



## Realising Inclusive and Safe Education (RISE)

Despite the critical importance of education, children with disabilities or special educational needs are frequently left behind. A lack of inclusive infrastructure in schools is a major barrier, as is a lack of training and resources for teachers, inadequate assistive devices for the children, and discrimination. According to UNESCO, children with disabilities are 2.5 times more likely not to go to school than their non-disabled peers<sup>1</sup>. In rural Rwanda only 8.4% of children with disabilities attend school<sup>2</sup> whilst in Malawi children with disabilities make up 4% of total primary school enrolment and only 4% of primary schools (209 schools) have specialist teachers<sup>3</sup>.

The £7.5 million Realising Inclusive and Safe Education (RISE) project will work in eight districts across Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia, and reach 422 government schools, 5,952 teachers and school leaders, 402,981 learners of which 10,031 have a disability, and support 16 resource centres. It will strengthen government support for children with disabilities, especially girls, and ensure these children are able to access a safe and quality education. Project partners will support identification, assessment and device provision for children with disabilities, will strengthen teacher and leadership training in gender and inclusive education, and engage communities and school governance bodies to better support children with disabilities.

RISE is delivered by Link Community Development Malawi, Chance for Childhood in Rwanda and School to School in Zambia, is managed by Link Education International and funded by the Scottish Government. This consortium will draw on extensive experience to co-design and deliver, alongside government partners, Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs), schools and communities, a project that will meet the diverse needs of the RISE participants. RISE will run from July 2024 to March 2029.

### Key activities will include:

- Co-designing project interventions with local communities and stakeholders to ensure targeted project activities meet the greatest local needs
- Identifying and supporting learners through the provision of assistive devices such as hearing aids, glasses and mobility aids, and links to medical help and social services
- Teacher and school leader professional development, including customised materials and support for local trainers to lead sessions at primary and secondary level

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unesco.org/en/inclusion-education/need-know#:~:text=Children%20and%20youth%20with%20sensory,of%20exclusion%20is%20greater%20still>.

<sup>2</sup> 2022 Rwanda General Population Census

<sup>3</sup> Joint Sector Review, Malawi, 2024

- Inclusive education training and community sensitisation for School Management Committees, parents, school leaders and district education authorities
- Training for schools in creating evidence-based, participatory and accessible improvement plans with a gender and disability lens, feeding data to the national level
- Consulting with Ministries of Education to ensure gender and inclusion are prominent agendas within national education standards

### **Country detail in brief:**

Malawi: RISE is working alongside the Directorate of Inclusive Education and district education offices in Lilongwe Urban, Lilongwe Rural West, Lilongwe Rural East, and Dedza. RISE in Malawi will reach 108 schools, 1,996 teachers and leaders, 134,119 learners of which 4,527 have a disability and 10 resource centres.

Rwanda: RISE is working with MINEDUC and district education teams in Burera, Gakenke and Gicumbi districts in Northern Province. Rise in Rwanda will reach 57 schools, 1,311 teachers and leaders, 100,035 learners of which 5,130 have a disability, and 3 resource centres.

Zambia: RISE is working in partnership with the Ministry of Education and district education teams in Kabwe and Chibombo districts in Central Region. RISE in Zambia will reach 251 schools, 2,645 teachers and leaders, 168,827 learners of which 374 have a disability and 3 resource centres.

NOTE: These numbers are taken from government statistics and may change after the RISE baseline is complete (June 2025).

### **The partners:**

Link Community Development Malawi (LCDM) is a locally registered non-governmental organisation working since 2006 in multiple districts in Malawi. LCDM strives to improve education for children in disadvantaged, rural areas, and works in partnership with every level of government, engaging with local communities to deliver holistic projects that remove barriers to education and help all children flourish. LCDM focuses on enhancing teaching, learning and school management, developing life skills, promoting equality and inclusion for all learners, strengthening safeguarding practices, building community voice, engagement and accountability and capacity strengthening and partnership with district education officers. LCDM will lead on community support and strengthening school governance.

Chance for Childhood Rwanda (CfCR) is a child-centred organisation committed to addressing complex issues faced by children who find themselves marginalised from society and vital services, such as children with disabilities (CWD). With its strategic areas of Inclusive Education (IE) and Safe Spaces, CfCR designs projects that affect change at an individual, community, and institutional level. Its activities include teacher, parent, service provider and community training to enhance early identification, assessment of developmental delays and disabilities and appropriate referral mechanisms. CfCR has been working in Rwanda for 14 years in 22 districts. CfCR will lead on identification and assessment of CWD.

School to School Zambia (StSZ) is a locally registered non-governmental organisation committed to improving the lives and learning of girls and boys in Zambia through thoughtful research, practice and partnership. StSZ has worked to strengthen and support the education system in Zambia since

2012, including strengthening teacher pre-service education, improving access to quality inclusive education, and developing a comprehensive report on Zambia's progress towards education-focused Sustainable Development Goals. StSZ will lead on leadership and teacher development.

Link Education International (LEI) is experienced in adaptive project management and appropriate oversight for multi-country projects, as well as consortium management including oversight of risk management, duty of care and aligned delivery. LEI has delivered multi-million-pound, multi-year programmes across Malawi, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Uganda concurrently, managing complex budgets for a diverse range of donors. LEI creates values-led governance structures to share learning between countries and amplify the voices of those delivering. Our adaptive management approach emphasises clear communication among programme staff, participants, government stakeholders, and donors, and embeds structured review, adaptation, and feedback loops, ensuring a needs-led approach. LEI will lead on overall consortium and project management, including monitoring, evaluation and learning and communication with Scottish Government.

LEI and its consortium partners have a strong track record of working with Ministries of Education (MoE) and local communities to co-design participatory inclusive education programmes, amplifying marginalised voices and furthering national education plans. Programme design is guided by expertise from the global south, and delivery is locally owned and led, to ensure we go beyond aid to effect sustainable development. LEI's consortium leadership brings Scottish experience, providing learning from its 30-year history including successful delivery of Scottish Government-funded projects.

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