

Message from the READ Trust Fund Program Managers

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to present the first in what will be a quarterly newsletter series on the second Russia Education Aid for Development (READ 2) Trust Fund Program. These newsletters are meant to inform you and fellow leaders, practitioners, and researchers in the education and development communities about progress under the READ 2 Trust Fund Program and related activities. Through this newsletter, we also will be sharing with you the latest news and resources on student assessment from around the world. Likewise, we look forward to hearing from you about topics or resources that could be included in future newsletters. For your reference, you will be able to access all of the newsletters on the [READ website](#).

The eight countries selected to receive grants under the READ 2 Trust Fund Program are highlighted in this first newsletter. They span three World Bank regions and cover a variety of assessment-related issues, from capacity building for key stakeholders on the analysis and use of assessment data, to improving teacher training in classroom assessment, to enhancing high-stakes examination programs. Also highlighted in this newsletter is the READ 2 Reimbursable Advisory Services Program, which aims to develop Russia's institutional, expert, and research capacity to support improving the quality of basic education systems in low- and middle-income countries.

We look forward to an exciting READ 2 Trust Fund Program and to learning from and sharing with you in the process.

Warm regards,

Marguerite Clarke and Julia Liberman
READ 2 Trust Fund Program Managers

"Better assessment for better learning"

Feature Story



Why READ 2?

The first [Russia Education Aid for Development \(READ\) Trust Fund](#) Program, which ran from 2008 to 2015, had the goal of helping countries improve their capacity to support student learning through the design, implementation, and use of strong assessment systems. [A 2015 independent evaluation of the program](#) noted its positive impacts in many areas—global knowledge development in the area of student assessment, targeted support for eight countries’ assessment systems, and development of Russia’s capacity as a key donor and player in the area of education quality. At the same time, the evaluation concluded that much work remained to be done in the areas of learning outcomes and student assessment, both globally and at the country level. The READ 2 Trust Fund Program is a response to these identified needs. It builds on the successes and lessons learned from the first program while continuing to help countries improve their capacity to support student learning through the design, implementation, and use of strong assessment systems.

The READ 2 Trust Fund Program places particular emphasis on helping countries to:

- Strengthen the capacity of key stakeholders to use assessment data to improve teaching and learning;
- Strengthen or reform high-stakes examinations programs that make decisions about student promotion, graduation, or admission; and
- Strengthen or pilot programs for training and professional development of teachers in the use of classroom assessment practices.

Together, these emphases will allow the READ 2 Trust Fund to create a body of evidence and experience in areas of critical importance to developing countries and to the attainment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal for education. Countries need support to develop and implement assessments that will enable them to meet national, regional, and global monitoring requirements. They also need support in effectively analyzing and using data from all of their assessment activities to inform teaching and learning and to more effectively address equity and quality gaps in the classroom and beyond.

The READ 2 Trust Fund Program will run until 2019.

READ Country Spotlight

READ 2 Countries Selected

The READ 2 Trust Fund will help countries to improve their capacity to monitor and support student learning through the design, implementation, and use of strong assessment systems. Eight countries have been selected to receive grants under the READ 2 Trust Fund Program: Armenia, Cambodia, India, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, Tajikistan, and Vietnam.

Overall, 17 country teams submitted proposals for a READ 2 grant. Each proposal underwent rigorous review by a team of independent experts. Shortlisted proposals were discussed and approved by the READ Council, which is made up of leaders from the World Bank and the Russian Federation.

Four countries on the approved list—Armenia, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Vietnam—also received grants under READ 1. These countries will continue to build on their earlier work under READ 2.



Full-size interactive map is available [here](#).

READ 2 Country Projects and Supported Activities:



Armenia: Building on Results: Strengthening Educational Assessment Capacity to Support Improved Learning Outcomes

Sample Activities:

- Improving the Unified Entrance Examination through introduction of computer-based testing
- Finalizing and implementing Masters' program in educational assessment



Cambodia: Strengthen National Capacity and Feedback Mechanisms for Assessment

Sample Activity:

- Developing capacity and mechanisms to provide feedback on national assessment results and effectively utilize the data with stakeholders



India: Improving Assessment Systems and Enhancing the Relevance of Assessment Data for Improving Teaching and Learning

Sample Activities:

- Regional workshop on national educational assessments
- Creating performance-level descriptors for India's National Achievement Survey



Kyrgyz Republic: Strengthening Student Assessment for Improved Learning

Sample Activities:

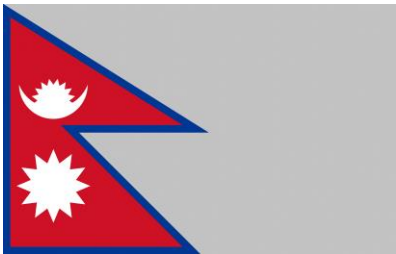
- Modernizing the school leaving examination
- Enhancing teacher classroom assessment practice



Mongolia: Support to Early Grade Reading and Mathematics Assessments

Sample Activities:

