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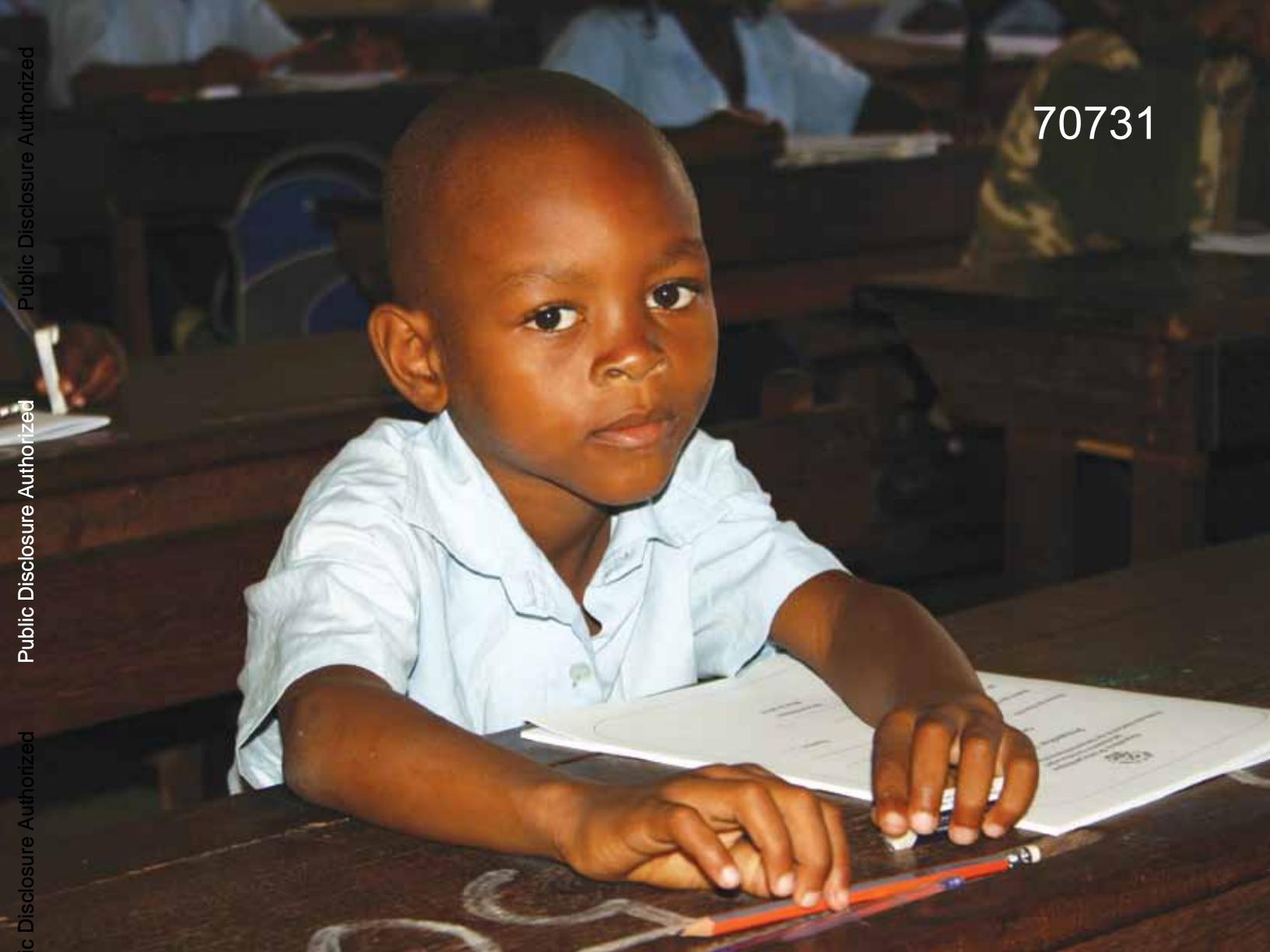
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RUSSIA EDUCATION AID FOR DEVELOPMENT TRUST FUND



**READ**  
ANNUAL REPORT  
**2011**

“Learning for all is a huge challenge, but it is the right agenda for the next decade. It is the knowledge and skills that children and youth acquire today that will drive their employability, productivity, health, and well-being in the decades to come, and that will help ensure that their communities and nations thrive.”

—Elizabeth King, World Bank Education Director,  
Opening Remarks at the Third READ Global Conference, October 24, 2011





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## MESSAGE FROM READ COUNCIL

Through the Millennium Development Goals, the international community made a global commitment to help ensure that, by 2015, every country achieves the goal of universal primary education. Ultimately, this goal seeks to empower an entire generation of young people with the benefits provided by a primary school education. The global community is increasingly recognizing the critical importance of education quality and learning outcomes. The Russian Federation initiated the READ program, through the World Bank, to bring together leading experts, international organizations, and governments to help countries in the CIS, Asia and Africa effectively increase learning outcomes.

READ's goal to improve learning outcomes, through the use of learning assessment results, directly aligns with the World Bank's Education Sector Strategy's emphasis on "Learning for All." READ has been commended for its systems approach to helping countries build the right systems and institutions to measure what matters most in any education system—student learning—and to use the results of such measures to boost learning for all. The READ program is seen as a leader in this critical area of work.

At the READ Council Meeting which took place in Hanoi, Vietnam in January 2012, the members from the World Bank and the Russian Federation stressed the importance of clear, concrete, and measurable results. At the global level, the knowledge products being developed under the program are highly valued and have firmly established READ as a leader in the area of student assessment systems. At the country level, each country continues to develop and progress in strengthening and institutionalizing its student assessment system. Countries' efforts will continue to be measured against the READ Results Framework and corresponding key indicators, as to capture successes and demonstrate the impact of the READ program.

The READ Council is pleased to receive the READ Annual Report 2011, which shows that the program is making significant contributions to the global learning agenda.

### READ COUNCIL MEMBERS

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The READ Council thanks Manorama Gotur, the previous READ Program Manager, for her work in defining, launching, and leading this ambitious program until February 2011, and welcomes Olav Christensen, the new READ Program Manager.

## PROGRAM MANAGER'S NOTE

The READ Trust Fund completed its third year of program implementation in 2011. The early months of 2011 saw several changes for the READ program. Armenia was nominated and accepted by the READ Council as the eighth country to receive direct READ assistance. In addition, the READ Council selected another key World Bank official to join its ranks—Alberto Rodriguez, Education Sector Manager for the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) Region. Finally, READ received a new program manager. Amidst these changes, the program continued to see positive development of its work at both the global and country levels.

READ has made important progress, but the largest portion of its work still lies ahead. A sound assessment system—the desired end result of READ—is not easily accomplished within a few years. Even the best-performing countries have taken decades to firmly establish their student assessment systems and effectively use results in ways that improve overall education quality. However, the student assessment conceptual framework and benchmarking tools developed under READ have made enormous contributions to the somewhat overwhelming task of establishing an assessment system. READ's tools allow the task to be broken down into manageable steps: identify key indicators, define various stages of development, and plot the steps required to move forward.

It is absolutely essential that by the end of the READ program, there are clear, measurable results and significant achievements reached in establishing each supported country's assessment system. These benchmarking tools and the newly established READ Results Framework have given the program the means to track and monitor progress at the country level. The READ Program will continue to align the country-level work with key indicators and demonstrate the level of progress achieved against the country baselines established in 2009.

This report demonstrates a year of significant progress for the READ program. The conceptual framework and tools for student assessment systems piloted during the first few years of the program are being rolled out on a large scale and used by countries across the globe. Almost all READ countries have now finalized their Action Plans and have begun implementing their initial set of activities. The year ahead will surely be one of intense activity across the program.

Olav Christensen  
READ Trust Fund Program Manager

# OVERVIEW

Established in October 2008, the Russia Education Aid for Development (READ) program is a collaboration of the Government of the Russian Federation and the World Bank that focuses on improving education quality in low-income countries. The READ Trust Fund (hereafter referred to as READ) is a part of this program with an amount of US\$32 million to be executed over a six-year period, 2008 to 2014.

## LEARNING FOR ALL—IMPROVING LEARNING OUTCOMES THROUGH ASSESSMENTS

The World Bank's Education Sector Strategy 2020 highlights the importance of "Learning for All." The proven economic gains and poverty reduction tied to education are only obtainable when children actually learn. Simply attending school is not enough. All actors in an education system need to know whether or not learning is taking place so they can use this information to improve education quality.

Given the critical importance of measuring student learning, READ's main purpose is to help low-income countries improve their student learning outcomes through the design, implementation, and use of robust systems for student assessment. READ supports analytical work and technical assistance to help countries (i) establish systems or institutions—or strengthen existing ones—that formulate learning goals and carry out assessments of student learning; (ii) improve existing or develop new instruments to measure student learning outcomes; and (iii) strengthen existing or develop new mechanisms (policies) to use learning outcomes data to improve teaching and learning.

## READ ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

READ provides support at both the global and country levels. At the *global level*, the focus is on generating and sharing knowledge in the form of instruments and tools, analytical reports, case studies, and the sharing of good practices and lessons learned. At the *country level* (in Angola, Armenia, Ethiopia, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mozambique, Tajikistan, Vietnam, and Zambia), World Bank operational teams and country stakeholders work together to develop and implement a set of READ-funded activities that address gaps in the country's current learning assessment system. For both the global-level and country-level work, a group of learning assessment experts advises and supports product development and program design (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Roles and Responsibilities of Key Actors Supported by READ**

READ Council (Russia, WB)	READ Management Team (WB)	READ Global Team (WB)	READ Country Task Teams (WB)	READ Technical Group (International Assessment Experts)
Guidance on overall strategic direction, priorities, and rules of engagement for the READ TF and monitoring of program performance	Program management and administration, i.e., strategic planning, allocation of funds, program coordination, quality assurance, and monitoring	Development of the conceptual framework for work on assessment systems and learning standards, assessment benchmarking tools, and other global knowledge products	Focal point for all READ assistance in READ countries, working closely with country governments and other stakeholders to design and implement READ-funded assessment	Support for development of global knowledge products, program quality assurance, and direct technical assistance at the country level
<b>READ-Supported Country Education Officials</b> <b>(Angola, Armenia, Ethiopia, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mozambique, Tajikistan, Vietnam, and Zambia)</b>				

## ACCELERATING READ PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

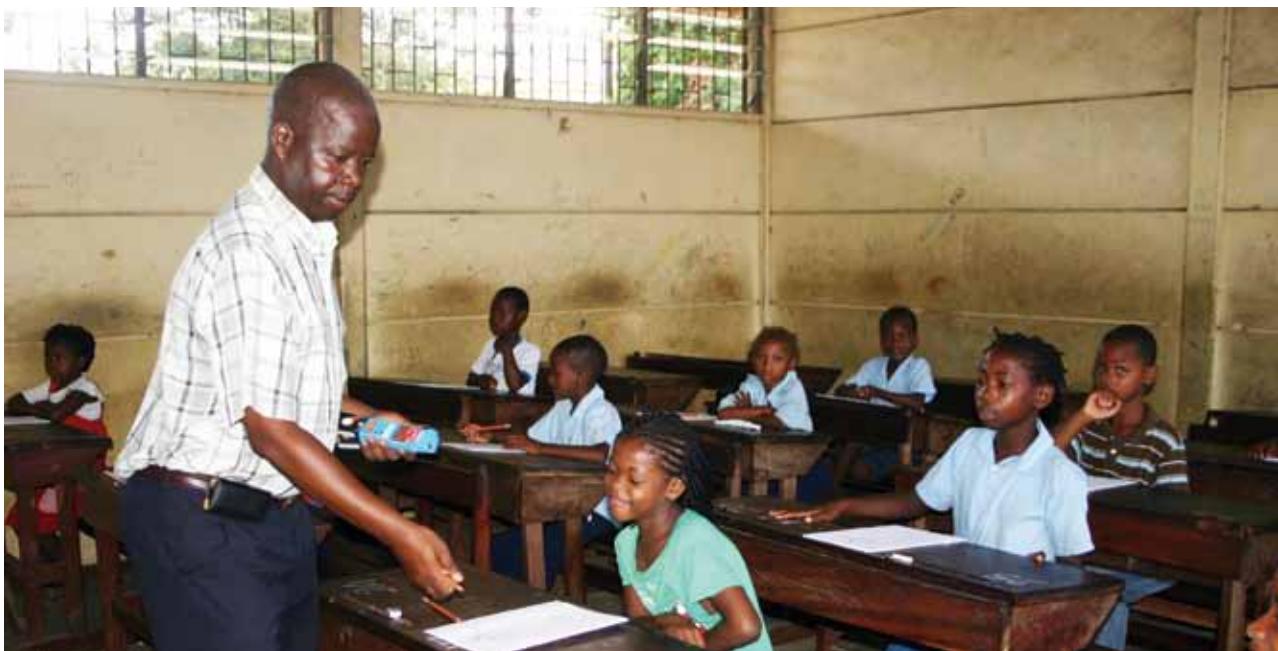
The first year of READ focused on establishing the READ program at both the global and country levels. The trust fund structure and technical group were established, the READ program was launched in seven READ countries, and self-diagnosis exercises were conducted in each READ country to identify gaps and begin to create Action Plans for READ assistance.

