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# ***USAID QUALITY READING PROJECT (QRP)***

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT  
FOR *JANUARY 2014 TO MARCH 2014*



*Submitted by:  
American Institutes for Research*

*U.S. Agency for International Development  
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*January 2014 to March 2014*

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**Contents**

- II. Acronyms ..... 4
- III. Activity Summary ..... 5
- IV. Executive Summary ..... 6
- V. QRP Implementation Plan Progress ..... 6
- VI. Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Progress..... 11
- VII. Project Management and Operations ..... 13
- VIII. Outstanding Issues/Constraints/Delays and Actions Taken..... 17
- IX. Activities Planned for Next Quarters ..... 18
- X. Financial Report..... 21
- XI. Summary of Key Conclusions ..... 21
- XII. Annex 1 QRP Field Based Organogram ..... 22

## Acronyms

AIR	American Institutes for Research
AOE	Academy of Education (Tajikistan)
COP	Chief of Party
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IDER	American Institutes for Research's International Development, Evaluation and Research Program
IST	In-Service Training
KAE	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
LES	Lead Education Specialists
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sciences
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NSCR	National Steering Committee on Reading
NTC	National Testing Center
QRP	Quality Reading Project
SC	Save the Children
SBE	Standards-Based Education
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
TOR	Terms of Reference
TOT	Training of Trainers
TTI	Teacher Training Institute
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

### III. Activity Summary

Lead Implementing Partner	American Institutes for Research (AIR)
Other Implementing Partners	Save the Children (SC)
Activity Name	Quality Reading Project (QRP)
Activity Objective	The primary objective of this contract is to improve student reading levels among students in grades 1-4 in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The contract focuses on the following results: 1) Improved reading instruction in grades 1-4; 2) Increased availability of reading materials; 3) Increased out-of-school reading time; and 4) Increased government support to improve reading.
Life of Activity	June 28, 2013 to June 27, 2017
Total Estimated Contract/Agreement	\$14,906,184.00
Obligation to date	\$7,390,356.00
Accrued Expenditures 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter (January – March 2014)	\$391,258.00
Activity Cumulative Accrued Expenditures to Date (March 2014)	\$796,758.00
Estimated Expenditure, Next Quarter (Q4)	\$1,275,058.00

## **IV. Executive Summary**

Main activities this quarter included completion of in-service training packages in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, early grade reading standards development and preparation of Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and other monitoring and evaluation instruments for baseline data collection.

The step-by-step approach to development of reading standards has had unplanned positive effects. The Kyrgyzstan Academy of Education (KAE) is duplicating the process used for development of grade 1-4 reading standards to develop other subject standards such as Math, Nature of the Motherland, and Kyrgyz and Russian languages.

In Tajikistan, QRP has developed a close partnership with the MOES. The MOES provides oversight and guidance to all steps of the program. The MOES approved QRP's work plan.

## **V. QRP Implementation Plan Progress**

### **Intermediate Result 1: Improved reading instruction in grades 1- 4**

#### *Sub Result 1.1 Conduct a baseline qualitative study*

The qualitative baseline report was completed and submitted to USAID this quarter. Last quarter, all data collection and compilation was completed. This quarter AIR worked closely with Zerkalo, the subcontractor, on the report presentation and contents. The qualitative study reinforced the need for teacher training and the need for reading materials at schools and in the communities. The findings from the study will be presented to the MOES of both countries next quarter.

#### *Sub Result 1.2 Design in-service training (IST) package*

##### Kyrgyzstan

Individuals attending roundtables at KAE, primary school teachers attending an IST course at KAE, and deputy directors of schools discussed standards on reading developed in two languages (Russian and Kyrgyz). During the development of standards, local consultants worked with AIR Adviser Rebecca Stone and followed her comments and advice. Standards for reading imply a set of rules and regulations defining substantive areas of reading, minimal standards for education, and basic requirements for the quality of teaching primary grades students. Standards should be followed in the development of curriculum, textbooks, and teaching materials for primary schools.

The standards involve the following six components:

1. Phonemic Awareness
2. Phonics
3. Vocabulary
4. Fluency
5. Reading comprehension and literary aspects
6. Listening, comprehension and writing

Three IST manuals (varying by length of training: 72 hours over 10 days, 40 hours over five days, and 72 hours over 36 weekly sessions) based on Literacy Boost were developed, reviewed by experts, and teachers. These manuals will be submitted to KAE for approval in April 2014.

