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 **Headway**
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Rural Schools in Ghana Help Children Reach Their Potential

For the children of the Awutu-Effutu-Senya District in Ghana, realizing their basic right to an education is a road paved with obstacles. One of the biggest problems is the lack of adequate school infrastructure. Ghana's compact agreement with the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) is about to offer the students of four schools in this rural district something they have never had: safe classrooms and facilities.

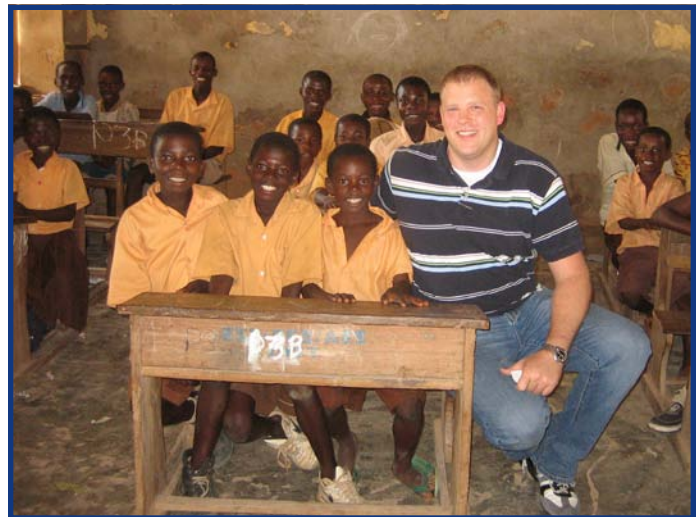
Local Ghanaian communities identified these schools as the most urgently in need of improvement. Troy Wray, Millennium Challenge Corporation's Associate Director of Human Development, describes the schools as "almost unusable, walls are falling down, lighting is poor, there are hardly any desks and chairs, and some classes are held under trees."

Mr. Wray is part of the Millennium Challenge Corporation team dedicated, since 2005, to supporting Ghana in the design, development and implementation of the MCC funded compact agreement providing US assistance to the Ghanaian people. These efforts, together with the Millennium Development Authority (MiDA) -- the Ghanaian organization coordinating MCC-funded projects on-the-ground -- are starting to bear fruit.

In early April 2008, MiDA began renovating the first four of a total of 35 rural schools in seven different rural districts scheduled for rehabilitation under the initial part of phase one of the school project. MiDA's goal is



One of the first four schools to be rehabilitated by MiDA in the Awutu-Effutu-Senya District.



Troy Wray, Associate Director of Human Development, sits in a classroom with the children of one of the schools scheduled for renovation.

to finalize the schools in time for the beginning of the academic year in August.

MiDA has hired local builders to rehabilitate the schools and provide furnishings. This project is a joint effort and is made possible through the collaboration of MiDA, the beneficiary communities themselves, the district-level government and the Ministry of Education.

The project's second phase will focus on the construction of new schools designed specifically to meet community needs. According to Wray, "the school project is crucial because it addresses basic needs and ensures there is a suitable learning environment for the children. There is so much to be done, we decided to start with the basics: a sound infrastructure."



U.S. Charge d'Affaires Sue Brown (center), MiDA CEO Martin Eson-Benjamin (with trowel) and a Ministry of Education District Representative lay the first stones at the ceremony launching the schools project in early April.

This \$2.8 million school rehabilitation project is part of Ghana's \$547 million compact with the Millennium Challenge Corporation. One of the compact's goals is to help transform the agricultural sector in Ghana by providing, among other services, improved access to education, water, electricity and sanitation.



The Millennium Challenge Corporation, a U.S. government agency designed to work with developing countries, is based on the principle that aid is most effective when it reinforces sound political, economic, and social policies that promote poverty reduction through economic growth.

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