READING WITHIN REACH

Early Grade Reading Program Design and Implementation: Best Practices and Resources for Success

Webinar series presented by Reading within Reach (REACH) in collaboration with the Global Reading Network

June-July 2019

Welcome!

- This EGR professional development series was developed by the **Reading within Reach (REACH)** initiative, which is funded by **USAID** and implemented by **University Research Co., LLC (URC)**

- REACH supports the **Global Reading Network (GRN)** to develop and share research, innovations and resources related to EGR programming

- For more information about REACH and the GRN, visit www.globalreadingnetwork.net

Webinar presenters

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Webinar series goal, content and approach

- The purpose of this professional development webinar series is to **provide participants with evidence-based information, guidance and resources to support the design and implementation of effective EGR initiatives**

- Each session is focused on a key technical topic and includes a summary of **research, experiences and best practices to date**

- **Cross-cutting issues** such as gender equity, ICT and inclusive education are integrated throughout the different webinars

- Issues related to EGR program **monitoring, evaluation, expansion and sustainability** will be addressed as well

- **Opportunities for interaction and questions** will be provided throughout each webinar

Webinar session topics and dates

- **Webinar 1** – Early grade reading programming: From conception to scale (June 25) – *Materials now available on GRN website!*

- *TODAY!* **Webinar 2** – Resources for teaching and learning early grade reading (July 10)

- **Webinar 3** – Key EGR skills and strategies for effective instruction and assessment (July 17)

- **Webinar 4** – Language considerations in early grade reading programs (July 24)

- **Webinar 5** – Continuous professional development in early grade reading programs (July 30)

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Acknowledgments

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- It was prepared by Reading within REACH, which is implemented by University Research Co., LLC. (URC). Contract No. AID-OAA-M-14-00001, MOBIS#: GS-10F-0182T) for the Office of Education (E3/ED).

Webinar objectives

By the end of this webinar, participants will know and be able to apply learning about:

- Characteristics of effective resources for EGR instruction

- The materials development & use process, tools and best practices

- Making materials appropriate, inclusive and accessible for diverse learners
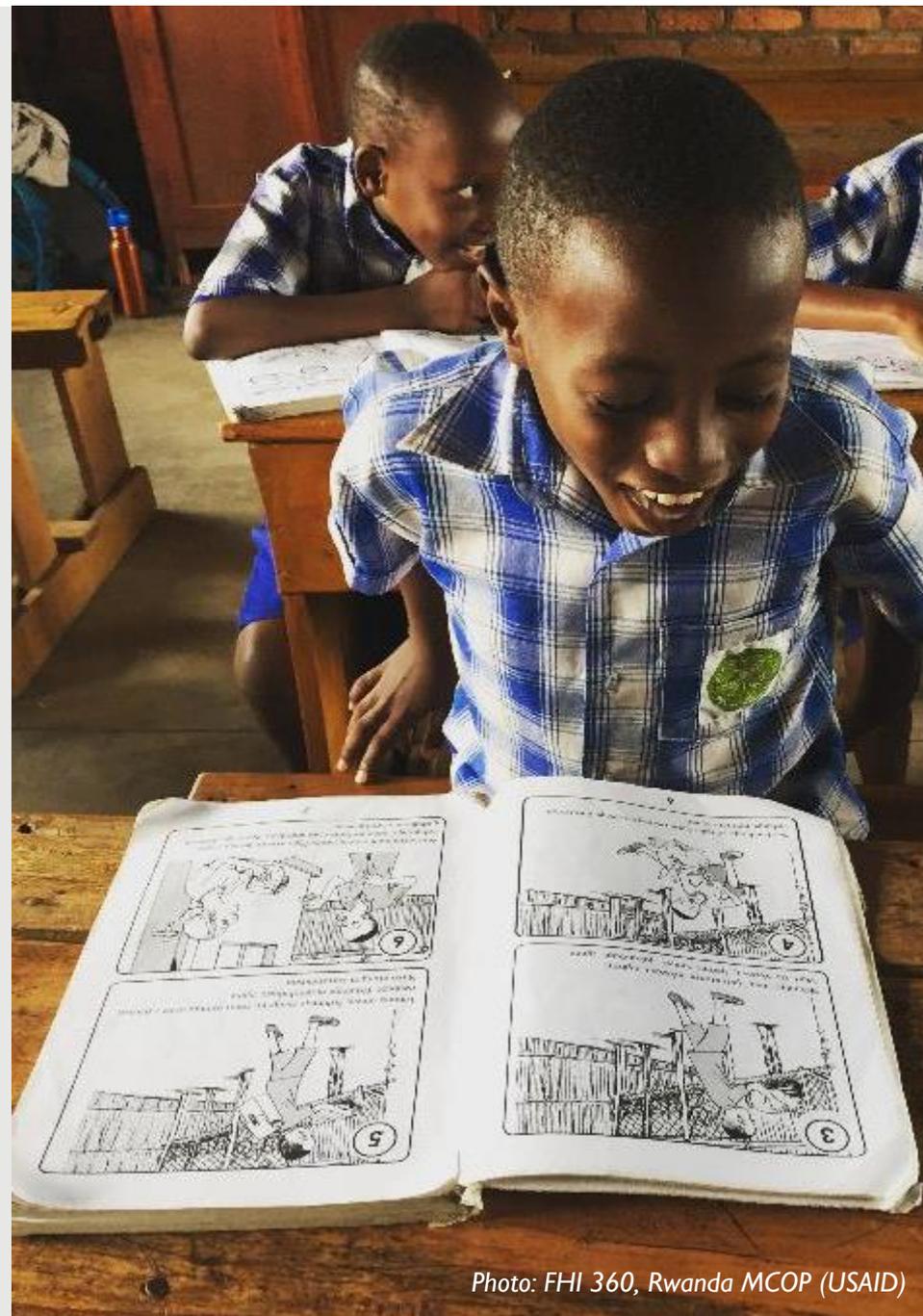
Photo: FHI 360, Rwanda MCOP (USAID)

