



USAID
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Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2015

Period: Oct 1, 2014–Sept 30, 2015

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Annual Report Fiscal Year 2015

**Period of Performance:
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Prepared by: EGRA Management and Component Leaders

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Abbreviations

AA	Accounts Assistant
ACCD	African Centre for Communication and Development
ACCO	Assistant Center Coordinator
AMEP	Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
ASPIRE	Girls' Empowerment through Education and Health Activity
BLK	Balaka
BT	Blantyre Rural
bTG	blueTree Group
CDA	Community Development Assistant
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CERT	Center for Educational Research and Training
CH	Chichewa
CIP	International Potato Center
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
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 Education Committee
DEM	District Education Manager
DEP	Department of Education Planning
DERG	Disability Education Resource Guide
DERP	EdData II Data for Education Research and Programming
DGVP	Disability, Gender, and Vulnerable Populations
DHT	deputy head teacher
DIAS	Department of Inspectorate and Advisory Services
DME	District Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

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
EGRP	Early Grade Reading Program
EMIS	education management information systems
EN	English
ESIP	Education Sector Improvement Plan
ETW	Expert Trainers Workshop
FAWEMA	Forum for African Women Educationalists in Malawi
FY	fiscal year
GMTLM	Guidelines for the Management of Teaching and Learning Materials
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GUCs	grants under contract
GVH	Group Village Headman
HRM	Human Resources Manager
HT	head teacher
IEP	individualized education plan
INVC	Integrating Nutrition in Value Chains
IP	implementing partner
IT	information technology
JCE	Junior Certificate Examination
KT	Key Teacher
LAT	learner assessment test
LB	learner book
LCD	local capacity development
LEA	Local Education Authority
LLRE	Lilongwe Rural East
LLRW	Lilongwe Rural West
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MEAL	monitoring, evaluation, and learning
MEDA	Malawi Electoral and Decentralization Activity
MG	Mother Group
MGCDSW	Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare
MHG	Machinga
MIE	Malawi Institute of Education

MMAP	Mobile Money Acceleration Program
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MOU	memorandum of understanding
MUB	Malawian Union of the Blind
MWK	Malawian Kwacha
MZN	Mzimba North
NBM	National Bank of Malawi
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NLS	National Library Service
NPC	National Primary Curriculum
NRS	National Reading Strategy
NS	Ntchisi
NTC	National Training Coordinator
NU	Ntcheu
OAI	O'Brien and Associates International
ODL	open and distant learning
ORF	oral reading fluency
PA	phonological awareness
PBR	pupil:book ratio
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
PLOCA	Participatory Local Capacity Assessment
PPP	public-private partnership
PSLCE	Primary School Learning Certificate Examination
PTA	parent-teacher association
Q	Quarter
QPR	quarterly performance report
RAN	rapid automatized naming
READ	Reading for Ethiopia's Achievement Developed
RIC	Reading Interventions Coordination
RTiaB	Reading Tools in a Box
SA	Salima
SEG	sustainable economic growth
SEGRA	Supporting Early Grade Reading Activity
SEGREM	Strengthening Early Grade Reading in Malawi
SEMA	Senior Education Methods Advisor
SEPA	Senior Education Policy Advisor

SI	Social Impact
SIP	school improvement plan
SLP	scripted lesson plan
SMC	school management committee
SMS	short messaging service
SNE	special needs education
SOC	statement of collaboration
SOW	scope of work
SSDI	Support for Service Delivery Integration
Std	Standard
STEPs	Supporting the Efforts of Partners Program
STEP	Standard 2 English with Phonics
STTA	short-term technical assistant
SY	school year
TDC	Teacher Development Center
TFD	Theater for Development
TG	teacher's guide
TLM	teaching and learning materials
TNM	Telekom Networks Malawi
TO	Thyolo
TOF	training of facilitators
TOI	teacher observation instrument
TTC	teacher training college
TWG	Technical Working Group
Tx	Treatment
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCRF	volunteer community reading facilitator
VDC	Village Development Committee
VRC	village reading center
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
ZA	Zomba Rural
ZTW	zonal training workshop

Introduction

This annual report provides an update on the progress of work toward planned tasks and activities under the Early Grade Reading Activity (EGRA) during the period from October 1, 2014, to September 30, 2015. 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 Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (AMEP). Also included are sections updating status on 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 quarter 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 1–3. 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 ¹
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
INT: Integrating USAID's Country Development Cooperation Strategy

¹ *Task 2-4: Production and Distribution of Chalk Slates* was removed from EGRA's scope of work via a contract modification on April 27, 2015.

Progress by EGRA Components and Crosscutting Issues

This section takes each component and task in turn and describes progress made from October 1, 2014, to September 30, 2015, 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. 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. Following a presentation of selected highlights from the year's activities, 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

Component 1 Highlights for FY 2015

Three developments that emerged over the course of fiscal year (FY) 2015 are particularly noteworthy. The first is the sense of ownership of EGRA activities that personnel of MoEST have increasingly demonstrated. Since the launch of the Activity in July 2013, Director Raphael Agabu of the Department of Inspectorate and Advisory Services (DIAS) has repeatedly stated in meetings that “EGRA is a MoEST project.” However, during this reporting period officers from DIAS, the Department of Basic Education (DBE), and Department for Teacher Education and Development (DTED) took the initiative to visit EGRA schools to develop their own impressions and perspectives on school-based instructional and coaching practices. By conducting these visits in advance of planning meetings EGRA hosted to develop training manuals and refresher materials for teacher-training cascades, these personnel were equipped to contribute to the materials-development process as informed expert participants. This in turn afforded EGRA's technical experts the opportunity to further develop these officers' skills in understanding and evaluating the intervention by engaging in robust technical discussions around what they each had observed and what it might mean.

The second positive development of FY 2015 has been the emergence of strong key teachers who serve alongside primary education advisors (PEAs) as co-facilitators of teacher-training workshops. Key teachers have proven to be a valuable resource for extending teachers' learning and growth during the periods between termly training events, especially in zones where PEAs are particularly busy and have elected not to prioritize coaching visits. In FY 2016 EGRA intends to explore how these key teachers can be further leveraged to enhance the value (or increase the frequency) of school- or cluster-based CPD events.

Finally, over the course of FY 2015 EGRA has strengthened its efforts to support school-based head teachers (HTs) and deputy head teachers (DHTs) in their roles as

curriculum leaders. Despite participating in more training days than any of the teachers in Standards 1–3, HTs were often precluded from providing effective coaching and mentorship by both administrative duties and a lack of clarity on their roles as curriculum leaders. During the August–September 2015 training cascade EGRA elected to include DHTs in all training days and dedicated a day to specifically briefing HTs on the expectations placed upon them to demonstrate leadership in their schools and how best they might meet those expectations. In FY2016 EGRA will provide school administrators with additional tools—*School Managers’ Observation Forms* and leadership files—to assist them in carrying out this role.

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

1.1.1 Appropriate CPD training materials developed in collaboration with MoEST

Throughout FY 2015 EGRA prepared for training cascades in close collaboration with personnel from MoEST. Prior to the December training cascade, EGRA held a review meeting on November 3, 2015, with counterparts from DIAS, DTED, and DBE. The group agreed upon a pre-Term 2 training schedule that was four days long and incorporated 1 ½ days each for English Standard 1 (EN1) and Chichewa Standard 2 (CH2), as well as 1 day for the use of supplementary readers. EGRA developed the draft training manuals based on those guidelines, and received approval on November 24, 2015, from MoEST and USAID to use them. EGRA finalized the manuals once participants at the Expert Training Workshop (ETW) has interacted with them and provided input, and the manuals were printed and delivered prior to the training of facilitators (TOF) workshops.

EGRA and MoEST counterparts held a follow-up meeting on February 12, 2015, to review the prior term’s processes and plan for the pre-Term 3 training cascade. The meeting participants noted that the scheduling was problematic for open and distant learning (ODL) teacher trainees, who faced conflicts between EGRA activities and the training obligations under their own ODL program. Planning meeting participants agreed to experiment with a modified schedule for the March to April training cascade, which would resolve those conflicts and enable ODL trainees to participate fully in EGRA’s training. Because coaching and classroom observations had noted that teachers were more proficient with the first two elements of the lesson cycle (the “I do” and “We do”, which are more traditionally teacher-centered) than the third element (the “You do”, which is more learner-centered and requires children to actively practice the skill in question), participants agreed that the pre-Term 3 training cascade would deliberately re-emphasize the full lesson cycle. Participants agreed to allocate 1 day each to CH2, EN1, and supplementary readers, for a 3-day workshop.

Once again, EGRA developed draft versions of the training manuals and then revised them in collaboration with MoEST officials and teacher training college (TTC) lecturers during the ETW held March 4–6 at MIE in Domasi. EGRA submitted the final draft to MoEST on March 5, 2015, and USAID cleared it March 9, 2015. This allowed sufficient time for the final versions of the training manuals to be printed and delivered ahead of the TOF.

Logistically, the July–August training cycle was EGRA’s most complex to date. The material to be covered included two entirely new courses—CH3 and EN2—in addition to refresher training for Standard 1 teachers in CH1 and EN1, for Standard 2 teachers in CH2, and for teachers in all standards on the use of supplementary readers.

EGRA consulted its colleagues from MoEST regarding preparations for this round at a planning meeting which was held June 18, 2015. Participants agreed that each level of the training cascade—the ETW, TOF, and zonal training workshops (ZTW)—would last for five days and that all teachers from all three standards would receive the full five days of training.² For this round, EGRA took a different approach to developing the training manuals—rather than first developing drafts and then incorporating comments from the ETW, EGRA invited MoEST participants to develop the materials directly under EGRA’s guidance. MoEST personnel agreed to this approach, but indicated that effectively writing training manuals for the August cascade would require classroom monitoring visits so the training process could be informed by MoEST’s concrete, firsthand observations on classroom implementation.

An additional change to the standard training process was the inclusion of DHTs and Assistant Center Coordinators³ (ACCOs) among the ranks of the ZTW trainees. By including the DHTs and the ACCOs EGRA and its MoEST advisors hoped to expand the circle of potential pedagogical leaders who could provide school-based mentorship and support to teachers.

1.1.2 CPD trainings delivered to Standard 1–3 teachers and HTs

As discussed above, in FY 2015 EGRA continued delivering termly teacher-training cascades in close collaboration with MoEST counterparts. The cascades included three levels: a single ETW per round, followed by a single TOF per round, followed by ZTWs.⁴

In general, the ETWs are led by EGRA staff, with participation and peer leadership from MoEST personnel from the various departments with which EGRA works (DIAS, DBE, DTED), Malawi Institute of Education (MIE), and the TTCs. The participants in the ETWs are then dispatched to lead the TOFs; the facilitators trained at TOFs generally include Coordinating Primary Education Advisors (CPEAs), PEAs, key teachers (KTs), special needs teachers, and Senior Education Methods Advisors (SEMs). The participants in the TOFs then become the facilitators at the ZTWs, where the audience typically consists of HTs and Standard 1–3 teachers.

Early in FY 2015, EGRA conducted the ETW, TOF, and ZTWs in consecutive weeks. However, feedback from the field indicated that teachers who were part of the MoEST ODL teacher certification program were unable to participate in the regularly scheduled ZTWs for the pre-Term 2 round of trainings. EGRA thus introduced a week’s gap between each level of the training cascade for the pre-Term 3 round of trainings. In addition to shifting the schedule enough to enable ODL teachers’ participation, this rendered logistical processes related to financial management of workshop costs (including liquidation of advances for per diems, materials purchases, etc.) and delivery of training materials significantly more manageable. EGRA has elected to maintain this spaced approach for future rounds of training.

² The need to provide five full days of training for each standard’s teachers led to standards being trained in consecutive weeks, rather than in parallel (see Table 2).

³ These are the MoEST personnel responsible for staffing and managing the Teacher Development Centers (TDCs) in each Zone.

⁴ Throughout FY 2015 EGRA delivered training in 18 clusters in addition to the 134 zones. The trainings were conducted concurrently in both types of locations. Providing some trainings at the cluster level facilitated participation of head teachers and teachers from schools that are far from their zonal centers. For ease of communication, this report will just use the term “zonal trainings” rather than “zonal/cluster-level trainings.”

In August 2015 EGRA adjusted its approach to ZTWs and invited deputy head teachers (DHTs) and the teacher development centers' (TDCs) assistant center coordinating officers (ACCOs) to attend the trainings. This decision was made in response to head teachers' reported inability to provide school-based coaching and curriculum leadership because of their administrative burdens and because of reports that teachers routinely visited TDCs and posed questions to the ACCOs on curriculum matters.

Incorporating these additional trainees and needing to provide initial training for two courses (EN2 and CH3) in addition to refresher trainings for three courses (CH1, EN1, and CH2) required shifting to a training schedule that provided a separate week for the teachers from each standard.

EGRA's M&E reviews during FY15 noted that its existing mechanism for capturing data about attendance at ZTWs did not adequately track the participation of teachers who were certified as special needs educators. EGRA altered its M&E trackers and also extended invitations to the ZTWs to all teachers at special needs resource centers in its intervention districts; as a result, the ZTW participation table for August 2015 includes SNE Teachers as a separate category.

Table 2 below details the dates and locations for each level of each round of training conducted in FY 2015.

Table 2. Dates and Locations of Training Workshops, FY 2015

Training Level	pre-Term 2 (SY 2014/2015)	pre-Term 3 (SY 2014/2015)	pre-Term 1 (SY 2015/2016)
ETWs	December 25–27, 2014	March 4–6, 2015	July 13–17, 2015
	Salima	Domasi	Mponda TDC, Zomba
TOFs	December 8–12, 2014	March 17–19, 2015	July 27–31, 2015
	Various Districts ⁵	Various Districts	Various Districts
ZTWs	December 15–31, 2014	March 30–April 4, 2015	August 10–14, 2015 August 17–21, 2015 August 31–September 4, 2015
	Zones & clusters	Zones & clusters	Zones & clusters

The duration in days and the thematic focus of each day's training varied over time throughout the year. **Table 3** below details the allocation of days for each round of training delivered during FY 2015.

Table 3. Duration and Thematic Focus of Training Workshops, FY 2015

⁵ Cohort A TOFs took place at a center location in each of the 11 districts; because not all districts have Cohort B zones and schools, TOFs were consolidated to four districts (Blantyre Rural, Machinga, Lilongwe Rural East, and Mzimba North), with each of the four centers hosting Cohort B PEAs from two districts.

Topic	Cohort A				Cohort B			
	Std 1	Std 2	Std 3	HT	Std 1	Std 2	Std 3	HT
August 2014 ⁶								
English	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Chichewa	-	4	-	4	4	4	4	4
Subtotal	3	7	3	7	7	7	7	7
December 2014								
Teaching reading with supplementary readers	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
English	2	-	-	2	2	-	-	2
Chichewa	-	2	-	2	2	-	-	2
Subtotal	3	3	1	5	5	1	1	5
March 2015								
Teaching reading with supplementary readers	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
English	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	1
Chichewa	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	1
Subtotal	2	2	1	3	3	1	1	3
August 2015								
Teaching reading using supplementary reading materials and Tools for gathering EGRA monitoring data	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
English and Chichewa refresher	4	-	1	1 [†]	4	-	1	1 [†]
HT Briefing	-	-	-	1 [‡]	-	-	-	1 [‡]

⁶ While the August 2014 training cascade did not take place in FY 2015, it is included here for the sake of comparison.

[†] DHTs and ACCOs only.

[‡] HTs only.

Chichewa Std 2 (initial)	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2
Chichewa Std 2 (refresher)	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chichewa Std 3	-	-	3	3	-	-	3	2
English Std 2	-	3	-	3	-	2	-	2
Subtotal	5	5	5	8	5	5	5	8

Table 4 below details participation in each of the three ETWs EGRA conducted in FY 2015 by institutional affiliation and sex.

Table 4. Participants at Expert Trainers' Workshops, FY 2015

MoEST	Institution	pre-Term 2 (SY 2014/2015) December 25- 27, 2014			pre-Term 3 (SY 2014/2015) March 4-6, 2015			pre-Term 1 (SY 2015/2016) July 13-17, 2015			Total		
		M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT
		MIE	1	-	1	2	-	2	-	-	-	3	-
DIAS	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	3	2	1	3	
DSNE	1	-	1	1	-	1	2	-	2	4	-	4	
DBE	-	2	2	-	1	1	-	1	1	2	2	4	
DTED	-	-	0	2	-	2	2	-	2	4	-	4	
	Chancellor College	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1
	Domasi College of Education (DCE)	-	1	1	-	-	0	-	2	2	-	3	3
	Montfort College	-	1	1	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	1	1
	Center for Education Research & Training (CERT)	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	0	-	2	2

Education Divisions	2	-	2	-	-	0	-	-	0	2	-	2
TTCs	5	8	13	9	6	15	10	7	17	24	21	45
Subtotal	9	13	22	15	8	23	16	11	27	42	30	72
EGRA	10	7	17	11	7	18	10	8	18	31	22	53
CRECCOM	-	-	0	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2
Grand Total	19	20	39	11	8	19	26	20	46	31	24	55

Table 5 below details participation in each of the three rounds of TOFs EGRA conducted in FY 2015 by district, cohort, and sex. ⁷

Table 5. Participants at Training of Facilitators Workshops, FY 2015

District	pre-Term 2 (SY 2014/2015) December 25-27, 2014			pre-Term 3 (SY 2014/2015) March 4-6, 2015			pre-Term 1 (SY 2015/2016) July 27-31, 2015			Total Attendance		
	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT
Cohort A												
Balaka	17	12	29	17	12	29	19	11	30	53	23	42
Blantyre Rural	9	8	17	9	9	18	10	10	20	28	18	29
Lilongwe Rural East	23	12	35	18	12	30	19	11	30	60	23	42
Lilongwe Rural West	14	8	22	14	8	22	14	10	24	42	18	32
Machinga	13	7	20	16	6	22	11	8	19	40	15	25
Mzimba North	14	13	27	15	13	28	13	14	27	42	27	40
Ntcheu	13	10	23	11	14	25	15	12	27	39	22	41
Ntchisi	12	11	23	9	11	20	10	10	20	31	21	31
Salima	23	9	32	21	8	29	22	10	32	66	19	40
Thyolo	12	6	18	13	6	19	16	6	22	41	12	28
Zomba Rural	12	6	18	11	12	23	10	12	22	33	18	34
Cohort A Subtotal	162	111	273	154	111	265	159	114	273	475	225	384
Cohort B												
Balaka	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0
Blantyre Rural	5	4	9	5	4	9	5	3	8	10	12	12
Lilongwe Rural East	4	3	7	4	4	8	4	2	6	8	9	10
Lilongwe Rural West	1	3	4	1	3	4	1	4	5	2	8	8
Machinga	6	3	9	6	3	9	6	3	9	12	12	12
Mzimba North	8	6	14	6	7	13	7	7	14	15	19	21
Ntcheu	9	3	12	8	4	12	7	5	12	16	16	16

⁷ Readers interested in the breakdown of participants by role (PEA vs. KT vs. Special Needs Teacher vs. SEMA) can consult EGRA's quarterly reports for more detail.

District	pre-Term 2 (SY 2014/2015) December 25-27, 2014			pre-Term 3 (SY 2014/2015) March 4-6, 2015			pre-Term 1 (SY 2015/2016) July 27-31, 2015			Total Attendance		
	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT
Ntchisi	4	2	6	5	1	6	5	1	6	9	8	7
Salima	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0
Thyolo	8	7	15	9	5	14	8	6	14	16	22	19
Zomba Rural	5	4	9	6	4	10	6	4	10	11	14	14
Total Cohort B	50	35	85	50	35	85	49	35	84	99	120	119
Total Attendance at all TOFs												
Totals	212	146	0	358	154	50	146	350	208	149	357	574

Table 6 below details participation in the December 2014 round of ZTWs EGRA conducted in FY 2015 by district, cohort, and sex.

Table 6. Participants at Zonal Training Workshops, December 2014

District	Head Teachers			Std 1 Teachers			Std 2 Teachers			Std 3 Teachers			Total			
	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	
Cohort A																
Balaka	120	30	150	110	154	264	116	150	266	103	118	221	449	452	901	
Blantyre Rural	57	12	69	33	139	172	44	142	186	52	112	164	186	405	591	
Lilongwe Rural East	147	6	153	95	175	270	125	366	491	150	174	324	517	721	1238	
Lilongwe Rural West	101	21	122	96	199	295	99	203	302	179	129	308	475	552	1027	
Machinga	76	11	87	83	81	164	87	62	149	103	59	162	349	213	562	
Mzimba North	102	5	107	55	32	87	58	33	91	40	19	59	255	89	344	
Ntcheu	95	20	115	98	105	203	78	130	208	105	97	202	376	352	728	
Ntchisi	62	8	70	63	58	121	57	49	106	69	37	106	251	152	403	
Salima	128	11	139	100	161	261	100	139	239	122	107	229	450	418	868	
Thyolo	87	7	94	75	106	181	93	84	177	99	74	173	354	271	625	
Zomba Rural	88	6	94	66	124	190	62	104	166	105	86	191	321	320	641	
Cohort A Subtotal	1063	137	1200	874	1334	2208	919	1462	2381	1127	1012	2139	3983	3945	7928	
Cohort B																
Balaka	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	
Blantyre Rural	27	7	34	28	40	68	26	36	62	42	42	84	123	125	248	

District	Head Teachers			Std 1 Teachers			Std 2 Teachers			Std 3 Teachers			Total		
	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT
Lilongwe Rural East	32	2	34	34	34	68	29	23	52	36	15	51	131	74	205
Lilongwe Rural West	18	2	20	27	24	51	22	25	47	31	18	49	98	69	167
Machinga	39	3	42	37	33	70	44	22	66	48	34	82	168	92	260
Mzimba North	102	5	107	55	32	87	58	33	91	40	19	59	255	89	344
Ntcheu	61	8	69	62	46	108	62	46	108	54	22	76	239	122	361
Ntchisi	29	1	30	28	18	46	27	14	41	31	12	43	115	45	160
Salima	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0
Thyolo	47	12	59	50	80	130	65	61	126	100	52	152	262	205	467
Zomba Rural	45	5	50	44	48	92	44	56	100	48	61	109	181	170	351
Cohort B Subtotal	400	45	445	365	355	720	377	316	693	430	275	705	1572	991	2563
Total Attendance at all ZTWs															
Totals	1463	182	1645	1239	1689	2928	1296	1778	3074	1557	1287	2844	5555	4936	10491

Table 7 below details participation in the March 2015 round of ZTWs EGRA conducted in FY 2015 by district, cohort, and sex.

Table 7. Participants at Zonal Training Workshops, March 2015

District	Head Teachers			Std 1 Teachers			Std 2 Teachers			Std 3 Teachers			Total		
	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT
Cohort A															
Balaka	127	27	154	118	153	271	124	147	271	133	151	284	502	478	980

District	Head Teachers			Std 1 Teachers			Std 2 Teachers			Std 3 Teachers			Total		
	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT
Blantyre Rural	57	12	69	30	135	165	34	143	177	59	134	193	180	424	604
Lilongwe Rural East	114	16	130	109	242	351	128	220	348	150	211	361	501	689	1190
Lilongwe Rural West	100	21	121	83	203	286	88	191	279	84	182	266	355	597	952
Machinga	78	11	89	94	127	284	89	69	168	123	64	187	384	271	728
Mzimba North	102	5	107	71	38	109	60	40	100	58	56	114	291	139	430
Ntcheu	94	19	113	82	134	216	99	104	203	102	99	201	377	356	733
Ntchisi	68	8	76	62	58	120	65	42	107	73	46	119	268	154	422
Salima	129	9	138	95	148	243	89	126	215	125	117	242	438	400	838
Thyolo	71	10	81	78	101	179	92	87	179	106	87	193	347	285	632
Zomba Rural	77	115	192	84	97	181	102	82	184	88	6	94	351	300	651
Cohort A Subtotal	1017	253	1270	906	1436	2405	970	1251	2231	1101	1153	2254	3994	4093	8160
Cohort B															
Balaka	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0
Blantyre Rural	28	6	34	24	49	73	30	38	68	34	44	78	116	137	253
Lilongwe Rural East	30	2	32	43	35	78	29	17	46	27	30	57	129	84	213
Lilongwe Rural West	21	-	21	30	23	53	25	23	48	28	20	48	104	66	170
Machinga	39	3	42	36	38	74	36	23	59	49	32	81	160	96	256
Mzimba North	66	6	72	29	60	89	26	47	73	36	44	80	157	157	314
Ntcheu	63	9	72	69	59	128	67	37	104	68	37	105	267	142	409

District	Head Teachers			Std 1 Teachers			Std 2 Teachers			Std 3 Teachers			Total		
	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT
Ntchisi	29	1	30	32	20	52	26	13	39	31	14	45	118	48	166
Salima	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0
Thyolo	70	10	80	51	83	134	73	61	134	97	60	157	291	214	505
Zomba Rural	35	72	107	35	60	95	55	53	108	45	5	50	170	190	360
Total Cohort B	381	109	490	349	427	776	367	312	679	415	286	701	1512	1134	2646
Total Attendance at all ZTWs															
Totals	1398	362	1760	1255	1863	3181	1337	1563	2910	1516	1439	2955	5506	5227	10806

Table 8 below details participation in the August 2015 round of ZTWs EGRA conducted in FY 2015 by district, cohort, and sex.

Table 8. Participants at Zonal Training Workshops, August 2015

District	Head Teachers			Deputy HTs			ACCOs			SNE Teachers			Std 1 Teachers			Std 2 Teachers			Std 3 Teachers			Total		
	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT
Cohort A																								
Balaka	118	36	154	127	28	155	12	-	12	6	7	13	133	135	268	128	127	255	164	133	297	688	466	1154
Blantyre Rural	58	11	69	48	22	70	5	1	6	5	1	6	30	127	157	42	126	168	79	114	193	267	402	669
Lilongwe Rural East	118	13	131	99	30	129	8	4	12	3	2	5	105	239	344	124	65	189	135	142	277	592	495	1087
Lilongwe Rural West	100	23	123	94	30	124	6	4	10	3	2	5	93	208	301	92	206	298	101	167	268	489	640	1129

District	Head Teachers			Deputy HTs			ACCOs			SNE Teachers			Std 1 Teachers			Std 2 Teachers			Std 3 Teachers			Total		
	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT
Machinga	78	10	88	79	10	89	4	2	6	4	-	4	85	73	158	79	63	142	94	63	157	423	221	644
Mzimba North	106	4	110	94	15	109	10	-	10	2	1	3	63	51	114	50	36	86	66	43	109	391	150	541
Ntcheu	94	21	115	95	21	116	8	1	9	4	6	20	128	42	170	144	110	254	144	105	249	627	306	933
Ntchisi	64	6	70	58	12	70	7	-	7	2	1	3	72	50	122	67	41	108	76	37	113	346	147	493
Salima	123	15	138	119	19	138	9	3	12	4	4	8	107	135	242	87	134	221	125	115	240	574	425	999
Thyolo	88	6	94	88	6	94	6	1	7	5	1	6	90	102	192	77	86	163	107	61	168	461	263	724
Zomba Rural	86	8	94	82	83	165	7	2	9	6	-	6	83	98	181	83	98	181	92	108	200	439	397	836
Cohort A Subtotal	1033	153	1186	983	276	1259	82	88	100	54	25	79	989	0	9	973	2	5	1183	1088	2271	5297	3912	9209
Cohort B																								
Balaka	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0
Blantyre Rural	28	7	35	35	8	43	2	1	3	2	2	4	26	43	69	25	39	64	25	41	66	143	141	284
Lilongwe Rural East	30	1	31	27	5	32	3	-	3	2	1	3	28	34	62	27	32	59	31	35	66	148	108	256
Lilongwe Rural West	20	1	21	19	2	21	1	1	2	-	-	0	38	24	62	24	25	49	32	18	50	134	71	205

District	Head Teachers			Deputy HTs			ACCOs			SNE Teachers			Std 1 Teachers			Std 2 Teachers			Std 3 Teachers			Total																										
	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT																								
Machinga	39	3	42	36	3	39	1	1	2	-	-	0	41	34	75	42	23	65	46	29	75	205	93	298																								
Mzimba North	67	5	72	56	16	72	5	-	5	5	1	6	48	69	117	35	44	79	37	44	81	253	179	432																								
Ntcheu	62	7	69	51	17	68	4	-	4	-	-	0	79	42	121	78	31	109	78	31	109	352	128	480																								
Ntchisi	28	2	30	29	1	30	3	-	3	-	-	0	27	21	48	25	13	38	38	8	46	150	45	195																								
Salima	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0																								
Thyolo	48	11	59	50	9	59	4	1	5	1	5	8	23	88	82	170	112	62	174	125	63	188	442	236	678																							
Zomba Rural	46	4	50	40	10	50	5	-	5	2	-	2	45	61	106	45	61	106	44	47	91	227	183	410																								
Total Cohort B	368	41	409	343	71	414	28	4	32	2	1	6	2	38	420	410	830	413	330	743	456	316	772	205	118	4	4	3238																				
Total Attendance at all ZTWs																																																
Totals	140	19	159	132	34	167	11	2	13	8	3	11	140	167	307	138	142	280	163	140	304	735	509	1244	1	4	5	6	7	3	0	2	2	0	7	7	9	0	9	6	2	8	9	4	3	1	6	7

Over its two years of implementation, EGRA's practice has been to ensure that training manuals, teacher guides, and learner books are all present at training venues and in schools before the ZTWs take place. This ensures that training participants are fully equipped with the materials they require to derive maximum value from the training process, as well as enables the teachers to begin implementing the courses immediately upon return to the classroom. As a result of internal political disputes at MoEST and associated delays in approving the final product, during the August 2015 training cascade, for the first time under EGRA, a full complement of training guides and learner books was not available for the *Standard 2 English with Phonics (STEP)* (EN2) course. Trainees made do by sharing training manuals and teacher's guides and referring to earlier versions of the learner books; while this approach was suboptimal, it was preferable to delaying the training until MoEST had approved the course materials. (Refer to the *Coordination regarding English curricula* subsection under [Challenges, Solutions, and Actions Taken](#) for a more detailed discussion of the issues.)

