



PAQUED QUARTERLY REPORT

April 1 – June 30, 2011

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US and MoE Officials in front of the Teachers' Resource Center in Mbandaka, moments after its inauguration, June 13, 2011

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFD	Agence Française de Développement
CGES	Comité de Gestion Scolaire
COP	Chief of Party
COPA	Comité des Parents
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
EDC	Education Development Center
EGMA	Early Grade Math Assessment
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
IFCEPS	Institut de Formation des Cadres de l'Enseignement Primaire et Secondaire
IPAF	Inspecteur Principal Adjoint Chargé de la Formation
IPP	Inspecteur Provincial Principal
IRI	Interactive Radio Instruction
MEPSP	Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire, Secondaire et Professionnel
PROVED	Directeur de la Province Educationnelle
SIP	School Improvement Plan
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistance

INTRODUCTION

On September 15, 2009 Education Development Center received an award from USAID to implement the PIEQ (Package for Improving Education Quality) program. Later USAID allowed EDC to use the French equivalent acronym "PAQUED" (Projet d'Amélioration de la Qualité de l'Éducation) as the official name of the project.

Project performance during the reporting period (April - June, 2011) mainly consisted of the following:

- Continuing to broadcast IRI programs
- Distributing school kits
- Developing IRI programs for grades 3 and 4
- Preparing a teachers' professional development institute
- Completing and inaugurating two resource centers (Bandundu and Mbandaka)
- Broadcasting the first generation of community radio programs
- Developing a second generation of community radio programs

These activities were very intense from both logistical and technical standpoints. Accomplishing them has increased the visibility of USAID interventions in education, and has substantially contributed to positioning the project among leading organizations that are contributing to increased access to quality education in the DRC.

The following is a narrative technical report of PAQUED for the period April 1 - June 30, 2011.

1.0. OPERATIONS

1.1. STAFFING

After a very long search, the project was able to find a hire a qualified M&E Director. Anaclet Nlandu brings years of experience that will undoubtedly strengthen PAQUED's M&E department.

The project also hired a new Finance Director, Mr. Albert Diasividi in replacement of Maurice Longo who left the project during this same reporting period.

Additionally, PAQUED recruited three provincial M&E Assistants. They will officially join the project early during the next quarter.

1.2. SCHOOL KITS DISTRIBUTION

Ensuring that school kits (packed in 40 Kgs boxes) reach each of the 3000 partner schools was undoubtedly the major logistical challenge that the project has faced so far. Reaching schools scattered across three of the largest provinces of the DRC characterized by poor (or lack of) road network and totaling together nearly twice the size of France was not a small matter. All means of transportation, including aircrafts, bicycles, motorcycles, pirogues, and trucks were used to reach PAQUED partner schools across the vast territory covering the three target provinces.

The project identified several transporters to dispatch school kits in the three provinces. While trucks were used to transport the kits to most schools in Bandundu, commercial and non-commercial cargo planes were used to ship the kits to big towns in Equateur and Orientale provinces. Ground and river transportation means were subsequently used to reach surrounding schools. This has considerably exceeded the transportation line item of the project budget.



Beneficiary school staff examine the content of kits received

We are so thrilled to receive these school kits that words will not be enough to express how we feel right now. We have been teaching with virtually no basic teaching aids. Our students lack even basic writing materials...And suddenly, here we are: owners of some of the high-tech gadgets (a solar radio) that will boost learning among our students!

Thank you PAQUED, for thinking about us and including us among your target schools. We will ensure that these resources are well and meticulously used....

(A school principal in Equateur)

Fortunately, this vast and challenging operation was successfully carried out. The kits were received with much enthusiasm by the beneficiaries including teachers, students, and even parents as well as local MEPSP officials.

There were only very few reported cases of damaged kits (or kits with missing items).

