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PAQUED QUARTERLY REPORT

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US Ambassador and Minister of Education and Project AOTR examining PAQUED instructional materials during an exhibit on March 21, 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	2
1.0. OPERATIONS.....	2
1.1. STAFFING.....	2
1.2. OFFICE SET UP.....	3
1.3. PROCUREMENT	3
1.4. SCHOOL KITS	3
2.0. PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES	4
2.1. SCHOOL SELECTION	4
2.2. PROJECT EXHIBITION	4
2.3. STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING	5
2.4. ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER OBJECTIVE 1	6
2.4.1 TRAINING OF SCHOOL CLUSTER AND SCHOOL-BASED FACILITATORS	6
2.4.2 TEACHER SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING MODULES	8
2.5. ACHIEVEMENT UNDER OBJECTIVE 2:	9
2.5. ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER OBJECTIVE 3.....	11
3.0. M&E ACTIVITIES	12
3.1. EGRA AND EGMA.....	12
3.2. M&E OVERALL STRATEGY	13
.	13
4.0. NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND TRENDS	14
5.0. SUCCESS STORY	14
6.0. PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS VERSUS PLANNED ACTIVITIES	14
7.0. CALENDAR FOR NEXT QUARTER.....	14

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’Education) as the official name of the project.

PAQUED will:

- provide teachers with a continuous professional development program centered around the design and implementation of innovative learning experiences;
- ensure that that program is delivered at the local level, and that it includes supports to incrementally build teachers’ capacity as they experiment with new practices in the classroom;
- provide teachers with incentives to change their practices, and publicly reward them;
- furnish teachers and students with the basic resources and materials necessary to support their learning, including a safe, inviting learning environment; and
- encourage parents and communities to advocate for and take a leadership role in school improvement.

The following is a narrative technical report of PAQUED for the period January 1 – March 31, 2011. The report describes achievements in terms of general operations and programmatic activities.

1.0. OPERATIONS

1.1. STAFFING

The project hired two new people during the period under review. Henoc Kisaka has assumed the post of IT and Logistics Officer. As the project begins to ship school kits to provinces, the services of a highly qualified and talented logistician are indispensable. Mr. Kisaka brings a wealth of experience in this regard. Additionally, a new driver was hired to provide necessary support to the PAQUED team in Kinshasa. The project acquired a new Nissan pickup truck to help meet the expanding needs of the Kinshasa-based team for adequate logistics support.

Finally, the project interviewed a number of candidates to fill the vacant M&E Director position. However, meeting the salary requirements of qualified applicants has been a challenge. If a new search does not yield the caliber of candidate needed within the

established salary range , then the project may be obliged to hire the best candidate possible from among the three people who already interviewed for the position.

1.2. OFFICE SET UP

As indicated in the last technical progress report, there was need to move PAQUED office to provide more space while meeting the needs of an expanding staff. The move was effective as of March 15. The new PAQUED office is now located at 29 Flamboyant Avenue in Gombe District.

1.3. PROCUREMENT

As mentioned in the previous report, the project procured VSAT equipment to ensure a more reliable internet connection both at the Kinshasa and the three provincial offices. During the reporting period, the connection was established for the Bandundu (Bandundu Province) and Mbandaka (Equateur Province) sub offices. As for Kisangani (Orientale Province), the project will wait until the provincial field office is housed within IFCEPS premises, one of the three teacher training centers being built or rehabilitated by the project. The move is expected to take place next quarter in May.

1.4. SCHOOL KITS

The project issued invitations for bids (IFB) requesting transporters to submit proposals for the delivery of school and cluster kits to the project sites in the targeted provinces. Project staff examined and rejected the three initial bids submitted, which were either too costly or inefficient. The project has since put in place a workable, alternative distribution plan. We will use commercial cargo planes to deliver the materials to sites in Mbandaka, Gemena (in Equateur Province), Bunia and Kisangani (in Orientale Province), which will then serve as distribution points for outlying schools and clusters. Smaller air transporters such as Aviation Sans Frontières (ASF) and Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) will then transport the kits to these other destinations. Since Bandundu Province sites are accessible by road, the project is arranging to reach the targeted schools and clusters within the province via ground transport firms under subcontract. This approach is designed to ensure the most timely, cost-effective means available for delivering much-needed materials to the targeted schools.