1.1.3 Cost-effectiveness of providing CPD training in target zones evaluated, documented

Conducting a rigorous analysis of costs associated with EGRA's training model has proven to be a subtle and complex exercise that required several rounds of internal meetings involving technical personnel, the finance team, and senior management throughout Q2 and Q3 of FY 2015. EGRA developed a model of cost-effectiveness that was based upon several simplifying assumptions regarding salary costs of MoEST headquarters personnel, the pre-existence of the necessary training materials, the number of days of training a teacher must receive to be considered "fully trained" according to the EGRA approach, etc. EGRA senior management presented the results of this model to the MoEST directors in Q4, inviting them to review and critique the assumptions. The Director of DIAS demurred and instructed EGRA to present the model in detail to technical line staff from DTED, DBE, and the Department of Education Planning (DEP). The presentation took place early in FY 2016.

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

Table 9. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 1-1

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
	1.1.1.1 Review and planning meetings held with relevant MoEST technical staff	Oct 2014, Feb–Mar, May 2015	Completed: Review and planning meeting held on June 18
1.1.1 Appropriate CPD training materials developed in collaboration with MoEST	1.1.1.2.EN1 Development of CPD training manuals to accompany EN1 SLPs	Oct–Nov 2014, Feb–Mar 2015	Completed: Training manual for Module 3 developed in February and March
	1.1.1.2.EN2 Development of CPD training manuals to accompany EN2 SLPs	May–Jul 2015	Completed: Manual contents planned June 18, workshop to develop manuals took place June 29–July 3

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
	1.1.1.2.CH1 Review and update CPD training manuals to accompany <i>Maziko a Kuwerenga</i> for CH1 (Cohort B)	Oct–Nov 2014, Feb–Mar 2015	Completed: Updated in March 2015
	1.1.1.2.CH2 Development of CPD training manuals to accompany CH2 SLPs	Oct–Nov 2014, Feb–Mar 2015	Completed: Training manual for Module 3 developed in March 2015
	1.1.1.2.CH3 Development of CPD training manuals to accompany CH3 SLPs	May–Jul 2015	Completed: Manual contents planned June 18, workshop to develop manuals took place June 29–July 3
	1.1.1.3 Development of CPD training manuals to accompany decodable readers, leveled readers, & story cards	Nov 2014, May–Jul 2015	Completed: Training manual for Module 3 developed in February and March. Refresher training manual finalized in Q3
	1.1.1.4 Submission of CPD training materials to MoEST for official endorsement	Nov 2014, Mar, Jun–Jul 2015	Completed: Module 3 submitted to MoEST March 5
	1.1.1.5 Submission of CPD training materials to USAID for official clearance	Oct–Nov 2014, Mar, Jun–Jul 2015	Completed: Module 3 cleared by USAID March 9
	1.1.1.6 Print and distribute training materials	Nov 2014, Mar, Jul–Aug 2015	On track: Completed for March 2015 trainings
1.1.2 CPD trainings delivered to S1–S3 teachers and HTs	1.1.2.1 Equipping of expert trainers (MoEST, MIE, TTC lecturers, EGRA staff) in preparation for Training of Facilitators (TOF)	Dec 2014, Mar–Apr, Jul 2015	Completed: Conducted for Module 3 March 4–6
	1.1.2.2 Expert trainers deliver TOF for PEAs, key teachers, and SEMAs	Dec 2014, Apr, Aug 2015	Completed: Conducted for Module 3 March 17–19
	1.1.2.3 PEAs deliver training workshops for S1–S3 teachers, HTs	Dec 2014, Jan, Apr, Aug 2015	Completed: Conducted for Module 3 March 30–April 4
1.1.3 Cost-effectiveness of providing CPD training in target zones evaluated, documented	1.1.3.1 Per-teacher cost of EGRA-style CPD training calculated from financial records	Jan, May, Sep 2015	Completed: Presented to MoEST during Q4 Directors' Meeting.
	1.1.3.2 Alternative cost-effective methods explored with MoEST for their decision and further action	Dec 2014, Mar, Jun, Sep 2015	Delayed: Pending presentation of 1.1.3.1 to MoEST technical staff in FY 2016 Q1

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

Throughout FY 2015, EGRA continued to invite learners to attend ZTWs for a day of practicum during which the trainees could practice and demonstrate the skills they were learning in a concrete fashion with a classroom of real children. Ahead of the March 2015 training cascade, EGRA and MoEST jointly noted the value of enabling facilitators to undergo this practicum experience during TOFs as well, so a practicum day was included in the TOF schedule. In preparations for the August cascade, however, EGRA and MoEST decided to drop the practicum day from the TOF schedule while increasing the number of participants in each ZTW-level practicum day from 20 to 60 in order to more accurately represent real-world conditions.

Table 10 below presents details regarding the learners who participated in teaching practicum days during FY 2015.

Table 10. Learners Participating in Practicum Days During Training Workshops, FY 2015

District	pre-Term 2 (SY 2014/2015) December 15-31, 2014			pre-Term 3 (SY 2014/2015) March 17-19, 2015 March 30-April 4, 2015			pre-Term 1 (SY 2015/2016) July 27-31, 2015		
	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT
	TOF	-	-	0	110	110	220	-	-
ZTW	1667	1628	3295	1727	1776	3503	4543	4754	9297
Totals	1667	1628	3295	1837	1886	3723	4543	4754	9297

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

Table 11. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 1-2

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
1.2.1 CPD includes a practicum session where methods can be modeled and teachers can practice	1.2.1.1 Teacher trainings include a practicum session with learners in the classroom	Dec 2014; Apr, Aug 2015	Completed: Completed for August 2015 trainings
1.2.2 Children recruited to attend practicum session of teacher-training workshops	1.2.2.1 Parents, communities engaged to identify/mobilize children for the teaching practicum	Dec 2014; Apr, Aug 2015	Completed: Completed for August 2015 trainings

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

During FY 2015 EGRA continued to collaborate with MIE and MoEST officers from various departments to develop or adapt teaching and learning materials (TLMs) for EGRA intervention schools. The primary focus for this year was on development of

scripted lesson plans (SLPs) for the existing CH2 and CH3 teacher's guides (TGs); an oral EN1 course and SLPs for a modified EN2 course (the modification was the addition of a "phonics strand" to the existing Malawi National Primary Curriculum [NPC] course); supplementary reading materials to accompany the Chichewa and English courses in Standards 1–2; and the scope and sequence for the EN3 reading course. EGRA's Disability, Gender, and Vulnerable Populations (DGVP) Specialist worked to ensure that all materials were appropriately inclusive with respect to gender and learners with special needs, as well as to lead the process of transcribing EGRA-developed materials into Braille for use by learners with low vision.

1.3.1 Evaluate TLM developed and used for teaching reading for Standard 1–3 learners

MoEST joined EGRA in conducting an evaluation of existing TLMs (developed by MoEST, prior USAID contracts and grants, and other parties) available in Malawi. The exercise concluded that

- SLPs for English had long been sorely needed, as many Malawian teachers struggle with English themselves, and that the oral English course EGRA developed was well-suited to the purpose of developing learners' oral and vocabulary skills.
- The CH2 course is easier to follow and use than the *Maziko a Kuwerenga* course for Chichewa reading in Standard 1. This seemed to be related to the clearer layout of the CH2 TGs (relative to *Maziko*) and the shorter duration (30 mins. vs. 60 mins.) of its lessons. Also, the learner book which accompanies the CH2 course (which EGRA was not permitted to modify) has shorter reading passages and less content to cover per lesson than the *Nditha Kuwerenga* course for Chichewa reading in Std 1.

1.3.2 Development of SLPs

In FY 2015 EGRA continued developing SLPs in sets of 3 volumes (one for each term of the school year), with each volume being finalized, approved, and delivered prior to the term in which it was to be trained on and used. Before a course's TLMs could be finalized, the TGs and learner books were trial-tested in at least 1 percent of intervention schools (usually 18–20 schools) by a team of hand-picked teachers and MoEST personnel. EGRA incorporated feedback provided by teachers and observers following the trial-testing process.

EGRA would develop, modify, or simply review the scope and sequence for each course with counterparts from MIE and MoEST. In Q1 of FY 2015, EGRA followed MIE's expressed preference for a materials-development process by periodically gathering teams of writers in workshops to collectively draft SLPs for the course in question. (Between workshops, no progress on drafting new SLPs could be made.) These draft SLPs would be edited by EGRA's Literacy Team before being sent to Brattle Publishing Group for pouring (layout and typesetting) and proofing. The print-ready files would then be shared with USAID and DIAS for their comment and clearance before being dispatched to the printers.

Near the end of Q2 FY 2015, in response to a series of meetings between EGRA, USAID, and the implementers of USAID's *Strengthening Early Grade Reading in Malawi* (SEGREM) activity, EGRA proposed an alternative mode of materials development (dubbed the "satellite" approach) which would shorten development

timelines. (See the *Materials-development processes* sub-section of the [Challenges, Solutions, and Actions Taken](#) section for more discussion of this issue.) The new approach involved an initial large-group orientation workshop where teams of writers would be introduced to scope and sequence for the course, and would collectively review the structure and format of the SLP pages and any other specific guidance required. Pairs of writers would then work independently on drafting SLPs for a week or two, following which a large-group review and editing meeting would be held. USAID and MIE agreed to the satellite approach near the end of Q2 and it began to be implemented immediately. While the satellite approach has indeed accelerated the pace of SLP development, an additional benefit has been the reduced opportunity cost of the EGRA Literacy Team's work on materials development; some of their time has been freed up to enable them to focus on other aspects of the intervention. (For more details on the individuals participating in the satellite development process, please see the report for Q3.)

Development of Term 2 SLPs for the EN3 course began in Q4 of 2015. At the outset of FY 2015 EGRA's approved timeline for delivery of the EN3 TLMs was August 2016; while supporting the development and production of the TLMs, EGRA would not be involved in training teachers in their use. Once USAID's SEGREM award began to be implemented, however, SEGREM's technical personnel began to advocate for an accelerated development timeline in order to accommodate their preferred implementation approach. With EGRA and SEGREM unable to reach a resolution on the matter, USAID convened a meeting to clarify that SEGREM's development of materials for a Standard 4 English course – which would need to build upon a prior Standard 3 English course – would simply need to wait until EGRA had completed the work on its own timeline. EGRA agreed to attempt to accelerate the production schedule, but established that December 2015 would be the earliest any EN3 materials could be in place. EGRA elected to develop the materials slightly out of sequence – with Term 2 first, then Term 3, and finally Term 1 – in order to be able to train teachers on using the materials during the 2015–2016 school year.

Further details regarding specific preparatory meetings and discussions in which EGRA engaged over the course of FY 2015 are available in the quarterly reports for Q1–Q3.

1.3.3 Development of new decodable and leveled stories for inclusion in new curricular materials

EGRA's supplementary reading materials include letter cards, story cards, decodable readers, and leveled readers. In Q1 EGRA developed 10 decodable Chichewa stories and worked with MoEST to map them to levels (1–3) corresponding to ranges of six units (1–6, 7–12, and 13–18) in the curriculum. The stories were printed on laminated cards, with the story on one side and comprehension questions and related activities on the other.

During Q2 EGRA produced an additional 30 stories (15 Chichewa, 15 English) through a *Supplementary Reading Materials Writers' Workshop* held in February. The majority of the 33 writers in attendance were affiliated with MoEST and the TTCs, although Malawi PEN, Chancellor College, the National Library Service (NLS) were also in attendance. EGRA had also extended an invitation to the workshop to USAID's implementing partners (IPs) as part of its efforts to support cross-sectoral integration under USAID's Country Development Coordination Strategy (CDCS), and

this led to the participation of a social worker from the Baylor College of Medicine Pediatric Hospital. (See the [Integrating USAID's Country Development Coordination Strategy](#) section for more details.) EGRA held another *Supplementary Reading Materials Writers' Workshop* in June to develop more draft stories for editing and layout work by Brattle Publishing Group and MoEST colleagues.

Table 12 details attendance at the two workshops by affiliation and sex.

Table 12. Participants at Supplementary Reading Materials Writers' Workshops, FY 2015

MoEST	Other Institutions	February 9-12, 2015			June 1-5, 2015		
		M	F	TT	M	F	TT
DBE		-	2	2	-	2	2
DCE		1	-	1	1	2	3
DIAS		1	1	2	-	1	1
DSNE		1	-	1	1	-	1
DTED		2	-	2	1	-	1
MIE		2	-	2	1	-	1
Blantyre TTC		2	-	2	1	-	1
Karonga TTC		-	1	1	1	-	1
Kasungu TTC		1	1	2	1	1	2
Lilongwe TTC		1	-	1	2	-	2
Machinga TTC		1	-	1	1	-	1
Montfort TTC		1	-	1	1	-	1
Phalombe TTC		-	-	0	1	-	1
St Joseph		-	1	1	1	-	1
Primary School Teachers		-	-	0	3	5	8
	Baylor College of Medicine / Pediatric Hospital	1	-	1	-	-	0
	Chancellor College	1	-	1	-	-	0
	Malawi Pen	2	-	2	1	-	1
	NLS	-	2	2	3	-	3
Subtotal		17	8	25	20	11	31
	EGRA	4	3	7	2	2	4
	CRECCOM	1	-	1	1	-	1
Grand Total		5	3	8	23	13	36

1.3.4 TLMs accessible to children with disabilities

Throughout FY 2015 EGRA's Disability, Gender, and Vulnerable Populations Specialist continued to participate in materials-development workshops to ensure that considerations of accessibility and gender sensitivity were borne in mind.

In FY 2014 EGRA conducted an assessment of assistive devices available in Malawi for the purpose of special needs education. In FY 2015 EGRA developed a procurement plan to address some of the unmet needs identified by the assessment, procured the materials, and delivered them to resource centers for children with disabilities. The resources EGRA procured included 16 Perkins Brailers, 62 white canes, 109 reams of Braille paper, 12 cartons of embossing paper, 170 boldline notebooks, 90 magnifiers, 19 bell balls, 100 abaci, 85 hand frames, 50 styluses, 69 cuberithm boards, 10 spur wheels, and 34 talking calculators.⁸

In Q4 EGRA enlisted the services of Mr. Paul Sitima, the head of the Visual Impairment Department at the Montfort Special Needs Education College, to provide training on the use of high- and low-technology assistive devices to 20 teachers from five resource centers for the blind. As indicated in **Table 13**, those five resource centers also received 40 copies of each of EGRA's completed Chichewa-language TLMs (including volumes of decodable readers) transcribed into Braille. The remainder of EGRA's TLMs will be transcribed into Braille in FY 2016.

Table 13. Braille versions of EGRA TLMs distributed to schools, FY 2015

District	School	Title	Quantity
Blantyre Rural	Montfort School for the Blind	Nditha Kuwerenga	40
		Chichewa Std 2	40
		Tiwerege Nkhani (Book 1)	40
		Tiwerege Nkhani (Book 2)	40
		Tiwerege Nkhani (Book 3)	40
Lilongwe Rural West	Malingunde School for the Blind	Nditha Kuwerenga	40
		Chichewa Std 2	40
		Tiwerege Nkhani (Book 1)	40
		Tiwerege Nkhani (Book 2)	40
		Tiwerege Nkhani (Book 3)	40
Mzimba North	Ekwendeni School for the Blind	Nditha Kuwerenga	40
		Chichewa Std 2	40
		Tiwerege Nkhani (Book 1)	40
		Tiwerege Nkhani	40

⁸ A table with full descriptions of the devices and their purposes can be found on p. 16 of the quarterly performance report for FY 2015 Q2.

District	School	Title	Quantity
		(Book 2)	
		Tiwerege Nkhani (Book 3)	40
		Nditha Kuwerenga	40
		Chichewa Std 2	40
Ntcheu	Nsiyaludzu	Tiwerege Nkhani (Book 1)	40
		Tiwerege Nkhani (Book 2)	40
		Tiwerege Nkhani (Book 3)	40
		Nditha Kuwerenga	40
		Chichewa Std 2	40
Salima	Salima Resource Center for the Blind	Tiwerege Nkhani (Book 1)	40
		Tiwerege Nkhani (Book 2)	40
		Tiwerege Nkhani (Book 3)	40
Total	[5]		1000

1.3.5 Provide support to DSNE and schools around Individualized Education Plans

During FY 2015 EGRA worked with the DSNE to provide follow-up support to teachers at SNE resource centers on the training they received in January 2014 regarding the development of individualized education plans (IEPs). EGRA and DSNE counterparts provided two rounds of targeted follow-up coaching and review, the first in Q2 and the second late in Q3. **Table 14** below provides details regarding the schools supported, the number of learners with IEPs at each school, and the dates of coaching support.

Table 14. Schools supported in development and implementation of IEPs, FY 2015

District	School	Number of Learners with IEPs	Dates of Support
Lilongwe Rural West	Malingunde Resource Center for the Blind	5	February 2015 June 2015
Mzimba North	Ekwendeni Resource Center for the Learning Disabled	5	January 2015 June 2015
Ntcheu	Nsiyaludzu Resource	5	March 2015

District	School	Number of Learners with IEPs	Dates of Support
	Center for the Blind		June 2015
Salima	Salima Resource Center for the Blind	6	February 2015 June 2015
Total	[4]	21	

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 by end of FY 2015
1.3.1 Evaluate teaching and learning materials (TLM) developed and used for teaching reading for S1–S3 learners	1.3.1.1 Review of currently available materials that can be incorporated into reading program	Oct–Nov 2014	Completed: Initial review completed in November 2014; additional review of EN2 conducted to develop phonics strand
	1.3.1.2 Planning meetings held with relevant MoEST and MIE technical staff to determine the content and timing of scripted lesson plans	Oct 2014, Feb, Jun 2015	Completed: Meeting held February 12
	1.3.1.3 Assurance of the gender appropriateness of TLM developed and/or used under EGRA	Oct 2014–May 2015	Ongoing: completed in June for EN2 and CH3 TGs
	1.3.1.4 Assessment of TLM currently available and needed for learners with disabilities	Oct–Dec 2014	Completed: Finished in November 2014
1.3.2 (CH2) Development of SLPs – Chichewa Std 2	1.3.2.1.CH2 Editing of CH2 SLPs for Terms 2 & 3	Oct 2014	Completed
	1.3.2.2.CH2 Trial testing of CH2 SLPs for Terms 2 & 3	Oct–Nov 2014	Completed: Terms 1 & 2 completed in November 2014; Term 3 completed in February 2015
1.3.2 (EN1) Development of SLPs – English Std 1	1.3.2.1.EN1 Editing of EN1 SLPs for Terms 2 & 3	Oct 2014	Completed: Term 2 final desktop editing completed in November 2014; Term 3 final desktop editing completed in February 2015
	1.3.2.2.EN1 Trial testing of EN1 SLPs for Terms 2 & 3	Oct–Nov 2014	Completed; trial testing with the manuscripts conducted October 2014
1.3.2 (CH3) Development of SLPs – Chichewa	1.3.2.3.CH3 Development of scope and sequence for CH3 in	Nov 2014, Jan 2015	Completed: Finalized during workshops January 20–22 and 25–29

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
Std 3	collaboration with MoEST and MIE		
	1.3.2.4.CH3 Writing of SLPs for CH3 in collaboration with MIE & MoEST	Jan–May 2015	Completed: Drafts of Term 1 & 2 completed by end of March; trial testing and writing of Term 3 carried out May 18–22
	1.3.2.5.CH3 Trial testing of SLPs for CH3 in 1% of intervention schools	Mar, May 2015	Completed: Conducted May 18–22
	1.3.2.6.CH3 Editing and graphics of SLPs for CH3 by MIE	Mar–May 2015	Completed: Finished June 29, 2015
1.3.2 (EN2) Development of SLPs – English Std 2	1.3.2.3.EN2 Development of scope and sequence for EN2 in collaboration with MoEST	Nov–Dec 2014	Completed: Draft completed November 2014; second version produced in March 2015 to incorporate phonics strand
	1.3.2.4.EN2 Writing of SLPs for EN2 in collaboration with MIE & MoEST	Jan–May 2015	Completed: Draft of Term 1 SLPs completed by end of March 2015
	1.3.2.5.EN2 Trial testing of SLPs for EN2 in 1% of intervention schools	Mar, May 2015	Completed: Conducted May 18–22
	1.3.2.6.EN2 Editing and graphics of SLPs for EN2 by MIE	May–Jun 2015	Completed: Finished June 30, 2015
1.3.2 (EN3) Development of SLPs – English Std 3	1.3.2.3.EN3 Development of scope and sequence for EN3 in collaboration with MIE & MoEST	Jul–Aug 2015	Delayed: Completed in Q4
	1.3.2.4.EN3 Writing of SLPs for EN3 in collaboration with MIE & MoEST	Sep 2015	Delayed: Manuscripts completed for Term 2 in Q4
1.3.3 Development of new decodable and leveled stories for inclusion in new curricular materials	1.3.3.1 Writers' workshops held with MoEST, MIE, NLS, Malawi PEN to develop Year 2 stories	Jan 2015	Completed: Writers' workshop held June 1–5 to produce first drafts of levelled readers in English and Chichewa
	1.3.3.2 Writers' editing workshop held with MoEST, MIE, NLS, Malawi PEN	May 2015	Completed: Conducted during June 1–5 writers' workshop
	1.3.3.3 Artwork commissioned for new stories	May–Jun 2015	Delayed: Planned for FY 2016 Q1

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
	1.3.3.4 Curriculum map of relationship between story cards and SLPs developed	Oct 2014, Sep 2015	Completed for first year of supplementary readers; SLPs for EN2 and CH3 incorporate the need for time spent in independent reading (incl. of story cards, decodable readers, and levelled readers)
	1.3.4.1 Support districts in conducting assessment and identification of learners with special needs in schools	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing
	1.3.4.2 Update assessment of current assistive technology available to schools of learners with disabilities	Oct–Nov 2014	Delayed; update of assessment to be completed in Q1 FY 2016
	1.3.4.3 Procurement of assistive technology to learners with special needs	Dec 2014–Feb 2015	On Track; delivery of products for 2014–2015 taken May 11, 2015, and procurement for 2015–2016 planned by September 30, 2015
1.3.4 TLMs accessible to children with disabilities	1.3.4.4 Distribution of assistive technology to learners with special needs	Mar–Apr 2015	Completed: Distribution of DSNE-funded materials completed March 9–13; distribution of EGRA-funded materials completed May 27–30.
	1.3.4.5 Provide training on how to utilize high and low tech assistive devices	Mar–Apr 2015	Completed; training provided in August and September 2015
	1.3.4.6 Selection of EGRA materials for adaptation for learners with special needs	Oct–Dec 2014, Jan, Jun–Sep 2015	Complete: Finished April 15, 2015
	1.3.4.7 Submission of adapted material to MoEST for endorsement	Feb 2015	Complete
	1.3.4.8 Submission of adapted material to USAID for clearance	Feb 2015	Complete
	1.3.4.9 Distribution of adapted materials to schools and Special Needs Education Resource Units	Mar–Apr 2015	Completed in September 2015
1.3.5 Provide support	1.3.5.1 Consultative	Oct 2014,	Ongoing; meetings held May

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
to DSNE and schools around Individual Education Plans	meetings held between DGVP Specialist and DSNE	Mar 2015	29, June 4, and June 16, 2015
	1.3.5.2 Workshop on development of IEPs for learners with special needs	Jan 2015	Complete; IEP content included in training workshops conducted in June 2015
	1.3.5.3 Discussions with DSNE, DTED, and Montfort College regarding IEP-related content in pre-service training structures/programs	Jan 2015	Delayed; planned for Q1 FY 2016
	1.3.5.4 Support districts in monitoring of implementation of IEPs in schools	Oct 2014– Sep 2015	Ongoing

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

Coaching of Standard 1–3 teachers

As coaching is an essential element to successful instruction in schools, in FY 2015 EGRA continued to provide support to PEAs and MoEST to visit teachers at their schools, observe and record their teaching practices, and provide coaching support and mentoring to improve their instructional practices. EGRA's District Training Coordinators (DTCs) also conducted coaching visits and classroom observations. These serve to provide EGRA direct insight into classroom activities and student engagement, as well as an opportunity for DTCs to mentor PEAs and provide them feedback on the coaching they conduct.

EGRA uses RTI's Tangerine® software to record and transmit data from classroom observations. In FY 2015 EGRA held refresher trainings for PEAs in the Cohort A schools (those that began receiving the EGRA intervention in August 2013) and first-time trainings for PEAs in the Cohort B schools on the use of the software. EGRA also developed a protocol for ensuring that teacher observations conducted using paper-based instruments (as when a tablet was malfunctioning and had been sent to Lilongwe for repair) could be collected and digitized for later analysis.

Table 16 provides details on the number of zones, schools, and teachers coached by PEAs in FY 2015, by location and standard.

Table 16. Coaching Visits Conducted by PEAs in FY 2015

District	Oct '14 – Dec '14					Jan '15 – Mar '15					Apr '15 – Jun '15					Jul '15 – Sep '15					Cumulative for FY 2015			
	Schools	Std				Schools	Std				Schools	Std				Schools	Std				1	2	3	TT
		1	2	3	TT		1	2	3	TT		1	2	3	TT		1	2	3	TT				
BLK	67	58	63	38	159	65	54	54	15	123	47	60	45	20	125	11	7	8	2	17	179	170	75	424
BTR	115	117	100	23	240	68	86	54	32	172	70	80	79	44	203	19	21	18	12	51	304	251	111	666
LLRE	100	192	108	62	362	40	45	34	22	101	163	214	175	105	494	119	127	88	42	257	578	405	231	1214
LLRW	62	62	57	27	146	69	74	53	59	186	82	89	63	52	204	34	32	31	25	88	257	204	163	624
MCH	72	92	68	19	179	96	90	75	32	197	75	73	64	36	173	34	28	31	16	75	283	238	103	624
MZN	118	113	107	46	266	124	119	107	60	286	123	111	115	68	294	45	41	36	24	101	384	365	198	947
NEU	124	125	78	49	252	130	133	87	66	286	94	85	60	37	182	55	56	48	27	131	399	273	179	851
NSI	27	24	22	16	62	8	11	11	4	26	101	161	133	91	385	67	54	62	49	165	250	228	160	638
SAL	66	67	49	12	128	67	64	48	11	123	58	58	55	20	133	9	14	8	6	28	203	160	49	412
TYO	54	32	23	7	62	46	48	42	32	122	52	54	41	23	118	0	0	0	0	0	134	106	62	302
ZOM	97	107	88	48	243	47	71	47	26	144	91	91	73	63	227	37	37	30	26	93	306	238	163	707
Sub-Total for PEAs	902	989	763	347	2099	760	795	612	359	1766	956	1076	903	559	2538	430	417	360	229	1006	3277	2638	1494	7409

Table provides details on the number of zones, schools, and teachers coached by EGRA staff in FY 2015, by location and standard.

Table 17. Coaching Visits Conducted by EGRA Staff in FY 2015

District	Oct '14 – Dec '14					Jan '15 – Mar '15					Apr '15 – Jun '15					Jul '15 – Sep '15					Cumulative for FY 2015			
	Schools	Std				Schools	Std				Schools	Std				Schools	Std				Std			
		1	2	3	TT		1	2	3	TT		1	2	3	TT		1	2	3	TT	1	2	3	TT
BLK	10	7	11	4	22	6	5	4	-	9	19	26	20	9	55	4	1	4	-	5	39	39	13	91
BTR	21	19	13	7	39	1	1	-	1	2	15	35	27	22	84	-	-	-	-	0	55	40	30	125
LLRE	4	8	4	2	14	8	11	7	5	23	19	29	15	14	58	5	2	4	4	10	50	30	25	105
LLRW	7	15	12	11	38	10	21	12	7	40	16	24	17	15	56	3	4	4	3	11	64	45	36	145
MCH	6	9	3	2	14	6	6	5	-	11	18	25	18	8	51	-	-	-	-	0	40	26	10	76
MZN	39	37	32	22	91	7	8	7	1	16	4	7	1	-	8	-	-	-	-	0	52	40	23	115
NEU	2	3	2	1	6	2	4	6	2	12	22	32	22	14	68	-	-	-	-	0	39	30	17	86
NSI	7	7	7	2	16	2	2	2	2	6	16	19	17	10	46	-	-	-	-	0	28	26	14	68
SAL	22	21	22	4	47	8	6	7	2	15	24	21	28	3	52	-	-	-	-	0	48	57	9	114
TYO	5	8	5	3	16	2	4	2	-	6	16	15	16	14	45	2	-	2	2	4	27	25	19	71
ZOM	6	11	12	8	31	9	22	7	2	31	6	9	7	4	20	-	-	-	-	0	42	26	14	82
Sub-Total for EGRA staff	129	145	123	66	334	61	90	59	22	171	175	242	188	113	543	14	7	14	9	30	484	384	210	1078

Differences between PEAs in their level of activity—the amount of coaching they do—were observed during FY 2014. In FY 2015, noting that the pattern persisted, EGRA sought to further encourage highly active PEAs by providing a second measure of fuel (to underwrite the cost of additional coaching visits) after they had accounted for the initial measure of fuel. For the less-active PEAs—those who rarely conduct coaching visits—EGRA sought to work through existing MoEST channels (including District Education Managers [DEMs] and CPEAs) to change their behavior. EGRA did so by attending the districts' monthly "PEA planning meetings" and hosting district- or division-level review meetings at which the importance of effective coaching was discussed in the context of EGRA's student performance data (collected using the learner assessments tests [LATs]) and participants were invited to voice theories as to why student performance in their districts was greater than or less than they would like and had expected.

During monitoring visits to schools EGRA technical staff noted that many coaching interactions (the feedback session that occurs following a classroom observation by a PEA or DTC) did not appear to be of a consistently high quality. Qualitatively, observations from the coaching visits conducted in Q3 and Q4 indicate that even at that late point in the school year, many teachers continue to struggle with relinquishing control of the classroom enough to give their learners the opportunity to practice the skills being taught: the "I do" portion of the lesson cycle is rarely if ever missed, whereas the "We do" and especially the "You do" portions continue to be routinely ignored by some teachers. Further, on those occasions where project staff observed the feedback PEAs provided teachers, the failure to allow learners the opportunity to practice skills independently was almost never mentioned as an issue.

EGRA took two measures to address the issue. During the planning meeting for the August training cascade held on June 18 both EGRA and MoEST personnel agreed that emphasizing the latter two portions of the lesson cycle would be an important theme of the refresher training modules. Teachers practiced the skills during the ZTWs, and PEAs were explicitly directed to focus their coaching in the new academic year on reminding teachers to provide learners opportunities for independent practice.

