



EdData II

Task Order 7

Learning Outcomes Research and Assessment-Related Projects

Final Report

EdData II Technical and Managerial Assistance, Task 7
Task Order No. EHC-E-07-04-00004-00
Strategic Objective 3
RTI Project No. 09354.007

December 2013

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by RTI International.

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Final Report

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RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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Learning Outcomes Research and Assessment-Related Projects: Final Report

1. Introduction

In much of the developing world, a lack of reliable data hinders realistic education policy and decision making. Without good measurements of access, learning, and management factors, local and national stakeholders base their policies on vague or erroneous ideas about the needs of their students and schools. Similarly, international donors lack sound data and often must make program decisions based on this incomplete and unreliable information.

EdData II, sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), provides survey expertise to help national and local governments as well as the donor community assess education status in low income countries. Project advisors collaborate with USAID Missions, Ministries of Education, and other donors and stakeholders to find innovative and cost-effective ways to gather and analyze education data. They can then jointly establish relevant benchmarks that help governments, teachers, and parents or guardians provide meaningful education for their children.

EdData II offers diverse services such as school-based, household, and national surveys. Rapid assessments can examine student-focused issues such as literacy, numeracy, and gender disparities. They can also measure school and district management capacity, highlight education needs as perceived by the business sector, assist with program evaluation and monitoring, and reveal potentially useful applications for information and communication technology (ICT). In addition to these activities, this project can also conduct youth-focused assessments; analyze or evaluate existing data systems or data sets; supply technical assistance and build local capacity for national educational assessments; and generate and evaluate experimental instructional interventions at the national, district, school, and classroom levels. EdData II also designs research and training for USAID on topics related to the Education Strategy 2011–2015 goals of improved reading, improved mathematics, routine monitoring, and education access.

The period of performance for EdData II Task Order 7, Learning Outcomes Research and Assessment-Related Projects, was October 2009–October 2013. Its purpose was to build on the measurement instruments developed and piloted under other EdData II task orders and to coordinate data, analysis, and reporting on learning outcomes with specific attention to early grade reading proficiency, early grade numeracy, and conditions of learning as indicated by school management effectiveness measures in a number of priority countries. The task order was structured in phases, with a set of five countries studied in Year 1; an additional five countries in Year 2 with a slightly modified scope of work; and a Year 3 no-cost extension to develop one new experimental assessment and to complete some of the Year 2 country studies that had been unavoidably delayed for various reasons. A summary of the scopes of work for each year is as follows.

1.1. Activity Statement, Year 1

Year 1 activities aimed to establish a reading performance baseline using the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) protocol in the FY 2008 President's Initiative to Expand Education (PIEE) countries (with the exception of Liberia, where this had already been done under EdData II Task Order 6). The findings from EGRA were used to conduct policy dialogue activities designed to raise awareness about the importance of reading in the early grades and to inform policy makers, and other education stakeholders, of the current status of students' reading performance. In general, work done under Task Order 7 consisted of:

- Measuring the state of reading in the early grades in ways that could be easily understood by both educators and policy makers.
- Carrying out sufficient policy dialogue to ensure that learning in the early grades, and in particular literacy, would receive appropriate attention.
- Assisting USAID in the development of global indicators of quality education, focusing on learning outcomes.

Some countries identified for Task Order 7 support already had considerable assessment activity in progress. EdData II assistance, in those cases, gathered existing data, engaged in some extra or supplementary assessments that would render the knowledge more accessible (e.g., by carrying out oral assessment of children using simple protocols), and collated the data, to produce a user-friendly picture of learning outcomes. All Task Order 7 Year 1 efforts were carried out with maximum coordination with Ministries of Education as well as existing projects and activities, to avoid working at cross-purposes.

1.2. Activity Statement, Year 2

Year 2 work, in most cases, saw combined EGRA, Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA), and Snapshot of School Management Effectiveness (SSME) applications in multiple countries. The combined application of these three instruments yielded rich data sets affording users a clear picture of students' foundational reading and numeracy skills and also of the management and teaching practices that are impacting student performance. This combined information provided Ministries, USAID, and other donor organizations with information needed to develop policies and strategies aimed at improving learning outcomes. By working closely with Ministry counterparts, RTI and its local partners ensured full local ownership of both the assessment methodologies and the resulting findings. Ministries now have the option of adapting this trio of EdData II tools for their routine monitoring of learning outcomes and school practice within their systems. In general, the Year 2 work:

- Measured early grade student performance in literacy and numeracy in five additional priority countries selected in conjunction with the Basic Education Coordinator, Regional Bureaus and Missions. The countries were the Dominican Republic, Kenya, Morocco, Rwanda, and Zambia.

