

D-RASATI

Developing Rehabilitation Assistance to Schools and Teacher Improvement

Sixth Quarterly Report January-March 2012

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AUB	American University of Beirut
ALLC	American Lebanese Language Center
BoQ	Bill of Quantities
CE	Community Engagement
CERD	Center for Educational Research and Development
CHF	Community Housing Foundation
COP	Chief of Party
DG	Director General
DOPS	Department of Guidance and Counseling
D-RASATI	Developing Rehabilitation Assistance to Schools and Teacher Improvement
ECA	Extracurricular Activities
ECU	Engineering Coordination Unit
EDC	Education Development Center
ESP/L	Effective Schools Profile/Lebanon
HFSHD	Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IOCC	International Orthodox Christian Charities
LDP	Leadership Development Program
LU	Lebanese University
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PD	Professional development
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
ProGRess SCaLe	P rofessional G rowth and R eforms S upport S ystem: S tandards-based C lassroom observation for L ebanon
SIS	School Information System
SPAC	Strategic Plan Advisory Committee
SPDT	Strategic Plan Development Team
SMC	Senior Management Council
SOW	Scope of Work
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistance
TLCs	Teacher Learning Circles
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USAID/L	USAID/Lebanon

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This quarter saw significant movement towards finalizing the D-RASATI master plan, increasing the level of project activity, and raising the project profile across Lebanon.

All but four of the 37 schools rehabilitated by the project in 2011 have now been handed over to MEHE; the remaining four are in areas difficult to access in winter and will be transferred in the coming quarter. A media tour was organized by the US Embassy to one of these 37 schools (Btighrine Secondary School) on the occasion of USAID's 50th anniversary. The purpose of the visit was to highlight D-RASATI's work in the school. Reports in the media on the visit and on the work were positive.

A final list of 293 additional schools eligible for consideration for rehabilitation under the project was approved by MEHE in March, and engineering visits to those schools to prepare Bills of Quantity (BoQs) and cost the potential work began. Effective School Profile for Lebanon (ESP/L) standards for all program domains were submitted, and the facilities and infrastructure standards were the first to be approved – these standards will guide all rehabilitation work under the program.

Elements of a draft strategy for science laboratory equipment procurement including criteria and a categorization approach for school selection along with a draft list of recommended priority equipment for schools were developed. An initial sorting of schools eligible for D-RASATI interventions under this strategy was prepared.

Testing of 4,065 public school teachers who use English as their language of instruction was completed this quarter, and data analysis for teacher training planning began.

Preparations for the piloting of the Progress Scale teacher observation tool continued. Briefing meetings for principals in all regions took place and a data team orientation meeting was held on March 30th. Data collection will begin in April.

A master plan retreat for D-RASATI, USAID, and MEHE stakeholders on February 7 provided the basis for agreement on changes to the draft plan that had been submitted on December 9, 2011. D-RASATI submitted the revised version of the project master plan on Friday, February 17. The week of March 5-9 was dedicated to a series of small group meetings to finalize the various components of the plan, with another joint draft submitted on March 13. On March 27, MEHE sent additional comments, to which D-RASATI responded with a revised plan March 28. Official approval of that version is anticipated in the coming quarter.

An informational event on the D-RASATI program was held for a selected, high-interest audience at the Grand Serail on February 27. Led by His Excellency the Prime Minister, Mr. Naguib Miqati, and His Excellency the Minister of Education and Higher Education, Dr. Hassan Diab, and including remarks by Her Excellency US Ambassador Maura Connelly, the event presented the work already completed by the project and introduced the broad strokes of the master plan to an audience of key stakeholders. This high-profile event provided an important stamp of approval for the project and a launch for its efforts over the coming years.



H.E. the Minister of Education and Higher Education delivers remarks at the D-RASATI event on February 27, in the presence of H.E. the U.S. Ambassador and H.E. the Prime Minister.

II. TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENTS

A. COMPONENT 1: ASSESSMENT

A.1. Subcomponent 1.1: Identify and Prioritize Technical Needs to Improve the Delivery of Quality Teacher Training for Lebanese Public Schools

Teacher English Test

On March 17, D-RASATI completed the administration of the D-RASATI Test of Teacher English Proficiency to 4,065 teachers whose language of instruction is English. The American Lebanese Language Center (ALLC) administered the BULATS standard tests (covering listening and reading), writing tests and speaking tests to targeted public school teachers, over 23 test days and 40 test sites. Appendix 1 provides details on the breakdown of tests taken and test-takers. 541 teachers (12% of those identified as Anglophone in the public school teacher roster) did not take the test, although multiple opportunities were provided. Score reports on 2,222 teachers had been received as of the end of the quarter and initial analysis begun. A progress report on the effort was provided to MEHE in February. The final data set is expected to be available in mid-April.



Resistance to the English test was encountered in a few areas, as communication by MEHE to principals and teachers about the test's purpose and the nature of the information to be collected was not smooth. Stakeholder fears about the collection and sharing of personal information on teachers were responded to by MEHE and D-RASATI, and the percentage of teachers who had refused to test on the first opportunity in these areas increased dramatically during the make-up opportunities.

ProGReSS SCcaLe Classroom Observations

Response to the Progress Scale training held at the end of the last quarter continued to be overwhelmingly positive,



including notice from the Education Inspectorate to MEHE that the Inspectorate intends to cascade the training to its full cadre, and a request from DOPS to train all new DOPS staff on the Progress Scale for use in their visits to schools.

Follow-on planning for initial data collection proceeded during this quarter. A random sample of 760 teachers was selected for tool testing and baseline data collection, and briefing sessions on the purpose and methods of the study were held for the regional MEHE directors and for the principals of schools in which the sampled teachers are employed. These principal sessions were strong examples of local ownership of the program – they were led by the CERD Regional Training Directors, with D-RASATI technical team presence for reference, and

endorsed by the MEHE regional Directors, who exhorted principals to participate and support this “national effort at quality improvement.” Both directors and principals embraced the study, noting the need for one clear set of standards against which teacher performance could be assessed and related to which teacher support could be planned.

A one-day refresher training and orientation for 46 data collectors and data quality monitors was held on March 30, in preparation for data collection beginning immediately after Orthodox Easter in April. Data collection planning

was coordinated at the regional level, managed by D-RASATI in partnership with the CERD regional training directors and Center Directors, who will field the majority of data collectors. As in December, DOPS, LU and Inspectorate representatives also attended the training and participated positively and with enthusiasm in the effort.

Literature Review on Professional Development

The teacher training literature review was submitted to MEHE on Friday, February 16.

A.2. Subcomponent 1.2: Identify and Prioritize Rehabilitation and Academic Resource Needs in all Lebanese Public Schools

School Selection for Rehabilitation

A final list of schools eligible for consideration for rehabilitation under D-RASATI was generated and approved by MEHE during this quarter. Following additional analysis on the distribution of schools by need categories and the proportionality of distribution by regions, a coordinating committee meeting on February 6 resulted in a new set of selection criteria for schools for rehabilitation, and an agreement that rehabilitation would be evenly geographically distributed by district and target schools at all levels of need, as reflected in the D-RASATI field survey data. Schools owned by the MEHE, built as schools, and with large current and potential enrollments were sorted. The revised list of schools qualified for consideration for rehabilitation under D-RASATI, using these criteria, and targeting 20% of schools in each district, was submitted on February 17. A supplementary list of schools eligible for consideration in all categories but enrollment was also submitted. MEHE reviewed and adjusted the list, within the limits of the criteria, resulting in a list of 293 schools for which BOQ packages (including schematic drawings, BoQs and photographs of needed work) will be prepared. This list was presented by the Director General to the regional education directors in a meeting, attended by D-RASATI representatives, in which the Ministry's ownership of the process and the objective, transparent final product was made clear by the DG and applauded by the regional team.

