

Instructions for the EFA FTI Global and Regional Activities (GRA) Program Stakeholder Consultations

Thematic Papers

The EFA FTI Secretariat's Global Good Practice (GGP) Team prepared thematic issues papers on education financing, out of school, and learning outcomes. These papers will serve as the main discussion tool for the consultative sessions, and are not considered exhaustive, rather we seek your inputs on who is doing what, where, and how, and good practices to be shared, scaled up, etc.

All papers describe:

- "gaps" in knowledge and practice at the country and regional level that need to be addressed as well as the results needed and expected (outputs and outcomes) from new activities to fill those "gaps", and
- eligible activities to address each priority theme.

Based on the outcomes of the consultations, the GGP Team will develop Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for specific GRA programmatic activities in each thematic area. All RFPs will fund concrete activities from the eligible activities list. RFPs will be results-oriented and will identify the specific outputs and outcomes that the EFA FTI Partnership wants to support. Proposals that are tendered in response to these RFPs will be assessed according to objective criteria and discussed by panels of external experts. Each activity or set of activities will be implemented by a Supervising Entity (SE) which will act as a funds-holder (via a transfer agreement) and may contract out to other entities (implementing body at the local level) if appropriate. SEs will be official bodies such as bilateral donor agencies or multilateral technical or financial agencies.

Instructions for Responding

For both consultations:

1. Provide written comments in a separate file, not using Track Changes or a commenting option such as in Word.
2. In the file, organize your comments so that all of the comments on each of the 3 thematic area papers are together and properly labeled with a heading.
3. Send comments to Koli Banik at the EFA FTI Secretariat at kbanik@educationfasttrack.org. All comments will be displayed on the EFA FTI website—unless you specify otherwise.

Consultation 1

According to each stakeholder's technical expertise, read one to three of the thematic papers on out of school, education financing, and learning outcomes. When preparing written responses, please think about the following guiding questions:

- Are there gaps in knowledge and practice areas which are missing? Or are there some areas we have identified as gaps that are in fact redundant because plenty of knowledge and experience exists? If redundant, please provide evidence (i.e. point to studies, projects already implemented by an institution, well-implemented policies in many countries, etc).
- Identify organizations/supervising entities best suited to coordinate/carry out program activities as described. Please explain why you think these organizations are best suited.

Deadline for comments: **June 3rd**

Consultation 2

We will do our best to accommodate comments, views, and opinions received from Consultation 1. However, we cannot promise to make sure every single opinion is reflected as there may be contradictory views, or views that exceed the budget. We will carefully study all views and do our best to deal with them. On that basis we will engage in a second consultation, in which we will ask the following.

- Read revised thematic papers (Approximately June 17th)
- Provide written comments on the revised papers if you feel strongly that your concerns have not been addressed.

Deadline to provide comments: **July 1st**.

EFA FTI Global and Regional Activities (GRA)

Thematic Area: Learning Outcomes

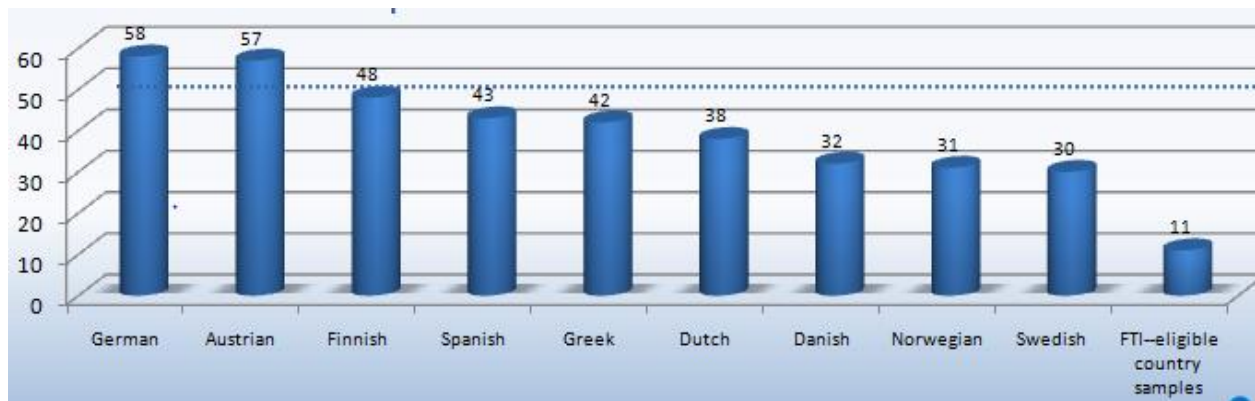
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1. Introduction

