Liberia Teacher Training Program

Year II Work Plan

October 1, 2011- September 30, 2012

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Contents

List of Acronyms

AED	Academy for Educational Development
ALU	Association of Liberian Universities
CEO	County Education Officer
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CSB	County School Board
DEO	District Education Officer
ECSEL	European Union Education for Liberia
EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EMIS	Educational Management Information System
EO	Education Officer
FHI 360	Family Health International 360
GOL	Government of Liberia
ICT	Information, Communications Technology
IRC	International Rescue Committee
KRTTI	Kakata Rural Teacher Training Institute
KSA	Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes
LTTP I	Liberia Teacher Training Program, Phase I
LTTP II	Liberia Teacher Training Program, Phase II
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCID	Mississippi Consortium for International Development
MCSS	Monrovia Consolidated School System
MoE	Ministry of Education
NATAL	National Teachers Association of Liberia
NATE	National Association for Teacher Education
NCHE	National Commission for Higher Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTPDS	National Teacher Professional Development Standards
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PTA	Parent Teachers Association
RTI	Research Triangle Institute
RTTI	Rural Teacher Training Institute
SMT	Senior Management Team
TEPs	Teacher Education Programs
TEPS	Teacher Education Program Standards
TOT	Training of Trainers
UoL	University of Liberia
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's' Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAEC	West African Examination Council

LTTP Year II Work Plan

Part I: Introduction and Background

Country Profile

Liberia, one of Africa's oldest republics, is located on the West Coast of Africa. The land mass of Liberia is 38,000 square miles and is bounded by the Republic of Guinea in the north, Sierra Leone in the west and Cote d' Ivoire on the east. The capital city is Monrovia and the country is divided into 15 administrative counties (regions) and 106 districts.

The population of Liberia is approximately 3.5 million and is composed of 19 ethnic groups, including the "Americo-Liberian" black freed men and women former slaves from the Americas who settled in Liberia beginning in 1821. Since then, the political and economic hegemony of the Americo-Liberian settlers and the resistance of the indigenous population has been the defining character of Liberia's history. This conflict came to a climax when the first indigenous Liberian to lead the country, Master-Sergeant Samuel K. Doe, overthrew the Tolbert Government in a military coup on April 12, 1980. The country subsequently went through cycles of violent conflict, elections, stability and back to violent conflict. These conflicts burgeoned in 1989 leading to Liberia's first civil war (1989-1996) followed by the election of Charles Taylor as President in 1997. The second civil war (1999-2000) escalated into the third most destructive war (2000-2003); this pitted anti-Taylor forces against the regime with extensive destabilizing impact on neighboring countries. One-third of the population was displaced and another third became refugees in the neighboring countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast and Ghana. By the 2005 elections, the three Rural Teacher Training Institutions had ceased to train teachers for nearly twenty years and the infrastructure was totally destroyed. Under LTTP I two RTTIs (Zorzor and Kakata) were reopened in 2006, followed by Webbo in 2010.

The Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed on August 30, 2003; bringing an end to the wars; the stationing of 14,000 troops of the United Nations Peace Keeping Mission and the installation of the National Transitional Government of Liberia. In 2005, national elections were held and the winner and current President, Madame Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, became the first women President in Africa.

Since 2005, a number of education reforms aimed at restoring the educational infrastructure and reconstructing schools to accommodate the increasing population of school age children were championed by Government. The overarching goal of the education emergency response in 2005 was to get as many children, as quickly as possible, into school and deal with quality of education issues in the future. As a result, the number of students enrolled in schools has increased significantly. However, the issues of educational quality and efficiency at all levels of the system remain a major challenge.

These key challenges are articulated in the Education Sector Plan for Liberia (March 2010): (1) the lack of coherent policies and appropriate education laws tailored to current and future directions of education; (2) limited capacity at all levels of the system; (3) weak structure and systems of educational governance and management and accountability, (4) education data for informed decision making is either nonexistent or inaccurate; (5) status of school and teacher education professional development infrastructure are inadequate; (6) the number of untrained and unqualified teachers is over 60% of the teaching workforce; (6) high turnover in leadership and linkage within the various levels of the system from national, county, district, school and classroom levels remain inadequate and weak.

The Liberia Teacher Training Program Phase I: In response to these realities, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) embarked on a joint development program. The program started in 2006 under the Liberia Teacher Training Program Phase I, implemented by Academy for Educational Development (AED) as prime along with two sub-grantees –the Mississippi Consortium for International Development (MCID) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC). The program was planned for three years beginning from November 2006, and then extended to May 31, 2010 to facilitate a smooth transition to the LTTP Phase II program. The key objectives were to support the Ministry of Education in developing a strategy and competency framework to reform the teacher education system; strengthen the overall teacher professional development system at the Teachers' College, University of Liberia as well as in the three national Rural Teacher Training Institutes (RTTIs) through staff upgrading, curriculum reform, materials development; training teachers in residential and field-based programs; improving training facilities at the RTTIs, and strengthening school level management and community support for education through support to the PTAs and school principals.

Overview of the LTTP II

The LTTP II is a follow on to the LTTP Phase I. AED (now FHI 360) in partnership with the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International provides educational support to the central Ministry of Education and nine counties (Montserrado, Lofa, Nimba, Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, River Gee, Maryland, River Cess and Sinoe). The overarching goal is to establish a functional teacher professional development system and strengthen the capacity of MoE to manage such a system. Another major goal is to improve early grade reading and mathematics in Liberia. The LTTP II interventions focus on three areas: (1) policies, systems and capacity development of the central MoE and lower levels; (2) pre- and in-service teacher professional development and (3) curriculum standards, materials and testing for language and literacy and mathematics skills in early grades 1-3 and grade 4-6 for math and language arts, including reading. The LTTP II will establish partnership and collaboration with International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and Local Non-Governmental Organizations (LNGOs) to strengthen the MoE.

