty and deprivation. In recent years, considerable headway has been made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goal of Universal Primary Education. However, schools are struggling to cope with limited resources, poorly trained teachers, weak school management and the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS. It is issues of quality like these which LCD seeks to address. LCD has 15 years experience of implementing education improvement projects and is now considered one of the leading organisations in large-scale rural school improvement in Africa.

Our objectives are:

- . To build local capacity to monitor and support schools
- . To encourage parental and community participation in schools
- . To improve schools' ability to promote children's health and wellbeing
- . To use lessons learned to inform policy and practice both nationally and internationally
- . To build understanding and support for development through education



WHERE WE WORK



LCD currently has more than 100 staff working across nine countries. LCD offices in Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, South Africa and Uganda are mainly involved in programme management and delivery in their respective countries. LCD offices in England and Wales, Ireland, Scotland and USA are mainly engaged in fundraising, communications, advocacy and development education through the Link Schools Programme and Global Teachers Programme. Whilst each LCD organisation has its own Board of Trustees, staff work very closely to share learning and co-ordinate activities.

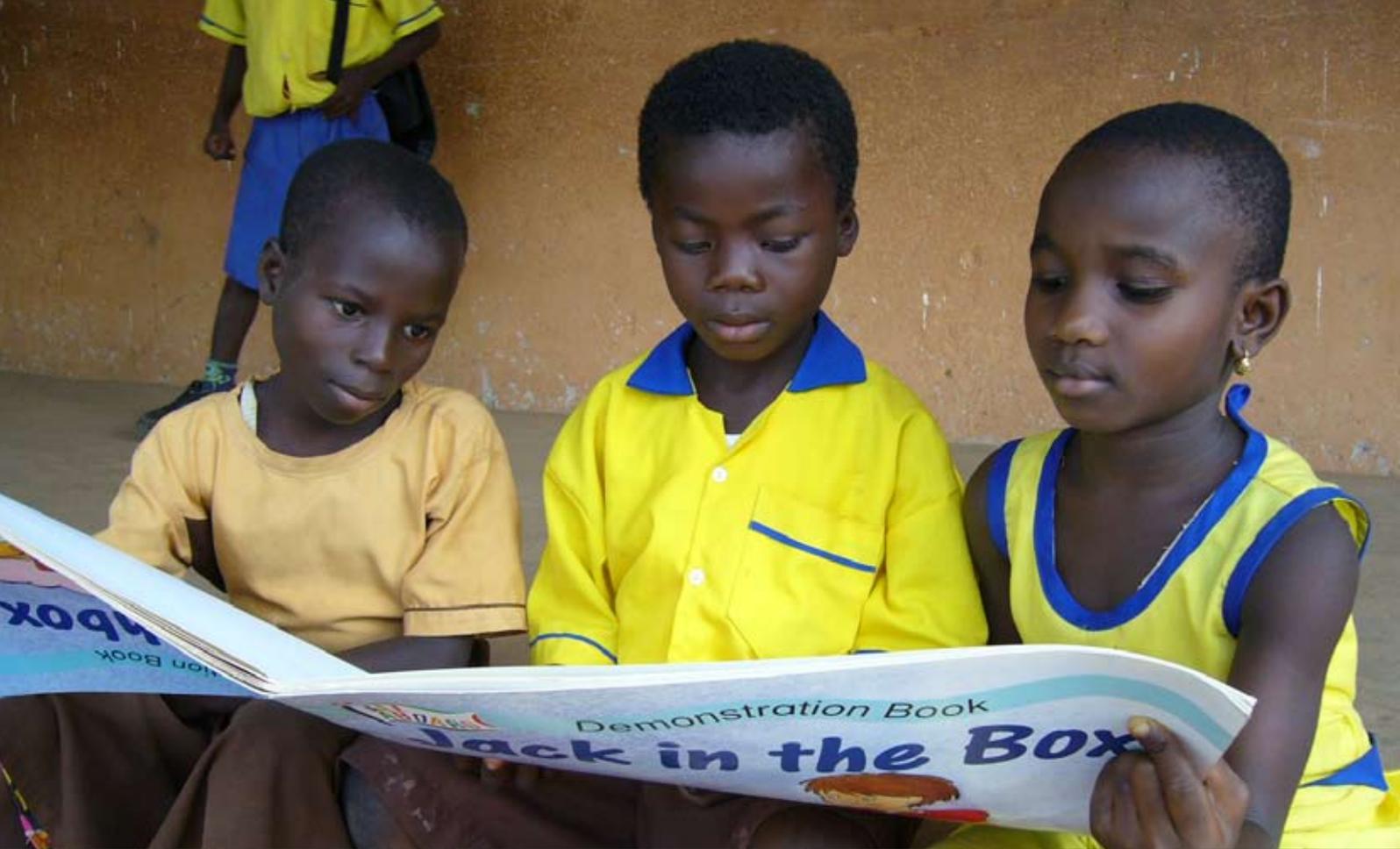


Education

The central focus of LCD's work is improving the quality of education in rural African schools. With successful projects spanning nearly 20 years, LCD is the leading NGO in the field of district-based school improvement projects in Africa. LCD collaborates with local government to improve performance of all schools in target districts. At the core of all LCD school improvement projects is a highly effective method of school monitoring and support called School Performance Review (SPR). We understand that all schools face different challenges and have different strengths and weaknesses. SPR enables education officials and teachers to assess schools individually and provides appropriate support depending on their needs. We work with district education officials, school inspectors, head teachers, teachers and community members to jointly improve individual school performance, creating a tailored action plan for each school.

The action plan recommends training and support appropriate to each school, ensuring that every school and teacher receives the best possible support. LCD has developed a range of training courses to address many of the common areas requiring improvement, including school governance, leadership, financial planning, literacy training and community involvement. This programme is central to our work and has developed over the past 15 years. In the past year our programmes have benefitted over 850 schools and 600,000 pupils.

