

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.



“Teachers are the strongest influence on learning.” UNESCO Education for All, Global Monitoring Report, 2005

WHY go to school if you won't learn to read? Most children in Ghana do not master reading in elementary school, and more than three quarters of pupils who complete primary school cannot read — about 77%, according to the Ministry of Education's assessment in 2007. But considering the large proportion of children who drop out before primary 6, altogether about 85% of Ghana's children are functionally illiterate.

A host of reasons such as teacher shortages and poverty affect children's reading performance.

No doubt, teachers play a major role in how well children learn. More children come to school when a teacher is in the classroom. And when teachers have learned how to teach reading effectively, thousands of children in Ghana have been able to learn to read in Primary one.

Yes, Amina and Kofi Can Read

This can be seen in Wakawaka Primary School in Bole District and Asuboi L/A in Suhum, two of more than 1,000 schools where EQUALL is working. Since 2004, EQUALL has provided training for teachers to teach reading effectively as part of its support for the Ministry of Education goal of improving literacy.

EQUALL implements the Reading Improvement in Primary Education (RIPE) program aimed at improving reading instructional practices to equip teachers to help children attain literacy. RIPE introduced reading instructional strategies to schools in 20 districts. The strategies focus on teaching pupils in their mother tongue in P1 before introducing English in P2.

Support for Teaching Reading

EQUALL trains District Teacher Support Teams (DTSTs) who train teachers. The participating schools received teaching and learning materials in one of four languages: Gonja, Ewe, Asante Twi and Akuapem Twi. To ensure children attain literacy, RIPE encourages teachers to teach reading every day (instead of three times a week) and for longer periods of 90 minutes.

Such strategies have helped children learn to read and write in P1. Reading assessments suggest that, generally, children in RIPE schools perform better in reading a Ghanaian language and English than children in other schools.

In eight other districts, RIPE trains teachers in the key components of literacy instruction for guiding pupils to develop literacy skills. Teachers in the target schools are also taught to monitor literacy quality in the mother tongue and English.



SUCCESS STORY

Suhum-Kraboaa- Coaltar District

In 2004, EQUALL introduced the Reading Improvement in Primary Education (RIPE) program in the district, and trained DTSTs who train teachers in selected schools.

I took full advantage of the literacy training I received. I sensitized my staff, the PTA and local leaders about RIPE strategies. In September 2005, Otoase Presby joined RIPE, and the rush for admission to P1 was unprecedented because parents saw children reading and writing.

Our 80-year old school looks old, but inside new things are happening. The class 1 teacher really likes what she is doing; and other teachers are keen to be introduced to RIPE. Now learners are regular and punctual.

Mr. E.A. Watson, Head teacher
Otoase Presby Primary School
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