



# **KYRGYZSTAN AND TAJIKISTAN QUALITY LEARNING PROJECT**

## **Program Assessment and Recommendations**

**FINAL REPORT**

**July 2011**

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# KYRGYZSTAN AND TAJIKISTAN QUALITY LEARNING PROJECT Program Assessment and Recommendations



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The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

**“I always thought that a teacher should be an actor, a performer. Now we think of the teacher as a conductor, while the children are the actors, the performers.”**

32 YEAR VETERAN PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER IN VARZOB, TAJIKISTAN.

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## MAPS

### Kyrgyzstan



## Tajikistan



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## ACRONYMS

AC	Advisory Committee
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
AOE	Academy of Education (Tajikistan)
CEATM	Center for Educational Assessment and Teaching Methods
DED	District (Rayon) Education Department
EFWG	Education Finance Working Group
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GBAO	Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast
GIZ	German International Development Organization GmbH
HE	Higher Education
HMU	Head of Methodology Unit
IBET	Improving Basic Education in Tajikistan (USAID-supported project 2003-2007)
IPD	Institute for Professional Development (ITTI in Khorog)
ISTTI, ITTI	In-service teacher Training Institute
ITT	In-service Teacher Training
JASU	Jalal-Abad State University
JBS	JBS International
KAE	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
KG	Kyrgyzstan
LC	Local Consultant
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOE	Ministry of Education (Tajikistan)
MOES	Ministry of Education and Science (Kyrgyzstan)
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MSBF	Minimum Standards of Budget Financing
MU	Methodological Unit
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NSED	National Strategy for Educational Development
OSI	Open Society Institute
OSU	Osh State University
PCF	Per Capita Financing
PDS	Professional Development Schools
PEAKS	USAID/Participation Education and Knowledge Strengthening project 2003-2007
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PMU	Project Management Unit
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PRESET	Pre-Service Training
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PTT	Pre-Service Teacher Training
PTTI	Pre-Service Teacher Training Institution
QLP	USAID Quality Learning Program

RayFO	Rayon Finance Office (under the subordination of the Hukumat/ Hakimyat
RayOnO/REA	Rayon Education Administration (under subordination of the MOE)
REP	Rural Education Project (Kyrgyzstan, supported by the World Bank)
RT	Republic of Tajikistan
RTTI	Republican (In-Service) Teacher Training Institute (Tajikistan) Secondary School Standards
SWAp	Sector-wide Approach
TE	Technical Expert
TJ	Tajikistan
TOT	Training of Trainers
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USAID/CAR	United States Agency for International Development/Central Asian Region
WB	World Bank
YAP	Youth Aid Programme for Education

## Executive Summary

The USAID/ Quality Learning Project (QLP) project began on 30 September 2007<sup>1</sup> and is due to be completed by 29 September 2012. The goal is to expand access to quality basic education in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan and the focus of the project is on four main areas or Intermediate Results (IRs) plus three additional tasks. This report and summary are structured around these elements.

The objective of this formative evaluation was to examine the four IRs and the three additional tasks of the project, and to determine if the program targets were met in the most effective, efficient, and relevant manner in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The evaluation team was tasked with examining ‘how the interventions of QLP, through a programmatic approach to build capacity at the central level of government, are seated in the larger contextual situation in which education operates in both countries.’<sup>2</sup>

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### *1. Improved Quality of Teacher Training in Student-centered Methodologies*

In IR I, QLP worked with in-service teacher training institutions to increase in-house capacity to develop and advance education standards and teacher training courses, including revision of current courses to include student centered methodologies. QLP provided select staff of the teacher training institutes with extensive training and coaching, developing among them a corpus of local consultants who were involved in designing and conducting teacher training and developing materials such as curriculum and syllabus guides for teachers.

Pre-service teacher training institutions (pedagogical universities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and a pedagogic college in Tajikistan) were also targeted, but with fewer visible successes. The project fostered better and/or new working relationships between schools and pedagogical universities, District Education offices, city and village governments by providing strong and effective models for mentoring, monitoring, and pedagogical leadership. This area has great potential for future interventions, explained in more detail in Section Three of recommendations.

### *2. Improved Quality of Student Assessment*

The QLP focused on formative assessment, integrating it with the student-centered approaches targeted in IR I. Both practices were well received by participating teachers and very relevant to their classroom work. Promoting a practical, hands-on approach to teaching made a lasting effect that could have great consequences for teaching and learning practices in the region. Summative assessment practices were addressed to a lesser degree.

### *3. Greater Involvement of Teachers in Curriculum Reform*

In Kyrgyzstan, syllabus guides were developed in four focus areas (Primary Education, Languages, Mathematics, Pedagogy and Psychology). The Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) requested technical assistance from QLP to apply this model to textbook and teacher guides developed by other donors. Teachers are involved in publication of teacher lesson plans in a national newspaper on a regular basis, with a competition on best lesson plans in focus subject areas; supplementary materials were produced on classroom management, positive discipline, and other topics.

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<sup>1</sup> In Kyrgyzstan, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for implementing the project, however, was signed in October 2008 so the actual implementation period was shorter than planned for this country.

<sup>2</sup> JBS International. *Technical Proposal*, p3, April 12, 2011.

In Tajikistan, capacity building of the Academy of Education has occurred which enabled development of subject standards including learning objectives, approval of primary standards, and development of supplementary materials. Exchange of good practices has been occurring via mass media and teachers participate in curriculum discussions and revisions.

#### *4. Increased Effectiveness of the Education Finance System*

The accomplishments under this fourth IR are remarkable. QLP staff members have been involved in both the teacher salary reform in Kyrgyzstan and the full rollout of the per capita finance reform in Tajikistan. Schools reportedly feel a new sense of financial autonomy and so far they have reported increases in financing. Open budget hearings at the school-community level have been held in both countries for the first time in Central Asia which encourages transparency and accountability. The Education Finance Working Group (EFWG) has successfully provided critical support to the policy process which has been welcomed and valued by respective Ministries and other organizations alike. Sustaining the momentum of educational finance reform made over the past 4 to 5 years, especially in terms of quality and durability, however, will be a challenge. Teacher salary raises are sorely needed in Tajikistan while per capita finance reform still needs to be rolled out in Kyrgyzstan. In Tajikistan, the Ministry of Education, with the Fast Track Initiative (FTI-3) will continue to disseminate training materials developed by QLP.

#### *5. The QLP Approach and Methods: An Overall Finding*

A significant result of the QLP project appears to be a systemic impact through the strategy of involving key players/stakeholders such as pedagogical institutes and national academies of education as well as the various actors at the different education levels, including at the crucial school level. Taking a holistic approach and attending to the often overlooked 'process' element as QLP has done is a complex and continuing challenge, but has to date been an important achievement.

##### *Additional Tasks*

QLP took on new initiatives as the times and circumstances required. These additional tasks varied in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In Kyrgyzstan, QLP worked in two geographic regions on two different additional components:

##### *Youth Aid Program for Education in New Settlements*

The aim of this component was to contribute to education access for children in new settlements though increased opportunities for school attendance. As a result of a 2010 household survey, QLP identified and assisted out-of-school children with registration (*propiska*) issues, medical checkups, and purchase of school supplies and uniforms. More specifically, pre-school training was provided for more than 1000 children; over 700 children from low income families received school supplies and have been enrolled in schools. Through this initiative, QLP has contributed to the creation of better social cohesion between populations of Bishkek and new settlements (e.g. reduced divisions and stereotypical relations). The main challenge is sustainability of this initiative after 2012 when QLP is completed.

##### *Creation of Positive Socio-Psychological Atmosphere in Schools during Post-Conflict Period in Jalal-Abad Oblast<sup>3</sup>*

In this component, QLP shifted its focus from quality to access due to very critical post-conflict conditions in the region. In an immediate response to the post-crisis situation, QLP provided training programs in peace-building for school administrators and key community members in three languages (Kyrgyz, Russian, and Uzbek). The trainings sought to ease the tension and allay fear in the tense situation so that teachers and children could feel secure in attending school.

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<sup>3</sup> The tragic inter-ethnic clashes took place in the south of Kyrgyzstan during the summer of 2010. More than 400 people reportedly died.

### The Safe School Program

The Safe School Program (SSP) was initiated in 2009 in Tajikistan in response to the growing safety issues at schools. The SSP interventions in Tajikistan aimed to improve educational outcomes by supporting both the school culture (becoming a safe zone) and improving relationships among school staff (including teachers, nurses, and psychologists). The Safe School modules developed for teachers and community members were well received. A manual for teachers was integrated to the psychology courses at the Institute for In-Service Teacher Training and through seminar work and a Teacher's Code of Ethics was developed. Beyond health and safety, the modules also provided life skills such as goal-setting, career planning, and contributing to society.

## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Assessment recommendations are organized by short-term and long-term horizons and address strategy Goal 1, improved reading skills in primary grades, and Goal 3, increased equitable education access in crisis and conflict-affected environments of the new USAID Education Strategy. The provision of basic education, when strengthened, should be a durable source of stability and recovery without the need to develop extensive short-term alternative (emergency) forms of basic education. Experience on the additional programs has positioned the QLP to generate good initiatives for future programming focusing on increased education access in post-conflict situations.

### *Short-term (now until September 2012)*

1. Develop public education finance capacity in Kyrgyzstan. The public finance system needs to be functional and transparent, enabling robust use of the system by other donors as well as the government.
2. Consider the possibility for local, contextualized, in-depth research, which can be undertaken through Ministry, university, and Academy of Education partnerships to support evidence-based decision-making. Building research capacity is an important goal for the education policy community. Funding for in-depth quality research, which addresses broader educational development issues in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, should be considered to supplement the quick evaluation studies.
3. Create or develop existing Teacher Centers. Many of the beneficiaries thought that creation of teacher resource centers would be timely and that they should fall under the Pedagogical College.
4. Document the mechanism for student-centered upgrading of curriculum materials to make it more readily available to the colleges and other donors, enabling these organizations to take on materials development themselves. QLP materials and products are esteemed and sought out by educators in both countries. While nominally not within the scope of the project, a documentation of the step-by-step process, made more visible and accessible, would be an invaluable legacy of QLP.

### *Long-term (Next two-year 2013-2015 or better five year project period 2013-2018)*

5. USAID should consider changing its delivery strategy. An analysis of parallel intervention strategies (not project-based work) would provide examples of how local staffs and partners could be better supported, such as providing exposure activities (staff retreats, study tours) and technical assistance *inside* of Ministries and their affiliates.
6. Teacher training should receive continued support, especially pre-service, with a focus on Kyrgyz and Tajik language in literacy and primary grade reading. In order to foster understanding of the

need to expand literacy strategies, an investigation into literacy strategies including local reading and literacy expert input would serve as the groundwork.

