



Ministry of Education

Early Grade Reading Interventions in Ethiopia: Developing Quality Books and Ensuring Access

International Literacy Day
Washington, DC, USA

September 7, 2016

**Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Ministry of Education**

Ethiopia's Achievements in Improving Access to Primary Education

- ❑ Following the adoption of the FDRE constitution and the education and training policy in 1994, and in line with the MDGs and EFA Goals, Ethiopia embarked on an ambitious plan to increase access to primary education.
- ❑ Policy provision for primary education in mother tongue
- ❑ Huge investment in educational expansion
 - Net enrollment ratio for primary education steadily climbed to 97.6% in 2015 from 44.4% in 2000.

Early Grade Reading Interventions

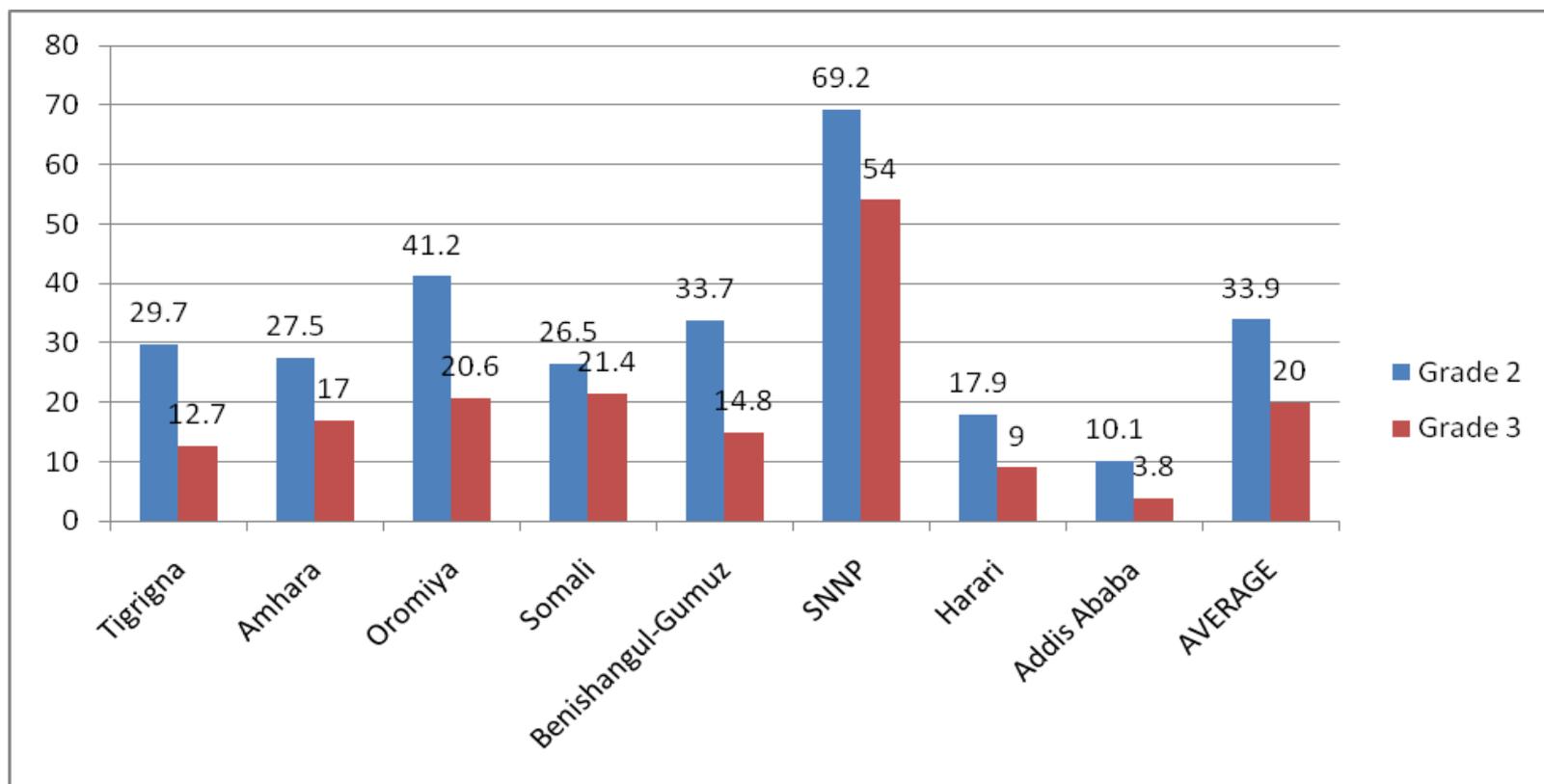
- ❑ The success gave Ethiopia reason to celebrate, but also prompted a shift to focus on quality of education in schools.
- ❑ The General Education Quality Improvement Project/GEQIP funded by the World Bank in a pool with development partners: **six programs**
 - Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) conducted in 2010 & 2011 through USAID support.
 - Data revealed that a large proportion of students were not able to read.
 - Ethiopia moved quickly to partner with USAID and other donors to improve reading instruction and learning in primary schools.
 - Determined to make changes from the traditional way of teaching and learning mother tongue languages to evidence and standard based approach

