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Education Data for Decision Making (EdData II):

Briefing on Sept 17 Workshop on Grade 3 Reading

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About the Presentation

- This presentation was prepared for a workshop for Egypt's Undersecretaries of Education, Ministry of Education, Cairo, September 17, 2014, as part of the conclusion of the Second National EGRA for Egypt.
- The USAID EdData II project is led by RTI International. This EdData II task order was No. AID-263-BC-14-00002 (RTI Task 27).

Background – 1

- Egypt prioritizes reading, acts as leader
 - President, Minister, Education Sector Strategic Plan all put reading as #1
 - Faith that results can be achieved is due to the hard work of EGRP coordinators and many colleagues
 - USAID has been there to support and will be there
 - Egypt is first Arab country to set numerical benchmarks
 - Egypt example is giving faith internationally that improvements can be made
 - In Saudi Arabia meeting, Egypt already approached by other Arab countries to help, as they see Egypt as leader

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Background – 2

- MoE and USAID started the effort back in 2009
- Pilot proved that vast improvements are possible
 - Doubling fluency scores
 - Halving number of non-readers
 - In approx 2 years, 2009-2011 (April)
- MoE (national and governorate and idara) saw results, scaled up nationally, essentially immediately: impressive courage

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
2011/2012	Green	Green	Light Blue
2012/2013	Green	Green	Light Blue
2013/2014	Green	Green	Green

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Background – 3

- Ministry scaled up and sustained the program, changing essentially nothing, through 6 changes in government
- Continued to train, print materials
- Were willing to be measured against a baseline and mid-lines as necessary
- Were willing to set benchmarks (only 2nd or 3rd developing country to do so, 1st Arabic-speaking one)
- Reading declared by President to be most important education goal, it is also most important in Sector Strategic Plan
- In my international experience in 20 or 30 countries, I have seen this only 2-3 times

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What Early Grade Reading program consisted of

- Assessment (EGRA) 2009, 2011, 2013, 2014
- Piloting
- Scale-up
- Components:
 - Teacher training in detailed, specific skills of reading
 - Direct, systematic instruction
 - Lesson plans for the teachers
 - Materials development for students, in line with lesson plans
 - MoE, Early Grade Reading Unit, PAT, CCIMD coordination
 - Scale-up: Planning teams in Early Grade Reading units in mudiriyas
 - Grades 1 and 2 in 2011, then Grade 3 in 2013

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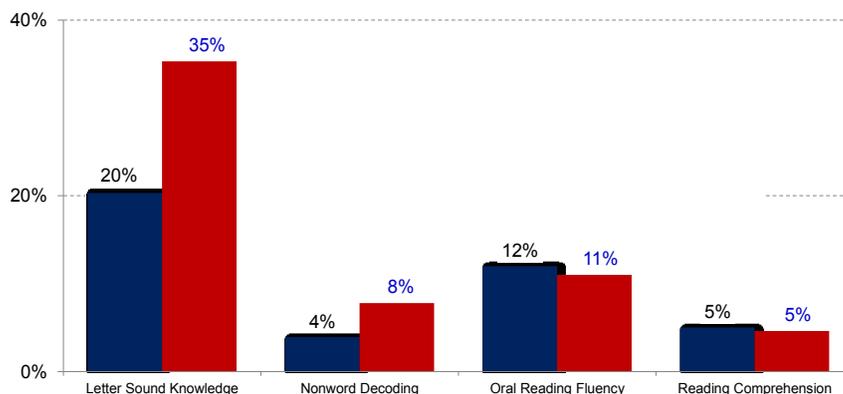
Results so far – 1

- Exactly what I would expect
- Even pilot projects, under totally controlled conditions, require the “wakeup” call from a midline to start showing improvements
- This has been true in just about every project and national campaign I’ve ever managed or studied
- The results are good in some areas, flat in others, but:
 1. With interesting variations across sub-aspects of reading, that suggest the way forward
 2. With good results on processes of school support

