

**EdData II: Ghana EGRA/EGMA Implementation
Educational Assessment and Research Center (EARC)
FY 2015 ASSESSOR TRAINING & DATA COLLECTION
REPORT**

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Introduction

This Report covers the assessor training and data collection activity under the ten-month performance period of the Firm Fixed Price subcontract (54-330-0209354-51736L) awarded to the Educational Assessment and Research Centre (EARC) by the Research Triangle Institute (RTI). The sub-contract was awarded under the USAID-funded EdData II Task Order for implementation of the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) activity in Ghana. The scope of the EARC subcontract includes provision of in-country support for coordination of implementation of all aspects of the EGRA/EGMA activity, including Assessor recruitment, training and piloting of test instruments, data collection, monitoring of test administration, upload of data, preparation of EGRA & EGMA brief and National policy dialogue support.

This report provides a summary of activities for the assessor-training and data collection component of the subcontract and it includes milestone deliverables achieved and a delineation of issues and challenges.

Summary of Activities

Presented below is a summary of activities that were carried out over the period. Information is organized according to the six task areas indicated below: 1) scheduling of schools to be visited by assessors; 2) Grouping of assessors; 3) School verification and replacement, 4) Organizing training for assessors, 5) data collection; and 6) monitoring of data collection process and upload of data. As the Firm Fixed Price subcontract is based on milestone deliverables with identified submission dates for each deliverable, this report provides a summary of training workshop and data collection activities for the period of June and July 2015 focused on deliverables expected for the 7th payment task areas of the subcontract completion of assessor trainings and submission of brief report.

Task Area 1: Scheduling of Visits to Sampled Schools

This exercise was critical to the success of the EGRA/EGMA test administration, as it was essential to have the right balance between location, language and school opening sessions. A comprehensive schedule was drawn that took these factors into consideration. Schools were grouped by proximity since data collectors had limited traveling time between sampled schools. In some instances data collectors had to travel to the next town immediately test administration was completed in one sampled school to ensure they got to the next scheduled test sampled school early the following day. The finalized schedule of school visits for the test administration/data collection is attached.

Task Area 2: Assessor Grouping

EARC took a lot of factors into consideration in the grouping of assessors for the EGRA/EGMA test administration. Experienced assessors were paired with recently recruited and trained assessors so that the experienced assessors could support the recently recruited ones thus enhancing reliability of the test administration processes. It was equally important that EARC ensured compatibility between the assessors as well as their ability to communicate in the local language of the area to be visited. A list showing Assessor Grouping and assignment is attached to this report.

Task Area 3: Sampled School Verification

Almost all schools were verified to ensure that they had ten or more students in the Primary 2 (P2) class and also that the school was operational and assessable. The setting up of a task force by the NEAU Coordinator to verify sampled schools and a follow up telephone call to head teachers of the selected schools to provide enrolment data of their P2 class accomplished this. Some schools were replaced with others on the list of first and second replacement schools provided by RTI as a result of the verification exercise. All replacement schools were documented with reasons for replacement indicated by EARC IT specialist. However even though this information was obtained before the school visits, a few schools visited had less than 10 pupils in P2, or was not accessible. A list showing all sampled schools and their P2 enrollment data is attached to this report.

Task Area 4: Assessors Training

Nine-day training session was organized for 200 assessors in four zones (Tamale, Kumasi, Accra and Cape Coast). The training was organized in zones in the various language groups taking into account the National Literacy Acceleration Program (NALAP) groupings of Northern, Southern, Akan and Fantse. Below is a gender disaggregation of participants by zone:

Zonal Centre	Male	Female	Total
Tamale	48	6	54
Kumasi	31	13	44
Accra	30	10	40
Cape Coast	25	11	36
Total	134	40	174

EARC achieved this subtask through the use of cascaded training approach. Training was cascaded on two levels from RTI to Master Trainers and from Master Trainers to assessors. There was a one week Training of Trainers for 24 master trainers and additional monitors including 4 NEAU staff, 3 EARC staff, 4 Tangerine Experts, 4 EGMA Experts, and other GES staff. See table below.

Source of Master trainer	Male	Female
EGMA	3	1
NEAU	3	1
EARC		3
TANGERINE	4	
GES STAFF	9	1
EXTRA MONITORS	8	

EARC worked closely with NEAU during these processes and also in the final recruitment of those included as master trainers. Hardworking and competent master trainers used in 2013 EGRA and EGMA program were maintained. NEAU staff acted as master trainers during the assessor training.

EARC in collaboration with NEAU used the rigorous system in place for selecting competent, hardworking and reliable assessors used in the 2013 for the 2015 EGRA/EGMA program. EARC in collaboration with NEAU recruited 174 assessors to work in teams of two. EARC used its internally generated system for pairing data collectors in the field. New data collectors were paired with old hands and 30 supervisors supported the initiative

nationwide. The number of supervisors was increased to 30 in response to recommendations by the NEAU directors experience during the pilot. EARC in conjunction with NEAU with guidance from RTI EGRA/EGMA assessment specialist and in accordance with standard training and administration procedures conducted the 2015 assessor training workshops. The training was zoned in four catchment areas, namely: Tamale, Kumasi, Accra and Cape Coast as done during the 2013 EGRA/EGMA implementation. At each training venue, EARC liaised with nearby schools to provide the opportunity for Assessors to practice both the administration of assessment and survey instruments as well as the use of TANGERINE application in order to have real field experience.

