



**Creating Democratic Schools as a Pilot Program
In Afghanistan and Bangladesh**

**Quarterly Programmatic Report
April – June 2005**

Under Leader Award No. GEG-A-00-01-00005-00

Submitted by Pact on behalf of
Children's Resources International

As indicated in the corresponding quarterly financial report, the total amount expended under this sub-award to date is \$122,282.89. This figure accurately represents amounts reported to Pact for the period ending May 31, 2005.

I. Executive Summary

CRI currently operates two separate and distinct projects under the EDSA program for the South Asia Bureau of the US Department of State. During this fourth quarter CRI planned and facilitated two trainings in Bangladesh as part of our MOU with Save the Children (Save) and revised plans for activities in Afghanistan under the Creating Democratic Schools project in Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

CRI's work in Bangladesh involves collaboration with Save the Children on their multi-year, early childhood grant, SUCCEED. Project work this quarter focused primarily on finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding between Save and CRI and planning and conducting training in Dhaka. This initial training was facilitated by two CRI Associate Directors and consisted of two parts—a five-day training for a core group of 48 master teachers, SUCCEED NGO representatives and Save education staff and personnel, and a three-day Training-of-Trainers for 27 key Save educational staff and personnel. In following this strategy, CRI is supporting the approach of the Mission in Bangladesh, building the capacity of a core team in country, reaching a broad audience, and leveraging the funds available.

CRI's project in Afghanistan saw numerous revisions this quarter. During the fourth quarter, five members from the faculty of Kabul Education University attended a five-day training for teachers and principals in Pakistan and had opportunities to meet with CRI Washington as well as CRI Pakistan Country Director and seasoned staff of Master Teacher Trainers. Afghani visitors also had an opportunity to visit several local schools and consider program implementation in Afghanistan. The lead faculty representative returned to Islamabad in order to meet with Melanie Bixby, US Department of State, Senior Advisor, South Asian Affairs, who was traveling to the region, and discuss the planned intervention and its ramifications with her.

CRI is in the process of developing a revised work plan to implement its Creating Democratic Schools program. The revisions do not effect the scope of work in Bangladesh under the original award, however, they adjust the focus of work in Afghanistan from Higher Education and the faculty who prepare teachers to include a visitor's training program, which entails selecting Afghani representatives to attend training in the US as well as a shift to identified needs at the preschool level.

II. Background

After 23 years of war, the revitalization of Afghanistan's educational system is essential to ensuring a stable future. The Afghan Government is working diligently toward this end, mobilizing resources for the achievement of "Education for All," particularly at the primary school level. Even so, however, demand for access to education has far exceeded the educational system's capacity.

Due to a rapidly growing youth population, Bangladesh has also experienced an inability to provide quality education to a large number of pupils at the primary level. Gender inequalities, widespread child labor, and a majority rural population have also presented obstacles to expanding educational access.

This program aims to establish a democratic, child-centered educational pilot for early primary school-age children in Afghanistan and Bangladesh. It introduces teachers to new teaching methodologies that are democratic in nature and draws families into the life of the school community. By reaching these children in their early years, the program aims not only to ensure access to education but also to develop within the youngest members of society the democratic skills, values, and attitudes that are necessary for success in the 21st century.

The program strengthens the development of a democratic culture in young children through a new type of civic education—one that is inherently participatory. Teaching methods encourage children to make choices, take responsibility for their decisions, express their ideas with creativity, respect the different styles and abilities of their classmates, develop critical thinking skills, and practice independent thinking. Teachers learn to shift the emphasis from rote learning to the construction of knowledge based on the individual interests, needs, and strengths of each student.

The objectives of the program include:

- Increased use of democratic, child-centered methods in the education of primary school children.
- Increased use of democratic, child-centered methodologies by faculty at two-year teacher training institutes and universities.
- Increased participation of families in school activities.
- Increased attendance and retention rates of primary school children
- Establishment of model training sites for teacher practicums (Afghanistan)

The program targets four primary audiences – children, families, teachers and faculty that train teachers.

There are two separate projects under this grant—one in Bangladesh and another in Afghanistan. Work plans revised and approved during the second quarter are presented below. Recent discussions with USAID will require further modification of the work plan for Afghanistan. Once agreement is reached, CRI will make the necessary revisions.

