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USAID/AFRICA BUREAU ACTIVITY
Quarterly Program Report for the Period
January – March 2004



Submitted by:

American Institutes for Research

With:

Education Development Center
Juárez and Associates
Sesame Workshop

U.S. Agency for International Development
Cooperative Agreement No. GDG-A-00-03-00006-00

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I. Objectives

The EQUIP1 Africa Bureau Associate Award was signed on September 30, 2003, and includes five activities for the USAID Africa Bureau:

- **Regional West African Sesame Street Model**
The goal of this study is to examine the feasibility of executing a Sesame Street project in West Africa. EQUIP1 will provide the information needed to make an informed decision about the value of investing in a Sesame Street project in the region. This feasibility study will assess whether and how Sesame Street, possibly in conjunction with other complementary media-based interventions, such as Education Development Center's Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) programs in Guinea and Nigeria, could serve the early childhood/early primary school education needs of the West Africa region. The study will focus on the countries proposed by USAID (Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal).
- **Community Radio Program**
The radio program —Ku Mudzi Wangu: "In My Village"— will provide community-level radio education support as a pendant companion to the central government support for provision of education in HIV/AIDS-affected countries. "In My Village" will be developed on a pilot basis in its first two years, in eastern Zambia (with the expectation of trans-border application with Malawi) to explore implementation in a trans-boundary context. Rationale for the target area include the desire to build on Zambia's successful and well supported Interactive Radio Instruction services, Education Broadcasting Services as a production NGO in Lusaka to model activities on, and the successful School Health and Nutrition small grants activity in Eastern Province that serves as a streamlined model for successful support to community-led interventions.
- **West Africa Mobile Task Team Model**
A new West Africa Mobile Task Team (MTT/West) modeled on the University of Natal Southern MTT for HIV and Education will be adapted specifically to meet the needs of West African countries. Once the new entity is established, funds will support provision of strategic and implementation planning for HIV response in education services to West African MOEs. Funds will also provide support for the west Africa MTT-model (WAMTT) to facilitate training of the technical consultants by the University of Natal MTT, to document and disseminate the WAMTT replication experience, and to seek additional funding partners for the west African institutional base of the WAMTT (not exclusively from) among agency members of the UNAIDS Interagency Task Team on HIV/AIDS and Education (IATT).
- **Lesotho**
In response to the difficulties of Lesotho's herd boys, EQUIP1 will undertake an assessment of the current status of education access, quality, and equity for the herd boys and the activities and projects of the Government of Lesotho, donors, multilateral organizations, and NGOs addressing the education needs of herd boys. The assessment will give special attention to the impact of HIV/AIDS.

➤ **Swaziland**

EQUIP1 will assist the OVC population of Swaziland in breaking the cycle of poverty, HIV/AIDS, and orphan hood. Activities include an initial assessment of current efforts to address the needs of the OVC, including UNICEF's efforts focused on school-feeding programs and community children's centers, to identify best practices and lessons learned. Following the assessment, EQUIP1 will pilot a community-based intervention targeted at increasing the abilities of communities to integrate OVC into their social nets with the ultimate goal of decreasing their vulnerability and breaking the cycle of poverty and disease.

II. Overall Progress

This quarter all of the activities are underway and have made good progress.

Sesame Street Feasibility Study

During the report period, January to March 2004, the Sesame Street Feasibility Study moved into top gear. EQUIP1 completed its in house literature review for 6 West African country studies and draft country profiles for each were completed. Following site visit approvals by USAID missions, an EQUIP1 team conducted the first series of stakeholder meetings in Nigeria. Meetings in Senegal, Ghana and Benin soon followed while two research firms were selected to conduct Phase II focus group research studies in Nigeria and Senegal.

Zambia Community Radio Project

The first quarter of 2004 saw much progress on the development of the *In My Village* Community Radio Project. During this quarter, two local coordinators were hired and trained, on-going needs assessment continued, pilot programs were recorded and tested, agreements with two eastern province radio stations, Radio Chikaya and Radio Breeze, were finalized, radio station personnel were identified, and an office in Chipata established. Additionally, following a lightening strike that shut down broadcasting for three weeks, EQUIP1 was able to obtain, deliver and install a donated 50 w FM transmitter at the station. Today, the Chikaya station is once again broadcasting at an estimated effective broadcast range of about 30 km.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Zambia Community Radio Project

During this quarter, EQUIP1 personnel met for the first time with partners to develop a monitoring and evaluation plan for the project. As a result of this initial meeting an M&E consultant was engaged to conduct a short TDY to coincide with a site visit to the Eastern Province with the program manager.