7. The measurement of quality (for example, measuring reading levels) should be conceived together with partners so that project monitoring and evaluation goals coincide with and can be integrated into school monitoring and evaluation. In this way, generated improvements will be measured and will be accessible to all the stakeholders and beneficiaries.
8. For testing and measuring literacy, summative assessment could be pursued, especially for the development of tests to gauge higher order thinking. Moreover, to achieve more equitable and fair assessment and selection into higher education, standardized and independent testing initiatives are recommended in Tajikistan (similar to National Scholarship Testing in Kyrgyzstan). Tajikistan has an underfunded, non-independent testing center to build on.
9. All three additional tasks of QLP are crucial and should continue, but perhaps could be merged. For example, Safe School modules might be used in Kyrgyzstan target areas, or expanded to pre-service teacher education curriculum.
10. The two-country approach could continue or separate country programs could be considered. Regardless of the structure of interventions, as there has been so much learning from one country to another (e.g. working on education standards, new salary structure, per capita), the recommendation is that the USAID country teams continue to interact about every 6 months.
11. USAID should carefully scrutinize the Education Strategy in both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to find common interests and priorities concerning education, to position their goals with those expressed by the respective Ministries of Education.

## CONCLUSIONS

While the 'impact' lies ahead, many innovative and lasting education reforms have been brought to bear through the USAID/QLP. This is due mostly to the agility of the project to re-position itself to address the changing and chaotic circumstances in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Because of the dedication and high standards of hard-working staffs, gentle management, and a political willingness to try new things (Ministries of Education in both countries as well as Ministry of Finance), the program has been a success. QLP has not only been able to develop products and train people but has also been leading and contributing to ongoing discussions about standards, curriculum reform, and education reform more broadly. It was also, however, a bit ambitious given the timeframe and volatility in the region.

As a project, QLP has been very reflective and learned from its own missteps and successes, as well as from the lessons of other projects that are operating concurrently or functioned before QLP. One vivid example of this, shared on many occasions, is that QLP has built on organizational knowledge generated by the PEAKS project. From the very beginning, QLP started working within 'the system' and decided to develop capacity within existing, local institutions. This has been a good strategy, and in the words of one consultant, QLP found 'momentum.' Loosing this momentum would be unfortunate as QLP has worked very actively to make a sustainable impact on the system.

In a testimonial to successes to date, QLP's influence has had a ripple or multiplier effect outside of its own program framework. This has occurred at many levels and in international organizations as well as in local institutions, from the national level to non-targeted, neighbouring schools and teachers. It is what most development programs hope for but seldom achieve.

## I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### *I.1 QLP Introduction*

USAID's programmatic efforts in education for Kyrgyzstan (KG) and Tajikistan (TJ) have encompassed a variety of projects and activities since 2003. Prior to QLP, USAID results have included the development of in-service teacher training programs and a cadre of trainers, pilot introduction of school finance mechanisms, and capacity building of teachers of school management. The USAID-supported programs have included:

- a. *Participation, Education and Knowledge Strengthening (PEAKS)* implemented by the Academy for Educational Development (2003-2007). This project also took place in Uzbekistan (ending in 2006) with limited activity in Turkmenistan.
- b. *Improving Basic Education in Tajikistan (IBET)/Improving Secondary Education in Tajikistan (ISET)*, implemented by the Aga Khan Foundation (2003-2007);
- c. *Step-by-Step*, a grant to the Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation, Tajikistan (2002-2005). The activities of Step-By-Step continued under the PEAKS program.
- d. *National Scholarship Test*, in Kyrgyzstan, was implemented by American Councils from 2003-2005 and continued by the Center for Educational Assessment and Teaching Methods (CEATM) in Kyrgyzstan from 2005 to present.

QLP is the second regional USAID project implemented in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan and builds on the lessons and achievements learned previously in basic education.<sup>4</sup> It is being implemented through Creative Associates International, Inc, with sub-contracting work on education finance in association with Abt Associates. The overall goal of the project is to expand 'access to quality primary and secondary education (in the three countries) and to build the capacity of pre-service and in-service teacher training systems to enable students to achieve higher order thinking such as application, synthesis, problem solving and critical thinking.'<sup>5</sup> The project incorporates child-centered pedagogy and the use of formative assessment techniques as it targets in-service and pre-service teacher training curricula. The project examines supplementary materials that teachers need in the classroom to ensure improved student outcomes. It also continues to pilot and introduce reform of education financing by providing technical assistance to per-capita financing (PCF) reforms in education in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

The QLP project officially began on 30 September 2007 and is due to be completed by 29 September 2012. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in Tajikistan was signed with the MOE in November 2007 while the MOU with Kyrgyzstan was signed in October 2008 so the actual implementation period in this country was shorter than planned.<sup>6</sup> Whether this delay in Kyrgyzstan affected implementation of the entire project is unknown. The QLP has an overall budget allocation of \$13,947,788.<sup>7</sup> This amount is apportioned among the three target countries: Tajikistan, \$6,274, 503; Kyrgyzstan, \$5,879, 842; and Turkmenistan \$1,793,443. The most recent Quarterly Report of the project (January 1-March 31, 2011) provides a detailed account of progress being made according to the IRs and additional objectives.

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<sup>4</sup> QLP is referred to variously as a "program" (USAID Task Order and JBS International Technical Proposal) and a "project" (QLP documents such as Quarterly Reports). Every attempt will be made to be consistent but the two words may be used interchangeably in this document.

<sup>5</sup> From *USAID Quality Learning Project QLP Quarterly Report*, January 1-March 31, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> The QLP in Turkmenistan only got underway in January, 2010, with the first official activity implemented in April 2010.

<sup>7</sup> This information is cited in the QLP Quarterly Report for the period January 1-March 31, 2011. The total amount is noted in the report as following Modification # 10 of 24 December 2011, but presumably means 24 December 2010.

## 1.2 Background on the Region, Development and Education

This evaluation covers Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan only. Despite many reform initiatives, the Soviet institutions linger on; education systems in both Tajikistan (TJ) and Kyrgyzstan (KG) have undergone little change over the last two decades since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Both countries have received substantial support from multilateral and bilateral donors targeting increased access and quality in the education sector. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have both managed slow if inconsistent economic growth over the last decade but factors related to weak capacity and financial short-falls constrain a desire within the Ministry of Education to more fully support education reform. Both countries have received EFA Fast Track Initiative grants (Kyrgyzstan for an Early Childhood Development program and in Tajikistan for School Infrastructure; Provision of textbooks and learning materials; Supply of furniture and equipment; In-service training for teachers and school administrators; Training new management and financing and strengthening fiduciary capacity in the education system; Data collection and analysis with the Education management Information System (EMIS) and Grant Management.). The two countries remain the poorest in the Central Asian Region.<sup>8</sup>

Despite positive inputs from donors, the education systems in both countries are in precarious situations. Primary enrollments are 97 percent in Tajikistan at nearly gender parity; secondary enrollments are 82 percent but the gender gap is significant with nearly 10 percent fewer girls than boys attending.<sup>9</sup> In Kyrgyzstan, primary enrollment is at 83 percent while secondary enrollments are slowly declining and now are at 79 percent. The rural-urban divide is of greater concern in Kyrgyzstan. On several national and international tests, for example, the academic performance gap between rural and urban students may be equivalent to at least two years of schooling.<sup>10</sup> Tajikistan has not participated in the PISA test.

Teacher professional preparation and classroom expertise are major constraints to quality education provision in both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. In 2005, only about two-thirds of teachers in both countries had higher education degrees (TJ: 62 percent, KG: 68 percent).<sup>11</sup> Teaching methodologies such as child-centered teaching and modern practices such as distance learning are not generally in use.<sup>12</sup> Poor system incentives (salary, workloads, and resources) persuade many teachers to slip out of the profession to find other work and do not attract new candidates into the workforce. In Tajikistan, for example, students attend pedagogical institutions by default; low scores on their university entrance examinations disqualify them from entering other career paths. Similarly in Kyrgyzstan, the lowest performing students in centralized university admission tests, called National Scholarship Tests, typically enter pre-service teacher education institutions thus further undermining the prestige of the teaching profession and the quality of education.<sup>13</sup> After graduation, many of the student teachers never enter the profession. A commentary by the International Crisis Group on the 'decay and decline of Central Asia' notes that specialists in the two countries say that in the next few years, the countries will have few teachers left to teach their children.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Kyrgyzstan's progress was brutally interrupted by the inter-ethnic violence in the south of the country in the summer of 2010.

<sup>9</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Reported on Eurasianet, December 13, 2010. <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/62558> Accessed on 03.30.2011.

<sup>11</sup> Data are from the respective national education strategies.

<sup>12</sup> Government of Tajikistan (2005) National Strategy for Educational Development.

<sup>13</sup> Silova, I. (2009) 'The crisis of the post-Soviet teaching profession in the Caucasus and Central Asia.' In *Research in Comparative and International Education*, Vol 4 (4), 2009. Pages 366-382.

<sup>14</sup> International Crisis Group, *Central Asia: Decay and Decline. Asia Report No. 201*, February 3, 2011.

Reform is centrally-led and has had little input from practitioners or students. The result is that curricula are abstract and have little application to the demands of real life.<sup>15</sup> Curriculum reform has not been coordinated with textbook development, teacher training, and student assessment. Student assessment is teacher-centered and tends to be summative in style rather than focusing on improving learning outcomes.

Not surprisingly, unqualified and under-qualified teachers lead to poor student learning outcomes. Despite reported high adult literacy rates of 99 percent in both countries,<sup>16</sup> declining education achievements of school-age populations may be more the reality. On both the 2006 and 2009 PISA<sup>17</sup> tests, Kyrgyzstan ranked last of participating countries.<sup>18</sup> From the 2009 test, one result showed that more than 80 percent of participating 15-year-olds had reading skills below a Level 2, considered a “a baseline level of proficiency, at which students begin to demonstrate the reading literacy competencies that will enable them to participate effectively and productively in life.” On a National Assessment of Students’ Learning Achievements in 2007, more than 60 percent of grade four students demonstrated below basic achievement in reading as well as in math, and civic education.<sup>19</sup> Tajikistan has not participated in any international assessments; however, given the similar development patterns, shared Soviet experience, and its current rank as the poorest country in the region, the assumption is that student performance would be similar to its neighbor.

Evidence from Kyrgyzstan adds weight to that from other low-income countries, when available, indicating that average student learning is quite low and that improvements in student learning lag considerably behind improvements in access.<sup>20</sup> Most national and international student assessments are paper-and-pencil tests, administered at the earliest in grade 4; they therefore assume that students can read and write already. Low scores on tests such as the PISA, however, may be more as a result of poor reading ability rather than a result of students’ low content knowledge.

