ALL CHILDREN READING WORKSHOPS
SUMMARY REPORT

All Children Reading Regional Workshops
Workshop 1: February 28 – March 2, 2012
Workshop 2: March 12 – March 15, 2012
Kigali, Rwanda

May 1, 2012
INTRODUCTION

With approximately 200 million children in primary school in developing countries struggling to read even basic words, a renewed focus has been placed on making learning a reality for all children. Following a successful Replenishment Conference in November 2011, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has pledged among other things to:

- Reduce the number of grade 2 school children who cannot read by 50% in 20 developing countries over the next 5 years, and to
- Provide 50 million new textbooks in classrooms.

The first of these is re-emphasized in the current draft of GPE’s Strategic Framework. Thus, the Global Partnership for Education is the first multi-stakeholder partnership to make a concrete pledge in regard to learning outcomes. This cannot be achieved without the strong commitment of all partners of the Global Partnership for Education, and in particular, its developing country partners.

Development organizations also have increased their focus on early grade reading. In particular, at this point, USAID, DfID and AusAID have put reading as a key goal for their agencies’ education sector strategies.

To increase momentum in this regard, and in partnership with the organizations mentioned above, GPE hosted two All Children Reading Workshops for the African Region at the in Kigali, Rwanda:

- **Workshop 1:** February 28 – March 2, 2012
- **Workshop 2:** March 12 – March 15, 2012

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

With an overall objective to achieve the literacy goals mentioned above, these workshops were meant to rapidly initiate and improve progress in early grade reading in 26 developing countries through knowledge sharing of best practices in specific early grade reading thematic areas including:

- Campaigns and Policy Dialogue
- Curriculum and Lesson Plans
- Teacher Training and Supervision
- Mother Tongue Instruction and Language Transition
- Instruction and Reading Materials
- Assessment Tools, Counting and Impact Evaluations
- Logistics and Management

The workshops were also intended to increase momentum in the development of early grade reading action plans at the country level through multi-stakeholder dialogue, engagement with technical experts, and sharing experiences and lessons learned with other countries. The action planning matrix contained specific guiding questions for each Country Team to work in regard to: (1) Assessing the current national situation, (2) Indicating challenges and gaps for progress, and (3) Identifying activities to overcome challenges and gaps and initiate change and improvement.
PARTICIPANTS

25 African countries and Haiti were invited as a result of interest expressed either to the Global Partnership for Education or one of our development partners (USAID, DfID, AFD, and the Hewlett Foundation) or by the Ministries of Education of various countries. The table shows the participating countries by week.

Country Teams varied in size from 3-9 participants consisting of:

- **Representatives from the Ministry of Education:** including representatives such as the Minister of Education, Deputy Minister, Director of Primary Education, or the Director of Literacy, Curriculum or Teacher Training, etc..

- **Representatives from local NGO/CSOs:** including representatives from teacher unions.

- **Representatives from local development partner organizations:** including UNICEF, USAID, DfID, IRC, Save the Children, Concern Worldwide, EDC and others. Please refer to the combined participant list from Week 1 and Week 2 in Annex 3.

Selection of country teams was coordinated by the Coordinating Agency (lead education donor) in each country prior to the workshop.

In the workshop, Country Teams were assigned a facilitator and encouraged to select a Country Lead and note-taker. The role of the facilitator was to keep discussions on track and in alignment with the Action Planning Process, as well as seek technical support or advice from one of the various expert presenters. The Country Lead provided leadership throughout the discussions while the note-taker was responsible for filling in the Action Planning Matrix throughout the course of the workshop. These three roles are exceptionally important in the workshop follow up activities mentioned below.

STRUCTURE OF THE WORKSHOPS

The workshops were designed to feed into the process for development of action plans that will be used as tools for improving the current status of early grade reading at the country level. Each workshop consisted of:

- **Technical and plenary sessions:** Technical experts from partner countries and various organizations presented on the thematic areas mentioned above, emphasizing evidence based strategies and providing concrete action steps necessary for country-level planning and decision making processes.

- **Country presentations:** Liberia, Rwanda, and the Gambia presented on their successful whole-country experiences on early grade reading where they were able to share strategies and tips for improving early grade reading interventions in various areas including teacher training and assessment; as well as lessons learned and plans for improvement. They also served as exemplars of what can be done once a country focuses.

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Working sessions: During the working sessions, Country Teams met to develop early grade reading action plans. Provided with an action planning matrix made up of a number of questions related to thematic areas, country teams worked collaboratively to address challenges and introduce practices that will help accelerate progress on early child reading in country.

Discussion groups and panels: Each day consisted of two panel discussions (there was some evaluation of this idea between the two workshops):

1. Q & A Session with Technical Experts: providing additional time to discuss questions geared toward thematic areas and expert presentations
2. Country Panel: providing an opportunity for Country Leads to share their experiences throughout the action planning process including progress made and challenges faced

COUNTRY PLEDGES:

Since Country Teams were not in official representation of their countries, these pledges cannot be taken as final. Also, some of them would ideally be improved by being made more specific and at the same time realistic. However, they give an idea of the kind of goal-setting that came out of the country teams.

