



USAID
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Room to Learn South Sudan

FY 2014 QUARTER 2 PROGRESS REPORT

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The authors' views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AES	Alternative Education System
ALP	Accelerated Learning Program
AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
BRIDGE	Building Responsibility for Delivery of Government Services
CAA	Community Asset Appraisal
DFID	(United Kingdom's) Department for International Development
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FHI 360	Family Health International
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GESS	Girls' Education South Sudan
GOSS	Government of South Sudan
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
INEE	Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDTF	Multi-Donor Trust Fund
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MSI	Management Systems International
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OAA	Office of Acquisition & Assistance
PEP	Pastoralist Education Program
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RtL	Room to Learn South Sudan project
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMoE	State Ministry of Education
SSI	Safer Schools Index
SSTEP	South Sudan Teacher Education Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VSS	Veterans Security Services Ltd.

I. ROOM TO LEARN SOUTH SUDAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The conflict that erupted in mid-December spread to other areas of the country and deepened during the quarter, leading to the displacement of nearly 1.1 million South Sudanese both internally and externally as refugees fleeing to neighboring countries. The Room to Learn South Sudan (RtL) project therefore was unable to resume full project operations, as evacuated international staff were not permitted to return to South Sudan, and many South Sudanese staff themselves were displaced as they fled to safer areas. Staff members were on administrative leave during most of the quarter. RtL program offices remained closed throughout the reporting period.

- **Qualitative Impact**

With staff uprooted and RtL offices closed, program activities for RtL were largely on hold during the quarter. In spite of this, the RtL team was able to undertake some work remotely to prepare for the resumption of activities. Team members worked on some of the tools and approaches that the project plans to use, and South Sudanese RtL staff attended Education Cluster meetings in Juba.

On January 31, 2014, Winrock hosted in its Arlington, Virginia office a one-day discussion convened by the USAID/South Sudan Education Director LeAnna Marr and Deputy Education Office Director Peter Cronin about the future direction of education in South Sudan with key education stakeholders. Carrie Gruenloh, Senior Conflict Specialist with USAID provided an historical overview of the conflict in South Sudan that was valuable for the RtL team members attending from Winrock International, FHI 360 and Plan International. Cynthia Koons explained how the Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies were contextualized from the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) and shared her perspective about how these standards can shape the educational response to the current conflict.

- **Quantitative Impact**

RtL does not have any quantitative impacts to report for this reporting period.

- **Project Administration**

The security of RtL staff and assets continued to be the primary concern of Winrock. Winrock maintained contact with RtL staff via phone, Skype, and email during the quarter and sent out alerts to staff. Winrock updated the staff phone and contact list for staff and—as communications allowed—tracked the whereabouts of all staff. Winrock focused on maintaining essential functions, including the payment of staff salaries, the operation of the generators, the provision of water and internet at the compounds, and the continuation of the security services contract with VSS.

In order to deepen Winrock's information about the unfolding security challenges, Winrock obtained approval from USAID to contract Burton Rands to conduct an initial security assessment for RtL and to provide 10 weekly security updates. The security assessment included recommendations for the needed physical improvements at the compound in Juba, as well as procedural changes that could enhance security. Winrock worked on the Project Emergency Response Plan (PERP) to revise it based on this input and Winrock's experiences during the week of December 15, 2013. Winrock also created a new position—Country Security Manager. During the quarter, Winrock was able to launch the recruitment for this position that led to the selection of a well-qualified individual with prior recent experience working in South Sudan. The Country Security Manager was scheduled to begin work on April 21, 2014.

Members of staff were on administrative leave due to the conflict and the closure of the offices. Winrock had not completed the hiring process for permanent staff working on operations and administration, and was still using short-term contracts to undertake those tasks. As the duration of the

conflict lengthened with the attendant uncertainty about the program, and in accordance with the February 14, 2014 guidance from Jason Gilpin, Acting Director, USAID/South Sudan/OAA to minimize costs during the evacuation, Winrock decided to pare back its staffing. When the short-term contracts expired in February, Winrock renewed the contracts of a core team of staff who could carry out essential functions of the project. The core functions included accounting and finance, human resource management, compound management and cleaning, and vehicle management.

At the start of the quarter, Winrock RtL was managing two compounds: one in Juba and one in Kwajok. On February 1, 2014, in order to secure assets given to RtL from the BRIDGE project and to keep RtL's operational options open, RtL assumed management of a third former-BRIDGE project compound in Aweil. Utilizing the contracted services of VSS in all three locations and a Winrock compound manager, assets at all three offices remained secure throughout the quarter.

Winrock advised international staff to discontinue renting their accommodations so that Winrock could identify safer locations for staff to reside in, factoring in the potential for continued conflict and unrest in Juba. In addition, once the SSTEP program's closure was announced, Winrock began discussions with the landlord of the Juba SSTEP office to negotiate renting that compound as RtL's Juba office.

Winrock received a report that one vehicle from the BRIDGE program that had remained in Unity State was stolen. The vehicle was parked on a compound managed by another USAID implementing partner that was overrun and looted. Due to the lack of access to Unity State, Winrock has not conducted an on-the-ground investigation of the theft, and has not recovered the vehicle. Winrock has reported the loss to USAID. Winrock secured all other vehicles in the Juba, Kwajok, and Aweil compounds, and disabled all but one vehicle in each compound by removing the alternators and/or batteries (and in some cases deflating the tires) to prevent the swift theft of these valuable assets.