As reading skill is the foundational skill for all school-based learning,<sup>21</sup> poor reading ability affects student learning in all other subjects. Evidence from research on reading acquisition indicates that learning to read *early* and at a sufficient *rate* of speed is essential for learning to read well.<sup>22</sup> As students get older, acquiring literacy becomes more difficult and children who do not learn to read in the first few grades are more likely to repeat grades and eventually drop out. Moreover, children who do not learn to read

**(In Kyrgyzstan) “...the incoherence of the curriculum should be the object of scrutiny; over the past decade, new subjects have been continuously added to curricula that have traditionally been crowded with a multitude of subjects; all with few teaching hours allocated. The MoES seems to have applied an ‘additive approach’ to curricula reform in that it has merely added rather than revised or replaced learning content. As a result, donor-supported initiatives have merely been added rather than fully integrated (or possibly omitted) in a comprehensive curricula reform.”**

GITA STEINER-KHAMSI AND KETEVAN CHACHKHIANI, DONOR INVOLVEMENT ANALYSIS IN EDUCATION SECTOR DEVELOPMENT IN KYRGYZSTAN: ANALYSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS. APRIL 2008, p.14

<sup>15</sup> Steiner-Khamsi, G. S. Mossayeb, and N. Ridge (2007) *Curriculum & Student Assessment, Pre-service Teacher Training: An Assessment in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan*. Columbia University, New York City.

<sup>16</sup> UNICEF Country Statistics and ADB (2010) Basic Statistics 2010.

<sup>17</sup> Program for International Student Assessment at [http://www.pisa.oecd.org/pages/0,2987,en\\_32252351\\_32235731\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.pisa.oecd.org/pages/0,2987,en_32252351_32235731_1_1_1_1_1,00.html)

<sup>18</sup> Some 57 countries participated in 2006 and 65 countries participated in 2009. The 2009 test focused on assessment of reading skill. On a positive note, Kyrgyzstan saw an average score improvement of 26 points between the tests making it one of the top improvers in 2009.

<sup>19</sup> Reported in UNICEF (2008) *Country Profile: Education in Kyrgyzstan*.

<sup>20</sup> RTI (2009) *Early Grade Reading Assessment Toolkit*. USAID.

<sup>21</sup> Dr. Reid Lyon ‘*Overview of Reading and Literacy Initiatives*’ Presentation given at the Committee on Labor and Human Resources. Washington D.C. April 28, 1998

<sup>22</sup> Ibid RTI (2009).

well are deprived of many future opportunities for continued education, good employment, and a good living standard. Therefore learning to read early and well is an absolute necessity for children. This is reflected in the prioritization of improved reading skills as Goal One in the new USAID Education Strategy.<sup>23</sup> An Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) has been designed to assess foundational literacy skills acquisition of children in grades 1-3. Such an assessment in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan will provide a more accurate indicator of young children's current reading ability leading to an identification of potential areas for improvement that can be made in early education provision.

### *1.3 Donor Coordination*

Donor coordination is addressed briefly here because it is an important element of the overall context in which QLP works. The subject also warrants attention because of the advent of the Sector Wide Approach (SWAp), multilateral efforts by the Fast Track Initiative (FTI), as well as the changing global strategy in education by USAID. The topic has received attention in the development literature for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Silova and Steiner-Khamsi (2009) refer to some NGO-implemented projects 'as opulent islands in otherwise empty seas' and unfortunately the track record, as reviewed in the literature, gives the similar impression of many projects initiated by the donor agencies.

In one of the more scathing indictments of donor coordination, Cassidy (2009) notes that despite the rhetoric and some efforts by donors and lenders, most groups working in programs and projects (in Tajikistan, in this case) 'seem content to do their own things with minimal meaningful sharing of results, materials, activities and plans and little real effort at coordination of their activities.' (See long-term recommendation 18). Apparently in Kyrgyzstan, the situation was even worse in earlier stages when the QLP had to confront issues brought on by poorly-coordinated and communicated responses among the multiple donors active in the sector, which were compounded by political overtones of individual government-donor relationships. For example, 'other donors created misunderstandings over the definition and application of formative assessment.'<sup>24</sup>

In summary, previous donor work has not left a particularly good foundation in either country for sustainable, locally-controlled amelioration of education. Capacity building at critical central levels did not take place sufficiently for the drive, the administration, and the implementation to be carried on its own.<sup>25</sup> While consultative donor forums do exist in both countries, their overall effect appears to need improvement. QLP has managed to overcome some of these development barriers and as a result, its effects have spread far beyond project boundaries. The significance of this is described in further detail below.

### *1.4 QLP: Achievements and Challenges*

Implementation of QLP, as noted, formally began in October 2008 with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in Kyrgyzstan. This was slightly more than a year later than the official beginning of the project in that country (September 2007). That the QLP has managed to accomplish all that it has in what appears to be a fore-shortened time period must be cited as both an achievement and a continuing challenge. Project implementation is often where development work, including that in education, falls apart because attention to the difficult and messy tasks of taking ideas from concepts and proposals and putting them into practice requires action-oriented staff members with a practical and grass-roots orientation along with leadership who can see the larger perspective. "The process needed for effectiveness and getting to results happens on the ground. (Moreover, what passes for 'innovative

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<sup>23</sup> USAID (2011) *Education: Opportunity through Learning* USAID Education Strategy. Washington D.C.

<sup>24</sup> Terrance Giles, email communication.

<sup>25</sup> Report by Gita Steiner-Khamsi and Ketevan Chackhiani to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, April 2008.

design' in program or project work not grounded in implementation often simply leads to unicorns: lovely to look at, but the essence of unreality)."<sup>26</sup>

QLP appears to have had a combination of good leadership and a dedicated and talented staff that have provided the necessary elements for efficient and effective implementation. The achievements and challenges of implementing QLP also appear in the analysis of each Intermediate Result (IR) and Additional Task in this evaluation report.

From interviews and a review of PMP objectives and accomplishments, the process has not been easy for QLP. While education projects in general can 'tick off' all the many small inputs and outputs (e.g. number of trainings conducted) required by donors, the project may still not have any profound 'impact' (a word used with care here as this is not an impact evaluation) on the system upon which it has been asked to focus.

In noting significant results of the project, QLP appears to have made a *systemic* impact through its strategies of involving key players/stakeholders such as pedagogical institutes and national academies of education as well as the various actors at the different education levels, including those at the crucial school level. Some examples of these successful strategies include:<sup>27</sup>

*Tajikistan:*

- Prompting and stimulating the review of PTTI curricula for the purpose of identifying the challenges within the existing documents and opportunities for improvement that will lead to better prepared future teachers;
- Building the capacity and giving exposure to the specialists from the system, particularly from the RTTI/FTI, to wider contexts of mentoring and leadership through training conducted by an international consultant in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan;
- Conducting a one-day seminar for the primary methodologists of non-target areas (22 rayons) on effective implementation of modified primary standards.
- Holding Effective Educational Finance Working Group (EFWG) meetings.

*Kyrgyzstan:*

- Supporting regional In-Service Teacher Training Institutes (ITTIs) through the Kyrgyz Academy of Education (KAE) by strengthening the KAE's role and responsibilities (that were defined by a MOES order in 2008);
- Supporting regional ITTIs from KAE leading specialists strengthening regional ITTIs capacity for better performance in conducting in-service teacher trainings in the Kyrgyz Republic;
- Creating a database at the ministry level by the automated expenditure tracking system, installed at MOES, to make systematic analyses of PCF (Per Capita Financing) implementation and evidence-based decision-making in school financing.

Taking a 'holistic' approach to capacity development<sup>28</sup> and attending to the often overlooked 'process' element, as QLP has done, is a complex and continuing challenge, but to date has also been an important

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<sup>26</sup> Bryant, C. and C. Kappaz (2005) *Reducing Poverty, Building Peace*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press Inc. p. 161.

<sup>27</sup> These examples, among others, were submitted to USAID in the Quarterly Report, January 1-March 31, 2010. USAID Quality Learning Project (QLP). Creative Associates International and Abt Associates. 17-18 and 38-39.

<sup>28</sup> Many excellent resources are available internationally for implementing such broad-strategy capacity development measures. UNDP's 'Capacity Development Group' has available (online and in hard copy) a set of particularly rich and useful capacity development guides, manuals and research studies. The World Bank also has many such materials, including the succinct 'World Bank Capacity Development Brief' (May 2008) in which 10 points for a new operational approach to capacity development are outlined; Point No. 9: 'Build Capacity to Build Capacity' would seem to have special relevance for the educational development situations in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

achievement. With modifications for culture and context, such strategies, approaches, and methods can be applied in other sectors and countries as well.

The challenges have been significant from the beginning, even without the constricted project time period. First, the breadth of the project as originally conceived and accepted, is daunting in its range (the range of the project's messages has been a source of sensitivity from some sources, with the implication that it should have been more narrowly focused). The focus of the project on the four original IRs is, upon review, not as simple as it looks. The first IR (teacher training in student-centered methodologies), for example, is in reality composed of three elements or components, each of which comprises a major initiative (1) in-service teacher training, (2) pre-service teacher training, and (3) improved capacity of education administration in mentoring, monitoring and pedagogical leadership. Implementing these sub-components, and the other three IRs, has been a major challenge. *Integrating* these IRs stands as an important QLP achievement.

To the four IRs were added three additional tasks (ATs). In Kyrgyzstan, these include the *Youth Aid Program (YAP)* and the *Creation of Positive Socio-Psychological Atmosphere in Post-conflict Period* in Jalal-Abad. These were initiated in response to the events of spring and summer 2010 in Kyrgyzstan in the north and south part of the country respectively. In Tajikistan, the additional task has been the *Safe School Program*. Before additional funding was added in the summer of 2010, management capacity of the project was stretched very thin by the work under the four IRs and these additional tasks. The scope of each of these tasks has represented a major challenge. Implementation of these tasks, and the achievements and challenges, is described in more detail later in this report. The most recent QLP Quarterly Report (January 1-March 31, 2011) highlights the specific challenges of implementing these tasks.

A corollary to the challenge of project breadth has been that of using limited resources effectively. Although a financial analysis of the project is not part of this evaluation portfolio, it appears the QLP has effectively targeted limited funding (in overall development terms, the total project cost, about 14 million US dollars, while significant, is not a huge amount) while limiting such expenses as study tours.

Each of the IRs has presented significant challenges. The pre-service training component of IR 1 is addressing an element of the educational system that not yet been tackled by other donor initiatives in the 20 years since independence; therefore teaching staff have had little exposure to modern pedagogical approaches in term of learning objectives and teaching methodologies.<sup>29</sup> Apparent difficulties have included: the low status of teachers, the lack of strong candidates being enrolled in the PTTIs, and the decisions by graduates not to join schools upon graduation. Also reported was an apparent lack of interest in the PTTIs to make improvements. In Tajikistan, no QLP staff member was available for this component until Fall of 2010. IR 2, the improved quality of student assessment, has proven a hard objective to implement because of (1) the need to integrate it with other components, (2) the focus of the governments on summative assessment, given the recent international testing results (in Kyrgyzstan), and (3) confusion over the definition and application of formative assessment. In the beginning, QLP sought to find its niche in terms of IR 3 (greater involvement of teachers in curriculum reform), especially since other donors were involved in the curriculum area; in Kyrgyzstan, Soros Foundation was working on a curriculum framework and the Asian Development Bank on subject-oriented curricula.