In March-May 2010 about 20,000 participants played the online game EVOKE, sponsored by the World Bank. To help denizens of low-income countries, the players created a vast number of potential solutions. Some were directed at improving education. One player, for example, proposed to offer through cloud computing “new tools that are powerful, mobile, cheap, easy to learn, easy to use, and soon will be ubiquitous”. The player clearly assumed that students in low-income classrooms would have the prerequisite skills necessary for using these tools: high-rate reading fluency and math automaticity, good language command, lots of background knowledge to understand text quickly, and teachers who would show up and teach these skills.

However, in early-grade reading fluency tests, almost no low-income countries approximated the average speed needed to understand simple text (Abadzi 2011).

Figure 1. Fluency of FTI Partner countries in comparison to European countries at the end of grade 1



Source: Seymour et al. 2003 (The data for the FTI countries is for grade 2, whereas the data for OECD countries is for grade 1).

In countries such as the Gambia or Mali over 90% of the students could not read a single word. This happens because in many low-income countries the chain linking enrollment to learning outcomes is broken in multiple places. Instructional time is insufficient, and what exists is used poorly; textbooks are chronically scarce, too expensive, or may not present the necessary content. Poorly paid teachers are supposedly supervised by inspectors who do not show up and managed by principals who assume no instructional responsibilities. In these information-deprived circumstances, teachers may interact only with the few students who keep up. Thus, only the smartest or those with parental help may benefit from schooling. The rest may drop out or even graduate illiterate. (See Abadzi 2006, 2008a, 2008b).

Education for “all” implies that regular schools should teach basic skills not only to those who are better off, but to practically everyone, except perhaps special education cases. To achieve this, the chosen methods must be effective not just with the average or better students but with the weakest as well. Textbooks, teaching methods, teacher training must work to ensure learning for the weaker rather than for just the average or better students. To justify continued financing by donors, relatively quick and tangible results must be obtained from educational investments.

When the FTI partnership was set up in 2002-03, the four gaps seen as needed to fill for success: *data, policy, capacity, and financing*. With time it was found that donors and governments had overestimated the competencies of poor students. The information needed to help them benefit from school was the most important gap of all. To get results in terms of student learning outcomes the FTI partnership must **close the knowledge gap** and offer knowledge applicable to daily practice in schools.

It is proposed that as a case in point the FTI process work with selected countries to rapidly boost learning outcomes using reading in the early grades as a case in point. Improving learning outcomes at a national scale is something that has thus far eluded EFA and FTI efforts, but is at this point a necessity. There are several reasons for using reading in the early grades as a case in point in improving learning outcomes: a) there is a need to show clear and sharp impact, and the more one focuses, the greater the likelihood of showing impact; b) in this particular area there are enough pilot and even scaled-up experiences available, by now, that one can generalize from—thus there is no need to wait; c) key donors are keen to work in this area, and a few already have large and rigorously evaluated activities already starting up, where FTI-S can act as a broker of information and can help generalize experiences, and can provide support with specialized technical assistance where needed; d) reading is fundamental to all other skills and there is evidence that it is much more cost-effective to use early reading as a leverage point to improve other skills later. FTI proposes to quickly add early grade mathematics to the work.

Also, it should be noted that while many knowledge-generating and –packaging actions are proposed here, there is enough of an empirical basis on how to get going with improved learning outcomes to

allow the FTI partnership to start to develop national-scale efforts. Thus, the model envisioned here is of rapid start-up of actions which can lead to national-level improvements in learning outcomes, while at the same time pipe-lining new knowledge into such improvement processes.

2. Proposed Activities

The Global and Regional Activities (GRA) fund is to finance activities to fill these important gaps in order to improve the learning outcomes.

In order to provide a clear picture of the set of activities, ancillary activities that may be financed by other trust funds, but which are key to the achievements envisioned in the GRA, will sometimes be described.

