EdData II

Workshop Report: Policy Dialogue on Early Grade Reading, Mathematics, and School Management

November 21–22, 2011
Lusaka, Zambia

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Workshop Report:
Policy Dialogue on Early Grade Reading, Mathematics, and School Management

November 21–22, 2011
Lusaka, Zambia

Prepared for

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Background and Objectives for the Workshop

On November 21 and 22, 2011, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) convened a workshop at the Intercontinental Hotel in Lusaka to review the draft report *Pupil Performance, Pedagogic Practice, and School Management: An SSME Pilot in Zambia*. This Policy Dialogue on Early Grade Reading and Mathematics was organized by RTI International with the assistance of Family Health Trust (FHT); was hosted by USAID; and was facilitated by Ash Hartwell, consultant to RTI. Mr. Wick Powers of USAID welcomed participants to the workshop and invited the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education (MOE), Dr. Felix Phiri, to give the opening address. Following the opening address the Director of the Examinations Council of Zambia, Mr. Chekani T. Sekala, introduced participants to the design and findings of the study.

The draft report provides evidence from the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and the Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) that pupils in grades 2 and 3, in a sample of 800 pupils in 40 schools within four Bemba-speaking provinces, were largely unable to sound letters or read Bemba words and simple stories. Their mathematics performance, while somewhat better, still indicated that fewer than 25% of grade 3 pupils were able to add more than ten simple sums in one minute. This level of pupil performance was examined in relation to the conditions and management of the schools using the Snapshot of School Management Effectiveness (SSME), which included an evaluation of the availability of instructional materials, the time pupils were given to learn and practice reading, the pedagogic approaches used in the classrooms, and the role of parents (or family members) and the community.

The objectives for the workshop were:

- To examine the findings of the SSME and the EGRA and EGMA results in the context of Zambia's policies, programs, and experience;
- To identify key factors that contribute to pupils' performance;
- To explore the policy and program implications of these findings; and
- To consider next steps for policy, programs, and research.

This is a report of the workshop and its recommendations. It includes, as annexes, the handouts plus the presentations that were made over the two days.

Opening of the Workshop

The participants were welcomed by **Wick Powers, USAID/Zambia Education Team Leader**, who said in his remarks:

- This workshop provides an opportunity to reflect on the implications from a wealth of information based on the SSME/EGRA/EGMA assessment that can inform decisions on early grade learning in reading and mathematics.

- Reading and mathematics form the foundation for all other school learning. Without reading with fluency and understanding, pupils will fail in school, and fail to receive the benefits of education. The results of EGRA in Zambia and many other countries show that pupils in early grades are not learning to read.
- Globally, USAID has set a goal of helping countries address this problem with a target of 100 million children learning to read. This goal is supported by the Global Partnership in Education (formerly the Fast Track Initiative). For USAID/Zambia the focus on supporting early grade reading is a priority, and is reflected in all of our education program areas.
- Quality education is the surest foundation of a strategy for national development. Its essential starting point is early grade literacy. USAID is committed to support Zambia in moving toward this goal.

Dr. Felix Phiri, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, provided the opening address:

"This workshop should serve as an opportunity for all education experts to share vital and useful ideas on various assessments and procedures, besides finding solutions to the low learner achievement challenge that institutions of learning, public and private, are experiencing.

"Everybody in the country is aware that the learner achievement levels have greatly declined over the years, and this situation is really bothering the government. Fortunately, we even have empirically verified data proving this point. One of the main purposes of the school system is to provide quality education to all learners.

"In Zambia, over the years, many factors have contributed to undermining the standards and quality of teaching/learning. Predominant among these are:

- Double, triple, and quadruple sessions that have reduced in-class learning time below acceptable limits;
- Overcrowded classrooms;
- Lack of suitable textbooks and other learning materials;
- An extensive use of untrained or unqualified teachers, particularly in the community and some private schools;
- A language used for initial literacy and numeracy as medium of instruction that is foreign to the majority of learners and teachers;
- The absence of a proper assessment system, especially in early grades."

Dr. Phiri noted the importance of an early grade assessment:

> "Our system of education will not provide quality education in the absence of a well-defined assessment system. Apparently, assessments are only minimally used in schools to test and examine learners at the end of a term and terminal points respectively. Since assessment is a tool in the teaching and learning processes, the

Ministry wants to see it used to the maximum by all the teachers and teacher educators to enhance effective learning on the part of the learners.

"The Ministry of Education must provide leadership on improving the quality of the education system. Over the next two days wake, sleep, and eat education so as to examine the implications and actions that should arise from your careful review of this assessment."

Mr. Chekani Sakala, Director of Examinations Council, Zambia, provided an introduction to the SSME, EGRA, and EGMA study and noted in his remarks:

- The Examinations Council has taken a keen interest and an active role in shaping the SSME, EGRA, and EGMA assessment, carrying out an adaptation from international assessments, now used in 46 countries, during a workshop in April 2011.
- Zambia has done much work to enhance access to education, rapidly increasing completion rates for basic education, and increasing transition to grade 9 (from 26.7% in 2000 to 48.6% in 2010). However, this increase does not reflect higher learning achievement. On the contrary, low pupil performance on the grade 5 National Assessment shows little change from the past decade, with less than 40% of pupils achieving minimum levels in English and mathematics.
- Conducting an assessment at grade 5 means we are waiting for five years to know whether pupils are learning. This is too long! EGRA and EGMA provide an opportunity to see what children are learning in grades 2 and 3, and thereby alert us to issues that need to be addressed in the early grades.
- This workshop provides an opportunity and a challenge: What can we do to improve these results in the early grades, the foundation for all subsequent school learning achievement?

Policy Context

The first working session of the workshop began with an overview of why early grade literacy is of vital importance to pupils and to an education system. The participants then reviewed Zambia's educational policies and experience with early grade literacy programs and assessments since 1995, when the first national learning assessment was conducted by the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) with grade 6 pupils in reading (English).

This presentation included two quotations on the importance of early grade literacy that further emphasized the points made by the officials who opened the workshop:

"Research has shown that early grade reading competency is critical for continued retention and success in future grades. This link is especially relevant for low-income children, because they tend to have home and school environments that are less

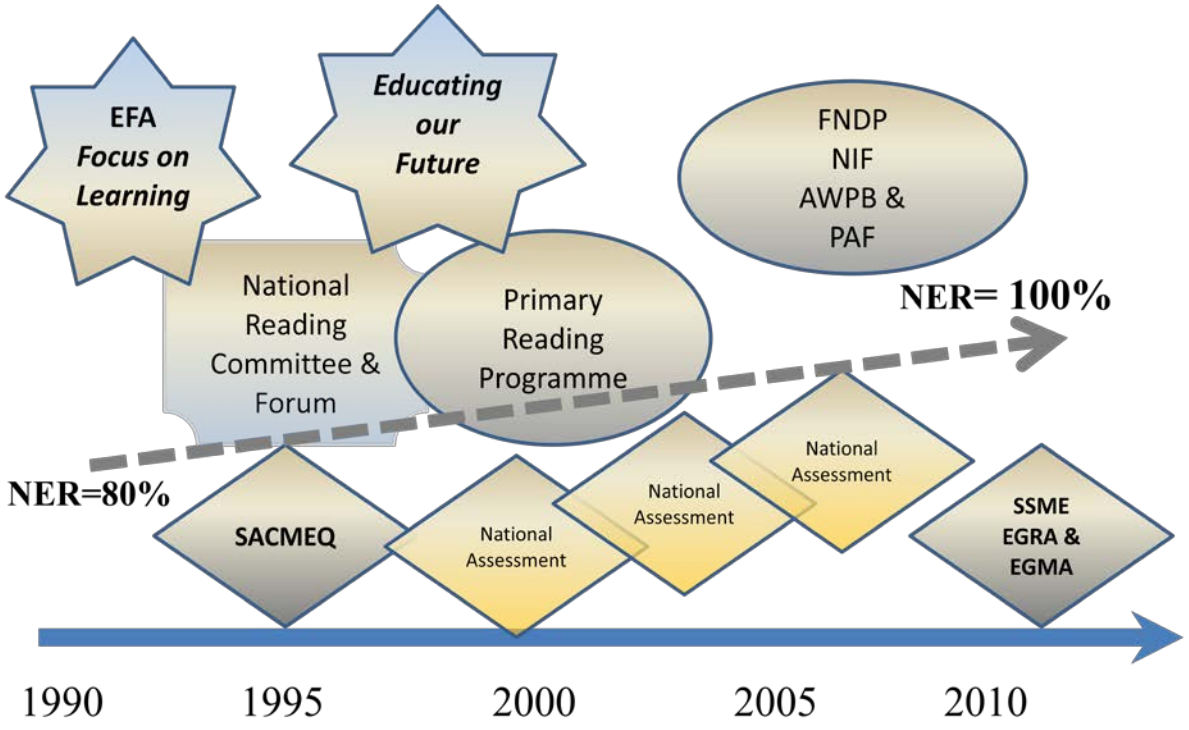
conducive to early reading development relative to those of higher income children."[1]

———

"Studies have shown that learning outcomes have a direct correlation to a country's economic growth. A 10% increase in the share of pupils reaching basic literacy translates into a 0.3 percentage point higher annual growth rate for that country."[2]

The Zambian experience with educational policies and programs (e.g., the Primary Reading Program, or PRP) targeting early grade literacy was highly praised in the years 2004–2006 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the British Department for International Development (DFID), and other educators. A two-person panel of Mr. Joe Kanyika of the Examinations Council and Mr. Bube Mwansa of the Curriculum Development Center discussed the assessments, policies, and programs from 1995 to the present (see ***Figure 1***). It was explained that since 2006 there has not been any replenishment of the Zambian language materials, nor refresher training of teachers on the PRP. It is therefore not surprising that there has been a marked decline in literacy performance over the past five years.

Figure 1. Zambia: Policy, programs, and experience with early grade literacy



[1] Patrinos, H. A., & Velez, E. (2009). Costs and benefits of bilingual education in Guatemala: A partial analysis. *International Journal of Educational Development, 29*(6): 594–598.

[2] Hanushek, E., & Woessmann, L. (2009). *Do better schools lead to more growth? Cognitive skills, economic outcomes, and causation.* NBER Working Paper 14633. Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

AWPB = Annual Work Plan Budget
EFA = Education for All
E**G**MA = Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
EGRA = Early Grade Reading Assessment
FNDP = Fifth National Development Plan
NER = net enrollment ratio
NIF = National Implementation Framework
PAF = Performance Assessment Framework
SACMEQ = Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SSME = Snapshot of School Management Effectiveness

Review of SSME, EGRA, and EGMA Findings

On the first afternoon of the policy dialogue workshop, the participants jointly examined the findings from the draft report. We began by examining the rationale for the sample and the procedures for ensuring that this sample was representative of the four Bemba-speaking provinces selected for the study.

Pictures of the settings, the sampling, and the assessment processes were presented and discussed, along with a video and live demonstrations of the methodology and scoring procedures used by the field researchers.

Random sampling of pupils

Pupil assessments

Following a presentation and discussion of research on school management effectiveness, the SSME results were highlighted for school infrastructure; class size; teacher and Headteacher characteristics; availability and usage of appropriate instructional materials (in Bemba for reading); lesson content and pedagogy, including feedback from teachers; parental and community role in supporting pupils; and estimated time on task for pupils learning to read.

Highlights of these findings showed that 60% of the Headteachers considered that their school facilities were in need of major repairs; class sizes averaged 50 pupils, with 40% of the schools having even higher pupil-teacher ratios; almost all schools in the sample

had double shifts (with total time for instruction at about 3½ hours per day); virtually all teachers were trained, but only 25% had specific training on teaching pupils how to read; the ratio of Bemba books to pupil was 1:5, with only 12% of the classrooms having enough textbooks for at least half of the pupils; and lesson content for both reading and mathematics suggests that teachers are presenting lessons above the pupils' level of competence (e.g., reading and writing practice when most pupils cannot produce the sounds of letters or decode unfamiliar words). Parents appear to be supportive of pupils, and parent-teacher associations (PTAs) were reported as active. However, the analysis of pupils' time for learning to read suggests that this is far from adequate. Taking into account the school periods during the week for literacy in Bemba, and teacher and pupil absences, on average pupils have less than 65 hours of focused literacy instruction in a year (it is estimated that 250 hours is necessary to achieve reading fluency and comprehension).