2.0. PROGRAMMATIC ACHIEVEMENTS

2.1. ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER OBJECTIVE 1

2.1.1. [Teacher self-directed learning modules](#)

Teachers in the targeted schools are continuing to meet with their School Cluster Facilitators to view and discuss the content of the self-directed video learning Modules 1 (on the use of IRI programs) and 2 (on the use and fabrication of classroom instructional materials). However, several factors have slowed progress and reporting on this result. First, materials (school kits) were not distributed until the end of the school year. These kits contain both the RAN10 video players for viewing these modules, as well as the raw materials and tools for making classroom instructional materials used with Module 2 in school cluster meetings. Second, gathering data on these activities has been slow due to logistical issues in the provinces. The project has yet to hire monitoring and evaluation staff in the provincial offices. Further, monitoring and evaluation activities have depended upon Inspectors to collect data on teacher participation in self-directed learning modules and IRI activities. A new M & E officer hired in the central office will help matters in this regard. But staff is urgently needed in the provincial offices to ensure data is collected for future activities in a timely manner.

To resolve these problems the Education Technical Team will re-launch Modules 1 and 2 during the upcoming summer institute in French language (August 2011). The institute content will include supplementary French learning materials for the teachers to use in their school cluster meetings. The goal is to provide teachers with quality content to improve their pedagogical content knowledge while fostering the development of regular, self-directed learning activities in the clusters. The project therefore expects stronger results on the use of self-directed teacher learning modules in Year 3, once the school year has started in September/October of 2011.

2.1.2. Conception and piloting of the Summer Institute in French Language

Teachers in PAQUED targeted schools of Kisangani Town (Orientale Province) participated in a four-day long pilot of planned activities for the upcoming summer institute in French language (Module 3). A PAQUED consultant with over 20 years of experience in teaching French as a second language and in the use of French language pedagogy designed the core activities and learning strategies through collaboration with pedagogical advisors from the DRC Ministry of Education during a series of workshops held in early March. The project technical team then reviewed the learning objectives identified in the workshops, selected the materials (texts), adapted the activities and drafted a training plan for piloting the module with DRC teachers.

A total of 35 teachers participated in the series of reading and writing activities designed to help teachers to improve their French language knowledge and skills. A team of four trainers, including the Education Technical Advisor, the National Teacher Training Coordinator and two DRC teachers experienced in both French language pedagogy and teacher-training methods led and observed the activities, which took place in April during the school holiday.

According to participant evaluations the teachers both enjoyed and benefitted from the pilot activities. The training findings showed that reading brief texts with the teachers followed by conversation and writing activities focusing on comprehension, vocabulary and grammar was an effective method for promoting teacher learning of French language. Repeating the same activities for different texts proved effective as well, allowing the participants to become familiar with the new approach to language learning. During the four days the teachers were observed participating actively in the reading and writing exercises. By the end of the training, participants were able to guide their own reading and conversations. The results of the pilot thus demonstrated that the learning strategies and activities were capable of fostering the development of a self-directed teacher learning culture, which is an overarching goal of the summer institute.

Given the increased numbers of teachers in the target schools (from 21,000 to over 30,000) the technical team and coordinators re-organized school clusters as well to reduce the number of teachers per cluster. This move promises to enhance teacher participation while improving the quality of the summer institute. Working with media technicians and actors, the technical team has developed audio and video materials for the summer institute to help ensure consistent quality of content. These efforts promise to enhance teachers' participation in PAQUED training activities while strengthening the country's emerging, decentralized in-service teacher training system.

Since piloting the training module the technical team and the Provincial Coordinators identified trainers and facilitators for the French Language Summer Institute in each of the three provinces, following criteria developed during the March workshops. The technical team and coordinators have worked with Ministry of Education personnel at both the central and provincial levels to establish selection criteria, coordinate and execute a workable plan for selecting trainers and facilitators. By the end of the reporting period, this process was nearly complete with 100% of trainers and nearly 95% of facilitators identified and selected. Approximately 1700 facilitators will lead the summer institute in the school clusters, organized in teams of two (the Cluster Coordinator and a teacher experienced in French language pedagogy). A group of 120 trainers will train these facilitators in late July, following the training of the trainings beginning in June in each of the three provinces. School inspectors (PAQUED Master Trainers) and other Ministry personnel will help to supervise and monitor the series of training activities. The 10-day summer institute is scheduled to take place August 15 to 25 in 850 school clusters (compared with the original 600 initially organized by the project).