During its second year, READ work at the global level centered on establishing a clear conceptual framework and evidence base for analyzing and strengthening assessment systems. At the country level, this framework improved READ country governments' understanding of their own learning assessment systems and their ability to identify the actions necessary to improve their current assessment systems. Action Plans for both Angola and Zambia were approved and they began implementing their first set of activities.

In 2011, the third year of the READ program concentrated on accelerating progress at the country level and establishing a clear framework for monitoring and capturing country-level results. Angola and Zambia continued to implement their Action Plans and pilot assessment activities; Action Plans were approved for Ethiopia, Mozambique, Tajikistan, and Vietnam; and Armenia was selected as a new recipient country. At the global level, a READ Results Framework was established, support continued for the development of student assessment global knowledge products, work began in the area of learning standards, and efforts to share lessons learned across countries continued.

## READ'S KEY EXPECTED OUTCOME: IMPROVED LEARNING ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

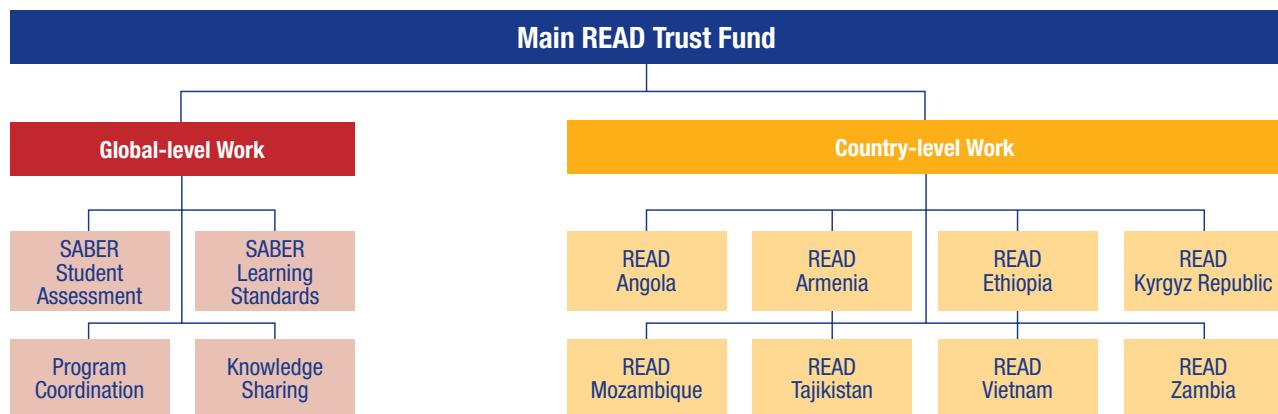
It is expected that the main outcome under the READ program will be increased institutional capacity of READ countries to develop, carry out, and use data from student assessments. Additionally, countries will be able to use the conceptual framework and tools developed under READ to measure the strengths and limitations of their student assessment activities and identify areas for improvement. Armed with information on how well their students are performing, teachers, policy makers, and international donors alike will be able to determine where to focus their energy and resources for the greatest improvement in learning outcomes.



## 2011 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

The READ Trust Fund of US\$32 million has been set up to fund activities at both the global and country levels (see Figure 2). The trust fund was originally set up to be executed only by Bank staff. However, in 2010, an amendment made it possible for the funds to also be recipient-executed and implemented by country governments in select, justifiable cases. (To date, Tajikistan has the only recipient-executed program; the Kyrgyz Republic is preparing one to begin in 2012.)

**Figure 2. READ Trust Fund Structure**



Source: READ.

As of December 2011, the World Bank had received the entire US\$32 million. The funds were delivered in four tranches—US\$5 million in December 2008, US\$8 million in June 2009, US\$10 million in July 2010, and US\$9 million in December 2011. To ensure adequate time for program implementation, nearly all of the remaining funds were allocated in 2011. In addition to Angola and Zambia's Action Plans (which received funding in 2010), funding requests to support country-specific Action Plans were approved for Ethiopia, Mozambique, Tajikistan, and Vietnam.

At the direction of the READ Council, the total trust fund has been allocated between the global and country level work programs. The global work receives approximately 35 percent and the country work 60 percent of the total funds available. The greater portion of funds has been allocated to country-specific activities.

For the first two years, program disbursements were greatest at the global level. This enabled the creation of knowledge products on learning assessments, which underpin and inform all of the work being done in READ countries. Even though several countries only received their funding in the latter part of 2011, expenditures at the country level are increasing significantly as countries begin to implement their programs and spend their allocated funds (Figure 3). This trend is expected to continue over the next years of READ program implementation.

**Figure 3. READ Trust Fund Disbursement Trends at the Global and Country Levels (in US\$ millions)**

Source: READ.

Table 1 shows a financial summary of the READ Trust Fund since its inception in 2008. Thus far, US\$28.9 million has been allocated overall, with US\$12.1 million at the global level, US\$15.2 million at the country level (for READ countries), and US\$1.6 million for the trust fund management fee required by the World Bank. Additional funding proposals to be submitted in 2012 are underway for Armenia (US\$1 million), Angola (US\$1 million), and the Kyrgyz Republic (US\$2 million). It is intended that the fund will be slightly overprogrammed to ensure that all funds are spent by the end of the READ program in 2014.

The READ Trust Fund is a six-year program that began in October 2008 and will end in October 2014. The end of 2011 marks the midpoint for program implementation. As shown in Figure 4, nearly 40 percent of the total funds have been spent to date. However, for most of the countries, expenditures have been modest. Considerable time was spent identifying needs, building in-country consensus, and developing project designs. Now that most country programs are underway, it is expected that expenditures will dramatically increase in 2012.

**Figure 4. READ Trust Fund Total Expenditures as of 12/31/11 (in US\$ millions)**

Source: READ.

**Table 1. READ Trust Fund Financial Summary as of 12/31/11 (in U.S. dollars)**

	Total Allocated	Disbursements	Commitments	Balance
<b>MANAGEMENT FEE</b>				
WB Trust Fund Management Fee	1,600,000	1,600,000	0	0
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>1,600,000</b>	<b>1,600,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>GLOBAL PROGRAM</b>				
Knowledge Sharing/Program Coordination	6,400,000	2,189,851	93,549	4,116,600
SABER—Student Assessment	4,700,000	2,031,311	147,099	2,521,590
SABER—Learning Standards	1,000,000	241,217	562,408	196,375
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>12,100,000</b>	<b>4,462,379</b>	<b>803,056</b>	<b>6,834,565</b>
<b>COUNTRY PROGRAMS</b>				
READ Angola*	1,280,277	780,752	15,176	484,349
READ Armenia*	0	0	0	0
READ Ethiopia	1,091,000	289,705	0	801,295
READ Kyrgyz Republic*	350,000	299,355	0	50,645
READ Mozambique	2,425,000	676,815	752,948	995,237
READ Tajikistan	3,800,000	673,137	0	3,126,863
READ Vietnam	3,811,894	334,475	330,599	3,146,820
READ Zambia	2,413,500	1,236,193	136,301	1,041,006
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>15,171,671</b>	<b>4,290,432</b>	<b>1,235,024</b>	<b>9,646,215</b>
<b>TOTAL OVERALL</b>	<b>\$28,871,671</b>	<b>\$10,352,811</b>	<b>\$2,038,080</b>	<b>\$16,480,780</b>

Source: READ.

\*Additional funding proposals will be submitted for Angola, Armenia, and the Kyrgyz Republic in 2012 which will account for the remaining unallocated funds.

# 2011 GLOBAL SUMMARY

READ activities at the global level are centered on: (i) *developing knowledge products* to expand the current understanding of what makes for an effective student assessment system; (ii) *partnering and knowledge sharing* with international donors to generate additional support for the READ agenda; and (iii) providing opportunities to *share lessons across READ-supported countries and best practices from other countries' experiences* in the field of student assessment.

## DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

In the area of knowledge product development, the focus in 2011 was on piloting, validating, and applying conceptual frameworks and evidence-based tools for evaluating and strengthening student assessment systems and student learning standards. The work on student assessment was a continuation and expansion of work started in 2010, while the work on learning standards represented a new area of activity. A greater understanding of effective policies and practices in both areas is essential to the READ program's goal of strengthening countries' systems and institutions that formulate learning goals and carry out assessments. The work programs in both of these areas are part of a larger World Bank initiative known as the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) program (see Box 1).

### **Box 1. SABER—The World Bank's Systems Approach for Better Education Results**

To support the implementation of its Education Sector Strategy 2020: Learning for All, the World Bank has created a program to help countries systematically examine and strengthen the performance of their education systems. This evidence-based program, called Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER), involves building a comprehensive toolkit of system diagnostics for examining the various components and policy domains in education systems against global standards and best practices around the world.

The SABER program fills a gap in the availability of policy data, information, and knowledge on what matters most to improve the quality of education. In addition, it responds to the demands of policy makers and citizens in countries worldwide who want to know what reforms are needed to help ensure that their schools can produce learning outcomes that meet their twenty-first century national goals and global opportunities.

Drawing on the best global evidence and research currently available, SABER has initiated work on a wide range of education policy domains (including teachers, student assessment, finance, early childhood development, and so forth). Each domain follows a similar process of generating tools and knowledge in the following key areas:

- **Conceptual Framework**—identifies the key goals that a given policy domain would aim to achieve, the policy levers or quality drivers that would allow it to reach these goals, and the indicators that measure the extent to which it is reaching each goal.
- **Diagnostic Tools**—used to quickly and economically collect data on issues needed to assess performance in a given policy domain, based on both available evidence and the experience of top-performing education systems.
- **Country Reports**—provide a standardized snapshot and summary description of a country's performance in a given policy domain.
- **Case Studies**—provide concrete illustrations of what some countries have done to measurably improve performance in a given policy domain.
- **SABER Knowledge Base Website**—shares collected data, supporting documents, and analytical work on each policy domain.

Source: World Bank.



### SABER—Student Assessment

In 2011, with the support of the READ program, SABER—Student Assessment continued to develop and validate an evidence-based methodology to benchmark student assessment policies and systems in developed and developing countries around the world, with the goal of promoting stronger assessment systems that contribute to improved education quality and learning for all.

In 2011, READ supported the completion of the conceptual framework for SABER—Student Assessment (shown in Appendix 1); the piloting of data collection tools and protocols based on the framework; and the retroactive application of these tools in READ countries (using 2009 data). Ultimately, a standardized report with ratings and a description of the strengths and weaknesses of that country’s student assessment system was produced for each READ country. Table 2 shows the ratings for each country for four types of assessment activity.

It is evident that all of the countries have areas that need further development and the potential to benefit from the targeted funding and support provided under the READ program. These baseline ratings and corresponding key indicators, as outlined in the READ Results Framework (see page 20), are being used to track each country’s progress in strengthening its overall assessment system.