When the workshop turned to the findings from the EGRA and EGMA it was not surprising, given the conditions documented by the SSME, that pupil performance was very low. ***Table 1*** summarizes pupil performance on the five reading-related subtasks.

Table 1. Reading skills: Correct responses in one minute, by grade

Subtask	% of pupils with 0 correct responses		% of pupils with 11+ correct	
	Grade 2	**Grade 3**	**Grade 2**	**Grade 3**
Letter sounds	50%	42%	13%	30%
Unfamiliar words	88%	75%	2%	12%
Oral reading fluency	91%	78%	4%	17%

Comprehension

Subtask	% of pupils with 0 correct		% with 50% or more correct	
Reading comprehension (5 questions)	95%	84%	0%	1%
Listening comprehension (3 questions)	30%	12%	22%	27%

In the discussion of these results, workshop participants pointed out that teachers are not teaching phonics in grade 1 or 2, only in preschool, and this is one of the reasons that pupils are not able to sound letters, decode text, or read with fluency and understanding.

Table 2 provides a summary of pupil performance in the five mathematics subtasks.

Table 2. Mathematics skills: Percent correct responses in one minute, by grade

Subtask	% of pupils with 0 response		% of pupils with 11+ correct	
	Grade 2	**Grade 3**	**Grade 2**	**Grade 3**
Number identification	5%	5%	49%	77%
Quantity discrimination	18%	12%	19%	50%
Missing number	40%	27%	2%	8%
Addition	23%	9%	3%	23%
Subtraction	26%	9%	0%	6%

It was notable that the mathematics performance, although low, was better than the Bemba reading performance.

Recommendations Arising from the Workshop

On the second day of the workshop, participants formed four working teams. Each team represented a "fictitious" school (Lando PS, Bwalya PS, Family PS, and Mwanza PS) in a simulation whereby the MOE was supporting the development of School Learning Improvement Plans (SLIPs) to enhance pupils' literacy and numeracy, especially in early grades. Each team included seven or more members: 2 teachers (grades 2 and 3), the Headteacher, the chair of the PTA, the District Education Officer, a representative of the MOE, and a representative from a Development Agency.

The task for each team was to develop a strategy—drawing on the findings from the SSME, EGRA, and EGMA; from other assessments and performance reviews; and from research on early grade literacy. Each member of the team also would draw on his or her own experience and on information from research and recommendations related to early grade literacy.

Each of the four SLIP teams made a presentation based on the description of the school conditions and the performance of the early grade pupils in literacy; the factors the team believed were key in explaining this performance; and the recommended policy, program, and school-based actions that could improve learning performance.

There was, as would be expected, much overlap in the recommendations from each of the SLIP teams. The primary consensus was that **there is a critical and timely need to review national policies and their implementation related to early grade language and literacy.** These policies include:

- the design of the curriculum for early grade literacy (phonics, prereading skills…)
- the extension of Zambian language reading through grade 3;
- the determination of an appropriate Zambian language for each school;

- a restructuring of the school timetable to increase time for reading;
- a priority on providing appropriate and sufficient instructional and reading materials;
- assignment of teachers to schools based on Zambian language competence;
- reform to reduce teacher absences;
- teacher training reform, to include teaching pupils to read;
- increased community and parental engagement to support early grade reading and mathematics; and
- the need to integrate the assessment of early grade reading and mathematics performance into Zambia's National Assessment.

The next two subsections address both the EGRA/EGMA/SSME recommendations and the policy recommendations in greater detail.

Recommendations for EGRA, EGMA, and SSME

Specific recommendations about EGRA, EGMA, and SSME that were suggested from the workshop, including those that arose from the School Learning Improvement Plans, are presented below.

1. The pilot EGRA, EGMA, and SSME, as adapted for Zambia from international applications, has demonstrated that this early grade assessment provides critically important information for the review of education sector program and policy. Although the results reveal disturbingly low pupil performance, they are consistent with assessments of reading and mathematics performance by the periodic National Assessments and SACMEQ at grades 5 and 6.
2. The EGRA and EGMA should now be further developed into versions in English and the other six Zambian languages used in schools. The English version of EGRA and EGMA should be used, along with the appropriate local Zambian language, in grade 3.
3. This expanded use of EGRA and EGMA should be incorporated into the set of instruments used as a part of the Zambian regularly scheduled National Assessments. The results of grade 2 and grade 3 reading (in Zambian languages and English) and mathematics performance would then be reported as a part of the overall Zambian education sector performance.
4. The SSME instrument provides valuable information on the conditions and management of the schools and classes. In particular, workshop participants noted evidence of the following key factors influencing the low EGRA results in particular:
    a. A general lack of instructional materials in Bemba, with a ratio of one reading book for every five pupils. This situation reflects the fact that publishers were no longer making Zambian language early grade reading materials available,

and there have not been purchases of these materials for the past three or four years.

b. Teachers lack the guidance and proficiency to teach phonics, a fundamental building block for literacy; and other prereading skills, such as print awareness. This was confirmed by the fact that few pupils were able to provide letter sounds (in contrast to pupils' ability to name the letters). Participants in the workshop noted that these skills are taught in preschool, but that teachers in the early grades are not guided by a curriculum to do this.

c. The lack of sufficient time on task, with a focus on prereading and early reading skills, was particularly noted. This arises from a number of factors noted by the SSME, including:

   i. Total instructional time is shortened by the double- and even triple-shift system, whereby the official timetable calling for 4 hours and 40 minutes is, in practice, reduced to 3½ to 4 hours.

   ii. The curriculum provides for a Zambian language period only in grade 1, while in grade 2 the language period focuses on English. The medium of instruction in all other subjects is English. This means that in grade 1 pupils are exposed, at a maximum, to 8 periods per week (320 min or 5 hrs 20 min) of Zambian language practice in grade 1; and 3 periods (2 hours) per week in grades 2 and 3. This is far short of what is generally recognized as necessary for pupils to achieve reading fluency, even in cases where there are adequate materials and teachers are well trained in reading instruction.

   iii. Teacher and pupil absences further reduce instructional time. Although the SSME indicated an average estimate of 11% teacher absenteeism, as reported by the Headteachers, a 2010 study that had a larger sample and that made unannounced visits to schools, implemented by the Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC) found a 43% teacher absenteeism rate.

d. The role of homework and of both teacher and parent (or guardian) feedback to the pupil plays a vital role in motivation and in developing pupil reading and basic computational skills.

5. There are a number of changes to the SSME that workshop participants noted could improve the quality of information provided:

   a. Items which arise from interviews with pupils, teachers, Headteachers and parents do not always provide reliable, unbiased information, and need a means of verification. For example, the responses to questions asking pupils whether their parents are literate and help them in their reading indicated far higher adult literacy rates than other sources; asking Headteachers about teacher absences (as noted above) provided very low estimates; and Headteachers seemed to report high levels of activity for the PTAs

(Headteachers are secretaries of the PTAs and are expected to see that they function effectively), which is contrasted with a low opinion of PTA effectiveness by teachers. In general, interview questions that request self-reports about behavior need to be independently verified with evidence to be credible.

b. The classroom observation instrument needs to focus more specifically on pupils' time on task in relation to prereading and early reading skills, so as to determine how much of the available instructional time is actually used to enhance reading.

c. A fundamental issue is that the SSME process, by informing schools that the team is to arrive on a given day, reflects the schools' response to the visit, rather than reflecting the typical school day. Thus, teacher absenteeism reported by the SSME was 11%, whereas the ZANEC study—done on a nationally representative sample of schools—indicated a 43% absenteeism rate. This suggests that a subsample of the SSME—of schools and classes—should be based on unannounced visits and observations.

Policy and Program Implications and Recommendations

As stated earlier, workshop participants considered that the results of the EGRA, EGMA, and SSME indicate a critical and timely need to review national policies and their implementation related to early grade language and literacy. These include:

1. The curriculum for early grade literacy needs the development of standards and milestones for prereading and early reading based on the stages of learning to read, including oral language development, phonological awareness, print awareness, phonetics, reading fluency, and comprehension.
2. The curriculum should be revised to reflect best practices on transitional bilingual language and literacy learning. This would include having pupils' first language used as the primary language of literacy through grade 3, while progressively introducing English, at first orally, and then, by grade 3, in print.
3. First language of literacy: the Zambian language selected for each school should be the dominant language used by pupils on the playground (a language which all pupils understand and speak).
4. The school timetable needs to be rearranged to ensure greater time for pupil instruction and practice in reading: at least 10 periods per week (each period of 40 minutes = 400 min) x 38 weeks, or a total of 253.3 hours with no time lost.
5. Instructional materials: A priority is to provide a regular supply of Zambian-language instructional materials.
6. Teacher assignments: The criterion of Zambian language competence for early grade teachers should be considered in placement; incentives are needed for rural early grade teachers.

7. Absenteeism of teachers needs to be addressed as a priority. This will involve issues of management, involvement of the PTA and community, and incentives.
8. Teacher training needs to be reformed to include teaching pupils how to read in both Zambian language(s) and English.
9. Community and parental engagement and support for early grade readers is an essential element of an effective literacy program. A public relations communication campaign is needed to educate parents on this role.

It is recognized that these policy and program recommendations represent an initial set of proposals that would need to be further evaluated and elaborated in terms of feasibility, priority, timing, and resource implications to become a part of a national strategy. Thus, they should be taken as initial proposals for further analysis and dialogue, as indicated by the objectives for the workshop.

Annex 1. Agenda: Zambia Policy Dialogue on Early Grade Reading, Mathematics, and School Management

Nov 21, Monday
10:00-10.30 am– **Opening & Welcome** (USAID, Examination Council of Zambia, Ministry of Education) • Introductions, overview of the workshop • Overview of workshop objectives and program
10:30-10:45 am – Break
10.45-12.30pm - **Zambia's Experience with Early Grade Literacy** • International Focus & Findings on Early Grade Reading • Zambia education policy and experience with primary school literacy • Overview of the Study in Zambia: Study design & sampling
12:30 – 1:30 pm – Lunch
1:30-3:00pm – **Review of Assessment Instruments and Findings** • Presentation of each assessment tool and results. • **The Setting-SSME**: Pupils, School and Classroom Context • **EGRA:** Letter sounds, unfamiliar words, reading fluency, comprehension, reading comprehension and oral comprehension • **EGMA:** Numeracy: number identification, quantity discrimination, missing number, addition and subtraction
3:00-3:15 pm – Break
3:15-4:15pm - **Key Factors Contributing to Results** • Presentation and discussion of school/classroom effectiveness. • Description of SSME variables 4:00-4:15pm - Closing summary of the day

Nov 22, Tuesday
9:00-9:30 am – **OPENING** Review of Day 1 • QUESTIONS that arise from findings 9:30-10:30 am – **ANALYSIS** of findings: factors contributing to results
10:30-10:45 am – Break
10:45-12:30pm – **Working session** Participants will engage in a simulation, to develop a strategic plan for improving pupil performance within schools, based on findings from the study and research on early grade learning. The plan will identify proposed changes in pedagogic, classroom, school and management practices, and will include the role of parents and the community to help improve learning.
12:30 – 1:30 pm - Lunch
1:30-3:00 pm – **Group Presentations of Recommendations and Policy and Program Implications**
3:00-3:15 pm – Break
3:15-4:00 pm – Summary of Recommendations 4:00-4:15pm – Closing by Ministry of Education

Annex 2. Workshop Participants

NAME	OFFICE	EMAIL ADDRESS **[REDACTED]**
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION		
Dr. Felix Phiri*	Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education (MOE)	
Chilufya Mumba	Ministry of Education	
Mwansa Simkwanda	Ministry of Education	
Mrs W. Nyangu	Principal Education Officer, Directorate of Open and Distance Education (DODE)	
Mrs. Veronica Siluyele	Standards Officer, Languages, MOE	
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Ms. M. Mwiya	Senior Education Officer	
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Ms. Mary Nywenda	Curriculum Specialist, CDC	
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Exhilda Mulenga	Senior Exam Specialist	
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Ms. Felida Kiwala	Senior Exam Specialist	
Mr. Boniface Lisuba	Senior Exam Specialist	
Mr. Angel M. Kaliminwa	Senior Research Officer	
Ms. Charity M. Kombe	Senior Research Officer	
Wick Powers	Education Officer, Team Leader	
Mary Tyler Holmes	Education Officer	
Cornelius Chipoma	Senior Education Advisor	
Malama Munkonge	Water & Sanitation Advisor	
Ash Hartwell	Consultant to RTI/USAID	
Benny E.L. Zulu	FHT Director	
Timmy Mike Mudenda	FHT, Project Coordinator	
Lungu Kilby	FHT staff	
Boniface Kasumba	FHT staff	
Grace Chileshe	Field researcher	
H. Meenda	Field supervisor	

* Dr. F. Phiri delivered the opening address for the Workshop.
** Mr. C. Sakala gave the introductory remarks for the presentation of study findings.