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Results so far – 2

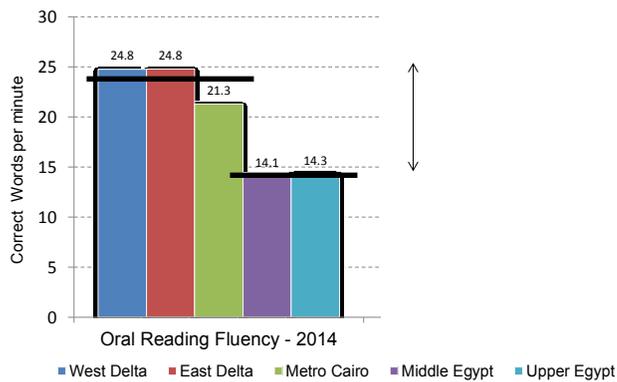
Some key indicative results, 2013 and 2014: % of kids at 2018 benchmarks
What are the implications?



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Results so far - 4

- Regional differences: 3 regions about the same, 2 regions also about the same but much lower than other three



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Results so far - 3

Some process indicators, from classroom observation study (additional to reading assessment)

- All observed classrooms had key materials
- 92% of teachers had received some training on teaching Grade 3 reading
- 75% of those who had received mastery monitoring training were applying it
- Nearly all teachers receiving various forms of ongoing support in reading
- 87% had the lesson plan and 71% were using it
- Applying the key procedures

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So what are the issues and what remains to improve? – 1

- First, recall that mid-line, one year after baseline, almost always has some flat areas – in every campaign I have seen
- Most campaigns and projects need this follow-up, 1 or 2 years after start
- What are the implications?
 1. Time to apply the training: only 4 useful weeks in the whole school year in 2014!
 - Due to political turmoil; should solve itself next year
 - Possible monthly refresher trainings during the weekends or holding the one day refresher training on two days afternoon
 - Support teachers to maximize reading instructional time, require reading at home?
 2. Teachers a bit “stuck” with the Grade 1 and 2 skills: need to focus on fluency and comprehension
 - Letter sounds skills easy, innovative, fun, can turn into game
 - Need training and specific tips on how to improve fluency and comprehension that are practical, fun, innovative
 - School teachers' knowledge that reading is not just sounds and kinetics must be strengthened, but without forgetting those
 - Exposing students to various texts (factual and fictional) (child literature) to practice reading.
 - MOE Library supervision gives “room” to schools to buy child literature books for reading practice.

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So what are the issues and what remains to improve? – 2

3. Line-up of curriculum, assessment, reading materials, and training, was not as good for Grade 3 as for Grades 1 and 2 under pilot
 - MoE is spontaneously improving this, but more support would be useful
 - Make 100% sure that lesson plans, books, and assessment techniques even in Grade 1 and 2 are perfectly aligned, including comprehension in lessons
4. Ways to intensify quality of teacher coaching model should be found; improve quality; improve transmission in the cascade; use video more in every training?
5. Quality of improvement varies a lot: bring up the average by supporting Middle and Upper Egypt more
6. Remediate children that are particularly behind
 - Group by specific ability rather than grade for extra help, provide special support, not expensive, many models exist
 - Test socio-cultural acceptability
7. Popularize and implement more goal-orientation using the benchmarks
 - Adopt the benchmarks, review if needed
 - Revisit the MOE strategic plan especially early grade reading project

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So what are the issues and what remains to improve? – 2

9. Consider social marketing of what children sound like when they are reading well
 - Using video, audio
10. Create incentives, use competition, for reading improvement, but with care
 - Honor has to be provided at all levels, otherwise only those who are already good will benefit and this will not provide inspiration to those who are many levels behind
 - Consider awarding “most reading” not just “best reading”
11. Encourage students “practice of reading” through:
 - Establishing affordable in-classroom libraries
 - Holding reading camps and readathons where students practice free reading with support from BOTs
12. Do better overall planning and coordination
 - Make sure all the features are perfectly integrated (lesson plans, training, books, assessment styles and types), and everything happens on time
 - Giving governorates “room” for speaking up their training needs for the early grade teachers
 - PAT includes EGRP training package in the annual teacher training plan this will guarantee funding the trainings