In terms of the GRA classifications, the following activities are envisioned:

1. Research, reviews of the literature, and knowledge packaging (including data collection and repository, development of presentational materials summarizing evidence, etc.),
2. Technical workshops, peer learning events, and conferences, and
3. Scalable experiences to address specific issues, technical assistance around Education Sector Plans (ESPs).

Some explanation of how all this fits together may be useful. We believe that the matters to be addressed on learning outcomes are sufficiently urgent and that enough knowledge exists, that it is possible to start with Activity 3, namely specific experiences in countries that can be taken to scale quickly. Indeed, such experiences are already taking place, under countries' own initiatives and with either country-based, or multilateral and bilateral donor funding. However, while this work continues, it is also necessary to improve the knowledge base used to support these efforts, and to provide technical assistance, in some cases, to sharpen them. Thus, FTI-S will direct certain specific lines of analysis, using consultants and using other trust funds, to generate knowledge products that countries can use in their experiences. In addition, as countries gain experience, holding workshops and other events where new evidence is brought to bear, and where countries can share their experiences, will be helpful. These events can also be used to allow new countries interested in these activities to see what other countries are doing.

2.1. Key technical topics

In general, all activities will touch upon 8 substantive areas that are at the heart of what is needed to improve performance. **The following list is important as it forms a key reference to all actions in this effort.** We will cover a detailed discussion of these 8 areas in section 3.3, they are relevant in all sections.

1. Research-based reading instructions
2. teaching reading and basic skills in local languages
3. early-childhood education for school readiness
4. effective and efficient math instruction
5. teacher training, supervision and support
6. effective remediation strategies for students failing behind
7. textbook production, financing, distribution and use
8. performance measurement and evaluation

3. Research and Knowledge

Three specific lines of work are envisioned here: refinement of indicators, literature reviews and packaging of knowledge, and repository of data on indicators. Some of the work will be carried out with trust funds other than the Education for All Fund of which GRA is part. They are described here for the sake of completeness.

3.1. Refinement of indicators

FTI-S will carry out work, or commission work, needed to improve the indicators used for the results framework. This will take place in collaboration with the M&E work already being carried out by the

Secretariat. In addition, the work will help specify the relationship between the learning indicators and the access or dropout indicators.

All results framework indicators are impacted by the quality of service provision. If students are learning in school what the curricula are supposed to teach, they will be less likely to drop out, repeat grades, become overage while in school. And they will be more likely to graduate from primary education and transition to secondary. (However, social promotion policies change these indicators regardless of learning, so monitoring must take this issue into account.)

The benchmarks would be applied to Partner countries aiming to increase their students' reading achievement. For the FTI evaluation framework, several benchmarks could be used, to include:

- International comparison tests (PASEC, SACMEQ);
- Public examinations in various FTI Partner countries; country-specific benchmarks would include percentages of failure, promotion, repetition (gender breakdowns); if public examinations are to function as expected, they must have satisfactory psychometric validity and reliability and limited corruption issues.
- Instructional time use percentages already have some rough benchmarks from earlier studies (Abadzi 2008, ongoing LAC studies on the Stallings classroom snapshot), and Partner countries applying them could resort to those. Because of relationships to achievement, instructional time studies could be considered learning outcome indicators. For example Partner countries may be asked to attain 80% of the time spent in instruction (given the best measure of a 2007 study (Abadzi 2008)).
- *For oral reading fluency*, the benchmarks could refer to the % of countries on track to eliminate child illiteracy¹ on the basis of:
 - Reading at least 45 words per minute by the end of grade 2, unless a country specifies a different reading rate;

¹The 2009 FTI Secretariat benchmarks: (a) early grade performance: % students who, after two years of primary school, demonstrate reading fluency and comprehension to 'read to learn'; and (b) % students who are able to read with comprehension, according to their countries' curricular goals, by end of primary school. These are too vague to serve as benchmarks, and "reading to learn" is not normally a grade 2 objective (Abadzi 2011 for a review).

- Demonstrating satisfactory levels of comprehension (e.g. 80%) as measured by simple recall questions on grade 1-2 texts;
- Reading at least 90-120 words per minute by the end of primary, unless a country specifies a different reading rate;
- Demonstrating satisfactory levels of comprehension (e.g. 80%) as measured by simple recall questions on grade-level texts.
- Eliminating cases where students read near zero words per minute in grade 2 or end of primary (special education excluded).

