



Early Grade Reading: A Foundation for Development

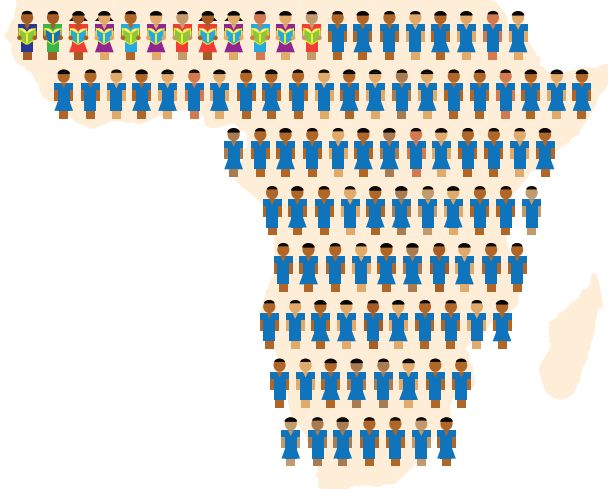
The Problem: *The Global Learning Crisis*

Hundreds of millions of children around the world are unable to read, write or do basic math. Most have attended school for years. Many belong to the world's most vulnerable populations.

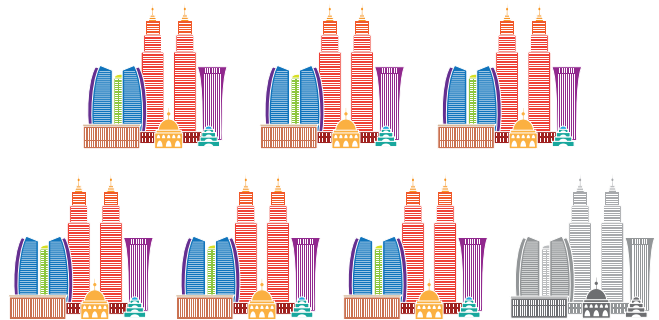
- **387 million:** Number of primary school-age children unable to read proficiently; 2/3 are already in school.¹



- **88:** Percentage of children aged 6–14 in sub-Saharan Africa who are not gaining minimum proficiency levels in reading.²



- **6 out of 7:** The number of top growing economic sectors in Asia that list reading comprehension as a skill in high demand.³



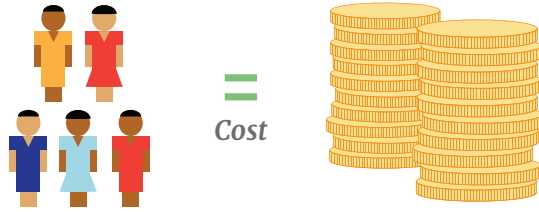
The Importance of Reading: *Poverty Reduction and Economic Growth*

USAID invests in early grade reading because literacy is a driver for the reduction of poverty and accelerates economic growth.

- **171 million:** The number of people who could be lifted out of poverty if all students in low-income countries left school with basic reading skills.⁴



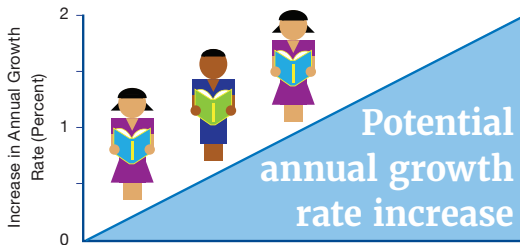
- **\$129 billion:** The cost of 250 million children worldwide not learning basic skills; this represents 10% of global spending on primary education.⁵



250 million children not learning basic skills

\$129 billion

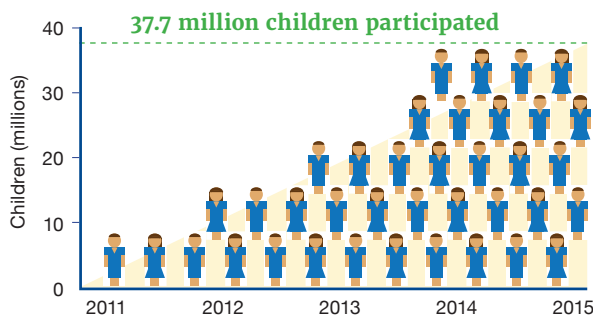
- **Up to 2%:** The increase in a nation's annual growth rate that may result from increased student reading performance.⁶



USAID's Global Efforts to End Childhood Illiteracy

USAID finances early grade reading initiatives and assessment in more than 40 countries, in both stable and crisis-affected environments, with a clear emphasis on measurably improving students' academic outcomes. USAID-supported programs combine evidence-based instruction, rigorous evaluation, active family engagement, and system-wide improvements to accelerate students' mastery of this essential skill.

