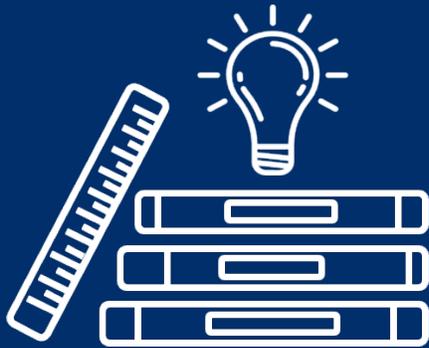




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**OFFICE OF EDUCATION**



# Nepal: Terms of Reference for an Education Sector Needs Assessment

G2G Education Toolkit

Version: January 2014



## G2G Education Toolkit

# Nepal: Terms of Reference for an Education Sector Needs Assessment for Early Grade Reading

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This Terms of Reference describes the performance of an education sector needs assessment employed by USAID Nepal to understand the Nepal education country context. Through analysis of programs, policies, practices, and institutional capacities, identification of key strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities would serve as the basis for development of a program to improve reading outcomes in early grades of primary school. Additionally, the research questions used to identify operational issues of primary teacher preparation are included to illustrate the information necessary to serve as the foundation on which to build system capacity to deliver a literacy program.

Education Office  
Economic Growth, Education and Environment  
January, 2013

# FOREWARD

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## Government-to-government Education Toolkit

In line with the compelling policy guidance of USAID Forward, Agency education officers are currently exploring, developing and implementing new government-to-government (G2G) modalities in education projects. An immediate need exists for tools and training materials that will assist Education Teams as they design, implement, and monitor G2G activities to achieve USAID Education Strategy Goals.

Under the leadership of the Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment's (E3) Education Office, the **G2G Education Toolkit** has been developed to provide this support. The Toolkit includes a literature review; an analysis of lessons learned and best practice; an analytic framework and roadmap; operational tools; and case studies. Additionally, sample G2G operational documents from Missions currently undertaking government-to-government activities will be available to guide field staff.

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**Terms of Reference:**

**Education Sector Needs Assessment for an  
Early Grade Reading Program, Nepal**

**Issued by USAID/Nepal  
2012**

## I. Terms of Reference: Education Sector Needs Assessment

**SUMMARY:** USAID/Nepal is seeking assistance to conduct an analysis of programs, policies, practices, and institutional capabilities for improving early grade reading in Nepal. USAID/Nepal will use the results of the assessment to inform the development of a new reading skills program.

This TOR will be developed and cleared by USAID/Nepal, and will then be shared with the AME DEP COTR for review and approval. Funding and technical assistance to carry out the tasks included in this SOW will be provided through the Asia Bureau funded DEP Task Order.

### 1. Background:

The Country Assistance Strategy (2009-2013) of USAID/Nepal recognizes its assistance in the area of early childhood education through the School Sector Reform initiatives of the GON. USAID's assistance strengthens and expands the national Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) program, thereby increasing the percentage of four year-olds enrolled in ECED program. This program has been recognized to be important for children's well-being and their future development. ECED program is one of the key program elements of School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP)<sup>i</sup> 2009-2015 of the Government of Nepal (GON). USAID/Nepal's assistance to ECED program ends July 2012.

In February 2011, USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah approved and launched a new Agency-wide Education Strategy. The strategy reflects recent Presidential policy guidance that development assistance programs be guided by evidence-based analysis of educational effectiveness and aimed at maximizing the impact and sustainability of development results. The 2011-2015 Education Strategy was created to reflect these core principles.

This Education Strategy is premised on the development hypothesis that education is both foundation to human development and critically linked to broad-based economic growth; democratic governance; and improved health outcomes.

Embracing the President's 2010 U.S. Global Development Policy principles, USAID invests education resources strategically to achieve measurable and sustainable education outcomes through enhanced selectivity, focus, country-led programming, division of labor and innovation. Based on the policy principles, USAID has developed three global education goals-Goal One: Improved *reading skills* for 100 million children in primary grades by 2015; Goal Two: Improved ability of *tertiary and workforce development* programs to generate workforce skills relevant to a country's development goals; Goal Three: Increased equitable *access to education in crisis and conflict* environments for 15 million learners by 2015.

