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EARLY GRADE READING ACTIVITY

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2014

Period: October 1, 2013, to September 30, 2014

OCTOBER 31, 2014

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Prepared by: EGRA Management and Component Leaders

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Abbreviations

AA	Accounts Assistant
AMEP	Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
AO	Activity Objective
BC	Braille Cup
BPG	Brattle Publishing Group
bTG	blueTree Group
CDA	Community Development Assistant
CDCS	Country Development Coordination Strategy
CERT	Center for Educational Research and Training
CH	Chichewa
CM	community mobilization
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CPEA	Coordinating Primary Education Advisor
CPD	continuous professional development
CRC	camera-ready copy
CRECCOM	Creative Center for Community Mobilization
CSR	corporate social responsibility
cwpm	correct words per minute
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DC	Divisional Coordinator
DCDO	District Community Development Officer
DCE	Domasi College of Education
DCM	District Community Mobilization Officer
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DEC	District Executive Committee
DEM	District Education Manager
DEO	District Education Office
DEP	Department of Education Planning
DERG	Disability Education Resource Guide
DGVP	Disability, Gender, and Vulnerable Populations
DIAS	Department of Inspectorate and Advisory Services
DME	District Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

DP	Development Partner
DQA	data quality assurance
DSA	daily subsistence allowance
DSNE	Department of Special Needs Education
DTC	District Training Coordinator
DTED	Department of Teacher Education and Development
EDM	Education Divisional Manager
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Activity
EMIS	education management information systems
EN	English
ESIP	Education Sector Implementation Plan
FAGM	Finance, Administration, and Grants Manager
FAQs	frequently asked questions
FAWEMA	Forum for African Women Educationalists in Malawi
FTP	file transfer protocol
FY	fiscal year
GAO	United States Government Accountability Office
GIS	global information system
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GMTLM	Guidelines for the Management of Teaching and Learning Materials
GUCs	grants under contract
HOCAI	Holistic Organizational Capacity Assessment Instrument
HR	human resources
HT	head teacher
ICT	information and communication technology
IEP	individualized education plan
INDE	Investment and Development Bank
IP	implementing partner
LAT	learner assessment tool
LCD	local capacity development
LLRE	Lilongwe Rural East
LLRW	Lilongwe Rural West
LSEN	learners with special educational needs
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MaK	<i>Maziko a Kuwerenga</i>

MANEB	Malawi National Examinations Board
MGCSW	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare
MIE	Malawi Institute of Education
MIM	Malawi Institute of Management
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MOU	memorandum of understanding
MT	mother tongue
MTPDS	Malawi Teacher Professional Development Support Program
n/a	not available
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NLS	National Library Service
NPC	National Primary Curriculum
NRS	National Reading Strategy
OAI	O'Brien and Associates International
OIBM	Opportunity International Bank of Malawi
PCAR	Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
PMEP	Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
PPP	public-private partnership
PS	Principal Secretary
PSSP	Primary School Support Program
PSIP	Primary School Improvement Program
PTA	parent-teacher association
Q	Quarter
RFP	Request for Proposals
S1, S2, S3	Standard 1, Standard 2, Standard 3
SCI	Save the Children International
SEMA	Senior Education Methods Advisor
SEPA	Senior Education Policy Advisor
SI	Social Impact
SMC	school management committee
SMS	short messaging service
SNE	special needs education
SOC	statement of collaboration
SOW	scope of work

STTA	short-term technical assistant
SY	school year
TA	paraprofessional teaching assistant
TDC	Teacher Development Center
TLM	teaching and learning materials
TO	Task Order
TOF	training of facilitators
TOI	teacher observation instrument
TOR	terms of reference
TTC	teacher training college
TWG	Technical Working Group
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCRF	Volunteer Community Reading Facilitators

Introduction

This annual report provides an update on the progress of work toward planned tasks and activities under the Malawi Early Grade Reading Activity (EGRA) during the period from October 1, 2013, to September 30, 2014. The annual report is structured according to the headings listed below.

- **Introduction** sets out the aims and structure of the document.
- **Activity Summary** briefly describes and lists the intended components and tasks of EGRA.
- **Progress by Component** provides a detailed description of activities and accomplishments made under each component and crosscutting issue. For each component the following is presented:
 - A narrative section describing activities and progress under the component
 - A summary table detailing the status of activities under each task and subtask within the component.
- **Progress toward Targets** explains the progress that EGRA has made toward meeting the targets established for each indicator under the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMEP)—now referred to as the Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (AMEP). Also included are sections updating status of deliverables to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).
- **Management Issues** describes the major management issues dealt with during the year and how these issues were managed.
- **Challenges, Solutions, and Actions Taken** discusses significant challenges faced by EGRA during the year and explains how these challenges were addressed.
- **Success Stories** shares success stories from activities and events that were reported during the year.

Activity Summary

EGRA is a three-year, four-month USAID activity designed to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) in improving the reading performance of Malawian learners in Standards 1 to 3. EGRA's goals include improving the quality and availability of pedagogical materials for early grade reading; providing training to teacher trainers, teachers, and school administrators in the effective use of those materials; equipping parents and communities with the knowledge and tools to support school-based reading programming; and supporting efforts to build a policy environment conducive to improving early grade reading. EGRA is composed of the following components, each with a set of tasks (**Table 1**):

- **Component 1:** Providing Quality Reading Instruction for Early Grade Students
- **Component 2:** Provision of Teaching and Learning Materials for Reading

- **Component 3:** Increasing Parental and Community Engagement to Support Reading
- **Component 4:** Improving Policy Environment to Support Early Grade Reading
- Monitoring and Evaluation and Crosscutting Issues

Table 1. Early Grade Reading Activity Components and Tasks

Component 1: Provide Quality Reading Instruction for Early Grade Students
Task 1-1: Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of Standard 1–3 Teachers in Teaching Reading
Task 1-2: Teaching Practicum as Part of In-Service Training
Task 1-3: Scripted Lesson Plans and Related Reading Materials
Task 1-4: Consistent In-Service Teacher Support and Mentoring
Task 1-5: Rewarding Performing Teachers and Schools
Component 2: Provision of Teaching and Learning Materials for Reading
Task 2-1: Develop and Distribute Decodable and Leveled Books
Task 2-2: Develop and Distribute Story Cards for Home Use
Task 2-3: Develop and Distribute Letter Cards
Task 2-4: Production and Distribution of Chalk Slates
Task 2-5: Supply of Mobile, Lockable Bookcases/Cabinets and Registers
Component 3: Increasing Parental and Community Engagement to Support Reading
Task 3-1: Reading Fairs
Task 3-2: Parental/Caregiver and Community Support for Reading
Task 3-3: Provide Classroom Level and School Support for Reading
Component 4: Improving Policy Environment to Support Early Grade Reading
Task 4-1: Attend MoEST Technical Working Groups (TWGs) Relevant to Early Grade Reading
Task 4-2: Develop Memoranda of Understanding
Task 4-3: Facilitate Extension of Reading Instruction Time
Monitoring and Evaluation and Crosscutting Issues
ME-1: Internal Activity Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)
ME-2: Coordinating with External Evaluator for Baseline and Midterm Assessments
ME-3: Regular Ongoing Reporting
XC-1: Local Capacity Development
XC-2: Students with Special Needs/Learning Disabilities
XC-3: Grants under Contract (GUCs)
XC-4: Geographic Coverage
XC-5: Public-Private Partnerships
XC-6: Gender Equality

Progress by EGRA Components and Crosscutting Issues

This section takes each component and task in turn and describes progress made from October 1, 2013, to September 30, 2014, toward the associated activities and their timeframes. For each component and task, a narrative is provided to explain the progress made during this period, followed by a corresponding table that displays the planned timeframe and status of each subtask and activity at the end of this reporting period, as of September 30, 2014. This is followed by a discussion of each crosscutting issue and how it is being addressed through the component activities.

Component 1: Provide Quality Reading Instruction for Early Grade Students

Component 1 is composed of five tasks, as listed below. Each task will be addressed in turn with its corresponding progress summary table.

Task 1-1: CPD of Standard 1–3 Teachers in Teaching Reading

Task 1-2: Teaching Practicum as Part of In-Service Training

Task 1-3: Scripted Lesson Plans and Related Reading Materials

Task 1-4: Consistent In-Service Teacher Support and Mentoring

Task 1-5: Rewarding Performing Teachers and Schools

Task 1-1: CPD of Standard 1–3 Teachers in Teaching Reading

Teacher Trainings

Over the duration of fiscal year (FY) 2014, EGRA conducted four CPD training sessions of teachers. The first three teacher trainings were conducted for teachers and head teachers in the first cohort of 101 zones (Cohort A) which began receiving the EGRA intervention during School Year 1 (September 2013 to July 2014). The content of these three trainings focused on the Chichewa Standard 1 course called *Maziko a Kuwerenga (MaK)*, which was originally introduced under the USAID Malawi Teacher Professional Development Support (MTPDS) program. The fourth teacher training session was conducted in preparation for School Year 2 (which began in early September 2014) in all 134 EGRA intervention zones from both Cohort A and the 33 new zones (Cohort B) added during School Year 2.

The first teacher training session of the FY was conducted in early November 2013, which was a repeat of the trainings that were conducted in August 2013 for the four non-MTPDS districts. The training was conducted again because due to miscommunication between USAID, EGRA, and Social Impact (SI) there were 11 zones categorized as “treatment” zones by SI, which were supposed to receive the EGRA intervention from the beginning of School Year 1, which were not included in the original August trainings. Therefore, in October 2013 the 11 zones listed in **Table 2** were added to Cohort A of the EGRA intervention for School Year 1 (increasing the number of Cohort A zones from 90 to a total of 101 zones) and training began in the 11 additional zones as soon as possible. The training of facilitators (TOF) for the 11 added zones was conducted on October 28 to 31, with 22 Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) and key teachers (13 male, 9 female) trained to be facilitators for the teacher training sessions in their respective zones (see **Table 3** for TOF training numbers). A total of 980 Standard 1 to 3 teachers and head teachers (421 male, 559 female) were trained between November 5 and 15 in their zones using the Teacher

Training Module 1 materials from the August 2013 trainings, which focus on the five key components of reading and effective methods for reading instruction in the early grades. The trainings also introduced the *MaK Term 1* teachers' guide and its accompanying *Nditha Kuwerenga* learners' book, of which 833 and 44,697 copies, respectively, were printed and distributed to the 11 added zones, along with 1,050 copies of the Teacher Training Manual Module 1. The number of teachers and head teachers trained in the 11 added zones is provided in **Table 4** below.

Table 2. Zones Added to the School Year 1 Intervention in October 2013

District	Zone
Balaka	Chendausiku
	Kankao
	Maduwani
	Mmanga
	Mponda
	Nkhonde
	Ulongwe
Lilongwe Rural East	Kang'oma
	Matapila
	Nkhoma
Machinga	Boma

Table 3. PEAs and Key Teachers Trained in October TOF (Module 1)

District	Center	Male	Female	Total
Machinga	M'manga	1	1	2
Balaka	M'manga	8	6	14
Lilongwe Rural East	Nathenje	4	2	6
Total		13	9	22

Table 4. Teachers and Head Teachers Trained in 11 Additional Zones in November (Module 1)

District	Zone	Attendance		
		Male	Female	Subtotals
Balaka	Ulongwe	57	58	115
	M'manga	56	62	118
	Nkhonde	45	38	83
	Maduwani	37	11	48
	Chendausiku	31	37	68
	Mponda	33	50	83
	Kankao	43	43	86

District	Zone	Attendance		
		Male	Female	Subtotals
	Balaka Totals:	302	299	601
Machinga	Boma	36	72	108
	Machinga Totals:	36	72	108
Lilongwe Rural East	Nkhoma	39	33	72
	Kang'oma	14	127	141
	Matapira	30	28	58
	Lilongwe Rural East Totals:	83	188	271
Totals		421	559	980

The next teacher training session, Teacher Training Module 2, was conducted during the December holidays between Terms 2 and 3 for Standard 1 teachers and head teachers from all schools in the 101 Cohort A zones. The focus of the December trainings was to build upon the initial trainings conducted in August and under MTPDS by training teachers, head teachers, and PEAs to be reflective learners as they work to improve on their reading instruction skills. The December trainings also introduced the *MaK Term 2* teachers' guide and provided opportunities for teachers to learn how to develop their own instruments to evaluate their learners' reading skills and to practice using the scripted lesson plans in a classroom environment through a practicum session. A total of 4,035 copies of Teacher Training Manual Module 2 and 4,035 copies of the *MaK Term 2* teachers' guides were printed and delivered during the trainings.

From December 4 to 5 a roster of 42 expert trainers (23 male, 19 female) consisting of officers from the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE), Department of Inspectorate and Advisory Services (DIAS), Department of Teacher Education and Development (DTED), Department of Basic Education (DBE), Domasi College of Education (DCE), and teacher training colleges (TTCs) were equipped through a two-day workshop to train the PEAs and key teachers as facilitators. The TOF was conducted at each district from December 9 to 13 with a total of 195 PEAs and key teachers (126 male, 69 female) trained to be facilitators of the zonal teacher training sessions (see **Table 5** for TOF attendance numbers). District Training Coordinators (DTCs) and Divisional Coordinators (DCs) from EGRA assisted in conducting the TOFs in each district while the other EGRA district-level officers (District M&E Officers [DMEs] and District Community Mobilization Officers [DCMs]) attended the trainings to become familiar with the content and thereby enhance their support to schools and communities. During the final two days of the TOF, PEAs were trained on how to use tablet computers equipped with Tangerine software to conduct classroom observations and coaching sessions. They were provided with a practical session wherein they practiced using the tablets to record classroom observations while observing an actual lesson at a nearby school.

Table 5. PEA's and Key Teachers Trained in the December TOF (Module 2)

District	Male	Female	Total
Machinga	9	6	15
Balaka	16	9	25
Ntcheu	8	10	18
Salima	9	3	12
Lilongwe Rural West	14	6	20
Lilongwe Rural East	18	6	24
Ntchisi	10	5	15
Mzimba North	15	7	22
Thyolo	12	4	16
Blantyre Rural	7	5	12
Zomba Rural	8	8	16
Totals	126	69	195

During the following week, from December 16 to 20, all Standard 1 teachers and head teachers from 10 of the 11 intervention districts were trained during a five-day training session that included a practicum session with learners in the classroom to practice what they had been trained on. The teacher trainings in Salima district, postponed due to conflicting activities, were conducted from December 26 to 31. A total of 3,646 teachers and head teachers (2,143 male, 1,503 female) were trained from 101 zones. **Table 6** provides details of the numbers of teachers and head teachers trained.

Table 6. Teachers and Head Teachers Trained in December (Module 2)

District	Standard 1 Teachers			Head Teachers			Total Trained		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Machinga	91	75	166	75	12	87	166	87	253
Balaka	115	172	287	129	25	154	244	197	441
Ntcheu	112	137	249	128	10	138	240	147	387
Salima	96	19	115	114	142	256	210	161	371
Lilongwe Rural West	102	21	123	85	205	290	187	226	413
Lilongwe Rural East	144	193	337	114	16	130	258	209	467
Ntchisi	89	56	145	68	01	69	157	57	214
Mzimba North	76	45	121	102	09	111	178	54	232
Thyolo	102	106	208	86	08	94	188	114	302
Blantyre Rural	40	127	167	54	09	63	94	136	230
Zomba Rural	116	103	219	105	12	117	221	115	336

District	Standard 1 Teachers			Head Teachers			Total Trained		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Totals	1,083	1,054	2,137	1,060	449	1,509	2,143	1,503	3,646

Teacher Training Module 3 took place in April during the school break between Terms 2 and 3. The content of the training focused on “teachers as active learners” by reflecting on their own teaching and learning practices, reviewing results from reading assessments, and receiving and incorporating constructive feedback from coaches and supervisors. Module 3 included a section on literacy instruction for learners with special needs and provided training on how to effectively teach fluency, comprehension, and phonological awareness, and how to conduct continuous assessment of reading.

In order to equip expert trainers for the TOF, a three-day workshop was held April 1 to 3 with a total of 13 officers (9 male, 4 female) from DIAS, DTED, Department of Special Needs Education (DSNE), DCE, and TTCs in addition to the EGRA officers.

The TOF was conducted in each intervention district from April 7 to 11 where 11 Senior Education Methods Advisor (SEMAs; 2 male, 9 female), 106 PEAs (73 male, 33 female), 101 key teachers (69 male, 32 female), and 22 teachers of learners with special educational needs (LSEs; 13 male, 9 female) were trained to be facilitators. On the final day of the training, the PEAs conducted a practicum session using their tablets and Tangerine software to conduct teacher observations and mini-learner assessment tests (mini-LATs). This gave them an opportunity to use the mini-LAT in an actual classroom environment. PEAs are expected to assess four learners each time they conduct a classroom observation during coaching visits, so the practice was helpful. See **Table 7** below for the attendance numbers by district.

Table 7. District Participants Trained in the April TOF (Module 3)

District	Male	Female	Total
Machinga	11	8	19
Balaka	8	15	23
Ntcheu	14	9	23
Salima	20	8	28
Lilongwe Rural West	15	6	21
Lilongwe Rural East	21	9	30
Ntchisi	8	8	16
Mzimba North	15	8	23
Thyolo	12	6	18
Blanyre Rural	10	7	17
Zomba Rural	15	7	22
Totals	149	91	240

During the following week, from April 14 to 18, Standard 1 teachers and head teachers from the 11 intervention districts were trained during a five-day training

session that included a practicum session. This gave teachers an opportunity to practice the skills and methods they had learned during the training in a classroom setting. The trainings were postponed by a week in a few zones in Thyolo and Blantyre Rural due to conflicting commitments of the PEAs. A total of 3,462 teachers and head teachers (1,975 male, 1,487 female) from 101 zones were trained. **Table 8** provides the details of the numbers of teachers and head teachers trained.

Table 8. Teachers and Head Teachers Trained in April (Module 3)

District	Standard 1 Teachers			Head Teachers			Total Trained		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Machinga	91	65	156	79	8	87	170	73	243
Balaka	137	162	299	126	28	154	263	190	453
Ntcheu	106	152	258	94	21	115	200	173	373
Salima	96	152	248	129	8	137	225	160	385
Lilongwe Rural West	66	222	288	101	21	122	167	243	410
Lilongwe Rural East	103	185	288	114	17	131	217	202	419
Ntchisi	70	34	104	67	2	69	137	36	173
Mzimba North	70	48	118	100	8	108	170	56	226
Thyolo	83	112	195	90	4	94	173	116	289
Blantyre Rural	31	131	162	58	10	68	89	141	230
Zomba Rural	76	91	167	88	6	94	164	97	261
Totals	929	1,354	2,283	1,046	133	1,179	1,975	1,487	3,462

After the three training modules were completed for School Year 1, the EGRA team held meetings with MoEST counterparts from DIAS, DTED, and DBE to review the effectiveness of the training modules and to plan the training program for the upcoming School Year 2. During these deliberations the Ministry proposed that the August 2014 trainings be extended to seven days rather than the typical five days in order to accommodate the introduction of the Standard 1 English course in addition to the relevant Chichewa course. In consultation with USAID, it was agreed that the August 2014 trainings would be extended by two days while the subsequent trainings in the school year would be of a shorter duration. In addition, the inclusion of 33 new Cohort B zones meant that the teacher trainings would have to be conducted in two different streams. While both cohorts would receive training on the English Standard 1 course for three days, the Cohort A zones would receive four days of training on the newly developed Chichewa Standard 2 course, and the Cohort B zones would receive four days of training on the MaK course for Chichewa Standard 1 (the same trainings that Cohort A received during School Year 1). **Table 9** below provides a detailed description of the proposed training program for both Cohorts A and B for the duration of the project.

Table 9. EGRA Teacher Training Program

School Year/ Term	Cohort A (101 zones)		Cohort B (33 zones)	
	Course	Target teachers ¹	Course	Target teachers ¹
School Year 1 (2013–14)				
August 2013 (5 days)	Chichewa Std 1 – Maziko a Kuwerega Term 1	Stds 1, 2, & 3 (in 4 non-MTPDS districts)		
November 2013 (5 days)	Chichewa Std 1 – Maziko a Kuwerega Term 1	Stds 1, 2, & 3 (in 17 zones added after August)		
December 2013 (5 days)	Chichewa Std 1 – Maziko a Kuwerega Term 2	Std 1		
April 2014 (5 days)	Chichewa Std 1 – Maziko a Kuwerega Term 3	Std 1		
School Year 2 (2014–15)				
August 2014 (7 days)	Chichewa Std 2 – Term 1 (4 days)	Std 2	Chichewa Std 1 – Maziko a Kuwerega Term 1 (4 days)	Stds 1, 2, & 3
	English Std 1 – Term 1 (3 days)	Stds 1, 2, & 3	English Std 1 – Term 1 (3 days)	Stds 1, 2, & 3
December 2014 (5 days)	Chichewa Std 2 – Term 2	Std 2	Chichewa Std 1 – Maziko a Kuwerega Term 2	Std 1
	English Std 1 – Term 2	Stds 1, 2, & 3	English Std 1 – Term 2	Stds 1, 2, & 3
	Use of decodable readers and story cards	Stds 1, 2, & 3	Use of decodable readers and story cards	Stds 1, 2, & 3
April 2015 (3 days)	Chichewa Std 2 – Term 3	Std 2	Chichewa Std 1 – Maziko a Kuwerega Term 3	Std 1
	English Std 1 – Term 3	Stds 1, 2, & 3	English Std 1 – Term 3	Stds 1, 2, & 3
School Year 3 (2015–16)				
August 2015 (5 days)	Chichewa Std. 3 – Term 1	Std 3	Chichewa Std 2 – Term 1	Std 2
	English Std 2 – Term 1	Stds 2 & 3	English Std 2 – Term 1	Stds 2 & 3
December 2015 (5 days)	Chichewa Std. 3 – Term 2	Std 3	Chichewa Std 2 – Term 2	Std 2
	English Std 2 –	Stds 2 & 3	English Std 2 –	Stds 2 & 3

¹ Head teachers are included in all trainings.

	Term 2	Term 2
April 2016 (5 days)	Chichewa Std. 3 – Std 3 Term 3	Chichewa Std 2 – Std 2 Term 3
	English Std 2 – Stds 2 & 3 Term 3	English Std 2 – Stds 2 & 3 Term 3

In August, teacher training was conducted in all intervention zones for Chichewa and English. The Chichewa training in Cohort A focused on Standard 2 teachers and head teachers, whereas in Cohort B, the training targeted all Standard 1 to 3 teachers and their head teachers. The English training for both cohorts targeted all Standard 1 to 3 teachers as well as their head teachers.

In order to equip the expert trainers for the training of facilitators, a four-day workshop was held from July 29 to August 1 at Hippo View Lodge in Liwonde. In addition to the EGRA staff present, a total of 20 officers (12 male, 8 female) from DIAS, DTED, DBE, DSNE, DCE, and TTCs participated in the workshop. The roster for the expert trainers' workshop was updated after the July to August training and will be further updated following the December 2014 training.

The TOF for PEAs and key teachers who would deliver the zonal teacher training sessions was conducted in each intervention district for seven consecutive days from August 11 to 17. 107 PEAs (71 male, 36 female), 102 key teachers (57 male, 45 female), and 20 teachers of LSEs (13 male, 7 female) were trained to be facilitators for Cohort A zonal trainings. Thirty-three PEAs (23 male, 10 female), 33 key teachers (19 male, 14 female), and 2 male teachers of LSEs were trained to be facilitators for Cohort B zonal trainings. In addition, 11 SEMAs (3 male, 8 female) also attended the TOF.

See **Table 10** below for the attendance numbers by district.

Table 10. District Participants Trained in the August 2014 TOF (Std 1 Chichewa Cohort B , Std 2 Chichewa Cohort A, and Std 1 English Cohorts A & B)

District	Male	Female	Total
Machinga	15	9	24
Balaka	17	10	27
Ntcheu	18	13	31
Salima	19	6	25
Lilongwe Rural West	15	11	26
Lilongwe Rural East	23	9	32
Ntchisi	14	10	24
Mzimba North	20	12	32
Thyolo	18	10	28
Blanyre Rural	11	10	21
Zomba Rural	15	12	27
SEMAs	3	8	11

District	Male	Female	Total
Totals	188	120	308

Teacher trainings in the zones were conducted in two phases; this was because of the large numbers of teachers when Standard 1 to 3 teachers were combined. Each phase took seven days and included two practicum sessions. Phase 1 was conducted from August 19 to 27 and Phase 2 was conducted from August 28 to September 5, excluding weekends. However, there were some districts that continued training over the weekends, hence they finished the trainings earlier than September 5. On the fourth and seventh day of each phase, PEAs conducted a practicum session with the teachers using real learners in order to see the practicability of the skills and content learned. This gave teachers an opportunity to practice the skills and methods they had learned during the training in a classroom setting. A total of 11,001 teachers and head teachers (5,988 male, 5,013 female) were trained from 134 zones. **Table 11** provides the details of the numbers of teachers and head teachers trained during the August to September 2014 trainings.

Throughout each of the trainings conducted this year EGRA has kept detailed financial records of the total costs of each training workshop, which has allowed us to monitor the per-teacher cost of our training delivery method. As such, EGRA has worked with the Ministry to explore alternative methods that may increase the cost-effectiveness of the training delivery method. This has been done through consultations with the MoEST Directors during quarterly meetings and through EGRA's active participation in the discussions and workshops around the development of the National Reading Strategy (NRS). The NRS includes a section on CPD for teachers on reading instruction nationwide. During a meeting held with MoEST Directors on September 17, it was agreed that the Ministry would work with EGRA to sensitize the District Education Managers (DEMs), District Commissioners, and District Council Chairpersons to leverage their district education budgets to further support and increase the reach and impact of EGRA trainings. A series of such sensitization meetings are planned for early next FY.

Table 11. Teachers and Head Teachers Trained in August–September 2014

District	Standard 1 Teachers			Standard 2 Teachers			Standard 3 Teachers			Head Teachers			Total Trained		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Machinga	120	127	247	150	108	258	169	120	289	113	14	127	552	369	921
Balaka	120	187	307	130	152	282	166	163	329	125	29	154	541	531	1,072
Ntcheu	150	166	316	186	146	332	215	136	351	157	27	184	708	475	1,183
Salima	74	72	146	142	89	231	88	50	138	84	8	92	388	219	607
Lilongwe Rural West	147	228	375	147	214	361	147	208	355	114	27	141	555	677	1,232
Lilongwe Rural East	148	225	373	157	232	389	193	190	383	141	18	159	639	665	1,304
Ntchisi	92	54	146	90	49	139	92	41	133	94	6	100	368	150	518
Mzimba North	100	109	209	115	91	206	107	87	194	168	9	177	490	296	786
Thyolo	152	189	341	190	168	358	230	169	399	137	17	154	709	543	1,252
Blantyre Rural	63	181	244	74	169	243	99	175	274	87	16	103	323	541	864
Zomba Rural	291	200	491	123	188	311	168	148	316	133	11	144	715	547	1,262
Totals	1,457	1,738	3,195	1,504	1,606	3,110	1,674	1,487	3,161	1,353	182	1,535	5,988	5,013	11,001

Training Materials

In our first few months, EGRA had already identified and collected all of the available CPD content and supplementary materials that were previously produced by the Ministry and under other projects. The CPD materials were then reviewed by EGRA in collaboration with MoEST and were used as the basis for the Teacher Training Module 1, which was conducted in August and November 2013. Content from already existing CPD materials was also incorporated into the content for Modules 2 and 3 for Chichewa Standard 1.

In October 2013, soon after being brought onboard and officially joining the EGRA team, the Disability, Gender, and Vulnerable Populations (DGVP) Specialist conducted an assessment of the current teaching and learning materials available to schools for children with disabilities and special needs. The assessment was done in collaboration with the EGRA Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM) Coordinator, officers from the DSNE, Montfort College, and through interviews with some teachers of LSEN and children with disabilities from selected schools. The majority of participants reported that there is a shortage of TLM for visually impaired and other disabled children. At schools where there is no special needs resource center, it was asserted that special needs pupils have virtually no access to adapted materials. On the whole, TLM are not available in a variety of media for children with special needs.

On October 14 to 18 EGRA held a five-day workshop at Hippo View Lodge in Liwonde where participants from MoEST, MIE, TTCs, DCE, and the Center for Educational Research and Training (CERT) conducted a leveling exercise to determine the appropriate reading levels that the already available readers could support while identifying the gaps that required additional reading materials to be developed. A total of 16 books were leveled and identified for use in the early grades, while drafts of eight new Standard 1 decodable stories were written by the workshop participants. Subsequently, a writers' workshop was held December 27 to 31, where additional decodable readers and story cards were drafted to address the gaps identified in October. The newly developed readers then went through a series of edits and reviews by EGRA, MoEST, and MIE, which included the development of art-briefs for needed illustrations. Artists were identified and contracted by EGRA to develop the needed illustrations, which have been incorporated into the final draft of the readers. The draft supplementary readers have been reviewed by MoEST and MIE and will be piloted in October 2014 before finalization, printing, and distribution to schools.

From October 28 to November 3, two consultants from Brattle Publishing Group (BPG), Carol Karton and Sunny Gagliano, traveled to Malawi to assist in conducting a materials development workshop held at Annie's Lodge in Zomba from October 29 to November 2. Their trip also provided BPG with the opportunity to engage with MIE, MoEST, and other education partners and to informally assess MIE and MoEST's capacity, goals, and desired level of collaboration. Participants at the workshop included officers from MIE, DIAS, DBE, DTED, TTCs, DCE, CERT, and primary school teachers. The purpose of the workshop was threefold:

1. Develop plans/guidelines for aligning the Chichewa Standard 1 National Primary Curriculum (NPC) materials with *Nditha Kuwerenga* and the *MaK* teachers' guides.

2. Develop templates for scripted lesson plans for the English Standard 1 course.
3. Develop the training manual for the December teacher trainings.

Through discussions and consultations during the workshop, the Ministry counterparts agreed that it would not be possible to develop guidelines for aligning the NPC materials with *Nditha Kuwerenga* because it was deemed to be too difficult for teachers to implement. Instead of developing such guidelines, the participants agreed it would be best to develop a full set of scripted lesson plans that would merge the two courses together. The scripted lesson plans would follow the sequence of the NPC course, but incorporate the methodologies and content of the *MaK* teachers' guides, linking the lessons to specific content in the *Nditha Kuwerenga* learners' book. Developing such a set of scripted lesson plans will require additional time and resources that were not included in the scope of work and budget of EGRA. Therefore, it was agreed that EGRA would use the *MaK* teachers' guides and the *Nditha Kuwerenga* learners' book as the core content for the Chichewa Standard 1 trainings.

At the materials development workshop, BPG worked closely with MIE and MoEST counterparts to develop initial plans and templates for the English scripted lesson plans. After establishing the templates, the work group developed a number of sample lesson plans at the workshop. They also discussed the roles and responsibilities of the various partners in the process of developing the English Standard 1 course. It was agreed that MIE would take the leading role in writing the lesson plans with EGRA's technical support; MoEST departments would play the role of reviewing, editing, and approving the lesson plans; and BPG would provide technical assistance from a distance during the writing phase and take the lead in the editing and production phases of the development of the course, building MIE's capacity in the process.

Upon reviewing the English Standard 1 course, the workshop participants proposed that the scripted lesson plans developed through EGRA's support should provide for five days of lessons per week rather than the three days stipulated under the current curriculum. USAID presented this request to the relevant MoEST directors, to which the directors agreed that EGRA could support the Ministry in developing lessons for five days per week to be implemented and piloted in the EGRA intervention zones.

Also at the October 29 to November 2 materials development workshop, a separate working group composed of officers from DIAS, DTED, DBE, and TTCs worked with EGRA staff to develop the content for EGRA Teacher Training Module 2, which was to be used for the December teacher trainings. EGRA then compiled the agreed-upon content into a training manual that was later reviewed, edited, and approved by the relevant MoEST departments. After receiving MoEST's endorsement, Teacher Training Manual Module 2 was submitted to USAID for official clearance, which was provided on November 28. A total of 4,035 copies of Teacher Training Manual Module 2 and 4,035 copies of *MaK Term 2* teachers' guides were printed and delivered to the implementation zones.

In March the EGRA Literacy Team developed the content for Training Manual Module 3 which built upon the previous *MaK* trainings. The Module also included a section on how to provide effective literacy instruction to learners with special needs. A draft of the training manual was shared with and reviewed by the relevant MoEST

departments, whose input was incorporated into the final draft of the training module. The Training Manual Module 3 was submitted to MoEST for official review on March 18, and official endorsement was provided by the Ministry on March 20. Subsequently, the manual was cleared by USAID on March 21. A total of 4,000 manuals and 8,177 *MaK Term 3* teachers' guides were printed and delivered at the April teacher trainings.

The development of the teacher training manuals for the August 2014 training commenced in mid-June and was finalized in July. Three different modules were developed or updated: Module 1 of English Standard 1 (EN S1) for all intervention zones, Module 1 of Chichewa Standard 2 (CH S2) for the Cohort A zones, and a slightly modified version of Module 1 for Chichewa Standard 1 (CH S1) for the Cohort B zones (which is the same training module that the Cohort A zones received in August/November of School Year 1). Final drafts of these modules were submitted to the relevant MoEST departments for official endorsement and then cleared by USAID on July 30 before the printing of the materials in time for the August trainings.

Engaging TTCs in the Development and Use of Literacy Modules

Throughout this year EGRA has engaged with DTED, DCE, and TTCs as much as possible to try to ensure that the materials developed and trainings conducted under EGRA are incorporated into the pre-service teacher-training curriculum. While EGRA is rather limited in what it can do to influence the status of the pre-service curriculum—because it is a policy issue that is beyond the scope of EGRA—it has engaged the relevant departments and institutions whenever possible to make sure they are well versed in the reading methodologies and materials that are being developed and trained under EGRA. Throughout this year EGRA has engaged with these institutions by having representatives participate in the materials development, teacher training, and monitoring activities. It is hoped that through this engagement the TTCs are able to incorporate the methodologies and content used under EGRA into their language and literacy courses with student teachers.

On October 24 EGRA held a sensitization meeting at Bridgeview Hotel in Lilongwe with the principals from all public and private TTCs in Malawi. DTED chaired the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to inform the TTCs of the components and activities of EGRA and discuss how EGRA can collaborate with TTCs to ensure that the materials, knowledge, and skills provided through EGRA support can be incorporated into pre-service teacher training. A total of 14 representatives from TTCs along with the National Training Manager of DTED attended the meeting.

During the meeting, the TTC principals expressed their desire to have more of their lecturers involved in the trainings for early grade reading so that they could gain the skills and knowledge of the current methods in teaching reading. The pre-service curriculum still follows the old Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform (PCAR) materials and has not been changed to be aligned with the revised curriculum. Therefore, student teachers are being trained on different methodologies and materials than those in the revised NPC materials and the EGRA materials. The TTCs said that they would like to incorporate the new methodologies and content into their trainings, but they cannot officially do so until the pre-service curriculum is revised.

In the meantime, they would like to have EGRA work with their lecturers to ensure the lecturers are aware of what is currently happening in schools and that pre-service

student teachers are not sanctioned for using different reading instruction methods and materials than those currently in use in the TTCs. They also expressed their interest to have lecturers be able to incorporate effective teaching practices for early grade reading into their language courses at the TTCs, even if the official pre-service curriculum has not yet been changed. It was agreed in the meeting that EGRA, DTED, and the TTCs would continue to engage in the issue and explore ways to let more TTC lecturers gain from the technical assistance of EGRA.

This is also being addressed as part of the NRS that is being developed by MoEST. The NRS recommends that the pre-service curriculum be revised to incorporate the same methodologies and content that is currently being implemented under EGRA. Through the request of MoEST and USAID, EGRA has actively participated in the development of the NRS through attendance at three NRS conferences and workshops (on November 13 to 14, January 8 to 9, and June 24 to 25). Through these workshops and through input on draft NRS reports, EGRA has provided technical advice on how these issues can be incorporated most effectively into the pre-service teacher training curriculum.

Due to the fact that pre-service issues are at the policy level beyond the scope of EGRA, it has not been possible to develop a specific plan for adapting EGRA materials for the pre-service teacher training curriculum. In addition, there has been a general understanding that a development partner other than USAID has been taking the lead on pre-service teacher training issues. Therefore there has not been an adaptation plan developed for EGRA's approach and materials to be adapted to the pre-service curriculum other than the efforts discussed above. On February 20 the EGRA Senior Education Policy Advisor (SEPA) brought up this issue at the TWG for Teacher Education, where it was agreed that the revision of the pre-service curriculum needs to take place, especially with regards to reading instruction. The Ministry assured the TWG members that the issue will be addressed in the near future through support from one of its other development partners.

Table 12 provides further details on the status of activities for Task 1-1.

