SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING
Education – Regional Brief

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

This brief analyzes one of the four major themes in USAID education programming in Sub-Saharan Africa: community engagement, conflict- and crisis-response, gender-based violence, and systems strengthening. These themes were identified through the basic education PPR narratives submitted for fiscal year (FY) 2019. Eighteen Sub-Saharan African countries provided FY 2019 PPR narratives for basic education activities: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. In some cases, countries also reported on education activities under other PPR narratives, such as youth, gender-based violence (GBV), gender, or inclusive development. When possible, these programs are included here, which has resulted in the inclusion of Zambia and Zimbabwe. Programs that did not clearly describe a school-based component in the PPR narratives were excluded, so there may be some relevant programming not captured here. The most frequently mentioned themes across PPR narratives were community engagement, conflict- and crisis-response, and systems strengthening. GBV is elevated as a fourth theme because it is a major priority for USAID and because school-based GBV programs are frequently described in the GBV and gender PPR narratives, even when not included in the basic education narratives. Each thematic area is divided in two sections: 1) background on the theme and its importance, and 2) a snapshot of USAID's work in these areas, including a list of programs, high-level observations about the nature of the work, and summaries of exemplar projects. Country PPR narratives provide more information on all programs described here.

EDUCATION SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING | Sub-Saharan Africa

Systems Strengthening with Country Governments to Build Self-reliance

Strong education systems are essential for a country's capacity to achieve self-reliance in the education sector. Weaker systems reduce the stakeholders' ability to communicate with and support each other to promote a students' learning (World Bank Group 2018; Education Commission 2016). As USAID's education policy, states,

> self-reliance in the education sector is the ability of a country to sustainably finance and equitably deliver services that measurably improve learning outcomes and skill acquisition for all children and youth, from early childhood and primary education to secondary and higher education. The journey to self-reliance in education depends upon the capacity for, and commitment to, plan, finance, and deliver education and related services effectively, inclusively, and accountably (USAID 2018).

To promote self-reliance in the education sector, it is imperative to build the strength of education systems—"the people, public and private institutions, resources, and activities whose primary purpose is to improve, expand, and sustain learning and educational outcomes," so all actors in those systems can coordinate together at national, regional, and local levels (USAID 2018).

Interventions in this area can focus on range of topics: strengthening school and education system management and governance; supporting curriculum development and implementation; training and supporting teachers (including teacher training at local universities); supporting increased coordination between state and non-state education providers; and institutionalizing effective financial management and allocation systems (Snilstveit et al. 2015; USAID 2018; World Bank Group 2018). Undergirding all of these is a drive to increase accountability for student learning, which requires improved access to data and the capacity to analyze and use those data.

Accountability also requires the use of data to track learning-related indicators. Although many country education systems focus on indicators related to school access, attendance, and completion, more work remains to track and prioritize indicators related to learning; otherwise, countries risk making systemic reforms that lead to students' attending classrooms where learning does not occur (World Bank Group 2018). Systems focused on learning results are essential to making sure investments in education are well spent (Education Commission 2016).

USAID Initiatives to Strengthen Education Systems with Local Governments in Sub-Saharan Africa

USAID has shown a strong commitment to education systems strengthening in Sub-Saharan Africa. The systems strengthening initiatives bolster the other themes identified as critical in the PPR narratives.

In fiscal year (FY) 2019, at least 19 Sub-Saharan African countries had education programs that included a systems-strengthening component.

COUNTRY	USAID ACTIVITY WITH EDUCATION SYSTEMS-STRENGTHENING COMPONENTS
Democratic Republic of the Congo	• ACCELERE! 1 (A!1) • Teacher Incentives and Motivation Study • Integrated Youth Development
Djibouti	• Djibouti Early Grade Reading Activity (DEGRA)
Ethiopia	• Reading for Ethiopia's Achievement Developed II (READ II) • READ Community Outreach (READ CO) • READ Monitoring and Evaluation (READ M&E)