Despite the uncertain status of the project during the quarter, Winrock resumed recruitment to fill two key personnel positions: Project Director and Director of Community Mobilization. Winrock presented one candidate for the Project Director position that USAID did not approve, and the recruitment resumed for that position. From the second round of recruitment, five candidates were selected to be interviewed in the next quarter. Winrock also screened 36 candidates for the Director of Community Mobilization and short-listed seven candidates for interviewing. FHI 360 selected Dr. Christopher Kenyi as the Director of Education and his candidacy was approved by USAID. He was scheduled to start in April. As planned the previous quarter, FHI 360 brought two individuals onto the RtL team on January 2. Nurudeen Lawal started working remotely from his home in Nigeria as the Teacher Development Specialist. Stephen Wani also started working remotely within South Sudan as the new Database Officer. Winrock maintained contact with short-listed South Sudanese candidates for the Grant Officer and the Procurement Manager, positions that Winrock had recruited for before the conflict, but whose hiring was postponed pending re-opening of the offices.

In February, Winrock first submitted a 90-day and then a 120-day workplan to USAID that included a proposal to conduct a workshop in Winrock's Arlington, Virginia offices. Although neither plan was fully approved, USAID did approve the workshop and Winrock began making travel and other arrangements for program staff to attend the workshop in April. Winrock also requested approval by USAID for the RtL Director of Finance and Administration to make a series of trips to Juba from Nairobi (his home of record and city of evacuation) to undertake critical functions associated with RtL. These requests were not approved during the quarter, so he did not travel to Juba.

Winrock continued negotiations with Plan International and Souktel to enable Winrock to prepare subawards to both organizations.

- **Subsequent Quarter's Work Plan**

In the April–June 2014 quarter, Winrock will bring staff to Arlington, Virginia for a two-week RtL workshop. Based on the input from that workshop, Winrock will prepare a revised 12-month work plan for review by USAID. Following the approval of the work plan, Winrock will submit a revised Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP), and the Gender Action Plan.

Winrock will continue recruitment efforts and will conduct interviews for the Project Director and Director of Community Mobilization. Upon selection of the top candidate for each of these positions, Winrock will submit the proposed candidates to USAID for approval. The start dates of the candidates will be determined by their availability and will be contingent upon USAID's approval.

Work will continue to improve security for RtL local and international staff by making necessary repairs to the current compounds, searching for a new office compound in Juba, and securing safe lodging for international staff who will return to Juba upon approval by USAID. Upon approval for international staff's reentry, Winrock will first deploy the Country Security Manager and the Director of Finance and Administration to oversee the reestablishment of operations and to ensure proper security measures are in place. Program staff will arrive in South Sudan a week thereafter.

Upon the team's return to South Sudan, RtL will resume recruitment, hiring, orientation, and training of staff.

Winrock expects to sign subgrants with Plan International and Souktel to carry out activities for RtL. Negotiations on the subgrant to Plan were nearing conclusion at the end of the quarter, with only minor adjustments to the budget required for the final award. Under the signed Letter of Intent, Souktel began developing the digital platform while work proceeded to finalize the subaward.

II. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS (QUALITATIVE IMPACT)

The disruption of the program and the scattering of the staff limited the ability of the staff members to work as a team to complete many of the efforts that had begun in the prior quarter. In spite of these very real limitations, RtL made progress on a number of fronts.

Gender and Social Inclusion Framework and Action Plan Draft

The Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist developed a draft Gender and Social Inclusion Framework and Action Plan with six objectives:

- Establish a transparent system for RtL to ensure accountability for mainstreaming gender and social inclusion throughout the project;
- Enhance the capacity of RtL staff and stakeholders to implement RtL gender mainstreaming and social inclusion strategies;
- Establish a coordination system for regular networking with national and local partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries to promote gender mainstreaming and social inclusion in education;
- Create a strong network of gender and social inclusion advocates at the local level;
- Increase the number of female and other vulnerable groups in leadership positions in RtL project areas; and
- Create safe and supportive learning environment for girls, orphans, street children, and children and youth with special learning needs.

In addition, RtL has drafted a Gender Mainstreaming and Social Inclusion training guide to help the county teams organize and facilitate training for the RtL beneficiaries and a set of strategies to support social inclusion and gender sensitivity in promoting girls' and vulnerable children's education. The larger RtL team will be reviewing the documents during the RtL workshop and making final revisions subsequently for submission to USAID.

Revised School Improvement Plan Guidelines to Orient RtL Staff

In December 2013, a first draft of School Improvement Plan (SIP) was completed. The draft was circulated to RtL program staff for their input. Due to the conflict and the disruption of normal life particularly for the national staff and lack of communication channels, few staff was able to provide feedback. During March 2014, the Materials and Curriculum Development Specialist reviewed the draft SIP guidelines and incorporated feedback received, remotely.

The South Sudan RtL SIP is a road map that establishes the parameters for a school to offer safe access to quality education; expand inclusive education to benefit all boys and girls, especially the underserved children in difficult to reach communities, the socially excluded such as girls, and children with special learning needs. The SIP will also be used to support activities that improve students' and teachers' wellbeing; increase community engagement; and increase learning achievement. The SIP outlines how the planned changes may be achieved, specifically noting what is to be done, who will do it, and the timeframe by which each activity is to be done. Improvement to be made in each area is based on the findings of the RtL Safer School Index. The South Sudan RtL SIP is also a way through which the public can hold schools accountable and measure improvement.

