



PRESS RELEASE

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USAID LAUNCHES \$70 MILLION PROGRAM TO STRENGTHEN EARLY GRADE READING SKILLS IN AFGHANISTAN

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN – The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in close collaboration with the Afghanistan Ministry of Education (MoE) announced today the official launch of Afghan Children Read (ACR), a five year project in Early Grade Reading (EGR) for primary grades 1 to 3.

Despite the gains made in education in Afghanistan, access to quality education remains a challenge. To help reverse the situation, USAID is investing \$70 million in the ACR Project. This project will help to improve early grade reading skills for primary level students, boys and girls, in grades 1-3 in formal and community based education (CBE) schools. The ACR project will enable the MoE to utilize the best practices of EGR standards towards improving the primary level student's literacy and learning skills at large.

The February 28 launch ceremony was attended by Her Excellency Rula Ghani, First Lady of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the U.S. Embassy Special Chargé d'Affaires Ambassador Hugo Llorens, the Honorable Rahil Mohammad Formuly, Deputy Minister of Education, the USAID Mission Director to Afghanistan, Mr. Herbert Smith, Ministry officials, representatives of UN agencies, heads of national and international educational organizations, civil society and other stakeholders from the Education sector.

"The United States is committed to promoting education, and we passionately believe that education offers the best and surest path for a brighter future for Afghanistan," said U.S. Embassy Special Chargé d'Affaires Ambassador Hugo Llorens. "The Afghan Children Read Program is a clear example of this sacred commitment and it will directly advance opportunities for more than one million children in primary grades."

"A good education is the best gift we can ever give our children and their success depends on how educated they are in life," said Her Excellency Rula Ghani, First Lady of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. "I welcome and encourage any and all efforts that improve the state of education in Afghanistan."

ACR is a USAID-funded primary education initiative designed to improve equitable access to quality education and generate measurable reading outcomes for girls and boys in early grades in Afghanistan. ACR will support education service delivery, through building the capacity of the MoE to provide an evidence-based EGR program (in Dari and Pashto) for students in grades 1 to 3 in both formal and CBE schools.

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With almost \$17 billion spent on development programs in Afghanistan since 2002, USAID provides the largest bilateral civilian assistance program to Afghanistan. USAID partners with the government and people of Afghanistan to ensure economic growth led by the country's private sector, to establish a democratic and capable state governed by the rule of law, and to provide basic health and education services for all Afghans.

The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for more than 50 years."



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