Annex 3. Description of the Exercise Developing a School Learning Improvement Plan for Literacy

The Ministry of Education is supporting the development of School Learning Improvement Plans (SLIP) to enhance pupils' literacy and numeracy, especially in early grades. You are appointed to one of four SLIPs (for Lando PS, Bwalya PS, Family PS and Mwanza PS. Each team includes 2 teachers (grades 2 and 3), the Headteacher, the Chair of the PTA, the District Education Officer, a representative of the MoE, and a representative from a Development Agency.

Your task is to develop a SLIP strategy – drawing on the findings from SMME, EGRA and ESMA, from other assessments and performance reviews, and from research on early grade literacy. Each member of the team should draw on their own experience and on information from research and recommendations related to early grade literacy.

Your plan should be cost-effective, be feasible to initiate in the next two years, and include the following:

1) Describe the current status of school conditions and pupil performance on reading and mathematics in grades 2 and 3.

2) Identify the key factors which you believe will improve pupils' reading and maths performance

3) Indicate what changes are necessary to achieve this improvement.

4) What policies, programs and/or resources would your school need to achieve progress?

- National Level
- District level
- School level
- Classroom level

5) Key indicators that you will use to measure progress and targets for improvement over the next 2 years.

TO GET STARTED:

- Each person should select a role: different from your actual role, one you know well
  - MOE representative
  - District Education Office representative
  - Headteacher
  - 2nd grade Teacher
  - 3rd grade Teacher
  - PTA Chair

  - Development Agency representative
- Write your 'name' on the name card, and imagine your character
- Review and reflect on the research findings linked to your role for improving early grade literacy (see summary of research findings for each role in ***Annex 4***
- Introduce yourself to your team with a brief opening statement
- The team then will select a chair and a reporter

Begin Task: Develop and record:

- School profile./performance in reading
- Key factors that influence that performance – in your school
- Actions that can be taken (policy, programs, actions locally) - Priority
- Estimated resources, support needed (where possible indicate cost-effectiveness)
- Key indicators to measure and report progress…how will you do this?

Write up your findings for a presentation to the full group.

Annex 4. Background Research Briefs on Early Grade Reading for SLIP Teams

For all members of the School Learning Improvement Plan team

School Effectiveness is a function of:

- Available time and opportunity to learn[3]
- Instructional approaches that make use of available time to learn

School Effectiveness can be improved by:

- Providing more consistent and better instructional support to teachers and schools
- Policies, practices and decisions that maximize the opportunity/time to learn
- Time is a key ingredient in pupils learning to read
- But what teachers and pupils do with time determines whether learning is actually promoted
- Learning to read in early grades is required for continued learning

From Gillies, J. & Quijada, J. (2008). *Opportunity to Learn: A high impact strategy for improving educational outcomes in developing countries.* Academy for Educational Development, EQUIP2. From www.equip123.org

[3] It is estimated that a minimum of 250 hours of instruction and practice are needed to achieve reading fluency and comprehension. See Comings, J. (1995). Literacy skill retention in [adult] pupils in developing countries. *International Journal of Educational Development,* 15(1).

For Ministry of Education representative

Policies for Early Grade Literacy

National leadership: commitment for early grade multi-lingual literacy and learning

Whatever the particular configuration of national and donor support for the education sector, it is critical for the success of an early grade literacy program that national political, technical and bureaucratic leaders, especially at the Ministry of Education, articulate and support an early-grade literacy priority as a key feature of the education sector policy and programs. In countries where decentralization has been implemented, this leadership in necessary within each region or district. There needs to be a strong and consistent message to citizens, to education officials, teachers and teacher unions, and to parents, to focus on children learning to read and write, A model of such a focus at a national level is from the President of South Africa in 2010:

> ***…we want to improve the ability of our children to read, write and count in the foundation years. Unless we do this, we will not improve the quality of education. Our education targets are simple but critical. We want learners and teachers to be in school, in class, on time, learning and teaching for seven hours a day***
>
> **(ZUMA, 2010)**

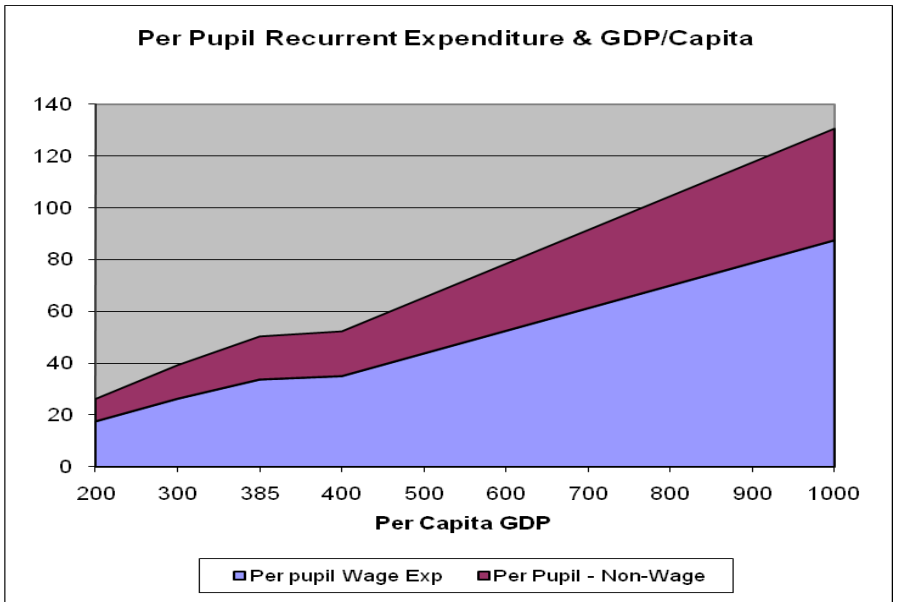
Policies for Early Grade Literacy

Adequate sector financing for basic education, and non-wage expenditures

Shortly after the Dakar summit on EFA in 2000, the Fast Track Initiative was established to organize financing for basic education. In an analysis of countries which had made good progress in expanding access and completion, it estimated the level of recurrent, per-pupil financing related to a country's per capita GDP (World Bank, 2002). The findings provide a rough and simple guide for the minimum level of resources a country needs to support basic education:

Indicators of recurrent per pupil unit costs:

- Pupil/teacher ratio 40:1
- Teacher wage average of 3.5 per capita GDP
- Non-wage expenditure: 1/3 (33%) of total recurrent expenditure



Thus, for a country with a GDP/capita of $600, per pupil recurrent expenditures should be, at a minimum, about $80, of which $16 should be for non-wage expenditures: books, materials, professional development, supervision and management.

Many countries which have rapidly expanded access to primary schools have not been able to keep pace with the recurrent budget. Typically the first casualty of the budget squeeze is the non-wage recurrent budget: books, materials, professional development, supervision and management. These are elements which are indispensable for improving the quality of teaching and learning. Secondly, funds expended on teacher wages are

reduced by 1) increasing class sizes – in some countries with lower primary grades exceeding 60:1 on average, 2) having a large proportion of the teaching force untrained and with low remuneration, and 3) delaying salary increases so that wages decline in real terms, relative to inflation. All of these measures lead to a demoralized, underpaid and under-trained teaching force. These factors tend to be compounded when countries move to decentralize the budget to district levels, since decisions about recurrent expenditures at that level tend to undervalue early grades and non-wage expenditures.

Policies for Early Grade Literacy

A Curriculum linked to early grade literacy – oral, phonics, writing

Curriculum reform is often at the heart of an effective early grade literacy program. Such reform must address the following issues:

- Do existing curricula and syllabi reflect standards and objectives that are consistent with the an effective instructional framework?
- To what degree are practices of learning to read and write reflected in the subject syllabi and school timetable? Is there a single language 'period' during a full school day?

The answer to most of these questions is often negative, indicating the significant policy and bureaucratic challenge in bringing about system change. A systemic, sustainable program requires that there be policy and regulatory changes in curriculum guidelines, syllabi, and school timetables.

Specifically,

- The curriculum for early grade literacy should be guided by standards and milestones reflecting the stages of pre-literacy (development of oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness and alphabet awareness) and the stages of early reading including phonemic awareness, phonics, reading with fluency, building vocabulary and comprehension of text.
- The daily and weekly timetable should provide at least 90 minutes a day for the first three years of schooling to master these skills, especially where there is no tradition of reading in the home;
- Instructional materials, including posters, stories, texts, and teachers' guides are necessary for pupils to practice the skills of pre- and early reading.
- Regular assessments, based on the curriculum literacy standards and milestones should be given by the teacher, and at least once a year by the school and education system.
- Where the program is bilingual and transitional, from the language known and spoken by the pupil on entering school (L1) and moving to a second, usually national, language (L2), the curriculum should carefully overlap L1 and L2, and not shift to L2 as a medium of instruction until pupils are competent, fluent readers of L1.

Policies for Early Grade Literacy

System for the development, distribution and use of instructional materials

A very large part of the technical work that goes into an early grade literacy program typically involves the design, publication, printing, distribution and use of instructional materials. If national policy supports a multi-lingual approach the basic materials must be provided in each of the indigenous languages as well as the national language. This presents a considerable challenge for development, production and distribution.

Instructional resources produced for early grade literacy programs often include, for every grade level, a teachers manual; a pupil reader with leveled texts and games; teacher (laminated) assessment tasks; and parent (laminated) assessment tasks; home-school reading tracker and end of year skills assessment test. In addition, for countries with an enriched program, there may be interactive radio programs; audio stores; travelling suitcase with a MP3/4 player/radio.

The orientation and training for teachers, school administrators and district officials in a new early grade literacy program must include the regulations and processes for the receipt, storage and distribution of materials (including the distribution and use of the materials by pupils), so as to assure that the proper titles and numbers of materials reach and are used in schools and classrooms. Since materials typically provide the guidance and materials needed by teachers for a new literacy program, their availability and use is a key in effective pre- and in-service teacher training.

Policies for Early Grade Literacy

Teacher supply and policies to reduce oversized classes

The policies and operations of the teacher personnel system have a direct and profound effect on attempts to improve teaching and learning. In Malawi and Uganda, after the declaration of free and compulsory primary education in the mid-1990s, it was not possible to find, assign and pay for enough new teachers to match the dramatic increase in enrolments. Lower grade class sizes frequently exceeded 100 pupils, overwhelming any coherent short-term project to improve the quality of instruction.