Table 12. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 1-1

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
Task 1.1 Continuous Professional Development of Standard 1–3 Teachers in Reading							
1.1.1 Evaluate existing CPD modules on teaching reading for Standard 1–3 learners	1.1.1.1 Review of existing CPD content from MTPDS, Primary School Support Program (PSSP), <i>Tikwere!</i>	July–October 2013	Completed August 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
	1.1.1.2 Assessment by DGVP Specialist, Perkins STTA, and local partners of current teaching and learning materials available to schools of children with disabilities	July–September 2013	Not yet completed due to delay in bringing DGVP Specialist and Perkins on board. Will be conducted during Year 2.	Assessment conducted October–December 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed; Assessment conducted October–December 2013
1.1.2 Existing materials (including supplemental materials and existing CPD modules) incorporated to maximum extent possible in implementation of teacher training	1.1.2.1 Materials from prior projects collected, assessed	July–August 2013	Completed August 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
	1.1.2.2 Requests submitted to MIE, NLS to share any additional Chichewa reading materials for children that might be leveraged	August–September 2013	Completed September 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
	1.1.2.3 Leveling workshop facilitated by	October 2013	Planned	Workshop held	Completed	Completed	Completed; Workshop

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
	EGRA and Brattle Publishing Group (BPG) held with MIE and NLS personnel to revise Read Malawi and other source materials			October 14–18, 2013; 16 readers leveled and selected for use under EGRA			held October 2013
	1.1.2.4 Revised materials reviewed with Director of MIE	October 2013	Pending completion of 1.1.2.3	Revision in progress, plan to review in Q2	Not yet completed. Materials to be ready for review by end May 2014. Delay due to continued negotiations with MIE	Not yet completed due to extended leave of MIE Director	Materials sent to MIE August 2014
	1.1.2.5 Materials endorsed prior to piloting in schools	October 2013– March 2014	Pending completion of 1.1.2.3	Pending completion of 1.1.2.4	Pending completion of 1.1.2.4	Pending completion of 1.1.2.4	Materials endorsed by MoEST August 2014
1.1.3 Appropriate CPD training materials developed in collaboration with MoEST	1.1.3.1 Initial consultation/ planning meetings	September 2013	Meetings delayed until October 2013 due to unavailability of MoEST partners	Workshop held October 29– November 2, 2013 for Training Manual Module 2	MoEST reviewed Training Manual Module 3 in March 2014; their inputs were incorporated in final	Consultation meetings held on April 16, May 28, and June 2 in preparation for August training	Completed; Meetings held in October– November 2013; March, April, May, June, & August 2014

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
					version		
	1.1.3.2 Modification of CPD content and framework to reflect role-based approach	September 2013– March 2014	Planned to begin October 2013	Completed November 2013 for Module 2	Completed March 2014 for Module 3	Completed	Completed; November 2013, March & June 2014
	1.1.3.CH Development of CPD training manuals for Standard 2 (S2) Chichewa to accompany School Year 2 scripted lesson plans	January– March 2014	Planned, not yet started	Planned, to begin in Q2	Delayed due to continued negotiations with MIE. Planned for July 2014	Training program completed June 30, manual development to be completed early July.	Completed for CH-S2 Module 1 in July 2014
	1.1.3.EN Development of CPD training manuals for S1, S2 English to accompany School Year 2 scripted lesson plans	January– March 2014	Planned, not yet started	Process started for EN S1 in 29 October– November 2, 2013 workshop; planned to start for EN S2 in Q2	Delayed for S1 English due to same as 1.1.3.CH above. EN S2 is now to be implemented in School Year 3 and developed during FY 2015	Training program completed June 30; manual development to be completed early July. S2 postponed until School Year 3.	Completed for EN-S1 Module 1 in July 2014; EN-S2 postponed until School Year 3
	1.1.3.3 Periodic joint reviews of any materials under development	Quarterly September 2013– September 2014	Pending development of materials	Conducted during October 29– November 2	Conducted during January and March workshops in	Materials reviewed with MoEST partners April 1–3; April 16;	Completed; Reviewed October, November, December

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
				workshop and subsequent consultation with MIE and MoEST in November–December 2013	Q2	April 23–25; April 28–May 2; 6 May 14–1; June 2–6, June 16–20; June 30–July 4.	2013, and January, March, April, May, June, July, & August 2014
	1.1.3.4 Submission of CPD training materials to MoEST for official endorsement	Quarterly September 2013–September 2014	Pending development and review of materials	CH S1 Module 2 endorsed by MoEST in November 2013	CH S1 Module 3 endorsed by MoEST in March 2014	EN S1 Module 1 & CH S2 Module 1 will be submitted in July	Completed; EN S1 & CH S2 Module 1 endorsed by MoEST July 2014
	1.1.3.5 Submission of CPD training materials to USAID for official clearance	Quarterly September 2013–September 2014	Pending development and review of materials	Module 2 cleared by USAID in November 2013	Module 3 cleared by USAID in March 2014	EN S1 Module 1 & CH S2 Module 1 will be submitted in July	Completed; EN S1 & CH S2 Module 1 cleared by USAID July 2014
1.1.4 CPD trainings delivered to S1–S3 teachers and HTs	1.1.4.1 Roster of expert trainers (MoEST, TTC lecturers) assembled	July 2013	Completed July 2013	Roster updated December 2013	Roster updated March 2014	Roster updated and assembled April 2014	Completed; Roster updated July 2014
	1.1.4.2 EMIS data on number of S1–S3 teachers, HTs in each intervention zone obtained	July 2013	Completed July 2013	Data updated with field data December	Completed	Completed, updated for zones to be added in August	Completed; Updated July 2014

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
2013							
	1.1.4.3 Number, names of TTC language lecturers in intervention districts identified	July 2013	Completed July 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
	1.1.4.4 Roster of targeted S1–S3 teachers, HTs, TTC lecturers built into EGRA M&E database	July–November 2013	Completed for August 2013 trainings	Ongoing; field officers entering data from December 2013 trainings	Updated March 2014	Updated April 2014	Completed; Updated July 2014
	1.1.4.5. Roster of targeted S1–S3 teachers, HTs, TTC lecturers updated regularly	December 2013–April 2016	Ongoing	Ongoing	Updated March 2014	Updated April 2014	Completed; Updated July 2014
	1.1.4.6 Equipping of expert trainers (MoEST, TTC lecturers)	August 2013–April 2016	Completed for August 2013 training	Completed for December 2013 training	Planned for April for Module 3 trainings	Completed for April 2014 training	Completed July 28–31 for August 2014 training
	1.1.4.7 Expert trainers hold five-day training sessions for PEAs and SEMAs	August 2013–April 2016	Completed for August 2013 training	Completed in October 2013 for 11 additional zones for Module 1 and in December 2013 for Module 2	Planned for April for Module 3 trainings	Completed for April 2014 training	Completed for August 11–17 for August 2014 training

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
				training			
	1.1.4.8 PEAs deliver five-day training workshops for S1–S3 teachers, HTs	August 2013–April 2016	Completed for August 2013 training	Completed in November 2013 for 11 additional zones for Module 1 and in December 2013 for Module 2 training	Planned for April for Module 3 trainings	Completed for April 2014 training	Completed August 19 to September 5 for August 2014 training
	1.1.5.1 Per-teacher cost of EGRA-style CPD training calculated from financial records	August 2013–April 2016	Completed for August 2013 training	Ongoing; financial data for December 2013 training being processed	Completed for December 2013 training	Completed for April 2014 training	Completed in September for August 2014 training
1.1.5 Cost-effectiveness of providing CPD training in target zones evaluated, documented	1.1.5.2 Cost of alternative methods modeled	May–September 2014	Planned, not yet started	Planned, not yet started	Planned, not yet started	Planned; in discussions with MoEST on alternative options	Ongoing; discussed with MoEST August 2014, plans for October 2014
1.1.6 Literacy modules adapted for inclusion in pre-service teacher-training curriculum	1.1.6.1 Consultation meetings with DTED, DBE, DIAS	September 2013–July 2016	Planned to begin October 2013	Ongoing; discussed in meeting with TTC principals	Ongoing; discussed during National Reading	Ongoing; discussed during National Reading	Completed; see details in previous quarters

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
				October 24, 2013, and Materials Development Workshop	Strategy conference and in Teacher Education TWG. TTC lecturers are included in materials development and trainings	Strategy Taskforce Workshop. TTC lecturers included in materials development and trainings	
	1.1.6.2 Plan for adaptation process agreed	September 2013–July 2016	Planned to begin October 2013	Ongoing; consultation continuing	Ongoing; as stated in 1.1.6.1	Ongoing; as stated in 1.1.6.1	Completed; MoEST will take it up with other partners
	1.1.6.3 Adaptation process executed	November 2014–July 2016	Planned, pending 1.1.6.2	Planned, pending 1.1.6.2	Pending 1.1.6.2	Pending 1.1.6.2	Pending 1.1.6.2

Task 1-2: Teaching Practicum as Part of In-Service Training

An essential component of each teacher training module conducted by EGRA is the one-day practicum session, which is included as the final day of each training. As such, each of the teacher trainings during this FY (as described under Task 1.1 above) has incorporated a practicum session in which the methods and skills acquired were modeled and practiced by teachers with actual learners in the classroom.

To make such practicum sessions possible, EGRA worked with the DEMs, PEAs, and head teachers (HTs) at the schools where the trainings were conducted to engage with the parents and other members of the community. This engagement was crucial because the trainings were all conducted during the term breaks and school holidays, when schools were not in session.

During each of the training sessions in School Year 1, a class of 20 learners was organized in each of the 101 training centers in the intervention districts. The children were happy to participate in the practicum sessions and were provided with juice and a snack as an incentive for their support. The practicums were followed by a discussion that focused on successes, challenges, and solutions. The teachers and head teachers found these sessions very useful because they helped to iron out the challenges they faced or observed during lesson presentation. This increased their confidence in using the materials and skills they had been exposed to in the trainings. The practicum also raised community awareness about EGRA, because parents sent their children in to participate during the school holidays.

As was mentioned under Task 1.1, the August to September teacher trainings were conducted in two phases. This was because of large numbers that could not be handled in one session or phase. The content of the second phase was a repeat of Phase 1 with a different set of participants. In each phase, two practicum sessions were included, one for Chichewa on Day 4 and the other for English on Day 7. This is because the Chichewa module was given four days and the English module three days. A class of 20 learners was organized in each of the 134 training centers in the intervention districts; in total, 7,844 learners (3,742 male, 4,102 female) participated in the teacher practicum sessions.

The English practicum generated particular interest, as this was the first time under EGRA that English had been addressed; participants and facilitators alike were delighted with the increase in skills and confidence that this short training afforded. The interest was so high that some children had to be sent back because the number of learners was limited to 20 for each center, and the numbers of children who reported for the practicums exceeded this in each of the 134 centers.

In addition, during the TOFs in December, April, and August, the PEAs were provided with an opportunity to practice conducting classroom observations and coaching sessions using tablet computers. They were able to do so by visiting a school close to the training venue and observing an actual lesson being taught by a teacher in the classroom. This provided practical application of the new technology and an opportunity for reflection and feedback after the practicum.

Table 13 provides further details on the status of activities for Task 1-2.

Table 13. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 1-2

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
Task 1-2 Teaching Practicum as Part of In-Service Training							
1.2.1 CPD includes a practicum session where methods can be modeled and teachers can practice	1.2.1 CPD includes a practicum session where methods can be modeled and teachers can practice	August 2013–April 2016	Completed as part of August 2013 training	Completed as part of October and December 2013 trainings	Included in the Teacher Training Manual Module 3	Completed as part of April 2014 trainings	Completed as part of all trainings in FY 2014
	1.2.2.1 Parents, communities engaged to identify/mobilize children for the teaching practicum	August 2013–April 2016	Completed as part of August 2013 training	Completed as part of October and December 2013 trainings	n/a for this quarter	Completed as part of April 2014 trainings	Completed as part of all trainings in FY 2014
1.2.2 Children recruited to attend Day 5 of PEA teacher-training workshops	1.2.2.2 Incentives for children's participation identified, implemented	August 2013–April 2016	Completed as part of August 2013 training	Completed as part of October and December 2013 trainings	n/a for this quarter	Completed as part of April 2014 trainings	Completed as part of all trainings in FY 2014
	1.2.2.3 Count of children participating recorded and transmitted to EGRA headquarters	August 2013–April 2016	Completed as part of August 2013 training	Completed as part of October and December 2013 trainings	n/a for this quarter	Completed as part of April 2014 trainings	Completed as part of all trainings in FY 2014

Task 1-3: Scripted Lesson Plans and Related Reading Materials*Scripted Lesson Plans*

The development of scripted lesson plans and related materials took longer than anticipated during this FY for a number of reasons, as will be described below. Despite these setbacks EGRA was able to make the necessary adjustments and arrangements with MoEST and MIE to ensure that the scripted lesson plans were developed in time for the relevant trainings and ready to be implemented in schools during the intended terms. This was all done in close collaboration with MoEST and MIE so that the materials are now recognized as official NPC materials.

As was discussed under Task 1.1 above, at the materials development workshop held from October 29 to November 2, the issue of the timing for the development and deployment of the scripted lesson plans was reviewed and updated according to the needs and desires of MoEST, which were further articulated during the workshop. MoEST made it clear that EGRA must work under the guidance of MIE in order for the materials to be considered official Ministry curriculum materials. As part of the discussions, the division of labor in the writing and development of scripted lesson plans for English Standards 1 and 2 and Chichewa Standards 1 and 2 was clarified, with MIE taking the leading role—as the institution mandated to develop curriculum for the Ministry—in writing the scripted lesson plans with technical support from EGRA and BPG; MoEST departments playing the role of editing, reviewing, and approving the lesson plans; and BPG taking the lead in the desktop publishing, editing, and production of the lesson plans, while building the capacity of MIE in the process.

In order to operationalize the role of MIE and to secure sufficient level of effort from the Institute, EGRA explored the possibility of establishing a formal partnership with MIE. As MIE is a parastatal institution, it is required to generate its own revenue to sustain its activities. As such, although extremely committed to and supportive of EGRA's work, the MIE Executive Director was not able to guarantee the time and effort of his officers and institutional resources without being assured of their work being compensated. Therefore, EGRA decided it would be best to pursue a contractual arrangement with MIE to ensure their availability and efforts within EGRA's required timeframes. A series of discussions were held from December to March with the MIE Executive Director and relevant MIE officers on establishing a financial arrangement between EGRA and MIE. It was tentatively agreed that MIE would sign a subcontract with RTI that would be based on a set of task orders (TOs) related to the development of each set of scripted lesson plans. Through constant negotiation, two TOs, one for English Standard 1 and one for Chichewa Standard 2, were drafted and ready to be signed at the end of March. But on April 4 MIE sent an email to the Director of DIAS stating that it would not be signing the contract with EGRA due to administrative requirements that it cannot meet.

On April 11 a meeting was held with the Director of DIAS and the Executive Director of MIE to discuss the way forward. At the meeting it was agreed that MIE should continue to work with EGRA through workshops and other invited activities until a more formal arrangement could be made. Unfortunately, this put EGRA back to where we were in November, without any formal arrangement with MIE. It also delayed the writing of materials by a few months because MIE was tasked to take the lead in writing the materials. While the workshop mode is feasible, it is not ideal as it

requires greater resources and is subject to the availability of all participants, which inevitably slows down the process. In addition, while workshops may be manageable for the writing and development of materials, they do not lend themselves to the editorial and desktop publishing process, which usually requires individuals working within their own office environment. As such, it has been challenging to establish with MIE effective means to accomplish the editing and production phases in a timely manner.

Despite these setbacks, EGRA continued to push forward with the Ministry by developing the scope and sequence for the English Standard 1 and Chichewa Standard 2 courses, establishing a lesson plan template that would act as a guide for the writing process, and agreeing upon the content of the course materials. These activities were conducted during two materials development workshops held in Salima January 13 to 17 and March 17 to 21. The January workshop was attended by 13 participants (7 male, 6 female) representing MIE, DBE, DIAS, DTED, DCE, TTCs, and EGRA. The March workshop was attended by 12 participants (7 male, 5 female) representing DIAS, DBE, DCE, TTCs, practicing teachers, and EGRA.

It was agreed through those workshops that EGRA would support the Ministry in developing scripted lesson plans that follow the officially approved primary curriculum materials produced through the PCAR revision activities. Although the PCAR revision for Standards 1 to 4 was completed in 2012, the materials (other than the Chichewa Standard 1 learners' book) are yet to be printed and implemented in primary schools. This provided EGRA with a unique opportunity to support MoEST in further developing the curriculum materials with scripted lesson plans before they are printed and implemented in Standard 1 to 3 classrooms.

Also due to the delay, EGRA was forced to reconsider its timeline for developing the English Standard 2 course materials. In consultation with USAID, an implementation plan for the Standards 1 to 3 English and Chichewa courses was agreed upon. **Table 14** illustrates the course implementation plan that was approved by USAID on March 7. This meant that the development of English Standard 2 would not take place until the next FY. It also meant that the timetables for completing Chichewa Standard 2 and English Standard 1 needed to be adjusted to fit within the shrinking time frame. A new plan was agreed upon with USAID and MoEST to have the Term 1 materials for both courses finished, approved, and printed in time for the August 2014 teacher trainings and supplied to schools for the beginning of School Year 2 in September 2014. The Term 2 and Term 3 materials would then be developed, finalized, and printed prior to the December 2014 teacher trainings.

Table 14. Course Implementation Plan

	School Year 1 (Sep'13–July'14)	School Year 2 (Sep'14–July'15)	School Year 3 (Sep'15–July'16)	Aug '16
Cohort A	Chichewa Std. 1	Chichewa Std. 2 English Std. 1	Chichewa Std. 3 English Std. 2	English Std. 3
Cohort B		Chichewa Std. 1 (Aug'14) English Std. 1 (Dec'14)	Chichewa Std. 2 English Std. 2	Chichewa Std. 3 English Std. 3

With a clearer understanding of the division of labor and goals of MIE and MoEST, RTI was able to further clarify the role of BPG in the process and finalized the SOW and accompanying TOs for BPG for FY 2014. While the first two TOs were issued to BPG in September and October 2013, the third and fourth TOs were adjusted accordingly, with the third TO being issued in January 2014 and the fourth in June 2014. These latter two TOs clarified the role of BPG as providing technical support during the writing process of the English Standard 1 course through editing and feedback while taking the lead for both English Standard 1 and Chichewa Standard 2 in pouring the manuscript pages onto the formatted template and doing desktop publishing up through to the finished product. Throughout the process MIE was engaged for input and feedback, building its capacity through the process.

As part of its tasks, BPG worked closely with EGRA and MIE staff to develop a detailed scope and sequence for the English Standard 1 course that follows the desires of the Ministry. The initial plan for EGRA was to use the English materials developed by BPG for the Liberia Ministry of Education under another USAID activity as a model for the Malawi English curriculum materials. But during discussions with MoEST and MIE, it was made clear that the Ministry wanted to follow the sequence and content of the language curriculum materials that have already been developed in the revised PCAR materials. As such, it was established by MoEST that the role of EGRA and BPG was to support the development of scripted lesson plans that build upon and enhance the current curricular materials as they are, incorporating the methods that have proven to be effective in early grade reading instruction. This has helped to ensure that the materials developed under EGRA are owned and endorsed by MoEST and will continue to be used after EGRA ends its work.

With regards to the Chichewa Standard 1 materials, EGRA worked with MoEST and MIE to develop guidelines for teachers to integrate the *MaK* materials, including the *Nditha Kuwerenga* learners' book, into the revised PCAR Chichewa Standard 1 course. In the end it was decided that such guidelines would be too difficult for teachers to effectively implement, and the way forward would be to develop a whole new set of scripted lesson plans that follow the sequence of the PCAR Chichewa Standard 1 course but merge content from *MaK* into the lessons, utilizing both the PCAR learners' book and *Nditha Kuwerenga*. EGRA helped the Ministry to develop a few examples of how scripted lesson plans in the merged teachers' guide would look, but it explained to MoEST that it was beyond the scope and budget of EGRA to develop a full set of such lesson plans. Therefore, it was agreed that EGRA would continue to use *MaK* as its materials for Chichewa Standard 1, while the Ministry pursued further support to develop a revised teachers' guide that merges the two courses together.

For the Chichewa Standard 2 course, this was not a problem because the revised PCAR materials had not yet been printed and were not in the schools. Therefore, it was agreed for Chichewa Standard 2 that EGRA would support MIE and MoEST in developing a full set of scripted lesson plans that follow the already approved revised PCAR curriculum materials by enhancing the lessons to incorporate effective methods and strategies for reading instruction. It was also agreed that the revised PCAR learners' book, which is already in camera-ready copy form, will remain untouched and be the basis for the content in the scripted lesson plans.

After it was established in the April 11 meeting with DIAS and MIE that EGRA should work with MIE through workshops in the absence of a subcontract, EGRA moved

forward in the writing of scripted lesson plans for English Standard 1 and Chichewa Standard 2. Over the months that followed, EGRA held eight materials development workshops or meetings with MIE and MoEST partners, as follows:

- April 16—EGRA's TLM Coordinator and Literacy Specialist met with MIE technical staff to plan the strategy for completing the teachers' guides for English Standard 1 and Chichewa Standard 2.
- April 23 to 25—Three-day workshop for the review and further development of the scope and sequence for Chichewa Standard 2.
- April 28 to May 2—Five-day workshop in which participants completed a first draft of Term 1 lesson plans for English and Chichewa. After the workshop, EGRA staff further edited the drafts in preparation for the trial testing of the materials (detailed below).
- May 16 to 18—Three-day review workshop for further improvement to both the English Standard 1 and Chichewa Standard 2 materials.
- June 2 to 6—Five-day workshop in which MIE technical staff worked with the TLM Coordinator and the Literacy Specialist to produce a final draft of the manuscript for Term 1 lessons, which was then sent to BPG for content editing and desktop publishing.
- June 16 to 20—Five-day workshop in which EGRA addressed the development of Term 2 lesson plans for both English Standard 1 and Chichewa Standard 2.
- June 30 to July 4—Five-day workshop in which participants developed the first drafts of the lesson plans for Term 3 for both subjects.
- September 15 to 19—Five-day workshop that reviewed the manuscripts of the Term 2 and Term 3 lesson plans, resulting in a second draft of the lesson plans ready for trial testing planned to take place in October 2014.

Trial testing of the English Standard 1 and Chichewa Standard 2 materials for Term 1 was conducted by MoEST and EGRA staff from May 12 to 13 in 1 percent of intervention schools. One school in each of the 11 districts was purposefully sampled (with an extra school sampled in Mzimba North) so that the sample of 12 schools represented 1 percent of the 1,186 intervention schools. PEAs assisted in identifying appropriate schools, so that the materials could be trialed and evaluated in an optimal context. It was possible to complete the trial testing in two days because MoEST partners participated in such numbers that six teams were available to simultaneously conduct the trials.

The trial testing was invaluable. While it revealed on the whole that the materials were at the right level, there was too much detail in the trialed Chichewa lessons to adequately complete the lessons in the allocated lesson time. The trial of the English lessons, on the other hand, revealed that a key step in the practice routine had been omitted. It was possible to address both these findings in the workshop that was held immediately after the trial testing (as mentioned above). Another important feature of the trial testing was that MoEST partners not only contributed their expertise but also learned more about the process. Six early grade teachers from intervention schools (1 male, 5 female) were invited to participate in the review workshop; their highly important classroom experience concretely informed the materials' modifications.

After the trial testing was completed the resulting modifications were incorporated into the final manuscripts for the Term 1 scripted lesson plans, which were shared with BPG for final editing, design, and production. EGRA worked closely with BPG throughout the desktop publishing and production of the lesson plans keeping in weekly contact via teleconference. The designed pages of the teachers' guides for both English Standard 1 and Chichewa Standard 2 were ready by June 30 and were sent to MIE for final proof-reading. The teachers' guides were printed locally in order to have them ready on time for the teacher trainings in August.

In preparation for these two courses to be implemented in the intervention schools, EGRA requested that MIE provide EGRA with the camera-ready copies (CRCs) of the MoEST learners' books, which form the basis of the lesson plans development, and which EGRA plans to print and distribute to its intervention schools. After some delays the CRCs were obtained from MIE at the end of June. The CRCs were then formatted by BPG and sent to the printers. This delay meant that the consignment of books being printed internationally will not arrive until after School Year 2 has already begun. In order to mitigate this, and also to help build local printing capacity, EGRA apportioned an additional consignment for a number of the learners' books to be printed locally to ensure that enough books were available during the teacher trainings in August, which the teachers could use in their schools at the beginning of the school year in September. The remaining books are scheduled to arrive in two shipments, one in October and one in November, and will be immediately delivered to the schools.

Supplementary Readers

As was discussed under Task 1.1, EGRA conducted a leveling workshop on October 14 to 18 where a total of 16 already available books were identified for use in the early grades, and gaps that require additional reading materials were identified. Subsequently, EGRA conducted a writers' workshop from December 27 to 31 involving officers from MIE, DIAS, DCE, Lilongwe TTC, and CERT, along with representatives from the National Library Services (NLS) and Malawi PEN. The purpose of the workshop was to write drafts of the decodable readers and story cards to fill the gaps that had been identified. The workshop participants were able to successfully write a first draft of all the stories required for Standard 1.

A particular success of the writers' workshop was in bringing together MoEST counterparts with those from the NLS and Malawi PEN. Participants from both sides noted that this was the first time they have been brought together to collaboratively develop reading materials. The Ministry counterparts praised the collaboration by commenting that having NLS and Malawi PEN participate added creativity and a fresh perspective to the writing process, while those from NLS and Malawi PEN expressed their appreciation and enhanced awareness of the pedagogical considerations that need to be taken into account when writing stories that support reading instruction and acquisition. EGRA hopes that the two parties will continue to be able to collaborate in similar efforts in the future.

After the stories had been drafted during the writers' workshop EGRA worked on refining and editing the stories to get them ready for trial testing and finalization. Part of this process is preparing the stories for artwork development and type-setting. EGRA developed art briefs and identified artists to do the illustrations. By the end of August, 30 stories had been written and three artists had been identified to produce the line drawings to fit the artwork briefs. The artists' first drafts were received on

September 8 and reviewed by MoEST colleagues during the September 15 to 19 workshop. On September 25 meetings were held with the artists to brief them about the required changes and about the completion of the artwork for the front covers of the three volumes in which the 30 stories are to be presented. Plans are in place for the stories to be trial tested in October 2014 for final modifications before being sent to the printers.

Due to the large amount of content being introduced in the August teacher trainings for English Standard 1 and Chichewa Standard 2, EGRA and MoEST agreed to defer the introduction of the decodable stories until the December 2014 trainings, in which teachers will be trained on how to integrate the decodable stories into the new curriculum materials. Both parties agreed that because the August training will expose teachers simultaneously to two new courses, it would likely be overwhelming and counterproductive to try to do justice to the use of the supplementary reading matter as well.

The Chichewa Standard 2 scope and sequence makes provision for the reading of supplementary readers as both an independent and a teacher-led activity. Fifteen of the 30 decodable readers have been selected for use as the content of story cards which will include the additional feature of comprehension questions on the back of the card. The curriculum map of the relationship between the story cards and the scripted lesson plans will be developed in the next quarter in preparation for the dissemination of the supplementary reading materials and the December trainings focusing on their use. It is anticipated that the supplementary readers and their accompanying story cards will be printed and delivered to schools before Term 2 begins in January 2015.

Book Chain Analysis and Technical Assistance

Following the book chain analysis trip conducted by the blueTree Group (bTG) in August and September 2013, a draft report was written summarizing their findings and recommendations. The draft report was shared with EGRA staff and key MoEST counterparts for their feedback and input, which was incorporated into a final draft that was submitted to USAID on January 20. A training plan was drawn up by bTG to address the gaps in capacity and technical skills identified in the analysis report.

In January, both Roel de Haas and Maggie de Jongh of bTG traveled to Malawi to hold consultative meetings and initial technical training with different sets of stakeholders. Mr. de Haas's trip (from January 13 to 24) focused largely on the printing capabilities and needs of local printers to design technical trainings that would address their capacity needs and desires. He also discussed with MoEST and development partner (DP) counterparts their needs for technical training on the printing process from pre-press up through finishing and delivery of books.

Ms. de Jongh's trip (from January 20 to 25) focused more on technical and policy issues surrounding the book chain and how they impact the availability and pricing of printed materials in Malawi. She met with MoEST and DP counterparts to get their input on how bTG can best support the government and DPs in providing an environment that increases the availability, affordability, and quality of locally printed materials.

During the overlap of their two trips, bTG conducted two consultative meetings, one with MoEST departments on January 21 and one with DPs on January 24, to discuss these issues in further detail and to agree upon the work plan for their upcoming

technical trips scheduled for later in the year. The MoEST meeting was well attended with positive contributions from most departments. Issues and priorities of MoEST were raised and identified that bTG will address in future trainings. The DP meeting was not as well attended, but there was a core group of DPs in attendance that expressed a desire to work with EGRA in improving the book chain. During the meeting Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) explained that they are planning to hold consultative meetings with the Ministry in revising and finalizing the Guidelines for the Management of Teaching and Learning Materials (GMTLM), so it was agreed that EGRA would coordinate with GIZ in these efforts to ensure that each activity's work supports and builds upon the other's.

Mr. de Haas made a second trip to Malawi from March 9 to 20 to conduct technical training on the pre-print processes of the book chain. His first week focused on supporting and training local printers in how to increase their capacity and technology to ensure better quality and cost-effectiveness. From March 17 to 18 he conducted technical training for MoEST departments. The training was attended by officers from DIAS and MIE, but no other departments showed up. The DIAS and MIE participants expressed their appreciation for the training, stating that they learned many new things that will help in their pre-printing processes, especially with regards to technical specifications of materials, font types, colors, and other technical aspects. It is unfortunate that the other departments did not attend the training because there were other topics on print forecasting and other planning and procurement issues that would have benefitted them, especially the Departments of Education Planning, Special Procurement, and Supplies Unit. EGRA will need to reach out to these departments and directors to see how they can become more involved in future meetings/trainings.

In August Mr. de Haas returned to Malawi to conduct the third phase of technical trainings and support to local printing companies. This included a one-day training for all participating companies followed up by half-day visits to each selected printer to provide support in discussing their business plans and strategies, including investments in improved equipment to increase the quality and volume of printing that can be done locally. Unfortunately, the training session planned for MoEST and MIE during the trip fell through due to lack of attendance. Therefore, bTG plans to conduct a two-day session of training during its next trip in November to cover both press and post-press trainings at once.

During his March trip, Mr. de Haas also planned to hold a half-day technical training for DPs, but no one showed up to the meeting. Instead, Mr. de Haas met with Ms. Grace Banda from GIZ to discuss how EGRA can further collaborate with GIZ on the textbook policy, as stipulated in the GMTLM. At the meeting Ms. Banda notified EGRA that GIZ would soon be ending its current support to MoEST, therefore it was agreed that bTG would coordinate with GIZ to ensure that the issues around the GMTLM would continue after GIZ conducted a workshop in April where the Ministry reviewed and agreed upon a final draft of the GMTLM. Both USAID and MoEST agreed that EGRA, through bTG, should take on the role of providing technical support on the issue after GIZ's support officially ended.

In July, Ms. de Jongh and Ken Obura from bTG traveled to Malawi to conduct a two-day workshop with MoEST and MIE to finalize the GMTLM. The workshop was attended with great interest and participation by the directors of MIE, DIAS, DBE, and DTED, including representatives from other MoEST departments. At the workshop

the introduction and rationale sections were finalized and the structure of the document was reviewed. Participants suggested that the structure of the document should be according to chronological order of activities rather than by theme. It was agreed that bTG would draft an Option B of the GMTLM that restructures the guidelines accordingly, which the Ministry could then review and decide which structure to adopt. In addition, the workshop participants agreed that an implementation plan would also need to be drafted that outlines the details of how, when, and by whom the guidelines would be implemented.

The Ministry stressed that it wanted the GMTLM to be finalized as soon as possible, so a second meeting was scheduled in August. After drafting Option B of the guidelines, Mr. Obura shared the document with MoEST and returned in August to review the final draft and help the Ministry develop an implementation plan. The meeting participants decided to adopt the Option B version of the document and endorsed it as the final draft of the GMTLM, which would be shared and discussed with MoEST senior management. An implementation matrix was drafted and agreed upon by the Ministry. bTG plans to return to Malawi in November to follow up on the GMTLM implementation plan and provide further technical support to MoEST, MIE, and local printing companies.

In addition to their support on the GMTLM, bTG also discussed with MoEST, USAID, and other DPs the implications of certain policies in the book chain, such as the policy on importing paper. USAID requested bTG to draft a briefer on this import policy and its implications on the pricing and competitiveness of local companies in the printing market. Another book chain policy issue that has become relevant is the funding and procurement of books being printed by and for MoEST. Previously the printing of books was funded through the Education Pooled Fund, but this was discontinued as a result of the Cashgate scandal. Therefore, in July the DPs expressed their interest in receiving technical support from EGRA through bTG in exploring how to most effectively and efficiently procure books for the Ministry in the future. This is something bTG plans to address in the upcoming FY.

Learners with Disabilities and Special Needs

The DGVP Specialist, Augustine Kanyendula, officially joined EGRA at the beginning of October after subcontract arrangements with Perkins International were finalized. As mentioned under Task 1.1 above, the DGVP Specialist led an assessment from October to December on the availability of TLM for special needs learners. As part of this assessment, EGRA worked in collaboration with MoEST, through the DSNE and Montfort College, in identifying the specific disabilities that can effectively be addressed under EGRA. It was agreed with MoEST that EGRA will focus largely on learners with visual impairments in its interventions, while also providing technical assistance and training to MoEST officers and teachers on supporting learners with special needs in learning how to read.

A workshop was held in Salima December 18 to 19 to review the *Nditha Kuwerenga* and *MaK* materials and begin developing adapted versions of the materials for Braille readers and teachers of vision-impaired learners. This workshop was led by the DGVP Specialist and the TLM Coordinator, with two participants from DSNE, two Braille transcribers from Montfort College, and two teachers of LSEN. The Braille version of *Nditha Kuwerenga* was developed in collaboration with DSNE, Montfort College, and visually impaired learners and teachers of Malingunde Resource Centre for the Blind. In May the Braille version of *Nditha Kuwerenga* was pretested with

visually impaired students and teachers of Malingunde Resource Centre for the Blind. The final draft has been submitted to MoEST and is awaiting endorsement before being submitted to USAID for final clearance. The Braille books will be printed and distributed to schools with blind learners in School Year 2.

A short-term technical assistant (STTA) from Perkins, Mr. Albert Peters, visited Malawi from February 16 to 21 to conduct an assessment of the availability of assistive technology for LSEN in Malawian primary schools. During his trip Mr. Peters visited four resource units for learners with special needs in different parts of the country, including the Mountain View School for the Deaf in Thyolo District, and three centers for the blind in Salima, Ekwendeni (Mzimba North), and Malingunde (Lilongwe Rural West).

A survey approach utilizing a questionnaire, interviews, and a review of the literature was adopted for the assessment. The findings suggest that at present most of the resource centers for the visually and hearing impaired do not provide adequate and suitable assistive technology for LSEN. Most schools reported that they did not have resource rooms or that their resource rooms were poorly stocked with equipment that was not always functioning. The lack of suitable assistive devices makes it difficult for the children to acquire and apply knowledge, to learn at their own pace, and to assess their own progress in their studies. The assessment established that while there is a government policy to support the provision of inclusive education, there appears to be a serious disparity between policy and current practice. The majority of the respondents stated that most schools lacked trained special education teachers, appropriate TLM, appropriate technologies, and resource rooms. Further, most of the schools did not have a budget for procuring these resources. During his trip Mr. Peters also met with officers from DSNE and shared his initial findings during an out-brief meeting with USAID, DSNE, DIAS, and DBE.

Following the assessment conducted by Mr. Albert Peters, the DGVP Specialist worked with DSNE to develop a list of highly needed low-tech assistive devices for LSEN within EGRA's intervention districts. This will culminate in the development of a procurement plan that is being finalized and will be submitted early next FY.

Throughout the year the DGVP Specialist has held regular consultative meetings with DSNE to discuss issues related to providing quality reading instruction and support to MoEST, schools, teachers, and learners with special needs and disabilities. Among the major topics discussed include the development of plans on how to integrate individual education plans (IEPs) into EGRA's trainings and materials, incorporating issues of teaching children with special needs in the EGRA teacher training manuals, identifying assistive technology that should be included in the EGRA procurement plan, and making preparations for the Braille Cup (which will be discussed under Component 3).

With regards to the development of IEPs, EGRA has supported MoEST in two ways. From January 19 to 24, Martha Majors, an STTA from Perkins School for the Blind, conducted a workshop in Blantyre on how to develop IEPs for LSEN. At the training 20 participants (11 male, 9 female) including 9 teachers of LSEN, 6 desk officers for special needs education from all six education divisions, 2 officers from DSNE, 2 Montfort College lecturers, and the DGVP Specialist were trained as trainers, introduced to the IEP training curriculum, and guided through the development and implementation of IEPs. In addition to this specific training, the DGVP Specialist has participated in all of the materials development workshops and provided input into the

training manuals and scripted lesson plans to ensure that IEP-related materials are incorporated in the trainings and materials.

During the April and August 2014 teacher trainings, teachers of LSEN were included in the TOFs so that they could help facilitate the zonal teacher training sessions related to teaching reading to learners with special needs. A total of 22 teachers of LSEN were trained in April (13 male, 9 female) and August (15 male, 7 female). During the August teacher trainings it was observed that the majority of PEAs displayed good knowledge and skills in delivering the module on how to support children with disabilities.

As EGRA has worked closely with Montfort College, which is the only teacher training institution that trains teachers of LSEN, on many of its activities the college has learned a lot about the methodologies and materials used under EGRA for reading instruction. As such, Montfort College has reviewed its own IEP format and incorporated EGRA aspects into its own programs.

Table 15 provides further details on the status of activities for Task 1-3.

