



“They say if you give a man a fish, you feed him for one day, if you teach a man to fish you give him food for life. Just like this project changed our lives forever. Link have given what cannot be lost, no one can take it away from us. It is for life.” (Female teacher)

Teaching over 60 pupils in a dilapidated classroom with no text books, a scratched blackboard, minimal training and little support on a meagre salary does not instil joy or pride in your work. In many countries this is the daily experience of the average teacher, and unsurprisingly the teaching profession is plagued by low levels of commitment. Link projects in Ethiopia, Malawi and Uganda demonstrate how a variety of low cost interventions can improve teachers’ motivation, and ultimately transform learning outcomes.

Confident teachers = confident girls

Link’s Girls’ Education Challenge project in 123 schools in rural Ethiopia, improved the learning, attendance and retention of 62,777 girls. Through a multi-intervention, holistic approach girls’ literacy and numeracy outcomes increased by 300% and 150% respectively. This improvement cannot be attributed to a single activity – however, tutorial classes, gender responsive teaching and simple teacher encouragement were frequently cited. Moreover, better attendance and performance credited to changes in teaching pedagogy, in turn motivate teachers to perform better.

Tutorial classes provided 12,000 girls most-at-risk of dropping out or failing, one hour of extra tuition three times per week. Tutors were chosen according to strict criteria by the district education officials and school directors. They were trained in gender sensitive approaches and given a teachers’ manual for continued support. One teacher said, **“We have acquired tremendous knowledge from the training provided by this project such as preparation of lesson plans and designing gender sensitive lessons.”** In the tutorial classes girls received special attention when they did not understand and were encouraged to ask questions. This has helped the girls feel confident about their ability to do the work as well as to participate in their general classes.

“Revising what we learnt in regular classes in these tutorial classes assisted us in improving our performance. We used to beg male students to help us with our studies.

Now, we learn freely in tutorials and our teachers assist us in our studies” (senior girl).

An interesting consequence of the training is that female teachers also gained confidence, **“In my house I could not speak with my family. When I try to speak, they would say do not speak to me. It is not so today. I was shy, not today. As teachers we benefitted a lot in confidence” (female teacher).** In addition, 71% of teachers in the project schools now think that female teachers can be promoted on similar grounds as their male colleagues (compared to 49% in the control group) and focus group discussions confirmed that female teachers had applied, and achieved, promotions.

KEY FACTS

Link works in Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi and Uganda

School Performance Review (SPR) is a Link Community Development innovation enabling social accountability monitoring for educational quality

Our School Performance Review gives citizens a voice, fostering a culture of transparency, trust and mutual accountability between communities and schools, enabling greater collective responsibility.

Participatory data collection aligns to Ministry of Education indicators

Representatives participate in School Performance Appraisal Meetings (SPAM) to hold each other accountable to achieve agreed targets

Link’s projects work from the ‘inside-out’ using existing school and district systems

As the project draws to a close, and the small stipend provided to tutors ends, the sustainability of the tutorial classes is considered. Link was delighted to hear that the current tutors are committed to continue tutorials (without pay) and they are willing to inspire other teachers to do the same, ***“We are committed to change others as we have been changed through the training we take regarding self-esteem and self-confidence”*** (tutor).

Information on performance = a desire to improve



Link’s School Performance Review (SPR) process supports the roll out of Malawi’s National Education Standards (NES) and has provided teachers with robust indicators to benchmark their performance. Feedback from advisors during SPR is regarded as welcome continuous professional development, *“Monitoring of activities at school encourages us”* (teacher) and teachers referred to improvements in their own knowledge, skills and teaching practice *“[we] acquired knowledge on effective teaching and learning”* and *“Teaching standards have improved.”* And ultimately

community members and headteachers identified that more effective, motivated and committed teachers lead to an improvement in the education provision at their schools, *“Teachers are now spending their time in class. Before they were spending some time just sitting outside”* (community member) so *“Learners are receiving quality education”* and *“If we check in learners’ exercise books, they are showing improvement”* (community member).

Learners at one rural school stated that they didn’t attend regularly because *“you did not lose much anyway because teachers were not teaching that much... at times we only had three lessons the whole day.”* After SPR, they observed that now when they miss a day that means plenty of work to catch up on so everyone is keen to attend regularly. And at another school, teachers felt they had gained momentum from participating in SPR as they felt the process provided a manual and milestone against which to measure their work through NES requirements.

The District Education Manger (DEM) in Mchinji District is so impressed with the performance data produced through SPR that she has initiated the process in schools which were not yet participating in Link’s project. This has been done solely at her initiative and without financial support from Link or other sources, indicating the value she places on improving education and supporting her teachers.

Regular support = improved student learning



In Uganda Link developed an intensive teacher development approach to support teachers. Government teacher trainers held a one-day workshop tailored to specific identified needs. Crucially, this workshop was followed with regular lesson observations followed by constructive positive feedback and support with planning, pedagogical needs and material development from locally available resources. As a result, learners made significant gains against the control group. The external evaluator found that *“The Link project improved Early Grade Reading (EGRA) results due to regular school based support and guidance by Link staff which transformed targeted primary teachers into strong literacy teachers”* and

concluded that *“20 hours of individual support for early years’ teachers in rural schools was adequate to improve significantly their learners’ literacy skills”* (2015).

For more information see here: <http://lcdinternational.org/case-studies>

Delivery Partners



Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Malawi



Ministry of Education, Ethiopia



Ministry of Education & Sports, Uganda