

MCC Facilitates the Ghanaian-Led Partnership with USAID to Improve Primary Education

Imagine a 10-year old boy living in a rural village in Ghana. If he is lucky, his small community will have a school with walls, a roof that doesn't leak, and will be large enough to accommodate children from his village and neighboring communities. He might be fortunate to have a teacher to instruct his multi-grade classroom, or even luckier if he has a teacher dedicated to his specific grade-level. Ghana, like many developing countries, doesn't have sufficient trained teachers, and attracting and retaining teachers in rural schools can be challenging, especially if the teachers are not from the area.



Many children throughout Ghana attend school in structures that are falling apart or even under trees, conditions that make learning difficult, especially during the rainy season.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) plays a critical role in the U.S. Government's approach to assisting countries with their efforts to achieve the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as part of their overall strategy to achieve their development priorities. In support of the MDG aimed at achieving universal primary education, U.S. taxpayer dollars are funding the construction and rehabilitation of schools through the MCC program, and the training of teachers through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Thanks to this integrated approach, students, will benefit from the partnership between the U.S. Government and the Government of Ghana as they will now have access to a safe school and a trained teacher from their community.



Pictured is the interior of one of the schools before rehabilitation through MCC funds.

The U.S. Government's MCC compact with Ghana identified lack of access to education as one of the constraints to economic growth and developed a program to build and rehabilitate schools in three targeted zones. The Millennium Development Authority, or MiDA, the Ghanaian entity implementing the MCC compact, is helping increase school enrollment of children residing in these communities by constructing or improving classrooms, installing toilets and latrines, ensuring access to potable water, and providing school furniture. While MCC and MiDA's efforts improve the environment for learning, a shortage of trained teachers, particularly in rural areas, remains a major impediment. To address this shortfall, and to increase the impact of MCC's investment, MiDA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with USAID to train approximately 260 teachers to be placed at MCC-funded schools through the Community Teachers for Ghana program. This USAID program will recruit, train, and support community-based teachers for the schools, build the capacity of the district education offices, and assist these teachers in improving their qualifications so that they can become part of the formal Ghana Education Service (GES) professional teaching group. The teachers will be selected from the communities in which the schools are located as a strategy to improve teacher retention. The GES will identify, review, coordinate, and monitor the implementation of MiDA's education projects, take legal ownership of completed school facilities, and guarantee ongoing operations and maintenance. Communities that receive MiDA assistance also make a commitment to support and maintain the school, ensuring the sustainability of this country-led approach.

These efforts with USAID not only complement, but increase the impact of MCC's investment by ensuring that meaningful learning is taking place in MiDA-constructed classrooms. MCC funds are improving infrastructure in Ghana, leveraging donor funds, and also building the capacity of the Ghanaian government, through MiDA, to design, implement and manage multifaceted and multi-donor projects. The partnership between the U.S. Government and the Government of Ghana is reducing poverty through an integrated and sustainable approach, contributing to a brighter future for Ghanaians.

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MCC funds the construction and rehabilitation of schools in 30 districts, providing students and teachers with safe structures, potable water, latrines, and furniture. In collaboration, USAID is identifying, training, and employing members of the community to teach in these MCC-funded schools.