Draft PTA Guidelines Developed

RtL advisors met with the DfID-funded Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) staff to gain a better understanding of the school development plan and School Management Committee (SMC) Guidelines, used by GESS for implementation of their school planning and the school capitation grants program. The capitation grants are available for all schools excluding profit-making schools with each primary school receiving SSP 5,000 annually plus SSP 39 per pupil enrolled in the school that year.

To assist with the RtL school improvement planning process, draft Parent-Teacher Association Guidelines were developed, which complements the SMC guidelines developed. The guidelines include steps to initiate and establish a PTA, an overview of the PTA's purpose and membership, and an explanation of the school improvement planning process.

Safer School Index Reviewed

Building upon the work undertaken in November 2013, revisions to the SSI were prepared which addressed four key areas: security, school environment, school internal controls, and inclusive community engagement- all with status indicators scaled from 1-5 the lowest being the worst. The SSI was expanded from the seven original indices to more than 20, and will need further refinement and consolidation so the tool is comprehensive without being too cumbersome for school communities to understand and utilize it.

In March 2014, the RtL Materials and Curriculum Development Specialist developed an introduction to the SSI tool and a guideline on how to how to conduct sessions with the school community to measure their status on the SSI tool, set targets and plan action to improve their performance. Beginning at the RtL workshop in April RtL staff will review the draft SSI, address gaps, add value and later in the quarter will produce a copy to pilot and scale up for wider use.

Scope of Work for Mango Tree Developed

Winrock International Room to Learn South Sudan FY 2014, Q2 Progress Report

During the quarter, FHI 360 developed a scope of work for Mango Tree, a planned sub-grantee of FHI 360. With this sub-grant, Mango Tree will provide technical assistance in the development of the materials needed for RtL to work with the Pastoralist Education Program (PEP). This includes the development of culturally relevant, and age appropriate supplemental literacy curriculum materials for pastoralist learners in the Pastoralist Education Program and training guidance for the core group of master trainers who will roll out training of PEP literacy teachers at county and payam level.

Exploring Use of UWEZO-type Assessment for PEP

UWEZO (Kiswahili for 'capacity') is a citizen-led initiative to assess children's basic literacy and numeracy skills. It helps citizens and other education stakeholders to understand how well children are learning. The Materials and Curriculum Development Specialist paid a consultative visit to UWEZO Uganda to explore ways the test may be used to establish a baseline and to periodically measure the impact of PEP. UWEZO conducts a vast survey which requires adequate funding and time; engages different categories of qualified and experienced personnel to develop tools; collects, analyzes, and interprets data; and appropriately documents and disseminates findings to different categories of stakeholders.

Using UWEZO, a regional test used by other Eastern African countries, would allow for a comparative literacy and numeracy data review with other East African countries. Since RtL must develop or adapt a test to establish the baseline for the RtL project literacy intervention and to periodically measure its impact, RtL will explore whether components of UWEZO and other literacy tests may be adapted for RtL using low cost procedures without compromising quality and effectiveness.

Literacy Scan (baseline) assessment drafted

RtL is preparing a program to support existing efforts to increase reading outcomes in Pastoralist Education Program (PEP), Accelerated Learning Program (ALP), Community Girls' Schools (CGS) and in formal primary school classes 1 to 3. To streamline data collection, RtL will conduct one baseline survey that provides needed information for all the key components of the program. The literacy scan will help to identify areas where additional support may be needed to improve reading. The questions also gather information about the target schools and school staff to learn more about conditions and practices that may affect children's reading. The combined results of the survey conducted in many schools will be used to identify areas where additional support may be needed.

Information will be gathered from teachers teaching in the target schools and learning centers, School Management Committee members, PTA and the chief beneficiaries themselves-some PEP children. Data collection points include: 1) status of the school, 2) teacher data, 3) instructional materials, 4) literacy skills development, 5) teaching and learning support equipment and materials other than books, 6) rating students' reading skills, 7) the learning environment – such as furniture, 8) school attendance while sections 9 and 10) seek views of school governing bodies and the PEP learners.

PMP Status Update

Work continued this quarter to refine RtL's Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) including the approach to data collection as well as the reporting processes and systems. Performance Indicator Reference Sheets (PIRS) for the US Foreign Assistance Standard Indicators and a significant number of custom indicators have been designed and are ready for review. The PMP will be reviewed in line with the new emerging USAID results framework, with some short-term indicators added. During the next quarter, agreement will need to be reached on the components of the Safer School Index, clarification of what aspects of the Community Assets Appraisal will also be tracked in the PMP, and specification of the dimensions of institutional capacity development that will be the focus of the project's work with payam-, county-, and state-level Ministry of Education offices.

Baseline Survey

RtL has undertaken initial work on the baseline data-collection tools, which included a review of the existing EMIS data. The project will need to determine if the annual school census will be conducted in 2014 and whether it will include data from the Pastoralist Education Program centers and the regular and alternative schools in the areas of the country in which RtL will undertake its activities. Further discussions are also required with MSI, which is responsible for conducting the external impact evaluation of the project to clarify data collection needs.

Final decisions on the baseline survey also require determination of the states and counties in which RtL will be focusing its activities. In addition, the timing of the baseline survey will depend on when project activities will be initiated in pastoralist education program, alternative education system programs, and regular primary schools.

