ALL CHILDREN READING
Workshops 2012, Kigali, Rwanda

1. Early Grade Reading: Entry Point to Achieving the Global Education Goals

- The Global Partnership for Education is hosting the All Children Reading Workshops 2012 in Kigali, Rwanda. Given that 25% to 75% of children in developing countries are failing to learn to read in a timely manner, the situation is urgent and the workshops timely. Children who cannot read cannot become independent learners.

- The engaged partners share the understanding that in order to turn the Education for All (EFA) Goal 6 into a reality for all their children, developing country partners require joint support to use reading as an entry point to achieving learning outcomes. EFA Goal 6 calls for improvement in the quality of education in all its aspects, aiming for a situation where people can achieve excellence.

- The workshops are designed to provide an opportunity for country teams (including representatives from the respective Ministries of Education, civil society and donor partners) from 25 African partner countries and Haiti to engage with technical experts, discuss country experiences, and learn from other country practices. At the same time, efforts will be made to integrate newly gained knowledge into an actionable plan to improve the current situation in early grade reading, with a view to breaking business as usual and creating a sense of urgency and delivery. The starting point for discussion and for developing those action plans will vary from country to country, based on the existing dialogue, initiatives or programs.

- The development of country action plans on early grade reading will serve as the focus of the workshop. Using a collaborative approach, it is hoped that they will set the stage for building and reviving the momentum for early grade reading as a pillar of progress on the global literacy agenda.

Information about the workshops

Organizing Partners: Two 4-day workshops are held in Kigali, Rwanda, organized by the Global Partnership for Education.

Participants: Country teams from 25 partner countries in Africa and Haiti are invited to the workshops. Two identical workshops are organized with up to 13 partner countries each to ensure a dynamic and productive atmosphere. Technical experts and facilitator will also form part of the workshop.

Dates & Venue: Workshop I will take place between 28 February and 2 March and Workshop II between 12 March and 15 March, 2012. The workshops will take place in the Hotel des Milles Collins, Kigali, Rwanda.

More information: www.globalpartnership.org
2. Engaging in a Community of Practice and Action

- **Workshop Objective:** With an overall objective to achieve the literacy goals, these workshops are meant to rapidly initiate and improve progress in early grade reading in 26 developing countries through knowledge sharing of best practices in specific thematic areas.

- **Desired Workshop Results:**
  - Start-up of country action planning for improving early grade reading
  - A newly formed community of practice as a mechanism for ongoing support and accountability among government, civil society and development partners.

3. New Focus on Early Grade Reading

- 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. EFA Goal 6 has existed for more than ten years, but remains less than fully operational. This is changing. The engaged partners share the understanding of using reading as an entry point for making EFA Goal 6 more operational, and to work with partner countries to provide quality education for all children.

- Following a successful Replenishment Conference in November 2011, the Global Partnership for Education 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.**

- 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, acknowledging that successful early grade reading sets the foundation for all learning. USAID, for example, has committed to improving the reading skills of 100 million children in primary grades by 2015. AusAID and DFID have also vowed to increase support to early grade literacy practice, as well as many private philanthropic organizations such as the Hewlett Foundation. Other partners such as the French Development Agency (AFD) and UNESCO have shown an interest in specific aspects of early grade reading, even if they do not yet have literacy as an organizational goal.

- The Global Partnership for Education is collaborating in various ways with multiple partners such as USAID, DFID, The Hewlett Foundation, AusAID, AFD, and UNESCO, on how to improve children's reading in the early grades. These collaborations are at different stages, but the workshops are intended to strengthen these collaborations.
4. Initiate and Improve Progress

a. About the Workshops

- **Collaboration**: Partners engaging in the workshops are collaborating to improve children’s reading in the early grades in African partner countries. The workshops in Rwanda will mark one step forward towards deepening the collaboration amongst participating country partners and development partners. This collaboration is at the heart of the Global Partnership’s approach to effective education development progress, by bringing together developing country partners, development partners, civil society and private foundations at the global and country level.

- **Content**: The workshops are meant to respond to country demand for support to rapidly initiate and improve progress in early grade reading through knowledge sharing of best practices in specific thematic areas including teacher training, mother tongue instruction, language transition, learning materials and reading books, curriculum and lesson plans, assessment tools, monitoring and evaluation, finance and sustainability, campaigning and policy dialogue. The aim of the workshop is that country teams will have concrete action plans, including initial numerical estimates of numbers of teachers trained, materials distributed, in order to meet the literacy goals.