EGRA Ethiopia (2010)

- Regionally representative samples
- 8 regions (Tigray, Amhara, Oromiya, Somali, Benishangul-Gumuz, SNNPR (Sidama), Harari, Addis Ababa)
- 6 languages
 - Amharic, Afan Oromo, Tigrinya, Af-Somali, Harari, Sidaamu Afoo
- 2 grades (Grade 2 & Grade 3)
- 20 children per grade
- 13,079 children assessed
 - 3255 Grade 2 boys, 3284 Grade 2 girls
 - 3314 Grade 3 boys, 3226 Grade 3 girls
- 999 teachers interviewed
- 338 directors interviewed

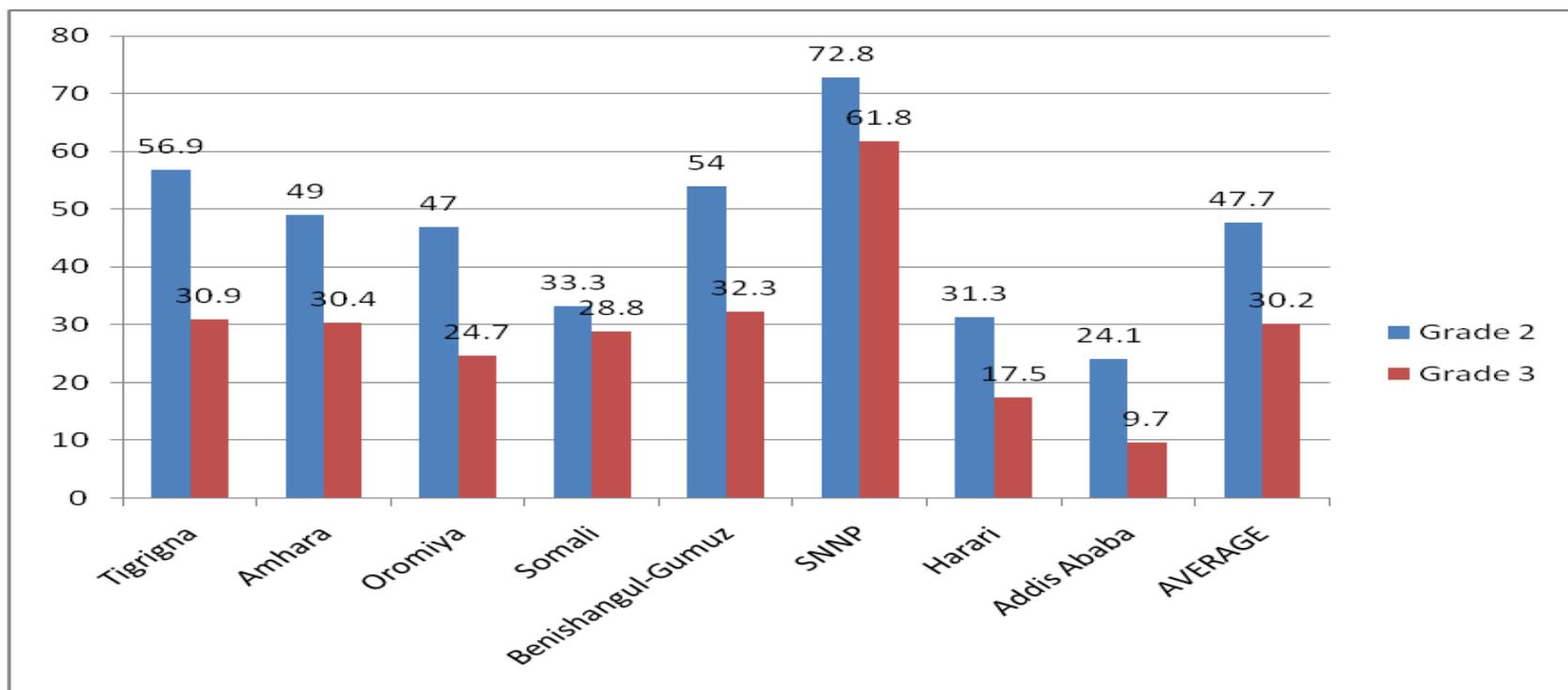
Snapshots Of EGRA (2010) Results

Percentage of Children Unable to Read a Single Word, by language



Snapshots Of EGRA (2010) Results

Percentage of Children Scoring 0% on Reading Comprehension

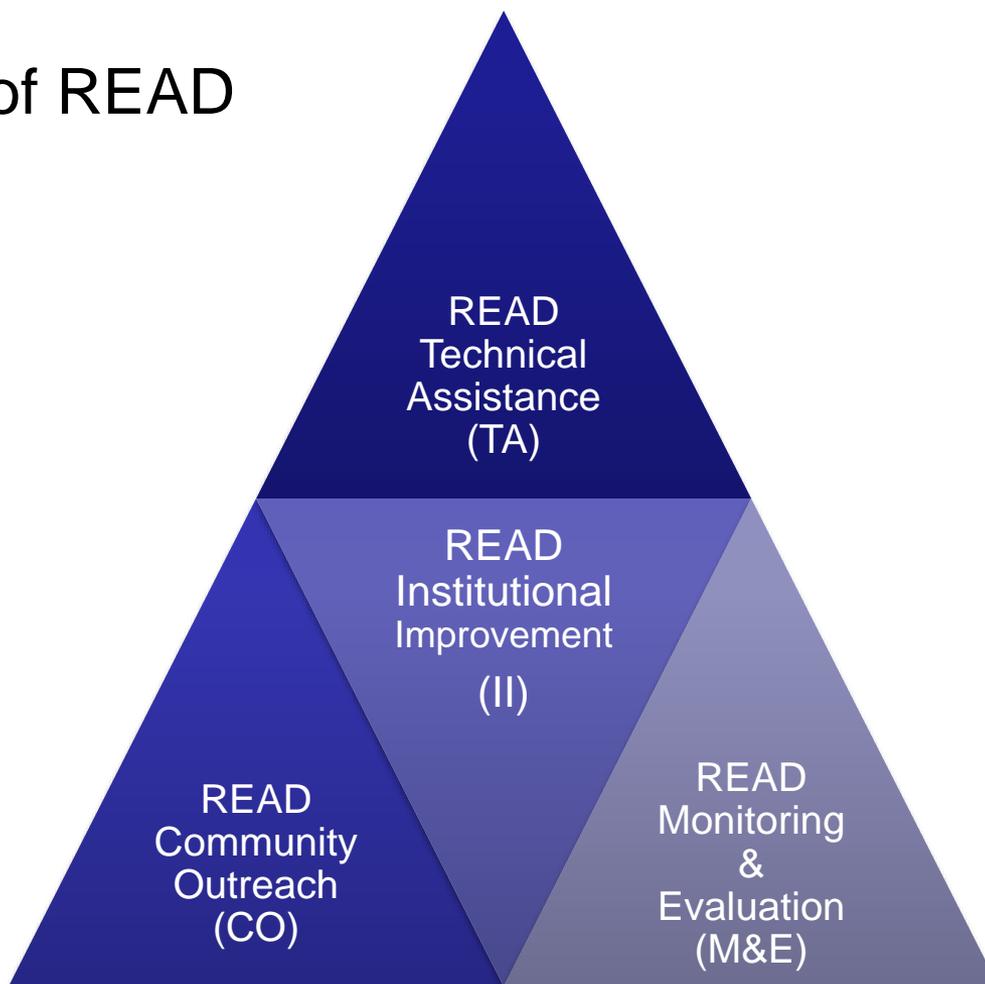


Early Grade Reading Interventions

- ❑ The EGRA results created high level of concern from Govt, parents, community and Devt partners
- ❑ This was addressed in line with the vision to achieve a middle income economy and its demand for the creation of literate and skilled human power
- ❑ The Ministry of Education and RSEBs determined to improve early grade reading achievements with support from USAID, the Global Partnership for Education, DfID, IDA, Finland and Italy-through GEQIP funding
- ❑ The USAID funded READ (Reading Ethiopia's Achievement Developed) program constitutes the major effort towards improved reading and writing.

Early Grade Reading Interventions..(Cont'd)

Four Related Projects of READ
2012-17



Achievements under READ projects

- ❑ Developed reading and writing curriculum for **7 Ethiopian languages**
- ❑ Developed **304 high quality student textbooks & teacher guides** in 7 languages(Amharic, Tigrigna, Afan Oromo, Af Somali, Sidamuu Afo, Wolyitatto and Hadiyissa)
- ❑ Developed **supplementary reading materials and teacher training manuals** .