Part II: New Strategies and Approaches in Year II

Transition to Development Corridor Counties

The current USAID strategy is to reduce the number of target counties from nine to six in the development corridor: Lofa, Nimba, Bong, Margibi, Montserrado and Grand Bassa. LTTP II works in all of these counties with the exception of Grand Bassa. A Standards-based CPD model is being used for the Early Grade Reading and Math (EGR/M) program that will enable most of the pupils in grades 1-3 to attain reading and math proficiency in LTTP II targeted schools. The in-service component of LTTP II will team up with the Reading First +Math team to use the same model in the RTTIs' catchment schools and in Nimba County. System strengthening will focus on enhancing the decentralization drive of the Ministry of Education through capacity building at the county and lower levels.

Development of Functional Systems

Year II activities under Result One will focus on systems development. The Education Reform Act was widely debated across the country and adopted by the National Legislature and signed into Law by the President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, on August 16, 2011.The challenge now is to translate the Act into tangible and concrete activities that are responsive to the needs of citizens. For instance, the Act stipulates that County School Boards (CSB) be established to facilitate, monitor and oversee operations of all local public schools in keeping with regulations, guidelines and policies promulgated by MoE. The implication for teacher professional development is important because MoE has expressed the need for building the capacity of the new CSBs to have oversight responsibility for the professional development activities at the county level and as part of the decentralization initiative. The roles of DEOs will change from general administration to school supervision. To fulfill this role, DEO and CEOs will require training to enable them to exercise oversight of these new roles and devolve activities related to previous roles in educational management.

EMIS and Biometrics

In year one, the development of the EMIS and biometrics system focused on building capacity at the central MoE and setting up the national infrastructure that will be linked to the county offices. In Year II and as part of the decentralization process, EMIS activities will focus on building infrastructure at the county level and training of county level staff to operate and manage the EMIS system. The biometrics system will establish identity, reduce mismanagement of resources, ensure prompt payments, and improve attendance. In the future, this work will progress to the district level by establishing a portal and services for the collection and use of data to make decisions closest to where the problems are encountered.

Teachers Professional Development Model

It is estimated that 60% of teachers in Liberia are untrained and unqualified. Recognizing that the one year residential pre-service teacher education program and the field-based in-service model are inadequate to address this enormous need for better trained teachers, LTTP is developing a new approach to teacher continuous professional development (CPD).

Teacher Training and Early Grade Reading Integration

Beginning this academic year (October 1, 2011) early grade reading will be introduced as a course in the nine-month curriculum of pre-service teacher training. This is to be followed by math in the next year. The introduction of these courses is part of an overall effort to scale-up the early grade reading and mathematics through pre-service didactic and practice teaching settings. The pre-service trainees are expected to apply reading and math skills during the practice teaching assignment in the cluster schools and the demonstration schools located on and around each RTTI campus.

Implications: Staff Placement at RTTIs and Capacity Development

The introduction and sustainability of these new strategies hinges on the capacity of the RTTIs to adapt and adjust to change. On the other hand, the effectiveness of new actors like educational specialists that will be deployed to the RTTIs will depend on their ability to relate to their new environment. Beginning this academic year, (a) one reading math specialist and (b) one educational specialist will be stationed at the RTTIs. These two specialists will, as part of their responsibilities, mentor their counterparts to take over respective responsibilities over time. The education technology coordinator, though based in Monrovia, will periodically visit the RTTIs to coordinate training, participate in practice-teaching activities and mentor trainers to use educational technology in teaching and learning.

Working with CEO and DEO

The frequency and intensity of interaction between the DEO/CEO (i.e., MoE Education Officers) on one hand and the field trainers (i.e., coaches, RTTI teachers, CPD trainers, etc.) will change to ensure better coordination of school-based activities. The LTTP staff and education officers (EOs) will co-facilitate change and guide training activities taking place in the field. The CPD and early grade reading and math interventions will ensure that the CEO and DEO staffs are engaged in the day-to-day implementation and monitoring.

Part III: Key Achievements in Year I

Year I results indicate a sustained effort to build the foundation for effective project implementation while at the same time helping the three rural teacher training institutions successfully graduate over one thousand pre- and in-service trainees. This was the largest and most diversified cohort of graduates since the RTTIs were reopened in 2006. This achievement involved, among other activities, garnering consensus among key project stakeholders about the institutional arrangements,

roles and responsibilities and clear understanding of the key goals, sub-results and activities assigned to individuals and institutions in each quarter.

The Year I Annual Work Plan was based on the Cooperative Agreement with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), with Associate Cooperative Agreement No. 669-A-00-10-00116-00. The four components of the Liberia Teacher Training Program are coordinated and facilitated by FHI 360 as the implementing agency with the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International, serving as the subcontractor. The components are as follows:

1. Component 1: MoE institutional strengthening for increased quality of education, accountability and effective decision-making

2. Component 2: Improved teacher professional development: Policy management and supervision

3. Component 3: Enhance MOE Performance in improving teacher training skills and implementing teacher training standards

4. Component 4: Standards, curriculum, materials, and testing for effective language and literacy acquisition and student learning (Illustrative activities only)

After extensive discussion in a four-day workshop with the Ministry of Education and USAID, the annual work plan identified the activities and outputs necessary to achieve the results and ultimately address the issues delineated in the above four components and the overall objectives of the project. The Annual Work Plan and the Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) were then approved by USAID. Highlights of the first year accomplishments of LTTP II are as follows:

COMPONENT 1: MOE INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING FOR INCREASED QUALITY OF EDUCATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING

1. **Strengthening Donor-Government Planning, Management and Monitoring of Educational Development**: LTTP helped the Planning Department of the Ministry of Education in developing tools for collecting data on donor support and information has been collected from most donors. Terms of reference for a donor-government technical working group, which will oversee joint planning and management of educational development has been finalized. It is expected that the Ministry would convene a meeting of donors to officially form the technical working group.
2. **MOE Restructuring and Organization**: LTTP worked closely with the Departments of Instruction and Planning to examine organizational possibilities, which resulted in the development of an organizational structure.