**Table 2. READ Country Baseline Ratings**

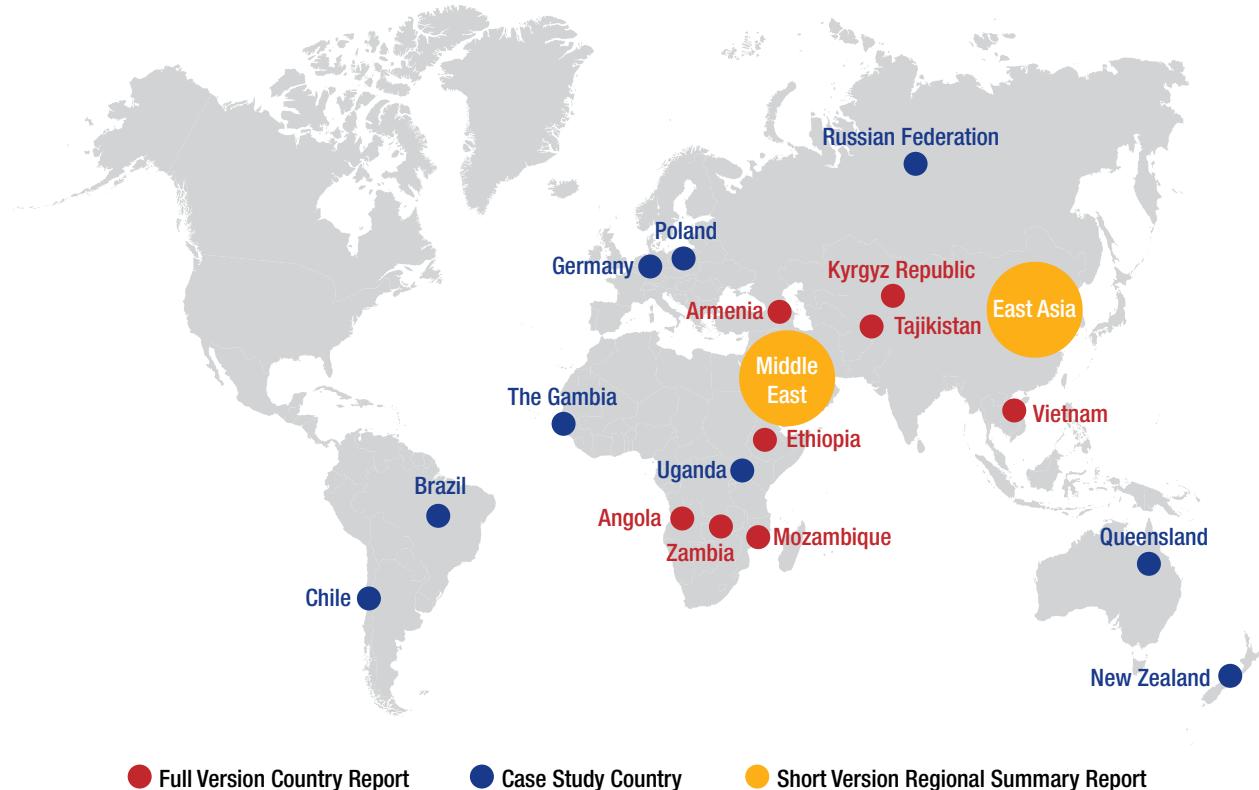
	Classroom	Examinations	NLSA	ILSA
Angola	Latent	Latent	Latent	Latent
Armenia	Advanced	Emerging	Latent	Established
Ethiopia	Latent	Established	Latent	Latent
Kyrgyz Republic	Latent	Emerging	Latent	Latent
Mozambique	Emerging	Emerging	Latent	Latent
Tajikistan	Emerging	Emerging	Latent	Latent
Vietnam	Emerging	Emerging	Latent	Latent
Zambia	Latent	Established	Latent	Emerging

■ Latent ■ Emerging ■ Established ■ Advanced

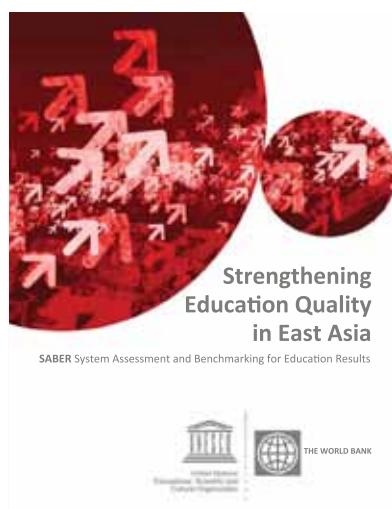
Source: World Bank.

Note: All data are from 2009 except for Armenia, which is from 2011.

**Figure 5. Countries Participating in SABER—Student Assessment Activities (as of 12/31/2011)**



Source: World Bank.



In 2011, there was considerable demand from countries worldwide to use the SABER—Student Assessment tools to benchmark their student assessment systems. By the end of 2011, the team had performed benchmarking exercises in all of the countries in the East Asia and Middle East and North Africa Regions of the Bank.

Similar to the case studies commissioned in 2010, READ provided support for six additional case studies in 2011. These case studies focus on how different countries around the world have made effective use of the information from their student assessments to support improved quality and student learning. These countries included Chile, Germany, Jordan, the Russian Federation, Singapore, and The Gambia (see Figure 5). These case studies were presented at the Third READ Global Conference in Germany in October, 2011, and will be published in 2012. These and other READ-supported products developed in 2011 are described in further detail in Table 3.

**Table 3. Products Developed under the SABER—Student Assessment Program**

<b>Conceptual Framework for Assessment Systems</b>	<p>SABER—Student Assessment has developed a framework and identified key indicators that help countries systematically examine the quality of their student assessment systems. The framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Describes key characteristics of effective assessment systems</li> <li>■ Provides the evidence base for analyzing and strengthening assessment systems</li> <li>■ Underpins the entire READ program and informs all of the global and country-level work being carried out under READ.</li> </ul> <p>In 2011, the paper outlining this conceptual framework underwent internal and external peer review. The finalized version will be printed as the inaugural paper in the SABER Working Paper series in 2012.</p>
<b>Diagnostic Tools—Questionnaires and Rubrics</b>	<p>In 2011, following pilot exercises carried out in Chile, New Zealand, and Uganda in 2010, a complete set of questionnaires and rubrics based on the conceptual framework was finalized. The purpose of these instruments is to provide a standardized, evidence-based approach to collecting and evaluating data on the characteristics and development levels of a country's assessment system.</p> <p>The full set of questionnaires and rubrics cover the following assessment types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Classroom assessments</li> <li>■ Examinations</li> <li>■ National large-scale assessments</li> <li>■ International large-scale assessments</li> </ul> <p>The team also developed a “short version” questionnaire that covers all assessment types.</p> <p>The full set of questionnaires and rubrics were used in all eight READ-supported countries whereas the “short version” was used in the East Asia and Pacific and Middle East and Northern Africa Regions as well as in three states in Nigeria as a way to capture data for a results-based financing education project.</p>
<b>Country Reports</b>	<p>In 2011, the team developed a standardized report template that summarizes key findings and recommendations derived from the application of the diagnostic tools to a country's assessment system. For the READ-supported countries, these reports provide the baseline data for monitoring progress at the country level.</p> <p>In 2011, full country summary reports were completed for all eight of the READ supported countries: Angola, Armenia, Ethiopia, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mozambique, Tajikistan, Vietnam, and Zambia.</p> <p>In addition, using the short, consolidated version of the instruments, comparative country summary reports were completed for the following countries and regions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ East Asia (14)—Cambodia; China; Hong Kong SAR, China; Indonesia; Japan; the Republic of Korea; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Mongolia; the Philippines; Singapore; Thailand; and Vietnam</li> <li>■ Middle East and North Africa (7)—Dubai, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia</li> <li>■ Africa (1)—three states in Nigeria.</li> </ul>
<b>Case Studies</b>	<p>Commissioned papers aimed to build the evidence base on best practices in reforming and strengthening assessment systems. In 2010, case studies on the enabling context were commissioned for Australia (Queensland), Brazil, Chile, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, the Russian Federation, and Uganda. Then in 2011, case studies on the use of assessment results were commissioned for Chile, The Gambia, Germany, Jordan, the Russian Federation, and Singapore.</p> <p>(The case studies are currently under review and being finalized so they can be published under a newly created working paper series on assessment. The papers completed the review process in 2011. The year 2012 will be spent on production.)</p>

### SABER—Learning Standards

In 2011, with the support of the READ program, SABER—Learning Standards began to develop and test an evidence-based methodology to benchmark learning standards policies and systems in developed and developing countries around the world, with the goal of promoting stronger learning standards that contribute to improved education quality and learning for all.

The background work for SABER—Learning Standards was outsourced to the American Institutes for Research (AIR) via a competitive bidding process. In 2011, the AIR team completed the draft framework paper for this domain. The purpose of the paper is to provide a framework that sets out what matters most in the area of learning standards according to the existing global evidence base and best practices (see Appendix 2). The AIR team also developed diagnostic tools based on this framework (see Table 4).

In 2012, the conceptual framework and diagnostic tools will be reviewed, piloted, and finalized, and additional tools and knowledge will be generated in the form of country reports and case studies. The materials will undergo further piloting and review before being promoted as SABER tools.

**Table 4. Products Developed under the SABER—Learning Standards Program in 2011**

<b>Conceptual Framework for Learning Standards</b>	Describes key characteristics of effective learning standards and provides the evidence base for developing high-quality learning standards.
	The purpose of the paper is to provide a framework that sets out what matters most in the policy domain of learning standards according to the existing global evidence base and best practices. It is meant to be a comprehensive, state-of-knowledge report in the area.
<b>Diagnostic Tools—Questionnaires and Rubrics</b>	<p>To collect data on the characteristics of a country's learning standards and judge its level of development, questionnaires and rubrics are being developed for various content areas.</p> <p>Pilot versions of the questionnaires for various content areas and a corresponding rubric have been developed. Content areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Language arts</li> <li>■ Mathematics</li> <li>■ Science</li> </ul>

Source: World Bank.

### PARTNERING AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Another key component of the READ program at the global level is a focus on finding ways to partner with other donors and continue to generate broad support for the READ agenda. A number of events in 2011 concentrated on training other donors, partners, and development practitioners on the tools and products being developed under the SABER—Student Assessment program. Participation in these events has given the READ program a platform for showcasing its work, various venues for discussing and generating support for the assessment framework developed under SABER—Student Assessment, and greater visibility for READ on the international stage.

### Student Assessment Training Sessions

In the spirit of partnership and collaboration, the SABER—Student Assessment team has been invited to provide training sessions for a number of donors interested in building their own capacity and understanding in the area of student assessment. For instance:



- On January 27, 2011, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) invited the SABER—Student Assessment team to deliver a training session on the benchmarking tools as part of their Education Staff Learning Week in Washington, DC.



- To enhance the use of the SABER—Student Assessment tools by World Bank education operational teams, on March 8, 2011, a full-day session was dedicated to the topic of student assessment as part of the World Bank's Education Learning Week.



- The U.K. Department for International Development (DfID) has also been a major donor to the SABER program. On March 16–18, 2011, a workshop for DfID staff on the various policy domains, including student assessment, was held in Scotland.



- The World Bank Institute's Strategic Choices for Education Reform Course includes a learning module that specifically addresses "Outcomes and Impacts of Reform: Assessment and Evaluation." As part of this course, on March 16, 2011, the SABER—Student Assessment team trained 50 country government education officials on the topics of student assessment benchmarking tools, effective reporting of national assessment results, and how to prevent cheating and corruption in examinations. Based on the success of the first session, on July 18, 2011, the team was invited back to deliver the same training to 54 UNICEF education staff.



- To highlight READ's work program at both the country and global levels and collaborate with other donors working in assessment, READ assembled a panel to deliver a presentation at the Comparative and International Education Symposium, which took place on May 1–5, 2011 in Montreal, Canada.