It should also be noted that solar-powered radios (Lifeplayers) finally arrived during the period under review. Project technical staff immediately began loading IRI programs onto the SD cards with which each radio is equipped. The project will deliver the radios (one per school) as part of the school kits.

The PROVED (Provincial Ministry of Education) in each of the three provinces has agreed to assist the project during the materials distribution phase. In this manner, provincial-level education authorities will share responsibility for ensuring the effective distribution of materials with project staff. The role of the PROVED in materials distribution and other project implementation tasks was discussed at length during provincial-level steering committee meetings held in Equateur and Orientale Provinces (see 2.3, below). This approach is designed to help ensure some accountability among government partners for delivery of project materials while providing an opportunity for capacity building and joint problem solving.

2.0. PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES

2.1. SCHOOL SELECTION

School selection was finally completed during the quarter under review. A number of schools in Orientale Province had to be replaced, due especially to growing security concerns in the vicinity of these schools in the last few months.

2.2. PROJECT EXHIBITION

On March 21, the project organised an important exhibition. The event was marked by the participation of two high-ranking delegations from the Governments of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the United States of America, the donor of the project, in addition to invited guests representing donors and PAQUED partners (i.e., international governmental and non-governmental organizations) working in education in the Congo. The DRC Government delegation was headed by the Minister of Education, whereas the U.S. Ambassador led the U.S. Government delegation.

The exhibition had a dual purpose. The first aim was to present the project's accomplishments in terms of materials developed and training modules produced. The exhibition was particularly useful in this regard, displaying and allowing exhibition participants to see first-hand the technology the project is using to reach its beneficiaries. Second, the exhibition provided an opportunity for the Minister of Education to officially launch the broadcasting of IRI programs produced by the project. The event was a tremendous success, based on the expressions of satisfaction from everyone who attended. Delegates representing both DRC and U.S. governments were especially impressed with project accomplishments to date, including the diversity of teaching and learning materials that the project is providing. A popular attraction was the RAN 10 video player used to deliver self-directed teacher learning modules in the school clusters and the solar-powered radio (Lifeplayer) used for delivering quality teaching and learning content in French and mathematics in classrooms in the targeted schools.

Projet d'Amélioration de la Qualité de l'Éducation (PAQUED)
Quarterly Report January 1 - March 31, 2011

The exhibition featured a model radio lesson led by a teacher with select students from a project partner school in Kinshasa (used for testing radio programs), as well as presentations of baseline study data on the state of teaching and learning in the Congo in these two important subject matter areas.

2.3. STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

The project organized a meeting of the Equateur Province steering committee in March. Prominent education authorities in the province, including the Provincial Minister of Education attended the meeting. The meeting thus offered participants with an opportunity to provide input on project activities and progress realized to date. As was the case with the Bandundu Province steering committee meeting held during the previous quarter, the meeting in Equateur pursued two main objectives. The first objective was to establish the committee itself, defining its role and membership. The second objective was to address a few issues critical that are paramount to successful implementation of the project.

The main role of the committee was defined as that of advisory and monitoring body to the project on strategic issues, such as the distribution of materials. In addition to project senior staff (COP, the Education Technical Advisor and the Community Mobilization Advisor), steering committee members present at the meeting included the provincial Minister of Education, the PROVED from each education sub-region with the province, the IPP and a parents' association representative (i.e., COPA/CGE). To ensure effective coordination and synergy, membership has been extended to include provincial representatives of key education partners as well, such as UNICEF.

Regarding the second objective of the steering committee meeting in Mbandaka, the same critical issues as those raised in Bandundu were addressed:

How can the project ensure that school kits actually reach the schools (and do not end up in the local markets) and are effectively used?

Recommendation: the CGEs and COPA memberships need to be informed about the arrival of the kits before they are distributed. Members likewise need to be made aware of the importance of these kits to children's education and improving the quality of teaching; inspectors will work with school principals to ensure that the kits are properly used and are made fully available to teachers and their students.

How can the project ensure that clusters and the "Unités Pédagogiques de Base" are truly functional?

