THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

EARLY READING:

IGNITING EDUCATION FOR ALL

Washington, D.C.

Wednesday, September 8, 2010

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. WINTHROP: Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you so much for joining us. Since I didn't pause -- we have a lot of teachers in the audience -- good afternoon. Thank you so much for joining us.

For the few of you who are standing in the back and don't have a seat -- I actually don't see any seats, but there are a few left. Is that a seat right there? Is that empty? No. No. Okay, it's taken. But for folks who don't actually want to stand for the next two hours, this is projected in the next room, so you can see it. The first hour is really going to be presentations, and then we'll open it up for Q&A. And there are a few chairs in there, so if people get tired of standing, you are free to watch from the side and then sort of come back for the Q&A and ask your questions -- or stand. I see some people saying no, I'm going to stand for the whole time, which is welcome, too.

So, thanks, everyone, for sharing your afternoon with us. Welcome to International Literacy Day, the 44th time this has been celebrated around the world since UNESCO established this in the mid-'60s. There are lots of topics that we could be talking about. I'm sure many of you are familiar with the really appalling statistics of the large numbers of young adults and adults who are illiterate -- about 760 million around the world -- and most of them, the vast majority, are women. That would have been one topic.

We're not going to talk about that. There are many others. The topic we're going to focus on today is really around an emerging reading crisis that's happening in the developing world and focus on, you know, why is it that in so many countries, so many poor countries around the world school children are not learning how to read and not acquiring basic literacy skills. And this is something that is I think more and more people are recognizing and getting alarmed about and is certainly something that is quite alarming, especially if you think of it, you know, sort of on an individual, personal level, student level, a parent level.

How many of you guys are parents? I'm a parent. Raise your hand. Wow. A lot -- most -- a vast number. Imagine, you know, if you have school-age children, I'm sure very recently you all went through sort of the exercises of buying school supplies, back to school, sending your kids off to school. This is an exercise that happens around the world in many countries. Parents are sending their kids back to school and also investing heavily in sending their children to school. In Haiti, on average parents spend half of their annual income on sending their kids to school, which is huge. It's one of the highest in the world. But Haiti is not alone. There are many countries in the world where parents are investing extreme amounts of money in sending their kids to school.

So imagine if you have a first-grader. You send your child to first grade. Perhaps he or she has a great time, is learning to interact with

other kids, et cetera. By the end of the first grade you realize they're not really able to read, they're not really able to learn letters. Okay, well, it takes a while to read. Maybe say okay, great, go off to second grade the next year. A whole other year passes. It's been two years your child has been in school. The end of second grade they still can't read and you think, well, ooh, maybe this is -- the quality of the school isn't great, but, you know, it takes a while, so third grade. You send your child to third grade. At the end of third grade, they are still not able to read basic phrases or even perhaps recognize letters. This, unfortunately, is something that is happening to far too many kids in the developing world.

And even, tragically, I think, appallingly, you have kids who spend four, five, and even six years -- six years -- in school and leave school not being able to recognize basic letters or read basic phrases. And this isn't a huge percentage, but it's incredibly disturbing. And most of those kids actually -- and we'll hear a lot more from Amber, who's going to talk about sort of the scope and scale of this real reading crisis -- are kids who are educated in languages that they're not mother tongues or whose teachers teach in languages that are not their mother tongue. And this, as you can imagine, would be horribly disturbing for parents who invest heavily in their children's education, because they want a better future not only for their child, but for themselves and their community.

Certainly it'd be terrible if you're the student and you're the

child, but if you take this phenomenon collectively so community after community, family after family, and look at it sort of at a country level, this reading crisis really spells a big problem for improving the quality of life for the world's poorest communities. We all know in traditional international development, research says that if you increase a population's years in school, you're going to lead to all sorts of better things, such as improved economic outcomes, improved health outcomes, et cetera, and that's traditionally what people have thought. And, of course, that relies on the assumption that for every year of school you pass through you're learning something, you're acquiring some basic skills.

And we now know it's not rocket science, although there have been a number of very skilled economists who have spent quite bit of time investigating this, but, actually, improving people's quality of life, improving economic development, improving health outcomes has much less to do with the number of years of school you spend, but actually the skills and knowledge you develop while there. I mean, it's not a surprising insight. You can imagine if you spend four years in school, five years in school and you learn to -- you acquire basic literacy skills, numeracy skills, critical thinking, problem-solving skills. You are, at the end of the day, eventually going to be a lot more relevant and useful for the labor market if you spend -- versus spending six, seven years in school and not acquiring any of those skills. So, the quality of learning is really important for a

whole range of issues to do for personal development as well as international development and improving sort of our global community.

Unfortunately, this focus on both the quality of learning and the quality of education is not something that the global community is heavily emphasizing today. I would really argue that this attention to learning and quality has been lost. I wouldn't say it's missing from sort of global policy on education, largely because in 1990 the world's education ministers as well as many international development partners and international donors got together and came up with six education-for-all goals, and in those goals, education quality was an important part. However, in the last 10 years, two of those of those goals have been taken up by the Millennium Development Goals. So at the new millennium, the United Nations, along with the global community, picked sort of eight things they thought that the whole world should focus on to really try to improve things for poor countries especially, and two of those goals are focused on education.

But really what they're focused on is not necessarily quality; they're focused on ensuring students around the world, both boys and girls, enroll in school and stay in school. And ultimately what's happened is there's been a whole range of policies and support and financing around getting kids into school and helping them stay in school, and without the accompanying sort of policies and supports that are needed to ensure that

while they're there, they're learning something, and so to me this is actually an urgent issue that we all need to sort of begin to focus on.

There will be, in a couple weeks' time -- I'm not sure how many of you are tracking this, but in a couple weeks' time in New York City, there will be the heads of state of all the countries in the world virtually assembling at the United Nations for the Millennium Development Summit to track how far along are we in the world against the Millennium Development Goals. And we certainly are going to see a number of countries get up there and say I'm doing great on the education goal; I've got a lot of kids enrolled in school, which is, of course, necessary and important. But what if they actually had to say how many of those kids are reading by the time they graduate or by third grade or reading at grade level even? I think we would have a really different picture internationally of how sort of education is doing around the world.

And I think ultimately, in closing, what I would argue is that I don't think the intent of the Millennium Development Goals, which have really shaped a lot of our international development work, was ever to just focus on education as pure enrollment. I don't think that was what anyone wanted to happen. I think the intent always really was to put education -- that education is fundamental to international -- or to development, to economic development, to human development. It's an important engine amongst several others to improve people's well-being. And I think the

intent always was to ensure that we have equitable learning, that all kids are able to learn equally. I think the people who really put the MDGs together were worried that there were -- you know, there's always going to be pockets of educational excellence in developing countries and poor countries of really good quality learning, and by and large it's the elites of those countries who are going to access those pockets of educational excellence. And I think the real aspiration of the Millennium Development Goals was to ensure that that educational excellence is spread much more broadly.

And so I think really it's time to begin to sort of reclaim that initial intent, and I want to actually quote some of my colleagues, Jacques van der Gaag and Anda Adams here at the Center for Universal Education at Brookings. They just completed a piece, which you may have picked up. It's called "Where's the Learning" -- a draft piece, actually, which I know they're interested in your comments in the next couple of weeks if you have any. But they've sort of reviewed the major global actors and said their people are not doing much to really move this learning agenda forward. And, ultimately, they say, "We are falling short by order of magnitude of what is necessary to ensure that children learn. It is time for a paradigm shift in education reform that moves from input-focused to outcome-driven policies."

So, that is what we're here to talk about today, and I'm

Rebecca Winthrop, the director here of the Center for Universal Education, and it's my pleasure to introduce to you on behalf of both myself and my colleagues here at the center but, as well, the International Reading Association who are co-convening this event with the people we have assembled to talk about this issue in much greater depth from different perspectives with you.

Amber Gove is a senior research specialist with RTI International, is going to spend several minutes talking through with you some very recent data -- the report is launched today actually -- on what is sort of the scope and scale of the reading crisis. They have some very interesting findings -- shocking findings I would say. And then what we'll do is we'll have a series of comments from three very distinguished panelists about well, what are we going to do about that? Okay, if this is the problem, what should be done?

We also have David Barth, who is the director of the Office of Education for USAID.

We have Patricia Edwards, who is the president of the International Reading Association. Also a professor at Michigan State, right?

