RUSSIA EDUCATION AID FOR DEVELOPMENT TRUST FUND

READ ANNUAL REPORT 2010
“By investing in system assessments, impact evaluations, and assessments of learning and skills, the Bank will help its partner countries answer the key questions that shape educational reform: Where are the strengths of our system? Where are the weaknesses? What interventions have proven most effective in addressing them? What are the key roles of public and private sector in service delivery? Are children and youth acquiring the knowledge and skills that they need?”

—World Bank Education Strategy 2020 (forthcoming)
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MESSAGE FROM READ COUNCIL

READ COUNCIL, RUSSIAN FEDERATION
In 2000, the international community made a global commitment to help ensure that, by 2015, every country, including the poorest ones, achieves the goals of Education for All, including universal primary education, one of the eight Millennium Development Goals. The attainment of these goals depends not only on the financial and technical capacity of countries and their institutions, but also on the technical support provided by the international community and on the active collaboration between national governments across the world.

The READ program was initiated by the Russian Federation to bring together leading national and international experts, international organizations, and governments to focus in particular on improving the quality of education in countries in the CIS, Asia, and Africa. The Russian Federation, through the World Bank and the READ program, provides support to governments to improve the quality of education through the exchange of knowledge and know-how in assessing student learning and using assessment findings to increase learning for all. We are pleased to receive the READ Annual Report 2010, which shows progress on the READ program’s efforts to support this goal.

Andrei Bokarev
Head of the Department for International Financial Affairs,
Ministry of Finance, Russian Federation

Vladimir Mau
Rector, Academy of National Economy under the Government of the Russian Federation

Andrei Volkov
Dean, Moscow School of Management «Skolkovo»

READ COUNCIL, WORLD BANK
Efforts to measure student learning and build sustainable student assessment systems are continuing to gain even greater importance at the World Bank. READ’s goal to improve learning outcomes, through the use of learning assessment results, directly aligns with the World Bank’s new 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.

At the conclusion of the READ Council Meeting last April 2010, the World Bank and Russian Council members strongly agreed that READ was well positioned to advance the learning agenda and the Russian Federation’s role as an emerging donor in education. This report clearly demonstrates another year of program successes. The World Bank welcomes Russia’s continued desire to be actively involved in the work being carried out under the READ Trust Fund and will continue to look for ways for further collaboration.

Robin Horn
Education Sector Manager, World Bank
The READ Trust Fund marked its second full year of operation in 2010. The pages of this report reveal a year in which the emphasis began to shift from information to action, and from concepts to results. READ countries advanced to different degrees in translating their Self-Diagnoses first into Action Plans and then into proposals for a second round of READ funding. Work at the global level advanced from articulation of concepts to concrete guidance on how to measure progress in assessment.

READ has made important early progress, but much work remains to be done. Country context matters when measuring outcomes. Progress is influenced by a variety of factors, ranging from political developments and availability of experts to matters of in-country bureaucracy and the immediate workload of ministries. Furthermore, a sound assessment system—the desired end result of READ—is neither ubiquitous in the developing world nor easily accomplished within a few years.

The challenge going forward is to keep firmly in view a vision and goals for what the READ program will achieve—which will now end in October 2014, following a one-year extension agreed in 2010. Critical work in 2011 will include mapping out precise paths and goals for the country and global levels, and ensuring that supporting elements are in place to move toward those goals.

Manorama Gotur
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 $32 million to be executed over a now six-year period, 2008 to 2014. The initial five-year period has been extended to allow additional time for program implementation.

IMPROVING LEARNING OUTCOMES THROUGH ASSESSMENTS

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 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 to 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 (a) establish systems or institutions—or strengthen existing ones—that formulate learning goals and carry out assessments of student learning; (b) improve existing or develop new instruments to measure student learning outcomes; and (c) strengthen existing or develop new mechanisms (policies) to use learning outcomes data to improve teaching and learning.

READ ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

Work carried out under READ occurs at two levels. At the global-level the focus is on developing and sharing knowledge products on learning assessments and overall program management and administration. At the country-level (in Angola, 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>READ Council (Russia, WB)</th>
<th>READ Program Management Team (WB)</th>
<th>SABER–Student Assessment (WB)</th>
<th>World Bank Country Task Teams (WB)</th>
<th>READ Technical Group (WB, Russia, Int’l Assessment Experts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guidance on overall strategic direction, priorities, and rules of engagement for the READ TF and monitoring of program performance</td>
<td>Program management and administration, i.e., strategic planning, design and implementation of work program, allocation of funds, program coordination, and quality assurance, and monitoring</td>
<td>Development of the conceptual framework for work on assessment systems, assessment benchmarking tools, and other global knowledge products such as country case studies on assessment-related topics</td>
<td>Focal point for all READ assistance in READ countries, working closely with country government counterparts and other stakeholders to design and implement various READ-funded assessment activities</td>
<td>Support for development of global knowledge products, program quality assurance, and direct technical assistance at the country level, to incorporate best practices in assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: READ
MOVING FROM THE SELF-DIAGNOSIS TO IMPLEMENTING ACTION PLANS

The first year of READ implementation focused on firmly 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 all seven READ countries, Self-Diagnosis exercises were conducted in each READ country to identify gaps and create Action Plans for READ assistance, and a First READ Global Conference brought everyone working on READ together and built momentum for moving forward.

For 2010, in 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 has 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. Moving beyond the Self-Diagnosis Reports, and now equipped with Action Plans, countries have begun to implement their first set of activities.

RUSSIAN “LEARNING BY DOING”

A complementary activity of the READ Trust Fund is READ Fee-Based Services (FBS). FBS’ primary objective is building the capacity of the Russia’s Center for International Cooperation in Education Development’s to engage in international development work. Given that an important emphasis of READ FBS is “learning by doing,” the READ Trust Fund is continually looking for opportunities to involve Russian experts in their work (see Box 1).

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 low-income 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 target their energy and resources for the greatest improvement of learning outcomes.

BOX 1. RUSSIA’S CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT (CICED)

Emerging Player in International Education Development. CICED was established in July 2008, under the Government of the Russian Federation, with the primary purpose of coordinating and implementing international initiatives in education. The center is a network organization that brings together Russian research universities, centers, and over 50 leading experts to help implement education development aid initiatives. CICED widely draws on and promotes international best practices and expertise in assessment and quality management in education.

Assessment Expertise and Advantages. The CICED network aims to help its partners:
- identify what is required to establish national and regional educational quality assessment systems;
- develop and pilot tools for assessment and quality management in education;
- provide technical expertise in education quality management and assessment; and
- DELIVER world-class training in education assessment and quality management in Russia and abroad.

Source: CICED
GLOBAL-LEVEL ACTIVITIES:

- **Second READ Global Conference:** To mark a second-year milestone, high-level education officials from the seven READ country governments, Russian officials and education experts, World Bank staff, and international assessment experts came together again for a three-day event in Nairobi, Kenya under the theme of “Strengthening the Enabling Environment for Assessment Systems.”

- **SABER—Student Assessment Program:** A conceptual framework for analyzing assessment systems and related products, including questionnaires and rubrics for three main kinds of assessment activities, have been developed and piloted in a number of countries.

- **Case Studies:** Case studies were conducted for Australia (Queensland), Brazil, Chile, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Russia, and Uganda. These studies, prepared for the READ Global Conference in Kenya, illustrate how improvements in these countries’ enabling contexts led to better educational assessment systems.

- **National Assessment Series:** Volumes 1, 2, and 5 of the World Bank’s *National Assessment Series*, which introduce key concepts in national assessments of student achievement levels, have now been translated into Portuguese. (Russian translations and Portuguese translations of Volumes 3 and 4 are forthcoming.)

- **Video:** Using stories from Colombia, Singapore, and South Africa, 24- and 7-minute versions of a documentary titled “When Children Learn, Nations Prosper” were produced to highlight why learning matters and to show how these countries are ensuring that learning is taking place (available in English, Russian, and Portuguese).

- **READ Partnerships:** In the spirit of collaboration and to build broader support for the READ agenda, READ worked with other international donors and cofinanced several assessment-related events. These included the “All Children Reading by 2015 Workshop,” Africa ALERT’s “Users and Uses of National Assessment Results Workshop,” and the “Benchmarking Education Systems for Results: East Asia Regional Conference.”

COUNTRY-LEVEL ACTIVITIES:

- **Action Plans:** In close collaboration with country governments and based on findings from the Self-Diagnosis Reports, Government Action Plans that identify potential READ-financed activities for all seven READ-supported countries have been developed.