2.1.3. Development of pre-test and post-test for the Summer Institute

PAQUED contracted two experts in French language evaluation in May/June to develop and pilot the pre-test and post-test, to be administered at the beginning and end, respectively, of the Summer Institute in French Language. The consultants worked with a team of 8 DRC teachers with experience in French language pedagogy, as well as two inspectors from the Ministry and a DRC university professor in French language. Following an analysis of the

summer institute learning objectives and the principal training guide, the pre- and post-test team developed over 120 test items for piloting with 300 local (Kinshasa) teachers.

To help ensure the validity of the test and its appropriateness for DRC teachers' existing level of competency, the PAQUED technical team worked with a Ministry Inspector to identify 300 teachers at all primary grade levels from schools of varying characteristics to participate in the pilot test. The consultants and development team piloted the test in 3 testing centers established for these purposes. The team then scored the pilot tests, analyzed the results and selected items for development into the final, 40-item pre-test and 40-item post-test. The consulting team subsequently finalized the two tests for distribution and administration by the summer institute facilitators in each school cluster.

2.2. ACHIEVEMENT UNDER OBJECTIVE 2:

2.2.1. Script advancement

In the third quarter, the team of 8 scriptwriters wrote 140 scripts of the 200 literacy and numeracy support IRI programs for grades 3 and 4. These programs provide 2h30 per week and per grade of specific support to literacy and numeracy. The programs are also accompanied by a teacher resource guide that helps prepare teachers to effectively use each program in addition to providing them with ideas for instructional materials, games, and evaluation activities. Field-testing of the programs also continued. By the end of the reporting period, 80 programs have been field-tested and finalized at the studio-level.



At the beginning of April, the team of

A confidence booster: At the Sésam exhibition in June, a trainer from CTB approached PAQUED table to tell us that he was visiting schools in Buta (Pr. Orientale) to follow-up on the use of CTB books. What he found were classrooms of grade 1 & 2 students following our programs. He was so enthralled by the programs and how engaged children were that he came back every day of that week to listen with the students. He congratulated us and said he'd be in touch about collaboration with our project.

scriptwriters traveled to Bandundu to test IRI programs in target PAQUED schools. Teachers and students welcomed the programs and quickly adapted to their structure and pedagogical

approach (see case study). The PAQUED team also tested radio-training with primary students. Students quickly learned to use the mp3 radio, helping the teacher to play mp3 programs on a daily basis. This finding will play a key role in radio-training design.

Grade 3 students test IRI in Bandundu

In August, the first 100 programs will be loaded onto the Lifepayer radios. The accompanying teachers guide will also be distributed in time for the 2011 school year.

2.2.2. Introductory programs written and recorded

In the third quarter, the five 15 minute introductory programs for the grade 3 and 4 series were written and recorded. These programs are designed to introduce the new IRI series to grade 3 and 4 teachers. They initiate teachers to the new radio characters, pedagogical strategies embedded within the program, and useful tips on how to effectively use an IRI lesson in their classroom. A user-friendly facilitators' guide was written to accompany these programs. These programs and the guide will be tested in a PAQUED partner school the last week of June. Distribution to PAQUED schools is planned for August.



Learning to use MP3 on the solar radio

2.2.3. Radio delivery and program distribution

In April, grade 1 and 2 programs were loaded onto the 3,500 Lifepayer memory cards. Radios were delivered to PAQUED schools in May as part of the school kits packages.

In August, the first 100 grade 3 and 4 programs and introductory programs will be loaded onto the radios, in time for the 2011 school year.

2.2.4. Baseline observation data collection:

In May, a team of PAQUED scriptwriters ran classroom observations in the provincial capitals of Bandundu, Orientale, and Equateur. The sample consisted of 73 French and Maths observed lessons in 26 schools. These observations were conducted in order to establish a baseline of teacher practices in PAQUED schools, and to see how their practices may eventually change with PAQUED interventions like IRI and summer institutes. The findings provide an in-depth collection of qualitative data on teacher practice. Some major points drawn from the baseline are as follows:

1. Teachers rarely use pairwork or groupwork and treat it as “cheating”

2. When reading aloud, students and teachers do so in a slow manner (fluidity is not emphasized at all primary grade levels)
3. Drawings are the most used form of instructional materials. Manipulative (counting sticks, stones) were sometimes present during demonstrations but rarely touched by students.
4. Oral repetition and memorization of “rules” (grammatical) is often employed when demonstrating a lesson.
5. Teachers will encourage students to work individually on the board (often for students’ lack of school supplies)
6. Teachers do not accept criticism (even if constructive) and have difficulty with self-evaluation.

