



EdData II

Task Order 3: Early Grade Reading Assessment

Annual Report

October 2008–September 2009

EdData II Technical and Managerial Assistance, Task 3
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In September 2008, USAID modified the scope of ongoing activities for Task 3 (Phase 2/Year 2), and requested a set of new efforts (Phase 3/Year 3). Under Phase 3, RTI was to “Further develop and test concurrent validity of Early Grade Reading Assessment instruments; disseminate and promote the use of EGRA findings through workshops in Washington and Latin America; [lead] in-country advocacy campaigns to focus on improving early grade reading; and [develop] an on-line education research course highlighting early grade reading measurement and interventions to improve learning outcomes.”

The overarching objective of this task order (TO) is to increase USAID’s understanding of one essential dimension of education quality (reading) in its host countries, and ultimately to spur more effective efforts to improve educational quality. The TO specifically addresses the achievement of EdData 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*. With these objectives in mind, this task order deals with the following specific activities (from the scope of work):

1. **French and Spanish versions of the users’ manual are developed that will inform USAID of the instrument’s methodology, sampling and administration protocols, statistical applications for interpreting results, and general cost estimates for additional assessments.** RTI will develop French and Spanish versions of the users’ manual for USAID/Washington, other donors, and USAID missions that may want to take the process forward. It must include an analysis of the purposes and results of both assessment instruments. It must inform USAID of the assessment methodology, how to administer the set of test instruments in USAID host countries, how to gather statistically valid data, how to analyze and interpret the results, and how to plan, cost, and implement future testing. The documentation in the users’ manual needs to be provided in sufficient detail to enable a different team to understand how to follow the methodology and how to reproduce the results.
2. **Scientific research regarding the concurrent validity of Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) in two countries.** Concurrent validity will be assessed by comparing children’s performance on EGRA with their performance on existing national standardized pencil-and-paper tests. Concurrent data collection activities will be conducted in Nicaragua and Honduras (using World Bank funding). Task 3 funding will be used to analyze the data from the two data collection activities and to prepare a report summarizing the findings from Honduras and Nicaragua. Psychometricians will be heavily involved in this activity.
3. **EGRA social marketing campaign in one presidential initiative country.** Initiate an EGRA social marketing campaign in one presidential initiative country where EGRA studies

are currently under way or have been conducted. Possible countries include Mali, Liberia, and Honduras. RTI will work with a local subcontractor to develop a video that describes the EGRA findings and methodology. This video will be shared with the local media (newspapers and television). RTI will also provide the EGRA instruments to the media and simple instructional pointers on how to improve student reading. The end goal is to involve the media, local schools, parents, and parent groups in evaluating and improving their children's/students' reading ability at relatively minimal cost.

4. **EGRA workshop in Washington.** In collaboration with International Reading Association (IRA), convene an EGRA workshop in Washington, DC, with private sector representatives (Microsoft, Cisco, Citibank, Rotary, etc.). The key presentation will be on the necessity of a literate/trained labor force for global economic growth. A small number (4–5) of speakers will be invited (EGRA country representatives and reading experts) to come and present their EGRA findings and experiences. Discussions with participants should focus on how the business sector could help to resolve the issue of global illiteracy.
5. **Regional EGRA meeting in Latin America.** Conduct one regional EGRA meeting in Latin America to disseminate EGRA findings and methodology (covering travel and honoraria costs for regional education and reading experts). Investigate the possibility of attaching these meetings to other planned workshops such as IRA's literacy conference in Peru in the summer of 2009.
6. **Education Survey Research Course development.** Further develop the Education Survey Research Course which was piloted in Malindi, Kenya. An online version of this course will then be prepared and piloted in a to-be-determined country. The purpose for making the course available online is to ensure that it is widely accessible to district-level education managers and other stakeholders. The main goals are to aid these actors to focus on measurement of early grade learning skills acquisition; to assist them to design applied research activities to improve learning; and to help them utilize the findings to improve equitable access to quality education by making the best use of available resources.
7. **Continued dissemination of the early grade reading assessment approach and the importance of early grade reading in schools.** This will be done via conference attendance, presentations, participation in working group sessions, etc.