- Supporting analysis of data from the first round of early grade reading and mathematics assessments and dissemination of findings
- Developing plan to train teachers on use of formative assessments to track and improve early reading and mathematics outcomes



Nepal: Strengthening Assessment and Examination Systems

Sample Activities:

Capacity development for improved quality of assessment data and use of results to make policy decisions

- Supporting public examination reforms



Tajikistan: Contribution to Establishing a Classroom Assessment System

Sample Activities:

- Classroom assessment and grading system
- New University Entrance Examinations beneficiary survey



Vietnam: Promoting Capacity for Fair, Aligned, and Effective Assessment

Sample Activities:

- Mapping, review, and assessment of high school entrance and leaving examinations
- Development and dissemination of classroom assessment tools for revised national curriculum

READ RAS Spotlight

READ 2 RAS Program Launched at the READ Conference in Armenia



Session participants at The First Annual Conference on Technical Assistance to Support the READ Program (November 13-15, 2016) in Armenia. Photo: World Bank

The second Russia Education Aid for Development Reimbursable Advisory Services (READ 2 RAS - P154546) Program was officially launched during *The First Annual Conference on Technical Assistance to Support the READ Program*, which took place from November 13-15, 2016 in Armenia.

The conference was organized by the World Bank, the Russian Center for International Cooperation in Education Development (CICED), and the Armenian Ministry of Education and Science. The event provided an opportunity to introduce the READ 2 RAS and CICED Programs to key stakeholders and experts from European and Central Asian (ECA) countries and allowed them to discuss the programs' designs and implementation plans. During the conference, the READ 2 RAS Expert Council also approved the first phase of initiatives to be implemented under the READ 2 RAS program.

The aim of the READ 2 RAS Program is to develop Russia's institutional, expert, and research capacity in the area of education development aid and support the application of this capacity to improving the quality of basic education systems in low- and middle-income countries. Related work to be carried out by Russia's CICED over the next few years includes a cross-country study on education quality in several ECA countries.



Participants at The First Annual Conference on Technical Assistance to Support the READ Program (November 13-15, 2016) in Armenia. Photo: World Bank

The READ 2 RAS Program, part of a broader READ initiative that includes the READ 2 Trust Fund, is financed by the Russian Federation and overseen by the World Bank. The program will run until 2019.

If you are interested in finding out more about the READ 2 RAS Program, please contact Tigran Shmis, Task Team Lead (tshmis@worldbank.org) or Dmitry Chugunov, Research Analyst (dchugunov@worldbank.org).

Blogs



The Latest PISA Results: Seven Key Takeaways

By Marguerite Clarke

Results for the OECD's 2015 PISA are instructive, not only because of what they tell us about the science, mathematics, and reading knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds around the world, but also ... [read more](#)



Education SDG Indicator on Learning Outcomes Gets a Major Upgrade

By Luis Benveniste and Silvia Montoya

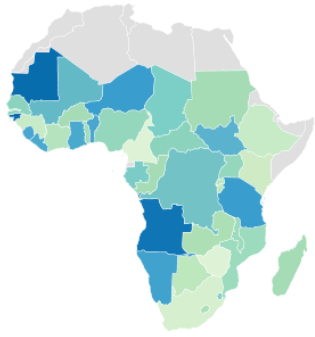
There has been an important shift in the global measurement of learning outcomes: the proportion of children and young people who achieve at least a minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics ... [read more](#)



Nine Takeaways from the 2015 Trends in International Math and Science Study Results

By Marguerite Clarke

TIMSS 2015 assessed more than 600,000 students in grades four, eight, and the final year of secondary school across 60 education systems ... [read more](#)



Education as a Development Priority at the Global, Regional, and Country Levels

By Svetlana Markova

Education is at the top of the world's development agenda, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the focus of the upcoming 2018 World Development Report of the World Bank ... [read more](#)

Read more **Education for Global Development Blogs** [here](#).

General News Roundup and Resources



Does Sharing Test Scores with Parents Improve Student Learning?

The World Bank's Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund has released a new policy note about an evaluation in Pakistan that measured the impact of providing families with information on their child's test scores and how these compared to the scores of children attending other schools ... [read more](#)



Champions for Learning: The Legacy of the Learning Metrics Task Force

Brookings and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics convened a high-level task force in 2012 to define a set of learning outcomes that could be used by all countries to monitor education quality and support learning. The Learning Metrics Task Force Final Report was published on November 16, 2016. World Bank and Russian experts contributed extensively to the task force's work ... [read more](#)



Databases on Student Assessment Systems

The first READ Trust Fund Program supported the development of the World Bank's [Systems Approach for Better Education Results \(SABER\)-Student Assessment website](#), which collects and publishes comparative ratings and data on assessment systems around the world. Website visitors can find information on the quality of classroom assessment, public examinations, and national and international assessment activity in each country as well as free publications, resources, and diagnostic tools. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics [Catalogue of Learning Assessments](#) provides descriptive, comparable information on public examinations and national and international assessments in countries across the world. A companion [Database of Learning Assessments](#) also provides standardized information on around 100 public examinations and national learning assessments.



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