- **Lessons Learned**

With the closure of the office, maintaining a flow of information with staff became both more difficult and more important. For security reasons, Winrock needed to account for all staff, particularly after the sporadic violent incidents that rocked Juba. In addition, because staff members were not congregating at the office and having the opportunity to interact, morale dropped and the sense of cohesion waned. Periodic updates with news from USAID and exchanges of information from the field helped staff reconnect, and maintain their identity as key members of the RtL team.

As RtL prepares to resume activities in South Sudan in the coming quarter, it will be vital to maintain continued vigilance about adhering to standard operating procedures that can protect lives and property. Although all staff made it through the crisis in December unharmed, Winrock decided that RtL needed to have a Country Security Manager whose work would be dedicated to overseeing all aspects of the program's security and keeping this fresh in the mind of every member of the team through regular drills, trainings, and alerts. The PERP will be a living document, with ongoing revisions based on the changing environment in South Sudan.

III. PROGRAM PROGRESS (QUANTITATIVE IMPACT)

No quantitative impacts were documented during this quarter.

IV. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

A draft PMP with indicator reference sheets was developed based on program activities identified in the original work plan, submitted on November 24, 2013. RtL will revise the draft PMP to reflect the changed circumstances in South Sudan.

V. PROGRESS ON LINKS TO OTHER USAID PROGRAMS

RtL has no progress to report this quarter.

VI. PROGRESS ON LINKS WITH GOSS AGENCIES

In January and March, RtL representatives attended the national education cluster meetings at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, which focused on addressing the emergency education situation.

January meeting key points:

- Developed new National Education Cluster objectives, set outcomes and established targets.
- Cluster argued for an urgent need for emergency education programs to adopt a conflict-sensitive approach. They asked partners, including state and county education authorities, to establish or lightly rehabilitate emergency learning spaces for children including preschoolers and youths. Education partners were encouraged to pre-position education supplies ahead of the rainy season.
- All schools in South Sudan required to use the Daily Attendance Registers distributed by MoEST and County Education Departments with support of Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS).

March meeting key points:

- GESS partners present on the ground carried out assessments on education needs in Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity states. Mercy Corps and Windle Trust carried out assessments in Unity State covering Rubkona, Panyijar, and Panriang Counties and in areas of Warrap State hosting refugees from Unity State. Food for the Hungry (FH) carried out assessments in Jonglei State in Bor and Renk counties.
- Distribution of textbooks to Greater Upper Nile was disrupted by the outbreak of the conflict in December.
- Thirty schools are currently occupied by armed forces across various states with some partners reporting political interference in their operation, in particular in Warrap and Western Bahr El Ghazal States.

VII. PROGRESS ON USAID FORWARD

During this quarter, Winrock added additional NGOs to the list of local NGOs that may be eligible to receive funding from RtL funding and the RtL grants team continued to respond to queries from NGOs. Upon resumption of activities, further organizational capacity assessments will be conducted before any funding is awarded to these NGOs.

VIII. SUSTAINABILITY AND EXIT STRATEGY

RtL has no activities to report this quarter.

IX. SUBSEQUENT QUARTER'S WORK PLAN

Due to the security situation which intervened, many activities planned towards the end of the quarter were put on hold, including the submission of a revised costed work plan, the Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP), and the Gender Action Plan. Recruiting was halted, along with the development of the capacity needs assessment tools for county and payam education staff, and the refinement of the Safer Schools Index (SSI). To the extent that security permits these activities to go forward in the coming quarter, it is RtL's intent to develop a new work plan that factors in the changed circumstances. Since RtL does not have an approved work plan, Winrock will remain in close communication with the AOR and the Education Office Director to discuss appropriate plans. Depending on prevailing conditions, RtL intends to begin working in up to thirteen select counties in the coming year.

Planned Activities from Previous Quarter	Actual Status this Quarter	Explanations for Deviations
Submission of the PMP and Gender Plan to USAID	The drafts will be revised based upon the revised work plan and the new USAID transition objectives emphasizing the promotion of recovery and resilience	Ongoing political and tribal conflict in South Sudan since December 2013 has delayed the completion of this task.
Agreement with USAID on streamlining the Grants Approval process	The draft will be revised based upon the revised work plan and the new USAID transition objectives emphasizing the promotion of recovery and resilience	As above
Finalization of the CAA, SSI and SIP	The CAA, SSI and SIP will be revised to harmonize with GESS and to factor in more of the conflict elements	As above
Revision and approval of Year I work plan	Winrock has been asked to prepare a 12-month work plan and planned to begin work on the revised plan in April	As above
Recruitment of Project Director	Winrock launched a multi-pronged recruitment effort, reviewing more than 60 candidates and interviewing ten. One candidate was selected to present to USAID on January 17, 2013. When that candidate was not approved, Winrock renewed and widened its recruitment efforts, and planned to interview the five top candidates in the second round.	This activity—although unplanned—was precipitated by the resignation of the Project Director on November 15, 2013.
Recruitment of Director of Community Mobilization	Recruitment of a new Director of Community Mobilization resumed in February after being suspended due to the conflict	The Director of Community Mobilization submitted her resignation on December 11, 2013, immediately prior to the outbreak of the conflict.
Recruitment of Director of Education	FHI360 identified a second candidate and Winrock presented the South Sudanese	Ongoing political and tribal conflict in South Sudan since December 2013 has delayed