The first package of Training of Trainers module (TOT) consists of 10 day sessions, 72 hours total. This 10-day training package will be used for the development of training skills of Master Trainers (who will be advanced teachers, the head of the methodological unit and Deputy Director) at the district level. During the training, participants will learn how to conduct teacher trainings focusing on:

- organizing daily reading in the classroom
- conducting extracurricular activities
- working with families
- learning how to create lessons plans around the five components of reading skills (knowledge of letters, phonemic perception, fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension)
- conducting formative assessment
- becoming familiar with mentoring tools, and mentoring in general

The project expects that Master Trainers will become mentors at their schools. At the end of the training, trainees will receive certificates from KAE and QRP designating them national trainers.

The second training package consists of five days (40 hours). The second package is for regular in-service training for primary school teachers at KAE and TTIs (teacher training institutes). The content of this training package are to be integrated into the existing IST curriculum that is used for training current primary teachers. This package was developed with the aim of building the capacity of KAE and TTI staff as it relates to training on reading instruction by using Literacy Boost methodology, and to advocate for change in the existing IST curriculum. QRP is advocating for the integration of the 40-hour training module into the existing IST 72-hour curriculum. At the end of the course, participants will receive certificates from KAE.

The third package contains training materials for a 36-week long training seminar to take place during the school year for primary school teachers in project schools. The objective of the training is to have teachers apply best practices in lesson planning that incorporates all five reading skills. A secondary objective is that trainings will be a forum for teachers to discuss their experiences. As the trainings will take place on Saturdays, reserved as weekly professional development days, teachers will not be taken away from their regular teaching duties. Teachers will also receive on-going mentoring from the trainers during the school year. At the end of the course, participants will receive certificates from the MOES and QRP as confirmation of participation in the training.

### Tajikistan

Mother Tongue Standards for grades one to four were reviewed with the help of international and local reading experts to ensure reading standards are clearly presented, described and measured. Primary education experts reviewed the Mother Tongue Standards, feedback was provided and standards were adjusted. The Mother Tongue Standards were then submitted to the Curriculum Board of the MOES for final review.

Approval is expected in two to three months. The Reading Standards for Russian schools were drafted and will be submitted to the Academy of Education for first round of revision. QRP has coordinated with GPE-4 on the standards development process. QRP is responsible for Mother Tongue Standards and IST package developed by QRP will be used by GP-4.

QRP staff, in cooperation with many other stakeholders, developed the IST package for TTIs in seven modules focused on reading instruction, mentoring guides, and portfolio development. The overall objective of the training is to equip all teachers of primary school students with useful tools and techniques to effectively teach children how to read. These modules cover the five key reading skills. In developing this teacher training package, we applied the following research-based principles:

- Learning to read is neither simple nor automatic—teachers need to teach component skills deliberately.
- Training is more effective if done regularly and frequently (rather than in one-off trainings), and if it is school-based and with smaller groups of teachers (rather than large groups in district-wide or province-wide training).
- Teachers must practice skills between sessions.
- Teachers must reflect on practice when they return for the next session.
- Explicit links must be made among training, national government curricula, and textbooks.

The IST package was translated into English and sent for review to Colin Alfred, Save the Children's Technical Advisor. Colin's suggestions, which included changes to the length and organization of each module, and further adaptation of each activity to increase local relevance and practicality, were incorporated into the modules. After the draft version of the IST package was completed, it was field tested in Kurgonteppe in collaboration with AOE and the regional TTI. Field testing of the IST package was conducted for 10 days during which 25 primary teachers from local schools gave their feedback and made comments on the pedagogy and content of the material. Regarding content, teachers suggested that some of the information is not relevant to Tajikistan and needs to be replaced or removed. They also recommended that texts need to be labelled by grade level, difficult texts should be replaced with simplified versions, and definitions of difficult words should be given.

Regarding pedagogy, teachers suggested that some activities are difficult to implement in their classroom due to time constraints and classroom space. There are activities that do not foster learning and need to be removed. Large group activities are difficult to manage so smaller group activities or pair work should be considered more. There was also a comment that less theory and more practical sessions are required for the effectiveness of learning.

