



“The Link project improved EGRA results due to regular school based support and guidance by Link staff which transformed targeted primary teachers into strong literacy teachers” (external evaluator, 2015)

Summary

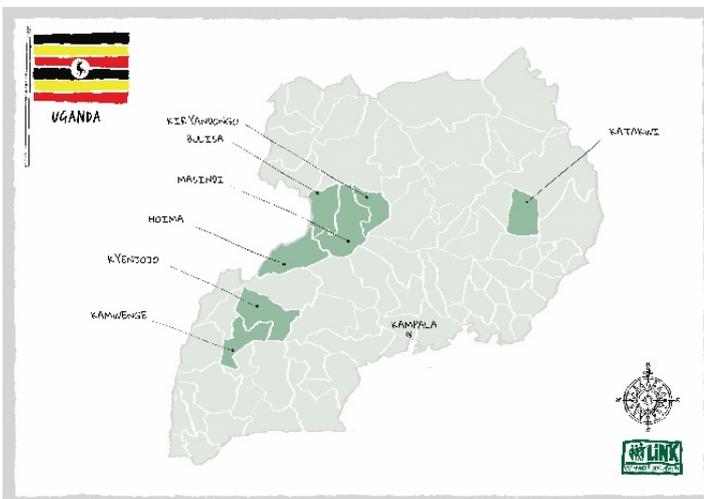
Link has worked in Uganda since 2000, supporting marginalised rural districts and schools that have been identified on the basis of greatest need according to indicators such as low learning outcomes, displaced communities and poverty levels. In the six prime districts where Link Uganda has run its own ‘core work’ projects (Masindi, Bulisa, Soroti, Katakwi, Kamwenge, Kyenjojo), we have supported a total of 774 schools with a combined enrolment of nearly 410,000 learners.

Link Uganda has received funds from Comic Relief, Trust Africa, The Waterloo Foundation, USAID funded UNITY project of MoES and Tullow Oil. Elements of Link Uganda’s work which constitute recognised best practice include:

- Local language literacy and numeracy training programmes across all districts
- Capacity building and partnership with district inspectors and education officers
- Head Teacher Training Programme (adopted into national policy)
- School HIV and AIDS Planning
- Healthy Schools Programme (particularly in relation to the provision of improved facilities for female learners)
- School / community demonstration gardening

Background

Uganda has the world’s youngest population, with over 78% aged under 30 and has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in sub-Saharan Africa. 20% of the population is living in poverty and a further 43% is classified as ‘insecure’. Access to good quality education is key to breaking this cycle of



poverty.

KEY FACTS

- Link has been working in Uganda since 2000
- Link’s innovative School Performance Review process was modified and adopted for national implementation as part of the Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA) national schools’ inspection cycle
- Link piloted the Decentralised Education Management Information System (DEMIS) in our project districts
- Link Uganda pioneered Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) in the *Alur* and *Lugungu* local languages
- In all districts where Link works, Primary Leaving Exam results in poor performing schools rise quickly
- Our projects are sustainable – we work with government at all levels and ensure our interventions align with government policy

The story of Patience Angela



Patience Angela is seven years old and in Grade one of Kabwoya Primary School in Hoima District, western Uganda. She has four siblings and her parents are subsistence farmers. Patience walks three kilometres to school. She then walks three kilometres home. Every day.

A survey to ascertain the competency levels of grade one students at Patience's school showed that none of her class could recognise any letters or letter sounds in their mother tongue language of Runyoro. Runyoro is a small language spoken by only 6.2% of the population.

Link Community Development Uganda's Early Learning Enhancement Project (ELEP), 2014-2015, funded by Trust Africa and Tullow Oil, aimed to improve the early learning outcomes for 4,795 pupils in 16 primary schools in Buliisa and Hoima Districts in western Uganda. The project comprised of two main activities: 1) teacher training and support for early grade literacy teachers; and 2) Link's innovative **School Performance Review (SPR)** to enhance school performance. SPR supports districts to collect, analyse, share and use information to improve education. Schools, and their communities are armed with information allowing them to jointly agree targets for their School Improvement Plan. This allows them to build on good practice and allocate scarce resources to strengthen weak areas.

The teacher training consisted of a workshop for all Early Grade teachers which covered the emphasise of teaching letter sounds, better use of Readers, enhanced learner participation, substantial reading and writing work in the classroom, and crucially regular monitoring visits to the schools to observe teachers and offer one-to-one support.



A key finding of the project was that just **20 hours of individual support for early years' teachers in rural schools was adequate to improve significantly their learners' literacy skills**. This level of improvement was not seen in the control schools. ELEP results show that teacher support is critical in improving learning outcomes. The external evaluator found that "The Link project improved Early Grade Reading results (EGRA) results due to regular school based support and guidance by Link staff which transformed targeted primary teachers into strong literacy teachers" (external evaluator, 2015).

Patience has improved her reading and writing skills in her mother tongue. She can now segment words in Runyoro, construct words from clusters of sounds, read competently and understand what she has read. She has also excelled to become a 'lead learner' among her peers. She says "Reading is now fun" and "I want to work hard to become a doctor in the future." That daily six kilometre walk is now worth it.

Please see our **Biennial review (2013-2015)** for more information

Delivery Partner



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