



Primary School Becomes a Model

Challenge

Kentikrono is a poor urban community in Kumasi, the second largest city in Ghana. Its only public primary school, Kentikrono Metropolitan Authority Primary, enrolled 215 students in 1999. Students were not proficient in English, and teachers neither prepared detailed lesson plans nor used teaching and learning materials. Community-teacher relations were so poor that parents openly called the school "lazy teachers' school."



Photo: USAID/Henry Akorsu

Susan Senchery, headmistress of Kentikrono primary, poses with her students.

Four years into USAID's program, Kentikrono Primary placed first in English and second in math in a test given to 20 primary schools in the area.

Initiative

In 1999, USAID became involved with a program designed to provide the building blocks for children to receive quality basic education. Teachers, the School Management Committee and executive members of Parent-Teacher Association were trained in various skills to help improve student learning and increase community support for the school's activities. The teachers learned how to prepare lesson plans, use teaching and learning materials and effectively manage classrooms, and then began applying these skills. To bolster its role to support the school in providing quality basic education, the School Management Committee learned how to prepare action plans and keep cash books. It also organized meetings with the community to discuss the need to visit the school regularly, participate in school activities and provide for the basic needs of their children.

Results

In 2003, four years into USAID's program, Kentikrono Primary placed first in English and second in math in a test given to 20 primary schools in the area. Kentikrono has also topped other schools in quiz competitions since 2001. Students are now enthusiastic about expressing themselves in English in school and at home. Some parents have even withdrawn their children from nearby schools and enrolled them in Kentikrono, increasing its enrollment from 215 in 1999 to 495 in 2004. Parent-teacher relations have also improved markedly. Nine out of ten parents now attend meetings of the Parent-Teacher Association, and they regularly visit the school to discuss their children's performance and attendance. Kentikrono's improvements are reverberating throughout the area: more than 50 teachers of other local schools have visited Kentikrono to learn its methods of lesson planning, school and class management and community relations.