We always work in close partnership with both local and national departments of education to ensure that the lessons from our projects can inform policy development. SPR is a good example of an LCD innovation which has been adapted and used in several countries.



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Demonstration Book
Jack in the Box

WHAT WE DO

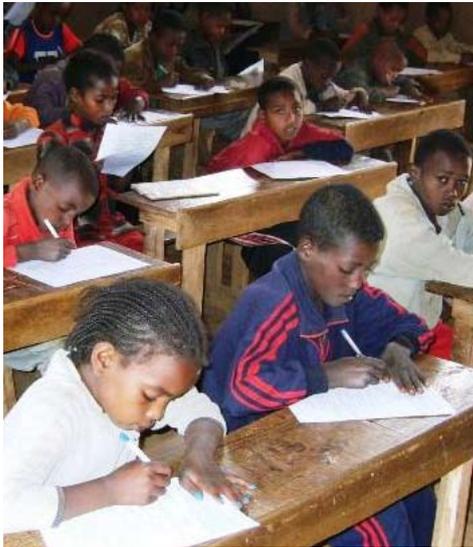
School Health, HIV and AIDS

LCD knows that education has a critical role to play in preventing the spread of HIV and AIDS and mitigating its impact. Our projects aim to increase knowledge and understanding of HIV and AIDS amongst children, teachers and the community as well as helping people infected and affected by HIV and AIDS to access education and necessary support. In most of the countries where we work, HIV and AIDS education is compulsory but many teachers lack sufficient understanding to teach effectively. LCD helps schools to think about and manage the impact of HIV and AIDS on their school and community. This planning fits with our school performance review programme, and we provide ongoing support and monitoring to ensure that schools are meeting their objectives. Through this work we have also established a project to support orphaned and vulnerable children, who often miss out on education. We help schools to identify vulnerable children, assist them to access health services and support children back into education. Over the past year we have provided support to over 700 orphans and vulnerable children in South Africa. We have been invited by the Ministry of Education to extend this programme to a further four districts in South Africa.

Global Citizenship

LCD facilitates partnerships between schools in UK, Ireland and USA with African schools, sharing skills and encouraging learning. Through our Link Schools Programme over 430 schools are currently linked to schools in Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda, Malawi and South Africa. This brings the teaching of development education and global citizenship to life in UK classrooms, while supporting the development of African partner schools. We also support teachers to develop their understanding of International Development and arrange reciprocal teacher exchange visits. In Ireland and Scotland our Global Teachers programme allows teachers to undertake a five week professional placement in a school in Uganda or Malawi.





Working in Partnership with Local Government

We started working in Ethiopia in June 2007, building on our experience in Ghana, Malawi, South Africa and Uganda. LCD Ethiopia registered as an NGO in Ethiopia in September 2008. Already we have had tremendous success, focusing our efforts on the improvement of education in the Wolaita Zone of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPRS). This is one of the most deprived rural regions in southern Ethiopia.

