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AREW 2018 PARTICIPANTS (REEP-A)

# RESEARCH FOR EFFECTIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMING – AFRICA (REEP-A) FINAL REPORT

September 2021

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## ACRONYMS

AFR	Bureau for Africa
AFR/SD/ED	USAID Bureau for Africa’s Office of Sustainable Development Education Team
CI	Confucius Institute
DERP	Date for Effective Research Programming
DDI	Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation
DRASPAC	Development Research and Social Policy Analysis Centre
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
E3/ED	Bureau for Economic Growth, Education, and Environment, Office of Education
ECE	Early childhood education
EVAL-ME IDIQ	Monitoring and Evaluation Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity
FGD	Focus group discussion
HDAK	Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze
IKI	Invest in Knowledge
KII	Key informant interview
KSA	Knowledge, skills, and attitudes
LMIC	Lower-to-middle income country
LOI	Language of instruction
REEP-A	Research for Education Effectiveness - Africa
SEL	Social and emotional learning
SRGBV	School-related gender-based violence
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
TLLA	Teacher language and literacy assessment
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Research for Effective Education Programming – Africa (REEP-A) task order issued by U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to Dexis Consulting Group was awarded on September 29, 2016 with a period of performance of five years through September 28, 2021 and a total ceiling value of \$7,949,966. The main objective of REEP-A is to support the Education Team of USAID Bureau for Africa’s Office of Sustainable Development (AFR/SD/ED) by generating and effectively disseminating Africa regional and country specific education data, analysis, and research. Specifically, REEP-A provided USAID’s Africa Bureau, mission offices, and partner organizations with evidence and resources to assist in the prioritization of needs, inform program design, and support sound education investments through the fulfillment of requirements across three results:

- Result 1: Africa Missions Strategy-Related Data Needs Met
- Result 2: Availability of Africa Education Data and Trends Expanded
- Result 3: Measurement Tools with Applicability Across Countries Developed

Over REEP-A’s five-year duration, the Project worked closely with AFR/SD/ED, implementing partners, and other stakeholders to produce reports, tools, country profiles, and other resources, and to identify and organize opportunities for dissemination and knowledge sharing.

### SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

#### RESULT 1: AFRICA MISSIONS STRATEGY-RELATED DATA NEEDS MET

**Education Data Trends Snapshot.** REEP-A produced a data snapshot on the current state of education in sub-Saharan Africa to inform USAID decision-makers of the key trends and noteworthy statistics in education in the region and specific countries, thus having direct impact on country-level budget allocations and the Strategy goal(s) that USAID missions pursue.

**Education Data Briefs.** REEP-A developed a comprehensive data brief on the global prevalence of school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) using recent data to illustrate the scope and scale of SRGBV with a focus on sub-Saharan Africa. At the request of USAID, the data brief was translated into French to support wider dissemination, reach, and utility. REEP-A also produced a data brief comparing development assistance funding to the education sector, to humanitarian assistance funding targeting education activities and the overall level of humanitarian funding. This brief covers six resilience-focused countries – Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Somalia, and South Sudan – and allows USAID to examine aggregate levels of funds obligated between 2017 and 2021 that meet education needs.

**Mission Support for Evaluations.** REEP-A supported USAID/Rwanda through the midterm performance evaluations of the Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze (HDAK) project and the Soma Umenye project. The performance evaluations examined the effectiveness of project implementation and the performance of implementing partners and identified areas for improvement or adjustment.

#### RESULT 2: AVAILABILITY OF AFRICA EDUCATION DATA AND TRENDS EXPANDED

**Africa Regional Education Workshop 2018.** REEP-A planned and delivered the Africa Regional Education Workshop (AREW) 2018. Through AREW, REEP-A provided a forum for USAID personnel to conduct technical training for education staff; exchange lessons learned and best practices; share the

Administrator’s priorities for education programming; review education-related issues relevant to the USAID Policy on Evaluation and other high-level Agency and USG policies and strategies; and exchange ideas, lessons learned, and best practices between Washington and the field.

**Language of Instruction Framework Report.** To meet USAID’s research needs regarding critical issues on teacher effectiveness in improving early grade literacy in sub-Saharan Africa, REEP-A reviewed and synthesized literature on the relationship between teacher knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA) regarding language of instruction (LOI) and early grade reading outcomes in multilingual contexts in the region. The resulting framework report is intended to help USAID and other stakeholders better understand the challenges in language policy planning and implementation, thereby laying the groundwork for future USAID research activities on issues related to teachers and LOI in early grade reading.

**LOI Country Profiles.** REEP-A developed language of instruction country profiles to address the information gap that donors often face when designing literacy programs due to the challenges of finding or accessing accurate and up-to-date information on the official government policies and the country’s linguistic landscape. These profiles support USAID and partner organizations in understanding a country’s linguistic and policy context to design approaches that most effectively help improve early grade reading outcomes.