- Conducted SSME assessments in the selected priority countries to evaluate what management factors may be impacting (hindering or enhancing) student performance in reading and numeracy.
- Produced and disseminated reports on the findings of the EGRA, EGMA, and SSME for each country.
- Engaged in policy dialogue based on these findings.

1.3. Activity Statement, Year 3

A no-cost extension was added to the task order contract both to complete remaining activities and to add a final new activity, a test of the lot quality assurance sampling (LQAS) method in the education sector.

In February 2011, Dr. Luis Crouch led an informational presentation to USAID’s Education Sector Council on ways in which the LQAS method might be used for education-sector monitoring and evaluation. This approach, used originally by industry and more recently in the health sector, is designed to efficiently monitor the quality of products and services. USAID interest continued, and in April 2012 RTI prepared a draft concept note for USAID briefly explaining the technique and proposing a pilot implementation in Ghana. This pilot would be able to take advantage of Ghana’s scale-up of its National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP), for which EdData II had performed a cursory (not comprehensive) evaluation earlier under Task 7 funding; as well as the recent establishment of a National Inspection Bureau (NIB).

During the last week of May 2012, with partial funding from Task 1, EdData II staff and former Contracting Officer’s Representative (COR) Sandra Bertoli organized an introductory course on LQAS. Dr. Joseph Valadez, LQAS expert and professor at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, came to provide introductory training. RTI, USAID, and U.S. Department of Agriculture representatives attended. The outcome of this course was a decision to go forward with the LQAS pilot in Ghana, as described in more detail in the Year 3 section of this report.

1.4. Structure of the Final Report

The remainder of this report is organized by project year, and within year, by the various countries of interest. Each summary gives a history of the effort in each country, including its purpose, various challenges encountered, and in-country reactions to the study findings. Links are provided to all EdData II analysis reports that are available for these studies, where interested readers may review the data findings and policy recommendations. In addition, most of the instruments used are now available for download from the EdData II project website, www.eddataglobal.org (navigate by the Countries tab).

2. Year 1 Task 7 Activities

2.1. Ethiopia

In May and June 2010, the EGRA was performed in eight regions in Ethiopia. Funding from Task Order 7 was applied to two languages and 80 schools, and funding from EdData II Task Order 9 enabled the sample to be expanded to four more languages and over 250 more schools, for a total sample of 338 schools and 13,079 students. The executive summary of the findings report describes the context and purpose in detail, as follows:

The EGRA was a collaboration among the Ministry of Education (MOE), RTI International, members of the Education and Training Quality Assurance Agency (ETQAA), the Improving Quality in Primary Education Program (IQPEP), and other stakeholders, and was a study of the reading skills in Ethiopia in a variety of areas.



The assessment was developed for 6 languages in Ethiopia, such that Grade 2 and Grade 3 students were assessed in Tigrinya, Afan Oromo, Amharic, Somali, Sidaamu Afoo, and Hararigna. The assessments included a variety of subtasks, including letter (or fidel) sound fluency, phonemic awareness, word naming fluency, unfamiliar word naming fluency, oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, and listening comprehension. The assessments were leveled according to the MOE's Minimum Learning Competencies.

The purpose was to investigate the children's reading skills in the context of the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) and the rapidly changing primary school environment in Ethiopia. In addition to student literacy assessments, a family background questionnaire was administered to students, and head teacher and teacher questionnaires at the school level. School level and teacher level data were matched with student achievement data to determine how student background, the classroom environment, and community factors were correlated with student outcomes.¹

RTI's work in Ethiopia under Task 7 was completed during the October–December 2010 quarter, with the final activity in FY 2011 being a policy dialogue workshop.

¹ Ben Piper. (2010). *Ethiopia Early Grade Reading Assessment Data Analysis Report: Language and Early Learning*. Analysis report prepared for USAID under the EdData II project, Task 7. Research Triangle Park, North Carolina: RTI International. <https://www.eddataglobal.org/countries/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubDetail&ID=289>

The full findings report can be [downloaded here](#) (see also footnote 1). Based on the results of the report and dissemination workshop, the MOE saw the need to revisit the current language syllabus for primary grades and stopped the procurement of new mother-tongue textbooks. USAID has since awarded RTI a technical assistance project to support the MOE and RSEBs to revise the syllabi and write new reading and writing curriculum for grades 1–8 in seven languages and English.

