

EQUALL UPDATE

EQUALL is a USAID-funded project designed to support the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service to improve the quality of basic education in Ghana.



Educating girls benefits the whole family eventually, says United Nations.

IF educating girls could be described as sowing seeds that can grow and multiply, then the EQUALL project's scholarships for girls was like watering seeds.

EQUALL offered a nine-month Complementary Education Program (CEP) for out-of-school children in the three Northern Regions in Ghana to equip learners with the basic literacy and numeracy skills to transition into formal school.

The Complementary Education Scholarship Program (CESP) provided scholarships for disadvantaged girls who graduated from CEP to enter and continue in primary school. Each beneficiary received two uniforms, exercise books, pencils and pens, erasers, a ruler, a sharpener, a pair of sandals, a school bag and food tied to attendance at school.

Educate a Woman, Educate a Nation

Poverty and socio-cultural perceptions about girl's education cause low enrolment of girls in formal schools in northern Ghana.

According to the United Nations, children are more likely to go to school and enjoy better health when their mother is educated than if the father is educated or mother is uneducated.

Positive Response

The scholarship package reduced the direct cost of education on parents. In addition, the program advocated for parental and community support for girls' education using drama, video shows, community discussions and

posters placed in all 100 participating communities.

In its first year, 90 percent of the CEP female graduates transitioned to formal schools (919 out of 1011 in 2006-2007) in two of the most deprived districts in the country, Bole and West Gonja in the Northern Region.

Helping to keep girls in school forms part of EQUALL's mandate to support the priorities of the Ghana Government's Education Strategic Plan, which aims at gender equity to meet the Millennium Development Goal 3 by 2015.

Local Participation

EQUALL effectively involved the community in design and planning CESP. The committee tasked with selecting 250 beneficiaries for scholarships comprised representatives of GES, Girls Education Unit, district assembly and opinion leaders. Further, the Civic Union helped negotiate for the dressmakers association to sew uniforms for the girls at a cost of GH ₵ 1 instead of GH ₵ 2.50 per uniform (in 2007).

Motivating Girls in School

EQUALL also sought to motivate young girls to participate fully in school. CESP provided food rations that were tied to the girls' attendance in school.

The program expanded to four more districts by end of 2007, and has reached more than 4,000 girls by the end of the project.



Girls' Education Fair Busunu, West Gonja District

Though activities focused on children, teachers and adults participated eagerly in the girls' education fair in Busunu, a settlement near Damongo, capital of West Gonja District. EQUALL's Complementary Education Scholarship Program organized the fair to raise awareness about the importance of educating girls. Games such as the sack race and the three-legged race were fiercely competed by eight schools from villages including Telape, Kojope, Djonkponto, and Bidima. There was drama and an art-and-craft exhibition. Female graduates of CEP got to show off their literacy skills in solving word-image puzzles in Gonja and English. The fair made the national television news later that month (May 2007).



Education Quality for All
CCC PMB CT41, Cantonments, Accra, Ghana,
West Africa
Tel: (233-21) 771-335 / 784-762
Fax: (233-21) 784-761
E-mail: equall@equall.com
Web site: www.equall.com