

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.



Twenty Districts Compete for GH¢650,000 in Education Grants

IN 2008, TWENTY districts partnering with the Education Quality for All (EQUALL) project competed for grants to improve basic education.

The amount at stake exceeded GH¢650,000 (about US\$670,000), which was not divided equally, but rather apportioned according to the strength of each district's proposal and the education management performance of the District Education Office.

Because of the competitive nature of the grant scheme, districts which earned top scores could receive more than double the amount that went to those with the low scores.

The grant funds, which are made available through USAID, are provided by the American people to assist education improvement in 20 districts. The District Education Offices (DEOs) in the partner districts finance priority activities in improving primary education, particularly in reading.

Education Management Improvement

The award scheme is coordinated by the Education Management Improvement (EMI) component of the EQUALL project, which supports the Ghana Government's goals to improve the quality of basic education. EQUALL's EMI support

takes the form of strengthening the capacity of the District Education Office. At the moment, due to the decentralisation of the education sector in Ghana, the DEOs are taking on increased management responsibility.

The EMI team offers training and technical assistance tailored to each district's specific needs in planning, monitoring and evaluation, transparency and others.

Typically, districts use grants for literacy activities such as reading instructional training for teachers and DEO visits to hard-to-reach schools.

Since beginning the awards in 2004, the quality of applications has improved. In the 2008 applications, the Review Committee was impressed by the overall quality of applications and the commitment and effort put forth by all partner districts.

Over the course of five years, approximately GH¢2,000,000 has been given in grants to districts. Assessments suggest that the combination of the grant awards, management training, and technical support of the EMI program is achieving the desired results, including improving reading instructional practices, pupil reading performance, and education management.



Success Story

Training provided by the Education Management Improvement program led to improvement in the reading skills of pupils. George Appiah, the chairperson of the school management committee of a public school in the Kwahu West District says EQUALL's Education Management Improvement workshops strengthened his skills to support literacy. Appiah, already in his seventies and blind, volunteers to teach children, helps with homework, and covers for teachers who are absent from the Amanfrom Primary School. As more children attained reading skills, the school captured several prizes in the district reading competitions, making Appiah and the parents in the community very proud.



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