- **Approval of Additional Country Funding Requests:** Both Angola and Zambia’s proposals for additional funding were approved. The preparation and quality review of several additional funding requests for other READ countries are also underway.

- **Workshops/Conferences:** A number of workshops and conferences have been held in all seven countries aimed at ensuring high-level commitment and broad ownership of the respective country’s assessment agendas.

- **In-Depth Reviews:** Vietnam conducted six in-depth reviews of specific aspects of its current set of assessment activities. Similar reviews in Zambia focused on assessment capacity and current practices to train teachers in the effective use of assessment results.
The READ Trust Fund of $32 million has been set up to fund activities at the global and country levels. Of the total fund, $23 million has been received to date, in three tranches—$5 million in December 2008, $8 million in June 2009, and $10 million in July 2010. The trust fund was set up to be executed by World Bank staff; in 2010, an amendment was proposed to allow country government implementation in select, justifiable cases.

Table 1 shows a financial summary of the READ Trust Fund since its inception in 2008. Thus far, $8.6 million has been allocated overall, with $3.3 million at the global level and $5.3 for READ countries. The greater portion of funds has been allocated to the country-level, dedicated to supporting country-specific activities (see Figure 3). The portion of funds allocated at the global-level has enabled the creation of knowledge products on learning assessments, which underpin and inform all of the work being done in READ countries.

At the country-level, the first round of funding in 2009 amounted to roughly $2 million to carry out Self-Diagnosis exercises and the first set of READ activities. Additional funding requests to support country-specific Action Plans for Angola and Zambia were approved in 2010 and the funding request preparation/approval process for several other READ countries is underway.

For most of the countries, disbursements have been modest to date. Considerable time has been spent identifying needs, building in-country consensus, and developing project designs that will produce sustainable results—all of which are absolutely essential for long-term success. With all of the groundwork done during Years 1 and 2, countries are presumably well-positioned to implement the activities outlined in their Action Plans during 2011.

Figure 2. READ Trust Fund Structure

Figure 3. READ Trust Fund Allocations as of December 31, 2010

Source: READ
Table 1. READ Trust Fund Financial Summary as of 12/31/10 (in U.S. dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CY 2008</th>
<th>CY 2009</th>
<th>CY 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Contributions</td>
<td>$5,000,000</td>
<td>$8,000,000</td>
<td>$10,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Allocations</td>
<td>4,030,000</td>
<td>4,559,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Allocations</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>1,300,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Allocations</td>
<td>2,030,000</td>
<td>3,259,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>1,065,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyz Republic</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>280,000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>350,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>2,114,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Disbursements</td>
<td>1,220,179</td>
<td>2,927,408</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Disbursements</td>
<td>848,752</td>
<td>1,871,194</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Disbursements</td>
<td>371,426</td>
<td>1,056,214</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>33,447</td>
<td>250,514</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>56,736</td>
<td>167,403</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyz Republic</td>
<td>21,276</td>
<td>61,042</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>41,507</td>
<td>128,666</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>160,078</td>
<td>172,285</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>2,260</td>
<td>162,040</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>56,122</td>
<td>114,264</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: READ

Note: For a given year, allocations are the sum of new funding requests that have been approved and any replenishments to previously approved funding requests.
In 2010, READ activities at the global-level were centered on: (1) developing knowledge products to expand the current understanding of what makes an effective assessment system; (2) partnering and knowledge sharing with international donors to generate additional support for the READ agenda; and (3) providing opportunities to share lessons across READ-supported countries and best practices from other countries’ experiences in the field of learning assessment. A key output of this work was the launch of the SABER—Student Assessment program.

**SABER—STUDENT ASSESSMENT**

**What is SABER—Student Assessment?**
SABER—Student Assessment is one of the subsystems within the World Bank’s System Assessment and Benchmarking for Education Results (SABER) program. SABER is an evidence-based program to help countries systematically examine and strengthen the performance of their education systems (see Box 2). With READ funds, SABER—Student Assessment is developing a methodology to benchmark learning assessment policies and systems in developed and developing countries around the world. The goal of this program is to promote stronger assessment systems that contribute to improved education quality and learning for all.

**How will the program be used by countries to improve assessment policies and systems?**
SABER—Student Assessment is in the process of making available, in one easily accessible location, information, and tools based on the latest evidence for ‘what works’ in creating effective assessment policies and systems. The strategy for helping countries to use this information has three steps:

- A country conducts a ‘self diagnosis’ of its assessment system using a set of evidence-based questionnaires and rubrics being developed under SABER—Student Assessment.
- A country profile report is produced, indicating strengths and areas for improvement.
- Countries decide how they wish to act on the results and suggestions outlined in their country profile report. In READ countries and possibly others, the team will work with the country through local World Bank projects and teams to support assessment strengthening activities or share experiences about what other countries have done to improve their assessment systems.

**What is SABER—Student Assessment’s 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 4). Through applying this framework, countries receiving READ support have begun to conceptualize and analyze 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; and
- **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; and
- **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 4. SABER—Student Assessment’s Conceptual Framework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Classroom Assessment</th>
<th>Examinations</th>
<th>Large-scale Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enabling Context</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System Alignment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Quality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Bank

The 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 everywhere who want to know what reforms are needed to help ensure that their schools and universities can provide learning outcomes that meet their twenty-first century national goals and global opportunities.

**Box 2. SABER: The World Bank’s Systemic Approach to Analyzing Education Systems**

To support the implementation of its forthcoming Education Strategy 2020, the World Bank has launched a multi-year program to help countries systematically examine and strengthen the performance of their education systems. This evidence-based program, called **System Assessment and Benchmarking for Education Results (SABER)**, is building a comprehensive toolkit of system diagnostics to examine education systems and their component policy domains against global standards, best practices, and in comparison with policies and practices of countries around the world.

The 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 everywhere who want to know what reforms are needed to help ensure that their schools and universities can provide learning outcomes that meet their twenty-first century national goals and global opportunities.

**Figure 4. SABER—Student Assessment’s Conceptual Framework**

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<td>System Alignment</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Quality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Bank
What products have been developed under SABER—Student Assessment?

In addition to the conceptual framework, various related products, including questionnaires and rubrics for the three main kinds of assessment activities, have been developed and piloted in a number of countries. These products are described in Table 2.

Table 2. Products Developed by SABER—Student Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Framework Paper</td>
<td>Provides the conceptual framework and evidence base for analyzing and strengthening assessment systems (see Figure 2.) Describes key characteristics of effective assessment systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
<td>Standardized instruments, based on the conceptual framework, for collecting data on the characteristics of the assessment system in a country. The following questionnaires have been piloted in Chile, New Zealand, and Uganda and are being finalized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examinations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Large-scale Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Large-scale Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidated ‘Short Version’ Questionnaire Covering all Assessment Types</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubrics</td>
<td>Standardized instruments, based on the conceptual framework, for judging the development level of an assessment system based on data collected in the questionnaires. The following rubrics have been piloted in Chile, New Zealand, and Uganda and are finalized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examinations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Large-scale Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Large-scale Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Report</td>
<td>Standardized report, based on the conceptual framework, that summarizes key findings and recommendations derived from the application of the questionnaires and rubrics to a country’s assessment system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Case Studies</td>
<td>A set of commissioned papers describing the steps that seven very different countries—Australia (Queensland), Brazil, Chile, Korea, New Zealand, Russia, and Uganda—have taken to reform and strengthen the enabling context for their assessment systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database of World Bank Projects Supporting the Development of Assessment Systems</td>
<td>Database with detailed information on 166 World Bank projects that involved support to countries for the development of assessment systems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SABER—Student Assessment
As of January 2011, through case studies and pilot exercises, the following countries have been involved in SABER—Student Assessment: Australia (Queensland), Brazil, Chile, Korea, New Zealand, Russia, and Uganda. Work related to SABER—Student Assessment also has been carried out in the seven countries receiving support under READ: Angola, Ethiopia, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mozambique, Tajikistan, Vietnam, and Zambia.

**PARTNERING AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING**

Another key component of the READ program at the global level has involved capitalizing on opportunities to partner with other donors and continue to generate broad support for the READ agenda. A number of events that took place during 2010 afforded READ various venues for discussing the assessment framework developed under SABER—Student Assessment and convincing other donors why countries should prioritize learning assessments to ensure education quality.

