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USAID and Lions Clubs International Announce Partnership - Promoting Literacy Around the World

Oak Brook, Illinois, USA, June 26, 2012 —Today at the 95th annual Lions Clubs International Convention in Busan, South Korea, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Lions Clubs International (LCI) launched a new partnership aimed at promoting literacy around the world. This partnership will:

- Mobilize Lions club members to read to primary school children and to raise awareness about the critical nature of improving early grade reading;
- Recognize teacher excellence in promoting early grade reading through awards for schools, teachers, students and communities and other incentives;
- Promote reading among young children with disabilities, particularly people with visual impairments; and
- Assist USAID in reaching its target of improving the literacy of 100 million children in developing nations by 2015.

Eric G. Postel, USAID Assistant Administrator for Economic Growth, Education and Environment, and Wayne A. Madden, the 2012-13 International President of Lions Clubs International, signed a Memorandum of Understanding setting a framework for joint activities at the final plenary session that was attended by 55,000 Lions members from around the world.

“USAID and Lions Clubs International share the belief that literacy is critical to the future of all children, and that literate children contribute to their society’s stability, economy, health and growth. This partnership is a critical way to leverage both organizations’ resources to this ambitious goal,” said Postel.

“Lions’ contribution to global literacy, while continuing to support those with vision and other impairments, will change the lives of millions of people around the world,” said Madden. “This will improve their quality of life and earning potential.”

USAID’s Education Strategy is based on the premise that education is foundational to human development and critical to broad-based economic growth and poverty reduction. A key goal of this strategy is to improve reading for children in primary grades. Since early grade reading competency is essential to success in later grades, children who do not learn to read at an early age will likely make limited educational progress throughout their lives. They will have limited economic and developmental opportunities as a result.



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Working in more than 86 countries, USAID supports international development and advances U.S. foreign policy objectives by supporting economic growth, agriculture and trade, global health, democracy, conflict mitigation and management, and humanitarian assistance in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe and Eurasia. For more information about USAID, please visit [usaid.gov](https://www.usaid.gov).

Lions Clubs International is the world's largest service club organization with 1.35 million members in more than 46,000 clubs in 207 countries and geographic areas. In addition to its efforts toward conquering blindness, the organization has made a strong commitment to community service and helping youth throughout the world. To learn more about Lions Clubs International, visit [lionsclubs.org](https://www.lionsclubs.org).

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