III. Key Results This Quarter

Bangladesh

Develop Training Materials For First Training of Teachers And Trainers

As part of the MOU with Save the Children, CRI developed numerous training materials to be used in the initial training. Several CRI training modules were adapted to reflect specific needs of Save to support Literacy and Math initiatives under the SUCCEED grant as well as address the wide range of ages Save Master Trainers must target in subsequent trainings in the field.

CRI's Facilitators' Guide was revised and adapted to meet specific training needs of the SUCCEED Master Trainers. The Facilitators' Guide, all handouts and Overheads generated by CRI were translated by Save the Children and distributed to all participants.

Conduct Teacher Training

CRI Associates Directors, Colleen Bane and Zsuzsa Szabo, planned and conducted an initial training in Dhaka Bangladesh, May 29–June 8. The training consisted of two separate parts. Part I, a five-day training for a core group of 48 master teachers, SUCCEED NGO representatives and Save the Children education staff and personnel, focused on child-centered methodology in early primary classrooms with an emphasis on Literacy and Mathematics. (See Appendix A)

Fazle Rabbani, Education Advisor, USAID Bangladesh, attended a portion of the training on day three and met with Save Representative Kamal Hussein (Deputy Program Director for SUCCEED) and CRI representatives to discuss the role of USAID in SUCCEED. Mary Hobbs, Education Team Leader, USAID Bangladesh was on travel during both trainings and unable to attend.

Conduct Training of Trainers

Immediately following the five-day training, CRI International Trainers facilitated Part II, a three-day Training-of-Trainers for 27 key Save educational staff and personnel. As the SUCCEED program proceeds, the Master Trainers will provide training to an extensive cadre of preschool and primary teachers throughout Bangladesh over the next several years. (See Appendix B) This training prepares them to be trainers. It presents concepts of adult learning, demonstrates the logistical preparations necessary for to deliver effective interactive sessions, offers examples of content-based experiential learning, gives participants opportunities to make presentations and critique those of others, teaches positive feedback techniques, and much more. In sum, it prepares educators, who are knowledgeable in the field and experienced in the classroom but requiring support, to become educational trainers.

Observe Classrooms Near Training Sites

CRI representatives, escorted by Shahin Islam, Deputy Program Manager, Early Childhood Development, Save the Children, had an opportunity to visit the village of Nasir Nagar in the Brahman Baria District, Northwest of Dhaka. (See attachment 1 for photos.) The following sites were visited:

A Preschool in Kundra (Nasir Nagar Upazila) – a one-room program for children ages 5–6 run and funded by Save’s Core staff. The teacher, trained by Core, is a community volunteer. Younger siblings often attend the 3 hour program which operates 6 days a week.

A Lokokendra in Kundra – a Save program for adolescent girls, ages 8–14. Younger siblings not attending school programs are allowed to “visit” and mothers and community members are welcomed to participate as well. A community library is housed in the Lokokendra building. Students and members of the community are encouraged to check out books and reading materials.

A private FIVDB primary school, funded by through a Basic Education Partnership between Core and Friends in Village Development, Bangladesh (F.I.V.D.B), one of Save’s selected SUCCEED NGOs. This school is operated by a trained, paid staff. The school has 4

classrooms, 3 of which are currently used in two shifts to support classes for grades 1–5 (ages 6–11). A “spare” room will be used as enrollment expands next year to accommodate growing numbers of children and families in the program.

Develop Evaluation Tools

CRI adapted and utilized its End-of-Training Evaluation instrument following each of the trainings.

Follow-up Meetings with Save the Children

Following the initial training in Dhaka, CRI representatives met with Delilah “Lala” Borja, Program Director SUCCEED, and Ned Olney, Country Representative, Save the Children, USA to discuss feedback from training. During these meetings, Lala and Ned both expressed the desire for CRI to continue to collaborate with Save the Children on the SUCCEED grant by providing two additional trainings.

Future trainings are tentatively scheduled for early September 2005 and early December 2005. CRI will draft a new MOU to be signed by Ned Olney outlining roles and responsibilities for each party as we move forward with our collaboration.