**Events Cosponsored by READ in 2010**

- **All Children Reading by 2015: From Assessment to Action Workshop**
  This event was a three-day workshop held on April 12–14, 2010 in Washington, DC. Supported by the Education for All-Fast Track Initiative (FTI), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and READ, the workshop brought together country leaders, experts, and donors to discuss how countries can ensure that all of their children are reading by the end of Grade 2 by 2015, as outlined in the new FTI Indicators. The workshop aimed to help the countries in attendance (Egypt, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guatemala, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Nicaragua, and South Africa), most of which recently had conducted early-grade reading assessments, to devise clear strategies on how to use the assessment results to identify actions they will take to improve learning outcomes in reading.

- **Users and Uses of National Assessment Results Workshop**
  Another event in which READ was a partner was the workshop “Users and Uses of National Assessment Results” held on April 13–15, 2010, in Capetown, South Africa. The Africa Alliance for Learning and Education Results (Africa ALERT) brought together representatives from international organizations and senior policy makers and technical staff in charge of national assessments from nine African countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, and Zambia) for a three-day workshop. Participants analyzed ways in which assessment results have been used for policy design, teacher professional development, enhancing school management, and informing parents and increasing public awareness and then developed country-specific plans for ways to better use national assessment results.
Benchmarking Education Systems for Results: East Asia Regional Conference

The World Bank’s SABER Program has partnered with organizations in East Asia to begin benchmarking their education systems. As the primary support for the benchmarking work on assessment, READ was invited to partner with the Korean government, the Nanyang Technological University, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the Education Program Development Fund, and UNESCO to support a benchmarking conference in Singapore on June 21–23, 2010. Bringing together international experts, representatives from donor organizations, and education policy makers and school administrators from 20 countries throughout the East Asia Region, this event provided an opportunity to build partnerships, promote assessment of education programs, and help countries define a framework for benchmarking.

Other Collaboration

Recognizing its expertise in assessment and the overall importance of the READ program, several organizations have invited the World Bank to present on the assessment work being funded by READ. For instance:

- At the invitation of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the World Bank was invited to participate in a session titled “International Benchmarking: Current Contributions and Future Directions for Policymakers and Researchers” with other leaders from key organizations such as the U.S. Department of Education, American Institutes for Research (AIR), and the National Academy of Sciences at the AERA 2010 annual conference in Denver, Colorado.

- In September 2010, the World Bank was invited to participate in the OECD Group of National Experts on Evaluation and Assessment and present the work being developed under SABER—Student Assessment. READ has benefited from this partnership with OECD by soliciting their feedback, suggestions for improvement, and opportunities for collaboration.

- By invitation from the Chinese and French ministries of education, a presentation on the tools and resources being developed under SABER—Student Assessment was given at the “International Conference on Educational Monitoring and Evaluation” in Beijing, China on November 29–December 1, 2010.

Participation in these events has given READ a platform for showcasing its work, garnering additional support of assessment experts and donors, and greater visibility for the READ program on the international stage.
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 the process of publishing a five-volume series on key concepts in national assessments of student achievement levels. Such concepts include policy issues to address when designing and carrying out assessments through test development, sampling, data cleaning, statistics, report writing, and the use of results to improve educational quality. To increase the accessibility of these key publications (and for READ countries in particular), READ supported the translation of the completed volumes (1, 2, and 5) into Portuguese. Upon publication of Volumes 3 and 4, these will also be translated into Portuguese. (Russian translations are being carried out with support from CICED.)

“When Children Learn, Nations Prosper” Documentary

It is imperative that countries understand why learning matters and what they can do to ensure that learning is taking place. Stories from Colombia, Singapore, and South Africa highlight various ways governments, schools and communities are focusing on learning and measuring student performance. To communicate these messages in a powerful way, a beautifully filmed documentary (24 and 7 minute versions) was produced. With READ-supported countries as the primary target audience, the video is available in English, Russian and Portuguese.

Second READ Global Conference, October 4-6, 2010

To mark a second year milestone, high-level education officials from the seven READ country governments, Russian officials and education experts, World Bank staff, and international assessment experts came together again for a three-day event in Nairobi, Kenya under the theme of “Strengthening the Enabling Environment for Assessment Systems.” These conferences are major undertakings but READ countries continue to express the high value they place on these events, making the effort worthwhile. (See Annex, page 34, for a full conference summary.)
READ programs are underway in seven developing countries—**Angola, Ethiopia, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mozambique, Tajikistan, Vietnam, and Zambia**. World Bank Task Team Leaders (TTLs) and Country Teams have been working closely together with their respective government counterparts to thoroughly assess the strengths and weaknesses of their existing learning assessment systems, decide on future activities to address gaps, and begin implementation.

**PROGRESS TO DATE**
The country summaries that follow show a significant amount of progress to date. All seven countries have completed Self-Diagnosis exercises, formulated Action Plans to map out their path, and conducted workshops to ensure broad ownership and full endorsement by a wide range of stakeholders. Trainings to build assessment capacity have also taken place in most countries. Results so far clearly demonstrate an increasingly high-level commitment to assessments; an improved understanding of what makes up a comprehensive, high functioning assessment “system”; and the need for improved alignment across the education system. In several cases, important milestones have been reached such as the creation of a specific line item for assessments in the budget and established assessment teams with the designated responsibility for implementing assessment activities.

**CHALLENGES**
Implementation of the READ program has not been without its challenges. It is an ambitious program—to not only improve assessment practices but institutionalize the assessment system is a vast undertaking. Effective 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 common challenges in implementing the READ program have been government instability, competing priorities when countries have other large non-READ programs, and the need for additional on-the-ground support. Furthermore, READ assistance alone is often not enough. Countries need to work together with other partners and strategically build capacity so progress can be sustained.
READ ANGOLA ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH 2010
Angola has limited assessment experience and capacity, and only two standalone assessment exercises (non-nationally representative and funded by donor agencies) were conducted in 2005–06, the results of which were not widely shared. Therefore, the starting point for the READ program was (1) to learn more about the country’s assessment landscape as a basis to design a program and (2) to adopt an incremental approach to establishing a sustainable assessment system. To that end, several steps have been taken and the following results achieved:

- Regarding **assessment policies**, the elaboration of a Self-Diagnosis and Action Plan were an important step to define clear purposes and strategies.
- Regarding **financing**, creating a government budget line for assessments (amounting to roughly US$1 million in the education budget for 2010) was important to increase the likelihood of stable and sufficient funding for future activities.
- In **leadership**, a national Technical Group (TG) was created. It comprises members of different departments of the Ministry of Education (MOE) with a mandate in the field of assessment of learning outcomes. The TG is important to ensure the leadership and sustainability of assessment activities—it’s members wrote the Action Plan for developing the assessment system, have participated in international READ conferences, and will benefit from future trainings. Furthermore, this group will lead the implementation of the first nationally representative assessment exercise in Angola (to be financed by READ). The team has already developed and supervised implementation of the pilot exercise. The Angola TG is expected to also lead and supervise the implementation of future assessment exercises, once the assessment activity is fully institutionalized.
- To strengthen **human resources**, several hands-on workshops have been carried out. The approach chosen for capacity building has been one of learning by doing. Therefore, the workshops have been organized in line with the preparation of the pilot of an early-grade reading assessment, which will start national implementation in July–August 2011, after the rainy season. In total 31 local resource persons were trained in three workshops. Trainees included members of the Angola TG, as well as enumerators (who were teacher trainees). All workshops were supported by the authorities. The workshops focused on preparation of test instruments, training of enumerators, and analysis of the implementation of the early-grade reading assessment pilot. A fourth workshop took place in December 2010, and focused on the analysis of the pilot database.
- Regarding the **technical aspects** of the assessments, due to work completed during 2010, Angola now has early-grade reading survey instruments, training instruments, a pilot database, and preliminary analysis of assessment results. These are key technical components of an assessment. Reflecting the READ approach to build local capacity, it is important to note that all work to date has utilized local resources, with the support of three international consultants only at critical moments.