Recommendation: IPAFs must ask the Master Trainers (i.e., inspectors) to report any problems that the clusters may encounter, and work with EDC to solve them. The IPAF, PROVED or other education authorities at the provincial or sub-district level may also be consulted, should their intervention be required.

How can the project ensure that teachers and students listen to IRI programs regularly?

Recommendation: Close monitoring of the use of IRI programs is needed during regular school visits by Master Trainers; project staff will likewise visit schools to monitor the use of IRI in target school classrooms. Meeting participants agreed that these outcomes should be noted on teachers' formal (annual) evaluations. (The project will provide further incentives, including certificates of completion to qualifying teachers for their participation in self-directed teacher learning modules and other training activities organized by the project.)

How can the project ensure communities (through COPA/CGE) are truly involved in school affairs?

Recommendation: Project staff agreed that both COPA and CGE members will need additional training in this regard, including awareness-raising activities to promote the importance of (and demand for) formal schooling. These community-based training activities will be linked to project teaching and learning activities and materials, such as self-directed teacher learning modules, as appropriate.¹

In addition to the above-mentioned issues, steering committee members also examined the preparation of the summer institute in French language (reading and writing) for teachers in Grades 1-6. A key recommendation that emerged was the involvement of the IPP and PROVED in selecting competent teachers and other educational cadres to be trained as trainers. The participants outlined a set of selection criteria and procedures for completing this task, and committed to forward a complete list of trainers and facilitators for the institute by May 15. (The Inspector General, as well as the General Secretary, have issued letters requesting that education authorities in each of the three provinces adhere to these criteria, procedures and target dates to ensure the success of the summer institute.)

2.4. ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER OBJECTIVE 1

2.4.1 Training of School Cluster and School-based Facilitators

The project completed training of 1,569 teacher-facilitators during the first quarter of Year 2 in all three of the target provinces. The training focused on the use of Module 1 (using Interactive Radio Instruction, IRI), Module 2 (making and using instructional materials) and

¹ For more information on these project issues, challenges and solutions discussed with provincial education authorities, please see the PAQUED Quarter 1, Year 2 technical progress report.

teacher-guided discussion forums (forums d'échange). The teachers included in these trainings were School (i.e., Neighborhood) Cluster and School-based (i.e., Cellule de base) Facilitators. This brings the total number of facilitators trained in Year 2 to 2,058. The trained facilitators in turn led their fellow teachers in discussions and exercises as part of the multimedia training sessions to be organized in the school clusters for the two self-directed learning modules. The completion of the facilitators' training allows these facilitators to guide their teacher colleagues (in the target schools) in the use of these and other, future self-directed teacher learning modules while supporting the development of teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge and skills.

Initial reports of the results of these trainings have been positive. Evaluations of the trainings completed by the project's Provincial Teacher Training Coordinators (PTTCs) show a high level of understanding and enthusiasm for the introduction of radio (IRI) and video (self-directed teacher learning modules) technologies. Although training for the School-based Facilitators was not required within the project plan, the project direction and technical team decided to expand the training beyond the Neighborhood Cluster Facilitators to include the School-Based Facilitators. These key resource people are part of the Ministry's revitalized system of self-directed in-service training for elementary school teachers. This project initiative therefore promises to 1) provide additional support to teachers as they begin using these new technologies and 2) build the capacity of the country's emerging in-service teacher training system.

Table 1 provides a breakdown of the numbers of teachers and school principals (i.e., cluster-based / school-based coordinators) trained during the second quarter of Year Two of the project in the use of IRI and the self-directed learning Modules 1 and 2. With the arrival of the Lifeplayers (solar powered radios for the use of IRI programs in target school classrooms) and the distribution of school kits in the following quarter, teachers will soon have all of the tools they need in order to make use of these two important modules. These tools include RAN 10 video players, which are being distributed to each cluster of 2-5 schools.