These findings are completed with anecdotal data of how the observed lessons were carried out. From this, we can derive conclusions that will aid in the improvement of PAQUED materials for training (IRI, summer institutes). So far, the data has been analyzed comparing PAQUED referential domains with teacher practices. A more in-depth report, including anecdotes and a qualitative analysis will be produced in late July.

2.2.5. Second generation of community radio programs:

With the recent renovation of the MESP studio, the writing of the second generation of community radio programs has commenced! These programs, translated into Lingala, are designed to guide communities in the step-by-step planning and implementation of their School Improvement Plans (SIP). In collaboration with a PAQUED consultant, a team of Ministry scriptwriters has already written and translated 10 of 20 scripts. Recording and production of these programs is planned to begin late June. Field-testing will take place in a local PAQUED partner school-community in July and August.

2.3. ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER OBJECTIVE 3

2.3.1. Broadcasting community radio programs

The project signed contracts with local channels for dissemination of interactive radio programs. To date two community radio programs have been broadcasted on the channels including one program on school environment and another on roles and responsibilities of COPAs and school management.

Lack of access to the broadcasting networks in some communities demonstrate the need for the programs to be recorded on Memory Cards to be used by communities.

2.3.2. Organizing listening groups

CRS and partners supported communities to create Listening Groups in each year 1 school community and trained leaders of the groups on how to effectively lead their group, topics included:

- The role and function of the listening group
- Profile and responsibilities of the group facilitators
- Profile and responsibilities of radio managers
- Organization of listening group sessions
- Monitoring of follow-up actions chosen during listen sessions by community members

By the end of the reporting period, a listening group had been created in each of the 300 year 1 cohort schools. Each listening group is made up of 25 people from COPA members, schools management committees and community leaders with an interest in the education of children in their community. CRS and partners reinforced gender so that women play a key role in the education of their children. Because of these efforts, 40% of members are women and 10% of these women will be listening group facilitators.

In addition to the Guide to be used by the listening group facilitator, each listening group received a notebook containing:

- The timing of broadcasts
- Attendance records
- Summary table of the listening session
- Summary table of concrete action and immediate next-steps to be taken by community.

Project solar radios were distributed late in the communities - after broadcasting had been completed on some channels. Communities were urged to use their own radios. However, not all communities had opportunities to organize listening sessions. The community mobilization team members have continued to conduct monitoring missions to review the status of radio broadcasting and listening sessions. Their findings will be used to formulate actions to ensure a maximum benefit from these important community level activities.

2.3.3. Psychosocial support



Training mothers to provide psychosocial support

The psycho-social trainings have been widely regarded as a powerful aspect of the project that allows parents and teachers to better recognize, understand and support trauma that their children may have experienced or be experiencing at school or

Mothers and select teachers attending training in psycho-social support / Kikwit, April 2011

in their communities.

In all communities, mothers who were targeted for the psycho-social training emphasized that *all mothers should receive* this training, given its incredible importance to the well-being of their children. This training brought up very strong emotions among the trainees, especially the aspects focusing on the origins of their children's psycho-social trauma, causing even tears to be shed during many of these trainings.

PAQUED animators selected two volunteer women from each community who will be responsible for psycho-social support in their community. CRS and partners expected 1,140 women, but because of the importance of this training, several other men including teachers joined women at this training. A total of 1207 participants attended the training.

PAQUED has realized that many children in Year 1 cohort schools are affected by psycho-social problems linked to different manifestations of trauma experienced at schools and in their communities. Following from the training that the project has provided, many recreational and sports-related activities were organized as an attempt to help address trauma.

2.3.4. Training in participatory school management, children's rights and PAES

PAQUED completed training in all second year 570 targeted primary schools. Each PAQUED animator was directly responsible for mobilizing community members in 3 clusters of 5 schools each (15 schools total). All animators traveled to the field for 30 days total to lead 4-day workshops on how to develop PAES (8 hours/day) with two target school communities at a time (36 participants). The training focused on:

- Participatory school management

During a training on psychosocial support, one participant, maman Akumukali Marie-Jeanne, a teacher at the Obongoni Primary School, realized that she was responsible for behaviors that certain of her students were manifesting, without ever realizing that perhaps she could do something to improve these behaviors, or worse yet, that she may be the cause of many of them. After support from co-participants, she finally was able to calm down from this hard realization, and transform this experience into positive steps forward to create a better learning environment for students in her classroom, subsequently affecting their lives.