West Africa Mobile Task Team (WAMTT)

EQUIP1 Dakar staff arranged a January meeting between all partners to start work on the creation of MTT/West. USAID, AIR and MTT/Southern Africa were represented at the meeting. Much progress has been made this quarter; two core members of the MTT/WEST team have already been selected and have participated in an orientation by EQUIP1 Dakar, and have attended the quarterly meeting of MTT/Southern Africa



in Johannesburg. A workplan has been drafted; necessary contacts with stakeholders in Senegal and Mali have commenced. Strengthening of internal financial and administrative systems of the institutional base has also been initiated so as to provide needed support as the creation of MTT/West moves forward.

Lesotho

EQUIP1 staff completed a literature review of the interventions targeting the herd boys and undertook an onsite visit. As a result of that visit the strategy of USAID for this project is likely to change to enhance or replicate an ongoing intervention. A final decision will be made by USAID and EQUIP1 in May 2004.

Swaziland

Following a literature review, EQUIP 1 staff visited Swaziland to meet donors and stakeholders involved in interventions supporting orphans and vulnerable children and to see first hand, projects that USAID might wish to provide additional funding for. USAID Africa Bureau will study the options provided by EQUIP1 and a decision will be made in May 2004.

III. Specific Activities this Quarter

1. Regional West Africa Sesame Street Model

Sesame Street Feasibility Study

During the report period, January to March 2004, the Sesame Street Feasibility Study moved into top gear. The in-house literature review for 4 West African country studies and draft country profiles for each were completed. Following site visit approvals by USAID missions, an EQUIP1 team conducted the first series of stakeholders meeting in Nigeria. Meetings in Senegal, Ghana and Benin soon followed while two research firms were selected to conduct Phase 2 focus group research studies in Nigeria and Senegal.

The Sesame Street Feasibility Study seeks to assess whether and how a regional West African Sesame Street production, perhaps in conjunction with other media based interventions such as Interactive Radio Instruction, could help to serve the needs of early childhood/early primary school education in Benin, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal. This study is conducted in a partnership under EQUIP1.

This feasibility study is conducted in two phases:

- Phase I: Literature review and introduction of Sesame Street concept to stakeholders in the six West African countries targeted by this study;
- Phase II: A more in-depth study of the end users' socio-cultural context, beliefs about education and reaction to mock Sesame Street programs in two countries.

Technical Activities

Country visits/stakeholder meetings:

In Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal and Benin, carefully selected teams comprising local consultants, EQUIP1 representatives, pre-and primary school education consultants and African media professionals met with numerous in country stakeholders. During visits ranging from 8 to 15 days, the teams met with potential donors, Ministry of Education, Health and Communication personnel, State and National Broadcasters, independent media houses, local government officials, interested NGO's, local research firms, and pre-primary and primary school educators. Information gathered from these extensive interviews will form the basis of the final report now scheduled to be completed during the next quarter.

Nigeria Country Visit:

From Feb 14 to Feb 29 a team that included the Executive Producer of Takalani Sesame, and a local Nigerian consultant, conducted a two-week country visit as part of the phase I literature review and introduction of Sesame Street concept to stakeholders in Nigeria.

The team visited numerous stakeholders including potential donors, Ministry of Education, Health and Communication personnel, State and National Broadcasters, independent media houses, local government officials, interested NGO's, local research firms, pre-primary and primary schools, community viewing centers and educators in Abuja, Kano, and Lagos.

Senegal Country Visit:

Between March 1-8, 2004, an EQUIP1 team met with educators, cultural experts, media representatives and NGOs in Dakar, Senegal. Discussions centered on the need for a West African Sesame Street program, its possible content, appropriate languages to be used, the preferred mix of media, and eventual partners and sponsors for the co-production. The team also looked at television production capabilities and interviewed research firms who submitted proposals for an anticipated qualitative research study. The team visited three pre-school institutions in order to see first hand the current pre-school environment in Senegal

Ghana/Benin Country Visit:

From March 19 to April 4, EQUIP1 representatives conducted meetings with stakeholders in Ghana and Benin. The first team traveled to Ghana in March. From Ghana, two team members moved on to Benin where they were joined by

an EQUIP1 Television Production consultant based in the Ivory Coast. The trip to Benin lasted from March 28 to April 4.

The teams met with numerous stakeholders including USAID mission Directors and Education Officers, national and private broadcasters, media production houses, educators, experts on cultural and linguistic issues, ministry officials, local and international NGOs, primary schools and community radio stations. During meetings, discussions centered on the identification of potential focus areas for a possible West African Sesame Street program. The team sought to uncover current issues to be addressed by such a program, as well as identify local partners that could serve as future resources.

Focus Group Research

During the quarter, the project identified qualified local research firms in two selected countries, Nigeria and Senegal. All firms were asked to present a research proposal and budget to meet the needs of research as described in a brief that has been developed by EQUIP1. The research has been designed to meet the following objectives:

For children:

- To evaluate the reactions of groups of children ages 4-8 to a “mock” episode of *Sesame Street*.
- To solicit general information about the children and their media habits.