To share your questions and comments

- We will provide time throughout the webinar to address your questions and comments

- Please submit them in the "Chat" window, which we will monitor throughout the presentation

ACTIVITY

Reflect and use the Zoom chat window to share your experiences and ideas

What materials have been developed for the EGR programs you have supported?

- Why did you decide to develop these particular resources?

- Share a challenge, success or other piece of wisdom about your materials development experience.

Why invest in early grade reading materials?

- Children need diverse and plentiful texts to learn to read

- In many low-income countries, books are too difficult, too few and not in languages children understand

- A recent survey of reading materials in 11 sub-Saharan African countries reviewed nearly 6,000 titles. The study found that only about 14% would be appropriate for a beginning reader (RTI, 2016)

Photo: Creative Associates, Nigeria Northern Education Initiative Plus (USAID)

Resources for effective EGR instruction: What is needed?

It depends on:

- Goals of the program/curriculum
- Materials already available
- Time and budget available
- Expansion and sustainability considerations

Teacher resources	Student resources	Classroom resources
• Teacher's guide • Assessment tools • Big books/story read aloud books	• Student reader/primer • Decodable text • Leveled text • Assistive technologies for children with disabilities	• Flashcards with letters, words, pictures • Manipulatives • Posters and other text for walls • Library or book box • Story cards • Technology

Section 1: Characteristics of Effective EGR Resources

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EGR resources: Teacher's guide

- Designed to support teachers' instruction by providing guidance on what skills to teach, how to teach them and when they should be taught

- Content based on curriculum/scope and sequence

- Can include guidance on student assessment and adapting instruction

- **Amount of text (e.g., "scripting") should be carefully considered. See Handout 1: Guidance on the content and design of teacher's guides for more detailed information on this topic**

EGR teacher's guides generally include:

- ✓ Lesson plans with objectives
- ✓ List of resources that teachers will need for a lesson
- ✓ Activity suggestions and descriptions for teaching specific reading skills
- ✓ Ideas for conducting formative assessment, and how to use it to inform and adapt instruction
- ✓ Ideas for extending a lesson or differentiating instruction
- ✓ Information on reading pedagogy, list of terms