The analysis of long term impact of school-improvement projects has frequently found little trace of effective practices a few years after the project has been completed, particularly in remote and rural schools, where there is as high as a 50% turnover of teachers who leave behind 'dereformed' schools.[4]

Even where there are sufficient numbers of formally trained teachers assigned to lower grades, this does not easily translate into effective pedagogy for early grade literacy. A critical examination of the requirements of awareness, belief, knowledge and practice of teachers' of writing and reading, often in a language that pupils do not well understand, indicates the huge transformation from existing practice that is called for. Long entrenched practices of teacher centered classrooms make trained, experienced teachers often more resistant to these changes than young, untrained recruits from local communities – who know the parents, the pupils, the culture and the language. [5] This is not to suggest that it makes sense to replace trained teachers with local volunteers, but rather, for the long term, to address the linguistic and pedagogic competencies needed in pre-service teacher training, and to seek the placement of teachers to schools where they know the language the pupils' speak.

As with the other policy matters, these are not uncommon constraints, and education quality programs ignore them at their peril.

[4] This is a key finding of the impact evaluation of the QUIPS project in Ghana (USAID, 2005).

[5] The EQUIP2 research on complementary education demonstrated that relatively high quality early grade literacy can be attained with relatively little pre-service training followed by intense mentoring and regular supervision. See http://www.equip123.net/docs/e2-CompModelsEffectiveSchooling-Book.pdf

Policies for Early Grade Literacy

Adequate school infrastructure (classrooms, furnishing, office, stores, water, latrines)

The considerable resources governments and donors often put into school infrastructure is inadequate as a strategy for improving access and quality in basic education. However, it is important that fundamental elements of infrastructure are in place for an effective early grade school literacy program. These include secure, spacious and well-lit classrooms (protected from storms and vandalism), an office, store, a nearby clean water supply, and latrines.

In sub-Saharan Africa classrooms are often crowded with long benches riveted to immovable tables, while in south Asia and the Middle East, it is common for children to sit on mats with slates or low tables, thus making group work far easier to organize. Effective early grade literacy programs require pupils to work in groups, and this is much easier with flexible classroom furnishings.

The visitor to an effective early grade literacy program is immediately struck by the transformation of the classroom: it is a ‘literate’ environment, where walls are used to display current posters, pictures, pupils’ art and writing. The arrangement reflects interactions among pupils working in groups, and the use of shelves or storage lockers to keep frequently accessed instructional materials such as readers, pupil writing, laminated instructional cards and posters.

Policies for Early Grade Literacy

System of in-service and pre-service professional development and supervision

A large part of the challenge of early grade reading achievement is the transformation of teacher behavior and classroom relationships, particularly to increase pupils' oral and written interaction and practice. This requires teachers' shifting their beliefs about how children learn, based on clear mental images of effective instructional practices, with daily guidance on steps and resources to structure lessons, regular mentoring and supervision, and methods for assessing pupil learning progress against standards and milestones.

How can such a transformation occur? This is a significant shift from current practices in the great majority of primary school classrooms. This becomes a central concern for the design and management of an Early Grade Learning Program. One answer to this has been Interactive Radio Instruction, through which, at least for the period of the daily radio broadcast (or tape), these new beliefs and practices are modeled. In other projects, short-term results, for a limited number of schools, can sometimes be achieved through an intensive in-service training program. However, this typically ends with the project, and teacher turnover and lack of ongoing professional support from districts soon extinguish the new behaviors.

The central policy issue is a system of professional teacher development, including regular in-service reviews and workshops, with a cadre of mentors and supervisors, supported with resources and leadership from teacher training colleges and/or districts. There are relatively few countries that have such systems or personnel in place. Rather countries tend to depend upon the resources of donors and projects to provide the finances that enable training to be held, and gas to be purchased for vehicles so supervisory visits can be made.[6] Notable exceptions to this are Botswana, Lesotho, and Uganda's Teacher Development Management System.

[6] One of the challenges a project faces is the demand for remuneration by trainers and mentors (sometimes even from teachers) for their increased responsibility. If the project simply assumes this responsibility and covers additional expenses and allowances, this work will cease when the project is completed. The policy of incentives, allowances for increased responsibility must be developed or invoked for sustainability.

The evidence is strong that a system of continuous in-service professional development and training has an even greater effect on teacher capacity and performance than does formal pre-service training.[7] However, this does not imply that pre-service training can be neglected for an early-grade literacy program. The pre-service teacher training colleges are essential partners for the development of the teacher competencies and skills. National policies specifying teacher competencies, and the modalities for training and developing teachers need to link the pre-and in-service programs, ideally through a partnership between the local education supervisors and teacher college staff.[8]

[7] See Craig et al. (1998); Darling-Hammond, (2010); Hartwell (2003).

[8] A good example of such a system is Uganda's TDMS (Hartwell, 2004).

Policies for Early Grade Literacy

Literacy assessments at classroom, school and national levels

Over the past decade, the issue of early-grade literacy has come to the forefront of policy reviews in large part because of a series of national assessments demonstrating that pupils in primary schools are generally not learning to read with fluency and understanding: for example Pratham's early grade reading and maths in India; Performance tracking of learning outcomes in Bangladesh; The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), and its francophone equivalent, PASEC[9]; and in the past five years EGRA, which has assisted reading assessments in almost 40 countries.

This represents a significant shift from the central importance still held by national selection examinations, which measure pupil performance in core subjects at the end of each schooling cycle, using a norm- referenced test (which only allows comparisons between pupils, or between schools and not against curriculum standards). The examinations can say little about education quality, and they do not address early grade learning. Yet because the results have such a dramatic effect on each pupil and their families in terms of selection and progression to the next schooling cycle, they remain a cornerstone of education systems.

Currently the great majority of criterion-based assessments, which seek to assess how well the schools, the system, is doing, are supported through donor technical assistance and financing. The policy challenge is for Ministries of Education embrace early grade criterion based assessments of reading and numeracy as key indicators of education sector performance.

A second policy objective is to assure that each class, and each school, assesses progress in reading and writing (and numeracy) and reports these results in clear terms to the communities served. In an increasing number of countries, this is termed the 'School Report Card.' There are a number of innovative means by which parents, and communities, can be informed of pupil, class, and school progress in achieving reading and writing learning objectives. There are also early-grade literacy and numeracy assessment programs that have been pioneered by Pratham in India, Uwezo in Kenya, and School Performance Assessment Monitoring (SPAM) in Ghana which engage community and school staff in reviewing assessment results and planning for improvements.

From Gove, A. and Wetterberg, A. (Eds.). (2011). *The Early Grade Reading Assessment: Applications and interventions to improve basic literacy*. Research Triangle Park, North Carolina: RTI Press.

[9] *Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Educatifs de la Conférence des ministres de l'éducation des pays ayant le français en partage* (CONFEMEN).

Policies for Early Grade Literacy

"Time on task": The time that schools, teachers and pupils spend on literacy

The publication of Helen Abadzi's 2007 study of time on task in schools was a wake up call for a central, previously overlooked, factor in education quality. The policy issue is summarized in the abstract to the study:

Time on Task Lost for Learning

Studies have shown that learning outcomes are related to the amount of time pupils engage in learning tasks. However, visits to schools have revealed that pupils are often taught for only a fraction of the intended time, particularly in lower-income countries. Losses are due to informal school closures, teacher absenteeism, delays, early departures, and sub-optimal use of time in the classroom. A study was undertaken to develop an efficient methodology for measuring instructional time loss. Thus, instructional time use was measured in sampled schools in Tunisia, Morocco, Ghana, and the Brazilian state of Pernambuco. The percentage of time that pupils were engaged in learning vis-à-vis government expectations was approximately 39 percent in Ghana, 63 percent in Pernambuco, 71 percent in Morocco, and 78 percent in Tunisia.

Research suggests that merely financing the ingredients of instruction is not enough to produce learning outcomes; pupils must also get sufficient time to process the information. The quantity-quality tradeoff that often accompanies large-scale enrollments may be partly due to instructional time restrictions. Time wastage also distorts budgetary outlays and teacher salary rates. To achieve the Millennium Development Goals pupils must get more of the time that governments, donors, and parents pay for.

(Abadzi, H. (2007). *Absenteeism and beyond: Instructional time loss and consequences.* Washington, DC: The World Bank).

One of the challenges for an early grade literacy program is to establish adequate time on task on the official daily school schedule, an essential pre-requisite for achieving the actual time on task needed. Although further research is needed to establish the relationship between pupil time on task and levels of literacy achieved, there is no doubt that much of the time in early grades should be spent on basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy.

Since early-grade language period(s) typically provide less than one hour of mandated instruction per day and schools typically have less than 200 official school days, pupils do not receive adequate instructional time (in class) to acquire literacy within a school year. In Ghana the Ministry of Education combined the English and Ghana Language periods into a single 'Language and Literacy' period of 90 minutes, considered as an essential step in achieving early grade reading competency. Still, with a significant loss of instructional time due to teacher absences, doubling class time to focus on literacy would have only a limited impact on pupil achievement.

However, Abadzi's work has demonstrated that whatever the official time on task, the combination of school closures, absenteeism, and wasted time during class lessons, are major factors explaining low time on task. Rather, public awareness of these patterns, better supervision and monitoring, and the improved and focused implementation of existing policies and regulations are needed.

For Grade 2 Teacher

Pre-Reading Goals and Learning Activities

Oral Language	Phonological Awareness	Print Awareness	Alphabet Awareness
• Talking with others about personally meaningful experiences • Building vocabulary: describing objects, events, and relations • Pretending, telling stories, resolving conflicts • Having fun with language • Enjoying stories, rhymes, and songs • Building a rhyme and alliteration repertoire • Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test	• Speaking and listening • Attending to and experimenting with sounds that make up words • Generating rhymes and alliterations • Phonemic awareness—Distinguishing letter sounds • Test of Phonological Awareness	• Working with print-bearing materials • Handling and learning about books • Being read aloud to from books • Generating print • Dictating stories • Reading signs and symbols, storybooks, one's own writing • Specific Level Assessment of Awareness of Print & Sound	• Seeing and handling letters • Recognizing letters and words • Writing in various ways • Using three-dimensional letters, key boards, and moveable type • Making sound-letter connections

References

See: http://www.highscope.org/NewsandInformation/PositionPapers/mainpage.htm, accessed May 31, 2006.

Kame'enui, E. J., Simmons, D., & Cornachione, C. (2001). *A practical guide to reading assessment: the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education with the International Reading Association and Health Communications, Inc.

For Grade 2 Teacher

Policies for Early Grade Literacy

Using a language the child knows to acquire literacy before shifting to L2

In countries with multilingual societies, often with as many as twenty distinct languages in use, a central policy issue is which languages will be used in schools. To formulate this policy, these questions must be answered:

- What language, or languages does the child understand and speak on entering school?
- What language(s) do teachers use in the classroom, and in introducing the child to written letters, words, and texts?
- What language(s) do teachers use as the medium of instruction: across the subjects in the early grades such as mathematics, health, science, social studies? What is the language of the instructional materials used in the classroom?

Whatever the answers are to these questions, the evidence about the centrality of language for early grade literacy is clear:

> *It is an obvious truth that a child cannot well learn to read in a language which she neither understands nor speaks. Those who have become literate are able to use that capacity in mastering a new language, but learning to link linguistic sounds with written symbols should be done in a language the child knows.*[10]

The explanation for this truth is illustrated by the 'Literacy Ladder', which shows the stages of learning to link sounds to letters, letters to words, and words to expressions of meaning. If a child does not understand the classroom oral language, s/he is unable to make the link between language sounds and letters and words necessary for making meaning of a written text.

The Literacy Ladder: Decoding to Fluency in a Child's Language

Stages	Oral Listening & Speaking	Written Reading & Writing
1	Sound	Letter, single phoneme word (shhh!)
2	Sounds →Word	Letters → Word, spelling
3	Words → Syntax, fluency of expression, intonation, phrases	Words → Syntax, grammar of sentence
4	Expressions → meaning (story, instruction…)	Sentences → paragraphs, meanings
5	Fluency & Comprehension with Spoken & Written Meaning	

[10] See Ball (2010); Center for Universal Education (2011); Ducher (2004); UNESCO (2003); UNESCO (2007).