**IMPACT OF THE READ PROGRAM**
The Self-Diagnosis for Angola showed that while government commitment to assessment was strong, there were significant gaps in other areas. There was no assessment system in place, no single national entity responsible for assessment, no standardized examinations, no full-time staff trained for assessment, and in general only a weak assessment culture, with little attention to using assessment results to improve learning. READ support has been designed to address these gaps. Note, however, that Angola has been rebuilding its education system since the Peace Treaty in 2002. Thus, although very little had been done in the field of assessment, the government has been strongly committed to both ongoing reconstruction of the education system and expansion of the assessment system.
As a result of Angola’s commitment to assessment and thanks to READ support, by 2014 Angola is envisioned to have built the foundations of a sustainable assessment system. Key objectives comprise:

- a well-defined vision for assessment and for the use of assessment results in quality improvement along sustainable arrangements for its implementation;
- two rounds of assessment exercises (an early-grade reading assessment and an early-grade mathematics assessment) aimed at establishing a baseline of learning levels. These assessment exercises will also help gradually develop a culture of assessment as well as capacity for designing and implementing tests and using results. Expected products include tests, administration and training documents, a database, reports, and technical documentation;
- a broad stakeholder understanding and ownership of assessment that will sustain the momentum for progress;
- a budget line item for assessment and securing sustained government funding;
- a permanent entity with institutional responsibility for assessment;
- a core, stable body of assessment staff with formal training and on-the-job experience; and
- a set of pilot quality interventions (informed by the results of the early-grade reading assessment) designed, implemented, and their impact evaluated so as to inform the scaling up of the most appropriate interventions.

The main objective of Angola’s READ Program is to improve the institutional and technical capacity of Angola’s MOE in the field of assessment of student learning outcomes, while developing a culture of using assessment results to inform interventions aimed at improving the quality of education.

Through READ support, Angola has begun designing and implementing an early grade reading assessment that is assessing learning from the capital to even the most remote villages. More importantly, this work is being done by Angolans themselves. MOE officials, Angola’s TG, school leaders, and teachers alike are all actively involved in building capacity to assess student learning. Empowered actors across the education sector are being geared up to drive a national literacy campaign that will use the early grade reading assessment results to focus on quality interventions to improve student learning.
READ ETHIOPIA ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH 2010

Under READ, Ethiopia is focused on strengthening its assessment system as a key component of its education quality assurance activities. To that end, READ has supported activities both in the area of large-scale assessment and in the related area of school inspection. Support in the area of examinations is expected to commence shortly.

The READ Self-Diagnosis exercise revealed several weaknesses in the enabling context for large-scale assessment activity in Ethiopia, including the lack of a policy framework, unclear institutional arrangements, the need to train and retain sufficient technical staff, and the lack of a full-fledged, dedicated government budget. While the Self-Diagnosis also indicated weaknesses in the areas of system alignment and assessment quality, priority was given to creating a solid enabling context for large-scale assessment activity that could subsequently serve as a foundation for the work on system alignment and assessment quality. Results of work completed during 2010 include the following:

- A draft policy framework document for large-scale assessment activity was initiated that includes a clear vision for the role of large-scale assessment in education quality improvement in Ethiopia, a set of activities aligned with that vision, and a delineation of roles and responsibilities.
- An improved and more focused dialogue on assessment issues was carried out that has enhanced high-level leadership and support for the assessment agenda in the Ethiopian MOE.
- Clearer and more appropriate institutional arrangements were established that better ensure the sustainability of the national large-scale assessment program and for which legal procedures should soon be complete (before August 2011).
- A small but stable core team of eight dedicated staff in the national large-scale assessment unit in Addis Ababa responsible for overseeing the national assessment program was established, which includes an individual with ‘international standard’ technical skills in large-scale assessment.
- A designated budget line was created (through the National Examinations and Assessment Agency, effective as of August 2011) for national large-scale assessment activity.
- A draft Action Plan for human resource capacity building and assessment quality improvement was written based on recommendations in the endorsed Self-Diagnosis report. The Action Plan includes hands-on, practitioner-led training sessions on standards/cut-score setting and test equating that will build large-scale assessment capacity at both national and regional levels and be integrated with planned activities for the 2011 national large-scale assessment exercise at Grades 4 and 8.

School inspection oversight is a new activity at the national level. Not surprisingly, the READ Self-Diagnosis exercise revealed considerable gaps in the enabling context for inspection-related activities at this level, including the lack of a policy framework and guidelines, untrained staff, and uncertain fiscal resources. Similar to large-scale assessment, while the Self-Diagnosis also indicated weaknesses in the areas of system alignment and assessment quality, priority was given to first creating a solid enabling context for national inspection activity that could subsequently serve as a foundation for the work on system alignment and assessment quality. Due to work initiated during 2010, the following results have been achieved:

- A draft policy framework and guidelines document for national oversight of school inspection activity in Ethiopia that reflects international best practice and is suited to Ethiopia’s federal system;
ETHIOPIA: IMPLEMENTING READ AMIDST GOVERNMENT RESTRUCTURING

Ethiopia is a good test case of the robustness of the READ design in a developing country context. Ethiopia is both the second most populous country in Africa and one of the poorest countries in the world. In addition, READ was introduced to Ethiopia just as the MOE underwent a significant restructuring exercise that affected the entire civil service in the country. This restructuring and related staff reassignments presented real challenges for the timely implementation of READ activities at the country level. READ also came at a time when the Ethiopian government was already in the process of implementing a huge agenda of education reform at the national and regional levels under the government and multidonor-funded Ethiopian General Education Quality Improvement program (GEQIP), USAID, and UNICEF. Despite these obstacles, the Ethiopian government has made real progress over the past year.

A draft staff training manual for national oversight of school inspection activity;

A small but stable core team of three dedicated staff in the school inspection unit in Addis Ababa responsible for carrying out the national oversight of inspection activity; and

A draft Action Plan for human resource capacity building, including a study visit to Ghana in January 2011 to learn about their approach to national oversight of inspection activity.

IMPACT OF THE READ PROGRAM

By 2014 Ethiopia is envisioned to have created technically robust assessment (including large-scale and examinations) and inspection systems. These achievements will be the result both of Ethiopia’s commitment to enhancing education quality and learning outcomes and of READ support, complemented by support from the government and multi-donor funded (World Bank, DFID, Finland, Italy and the Netherlands) Ethiopian General Education Quality Improvement program (GEQIP), USAID, and UNICEF. These systems are key components of Ethiopia’s education quality assurance activities. They will be further supported by the following key objectives:

- a well-defined and stakeholder-owned vision for the role of large-scale assessment, examinations, and school inspection in education quality improvement, along with sustainable arrangements for their implementation;
- a core, stable body of large-scale assessment, examinations, and school inspection staff at the national and regional levels with technical and operational competence in their areas of responsibility;
- one round of a technically improved national large-scale assessment exercise and one round of national oversight of school inspection activity; and
- a pilot of a technically improved national examination.

National Learning Assessments Workshop in Debre Zeyt Town, Ethiopia
Implementation of the first phase of the READ Program in the Kyrgyz Republic was strongly affected by the political and social events that took place in the country in 2010. The April revolution and subsequent change of government, continuous social instability, and teachers’ strikes did not allow timely implementation of all initial activities. However, due to the country’s progress in assessment from previous collaborative efforts of the government and international donors (which encompassed national and international large-scale assessments, reforms in its examinations system, and, to a lesser extent, endeavors to reform classroom-based assessment), the few steps taken in 2010 gave a sound start to READ implementation in the country. These steps comprised the following:

- Elaboration of a Self-Diagnosis and Action Plan was an important step in defining the objectives and expected outcomes of activities aimed to improve the assessment system and align existing assessment achievements with the READ program.
- A roundtable for educational stakeholders held on March 31–April 1, 2010 gained general political support and raised awareness about the program. The general principles and visions of improving assessment were used in designing the government’s Educational Sector Development Strategy for the coming decade (ESDS-2020). Unfortunately, more progress was made impossible by the revolution of April 7. However, work with government officials continues and support remains firm.
- A strong effort has been made to develop partnerships and collaborate with relevant ongoing international projects and Kyrgyz government agencies including the Ministry of Education and Science and the Kyrgyz Academy of Education (KAE). As a result, an Educational Assessment Unit formed under the World Bank’s Rural Education Project in 2006 was transferred to the KAE, which bears the institutional responsibility for initiating, coordinating, and evaluating international and national activities in the field of educational assessment. KAE’s capacity as a strong assessment entity is being further developed with the help of READ.

**IMPACT OF THE READ PROGRAM**

The Self-Diagnosis showed that there is a general understanding in the education community of the need for learning assessments; moreover, there is the political will necessary to make these changes happen. However, there are some significant gaps in the growth of the assessment culture in the Kyrgyz Republic. Previous efforts yielded some knowledge and on-the-job experience in conducting large-scale standardized tests of different kinds and student assessment surveys, but these initiatives need further improvement and a wider reach.