**Analysis of Relationship Between Teacher Language Proficiency and Student Reading Performance.** REEP-A developed a teacher questionnaire that allow for teachers’ self-reported language abilities to be compared with student reading outcomes to examine if any relationship exists. Following an initial administration in Uganda to test instrument quality and to test whether the questions showed any relationship between teacher language proficiency and student reading outcomes, the questions were added to the Teacher Language and Literacy Assessment (TLLA) as the Language Background Interview subtask.

**Soft Skills Desk Study.** To fill the gap of readily available and rigorous evidence on the effectiveness of soft skills programs in the sub-Saharan African context, REEP-A conducted a literature review to examine the linkages between soft skills interventions and youth workforce development outcomes. This literature review contributes to the field of soft skills and youth workforce development by highlighting evidence and lessons unique to sub-Saharan African countries and the specific contextual factors that exist within and across them.

**Social and Emotional Learning Systematic Review.** REEP-A conducted a systematic review of evidence related to social and emotional learning (SEL) programming in development and humanitarian settings to fill the gap in evidence from relevant contexts in the Global South and systematically catalogue the existing evidence to inform research, policy, and practice. The resulting evidence gap map and report provide an overview of the existing evidence on the effects of SEL and soft skills interventions on key outcome areas, including social and emotional competencies, academic success, well-being, health, and resilience, in development and humanitarian settings.

**Chinese Influence on Education in Africa Country Profiles.** REEP-A developed country profiles that provide USAID with information on China’s support for education in Africa through Confucius Institutes and other initiatives. The individual country profiles and the regional summary, which highlights trends across the countries given China’s role as a major donor of development assistance in the recent years, serve as a resource for the USAID Bureau for Africa and USAID missions to inform future programming and partnerships in the region.

### RESULT 3: MEASUREMENT TOOLS WITH APPLICABILITY ACROSS COUNTRIES DEVELOPED

**School-Related Gender-Based Violence Measurement Toolkit.** As part of a collaborative effort to advance knowledge, measurement, and programming to eliminate school-related gender-based violence worldwide, REEP-A managed the completion of the SRGBV Measurement Toolkit in close collaboration with AFR/SD/ED. The Toolkit is a practical guide and resource for measuring the prevalence and extent of students' experiences of SRGBV and provides methods for assessing key risk factors and drivers of SRGBV within the local context. The final SRGBV Measurement Toolkit provides an avenue for designing evidence-informed programs, evaluating SRGBV factors during situation analyses, or evaluating entire programs.

**Teacher Language and Literacy Assessment.** REEP-A developed the Teacher Language and Literacy Assessment (TLLA) to measure teacher language and literacy proficiency in the relevant LOI to understand its influence on students' reading acquisition. The TLLA can support USAID early grade reading programming by serving as a system diagnosis of teachers' basic or advanced language and literacy skills; as a screening of their linguistic assets for placement or training purposes; or as a monitoring and evaluation tool for interventions aimed at strengthening teachers' skills and students' learning outcomes.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

REEP-A offers the following recommendations for follow-on work to complement the achievements under the REEP-A contract:

Replicate the **Chinese influence in education profiles** for remaining sub-Saharan African countries where USAID provides support to the education sector complemented by a **regional paper detailing China's investment strategy in sub-Saharan Africa**

Expand on the language of instruction (LOI) workstream through:

- **Case study on LOI implementation and language attitudes.** An in-depth understanding of the context, process, and degree of implementation of the LOI by examining critical elements contributing to and affected by LOI policy at the country level could assist in improving the effectiveness of program design and implementation.
- **Curriculum analysis of pre-service teacher training related to the LOI.** Further research examining pre-service teacher curriculum focused on the LOI through a curriculum analysis could support curriculum reform and alignment between pre-service and in-service training.
- **Testing and adapting translated versions of the TLLA.** The French version of the TLLA represents an initial adaptation of the English instrument into French and would benefit from adapting to the local context and piloting in the target country prior to administration in French-speaking countries.
- **Regular updates to the LOI country profiles** to reflect the most current policies and programs.

Expand the soft skills and SEL workstream through:

- **Guidance on developing culturally relevant SEL and soft skills programming.** While there is a growing interest in designing SEL/soft skills programs that are culturally and contextually relevant to the global South, little is known about the cultural nuances and local relevance of social and emotional skills in the sub-Saharan African context. Identifying locally relevant competencies necessary for children and youth to succeed in school through a synthesis of evidence and the

development of tools and materials to guide cultural and conflict-sensitive contextualization and adaptation processes of SEL and soft skills programs could support USAID missions and partners in designing more effective programs that are adapted for cultural relevance.

- **Review of SEL evidence on early childhood education.** Due to the unique priorities and approaches for social and emotional development within early childhood, research included in the SEL systematic review that primarily targeted early childhood (ages 3-5) was only examined during the first phase of the review to understand the breadth, depth, and type of existing evidence. A systematic review that examines SEL programming at the early childhood level could provide valuable information on how SEL is integrated into early childhood support and outcomes for children and communities in development or humanitarian settings.
- **Interactive digital platform for gap map.** The SEL evidence gap map created under REEP-A could be further enhanced and disseminated by creating an interactive online platform to host the gap map that would allow users to explore the evidence on the gap map and access links to summaries and/or full-text articles.