- By invitation from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), a presentation on the tools and resources being developed under SABER—Student Assessment was delivered at UIS headquarters in Montreal, Canada on September 30, 2011.

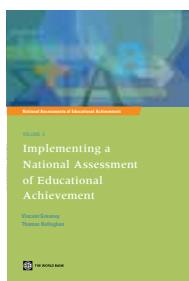
### Other Collaboration

While the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) documents outline indicators for completion and enrollment, there are no clear learning goals or indicators. In January 2011, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) (formerly known as the Education for All—Fast Track Initiative) and READ partnered to convene a panel of international reading and assessment experts to conduct an external review of potential Fast Track Initiative (FTI) indicators to measure learning outcomes in reading fluency and comprehension. The panel resulted in a consensus document and list of recommendations for further actions required to validate potential learning indicators and their use. Discussions on the potential indicators are still ongoing.

The World Bank and the Governing Board of OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) are collaborating to find ways to adapt the PISA test such that low-income countries can better benefit from it. With READ support, the Education Testing Services (ETS) has begun developing a new skills assessment for three reading components including vocabulary, sentence processing, and passage comprehension. In 2011, a field test took place, which included preparation of an administration manual, training guide, and sampling plans. Based on the analysis of the field test data, the main survey instrument has been verified, including recommendations for improvements. It is expected that this international option will be available for PISA 2012 and will improve the information value of PISA at the lower end of the achievement scale.

### **SHARING LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES IN ASSESSMENT**

At the global level, READ identifies opportunities to share lessons and best practices in the field of learning assessments among READ-supported countries. This is meant to enhance READ's work at the country level and increase awareness of assessment best practices.



#### **National Assessments of Educational Achievement Series**

The World Bank is in the process of publishing a five-volume series on key concepts in national assessments of student achievement levels. In 2011, Volume 3, titled *Implementing a National Assessment of Educational Achievement*, was finalized with READ support. This book focuses on practical issues such as planning, budgeting, and test security, and also includes a step-by-step guide on national sampling. The final book in the series, Volume 4, will be published in 2012.



#### **Third READ Global Conference, October 23–26, 2011**

High-level education officials from the eight READ countries, Russian officials and education experts, World Bank staff, and international assessment experts came together again for a three-day event in Eschborn, Germany under the theme of "Using Student Assessment Results for Education Quality and Systems Strengthening." This year's event was combined with the World Bank's Education Conference for ECA and co-hosted by the German Development Agency (GIZ), which gave READ even greater visibility as a leader in student assessment and highlighted Russia's role as an important emerging donor. (See Appendix 3 for a full conference summary.)



#### **READ Website**

A Website dedicated to READ has been created to (i) highlight the role of Russia as a donor and (ii) disseminate the key messages of the READ program, READ country achievements, and the knowledge products developed under the READ global program. This Website was officially launched in 2011 and is gradually becoming a major communication tool for the program ([www.worldbank.org/readtf](http://www.worldbank.org/readtf)).

## 2011 COUNTRY SUMMARIES



READ-funded programs are underway in eight countries—**Angola, Armenia, Ethiopia, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mozambique, Tajikistan, Vietnam, and Zambia**. World Bank Task Team Leaders (TTLs) and Country Teams have worked closely together with their respective government counterparts to thoroughly assess their existing learning assessment systems, decide on future activities to address gaps, and implement activities.

### MONITORING AND TRACKING PROGRESS

Given the absolute necessity that the READ program be able to demonstrate clear, measurable results in further establishing each country's assessment system, it was decided to develop a results framework and identify key indicators against which to measure progress. The READ Results Framework draws heavily on the work done under SABER—Student Assessment. The framework summarizes key indicators across assessment types as outlined by the questionnaires and rubrics (see Table 5). All country-level activities have now been aligned to fit within the results framework and READ is monitoring and tracking progress against these key indicators. It is expected that by doing so, at the end of READ, the program will be able to clearly demonstrate the level of progress achieved against the country baselines.

**Table 5. READ Results Framework and Key Indicators**

Enabling Context (EC)
<b>EC1—Setting clear policies</b>
There is a formal document(s) that provides guidelines about assessment activities.
The formal document(s) is available to key stakeholders and the public.
<b>EC2—Having strong leadership</b>
Key stakeholders support the assessment activities.
There is key stakeholder support for continuous improvement of assessment activities.
<b>EC3—Having regular budget/funds for assessment activities</b>
There is a line item in the government education budget for assessment activities.
The budget provides adequate funding in major areas, including design, administration, data processing, and reporting.
<b>EC4—Having strong organizational structures</b>
There is an agency, institution, or unit with the mandate to carry out assessment activities.
The assessment agency, institution, or unit is accountable to a clearly recognizable body.
<b>EC5—Having effective human resources</b>
There is a team of people with the requisite skills/capacity to carry out assessment activities.
There are opportunities available to build assessment capacity—for example, courses/training on test development, sampling, and so forth.
System Alignment (SA)
<b>SA1—Aligning the assessment with learning goals</b>
There is a clear, common understanding among key stakeholders of what the assessment activities measure.
Assessment activities are aligned with an official curriculum/learning standards that outlines what students are expected to learn.
<b>SA2—Providing opportunities to learn about assessment activities</b>
There are training sessions/courses for teachers to learn about the assessment activities.
Teachers are involved some aspect(s) of assessment-related activities.
Assessment Quality (AQ)
<b>AQ1—Ensuring quality</b>
There is formal documentation about the technical aspects of the assessment activity.
Assessment results are deemed by key stakeholders to be valid and reliable.
<b>AQ2—Ensuring effective use of assessment results</b>
Assessment results are disseminated in meaningful ways to key stakeholders.
Assessment results are used to promote and inform students' learning.

Source: READ.

## PROGRESS TO DATE

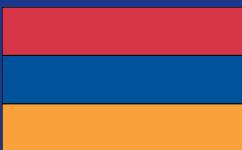
Considerable time was spent during the first years of the program developing an improved understanding of what it takes to establish a comprehensive, high functioning, and sustainable assessment “system.” High-level officials across the READ countries have been engaged in the program since its earliest stages, demonstrating a strong level of commitment to improve their assessment systems. Except for Armenia, which just joined the program in 2011, all READ countries have clearly mapped out an action plan and are now moving forward with an initial set of activities.

The country summaries that follow show differing levels of progress. Some countries such as Ethiopia and Zambia have opted to address gaps across multiple assessment types, while others have chosen to concentrate their initial efforts on a specific assessment type such as developing a national large-scale assessment in grade 3 in Angola or establishing a new testing center charged with creating a unified university entrance exam in Tajikistan. Research shows that establishing a comprehensive assessment system will take more time and resources than the life and expanse of the READ program. Nevertheless, the summary chart of each country’s activities thus far clearly demonstrate measurable progress on building and reinforcing the essential foundations.

## CHALLENGES

Implementation of the READ program has not been without its challenges. To not only improve assessment practices but institutionalize the assessment system is a vast undertaking. Comprehensive assessment systems touch nearly every aspect of an education system, from the central level down to what occurs on a daily basis in the classroom, requiring considerable coordination and communication at all levels. Some of the challenges in implementing the READ program have been government instability, competing priorities when countries have other large non-READ programs, the need for additional on-the-ground support and technical assistance, and establishing a clear set of government priorities of initial next steps. In spite of these obstacles, measurable progress can be seen and there is a sustained momentum for moving forward.





# ARMENIA



**Total Grant Amount:** US\$1,000,000 (to be allocated in 2012)

**Disbursements (as of 12/31/11):** N/A

## BACKGROUND

Based on a decision by the READ Council in April 2011, the Government of the Russian Federation and the World Bank expanded the reach of the current program by inviting Armenia to join the READ program. Since Russia and Armenia had already begun collaborating in the areas of educational assessments and education policy, it was decided to substantially enhance their joint efforts and formalize this relationship under the READ program.

Since the late 1990s, education has been a strong priority for public investment in Armenia. International assessment test scores, such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), marked significant improvements in student learning outcomes. Yet, despite these considerable improvements over the last decade, there are still remaining challenges for the Armenian education system to increase student learning.

Through the application of the SABER—Student Assessment benchmarking exercise, it is clear that although many of the necessary assessment policies are in place, there are various areas still in need of improvement. These areas include the need to increase the capacity of teachers and assessment specialists to carry out assessment activities; ensure that assessment results are used effectively and in ways to influence improvements in education quality; and improve the quality of key examinations such as the Unified Exam in grade 12. Discussions are currently underway on what assessment activities Armenia will now choose to focus on with the resources available through the READ Trust Fund.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2011:

- Completion of the SABER—Student Assessment benchmarking exercise and final report approved by Ministry of Education officials
- Strong leadership and support demonstrated by the participation of a five-member delegation from Armenia's Ministry of Education, including the Vice Minister, in the 2011 READ Global Conference in Germany
- Initial meetings with key Armenian government officials, the World Bank Task Team Leader for Education in Armenia, and a member of the READ Technical Group to begin developing an Action Plan for future READ funded activities





# ANGOLA



**Total Grant Amount:** US\$1,280,277

**Disbursements (as of 12/31/11):** US\$780,752



## BACKGROUND

Angola began the READ program in 2009 with very limited assessment capacity and experience. There was a very nascent system in place, no single national entity responsible for assessment, no full-time staff trained in assessment, and a weak assessment culture. With the resources available under READ, the government opted to first lay the foundation of their assessment system by focusing on strengthening the enabling environment for assessment activities and building capacity by training local staff to carry out a **national large-scale assessment of early grade reading**.

The strong leadership and support shown by Angola's Ministry of Education for the READ agenda has been impressive. The early grade reading assessment exercise mobilized school leaders and teachers across the entire country. Based on the successes under the READ program, negotiations are now underway for a possible International Development Association (IDA) project. This project would focus entirely on improving the quality of education, include support for the development of Angola's national assessment system, and promulgate a new policy on the implementation of national exams.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2011:

- All 13 members of the National System for Assessment Technical Group trained in data analysis, sampling/field operations, data entry, and software
- 75 teachers and teacher trainees trained to administer the national early grade reading assessment
- Implementation of a full-scale national reading assessment in Grade 3—more than 5,000 students tested from 144 schools across all 18 provinces
- National Examinations conference with over 80 participants from Angola's 18 provinces, including provincial directors of education and representatives of teachers training colleges, teachers' unions, and schools

READ Angola—Activities and Progress from 2009 to 2011		
Activity	Output	Outcome
<b>EC2 Strong Leadership</b>		
Events on assessment targeted for MOE leaders	Workshop with key education leaders (including three Vice Ministers of Education) to discuss Self-Diagnosis findings and proposed Action Plan (2010)	Self-Diagnosis findings and Action Plan validated and fully endorsed by Ministry of Education leaders; strong support by key leaders for building Angola's assessment system
<b>EC3 Regular Budget</b>		
Create a line item in the education budget for assessment activities	National assessment budget—US\$1 million	Regular budget allocated annually for assessment activities
<b>EC4 Strong Organizational Structures</b>		
Establish Angolan National System of Assessment Technical Group (NSATG)	13 representatives from key departments of the Ministry of Education with mandate to oversee the development of the national assessment system established by Ministerial Decree (2009)	Staff specifically assigned with the task of carrying out assessment activities
<b>EC5 Effective Human Resources</b>		
Trainings on assessment	<p>Three hands-on workshops for the NSATG on the following topics (2011):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ sampling, field operations</li> <li>■ data entry software</li> <li>■ analysis of Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) data</li> </ul> <p>75 teachers and teacher trainees trained to participate in the national early grade reading assessment (2011)</p>	Increased capacity of the national assessment team, teachers, and teacher trainees to conduct assessments (particularly as it relates to EGRA)
Study Trip	Study trip to Pernambuco, Brazil for 21 Ministry of Education staff to learn about assessment and its uses (Mar 2011)	Greater capacity of Ministry of Education staff to design, lead, and use assessment results
READ Global Conferences	Government delegation of 5–6 members including a Vice Minister of Education each year (2009, 2010, 2011)	Enhanced understanding of key issues in assessment and the importance of education quality
Learning Event	Team of 5–6 Angolans presented lessons learned to Bank Staff in Washington, DC with connection to Brazil and Mozambique country offices (July 2011)	South-to-South relationships strengthened and sharing lessons learned across countries and with donors
National Examinations Conference	Three-day conference with staff from Ministry of Education, 18 provincial governments, and teacher training institutes (Dec 2011)	Increased awareness by major stakeholders on how to improve assessments and exams
<b>AQ1 Assessment Quality</b>		
Pilot EGRA	Pilot exercise conducted in three provinces (2010)	Improved design of national EGRA
Create database with updated information on primary education	Collected data and created database with key education statistics necessary for creating EGRA sample (Aug 2011)	Basic education statistics in Angola more readily available
Data collection for national EGRA	<p>Data collection completed in 144 schools in all of Angola's 18 provinces (Oct 2011)</p> <p>Data file ready for analysis (Dec 2011)</p>	Greater capacity of NSATG staff to conduct national assessments and data available to analyze learning outcomes in Angola



# ETHIOPIA



**Total Grant Amount:** US\$1,091,000

**Disbursements (as of 12/31/11):** US\$289,705



## BACKGROUND

In Ethiopia, READ funds support activities in three key areas—**national large-scale assessments, national examinations, and school inspection.** The results of the self-diagnosis exercise revealed consistent weaknesses in these areas such as the lack of a policy framework, unclear institutional arrangements, and the lack of a dedicated government budget. Hence, READ funds are being used to **strengthen the enabling context** for both existing activities (national large-scale assessments and examinations) and new activities (school inspection).