The World Bank’s Rural Education Project that engaged in the development and implementation of standardized assessment techniques has reached its final period. Thus, the READ funds come just in time to continue these previous efforts. At present, classroom-based assessment is seen as the area of highest priority for improvement. It is intended that a significant part of READ funding will be allocated to address this type of assessment. Furthermore, the country lacks well-trained professionals in both assessment and curriculum design. No permanent pre- or in-service training is provided in either of these areas. READ funds will also help align the educational system as a whole with the requirements of the modern world and with existing and future assessment activities.
To address these needs, the following key objectives have been set for the program:

- greater awareness of the role and effective use of assessment results throughout the education community;
- a well-articulated strategy for systemic development of assessments, curriculum, and the use of large-scale assessment results for improving educational quality;
- action to conduct further round(s) of the National Sample-Based Assessments of Grades 4 and 8, and spread the once-piloted Improved School Leaving Examinations to a national level;
- new training programs in assessment and curriculum design that are integrated into the teacher training curricula;
- improved system alignment through consistent and continuous efforts in assessment, classroom instruction, and creation of a favorable political and legislative environment; and
- an organized institutional network staffed with professionals who have formal training and hands-on experience to provide stable, well-coordinated, and informed advice for country-level efforts in assessment and the adjacent areas, including research.

These objectives were set so that they are ambitious but feasible, given the country's existing achievements in assessment, intensive involvement by previous donors, and strong political support. By reaching these objectives, the READ program will help the Kyrgyz Republic to further develop the emerging assessment culture.
MOZAMBIQUE

Population: 23 million
Primary Net Enrollment Rate: 82%

Primary Completion Rate: 57%
Education Share of Budget: 21%*

Source: EdStats, all data from 2009 unless noted otherwise (*2006).

READ MOZAMBIQUE ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH 2010

Mozambique’s limited assessment experience and capacity, combined with the government’s commitment to improve its education quality, were the criteria for selecting Mozambique as a beneficiary of the READ program. READ selection generated increased awareness of the need for robust assessment systems and provided the visibility required for the MOE to consolidate and carry out its assessment activities in a more structured manner. As part of the READ program, Mozambique has (1) gained a greater understanding of the gaps in its current learning assessment system and (2) adopted an incremental approach to establishing a more sustainable assessment system. To that end, several steps have been taken and the following results achieved:

- The elaboration of a Self-Diagnosis and related Action Plan were important steps to define clear purposes and strategies for understanding and creating future assessment policies.
- Regarding financing, the inclusion of assessment activities in the 2011 annual plan of activities and the establishment of an assessment system as an indicator to be monitored by the government, shows increased awareness and commitment by the government. This achievement will greatly increase the likelihood of stable and sufficient funding for future activities.
- In leadership, the MOE decided to concentrate the implementation of the READ program through a Technical Group (TG) based in the National Institute for the Development of Education. The TG includes members of different departments of the MOE and needs more training to improve its technical skills. There is also a need for recruiting more qualified personnel, and the MOE is taking steps to ensure that assessment activities will be treated as a main field in the education sector.
- To strengthen human resources, a major workshop was carried out in August 2010 in Maputo (50 participants) with the support of Brazilian specialists. The TG also benefited from two trips to Brazil, in June and August 2010 (6 participants each time), where participants interacted with assessment experts and institutions, in addition to school directors and policy makers. This allowed the TG to establish international contacts and share information on major topics related to assessment.
- To further build technical capacity, short training courses in Portuguese are being developed on the following topics: sampling, preparation of item and design of diagnostic tests, data analysis, and reporting. Additionally, preparations are underway to conduct a pilot of an early grade reading assessment in 2011 with the assistance of a specialized team of consultants; national implementation will take place in June 2012. This assessment exercise will build capacity for assessment work by completely immersing the national team in the entire assessment process from developing test instruments to the dissemination of the results.
IMPACT OF THE READ PROGRAM
The Self-Diagnosis for Mozambique showed that while the government’s commitment to assessment is strong, the overall enabling context is plagued with some deficiencies. The current assessment system is fragmented and lacks trained personnel to manage and implement assessment exercises in a structured manner. READ support has been designed to address these gaps. As a result of Mozambique’s commitment to assessment and thanks to READ support, by 2014 Mozambique is envisioned to have built the foundations of a sustainable assessment system. Key objectives comprise:

- a well-defined vision for assessments and the use of assessment results to improve education quality, along with sustainable arrangements for implementation of improvements;
- design and implementation of one round of an early-grade reading assessment and an early grade mathematics assessment to establish a baseline of learning levels, build capacity to design and implement tests and use results, and gradually develop a culture of assessment. Expected products include tests, administration and training documents, database, reports, and technical documentation;
- a broad stakeholder understanding and ownership of assessment that will sustain the momentum for progress;
- a budget line item for assessment and securing sustained government funding;
- a permanent entity with institutional responsibility for assessment;
- a core, stable body of assessment staff with formal training and on-the-job experience; and
- a set of pilot quality interventions (informed by the results of the early-grade reading assessment) designed, implemented, and their impact evaluated so as to inform the scaling up of the most appropriate interventions.

BUILDING CAPACITY AND CREATING A NEW SPECIALIZED ASSESSMENT UNIT IN MOZAMBIQUE

With READ support, the newly formed TG in Mozambique will lead the implementation of the first pilot of an early grade reading assessment exercise in 2011, followed in 2012 by the first national assessment exercise in Mozambique. These assessment exercises will reinforce the need for a specialized unit on assessment in the country, and the MOE is already taking steps to establish this vision by having more public discussion on the topic of learning outcomes, including during the annual review meetings. In a recent joint review meeting of the education sector, the MOE presented for the first time the results of the SAQMEC exercise and openly recognized the decrease in results that Mozambique registered between 2000 and 2007. READ funds help strengthen and expand ongoing activities which are important to create the enabling context required for conducting assessments and making effective use of the results.

Mozambique’s Technical Group and Brazilian Experts during a Study Visit to Brazil
READ TAJIKISTAN ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH 2010

READ financing for Tajikistan has gone primarily towards support for the National Testing Center (NTC) of Tajikistan. This center is being established in order to realize the government’s vision of establishing fair and transparent University Entrance Examinations (UEE) and to establish a culture of national, grade-level assessments (GLAs) with the intention of joining the international arena in 10–15 years.

The Government of Tajikistan’s main objective is through READ financing, to increase the capacity of the NTC, which is being established through a Presidential Decree and supported by the NTC Charter in 2009. The NTC will enable the introduction of a sustainable system for UEE and national GLAs with a long-term goal of meeting international standards.

With READ program’s support, the following activities have been implemented to support Tajikistan’s long-term goals of establishing and developing an assessment system:

- A Self-Diagnosis was carried out and an Action Plan was produced as part of the government’s strategic efforts to develop an assessment culture and policies.
- A multi-partner financing program for the NTC was created in 2010. First, the government’s financing commitment to support the NTC operations was obtained (US$0.97 million over a period of four years), which is critical and important for its sustainability in the long run. Second, an IDA financed grant of US$2.0 million, which is already effective and being implemented by the MOE, will fund the construction of an NTC building, furniture, and some equipment. Third, US$1.5 million from the Open Society Institute (OSI) will fund capacity development of NTC staff.
- Invested interest and ownership from the government is one of the most important achievements to date. The government provided land for the NTC and was actively involved during 2010 in the preparation of a funding proposal aimed at increasing the capacity of the NTC. The MOE Student Assessment Department (SAD) staff was transferred to the NTC, and further training and expansion of professional staff was conducted with READ support.
- As for institutional arrangements, a detailed Master Plan of Action 2011–14 (MPA) was produced in September–October 2010 and approved by the Minister of Education. The MPA discussions were predicated upon a draft Operations Manual that had been prepared several months earlier by the NTC with technical support from a team of well-recognized experts in the assessment field (funded by READ). The preparation of the Operations Manual entailed consultations with major stakeholders, including the MOE and University rectors and deputy rectors. The Operations Manual was reviewed by the MOE and NTC and further discussed and revised during the preparation of the MPA.
- In terms of leadership, the NTC has the full support of the Office of the President and the MOE. MOE officials and NTC staff participated in two READ global conferences and received other training in 2009 and 2010.
IMPACT OF THE READ PROGRAM

The READ-funded Self-Diagnosis found that an assessment culture is completely lacking within and around educational institutions, and that teachers and educators at all levels lack assessment expertise. At the national level, there is limited experience administering large-scale standardized tests and other forms of assessment; while at the school or institutional level there is little expertise in, or even awareness of, the intricacies of obtaining and making use of valid and reliable measurements. Assessment is not part of teachers’ pre-service training.