School Selection for Science Laboratory Procurement

Field survey data were used to sort schools against a set of criteria developed with the MEHE Science Equipment Working Group. Schools built according to the new building standards reflected in Decree 9091 and schools housing only KG and/or cycle 1 were eliminated from consideration, and all others sorted according to four categories of need determined by the science laboratory equipment working group.

Supplementary Data Analysis from the D-RASATI Field Survey

Additional data cleaning and analysis of the open-ended and clustered questions in the areas of extracurricular activities, community engagement, and teacher training from the D-RASATI field survey was conducted to develop supplementary reports in these areas. The master report for general audiences was approved by MEHE and it and a strategy for releasing it and the supplementary reports will be developed in the next quarter.

Extracurricular Activities Gap Analysis

The Extracurricular Activities piece of the assessment continued with a review of relevant legislation [School Clubs Decree (2000), Parent Council Law of Public Schools (2007), Internal Regulations for Elementary and Intermediate Public Schools (1968), Internal Regulations for Public High Schools (1974), and Parent Council Law of Secondary Public Schools (1972)], as well as the revision of the ECA literature review draft in response to comments from MEHE. The ECA Literature Review was commissioned and a draft was received in January; however based on MEHE's feedback during the meetings of March 7 and March 8, 2012, the Literature Review will now be redrafted in order to emphasize the Lebanese experience with a reduced focus on international best practices. Focus group planning also continued, with the development of the focus group methodology and criteria for participant selection.

Community Engagement Gap Analysis

The Community Engagement piece of the assessment also drew on the review of the law of 1968 (Internal Regulations for Elementary and Intermediate Public Schools) and the 2007 Parent Council Decree. An updated draft of the Community Engagement literature review, focusing on best practices internationally, was also developed. However, master planning resulted in significant changes in the component that includes work with communities (now renamed School Leadership Development with Parent and Community Involvement), including the removal of the proposed focus groups from the work plan.

SMIS

In response to MEHE's formal request in the previous quarter, USAID initially requested a draft scope of work for an SMIS assessment from the project. Ultimately, however, the mission decided to decouple the SMIS work from D-RASATI entirely and to manage the assessment as a separate effort.

A.3. Subcomponent 1.3: Present Findings, Analysis, and a Master Plan

Effective School Profile

A draft of the proposed Effective School Profile for Lebanon (ESP/L), comprised of standards and indicators for school performance in all of the project's component areas and additional linked areas of importance to the Ministry, was submitted to MEHE for review on February 6. Initial feedback was positive, and the facilities and infrastructure standards embodied in the ESPL were approved in February. These standards will guide D-RASATI's rehabilitation work in schools: all schools rehabilitated by the project will meet or exceed ESPL standards for Effective Schools.

Master Planning

A master plan retreat for D-RASATI, USAID, and MEHE stakeholders on February 7 provided the basis for agreement on changes to the draft plan that had been submitted on December 9, 2011. D-RASATI submitted the revised version of the project master plan on Friday, February 17. The week of March 5-9 was dedicated to a series of small group meetings to finalize the various components of the plan, with another joint draft submitted on March 13. On March 27, MEHE sent additional comments, to which D-RASATI responded with a revised plan March 28. Official approval of that version is anticipated in the coming quarter.

B. COMPONENT 2: SCHOOL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS IMPROVED

B.1. Sub-component 2.1: Lebanese Schools Meet MEHE-Established Standards

Summer/Fall 2011 Rehabilitation Handovers

33 of the 37 schools rehabilitated by D-RASATI during summer/fall 2011 had been handed over to MEHE by the end of this quarter. Four (4) schools located high in the mountains (Ehmej, Kartaba, Bcharreh and Bakhoun) were still awaiting inspection by the ECU/MEHE engineers at the end of the quarter. Engineers had not been able to visit the schools due to bad weather conditions.

Provision and installation of resin lab tables and emergency eye washes were completed in all 19 schools of the 37 that had been identified as needing these fixtures.

