

Road helps close the poverty gap in Ghana and connect countries

The Africa Development Impact Awards recognise excellence, innovation, results and quality of operations in each of the High 5s. The Awards go to operations supported by the African Development Bank which have demonstrated unique development impact and improved peoples' lives in Africa.

Ghana's isolated Northern Regions have long lagged behind the rest of the country. While poverty has fallen with steady economic growth across other parts of Ghana, in the three Northern Regions nothing has changed. Scattered communities and urban centres are far from ports, roads, railways and markets. The Government is committed to closing the gap, and the building of a 148 km road from Fufulso to Sawla is an important part of this effort, in addition to rehabilitating schools and a hospital in the vicinity of the road. This has increased trade in the sub-region and tourism revenues.

Challenge

The 148-km long road from Fufulso to Sawla, was gravel surfaced and most sections were inaccessible during the rainy season. Travel time from Fufulso to Sawla lasted between 5 to 8 hours. In addition to the poor state of the road, school and health centres needed to be renovated. For example, the West Gonja District Hospital at Damongo is the only hospital located within a 148 km radius and serves a total population of 400 000. Poor transport made it difficult for patients, particularly pregnant women, to get care in time and contributed to high maternal mortality. Educational infrastructures were also inadequate with some classes held in sheds or under trees.

This lack of effective road conditions also hinder the ability to connect to nearby countries like Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, and to transform the region into a regional corridor.

Approach

The project sought to address these constraints by doing more than building just 148 km road between Fufulso and Sawla.

It provides an integrated solution to rural development by not only building a road, but also improving key socioeconomic infrastructures such as educational and health institutions, markets, lorry parks, water supply, grain storage and tourism facilities. This required a rigorous consultation with communities which allowed to understand and prioritise needs.

Besides the high social returns, the cost and benefits analysis estimated an Economic Rate of Return of 20% over 20 years of economic life. Road maintenance of the 148 km road is guaranteed by the Ghana Highway Authority, while the sustainability of socioeconomic infrastructures – such as schools and health centres – is assumed by funding from local government and user fees.

Impact

The construction of the road transformed the area and benefited people in many ways, including with greater access to improved schools, health centers and transport facilities. It:

- Reduced travel time between Fufulso and Sawla from five to three hours.



Sector	Road
Country	Ghana
Project full name	Fufulso-Sawla road project
Project duration	2010–2017
Project total cost	\$174 million
Bank contribution	\$172 million

148 km
of road between Fufulso and Sawla constructed

9 schools
and new health facilities built for communities living along along the Fufulso-Sawla road

2 permanent
weighbridges installed along the new road

- Increased trade in the sub-region by \$395 million due to the reduction of transport cost from US\$0.62 to US\$0.40 per km.
- Improved access to health facilities which reduces the mortality rate. The average time to bring patients to the main health centre is now 45 minutes, which reduced the fatality rate by 78%.
- Boosted tourism revenue by 330%.
- Employed 540 women during the road and ancillary works construction. Moreover, the provision of potable water, sanitation and health facilities helps women and girls.
- Constructed the Monori Bridge that opened up the North of the West Gonja District. This improves accessibility and reduces post-harvest losses for farmers.



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