For adults (parents, educators, and caregivers):

- To assess adults’ perceptions of children’s current interface with the media.
- To obtain a closer look into the daily life of the target audience’s parents in the two countries, particularly in the area of what songs and games people like, when people listen to the radio and watch TV, who has access to these technologies within the family.
- To determine reactions to a potential *Sesame Street* project in West Africa.
- To assess the potential value of a *Sesame Street* project at home and in informal and formal educational settings.

Following a joint review of the research proposals, two firms were selected to conduct the studies; Communication and Marketing Research in Nigeria and Forut-Senegal in Senegal have begun preparations for this qualitative study which will begin in April and will include a series of focus group/personal interview sessions with children, parents and educators.

Towards this end, appropriate materials were developed and dubbed into West African English and French by Sesame workshop. Service Agreements were completed and the proposed studies are scheduled to begin in Nigeria during the first week of April and in Senegal during the latter part of the month. It is



expected that these studies will take 6 weeks to complete. EQUIP1 staff is currently working with the two selected firms to develop final research instruments. Representatives from EQUIP1 will join local researchers during the initial stages including pilot testing and preliminary focus groups encounters.

Both research firms have provided a timeline for the study and analysis of data, which will be concluded in approximately 6 weeks. Therefore, EQUIP1 staff has adjusted their calendar and anticipate that the final report will be made available by the end of May 2004.

2. Zambia Community Radio Education Project to Mitigate Multi-Sectoral Impact of HIV/AIDS

This EQUIP 1 project—*Ku Mudzi Wangu: In My Village*—provides community-level radio education support at the village-level to mitigate the (selected) multi-sector impacts of HIV/AIDS in Eastern Zambia. It will provide strategic education, accompanying mentoring assistance to village listening clubs, together with small grants to (selected) village associations to help strengthen communities in regions heavily affected by HIV/AIDS.

Technical Activities

Needs Assessment:

While needs assessment is considered an on-going process, the project has made great progress in better understanding the media environment, on-going development programs, communities' perceptions and potential NGO partnerships that have helped us to identify thematic issues to be covered in our radio programming.

A radio station survey was completed permitting the project to identify and negotiate program production and broadcast terms with two of the three established radio stations.

The project also surveyed the NGO environment in the province. These NGO's, both local and international, have been contacted and will be instrumental in helping to identify project and activity success stories that can be featured in our radio programs. Key potential partners include, SFH, Best Choice, Women's Eastern Development Association, Thandazani, EDC/EBS Taonga project, DAPP.

Finally, following discussions with the NGO's and radio stations, project staff interviewed townspeople in six villages. The townspeople were asked to identify their major problems, concerns and reactions related to HIV/AIDS, agricultural concerns and practices, food security, income generating schemes, environmental health and educational needs. Based on these surveys, staff personnel were able to finalize radio program themes, objectives and monitoring indicators.



Pilot “In My Village”

Three pilot shows were produced with radio personnel from Chikaya and Breeze. The pilot shows featured many different elements, which the team thought might be appropriate for testing. Testing in 6 villages confirmed that the villages wanted to hear their own voices. Elements that included outside voices were criticized. The programs should only be in the local languages and great care should be given to ensure that people represented on the show be adept in the language. Villagers also enjoyed the opportunity to present their histories and culture and to be able to present for themselves initiatives that they have undertaken in order to address their own problems. In short, they expressed a desire for *In My Village* to truly be their own show, one that allowed them to speak as one.

While the presentation of the histories and culture of any one particular village or group was deemed critical to the success of the show, the producers also acknowledged that the shows must never lose sight of its objective; to present workable solutions to many of the problems faced by the villages due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Local and international staff developed with our radio partners a radio format which we will feel will maintain interest and encourage communities to replicate projects and activities that have proven successful in other communities. The staff finalized the program purpose, format, themes objectives and criteria for village selection.

In order to ensure clarity, the team decided that each show would concentrate on just one thematic subject and that musical elements, activity feature, stories and sketches would all reflect on the theme of the week.

Criteria were developed to ensure relevance and to effectively contribute to replication by radio listeners.

Program Themes

Initial year broadcasts will focus on the following major themes and sub themes:

- (a) HIV/AIDS Prevention (Care and Support and VCT Promotion)
- (b) Vulnerable Children and Education (Support to Taonga Centers, Community school, child labor and school feeding programs)
- (c) Income Generating Activities (model projects)
- (d) Agriculture (Agro-forestry, food security, marketing cooperatives, small livestock and aquaculture)
- (e) Environmental Health (malaria and clean water supplies)

Radio Partnerships

Last quarter, the IRI project established formal relationships with both Radio Breeze in Chipata and Chikaya in Lundazi. Both have established year long programs for the promotion of Taonga Market Learning Centers. These intensive education campaigns have already proven to be of great value to the IRI project and the joint program has engendered confidence and trust between EQUIP1 staff and the two radio stations.