Table 15. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 1-3

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
Task 1-3 Scripted Lesson Plans and Related Reading Materials							
1.3.1. Timing for development, deployment of scripted lesson plans articulated	1.3.1. Timing for development, deployment of scripted lesson plans articulated	August–September 2013	Completed August 2013	Updated during Materials Development Workshop October 29–November 2, 2013	Updated as discussions with MIE continue	Updated to adapt to “workshop” mode of materials development.	Completed; original plan developed August 2013 and updated throughout FY 2014
1.3.2 Scripted lesson plans for Term 1 available by August 2013 for initial in-service training	1.3.2.1 <i>Maziko a Kuwerenga</i> (S1 Chichewa) scripted lesson plans reviewed	July 2013	Completed July 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed July 2013
	1.3.2.2 Publication-ready files for first print run of teacher scripted lesson plans finalized, sent to printer	July 2013	Completed July 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed July 2013
	1.3.2.3 Teachers’ guides for S1 Chichewa distributed to schools	August 2013	Completed August 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed August 2013
1.3.3 Consultation with MIE regarding development of new curricular materials	1.3.3.1 Division of labor, roles/responsibilities between EGRA, BPG, MIE discussed and agreed	July–September 2013	Ongoing; discussions initiated August 2013	Ongoing; initial plans established during Materials Development Workshop, arrangements	Ongoing; finalizing MOU and formal arrangements with MIE	Completed; agreed to do in “workshop” mode in meeting with DIAS and MIE. Workshops	Completed

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
				yet to be formalized		held on April 23–25, April 28–May 2; May 14–6; June 2–6, June 16–20; June 30–July 4.	
	1.3.3.2 SOWs for BPG Year 1 and 2 TOs developed	August–September 2013	Ongoing; not yet finalized	Completed December 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed
	1.3.3.3 BPG Year 1 and 2 TOs issued	August–September 2013	Ongoing; not yet finalized	Ongoing; first TO signed September 2013, second TO signed October 2013	Ongoing; third TO issued January 2014	Fourth TO issued June 16, 2014	Completed; TOs 1–4 issued
	1.3.CH.1 Review of MoEST S1 Chichewa curriculum under revised primary curriculum	August–October 2013	Delayed due to unavailability of MoEST partners, planned October 2013	Completed November 2013 during Materials Development Workshop	Completed	Completed	Completed November 2013
1.3.CH Scripted Lesson Plan Activities—Chichewa	1.3.CH.2 Articulation of differences between <i>MaK</i> S1 Chichewa and MoEST S1 Chichewa approaches, expectations for literacy instruction	August–October 2013	Delayed due to unavailability of MoEST partners, planned October 2013	Completed November 2013 during Materials Development Workshop	Completed	Completed	Completed November 2013
	1.3.CH.3 Discussions held with MoEST, MIE regarding alignment	August–October 2013	Delayed due to unavailability of MoEST	Completed November 2013 during	Completed	Completed	Completed November 2013

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
	needs between <i>MaK</i> and MoEST S1 Chichewa		partners, planned October 2013	Materials Development Workshop			
	1.3.CH.4 Development of scripted lesson plans for S2 Chichewa	January–March 2014	Not yet started	Planned in Q2; initial plans agreed upon during Materials Development Workshop in November 2013	Delayed due to continued negotiations with MIE	Ongoing; Term 1 completed and sent to MIE for page proofing. Term 2 manuscript edited, Term 3 first draft completed.	Ongoing; CH-S2 Term 1 teacher's guide printed and distributed August 2014, Terms 2 & 3 being finalized
	1.3.CH.5 Testing of S2 Chichewa scripted lesson plans in 1% of intervention schools	May–June 2014	Not yet started	Pending completion of 1.3.CH.4	Planned in May	Completed May 12–13	Ongoing; Trial testing for Term 1 teacher's guide completed May 2014; planned for Terms 2 & 3 in October 2014
1.3.EN Scripted Lesson Plan Activities—English	1.3.EN.1 Review with MoEST, MIE expectations for S1 English instruction	August–October 2013	Delayed due to unavailability of MoEST partners, planned October 2013	Completed November 2013 during Materials Development Workshop	Completed	Completed	Completed November 2013
	1.3.EN.2 Review with MoEST, MIE expectations for S2 English instruction	August–October 2013	Delayed due to unavailability of MoEST partners, planned	Planned; initial discussion held during Materials Development	Postponed until FY2015 due to updated course	Postponed until FY 2015	Postponed until FY 2015

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
			October 2013	Workshop in November 2013; propose to defer this to 2014–15	implementation plan		
	1.3.EN.3 In collaboration with MIE and BPG, localize/adapt Liberia S1 English curricular materials	September–December 2013	Delayed due to unavailability of MoEST partners, planned to begin October 2013	Ongoing; scope and sequence developed, development schedule agreed upon; writing has been delayed until arrangements with MIE are formalized	Ongoing; delayed due to continued negotiations with MIE	Ongoing; Term 1 completed and sent to MIE for page proofing; Term 2 manuscript edited, Term 3 first draft completed.	Ongoing; EN-S1 Term 1 teacher's guide printed and distributed August 2014, Terms 2 & 3 being finalized
	1.3.EN.4 In collaboration with MIE and BPG, localize/adapt Liberia S2 English curricular materials	January–March 2014	Not yet started	Planned for Q2	Postponed until FY 2015	Postponed until FY 2015	Postponed until FY 2015
	1.3.EN.5 Testing of S1 English scripted lesson plans in 1 percent of schools	January–February 2014	Planned	Pending completion of 1.3.EN.3	Planned in May	Completed May 12-13	Ongoing; Trial testing for Term 1 teacher's guide completed May 2014; planned for Terms 2 & 3 in October 2014
	1.3.EN.6 Testing of S2	May–June	Planned	Pending	Postponed	Postponed	Postponed until

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
	English scripted lesson plans in 1 percent of schools	2014		completion of 1.3.EN.4	until FY 2015	until FY 2015	FY 2015
1.3.4 Development of new decodable stories for inclusion in new curricular materials	1.3.4.1 Writers' workshops held with MIE, NLS, Malawi PEN (<i>See also Task XC-1.1</i>)	October–November 2013	Planned, not yet started	Completed for S1 December 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed December 2013
	1.3.4.2 Revision of Writers' Workshop outputs by MIE, BPG	November–December 2013	Planned, not yet started	Ongoing	Ongoing; taking longer than anticipated due to need for illustrations, type-setting, and continued negotiations with MIE	Ongoing; 2 additional stories written; art briefs written for 15 stories; 6 stories at level 3 still to be written	Completed; revised version ready for field testing in October 2014
	1.3.4.3 Integration of new decodable stories into new curricular materials	December 2013–January 2014	Planned, not yet started	Pending 1.3.4.2 and field testing of stories; planned for Q2	Pending 1.3.4.2 and field testing of stories	Ongoing; CH2 scope and sequence include time for supplementary readers.	Ongoing; will be incorporated in December 2014 trainings
	1.3.4.4 Selection of decodable stories to be set aside for supplementary reading materials	December 2013–January 2014	Planned, not yet started	Completed during Leveling and Writers' Workshops October–December	Selection completed; editing ongoing	Selection completed; editing being finalized; training on their use to take place in	Completed

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
				2013		December 2014	
	1.3.4.5 Curriculum map of relationship between story cards and scripted lesson plans developed	December 2013–February 2014	Planned, not yet started	Pending 1.3.4.2 and field testing of stories; planned for Q2	Pending completion of 1.3.4.2 and field testing of stories	CH2 lesson plans incorporate supplementary reading materials. Final mapping pending completion of 1.3.4.2 and field testing of stories	Ongoing; will be incorporated in December 2014 trainings
1.3.5 blueTree Group's (bTG's) analysis of Malawi Book Chain/print sector	1.3.5.1 blueTree Group conducts analysis of Malawi book chain	August–October 2013	Analysis trips by bTG conducted August–September 2013; analysis and trip reports expected October 2013	Completed in August–September 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed in August–September 2014
	1.3.5.2 Book chain analysis complete, report shared with Activity and MoEST, USAID stakeholders	October–December 2013	Report expected October 2013	Ongoing; draft report received October 2013, shared with MoEST for feedback	Completed; report shared January 2014	Completed	Completed; report shared January 2014
	1.3.5.3 Ongoing blueTree Group STTA visits to	January–June 2014	Planned	Next trips planned in	Trips conducted in	Trip started end of June	Completed; three additional

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
	provide training, guidance to private-sector printers and MoEST counterparts			January and March during Q2	January and March 2014	2014	trips this quarter in July and August
	1.3.6.1 Identification of specific disabilities that can be effectively addressed	August–September 2013	Not yet completed due to delay in bringing DGVP Specialist and Perkins on board	Completed in collaboration with DSNE	Completed	Completed	Completed
	1.3.6.2 Adaptation of selected materials for children with disabilities	October–November 2013	Planned, not yet started	Ongoing; workshop held December 18–19, 2013, adaptation work continues	Ongoing; adaptation work still in progress	Ongoing; Braille versions field tested in May	Completed: Braille version of <i>Nditha Kuwerenga</i> submitted to MoEST for endorsement
1.3.6 Teaching and learning materials accessible to children with disabilities	1.3.6.3 Development of adapted material for children with disabilities	October–December 2013	Planned, not yet started	Ongoing	Ongoing; production of braille materials underway at Montfort College	Ongoing; Braille versions field tested in May	Completed: Braille version of <i>Nditha Kuwerenga</i> submitted to MoEST for endorsement
	1.3.6.4 Submission of adapted material to MoEST for endorsement	December 2013	Planned	Planned	Pending completion of 1.3.6.3	Pending completion of 1.3.6.3	Completed: Braille version of <i>Nditha Kuwerenga</i> submitted to MoEST for endorsement
	1.3.6.5 Submission of	December	Planned	Planned	Pending	Pending	Pending

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
	adapted material to USAID for clearance	2013			completion of 1.3.6.4	completion of 1.3.6.4	endorsement from MoEST
	1.3.6.6 Production of materials	January–February 2014	Planned, not yet started	Planned	Planned to take place in Q3	Planned after materials are cleared	Planned after materials are cleared
	1.3.6.7 Distribution of adapted materials to schools and Special Needs Education Resource Units	March 2014	Planned	Pending completion of 1.3.6.6	Planned to take place in August 2014	Planned in Q4 after materials are cleared and produced	Planned after materials are cleared and printed
	1.3.7.1 Consultative meetings held between DGVP Specialist and DSNE	September 2013–April 2014	Not yet conducted due to delay in bringing DGVP Specialist on board	Conducted October–December 2013	Conducted four meetings during this quarter	Conducted four meetings during this quarter	Completed; Conducted two more meetings in Q4
1.3.7 DGVP, Perkins to provide support to DSNE and schools around Individual Education Plans	1.3.7.2 As appropriate, development of IEP-related training materials	October 2013–March 2014	Planned, not yet started	Training planned January 2014	IEP training conducted January 2014	Completed	Completed
	1.3.7.3 Discussions with DSNE, DTED regarding IEP-related content in pre-service training structures/programs	October 2013–April 2014	Planned	Planned	Ongoing; issues of special needs included in Module 3 Training Manual	Discussions held in January and April 2014	Completed

Task 1-4: Consistent In-Service Teacher Support and Mentoring

Coaching Support to Teachers

Coaching of teachers and provision of on-site support is an essential element of the EGRA strategy and is an aspect that receives full support and participation from MoEST at all levels. Throughout the year EGRA has engaged with the relevant MoEST departments and institutions, especially DIAS, DBE, DTED, MIE, and TTCs, to ensure that sufficient support is provided to teachers. This is more particularly the case at the district and zonal levels where EGRA's field staff have worked in close collaboration with DEMs, coordinating PEAs, and PEAs to provide effective coaching and support to teachers in the schools.

At the beginning of the school year EGRA worked with MoEST, MIE, and TTCs to update the coaching manual that was developed under MTPDS and to develop coaching tools in the form of the teacher observation instrument (TOI) and mini-LATs. The PEAs in the Cohort A zones were provided with a one-day training/refresher training from October 2 to 4 (and in November for the 11 zones that were later added to Cohort A) to review the coaching manual and to be introduced the new teacher observation and coaching instruments. A total of 101 PEAs (69 male, 32 female) were trained in using the new classroom observation and coaching instrument.

During Term 1 the PEAs were provided with paper copies of the TOI and mini-LATs to pilot the instruments during their coaching visits and provide feedback from their experiences. This feedback was reviewed by EGRA and MoEST at the end of Term 1, and the instruments were revised and simplified so that they could be rendered into Tangerine software to be used on tablet computers.

From October 28 to November 4, Scott Kipp from the RTI Home Office traveled to Malawi to support the EGRA team in rendering the TOI and LAT into Tangerine software that was installed onto 112 tablet computers, which have been provided to all of the PEAs from intervention zones. Mr. Kipp helped EGRA decide on the most appropriate way to present the tools for ease of use by the PEAs. He also trained the M&E Specialist on how to render different types of tools so that any future rendering can be done by EGRA itself. The Tangerine instruments were then introduced to EGRA DMEs and DTCs (along with one PEA from each intervention district), who were trained in how to use the Tangerine instruments during a week-long workshop at Peter's Lodge in Zomba from November 18 to 23. The participants then tested the tablets and Tangerine instruments at various schools by conducting classroom observations and learner assessments. Their feedback from the trial tests was discussed and incorporated into the final version of the instruments.

In the December TOF, the PEAs received training in how to use the Tangerine version of the TOI and mini-LAT on the tablets and were provided with a practicum session to practice using the new instruments in an actual classroom observing a teacher teach and assessing learners. The PEAs were each provided with their own Nexus tablet in January with the Tangerine instruments installed so they could use the Tangerine tools during their coaching visits from Term 2 onwards. While the introduction of Tangerine is meant to simplify the PEAs' task during classroom lesson observation, it has taken some PEAs some time to adjust to the new technology. Therefore, EGRA has incorporated some time during each of the TOFs for the PEAs to receive additional training and practice in using the tablets at schools.

In order to support the PEAs in conducting regular coaching visits EGRA has provided PEAs with small fuel allotments during each term that they can use to visit all schools in each PEA's zone for coaching support. These funds are then liquidated upon the receipt of completed classroom observations and signed coaching forms to document the number of schools and teachers they visited during the allotment period. In order to receive the next allotment of fuel, PEAs are required to submit a coaching schedule to their coordinating PEA and to EGRA to ensure that all schools in the zone are visited each term.

As coaching is an essential component to ensure that teachers are able to effectively implement the content and materials they have been trained in, EGRA conducts regular monitoring visits to schools to see how coaching is being implemented and received on the ground. Through this monitoring EGRA is constantly adjusting its approach to coaching and refining the roles and responsibilities of district-level staff within both EGRA and the Ministry. As part of this refining of roles, EGRA held a meeting with all of its DTCs and DCs February 20 to 21 to emphasize their role as a coach to the coaches. While DTCs can sometimes conduct coaching directly with teachers, their focus should be on supporting PEAs at the zonal level to build PEAs' coaching skills and provide the tools and resources necessary to carry out consistent teacher support and mentoring. A similar meeting was held with DCs June 9 to 10 and PEAs and DTCs from June 11 to 13 to reemphasize the role of EGRA staff as "coaches of the coaches," or in other words, their primary role is to make sure PEAs are conducting regular and effective coaching to teachers. EGRA is continuing to look into ways to increase the effectiveness and frequency of coaching so that teachers can be guided individually as they try to implement what they have learned through in-service trainings.

The total number of coaching visits conducted by PEAs and EGRA staff during School Year 1 was 4,609 teachers from 2,393 schools, as illustrated in **Table 16**.

Table 16. Coaching Visits by PEAs and EGRA Staff during FY 2014

Coaching Visits by PEAs and EGRA Staff each Quarter				
Quarter	Schools Visited	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	Total Teachers
Q1	58	55	47	102
Q2	1,200	898	1,066	1,964
Q3	532	591	700	1,291
Q4	603	551	701	1,252
Total for FY14	2,393	2,095	2,514	4,609

The addition of 33 zones for School Year 2 (Cohort B) necessitated an orientation of the PEAs who will manage the zones in the implementation of EGRA activities. These were joined by six PEAs who have just been appointed to replace those who have retired along with a newly recruited DME for Machinga District. The orientation was conducted from September 24 to 26 at St. Therese Teacher Development Center (TDC) in Liwonde. PEAs were oriented on coaching, M&E, and memoranda of understanding (MOUs). PEAs were given an opportunity to interact with the Nexus tablets by observing a lesson at the nearest school to reinforce their understanding and their inter-rater reliability. This orientation has helped to put the new PEAs on the same page as they start implementing the EGRA intervention in the new school year.

SMS Gateway System

During this FY many preparations were made to establish the SMS Gateway system, but due to a number of factors the actual implementation of the system has been delayed; it is anticipated to launch in November 2014.

During his trip in October and November, Mr. Kipp provided support to the EGRA IT Manager in setting up the framework for the SMS Gateway system that will be used to provide consistent support to teachers through their mobile phones. The basic structure of the SMS Gateway system was established with the system ready to be tested and operated once the relevant data for teachers', head teachers', PEAs', and key community members' mobile phone numbers were collected and entered into the system and an SMS service provider was identified and contracted. These mobile number data were collected in each district and entered into a database by the DMEs. The SMS Gateway system was fully designed by early 2014 and was trial tested internally in March, with messages successfully sent out to EGRA staff. EGRA has developed a series of messages to be sent to schools and communities once the system is launched.

One of the major delays in getting the SMS Gateway system operating has been working out the details with the telecommunications service providers. In November, Dan O'Brien from O'Brien and Associates International (OAI) conducted a three-week assessment visit where he met with a wide variety of private institutions to ascertain their level of potential partnerships with EGRA. As part of this assessment, Mr. O'Brien met with the relevant telecommunications companies that could potentially provide service for the SMS Gateway system and to determine whether EGRA can leverage their support for reduced costs for the SMS service. While both Airtel and TNM expressed their commitment early on to providing a reduced rate as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) program, establishing the terms of these agreements has taken much longer than anticipated. The IT Manager has been working closely with both companies, which have indicated that they will provide EGRA with special SMS short codes with the tag of "EGRA" that will be dedicated to the EGRA SMS Gateway system. Each company will underwrite a portion of the set-up and maintenance fees for these short codes and is nearly ready to implement the program. There are still a few technical details that need to be worked out, but it is anticipated that the SMS Gateway system will be launched and go live in November 2014.

In anticipation of the SMS Gateway system going live in the intervention districts, EGRA has explored the possibility of conducting a controlled study on the cost-effectiveness of using SMS messaging to support schools and communities in their efforts to improve reading. As such, EGRA held discussions with USAID and the external evaluator SI on the feasibility of such a study. Through a series of discussions and emails between EGRA, USAID, and SI, it was determined that such a study would be possible without adversely affecting the impact evaluation conducted by SI.

Therefore EGRA has developed a research design that will compare intervention zones across three levels: 1) zones that will receive full SMS Gateway support to both school personnel and community members; 2) zones that will receive SMS Gateway support to school personnel only; and 3) zones that will not receive SMS Gateway support on top of the regular EGRA intervention. In addition, EGRA will compare zones that will be provided with toll-free SMS messaging for school

personnel and community members to respond to EGRA's messages at no cost, compared to other zones that will have to use their own personal airtime to respond to the messages.

Table 17 provides further details on the status of activities for Task 1-4.

Table 17. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 1-4

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at the End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
Task 1-4 Consistent In-Service Teacher Support and Mentoring							
1.4.1 Introductory meetings between EGRA, MoEST, and USAID	1.4.1 Introductory meetings between EGRA, MoEST, and USAID	July–August 2013	Completed July 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
1.4.2 EGRA staff meet with individual MoEST departments to define parameters, modes of collaboration	1.4.2 EGRA staff meet with individual MoEST departments to define parameters, modes of collaboration	July–August 2013	Ongoing; meetings held July–September 2013	Ongoing	Ongoing	Completed	Completed
1.4.3 Informal agreements (precursors of MOUs) reached with DIAS, DBE, DTED re: roles of division and district-level MoEST personnel	1.4.3 Informal agreements (precursors of MOUs) reached with DIAS, DBE, DTED re: roles of division and district-level MoEST personnel	July–September 2013	Ongoing; meetings held July–September 2013	Ongoing; further defined during Materials Development Workshop on October 28–November 2, 2013	Ongoing	Meetings on May 27 and June 2 established MoEST roles with regard to expert training and TOF.	Completed
1.4.4 PEAs provide monthly or bi-monthly coaching visits to S1–S3 teachers	1.4.4.1 Schedule of visitations developed	August–September 2013	Ongoing; first schedule completed September 2013	Ongoing; second schedule completed November 2013	Ongoing; PEAs submitted plans January and March in order to receive funds for fuel	Ongoing; 952 coaching visits completed April–June	Ongoing; PEAs submit in order to receive fuel for coaching

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at the End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
	1.4.4.2 Development and/or adaptation of Coaching Manual	August–December 2013	Ongoing; feedback from PEAs to be incorporated November 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
	1.4.4.3 PEAs receive training/refresher training on coaching from DTCs	September–December 2013	Ongoing; first refresher trainings conducted September 2013	Completed October–November 2013	Completed	District meetings held with PEAs June 11, 12, & 13.	Completed; new PEAs trained in September 2014
	1.4.4.4 Classroom observation instrument, coach visit report forms developed, agreed upon with DIAS	August–September 2013	Ongoing; draft trial tested in September; awaiting feedback from PEAs	Complete; final draft rendered onto Tangerine December 2013	Completed	Finalized and uploaded on Tangerine and in use by DTCs and PEAs	Ongoing; submitted by PEAs during liquidation of fuel for coaching
	1.4.4.5 Regular coaching of S1–S3 teachers by PEAs	August 2013–July 2016	Ongoing	Ongoing; second allotment of fuel for coaching provided November 2013	Ongoing	952 teachers and 303 teachers coached by PEAs and DTCs respectively	Ongoing
	1.4.4.6 Coaching Visit Report forms completed, returned to District Education Offices (DEOs) and EGRA	September 2013–July 2016	Ongoing; first reports to be received October 2013	Ongoing; data is being entered by EGRA field staff	Ongoing	Recorded in May and June Monthly reports	Ongoing; submitted by PEAs during liquidation of fuel for coaching

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at the End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
	1.4.4.7 PEAs hold termly experience-sharing meetings for their teachers	November 2013–July 2016	Planned, First meeting to be held November 2013	Ongoing; meeting held during December TOFs	Ongoing; Planned in May	Ongoing; meeting held during April TOFs	Ongoing
	1.4.5.1 SMS Gateway system set up at EGRA headquarters	October 2013	Planned	Initial system set up, awaiting mobile phone data and service provider	System set up and trial tested in March 2014	Ongoing; data from Cohort A schools entered in SMS control system; Cohort B data being entered	Ongoing; system ready to go live, awaiting finalization of agreements with service providers
1.4.5 Provision of remote support via SMS Gateway	1.4.5.2 Subsidized/reduced-cost SMS service negotiated with Telecoms	July–October 2013	Planned, awaiting trip from O'Brien and Associates	Ongoing; OAI conducted initial assessment visits November 2013	Ongoing; OAI working on concept note with Airtel	Ongoing; two service providers showing strong interest; meetings to finalize early July	Ongoing; commitments made by two service agreements, waiting to be formalized
	1.4.5.3 DTCs formulate responses to FAQs and interact via SMS Gateway with teachers and HTs	November 2013–July 2016	Planned, not yet started	Planned, not yet started	Draft messages developed; awaiting launch of system	Planned, pending launch of the gateway	Draft messages developed; awaiting launch of system
1.4.6 Partnerships with private-sector actors	1.4.6 Partnerships with private-sector actors	October 2013–July	Planned, not yet started	Ongoing; OAI conducted	Ongoing; OAI developing	Ongoing; possible on	Ongoing; commitments

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at the End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
developed and leveraged in support of coaching	developed and leveraged in support of coaching	2016		initial assessment visits November 2013	concept notes with potential PPPs, although none seem interested in supporting coaching	specific use of SMS Gateway to support coaches	made by two service agreements, waiting to be formalized

Task 1-5: Rewarding Performing Teachers and Schools

Teacher Certificates

On October 10, EGRA management met with the MoEST Directors of DIAS, DBE, DTED, and MIE to discuss the progress of EGRA. During the meeting the issue of certification for teachers who successfully complete EGRA trainings was discussed. The concern was raised that the Ministry cannot provide certificates with an attachment to merit if the trainings are not available to all teachers nationwide. It was therefore agreed that MoEST could consider having MIE provide certificates of attendance to EGRA trainings, which do not have any bearing on teachers' merit or advancement until the trainings might be made available nationwide. The issue was raised again during the quarterly meeting with MoEST directors in September, at which it was agreed that EGRA could provide a certificate of completion for teachers who attend the full set of trainings for each language course trained under EGRA. For example, teachers who attend all three of the training sessions for Chichewa Standard 1 throughout the school year under EGRA would receive a certificate of completion for Chichewa Standard 1. EGRA has yet to work out the specifics with MIE of how such a certificate would be provided.

Grants Under Contract

The Grants Manual was approved by USAID on November 1, 2013. While the Grants Manual includes a general list of criteria for the selection of schools to be awarded grants, these criteria went through further revisions and refinement in collaboration with MoEST until a final set of criteria were agreed upon. A school-level survey instrument was developed to collect information needed for the selection criteria. A copy of the survey tool was provided to each school as the head teachers and community members were notified of the GUC program during the community mobilization trainings conducted in Term 2. The surveys were collected from schools at the end of Term 2 and the data entered into a database by the DMEs. A second round of data collection was conducted near the end of Term 3, which was also entered into the database. This second round of data was used to evaluate the schools for selection of awards in each district.

In order to orient the DEMs and PEAs on the GUC program, including an explanation of the selection criteria, data collection, and selection process, the Finance Manager visited all districts starting in the first week of May, through the end of the first week of June.

The GUC coordinating team within EGRA met in-house on June 27 to finalize plans for the identification of the district evaluation committees and to finalize the process of creating a short list of 10 schools per district that then received further evaluation. After the 10 schools were selected the district committees visited the schools to conduct an assessment of learners' reading skills, using the LAT, and to verify the information provided by the schools on the GUC questionnaires.

From August 25 to September 5, a team from EGRA traveled to each district to meet with the district selection committee and evaluate the findings from the GUC questionnaire, learner assessment, and verification visits from the shortlisted schools. Representatives from DIAS and DBE also participated in each meeting. USAID attended the meeting in Ntchisi to observe and participate in the process. The 10 shortlisted schools were then narrowed down to five awardee schools that would

receive the grant in the upcoming school year. At each of the district selection meetings the DEMs, Coordinating PEAs, District Community Development Officers (DCDOs), MoEST, and EGRA staff in attendance all agreed upon the top five schools selected and made plans to notify the schools and begin implementation of the grants.

In addition, the selection process was reviewed with each district. While the districts agreed that the selection process was able to identify well performing schools, there was also a consensus that the process needed to be reviewed and improved. More particularly, there were concerns that the process relied too heavily upon the self-reporting of schools without a way to verify the data across all schools. This meant that schools that took the time to fill out the questionnaires were the ones shortlisted, while other schools may not have understood the importance of the questionnaires or did not take the process seriously. In addition, the process of collecting the questionnaires from all of the schools and conducting a LAT at each of the shortlisted schools and entering the data required a large amount of time, labor, and resources, which was disproportionate to the total amount of money being awarded to schools and not sustainable. Therefore, it was agreed that EGRA would hold a review meeting in October 2014 with MoEST and DEMs to review and streamline the process.

As a result of the district GUC selection committee meetings, five schools per district were selected to receive a grant of up to \$1,000 each for a total of 55 schools across the 11 districts. The final list of schools was presented to the Director of Basic Education, who signed the award letters jointly with the EGRA Chief of Party (COP). The award letters were sent to the DEMs offices at the end of September to distribute to the awardee schools. During the first term of School Year 2, EGRA plans to work with each of the awardee schools through the DEMs' offices to support them in developing project proposals and identifying milestones, upon completion of which the schools will receive their grant funds in tranches.

Although no formal process for identifying and recognizing teachers has been established by EGRA or MoEST, schools and communities have continued to recognize teachers and learners in their communities during reading fairs and similar events, as will be discussed under Component 3 below.

Throughout this FY EGRA has coordinated with SI to keep SI updated on the activities that are being conducted. This has included a number of meetings with SI while SI representatives have been in-country, which will be discussed in more detail under Section ME-2 below. Throughout this coordination EGRA expressed willingness to share the GUC data with SI as they evaluate the impact of various EGRA activities, including incentives to schools, teachers, learners, and communities.

Table 18 provides further details on the status of activities for Task 1-5.

Table 18. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 1-5

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at the End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
Task 1-5 Rewarding Performing Teachers and Schools							
1.5.1 Collaboration with MIE, Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB), DIAS toward development of Certificate of Early Grade Reading	1.5.1.1 Initial discussions with MoEST, MIE, MANEB regarding interest, feasibility	August 2013	Discussions initiated August 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
	1.5.1.2 Ongoing discussions to develop framework for Certificate program	October 2013–September 2014	Ongoing	Ongoing; discussed during quarterly meeting with MoEST directors October 10, 2013	No new discussions during this quarter	MIE certificate of attendance issue is pending.	Discussed during quarterly meeting with MoEST directors in September 2014
1.5.2 Grants under Contract (GUC) incentive program implemented	1.5.2.1 Grants Manual developed, submitted to USAID for approval	July–September 2013	Grants Manual submitted to USAID September 17, 2013	Complete; approved November 1, 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed; Grants Manual approved by USAID November 1, 2013
	1.5.2.2 Criteria for GUC application eligibility developed in consultation with DEMs, PEAs, HTs	August–September 2013	Ongoing; initial consultations held August–September 2013	Ongoing; criteria to be refined in Q2	Completed February 2014	Completed	Completed February 2014
	1.5.2.3 Schools (HTs) and communities (SMCs) notified of GUC program	October–November 2013	Planned; pending approval of Grants Manual	Pending completion of 1.5.2.2	Completed February and March 2014 during	Completed	Completed February and March 2014

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at the End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
					community sensitization training		
	1.5.2.4 Schools and communities encouraged to collaborate around learner reading (in order to meet eligibility criteria) (as in Task 3-2)	December 2013–May 2014	Planned	Planned; awaiting community mobilization training in districts	Ongoing; community mobilization and sensitization trainings conducted March 2014	Ongoing; addressed during community mobilization and sensitization trainings and follow up visits	Ongoing through continued support to communities
	1.5.2.5 GUC program competition opens	April–May 2014	Planned	Planned	Competition opened this quarter	GUC program in process	Completed; competition opened in February 2014
	1.5.2.6 Submitted GUC applications reviewed	May 2014	Planned	Planned	Planned in July 2014	Applications data entered into database	Completed
	1.5.2.7 GUC incentive awardees selected, notified	June–July 2014	Planned	Planned	Planned in July 2014	Shortlist of 10 schools per district will be identified in July from the data. Selection of finalists and notification planned for July.	Completed; notification letters sent to DEMs September 2014
	1.5.2.8 GUC funds	July–August	Planned	Planned	Planned in September	Planned for September	Pending the finalization of

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at the End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
	disbursed	2014			2014	2014	school proposals and establishment of payment milestones
	1.5.2.9 GUC awardees' activities monitored	July 2014–July 2016	Planned	Planned	Planned to begin September 2014	Planned to begin September 2014	Pending the approval of school proposals
	1.5.2.10 Top-performing teachers recognized at reading fairs (see Task 3-1)	January 2014–July 2016	Planned	Planned	Ongoing; reading fairs conducted in March 2014	Ongoing; reading fairs conducted in selected schools	Ongoing; conducted during reading fairs at schools
1.5.3 Coordinate with Social Impact on evaluation of GUCs, teacher incentive programs	1.5.3 Coordinate with Social Impact on evaluation of GUCs, teacher incentive programs	April–August 2013	Planned	Planned	Planned in Q3	Discussed during June 9 meeting with SI	Ongoing; continued coordination with SI

Component 2: Provision of Teaching and Learning Materials for Reading

Component 2 is composed of five tasks as listed below. Each task will be addressed in turn with its corresponding progress summary table.

Task 2-1: Develop and Distribute Decodable and Leveled Books

Task 2-2: Develop and Distribute Story Cards for Home Use

Task 2-3: Develop and Distribute Letter Cards

Task 2-4: Production and Distribution of Chalk Slates

Task 2-5: Supply of Mobile, Lockable Bookcases/Cabinets and Registers

Although Component 2 is focused on the provision of TLM, much of the development of these materials is conducted under Component 1. Therefore, most of the preparation work for this component is reported above under the Component 1 tasks, including the identification, development, and trial testing of scripted lesson plans, learners' textbooks, supplementary readers, and story cards.

PPPs to Support Provision of Materials

In preparation for printing and procurement of materials, EGRA's subcontractor OAI followed up its desk study of potential PPPs with a three-week trip to Malawi in November to meet with potential partners and assess their interest in and ability to support the provision of reading materials.

As a follow-up to his November trip, Mr. O'Brien from OAI traveled to Malawi in March for three weeks to meet with organizations that have strong potential to develop PPPs with EGRA. Through his 39 meetings he was able to draft concept notes for 22 companies and organizations that have expressed interest in supporting EGRA activities. These concept notes were shared with the potential PPPs in anticipation that they will be able to dedicate some of their resources for this support, which will be formalized through the signing of statements of collaboration (SOCs) with willing partners.

The majority of interested companies have expressed their interest in supporting EGRA through providing "Reading Tools in a Box" to schools. This concept draws upon experience under a USAID activity in Zambia where many companies funded the provision of a similar concept to schools. The Reading Tools in a Box concept entails providing a secure plastic box full of supplementary readers, including the decodable and leveled readers, along with the story cards that are being developed and printed under EGRA. As part of this concept, OAI has been able to secure the support of a local printing company that is willing to print the books at near cost, as part of its CSR efforts. Through these PPPs, EGRA should be able to provide more books to schools than the current EGRA budget allows.

In July, Mr. O'Brien made another three-week trip to follow up on the 22 concept notes that had been developed in March and to pursue further potential PPPs. Two of the concept notes have nearly come to fruition through alliance agreements with the two telecommunications companies, Airtel and TNM, as has already been discussed under Task 1.3 above. These two companies have agreed to provide free set up of the SMS short code numbers and to provide a reduced rate for the maintenance fee and SMS charges as part of their SRC. Draft SOCs have been developed, which are anticipated to be signed in October 2014. Also during the July

trip, OAI was able to develop seven additional concept papers with newly identified potential PPPs bringing the total to 29 concept papers.

Mr. O'Brien has continued to correspond with these potential PPPs and update EGRA on the development of the concept notes. While some concept notes seem to have strong potential in coming to fruition, others will need additional work by OAI and EGRA to move them forward. One of the major factors in companies' abilities to provide PPP support is earmarking the resources in the annual budget cycle. Therefore, it will be important for OAI and EGRA to provide constant reminders and persistent follow-up to ensure that support to EGRA is included in the next budget cycle for these companies.

Table 19 provides further details on the status of activities for Task 2-0.

Table 19. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 2-0

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
Task 2-0 Preparation and Groundwork for Component 2 Tasks							
2.0.1 PPPs leveraged to support provision of materials to intervention schools	2.0.1 PPPs leveraged to support provision of materials to intervention schools	September 2013–June 2016	Ongoing; OAI began desk study of assessment September 2013	Ongoing; OAI conducted field assessment in November 2013	Ongoing; draft concept notes developed with potential PPPs to provide for materials	Ongoing; draft concept notes reviewed by potential PPPs to provide for materials	Ongoing; 29 total concept notes drafted and reviewed with potential PPPs
2.0.2 Testing of learner books that accompany scripted lesson plans (See Task 1.3)	2.0.2.1 Limited print run of new learner books produced	November 2013	Planned	Planned	Planned to be field tested along with scripted lesson plans in May 2014	Completed; as part of the trial testing of scripted lesson plans for EN S1 and CH S2	Completed; as part of trial testing in May 2014
	2.0.2.2 New learner books tested in 1% of schools	November–December 2013	Planned	Planned	Planned to be field tested along with scripted lesson plans in May	Completed; as part of the trial testing of scripted lesson plans for EN S1 and CH S2	Completed; May 2014 for Term 1 of EN S1 and CH S2
	2.0.2.3 Review and amendment of materials based on findings of trialing	December 2013	Planned	Planned	Planned to occur immediately after field testing in May	Completed; as part of the trial testing of scripted lesson plans for EN S1 and CH S2	Completed; May 2014 for Term 1 of EN S1 and CH S2

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
2.0.3 Testing of decodable texts and story cards (see Task 1.3)	2.0.3.1 Limited print run of new decodable texts and story cards	November 2013	Planned	Planned	Planned in June 2014	Planned in September 2014	Planned in October 2014
	2.0.3.2 New decodable texts and story cards tested in 1% of schools	November–December 2013	Planned	Planned	Planned in June 2014	Planned in September 2014	Planned in October 2014
	2.0.3.3 Review and amendment of materials based on findings of trialing	December 2013	Planned	Planned	Planned in June 2014	Planned in September 2014	Planned in October 2014

Task 2-1: Develop and Distribute Decodable and Leveled Books

The development of the decodable and leveled readers has already been discussed under Task 1.3 above. As explained, the series of 30 decodable readers have been developed, and the readers are currently in draft form. Plans are in place to field test the supplementary readers in October 2014 before finalizing and printing the books for schools.

As the core text for the *MaK* Chichewa Standard 1 reading program under EGRA, the learners' book *Nditha Kuwerenga* was printed and distributed to all Standard 1 to 3 learners in the EGRA intervention schools. A total of 477,904 copies of *Nditha Kuwerenga* were printed and delivered to Cohort A schools during this FY. An additional 207,642 have also been printed and are being distributed to Cohort B schools. As has been directed by MoEST, for the remaining courses EGRA will print and use the existing learners' textbooks from the NPC as material for the scripted lesson plans developed under EGRA. Therefore, EGRA included the use of the NPC learner books in its field testing in May of the scripted lesson plans for English Standard 1 and Chichewa Standard 2 as discussed under Task 1-3.

Throughout the year, bTG has provided technical assistance to EGRA in developing a print forecast schedule, which has helped by indicating the deadlines for each step in the process of printing to ensure timely printing and distribution of materials. In addition, it has helped EGRA to identify the most cost-effective and appropriate source for printing, whether it be done in-country or sourced internationally, depending on the circumstances and needs of each print run required. While the majority of materials printed during this FY have been printed locally in Malawi—largely due to expediency of time—EGRA has decided to split up its larger print consignments to have the majority printed internationally to reduce costs, while maintaining a portion of the consignment to be printed by local Malawian printing companies in order to further develop their capacity to print books for the Ministry and to ensure timely availability of books. **Table 20** provides the total number of materials that have been printed or are in the process of being printed under EGRA up through the end of FY 2014.

Table 21 provides further details on the status of activities for Task 2-1.