# INTRODUCTION

## TASK ORDER OVERVIEW

USAID Africa Bureau’s Office of Sustainable Development Education Team (AFR/SD/ED) awarded the Research for Effective Education Programming – Africa (REEP-A) contract to Dexis Consulting Group as a five-year task order (September 29, 2016 to September 28, 2021) under the Monitoring and Evaluation (EVAL-ME) Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract vehicle. REEP-A’s work builds on the Data for Education Research Programming (DERP) in Africa with the objective of generating Africa regional and country specific education data, analysis, and research, and to disseminate this knowledge through appropriate forums, such as detailed reports, country profiles, and evaluations. By generating research and tools across key priority topics, such as language of instruction, soft skills and SEL programming, and school-related gender-based violence, REEP-A provided USAID’s Africa Bureau, mission offices, and partner organizations with evidence and resources to assist in the prioritization of needs, inform program design, and support sound education investments.

**Project Name:**  
Research for Effective Education Programming – Africa (REEP-A)

**Prime Contractor:**  
Dexis Consulting Group

**Subcontractor:**  
Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International

**Period of Performance:**  
September 29, 2016 to September 28, 2021

**Ceiling Value:**  
\$7,949,966

In particular, REEP-A provided technical assistance across the following results:

- Result 1: Africa Missions Strategy-Related Data Needs Met
- Result 2: Availability of Africa Education Data and Trends Expanded
- Result 3: Measurement Tools with Applicability Across Countries Developed

## PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

In coordination with the Task Order Contracting Officer’s Representative (TOCOR), REEP-A developed a work plan each year with a set of requirements that aligned with the Bureau for Africa’s priorities. This allowed REEP-A to remain sufficiently flexible and integrate new work streams, thus ensuring that the research generated under the contract reflected USAID’s changing needs and priorities.

Throughout implementation, REEP-A worked closely with the TOCOR, activity managers, technical advisors and implementing partners to plan activities, produce resources, and identify and organize opportunities for dissemination and knowledge sharing. REEP-A provided technical expertise through a network of education, M&E and research specialists with a deep bench of literacy and evaluation experience. On the project management side, REEP-A applied adaptive management strategies to seamlessly mobilize technical teams, coordinate with multiple stakeholder groups, and effectively oversee project activities.

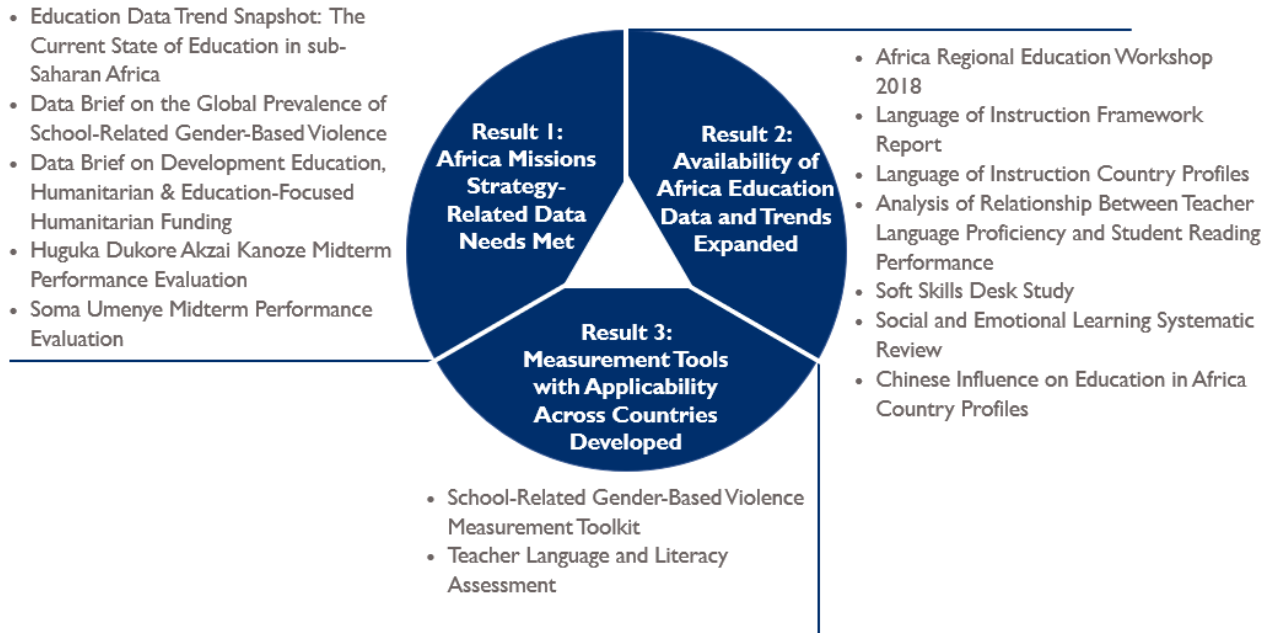


## ACHIEVEMENTS BY RESULTS

This section details REEP-A’s accomplishments against requirements agreed upon with the TOCOR and described in the annual work plans. It also addresses lessons learned during implementation and documents ways that REEP-A addressed constraints and challenges and applied adaptive and flexible methods to ensure positive results. The description of each requirement includes completed products with links to those posted on publicly accessible outlets and the USAID and external stakeholders that were involved in project activities and/or provided support through technical input on deliverables.