COUNTRY	USAID ACTIVITY WITH EDUCATION SYSTEMS-STRENGTHENING COMPONENTS
Ethiopia (continued)	• Local Education Monitoring Approach (LEMA) • General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) II
Ghana	• Partnership for Education
Kenya	• Tusome • Agile and Harmonized Assistance to Devolved Institutions (AHADI)
Liberia	• Learning Links • Read Liberia • Accelerated Quality Education (AQE)
Malawi	• National Reading Program (NRP) • Malawi Early Grade Reading Improvement Activity (MERIT) • Strengthening Early Grade Reading in Malawi (SEGREM) • Assess the Learners (YESA) • Reading for All Malawi • Give Girls a Chance to Learn (AMAA) • Local Government Accountability and Performance (LGAP)
Mali	• Selective Integrated Reading Activity (SIRA) • Education Recovery Support Activity (ERSA) • Girls Leadership and Empowerment through Education (GLEE) • Inclusion of Deaf and Blind Children into Mainstream Schools • Inclusion education for Visually Impaired primary school Children in Mali • Sub-National Governance Project (SNGP)
Mozambique	• Vamos Ler! (VL) • Support for Unidade de Assistência Técnica de Alfabetização Funcional (UATAF) • Eu Leio • Nikhalamo • Strengthening School Councils Capacity for Sustainable Organizational Development
Niger	• Niger Education and Community Strengthening (NECS)
Nigeria	• Northern Education Initiative (NEI) Plus • Addressing Education in North East Nigeria (AENN) • Strengthening Education in Northeast Nigeria States (SENSE) • Establishment of the Nigeria Center for Reading Research and Development (NCRRD)
Rwanda	• Soma Umenye • Mureke Dusome • Itegure Gusoma • Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze (HDAK)
Senegal	• DRG Integration Activity: Governance for Local Development (GOLD) • Lecture Pour Tous • Passerelles • Nos Enfants Lisent • All Children Reading G2G Activity
Somalia	• Alternative Basic Education (ABE) • Partnership with New Horizons • DFID Delegated Cooperation Agreement Girls Education Challenge Transition (GEC-T)
South Africa	• Reading Support Project (RSP) • Teacher Assessment Resource for Monitoring and Improving Instruction Version 3.0 (TARMII 3.0) • Accelerated Progress in Early Grade Learning (APEGL) • Early Grade Reading Study II (EGRS II) • Practical Education Research for Optimal Reading and Management: Analyze, Collaborate, Evaluate (PERFORMANCE)
South Sudan	• Integrated Essential Emergency Education Services
Tanzania	• Tusome Pamoja • Waache Wasome
Uganda	• School Health and Reading Program (SHRP) • Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA) • GPE FUNDED - Uganda Teacher and School Effectiveness Project
Zambia	• Let's Read Zambia • Teaching at the Right Level in Zambia

*Based on FY19 PPR Narrative Responses

USAID's Approaches to Strengthen Education Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa in FY 2019

- Building the capacity of national, regional, and local civil society and education authorities to conduct needs assessments and administer education programs
- Working to build monitoring systems, set benchmarks, and increase use of data in school and education system management
- Working with national, regional, and local governments to identify sustainable cost structures, improve financial management, and leverage innovative financing for educational activities
- Partnering with private-sector schools and governments to support the private education system to make it both effective and accountable
- Partnering with institutions of higher learning to increase their role in preparing the teacher workforce, and improving technical and vocational offerings as alternative education pathways

Examples of USAID-supported Systems-strengthening Work in Sub-Saharan Africa

In **Kenya**, **Tusome** ("**Let's Read**" in Swahili) is a USAID-supported early grade reading program that has come increasingly under the ownership of the Kenyan government. In addition to interventions with youth, in FY 2019, Tusome provided technical support to help the Kenyan Ministry of Education develop textbook content. The ministry now owns this content, increasing self-reliance and reducing costs. Tusome is now implemented in every public primary school in Kenya, and other countries are considering adopting its approach.

The **Djibouti Early Grade Ready Activity (DEGRA)** focuses on improving students' reading ability, enhancing community participation in education, and improving the policy environment to support reading. Under this last theme, DEGRA led meetings with the Djiboutian Ministry of Education to launch a national evaluation framework. Adopting measurement tools and setting benchmarks will enable more evidence-informed decision making and accountability for the ministry.

In **Rwanda**, the **Hukuga Dukore Akazi Kanoze** ("**Get Trained and Ready to Work**" in Kinyarwanda) activity builds youths' soft skills and links them with technical and vocational training. In FY 2019, this USAID activity partnered with the Rwandan Workforce Development Authority and Rwanda Polytechnic to develop the Rwanda Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Qualification Framework Level 2 curriculum for students who leave school in grades 6–9. This bridged a gap that would otherwise stop student progression in TVET; it also strengthened Rwandan institutions' capacity to maintain this system.

REFERENCES

Day, Ashley, and Joseph Wales. 2015. The Impact of Non-State Schools in Developing Countries: A synthesis of the evidence from two rigorous reviews. Department for International Development. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486417/imact-non-state-schools-dev-countries.pdf

Education Commission. 2016. The Learning Generation: Investing in education for a changing world. New York, NY: The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunities. https://report.educationcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Learning_Generation_Full_Report.pdf

Snilstveit, Birte, Jennifer Stevenson, Daniel Phillips, Martina Vjtkova, Emma Gallagher, Tanja Schmidt, Hannah Jobse, Maisie Geelen, Maria Grazia Pastorello, and John Eyers. 2015. Interventions for improving learning outcomes and access to education in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review. Washington, D.C.: The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation. https://www.3ieimpact.org/evidence-hub/publications/systematic-reviews/interventions-improving-learning-outcomes-and-access

United State Agency for International Development (USAID). 2018. USAID Education Policy. https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1865/2018-usaid-education-policy

United States Government (USG). 2018. U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education: Fiscal Years 2019-2023. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/USG-Education-Strategy_FY2019-2023_Final_Web.pdf

World Bank Group. 2018. World Development Report 2018: Learning to Realize Education's Promise. https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2018