Second Wave Rehabilitation

On March 16, D-RASATI received official permission from MEHE for D-RASATI engineers and assistant engineers to enter the 293 public schools selected as eligible for consideration for rehabilitation under the project



Media tour of the D-RASATI-rehabilitated Btghrine Secondary School on the occasion of USAID's 50th Anniversary

(see Component 1: Assessment) in order to assess their detailed rehabilitation needs and prepare the relevant bills of quantities (BoQs). A guidebook for infrastructure rehabilitation was developed to be used by engineers, and all field engineers were trained on the ESP/L school rehabilitation and infrastructure standards and the preparation of BoQs. Forty-two engineers began visits to schools to take measurements and prepare BoQs, with special permission from MEHE to enter schools on holidays to facilitate rapid completion of the work. 166 schools had been visited by the end of the quarter: 9 schools in Beirut, 20 schools in Bekaa, 39 schools in Mount Lebanon, 20 schools in Nabatiyeh, 58 schools in the North and 20 schools in the South. D-RASATI will start submitting BoQs to MEHE for review and approval in the first week of April.

During these school visits, six schools were identified as schools in which the building and students are at risk. The engineering findings for these schools corresponded with the relevant item scores schools received on the D-RASATI field survey. D-RASATI reported these critical cases and additional concerns and questions about the rehabilitation of shared buildings, prefabricated structures, and schools operating in rented facilities to MEHE for the Ministry's urgent attention and reply.

In preparation for developing the framework for the long-term maintenance of the completed rehabilitation works in schools, D-RASATI finalized the report on the workshop that was conducted on December 16, 2011 at MEHE on "The Maintenance of School Facilities". D-RASATI recommendations were added to the report, which will be submitted to USAID and MEHE in the first week of April.

B.2. Sub-component 2.2: Provision of Equipment, School Furniture, Including But Not Limited to Computer and Science Laboratories in Schools

The most significant background development for work in this component this quarter and hereafter was the agreement during the master plan revision on the limitations on furniture and equipment procurement under D-RASATI. Within the final master plan, furniture is limited to science or computer lab furniture, and equipment is limited to science laboratory equipment and administrative and ICT equipment that will be detailed in the final ICT for Teaching and Learning Strategy being developed with assistance from D-RASATI. As the ICT strategy will not be ready until summer 2012, work this quarter to prepare for procurement therefore focused on science lab equipment.

Science Laboratory Equipment

Activities related to science lab equipment procurement focused on clarifying the specific equipment to be procured within the context of a larger science laboratory strategy for the Ministry.

MEHE designated a team of representatives to work with the D-RASATI procurement team and science education specialists to generate a prioritized standard list of science lab equipment for schools in Lebanon. The science lab equipment focal points and working group met to discuss the standards for equipment and the strategy for science labs, and the MEHE team agreed to review and give feedback by February 20 on the list of prioritized equipment that D-RASATI's science education experts had developed. A draft strategy for science labs was submitted to the project by email, with agreement that the final version would be submitted by the focal points to D-RASATI by March 10. As of the end of the quarter, the strategy and final list of prioritized equipment have not been received from MEHE.

C. COMPONENT 3: INCREASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

C.1. Sub-component 3.1: MEHE/CERD Capacity to Provide Quality In-Service Teacher Training Improved

Teacher Learning Circles and Subject-Area Hubs

The framework for the training of TLC facilitators was finalized internally. Work began on the development of the training module and materials for the Teacher Learning Circles (TLCs).

Teacher Trainer Standards

The draft teacher trainer standards were reviewed internally. Based on feedback, D-RASATI prepared an introduction to the standards describing the purpose and uses of the standards document. The final draft was translated into Arabic and will be submitted to MEHE in the coming quarter

English Language Courses

Preparations for the process of identifying English language training providers have begun and will be finalized in the coming quarter, based on the analysis of the teacher English test results.