The fluency benchmarks are well grounded in cognitive and linguistic research (details in Abadzi 2011). Reading fluency data from many countries attest to the stability of measures, despite linguistic and script variability (Abadzi 2011 and many reports in eddataglobal.org). Countries would be helped to determine the percentages of students expected to reach the above benchmarks given experiences and prior measurements.

3.2. Indicators repository

FTI-S would propose working with a partner Supervise Entity (SE) to create a repository of all the key indicators specifically relevant to early reading, early mathematics. This agency would be a body with experience and interest in creating repositories of such data. As per now UIS is identified as a possible SE. Care is to be taken not to duplicate work other agencies are doing. The objective would be to provide easy access to countries, donor agency staff, researchers, and others, on the basic indicators that pertain to learning outcomes particularly in this context.

Proposed activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure knowledge sharing on all outcomes data related to early learning outcomes
Type of activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of data base, and dissemination mechanism via web site
Link with Results framework indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 1: Improved learning outcomes

Proposed approach:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile results and also data on methods and usage from all countries participating in early learning assessments
Expected Deliverables:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database for public use operational
Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database operational by late 2012

3.3. Literature reviews, knowledge generation, and knowledge Packaging

The identified knowledge gaps and proposed specific activities largely correspond to the quality strategy being sent to the Board. The amount of existing information for the various activities varies. For some, only literature reviews would be necessary, while for others actual research would be needed. However, research would be done only for the purposes of clear implementation and usage.

The current plan is to commission literature reviews and state-of-the-art knowledge packaging via a USAID trust fund, rather than the GRA. However, this plan could change. Since these activities are not planned to be implemented under the GRA, they are not tabulated as is the case in the activities that are to be GRA-funded. However, note that piloting and field based research on these subjects is expected to be included in country-based activities. For that reason, we list their technical contents in detail here.

The time frame for these knowledge-generating or –packaging activities is set to the length of the GRA because one expects that some of the knowledge will take some time to generate. But note that enough knowledge exists at present to start dissemination and improvement.

While the themes below are described in detail here, for the sake of economy, note that all of them need to be included in the workshops (see section 4) and in country experiences for scale-up (see section 5).

3.3.1. Research-based instruction in early grades

Much research suggests that gradually presented phonics, phonological awareness, systematic feedback to all students, use of instructional time for practice, writing, use of scripted lessons, defined modules of specific duration, availability of textbooks built on the same principle would make all students literate, particularly if delivered in local languages that are consistently spelled. (Most of them were written down in recent centuries, in contrast to the spelling of European languages and especially English, which reflect older pronunciations.)

The knowledge issues to be addressed include:

- Is daily brief feedback for every student (by a teacher and better students) a realistic and sustainable procedure during initial reading instruction? How are teachers of limited education likely to learn and apply this procedure given limited supervision? How can the better students be used to help classmates in systematized but feasible procedures?
- What should be the optimal duration of initial reading modules so as to teach all letters and essential diphthongs while keeping teachers focused on proximal goals?
- Are there significant efficiencies in instructional time or learning outcomes if letters are presented through a “linguistic” approach, or do commonsense orderings of letters bring about the same outcomes?
- Can the scripting of lessons for beginning reading be systematized so that new countries and languages could follow standardized procedures and save time? A process would be useful.
- Can the writing of textbooks be systematized, as for example, in a software program (BLT used by the Summer Institute of Linguistics or SynPhony by the Canada Institute of Linguistics)? Would such software be practically usable?
- What instructional and grouping methods can realistically be implemented in large classes (60-120 students) by teachers of limited education? (if any). Examples would be J groups and modifications.

3.3.2. Use of local languages in the instruction of basic skills.

Linked mainly to literacy (but also to numeracy) is language of instruction. Students come to school with vocabulary and syntactical understanding of their mother tongue, and they may have sufficient command of languages spoken by neighbors and relatives to understand the simple concepts used in basic skills. However, the large numbers of languages in many countries create logistical problems in children's literacy. Textbooks and teachers must be dedicated to these efforts. These are some of the reasons why research is needed to enhance the utility of local languages under various circumstances.