The new USAID Nepal education program will directly support Goal One: Improved reading skills for 100 million children in primary grades by 2015. The new Agency education strategy corresponds to the USAID Nepal strategy in several ways. First, a reading skills program is a logical follow-on to the ECED program, which targeted preschool children. There is a great unmet need in Nepal to improve early grade reading skills which is an important foundational building block for literacy, numeracy and eventual participation in social and economic activities. Most importantly, a reading skills program is relevant to the School Sector Reform Program (SSRP) 2008/9-2014/15 of the GON. The overarching goal of the SSRP is to ensure that all children (girls and boys) have access to quality primary education by 2015. The primary sub-sector receives priority in this program. Major thrusts of this program are access, equity, and quality.

### Quality of education (relevant to reading skills):

One additional reason why the USAID reading skills program is a good strategic fit is that the GON has identified access to education as a crucial precondition to education impact, but what matters most

thereafter is the quality of education. Nepal has made remarkable improvement in terms of access. However, the quality aspect remains a key issue.

A recent study conducted by DFID in Grade 2 and 4 revealed that in Nepali subject only 37.9% students recognized and accurately read single words, and only 70.7% recognized and correctly read single letters. Likewise, in Mathematics 86% of the total students tested in Grade 2 could recognize single-digit numbers but only 31.6% could recognize and read double-digit numbers. Only a tiny number below 2% could manage any subtraction or division sums. At grade 4 in Nepali some 56.2% now reach the expected standard, with some 85.4% able to read single word. In Mathematics the pass rate was reached by only 10.7% of pupils tested. 71.3% could name double-digit numbers but 30% were still unable to reach the Grade 2 pass level.

Continuous Assessment System (CAS) is one of the key policy measures for improving children's learning at early primary grades. It is observed that due to technical difficulties<sup>ii</sup> the CAS is not being implemented by schools.

## **2. Key objective:**

The overall objective of the assignment is to conduct a needs assessment of the current situation in Nepal relating to reading improvement. An important part of the analysis is to assess the capacity of relevant GON institutions to develop, manage, and evaluate a national reading improvement program.

USAID/Nepal has conducted consultations with the GON and Development Partners and has confirmed the importance of early grade reading skills and this analysis will provide helpful information to the MOE and other development partners (DPs) in Nepal.

## **3. Specific Tasks**

- Review of relevant policy documents, SSRP 2009-2015, Education Act and Regulation, National Curriculum Framework, Continuous Assessment System at primary level (grade 1-3), Child Friendly School Framework; Minimum Enabling Condition Guidelines, Mid-Term Review Report of SSRP, <sup>iii</sup> etc. The analysis will be done to understand policy environment-compatibility between USAID's new Education Strategy specifically Agency's education goal 1 and SSRP of the GON.
- Consultation with the MOE, DOE and the DPs (WB, DFID, Save the Children, Room to Read and World Education) to understand ongoing projects implemented by the GON and other DPs related to enhancing children's reading skills, and private school association, private printing houses.
- Consultation with National Center of Educational Development and review of teacher training packages to understand training needs.
- Consultation with Curriculum Development Center to understand primary level curriculum and its compatibility with children's reading skills.
- Consultation with people/team involved in designing National Assessment of Students' Achievement (NASA) specific to children's assessment at grade three and five.
- Consultation with research institutions particularly Research Center for Educational, Innovation and Development (CERID), and education experts.
- School visit for classroom observation, consultation with School Management Committees, primary teachers, parents, and students (lower primary grades).
- Focus Group discussion with lower primary grades teachers (grades 1-3).
- Review and analysis of EGRA and EGRA-like instruments and results that have been implemented in Nepal

#### 4. Key Deliverables

Based on the review of relevant documents, consultation with key stakeholders, and field observations, the consultant(s) will produce a report which includes an analysis of the current situation regarding early grade reading in Nepal. Areas of focus for the analysis should include:

- Analysis of available information and data on reading.
- Analysis of GON MOE policies, programs and classroom practices relating to reading improvement. This analysis should highlight if and how reading improvement is part of the MOE's overall education plans and priorities.
- An analysis of the GON management capacity, at multiple levels of the education system, to manage a large scale reading improvement program. Since many externally funded education programs in Nepal are managed through the SSRP multi-donor trust fund, this analysis should include the trust fund in the institutional assessment.