Based on these findings and technical assistance from the Australian Council of Education Research (funded by READ), Tajikistan has developed a comprehensive four-year plan for the development of the NTC into a full-fledged testing institution that can provide free and fair university examinations for all of Tajikistan’s university entrants. The comprehensive roadmap for all NTC activities (to be funded by READ, OSI, IDA, and the Government of Tajikistan) can be found in the NTC MPA. The impact of financing to the NTC through READ and its partners is envisaged to be the following:

- increased capacity of the NTC so that, by 2014, it will have introduced UEEs and national GLAs with a long-term goal of meeting international standards;
- a fully staffed, operational, and financially self-sufficient NTC by early 2015;
- test instruments and systems piloted and nationally introduced;
- a legal and regulatory framework in place that allows for the introduction of GLAs and the UEE system; and
- development and endorsement of a national long-term strategy for assessments in Tajikistan.

INSTITUTIONALIZING LEARNING ASSESSMENTS: A NEW NATIONAL TESTING CENTER FOR TAJIKISTAN

The Government of Tajikistan is firmly committed to building a sustainable assessment system for measuring learning outcomes. The relatively few previous assessment activities were known to be neither valid nor reliable. The government’s desire to take a fresh approach and firmly establish a high-quality institution in charge of assessment activities led to creation of a new agency, the NTC.

Through READ support, Tajikistan has drawn extensively on international expertise in bringing best assessment practices to bear. An Operations Manual was written and close attention given to creating an enabling context that promotes transparency, anti-corruption, and professionalism in carrying out assessment activities. The Operations Manual clearly outlines how the NTC will be able to provide high-quality, secure test results, establish an equitable university entrance exam, and begin to development an assessment culture in Tajikistan.
READ VIETNAM ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH 2010

Under READ, Vietnam is concentrating on strengthening its current assessment system and devising ways for assessment activities to have a greater impact on student learning and overall education quality. The first phase of READ activities in Vietnam helped develop a clearer understanding of the impediments in the current system and viable solutions for further READ funding. To that end, several steps have been taken and the following results achieved:

- Regarding assessment policies, the elaboration of a Self-Diagnosis and Action Plan has been an important step to define gaps in the current system and clear purposes and strategies for future activities.
- The Self-Diagnosis recognized that Vietnam has an assessment system with the capacity to conduct their national assessments in Grades 5, 6, and 9 and examinations. However, further in-depth analysis of specific components and dimensions of Vietnam’s assessment system was recommended. Based on this recommendation, the following studies were launched during 2010:
  - analysis of the policy and regulatory framework governing student assessment in primary and secondary education and the training/guidance provided to provinces/districts/schools;
  - analysis of classroom assessment practices for natural and social science subjects in primary and secondary schools;
  - analysis of current training programs (both short and long term) on student assessment;
  - analysis of the capacity to develop, administrate, analyze, and interpret results in all 63 provincial testing units;
  - analysis of fiscal and human resources currently allocated for assessment; and
  - analysis of the use of assessment data and the feedback loop between students, teachers, and education managers.

These studies emphasized the need for strong system alignment. In particular, there is need for (1) robust communication and coordination mechanisms for the many units, central MOE staff, and provinces in charge of managing the assessment system; (2) improved teacher training in assessment practices and research; and (3) further capacity building in assessment. These actions are essential for strengthening the system across the many schools, districts, and provinces in Vietnam.

- In parallel with the studies launched in 2010, strong ownership of the READ agenda and increased capacity for assessment work has been developed through a series of workshops and trainings, including the following:
  - a workshop with key stakeholders to discuss and endorse the Self-Diagnosis;
  - a series of three assessment policy workshops (January, April, and September 2010) to review current assessment policies and practices both in classrooms and examinations with different policy units (that is, primary and secondary education and testing departments);
  - registration by Vietnam to participate in PISA 2012 and attendance at an introductory course (June 2009), as well as a first PISA training in Hong Kong (January 2010);
  - two workshops to develop assessment rubrics for Grade 12 examinations and secondary education tests (October and December 2010); and
LEVERAGING FUNDS TO SPREAD READ’S IMPACT ACROSS VIETNAM’S ENTIRE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Vietnam’s desire to raise its education system to a high-performing level is challenging. The system is large, with around 20 million students and more than one million teachers in nearly 40,000 schools. Some elements of the assessment system are already in place, such as assessment policies and regular implementation of national exams and large-scale surveys. However, the technical capacity and resources are still lacking and an effective feedback loop has yet to be developed and sustained. READ funds are crucial in helping Vietnam upgrade its assessment system.

Currently in Vietnam, READ is the only project that has the potential to cut across all levels of education. By leveraging the World Bank’s program in basic and higher education in Vietnam (currently more than US$1 billion), READ will be able to reach out to teachers and schools and ensure that assessment is a key component in these investments and policy operations.

As a result of these studies, workshops, and trainings, Vietnam now has a shared vision for a national assessment framework that includes all three major components: (1) regular classroom assessments, (2) examinations, and (3) national and international assessments. Additionally, there is now a strong government commitment to institutionalize national and international assessments and Vietnam is currently composing a new policy document on external assessments.

IMPACT OF THE READ PROGRAM

Vietnam’s vision is to strengthen and improve the effectiveness of its current assessment system and to identify the factors that improve student learning. READ has been and will continue to support Vietnam to enhance its capacity to conduct systemic assessment of learning outcomes and provide channels for feedback, policy analysis, and recommendations for actions to improve student learning outcomes. During the next phase of READ, key result indicators will include the following:

- positive and regular interaction between key stakeholders of the assessment system to ensure alignment and coherence;
- capacity for developing good assessment tools at all levels (classroom, examination, and large-scale surveys) built at central and local levels;
- effective training programs (both in-service and pre-service) made widely available to teachers, teacher trainers, and education managers;
- a new curriculum that clearly outlines learning outcome standards; and
- an effective system of recording and reporting student learning and channels for feedback.

following the Annual READ Global Conferences, Annual READ Vietnam Conferences (December 2009 and 2010) have been organized to convene leaders and staff from all concerned departments (primary, secondary, testing, teacher management, Institute of Educational Sciences, teacher training universities, and provinces) to discuss study findings, generate consensus, and build momentum for addressing the assessment agenda.
READ ZAMBIA ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH 2010

Zambia is committed to improving the quality of its education system. Over the past couple of decades, the country has made considerable efforts to build up learning assessment capacity. Although capacity to conduct national learning assessments has definitely increased, ample room exists for improvement in both the quality of the assessments and communicating results in a way that will ultimately improve levels of learning. To date, several steps have been taken to carry forward the READ agenda and the following results have been achieved:

- The Self-Diagnosis, made possible with READ financing and technical assistance, allowed the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) to identify gaps and priority areas in their current assessment system and generate a plan on how to address these needs. Completed at the end of 2009, the report benefited from ample buy-in and guidance from various key stakeholders. One major participant was the National Assessment Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from the MOE, cooperating partners, researchers, and scholars.
- Leadership was provided at a workshop held in early 2010 that officially launched the READ program in Zambia. Using the Self-Diagnosis, the workshop participants drew up a concrete Action Plan for the first phase of the READ program in Zambia. Following the workshop, a meeting chaired by the Permanent Secretary of Education took place where the Action Plan underwent further review and ultimately received official endorsement by the National Assessment Steering Committee.
- In order to determine the technical quality of certain examinations in Zambia, in conjunction with the overall Self-Diagnosis, a careful review of the marking procedures of Grade 9 and 12 exams was completed and underwent an international review in 2010.
- The Self-Diagnosis made evident that in many cases more information was necessary to determine how best to proceed. Subsequently, two additional needs assessments are currently underway. These studies and their purposes are as follows:
  - Review of the Capacity and Practices of Standard Officers: identify training needs for standard officers in the use of learning assessment results to support teaching and learning in the classroom; and
  - Review of the Capacity and Practices of Teachers: identify training needs for teachers in the use of learning assessment results to support teaching and learning in the classroom.

During 2010, the Action Plan was modified and adapted as part of the process for obtaining funds through the second funding request for Zambia. The Government of Zambia worked with the World Bank to incorporate development and assessment experts’ views on modifications to the initial plan. The final result is an Action Plan that has broad approval and endorsement on all levels, which is key to the success of all assessment activities moving forward under READ. This broad support and leadership has created a strong enabling context for the READ program which is promising.