The knowledge issues to be addressed include:

- How many local languages do the residents of a country really speak and to what degrees of fluency?
- How many days, weeks of school interaction do children speaking one local language require in order to acquire sufficient knowledge of another local language and receive instruction in it?
- How many days, weeks of interaction do children need to become habituated to differences of dialects or similar languages and understand teachers or respond to questions?
- How much preparation or study do teachers speaking one local language require in order to teach primary school in another local language? Which combinations in specific countries may be more feasible?
- Can children speaking one language be effectively made literate in a neighboring language, assuming no political problems? The hypothesis must be tested.

3.3.3. Effective early-childhood education methodology

Despite much conceptual emphasis on early childhood education, outcomes have been limited to specific rather high-cost experiences, and project designs have not worked well for low-income areas. Mainly middle-class people send their children to preschool, and the relative advantage they obtain increases the "Matthew effect." The GRA would finance reviews and pilots to determine how best to deliver preschool education to low-income populations that support learning readiness and school readiness. Examples would be:

- Development of procedures for preschool educators to follow for sustainable interactive means of language development.

- Review on impact of health indicators on child development
- Studies on instructional time and materials that would significantly improve performance scores among low-income children.
- Establishing the benefit amounts and areas that may be obtained from realistically implementable ECD programs.
- Review Early school years low cost assessments
- Experimentations on low cost, locally developed pedagogic materials supporting child development (cognitive, linguistic, physical and socio-emotional)
- Review of various preschool services promoting school readiness for disadvantaged children and in FTI countries.

3.3.4. Effective and efficient math instruction

Math outcomes are poor at the early level, and teachers sometimes perform less well than students (as measured in SACMEQ). A broad range of critical variables has been mentioned in research and measurement, and variable philosophies are promoted. There is a need for targeted studies in determining the variables that do matter in low-income environments, and in remedying them effectively. A similar need exists for the remediation of teachers with limited ability to carry out elementary calculations fast and to explain concepts correctly to students.

Identified issues are:

- Studying the relationships and causality patterns between prominent math-related variables (eg. magnitude processing, prediction accuracy) and actual student achievement
- Determination of feasible instructional activities and amounts of practice in K-3 (or higher) that would significantly improve the performance of curricular math objectives for poorer students
- Math textbooks that effectively and most economically teach the required concepts
- Means to improve teachers' math knowledge and automaticity of calculations

3.3.5. Teacher training and supervision

The investments in teacher training have shown limited connection to results. Teachers may attend and even pass tests of pre-service and in-service training, but their classroom behaviors seem uninfluenced by the training content. Several studies have shown limited or no effects of teacher training on student achievement. Teacher training at least partly through observational learning, particularly for critical lower-grade behaviors, but this effect must be streamlined and demonstrated. Also, teachers with limited formal education must learn more of the content necessary to teach students in areas such as basic math.

Issues would include:

- How can observational learning methods be institutionalized? Which procedures are feasible and what are the effects of these methods? Aside from feed forward modeling, what is the contribution of detailed planning and visualization processes to these methods? Experiments would be needed, and toolkits would be written.
- Piloting lesson scripting in various circumstances, developing an audiovisual “toolkit” for this work. (Activity repeats from reading and may be appropriate for both groups).
- Proposing and piloting technologies and usage procedures likely to facilitate essential supervision from a distance. How sustainable would the likely procedures be? A literature review of likely technology would be useful.
- Testing sustainable cash on delivery procedures, documenting results of various cash on delivery pilots.

3.3.6. Remediation strategies for students falling behind

Low-income countries are faced with large numbers of students who fail to learn the very basic skills that subsequently become prerequisites for more advanced skills. Remediation is needed before students are promoted, but it has received little attention, except in the form of private tutoring. There is a need to develop methods and strategies for efficient remediation and to encourage countries to adopt remediation policies.

Specific further issues will become more detailed after a literature review presents the outstanding issues and potential choices at the early-grade level, at the least. Potential activities would be:

- Literature reviews of remediation methods in specific countries, including detailed descriptions of the methods used as well as evidence regarding effectiveness;
- Designs of effective remediation programs, materials development, logistics, timeframe.
- Pilots of remediation courses likely to be effective with various populations. A research basis would have to be shown (partly derived from the literature review that will be carried out).
- Development of country-level remediation strategies (to take higher-grade skills and private tuition into account) and seek to maximize the proportion of students mastering basic skills.