Conduct an assessment of and map the GON department and/or SSRP partners who are interested in supporting a national reading improvement program. This mapping should identify specific sector areas that the GON or development partners have unique capabilities or programmatic interests such as teacher training, curriculum development, and measuring learning.

- Identify the most appropriate implementation mechanisms for carrying out USAID-funded early grade reading skills interventions (direct assistance to GON, or award to local/ international partner, or combinations thereof, IQC etc.).
- Identify if there is a room for public private partnership and/or other initiative(s) to support a national reading improvement program.

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<sup>i</sup> SSRP is jointly supported by the GON, pool and non-pool DPs, local bodies, and communities. The total cost for the seven-year SSRP period has been estimated at \$6.47 billion, of which \$2.7 billion is required for FY 2012-FY 2014. The \$2.7 billion includes both development (20%) and recurrent expenditures (80%). Key sub-sectors of SSRP are Early Childhood Education and Development; Basic Education (grades 1-8); Secondary Education (grades 9-12); Literacy and Lifelong Learning; and Technical Education and Vocational Training. Basic education receives the largest share of the budget reflecting the high priority with greater focus on ensuring access, enhancing equity, and improving quality.

<sup>ii</sup> Children's learning performance at low primary grades (grades 1-3) must be assessed through the continuous assessment system. However, the continuous assessment system is not being implemented by schools as mandated by the policy. Children's learning performance is assessed based on the written examinations. It is observed that the linkages between the curriculum and teacher preparedness in terms of continuous assessment system implementation seems weak.

<sup>iii</sup> Mid-term review of SSRP is being conducted. Full report will be available by the time of this assessment

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## II. Nepal Assessment Protocol Questions to Identify Operational Issues Related to Primary Teacher Training

### Pre-Service

1. Basic data to be obtained from whatever source:
  - Profile of teaching force (including head teachers) by level of education, by type of pre-service training, by years of experience
  - Number of teacher candidates enrolled in pre-service training in a typical year (past three years of data would provide image of what is typical)
  - Number of primary teachers certified each year (past three years) – actual number and as percent of those who participated in pre-service training
  - Relationship between annual supply of teachers from pre-service institutions to the annual demand/need for teachers in primary schools (would worry about demand only if Nepal has done a projection/analysis themselves).
2. Location and administrative/governance/management arrangements of pre-service institutions
  - Numbers and distribution::
    - How many pre-service institutions are there in total?
    - How are they distributed across the country?
  - Are there any private pre-service institutions?
  - **If yes**, do they produce a significant number of new teachers each year?  
(If yes, then distinctions will need to be made on many of the following questions for public v. private institutions.)
    - Under what part of the ministry do pre-service institutions fall administratively?
  - Pre-service curriculum:
    - Who sets curriculum objectives for pre-service training?
    - Who develops the actual curriculum?
    - Who develops the materials used?
    - When was the last time the curriculum for pre-service training was updated/changed in any significant way?
  - What, if any, have been the other major reforms/changes to pre-service teacher training over the past 3-5 years?
  - What major programs, projects, or investments have targeted teacher pre-service training in the last 3-5 years?
  - How (and by whom) are teacher candidates recruited/selected for enrollment in pre-service training (including entry criteria)?
    - To what extent is recruitment/selection geographically based?
  - How (and by whom) are teacher candidates evaluated during and at the end of their pre-service training?
  - What is required for official certification of teachers and head teachers (completion of training, passing of exam, practicum,...)?
  - How are pre-service institutions managed?
    - What degree of autonomy do they have related to budget, staffing, course content, course delivery, ... ?
  - How are pre-service institutions funded?
  - How much money goes to pre-service? What is the unit cost?

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- Where do they come from?
  - What education levels do they have?
  - What specific training do they have?
  - What statute do they have (employed full-time, part-time, employed as civil servants, or by each institution, etc.)?