Already, community radio has demonstrated its ability to mobilize rural communities. In a matter of weeks, the stations were able to join forces with area education officers, who identified 19 new communities interested in starting Taonga learning Centers. After just 6 weeks, the centers were established and over 1,000 new students were registered in grade 1 classes.

The team visited 4 new centers and all were thriving with an enthusiastic population supporting their newly trained mentors and students.

During the quarter, the project worked closely with station personnel in the development of the pilot programs. Now that formats and themes have been established, formal arrangements are being discussed. It is expected that the project will shortly conclude favorable production and broadcast contracts with the two stations before the end of April.

There are 4 additional stations in various states of development. Two stations in Petauke have received authorization to build but have yet to receive their broadcast licenses. Meanwhile they have been permitted to begin test broadcasting of music and public service announcements. Recently, one of the stations received a 50 w transmitter permitting a broadcast reach estimated by station management at over 60 km. The second station is a student run operation with a hand built radio transmitter. Broadcast range is severely limited. A third station in Katete has yet to begin even test broadcasting and is awaiting broadcast equipment.

The fourth station is an established Catholic station located in Chipata. When approached they seemed less interested in working with outside NGO's who they felt had agendas not wholly in conformity to the stations mission.

Based on the possibility of extending project reach, the project will continue to follow these stations with a view to bringing them on board as the program progresses. One possibility discussed with Breeze and Chikaya was permission to rebroadcast *In My Village* shows on these stations. Both stations seemed amenable to this possibility.

Radio Chikaya

In January a lightning strike irreparably damaged Radio Chikaya's transmitter, effectively silencing the station. Given Chikaya's important role in the project, EDC deemed it essential to help find a way to bring our partner station back on board. Fortunately, we were able to obtain a 50W Predator FM transmitter donated by Radio Systems managing director/owner. A quick visit to Radio Systems production plant permitted program manager Eiger and production advisor Bell to take delivery of the transmitter and to engage in a quick course on operating and installing the equipment. Two days later, a member of EQUIP1 staff was jetting on to Lusaka with the replacement transmitter. Within a week Radio Chikaya was back on the air.

Administrative Issues

Local Staff

The ZCRP has been designed to employ a small permanent staff. Two local coordinators, based in Chipata in the Eastern Province will work closely with local community radio stations and NGO's. These coordinators are tasked with ensuring and maintaining local partnerships, developing work plans, identifying villages to be featured, developing and maintaining monitoring plans, and forming a production partnership with selected station personnel.

Two local coordinators were identified and hired in February. Both have extensive experience working with our two preliminary radio stations. Additionally, the two have had a good deal of experience working with local and international NGO's active in agricultural and health programs in the province.

One will be responsible for our Lundazi province programming and the other has been charged with similar tasks in Chipata.

During the quarter, EDC production specialist began initial training working with the two coordinators to identify program themes and testing of pilot programming that had been produced earlier with our two radio partners.

Also, a three-month short-term contract has been finalized with a local finance and administration consultant, who will set up administration procedures and supervision of local financial expenditures and reporting.

Chipata Office

Local coordinators identified and concluded a lease agreement for an office located in Chipata, centrally located just blocks away from Radio Breeze and other potential NGO partners.

Motorcycle Waiver

EDC has requested a waiver to purchase locally two motorcycles to be used by the coordinators. The motorcycles are essential tools to be used to visit villages, gather radio program content, establish and track listening groups.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Zambia Community Radio Project

In this quarter EQUIP1 arranged a joint meeting with all partners participating in the Zambia Community Radio Project to initiate the planning and development of the monitoring and evaluation component. A year one implementation plan: September 30, 2003 through August 31, 2004, was drafted and submitted for approval.

An EQUIP1 evaluation consultant made a visit to Zambia with the Community Radio Activity project manager to start the process for setting up baselines for evaluation, identifying the data collection, management and analysis capacity of project staff in preparation for the project monitoring and baseline data collection plans. During the course of this visit a local evaluation specialist was identified.

3. West Africa Mobile Task Team for HIV/AIDS and Education (WAMTT)

African Consultants International (ACI) is the institutional base for the West African Mobile Task Team (WAMTT). Now that the entity has been established, it is known as the MTT/West. A sub-agreement is being prepared between ACI and AIR and will in all probability be signed by the end of May.

ACI prepared, organized and facilitated a meeting in Dakar with AIR, USAID, MTT and ACI in January 2004. The purpose of this meeting was to initiate the creation of MTT/West and it was extremely productive. The coordinators of MTT/South provided valuable information and insight, USAID shared expectations and goals, and AIR discussed procedures and objectives. A report on the activity was submitted to EQUIP1 project management in February.