- **37.7 million:** Number of children that participated in USAID-supported early grade reading programs from 2011-2015.⁷



- **146 million:** The number of books and other educational materials provided during the implementation of USAID's Education Strategy (2011-2015).⁸



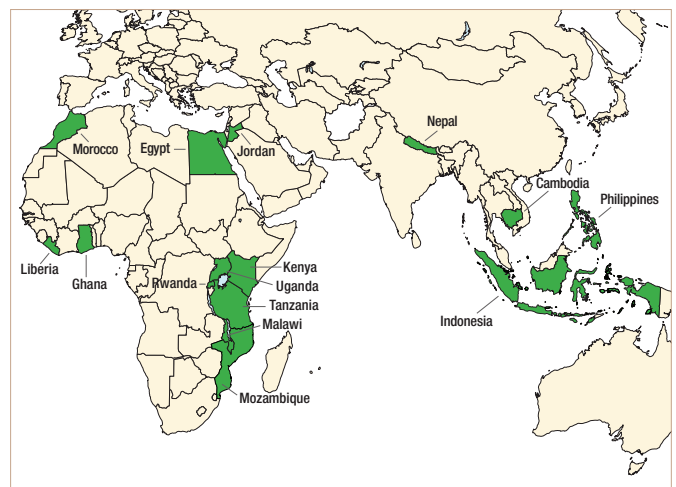
2011 → 2015

Reading by the Numbers at USAID

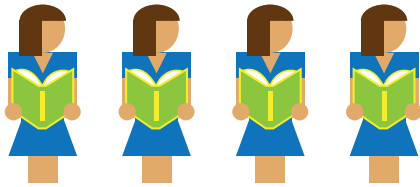
USAID works closely with Ministries of Education worldwide to build the capacity of national education systems to deliver high-quality reading instruction.

USAID is also working with other donor, private sector and NGO partners to improve education through teacher training, more and better books, and the promotion of reading assessments so that partner governments can improve their national reading programs.

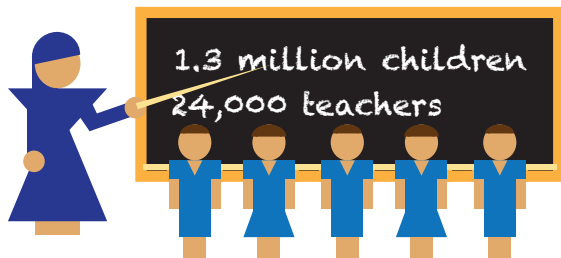
- **15:** The number of countries where governments are working to take USAID-launched early grade reading programs to scale.⁹



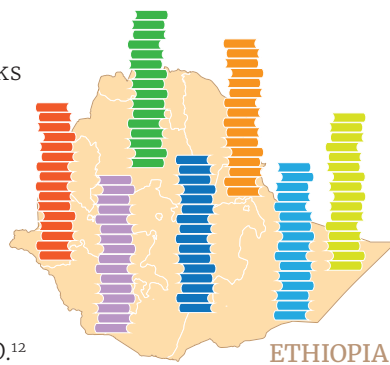
- **4 million:** The number of learners that benefitted when Egypt expanded the reading component of the USAID-funded Girls' Improved Learning Outcomes (GILO) program nationwide.¹⁰



- **1.3 million:** The number of students projected to benefit from the USAID-supported Pakistan Reading Project, along with nearly 24,000 teachers.¹¹



- **2.5 million:** The number of books in 7 mother tongue languages printed and distributed through the READ TA program in Ethiopia, which is supported by USAID.¹²

