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Institute for International Research Inc.

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Subject: FIRST QUARTERLY REPORT
IMPROVED EFFICIENCY OF LEARNING PROJECT

Cooperating Country: LIBERIA

Contract Number: AID/AFR-C-1494

Project Number: 669-0130

Date: JUNE 1979

Institute for International Research Inc.

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June 28, 1979

Contracting Officer
Regional Operations Division-Africa
Office of Contract Management
U.S. Agency for International Development
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20523

RE: Contract AID/AFR-C-1494

Dear Sir:

I enclose three copies of our First Quarterly Report, as required by Clause 16(a) of the General Provisions of our contract for the Improved Efficiency of Learning Project in Liberia.

Along with the copy of this letter to USAID/Liberia, I have sent five copies of the report. Also, I have sent two copies to the AID Reference Center, along with a copy of this letter, as required by Clause 16(d) of the General Provisions.

Sincerely yours,



Victor J. Cieutat
Director of Support Services

VJC:mm
Enclosures

cc: USAID/Liberia (w/enclosures)
Richard R. Solem (AFR/DR)(w/enclosures)
AID Reference Center (w/enclosures)
IIR Field Staff (w/enclosures)

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I. INTRODUCTION

Under a contract with AID/AFR, the Institute for International Research (IIR) will provide technical advice and assistance to the Government of Liberia. Specifically, IIR will:

- a. Design and test student learning materials and develop materials and procedures for training teachers in their use.
- b. Develop and implement evaluative instruments for validating the impact of these materials and procedures (i.e., actual performance of teachers as evidenced by achievement of students);
- c. Explore alternative strategies for replicating the project and develop a detailed plan judged to be the most feasible;
- d. Develop a comprehensive and coordinated strategy for conducting all Ministry of Education teacher education activities; and
- e. Identify actual outputs and assess total impact of the project.

The necessary preparation and planning activities accomplished during the first quarter of work are described below. The contract was signed on 13 February 1979 with an effective date of 30 January. This report covers activities through 31 May 1979.

At a meeting of IIR staff with EHR officers at USAID/Liberia on 22 March, it was agreed that quarterly reports will be submitted during the first year only, with annual reports thereafter. Accordingly, our reporting schedule is the following.

DATE	REPORT
June, 1979	First Quarterly
September, 1979	Second Quarterly
December, 1979	Third Quarterly
March, 1980	Fourth Quarterly/First Annual
March, 1981	Second Annual
March, 1982	Third Annual
March, 1983	Fourth Annual
January, 1984	Final Report (Draft)

II. ACTIVITIES

Preparation and planning began as soon as the contract was signed. The following five members of the IIR staff arrived in Liberia within 30 days.

Daryl G. Nichols, Principal Investigator, 25 February
Victor J. Cieutat, Director of Support Services, 25 February
Robert C. Jacobs, Reproduction & Administration Specialist,
4 March
Aida L. Pasigna, Programmed Learning Specialist, 12 March
Rebecca N. Belleza, Programmed Teaching Specialist, 12 March

On 17 March, Richard T. Johnson, Chief of Party, arrived. Christian O. Agbenyega, already in Liberia, began his duties as Teacher Education Specialist on 1 April. Corene F. Casselle, PT/PL Teacher Trainer, joined the Bloomington group on 1 May and will move to Liberia in early August.

Consultants on site during the period include Sivasailam Thiagarajan (12 March - 5 April); Robert Jacobs (15 April - 4 May); Soemitro Sumantriwignjowijanjono (21 - 27 April); and IIR's president, Paul Spector (21 - 28 April). Description of their tasks is included below. All field staff and field consultant time is summarized in Appendix A (page 14).

Activities carried out during this reporting period are covered under the following headings:

- A. Orientation
- B. Administration and Logistics
- C. Collection of Initial Background Data
- D. Conference on Instructional Technology
- E. Writers' Workshop (Liberia)
- F. Three-Month Course on Programmed Instruction
- G. Revision of the Project Implementation Plan and Preparation of the Contractor Life-of-Project Work Plan

Following the activities are sections on problems and on plans for the next quarter.

A. Orientation

All the field team members were given an orientation to the administrative, logistical, technical, and cultural aspects of their tours of duty in Liberia. Orientations were held at IIR in Bethesda, Maryland, while members were in transit to Liberia. USAID orientation was also provided.

