



*EdData II*

# Task Order 3: Early Grade Reading Assessment Annual Report

October 2007–September 2008

**EdData II Technical and Managerial Assistance, Task 3  
Task Order Number EHC-E-03-04-00004-00  
Strategic Objective 3  
RTI Project No. 09354.003**

**October 31, 2008**

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by RTI International.

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# Task Order 3

## Annual Report

October 2007–September 2008

### **EdData II Task Order 3**

The purpose of this Task Order (TO)—awarded September 30, 2006—is to provide the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) with a valid set of instruments for assessing the extent to which early-grade primary-school children in USAID-presence countries are learning to read with an acceptable degree of comprehension and at an acceptable rate of fluency. The overarching objective is to provide USAID with an increased understanding of one essential dimension of education quality (reading) in its host countries, and ultimately spur more effective efforts to improve educational quality. The TO specifically addresses the achievement of Ed Data II's Result 5: International education statistics and indicators improved, promoted, and further standardized through collaboration with other USAID activities, Ministry statistics staff, multilateral and other bilateral organizations.

To this end, USAID has asked RTI to develop two reading assessment instruments: (1) an opportunity to learn assessment; and (2) a simple-screening assessment. These instruments will build upon recent experience of USAID, other donors, and country experiences, and will be designed to permit cross-country comparison of the degree of reading skill acquisition in the first few grades of the school system. These assessment instruments, or metrics, and the results obtained through field testing them in three languages—English, French, and Spanish—will serve as a basis for international discussion and will facilitate the establishment of basic standards for early-grade reading.

In early September 2008, USAID issued a modification to Task 3 to expand activities related to the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA). These new efforts (with a funding supplement for Year 2/Phase 2 plus a new scope and funding for Year 3/Phase 3) were under final negotiation at the close of FY2008 and will be reflected in the quarterly report submitted to USAID for October–December 2008.

### **Status and Activities, by Quarter**

#### **October–December 2007**

This first quarter of project activities in FY 2008, RTI staff undertook training of ministry staff and enumerators in order to pilot the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) instruments in Nicaragua. Piloting took place in 47 schools, with results obtained from 2,206 students (1,924 students were tested in Spanish; 282 in Miskitu). A complete field report will be available in Spanish. In addition, preparations began for the March 2008: Second EGRA Workshop, to be held at the World Bank facilities in Washington, DC.

- October—Finalized draft protocol in Spanish. Signed EdData II Task Order 5 (TO5) contract with USAID/Nicaragua for April 2008 and 2009 EGRA work to track progress in Excelencia

and Centers of Excellence in Teacher Training (CETT) project schools as well as a group of control schools. Conducted training of 25 enumerators and supervisors during a 1 week workshop.

- November— Conducted pilot field work in 47 schools in four regions during 4 weeks.
- December—Completed data entry. Prepared final field report.

### **January–March 2008**

This second quarter of project activities in FY 2008, RTI staff completed the work related to the pilot application in Nicaragua and began work on TO5. The major component of this quarter's work was dedicated to the realization of the March 2008: Second EGRA Workshop, held at the World Bank facilities in Washington, DC. Specific details follow:

- January. Finalized and sent invitations to all participants. In total 234 participants representing 40 countries and numerous institutions received invitations to participate in the three day workshop. Secured funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Fast Track Initiative to support travel costs for 35 low-income country participants. Presented initial results of Nicaragua pilot to 20 USAID/EGAT staff in Washington, DC on January 16 (presentation available on EdData II website).
- February. Finalized agenda and reviewed presentations from participants. Finalized workshop materials for translation and printing.
- March. Second EGRA Workshop, March 12-14, 2008. During the three-day workshop, 166 participants from 40 countries shared results from pilot experiences and reviewed the implications of early reading assessments for social mobilization, monitoring and instruction purposes. Participants gained technical knowledge of the importance of early reading instruction and assessment, the research underpinning early reading assessments and potential uses for their results. The workshop brought together a diverse group of participants, including U.S. and international research experts in reading and instruction and representatives of ministries of education, NGOs, donors and foundations from around the world. In addition, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) Secretariat funded travel costs for 35 participants from partner countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East. In total, leveraged funds are estimated to have been \$500,000, broken down as follows: \$200,000 for travel costs for participants, \$150,000 for unpaid consultant and expert time, and \$150,000 for facilities, translation and meals. Reviews from participants were positive. Overall, the average score for the workshop having met its objectives was 4.35 (SD=0.8). Participants also reported they would recommend the workshop to someone else (average=4.29, SD=1.01). Usefulness of the workshop was rated at 4.35 (SD=0.73) and quality of the presentations at 4.18 (SD=0.87). All results reported above are on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being “most satisfactory/most positive.” In total 55, or one third of participants submitted evaluation forms.