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<sup>29</sup> Respondents said that many larger donor organizations have been avoiding pre-service teacher education institutions as they thought it would be a wasted effort, especially because a very low percentage (15-20%) of graduates ends up moving into the teaching profession.

QLP chose to work with the teachers and help them conceptualize the curricula they use. Now QLP conducts training programs for teachers on curriculum development, creating opportunities for them to share experiences on how they develop learning objectives. IR 4, increased effectiveness of educational finance systems, has of course been sensitive and complex, with the focus on per capita financing (PCF) of schools, and transparency of budget hearings at the school level. The non-availability of qualified school accountants continues to represent a significant implementation challenge. Context continues to play an important role in the overall implementation effectiveness of QLP; for example, there is as yet no clear strategy in Tajikistan to implement the transition to a 12-year education cycle and that affects most of the initial plans of QLP, making the work of the project difficult. This overview only touches upon conceptual and implementation details to be examined later in the report.

The overall challenge facing QLP in both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan was outlined in a baseline study conducted for a first cohort in 2009 by the project and published in 2010<sup>30</sup> (data from a follow-up study were not available at the time of this evaluation). The purpose of the baseline study was to present QLP with data on the academic skills of 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders taught by teachers trained within the QLP framework in selected disciplines. Selected findings of this study included:

*Tajikistan:*

- Overall results indicate low level of academic skills among 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders especially in reading (native language) across all schools;
- Overall, academic skills of high order were demonstrated very poorly. The academic skills of low order prevailed, but were demonstrated at the below baseline level for the most part;
- Initial level of academic skills among fourth-graders appeared to be the same for both target and controlled schools, except for reading skills.

*Kyrgyzstan:*

- Overall results indicate a low level of academic skills among 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders in both mathematics and reading (native language, motherland studies) across all schools;
- Academic skills of low order prevail over academic skills of higher order regardless of grades and disciplines;
- Initial level of academic skills proved to be higher in target schools for both 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades in all target disciplines.

The baseline survey recommended that:

“Both countries should put an emphasis on the importance of skills related to reading, understanding, and working with different types of texts. Reading is a basic tool in learning and lack of reading skills inevitably leads to negative consequences in learning all other school disciplines. Due to the fact that in Kyrgyzstan and to a greater extent in Tajikistan, there are serious problems with the development of reading skills among students, it is absolutely necessary to recommend the Project to make a special emphasis on training instructors in text processing methodology and techniques for developing students reading skills starting at the very basic level.” (USAID QLP IMPACT ASSESSMENT, BISHKEK 2010. p.105)

The recommendation does not however, address a common problem facing students who *do* learn how to read: what books, outside of school, and in the home, do students have to read? Is there a culture of reading?

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<sup>30</sup> USAID (2010) *Survey Report: Assessment of Student Academic Skills Progress in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan*. QLP Impact Assessment, Bishkek.

This QLP evaluation, along with other limitations, was not asked to conduct an organizational analysis of QLP operations and staff. One issue, cost, a challenge to the project, must at least be mentioned in passing, demonstrated in the previous departure of some talented staff from this fast-paced, hard-charging project for other programs that offer better remuneration. As QLP heads towards a 2012 closure, the challenge of retaining its major asset, staff, will grow more difficult and has implications for quality of QLP deliverables and long term sustainability.

Some of the achievements of QLP have been already woven into this overview; others deserve additional mention. In terms of curriculum reform, the syllabus guides prepared via QLP are seen as being of very good quality and so the MOES in Kyrgyzstan, for example, has requested QLP to develop such guides in language and reading for primary school teachers (this was not in the original QLP work plan). Development and use of supplementary materials (SM) in national languages has been positive. Overall, the ability of QLP to work at so many levels and the program holistic approach have been a source of both implementation complexity and difficulty, and also have given the project the ability to affect those beyond its boundaries. Several examples of how results of the QLP extended beyond the project's planned beneficiaries and assisted sustainability include the use of the teacher and management training expanded with FTI funding in Tajikistan and the Save the Children organization using the QLP-supported model to institutionalize the teacher training curriculum.

For QLP, this overview points to a series of questions that require further examination. QLP officially comes to an end in 2012. USAID has a global strategy into which QLP activities may fit but not neatly. Under the circumstances, does the potential exist to continue doing what QLP is now doing? Can it expand and in what ways? Can the aspects of QLP that have proven to be successful be sustained, and how? These and related questions are addressed later in the report (See the section on *Additional USAID Questions: Q8, Q9, and Q10.*)

### *1.5 Evaluation Methodology*

The stated overall objective of this evaluation is to review and examine the four intermediate results of the Quality Learning Program (QLP), as well as stated additional tasks, and determine if the targets for the Program were met in the most effective, efficient and relevant manner in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.<sup>31</sup> The focus of the evaluation is to review how the QLP interventions, through its programmatic approach to build capacity, are seated in the larger contextual situation in which education operates in both countries. Further, in what USAID has deemed to be the most important section of the evaluation report,<sup>32</sup> recommendations were requested that add support to the agency's future programming in the region. The request was also made that recommendations for the future be considered within the framework of USAID's new global education strategy.

#### *1.5.1 Objectives and Research Questions*

The assessment task has three sub-objectives:

1. Assess the effectiveness, efficiency, relevancy and results of the current USAID/CAR Quality Learning Program;
2. Determine the current status of early grade reading and comprehension of children in grades one to three in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan;<sup>33</sup> and
3. Provide recommendations for future successful USAID/CAR early grade reading program planning and implementation based on the results of the above two activities.

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<sup>31</sup> From: the Technical Proposal of JBS International, "Quality Learning Program Assessment and Early Grade Reading Review." April 12, 2011.

<sup>32</sup> USAID RFTOP No. SOL-176-11-000005 Task Order. 12.

<sup>33</sup> This task concerns the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and is not being implemented by this team.

The assessment is based on the progress of the following four Intermediate Results, three added tasks, and seven Research Questions:

- IR1. Teacher training in student-centered methodology;
- IR2. Quality of student assessment;
- IR3. Involvement of teachers in curriculum reform;
- IR4. Effectiveness of the education finance system.

- Kyrgyzstan Youth Aid Program for Education, focused on New Settlements around Bishkek (YAP)
- Kyrgyzstan Creation Positive Socio-Psychological Atmosphere in Schools during Post-Conflict Period in Jalal-Abad Oblast (JAP).
- Tajikistan Safe School/Doorways Program

The research questions are:

- RQ1. *To what extent has the USAID/QLP achieved its intended results?*
- RQ2. *To what extent have the governments of KG/TJ adopted the materials?*
- RQ3. *What are the outcomes of USAID/QLP capacity building efforts?*
- RQ4. *Has QLP contributed to increased early grade reading outcomes?*
- RQ5. *Is QLP an appropriate intervention?*
- RQ6. *How has QLP supported pedagogic colleges and a safe schools program in TJ?*
- RQ7. *What is the QLP impact on pre-service teacher education in KG?*

This assessment covers the period from 2007, when the previous assessment was conducted,<sup>34</sup> to the present. In order to complete the review of QLP, the assessment team used a mixed methods research design involving both quantitative and qualitative data (see Table I). The two types of data are complementary. Whereas one (quantitative) provides a description of the education system, the other (qualitative) provides individual experiences of stakeholders within that system.

Qualitative data collection, which took place during May 2011, involved semi-structured individual and group interviews and site visits. Implementing agencies (Creative Associates, and the QLP partner in testing, CEATM) and beneficiaries (pedagogical institute staff, pedagogical institute students, school directors and teachers) were selected as participants in the assessment based on their involvement with QLP specifically and/or their expertise about the expansion of access to quality basic education in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in general. A desk review of relevant documents was carried out prior to and during the data collection period. A list of the documents reviewed can be found in Annex G.

Quantitative data was drawn from secondary sources, such as education statistics, PMP results, and CEATM test results.

Table I. Sources of Qualitative and Quantitative Data

Data Sources	Qualitative	Quantitative
Desk review: Previous assessments, relevant reports, and government documents	✓	

<sup>34</sup> Steiner-Khamsi, G., S. Mossayeb, and N. Ridge (2010) *Curriculum & Student Assessment, Pre-Service Teacher Training in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan*. Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.

Semi-structured interviews and focus groups with implementers and beneficiaries	✓	
M&E system data (numbers of participants and measure of their training attitudes and behaviors)		✓
<b>Data Sources</b>	<b>Qualitative</b>	<b>Quantitative</b>
CEATM Baseline (4 and 7 grade test)		✓

One note on quantitative data: analysis was not possible at this early stage. Over the summer (2011), intermediate measures are expected to be ready for both the student testing (CEATM) and the Project surveys by which it measures direct effects, or results. Available in May 2011 were the baseline studies conducted in 2009 and 2010, basic figures for number of persons trained, and estimated impact size (total population reach for program interventions).

### 1.5.2 Description of Sample and Data

Table 2. Description of stakeholders (adapted from Task Order)

Type of stakeholder group	Illustrative examples	Number of persons consulted
1. USAID project beneficiaries	School administrators, teachers, teacher training college administrators, teachers and trainers, Advisory Councils and PTA, district education representatives.	<b>96</b>
2. Host government counterparts and other relevant government officials	Ministry of Education and ministry staff, Ministry of Finance staff	<b>6</b>
3. Basic Education sector development partners and other donors providing assistance in the sector	WB, UNICEF, GIZ, and, in Tajikistan, AKF.	<b>13</b>
4. Other stakeholder groups	Local governments, NGOs.	<b>5</b>

### 1.5.3 Data Collection Instruments

Instruments, chiefly interview protocols for use with individuals and small groups, were prepared by the evaluation team in country and used in semi-structured interviewed with the selected stakeholders during two weeks of fieldwork (one week each in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan). The interview questions from these protocols appear in Annex F.

#### 1.5.4 Evaluation Limitations

Due to the brevity of the in-country visit (seven days of data collection in Kyrgyzstan and seven days of data collection in Tajikistan, followed by seven days of preliminary analysis in Kyrgyzstan) by the evaluation team, neither an extensive survey of project beneficiaries nor in-depth classroom observation was possible. Brevity too led the team to welcome the assistance of USAID/ Creative Associates in setting up meetings in both countries, and in selecting the schools for the team to visit ahead of time, despite the possibility of selection bias. Due to a variety of extenuating, and understandable, circumstances, some key documents were supplied to the team before arrival in-country, while other important documents only became available when the team arrived, thereby extending the scheduled literature review process into the implementation period. The lack of time to thoroughly review the documents, coupled with PMP data that provided chiefly baseline information, were serious constraints, and often made it extremely difficult for the evaluation team to address the various research questions posed.

