



Changing lives through education

Disability Project

Year Two Report

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Executive Summary

The aims are:

- To increase the quality of life of students with disabilities by improving the education they receive in school and their attainment
- To increase the value and enjoyment of education for disabled children
- To support the schools directly by providing them with the SEN resources, teacher training and conditional financial support to the children’s families.

Project Implementation:

Activities	Progress status
Bishoftu	
Vocational Training	Completed
Awareness Training	Completed
Tutorial Programme	Completed
Improvement Grants	Ongoing
Gondar	
Awareness Training	Completed
Tutorial Programme	Completed
Vocational Training	Completed
Partnerships	Ongoing
Outreach Programme	Ongoing
Improvement Grants	Ongoing

Results:

- 860 students supported in Year Two of the Project, up from 600 students supported in Year One
 - 818 students taught by teachers trained in disability awareness this year
 - 275 students with access to new classroom facilities this year
 - 333 students received extra teaching contact within the tutorial programme
 - 45 students participated in a vocational skills training event
- Student interviews and lesson monitoring show that Link Ethiopia teacher training has improved the inclusiveness of lessons. An example lesson observation finds *‘praise, humour and compassion utilised by teacher’* and an example student interview states *‘the teachers give us more chance to participate in the lesson especially in questioning and answering’*.
- The tutorial programme has measurably increased grades for students. Across all subjects and grades, tutorial students improved test scores by 3% in Bishoftu and 5% in Gondar. In model schools, students achieved 16% margins of improvement in individual subjects.

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Background

The Link Ethiopia disability project was inspired by the work of the Nekemte Rehabilitation for Persons with Disability organisation. The NRPD project combined awareness training and resourcing to provide schools with the means to better support children with disabilities. The project teams in Ethiopia recognised that we could use our network of linked schools to recreate the success of the disability project in Nekemte.

The Ethiopian government recognises that students with disabilities have special educational needs but that, currently, they are poorly served by government schools. The 2012 Special Needs and Inclusive Education Strategy notes that there is gap in the provision of quality education for students with disabilities with a lack of qualified professionals, a lack of practical SNE training, limited budget for resources and inaccessible school facilities. The latest Ministry of Education figures show that in 2013-14 of 52,000 trainee teachers only 673 would receive specialist SNE training. The African Child Policy Forum (ACPF, 2011) report also outlines the difficulties for disabled students, also highlighting the need for better teaching resources and more access to training for teachers to implement the government Special Educational Needs policy.

Aims and Objectives

Aims

- To increase the quality of life of students with disabilities by improving the education they receive in school and their attainment
 - To increase the value of education for children with disabilities and their enjoyment of it
 - To support the schools directly by providing them with the SEN resources, teacher training and conditional financial support to the children's families.
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Objectives

The project teams in Bishoftu, Gondar and in London have continuously reflected on and modified the project objectives. In year one, our two project offices independently designed projects based on the needs of their local communities. In year two, we have consolidated the most successful elements from each region (see Project Design section). One modification this year was that in place of producing SEN packs for teachers, Link Ethiopia incorporated action plan workshops into our awareness training. In this way, teachers and directors have bespoke SEN plans developed in collaboration with their peers.

The objectives below reflect the improvements made to the project design as well as the aims laid out in our initial proposal.

- To reach 200 disabled children over two years, in the Amhara and Oromiya regions.
- To strengthen existing human and physical resources of special schools in Gondar and Bishoftu and build the capacity of schools with disabled students.
- To supply school action plans to teachers which help them identify and support a range of disabled students.
- To supply teaching materials and teaching aids to the existing SEN teachers.
- To fund SEN training for at least 20 local teachers in SEN teaching techniques, teaching upper primary grades (Grade 3 onwards).
- To provide tutorial support for disabled children.
- To provide vocational training so that students can support themselves.