	candidate to USAID and Dr. Christopher Kenyi was approved. He was scheduled to start work in April 2014.	the completion of this task.
Completing the recruitment of the local staff for Juba and field based positions	Recruitment remained largely on hold due to the absence of senior staff to oversee the process	As above
Developing methodology for baseline survey, baseline tools and protocols	Draft methodology and survey tool is under development and must be revised based on new transition objectives	As above
Revising and finalizing the SSI and developing the tools for implementation	Team review began with the Director of Grants and Materials & Curriculum Development Specialist taking the lead	As above
Conducting the CAA and the SSI in the selected counties	Activity on hold	As above
Procurement, delivery and installation of IT equipment	Procurement on hold pending disposition of assets from SSTEP	As above
Procurement and delivery of vehicles and motorcycles	Procurement on hold pending disposition of assets from SSTEP	As above
Developing guidelines for community mobilization	Draft guidelines have been developed and will be modified to more strongly factor in conflict dynamics	As above
Develop and adapt DRR tools	Draft tools have been developed	As above
Work with the Department of Curriculum Development to incorporate conflict-sensitive and peace-building approaches in the curriculum	Activity on hold based upon limited RtL engagement with government	As above
Compile existing ALP literacy materials in national languages	Activity on hold	As above
Adapt community engagement and civic education tools and tailor it for RtL use	Activity on hold	As above
Develop capacity needs assessment tool for assessing capacity gaps of education departments	Activity on hold based upon limited RtL engagement with government	As above

Gather, compile and translate to local languages articles from policies related to equitable access to education	Activity on hold	As above
Finalize project emergency response plan	The plan was revised and was being prepared for submission to USAID in April; it will continue to be revised as conditions on the ground evolve	As above

X. FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR INTERNAL USAID USE ONLY

CONTENT REMOVED

XI. PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

- **Constraints and Critical Issues**

Insecurity: While RtL staff hoped that the conflict would lessen with the signing of the ceasefire accord early in the quarter, the situation—particularly outside of Juba—remained volatile and unsafe. Two of the states targeted by RtL (Jonglei and Unity) have been the site of some of the worst fighting, and Lakes State, as a result, has become host to a large population of IDPs who have fled the conflict in Bor, Jonglei State. Given the ongoing inaccessibility of Jonglei and Unity States, during the quarter Winrock held discussions with USAID about the geographic footprint of RtL, Winrock is looking at a more flexible approach that would make RtL a national program that capitalizes on opportunities based on security and access.

While international staff were able to remain in contact via email, few South Sudanese employees have access to power and internet in their homes, and therefore during the most insecure periods, they were not able to communicate by email. Some staff members came to the office to spend a few hours in a location with power where they could charge their phones, use their laptops, and access the internet, but many had departed Juba and were not readily accessible.

- **Personnel**

RtL was able to make some headway with recruiting key and non-key personnel. Winrock proposed a candidate for the Project Director position, but the candidate was not approved by USAID. Winrock utilized the services of DevEx to conduct a deeper candidate search for the Project Director, and by the end of the quarter had a new pool of five top candidates. FHI 360 proposed Dr. Christopher Kenyi as the Director of Education and USAID approved his candidacy during the quarter, enabling FHI 360 to hire him shortly after the end of the quarter in early April. Winrock began recruiting for the Director of Community Mobilization and the Director of Grants assisted in screening 36 candidates who applied and selecting seven for screening interviews. Follow-up interviews were to be scheduled in the next quarter.

Winrock also posted the newly-created position of Country Security Manager and Winrock’s Global Security Director helped screen 40 candidates and short-list five candidates for that position, which was filled in April by Brett Petzer.

Winrock, FHI 360 and Plan International maintained contact with prospective candidates for vacancies during the reporting period, awaiting more clarity on the timing of the resumption of activities.

- **Changes in the Project**

During the quarter, Winrock and the USAID/South Sudan education team held a number of discussions regarding the adjustment of RtL's planned areas of operation. Initially Winrock and USAID were considering a shift of one or two states to work in comparatively stable places such as Western Bahr el Ghazal and Western Equatoria in lieu of Jonglei and Unity States. However, RtL is planning to propose in the work plan a "national opportunistic" strategy, in which the project could initiate activities in counties in any of the ten states that were secure enough to field staff and to which RtL could have access. In addition to being a more flexible approach, a national program has the advantage of lessening opportunities for officials in specific states to feel excluded or marginalized. This could be a more conflict-sensitive approach.

Another evolution in the program will be to focus more heavily on the population of children and youth who are in cattle camps, IDPs who are not in camps, or others who may be well served by the Alternative Education Service (AES).

- **Cooperative Agreement Modifications and Amendments**

There were no modifications to the cooperative agreement during the reporting period. Other changes and approvals of note include:

- The designation of LeAnna Marr as the Alternate Agreement Officer's Representative for the RtL project
- The approval of a sub-contract with Burton Rands Associates for security assessment and risk management services
- The approval of Christopher Kenyi as Director of Education
- The approval of travel for RtL staff to travel to the RtL workshop in April in Arlington, Virginia

Due to the security situation, Winrock had requested approval to extend the deadline for the revisions to the Year I work plan, the PMP, and the Gender Action Plan. The AOR acknowledged that new deadlines would need to be established based on the evolving situation, but this did not occur during the quarter.