Task 2-2: Develop and Distribute Story Cards for Home Use

As mentioned above, the story cards are being developed right along with the decodable and leveled readers. Therefore, they will be trial tested, finalized, printed, and distributed along with the other supplementary reading materials. The structure and design of the story cards has been agreed upon by MoEST and EGRA during the regular materials development workshops described under Task 1.3 above. It is planned that the story cards will be stored in secure bookcases along with the other supplementary reading materials, such as the “Reading Tools in a Box” concept discussed previously.

Table 22 provides further details on the status of activities for Task 2-2.

Table 20. Materials printed under EGRA through FY 2014

Title	Delivery Date	Recipients	Total
Nditha Kuwerenga (Chichewa Std 1 Learners Book)	Aug 13	Zones trained in Aug 13	85,000
	Dec 13	Zones added in Nov 13	44,697
	Apr 14	Std 2–3 Lilongwe Rural	95,873
	Jul 14	Std 2–3 other districts	252,334
	Sep 14	Zones trained in Aug 14	20,000
	Sep 14	Zones trained in Aug 14	87,642
	Sep–Oct 14	Std 2–3 Cohort B districts	100,000
Total Nditha Kuwerenga			685,546
English Standard 1 – Learners' Book	Sep-14	All intervention schools	67,687
English Standard 1 – Learners' Book	Nov-14	All intervention schools	265,000
Total English Standard 1 – Learners' Book			332,687
Chichewa Standard 1 – Learners' Book	Sep-14	All intervention schools	97,561
Chichewa Standard 1 – Learners' Book	Nov-14	All intervention schools	149,878
Total Chichewa Standard 2 – Learners' Book			247,439
Maziko Teachers' Guide - Term 1	Aug 13	Zones trained in Aug 13	1,637
	Aug 13	Std 2–3 101 Cohort A zones	4,681
	Nov 13	Zones added in Nov 13	833
	Aug 14	33 Cohort B zones	2,848
Total Maziko Teachers' Guide - Term 1			9,999
Maziko Teachers' Guide - Term 2	Dec 13	101 Cohort A zones	4,035
	Dec 13	101 Cohort A zones	4,681
Total Maziko Teachers' Guide - Term 2			8,716
Maziko Teachers' Guide - Term 3	Apr 14	101 Cohort A zones	8,177
Total Maziko Teachers' Guide - Term 3			8,177
Maziko Training Manual - Term 1	Aug 13	Zones trained in Aug 13	3,250
	Nov 13	Zones added in Nov 13	1,050
	Aug 14	33 Cohort B zones	3,300
Total Maziko Training Manual - Term 1			7,600
Maziko Training Manual - Term 2	Dec 13	101 Cohort A zones	4,035
Total Maziko Training Manual - Term 2			4,035
Maziko Training Manual - Term 3	Apr 14	101 Cohort A zones	4,000
Total Maziko Training Manual - Term 3			4,000
English Std 1 - Training Manual - Term 1	Aug 14	All intervention schools	12,000

Title	Delivery Date	Recipients	Total
Total English Std 1 - Training Manual - Term 1			12,000
English Std 1 – Teachers’ Guide - Term 1	Aug 14	All intervention schools	5,737
Total English Std 1 – Teachers’ Guide - Term 1			5,737
Chichewa Std 2 - Training Manual - Term 1	Aug 14	101 Cohort A zones	4,900
Total Chichewa Std 2 - Training Manual - Term 1			4,900
Chichewa Std 2 - Teachers’ Guide -Term 1	Aug 14	101 Cohort A zones	4,763
Total Chichewa Std 2 – Teachers’ Guide - Term 1			4,763
Letter Cards (in sets of 24 cards)	Aug 14	Std 1 Classrooms,101 zones	1,100 sets
	Aug 14	Std 2 Classrooms,101 zones	1,100 sets
Total Letter Cards			2,200 sets
GRAND TOTAL			1,333,799

Table 21. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 2-1

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
Task 2-1 Develop and Distribute Decodable and Leveled Books							
	2.1.1.1 Procurement sent to printers	January 2014	Planned	Planned	Ongoing; procurement sent to local and international printers for <i>Nditha Kuwerenga</i> and <i>Mazikola Kuwerenga</i> materials	Completed; procurement sent to local and international printers for materials needed for August and September	Completed for all CH S1 materials and Term 1 materials for EN S1 and CH S2; supplementary readers pending finalization
2.1.1 Large print run of decodable books, leveled books, and story cards	2.1.1.2 Books and story cards in production	January–February 2014	Planned	Planned	Planned in Q3 as books and story cards are in final draft form	Planned; books and story cards still being finalized	Completed for all CH S1 materials, part of Term 1 materials for EN S1 and CH S2
	2.1.1.3 Delivery of books and story cards to schools	March 2014	Planned	Planned	Planned pending completion of 2.1.1.2	Planned pending completion of 2.1.1.2	Completed for all CH S1 materials, part of Term 1 materials for EN S1 and CH S2

Table 22. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 2-2

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
Task 2-2 Develop and Distribute Story Cards for Home Use							
2.2.1 In conjunction with MoEST and USAID, EGRA finalizes structure/design of story cards	2.2.1 In conjunction with MoEST and USAID, EGRA finalizes structure/design of story cards	August–September 2013	Delayed due to unavailability of MoEST partners	Ongoing; structure discussed December 2013	Completed during workshops in December 2013 and January and March 2014	Completed	Completed
2.2.2 Story cards stocked in classroom library cases for daily reading at home	2.2.2 Story cards stocked in classroom library cases for daily reading at home	April–May 2014	Planned	Planned	Not yet accomplished pending trial testing and finalization of story cards; planned to be distributed August 2014	Not yet accomplished pending trial testing and finalization of story cards; planned to be distributed Term 2 of SY2	Pending finalization of supplementary readers

Task 2-3: Develop and Distribute Letter Cards

As with the story cards, the design of the letter cards was finalized and agreed upon during the materials development workshops in January and March. The letter cards for Chichewa Standards 1 and 2 are composed of a set of 24 letters of the Chichewa alphabet. Each letter card consists of a lowercase and uppercase letter accompanied by a picture of a word that corresponds to the letter. The words on the cards were derived from the current Chichewa Standards 1 and 2 course work and can be used in teaching reading in any class. An artist was hired to develop the letter cards, which were shared with and approved by MoEST and USAID.

The EGRA district staff worked with the DEMs, PEAs, and head teachers to identify how many Standard 1 and 2 classes are conducted in classrooms that can have letters painted on the wall and how many classes do not have classrooms with walls. A total of 1,100 sets of letter cards for Standard 1 (26,400 total cards) and 1,100 sets letter cards for Standard 2 (26,400 total cards) were produced and delivered to Cohort A schools that have classrooms without walls. The sets for Cohort B schools still need to be printed and distributed. The remaining schools with Standard 1 to 2 classrooms are expected to mobilize their communities to paint letters on the classroom walls.

During his assessment trip in November, Mr. O'Brien came across a nongovernmental organization (NGO) called boNGO, which provides schools with "Happy Classrooms" in which they paint letters and numbers along with other curriculum-support graphics and text on classroom walls. EGRA met with the boNGO director in November to discuss possible partnerships in painting the walls of EGRA intervention schools. Some of the EGRA staff visited a school in Lilongwe with "Happy Classrooms" to see boNGO's work. The quality of the painted walls is excellent, and thus, EGRA hopes to find ways to partner with boNGO in leveraging PPP support in painting more classrooms in the intervention zones. Unfortunately a formal partnership with boNGO is yet to be made.

In order to provide an example of how schools can paint letters on their classroom walls, EGRA decided to provide the resources and support to paint one example classroom in each of the 134 intervention zones. Two such schools were painted at Ntambanyama Primary School in Thyolo District and Matindi Primary School in Blantyre Rural District. EGRA has sourced quotes for the painting supplies to do the same in the remaining 132 zones. During these painting activities EGRA is working closely with the school communities so that they can replicate the efforts in their own schools. This will be discussed in greater detail under Component 3.

Table 23 provides further details on the status of activities for Task 2-3.

Table 23. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 2-3

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
Task 2-3 Develop and Distribute Letter Cards							
2.3.1 In conjunction with MoEST and USAID, EGRA finalizes design of letter cards	2.3.1 In conjunction with MoEST and USAID, EGRA finalizes design of letter cards	August–September 2013	Delayed due to unavailability of MoEST partners	Discussed December 2013, yet to be finalized	Completed; USAID approved design in March 2014	Completed	Completed; USAID approved design in March 2014
2.3.2 BPG adapts design to fit classrooms with no walls	2.3.2 BPG adapts design to fit classrooms with no walls	September–October 2013	Delayed due to unavailability of MoEST partners	Request for quotes were sent out	Design will be done by local artists rather than BPG. Artist was identified in March 2014	Completed; local artist finalized design and letter cards were produced	Completed
2.3.3 DEMs, PEAs consulted to identify No. of classrooms requiring painted letter cards, No. requiring printed cards	2.3.3 DEMs, PEAs consulted to identify No. of classrooms requiring painted letter cards, No. requiring printed cards	October–November 2013	Ongoing; began collecting data September 2013	Ongoing; being entered into database	Ongoing; consultations conducted this quarter, to be finalized in Q3	Completed; list of schools finalized	Completed
2.3.4 Publication-ready files for print run of letter cards finalized, sent to printers	2.3.4 Publication-ready files for print run of letter cards finalized, sent to printers	December 2013–January 2014	Planned	Planned	Ongoing; artist currently developing publication-ready files	Completed; 52,800 letter cards printed	Completed; 52,800 letter cards printed for Cohort A
2.3.5 Letter cards distributed to schools	2.3.5 Letter cards distributed to schools	March 2014	Planned	Planned	Pending completion	Planned to be distributed in	Completed for Cohort A

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
where S1 classrooms have no walls	where S1 classrooms have no walls				of 2.3.5; planned to be distributed in Q3	August 2014	

Task 2-4: Production and Distribution of Chalk Slates

Given the volume of chalk slates to be provided, EGRA began as early as possible to identify options for low-cost, local production of these slates. Solicitations proved to be quite cost-prohibitive for local production of the materials. Therefore, EGRA also explored alternative possibilities both within the region and internationally to better gauge the price range that can be expected.

In the meantime, EGRA discovered halfway through the school year that MoEST has recently procured and distributed chalk slates to all of its primary schools. This was discovered in the field when the EGRA officers saw chalk slates being distributed and stored at TDCs. EGRA has subsequently followed up with the Ministry on the details of the procurement and distribution and has received the exact numbers from the Supplies Unit that were delivered to each TDC and school. As a result, EGRA has been in discussion with USAID on the implications for EGRA's requirement to provide chalk slates to its intervention schools. It is proposed that EGRA will compare the actual number of chalk slates reported to be distributed by MoEST against the enrollment numbers that EGRA has collected from the field and look into covering any shortfall of chalk slates, if needed. EGRA will continue to discuss this issue with USAID and MoEST on the best way forward.

Table 24 provides further details on the status of activities for Task 2-4.

Table 24. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 2-4

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
Task 2-4 Production and Distribution of Chalk Slates							
2.4.0 Evaluation of local manufacturing of chalk slates conducted	2.4.0 Evaluation of local manufacturing of chalk slates conducted	July–September 2013	Ongoing; evaluation initiated July 2013	Ongoing; continue to source quotes	Ongoing; continue to source quotes	Ongoing; sought details from MoEST on recent procurement	Completed; quotes sources locally, regionally, and internationally
2.4.1 Procurement of chalk slates	2.4.1.1 RFQ for production, procurement of chalk slates developed and issued	October–November 2013	Planned	Planned	Planned in Q3; delayed due to deliberations with USAID and MoEST	Pending agreement with USAID on way forward	Pending agreement with USAID on way forward
	2.4.1.2 Vendor or offeror selected	December 2013	Planned	Planned	Pending 2.4.1.1	Pending agreement with USAID on way forward	Pending agreement with USAID on way forward
	2.4.1.3 Chalk slates procured, shipped to Lilongwe	January–February 2014	Planned	Planned	Pending 2.4.1.2	Pending agreement with USAID on way forward	Pending agreement with USAID on way forward
2.4.2 Chalk slates distributed to schools	2.4.2 Chalk slates distributed to schools	March 2014	Planned	Planned	Pending 2.4.1.3	Pending agreement with USAID on way	Pending agreement with USAID on way

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
						forward	forward
2.4.3 Schools and teachers engaged to ensure children have chalk	2.4.3 Schools and teachers engaged to ensure children have chalk	February 2014–July 2016	Planned	Planned	Planned when chalk slates begin to be produced	Pending agreement with USAID on way forward	Pending agreement with USAID on way forward

Task 2-5: Supply of Mobile, Lockable Bookcases/Cabinets and Registers

Similar to the chalk slates, EGRA also looked into possibilities for procuring and producing mobile, lockable bookcases locally, which has proven to be much more costly than anticipated. Therefore, EGRA has been exploring options regionally and internationally.

An alternative option may be possible in the Reading Tools in a Box concept discussed in Task 2.0 above, in which supplementary reading materials will be delivered to schools in a sealable plastic box container and stored in a secure location. EGRA has sourced initial quotes for this alternative, which appears to be more cost-effective and thus more attractive for potential PPPs to support. This will need to be further discussed with USAID and MoEST before any decision can be made.

In anticipation of reading materials and storage units being delivered to schools, EGRA has developed draft materials registers for schools to use in keeping track of learner use of reading materials. Teachers and communities will be trained in how to use the registers when they are disseminated to schools.

Table 25 provides further details on the status of activities for Task 2-5.

Table 25. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 2-5

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
Task 2-5 Supply of Mobile, Lockable Bookcases/Cabinets and Registers							
2.5.0 Evaluation of local manufacturing capacity of bookcases/cabinets	2.5.0 Evaluation of local manufacturing capacity of bookcases/cabinets	July–October 2013	Ongoing; evaluation initiated July 2013	Ongoing; continue to source quotes	Ongoing; continue to source quotes	Ongoing; continue to source quotes	Completed; quotes sources locally, regionally, and internationally
2.5.1 Procurement of bookcases and registers	2.5.1.1 RFQ for production, procurement of bookcases and registers developed and issued	October–November 2013	Planned	Planned	Planned in Q3; delayed due to deliberations with USAID and MoEST	Planned; delayed due to deliberations with USAID and MoEST	Pending agreement with USAID on way forward
	2.5.1.2 Vendor or offeror selected	December 2013	Planned	Planned	Pending 2.5.1.1	Pending 2.5.1.1	Pending agreement with USAID on way forward
	2.5.1.3 Bookcases procured, shipped to Lilongwe	January–February 2014	Planned	Planned	Pending 2.5.1.2	Pending 2.5.1.2	Pending agreement with USAID on way forward
2.5.2 Bookcases and registers distributed to schools	2.5.2 Bookcases and registers distributed to schools	March 2014	Planned	Planned	Pending 2.5.1.3	Pending 2.5.1.3	Pending agreement with USAID on way forward
2.5.3 Indexing/registration format for tracking learner use of library reading materials	2.5.3 Indexing/registration format for tracking learner use of library reading materials	March–May 2014	Planned	Planned	Drafts developed by EGRA; Planned consultations	Drafts developed; awaiting consultation with	Drafts developed; awaiting finalization

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
developed in collaboration with school community	developed in collaboration with school community				with communities and MoEST for finalization	communities and MoEST for finalization	
2.5.4 Registers maintained by teaching assistants (TAs), community volunteers, or classroom teachers	2.5.4 Registers maintained by TAs, community volunteers, or classroom teachers	May–June 2014	Planned	Planned	Pending 2.5.3	Pending 2.5.3	Pending 2.5.3

Component 3: Increasing Parental and Community Engagement to Support Student Reading

Component 3 is composed of three tasks as listed below. Each task will be addressed in turn with its corresponding progress summary table.

Task 3-1: Reading Fairs

Task 3-2: Parental/Caregiver and Community Support for Reading

Task 3-3: Provide Classroom Level and School Support for Reading

Over FY 2014 EGRA has carried out a number of activities aimed at increasing parental and community engagement to support students' reading. One of the first activities involved the recruitment of 9 DCMs in October 2013 by the Creative Center for Community Mobilization (CRECCOM), with technical support from RTI. The other 2 DCMs were recruited in January 2014. A week-long orientation workshop was held in Zomba for all the new hires, including the DCMs, DTCs, and DMEs, from November 18 to 23. The orientation focused on the goals and objectives of EGRA and the administrative as well as technical issues for each specific component. A practical session was held at a school so the participants could get hands-on experience working with community groups. The DCMs had an opportunity to review the drafted Community Mobilization Handbook and field tested its content with members of the community from the villages surrounding the school.

The draft Community Mobilization Handbook, which lays out core responsibilities of the DCMs and activities and strategies for mobilizing communities to support student reading, went under further review and field testing during the TOF that took place January 20 to 25 (more details will be reported under Task 3.2 below). This TOF session provided an opportunity for the 2 DCMs who were recruited in January to have their orientation, while at the same time allowed for testing of the draft Community Mobilization Handbook on the PEAs and Community Development Assistants (CDAs) from the government who were being trained as facilitators. These PEAs and CDAs needed to become conversant with the draft Community Mobilization Handbook because they are responsible for sensitizing and training local community leaders, school community members, head teachers, and mother groups throughout the intervention zones. The draft Community Mobilization Handbook field testing and revision was also done during the training of the local community leaders, school community members, head teachers, and mother groups.

Following the field testing, the revised handbook was sent to the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Welfare (MGCSW) head office for further review, after which it was submitted to USAID on May 8 for final approval. USAID provided feedback and initial approval on May 14, on condition that the suggested changes were incorporated. EGRA resubmitted the handbook on May 29 with all changes incorporated. As a result of EGRA's inclusive approach to field testing, revising, and editing of the handbook, stakeholders have expressed a sense of genuine ownership of its content. In September, the Community Mobilization Handbook was sent to a printer where 10,427 copies will be printed.

In order to familiarize the DCMs on the content and materials teachers are using in training, they participated in the TOFs that were held in December. The knowledge has helped the DCMs work more effectively with communities in identifying ways and strategies that communities can support reading instruction in their schools.

During FY 2014 EGRA developed effective and strong relationships with the relevant district officials, PEAs, CDAs, local community leaders, and school community members. This was achieved by DCMs briefing the relevant district committees, including the District Executive Committees (DEC) of EGRA and its activities. EGRA field staff also worked closely with the PEAs and CDAs during community mobilization training and monitoring at the cluster and school levels. The two-day training sessions of 10,183 parent-teacher associations (PTAs), school management committees (SMCs), and mother group members were conducted February 26 to 27 and March 5 to 6, while the training of 1,173 head teachers was conducted March 19 to 22. During the August to September teacher trainings, EGRA reached out to all the teachers to explain how best the teachers can engage the communities so that they, the communities, can best support their children in reading. Data were collected in readiness for the training of the remaining community leaders, head teachers, PTAs, SMCs, and mother groups to be conducted in the Cohort B zones early next FY.

Table 26 provides further details on the status of activities for Task 3-0.

Table 26. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 3.0

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
Task 3-0 Preparatory Groundwork and Development of EGRA Resource Materials for Community Mobilization							
3.0.1 Development and deployment of EGRA CM Handbooks	3.0.1.1 Consultant Barbara Harvey mobilized to assist CM Specialist in development of handbooks	June 2013	Completed; trip report approved by USAID September 16, 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
	3.0.1.2 Completion of CM Handbooks	August–November 2013	Ongoing; draft completed, awaiting feedback from training before finalization	Ongoing; feedback provided during DCM orientation and field testing in November 2013	Ongoing; further feedback provided during TOF with PEAs and CDAs, which is being incorporated and edited for final version ready in May 2014	Completed; submitted to USAID May 8, 2014, comments received from USAID May 14, changes incorporated and resubmitted May 29	Completed; approved by USAID XXXX
	3.0.1.3 Training of Activity staff on use of CM Handbooks	October 2013	Planned	Completed November 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed November 2013
	3.0.1.4 Training of PEAs, CDAs on use of CM Handbooks	December 2013	Planned		Planned for January 2014 for 101	Completed January 2014 for 101	Completed January 2014 for 101

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
				zones	zones	zones	
3.0.2 Deployment of DCMs to districts	3.0.2.1 DCMs develop relationships with school staff, local community leaders, CDAs, MoEST district-level personnel	July 2013–August 2014	Ongoing; delay due to continued finalization of contract for CRECCOM	Ongoing; DCMs deployed in October–December 2013	Ongoing	Completed and Salima introduced to the DEC	Completed

Task 3-1: Reading Fairs

A few reading fairs and open days were held during the early months of EGRA implementation. Even though communities had not yet received community mobilization trainings, a few schools had taken their own initiative to hold reading fairs and open days with their communities. EGRA staff managed to attend three such reading fairs during Term 1 at Kadyaulendo, Njewa, and Air Base primary schools in Lilongwe Rural West district. At the fairs it was noted that the schools and communities were at different levels in their ability to hold effective reading fairs. Subsequently EGRA trained the DCMs in December and the PEAs and CDAs in January in how to plan and organize reading fairs that showcase the reading instruction and learning that was taking place at schools, as stipulated in the Community Mobilization Handbook. The DCMs, PEAs, and CDAs trained head teachers, PTAs, and SMCs towards the end of the second term of the school session.

These DCMs, PEAs, and CDAs also worked with communities, who came up with plans on how to organize reading fairs and mobilize resources. It was encouraging to see a number of schools taking their own initiative to hold open days and reading fairs during the final weeks of March, at the beginning of April, and during the month of July. Some of these reading fairs were attended by the EGRA district team, PEAs, and CDAs. It was reported that some community members were so impressed with the learning that was being displayed by the learners that they gave gifts from their own personal resources to young readers and teachers. At one reading fair at Ntonda Primary School, in Blantyre Rural District, the community was able to secure PPP support from Colgate Palmolive, which gave all learners some toothpaste and toothbrushes. EGRA pursued this PPP for further support at subsequent reading fairs.

A total of 581 reading fairs were conducted at EGRA intervention schools over the year. During the reading fairs the community members also showcased how they contributed towards EGRA's goal of ensuring that children practiced reading both within and outside the school. For example, community members showed how they taught literacy lessons in the community reading centers and the roles that community leaders played to ensure that children fully patronize the reading centers. Schools often held zonal fairs when they hosted a reading fair for the first time. The experience and lessons learned from zonal fairs motivated other schools to hold their own school-based reading fairs.

The reading fairs have been well received by the communities, and have even drawn high-level district officials and other leaders on many occasions. As the reading fairs were conducted by the schools and communities themselves, the content and activities varied across each event. Most reading fairs included demonstrations of reading lessons and displays of the reading abilities of learners. Numerous examples of communities, individuals, and private organizations providing gifts and other incentives to teachers, learners, and community members who are making a difference in improving reading in their schools were observed.

Most schools typically tended to conduct the reading fairs as a part of school term closure events. As such, many schools held their reading fairs in the month of July when the academic year came to an end. In order to capture the above information, EGRA developed a template for reporting on reading fairs conducted that helped the

schools produce a detailed report on the dates and activities that were conducted at their reading fairs. These reports were being collected and consolidated by the EGRA field offices and shared with the Community Mobilization (CM) Specialist and M&E and Learning Specialist to keep records of all reading fairs conducted across the intervention districts. Many districts received news that even schools and communities from non-intervention zones were conducting reading fairs, so the practice seems to be taking root in the districts.

Braille Cup competition plans started as early as October, with the DGVP Specialist holding initial discussions with DSNE, Montfort College, and teachers of LSEN on what activities could be included in the Braille Cup. This was followed by the development of the draft outreach plan and participant scope for the event by the DGVP Specialist and the CM Specialist, which was shared with DSNE and other partners from the Resource Centers for their input. In November, Mr. O'Brien, of OAI also discussed the Braille Cup competition with potential PPPs, including Investment and Development (INDE) Bank, so that they could support such a competition. The DGVP Specialist worked with Mr. O'Brien in developing a concept note for INDE Bank to provide support for the Braille Cup, as it had expressed interest in supporting EGRA's efforts in working with blind learners.

Discussions related to the development, coordination, and planning for the Braille Cup held among the DGVP Specialist, Perkins International, and local partners like DSNE, Montfort College, and teachers of LSEN culminated in the identification of Nsalura School for the Blind in Salima as the venue and July 12 as the actual date for the National Braille Cup competition.

In preparation for the Braille Cup, the DGVP Specialist and CM Specialist met with DSNE to develop a detailed schedule, agenda, outreach plan, and participant scope for the inaugural event. Preparations also entailed developing plans on how to adapt EGRA's reading materials and assessment instruments to be used for the Braille Cup competitions. EGRA continued to work with OAI in identifying available matching resources from PPPs and other sources. Unfortunately, one of the greatest potential sources of matching resources, INDE Bank, decided not to support this year's Braille Cup due to budgetary constraints. Despite this setback, the DGVP Specialist and other EGRA staff continued to work on identifying companies and individuals that would provide resources to support the competition. These included Colgate Palmolive, Crossroads Hotel, Kriss Offset Printing, Montfort College, and Spendrite Mart. The National Braille Cup competition was held on July 12, 2014 and was attended by USAID and MoEST officials. It was well attended and received excellent responses by those involved as it effectively highlighted the reading accomplishments of learners with visual impairments.

As the Braille Cup and reading fairs continue to be held, EGRA continues to reach out to and collaborate with SI on establishing a way to evaluate the impact of these activities.

Table 27 provides further details on the status of activities for Task 3-1.

Table 27. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 3.1

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
Task 3-1 Reading Fairs							
3.1.0 DTCs, DCMs coordinate planning for community-driven reading fairs	3.1.0.1 Development of Reading Fair Planning Guide	August–September 2013	Ongoing; awaiting deployment of remaining DCMs to finalize	Ongoing; will be done along with CM trainings	Completed as part of CM Handbook	Completed	Completed as part of CM Handbook
	3.1.0.2 Development of reading fair schedule, agenda	August–September 2013	Ongoing; awaiting deployment of remaining DCMs to finalize	Ongoing; will be done during CM trainings	Ongoing: included in CM trainings; plans for Term 3 will be developed next quarter	Ongoing; varies from community to community	Ongoing: schools plan own schedules and communicate to EGRA office
	3.1.0.3 Procurement by school of necessary materials	October 2013–April 2014	Planned	Planned	Ongoing: Schools with reading fairs are procuring own materials	Ongoing; schools with reading fairs are procuring own materials	Ongoing; schools with reading fairs are procuring own materials
3.1.1 School-based fairs held to showcase learner reading abilities	3.1.1 School-based fairs held to showcase learner reading abilities	October 2013–June 2014	Planned	Started in December 2013 in a few schools	Ongoing: Reading fairs conducted in March at end of Term 2	Ongoing; 237 reading fairs conducted this quarter	Completed; 259 fairs held in Q4 for a total of 496 in FY 2014
3.1.2 DGVP Specialist and Perkins International's local partners	3.1.2.1 Identification of available matching resources	September–November 2013	Not yet started due to delay in bringing DGVP and	Started with OAI trip in November 2013	Ongoing: OAI followed up with potential PPPs in March;	Ongoing; concept note submitted to INDE Bank, other sources	Completed; Raised K650,000 plus other materials

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
coordinate planning for, development of Braille Cup			Perkins on board		developing concept notes	being pursued	
	3.1.2.2 Development of Braille Cup outreach plan, participant scope	December 2013–February 2014	Planned	Planned	Ongoing; developed a draft plan that will be shared with MoEST in Q3	Completed in collaboration with DSNE	Completed in collaboration with DSNE
	3.1.2.3 Adaptation/Development of Braille Cup (BC)-specific testing materials	March–April 2014	Planned	Planned	Planned; to be included in planning for Braille Cup	Ongoing; production began this quarter, to be completed in July	Completed in collaboration with DSNE
3.1.3 Braille Cup implemented	3.1.3.1 Matching resources for BC mobilized	February–April 2014	Planned	Started with OAI trip in November 2013	Concept notes being developed with potential PPPs	Ongoing; partners identified and promised resources	Completed; Raised K650,000 plus other materials
	3.1.3.2 BC schedule, agenda set	March–April 2014	Planned	Planned	Initial plans made with DSNE this quarter	Completed; schedule and agenda finalized with DSNE	Completed
	3.1.3.3 BC competition held	May–June 2014	Planned	Planned	Planned in June 2014	Planned for July 2014	Completed; held on July 12, 2014
3.1.4 Evaluation of School Year 1 reading fairs and	3.1.4.1 Consolidation of reading fair reports from field offices	March–August 2014	Planned	Started with a few reports in December	Ongoing; reports for Term 2 being	Ongoing; reports for Q3 consolidated	Completed for FY 2014

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
Braille Cup				2013	collected by field staff	and tabulated	
	3.1.4.2 Collaboration with Social Impact (external evaluator) to establish evaluation approach	November 2013–January 2014	Planned	Planned	Planned during Q3	Discussions held on June 9 with Social Impact	Ongoing
	3.1.4.3 Evaluation conducted	June–July 2014	Planned	Planned	Planned during SI's mid-term evaluation	Planned during Q4	Planned during SI's evaluation

Task 3-2: Parental/Caregiver and Community Support for Reading

As was discussed under Task 1.2, parents and communities were mobilized to support the November, December, April, and August teacher trainings by providing children for the practicum session held at each TDC. It was encouraging to see the continued positive response by parents and communities, with all TDCs having full participation by children, allowing for a hands-on practicum session to be included in the trainings.

Although CM trainings were delayed, EGRA staff continued conducting informal meetings with district-level officials, school staff, and community members on their roles in supporting reading at schools. CM training for facilitators, schools, and communities was held January 20 to 25. A total of 257 (145 male, 112 female) district-level officers from MoEST and MGCSW were trained at five separate centers, where at least two districts joined together to learn together and share experiences and ideas. The total number of participants by position is provided in **Table 28** below.

Table 28. Total Number of Officers Trained during CM TOF (by office)

Designation	Male	Female	Total
PEA/CPEA	73	32	105
CDA	45	47	92
DCDO	7	4	11
SNE	6	6	12
DME	5	5	10
DTC	5	5	10
Key Teacher	0	1	1
DC	2	2	4
DCM	0	2	2
SEMA	2	8	10
Total	145	112	257

The main aims of the TOF were to: 1) equip district-level officers with knowledge and skills for mobilizing communities to support reading in the early grades; 2) prepare PEAs and CDAs for conducting CM sensitization meetings with head teachers and community leaders; 3) assist PEAs and CDAs to develop CM plans for their relative districts and zones; and 4) to trial test and review the CM Handbook for final edits.

In order to effectively raise awareness on disability and reading during the community sensitization meetings that were to be conducted by the facilitators and other key target groups like SMCs, PTAs, and mother groups, a network of teachers of LSEN was utilized through their integration into the CM trainings targeting PEAs and CDAs. A total of 22 special education teachers were involved as contributors, raising awareness of the participants on issues of disability and reading.

The TOF was well attended with active participation. Participants from MGCSW were especially grateful that EGRA included them in the trainings and plans because they

play a crucial role in supporting and mobilizing communities, in addition to PEAs and other MoEST officials.

From February 25 to 26, the PEAs and CDAs conducted CM sensitization trainings for head teachers in all but two of the districts, which conducted the sensitization trainings March 5 to 6, due to conflicting activities. The two-day sensitization meeting focused on key aspects from the CM Handbook and sensitizing head teachers on how communities can be mobilized to support schools in improving reading instruction and how they can conduct activities outside of school that provide additional opportunities and support for children to learn how to read. A total of 1,173 head teachers (1,041 male, 132 female) attended the sensitization trainings. **Table 29** provides the detailed attendance numbers by district for the head teacher sensitization meetings.

Table 29. Head Teacher Attendance at CM Sensitization Trainings

Designation	Male	Female	Total
Balaka	125	29	154
Blantyre Rural	58	10	68
Lilongwe Rural East	113	17	130
Lilongwe Rural West	101	21	122
Machinga	77	10	87
Mzimba North	103	3	106
Ntcheu	94	21	115
Ntchisi	66	3	69
Salima	128	8	136
Thyolo	88	6	94
Zomba Rural	88	4	92
Total	1,041	132	1,173

CM sensitization meetings were then held with key community members from March 19 to 22. The meetings were held for two days each with each zone split into two separate clusters, due to the large number of participants. For each school there were nine participants invited: the chairperson, secretary, and treasurer from the SMC, PTA, and mother group of each school. Attendance was very high, with a total of 10,183 participants (4,572 male, 5,611 female) attending the sensitization meetings. **Table 30** provides detailed attendance numbers by district. The PEAs and CDAs facilitated the meetings.

Table 30. Community Member Attendance at CM Sensitization Trainings

District	Male	Female	District Total
Balaka	589	797	1,386

District	Male	Female	District Total
Blantyre Rural	161	246	407
Lilongwe Rural West	540	516	1,056
Lilongwe Rural East	571	500	1,071
Machinga	355	428	783
Mzimba North	463	497	960
Ntcheu	447	587	1,034
Ntchisi	259	322	581
Salima	506	726	1,232
Thyolo	325	518	843
Zomba Rural	356	474	830
Total	4,572	5,611	10,183

The CM sensitization meetings for community members focused on equipping community members and school governance bodies with knowledge and skills on how to effectively mobilize communities to support reading in and out of school. These sensitization meetings also included training in how to conduct effective reading fairs that highlight reading successes of children.

In principle, during the meetings, discussions and trainings were held on topics such as encouraging parents and caretakers to expose their children to books and opportunities to read; developing after-school activities that help children acquire reading skills at an early age; ensuring that learners with disabilities are provided sufficient support to learn how to read; and encouraging communities to take part in monitoring and reporting the performance of schools and teachers in providing quality reading instruction. At each of the meetings the participants drew up community action plans for their schools that outlined how the communities and school governing boards would implement support for reading in and out of schools.

Beginning in June the DCMs, in conjunction with CDAs, began holding sensitization meetings with traditional authorities and group village headmen. Even before these sensitization meetings, some of these traditional authorities and group village headmen had already been informally sensitized by their respective PTAs/SMCs and head teachers by working with their schools to establish community reading centers. In general EGRA's aim in "sensitizing" traditional authorities and group village headmen was to share with them how they could support EGRA with in- and out-of-school activities and to teach them how to draw up action plans. Through sensitization EGRA encouraged the group village headmen to:

- Establish and support community reading centers in their respective communities
- Appoint volunteer community reading facilitators
- Sensitize in turn the village headmen they supervised

- Assist with painting classrooms and copying decodable readers for reading centers
- Create a close and positive relationship with schools for easy EGRA implementation
- Ensure that schools were community and literacy friendly and that parents felt free to interact with teachers
- Ensure that parents participated in reading fairs to showcase their contribution and demonstrated literacy skills gained by their children.

Since community sensitization is an on-going process, EGRA continued to work in collaboration with PEAs and CDAs to monitor and support communities in implementing their plans. EGRA also documented and collected data on promising approaches that were being conducted by parents and communities to support reading. In addition, EGRA staff investigated other approaches that have been tried in other areas and through similar projects and activities within Malawi and throughout the region, including the SMS Gateway system.

As was discussed under Task 1.4, the SMS Gateway system was developed and is awaiting finalization of arrangements with service providers before being rolled out. There were some delays due to discussions with USAID and MoEST on the possibility of conducting a research study of the impact of the SMS messaging. It is anticipated that the SMS-based support will begin to be provided to schools and community members in School Year 2. In preparation for this EGRA has been collecting mobile phone numbers of the different actors who will be included in receiving SMS messages from EGRA. These will include key community leaders from the PTAs, SMCs, and mother groups. These data are being entered into the SMS Gateway database in preparation for its roll-out.

Sensitization meetings had excellent attendance and participation. As did the PTA and SMC members, the traditional authorities and group village headmen felt that the community mobilization activities would strengthen school/community relationships. **Table 31** provides the number of traditional authorities and group village headmen sensitized by DCMs and CDAs during this year.

Table 31. Number of Traditional Authorities and Group Village Headmen Sensitized

EGRA District	SMC or PTA Members			Mother Group Members	Traditional Authorities			Group Village Headmen			Community Reading Facilitators			Area Development Committee		
	M	F	Total		M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Ntchisi	6	0	6	0	1	0	1	19	1	20						
Balaka	0	0	0	0	8	1	9	145	32	177						
Lilongwe Rural East	20	57	77	0	12	2	14	349	57	406	25	18	43			
Ntcheu	0	0	0	0	6	2	8	151	22	173						
Machinga	0	0	0	0	10	0	10	8	87	95						
Mzimba North	0	0	0	0	5	0	5	126	1	127						
Lilongwe Rural West	14	1	15	8	7	0	7	79	12	91				55	15	70
Zomba Rural	0	0	0	0	13	4	17	69	28	97						
Blantyre Rural	0	0	0	0	9	1	10	57	27	84						
Thyolo	0	0	0	0	44	3	47	81	5	86	29	5	34			
Salima	17	17	34	7	8	3	11	98	28	126	6	2	8	1	0	1
TOTAL	57	75	132	15	123	16	139	1,182	300	1,482	60	25	85	56	15	71
Total Male	974															
Total Female	341															
															Overall TOTAL: 1,924	

The DGVP Specialist held discussions with the relevant partners, including the DSNE and teachers of LSEN, on how to raise awareness of communities and schools on issues around disabilities and reading as well as the development of the Disability Education Resource Guide (DERG). SNE materials were developed and utilized in orienting DCMs in special needs issues, who eventually conducted awareness raising sensitization meetings around disability targeting local leaders, SMCs, PTAs, and mother groups. However, training of parents with SNE children had not yet started, but the identification of the possible participants was already done by the DCMs. Perkins International developed an outline and a draft copy of the DERG. The DERG contains all information that has been collected relating to education and services for learners with disabilities in Malawi, and it will be made broadly available to the MoEST, educators, communities, and families. The draft DERG that was developed and edited was submitted to USAID on September 24 for review.