EGRA also elected to begin the process of migrating from using the default build of its Tangerine data-collection software to a specialized build called Tangerine:Tutor ("Tutor"). Tutor has been configured by literacy experts at EGRA and RTI headquarters to automatically generate suggested feedback messages for the coach (whether to deliver verbatim or to use as inspiration) as a result of the specific marks and ratings the coach records during the classroom observation. **Table 18** contains examples of the teacher observation instrument (TOI) items and the responses that will be prompted based on the observer's selections.

Table 18. Examples of Tangerine:Tutor Feedback Items

TOI Item	Observer Notation	Prompt Type
		Prompt
6. Teacher provides opportunity for learners to practice writing/drawing, e.g. in the air, on the ground, in their notebooks or slates. [YES-NO-N/A]	No	Constructive Criticism Remind the teacher: " <i>The 'You do' part of the lesson is very important, because this is where learners practice what they have been taught. Please ensure you include this part of the activity.</i> "
8. Teacher teaches new words using a relevant strategy (strategies), (e.g. actions, pictures, explanation, etc.), to ensure that learners show understanding. [YES-NO-N/A]	No	Constructive Criticism Remind the teacher: " <i>Children will learn material more rapidly if you connect what they are learning to things they already know well.</i> "
17. Teacher varies class organization (group work, pair work, individuals sharing work) to maximize learning. [YES-NO-N/A]	No	Constructive Criticism Remind the teacher: " <i>Working in pairs or small groups is helpful both for stronger learners and for weaker learners. Helping their peers with new material is an effective way for learners to reinforce what you are teaching them.</i> "
	Yes	Positive Reinforcement Say to the teacher: " <i>Working in pairs or small groups is helpful both for stronger learners and for weaker learners. Helping their peers with new material is an effective way for learners to reinforce what you are teaching them. I noticed that you did a really good job of encouraging the children to work together - keep it up!</i> "
B3. How many learners borrowed books from the teacher last week? [#]	If [# of book borrowers] / [enrollment]	Positive Reinforcement Ask the teacher: " <i>I noticed that more than half of your learners borrowed books to take home. That's a great success! What did you do to encourage the children to borrow books to take home?</i> "

Migration to Tangerine:Tutor will be completed in FY 2016 Q1.

Despite the observed shortcomings in the quality of the coaching being provided, anecdotal reports from PEAs and EGRA DTCs suggested that teachers demonstrated increasing competence over the course of the year in delivering EN1, CH1, and CH2 lessons. (This was as expected.) Both anecdotal reports and EGRA's termly LAT data suggested that learners' competence in letter identification, syllable reading, and word reading improved noticeably and meaningfully over the course of the year. (Reading comprehension is an area that, notably, does not appear to have meaningfully improved.)

As mentioned above, EGRA used district review meetings as an opportunity to review coaching levels, student performance, and community mobilization activities with MoEST and other stakeholders from the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability, and Social Welfare (MGCDSW). Participants included PEAs, CPEAs, DEMs, District Community Development Officers (DCDOs), Community Development Assistants (CDAs), special needs teachers, and EGRA personnel. The meetings' agendas focused on reviewing EGRA implementation and coaching to date, with a particular emphasis on reflecting on challenges encountered and identifying strategies to overcome them. Meetings were opened and closed by either the Educational Division Managers (EDMs) or the DEMs.

During one district review meeting in Q3 EGRA piloted a new approach of having DTCs and PEAs proactively map out the days PEAs could be available for coaching duties.⁹ The approach was welcomed by the CPEAs—many of whom had never critically examined PEAs' claims of being extremely busy and thus had not realized how many working days were "lost" and unaccounted for by MoEST-approved activities—and will be systematically implemented across all intervention districts in FY 2016.

Table 19 provides the dates and number of attendees at the district review meetings held in FY 2015.

Table 19. Dates of and Attendance at District Review Meetings, FY 2015

District	Dates	Term 2			Dates	Term 3			Total for FY 2015		
		M	F	TT		M	F	TT	M	F	TT
Balaka	-	-	-	0	June 10–12	19	9	28	19	9	28
Blantyre Rural	April 8–10	12	31	43	April 8–10	16	23	39	28	54	82
Lilongwe Rural East	-	-	-	0	June 4–5	17	21	38	17	21	38
Lilongwe Rural West	-	-	-	0	June 3–5	14	18	32	14	18	32
Machinga	-	-	-	0	May 18–	22	10	32	22	10	32

⁹ DTCs first invited PEAs to map out all the dates during the upcoming term when they were already committed to other activities. Then PEAs were invited to map out the dates they would need to commit to office-based work. For the remaining days on the calendars, PEAs were invited to assign specific schools' names to each date, completing one full cycle through a list of all the schools in their zones before assigning a second date to a school.

District	Dates	Term 2			Dates	Term 3			Total for FY 2015		
		M	F	TT		M	F	TT	M	F	TT
					19						
Mzimba North	Jan 26–27	10	7	17	-	-	-	-	10	7	17
Ntcheu ¹⁰	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	0	0	0
Ntchisi	-	-	-	0	June 10–12	25	13	38	25	13	38
Salima ¹¹	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	0	0	0
Thyolo	-	-	-	0	June 3–4	21	11	32	21	11	32
Zomba Rural	-	-	-	0	May 11–12	20	8	28	20	8	28
Total	2	22	38	60	8	154	113	267	176	151	327

Remote support via SMS Gateway

The launch of EGRA's SMS Gateway system was significantly delayed by contractual and administrative complications with Telekom Networks of Malawi (TNM), one of the two main telecom carriers in Malawi. (More details are provided in the *Limited reach of SMS Gateway system and data management challenges* subsection of the [Challenges, Solutions, and Actions Taken](#) section.) The first messages reached teachers and PEAs in April (early Q3).

In the latter half of FY 2015 since the system came online, EGRA sent 23,836 messages to PEAs, HTs, teachers, and community members. Some of the messages were polls and requested that recipients provide responses by sending SMSes to one of EGRA's short codes (53471 or 53472). The 1,228 messages (received from Airtel subscribers only, due to the ongoing difficulties with TNM) represented response rates of between 5–14 percent for each poll.

Early in Q4 EGRA recruited a Communications Specialist, and the responsibilities assigned to her included working closely with component leaders to draft outbound messages, ensuring message broadcasts occur on a regular and consistent basis, and reviewing and summarizing incoming responses so headquarters and district staff can respond in an appropriate and timely fashion. EGRA anticipates both broadcast volume and response rates to polls will increase in FY 2016 as recipients become more accustomed to the system.

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

¹⁰ Plans for the Ntcheu district review meeting were disrupted by the DTC's involvement in a road accident. By the time he had recovered, LAT and ETW activities were taking precedence.

¹¹ The district review meeting for Salima is scheduled for FY 2016 Q1 (near the beginning of the 2015–2016 school year).

Table 20. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 1-4

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
1.4.1 Coaching by PEAs and DTCs to S1–S3 teachers	1.4.1.1 PEAs supported to conduct coaching visits to each school at least twice per term	Oct–Nov 2014, Feb–Mar, May–Jun 2015	2,538 (1,245 men, 1,293 women) coaching visits conducted by PEAs this quarter; an additional 543 (188 men, 355 women) conducted by EGRA staff
	1.4.1.2 PEAs in new zones receive training on use of tablet for teacher observations and conducting mini-LAT	Oct 2014	Completed: October 2014
	1.4.1.3 DTCs meet PEAs once per term for mentorship and support	Oct–Nov 2014, Jan–Mar, May–Jul 2015	On track: Completed in ZA May 11–12; MHG May 18–19; TO June 3–4; LLRE June 4–5; LLRW June 3–5; BLK June 10–12; NS June 10–12
	1.4.1.4 High-performing PEAs recognized for exemplary coaching and support to teachers	Oct–Nov 2014, Jan–Mar, May–Jul 2015	Ongoing
1.4.2 Provision of remote support via SMS Gateway	1.4.2.1 SMS Gateway utilized for sending information, coaching, and supporting teachers	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing: Gateway launched in April 2015; 23,836 messages sent to date
	1.4.2.2 SMS impact research study conducted	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	On track: Messages are being sent by treatment group per study design.

Task 1-5: Rewarding Performing Teachers and Schools

1.5.1 Rewarding high performing teachers and learners

During FY 2015 EGRA continued low-intensity conversations with MoEST directors about providing teachers who had been “fully trained” in EGRA’s approach to reading instruction with certifications of completion and recognition. MoEST’s position remained that it would be unfair to teachers in non-EGRA intervention districts to provide these, as those non-EGRA teachers would never have had the opportunity to receive the training in the first place. Nonetheless, MoEST continued to endorse the idea of providing such certificates to teachers once an EGRA-like intervention was present at a national scale and all teachers would be eligible to receive training in reading instruction. With USAID on the verge of awarding the Malawi Early Grade Reading Improvement Activity (MERIT) early in FY 2016, MoEST indicated that the time to reexamine the criteria and process for awarding such certificates would soon be at hand.

In the absence of such certificates, the primary venue for recognition of performing teachers and learners in FY 2015 continued to be the school and zonal reading fairs.

Over the course of the school year EGRA schools participated in 1,540 reading fairs (of which 1,271 occurred in the first three quarters, and 269 in July alone). A significant proportion of reading fairs were held at the cluster or zonal levels and included multiple schools. At these reading fairs MoEST and Government of Malawi district staff and community members showed their appreciation and support for the work teachers are doing to improve learners' reading skills. Donations of cash, food, and other small items—all direct from the community, and unsolicited—are a regular feature of these events.

1.5.2 Monitoring implementation of first round of GUC awardees

EGRA's scope of work includes a grants under contract (GUC) program through which high-performing schools are eligible to apply for small grants (in the range of \$1,000-\$1,500) to support their efforts to improve reading. The eligibility and evaluation criteria developed and applied during the first round of competition was overly stringent and extremely burdensome. As a result, the winners of the first round of GUC competition were not selected until FY 2014 Q4, with notification of award beginning in Q1 of FY2015 and disbursement of funds beginning in Q2 of FY 2015.

EGRA leadership, USAID, and MoEST all concurred that the burden of continuing the original approach was vastly out of keeping with any benefit to project-wide implementation derived from the GUC program. In Q2 EGRA drafted revised guidelines to be used for the second round of competition; they were reviewed and approved in Q3 by a committee of MoEST and USAID participants. The revised guidelines and application timelines were then incorporated into a revised GUC Manual that EGRA was to submit to USAID for approval in FY 2016 Q1.

By the end of FY 2015, EGRA had fully disbursed both tranches of funding to 52 of the 55 grantees, amounting to 20.8 million Malawi Kwacha. The three schools that had not received the second tranche of funding for grants were actually the first three schools to receive the first tranche and reach their grant milestones; a communications breakdown led to their being overlooked until grant-closing paperwork was sought near the end of September, and they responded that they were still waiting for their second tranches.

1.5.3 GUC incentive program implemented for round two

EGRA provided HTs with training on the revised GUC application guidelines as part of the August training cascade. By the end of FY 2015 applications for the next round of the GUC competition had been received from an estimated 1507 schools. Review of the applications by zonal committees will commence in early FY 2016 once USAID has approved EGRA's revised GUC Manual.

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

Table 21. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 1-5

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
1.5.1 Rewarding high performing teachers and learners	1.5.1.1 Certificate of completion provided in collaboration with MIE and MoEST to PEAs & teachers who complete the	Oct–Nov 2014, Sep 2015	Delayed: Modalities for awarding certificates remain to be finalized with MoEST Directors

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
	training cycle		
	1.5.1.2 At reading fairs, schools and communities recognize teachers & learners who exemplify the goals of EGRA	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing: 347 reading fairs held in Q3
1.5.2 Monitoring implementation of first round of GUC awardees	1.5.2.1 GUC awardee schools monitored in implementation of grants	Oct 2014–Jul 2015	Ongoing; 30 of 55 grants executed, with the remainder to be completed in Q4
	1.5.3.1 Criteria for GUC application eligibility reviewed and redesigned in consultation with MoEST, DEMs, PEAs, HTs	Oct 2014	Completed: Finalized on June 11, 2015
	1.5.3.2 Schools (HTs) and communities (SMCs) notified of updated criteria	Oct–Nov 2014	Completed during August teacher training cascade
1.5.3 GUC incentive program implemented for round two	1.5.3.3 Schools submit GUC applications	Apr–May 2015	Completed during September 2015
	1.5.3.4 Submitted GUC applications reviewed	May–Jun 2015	Ongoing: Pending USAID approval of revised GUC Manual
	1.5.3.5 GUC incentive awardees selected, notified	Jul–Aug 2015	Delayed: Planned for FY 2016 Q1
	1.5.3.6 GUC funds disbursed	Sep 2015	Delayed: Planned for FY 2016 Q2
1.5.4 Coordinate with SI on evaluation of GUCs, teacher incentive programs	1.5.4.1 Coordinate with SI on evaluation of GUCs, teacher incentive programs	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing

Component 2: Provision of Teaching and Learning Materials for Reading

Component 2 is composed of five tasks as listed below. Following a presentation of selected highlights from the year's activities, 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

Component 2 Highlights for FY 2015

EGRA's most noteworthy accomplishments under Component 2 for FY 2015 have been related to the establishment of public-private partnerships (PPPs) to support reading. Over the course of the year EGRA developed PPPs with seven private-sector partners whose contributions underwrote the rough equivalent of \$86,000 in costs¹² associated with providing *Reading Tools in a Box* to 548 schools. A *Reading Tools in a Box* campaign launch event was held on September 17 at the Mlumbwira School in Lilongwe Rural West to recognize the various partners' contributions and announce EGRA's intent to provide additional *Reading Tools in a Box* for use by its village reading centers (VRCs) in FY 2016.

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

2.1.1 PPPs leveraged to support provision of materials to intervention schools

Many of the PPPs EGRA had begun developing in FY 2014 came to fruition in FY 2015. The private sector partners who supported EGRA's *Reading Tools in a Box* initiative did so with substantially varying levels of commitment, from Eastern Produce's 3 schools to the Monsanto Fund's 260 schools. (Other partners who supported EGRA in other ways, such as Airtel and Rainbow Paints, are discussed under [Component 3](#).) All *Reading Tools in a Box* partners were recognized at a launch event held on September 17 at the Mlumbwira School in Lilongwe Rural West. **Table 22** below details the *Reading Tools in a Box* partners, the level of their support, and the number of schools reached by their contributions.

Table 22. PPP Contributions to *Reading Tools in a Box* Realized in FY 2015

Alliance Partners	Contribution (MWK)	Contribution (USD equivalent)¹³	Number of Schools
Monsanto Fund	MWK 21,600,000 equivalent	\$45,000	260
Old Mutual Bank	MWK 8,000,000	\$16,666.66 equivalent	100
First Merchant Bank	MWK 5,800,000	\$12,083.33 equivalent	80
National Bank	MWK 5,000,000	\$10,416.66 equivalent	65
Lafarge Cement	MWK 3,000,000	\$6,250 equivalent	40
EcoBank	MWK 380,000	\$791.66 equivalent	5
Eastern Produce	MWK 240,000	\$500.00 equivalent	3
Total:	MWK 41,320,000 equivalent	\$86,083.33 equivalent	548

2.1.2 Large print run and distribution of decodable books, leveled books, and story cards

The development, trial testing, and finalization of the supplementary readers and SLPs was discussed under [Task 1-3](#) above. As a brief recap, EGRA worked with MoEST officers and other stakeholders to develop decodable stories that could be

¹² When using an exchange rate of 480 MWK: 1 USD. Some contributions were in dollars, and others in kwacha, so both the above USD-denominated amount and the MWK-denominated amount of 41,320,000 are slightly imprecise.

¹³ Using an exchange rate of 480 MWK: 1 USD.

incorporated into volumes of material accessible to emergent readers as well as simple stories that could be bound as stand-alone levelled material for slightly more advanced readers. By the end of FY 2015 EGRA and its collaborators had developed 30 Chichewa stories had been written, 15 levelled readers had been selected, and 15 stories were matched with questions and activities for use as story cards. **Table 23** presents the titles and language of usage for materials developed over the course of FY 2015.

Table 23. Decodable and Leveled Materials Developed and Distributed in FY 2015

Language	Material Type	Title	Quantity Distributed in FY 2015
Both	Decodable Readers	Volume 1 (Ana, Amina, Bota, Ife, Jekete, Kalulu ndi galu, Utaka, Mudzi, Moto, Dzino lobooka)	157,500
		Volume 2 (Fulu, Ku sukulu, Amalume ndi a Kwenda, Tsiku lalikulu, Timakonda zipatso, Bwemba, Khama amakonda sukulu, Kuthira manyowa, Chambo, Njovu ndi Nyani)	94,500
		Volume 3 (Phada, Mitengo, Phelile, Padwale, Chakudya, Mlimi, Nyanja ya Malawi, Mtedza ndi mkaka, Mvula, Lukia amakonda zipwete)	63,000
<i>Decodable Readers Subtotal:</i>			<i>315,000</i>
Chichewa	Leveled Readers	Banja Lathu (<i>Read Malawi</i>)	136,800
		Kodi Anzanga ndi ati?	45,600
		Madzi ndi Moyo	45,600
		Madzi ndi odabwitsa (<i>Read Malawi</i>)	68,400
		Mazunzo ndi Chifuniro (<i>Read Malawi</i>)	136,800
		Mphuno za Nyama	45,600
		Ndimakonda Sukulu (<i>Read Malawi</i>)	68,400
		Nyama Zosiyanasiyana	68,400
		Thoko ndi Ziona	136,800
Ulimi	68,400		
<i>Chichewa Leveled Readers Subtotal:</i>			<i>820,800</i>
English	Leveled Readers	Ben and Ken	85,500
		Clap Clap Clap	68,400
		My Family	68,400
		Pat had a Cat	85,500

Language	Material Type	Title	Quantity Distributed in FY 2015
		The Cat on the Mat	68,400
<i>English Leveled Readers Subtotal:</i>			376,200
Total Decodable and Leveled Readers:			1,512,000

In addition to the volumes of decodable stories and the leveled readers, in FY 2015 EGRA also procured and delivered more than 1.1 million learner books (for CH1, EN1, CH2, and CH3) to accompany 38,500 teacher's guides (CH1, EN1, CH2, EN2, and CH3) and 86,750 training manuals.

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

Table 24. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 2-1

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
2.1.1 PPPs leveraged to support provision of materials to intervention schools	2.1.1.1 PPPs leveraged to support provision of materials to intervention schools	Oct 2014–Jun 2015	Ongoing: First print runs completed, more to come
	2.1.2.1 Procurement sent to printers	Apr–Jun 2015	Completed
2.1.2 Large print run and distribution of decodable books, leveled books, and story cards	2.1.2.2 Books and story cards in production	Jan–March 2015	Completed: First run completed in Q2, second consignment delivered in Q4
	2.1.2.3 Delivery of books and story cards to schools	March–April 2015	Completed: First run completed in Q2, second consignment completed in Q4
	2.1.2.4 Schools keep record of supplementary readers taken for home reading	Jan–Jul 2015	Completed: Accession registers delivered to schools in Q2, used through remainder of 2014–2015 school year

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

In FY 2015 EGRA completed the development of story cards on schedule. While procurement and sourcing processes also proceeded according to schedule, actual production was delayed due to a nationwide shortage of lamination pouches. As a result, EGRA actually received and distributed story cards in Q2 rather than in Q1. EGRA distributed an initial quantity of 410,500 laminated Chichewa story cards and 205,250 laminated English story cards by the end of Q2. The story cards proved to be very popular and were used frequently in classrooms. When the volunteer community reading facilitators (VCRFs) at EGRA's after-school VRCs began requesting that children be permitted to bring the cards with them to the VRCs, classroom teachers often refused out of fear that the cards would be damaged or not returned. To address this issue, in Q3 EGRA commissioned a second print run of the same quantities for Q4 delivery to schools, with the goal of reducing teachers'

resistance to sharing the materials by making sure that an abundance of cards were available in every classroom. Thus by the end of FY 2015 EGRA delivered a total of more than 1.31 million story cards (821,000 in Chichewa and 410,500 in English).

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

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

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
2.2.1 Story cards stocked in classroom library book boxes for daily reading at school and home	2.2.1.1 Print and distribute story cards to intervention schools	Nov 2014–Jan 2015	Completed: First run finished in Q2, second consignment to be finished in Q4
	2.2.1.2 Ensure that story cards and record keeping registers about home use are distributed to schools	Dec 2014–Jan 2015	Completed: Finished for first run (Q2) and second run (Q4)

Task 2-3: Develop and Distribute Letter Cards

In FY 2014 EGRA identified all of the Standard 1 and 2 classrooms in Cohort A schools that lacked walls and provided them with laminated letter cards. During Q1 of FY 2015 EGRA conducted the same exercise with Standard 1 and 2 classrooms in Cohort B schools. The assessment indicated a need for 2,088 sets of letter cards for each Standard. EGRA thus procured and distributed in Q2 a total of 4,176 sets of letter cards (100,224 individual cards at 24 per set).

Those schools in which Standard 1 and 2 classrooms had walls did not require letter cards, as letters, words, phrases, and other educational content would be painted directly on the walls. In Q2 EGRA finalized a statement of collaboration (SOC) with Rainbow Paints the terms of which would make painting materials (paint; roller, paint, and writing brushes; and crack filler [a sort of caulk]) available to EGRA schools and communities at cost. Once approved by USAID in Q3, EGRA procured the materials to paint the walls of one “model school” in each zone (132 in total),¹⁴ delivered these to the schools, and worked with the schools’ HTs and teachers to coordinate the painting of the schools as a communal activity. By the end of FY 2015, 57 of 132 schools (43 percent) had completed their painting; 58 (44 percent) were in process; and 19 (14 percent) had postponed painting until they were able to finish repairing classrooms whose roofs had been blown off by storms. Many of the schools that were “in process” noted that teachers had demanded the painting be extended to all Standard 2 and 3 classrooms as well; as EGRA had only provided the paint for Standard 1 classrooms to be painted, the schools elected to delay painting until they had raised funds from the community in order to paint Standard 3 and other classrooms as well. In other cases schools were sourcing funds to hire outside painters to come do the work, as they believed no one in the community had the skills to do the painting.

¹⁴ There are 134 treatment zones in EGRA’s intervention districts. Model schools in two of the zones were painted in October 2014 in order to evaluate the feasibility and expense associated with the approach. Because the initial attempts were deemed to be too expensive to be within the reach of schools and their communities, EGRA prioritized developing a more cost-effective approach and the SOC with Rainbow Paints before moving ahead with painting more model schools.

EGRA's community mobilization efforts include encouraging the remaining schools in each zone to paint their classrooms in the same fashion as the "model schools." EGRA photographed the classrooms painted at the Matindi Primary School in Blantyre and the Ntambanyama Primary School in Thyolo and distributed those photographs to schools in other zones. The photos are attached to this report as **Annex 3: Model Painted Classrooms**. Schools that procure painting materials from Rainbow Paints will also receive the preferential (at-cost) pricing negotiated by EGRA through its PPP with Rainbow Paints. The preferential pricing secured under the SOC with Rainbow Paints realized an overall savings to EGRA for the exercise of roughly \$17,300,¹⁵ or roughly \$131 per school. Should the remainder of EGRA intervention schools heed the call to paint their classrooms as a community mobilization exercise, the ceiling on the cost savings realized because of the preferential pricing arrangement is estimated at roughly \$190,000.¹⁶ (More realistically, assuming constant sensitization efforts, EGRA expects 60 percent of schools may be expected to participate in the exercise, which would cap the savings at roughly \$115,000.)

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

Table 26. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 2-3

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
2.3.1 DEMs, PEAs consulted to identify # of classrooms requiring painted letter cards, # requiring printed cards	2.3.1.1 Establish names of schools where a model classroom for S1 will be painted (Cohort B)	Oct–Dec 2014	Completed
	2.3.1.2 Identify and support the painting by volunteer artists in each model school	Oct–Dec 2014	Ongoing: Completed in 57 schools, in process in 58, postponed in 19
2.3.2 Publication-ready files for print run of letter cards finalized, sent to printers (Cohort B)		Oct 2014	Completed
2.3.3 Letter cards distributed to schools where S1 classrooms have no walls (Cohort B)		Oct 2014	Completed

Task 2-4: Production and Distribution of Chalk Slates

Near the end of FY 2014 EGRA received a letter from MoEST requesting that EGRA repurpose the funds it had allocated to the procurement and distribution of chalk slates under Task 2-4 because MoEST was already providing writing slates to all primary schools. MoEST preferred these funds be used to procure additional supplementary reading materials.

¹⁵ Estimated using an exchange rate of 480 MWK:1 USD

¹⁶ The bases of this estimate are as follows: 1,463 non-"model school" intervention schools; ~63,000 MWK in savings per school; an exchange rate of 480 MWK : 1 USD.

In Q1 EGRA thus submitted a request to USAID for a contract modification that included removal of Task 2-4 from EGRA's scope of work. EGRA placed further work on Task 2-4 on hold pending the resolution of the contract modification request. In Q3 EGRA received the requested contract modification from USAID eliminating the requirement to provide chalk slates to learners in Standards 1–2, in line with the MoEST's expressed preference.

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

Table 27. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 2-4

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
2.4.1 Procurement of chalk slates	2.4.1.1 Finalize numbers where there was a shortfall in MoEST provision of chalk slates	Oct 2014	Completed
	2.4.1.2 Procure chalk slates for S1 to address shortfall in MoEST provisioning	Oct 2014–Jan 2015	N/A: Obviated by contract modification
2.4.2 Chalk slates distributed to schools		Dec 2014–Jan 2015	N/A: Obviated by contract modification

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

During FY 2015 EGRA discussed with USAID the possibility of providing schools with securable and transportable plastic cases for storing supplementary reading materials. These were seen to be more practical than large lockable metal or wood cabinets for use in schools where classes are frequently held outdoors rather than in a classroom, as well as providing the possibility of moving the materials to the HT's office for overnight safekeeping in those instances where classrooms do not have doors. The contract modification EGRA received in Q3 revised the language of Task 2-5 to make this possible, and thereafter EGRA recommenced procurement processes.

In Q3 EGRA procured and took delivery of the first 65 boxes from Game Stores to hold the *Reading Tools in a Box* underwritten by NBM. By the end of Q4 EGRA had identified a supplier for the additional 3,300 boxes and completed negotiations regarding payment modalities. Delivery of the boxes is expected early in FY 2016.

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

Table 28. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 2-5

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
2.5.1 Procurement of book boxes and registers	2.5.1.1 RFQ for procurement of plastic book boxes and registers developed and issued	Oct 2014–Jan 2015	Completed
	2.5.1.2 Vendor or offeror selected	Oct 2014–Jan 2015	Completed
	2.5.1.3 Book boxes procured,	Oct 2014–Jan	Delayed: Procurement

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
	shipped to Lilongwe	2015	completed, but delivery is now expected in FY 2016 Q1
	2.5.1.4 Book boxes and registers distributed to schools	Dec 2014–Jan 2015	Delayed; expected in FY 2016 Q1

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

Component 3 is composed of three tasks as listed below. Following a presentation of selected highlights from the year's activities, 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

Component 3 Highlights for FY 2015

Three of EGRA's accomplishments under Component 3 for FY 2015 are especially worthy of note. First, schools and communities have enthusiastically heeded the call to celebrate learners' achievements and recognize teachers for their efforts by way of school-, cluster-, and zonal-level reading fairs. In FY 2015 1,540 such fairs were held, with more than one-third (528) taking place in Q2 and nearly one-fifth (269) taking place in the month of July alone. Second, communities have recognized the value of providing children with structured extra-curricular opportunities to practice their reading skills. Communities in EGRA's intervention zones have established 8,994 VRCs, and 15,821 VCRFs were trained in facilitating activities at the VRCs. Finally, in June EGRA held the second annual Braille Cup, a reading competition for visually impaired learners that Airtel Malawi, as the sole corporate sponsor, underwrote at a cost of nearly \$10,000.

Task 3-1: Reading Fairs

3.1.1 School-based fairs held to showcase learner reading abilities

Throughout FY 2015 EGRA field staff continued to work with schools and communities to encourage them to conduct reading fairs on a regular basis. Illustrative activities include oral reading demonstrations by learners using both standard-appropriate and higher-level materials, performance of poems and dramatic skits, tours of reading centers, lesson demonstrations, and exercises in writing and reading comprehension. Through encouragement from EGRA many schools have taken special care to make sure that learners with special needs are integrated in the reading fair agenda and events.

With the 2014–2015 academic year due to conclude in July, late in Q3 EGRA district staff followed up with schools regarding their planned reading fairs. EGRA schools and communities held 269 reading fairs in the month of July alone. This brought the total number of reading fairs held in EGRA schools to 1,540 for FY 2015, with some of the fairs (those held at the zonal or cluster levels) including multiple schools. **Table** details the number of reading fairs held in each district each fiscal quarter.

Table 29. Reading Fairs Held in Each District, FY 2015

District	Number of Reading Fairs				District Total for FY 2015
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Balaka	29	26	16	33	104
Blantyre Rural	13	51	0	24	88
Lilongwe Rural East	14	93	91	37	235
Lilongwe Rural West	53	100	11	21	185
Machinga	43	11	29	9	92
Mzimba North	36	47	34	47	164
Ntcheu	19	8	26	51	104
Ntchisi	36	51	50	17	154
Salima	26	10	5	12	53
Thyolo	109	58	25	9	201
Zomba Rural	18	73	60	9	160
Total	396	528	347	269	1540

The reading fairs continue to be well-received and -patronized by their communities, drawing attention and support from high-level district officials and stakeholders, such as traditional leaders, local government officials, and political leaders. As the reading fairs are organized and run by the communities themselves, they vary in their approaches and activities, but they all focus on highlighting the achievements of their teachers and learners in reading. Many reading fairs are supported by donations and contributions from community members, local leaders, and businessmen. Beginning in Q3 VCRFs became increasingly involved in reading fairs, often demonstrating how they facilitate learning in their VRCs.

In Q3 some zones began to host reading *competitions* (rather than just reading fairs) using their own resources. One example was the Kapalamula Zone in Ntcheu, where the schools and communities collectively raised almost \$200 to purchase prizes for learners (including tablets of bath soap, Vaseline body lotion, exercise books, pencils, and pens), hire a public address system, and provide food for learners involved in the competition and invited guests.