And we also have Adolph Cameron, who is head of the Jamaica Teachers Union as well as a much larger sort of union, a Caribbean union of various teachers unions, giving sort of a teacher

perspective.

So, that's the plan. And then, of course, the bulk of time open to questions and answers and discussion with all of you and your insights.

So, Amber, I think we will turn it over to you.

MS. GOVE: Thank you, Rebecca.

First and foremost, thanks to the Center for Universal Education and the International Reading Association for convening this meeting today. Thanks to all of you for being here. And to the many contributors and reviewers of this report, you'll be receiving it following the program. We wanted to keep you focused, and so you'll be able to receive that.

I struggled with how we should use the limited we have today. Should we talk about the importance of reading? Of how children learn to read? About that spark that goes off in a child's mind when they finally figure out that the letters that they're seeing on the page and the words they're seeing on a page are linked to the sounds and they words they've heard for five, six, seven, eight years? Or should we reflect on why precisely the international community, with few exceptions, has really been focusing on buildings and benches rather than instruction and teaching and learning over the last several decades?

The report that you're going to receive touches on some of

these deeper questions, but so that I don't do a disservice to them, I'm actually going to be summarizing the recommendations of the report. I'm going to be focusing a little bit on some of the results, which you'll see more deeply in the report and provide a few key examples of how instruction can be improved in some of these countries. So, you have a little bit of bad news, a little bit of hope, and some recommendations going forward.

Before I start, I see many familiar faces, people I've been working with over the last few years on this topic, but I want to make sure we're clear on a couple things. First of all, early -- while we should be talking about early outcomes, zero to eight, the early we mean here is actually probably the early grades, so grades one, two and three. We know all those foundation learnings really happen at birth or even before -- those of you who've ever read *In Utero* -- but we are talking here principally about the early grades of primary school where the focus of this report is on.

Secondly, we are focused on reading. I think it's important to emphasize that, not -- numeracy and not life skills not -- we are calling attention to focusing on reading really as a proxy for quality generally, as Rebecca pointed out. So, I wanted to make sure that everyone's clear on the reading piece. And education for all is, as she discussed, is really under that umbrella term of the Millennium Development Goals and other

goals going forward.

Okay, so clear messages here. Access is not enough.

You may be shocked to realize but we are doing quite well on the enrollment goals, as Rebecca pointed out. The figure on the left will show that. Over the last 10 years, we've closed that gap pretty much between high income and low income countries. Where we're still lagging is on those primary completion indicators.

It's been 20 years since Jomtien, 10 since Dakar, and there's been progress. But it's been slow. On the completion side, you'll see it'll probably take us about another 30 years to get anywhere near having completion levels in low-income countries that will approach the levels in the high-income countries. And there are 72 million children still out of school. It's the global campaign we'll point out to you.

But what are they learning? Extrapolating from the TIMSS, PISA, Pearls -- all those big international assessment results -- the average child in these low income countries is performing at about the fifth percentile of the wealthy countries, so worse than 95 percent of the other children in the rich countries. And participating in these international assessments, again and again, is telling these countries that they're at the bottom of the heap. The results I'm going to show you today aren't much of an improvement on those results, but it's at least highlighting and indicating areas for improvement.

Second message: Children are not learning to read. So, these are the shocking indicators. I'll give you a couple seconds to actually absorb them. This does not mean that the children in the tiny little bar that would be on the other half of this percentage mark actually can read. These are simply the percentage of children at the end of grade two, in their countries, who are unable to read a single word in a simple paragraph. These children are tested in their official language of instruction, which is a key point. So, in Mali, for example, the French children in school -- French-speaking children, presumably -- were tested in schools that were teaching in French.

One of the prime suspects I would say underlying that completion gap that I pointed out on the previous graph is this reading deficit. If students can't read, it's tough to master mathematics. Reading is fundamental to history. Reading is fundamental to pretty much everything else. Students who don't master reading within those first couple grades are likely to struggle, give up, and drop out; and we know that from plenty of school quality study where -- household-based studies where students are saying we dropped out because I didn't actually learn much.

So, a couple years ago, nearly four years ago, I was calculating, an international panel of reading specialists, experts in test development, got together and they said well, we need a simple

assessment that will complement some of these big international assessments to figure out how children are learning to read and, most importantly, to pinpoint the areas for instructional improvement. We're not talking about assessment for assessment's sake just to point out these depressing numbers; we're talking about assessment for working to highlight the areas where we can improve teaching and learning in the classroom. And that's a really important message I wanted to get across. And these are some of the basic results. The complete reports underlying this are available on a website, and you'll have that also in the report.

But these numbers are shocking. I mean, I was shocked. How can it be that 60, 70, 80, sometimes 90 percent of students have spent 2 years in school without actually being able to read a single word of text?

The hopeful side of this message -- what happens when you do some of these basic assessments? Well, this is the Gambia, and this was our very first pilot assessment in English in 2007. And I went to the Gambia and worked with the permanent secretary and we were actually in schools testing children, and he was having children read out loud to him. And he started with the third-graders and he said bring me a third-grader, and we sat down with the assessment and the timer -- which we have here -- asking the children to read out loud to him, and, unfortunately, the third-grader couldn't actually read.

So then he said, well, bring me a fourth-grader. I said it's not part of the assessment. We're assessing first and second and third. No, no, no, bring me a fourth-grader. So, I brought him a fourth-grader, and that child couldn't read.

And then he said, well, how about a fifth-grader? We'll go for that. And that child couldn't read.

And then a sixth -- and the sixth-grader could finally read just a little something. And he said I knew the quality was bad, but I didn't know what that actually meant; I didn't know it was this bad. And it wasn't until he was actually in classrooms having children read out loud to him that we had this very clear image in his head of what needed to be done.

And so what did they do? They contacted reading specialists in the UK. What they did is they contacted reading specialists in the UK, and they said we need to figure out how to improve instruction in reading. So, they brought reading materials; they brought reading specialists; and they trained all 3,000 of their primary school teachers. They have 400 schools in the Gambia, so they could train all their teachers within a year. And these are the results of their improvements. Again, this is the percentage of children who can't read a single word. But you see the third-grade results dropping from nearly half of children not being able to read a single word, dropping by 20 percentage points, so almost 40 percent. It's a huge gain in two years, and this is simply

because they participated in an assessment where high-level policymakers were in schools testing kids, hearing children read out loud, and becoming cognizant for the first time of what really those quality measures meant to them.

Another example, Liberia. So, Liberia approached the World Bank and USAID a few years ago and said we think we have reading problems, so we'd like some help fixing them. And so the experiment came about then of let's try and figure out a randomized trial of what really works so we can finally have this really concrete evidence to point out to people of how to improve instruction, and they asked for some help and we developed a program that had a couple of different levels of treatment. The light treatment would be simply communicating results to parents, assessing on a regular basis, but communicating those test results. The full treatment was actually a deep instructional package, full scope and sequence for instruction with associated materials, so if teachers were asked to teach this particular concept in reading, it would point to the specific book where they should go to for that resource.

These are the final results. Just came out this week, so it's not actually a part of your report. But the learning gains over the last couple of years have been -- have really resulted in a significant gain over the control group. So, you see for average reading levels, 50 percentile score, we're looking at about 12 words per minute for those children in

both control and light treatment schools compared to 41 words per minute. Now, this is not yet the green line or the U.S. national norms using the Hasbrouck and Tindal results from Diples. These are not at U.S. national scores, but it's a significant improvement comparing the treatment versus the control groups.

The recipe here I think is pretty clear. It's sequence instruction, following an order with plenty of materials. These aren't really revolutionary ideas. But it also involves lots of support for teachers with regular coaching and visits to schools, and those pieces all put together I think we're finding from a lot of these experiments are great directions to go in -- very content-specific-driven support for teachers.

And these are just two examples. There are other examples that are highlighted in the report from other folks' literacy booths by Save the Children. There's been another program that's working really holistically with communities. Pratham's program, Read India, has been another effort that's really improved reading, getting children reading within several months, not several years. There are a number of programs that are out there, and we highlight a few of these in the report where we were able to document very serious evidence about improving reading instruction within a short amount of time.

So, the recommendations. First, we should use assessment, but we should use it judiciously. Communicating those

results and getting people to use those results to make improvements. We're not assessing for assessment's sake, please. We're assessing to mobilize and drive the agenda forward. So, it's working with teachers unions; it's working with ministry officials; it's working with parents to understand what the results of the assessments mean and how to make improvements.