3. **The National Education Consultative Conference:** LTTP sponsored and the MoE organized the first post-war National Consultative Conference attended by 395 registered delegates and participants. The conference was also supported by other partners including, UNICEF, European Commission School Improvement in Liberia (ECSEL) and other partners.

4. **MoE 5-Year Action Plan:** LTTP has been working with the sector planning group to develop the next five-year national education plan. In this effort, LTTP developed a matrix that lays out the goals, strategic objectives and results for the working group. LTTP also played a key role in the effort to finalize the document that will serve as a basis for the five-year plan and also the requirements for Liberia to secure the necessary resources from international donors.

5. **Strengthening Decentralization**: LTTP helped in revising the Educational Law, which has recently been signed off by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. The law establishes the legal basis of regulations, policy reform, new strategies and tactics to implement change. An orientation workshop was convened for key MoE staff on the theory and practice of decentralization.

6. **Introductory Workshop on Decentralization**: In support of the planning process and the decentralization efforts by the Ministry of Education, LTTP conducted the first in a series of training activities on decentralization and capacity building for education officers and school heads on April 9, 2011, for ministry, county and university staff.

7. **Building Capacity for Decentralization**: LTTP, in preparation for a major capacity building exercise that will be undertaken in Year II developed the following materials in cooperation with MoE experts:

   - Capacity of the Liberian Education System.
   - Evaluation Guidelines, Suggestions for Good Evaluation Practices.
   - County Monitoring Manual, Recommendations for Monitoring Practices.
   - Educational Diagnosis through Monitoring, County Capacity Building in M&E for Decentralization.
   - Monitoring Framework, Institutionalization of Monitoring for Effective Management in Education.
   - Manual 2: Projection of Educational Development, County Capacity Building in Planning for Decentralization

8. **Overhauling the Liberian Education Management Information System (EMIS)**: The foundation for a fully functional Education Management Information System (EMIS) is being established. Preliminary assessment of the needs of the EMIS of the MoE was

completed and resulted in the development of a framework of a national EMIS that will be linked to the MoE personnel system for the first time in Liberia. Significant achievements include:

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the European Union Education for Liberia (ECSEL) resulted in ECSEL providing computers for the MOE and saving over $200,000 for LTTP.
- LTTP succeeded in installing an Internet system for the Ministry of Education, which will be critical for the EMIS that will be built.
- The MoE-EMIS Policy Committee: The MoE EMIS Policy Committee has been selected and terms of reference for its members submitted to the MoE for approval. The members of the committee were selected by the Minister of Education in consultation with the Deputy Minister for Planning. The draft ICT and EMIS policy document was also submitted to MoE for approval.

9. **Strengthening Accountability of teachers**: LTTP II developed a model national biometric system for teachers. This model was adopted by National Taskforce on Personnel and Pay because the LTTP model was superior, cost-effective and appropriate for conditions in Liberia, compared to previously proposed models. Members of the taskforce are: (1) Director-General of Civil Service Agency, (2) Deputy Ministers for Finance and Education, LTTP/USAID, the World Bank, and others. In addition this model is now jointly supported by the Civil Service Agency, World Bank and the Ministry of Finance.

10. **Strengthening informed decision making, planning and management** –Three studies have been concluded to help inform the decision-making, planning and management system.

- **Teacher effectiveness study** – This study was undertaken to establish a baseline for the effectiveness of graduates of LTTP's in-service training program. It found that only 5% of the teachers prior to completion of the program and graduation were effective in their classroom.
- **Female teachers' participation** – This study covered 16 secondary schools in the fifteen counties. The aim of the study was to identify reasons and determinants of the low number of female teachers in the system. Various socio-economic, cultural and in-school factors contribute to help explain why there are fewer female teachers in Liberian classrooms and in leadership position within the system.
- **Institutional Capacity Assessment:** Capacity analyses were carried out for the ministry and the MCSS to address current capabilities and decentralization possibilities. The use of the MCSS as a model for county school systems was evaluated. Following suit, assessment of the capacity of key institutions was undertaken. The assessment was aimed at establishing the capacity level of various

institutions, policies, programs and processes in the education sector at the county level in terms of strategic alignment, management, administration and resources. This study is expected to provide baseline measures at the country level to serve as benchmarks for the design, monitoring and evaluation of project interventions.

COMPONENT 2: IMPROVED TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: POLICY MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION.

The purpose of this component was to help the MoE to establish a well-functioning teacher professional development system and be able to manage it effectively. Existing policies will be reviewed and refined to address the career ladder for teachers; professional standards and teaching competencies; roles and responsibilities of education officers at central MoE, county, district and school levels. Training programs will be developed to strengthen management and supervision. This component will also address teacher training at the RTTIs and higher education institutions that prepare teachers and education managers for the basic education system.

1. **Curriculum Development**: LTTP assisted the MoE and the West African Examination Council (WAEC) to revise and align secondary education curriculum with the WAEC standards in mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, geography, English, social studies as well as geography, social studies, English and mathematics in junior secondary. This is the most comprehensive revision of the secondary school curriculum since the end of the civil war.

2. **Doctoral Level Training**: LTTP negotiated a cost-share agreement with University of Stellenbosch, African Doctoral Academy in South Africa to train a cohort of Liberian educators at doctoral degree levels that will take effect in January, 2012.