When pupils do not understand or speak the language that the teacher uses in class, the consequence is the oft-observed patterns of repetition—often in chorus, sometimes called "parroting," and copying letters and words from a blackboard. Pupils are typically asked to repeat single words, and almost never, in the early grades, to express themselves with a full sentence. This pattern defines the relationship between the teacher and pupils in a very large proportion of early grade classrooms in multi-lingual lower-income countries. Children learn and are rewarded for correct repetition in a language which they do not understand well or speak fluently. They have neither the capacity, nor the incentive to use language, oral or written, as a tool of thought, for creative expression or problem-solving within the classroom. At best children learn how to decode print, but are unable to acquire fluency and full comprehension. This is a key finding from the Early Grade Reading Assessments (EGRA).[11]

UNESCO has taken a lead on a global linguistic standard for early grade literacy. Drawing on research on early grade literacy in multi-lingual contexts, UNESCO advocates that learners should begin their education in the language they know best (L1). As they use their own language for learning and becoming literate, they are introduced to the 'national' language and begin learning how to communicate in that language (L2). *In the best programmes, learners continue to develop their ability to communicate and to learn in both languages throughout primary school.* (UNESCO, 2007). The steps that indicate this progression, called a Multi-Lingual Education (MLE), are:

STAGES OF A MULTI-LINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (MLE)

Build competence and confidence in home language (L1) orally

For children in pre-school or just entering school, using illustrations and building phonetic awareness

Introduce reading and writing in L1

Continue building oral L1, and use L1 for teaching and learning

Introduce official language (L2) orally

Continue building oral and written L1, and using L1 for teaching and learning

Introduce reading and writing in L2

Continue building oral and written L1 and L2

Begin using Ls for teaching and learning with help from L1

Continue building oral and written competence in L1 and L2

Use L2 for teaching and learning, with L1 as a subject

[11] Gove, A. & Cvelich. P. (2010). Retrieved from http://www.rti.org/pubs/early-reading-report-revised.pdf

For Grade 3 Teacher

Early Reading Components and Learning Activities

Phonemic awareness	Phonics	Reading Fluency	Vocabulary	Text comprehension
• Identifying and creating rhymes • Finding words with the same beginning, middle, and ending sounds • Separating and blending syllables and phonemes	• Sounding out regularly spelled, unfamiliar words in text and when writing • Making sound-letter corres-pondences • Working with blends, vowel combinations, silent e's • Seeing letter patterns in multi-syllable words • Identifying suffixes, prefixes, and root words • Spelling only: • Test of written spelling	• Reading rapidly and accurately • Recognizing words automatically • Reading orally with inflection, phrasing, and attention to punctuation • Test of Oral Reading Fluency (words per minute)	• Identifying and reading high-frequency, non-phonetic words • Sorting and matching words • Reading a variety of texts • Making plans, carrying them out, talking and writing about them	• Listening • Predicting, asking and answering questions, retelling • Relating text to experience • Reading alone, in pairs, and in guided small groups • Analyzing narrative texts for character, setting, problems and resolutions • Comparing texts • Writing • Generating texts: stories, poems, journals, reports, books

References

http://www.highscope.org/NewsandInformation/PositionPapers/mainpage.htm, accessed 5/31/06

Kame'enui, E. J., Simmons, D., & Cornachione, C. (2001). *A practical guide to reading assessment: the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education with the International Reading Association and Health Communications, Inc.

Hudson, R. F., Lane, H. B., & Pullen, P. C. (2005). Reading fluency assessment and instruction: what, why and how. *The Reading Teacher, 58*(8), 702-714.

For the PTA Chairperson

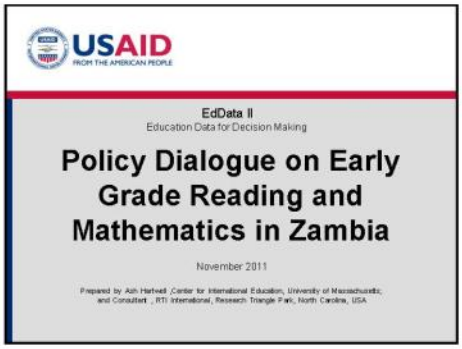
Key Elements of Early Grade Reading:

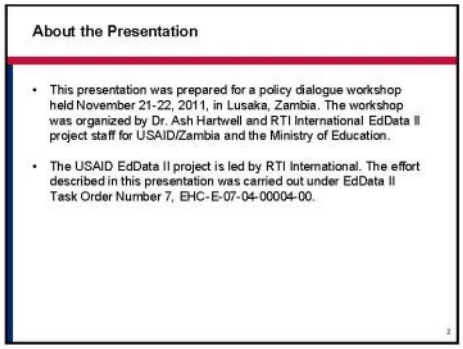
1. Illiterate households, pre-reading skills not learned in those settings will need to be learned in the early grades of primary school.
2. In terms of reading, few studies suggest that children can achieve fluent reading in less than one year. The focus of reading programs for children with little support for literacy at home should be on grades 1 to 4.
3. Children who do not attain a certain level of reading fluency in grades 1 to 3 will likely relapse into illiteracy if they drop out of school in grades 4 or 5.
4. Simple quantitative targets, such as reading 60 wpm, are not the final goal of reading instruction, but they can serve as leading indicators of progress towards the goal of independent reading.
5. Good reading programs will cost more per pupil than current reading textbooks and teacher education. They may also demand more time than is currently allocated in the curriculum. However, good reading programs may be more cost effective than weak ones.
6. The quality of teaching and learning is not solely dependent on levels of resources, and increases in efficiency are possible even where funding is limited.
7. Children need some minimum level of one-on-one contact to get sufficient practice with feedback to achieve fluent reading. In many crowded classrooms, teachers do not have the time to provide this. Without literate adults and printed material in the home, paraprofessionals are practically a necessity in the classroom or on an extra-curricular basis.
8. Language and literacy go hand in hand. A child cannot read better than s/he speaks. Language skills in mother tongue must be built and literacy learned in that language before proceeding to learn reading and writing in an unknown language.

From Chabott, C. (2006). *Accelerating early grade reading in high priority EFA Countries: A desk review*. American Institutes of Research/EQUIP.

Annex 5. PowerPoint Presentations for Workshop

Part 1: Policy Context, Purpose of the SSME Study


USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
EdData II
Education Data for Decision Making
Policy Dialogue on Early Grade Reading and Mathematics in Zambia
November 2011
Prepared by Ash Hartwell ,Center for International Education, University of Massachusetts; and Consultant , RTI International, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, USA


About the Presentation
• This presentation was prepared for a policy dialogue workshop held November 21-22, 2011, in Lusaka, Zambia. The workshop was organized by Dr. Ash Hartwell and RTI International EdData II project staff for USAID/Zambia and the Ministry of Education.
• The USAID EdData II project is led by RTI International. The effort described in this presentation was carried out under EdData II Task Order Number 7, EHC-E-07-04-00004-00.
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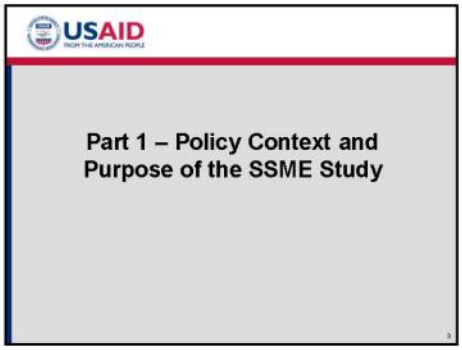
USAID
Part 1 – Policy Context and Purpose of the SSME Study
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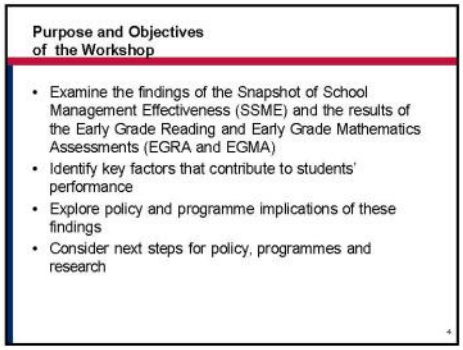
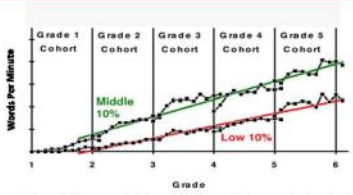

Purpose and Objectives of the Workshop
• Examine the findings of the Snapshot of School Management Effectiveness (SSME) and the results of the Early Grade Reading and Early Grade Mathematics Assessments (EGRA and EGMA)
• Identify key factors that contribute to students' performance
• Explore policy and programme implications of these findings
• Consider next steps for policy, programmes and research
4

Why Early Grade Literacy Matters

What do you think?

Reading Trajectories of Low and Middle Readers, Grades 1–6



Children below a certain level by the end of grade 1 stay behind forever, and the gap widens. If they cannot read, they fall behind in everything else.

Why Early Grade Literacy Matters

"Research has shown that early grade reading competency is critical for continued retention and success in future grades. This link is especially relevant for low-income children, because they tend to have home and school environments that are less conducive to early reading development relative to those of higher income children (Patrinos & Velez, 2009).

"Studies have shown that learning outcomes have a direct correlation to a country's economic growth. A 10% increase in the share of students reaching basic literacy translates into a 0.3 percentage point higher annual growth rate for that country (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2008).

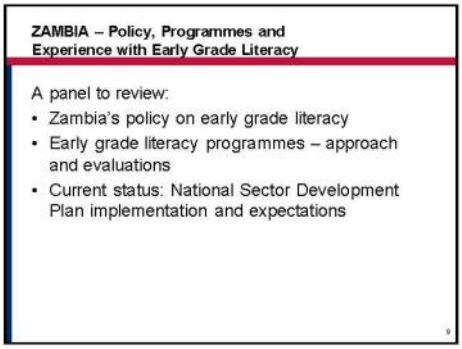
"Children who do not attain reading skills at the primary level are on a lifetime trajectory of limited educational progress and therefore limited economic and developmental opportunity."

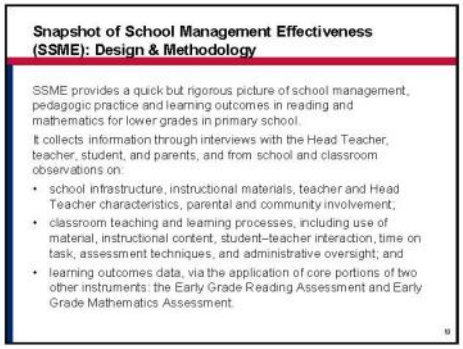
Why Early Grade Literacy Matters

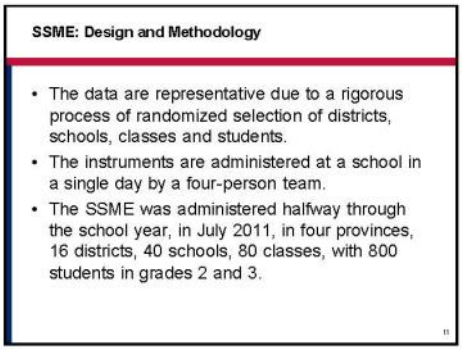
In 2006, governments and development agencies awoke to the reality that Education for All (EFA) was not the same as learning for all.

In that year, evaluations and policy papers from UNESCO, the World Bank, the Center for Global Development, and USAID indicated that the rapid expansion of access to basic schooling, celebrated as a success for EFA and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), was not matched by increasing learning outcomes.

Rather, even in those countries on track to meet the MDG of primary school completion, the great majority of youth were not meeting even *minimum* reading objectives, much less the competencies demanded by a rapidly globalizing economy (Abadzi et al., 2005; Filmer et al., 2006; World Bank, 2006).