EGR resources: Student reader (pupil book, primer)

- The purpose of the student reader is to provide opportunities for children to practice reading *every day*

- The content of a student reader should be aligned with the teacher's guide and should visibly address all sub-domains of reading instruction

- Student readers commonly include letters, words and decodable and/or leveled text

- Student readers should ideally be provided to every child; they should also be durable so students can take them home to practice reading

Photo: FHI 360, Rwanda MCOP (USAID)

Example student reader: Nigeria NEI Plus

Content aligns with lesson objectives on letter sounds and blending

Students can practice writing the letters they are learning

■	Y y	I i	
●	yin	yau	ra
♥	yin	yara	yawo
★	Yau ma ana yin yawon sallah.		

yin	yin	yin	
yau	yau	yau	
ra	ra	ra	

yin	yin	yin	
yau	yau	yau	
ra	ra	ra	

Mako Na 2   Darasi Na 3 da Na 4

Source: Creative Associates. Nigeria NEI Plus "Mu Karanta!" (Hausa) Grade 1, Term 2 Pupil Book (USAID). Available at https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00SZQX.pdf

Mako Na 3   Darasi Na 1 da Na 2

Amina na wasa da ulu.
Nana na karatun littafi.
Suna zaune a lambun makaranta.
Suna zaune cikin lumana.

Decodable text based on the week's lesson helps students develop fluency skills

EGR resources: Decodable text

- Text that a child can decode, or "sound out," independently based on the symbols and sounds they have learned

- Helps children to develop confidence and interest in reading early because only familiar letters and sounds are used in the text

- Provides children with an opportunity to practice gaining *automaticity* in their reading (Davidson, 2013)

- Can include a simple sentence or a short fictional story

- Can be included in a student reader or as separate books or other resources (e.g., laminated story cards)

Isa ya saki jiki. Yana jin daɗi cikin yara.

Source: School-to-School International, Niger Education and Community Strengthening Plus *(USAID/MCC)*

See Easterbrooks, L. (2019) for a case study on developing decodable and leveled text in Niger

Handout 2: Guidance on decodable and leveled text

EGR resources: Leveled text

- Provides beginning readers with opportunities to read independently (or with some support) to practice the skills they have learned, without becoming frustrated by text that is too difficult for them

- Leveled text is designed to match a student's reading ability—NOT a particular lesson

**Handout 2:
Guidance on decodable and leveled text**

**Handout 3:
Leveled text matrices**

Content of leveled text

✓ Text in leveled books increases in difficulty in terms of language, sentence structure and content

✓ Leveled text can be linked to subject content for the grade level to support content learning, as well as to provide children with an opportunity to build their vocabulary and practice fluency

✓ Leveled text usually comes in the form of short fictional stories or non-fiction passages, referred to as leveled books or leveled readers

Narrative and expository text

- The purpose of a **narrative text** is to tell a story

- An **expository text** is intended to explain or describe

- Both types of text can be fiction or non-fiction

- Early grade reading programs should include both types of text

- See Pinto, C. (2018) for a useful summary of best practices and design considerations when developing expository text

A GRN Interest Group on this topic meets regularly!
Contact Christabel Pinto (Christabel.Pinto@roomtoread.org)
or Emily Miksic (emiksic@fhi360.org) for more information

EGR Resources: Big books and read alouds

- Big books are large versions of children's books meant to be read aloud by a teacher

- Big books are usually used with beginning readers to help them learn concepts of print, build oral language skills, and teach vocabulary and early comprehension strategies

- Words and sentence structure in big books can be more complex than in decodable or leveled texts since children's oral language skills are stronger than their beginning reading skills

Photo: RTI International, Indonesia PRIORITAS (USAID)

In contexts where it is not feasible to produce big books, regular sized read aloud books can be used instead. Alternatively, a teacher's guide can include a story to be read aloud, with pictures provided in the student reader

EGR resources: Other materials

- Flashcards with letters (for letter/sound practice and for making words)

