USAID has been helping the Afghan government increase children’s access to basic education since 2002. The EGRS project acquired data and information on student reading ability in primary and community-based education schools, providing key information for the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the international donor community to reform and improve early grade reading instruction.

**ACTIVITIES**

- Made early grade reading materials available in local languages.
- Carried out a national assessment of the ability of second and fourth-grade students to read, understand letters, and recognize familiar words and connected text.
- Conducted a study of school safety and management effectiveness, and held national policy and dissemination workshops on the findings.
- Assessed the MoE’s capacity to implement early grade reading and public-private partnerships supporting a national reading improvement program.
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Early Grade Reading Assessment/School Management, Effectiveness and Safety Assessment (EGRA/SMES) results showed that on average, students in Grade 2 were able to read 18 correct words per minute, and more than one third of Grade 2 students scored 100% on oral reading fluency in Pashto.

- EGRA/SMES results showed that on average, students in Grade 4 read 44 correct words per minute, and almost one-fifth of Grade 4 students scored 100% on oral reading fluency in Dari.

- Conducted an assessment of the private sector to support reading programs in schools. The results from Kabul, Bamyan, Balkh, Nangarhar, and Herat indicated a high degree of willingness of the private sector to support reading activities in schools and an interest in partnering with the MoE.

- Formed working groups, composed of members of various MoE departments, to build institutional capacity, assess education materials and work on the EGRA/SMES. Throughout implementation, the MoE groups developed their capacity to implement activities themselves in support of early grade reading.