The figure below provides an overview of the activities under each result.

**Figure 1. Activities by Results**



## RESULT 1: AFRICA MISSION STRATEGY-RELATED DATA NEEDS MET

Under Result 1, REEP-A provided USAID missions with data and research support that met their needs and facilitated understanding of the status of education in specific countries.

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### Requirement

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## Deliver Country and Regional Education Data Trends Snapshots

**Products:** [Education Data Trend Snapshot](#)

### Key Accomplishments

To support USAID's Performance Plan and Report (PPR) requirement, REEP-A produced a data snapshot on the current state of education in sub-Saharan Africa using indicators on access to education, school participation and completion, inequality, learning, education in conflict and crisis-affected environments, higher education and workforce, teachers, and gender. This snapshot informed USAID decisionmakers of the key trends in education in the region as well as noteworthy statistics from countries, thus having direct impact on country-level budget allocations and the Strategy goal(s) that USAID missions pursue.

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### Requirement

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## Deliver Education Data Briefs

**Products:** Global Prevalence of School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) – [English](#), [French](#), [Development Education, Humanitarian Aid, and Education-Focused Humanitarian Funding](#)

### Key Accomplishments

REEP-A provided Africa Bureau leadership and other decision-makers with the option to request tailored analyses and time-sensitive education data in the form of education data briefs. REEP-A developed a comprehensive data brief on the global prevalence of SRGBV using recent data to illustrate the scope and scale of SRGBV worldwide. The SRGBV data brief also provides country-level statistics, when available, with a focus on sub-Saharan Africa. At the request of USAID, the data brief was subsequently translated into French for wider dissemination, audience reach, and stakeholder use. REEP-A also produced a data brief

comparing development assistance funding to the education sector to humanitarian assistance funding targeting education activities and the overall level of humanitarian funding. This brief covers six resilience-focused countries – Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Somalia, and South Sudan – and allows USAID to examine aggregate levels of funds obligated between 2017 and 2021 that meet education needs.

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**Feedback Highlights.** “The education data brief, covering the global prevalence of SRGBV was highly received by the SRGBV working group, the data brief is a comprehensive document that provides recent statistics and data points on the topic. Because of the high quality of the report, the working group requested a French translation of the data brief to share with a wider audience.”  
– REEP-A Year 2 CPAR

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## Requirement

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### Deliver Mission Support for Evaluation, Assessment, and Data on Selected Priorities

**Products:** [Performance Evaluation Report: Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze](#); [Midterm Performance Evaluation: Soma Umenye](#)

**Principal Collaborators:** USAID/Rwanda, Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze implementing partners; Soma Umenye implementing partners

#### Key Accomplishments

REEP-A supported USAID/Rwanda through the midterm performance evaluations of the Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze (HDAK) project and the Soma Umenye project.

The Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze (HDAK) midterm performance evaluation examined the effectiveness of the project approach and implementation, assessed the performance of the implementing partners, and identified areas for improvement or adjustment. The HDAK evaluation also explored how the activity relates to and feeds into the wider efforts of USAID, the Government of Rwanda, and other partners to further develop human capital in the country. The evaluation team met with 14 implementing partners, conducted 64 key informant interviews, and held 13 focus group discussions with a total of 150 beneficiaries across 10 districts in Rwanda. The team used both qualitative and quantitative data to answer the evaluation questions and formulate learning-oriented, actionable recommendations to inform course correction measures that are presented in the evaluation report.

The Soma Umenye midterm performance evaluation examined the effectiveness of both mid-course corrections made following the initial years of the activity and the current activity implementation and performance. Following a preliminary desk review of activity design documents, monitoring data, annual and quarterly reports, and other applicable activity information, the evaluation team conducted key informant interviews, classroom observations, and focus group discussions, and administered a teacher questionnaire in Rwanda with a total of 182 participants.

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**Feedback Highlight.** “REEP-A exceeded expectations for the Soma Umenye [performance evaluation], producing a comprehensive and robust report that the Mission was pleased with. The evaluation was able to employ an adaptive approach to data collection to meet the evolving needs of the project and the Mission, and to offer constructive insights that informed the work planning that occurred immediately following the evaluation.” – Year 4 CPAR

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**Remaining agile and flexible to meet activity needs.** The REEP-A Soma Umenye evaluation team faced several challenges during data collection planning due to inconsistent information from official sources regarding the Rwandan school calendar. While data collection had originally been planned to occur over the course of a month, unforeseen and last-minute updates to school calendar required the team to reduce the data collection period to less than three weeks. To accommodate this change in schedule while maintaining adherence to the approved data collection plan and ensuring high quality data collection, REEP-A hired two local Research Assistants to support the team with coordinating logistics, translation, and conducting interviews and focus groups. REEP-A’s ability to quickly pivot and address unforeseen challenges allowed the team to meet all data collection needs and produce a comprehensive report without sacrificing quality. The report was well-received, and the Soma Umenye project team provided detailed responses to the evaluation recommendations to strengthen implementation.