- Flash cards with sight words (to build automaticity in recognition)

- Flashcards with pictures and definitions (for building vocabulary)

- Flashcards with pictures (for phonological awareness and phonics activities)

Photo: EDC, Philippines Basa Pilipinas (USAID)

- Manipulatives, such as cardboard letters

- Posters and other displays of print (to build concepts of print and other skills)

EGR resources: Other materials

KARATU TARE ⑤

Baba yana zuwa aiki. Idan ya taso daga aiki yana zuwa gona. Baba yana noma kayan abinci. Yana noma don ya samu kuɗi. Yana noma don ya kula da iyalinsa. Yana noma domin ya biya kuɗin makarantar 'ya'yansa.

Above: Leveled text poster used in the Nigeria Reading and Numeracy Activity (RANA) project, FHI 360 (UNICEF/DFID)

Below: Children in Rwanda using flashcards (FHI 360, MCOP project, USAID)

EGR resources: Other materials

Tableau d'alphabet—Zarma

A a	B b	C c	D d	E e
aku	buuru	ce	damsi	eka
F f	G g	H h	I i	J j
fandu	gorŋo	haw	isa	jeeri
K k	L l	M m	N n	Ŋ ŋ
korboto	leemu	moolo	niine	ŋwaari
Ɲ ɲ	O o	P p	R r	S s
ɲa	orooti	porporo	roogo	sulma
T t	U u	W w	Y y	Z z
tita	ula	walhã	yu	zaama
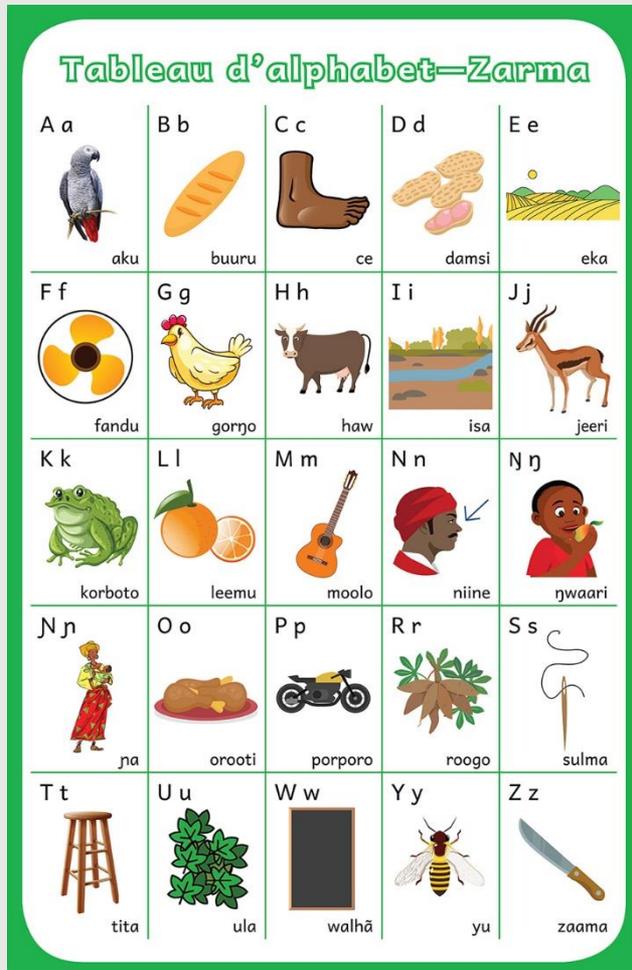
Alphabet chart:: STS International, Niger Education and Community Strengthening Plus Project (NECS+) (USAID/MCC)

Photo: Room to Read, Cambodia

**Handout 4:
Additional resource
examples**

"Beyond books": Technology as a resource

- **To provide children with access to reading materials**

  - E.g., text on tablets

- **To support teacher professional development**

  - Videos of exemplary instruction to model best practices (produced for EGR programs in Ethiopia, Liberia, Nigeria and Rwanda, among other countries)

Cost-effectiveness of technology to support EGR improvement

A randomized controlled trial (RCT) conducted in Kenya compared the cost-effectiveness of providing tablets for coaches, teachers or students, as well as providing no tablets. The study did not find significantly better student outcomes in treatment groups provided with tablets compared to the control group. Tablets for coaches were found to be more cost-effective than for teachers or students (Piper et al., 2016).