The Director of Support Services established standard procedures and checklists for all aspects of the orientation. The checklist for preliminary processing includes, for example, the following items: passport applications, inoculation and medication information,

medical briefing, medical clearances, visa processing, Post Report review, storage arrangements (household effects, motor vehicle), shipping (unaccompanied baggage, household effects, motor vehicle), and travel reservations. During orientation, the checklist also ensures that the following activities take place: routine office processing (W-4, fringe benefits, etc.), contract review, General Provisions review, Additional General Provisions review, banking arrangements, insurance arrangements, Post Report discussions, and country clearance.

B. Administration and Logistics

The Administrative Officer located on-site in Gbarnga. The Director of Support Services (TDY to Liberia 24 February to 27 March), the IEL Special Assistant (seconded to the project by the MOE for the period 1 March to 30 June), and other staff members cooperated in logistical support. Considerable progress in establishing the office had already been made through the efforts of the Deputy Minister of Education for Instruction. The Project Director, Janice M.T. Vani, worked part-time on project implementation for many months before the official project beginning.

Each administrative and logistical area will be described in the following sections.

1. Office. The office in Gbarnga, formerly the Bong Motel, was remodeled in January and February. The approximately 4600 square feet of floor space is divided into ten rooms, two large work areas, plus a few smaller storerooms. The office is located on the Superintendent's Compound across from the bank and post office.

The Ministry of Education, the Bong County Chief Education Officer, and EHR/USAID loaned several chairs, desks, and office equipment to the project pending the arrival of U.S. and local purchases.

2. Staff. The organizational chart (page 6), represents current lines of authority and staff size. Staff authorized by the contract are marked with an asterisk; those unmarked are MOE positions. Initials indicate that the position has been filled.

A Special Assistant and a secretary were seconded to the project by the MOE, the former from 1 March to 30 June at which time the Director will assume full-time duties, and the latter from 11 March to 11 April.

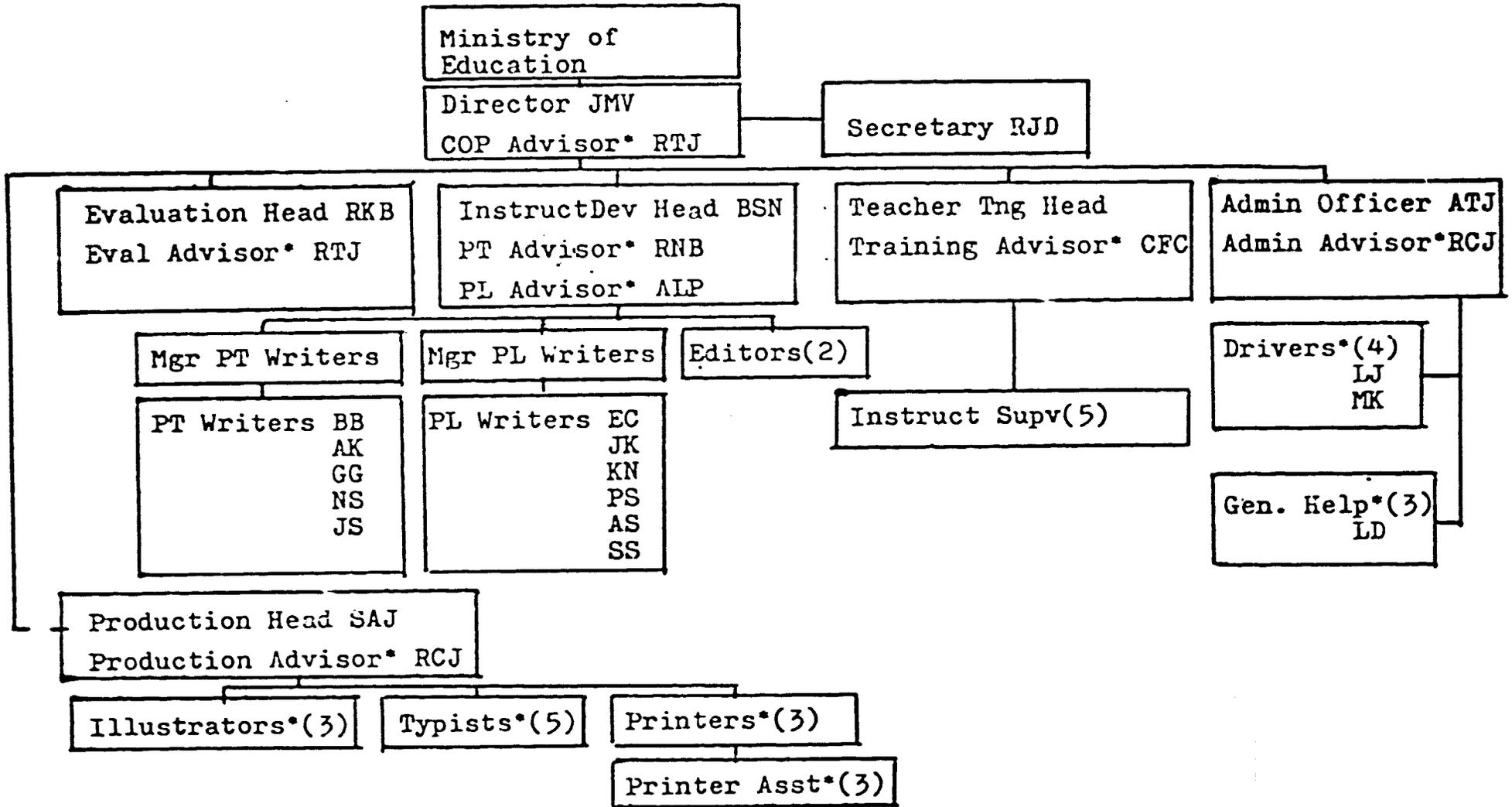
3. Commodities. A partial office commodities list was approved by EHR/Monrovia and most of the items have been procured. Office furniture has been shipped from the U.S.; 935 and local items are being obtained. Four typewriters and two calculators are in constant use. A consignment of office supplies required for immediate use was airfreighted to Liberia from the IIR offices at Bethesda, Maryland.

