



HISTORY OF USAID IN GHANA

On June 3, 1957, Ghana and the United States of America signed a cooperation agreement in Accra for the interchange of technical knowledge and skills and in related activities designed to contribute to the development of Ghana. Kwame Nkrumah, the Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs of Ghana and Peter Rutter, Charge d' Affaires of the U.S. signed for their countries.

For more than fifty years, the U.S. and Ghana have enjoyed a tradition of cooperation, working in partnership. Over the years, the American people's cooperation evolved from contributing to human resource, agricultural and infrastructural development to strengthening democratic governance, increasing private sector competitiveness, improving health status, advancing the quality of and access to basic education, and enhancing food security in Ghana.

With the establishment of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on November 3, 1961, the agency unified already existing U.S. aid efforts, combining economic and technical assistance operations, and loan as well as food aid distribution activities.

Initially, USAID focused on agriculture, training and infrastructure, including support for the construction of the Akosombo Dam. USAID helped to establish more effective extension services for farmers, and introduced improved vegetable varieties, more intensive use of irrigated gardening and adoption of best practices for vegetables, field, and tree crops to about 10,000 farmers.

Hundreds of Ghanaian professionals pursued their university education for first and graduate degrees in the U.S. as well as short-term training in the U.S. and African countries. The training programs focused on building the capacity of the then ministries for Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Works. The majority of these professionals have returned to Ghana to play leading roles in improving the lives of their compatriots. They are teachers, healthcare providers, academics, scientists and engineers responsible for communications technology and road-building, businessmen and women, and heads of non-governmental organizations. Some have become government ministers.

In the 1970s, USAID increased its focus on rural sectors, assisting in maize production, especially in the Brong-Ahafo and Ashanti regions. This included support for farm inputs and construction of feeder roads. Another important activity was the supply of full contraceptive requirements of the Ghana National Family Planning Program (GNFPP), including medical sets, funds and training for GNFPP staff. These items were used in over 100 family planning clinics operated by the Ministry of Health and various private organizations in the country.

United States Government assistance through USAID began to rise as a result of the success of Ghana's economic reforms that began in 1983. The food aid program improved the nutritional status of pre-school children; educated mothers on nutrition and child health; and strengthened the impact of the primary health delivery in preventive health, immunization and population planning. The USAID-funded Ghana Seed Company promoted the production of legume crops, such as, cowpeas, beans and soybeans; and vegetable seeds in demand among agricultural producers.

USAID expanded its family planning programs in the rural areas, contributing to the continuous supply of safe, reliable and acceptable contraceptives through both public and private health facilities, permitting them to better space births and therefore reduce maternal and child mortality and morbidity. Results indicate that more Ghanaians practiced family planning, and total fertility dropped from 6.4 children per woman in 1988 to 5.5 in 1993; and modern contraceptives used by women rose to 22% in 1996 from 5.5% in 1988. USAID again supported the construction and introduction of all contraceptive methods at the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital's Reproductive Health Center in Kumasi. This specialized center for family planning services has a surgical unit to handle Intra-Uterine Device insertions, NORPLANT, and male and female sterilizations. Presently, it is the leading family planning center in Ghana and trains all categories of health workers in Ghana and from other countries in West Africa.

By 1990, USAID budget to Ghana rose to about \$12 million per annum plus another \$5-\$10 million in food aid commodities. The assistance supported programs in health, education and agriculture. In 1997, USAID expanded to focus on economic growth, health, primary education, and democratic governance. Funding averaged \$34 million per annum, including food aid commodities.

Under the new strategy, USAID helped to create an open and credible voter registry, increased confidence and broadened participation in the electoral process during the 1996 Presidential and Parliamentary elections. On the success of the 1996 elections, USAID introduced a broader program for an enhanced civic participation and transparent governance. This approach aimed at strengthening local government capacity to work with citizens to plan, budget, finance and implement development programs, and deliver quality services in a more transparent and accountable fashion.

USAID's basic education assistance focused on pre-service training of teachers; in-service training of teachers; improved supervision and inspection; testing and revising curricula; and improving management at the schools and district levels. Over 40,000 teachers have received pre-service training and another 4,000 have received in-service training. The assistance also improved overall student performance, enhanced the quality of education for girls, and increased community participation in school management. Through the food aid program, which includes lunch to over 176,000 primary school pupils and food rations to girls in the northern regions, school enrollment has increased by 14 percent, attendance by 45 percent, and retained 77 percent of the children in school between 2003 and 2006. Girls' enrollment has also increased by 20.9 percent, attendance by 58.5 percent, and 80 percent of the girls were retained in school.

From the 1990s, Ghana has begun to diversify its export base (cocoa, gold, and timber). Non-traditional exports (NTEs) such as pineapple, mango and handicrafts have increased from \$68 million in 1991 to \$227 million in 1996. USAID support included assistance to improve policies, enhance availability and access to finance, increase access to and use of technology and market information, and increase the skills of managers, private entrepreneurs and policy makers. NTEs expanded by 26 percent in 1996 alone, with strong growth in farm products, processed and semi-processed, and handicrafts. In addition, over 50,000 jobs have been created in NTE production and marketing, including extensive impacts among small-scale enterprises engaged in supplying and distributing inputs and products for larger producers.

Again, revenue in tourism nearly tripled between 1990 and 1994, placing the sector as Ghana's third largest foreign exchange earner since that time. In 2008, tourism became the fourth contributor to Ghana's economy after cocoa, gold, and foreign remittances, earning \$1.3 billion. USAID assisted in the rehabilitation of the Cape Coast and Elmina castles and Fort Saint Jago, and the development of Kakum National Park. At the park, USAID sponsored the design and construction of a canopy walkway, and the establishment of a management system. Annual visitations to these sites jumped from 20,000 in 1992 to 52,000 in 1996 and revenues increased ten fold over the same period. Revenues at Kakum, a 360-kilometer rain forest, have grown from zero at the beginning of the project to over \$50,000 per year in 1995. Increased visitations to the park, which hit over 108,000 in 2006, are due mainly to the construction in 1995 of Africa's first Forest Canopy Walkway.

From the year 2000 to present, United States Government activities through USAID support the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy. In August 2006, the Government of Ghana signed a US\$547 million Millennium Challenge Compact with a goal of poverty reduction through economic growth. USAID has also implemented several United States Presidential Initiatives, including the Initiative to End Hunger in Africa, and the Africa Education Initiative. The ongoing African Growth and Competitiveness Initiative, Emergency Plan for HIV/AIDS Relief, the President's Malaria Initiative, and the Global Food Security Response Initiative have also brought new resources for development activities. In addition, Ghana has been selected to participate in the new Neglected Tropical Diseases Initiative.

USAID leadership in the donor community is well recognized. USAID currently leads the Health Sector and Heads of Cooperation donor groups.

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