Technology resources in EGR programs

- **To support teacher instruction, including assessment**
  - Interactive Audio Instruction (IAI)
  - SMS (text messages) to teachers
  - Software (such Papaya, Stepping Stone, Tangerine Class)

- **To assist coaches in monitoring and supporting teachers**
  - Coaches record lesson observations onto a tablet, which can then suggest items for feedback; information then uploaded for analysis

- **To track and trace materials**
  - Hardware and software designed to reduce waste in the supply chain (see "track and trace" section of Resources and reference document for additional resources)

- **To identify and support children with learning impairments**
  - Apps (such as HearScreen, which helps identify learners with visual and auditory impairments)
  - Assistive technology

REACH is developing a resource titled "Analysis of Assistive Technologies to Support Learners with Disabilities" to provide information on various technologies and issues to consider

ACTIVITY

Reflect and use the Zoom chat window to share your experiences and ideas

- Reflecting on your work and the resources developed and used to support teaching and learning in early grade reading:

  - What is missing in your program and how would you address it?

  - What challenges did you experience in the development of those resources?

Section 2: Developing & Using Effective EGR Resources

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Developing effective and appropriate early grade reading resources: Steps to take

The following steps are designed to guide resource development and production. Some steps are sequential, while others may take place at the same time. Some may be repeated.

**Handout 5: EGR resources development and use:
Key activities, questions and considerations**

*Photo: RTI International, Nigeria Reading
and Access Research Activity (RARA) (USAID)*

Developing EGR resources: Steps to take

1. Engage all relevant stakeholders early and often

- Reading and language experts

- Ministry of education and other relevant gov't institutions

- Teachers

- Children

- Community members

2. Form a materials development team

- Your development team should be diverse and appropriate to the context in terms of technical skills, language, ethnicity, religions, age and role

Developing EGR resources: Steps to take

3. Conduct Research

- Analyze student assessment data

- Review reading curriculum and/or scope and sequence for the language (i.e., what is taught and when)

- Verify "language readiness" (e.g., has the language been standardized?)

- Become knowledgeable about language structure

- Learn more about local publishers and printers, and the education sector materials procurement process

- Examine existing materials to see what is available to use or adapt, and what needs to be created

- Assess and consider teacher knowledge and skills

Handout 6: Research to inform materials development

Developing EGR resources: Steps to take

4. Obtain stakeholder agreement on copyright & licensing

- Copyright and licensing affect future use and availability of materials

- **Open licensing** grants permission to reproduce, adapt, distribute and use material; the trend globally is toward open licensing

- Agreement on how materials will be copyrighted and licensed should be obtained *prior* to materials being developed

REACH is currently developing a guidance resource on copyright and open licensing for EGR stakeholders

> **Check out these GRN webinars and resources on this topic available on our website (see URLs in handout):**
> - Open Licensing, Education & Policy (April 2019)
> - Open Licensing Business Models for the Africa region (June 2019)
> - Open Licensing Business Models for Asia region – July 18, 2019
> - Guidance and Best Practices on Using Creative Commons Licensing for Early Grade Reading Program Resources (October 2017)

Developing EGR resources: Steps to take

5. Draft a plan for materials production

- Based on the background research conducted, develop or update a plan that includes:
  - A list of resources you will develop
  - The time/budget/expertise you will seek
  - A reasonable schedule for printing and procurement
  - Any technology you will use to assist in the process
  - A back-mapped calendar for delivery to schools

- Consider developing materials over time, in repeated cycles, providing foundational materials on a tight schedule, and supplementing them gradually

