

OEF Educational Program Development

- Opportunity Education Foundation (OEF) program is used in eleven countries across two continents, the national curriculum, standards, and/or requirements often vary greatly within specific content country areas. National curriculums were always accessed and studied, but the final decision to standardize OEF content was based on U.S. standards.
- Opportunity education curriculum is an extension or supplement to the curriculum required in each country. OEF curriculum is not intended to be a total replacement curriculum. In addition to the OEF lessons, on-site trainings, site visits, and training DVDs allow teachers opportunity to apply lessons to their individual school or country curriculum to enhance or supplement the national curriculum.
- Content decisions were based on standards from U.S. based national professional organizations such as NCTE, NCSS, and et.al. As the United States Department of Education allows individual state performance and content standards instead of national standards, it was determined that the work of the national originations on voluntary standards would be comprehensive and supersede individual state standards. In most content areas state standards are also referenced during the initial development process.
- Specific lesson objectives were developed after meetings with curriculum writers, major vendors, and re-examination of total scope and sequence. Applicability to developing work, production constraints, and reproducibility in the developing world are all considerations in final lesson design. In short, the question become “How can OEF teach crucial standards?”
- Other key references used in development of the Opportunity Education Scope and Sequence include the 21st Century Skills developed by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21), a leading advocacy organization consisting of business and education leaders who have examined the global skills needed for the 21st century (critical thinking, problem solving, and communication within core content areas).
- All curriculum decisions are research-based and finding from key research organizations such as McCrel are referenced as lessons were developed.

Content-Specific Comments:

Reading/Language Arts

- Lessons reflect both International Reading Association (IRA) and National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) standards and employ a balanced-literacy approach within the confines of developing world school structure and untrained teachers. Emphasis is placed on process skills, especially in the areas of reading comprehension and writing.
- An item analysis of OEF assessments and on-site school visits in Africa and Asia both demonstrated the need for more intensive vocabulary instruction, primarily due to the fact that most learners are English as a Second Language Learners (ESL). An intensive, supplemental vocabulary program is provided as noted on the Reading/LA descriptions.
- Lesson 6 (Six Traits of Writing) employs a version of Beck's 6 Traits that has been modified for use in the letter-writing portion of the OEF Sister Schools program. Great Source handbooks supplement that is well.

Social Studies

- Social studies standards come from three different national Organizations (National Council for Social Studies – NCSS, National Geography, and Economics Education), OEF Social Studies incorporates elements of all three organizations.
- Social Studies instruction in OEF does not begin until grade 4 so many of the skills are still being introduced in the grade 6 curriculum including some basic map skills and historical research process skills.

Science

- *National Science Education Standards* were actually produced by the National Research Council in 1995 and published in 1996 and are now being endorsed and promoted by National Science Teachers Association (NSTA). These are the key standards on which OEF curriculum is based.
- All seven stand areas are addressed throughout the OEF curriculum.
- Science standards are linked to Reading standards whenever possible so as to reemphasize process skills and for cross-over in materials use, especially the purchase of non-fiction libraries.
- The four stand areas are based on National Standards from National Art Education Association (NAEA) with an emphasis placed on multi-cultural applications to creative arts.
- The Performing Arts/Music strand is built on a music awareness program begun in the Preprimary OEF curriculum. Schools have received rhythm sticks, percussion sets, bells, and other supplemental materials at each grade level to encourage the development of music programs.