Implementing the READ program in Zambia has not been without its challenges. The World Bank does not have an ongoing education project in Zambia and as a result there is limited World Bank assistance on the ground. To overcome delays in implementing program activities, during the last part of 2010, the World Bank has been working diligently to recruit a program coordinator to be based locally in Zambia for program support. This recruitment is ongoing and will be a huge asset to the successful implementation of the program. ECZ has also discussed the possibility of assigning one of their staff to coordinate the READ program on behalf of the Zambian government.
IMPACT OF THE READ PROGRAM
The Self-Diagnosis clearly showed that although much has been done to strengthen Zambia’s assessment system, improvements are still necessary. Studies conducted in Zambia demonstrate that the quality of education remains low, and assessments have not raised the quality of learning in classrooms. While continuing to build the technical capacity and quality of the assessments already in place, additional, concentrated attention should be given to effective analysis and use of the results. It is expected that given the generous support under the READ program, Zambia will be able to address this important gap and make significant improvements in three main areas: (1) instrument development, administration, and marking; (2) data management, analysis, and reporting; and (3) dissemination, use of information, and research.

The various READ-funded activities are expected to produce the following results:
- improvements in the quality of national assessments and a greater number of grades assessed;
- greater capacity of assessors to provide reliable and accurate results;
- significant improvement in the analysis and reporting of assessment results;
- enhanced access to and comprehension of relevant assessment results by various stakeholders; and
- greater use of evidence-based decision making at the classroom, school, district, and national levels.

With READ support, Zambia’s assessment system will be much improved by 2014. By enhancing the quality of the assessments themselves and focusing on finding ways to effectively communicate targeted messages on the results, assessments will be endowed with a much greater potential for impacting policy changes, teaching practices and ultimately the quality of learning in Zambia’s education system.

Zambian Students Preparing for their Exams

ESTABLISHING AN INFORMATION CENTER TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION OF LEARNING ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Zambia has a long history of assessing student learning outcomes. However, the quality, frequency, and effective communication of the results need to be improved. Looking for innovative solutions, discussions with key stakeholders such as MOE officials, the ECZ, and other international donors led to the idea of creating an information and communication center for assessment results with the primary responsibility to increase the accessibility of learning assessment information. Making the information available in more user-friendly formats that educators and MOE staff can easily understand will increase the likelihood that assessment activities will actually have an impact on student learning outcomes and improve the quality of education in Zambia. Additionally, making data more available will allow researchers to study the results and determine what factors have the greatest impact on student learning.
Harmonizing results will be a key priority as the program enters its third year, across donor expectations, READ country Action Plans, and the global (SABER—Student Assessment) conceptual framework and indicators. This task will be challenging but necessary, not only to ensure that work in countries is informed by international good practice, but also that expectations are informed by countries’ plans, which reflect their particular context and realities.

Rigorous efforts to accelerate implementation will accompany the attention to results. This will entail close and systematic monitoring, analysis to identify constraints, and development of solutions to unblock hurdles. Areas requiring attention may include READ visibility in countries with large non-READ agendas, the supply of assessment experts speaking the local language, and incentives for progress.

The annual READ Global Conference will again be designed to support important objectives: to sustain READ countries’ interest in and momentum around the READ agenda; to continue to build knowledge of what it takes to establish or strengthen a sound assessment system; to have a substantive country-by-country discussion with those most directly engaged in READ work; and to create the space for networking both across the countries and with international—including Russian—assessment experts.

Efforts will be stepped up to involve Russian education and assessment experts in the work of the READ Trust Fund. These efforts will be aimed both at taking advantage of seasoned professionals and providing learning-by-doing opportunities for those interested in international development. In both cases, Russian involvement will be funded by the READ FBS program (see page 7).

Finally, a stronger role is envisaged for communications efforts. These efforts will be aimed at making information resources available to countries to support their work, providing countries with opportunities to showcase their progress, and sharing the knowledge products being developed at the global level.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIR</td>
<td>American Institutes for Research</td>
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<td>AERA</td>
<td>American Educational Research Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALERT</td>
<td>Africa Alliance for Learning and Education Results</td>
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<td>CICED</td>
<td>Center for International Cooperation in Education Development</td>
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<td>CY</td>
<td>Calendar Year</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
<td>UK Department for International Development</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
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<td>ECZ</td>
<td>Examinations Council of Zambia</td>
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<td>FBS</td>
<td>Fee-Based Services</td>
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<td>FTI</td>
<td>Fast Track Initiative</td>
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<td>GEQIP</td>
<td>General Education Quality Improvement Project</td>
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<td>GLA</td>
<td>Grade Level Assessments</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communications Technologies</td>
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<td>IDA</td>
<td>International Development Association</td>
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<td>KAE</td>
<td>Kyrgyz Academy of Education</td>
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<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>MPA</td>
<td>Master Plan of Action</td>
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<td>NTC</td>
<td>National Testing Center</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>OSI</td>
<td>Open Society Institute</td>
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<td>PISA</td>
<td>Program for International Student Assessment</td>
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<td>READ</td>
<td>Russia Education Aid for Development</td>
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<td>SABER</td>
<td>System Assessment and Benchmarking for Education Results</td>
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<td>SAQMEC</td>
<td>Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality</td>
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<td>SAD</td>
<td>Student Assessment Department</td>
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<td>TF</td>
<td>Trust Fund</td>
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<td>TG</td>
<td>Technical Group</td>
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<td>UEE</td>
<td>University Entrance Examination</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
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Strengthening the Enabling Environment for Assessment Systems

October 4-6, 2010
Nairobi, Kenya
The Second READ Global Conference took place October 4–6, 2010 in Nairobi, Kenya. This event brought together nearly 130 participants comprising high-level education officials from the seven READ country governments (Angola, Ethiopia, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mozambique, Tajikistan, Vietnam, and Zambia), the Kenyan assessment community, Russian officials and education experts, World Bank staff, and international assessment experts.

OBJECTIVES
The three-day agenda was designed to:

- Support READ countries in improving learning outcomes through strong, sustainable assessment systems.
- Provide READ countries with an opportunity to collectively, and with support from assessment experts, think through ways in which to improve the enabling environment for assessment systems.
- Share lessons from other countries’ experiences in strengthening their enabling environments.
- Offer a venue for those engaged in assessment work to interact, network, and consult with each other.
- Communicate ways the READ Program is working to help countries develop their assessment systems.

KEY MESSAGES
The theme for the conference was “Strengthening the Enabling Environment for Assessment Systems”. Key messages included:

- Leadership plays a vital role in building effective assessment systems.
- Establishing a strong assessment system requires focusing on the policies, institutional arrangements, and financial and human resources in which assessment activities take place.
- Strengthening the enabling environment is fundamental to ensure that learning outcomes improve and that money spent on assessment produces results.

STRUCTURE
Delegations of senior education officials and assessment experts from the seven READ countries were the primary target audience for the conference. READ country delegations sat together at roundtables with World Bank education task teams and international assessment experts to encourage interaction among participants. The conference aimed to provide ample time for countries to present on their progress under READ and discuss challenges in building their own assessment systems. To facilitate in-depth discussions on challenges in each country, on the second day, World Bank staff and international experts conducted individual country clinics with each delegation. Upon completion, delegates reported back on what future actions they would take to strengthen their assessment systems moving forward. On the last day, assessment specialists presented lessons learned from several commissioned case studies on other countries’ experience in strengthening their enabling environment and a couple of guidance notes developed to motivate countries and give them a few simple ideas to take back to their countries.

OUTCOME
The annual conference marks an important milestone for READ, as it is the only occasion when all seven READ countries interact with each other, the donor, and international experts. The conference successfully brought together a large number of stakeholders working on the READ agenda and participants capitalized on the opportunity to network and learn from each other. It broadened READ countries’ understanding of the fundamental elements required to build sound assessment systems, deepened their resolve to find concrete ways to improve their own enabling environments for assessments, and made connections as to how tools being developed at the global level can guide them in their efforts. According to feedback from READ countries and World Bank country teams, the conference was highly valued by participants and successful in motivating READ countries to continue to advance their READ Action Plans.
DAY 1: THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP

Demonstrating the importance of strong leadership, high-ranking leaders from Russia, the World Bank, and Kenya opened the event. Johannes Zutt, World Bank Country Director for Kenya, and Professor George Godia, Kenya’s Permanent Secretary of Education, welcomed conference participants to Kenya and stressed the important role of learning assessment. Vladimir Mau, Rector of Russia’s Academy of National Economy, spoke to the importance to Russia of international education initiatives like READ. Finally, the World Bank’s Director of Education, Elizabeth King, praised the READ initiative for bringing into focus the imperative need to ensure that children are learning.

