

Recommendations from the Global Book Fund feasibility study



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Addressing the Global Learning Crisis: Successes and Challenges of Improving Reading Outcomes

Session: Books for Every Child

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RESULTS FOR
DEVELOPMENT

Leveraging market dynamics and health funds expertise, an IEP-R4D cross-team group was selected to:

Determine if there is a business case for a global book fund

Results for Development Institute

Cross-team project at R4D – Education, Health, Market Dynamics



International Education Partners

IEP has deep experience in curriculum review and reform, as well as in teaching and learning materials development.



A roster of senior experts in health and reading materials have provided additional guidance and insight.

A massive problem

250 million children in the developing world are struggling to recognize even basic words and numbers.

There are very few textbooks and learning materials in developing country classrooms to help children learn to read.

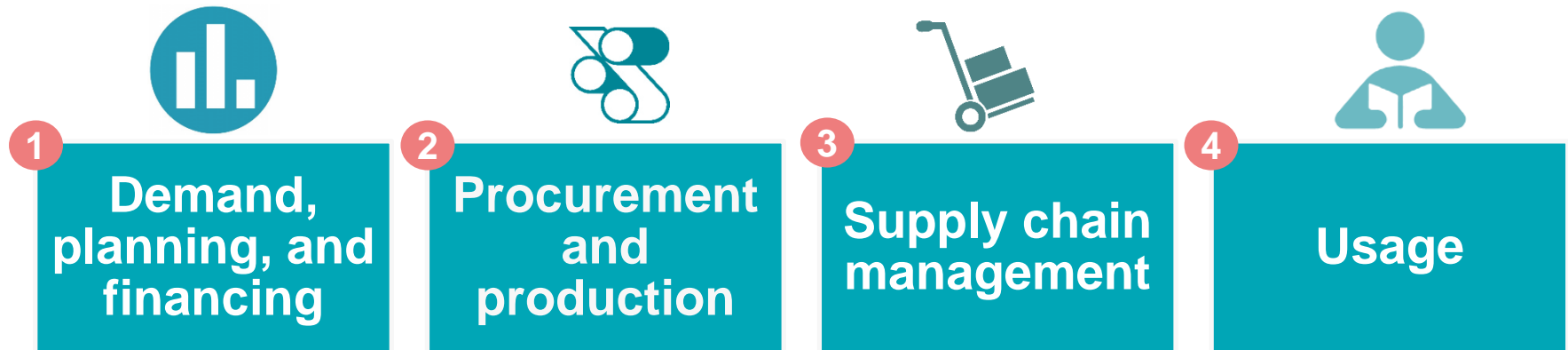
Select findings



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The findings from the Books for Every Child: The Global Book Alliance* feasibility study correspond to 4 key lines of inquiry:



*Also referred to as “Global Book Alliance” and “GBA” in subsequent slides.

Demand, planning, and financing of books



1

Lack of awareness of the importance of reading books to early grade literacy contributes to reduced demand from governments, teachers, and parents.



2

Lack of data on book provision and learning outcomes hinders assessing progress, identifying inefficiencies, planning, and mobilizing resources.



3

US\$3.1 billion - US\$3.9 billion must be spent on reading books and textbooks annually by LICs and MICs.

4

However, a ~US\$200 million gap in financing for reading books and textbooks exists in 18 of the 32 countries studied.



5

In countries where funding gaps exist, funding must be increased and/or spending efficiency improved.



Procurement and production of books

6

Inadequate supply of appropriate reading book titles due to low awareness of value of reading books, limited authorship capacity, and lack of content sharing arrangements.



Low availability of reading books in classrooms was consistent across all 13 country case studies undertaken by R4D and IEP, although some countries have recently made improvements.

7

Public sector book procurement is not always optimized for cost, quality, and sustainable supply.

Procurement inefficiencies include:

- x Unpredictable demand
- x Inadequate budgeting
- x Insufficient planning
- x Small print run sizes
- x Lack of transparency
- x Use of uneconomical printers
- x Inefficient book specifications
- x Fluctuating payment practices

Supply chain management & Usage of books



8

Common supply chain challenges include weak demand forecasting, poor management systems, inadequate financing, lack of trained staff, and inefficient distribution.

9

The effectiveness of distribution models varies by context.

Key considerations include:

- *Type of model (e.g. centralized, decentralized)*
- *Responsible actor (e.g. public, private, NGO, mixed).*
- *Accountability mechanisms*

10

Book provision does not equal usage.

A 2013 World Bank Uganda study reported that despite the presence of textbooks in public schools, no textbooks were used by students in 86% of the classes.

11

Many teachers are unaware how to appropriately use books in classrooms and how to set up and run school and classroom libraries.

The Global Book Alliance: Books for Every Child

Recommendations and Design



Photo courtesy of Room to Read



The Global Book Alliance could play 4 key global and country level functions to support increased access and provision of all books.

Global	Country level
1 Develop and disseminate knowledge and best practices	3 Fund technical assistance
2 Advocate and promote policy dialogue	4 Fund reading books and over time, textbooks

Function 1

At the global level, the Global Book Alliance could develop and disseminate knowledge and best practices in four ways.