Afghanistan

CRI Training in Islamabad, Pakistan

With the significant help of USAID staff, five members of the faculty of Kabul Education University obtained visas and passports to attend the five-day Creating Democratic Child-Centered Classrooms training for third Grade teachers and principals. (See Appendix C)

Following the five-day training, Professor Jamily had an opportunity to meet with Melanie Bixby, US Department of State, Senior Advisor, South Asian Affairs, on-travel assignment in Islamabad, to share concerns and immediate needs facing KEU. On behalf of Dr. Mohamad Daud Rawosh, the President of the University, he expressed a desire for future collaboration with CRI Washington. Dr. Jamily indicated that the University was interested in starting a new department of early childhood education and he was the designated head. He requested CRI’s assistance with the undertaking.

Develop Memoranda of Understanding

CRI developed separate MOUs with Kabul Education University and the Ministry of Education. The MOU with the University was drafted during the third quarter so that the visiting faculty could review it during the training in Pakistan and suggest revisions as necessary. The MOU with the Ministry of Education was developed during this quarter. It required coordination with Dr. Richard Navarro who represents the Ministry’s interests. (See Appendix D) The Memorandum was drafted and sent to the Ministry of Education through Dr. Navarro.

Revisions to Work Plan

Revisions to the original and previously revised concept paper were developed during this fourth quarter and have been approved by the US Department of State, July 13, 2005. However, as we

write this report we are aware that the work plan will again be changed to accommodate input from the USAID Mission in Afghanistan.

IV. Comparison of Planned and Actual Accomplishments

Bangladesh

Activities Planned for this Quarter	Timeline	Status
Develop Training Materials for first training of teachers and trainers	April – June	Completed
Conduct teacher training	May – June	Completed
Conduct training-of-trainers	June	Completed
Develop evaluation tools	April - June	Underway

Afghanistan

Activities Planned for this Quarter	Timeline	Status
Provide training for faculty at CRI program in Islamabad, Pakistan	April – June	Completed
Develop MOUs with Kabul Education University and Ministry of Education	April – June	Completed
Prepare for July training for faculty and teachers.	April – June	Canceled / to be revised
Identify faculty to attend CRI training in July	April – June	Canceled / to be revised
Designate project coordinator in Kabul.	April – June	Canceled / to be revised
Select schools for training of teachers	April - June	Canceled / to be revised
Arrange for translation and adaptation of early childhood faculty courses into appropriate languages.	April - June	Canceled / to be revised

Delays in Project Work in Afghanistan

CRI originally proposed a pilot primary school program in Afghanistan. When CRI staff made the initial visit to Afghanistan in August 2004, the USAID Mission redirected our efforts, suggesting that CRI fill a gap organizations had yet to fill—to provide support to faculty who prepare teachers. CRI revised its plan and, working with an Embassy representative in Kabul, targeted Kabul Education University (KEU) and the Teacher Training Centers through the Ministry of Education.

When the South Asia Bureau called for concept papers for second year activities for this grant, CRI responded setting in motion a series of communications that resulted in yet another revision to the CRI Afghanistan work plan in order to accommodate to USAID’s national strategic plans and forthcoming RFPs for education reform in Afghanistan.

Further, on June 28, the Ministry of Education sent a letter to CRI (attached) requesting that CRI work with a newly formed Pre-service Reform Committee. They suggested that CRI train representatives of all teacher training colleges and finally that we once again visit Kabul to make final plans prior to launching training. Hence, CRI canceled the planned training for July and will revisit plans for resumption of activities pending a decision about our proposal.

V. Activities Planned for the Next Quarter

The following activities are planned for the next quarter:

Bangladesh

- Develop new MOU outlining future work with Save the Children on the SUCCEED grant
- Plan and facilitate 2nd training for core group in Dhaka scheduled for Sept 2005
- Observe classrooms in close proximity to training sites

Afghanistan

- Visit Kabul early fall 2005 to conduct meetings with Ministry of Education, Kabul Education University, and others with oversight of preschool education in Afghanistan.
- Plan Visitor Education Program
- Plan Preschool Education Program
- Begin translation of CRI's methodologies and modules

VI. Success Stories/Lessons Learned

Bangladesh

Feedback from Teacher Training

“My background is in early childhood education. I have participated in many trainings over the years and have a solid grasp of theory. This is the first time I really understand the connection between theory and application. I really get it now.” --Deputy Program Director, Save the Children

“This type of training, with so many people from different jobs, has been a good capacity building activity. I think the NGO leaders see that the staff has knowledge. We can get more respect from them now.” --NGO technical officer

Other comments

- I will try to integrate math and literacy concepts.
- Active learning is useful to all children in our country.
- I will try to use this training and learning because I think it is very effective, especially writing and making books.
- The training was very effective and interesting. It's so new. Wasn't able to grasp everything. Perhaps if I have a chance to do this again, I will get it.
- This is very important for our field work and sustainability.