Achievements under READ projects

- ❑ Trained **master trainers & teacher trainers** to train 150,000+ teachers.
- ❑ Provided grant to conduct **in-service teacher training**.
- ❑ Developed **pre-service course modules**
- ❑ Trained **over 210 CTE lecturers** on pre-service courses
- ❑ **Built MOE and RSEB capacity** to scale and sustain improvements.

Developing high quality learning materials

□ “High quality” learning materials: the process

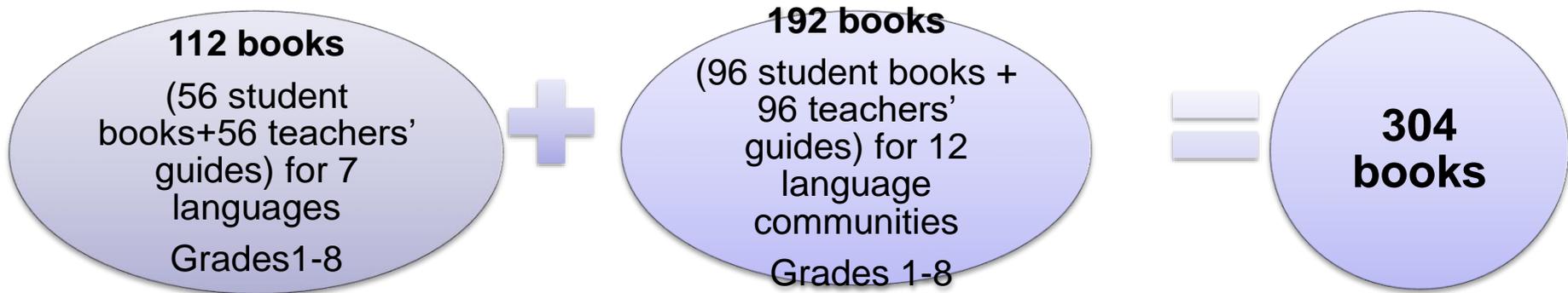
- Based on international research and best practices
- Continuous technical input from team of international and national experts
- Market capacity development (training of publishers, writers, designers, etc)
- Quality assurance procedures established and imbedded in the materials development process
 - Outside experts intensively review content at regular intervals during the process, don't wait until afterwards
 - Pilot testing of materials in schools with trained teachers
- Final materials validated by MOE and RSEBs,
- MOE is not the developer, quality controller and implementer at the same time

Developing high quality learning materials....(Cont'd)

□ “High quality” learning materials: the product

- There are adequate examples and illustrations.
 - Also interesting and relevant to students’ experience.
- Appropriate balance between depth and breadth in the treatment of lesson content.
- Level of difficulty of content is consistent with curriculum requirements and cognitive level of students.
- Bias in content avoided, like over-generalization and stereotyping.
 - Content and illustrations avoid discrimination on the grounds of gender, age, race, religion, culture, disability etc.
- The materials are well-organized, with appropriate use of fonts, space and margin for ease of reading.
- Activities have clear instructions.

Developing high quality learning materials



❑ Government factors that helped develop quality curricular materials:

- Govt focus and priority on improved reading and writing skills and its strong need to mix local and international expertise
- Government (MOE and RSEB) high commitment, will and strong partnership with USAID
- Careful selection and capacity building of participants
- Intensive reviews and revisions of products
- Validation and post-validation process for final materials
- Government determination and commitment

Developing high quality learning materials...(Cont'd)

- ❑ **Working in teams with a pool of experts:**
 - Regionally based Mother Tongue Curriculum Development (MTCD) teams were formed for each of the 7 mother tongues
 - Team composition was diverse containing :
 - Teachers
 - Story writers
 - RSEB MT curriculum experts
 - Quality assurance experts
 - Gender experts
 - Inclusive education experts,
 - Editors/language specialists

Developing high quality learning materials...(Cont'd)

❑ Working in teams with a pool of experts:

- Regionally based Mother Tongue Curriculum Development (MTCD) teams were formed for each of the 7 mother tongues
- Team composition was diverse containing :
 - Significant knowledge and skill sharing
 - High collaboration as teams were working in the same place

Developing high quality learning materials....(Cont'd)

❑ Careful selection and capacity building of participants:

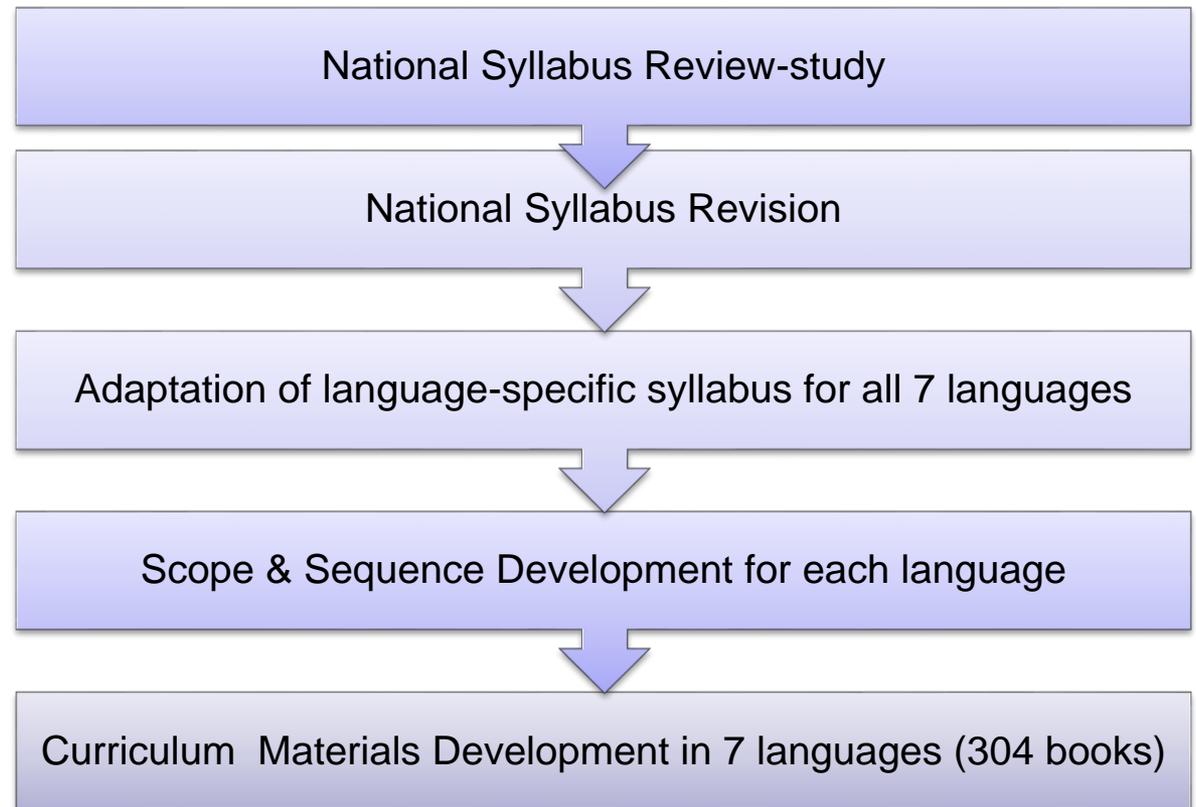
- Curriculum development team members were carefully selected with rigorous procedures-selection guidelines and standards:
 - Clear TOR on selection of experts prepared and consulted
 - Duties and responsibilities, appropriate experience and qualifications clearly outlined for each development team member.
 - Advertisements floated on best channels and places.
 - Selection was done on competitive basis.

Developing high quality learning materials....(Cont'd)

❑ Careful selection and capacity building of participants

- Team members were trained before every material development process:

*Capacity Building
Trainings
Integrated
throughout
Material
Development
workshops*