Annex I: Schedule of Future Events

April 14-24, 2014	Room to Learn South Sudan Workshop, Winrock International Offices, Arlington, Virginia
May 6, 2014	Return to Post of the Director of Finance and Administration and Arrival at Post of the new Country Security Manager
May 14, 2014	Return to Post of the Director of Grants and the Materials & Curriculum Development Specialist and Arrival at Post of the Teacher Development Specialist
Mid-Late July, 2014	Move RtL office from current compound to former SSTEP compound

Annex II: Report on the Major Themes and Findings from 2013 State Field Visits and Meeting in Juba with State Ministry of Education officials

Introduction

As part of the RtL start-up process, RtL teams conducted field visits to the five selected RtL states:

- Northern Bahr el Ghazal (October 17–19, 2013)
- Warrap (October 20–23, 2013)
- Jonglei (October 22–25, 2013)
- Unity (October 28–November 1, 2013)
- Lakes (December 2–6, 2013)

The purpose of the field visits was to:

- Introduce the new program to States Ministry of education, Science and Technology;
- Meet with ministry technical officials to get a clear understanding of the linkages between the National and State Ministries; and
- Conduct consultative meetings with education stakeholders including the local and international NGOs in the states to gather information to inform the development of RtL's Year I work plan.

In addition to the field visits, RtL conducted a three-day work plan preparatory workshop (November 5–7, 2013). Thirty representatives from the National and State Ministries of Education (SMoE), as well as representatives from international and local NGOs, contributed to the work plan.

The report addresses the general and state-specific findings, provides an analysis of the information acquired, and makes recommendations for program activities.

A major finding from the field visits and the consultations during the workshop is that RtL will have to be working in two main themes that start in parallel and then merge under the Safer School Index concepts. This is done by:

- Establishing learning spaces in areas where there are none;
- Once established, applying the Safer School Index to the new learning spaces and treating them the same way established schools are treated (determining where the new establishments are on the SSI, developing school development plans and implementing projects that help them enhance the education environment, safety, and quality.

Common Findings and Observations

- Education, like any other aspect of development, requires political will and close coordination between the implementing partners. Currently, the political will is not clear or strong enough, and there is no framework that organizes partner operations.
- The nature of life in South Sudan in terms of seasonal migration, floods, armed conflict, all lead to continuous community movement in search of water, grazing land, shelter and security, and this leads to a lack of continuity for long-term education plans.
- Austerity measures contributed to increasing the attitude of dependency within the national and state government departments and further reduced the level of commitment of the government officials to perform their duties. One example is the fact that inspectors are not performing their duties regularly due to the lack of transportation costs in many areas.
- Sustainability is a major challenge. The lack of commitment from the government side to take over and continue projects implemented by international donors following the end of the

contracts has led in many cases to the loss of gains made through the implementation of the programs.

- Shuffling staff leads to lack of continuity in government plans due to the tendency of the old staff to take the important documents upon leaving their posts and the lack of hand-over to or orientation of new staff.
- **Management systems/Standardization:** The team noticed that there were different mechanisms for teacher payments (a lack of standardization), particularly in ALP and pastoralist education. Sometimes teachers are paid centrally from the ALP department at the national level. In such cases, we noticed an obvious lack of involvement from the state officials in the operation or the activities of these centers. However, the positive side of such a funding mechanism may be more sustainability.
- **Curriculum:** Until recently (2013), there were four foreign curricula used in South Sudan including Ugandan, Kenyan, Ethiopian, and Sudanese curricula. Although the government developed the unified national curriculum, some areas are still using other curriculum.
- **Coordination:** International organizations focus on certain counties in each state, leaving the communities in the other counties without services and feeling marginalized. Reasons for focusing on certain counties differ and may change. They include security, and easy access. Examples are Gogrial East and Tonj East in Warrap State.
- **Enrollment:** The major reasons behind low numbers of pupils:
 - Lack of schools and learning spaces in communities (nonexistent schools as in Pakuor Payam in Koch County in Unity State or not enough classrooms);
 - Non-functional schools; and
 - An unwelcoming environment in the existing learning facilities.
- **School Community:** All education stakeholders have a general lack of capacity. This includes:
 - Teachers' capacity to teach;
 - PTAs' capacity to understand its role and responsibilities; and
 - Inspectors' capacity to carry out their duties.
- **Dropouts:** Common reasons that lead to drop outs and the lack of will to attend schools and ALPs:
 - mixing children with adults;
 - early marriages of girls;
 - security issues in terms of school access (distant school, lack of safe roads, etc.);
 - overcrowded classes (poor teacher to student ratio);
 - high number of students using the same books and learning materials;
 - schools fees and other costs such as uniforms etc.;
 - lack of school feeding;
 - use of schools as shelters for IDPs or for military purposes;
 - mixing boys with girls;
 - logistical hurdles that lead to reduced levels of performance from the teacher community's end (transportation for the supervisors during the dry and the rainy season, lack of teachers' accommodation, etc.);
 - the change in the school calendar which conflicts with seasonal migration that prevents pastoralist children from enrolling until May, when the first term has elapsed;
 - the location of the ALP center (the ministry officials in Rumbek explicitly stated that ALP centers should not be located close to the market, because students were distracted).
- **Other:** There is a clan culture that in many cases decides the teachers' deployment. There are reports of teachers killed because they taught in schools attended by other clans.
- **School Communities/PTAs:** PTAs are available in most of the schools. SMCs are not. Schools that have SMCs are mainly the ones established and funded by GESS.