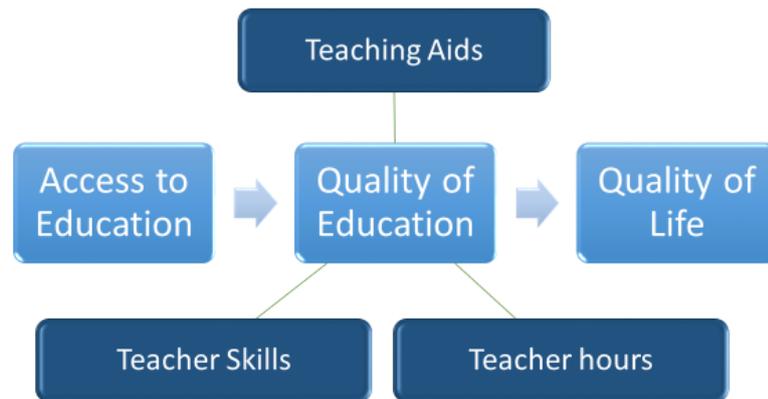
Project Design

Year One

In the first year, our project was focused on improving the quality of education for disabled students. We did that in three ways: by improving teacher skills; delivering more resources for teachers and by increasing the amount of hours of teaching received by disabled students.

Link Ethiopia has offices in Gondar (northern Amhara region) and Bishoftu (Debre Zeyit, in southern Oromiya region). Each office was given flexibility to shape activities to local needs.

Our project was designed to support teachers to support disabled students by:



- **Strengthening existing SEN centres of excellence**

Gondar: Tsadiku Yohannes Elementary and Atse Fasil Elementary were used centres for teacher training and received teaching resources including braille books and audio books.

Bishoftu: Refurbishment of the special unit based in Bishoftu Secondary

- **Increasing resources**

Gondar: Link Ethiopia provided resources to Tsadiku Yohannes and Atse Fasil special schools including braille slates and styluses, sign language books and audio recorders.

- **Tutorial Programme - Maximising face-to-face time with teachers**

Gondar: Weekend tutorial sessions were set up in four centres in Gondar and Bahir Dar over a period of 14 weeks.

- **Teacher training**

Bishoftu: A three day training session was organised for 70 teachers and directors from 18 local schools. The training was designed to increase awareness and to enable schools to implement strategies for improved education for disabled students.

Year Two

At the beginning of the academic year 2014-15, the project teams in Gondar, Bishoftu and the UK met to re-evaluate the project design for the coming year. The project design meeting reflected on:

- The original aims of the project
- The different groups of beneficiaries we were working with and could feasibly work with
- Feedback from direct and indirect beneficiaries in year one
- Impact data on the project from year one.

Following our meeting we made four changes to the project to maximize the impact we could have with the resources available:

1) Adopting best practice

In our first year, the project teams in our local offices took the lead with project design setting their own priorities for outcomes and activities. In year two, we have been able to focus on the most successful and elements of the projects in both regions, with tutorials, vocational training and awareness training rolled out in both regions.

2) Improved monitoring and evaluation

In 2014-15, we have improved how we measure what is delivered and the impact it has on students and teachers. The most striking example is in the awareness training we offer to teachers. This year, we asked teachers to make an action plan, identifying exactly what they could do in their classrooms to help students with disabilities. When we followed up these plans, every school had made concrete progress making their school inclusive.

3) Partnerships

We sought to work with other NGOs who specialized in inclusive education. In the summer of 2015, Link Ethiopia participated in a Blind Summer School organised by Project Ten, an international NGO with volunteers supporting education in Gondar, and the local Blind Association. We used the forum to give students basic training in business. We have also partnered with Community Based Rehabilitation, a disability NGO, to provide teacher training and with students at Fasiledes Secondary, Gondar, who have developed their own tutorial scheme.

4) Extending the scope

A big change to this year's project is that we have sought to work not just with children with disabilities who are in schools but those who are currently out of school. Children with disabilities in Ethiopian schools face many difficulties, however, many students simply fail to make it to school. By widening the scope of our project to include these children we can increase the impact of our resources and access a community poorly served by the current education system.