3.1.2 Coordinate planning for development of Braille Cup

EGRA held Malawi's first annual Braille Cup in FY 2014. Planning for the 2015 Braille Cup included attempts to attract corporate sponsorship in order to raise the event's profile and offset its costs. The first would-be sponsor, Indebank, withdrew in Q2 due to financial difficulties which were leading to the bank being sold. EGRA then provided a concept paper, budget, and information pack to Airtel Malawi and invited them to assume the role. Airtel agreed, and the SOC between Airtel and EGRA was submitted to USAID late in Q2 and approved in early Q3. The SOC committed Airtel to providing 5,000,000 MWK toward costs associated with the event, including transportation and accommodation for the learners, teachers, and judges; certificates of participation and prizes; and equipment rental costs.

3.1.3 Braille Cup implemented

EGRA hosted the *2015 Braille Cup sponsored by Airtel* on June 18–19 at the Salima Local Education Authority (LEA) Primary School. The event was the culmination of collaboration between EGRA, Airtel, MoEST (through the Department of Special Needs Education [DSNE]), USAID, Montfort College, and leaders from the Malawian Union of the Blind (MUB). VIPs from USAID, the US Department of State, MoEST, and Airtel attended the event, including U.S. Ambassador to Malawi Virginia Palmer, the Secretary of Education, Science, and Technology Mrs. Lonely Magreta, and Airtel Malawi Managing Director Mr. Heiko Schlittke.

The competition featured 40 Standard 1–8 learners from the resource centers for the visually impaired at the Ekwendeni Primary School, Malingunde Primary School, Nsiyaludzu Primary School, Salima LEA Primary School, and Montfort Demonstration School. The learners competed in five events:

- 1) Reading comprehension
- 2) Spelling
- 3) Reading for speed and accuracy
- 4) Proofreading
- 5) Oral presentation of an essay

As the lead corporate sponsor for the Braille Cup, Airtel Malawi provided branded T-shirts to all the participants and judges. Airtel also underwrote the costs of prizes for top-performing learners and schools. These included

- Cash prizes (a total of 200,000 MWK)
- 6 Perkins Braille
- 30 magnifiers
- 5 radios
- 30 reams of braille embossing paper
- 2 Airtel routers

3.1.4 Evaluation of Year 2 reading fairs and Braille Cup

Early in Q3 EGRA's Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) and Community Mobilization (CM) Specialist met with technical personnel from EGRA's external impact evaluation firm, Social Impact (SI). During these meetings EGRA updated SI on implementation progress, including the nature and extent of reading fairs in EGRA schools. In Q4 EGRA began a review of the planning and implementation processes for the 2014 and 2015 Braille Cups. The report this exercise will generate will (in FY 2016) form the basis for a *Braille Cup Implementation Guide* that will be used ahead of the 2016 Braille Cup as EGRA attempts to allow local disability-sector partners to take a greater role in planning and preparing for the event.

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

Table 30. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 3-1

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
3.1.1 School-based fairs held to showcase learner reading abilities	3.1.1.1 Development of reading fair schedules, agendas	Oct–Nov 2014, Jan–Feb, Apr–May 2015	Completed: Finished for Terms 1–3
	3.1.1.2 Integrate learners with special needs in plans for reading fairs	Oct–Nov 2014, Jan–Feb, Apr–May 2015	Ongoing
	3.1.1.3 School-based reading fairs held	Dec 2014, Mar–Apr, Jul 2015	Completed; 269 reading fairs held in Q4, 1540 held in FY 2015
	3.1.1.4 Annual zonal competitions	May–Jul 2015	Completed: First zonal competition completed in Q3
3.1.2 Coordinate planning for development of Braille Cup	3.1.2.1 Identification of PPPs and submission of concept papers for the Braille Cup	Nov 2014–May 2015	Completed: Airtel Malawi retained as sole corporate sponsor
	3.1.2.2 Development of Braille Cup outreach plan, participant scope	Jan 2015	Completed
	3.1.2.3 Adaptation/Development of Braille Cup-specific testing materials	Mar 2015	Completed
3.1.3 Braille Cup implemented	3.1.3.1 Matching resources for Braille Cup mobilized	Jan–May 2015	Completed: Airtel provided 5 million MWK
	3.1.3.2 Braille Cup schedule, agenda set	Mar 2015	Completed
	3.1.3.3 Braille Cup competition held	Jun 2015	Completed
3.1.4 Evaluation of Year 2 reading fairs and Braille Cup	3.1.4.1 Consolidation of reading fair reports from field offices	Jan, May, Aug 2015	Ongoing: expect to be completed in FY 2016 Q1
	3.1.4.2 Collaboration with Social Impact (external evaluator) to establish evaluation approach	Oct 2014, May 2015	Ongoing
	3.1.4.3 Evaluation conducted	Jun 2015	Ongoing: Internal review of reading fairs completed

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

3.2.1 Communities mobilized to support young readers

Throughout FY 2015 EGRA continued to work closely with school communities through the district-level MoEST and MGCDSW officers, to encourage and mobilize community support for reading both inside and outside of school. EGRA adopted a variety of approaches, from sensitization meetings with community leaders (including school management committees [SMC], parent-teacher association [PTA], and Mother Group [MG] members) to *Special Group* (*Gule wa Mkulu* and *Jando/Nsondo* Initiation Counsellors) trainings, various forms of theater and drama performance, and the establishment of VRCs.

EGRA had completed training and sensitization activities with community leaders from Cohort A schools in FY 2014, so FY 2015 initial outreach activities were limited to those from Cohort B. The initial outreach was completed in Q2; review meetings with various target audiences in the community were then held in Q4. **Table 31** presents the number of community members who participated in EGRA community sensitization activities in FY 2015.

Table 31. Community Members participating in Sensitization Meetings in FY 2015

District †	SMC/PTA Members ‡			MGs	TAs			VHs			VCRFs			VDCs			TFD			LDGs			Other			Total		
	M	F	TT	F	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT
BLK	234	205	439	243	67	13	80	76	19	95	698	1191	1889	16	9	25	548	988	1536	0	2	2	0	0	0	1639	2670	4309
BTR	247	182	429	204	23	0	23	61	40	101	165	420	585	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	70	0	70	567	846	1413
LLRE	296	155	451	232	0	0	0	162	51	213	26	36	62	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	336	482	818	820	960	1780
LLRW	543	171	714	324	10	1	11	224	16	240	782	666	1448	4	16	20	12	6	18	2	0	2	73	127	200	1650	1327	2977
MCH	290	184	474	274	0	2	2	166	69	235	46	22	68	7	15	22	3	0	3	45	57	102	249	379	628	806	1002	1808
MZN	458	283	741	395	0	0	0	94	42	136	782	1208	1990	49	0	49	10	2	12	6	6	12	172	190	362	1571	2126	3697
NEU	360	410	770	347	0	0	0	102	56	158	149	224	373	4	0	4	25	55	80	0	0	0	165	310	475	805	1402	2207
NSI	369	101	470	204	2	0	2	98	51	149	785	1209	1994	22	22	44	31	41	72	22	17	39	26	8	34	1355	1653	3008
SAL	212	163	375	168	1	0	1	116	25	141	16	16	32	61	0	61	10	20	30	24	21	45	176	409	585	616	822	1438
TYO	238	124	362	309	4	0	4	18	26	44	140	141	281	2	3	5	0	0	0	61	176	237	19	162	181	482	941	1423
ZOM	317	212	529	205	17	6	23	296	213	509	572	553	1125	198	31	229	116	179	295	0	4	4	13	1	14	1529	1404	2933
Total	3564	2190	5754	2905	124	22	146	1413	608	2021	4161	5686	9847	364	96	460	755	1295	2050	160	283	443	1299	2068	3367	11840	15153	26993

† BLK = Balaka; BTR = Blantyre Rural; LLRE = Lilongwe Rural East; LLRW = Lilongwe Rural West; MCH = Machinga; MZN = Mzimba North; NEU = Ntcheu; NSI = Ntchisi; SAL = Salima; TYO = Thyolo; ZOM = Zomba Rural

‡ SMC = School Management Committee; PTA = Parent-Teacher Association; MGs = Mother Group members; TAs = Traditional Authorities; VHs = Village Headmen; VCRFs = Volunteer Community Reading Facilitators; VDCs = Village Development Committee members; TFD = Theater for Development Audience Members; LDGs = Local Drama Group Audience Members; Other includes HTs, learners, and community members who do not fall into any of the other categories.

In March, EGRA conducted Special Group trainings targeting *Gule wa Mkulu* leaders in the central region of Malawi and *Jando/Nsondo* initiation counselors in the southern region, where these cultural institutions are prevalent.¹⁷ EGRA held review meetings with the groups in Q4 at the outset of the new school year. **Table** details the number and sex of participants at these training events.

Table 32. Special Groups Trained on EGRA in FY 2015

Special Group Type	District ¹⁸	Initial Training			Review Meetings			Total for FY 2015		
		M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT
<i>Jando/Nsondo</i>	Balaka	24	24	48	26	29	55	50	53	103
	Machinga	25	27	52	23	25	48	48	52	100
<i>Gule wa Mkulu</i>	Lilongwe Rural East	56	18	74	53	21	74	109	39	148
	Lilongwe Rural West	61	20	81	65	12	77	126	32	158
	Ntchisi	55	13	68	60	19	79	115	32	147
Total		221	102	323	227	106	333	448	208	656

In Q2 and Q3 Chancellor College students trained in the CM methodology known as Theater for Development (TFD) under the direction of EGRA's CM partner, the Creative Centre for Community Mobilization (CRECCOM), continued to hold performances in EGRA districts to raise awareness of the importance of reading and the roles parents and community members can play in supporting children's learning. Over the course of FY 2015 the performances reached a total of 5,003 (2109 m, 2894 f) community members. **Table 33** provides detail on the locations and affiliations of attendees.

¹⁷ For a brief explanation of the role of these Special Groups in Malawian culture and how their practices influence education outcomes, please see **Annex 2**.

¹⁸ As these cultural institutions are not prevalent in all districts, training did not occur in other EGRA intervention districts.

Table 33. Composition of the Audiences at TFD Performances in FY 2015

District ¹⁹	Chiefs			Government Extension Workers			Teachers & VCRFs			SMCs, PTAs, MGs			Other Parents			Children			Total		
	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT
BLK	8	1	9	2	0	2	4	6	10	2	20	22	105	295	400	230	300	530	351	622	973
BTR	4	1	5	2	3	5	5	7	12	4	6	10	50	95	145	175	190	365	240	302	542
LLRE	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0
LLRW	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	0
MCH	17	2	19	2	-	2	3	6	9	2	1	3	25	100	125	90	115	205	139	224	363
MZN	6	-	6	1	1	2	8	5	13	7	6	13	70	90	160	110	160	270	202	262	464
NEU	5	2	7	2	1	3	6	13	19	5	7	12	85	105	190	250	410	660	353	538	891
NSI	22	-	22	1	1	2	15	5	20	8	7	15	60	85	145	105	120	225	211	218	429
SAL	5	3	8	3	2	5	6	5	11	7	6	13	75	80	155	125	130	255	221	226	447
TYO	6	1	7	1	3	4	3	2	5	5	13	18	35	80	115	130	150	280	180	249	429
ZOM	10	1	11	2	1	3	3	9	12	2	2	4	45	50	95	150	190	340	212	253	465
Total	83	11	94	16	12	28	53	58	111	42	68	110	550	980	1530	1365	1765	3130	2109	2894	5003

Many communities do not have access to highly-trained TFD troupes. Through CRECCOM EGRA provided training to local drama groups in the use of participatory drama performance methodologies to communicate messages related to early grade reading improvement. During Q2 one club was trained in each intervention district; however, EGRA felt that impact beyond the Activity's period of performance would be greater if there are at least four drama groups present in each district. Therefore during Q3 EGRA began providing training to three additional drama groups in each district. **Table** provides details regarding the names, composition by sex, and location of the local drama groups trained during Q3.

¹⁹ Due to troupe availability, the TFD performances for Lilongwe Rural East and Lilongwe Rural West were postponed until FY 2016.

Table 34. Local Drama Groups Trained in FY 2015

District	Name of Drama Club	Zone	M	F	TT
Balaka	Kachenga Mchedzero	Chembera	6	6	12
	Nkaya Drama Club	Maduwani	8	4	12
	Kalembo	Ulongwe	7	5	12
	Phanyaka	Phalula	7	5	12
Blantyre Rural	Holistic Drama Club	Naotcha	8	5	13
	Kaphuka Drama Club	Namwanje	6	6	12
	Kachere	Mudi	6	4	10
	Fazala Drama Club	Dzunga	7	4	11
Lilongwe Rural East	Chigogo	Ching'ombe	8	5	13
Lilongwe Rural West	Thale	Mzumazi	7	6	13
Machinga	Foyode Youth Club	Chikweo	7	6	13
	Ntaja Youth Club	Ntaja	8	5	13
	Mangamba	Namandanje	6	4	10
	Nampeya Drama Club	Nampeya	7	6	13
Mzimba North	Gonjetso Club	Enukweni	7	6	13
	ECOBO	Ekwendeni	8	5	13
	Kafukule	Kafukule	9	6	15
	Malivenji	Lusangazi	6	7	13
Ntcheu	Likudzi	Senzani	9	6	15
	Chikande	Chikanda	6	9	15
	Mthunzi	Sharpevale	9	6	15
	Makhaphwa	Mtonda	11	5	16
Ntchisi	Gwangwa	Gwangwa	8	5	13
	Kansonga	Kansonga	5	8	13
	Chigona	Kayoyo	9	5	14
	Kazongolowe	Malambo	8	5	13
Salima	Chifundo	Dzonzi	8	5	13
	Yankho	Chitala	5	8	13
	Makwinya	Matenje	6	5	11
	Tiyanjane	Thavite	3	10	13
Thyolo	Kwanjana	Mountain View	8	5	13
	Umodzi	Molere	8	5	13

District	Name of Drama Club	Zone	M	F	TT
	Chimaliro	Goliati	6	8	14
	Tithandizane	Ntambanyama	8	7	15
Zomba Rural	Kwirikwiri Youth Club	Msondole	6	5	11
	Likhubula Youth Club	Namiwawa	7	5	12
	Banana	Chikala	7	5	12
	Anxious Youth Club	Songani	6	6	12
Total	[38]	[38]	271	218	489

Each of the local drama groups mentioned in Table conducted participatory drama performances in Q2-Q4. **Table** describes the composition of the audiences at these performances.

Table 35. Composition of the Audiences at Local Drama Group Performances in FY 2015

District	Chiefs			Government Extension Workers			Teachers & VCRFs			SMCs, PTAs, MGs			Other Parents			Children			Total		
	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT
Balaka	5	-	5	2	-	2	2	7	9	4	-	4	30	156	186	98	102	200	141	265	406
Blantyre Rural	7	8	15	2	2	4	15	10	25	9	7	16	105	201	306	208	217	425	346	445	791
Lilongwe Rural East	2	-	2	-	-	0	-	1	1	-	-	0	3	24	27	27	26	53	32	51	83
Lilongwe Rural West	18	-	18	-	-	0	7	1	8	4	3	7	17	11	28	107	200	307	153	215	368
Machinga	23	12	35	1	3	4	8	6	14	7	9	16	140	200	340	193	249	442	372	479	851
Mzimba North	28	-	28	4	2	6	25	17	42	7	5	12	107	206	313	307	679	986	478	909	1387
Ntcheu	34	10	44	3	5	8	21	14	35	9	7	16	204	270	474	298	247	545	554	573	1127
Ntchisi	18	-	18	1	-	1	5	2	7	1	1	2	20	47	67	32	51	83	77	101	178
Salima	28	4	32	2	1	3	8	4	12	5	8	13	188	148	336	332	395	727	531	592	1123
Thyolo	1	-	1	-	-	0	1	-	1	-	-	0	51	9	60	43	48	91	96	57	153
Zomba Rural	11	12	23	4	3	7	9	10	19	9	8	17	116	260	376	193	256	449	339	549	888
Total	175	46	221	19	16	35	101	72	173	55	48	103	981	1532	2513	1838	2470	4308	3119	4236	7355

Reading centers and Volunteer Community Reading Facilitators

EGRA field staff continued to work with schools and communities on an individual basis to mobilize them to support reading in the community. By the end of Q2 most EGRA communities had taken the initiative to establish 8,994 VRCs and appoint or identify 16,845 VCRFs to work with the children who attend.

Following USAID's approval of EGRA's *VCRF Training Manual*, EGRA held the expert trainers' workshop for the VCRF training cascade in Q2 and the two-day district-level TOFs in Q3 and Q4. The TOFs included PEAs, CDAs, DCDOs, KTAs, EGRA District Monitoring & Evaluation Officers (DMEs), SEMAs, and special needs education (SNE) teachers.

Table provides details regarding the role, affiliation, and sex of the participants at the VCRF TOFs.

Table 36. Participants at Volunteer Community Reading Facilitator Training Of Facilitators Workshops Conducted in FY 2015

District	PEAs			CDAs			DCDOs			Key Teachers			DMEs			DEMs			SEMAs			SNE Teachers			Total		
	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT			
Balaka	7	4	11	8	3	11	1	-	1	8	4	12	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	2	27	12	39
Blantyre Rural	7	3	10	2	13	15	-	1	1	6	7	13	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	3	-	3	20	24	44
Lilongwe Rural East	4	8	12	1	7	8	-	-	-	9	3	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	15	18	33
Lilongwe Rural West	4	8	12	1	7	8	1	-	1	9	3	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	16	18	34
Machinga	7	4	11	5	3	8	1	-	1	5	5	10	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	2	20	13	33
Mzimba North	12	3	15	5	3	8	2	-	2	7	12	19	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	2	2	28	20	48
Ntcheu	8	6	14	5	3	8	1	-	1	8	7	15	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	2	25	16	41
Ntchisi	10	1	11	5	3	8	1	-	1	3	7	10	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	2	21	12	33
Salima	8	5	13	6	4	10	-	-	-	10	3	13	-	-	-	1	1	2	-	-	-	2	-	2	27	13	40
Thyolo	10	3	13	5	2	7	1	-	1	7	6	13	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	2	25	12	37
Zomba Rural	8	5	13	7	1	8	-	-	-	5	7	12	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	1	1	-	1	22	14	36
TOTAL	85	50	135	50	49	99	8	1	9	77	64	141	0	1	1	8	3	11	1	1	2	17	3	20	246	172	418

For logistical purposes, EGRA decided to deliver the final level of the VCRF training cascade at the cluster level rather than at the zonal level. Each zone was divided into 2–6 clusters according to the geographic distribution of the schools and the number of VCRFs to be trained in an effort to minimize travel times and costs. Due to the volume of VCRFs to be trained and the associated logistical burden, EGRA decided to first conduct training in the six districts of Balaka, Blantyre Rural, Lilongwe Rural West, Mzimba North, Ntchisi, and Zomba Rural. The first wave of trainings, which were facilitated by PEAs, CDAs, and KTs, were undertaken from June 15–30, with the remainder completed from July 20–24 and August 3–8.

Error! Reference source not found. provides details regarding the sex of the VCRFs trained in FY 2015 by location.

Table 37. Number of Volunteer Community Reading Facilitators Trained in FY 2015

District	# VCRFs Trained			Quarter
	M	F	TT	
Balaka	676	1272	1948	Q3
Blantyre Rural	228	559	787	Q3
Lilongwe Rural East	696	739	1435	Q4
Lilongwe Rural West	742	630	1372	Q3
Machinga	595	1296	1891	Q4
Mzimba North	522	1378	1900	Q3
Ntcheu	514	854	1368	Q4
Ntchisi	502	442	944	Q3
Salima	546	1165	1711	Q4
Thyolo	583	828	1411	Q4
Zomba Rural	528	526	1054	Q3
TOTAL	6132	9689	15821 ²⁰	

Painting of classroom walls

As was discussed under [Task 2-3](#), in Q3 EGRA successfully concluded a PPP with Rainbow Paints to obtain preferential (at-cost) pricing on the supplies required to paint letters on classroom walls. Refer to Task 2-3 for details.

SMS Gateway

As mentioned under [Task 1-4](#), during Q3 EGRA launched the SMS Gateway system. Two-way communication has been established with Airtel users, though TNM users remain restricted to one-way communication. Refer to Task 1-4 and the *Limited Reach of SMS Gateway System and Data Management Challenges* under [Challenges, Solutions, and Actions Taken](#) for more details. To date the

²⁰ The 15,821 VCRFs trained represent 94 percent of the 16,845 VCRFs included on EGRA's rolls. The variance is accounted for by VCRFs relocating to different communities, death, lack of support from their group village headmen (GVHs), often a result of GVHs who haven't been sensitized to EGRA, or discouragement because the VCRF training took so long to be realized.

majority of SMS messages have targeted teachers and HTs, with significantly less communication directed toward community members and local leaders.

Sensitization of district-level community structures

EGRA field staff continue to participate actively in the district-level institutions established to support education. The EGRA district staff have worked through the DEMs' offices to be formally introduced to the District Education Committee (DEC) and have participated in DEC meetings whenever they take place. They have also sensitized some Village Development Committee (VDCs). **Table 38** below presents the number of attendees at VDC sensitization meetings by district.²¹

Table 38. Number of Village Development Committee Members Sensitized in FY 2015

Districts	VDCs		
	M	F	TT
Balaka	16	9	25
Blantyre Rural	1	-	1
Lilongwe Rural East	-	-	0
Lilongwe Rural West	4	16	20
Machinga	7	15	22
Mzimba North	49	-	49
Ntcheu	4	-	4
Ntchisi	22	22	44
Salima	61	-	61
Thyolo	2	3	5
Zomba Rural	198	31	229
TOTAL	364	96	460

3.2.2 Promising approaches to parental support documented and shared

In Q2 EGRA held a review meeting for all of its District Community Mobilization Officers (DCMs). Because EGRA works closely with the MGCDSW's CDAs, representatives from the MGCDSW's central office participated as well. At the review meeting DCMs and CDAs shared their experiences, challenges, and innovations.

In Q3 the DCMs conducted community and zonal or cluster review meetings. The PEA and CDA from the zone co-facilitated the meetings alongside the DCM; meeting participants included HTs from the zones, representatives of each school's PTA, SMC, and mother group (MG)—three from each group.

DCMs also joined their district colleagues in the district review meetings discussed under [Task 1-4](#).

3.2.3 Activities continuously monitored to allow for iterative improvement

²¹ Note that these figures are excerpted from Table 31 above, and do not represent additional attendees.

In FY 2015 EGRA's M&E and CM teams developed surveys to collect school-, household- and reading center-level CM data. These were first deployed in Q2, with most compilation and analysis beginning in Q3. These datasets were combined with regular meetings between EGRA and CRECCOM (at both the managerial and technical levels) to provide greater insight into how CM activities should be altered or adjusted for greater effectiveness.

Community mobilization of reading materials

Throughout FY 2015 EGRA CM personnel encouraged community members to provide reading materials to their learners. This was done both through sensitization meetings, TFD performances, and participatory drama activities; the action plans communities developed as a result often included provision of reading materials to VCRFs and reading centers as a core element.

Raising awareness about disability and reading

In Q1 of FY 2015 EGRA held a training event for the parents of learners with disabilities. The training was by EGRA DCMs in partnership with SNE teachers in the districts, and aimed to introduce parents to methods of increasing literacy among their children by improving communication and making modifications to the child's environment could improve her overall function. The training sessions focused on developing positive teacher/parent relationships, sharing information about others parents' experiences, linking parents to information and resources available for their children, and providing strategies to support their children in reading. The trainings reached 287 parents (125 m, 162 f) across all eleven districts.

Over the remainder of FY 2015 discussed the outcomes of these Q1 trainings during DCM review meetings and when planning for other training events. In Q3 EGRA conducted awareness-raising trainings for HTs of schools that contain special needs resource centers. These trainings focused on raising awareness about concepts and approaches to literacy for children with disabilities. The trainings were designed to meet the requirements of the HTs in order to make their schools as inclusive as possible in terms of access, participation, and progress for the children with various disabilities. The objectives of the HT training were to

- introduce effective strategies or practices for teaching literacy to children with disabilities, including utilization of TLMs for these children; and
- train HTs in strategies to promote collaboration with the school community including parents, SMCs, and PTAs in support of the education of children with disabilities.

Disability Education Resource Guide

In FY 2015 EGRA finalized the *Disability Education Resource Guide* (DERG), a document that brings together information about various organizations, policies, and resources available to support learners with disabilities in Malawi. USAID approved the DERG in Q2, and it was formally presented to MoEST by Ambassador Virginia Palmer as part of the Braille Cup festivities in June 2015. In Q4 EGRA began disseminating the DERG to stakeholders in the disability sector and planning for two larger-profile dissemination events in FY 2016.

EGRA's PPP activities in Q3 were discussed previously under [Task 2-1](#).

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

Table 39. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 3-2

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
3.2.1 Communities mobilized to support young readers	3.2.1.1 Community sensitization meetings held with SMCs, PTAs, MGs, & local leaders	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Completed
	3.2.1.2 <i>Special Group</i> training (<i>Gule wa Mkulu</i> Leaders and <i>Jando/Nsondo</i> Initiation Counsellors)	Dec 2014, Jan, Jun 2015	Completed: Finalized in Q2 in the five applicable districts
	3.2.1.3 TFD implemented in communities	Oct–Nov 2014	Completed: Two districts completed in Q2, nine districts completed in Q3
	3.2.1.4 Training of community-based drama clubs	Dec 2014, Jan, Mar–Apr 2015	Completed: Training of additional groups completed in Q4
	3.2.1.5 Establishing reading centers	Oct 2014–Mar 2015	Completed: no additional reading centers established in Q3 or Q4
	3.2.1.6 Training of VCRFs	Oct–Nov 2014, Jan–Feb 2015	Completed: Training provided in six districts in Q3, with remaining five reached in Q4
	3.2.1.7 Zonal meetings for change agents (group village headmen [GVHs] and teaching assistants)	Jan, Jul 2015	Delayed: Completed for Cohort A zones; planned for FY 2016 Q1 for Cohort B zones.
	3.2.1.8 Communities mobilized to paint letter cards on walls of S1 classrooms	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing: Model classrooms painted in 2 zones in September 2014; 43% of model classrooms painted in Q4, remainder are pending additional resources due to school-directed scope expansion
	3.2.1.9 SMCs, PTAs, and community leaders engaged through SMS messaging	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing: Begun in Q3, but currently limited to Airtel subscribers
	3.2.1.10 Members of DEC, Area Development Committees (ADCs), and Village Development Committees (VDCs) sensitized on early grade reading	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing
	3.2.1.11 EGRA staff attend district-level meetings for	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
	DEC, ADC, and VDC		
3.2.2 Promising approaches to parental support documented and shared	3.2.2.1 Mobilization officers (EGRA staff) review meetings	Nov 2014, May 2015	Ongoing
	3.2.2.2 HTs' review meetings	Feb, Aug 2015	Ongoing: Continuing throughout Q3 and Q4
	3.2.2.3 Local school leaders (SMCs, PTAs, MGs) review meetings	Feb, Aug 2015	Ongoing: Continuing throughout Q3 and Q4
	3.2.2.4 Special group review meetings	Jun–Jul 2015	Completed: Conducted in Q4
	3.2.2.5 Local community Drama Club review meetings	Jul–Aug 2015	Delayed: Planned for FY 2016 Q1
	3.2.2.6 Documenting and sharing success stories	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing
3.2.3 Activities continuously monitored to allow for iterative improvement	3.2.3.1 Collection of school, household, and reading center level data	Oct–Dec 2014, Feb–Mar, May–Jul 2015	Ongoing
	3.2.3.2 CRECCOM/RTI coordination meetings	Oct 2014, Jan, Apr, Jul 2015	Ongoing: Meetings held in April, May, June
3.2.4 Communities mobilize reading materials	3.2.4.1 Encourage communities to establish community libraries	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing
3.2.5 Conduct awareness-raising around disability and reading	3.2.5.1 Provide awareness raising to EGRA staff on disability and reading	Oct–Nov 2014	Ongoing
	3.2.5.2 Conduct awareness meetings for parent groups and parents of learners with special needs	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Completed for Cohort A zones in November, Cohort B to be rescheduled from September 2015
	3.2.5.3 Train head teachers overseeing resource units for learners with special needs	Nov 2014	Complete: Concluded in June 2015
3.2.6 Development of Disability Education Resource Guide (DERG)	3.2.6.1 Conduct annual update of the DERG	Sep 2015	Delayed: Postponed until Q1 FY2016
	3.2.6.2 Updated DERG submitted to MoEST for endorsement	Oct 2014	Delayed; awaiting 3.2.6.1
	3.2.6.3 Updated DERG submitted to USAID for clearance	Oct 2014	Delayed; awaiting 3.2.6.1
3.2.7 Development of PPPs	3.2.7.1 Develop partnership	Oct 2014–Jul 2015	Ongoing

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
	concepts/papers, negotiate roles/responsibilities for alliances		
	3.2.7.2 Finalize and sign SOCs/support implementation	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing

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

As part of its efforts to mobilize communities to support reading, EGRA has continued to encourage parents and communities to provide reading support directly to their schools. EGRA's *Community Mobilization Handbook*—copies of which EGRA provided to all DEMs, CDAs, PEAs, and HTs, as well as to the Directors of MoEST and key leaders in the MGCDSW—lays out strategies for engaging parents and community members to support school-based efforts.

In order to foster a positive relationship between communities and schools, EGRA has worked with schools to allow for community members, especially SMCs and PTAs, to visit, monitor, and support schools to see what is happening in the classroom.

Parents and communities have begun supporting schools in innovative ways. Some of them involve raising funds to support activities related to the reading centers, fairs, and competitions. Specific examples from Q3 include the following:

- In Kapalamula Zone (Ntcheu), the community raised roughly \$200 to underwrite the costs of a zonal reading competition, including prizes for top learners, food for competitors and invited guests, etc.
- In Bulala Zone (Mzimba North), GVH Themhani Mkandawire has begun providing a monthly stipend of 500 MWK to the local VCRFs for their service.
- Also in Bulala Zone (Mzimba North), a parent at the Chilanganombo Primary School whose child had become a fluent reader gave a Standard 1 teacher a gift of a pair of shoes in appreciation for her efforts.

Table presents the number of community-led activities in support of reading that were documented during FY 2015.