Following this realization, she admitted that every day when she went to school she had used her position of power to have children search for water from the river for her, go to the field, clean clothes, cook, clean dishes, etc. Sometimes this would continue until late into the evening before she would ask the children to find a place to sleep on one of the traditional chairs in her salon, or even on the floor. She also recognized that in class she morally and sometimes even physically degraded certain students to the point where some of them turned their interest away from their studies, without realizing the gravity and consequences of her actions.

Maman Akumkali Marie-Jeanne declared during this emotional moment of the psycho-social training session that her and her husband would become from this point forward PAQUED's messengers to other community members and teachers at their school to stop taking advantage of their power over students and of their role to support, morally and academically, their students' success.

- Children's rights and the importance of education
- School Environment Improvement Plans (PAES)

2.3.5. PAES Development

9,483 participants from 570 schools attended training in school management, children's rights and the importance of education. It was expected that each community school be represented by 18 members. However, some communities were represented by only 14-16 members because the trainings took place during school enrollment period and some school directors were unavailable.

During the training on participatory school management and school environment improvement plans, one session was designed to assess the environment of the school. During and after this session, each community assessed its school environment including the school's strengths and weaknesses to be addressed. The assessment form is an essential annex of the PAES. A total of 570 assessments were completed.

These plans will be reviewed by the facilitators who will provide feedback to communities and accompany them to put the plans in the PAQUED format before granting them next October.

2.3.6. Resource centers

Bandundu and Mbandaka resource centers

The completion of two resource centers in Mbandaka and Bandundu culminated in highly publicized handover ceremonies. The National Minister of Education and the US Ambassador were the guests of honor who presided over the event in Mbandaka on June 13. Two weeks later, the Minister and the Deputy Chief of Mission presided over a similar event in Bandundu.

Beyond the ceremonial aspect of the events, the project gained remarkable visibility in the country. In many decades, the DRC has not seen such type of infrastructure to support teachers' professional development. The Minister recognized this impressive achievement and publicly lauded the project for meeting a very critical need.

CRS gave a provisional handover with the companies with remarks to improve and/or correct the observed defects before the definitive handover takes place in three months.

Apart from the colorful inaugural ceremonies, the project raised serious concerns about the management of the centers. In effect, it clearly appeared that the provincial ministries of education were unprepared to take over and to manage the centers responsibly. No personnel, no system had been put in place. PAQUED agreed to manage the centers for three

months during which the provincial Ministries are expected to hire staff. After the three month period, PAQUED will provide management support (on-the job coaching) to the ministry team and progressively withdraw in another three month period.



Inauguration ceremony of Training Center, Mbandaka, June 13th, 2011.

Phase 2 of IFCEPSP Kisangani rehabilitation

In response to an earlier request by the Ministry of Education to refurbish all the buildings of IFCEPS Kisangani, PAQUED agreed to partially realign its budget and provide additional resources to CRS' construction line item.

During the quarter under review CRS processed applications that responded to the invitation for bids that it had issued earlier. This second phase of IFCEPS rehabilitation work was divided in eight lots, and four months contracts (July – October, 2011) were signed with the following three companies:

- Bobo Construct (Lots 1 and 8)
- COREREBA sprl (Lot 5, 6, 7 and 4)
- EGCR (Lot 3 and 2).

3.0. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

3.1. DEVELOPING A DATABASE

The consultant that the project hired to develop a database presented a nearly final version of the tool during a working session. USAID Education team, OPEQ and PAQUED senior staff

members attended the session and provided useful inputs for improvement. The consultant made the recommended improvements and handed the final product to PAQUED at the end of the reporting quarter.

The database will capture and store all the data that the project will collect from the 3000 partner schools. A key characteristic of the tool is that data will be entered and stored at the provincial level and automatically transferred to a central server in Kinshasa. Analyses and reports will be generated at the Kinshasa office. It is expected to be fully operational early next quarter as the project launches the French summer institute.