Our work in Ethiopia demonstrates the vital importance of working in close partnership with district local government. It is government that has the responsibility for the delivery of education and only through building their capacity can quality improvement be sustained in the long term. We are currently focusing on training district staff, enabling them to monitor and support schools better. Over the past year, we have trained over 300 school improvement committee members and assisted staff to carry out a detailed survey of all 62 primary schools in two districts. We are now in the process of creating individual action plans for each school.

We intend to establish school links between Ethiopian, UK and Irish schools in the future.

"We are facing big resource challenges such as lack of teaching materials, classrooms, drinking water and school staff. Our key focus however is improving the quality of education in our elementary schools. We want to develop comprehensive training programmes to build the capacity of PTAs, teachers, school directors and woreda education officials. We need the technical and financial support of LCD to achieve our goals and we are committed to developing a close and fruitful working relationship"

Ato Zerihun Alemu, Education Training and Quality Assurance Expert, Bolosso Sore

Empowering Communities to Support Education

We have been working in Ghana since 1999, focusing our work on rural districts in the Upper East and Ashanti Regions. There is still a huge discrepancy between urban and rural school performance in Ghana. In the Upper East Region, significantly fewer girls go to school and under 50% of all pupils complete primary education. Our SPR system is being used to improve performance in over 300 rural primary schools. Over the past 10 years, some of the schools we support have seen an increase in pupil performance by up to 25%. Over the past year, we have provided direct training and support to 340 schools in 4 districts in Ghana. There are 95 schools linked to UK schools in the Ashanti and Upper East Regions.

Our work in Ghana demonstrates the importance of engaging communities to reflect upon accurate, locally gathered information to inform decision making. School improvement can only be sustained if communities are empowered to hold schools accountable for the service they deliver.



Case study

Through our monitoring system the majority of schools in Talensi Nabdam district in the Upper East Region were found to have no functioning Parent Teacher Association or School Management Committee. LCD helped schools in the district to form PTAs and SMCs and trained parents and community members so they understood their roles and responsibilities. Now many schools in the district have fully functioning committees and overall school performance has increased so much that Talensi Nabdam is now the best performing district in the region.

"I am very happy to be on the PTA in my daughters' school. Now that we parents are more involved we make sure that teachers and students turn up on time. If we see children out of school we will go to their home to ask why."

Rashida Abdul Hamid, Parent, Talensi Nabdam



Demonstrating Strong School Leadership and Management

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in Africa. LCD currently works in two of the poorest districts, Dedza and Mulanje where some schools have more than 160 children per teacher. Work began in Dedza in 2006 and Mulanje in 2007. Thanks largely to the support of the Scottish Government, LCD's programme in Malawi now reaches over 350 schools and benefits over 280,000 learners.

Under such challenging conditions, the quality of leadership and management provided by the head teacher is critically important. In both Dedza and Mulanje LCD has worked with local district officials to design and deliver a nine-day training programme to 240 participants. This course aimed to improve the quality of management, leadership and administrative skills amongst head teachers and other senior staff

LCD also supports the head teacher in every school to take a lead in developing and implementing a School Improvement Plan (SIP) which provides a clear structure for the schools efforts to improve. This work was recognised by the UK Department for International Development when they chose to work with LCD in Dedza on the 'Direct Support to Schools' pilot. Through this project schools have been entrusted, for the first time, with a discretionary budget to support interventions planned in their SIP. Through this scheme many schools have started to employ temporary teachers to tackle key issues like class size and pupil retention.

There are currently 41 schools in Malawi linked with schools in Scotland. Linked schools can choose to raise additional money to fund "special projects" at their partner school. Hallside School raised over £500 for Mankhamba Full Primary School enabling them to build two new pit latrines.

"Trainings have widened the horizons We are waiting for more so we can be champions tomorrow"

Mr Nzuze Head teacher Kakolo School, Dedza

SOUTH AFRICA

Supporting Orphans and Vulnerable Children to Access Education

LCD has been working in South Africa for 20 years. All of our other African programmes have developed using experience and expertise gained in South Africa. It continues to be our largest programme. We have an excellent relationship with the Government in South Africa and have developed several successful projects. LCD South Africa leads the way in new project development and works in close partnership with all of our other country offices. Our work in South Africa illustrates the central role that education plays in the fight against HIV and AIDS, not only in delivering life saving messages but also by ensuring that schools become centres of care and support for infected and affected learners. Over the past year, we have provided direct training to 1,640 schools in South Africa. 272 vulnerable children have been assisted to access health care support and 692 children attended our homework support clubs for children whose education has been disrupted.