Table 40. Number of Community-Led Activities Conducted in FY 2015

District	April		Total
	In School	Out of School	
Balaka	1	17	18
Blantyre Rural	1	4	5
Lilongwe Rural East	7	31	38
Lilongwe Rural West	1	8	9
Machinga	7	15	22
Mzimba North	17	126	143
Ntcheu	15	25	40

District	April		Total
	In School	Out of School	
Ntchisi	11	34	45
Salima	5	18	23
Thyolo	6	35	41
Zomba Rural	0	14	14
TOTAL	71	327	398

Throughout the two years of EGRA's intervention teachers have been resistant to letting children take reading materials home for extra reading practice. EGRA has understood this resistance to be largely due to the lack of materials at school and concerns about durability of the materials. Following EGRA's delivery of additional reading materials to schools in Q3, EGRA's DCMs noted some softening of that resistance. In areas where the communities have come together to cover the books provided to schools—such as the Lusape, Sharpevale, Kulanga, Nankokota, Chaumbi and Chabwera schools in Ntcheu—teachers' resistance has diminished even further.

EGRA's DCMs have begun documenting and briefing HTs and other stakeholders about branches of the National Library Service that are located within the district and could serve as a source of additional reading material for motivated learners. Also, EGRA's integration efforts (discussed further under [Integrating USAID's Country Development Cooperation Strategy](#) below) led to 5,000 copies of the *Support for Service Delivery Integration* (SSDI) malaria prevention informational leaflet *Moyo ndi Mpamba* ("Healthy life results in economic empowerment") to VRCs in Lilongwe Rural East and West, Balaka, Thyolo, Salima, Zomba Rural, and Machinga.

Throughout FY 2015 curbing absenteeism by learners remained a major point of emphasis in many communities, with village headmen levying fines against parents of truant learners in accordance with their established bylaws. In Q4, after hearing for months that increasing numbers of village headmen were issuing new bylaws (or amending existing ones) to address absenteeism, EGRA began cataloguing these bylaws.

In other places, local government is becoming involved in supporting reading as a result of the sensitization meetings EGRA has conducted. In Lilongwe Rural West the Area Development Committee organized itself to conduct monitoring visits to VRCs in the Njewa zone; in Balaka, the district council offices in the Boma have taken to donating copies of the *Boma Lathu* (Our Nation) newspaper to the Kandengwe and Ntonya VRCs associated with the Balaka LEA primary school. EGRA continues to deliberately seek out community leaders who have demonstrated these kinds of commitments to reading in their communities in order to highlight their actions through the Role Model Initiative.

Incorporation of reading support activities into GUCs

As discussed under [Task 1-5](#), during Q3 a committee representing MoEST stakeholders approved revised guidelines for EGRA's GUC competition. Incorporation of activities designed to improve reading into an applicant school's school improvement plan (SIP) was retained as a key criterion for selecting GUC awardee schools at the zonal level.

Implementation of Role Model Initiative

EGRA launched the “Role Model Initiative” in an effort to facilitate peer learning between the communities related to intervention schools. Community leaders who have demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting the intervention’s activities are taken to visit community leaders elsewhere who have been less willing or able to implement EGRA’s suggested community-mobilization activities. The less-active leaders share what they consider to be obstacles to taking up EGRA activities; the role models share the obstacles they had encountered and how they overcame them. By the end of the encounter the less-active leaders usually express a renewed interest in urging their communities to engage with EGRA’s community mobilization efforts.

In Q3 the DCM for Mzimba North followed up on the role modeling exercise conducted there in Q2. The DCM reported that communities that had been included in the initiative because of their need to improve their support for EGRA had become “vibrant” in their CM activities. In one example, Inkosana [female chief] Kacheke Chavula and Group Village Headman (GVH) Chigani of Lusangazi were brought to visit Rukuru Zone so they could learn more about how communities in Rukuru Zone are promoting literacy. Upon their return home, the Lusangazi became markedly more active in implementing EGRA CM activities. Inkosana Kacheke Chavula committed to becoming a VCRF and has provided one of his houses for use as a VRC. In Q4, role models from the Mgoza School in Salima were taken to the Pemba, Mgwirizano, Msindikiza, and Chagunda schools in the Ngolowindo and Katelera zones to encourage the latter to improve their in- and out of school support for reading. In Thyolo, District Village Head Samison and a VCRF from the Mchenga School addressed village heads, clan leaders, and members of the SMC, PTA, and MGs on the importance of community engagement in curbing absenteeism at schools and reading centers.

Table 41 provides further details on the status of activities for Task 3-3.

Table 41. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 3.3

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of Q3 FY 2015
	3.3.1.1 Parents and communities monitor teaching and learning of reading at schools, including teacher and learner absenteeism	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing
3.3.1 Parents and communities provide support to schools for reading	3.3.1.2 Parents and communities provide teaching and learning aids to schools using local resources	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing
	3.3.1.3 Parents and communities support schools in safeguarding books (e.g., support learners in covering textbooks) and other TLMs	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of Q3 FY 2015
	at school		
	3.3.1.4 Parents/guardians and communities encourage their children to read school materials at home	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing
3.3.2 Communities incorporate reading support activities in SIPs	3.3.2.1 SMCs ensure that SIPs embrace reading activities	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing
	3.3.3.1 Role models identified in communities	Jan–Sep 2015	Ongoing in all districts
3.3.3 Role model initiative implemented	3.3.3.2 Implement role model initiative in schools and communities	Jan–Sep 2015	Ongoing in all districts

Component 4: Improving Policy Environment to Support Early Grade Reading

Component 4 is composed of three tasks, as listed below. Following a presentation of selected highlights from the year's activities, 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

Component 4 Highlights for FY 2015

EGRA made significant progress on Component 4 during FY 2015. Among the most noteworthy achievements were: (1) the finalization and adoption by MoEST of the *Guidelines for the Management of Teaching and Learning Materials* (GMTLM); (2) development of strong PPPs in support of reading; and (3) sustained dialogue with the Ministry and other partners on policy issues to support reading.

On the first achievement, blueTree Group (bTG), worked with MoEST to develop new guidelines for the management of TLM. The new guidelines replace the centralized system of book provision with a new system that liberalizes the textbook market and allows private publishers to offer books to support Malawi's curriculum. If implemented well, this should ensure increased availability of textbooks and stimulate the local publishing business in Malawi. MoEST approved the GMTLM in April 2015, and bTG is now working with MoEST to develop an implementation handbook that provides further details on how to apply the guidelines outlined in the GMTLM.

On the second achievement, EGRA was able to develop partnerships with private companies such as Airtel, Monsanto Malawi, National Bank of Malawi, First Merchant Bank, Ecobank, and Lafarge Cement Company in support of reading. Airtel sponsored the Braille Cup, a reading completion for the visually impaired, which took place in June 2015. The other named companies sponsored Reading Tools in a Box,

which was launched on September 2015 by the Director of Inspection and Advisory Services, Mr. Raphael Agabu. Under this initiative schools sponsored by the private companies received a large box containing supplementary readers, story cards, and other reading materials.

Recognizing that the policy reform process is often complex, involving different stakeholders with different perspectives and interests, over the course of FY 2015 EGRA deepened its engagement with MoEST in the policy reform process, especially as it pertains to increasing time for reading instruction in the curriculum. The Senior Education Policy Advisor (SEPA) has organized and attended numerous meetings with MoEST and other partners focused on policies to support reading. EGRA team members were part of the task force that worked on the *National Reading Strategy* and the *Education Sector Implementation Plan II (ESIP II) Action Plan for Early Grade Reading*. The former was adopted in November 2014 and includes a proposal for increased time on reading. The latter also includes as one of its key strategies to “increase time spent on literacy and numeracy.” Given these policy statements, the EGRA team is now working with DIAS on implementation details. Finally, EGRA supported MoEST in the development of reading benchmarks for Chichewa in Standards 1 to 3.

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

During Q4 EGRA participated in the following meetings and events:

- Special Reading Interventions Coordination Meeting – July 10
- TWG on Standards, Research, and Development – August 18
- 6th EGRA Directors’ Meeting – August 21
- *National Standards of Education* Launch event – August 26
- TWG on Basic Education – August 27
- GMTLM Handbook Review Workshop – September 4
- *Scale-Up and Sustainability Tool* piloting workshop — September 7–8

For the majority of FY 2015 MoEST’s TWGs lay dormant. As a result, EGRA redirected its efforts under Task 4-1 toward participation in other coordination meetings, namely the EGRA Directors’ Meetings, USAID’s Early Grade Reading Project (EGRP) implementing partners (IPs) meetings, and the MoEST Reading Interventions Coordination meetings.

Table 42 displays the dates of the various coordination meetings and policy events in which EGRA participated over the course of FY 2015.

Table 42. Coordination Meetings and Policy Events EGRA attended in FY 2015

Meeting	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Recurrent Meetings				
EGRA Directors’ Meeting	-	January 28	April 14	August 21
USAID EGRP IPs Meeting	December 16	January 8	May 20	-
MoEST Reading Interventions Coordination Meeting	-	-	June 16	July 10

TWG – Basic Education	-	-	-	August 27
TWG – Standards, Research, and Development	-	-	-	August 18
TWG – Teacher Education	-	-	-	-
Once-off Events				
Chichewa Benchmarking Workshop	November 12–13	-	-	-
EGRA Performance Evaluation Findings Workshop	-	February 19	-	-
National Education Standards Stakeholders Meeting	-	March 13	-	-
ESIP II Action Plan Workshop	-	-	April 21–23	-
EGRA PPP Handover Workshop	-	-	June 9	-
GMTLM Handbook Review Workshop	-	-	-	September 4
<i>Scale-Up and Sustainability Tool Pilot</i>	-	-	-	September 7–8
TOTAL				

EGRA, USAID, and MoEST participated in a joint workshop in November 2014 to develop draft benchmarks for Chichewa reading in Standards 1–3. The event was funded by USAID’s EdData II mechanism under Task Order 20. The workshop produced draft benchmarks which have been submitted to MoEST for consideration, but as of the end of FY 2015 had not been formally approved. A follow-up workshop to extend the Chichewa benchmarks to Standard 4 and possibly (depending on the quality of available data) develop benchmarks for English reading is current planned for early December 2015.

USAID retained Khulisa Management Services, Pty. (Ltd.) to conduct a performance evaluation of EGRA over roughly its first 18 months of implementation. Khulisa presented its draft findings at a workshop held on February 19 attended by EGRA representatives, USAID, and MoEST counterparts. EGRA was invited to provide additional written comments in response to the report and turned them in on March 4.

On March 13 DIAS held a special meeting at which it presented the final draft of the National Education Standards it developed in collaboration with the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* ([GIZ], the German international aid agency). Various stakeholders, including members of the TWG on Standards, Research, and Development attended the event alongside EGRA.

MoEST held a workshop from April 21–23 to develop an action plan for ESIP II. The event was driven by a request which followed a visit to Malawi by a team from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and had the goal of generating an action plan that could be used to apply for funds from the GPE. EGRA attended and contributed to developing the action plan for the ESIP II component focused on early grade learning.

In response to a critique from Khulisa's draft report about the absence of a sustainability plan for the PPPs developed under EGRA, EGRA revived efforts to engage MoEST to learn more about PPP generation and maintenance. (Initial overtures to MoEST in FY 2014 had met with disinterest, so EGRA had let them fall.) On June 9 EGRA invited USAID, MoEST, and representatives from its private sector partners at the time—Airtel Malawi, Rainbow Paints, the Monsanto Fund, and National Bank—to a workshop on PPPs. The event included presentations by EGRA on the theory behind PPP development, a panel discussion by the private sector representatives, and comments from DBE Director Dr. Joseph Chimombo.

Throughout FY 2015, EGRA's partner bTG has supported MoEST to advance its policy priorities. bTG assisted MoEST to revive the consultation and drafting process around the GMTLM, ultimately generating a revised GMTLM policy document that MoEST formally approved in April. MoEST subsequently requested bTG's assistance in developing an implementation plan and handbook for the implementation of the revised GMTLM, which aimed to decentralize the production and procurement of primary school textbooks in Malawi. On September 4 EGRA hosted a meeting at which a draft of the GMTLM Handbook was reviewed in detail and discussed by MoEST and other stakeholders, including representatives of Malawi's print and publishing sectors.

Under USAID's EdData II Data for Education Research and Programming (DERP) task order RTI International developed a system for projecting the costs of expanding a reading intervention from the pilot stage to national scale. EGRA proposed to MoEST, and MoEST accepted, for this Scale-up and Sustainability Tool to be piloted in Malawi. The pilot was postponed from its original date (Q3) to Q4 because of technical delay in the software development. RTI's representative traveled to Malawi and conducted the pilot from September 7–8. The workshop included MoEST officials from the Budget and education management information system (EMIS) sections of DEP, as well as representatives from DTED and DBE. EGRA was represented by officers from the accounts section, the M&E Officer, DCOP, and the Senior Education Technical Advisor.

Over FY 2015 EGRA also collaborated with USAID IPs in the governance sector to raise awareness of EGRA activities and the roles that local governance structures could play in supporting improved education. EGRA's key counterpart in these activities was the National Democratic Institute (NDI) under the aegis of the Malawi Electoral and Decentralization Activity (MEDA). (More details regarding this and subsequent related activities are provided under Task 4-2 in the QPRs for Q2 and Q3.)

Some of EGRA's meetings in Q4 addressed issues that had been growing in relevance and urgency over the course of FY 2015. As these have significant implications for EGRA's implementation in FY 2016, these are presented below in more detail.

At the Reading Interventions Coordination Meeting which took place on June 16, 2015, it was learned that institutions and particularly TTCs were not happy with the way projects were using their staff in the languages departments. Lack of coordination among projects was resulting in some lecturers constantly attending workshops and neglecting their classes. It was therefore agreed that a special meeting involving representatives of the various projects or activities and principals of the TTCs and their heads of languages departments should be held to discuss this

issue. The meeting took place on July 10 and was chaired by the Director of Inspection and Advisory Services, Mr. Raphael Agabu. It was attended by a total of 25 people including principals and heads of languages departments or their representatives from all the public TTCs, MoEST officers from DIAS and DTED, and representatives of SEGREM, Forum for African Women Educationalists in Malawi (FAWEMA), Girls' Empowerment through Education and Health Activity (ASPIRE), and EGRA. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how to coordinate the use of TTC lecturers in reading interventions activities. At the end of the meeting participants agreed as follows:

- Since not all the languages lecturers can be trained by the reading interventions organizations due to budgetary constraints, different organizations should train different lecturers. This will help to increase the pool of trained lecturers and reduce the need for the use of the same lecturers by the organizations.
- Communication to lecturers on their participation in various activities should always go through the principals.
- Organizations should consider exempting heads of languages departments from activities that do not really require expertise in literacy instruction such as data collection.
- Organizations should provide feedback to principals of the colleges on the performance of their lecturers in the reading interventions activities.
- Organizations should share with the colleges their plans for activities in advance so that, in turn, the colleges can incorporate them in their plans.

After a break of about one year some TWG meetings took place in August. The TWG on Standards, Research and Development met on the 18th and the TWG on Basic Education met on 27th of August. EGRA attended both meetings. The highlight of the meeting of the TWG on standards, Research and Development was the report by DIAS about MoEST's approval of the following policy documents: a) National Reading Strategy (NRS), approved in November 2014; b) National Education Standards, approved in May 2015 and c) GMTLM, approved in April 2015. During the Basic Education TWG meeting the Director of Basic Education reported that:

- The Ministry was not yet in a position to recruit the teachers that graduated from colleges in 2014 due to lack of funding.
- There was no funding for TLMs in the 2015–2016 financial year just as it was in the previous year.
- USAID had procured Chichewa and English books, and UNICEF was procuring books for the remaining subjects for Standards 1 to 8.

EGRA presented a brief update on its activities since the last meeting.

The 6th EGRA directors' meeting was held at MIE on August 21. The major policy issues discussed at the meeting included the following:

- Extension of the school day
It was reported that MoEST management wanted the proposal on the extension of the school day, which was submitted by MIE, to include suggestions on how the Ministry would handle issues of time on task, i.e., teacher and pupil absenteeism and late reporting for classes, as these compromised the ability to add time to the existing timetable. The meeting observed that the issues of extension of the school day and absenteeism of teachers and pupils might be related, but are two separate issues that need to be dealt with separately. It was also observed that the

comments from the MoEST management had not been formally communicated to the MIE for it to respond. DIAS promised to communicate the comments to MIE by August 28, 2015.

- **Printing and use of teachers' books and learners' books from projects**
Following the last meetings' resolution that projects or activities should be allowed to modify materials in line with the methodologies they are trying out and that they should then print those materials for the schools in which the activity is being implemented, it was further reported that while projects can develop and print materials to be used in their intervention schools, there was still need for them to seek MoEST's approval for such materials. This was necessary in order to avoid creating parallel curricula in the school system, i.e., the official curriculum developed through MIE and the curricula developed by intervention projects. The meeting then agreed that there was need for clear guidelines on how such approvals would be granted. DIAS and MIE were requested to meet and produce the guidelines as soon as possible.

The National Education Standards were launched on August 26. The function was presided over by the Minister of Education, Science and Technology. EGRA was represented by the Senior Education Technical Advisor.

Coordination of Local Capacity Development Efforts

Over the course of FY 2015 bTG provided significant technical assistance along two primary dimensions: first, training and capacity building activities with actors in Malawi's print sector, and second, advancement and further articulation of MoEST's policy goals.

Trips by Roel de Haas focused on working with the various printers in Malawi on improving their understanding of the print process, identifying ways they could work together to grow the print sector, and developing or revising business plans. Some of the printers elected to work with Mr. de Haas individually outside the scope of EGRA to inform procurement of higher-capacity machinery which would increase their maximum output.

Mr. Ken Obura's first trips in FY 2015 focused on assisting MoEST as the Ministry advocated for the finalization and approval of the revised GMTLM. Once the GMTLM was passed, Mr. Obura continued supporting MoEST as the Ministry requested assistance in developing a handbook to support the implementation of the revised GMTLM.

On the PPP front, EGRA held an event in June to bring USAID, MoEST, and private sector partners together to reach a common understanding about the challenges and possibilities inherent in PPPs. EGRA also held a Reading Tools in a Box Campaign Launch on September 17 at the Mlumbwira School in Lilongwe Rural West. The function was attended by representatives of companies participating in the EGRA PPPs arrangement for the Reading Tools in a Box concept. These included Monsanto Malawi, National Bank of Malawi, First Merchant Bank, Ecobank, and Lafarge Cement Company. It was presided over by the Director of Inspection and Advisory Services, Mr. Raphael Agabu. USAID was represented by Mr. Kevin Roberts.

Table 43 provides further details on the status of activities for Task 4-1.

Table 43. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 4-1

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
4.1.1 Active participation in meetings of Technical Working Groups (TWGs) relevant to early grade reading	4.1.1 Basic education TWG attended by EGRA representative	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	EGRA attended meeting that took place on August 27
	4.1.2 Teacher Education TWG attended by EGRA representative	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	No TWG this quarter
	4.1.3 Standards, Research, and Development TWG attended by EGRA representative	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	EGRA attended meeting that took place on August 18
	4.1.4 Quarterly reading interventions meetings hosted	Dec 2014, Mar, Jun, Sep 2015	A special meeting that involved principals of TTCs took place on July 10
4.1.2 Coordination of local capacity development efforts	4.1.2.1 Book chain improvement meetings and trainings conducted by blue Tree Group	Nov 2014, Jan, Apr 2015	Completed; Last STTA trip by bTG was from August 31 to September 5
	4.1.2.2 Support MoEST in finalizing, approving, and implementing GMTLM	Oct 2014–Jun 2015	A workshop to review the GMTLM implementation handbook was held on September 4
	4.1.2.3 Support OAI in connecting EGRA and MoEST with private companies/organizations for PPP development and finalization	Oct 2014–Jun 2015	Ongoing, Reading Tools in a Box was launched on September 17

Task 4-2: Develop Memoranda of Understanding

In FY 2015 EGRA engaged the PEAs, HTs, and leadership of the SMCs and PTAs in Cohort B zones to sign the memoranda of understanding (MOUs). Monitoring visits in FY 2014 indicated that when PEAs were asked to brief these structures on the purpose and roles of the MOUs, they failed to do so; as a result, EGRA conducted one-day sensitization meetings for representatives from both Cohort A and B schools in November and December of 2014. Participants, a total of 4,271 (3,407 men, 864 women), were from 1,431 schools.

In Q2 EGRA began a series of sensitization meetings for District Council Education Committees in the intervention districts. The series of meetings was completed in April, with the final four district meetings held in Salima (April 7), Ntchisi (April 8), Lilongwe Rural (April 9), and Mzimba North (April 10). Total attendance at the meetings held in Q3 was 104, including 52 councilors (42 men, 10 women), 7 members of Parliament (5 men, 2 women), 16 traditional leaders (14 men, 2 women), 28 government officers (24 men, 4 women), and 1 pastor who represented special interest groups. **Table 44** provides details regarding participation in these meetings.

Table 44. Participation in District Council Education Committee Sensitization Meetings held by EGRA in FY 2015

District ²²	Councilors			Members of Parliament			TAs			Government Officers			Others			Total		
	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT	M	F	TT
Balaka	5	-	5	-	-	-	1	-	1	2	-	2	-	-	-	8	-	8
Blantyre Rural	4	1	5	-	-	-	2	-	2	4	-	4	-	-	-	10	1	11
Lilongwe Rural	9	-	9	2	-	2	1	-	1	7	1	8	-	-	-	19	1	20
Machinga	3	3	6	1	-	1	1	-	1	2	1	3	-	-	-	7	4	11
Mzimba North	2	1	3	-	-	-	1	-	1	2	1	3	-	-	-	5	2	7
Ntcheu	3	-	3	1	-	1	2	-	2	4	-	4	-	-	-	10	-	10
Ntchisi	3	1	4	-	1	1	1	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	4	3	7
Salima	3	3	6	1	1	2	2	1	3	1	-	1	-	-	-	7	5	12
Thyolo	4	-	4	-	-	-	2	1	3	1	-	1	1	-	1	8	1	9
Zomba Rural	6	1	7	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	8	1	9
TOTAL	42	10	52	5	2	7	14	2	16	24	4	28	1	0	1	86	18	104

In Q2 and Q3 EGRA conducted monitoring visits to understand the implementation of the MOUs signed by HTs, SMCs, and PTAs over the prior two years. The visits included six schools in Machinga and three schools in Ntcheu (the two districts not visited in Q2).

As MoEST personnel were busy coordinating national school examination activities during May and June, the debriefing meeting for DEMs and CPEAs in EGRA districts scheduled for Q3 was postponed until September 25. Representatives attended from every district save Thyolo and Ntcheu, both of which later reported not having received the invitations they were issued. Among other things the meeting agreed to the following:

- DIAS needs to issue a circular to all intervention schools about the extension of the school day for Standards 1 to 3.
- EGRA should provide clear guidance on the utilization of the extra 1 hour for Standards 1 to 3.
- EGRA should consider further training of the reading center facilitators.
- SMC and PTA members require further training on how to support activities that promote reading in their schools and communities.

Table 45 Table provides further details on the status of activities for Task 4-2.

²² Politico-administrative boundaries are different than educational-administrative boundaries, which is why the meeting is reported as being held for Lilongwe Rural as a whole (rather than East or West).

Table 45. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 4-2

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of Q3 FY 2015
4.2.1 MOUs implemented and monitored in intervention districts	4.2.1.1 Consultative meetings held with stakeholders, including DIAS, DBE, DEMs, PEAs, MGCDWS	Nov 2014, Mar, Jun 2015	Completed: Monitoring visits to Cohort B schools completed in May; debriefing planned for Q4 ²³
4.2.2 MOUs signed with stakeholders in new intervention zones (Cohort B)	4.2.2.1 Sensitization meetings held with stakeholders	Nov 2014	Completed: Finished in April 2015
	4.2.2.2 MOUs submitted to stakeholders for signing	Dec 2014	Completed: Finished in January 2015
4.2.3 MOUs revisited and updated in light of Year 1 successes and challenges		Oct 2014	Completed: Finished in September 2014

Task 4-3: Facilitate Extension of Reading Instruction Time

Formalization of the arrangement to extend reading instruction time in intervention schools was completed with the signing of MOUs by Cohort B schools in January 2015. During Q3 EGRA held district review meetings (discussed in more detail under [Task 1-4](#)) at which EGRA district staff notified PEAs of the inconsistent implementation in some schools of the extension of the school day. (As discussed in the FY2015 Q2 quarterly performance report (QPR), the monitoring visits under Task 4-2 revealed that some schools were extending the instructional day only on certain days of the week.)

Attendees at the September 25 meeting mentioned above noted that while extending the instructional day for Standard 1 was fairly straightforward, doing so for Standards 2 and 3 was much more complicated. In the absence of concrete guidance from DIAS as to how best to implement this practice, many schools elected to disregard that element of the MOUs.

The proposed new primary school timetable framework that allocates more time for reading instruction has yet to be approved. At the fifth EGRA directors' meeting on April 14 the directors reported that the issue was discussed at a meeting of the Education Sector Wide Group and concerns were raised about how the proposed changes would affect the double shift system being implemented in some schools. It was also observed that in some districts the proposed changes would affect the operations of Muslim *madrassa* schools. The directors noted that MoEST was thus considering ways to deal with these issues before formally approving the proposed framework.

In Q4 EGRA continued lobbying for the institutionalization of the extension of the school day to allocate more time for reading instruction in all primary schools in the country. As reported in Q3 the ESIP II (2013/14 – 2017/18) includes the extension of the school day by one hour as one of the strategies to improve early grade learning.

²³ The FY2015 Q2 QPR erroneously noted this activity as completed in February (Q2); in fact, the final two districts were visited in Q3, as reported above.

This was also included in the ESIP II Action Plan developed in April. However the proposed new primary school timetable framework that allocates more time for reading instruction is yet to be approved. The issue was once again raised at the 6th EGRA Directors' meeting on August 21 as indicated above. This time it was reported that MoEST management wanted the proposal to include suggestions on how the Ministry would handle issues of teacher and pupil absenteeism and late reporting for classes as these compromised the ability to add time to the existing timetable. After it was observed that those comments from MoEST management had not been formally communicated to the MIE for them to respond, DIAS promised to communicate the comments to MIE by August 28, 2015. It is not clear whether this has since been done.

Table 46 provides further details on the status of activities for Task 4-3.

Table 46. Progress against Planned Activities—Task 4-3

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
4.3.1 Meetings hosted on extension of reading instruction and other policy issues on reading	4.3.1 Meetings hosted on extension of reading instruction and other policy issues on reading	Oct, Dec 2014, Aug 2015	Ongoing; issues are raised through quarterly EGRA directors meetings; 6 th meeting was held August 21
4.3.2 Meetings held with MoEST to review implementation guidance	4.3.2 Meetings held with MoEST to review implementation guidance	Dec 2014, Apr, Aug 2015	Ongoing; next meeting with DIAS planned for October
4.3.3 Meetings held with DEMs, PEAs in intervention districts to share/review implementation guidance	4.3.3 Meetings held with DEMs, PEAs in intervention districts to share/review implementation guidance	Dec 2014, May, Jul 2015	Ongoing; last meeting held on September 25
4.3.4 Extension of reading time implemented in new intervention zones	4.3.4 Extension of reading time implemented in new intervention zones	Oct 2014-Jul 2015	Ongoing; formalization of the arrangement was completed in January 2015, but monitoring continues

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 have already been listed and discussed 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 1–4 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

Review Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (AMEP)

EGRA's plans to review the AMEP early in FY 2015 were derailed by the resignation in late November of its M&E and Learning Specialist, Dr. Mike Nkhoma. His successor, Mr. Kondwani Nyirongo, was hired and on-boarded in May. EGRA thus conducted its internal review of the indicator definitions and data collection methods documented in the AMEP in Q3. However, EGRA was not able to coordinate a suitable time to meet with USAID and propose mutually acceptable revisions to the AMEP.

Review and update of M&E data collection tools

Over the course of FY 2015 EGRA completed or initiated several modifications to its data collection tools. A review of data entry templates conducted in Q2 led to Q3 revisions that incorporated data validation, restricted access, and pre-populated lists. A review of data collection processes and reporting flows identified problems with timeliness, inadequate controls and confusion, which routinely delayed the reporting of actionable data by the field to Lilongwe headquarters. The review also identified incomplete datasets (especially relating to CM activities) and areas in which data collection tools could be improved.

In order to resolve these bottlenecks and shortcomings, EGRA implemented revisions to its data gathering forms and collection processes. The M&E unit developed data inventory tracking sheets to facilitate timely reporting of the data being collected by EGRA.

Migration to Tangerine:Tutor

During visits to classrooms to observe coaching interactions, EGRA noted that the quality of coaching being provided was inconsistent. More specifically, the feedback provided by coaches was rarely specific and actionable, and frequently omitted areas of high priority for improvement (such as the use of small-group and paired activities for learners' independent practice). EGRA thus elected to initiate a migration from core Tangerine software to Tangerine:Tutor, which automatically generates suggestions for feedback based on responses marked by the user. EGRA developed the software logic and feedback statements Tutor relies upon and revised them through discussions with teams from the RTI Home Office, which have used Tutor in

Nigeria on the Reading and Access Research Activity. EGRA's M&E unit also reviewed the reporting dashboards used in Kenya on the Primary Math and Reading Initiative and Tusome Early Literacy Programme and specified the modifications that would be required for the Malawian context. By the end of Q3 RTI's software developers were implementing the requested changes. The requested changes were not fully complete by September 30, but EGRA continues to plan for Tutor to be rolled out to PEAs, DTCs, and DMEs in FY 2016 Q1.

LAT Rounds 1–7 data analysis and report writing

At the time of Dr. Nkhoma's departure there was a backlog of unwritten reports from the first four rounds of LAT data collection. During Q3 EGRA recruited and hired a data analysis and report-writing consultant (Dr. Boran Altincicek, an expert in statistics) to clear the backlog of LAT reports. By the end of FY 2015 drafts of the LAT 1–3 reports had been submitted to the editors and experts at RTI HQ. These will be submitted to USAID for clearance and subsequent dissemination to stakeholders in FY 2016 Q1, with the reports for LAT rounds 4-7 to follow shortly thereafter.