3. **Professional Scholarship Program**: A scholarship program was established to train Education development professionals to support the National Teacher Professional Development Standards (NTPDS).

4. **Webbo Rural Teacher Training Institute running after 50 years**: LTTP assisted the MoE Bureau of Teacher Education to provide all necessary pedagogical and material support, including food, fuel, and electric generator to WRTTI, resulting in the registration of 125 students for the maiden cohort after fifty years of dormancy.

"Let knowledge and wisdom flow from these hills to the rest of country." With those words, the Minister of Education, Hon. Othello Gongar, declared open, on behalf of the Government of Liberia and President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the Webbo RTT for classes on October 30, 2010.

The Webbo Rural Teacher Training was constructed nearly 50 years ago in 1962. The Government of Liberia in partnership with USAID built three rural teachers training institutes in Kakata, Zorzor and Webbo. KRTTI and ZRTTI were opened and the first students were enrolled in 1963; but the Webbo campus was never opened and had remained closed for half a century.

5. **Scholarship Program**: A successful scholarship program has been established to train educational professionals who will adhere to standard professional practices and manage the National Teacher Professional Development Standards (NTPDS). University of Liberia Teacher College female students are the main program beneficiaries. They receive: (1) a monthly stipend and (2) fees for books and tuition. Female students at the RTTIs receive a monthly stipend of twenty ($20) US dollars. In addition to this support, they are encouraged to attend extra tutorial class consisting of individualized tutoring several days a week.

COMPONENT 3: ENHANCE MOE PERFORMANCE IN IMPROVING TEACHER TRAINING SKILLS AND IMPLEMENTING TEACHER TRAINING STANDARDS

The overall purpose of component three is to improve teacher education in Liberia by strengthening the public teacher training institutions. Component three is designed to build on the gains of the LTTP Phase I in terms of re-establishing the foundations of teacher education at the RTTIs in Kakata, Zorzor and Webbo. During LTTP I, the RTTIs were restructured, new curriculum was developed for both pre- and in-service teacher education, new academic and professional staff was recruited and over a one thousand teachers were trained. LTTP II builds on these successes to strengthen the capacity of MoE to develop the technical expertise, establish institutional arrangements and systems, and gain organizational capacity to plan, manage and evaluate teacher education program activities in keeping with teacher professional standards in Liberia.

1. **Teacher Training**: The Pre Service C Certificate Program graduated 532 student-trainees qualifying them to teach in elementary schools in Liberia. The in-service C-Certificate program graduated 596 trainees (110 females and 486 males) for the Cohort-3 program.

2. **Teacher Credentials**: LTTP assisted the MoE and the RTTIs administration to initiate the credentialing process for the C-Certificates and assignment upon graduation, resulting in about 90% of the trainees being assigned to schools immediately after graduation. The combined programs were the largest and most diversified cohort of C Certificate graduates since the C Certificate Program was resumed 2006.

3. **Policies for Student Assessment Established:** Using the new code established by the Deputy Minister of Instruction, the pre-service team worked closely with the Director of Teacher Accreditation to prepare C-Certificates to establish the procedures below:

- Certification of graduates
- Preparation of summary grade sheets
- Portfolio development during the field experience
- Validation of test scores for the comprehensive and re-sitters' exams

4. **Peer Lectures:** LTTP facilitated the Inaugural Mary Antoinette Brown Sherman Lecture delivered by Professor Naana, Vice Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast and the signing of a capacity development Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the University of Cape Coast, Ghana and the University of Liberia (UL).

5. **Training Plan Developed:** The pre-service team conducted a needs assessment to establish training needs for the short and long-term staff development and to prepare a training plan during the first quarter of Year II.

6. **ICT Educational Technology:** Three fully eqipped computer labs have been established and embedded in the overall training program after a thorough survey of the needs of the institutions. The LTTP sponsored a visit by the Director of the WiderNet Project (Cliff Meissen) to support the widespread use of digital learning resource materials known as e-Granary in collaboration RTTIs with the University of Iowa, School of Library and Information Science.

COMPONENT 4: STANDARDS, CURRICULUM MATERIALS AND TESTING FOR EFFECT LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACQUISITION AND STUDENT LEARNING

1. **Reading and math baseline established:** Baseline assessment for Early Grade Reading and math covering a sample of over 4000 students in grades 1-3 and Bong, Nimba, Lofa, and Montserrado counties was undertaken.

2. Implementation and supervision plans for 58 clusters and 678 schools have been completed in anticipation of scale-up of early grade reading in Year II.

3. Reading and math have been integrated into the nine-month Pre-service Program .

4. The hiring of 58 coaches and seven Reading/Math Specialists (RMS) to support the coaches in the field has been completed.

5. **In-service, pre-service and EGRA integration**: EGRA has successfully trained 600 in-service, pre-service trainees, trainers and other school personnel in early grade reading and mathematics during two five-day workshops in anticipation of the national scaling-up program in about 675 schools in Year II.

Critical Challenges - LTTP is the largest donor funded project in the education sub-sector. As a result the project deals with challenges from two sources: (1) challenges emanating from within the educational system and (2) the overall impact of post-conflict project environment on the work of LTTP. LTTP is expected to work with MoE in key areas of (a) policy development and implementation, (b) teacher professional development and (c) early grade reading. Program implementation in this context assumes a certain level of capacity within the educational system that does not exist at this time. Consequently, there are delays in programmatic activities due to significant gaps in technical capacity. LTTP II works with MoE to mitigate these gaps through posting of staff at the RTTIs. Each staff must have a counterpart that can be mentored to assume responsibility for program implementation in the future. In the long run, the USAID/LTTP scholarship program will mitigate technical gaps and ensure that a critical mass of well trained and highly qualified individuals take over key position at the MoE and in the higher education system.