- An interesting way to do training.
- I will do math differently as a result of this training.
- We need more theory.
- The trainings should be residential so more teachers are impacted.
- We need more materials in the field.
- Training should be at least 7 days.
- Include sessions to make materials for math and literacy

Feedback from Training of Trainers

What will you do differently as a result of this training?

- I will develop a training plan that fits into our Bangla context for teachers in the field
- This training will help me a lot. Giving feedback especially.
- I will try to use a variety of methods and also make participatory sessions.
- I will use journal entries and daily reflections.
- Include more activities engaging participants.
- Session on practicing giving positive feedback was good. I will include this at all levels and encourage staff to practice with their supervisors.
- I will embellish your trainings and make mine participant centric – more engaging with different levels of activity.
- Take some tips from on how to engage participants differently.
- I got some important idea as I learned new techniques. I will try to give feedback differently. I mean positively. And, try to involve every participant or child with activities effectively.
- Need to include more modern instrumentations into my trainings.
- I will use more visual materials.
- Apply the learning from this training to build up community learning corners.
- I will introduce methods to non-SUCCEED schools.
- I will advocate to introduce ideas into government schools.

Is there anyway the training can be improved to better meet your needs as a trainer:

- The TOT could be longer than three days to have a chance to practice more.
- Training should be 7 days (12, 5).
- I understand English and it is required for my job, but I would benefit from translation especially for content.
- Videos of American child-centered classrooms or better still an exchange to visit real classrooms, so we can see things in action.
- Videos of Morning Meeting.
- Force all participants to come up with new ideas.
- More time to practice.
- Field visits.
- Video feedback session.

Suggestions for a Follow-up Training

- Conduct a Workshop on Folder Activities that can be used in Learning Centers, Child-to-Child Programs and Community Centers. Include:
 - Math Task Cards
 - Books and specific Reading Responses
 - Writing Responses and Journal Entries
- Conduct a workshop on Observation and Assessment. Focus on:
 - Collecting Data
 - Interpreting Data
 - Portfolios
- Define the Role of the Teacher
- Conduct a Workshop on Activity/Learning Centers
- Conduct a Workshop on Cooperative Learning Activities
- Conduct a Workshop on Teacher Child Interactions
- Distribute guidelines for teachers to make classrooms child-centered

Afghanistan

Five Members of the Faculty from Kabul Education University attended the Training in Islamabad, Pakistan, April 2005:

Khalilullah Jamily (Jamily Ostad)

Abdul Quodos Nadimi (Nadimi Ostad)

Mohamad Rasool – (Razool Ostad)

Mira John Ghorbandi (John Ostad)

Abdul Manan Haquiar (Haquiar Ostad)

Feedback from Training

“We never thought you would call (after our February Meeting at KEU). Most companies come and offer to help and never come back. You invite us to participate and we welcome the invitation. It is a beginning of a relationship. We are grateful you have chosen us. Most countries want to work with Kabul University. We will work fast to prepare for the training you will give us. We will make a space, we will be ready to think and learn from you like we have here with our new friends in Pakistan.”

“We need more exchanges, especially with our brothers and sisters in Pakistan. We are neighbors – we can learn from the successes we see here. We have much work to do. Our teachers are no-good. They are not smart. They have not so many ideas and it is a problem. We will make a very good program. The students (KEU) need this. My people need this.”

“I think my favorite part of training this week was working together and cooperation. That was stressed – it is good.”

“Active learning using materials and moving around (is good). Passive not so good. Active much better. We must do this too.”

“I think we need more on helping children be better readers and writers. They do not know. Teachers do not know. No one writes anymore. Our students (college) do not write so well. Do not read.”

“Self esteem is important. I think this methodology is very, very good and important for making children want to come to school.”

“We need books – a methodology for teachers (KEU) we do not know how to teach we just lecture – I say, you know.”