Household furnishings and equipment authorized under contract Amendment No. 1 have been purchased. Five households of furniture were shipped from the U.S. and are expected to arrive in July. One set was purchased locally for the advisor whose family had already arrived.

Procurement has been inordinately time consuming, both for the field staff and the home office support personnel. No Liberian index of supply sources is available; "yellow pages" provide no street addresses for the small number of businesses which have telephones.

4. Housing. Temporary housing was obtained in the Gbarnga area on 17 March for staff and consultants. Leases have been signed for a house in Monrovia for the Teacher Education Specialist, and houses in Gbarnga for the Chief of Party, Reproduction & Administration Specialist, and Programmed Teaching Specialist. Only two of the houses were ready for occupancy as of 31 May. Discussions are currently being held on the remaining two houses required in August for the PT/PL Teacher Trainer and the Programmed Learning Specialist.

FIGURE 1. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Notes:

- a. COP and Evaluation Advisor positions combined
- b. Production and Administration Advisor positions combined
- c. an asterisk signifies AID funded, all else MOE funded
- d. initials show the positions currently filled

The supply of electricity is fairly stable at present, and water is available two hours each morning and evening. Frequent total outages for a week at a time continue to burden the staff; the most recent was accompanied by a dearth of cooking gas so recourse was made to cooking over an outside fire.

5. Finances. A checking account initially was opened with Chase Manhattan Bank in Monrovia, but later transferred to the Agricultural and Cooperative Development Bank at Gbarnga. Service has been excellent although no foreign check can be drawn upon for thirty days, which severely hampers the cash flow. We are currently looking into alternative arrangements, cable transfers, etc.

6. Transportation. Two vehicles, Chevy Novas, have been obtained for the project. Five additional vehicles have been ordered, but have not yet arrived. The MOE purchased a Peugeot station wagon which is more heavily used in the Gbarnga area than are the Novas since the latter are of limited use off paved roads.

Fuel storage facilities will be installed at the office to reduce the supply fluctuations now affecting us.

7. Communication. Post office boxes have been obtained in Monrovia (Box 2914) and Gbarnga (Box 44). Mail originating in the U.S. is often sent through the pouch, saving both time and postage.