MoE Challenges

1.   Since 2005 there have been notable and significant changes and progress in education, especially in terms of increases in school enrollment across the country. At this time, the technical capacity to carry out key priorities of MoE, like decentralization or the teacher accreditation and certification process, is lacking. Therefore, the pace of LTTP program implementation is determined by the "degree of readiness" of MoE to collaborate and effectively implement programs.

2.   Adequate staffing to support decentralization and MoE head office capacity building is key to sustainability. LTTP cannot train and build capacity at county and district levels, if the staff in key areas, such as planning and curriculum development, is not yet in place.

3.   Training and human resource development is a major part of the LTTP program. In order for EMIS and other programs LTTP is developing with MoE to operate and be efficiently sustained after LTTP, there is a need for the MoE to re-organize itself and get the necessary staff in place. This is not currently the case and the USAID/LTTP scholarship program is designed to address capacity gaps.

4.   Delays in the implementation of activities and the provision of resources that need to be undertaken or provided by the MoE, RTTIs and other offices in order for LTTP programs to take effect have been serious challenges. Capacity building at RTTIs is a long term undertaking. Meanwhile, if appropriate counterparts are not assigned to the LTTP staff posted to the RTTIs, the long term sustainability of these activities will be in jeopardy.

5.   Operation costs, including food, fuel, basic maintenance and salary payments of MoE staff not on payroll are associated with considerable risks for the project.

LTTP Challenges

1.   Scaling up the Early Grade Reading and math will require programmatic integration at several levels: (a) pre-service curriculum (b) in-service continuous professional development (c) staff development, among others. At the curriculum level, the plan is to develop a module of lessons and pilot with pre-services students and CPD teachers, revise as necessary, and continue to test the result through practice teaching and field based CPD

To address these challenges, LTTP/USAID in consultation with MoE officials will work collaboratively with MoE counterparts in accepting responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of programmatic activities that are the responsibilities of specific divisions/directors. Furthermore, LTTP will work with the new administration of the RTTIs to put in place a system of structured monitoring at the RTTIs to reduce implementation gaps.

Part IV: Year II Work Plan Development Process and Organization and Management

Year II Work Plan Development Process

A four-day work plan workshop was held from August 1- 4, 2011. Day one was opened by the Minister of Education and the Deputy Minister of Education for Instruction and the team leader of USAID's education program. The purpose of day one was to raise awareness on the five-year education sector plan of the Mo E, the new USAID education strategy and the activities of partner organizations. It was attended by all the relevant divisions of the MoE; the RTTIs, tertiary institutions and other development partners.

In day two, the LTTP teams worked in-house to consolidate the ideas that have been collected from the different departments of the ministry. The third day was convened within the Ministry to undertake a final validation of the draft plan. In day four, the project staff refined the key activities selected and presented them to USAID. In the words of the deputy minister, the process resulted in having the finger prints of the ministry in the work plan.

Organization and Management of Year II Plan

The slightly revised Results Framework, starting in Year 2, is organized into three components, three results and eleven sub-results. This was necessary in order to integrate the previous components 3 and 4 so that teacher capacity professional development interventions are well coordinated and that reading and math get proper focus, as indicated in the new USAID education strategy. Each activity within each result and sub-result is related to a measurable output and has an identifiable code. Along with each code, a set of outputs, activities, target, timeline, collaborating partners are associated with each sub-result linked to the use of project resources.

LTTP II is implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Education, with support and guidance from USAID/Liberia. As the prime contractor for EQUIP 2, FHI 360, is the legal representative for the cooperative agreement and is responsible for project planning, financial management, and reporting, with ultimate accountability for the success of the LTTP II Project. RTI International, as the sub-contractor, is responsible for implementing the reading and math program of LTTP II.

The management structure of LTTP II consists of three levels. The Senior Management Team (SMT) consists of the COP, the two DCOPs for Technical and Operations and the Senior M & E Advisor. The second level of management, the Extended Management Team, consists of the SMT plus team leaders, Reading Plus, In-service, Pre-service, Operations, and Finance Team Leaders. The third tier consists of junior managers that are responsible for both technical activities, like field placement and those responsible for operational and logistical activities, like procurement. These managers are based in the Monrovia office.

Satellite Offices: To coordinate and ensure successful implementation of program activities in the RTTIs and counties, satellite offices will be established in the three Rural Teacher Training Institutions covering River Gee County, Margibi County, and Lofa County and two development corridor counties, Nimba (Ganta) and Bong (Gbarnga) counties. Activities for Montserado county will be managed from the central office in Monrovia. The central office team in Monrovia maintains daily contact with the FHI360 home office in Washington, DC and the MoE officials at both central, county, district and school levels. LTTP II SMT meets weekly with USAID to discuss project updates and proactively deal with emerging issues that are part of project work.

Team Integration

Program integration across the components will take place at three levels of program implementation: training of trainers and overall program activities coordination at central level, implementation of training of RTTIs teaching force and the teacher trainees at the RTTIs level, and actual training and implementation of the interventions at school level. At the RTTIs, early grade reading and math is a semester-long course embedded in the program. This is a major curriculum change in terms of program content and scheduling adjustments. Similarly, CPD will include early grade reading both in the RTTIs and in the field based activities. In the field, practice teaching supervision will include EGR/EGM assessment to ensure that students include in their portfolio early grade reading activities.

Analysis of Risks, Challenges and Opportunities

The project faces risks that are inherent in working in any post-conflict environment: poor infrastructure, lack of systems, policies, guidelines and above all capacity to implement, monitor and evaluate change. Within the project, coordination of activities under a common vision for promoting teacher education and student learning across the various components presents opportunities as well as challenges. As indicated, the challenges posed by capacity gaps within the MoE, universities and

other institutions LTTP works with are significant and detrimental. However, the opportunities for instituting changes in teacher education are clearly presented in the new Education Act signed into law on August 14, 2011.

