



# EDUCATION FACT SHEET

January 2016

## BACKGROUND

Currently, the education sector in Haiti lacks the quality and access necessary for sustained social and economic development. Despite improvements in enrollment and the commitment of the Haitian government to strengthening public education, challenges in funding, teacher training and access remain prevalent. These issues put a generation of Haitian youth at risk of not receiving the knowledge and basic skills necessary to succeed in the labor force. To address education issues facing the country, the Government of Haiti has made free and universal education a priority. During the fall of 2011, the Government of Haiti's Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training (MENFP) began the rollout of an operational plan to enroll 1.5 million students in school by 2016, and to improve curricula, train teachers, and set standards for schools.

## KEY CHALLENGES

**Low enrollment:** Primary school enrollment is roughly 75 percent – an improvement from earlier years but still low; an average Haitian, 25 years or older, has less than 5 years of schooling. School fees can be prohibitively expensive for low-income families.

**Poor literacy rates:** A U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) early grade reading assessment revealed that roughly 75 percent of children at the end of first grade and nearly half of students finishing second grade could not read a single word. Half of the adult population is illiterate.

**Lack of government oversight:** Most schools in Haiti receive minimal government oversight and are expensive relative to average earnings. More than 85 percent of primary schools are privately managed by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), churches, communities, and for-profit operators.

**Shortage of qualified teachers:** Half of public sector teachers in Haiti lack basic qualifications and almost 80 percent of teachers have not received any pre-service training.

## USAID STRATEGY & ACTIVITIES

USAID supports the Government of Haiti's education efforts and is committed to improving the quality of, and access to, education for Haitians. USAID activities include:

**Improving early grade reading and teaching:** USAID directly supports 550 schools and promotes the use of a nationwide innovative instructional model in partnership with other donors, NGOs, and the private sector. The goal is to holistically improve early grade reading and writing in Haitian Creole and French for Haitian children in the first four grades. USAID activities also train teachers and school staff in modern instruction techniques and involve communities through outreach and partnership programs.

**Promoting inclusive education for students with visual impairments:** Collaborating with a local NGO, USAID is increasing access to quality education for children who are blind and visually impaired in Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haïtien. This project will integrate 250 students with visual impairments into mainstream classrooms as well as provide needed resources, such as computer rooms with equipment for the visually impaired, and print 150 books in braille and audio.

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Overhauled early-grade reading instruction:** USAID provided more than 23,000 children and 770 teachers with innovative reading curricula that meet international standards for literacy instruction, and trained teachers and administrators on how to implement the curricula for Haitian Creole and French speakers. These critical resources were specifically designed for Haiti to best address challenges in the country's education ecosystem.

**Supplied books and teaching materials:** USAID designed, published and distributed more than 85,000 books and workbooks, 3,700 teacher guides, and over 400 posters to first- and second-grade students at 200 primary schools in the St. Marc and Cap-Haïtien regions.

**Improved access for students with disabilities:** USAID retrofitted 19 primary schools to accommodate students with physical disabilities and provided disability awareness training to more than 660 teachers and school principals. More than 62,000 community members, 400 parents, and 800 school staff also participated in disability awareness programs.

**Boosted capacity at the Ministry of Education:** USAID strengthened the capacity of the Ministry of Education, with a focus on facilitating its reading improvement unit to coordinate donor resources and promote national-level implementation of reading activities.