The key focus of READ support includes developing policy frameworks, establishing clear institutional arrangements and conducting capacity building exercises. Thus far, notable achievements have included the establishment of an autonomous agency for large-scale assessments and examinations- National Educational Assessment and Examinations Agency, and a directorate for school inspection at the Federal Ministry of Education. By the end of READ, it is expected that Ethiopia will have clear policies and procedural frameworks to guide the work in each of these areas, and an improved system of quality assurance will be established in Ethiopia.

Other donors are also supporting assessment activities in Ethiopia. Therefore, donor support is being coordinated to ensure that support from various sources is complementary to each other and there is no duplication. The multi-donor financed General Education Quality Improvement Project (GEQIP), supervised by the World Bank, supports all three activities by making available operating costs. While USAID and UNICEF are supporting the implementation of large-scale assessments, READ is the primary source of assistance for examinations and inspection.

## KEY PROGRESS IN 2011:

- Draft policy and procedural frameworks in national large-scale assessments and school inspection
- Self-diagnostic report completed for national examinations
- Reorganization of previous institutional arrangements so national large-scale assessments and national examinations are now under the same agency—the National Agency for Educational Assessment and Examinations, which is autonomous and to be led by a board
- A designated budget line item for national large-scale assessment activities
- Staff tasked with carrying out various assessment activities—eight staff fully dedicated to national large-scale assessments and two staff fully dedicated to school inspection

READ Ethiopia—Activities and Progress from 2009 to 2011		
Activity	Output	Outcome
<b>EC1 Setting Clear Policies</b>		
Create Policy/Procedure Framework documents for National Large-Scale Assessments (NLSA), National Examinations (NE), and School Inspection	Draft NLSA Policy/Procedure framework (Dec 2010)  Draft School Inspection Policy/Procedure framework, and training manual (Feb 2011)  Self-diagnostic report on Examinations (Dec 2011)	A draft framework and clear guidelines to support large-scale assessment and inspection activities in Ethiopia  The current status of examinations activity and key issues and needs determined
<b>EC2 Strong Leadership</b>		
Workshops for MOE leaders to discuss assessment related reports and endorse plans	Workshop for 50–60 key stakeholders (MOE leaders, regional staff, and donor community) to validate Self-Diagnosis findings for NLSA and endorse Action Plan (Aug 2010)  Meeting with Education Minister, donor representatives, and school inspection staff to discuss/validate School Inspection Report (2010)	Key leadership and broad support gained by validating diagnostic reports, including action plans on large-scale assessment and school inspection
<b>EC3 Regular Budget</b>		
Create a line item for NLSA activities	Regular budget allocated annually	NLSA undertaken on a regular basis
<b>EC4 Strong Organizational Structures</b>		
Reorganize the NLSA and NE components to be under the same agency led by a board	Creation of an autonomous National Agency for Education Assessment and Examinations and eight staff fully dedicated to School Inspection (2011)  Decision to establish a Directorate for School Inspection with two staff fully dedicated to School Inspection	Clear and stable institutional arrangements for NLSA, examinations, and school inspection
<b>EC5 Effective Human Resources</b>		
READ Global Conferences	Delegation of 5–6 members each year with representatives from NLSA, NE, School Inspection (2009, 2010, 2011)	Enhanced understanding of key issues in assessment and the importance of education quality
Study Visits	Study visit to Ghana for three education officials on how to conduct school inspections (Jan 2011)	Staff with a greater understanding of good practices in school inspection



# KYRGYZ REPUBLIC



Total Grant Amount: US\$350,000

Disbursements (as of 12/31/11): US\$299,355

## BACKGROUND

Due to collaborative efforts made previously by the government and international donors to conduct national and international large-scale assessments and reform the examinations system, the Kyrgyz Republic began the READ program with several recent advances in the development of its assessment system. While additional work in these areas is necessary, **classroom assessments** was determined to be the assessment type most in need of further development. Hence, READ funds are likely to be allocated primarily to activities to strengthen classroom assessment activities.

Implementation of the READ program was seriously delayed due to the April 7 revolution in 2010. Fortunately, the primary agency tasked with carrying out assessment activities remained largely intact during this time of uncertainty. In April 2011, the program began to get back on track and steps were taken to continue the activities previously begun under READ. Building on the findings from the earlier self-diagnosis and the action plan formulated, as well as the SABER benchmarking exercise, a funding proposal has been prepared to take forward a set of priority actions. The proposal is expected to be launched in the second half of 2012. The proposal contains three major elements: building policy and teacher capacity for classroom based assessment, continuing large-scale assessment through the National School-Based Assessment (NSBA) at grade 4, and the launch of an improved school leaving test at grade 11.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2011:

- Increased knowledge and skills of seven key education leaders through a study tour to the Netherlands, which focused on the effective use of results from large-scale assessments to improve learning and how to conduct independent summative classroom assessments
- Five assessment staff from the National Testing Center (NTC) and Kyrgyz Academy of Education trained in Moscow on how to design an effective assessment system
- Broad stakeholder support generated through two workshops each with more than 40 representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science, assessment organizations, donors, and academia
- Preparation of the new funding proposal



READ Kyrgyz Republic—Activities and Progress from 2009 to 2011		
Activity	Output	Outcome
<b>EC1 Setting Clear Policies</b>		
Identify priority areas in assessment	In-country clinic with all major stakeholders (June 2011)	Priority assessment areas identified through consultation with all stakeholdersd
<b>EC4 Strong Organizational Structures</b>		
Functional analysis of the Education Assessment Unit (EAU) and the National Testing Center (NTC)	Recommendations to strengthen the function and staff capacity in EAU and NTC for assessment	Clear identification of institutional weakness and steps to strengthen them
<b>EC5 Effective Human Resources</b>		
Capacity building of key assessment staff through study tours and trainings	READ Global Conferences: 5–6 member delegation each year (2009, 2010, 2011) A study visit to the Central Institute for Test Development (CITO), the Netherlands, for Kyrgyz Republic key learning assessment stakeholders (Apr 2011)  Training of seven key assessment specialists of Kyrgyz Academy of Education (KAE) and Ministry of Education and Science in Moscow (Sep 2011)	Enhanced understanding of key issues in assessment and the importance of education quality, including the following:  1. Better understanding of the importance of human resources in policy making, program development , in-service training (Academy of Education), and implementing structures in the regions 2. Clear understanding of the advantages to keeping assessment functions independent so they can remain objective 3. Clear understanding of the need for unified assessment tools in order to get comparable results and review items in order to improve existing structures
<b>AQ2 Effective Use of Assessment Results</b>		
Secondary analysis of the results of the PISA 2006/2009 and the National Sample Based Assessment (NSBA) 2007 and 2009	Report produced by international experts, which includes specific recommendations on how the Ministry of Education and Science can use these assessments to inform policy (May 2011)	Ensuring appropriate utilization of key findings for corrective and/or preventive policy decision-making; evidence for further strategic decision-making



# MOZAMBIQUE



**Total Grant Amount:** US\$2,425,000

**Disbursements (as of 12/31/11):** US\$676,815



## BACKGROUND

The Government of Mozambique is funding assessment activities through a pooled education donor fund. The READ funding complements this existing funding by focusing on building institutional capacity in the area of student assessment and by financing pilot activities that, if successful, can then be implemented at national scale through the pool of funds. Although Mozambique has been actively involved in developing assessment activities in many of the various assessment types, the self-diagnosis exercise highlighted the need to improve the enabling context and implement assessment activities in a more structured manner. The activities under READ are aimed to address gaps in the **institutional and technical capacity** of Mozambique's Ministry of Education (MOE) for **national and classroom assessments** and improving system alignment by **establishing education system quality indicators**.

By the completion of the READ program, it is expected that: (i) nearly 25 staff from the Assessment Unit (INDE), the Examinations Council (CNECE), and public universities will have the requisite skills to independently design tests, analyze results, and effectively disseminate assessment results; (ii) a formalized set of quality indicators and standards will exist to guide assessment activities; (iii) a school-based assessment in early grade reading, "Provinha," will have been piloted among 3rd graders in 70 schools and will have informed changes in pedagogical practices at the school level; and (iv) a nationally representative assessment, also administered in grade 3, will have been piloted among a representative sample of students in one province. The results of the school-based assessment and representative assessment pilots will inform the decision as to whether these two assessments should be scaled up to the national level.



## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2011:

- 70 draft education system quality indicators developed and field tested with directors, teachers, and parents in six provinces
- 15 staff from INDE, CNECE, and public universities trained in various technical aspects of assessment—test design and analysis, statistic software, and proficiency scales
- Enrollment of 10 government staff in a semi-present, two-year Masters Degree program in educational management and evaluation
- Test materials designed and printed (550 test booklets, 16 administrator manuals, and 10 scoring guides) and the Pre-Pilot of the national early grade reading assessment "Provinha" conducted

READ Mozambique—Activities and Progress from 2009 to 2011		
Activity	Output	Outcome
<b>EC2 Strong Leadership</b>		
Events on assessment topics	Workshop with MOE leaders and international partners to share and discuss main finding of the Self-Diagnosis (2009)	Key leadership and broad support gained by validating diagnostic report and agreement on next steps
<b>EC5 Effective Human Resources</b>		
Short courses in assessment topics: ■ Assessment Systems ■ Questionnaire design, statistical analysis, and proficiency scale development	15 staff from INDE, CNECE, and universities trained in assessment systems and test design (June 2011)  10 staff from INDE, CNECE, and universities trained in questionnaire design, statistical analysis, statistic software, and production of proficiency scales (Nov 2011)	Creation of “stand alone” capacity to carry out the following activities with limited (or no) support from outside technical experts/consultants: ■ Test design and item analysis for creating and finalizing student assessments ■ Basic descriptive and correlational analysis of assessment results and factors associated with test scores
Masters Degree in assessment	10 staff from MOE, INDE, CNECE, and universities highly qualified in designing and the management of national assessments (Sep 2011)	No outcome yet as the Masters Degree will only be completed in September 2013
Participation in conferences on assessment and study visits	Study visit to Brazil to learn from their assessment agencies (2010)  Users and Uses of National Assessment Results Workshop in Cape Town (Apr 2010)  AAEA Conference in Nairobi: five staff participated in benchmarking assessment systems in the Africa Region (Aug 2011)  READ Global Conferences: 5–6 member delegation each year (2009, 2010, 2011)	Enhanced understanding of key issues in assessment, the importance of education quality, and how to conduct national assessments and make efficient use of the results
<b>SA1 Aligning the Assessment with Learning Goals</b>		
Elaborate indicators of education system quality	70 draft education system quality indicators (June 2011)	Concrete tools are now available to measure the quality of the supply of education in Mozambique
Design assessment blueprint and test items	Blueprint for writing test items for reading, writing, and mathematics covering different topics of the national curriculum (July 2011)  Design 600 test items for database (2011)	A large bank of test items is now available to draw from for the purpose of designing specific assessments, such as Provinha or the nationally representative assessment
<b>AQ1 Assessment Quality</b>		
Conduct large scale assessment in reading in grade 3 (“Provinha”)	Test kit including administration and interpretation manuals and test booklet designed and printed for pre-pilot (Oct 2011): ■ 550 test booklets ■ 16 administrator manuals ■ 10 scoring guides  Provinha Pre-Pilot conducted to validate test and testing procedures (Oct 2011)	At the end of 2011, a validated instrument was available to be used in the pilot scheduled for March 2012



# TAJIKISTAN



**Total Grant Amount:** US\$3,800,000

**Disbursements (as of 12/31/11):** US\$673,137



## BACKGROUND

The results of the self-diagnosis and benchmarking exercises found Tajikistan's assessment system to be at an early stage in its level of development. Given the lack of experience administrating large-scale assessments and limited assessment expertise, it was decided to create a new assessment institution responsible for carrying out all national assessment activities—the National Testing Center (NTC). The main objective of the READ program in Tajikistan is to increase the capacity of the NTC that was established through a Presidential Decree in 2009. Through the NTC, Tajikistan will introduce Unified University Entrance Examinations (UEE) and national grade-level assessments with a long-term goal of meeting international standards.