After the comments and the feedback were incorporated in the IST materials, the package was sent for editing to AOE, TTIs and the Methodological Center. The editing will also include reviewing the materials comprehensively alongside the MOES norms and standards.

### *Sub-Result 1.3: Conduct in-service trainings for teachers and other educators*

#### Kyrgyzstan

Discussions were held with the MOES and KAE to discuss the roll-out of the teacher training. Next quarter, trainers will be identified and the training will begin.

#### Tajikistan

For Cohort 1 Level 1 training, 50 national trainers have been identified from among AOE, TTIs, Methodological Training Centers, and District Education Departments from Dushanbe, Kurgonteppe and Kulob regions. The criteria for selection were experience, willingness to learn and motivation to work with the project during the summer time.

### *Sub-Result 1.4: Strengthen systems for teacher mentoring/coaching*

#### Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

Modules on mentoring/coaching were developed as a part of each IST. This module contains information about the goals and objectives of the monitoring/mentoring tools (e.g., questionnaires, interviews and scheme of analysis teacher's portfolio and lessons), and a guide on how to use these materials.

The IST packages also include mentoring and coaching guides for reading instruction support. During the pilot training, teachers suggested that for this module more focus should be on improving the mentor's sense of responsibility and the practice of providing constructive feedback to teachers after class observation. Mentors must have strong analytical skills to provide relevant support. These suggestions were incorporated into the IST package.

*Sub-Result 1.5: Implement classroom-based reading diagnostics (process focused); administer national, standardized reading assessments (outcome focused), such as an EGRA, in a representative sample*

Details on the baseline administration of EGRA in 2014 are in Section V.

## **Intermediate Result 2: Increased availability of reading materials**

*Sub-Result 2.1: Conduct a comprehensive review of the quantity of primary grade-level reading material available in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan*

#### Kyrgyzstan

QRP staff developed a report on availability of grade-level appropriate Kyrgyz and Russian-languages books. The focus was on books that could be printed and distributed, which required information on titles, authors and publication. The report was submitted to USAID.

#### Tajikistan

QRP staff completed a review of primary-grade reading materials. Two hundred discrete materials were identified and categorized by grade level. The reviewed and recommended materials will be purchased and used for the book bank and mobile library activities of the project. A report was submitted to USAID in April.

### **Intermediate Result 3: Increased out-of-school reading time**

*Sub-Result 3.1: Increase public awareness about the importance of reading as a cornerstone of education and life-long success*

#### Tajikistan

The two QRP Education Field Coordinators, in Kurganteppe and Kulob, identified products that are bought by a majority of the population including children. These products include macaroni, chewing gum, lollipops and snack food. Our goal is to incorporate fun reading materials, such as riddles, poems and puzzles, in these products for kids and parents. Further activities will take place in future quarters.

*Sub-Result 3.2: Implement out-of-school reading activities*

Reading Camps are enjoyable, safe places with fun activities designed to complement other components of Literacy Boost with the overall goal of supporting children's literacy acquisition, kindling their love of reading and encouraging literacy development outside of the school environment. This is especially important for children who come from non-reading households.

Local, literate youth volunteers trained to lead the Reading Camps. Reading Camps will be capped at 20-25 children per camp. Participants are grade 1-4 children, generally aged seven to ten years old. Reading Camps take place during a month on summer school holidays, approximately 21 working days from 9am up to 4pm. Breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks will be provided by the government. Materials for Reading Camps draw from Book Banks, provided by QRP as part of Literacy Boost. As materials are limited, Reading Camps strive to increase the availability of community resources and materials to support literacy development.

#### Kyrgyzstan

The QRP Manager met with MOES to discuss curriculum and timing of existing summer camps sponsored by the MOES. It was agreed that MOES will pay for the staff and QRP will provide materials and an adapted curriculum for the summer camp. This is a major accomplishment of which QRP is very proud.

Jump Start was also discussed. The timing for the current MOES pre-grade one program begins in March, so QRP will assist in reviewing current curriculum and assist the MOES with revision for 2015 Jump Start activities. This has been discussed with USAID.

#### Tajikistan

The QRP Education Coordinator and an expert from the MOES reviewed existing camp curriculum and camp programs of the MOES. The expert is willing to continue working with QRP on adaptation of curriculum to include a reading focus.