3.2. EGRA/EGMA

3.2.1. Baseline reports

The project completed the final EGRA/EGMA baseline reports during the period under review. Copies of the reports (see annexes 2 and 3) were sent to USAID/Kinshasa. As previously reported, the EGRA and EGMA results were generally similar between students in treatment and control groups.

Overall, the results show that the students were performing well below the levels that the DRC curriculum expects of them. Across the subtests, analyses indicated that a large proportion of students appear to be able to answer only the most elementary and procedural of items.

3.2.2. How to report EGRA/EGMA Scores

EGRA and EGMA comprise a series of sub-tests that measure children's performance in various domains (e.g. reading fluency, reading comprehension for EGRA; number identification and counting for EGMA). Projects such as PAQUED and OPEQ that have used those two instruments are faced with the question of how to report on the USG common indicators such as students' mean test scores in math and students' mean test scores in math. USAID education team, OPEQ and PAQUED senior staff met to debate three options that had been envisioned. The first option was to report students' mean scores on each of the subtest; the second was to use the results of the subtest most representative of the other subtests; while the third option was to compute the mean of students' results in all the subtests of the instrument.

It clearly appeared during the discussions that option one was appropriate if the intention is to gain a deeper understanding of students' weaknesses and strengths. The second option was rejected for lack of sound theory or empirical evidence to support the hypothesis that the competency measured by any of the subtests best represented students' overall performance in French or in math. A consensus emerged around the third option. It was then concluded that both OPEQ and PAQUED will use averages of students' results in each of the subtests.

4.0. NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND TRENDS

During the quarter under review strengthened collaboration with OPEQ. The meeting on how to report EGRA/EGMA results was recognized as an important first step in the right direction, i.e. cross-fertilization and close collaboration between the two projects. Both have agreed to meet regularly to discuss technical issues and to support the Ministry of Education in a constructive and congruent manner. For example, PAQUED will work very closely with, and support OPEQ in its effort to develop a national in-service teachers' training policy.

The radio listening groups and psycho-social trainings have been cited as high impact activities of the project, and every effort will be made to reinforce these in the future activity implementation, and share lessons learned in the effective facilitation of radio listening groups and psycho-social trainings.

5.0. SUCCESS STORY

(See next page)



CASE STUDY

Primary students in Democratic Republic of Congo learn new

Students in PAQUED partner schools in the Democratic Republic of Congo take the forefront on training teachers in mp3 technology



“I like being the one to find the radio program...I get to listen to a program with my classmates and I help my teacher.”

—[Belbiche, Manzanza]

In the village of Kimpoko, some 40 kilometers from the capital city of Kinshasa, nine-year old Belbiche Manzanza is at the front of her 4th grade classroom winding the crank to charge the radio for the lesson of the day. It was only a few days ago that she and her classmates learned to use Lifeplayer mp3 radio donated by the USAID-funded PAQUED project.

Since January 2010, students like Belbiche have helped test grade 3 and 4 “A la Ferme!” interactive radio instruction (IRI) programs developed by the PAQUED project, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and funded by USAID. The programs, which are broadcast five times a week aim to improve literacy and numeracy teaching and learning. In addition to evaluating these programs, the students and teachers of EPP Kimpoko 3 have assisted in testing new mp3 technology as a strategy for radio program distribution. Belbiche and her classmates like helping with the radio. “I like being the one to find the radio program...I get to listen to a program with my classmates and I help my teacher.” Madame Fifi Kahiomba is relieved that students have learned how to use and maintain the radio so quickly. “I don't have much experience with technology so when I see my students quickly and easily finding a program on the radio, it's one less thing I have to think about.” And teachers also recognize the importance of letting students operate the radio. “Usually, we (teachers) are scared to let the students touch books or new things because we don't want them to break them...but we see that if they know how to use it, they will take care of it.” Allowing the students to interact with the radio empowers them to take responsibility for the radio and their lessons. And it frames the cornerstone for good pedagogy: active participation. From this experience, the PAQUED project will incorporate students as important actors in training teachers on radio use. The Lifeplayer mp3 solar/wind-up radio was selected as a primary medium of radio program distribution to counteract the lack of wide-ranging radio-wave infrastructure in the DR Congo. By the end of the PAQUED project, up to 700 literacy and numeracy support programs for grades one to six will be loaded

6.0. PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS VERSUS PLANNED ACTIVITIES

The DRC remains a difficult operational environment for a project such as PAQUED. High costs, large geographical territories to cover coupled with lack of road infrastructure make project implementation particularly challenging. Fortunately, the dedication of our staff has enabled us to navigate reasonably well through this than ideal environment and produce results that have earned the project excellent reputation with the Ministry of Education and other key players in the education arena.