Status and Activities by Quarter

October–December 2008

In this first quarter of project activities in FY 2009, RTI continued dissemination of the EGRA approach, by presenting to USAID Education officers in Washington, DC (see details below). Staff also continued exploring options for conducting the Washington and regional Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) EGRA workshops. The following activities took place this quarter:

- The work plan for FY2009 was finalized and submitted.
- The English version of the EGRA toolkit funded by the World Bank was finalized.

- Luis Crouch explored options for holding an EGRA private-sector workshop in Washington, DC.
- Dr. Crouch and Jessica Mejia met with the IRA to explore the possibility of holding an EGRA regional workshop in Latin America.
- Dr. Crouch and Dr. Sylvia Linan-Thompson gave presentations on EGRA and EGRA interventions, respectively, to USAID Education officers at the USAID Education Overview Course held October 20–24 in Washington, DC.

January–March 2009

During the second quarter of FY 2009, RTI staff presented at various venues, such as the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) annual conference in South Carolina, and an IRA literacy event in Washington, DC:

- Amber Gove and Medina Korda presented at the CIES conference held March 23–27 in Charleston, South Carolina. Dr. Gove presented on “Why Early Grades? The Rational and Development of the Early Grade Assessments,” and Ms. Korda presented on “Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA): Malindi, Kenya” and “Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) Plus: Liberia.”
- Data were received from Nicaragua for the EGRA concurrent validity report. Data for Honduras remained pending.
- Michelle Ward-Brent explored options for conducting a social marketing campaign in Yemen.
- Dr. Gove participated in the IRA Sixth Annual Global Perspectives on Literacy event on March 30.

April–June 2009

The primary activity during this quarter included a three-day EGRA workshop in Washington, DC, that sought to continue building momentum for EGRA. The following activities took place:

- On April 30, Amber Gove gave a presentation on EGRA to more than 40 ministry of education and finance staff from around the world at the World Bank Institute.
- A three-day technical EGRA workshop was held in Washington, DC, June 10–12 that was attended by RTI staff and a panel of experts. The purpose of this workshop was to continue building momentum for EGRA and to gather/share lessons learned on EGRA applications from different countries.
- Luis Crouch continued to explore the possibility of a private sector EGRA workshop.

July–September 2009

During the July–September quarter, primary activities included a two-day EGRA regional workshop for Latin America held in Peru in August 2009, and a five-day Education Survey Course/workshop held in September 2009 in Liberia. Specifics follow:

- Luis Crouch and Abhijit Nimbalkar conducted an Education Survey Course for Ministry of Education (MoE) staff in Liberia, September 14–18. The course was held at the MoE offices in Monrovia and was attended by 28 staff from various divisions within the MoE, including Information Systems and Data Services (ISDS), Bureau of Primary Education, Bureau of Secondary Education, Office of Research, and Office of Planning; as well as one U.S Peace Corps representative. The Education Survey Course is a one-week introductory course on surveys and statistics that has two primary goals. First, it seeks to train education officials on how to design and carry out education surveys to collect baseline or monitoring data, and second, it seeks to train them in how to analyze, present, and use these survey data to improve overall education quality by understanding the educational challenges and interventions involved.
- In light of the Education for All (EFA) Goal 6 and the work being done to further it, RTI organized a meeting in conjunction with the International Reading Association (IRA) to explore how to improve the quality of early literacy education and measurement within the Latin American context. An EdData meeting was held in conjunction with the IRA regional Latin America meeting, which was also held in Lima on July 28–August 1. The EdData meeting was then held on August 2–3 with the purposes of
 - Sharing information, experiences, and lessons learned from previous and ongoing projects;
 - Jointly taking stock of needed steps forward; and
 - Starting to sketch a possible community of practice on these issues.
- For the French EGRA toolkit, the final bibliographical and other minor problems were resolved in July. The web posting was prepared and made live on July 20, with the toolkit being submitted to USAID’s Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) in August.
- For the Spanish toolkit, the translation from Epejo & Gallagher was received in September. It was then sent to the technical consultant, Juan Jiménez, for checking the reassembly of the translated portion with the adapted portion, and for quality control.

Anticipated Activities for Next Quarter (October–December 2009)

- Dr. Crouch and Mr. Nimbalkar will work to move the content of the Education Survey Course online. Appropriate technologies for such an online platform will be explored and tested.
- It is anticipated that the Spanish EGRA toolkit will be finalized next quarter, with Amber Gove and Erin Newton completing quality control and final edits.

Financial Statement

[REDACTED]