2.2. Ghana

The activity in Ghana focused on providing both the Ghana Education Service (GES) and the USAID/Ghana mission with data giving an initial glimpse at the progress of the National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP)—an initiative to support a mother-tongue-based literacy policy in the early grades. From the findings report:



NALAP is a ground-breaking literacy intervention, unique in both Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa. While several countries have recently moved toward local language policies focused on ensuring that children learn to read in the language that they speak at home, many of these country policies are impeded by the lack of high-quality pedagogical material to support them, and fewer have careful designs for the transition to a language of broader communication, such as English. The NALAP program was designed to provide the education system with the materials and training to properly implement a mother tongue policy, using locally developed reading materials and teachers' guides to help teachers do the relatively difficult task of revising how they teach reading.

Following several years of program and materials development, the NALAP program was initiated in Ghana in early 2010. The formative evaluation planned under Task Order 7 was designed to be a micro-level assessment of the current status of NALAP in Ghana. The evaluation strategy was to obtain in-depth data for GES and USAID while limiting the sample to a manageable size.²

² RTI International. (2011). *NALAP Formative Evaluation Report*. Analysis report prepared for USAID under the EdData II project, Task 7. Research Triangle Park, North Carolina: RTI International. <https://www.eddataglobal.org/countries/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubDetail&ID=317>

Once NALAP had been implemented for almost an entire school year, USAID required a relatively informal, yet conceptually rigorous (in terms of the constructs examined), formative evaluation that was oriented at how NALAP was being implemented, whether the pedagogical approaches used by teachers were effective, and more importantly, the use that teachers were making of the NALAP teaching and learning materials.

RTI completed its Task 7 activities in Ghana in March 2011, including a final report on the findings, which can be [downloaded here](#) (see also footnote 2).

Findings from the evaluation of NALAP were useful to inform the contextual understanding and design of the later EdData II Task Order 21: *Ghana Partnership for Education—Testing. Testing* includes a nationally representative EGRA in 11 Ghanaian languages of instruction (8 more than the Task Order 7 assessment measured) as well as in English. As of the writing of this final report, analysis results of the *Testing* 2013 EGRA were pending, but will serve to shed more light on the state of mother-tongue instruction in Ghana.

2.3. Honduras

The purpose of the activity in Honduras was to help teachers, parents, and policy makers better understand the importance of reading. For teachers in particular, the activity aimed to communicate the benefits of regular literacy assessment in the classroom, train them how to do it, and help them determine how to use the results to guide and improve their instruction.

To these ends, project technical staff developed a video on best practices of reading instruction and EGRA administration, and organized a workshop held February 7–10, 2012, in el Zamorano, led by RTI technical staff with local partners. Participants of the workshop represented 40 municipalities in Honduras. The majority of the participants were staff members from the Secretary of Education. Also in attendance were district or municipal-level technical assistants charged with working directly with teachers and school directors, as well as six teachers. Representatives from the EduAccion project also attended with representatives from American Institute of Research, Save the Children, and Childfund.

The workshop was met with general enthusiasm and interest from participants, most of whom were former or current primary school teachers. The workshop used the Nicaragua social marketing video “Todos a Leer” to set the stage for the workshop. Facilitators explained the importance of students learning to read and discussed the consequences for students who are not able to read and comprehend well by third grade when they will begin to read to learn. Participants then spent a day and a half learning and practicing the Honduras EGRA instrument, ensuring their ability to instruct teachers on the administration of the instrument as well.

Once participants were prepared to administer the instrument, the group discussed how teachers could use EGRA at the classroom level and how teachers and district officials could make informal alternate versions of the instrument, including practice in writing new short stories that are grade-appropriate. Participants were then led through discussion and activities focused on analyzing

data, grouping students for instruction, and using decision-making processes for teachers to know when students need more instruction or practice in certain skills, as well as when to move on to more difficult skills.

Finally, participants spent time discussing instructional activities that could be used to help students who needed more instruction or practice. Throughout the workshop, a video produced in Honduras to support the workshop was shown as a visual aid for the ideas and concepts discussed. All participants were given copies of the video. The workshop ended with a discussion and agreement that participants would replicate the workshop at least three times in the next year and that there would be some minimal support from the EduAccion project. Evaluations of the workshop were all positive and enthusiastic.³

Materials, reports, and presentations from the Task Order 7 activity in Honduras can be found on the “[Honduras](#)” page of the EdData website.⁴ The videos referenced above—titled *Para Leer Mejor*—can be found within the “EGRA in the Field” album [here](#).⁵

2.4. Mali

The purpose of the Mali activity was to allow for compilation and analysis of data collected under projects funded by USAID and by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to be compiled and analyzed together. Additionally, the funding under Task Order 7 allowed for policy dialogue, presentations, and dissemination activities involving results across projects.