3.3.7. Textbook production, financing and distribution, and use

Textbook issues are lengthy and difficult. The provision in the lower-income countries often fails due to expense, delays, corruption. Even when textbooks are available, their quantity and quality may be suboptimal. The content may be limited, the reading methods may be inefficient, the math presentations may confuse beginning readers. Textbook illustrations could be too confusing for students with limited exposure. The research base for producing them may be nonexistent. Finally there are findings related to size and spacing or letter complexity that are unknown and therefore not used. Thus, the textbooks may not be cost-effective. An informal consultation at the World Bank (April 24-29, 2011) brought out problems and solutions that will be studied, and the relevant questions will be modified. At this time, a partial list of the issues is below.

- What are the most important factors that influence textbook pricing the most? Which of these could be realistically controlled, and by how much could textbook prices be lowered if controlled? (Including color use, formatting, paper tariffs, rent-seeking, collusion, etc)?
- How many actual words (not just new vocabulary) should grade 1 textbooks have, given the likely existence of a single book available for poor students (if available at all). What are the optimal presentations of letters, diphthongs, syllabic letters etc. in various languages and scripts so as to speed up automaticity? What is the contribution of illustrations in convincing children to pursue further reading at various levels of proficiency? The perceptual and emotional aspects of illustration must become better understood and documented.

- For the textbooks of the lower grades (1-3) layout may optimize costs? What is the most economical configuration given picture size and frequency, colors, fonts, white space? How repetitive and predictable should be the placement of text and graphics? How much use of white space that has high paper costs? How much use of complex typographical conventions and multiplicity of exercises per page, which appear to generate interest but may simply generate confusion? Observational and computer-led studies (e.g. using ‘eyelink’) could be conducted.
- Similarly, what issues should inform the design, number of pages, contents, presentation of textbooks for the higher grades of primary schools as well as lower-secondary schools?
- How does relative complexity in textbooks affect the probability that students will work with the content? According to some research, modest challenge may contribute to greater learning outcomes.
- What issues specifically impact the development, printing, distribution of textbooks in local languages? Studies, pilots, development in specific countries and language configurations would be financed.
- There should be development and testing of glossaries and dictionaries in local languages to contain the vocabulary taught in schools of interested FTI Partner countries. The GRA activities could finance their development in specific countries and also evaluate their usage if feasible.
- How feasible is the use of e-readers in upper primary grades? Some experiments might be financed.

3.3.8. Performance measurement and evaluation

Performance measurement has had multiple challenges. To monitor performance changes and evaluate the outcomes of various experiences, a regular program for measuring reading and math achievement ought to be institutionalized in Partner countries. Achievement tests are needed that are valid and reliable for the lower grades. They should show progress through at least the primary and the lower secondary grades in important subjects. Their scores should be intuitively comprehensible if possible. Also they should also be quick and inexpensive to set up and to score every 2-3 years, and they should not overly tax the limited psychometric capabilities of low-income countries. If possible, they ought to provide some means of comparison with other countries, though this feature is not indispensable.

A plethora exists of international comparison tests at the primary school level, but most fail to fulfill the above requirements. For the upper primary grades, there are international comparison tests in French,

English, and Spanish (PASEC, SACMEQ, LLECE), as well as in the languages of countries participating in TIMSS and PIRLS. There are also country-level achievement tests and public examinations.

- Monitoring efforts aside, few countries have made changes on the basis of the standardized tests. Efforts should be made to interpret this phenomenon and find solutions. A statement of best practices is needed, to drive presentations and technical assistance may help governments identify realistically actionable issues given the results of oral and written reading assessments.
- Instruction can become more effective only if instructional time is measured and improved. Considerable research has already been carried out in the measurement of time loss at various levels. Surveys have been used for school-level time losses and teacher absenteeism, and observation instruments have been used for time use at the classroom level. A package tool containing selected surveys and snapshots similarly quantified and of low inference will be prepared in order to be implemented in selected countries (See H. Abadzi “Absenteeism and Beyond, 2008, World Bank).
- Designing a 3 Rs “PISA” or **All-Grade-Reading Fluency test**. It could consist of letters, words per minute, and “shallow” comprehension questions. Administration could also include a math test, such as a two minute magnitude processing test under experimental development and a time writing test.
- A method is needed to specify how words would be counted in various languages and language in order to compare reading performance in various languages (e. g. how to segment agglutinative languages). Besides a literature review, a computer simulation may be carried out.
- The early-grade set of tests ought to be institutionalized outside the FTI Secretariat, possibly to an organization handling PASEC, SACMEQ, or LLECE. Reading math, and writing fluency would be administered along with international comparison tests (PASEC, SACMEQ, LLECE); interested organizations would receive financing for doing so.
- Studies of substituting a 3-minute group test (wordchains) for the more intensive individual reading tests. An organization administering reading tests would also administer this instrument and compare outcomes.
- Reading fluency tests for secondary education grades, to map fluency and comprehension increase throughout students’ years.
- Relatively objective but sustainable and research-based methods to assess emergent automaticity and parallel processing, such as the activation of the visual word form related to words per minute through event-related potentials.
- Improving the Stallings Classroom snapshot and instructional time use surveys to produce an integrated package with associated software and audiovisual administration procedures.