The QRP Education Coordinator and experts from MOES also reviewed the existing pre-school program. These experts are willing to collaborate on incorporating the reviewed pre-school program with the Jump Start activity.

## **Intermediate Result 4: Increased government support to improve reading**

### *Sub-Result 4.1: Increase dialogue about the existing environment for reading acquisition*

#### Kyrgyzstan

QRP staff met with the Deputy Minister of Education and discussed creation of the National Steering Committee on Reading (NSCR). The members of the NSCR are the representatives of the Ministries of Culture, Education, Donors, INGOs, local NGOs, Parents Committee, Teachers and others. During the discussion the Deputy Minister of Education has been given the TOR of the NSCR for comments and review. The deputy is very supportive of the creation of NSCR and role in monitoring and coordination among other donors and partners focused on reading will be briefed on QRP implementation. The first meeting of the NSCR will be held as soon as the TOR is approved by the Education Minister, expected in June 2014.

Staff also conducted round tables with primary education experts and teachers to review and discuss Reading Standards before submission to KAE. These activities included:

1. Meeting with Chui region teachers in training on assessment in December 2013.
2. Meeting with KAE on March 19, 2014. Information about the texts and minimum requirements (standards) has been published on the KAE website for public comment starting March 20, 2014.
3. Meeting with primary school teachers, 27-28 March 2014 in the QRP Bishkek office.
4. Meeting with Bishkek schools Head of Methodological Units at school number 74, March 8, 2014.

QRP staff conducted a round table with primary education experts, teacher trainers and teachers to review and discuss IST on reading. Some standards have been amended as a result of the discussions. These include: clarification of the background for the each section, description of standards definition, increasing the level of difficulty of some standards as they move up in grade level.

#### Tajikistan

During meetings with the MOES institutions, QRP staff emphasized the importance of improving reading. Officials from these institutions realize the lack of the MOES expertise in this field. Therefore, they fully support QRP in implementation. They also closely review all the materials developed for IST and out of school activities as they understand that all the materials will be handed over to the MOES when the project is over.

In the meeting with the president of AOE, IST modules and materials for parents were discussed. The president was very enthusiastic about providing advisory assistance to the QRP program to develop reading materials for parents as AOE already has some experience.

## **VI. Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Progress**

The following indicators are part of the baseline data collection activity taking place in April in Kyrgyzstan and May in Tajikistan.

- Indicator 1: Percentage change in proportion of students in program schools who read proficiently according to national standards.
- Indicator 2: Proportion of students in intervention schools who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text.
- Indicator 21: Number of standardized reading assessments supported by USG.

The above three indicators, all measured through EGRA, have been important parts of the 2014 quarter one activities of the Monitoring and Evaluation staff in both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In preparation for EGRA development, staff was involved in a thorough review of textbooks and curriculum. EGRA tool development includes counting of vocabulary and letters used throughout these textbooks. EGRA tool development workshops were conducted in January in Bishkek and late January through early February in Dushanbe for MOES. Dr. Abdullah Ferdous, AIR Assessment Technical Expert, lead a workshop on EGRA tool development and a draft tool was developed for each country. In Kyrgyzstan, piloting of EGRA was completed in February and in Tajikistan the pilot was in March.

Note for Tajikistan: The MOES has been heavily involved in approving the use of the EGRA tool. There have been many discussions with the MOES on the EGRA tool. Their experts have reviewed project tools and approaches, and their comments on simplifying and content structure have been taken into consideration. One of their main concerns or suggestions was the MOES approved the piloting of the EGRA tool, and now QRP is waiting for final confirmation from the MOES for the baseline. The MOES' heavy involvement is a positive outcome because it indicates that they are taking ownership of the tool, and hopefully will accept the results of the baseline that uses this tool, but it also has slowed the process.

- Indicator 4: Percent of teachers demonstrating, in the classroom, reading instructional best practices.
- Indicator 12: Percent of teachers using results of classroom-based reading assessment.
- Indicator 13: Percentage of schools and communities with adequate number of grade-level appropriate supplementary reading materials.
- Indicator 15: Percent of parents who have changed in their attitudes towards reading.
- Indicator 16: Percent of primary grade students participating in out-of-school reading activities.
- Indicator 17: Percent of parents/other adults reading non-textbook materials to students at home.
- Indicator 18: Percent of primary grade students participating in at-home reading program.