All eleven-language experts who supported the adaption of the EGRA/ EGMA instruments were invited to participate in the training at the various centers (after an initial miscommunication led to their exclusion the first two days). Below is the language expert by center.

Name	Gender	Languages	Accra
Mr. S. Appenteng	Male	Akuapem Twi	
Dr. G. Ofori	Female	Ewe	
Mr. Francis Sarpong	Male	Dangme	
Mr. Daniel Odame	Male	Asante Twi	Kumasi
Ms. Patience Obeng	Female	Fante	Cape Coast
Mr. Nii Adjetey Adjei	Male	Ga	
Mr. J. F. Bonya	Male	Nzema	
Mr. Henry Twako	Male	Gonja	Tamale
Issahaku Alhasan	Male	Dagbani	
Mr. Mark K.K. Ali	Male	Dagaare	
Mr. Alexis Danti	Male	Kasem	

Two (2) school visits were undertaken to enable trainees have a hands-on experience in random sampling, assessing pupils and administering the EGRA/EGMA protocols. Assessors were sent home from the training workshop with all materials needed for data collection, including paper copies of instruments, tablets and chargers, gifts for pupils, etc. Team leaders were assigned and their responsibilities were reiterated. Data collection commenced a week after the training workshop and span two weeks.

Before leaving each workshop, the participants were given workshop evaluation questionnaires to complete (see Appendix). This questionnaire was to give them the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the various aspects of the workshop including relevance of content, process and presentation, venue and administration. The questionnaire also required them to indicate anything that they liked most about the workshop and suggestions for improvement. The participants' agreement to evaluation statements at the various centers is presented in Appendix

Task Area 5: Test Administration/Data Collection

The test administration/data collection commenced in all ten regions of Ghana on 6th July and ended on the 17th July 2015. A total of seven thousand four hundred children (7,400) were assessed over the two-week period. The number of schools visited in each region and language area is listed in the table below.

Regions	Languages											
	Asa Twi	Akw Twi	Fante	Ga	Nzema	Dangme	Ewe	Dagaree	Dagbani	Gonja	Kasem	Eng
Ashanti	55											
Brong	55											
Central	25		45									
Eastern		45				25	5					
Accra	5	5		55		20	5					
Northern	5							10	45	35		5
Upp East											35	45
Upp West								45				
Volta		20					45					
Western	45		25		35							
Totals	190	70	70	55	35	45	55	55	45	35	35	50

EGRA/EGMA test administration/collection was conducted in 740 Schools in all the 10 regions in Ghana. Overall 174 data collectors were involved in the data collection and were organized into 87 teams. Two data collectors were assigned to each team based on their local language proficiency. However, there were some teams who conducted the assessment only in English in the Northern regions. The Assessment was conducted only in P2 and for each pupil at a time.

Each team visited a maximum of nine (9) schools for the data collection period. In each sampled school one day was used for the data collection exercise.

On arrival at the schools, assessors introduced themselves to either the head teacher or assistant head teacher and briefed him/her about their visit. After that, they moved on to the sampling process by sampling 10 pupils from P2 (5 boys/girls). But in some schools some assessors had more boys than girls and vice versa and some pupils were not up to ten due to various reasons. All sampled pupils were taken to a separate classroom for the assessment. Each team assessed between 70 and 90 pupils depending on the number of schools assigned to them. A list of the sampled schools and number of sampled pupils disaggregated by sex is attached.

Seven stages were used in the test administration/data collection exercise in each sampled school. These were sampling of ten pupils from a class, sampled pupils' had to endorse a Consent form agreeing to participate in the exercise, administering the EGRA Home Language test, administering the EGRA English test, and administering the EGMA test. Pupils' responded to a questionnaire about their home background and the head teacher assisted with the School Information questionnaire. The exercise took between 45 minutes and an hour for a pupil depending on the weather/school conditions and the pace of respective assessors in completing administrative issues and reading of test instructions and ensuring that sampled pupils were comfortable with, and at each stage of the test administration processes.

Task Area 6: Monitoring of Data Collection Process

Monitoring of the data collection activity was a very effective tool for ensuring quality and consistency in test administration processes. The supervisors were increased to 30 even though the sample schools had reduced. This ensured rigorous monitoring of the data collectors. Each supervisor was assigned to three teams and spent at least three days with a

team. Quality control officers were also designated to oversee the activities of the supervisors. The supervisors ensured that all logistics were provided and where challenges were encountered with their tangerine device the tangerine expert was available to assist in addressing the challenge. The assessors were to report any difficulty and seek direction from the supervisors and the supervisors to the quality control team. A clear line of communication was established which allowed for smooth implementation. This helped track the activities of the assessors and helped rapid response to issues.