Review and update of LAT instrument and administration process

In FY 2015 EGRA made minor adjustments to the LAT instruments in order to minimize the risk of learners being coached to memorize the items should any prompts leak. Specifically, EGRA re-randomized grid items (letters, syllables, familiar words) and substituted a new oral reading passage and comprehension questions for the existing ones. EGRA plans to conduct an equating assessment in FY 2016 to confirm whether the various forms of the LAT instrument are of equivalent rigor, and if not, which adjustment factors should be applied to score them on a common scale.

In Q3 EGRA developed two new subtasks to pilot during the July LAT on a pilot basis: a phonological awareness (PA) assessment that may serve as an alternative to the existing "initial sound identification" task and a rapid automatized naming (RAN) task. The first seeks to improve the validity of the standard early grade reading assessment PA measure by reducing variability between raters (which in Malawi has historically been lowest on this subtask, regardless of language of assessment) and removing from children the need to accurately reproduce the sound rather than just identifying it. The RAN assessment was included for its diagnostic value, as the literature review that informed the development of the alternate PA assessment identified it as more strongly predictive of later reading performance than many other subtasks.

Development of the subtasks involved polling EGRA staff to assess the cultural appropriateness and resonance of 179 potential images, soliciting and comparing translations, and then selecting the subtask items to assess a variety of syllable sounds.

Support to PEAs on use of Tangerine in observing and coaching teachers

During Q3 EGRA installed updated versions of the Tangerine-based TOI on the tablets of 134 PEAs and 11 DTCs. The M&E unit supported PEAs and DTCs in uploading the coaching data collected electronically during Q3. A total of 6,151 observations were successfully uploaded as indicated in **Table 47** below; coaching

conducted using paper-based TOIs accounts for the difference between the number of coaching interactions listed below and the number reported under [Task 1-4](#).²⁴

Table 47. TOI Records Collected Electronically in FY 2015

District	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Balaka	158	112	155	25	450
Blantyre Rural	70	52	74	8	204
Lilongwe Rural East	61	44	350	96	551
Lilongwe Rural West	50	145	72	6	273
Machinga	159	168	324	50	701
Mzimba North	361	246	355	52	1,014
Ntcheu	414	219	199	101	933
Ntchisi	166	114	196	35	511
Salima	219	73	139	15	446
Thyolo	122	212	242	5	581
Zomba Rural	251	130	80	26	487
Total	2,031	1,515	2,186	419	6,151

EMIS Toolbox

In FY 2015 EGRA developed a Malawi-specific build of an open-source data visualization and reporting system called the [EMIS Toolbox](#). EGRA initiated configuration and initial training activities in Q1, and retained the system's developer as a consultant in Q2 to help localize the underlying data structures for Malawi and assist with training Lilongwe headquarters staff, 16 District EMIS Officers (13 men, 3 women) from EGRA districts, and a USAID Project Management Specialist in its use. Throughout Q3 further development of additional features began, and in Q4 EGRA took the system offline temporarily to add some additional features (developed for USAID programs in Nigeria and the Philippines) and address some misconfigurations identified by users. It will be reinstated early in FY 2016.

Table 48 provides further details on the status of activities for Task ME-1.

Table 48. Progress against Planned Activities—ME-1: Internal Activity M&E

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
ME-1.1 Review and update of AMEP	ME-1.1.1 Review and update AMEP goals/targets for FY 2015 in light of FY 2014 results	Oct 2014	Ongoing: Draft modification developed but not yet submitted to USAID
ME-1.2 Review and	ME-1.2.1 Review and	Oct 2014–	Completed: Review

²⁴ The electronically-collected TOI records are used for calculation of teacher performance and learner attendance data. The paper-based forms have been collected and are being gradually entered in electronic format.

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
update of M&E data collection tools	modify M&E data collection tools as needed	Sep 2015	meeting held June 29–July 1
	ME-1.2.2 Rendering of updated tools in Tangerine	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing: Completed for LAT and core TOI, final tweaks underway for Tutor
ME-1.3 Review and update of LAT instrument and administration process	ME-1.3.1 Review and modify LAT instrument in light of FY 2014 experience	Sep 2015	Completed: new PA and RAN subtasks introduced for July LAT (Q4)
	ME-1.3.2 Develop new passages for oral reading fluency (ORF) and comprehension subtests	Jul– Aug 2015	Completed: Finalized in Q4
	ME-1.3.3 Rendering of updated LAT instrument in Tangerine	Sep 2015	Completed: Finalized in Q4
	ME-1.3.4 Selection of new sample set of schools for SY3	Aug 2015	Completed: Finalized in Q4
ME-1.4 Support to PEAs on use of Tangerine	ME-1.4.1 Technical support provided to PEAs on use of Tangerine	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Completed; refresher training conducted in March 2015 and modules included in Q3 review meetings with PEAs
	ME-1.4.2 Monitor and review of use of Tangerine for data collection with PEAs	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing
ME-1.5 Tangerine-based M&E implemented	ME-1.5.1 Tangerine-based M&E implemented by PEAs and district staff	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing
	ME-1.5.2 Data coordination meetings with DMEs	Dec 2014, Mar, Jun, Sep 2015	Completed; Instrument review meeting held June 29–July 1
ME-1.6 Small-scale LAT quantitative assessments	ME-1.6.1 LAT assessments conducted every term	Mar, Jul, Sep 2015	Completed: Next round scheduled for October 2015 (FY 2016 Q1)
	ME-1.6.2 STTA from RTI Home Office support trip during LAT administration	Mar 2015	Completed

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

Throughout FY 2015 EGRA coordinated with the external evaluator, SI, to ensure that the needed data are being collected in order to evaluate the impact of various activities under EGRA. EGRA held several meetings with SI personnel in Q2 and Q3

to brief them on implementation timelines and the specific details of various elements of the intervention. EGRA also submitted to SI M&E datasets regarding coaching, CM, teacher training, etc., in order to inform the analysis of SI's Midterm Impact Evaluation data.

EGRA further agreed to assist SI in assessing whether SI's "State of the District" reports detailing the findings from the 2014 National Reading Assessment had been received by DEMs and HTs, and if so, how they had been used.

Table 49 provides further details on the status of activities for Task ME-2.

Table 49. Progress against Planned Activities—ME-2: Coordinating with External Evaluator

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of Q3 FY 2015
ME-2.1 Coordinate with external evaluator (Social Impact) on impact assessment	ME-2.1.1 Coordinate with SI on end of School Year 2 EGR assessment in intervention districts	Jun–Jul 2015	Completed: Meetings held with SI in April and May
	ME-2.1.2 Coordinate with SI on evaluation of impact of various EGRA activities, including the GUC, reading fairs, and other incentives	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing

ME-3: Regular Ongoing Reporting

Throughout FY 2015 EGRA met nearly all of its ongoing requirements and deadlines for reporting to USAID. (The Q3 report was initially submitted on July 31 rather than July 30.) **Table 50** presents the dates of initial submission, comments, revisions, and approval for the quarterly progress reports.

Table 50. Dates of QPR Submissions, Revisions, and Approvals in FY 2015

Quarterly Report	Date Submitted	Comments, Revisions, Resubmissions	Date Approved
FY2015 QPR 1	January 31, 2015	Comments received February 3, 2015 Resubmitted February 11, 2015	February 13, 2015
FY2015 QPR 2	April 30, 2015	Comments received May 8, 2015 Resubmitted May 11, 2015	May 11, 2015
FY2015 QPR 3	July 31, 2015	Comments received August 11, 2015 Resubmitted September 2, 2015	September 9, 2015

During Q3 the M&E unit undertook an intensive data entry exercise in order to clear a backlog of monitoring data accumulated since October 2014. By the end of Q3 all collected data had been entered, and by Q4 they had been cleaned and reformatted for import into the EMIS Toolbox. As discussed briefly above under [ME-1](#), the process of clearing the backlog revealed gaps in some collected datasets (especially CM data) and chronic lateness in submission to Lilongwe headquarters.

EGRA did not resume monthly reports to MoEST counterparts in Q4 as anticipated due to the volume of end-of-school-year activities.

Table 51 provides further details on the status of activities for Task ME-3.

Table 51. Progress against Planned Activities—ME-3: Regular Ongoing Reporting

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of Q3 FY 2015
ME-3.1 Regular ongoing reporting	ME-3.1.1 Quarterly performance reports	Oct 2014, Jan, Apr, Jul 2015	On track: QPRs submitted on time for Q1 and Q2; 1 day late for Q3
	ME-3.1.2 Quarterly financial reports	Oct 2014, Jan, Apr, Jul 2015	On track: Submitted on time within QPRs for Q1, Q2, and Q3
	ME-3.1.3 Annual report	Oct 2014	Completed: Submitted on time on October 31, 2014
	ME-3.1.4 Monthly updates to MoEST counterparts	Oct 2014-Sep 2015	Delayed: Did not resume in Q4
	ME-3.1.5 Quarterly technical meetings with Principal Secretary (PS), directors of MoEST and USAID	Oct 2014, Jan, Apr, Jul 2015	Ongoing: Meeting held in April 2015

XC-1: Local Capacity Development (LCD)

Throughout FY 2015 EGRA continued to help build local capacity by working collaboratively with MoEST, MIE, and other educational partners in the development of materials, training of teachers, and many other activities under EGRA. Through providing technical assistance and working hand-in-hand with counterparts, EGRA is building hands-on capacity, skills, and knowledge that will remain with the Ministry and others working on education and reading in Malawi.

Participation of MIE and MoEST personnel in materials-development workshops was particularly robust over the first three quarters. As discussed under [Task 1-3](#) above, during Q3 EGRA implemented a modified approach for development of SLPs. While the products of the new approach were of good quality and the gains in efficiency were significant, EGRA found that more work needs to be done to ensure that higher-level MoEST personnel are able to provide their inputs into the materials while the products are still at the manuscript stage. Feedback provided by MoEST during a workshop spanning late Q3 and early Q4, while valuable, came significantly after the SLPs had already been “poured” (rendered into their final format for conversion to print-ready files). Providing feedback at such a late stage incurs additional costs on the publishing side, significantly alters page counts relative to requests for quotes issued to print vendors, and creates delays in submission of camera-ready copy (CRC) to the printers. During Q4 EGRA convened a meeting with MoEST to develop a process guide of sorts to identify appropriate windows for feedback in order to minimize these sorts of challenges.

Mentorship Program

EGRA's formal mentorship program was placed on hiatus following the resignation of EGRA's Human Resources Manager and M&E and Learning Specialist, as both of them were key players in overseeing the mentorship program.

While EGRA personnel continued to share their knowledge with each other through informal coaching and mentoring sessions, EGRA's formal Mentorship Program remained on hiatus throughout Q2–Q4. EGRA began on-boarding a new Human Resource Manager (HRM) on June 1, but the remainder of Q3 was dedicated to orienting him to RTI's personnel and workflows and clearing the backlog of human resource-related tasks that had accumulated during the 8 months EGRA had been without an HRM. EGRA thus did not revive the formal mentorship program in June as earlier anticipated.

EGRA's culture of mutual support continues, however, with district personnel regularly coaching their peers on data entry, the use of tablets, software (especially Tangerine and Excel), and document layout. Dr. Beatriz Coningham, RTI's Director of Global Organizational Development & Learning and a key architect of the mentoring program, visited Malawi EGRA for the third time late in Q4 (September 28–October 1, 2015). During her visit EGRA held a strategic planning retreat (including all CRECCOM and OAI in-country staff) with Dr. Coningham facilitating. The visit included a review of the mentoring program, and EGRA determined that the new HRM would propose some modifications to the structure of the formal mentoring interactions and revive it in FY 2016 Q1.

Technical and administrative performance by CRECCOM

One of EGRA's major priorities in FY 2015 was building CRECCOM's capacity in the areas of technical and administrative management. Their struggles in the areas of administration and finance are discussed at length in the FY2015 Q2 QPR (especially in the XC-1 section, pp. 62–63, but also pp. 34–38, 43, and 74).

Early in Q2 EGRA issued CRECCOM a cure notice directing it to address several deficiencies. It was unable to comply with the cure notice, successfully correcting only 3 of 12 issues. From April 8–10, early in Q3, EGRA's DCOP, CM Specialist, and Home Office Project Coordinator Caroline Bixiones traveled to Zomba Rural for three days of meetings with CRECCOM's senior management and board.

During those three days CRECCOM's contract was significantly restructured to reduce the scale and complexity of technical tasks, with the understanding that this would render the associated administrative tasks more manageable. In addition to streamlining CRECCOM's technical responsibilities, the meetings identified steps to be taken by EGRA and CRECCOM to enhance the timeliness and quality of communication. EGRA agreed to modify the structure and timing of weekly e-mails from EGRA's DCOP to CRECCOM's senior management and board. Both parties agreed to hold in-person meetings of senior managers on a quarterly basis at minimum, with more frequent meetings as scheduling and serendipitous travel permit. CRECCOM agreed to provide quarterly work plans with weekly rather than monthly detail to facilitate more granular accountability checks by EGRA. EGRA agreed to make a point of proactively inviting specific CRECCOM personnel to relevant activities rather than relying upon CRECCOM management to take initiative and send its staff.

The discussed measures were implemented throughout Q3: the weekly e-mails were moved to Tuesday mornings, with action items directed to specific individuals within CRECCOM rather than to the management team as a whole. EGRA and CRECCOM senior managers met in-person on May 20 (following USAID's EGRP IP meeting), June 19 (at the 2015 Braille Cup), June 22 (with EGRA Home Office Project Manager Dr. Bidemi Carrol in attendance), and June 24 (at the Namilongo School in Zomba Rural, for the visiting UK Department for International Development minister's event). CRECCOM delivered its Q4 work plan with visibility into activities at the weekly level. EGRA has invited CRECCOM personnel to participate in several Q3 and early Q4 activities related to Component 1 and M&E.

Since the end of the cure notice period (March 10, 2015) CRECCOM has been invoicing EGRA each month. While the invoices have never yet been correct and complete on first submission, they have improved sufficiently for EGRA to be able to in turn invoice USAID for CRECCOM-related costs several times in Q3 and Q4. While CRECCOM has successfully submitted work plans, the listed activities have not been completed as planned; invoices have indicated that the work has been carried out in different locations and on different dates than indicated in the work plans. The advances CRECCOM receives are intended to cover a one-month period; however, CRECCOM routinely inflates the projected expenses and then requires two months or more to spend the advanced funds. As discussed below, despite EGRA's coordination with Counterpart International, significant gaps remain in CRECCOM's capacity.

Coordination with Counterpart International on LCD

In Q2 RTI sent Nicole Jacobs, a capacity-building expert, and Caroline Bixiones, the EGRA project coordinator who has worked most directly with CRECCOM's financial and operational personnel, from RTI's Home Office to facilitate CRECCOM's completion of a self-assessment known as the Participatory Local Capacity Assessment (PLOCA). After EGRA shared the PLOCA with USAID in Q2, USAID placed EGRA in contact with Counterpart International, the implementers of the *Supporting the Efforts of Partners* (STEPS) program. (This is discussed in greater detail in the FY2015 Q2 QPR XC-1 section, pp. 62–63.) As agreed in Q2, EGRA and STEPs have proceeded to closely coordinate ongoing activities explicitly aimed at building CRECCOM's capacity.

STEPS' DCOP and Capacity Development Specialist joined EGRA in Zomba on April 9 for a joint review of capacity-development activities. CRECCOM and STEPs jointly identified a subset of CRECCOM's capacity development priorities that could be supported by STEPs and realistically completed within the next five months. The participants then tasked CRECCOM with modifying its draft Capacity Building Plan to reflect the allocation of these activities to STEPs and to readjust priorities for EGRA and RTI Home Office support. (CRECCOM missed the deadline for submission of the revised Capacity Building Plan. When it was finally submitted, it differed only slightly from the versions submitted prior to the joint EGRA-STEPS-CRECCOM meetings.) By the end of FY 2015 EGRA has not seen evidence that CRECCOM was completing its planned activities.

EGRA and STEPs continue to meet regularly to discuss CRECCOM's progress and coordinate further capacity development activities. EGRA's COP and DCOP met with STEPs' COP, DCOP, and Capacity Development Specialist on April 28 to follow up on the April 9 meeting. EGRA's COP and RTI's Vice President for International

Education, Melinda Taylor, met with STEPs' COP and DCOP again on May 7. EGRA's COP, DCOP, and Home Office Project Manager met with STEPs' COP, DCOP, and Capacity Development Specialist on June 18. Following the June 22 meeting with CRECCOM, EGRA briefed STEPs on the outcome by e-mail and identified additional opportunities for further coordination. As a result of this EGRA-STEPs coordination, (1) EGRA specifically requested that CRECCOM provide opportunities to draft EGRA-related success stories and progress reports to a pair of staff members who attended a STEPs-run training on report writing; (2) EGRA directed O'Brien and Associates' (OAI's) Malawi-based PPP Specialist, Natasha Phoya Kalea, to deliver a version of the presentation OAI developed for the "PPP Handover Meeting" (discussed under [Task 4-1](#)) at STEPs' upcoming training for CRECCOM's Board; (3) EGRA formally introduced STEPs to the leadership of ASPIRE, whose CRECCOM-hired staff had participated in some of their earlier training events.

Table 52 provides further details on the status of activities for Task XC-1.

Table 52. Progress against Planned Activities—XC-1: Local Capacity Development

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
XC-1.1 Local capacity is built in area of early grade reading	XC-1.1.1 MoEST, MIE, capacity built through collaborative participation in EGRA activities	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing: Joint writing of SLPs and TLMs continued in Q3 and Q4
	XC-1.1.2 MoEST, MIE, NLS, Malawi PEN participate in writing workshops that include training on developing decodable and leveled stories for children (See also <i>Task 1.3.4.1</i>)	Jan, May 2015	Ongoing: Additional activities planned for Q3 pushed back to Q4
	XC-1.2.3 Ongoing implementation of organizational learning and mentorship activities with EGRA staff	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing
	XC-1.2.4 Quarterly in-person meetings of peer mentors	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Temporarily suspended
	XC-1.2.5 RTI conducts midterm organizational capacity assessment to evaluate CRECCOM's systems	Feb 2015	Completed: PLOCA conducted in January 2015
	XC-1.2.6 Review and update of CRECCOM's systems-strengthening/remediation plans	Oct 2014, Mar 2015	Ongoing
	XC-1.2.7 Implementation of CRECCOM systems-	Oct 2014–Sep	Ongoing

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
	strengthening/remediation plans	2015	

XC-2: Students with Special Needs/Learning Disabilities

Progress under this crosscutting issue has already been discussed under Task 1-3, Task 3-1, and Task 3-2 above.

Table 53 provides further details on the status of activities for Task XC-2.

Table 53. Progress against Planned Activities—XC-2: Students with Special Needs

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
1.3.1 Evaluate teaching and learning materials developed and used for teaching reading for S1-S3 learners	1.3.1.4 Assessment of TLM currently available and needed for learners with disabilities	Oct–Dec 2014	Completed: Finished in November 2014
	1.3.4.1 Support districts in conducting assessment and identification of learners with special needs in schools	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing
	1.3.4.2 Update assessment of current assistive technology available to schools of learners with disabilities	Oct–Nov 2014	Delayed; update of assessment to be completed in Q1 FY 2016
1.3.4 TLMs accessible to children with disabilities	1.3.4.3 Procurement of assistive technology to learners with special needs	Dec 2014–Feb 2015	On Track; delivery of products for 2014–2015 taken May 11, 2015, and procurement for 2015–2016 planned by September 30, 2015
	1.3.4.4 Distribution of assistive technology to learners with special needs	Mar–Apr 2015	Completed: Distribution of DSNE-funded materials completed March 9–13; distribution of EGRA-funded materials completed May 27–30.
	1.3.4.5 Provide training on how to utilize high and low tech assistive devices	Mar–Apr 2015	Completed; training provided in August and September 2015
	1.3.4.6 Selection of EGRA materials for adaptation for learners with special needs	Oct–Dec 2014, Jan, Jun–Sep 2015	Complete: Finished April 15, 2015
	1.3.4.7 Submission of	Feb 2015	Complete

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
	adapted material to MoEST for endorsement		
	1.3.4.8 Submission of adapted material to USAID for clearance	Feb 2015	Complete
	1.3.4.9 Distribution of adapted materials to schools and Special Needs Education Resource Units	Mar–Apr 2015	Completed in September 2015
	1.3.5.1 Consultative meetings held between DGVP Specialist and DSNE	Oct 2014, Mar 2015	Ongoing; meetings held May 29, June 4, and June 16, 2015
	1.3.5.2 Workshop on development of IEPs for learners with special needs	Jan 2015	Complete; IEP content included in training workshops conducted in June 2015
1.3.5 Provide support to DSNE and schools around Individual Education Plans	1.3.5.3 Discussions with DSNE, DTED, and Montfort College regarding IEP-related content in pre-service training structures/programs	Jan 2015	Delayed; planned for Q1 FY 2016
	1.3.5.4 Support districts in monitoring of implementation of IEPs in schools	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing
3.1.1 School-based fairs held to showcase learner reading abilities	3.1.1.4 Annual zonal competitions	May–Jul 2015	On track: First zonal competition completed in Q3
	3.1.2.1 Identification of PPPs and submission of concept papers for the Braille Cup	Nov 2014–May 2015	Completed: Airtel Malawi retained as sole corporate sponsor
3.1.2 Coordinate planning for development of Braille Cup	3.1.2.2 Development of Braille Cup outreach plan, participant scope	Jan 2015	Completed
	3.1.2.3 Adaptation/Development of Braille Cup-specific testing materials	Mar 2015	Completed
	3.1.3.1 Matching resources for Braille Cup mobilized	Jan–May 2015	Completed: Airtel provided 5 million MWK
3.1.3 Braille Cup implemented	3.1.3.2 Braille Cup schedule, agenda set	Mar 2015	Completed

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
	3.1.3.3 Braille Cup competition held	Jun 2015	Completed
3.1.4 Evaluation of Year 2 reading fairs and Braille Cup	3.1.4.1 Consolidation of reading fair reports from field offices	Jan, May, Aug 2015	On track: final consolidation planned for Q4
	3.1.4.2 Collaboration with Social Impact (external evaluator) to establish evaluation approach	Oct 2014, May 2015	Ongoing
	3.1.4.3 Evaluation conducted	Jun 2015	Ongoing: Internal review completed
3.2.5 Conduct awareness-raising around disability and reading	3.2.5.1 Provide awareness raising to EGRA staff on disability and reading	Oct–Nov 2014	Completed for Cohort A zones in November, Cohort B to be rescheduled from September 2015
	3.2.5.2 Conduct awareness meetings for parent groups and parents of learners with special needs	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Complete: Concluded in June 2015
	3.2.5.3 Train head teachers overseeing resource units for learners with special needs	Nov 2014	Delayed: Postponed until Q1 FY2016
3.2.6 Development of Disability Education Resource Guide (DERG)	3.2.6.1 Conduct annual update of the DERG	Sep 2015	Delayed; awaiting 3.2.6.1
	3.2.6.2 Updated DERG submitted to MoEST for endorsement ²⁵	Oct 2014	Delayed; awaiting 3.2.6.1
	3.2.6.3 Updated DERG submitted to USAID for clearance	Oct 2014	Ongoing

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 54** provides further details on the status of activities for Task XC-3.

²⁵ The original FY 2015 work plan called for this to be completed in October 2014, based on the assumption that the first version of the DERG would be completed by the end of FY 2014. Because that was not the case, activities related to an updated DERG (3.2.6.2 and 3.2.6.3) occurred for the first time in September 2015 (Q4).

Table 54. Progress against Planned Activities—Task XC-3: Grants under Contract

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of Q3 FY 2015
1.5.2 Monitoring implementation of first round of GUC awardees	1.5.2.1 GUC awardee schools monitored in implementation of grants	Oct 2014–Jul 2015	Ongoing; 30 of 55 grants executed, with the remainder to be completed in Q4
1.5.3 GUC incentive program implemented for round two	1.5.3.1 Criteria for GUC application eligibility reviewed and redesigned in consultation with MoEST, DEMs, PEAs, HTs	Oct 2014	Completed: Finalized on June 11, 2015
	1.5.3.2 Schools (HTs) and communities (SMCs) notified of updated criteria	Oct–Nov 2014	Completed during August teacher training cascade
	1.5.3.3 Schools submit GUC applications	Apr–May 2015	Completed during September 2015
	1.5.3.4 Submitted GUC applications reviewed	May–Jun 2015	Ongoing: Pending USAID approval of revised GUC Manual
	1.5.3.5 GUC incentive awardees selected, notified	Jul–Aug 2015	Delayed: Planned for FY 2016 Q1
	1.5.3.6 GUC funds disbursed	Sep 2015	Delayed: Planned for FY 2016 Q2
1.5.4 Coordinate with SI on evaluation of GUCs, teacher incentive programs	1.5.4.1 Coordinate with SI on evaluation of GUCs, teacher incentive programs	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing

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

In FY 2015 EGRA's geographic coverage was increased to incorporate the Cohort B zones and schools.

The identification of control and intervention zones in the 11 intervention districts under EGRA was established and agreed upon during FY2014 by USAID, SI, and EGRA. EGRA began implementation in 101 zones (Cohort A) during SY1 and expanded into 33 additional zones (Cohort B) for SY2. In order to maintain a sufficient number of control zones for SI to conduct an external evaluation of EGRA's impact, the remaining 40 zones continue to not receive any activities directly under the EGRA intervention. A list of the intervention and control zones is provided in **Table 55** below.

Table 55. XC-4: Geographic Coverage of Intervention and Control Zones

TOTAL ZONES		
COHORT A	COHORT B	CONTROL
Zones that began intervention during SY 1	Zones added to intervention beginning SY 2	Non-intervention zones
101	33	40
134 Intervention Zones		40 Control Zones
Balaka Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Chendausiku	NONE	NONE
Kankao		
Maduwani		
Mmanga		
Mpilisi		
Mponda		
Nkhonde		
Phalula		
Ulongwe		
Balaka		
Chembera		
Utale		
12	0	0
Blantyre Rural Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Dziwe	Madziabango	Chigumukire
Dzunga	Mdeka	Khombwe
Lunzu	Mpapa	Lirangwe
Mudi		Nankumba
Namwanje		
Naotcha		
6	3	4
Lilongwe Rural East Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Chowo	Chadabwa	Balang'ombe
Kang'oma	Chikanga	Chiseka
Matapila	Nathenje	Kunthulu
Nkhoma		Mchemani

TOTAL ZONES		
COHORT A	COHORT B	CONTROL
Chankhandwe		
Ching'ombe		
Kanjedza		
Malikha		
Mitundu		
Mtentera		
Pimbiri		
Thawale		
12	3	4
Lilongwe Rural West Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Kabuthu	Buwa	Chikhutu
Mteza	Kalolo	Kamanzi
Dzenza		Majiga
Kabudula		Malembo
Karonga		Malingunde
Kasiya		Mdzobwe
Likuni		Ndaula
Mpingu		Nyanja
Mzumazi		
Njewa		
10	2	8
Machinga Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Machinga Boma	Ntaja	Puteya
Namandanje	Mlomba	Namasika
St. Therese	Nampeya	
Chikweo		
Mpombe		
Ngokwe		
Nsanama		
7	3	2
Mzimba North Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Bulala	Echilumbeni	Bwengu

TOTAL ZONES		
COHORT A	COHORT B	CONTROL
Chanyama	Ekwendeni	Engucwini
Emcisweni	Enukweni	Enkondhlweni
Emoneni	Euthini	Enyezini
Kafukule	Mbalachanda	Ezondweni
Kapando		Njuyu
Lusangazi		
Mtende		
Mzalangwe		
Rukuru		
10	5	6
Ntcheu Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Billila	Ganya	Kanyimbo
Chikande	Kambilonjo	Lizulu
Gumbu	Kapalamula	Tsangano
Matchereza	Kasinje	Bunyenga
Nsipe	Muluma	
Nsiyaludzu		
Ntonda		
Senzani		
Sharpevale		
9	5	4
Ntchisi Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Boma	Chikho	Chinthembwe
Chibweya	Kayoyo	Malomo
Kamsonga	Mbuyedziko	Mpalo
Makanda		Msumba
Malambo		
Mpherere		
Mvumo		
7	3	4
Salima Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Chipoka	NONE	NONE

TOTAL ZONES		
COHORT A	COHORT B	CONTROL
Chitala		
Kanongola		
Kaphatenga		
Katelera		
Matenje		
Msalura		
Ngolowindo		
Thavite		
Yambe		
Lifidzi		
Ngodzi		
12	0	0
Thyolo Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Folopensi	Thekerani	Chisawani
Gombe	Goliati	Mulenga
Khonjeni	Konzalendo	Thunga
Masambanjati	Luchenza	
Molere	Mountain View	
Mpinji		
Nansato		
Ntambanyama		
8	5	3
Zomba Rural Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Chikala	Chilipa	Chikomwe
Chingale	Namapata	Chimwalira
Namiwawa	Nsondole	Ntonda
Ntungulutsi	Songani	St. Anthony
St. Martin		Mchengawedi
St. Michael		
St. Pauls		
Namadidi		
8	4	5

XC-5: Public-Private Partnerships

Activities related to this crosscutting issue have already been discussed under Task 2-1: Task 3-1:, Task 3-2:, and Task 4-1: above. **Table 56** provides further details on the status of activities for Task XC-5.

Table 56. Progress against Planned Activities—Task XC-5: Public-Private Partnerships

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of Q3 FY 2015
2.1.1 PPPs leveraged to support provision of materials to intervention schools	2.1.1.1 PPPs leveraged to support provision of materials to intervention schools	Oct 2014–Jun 2015	Ongoing: First print runs completed, more to come
3.1.2 Coordinate planning for development of Braille Cup	3.1.2.1 Identification of PPPs and submission of concept papers for the Braille Cup	Nov 2014–May 2015	Completed: Airtel Malawi retained as sole corporate sponsor
3.1.3 Braille Cup implemented	3.1.3.1 Matching resources for Braille Cup mobilized	Jan–May 2015	Completed: Airtel provided 5 million MWK
3.2.7 Development of PPPs	3.2.7.1 Develop partnership concepts/papers, negotiate roles/responsibilities for alliances	Oct 2014–Jul 2015	Ongoing
	3.2.7.2 Finalize and sign SOCs/support implementation	Oct 2014–Sep 2015	Ongoing
4.1.2 Coordination of local capacity development efforts	4.1.2.3 Support OAI in connecting EGRA and MoEST with private companies/organizations for PPP development and finalization	Oct 2014–Jun 2015	Completed; PPP Handover event held in June

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, during FY 2015 gender considerations continued to be integrated throughout the planning and implementation of EGRA activities. During all materials development workshops and activities, EGRA continued to ensure that gender and equality issues are appropriately addressed. The DGVP Specialist participated in almost all relevant workshops during FY 2015 with the specific role of ensuring these issues are considered during the development and review of materials.