The indicators listed above are also part of the baseline data collection process that includes EGRA, and are measured as follows:

- Indicator 4 (measured through the classroom observation instrument)
- Indicator 12 (measured through the student and teacher questionnaires)

- Indicator 13 (measured through teacher, parent and librarian questionnaires)
- Indicators 15 and 18 (measured through the parent questionnaire), and
- Indicators 16 and 17 (measured through the student and parent questionnaire)

Indicator 7: Number of in-service training packages developed and approved by MOE.

Indicator 7 has been a key part of the program activities during this quarter, as the in-service training packages have been under development. Approval is expected in the next quarter.

In January and February, Monitoring and Evaluation staff were involved in developing these instruments. In February, the instruments were piloted in Kyrgyzstan and in March instruments were again revised based on the pilot. Kyrgyzstan staff was involved in hiring data collectors for the baseline collection period. Staff in both countries was also involved in the randomized selection of schools for the project, as well as the sample to be used for the EGRA baseline.

## **VII. Project Management and Operations**

QRP Kyrgyzstan received approval from USAID to add a budget line for a program office separate from the originally planned SC office. Budgets will be adjusted according to the approved office request. QRP moved into their new office space the first week of January 2014. The first meeting held at his premises was with the National Testing Center's Director to discuss the roll out of EGRA.

QRP Tajikistan is still without a Country Manager. The candidate from last quarter did not accept the position, for he was promoted in his current organization. A new round of advertisements went out, candidates were short-listed and interviews took place. The panel consisted of the COP, Regional Finance Manager, Education Coordinator and M&E Manager. There was one top candidate, but his references were not strong. AIR and USAID are under discussion of possibly changing this position to DCOP or equivalent and making it an expatriate position. This position has been advertised at least four different times, and the project has determined that finding a candidate who meets the educational and technical qualifications with managerial experience within Tajikistan is a challenge.

### **a) Operations**

QRP received permission to purchase multipage scanners for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. These scanners will be used for scanning the thousands of pages of EGRA data. Scanners will save human data input time and money and minimize errors. They will be used throughout the life of the project, with assistance from the MOES (NTC or AOE). In Tajikistan the scanners cost approximately \$10,500, while in Kyrgyzstan QRP was able to purchase them for approximately \$7,500. After reviewing prices, it was decided that purchasing both scanners from Kyrgyzstan made the best financial sense.

## b) Project Staffing

- Field Based Project Staffing (please see Annex 1)  
Lead Education Specialist for Tajikistan was recruited and hired: Sherali Saidoshurov.
  - Fayziddin Niyoz was hired as Education Consultant to oversee the finalizing of Mother Tongue standards and to assist in baseline preparation and implementation.
  - Finance Administrative Assistant was hired for Kyrgyzstan.
  - Short-term Administrative Assistant was hired to cover employee on maternity leave in Kyrgyzstan.
- Home Office Project Staffing.
    - There were no changes in home office staffing during this period.

## c) Key Meetings with USAID and Partners

### Tajikistan

Date / Location	Attendees	Subject	Follow-up / Notes
11/02/2014 AOE	Chief of Party, Education Coordinator, M&E Manager, Consultant and AOE staff	Update AOE on QRP activities	Provide AOE with the work plan
14/02/2014 RTTI	QRP and RTTI staff	IST finalization and approval	Prepare 36 hours Training program for RTTI
14/04/2014 MOES	USAID, UNICEF, AKF, OSI, MOES	GPE-4 meeting	Meet the deadline

### Kyrgyzstan

Date / Location	Attendees	Subject	Follow-up / Notes
8/01/2014 KAE	Project Manager, Field Education Coordinator, IST developers/ consultants and KAE staff	Review IST packages	Develop IST packages, check the KAE IST curriculum
14/01/2014 KAE	QRP, KAE staff, standards developers and IST developers/ consultants, experts	Weekly review of IST packages and Standards	IST and Standard Cross cutting issues

