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EdData II: Education Data for Decision Making Logistical Implications for Taking a Reading Intervention from a Pilot to Scale



Medina Korda
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Acknowledgments and Purpose

- This presentation was funded by the **USAID EdData II project**, Task Order Number 1, EHC-E-00-04-00004-00, led by RTI International. It was prepared as part of a training course for USAID and U.S. Department of Agriculture McGovern-Dole program managers and was held at RTI's offices in Washington, DC.
- Additional support and examples are from the USAID Liberia Teacher Training Program 2 (LTTP2), for which RTI International is a subcontractor.
- The presentation looks briefly at reading program design, including the process of going from a pilot to scale, with a focus on the logistical implications.

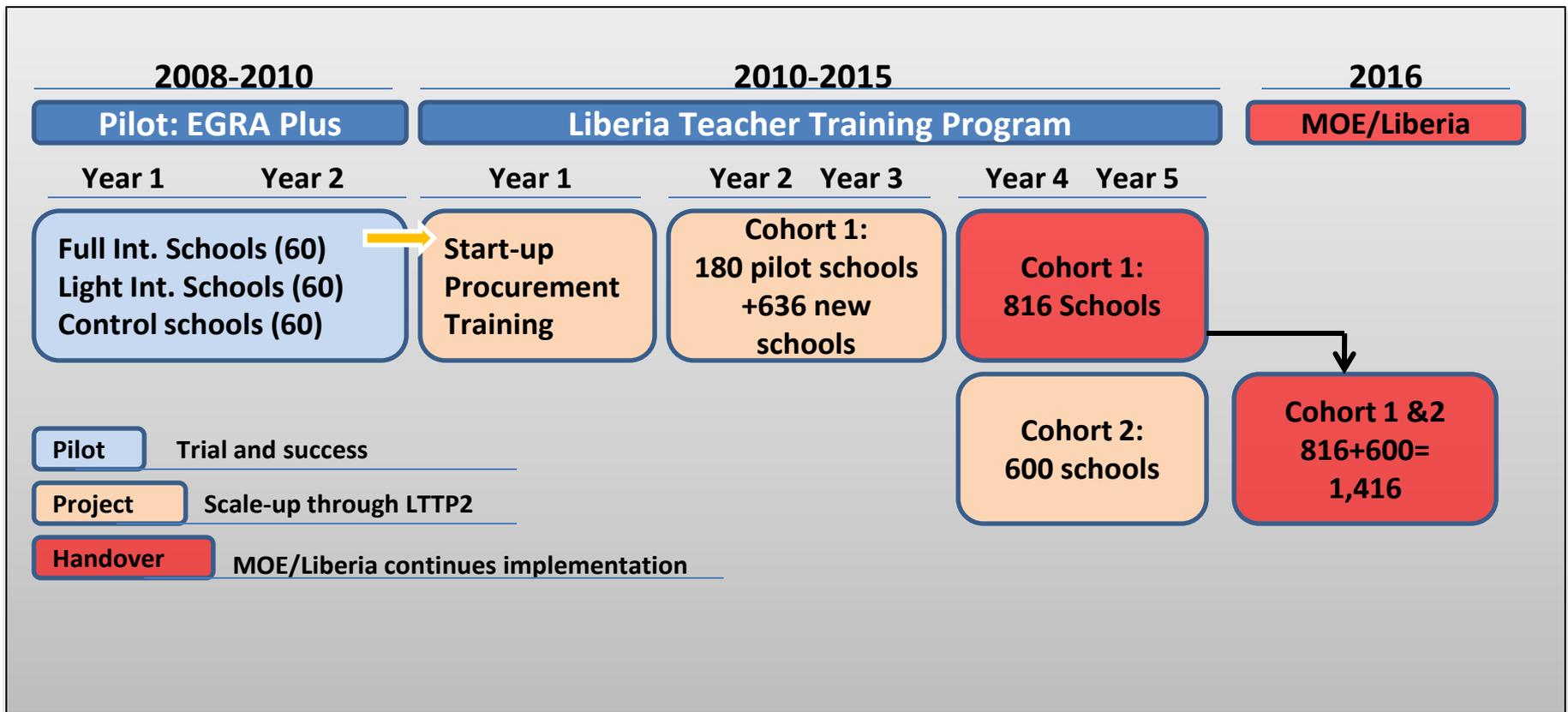
Outline

- Project design
- Logistical implications for
 - Content development
 - Training of teachers and classroom-level support
 - Training of coaches, deployment to schools, fidelity of implementation
 - Capacity building of education staff
 - Policy development
- Sustainability