The first picture is an example of an assessment, actually in Egypt working with the team there.

What you'll see in the second picture is actually a poster developed by Awezo for parents of what improvements parents can actually make. So, talking to their school, asking about learning, figuring out if their children are learning to read, providing special places to read in the home or a particular amount of time that children should be reading every day.

Finally, the third one is an example of mobilization of parents within a school for a community exercise to promote reading.

All of these things are relatively easy to accomplish. You'll say, wow, this seems really easy, it's just this 1-2-3, and it's all -- well, health does this all the time. In education we've lacked these clear, measurable, actionable indicators. We keep saying to everyone education is just this complicated thing and there's no way we can capture it with a measure. No measure is going to be perfect, but this is something I think

to mobilize both the global community and the local community to drive the quality agenda forward. Reading might just be that thing we've been missing to push education forward and really measure quality and drive that.

Two -- there are only five -- teach teachers how to teach reading; support teachers in how to teach reading. Many teachers, volunteer teachers because they've had to fill the gap, haven't had that formal support. Teaching reading is both an art and a science, but we know enough about the science of reading in many countries around the world that we can take a lot of those lessons to other countries and not start from scratch. We know that in alphabetic languages, children need to know when they see a certain letter it will make a certain sound. Now, fortunately, in every other language but English, that's a rather predictable association. It's not necessarily the case in English, which will lead me to my next point.

For those of you who've seen this example before -- I do apologize, this is Barbara Trudel's example, and it's from Cameroon, but there's a case of the teacher who's been teaching for 20 years in English in Cameroon, and this teacher was finally provided instructional support as a part of a pilot in how to teach another tongue, teach in the children's mother tongue. And every time he got to this lesson about farm animals in his English instruction, he would say to the children what is this, children?

And the children would say this is a chicken. Not very exciting. But he started this mother tongue program, and he was able to then say to the children, children, what is this? And the children said, oh, that's a spotted guinea fowl, and I have three spotted guinea fowls and my spotted guinea fowl lays eggs in the morning, at least three. And another child said, and our dog chases after the spotted guinea fowl or the chicken or the red hen or the whatever it might be, and suddenly this was a rich vocabulary discussion. He thought the children only knew how to say that as a chicken. But, in fact, once you actually worked in the language where the children understood what they were saying instead of reciting back "this is a chicken," suddenly the vocabulary was so much richer and the discussion was just amazing.

And he said he had never realized, even as a teacher, of how important that was until you understand that children bring thousands upon thousands of vocabulary words to the table with them. I mean, imagine, you finally figured out that "c" makes a "k" sound sometimes, because it also makes soft "s," as in "scent"; and then "ah" -- by the way, there's 13 ways to say the letter "a" in English -- and then "t," "t." He said "k"-"a"-"t," okay, cat. What is that? When you have both the vocabulary -- we already have all that vocabulary to build on and you link the decoding skills? That's so much easier. That's half the learning you have to do.

We're doing a disservice to millions of children in these

countries by not teaching them in a language that they understand. And we're making it tougher on ourselves.

Okay, two more. This seems just really to obvious to have to write it down, but we need to give children books, lots of them. Access to print is a critical component. Environmental print books in the hands of children: reading books, textbooks, support books. Children who have books have an easier time of learning to read.

The results from the Gambia were that 90 percent of the readers -- so those reading actually fluently and understanding what they read -- they had books in the home. The children who could not read, only 20 percent of those children have books in the home. So, it's a necessary but not sufficient condition.

Supplementary readers, readers in local languages. There are a lot of projects, the (inaudible) Library Project, Room to Read, and others are doing lots of good work in this area, but supporting publishing industries, supporting the production of readers, having teachers write stories, writers' workshops, there are number of activities we can do in this area.

Lastly, maximizing instructional time. Teacher strikes, absences, student absences, delays of the school day, I could go on and on. There are a number of reasons why we are not maximizing the instructional time in classrooms. It's a very complex problem, but it's

probably the easiest one to fix. We need teachers and students in school for at least the mandated amount of instructional time that administrators are asking their teachers to be there for. Again, I'm not sure why I have to write this one down.

So, given the instructional focus of this, I did provide a little pneumonic exercise for you. Test. Communicate and mobilize those results, please. Teach teachers to teach reading. Tongue, so focusing on the mother tongue. Text, putting books in the hands of children. And lastly, time.

Again, you'll have the report when you leave the session. I look forward to your questions and comments. Thank you.

MS. WINTHROP: Thank you very, very much, Amber, for that presentation.

Just the few of you at the back, there's now four or five seats here. Don't be shy. Come on down and come on -- Rod, Jennifer, Mary. I see all of you -- Jacques. Yes. I feel like a teacher already.

So, thanks so much.

What we're going to do now is really have a discussion about sort of what we've heard and what Amber has put out there. And, actually, David, I'd like to start with you. You know, you're head of the Education Office for USAID. USAID puts lots and lots of money into education projects and programs in developing countries, and I know that

USAID funds a lot of these early-grade reading assessments. But, you know, what I'm really curious is, you know, would you say that USAID is really doing enough to address this crisis in early reading and if not what others types of things do you think you should be doing?

MR. BARTH: Well, thank you.

First of all, I've got to thank you for what so far has been a terrific day. We had a wonderful lunch before this, and then it was a great presentation, Amber. At USAID we're really proud to be associated with the research you've done and really delighted to be able to have this conversation.

Your question's a good one, but I don't love it.

MS. WINTHROP: That's my job.

MR. BARTH: No -- that's your job. I'll tell you why. I think that's the wrong way of thinking about it to ask the question are we doing enough. I think one thing that comes clear from the data is that this is a global crisis, and it's a collective problem and responsibility. So, I start from that premise. I think we've been very lucky to have had some superlative partners in working through some of these early -- the sort of betas on these early-grade assessments, and our first levels of intervention. It's been wonderful to work with RTI and feel that World Bank and FTI -- that's been a big part of the -- we've also had really good partner governments to work with and the willingness of the partner

government to take -- to allow you in, to give you access, and then to be willing to let the results follow them in and use those results for good has been important. So, I feel strongly this is not about us but about us.

I think in a way there is a bit of an emerging global consensus around quality. It just may be more that we're talking about it in the hallways and not in the big convention centers, and so I think among the practitioners quality is almost becoming -- well, is now the sort of de rigueur. And I think that's -- so, I think the opportunity is there. I think people understand the need to reach into early grades, promote those early-grade skills and the urgency of it.

I think the EGRA tool -- this early-grade reading assessment tool -- has been a really important breakthrough. I think it's been a -- it's a real landmark kind of tool, but it does lead to, okay, so if performance is poor, what do we do question. Then as a funder, that's a big one for us. And I think your report gives some important clues on the ways to attack a problem, and there some description there. We've got to push even further on that question, so I think our -- the kind of what-do-we-do-next thing is to ask the question if we know the results are poor, how do we get at them?

I think our strength as an agency is the ability to form these partnerships. I think that's where we're most effective, and so I think that's one of the things that you'll be seeing from us going forward -- is looking at

things like EGRA and how they take on the scale. This means we've got to do a lot more research. We need a body of unimpeachable data that will counter the somehow accepted collective kind of wisdom that getting at quality is either too hard or too expensive. I don't know where that came from. It doesn't necessarily have to be. It's a lot more expensive to have a kid in school six years not learning anything. They're paying a teacher at a facility and they -- you know, there's an opportunity cost for the child. That costs you a lot more than having someone targeted interventions that get these kids their basic skills.

We've got a new administrator and a new team at USAID. We're looking hard at pushing on more randomized control trials looking at new technology, looking at innovation. That's sort of the centerpiece of how we're going forward. We've talked about this a little bit. I'm particularly seized with looking at the idea of sort of a correlation of transparency and civil society with attainment and education. And I think it's looking at the role of parents in civil society in getting us better education results. It's really fascinating. It's one of the things that was really interesting that came out of your resource that's in your report. India, Liberia, a number of places, you see the effect of merely making data public to parents -- to parents and to civil society and the whole system. I think, one, you create this -- you create a lot more demand from the parents to insist on more and better quality. What was enormously

interesting was the hunger of teachers who've become aware of the existence of tools to assess and tools to help them become more effective teachers -- their hunger to chase them down and then the effort to improve scores. So, I think that we know the hunger is out there. The question is how do we harness it, and that for me is a particular fascinating outcome of this research.