## **April–June 2008**

During this quarter, RTI staff further consolidated the work related to the pilot application in Nicaragua and conducted the April 2008 assessment work in 120 schools for TO5 (see quarterly report for TO5). The major component of this quarter's work was dedicated to the May 2008 USAID Education Officers Training (Training for Education Sector Teams, or TEST).

- April. During April, the EdData II team prepared for the May 12 TEST Course and consolidated the experience of the March 2008 EGRA workshop and subsequent presentations at Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) and American Education Research Association (AERA).
- May. Helen Abadzi, Luis Crouch, Amber Gove and Sylvia Linan-Thompson delivered a day-long course on the Early Grade Reading Assessment on May 12th. Results of pre and post test evaluations are as follows: average performance for the EGRA pretest was 49 percent correct (that is, on average participants obtained a score of 49 out of 100, with a Standard Deviation of 18). Following the presentation, post-test results increased by 16 percentage points, to an overall average of 65 percent correct (SD=13). Furthermore, only 15 percent of those tested correctly answered at least two-thirds of the pre-test questions, compared to 62 percent for the post-test, demonstrating significant improvements in performance. The course was rated extremely well by participants: 88 percent of participants gave the course a 4 or 5 (of a total of 5) as having contributed to improving their job performance and imparted new knowledge and skills. Course instructors were rated equally high, with 95 percent of respondents awarding the instructors a 4 or 5.
- June. On June 5th, Amber Gove gave a presentation to some 30 education ministry staff from around the world as part of the World Bank Institute's Strategic Choice for Education Reform course. On June 12th, Luis Crouch and Amber Gove presented the results of the Arabic EGRA pilot (funded under the USAID/Egypt Girls' Improved Learning Outcomes [GILO] project) to USAID/EGAT. In addition, local expressions of interest in EGRA were received from Madagascar, Guatemala and Mozambique.

## **July–September 2008**

During the fourth quarter of FY 2008, RTI staff further consolidated the work related to the Task Order 5 pilot application in Nicaragua conducted in April 2008 that included an assessment of early grade reading skills in 126 schools. RTI staff also met in Washington, DC, to review the EGRA instruments and methodology/toolkit in light of the lessons learned from EGRA applications.

- July. Amber Gove, Sylvia Linan-Thompson, and Liliane Sprenger-Charolles presented the results of the Nicaragua and other assessments conducted to date at the International Reading Association World Congress, July 28–31, in San José, Costa Rica. Participation at this event was funded by EdData II. In addition, Dr. Gove delivered training to UNICEF education officers on the development, purpose, and uses of EGRA as part of ongoing World Bank Institute collaboration (40 participants).

- August. Reading experts Drs. Linan-Thompson, Marcia Davidson, and Sandra Hollingsworth provided a peer review of the EGRA toolkit as part of the finalization of this document.
- September. RTI staff met in DC to receive EGRA training so that RTI would be able to staff the anticipated EGRA activities. RTI staff held a two-day peer-review work session with the EGRA Technical Advisory Group. Participants included Drs. Linan-Thompson, Hollingsworth, Sprenger-Charolles, and Davidson; Drs. Juan Jimenez, Marguerite Clarke, and Dan Wagoner; and RTI staff. The purpose of this work session was to review the EGRA instruments and methodology/toolkit in light of the lessons learned from EGRA applications.

**Anticipated Activities for Next Quarter (October–December 2009)**

- Finalize EGRA toolkit as part of World Bank-funded activities.
- Continue to explore other EGRA opportunities.

**Financial Statement**

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