### 3. Hiring and assignment of teachers following pre-service

- Are all teachers who complete pre-service training automatically hired as teachers?
  - **If no, how is the hiring decision made (and by whom)?**
- What is the status of newly hired teachers—i.e., is there a probationary period before they are fully ensconced in the civil service? (*Assumption being that teachers are civil servants – need to also double-check that.*)
- How are teachers assigned following completion/hiring? Who makes the assignment decisions?
- What roles do districts, resource centers and schools play (if any) in the teacher hiring and assignment decision-making process?
- What roles do local bodies (governance entities) play?
- To what extent are teachers hired who have not completed pre-service training? (Are there other ways into the profession than through pre-service training?)
- Head teachers:
  - How (and by whom) are head teachers hired/assigned?
  - What are the requirements for becoming a primary school head?
- Are there differences in the teachers that public, private, and community schools are hiring? If yes, what are those differences?

## In-Service

### 1. Basic data to be obtained:

- Number of in-service training initiatives, programs, projects in operation over the past 3-5 years?
- Geographic concentration/dispersion of those in-service initiatives, programs and projects?
- Numbers of teachers trained through those initiatives, programs and projects?
- Typical number of in-service training days for a serving teacher in a given year?

### 2. Institutional home for in-service

- What office is responsible for teacher in-service training?
  - Is there more than one office that can generate teacher in-service programs?
  - **If yes, how are different in-service initiatives coordinated (if at all)?**
- What is the main institutional delivery mechanism for teacher in-service? Who governs, administers and manages that institution?
- What is the relationship between institutions that deliver in-service training and the existing educational administrative and management structure (relationship to DEO, RC, local bodies, schools, etc.)?
- Budgets for in-service training:
  - How are budgets for in-service training established?
  - How are costs associated with participation in in-service training addressed (i.e., are teachers reimbursed for travel, do they receive per diem when away from school/home to participate in training, etc.)?
- How much money goes into INSET and where does it all come from?

### 3. In-service training programs

- What have been the major in-service training initiatives implemented during the past 3-5 years?
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- How are in-service programs designed and developed?
  - Who determines the content and curriculum of in-service training?
  - Who designs the delivery of in-service training?
  - Are programs national in scope or are they designed and developed for regional level, district level, or sub-district level?
  - To what extent are there existing, regular in-service programs?
    - If any, what have been their focuses?
    - To what extent are programs designed/delivered on an as needed basis?
    - To what extent are programs dependent on specific projects for implementation?
  - What training programs are required? If any, what have been their focuses?
  - When training programs are not required, what (and who) determines teacher recruitment and participation in in-service training?
  - Are there mechanisms for identifying specific training needs? If yes, who participates in identifying needs (teachers, school heads, SMCs, local bodies, RCs, DEOs, etc.)?
  - What is the balance between national in-service training initiatives and local (district or below) initiatives?
  - Do schools have budgets for in-service training? Do RCs? Do DEOs? Do local bodies allocate and spend resources to cover local in-service training needs?
  - Do teachers receive credit/recognition of any kind for participation in in-service programs? If yes, what?

#### 4. Monitoring and evaluation of in-service

- What data are systematically collected on teacher participation in in-service training?
- Who collects (and makes use of) these data—at the school level, district level, regional level, national level?
- Does the unit that manages the EMIS compile data on participation in in-service?
- Is there a TMIS?
- Do teachers' individual personnel records reflect participation in in-service training?
- How (and by whom) the effectiveness of in-service training is evaluated (ad hoc, systematic, punctual)?
- What formal evaluations of teacher in-service training have been completed recently?

### **Ongoing Follow-Up and Teacher Support**

#### 1. School level

- What support is provided to teachers at their schools? By whom (head teacher, other admin staff, other teachers, other)?
- Are head teachers trained specifically to provide pedagogical support/leadership for their schools and staff?
- What is the nature of the support which teachers receive within their school (help preparing lessons, observation and feedback on technique, etc.)?
- To what extent are their peer support mechanisms set up as a regular feature of school operations (mentoring, teachers meeting in teams, use of staff meetings for “in-service,” etc.)?
- What happens within a school when a teacher returns from participating in an in-service training? Is there any systematic relationship between in-service training programs and on-site support and follow up?
- Are there any special provisions made for beginning/novice teachers at the school level?
- What support (if any) is provided by the local community?
- Who at the school level evaluates teacher performance? How regularly? On what basis?