The table on the next page summarizes project accomplishments compared with planned activities during the reporting period. As can be seen in the table, the project has accomplished most planned activities. Among the accomplishments, the distribution of school kits, the inauguration of two resource centers, and the preparation for summer institute stand out as most significant mostly because of their high visibility either at the national or the local level.

Two activities that still remain to be conducted are the issuance of quarterly newsletters and the disbursement of small community grants for SIP implementation.

The project has not issued newsletters primarily because of lack of staff dedicated to that specific activity. The project management team is considering the option of hiring a consultant to help design and produce the newsletter (most likely on a biannual rather than on a quarterly basis).

Issuing community grants to support SIP implementation has proven to be a far more laborious and slow process than anticipated due primarily to various measures that the project has to take to ensure compliance with USAID rules and regulations regarding grants making, and to minimize risks. It is hoped that the first grants will be issued in August.

Table 1: Project Accomplishments versus Planned Activities

Main Activities	APRIL				MAY				JUNE				Status
	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	
Overall project management													
Develop a website and a database for the project													Done
Issue newsletters													Not done
Attend quarterly meetings with USAID and other partners													Done
Continue to hire staff													Done
Organize quarterly meetings with all staff													Done
Inaugurate Resource Centers in Bandundu & Equateur													Done
Objective 1 : Improve Teachers Content Knowledge and Pedagogy													
Continue to monitor and support Cluster Facilitators as they lead sessions with teachers on modules 1 & 2 (IRI & DM)													Done
Distribute teaching/learning kits purchased in year 1													Done
Self-directed learning by teachers in clusters on modules 1 and 2													Done
Continue to plan the summer institute (logistics, organizing the sites, number of trainers, etc...) and test/develop training materials													Done
Recruit and train a core of 12 experts who will train trainers from provinces													Done
Objective 2: Improve Students' Mastery of Subject Matter													
Continue to broadcast Matahata programs													Done
3rd and 4th grades													
Continue to design IRI programs													Done

Main Activities	APRIL				MAY				JUNE				Status
	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	
Continue to conduct formative evaluation of programs that have been designed													Done
Produce teachers' guide													Done
Design and produce story cards													Done
Objective 3: Improve the school environment													
Continue to produce and test second generation community programs													Done
Review and finalize listening guides for 1st generation programs													Done
Provide small grants to year 1 communities													Not done
Monitor year 1 SIP implementation													Not done
Continue to train CGES/COPAs/CRES in participatory management and child rights													Done
Continue to develop SIPs in year 2 communities													Done
Provide small grants to support SIP in year 1 communities													Not done
Train mothers in psycho social support													Done
Implement recreational and sports activities in year 2 target schools													Done

7.0. CALENDAR FOR NEXT QUARTER

The major activity planned for the coming quarter is undoubtedly the French institute and the implementation of all the preparatory activities that must take place before the teachers are trained during the institute.

Additionally, the project will undertake a major budget revision exercise. To conduct such an exercise after the summer institute will be timely because we will have gained a clearer understanding of various unit costs, and of the actual number of beneficiaries (teachers and students).

A detailed list of all activities planned for next quarter can be found in table 2 on the next page 2. The following list briefly highlights the major categories of activities that the project will undertake:

- Implement the French professional development institute
- Continue to develop script writing, and field testing of grade 3 and 4 literacy and numeracy programs, and the accompanying teachers' guide.
- Continue to write the 2nd generation of community radio programs
- Disburse community small grants
- Complete the writing, recording, and field-testing of the 2nd generation of community radio programs
- Design and carry out a "refresher" IRI training during the summer institutes
- Begin to procure key items that will be included in the school kits for year 3
- Revise and submit a new version of the budget.