ZAMBIA – Policy, Programmes and Experience with Early Grade Literacy
A panel to review:
• Zambia's policy on early grade literacy
• Early grade literacy programmes – approach and evaluations
• Current status: National Sector Development Plan implementation and expectations


Snapshot of School Management Effectiveness (SSME): Design & Methodology
SSME provides a quick but rigorous picture of school management, pedagogic practice and learning outcomes in reading and mathematics for lower grades in primary school.
It collects information through interviews with the Head Teacher, teacher, student, and parents, and from school and classroom observations on:
• school infrastructure, instructional materials, teacher and Head Teacher characteristics, parental and community involvement;
• classroom teaching and learning processes, including use of material, instructional content, student–teacher interaction, time on task, assessment techniques, and administrative oversight; and
• learning outcomes data, via the application of core portions of two other instruments: the Early Grade Reading Assessment and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment.


SSME: Design and Methodology
• The data are representative due to a rigorous process of randomized selection of districts, schools, classes and students.
• The instruments are administered at a school in a single day by a four-person team.
• The SSME was administered halfway through the school year, in July 2011, in four provinces, 16 districts, 40 schools, 80 classes, with 800 students in grades 2 and 3.


Sources
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Part 2: SMME, EGRA and EGMA Results

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Part 2 – Snapshot of School Management Effectiveness (SSME)

1

About the Presentation

- This presentation was prepared for a policy dialogue workshop held November 21-22, 2011, in Lusaka, Zambia. The workshop was organized by Dr. Ash Hartwell and RTI International EdData II project staff for USAID/Zambia and the Ministry of Education.
- The USAID EdData II project is led by RTI International. The effort described in this presentation was carried out under EdData II Task Order Number 7, EHC-E-07-04-00004-00.

2

SSME: School and Class Profiles

Sample
- Regions
- Schools/Head Teacher, classes/teachers, parents, and students
- Regions, districts, students by gender and grade (2 and 3)

SSME 1 – Schools, Classes, Students, Parents
- School infrastructure
- Head Teacher and teacher qualifications and training
- Enrolments and class sizes
- Instructional materials: Availability and usage
- Teaching and learning processes
- Assessments of students and teachers
- Community and parent-teacher association (PTA)
- Time on task (reading)

HOW DO THESE FACTORS INFLUENCE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES?

3

Provinces Selected for Assessment

4

Random Sampling: Schools, Classes, Parents and Students

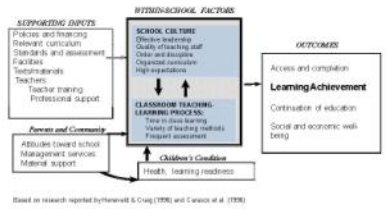
Unit	No. in Sample
Schools and Head Teachers	40
Classrooms and Teachers	80
Parents	80
Students	800

Region	Districts	Boys	Girls	Grade 2	Grade 3
Central	3	106	94	100	100
Copperbelt	5	99	101	100	100
Luapula	4	107	93	100	100
Northern	4	100	100	100	100
Total	**16**	**412**	**388**	**400**	**400**

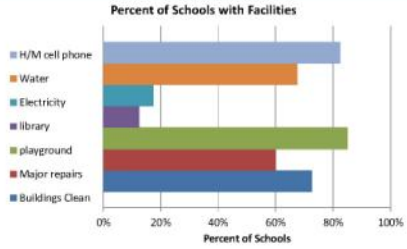
Student Characteristics

- On average, 72% of students spoke Bemba at home. Proportions of students whose native tongue was Bemba varied:
  - Luapula – 96%
  - Northern – 78%
  - Copperbelt – 63%
  - Central – 60%.
- The average age for students in grade 2 was 9 years, and in grade 3 it was 10 years.
- 4% of students reported that they were repeaters.
- 35% of the students reported attending preschool.

Factors Linked to School Effectiveness



School Infrastructure



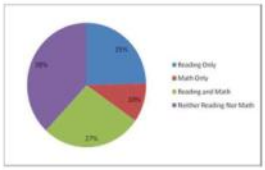
Class Size: Student–Teacher Ratio

- In the evaluated classrooms, the average student-teacher ratio was 53.
- In 40% of schools, the student–teacher ratio was greater than 50. Head Teachers reported a range of student–teacher ratios, from 22 to 179.
- Most schools had multiple shifts, with shift times from 3.5 to 4 hours.
- 29% of evaluated classrooms were multi-grade classrooms.

Teacher Qualifications and Training

Among Head Teachers, 56% reported that their highest level of qualification was a diploma and 29% reported a teaching certificate. Among teachers, 66% reported that their highest level of qualification was secondary school; all but 2 teachers (97%) had completed teacher training.

Teachers Who Had Received In-Service Training



Distribution of Books to Schools and Classes

- In the majority of classrooms (51% in language and 49% in mathematics), fewer than 10% of the students had textbooks.
- Fewer than 7% of the classrooms had textbooks for more than 75% of the students.
- Only 12% of classrooms had enough textbooks for half or more of the students.
- Head Teacher reports indicated that only 8% of the schools had received the appropriate number of textbooks for their students at the start, or during, the last school year.
- 63% of the classrooms had no books other than textbooks.

Instructional Materials in Classrooms

Instructional Materials Available

Language Books per Student	Student Exercise Book: Language	Teacher Guide: Language	Math Books per Student	Student Exercise Book: Maths	Teacher Guide: Maths
20%	60%	57%	23%	80%	55%

3

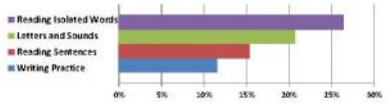
Instructional Materials in Classrooms

Use of Instructional Materials

Class Time Used	Blackboard	Textbook	Other Books	Student Exercise Book
More than ½ class time	73%	30%		5%
Less than ½ class time	24%	42%	5%	45%
Not used	3%	28%	95%	50%

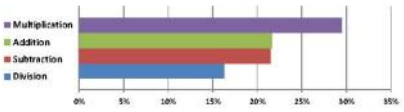
Lesson Content and Activities

Bemba Language Classes



Lesson Content and Activities

Mathematics Classes



Assessments and Feedback

Teacher Comments in Student Exercise Books	% Observed*
None	12%
A few pages	52%
Most pages	21%
All pages	14%

*Half of the students assessed did not have exercise books on the day of the visit so these figures represent only those with their books.

4

Assessments and Feedback

Head Teacher Evaluation of Students	% Reported
End-of-term evaluation	59%
Monitoring of tests given by teachers	49%
Teacher progress reports	44%
Review of students' work	27%
Classroom observation	12%

Parents' Role in Supporting Students

Report from...	Type of Support	%
Students	Parent(s) help with homework	48%
Teachers	Some parents review student homework	63%
Students	Parent(s) are aware when they receive good marks	78%
Students	Parent(s) celebrate students' good marks	66%
Head Teachers	Satisfied with parents' involvement	31%
Teachers	Satisfied with parents' involvement	21%
Parents	Read stories to children a number of times each week	12%

Community Role: PTA Activities

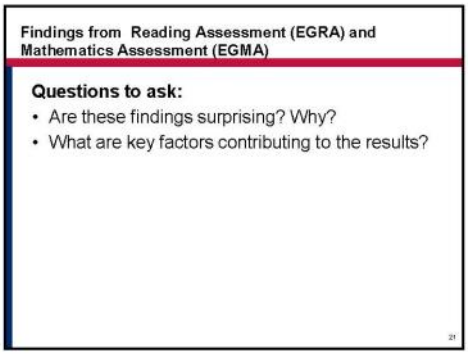
All Zambian schools have a PTA. Head Teachers reported fairly active PTAs:

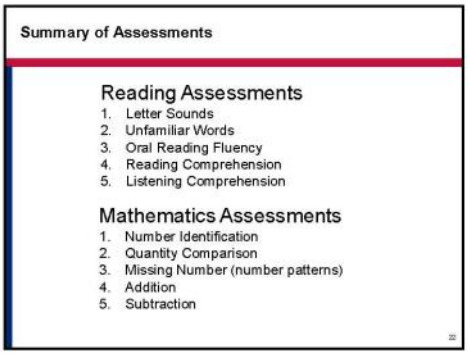
- 67.5% of Head Teachers reported that the PTAs meet every 2–3 months.
- 27.8% reported that PTAs meet monthly.
- Head Teachers reported that PTAs engaged in a number of activities, from reviewing school improvement efforts to discussing student problems and solutions.

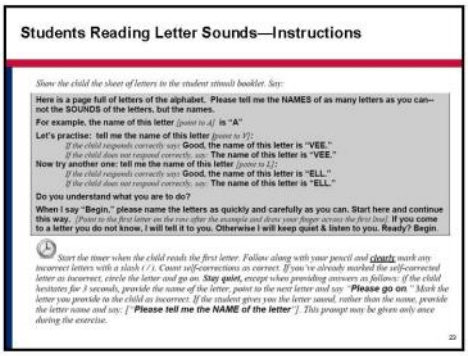
Time for Reading Instruction and Practice

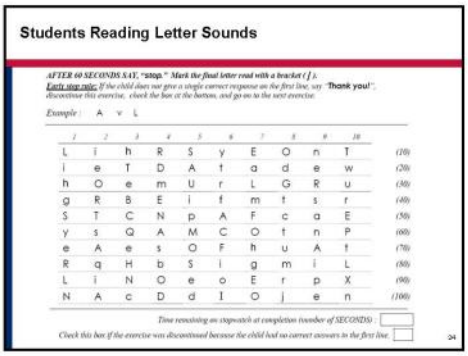
	Official	Observed	Total Annual Instructional Hours: Reading
School days	190	187	
Length of school day (hrs)	4hr 40m	3 hr 30m	655
Periods for Bemba reading	8/35wk	1hr4m day	150
Teacher absences (reported by HT)	11%		133
Pupils absences (observed)	26%		98
Class management time	8.5%		90

Note: These data do not indicate how effectively these 90 hours are used to teach and practice reading. Research indicates that a minimum of 250 hours of focused instruction and practice are needed to achieve reading fluency (Comings, 1995).

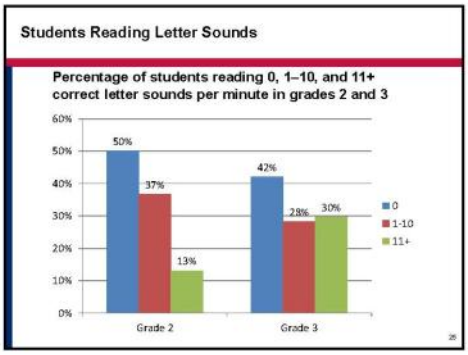

Findings from Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Mathematics Assessment (EGMA)
Questions to ask:
• Are these findings surprising? Why?
• What are key factors contributing to the results?
21

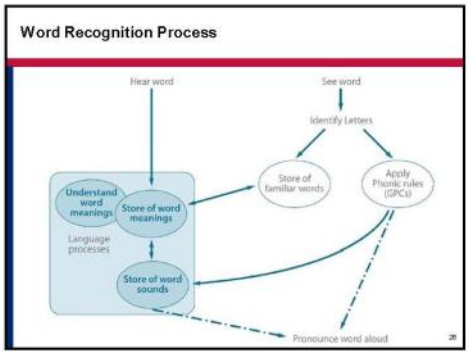

Summary of Assessments
Reading Assessments
1. Letter Sounds
2. Unfamiliar Words
3. Oral Reading Fluency
4. Reading Comprehension
5. Listening Comprehension
Mathematics Assessments
1. Number Identification
2. Quantity Comparison
3. Missing Number (number patterns)
4. Addition
5. Subtraction
22