- Build in time to field test and revise materials

Handout 7:
Materials development process map

Developing EGR resources: Steps to take

6. Develop resources

- Identify number of lessons needed
- Design lesson plan structure
- Use scope and sequence to guide content
- Establish guidelines for lesson content
- Consider design elements
- Ensure alignment between student and teacher materials
- Identify topics and story ideas that are engaging to learners
- Develop content appropriate for context and learners, addressing inclusion issues

Writers at the Andika Rwanda story writing event. Photo: EDC, Rwanda Literacy, Language and Learning (L3) Initiative (USAID)

Check out the Enabling Writers and Bloom resources listed in the resources and references document for this webinar

Developing EGR resources: Steps to take

7. Conduct quality control

- Provide guidance, resources and training on quality aspects
- Monitor quality during development
  - Verify text difficulty, readability & complexity
  - Pay attention to design elements
  - Review for inclusion, including access and adaptations for students with disabilities
  - Provide structured planning resources for teachers to help them implement with fidelity (e.g., according to plan)

Photo: Creative Associates, Yemen Early Grade Reading Approach

**Handouts
8, 9, 10, 11, & 12**

Developing EGR resources: Steps to take

8. Field test materials

- Field testing prototypes provides information on

    – Level of text difficulty

    – Student interest & engagement

    – Ability of teachers to effectively use resources

    – Appropriateness within the specific context

    – Inclusivity of materials

    – Readability and design elements

Decodable books are field tested in Indonesia as part of the Enabling Writers Workshop Program implemented under REACH

**Handout 13:
Guidance on field testing**

Developing EGR resources: Steps to take

9. Print & distribute: From warehouse to school

- Make a plan for your printing, distribution and storage

- Guide schools on materials management and used

- Verify through monitoring

10. Monitor & evaluate use of resources

- Ask teachers, students and coaches for feedback

- Monitor how resources are used

- Evaluate materials' effectiveness in terms of their impact on various elements of instruction and performance

Handout 14: Planning for materials printing, distribution and storage

Also see "track and trace" presentations on GRN website

ACTIVITY

Reflect and use the Zoom chat window to share your experiences and ideas

Considering all of the recommended steps for materials development and monitoring of use:

- Which steps have you been most successful at accomplishing in your work?

- Where have you encountered the most difficulty?

- What advice do you have for others who are taking on EGR resource development?

Section 3: Developing Resources for All Learners

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Developing resources for multiple languages simultaneously, for "at scale" implementation: The case of Ghana *Learning*

- Developing materials in one language is tough work – developing materials in 11 languages is a Herculean feat!

- Requires:

  - careful planning

  - quality control processes and tools

  - clearly defined roles & responsibilities

  - attention to quality and detail

  - sufficient human and technological resources

For more information on the Ghana: Learning experience, see Boakye-Yiadom, F. et al. (2018)

Photo: FHI 360, Ghana Learning (USAID)

**Handout 15:
Developing materials in 11 languages – The case of Ghana**

Developing resources for multiple languages:
The case of Mozambique *Vamos Ler! (Let's Read!)*

- Developed materials: In 4 local languages for foundational reading instruction, and in Portuguese for second language instruction

- Used language-specific scope and sequence, and frequently used words with curriculum themes and leveling guides common across languages

- Led to further development of leveled materials for all languages for adult basic skills development

Creative Associates Int'l

For more information about the process and outcomes, see Blankenbeckler, C. (2019)

Best practices for developing materials content

- **Resources should be developed for the specific context** in which they will be used – appropriate adaptation from other countries, contexts or languages is possible in some cases

- **Content should be directly linked to the curriculum**, scope and sequence, student learning goals and assessment

- **Content should be developmentally appropriate** for learners' age, grade and/or skill level

- **Stories, topics and activities should be engaging** to young learners and relevant to their language and culture; for beginning readers, include familiar contexts and stories so that they can focus on decoding and other skills, and not comprehension of unfamiliar themes or places

Check out the panel "Developing effective and appropriate decodable and leveled books" on the GRN website for more information, case studies and best practices from EGR programs –
URL available in "Resources and references" handout.

