



**University of Nairobi & International Rescue Committee
Partnership for Education in Emergencies**

Short Course Title:

Improving Education Quality through Early Grade Reading

Dates: June 7-10, 2011

Location: University of Nairobi, School of Education,
Kikuyu Campus



Course description:

Over the last two decades, education in emergencies has drawn attention from the international community, education professionals and various agencies working in crisis situations as a critical part of reconstructing disoriented lives of children. Education provides a means for rebuilding refugee children's lives through social interaction and gaining knowledge and skills for their future lives. This is reinforced by the international protocols on education that regard education as a fundamental right for all children. In this regard, in emergencies and crisis situations quality education is even more compelling for sustainability of world peace and stability.

The Early Grade Reading short course to be offered by the University of Nairobi, with technical assistance from the International Rescue Committee and financial support provided by the European Commission for Humanitarian Aid department, will expose participants working or associated with emergency or crisis situations and other educational professionals to basic competencies and skills that children in the lower classes of primary education should acquire to enable them to read and learn; and subsequently, pursue education successfully.

This course will introduce participants to a simple tool—the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)—that will diagnose the problems children have in reading quickly and proficiently. The course will also introduce to the participants how to administer the instrument, analyze the data and initiate the policy dialogue with relevant authorities and agencies.

Course objectives:

At the end of the course, the participants will be able to:

- i. Explain and define Early Grade Reading Assessment;
- ii. Identify components of EGRA toolkit;
- iii. Explain the role of EGRA in improving learning outcomes;
- iv. Explain how to administer EGRA and analyze the results;
- v. Explain the policy implications of EGRA on education at school and national level

Course agenda:

- I. **The Importance of Reading:** This will answer the question “Why reading?” and provide the understanding of its importance and emphasizing “Reading” as the entry skill or pre-requisite for all future learning. Use recent research evidence indicating that learning to read both *early* and at a sufficient *rate* are essential for learning to read well.
- II. **Assessing Early Grade Reading--Components of Reading and Measurement:** This topic will unpack the EGRA toolkit, what it assesses, measures and how much. Basically, it will explain the 15-minute test administered orally to pupils in the early grades of primary school such as EGRA Components of Reading and Measurement that form the foundation of literacy skills, including pre-reading skills like phonemic awareness and listening comprehension, which have been shown to predict later reading abilities in any context.

- III. **Relevance of EGRA for Education Quality:** the world is going towards education quality; using EGRA results to understand the implications of EGRA for instruction, meeting EFA literacy, quality and achievement of educational goals;
- IV. **EGRA Development at the Language Level:** all over the world, languages are different and each language has some unique aspects such as sound system (phonology), written system (orthography) and meaning system (morphology). Despite these differences, children learn to read in similar ways. The EGRA instrument for use in a particular country generally involves some adaptation, including translation into the language of instruction.
- V. **Piloting, Data Collection and Analysis:** Piloting helps to gather relevant data on the EGRA instrument, adaptability within the country context and eventual school-based focused survey (baseline) on pupil learning outcomes. Providing innovative and cost-effective ways to gather and analyze education data. Collecting data on actionable variables that impact student success in-school.
- VI. **Policy Dialogue:** Using EGRA results to inform MOE discussions regarding how to ensure education quality in Kenya as well as early reconstruction to improve and increase quality education opportunities and policies affecting education in emergencies.
- VII. **Potential challenges for EGRA application in “crisis” contexts.** Some of the key issues to be highlighted include: Involvement of national governments in the quality of refugee children; low teaching skill pool among the existing teachers requiring training and support; students to be given the opportunity to learn in their diverse home languages and to also learn the host languages and the nature of local communities in put and concerns.

Dates: The short course will be held from 7-10 June, 2011; the daily schedule for the 4 days will be 9:00 – 3:30 pm.

Short course facilitators: The lead facilitator is Isaac C. Cherotich, Education Specialist with over 35 years experience in public and private sectors. Mr. Cherotich has served as the Project Manager for the Pilot Early Grade Reading Assessment in Malindi District (2007), Early Grade Reading Pre- and Post-Evaluation Assessment (2008), Early Grade Mathematics Assessment in Malindi district all supported by USAID and an Early Grade Reading Assessment Survey in Nyanza and central Provinces (May-December 2009).

Staff members from the International Rescue Committee will also co-facilitate specific sessions in order to share organizational learning from the application of EGRA in Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Fee: \$300 (UN, INGO, Donors); \$150 (Government, national/local NGOs, community organizations, academic institutions); *Fee includes short course, materials, daily tea/coffee breaks and lunch for duration of course.*

Venue: University of Nairobi, School of Education, Kikuyu Campus. Spaces are limited.

To request an application for the short course, please contact the following focal points:

Mary Mendenhall, Ed.D.
International Rescue Committee
mary.mendenhall@rescue.org

Loise Gichuhi, Ph.D.
University of Nairobi
lopawer@yahoo.com