## RESULT 2: AVAILABILITY OF AFRICA EDUCATION DATA AND TRENDS EXPANDED

REEP-A conducted a variety of research and evidence-gathering activities under Result 2 to identify or generate knowledge to support evidence-based education programming related to early grade reading, social and emotional learning and soft skills, and language of instruction (LOI). Further, REEP-A ensured that relevant knowledge and research products are available to USAID education personnel through various cost-effective dissemination methods, such as posting final products on USAID websites, producing report summaries for circulation, and presenting findings to USAID audiences.

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### Requirement

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## Deliver Workshops – Africa Regional Education Workshop (AREW) 2018

**Principal Collaborators:** USAID missions in Africa, USAID Bureau for Africa Office of Sustainable Development Education and Youth Division, USAID Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment, Office of Education (now Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation Center for Education)

### Key Accomplishments

REEP-A planned and delivered the week-long Africa Regional Education Workshop (AREW) 2018 in Pretoria, South Africa. The workshop drew 62 participants representing 18 USAID missions in Africa, USAID AFR/SD/ED, USAID E3/ED, external presenters, Dexis staff, and REEP-A organizers. Through AREW, REEP-A provided a forum for USAID personnel to conduct technical training for education staff; exchange lessons learned and best practices; share the Administrator’s priorities for education programming; review education-related issues relevant to the USAID Policy on Evaluation and other high-level Agency and USG policies and strategies; and exchange ideas, lessons learned, and best practices between Washington and the field.

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**Feedback Highlight.** “[REEP-A] successfully implemented Africa Regional Education Workshop (AREW) working with USAID to overcome schedule and budget challenges that were outside of Dexis control. Some participants shared that it was the best AREW workshop they have attended.” – REEP-A Year 2 CPAR

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**Adeptly navigating budget constraints.** REEP-A responded quickly to USAID’s request to revise the AREW budget to accommodate unanticipated constraints outside of the project’s control. REEP-A identified where adjustments could be made and introduced additional cost saving measures by taking advantage of existing resources, such as a USAID training venue in lieu of an external site, to maximize available funds without comprising the quality of services provided.

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## Requirement

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### Deliver Current Research on Teacher Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes (KSA) Related to Language and Literacy that Influence Early Grade Literacy Outcomes (LOI Framework Report)

**Products:** Teacher Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Related to Literacy and Language that Influence Early Grade Literacy Outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa – [LOI Framework Report](#) and [Executive Summary](#)

**Principal Collaborators:** USAID Bureau for Africa Office of Sustainable Development Education and Youth Division, RTI International

#### Key Accomplishments

To meet USAID’s research needs regarding critical issues on teacher effectiveness in improving early grade literacy in sub-Saharan Africa, REEP-A reviewed and synthesized literature on the relationship between

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**Feedback Highlight.** “[The LOI Framework Report was] well-received and...widely regarded by USAID and others as a seminal piece of research on the topic”.  
– REEP-A Year 4 CPAR

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teacher knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA) regarding language of instruction (LOI) and early grade reading outcomes in multilingual contexts in the region. REEP-A conducted a thorough review of 110 articles to examine three primary topics: 1) teacher language and literacy skills, 2) teacher pedagogical knowledge and skills, and 3) teachers’ attitudes and beliefs towards local language instruction. The resulting framework report is intended to help USAID and other stakeholders better understand the

challenges in language policy planning and implementation, thereby laying the groundwork for future USAID research activities on issues related to teachers and LOI in early grade reading.

**Adapting approaches to dissemination in response to COVID-19 restrictions.** The onset of the COVID-19 public health emergency resulted in the cancellation of in-person dissemination events that were planned or in discussion. This included the 2020 CIES conference where REEP-A was scheduled to lead a panel on “Language Instruction for Early Grade Reading in sub-Saharan Africa: Using Research to Inform Programming” and present on the LOI framework report, the LOI country profiles, and the TLLA. Despite pandemic-related restrictions, REEP-A continued to work closely with the COR and Activity Managers to identify opportunities to conduct remote presentations to relevant audiences at USAID and proactively propose briefs and other pieces to circulate and post to online outlets. By exercising adaptability, REEP-A was able to complete several key dissemination activities, including a [blog article](#) to highlight the LOI work produced under REEP-A, presentations to the Education Sector Council on the SEL systematic review; a webinar launching the soft skills report; summary documents and study briefs for the [TLLA](#), [SRGBV measurement toolkit](#), [SEL systematic review](#), and [soft skills desk study](#); and an article on the TLLA submitted to a peer-reviewed academic journal.