This report covers Phase I of the evaluation process and must be understood basically as a review of the intended results of QLP in light of some preliminary findings in the view of its implementers and select beneficiaries, with a set of recommendations for the future. The evaluation team was provided with QLP Quarterly Reports (the most recent received in-country) that indicate progress according to the four IRs and the Additional Tasks. Again, the brevity of the assessment provided only minimal opportunities to check on the accuracy of this information. Phase 2 of the evaluation consists of an Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) scheduled for later in 2011; the current team is not involved in the design or implementation of that phase.

The current evaluation should be considered formative in nature. It is not an impact assessment, although QLP is making an effort to measure the preliminary ‘impact’ of the program on teachers and other beneficiaries. Assessment of impact is a necessary process but one that requires a much deeper degree of research and greater investment of time than can be done in a two and a half week evaluative review process.

## II. PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

The Quality Learning Project is examined here according to the four expected Intermediate Results (IRs) as well as Additional Tasks given to the project for implementation.



**Interactive Kyrgyz Language class, QLP-trained teacher, Tokmok School, Chui Oblast, Kyrgyzstan.**

### *2.1 IRI Improved Quality of Teachers’ Training in Student-Centered Methodologies*

QLP started working closely with the system in both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to build capacity of central and regional in-service (ITTIs) and pre-service teacher training institutes (PTTIs). QLP has been working closely with the local education bodies responsible for developing education standards and teacher training. Thus, through the Kyrgyz Academy of Education in Kyrgyzstan and Academy of Education in Tajikistan, QLP has been involved in developing education standards for primary grades and selected (target) secondary subjects. QLP conducted many activities to improve the quality of in-service and pre-service teacher training both in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

The work was related to building capacity of trainers of in-service and pre-service teacher training institutes (ITTIs and PTTIs) in interactive/student-centered teaching methodology, and mentoring. By



**Interactive Kyrgyz Language class, Tokmok School, Chui Oblast, Kyrgyzstan.**

working closely with the heads of target PTTIs and ITTIs, the QLP team helped to review and revise teacher training course curriculum. Another aspect of the capacity building was that QLP first conducted trainings at ITTIs and PTTIs and then hired stronger instructors of ITTIs and PTTIs as the local experts (or trainers<sup>35</sup>) for QLP who subsequently were involved in designing and conducting trainings for others. QLP developed an action plan and scope of work for local experts (consultants) in their subject areas. Teacher training was conducted for teachers of target schools in the target subject areas (mathematics, mother tongue and primary education) as well as on mentoring.

Involvement in pre-service teacher education by the QLP was the first serious donor initiative attempting to improve quality of pre-service teacher training. Previous attention to pre-service components have met with relatively limited success thus far but the area has enormous potential. QLP was involved in the revision of the target subject curricula of five universities: Arbaev University, Osh State University and Jalal-Abad State University in Kyrgyzstan, and Tajik State Pedagogic University and Qurgan-Teppe State University in Tajikistan. The revisions demonstrated that the prior PTTI curricula included very little content related to modern pedagogy and good classroom practice.



**Using visual aids, fables and stories. Kyrgyz Language class, Tokmok School, Chui Oblast, Kyrgyzstan**

To improve the qualities of training of the ITTIs, QLP has provided them with resources such as computers in both countries, and printers in Tajikistan, all of which are used for preparing training materials. QLP also aimed to strengthen student practicum and PTTI-school linkages. Even though this was one of the focus areas of QLP, sustainability of efforts will depend on levels of investment directed to each area of teacher training. Another positive aspect of QLP in both countries was that the medium of training was Kyrgyz and Tajik respectively. The use of national languages for trainings and materials proved to be a critical factor for the success of the project. At all levels, the respondents very highly valued the use of their own languages.

Improving capacity of state authorities in interactive teaching as well as in mentoring, monitoring and pedagogical leadership was also mentioned many times as a contributing factor to the success of QLP deliveries. The holistic approach of inclusion of school administrators and school authorities in the QLP interventions was positive, ensuring that the officials who assess and evaluate teachers' work wouldn't use old approaches of evaluation based on their own philosophies of what good teaching should look like. Moreover, QLP staff worked on the new salary reform recently, cohesively linking the salary

<sup>35</sup> QLP pays money to these local experts for school visits and doing the work for QLP. Therefore, we noticed that local consultants were very motivated to work on QLP-related tasks as their salary from their main jobs at ITTIs and PTTIs is quite low. This has a potential to raise two issues: 1) what happens to these local experts when QLP is over? Will they be satisfied with their work and remuneration that they were getting prior to QLP? Or would they end up leaving their institutions; and 2) some administrators of these local experts strongly resent that they end up doing more QLP work rather than being involved in the 'institutional tasks.'

structure with appropriate incentives and compensation for in-school mentoring that will assist to institutionalize methodologies for improved teacher training in Kyrgyzstan.

In the target schools, the teachers were trained in various aspects of teaching and learning including lesson planning, use of teaching aids and supplementary materials, instruction and teaching methodologies, and student assessment. The teachers were trained in developing lesson plans by setting clear lesson objectives from the learner perspective (lesson outcomes). They learned how to set criteria for assessment based on those lesson objectives. Teachers received training on how to use visual aids and supplementary materials more effectively and appropriately according to grade levels. The QLP trainings also focused on interactive/learner-centered methodologies, namely by developing teachers' understanding of different levels of thinking (according to Benjamin Bloom) and promoting higher order thinking by having students ask open-ended/conceptual questions, encouraging discussions, asking students for their views and opinions. Teachers were also trained how to use pair and group work in their classes.

## 2.2 IR 2 Improved Quality of Student Assessment



**Group work. Kyrgyz Language class, Tokmok School, Chui Oblast, Kyrgyzstan**

The recommendations offered in the 2007 evaluation encouraged USAID to pursue the introduction of a practitioner-oriented component on curriculum and assessment reform. The needs identified in the 2007 evaluation were 1) to transform interactive teaching methods into student-centered teaching assessment; 2) to include more formative assessment in schools; 3) to have representative student achievement data, in 4<sup>th</sup> and 7-8<sup>th</sup> grades, in order to target certain areas for improvement; 4) to assess not only content knowledge, but other aspects of students' abilities, and to assess in a variety of ways so that all students can demonstrate their knowledge, not just those of a particular learning style.<sup>36</sup>

“Currently assessment is viewed as a tool merely for evaluation and, even in this instance is not utilized to its full capacity. It is therefore important that all those involved in education understand assessment more fully and the range of uses that it has.” (USAID Evaluation, 2007, p. 36)

Creative Associates has relied on international models or ‘best practices’ in devising concrete programmatic strategies for formative assessment. Specifically, they used Shirley Clarke Education, ‘known for taking the principles of formative assessment and encouraging teachers to experiment with ways in which they might be applied.’<sup>37</sup> But the genius of Clarke was not the reason that ensured success; rather success lay with the Kyrgyz and Tajik educators who took the materials and molded them to fit the time and place as needed.

<sup>36</sup> Importantly, a distinction between Summative Assessment (commonly considered the ‘old’ way) and Formative Assessment (commonly considered the ‘new’ way) should be clear, while emphasizing the uses for and relationships between, the two types of assessment: Summative Assessment: assessments *of* learning, and Formative Assessment: assessments *for* learning.

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.shirleyclarke-education.org/about>



**Student self-assessment, using colored paddles to indicate degree of understanding. Kyrgyz Language class, Tokmok School, Chui Oblast, Kyrgyzstan.**

QLP aimed to change the Soviet-style practices of rote learning, to introduce alternative, more continuous forms of formative classroom assessment. In Kyrgyzstan this was planned by carefully integrating formative assessment into the teacher training materials and courses delivered under the IRI, ‘improved quality of teacher training in student centered methodologies.’ The main goal was to improve the quality of formative student assessment. In Tajikistan formative assessment was also integrated as a key element in the teacher training course content and delivery.

Focus on formative assessment was well-received by teachers. The new material enjoyed a very sound delivery through practice, not lecture, and beneficiaries reported gaining greater understanding through ‘learning by doing’ and ‘experiential learning.’ Training in formative assessment was well integrated

with student-centered methodology, creating a more lasting effect and become more applicable as a teaching and learning tool. Teachers and students changed their attitude towards learning, a very powerful outcome.

“If I have some theories about formative assessment and about teaching, I should put them together – the theory and the practice go together. We got all our information from teachers and developed the materials with their stories. Before getting their feedback, we offered them the philosophy of formative assessment.” QLP Staff

With an eye to institutionalization of practices, education administrators, methodologists, and academicians were included in leadership trainings, so that their assessments of teachers also became more supportive, using elements of formative assessment. This was an expansion of the focus, widening the scope from student assessment to teacher assessment and even general system assessment.



**QLP post-class critique, Kyrgyz Language class, with peers and teachers from other schools, Tokmok School, Chui Oblast, Kyrgyzstan**

In Kyrgyzstan a general formative assessment guide was developed, and in-service teacher training courses developed teacher capacity to assign tasks related to higher order thinking skills. In addition with the help of local consultants and experts, video training was produced to expose teachers to formative assessment, and significant amount of work was carried out regarding changes to the Olympiad system.

In Tajikistan, in target schools, a system-wide dissemination of formative assessment techniques was delivered to district education departments and methodological centers.

Alternative (to memorization of facts) forms of assessment were holistically integrated into the work of teacher training and teacher support and development. In addition, formative assessment was included in the primary education standards approved by the Ministry of Education.

Challenges to an improved student assessment process surfaced. In Kyrgyzstan, in addition to the USAID QLP, World Bank’s rural education project had also been working on formative assessment. However, their approach was different. Evidence gathered from various sources supported the evaluation team’s opinion that the QLP approach was a more practical process for teachers and is more sustainable in the long-run. Competing approaches endanger the longevity of alternative forms of

assessment, especially when what is called formative assessment by others includes considerable additional paperwork for teachers. Improved donor collaboration would encourage engagement in constructive dialogue to reach agreement on the nature and uses of formative assessment in education.

Assessment needs attention in the broader scheme of measuring progress in education, but this has not been the result of the programming thus far. IR2 focused on formative assessment which was very appropriately and thoughtfully integrated to the other IRs (1 and 3) and therefore does not necessitate its own IR moving forward. (It should be mentioned that this is what QLP has done well, but should be further followed up at the school level, otherwise most of good work of QLP may not be maintained or sustained. QLP hopes to institutionalize the outcomes of their work, and they were looking for the Academy of Education, for example, to use their assessment guides).