ICT Strategy for Teaching and Learning

The Final Draft of the Lebanon National Educational Technology Strategic Plan was completed on February 28 and (as agreed to in the approved SPDT work plan) submitted to the Minister of Education on February 29. The SPDT is working with MEHE authorities to finalize the members of the Strategic Plan Advisory Committee (SPAC) and others who will provide input into the draft plan as part of the review process.

Sub-component 3.2: Extra-Curricular Activities Expanded at Intermediate and Secondary Schools

All activities related to this subcomponent are reported under Component 1: Assessment.

D. COMPONENT 4: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT INCREASED IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

All activities related to this component are reported under Component 1: Assessment.

Sub-Component 4.1: Increased Local Stakeholder Engagement in Schools

All activities related to this subcomponent are reported under Component 1: Assessment.

E. COMPONENT 5: HIGH QUALITY MONITORING AND EVALUATION ACHIEVED

E.1. Sub-component 5.1: Establish a Research Design, Develop a Baseline Data Collection Survey, and Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for Project

PMP

Two drafts of the proposed project results framework and PMP were submitted to USAID during this quarter. The first, in January, reflected the master plan as submitted to MEHE in December. The second draft, which was submitted to USAID and its M&E subcontractor Social Impact, was aligned with the final version of the master plan submitted for approval on March 13, and a meeting was requested to review and finalize the plan.

Quarterly Reporting

The quarterly report for Quarter 5 was submitted to USAID on January 30.

III. CHALLENGES, CONSTRAINTS, AND RESPONSES

General

USAID formally notified the Ministry of Education and Higher Education that the project may cover transportation, meal and lodging costs in line with USAID regulations, but may not pay MEHE or CERD personnel to participate in activities, as these personnel are considered program beneficiaries. This is a particular issue for CERD personnel, who are typically compensated for research and training work done on behalf of the Ministry. MEHE agreed to provide limited release time to those CERD personnel participating in the Progress Scale effort who are also public school teachers to enable that data collection to take place (these personnel will collect data during their MEHE-paid teaching days rather than their CERD-paid days), but this withdrawal of teachers from actual instruction to support other project activities is non-sustainable. A MEHE solution to the funding of MEHE and CERD personnel for their involvement in the program is necessary to allow teacher training and data collection activities to progress as planned.

Delays in approval of the master plan, related to the limited availability (due to competing priorities) of the small number of MEHE staff participating in the review, have caused the proposed timeline to slip further. As of the end of the quarter, the project is still awaiting approval on a master plan whose timeline was to have begun in March.

Specific counterpart teams within MEHE remain indeterminate. Even when individuals or teams have been formally named to provide support to specific project activities, MEHE/CERD staff have encountered real obstacles in providing the necessary counterpart level of effort to ensure that the partnership approach required under the Paris Agreement and endorsed by the USAID/L mission director for D-RASATI is successful. For example, one individual with other full-time responsibilities at MEHE is currently serving as the point person for leadership, extracurricular activities, and community engagement, and is also a member of the ICT planning group -- a load that is problematic when forward movement requires review of materials, input on technical activities, and joint planning.

D-RASATI submitted non-objection requests for a Communications Officer and a Community Engagement Director in January. As of the end of this quarter, non-objection has still not been received for these positions. Strong proposed candidates for both posts may become unavailable if the positions are further delayed.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation decisions will hinge in part on MEHE and USAID's preferences related to the special cases reported to the Ministry during the preparation of the BoQs, and on the timely approval of those BoQs. No response had been received to the letters sent by the end of the quarter, and the limited number of engineers (6) at MEHE makes the review and approval of all 293 BoQs by the end of May, as proposed, a challenge.

Teacher Training

MEHE/CERD have not provided D-RASATI with the requested roster of DOPS and CERD trainers who are eligible for training as trainers under the program. This list is necessary for training planning and allocation of level of effort for training to begin this summer. Delays in informing trainers and teachers that they have been scheduled for summer training will result in limited availability of targeted personnel.