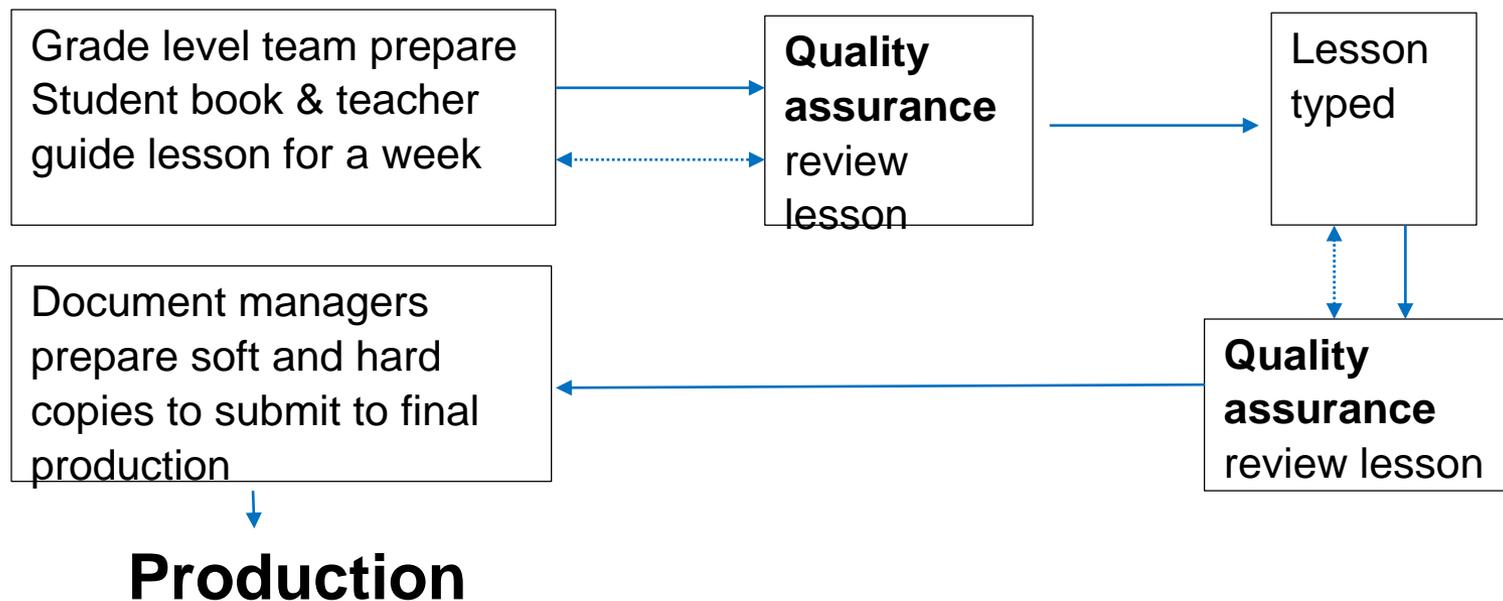
Developing high quality learning materials....(Cont'd)

- **Guidance, support and follow up from local and international reading experts (consultants):**
 - International and local consultants provided intensive trainings on:
 - Syllabus revision;
 - Contemporary approaches in teaching mother tongue- the five reading components;
 - Scope and sequence development;
 - Activity bank development;
 - Story/text writing;
 - Making books sensitive to gender and inclusion.
 - The consultants also closely followed up and supported curriculum development teams.

Developing high quality learning materials....(Cont'd)

□ Intensive reviews and revisions of products:

- Guidelines and standards were set at national level
- Quality assurance was an in-built process throughout the development of the curriculum materials



Developing high quality learning materials....(Cont'd)

□ Pilot testing:

- During development learning materials were pilot tested at sample schools while trained teachers used them in the classrooms.
- Feedback from pilot test was compiled into language specific recommendations and shared with curriculum development teams.
- Curriculum development teams made revisions based on recommendations from the pilot test of the materials.

Developing high quality learning materials....(Cont'd)

□ Validation and post validation processes:

- Developed learning materials go through validation by Regional Mother Tongue Taskforces (MTTFs).
- Taskforces use validation checklists to review learning materials and forward comments.
- Curriculum development teams use validation comments to improve the materials.
- Final learning materials are produced for print.

Developing high quality learning materials....(Cont'd)

- ❑ **Commitment and determination from the government:**
 - Development of primary curriculum materials is the mandate of Regional State Education Bureaus.
 - The Ethiopian Ministry of Education provides overall leadership, establishes the curriculum framework, and ensures quality control.
 - Successful curriculum materials development required:
 - Extensive coordination and collaboration
 - Acting with determination to produce quality materials (quality controls, quality assurance teams, MTTFs)
 - Availing experts and government officers for long periods of time
 - Demonstrated commitment closely monitoring the curriculum materials development process.