Data were collected by EGRA field staff from schools on the number of Standard 1 classrooms that needed letters painted on their walls with the assistance of the communities in each of the intervention zones. These painted classrooms were to act as models for other schools to utilize. Plans were developed to establish the design for the wall paintings and to mobilize communities to support in the effort. As was mentioned under Task 2.3, EGRA also had discussions with boNGO regarding the possibility of collaborating in painting “Happy Classrooms” in some of the intervention schools. Between September 2 and 7, EGRA procured paint and paint brushes and painted letters in one Standard 1 class at Matindi Primary School and Ntambanyama Primary School in Blantyre and Thyolo districts respectively. The painting was done using locally available labor. For example, at Matindi painting was done by a Standard 1 teacher, a Standard 8 teacher, and a PTA chairperson, while at Ntambanyama it was done by the head teacher, the son of a head teacher, and supervised by a member of the PTA. Traditional leaders, PTA, SMC, mother group members, and the Volunteer Community Reading Facilitators (VCRFs) were also present to witness the occasion and were requested to replicate this exercise in their schools within their catchment areas.

Towards the end of the FY, the concept of having communities make copies of decodable readers had started in some schools, where community members copied some sentences from *Nditha Kuwerenga* and used them in reading centers.

As was discussed under Task 1-4, Mr. O'Brien from OAI traveled to Malawi in December to talk with potential PPPs and then came again in March and July to follow up with potential PPPs and develop concept notes on how they might support EGRA in its implementation. These concept notes have been shared with the relevant organizations like Airtel, TNM and INDE Bank. EGRA is awaiting their feedback in order to move the concepts forward into formal agreements in the form of MOUs. However, one of the major achievements was the commitment from Colgate Palmolive to participate in reading fairs and the Braille Cup. After EGRA provided Colgate Palmolive with a schedule of the third school term's reading fairs for all the intervention districts, Colgate Palmolive pledged to support some schools in Blantyre Rural, Lilongwe Rural East, Lilongwe Rural West, Mzimba North, and Balaka by providing samples of products as awards for the reading fairs. For the Braille Cup, Colgate Palmolive provided consolation prize hampers containing a cup, toothpaste, toothbrushes, and soap to all 30 Braille Cup contestants.

EGRA continued to investigate promising approaches to community support for reading and to monitor community activities in the field. The CM and M&E teams worked together to develop data collection tools to collect school-level data, conduct household surveys, and collect reading center data. Through this EGRA found opportunities to test and refine such tools as it monitored, collected, and documented data on promising approaches conducted by parents and communities to support reading, such as creating reading centers, including literacy activities in school improvement plans, and encouraging schools to let learners take books home to read.

On June 4 and 5, all 11 DCMs convened for a strategic planning meeting in order to reflect upon the experiences of each district in implementing CM activities, build upon successes and lessons learned, compare and contrast approaches taken, and develop action plans and strategize for upcoming activities. During this meeting DCMs were also oriented on how parents could identify whether their children had special educational needs so that that they could find appropriate teachers.

During the strategic planning meeting the concept of community reading centers was discussed in detail, with further plans developed on how to support communities in establishing and running such centers. To date, many communities have already created community reading centers and appointed VCRFs. At most of these reading centers the head teachers of the local school have provided the centers with reading materials, mobile chalkboards, and pieces of chalk. In some cases, the head teachers, at their own initiative, have already oriented the VCRFs. Local leaders have provided meeting venues and moral support. Some communities have, on their own, also formed monitoring committees and assisted with checking absenteeism, supported the reading facilitators, provided walls of their houses to be used as chalk board, made chalk from locally made materials, and covered books. Some districts have been very innovative. For example, in Salima, in Nsalura zone at Cheyama School, Umodzi village has a village reading center vegetable garden, whose proceeds are being used to buy pencils and notebooks for the children at the reading center. EGRA plans to build on these successes by providing unified guidance to schools and communities on how to establish and run effective reading centers.

Table 32 shows the number of the reading centers and VCRFs by district.

Table 32. Number of Reading Centers and VCRFs by District

District	Number of Reading Centers	Number of VCRFs		
		M	F	TOTAL
Lilongwe Rural East	955	709	597	1306
Balaka	710	955	1112	2067
Blantyre Rural	298	182	279	461
Machinga	509	459	814	1273
Ntchisi	343	391	295	686

District	Number of Reading Centers	Number of VCRFs		
		M	F	TOTAL
Lilongwe Rural West	750	625	624	1249
Ntcheu	559	363	596	959
Zomba Rural	230	113	116	229
Salima	569	590	790	1380
Thyolo	458	417	356	773
Mzimba North	497	500	494	994
Grand Total	5,878	5,304	6,073	11,377

Table 33 provides further details on the status of activities for Task 3-2.

Table 33. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 3.2

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
Task 3-2 Parental/Caregiver and Community Support for Reading							
3.2.0 SMCs, PTAs, and community leaders engaged through SMS Gateway messaging	3.2.0 SMCs, PTAs, and community leaders engaged through SMS Gateway messaging	August 2013–July 2016	Planned; Not yet started as SMS Gateway is being developed	Planned; Not yet started as SMS Gateway is being developed	Planned; SMS Gateway has been developed but is being field tested	Delayed due to discussions with USAID and MoEST on possible research study of system	Planned; not yet started as SMS Gateway is being developed and partnership discussions with telecommunication providers are underway
	3.2.1 Communities mobilized to support young readers	3.2.1.1 Communities encouraged to send children to participate in Day 5 of PEA training of teachers (<i>see also Task 1.2.2</i>)	August 2013–April 2016	Ongoing; children participated in August 2013 training	Ongoing; children participated in December 2013 training	Ongoing; no in-service training took place this quarter; planned in April	Ongoing; children participated in April 2014 training
	3.2.1.2 Children attend Day 5 of PEA training of teachers	August 2013–April 2016	Ongoing; children participated in August 2013 training	Ongoing; children participated in December 2013 training	Ongoing; no in-service training took place this quarter; planned in April	Ongoing; children participated in April 2014 training	Ongoing; children participated in Nov, Dec, April, and August/Sept training
	3.2.1.3 Community	August	Ongoing;	Ongoing;	Ongoing;	Ongoing;	Completed for

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
	sensitization meetings held	2013–September 2014	meetings began in August 2013	informal meetings held	CM training was conducted in March	traditional authorities and village headmen sensitized this quarter	FY 2014
	3.2.1.4 Communities procure paint, paintbrushes to paint letter cards on walls of S1 classrooms	December 2013–September 2014	Planned	Planned	Planned; currently identifying one school per zone as a model of the letter painting	Planned for August 2014	Ongoing; started with Matindi and Ntambanyama schools in Blantyre and Thyolo districts
	3.2.1.5 Community classroom painting days	February 2014–September 2014	Planned	Planned	Planned after model painting has been done in selected schools	Planned for August 2014	Ongoing; started with 2 schools to continue in FY 2015
3.2.2 Promising approaches to parental support investigated	3.2.2.1 Promising approaches to parental support by non-literate parents investigated	September 2013–September 2014	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
3.2.3 Activities continuously monitored to allow for iterative improvement	3.2.3 Activities continuously monitored to allow for iterative improvement	September 2013–September 2014	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
3.2.4 Communities mobilized to make copies of decodable readers provided under	3.2.4.1 Interested communities take delivery of paper, writing utensils for copying	February–April 2014	Planned	Planned	Planned; pending finalization of decodable	Planned; pending finalization of decodable	Ongoing; happening in some schools /reading

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
Component 2					readers	readers	centers
	3.2.4.2 Decodable Reader Duplication Day held	February–April 2014	Planned	Planned	Planned; pending finalization of decodable readers	Planned; pending finalization of decodable readers	Ongoing; happening in some schools /reading centers
	3.2.4.3 CM staff and personnel report on successes/challenges of approach	February–September 2014	Planned	Planned	Pending 3.2.4.2	Pending 3.2.4.2	Ongoing
3.2.5 Perkins International and local partner organizations conduct awareness-raising trainings and meetings around disability and reading	3.2.5 Perkins International and local partner organizations conduct awareness-raising trainings and meetings around disability and reading	September 2013–September 2014	Not yet started due to delay in bringing DGVP and Perkins on board	Planned; Initial discussions held with partners	Ongoing; included in CM training for PEAs and CDAs	Ongoing; DCMs oriented on parents identifying children with special needs	Ongoing; DCMs sensitizing local leaders, communities, PTAs, SMCs, and mother groups
3.2.6 Development of Disability Education Resource Guide (DERG)	3.2.6.1 Development of DERG	August–December 2013	Not yet started due to delay in bringing DGVP and Perkins on board	Planned; initial discussions held with partners	Ongoing; currently being developed under guidance of DGVP Specialist	Draft developed	Completed; Draft submitted to USAID September 2014
	3.2.6.2 DERG submitted to MoEST for endorsement	January 2014	Planned	Planned	Pending 3.2.6.1	Planned; being developed	Planned; after receiving feedback from USAID
	3.2.6.3 DERG submitted	January	Planned	Planned	Pending	Planned;	Completed;

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
	to USAID for clearance	2014			3.2.6.1	being developed	Draft submitted to USAID September 2014
3.2.7 O'Brien and Associates International develops PPPs	3.2.7.1. Conduct initial desk study of available actors, plan possible alliance assessment and potential partnerships	July–October 2013	Ongoing; draft of desk study completed	Ongoing; assessment trip in November 2013	Ongoing; concept notes initiated during trip in March 2014	Completed	Completed
	3.2.7.2 Develop partnership concepts/papers, negotiate roles/responsibilities for alliances	November 2013–September 2014	Planned	Ongoing; initial drafts of concept notes developed	Ongoing; initial concept notes shared with potential PPPs	Ongoing; potential PPPs reviewing draft concept notes	Ongoing; 29 concept notes developed
	3.2.7.3 Finalize and sign MOUs/support implementation	April–September 2014	Planned	Planned	Pending finalization of concept notes under 3.2.7.2	Pending finalization of concept notes under 3.2.7.2	Pending agreement with PPPs

Task 3-3: Provide Classroom-Level and School Support for Reading

During the initial months of EGRA, discussions were held with MoEST directors on the practicality and support for using teaching assistants (TAs) in EGRA intervention schools. Generally, the MoEST supported the concept, but there was some hesitation by a few directors about the idea. Fortunately, a precedent has been set through the Primary School Improvement Program (PSIP) under DBE, which has utilized TAs in some of its activities. Many details of how this will be implemented still need to be worked out. Discussions regarding the certification of paraprofessional TAs had also not been finalized.

In the meantime EGRA learned that the Forum for African Women Educationalists in Malawi (FAWEMA) has begun supporting TAs in selected schools in Ntchisi as part of its Supporting EGRA contract with USAID. EGRA has held discussions with FAWEMA to learn more about their program and to ensure there is no overlap in activities.

When there is agreement from MoEST departments about using TAs under EGRA, the DCMs will begin working with the districts, zones, and schools in identifying model schools to implement the program. Actual deployment of the TAs to the model schools will still be dependent on the outcome of the discussions with MoEST directors on the practicality and support for using TAs in schools.

Table 34 provides further details on the status of activities for Task 3-3.

Table 34. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 3.3

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
Task 3-3 Provide Classroom-Level and School Support for Reading							
3.3.1 In conjunction with MoEST/DEO, identify 1 school/zone in which use of a paraprofessional teaching assistant (TA) will be modeled	3.3.1.1 Model school identified	August 2013	Not yet started due to delay in bringing DCMs onboard	Not yet started; will begin in Q2 after CM trainings	Not yet started; further discussions with MoEST directors are needed	Not yet started; will be done in Q4 after finalizing discussions with MoEST	Not yet started; on hold until MoEST decides what they want to do
	3.3.1.2 Recruit TAs from local community	September–October 2013	Not yet started due to delay in bringing DCMs onboard	Not yet started; will begin in Q2 after CM trainings	Pending agreement from MoEST on the use of TAs in EGRA schools	Not yet started; will begin in Q4 after finalizing discussions with MoEST	Not yet started; on hold until MoEST decides what they want to do
	3.3.1.3 TAs included in PEA teacher-training workshops	November 2013	Planned	Planned	Pending agreement from MoEST on the use of TAs in EGRA schools	Planned once discussions with DIAS and DTED are finalized	Planned once discussions with DIAS and DTED are finalized
	3.3.1.4 TAs engaged in school-based activities, providing classroom-level support	December 2013–June 2014	Planned	Planned	Pending agreement from MoEST on the use of TAs in EGRA schools	Planned once discussions with DIAS and DTED are finalized	Planned once discussions with DIAS and DTED are finalized
3.3.2 Discussions held with MoEST/DTED	3.3.2 Discussions held with MoEST/DTED	August 2013–	Planned; not yet started	Planned	Planned for this quarter	Planned for Q4	Planned once discussions

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
regarding certification of paraprofessional TAs for lateral entry into teaching profession	regarding certification of paraprofessional TAs for lateral entry into teaching profession	September 2014					with DIAS and DTED are finalized

Component 4: Improving Policy Environment to Support Early Grade Reading

Component 4 is composed of three tasks, as listed below. Each task will be addressed in turn with its corresponding progress summary table.

Task 4-1: Attend MoEST TWGs Relevant to Early Grade Reading

Task 4-2: Develop Memoranda of Understanding

Task 4-3: Facilitate Extension of Reading Instruction Time

Task 4-1: Attend MoEST TWGs Relevant to Early Grade Reading

During this FY, EGRA attended the following TWG and other MoEST meetings:

- Standards, Research, and Development TWG: October 11, 2013
- Teacher Education TWG: November 19, 2013; February 20 & May 8, 2014
- Human Resources and Administration TWG: January 28, 2014
- EGRA Directors Meeting: October 10, 2013; January 14 & August 12, 2014
- EGRA Quarterly Technical Meeting with Principal Secretary for Basic and Secondary Education (PS): November 12, 2013
- National Reading Strategy Taskforce: November 13 to 14, 2013; June 24 to 25, 2014
- Education Joint Sector Review: December 3 to 4, 2013
- National Reading Strategy Conference: January 8 to 9, 2014
- Review of GMTLM: April 10 to 11, 2014
- Reading Interventions Coordination Meeting: June 11 & September 12, 2014

EGRA planned to attend the Basic Education TWG meetings this year, but due to a few communication errors, EGRA did not make it to any of the meetings. During the first quarter EGRA was informed of the wrong date by the TWG secretariat. EGRA realized the miscommunication after the fact when we showed up at the informed date only to find out the meeting had taken place the previous day. EGRA is only aware of one other Basic Education TWG that took place this FY, but we were left off of the mailing list and only found out after the event had already taken place. EGRA was also left off of the email list for the Standard, Research, and Development TWG that was held in August. EGRA has communicated with the TWG secretariats to ensure that EGRA is included on the email lists and properly notified in the future.

In addition to the TWGs, EGRA agreed with the directors of DIAS, DBE, DTED, and MIE that they would all meet together on a quarterly basis to update MoEST on progress in implementing EGRA activities and discuss and coordinate technical issues related to the MoEST and EGRA. Terms of reference were established and agreed upon by all parties. EGRA has recorded the minutes of each meeting and circulated them to all participants and USAID to keep them informed. These meetings have proven to be very important in ensuring that the directors are well informed of EGRA activities and have created a greater sense of collaboration and ownership of EGRA activities by the Ministry. Three EGRA directors meetings were held during this FY on October 10, January 14, and August 12. The USAID Contracting Officer's

Representative (COR) for EGRA and the PS joined the meeting August 12, which further helped to facilitate coordination between EGRA and MoEST.

At the beginning of EGRA's implementation, the PS for Basic and Secondary Education established that she would like to hold quarterly technical meetings with EGRA and USAID to update progress on its activities. Unfortunately, only one quarterly EGRA Technical Meeting was held with the PS during this FY, on November 12. The USAID Acting Mission Director attended the meeting along with the USAID education team, EGRA management, and MoEST directors. These meetings are arranged between USAID and the PS, so EGRA has no control over when they are held. Close to the end of this FY, MoEST appointed a new PS for Basic and Secondary Education, so it will be important to establish whether the new PS would like to resume such meetings.

From November 13 to 14, EGRA participated in the National Reading Task Force meeting, which took place at Wamkulu Palace in Lilongwe. The task force meeting was led by the USAID consultant, Sylvia Linan-Thompson, with MoEST departments and DPs represented. During the meeting, the task force established the main components of the proposed NRS, which were drafted by the consultant and presented to a larger audience at the National Reading Strategy Conference on January 8 to 9, where EGRA participated actively with representation in each of the four thematic sub-groups that developed plans for the strategy. EGRA was also invited to participate in the final National Reading Task Force meeting on June 24 to 25, where the draft strategy was reviewed for final comments and input. Through this process EGRA has been able to provide important technical advice into the establishment of an NRS that focuses largely on reading in the early grades.

On November 22, EGRA staff attended a meeting to discuss the baseline study report from SI, where the findings from the baseline early grade reading assessment, which was conducted at the end of the previous schools year, were shared and discussed. While SI was in-country, a separate meeting was called by USAID on November 19 to coordinate efforts and ensure that EGRA and SI are on the same page with the implementation plans.

During the first quarter of this FY, the SEPA, through consultation with MoEST and other partners, finalized a draft concept note for a quarterly coordination meeting of projects and activities that focus on early grade reading. The first meeting was initially planned to be held in December, but did not actually take place until June 11 due to the unavailability of the Director of DIAS, who insisted that he be present for the inaugural meeting. This first meeting was attended by a total of 14 participants from Save the Children International (SCI), Concern Worldwide, World Vision International, FHI360, VSO, Theatre for a Change, EGRA, USAID, DTED, and DIAS. The meeting was chaired by the director of DIAS. At the end of the meeting it was agreed that the organizations should meet quarterly. A task force was established to draft terms of reference (TORs) for the meetings, and it was agreed that EGRA would be the secretariat for the meetings.

A second meeting took place on September 12, where TORs for the coordinating meeting were agreed upon. The meeting was attended by representatives from FAWEMA, SCI, VSO, USAID, EGRA, and DIAS. Once again it was chaired by the Director of DIAS. There were a total of 10 participants, and the main item of agenda was the finalization of the draft TORs for the meetings. The partners involved in the coordination meetings have expressed their gratitude that such a coordination

meeting has been established, as it will help to ensure that efforts are not duplicated and will allow for partners to learn from and build upon each other's efforts.

Table 35 provides further details on the status of activities for Task 4-1.

Table 35. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 4-1

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
Task 4-1 Attend MoEST TWGs Relevant to Early Grade Reading							
4.1.1 Active participation in meetings of TWGs relevant to early grade reading	4.1.1 Basic Education TWG attended by EGRA representative	August 2013–October 2016	No TWG held during this period	Missed TWG due to incorrect dates	No TWG held this quarter	No TWG held this quarter	Missed TWG due to mis-communications
	4.1.2 Teacher Education TWG attended by EGRA representative	August 2013–October 2016	Ongoing; attended meeting on September 12, 2013	Ongoing; attended meeting on November 19, 2013	Ongoing; attended meeting on February 20, 2014	Ongoing; attended meeting on May 8, 2014	Ongoing; attended on November 19, 2013; February 20 & May 8, 2014
	4.1.3 Standards, Research, and Development TWG attended by EGRA representative	August 2013–October 2016	No TWG held during this period	Ongoing; attended meeting on October 11, 2013	Ongoing; missed a meeting on March 14 due to conflicting activities	No TWG held this quarter	Ongoing; attended on October 11, 2013
	4.1.4 USAID/Donor coordination group on disability attended by EGRA representative	August 2013–October 2016	Planned	Planned	Planned; EGRA is not aware of any such meetings	Planned; EGRA is not aware of any such meetings	EGRA is not aware of any such meetings
	4.1.5 Quarterly implementing meetings of TWG hosted on rotating basis	August 2013–October 2016	Planned; concept note drafted	Planned; first meeting postponed to next year	Planned; continues to be postponed due to unavailability of DIAS Director	First meeting took place on June 11, 2014	Ongoing; meetings held June 11 & September 12, 2014

Task 4-2: Develop Memoranda of Understanding*MOUs with DEMs, Schools, SMCs, and PTAs*

During its initial months of implementation EGRA consulted with MoEST, DEMs, and other stakeholders to develop initial drafts of MOUs for DEMs, schools, and SMCs. After receiving feedback from the Director of Basic Education, the SEPA held a meeting on November 18 at Hippo View Lodge in Liwonde with representatives of PEAs, head teachers, and the SMC chairpersons from each of the 11 intervention districts to present the draft MOUs and receive their feedback. A total of 34 participants (19 male, 15 female) attended the meeting, along with a representative from DBE. In general the participants agreed with the content of the MOUs. They recommended that the MOU for SMCs be translated into Chichewa and be available in both English and Chichewa.

A final draft version of the MOUs was shared with MoEST in December and approved by MoEST in January. After incorporating comments from RTI on the legal language of the document, the MOUs were then submitted to USAID for clearance on January 30. On February 18 USAID provided feedback, which was incorporated into an updated version of the MOUs. Then the MOUs were shared with the USAID legal advisor, who required additional changes to the branding and legal wording of the documents. EGRA implemented these required changes so that the MOUs are branded with the USAID logo, but the agreement is made by RTI on behalf of USAID under EGRA. The updated versions were submitted to USAID on March 14.

On April 8 USAID provided contingent approval of the MOUs that were submitted on March 14 pending confirmation from the USAID resident legal advisor. Upon this understanding EGRA started the process of printing the MOUs and having them signed, beginning with Lilongwe Rural West on May 5. In the meantime the USAID legal advisor was replaced, and the new legal advisor made further observations, which required additional changes to all of the MOUs. These changes were incorporated into the MOUs, which necessitated a reprinting of the MOUs for all districts. Final USAID clearance of the documents was given on May 23, 2014.

Meetings for the signing of the MOUs at district and school levels were first arranged to take place in February. However, because of the delay in having the MOUs cleared by USAID, the meetings did not take place until June. Meetings for DEMs to sign the MOUs were conducted June 4 to 24 in their respective districts. DEMs in Mzimba North (June 4), Ntchisi (June 5), Zomba Rural (June 12), Thyolo (June 13), and Blantyre Rural (June 13) signed the MOUs in meetings where the Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) presided over the meetings and signed the MOU on behalf of RTI. DEMs in Balaka (June 12), Salima (June 17), Machinga (June 24), and Ntcheu (June 24) signed the MOUs in meetings where the DC for those districts presided over the meetings and signed the MOUs on behalf of RTI. In Lilongwe Rural East, the MOU was originally signed by the Deputy DEM. As indicated above, the first meeting for the signing of the MOUs was May 5 in Lilongwe Rural West. On that day the MOU was signed by the Deputy DEM of the district. However, since further changes to the MOUs were made following inclusion of the observations of the new USAID legal adviser, the amended MOU was taken back to the DEM's office for signing June 24. This time the MOU was signed by the DEM. The DCOP again signed on behalf of RTI.

During these meetings PEAs from the intervention zones were briefed on how to administer the MOUs for head teachers and chairpersons of SMCs and PTAs in their respective zones. They were then given the MOUs to take to the schools for head teachers, SMCs, and PTAs to sign. Nearly all of the Cohort A schools, SMCs, and PTAs signed the MOUs and returned them to EGRA; the MOUs are filed at the district offices.

Although the MOUs for schools, SMCs, and PTAs were not signed until June 2014, head teachers of intervention schools had already been informed about their expected responsibilities in the implementation of EGRA during their orientation in August and September 2013. Therefore schools in the intervention districts already knew of some of the expectations contained in the MOUs from the beginning of School Year 1. Accordingly, a number of schools were visited in July to find out from the head teachers the extent to which they were able to implement the provisions of the MOUs. The SEPA visited a total 22 schools (two schools in each intervention district) in July and held discussions with head teachers. The head teachers outlined a number of challenges they said they were facing in the implementation of EGRA, which were documented in a report and shared with DEMs and MoEST.

The SEPA met the directors of DIAS and Basic Education separately on August 21, during which he briefed them on the findings of the visits to the schools. On September 1 a meeting with DEMs and CPEAs was held at Machinga TTC in Liwonde to review the MOUs in light of the findings of the visits made to schools in July. The meeting was chaired by the Director of Basic Education. The participants reviewed the findings and made recommendations on how to improve implementation of the commitments made in the MOUs.

As the new Cohort B zones were just added in September 2014, they needed to be oriented on the MOUs and have them signed by the schools, SMCs, and PTAs in their zones. An orientation seminar for PEAs from these new zones was conducted from September 24 to September 26. Briefing on the MOUs was done on September 26. EGRA plans to print copies of the MOUs for the 33 new zones and have them signed during the first term of School Year 2.

As was discussed under Component 3, communities have been trained and provided with support to monitor their commitments made in the MOUs. In School Year 2 EGRA plans to review the MOU process and update the MOUs in light of successes and challenges met during their implementation.

MOUs with MIE and MGCSW

As was discussed in detail previously under Component 1, EGRA had hoped to establish a formal arrangement with MIE to ensure their availability and time commitments to support EGRA activities. After months of discussions and negotiations, it appeared that MIE was ready to sign an agreement, but it reversed its decision at the last minute. MIE said it did not want to continue with the discussions on the same because it did not like the way the discussions were being handled. MIE accused both RTI and EGRA of not allowing the Institute to make its own decisions. This put the signing of the MOU with MIE on hold pending a mutual agreement. A meeting with the directors of MIE and DIAS was held April 11. An attempt was made to persuade the Director of MIE to rescind his decision, but he was very reluctant to do so. Instead he proposed that we should use an arrangement that existed between the Institute and MoEST during the time they were developing PCAR materials. Using that arrangement, the Institute would no longer need to sign a financial

agreement with RTI on the development of TLM. Instead MIE would prepare budgets for workshops for the development of the materials and submit them to EGRA. Upon approval of the budgets EGRA would release the funds for the workshops. The responsibility for administering the funds during the workshops would be EGRA's. Since EGRA was running short of time for the development of the materials to be used from September, EGRA agreed to this arrangement. Efforts to readdress the possibility of a subcontract with MIE will continue in the next FY.

On January 16 EGRA held a meeting with the PS for the MGCSW. The PS was briefed about EGRA and how CDAs from the Ministry would be involved in mobilizing community-based reading activities for learners in Standards 1 to 3. The PS welcomed the activity and pledged her support. It was agreed that an MOU would be developed to formalize the relationship between the MGCSW and EGRA. The meeting was also attended by the USAID COR for EGRA. The PS for the MGCSW signed the MOU on behalf of her Ministry on June 18 at her office in a ceremony that was also attended by USAID. The DCOP signed on behalf of RTI.

Selection of Intervention Zones for School Years 1 & 2

At the beginning of its implementation, EGRA held discussions with SI and USAID on the selection of zones for implementation in School Year 1. As mentioned in the FY 2013 Annual Report, it was discovered that 11 "treatment" zones were not included in the original selection of zones in the four non-MTPDS intervention districts. On October 4 a meeting was held at USAID where EGRA was directed to begin implementation in the 11 additional zones as soon as possible. For the remaining seven districts that were previously under the MTPDS intervention, EGRA was provided by SI with a list of schools that could be included in the first-year intervention. EGRA consulted with DEMs and other stakeholders to select the zones to be included in the intervention during School Year 1. This list was presented to SI and was approved by USAID.

Further discussions were held on November 19, when SI was in-country to present on its baseline study findings. SI explained that a certain number of schools were identified as control schools as part of the research design and that SI would prefer if the zones with control schools remain as controls. EGRA expressed its desire and MoEST's request to expand the intervention into as many zones and schools as possible. During the meeting it was agreed that some zones would remain control zones throughout the duration of EGRA while SI would work with EGRA to maximize the number of zones and schools that EGRA could expand into during School Year 2 while maintaining the integrity of the impact evaluation. Subsequently, SI provided EGRA and USAID with its power calculations and options for the number of zones that can be added in School Year 2.

Upon review of these options it was agreed between USAID, SI, and EGRA that EGRA would begin implementation in the remaining "neutral" zones, which were identified as neither treatment nor control zones under SI's impact evaluation research design. In addition, EGRA would be able to move into 20 additional zones that were originally identified as control zones by SI, coming from the SI-defined Level 4 districts, which include Mzimba North, Ntchisi, Zomba Rural, Blantyre Rural, and Thyolo districts. Therefore, it was agreed that EGRA would move into an additional 33 zones during School Year 2, which makes a total of 134 zones out of the 174 total zones in the 11 districts. This means that EGRA is implementing in just over 77 percent of the zones in School Year 2.

It was agreed with SI that the DEMs of the five Level 4 districts would be included in the selection of the control zones by randomly selecting the zones within their own districts. This was done during the MOU signing meetings that were held in June.

Table 36 below gives the details of the numbers of zones for School Year 1 and School Year 2 for each district.

Table 36. Number of Intervention Zones for Each District in SY 1 and SY 2

District	Total # of Zones	Zones in SY 1	Zones added for SY 2	Total EGRA Zones	% Coverage
Mzimba North	21	10	5	15	71.4
Ntchisi	14	7	3	10	71.4
Salima	12	12	0	12	100
Lilongwe Rural East	19	12	3	15	78.9
Lilongwe Rural West	20	10	2	12	50
Ntcheu	18	9	5	14	77.8
Balaka	12	12	0	12	100
Machinga	12	7	3	10	83.3
Zomba Rural	17	8	4	12	70.6
Blantyre Rural	13	6	3	9	69.2
Thyolo	16	8	5	13	81.3
Total	174	101	33	134	77.0

Table 37 provides further details on the status of activities for Task 4-2.

Table 37. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 4.2

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
Task 4.2 Develop Memoranda of Understanding							
4.2.1 MOUs developed with stakeholders in intervention districts and schools	4.2.1.1 Consultative meetings held with stakeholders, including DIAS, DBE, DEMs, PEAs, MGCSW	July–September 2013	Ongoing; meetings initiated July 2013	Ongoing; meeting held November 18, 2013	Ongoing; meeting held with MGCSW on January 16, 2014	Ongoing; a meeting with the directors of DIAS and MIE was held on April 10	Ongoing; meetings held with DIAS and DBE on August 21
	4.2.1.2 Work with DEMs in intervention districts to identify zones in which EGRA will operate in School Year 1	August–September 2013	Ongoing; meetings held with DEMs August 2013	Done for School Year 1	Completed for School Year 1	Completed	Completed
	4.2.1.3 Work with MoEST, USAID, Social Impact to identify zones in which EGRA will operate in School Year 2	January–August 2014	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing; identified number of zones to expand to, plan to select specific zones in Q3	Completed	Completed
	4.2.1.4 Draft frameworks for MOUs with DEMs, PEAs, HTs, and SMC chairpersons developed	August–September 2013	Ongoing; incorporating feedback from consultation meetings	Completed; submitted to MoEST	Completed; submitted to USAID March 14, 2014	Completed	Completed
	4.2.1.5 MOU frameworks submitted to	October 2013	Planned	Planned in Q2	Completed; submitted to	MOUs cleared by USAID on	Completed; cleared by

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
	USAID for clearance				USAID March 14, 2014	May 23, 2014	USAID on May 23, 2014
	4.2.1.6 MOU frameworks submitted to MoEST, MGCSW for approval	November 2013	Planned	MoEST approved first draft	Completed; submitted to USAID March 14, 2014	MOU endorsed by MoEST on March 25, 2014	Completed; MOU endorsed by MoEST on March 25, 2014
	4.2.2.1 Sensitization meetings held with stakeholders	December 2013	Planned	Ongoing; initial meeting with representatives of DEMs, HTs, SMCs November 18, 2013	Ongoing; MOUs to be discussed with PEAs during TOFs in April	Completed; MOU briefing meetings were held with PEAs during the time DEMs were signing their MOUs	Completed
4.2.2 MOUs signed with stakeholders in intervention districts	4.2.2.2 MOUs submitted to stakeholders for signing	December 2013	Planned	Planned	Planned in Q3	DEMs signed the MOUs June 4–24. PS for MGCSW signed the MOU on June 18. HTs, SMCs, and PTAs started signing in June, and the process is to continue in July	Completed

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
4.2.3 Community actors leveraged to monitor school activities	4.2.3.1 Community actors trained in monitoring school activities related to EGRA	January–August 2014	Planned	Planned	Completed during CM sensitization meetings in March 2014	Completed	Completed
	4.2.3.2 Community actors monitor school activities related to EGRA	January–September 2014	Planned	Planned	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
4.2.4 MOUs revisited and updated in light of School Year 1 successes and challenges	4.2.4 MOUs revisited and updated in light of School Year 1 successes and challenges	July–August 2014	Planned	Planned	Planned in Q4	Planned for September	Completed in September 2014

Task 4-3: Facilitate Extension of Reading Instruction Time

From the beginning of its implementation EGRA was provided with permission from MoEST to implement the additional hour of reading instruction in its intervention districts. This was met with support from all of the DEMs, and therefore the extension of reading instruction time was also included in the MOUs for DEMs and head teachers to formalize the arrangement.

While EGRA has been implementing the extension of reading time in its 11 intervention districts, it has not yet been implemented nationwide. The former PS has been a strong advocate for extending the school day and has worked hard to move the discussions forward. The Ministry has demonstrated interest in extending this policy to all schools nationwide. The issue was discussed at length in the NRS workshops and has been incorporated into the draft strategy. As a result, MoEST requested that EGRA support a meeting that brought MoEST directors together with the PS and MIE to develop a plan for establishing a policy that would extend the school day in primary schools nationwide.

The requested meeting took place on September 17 at MIE with the purpose of discussing the modalities for the extension of time on task for the teaching of early grade reading. The meeting was attended by senior officers from MIE, EGRA, and the MoEST, including the new PS for Basic and Secondary Education, Ms. Thokozile Banda. It was also attended by the USAID COR for EGRA. The meeting resolved that the school day for the various sections of primary school education in the country should be extended as shown in **Table 38**:

Table 38. Primary School Day Extension

Standards	Starting Time	Finishing Time
1 – 2 (Infant section)	07.30	12.00 (Extended by 1hr.)
2 – 4 (Junior section)	07.30	13.30 (Extended by 25 min.)
5 – 8 (Senior section)	07.30	15.00 (Extended by 1hr. 25min.)

It was also agreed that MIE should work with EGRA to produce a detailed proposed amended timetable framework for primary schools and submit it to DIAS by October 1. As such, EGRA met with MIE on September 25, and a detailed time table was developed for all Standards 1 to 8 that incorporates at least one hour of reading instruction both in Chichewa and English. The proposed amended framework is expected to be submitted to MoEST management for approval during the next quarter.

Table 39 provides further details on the status of activities for Task 4-3.

Table 39. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 4-3

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
Task 4-3 Facilitate Extension of Reading Instructional Time							
4.3.1 Review existing MoEST instructions regarding extension of instructional time for reading	4.3.1 Review existing MoEST instructions regarding extension of instructional time for reading	July 2013; August 2014	Initial consultations August 2013	Being incorporated in MOUs	Included in MOUs	Completed with the endorsement of MOUs by MoEST	Completed
4.3.2 Request submitted to USAID to facilitate policy discussion with MoEST on one-hour extension of reading instructional time	4.3.2 Request submitted to USAID to facilitate policy discussion with MoEST on one-hour extension of reading instructional time	August 2013	Not yet started	Being incorporated in MOUs	Included in MOUs	Included in MOUs for DEMs, HTs, SMCs and PTAs which have since been signed	Completed
4.3.3 Meetings held with MoEST to obtain implementation guidance	4.3.3 Meetings held with MoEST to obtain implementation guidance	September 2013; August 2014	Ongoing; initial consultations August 2013	Discussed with directors	No further discussions this quarter	No further discussions this quarter	Completed; meeting held on September 17, 2014
4.3.4 Meetings held with DEMs, PEAs in intervention districts to share/review implementation guidance	4.3.4 Meetings held with DEMs, PEAs in intervention districts to share/review implementation guidance	September 2013; August 2014	Ongoing; initial consultations August 2013	Ongoing; meeting held November 18, 2013	Ongoing; to be discussed with PEAs during TOFs in April	Ongoing; further discussions with PEAs were held during the meetings in which DEMS signed their MOUs	Ongoing; during orientation and signing of MOUs
4.3.5 Extension of reading time	4.3.5 Extension of reading time	October 2013–	Ongoing	Ongoing; will be	Ongoing; will be	DEMs signed MOUs in June	Completed; DEMs signed

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
implemented at district level	implemented at district level	September 2014		formalized through MOUs	formalized through MOUs		MOUs in June, 2014
4.3.6 Advocacy meetings with SMCs/PTAs for school communities' use of local activities to increase time spent reading outside of school	4.3.6 Advocacy meetings with SMCs/PTAs for school communities' use of local activities to increase time spent reading outside of school	October 2013–September 2014	Planned	Planned in Q2	Completed during CM trainings in March, 2014	Completed; CM sensitization meetings continued in May and June	Completed for Cohort A zones
4.3.7 "Social contract" developed with parents and communities	4.3.7 "Social contract" developed with parents and communities	October 2013–September 2014	Planned	Planned as part of MOUs	To be signed as part of MOUs	Completed with signing of MOUs in June	Completed for Cohort A zones with signing of MOUs

Monitoring and Evaluation and Crosscutting Issues

M&E consists of three tasks, and Crosscutting Issues comprise six crosscutting themes, as listed below. Each task and theme will be addressed in turn with its corresponding progress summary table.

- ME-1:** Initial Activity M&E
- ME-2:** Coordinating with External Evaluator for Baseline and Midterm Assessments
- ME-3:** Regular Ongoing Reporting
- XC-1:** Local Capacity Development
- XC-2:** Students with Special Needs/Learning Disabilities
- XC-3:** Grants under Contract
- XC-4:** Geographic Coverage
- XC-5:** Public-Private Partnerships
- XC-6:** Gender Equality

Certain elements of EGRA's scope of work are crosscutting and therefore do not fit wholly within one component. M&E activities, which are by definition uniformly crosscutting, are also included here. For each of the crosscutting issues, activities are identified that are incorporated within any of the four components above in which the crosscutting issue is being addressed. A brief summary is provided for each crosscutting issue with a table following that lists the activities from Components 1 to 4 that apply to that particular crosscutting issue. Therefore, many of the activities have already been addressed above and are listed in this section only for illustrative purposes.