- **School Communities/PTAs:** PTAs have different levels of commitment and capacity due to the fact that NGOs train only one or two members. With the continuous movement, and the fact that trained PTA members do not transfer knowledge to their colleagues, disrupting the development process.
- **Gender-Based Violence:** Communities, teachers and pupils neither understand the definition of GBV nor are they willing to openly discuss issues relating to it.
- **Increased enrollment:** Most girls start school at age 8, which is far later than the required school-going age of 6 years. By the time they reach Primary 5 they are ready for marriage and drop out of school. An outreach campaign to advocate for early enrollment of girls may help them get the primary certificate before the age of puberty when they are at risk of early marriage.

State-Specific Findings and Observations

Warrap and Northern Bahr el Ghazal States

- Austerity measures:** State Ministries have supplies of books lying somewhere in Juba, but they did not reach the states and counties due to the lack of transportation funds.
- Austerity measures:** School inspectors do not carry out school supervision, mainly due to the lack of transport.
- Increased enrollment:** Government officials believe that boarding schools would increase girls' enrollment and retention. Sustainability is an issue to be tackled.
- Education in Emergencies:** Plans to disperse materials to disaster-prone counties face the challenge of the lack of storage facilities.
- Education cluster coordination committees** are not available at the county level in Lakes, Warrap and NBG states.
- Teacher training:** INGOs need to provide several teacher trainings with a focus on longer training courses. Currently, training typically consists of a three-day workshop which is not adequate to improve teachers' performance and quality.

Jonglei State

- Increased Enrollment:** In addition to the common reasons, education in Jonglei faces state-specific challenges:
 - cattle raiding;
 - Abduction of children and women; and
 - road inaccessibility
- Other:** The schools in some of the counties are scattered and cannot be clustered.
- Other: Buma** was a payam in Pibor County. It was then split off and made into a separate county that is administered by the national government. Buma is a marginalized area (predominantly Jeichi and Kachi; Murle have left). The county has just become stable. Administration of the county was established in September 2013. The county is very difficult to reach though there is a good airstrip. UNHAS is exploring flights into the county. There is no mobile phone coverage.
- Teacher Training:** Training of teachers on local language teaching is lacking. The last training was provided in 2010 to 30 Dinka teachers.
- Teaching material:**
 - teaching material in Dinka is available. It includes an alphabet chart, alphabet book, phonetic book, story book, and flash cards. Schools were provided with solar tape records (made in South Africa) which have classroom lessons to assist teachers with flash cards, alphabet chart and alphabet story book. When fully charged solar tape recorders can last for four hours.

- ACROSS develops material for Grades I–3 in Dinka, Nuer, Anyuak and Kachifo and Jieh. They do not yet have printed materials. Kachifo is a dialect of Murle so they can use Merle materials. Jieh is different language (Toposa from Eastern Equatoria also speak Jieh so syllabi is transferable).
- **Austerity Measures:** Master copies of materials in all languages are available, but only Dinka books are printed due to financial constraints;
- F) **ALP/Girls' Community Schools:** BRAC implements Community Girls' Schools in both Lakes and Jonglei States. BRAC's model is excellent and recommendable.
- G) **Language of instruction:** One of the big challenges in the case of returnees is the language of instruction, because some of them speak Amhari.
- H) **Children with Special Needs:** Schools for children with special needs are very few and not well taken care of. There is one in Bor.
- I) **School Communities/PTAs:** Most of the PTAs in Jonglei are not active. They usually have conflicts with the head teachers and teachers.

Unity State

- A) **School Communities/PTAs:** PTAs are not functioning due to:
 - Lack of training to enable them to understand their roles.
 - Most PTAs members ask for incentives. When asked to do the work voluntarily they become reluctant.
 - Many of the trained PTA members leave their villages and move to other areas, leaving a gap in PTA capacity.
 - Lack of commitment; Mercy Corps constructed semi-permanent schools. The role of the community is to build the walls of the constructed schools with mud. Almost six months after school construction community members have not built the walls. PTA members were asked to raise funds (Only SSP 5) for feeding community members willing to volunteer to complete the building, however they failed to raise the funds.
- B) **Education in Emergencies:** oil companies blocked water streams that used to help in the natural flow of the rain water to the Nile and also to deprive SPLA soldiers of water during the war. These streams need be reopened to allow the water to flow to the Nile to avoid flooding.
- C) **Other:** The Quality Promotion Director and the Technical Advisor recommended reinstating the "Men's Court" used during the old Sudan. Paramount chiefs and chiefs of different states and counties used traditional authorities/powers to retain security. An agreement is in place between Warrap and Unity States to re-start the Men's Court soon.
- D) **ALP/Pastoralist Education:** The Pastoralist Education Program was emphasized as the most effective and important program in Unity state. The PEP was first started by the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) in 2010. In Unity State there were three centers for the pastoralist education or cattle camp schools: in Mayom County (Koni center); in Rubkona County (Biel Center); and in Guit County (Kuerlatgor Center). Each cattle camp has two teachers who were trained by Winrock Bridge. For three years, MDTF paid the mobile teachers 700 SSP monthly.
- E) **Distance Learning:** Radio talk shows are veru effective, according to the Director General, because people in Unity State always tune in to listen to the radio.
- F) **ALP/Girls' Community Schools:** Community Girls Education has not started. The NGO BRAC had promised to come and start them in Unity, but they have not done so yet.