Getting learning materials in the hands of students and teachers

- Printing of new MT curriculum books is conducted in two phases: for grades 1-4 and grades 5-8
 - Grades 1-4 books reached students and teachers during the previous school year.
 - Grades 5-8 books are being printed for the next school year
- Printing of the books were made possible with funding from:
 - USAID – Initial round of printing to quickly get books to schools at 1:5 book to student ratio in time for teacher training
 - The Ethiopian government through the MOE and RSEBs & GEQIP pooled funding for large scale printing to increase book to student ratio
- Student to text book ratio will be 1:1 the next school year

Developing high quality supplementary reading materials (SRMs)

- Collaborating with partners to develop high quality SRMs: **Critical considerations**
 - In addition to the core curriculum materials, the MOE has worked closely with partners to develop high quality, relevant materials that are aligned with the newly revised MT curriculum
 - Key partners in development of SRMs:
 - Private publishers and local NGOs
 - Local writers, scholars, educators, & other stakeholders
 - USAID projects (READ CO, READ TA, and local NGOs)
 - Regional Education Bureaus

Developing high quality SRMs (Cont'd)

❑ Production of high quality SRMs:

- ❑ Develop market capacity (i.e., training writers, publishers, illustrators, designers) to develop quality SRMs
 - Support local writers, publishers, and NGOs to develop SRMs
 - Developed SRMs are reviewed by MOE experts who have been trained on approval criteria
 - MOE approves, with regional participation, SRMs meeting standards, to be printed and distributed to schools
 - USAID projects are currently printing and distributing SRMs for 2,000-3,000 selected schools
 - MOE has plans to print 38M SRMs for schools nationwide using GEQIP funds; SRM evaluators to be trained with READ support

Developing high quality SRMs (Cont'd)

- **MOE oversight of development of high quality SRMs:**
 - MOE does not develop SRMs themselves, but provides oversight and leadership by:
 - setting standards for quality SRMs,
 - establishing guidelines on the development of SRMs aligned with the MT curriculum,
 - identifying types of SRMs needed to supplement curriculum,
 - supporting training of publishers, writers, and other stakeholders,
 - determining criteria for approval of SRMs to be used in Ethiopian schools, and
 - conducting review of SRMs for official approval.

Developing high quality SRMs (Cont'd)

□ Production of high quality SRMs:

- SRMs are first developed by local writers, publishers, or other organizations
- Developed SRMs are reviewed by MOE experts who have been trained on approval criteria
- MOE determines which SRMs are approved which can then be printed and distributed to schools
- USAID projects are currently printing and distributing SRMs for 2,000-3,000 selected schools
- MOE has plans to print **25 million** SRMs using GEQIP funds for schools nationwide

Developing high quality supplementary reading materials (SRMs)

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 - MOE and Regional Education Bureaus

Template –Standard/Checklist for Grades 1-4 on Alignment with Scope and Sequence (27 points)

No	Standard	Yes	No	NA
1	Letters/sounds introduced/used by week as per the scope and sequence/ content guide			
2	The decodable book/ material contain previously learned letters, words, and sounds.			
3	Coverage of target skill/skills			
4	The decodable gradually increases complexity			
5	Clear structure (week based)			
6	Theme of the book appropriate for the week.			

Template –Standard CHECKLIST FOR GRADES 1-4 on Alignment with Scope and Sequence (27 points)

No	Standard	Yes	No	NA
7	Sight word appropriately used in the decodable.			
8	Difficulty level of the leveled book is right to the maturity level of the children in the grade.			
9	The leveled text goes from simple to complex.			
10	The leveled book/material addresses the selected themes as per the syllabus.			
11	Content is relevant for children in 1-4			
12	Content/story is interesting to read			

The Results

- The curriculum materials development experience has resulted in:
 - Production of curriculum materials with better quality
 - Reinforced local capacity to sustain and scale up curriculum development in other languages
 - Field monitoring on the implementation of revised MT curricula has shown positive changes
- The SRM development experience has resulted in:
 - Local capacity to develop high quality SRMs
 - Standards and guidelines to meet the needs of MOE
 - Greater variety of reading materials for students in all 7 languages

The Results

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Lessons

❑ The benefits of collaboration

- ❑ working very closely with MoE, RSEBs, and diverse experts led to
 - Production of better quality materials
 - Development of strong ownership
 - Building the capacity of actors such as publishers, writers, illustrators, etc
 - Local capacity for sustainability

The Challenges

- Lack of standards for some of the MT languages
- Lack of enough number of qualified experts for some languages
- Limited local book printing capacity
- Distribution of books to schools
- Introducing the new MT curriculum books to all teachers
- Ensuring quality SRMs from local market that are aligned with MT curriculum and address gaps/needs
- Creating demand to allow local publishing market to grow and sustain needs for developing SRMs

GOALS

- ❑ Ethiopia hopes to improve student performance in reading and writing with the additional inputs
- ❑ Improved student learning of math and sciences as result of improved reading and writing literacy



Curriculum Materials Development Workshop



In-Service Teacher Training Manual Development Workshop

Teachers' and students' Reflection on the new books



Lemlem Alemseged, a Grade 3 teacher at Selam Primary school of Wukro town in Tigray region.