Tajikistan's government officials have fully embraced the READ agenda and are firmly committed to institutionalizing assessment activities in the country. It is expected that by the end of READ, Tajikistan will have introduced UEE and national grade-level assessments through the increased capacity of the NTC. The NTC will be operational, fully staffed, and financially self-sufficient; test instruments and systems will have been piloted and introduced nationally; and a legal and regulatory framework for assessment activities and a national long-term strategy will be in place.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2011:

- Strong leadership and ownership of the NTC as shown by full support from the Office of the President and the Ministry of Education (MOE) and active participation in the development of the Master Plan of Action and Operations Manual and the official launch of the READ program in October 2011
- Development and approval for a detailed Master Plan of Action and Operations Manual to institutionalize the NTC and develop Tajikistan's capacity to carry out assessment activities
- The recruitment of 35 NTC staff and initial training activities in test development and item analysis



READ Tajikistan—Activities and Progress from 2009 to 2011		
Activity	Output	Outcome
<b>EC1 Setting Clear Policies</b>		
Develop the National Testing Center (NTC) and University Entrance Exams (UEE) procedures, regulatory and legal documents	Master Plan and Operations Manual for the NTC (2010)  Revised Master Plan adopted by the MOE in (Aug 2011)	Documents developed and adopted by the Government of Tajikistan (GOT) and respective entities providing the regulatory and legal basis for national introduction of the UEE in 2014 and further work on national and international large-scale assessments
<b>EC2 Strong Leadership</b>		
Involvement of all key stakeholders—MOE officials, universities, education leaders	GOT approval obtained for legal agreement between READ and World Bank and funds available for the NTC (July 2011)  Workshop with all key stakeholders to launch the program (Oct 2011)	Key stakeholders are well informed about the new UEE system and support it.
<b>EC3 Regular Budget</b>		
State budget funds allocated annually for the NTC	State budget allocation for NTC for the second half of 2011 is negotiated with GOT, MOF and MOE and released (Aug 2011)	NTC has financial sustainability to conduct UEEs annually
<b>EC4 Strong Organizational Structures</b>		
NTC premises, equipment, and staff recruitment	The NTC building rehabilitated and adapted for the NTC's tasks, partially equipped, and 35 staff recruited (2011)	NTC and regional branches to be fully staffed, equipped, functional, and institutionalized
<b>EC5 Effective Human Resources</b>		
Training and study tours	Five NTC staff participated in two training courses in Moscow provided by the Russian Training Center (World Bank funds)  Eight NTC and MOE staff went to Ankara and Moscow to learn from their testing centers experiences (World Bank funds)  Training in test development for 30 experts (Open Society Institute funds)  READ Global Conferences: 4–5 member delegation each year in 2009, 2010, 2011 (READ funds)	NTC has qualified and committed staff, and the country has a pool of experts with the capacity to conduct assessment activities
<b>SA1 Aligning the assessment with learning goals</b>		
Align UEE with university admission requirements	Database containing information about all higher education institutions admission requirements (2011)	Ensure the UEE addresses the needs of the universities and create foundation for building a holistic admission system
<b>SA2 Providing Opportunities to Learn about the Assessment Activities</b>		
Design and conduct a communications strategy	Draft communications strategy (2011)	Key stakeholders are well informed about the new UEE system and support it; universities do not resist it



# VIETNAM



**Total Grant Amount:** US\$3,800,000

**Disbursements (as of 12/31/11):** US\$334,475

## BACKGROUND

There are nearly 40,000 schools, one million teachers, and 20 million students in Vietnam. The size of Vietnam's education system makes coordinating assessment activities a challenge. The self-diagnosis and a series of subsequent detailed reviews of various components related to assessment emphasized the need for **stronger system alignment** and robust communication and coordination mechanisms for the many units, central Ministry of Education (MOE) staff, and provinces in charge of managing assessment activities.

The shared vision and consensus built around the Vietnam's national assessment framework is impressive. The assessment activities in Vietnam involve all major education departments—primary, secondary, testing, teacher management, Institute of Educational Sciences, teacher training universities, and provinces. By the completion of the READ program, it is expected that key teacher training institutions will have integrated student assessment modules into their teacher training curriculums. Short-term in-service trainings will be developed; assessment rubrics will be fully integrated into the new 2015 curriculum; modules for capacity building in assessment and quality management will be developed and 630 staff at the provincial level will be trained; and Vietnam will have successfully participated in their first international large-scale assessment—the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2012.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2011:

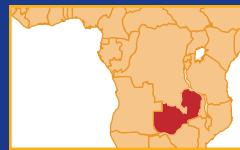
- Registered for PISA 2012 and training of a core team to enable Vietnam to participate in its first international large-scale assessment—PISA 2012
- Six completed studies including in-depth analysis of the policy and regulatory framework governing student assessment, classroom assessment practices, and assessment training programs; three workshops with key stakeholders to analyze current policies
- Assessment rubrics for grade 12 examinations and secondary education developed
- Strong leadership and ownership established through participation of more than 30 leaders and key staff from various education departments in the Annual READ Vietnam Conference for 2011
- Issuance of policy document on national large-scale assessment framework



READ Vietnam—Activities and Progress from 2009 to 2011		
Activity	Output	Outcome
<b>EC1 Setting Clear Policies</b>		
Development of matrix for assessment topics—school leaving exams and classroom assessment	Report of the policy and regulatory framework for student assessment (Dec 2010) Guidelines for use of matrix for school leaving exams and classroom assessment (2011)	Report of the policy and regulatory framework for student assessment (Dec 2010) Guidelines for use of matrix for school leaving exams and classroom assessment (2011)
Development of policy for national large-scale assessment	Ministry of Education's decision on national large-scale assessment	Strong support for institutionalizing national large-scale assessments
<b>EC5 Effective Human Resources</b>		
Capacity building for assessment development and quality management	Analysis of current short- and long-term training programs in assessment (Feb 2011)	Deeper understanding of gaps in the current system to be used to develop future training programs
Participation in PISA 2012	Introductory course (Jun 2009); Training (Jan 2010)	Increased capacity to participate in international assessments
Assessment Conferences	READ Global Conferences: 5–6 member delegation each year (2009, 2010, 2011)  READ Vietnam Conference: 30–40 participants with representatives from each department part of the READ Task Force Team (2009, 2010, 2011)	Enhanced understanding of key issues in assessment and the importance of education quality  Broad understanding across the entire Ministry of Education on the key issues in developing Vietnam's assessment system
Integration of assessment into teacher training	Conduct review of all training (short and long term) in assessment in teacher training institutions and universities (2010)  Reviews of classroom assessment practice in primary and secondary education (2011)	Information available to design assessment components into the teacher training institutions' curricula  Increased understanding of the current classroom assessment practices in Vietnam
<b>AQ1 Assessment Quality</b>		
Diagnostic research of assessment trends	Report of the fiscal and human resources in assessment (2011)	Information available on what constraints might exist in the current system to identify where more resources might be necessary
<b>AQ2 Effective Use of Assessment Results</b>		
Research of assessment trends	Report of the utilization of assessment data and feedback loop (2011)	Increased understanding of how results of current assessment activities are being used and potential ways to improve the use of data



# ZAMBIA



**Total Grant Amount:** US\$2,413,500

**Disbursements (as of 12/31/11):** US\$1,236,193



## BACKGROUND

Although Zambia has a long history of assessing student learning outcomes, the self-diagnosis exercise found the quality, frequency, and effective communication of student assessment results lacking. READ-funded activities in Zambia address gaps in all major assessment types with an aim to improve and strengthen the current activities and develop mechanisms to **ensure the effective use of assessment results** to improve learning outcomes.

By the end of the READ program, it is expected that the quality of assessment activities and system alignment will have been improved in Zambia. In examinations, the exams for grades 7, 9, and 12 will be better aligned with the current curriculum; more than 1,500 exam setters and markers will have improved skills; and the capacity to analyze data, write reports, and conduct advanced analysis will increase for 25 examinations officers. In classroom assessments, 360 standards officers will have been trained to enhance the use of assessment results to improve student learning outcomes and 50 percent of teachers will receive training in how to use assessments in their own teaching practices. Finally, national assessments will be improved through an analysis of the current national assessment at grade 5 and the development of a national assessment framework for grade 9.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2011:

- Trainings complete for 161 exam setters for grades 7, 9, and 12 and 917 examiners/markers for grades 9 and 12 to improve their skills in administering and scoring exams
- Two examinations officers trained in sampling techniques at the University of Michigan
- Two studies conducted and draft reports completed that assess standards officers' knowledge and current practices on use of assessment results, current assessment practices of teachers, and current assessment practices of lecturers
- Increased capacity in assessment for 13 Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) and Ministry of Education officials that participated in international assessment conferences
- Analysis and technical review of grade 5 assessment initiated
- Proposal developed for IT audit and expressions of interest requested and evaluated

READ Zambia—Activities and Progress from 2009 to 2011		
Activity	Output	Outcome
<b>EC5 Effective Human Resources</b>		
Training of setters, markers, and examiners	<p>Improved skills of exam setters, markers, and examiners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Training completed for 161 setters for grades 7, 9, and 12 (Aug 2011)</li> <li>■ Training completed for 917 examiners/markers for grades 9 and 12 (Aug 2011)</li> </ul>	<p>Greater capacity and improved skills in test design, construction and test item writing</p> <p>Improved quality of examinations</p> <p>Greater awareness by markers on how to detect and report cheating on exams and mark exams based on comparable and acceptable standards</p>
Develop a training program for standard officers, teachers, and lecturers on the use of assessment	Report on the standards officers' and teachers' knowledge and current practices on use of assessment results (Dec 2011)	Draft report available to use to design future trainings and interventions to ensure better use of assessment results by standard officers and teachers
Training for ECZ staff in sampling, basic and advanced statistical analysis, basic data analysis, and report writing	Two examinations officers trained in sampling techniques at the University of Michigan (2011)	Enhanced capacity of ECZ specialists in sampling techniques resulting in greater autonomy and less reliance on other government departments
Study and exchange visits and participation in international conferences	<p>READ Global Conferences: 5–6 member delegation each year (2009, 2010, 2011)</p> <p>13 ECZ and MOE officials participated in international assessment conferences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conference of Association for Education Assessment in Africa (AEAA) in Nairobi, Kenya (Aug 2011)</li> <li>■ International Association for Education Assessment (IAEA) Conference in Manila, Philippines (Oct 2011)</li> </ul> <p>Study Tour to Barbados on Examinations</p>	<p>Knowledge exchange on best practices on the use of assessment results to improve quality of education, regional integration, and addressing common assessment challenges</p> <p>Improved understanding on how to use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ ICT in assessment, candidate registration, school-based assessment, mark/capture, item banking, and instituting quality management system</li> <li>■ Social media to attract candidates to study material and mitigate examination malpractice</li> </ul>
<b>AQ1 Assessment Quality</b>		
Conduct technical review of the current National Large-Scale Assessment at grade 5	Technical report that reviews the current National Large-Scale Assessment for grade 5 (to be completed in 2012)	Improved quality of the grade 5 national assessment and possibility of designing future assessments for other grades taken into account quality improvements
Conduct IT audit	Evaluation of firms proposals completed (audit to be completed in 2012)	Specific actions identified to improve existing IT policies, practices, hardware, and software tools

## LOOKING AHEAD

### ***Accelerating program implementation and monitoring progress will continue to be key priorities.***

READ country investments are meant to build capacity and institutionalize student assessment activities. It is critical that each country is able to show concrete results at the end of the program. The key indicators identified by the READ Results Framework will allow the program to monitor progress in these critical areas and to keep countries on track. As the program enters its fourth year, careful attention will be paid to ensuring that countries are actively implementing the activities outlined in their Action Plans and increasingly improving their capacity to develop, carry out, and use data from student assessments.