No data collection took place under this task order; data already collected from Hewlett-funded and Mission funded baselines were considered nationally representative. These data were collected in April–May 2009 and presented to the Ministry of Education and donor partners in November and December 2009.

The results were officially accepted and “validated” by the MOE in late 2010. Following this, RTI and Programme Harmonisé d'Appui au Renforcement de l' Education (PHARE) project staff discussed holding a reading conference to be co-organized by RTI, the PHARE project, USAID/Mali, and the Hewlett Foundation. The plan was for the conference to bring together key stakeholders—policy makers, civil society organizations, and international NGOs—to discuss primary education outcomes, with an attached agenda to facilitate the development of the Mali MOE’s plans for heightening public awareness of learning outcomes, as well strategize about the use of EGRA going forward in the country. In addition, project staff held discussions with

³ Jessica Mejia. (2012). *Summary: Honduras EGRA Teacher Training Workshop*. Activity summary report prepared for USAID under the EdData II project, Task 7. Research Triangle Park, North Carolina: RTI International. <https://www.eddataglobal.org/countries/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubDetail&ID=356>.

⁴ Four documents related to this activity are available from the Honduras page, full path <https://www.eddataglobal.org/countries/index.cfm?fuseaction=showdir&pubcountry=HN&statusID=3&showtypes=0>; a manual for EGRA administrators; presentations from the three-day training workshop (two files); and the Honduras EGRA summary workshop report cited earlier.

⁵ Full path for “EGRA in the Field” album: <https://www.eddataglobal.org/video/index.cfm>

USAID officials about contributing to possible intervention work around mother-tongue instruction, as well as to a communications strategy that would utilize EGRA results in an attempt to raise awareness and concern about learning at a popular level.

Unfortunately, originally due to protracted discussions and lack of consensus among all the parties involved, and then due to the suspension of work following the March 2012 coup d'état, these various planned follow up activities did not come to fruition.

2.5. Yemen

The purpose of the activity in Yemen was to assist the MOE to begin looking critically at the *quality* of the country's basic education system, after having made great strides toward ensuring all pupils *access* to school. To this end, an EGRA was administered in 40 schools in the Arabic language. The sample of schools was randomly selected and covered both large and small schools in each of three governorates, with 20 pupils assessed in each school—10 in grade 2 and 10 in grade 3—for a total sample size of 735 pupils. Schools were sampled from within the governorates of Amran, Lahj, and Sana'a—three of eight governorates prioritized by USAID. Data collection took place in April 2011.



In June, 2012, a policy dialogue was carried out via videoconferencing between Washington, DC and Yemen. From Yemen, participants included staff of subcontractor Prodigy Systems, USAID/Yemen, the USAID Community Livelihoods Program, the USAID Responsive Governance Project, and the Ministry of Education. From the United States, RTI technical staff led the discussion of the results, and USAID staff based in Washington, DC also participated. EGRA results were shared and a robust discussion followed, with representatives from Yemen expressing a commitment to using the EGRA data to inform policy and future efforts to improving literacy instruction in the country. USAID and the MOE in Yemen went on to partner on more activities to this effect following the completion of the Task Order 7 project. The EGRA findings report in English and Arabic, as well as presentations, can be found on the “[Yemen](#)” [page](#) of the EdData II website.⁶ Also USAID covered the Yemen activity in a [press release](#) dated June 18, 2012.⁷

⁶ The website's Yemen page contains links to nine documents related to this assessment, including the final report in both languages and the instruments used: <https://www.eddataglobal.org/countries/index.cfm?fuseaction=showdir&pubcountry=YE&statusID=3&showtypes=0>

⁷ Full path for the press release: https://www.eddataglobal.org/news/documents/USAID_Weekly_Program_Report_6_18_12.pdf (see page 2).

3. Year 2 Task 7 Activities

3.1. Dominican Republic

The purpose of the assessment in the Dominican Republic was to obtain baseline knowledge about reading acquisition in selected schools, with the intent of using the data to make improvements to current programs. Although the Dominican Republic was designated as one of the Year 2 (2012) countries to receive assistance under this task order, protracted negotiations to determine the scope of work as well as the Ministry of Education's interest and level of involvement, delayed the start-up until mid-2012. At that time, it was decided that the SSME application could be used to help the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) better understand student outcomes in its project schools and, in August–September 2012, the MOE participated in the adaptation workshop for the SSME/EGRA/EGMA instruments and the training of assessors and supervisors in instrument administration.