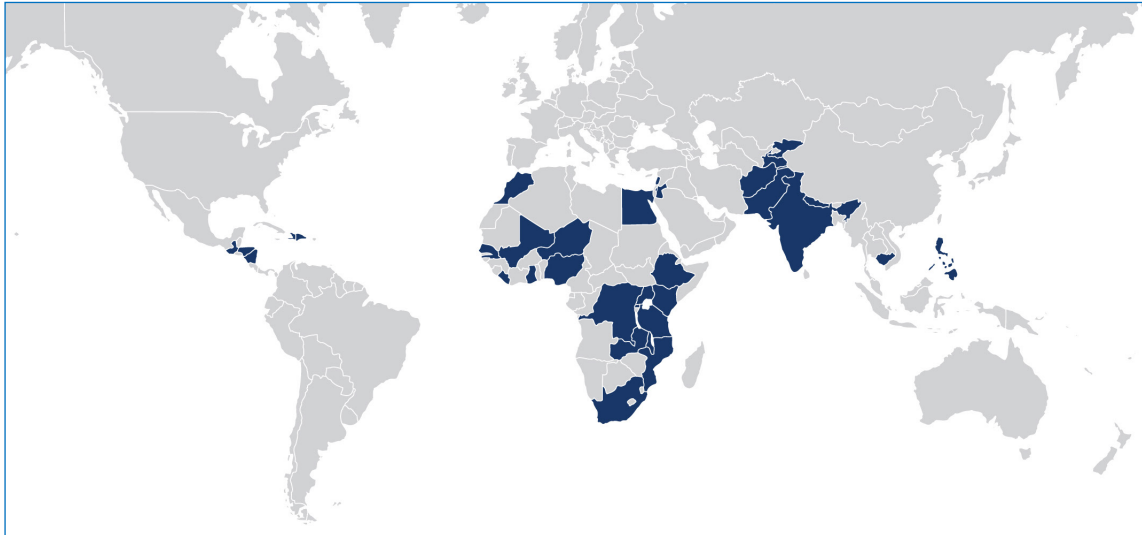


- **4,000+:** The number of books for early grade readers written in underserved national languages for children in the Philippines, Bangladesh, Nepal, Haiti and Nigeria by local authors, thanks to the **Enabling Writers initiative** supported by the **All Children Reading: A Grand Challenge for Development partners**, (USAID, World Vision, and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade), as well as **Reading within Reach** and the **Global Reading Network**.¹³

References

- ¹ UNESCO (2017). More Than One-Half of Children and Adolescents Are Not Learning Worldwide. Fact Sheet No. 46. Available at <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs46-more-than-half-children-not-learning-en-2017.pdf>
- ² UNESCO (2017). More Than One-Half of Children and Adolescents Are Not Learning Worldwide. Fact Sheet No. 46. Available at <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs46-more-than-half-children-not-learning-en-2017.pdf>
- ³ RTI International (In Press). Policy Paper: Why Should Asia Invest in Early Grade Reading? Produced for All Children Reading Asia, USAID.
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- ⁶ Hanushek, E., & L. Woessmann (2009). Do Better Schools Lead to More Growth? Cognitive Skills, Economic Outcomes, and Causation. Working Paper 14633. National Bureau of Economic Research. Available at <http://www.nber.org/papers/w14633>
- ⁷ USAID (2016). 2011–2015 USAID Education Strategy Progress Report. Available at https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/2011-2015_ProgressReport_r13_Final_WEB.pdf
- ⁸ USAID (2016). 2011–2015 USAID Education Strategy Progress Report. Available at https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/2011-2015_ProgressReport_r13_Final_WEB.pdf
- ⁹ DeStefano, J. & Healey, F. H. (2016). Scale-Up of Early Grade Reading Programs. EdData II Technical and Managerial Assistance, Task Number 15. Available at <https://globalreadingnetwork.net/eddata/task-order-15-data-education-programming-asia-and-middle-east-depame-scale-early-grade>
- ¹⁰ Gove, A., Brombacher, A., & Ward-Brent, M. (2017). Sparking a reading revolution: Results of early literacy interventions in Egypt and Jordan. In A. Gove, A. Mora, & P. McCardle (Eds.), *Progress toward a literate world: Early reading interventions in low-income countries, New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 155, 97–115. Available at <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-1119407397.html>
- ¹¹ Global Reading Network. Webinar spotlights Pakistan Reading Project. Available at <https://www.globalreadingnetwork.net/news-and-events/blog/webinar-spotlights-pakistan-reading-project>
- ¹² SIL LEAD (2017). SIL LEAD: The First Five Years. Available at <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/51afb275e4b06f81432164f0/t/585b2e513e00be2582b3a565/1482370692973/Final+-+2016+Five+Year+Report+online+updated.pdf>
- ¹³ URC (2017). Reading within Reach (REACH) Quarterly Report, April 1, 2017 to June 30, 2017

Countries With USAID-Supported Reading Programs



- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|------------|-------------|----------------|
| Afghanistan | Dominican Republic | India | Morocco | Rwanda |
| Barbados and Eastern Southern Caribbean (OECS countries: Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Anguila) | Egypt | Jordan | Mozambique | Senegal |
| Cambodia | Ethiopia | Kyrgyzstan | Nepal | South Africa |
| DRC | Ghana | Kenya | Nicaragua | Tajikistan |
| | Guatemala | Lebanon | Niger | Tanzania |
| | Haiti | Liberia | Nigeria | Uganda |
| | Honduras | Malawi | Pakistan | West Bank Gaza |
| | | Mali | Philippines | Zambia |



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The Global Reading Network (GRN) is an interactive hub and resource repository that connects and mobilizes a global community of stakeholders working to improve literacy outcomes for children in the early grades, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. The GRN is supported through Reading within Reach (REACH), a five-year initiative funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and managed by University Research Co., LLC (URC).