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- How are “effective” teachers recognized/rewarded at the school level?
  - How are “ineffective” teachers dealt with?

## 2. Sub-district level

- What support is provided to teachers from the sub-district level (from resource center or other institutional base)?
- How regularly (if at all) are teachers visited by an external, sub-district support person?
- What is the nature of the support provided by the sub-district (help preparing lessons, observation and feedback on technique, reinforcement of specific classroom practices etc.)?
- How regularly do the sub-districts plan specific follow-up visits to schools as a facet of in-service training?
- What constraints do sub-districts face in reaching schools/teachers regularly with support?
- To what extent are peer support mechanisms set up at the sub-district level?
- Sub-district-level teacher evaluations:
  - Who at the sub-district level evaluates teacher performance?
  - How regularly?
  - On what basis?
- How are “effective” teachers recognized/rewarded at the sub-district level?
- How are “ineffective” teachers dealt with at the sub-district level?
- What is the budget for all of this?
- How is it decided?

## 3. District level

- What support is provided to teachers from the district level (from DEO or other institutional base)?
- How regularly (if at all) are teachers visited by an external, district support person?
- What is the nature of the support provided by the district (help preparing lessons, observation and feedback on technique, reinforcement of specific classroom practices etc.)?
- How regularly do the districts plan specific follow-up visits to schools as a facet of in-service training?
- What constraints do districts face in reaching schools/teachers regularly with support?
- To what extent are peer support mechanisms set up at the district level?
- District-level teacher evaluations:
  - Who at the district level evaluates teacher performance?
  - How regularly?
  - On what basis?
- How are “effective” teachers recognized/rewarded at the district level?
- How are “ineffective” teachers dealt with at the district level?
- What is the budget for all of this?
- How is it decided?

## III. Horizontal/Vertical Accountability, Governance, Management, and DEC Protocols

### 1. Regional Level

- Is there a regional-level governing body akin to the VDCs and DDCs (LBs) at the lower levels of the system? If NO, skip to district-level questions

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- If yes, what is the name of this governing body?
  - Are all of its members elected by the citizens of the region?
    - **If not**, what % is?
  - How do the rest gain membership?
  - What is the relationship between the RED and this LB?
  - What are the exact roles and responsibilities of this LB?
    - Do they have any say over how money is spent at the regional level?
    - Do they have any say in the local curriculum?
    - Plan development?
    - Who works where?
  - Are these roles and responsibilities enshrined in some kind of legislation?
  - Given these roles and responsibilities, how accountable do you feel the RED is to this LB?
  - What is the exact nature of the relationship between the RED and the DOE/MOE?

## 2. District Level

- What is the relationship between the DEC and the DDC?
  - Is the DEC a committee within the DDC?
- Are all of its members elected by the citizens of the district?
- If not, what % is?
- How do the rest gain membership?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of the DEC vis-à-vis education?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of the vis-à-vis education DDC?
  - To what extent is the DDC/DEC really a governing body over the DEO?
    - Its role in district planning?
    - Its role in district monitoring?
    - Control over finances: Does a block grant of any sort come down?
    - Control over the local curriculum?
    - Control over human resources?
    - Do they hire/fire DEO staff?
  - **If not, who hires/fires DEO, RC, school staff?**
  - Do they have the power to channel money into EGR expenses?
  - Just how accountable is the DEO to the DDC/DEC, if at all?
- What is the exact nature of the relationship between the DEO and the DDC/DEC?
- What is the exact nature of the relationship between the DEO and the RED?

## 3. Sub-District Level

- What is the relationship between the VEC and the VDC?
  - Is the VEC a committee within the VDC?
- Are all of its members elected by the citizens of the district?
- If not, what % is?
- How do the rest gain membership?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of the VEC vis-à-vis education?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of the VDC vis-à-vis education?
  - To what extent is the VDC/VEC really a governing body over the schools/SMC/RC/RCMC?
    - Its role in district planning
    - Its role in district monitoring?
    - Control over finances: Does a block grant of any sort come down?
    - Control over the local curriculum?