Part V: Year II Plan Description

COMPONENT 1: MOE INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING FOR INCREASED QUALITY OF EDUCATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING

Result 1: MOE, CEO, DEO and RTTI capacity strengthened to plan, manage and monitor educational services.

The aim of this result is to help the MoE reorganize and build its capacity so that it can provide the necessary support to and oversight of counties, districts, institutions and schools. The result goes further to building the capacity of County Education Offices (CEOs) to enable them to shoulder the new roles they will play as a result of the devolution of responsibilities and decision-making authority. It will also be necessary to continue to build upon the successes made in laying out the EMIS and educational monitoring and evaluation systems and services. Special focus will be given to strengthening the communication arm of the MoE to help it to effectively pass messages about education development to key stakeholders and receive feedback from various constituencies.

Sub result 1.1: Critical MOE, CEO, DEO, School systems are strengthened to guarantee the quality of education services.

The Liberian education system is going through a critical stage in its recent development. The system, which catered to the urban few, mainly in and around Montserrado county and Monrovia, is now expanding farther and wider to the entire country. This demands that the planning, management and monitoring of educational development be decentralized bringing decision making nearer to the people and to settings where problems are first encountered and felt.

The central ministry needs to be re-organized and its capacity developed to play new oversight and supportive roles in the future. At the same time, County Education Offices are going to play increased roles under decentralization. They will have responsibilities for planning, implementing and monitoring educational development within their counties. The County School Board, under the new decentralization guideline, is the highest authority at the county level that makes key decisions on educational development within the county. The members of the board, while prominent in their locality, may not always have the necessary levels of professional knowledge and skill. Based on the needs of each county, support will be provided to ensure that CEO and board members have the skills and competencies they need in order to function in their new roles. LTTP II will make sure

that the relevant departments of the MoE are fully engaged in building the capacity of CEOs and lower level staff to ensure sustainability. There are four major outputs expected:

Output 1: MoE re-organized to better support the regional offices.

Output 2: Medium- and long-term plan for capacity building in planning and management developed.

Output 3: Capacity of MoE, CEOs and DEOs in Decentralized Strategic Planning, Management and Instructional Leadership built through trainings and provision of support equipment.

Output 4: Capacity of County School Boards developed through training and provision of manuals and handbooks.

Sub-result 1.2: Education quality monitoring and instructional supervision strengthened at county, district, school and classroom levels:

The MoE has recently established a monitoring and evaluation unit. A group of fifteen staff from the ministry and counties visited Ghana to help them understand the process of monitoring educational development. A number of development partners are involved in strengthening the new M&E Unit within the MOE. LTTP plans to take this effort further by implementing a comprehensive capacity building program for CEOs and lower levels in monitoring and instructional supervision. The expected outputs for this sub-result are:

Output 1: Monitoring Policies, Procedures, Standards, and Guidelines Established.

Output 2: M&E System Capacity Strengthened for Education Quality Improvements.

Sub-result 1.3: Policy and programmatic decisions are based on data derived from an information management system, policy analysis and technical/applied research studies.

EMIS support in Year I was focused on assessing the needs of the system and building the technology and infrastructure within the MoE. This effort will continue to selected counties in Year II. Major focus will also be on the software aspect of EMIS. It will involve training principals and school registrars from all public schools on school-based record keeping and collecting and disseminating data to the district and higher levels.

The second most important intervention will ensure that the National Identity Card System, that is expected to ensure accountability, is piloted at the MoE and five counties before it is used nationally. This card will also be used to identify legitimate MoE employees for the purpose of salary payment and enhancing security on school grounds.

As part of the effort to avail critical information related to key current policy issues, MoE, counties, districts and schools will be involved in studies that will be conducted by LTTP. The key outputs are:

Output 1: National Teacher Biometric Identity Card System implemented in all Government Schools.

Output 2: County, District and School EMIS infrastructure, procedures, and standardized tools developed.

Output 3: Capacity of EMIS staff at MoE, County, District, and school levels developed.

Output 4*:* Decentralization process better informed through teacher effectiveness and other studies.

Sub-result 1.4: Improved communication of changes and progress in educational development
The MoE has a communication office, which has not been very effective. Under this sub-result, a review of current practices of the ministry at central, county, and district levels in communication will be undertaken. This review assumes that the communication needs are very different at various levels within the system. It is therefore important to determine the human and other resource needs at each level. This needs assessment process will be undertaken to identify gaps leading to the development of tools, guidelines and implementation strategies.

At the heart of the MoE communication challenge are two important facets that should be addressed: information flow and information exchange. Information flowing from MoE Executive Management Team (Minister and Deputies) needs to be immediately available to all assistant ministers and bureau chiefs, directors and technocrats who constitute the professional cadre of MoE. Likewise, the professional cadre should have a channel for communicating directly with Executive Management Team.

Under sub result 1.1 the problem of organizational structure will be addressed to allow effective communication of decision-making, followed with action measures and reporting results. The MoE will be assisted with developing a system for communicating and receiving feedback from schools, districts, and counties about the impact of decisions and policies made at central MoE in a timely and smooth manner. In order to have effective communication, no matter how well designed, there must be clearly defined roles and responsibilities and accountability in place that everyone respects.

As part of the implementation of the communication strategy, LTTP will work with the ministry's communication unit to produce radio programs as well as support in the development of and dissemination of other communication tools. These tools will include public education campaign about specific MoE initiatives that require public participation for success. The outputs include:

Output 1: Cohesive, coherent, and innovative communication strategies and tools developed.