During the collection and reporting of EGRA data, 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 57** provides further details on the status of activities for Task XC-6.

Table 57. Progress against Planned Activities—Task XC-6: Gender Equality

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of Q2 FY 2015
1.3.1 Evaluate teaching and learning materials developed and used for teaching reading for S1–S3 learners	1.3.1.3 Assurance of the gender appropriateness of TLM developed and/or used under EGRA	Oct 2014–May 2015	Ongoing: completed in June for EN2 and CH3 TGs

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 Cooperation Strategy (CDCS)

Involving USAID IPs in developing accessible messaging

In FY 2015 EGRA pursued the goal collaborating with other USAID IPs by including messaging on their themes in EGRA’s materials. While none of USAID’s other IPs participated in the writers’ workshop held from June 1–5, George Mikwamba from Baylor Pediatric Hospital, who had found the February writers’ workshop so valuable (see FY2015 Q2 QPR for more detail), expressed interest in attending.

Misunderstandings between EGRA and Baylor about the source of funding for his attendance ultimately precluded his participation. EGRA raised this and related issues to USAID to seek guidance on how to proceed.

In Q4 USAID convened a meeting of selected IPs from across sectors with the goal of more explicitly directing their coordination and collaboration. The event proved extremely helpful, and by the end of it EGRA had agreed in principle on modalities of collaboration with five other USAID IPs: ASPIRE, Njira, SSDI Communications, PERFORM, and the Feed the Future Mobile Money Activity. (A sixth partnership has been agreed upon with the International Potato Center, whose funding does not derive from USAID.)

Collaboration with USAID’s STEPs

During Q3 EGRA began coordinating with STEPs’ efforts to build CRECCOM’s administrative and management capacity. The results are discussed in greater detail above under the *Coordination with Counterpart International on LCD* subheading of section [XC-1 Local Capacity Development](#).

Table 58 provides further details on the status of activities for CDCS Integration.

Table 58. Integrating USAID’s Country Development Cooperation Strategy

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
INT-1.1 Identify themes from IPs to be incorporated into EGRA reading materials	INT-1.1.1 Identify relevant themes that can be effectively incorporated into EGRA reading materials	Oct–Nov 2014	Ongoing
	INT-1.1.2 Hold discussions with IPs on specific content to be incorporated	Oct–Nov 2014	Ongoing
INT-1.2 Include IPs in	INT-1.2.1 Identify and invite	Oct–Nov 2014	Completed: IPs invited

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
materials development activities	IPs to participate in materials development activities		to activities in December 2014, February 2015, and June 2015
	INT-1.2.2 IPs participate in materials development workshops	Jan, Jun 2015	Completed: Q3 workshop held, albeit without IP involvement
INT-1.3 Themes from IPs incorporated into EGRA materials	INT-1.3.1 Stories and other materials identified/developed to incorporate themes	Jan, Jun 2015	Completed: Executed in Q3 via ad-hoc communications
	INT-1.3.2 Reading materials with IP themes developed, printed, and distributed	Jan, Jun–Sep 2015	On track
INT-2.1 Materials and issues identified to be shared at EGRA reading centers	INT-2.1.1 Identify IPs that have materials available to be shared at reading centers	Oct–Dec 2014	Ongoing
	INT-2.1.2 Determine which materials and issues would be appropriate for sharing at reading centers	Oct–Dec 2014	Ongoing
INT-2.2 Distribute and utilize materials from IPs to reading centers	INT-2.2.1 Obtain materials from IPs for use at reading centers	Dec 2014	Ongoing
	INT-2.2.2 Distribute IPs' materials to reading centers	Dec 2014–Jan 2015	Completed in Q4
	INT-2.2.3 Orient VCRFs and communities on proper use of IPs' materials at reading centers	Jan 2015	Ongoing throughout Q4
INT-3.1 Identify ways to incentivize EGRA volunteers and communities	INT-3.1.1 Identify IPs with incentive programs	Oct–Dec 2014	Completed in Q4
	INT-3.1.2 Hold discussion with IPs on ways to incentivize EGRA volunteers and communities through their programs	Nov–Dec 2014	Completed in Q4
	INT-3.1.3 Implement incentive programs with IPs	Jan–Sep 2015	Ongoing throughout FY 2016
	INT-3.1.4 Coordinate with FAWEMA and other IPs on support to teaching assistants in schools	Oct–Dec 2015	Completed; technical review of their training manual was provided in Q2, and informal discussions were held at the margins of the May 20 IPs meeting
INT-4.1 Develop pilot in collaboration with the USAID Mobile Money Accelerator Program (MMAAP) to use Mobile Money to disburse funds to the field	INT-4.1.1 Provide data to MMAAP to facilitate the identification of locations for initial pilot	Oct 2014	Completed in March
	INT-4.1.2 Identify locations to conduct pilot	Nov 2014	Completed in March 2015
	INT-4.1.3 Pilot the use of	Dec 2014	Completed in March

Subtasks	Activities	Planned Timeframe	Status by end of FY 2015
	Mobile Money to disburse funds to the field during a regular EGRA activity		2015
	INT-4.1.4 Determine in collaboration with MMAP if the system can be expanded to more locations under EGRA	Jan 2015	Completed: Meetings held in Q4
	INT-4.1.5 If feasible, expand use of Mobile Money under EGRA	Feb–Sep 2015	Postponed: Initial pilot was a failure, so a second pilot is planned for Q1 FY 2016

Progress toward Targets

Table 59 summarizes current progress toward EGRA targets for each indicator in the AMEP, as of the end of FY 2015.

Table 59. Current Status of Progress towards Annual Targets

Indicator	Targets		
	Baseline	Year 3 (FY 2014–2015)	Actual for FY 2015
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	TBD ²⁶
AO2 Learning gains on core early grade pre-reading and reading tasks as measured by regularly administered reading assessments compared to baseline	Std 1	ORF: 0.34 cwpm†	4.77 cwpm (↑ 4.43 cwpm; 1302% gain)
		Comprehension: 0.30%‡	19.37%‡ (↑ 19.07 pct points; 6356% gain)
	Std 2	ORF: 1.09 cwpm†	16.69 cwpm (↑ 15.60 cwpm; 1431% gain)
		Comprehension: 4.50%‡	35.00%‡ (↑ 30.5 pct points; 678% gain)
	Std 3	ORF: 5.00 cwpm†	29.52 cwpm (↑ 24.52 cwpm; 490% gain)

²⁶ Data for this indicator will be provided by the external evaluator, Social Impact, during its midterm and end-of-activity assessments.

† Baseline LAT data for FY 2015 collected in October 2014

‡ Because of the design problems with the SY2 LAT Comprehension scores, this indicator reflects the change from January 2015 (baseline) to July 2015 (most recent). The next round of data collection will be in FY 2016 Q1 (October).

Indicator	Targets		
	Baseline	Year 3 (FY 2014–2015)	Actual for FY 2015
	Comprehension: 14.30% ‡	Comprehension: ↑ 20%	46.28% ‡ (↑ 31.98 pct points; 224% gain)
OC1 Proportion (%) of Standard 1–3 teachers demonstrating essential skills in teaching reading	33% ²⁷	60%	83.4%
OC1.1B Proportion (%) of teachers who complete expected number of lessons in Terms 1–3, Standards 1–3	23.5% ²⁸	65%	45.6% ²⁹
			Std 1 47.0%
			Std 2 48.1%
			Std 3 37.1%
OP1.1a Number of pupils receiving reading interventions in Standards 1–3	0	670,770	549,730 ³⁰
OP1.1b Number of teachers, head teachers, and teaching assistants who successfully complete in-service training	0	10,700	12,625 (7,446 m, 5,179 f) ³¹
OP1.1c Total number of person hours of teachers, educators, and	0	820,320 hrs	901,600 hrs ³²

‡ Because of the design problems with the SY2 LAT Comprehension scores, this indicator reflects the change from January 2015 (baseline) to March 2015 (current). The next round of data collection will be in Q4 (July).

²⁷ Comes from initial scores recorded during Term 1 of SY1 (December 2013).

²⁸ Reflects the proportion of teachers who completed the expected lesson by the end of SY1 (July 2014).

²⁹ This indicator reflects the proportion of teachers on pace at the end of Q4. Using the same methodology, by the end of Q3 the figure was 98.5% (Std 1: 98.8%; Std 2: 97.7%; Std 3: 97.8%). The reason for this significant decline bears further investigation, although it may be due to year-end revision of prior lessons.

³⁰ This total is calculated by taking the average attendance rate by sex and standard for each district (across sexes and districts it was 68% for Std 1, 71% for Std 2, and 72% for Std 3) during the 2014–2015 school year as indicated in the teacher observation instrument (TOI) records for classes that were observed by PEAs and EGRA staff and applying those percentages to the October 2014 enrolment in EGRA schools recorded by HTs of 793,699. For the Q4 period alone, relatively higher attendance than earlier quarters projected 606,332 learners.

³¹ This is a count of unique teachers trained in FY15. A running total of teachers attending trainings in FY15 would be 33,922 (18,507 m, 15,342 f).

³² Based on 8 hours per day for each training session. The total by the end of Q3 was 396,600 hours of training, and an additional 505,000 hours were provided in Q4.

Indicator	Targets			
	Baseline	Year 3 (FY 2014–2015)	Actual for FY 2015	
teaching assistants who successfully completed in-service training				
OP1.1d Number of administrators and officials successfully trained with US Government support	0	271	324 ³³ (208 m, 116 f)	
OP1.1e Total number of person hours of administrators and officials successfully trained with US Government support	0	32,184 hrs	44,824 hrs ³⁴	
OP1.1f Proportion (%) of teachers/educators/teaching assistants who received intensive coaching or mentoring with US Government support	68.7% †	70%	50.0% ³⁵	
OP1.1g Proportion (%) of schools receiving at least one coaching/support visit per term	89.6% †	95%	71%	
OC1.2A Proportion (%) of learners in intervention districts and target grades who take home and use a book or other reading materials at home	13.6% †	45%	28% ³⁶	
			Std 1	30%
			Std 2	21%
			Std 3	39%
OC1.2B Proportion (%) of children in intervention districts and target grades who interact with text on a daily basis	60.3% †	80%	68% ³⁷	
			Std 1	77%
			Std 2	62%

³³ This is a count of unique administrators trained in FY 2015. A running total for the years would be 1,440.

³⁴ Based on 8 hours per training session. By the of Q3 the running total was 34,932 hours; 9,892 more hours were added in Q4.

† Reflects the proportion at the end of SY1 (July 2014).

³⁵ In FY 2015 5,410 (2,788 m, 2,622 f) teachers received coaching and mentorship out of the 11,047 teachers trained in April 2015. Some teachers were visited multiple times, as 6,151 coaching visits were recorded in FY 2015.

³⁶ Taken from the TOI data where learners are asked during PEAs' classroom observations to raise their hand if they took a book home to read in the past week.

³⁷ Taken from the TOI data where learners are asked during PEAs' classroom observations to show if they have a book in their hand during the class.

Indicator	Targets		
	Baseline	Year 3 (FY 2014–2015)	Actual for FY 2015
			Std 3 52%
OP1.2a Number 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	3 new complete sets	4 complete sets (CH2, CH3; EN1, EN2), including 785 lessons (225 CH2, 210 CH3, 170 EN1, and 210 EN2)
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: 1,590	1603
	0	Slates: 1,590	N/A ³⁸
	0	Cabinets: 1,590	0 ³⁹
OP1.2c Number of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials (TLM) provided with US Government support	0	3,270,054	3,702,428 ⁴⁰
OC2 Number of community, local government, and/or private sector–led advocacy activities conducted to support increased reading skills in primary schools	0	1,590	1,600
OC2.1 Proportion (%) of schools in intervention districts with MOUs or social contracts on reading	0%	100%	100.0%
OP2.1a Number of reading fairs hosted by school communities or clusters	0	842	1,540 ⁴¹
OP2.1b Number of stakeholders consulted to establish and review MOUs	0	75	1,078
OC2.2 Proportion (%) of schools with community, local government,	unknown	70%	100%

³⁸ Chalk slates no longer need to be procured. Refer to discussion under Task 2-4.

³⁹ Mobile securable book cases have not yet been procured. Refer to discussion under Task 2-5.

⁴⁰ By the end of Q3 EGRA had printed 2,474,030 TLMs. In Q4 EGRA printed an additional 1,228,398 TLMs.

⁴¹ By the end of Q3 EGRA schools had hosted 1,271 reading fairs. During Q4 schools hosted an additional 269 reading fairs.

Indicator	Targets		
	Baseline	Year 3 (FY 2014–2015)	Actual for FY 2015
and/or private sector-led initiatives supporting early grade reading			
OP2.2a Number of PTAs or similar school governance structures supported by US Government	0	4,770	5,759 ⁴²
OP2.2b Number of schools applying for grants to support early grade reading	0	1,474	1507 ⁴³
OP2.2c Proportion (%) of school grant applications that meet minimum requirements for award	0	65%	TBD
OC3 Standards for reading outcomes formally established for Standards 1–3 by MoEST	Proposed by MoEST EGRA Coordinating Committee	Reviewed	Benchmarks proposed to MoEST
OC3.1A Proportion (%) of teachers who stay in the early grades after initial training	unknown	80%	96% ⁴⁴
OC3.1B Proportion (%) of children in intervention districts and target grades receiving an average of one hour time-on-task reading instruction per day	unknown	80%	100% ⁴⁵
OP3.1a Number of laws, policies, regulations, or guidelines	0	1	1 ⁴⁶

⁴² As of the end of Q3 the figure was 5,599; an additional 160 structures were supported in Q4.

⁴³ This is an estimate. It was generated by calculating, for one sampled zone from each of EGRA's 11 districts, the proportion of schools which had submitted GUC applications in FY 2015. The overall proportion was 94%, which would translate into 1507 schools. Applications are received, and will be processed, at the zonal level. This number may thus increase once the revised GUC Manual has been approved by USAID and processing of grant applications begins.

⁴⁴ Awaiting analysis from TOI and school surveys to compare to last year.

⁴⁵ This was calculated on the basis of the GUC applications. It was generated by calculating, for one sampled zone from each of EGRA's 11 districts, the proportion of schools for which the submitted timetables indicated at least 60 minutes of reading instruction per day. All schools sampled indicated at least 2 periods (30-35 mins.) of reading instruction per day, across Chichewa and English. Some schools had up to 6 periods of 30-35 mins. on some days.

⁴⁶ The revised GMTLMs received official MoEST approval in Q3; proposed reading benchmarks and the framework for an extended school day schedule are still awaiting official MoEST approval.

Indicator	Targets		
	Baseline	Year 3 (FY 2014–2015)	Actual for FY 2015
developed or modified to improve primary grade reading programs or increase equitable access			
OP3.1b Number of teachers in special needs schools supported in the application of adapted early grade reading materials for special needs pupils	0	18	159 ⁴⁷
OC3.2A Improved institutional capacity for supporting reading by local NGO	Assessment report	Action plan implemented; progress updated	Participatory Local Capacity Assessment (PLOCA) completed in January
OC3.2B Number of PPPs supporting early grade reading	0	2–5 established (contributing \$100,000 equivalent)	8 established (contributing \$103,383.33 equivalent) ⁴⁸
OP3.2a Number of mentoring and training meetings conducted	0	50	22
OP3.2b Number of meetings held with private organizations to establish potential PPPs	0	10	52

⁴⁷ By the end of Q3 the total stood at 119. In Q4 an additional 40 (25 m, 15 f) were trained.

⁴⁸ By the end of FY 2015 EGRA had finalized eight PPPs (NBM, Monsanto Fund, Old Mutual, Airtel, Rainbow Paints, Lafarge Cement, Eastern Produce, First Merchant Bank) contributing the equivalent of \$103,383.33 assuming an exchange rate of 480:1.

EGRA Management Outputs and Deliverables

Table 60 includes the deliverables that are listed in the reporting schedule of the EGRA Scope of Work (SOW).

Table 60. Deliverables Listed in the Reporting Schedule of the EGRA SOW

Deliverable	Status
Initial Work Plan: June–September 2013	Submitted September 5, 2013; 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; tentatively approved by USAID October 21, 2014 pending contract modification; resubmitted September 10, 2015 to USAID; formal approval pending as of end of FY 2015
Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (AMEP)	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; FY 2014 Q1 reports cleared by USAID April 3, 2014. FY 2014 Quarter 2 submitted April 30, 2014; FY 2014 Q2 report cleared by USAID May 9, 2014. FY 2014 Q3 report submitted July 31, 2014; FY 2014 Q3 report cleared by USAID September 8, 2014. FY 2014 Q4 report submitted as part of FY 2014 annual report on October 31, 2014. FY2015 Quarter 1 submitted January 31, 2015; resubmitted February 11, 2015; cleared by USAID February 13, 2015. FY2015 Quarter 2 submitted April 30, 2015; resubmitted May 11, 2015; cleared by USAID May 11, 2015. FY2015 Quarter 3 submitted July 31, 2015; resubmitted September 2, 2015; cleared by USAID September 10, 2015.
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 61 below
Annual Report	FY 2013 submitted to USAID October 31, 2013; approved by USAID December 30, 2013; FY 2014 submitted to USAID October 31, 2014, approved by USAID December 23, 2014
Final Report	N/A this reporting period

Status of Programmatic Deliverables

Table 61 summarizes the current status of programmatic deliverables that have been submitted to USAID, organized by date of submission.

Table 61. 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
STTA Trip Report for Beatriz Coningham, 16 September 16–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, 2014	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	Acknowledged by USAID February 3, 2015
STTA Trip Report for Martha Majors	Martha Majors	XC-2	April 4, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID April 17, 2014

Title	Author	Component	Date Submitted	Status
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: MGCDWS, DEMs, head teachers, SMCs, and PTAs	Charles Gunsaru	4	February 3, 2014; resubmitted March 14, 2014; resubmitted March 31, 2014; resubmitted April 29, 2014; resubmitted May 22, 2014	Preliminary approval by USAID April 8, 2014; final clearance by USAID May 23, 2014
CRECCOM Capacity Assessment Report	Mike Nkhoma	XC-1	July 9, 2014; resubmitted September 24, 2014; resubmitted December 12, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID July 10, 2014; comments made October 2, 2014; cleared December 23, 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 Jongh-Abebe	1, 2	August 14, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID August 15, 2014
Disability Education Resource Guide (DERG)	Augustine Kanyendula	SNE (XC-2)	September 24, 2014; resubmitted January 27, 2015; resubmitted February 11, 2015	Feedback provided by USAID October 3, 2014; comments made January 27, 2015; comments made February 1, 2015; comments made February 11, 2015; cleared by USAID February 12, 2015
Tiwerenge Nkhani 1 Decodable Reader		2	November 17, 2014	Cleared by USAID November 24, 2014
Tiwerenge Nkhani 2 Decodable Reader		2	November 17, 2014	Cleared by USAID November 24, 2014

Title	Author	Component	Date Submitted	Status
Tiwerenge Nkhani 3 Decodable Reader		2	November 17, 2014	Cleared by USAID November 24, 2014
English Standard 1 Training Manual Module 2		1	November 24, 2014	Cleared by USAID November 24, 2014
Chichewa Standard 2 Training Manual Module 2		1	November 24, 2014	Cleared by USAID November 24, 2014
Chichewa Standard 2 Term 2 Teachers' Guide		1	November 26, 2014	Cleared by USAID November 26, 2014
English Story Cards for Standard 1		2	December 3, 2014	Cleared by USAID December 4, 2014
Chichewa Story Cards for Standard 1		2	December 9, 2014	Cleared by USAID December 12, 2014
Request for Key Personnel Approval (DCOP)			January 16, 2015	Approved by USAID January 26, 2015
SOC with National Bank of Malawi		PPPs (XC-5)	February 16, 2015; resubmitted March 3, 2015	Cleared by USAID March 4, 2015
Cure Notice for CRECCOM		3	February 17, 2015	
English Standard 1 Teacher's Guide for Term 3		1	February 17, 2015	Cleared by USAID February 19, 2015
Chichewa Standard 2 Teacher's Guide for Term 3		1	February 17, 2015	Cleared by USAID February 19, 2015
Request for Key Personnel Approval (MEAL)			March 3, 2015	Approved by USAID March 25, 2015
Presentation slide deck for CIES 2015	Tim Slade, Augustine Kanyendula	SNE (XC-2)	March 4, 2015	Cleared by USAID March 6, 2015
Policy Briefer on use of <i>Anikumeto</i> sequencing for grapheme introduction		1, 2	March 4, 2015; resubmitted with updates on March 17, 2015	
English Standard 1 Training Manual Module 3		1	March 5, 2015	Cleared by USAID March 9, 2015
Chichewa Standard 2 Training Manual Module 3		1	March 5, 2015	Cleared by USAID March 9, 2015
Request for Technical Direction regarding assessing the same child in both Chichewa and English during LAT		M&E	March 6, 2015	Technical direction provided by USAID March 9, 2015
STTA Trip Report for Dan O'Brien, January 12-30,	Dan O'Brien	PPPs	March 6, 2015	Acknowledged by USAID March 10,

Title	Author	Component	Date Submitted	Status
2015		(XC-5)		2015
STTA Trip Report for Roel de Haas, November 3-14, 2015	Roel de Haas	1, 2	March 6, 2015	Acknowledged by USAID March 10, 2015
STTA Trip Report for Roel de Haas, January 19-30, 2015	Roel de Haas	1, 2	March 6, 2015	Acknowledged by USAID March 10, 2015
STTA Trip Report for Ken Obura, January 19-23, 2015	Ken Obura	1, 2	March 6, 2015	Acknowledged by USAID March 10, 2015
STTA Trip Report for Scott Kipp, March 4-13, 2015	Scott Kipp	1, M&E	March 6, 2015	Acknowledged by USAID March 10, 2015
Report of Participatory Local Capacity Assessment (PLOCA) Exercise	Nicole Jacobs, Caroline Bixiones		March 10, 2015	
Consultancy and STTA Trip Report for Radhika Sharma, January 10-February 6, 2015	Radhika Sharma	1, 2	March 23, 2015	
Consultancy and STTA Trip Report for Jorg Bauer, January 10-February 6, 2015	Jorg Bauer	1, 3, 4, M&E	May 15, 2015	Acknowledged by USAID May 15, 2015
VCRF Training Manual		3	June 1, 2015	Resubmitted June 4, 2015; Approved June 4, 2015
Statement of Collaboration with FMB for Reading Tools in a Box	-		June 25, 2015	
Statement of Collaboration with Lafarge Cement for Reading Tools in a Box	-		July 16, 2015	
Cover design for English Standard 2 Teacher Guide		1, 2	July 17, 2015	
Graphs of LAT 7 Performance		1, M&E	July 17, 2015	
Braille Cup preparation materials		3	July 18, 2015	
English Standard 2 Training Manual + Facilitators' Guide		1, 2	July 20, 2015	
Chichewa Standard 3 Teacher Guide		1, 2	July 21, 2015	

Title	Author	Component	Date Submitted	Status
Statement of Collaboration with Eastern Produce for Reading Tools in a Box	-		July 22, 2015	
EGRA Data Gathering Manual	-	M&E	July 23, 2015	
Revised Year 3 AWP	-		September 10, 2015	
Trip Report – Ken Obura	-		September 14, 2015	
Trip Report – Dan O'Brien	-		September 14, 2015	
Trip Report – Angela Affra	-		September 22, 2015	

Management Issues

Coordination with USAID and the US Embassy

Throughout FY 2015 EGRA personnel regularly coordinated technical and administrative activities with USAID. As a general rule, EGRA management and USAID coordinated their activities through standing weekly meetings at USAID's offices, with ad hoc meetings as needed when preparing for major events. These face-to-face conversations were buttressed by constant e-mail and telephone communication. (Specific dates on which USAID and EGRA met and the topics of those discussions can be found in QPRs 1-3.)

Coordination with MoEST and MGCDSW

Throughout FY 2015 EGRA coordinated technical and planning activities with both MoEST and MGCDSW. EGRA worked especially closely with MoEST Directors via the quarterly EGRA Directors' Meetings; with mid-level MoEST personnel through materials-development workshops, training events, and occasional TWG meetings; and with MoEST's district- and zone-level personnel through ETWs, TOFs, ZTWs, and planning for PEAs' coaching activities. (The specifics of these activities are discussed in greater detail above in the sections reporting on Components 1-4.)

EGRA's work with MGCDSW primarily involved the CDAs who operate in the traditional authorities and zones where EGRA is active. (The specifics of activities involving CDAs are discussed primarily under Component 3 above.)

EGRA component managers continued to coordinate technical activities with their appointed counterparts at MoEST and MGCDSW. The list of the counterparts is shown in **Table 62**. Meetings between EGRA staff and their counterparts continue to occur on a regular basis.

Table 62. EGRA Component Leaders and Assigned MoEST Counterparts

Component	Component Leader	MoEST Counterparts	Dept.
1 Provide Quality Reading Instruction for Early	Dr. P. Green (Literacy Specialist)	Mr. R. Madi Mr. V. Mdangwe	DTED

Component	Component Leader	MoEST Counterparts	Dept.
Grade Students		Ms. M. Chilimanjira	MIE
		Mr. J. Kamkuza	DIAS
2 Provision of Teaching and Learning Materials on Reading	Mr. O. Banda (Teaching and Learning Materials Coordinator)	Mr. V. Mdangwe	DTED
		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	MGCDSW
4 Improving Policy Environment to Support Early Grade Reading	Mr. C. Gunsaru (Senior Education Policy Advisor)	Dr. W. Susuwele-Banda	MIE
		Mr. R. Agabu	DIAS
		Mrs. M. Chirwa Mr. A. Kamoto	DTED
		Mrs. G. Milner Mr. C.W. Naunje	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. Kondwani Nyirongo (M&E and Learning Specialist)	Mr. C. Mazinga	DSHNA
		Mr. D. Njaidi	DSNE
		Mr. J. Kayira	DIAS
		Mr. C.W. Naunje Mr. L. Nyirongo Mr. W. Mwanza	DEP

Divisional and District Offices

The 11 educational district offices continue to accommodate the EGRA staff.

Table 63 shows the deployment of EGRA staff during FY 2015.

Table 63. 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	Lilongwe Rural East	DME, DCM,

EGRA Division	Office Location	Divisional Staff	District	Location	District Staff
			Rural East	DEM	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
			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

During FY 2015 USAID received from EGRA and/or approved the Annual Report for FY 2014, the QPRs for FY 2015 Q1-Q3, and the associated financial accruals reports.

Communications

EGRA follows the Branding and Marking Plan that was approved by USAID on October 18, 2013; when in doubt, the Activity continues to seek clarification from the COR. For example, in FY 2015 Q3 EGRA sought guidance on the branding of leveled and decodable readers printed under SOCs with Reading Tools in a Box alliance partners, such as NBM.

Human Resources/Personnel

In FY 2015 EGRA experienced a few major changes in staffing. In November 2014 EGRA's HR Manager, Mr. Tarsco Mwafulirwa, resigned his post; he was succeeded by Mr. Mickson Tsambewe on June 1, 2015. Likewise in November 2014, Dr. Mike Nkhoma resigned his post as M&E and Learning Specialist; he was succeeded by Mr. Kondwani Nyirongo on May 4, 2015. In January 2015 Dr. Stephen Backman resigned the post of Deputy Chief of Party; he was succeeded on March 2, 2015 and by Mr. Timothy Slade, who had formerly served as EGRA's project manager at RTI headquarters.

Table 64 lists EGRA staff and their titles, gender, date of hire, and work location. EGRA currently employs 60 full-time staff in Malawi. All current employees, in order of their recruitment, are included in the table.

Table 64. Staffing In-Country as of September 30, 2015

Name	Title/Relationship	Gender	Start Date	Work Location
Mickson Tsambewe	Human Resource Manager	M	June 1, 2015	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
Kondwani Nyirongo	M&E and Learning Specialist	M	May 4, 2015	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
Timothy Slade	Deputy Chief of Party/Senior Technical Advisor	M	March 2, 2015	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	Machinga

Name	Title/Relationship	Gender	Start Date	Work Location
Catherine Saiwa	District M&E Officer	F	Oct 1, 2013	Lilongwe Rural East
Ivy Vale	District M&E Officer	F	Oct 1, 2013	Lilongwe Rural West
MacMillan Gondwe	District M&E Officer	M	Oct 1, 2013	Mzimba North
Patrick Mdhuli	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
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
Sphiwe Botha	District M&E Officer	F	Nov 1, 2013	Ntchisi
Isaac Kazizi	District M&E Officer	M	May 1, 2015	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
Joyce Masache	District Training Coordinator	F	May 1, 2015	Zomba Rural
Lyson Jarafi	District Community Mobilizer	M	Dec 10, 2013	Lilongwe Rural East

Name	Title/Relationship	Gender	Start Date	Work Location
Yohane Katantha	District Community Mobilizer	F	Dec 10, 2013	Lilongwe Rural West
Asiyatu Kassium	District M&E Officer (in temporary capacity – role now closed)	F	Mar 6, 2014	Balaka
John Mkwaila	District Training Coordinator	M	Mar 24, 2014	Balaka
Alipao Mabeti	District Training Coordinator	F	Mar 24, 2014	Machinga
Clement Zunda	District Community Mobilizer (in temporary capacity – role now closed)	M	June 3, 2014	Mzimba North
Brenda Barron	District Community Mobilizer	F	June 3, 2014	Ntcheu
Christopher Nkhoma	District Community Mobilizer (in temporary capacity – role now closed)	M	June 3, 2014	Thyolo
Precious Ussi	District M&E officer	M	September 1, 2014	Machinga
Mussa Mtwela	Driver	M	October 13, 2014	Blantyre

Challenges, Solutions, and Actions Taken

Competing demands and conflicting schedules with partners

EGRA's collaborative approach relies heavily on participation by MoEST departments, MIE, TTCs, and other partners in the implementation of technical activities. A theme that emerged over the course of the year was the pressure that implementers of USAID's EGRP were placing on MoEST structures by relying so heavily on MoEST personnel (especially PEAs and TTC lecturers) to deliver training events. This became especially pronounced as SEGREM and ASPIRE came more fully online in Q2. Discussions with the MoEST Directors in Q2 noted the need for EGRP IPs to coordinate their activities in order to reduce the burden on TTC personnel.