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## Requirement

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### Develop Country Profiles for Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa where a USAID Reading Program is Currently Being Implemented or Has Recently Been Completed

**Products:** Language of Instruction (LOI) Country Profiles for [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), [Djibouti](#), [Ethiopia](#), [Ghana](#), [Kenya](#), [Liberia](#), [Malawi](#), [Mali](#), [Mozambique](#), [Niger](#), [Nigeria](#), [Senegal](#), [Somalia](#), [South Africa](#), [South Sudan](#), [Tanzania](#), [Uganda](#), [Zambia](#)

**Principal Collaborators:** USAID missions in Africa

#### Key Accomplishments

REEP-A developed profiles on the language of instruction (LOI) for 18 countries across sub-Saharan Africa where USAID supports early grade reading (EGR) initiatives. These profiles address the information gap that donors often face when designing literacy programs due to the challenges of finding or accessing accurate and up-to-date information on the official government LOI policy and the country's linguistic landscape. The LOI country profiles provide thoroughly researched and vetted information that allows the USAID

Africa Bureau, USAID missions, and partner organizations to quickly understand the country's linguistic and policy context to design an approach that most effectively helps improve EGR outcomes.

Figure 2. Countries with LOI Profiles



**Utilizing on-the-ground sources to fill information gaps.** Accessing recent information on the LOI policy was often challenging due to the lack of digital versions of policy documents, availability of information only in local languages, or information being outdated. REEP-A utilized diverse on-the-ground sources, such as reports and publications from USAID projects and other donors, including the World Bank and the Global Partnership for Education, to triangulate information and ensure accuracy. REEP-A also conducted a limited number of key informant interviews (KII) with in-country stakeholders to verify information or identify additional resources.

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## Requirement

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### Deliver Analysis of Relationship Between Teacher Language Proficiency and Student Reading Performance

**Products:** [Interim Report: Analysis of Relationship Between Teacher Language Proficiency and Student Reading Performance in Uganda](#)

**Principal Collaborators:** RTI International, USAID/Uganda School Health and Reading Project (SHRP)

#### Key Accomplishments

Despite the inclusion of a teacher interview in Early Grade Reading Assessments (EGRAs), there is limited data available on the extent to which teachers are proficient in the LOI used in schools and the relationship between teacher language proficiency and student performance. In response to this need, REEP-A developed a teacher questionnaire that allows for teachers' self-reported language abilities to be compared with student reading outcomes to examine if any relationships exist. The questionnaire was initially administered along with the EGRA under the USAID/Uganda School Health and Reading Project (SHRP) to 1) test the quality of the instrument and 2) test whether the questions about teacher language proficiency showed any relationships to student reading outcomes. Based on findings from this initial administration captured in the Interim Report, the questions were revised to improve reliability and content of the data collected then added to the TLLA as the Language Background Interview subtask.

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## Requirement

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### Desk Study on Soft Skills

**Products:** Soft Skills Literature Review: [Final Report](#) and [Study Brief](#)

**Principal Collaborators:** USAID Bureau for Africa Office of Sustainable Development Education and Youth Division

#### Key Accomplishments

The growing interest and investment by USAID and other donors in soft skills programming highlights the need for readily available and rigorous evidence on the effectiveness of these programs in the sub-Saharan African context. To address this gap, REEP-A conducted a literature review to examine the linkages between soft skills interventions and youth workforce development outcomes. Through the review and analysis of 177 publications that met the study's inclusion criteria, REEP-A analyzed evidence and lessons on soft skills programming that are unique to sub-Saharan African countries and the specific contextual factors that affect outcomes. This literature review contributes to the field of soft skills and youth workforce development by: 1) synthesizing the most up-to-date evidence on the relationship between soft skills and youth workforce outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa and other low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) with similar labor market conditions for disadvantaged youth; 2) identifying and documenting examples of soft skills development in youth workforce training in SSA and in LMICs to inform programmatic decision making; 3) identifying practical applications for soft skills training in youth workforce development in SSA; and 4) highlighting gaps in the literature and areas for future research. Findings and lessons learned from this study were presented to an audience of USAID and other key soft skills stakeholders at a webinar commemorating International Youth Day.

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## Requirement

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# Systematic Review of Impact Evaluations and Other Rigorous Evaluations of SEL Programs in Development or Crisis and Conflict-Affected Contexts

**Products:** Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Systematic Review: [Final Report](#), [Gap Map](#), [Study Brief](#)

**Principal Collaborators:** USAID Bureau for Africa's Office of Sustainable Development Education and Youth Division, USAID Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation Center for Education, USAID Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Working Group, RTI International, NYU Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development

## Key Accomplishments

Given the significant interest and investment in SEL programs and research, USAID identified the need to take stock of lessons learned and evidence generated from the past ten years of global SEL interventions and research. In support of this aim, REEP-A undertook a systematic review of the evidence related to SEL programming in development and humanitarian settings to understand patterns of success and failure, and to identify strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in the evidence base. As part of this review, REEP-A developed an evidence gap map to graphically display what evidence exists on SEL programming and highlight key gaps along with a searchable database of all literature reviewed. The gap map is complemented by the final report, which expands on the evidence gap map to present key findings, nuance, and details that cannot be fully captured in a graphic representation. Based on the review of existing evidence, this study provides guidance to practitioners, policymakers, and donors on how to improve the effectiveness of SEL programming for children and youth and inform areas for future research. This work builds upon previous systematic reviews focusing on specific outcome or intervention areas to produce a comprehensive picture of the current state of the evidence across development and humanitarian settings.