Cable addresses have been registered in Monrovia and Gbarnga; in both cases, it is IIRINC. We plan to have a telephone installed at the Gbarnga office.

8. Utilities. Difficulties with the supply of electricity and water have been mentioned above. The supply of electricity is critical to the success of the project since materials must be produced and duplicated far faster than is possible without mechanization. At a

meeting of IIR and EHR staff in April, the decision was taken to assess the reliability of the supply in Gbarnga in six months when installation of new equipment is scheduled to be completed. If the supply is inadequate, USAID will request the MOE to intervene, approve the purchase of generators, or move the project site.

Garbage collection service is nonexistent at Gbarnga. We will make some sort of arrangement when all the staff have returned from Bloomington.

9. Support Services. A logistical support team was organized by the Director of Support Services, with responsibility for:

- Coordination of recruiting, preliminary processing, and pre-departure orientation of all field personnel and consultants;
- Coordination and administration of long-term, short-term, and on-the-job training for Liberian project personnel;
- Coordination of all domestic and international project travel;
- Procurement of U.S. commodities for project use;
- Transportation of project commodities, personal motor vehicles, personal effects, and household goods;
- Arranging storage of household goods;
- Documentation required for smooth project operations;
- Monitoring project expenditures; and
- Other backstopping tasks; e.g., obtaining information, locating professional articles and reports, maintaining morale.

Details concerning the support services are included in the Administrative and Logistics Support Plan now in draft form.

10. Other. Support from the EHR/Liberia office has been outstanding. Technical advice, protocol suggestions, loans of office equipment, expediting of voucher processing, and moral support have been abundant. W.A. Whitten hosted three separate social gatherings for project and MOE staff on 5 April, 28 April, and 16 May.

The MOE has been similarly generous in assistance. Christine T. Norman has given invaluable advice and has provided a tremendous start to the project. Staff have been competent and readily available for innumerable meetings.

C. Collection of Initial Background Data

Two sets of background data were collected during this reporting period and are being used in the three-months writers' workshop in the U.S. The first was a complete set of materials from the 1974-75 revision of the 1966 elementary school curriculum in Liberia. Books from the approved list were obtained and sent with the other documents to Bloomington.

PT and PL materials are in written form and the reading level must be set according to the skills of the user. We consequently collected data from 100 fourth-grade students in five rural schools. Data included written comprehension, oral comprehension, and recognition-in-context abilities on over 900 words (including Dolch words, and commonly used nouns and verbs).

Other data are needed for project planning. The evaluation plan, now in draft form, includes a description of the data to be gathered, questions to be answered, timing of the activities, and overall rationale.

D. Conference on Instructional Technology

A one-week meeting of educational technologists to develop programmed instructional approaches for use in Liberia was held from 8 - 12 January in Bloomington, Indiana. The conference, attended by Daryl G. Nichols, Douglas G. Ellison, Siegfried Engleman, Jerry G. Short, Sivasailam Thiagarajan, Aida L. Pasigna, Corene F. Casselle, Rebecca N. Belleza, and Paul Spector, produced initial program designs that were included in the syllabus of the three-month course for writers.

The major concern of the conference was the programming of instruction for those learning tasks in the Liberian curriculum for which present approaches may be inappropriate. Attention was given to programmed teaching methods for classes up to 40 students, although more recent information suggests that numbers may be larger in many schools.

E. Writers' Workshop (Liberia)

The workshop was held in Gbarnga from 12 March to 5 April. IIR conducted the workshop, with Sivasailam Thiagarajan training writers on instructional techniques. The learning tasks in the Liberian curriculum that are most appropriate for adaptation were used in training practice. Topics covered were (1) behaviorally stated objectives, (2) measuring achievement of objectives, (3) principles of programmed instruction, (4) programmed teaching, and (5) programmed learning, both group- and self-instruction.

The Project Director and the MOE selected 34 participants for the workshop. The ability to learn programming techniques and to use clear and simple language in their application to learning tasks were the principal criteria for final selection of 13 individuals to attend the three-month workshop in the U.S. Eleven of the thirteen are writers, one is the Instructional Development Head, and the other is the Evaluation Head.