The diagram below shows the changes in project design, with an equal focus on quality and access to education.



Year Two project had six key activity areas:

1) Awareness Training

Teachers and school directors were invited to a two day awareness raising event. The first day covered awareness of different kinds of disability and best practice in inclusive education. The second day allowed teachers to break into groups and discuss practical action in their own schools coming up with an action plan to improve the inclusivity of lessons and the school environment. Link Ethiopia visited each school to check their progress against this plan.

In Gondar, 72 teachers and directors from 10 schools attended. In Bishoftu, 67 teachers from 21 schools attended.

2) Tutorials

After the success of the tutorial programme in year one, both regions adopted the intervention. Teachers were funded to provide revision lessons for students at weekends to cover material that can be easily missed in undifferentiated lessons. Tutorials covered Maths, English, Amharic and Social and Natural Sciences.

In Gondar, 111 students with disabilities from nine schools accessed the tutorial programme which was provided by tutors working in five centre schools over 12 weeks.

In Bishoftu, 222 students with disabilities from seven schools accessed the tutorial programme provided by tutors in six centre schools over 12 weeks.

3) Vocational Training and microloan support

In Bishoftu, a two day training event on handicrafts for teachers was held in the Bishoftu Secondary school. Participants learnt how to make shoe brushes, woven mats and leather projects. The special school six teachers attended as well as two students.

In Gondar, Link Ethiopia participated in the Project Ten-Gondar Blind Association summer camp. The project team provided a two and a half day training on business basics to 43 students from Grades 1 - 12. Of the students who received training, 24 older students submitted proposals for new income-generating businesses. Link Ethiopia will, as a pilot project in partnership with the Office for Small Enterprises, offer microloan support to proposals which meet our business and ethical criteria.



Tutorial Closing Ceremony in Gondar, August 2015



Business Training for Grade 1-12 students in Gondar, June 2015

4) Physical projects for schools

Schools in both regions will be given the chance to apply for funding to make the physical environment of the school more accessible for students with disabilities.

In Bishoftu, schools which attended the awareness training were given the opportunity to make a proposal for five grants of 10,000 Birr. The bids were judged on three criteria; improving accessibility, improving awareness and improving outreach to students out of education.

In Gondar, school will be given the opportunity to bid for improvement grants in 2015-16.

5) Outreach for children with disabilities outside of education

In Bishoftu, outreach programmes were included in the school improvement grant.

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In Gondar, the project team worked with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to identify ten families who have children with disabilities who are currently out of education. Link Ethiopia will identify the primary causes for their absence and sponsor a social worker to resolve their individual issues.

6) Partnerships with local grassroots organisations

In order to ensure that the impact of our project sustains over time, Link Ethiopia has sought to strengthen grassroots organisations already working to support students with disabilities.

In Gondar, we partnered with Project Ten and the Blind Association to co-operate with their summer school. Further, we provided resources for an existing project supporting deprived students attending university. Students commented at the handover ceremony that without Link Ethiopia's tutorial programme and without the blankets and bedsheets provided through the partner project they would be unable to stay in education.

Finally, we partnered with a student at Fasiledes secondary, who as part of Project Ten's Admas programme, created her own project to start student led tutorials at Fasiledes.



A volunteer from Project Ten doing group work with blind students at the summer school in Gondar, June 2015



Small but impactful changes to the toilets in Tokuma, Bishoftu

Project Implementation

The project activities were carried out as outlined in the table below.