Administration of the combined EGRA and EGMA as well as the SSME took place in October 2012, in 50 AmCham schools. The field teams assessed 10 students each from grades 1 and 2 (1,000 total students); interviewed the school director, a grade 2 teacher, and parents; took a survey of each school and grade 2 classroom; and observed reading and math instruction in grade 2 classrooms.

During January–March 2013, the technical team prepared the EGRA/EGMA/SSME database for analysis, analyzed the data, and began writing the draft analysis report. For the first of these activities, the team reviewed and processed the data, adding appropriate weights based on the sampling framework; and cleaned the database and resolved inconsistencies. The cleaned database was then analyzed and the findings summarized in a report. The report, which was initially drafted in Spanish, went through multiple revisions prior to being finalized and translated into English.

Throughout the work in the Dominican Republic, the plan had been for the last phase to consist of a meeting about the results among stakeholders from AmCham, Entrena, the Ministry of Education, and RTI, with Dr. Guadalupe, RTI consultant, also present. Repeated attempts to contact AmCham and USAID/Dominican Republic in order to organize this planned meeting, unfortunately, proved unsuccessful. The final report was, however, reviewed by AmCham, with feedback sent to RTI in the last week of September.

The project team found the overriding challenge of the efforts in the Dominican Republic to be related to the Ministry's philosophy on reading instruction, which is not aligned with the theoretical framework on which the EGRA instrument is based. This difference led to push-back from the Ministry and resulted in accommodations on items such as schools selection, data collection methods, content of the instruments, summary findings, and the relevance of findings to existing programming. Overall, it proved impossible to find common ground and to produce information that the MOE would be able, and was willing, to use going forward.

Given the difficulty in creating an opportunity to disseminate the results of the EdData II study among Ministry stakeholders, as well as the last-minute revision and finalization of the analysis report before the task order closed, there was no possibility to see concrete outcomes in the Dominican Republic based on work done under EdData II. One lesson that was learned, however, is the need to ensure a demand-driven scope of work for the type of assessment that EdData II employed, such that the host country ministry buys into the precepts of the assessment itself and the validity of the collected data.

3.2. Kenya

Task 7 in Kenya funded an SSME baseline assessment that was carried out in conjunction with the EGRA/EGMA administration done by the USAID Primary Math and Reading Initiative (PRIMR; EdData II Task 13), which meant that Task 7 activities were postponed until the PRIMR project was in place. PRIMR was awarded on September 15, 2011, and the Task 7 SSME instrument adaptation took place during October 2011 along with the EGRA and EGMA adaptations for PRIMR.



In order to effectively assess children and administer the SSME instruments, the PRIMR team spent five days training 66 data collectors, who were then organized into the 17 teams. The 17 trainees designated as supervisors were trained on the SSME tools at the school level. Particular care was taken with the training on the classroom observation instruments in reading and math, as reliable data collection using these tools is notoriously difficult. Most of the assessment team leaders had previous experience with other versions of the teacher, head teacher, and student instruments, and the quality of the training was evident from the very high response rates and the lack of missing data in the databases.

The joint EGRA/EGMA/SSME baseline assessment took place in January 2012. Supported by signed letters from the MOE, written permission from the RTI Institutional Review Board (IRB), permission from the Kenya National Council of Science and Technology, and ethical approval from Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), the PRIMR team assessed children in 230 schools across PRIMR's sample in Nairobi, Thika, and Nakuru in Kiswahili reading, English reading, and math. Using EdData II Task Order 7 funds, PRIMR implemented the SSME in 230 schools. In 10 of these 230 schools, the Tangerine[®] tool, on Kindle Fires, was used for SSME data collection to produce a unique set of data for analyzing outcomes.

After RTI undertook the basic SSME analysis in the first quarter of 2012, the report writers worked with the MOE in joint writing workshops. In early April 2012, senior members of the MOE and Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) worked together on an interpretation exercise to inform the team on how to interpret the low findings and the SSME results. Later in

the month, key data analysts from the MOE worked with the RTI team to write the actual report. By the end of April the report was ready for sharing with the technical team at the MOE, and it was sent via soft and hard copy for them to read and review. All changes were then incorporated into the draft report.

An RTI EdData II technical staff member traveled to Nairobi in mid-June 2012 for high-level policy dialogue meetings with the MOE and the Semi-Autonomous Government Agencies (SAGAs), in order to better explain the relationships between SSME and outcomes, as well as to discuss how the SSME findings can be used as part of the national reform effort.