In order to launch collaboration among stakeholders and create a favorable environment for MTT/West, ACI is engaged in an on-going process of meeting key actors in Education in West Africa, informing them of the creation of MTT/West, learning more about their activities and needs and discussing ideas for this new initiative with them.

Since January the following international and regional partners have been contacted:

- UNICEF Regional Office (Dakar), ACI staff met with the Regional Life Skills specialist who expressed interest in the project and willingness to collaborate, either individually or in his capacity as regional advisor.



- Dr. Georges Tiendrebéogo, Burkinabé Public Health and HIV and Education specialist currently working with KIT in Amsterdam, who expressed interest in participating as an MTT/West member and in exploring possible institutional collaboration with KIT.
- Contacts in Senegal with Santé Scolaire (School Health) at the Ministry of Education, INEADE, a research and materials development center.
- With the coordinator of ROCARE (ERNWACA), a West African regional research network based in Mali. The network is coordinating a study on HIV and Education research in the region in collaboration with UNESCO/IIEP.
- Also in Mali, (during a consultation for World Education in early March) with the UNAIDS Country Program Advisor, and with the USAID Education team, HIV/AIDS specialist, and USAID Mission Director. There were also discussions with World Education Director, currently heading up the basic education reform program, and his senior staff and contacts with Malian MoE officials and World Education Technical Assistants: the advisor to the Minister of Education, head of the Teacher Training Division, World Education Teacher Training specialist, head of Décentralization, and Curriculum Development team members.

The consultant also met briefly with Mme. Fatoumata Singaré Sow who is in charge of the introduction of Life Skills into the curriculum for the MoE. The content of HIV/AIDS curriculum (as an activity for the MTT/West) may well prove to be more important in the West African lower HIV-prevalence context than in Southern Africa. Curriculum and teacher training might serve as MTT/West's entry point to get to management reforms.

Suggestions received for the organization of MTT/West and for potential candidates:

The MTT/South has provided several interesting suggestions for MTT/West start up activities such as:

- A study on the state of HIV and Education research, identification of researchers, and organization of a meeting to discuss the state of HIV and AIDS Education research. We later learned that a similar initiative had been undertaken by IIEP in collaboration with ROCARE (ERNWACA), and we are currently exploring how MTT/West can collaborate and help support this important initiative.
- Organizing a modified, MTT/South-type winter training course for educational planners and managers in West Africa to introduce MTT/West.

Several recommendations for potential team members have been received in the course of our contacts. We are waiting until budget negotiations have been completed to begin contacting potential members, since these negotiations may affect both the number of MTT/West members recruited in the first year and the consulting rates they are offered.

Information gathered on related activities

It is useful for MTT/West to be aware and informed of activities already carried out in the region or in the planning stages that affect the MTT/West environment. These include:

- A meeting in Elmina, Ghana in March 2001 which emphasized the need and set the agenda for HIV and Education research in West Africa
- A World Bank - projected HIV/AIDS and Education training in Dakar
- IIEP/ROCARE study on HIV/AIDS and Education research in four countries: Cameroon, Senegal, Ghana, and Mali, and a proposed meeting in Bamako in June 2004 to report on this study.
- Creation of an HIV/AIDS and Education Research Clearinghouse by IIEP.

Initiating the establishment of an MTT/West team

By the end of February, MTT/West had recruited two “core members” with good management, analysis and design skills and international and development experience.

Both received orientation from ACI in Dakar and have been active in assisting the institutional base in designing MTT/West, identifying and interviewing candidates, and reflecting on the adaptation of the southern African model to West Africa. Both core members were part of the MTT/West team that went to Johannesburg to attend the MTT/South seventh quarterly meeting in March, which provided an orientation to MTT/South and its activities.

The MTT/West team met the members of MTT/South, saw how it functioned, and learned more about its activities. In return, the MTT/South found the team’s guidelines and comments useful as an informal, external evaluation. Most important was the consolidation of the collaborative relationship between MTT/West and MTT/South that began in January in Dakar.

One team member went on to Durban to visit HEARD, examine tools developed by MTT/South and see first hand the mapping techniques for school districts developed by an organization called EDUCATION, employing an MTT/South team member.

Next, the team member went to Gaborone, Botswana, with the MTT/South team in March to attend the workshop on “Developing Effective Decision Support Systems in the Area of HIV/AIDS” organized under the direction of the MTT/South team, with the participation of MOE officials from Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, Malawi and Zambia. This also provided training in information systems and allowed the team member to gain insight into the organization and content of MTT/South training.

The workshop is a building stone in a much larger process of capacity building within the MOE in order to be able to develop more effective responses to address the adverse consequences of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on the education system.