Output 2: Capacity in communication developed.

Output 3: Communication strategy implemented.

COMPONENT 2: IMPROVED TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: POLICY MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION

Result 2: Improved teacher policies and procedures for teacher recruitment, training, deployment and career development

Training teachers alone will not produce quality teachers. Quality teachers are both qualified and motivated. In the Liberian context, both the training of teachers and their career development and incentive systems are under-developed. The Liberian Teacher Training Program has been at the forefront of the effort to train thousands of teachers in the aftermath of the long conflict. The female teachers' participation study conducted by LTTP II in Year I showed that the teacher career growth and benefit system is almost non-existent on the ground. Teachers indicated that they get no professional or personal support from the government system. Delay in salary payment is common. Teaching has become the last way out for aspiring professionals. Discussions with MoE staff showed that the system of teacher recruitment, deployment, career growth, and incentive systems exist on paper only. They strongly suggested a review of the current situation and development of new policies and procedures as critical both to attract the young to the teaching profession and retaining them. Accordingly, there are three sub-results under Result 2 addressing these issues.

Sub result 2.1: Teacher qualifications, recruitment, training and deployment guidelines developed and used.

Output 1: Current teacher recruitment, training and deployment policies, procedures and guidelines reviewed. Activities under this output include: assessment of existing policies, guidelines and practices and the development of gender-sensitive policies and guidelines for efficient and transparent teacher recruitment, training and deployment that encourages females to join the profession.

Sub result 2.2: Teacher career structure, growth and incentive policy established.

Output 1: Current teacher career ladder structure, and incentive policies, procedures reviewed: Activities here include reviewing current policies and practices and developing policies, and guidelines on teacher career ladder structure.

Output 2: A teacher education management document that defines roles and responsibilities at the national, county and district levels: Based on the new career structure, a framework for teachers' professional development will be established.

Sub result 2.3: Efficient and transparent accreditation and examination system established.

Output 1: Standardized teacher certification policy and system reviewed and revised. A review of current teacher certification policy and existing structure/system will be undertaken leading to the development of a teacher certification policy and standards.

Output 3: Teacher Education Institutions' Accreditation policy and standards developed.

Output 3: LTTP will facilitate the establishment of a teacher accreditation board.

To achieve these outputs, joint activities will be taken to help establish and strengthen the new center MoE is creating to address certification and accreditation issues.

COMPONENT 3: ENHANCE MoE PERFORMANCE TO IMPROVE TEACHER TRAINING SKILLS AND STANDARDS

Result 3: Improved Teacher Training Programs and Reading/math Delivery Systems

The overall purpose of Result 3 is to improve teacher education in Liberia thereby improving the reading/math delivery system and enhancing students' learning. During Year II, the main focus of this result will be to scale up the early reading intervention to more than 800 schools in the five development corridor counties. Another focus will be on efforts to support and sustain management systems geared towards aiding the MoE and the Rural Teacher Training Institutions' (RTTIs) administration in improving institutional performance. Yet, another key focus and innovative development will be on the integration of reading and math skills into the teacher preparation programs and curricula at the Rural Teacher Training Institutions and Universities and primary schools. The pilot program will be hinged to the RTTIs and catchments schools, working closely with the Reading First + Math team in training teachers, material development and impact assessment. The Teacher Continuous Professional Development (TCPD) pilot program, if successful, is expected to ultimately be adopted by the Liberian education system.

A continued focus will be on instructional technology as an effective teacher training tool. During the second year, LTTP II will continue to work with the MoE to evaluate the training curriculum and delivery systems. An intensified effort to assist the MoE to develop the capacity to plan, manage and evaluate the teacher education systems will include research-based implementation strategies to address school effectiveness management practices.

Sub-result 3.1: Standards-based model for Early Grade Reading and Math developed and implemented in selected Counties

The main focus of the "Reading First + Math" efforts of LTTP II is to improve student learning outcomes in reading and mathematics in Grades 1-3. The results of EGRA Plus project (Oct 2008-2010), show that improvements can be made in a short period of time. The EGRA Plus program has increased average reading performance by 51% in less than one year. The EGRA Plus Liberia program represents an effective model of teacher support that leads to improved learning outcomes; one that pulls and unites all of the levels together – from the national level staff to the strong involvement of parents. As such, it demonstrates how teachers are best supported by coaches (Master Trainers) and District Education Officers (DEOs), and coaches and DEOs in turn are supported by the project management and the MoE.

In Year II, Reading First + Math will start implementing its reading program in 636 schools in Motserado, Lofa, Nimba, Bong and Margibi counties**.** Following this, in January 2012, Grade 1 math scope will be rolled out.

The implementation approach of "Reading First + Math" will simulate an environment in which the capacity at the school level will be strengthened in order to continue the efforts beyond the project life. The schools will be supported in clusters of 10-12 schools by one coach. This coach will serve as an advisor on all matters from curriculum to classroom organization to pedagogy to assessment of student performance, as well as community engagement. EGRA Plus Liberia had the following key components that were instituted at the school level:

1.   Training for teachers at a cluster basis once per semester;

2.   Follow up with trained teachers at the school level 3-4 times per semester; teachers with fully scripted lesson plans for the whole year;

3.   Providing children with books that are linked with the reading curriculum (so that the use of books is enforced), and

4.   Building small libraries at the target schools (50-80 small locally produced books).

Given the dire need to improve student reading and mathematics performance in early grades in Liberia, there is a need to work intensively at the following two levels – a) school level through supporting direct service delivery by Liberians (this institutionalizing parts of the system that are currently missing), and b) at the system level so that the change becomes permanent. LTTP II is designed to work on both of these levels.