The final baseline findings report was submitted to USAID/Kenya on August 23, 2012, with acceptance on September 4, and can be [downloaded here](#).⁸

The Task 7-funded SSME analysis, paired with the EGRA and EGMA results from baseline and midterm, helped to highlight systemic changes that could be made, and additional training that teachers and their advisors needed, to create the greatest possible impact in terms of student learning under the PRIMR treatment. The performance of students in treatment schools compared to controls was compelling enough that the UK Department for International Development has since funded extensions of the PRIMR experimental intervention to investigate effects of the PRIMR treatment in a 800 schools in two rural counties, and use of tablets to enhance coaches' instructional support of teachers.

3.3. Morocco

As with most of the Year 2 investigations under Task 7, the objectives in Morocco were to conduct a combined EGRA/EGMA/SSME and to present the findings via a policy dialogue activity. The instruments were developed in Modern Standard Arabic, with content adapted as needed for the Moroccan context. USAID/Morocco and the national and regional levels of the Ministry of Education were involved in the instrument development as well as the data collection. The data collection teams, with personnel from both MOE and local partner ETM, led the fieldwork in May 2011. They administered the assessments to 773 grade 2 and grade 3 students, in 40 schools in Doukkala Abda region (randomly selected from 1400 possible schools in the region). The researchers also interviewed head teachers, teachers, students, and parents, and conducted the various SSME classroom observations and inventories.

The initial draft of the data analysis report in English was submitted to USAID/Morocco in November 2011, along with an executive summary in French. Following this, the policy dialogue workshop was held in January 2012 with the team from the Ministry of Education which led the study, the director of the Regional Academy for Education (AREF) in Doukkala Abda where the study took place, and the AREF regional team leaders. As summarized in an EdData II progress report submitted shortly afterward:

⁸ RTI International. (2012). *Primary Math and Reading (PRIMR) Initiative: Baseline report*. Prepared for USAID by Drs. Benjamin Piper and Abel Mugenda under the EdData II project, Task Orders 7 and 13. Research Triangle Park, North Carolina: RTI. <https://www.eddataglobal.org/countries/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubDetail&ID=480>

In addition to the RTI EdData II technical team, the attendees included school principals, inspectors, and regional education officials who had been trained by the project and served on the data collection team. Their concrete goal for the workshop was to review what was happening—or not—with early grade instruction in language and mathematics, and to make recommendations to address the problems represented by the low student scores. One of the RTI staff members who led the presentation noted afterward that “The MoE was appalled by the results but had a very positive attitude, wants things to change, and asked for more. They are very motivated to get things moving on early grade learning.”

RTI also presented the results at one briefing for USAID/Morocco, which lasted 90 minutes rather than the 30 originally set aside, due to questions and follow-up from those present, including the mission director; and another among USAID implementing partners RTI, MSI, and Creative Associates, as well as Peace Corps directors. Again, there was lively discussion about the meaning of the results and the possible next steps.⁹

The conclusions and suggestions drawn from the policy dialogue were integrated into the final version of the report. The final report, translated from English into French, was shared with USAID/Morocco and the Ministry of Education in May 2012. The English version can be [downloaded here](#).¹⁰

Anecdotal reports from Morocco, following the conclusion of activities there, indicated a desire to better understand literacy achievement in other areas of the country, but to date there has not been a follow-on activity, to RTI’s knowledge.

3.4. Rwanda

Again per the pattern established for Task 7, Year 2, the work in Rwanda involved a combined EGRA/EGMA/SSME, analysis, and policy dialogue events to disseminate the results.

In October–November 2010, RTI completed the preliminary steps. The initial research design was agreed upon, and the instrument adaptation workshop was carried out (per an add-on agreement, this included implementing full EGRA instruments in English and



⁹ Amy Mulcahy-Dunn. (2012). *Task Order 1 Annual Report, October 2011–September 2012*. Prepared for USAID under the EdData II project, Task Order 1. Research Triangle Park, North Carolina: RTI.

¹⁰ Souhila Messaoud-Galusi, Amy Mulcahy-Dunn, Wendi Ralaingita, and Emily Kochetkova. (2012). *Student Performance in Reading and Mathematics, Pedagogic Practice, and School Management in Doukkala Abda, Morocco*. Prepared for USAID under the EdData II project, Task Order 7. Research Triangle Park, North Carolina: RTI. <https://www.eddataglobal.org/countries/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubDetail&ID=387>

Kinyarwanda for primary grades 3 and 5, as well as EGMA for grades 3 and 5). Through a competitive bidding process, RTI selected a subcontractor, OutReach Development Solutions. Conversations were held with the Mission and the Ministry of Education in order to determine how RTI's work would be coordinated with the work of the Ministry's Learning Assessment Rwanda System (LARS) team.