Table 1: Number of facilitators trained in IRI (Module 1) and instructional materials (Module 2), by province:

ORIENTALE PROVINCE				BANDUNDU PROVINCE			
	SCHOOL CLUSTER FACILITATORS	SCHOOL-BASED FACILITATORS	TOTAL		SCHOOL CLUSTER FACILITATORS	SCHOOL-BASED FACILITATORS	TOTAL
FEMALES	38	1	39	FEMALES	10	16	26
MALES	70	550	620	MALES	180	114	294
TOTAL	108	551	659	TOTAL	190	130	320

	EQUATEUR PROVINCE		
	SCHOOL CLUSTER FACILITATORS	SCHOOL-BASED FACILITATORS	TOTAL
FEMALES	49	13	62
MALES	443	85	528
TOTAL	492	98	590

2.4.2 *Teacher Self-Directed Learning Modules*

Teachers in the targeted schools are to meet with their School Cluster Facilitators once per month to view and discuss the content of video Modules 1 and 2 (which are divided into chapters). These facilitators will lead activities on how to use IRI effectively in the classroom and how to make and use materials for teaching reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers and their facilitators then plan activities on similar themes, such as the development of teaching aids using local materials, in which the teachers can participate, either within future school cluster or school-based meetings (i.e., forums d'échange). Table 2 below shows the participation of teachers in these self-directed learning activities so far.

Table 2: Number of teachers who have begun participating in IRI (Module 1) and instructional materials (Module 2) video training activities, by province:

	ORIENTALE PROVINCE *	
	Participants in Self-Directed Learning Modules 1 and 2	
	Cluster Facilitators	Teachers
FEMALES	1	14
MALES	4	21
TOTAL	5	35

	BANDUNDU PROVINCE *	
	Participants in Self-Directed Learning Modules 1 and 2	
	Cluster Facilitators	Teachers
FEMALES	0	20
MALES	2	29
TOTAL	2	49

	EQUATEUR PROVINCE	
	Participants in Self-Directed Learning Modules 1 and 2	
	Cluster Facilitators	Teachers
FEMALES	2	126
MALES	7	226
TOTAL	9	352

* Estimated figures based on available data

Teachers and cluster facilitators in all three provinces targeted by the project have been able to organize their first teacher self-directed learning module meetings in a number of school clusters (see table 2, above). Unfortunately, delays in the delivery of radios for the launching of IRI programs slowed the implementation of these modules. However, the project expects that all materials will be in the schools within the coming weeks while enhancing results on this objective. Given the durability of the self-directed learning materials, teachers and facilitators in the targeted schools will be able to continue using these self-guided teacher learning programs and materials in the coming school year.

Managers in 45 stations were trained in the use of IRI during separate training activities held in March in each of the three provinces. PAQUED technical staff demonstrated the use of IRI and discussed the proposed broadcast calendar with the station managers. The training team provided each station with a set of CDs for broadcasting 70 hours of programs including 100 programs for Grades 1 and 2 IRI and 19 community radio programs (see achievements under Objective 2 section of this report).

Table 3: Number of station managers trained to broadcast radio programs, by province:

BANDUNDU PROVINCE	ORIENTALE PROVINCE	EQUATEUR PROVINCE
Radio Station Managers Trained		
13	13	19

In some cases, provincial education officials were able to observe a portion of the training to familiarize themselves with the radio programs and to advise the training team on issues related to the school calendar and broadcast schedule. At the end of the training the participating radio station managers signed contracts to broadcast PAQUED radio programs from March 21 through May 29, bringing the school year to a close.

2.5. ACHIEVEMENT UNDER OBJECTIVE 2:

2.5.1 Scriptwriting



During the quarter under review, the team of scriptwriters wrote 100 scripts of the 200 literacy and numeracy support IRI programs for grades 3 and 4. These programs provide 2h30m 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. In early

Projet d'Amélioration de la Qualité de l'Éducation (PAQUED)
Quarterly Report January 1 - March 31, 2011

March, an IRI STTA worked with the scriptwriter team to design this teacher resource guide, integrated pedagogic strategies, and introductory programs. Field-testing of the programs began in early January. Thus far, programs have been well received by both teachers and students alike. To date, 40 programs have been field-tested and finalized (recorded).

At the beginning of the next quarter, the team of scriptwriters will travel to Bandundu to test IRI programs in target PAQUED schools. This series of tests is designed to better account for actual conditions, such as the needs of teachers and students, among and within PAQUED target schools. That said, these and other, recent efforts, such as the re-organization of the IRI production process, promise to improve the quality of PAQUED radio programs while reinforcing the capacity of IRI technical staff.

