

Education Systems Strengthening

Working within the education ecosystem

To achieve lasting improvements in education outcomes that will continue to grow after the life of a project, each aspect of that project must be woven into the fabric of the education system. At FHI 360, we focus on integrating our support to quality education within the education system where it sits from Day 1.



Photo: FHI 360

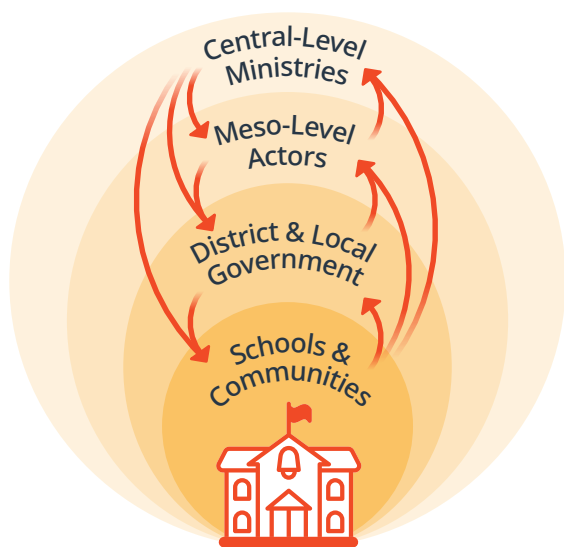
At every level of the system — micro, meso and macro — we work hand-in-hand with government counterparts on strengthening their systems from within as they accomplish their daily tasks. Whether a project focuses on the systems level or on the classroom teaching level, we emphasize the connection between macro and micro through the essential, yet often overlooked, meso level.

Driving change locally: USAID Liberia: Education Systems Strengthening Activity, 2023–2028

The USAID/Liberia Education Systems Strengthening Activity (ESSA) works in partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE) to increase the ministry's capacity to provide quality decentralized and inclusive education services to improve learning outcomes for all children and youth. ESSA supports the MoE at the central, county and district levels to strengthen capacity for data collection and utilization, improve the efficiency and transparency of financial and human resource management, and enhance both demand- and supply-side accountability mechanisms. ESSA uses Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) — a framework and process for solving complex problems — to help the MoE explore the root causes driving education system underperformance and to develop, test and implement local solutions to improve the quality of education service delivery. ESSA supports successful innovations to be institutionalized and scaled through national and county education sector plans.

Building coherence for foundational learning: USAID Rwanda: Tunoze Gusoma, 2021–2026

The USAID Rwanda Schools and Systems activity is designed to support the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) to ensure that



Kinyarwanda literacy instruction in all pre-primary and lower primary schools and classrooms is of a high quality, is inclusive and uses best practices. Building on prior literacy projects, FHI 360 and its consortium, Save the Children International and Florida State University, are working to improve pre-primary emergent language and literacy; improve lower primary literacy instruction; improve the school environment and improve education systems management. Key interventions in support of MINEDUC, the Rwanda Education Board (REB) and the National Examination and Schools Inspection Authority include strengthening literacy assessment systems and decision-making, expanding REB's eLearning system functions and reach as part of in-service teacher professional development, extending research-based literacy practices into pre-service and pre-primary, and further development and integration of social emotional learning and inclusion components into literacy instruction.

Aligning policies and practice: USAID Djibouti: Djibouti Early Grade Reading Activity, 2019–2024

The USAID-funded Djibouti Early Grade Reading Activity (DEGRA) improves the reading outcomes of children in grades 1–5. This activity leverages Djiboutian leaders in the National Ministry of Education and Professional Training (MENFOP) and civil society to lead data-informed initiatives to improve reading skills through continuous cycles of collaboration, learning, and adaptation. DEGRA has worked with MENFOP to design and administer assessments to set benchmarks using the policy-linking method so that Djibouti can report on national and international performance reading indicators. DEGRA then completed each step of the ALIGN (Align Learning Inputs to Global Norms) process. This ensured that the four key pillars of instructional quality (Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Materials, Teacher Education and Development, and Assessment) were in alignment toward the shared

goal of improved primary reading outcomes. Thanks to the DEGRA program, 45.7% of Grade 2 students now meet national benchmarks for reading (up from 19.6% at baseline), MENFOP uses data dashboards integrated into their education management information system to track progress, and there is a pool of national trainers to prepared to support all trainers and teachers of early grade reading.

Strengthening the vertical pathway through the system: USAID Ghana Partnership for Education Learning, 2015–2023

FHI 360 collaborated with Ghana's Ministry of Education (MoE), the Ghana Education Service (GES) and affiliated educational institutions to improve reading performance for early grade pupils in public primary schools. Under this activity, FHI 360 developed an early grade reading intervention in partnership with the MoE, which was implemented in 11 local languages in more than 7,200 schools. Focusing on support to the meso level of the system, FHI 360 developed a tablet-based Fidelity of Implementation monitoring system and trained and supported 800 district-level circuit supervisors to monitor use of structured lesson plans, frequency of teacher use of instructional best practices, in-school teacher support and pupil learning outcomes. Education officials at district and national levels were trained to access and analyze the data through an online dashboard and use the information to create district action plans and provide targeted coaching support. This allowed for information to flow up from the classroom transparently and enabled decision-making at multiple system levels for improved decisions on resource allocation to schools and classrooms. During the final year of the project, the GES expressed a desire to sustain and expand the monitoring system. In response, FHI 360 worked closely with the GES to establish and train a new unit within the Quality and Assessment department.

About FHI 360: FHI 360 is a global organization that mobilizes research, resources and relationships so people everywhere have access to the opportunities they need to lead full and healthy lives. With collaborations in over 60 countries, we work directly with local leaders to advance social and economic equity, improve health and well-being, respond to humanitarian crises and strengthen community resilience. We share data-driven insights and scalable tools that expand access and equity so communities can effectively address complex challenges, respond to shocks and achieve thriving futures.

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