1



Serving as a locus of technical expertise on the book chain

- Repository and information generator
- Guidance and research on procurement best practices, book specifications, etc.

2



Coordinating donor efforts

- Improve synergies and alignment
- Holding place for all books related activities

3



Facilitating content sharing

- Increase content availability
- Support content sharing platform, e.g. Global Reading Repository

4



Convening diverse stakeholders

- Increase collaboration
- Facilitate dialogue across the book chain

Function 2

At the global level, the Global Book Alliance could also play an advocacy role and spur long-term policy dialogue.

Function 2 supports two key purposes:

Instilling the importance of reading books and raising demand for books

“Early grade readers don’t have many words and so are not perceived [by parents] as ‘sophisticated enough’ for their children.”

- Robbi Cahjadi,
ProVisi Education

“The importance of a good supply of reading books in improving reading and literacy is not widely appreciated by lower primary teachers...”

- India Case Study

Creating long-term policy dialogue

“A key issue is the need to convince the state ministry of education of the importance of reading books in class.”

- India Case Study



Function 3

At the country level, the Global Book Alliance (GBA) could fund technical assistance to improve development, procurement, distribution, and usage of books.



1 Require a country-driven needs assessment to determine gaps

- May require GBA assistance or may align with national education sector plans
- Would form the basis for proposals to the GBA

2 Fund, but not directly provide, technical assistance

RMNCH Trust Fund spends ~50% of trust fund resources **funding training and technical assistance (TA)**, but not direct provision of TA.

3 Accompany technical assistance with flexible program funding

With the use of **flexible program funding**, CHAI's UNITAID increased sites for infant HIV/AIDS testing, with trained staff from 200 to 4,600 in 4 years.

Function 4

At the country level, the Global Book Alliance could fund reading books – and over time, textbooks – in mother tongue languages that correspond to LOIs.



Providing multi-year funding to increase demand predictability



Engage and build local publishing capacity



Directly procure books from publishers in emergencies or where government procurement capacity is absent

Limited to countries that both demonstrate financial need and country commitment

- * Require governments to provide financial contributions and/or adopt certain management and operational best practices
- * Require / support pooled procurement at the national level to increase efficiencies

Initial focus on funding pre-primary and primary reading books that correspond to mother tongue LOIs given their link to improving literacy.
Over time, the GBA might also move to fund the provision of textbooks.

Five structural and operational considerations are carefully assessed in our analysis.



Funding and implementation model



Institutional structure and governance



Country co-financing



Country eligibility, graduation, and allocation across countries



Monitoring and evaluation and accountability

Next steps



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Next steps and further analysis includes...

1 Refine operational and governance structures

Balance between autonomous and current host structures, and creation of decision making and participation processes

2 Test and explore specific approaches to demonstrate proof of concept

Small-scale pilots and other interventions in a select number of countries to refine the model

3 Consultations to generate political buy-in for a new mechanism

Building political support through extensive consultations with global and national stakeholders

4 Analyze the feasibility and provision of reading materials to targeted populations

Focus on the specific needs of children in distinct contexts

5 Refine the model for fund disbursement

Details on co-financing, frequency of disbursement, proposal submission and renewal, etc.

Already underway

Thank you!

For questions:

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Questions for discussion

- Do the findings and challenges described hold true for your context? Are there any other challenges along the book chain?
- How could the Global Book Alliance support activities in your country? What activities should be prioritized?
- How can we obtain the buy-in and support from stakeholders – including government ministries, implementers, printers, publishers, private sector, civil society – at the country level?

Annex



Summary of 16 findings



Summary of findings

Line of inquiry	Finding
Demand, planning, and financing of books	<p>1: Lack of awareness of the value of reading books in supporting literacy.</p> <p>2: Lack of data on book provision and learning outcomes limits the ability to assess progress, identify inefficiencies, and mobilize appropriate resources. A GBA could play a key role in a) providing funding or technical support to implement improved in-country data systems, b) making country-level data collection a requirement for GBA book funding; or c) hosting or supporting an online data sharing platform.</p> <p>3: To meet a theoretical minimum book standard for all pre-primary and primary students, low and middle-income countries need to spend between US\$3.1 billion - US\$3.9 billion yearly. However, research is needed to understand a more realistic current addressable market size.</p> <p>4: Analysis of primary education spending reveals an underfinancing of books, including textbooks and reading books. To meet minimum book standards, out of 32 countries studied, 18 face significant annual budget gaps that total nearly US\$200 million. However, improving spending efficiency, rather than raising absolute funds, is a priority for half of LMICs and all UMICs.</p> <p>5: There are three distinct categories of countries exhibiting different financing needs, requiring different types of support from a GBA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group 1 countries do not spend enough on both textbooks and reading books and do not have the capacity to increase spending.• Group 2 countries also have significant funding gaps but improved efficiency could help counter some of the gap.• Group 3 countries do not face funding gaps.

