

# ***D-RASATI***

## **Developing Rehabilitation Assistance to Schools and Teacher Improvement Lebanon**

### **First Quarterly Report October – December 2010**

**Presented to Zeina Salame  
USAID Agreement Officer's Technical Representative  
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**Submitted by  
Education Development Center  
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## FIRST QUARTER HIGHLIGHTS

October – December 2010

- USAID awarded the D-RASATI project to EDC, September 29, 2010.
- The D-RASATI MOU between USAID and MEHE signed Dec. 20, 2010.
- Meetings initiated with D-RASATI Coordination Committee.
- Component working groups established between MEHE representatives and project team.
- 89 Volunteers recruited to assist with assessment.
- Key personnel arrived on field; Finance Director hired; additional staff added.
- Lease signed for D-RASATI office.

## BACKGROUND

USAID's Developing Rehabilitation Assistance to Schools and Teacher Improvement (D-RASATI) program is a five-year education project designed to improve student achievement by: a) improving the quality of teachers' performance through in-service training, b) upgrading the educational environments at all Lebanese public schools based on standards agreed upon in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and c) increasing stakeholder engagement in school activities.

D-RASATI will provide technical assistance and capacity building in five core program components:

1. Comprehensive Assessment of all Public Schools
2. Improved School Learning Environments
3. Increased Learning Opportunities
4. Increased Stakeholder Engagement in Public Schools
5. High Quality Monitoring and Evaluation

The long-term goal for the D-RASATI program is to increase the capacity of MEHE and the Center for Educational Development and Research (CERD) to deliver quality in-service teacher training, improve school learning environments, and develop community involvement in schools while promoting positive perceptions of public schools among all stakeholders.

The D-RASATI project contributes to USAID/Lebanon Education Assistance Objective of *Student Achievement Improved*. Implementation activities will be conducted at the community, regional and national levels.

On September 29, 2010, USAID awarded the five-year Cooperative Agreement to the Education Development Center (EDC). EDC will serve as the prime implementer of project activities, facilitated by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE). Five additional partners complete the D-RASATI team: the American University of Beirut (AUB), the Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF), International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), the Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development (HFSHD) and AMIDEAST.

## STRATEGY

D-RASATI's strategy for achieving project outcomes encompasses the immediate **learning environment** in which students find themselves, the **institutional structures** that support teaching and learning, and the **community resources** that enhance them. These three mutually supportive influences interact and are

best addressed together. An initial comprehensive assessment will determine the overall project interventions in each of the three areas: capacity building for providing in-service teacher training; school infrastructure, including renovation, equipment, and laboratory needs; and community mobilization and extracurricular needs, especially for marginalized schools.

While the entire D-RASATI team will work together to implement the initial assessment, each partner will utilize its particular expertise to implement subsequent project activities. As the prime, EDC will oversee all project activities. The American University of Beirut (AUB) will work with EDC to provide technical support to improving teacher and student performance; the Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF), the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) and the Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development (HFSHD) will focus on rehabilitating and equipping schools; and HFSHD and AMIDEAST will bring their expertise in engaging communities. HFSHD will also provide support for policy advocacy and work with principals.

Critical to the Project's success will be its collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE). The Minister of Education and Higher Education chairs D-RASATI's Steering Committee while representatives from MEHE, along with USAID and D-RASATI personnel, serve on the Coordination Committee. The ongoing participation of MEHE in all project activities will facilitate project implementation.

## **D-RASATI QUARTER 1 PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES**

### **ASSESSMENT**

#### Recruitment of Volunteers

Consistent with D-RASATI's goal of engaging the Lebanese community in support of public schools, D-RASATI staff has recruited a cadre of 89 qualified volunteers to assist with assessment data collection. Volunteers include private sector employees in the fields of education, engineering, architecture, construction, IT, and community engagement; retired teachers, administrators, and municipal employees; NGOs working in the areas of education and community mobilization; and upper-level university and graduate students in areas directly related to the project's activities (for example, engineering, architecture, sociology, social work, and education).

The project also selected an initial pool of candidates for the position of field coordinator, who will assume significant responsibility for ensuring that data are collected and reported accurately and for building initial relationships with schools and communities (a critical component of the field survey).

#### Technical development and implementation

An initial data collection and work plan for the assessment was developed, by component. Parallel data collection will occur in all three areas (teacher training, rehabilitation and equipment, and community mobilization/extracurricular activities). Component delegates met with MEHE counterparts to share the initial work plan, explore existing efforts in the project technical areas, begin to assemble a list of data sources for review and consideration during the assessment, and establish working relationships.

**Teacher training:** The team met with MEHE counterparts and received an initial delivery of documents related to teacher training in Lebanese public schools to review. Work was begun on a review of international literature related to best practices in teacher training, and on a similar analysis of the most

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effective prior efforts in Lebanese public schools. Discussions within the team on the adaptation of the Standards-Based Classroom Observation Protocol for Educators (SCOPE) tool for use in Lebanon were begun, with the goal of presenting to MEHE in January. The possible addition to the work plan of a teacher skills assessment in English (for English teachers and teachers of subjects taught in English) was discussed and resources for doing so explored.