Project 2014-15 Delivery

Activities	Delivery dates	Progress status
Bishoftu		
Vocational Training	Dec 2014	Completed
Awareness Training	Mar 2015	Completed
Tutorial Programme	Mar - Jun 2015	Completed
Improvement Grants	May 2015 – May 2016	Ongoing
Gondar		
Awareness Training	Mar 2015	Completed
Tutorial Programme	Mar - Jun 2015	Completed
Vocational Training	Jul 2015	Completed
Partnerships	Jul 2015 – May 2016	Ongoing
Outreach Programme	Sept 2015 – May 2016	Ongoing
Improvement Grants	Sept 2015 – May 2016	Ongoing

Monitoring and Evaluation

Outcome indicators

- 861 students with disabilities are supported by at least one Link Ethiopia activity.
- 139 teachers received awareness training. They will provide inclusive lessons for over 7,000 students this year including 818 who have recognised disabilities.
- 333 students received extra teaching contact within the tutorial programme.
- 45 students participated in a vocational or business skills training event.
- 275 students with disabilities will benefit from the new accessible school facilities.

Lesson Monitoring

The project teams conducted lesson monitoring visits before and after the disability awareness training. The monitoring criteria were based on the UNESCO 'Teaching Children with Disabilities in Inclusive Settings' toolkit.

Before the training, two schools in each region received lesson observation meetings. The table below shows the strengths (highlighted in green) and weakness of standard lessons. The criteria for visually impaired students have been highlighted as they were the most commonly present all schools and all four of the sample schools. Teachers were able to show competency in allowing students to participate, using praise and reading aloud to blind students. Factors which involved lesson planning and activities beyond the curriculum were more difficult.

Description	Yes (Number)	No (Number)
All students engaged in the lesson and get equal time to participate	3	1
All students understand the lesson	4	0
Students are praised for good work and contributions	4	0
Students supporting each other's' learning	2	1
Extra teacher support for SEN students	1	1
Student progress is measured as well as performance	1	1
Visually Impaired Students	0	0
Seating is consistent and the classroom is uncluttered	3	0
Practical activities are explained ahead of time	0	2
Written text is read aloud	3	0
Lessons include tactile learning tasks and projects	0	2

After the training the general pattern of strengths and weakness remained the same. Individual schools and teachers were able to improve against the 'red' criteria with observations showing the teacher providing extra support for SEN students and explaining difficult elements of the lesson ahead of time. Every school was able to improve within categories which is well demonstrated by positive comments made by volunteers and project managers who observed lessons:

Both blind students were invited to explain some new concepts of the day's lesson

Positive attitude toward students, including the sight impaired student

Praise, humour and compassion utilised by teacher

Teacher Interviews

Teachers and students with disabilities were interviewed before and after the teacher training in target and control schools.

Teachers were asked about their attitudes toward students with disabilities, to assess the inclusiveness of their own lessons and what extra support they needed (if any). All teachers were positive about the abilities of students with disabilities, several pointing out that disabled students were top of the class. Teachers rated their lessons highly before and after the training.

When we asked teachers what specific changes they had made after the training they outlined several improvements including grouping students by ability, making time in the lesson for explanation and contributing extra time to tutorial lessons.

Student Interviews

Students were asked what they liked and disliked about school, what (if anything) stopped them from attending lessons and what stopped them understanding lessons. The broad picture from pre and post training interviews is that students are very positive about school with many students unable to identify negatives about school life. Most students stated that they rarely missed lessons but some identified economic problems and illness as reasons for missing school. Students were also positive about lessons stating that they understood lessons well though several asked for specialist resources and teaching.

This broad picture was the same before and after the training with students positive about school with some suggested improvements. When we asked them about the inclusiveness of lessons specifically they mentioned the following improvements:

The teachers give us more chance to participate in the lesson especially in questioning and answering

The teachers repeated the lesson contents in many ways, giving us face-to-face instructions and lecturing aloud

The teachers used the best grouping arrangement and made clear the lessons when we asked them questions

Action Plans

This year, as well as hosting presentations on identifying disabilities and ideas for inclusive education, we also asked teachers to make an action plan, identifying exactly what they could do in their classrooms to help students with disabilities.