I believe in the power of healthy systems, so I think we need -- there's still a lot of work to be done looking at education systems sort of comprehensively. We need to be doing more to generate tools that will go to supporting teachers and students from the ministry level down to the local community level. I think managerial and administrative support is an area where we haven't done as much as we could possibly, and that's why the snapshot of school management effectiveness is a nice kind of proto-tool. I think we can expand on this, as I think that's an area you'll see us looking to invest some more.

So, at the core of all this, I guess if you ask the question what could USAA be doing more? What I think we'd want to be doing is positioning ourselves to be funding innovation, to be challenging, you know, our core assumptions. It's not something that we've been famous for in the past. I think we've been maybe seen maybe unfairly or maybe fairly -- who knows -- as being sort of traditional as to how we administer assistance, but, you know, we're -- we may very well be on the cusp of

some serious change and effecter. You know, in a lot of ways the -- our education model is -- you know, it's tried and true and safe. It also looks a lot like ancient Greece or it looks a lot like maybe 19th century Europe is probably a better model, you know, but what it doesn't -- what it may not look like is the future. And I think so our greatest contribution is going to be to engage the best thinkers, the best researchers, the best minds to get some consensus on how we can get to scale with affordable solutions that get to the root of this problem.

So, I'm really -- you know, that's the reason why it's a thrill to be up here. This is an example of some really good thinking that's going to give us -- that's generating real practical solutions and I hope just the beginning.

MS. WINTHROP: Great.

MR. BARTH: Thanks.

MS. WINTHROP: Thanks so much, David. I'm sure many people will have more questions about your thoughts about what you mean by innovation and a range of things. But we'll leave that for the Q&A.

Patricia, I know you are an expert in literacy and you have lots of experience around the world, but especially here in the U.S. What might be some of your insights, some of your strategies or models you would recommend for developing country classrooms to try to tackle this

early reading crisis?

MS. EDWARDS: Well, first of all, thank you for inviting me here today. The International Reading Association thanks the Center for Universal Dducation, and the Brookings Institution for hosting this eye-opening release. Thanks, Amber.

The International Literacy Day is an opportunity to not only celebrate literacy but to remind us why this goal is extremely important. We have today with the release of "Early Reading: Igniting Education For All" both elements.

Over the last several decades, the world has seen many positive changes. More students than ever are going to school. More nations are seeing investments in education as critical to their long-term success. The education of girls and women is a top priority. Reaching our people with a basic education is seen as part of what governments should be doing.

The development of education policy needs to expand to include providing resources to teachers to become better teachers and to continue to measure what we are doing and its impact on the core mission of schools. Specifically, what IRA would suggest is that ministries of education develop their teacher preparation programs to emphasize instruction, that ongoing programs for teachers be defined to enhance focusing on their knowledge and skills. School systems support reading

and literacy instruction by enhancing their curriculum, improve their understanding of pedagogy and reach out to their diverse learners.

And, fourth, that instruction be seen as the cornerstone of schools, data be collected to be used to improve instruction, not simply to measure progress.

Why these issues? If we wish to improve the ability of children to be able to read, we must focus on reading and instruction. IRA believes that our experience working in a number of developing countries has taught us. We believe that support of teachers is absolutely critical to success. Unfortunately, in many developing nations, teachers are not adequately supported, and many have not been able to attend college to become fully educated teachers.

Why is this important? This report tells us that even after two years of schooling, a majority of children in nations measured in this report can't read a single word. Not being able to read a single word doesn't mean that they weren't in school, nor does it mean that they can't learn. It means that they haven't been taught.

Is it that many children do not speak the language of instruction? Does it mean that there are no materials that draw the relationship between the written form and the language spoken and the language spoken form? Does the teacher not know how to differentiate instruction between some children who learn one way as compared to

other children?

IRA has been involved in three projects that I'd like to share with you that have occurred in developing countries that incorporate some of the strategies that we've used in these developing countries.

The first project is entitled "African Educators' Capacity Building Program," in which African educators attended a Pan-African conference, "Reading for All," in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in August 2009, and now carry out targeted early-grade reading activities in their own country. Sixteen participants entered a competition for a grant to carry out early reading activity in their home countries. Each designed and planned specific activities to respond to the needs they identified in their home country. I think this is important, and when we go into developing countries is that we not bring a model from a western perspective and assume that they can incorporate this model. We need to have them vested in their own development based in innovation, need, and technical quality of their proposals or received a grant to carry out their individual projects, joining upon IRA's vast network of literacy specialists around the globe. The project provides technical assistance and oversight for the four grantees in Burkina Faso, Senegal, Uganda, and Zanzibar.

The second project referred to the ATLAS project. It's entitled "Active Teaching and Learning Approaches in School," and this

project occurs in Zambia, and it seeks to improve the quality of teaching and learning through in-service teacher training. And a lot of developing countries, they don't have an organized system of teacher training. They may have a focus project one place, but not a complete teacher training project. And using child-centered participatory teaching methods. And a lot of developing countries -- they are large classes, over a hundred students. So, the interaction between teacher and student is not that good. Teacher exchange program in with the Zambia project has a teacher exchange program with New Zealand. Professional development included development of a coaching program and the creation of teacher quality circles to allow teachers to share, reflect on their practice and support each other's progress and applying new methodologies.

This pilot project, in collaboration with the local government and the education officials, targets first-grade through ninth-grade teachers, and it focuses on early grades in Spanish-speaking Latin America, Arabic-speaking Middle East, Anglophone and Francophone Africa. The objective of this project is to use research conducted by IRA on early grade reading policies in countries in these regions both at the school level and the pre-service development level to document that they will service a toolkit to aid international and national education development donors and NGO partners in developing permanent and effective early-grade reading programs in this country.

The third project that IRA has is a project in Sudan, and this project is in collaboration with the Rotary International Support, and they are working to educate Sudanese teachers to be teacher educators in this area that has one of the lowest literacy rates -- 24 percent, to be exact -- in the world. Eighty-five percent of the classes are taught under a tree with only chalk and chalkboards by teachers that have approximately a fifth-grade education with little or no teacher training. This project's three phases are needs assessment, guided and independent practice. It includes strategies to use with all grades to both mother tongue, Dinka and English, across content areas for simple or complex learning and by novice and more experienced teachers and evaluation with continued support, which includes seeing teachers themselves as -- having teachers see themselves as professional educators, demonstrating knowledge and skill in teaching, using a gradual release of responsibility model of instruction to teach transportable strategies to support student learning, and understanding the role and use of ongoing and formal assessments. These three projects and other acts on the needs expressed -- excuse me -- these three projects and others act on the needs expressed in today's report.

In closing, what I would like to say is that educational change is demanding. Questions such as should I invest scarce resource in this idea or that idea? What will help the most students? These different

issues -- these are very different -- difficult issues to resolve. To make these decisions, ministers of education should be guided by a tradition of evidence. Making decisions on how to best link oral language to written language and then language of instruction and how to use writing to support reading instruction and what assessments will give teachers the information they need to improve instruction are all critical to improve in reading instruction and achievement. They cannot be made using political judgment.

As we celebrate International Literacy Day, let us rejoice in learning, that we need to continue to build on what has gone before us, focusing now on teaching teachers, students, and I'm going to add parents. We know how to do this. Now the question is will we?

Thank you.

MS. WINTHROP: Thank you, Patricia. Call to action there at the end about do we have the collective will to move on this.

Adolph, we've heard a lot, actually, about Africa, and I think it would be really interesting to get your perspective from the Caribbean and particularly as it relates to teachers unions with your sort of senior leadership in Jamaica and in the Caribbean with teachers unions. You know, improving reading can't happen without teachers, and how can we maximally leverage teachers unions to sort of move this agenda forward, and what barriers might there be, and how can we address them?

MR. CAMERON: Thank you very much. I'm very happy to be here to participate in the activities in honor of International Literacy Day.

The question that you ask is a very broad question but important, and I'd like to congratulate RTI for the work done in producing this report on the early reading, something that we all knew, but having particularly in front of us it makes the -- in our face and we have to deal with it.

I'm part of the Caribbean Union of Teachers, and it is a confederation of teachers unions in the region, and I'd like to make the point that there is the -- I used the word early on today that there is a myth that teachers unions are only concerned with bread-and-butter issues relating to the wealthier of teachers and not interested in what happens to the children when they get into the classrooms. And I'd like to make it very clear that as far as the teachers unions in the Caribbean are concerned, we are committed to ensuring that all our children benefit from education once they come into the classroom. And in addition to that, we make a very strenuous effort to ensure that all children, in fact, come into the schools, come into classrooms and meaningfully participate in the education experiences.