The quality of the QLP activities and the growing demand for the alternative educational practices is a sure sign that the program has made a significant imprint on the schools already. The only challenge now is there is not enough QLP staff to train the growing numbers of teachers who desire the training. Put another way, demand is going up just as the project is winding down.

The QLP did not integrate summative assessment but in the end probably this was not necessary. The QLP focused primarily on formative assessment and to a lesser extent summative assessment was addressed through the revision of Olympiad<sup>38</sup> criteria. In Kyrgyzstan, new regulations of Olympiads were developed by the QLP team together with the MOES specialist to improve the nature of questions to be asked during these subject competitions. A large number of the questions now require 'thinking' to reach correct answers (not only memory and recall), requiring from students more analytical and higher order thinking skills. However, the new regulations still need to be approved at the government level. In Tajikistan the work on the Olympiad regulations is still in process, and it was felt that the Olympiad competitions are commonly seen as being corrupt. Serious revisions of the quality and style of delivery are very unlikely.

QLP has focused exclusively on formative assessment. However, to support QLP's work with sound learning methodologies that teachers receive in their training, future iterations of project activities should also include the development of an assessment process for students as well as standardizing such assessment practices. While the main purpose of formative assessment is *for* learning, assessment of learning has been neglected. It is imperative that teachers should also learn how to develop criteria for grading and use grading of students performance effectively, fairly and objectively.

Moreover, another focus area that could be taken by new USAID projects would be the effective use of summative assessment and development of criteria and tools for effective summative assessment. Unfortunately, teachers both in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are not equipped with knowledge and skills to design good quality tests measuring student learning. The quality of summative tests could be improved by introducing higher-order thinking questions into them, and teachers could use those tests not only for assessment purposes, but as a teaching tool as well (e.g. open tests, or using tests' results for identifying students' weaknesses or discussing the test results in the classrooms). This is especially important in light of many standardized (multiple-choice) tests that students are taking, for international tests such as PISA, and national tests in Kyrgyzstan such as the National Sample Based Assessment or National Scholarship Tests conducted by CEATM. Unfortunately, teachers in the majority of schools do not develop and use tests.

Testing and taking a test is a learned skill. For example, students from Kyrgyz-Turkish schools sit for tests in their subjects almost every week. Top National Scholarship Test performers are usually from

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<sup>38</sup> On the history and purposes of Olympiads in the USSR, see Dunstan, J. (1978). *Paths to excellence and the Soviet school*. Windsor, Berks: NFEPPublishing Company.

private schools, such as Kyrgyz-Turkish schools<sup>39</sup>, elite urban schools and schools which receive support from international organizations. These schools offer better quality schooling, are well resourced and their teachers are familiar with innovative teaching<sup>40</sup> and international testing methods. Teachers in rural and mountain schools are not familiar with effective teaching approaches or different testing methods. Most lack professional development opportunities to learn innovative teaching approaches, and as a result, focus on textbook coverage and promote memorization and recall rather than critical thinking and application of knowledge. A rural school teacher observed, “Most of our students get anxious when they sit in test halls in the district center. This is due to the poor self-esteem of the rural students. Our students normally do not have this kind of experience in their whole life at school.”

Often, rural teachers are not equipped to design and conduct tests. CEATM has a website with resources for teachers to guide them in their preparation of their students for NST and assist them in teaching differently. However, only a small fraction of secondary school teachers, mostly from Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan and other urban centres, have access to the internet. For example, only one out of 15 teachers who were participating in training at Osh ITTI said that she had her own email account, while the rest did not access any internet.

There is a need to think through all levels of education and the various assessment mediums that teachers and students are exposed to so that they can transfer skills to other levels and subjects, including national standardized tests as well as the promotion of summative assessments. *The Lesson Learned is that using the operating languages of Kyrgyz and Tajik in materials and the delivery matters. Thus QLP was able to create a culture of accessibility, visibility, and respect. This also applies to IRs 1 and 3.*

### 2.3 IR3 Greater Involvement of Teachers in Curriculum Reform

Curriculum is a very important area in education in any country. Thus, QLP is also involved in curriculum reform initiatives, but worth mentioning is the context of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in terms of initiatives in curricular reforms. The curriculum change process in both countries is similar. It normally begins with a proposal for change which can come internally through the Ministry of Education or externally from a donor agency such as the World Bank or Asian Development Bank. Then, approval is granted by the Ministry and the change is legislated and passed down through the *oblast* and *rayon* levels of education administration until it, in theory, reaches schools. However, as a rule there is very little or no input from the teachers / practitioners, i.e. implementers of the new curriculum.

In Kyrgyzstan, the PISA 2006 results demonstrated that the curriculum of Kyrgyzstan should be aligned with international standards and focus on modern skills and competencies at higher proficiency levels. Two curriculum reform initiatives were already operating in Kyrgyzstan when QLP started its work. A new national curriculum framework had been spear-headed by the Soros Foundation/Kyrgyzstan prior to the PISA 2006. At the same time, the Asian Development Bank's Second Education Project (SEP) worked on developing subject-based curricula. Subsequently, subject-based curricula for primary grades 1-4 have already been developed and approved. Subject curricula for grades 5-9 were not approved by

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<sup>39</sup> Many private schools have been established since the break-up of the USSR. As part of the Sebat International Educational Institute, non-governmental organization established in 1991, Kyrgyz-Turkish high schools offer separate schooling for boys and girls and are located in different cities and towns of Kyrgyzstan. The success of private schools such as Kyrgyz-Turkish schools can be attributed to the following: These schools select the best students from other schools after grade 5, charge high tuition fees, offer quality education and are far better resourced. They also have low teacher-student ratios. Students live in dormitories and are provided with additional support in their studies. Their teachers get relatively higher salaries than public school teachers, have regular opportunities for professional development, and therefore, they have lower dependency on textbooks, while they use learner-centred methodologies and conduct ICT integrated lessons.

<sup>40</sup> The teachers from urban schools are acquainted with test methodologies because they have access to internet, library, additional materials and more professional development seminars and trainings are available in Bishkek.

Kyrgyz Academy of Education.<sup>41</sup> These curricula aim to develop students' competencies and include innovative teaching methods to achieve their objectives.

Moreover, the education program in Kyrgyz schools, in terms of time spent in lessons, was the heaviest amongst all participating countries of PISA 2006. After the break-up of the USSR, new subjects were added to an already long list of subjects. The annual educational load for 15-year old students in Kyrgyzstan in 2006 was 1190 hours, while students in Finland clocked only 855 hours. As Steiner-Khamsi et. al (2007, p.23) wrote "The breadth of knowledge required is overwhelming as is the limited amount of time in which teachers have to cover it. This also assumes that children attend school every day and that teachers also attend regularly." Currently, the Kyrgyz Academy of Education (KAE) is working to consolidate the existing 22 subjects into 14 subjects (Steiner-Khamsi et. al, 2007).<sup>42</sup> Longer contact hours for regular classes do not necessarily guarantee quality education. Therefore, just reducing the education load is a positive step forward. The next step is to ensure that the reduced amount of time is used efficiently, effectively and qualitatively. Extra-curricular activities, such as science clubs, fairs, competitions and excursions also positively affect students' performance and also have to be scheduled.

Shortage and poor quality of textbooks is another serious issue as teachers of the former USSR were accustomed to using textbooks as their main curricula source. In fact, state standards of education were not revised until 2005 and even then only 500 copies were printed, not nearly adequate for the 75 thousand school teachers. Textbooks serve as a substitute for education standards. Insufficient quantities of textbooks and teaching materials, especially in Kyrgyz language, and the poor quality of available textbooks and teaching materials were commonly reported as leading to poor quality education. The poor quality of textbooks is attributed to the textbook development and publication procedures.<sup>43</sup>

In Tajikistan, the World Bank supported the establishment of a Curriculum Board at the Ministry of Education represented by academicians, ministry, in-service and pre-service staff, textbook developers, which developed curriculum, textbooks, and teacher guides for the primary levels as well as guides and education standards. The World Bank project was seen as a parallel, unsustainable structure by the Ministry of Education, which did not accept it as its own unit. For the last several years, the Aga Khan Foundation has also been working actively, especially in *Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO)* of Tajikistan on a Curriculum Enrichment Framework project by working closely with Khorog ITTI called Institute for Professional Development (IPD). They involved teachers and stakeholders while developing curriculum framework. The Open Society/Soros Foundation has also been involved in curriculum reform through producing textbooks and teachers' guides for subjects such as English, *Odobnoma* (book of ethics) and History.

Unfortunately, the following issues in curriculum reform initiatives exist worldwide: (i) curriculum as espoused remains hidden from the teachers and other practitioners; (ii) as a policy document, it is vulnerable to interpretation and manipulation; (iii) more than policy documents and textbooks, it is the

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<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately, there was a disconnect between those who worked on new curricula and those who would ultimately implement it. Therefore, the local education institution, Kyrgyz Academy of Education, responsible for the education standards and content, did not approve the subject curricula for Grades 5-9 of ADB project. ADB project is now completed, and the respondents mentioned that MOES has assigned the Soros Foundation to complete the work of the ADB project and align it with the curriculum framework.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid Steiner-Khamsi et. al (2007).

<sup>43</sup> Currently one institution in Kyrgyzstan, the Kyrgyz Academy of Education (KAE), is responsible for developing requirements for writing and approving textbooks. As a result there is a conflict of interest, which has led to low quality of textbooks because of a monopolization of the 'businesses of textbook development.' Textbooks are developed by authors who are hired and approved by the KAE but who are usually removed from school life. The textbooks these authors develop therefore are usually overly theoretical and difficult for both teachers and students to use.

teachers, and what they do in the classroom with their students that matters. Thus, the actual curriculum is what teachers do with the textbooks, students, assessment and classroom culture.

In this context, QLP seems to have found its niche, i.e. to work closely with teachers/practitioners who actually implement curriculum. As the QLP started working closely with the local education bodies

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**“Many projects begin in Russian, develop their materials in Russian, which are then translated into Kyrgyz, often incorrectly. Because *this project* is in Kyrgyz, we discovered so many brilliant specialists in the regions and new ‘stars’ have now emerged from the regional ITTIs. We would not have been able to find them if the language was not Kyrgyz.”**

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responsible for developing education standards and through the Kyrgyz Academy of Education in Kyrgyzstan and Academy of Education in Tajikistan, QLP has been involved in developing education standards for primary grades and selected (target) secondary subjects. QLP conducted many activities to improve the quality of in-service and pre-service teacher training both in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Then, QLP in both countries also worked on revision and publications of pre-service teacher education institutions education programs called *tipovye plany*.

QLP engagement of teachers from its target schools in conceptualizing curriculum and education standards have been very positive. The teachers are involved in

discussions on new skill-based standard guides in target subject matter. High quality, user-friendly, easily understandable, ‘in national language,’ and affordable supplementary materials in target subjects have been developed. The teachers have been involved in the review process, and as a result, have gained valuable experience in developing materials and shaping their own curricula. Based on their feedback, a more teacher-friendly format with clear usage implications was designed. The drafts were further reviewed and several options that would make the content and format more interactive and appropriate to the standards were proposed.