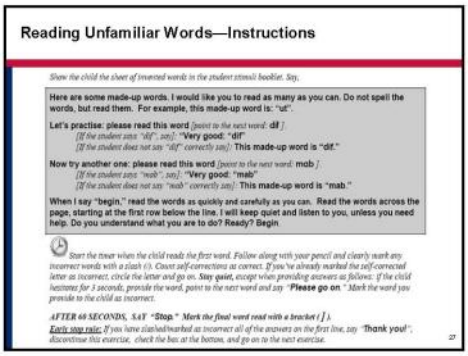

Students Reading Letter Sounds—Instructions
Here is a page full of letters of the alphabet. Please tell me the NAMES of as many letters as you can--not the SOUNDS of the letters, but the names.
For example, the name of this letter is "A"
Let's practise: tell me the name of this letter
Good, the name of this letter is "VEE."
The name of this letter is "VEE."
Now try another one: tell me the name of this letter
Good, the name of this letter is "ELL."
The name of this letter is "ELL."
Do you understand what you are to do?
When I say "Begin," please name the letters as quickly and carefully as you can. Start here and continue this way.
If you come to a letter you do not know, I will tell it to you. Otherwise I will keep quiet & listen to you. Ready? Begin.
Please go on.
Please tell me the NAME of the letter
23

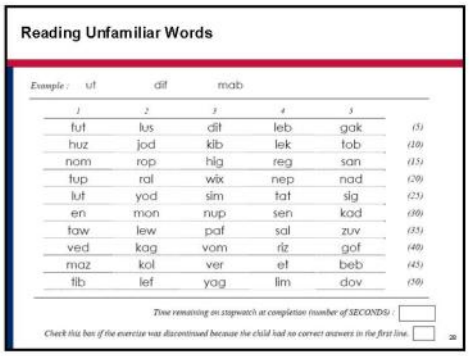

Students Reading Letter Sounds
Thank you!
Example: A v L
L i h R S y E O n T (10)
i e T D A t a d e w (20)
h O e m U r L G R u (30)
g R B E i f m t s r (40)
S T C N p A F c a E (50)
y s Q A M C O t n P (60)
e A e s O F h u A t (70)
R q H b S i g m i L (80)
L i N O e o E r p X (90)
N A c D d I O j e n (100)
24

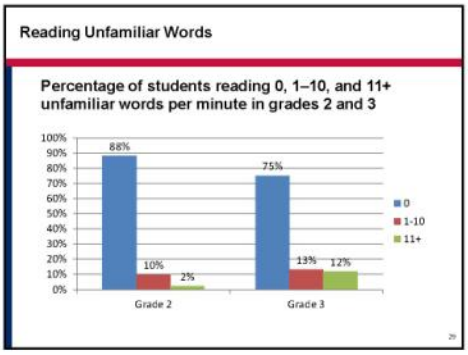
6

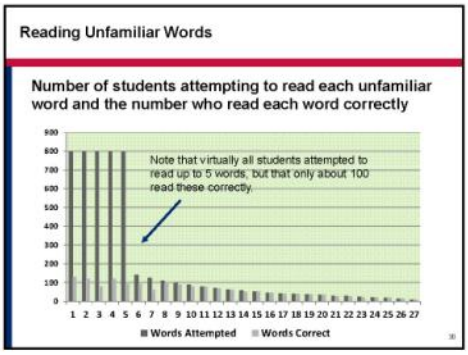

Students Reading Letter Sounds
Percentage of students reading 0, 1–10, and 11+ correct letter sounds per minute in grades 2 and 3
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
50%
37%
13%
42%
28%
30%
0
1-10
11+
Grade 2
Grade 3

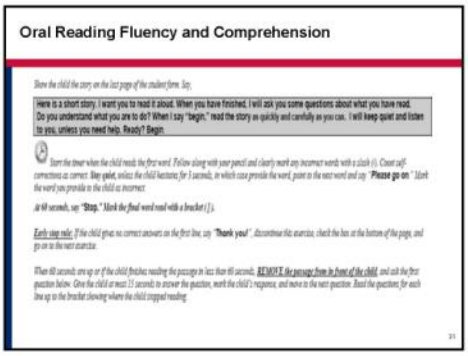

Word Recognition Process
Hear word
See word
Identify Letters
Understand word meanings
Store of word meanings
Store of familiar words
Apply Phonic rules (GPCs)
Language processes
Store of word sounds
Pronounce word aloud

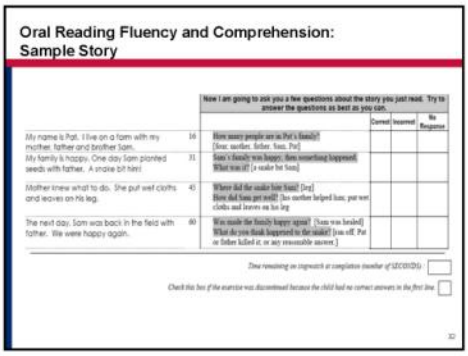

Reading Unfamiliar Words—Instructions
Here are some made-up words. I would like you to read as many as you can. Do not spell the words, but read them. For example, this made-up word is: "ut".
Let's practise: please read this word
Now try another one: please read this word
When I say "begin," read the words as quickly and carefully as you can. Read the words across the page, starting at the first row below the line. I will keep quiet and listen to you, unless you need help. Do you understand what you are to do? Ready? Begin.

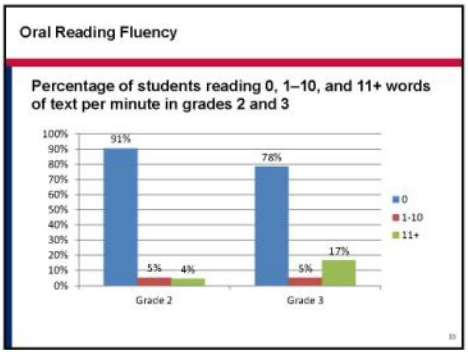

Reading Unfamiliar Words
Example : ut dif mab
fut lus dit leb gak
huz jod klb lek tob
nom rop hig reg san
fup ral wix nep nad
lut yod sim tat sig
en mon nup sen kad
taw lew paf sal zuv
ved kag vom riz gof
maz kol ver et beb
flb lef yag lim dov

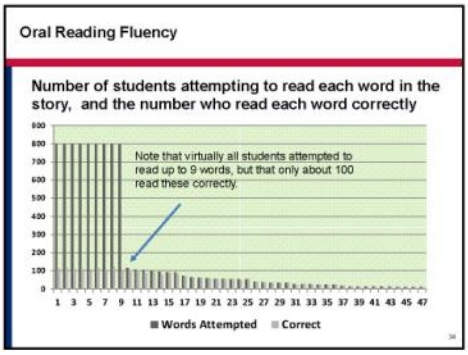

Reading Unfamiliar Words
Percentage of students reading 0, 1–10, and 11+ unfamiliar words per minute in grades 2 and 3
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
88%
10%
2%
75%
13%
12%
Grade 2
Grade 3
0
1-10
11+

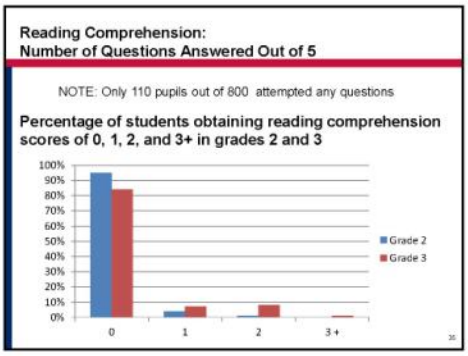

Reading Unfamiliar Words
Number of students attempting to read each unfamiliar word and the number who read each word correctly
Note that virtually all students attempted to read up to 5 words, but that only about 100 read these correctly.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27
Words Attempted
Words Correct

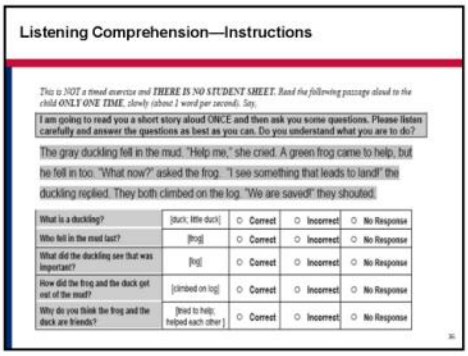

Oral Reading Fluency and Comprehension
Here is a short story. I want you to read it aloud. When you have finished, I will ask you some questions about what you have read. Do you understand what you are to do? When I say "begin," read the story as quickly and carefully as you can. I will keep quiet and listen to you, unless you need help. Ready? Begin.
Start the timer when the child reads the first word. Follow along with your pencil and clearly mark any incorrect words with a slash (/). Count self-corrections as correct. Stay quiet, unless the child hesitates for 3 seconds, in which case provide the word, point to the next word and say "Please go on." Mark the word you provide to the child as incorrect.
At 60 seconds, say "Stop." Mark the final word read with a bracket ( ]).
Early stop rule: If the child gives no correct answers on the first line, say "Thank you". Discontinue this exercise, check the box at the bottom of the page, and go on to the next exercise.
When 60 seconds are up or if the child finishes reading the passage in less than 60 seconds, REMOVE the passage from in front of the child, and ask the first question below. Give the child at most 15 seconds to answer the question, mark the child's response, and move to the next question. Read the questions for each line up to the bracket showing where the child stopped reading.


Oral Reading Fluency and Comprehension: Sample Story
Now I am going to ask you a few questions about the story you just read. Try to answer the questions as best as you can.
Correct
Incorrect
No Response
My name is Pat. I live on a farm with my mother, father and brother Sam.
How many people are in Pat's family? [four, mother, father, Sam, Pat]
My family is happy. One day Sam planted seeds with father. A snake bit him!
Sam's family was happy. Then something happened. What was it? [a snake bit Sam]
Mother knew what to do. She put wet cloths and leaves on his leg.
Where did the snake bite Sam? [leg] How did Sam get well? [his mother helped him; put wet cloths and leaves on his leg]
The next day, Sam was back in the field with father. We were happy again.
Was inside the family happy again? [Sam was healed] What do you think happened to the snake? [ran off, Pat or father killed it, or any reasonable answer.]
Time remaining on stopwatch at completion (number of SECONDS):
Check this box if the exercise was discontinued because the child had no correct answers in the first line.

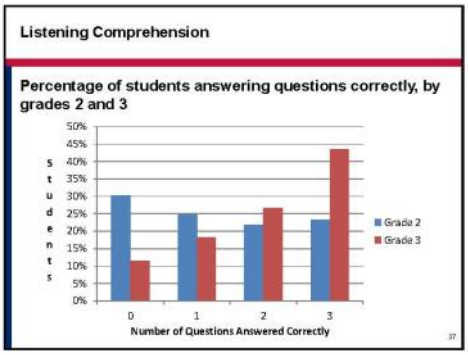

Oral Reading Fluency
Percentage of students reading 0, 1–10, and 11+ words of text per minute in grades 2 and 3
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
91%
5%
4%
78%
5%
17%
Grade 2
Grade 3
0
1-10
11+

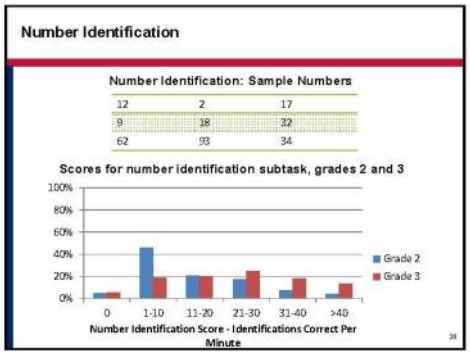

Oral Reading Fluency
Number of students attempting to read each word in the story, and the number who read each word correctly
Note that virtually all students attempted to read up to 9 words, but that only about 100 read these correctly.
1 3 5 7 9 11 13 15 17 19 21 23 25 27 29 31 33 35 37 39 41 43 45 47
Words Attempted
Correct

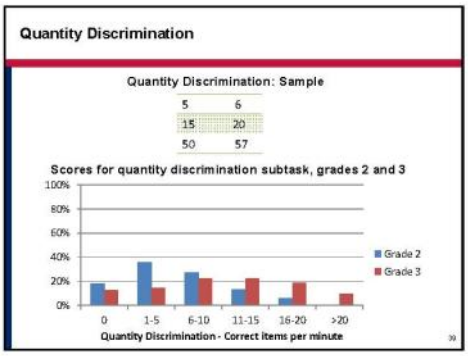

Reading Comprehension:
Number of Questions Answered Out of 5
NOTE: Only 110 pupils out of 800 attempted any questions
Percentage of students obtaining reading comprehension scores of 0, 1, 2, and 3+ in grades 2 and 3
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
0
1
2
3+
Grade 2
Grade 3