We believe that teachers unions are critical in the process to solve the problem of the illiteracy that moves through the primary grades.

We believe that we need to, in fact, support all of the efforts, government and otherwise, that are intended to improve the literacy situation in the countries.

One of the things I think we need to do is that we must trust our teachers unions and engage them -- governments ought to engage the teachers unions from the very beginning in terms of the development of policies and also where the implementation of policies are concerned. If we do not engage the teachers in this enterprise, then they are not going to buy into whatever the initiatives that our government intends to implement and with the intention that they will impact on the learning the children get in their classrooms.

So that we -- the first point I would like to make is that we need to engage our teachers unions and we must trust them that they are on the same page. We are all moving towards the same goal, which is to ensure that our children are competent and can participate and function later on in the school system.

I think that another way that teachers unions can be leveraged in assisting in dealing with this issue is that teachers unions can establish strong partnerships with their colleagues, either international teachers groups. And there are examples of this that I can point to. We have a strong relationship in the Caribbean with the Canadian Teachers' Federation. The teachers unions identify particular needs in terms of what

they see need to happen. And one of the areas that they have identified is the area of literacy. And over some years the Canadian Teachers' Federation has assisted, partnered with teachers unions in the Caribbean, in running workshops to enhance the professional competence of the teachers in the teaching of reading.

There are other initiatives that some of the teachers unions have implemented. And one of them that I think, in particular in Jamaica, they borrowed the campaign that NEA has had for a number of years, the Read Across America, and they have -- we have implemented a Read Across Jamaica Day, which is held during May of each year during Education Week where we galvanize a total society in ensuring that we make children aware that it is important for them to acquire the skill of reading. This initiative is driven by the teachers union and it has proven quite successful in terms of getting the whole society, parents and others, engaged in this particular campaign about the value of reading in children's success in schools.

We also are part of some initiatives that have been implemented. There was a Caribbean Center for Excellence in the teaching of reading and the teachers union was an integral part of that initiative where they established this center at the University of the West Indies. And they had a number of territories who were participating in this particular pilot and they taught the teachers skills. And one of the

interesting things that they did was the fact that they looked at the underperformance of boys in terms of reading in this particular project and they developed material that boys were interested in. And it was interesting that they found that at the grade one level the girls were outperforming the boys in reading, but by the time they got to about grade four, the boys caught up with the girls. And this was quite different because throughout the school life we have found in the region that girls outperform the boys at every level. But in this particular project, because they made the instruction relevant to the boys in the classroom, the boys really began to love reading and developed the skill of reading.

The sad thing though is that as for a number of projects, once the life of the project ends there is very little effort to integrate it into the general system so that you develop good practices but the practices are in the report that is written at the end of the project and not these practices being taken on and impacting on the system.

The other thing I think we need to do is that even -- not even -- the international donor agencies are coming to the Caribbean in a lot of instances when they are contemplating projects. They speak to the government and not to the teachers union. And we believe that they need to begin to speak to the unions as an important partner and not to just talk to them as part of a large group. People are going to talk about teachers are involved but they do not identify the teachers as a separate group who

are at the forefront of what is to happen, and, therefore, they need to properly engage them so that I'm appealing to international agencies, donor agencies to talk to teachers unions, trust them because they are about the same thing that they want to achieve.

In terms of barriers, I think that some persons have mentioned the matter of very large classes in many of the territories. And the teachers unions have always been making the point that unless you have manageable class sizes it is going to be not possible to engage the students in the way we would want to. We need to look at the nutrition, the health of the children. Those children who are falling through the cracks as it were, we need to find out what is it -- what are the things that are impacting on them why they are not performing in schools and deal with them.

So a lot of the children, like in Jamaica in particular, a number of children come from very violence-prone areas. And when they come into school they have endured like a night of violence. You don't expect them the following day to be able to participate meaningfully. We need to deal with these issues in order for our children to participate and benefit from instruction.

And I make the plea that we should trust the teachers unions, that they are not there as one of the barriers. They are about the learning what children acquire in schools.

MS. WINTHROP: Thank you. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

We have probably around 45 minutes for all of your questions, your comments, your inputs to the panelists or things you want to share. So the floor is open. We have mics coming around. And please state your name and which organization you're from, or if you're from any organization.

Yes, please. Here, here, and then here.

MS. REISER: Thank you. Very enlightening. I'm Mindy Reiser. I've worked both with the U.S. Department of Education and with USAID, so national, international.

My question is the Obama Administration has really focused on whole of government approaches. What kind of coordination and collaboration is AID doing with the Department of Education? There are many innovative projects in this country, the work in Harlem with the zone really integrating a whole range of resources and services is something people can learn from. There have been interesting involvements with parents -- the What Works Clearinghouse, which has had a dicey career but has done some good things. So please talk about how the U.S. will mobilize the extraordinary resources to create options and opportunities overseas.

SPEAKER: Sure.

MS. WINTHROP: And then we had, let's see, the woman over here on the far end and then two gentlemen in the back.

Sorry, can you reach? He's stepping over people to reach to the mic.

MS. COMAS: Jacqueline Comas, George Washington University.

I'd like to know, given our concern for the impact of literacy and the idea that instruction and teacher preparation is the foreground of what we need to do, when we think about that I'd like to know if you would share with us if there are places that you have visited where you are doing something beyond the project. In other words, what are you doing or what have you learned about places where there is ongoing professional growth opportunities for teachers? As we suggest, they need this instruction and an opportunity to grow. Are there places where this exists? And if there are, how are these experiences finances? How are they organized? And how are they implemented?

MS. WINTHROP: Okay, great. We'll have two more in this cluster. There are two gentlemen. Yeah. Steven, right there.

MR. CARTER: Hi, my name is Jeff Carter. I'm the director of policy and public affairs for Pro Literacy.

I'm interested in -- from the entire panel, I'm interested in any comments you have on the role of parents and caregivers in these

strategies, particularly in education at home and whether or not you think the investment in parents, caregivers, and adults might have a positive impact on some of these drivers.

MS. WINTHROP: Great. And Joe, the last question.

MR. DeSTEFANO: Thank you, Rebecca. I'm Joe DeStefano with RTI International.

My question goes in a little bit different direction where I think the kinds of things that we've been talking about are all really important. I'm a little bit concerned that we've left out of the conversation this sort of larger institutional and policy context that in fact disfavors early grades. The pattern of resource allocations and actual policies concerning teacher deployment within the system and teacher assignment within schools really disadvantages early grades. And I think that's something that we shouldn't let slip off of the agenda. Maybe we can come up with a T that corresponds to that.

MS. WINTHROP: You think on that while they're answering.

Okay. We'll go to the panelists to just pick one question to answer. So we had a question about whole of government and USAID. So, David, I'm guessing you're going to answer that one.

Another question, and perhaps Patricia or Adolph could talk about where are the places where there's ongoing sustainable professional development growth. A question around parents and

caregivers. And then I'm thinking maybe Amber you might want to take -- or whoever really -- the final question about resource allocations and educational policies that disfavor early grades.

MR. BARTH: Well, I'll just be brief on this question, but I have to say I've been with USAID 15 years and I've never seen as sort of a dedicated period of kind of engagement agency to agency as we have going on now. You're absolutely right. The Department of Education, it's a real luxury for us. I mean, there's just a vast amount of accumulated sort of wisdom there. We've tapped into that already in a number of ways.

We're working very closely with Karen Kater and Ray Meyer on the technology side. Immediately after Haiti, we brought in the Department of Education expert who had worked after Columbine and Katrina to come down and help us with Haiti. The Department of Education is going to help us embed a specialist in the Ministry of Education, Afghanistan. Actually, today we just put up a joint video from Secretary Duncan and our administrator on our website launching for International Literacy Day.

So I think that we're, you know, it takes -- whole government initiatives take effort and it takes -- you have to be sort of conscious to make the call and to reach out in the past and been really strong so, like I say, I don't know what more we could be doing but certainly, you know, we're looking at examples like Harlem Children's Zone and other things.

We're -- there's a concept called -- that we're calling Communities of Learning, which has -- which really has to do with having the school be a centerpiece of a more integrated community development effort. It can include agriculture and other things and that's something where there are examples in the United States as well as globally. So to the extent we can get good information and counsel from the Department of Education, we're doing our best.