In 2007, LCD was asked to help the Limpopo Department of Education to develop a 'school monitoring and support framework' to enable the Province to measure school performance in every school in the province and to get a breakdown of circuit performance. To enable this to work, LCD developed a database which allowed circuit level officials to input the data and to produce basic reports without significant IT skills. This approach has now been tested and has been applied in almost 1,000 schools in Limpopo. There are 137 South African schools currently involved in the Link Schools Programme.

Case study

Eva lost her mother to AIDS three years ago and lives with her father who is HIV positive. She is his main carer, causing her to miss a lot of school and is falling behind with her studies. LCD has trained teachers to provide emotional support and more flexible learning to children affected by HIV and AIDS. Eva's teacher is assisting her to access other services and supporting her to come to school when she can. Teachers and parents have also set up a voluntary fund to assist vulnerable children. This fund has been used to buy a uniform and materials for Eva, as she could not afford them herself. Eva's school has also created a garden and distributes fresh vegetables to families affected by HIV. This helps to reduce stigma in the community as well as educating children about agriculture and providing nutritious food.



Rigorous Measurement of Impact

We have been working in Uganda since 2000, currently running programmes in four districts. Our work in Uganda demonstrates the importance of rigorous monitoring and evaluation. Our approach to M&E ensures that we can constantly improve the quality and relevance of our services. For example in Katakwi District, communities have suffered from conflicts, and schools must provide support to traumatised children and their families. LCD is tailoring its support to respond to the needs of conflict affected communities in Katakwi District.

LCD's achievements were endorsed by the Netherlands Government, who commissioned an independent review into Primary Education in Uganda. The review highlighted LCD's work in Masindi District as an example of good practice, with schools demonstrating a huge improvement in performance. The report stated:

'In Masindi, the Regional District Office, the Education Standards Agency and the NGO Link Community Development (LCD) have worked since 2000 to improve district and school management. The training of district officers, management and teachers, as well as regular monitoring and inspections by the district office on the basis of a detailed format have resulted in significant improvements in the schools participating in the project. Examination results in these schools are approximately 50% higher than the results of comparable schools'

There are currently 130 schools in England, Wales and Ireland linked with schools in Uganda.

A Commitment to Mutually Beneficial School Partnerships

Our Link Schools Programme facilitates mutually beneficial links between schools in England, Scotland, Ireland and the USA with schools in Ghana, Malawi, South Africa and Uganda. The purpose is for both schools to learn more about global issues, share skills, encourage learning and promote school improvement. Over the past year, LCD has supported 436 school partnerships. Following the drive towards universal secondary education we were, for the first time, able to offer the facilitation of partnerships with secondary schools in Uganda and Ghana.

Fitting in with the theme of sustainability, the LSP Annual Postcard Exchange has been successful in encouraging learners in both UK and African schools to use their creativity and imagination. Students looked at sustainability issues, particularly in connection with the local resources and the environment in the areas where our schools are located. Many students know exactly how they can make a difference in their local community and their postcards encouraged others to explore how their actions are connected to other people's lives around the world.



Case Study

Queensferry CP School in Wales linked to Brofoyedru Primary School in the Ashanti Region of Ghana in February 2007. Everyone at the school is involved with the link and all pupils do at least one piece of work a year that is directly related to the partner school. When the pupils write real letters and postcards to their peers in Ghana the link gives relevance to writing in the English lesson.

"I love the fact that children in Ghana do the same things as we do: football, netball and their lessons. I think that having to clean the school as the pupils do is great; we should do it. I would like to go and visit them",

says Megan (pupil, aged 10).

GLOBAL TEACHERS



Our Global Teachers programme facilitates teachers from UK and Ireland to undertake five week placements to schools in Africa as well as enabling teachers from Africa to visit their partner schools in UK and Ireland. This is beneficial to both parties who get an insight into an alternative education system and share valuable experience and curriculum knowledge.

Over the past year, 20 Global Teachers undertook placements in Uganda and Malawi.

Jane McClounan, a Primary School teacher from Glasgow, was one of 14 Global teachers to spend five weeks in Malawi. During her time at Chilanga School in Dedza district, Jane spent time observing classes, reviewing curriculum and school management procedures and training teachers and community members. On her return to Scotland, her experience has helped bring to life Development Education for her students. Jane said:

“This experience has been one of the most inspiring and rewarding in my life. The Global Teachers programme is a model for movement towards equality, progress and sustainable development. It gives so many chances for all involved to learn from each other, it creates mutual respect and a deeper understanding of each others’ countries. Personally I am proud of my achievements and how I have developed professionally and personally as a result of my involvement.”