- **Structure**: The workshops are designed to feed into the development process of action plans for improving early grade reading. Each workshop consists of:
  - **Technical and plenary sessions**: Technical experts from partner countries and various organizations will present on the thematic areas, emphasizing the evidence base of their presentations and also the specific action steps that need to be planned in each area if the number of non-readers is to be reduced by 50% during the next 5 years.
  - **Country presentations**: Selected country teams will present on their successful whole-country experiences on early grade reading.
  - **Working sessions**: During the working sessions, country teams will work on the development of the early grade reading action plans. A facilitator/technical expert will support each country team during the development of the action plan to meet the specific needs of each country.
  - **Discussion groups and panels**: Country teams will meet in discussion groups to exchange their experiences on drafting the action plan. Facilitators will support these discussions and highlight key issues and challenges presented by the country teams.

b. Develop Early Grade Reading Action Plans

- The workshops underscore the need for focus and immediate action in early grade reading to lay important groundwork for all literacy efforts. The aim is to ground early grade reading initiatives with specific actions and evidence. The current situation demonstrates that more emphasis needs to be given to action-orientation, research, evidence, and multi-stakeholder dialogue to make early grade reading programs truly work for children.

- Participating partner countries will enter discussions based on the current state of play of early grade reading in their respective countries. The level at which country teams start to develop the action plans will vary from country to country. The
workshops aim to encourage discussion in the country teams on what is needed to address challenges and introduce practices that will help accelerate progress on early child reading.

- **All country teams are encouraged to prepare in advance for the workshop.** It is suggested that this includes a brief overview on significant early grade reading issues, including strengths and challenges, existing policy and framework documents on specific early grade reading areas (curriculum, reading books, assessments, etc.) and most recent data if available. This includes also information about the situation in rural and remote areas. This will help to inform a realistic, action-oriented discussion to make the action plan fit in the given country circumstances.

- The country team discussions on the action plan (specific guiding questions will be provided to each country team) will include three steps: (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.

- The country teams are encouraged to discuss each day in detail three specific technical areas regarding early grade reading. The action plan will sketch out for each thematic area the following: (a) actor in lead, (b) deliverables and timeline, (c) collaborating partners with specific roles, and (d) the funding source for the proposed action. For each thematic area guiding questions will be provided to keep discussion on task and help fleshing out activities in detail.

- Action plan work is cumulative and will be a living document. Each technical session might modify the action plan considerations laid out previously. As the country team moves along the four days, all previous considerations should be reviewed in light of the information and considerations added later.

### c. Participating Country Teams

- Each developing country partner invited was selected as a result of interest expressed either to the Global Partnership for Education or to one of the development partners mentioned above by the Ministry of Education.


- Participation of up to 13 country teams each with 4-7 members is expected in each workshop. The individuals forming part of the country teams are nominated through the Local Education Groups in each country. Country teams are composed of:
  - **2-3 representatives from the Ministry of Education:** This can include representatives such as the Deputy Minister, Director of Primary Education, or the Director of Literacy, Curriculum or Teacher Training, etc..
  - **1-2 representatives from local CSOs:** This will include one representative from an NGO/CSO and one from a teacher organization, knowledgeable about the country and ideally with the ability to access skills in the creation of early grade reading programs.
  - **1-2 local development partner representatives** with interest in this field, who may already be planning or undertaking activity in this area.
Country teams will have the opportunity to discuss and learn from other country teams, and share experiences on existing early grade reading programs and practices. Country teams will engage and learn from technical experts presenting on the specific technical areas. They will have the opportunity to work with a facilitator during the workshop to seek guidance where needed.

d. After the Workshop

- Developing the action plan through a multi-stakeholder discussion will only be the first step to initiate the desired progress. Following the country teams' work in Kigali, they are encouraged to share and discuss the action plan widely and enter a process to detail the proposed action, get the buy in from the various Ministry of Education departments and education development partners to seek ownership and funding, confirm roles and responsibilities to implement the action plan at the country level.

- This workshop will be the initiation of a process. It is intended that in the coming years, participating partner countries will receive direct support from one or several of the development partners to further projects in early grade reading, along with ongoing facilitation through the Secretariat of the Global Partnership.

- The Secretariat of the Global Partnership for Education will prepare a workshop report; it will monitor the implementation of the action plans and make them accessible through the website. The Secretariat will also facilitate ongoing exchange in the community of practice on early grade reading, with a focus on South-South exchange and learning, accessibility of technical knowledge, and multi-stakeholder collaboration in this process at global and country level; at the country level specifically through the Local Education Group.

- Workshops for other regions are also under discussion, depending on the interests of country partners and development partners.