**Rehabilitation and Equipment:** The team met with MEHE counterparts and received an initial delivery of documents related to prior learning environment improvement efforts in Lebanese public schools to review. The team reviewed these reports, along with existing instruments developed under LEAD, CERD instruments, WHO tools and other local instrumentation, and proposed an initial draft of a field survey tool to capture school level data.

**Community Mobilization and Extracurricular Activities:** The team met with MEHE counterparts and received an initial delivery of documents related to community mobilization and extracurricular activity development efforts in Lebanese public schools to review. An initial database of community resources available to support schools was also developed. In addition to the project's named resource partners, 9 organizations from the business and education sectors were identified as potential contributors to D-RASATI's activities.

**Other:** The possible addition to the work plan of a more detailed assessment of the existing school-level data systems for management and administration was discussed and resources for doing so explored.

## D-RASATI QUARTER 2 ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

### MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING

On December 20, 2010, D-RASATI was officially recognized with the signing of the Memo of Understanding by the Minister of Education and Higher Education Hassan Mneimneh and USAID Lebanon Mission Director Jim Barnhart. Observing the event were Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri and U.S. Ambassador Maura Connelly. The finalization of the MOU signaled the official start of D-RASATI.

The signing of the MOU advanced EDC's efforts to register as an NGO in Lebanon. The application form was sent to the Ministry of Interior in December. Although the application was on the "fast track" for approval, recent political events have curtailed the registration process. Unless exceptional approval is granted, EDC's registration process will be stalled until a new government is formed.

### ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS AND STAFFING

EDC moved quickly establish D-RASATI's presence in Lebanon. Within days of the award, EDC's advance team arrived to begin the preliminary work of setting up a project. EDC developed a policies and procedures manual for the project, interviewed and engaged a law firm to handle registration, and conducted a security assessment. Key personnel and EDC home office contracts and finance representatives attended the post-award review with the mission.

During the first quarter, D-RASATI's key personnel arrived, and hiring of additional staff members began. EDC's partners also brought on staff for the project. Table 2.1 details the deployment/employment of the D-RASATI team during this quarter.

Table 2.1 D-RASATI STAFFING<sup>1</sup>

<b>EDC</b>	
Nancy Parks	Chief of Party
Susan Ross	Deputy Chief of Party
Dr. Rachel Christina	Monitoring and Evaluation Director
Ziad AbiAbdallah	Finance Manager
<b>AMIDEAST</b>	
Dr. Khatoun Haddad	Community Mobilization and Extracurricular Activities Manager
<b>AUB</b>	
Dr. Ghazi Ghaith	AUB In-Service Professional Development Expert – Languages and Social Sciences
Dr. George Farag	AUB/REP Liaison Consultant
<b>CHF</b>	
Ayman Abdallah	Country Director
Cynthia Dagher	Reporting and Contracting Officer
Ibrahim Mansour	Senior Engineer
Mohamad Chehaded	Engineer
Maya Chall	Tendering and Data Processing Officer
<b>IOCC</b>	
Linda Shaker Berbari	Rehabilitation Coordinator (80%)
Fadi Haddad	Construction Manager (100%)
Ketty Karam	Finance Manager (70%)
Pascale Khalil	Accountant (100%)
Suzy Kazan	Tendering and Data Processing Manager (70%)
Maral Joulouyan	Reporting and Communication Officer (70%)
Chadia Alloui	Janitor (70%)

## OFFICE SELECTION

In December, EDC signed the lease for office space in the Eshmoun Building on Damascus Street, near Sodeco Square. The office, conveniently located in central Beirut, should be ready for occupancy by the end of February 2011.

## PROJECT CHALLENGES

In the initial project stages, D-RASATI personnel will need to invest much effort in building the confidence of the MEHE to partner effectively. The purpose and outcomes of the assessment will need to be agreed upon in order for the initial assessment to be undertaken. The MEHE enthusiastically participates in all component working groups, but a shared understanding of the assessment will facilitate its implementation.

<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the three EDC expatriate personnel, all other D-RASATI personnel hired specifically for the project will be engaged as consultants until EDC's registration process is finalized.

Project start up can be challenging, frustrating and time consuming. D-RASATI's local partners and staff successfully mitigated many of the traditional nuisances for EDC staff. EDC leased its office within the first quarter and began the process of registering as a company in Lebanon. However, the registration process is lengthy, and until it is finalized, EDC staff will have to be hired as consultants, V.A.T. and customs duties will need to be paid, shipments will be delayed, and even a minor detail such as telephone land lines will need to be carefully negotiated. (USAID's contracts office in Cairo has granted EDC permission to charge customs and VAT taxes to the award until the company is officially registered, in order to allow the project to move forward with activities.) During the next quarter, EDC will explore the possibility of an exceptional registration approval to facilitate project implementation.

## **SECOND QUARTER PLANNED ACTIVITIES**

- Field Survey Tool finalized and survey begun in all schools.
- Review of literature for the assessment completed.
- Field coordinators hired; volunteers secured.
- D-RASATI occupies new office space.