

President's International Education Initiative Expanded Education for the World's Poorest Children Ethiopia Fact Sheet

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 24, 2007

Press Office: 202-712-4320
Public Information: 202-712-4810
www.usaid.gov

Education Overview

Education and literacy are fundamental to Ethiopia's stability and development. Approximately 59% of Ethiopian men and 29% of women are literate. Over the past 10 years, primary school enrollment increased from 22% to 80%, but education quality remains low. Ethiopia has 2.7 million children out of school, primarily in rural areas and among pastoralist communities. Given Ethiopia's inadequate rainfall and food shortages, with more than half the population under age 18, high-quality basic education is critical to increase agricultural productivity and improve livelihoods. In addition, basic education is essential for the delivery of key Government of Ethiopia social services, including health care.

Key Elements of the Fast Track Initiative (FTI)

Ethiopia's FTI plan was endorsed in 2002. Since then, the Ethiopian government, in close collaboration with the education donor group, has come up with a comprehensive strategy and program for enhancing the quality of general education in the next five years. As co-chair of the education donor group, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) played a major part in the shaping of the Government of Ethiopia (GOE) program, now called the General Education Quality Improvement Program. This program has incorporated many of the initiatives USAID helped to introduce in teacher training and school-based support in the last twelve years. The other donors in the education sector include the United Kingdom, Japan, Finland, Norway, Belgium, Ireland, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, the European Union, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP and the World Bank. The Fast Track Initiative was created in 2002 as a partnership between developing countries and donors to accelerate the delivery of universal primary education in the world's poorest countries.

Current Program

USAID implements a community education program to improve quality at the school level through increased parent and community involvement, and by creating a space for the delivery of health and other social services. USAID has invested in teacher development through site-based teacher-in-service training. Technical assistance has been expanded to all regions to build education planning and management capacity and strengthen decentralized systems. In addition, the expansion of alternative basic education (ABE) for pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities has expanded access to basic education. Under the Presidential Africa Education Initiative, USAID provides girls' scholarships and textbooks and learning materials to schools.

Illustrative Next Steps of the New Initiative

Over five years, teacher training and ABE could expand to pastoralist communities, including those that are Muslim dominated, empower local education governance and scale-up proven teacher development methods. USAID support to introduce key innovations in teacher development could be scaled-up and strengthened to demonstrate active-learning and student-centered methods. Parent-Teacher Associations and Woreda (District) Education offices could also be strengthened to help these local institutions manage their own educational development. In the next five years, USAID will actively support the Ethiopian Government's General Education Quality Improvement Program and the development and provision of reading materials, which is one of the most critical elements in improving quality. Finally, USAID will support the government's initiatives for building child-friendly school environments. The new Community-School Partnership Program of USAID is focused on the provision of safe water at schools and

USAID Fact Sheet

linking health and education institutions to enhance the health of school children.