**Active and strategic collaboration for effective implementation:** The SEL Systematic Review activity benefited from the support of various USAID stakeholders, including the SEL working group and mission personnel working in the SEL and soft skills space. REEP-A ensured active and strategic collaboration throughout the research process to ensure that the products reflected the interests of these groups and to mitigate challenges with navigating between multiple priorities and preferences. REEP-A instituted bi-weekly calls that were open to USAID stakeholders to discuss progress to date, questions and challenges, and next steps. REEP-A also utilized a collaborative review process for all deliverables whereby the USAID activity managers, technical advisors, and other SEL stakeholders had the opportunity to provide feedback and participate in debrief calls to reach a consensus on revisions and decision-points.

To promote further engagement and facilitate contributions to the research, REEP-A distributed a call for papers to various networks and organizations to solicit relevant studies, policy briefs and other research. In doing so, REEP-A widely promoted the study while ensuring a comprehensive search that included literature that may not have been identified through the systematic search of academic databases.

The research team took advantage of opportunities to socialize the study to a wider audience by conducting a presentation on preliminary findings followed by a final presentation of findings to the USAID Education Sector Council. Findings will also be presented at the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness (SREE) 2021 Conference after the end of the REEP-A contract.



## Chinese Influence on the Education Sector in African Countries

**Products:** Country profiles for Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia; Chinese Influence in Education Regional Summary Brief

**Principal Collaborators:** RTI International, USAID missions in Africa

### Key Accomplishments

China has emerged as a major donor of development assistance worldwide during the past two decades, but reliable information on their efforts in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in education programming, is often difficult to access. To better understand the nature of Chinese investments in education in the region and foster collaboration between donors, USAID commissioned REEP-A to conduct desk research on China's support for education in Africa provided through Confucius Institutes and other initiatives. Specifically, each profile presents information about language and cultural programming, school infrastructure support, scholarships, and areas of support from the Chinese government and private sector. The individual country profiles and the regional summary, which highlights trends across the countries, serve as a resource for the USAID Bureau for Africa and USAID missions to inform future programming and partnerships in the region.

**Figure 3.** Countries with Chinese Influence in Education Profiles



**Identifying non-traditional sources for research.** Due to sensitivities regarding outreach to local informants for additional information on China's support for education in sub-Saharan Africa and at the request of USAID, REEP-A adjusted the research methodology and gathered data solely through a desk review of publicly-available information. Despite the limited sources that cover the work of Confucius Institutes in Africa, REEP-A exercised creativity and resourcefulness to utilize non-traditional sources, such as university social media pages and news articles, to triangulate findings to the extent possible, and clearly document where information was limited to produce thoroughly researched and comprehensive profiles.

### RESULT 3: MEASUREMENT TOOLS WITH APPLICABILITY ACROSS COUNTRIES DEVELOPED

In response to the demand for low-cost and user-friendly tools for systematic data collection, analysis and policy dialogue, REEP-A developed relevant and applicable tools for priority topic areas for USAID.

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#### Requirement

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### Deliver the School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) Measurement Framework

**Products:** [SRGBV Measurement Toolkit and Instruments](#), [SRGBV Measurement Toolkit Summary](#)

**Principal Collaborators:** USAID Bureau for Africa's Office of Sustainable Development Education and Youth Division, Expanding Monitoring and Evaluation Capacities (MeCAP), RTI International, the Global Working Group to End SRGBV, Invest in Knowledge (IKI)

#### Key Accomplishments

The School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) Measurement Toolkit is a practical guide and resource for measuring the prevalence and extent of students' experiences of SRGBV and provides methods for assessing key risk factors and drivers of SRGBV within the local context. The SRGBV Measurement Toolkit was developed as part of a collaborative effort to advance knowledge, measurement, and programming to eliminate SRGBV worldwide. Initiated by DERP, the Toolkit was completed under REEP-A in close collaboration with AFR/SD/ED. The toolkit was piloted twice, once in Uganda under DERP and again in Malawi under REEP with 247 primary grade students in grades 3 and 5, 247 parents/caregivers and 52 teachers. Following the pilots, efforts towards finalizing the toolkit focused on ensuring that the overall framing of the Toolkit clearly linked to the survey instruments and the conceptual framework, improving the physical and electronic navigation of the toolkit, revising content around data analysis, and defining the Toolkit's target audience and objective. The final SRGBV Measurement Toolkit -- which contains a conceptual framework for measuring SRGBV, a school-based survey for measuring experiences of SRGBV, risk factors, and drivers, as well as practical guidance for implementing the survey -- provides an avenue for designing evidence-informed programs, evaluating SRGBV factors during situation analyses, or evaluating entire programs.