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- Do they hire/fire DEO staff?
  - If not, who hires/fires RC and school staff?
  - Do they have the power to channel money into EGR expenses?
  - Just how accountable is the school/RC to the VDC/VEC, if at all?
  - What is the exact nature of the relationship between the school/RC and the VDC/VEC?
  - What is the exact nature of the relationship between the school/RC and the DEO?

#### 4. School Level

- What is the relationship between the school and the SMC?
- What are the exact roles of the SMC and schools vis-à-vis:
  - Plan development
  - Budgeting money
  - Local curriculum definition
  - Time on task (time needed for EGR)
  - Human resources
- To what extent, if any, is the school accountable to the SMC?
  - Who hires the Principal?
- What is the relationship between the SMC and the VDC/VEC, if any?
- How do the two differ?
- Which is the true governing body over the school?

The answers to all of these questions will, among other things, give us a sense of how much various actors in the system can be held to account for whatever. If, say, schools can channel money into reading and they have some say over who teaches there, they can conceivably hold teachers to account for reading results; the same for a district, etc. They can do so via carrots and sticks. The question then becomes one of measuring the results vis-à-vis some set of performance standards.

Point: if the system proves to be fairly decentralized, then one has the problem of getting lower levels of the system to channel money/resources into EGR and to hold people accountable for results. If the system is fairly centralized, then the task is one of getting the center to put money into EGR-related line items and having them, in some way hold people accountable for reading results. In either case, the question becomes one of how to get performance from the system: carrots or sticks? Most people eschew sticks, and so one is left with carrots: issuing awards for high performing entities, factoring good performance into progression along career ladders, etc. And do they have the systems in place to do EGRA? This, then, will have to tie into the protocols being developed for assessment.

#### **A. Finance Protocols (A lot of these questions can be answered via the governance/management questions above. For those that can be, a G has been placed next to them.)**

- May we see the unrolled-up 2010/11 budget for education by region and district?
  - Fat chance!
- May we see the budget in as disaggregated a form as possible (center, region, district, schools)?
- Schools/districts/RCs: what are the sources of all your money?
  - How much control do you have over how each kind is spent? G
  - On what basis do you decide (i.e., does, say, a school first have to develop a SIP, get approval for the SIP by the SMC/VDC, before the money can be spent)? G
- Is there any movement of GON block grants in the education sector (yes)? **G**
- If so, what kind of money is it (i.e., capital, recurrent, non-personnel recurrent)?
- Can we get finance data that shows all finance flows by type of money, type of flow, etc?
- How much of the total budget is this money?
- At what level are decisions made about how to use this money? G
- Who at that level makes the decision (on what basis)? G

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- Can any of this be used to address EGR costs?
  - Is it sufficient to cover EGR-related costs at this level?
  - What are EGR-related costs at this level?
  - In what piece of legislation is this delineated?
  - If no GON money moves as a block grant, how much money is decentralized (i.e., moves to lower levels of the system where it can be spent by a lower level entity)?
  - What kind of money moves in this way (i.e., capital, recurrent, etc.)?
  - How is this money moved (i.e., enrollment-based funding formula)?
  - How much of each kind moves in this way?
  - At what level of the system is this money spent (by type)?
  - Who spends the money (by level and type of money)?
  - On what basis is it spent (i.e., does, say, a school first have to develop a SIP, have that SIP approved by the SMC/VDC, before the money can be spent)? **G**
  - Do they have any control over how the money can be spent (i.e., can they move money between line items and/or within a line item: how much choice do they have over how the money is used)? **G**
    - How much money can be moved around in these ways?
  - To what extent can any of this be used for EGR costs?
  - If little, to what extent can we carve out space for EGR-related line items?
    - This will require some budget analysis
  - If none is decentralized, how much is spent on EGR-related costs?
  - How much is needed?

## B. Data/EMIS Protocols

- May we see the data collection sheets for the EMIS for all levels of the system?
- If we cannot see the actual sheets to find out what data are collected, we can ask to see printouts of the data that have been collected.
- Need to see how much reading data are collected (none).
- How much room is there for reading data to be collected?
- To what extent are level-specific report cards developed and used?
- This all leads into assessment which is also needed for accountability.

Note: From the Flash Reports, it looks like we can get enrollment by grade, gender, ethnic group, and location. Teacher data are only by level. I saw no transition rate data. They did have attendance and some other indicators. It would be ideal to get raw data.