Extracurricular Activities

Unlike other project components, the Extracurricular Activities component details were not finalized in a small group meeting during the week of March 5-9, due to the limited availability of MEHE counterparts. Only section 1 was fully discussed and orally approved. Section 2 was partially discussed, while section 3 was not even tackled. Finalization of this component in collaboration with MEHE is necessary to complete the master plan.

Community Engagement

The community engagement component of the program was formally restructured as School Leadership Development with Parent and Community Involvement during the finalization of the master plan. Specific community engagement activities now include a public awareness campaign and the involvement of community members per law in the School Councils that will be supporting School Improvement Planning under the project.

IV. SCOPE OF WORK FOR NEXT QUARTER

Content of this section assumes approval of the master plan submitted to MEHE on March 28, 2012.

Assessment

The coming quarter will continue the significant data collection and design support activities already conducted by D-RASATI. The first phase of Progress Scale data collection will be conducted in approximately 200 classrooms. Data matching to support the final prioritized list of science laboratory equipment will be conducted in schools qualifying for consideration for science lab procurement under D-RASATI (per the strategy to be finalized in April). Teacher English test scores will be analyzed to support planning for English language training this summer and overall. ECA gap analysis activities including the legal review, the Lebanese best practice review, focus groups with sampled schools, and field visits to exemplary schools will be completed in preparation for drafting the national strategy for Extracurricular Activities support. Finally, revision of the field survey tool and data system will begin, in preparation for the second iteration of the activity in the coming fall.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation of schools will take a significant jump forward in the coming quarter. The four remaining schools of the 37 rehabilitated in 2011 will be initially handed over to MEHE, and others from that group will have their final handovers and acceptance following the 6-month waiting period. BoQs, sketches and photos from the 293 schools selected for that work will be completed and submitted to MEHE for review. Based on the findings of that review, cost analysis will be conducted and the final prioritized list of schools that will be rehabilitated under D-RASATI generated in coordination with MEHE. Tendering and bidding for the first batch of schools will be initiated, and a rehabilitation maintenance support plan will be developed to ensure a reasonable useful life of the rehabilitation interventions.

Equipment

D-RASATI anticipates formally receiving the lists and specifications for laboratory equipment, science laboratory furniture, and resin tables from MEHE in the coming quarter. These lists will be matched to existing school inventories and costed, and the list of schools that will benefit from science laboratory equipment, science laboratory furniture and resin tables will then be developed. After the approval of a unified bidding process for the procurement of science lab equipment and furniture, bidding and tendering for these items will begin.

Teacher Training

During the coming quarter, the Teacher Trainer Standards will be revised according to MEHE feedback. TLC training materials will also be developed, and planning for TLC Facilitator training will take place. Eighty (10 per region, including Akkar and Baalbek/Hermel) schools will be identified and release time secured for TLC Facilitators to participate in the upcoming training. The RFP for commercial English course providers to support the English skills development of selected teachers will be published, the best-qualified provider will be selected, and planning for the first round of training will take place. Finally, training materials will be developed for training of trainers on English, Science and Math teaching methods.

Extracurricular Activities

Activities related to this sub-component are contained within the ECA gap analysis, which is planned under Component 1: Assessment.

School Leadership Development with Parent and Community Involvement (Formerly: Community Engagement)

Preparation for LDP II will continue: LDP training modules will be revised, and the training program for the first cohort of 300 principals will be approved. The framework and plan for the school review pilot will also be developed and approved.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The performance monitoring plan (PMP) for D-RASATI will be finalized. Studies of the impact of the teacher learning circles and of the use of tablets by students in public school classrooms will be designed and submitted for approval. Alignment of D-RASATI data systems with those of CERD and MEHE will continue, and support to CERD and MEHE to use D-RASATI-generated data independently will be provided.

V. ANNEXES (TECHNICAL PRODUCTS)

Annex 1: English Proficiency Tests Administered

Annex 2: Teacher Training Literature Review

Annex 3: Effective Schools Profile/Lebanon

Annex 4: List of 293 schools selected for BoQs under D-RASATI

Annex 5: Final Draft – Lebanon National Education Technology Strategy