Line of inquiry	Finding
Procurement and production of books	<p>6: There is an inadequate supply of appropriate mother tongue reading book titles due to low awareness of the value of reading books, limited authorship capacity, and lack of content sharing arrangements. Given these challenges, the GBA could, at the global level, serve as or support a content repository to expand access to published titles, and at the country level, support the growth, sustainability, and quality of local publishing industries as needed.</p> <p>7: Public sector book procurement is not always optimized for cost, quality, and sustainable supply. A GBA could play a role in a) disseminating and incentivizing the use of procurement best practices, b) improving the consistency and predictability of demand, and/or c) promoting centralized pooled procurement for reading books at the national level to lower book costs.</p> <p>8: The cost to implement a digital reading program based on a library model is about 12-13 times more expensive than the cost to implement a similar print reading program. However, for structured reading programs where each child is reading the same book at the same time, digital programs are less expensive per child than print programs.</p> <p>9: There are high technical barriers to the adoption of digital reading materials, including a lack of sufficient infrastructure to support device use, and high intellectual property-related (IP-related) transaction costs.</p> <p>10: Operational challenges also constrain the uptake of digital materials, and include challenges related to education policy, content availability, and utilization.</p>
Supply chain management of books	<p>11: Supply chain issues vary by country, although common challenges include weak demand forecasting, poor management systems, inadequate financing, lack of trained staff and inefficient distribution.</p> <p>12: Distribution can be centralized or decentralized, with the public, private, and NGO sectors playing a mix of roles. The effectiveness of the distribution model varies by context and influenced by accountability measures and the capability of the responsible actor.</p> <p>13: Citizen accountability mechanisms to monitor distribution have been used successfully in some countries – for example, India and the Philippines – and may hold valuable lessons to reduce corruption in sub-Saharan Africa.</p>
Usage of books	<p>14: Although data on reading books is limited, research on textbooks reveals that book provision does not equate with usage.</p> <p>15: Many teachers are unaware how to appropriately use books in classrooms and how to set up and run school and classroom libraries. Usage can therefore be optimized through ensuring pedagogical quality of books, teacher training on how to incorporate books in lessons, establishment of classroom libraries, and advocacy campaigns.</p> <p>16: Although complementary reading programs can improve reading achievement in students, uncertainties on the cost-effectiveness of these programs persist due to lack of data and agreement on the ideal number of titles needed per student.</p>

Structural and operational considerations



Country co-financing should be a central part of the Global Book Alliance strategy.



Country co-financing

Countries receiving support for book purchase should be required to contribute a meaningful share of the cost to:

- Build national ownership and
- Prepare countries for assuming full responsibility for funding.

Considerations:

- Country ability to pay
- Timeframe for replacing external with domestic resources
- Reforming country budgetary processes



Gavi and GFATM require recipient countries to co-finance vaccine and program costs respectively.





Institutional structure and governance

Hosting the GBA within an existing institution will enable cost savings, greater integration with existing efforts, and alignment with the Accra accord.

A variety of host institutions were considered...

- Multilaterals
- Bilateral aid agencies
- NGOs
- Private institutions

...and weighed against criteria including:

- Neutrality
- Geographic scope
- Education focus
- Alignment with mission and current activities
- Appetite for a new mechanism
- Level of autonomy within host institution

GPE, UNICEF, and the World Bank may be possible hosts.

Preliminary consultations revealed...

- GPE is willing to further explore alignment with its mission and current activities.
- UNICEF is interested in exploring synergies, including with its Supply Division.
- The World Bank's current restructure may make it difficult to focus on a new GBA.

Governance structure would have to be determined accordingly.



We propose that the GBA provide cash grants and fund technical assistance in response to country proposals.

Questions that need further analysis and resolution include...

Proposal development process

- Who will develop the proposal?
- MOE? Local Education Group? Other?

Actors eligible for support

- Will actors besides national governments be eligible?
- Under what circumstances?

Alignment with existing channels

- To what extent will the GBA align with existing initiatives?

Method of technical assistance provision

- Will the GBA provide TA itself in certain circumstances?

Scope for results-based financing v. innovative financing

- As there is limited scope for innovative financing, to what extent and how should RBF be used?

Country eligibility and graduation criteria may vary based on type of support and grouping.



Country eligibility, graduation, and allocation across countries



Country eligibility criteria *for technical assistance* should be broad.



Eligibility *for direct funding* may be more limited and should consider need, government commitment, and income level.

Considerations:

- Variation of criteria for Group 1-3 countries
- Timeframes of support
- Proposal prioritization mechanism



The GBA will need to have its own robust M&E system, and will also need to support country M&E systems.

Robust country level M&E data will help...

- ✓ Ensure quality
- ✓ Safeguard against fund diversion
- ✓ Demonstrate project effectiveness and efficiency
- ✓ Evaluate country performance
- ✓ Determine phase out, country graduation, and grant allocations
- ✓ Serve as a global public good

The GBA may need to...

- Provide technical assistance to countries to develop M&E systems and capacity

The GBA M&E will also need to...

- Align GBA M&E indicators to existing country indicators to reduce high transaction costs
- Maintain flexibility of its M&E framework to track multiple activities



Using a tiered M&E approach, Gavi gathers existing and new data from routine program monitoring, targeted studies, and full country evaluations.