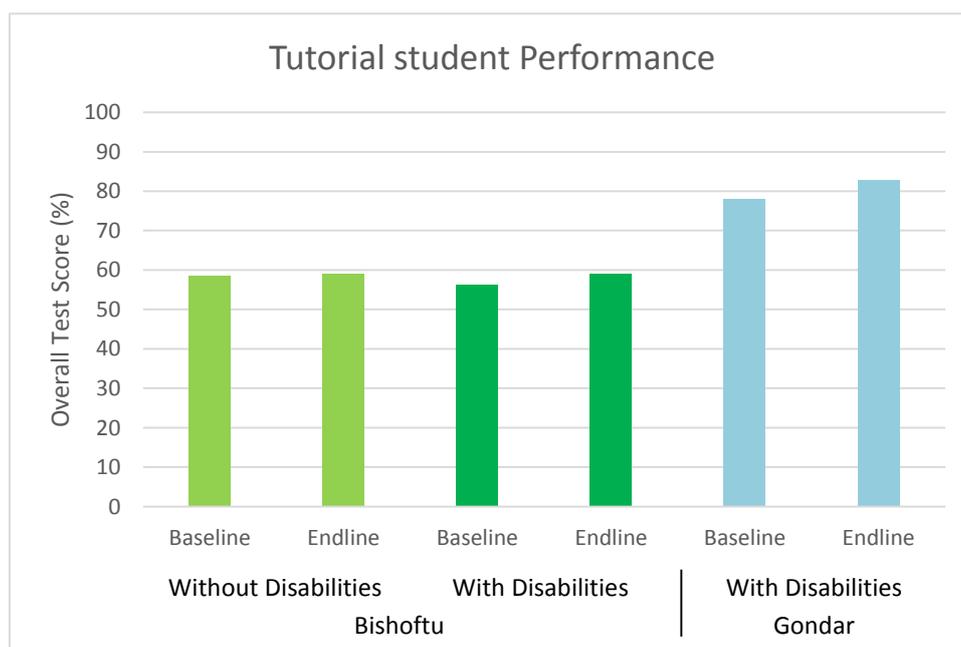
When we followed up these plans in Bishoftu, every school had held an awareness day inviting parents and students to discuss disability and inclusive education and to celebrate the academic achievements of disabled students. In Gondar, most schools had achieved progress in identifying children with SEN, in increasing participation in lessons and helping children prepare for exams.

Simply by asking teachers what they will do with the training we have been able to enhance the way they use the training to make their lessons better.