Subject to availability of funding, each student will receive decodable reading books that they can take home. These books are linked to the reading curriculum. A similar approach will be developed for mathematics as part of Year II work plan, including specification of the full scope and sequence for instruction and accompanying materials, with an eye to drawing on local resources and international best practices (e.g. Centers of Excellence for Teacher Training [CETT]). Apart from teacher resources, the project will provide student resource materials that are tightly linked to the scope and sequence for reading interventions. Outputs include:

Output 1: Early Grade Reading and Math TCPD Model designed.

Output 2: Reading and math materials for grades 1-3 developed, validated, printed and distributed.

Output 3: Reading and Math Materials for Grades 4-6 developed and validated.

Output 4: Mechanism for continuous updating of Reading/Math materials established

Output 5: Pre-service teachers trained in Reading and Math Skills.

Output 6: Classroom teachers trained in Reading and Math Skills.

Output 7: Capacity of demonstration schools improved in teaching Reading and Mathematics.

Output 8: Mechanism to Measure Reading, Comprehension and Math Skills Designed.

Output 9: Reading and Mathematics measures used to track student performance in Reading and Mathematics.

Output 10: Reading and Math measures integrated into the MoE EMIS.

Output 11: Reading and Math learning promotion activities undertaken.

Output 12: Education Stakeholder Coordination in Reading and Math Strengthened

Sub-result 3.2: Teacher Continuous Professional Development (TCPD) Model for Primary Level Developed and Piloted with Focus on Reading and Math

The in-service Teacher CPD will start in Year II in 180 catchment schools around the three RTTIs and other schools in Nimba county. The intervention will be limited to early grade reading grades 1 - 3. Year II will also see the development of reading and math program for grades 4 – 6 for implementation in years 3 – 5 as well as the establishment and strengthening of cluster resource centers. Training materials in English and math content areas and pedagogy will be developed to enable teachers in grades four to six to support students learning. The materials will be used to develop school-based programs in areas such as: teaching teachers handwriting, reflective and active learning styles and the production of supplementary materials to strengthen the contents in these two subject areas. Materials developed this year will be used for teacher continuous professional development next project year to enable LTTP II to revise and refine the materials in years 3 and 4.

Outputs include:

Output 1: Teacher CPD guidelines developed.

Output 4: Reading and Math intervention for grades 1 -3 Catchment Schools facilitated.

Sub-result 3.3: Pre-service teacher preparation program strengthened with emphasis on Reading and Math

During Year II, the pre-service team will join the EGRA/EGMA Specialists and coaches to constitute the LTTP Technical Support Team on-site at the RTTIs. The LTTP Team will work in a unified and integrated manner with RTTI administration, faculty and staff to implement project activities at the RTTI, including the demonstration school and the catchment schools. As in Year I, training will be campus-based and conducted by the project team, local consultants or university partners.

Academic program development under this sub-result pertains to training RTTIs demonstration and catchment schools teachers and to provide more direct and guided opportunities for the pre-service teachers and trainees to interact with children in grades 1 – 6. Additionally, the pre-service teachers and trainees will have opportunities to impact student learning and teaching reading across the content areas in grades 4-6.

In Year II, there will be a continued focus on the revision of the C-Certificate curriculum and materials which will include a structured approach to reviewing the current MoE K-6 curriculum to determine appropriate revisions. In conjunction with revision of the curriculum, the LTTP technical support team will work with MoE, RTTIs and partners to incorporate materials production, reproducible books and instructional technology into the training of teachers. Outputs include:

Output 1: Research-based Effective School Management Modules incorporated into professional development and evaluation plan and decision making.

Output 2: Common indicators, mechanisms and schedules for RTTI operations established and used.

Output 3: Existing/revised policies, procedures and standards on teacher effectiveness understood and used by the RTTI staff.

Output 4: Academic records and certifications in the RTTIs are properly documented and monitored.

Output 5: C-Certificate curriculum reviewed, revised and used with focus on integrating reading and math across the content areas.

Output 6: Reading clubs, labs and resource center operational guidelines and procedures established and operationalized.

Output 7: RTTI trainees, teachers, and demonstration school teachers trained in teaching Early Grade Reading and Math.

Output 8: Mechanism for measuring and tracking student performance in the RTTI established and used.

Output 9: Use of ICT for RTTI teachers, teacher trainees, and demonstration schools introduced.

Output 10: RTTI female students' academic performance and success enhanced.

Sub-result 3.4: Strengthened National University delivery system to provide high quality courses in Teacher Education, including Reading and Math

Under this sub-result, in Year II, the LTTP team will work with the MoE and the university to strengthen teacher education in support of basic education through provision of scholarships.

A working group of RTTIs and university staff will be created to work on improving the content and quality of RTTIs course offerings. A scholarship committee will be established to receive and validate nominations for masters and doctoral scholarships. A portal for storing, retrieving and disseminating digital information and course materials in cooperation with the University of Iowa e-Granary will be enhanced. The WiderNet project will train staff and create the platform for data gathering and retrieval. An initiative to develop an undergraduate and master degree programs at the University of Liberia during Year 2 will be made. Outputs include:

Output 1: Capacity of RTTI Faculty Built Through University Support.

Output 2: Digital Library Established and Strengthened to support e-learning.

Output 3: Reading and Math introduced to Universities Faculty of Education.

Output 4: Support system established to ensure success of female students at UoL.

Output 5: MoE, Universities, and RTTI employees trained at Masters and PhD Level.

Rapid Response Fund

The Rapid Response Fund (RRF) is intended to quickly and timely respond, "…to requests from the Liberian Government, Local Institutions, Civil Society as well as the US Government for direct support of interventions related to the achievement of the goals of the Cooperative Agreement." A place-holder budget ($350,000) is indicated for use on a needs basis and as approved by the Agreement Officer's Technical Representative.