



Project Overview:

The Realising Inclusive and Safe Education (RISE) project is a five-year initiative (July 2024–March 2029) funded by the Scottish Government and implemented in Malawi, Zambia, and Rwanda. Led by Link Education International, the project works in Lilongwe Urban, Lilongwe Rural West, Lilongwe Rural East, and Dedza districts in Malawi to strengthen inclusive and safe education systems for children with disabilities, particularly girls in partnership with government, regional and local organisations.



Context:

The 2024/2025 Malawi Education Statistics Report states that learners with special educational needs (SNE) comprise 4% of total primary enrolment, with learning difficulties and low vision being most prominent. While there has been a 6% increase in SNE identification due to improved knowledge among teachers and parents, the system faces a significant ‘transition cliff’ with representation dropping to 2.7% at secondary level. Despite a 37.1% growth in classrooms equipped with ramps since 2021 only 53.6% of permanent classrooms are currently accessible to learners with physical impairments.

Primary schools face a 95% deficit in specialized furniture, 85% received zero formal inspection visits in the final term of 2024/2025 and 1,102 lack a registered Mother Group to advocate for at-risk children. Addressing these challenges is vital for improving internal efficiency, as the primary sector struggles with a 25% repetition rate and a declining completion rate of only 44%.



Key interventions:

1. Supporting identification, screening, assessment, referral, and assistive device provision.
2. Support teacher and leader professional development.
3. Community engagement and governance.
4. Strengthening safeguarding systems.

Achievements 2025/2026:

- 160,465 children screened; 2,197 children assessed; 322 assistive devices provided; 108 children with disabilities referred.
- 20 resource rooms established and supported with materials.
- Inclusive education capacity building for 2,443 teachers; 111 leaders; 139 officials.
- Inclusive education and safeguarding capacity building of 5,486 community members; 2,308 champions; 117 schools; 111 mother groups.
- Adaptive Management to support EMIS integration, safeguarding follow-up, inclusive infrastructure, and inclusive education coaching for teachers.

Key activities 2026/2027:

- Screen and assess 1,500 learners and provide 500 assistive devices in collaboration with 10 disability organisations.
- Train 2,082 teachers and headteachers in Universal Design for Learning and continuous assessment, supported by 120 resource center coordinators.
- Support 30 resource centers and 117 family support groups.
- Link 20 communities to national safeguarding toll lines

Key partnerships:

- Ministry of Education Science and Technology: Directorate of Basic Education, Department of Education Planning, Directorate of Quality Assurance Services, and Department of Teacher Education and Development.
- Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare
- Health and rehabilitation service providers: District Health Office
- Sandithandiza, Taz Medi Rehab, Malawi Council for Disability Affairs, Federation of Disability Organization in Malawi, ABC Hearing Clinic, Beit Cure Blantyre, Malawi Against Physical Disabilities, Lions Orthopedic Lilongwe, Blantyre Institute for Community Outreach, Good Vision Glasses, Parents of Disabled Children Association of Malawi, Nkhoma Hospital, Kamuzu Central Hospital, Youth Net and Counselling.
- Community child protection structures and local authorities
- Schools, mother groups, school management committees, parent teacher associations and community safeguarding champions (chiefs and police).

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