Note: Flash I reports are data taken at the beginning of the school year while Flash II reports are data taken at the end of a school year.

## C. Materials Development and Distribution

Assess what textbook situation looks like:

- What is the relationship between textbooks and the curriculum: How many texts are there for each subject/course/grade (one or several from which people can choose)?
- How many texts are demanded by the curriculum?
- How many are supplied?
- Does supply match demand?
  - What is the budget?
  - Is the budget sufficient to meet demand?
  - Quality of the texts?
  - What % of the budget are textbooks?

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- See finance: Are any textbooks purchased out of block grants?
  - How many get to the classrooms/students/teachers?
  - How are the textbooks distributed?
  - How are they ordered?
  - Who prints them?
  - Who distributes them?
  - Expected cost of EGR materials?
  - Who decides to spend this money?

#### D. Key Institutional Issues:

- Getting EGR into the curriculum
  - Getting enough class time into the curriculum for EGR
- Getting the revised curriculum into printed matter: EGR materials
- Getting EGR assessment into the overall education assessment system (this will be driven in part by holding entities accountable for some reading results)
- Getting EGR assessment results into EMIS and local-level report cards
- Ensuring report cards are well publicized—finding an institutional home for this—creating the space for it (someone’s job to do it)
- Developing official EGR-related performance standards for schools, districts, etc.
- Creating the accountability system that drives the system to perform
  - Formalized competitions between localities: schools, districts, etc.
  - Awards for winning
    - Who decides?
- Adding performance to career ladders (and all that this would entail)
- In addition to the carrots, any sticks?

Creating the HR space needed for critical EGR and EGR assessment functions:

- Decide who will do what where: tease out all of the functions germane to EGR and EGR assessment, and ID who will do what where and how much time is needed to do it.
- Formalize job descriptions
- Carve out the time they need to do what they need to do
- Decide on various service ratios
- Getting EGR into PRESET (Getting EGR into the PREST curriculum)
- Getting EGR into INSET/CPD (Getting EGR into the INSET/CPD curriculums)
- Costs
  - Personnel costs
  - Non-personnel recurrent costs
  - Other costs
- For all block-grant money that will be used for some of this: the accountability system will be key, it is the only thing I can think of that will get decision makers to channel some block grant money into EGR and EGR assessment.
- Ensure that all horizontal and vertical accountability linkages are in place.
- For all categorical money used for this, ensure that line items exist and that proper funding formulas are in place.

## IV. Reading, Teaching and Learning

Most of the questions below can/should be asked at both the official policy level (centralized and decentralized) and the official implementation level (centralized and decentralized).

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ministry offices and schools), in order to gather essentially three types of information: What does the policy say is supposed to happen; what do actors THINK is supposed to happen; what actually happens? A successful, system-wide change in reading T&L will ultimately have to impact all three.

General:

In addition to the specific questions below, some of which may be altered by respondent depending on their responsibility, I would want to ask every respondent:

- How do you think students in Nepal are doing in reading?
- Do you think that the schools in Nepal are doing a good job teaching children to read?
- (If respondent feels things could be better) What do you think are the biggest challenges that may be resulting in low performance in reading?

And for most respondents (at least those who have a post of potential responsibility in the education system):

- How do you think children learn to read?
- What are the best ways to help children to learn to read?

Information related to teachers:

- Do teachers receive any training specifically about how children learn to read, or methods for teaching children how to read? (as distinct from general language instruction—for example, helping students to know how to read a word they've never seen before by using the sounds that the difference letters make, or asking/answering questions about a text they've read)
- How do teachers go about teaching children how to read? (may need a further prompt, if respondents really haven't thought about reading as a specific/separate skill that needs to be taught methodically)
- Are there any widely accepted benchmarks or milestones for when children should be able to read fluently (smoothly, without problems) and understand what they're reading (even if this isn't official)?
- What does the teacher use as a guide for what he/she should be teaching? national curriculum? local syllabus? textbook? [Whatever this source is should be gathered for examination if at all possible]
- Are there people in the ministry, or elsewhere, who have expertise or specialization in reading (NOT linguistics, specifically in reading)? Where/who are they?
- If a teacher needed support or help in teaching reading, who could she/he turn to? [system/support implications]
- How are decisions made, at the school-level, for teacher assignment? That is, which teachers will teach 1st, 2nd, 3rd grade?
- Do teachers teach all subjects, or specialize by subject? Is this universal or does it differ by district or school?
- Are teacher aides or assistants available to any teachers? If yes, in what contexts/situations (certain districts, certain schools, etc.)?