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Reading Efforts in Liberia – Project Design



What is going to scale?

- Support to schools (for quick school impact)
 - Reading curriculum for teachers
 - Training of teachers: Face to face (2 a year)
 - Coaching of teachers at schools: 6-8 visits per year for each school
 - Books for students; reading manual for teachers
- Support to Teacher Training Institutes (TTIs) (for national sustainable impact)
 - Create a reading curriculum for pre-service use
 - Train student teachers and place them in the intervention schools
 - Establish demonstration and practicum schools for TTIs
- Support to the Ministry of Education (MOE) (for continuation of success)
 - Policy: Establish reading as a separate subject, teach reading every day for 45 minutes
 - Create reading benchmarks
 - Build capacity in reading curriculum development, benchmarks development, and early grade reading assessment

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Content development – Who is going to do it?

Content developed through the EGRA Plus pilot

- No reading curriculum → Insufficient in-country capacity to develop one
- Teachers had little or no lesson planning skills → We developed and scripted daily lesson plans for them
- No decodable books or readers → Found them internationally and adjusted to the local context.
- All this (and more) had to be done in 1-2 months in order to hit the ground running (familiar phrase, right?)

Logistics:

- High-quality expertise to spend significant amount of time to develop curriculum and adjusting decodable books
- Project management to plan and handle for content development and roll out to schools a few months later

Content development: Logistics

Preparation phase

- 6 months for the pilot and 1 year for scale-up before rollout

Availability of books

- Local printers in Liberia are (very) expensive
- Think long-term in terms of the publishing/distribution and handover

Rapid start-up requires more labor

- Front-load technical assistance, development, and management

Government ownership

- Approval of a reading curriculum and books requires (a) piloting, and (b) adjusting to local culture
- Budget for intensive policy dialogue at the outset to (a) explain science behind all this and (b) contextualize everything for the next year

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Teacher Training

We want teachers to learn how to:

- Deliver daily lesson plans successfully
- Link lessons with student books
- Use a pocket chart in support of phonics
- Assess student reading performance
- Engage parents in support of reading efforts through student reading report card



Goals, analysis – Who can deliver the training?

- Roll out reading to approx. 800 schools 2 years (Cohort 1), and then 600 schools after 2 years (Cohort 2).
 - Limitation: not enough initial capacity.
 - Can we wait for pre- and in-service to churn out new teachers? No, it would take too long.
 - NGO-based gap-filling for initial period
- * The analysis above is critical and requires a lot of forward thinking and planning (front-load the short-term technical assistance)

Delivery mechanism

- Schools are served by a Coach in a cluster of 12 schools
- Teachers are trained by a Coach twice per year at a cluster level
- Teachers are supported by a Coach once per month for a given year
- If needed, this is repeated for one more year. And in Liberia this is needed
- Coaches and school leadership assign a school master trainer for reading
- What are the logistical implications?

Logistics of teacher training

Teacher Face to Face Training in clusters

- In 816 schools, for 3 grades, we trained 3,264 teachers
- 68 training sessions were taking place at the same time (12 schools × 68 clusters = 816 schools)
- Venue for training – either a school or some other venue in the district. No cost or very little.
- Teacher transportation – cost is low given clustering
- Teacher feeding –
 - in rural areas there are no restaurants; hire a cook for a day to feed everyone
 - In more urban areas, prepare food for teachers through a restaurant
- (continues on next page)

Logistics of teacher training (continued)

- Sufficient training materials and some for schools is sent along with Coaches
- Participants are provided transportation to take some of their materials to schools
- The rest of the materials are delivered directly to schools at a later date with trucks
- Coaches are in charge of documenting the costs of feeding and venue (sign-in sheets for every day).
- Due to risk, Coaches do not carry funding with them, just sufficient amount for the first day or two
- Finance team deploys to complete the payment and collect documentation
- (The last two points – Not the most efficient way to handle payments. Currently determining how big of a risk it is for Coaches to carry funding and pay for this themselves.)