MTT/West has assembled a list of people in Senegal working in educational research, curriculum development and life skills, from Santé Scolaire and INEADE, and has started the interviewing process. Potential MTT/West members or resource people were also interviewed in Dakar and Mali. The number of team members who will be recruited this year will depend on budget discussions.

Contacts with USAID missions, Ministries of Education and partners

ACI used the occasion of a consultation for World Education in Mali to make extensive preliminary contacts with USAID Mission and high-level MOE officials.

MTT/West personnel have been invited to participate in a Study Tour with a delegation of 30 members from Guinea currently scheduled for June 2004. Participation by MTT/West core members will provide possibilities for involvement in strategic planning with the Guinean delegation and for a transfer of planned activities in Guinea to the new MTT/West team, with assistance from MTT/South.

Contacts with the USAID Mission in Senegal, home of ACI the institutional base for MTT/West, were established in January.

The first regular quarterly meeting of MTT/West (and training session) is likely to be rescheduled for July or August given the new Guinea activities currently scheduled for June.

ACI has maintained close communication with the MTT/South, AIR and USAID, all members of the Consultative Group that forms the MTT/West Steering Committee, as well as with members of the MTT/West. Nancy Devine, Senior Program Development Advisor, and Lillian Baer, ACI Co-Director, are in regular contact with EQUIP1 management in Washington to refine and approve the proposed work plan and budget.

Development of support materials for Ministries of Education

MTT/West is responsible for a mapping activity that involves two studies: one on regional resources and the other on global resources, and how to access them. An experienced, local consultant has been identified for the resource mapping exercise and MTT/West continues to look for others who could complete this activity under ACI supervision.

Generating political will in the area of HIV and Education in the region and interest in MTT/West

Discussions with government officials in Mali during the ACI consultation for World Education in March were the beginning of a process of building political will and interest in the MTT/West approach. Additional contacts and some demonstration of capacity by MTT/West will be needed to consolidate this initiative.

After meetings and discussions with MTT/South, rather than traveling from country to country during the first months of activity, MTT/West, with the help of MTT/Southern Africa, will organize a major regional training event that will build a rapid reputation for MTT/West as experts, generate more interest in “buying the services” of MTT/West and generate requests for assistance from countries in the region.

This approach would also be helpful in attracting additional resources for MTT/West and its activities by creating focus and bringing it into the limelight at an early stage.

Discussions are under way as to how MTT/South can provide direct assistance in the form of staff and tools to supplement ACI’s existing workshop skills and organize a reduced version of the MTT/South Winter Training Program.

This makes it possible to work within the existing budget while building up the MTT/West team.

Providing support to MTT/WEST activities

ACI has already begun providing effective administrative and logistic support for MTT/ West activities by organizing the Dakar meeting in January and by providing support for one staff member, and two members of the MTT/West core team, to travel to South Africa in March.

In the early stages of MTT/West, administrative support will continue to be provided by current ACI staff.

Develop management tools, monitoring tools, accounting tools

ACI has initiated internal system reforms to make appropriate adjustments for strengthening administrative and financial systems to support new MTT/West activities and respond to additional support needs. This has involved hiring a financial management consultant, to upgrade administrative and financial capabilities. ACI is currently recruiting for a new accountant position to manage the increased support load.

EQUIP1 Washington staff has helping ACI to work on the preparation of work plans and budgets for MTT/West's first year of operation. This has involved gathering cost information and calculating time and input from various participants in the MTT/West program.

Lesotho

Two EQUIP1 team members conducted a one-week visit to Lesotho in March.

The purpose of the visit to Lesotho was to research interventions focused on herd boys, undertaken by the Government of Lesotho, international donors and NGOs, in order to determine where USAID might most usefully channel the funding that is available to the Africa Bureau for this purpose. Also to investigate the utility of a Roundtable in order to highlight successful practices and lessons learned. One team member was responsible for taking photographs and arranging them to illustrate the situation of the herd boys and to use that as a basis for a visual presentation.

To gather the necessary information EQUIP1 staff met with the following stakeholders:

- The Long Distance Teaching Centre (LDTTC) at the Ministry of Education. This is the essential body for targeting herd boys and has a number of programs in collaboration with donors and NGOs. The LTDC has 179 distance learning centers in five out of the ten districts. The "School in a Box" idea is also being tried in some areas.
- The US Embassy Special Project Coordinator, US Department of State, was extremely helpful in indicating who were the key donors and in helping us to contact them.
- The Peace Corps Country Director introduced us to PCVs who were based in remote areas. They were working with the formal education system, but gave us first-hand information about the status of herd boys in the lowlands as well as in the mountains. The latter are much more isolated and removed from social contact and access to education. The Director also arranged for us to have a very competent guide/translator/driver. This person was a part time teacher and knew the region well.
- The UNICEF Resident Representative and Education officer. We learned from UNICEF that there were a large number of reports, including some very recent studies on interventions focused on herd boys, as well as a series of Roundtables and seminars.
- The Development Cooperation Ireland Programme Advisor said that it was the largest bilateral donor in Lesotho and works directly with the government. It is presently helping the GOL put together a strategic plan for education. The programme advisor pointed out that there is no official non-formal education policy in effect.