### ***Rigorous efforts will be made to finalize key deliverables and widely disseminate global knowledge products.***

**With READ support, the SABER—Student Assessment and SABER—Learning Standards initiatives have generated a significant amount of research and evidence on what matters most in these two critical areas. READ will continue to provide direct support to further develop these areas, while concentrating significant energy during the second half of the program to capturing the lessons learned and disseminating this knowledge to a wide, global audience.**

### ***In lieu of a READ Global Conference in 2012, READ will sponsor two regional workshops for assessment practitioners—one in the Eastern and Central Asia Region and one in the Africa Region.***

**Following three successful global conferences, these regional workshops will address the desire of assessment practitioners supported by READ to come together to share lessons learned, discuss common challenges faced during the first half of the READ program, and strengthen the network of assessment experts across READ countries. Additionally, the workshops will provide training on specific assessment-related topics most relevant to the needs of that particular region and include site visits to assessment institutions being supported by the READ program.**



## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>AIR</b>	American Institutes for Research
<b>DFID</b>	UK Department for International Development
<b>CNECE</b>	Examinations Council for Mozambique
<b>EAU</b>	Education Assessment Unit
<b>ECA</b>	Europe and Central Asia Region
<b>ECZ</b>	Examinations Council of Zambia
<b>EFA</b>	Education for All
<b>FTI</b>	Fast Track Initiative
<b>GEQIP</b>	General Education Quality Improvement Project
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
<b>GLA</b>	Grade Level Assessments
<b>GPE</b>	Global Partnership for Education
<b>IAEA</b>	International Association for Education Assessment
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communications Technologies
<b>IDA</b>	International Development Association
<b>INDE</b>	Assessment Unit
<b>KAE</b>	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
<b>MOE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>MOF</b>	Ministry of Finance
<b>MPA</b>	Master Plan of Action
<b>NLSA</b>	National Large-Scale Assessment
<b>NSBA</b>	National School-Based Assessment
<b>NTC</b>	National Testing Center
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>OSI</b>	Open Society Institute
<b>PISA</b>	Program for International Student Assessment
<b>READ</b>	Russia Education Aid for Development
<b>SABER</b>	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
<b>SAQMEC</b>	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
<b>SAD</b>	Student Assessment Department
<b>TF</b>	Trust Fund
<b>TG</b>	Technical Group
<b>UEE</b>	University Entrance Examination
<b>UIS</b>	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>WB</b>	World Bank

## GLOSSARY OF ASSESSMENT TERMS

- Classroom Assessment:** A variety of tools and procedures employed by teachers and students in the course of daily classroom activity to collect and interpret written, oral, and other forms of evidence on student learning or achievement (for example, oral questioning and feedback, homework assignments, student presentations, diagnostic tests, and end-of-unit quizzes). Provides “real time” information to support the teaching-learning process.
- Educational Assessment System:** A group of interconnected policies, structures, and practices for the generation and use of information on student learning or achievement.
- Formative Assessment:** Ongoing assessments, reviews, and observations in a classroom as part of the instructional process. Used to modify and validate instruction.
- National/International Assessments:** Also referred to as “large-scale assessments” or “large-scale surveys.” Designed to provide data on the achievements of students in a curriculum area, aggregated to provide an estimate of achievement levels in the education system as a whole at a particular age or grade level. Involves the administration of achievement tests either to a sample or a population of students. Teachers and others may be asked to provide background information which, when related to student achievement, can provide insights on how achievement is related to factors such as household characteristics and levels of teacher training.
- “Public” or “External” Examinations:** Tests that measure individual student achievement in relation to an official curriculum or other formal body of knowledge and skills. Results are used, alone or in combination with other information, to make highly consequential decisions about individual examinees, such as promotion to the next grade or admission to higher education. Also referred to as “high-stakes” tests.
- Standards:** Content standards are broadly stated expectations of what students should know and be able to do in particular subjects and grade levels. Student performance standards are explicit definitions of what students must do to demonstrate proficiency at a specific level on the content standards.
- Student Assessment:** The process of gathering and appraising information on what students know, understand, and can do in order to make an informed decision about what to do next in the educational process. Also referred to as “learning assessment,” “educational assessment,” or simply “assessment.”
- Summative Assessment:** Typically used to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional programs and services at the end of an academic year or other predetermined time, or to make a judgment of student competency after an instructional phase is complete.

# APPENDIX 1. SABER—Student Assessment Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework developed as part of the work under SABER—Student Assessment underpins all of the work being completed under the READ program (see Figure A1.1). Through applying this framework, countries receiving READ support are conceptualizing and analyzing their assessment systems using a common terminology and understanding of the various components in a comprehensive assessment system.

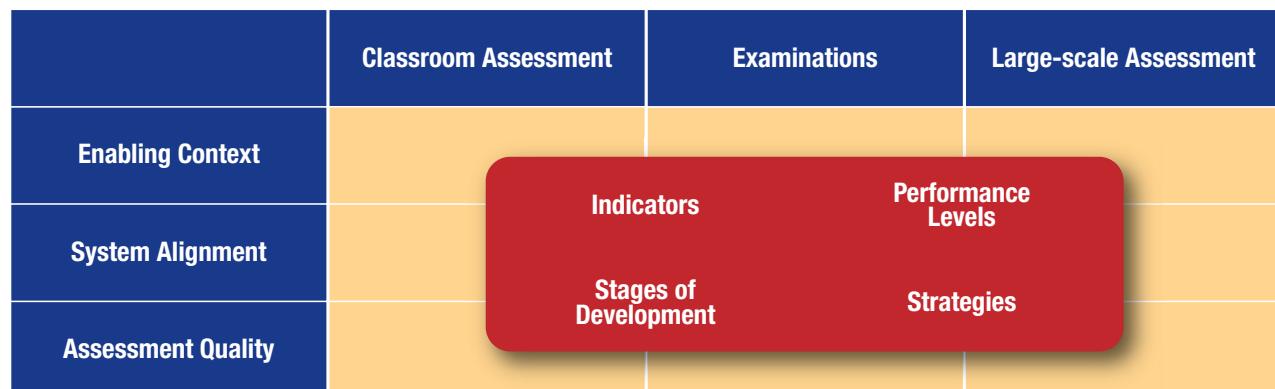
The framework outlines different assessment types and their primary quality drivers. Assessment systems tend to be made up of three main kinds of assessment activities, corresponding to three main information needs or purposes. These assessment types and purposes, under the first dimension of the framework, are as follows:

- **Classroom assessments** for providing real-time information to support teaching and learning in individual classrooms
- **Examinations** for making decisions about an individual student's progress through the education system (for example, certification or selection of the student), including the allocation of “scarce” educational opportunities
- **Large-scale assessments** for monitoring and providing policy- and practitioner-relevant information on overall performance levels in the system, changes in those levels, and related or contributing factors.

The second dimension of the framework includes quality drivers that determine the adequacy of the information generated to support decision making. Similar to the assessment types, there are three main drivers of information value/quality in assessment systems:

- **Enabling context** in which the assessment activity takes place, including the policies and legal framework for assessment activities; institutional and organizational structures for designing, carrying out, or using results from the assessment; the availability of sufficient and stable sources of funding; and the presence of trained assessment staff
- **System alignment** between the assessment activity and the rest of the education system, including system learning goals, standards and curriculum, and pre- and in-service teacher training
- **Assessment quality** in terms of the quality of the instruments, processes, and procedures used for the assessment activity, including fairness, transparency, quality assurance mechanisms in place, and effective dissemination and uses.

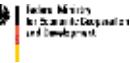
**Figure A1.1. SABER—Student Assessment Conceptual Framework**



## APPENDIX 2. Key Features of High-Quality Learning Standards

Supportive Conditions for the Development of Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Guidelines exist:</b> Standards have explicit guidelines outlining the development process used, and these guidelines are readily available.</li> <li>■ <b>Resources are allocated:</b> Standards have adequate financial and human resources supporting their development.</li> <li>■ <b>Stakeholders are involved:</b> Standards are developed in a collaborative manner to ensure buy-in from all stakeholders.</li> <li>■ <b>Leadership is in place:</b> Standards are controlled and ultimately owned by a lead organizational structure.</li> </ul>
Technical Characteristics of Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Situated within a framework:</b> Standards are part of the country's educational strategy and vision.</li> <li>■ <b>Developmentally sequenced:</b> Standards are built on one another and thus reflect a progression of learning that is developmentally appropriate and research based.</li> <li>■ <b>Explicitly connected:</b> Standards are related and interlinked within and among different subject areas.</li> <li>■ <b>Subject and grade specific:</b> Standards are related to a specific subject area and level.</li> <li>■ <b>Clear:</b> Standards are written in understandable terms and presented with examples.</li> <li>■ <b>Common:</b> Standards are expected of all students.</li> <li>■ <b>Objective/free from bias:</b> Standards are objective and the classifications apply to all groups of students regardless of age, race, gender, SES, and so forth.</li> <li>■ <b>Focused on big ideas:</b> Standards focus on the key milestone concepts of the subject, not on details.</li> <li>■ <b>Feasible:</b> Standards set a reasonable scope of knowledge and skills that can be translated into appropriate classroom activities.</li> <li>■ <b>Measurable or observable:</b> Standards describe knowledge or skills that are either observable or measurable.</li> <li>■ <b>Internationally benchmarked:</b> Standards are informed by the content and organization of standards in high-performing nations.</li> <li>■ <b>Valid and easily interpreted/explained:</b> Standards are easily interpreted, used, and explained by assessment users.</li> <li>■ <b>Not arbitrary:</b> Standards are well substantiated and have explicit reasons for including specific knowledge and skills and cut-scores.</li> <li>■ <b>Aligned:</b> Standards (content, process, and performance) are aligned with one another.</li> <li>■ <b>Contextually and culturally relevant:</b> Standards are informed by the needs of the society in which they are developed.</li> </ul>
Implementation of Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Disseminated and publicly available:</b> Standards and the reports/documentation of the development process are communicated and made widely accessible to all stakeholders.</li> <li>■ <b>Implemented:</b> Standards are widely used by teachers to inform classroom instruction.</li> <li>■ <b>Provided with guidelines:</b> Standards implementation is transparent and opportunities exist to learn about it; sufficient guidance is given for the design of curricula and instructional materials.</li> <li>■ <b>Resources allocated:</b> Standards implementation is supported by regular and adequate financial and human resources.</li> <li>■ <b>Reviewed and revised:</b> Standards are periodically updated with expert panels and stakeholder collaboration in a process supported by adequate human and financial resources.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 3. Third READ Global Conference Summary



**USING STUDENT ASSESSMENT RESULTS  
FOR EDUCATION QUALITY AND SYSTEMS  
STRENGTHENING**

Third READ Global Conference and Sixth ECA Education Conference  
October 23–26, 2011 — Eschborn, Germany





The World Bank held a joint Third READ Global Conference and Sixth World Bank ECA Education Conference in Eschborn, Germany on October 23–26, 2011. The event was hosted at the headquarters of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and sponsored by READ, the World Bank's department for education in the Europe and Central Asia Region (ECA), and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). This event brought together over 160 participants comprised of delegations of high-level education officials from 21 countries (AFR—Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Zambia; EAS—Vietnam; and ECA—Albania, Armenia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Kosovo, the Kyrgyz Republic, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and Tajikistan), Russian officials and education experts, World Bank staff, GIZ staff, and international assessment experts. All in all, there were more than 38 countries represented at this international event.