Information about opportunity to learn to read:

- How many subjects are required in grades 1-3?
- Does the curriculum (and syllabus and/or textbook) make any specific reference to the process of learning to read, in mother tongue (MT) or in any other language?
- Does the curriculum (or other policy document) specify any dedicated amount of time to be spent on reading? If no, does it mandate time to be spent on language?
- How much time is typically spent specifically on reading instruction?
- How much time (if any) is typically allotted for children to practice reading?

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- Does the curriculum explicitly or implicitly set any benchmark or milestone for when children should be able to read fluently and understand what they've read?
  - What are policies or expectations for what teachers should “cover” by the end of the year? How is this monitored?

Information about text/materials:

- Are there any textbooks specifically designed to support reading instruction? If not, what textbooks include any reading-related instructional material?
- How appropriate are these textbooks? Are they “leveled”? (that is, organized to be appropriate to the students' reading ability, introducing sounds/constructions as they might be learned by the student) [if possible, we'd like to have or inspect examples]
- What is the process through which textbooks are developed, approved, and/or selected?
- How timely do schools receive textbooks? [budgetary/system implications]
- If/when they do receive them, what are typical student-text ratios for reading or language textbooks?
- How regularly do teachers use textbooks in class (meaning that they are actually in the hands of the students)?
- Are students allowed to take textbooks home?
- Are any other books (other than textbooks) available for students to read?
- Are there other print materials in the school/classroom environment for children to potentially read?
- Are there other print materials in the home or out-of-school environment for children to potentially read?

Questions for CDC (from Joe – email on 5/8/2012):

- How many languages are you currently working on incorporating into the curriculum?
- How are you thinking about dealing with multilingual environments?
- Are you doing linguistically appropriate development of materials (or translating)?
- Could you please tell me more about the pilot work done in 2007 with the Finnish Embassy?

Information about language/mother tongue:

- What percentage of schools is actually attempting to utilize mother tongue instruction in the early grades?
- What is the expectation for introducing Nepali and English? By what grade are students expected to be able to function fully in Nepali (i.e., ready to have Nepali as LOI)? English (i.e., ready to have English as LOI)?
- In what language(s) do parents want their children to be able to read?
- What methodology/approach is used for:
  - learning the second and third language?
  - learning to read in the second and third language?
- Does the methodology/approach utilize the relationship between the linguistic structures of the languages? (that is, for example, teachers specifically noting sounds that exist in both the MT and English to help students more rapidly transfer their decoding skills to the second language—as opposed to teaching English as a completely separate, isolated subject)
- What is the status of development of reading materials in the mother tongue languages?
  - How are these being developed?
  - What is the process?
- How long does it take to produce materials? [budgetary implications]

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Information about assessment:

- Do any currently used assessments attempt to incorporate any lower-level reading skills (before comprehension—including decoding, basic vocabulary? (by the ministry? by other organizations? frequency of application?)
- Who has, or would have, primary responsibility for developing and implementing assessments that included early-grade reading competencies?
- What are students typically tested on in the primary grades in end-of-year or other “external” assessments?
- Do teachers have any way to assess the level of their students, in reading or language, at the beginning of the year?
- How do teachers track progress of students?
  - What competencies do they focus on?
  - What do they do with this information?

For current reading programs:

Specifically for reading interventions (this is the information that I would like us to collect—I wonder about the sensitivity of us being potential “competitors” . . . ), in addition to above:

- What are the main components of the intervention?
- What is the approach to reading instruction?
- What is the training model used? (amount of time per training, frequency)
- What is the coaching/support model used?
  - Who are the coaches?
  - How frequent are their visits?
  - What kind of support do they provide?
- What sorts of community-oriented supports are involved?
- What are the primary challenges that have been faced in implementation? What work-around have worked well?