ALL CHILDREN READING REGIONAL WORKSHOP
17-20 September, 2012
Bangkok, Thailand

BACKGROUND:

- The Global Partnership for Education, in collaboration with AusAID, DfID, UNESCO Bangkok, and USAID, is hosting an All Children Reading Regional Workshop in Bangkok, Thailand. Given that 25% to 95% of children in developing countries are failing to learn to read in a timely manner, the situation is urgent. Children who do not learn to read cannot read to learn.

- 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. The current draft of the Strategic Plan for the Global Partnership for Education seeks a dramatic improvement in the levels of literacy and numeracy in the early grades. In addition, 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

- These goals cannot be achieved without the strong commitment of all partners of the Global Partnership for Education, and in particular, its developing country partners.

- Other development organizations have also increased their focus on early grade reading, acknowledging that successful early grade reading sets the foundation for all learning. AUSAID, DfID, and USAID, for example, have now put early literacy (and numeracy in the case of AUSAID) goals into their own strategic frameworks.

- Following two very successful All Children Reading Workshops in Kigali, Rwanda, from 28 February to 2 March, 2012 and 12-15 March, 2012, there has been an increase in demand for technical support, as well as interest in similar knowledge sharing and dissemination workshops in various regions, including Asia and The Pacific. To learn more about the All Children Reading Workshops in Kigali please visit the following link:

OBJECTIVES OF THE ASIA WORKSHOP:

- With an overall objective to achieve the literacy goals mentioned above, this workshop is designed to respond to country demand for support to rapidly initiate and improve early grade reading through knowledge sharing of best practices in specific thematic areas including (but not limited to) teacher training, language of instruction, learning materials and textbooks, curriculum design, assessment, and sustainability.

- This workshop will provide an opportunity for country teams (including relevant representatives from the respective Ministries of Education, civil society organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and donor partners) from the Asia region to engage with technical experts, discuss country experiences, and learn from other countries.

- The development of country action plans on early grade reading will be the focus of the workshop. Newly gained knowledge will be used to develop plans to improve the situation in early grade reading, with a view to changing business as usual and creating a sense of urgency. 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. Using a collaborative approach, it is hoped that the country action plans will set the stage for accelerating momentum for early grade reading as a pillar of the global education agenda.

- Naturally, at an international workshop it is not expected that participants would have fully fleshed out plans, as true plans would have to be done in country. Furthermore, some countries already have fairly advanced plans, and therefore the workshops would serve to nuance or improve plans in these cases. Finally, some countries may not be ready to plan, in which case the workshop will serve a technical sensitization purpose.

STRUCTURE

The workshop will consist of:

- **Technical Plenary Sessions:** Technical experts from partner countries and various leading organizations in the reading field will present on a series of thematic areas, emphasizing the evidence base in their presentations and also discussing specific action steps that need to be planned for each area.

- **Country Presentations:** Selected country teams will present on
successful whole-country or otherwise large scale experiences with improving early grade reading.

⇒ **Action Planning 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 process to meet the specific needs of each country.

⇒ **Discussion Panels:** Country teams will meet in plenary to discuss experiences of drafting action plans. Facilitators will support these discussions and highlight key issues and challenges presented by the country teams. Panelists will specify next steps and timelines for action upon return to their countries.

**PARTICIPANTS**

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

⇒ **Participating Countries:** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Tajikistan, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

- Each country will be represented by a “team” of participants consisting of individuals from the Ministry of Education, civil society organizations, and local donor groups. Participants forming the country teams are to be nominated through the Local Education Groups and implementing partners in each country, with close consideration of who the key actors are in regard to early grade reading.

- Teams should be limited to a maximum of 7 people, with some leeway for federated countries. The following bullet points suggest a possible team composition but this will ultimately depend on each country context. The guiding principle is to assemble a team capable of drawing up an effective action plan on early grade reading, which will be disseminated and implemented on return to country.

⇒ **2-3 representatives from the relevant Ministry of Education:** This may include representatives such as the Deputy Minister, Director of Primary Education, or the Director of Literacy, Curriculum or Teacher Training, etc.. The team should ideally include the highest relevant official with direct responsibility over reading in the early grades.

⇒ **1-2 representatives from relevant local CSOs/NGOs:** This will include one representative from a local NGO/CSO or the local
branch of an INGO/ICSO, and one from a teacher organization. **The NGO/CSO should be chosen from amongst the one or two that have most successful in-country experience on early reading development** and preferably those that work closely with government partners.

⇒ **1-2 local development partner representatives** with the strongest interest in this field, who may already be planning or undertaking activity in this area.

- GPE is coordinating with local donors to work out the financial arrangements of representatives from the Ministry of Education and local CSO/NGOs.

**EXPECTED RESULTS**

- **Development of a cumulative and living action plan through technical discussions and multi-stakeholder consultations.** Following the country teams’ work in Bangkok, they are encouraged to share and discuss the action plan widely and develop a process to detail proposed actions get buy-in from the relevant Ministry of Education departments and education development partners to confirm ownership and funding and define 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, most 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.

- **Development of a community of practice on early grade reading,** with a focus on South-South exchange and learning, access to global technical knowledge, and multi-stakeholder collaboration at global and country level; at the country level specifically through the Local Education Group or another, country-developed, coordinating body.

- The Secretariat of the Global Partnership for Education will prepare a workshop report as well as monitor the implementation of the action plans and make them accessible through the website.

**Date:** September 17-20, 2012  
**Location:** The Lebua at State Tower Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand  
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