<b>Date / Location</b>	<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Follow-up / Notes</b>
21/01/2014 KAE	QRP, KAE staff, standards developers and IST developers/consultants, experts	Weekly review of IST packages and Standards	Update packages
24/01/2014 MoC	QRP Project Manager, Specialist of the Ministry of the Culture	Review of the WP of QRP and MoC	Share Work Plans
28/01/2014 KAE	QRP, KAE staff, standards developers and IST developers/consultants, experts	Weekly review of IST packages and Standards	Updating packages
05/02/2014 MOES	QRP Project manager, 2 Specialists of the Department on school, out of school and preschool activities	Summer Camp, and Jump Start activities	Next meeting on April for the discussion of activities
07/02/2014 KAE	QRP, KAE staff, standards developers and IST developers/consultants	Review IST packages	Updating Packages
19/02/2014 KAE	QRP Project manager, Field Education Coordinator, President of the KAE, IST developers/consultants	Updating of the process of developing IST packages and Standards on reading	Finalization of IST packages and Standards
07/03/2014 MOES	Chief of Party, Project manager, M&E Manager, Deputy of the Minister	TOR for National Steering committee on reading discussion, Base line assessment, Update QRP activities.	To get comments for NSC on Reading. Order from the MOE for baseline assessment
11/03/2014 Special school for blind children	QRP Project manager, AIR HQ Program Director, School Director	Needs assessment meeting	Identification of intervention
13/03/2014 QRP Office, Bishkek	Chief of Party, QRP Project manager, M&E Manager, USAID, AIR HQ Program Director, Jerome Mindes.	Project updating	Updating WP and Budgeted modification
22/03/2014 KAE, head of IST department	QRP Project Manager, Field Education Coordinator, Consultants	IST development and Certificate issues.	Review the KAE IST curriculum

<b>Date / Location</b>	<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Follow-up / Notes</b>
27/03/2014 DPCC	QRP Project manager, USAID, DONORS, NGOs Education department	Donor's program briefing	Next DPCC QRP, USAID will make a presentation the sustainability of interventions

#### **d) Staff and Consultant International Travel**

Visits by staff from the headquarters offices of AIR were made during the quarter to both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan for the purpose of providing technical and operational support to the field offices.

<b>Name of Traveler</b>	<b>Destination (s)</b>	<b>Dates of Travel</b>	<b>Purpose of trip</b>
Abdullah Ferdous	Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan	18 January – 01 February 2014	Conduct workshop on development of EGRA tool.
Jerome Mindes	Kyrgyzstan	06-16 March 2014	Provide support to QRP team, meet with USAID, assess activities for School for the Blind.
Aizada Sarybaeva	Tajikistan	02-09 February 2014	Training on Quick books with Regional Finance Manager.
Barbara Greenwood	Tajikistan	12-19 January 2014; 09-16 February 2014; 16-19 March 2014	Meetings with USAID COR and country team; meetings with department heads in the MOES; interviewing Country Manager position; and program oversight.
Kiomiddin Davlatov	Kyrgyzstan	19-26 January 2014	Attend the EGRA tool development training in Bishkek.
Fayziddin Nioyz	Kyrgyzstan	19-26 January 2014	Attend the EGRA tool development training in Bishkek.

#### **e) Procurement**

The field offices in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are in the process of setting up. As such, AIR and its field office staff are currently procuring all the necessary supplies, furniture, and services necessary to operate a fully functional office.

<b>Field Office</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount*</b>	<b>Status on 31/03/2014</b>
Kyrgyzstan	Canon Production Scanner	\$7,500	Completed
Tajikistan	Canon Production Scanner	\$7,500	Completed

## **VIII. Outstanding Issues/Constraints/Delays and Actions Taken**

### Kyrgyzstan

In Kyrgyzstan, we have faced challenges in discussions with the KAE on the labelling and use of the primary grade reading standards. As the existing Law on Education does not currently include standards, it becomes challenging for them to adopt the standards that have been developed through this program. Two options have been discussed: one, lobby to change the law so that it will now include the newly developed standards; or two, rename the standards developed by QRP “Minimum requirements on reading in primary grades.” The Deputy Minister of Education, among other stakeholders, is advocating that QRP use option two. The matter is still under discussion.

Despite this minor procedural setback, we remain hopeful about the impact of the primary reading “minimum requirements,” as the Ministry has indicated that they will develop other “minimum requirements” in other subjects based on our experience. For this reason, we intend to comply with the Ministry’s requests, as we wish to show encouragement for the development of standards in other subject areas.