Best practices for developing materials content

- **Be attentive to text difficulty, readability and complexity.** Children's ability to read depends on text difficulty, complexity and readability

- **Consider design elements,** as they affect the accessibility and readability of content. Font type, size, spacing and organization of text are critical. Consult the following resource for more information:
  - **Best Practices for Developing Supplementary Reading Materials** (blueTree Group/JBS International, 2014)

- **Content should include positive and equitable representations** (gender, ethnicity, religion, (dis)ability, and other characteristics)

- **Develop materials that meet the needs of children with various abilities**
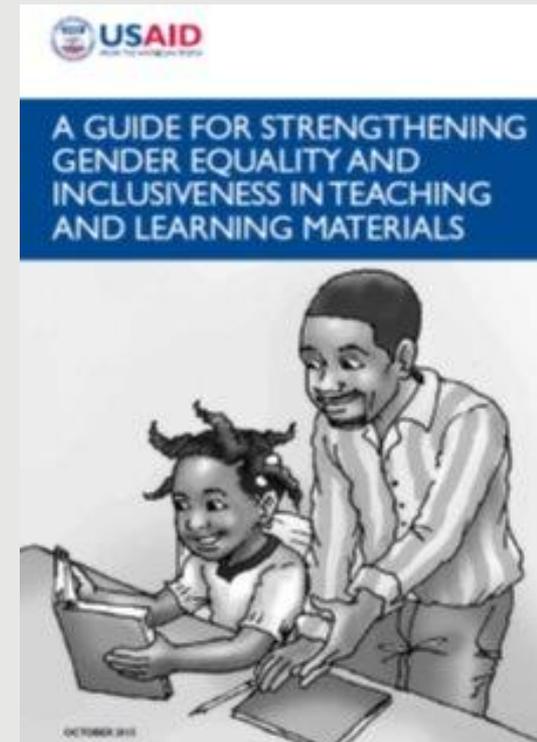
Handouts 16, 17 & 18: Materials development supporting resources

ACTIVITY

Return to Handout 5: Planning for materials development and use: Key activities, questions and considerations to guide planning and the materials quality control handouts

- **Reflect**

  – When thinking about your existing program materials, what are the gaps you now think you may need to address? How might you go about that process?

- **Chat**

  – Where are the gaps in your resource development & use process? How can you use suggestions from today's webinar to close those gaps?

Key takeaways

- ✓ Development of high-quality accessible materials is important
- ✓ It requires careful and detailed planning of a usually large-scale process
- ✓ A common understanding of characteristics of quality materials is required
- ✓ A systematic process for development is essential
- ✓ Engaging local actors in the development process results in materials that are contextually appropriate
- ✓ When children read books that are written specifically for them, they engage more often, more actively, and benefit more from improved reading habits

To contact the presenters:

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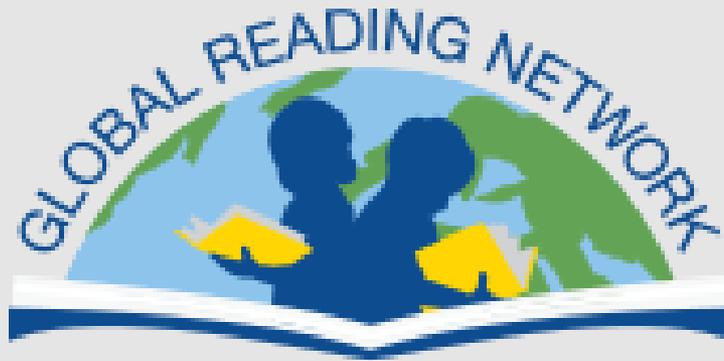
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Webinar presentation materials and handouts may be downloaded from the "Tools and Training" category at:

www.globalreadingnetwork.net

Upcoming webinars

EGR Program Design and Implementation Series

- **July 17** – Key EGR skills and strategies for effective instruction and assessment

- **July 24** – Language considerations in early grade reading programs

- **July 30** – Continuous professional development in early grade reading programs

https://www.globalreadingnetwork.net/news-and-events/calendar

Other webinars of interest

- **July 18 –** Open licensing of education materials (presented by REACH)

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