

School Management Simulation Training – Introduction

Link's School Management Simulation Training (SMST) is a training tool developed in partnership with Business Today. It trains stakeholders on **how to make effective decisions** on the use of funds, staff and resources **to bring about school improvement**. It enables school management teams, school governing bodies, teachers, learners and community members to 'simulate' managing a school using real scenarios. This collaborative decision making, where everyone has a say and everyone works together, creates strong school management teams able to make better decisions for more effective planning to improve learner outcomes.

What is different about simulation training?

- This training uses a high quality board game developed specifically to train schools.
- The training is 'hands-on' giving experience in making decisions about real challenges schools face and the consequences of those decisions.
- The training is delivered to teams of 4 or 5, made up of government staff, parents, learners, community members and teachers. Everyone playing gets directly involved.
- The training allows groups to discuss the reality of their own school and learner performance. Scenarios can be adapted to reflect what is happening in their actual school.
- Finally, the training brings the teams back together for a collective process to develop a 'whole school' inclusive and effective school plan.



The simulation encourages **wider participation in decision making**, **better understanding of the consequences of decisions made**, and a **conducive environment for effective planning**. As a result:

- Leadership skills are developed.
- Players consider the longer-term consequences of their resource allocation and decision-making and plan more strategically.
- The opinions and contributions of community members are better understood and valued.
- Levels of **ownership** increase improving accountability.
- School Improvement Plans are more **inclusive, focused** and **achievable** - so they are more likely to be effective in delivering quality education in rural African schools.

Evidence of Impact

School Management Simulation Training has been delivered to hundreds of school stakeholders across sub-Saharan Africa.

In a recent evaluation in Malawi found that headteachers and community members viewed the SMST as highly **relevant** to their ambitions to improve their schools and the skills they need to achieve these ambitions. **99%** of community members and headteachers were **satisfied or very satisfied** with the SMST. One community member commented that *"the training was more like we were playing, but it was a reality of what is happening in schools"*.

The training had a significant positive impact on the **capacity** of headteachers, teachers and community members to bring about school improvement by providing a professional development opportunity, increasing their knowledge of management techniques, and clarifying the roles of various stakeholders in school management. **87% of headteachers** and **93% of community members** felt that the SMST was **very important** in enabling them to support school improvement.

Just three months after the SMST was delivered, beneficiaries were able to identify a number of specific improvements in the **management and performance** of their schools as a direct result of the training. These included improvements in community engagement, school management and School Improvement Planning. Improved attendance of learners as a result of these improvements was also noted.



“A lot of management skills were acquired in a very short period.” **Headteacher**

“The community is now fully participating in development activities at school and we have managed to construct girls’ toilets.”
Headteacher

“The relationship between teachers and the community was strengthened and there’s ownership of the school by the community.”
Community member



“We were encouraged to see that we have critical roles in the management and improvement of our school.” **Teacher**

“School attendance has improved. There is low absenteeism as chiefs take part in making sure children go to school.” **Teacher**

Read the full report on the School Management Simulation Training impact evaluation in Malawi:
<http://www.lcdinternational.org/content/links-global-news/school-management-simulation-training-mid-term-evaluation>