

Ghana

Ghana Basic Education Sector Improvement Project (P000975)

Date Effective: October 11, 1996

Date Closed: December 31, 2002

Project Description: Following independence in 1957, Ghana expanded its basic education, but by mid-70s the number of children attending primary school had fallen. Government spending on basic education as a percent of GDP dropped. By the 1980s, school buildings were dilapidated, classrooms had few desks and in several cases, one text book was shared by the whole class. By the mid-1980s, the government embarked on an education reform program to restructure the system. The restructuring took place, but concerns remained on the poor quality of instruction, teacher absenteeism and poor school infrastructure. The Basic Education Sector Improvement Program (BESIP) was designed to support the government's policy of "Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE). By design, BESIP constituted donor support to the government's FCUBE policy, and thus, all the objectives of BESIP are identical with those of FCUBE. BESIP's objectives were to:

- improve the teaching process and learning outcomes;
- strengthen management of the basic education system through better planning, monitoring and evaluation by the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service at central, regional and district levels, and by promoting active involvement of communities in the management of schools;
- improve access to basic education, especially of girls, the poor and other disadvantaged segments of the population; and
- ensure financial sustainability of the government program for basic education over the longer term.

Impact: *Classroom construction and rehabilitation contributed to higher enrolments and better learning outcomes. The project financed 11 million textbooks which played an important role in improving the quality of instruction.*

Some Highlights:

- From 1996 to 2001, the absolute enrollment in junior secondary schools increased nearly 130,000 (from 738,057 to 865,636); the gross enrollment rate increased 5.2 percentage points (from 58.7% to 63.9%). The girls' enrollment share increased 2.3 percentage points (from 43.1% to 45.4%) between 1996 and 2001.
- Pupil-teacher ratio increased 2.2 points (from 30.7 to 32.9) for primary school between base-year 1994 and 2001.
- With increased teacher training and availability of textbooks, Criterion Referenced Test mean scores increased (from 1996 to end of project) in English from 33.0 to 36.9 and in math from 28.8 to 32.3.

- The Education Management Information System (EMIS) was established in 10 regions and 26 districts with training provided to the EMIS staff. EMIS enabled the generation of five years annual school census data from 1997 to 2001 in a timely manner, production of key education indicators and of policy relevant analysis, and the sensitization of education officials in the use of data for planning and decision making.
- A total of about 11 million textbooks were printed and distributed. In addition 96,200 syllabi and 6,500 globes were distributed. The Survey of Textbook Distribution to Basic Schools reported that the target of a 1:1 ratio of pupils to textbooks in the four core subjects (Primary: Math, English; JSS: Math, English, Science, Social Studies) was reached in 79 percent of the schools.
- 2,300 classrooms were rehabilitated (out of 2,000 planned); 344 four-unit teacher accommodation blocks, 101 primary schools, and 50 secondary schools were constructed.

Total Financing: The total project cost was \$47.8 million, of which IDA financed \$45 million.

IDA Contribution: IDA played a catalytic role in facilitating Ghana's proposal for inclusion in the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) of the Education for All (EFA) initiative. Without The Education Management Information System (EMIS) established by the project, Ghana could not have prepared the documentation for a sound plan to achieve EFA, and improvements in Ghana's enrolments and learning outcomes in primary education enabled Ghana to be included in the FTI. IDA helped enhance the government's capacity for better donor coordination.

Linkages: The program builds on previous Bank operations and lays the groundwork for subsequent Bank operations. EMIS data have been used in several ways, both for the government's sectoral policy and resource allocation, and Ghana's proposal for the Education for All Fast Track Initiative. The Bank's follow-on operation, EdSEP, identified and targeted districts using EMIS data.

Next Steps: Continued support from development partners will make the sustainability of the project likely. Since several important operations supporting the education sector are being implemented (e.g., IDA's EdSeP, Poverty Reduction Support Credit, other development policy support and EFA-FTI), the progress of the sector is likely to be sustained. The government must contribute to these efforts by addressing issues of disparity among communities, along with providing support to EMIS. Specifically, continued skills enhancement for EMIS staff and further development of the system is warranted.