2.5.2 IRI Broadcasting

To provide as much IRI content as possible in the current school year, the project took steps to train radio station managers (45 stations in all) to broadcast the already-completed programs for Grades 1 and 2. CDs were produced in Kinshasa, featuring half of the 200 IRI programs produced. The CDs were distributed to 30 of these stations so as to provide access to IRI programs to as many PAQUED schools as possible. Although this effort has met with a number of challenges, including issues of power cuts in both urban and rural areas, preliminary results have been positive.

As mentioned in previous technical progress reports, the project experienced long delays in receiving solar radios (Lifeplayers) from the manufacturer in China, greatly slowing the planned implementation of IRI programs. The initial plan was to start broadcasting IRI programs for Grades 1 and 2 at the beginning of the current school year (i.e. October 2010). This plan has relied upon communities providing their own radios in order to begin taking advantage of this important component of the project. Fortunately, due to the concerted efforts of project staff, provincial education authorities and the enthusiasm of teachers and community members many communities have been able to follow at least some of the IRI programs. Initial data gathered by the Provincial Coordinators and other staff indicates that most, if not all, of the stations provided with CDs have been broadcasting IRI programs. In Bandundu Province, for example, schools in every district report receiving the radio broadcasts. Whereas some teachers have had difficulty with reception there are a number of cases where teachers have followed radio with their students. The project is gathering additional data, which will be including in the next quarterly progress report.

Project senior staff met to discuss the possible impact of delayed IRI broadcasting and programming issues on the results of future EGRA, EGMA and teacher pedagogical content knowledge testing. The major negative impact of starting IRI programs so late is that

teachers and students Grades 1 and 2 will not fully benefit from IRI this school year. They will receive such benefit only next year. Meanwhile, the project will continue to broadcast the programs during the remainder of the school year, and resume broadcasting at the beginning of the next school year.

Grades 3 and 4 IRI programs will also be launched at the same time as programs for Grades 1 and 2 (i.e., in the first quarter of Year 3, October of 2011). According to RTI these factors may adversely affect future EGRA, EGMA and teacher knowledge testing, due to the limited time teachers and students will be exposed to the radio instructional programs and materials. RTI therefore recommends taking these factors into account in the analyses and reporting of the results of future assessments, especially EGRA and EGMA testing, which is scheduled for the spring of 2012 (Year 3). However, the project plans to maintain and apply the same assessment objectives, content and protocols already developed, as were applied on prior assessment tasks.

2.5. ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER OBJECTIVE 3

2.5.3 *Broadcasting the first generation of community radio programs*

As mentioned in previous reports, the IRI and the community mobilization teams have developed 19 radio programs that seek to strengthen community capacity to support children's education. The project began broadcasting these programs in March, shortly after the official launch ceremony presided by the Minister of Education during the aforementioned exhibition (see previous section on IRI program broadcasting).

2.5.4 *Creating listeners' groups*

The project trained a total of 36 "Animateurs" in how to facilitate listeners' groups known as "groupes d'écoute active"(GEA). These groups are comprised of community members who meet to listen and discuss issues related to school improvement. As a result, the Animateurs were able to support the creation of the GEA and train designated group leaders.



The radio programs will allow for critical learning and discussion at the community level. As noted above, CRS partner animators will continue to facilitate the creation of one listening group in each community. To date, a total of 585 groups

(out of a total 870 expected for the year) have been created. In the next quarter, additional GEAs will be formed and leaders will be trained. The 585 groups comprise 7,245 members.

2.5.1. Implementing Psycho Social Activities in Y1 Target Schools

Community leaders have identified female volunteers to assist schools in organizing psycho-social activities to support children in need. Mothers have worked with teachers in 150 Year 1 schools to identify children who need support and have also organized sports and cultural events as healing activities. Examples of activities organized during the reporting period include dances, poetry competitions, theater activities and football matches. These activities are meant to contribute to the well being of children by facilitating the expression of emotions, providing children with space for amusement, etc.

2.5.2. Resource Centers Rehabilitation / Construction

During the quarter under review, the project completed the rehabilitation of a number of IFCEPS buildings. The project also developed an invitation for bid for additional rehabilitation work requested by the Ministry of Education. EDC accepted to increase the total LoA budget for CRS to complete this additional work, which will include dormitories, classrooms and a fence. However, EDC will factor these additional improvements into an overall budget revision. The rehabilitation work is expected to continue for 6 months, until end of September 2011. The contract will be extended accordingly, if necessary.