MS. EDWARDS: I guess my response to the question about what other projects are we doing, if you're going to developing countries, they're inviting you there because they need your assistance. And so that's why the International Reading Association is focused on specific projects.

I just left South Africa and they are struggling with some of the issues that are in the report. So I really don't know how to answer that question other than the fact that the International Reading Association has been invited to specific countries. And when they're invited, they work with teachers around these issues. And some of the issues that have been highlighted in Amber's report, those issues cross across all of the developing countries where people might be at different levels on working on things but I don't know.

One of the projects that Shaquille Malik and I are going to be working on is looking at how the world reads because we need to know

what issues different countries have. So unless you've traveled all around the world you really don't know because when people say they go to Africa, Africa is just as different as Europe. So just because you went to one African country doesn't mean that they all have the same issues and concerns.

So Africa is not a country; it's a continent. So it's like in the Caribbean. I mean, there are various Caribbean islands with different issues and concerns. So I don't think people just show up in a country. They go if they're invited and then they engage. And I agree that we need to not just go to the government, but go specifically to teachers because they are the instructional carriers in any country. And I do think that they are -- I think in this country, and we're looking at issues -- I mean, in looking at the world globally, different, I mean, like some teachers are complaining about not having the latest iPad and there are people that don't have pencils and chalk. So I think where we are we have to go around the world to adapt with those people.

The person that asked the question about parents and caregivers, I think that's very, very important. We can't leave the education of children totally to teachers. We need to engage families to make sure that they are aware of what the needs are of the school and making sure that there are programs and initiatives developed to help parents understand the importance of literacy and not just turn their kids

over to the school and assume that the school is going to do everything. Because when you're teaching 1 to 45, or whatever you're teaching to, I think everyone wants to tell teachers how to teach, but I want them to be in the classroom and they be on the front line.

I always tell my students that Arnold Schwarzenegger tried to teach and he didn't do too well in kindergarten. So we need to make sure that people understand that teaching is not this little easy task and that parents are their children's first and most influential teacher. And that's important. And teachers are the second most important teacher.

MS. WINTHROP: Okay. Great. Thank you, Patricia.

Adolph? Amber? Do you want to jump in?

MR. CAMERON: I was going to respond to the question about places where there is ongoing professional development.

MS. WINTHROP: Sure.

MR. CAMERON: I can only speak specifically to Jamaica. We have had a professional development unit within the Ministry of Education and the Jamaica Teachers Association Collaborates with that unit in terms of identifying professional development needs for teachers. Recently, they established what is called a Jamaica Teaching Council and that particular body is going to be responsible for all of the professional development activities for teachers. And there is a strong representation of the teachers union on that body.

And part of that council, they have established what are called quality education circles in different areas across the island. And these circles involve teachers where they are given opportunity to share their own experiences with their colleagues and hopefully there will be the ripple effect throughout the country.

MS. WINTHROP: Amber, did you want to jump in on that last and final question?

MS. GOVE: Yes. The Joe question. So the system solutions. I point to a couple, one of those being teacher assignment practices. I think we've known for a long time, assigning the best teacher to the initial grades. Maybe that's something that teachers unions can help advocate for. The truth is the way they're organized now is several hundred students might be in that first grade but you get to the second, or third, or fourth, or fifth grade and suddenly there are only 20 students. It's a filtering system.

So possibly another key policy recommendation to move towards is in a school where most of the children are in the first grade, but you go to a fourth grade classroom literally across the hall and there are 15 students. Maybe working at multi-grade strategies for those older grades and splitting up that share of the large chunk of students in this first couple of grades seems like an easy within- school solution that everybody can turn around. Instead, those policies come from high on up

above and it's very difficult to parse out those changes at the school level. So assigning the best teachers in the early grades and then fixing some of those lopsided class size issues.

Lastly, the systems are really designed to filter. Many of these systems were developed during elite days where you were only expecting to graduate a few hundred kids who would then go run the country. We need to change expectations. We need to really work with community members. We need to work with teachers and parents to really show that all children can learn to read. It is rocket science but we know how to do this at this point.

And I think the key to that -- and we haven't possibly had it until now -- is really demonstrating that with key benchmarks and measurable indicators and measuring progress against that. Everyone should know that reading fluently requires that you read with automaticity and you read as if you speak. We don't even have to get into numbers but if at the end of three and four years of schooling your children aren't reading to you in a comfortable way that it sounds just like when they're speaking to you, there's a problem. And you as a parent should be able to go talk to your teacher and talk to your community, and everybody should be aware of that -- that reading is foundational to everything else and that it requires this automatic nature of it.

MS. WINTHROP: Okay. Did you have some other final

point there?

MS. GOVE: No, I think that was it.

MS. WINTHROP: I didn't know if you were pausing for another last and final point.

MS. GOVE: No, that's enough. We'll go on to more questions.

MS. WINTHROP: Okay. Yes, there -- we'll take a handful again. So, this lady right here in the second row. Irene. And say who you are, Irene.

MS. DUNCAN-ADANOUSA: Thank you. Irene Duncan-Adanousa. I'm general secretary of the Ghana National Association of Teachers and also vice president of Education International. Education International is the global union federation of teachers and education workers' organizations.

We have a headquarters in Brussels and we work with 30 million members, over 400 affiliates and over 170 countries all over the world. So I'm glad to be here and I'm wearing the cap of the teacher or the labor union.

I think this study is bringing up a lively discussion for many of us. I think the important thing, and I would again wish to reiterate what my colleague Adolph said, that teachers care. We care about quality and Education International has been advocating quality public education.

Because for many of us our countries and our improvement depends on the public system. And so even though we talked about EFA, we talked about access and numbers, enrollment. We are beginning to talk about quality, and the quality really matters. So the collaboration with teacher organizations is very critical.

Back home in Ghana, my union has two main divisions -- professional development division and labor relations division -- and we work on both legs. We do a lot of professional development in-service training with our colleagues also from Canada. Early childhood from Denmark. And that is during the long vacation. But our plea to government is that please strengthen us to do more of such professional development because whether you like it or not, the teachers have now begun to look to the union for other in-service training programs during the long vacation. And we could include anything. We are aware that some of our teachers may have shortcomings, may not have the skill to do proper teacher education, proper reading for our case. So we would need support in that area.

Again, looking at some of the recommendations on the Ts, I was very interested in the T, the tongue issue. Mother tongue learning is very important. I would once say back home in Ghana, government has taken its owner initiative with UNESCO, with USAID. We call it NLAP. That is National Literacy Acceleration Program. And the issue in that

literacy is mother tongue, promoting mother tongue literacy.

You should be able to read, even in your own mother tongue learning, also in the foreign tongue. That is English or whatever it is that we choose. We have various languages, but our problem then is even teaching some of our teachers to be very literate in the mother tongue education. And that is where the teacher unions become very, very important.

I don't know whether, one, you went -- you did your teaching, your research. You talk about the relevance of the teaching materials. When you gave that example of a chicken or whatever you call it and the story what happened in class when the teacher was trying to teach that same lesson in the mother tongue you saw the difference immediately, which tells you that teaching in that mother tongue even improves the comprehension rate of the pupils and they could immediately communicate much more and even enjoy the class because they could even relate to the example you are giving them.

So I think that one of the things that would advocate for teachers unions, especially in developing countries, is producing more support for mother tongue education. Of course I have talked about the teaching skills and the support --

MS. WINTHROP: Thanks, Irene.

MS. DUNCAN-ADANUSA: -- but then the relevance of the

teaching materials is very important. I don't know whether you realize in Liberia they've come out of war. There are certain things you cannot really teach them and hold the attention of the pupils because they are going through various experiences.

MS. WINTHROP: Irene. Irene, I'm so sorry. I'm going to cut you off.

MS. DUNCAN-ADANUSA: Thank you very much.

MS. WINTHROP: But we really appreciate your contributions and your perspective here. Thanks.

So let's see. One, two, three, four. Yeah. Go ahead.

MS. MEYERS: I'm Jane Meyers, the founder and president of the Lubuto Library Project. Thank you very much, Amber, for mentioning us in terms of important work we're doing to make books accessible to children. I'd like to also mention that we're doing very important work in terms of teaching reading in local languages by engaging Zambian reading teachers to create programs using e-Toys on the OLPC laptops in seven Zambian languages.