Table 2 : Planned Activities: Year 2, Quarter 4

Activities	July				August				September			
	W1	W2	W3	W3	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4
Administration and Management												
Staff retreat to assess Year 2 and plan for Year 3												
Completion of staffing												
Realign project budget												
Communication												
Quarterly project news letter (electronic) (EDC)												
Quarterly meetings with stakeholders, donors (EDC)												
Quarterly and annual reports (EDC)												
Module 2: Building and using instructional aids in language arts and mathematics classes												
Analysis of results of baseline evaluation of teachers' French and Mathematics competencies; identification of priority areas to be addressed in summer institutes												
Development of overview of Module 3, (French summer institutes) including identification of sections or strategies that require video or audio support (EDC); validation of overview by provincial teacher validation committee												
Creation of audio and/or video support materials for module 3												
Finalization of development of face-to-face training module for Module 3												
Recruitment of additional language specialists for co-facilitation of institute												
Development of pre and post test for two week institute												
Training of trainers to facilitate 10 day institute (EDC)												
Implementation of two week institutes in neighborhood clusters (EDC)												
Administration of pre and post tests (EDC)												
Analysis of results of pre and post tests; identification of areas for further emphasis during subsequent training modules; communication to provincial and central Ministry authorities of credit awarded (EDC)												
Grades 3 and 4												
Printing and distribution of grades 3/4 guides (as part of grades 3/ 4 teacher kits) (EDC)												
Grades 3 and 4												
Procurement of materials for grades 3/4 kits (EDC)												
Distribution of kits to grades 3/4 teachers in all 3000 partner schools during training on how to use IRI effectively in the classroom (Let's Learn with Matahata Day) (CRS, EDC)												
Student (classroom) kits												
Grades 3 and 4												
Identification of materials for grades 3/4 student kits (non perishable mathematical materials (rulers, protractors, right triangles), slates, textbooks, etc) (EDC)												
Procurement of materials for grades 3/4 kits (EDC)												

Table 2 : Planned Activities: Year 2, Quarter 4

Activities	July				August				September			
	W1	W2	W3	W3	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4
Distribution of kits to grades 3/4 students in all 3000 partner schools during initial training on how to use IRI effectively in the classroom (Let's Learn with Matahata Day) (CRS, EDC)												
Development of radio programs to support community school quality investment (CRS, EDC)												
Production of second generation community radio programs (CRS)												
Broadcast of community radio programs (CRS)												
Identification of schools for rehabilitation, following selection criteria (CRS, EDC)												
Community animators support to the organization of transparent and gender appropriate elections of COPAs /CGEs(CRS)												
Community animators training of COPAs/CGEs in participatory school management (good governance and budget/ financial management) and school renovation. (CRS)												
Community animators organize training of CGE and local leaders in children rights and girls education (CRS)												
Psychosocial officers organize training selected mothers and parents on psycho-social support (CRS)												
Community animators support to the communities to conduct schools assessments (CRS)												
Successful and/or innovative programs featured on community radio stations (CRS)												
Rehabilitation of IFCEPS Kisangani												
Support MEPSP in managing resource centers												

8.0. CHALLENGES

As previously mentioned, a major challenge that the project continues to face is the high cost of running the project. Shipping school kits ended up being a much more expensive operation than ever anticipated. Costs are further exacerbated by the fact that the number of beneficiaries was largely underestimated. Regarding the number of beneficiaries for example, the project was designed based on the assumption that there are six teachers and one headmaster in each of the 3000 target school, hence the budget was developed targeting 21,000 teachers and principals. We have learned that the reality is quite different. In many schools (especially in big towns) have several lower grade classrooms (e.g. four or even five first grades). As a result, school data collected so far indicate that the total number of teachers in the 3000 partner schools is about 30,000.

The number of students is estimated at 1,500,000 instead of the initial 900,000. More accurate statistics will be collected during the summer institute after which a budget realignment will be made.

In addition to that budget related challenge, mention must be made of a technical difficulty that has negatively impacted project performance. The late arrival of solar radios has prevented the project from fully broadcasting grades 1 and 2 IRI programs during the entire year 2 period. It is true that programs were aired during the last few weeks of quarter 2 and during the third quarter, but that is hardly sufficient broadcasting time for the IRI programs to have any significant effect on students' learning. The project will broadcast Grades 1, 2, 3 and 4 simultaneously in year 3.