F. Three-Month Course on Programmed Instruction

The 13 participants departed Liberia on 12 May, and were met in Bloomington by the Director of Support Services who had made arrangements for housing, food, and cash advances. The course is presently on schedule under the direction of Sivasailam Thiagarajan with the contractor PT Specialist, PL Specialist, and the Teacher Trainer assisting. An EHR officer and the USAID Director from Liberia plan to visit the course during June.

The course is specific to the needs of the IEL project and focuses on application rather than theory. The programmed instruction techniques being taught are those derived from other programs, from the workshop in Liberia, and modified in the light of the data collected as described in Section C (Collection of Initial Background Data) above.

G. Revision of the Project Implementation Plan and Preparation of the Contractor Life-of-Project Work Plan

The USAID/IIR contract calls for a final project implementation plan prepared by Liberian project staff and their U.S. counterparts, plus a contractor life-of-project work plan to be submitted for approval at the end of the sixth project month. At a meeting of IIR and EHR staff at USAID/Liberia on 22 March, agreement was reached on combining these into a single document with both titles. Work is progressing on the document to be submitted 30 July.

Sections of that plan will be:

- I. Project Status
- II. Teacher Education
- III. The IEL Project
 - A. Project Design and Schedules
 - B. Staffing
 - C. Materials Development Procedures
 - D. Teacher Training

- E. Evaluation Methods
- F. Administrative Support Plan
- G. Participant Training
- H. Commodities
- I. Costs

As part of the development, this quarterly report will form part of Section I. Officials from the MOE, USAID, IEL, and IIR met on 17 May concerning the role of the Teacher Education Specialist. Draft documents were discussed at that time, and further meetings will be held to finalize the plan which will become Section II.

Development of Section III has required two series of meetings: a conference on project design and another on schedules and production methods. The first series was held from 23-27 April at the Baptist Youth Camp near Monrovia where approximately 40 participants discussed a series of papers prepared by the IEL staff. Included among the participants were the three external consultants Robert Jacobs, Soemitro Sumantriwignjowijanono, and Paul Spector, who wrote recommendations and presented them to the audience. These persons have been most responsible for the designs of both Project IMPACT and Proyek PAMONG and have closely monitored and guided development and implementation of the projects. The conference produced a final project design which will be incorporated into the project implementation plan.

A preliminary analysis of the project design and schedules was made by IEL and MOE staff, and draft documents discussed at the second series of meetings held by the MOE Steering Committee and USAID/Liberia the week of 14-18 May. Three possible alternative designs were discussed, and the decision made to accept the third design -- one suggested by the Project Director. Revision of the document based on feedback from the reviewers is now in progress.

The remaining sections of the plan are in various stages of preparation. Evaluation Methods is in first draft form and under review by IIR staff in the U.S., Staffing is in rough notes form, and the other portions in similar status. The Teacher Training section has not been started.

When completed, the plan will cover all contractor commitments and schedules in support of the project implementation plan. It will include a PERT-type management and evaluation model that will enable precise monitoring and evaluation of all project inputs and outputs.

III. PROBLEMS

The major problem is the uncertainty of utilities. The electrical generators in Gbarnga are being replaced but the availability of diesel fuel is not reliable. The water supply is dependent upon electricity and a river that sometimes changes course; the officials are duly pessimistic. Contingency plans have been discussed with EHR, but hopefully will not be required.

IV. PLANS FOR NEXT QUARTER

1. Complete the Project Implementation Plan and Contractor Life-of-Project Work Plan.
2. Obtain the remaining commodities needed for efficient operation of the project.
3. Collect additional baseline evaluation data required for first-year project planning.
4. Modify the office slightly to accommodate personnel and equipment.
5. Fill the remaining positions on the revised staffing list.

Appendix A

Field Staff and Field Consultant Time

Staff Member	Arrival	Departure
Daryl G. Nichols	25 February	17 May
Victor J. Cieutat	25 February	26 March
Robert C. Jacobs	4 March	-----
Aida L. Pasigna	12 March	28 April
Rebecca N. Belleza	12 March	28 April
Sivasailam Thiagarajan	12 March	5 April
Richard T. Johnson	17 March	-----
Robert Jacobs	15 April	4 May
Paul Spector	21 April	28 April
Soemitro Sumantriwignjowijanono	21 April	27 April