And so that sort of brings me to -- I guess everything always comes back to the thunder in the room, but I would like to -- we've talked with USAID officials from the country level to the Washington level up and down and right and left and the big NGOs that tend to get most of the big contracts, USAID contracts in the education sector. And I'd just like to

know if in this new effort to spur on innovation and look at new ideas, are you looking at new funding mechanisms that might allow an organization like ours with a good plan and a plan to scale up, somehow to get into the loop? Because I've been told back and forth, well, here in Washington we can only put out giant procurements. Why don't you go to the mission? At the mission they say, well, in Washington they want this and it goes back and forth. And they say, well, go to the big NGOs. And they say, well, but USAID is asking for this. It's really hard by people in your agency's own admission to get new ideas into the pipeline.

So can you help us? (Laughter)

MS. WINTHROP: She might be finding you in the reception afterwards.

I think we had one right next to you. Yeah. There you go.

MS. DOWD: My name is Amy Jo Dowd. I work with Save the Children on the Literacy Boost project. And thank you, Amber, as well, for managing this.

I wanted to bring up something from about 10 different countries really coming out of the practice as we're launching Literacy Boost and getting into our first and now second year of implementation. And that is this idea that we've talked a little bit about parents and communities, but really mostly as those who are supporting the children in the school and understanding what teachers want to be working on

towards quality and maybe looking at data. And what I want to urge is to think also about parents as readers, parents as speakers, parents as those who first start and encourage vocabulary. Really parents as actors and all the skills that underpin the literacy and the reading that we're hoping to spur on. So really those that help the child to practice and to enjoy reading.

And coming from that I want to also mention something that Amber spoke to at the very beginning and set aside on purpose. I really want to add a T to your list. And that is toddlers. Because I think we really need to look at the emergent literacy skills and what is and isn't coming through the door and what language is coming through the door of the school in. And along those lines, yes, of course, I want to ask the donor about investment in these areas of community-based reading action, as well as early childhood actions supporting basic skills.

But I also want to ask the teachers about their priorities for action in this area and then also research priorities. If you could research anything under the sun about early childhood, about community action, what would it be?

Thank you.

MS. WINTHROP: A long list of very scintillating questions.

The woman on the end there with the cool glasses. Yeah.

(Laughter)

MS. FINDLAY: Hi. I'm Judy Findlay from George Washington University.

I'm a teacher, a reading specialist, teacher educator, and I just want to kind of make a comment of caution. I've been teaching internationally, working with teachers since the 1980s, and so often when new policies are put forth, the policy takes over and the teachers are lost. I'm so happy to see that you're balancing this. The policy is for the teaching. It's for improving what happens in communities. It's for including the community. But I just want to caution all of us to not let that get lost. To not let it get lost.

MS. WINTHROP: Thank you.

We'll probably take just two more in this cluster. Two or three more. The woman right next to her. Yeah.

MS. FABLE: Hi. My name is Leah Fable. I've been -- I've spent the past few years covering education at the *Washington Examiner* here and I'm leaving tomorrow to cover educational issues in India. So if any of you know stuff about India, come talk to me at the reception because I'm a little nervous right now.

But I'm interested in kind of the balance between federal government efforts to impact change. India, as a lot of you probably know, is trying to implement a Right to Education Act to -- gosh, to try to enroll more kids, to try to get better schools, to try to get better teachers.

I'm interested how that -- how federal efforts balance with kind of grassroots and NGO efforts to affect change. And what fundamentals, I guess, must be in place to be able to trust government efforts to affect quality and what pace of change can we expect when we rely on grassroots efforts?

MS. WINTHROP: Okay. Great.

So many hands. We had one here and then the remaining two on this side. And then that'll be our last round, I think.

MS. MacDONALD-MOORE: I'm Barbara MacDonald-Moore and I'm the director of international programs at the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

And just to pull up on the points that were just made and to link it just to say that more and more teacher organizations walking on the two legs of professional development and teacher welfare are stretching out to get involved in the education for all work. And what we want to make sure is they don't start burying themselves in policy and research and other things and forget the basic work of the teachers, their own members on the ground. But they also need to be very conversant in what's going on. And some of the professional development work we support is actually in response to teacher reforms and how the teachers can actually implement that in the classrooms is easily as possible to do a smooth transition.

MS. WINTHROP: Great.

And so the woman in the red and the woman at the very back row.

MS. KUEBLER: My name is Joanna Kuebler and I'm the director of the Global Campaign for Education U.S.

My question is for Amber, although, David, certainly you're welcome to answer it. We heard a bit about sustainability and projects coming in and having great benefit, but what happens when those projects end?

And through your research, Amber, in the Gambia, for example, it begs the question -- it goes to some of the funding questions that are being asked. What do you see the role potentially in country-driven national education plans that partner with civil society, teachers unions, and crafting and incorporating things like professional development and making reading a priority, and then using multilateral initiatives to support those plans?

MS. WINTHROP: Great.

The very last question. Yes, the woman at the very back. That's all right. I memorized all the questions. Don't worry, panelists. It's fine. (Laughter)

MR. BARTH: All the funding ones seem to be mine.

MS. WINTHROP: Yeah.

MS. COSGROVE: Hello. My name is Elizabeth Cosgrove from the University of Maryland.

And I understand -- as a university student, I understand and appreciate the importance of education in any community, but often the problems in developing nations specifically are more extensive, excuse me, than education. Do you think it's more crucial to fix infrastructural issues, like resource management and public health and then fully engage in an educational effort?

Sorry, I have a second half. Has it been investigated if it is possible to create a balance between all the necessities and prioritize the most important issues just because there are so many?

MS. WINTHROP: Great question.

So there are several of you, I know, who have other questions and I think this will probably be the last round before we close. But just to let you know, we do have a reception immediately after, so feel free to approach panelists with your questions.

So recap. We have questions about -- for you. We have a lot for you, David, you know, sort of innovative -- are there new funding mechanisms that perhaps let smaller players in? There's questions around parents and toddlers, so some of those wraparounds for improved literacy in the school. Questions around federal efforts versus grassroots efforts, how that's balanced. A question around national education plans

and incorporating this learning dimensions. And then actually a very appropriate question to end on, you know, where does education fall in the panoply of development priorities that are out there?

So none of them easy. But why don't you give her a grant? (Laughter)

MR. BARTH: Let me step nimbly and quickly through this question.

MS. WINTHROP: I'm sorry. He's never going to come back.

MR. BARTH: Right. (Laughter)

We're in the process of undergoing major procurement reform. Okay? And it's an enormously important exercise that's going to impact the allocation of hundreds of millions of dollars, but it's also -- it's very technical and this probably isn't the forum to get into it too much. But just know that in a lot of ways we're looking for instruments that are smaller, more flexible in some respects. We want new actors because we're pushing for innovation.

And so some of this will be through traditional contracting mechanisms as we've done in the past. Some of it will be through innovative partnership mechanisms which don't require the same competition. Okay. But what they do require would be like a leveraging component. And some of them will be through competitions more along

the lines of X-prizes and things like that which will be to reward the innovator. So all these things are in the hopper.

We recognize that we have a need for some of our traditional mechanisms because, you know, those are our, you know, those are our heavy haul mechanisms that move a lot of resources to a lot of places in a lot of ways, but we also need to have some smaller things that can reward innovation. So, I can say stay tuned.

MS. WINTHROP: No, no, no. I'm sorry.

MR. BARTH: You can come see us after.

MS. WINTHROP: Follow up in the reception, yeah.

Does anybody else want to make some final comments?

MS. EDWARDS: I want to address the whole parenting issue. I have a limited time but all of us are very familiar with the Hart and Risley study about differences among various groups of parents. I think Amber mentioned that in some of the developing countries. The ones with the most resources are the ones who get educated. That might be a discussion that people need to have.

If you want to change literacy, you need to start it where it becomes a community grassroots issue. And that's extremely important, is to challenge countries who do have some resources, but those resources are not balanced across all of the kinds of people that are in their society. Those are issues that they have to make a decision around

as to what kind of citizens they want as a part of their country.

But I do think it should start with toddlers. You can't wait until a kid shows up at school and try to do aggressive.-- you can do some things, but I do think it needs to start from birth, and that's a big initiative that we've had in this country. You know, reach out and read, you know, incorporating reading as a part of the medical practice. And so I do think those are some issues that would address nutrition and food.

I was just in South Africa and they were saying even if people don't have AIDS in that country, you are affected if you're not infected. And so I do think that people need to focus on the family because the family is the basis. I mean, schools cannot exist without parents and children, and so we need to make the right investment in that group of people.