QLP has worked on bridging links between the standards and supplementary materials which will help teachers to clearly see the path of achieving particular learning outcomes supported through the use of the supplementary materials. Teachers are involved in the process of developing lesson plans and publishing these in national newspaper on a regular basis, with competition on best lesson plans in focus subject areas. However, it is premature to say that teachers now have conceptualized their role as active implementers of curriculum. This is especially true in the light of curriculum reform uncertainties, i.e. both approvals of national curriculum framework and subject curricula in Kyrgyzstan as well as the proposed shift to 12-year school education and curricular change implications related to it in Tajikistan.

#### 2.4 IR4 Effectiveness of the Education Finance System

The education finance components of QLP address quality of education from a resource point of view. The governments of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan look to optimization reforms, including per capita financing schemes, to generate savings in the education sector. Public expenditures on education as a percent of total government expenditure in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are among the highest in the region, 19 percent and 18.7 percent respectively.<sup>44</sup> Education budgets are expected to decrease in the short and mid-term so both countries must look for savings through increased efficiency. Per capita finance is a popular reform in post-Soviet countries; in the past decade, Poland, Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania, Armenia, and Georgia have all introduced ‘decentralized’ per capita finance schemes with varying success.

<sup>44</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics, figures for 2008. [http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=125&IF\\_Language=eng&BR\\_Fact=EEGE&BR\\_Region=40505](http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=125&IF_Language=eng&BR_Fact=EEGE&BR_Region=40505)

USAID QLP programming related to financing focused on four major areas: the education policy process, implementation of school finance reform, improved school management, and increased involvement of communities in school financial processes.

In Tajikistan, per capita financing was embraced and funded by the Fast Track Initiative, and after early piloting in 2004, was scaled up, reaching the entire country by January 2010.<sup>45</sup> The Ministry of Finance RT has been involved and revised the PCF formula each year as needed. This year, for example, extra funding for Lyceums and Gymnasiums is being reallocated to small schools. The Ministry of Education set up the additional amounts for Lyceums based on the more intense workload and requisite higher salaries of teachers. In the opinion of the Ministry of Finance, small schools need the money more urgently than larger schools do.

Table 3. Tajikistan and Per Capita Finance: Roll out from pilot to national scale.

<b>Oblast/Region</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Sughd (Khujand)			X	X	X	X	X
Region of Republican Subordination (Dushanbe)					X	X	X
Dushanbe City					X	X	X
Khatlon (Qurgan-Teppe)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Gorno-Badakhshan (Khorog)				X	X	X	X

Source: QLP Tajikistan Program Staff.

In Tajikistan, another very important development with PCF has been a redirection through the Ministry of Finance regional and district offices. This change effectively cut out local governments (*Jamoat*), but adequate centralized authority and political will existed to sustain the change. (This is not the case in Kyrgyzstan according to local experts.)

At the national policy level, the QLP project facilitates quarterly high-level meetings on education finance in each county, sometimes sharing policy developments between countries. These meetings have been branded as the Education Finance Working Group (EFWG) and brought the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, and donor organizations together. For example, the QLP gave a presentation at the last EFWG meeting in Dushanbe on the new Teacher Salary Structure in Kyrgyzstan.

In Kyrgyzstan, in addition to working group meetings, programming has targeted the effective implementation of school finance reform, including working with other donors and ministry officials to develop per capita formulae. The EFWG was successful in providing critical support to the policy process; the Ministries and other organizations (UNICEF, AKF, WB, EU) all welcome and value the coordination effort. The rollout of per capita finance in Kyrgyzstan has been incremental. It began in 2007 with one district in Chui *Oblast*, and then expanded to all of Chui *Oblast* in 2008. In 2009, the

<sup>45</sup> Specifically, the rollout of per capita finance in Tajikistan began with 5 districts in 2005, added 7 districts in 2007, added 7 districts in 2008, added 24 districts in 2009, and added the last 25 (largest group) in 2010. There are 68 Education Districts in the country.

World Bank Rural Education Project began pilots in Issyk-Kul and Batken *Oblasts*. In 2011-2012 two cities are planned to begin per capita financing, with two *Oblasts* joining each following year for two years. Talas and Osh will join in 2012-2013 and finally Jalal-Abad and Naryn will join in 2013-2014. The plan is depicted graphically in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Kyrgyzstan and the anticipated per capita finance rollout.

<b>Oblast/Region</b>	<b>2007-2008</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>2013-2014</b>
Talas				o	o
Chui	X	X	X	X	X
Bishkek City			o	o	o
Issyk-Kul		X	X	X	X
Jalal-Abad					o
Naryn					o
Osh City			o	o	o
Osh				o	o
Batken		X	X	X	X

Source: Marchenko, L. MOES Kyrgyzstan. June 2, 2011.

Note: 'X' = implemented, 'o' = anticipated timeline for rollout.

Perhaps one of the most important roles the project has assumed is the practical training of school-level financial management. A Public Budget Hearing involves communities in transparent school financing. In Kyrgyzstan, these have occurred in a climate where teachers, parents, and community members join in open discussion of the under-financing of schools at the district level by *Ayil-okmotu* (village government).

In Kyrgyzstan per capita finance has been successfully piloted in three *oblasts*, Chui by USAID/QLP and Batken and Issyk-Kul by the World Bank/REP. In January, 2011, teachers' salaries were raised, and the teaching load was limited. The new norms regulate a certain number of non-classroom hours to teacher duties (mentoring, etc) whereas before, these tasks were unpaid. While these are welcome adjustments, there is an urgent and immediate need for explanation of the new legislation and training for school accountants at every school in the country regarding the change in teacher salary. Simultaneously, the slow expansion of PCF to two *oblasts* each year gives the complex task of management of two education finance schemes for the transition period to MOES, where capacity is still developing and more staff is needed.

MOES would prefer a shift in policy over the summer, whereby the *Ayil-okmotu* (village government) may lose their role in education finance and the flow of funds would shift to the District Education Departments. Politically this option is not as viable as the shift would require very strong political will and could be interpreted as anti-democratic.

During the project, giant steps forward were taken through the institutionalization of best practices: the teacher salary reform in Kyrgyzstan, and the full roll-out of per capita in Tajikistan. These changes occurred rapidly (and by default, upon the urgent request from the MOES in Kyrgyzstan, as a quick response to the teacher strikes). Some aspects of quality and durability of the process through which education policy is implemented could have been sacrificed in such times. As demonstrated in the Chui *oblast* in Kyrgyzstan, the two reforms have a complementary effect (and this will become clearer in fall, 2011). Teacher salary increases are sorely needed in Tajikistan while per capita finance still needs to be rolled out in Kyrgyzstan.

Table 5. Education Finance Working Group: Participation (Kyrgyzstan)

Meeting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Date	Oct 30, 2008	Jan 20, 2009	Apr 17, 2009	Dec 17, 2009	May 4, 2010	May 18, 2010	Aug 19, 2010	Mar 1, 2011
Location	Hotel	MOES - Bishkek				Chui	Resort	MOES
MOES	2	6	6	4	8	5	4	3
MOF	1	1	1		1		1	1
NALG							1	
WB		1	1	1	1			
School	1							1
Socium	2	1	1		1			1
Guests	4	32	8	16	9	19	7	18

Source: EFGW Meeting Minutes (8 meetings from October 2008 – March 2011).

Note: Numbers represent individuals listed in the meeting notes in attendance from each respective Ministry or Organization.

Table 6. Education Finance Working Group – Participation (Tajikistan)

Meeting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Date	Oct 14, 2008	Feb 20, 2009	Apr 28, 2009	Oct 23, 2009	Jan 29, 2010	Jun 17, 2010	Oct 14, 2010	Feb 2, 2011	May 11, 2011
Location	MOES	Meeting at USIAD/QLP office Dushanbe				Meeting at MOES			
MOES	3	2	2	2	3	3	4	4	4
MOF	1	1	1	1	1				
USAID	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
WB	2	2	1	1			1	1	
AKF	1			1				1	1
EU									
Guests	5	5	5	3	6	5	7	9	6

Source: EFGW Meeting Minutes (9 meetings from October 2008 – May 2011).

Note: Numbers represent individuals listed in the meeting notes in attendance from each respective Ministry or Organization.

The government looks to the Ministry of Education to roll out per capita finance and new teacher salary policies but additional financing for these efforts has not been identified. A certain level of restlessness exists among politicians and teachers, while the Ministry of Education is seeking donor assistance for the

'very quick' implementation of the new teacher salary law but the situation is a bit precarious. Teachers were said to be receiving their 'new' salary level for the month of May. The political climate does not cater to fiscal austerity as presidential elections are coming up in October 2011.

Under the circumstances, progress is impressive; the evaluation team was witness to schools that have gained fresh energy from having financial autonomy. So far, schools have experienced increases in financing. Open budget hearings were held for the first time in Central Asia and this positive practice, supporting transparency and accountability will need to be constantly re-enforced by the government on a national level.

Both Larisa Kiseleva and Jyldyz Uzbekova of QLP/Abt Associates have worked closely through the EFWG and developed a high level of trust and provided much support to MOES. Given the upcoming election and teacher strikes, stability and smooth communication are key issues. UNICEF has been another important advocate for teachers in Kyrgyzstan and is ready to help with dissemination of information to teachers on salaries. The challenges are many. Remarkable increases have been made in the effectiveness of the education finance system of late, but much more remains to be done. It is not entirely clear that the momentum gained in the past 4 to 5 years will be automatically sustained with further QLP or other mentoring support.

## 2.5 QLP Additional Tasks

### 2.5.1 Kyrgyzstan: Youth Aid Program for Education in the New Settlements

This component of QLP started in the summer of 2010 with the mission to address barriers to education access for children in new settlements through increasing opportunities for school attendance, the first time these issues were addressed in a systematic way. The main objectives of this program are:

- Support access to education in 45 new settlements;
- Build capacity of the mayor's office and local government and school SPs;
- Support access to education through small grants and programs via NGOs.

New settlements around Bishkek have grown in number since the breakup of the USSR, and a large number of them are inhabited by internal migrants who live in very poor social and hygienic conditions. Unemployed and poor youth in the new settlements are often considered to be a threat to stability and social cohesion. The work of QLP is being implemented in partnership with seven non-governmental organizations: Arysh, Ashar, Buchur, Center for Protection of Children, Institute of Detstva, EREP and Eraim.

