



PROGRAM BRIEF: *CODE's Reading Ghana Program*

The Challenge in Ghana

Even in a relatively stable country like Ghana, only half of primary teachers have been trained and many rural public schools don't have a single supplementary reading book. The recent introduction of free senior high school has also put a significant strain on the education budget and reduced available resources at the primary school level. This hurts mostly poor households whose children rarely make it through to senior high school.

Averages hide a great many realities. In 2016, national exams in Ghana showed that on average only 36% of children completing grade 6 were proficient in English. However, in the urban areas that number is 56% and in the rural areas, its 24%. In 2018, availability of English subject textbooks was 35% at the primary level and 40% at the junior high school level - again, schools in rural areas are more under-resourced than their urban counterparts. Lastly, as expected, it is hard to attract qualified teachers to the rural areas, especially female teachers. Rural areas are consistently deprived in every aspect of quality education.

CODE's Reading Ghana Program

The *Reading Ghana* program is in its 5th year and going strong. This year, 10 new schools in the Ashanti Region are eager to participate in the program that offers intensive teacher training workshops, in-class coaching, reading competitions, creation of school libraries, and regular visits of the mobile library van - all conducted with gender equality as the central principal.

Covid-19 Response

In March 2020, schools in Ghana closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Last month, the Ghana Education Service announced plans to reopen all schools in late December, meaning that children will be resuming their studies in the New Year. Contending with learning loss, pandemic protocols, a new school calendar etc. will not be easy in the under-resourced communities we work in throughout the Ashanti Region. Rather than losing this programming year in its entirety, CODE has re-calibrated its plan so that we can be there for the boys and girls at our program schools when they reopen. The *Back to School in Ashanti* campaign provides CODE supporters an opportunity to directly support to this effort.

Partnering for Sustainability

CODE effects change by working in partnership with locally-based organizations who ensure the sustainability of programs and who provide a local voice and local expertise. CODE's implementing partner, the Ghana Book Trust (GBT), is central to the success of this program. Their extensive knowledge of local issues and solid history of working side by side with local communities are essential elements contributing to the successful implementation of the program and its sustainability.



KEY PROGRAM ACTIVITIES IN 2020-21

Teacher Training and Mentoring

In our 2020-21 program year, a total of 30 educators and 10 head-teachers from primary grades 4-6 and junior high school grades 1-3 will be trained in 2 intensive 5-day workshops. Additionally, last year's cohort of *Reading Ghana* teachers will participate in refresher training to help consolidate the new skills and competencies they have gained.

The workshops will be conducted by a team of local trainers who have been trained by CODE's network of international education experts. Between workshops, teachers will receive in-class mentoring sessions to help them bridge new strategies effectively into their classrooms.

In our 2020-21 programming year, based on results of our mid-program evaluation, we are reviewing and updating our teacher training materials to ensure greater gender-responsive content. As well, we will streamline our library management training to ensure that all participating teachers are well equipped to maximize use of books within resource-poor school environments.



Book Distribution

During the year, CODE and GBT will distribute a total of 3,400 books procured in Ghana. An estimated 3,000 will be distributed to new schools and 400 will be used to replenish the book collections of last year's cohort of schools.

The 3,400 books contain approximately 40 titles of varying reading levels. These books take into account the Ghanaian school curriculum and include books that are gender-responsive, in that they challenge gender stereotypes and depict strong, capable girls and women.

All books are used in a variety of ways: library time, English class, after-school and weekend borrowing, reading competitions etc. As part of the workshops, the teachers will be instructed on how to use them effectively in the classroom to support reading instruction and learning.

Reading Promotion Activities

In order to get children excited about reading, in addition to the books, CODE and GBT implement two additional activities, which generate a lot of excitement in the schools as well as in the surrounding communities.

The mobile library van operated by the Ghana Library Authority (GLA) will visit the schools with an excellent selection of books at all reading levels as well as digital tablets and other electronic learning tools that can be used by either individuals or classrooms.

The second activity is reading competitions - a core activity of the *Reading Ghana* program since its inception and always considered a highlight of the program year. One competition is held at the primary level and a second at the junior high school level. Traditional leaders, members of the Parents Teachers Association, family members, and other community leaders are invited to participate. Prizes are donated by local businesses and community stakeholders.