In Q3 EGRA raised this issue at the Reading Intervention Coordination (RIC) meeting held at the Bridge View Hotel on June 16. The assembled participants agreed that a meeting of the RIC members and the principals of MoEST TTCs should be convened in early July to identify how best to address the issue. The outcome of the meeting, which was largely positive, is discussed in detail under [Task 4-1](#) above.

Materials-development processes

Throughout FY 2014 and Q1 of FY 2015 EGRA collaborated with MIE and MoEST personnel on the adaptation or development of various curricular and supplementary materials. (See [Task 1-3](#) above and in QPRs for Q1-Q3 for more a fuller discussion of the various materials developed.) Until the SEGREM award was made to MIE, MIE's stated preference was to engage with EGRA through a so-called "workshop mode" that involved large groups of writers coming together for a week-long workshop to collaboratively develop SLPs. Once the SEGREM award was made, the

incentive structure changed and an increased pace of materials-development took priority. With MIE expressing frustration at what they considered the slow pace of progress under workshop mode, in Q2 EGRA's materials development unit developed a proposal for an alternative approach to writing of SLPs and supplementary readers dubbed "satellite mode." The proposal, which involved pairs of writers developing SLPs independently between periodic check-in events, sought to accelerate the pace of development by minimizing the challenges associated with coordinating so many people's schedules and restricting the scope of the workshops to (mainly) editing drafted SLPs. USAID approved the approach in Q3 and it was implemented immediately. The new methodology succeeded in streamlining the materials-development process, and will likely remain in effect for the remainder of EGRA's period of performance. The only challenge that emerged with respect to materials development was not a function of the shift to "satellite mode", and is discussed below.

Coordination regarding English curricula

The major curricular issue of FY 2015 arose in Q3 and Q4. EGRA's reading intervention relies upon a phonics-based approach to reading instruction. However, all materials-development work under EGRA has been conducted in concert with MIE, and one of MIE's preconditions for this collaboration has been that changes to existing curricular documents be minimized to the extent possible.

During FY 2015 EGRA, MIE, and MoEST began adapting the English course for Standard 2. The existing curriculum, however, did not rely upon a phonics-based approach to reading instruction. When the scope and sequence for the revised course was developed, the workshop participants agreed that a phonics strand needed to be inserted for the course to be aligned with the approach to reading instruction espoused by EGRA and the National Reading Strategy. Inserting the phonics strand into the teacher guides for the course was not problematic, and drafting of the SLPs proceeded accordingly. However, while the workshop concluded with what EGRA understood to be agreement that the learner book could be altered to include an additional two pages of phonics material per unit, it later became apparent that MIE did not consider there to have been agreement on that matter. When EGRA submitted the camera-ready copies of the *Standard 2 English with Phonics (STEP)* course to MoEST for their review and approval prior to printing, rather than the customary several-day turnaround, several weeks went by without an approval. Extensive discussions between EGRA, USAID, and MoEST (including at the Q4 EGRA Directors' Meeting) revealed that MIE considered the additional phonics pages to represent an unauthorized alteration of the national English curriculum, and as a result MIE refused to either accept the copyright for the materials or permit their logo to be used on the cover. MoEST and USAID ultimately agreed to permit the *STEP* materials to be printed on the condition that the copyright be given to MoEST and all MIE logos be removed. The various parties only reached this agreement after several weeks of delay, however, and as a consequence the *STEP* learner books were not available by the time of the August 2015 training cascade. As of the end of FY 2015 the books were being printed but had not yet been delivered to schools.

Budget realignment and contract modification

In Q3 EGRA received a contract modification and related budget realignment from USAID. The most consequential changes in the contract included the removal

of [Task 2-4](#) (*Production and Distribution of Chalk Slates to Standard 1 & 2 Learners*); modification of the terms of [Task 2-5](#) (*Supply of Mobile, Lockable Bookcases/Cabinets and Registers*) to allow the book cases to be *securable* instead of lockable; and reallocation of funding between Components.

EGRA's COR indicated that the FY 2015 Annual Work Plan, which was understood to be a living document, should be modified and resubmitted to USAID to reflect the activities undertaken in response to the contract modification. Due to the volume of technical activities undertaken in May and June, the resubmission was not completed until Q4.

CRECCOM's financial, administrative, and technical challenges

Throughout FY 2015 EGRA's implementation of CM activities was significantly hindered by CRECCOM's weak administrative and financial management capacity. Several months into FY 2014 CRECCOM indicated that it lacked the resources to complete its work and subsequently invoice RTI for reimbursement; as a result, the two parties reached an agreement that CRECCOM would prepare requests for funds to be advanced to them to cover one month's technical activities. Two such advances would be permitted on a rolling basis; this would permit CRECCOM to continue delivering technical activities in one month while reconciling the prior month's expenditures and preparing the following month's advance requests.

CRECCOM struggled mightily under this system. CRECCOM's inability to (1) prepare complete and correct advance requests, (2) submit them by stipulated deadlines, and (3) submit appropriate supporting documentation for past expenditures prevented RTI from issuing subsequent advances according to the original schedule and plan. (The corrective actions RTI initiated are discussed in detail under [XC-1: Local Capacity Development](#).)

CRECCOM's struggles with submitting proper invoices and advance requests continued in Q3 and Q4, albeit somewhat attenuated. Even the few Component 3 technical activities that remained in CRECCOM's SOW and budget following the budget realignment were delayed multiple months as a result of CRECCOM's failure to complete and submit advance requests on time. While invoices submitted in Q4 still contain problems—especially in the areas of timekeeping and accounting for personnel's labor—the volume and severity of the problems have diminished somewhat from prior Q1-Q3. Even so, room for further improvement remains substantial. In Q4 RTI exercised its contractual authority to commission an audit of CRECCOM's finances; the findings are expected in FY 2016 Q1 and will significantly inform RTI's management strategy through the end of EGRA's period of performance.

GUC program

As was mentioned under [Task 1-5](#), disbursement of GUC funds to the awardees of the FY 2014 grant cycle took longer than planned. By the end of FY 2015 all schools had received their first tranche of funding, and most had received their second tranche as well.

The major obstacle to rapid selection of schools in FY 2014 was an overly complex system for evaluating applications, and EGRA addressed the issue in FY 2015 by developing a far more streamlined approach to GUC application review and award. However, once the selection of awardee schools had been completed, completion of

the paperwork required for a GUC remained a significant obstacle. In FY 2015 EGRA's Finance & Grants Manager traveled to all intervention districts to conduct training sessions with district M&E officers and accounts assistants on proper completion of the forms. This did not, ultimately, prove to be an effective approach. Most awardee schools' paperwork was rejected and revised several times before it could finally be accepted by RTI's GUC system.

For the FY 2016 round of GUC competition EGRA intends to institute a post-award conference in each District where HTs from all selected schools can congregate in one place to complete the necessary paperwork under the supervision of EGRA staff. EGRA believes that centralizing the paperwork completion process to this degree should significantly decrease if not eliminate delays due to complex and unfamiliar documentation requirements.

Limited reach of SMS Gateway system and data management challenges

EGRA launched the SMS Gateway system during Q3. However, due to ongoing challenges with TNM, it permitted two-way communication only with Airtel subscribers. (TNM subscribers were able to receive messages sent by EGRA, but messages sent in reply would not be delivered.) EGRA's COP, DCOP, and PPP Specialist met with TNM's Corporate Social Responsibility Manager during a late-June visit to Blantyre. At this meeting TNM indicated that it would no longer, in fact, require the requested paperwork from EGRA; however, finalization of a service agreement with EGRA would need to wait until TNM's Managing Director had reviewed and approved the terms of the proposed SOC. The documentation TNM sent EGRA halfway through Q4, while described by TNM as an SOC, was in fact contractual in nature. EGRA did not then submit the documentation to USAID, as it knew from prior experience that it would be rejected as too binding. Throughout Q4 EGRA has continued to engage TNM to find an alternate arrangement; by the end of FY 2015 both parties were considering simply returning to a standard commercial relationship.

While EGRA stakeholders' response to the SMS Gateway has been encouraging, it highlighted that EGRA's existing personnel were stretched too thinly to engage in SMS-based dialogue with stakeholders as robustly as desired. For this reason and others, in Q4 EGRA hired a Communications Specialist whose core job responsibilities include managing incoming messages, soliciting and finalizing responses from component leaders and other technical staff, and advancing the dialogue with stakeholders. By the end of FY 2015 EGRA had also streamlined its internal processes for approving drafted messages and begun leveraging Telerivet's capacity to schedule messages for later delivery in order to maintain a steadier stream of communication with stakeholders.

Piloting of Airtel Mobile Money

In Q2 EGRA attempted to pilot the use of Airtel Mobile Money to reduce the risk to personnel; the result was a colossal failure (the FY 2015 Q2 QPR, pp. 95–96, has more details). In Q3 both EGRA and USAID's Mobile Money Acceleration Project (MMAP) expressed a desire to reconvene and continue to collaborate in finding ways to use Mobile Money. While scheduling conflicts prevented a meeting from occurring in Q3, however, the discussions continued in Q4.

EGRA and the rebranded MMAP agreed in Q4 to collaborate as part of USAID's CDCS integration efforts. Under the agreement MMAP will assist EGRA as it

undertakes a second pilot of mobile money during the December 2015 training cascade. MMAP will provide sensitization and training to teachers in the pilot zones, as well as leveraging its relationship with Airtel to attempt to ensure better service by Airtel mobile money agents.

Personnel recruitment

As discussed under the Human Resources/Personnel section above, EGRA experienced several transitions during FY2015. Most of EGRA's recruitment and onboarding activities took place in Q3 and early Q4. EGRA added a Senior Accountant and a Data Entry Clerk to support the Finance and M&E teams, replaced two departed District personnel (the DME for Blantyre Rural and the DTC for Zomba Rural), and onboarded a new M&E and Learning Specialist and HR Manager.

During Q3 EGRA on-boarded Mr. Kondwani Nyirongo to fill the role of M&E Specialist vacated by Dr. Mike Nkhoma in early December 2014. EGRA had hoped that Mr. Nyirongo's presence would enable the Activity to adopt a more strategic and less reactive approach to M&E than had been possible over the preceding six months. Unfortunately, late in Q3 the EGRA M&E officer who had replaced Dr. Nkhoma in an acting capacity throughout Q2 and the first half of Q3 was a passenger in a fatal car accident. She was left bereaved, and her injuries were so significant that she remained on medical leave until late September. Shortly before she returned to active service, EGRA's DCOP (who oversees and is deeply engaged with the M&E unit) fell ill and was evacuated to South Africa for medical treatment. By the end of FY2015, EGRA's M&E team had been shorthanded for nine months out of the preceding ten.

In Q3 EGRA also welcomed Mr. Mickson Tsambewe as its new Human Resources Manager, filling the role vacated by Mr. Tarsco Mwafulirwa early in FY2015 Q1.

Success Stories

Below are EGRA success stories from FY 2015. USAID assisted EGRA to further explore, revise, and expand the sixth story below ("EGRA Learner Pays It Forward, across Generations") for broader publication. USAID published the revised story on its website as [*Reading Transcends Generations*](#).

Story #1 Role Model Activity Inspires Lusangadzi

It is one thing to learn and it is another thing to implement. The story of Group Village Headmen (GVH) Kamweko Chavula and Chingani of Maliveni School proves just that. In February 2015, a role model utilization intervention organized by the EGRA District Community Mobilization Officer (DCM) for Mzimba took Chavula and Chingani to learn from the implementation of Thom Kumwenda.

Kumwenda has made great strides for implementation of EGRA community participation. He serves as a role model for this practice in many ways. At his home, Kumwenda created a blackboard by using his own resources and turned his home into a village reading center (VRC). Kumwenda's wife is also very involved in community participation, by serving as a facilitator at the reading center. She created an incentive program to promote high attendance rates during the rainy season by providing learners with juice, Thobwa, and porridge. In addition this practice, Kumwenda and his wife also grow maize and sorghum during the planting season in order to raise funds for their VRC.

Kumwenda and his wife's work have effectively gotten community members excited and involved. They have completed projects such as molding bricks to construct another VRC structure and holding sensitization meetings for the village heads. These sensitization meetings allow community members to explain the benefits of EGRA community activities and how they help to sustain the project. During Chavula and Chingani's visit with Kumwenda, they learned how to execute similar practices in their own schools and how important community involvement can be to creating a successful environment.

	
<p><i>GVH Kumwenda's house is a VRC. Photo by: EGRA Staff</i></p>	<p><i>Bricks ready for the construction of a permanent VRC. Photo by: EGRA Staff</i></p>
	
<p><i>Letter cards hanging from trees around GVH Kumwenda's VRC. Photo by: EGRA Staff</i></p>	<p><i>Village library at GVH Kamweko Chavula. Photo by: EGRA Staff</i></p>



GVH and his community have letter cards on the walls of their VRC structure. Photo by: EGRA Staff

Story #2 Community Commitment in Literacy Activities in Villages Surrounding Mtuwakale Primary School in Lilongwe Rural West

In February and March of 2015, community sensitization campaigns were used to encourage development of reading centers in local villages. The success of the campaign resulted in the construction of eight reading centers: Kabuma, Mbula, Sikoti, Chikhwewo, Mulo, Mkuwa, Kawalazira, and Mtuwakale. The impact that the campaigns have made on the community surrounding Mtuwakale has been incredible.

After being sensitized, chiefs and village members began to develop an interest in the literacy activities of their children. Chiefs became so interested in childhood literacy that many have chosen to become volunteer supervisors at the reading centers. In other villages, chiefs serve as reading center facilitators. Chief Mwanese of Mtuwakale even turned part of his house in to a chalkboard to use when he facilitates reading.

Community members are also excited to get involved and are scrambling to become volunteers. The Mtambo and Mkuwa reading centers each have six volunteer facilitators. Each reading center also has volunteer mentors. The mentors are learners in the upper classes who volunteer to assist Standard 1, 2, and 3 learners during their reading time to help them further develop their comprehension skills.

Because of the strong community involvement in these areas, enrollment has reached an all-time high. The Mkuwa reading center has a total of 71 learners. The high enrollment has encouraged head teachers to bring in more school supplies to these centers so that children can continue on their educational journey.



Chief Mkuwa supervises reading time. Photo by: EGRA Staff



Nelesi Beston helping Std 1 learners read at Chief Mwanase VRC. Photo by: Ivy Vale

Story #3 Sheira Namitembo: The Amazing Child

Among the many learners in Sakatama School, the story of 7-year-old Sheira Namitembo stands out above the rest. When Sheira was born, she was diagnosed with brain damage that resulted in her limbs being paralyzed. Not only did her condition make it extremely difficult for her to succeed in school, but the Namiwawa Zone did not have a Special Needs Teacher to provide her with the attention she needed. While Sheira's condition is considered to be extremely severe, with the help and support of her family, teachers, and community, she was able to find the strength within herself to become one of the strongest students in the school.

Sheira's mother, Ellena Namitembo, and her husband, Mr. Namitembo, had the most influence over her success in school. The two of them have made many sacrifices to ensure that their child receives an education. Ellena and Sheira share a very rare type of love. It is extremely uncommon for a mother to transport her child to and from school, but Ellena does this each day and will continue to throughout her daughter's education. Ellena has said, "My intention is to make sure my child is educated like anyone else...that is why I bring her to and from school every day."

Ellena and Mr. Namitembo are not the only family members who support Sheira's education. Her relative, Chikondi William, also helps her during her lessons. Chikondi will help to seat Sheira in a comfortable position so that she can easily read and follow along with the rest of the class. He will even hold a book for the two of them to share, so that Sheira will not have to struggle to see. Sheira's other classmates also are excited to see her succeed. They all happily volunteer to help her with her daily personal needs, and they applaud her when she provides the correct answers in class.

The teachers in Sakatama School have also been patient and supportive of Sheira's special needs within the classroom. When Sheira was enrolled, many of the teachers were nervous because she could not speak and they didn't have a Special Needs Teacher to aid her. However, as the school year progressed, Sheira began to learn her own way to communicate. In order to answer a question she would attract attention to herself by moving her arms or legs, and even shouting if not initially recognized. Teachers quickly began to develop a strong interest in her education when they discovered how intelligent and dedicated she was. Teachers have said

that Sheira rarely fails to provide the correct answer and also pronounces letter names, letter sounds, and diagraphs at the same level as her classmates. Sheira's major breakthrough was gaining the ability to write with her toes. Because of this, Sheira is now able to be monitored in the learning process and LAT administration, as well as participate in all of the lessons for Standard 1 learners.

Sheira is truly an amazing child.



Mrs. Namitembo feeding Sheira before taking her home from school. Photo by: EGRA Staff



Mr. Kriss Taika, Standard 1 teacher, offering support to Sheira. Photo by: EGRA Staff



Chikondi William assisting Sheira in reading from Nditha Kuwerenga book. Photo by: EGRA Staff



EGRA DC Janet Chiromo and DTC Joyce Masache administering assessment test. Photo by: EGRA Staff

Story #4 In Buwa, Support for Literacy Is Ageless

In the Buwa zone of Lilongwe district, members of parent-teacher associations, school management committees, and Mother Groups were oriented on the Early Grade Reading Activity (EGRA). This orientation has attracted an outpouring of support from the community. Traditional leaders have been particularly enthusiastic proponents of EGRA—and none more so than Group Village Headman (GVH) Mtoso.

When GVH Mtoso, whose given name is Raphael Chimphepo, learned about EGRA's efforts in his area, he paid a visit to the head teacher at his local school, Zokoto Primary School. The head teacher invited Mr. Chimphepo to observe a Standard 1 classroom in which Chichewa reading was being taught using EGRA's methodology. Mr. Chimphepo left the lesson very impressed by what he had seen. When asked what impressed him the most, Mr. Chimphepo cited two things: first,

watching learners read as early as the second term of Standard 1; and second, that the lesson reminded him of the way he was taught to read—in the mid-1930s.

Despite his age—he was born in 1927—GVH Mtoso has become a tireless advocate for reading in his community. He not only founded a reading center in his village, he recruited two volunteer community reading facilitators and mobilized his community to contribute a small stipend to them every month. GVH Mtoso decreed that the reading center should be created under a mkhuthu tree near his home so he could monitor its activities each day.

EGRA learned of GVH Mtoso's efforts during the reading fairs held at Zokoto Primary School in early March 2015. The Primary Education Advisor for Buwa zone was so impressed by Mr. Chimphepo's commitment to supporting EGRA and his effectiveness in leveraging his position that she invited him to serve as a role model for the other communities in the zone. GVH Mtoso undertook an EGRA "barnstorming tour," attending seven of the ten reading fairs held this term in Buwa. At each reading fair, he delivered a speech and sang Chichewa and English songs in support of reading—some of which he said he first learned in 1936.

GVH Mtoso has been an inspiration, not only to the learners—many of whom have expressed amazement that someone of his advanced age could still remember the reading songs he learned in his childhood!—but also to the other traditional leaders in Lilongwe areas that are near Buwa. Since GVH Mtoso began participating in the role model activities, other local traditional leaders have increased their degree of support for EGRA's activities.



GVH Mtoso at his house – Photo by Yohane Katantha, EGRA DCM

Story #5 Collaboration with Parents Confers Benefits on Children with Learning Disabilities



Flora reading from a word tree. Photo credit: Augustine Kanyendula, Perkins International.

Flora had been diagnosed with cerebral palsy. Like any parent, her mother Janet was fearful when she learned about her daughter's learning disability. Would Flora succeed in school? Could she make friends? What would it take to make her daughter successful? Janet did not know how or where to get the appropriate help.

Although Janet had sent Flora to Chitedze Primary School, her goal had only been to make sure that her child had some friends to play with during the day while Janet attended

to household chores. "There was nothing that I could do about the situation," Janet confessed, tears running down her cheeks. "To me, my daughter's school was just a

pastime.” Flora was falling miserably behind in her Standard 2 classes. She struggled mightily to read simple words in Chichewa and to memorize the list of high-frequency words her class was learning; her writing was virtually unrecognizable. Flora had been getting special help in class since Standard 1, but it was not the right kind of help. As Flora realized she was not making the same progress as her peers, her self-confidence decreased rapidly.

Now, though, Janet is a changed mother. She has a deep and passionate interest in her daughter’s education. She now encourages Flora to read stories to her on a daily basis. She also frequents bookshops to collect a variety of reading materials, which she keeps at home. Janet’s changed perspective is a result of attending a training workshop for parents of children with disabilities that USAID’s Early Grade Reading Activity (EGRA) organized November 5–7, 2014 at Chitedze Primary School. The training workshop—the first of its kind in Malawi—is one of EGRA’s groundbreaking efforts to integrate children with disabilities in its reading activities.

The aim of the training was to introduce parents to methods of improving literacy among children with disabilities by strengthening communication with the child and finding ways to support the child’s healthy functioning in his/her environment. By bringing together parents with the head teachers, special needs education teachers, and heads of the school management committees, the workshop emphasized the critical role of a supportive community in a child’s educational development. For the first time, parents were provided a venue to share their fears about, and aspirations for, their children’s educational growth. The head teachers and teachers in turn explained to the parents how they could assume a more active role in the education of their own children, including how to partner effectively with school personnel in the development and implementation of an individualized education plan. Parents were taught that effective parental support extends the learning environment far beyond the school walls and the academic calendar. During the workshop, Janet learned practical techniques for supporting Flora’s school-based learning within the home environment; she also practiced skills that would help her develop a positive relationship with Flora’s teachers.

Janet’s efforts are beginning to bear fruit. The change in Flora has been astonishing. The shining personality Flora had shown before her tough experiences at school left her feeling beaten down has reemerged. Not only does Flora look forward to attending school, her energy level after school has increased immensely. She has made friends at school that she plays with. She does her homework. While reading is still a challenge, she is making progress and is beginning to master simple words in Chichewa as well as English. Her written expression is advancing nicely, and her confidence continues to grow.

While family engagement confers benefits on all students, those with disabilities often require a greater degree of parental involvement and advocacy than their peers without disabilities if they are to be assured of receiving the same level of instruction as the general student population. Children with disabilities often face multifaceted classroom challenges—challenges that require special attention from instructors and active engagement from their families if they are to be overcome. Their families play several supporting roles—they serve as advocates and provide valuable insight into the children’s specific needs that the instructors rely upon to tailor their instruction and support. Teachers often struggle to identify—let alone meet—the needs of diverse groups of students, and their task is greatly simplified by proactive family

members whose close experience with the child's needs can take the guesswork out of the process. There are no simple answers to the challenge of balancing the needs of each individual child with disabilities with those of their non-disabled peers. Further, the competing structural and emotional factors often add extra layers of effort and complexity for everyone involved. But when families and educators work together as partners, it enhances the likelihood that children with disabilities will have positive and successful learning experiences.

Story #6 EGRA Learner Pays It Forward, across Generations

When a nation invests in education, it invests in its future. Children whose schooling provides them with valuable knowledge and skills today have the potential to become the strong, effective leaders the nation will look to tomorrow. USAID's Early Grade Reading Activity (EGRA) is designed to support Malawi's Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) by investing in teachers, communities, and children to improve the reading skills of Malawian learners in Standards 1–3.

EGRA aims to help strengthen a generation of the future—but at one school in Ntchisi, this investment is also paying dividends for at least one member of a generation from the past.

Bridget Chitsanzo Mandalasi is now in Standard 2 at Makanda Full Primary School. The 8-year-old from Khuwi Village began learning to read last year when she was in Mrs. Pamela Ndazona's Standard 1 class. In the past, it was common for children to reach the end of the primary cycle without knowing how to read; it would be rare



Bridget (center right, in uniform) observes one of her reading center attendees practice his reading. Photo credit: Shadreck Chaguza

indeed for a child to read (let alone write) by the end of Standard 1. Bridget, however, was able to make the most of the support Mrs. Ndazona had received from EGRA. By combining her own hard work with her teacher's improved teaching techniques and the reading materials her school received, she was able to develop basic reading and writing skills by the end of the first term in school.

Bridget's success in school was warmly welcomed by her family. Her father, Mr. Hardwick Mandalasi, had

not finished school; while his friends were going to class, he spent his time dancing with the gule wamkulu performers in his community. As a result he reached adulthood unable to either read or write.

Bridget became determined to teach her father how to read and write in Chichewa. Night after night, Bridget practiced her school lessons with her father, teaching him the letters, words, and phrases that she was learning from Mrs. Ndazona. Mr. Mandalasi was initially skeptical of Bridget's efforts, but resolved to work hard to learn from his daughter. By the time Bridget had completed Standard 1, she had not only taught her father to read full sentences in Chichewa, but also to write his own name.

Mr. Mandalasi was bursting with so much pride that he sought out Mrs. Ndazona to relate this story. Thanks to Bridget's instruction, when the time came to register himself to vote, Mr. Mandalasi was able to refuse the option of registering himself with a simple thumbprint. To the astonishment of his community, he was able to sign his own name in the registration log.

Bridget continues earning the praise of her teachers for her good behavior and strong classroom performance. Bridget's spirit of generosity and enthusiasm has also not abated; she continues to seek out opportunities to share her knowledge and skills with others. This year Bridget established her own after-school "reading center" in her village. As the volunteer facilitator of the center, she leads her peers in drills and exercises to reinforce the phonemic awareness and letter- and word-recognition skills they are taught at school each day.

Such reading centers are a core element of the Early Grade Reading Activity's community mobilization efforts. They are designed to expand the reach and impact of EGRA's core reading-focused interventions, which include training teachers on effective approaches to teaching reading; ensuring these teachers receive ongoing coaching from Primary Education Advisors and EGRA staff to consolidate their newly-acquired techniques; and supplying schools with new teacher's guides, learner books, and supplementary reading materials that allow children to regularly interact with text and practice the reading skills the teachers are helping them develop.

**Annex 1. Quarterly Financial Statement
Malawi Early Grade Reading Activity:
Fourth Quarter of EGRA, July 1, 2015–
September 30, 2015**

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, 2015)

	Original or Revised Total Estimated Cost	Obligated Amount to Date	Invoiced as of Sept 30, 2015	Total Costs Incurred to Date (includes Oct 2015)	Outstanding Commitments	Total Expenditures	Unexpended Balance
Component 1	\$10,848,043		\$6,888,086	\$7,040,609	\$468,683	\$7,509,292	
Component 2	\$3,229,561		\$1,103,273	\$1,304,653	\$546,044	\$1,850,697	
Component 3	\$6,068,861		\$2,900,484	\$3,082,707	\$342,048	\$3,424,756	
Component 4	\$3,846,441		\$1,905,302	\$2,001,942	\$177,809	\$2,179,751	
Total	\$23,992,906	\$18,504,374	\$12,797,145	\$13,429,911	\$1,534,584	\$14,964,496	\$3,539,878

Annex 2. Brief Background on Special Groups as Cultural Institutions and Their Effects on Education

As indicated in the discussion of Component 3 (specifically [Task 3-2](#)), in March EGRA held training workshops targeting two major cultural institutions, *Gule wa Mkulu* and *Jando/Nsondo*, the *Special Groups* that play key roles in the rite of passage into adulthood known as *initiation*. In the central region, which is predominantly Chewa, the primary cultural institution governing initiation is *Gule Wa Mkulu*; in the southeastern, predominantly Yao districts, the primary institutions are *Chiputu/Nsondo* for girls and *Jando* for males. The rites of initiation in Malawi are central to many communities' cultures, especially in rural areas, and shape cultural norms with respect to gender roles and education (among many others). EGRA's work in the districts of the central region (Lilongwe Rural East and West and Ntchisi) and the southern region (Machinga and Balaka) can therefore be powerfully affected by engagement of these institutions. Successful engagement can mean leveraging a powerful resource; failure to engage can significantly attenuate an intervention's impact.

Historically, these initiation institutions were meant to teach children life and survival skills, home and community care, sexual and reproductive health, and personal hygiene. Because initiation institutions also involve elements of mystery and recreation, they appeal to youth and adults alike. The effects of these institutions on development outcomes, including education, are mixed. The initiation institutions can be positive because they are greatly valued by communities for their roles in imparting life skills to initiates. Also, because of the entertaining nature of their "performances," they can attract and retain large crowds, which can be useful for sensitization meetings and other events where information is to be disseminated. On the other hand, the institutions reinforce patriarchy in problematic ways. For example, because initiation rites for girls teach them that their femininity is based on their sexuality, they are often "prepared for marriage" by being initiated into sex by an older man or boy at the end of their initiation period. These practices significantly increase the girls' odds of becoming pregnant and subsequently dropping out of school. Parents also often willingly excuse their children from school in order for them to attend these institutions' ceremonies. Also, when masked dancers (*Gule Wa Mkulu*) pass near a school, the commotion they cause and the attention they attract frequently disturb learning in the school.

Annex 3. Model Painted Classrooms (Painting of Matindi and Ntambanyama Standard 1 Classrooms)

	
<p><i>Ntambanyama classroom before painting. Photo credit by: EGRA Staff</i></p>	<p><i>Standard 1 Matindi Primary School Teacher, Andrew Mchisa, painting Standard 1 class. Photo credit by: EGRA Staff</i></p>
	
<p><i>Standard 8 Matindi Primary School Teacher, Luciano Machilira, (seated) assisting with painting. Photo credit by: EGRA Staff</i></p>	<p><i>The completed base layer of the Ntambanyama School classroom. Photo credit by: EGRA Staff</i></p>
	
<p><i>Mr. Sailes James, the Matindi. School PTA Chairperson, doing final touches. Photo credit by: EGRA Staff</i></p>	<p><i>Traditional leaders, PTA, SBMC, Mother Group members, and VCRFs who came to witness painting of Ntambanyama classroom. Photo credit by: EGRA Staff</i></p>
	
<p><i>Mr. Charles Kabambe, Head Teacher of Namikango Primary School, painting a classroom with his son, Henry, at Ntambanyama School. Photo credit by: EGRA Staff</i></p>	<p><i>Staff from the Namikango Primary School assist with the painting of a classroom at Ntambanyama School. Photo credit by: EGRA Staff</i></p>