“The reports after conducting inspections showed that schools in Dedza which received Global Teachers had made notable improvements in many areas including community participation, and school leadership. We therefore very much appreciate the role played by Global Teachers.”

Mr Banda, Dedza District Education Manager

FUNDRAISING

In 2007/08 we received major grants from The BIG Lottery Fund for work in Ghana and Uganda. The Scottish Government continue to support school and district training in Malawi and have committed to support an Inclusive Education project in Malawi for the next three years. Irish Aid have also committed a new multiannual grant towards our school improvement project in Ethiopia. DFID's Development Awareness Fund funded our Link Schools Programme for three years until the end of 2008.

Income from Trusts and Foundations rose, with particular thanks to the Waterloo Foundation, Isle of Man Overseas Aid Committee, the Rockefeller Foundation, Allan and Nesta Fergusson Charitable Settlement, Alice Ellen Cooper Dean Charitable Trust and the Sutasoma Trust.

We are grateful to all the individuals and school sponsors who support our work so generously. LCD's first team in the Dublin City Mini-Marathon raised 7,000 Euros. This year, with the help of some of the stars of Arsenal Football Club, we launched The Great African Journey, a brand new event for schools and young people. Thanks to all the children and teachers who took part and raised lots of money.

Our main fundraising event continues to be the Morocco/Prague Hitch. We are delighted that students from all over the country show so much enthusiasm for our work in Africa. Last year 849 Hitchers made the journey to Morocco or Prague and raised a total of over £365,000. Our top individual fundraiser was Leo Bellis-Jones from Leeds University who raised an incredible £1,772. Special thanks to Rough Guides for their generous support of the event.



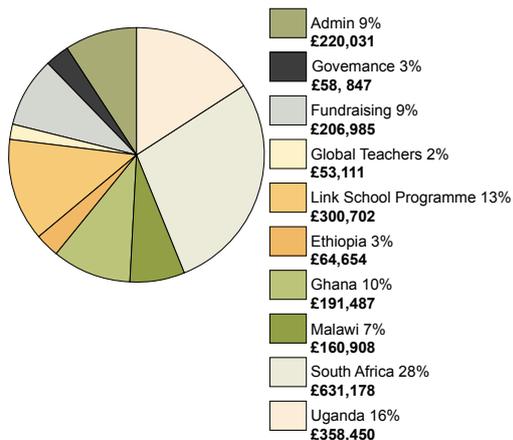
FINANCES

Summary of Group Finances

LCD is a family of separately registered NGOs which are not connected to a common separate legal entity. As a result, we do not consolidate accounts. For illustration purposes, the following is a summary of financial information extracted from the individual audited accounts of the individual LCD organisations. We are happy to provide the separate audited accounts of any one of the LCD organisations on request.

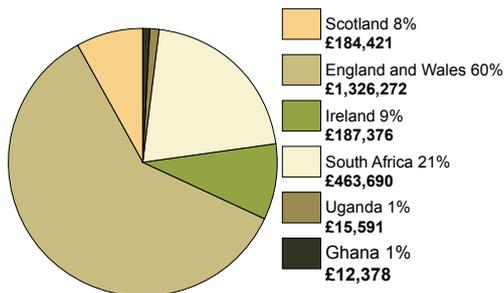
At the time of writing this report, not all of the LCD organisations have completed their 2008 audit.

The following figures are extracted from 2006-2007 audited accounts:



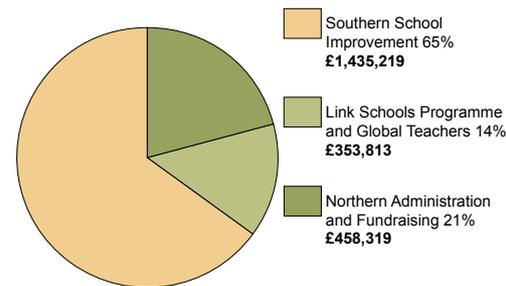
Group Expenditure

Total Group Expenditure: £2,247,352



Summary of Group Income

Total Group Income: £2,189,729



Summary of Group Expenditure

Total Group Expenditure: £2,247,352



Many thanks to Kristopher Badminton (kris_bad@hotmail.com) who designed this Annual Review free of charge.

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