



A look at Link's approach to education by Steve Blunden, Link's CEO

Link's goal is to improve the quality of education in sub-Saharan Africa. It's ambitious objective, which involves improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Ministry of Education.

Even though we are a relatively small organisation we think that we can achieve real change, but it takes time.

How do we go about improving quality?

Link knows that for there to be a sustained improvement, schools, district education offices and Ministries of Education need to be able to deliver more effectively and efficiently within their current budget.

Link first ensures that it has a clear understanding of education policy, it's delivery in practice, it's impact in schools and also has a **clear picture of the limitations and challenges that affect its delivery.**

From this, Link is able to deliver a district-based school improvement project, working closely with education staff and supporting school interventions designed to improve performance. These are long-term projects which aim to impact on



every school in the district. These projects provide a realistic reflection of the challenges that schools and staff are facing and maximise resources they already have at their disposal, so they can be used to make a difference.

As this journey starts to develop, Link uses its own innovative methods to add value to the district and school improvement process. Some of the innovations work, some don't. Link's aim is to develop approaches which can be up-scaled and reach further.

One example of this that has the potential to reach further is 'school performance review' (SPR). This is a process which enables districts to measure school performance against a standard which has been formed by assessing the best schools within the same region - a standard which has been achieved without additional resources and which can be captured on video and shown to other schools - presented by head teachers from schools they know and can visit.

Measuring school performance is only part of the process. Establishing the education standards is a team-building process between Link and the district authorities. **Instead of 'we can't do x because we have no resources', it focusses on 'you've achieved y inspite of limited resources, why can't we achieve this in all schools?'** SPR has the potential to deliver a full cycle of school improvement which involves parents, schools, district and ministry officials.

However, real success comes when the Ministry of Education adopts some of these ideas and implements them on a larger scale.

Bike Africa: Uganda - closing soon!



Experience Africa on two wheels with Bike Africa: Uganda and discover the heart of Link's work. Your ride will take you to Link schools and projects, where **you'll see the incredible difference your fundraising will make** and through national parks, over waterfalls and to our finish line in a safari lodge. For more details, contact bikeafrica@lcd.org.uk.

Keep up to date!



Make sure you keep up to date with Link by joining us on Facebook and Twitter. We update our website regularly with the latest news too, from Student Volunteering Week to World Toilet Day! [Click here to see our recent articles.](#)

Hitch has started!



Hitch, Link's signature event, has got off to a flying start this year with over 150 Hitchers on the road so far and some reaching Morocco and Croatia already!

"Unbelievable luck! We've run into a man on his way home to St. Gallen in Switzerland. In a single trip we will be catapulted almost

In Uganda, Link has been working with the Ministry of Education's 'Directorate of Education Standards' for ten years. They have now adapted aspects of SPR to inform their approach to measuring student achievement within schools.

In Malawi, following several years of demonstrating SPR in Dedza and Mulanje districts, Link has just started a new project working within the Ministry of Education's, providing technical assistance as develop some of Link's SPR model for wider application.

Of course, these are small steps. There are major challenges impacting on the quality of education which will take time and greater resources to combat. **But we've shown that change is possible.**

These achievements can only be made with your support and that of our major donors.

Thank you for reading,

Steve Blunden,
CEO

School spotlight: Chimphalika Primary School

Country: Malawi

District: Dedza

A bit of background: Link's project in Malawi is based in Dedza, just south of the capital, Lilongwe. Dedza was chosen by Link because of its levels of poverty and lack of other agency support.



The school: Chimphalika is a primary school packed full of children aged 6 to 13. With over 600 students and only 6 teachers, the smallest class at the school is Standard 8, with 46 learners, while Standard 1 is the largest class with 122 learners!

The headteacher: Mr. Boniface Kunyengana is the headteacher at Chimphalika Primary School. He said that the attendance of pupils is low because some, especially girls, drop out to get married, whilst boys often leave school to find domestic work.

The students: Odetta (pictured above) is a 16 year old girl who is in Standard 7. Her favourite subject is agriculture and her ambition is to become an Agricultural Advisor. Odetta said, "I like this school because the teachers encourage us to work hard in our studies. The teachers also are hard working even though there are only a few."

It is schools like Chimphalika that Link's work through SPR aims to develop. Find out more through Link's online virtual school or become part of Link's school sponsorship programme!

halfway to Croatia, going further today than we dared to hope! We are his first-ever hitch-hikers!"

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Find out more about our School sponsorship programme on our website. Learn how with just a few pounds a month, you can sponsor schools like Chimphalika and change hundreds of lives. Click here to find out more!