3.0. M&E ACTIVITIES

3.1. EGRA AND EGMA

There were several stages required in order to complete the EGRA and EGMA draft baseline reports. These included; cleaning, weighting, analysis, report writing, feedback from EDC, quality control and a more in-depth analysis of particular questions that arose during the primary analysis stage. The subcontractor tasked with creating the data entry interface and initial database completed a first round of data cleaning and produced the main database for use by RTI. RTI then completed a second round of cleaning. This round of cleaning focused on the technical qualities of the data. The data was reviewed for anything that might signify a problem, such as incorrect data capture, missing data, or misclassification.

The next phase was to weight the dataset. The dataset required weighting to account for the fact that it would not be possible, logistically, to take a random sample of children across all PIEQ schools. Instead, subdivisions and then schools within the subdivisions were chosen. Weighting accounts for differences between schools and subdivisions, making it possible to generalize to the population of all PIEQ schools. The weighting of control schools was somewhat more difficult (see explanation in difficulties section, below).

Analysis was then completed for each of the domains of reading and math. Following reception of initial feedback from EDC, changes were made to the reports, in large part to make them more accessible. The major change to the reports was to add graphs and explanations for readers to more easily interpret and understand the data presented. The impetus for this kind of change is partially the external interest in the PIEQ baseline. It is the first such scientific assessment of children's early learning in these two core subjects (reading and math), so the attention is understandable. There are some significant findings that cannot be ignored, such as differences in performance by gender and geography (i.e., between provinces). Further analysis is needed in order to make full use of these data in the development of project programs.

Based on some of our preliminary findings, RTI took a closer look at particular areas of interest, such as defining a profile of readers with more than 80% comprehension. Profiling a student with acceptable comprehension scores can aid ministry officials and educators alike in developing a vision of what the general outcomes schooling may realistically be expected in the DRC, given adequate pedagogical support (i.e., quality teaching and learning programs).

3.2. M&E OVERALL STRATEGY

3.2.1. Developing a Database

As mentioned in the previous technical progress report, the project began the process of developing a database that will capture and store data and information collected through monitoring and evaluation activities. Unfortunately, the process has taken longer than anticipated. However, the project has been able to locate a qualified technical consultant to help complete these tasks. The project hopes to have the database online within the next reporting period.

3.2.2. *Finalizing the PMP*

The COP continued to work with the USAID Education team to fine tune the project PMP. A key characteristic of the new version of the PMP is that it has much fewer indicators that the project will track. Reducing the number of indicators to a manageable level was indispensable for reasons of cost-effectiveness. Further, the new set of indicators will allow the project to focus its limited resources in order to maximize the impact of its teaching and learning programs.

4.0. **NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND TRENDS**

The last technical progress report mentions that there was a great window of opportunity to collaborate with the French Development Agency (AFD) in preparing for the French summer institute. Unfortunately, the Project Manager of that Agency has left this post. However, project technical staff have established positive working relationships with counterparts with SESAM, CTB, Save the Children and other governmental and non-governmental organizations working in education, particularly in-service teacher training.

5.0. **SUCCESS STORY**

(See Exhibition section near the beginning of this document)

6.0. **PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS VERSUS PLANNED ACTIVITIES**

(See annex 1)

7.0. **CALENDAR FOR NEXT QUARTER**

A full list of activities planned for next quarter can be found in annex 2. The following list highlights some of these key activities:

- First issue of the project newsletter
- Inaugurate the Resource Center in Bandundu and Equateur
- Continue to develop materials and plans for the summer institute
- Continue teachers' training activities (Forum d'échange, Module 1 and 2) at the cluster level
- Continue the broadcasting of IRI programs for grades 1 and 2
- Continue to develop script writing, and field testing of grade 3 and 4 literacy and numeracy programs, and the accompanying teachers' guide.
- Continue to prepare this year's summer institute

Projet d'Amélioration de la Qualité de l'Éducation (PAQUED)
Quarterly Report January 1 - March 31, 2011

- Continue writing of the 2nd generation of community radio programs
- Distribute school and teachers' kits
- Begin to disburse community small grants