



Year in Review 2020



LINK
EDUCATION

TRANSFORMING LIVES
THROUGH LEARNING

Registered with



FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR

2020 in Review

2020 began with a lot of promise for Link: in Ethiopia, we started on a new project training school leaders and trialling new approaches to inclusion and community engagement in four regions new to Link; in Malawi, we were developing our work helping some of the most vulnerable out of school girls learn foundation and vocational skills; we continued to provide technical support to the Rwandan Education Board; and in Uganda we started to work on key recommendations from the informative education system study we completed in 2019. Across the Link Family progress was on track to help more children gain a quality education and a brighter future.

As COVID-19 continued to spread in the spring, eventually all the schools we work with closed to help keep communities safe. Link joined nationwide coordinated emergency responses to minimise the impact on learners and support schools through this difficult time. By the end of the year all schools were at least partially open again, but faced increased challenges to teaching and learning and needed greater support.

About Link

Link is Scotland's leading international education charity, striving to improve education across sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. Working directly with schools, communities and government, we provide support and training for more effective teaching, improved school management and increased community engagement to help children learn and thrive.

How We Make A Difference



Reaching learners at home

Without access to school, many children were forced into early marriage, had to take on more chores, or needed to move away from home to find work. We did all we could to reach out and stop this causing them to drop out of education for good, even once schools reopened.

In Ethiopia and Malawi, as well as COVID-secure in-person visits from community members, we supported learners during the closure through local radio programming. Radio programmes contained reliable information on COVID-19 and also focussed on the continued importance of education, safeguarding and inclusion. We printed study materials for pupils in Uganda who had no other access to learning and we also continued to safely distribute food to care-givers so that vulnerable children still received much-needed nutrition in Malawi.



Learning from a blackboard



At the height of national lockdowns in April, approximately 91% of the world's students were out of school¹

Only 12% of project girls in Ethiopia can access internet-based learning through a mobile phone at home, and just 3.5% in Malawi³



Under 43% of girls have a radio at home that they can use for remote learning in Ethiopia and Malawi²

In Malawi, 21% of our learners said they felt more anxious since their place of learning had closed, increasing to 57% in Ethiopia⁴



Supporting schools to prepare to reopen safely

With many schools anxious about how to reopen safely and teach effectively under new restrictions, we stepped in to provide extra support. In Rwanda we provided training to school inspectors and helped schools prepare improvement plans to adapt to new circumstances. In Uganda we helped to train district officials and distribute guidelines to headteachers so they could prepare safe learning environments that also delivered quality teaching. Crucial supplies of soap and handwashing stations have been organised for partner schools to ensure a safe return for learners.



Helping learners return to the classroom

As schools started to reopen, many learners found they were facing new challenges, not just because they had missed several months of classes. We adapted the curriculum in our community-based learning centres to focus on core subjects so learners could consolidate their progress and get the most benefit from time with a teacher.

Across our programmes, we also continued to focus on supporting resilience and life skills teaching to help learners cope with these stressful times. Learners (and teachers) told us they were feeling increasingly anxious about the pandemic situation, so it was important to support them through pastoral care, peer support networks, and community groups like Girls Clubs. We also prepared home-learning materials so learners could catch up with missed classes and feel more confident in the classroom.



School Safety



School closures have challenged the safety of vulnerable children. It's estimated that over the next 10 years 13 million girls will marry as children.⁵ The pandemic is accelerating this trend as girls are forced to marry for economic reasons. Gender-based violence has also been increasing as women are made to spend more time at home.

We have changed the ways that children can reach out to us from home (rather than through their school) if they need help or are experiencing abuse. By keeping in touch and promoting safeguarding messages on the radio we're helping to keep vulnerable people safe.

Whatever the future holds, Link will continue to support communities and make sure all children get the education they deserve

- 1 UNICEF
- 2 Link Reporting
- 3 Link Reporting
- 4 Link Reporting
- 5 Girls Not Brides