Lakes State

- A) **Language of Instruction:** In Grades PI–P3 the language of instruction is English. Teachers use mother tongue as a medium of explanation in class. However, in many cases this is challenging because of the lack of the national language equivalent words to scientific terms. Rumbek town

Primary school was noted to be the only primary school in Lakes that uses Arabic as a language of instruction.

- B) **Management systems/Standardization:** The state is moving towards decentralizing the management of primary schools and having county commissioners manage the schools. However this has not been implemented across all counties because some counties have limited or no budget for education. Some of the counties such as Rumbek East and Yirol West are supported by the World Bank.
- C) **Increased Enrollment:** ALP is popular with parents because they don't consider sending their children to school until age 12 when they are already too old to be enrolled in lower grades.
- D) **Dropouts:** It has also been noted that ALP centers located next to market places distract students, and this leads to irregular attendance.
- E) **ALP/Pastoralist education:** Training of cattle camp teachers is conducted centrally in Yei, not in the state.
- F) **Increased Enrollment:** It was noted that fishing communities have been neglected leading to a high number of out-of-school children, especially in Nyibol and Payiir areas.
- G) **Gender:** According to the ministry officials, minimal cases of Gender Based Violence (GBV) have been reported. It is however important to note that communities, teachers and pupils neither understand the definition of GBV nor are they willing to openly discuss issues relating to it. Because GBV is not considered to exist as a 'problem' in their cultures, there are very weak enforcement mechanism to help acknowledge its existence and advocate for its elimination. Some training has been conducted but more needs to be done. There were no cases of corporal punishment reported.
- H) **Coordination:** There is an obvious lack of coordination between the ministry and the international community in terms of grants award. The state ministry is not involved in the stages of the pre award. Schools do not keep records of inventory of the in-kind material received from donors.
- I) **Coordination:** Sometimes the ministry is asked to participate in monitoring construction work funded by international donors. Due to the lack of involvement at the early stages of the award, and the use of contractors who come from other states, the impact of monitoring and recommendations are minimal.
- J) **Other:** Communities in some counties are scattered and have limited access to education. they may not receive international donor support either.
- K) **Language of instruction:** The Reintegration law of South Sudan encourages the integration of Returnees' children in existing schools together with the host communities; however, some are enrolled in Rumbek Town Arabic School.
- L) **School communities/PTA:** Every primary school has a PTA that is responsible for managing the affairs of the school. The same PTA serves both formal and ALP programs to avoid having two different bodies within the same school. During planning, all the needs of both formal and ALP programs are incorporated into the same plan and implemented by the same PTA supporting both formal and ALP.
- M) **ALP/General:** In general, ALP centers use existing schools. However, there are a few ALP independent schools in Lakes: one in Rumbek East, one in Rumbek Center, one in Cueibet and another Catholic adult education center in Yirol West with a total enrollment of as high as 1000 students.
- N) **Dropout:** Although the dropout rate for girls is high, boys are also affected due to family responsibilities especially during cultivation and harvesting seasons.

Recommendations

- I- The field visits clearly showed a need to have a presence at the state level as well as the county level (approved in the original Cooperative Agreement). RtL state presence will

- assist in building the relations with the state government that will contribute to positive perceptions of RtL interventions and elimination of any doubts about the selection of counties and activities. It also helps the RtL team to coordinate more effectively with other education stakeholders.
- 2- Following the submission of the RtL proposal, Warrap experienced a number of challenges in term of access that made it logistically not possible to be considered the headquarters of RtL.
 - 3- Gender equality is cross-cutting within RtL. However, due to the high sensitivity of the subject, it has to be approached prudently in a way that does not put RtL at risk of being perceived as culturally insensitive.
 - 4- BRAC's Girls' Community Schools is an excellent model that is cost effective and helps establish learning spaces that can reach girls in their neighborhoods, sparing them the risk of travelling relatively long distances to reach school.
 - 5- Subject to providing more trained teachers through RtL, schools can be open for more than one shift per day to cover the need to primary education in overcrowded schools. This was discussed with the Jonglei State Minister of Education.
 - 6- Teacher accommodation is a major request in all states that will contribute to quality education.
 - 7- Each state has a number of international organizations working under different mandates and themes. Close coordination with the different players ensures a better use of RtL resources and avoids re-inventing the wheel. It is recommended that RtL coordinate with OTCM/AECOM VISTA to assess opportunities of cooperation in the common geographic areas of interest. For instance, VISTA may do school construction, and RtL may provide the teacher training, training material, etc. Another example is coordination with ICRC, which is working through communities and schools to identify children with disabilities who are out of school. When identified, they will be provided limbs and wheel chairs to allow them go to school.
 - 8- Coordination efforts require a clear segregation of efforts, to make sure that it is possible to monitor, evaluate and assess the impact of the joint activities of each player.
 - 9- More county teams must be deployed to high-density counties to be able to cover all of the schools and other learning institutions during the short dry season. This can be achieved either by deploying roving teams that who can move from one county to another, or by increasing the teams based in the high density areas.
 - 10- Since access to school is a major issue related to increasing enrollment and reducing drop out, cash for work grants to clean feeder roads are recommended.