ME-1: Internal Program M&E

Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

A revised version of the PMEP was submitted to USAID on October 22. Feedback on the revised PMEP was received from USAID on December 13 with requests to make a few more changes and add some indicators to the results framework. EGRA incorporated the requested changes and resubmitted the PMEP to USAID on February 4. EGRA incorporated the changes USAID requested and resubmitted the PMEP to USAID April 29. Subsequently USAID indicated that the title of the document should be changed from PMEP to the Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (AMEP). The AMEP was thereafter approved by USAID on May 1.

M&E Instruments & Data Collection

As discussed under Task 1.4 the TOI was piloted by PEAs during the first term. Their feedback was incorporated into a revised version that was rendered into Tangerine software to be used on the tablet computers. These were field tested during an orientation workshop in November and further tested during the TOFs in December. A final version of the TOI was then rendered onto the tablets, which were distributed to PEAs in January in readiness for the beginning of Term 2.

In April the TOIs were updated to include a mini-LAT assessment where PEAs conduct short reading assessments with four learners from the class they observed. PEAs were trained during the April TOFs on how to conduct the mini-LAT as part of their classroom observation during coaching visits. In preparation for this, the mini-LATs were rendered into Tangerine and 31 officers (21 male, 10 female) from EGRA, DIAS, DSNE, DCE, DTED, and TTCs were oriented as expert trainers for the administration of Tangerine-based mini-LATs. Feedback generated during this training led to minor modifications to the final version of the mini-LAT. The final version of the mini-LAT was rendered into Tangerine and downloaded onto the PEAs' tablets. At the same time, the Tangerine version of the TOI was also updated to include auto-filled district names, zone names, school names, and education management information system (EMIS) numbers in order to reduce the amount of data cleaning required and to make it simpler for the PEAs to enter data during classroom observations.

The LAT instrument went through a similar process being field tested during the November orientation workshop. All passages for the LAT to be used during School Year 1 were finalized and incorporated into the tool. The final version of the LAT was rendered into Tangerine and was used during the first weeks of Term 2 to act as the baseline for School Year 1. To reduce the required resources and time to equate the LAT passages, it was decided best to wait until the third year of EGRA to conduct the equating exercise and complete it all at once rather than over multiple sessions. This is because the passages for School Years 2 and 3 have not been developed and will also require equating. Therefore, it is best to do the equating all at once when all passages have been finalized.

A total of 112 Nexus tablets were procured and shipped to Malawi. Twelve of these tablets were hand-carried by Mr. Kipp during his trip to Malawi in November to support and train EGRA staff in rendering Tangerine and setting up the SMS Gateway system. These 12 tablets were used during the orientation workshop and field testing while EGRA waited for the remaining 100 tablets, which arrived later in November. The 112 tablets were used during the TOFs in December when PEAs were trained and conducted practicum sessions on using the tablets to conduct classroom observations, as described under Task 1.1.

The LAT was administered for the first time using the Tangerine version on the tablets from January 13 to 17 in all 11 intervention districts. This initial LAT administration will act as the baseline reading data for School Year 1 because the instrument was not ready for implementation during the early stages of Term 1. Therefore, EGRA decided it was best to wait until after the December holidays to assess learners in reading because of the probable "drop" in scores that usually results after an extended break. While the initial LAT is not a true baseline of learners' reading skills it should provide enough of a starting point to measure progress throughout the remainder of the school year.

The LAT deployment scheme was finalized with the decision to conduct assessments every term at the same schools for the duration of a school year. The selection of schools was based on three randomly selected schools per district from randomly selected intervention zones. The baseline LAT was conducted at 33 schools with nearly 1,980 learners from Standards 1 to 3 in Chichewa and English. At each school a team of three assessors, composed of a PEA, DTC, and DME, assessed 10 learners (5 girls, 5 boys) from each standard for Chichewa and a different 10 learners

(5 girls, 5 boys) for English, for a total of 60 learners being assessed at each school. The data were then uploaded to the Tangerine cloud and were analyzed for the baseline LAT report.

A second LAT was administered from March 24 to 31 at the same 33 schools. The third and final LAT of the school year was conducted from July 2 to 11 again at the same 33 schools. The third LAT administration will be treated as the endline results for School Year 1. These data were uploaded to the Tangerine cloud where they were analyzed and the findings reported to USAID.

Data Quality Assurance

On October 14, the DCOP and M&E Specialist attended the data quality assurance (DQA) training conducted for all USAID projects and activities. Later that week, on October 16, a team from USAID came to the EGRA office to conduct a review of the DQA process that was conducted under MTPDS to follow up on its recommendations and implementation. On November 5 EGRA attended the DQA debriefing meeting held at USAID that reported on the findings from the DQA trainings and activities conducted. EGRA has worked to ensure that the principles of the DQA are applied to its AMEP and M&E activities.

From August 19 to 26 USAID conducted a DQA of the indicators in the EGRA AMEP. This was conducted mainly in the field where the USAID team visited the EGRA district offices, district education officials, and schools. On August 26 the USAID team visited the EGRA main office to discuss the findings from the DQA and share recommendations on how to improve the quality of data being collected, stored, and analyzed under EGRA. This was followed by a DQA report, of which a draft was sent to EGRA for comment. EGRA responded to the report and has been working to put the recommendations into practice.

In order to address some of the issues raised from the DQA, EGRA organized a three-day training and coordination meeting for all of the DMEs and DCs from the EGRA district office to be briefed on the findings of the DQA. This included training in how to more effectively collect, enter, and store data in a secure and accessible manner. This also provided the DMEs an opportunity to discuss some of the challenges of data collection from schools in the field and to come up with ways to address the challenges.

Although EGRA had developed a basic M&E database during its early months, it has been evaluating the structure of the database and exploring ways to speed up the data cleaning and analysis so that relevant reports can be produced in a more timely manner and at the relevant reporting levels. In order to address this RTI has contracted a consultant to develop a database interface that will process much of the data cleaning and basic analyses. It is expected that the interface will be integrated into the M&E database before the end of 2014.

Table 40 provides further details on the status of activities for Task ME-1.

Table 40. Progress against Planned Activities—ME-1: Internal Activity M&E

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
ME-1: Internal Activity M&E							
ME-1.1 Establishment of PMEP	ME-1.1.1 Liz Randolph STTA to support development of PMEP	July 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
	ME-1.1.2 Consultation with DIAS, other MoEST stakeholders regarding indicators	July–August 2013	Complete; meetings held July–August 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
	ME-1.1.3 Continued development of PMEP document	July–September 2013	Ongoing; PMEP submitted to USAID September 17, 2013, awaiting approval	Ongoing; PMEP undergoing final revisions incorporating input from USAID	Ongoing; revised draft submitted to USAID February 4, 2014, awaiting feedback from USAID	Completed; AMEP cleared by USAID May 1, 2014	Completed; AMEP cleared by USAID May 1, 2014
	ME-1.1.4 Submission of PMEP to USAID for approval	September 2013	Submitted September 17, 2013	Resubmitted October 22, 2013	Resubmitted February 4, 2014	Completed; AMEP cleared by USAID May 1, 2014	Completed; AMEP cleared by USAID May 1, 2014
ME-1.2 M&E tool development	ME-1.2.1 Design of M&E Database	August–December 2013	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing; basic design established, in the process of enhancing
	ME-1.2.2	August–	Ongoing; tool	Ongoing;	Ongoing;	Ongoing; GUC	Ongoing; initial

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
	Development of M&E templates, protocols, reporting tools	December 2013	development workshops and field testing conducting September 2013	classroom observation and LAT completed, still working on community M&E tools	GUC survey and CM data collection tools developed this quarter	survey refined and new CM data collection tools and protocols developed	tools developed, being updated as needed
	ME-1.2.3 Rendering of M&E data collection forms in Tangerine	September–December 2013	Planned to be conducted in October 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed; updated when tools are revised or changed
	ME-1.3.1 Adaptation and/or passage-writing workshop	September–October 2013	Ongoing; initial passages written September 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
ME-1.3 LAT instrument development	ME-1.3.2 Rendering of LAT instruments for Tangerine	October–November 2013	Planned to be conducted October 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
	ME-1.3.3 Equating study of LAT reading passages	October–November 2013	Planned, not yet started	Postponed until final year of Activity	Postponed until final year of Activity	Postponed until final year of Activity	Postponed until final year of Activity
	ME-1.3.4 LAT deployment scheme finalized	December 2013–January 2014	Planned	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
	ME-1.4 Procurement of Nexus tablets and accessories	ME-1.4.1 Tablets procured	September 2013–January 2014	Ongoing; procurement initiated September	Completed	Completed	Completed

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
2013							
	ME-1.4.2 Tablets shipped to Malawi	September–October 2013	Planned to be shipped October 2013	Completed; 112 tablets shipped for Year 1	Completed	Completed	Completed
	ME-1.4.3 Tablets deployed for LAT equating study	October–November 2013	Planned	Planned in Q2	Completed; tablets deployed to PEAs in January 2014	Completed	Completed
ME-1.5 Training of PEAs on use of Tangerine-based data collection	ME-1.5.1 Training of personnel for LAT data collection	October–November 2013	Planned	Completed in November 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed in November 2013
	ME-1.5.2 Training of PEAs and DMEs on use of Tangerine for regular classroom observation and coaching visit activities	December 2103; August 2014	Planned	Completed in December 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed in December 2013
ME-1.6 Tangerine-based M&E implemented	ME-1.6 Tangerine-based M&E implemented	January–May 2014	Planned	Planned to begin in Q2	Ongoing; LAT and classroom observations conducted using Tangerine	Ongoing; LAT and classroom observations conducted using Tangerine	Ongoing
ME-1.7 Small-scale LAT quantitative assessments	ME-1.7 Small-scale LAT quantitative assessments	February; May 2014	Planned	Planned to begin in Q2	Ongoing; LAT baseline conducted in	Ongoing; January and March LATs	Completed for School Year 1

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
					January, second round conducted in March	being analyzed, next LAT planned for July	

ME-2: Coordinating with External Evaluator for Baseline and Midterm Assessments

As reported under Task 4.2, EGRA has consistently coordinated with SI on the selection of intervention zones for School Years 1 and 2, while maintaining the essential number of control zones. EGRA met with USAID on October 4 to discuss the addition of 11 zones in School Year 1 and later met with SI and USAID on November 19 to discuss plans for expansion into zones for School Year 2. EGRA also attended the baseline report meeting with SI on November 22. EGRA also consulted with SI on the selection of zones for the SMS control study to ensure that it does not have any influence on the external evaluation results.

During the third quarter EGRA met with SI on three occasions as SI was in-country to conduct the national early grade reading assessment. Although SI has required limited coordination with EGRA during the data collection for the end of the School Year 1 early grade reading assessment, EGRA has assisted in any way needed and maintained regular and open communication with SI.

On May 27 a team from SI visited the EGRA office to discuss their preparations for an impact evaluation of the USAID-Malawi Country Development Cooperation Strategy. EGRA discussed the work being done by EGRA in the three USAID integrated districts of Balaka, Machinga, and Lilongwe Rural.

On May 30 EGRA met with SI to discuss the possibility of conducting a controlled study on the SMS Gateway system and its implications on SI's external impact evaluation. At the meeting EGRA and SI agreed that the study could be conducted without interfering with the external impact evaluation.

On June 9 SI returned to the EGRA office to have a more detailed discussion on the components and activities that are being implemented under EGRA and to coordinate on the collection of data to enable the evaluation of the impact of the activities.

Table 41 provides further details on the status of activities for Task ME-2.

Table 41. Progress against Planned Activities—ME-2: Coordinating with External Evaluator

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
ME-2: Coordinating with External Evaluator for Baseline and Midterm Assessments							
ME-2.1 Coordinate with external evaluator, Social Impact on impact assessments	ME-2.1.1 Coordinate with Social Impact on selection of intervention zones in light of baseline data collection	August–September 2013; May–July 2014	Ongoing	Ongoing; meeting on November 19, 2013	Ongoing; continued coordination throughout the quarter	Ongoing; met with SI on May 27 & 30 and June 9; coordinated with SI on selection of SY2 intervention zones	Ongoing
	ME-2.1.2 Coordinate with Social Impact on end of School Year 1 early grade reading assessment	April–May 2014	Planned	Planned; not yet started	Planned; not yet started	Completed	Completed

ME-3: Regular Ongoing Reporting

Throughout this year EGRA has met its reporting requirement completely and on time. The FY 2013 Annual Report and the quarterly reports for the first three quarters, along with the accompanying financial reports, were all submitted on time and approved by USAID. The FY 2014 Quarter 1 Report was cleared by USAID on April 3. The FY 2014 Quarter 2 Report was submitted on April 30 and was cleared by USAID on May 9. The FY 2014 Quarter 3 Report was submitted on July 31 and was cleared by USAID on September 8.

EGRA began submitting monthly reports to MoEST in November and has provided a report every month since.

As discussed under Component 4, EGRA held quarterly meetings with MoEST directors throughout the year and attended the technical meeting with the PS in November, which was the only such meeting that was held during the year. As this meeting is organized between USAID and MoEST, EGRA does not have control over when the meeting is held.

Table 42 provides further details on the status of activities for Task ME-3.

Table 42. Progress against Planned Activities—ME-3: Regular Ongoing Reporting

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
ME-3: Regular Ongoing Reporting							
ME-3.1 Regular ongoing reporting	ME-3.1.1 Quarterly Performance Reports	October 2013–October 2016	Planned	Submitted with Annual Report	Submitted Q1 Report January 31, 2014; awaiting clearance by USAID	Q1 Report cleared by USAID April 3, 2014; Q2 Report submitted April 30, 2014 and cleared by USAID May 9, 2014	Q1 Report cleared by USAID April 3, 2014; Q2 Report cleared by USAID May 9, 2014; Q3 Report cleared by USAID September 2014
	ME-3.1.2 Quarterly Financial Reports	October 2013–October 2016	Planned	Submitted with Annual Report	Submitted with Quarterly Report	Submitted with Quarterly Report	Submitted with Quarterly Report
	ME-3.1.3 Annual Report	October 2013–October 2016	Planned	Submitted October 31, 2013; approved December 30, 2013	N/A for this quarter	N/A for this quarter	This report
	ME-3.1.4 Monthly updates to MoEST counterparts	August 2013–October 2016	Planned	Began submitting November 2013	Completed each month during this quarter	Completed each month during this quarter	Completed; every month since November 2013
	ME-3.1.5 Quarterly technical meetings	October 2013–	Planned	Meetings held October 10	Technical meeting held	No meeting held this	Completed; only one

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
	with PS, directors of MoEST and USAID	October 2016		and November 12, 2013	with directors in January; no meeting with PS this quarter	quarter	meeting held this year

XC-1: Local Capacity Development

Much of the capacity building for MoEST, MIE, and other partners has happened through working in collaboration during the development of curriculum materials, preparation for trainings, and conducting of training sessions and workshops. A major part of EGRA's approach is to work with and through MoEST personnel and structures to deliver activities and complete tasks. EGRA believes this is one of the most productive and sustainable ways to build capacity. Examples of these efforts include the leveling and writers' workshops and the materials development workshops that were discussed under Component 1, along with the development and field testing of M&E tools. EGRA has made a concerted effort to include MoEST and district officials in its monitoring activities in order for them to see what is being implemented on the ground and to witness EGRA activities in actual practice.

The peer mentoring program that Dr. Beatriz Coningham came to Malawi in September 2013 to establish began implementation in January. It was slightly delayed because EGRA was waiting for all of the CRECCOM staff to be brought on board before identifying the mentoring partnerships. In each district the mentoring partners conducted initial meetings to determine areas of improvement where mentoring can be conducted and to draw up initial plans on how to address them. The district officers have conducted regular mentoring meetings throughout the year to help build each other's skills and knowledge. Progress on the mentoring programs is included as part of the monthly reports from district officers. The Human Resources (HR) Manager is monitoring progress in the mentoring program and providing support where needed. A total of 116 mentoring meetings were reported during FY 14.

During this quarter the HR Manager visited each of the district offices to follow up on the mentoring program and provide training on team building and coordination. From August 4 to 8 Beatriz Coningham returned to Malawi to assess progress of the mentoring program and to facilitate a two-day retreat that brought all EGRA staff together from the district offices and the RTI and CRECCOM main offices. On the day before the retreat she conducted mentoring training to all of the staff members who had been hired onto EGRA since her last visit in September 2013. During the retreat the EGRA team reviewed the challenges and successes of the first year of implementation and conducted training and practical activities on more effective planning and communication.

Much of the local capacity development (LCD) conducted during the first quarter of the FY was related to bringing CRECCOM and its staff onboard. There were a number of delays in getting the contract with CRECCOM signed. During that process there were many opportunities for capacity building on topics related to contractual negotiations and financial requirements. EGRA also supported CRECCOM in the recruitment and hiring of EGRA staff employed by CRECCOM. EGRA management participated in the interviews and selection of candidates while also working with CRECCOM in conducting an orientation workshop in November to bring new staff onboard.

EGRA conducted an institutional capacity assessment with CRECCOM March 5 to 6. In preparation for the assessment, the DCOP and M&E and Learning Specialist shared draft institutional capacity assessment instruments with CRECCOM management and visited CRECCOM's office in February to make sure the

assessment met the needs and desires of CRECCOM. In March a team of EGRA officers composed of the COP, DCOP, Finance, Administration, and Grants Manager (FAGM), HR Manager, M&E Specialist, IT Specialist, and Procurement Manager, along with the USAID COR, visited the CRECCOM office in Zomba for two days to conduct the assessment. The assessment was composed of area/technical specific interviews in small groups and a large group session to collect information on the current status and areas for improvement at CRECCOM. The focus was on helping CRECCOM gain the capacity to manage other reading projects or activities in the future.

A report on the findings from the assessment was drafted and shared with CRECCOM for its feedback and input. The report included recommendations for areas where CRECCOM can improve its capacity. This report is being finalized and will be the basis for developing a capacity development plan to address the capacity needs of CRECCOM. One of the areas in which RTI has identified a major need for capacity development is financial management and meeting contractual requirements. As an initial step to address this, the RTI Program Coordinator and Financial Analyst plan to travel to Malawi to work directly with CRECCOM finance and administration staff to address issues that have arisen during attempts to submit invoices to RTI.

Table 43 provides further details on the status of activities for Task XC-1.

Table 43. Progress against Planned Activities—XC-1: Local Capacity Development

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
XC-1: Local Capacity Development (LCD)							
XC-1.1 Local capacity is built in area of early grade reading	XC-1.1.1 MIE, NLS staff trained in leveling of reading materials	September–October 2013	Planned; not yet started due to postponed workshop	Ongoing; workshops in October and December 2013	Ongoing; during materials development workshops	Ongoing; during materials development workshops	Ongoing
	XC-1.1.2 MIE, NLS, Malawi PEN participate in writing workshops that include training on developing decodable stories for children (see also Task 1.3.4.1)	October–November 2013	Planned	Ongoing; workshop in December 2013	Ongoing; editing and finalizing their initial stories	Ongoing; continued editing and finalizing the stories	Ongoing; writers workshop held in December 2013
XC-1.2 CRECCOM's capacity is built in area of project management	XC-1.2.1 Dr. Beatriz Coningham deployed to Malawi to facilitate internal conference and development of organizational learning and mentorship tools	September 2013	Completed; trip report shared with USAID October 7, 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
	XC-1.2.2 EGRA peer-mentorship program set in place	October 2013	Planned	Ongoing; will begin in Q2	Ongoing; began in January	Ongoing; regular peer meetings taking place	Ongoing; regular peer meetings taking place
	XC-1.2.3 Ongoing implementation of organizational learning and mentorship activities	October 2013–October 2016	Planned	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing; regular peer meetings taking place	Ongoing; regular peer meetings taking place

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
	XC-1.2.4 Quarterly in-person meetings of peer mentors	October 2013–July 2016	Planned	First meeting to take place in Q2	Ongoing; initial meetings took place this quarter	Ongoing; regular peer meetings documented	Ongoing; regular peer meetings taking place
	XC-1.2.5 RTI applies HOCAL and/or other relevant assessment instruments to evaluate CRECCOM's systems	October 2013	Planned	Planned in Q2	Assessment conducted in March	Draft report shared with CRECCOM and other stakeholders for their feedback.	Draft report submitted to USAID
	XC-1.2.6 Development of CRECCOM systems-strengthening/remediation plans	November 2013	Planned	Planned in Q2	Ongoing; initial plans discussed in March	Ongoing; being finalized with CRECCOM	Ongoing; being finalized with CRECCOM
	XC-1.2.7 Implementation of CRECCOM systems-strengthening/remediation plans	December 2013–July 2016	Planned	Planned	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing

XC-2: Students with Special Needs/Learning Disabilities

Progress under this crosscutting issue has already been discussed under Components 1 and 3 above.

Table 44 provides further details on the status of activities for Task XC-2.

Table 44. Progress against Planned Activities—XC-2: Students with Special Needs

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
XC-2: Activities from Components 1–4 That Address Students with Special Needs/Learning Disabilities							
1.1.1 Evaluate existing CPD modules on teaching reading for Standard 1–3 learners	1.1.1.2 Assessment by DGVP Specialist, Perkins STTA, and local partners of current teaching and learning materials available to schools of children with disabilities	July–September 2013	Not yet completed due to delay in bringing DGVP Specialist and Perkins on board; will be conducted during Year 2	Assessment conducted October–December 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed
1.3.6 Teaching and learning materials accessible to children with disabilities	1.3.6.1 Identification of specific disabilities that can be effectively addressed	August–September 2013	Not yet completed due to delay in bringing DGVP Specialist and Perkins on board	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
	1.3.6.2 Adaptation of selected materials for	October–November	Planned, not yet started	Ongoing; workshop held	Ongoing; adaptation work still in	Ongoing; Braille versions field	Completed: Braille version of

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
	children with disabilities	2013		December 18–19, 2013; adaptation work continues	progress	tested in May	<i>Nditha Kuwerenga</i> submitted to MoEST for endorsement
	1.3.6.3 Development of adapted material for children with disabilities	October–December 2013	Planned, not yet started	Ongoing	Ongoing; production of braille materials underway at Montfort College	Ongoing; Braille versions field tested in May	Completed: Braille version of <i>Nditha Kuwerenga</i> submitted to MoEST for endorsement
	1.3.6.4 Submission of adapted material to MoEST for endorsement	December 2013	Planned	Planned	Pending completion of 1.3.6.3	Pending completion of 1.3.6.3	Completed: Braille version of <i>Nditha Kuwerenga</i> submitted to MoEST for endorsement
	1.3.6.5 Submission of adapted material to USAID for clearance	December 2013	Planned	Planned	Pending completion of 1.3.6.4	Pending completion of 1.3.6.4	Pending endorsement from MoEST
	1.3.6.6 Production of materials	January–February 2014	Planned, not yet started	Planned	Planned to take place in Q3	Planned after materials are cleared	Planned after materials are cleared
	1.3.6.7 Distribution of adapted materials to schools and Special Needs Education Resource Units	March 2014	Planned	Pending completion of 1.3.6.6	Planned to take place in August 2014	Planned in Q4 after materials are cleared and produced	Planned after materials are cleared and printed

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
	1.3.7.1 Consultative meetings held between DGVP Specialist and DSNE	September 2013–April 2014	Not yet conducted due to delay in bringing DGVP Specialist on board	Conducted October–December 2013	Conducted four meetings during this quarter	Conducted four meetings during this quarter	Completed; Conducted two more meetings in Q4
1.3.7 DGVP, Perkins to provide support to DSNE and schools around individual education plans (IEPs)	1.3.7.2 As appropriate, development of IEP-related training materials	October 2013–March 2014	Planned, not yet started	Training planned January 2014	IEP training conducted January 2014	Completed	Completed
	1.3.7.3 Discussions with DSNE, DTED regarding IEP-related content in pre-service training structures/programs	October 2013–April 2014	Planned	Planned	Ongoing; issues of special needs included in Module 3 Training Manual	Discussions held in January and April 2014	Completed
3.1.2 DGVP Specialist and Perkins International's local partners coordinate planning for, development of Braille Cup (BC)	3.1.2.1 Identification of available matching resources	September–November 2013	Not yet started due to delay in bringing DGVP and Perkins on board	Started with OAI trip in November 2013	Ongoing; OAI followed up with potential PPPs in March; developing concept notes	Ongoing; concept note submitted to INDE Bank, other sources being pursued	Raised K650,000 plus other materials
	3.1.2.2 Development of BC outreach plan, participant scope	December 2013–February	Planned	Planned	Ongoing; developed a draft plan	Completed in collaboration with DSNE	Completed in collaboration with DSNE

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
		2014			that will be shared with MoEST in Q3		
	3.1.2.3 Adaptation/Development of BC-specific testing materials	March–April 2014	Planned	Planned	Planned; to be included in planning for BC	Ongoing; production began this quarter, to be completed in July	Completed in collaboration with DSNE
3.1.3 Braille Cup implemented	3.1.3.1 Matching resources for BC mobilized	February–April 2014	Planned	Started with OAI trip in November 2013	Concept notes being developed with potential PPPs	Ongoing; INDE Bank pulled out for this year, other partners being explored	Completed; Raised K650,000 plus other materials
	3.1.3.2 BC schedule, agenda set	March–April 2014	Planned	Planned	Initial plans made with DSNE this quarter	Completed; schedule and agenda finalized with DSNE	Completed
	3.1.3.3 BC competition held	May–June 2014	Planned	Planned	Planned in June 2014	Planned for July 2014	Completed; held on July 12, 2014
3.1.4 Evaluation of School Year 1 reading fairs and Braille Cup	3.1.4.3 Evaluation conducted	June–July 2014	Planned	Planned	Planned during SI's mid-term evaluation	Planned during Q4	Completed for FY 2014
3.2.5 Perkins	3.2.5 Perkins	September	Not yet	Planned;	Ongoing;	Ongoing;	Ongoing;

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
International and local partner organizations conduct awareness-raising trainings and meetings around disability and reading	International and local partner organizations conduct awareness-raising trainings and meetings around disability and reading	2013–September 2014	started due to delay in bringing DGVP and Perkins on board	initial discussions held with partners	included in CM training for PEAs and CDAs	DCMs oriented on parents identifying children with special needs	DCMs sensitizing local leaders, communities, PTAs, SMCs, and mother groups
	3.2.6.1 Development of DERG	August–December 2013	Not yet started due to delay in bringing DGVP and Perkins on board	Planned; initial discussions held with partners	Ongoing; currently being developed under guidance of DGVP Specialist	Draft developed	Completed; Draft submitted to USAID September 2014
3.2.6 Development of Disability Education Resource Guide (DERG)	3.2.6.2 DERG submitted to MoEST for endorsement	January 2014	Planned	Planned	Pending 3.2.6.1	Planned; being developed	Planned; after receiving feedback from USAID
	3.2.6.3 DERG submitted to USAID for clearance	January 2014	Planned	Planned	Pending 3.2.6.1	Planned; being developed	Completed; Draft submitted to USAID September 2014
4.1.1 Active participation in meetings of TWGs relevant to early grade reading	4.1.4 USAID/donor coordination group on disability attended by EGRA representative	August 2013–October 2016	Planned	Planned	Planned; EGRA is not aware of any such meetings	Planned; EGRA is not aware of any such meetings	EGRA is not aware of any such meetings

Note: This table is meant to be illustrative of how this issue cuts across all four components of EGRA. Therefore, all activities listed in this table have been copied directly from the tables for Components 1–4. They do not represent additional activities but are repeated here for illustrative purposes only.

XC-3: Grants under Contract

Activities related to this crosscutting issue have already been discussed under Task 1.5 above. **Table 45** provides further details on the status of activities for Task XC-3.

Table 45. Progress against Planned Activities—Task XC-3: Grants under Contract

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
XC-3: Activities from Components 1–4 That Address Grants under Contract							
1.5.2 Grants under Contract (GUC) incentive program implemented	1.5.2.1 Grants Manual developed, submitted to USAID for approval	July–September 2013	Grants Manual submitted to USAID September 17, 2013	Complete; approved November 1, 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed; Grants Manual approved by USAID November 1, 2013
	1.5.2.2 Criteria for GUC application eligibility developed in consultation with DEMs, PEAs, HTs	August–September 2013	Ongoing; initial consultations held August–September 2013	Ongoing; criteria to be refined in Q2	Completed February 2014	Completed	Completed February 2014
	1.5.2.3 Schools (HTs) and communities (SMCs) notified of GUC program	October–November 2013	Planned; pending approval of Grants Manual	Pending completion of 1.5.2.2	Completed February and March 2014 during community sensitization training	Completed	Completed February and March 2014
	1.5.2.4 Schools and communities	December 2013–May	Planned	Planned; awaiting CM	Ongoing; CM and	Ongoing; addressed	Ongoing through

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
	encouraged to collaborate around learner reading (in order to meet eligibility criteria) (as in Task 3-2)	2014		training in districts	sensitization trainings conducted March 2014	during community mobilization and sensitization trainings	continued support to communities
	1.5.2.5 GUC program competition opens	April–May 2014	Planned	Planned	Competition opened this quarter	GUC program in process	Completed; competition opened in February 2014
	1.5.2.6 Submitted GUC applications reviewed	May 2014	Planned	Planned	Planned in July 2014	Applications data entered into database	Completed
	1.5.2.7 GUC incentive awardees selected, notified	June–July 2014	Planned	Planned	Planned in July 2014	Shortlist of 10 schools per district will be identified in July from the data. Selection of finalists and notification planned for July.	Completed; notification letters sent to DEMs September 2014
	1.5.2.8 GUC funds disbursed	July–August 2014	Planned	Planned	Planned in September 2014	Planned for September 2014	Pending the finalization of school proposals and establishment

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
							of payment milestones
	1.5.2.9 GUC awardees' activities monitored	July 2014–July 2016	Planned	Planned	Planned to begin September 2014	Planned to begin September 2014	Pending the approval of school proposals
	1.5.2.10 Top-performing teachers recognized at reading fairs (see Task 3-1)	January 2014–July 2016	Planned	Planned	Ongoing; reading fairs conducted in March 2014	Ongoing; reading fairs conducted in selected schools	Ongoing; conducted during reading fairs at schools
1.5.3 Coordinate with Social Impact on evaluation of GUCs, teacher incentive programs	1.5.3 Coordinate with Social Impact on evaluation of GUCs, teacher incentive programs	April–August 2013	Planned	Planned	Planned in Q3	Discussed during June 9 meeting with SI	Ongoing; continued coordination with SI

Note: This table is meant to be illustrative of how this issue cuts across all four components of EGRA. Therefore, all activities listed in this table have been copied directly from the tables for Components 1–4. They do not represent additional activities but are repeated here for illustrative purposes only.

XC-4: Geographic Coverage

As was reported under Components 1 and 4, EGRA has coordinated with SI throughout this year to ensure that the proper zones and schools are included in the EGRA intervention while the control zones do not receive the intervention. Early in the year it was discovered that some of the SI “treatment” zones had not been included in the EGRA intervention, so EGRA added the 11 zones to the intervention and brought them up to speed as quickly as possible. EGRA also worked closely with SI and USAID to identify and select the 33 new intervention zones that will be included in School Year 2. The final selection of zones is listed in **Table 36** as discussed under Task 4-2 above.

Table 46 provides further details on the status of activities for Task XC-4.

Table 46. Progress against Planned Activities—Task XC-4: Geographic Coverage

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
XC-4: Activities from Components 1–4 That Address Geographic Coverage							
	4.2.1.1 Consultative meetings held with stakeholders, including DIAS, DBE, DEMs, PEAs, MGCSW	July–September 2013	Ongoing; meetings initiated July 2013	Ongoing; meeting held November 18, 2013	Ongoing; meeting held with MGCSW on January 16, 2014	Ongoing; a meeting with the directors of DIAS and MIE was held on April 10	Ongoing; meetings held with DIAS and DBE on August 21
4.2.1 MOUs developed with stakeholders in intervention districts and schools	4.2.1.2 Work with DEMs in intervention districts to identify zones in which Activity will operate in School Year 1	August–September 2013	Ongoing; meetings held with DEMs July 2013	Done for School Year 1	Completed for School Year 1	Completed	Completed
	4.2.1.3 Work with MoEST, USAID, Social Impact to identify zones in which Activity will operate in School	January–August 2014	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing; identified number of zones to expand to,	Completed	Completed

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
	Year 2					plan to select specific zones in Q3	

Note: This table is meant to be illustrative of how this issue cuts across all four components of EGRA. Therefore, all activities listed in this table have been copied directly from the tables for Components 1–4. They do not represent additional activities but are repeated here for illustrative purposes only.

XC-5: Public-Private Partnerships

Activities related to this crosscutting issue have already been discussed under Components 1, 2, and 3 above. **Table 47** provides further details on the status of activities for Task XC-5.

Table 47. Progress against Planned Activities—Task XC-5: Public-Private Partnerships

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
XC-5: Activities from Components 1–4 That Address Public-Private Partnerships							
1.4.5 Provision of remote support via SMS Gateway	1.4.5.2 Subsidized/reduced-cost SMS service negotiated with telecoms	July–October 2013	Ongoing	Ongoing; OAI conducted initial assessment visits November 2013	Ongoing; OAI working on concept note with Airtel	Ongoing; two service providers showing strong interest. Meetings to finalize early July	Ongoing; commitments made by two service agreements, waiting to be formalized
1.4.6 Partnerships with private-sector actors developed and leveraged in support of coaching	1.4.6 Partnerships with private-sector actors developed and leveraged in support of coaching	October 2013–July 2016	Planned, not yet started	Ongoing; OAI conducted initial assessment visits November 2013	Ongoing; OAI developing concept notes with potential PPPs, although none seem interested in supporting coaching	Ongoing; possible one specific use of SMS Gateway to support coaches	Ongoing; commitments made by two service agreements, waiting to be formalized
2.0.1 PPPs leveraged to support provision of materials to intervention	2.0.1 PPPs leveraged to support provision of materials to intervention	September 2013–June 2016	Ongoing; OAI began desk study	Ongoing; OAI conducted	Ongoing; draft concept notes	Ongoing; draft concept notes	Ongoing; 29 total concept notes drafted

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
schools	schools		of assessment September 2013	field assessment in November 2013	developed with potential PPPs to provide for materials	reviewed by potential PPPs to provide for materials	and reviewed with potential PPPs
3.1.2 DGVP Specialist and Perkins International's local partners coordinate planning for development of Braille Cup	3.1.2.1 Identification of available matching resources	September–November 2013	Not yet started due to delay in bringing DGVP and Perkins on board	Started with OAI trip in November 2013	Ongoing; OAI followed up with potential PPPs in March; developing concept notes	Ongoing; concept note submitted to INDE Bank, other sources being pursued	Raised K650,000 plus other materials
3.1.3 Braille Cup implemented	3.1.3.1 Matching resources for BC mobilized	February–April 2014	Planned	Started with OAI trip in November 2013	Concept notes being developed with potential PPPs	Ongoing; INDE Bank pulled out for this year, other partners being explored	Raised K650,000 plus other materials.
3.2.7 O'Brien and Associates International develops PPPs	3.2.7.1. Conduct initial desk study of available actors, plan possible alliance assessment and potential partnerships	July–October 2013	Ongoing; draft of desk study completed	Ongoing; assessment trip in November 2013	Ongoing; concept notes initiated during trip in March 2014	Completed	Completed
	3.2.7.2 Develop partnership concepts/papers, negotiate	November 2013–September 2014	Planned	Ongoing; initial drafts of concept notes	Ongoing; initial concept notes shared	Ongoing; potential PPPs reviewing	Ongoing; 29 concept notes developed

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
	roles/responsibilities for alliances			developed	with potential PPPs	draft concept notes	
	3.2.7.3 Finalize and sign MOUs/support implementation	April–September 2014	Planned	Planned	Pending finalization of concept notes under 3.2.7.2	Pending finalization of concept notes under 3.2.7.2	Pending agreement with PPPs

Note: This table is meant to be illustrative of how this issue cuts across all four components of EGRA. Therefore, all activities listed in this table have been copied directly from the tables for Components 1–4. They do not represent additional activities but are repeated here for illustrative purposes only.

XC-6: Gender Equality

As an issue that cuts across all components, gender considerations have been integrated throughout the planning and implementation of EGRA activities. During all materials development workshops and activities EGRA has continued to use the USAID draft document *A Guide for Promoting Gender Equality and Inclusiveness in Teaching and Learning Materials* to ensure that gender and equality issues are appropriately addressed. The DGVP Specialist continued to participate in all relevant workshops during this quarter with the specific role of ensuring these issues are considered during the development and review of materials.

During the development of EGRA data collection instruments, information on gender is included to ensure that data on gender equality and inclusiveness can be tracked. During all EGRA workshops and trainings, registration data are collected and disaggregated by gender. **Table 48** provides further details on the status of activities for Task XC-6.