### **Objectives**

The key objective of the conference was to help READ-supported and ECA countries to strengthen their ability to use assessment results in meaningful ways that ultimately leads to improvements in education quality. The conference helped participants to develop a better understanding of how to:

- use assessment results to improve education policy and practice at national/sub-national and school levels;
- support efforts to help teachers and other educators understand how to interpret assessment data; and
- involve students, parents, and public stakeholders in monitoring learning outcomes in their schools and communities.

Additionally, the conference provided participants with an opportunity to learn lessons from other countries' experiences with the use of student assessment results. Site visits with local stakeholders that use student assessment results highlighted recent developments and the practical, concrete ways that Germany is using assessment data to improve its student learning outcomes.

### **Key Messages**

Under the theme “**Using Student Assessment Results for Education Quality and Systems Strengthening**,” the 2011 conference focused on ways to use data from various assessment activities (international and national large-scale assessments, examinations, and classroom assessments) to strengthen education systems and improve learning outcomes. Assessment activities are only effective in improving education quality when they are used in ways that inform policy makers’ decisions, help teachers improve their teaching practices, and empower parents with information about how well their children are learning. Key overall messages that emerged during the conference included the following:

- Classroom assessment has a high potential for increasing achievement and reducing learning disparities but is underdeveloped, poorly understood, and inadequately utilized in most education systems.
- Different kinds of assessments provide critical information for different purposes, including supporting pedagogy, monitoring learning levels, benchmarking school or district performance, certifying competencies, ensuring accountability, and strengthening the education system, but few countries examine, use, and disseminate the results adequately.
- One of the biggest challenges countries face is weak capacity and expertise to analyze assessment results, communicate results, and use results to drive improved and equitable learning.

### Structure

As a combined event, the conference was structured in a way to meet different donor needs. The first half of the conference was intended for a broad audience, open to all conference participants. These plenary sessions covered universal themes such as using assessment results to improve overall education quality, reporting large-scale assessment results in ways to ensure equity, good practices and lessons learned from a series of case studies on use of assessment results, and techniques to effectively use classroom assessment results. On the afternoon of day two, the conference divided into READ-only and ECA-only sessions. Participation in the READ-only sessions was limited to those directly associated with the READ program. These sessions were intended to provide an opportunity for Russian representatives, READ country government delegations, and World Bank staff to report back on the progress achieved thus far and discuss any challenges impeding their progress. After a series of site visits on day three, READ participants were brought back to participate in country clinics in which they examined their country's benchmarking report and reflected on ways they could improve the use of assessment results

### Outcome

The annual conference marks an important milestone for READ, as it is the only occasion when all READ countries interact with each other, the donor, and international experts. This year's conference provided a unique opportunity to expand the reach of the previous two conferences to include a much broader audience and expose many new countries to the important work being carried out under the READ program. The conference successfully brought together a large number of assessment experts and high-level education leaders and focused their attention on the critical importance of improving education quality. READ countries reported their early successes and left the conference motivated to press forward and ramp up their current efforts. According to evaluation forms from conference participants, the conference was deemed a success by all who participated.





### PRAISE FOR THE READ AGENDA

Key representatives from the World Bank, the Russian Federation, and Germany opened the event. Elizabeth King, Director of Education at the World Bank, acknowledged the World Bank's full support of the READ agenda and the need for learning for all, stating that quality needs to be the main focus of all education investments, with learning gains as its key metric. Andrei Volkov, a member of the READ Council, and Elena Ilina, from the Russian Federation's Ministry of Finance, spoke about the importance Russia places on education quality and international education initiatives such as READ to draw attention to this critical area. Finally, on behalf of GIZ, Mary Schäfer officially welcomed participants to Germany, and the opportunity for participants to learn from Germany's experience in using student assessment results to improve its education system.

### POWERFUL ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF EDUCATION QUALITY

A quality-focused education system evaluates its performance on a regular basis at all levels—from teachers inside the classroom to policy makers at the central level. According to research presented by Ludger Woessmann, over time this focus on quality and collecting information pays off. When assessment results are used effectively, such as to develop reforms in resource allocation, to increase accountability, and to create demand-side incentives, learning outcomes improve, which directly correlates with economic growth. Anil Kanjee demonstrated also that assessment results can be used effectively to address issues of inequity in learning outcomes among certain populations so they can obtain the same advantages that come with higher learning gains. These first few presentations made a clear argument as to why student assessment and education quality are so vital.



### LEARNING FROM INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE ON HOW TO EFFECTIVELY USE ASSESSMENT RESULTS

One of the primary objectives of the READ conferences is to share with participants, and READ countries in particular, other countries' experiences and lessons learned in strengthening their country's assessment system. Once again, READ commissioned a set of case studies aligned with the conference theme: "Uses of Assessment Results." Authors of these case studies were invited to the conference to present their findings and elaborate on lessons learned. The table that follows highlights key lessons drawn from each case study. Similar to previous READ conferences,

participants expressed a high level of interest in these case studies and found the sharing of other countries' experience highly beneficial as they work to build their assessment systems, which are at an earlier stage in their level of development.

**Table A3.1. Key Lesson Learned from Case Studies on Uses of Assessment Results**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Key Lessons Learned</b>
<b>Chile (M. Ramirez)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The use of assessment results is dependent on the intended purpose. Primary purposes and uses include:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Support pedagogy—pedagogical guidelines and workshops for educators</li> <li>– Monitor education policy—inform policy makers about the status of learning outcomes and impact of policies</li> <li>– Accountability—attach incentives (symbolic or money) for schools and teachers.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Making effective use of assessment results is very challenging and takes considerable time, effort, and resources.</li> <li>■ Leadership, long-term planning, and consensus building is absolutely essential.</li> <li>■ Effective dissemination strategies start small and gradually develop over time.</li> </ul>
<b>The Gambia (O. Senghor)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A high demand for efficiency, accountability, and greater education quality supports the use of results.</li> <li>■ Communication of assessment results should reach beyond the education sector and involve other key players such as the Ministry of Finance, donors, local communities, and the media.</li> <li>■ Broad dissemination of results should be free of technical jargon to attract a wider audience.</li> </ul>
<b>Germany (J. Reeff)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ It is best to have a predesigned communication plan for disseminating results before the assessment.</li> <li>■ Feedback on results should be tailored to different audiences—student, teachers, and school leaders.</li> <li>■ Researchers and policy makers should first agree on goals of data analysis and research.</li> </ul>
<b>Jordan (O. Obeidat)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Users of assessment results should proceed with caution, taking into consideration the purpose of the assessment and what it is intended to measure.</li> <li>■ School officials and directors need to be guided in how to use assessment results.</li> <li>■ Too many assessment activities overload teachers and distract them unnecessarily. Instead of introducing many new assessments, it is better to focus attention on fully utilizing the results from current activities.</li> <li>■ Use of assessment results is most successful when it contributes to changes in curriculum and teacher training programs.</li> </ul>
<b>Poland (M. Jakubowski)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Not accounting for differences in student and school backgrounds when comparing results across regions/schools is misleading and unfair.</li> <li>■ Additional investments of time and resources in using collected data to improve teaching practices are crucial.</li> </ul>
<b>Russia (Y. Tyumeneva)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ It is critical that assessment tools be technically robust, especially before they are brought to scale.</li> <li>■ Effective use of assessment results is only possible when the general public believes the results are credible.</li> <li>■ Focused and clear messages enhance use of results at all levels.</li> <li>■ Using results to enforce sanctions against schools with poor performance is not advised.</li> </ul>
<b>Singapore (B. Yeap)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Evolution of the education system over time has shifted the assessment landscape from using national examinations exclusively for evaluating schools and student placement to now using results to support learning.</li> <li>■ Assessments enable schools to identify struggling students and target additional resources to ensure learning for all.</li> <li>■ Close alignment between the curriculum and national examination ensures that the intended curriculum is taught.</li> </ul>

## **ASSESSMENT IS FOR LEARNING—THE POWER OF CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT**

In an education system, the learning takes place in the classroom. Drawing on his experience from Scotland, Alistair Marquis instructed conference participants on exactly what needs to take place for effective and successful classroom assessment. Successful classroom assessment is not an add-on but an essential aspect of the learning process. Assessment should accurately reflect the principles and values outlined in the curriculum; the student should be fully involved, including self and peer evaluation; it should balance careful, regular formative assessments with only very occasional summative assessment; and it requires systematic monitoring and tracking of students' achievements in order to plan the next steps in learning. Of all the assessment types, when used effectively, classroom assessment has the greatest potential to improve learning outcomes.

## **LEARNING FROM EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA**

As a joint READ/ECA event, the conference provided an opportune venue for presenting recent work in ECA in the area of assessment. Russian experts took advantage of the opportunity by discussing their recent efforts to develop further know-how in the area of student assessment and the creation of various assessment training programs in Russia. The World Bank used the conference to launch its newly completed ECA's flagship report, "Skills, Not Just Diplomas." The report reinforces that the lack of data on learning outcomes is one of the most pressing problems in getting young people prepared for productive employment or further education.

## **REPORTING READ COUNTRY RESULTS**

One of the main value-added aspects of the READ conference is that it provides a venue for global-level and country-level work to come together to share knowledge and develop a common terminology. As the Third READ Global Conference and third year of program implementation, this year's country presentations were structured in a way to emphasize progress since the previous READ conference. Each country used the newly created READ Results Framework to organize their activities according to key indicators. While the implementation of READ-funded activities has been somewhat slow, these presentations provided evidence of the key steps each country has taken to begin to build the essential foundations required for a sustainable, robust assessment system. Marguerite Clarke, a member of the READ Technical Group, presented an analysis of the benchmarking results for each READ country, establishing a clear baseline against which to measure future progress.

## **VISITING GERMANY'S ASSESSMENT INSTITUTIONS**

Germany was identified as a potential location for the conference due to the possibility of learning from its experience and visiting its institutions responsible for carrying out assessment activities. With the assistance of GIZ, site visits were organized to various schools, research institutions, and Ministry of Education units in Germany. Conference participants found this exchange of knowledge highly beneficial and a key learning opportunity. The messages of the first half of the conference were reinforced with concrete examples of what it takes to effectively use assessment results.

## **COMMITTING TO ACTION**

Similar to previous conferences, the last session was set aside as a READ Country Clinic. Armed with the completed benchmarking report, the clinic was intended to provide an opportunity for each country to examine its ratings, particularly in the uses of assessment results, and identify concrete steps it can take to improve in this area. The event concluded with READ countries committing to at least one action they would take in the upcoming months following the conference.

READ Angola



READ Armenia



READ Ethiopia



READ Kyrgyz Republic



READ Mozambique



READ Tajikistan



READ Vietnam



READ Zambia

**Russia Education Aid for Development Trust Fund**

Education, Human Development Network

World Bank

1818 H Street, NW

Washington, DC 20433

USA

Website: [www.worldbank.org/readtf](http://www.worldbank.org/readtf)

Email: [readtf@worldbank.org](mailto:readtf@worldbank.org)