MR. CAMERON: The question about the competing demands.

MS. WINTHROP: Absolutely.

MR. CAMERON: I don't know whether there's a clear answer, but education cannot be left behind. The governments will have to spend a lot of time ensuring that despite the lack of limited resources, attention has to be paid to education. If we believe that education is going to be the way out of poverty and towards economic development.

MS. WINTHROP: And I would just maybe add to your, you

know, your question there that, you know, it is a very good question. It's something probably, David, that you face every day when you talk about funding decisions with your other colleagues in charge of other departments such as health and economic development and stuff.

But I think there's a lot of good research that doesn't say education is the only thing and there's lots of important issues out there, but a lot of good research that says actually to achieve health outcomes, to achieve economic development outcomes, to achieve even some global security outcomes --

MS. EDWARDS: Yes.

MS. WINTHROP: -- to achieve even some global security outcomes --

MS. EDWARDS: Yes.

MS. WINTHROP: -- you do need quality education. And more and more of that data is coming to the floor. So it is pretty fundamental. Not to say it's more important than anything else but it's actually helped some of those other outcomes.

MR. BARTH: I certainly agree. I think we come at it from the premise of education is foundational to all the other development sectors, that you're not going to get through democratic society, you're not going to increase -- you're not going to have healthy families and delayed sexual activity and delayed marriage, other things. I think it's incumbent

on the sector on all of us to find better ways to communicate the importance of the investment in education, the importance to host governments.

I'm going to end up tying a few things together. If we're going to talk about country planning, okay, if we're going to talk about the development community being sort of assisting a national plan, a plan as developed indigenously in a country, it's very important that decision makers in those countries -- that means prime ministers, ministers of planning, even more so the ministers of education -- understand the impact of their investment in education. This is an investment that will pay itself back in healthier families and economic productivity and other things.

And you know, we can help communicate the message but it's got to be internalized in these host governments, particularly if we're going to get away from the old model of the development actor telling these countries what to do. And I think we certainly are moving away from that. And I think where this kind of, like, early childhood education is a good -- early childhood interventions are a good example. If it's not a country priority, it's hard for us to force it on them.

MS. EDWARDS: One last comment I would like to make is that we need to motivate countries to be engaged in the race against illiteracy and that should be a race that everybody in the country runs.

MS. WINTHROP: That's a good. You should put that on a

banner. (Laughter) You have some questions to answer. Okay.

So, Amy Jo. I wasn't going to forget you. If I could research anything.

MS. GOVE: So I would like the research to be so convincing and so compelling that the minister of finance and the minister of education would walk out of the room arm in arm and say of course that's what we need to do with early childhood education, along with the donors right next to them. And that package might be how to get kids ready for school. What are the social, cognitive, and health inputs in this nice little perfect package of 10 things that we have to do for all children in all of these countries? And it may vary from country to country of which intervention and how to work on it. But my one problem with that, and I even -- this is where, yes, the researcher is even doubting the power of data -- we've had this information in this country for how many years about the importance of early childhood education.

And so what change of pace can we expect? I'm going to combine Leah and Diana on these questions. And I think it depends on the country. We see a lot of governments where it's really tough to maybe expect that they're going to see the 94 percent of kids who can't read and say, oh, yes. Of course we're going to fix that. That gets back to the Gambia issue. There was a lot of leadership. They just needed that one little piece and then they said, absolutely, we can fix this. Let's go do it.

There are a lot of countries that are near failing states and it's tough to expect that a government merely by -- I believe in data, but merely by showing them the numbers that they're going to say let's go forward and change this.

And so your approach is going to depend on the country. It's also tough to expect strong civil society in countries that also have a weak state. So all of these different actors coming together. I think it's going to depend on the approach. What might work in Kenya with a civil society driven assessment, that Awezo, which we highlight in the report, is conducting where they're going household to household and communicating results to parents, that might not be imminently exportable to another country. I think we need to work with countries, in fact, where we're asked to do that. Work with countries and tailor the approach based on what they understand to be the best way forward. And bringing all of these pieces together, not just one, not just government, but teachers unions, civil societies, parents, communities, altogether to improve these reading levels.

MS. WINTHROP: Great. Just to wrap up. Thanks all of you. I have one final question.

Just off the top of your head, from the organizations you sit at or from what you think needs to happen in the world in terms of next steps. I mean, what do you think is the one thing from your perspective

that other actors should do or your own agency should do to really move this agenda forward?

And I'm a bad moderator. I didn't give this to them ahead of time so they'll have to frantically think. But we're going to put you on the spot first and go this way.

MS. GOVE: I gave you five. You want one and I gave you five.

MS. WINTHROP: Well, I know. I know. But pick one. What is the most, you know, sort of the one sort of most important thing that you think.

MS. COVE: So at this point I think my job has been more on getting these (inaudible) out there and communicating them. I think that a lot of agencies are just becoming aware of this. Again, it's the foot in the door. This might just be a way to finally define quality. And if we can all agree, and I have heard a message from very high places, well, maybe reading is too specific. Let's start there and I can get into everything else. But I think we can drive the quality agenda forward with specific measurable actionable reading indicators for the world.

MS. WINTHROP: As sort of an initial first step of platform.

MS. GOVE: Absolutely. Let's start there.

MS. WINTHROP: And so some sort of global agreement on what we're even trying to achieve as a floor. Enrollment is no longer a

good floor.

MS. GOVE: It's not enough.

MS. WINTHROP: What's the point of that? The floor really should be sot of basic literacy even.

MS. GOVE: Mm-hmm.

MS. WINTHROP: Okay. David?

MR. BARTH: Well, once we've got consensus on that issue, which I think we're this close.

I'm very much impressed with the research that's gone into the kind of what's the problem question, which is, you know, in a particular country it can be girls are not reading. We need to develop the next set of tools that get us to the why. Is it -- you know, can we pinpoint is it cultural? Is there an issue -- does it have to do with the way the school is built and whether they have running water or a boundary fence? Is it the teacher? Is it the principal? Is it the curriculum material?

So I think we're in a good place in terms of the what. But I think we struggle as a funder to get at the why. So the next generation of tools, which may be tied to the SSME assessments and things, or maybe something completely new, you know, that's my holy grail.

MS. WINTHROP: Okay. Great. So a lot -- so more evidence out there to really guide your policy decisions and investment around -- to target very nuanced things that need to be changed.

MR. BARTH: We live in a world of finite resources.

MS. WINTHROP: Right.

MR. BARTH: And we've got to make hard choices with finite resources.

MS. WINTHROP: Okay. Great.

MS. EDWARDS: We have councils all over the world with the International Reading Association, and I think what we need to do is engage our national affiliates all around the world to see what issues they would like for us to engage in and to put our better brains to engage in a bigger conversation around literacy. One of the slogans for the International Reading Association is that we teach the world to read. But I do think what we need to do is reverse that. It is how does the world read and have us better connect with them to see how they need to engage us, rather than us doing a top down model but to look bottom up to see what it is people need and to -- we talk about differentiated instruction but to use a differentiated mindset to interface with the world. And right now, like I said, I'm engaged in this huge study on how does the world read, not us telling them but asking them, and to see what those issues are and differentiating that information to see where we would utilize our best resources.

And also trying to get to know the researchers in those countries because if you think about it, most people know American and

Canadian and maybe European researchers, but there are researchers in other parts of the world that we might not know and they can better tell us what those issues are because they're engaged. And many people come from countries and they come either to Canada, Australia, or to the U.S. with their PhDs and we were asking them to go back to their countries. Maybe keep those linkages with those researchers to have them and give them support to work on their own settings.

MS. WINTHROP: Great. Thanks. Adolph?

MR. CAMERON: We have (inaudible) grade three (inaudible) assessment approximately 30 percent of all children not having the basic skills at that point. I would love that our organization enter into some partnership to identify what is it that has impacted that 30 percent of students, why they were not able, so that we then can cater our curriculum and intervention strategies to deal with what we have discovered to be the issue. Right now I think it is a shot in the dark that we are going.

MS. WINTHROP: So a lot actually about building the evidence base to better inform policy to move this forward.

So I want to thank everybody. A big round of applause for them. (Applause) But don't go yet. To thank you, really, thanks everybody for your time.

We have a reception right across the hallway. You will receive lots of literature. You will receive the report. There's also the draft

policy paper that my colleagues at the Center put out. And I know they're very interested in feedback and comments.

So thanks again. And we'll see you over there.

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I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

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