“Now I am able to prepare lesson plans easily and teach my students in fun ways. My students are also learning to read easily and comfortably.”

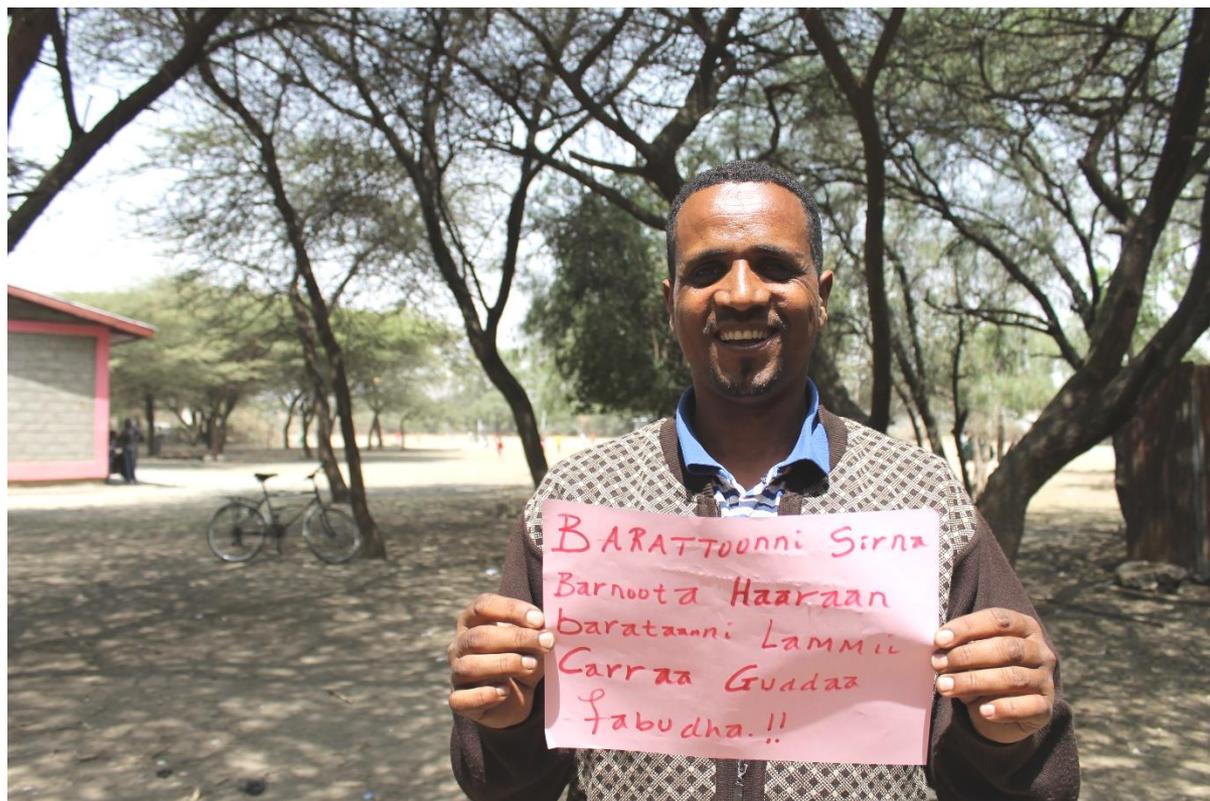
Teachers' and students' Reflection

“If teachers use the new books genuinely and properly, students will definitely learn to read faster and better.”



Bizunesh Argaw, a Grade 1 self-contained classroom teacher at Batu Number 3 Primary School in Batu Town, Oromia.

Teachers' and students' Reflection



“Students who learn with the new books should consider themselves lucky.”

Nego Asse, a Grade 3 self-contained classroom teacher from Oda Nega Primary School in the Oromia Region.

Teachers' and students' Reflection



Grade 3 students Abel Edil (left) and Zafu Hadush of Selam Primary school of Wukro city in Tigray region.

Listing things they liked about the new book, Abel Edil and Zafu Hadush spoke of interesting stories, blending and segmenting lessons, and new words they learned using the new book. They also added that illustrations are attractive and fonts bigger to read. Zafu remarked, “I liked the book at first sight!”

Teachers' and students' Reflection



Mahlet Kasahun, a Grade 4 student at Firewoyni Primary of Saesi Tsaed Emba woreda in Tigray region.

“There were stories and illustrations in the old book, but not as attractive and interesting as the ones in the new one.”

QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL!!!



Quality of Education for All!

Thank You!

Questions?