After officially welcoming all participants, Robin Horn, World Bank Education Manager and a member of the READ Council, elaborated on this year’s conference theme and why a strong enabling environment is essential for assessment systems to be effective in improving education quality and learning outcomes. To further demonstrate why learning matters and the role assessments play in ensuring learning, his remarks were followed by a premiere showing of the recently produced documentary, “When Children Learn, Nations Prosper.”

One of the film’s stars is Florence Shongwe. A veteran teacher in one of South Africa’s primary schools, Florence recently discovered the power of informally assessing student learning in her classroom. At the conference, Florence was invited to briefly share with participants her recent transformation, the positive changes she has seen in learning in her classroom, and her passion and newly discovered energy for teaching.

LEADERSHIP’S VITAL ROLE

Without the requisite leadership, it is highly unlikely that any assessment system will be able to effectively measure student learning in a way that will lead to improved learning outcomes. Education leaders need to pave the way by focusing the necessary attention on the assessment agenda and developing the policies, making the right institutional arrangements, and securing the resources required to establish sustainable assessment institutions. Once assessment results are available, strong leadership is required to use the results effectively and garner support to implement education reforms deemed necessary by the assessment results.

The primary keynote address was delivered by Andrei Volkov, President of the Skolkovo Business School of Management in Russia and member of the READ Council. Mr. Volkov is well-known both inside and outside of Russia for his strong leadership skills and vision. Especially for the READ program, Andrei Volkov’s leadership has been instrumental in developing the program and strengthening the enabling environment for development aid initiatives in Russia. He used the example of his newly created business school in Russia to demonstrate the key role leadership has played in its development.

Robin Horn, on behalf of the READ Program Manager, Manorama Gotur, spoke to the importance of having a clearly articulated vision for one’s assessment system. Countries need to first define the purpose of their assessment system. With a clear purpose in mind, assessment instruments should then be “aligned” with the standards that correspond to the countries’ learning goals. Then, once the appropriate “assessment” activities are carried out, the results should be “acted” on by publishing, analyzing, and feeding back the results to the overall system.

The final activity on Day 1 was a high-level panel discussion where the head of each READ country delegation was invited to participate in a series of Q&A centered on how leadership has affected efforts to establish their own assessment systems and how leadership has made a difference in pushing forward the assessment agenda.
SECOND READ GLOBAL CONFERENCE SUMMARY

DAY 2: THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT IN READ COUNTRIES

Day 2 began with two presentations on recent assessment activities in Kenya. The first presentation, delivered by the Kenyan National Examinations Council, focused on a recent study that analyzed results from a national assessment of Grade 3 students’ learning achievements in mathematics and literacy. The analysis allowed researchers to identify the school and governance factors that had the greatest impact on student learning outcomes and provide recommendations for future interventions. Sara Ruto from Uwezo, an NGO aimed at improving learning through conducting citizen- and community-led national assessments, delivered the second presentation. By using local volunteers to carry out simple reading and math assessments, Uwezo’s main goal is to initiate a conversation on poor education quality and generate a groundswell of demand for improvement.

The platform was then handed over to READ countries to deliver short presentations on how they have made a difference through assessment. These presentations clearly showed that READ countries have adopted the conceptual framework and terminology developed under READ to analyze and determine the level of progress in building their own assessment systems. While the implementation of READ-funded activities has been somewhat slow, these presentations provided evidence of the strong commitment READ countries have to strengthening the enabling environment for assessments so that their assessment systems can be built in ways that will ultimately be sustainable.

SETTING THE STAGE FOR READ COUNTRY CLINICS

Each READ supported country carried out a Self-Diagnostic exercise that identified various strengths and weaknesses in their current assessment system. A report was commissioned to synthesize the results and draw comparisons across all seven countries. Jeff Marshall, an assessment expert and READ consultant, presented these results and identified common areas where READ-funded activities would be beneficial. These areas included addressing concerns with the current enabling environment, improving feedback mechanisms and the use of assessment results, and increasing the technical capacity of country staff to implement assessment activities.

Marguerite Clarke, a member of the READ Technical Group, explained which factors should be considered when analyzing the enabling environment—leadership, policies, institutional arrangements, human resources, and fiscal resources—all of which affect the capacity to engage with assessments in a sustained, effective manner. Rubrics and questionnaires developed as part of READ’s global work on benchmarking assessment systems take this even further by carefully defining what each of these factors look like at various stages of development towards a strong overall enabling environment for assessment activities in a country. Shared with countries before the conference, these rubrics framed the discussion during the READ Country Clinics.

READ COUNTRY CLINICS

The country clinics were designed as a way for READ countries to benefit from international expert advice and identify ways to address country-specific challenges. Using the enabling environment rubrics for examinations and large-scale surveys and the questionnaire for classroom assessment enabled READ countries to map their own progress and determine possible means for improvement. Clinics were held in breakout rooms with an ensemble of government delegates, Bank Staff, Russian donor representatives, and international assessment experts. Working together, participants discussed the current status of the country’s enabling environment for assessment activities, immediate goals in this area, possible strategies for moving forward, and concrete next steps to be taken immediately following the conference. At the conclusion of the clinics, READ government delegates regrouped in the main conference hall to present to the plenary discussion highlights and the concrete next steps identified to take going forward. As evident from the plenary, the country clinics lent themselves to several very fruitful discussions.
DAY 3: READ SUPPORT FOR A STRONGER ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

The focus for the final day of the conference was to share with READ countries various global products developed to support READ work at the country level. CICED began the day by delivering several presentations on assessment toolkits they have been designing, such as a toolkit to monitor primary school students’ learning achievements, an ICT-literacy assessment instrument for secondary school students, and a statistics-based instrument to identify ways to enhance education quality at the regional level.

LESSONS FROM CASE STUDIES ON ASSESSMENT

A key objective of the conference was to share with conference participants, and READ country delegates in particular, other countries’ assessment experiences and lessons learned that could be used in strengthening their own country’s enabling environment for assessment systems. Authors of several case studies (written in preparation for the conference with the dual purpose of adding to the current body of knowledge on assessments and for the benefit READ countries) were invited to elaborate on lessons learned from their own country’s assessment experiences. The table below highlights 3–5 lessons drawn from each case study. At the conclusion, all of the case study authors were brought to the stage to participate in a Q&A session on the various common themes identified by the presenters. Conference participants were genuinely interested in the ensuing conversation with several READ country delegates directly stating how useful they found this session.

At the conclusion of Day 3, conference participants benefited from final words of advice and guidance from two READ Technical Group members. Tom Kellaghan outlined the steps necessary to institutionalize various types of assessment activities; Anil Kanjee offered 10 “R.E.A.D.” (relevant, easy, affordable, and doable) ideas for improving assessment systems. The event concluded with READ countries committing to at least one concrete action they will take in the upcoming months following the conference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Key Lessons Learned</th>
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| Australia   | - Integration of curriculum, instruction, teacher practices, and high-stakes assessment can be done.  
               - Teacher involvement in creating the learning program, implementing it, designing how learning achievement will be measured, and then gathering and using that information leads to greater teacher professionalism.  
               - Community confidence in teachers to act fairly and transparency of the decision-making process are key. |
| Brazil      | - Defining national standards before creating an assessment system is imperative to ensure that schools and teachers will be able to use the results to improve learning.  
               - Leadership and political support of presidents, governors, ministers, and local authorities is critical for success/effectiveness.  
               - Broad political support, legislation, and institutional arrangements are critical for sustainability.  
               - Creating an independent agency, with the right expertise, to be in charge of national assessments, and educational statistics and research is paramount. |
| Chile       | - Political and professional leadership are essential ingredients for implementing effective education reforms.  
               - Education laws about assessment are important elements to ensure institutionalization and ongoing budget support for assessment activities.  
               - Gradual changes to the education system are better than huge reforms that shock the system.  
               - Curricular reforms trigger assessment reforms. |
| Russia      | - Step-by-step: pilots and broad approval should precede mass implementation.  
               - The cultures behind standardized tests and teacher assessment practices often lead to conflict.  
               - International comparative research can serve as a powerful stimulus to develop high-quality national assessment systems.  
               - Extensive discussion among key stakeholders and the public at-large is key to acquiring the necessary support for successful implementation. |
| Uganda      | - Policies on improving learning must be clear, unambiguous, and focused.  
               - Strong political support from the government is essential in order for assessment exercises to add value.  
               - Using a single local agency to lead the development of the assessment system lends itself to greater coordination and sustainability. |