- **Benin**: By 2015, at least 80% of Beninese children will be able to read fluently and with comprehension at the end of grade 3
- **Burkina Faso**: By 2015, 75% of pupils will be able to read fluently and with comprehension by the end of grade 3
- **Cameroon**: Reduce by 50% in 2015, the number of children who cannot read
- **Democratic Republic of Congo**: In 2015, 3.5 million Congolese children of grades 1 and 2 will be able to read
- **Ethiopia**: All children at the end of grade three will read with fluency and comprehension by 2017
- **Ghana**: By 2017 increase the percentage of early grade readers (KG1-P3) from 20.4% to 80.0%
- **Guinea**: All children reading fluently by 2015
- **Haiti**: At the end of Grade 2, Haitian students will read with comprehension and fluidity and by the end of grade 4 they will be able to read with comprehension and fluidity in both national languages.
- **Kenya**: Reading for Life (R4L): 5 million Kenya children reading fluently by Grade 3 by 2015
- **Liberia**: We will build on the partnerships with evidence based reading interventions to ensure that learners achieve reading success by third grade
- **Madagascar**: By 2020, 100% of EPP teachers will transition from L1 to L2 and 100% of students will ready L1 and L2 independently by 6th grade
- **Malawi**: 50% of all non readers in primary school able to read by 2015.
- **Mali**: All children reading and writing by 2015
- **Mozambique**: Conduct a baseline to determine the current status of student reading in the 2nd grade. Establish an intervention plan for the next 3 years
- **Niger**: In 2015, 70% of students enrolled in grade 1 will be able to read fluently in the national language
- **Nigeria**: Reduce by 10% annually the number of children in Nigeria that cannot read
• **Rwanda**: To build a foundation for lifelong learning by creating a culture of reading in the home and in the community, and improving the teaching of reading in the early grades

• **Senegal**: Determined to bring 1.2 million children at the primary level reading independently by 2015

• **Sierra Leone**: By the end of 2015 children at the lower primary level of the pilot schools will develop strong reading skills and attain a minimum of 70% in comprehension exercises

• **South Africa**: By 2014 60% of Grade 3 learners will reach minimum reading levels through a coherent reading strategy aligned to the existing Education Sector Plan

• **South Sudan**: Achieve economic growth through adapting and implementing relevant educational policies that support innovations and lifelong learning

• **Tanzania**: 50% of Tanzanian children develop effective reading and writing skills by 2015

• **The Gambia**: Ensure that by 2015 all children in Basic Cycle level read with ease and fluency grade level text

• **Uganda**: Reading Uganda Now (RUN): All children reading by P2

• **Zambia**: Enhanced learning outcomes for all children through early grade reading

• **Zimbabwe**: Achieving 100% literacy rate through early grades and adult reading by 2015

**COMMON THEMES AND LESSONS LEARNED**

While the action planning process varied from country to country depending on the status and level of early grade reading interventions in country, commonalities existed across the two workshops including:

• The need for improved knowledge sharing of best practices in the areas of costs/financing, sustainability and scalability.

• The importance of multi-stakeholder dialogue at the country-level. In some cases, these workshops were the first opportunity for key players at the country level to sit down and discuss ways to initiate or improve progress in early grade reading. Continuing to provide opportunities for ongoing discussions is essential and will be a key component in the follow up activities.

• The high demand for technical support and assistance to countries to improve the current status of early grade reading.

• The action planning matrix served as an important tool for initiating discussion and progressing planning of early grade reading interventions at the country level, however how the action plan was going to be brought back, presented, and essentially owned at the national level remained a concern of many countries.

• The relationship between early grade reading and ECD and inclusive education policies.

**EVALUATION RESULTS**

• The average satisfaction rating overall (across both workshops) was 4.3 in a scale of 1 to 5.

• Based on the numerical ratings, the thematic areas of highest priority were teacher training and supervision, mother tongue instruction and language transition, and assessment tools and counting.
• Based on the numerical ratings, the areas which require most improvement were instruction/reading materials and impact evaluations.

• Based on the free-form comments area, three of the most common comments:
  ➤ The workshop provided an invaluable opportunity to meet with key stakeholders at the country-level to flesh out an early grade reading action plan.
  ➤ The presentations provided clear and concrete planning steps, as well as explicit strategies for improving early grade reading interventions at the country level.
  ➤ These workshops were timely and provided knowledge sharing of best practices as well as a venue for learning from the experiences of other countries.

NEXT STEPS

The workshops were intended to initiate the process of early grade reading action planning at the country level as well as establish mechanisms for ongoing support and accountability among government, civil society and development partner stakeholders. In order to facilitate ongoing support, including through the exchange of ideas and best practices and technical knowledge, multi-stakeholder collaboration and accountability, and support to the implementation of early grade reading action plans at the country the following addresses GPE’s follow up plans:

➤ Create a Country Tracker: Through ongoing communication with country focal points and key country team correspondents, including Country Lead, Facilitator and Note-taker, GPE will gather key information from the action plan including baseline information, government and donor contacts, national or pilot program information, etc. The web-based Country Tracker will be a valuable tool to not only monitor status of early grade reading at the country level, but to highlight gaps and ensure all countries receive adequate support to achieve their pledges.

➤ Establish Community of Practice to increase accountability, mechanisms for support, South-South exchange and learning, accessibility of technical knowledge and multi-stakeholder collaboration at the country level. This will also include an additional workshop at the end of June, 2012 designed to refocus service delivery organizations such as NGOs and think tanks on evidence based approaches with an emphasis on results. There are also tentative plans to host an All Children Reading Workshop for the Asia/Pacific region.

With and over goal to move to action, we count on the ongoing work of Country Teams, Local Education Groups, donors, and other key stakeholders, through further development of action plans and ongoing collaboration, to advocate for the inclusion of early grade reading into Education Sector Plans. The section of the GPE Secretariat that deals directly with countries will become increasingly involved in this effort as it moves from a technical idea into implementation, as this effort is a strong mandate.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

➤ For all workshop related materials including documents, participant list, presentations, and galleries please visit our website: All Children Reading Workshops, Africa Region

➤ We welcome materials, videos, and other resources to share on our website

➤ For all other inquiries please contact Catherine Henny at chenny@globalpartnership.org