- The World Vision Director Operations explained that WV works in seven of the ten districts using community committees that identify local issues. Since 2002 the focus has been on food security, HIV/AIDS, water and sanitation, health and education. WV also provides after hours literacy training for herd boys. The Director mentioned that communities could benefit greatly from knowledge that herd boys have about erosion control, grazing and natural herbal medicines.

LDTIC arranged for the team to visit Literacy Sites. In Leribe the team visited a class of adult women learners taught by a professional teacher. The class took place in a regular school building. No herd boys were present as exceptionally, because of our visit the class was during daylight hours and the boys were herding cattle. At the Fobane Learning Post, our second scheduled visit, the class was canceled because the teacher was unwell.

Outside Thaba Tseka, a northern capital, the team visited a Skills Training class where the students were taught carpentry, in Ha Shoapane. This is a pilot project. The students must have completed literacy class, and be able to contribute 50 Rands. They were presently learning to make bookshelves and coffins using the teacher's tools. They want to form an association and learn marketing skills and how to price their products. The team also visited a Learning Post in the same village, but on the other side of the mountain. The teacher was a volunteer and held the class outside her house. The learners were herd boys as well as adult women.

Another visit took place to the Learning Post in the village of Ha Rantsimane. The class was held in a rondavaal belonging to the chief. The teacher was the Chief's scribe. The Chief himself was illiterate.

The team also conducted interviews with the help of their guide/translator with teachers and herd boys at the learning sites, as well as with herd boys in the mountains. All the herd boys with one exception said that they did not like being herd boys. They wanted to go to school because they wanted to learn to be drivers, policemen, and teachers.

As a result of meetings with Government officials, donors, and NGOs, the team discovered that there already existed a large body of documentation on interventions targeting herd boys, and that there had also been a series of Roundtables on this topic. The team's research led to the conclusion that USAID could more usefully employ the available funding by helping to enhance and/or replicate programs and activities that were already being successfully implemented and were in need of additional funds.

On return to Washington EQUIP1 team met with USAID's Africa Bureau Education Chief and staff to discuss their findings. This resulted in a change of strategy. Since there was already so much information available on herd boys, as well as a very recent media piece, a DVD by UNICEF "Growing up Alone. Herd Boys in Lesotho,"

it was decided to select a worthwhile program or an activity already in process or needing funds for replication.

The team proposed the following options for funding:

1. Presently only two subjects are taught in the literacy classes at the learning posts: reading, in the local language, Sesotho and basic numeracy. The informal curriculum was developed and printed by the Lesotho Distance Training Centre (LDTC). UNICEF provided the funding for the printing of the manuals. Because of requests from herd boys and adult learners to learn English, a basic English primer has been developed. It presently exists in draft form. A workshop is scheduled in the near future with LDTC and UNICEF to ensure that the text is gender sensitive, and to check if there are other issues that need to be addressed. Presently there is no funding available for the printing of this primer. USAID might want to consider the funding of this primer. An initial printing is usually 100,000 copies. I have been in touch with LDTC to find out the cost of printing per copy and am waiting to hear from them.
2. Providing wind-up radios for Learning Posts. There are radio stations that can be heard up in the mountains, and there are some educational programs aired on religious radio stations and others. A wind-up radio would allow the remoter learning posts to access these programs.
3. In the past, the national radio station was owned by the government and the LDTC had a teacher-training program that was extremely useful for volunteer teachers at the learning posts. The radio station has been privatized and the LDTC does not have enough money to pay for airtime.

USAID asked EQUIP1 to get information on costs and numbers for the first option. A follow-up meeting will take place in May when a final decision will be made as to the allocation of the funding.

5. Swaziland

EQUIP1 staff went to Swaziland in March. The objective of the visit was to research the plight of orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs), including UNICEF's efforts focused on school feeding programs and community children's centers, and to find out if there were programs that were helping OVCs to break the cycle of poverty and were sensitizing communities to integrate these children into their social networks.

The team discovered that OVCs are getting great deal of attention, particularly in the South, which is the drought area. The government is working on a draft policy with UNICEF for OVCs, and is depending on NGOs to implement interventions.

It was also learned that the National Emergency Response Council for HIV/AIDS (NERCHA) is a parastatal entity that reports to the Prime Minister's office and is the coordinating agency for access to Global Funds for HIV/AIDS. All donors and

organizations contacted praised the efficiency and efficacy of NERCHA. The US Public Affairs Officer explained that capacity was lacking in most of the NGO's and implementers in Swaziland and that NERCHA was an exception.