Over 40 individuals participated in the adaptation workshop, including ministry officials, development partners, university lecturers, and independent consultants with expertise in reading, mathematics, or school management. There was a great deal of interest among the participants, and the workshops produced a full set of instruments adapted to the Rwanda context.

During January–March 2011, RTI and OutReach Development Solutions carried out the EGRA/EGMA/SSME assessor training, piloted and finalized the instruments, and completed full-scale data collection.

The assessment teams piloted the full battery of instruments in seven schools. Seventy students completed each of the assessment instruments (EGMA, English EGRA, and Kinyarwanda EGRA in grades P4 and P6), and 38 teachers (approximately 1 for each target subject for each target grade) completed teacher interviews. The teams carried out 38 classroom observations and completed full SSME questionnaires for each school. RTI analyzed the data from this pilot and used the results to finalize the instruments.

The start of the full-scale data collection, however, which had been expected to begin on February 14, 2011, was significantly delayed because of difficulty in receiving the necessary permission from the Ministry of Education to carry out the fieldwork. RTI received this permission February 24, and permission to go forward with data collection was approved on March 7. Ultimately, the sample size had to be reduced given the short time that remained in the school year for data collection following these delays. Data were collected in 42 schools, including 420 students tested on each assessment—a large enough sample size for reliable statistical analysis but at the minimum end of the acceptable range.

Preliminary results from the analysis of the survey findings were available in April 2011 and, at USAID's request, RTI presented those findings at an education sector stakeholder meeting that month as part of the annual Rwandan education sector review process. The Minister of Education, several national directors and technical staff from across several ministry offices, a broad cross-section of ministry financial and technical partners, and academics all participated in the meeting. The preliminary results from the EGRA/EGMA/SSME surveys were enthusiastically discussed with ministry officials, including the minister, evincing a strong commitment to mobilizing effort to address the shortcomings revealed by the data.

During June–August 2011, RTI completed the full data analysis, including all standard EGRA and EGMA analysis, as well as descriptive and correlational analysis of all SSME instruments. RTI submitted the findings report, and engaged in planning discussions with USAID/Rwanda in order to schedule the anticipated policy dialogue workshop, including drafting and submitting a proposed policy dialogue activity plan (in the form of a concept note).

In late 2011–early 2012, RTI activities focused on presentation of EGRA/EGMA/SSME results in various venues. Overall, the attendees received the results positively, and discussed the purposes of the instruments and how they might be used in Rwanda in the future. Recommendations for revising/finalizing the EGRA/EGMA/SSME report were also solicited and recorded during the technical review workshop. At that time, the Deputy Director of the Rwandan Education Board, who was also responsible for assessment and research, indicated that once the recommendations were integrated into the report, it would be approved by the ministry. He specifically noted that no further validation meetings or presentations would be necessary.

The findings of the report were also shared with Educational Development Center (EDC), which was awarded a cooperative agreement to implement Rwanda USAID’s program aimed at improving reading. The data proved useful as a baseline national assessment for reading performance, which EDC and ministry were able to use to inform their work.

The recommendations from the technical review meeting were integrated into the report, and the finalized report was submitted to USAID/Rwanda on February 27, 2012. The report was reviewed by USAID/Rwanda and then submitted to the ministry in March. In June, the ministry and USAID granted permission to release the findings report, which can be [downloaded here](#).¹¹

3.5. Zambia

RTI began preparing for activity in Zambia in October–November 2010. In January 2011, USAID/Zambia met with the Principal Secretaries of the Ministry of Education and confirmed their interest in, and approval of, the EGRA/EGMA/SSME instruments that were to be administered in Bemba in four provinces. Problems obtaining a local subcontractor unfortunately required postponing the adaptation workshop from mid-March 2011 until April.

After subcontractor FHT was brought on board, adaptation of the EGRA, EGMA, and SSME instruments took place April 18–29, along with pretesting. In May, FHT recruited 10 EGRA/EGMA assessors, 5 supervisors, and 5 classroom observers for the training of assessors and supervisors held in June 2011.



¹¹ Joseph DeStefano, Wendi Ralaingita, Michael Costello, Alexander Sax, and Abigail Frank. (2012). *Early Grade Reading and Mathematics in Rwanda: Final Report*. Prepared for USAID under the EdData II project, Task Order 7. Research Triangle Park, North Carolina: RTI. <https://www.eddataglobal.org/countries/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubDetail&ID=390>

Data were collected July 6–22 in the four Bemba-speaking provinces of Northern, Copperbelt, Central, and Luapula. The activities were supervised by a monitoring team from FHT. Data analysis and writing of a report encompassing the findings from the EGRA, EGMA, and SSME data collection, began in mid-August, and was completed in early November and shared with USAID/Zambia. This draft was then subsequently forwarded to participants of the policy dialogue workshop.