There is an issue with teacher certification by KAE at the school level IST. The school’s deputy director and head of the methodological unit will conduct the (level three) school-level ISTs. As these individuals are not direct employees of KAE, they are not technically able to give KAE certificates of completion to the teachers. This is a challenge as KAE certification is a strong incentive for teachers to participate and increase their professional portfolio. We are working with the Ministry and KAE on this issue.

QRP in Kyrgyzstan has also faced delays with some out-of-school reading activities under sub-result 3.2. One initially planned activity involved a preschool program that followed a Save the Children curriculum program called “Jump Start.” Our original work plan indicated that we would implement this program within the existing course that prepares eligible (those without other kindergarten experience who meet low-income qualifications) students to enter grade one. However, the program begins in March before the students would enter grade one. AIR was not able to build the necessary government buy-in, as well as the technical approach and materials, to integrate Jump Start into the existing course by March 2014; therefore, the students currently in this program are not using the “Jump Start” curriculum.

Moving forward, QRP will work with the future plans Ministry for the national preschool program. Under the Global Partnership for Education program, the Ministry will expand the course for its existing three month model to a full academic year. QRP will work with the working group for GPE in the Ministry to implement the Jump Start curriculum into this new full year model. Discussions have begun, and we expect further activity over the coming months to prepare for a September start date for the Jump Start program.

### Tajikistan

The bureaucratic attitude of the MOES senior staff creates constraints to conduct planned events on time. Therefore a lot of negotiation and meetings are held in order not to miss

deadlines. QRP and the MOES are meeting on a regular basis so information is shared among all concerned stakeholders.

## **IX. Activities Planned for Next Quarters**

Activities for the next quarter for Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan will focus on setting the groundwork for teacher training and assessment activities, as well as summer out-of-school reading activities. At this point, the Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan activities are similar, thus are still listed under one list. Where the activities are different, it is pointed out.

### **Intermediate Result 1: Improved reading instruction in grades 1- 4**

#### *Sub Result 1.1 Conduct a baseline qualitative analysis*

- Completed

#### *Sub Result 1.2 Design in-service training (IST) package*

##### Kyrgyzstan

- On April 15, AIR will submit IST packages and Standards to KAE for approval.
- At the end of May there will be a committee meeting at KAE for approval of IST and Standards on reading developed by QRP.
- Save the Children Education Adviser, Colin Alfred, will come to KG at the beginning of May 2014 for the review of IST packages and conduct refreshment workshop for IST developers in order to finalize IST materials.
- The developed reading standards will be used in the development of curricula, textbooks and teaching materials on reading for primary schools; in the development of tests for assessment of academic skills of primary school pupils, competencies in reading; in IST in teaching reading skills to primary grades pupils.

##### Tajikistan

- After pilot test of the IST package, it will be submitted for editing to AOE and then the package will be submitted for proofreading to RTTI and the Methodological Training Center for final review.
- Finalized QRP IST package and submission of developed materials for approval
- Materials approved by the MOES
- Printing of Teachers Package for IST Master Training workshops

#### *Sub-Result 1.3: Conduct in-service trainings for teachers and other educators*

##### Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

- Conduct ToT for National Trainers for Cohort 1

#### *Sub-Result 1.4: Strengthen systems for teacher mentoring/coaching*

##### Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

- Distribute mentoring/coaching guides to regional In-service TTI staff and deputy school principals of primary grades
- Finalize professional portfolio guides for teacher competencies

*Sub-Result 1.5: Implement classroom-based reading diagnostics (process focused); administer national, standardized reading assessments (outcome focused), such as an EGRA, in a representative sample*

- To be completed in April and May in both countries.
- Results compiled and reported in August/September.

## **Intermediate Result 2: Increased availability of reading materials**

*Sub-Result 2.1: Conduct a comprehensive review of the quantity of primary grade-level reading material available in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan*

### Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

- Develop a set of options and recommendations (to USAID and the MOEs) for creating a mix of low-cost, grade appropriate materials.

*Sub-Result 2.2: Ensure a mix of reading materials are used by schools and communities*

- Conduct Household (or community) surveys in conjunction with reading assessments to determine quantity of reading materials at home or in out-of-school activities. (To coordinate activities and funds, this activity has been compiled in with the baseline and the PMEP, thus conducted at baseline, midterm and endline).