Observations

Overall, participants performed quite well on the IRR session that was conducted to test their consistency in scoring responses based on a golden standard. The language experts in their various groups led these sessions.

The IRR scores showed that all assessors worked hard to improve their scores and have become reliable and proficient in administering the assessment

The third session of the IRR scores showed that all assessors had worked hard to improve their scores and had become reliable and proficient in administering the assessment

Trainees and indeed master trainers as well as the resource persons comported themselves very well. This was exhibited in their timeliness, activeness/enthusiasm and their love and support for each other in achieving the overall objectives of the workshop. In addition their attendance at all sessions was highly commendable

The word problem 3 of the EGMA sub task 6 was confusing to the children and need to be reviewed.

All assessors were able to get to their schools and conduct the exercise on schedule, few schools had to be replaced because of accessibility and these were done following standard procedures laid.

In some of the schools visited, the head teachers and Primary two teachers were not available because of an ongoing school head count exercise that required head teachers and teachers to go to a particular school or the District Education office. In some instances the schools had been closed for the day and assessors had to quickly go to another school.

Head teachers, teachers and pupils were receptive in all cases but two where the schools had to be replaced because the heads did not want their schools to participate.

Issues and Challenges

The workshop coincided with the Muslim fasting period and the coordination of their meals was at times challenging to the hotels especially in the Northern sector.

The Internet service signal at the Cape Coast center was very poor and sometimes tablets were sent to Internet Cafes for uploading. This was a prelude to how to react if Internet fails whilst in the field.

The roads to some of the schools were bad making commuting to and from those schools very difficult. Schools located in the hinterlands were also difficult to reach because of non-availability of vehicles as a result assessors had to ride on motorbikes.

The weather was unfriendly in some areas during the period of the data collection exercise. The raincoats given were helpful, however it was still difficult travelling on motorbikes whilst holding materials.

Some of the schools did not use the local language designated by GES, instead they used the predominant language in the area example: the Konkomba dominated communities in the north taught in konkomba which is not one of the languages stipulated, and in one school in Cape Coast Ewe was being taught instead of fante because the area was dominated Ewe.

Internet access was poor or non-existent in some schools visited. Under such circumstances, teams had to move to nearby towns in order to upload data collected.

The duration for assessing each pupil was sometimes too long, affecting pupils' levels of concentration. In some cases pupils got tired and appeared fidgety and inattentive.

Recommendations

Posting and allocation of schools to teams should be done in consultation with the master trainers and District Directors since they are from the area and are quite familiar with the terrain. EARC recommends this activity be finalized during master training sessions. This will minimize or reduce the long distances the assessors have to travel to reach the schools sampled for the assessment.

Final documents should reach Ghana at least two weeks before commencing an activity to reduce error associated with pressure.

There should be at least a week between Master training and assessor training to allow for ample time for preparation towards the assessor training.

We recommend that GES be informed about the discrepancies in language of instruction so that situations where assessment language does not match language of instruction for a particular school will be avoided.

It is recommended power banks be provided, to enable assessors charge tablets in locations where electricity is not available. In some cases assessors claimed they had to hire generators to charge their tablets.

Assessors think that for some areas such as the rural areas in the Northern Region and Northern Volta among others one-day interval should be given for travelling to distant schools this can be achieved by increasing the data collection period to three weeks or buying more tablets so we can have more assessors.

Assessors suggest that in future the carrier bags that contain tablets and paper protocol should be one that can be fixed to their backs (backpack) instead of the 'Ghana must go' bags which have to be hand held.

Assessors suggested intermittent breaks for pupils during the assessment so as to facilitate and sustain their concentration level, and also recommend that more time should be allotted

to the reading comprehension passages to allow them comprehend what they read to enable them answer questions based on the passage read.

Conclusion:

The evaluation report show the participants found the 10-day workshop on training assessors very successful in achieving its major intended outcomes. The participants had adequate opportunity to practice the EGRA and EGMA test administration process. Most of them (over 95%) attained a high standard of less than 5% disagreement in the second IRR. Finally, the participants had the opportunity to meet with their supervisors to discuss arrangements regarding meeting and travelling as well as responsibilities. All the assessors were excited to receive their supply/materials and money.

Old assessors have improved on their skills in administering the EGRA/EGMA assessment program. Their colleagues and master trainers/other resource persons ably supported the few new assessors. It must be noted that the old assessors did not consider their training in 2013 as an end in itself but opened up to instruction and learnt a lot especially through the multiple practices, the IRR sessions and the school visits.

Old assessors with prior experience did an exceptionally good job whilst conducting the assessment. They approached the task with such maturity, it is recommended they are used in future EGRA/EGMA.

The data collection exercise went on smoothly even though there were a couple of challenges as discussed above. The assessment was carried out successfully in all the sampled schools. All stakeholders (teachers, head teachers and personnel from the education Directorates) were very supportive during the period of the fieldwork.