A policy dialogue workshop to discuss the results, answer questions, and examine future actions took place November 21–22, 2011. Revisions to the preliminary report incorporating recommendations from the policy dialogue workshop were completed and submitted to USAID/Zambia in mid-January 2012. The report can be [downloaded here](#).¹²

Based on the findings, the Zambia research team suggested a number of policy and program changes at the national level involving issues such as curriculum redesign, extension of instruction in local language through grade 3; changes to increase classroom and school time spent on reading; deployment of teachers with more careful attention to mother-tongue proficiency; attention to ways to mitigate teacher absenteeism; teacher training in reading instruction; and increased participation by communities and parents in their children’s education. In the interim, USAID and the Ministry have used the results of the study to inform the design of a follow-up EdData task order to evaluate the impact of the Mission’s current programs in a systematic way.

4. Year 3 Task 7 Activities

4.1. Lot Quality Assurance Sampling: Pilot Test in Ghana

In July 2012, USAID/Washington issued a no-cost extension for Task 7, part of which was to cover a pilot activity on lot quality assurance sampling (LQAS).

The LQAS technique was an innovation of early 20th-century manufacturing, designed to monitor production quality. A small sample of items would be randomly selected from each lot and examined for imperfections. If the number of defective items was too high, the entire lot was rejected. The technique was more recently adopted by the health sector as a way to routinely and locally monitor immunization coverage rates and to monitor the quality of care provided in local health clinics. This approach lends itself well to decentralized monitoring as it requires small sample sizes, it can be applied in a short period of time, and its results can be computed using basic pen-and-paper analysis techniques at the local level. The ability to analyze data at the local level gives districts immediate access to actionable feedback: which schools are missing books, which schools’ teachers need assistance with their teaching practice, where attendance is

¹² Penelope Collins, Pierre De Galbert, Ash Hartwell, Emily Kochetkova, Amy Mulcahy-Dunn, Abhijit Nimbalkar, and Wendi Ralaingita (2012). *Pupil Performance, Pedagogic Practice, and School Management: An SSME Pilot in Zambia*. Analysis report prepared for USAID under EdData II Task Order 7. Research Triangle Park, North Carolina: RTI International. <https://www.eddataglobal.org/countries/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubDetail&ID=426>

problematic, etc. In the education sector, interest has grown in the possible benefits of applying the LQAS method in situations in which responsibilities have been decentralized. This EdData II effort was designed to test how well LQAS could identify districts and schools that might have fallen behind and need additional support from the higher levels of the system.

The EdData II activity consisted of a small-scale pilot application of LQAS in Ghana, which was chosen because of its in-progress National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP) as well as the recent establishment of a National Inspection Bureau (NIB). During this pilot, simple student assessment approaches were investigated and a short list of crucial yet easy-to-score indicators were defined. In addition, different sample size options were discussed and tailored to local needs.

In-country planning and groundwork took place during the first half of December 2012, followed by development of the draft LQAS instrument in late January–early February 2013. In short order, pretesting in Ghana was carried out Feb. 18–22, assessor training Feb. 25–Mar. 1, and pilot administration in 19 schools in one district, Mar. 11–15. In addition, a workshop provided training for the inspectors on how to tabulate the results from one district by hand. All the results were tabulated in two days and the results were presented by the inspectors to the Ghana Education Service (GES), the NIB, USAID, and UNICEF representatives.

Between April and September, the project team revised the instrument and protocols based on feedback and lessons learned, and prepared a report summarizing the pilot experience and the data findings.

As highlighted in the final report, the pilot showed that the LQAS method can quickly and relatively easily identify schools that are in particular need of assistance. In addition, the pilot identified some challenges that were common in almost all schools and that should be addressed at the district and possibly the regional level. It showed that this monitoring technique can be effectively applied at the local level. It also demonstrated that this approach provides a more systematic and effective way of monitoring the quality of instruction by the local inspectorate than is traditionally used. As intended, the LQAS pilot also presented a host of lessons learned. Information was collected and issues documented regarding the construction of the instruments themselves, training challenges for the administrators, sample selection, empirical results from the assessments and observations, the tabulation methodology, and the need for pre-planned remediation or support activities to address systemic inadequacies. The researchers also recognized the need for a strong and interactive dissemination plan for any results stemming from an LQAS monitoring exercise. Finally, they noted that the method will need to be tested further in other countries, and in multiple districts or regions within a country, to ensure that a variety of contexts drives a credible generic version of the instrument and approaches.

5. Financial Summary

[REDACTED]