## **Intermediate Result 3: Increased out-of-school reading time**

*Sub-Result 3.1: Increase public awareness about the importance of reading as a cornerstone of education and life-long success*

### Kyrgyzstan

- In collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, we are planning to participate in National Book Day on April 23, 2014. Design and conduct a variety of competitions around reading.

### Tajikistan

- Print and disseminate reading information cards (for Cohort 1).
  - Define target community members and conduct orientation workshop/sessions with PTA, and school administrators. Community leaders, women groups to present and discuss reading information cards with population.
- Negotiate with national and regional companies and agree on product placement.
- Develop TOR for Children Library Association to design and conduct community outreach programs.
- Support Children' Library Association (CLA) to create Mobile Theater and Mobile Libraries at regional level using Book Bank Resources.

- Support Children' Library Association (CLA) to design and plan National Book Day
- Print Teacher's Guide on School and Parents Reading Promotion Activities through Saturday trainings.

*Sub-Result 3.2: Implement out-of-school reading activities*

Kyrgyzstan

In April-May we are going to hire a consultant to adapt and incorporate Reading Camp Curriculum into existing summer school camps for primary grades (short term). These materials will be developed for Deputy Directors and used by teachers during the implementation of summer camps at the school level.

Tajikistan

- Print and disseminate Jump Start program and materials to target schools.
- Train volunteers from upper grades to conduct Jump Start program in target schools.
- Identify and purchase additional readers/books for creating book bank collection.
- Identify and contract developers of cartoon characters.

**Intermediate Result 4: Increased government support to improve reading**

Activities for this IR in both countries are conducted through regular MOES meetings and by working as partners in the roll out of all previously noted QRP activities. In each country, QRP will continue to work with government and other stakeholders to look at issues around reading, especially the lack of reading materials.

*Sub-Result 4.1: Increase dialogue about the existing environment for reading acquisition*

*Sub-Result 4.2: Increase capacity to use reading assessment results*

*Sub-Result 4.3: Strengthen the enabling environment to support improved reading instruction reform*

**Planned Travel:**

<b>Name of Traveler</b>	<b>Destination (s)</b>	<b>Dates of Travel</b>	<b>Purpose of trip</b>
Barbara Greenwood	Tajikistan	13-20 April; 18-25 May; 15-22 June	To support TJ QRP team for baseline and program implementation, to participate in Joint Sector Review, and to meet the MOES and USAID country team
Amy Todd	Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan	01 April – 16 May	To support M&E teams for baseline implementation and to provide extra support to KG M&E team while M&E Manager is on maternity leave

<b>Name of Traveler</b>	<b>Destination (s)</b>	<b>Dates of Travel</b>	<b>Purpose of trip</b>
Abdullah Ferdous	Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan	01- 08 May	Conduct TOT baseline training in Tajikistan and to conduct workshop with the MOES in KG on assessment scoring
Colin Alfred	Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan	03 – 17 May	Finalize IST package in each country and provide guidance on National TOT
Safina Zoire	Kyrgyzstan	27 April – 04 May	Provide support and oversight for KG finance

## **X. Financial Report**

Obligation	\$7,390,356
Pipeline at the beginning of quarter	\$6,984,856
Expenses during the current reporting period	\$391,258
Pipeline at the end of the quarter	\$6,593,598
Estimated expense burn rate for next quarter	\$1,275,058

## **XI. Summary of Key Conclusions**

January to March was about setting the groundwork for the baseline along with the teacher training roll out. The MOES in Kyrgyzstan and in Tajikistan are now partners with QRP in all aspects. Focal persons with the MOES have been provided to QRP. The roll out of the baseline in Kyrgyzstan is in partnership with the NTC and in Tajikistan with AOE. Reading Standards are being reviewed next quarter by the MOES for finalization, along with the IST package. This review sets the activities for mid-2014 program delivery with the beginning of teacher training.

The QRP staff in Kyrgyzstan and in Tajikistan has developed positive relationships with the MOES – no small feat indeed. Sharing of information and providing regular updates with the MOES is crucial. Weekly meetings in Tajikistan with AOE are fruitful and AOE submits letters for approval for QRP’s activities to the MOEs on QRP’s behalf. It has taken time, but the MOES of both countries are buying into the QRP program. There will be challenges ahead, but this quarter has seen a change in the MOES perception of QRP in a positive manner.

## XII. Annex 1. QRP Field Based Organogram