EQUIP1 staff met with the following stakeholders:

- At the US Embassy with the Public Affairs officer and the HIV/AIDS specialist. Both provided the team with very useful information on who was actively involved with orphans and vulnerable children and was able to estimate the ability and competence of the implementers.
- At NERCHA with the National Director and the Assistant Coordinator. NERCHA works at the national as well as at the grass roots level and tries to use existing, traditional structures, not necessarily create new ones. It also works to create equity and sustainability. It is closely involved with orphan care.
- With the UNICEF Education Officer. UNICEF supports feeding programs in 80 schools; provides grants for school fees to needy children; and has set up neighborhood care points for AIDS orphans.
- With the Assistant Director of Peace Corps. Peace Corps only just returned to Swaziland, four months ago. Their program is focused on income generating activities that benefit AIDS orphans. Peace Corps is presently working in the southern and eastern regions.
- JTK Associates Director informed us that a great deal of attention is presently focused on OVCs, but that the government is counting on NGOs to undertake interventions. However, many of these NGOs are lacking in capacity. A national policy of OVCs now exists in draft form. NERCHA is doing a good job coordinating activities, but there is still an absence of effective planning at the national level.
- World Vision HIV/AIDS Program Manager and an Associate. WV works with local committees to help identify problems at community level, and runs Area Development Programs (ADP) in ten villages. Each ADP costs about \$350,000 per year to operate.
- The Salvation Army implements school-related programs, in particular scholarship programs for about 300 children in urban and peri-urban area.
- Caritas is implementing the Orphan Aid project that focuses on supporting families who have taken in AIDS orphans. Community based programs cover a large spectrum of activities, food security and health, sanitation, housing, and income generation. Caritas also implements EDDI's girls' scholarship program.
- SOS National Director gave us a tour of the SOS Village facilities for orphans that provide family, housing, food, education and health care. SOS is conceptualizing a new project that will take care of orphans in their own communities, instead of bring them into SOS orphanages.

- Bristol-Myers-Squibb helps support the HIV/AIDS Prevention Project that Save the Children is implementing, which provides psycho-social support services.

EQUIP1 proposed the following options for funding:

1. NERCHA is planning an intervention directed towards more mature orphan heads of household, to help them grow food crops. Funds would initially provide tools, fertilizer, seed and other inputs in conjunction with the Swaziland national agricultural service. Community volunteers would help identify orphans and help them with plowing. An educational aspect, functional literacy, can also be incorporated into the OVC project. The issue of skills transfer is very important and the project would also encourage OVCs to become literate using non-formal schools at established centers, which would also include a mini-library for the children's use. The estimated cost is \$8,000 per Chiefdom, which will reach out to 40 child headed households at \$200 per household.
2. UNICEF is planning to create Neighborhood Care Points for OVCs, which would provide informal education, and daycare so that the OVCs could come to school with their younger siblings. The cost is estimated at \$85,000 per center, and presently UNICEF does not have funding for this project.
3. World Vision also has Neighborhood Care Points which provide food to OVCs. Children cannot cook so WV provides food and adults do the cooking. Each center costs approximately \$60,000. Also half the OVCs are over age for primary school so WB works with the church to provide basic literacy and life skills. Perhaps these centers could also be used to provide basic literacy skills.
4. Save the Children provides life skills training for OVCs who are heads of household. It includes two phases: a. skills for becoming effective young leaders; how to use resources effectively; household management and problem solving, and b. personal growth and development; how to deal with peer pressure; reproductive health.

The first option is the one presently favored by USAID Africa Bureau. Additional information is being gathered and a decision will be made in early May.

IV. Best Practices and Lessons Learned

The activities have all been successfully initiated. Advance planning and joint collaboration is a must for a successful launch. As implementation progresses lessons learned and best practices will begin to emerge and will be documented.



V. Analysis of Progress to Date

Most of the activities are developing according to the estimated timeline. EQUIP1 partners have also drafted and submitted Annual Work Plans.

- In the case of the Sesame Feasibility Study, completion had been anticipated for end of April; it is now estimated that it will be completed end of May.
- The institutional base ACI is working out the details of a work plan for MTT/West. Excellent progress has been made.
- The Zambia Community Radio Activity is proceeding as planned in spite of one of the radio stations having suffered a major electrical breakdown.
- For the Lesotho activity, a change of strategy has taken place as a result of on site research and meetings and there is no longer the intent of writing a report on the interventions targeting herd boys or of organizing a Roundtable on this topic. Alternative strategies have been discussed with USAID, and additional information is being gathered.
- The Swaziland activity is also in process and waiting for information before a final decision is made.