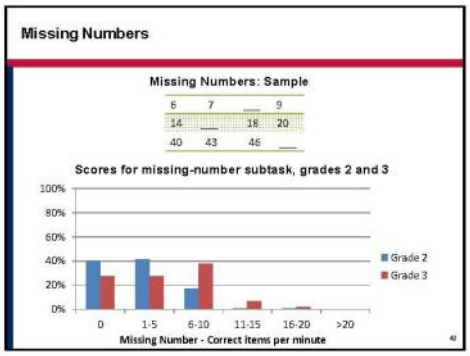

Listening Comprehension—Instructions
This is NOT a timed exercise and THERE IS NO STUDENT SHEET. Read the following passage aloud to the child ONLY ONE TIME, slowly (about 1 word per second). Say,
I am going to read you a short story aloud ONCE and then ask you some questions. Please listen carefully and answer the questions as best as you can. Do you understand what you are to do?
The gray duckling fell in the mud. "Help me," she cried. A green frog came to help, but he fell in too. "What now?" asked the frog. "I see something that leads to land!" the duckling replied. They both climbed on the log. "We are saved!" they shouted.
What is a duckling?
[duck; little duck]
Who fell in the mud last?
[frog]
What did the duckling see that was important?
[log]
How did the frog and the duck get out of the mud?
[climbed on log]
Why do you think the frog and the duck are friends?
[tried to help; helped each other]
Correct
Incorrect
No Response

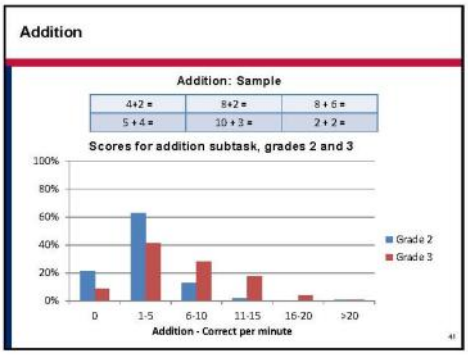
9

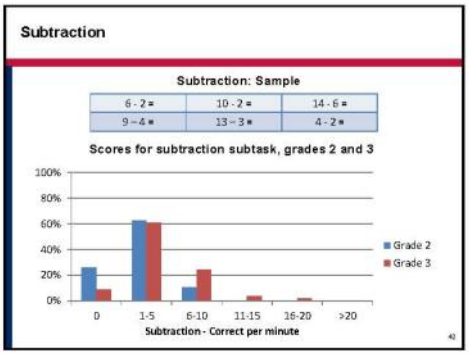

Listening Comprehension
Percentage of students answering questions correctly, by grades 2 and 3
50%
45%
40%
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
students
0
1
2
3
Number of Questions Answered Correctly
Grade 2
Grade 3

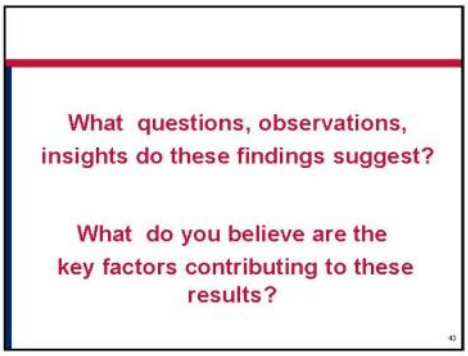

Number Identification
Number Identification: Sample Numbers
12 2 17
9 18 32
62 93 34
Scores for number identification subtask, grades 2 and 3
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
0
1-10
11-20
21-30
31-40
>40
Number Identification Score - Identifications Correct Per Minute
Grade 2
Grade 3

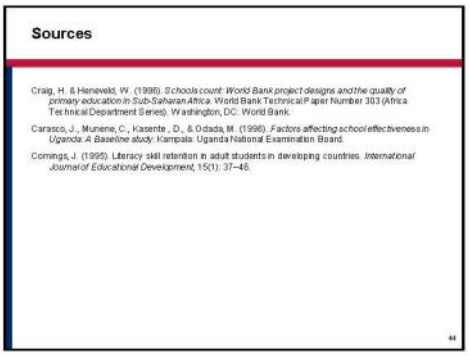

Quantity Discrimination
Quantity Discrimination: Sample
5 6
15 20
50 57
Scores for quantity discrimination subtask, grades 2 and 3
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
0
1-5
6-10
11-15
16-20
>20
Quantity Discrimination - Correct items per minute
Grade 2
Grade 3


Missing Numbers
Missing Numbers: Sample
6 7 ___ 9
14 ___ 18 20
40 43 46 ___
Scores for missing-number subtask, grades 2 and 3
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
0
1-5
6-10
11-15
16-20
>20
Missing Number - Correct items per minute
Grade 2
Grade 3


Addition
Addition: Sample
4+2 =
8+2 =
8 + 6 =
5 + 4 =
10 + 3 =
2 + 2 =
Scores for addition subtask, grades 2 and 3
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
0
1-5
6-10
11-15
16-20
>20
Grade 2
Grade 3
Addition - Correct per minute
41


Subtraction
Subtraction: Sample
6 - 2 =
10 - 2 =
14 - 6 =
9 – 4 =
13 – 3 =
4 - 2 =
Scores for subtraction subtask, grades 2 and 3
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
0
1-5
6-10
11-15
16-20
>20
Grade 2
Grade 3
Subtraction - Correct per minute
42


What questions, observations, insights do these findings suggest?
What do you believe are the key factors contributing to these results?
43


Sources
Craig, H. & Heneveld, W. (1996). Schools count: World Bank project designs and the quality of primary education in Sub-Saharan Africa. World Bank Technical Paper Number 303 (Africa Technical Department Series). Washington, DC: World Bank.
Carasco, J., Munene, C., Kasente , D., & Odada, M. (1996). Factors affecting school effectiveness in Uganda: A Baseline study. Kampala: Uganda National Examination Board.
Comings, J. (1995). Literacy skill retention in adult students in developing countries. International Journal of Educational Development, 15(1): 37–46.
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Part 3: Analysis of Findings and Policy Implications

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Part 3 – Analysis of Findings and Policy Implications

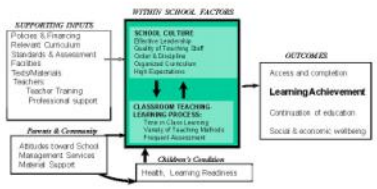
1

About the Presentation

- This presentation was prepared for a policy dialogue workshop held November 21-22, 2011, in Lusaka, Zambia. The workshop was organized by Dr. Ash Hartwell and RTI International EdData II project staff for USAID/Zambia and the Ministry of Education.
- The USAID EdData II project is led by RTI International. The effort described in this presentation was carried out under EdData II Task Order Number 7, EHC-E-07-04-00004-00.

2

Factors Linked to School Effectiveness



Based on research reported by Heneveld and Craig (1996), and Carnoco et.al. (1997).

SSME Factors Related to Pupil Performance

FACTORS	READING	MATHS
Pupil Social-Economic Status		+
Pre-School Attendance		+
Tardiness - Attendance	-	-
Independent Reading	+	
Receiving Feedback	+	+
Teacher Professional Training	+	
Multigrade classes		-

Note Statistically significant results of multiple regression models to examine which SSME factors predict student performance

1

Some Key Elements of Early Grade Reading: What the Research Shows

1. Language and literacy go hand in hand. A child cannot read better than s/he speaks.
2. Studies suggest that children cannot achieve fluent reading in less than one year and 250 hours of instruction and practice.
3. Children need some minimum level of one-on-one contact to get sufficient practice with feedback to achieve fluent reading.
4. Simple quantitative targets, such as reading 60 wpm, are not the final goal of reading instruction, but they can serve as leading indicators of progress towards the goal of independent reading.
5. Good reading programs will cost more per pupil. They also demand more time than is currently allocated in the curriculum. However, good reading programs may be more cost effective than weak ones.

(From Chabott, C. (2006). 'Accelerating Early Grade Reading in High Priority EFA Countries: A Desk Review.' American Institutes of Research/EQUIP.)

International Experience – Reading Strategies

- Country-wide reform – the Gambia, Liberia
- Revise curriculum and textbooks – Ethiopia
- Rewrite curriculum materials – Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi
- Material Revision – Ghana (NALAP)

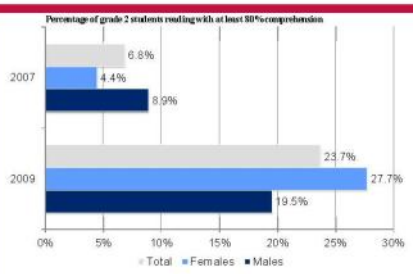
Experience from Other Counties Initiating Early Grade Literacy Programs: The Gambia Liberia

The Gambia – Country-wide Reform

- Minister saw the problem himself
- Task force focused on early learning
- Handbook of teaching early reading
- Nationwide Grade 1-3 in-service program
- Training on the 5 foundational reading skills
- Local schools took up the federal program

2

The Gambia: Results



Liberia EGRA: Plus – Intensive Overhaul

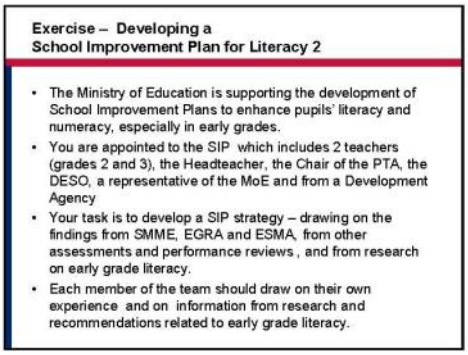
- Started as an evidence-based project
- 15 months of support
  - Teacher Training
  - Material Development
  - Instructional support
- Eventually scaled up nation-wide with development partners

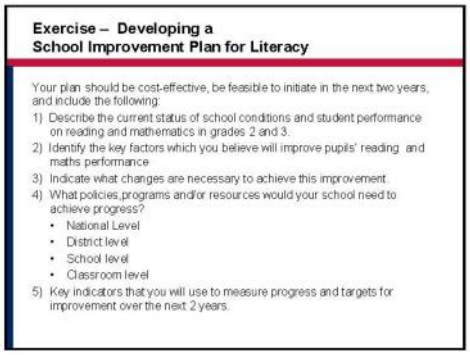
Liberia: Dramatic Increases

Key Elements to a Nationwide Scale-up

- Learn from international experience
- Start with curriculum
- Look at time-on-task and the timetable
- Consider pulling back material development from private publishers
- Examine teacher tutor system as lever for reform
- Emphasis on sustained, systemic training
- Bring the community into the process
- Make reading THE key outcome by Standard 2

3


Exercise – Developing a
School Improvement Plan for Literacy 2
• The Ministry of Education is supporting the development of School Improvement Plans to enhance pupils' literacy and numeracy, especially in early grades.
• You are appointed to the SIP which includes 2 teachers (grades 2 and 3), the Headteacher, the Chair of the PTA, the DESO, a representative of the MoE and from a Development Agency
• Your task is to develop a SIP strategy – drawing on the findings from SMME, EGRA and ESMA, from other assessments and performance reviews , and from research on early grade literacy.
• Each member of the team should draw on their own experience and on information from research and recommendations related to early grade literacy.


Exercise – Developing a
School Improvement Plan for Literacy
Your plan should be cost-effective, be feasible to initiate in the next two years, and include the following:
1) Describe the current status of school conditions and student performance on reading and mathematics in grades 2 and 3.
2) Identify the key factors which you believe will improve pupils' reading and maths performance
3) Indicate what changes are necessary to achieve this improvement
4) What policies,programs and/or resources would your school need to achieve progress?
• National Level
• District level
• School level
• Classroom level
5) Key indicators that you will use to measure progress and targets for improvement over the next 2 years.

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