- Assessing the effect of various treatments on girls performance that Partner countries may be administering (such as scholarships, nutritional interventions)

4. Technical workshops, peer learning events, and conferences

Existing knowledge and further knowledge as it develops, on every one of the technical issues listed above, need to be disseminated in appropriate venues. However, a larger need exists for training various stakeholders on knowledge that is **not** included above. A large unmet need exists for technical information, and there is no clear institutional base for delivering it. Universities, consultant companies, and NGOs have followed philosophies, whose research base is sometimes uncertain. Perhaps for these reasons, international organizations have had little or no capacity on instructional issues. The GRA would finance the FTI Secretariat and training organizations for the provision of targeted and modules aimed at filling these gaps. (Examples would be the World Bank’s WBI, the UNESCO IIEP, etc). Audio-visually developed configurations of knowledge modules would be assembled to meet the needs of various stakeholders as needed, either by distance, residential workshops, in-country workshops.

Those carrying applying for financing under this category would present detailed research-based material for consideration to the FTI Secretariat. The providers would ensure follow-up that would result in long-term retention and use of the knowledge rather than a one-time brief exposure.

Note that the technical content of all the training and workshops would be around the key 8 topics identified above (see section 2.1).

Proposed activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure knowledge sharing on all of the topics that pertain to improved reading and mathematics in the early grades: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ International higher-level workshops to generate motivation and exchange both technical and implementation information with leadership of ministries, donor agencies, and NGOs. ✓ Regional events with similar focus. ✓ Country specific activities related to development of scalable experiences ✓ E-learning or other forms of distance training. ✓ Technical guidelines and reviews published.
Type of activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical workshops and knowledge dissemination

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance • Intervention to inform scale up
Link with Results framework indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 1: Improved learning outcomes
Proposed approach:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge-sharing would be led by a SE that is expert at training and capacity building. This would apply in particular to larger events and on-line or other forms of distance capacity building. • Smaller country-based events, tied to country-based implementation, would be coordinated in a different manner. • A form of certification could be sought and offered. It should have as much labor market value as possible. • Initial workshops would be based on existing knowledge. As knowledge is refined or new information comes about, the new knowledge would be introduced into workshops and seminars. • FTI-S would commission the needed knowledge production and would closely supervise the preparation of training modules along with an SE that is expert in knowledge-sharing management, such as the management of online modules and learning.
Expected Deliverables:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two international workshops • Four regional workshops • E-learning modules and materials on all eight topics
Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All events completed by XX. • All e-learning and other forms of distance education available by XX.

5. Scalable experiences, TA around Education Sector Plans (ESPs)

In addition to knowledge-generation and –packaging, along with knowledge dissemination, GRA will work with country-based SEs and LEGs who would like to develop experiences that will produce sharp improvements in learning outcomes in early grade reading and mathematics. The purpose of these experiences is thus to create serious forward movement on learning outcomes at a national level, something which has thus far escaped all EFA and FTI efforts.

In this area, we envision working with a variety of SEs, one for each of various countries. However, the typical set of actions implemented by an SE would be as in the table below. Not all actions will need to be done in all countries. This will depend on the country’s interests, and what actions have already been performed. However, the table presents a typical profile.

Note that the technical content of all the training and workshops would be around the key 8 topics identified above (see section 2.1). In particular, country experiences can be used to test certain ideas and produce knowledge that can then be used regionally and globally to improve learning outcomes, and can be transferred to other country settings.