Logistics of teacher training (continued)

Let's look at the logistics for school-based support

- Each Coach visits every school in his/her cluster of 12 schools at least once per month and more if necessary
- Coaches are given a transportation allowance and they arrange for their own travel – taxi, a bike, or even walk
 - From the project management point of view, this is easier to manage, can be more expensive
 - Right now, we are conducting cost-benefit analysis for providing motorcycles
- Since Coaches reside locally, no per diems paid for their visits

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Coaches

- To reach 800 schools, needed 68 coaches (18 were already hired, so needed 50 more).
 - The operations took 3 months to go through the hiring and selection process (plan for this)
- Deployment of Coaches (discussed below)
- Most Coaches had low skills when it came to teaching reading
 - 6 months of coaching and support for them to learn all the skills
 - Initial training for Coaches followed by weekly check-ins by phone
 - Be prepared to bring Coaches back even 2 months after they've deployed
 - Conduct informal assessment to determine Coach effectiveness and take actions in case you need to
 - An effective and fast ONE STEP cascade

Fidelity of implementation

- The support to be provided by Coaches was systematized
- Detailed instructions for face-to-face training of teachers
- Coaches were trained just like they would train teachers
- Detailed instructions for every monthly visit were developed
- Classroom observation tool and other tools were developed to track progress of teacher's uptake
- All Coaches perform their tasks in the same way
- Accountability trackers developed
 - For example, every visit by a Coach has to be registered in a visitor log at the school and countersigned on the project's form that Coach carries along

Logistics related to coaches

- How about longer term?
- 6 reading and math specialists (RMSs) are placed in Teacher Training Institutes (2 per each of the 3 TTIs), and 2 are embedded in the MOE Liberia
- Form a senior team of 5-6 experts in the central office to
 - Manage and support all this effort
 - Work on policy side
 - Support pre-service reading curriculum and related efforts

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Key areas of capacity building and logistics

- How to assess student reading performance
 - For impact evaluation assessments, at least half of the assessors are MOE staff members
 - At the school level, introduce a student report card, create a manual for teachers on how to assess student performance and issue cards to parents (training done through a Coach)
 - At the county level, where Teacher Training Institutes are located, train the staff through project specialists who are housed there
 - Develop a series of video clips in support of this training (and all other training)

