

Country: Ghana

Project Name: The Quality Improvements in Primary Schools/Improving Learning through Partnerships (QUIPS/ILP) Project

Funding Organization: USAID

Implementing Partners in QUIPS: Academy for Educational Development (AED), American Institutes for Research (AIR), Aurora Associates, Inc.

Duration: 1997-2003

Overall project	The goal of the Quality Improvements in Primary Schools/Improving Learning through Partnerships (QUIPS/ILP) project was to assist the Ministry of Education of the Government of Ghana with educational reform, particularly efforts to improve basic education.
Program overview	This profile describes the teacher in-service professional development program in QUIPS/ILP, which was developed and implemented in close collaboration with the Government of Ghana (GOG). The program worked directly with teachers and head teachers at the school level and circuit supervisors in QUIPS/ILP partnership schools.
Objectives of the teacher professional development program	<p>The objectives of the teacher in-service professional development program of QUIPS/ILP were to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning at the classroom level using an appreciative inquiry/assets strengthening approach in working with district education staff, school level staff, and community members. The project worked within the context of the Government of Ghana's own educational reform program aimed at improving basic education and its initiative for creating a system of free, compulsory, universal basic education, referred to as fCUBE. Although clusters of schools were not part of the project, they were involved in a secondary way as part of the guidance given to district trainers to incorporate into their programs.</p> <p>The program helped teachers improve their instructional skills and practices, allowing teachers to have a more positive impact in their schools. In the program, teachers, head teachers, and circuit supervisors were able to try new methods and materials in a nurturing environment within their schools. The program focused on lesson-plan development and general planning; pupil-centered techniques; approaches for literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking; classroom supervision; and continuous assessment of pupil learning.</p> <p>The objectives of the program were identified through a collaborative process that included working with local stakeholders to improve the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools. One principle was the recognition of the value and the potential capability of every teacher and district-level staff member. Another principle was the recognition of the importance of a multi-level strategy in working with people at various levels in the educational system to support learning at each level. A third principle was that an ongoing program of inservice that reaches all teachers at the school level is an effective strategy for improving pupil learning. Finally, the project created a core group of district-based trainers who were supposed to gradually become responsible for the implementation of the in-service training at supported schools and extend that training to other schools in the district.</p>
Background and context	Over the past decade, the Government of Ghana (GOG) has undertaken a concerted campaign to improve the quality of its educational system. Although considerable progress has been made in decentralizing responsibility and authority within the educational system, improving educational quality remains a challenge. In many instances, major decisions about how quality should be improved are made at the central level by people who are removed from the reality in schools. In light of this, working within the context of fCUBE's goals, Ghana QUIPS/ILP helped narrow the gap between central-level policy and the classroom experience of teachers and pupils.

	<p>The program was designed after a field study by international consultants to determine what teachers were doing in the classroom and what support they needed to improve instruction. The program was initially implemented in three schools in each of Ghana's 110 districts. The program then expanded over time. By year two, the project changed in scope, and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) became responsible for the three northern regions of the country.</p> <p>The teacher professional development program was designed according to GOG priorities to help teachers plan, teach, and reflect on their instruction. It was also designed to build a stronger teaching team at the school level. Other components of the model consisted of showing educators and communities how to reach out to each other.</p>
<p>Organization of the program</p>	<p>The QUIPS/ILP in-service teacher professional development (INSET) program is based on the appreciative-inquiry approach. This approach reorients the typical intervention from one that focuses on identifying weaknesses to one that focuses on strengths and existing potential in the school and community. As a result, teachers are able to identify the resources and strengths of their schools and communities as a way of raising their awareness about the need to make changes. The professional development program was carried out by the QUIPS/ILP consultants and then by the district teacher support teams, which worked initially with the consultants and then eventually became responsible for the professional development of teachers.</p> <p>The in-service teacher professional development program included the following components: professional development of district level trainers; school based INSETs; and residential professional development for teachers, head teachers, and circuit supervisors.</p> <p>The district-level trainer component focused on teaching methods, classroom management, instructional leadership, school-level management, as well as facilitator skill development before the start of the school-based interventions. The focus of the residential instructional program was teaching methods, classroom management, instructional leadership, school-level management and administration, and facilitator skill development.</p> <p>The school-based INSET was designed on the basis of core pedagogical concepts and practices. The instruction involved each partnership school in six school-based in-service instructional workshops over a two-year period with reinforcement through a residential instructional program during the first year of this cycle. Workshops were designed to include the following components: a practical orientation, demonstration lessons, gender equity, community involvement, experiential learning, self-study, self-learning, and use of an appreciative-inquiry approach. This school-based intervention was conducted six times over a two- to three-day period at each school over a two-year period. During interval periods, circuit supervisors visited each of their schools at least once per month to provide additional assistance. Project staff also provided additional assistance on a regular basis but in a less structured way.</p> <p>The residential professional development component for teachers, head teachers, and circuit supervisors consisted of effective lesson planning and presentation, instructional leadership, and school management. The program included the following components: preparing lesson notes for English and mathematics lessons, constructing teaching and learning aids for English and mathematics lessons, giving and receiving feedback on teaching practices, and creating plans to implement new teaching and learning strategies.</p> <p>In many instances, teachers were so grateful for the opportunity to improve professionally and to work in their school setting that they attended training programs voluntarily after normal work hours and on weekends, even without financial incentives.</p>
<p>Program content and</p>	<p>Program content is based on quality improvement criteria from the Ghanaian primary</p>

support materials	<p>school curriculum as well as expressed teacher needs. The content also includes a focus on lesson planning and presentation, continuous assessment, leadership, and learning from experience.</p> <p>Selected materials include the following: lesson notes manual, manual on teaching and learning materials, manuals about teaching reading, school-based in-service trainer manuals, weekly forecast manuals, and school and classroom management tools and instruments. Most of the manuals were developed by the project with the help of master teachers.</p>
Costs	<p>The professional development program was financed between 1997 and 2003 by the QUIPS/ILP project, which was sponsored by USAID. There has been no cost-benefit analysis of the QUIPS/ILP program in comparison with alternative approaches. The program has been extended in subsequent projects and has widespread local support.</p>
Indicators and results	<p>To determine the success of the program, improvement in pupil achievement scores in English and mathematics were observed as well as changes in teacher behavior and head teacher practices. One way of determining success was testing annually a sample of pupils from the QUIPS/ILP partnership schools in English and mathematics to assess the extent to which improvements were being achieved.</p> <p>To measure changes in teacher behavior, considerable effort was placed in developing a valid classroom observation instrument. Using this instrument, teachers were rated on eight items that concentrated on pupil-focused instructional practices. The use of district teacher support teams helped to build the capacity of district level staff and promote sustainability by spreading and sustaining the initiatives introduced by QUIPS/ILP. Using the appreciative inquiry approach helped improve the attitudes and morale of teachers, allowing them to grapple with issues and face challenges from a positive perspective.</p>