Table 48. Progress against Planned Activities—Task XC-6: Gender Equality

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
XC-6: Activities from Components 1–4 That Address Gender Equality							
1.1.1 Evaluate existing CPD modules on teaching reading for Standard 1–3 learners	1.1.1.1 Review of existing CPD content from MTPDS, PSSP, <i>Tikwere!</i>	July–October 2013	Completed August 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
1.1.2 Existing materials (including supplemental materials and existing CPD modules) incorporated to maximum extent possible in implementation of teacher training	1.1.2.3 Leveling workshop facilitated by EGRA and BPG held with MIE and NLS personnel to revise Read Malawi and other source materials	October 2013	Planned	Workshop held October 14–18, 2013; 16 readers leveled and selected for use under EGRA	Completed	Completed	Completed; workshop held October 2013
	1.1.2.4 Revised materials reviewed with Director of MIE	October 2013	Pending completion of 1.1.2.3	Revision in progress; plan to review in Q2	Not yet completed. Materials to be ready for	Not yet completed due to extended	Materials sent to MIE August 2014

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
					review by end May 2014. Delay due to continued negotiations with MIE	leave of MIE Director	
1.1.3 Appropriate CPD training materials developed in collaboration with MoEST	1.1.3.3 Periodic joint reviews of any materials under development	Quarterly September 2013 –September 2014	Pending development of materials	Conducted during October 29–November 2 workshop and subsequent consultation with MIE and MoEST in November–December 2013	Conducted during January and March workshops in Q2	Materials reviewed with MoEST partners April 1–3; April 16; April 23–25; April 28–May 2; 6 May 14–1; June 2–6, June 16–20; June 30–July 4.	Completed; reviewed October, November, December 2013, and January, March, April, May, June, July, & August 2014
	1.3.4.1 Writers' workshops held with MIE, NLS, Malawi PEN (<i>see also Task XC-1.1</i>)	October–November 2013	Planned, not yet started	Completed for S1 December 2013	Completed	Completed	Completed December 2013
1.3.4 Development of new decodable stories for inclusion in new curricular materials	1.3.4.2 Revision of writers' workshop outputs by MIE, BPG	November–December 2013	Planned, not yet started	Ongoing	Ongoing; taking longer than anticipated due to need for illustrations, type-setting, and	Ongoing; 2 additional stories written; art briefs written for 15 stories; 6 stories at level 3 still to be written	Completed; revised version ready for field testing in October 2014

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
					continued negotiations with MIE		

Note: This table is meant to be illustrative of how this issue cuts across all four components of EGRA. Therefore, all activities listed in this table have been copied directly from the tables for Components 1–4. They do not represent additional activities but are repeated here for illustrative purposes only.

Integrating USAID’s Country Development Coordination Strategy

Following the USAID implementing partners integration meeting, which was held on March 18, EGRA developed an integration plan for FY14 and submitted it to USAID on April 1. The integration plan was approved by USAID on April 3.

The first activity under the integration plan—to incorporate themes from other USAID activities into EGRA reading materials—has yet to get started because the materials being developed this year are already in the editing and finalization stages. EGRA plans to invite implementing partners to the upcoming materials development workshops and activities, which will be conducted in the next FY. In the meantime, EGRA has contacted a few implementing partners about their desire to participate in materials development efforts. EGRA will continue to reach out to partners and try to identify those that would be interested in contributing ideas and themes to be incorporated into materials that will be developed in the coming years.

In August the EGRA Finance Manager met with the COP from the Mobile Money Accelerator Program, being implemented by FHI360, to explore how they can work together as EGRA looks into the possibility of using mobile money to transfer funds to the field during its activities.

On September 18 the COP and DCOP met with USAID and one of its implementing partners, NDI, to explore possible synergies between their activities related to building the capacity and public engagement of district elected officials. A few potential areas of collaboration were identified, which EGRA plans to follow up with during the upcoming year.

On September 25 the COP, DCOP, SEPA, and M&E Specialist attended the second USAID implementing partners integration meeting to further explore ways to integrate EGRA activities with other USAID programs. The COP presented on a panel at the meeting to discuss the implications of the newly elected district councils on activity implementation in the districts. The meeting also provided an opportunity for EGRA staff to meet other organizations and learn about what they are doing. EGRA made some initial connections that it plans to follow through with in implementing its integration plan.

In addition to the three USAID focus districts, EGRA has explored possible synergies with other USAID projects and activities at the district level in all of its 11 intervention districts. In order to do so, EGRA field staff have been collecting data from their relative districts on the number and variety of USAID activities that are on the ground. EGRA is analyzing this information to identify which of these partners may have written materials that could be used as reading materials in the reading centers that are being established by communities, as mentioned under Component 3. EGRA hopes that in doing so it will provide early grade learners with opportunities to engage with a variety of TLM while also exposing the communities to the messages of partner organizations and raising awareness of their activities.

Table 49 provides further details on the status of activities for Country Development Coordination Strategy (CDCS) integration.

Table 49. Integrating USAID's Country Development Cooperation Strategy

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status at the End of FY 2013	Status at End of Q1 FY 2014	Status at End of Q2 FY 2014	Status at End of Q3 FY 2014	Final Status at End of FY 2014
INT: Integrating USAID's Country Development Cooperation Strategy							
INT-1 Incorporating themes from other USAID activities into EGRA reading materials	INT-1 Incorporating themes from other USAID activities into EGRA reading materials	June-September 2014	n/a	n/a	Discussed in March 2014 meeting with USAID implementing partners	Submitted integration plan to USAID, initiated contact with IPs	Ongoing; met with IPs at integration meeting, NDI, and FHI360
INT-2 Utilizing community reading centers to raise awareness for other USAID activities	INT-2 Utilizing community reading centers to raise awareness for other USAID activities	June-September 2014	n/a	n/a	Discussed in March 2014 meeting with USAID implementing partners	Submitted integration plan to USAID, initiated contact with IPs	Ongoing; met with IPs at integration meeting, NDI, and FHI360
INT-3 Explore ways to incentivize EGRA volunteers through other USAID activities	INT-3 Explore ways to incentivize EGRA volunteers through other USAID activities	June-September 2014	n/a	n/a	Discussed in March 2014 meeting with USAID implementing partners	Submitted integration plan to USAID, initiated contact with IPs	Ongoing; met with IPs at integration meeting, NDI, and FHI360

Progress toward Targets

Table 50 summarizes current progress toward EGRA targets for each indicator in the AMEP, as of September 30, 2014. The Year 1 targets are meant to be reached at the end of FY 2014.

Table 50. Current Status of Progress towards Annual Targets

Indicator	Baseline	Targets	
		Year 1 (FY 2013– 2014)	Actual as of September 30, 2014
AO1 Proportion (%) of pupils who, by the end of two years of schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text	Conducted by external impact evaluator	5% over baseline	n/a ²
AO2 Learning gains among Standard 1-3 learners on core early grade pre-reading and reading tasks as measured by regularly administered reading assessments compared to beginning of school year	Std 1	ORF: 0.7 cwpm ³	ORF: ↑7 cwpm 7.8 cwpm (↑7.1 cwpm)
		Comprehension: 0.4% ³	Comprehension: ↑5% 6.1% (↑5.7%)
	Std 2	ORF: 4 cwpm ³	ORF: ↑7 cwpm 9.7 cwpm (↑5.7 cwpm)
		Comprehension: 3% ³	Comprehension: ↑5% 8.4% (↑5.4%)
	Std 3	ORF: 13.6 cwpm ³	ORF: ↑7 cwpm 25.8 cwpm (↑12.2 cwpm)
		Comprehension: 13.7% ³	Comprehension: ↑5% 25.5% (↑11.8%)
OC1 Proportion (%) of Standard 1–3 teachers demonstrating essential skills in teaching reading	To be conducted Term 1, Year 1	40%	59.3% ⁴
OC1.1B Proportion (%) of teachers who complete expected number of lessons in Terms 1–3, Standards 1–3	n/a	40%	23.5% ⁴
OP1.1a Number of pupils receiving reading interventions in Standards 1–3	0	419,231	506,564 ⁵

² Data for this indicator will be provided by the external evaluator, Social Impact, during its midterm and end-of-activity assessments.

³ Baseline LAT data collected early January 2014 at beginning of Term 2.

⁴ Based on TOIs conducted during Term 3 (sample size of 430 teachers). The lower number may be due to the instruction teachers were given during trainings to not continue on to the next lesson until 80% of children have understood what they are taught.

⁵ This total is calculated by taking the average attendance rate (60.23%) as indicated in the TOIs for classes that were observed by PEAs and EGRA staff and projecting that percentage across the entire enrolment of 840,933. The enrolment data comes from school level data collected from head teachers by EGRA in October 2013 for Cohort A intervention schools and in June 2014 for Cohort B intervention schools.

Indicator	Baseline	Targets	
		Year 1 (FY 2013– 2014)	Actual as of September 30, 2014
OP1.1b Number of teachers, head teachers, and teaching assistants who successfully complete in-service training	0	2,951	11,001 (5,988 m, 5,013 f) ⁶
OP1.1c Total number of person hours of teachers, educators, and teaching assistants who successfully completed in-service training	0	150,000 hrs	790,392 hrs ⁷
OP1.1d Number of administrators and officials successfully trained with US Government support	0	175	311 ⁸
OP1.1e Total number of person hours of administrators and officials successfully trained with US Government support	0	4,000	26,608 hrs ⁷
OP1.1f Proportion (%) of teachers/educators/teaching assistants who received intensive coaching or mentoring with US Government support	0	40%	68.7% ⁹
OP1.1g Proportion (%) of schools receiving at least one coaching/support visit per term	n/a	75%	89.6% ¹⁰
OC1.2A Proportion (%) of learners in intervention districts and target grades who take home and use a book or other reading materials at home	n/a	25%	13.6% ¹¹
OC1.2B Proportion (%) of children in intervention districts and target grades who interact with text on a daily basis	n/a	65%	60.3% ¹²
OP1.2a Number of complete sets of lesson plans designed, tested, revised, and approved by the MoEST and USAID for Terms 1–3 for Standards 1–3 that support the use of local language instruction in target districts	0	Selected and agreed	2 ¹³

⁶ Total number trained in August-September 2014. This does not account for teachers who were trained in previous trainings but did not attend in August-September 2014, therefore the actual number may be even higher than reported here.

⁷ Based on 8 hours per day for each training session.

⁸ This includes PEAs, SEMAs, CDAs, DCDOs, and those trained as expert trainers from MoEST, MIE, TTCs, and DCE. The total is much higher than the target because the CDAs and DCDOs from MGCSW were not anticipated in the original target.

⁹ Reflects the percentage of Cohort A Standard 1-3 teachers visited during SY1.

¹⁰ Reflects the percentage of Cohort A Standard 1-3 schools visited during SY1.

¹¹ These data come from the TOIs from Term 3 (n=430 classes) where the observer counted the number of learners that raised their hand when asked if they brought a book from school to read at home divided by the number of learners in attendance. It has been difficult to convince schools to allow children to take books home because they are afraid the books won't last or will be lost, hence the lower number than the target.

¹² These data come from the TOIs from Term 3 (n=430 classes) where the observer counted the number of learners with a book in hand divided by the number of learners in attendance.

¹³ Scripted lesson plans for English Standard 1 and Chichewa Standard 2 for Term 1 were completed and approved by MoEST. Lesson plans used for School Year 1 were adopted from the *Maziko a Kuwerenga* teachers' guides developed under MTPDS. Therefore, these are not counted under EGRA's indicator. Terms 2 & 3 materials for School Year 2 are still being finalized and yet to be approved.

Indicator	Targets		
	Baseline	Year 1 (FY 2013– 2014)	Actual as of September 30, 2014
OP1.2b Number of schools that have received the appropriate number of full sets of materials and equipment (decodable leveled books, story cards, home-use story cards, letter cards, slates, storage cabinets, materials registers)	0	Sets of reading materials: 1,054	0 ¹⁴
	0	Slates: 1,054	0 ¹⁵
	0	Cabinets: 1,054	0 ¹⁶
OP1.2c Number of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials (TLM) provided with US Government support	n/a	1,556,054	1,337,362 ¹⁷
OC2 Number of community, local government, and/or private sector–led advocacy activities conducted to support increased reading skills in primary schools	n/a	316	784 ¹⁸
OC2.1 Proportion (%) of schools in intervention districts with MOUs or social contracts on reading	0%	60%	99.5% ¹⁹
OP2.1a Number of reading fairs hosted by school communities or clusters	n/a	211	581
OP2.1b Number of stakeholders consulted to establish and review MOUs	n/a	60	78
OC2.2 Proportion (%) of schools with community, local government, and/or private sector-led initiatives supporting early grade reading	n/a	60%	49% ²⁰
OP2.2a Number of PTAs or similar school governance structures supported by US Government	n/a	1,054	3,561 ²¹
OP2.2b Number of schools applying for grants to support early grade reading	n/a	632	1,162 ²²

¹⁴ Full sets of materials have not yet been finalized. Therefore, no schools have received full sets yet although all Cohort A schools received sets of letter cards in August.

¹⁵ Chalk slates have not yet been procured. Refer to discussion under Task 2-4.

¹⁶ Cabinets have not yet been procured. Refer to discussion under Task 2-5.

¹⁷ This number is lower than the target because it was anticipated that the English Standard 2 books would be printed this year, but as explained under Task 1-3 those books will not be developed and printed until next FY.

¹⁸ These numbers may be inflated because the definition of what counts as an “activity” under this indicator was not clearly defined. Therefore there has been some inconsistency in the way this indicator has been reported across districts.

¹⁹ Reflects on Cohort A schools. Cohort B schools have not yet been introduced to MOUs.

²⁰ This reflects the percentage of Cohort A schools which conducted reading fairs during SY1. The actual percentage is likely higher but we did not count other community activities because the data is not reliable, as explained in footnote #16 above.

²¹ All 1,187 Cohort A schools had representatives from their three governance structures (SMC, PTA, and mother group) supported during the CM sensitization meetings. The original target anticipated that only SMCs would be supported.

²² Based on number of GUC questionnaires submitted to EGRA.

Indicator	Targets		
	Baseline	Year 1 (FY 2013– 2014)	Actual as of September 30, 2014
OP2.2c Proportion (%) of school grant applications that meet minimum requirements for award	n/a	50%	n/a ²³
OC3 Standards for reading outcomes formally established for Standards 1–3 by MoEST	Proposed by MoEST EGRA Coordinating Committee	Drafted	Workshop planned in November 2014
OC3.1A Proportion (%) of teachers who stay in the early grades after initial training	n/a	75%	79.4% ²⁴
OC3.1B Proportion (%) of children in intervention districts and target grades receiving an average of one hour time-on-task reading instruction per day	n/a	75%	56.7% ²⁵
OP3.1a Number of laws, policies, regulations, or guidelines developed or modified to improve primary grade reading programs or increase equitable access	n/a	2	5 ²⁶
OP3.1b Number of teachers in special needs schools supported in the application of adapted early grade reading materials for special needs pupils	0	0	36
OC3.2A Improved institutional capacity for supporting reading by local NGO	To be conducted Term 1, Year 1	Major deficiencies identified	Major deficiencies identified
OC3.2B Number of PPPs supporting early grade reading	n/a	2–5 identified	0 ²⁷
OP3.2a Number of mentoring and training meetings conducted	n/a	50	116
OP3.2b Number of meetings held with private organizations to establish potential PPPs	n/a	10	134

EGRA Management Outputs and Deliverables

Table 51 includes the deliverables that are listed in the reporting schedule of the EGRA Scope of Work.

²³ Minimum requirements were never established for the GUCs. Instead, each district shortlisted the ten top performing schools based on the data provided from the GUC questionnaires.

²⁴ This percentage comes from information provided by teachers in the TOIs during Term 3 (n=430) who reported to be teaching in Standards 1 to 3 during the previous school year.

²⁵ This percentage comes from head teacher reporting in March on Standards 1–3 in their schools. It has been difficult to verify this number, even though all schools signed the MOU committing themselves to an additional hour of reading instruction.

²⁶ Five different MOUs were established for: SMCs, PTAs, head teachers, DEMs, MGCSW.

²⁷ While OAI has been working on establishing PPPs with a number of organizations, none has been formalized yet. OAI has drafted 29 concept notes, which are being reviewed by potential PPPs.

Table 51. Deliverables Listed in the Reporting Schedule of the EGRA Scope of Work

Deliverable	Status
Initial Work Plan: June–September 2013	Submitted September 5, 2103; approved by USAID September 10, 2013
Annual Work Plan: June–September 2014	Initial draft submitted August 1, 2013, to USAID; revised draft submitted September 13, October 10, November 1, 22, 29, December 13, 27; approved by USAID December 30, 2013
Annual Work Plan: FY2015	Initial draft submitted September 1, 2014, to USAID; revised draft submitted October 15; approved by USAID October 21, 2014
Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMEP)	Initial draft submitted September 17, 2013, to USAID; resubmitted October 22, 2013; feedback received from USAID December 13, 2013; resubmitted February 4, 2014; feedback received from USAID April 2, 2014; resubmitted April 29, 2014; cleared by USAID May 1, 2014
Quarterly Progress Reports	FY 2014 Quarter 1 submitted January 31, 2014; FY14Q1 reports cleared by USAID April 3, 2014; FY 2014 Quarter 2 submitted April 30, 2014; FY14Q2 report cleared by USAID May 9, 2014; FY14Q3 report submitted July 31, 2014; FY14Q3 report cleared by USAID September 8, 2014
Quarterly Financial Reports	Submitted as required
Grants Manual	Initial draft submitted September 17, 2013, to USAID; approved by USAID November 1, 2013
Consultant Reports	See Table 35 below
Annual Report	FY 2013 submitted to USAID October 31, 2013; approved by USAID December 30, 2013
Final Report	N/A this reporting period

Status of Programmatic Deliverables

Table 52 summarizes the current status of programmatic deliverables that have been submitted to USAID, organized by date of submission.

Table 52. Current Status of Programmatic Deliverables Submitted to USAID

Title	Author	Component	Date Submitted	Status
Branding and Marking Plan	Richard Hair		Initial draft submitted July 16, 2013	Feedback received from USAID August 13, 2013
			Revised draft submitted September 14, 2013	Feedback received from USAID September 26, 2013
			Resubmitted October 7, 2013	Approved by USAID October 18, 2013
STTA Trip Report for Barbara Harvey, July 8–12, 2013	Barbara Harvey	3	September 11, 2013	Approved September 16, 2013

Title	Author	Component	Date Submitted	Status
STTA Trip Report for Beatriz Coningham, 16 September 16, 2013–September 20, 2013	Beatriz Coningham	XC-1	October 7, 2013	Acknowledged by USAID October 8, 2013
Trip Report: Stakeholder Interviews for blue Tree Group Country Assessment	Maggie de Jongh & Roel de Haas	1, 2	October 8, 2013	Acknowledged by USAID January 18, 2014
STTA Trip Report for Scott Kipp, October 28, 2013–November 4, 2013	Scott Kipp	1, 3, M&E	November 27, 2013	Acknowledged by USAID December 2, 2013
STTA Trip Report for Dan O'Brien, November 10, 2013–November 28, 2013	Dan O'Brien	1, 2, 3	January 2, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID January 14, 2014
Alliance Assessment Report	Dan O'Brien	1, 2, 3	January 17, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID January 20, 2014
Malawi Country Assessment of the Book Chain	Roel de Haas and Maggie de Jongh	1, 2	January 20, 2014; resubmitted June 2, 2014	Cleared by USAID June 4, 2014
blue Tree Group Trip Report for Roel de Haas, CEO	Roel de Haas	1, 2	February 25, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID February 25, 2014
blue Tree Group Trip Report for Maggie de Jongh, Human Rights Specialist, January 20–24	Maggie de Jongh	1, 2	March 3, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID March 3, 2014
STTA Trip Report for Timothy Slade, February 5, 2014–February 14, 2014	Tim Slade		March 14, 2014	
STTA Trip Report for Martha Majors	Martha Majors	XC-2	April 4, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID April 17, 2014
STTA Trip Report for Albert Peters	Albert Peters	XC-2	April 4, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID April 17, 2014
STTA Trip Report for Dan O'Brien	Dan O'Brien	1, 2, 3	April 23, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID April 25, 2014
Community Mobilization Handbook	Dezie Trigu	3	September 30, 2013; resubmitted May 8, 2014; resubmitted May 29, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID May 13, 2014
Memorandums of Understanding for: MGCSW, DEMs, head teachers, SMCs, and	Charles Gunsaru	4	February 3, 2014; resubmitted March 14, 2014; resubmitted	Preliminary approval by USAID April 8, 2014; final clearance by USAID May 23,

Title	Author	Component	Date Submitted	Status
PTAs			March 31, 2014; resubmitted April 29, 2014; resubmitted May 22, 2014	2014
English Standard 1 Training Manual Module 1		1	July 23, 2014	Cleared by USAID July 30, 2014
Chichewa Standard 2 Training Manual Module 1		1	July 23, 2014	Cleared by USAID July 30, 2014
STTA Trip Report for Maggie de Jongh-Abebe, June 29, 2014-July 11, 2014	Maggie de Johgh- Abebe	1, 2	August 14, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID August 15, 2014
Disability Education Resource Guide	Augustine Kanyendula	SNE	September 24, 2014	Awaiting feedback from USAID

Management Issues

Coordination with USAID and the U.S. Embassy

EGRA personnel have coordinated technical and administrative activities with USAID throughout this quarter. EGRA management met with USAID on the following dates:

- October 4, 8, 16, 22, and 29
- November 5, 12, 19, and 26
- December 4 and 13
- January 7, 16, 20, 24, 27, and 31
- February 4, 14, 17, 20, 21, and 25
- March 5, 10, 20, and 28
- April 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29
- May 6, 13, 22, and 29
- June 3, 11, 17, and 24
- July 1, 8, 15, 22, and 31
- August 5, 8, 12, and 26
- September 9, 16, 18, 23, 25, and 30

On October 3 EGRA accompanied the COR, Kevin Roberts, and Ramsey Sosola from USAID to visit three schools and a TDC in Lilongwe Rural West District. These visits helped provide the new COR with a practical understanding of how EGRA is being implemented and taken up by the teachers and schools. From October 23 to 24 the EGRA M&E Specialist accompanied the COR to visit schools in Ntchisi and Salima to monitor the implementation of EGRA activities in the classrooms and communities.

On November 21 EGRA organized a trip for the PS and USAID officials to visit two schools in Salima. The PS expressed her appreciation for the opportunity and was impressed with the teaching that she saw take place in the classrooms that were observed.

On December 4 the USAID Acting Mission Director, Stefanie Funk, called for a meeting with selected implementing partners (IPs) to discuss the new guidelines for per diem and allowance rates signed by the donors. She wanted to hear from the IPs how the new guidelines will impact their activities. The DCOP attended the meeting and represented EGRA's challenges and concerns. The Acting Mission Director then requested that the DCOP accompany her to a meeting on December 6 with the Heads of Missions for donors to further discuss the issue. It was important to have IPs at the meeting to represent their concerns and explain to the donors how the guidelines will create challenges to the implementation of activities. As a result of the meeting, it was agreed that DPs and their IPs would be given a grace period through January to fully implement the new guidelines while the donors further communicate with the government and clarify issues with the DPs.

On January 27 the USAID/Malawi education team called for a special meeting to prepare EGRA to represent USAID at the TWG for Human Resource and Administration because no USAID officer would be available for the meeting. On the following day, January 28, the DCOP and SEPA attended the TWG on behalf of USAID. At the TWG meeting the situation analysis for the Second Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP 2) was discussed where MoEST departments and partners were asked to submit updated situation analyses. USAID asked for EGRA to draft an updated situation analysis, which USAID later submitted to the TWG chair. Other issues regarding the MoEST capacity development strategy, the establishment and hiring of teachers and inspectors, replacement of vacant established positions, and ICT issues for MoEST were also discussed. EGRA shared a full report on the meeting with USAID.

On January 30 the COP and DCOP attended the official launch of the USAID/Malawi CDCS at Ufulu Gardens in Lilongwe.

On February 3 the USAID Contracts Officer and the EGRA COR visited Ching'ombe Primary School in Lilongwe Rural East District along with a desk officer from the USAID Washington office who was visiting Malawi. The COP accompanied USAID on the visit to the school, where they were able to witness the EGRA intervention in action as teachers were implementing the reading program in their classrooms.

In preparation for the visit from Christie Vilsack, the USAID Senior Advisor for International Education, to Malawi, EGRA management met with USAID on a number of occasions in January and early February to work out details for the visit and the official launch of EGRA, at which Mrs. Vilsack would be the keynote speaker. These preparations included a site visit with the COR on February 5 to Mphanje Primary School, where the launch was to take place.

From February 10 to 12, Mrs. Vilsack traveled to the south of Malawi to visit primary schools and see how EGRA is being implemented and received on the ground. On February 11 she visited the Thyolo DEM's office and proceeded to Mbandanga Primary School, where she observed a Standard 1 teacher teaching a Chichewa lesson in her classroom using a *Maziko a Kuwerenga* scripted lesson plan. At the school she also met with members of the school's SMC and PTA. Mrs. Vilsack

continued from there to visit another school in the district, Mikombe Primary School, where she witnessed a coaching session being conducted by a PEA and then heard from community leaders and parents about how they support reading at their school and in their community. Mrs. Vilsack was especially impressed with the coaching session that she had witnessed.

On the next day, February 12, Mrs. Vilsack visited the Machinga DEM's office and proceeded to Mtubwi Primary School, where she witnessed the LAT being conducted by a PEA and EGRA staff using the Tangerine tool on the tablets. She then continued to Ulongwe Primary School in Balaka District where she observed Standard 1 to 3 learners demonstrating their reading skills and met with the SMC to discuss how EGRA is being implemented in their school and community.

The official launch of EGRA was conducted on February 13 at Mphanje Primary School in Lilongwe Rural West District. Mrs. Vilsack gave the keynote speech while the Malawi Secretary for Education, Science, and Technology officially launched EGRA. The event was well attended by the MoEST directors, the USAID Mission Director, DEMs, PEAs, teachers, learners, community members, and many other dignitaries.

During Mrs. Vilsack's trip, EGRA management and staff had many opportunities to share with and explain to her the different components and activities of EGRA as they joined her during meals and on her drives between each of the sites. This provided Mrs. Vilsack with greater insights on how EGRA is being implemented, its challenges, lessons learned, and successes. The USAID/Malawi education team reported that Mrs. Vilsack was very impressed with her visit and was pleased with the variety of things she was able to see, experience, and learn during her short visit.

On February 20 USAID called for the DCOP and M&E and Learning Specialist to meet with the USAID global information systems (GIS) specialists who were in Malawi to support the mission and conduct trainings on utilizing GIS for data analysis and reporting. The GIS specialists wanted to learn more about what EGRA is doing with regards to GIS and see how USAID can further utilize GIS for educational data. EGRA shared the GIS map it had produced with support from the RTI Home Office. USAID expressed its interest in continuing to explore and collaborate on how EGRA can best incorporate its data and findings with USAID's GIS capacities.

On March 18 the COP, DCOP, and M&E and Learning Specialist participated in the full-day USAID IP Workshop at Ufulu Gardens in Lilongwe. The workshop brought together all USAID IPs to identify areas in which different USAID projects and activities can coordinate and cooperate across sectors as USAID/Malawi implements its CDCS. As a deliverable from the workshop, EGRA submitted on March 31 an amendment to the annual work plan that describes how it would incorporate integration of other USAID activities into its own activities.

On April 10, the USAID COR visited Nathenje TDC to monitor the facilitator training, accompanied by the COP. During the visit he observed role modeling of coaching by the PEAs.

On June 11 the USAID COR Alternate, DCOP, and the SEPA attended the Reading Intervention Coordinating meeting. Six other organizations attended this meeting.

The EGRA management team met with USAID officials on a number of occasions in the month of June to plan and prepare for the visit by the U.S. Government

Accountability Office (GAO) from the U.S. that took place from July 22 to 24. Discussions during the meetings centered on documentation required by the GAO team and programming of the field visit. EGRA shared all relevant documentation with the USAID-Malawi mission as requested. The GAO visitors visited Kaputu and Kapiri schools in Salima District; Blantyre-Tedzani school in Blantyre District; and Chikala LEA school in Machinga District. The visitors were impressed with the visit as they observed teachers teaching in the classroom, community members conducting their own reading assessment of the learners, and enquired how the districts utilized the information they got from EGRA assessments and how the teachers, SMCs, and community members felt about EGRA.

On August 8 the USAID COR attended early grade reading partners' coordination meeting that was held at Bridgeview Hotel in Lilongwe. The partners discussed and drafted the TORs for the group.

From August 18 to 20 USAID officials conducted a DQA exercise in Ntchisi, Salima, Thyolo, Blantyre Rural, Machinga and Ntcheu districts. The officials comprised USAID COR and the M&E specialists. While they appreciated the way we were collecting and storing data, they noted the following issues that needed to be addressed:

- The need to avoid duplicating numbers when reporting on beneficiaries on teachers trained and also the need to ensure that we report correctly on those teachers that had fully or partly attended the trainings, the number of days they attended and not just indicated attended /not attended
- School enrollment figures versus learners benefitting from EGRA
- Time taken to provide feedback on the performance of the pupils in a classroom when using tablets as the PEAs and DMEs cannot access the data since it is uploaded and sent to the Tangerine cloud. There was a demand from the field for instant feedback
- The need for community assessment data to be standardized as each DME seemed to be operate differently
- The need to ensure that there is data back up at EGRA offices in Lilongwe and that DMEs worked closely with the DEMIS officers in the districts.

On August 25, the USAID COR attended EGRA partners meeting to discuss the AWP. The meeting was aimed at sharing with the partners the plans EGRA had lined up for the year.

On September 17, the USAID COR attended the Literacy Day at Pheleni which was organized by MoEST in collaboration with other partners including EGRA. There were a number of activities that took place to commemorate the day. EGRA showcased a teacher instructing learners, displayed materials developed for early grade reading, and a demonstrated a Standard 2 learner teaching fellow students. The occasion was graced by the Deputy Minister of Education as well as the Secretary for Education apart from other partners.

On September 18, the USAID COR attended a meeting at MIE in Zomba that aimed at discussing ways of extending the school day to ensure one hour is dedicated to reading instruction in each language during every school day, including the districts where EGRA is not being implemented. The meeting was attended by all the MoEST

directors and the PS for Basic and Secondary Education. As explained under Component 4, suggestions were made as to when infant, junior and senior primary sections could be finishing their classes each day. MIE in collaboration with EGRA were tasked to come up with the actual time table which could then be tabled to the MoEST management meeting.

On September 25, USAID organized an IPs Integration workshop which EGRA attended. The workshop focused on defining the vision for integrated programming and identifying the key steps necessary to reach the vision. EGRA, through a panel presentation, narrated how it has integrated its activities with other partners in the districts which included leveling of readers for SSDI. More integration activities have been included in the AWP.

On September 26, the USAID Education Office Director, a USAID official from Washington, and other USAID officials from Malawi visited Mchedwa and Chiwenga Primary schools in Likuni Zone. They observe lessons being taught by some Standard 1 -3 teachers.

Coordination with MoEST and MGCSW

As was discussed under Component 4, EGRA held its first quarterly meeting on October 10 with MoEST directors to discuss the implementation of EGRA activities. On November 12 the quarterly EGRA Technical Meeting took place with the PS and MoEST directors.

Throughout this quarter EGRA consistently communicated with MoEST on technical issues and in coordinating activities. This was especially the case with regard to the development of materials under EGRA. EGRA has taken special care to engage MoEST and MIE during every step of the process to ensure that the materials developed are in accordance with MoEST goals and policies so that they can be owned and used by the Ministry into the future. As part of this process EGRA began to share monthly reports with MoEST departments and institutions.

A series of discussions has been held with MIE regarding establishing the MOU and financial arrangements for MIE to work with EGRA in developing materials throughout the duration of the project; this is discussed in further detail under Components 1 and 4.

In consultation with MoEST, EGRA component leaders have been assigned counterparts with whom to coordinate technical activities, as shown in **Table 53**. Meetings between EGRA staff and their counterparts continue to occur on a regular basis.

As was discussed under Component 4, EGRA held its second quarterly meeting on January 14 with MoEST directors to discuss the implementation of EGRA activities.

The EGRA management team held a number of discussions with MoEST and MGCSW directors to plan and execute various activities aimed at improving the reading skills of the children in Standards 1 to 3. Such discussions resulted in the following:

- Directors and other members of staff from DIAS, DTED, DBE, DSNE, MIE, and MGCSW monitoring teacher training sessions, LAT administration, coaching of teachers by PEAs, reading fairs, teaching of learners by teachers, and training of community leaders.

- MoEST better appreciating the challenges met by teachers where a number of reading activities are implemented at a single school by different organizations (i.e., Tikwere, EGRA, Literacy Boost, etc.) and the need to find a solution to this problem. As reported under Component 4, a first meeting was finally coordinated by EGRA and chaired by MoEST on June 11 with six partners implementing projects and activities related to early grade reading. The partners include: SCI, Concern Worldwide, World Vision International, FHI360, VSO, Theatre for a Change, and EGRA. As stated earlier, USAID also participated in this meeting. At the meeting partners agreed to develop TORs with EGRA acting as secretariat.
- MoEST, MIE, and TTC personnel being actively involved in the development of TLM under EGRA utilizing NPC materials. Even though MIE has not signed a subcontract with RTI, it has actively participated in developing these learning materials through the workshop mode, which involves members from various directorates and institutions. This has resulted in MoEST and other institutions appreciating the knowledge and skills imparted under EGRA and desiring that such knowledge and skills be adopted throughout the country.
- MoEST and MGCSW officials at ministry, district, zonal, and school levels signing MOUs to support and sustain EGRA activities. As stated under Component 4, this exercise occurred from June 4 to 24.

As mentioned previously, EGRA attended and participated actively in the NRS Taskforce Workshop on June 24 and 25.

EGRA component managers continued to coordinate technical activities with their particular MoEST and MGCSW counterparts as previously reported. The list of the counterparts is shown in **Table 53**. Meetings between EGRA staff and their counterparts continue to occur on a regular basis.

Table 53. EGRA Component Leaders and Assigned MoEST Counterparts

Component	Component Leader	MoEST Counterparts	Dept.
1 Provide Quality Reading Instruction for Early Grades Students	Dr. P. Green (Literacy Specialist)	Mrs. E.D. Namaona	DTED
		Mr. V. Mdangwe	
		Mrs. E. Chinguwo	MIE
		Mrs. D. Yasini Mr. J. Kamkuza	DIAS
2 Provision of Teaching and Learning Materials on Reading	Mr. O. Banda (Teaching and Learning Materials Coordinator)	Mrs. E.D. Namaona	DTED
		Mr. V. Mdangwe	
		Mrs. D. Yasini Mr. J. Kamkuza	DIAS
		Mr. M. Iphani	MIE
3 Increasing Parental and Community Engagement to Support Reading	Mr. D. Trigu (Community Mobilization Specialist)	Mrs. L. Daka	DBE
		Mr. Z. Mwandira	MGCSW
4 Improving Policy	Mr. C. Gunsaru	Dr. W. Susuwele-Banda	MIE

Component	Component Leader	MoEST Counterparts	Dept.
Environment to Support Early Grade Reading	(Senior Education Policy Advisor)	Mr. R. Agabu	DIAS
		Mrs. D. Mbewe	DTED
		Mr. P. Themu	
		Mrs. G. Milner	DEP
		Dr. J Chimombo Mrs. L. Daka	DBE
5 Crosscutting Issues Disability/Students with Special Needs Monitoring and Evaluation	Mr. A. Kanyendula (Disability, Gender, and Vulnerable Populations Specialist)	Mr. C. Mazinga	DSHNA
		Mr. P. Msendema	DSNE
	Dr. M. Nkhoma (M&E and Learning Specialist)	Mr. J. Kayira	DIAS
		Mr. V. Lungu	
		Mr. L. Nyirongo	DEP

Divisional and District Offices

The 11 educational district offices continue to accommodate the EGRA staff. During the quarter, the Balaka DEM together with the EGRA staff moved into a new office that has just been completed. Due to a shortage of furniture in some offices, EGRA provided furniture for its staff members. **Table 54** shows the deployment of EGRA staff during this quarter.

Table 54. District Staffing Structure

EGRA Division	Office Location	Divisional Staff	District	Location	District Staff
North	Ekwendeni	DC and AA	Mzimba North	Ekwendeni DEM (sharing with North Division)	DME and DCM
Central West	Lilongwe EDM	DC and AA	Lilongwe Rural West	Lilongwe Rural West DEM (sharing with Division)	DME, DCM, and DTC
			Lilongwe Rural East	Lilongwe Rural East DEM	DME, DCM, and DTC
			Ntchisi	Ntchisi DEM	DME, DCM, and DTC
Central East	Balaka	DC and AA	Balaka	Balaka DEM (Sharing with Division)	DME, DCM, and DTC
			Ntcheu	Ntcheu DEM	DME, DCM, and DTC
			Salima	Salima DEM	DME, DCM, and DTC

EGRA Division	Office Location	Divisional Staff	District	Location	District Staff
			Machinga	Machinga DEM	DME, DCM, and DTC
South	Zomba EDM	DC and AA	Zomba Rural	Zomba EDM (sharing with Division)	DME, DCM, and DTC
			Blantyre Rural	Blantyre EDM	DME, DCM, and DTC
			Thyolo	Thyolo DEM	DME, DCM, and DTC

AA = Accounts Assistant; DC = Divisional Coordinator; DCM = District Community Mobilizer; DEM = District Education Manager's office; DME = District M&E Officer; DTC = District Training Coordinator; EDM = Education Division Manager's office.

Reporting

EGRA met all of its reporting obligations on time throughout this FY as listed in **Table 49** above.

Communications

EGRA follows the Branding and Marking Plan that was approved by USAID on October 18, 2013; when in doubt, EGRA continues to seek clarification from the COR.

Human Resources/Personnel

During this year EGRA hired the remaining staff for all of its field offices. As mentioned before, the DGVP Specialist officially joined EGRA on October 7 at the EGRA main office. A total of twelve DMEs, eleven DCMs, six DTCs, and four accounts assistants were brought on board with EGRA during the year. **Table 55** lists EGRA staff and their titles, gender, date of hire, and work location. EGRA currently employs 61 full-time staff in Malawi. All current employees, in order of their recruitment, are included in the table.