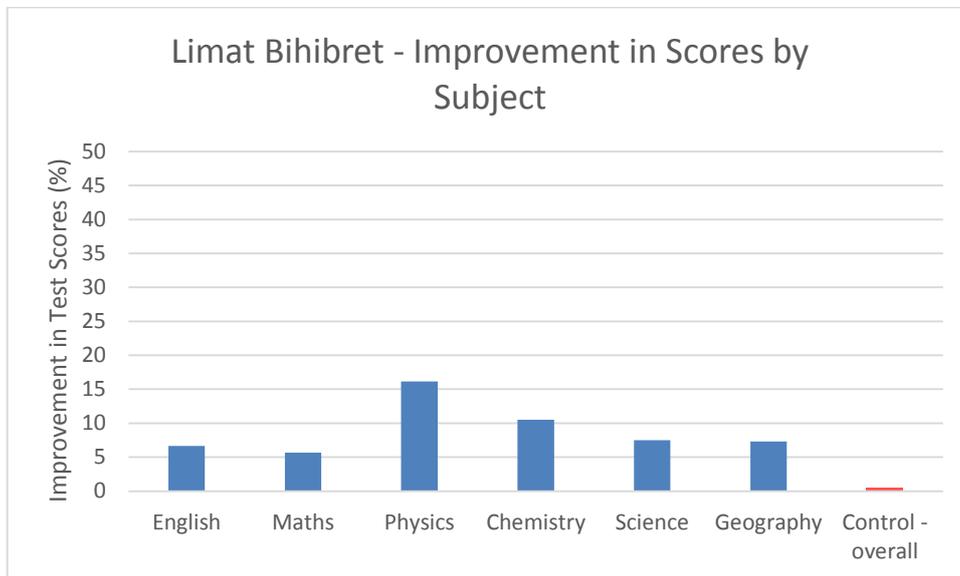
Tutorial Results

Link Ethiopia measured the performance of students before and after the tutorial programme. In Bishoftu, we measured the performance of able-bodied students outside the tutorial programme to provide a benchmark.

The chart below shows the overall performance of all students in the tutorial programme, averaging their marks across subjects and grades; we can see that students in Bishoftu and Gondar both improved their results after the tutorials, the former by 3 percentage points from 56% to 59% and the latter by 5% from 78% to 83%. Both of these improvements compare favourably to students without disabilities outside the scheme who improved only by 1 percentage point across the year.



This overall result smoothes out the individual performance of the different schools. Link Ethiopia will seek to learn from and expand upon the most successful school programmes, for example, Limat Bihibret school in Bishoftu who was able to achieve above average improvements across six subjects: achieving 6 – 16% increases compared to an average 0.5% for students outside the programme.



A university student receiving a blanket as part of the Gondar Blind Association education project



Students learning braille at the Project ten summer school in Gondar

Conclusions

The Link Ethiopia Disability Project aims to increase the quality of life for children with disabilities in Ethiopia by increasing their access to quality education.

We have worked hard to build on the successes of the first year and have sought to improve the project by expanding activities that were successful in one region, by building partnerships with grassroots organisations and by prioritising access for children outside of education.

The year two project was comprised of six key activity areas; awareness training, tutorials, vocational training, grants for school facilities, outreach and partnerships. The first three areas were completed in both regions in 2014-15. In 2014-15, school improvement activities, partner projects and outreach work for children out of school are ongoing.

The results from 2014-15 show real improvements for students with disabilities. 861 students were helped by at least one of our activities in 2014-15. Student interviews and lesson monitoring show that Link Ethiopia teacher training has improved the inclusiveness of lessons. The tutorial programme has measurably increased grades for students. We await data on the results of ongoing activities.

Improvements for a New Disability Project

Link Ethiopia will seek to continue working with disabled students as part of our mission to improve the quality of education for Ethiopian students particularly those who have special educational needs.

- Access to education

Building on our work setting up a pilot outreach programme with ten families in Gondar, Link Ethiopia would seek to work with other NGOs in health and education to expand our support to children with disabilities out of education.

Across the regions in which we work, support for children out of school is hampered by a lack of knowledge on the numbers of students out of school, their location and the barriers to schooling. For this reason we would seek to conduct a research project across the woredas (local districts) in which we work, identifying families with children outside of education and their needs. We would share the results with government and interested NGOs as well as setting a foundation for own new projects.

- School Awards

Link Ethiopia has been running a libraries project with link schools since 2012. A key part of this project has been introducing a library awards scheme where schools are rewarded for making their libraries more attractive, user friendly and encouraging reading for pleasure. The awards scheme has proven a great motivation for librarians and directors fostering positive competition between schools.

Link Ethiopia will seek to replicate this success within a disability award scheme promoting inclusive lessons, resourcing and awareness creation. Schools will take responsibility for making their schools inclusive and accessible environments for all students.

- Capacity building through awareness creation

The central aim of our project is to increase the quality of education received by students with disabilities. One important tool to achieve that aim is to raise awareness of disability in schools; to make teachers more aware of the range of disabilities that children under their care may suffer from, the extra help that they might need but also the achievements they are capable of with that support. In our next Disabilities project we will seek to build-in a more active role for students with disabilities, creating opportunities through art shows, radio broadcasts and leading disability clubs for them to talk about disability and build their own extra-curricular skills simultaneously.