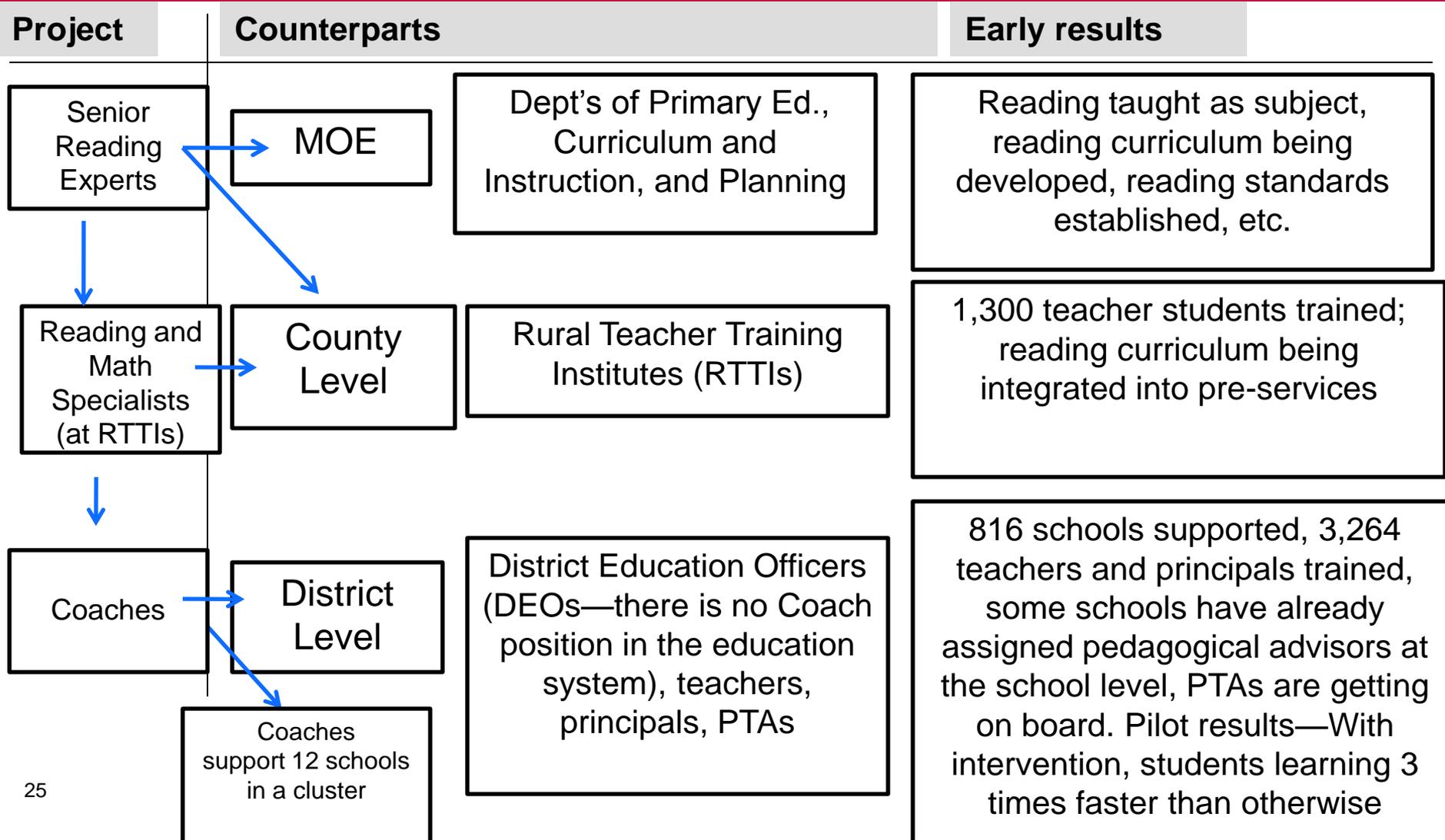
Key areas of capacity building and logistics (continued)

- How to teach reading
 - Identify key staff members across the education system whose job descriptions are closely related to reading
 - Include them in training, management visits, events, and whenever you can
- Use of data in decision-making
 - Focus only on reading
 - Train what is demanded and not what they should learn in vaguely theoretical terms. And work from there to open the doors for future training

Key areas of capacity building and logistics (continued)

- Reading standards and benchmarking
 - Start small in order not to hold the implementation back– Ask for a letter from MOE asking to teach reading for 45 minutes every day
 - Provide evidence of success and start the dialogue of reading standards and benchmarks
 - Do not reinvent the wheel; standards and benchmarks already exist in literature
 - Just budget for workshops for the above and support from senior specialists (either local or international)
 - Document and follow up on everything

Cannot fix the entire system, but can find “reading pressure points” and model the change



Final words

- **Plan, plan, and plan some more**
- True, we all have our own ways to get things done, but whatever it is:
 - Introduce systems, systematize support, visits, responses to requests. do not leave it up to that one person to think for everyone all the time
 - Your local team will appreciate all this as they are learning all this themselves
- Consult literature, and do not fall for ‘my’ or ‘your’ model.
 - There is plenty of evidence supporting the intervention being implemented in Liberia, including evidence from Liberia (refer to the final report on EGRA Plus: Liberia)