Table 55. Staffing In-Country as of March 31, 2014, in Order of Commencement of Employment

Name	Title/Relationship	Gender	Start Date	Work Location
Tarsco Mwafulirwa	Human Resource Manager	M	June 26, 2013	Lilongwe
Scott Muocha	IT Manager	M	June 26, 2013	Lilongwe
Sheila Sumaili	Office Manager	F	June 26, 2013	Lilongwe
Charlie Morton Gunsaru	Senior Education Policy Advisor	M	July 1, 2013	Lilongwe
Euclid Mtonga	Finance and Administration Manager	M	July 1, 2013	Lilongwe
Sydonio Matope	National Training Coordinator	M	July 1, 2013	Lilongwe
Odala Banda	Teaching and Learning Materials Coordinator	M	July 1, 2013	Lilongwe

Name	Title/Relationship	Gender	Start Date	Work Location
Mike Nkhoma	M&E and Learning Specialist	M	July 1, 2013	Lilongwe
Zondiwe Kayisi	Accounts Assistant	M	July 1, 2013	Lilongwe
Lackson Siyabu	Driver	M	July 1, 2013	Lilongwe
Everess Chifundo Milole	Program Receptionist	F	July 1, 2013	Lilongwe
Dezie Trigu	Community Mobilization Specialist	M	July 8, 2013	Lilongwe
Paula Green	Literacy Specialist	F	July 8, 2013	Lilongwe
Zikani Kaunda	Chief of Party	M	July 8, 2013	Lilongwe
Stephen Backman	Deputy Chief of Party	M	July 15, 2013	Lilongwe
Chrissie Phiri	Divisional Coordinator	F	July 22, 2013	Lilongwe
Speaker Nkhonjera	Divisional Coordinator	M	July 22, 2013	Mzimba North
Peter Jinazali	Divisional Coordinator	M	July 22, 2013	Balaka
Janet Chiromo	Divisional Coordinator	F	July 22, 2013	Zomba
Sydney Chikweza	Driver	M	July 22, 2013	Lilongwe
Mary Mamba Mwale	District Training Coordinator	F	Aug 7, 2013	Thyolo
Niffer Chikonje	District Training Coordinator	F	Aug 7, 2013	Blantyre
Martha Myava	District Training Coordinator	F	Aug 7, 2013	Lilongwe Rural West
Gerald Mtaja	District Training Coordinator	M	Aug 7, 2013	Ntcheu
Blessings Mkandawire	Driver	M	Sep 9, 2013	Mzimba North
Peter Potani	Driver	M	Sep 9, 2013	Balaka
Lloyd Kachapila	Driver	M	Sep 9, 2013	Zomba
Luciano Lloyd Kalata	District M&E Officer	M	Oct 1, 2013	Zomba
Benedicto Kamanga	District M&E Officer	M	Oct 1, 2013	Lilongwe Rural West
Catherine Saiwa	District M&E Officer	F	Oct 1, 2013	Lilongwe Rural East
Ivy Vale	M&E Officer	F	Oct 1, 2013	Main Office
MacMillan Gondwe	District M&E Officer	M	Oct 1, 2013	Mzimba North
Patrick Mdhluli	Accounts Assistant	M	Oct 1, 2013	Zomba
Frank Harawa	Accounts Assistant	M	Oct 1, 2013	Balaka
Makaiko Mbale	Accounts Assistant	M	Oct 1, 2013	Mzimba North
Mwayi Phiri	Accounts Assistant	F	Oct 1, 2013	Lilongwe
Augustine Kanyendula	Disability and Gender Specialist	M	Oct 7, 2013	Lilongwe

Name	Title/Relationship	Gender	Start Date	Work Location
Margret Makawa	District Community Mobilizer	F	Nov 1, 2013	Ntchisi
Beatrice Tangwe	District Community Mobilizer	F	Nov 1, 2013	Salima
Andrina Simengwa	District Community Mobilizer	F	Nov 1, 2013	Machinga
Boniface Chifundo	District Community Mobilizer	M	Nov 1, 2013	Zomba Rural
MacDonald Saizi	District Community Mobilizer	M	Nov 1, 2013	Blantyre Rural
Prisca Semu Mkukumira	District Community Mobilizer	F	Nov 1, 2013	Balaka
Madalo Mbewe	District Community Mobilizer	F	Nov 1, 2013	Thyolo
Margret Kulemekka	District Community Mobilizer	F	Nov 1, 2013	Mzimba North
Thom Nyirongo	District M&E Officer	M	Nov 1, 2013	Thyolo
Victor Mzungu	District M&E Officer	M	Nov 1, 2013	Salima
Elizabeth Mpindang'ombe	District M&E Officer	F	Nov 1, 2013	Balaka
Gift Muluwaza	District M&E Officer	M	Nov 1, 2013	Ntcheu
Siphiwe Botha	District M&E Officer	F	Nov 1, 2013	Ntchisi
Elias Misokwe	District M&E Officer	M	Nov 1, 2013	Blantyre Rural
Nelson Mtchini	District Training Coordinator	M	Nov 1, 2013	Salima
Shadreck Chaguza	District Training Coordinator	M	Nov 1, 2013	Ntchisi
Lovelaw Chapomba	District Training Coordinator	M	Nov 1, 2013	Lilongwe Rural East
Menard Papaya	District Training Coordinator	M	Nov 1, 2013	Zomba Rural
Lyson Jarafi	District Community Mobilizer	M	Dec 10, 2013	Lilongwe Rural East
Yohane Katantha	District Community Mobilizer	F	Dec 10, 2013	Lilongwe Rural West
John Mkwaila	District Training Coordinator	M	Mar 24, 2014	Balaka
Alipao Mabeti	District Training Coordinator	F	Mar 24, 2014	Machinga
Brenda Barron	District Community Mobilizer	F	June 3, 2014	Ntcheu
Precious Ussi	District M&E Officer	M	Sep 1, 2014	Machinga

Challenges, Solutions, and Actions Taken

Budgetary Constraints

During the first few quarters of this FY, EGRA had to make adjustments to some of its original plans due to budgetary constraints and cost forecasts. This was especially true with the teacher trainings as the costs for each training session were higher than originally budgeted. This is due to a number of factors. First of all, the total number of

teachers in Standards 1 to 3 was higher than reported by the Ministry under EMIS. When EGRA conducted its own school level data collection it discovered that there was a great increase in the numbers. In addition, the costs for lunch and transportation allowances ended up being higher than originally projected due to inflationary pressures and an increase in the per diem policy agreed by the donors.

When EGRA made cost projections it realized that it would not be able to train teachers from all three standards during each training module. Therefore, EGRA received USAID's concurrence to focus the December and April trainings on Standard 1 teachers and head teachers. While this has helped to address the budgetary challenges for this FY, EGRA has requested to be allowed to realign its budget in order to have sufficient funds dedicated to teacher training for the remaining years in the Activity.

Another budgetary challenge has been the costs of procuring materials locally. This is the case with printing materials and producing chalk slates and bookcases. As a result, EGRA has had to explore regional and international options to reduce costs, while at the same time trying to maximize the use of local resources when feasible. As explained under Component 2, EGRA has worked with bTG to determine how best to split up the large print orders so that the majority are printed internationally to save on the overall cost, while a significant portion will still be printed locally in order to build up the capacity of local printing companies and to ensure timely availability of essential TLM.

Similarly, EGRA has identified international vendors that can produce chalk slates and bookcases at a lower cost than can be produced locally. In doing so EGRA consulted with MoEST's Procurement Unit to find out how they have procured these items in the past. In the meantime EGRA discovered that MoEST had already procured and delivered chalk slates to all primary schools in the nation. EGRA has received the numbers that have been delivered to each school and is consulting with USAID on the most effective way to support MoEST in supplying more chalk slates to schools, if needed. EGRA has also explored the possibility of using plastic boxes that will be stored in secure places as an alternative to more expensive and bulky lockable bookcases that PPPs are less willing to fund. EGRA will continue to discuss with USAID on the best way forward with these materials.

Due to the delays in establishing a formal agreement with MIE for developing materials, EGRA was required to conduct more materials development workshops than originally budgeted for. This is because it was anticipated that much of the writing and development of materials would be done at MIE in a collaborative arrangement between EGRA and MIE. As was explained under Component 1, this did not happen. Therefore, EGRA has had to conduct workshops that bring all of the relevant officers from MoEST and MIE together. These workshops require greater costs than if the work was done with MIE at its own institution.

Despite these constraints EGRA has been able to find the cost savings in order to conduct all of its activities and meet its deliverables on time. EGRA hopes that it will be able to realign its budget to better fit the mix of activities that are needed for the upcoming years now that we have a better understanding of the balance of activities and their relative costs.

Coordination with Social Impact

The issue of coordinating with SI on the selection of implementation zones for School Year 1 and School Year 2 proved to be more challenging than originally anticipated as EGRA tried to balance the desire of MoEST to maximize the impact and reach of the intervention to as many schools as possible with the importance of maintaining the integrity of the impact evaluation research design, which requires control schools of different categories in order to make statistically significant conclusions about the impact of EGRA interventions. As was discussed under Component 4, after a series of discussions it was agreed between USAID, EGRA, and SI that EGRA would add an additional 11 zones as soon as was possible in October. EGRA subsequently began training teachers in the additional zones in November increasing the number of Cohort A zones to 101 in total. While this created logistical and budgetary challenges at the beginning, EGRA was able to work things out with USAID and the new zones were successfully incorporated into the intervention.

During meetings with MoEST directors, it was made clear that the Ministry would like EGRA to be implemented in as many zones in the 11 intervention districts as possible. EGRA communicated this desire to USAID and engaged in discussions with USAID and SI on how to best maximize the number of zones and schools that EGRA can expand into while maintaining the integrity of the impact evaluation study. It was agreed that SI would share their power calculations on how they determined the number of schools and zones needed as controls for each treatment type that EGRA and USAID would review. This resulted in an additional 20 zones being added to the EGRA intervention making a total of 134 zones after Cohort B was included in the August to September trainings.

Implementing with Subcontractors

As part of its scope of work (SOW), EGRA was expected to begin implementation of activities very early in the process. As such, EGRA has had to work closely with its subcontractors to ensure that activities and deliverables are performed on time while establishing clear expectations and arrangements for all parties. This has required some patience and flexibility on the part of EGRA and its subcontractors as it adjusts to the ever-changing circumstances on the ground.

Some of these adjustments resulted in slight delays in bringing certain personnel on board with EGRA, but EGRA was able to adapt its plans to accommodate these changes and keep with the work plan. For example, the DGVP Specialist did not officially join EGRA until the beginning of October, but he has been able to accomplish most of his activities on the work plan in a timely manner. Similarly, CRECCOM was not able to begin recruitment of its staff until October, resulting in many of the EGRA field staff being deployed to the district offices in November. Although their deployment was later than anticipated, the field staff have been effectively oriented, trained, and incorporated into their relative district teams.

EGRA continued to meet challenges with CRECCOM throughout this FY due to its inability to fully comply with certain contractual and financial requirements from RTI. As a result, CRECCOM has not been able to receive its full disbursements of funds from RTI. This has made it difficult for CRECCOM to meet all of its work plan deliverables on time and has also caused CRECCOM to delay in providing essential equipment and support to its field employees, such as laptops and airtime. This in turn has had an impact on the work that can be done at the district level. In order to

address this, district offices coordinated the use of limited laptops and prioritized the work of officers to ensure that essential activities are conducted completely and on time in the districts.

In the meantime, RTI has been working closely with CRECCOM to help them make the necessary arrangements to meet their financial requirements in order to facilitate the timely disbursement of funds. In order to help build CRECCOM's capacity to do so, two RTI staff members from Home Office plan to travel to Malawi in November to work with their finance and administration staff on complying with financial requirements. Unfortunately, this will continue to delay full implementation of CRECCOM's activities. In order to ensure that CM activities continue to be implemented, RTI will take over some of the key activities while CRECCOM sorts out its financial situation.

The original plans for BPG were that they would adapt the English materials they developed in Liberia to the Malawian context. But it became apparent early in discussions with MoEST and MIE that this was not the direction they wanted to take. Therefore, EGRA has had to be flexible in adjusting the SOW and roles of BPG in the development of materials. BPG has responded swiftly and adeptly to these changed expectations and has been able to establish solid plans that articulate the roles of all partners and their timing within the process.

Logistics and Transportation

After CRECCOM was able to recruit and hire its field officers under EGRA in October and November the new staff and district teams required a number of logistical arrangements to be made to establish offices in each district. Although the arrangements with each DEM had already been made to be provided with office space within the District Education Offices (DEOs), the logistics of procuring and delivering furniture, supplies, and materials along with supplying internet and other services needed to be finalized. These proved to take longer than anticipated as each district had different needs and available services. For example, not all districts have access to the same internet service providers, therefore specific arrangements were needed in each district. It also was not clear from each DEO what type of furniture would be available from what was handed over under MTPDS. It took CRECCOM longer than anticipated to procure laptops for all of its officers, so the district teams had to share laptops for a number of months. EGRA worked hard to respond to these needs in a timely manner and to ensure that work continued as planned in the districts.

Transportation continued to be a challenge throughout the year in coordinating and providing for the travel needs of all 11 districts with only eight vehicles for all of EGRA. To mitigate this problem, EGRA has tried to coordinate activities across districts to maximize use of vehicles and has deployed motorbikes to districts that can most effectively use them. EGRA will continue to monitor the needs for vehicles and identify the best ways to transport its field staff to field locations as often as possible. EGRA was pleased to learn from USAID that it will be given two extra vehicles from a previous USAID activity. This will greatly help EGRA reach and support more schools and participants as needed.

Competing Demands and Per Diem Issues with MoEST and MIE Counterparts

An essential component of EGRA is to work closely with MoEST and MIE counterparts in its activities to ensure Ministry ownership and sustainability of EGRA interventions; it is important that these counterparts are integrally involved in the work EGRA conducts and participate in all trainings and workshops. This continues to prove to be difficult as Ministry and MIE counterparts have many competing demands and cannot always participate in EGRA activities. EGRA has tried to mitigate this by planning with MoEST and MIE and working around their schedules. This is also done through a monthly report that is shared with MoEST departments that includes plans for the following two months. It is hoped that these steps will increase the likelihood of Ministry participation, but unfortunately calendar clashes cannot be completely avoided.

The new guidelines on per diems and allowances by the donor partners were circulated in late November and were supposed to be implemented on December 1, 2013. Although the increase in per diem rates has been welcomed by EGRA, the restrictions imposed by the new guidelines forbidding the provision of allowances to government participants has threatened participation in EGRA activities. With the new Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) Guidelines from donor partners being officially implemented beginning February 1, 2014, EGRA met some challenges in getting Ministry counterparts to attend and participate in activities. Ministry officials made it clear that they are not happy with the new guidelines, which state that allowances will not be provided at venues where full board can be arranged. This has resulted in some officials not attending some of the EGRA workshops. Fortunately, this has not affected district-level trainings, which have been given an exception to the no-allowance rule.

Aligning EGRA Materials Development with the Official Curriculum

Through discussions with MoEST and MIE, and during materials development workshops, the Ministry made it clear that any materials developed under EGRA must be aligned with the revised PCAR materials. This requirement has restricted EGRA's flexibility in developing curriculum materials that follow best practices and research-based methods. Although effective teaching practices can still be applied to the PCAR materials, it limits to some degree what can be done. Despite these restrictions, EGRA has been able to support the Ministry in enhancing the current curriculum materials through developing scripted lesson plans that incorporate the five key components of reading and follow effective teaching methodologies. In the end, what is most important is that the materials developed under EGRA are owned and utilized by MoEST so that they can be implemented even after EGRA activities end.

This requirement has especially posed a problem in the development of the English curriculum materials, in which EGRA originally hoped to be able to build upon the English courses that BPG developed for Liberia. This plan had to be abandoned due to MoEST's requests, and alternative plans were made. But this has delayed the development of English Standard 2 until next FY.

Similarly for the Chichewa Standard 1 course, it proved to be problematic because EGRA planned to use the materials that were developed under MTPDS for Standard 1 and align them to the MoEST curriculum materials. But when EGRA worked with

MoEST to align the two curriculums, it proved to be too difficult for teachers to implement. Therefore, MoEST has requested that EGRA support them in developing scripted lesson plans that merge the two courses together. While EGRA feels this is an important activity that needs to be done, it is outside of the original SOW for EGRA and was not budgeted for, as was discussed under Task 1.3.

Delay in Procuring Nexus Tablets and Implementing in the Field

It was originally planned that EGRA would be able to procure and begin using tablet computers in the field during the first term, but this did not happen due to unanticipated problems with receiving the Nexus tablets. EGRA, through its RTI Home Office in the United States, was able to procure and receive 112 Nexus tablets in October. The tablets were then shipped to Malawi but rejected because it was determined that the shipment had higher levels of lithium (due to the batteries of 112 tablets in one shipment) than allowed. So, RTI had to work with the shipping company to repackage and reship the tablets in a manner that was allowed. As a result, EGRA received the tablets in November, which proved to be too late to program and deliver the tablets in time for field use during Term 1. This also made it difficult to provide the level of training and field testing that was desired. Fortunately, EGRA was able to receive 12 tablets early when Mr. Kipp was able to bring them with him on his STTA trip to Malawi. These were used in November for initial training and field testing. It was also planned to conduct the baseline LAT at the end of Term 1, but due to the unavailability of the Nexus tablets, this activity was postponed until the beginning of Term 2.

Coordinating with MoEST and other Early Grade Reading Programs

The EGRA SEPA worked with the Ministry for more than four months in trying to set up a quarterly meeting for all partners who are implementing programs related to early grade reading. The first coordination meeting did not take place until June 11. While the meeting was successful in bringing a number of different organizations together, many of the partners lamented that it would have been better if the meeting could have started earlier. A second meeting took place in September, so EGRA hopes they will be able to take place on a quarterly basis from now on.

The regular quarterly meeting with the PS for Basic and Secondary Education only happened once during this FY. EGRA has no control over this because the meeting must be arranged between USAID and the PS. This has been a missed opportunity for improved coordination and ensuring that MoEST senior management is well informed of EGRA activities. Fortunately, the MoEST and MIE directors have been able to meet on a quarterly basis, so most of the coordination has been happening during those meetings. But EGRA hopes that the meetings with the PS will resume during the next FY.

Delay in Finalizing MOUs and Starting the GUC Program

The finalization of the MOUs for DEMs, schools, and communities met delays due to the consultative process they had to go through. Many of the delays came between RTI's contracts office and USAID's legal office on the exact legal wording and branding of the MOUs. An agreed-upon format was finally established so that the MOUs could be finalized and printed. EGRA made arrangements for the district

officers and PEAs to be oriented on the MOUs and distributed them to schools to be signed in June.

Similarly the GUC program was delayed in getting started due to the consultative process through which the GUC criteria had to go through. There were a number of layers of stakeholders' input that were incorporated into the GUC criteria. These were finalized in February along with a survey instrument that was distributed to all schools. The PEAs and head teachers were oriented on the GUC criteria and the requirements for schools to complete the survey in order to become eligible for the GUC competition. Although the process was delayed, there was enough time to collect baseline data during Term 2 and endline data during Term 3 in order to conduct a proper evaluation of applications to determine the grant awardees by the end of the school year.

Additional Days of Training in August

As reported under Task 1.1, during initial preparation meetings for the August trainings, MoEST expressed its desire to increase the number of days of training due to the large amount of content that is to be covered with both English Standard 1 and Chichewa Standard 2 materials included in the trainings. MoEST proposed that the trainings be at least seven days long rather than the five days required under EGRA. After considering the technical and cost implications of this adjustment, EGRA decided that it would be possible to do so with minimal increase in cost as long as the extra days can be taken away from subsequent trainings in School Year 2. It then approached USAID for approval of increasing the days of August training to seven while decreasing the subsequent two trainings in December 2014 and April 2015 to a total of eight days altogether. After receiving an official request from the MoEST on the issue, USAID provided approval to do so.

This helped provide sufficient time to cover the large amount of content introduced in the August trainings, but also created some logistical and technical challenges for effective implementation. EGRA worked closely with MoEST and USAID to ensure the trainings proceeded effectively.

National Elections

Much of the third quarter was dominated by the national tripartite elections that took place on May 20. This had a direct impact on EGRA activities because many government officials from the central Ministry down to the school level were often pulled away and distracted from their official duties. This resulted in lowered participation and commitment by many of EGRA's partners on the ground. A specific example of how this affected EGRA is in the fact that EGRA was not able to conduct its quarterly meetings either with the PS or the directors. In addition, some PEAs were not able to conduct coaching visits to schools during this quarter, while others did so, but at a lower rate than usual. While the elections made it much more difficult to get work done efficiently during this quarter, EGRA was still able to accomplish a lot and was pleased to see that the majority of PEAs continued to support their schools and provide coaching to teachers.

Success Stories

Below are four success stories that were shared with USAID during this quarter, some of which have been posted on the USAID website. EGRA will continue to work on developing success stories to share with the USAID-Malawi mission in an effort to show the great work that is being done under the Activity.

EGRA Forges Partnerships for Creativity

Thanks to the USAID Early Grade Reading Activity (EGRA), three key Malawian institutions were brought together to develop supplementary reading materials for the early grades. It may have been the first time to bring together writers from Malawi PEN, the National Library Service (NLS), and the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST) to develop reading materials for Malawian school children, and it proved to be a success.

The combination of technical experts from the MoEST and creative writers from Malawi PEN and NLS created a powerful combination that led to the development of Chichewa and English books that are both interesting and engaging while also educationally appropriate for emerging readers. From December 27 to 31, 2013, while most people were enjoying their holiday break, eleven participants from these three institutions came together to write a series of stories targeting children who are just beginning to learn how to read. The stories developed will be used at primary schools as supplementary readers and story cards that the children will also be able to take home to read with their families.

The development of interesting decodable texts that deliberately feature specific letter-sounds is no easy task. In fact it is easier to write for Standards 4 and above than it is to write for Standard 1. Yet this challenge motivated and kept participants actively engaged. The NLS and Malawi PEN writers brought imaginative ideas and word choices while learning the technicalities of early grade reading; the MoEST officials and lecturers enjoyed applying their curriculum knowledge to a practical and creative activity. The different perspectives gave rise to much enjoyment, collaborative learning, and lively debate.

Not only did the participants write new stories, but they also identified supplementary reading materials that had been developed in the past that would be appropriate for early grade learners. It was gratifying that participants were able to include stories from the beautifully illustrated *READ Malawi* and the well-conceptualized *Timawerenga* USAID activities. As a result, there will be some continuity between EGRA and earlier USAID programs, so that the previous good work can be utilized and enhanced, not shelved.

Enthusiasm and creativity continued to the last day, and by the end of the workshop, participants had produced or adapted fair drafts of the following:

- Thirteen decodable texts in Chichewa
- Two decodable texts in English
- Twelve leveled readers in Chichewa
- Three leveled readers in English

- Adaptations of the above, with artwork briefs and comprehension questions for 15 story cards

The fact that so much was produced in so short a time is quite remarkable. Clearly, the blend of MoEST officials and creative writers worked well and was appreciated by all. Closing comments from the participants highlighted the value and enjoyment they had derived from the workshop.

From the Ministry came the comment that “this blending of MoEST and writers has added to the quality of the work.” And from Malawi PEN there was appreciation that this workshop was, “the first time we have interacted with the Ministry, not meeting as a formal group.” “Now I am an author!” was the short but triumphant final word of one of the MoEST participants.

This workshop set the bar high in terms of the quality and quantity of work to be produced. There is every indication that the constructive working relationship forged among MoEST, NLS, and Malawi PEN has added value and will continue to add value to the materials development process as EGRA focuses in future years on stories for Standards 2 and 3. The process and output are a credit to the commitment of all participants and are a success story indeed.



Report-back and editing the stories in plenary. Maggie Chilimanjara presenting, Ivy Nthara, Jeremiah Kamkuza, and Mordky Kapesa in view.



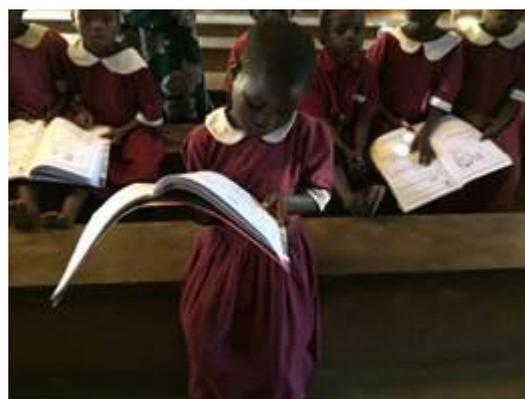
Maggie Chilimanjara (MIE) facilitating, Esther Ulalo (NLS) Alfred Msadala (Malawi PEN), Egidio Mpanga (Malawi PEN), Nancy Phiri (NLS), Foster Gama (MIE), and Augustine Kanyendula (EGRA).

Stella Stays in School

It is the human condition to want to go higher, faster, further, and to learn more. It is also human to want to have an element of safety, a mentor, a lifeguard, or a parachute before making that leap into the unknown. Learning to read is no exception.

Stella Chibonga is a Standard (Grade) One student at Chingazi Primary School in

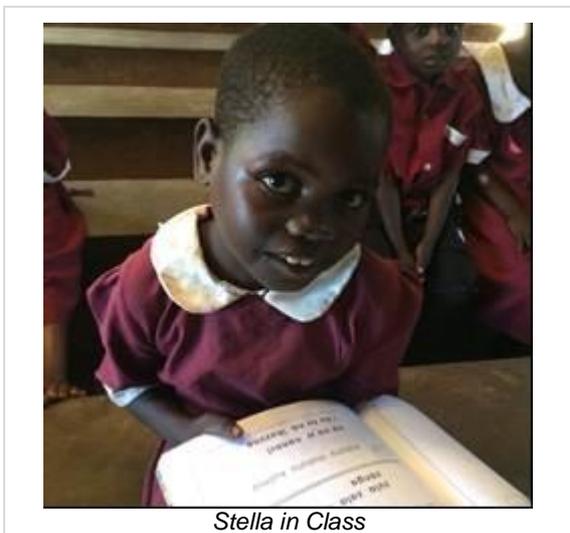
Ntambanyama Zone in Thyolo District in Malawi. Like many girls in Malawi, Stella did not feel safe enough at school to make that leap. Her teacher, Melia Swaleyji, said that other children laughed



Stella reading in front of her class

at her because when she tried to write she “held her pencil with five fingers as if she was holding a fresh Tilapia fish from the Shire River. She could hardly recognize or decode the letters she was trying to write!” The ridicule of her peers caused her to stay home from school more often than she attended, further hurting her chances of academic advancement.

On one of the rare occasions that Stella did go to school, Mrs. Swaleyi asked her to stay after class with some of her fellow students who needed extra help in reading. Using the techniques Mrs Swaleyi had learned through the USAID/Malawi Early Grade Reading Activity (EGRA) she started to teach Stella letter sounds, which Stella took to like a Talapia fish to the Shire River.



Stella in Class

Stella came to school the next day and the day after, staying after school to continue learning the building blocks of reading as prescribed through the teacher training and scripted lesson plans that Mrs. Swaleyi received through the EGRA. As well, Stella learned how to hold a pencil. Today, Stella’s absenteeism is a thing of the past and she has begun to decode words and comprehend what she is reading. She is even a group leader in her class.

Mrs. Swaleyi is grateful to the EGRA in helping her to learn methodologies that are effective in teaching her students to read at

unprecedented rates. She says “before the EGRA, our Standard One students were not reading, even at the end of the year. Now there are many students in my class who are reading just like Stella and we are barely half-way through the school year.”

Sadly, Stella’s initial dilemma is not an isolated case. In Malawi’s education system, girls are less likely to access school, remain in school, or learn. In fact, although boys and girls begin school at the same skill level, by the end of primary school a 10-percentage gap emerges between the sexes in the Primary School Leaving Certificate exam results, implying that girls gradually underachieve in the upper grades. The spillover effects of ignoring gender inequality include higher population growth rates as girls’ level of education is linked to having fewer children and the inability to combat gender-based violence and other forms of discrimination against women and girls. Programs like the EGRA can help to stem this inequality by keeping girls in school.

The USAID/Malawi Early Grade Reading Activity is a three-year, \$24-million activity implemented by RTI International. It focuses on the promotion of quality early grade reading instruction, the production of high quality reading and learning materials in Chichewa and English, an improved policy environment for reading at the national and local levels, and the building of a community of reading within and outside the school setting. A simultaneous impact evaluation is measuring the impact of this intervention and how household factors and other USAID/Malawi activities affect reading scores in treatment schools.

A Community Eager to Share Reading Success

The parents and teachers of Kadyaulendo School in the Lilongwe Rural West School District had information that they were bursting to share with their friends and neighbors. Before their eyes they were seeing a transformation in their children and students and needed to find an outlet to display and share their glorious news. “I could not believe my ears and eyes,” exclaimed Mrs. Akifodi, a mother with three children attending Kadyaulendo, “my child who just started Standard (Grade) One was reading better than my child in Standard Four.”



Children gathered at the Reading Fair at Kadyaulendo School

She attributed her child’s success to the methodologies and materials that had been introduced at the beginning of the school year through the USAID/Malawi Early Grade Reading Activity (EGRA). “I went to the school and saw that the EGRA was the reason why my child was reading. As a member of the school management committee (SMC) I was able to interact with the EGRA staff. I wanted to find how I could help the children who did not have the EGRA to learn how to read,” she explained.



Mr. Kaphikire demonstrating teaching techniques with Jofati

Through EGRA’s support and guidance on community mobilization, Mrs. Akifodi was able to work with community members to form after-school reading groups to help children to acquire and practice reading skills. “Children learned to read faster than they ever had before and the whole village was amazed.” Charity Chadewa the primary education advisor for the zone where Kadyaulendo School is located said, “the parents and

teachers of Kadyaulendo School have come together to support the EGRA. They were very excited about their children reading. I suggested that we show other schools and communities in the zone how they achieved their success. They loved the idea. Look at this girl –Elise Lenadi who is in Standard One, she can read fluently!”

Working together and without any outside resources, Mrs. Chadewa, the parents, and the teachers invited the District Education Manager, teachers from other schools, village headmen and community members from other villages, civil servants, parent-teacher associations (PTAs), SMCs, mother groups, and students to come and see the success of their children learning how to read.

At the event, David Kaphikire, a parent in charge of an after-school reading group demonstrated with one of his charges, Jofati, how to use the side of a building to write words and teach reading. Teachers demonstrated the EGRA lessons and

students showed their reading abilities by reading text (selected at random) to prove they had indeed gained reading skills. Billiati Kwachakale, one of the teachers, stated “we are so proud of our students for being able to read. I think we have demonstrated for others what can be done.”

Inspired by what they saw, members of PTAs, SMCs, mother groups, teachers, and traditional authorities gathered in their respective groups to discuss the role they could play in assuring that every child attends school and learns to read. Each group produced a list of action items that they would be responsible for in the support of reading and learning (one outcome is that parents will be fined a chicken if they do not send their children to school).

Zikani Kaunda, Chief of Party of the EGRA, was particularly pleased with the event. “Part of our work plan was to encourage communities to have these reading fairs,” he said, “and we are seeing schools like Kadyaulendo who are hosting them on their own. It really is a good indicator of how well the EGRA is working. We are confident that this is just the beginning.”



Mother's Group leader from Kadyaulendo School demonstrating how they will support reading

The USAID/Malawi Early Grade Reading Activity is a three-year, \$24-million activity implemented by RTI International. It focuses on the promotion of quality early grade reading instruction, the production of high quality reading and learning materials in Chichewa and English, an improved policy environment for reading at the national and local levels, and the building of a community of reading within and outside the school setting. A simultaneous impact evaluation is measuring the impact of this intervention and how household factors and other USAID/Malawi activities affect reading scores in treatment schools.



Judith Phiri with tools she uses for teaching her hearing impaired students

The View from the Top

Judith Phiri, a Standard (Grade) Three teacher, walks with a smile on her face because she is finally able to see her students reading after all her previous efforts had failed. She says “at last I have been able to climb up the mountain and get a glimpse of the Mountain View!” Fittingly, Mountain View is the name of the school for the deaf where she is teaching, located in Thyolo District in Malawi.

More than 13 percent of Malawian citizens live with some form of disability and over 85 percent live in rural areas including Mrs. Phiri's students. People with disabilities are

among the poorest and most vulnerable citizens in Malawi. They struggle against socio-cultural and economic barriers which prevent them from fully participating in society. They face a high level of discrimination and experience social exclusion, including the inability to access education, health services, justice or the right to earn a living or participate in decision making like others in their communities.

Even in the best of circumstances student academic achievement in Malawi is very low. Malawi ranks last amongst the 15 countries participating in the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) III standardized test in literacy. In addition, the USAID-funded Early Grade Reading Assessments conducted between 2010 and 2012 measured low performance by all students in the second and fourth years of schooling. This environment made Mrs. Phiri's challenge to teach her hearing impaired students to read, that much more profound.

However, Mrs. Phiri found help after the USAID/Malawi Early Grade Reading Activity (EGRA) invited her to a five-day training focused on effective early grade reading practices. She knew that the foundational challenge in learning to read for students who are hearing impaired is exposure to language, access to quality literacy instruction, and the use of relevant curriculum materials. Her training helped her to find ways to finally provide these for her students.

When Mrs. Phiri attended the EGRA training she began to brainstorm and imagine how she could adapt these techniques to the circumstances of her deaf students. "I thought: 'my students need good language and reading models, access to adapted instruction, and appropriate teaching materials' hence I decided to adapt and modify what I had learned to best suit my students," she explained as she displayed some of the materials she adapted for use in her class.

When asked what type of pedagogical techniques she has learned from her EGRA training that particularly helped her students she said:

- Using a semi-circular seating arrangement which offers her students the best advantage for seeing all class participants;
- Using a drum for signaling class schedule;
- Repeating the comments and questions of students;
- Signaling who is making a comment so the her students can focus on the speaker;
- Facing the class while speaking to make sure that all the students see her;
- Using as much visual information as possible to reinforce auditory information provided; and

Highlighting key words or concepts in printed words



Mrs. Phiri's students

Mrs. Phiri's hard work in using and adapting the EGRA techniques has paid off. She explained that due to challenges with oral language, learning usually progresses slowly for her students and she has found that they obtain skills at a pace on average three times slower than hearing students. She finds it beneficial that the EGRA approach encourages students to spend time on pre-reading skills that includes linking letters to sounds, then building syllables that are combined to make words. She says the approach helps her students to build a vocabulary base and improve their reading abilities. It also excites her that, at every stage of teaching, she has a chance to assess her students and check their understanding.

Where it used to take a year, her students are now reading after just one term. "It feels good seeing your

Standard One students succeed and overcoming the challenge of their hearing status. My students are faring well." If the excitement apparent on their faces as they continue to build their reading skills is any indication, Mrs. Phiri and her students are going to continue up that sometimes difficult mountain path toward reading mastery.

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Better Feedback on Reading Results

Timely and accurate data is of extreme importance for reading interventions such as the USAID/Malawi Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA). As mastery of reading can take years, it is necessary to measure the foundational skills of reading to better understand progress toward mastery. With Tangerine® software installed onto computer tablets to create and operate the Learner Assessment Tool (LAT) used to track of the progress of the EGRA



A Primary Education Advisor (PEA) administers the Learner Assessment Tool (LAT) to a student using a tablet computer

beneficiaries, useful data is being quickly processed and put into the hands of stakeholders at every level.

“The introduction of a tablet-based assessment for reading skills has been revolutionary for our data collection,” says Mike Nkhoma, the Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist for the EGRA, “cleaning data used to take weeks, now it takes just days.”

Tangerine® is electronic data collection software designed for use on mobile computers, including netbooks, tablet computers, and smartphones. Its primary use is to enable recording of students’ responses in oral early grade reading and mathematics skills assessments and interview responses from students, teachers, and principals on home and school context information.

Tangerine® was developed by RTI International and made available to the public through a GNU General Public License, meaning that Tangerine®’s source code is available for anyone who wishes to install and use Tangerine® on their own web server. This makes it both versatile and cost effective for those who wish to use and adapt this software.

The LAT is administered through Primary Education Advisors (PEAs), Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) supervisors who are each supporting between 12 and 20 schools through coaching teachers and assessing students in reading. The EGRA is building their capacity in using this new technology for administering assessments. “The PEAs have given positive feedback on the use of the tablets,” says Zikani Kaunda, Chief of Party of the EGRA. He continues, “they love the fact that the tablets are portable, they can administer tests without the need of a paper, pencil, or even a desk, and students are excited to use this technology.” Mr. Kaunda also adds that because the fields on the tablet screen must be filled before continuing and the tests are timed, the tablets provide more complete and accurate data than paper-based tests. “We are really finding these tablets extremely useful,” he exclaims.

“The best thing about the tablets is their utility,” said Steve Backman, Deputy Chief of Party of the EGRA. “People pronounce words and letter sounds differently,” he said “through a platform we call Papaya® we were able to upload standardized sounds for letters and common words on the tablets so PEAs can demonstrate the correct sounds and pronunciation, even if they cannot produce the sounds correctly themselves.” He went on to say “we are looking into even more ways that we can use them as teaching tools, from uploading videos of model lessons for PEAs to use in coaching sessions to seeing how they might be used by teachers for rapid assessment in their classroom.”

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other USAID/Malawi activities affect reading scores in treatment schools.

**Annex 1. Quarterly Financial Statement
Malawi Early Grade Reading Activity:
Fourth Quarter of EGRA, July 1, 2014–
September 30, 2014**

Recipient: Malawi Early Grade Reading Activity
Task Order Number: Prime Contract AID-612-C-13-00002
Performance Period: June 17, 2013–September 17, 2016
Quarterly Financial Report (as of September 30, 2014)

	Original or Revised Total Estimated Cost	Obligated Amount to Date	Invoiced as of Aug. 31, 2014	Total Costs Incurred to Date (includes Sept 2014)	Outstanding Commitments	Total Expenditures	Unexpended Balance
Component 1	\$9,413,517		\$2,740,724.72	\$3,510,344.74	\$77,505.05	\$3,587,849.79	
Component 2	\$3,229,560		\$315,139.98	\$402,685.86	\$210,000.00	\$612,685.86	
Component 3	\$7,655,094		\$899,850.19	\$955,975.35	\$245,767.25	\$1,201,742.60	
Component 4	\$3,694,735		\$879,469.17	\$950,215.11	\$116,416.81	\$1,066,631.92	
Total	\$23,992,906	\$11,704,374.00	\$4,835,184.06	\$5,819,221.06	\$649,689.11	\$6,468,910.17	\$5,235,463.83