**Ongoing course corrections for positive results.** REEP-A faced early challenges in translating technical concepts into a user-friendly tool with relevance across teams. By working closely with USAID and technical teams to understand pain points, clarify expectations, and take corrective actions to remedy quality issues, REEP-A oversaw the development of a high-demand product that was well-received. Upon completion, USAID presented the SRGBV Measurement Toolkit as part of a panel on "Safe and gender equitable schools: Utilizing data to catalyze advocacy and action on SRGBV and barriers to girls' education" at the 2021 Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) conference.

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## Requirement

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### Deliver Tools for Systematic Data Collection in a Selected Area: Teacher Language and Literacy Assessment (TLLA)

**Products:** [Teacher Language and Literacy Assessment \(TLLA\) Final Report](#); Teacher Language and Literacy Assessment (TLLA) Instruments – [English](#), [Luganda](#), [French](#); [TLLA Final Report Overview](#)

**Principal Collaborators:** RTI International, Development Research and Social Policy Analysis Centre (DRASPAC)

#### Key Accomplishments

There are many assumptions about how teachers' language and literacy abilities may influence instructional practices, especially related to the LOI. It is hypothesized that teachers with a high level of language proficiency and literacy in the LOI can effectively facilitate student learning, while a low level can impede it. However, there is limited research available that examines these relationships. To fill this gap, REEP-A developed the Teacher Language and Literacy Assessment (TLLA) which measures teacher language and literacy proficiency in the relevant LOI to understand its influence on students' reading acquisition. Specifically, the TLLA is designed to measure the oral language, reading, and writing skills of primary grade teachers in multilingual environments in sub-Saharan Africa. It has potential to support USAID early grade reading programming by serving as a system diagnosis of teachers' basic or advanced language and literacy skills; as a screening of their linguistic assets for placement or training purposes; or as for monitoring and evaluation tool for interventions aimed at strengthening teachers' skills and student learning outcomes. Under REEP-A, the TLLA was developed and piloted in Uganda in two languages, Luganda and English. The TLLA was also adapted into French, which can be administered in francophone countries following additional testing and adaptation. The tool provides the flexibility to be adapted into any language with additional testing and adaptation to the local context.

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**Feedback Highlight.** [REEP-A] exceeded expectations on the scheduling and timeline for the TLLA field work, to ensure that the data collection aligned with a scheduled teacher training that allowed the team to capture significant data while ensuring cost-effectiveness. – REEP-A Year 4 CPAR

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

Should there be interest in building further on the above requirements, REEP-A offers the following suggestions:

Replicate the **Chinese influence in education profiles** for remaining SSA countries where USAID provides support to the education sector complemented by a **regional paper detailing China's investment strategy in sub-Saharan Africa**.

Expand the **language of instruction (LOI)** workstream through:

- **Case study on LOI implementation and language attitudes.** An in-depth understanding of the context, process, and degree of implementation of the LOI by examining critical elements contributing to and affected by LOI policy at the country level could assist in improving the effectiveness of program design and implementation.
- **Curriculum analysis of pre-service teacher training related to the LOI.** Further research examining pre-service teacher curriculum focused on the LOI through a curriculum analysis could support curriculum reform and alignment between pre-service and in-service training.
- **Testing and adapting translated versions of the TLLA.** The French version of the TLLA represents an initial adaptation of the English instrument into French and would benefit from adapting it to the local context and piloting in the target country prior to administration in French-speaking countries.
- **Regular updates to the LOI country profiles** to reflect the most current policies and programs.

Expand the **soft skills and SEL** workstream through:

- **Guidance on developing culturally relevant SEL and soft skills programming.** While there is a growing interest in designing SEL/soft skills programs that are culturally and contextually relevant to the global South, little is known about the cultural nuances and local relevance of social and emotional skills in the sub-Saharan African context. Identifying locally relevant competencies necessary for children and youth to succeed in school through a synthesis of evidence and the development of tools and materials to guide cultural and conflict-sensitive contextualization and adaptation processes of SEL and soft skills programs could support USAID missions and partners in designing more effective programs that are adapted for cultural relevance.
- **Review of SEL evidence on early childhood education.** Due to the unique priorities and approaches for social emotional development within early childhood, research included in the SEL systematic review that primarily targeted early childhood (ages 3-5) was only examined during the first phase of the review to understand the breadth, depth, and type of existing evidence. A systematic review that examines SEL programming at the early childhood level could provide valuable information on how SEL is integrated into early childhood support and outcomes for children and communities in development or humanitarian settings.
- **Interactive digital platform for gap map.** The SEL evidence gap map created under REEP-A could be further enhanced and disseminated by creating an interactive online platform to host the gap map that would allow users to explore the evidence on the gap map and access links to summaries and/or full-text articles.