5.1. Country selection criteria or steps

Countries will be selected according to the following steps:

Step 1: Exchange with the Country Support Group of the FTI-S on: salient components supported by the FTI CF in various countries, specific requests from the part of the MoEs, identified weaknesses and need for capacity improvement.

Step 2: Exchange with key partners on preliminary list of countries that are ready to receive additional support in order to cause sharp improvements in learning outcomes with initial focus on reading.

Step 3: Exchange with the country-based CAs (Coordinating Agency) as representatives of LEGs (Local Education Groups) and key NGOs on possibility to further support countries in developing experiences in improving learning outcomes.

The selected countries may be:

- (a) Countries that are weak in delivering improved learning outcomes, despite the FTI support; and would like to create experiences in improved learning outcomes
- (b) Countries that already started or plan to start an experience in improving learning outcomes, as part of the Education Sector Plan or as part of some other activity. A balance needs to be reached between countries that already have good donor support in generating experiences that can be scaled up, which may be a sign of great willingness to improve, versus countries where there is little assistance and where, therefore, the work discussed here could have a large impact at the margin, but which may not have shown interest.
- (c) Countries showing promising results in previous programs and ready for scale up. Governments may need support in designing the scale-up and the sustainability.

- (d) Larger countries could be preferred to smaller ones, all other things being equal, given their potential to affect more children.
- (e) Countries in which there are good relationships based on previous FTI experiences and/or the experience of interested SEs.

5.2. Summary of envisioned activities

Proposed activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country-level experiences in national scale-up of sharp improvements in learning outcomes
Type of activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local knowledge sharing • Intervention to inform scale up
Link with Results framework indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 1: Improved learning outcomes
Proposed approach:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FTI-S in collaboration with partners would develop a list of interested countries and interested SEs • In countries with existing efforts, FTI-S would formalize relationship with relevant SE or other implementing agency, and provide support and technical assistance as needed, in the specific areas noted below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ In some cases the SE will be well-supported already. In that case FTI-S would only seek to help the FTI partnership understand the lessons learned emanating from that experience. • In countries with new efforts, FTI-S would work with the CA, or an SE wishing to take the lead, the LEG, and in particular the Ministry, to define an activity and choose an S • The work could lead off with a workshop to explain the basic idea, what can be achieved, and what it would take • Eventually FTI-S would facilitate TA and networking to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Apply assessments that are suitable to developing a baseline and/or motivating change

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Identify scale-up path ✓ Target geographical areas of work if country desires ✓ Develop lesson plans and methods ✓ Improve reading materials and develop method for distributing ✓ Develop and implement methods for coaching teachers ✓ Apply any of the innovations listed in Section 2.1 as appropriate to further knowledge for other countries (as well as the country in question) ✓ Develop an impact assessment or evaluation approach, and apply it ✓ Package lessons learned for regional and global sharing. These will include: a) knowledge of what can be achieved, b) further specific technical knowledge based on impact evaluation, and c) logistical and managerial knowledge of how to scale up ✓ Over time ensure that the lessons learned find their way as quickly as possible into ESPs to ensure scale-up (it could be at the outset if there is an ESP process starting up)
Expected Deliverables:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start-up and ongoing experiences in X countries.
Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences started up by XX.

6. Summary

To help Partner countries deliver quality education to their poorer constituents, important knowledge needs to be obtained and applied. GRA financing would make it possible to produce it, synthesize it, and disseminate it in appropriate and comprehensible forms. For some topics, mere literature reviews would be necessary, and for some others, field experimentation would first be necessary. Under all circumstances, the goal would be to lead into full-scale implementation and institutionalization in the countries which need certain interventions.

Priorities were presented on the topics of reading fluency, instruction in local languages, early childhood education, math instruction, teacher training, remediation strategies for students falling behind, textbook availability for students, performance measurement and evaluation, and knowledge communication to various stakeholders of important technical information that already exists. Also the interactions in some of the questions would be studied, as appropriate.

In many respects the possibility of the GRA funding presents a unique opportunity to resolve issues that have long-remained unanswered due to a lack of specific knowledge or interest by researchers who carry out work for their own purposes. This evidence-based customization for lower-income countries could have a sizeable impact in the improvement of learning outcomes in Partner countries.