In July of 2010, a household survey was conducted in 40 out of 48 new settlements. The study attempted to identify the number of children who do not have access to schooling. QLP was involved in helping these children with access through school registration (*propiska*), medical check-ups, and the purchase of school supplies, uniforms and shoes for children from low income families. More importantly through local Ministry and Mayoral support, 100 hours of pre-school training was provided for more than 1000 children for the first time; over 700 children from low income families received school supplies and uniforms, encouraging them to enter school.<sup>46</sup>

Moreover, QLP has been able to work closely with local governments, schools, communities, the Ministry of Labor and Migration, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, MOES and NGOs to improve

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<sup>46</sup> Data on this program were provided to the research team in an interview with the QLP Country Director for Kyrgyzstan,

schooling in the new settlements. A necessary next step is the development of a campaign strategy to lobby and advocate for project sustainability, i.e. to protect child rights for education, to reduce dropouts and more importantly, to provide quality learning opportunities as well as school access to these children.

The QLP has contributed to the creation of better social cohesion between populations of Bishkek and the new settlements, helping to reduce community divisions and stereotypical relations. Trainings were provided for social pedagogues at schools whose job is to increase community awareness of local education issues, creating a more conducive and pleasant environment at schools, but it remains to be seen how sustainable this initiative will be without future assistance.

### 2.5.2 Kyrgyzstan: *Creation of Positive Socio-Psychological Atmosphere in Schools during Post-Conflict Period in Jalal-Abad Oblast (JAP)*

In the summer of 2010, tragic inter-ethnic clashes took place in the south of Kyrgyzstan, costing the lives of several hundreds of people. Large numbers of people were also displaced and many buildings, houses, and school buildings were destroyed. Therefore, urgent measures were necessary to make it possible for children to go to school.

The clashes have since subsided, but fear, tension, psychological trauma, and mistrust remains, especially between ethnic groups. A needs assessment in south Kyrgyzstan, conducted by the Consulting Company Five Business Group indicated that the situation in many schools in the area had become worse. In addition to poor quality education, the schools have also become unsafe places. The need to improve inter-ethnic tolerance and peace-building was evident. School administrators and teachers called for inter-ethnic harmony and tolerance courses integrated into school curriculum.

QLP Kyrgyzstan plans to work in Jalal-Abad *oblast* in cohorts 1 and 2, but cohort 2 was adjusted to address this post-conflict component. The aim was to respond to the post-crisis situation with activities aimed at creation of sustained and institutionalized outcomes, rather than a one-time event. Thus, a 4-day training program for school administrators and key community members was designed and developed. Trainings were conducted in three languages (Kyrgyz, Russian and Uzbek) for 372 schools (for a total of more than 1900 participants). The main goal of these initiatives was to assist in easing the tensions and removing the fear factor in the post-conflict situation so that schools in the Jalal-Abad *oblast* could be open on 1<sup>st</sup> September of 2010 as safe and neutral places for teachers, children, and their parents to attend.

The work of QLP in this aspect was crucial. As one school principal stated “The training [of QLP] was designed and conducted at just the right time. To me, the training content is like helping a person who is searching for water in the desert, or how to provide medical treatment when a patient is ill.”<sup>47</sup>

In 2011, follow up activities conducted in Jalal-Abad *oblast* included further training for social pedagogues, support for the *Oblast* (province) Methodology Centre and *rayon* (district) education officials to monitor the situation in schools, and organization of regional and national information-sharing forums for social pedagogues.

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<sup>47</sup> Presentation of Terrance Giles at the Comparative and International Education Society conference, Montreal, Canada, 2011

In this component, QLP shifted its focus from quality to access due to the very critical conditions in the south of Kyrgyzstan. The contribution of QLP to the stabilization of the situation, which may not be easily seen on the surface, was critical and timely.

### 2.5.3 Tajikistan: Safe School Program

The Safe School program was set up as an additional task in 2009 to address school-related gender-based violence. In Tajikistan, UNICEF's school-based student health survey in 2005 reported that about 24 percent of students had concerns about violence and physical fights, and approximately 12 percent had serious worries which affected their sleep including, thoughts of suicide, and interrupted activities, such as schooling.

The overall purpose of the Safe School Program was to introduce the USAID-funded DOORWAYS materials<sup>48</sup> "in a contextual way, leaving local materials in local languages and training capacity to disseminate them further." The DOORWAYS materials were developed to provide school and community stakeholders with the understanding and tools to create a safe environment for all girls and boys that promote gender-equitable relationships and reduce School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV).<sup>49</sup> The expected results were improved educational outcomes supported by both an improved school culture (becoming a safe zone) and improved relations between school staff (including teachers, nurses, and psychologists) and school children in upper grades.

The Safe School intervention focused resources on a 'healthy school environment' by 'introducing sustainable mechanisms to support the quality of the education process.' The four key components were: revision of the Healthy Lifestyle Curriculum (partnering with UNICEF), provision of adequate sanitary conditions, access to health services for students, and a school policy that articulated the culture of respect and security.

The program was a success. The Safe School modules restructured from DOORWAYS materials of were well received by recipients in Dushanbe. Some student-targeted information was integrated into Healthy Life Style program for 10-11 grades by UNICEF. Beyond health, the program included important life skills such as goal setting, career planning, and contributing to society.

A manual for teachers was integrated to the Institute for In-Service Teacher Training courses in psychology and through seminar work. Various agencies (for example, the Ministry of Health and Child Protection Services) had an opportunity to enhance their working relationships. The Safe School program enjoyed the support of the president of the Academy of Education, Irina Karimova, who fostered links with the women's committee and drafted a Teacher's Code of Ethics to be legislated nationwide.

The training gave teachers and parents the know-how and awareness to respond to school-related gender-based violence. Participants noted that their attitudes shifted from concern for their own family to concern for their community and their school. Pre- and post-survey results reported a temporary increase in knowledge about school-related gender-based violence and change in attitudes about what should be done to lessen it.<sup>50</sup> Changes in behaviors were reported by participants, but were not systematically measured.

The student module has been developed and prepared for dissemination and awareness through the Academy of Education. The potential for impact on youth is great, and development of student materials

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<sup>48</sup> Developed by USAID Women in Development (WID), Washington, D.C.

<sup>49</sup> Quarterly Report, January 1-March 31, 2010. USAID Quality Learning Project (QLP). Creative Associates International and Abt Associates.

<sup>50</sup> Haarr, R.N. (2010) *Safe schools and the reduction of school-related gender-based violence in Tajikistan: An evaluation of impact of training on teachers and community members*. Creative Associates International, Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

and student trainings could be very powerful, especially in areas affected by conflict or crisis. Elements of the Safe School program could be developed further and carried into the next USAID program term with a mind to improve equitable access for learners in environments affected by crisis and conflict (Global Strategy Goal #3).

In the city of Qurgan-Teppe, the program was exceptionally successful and the community training continued without Safe School's staff. Furthermore, in-depth study of this site may identify strengths that could inform the Safe School approach in further programming. Challenges remain however. Interview respondents mentioned that traditions vary within Tajikistan, with some areas being more 'conservative' or 'traditional' than others. If expanded to a national scale, piloting in some regions and not others would need to take into account and be prepared to offer differentiated (micro-context) approaches. Cultural norms in Tajikistan do not always encourage open discussion of domestic conflict.

In schools, nurses and psychologists are vastly underpaid (as are teachers) and changing and elevating expectations for these individuals is difficult for obvious material reasons. Furthermore, in many schools one or both of these positions remain vacant, or when they are filled, they work only part time. One school nurse, earning about 20 USD per month, reported that she had done more work in the school since December (when the seminar took place), than in all of her tenure as school nurse since 1972, in the same school.

"I used to measure their temperature, blood pressure, and dispense pills. Now, I sit down with the child, and we talk. First I ask, "What did you have for breakfast?" *Safe School Trainee, after 42 years as School Nurse, Dushanbe.*

## 2.6 Summary of Findings, Answering the Research Questions

Below, the research questions of the project evaluation are listed and answered in narrative form individually. Following the seven research questions, three additional USAID questions are listed, and answered.

### **RQ1. To what extent has the USAID/QLP achieved its intended results?**

More than one year remains to the completion of QLP's activities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, but the conclusion can already be drawn, that despite all constraints and difficulties, QLP has achieved its intended results. Evidence of program achievements was available in conversations with the beneficiaries as well as the project staff, who are very invested and proud of their work. The original goal was broad: to expand 'access to quality primary and secondary education (in the three countries) and to build the capacity of pre-service and in-service teacher training systems to enable students to achieve higher order thinking such as application, synthesis, problem solving and critical thinking.'<sup>51</sup> The work of QLP has been very well received across different education levels starting with the Ministry of Education down to school teachers.

#### **ON QLP:**

**"I do not see it as a foreign organization. I think it is one of ours. QLP is part of the Tajik system. That is how I feel about it."**

IRINA KARIMOVA, PRESIDENT,  
ACADEMY OF EDUCATION,  
TAJIKISTAN

Moreover, QLP has done more than what it aimed to due to changing circumstances (e.g. MOES request for salary reform, or the additional tasks in Kyrgyzstan) or by having multiplier or ripple effects on indirect beneficiaries. The results of QLP are good, although the contextual circumstances have changed so much that QLP has sometimes been chasing a moving target. For example, access to education was

<sup>51</sup> USAID Quality Learning Project QLP Quarterly Report, January 1-March 31, 2011.

increased to youth in the new settlements and to students in the post-conflict south of Kyrgyzstan and to girls in Tajikistan through the Safe School program.

## **RQ2. To what extent have the governments of KG/TJ adopted the materials?**

QLP has done a lot of excellent work producing materials (e.g., improved education standards and training modules for ITTIs, subject work plans for PTTIs, a teachers' ethics code in Tajikistan, the Olympiad regulations in Kyrgyzstan, and so on). These materials are either already approved and being used or are in the final stages of approval. Most materials have been adapted to a great extent by governments, in the form of approvals through the academy, the teacher training institutes, and ongoing revisions of education standards. To name a few of the new interventions:

### *Kyrgyzstan:*

- Six in-service training courses have been incorporated into the curriculum of two new regional ITTIs (Talas and Naryn) and will be used in 2011 academic year in 5 ITTIs.
- The Kyrgyz Academy of Education has approved for dissemination of four Syllabus Guides, four Formative Assessment Guides, and the Mentoring Toolkit.
- The updated standard programs have been approved in three PTTIs (for target departments).
- The new salary structure includes elements related to PCF and mentoring that will assist institutionalization of key aspects of project interventions. Mentoring is now a part of teachers' paid work.

### *Tajikistan:*

- Primary Education Standards have been approved by the MOE Collegium.
- Primary, Math (secondary), Tajik language (secondary), and School Principals' in-service training curricula have been approved by the Republican Institute for In-service Teacher Training Scientific Board. School Principals training has been further disseminated by the FTI-3 program.
- The mentoring training package (Primary, Math (secondary), and Tajik Language (secondary)) has been approved by Republican Teaching and Methodology Centre for dissemination to all *rayons*.
- The accounting training module and the Parent Teacher Association training module have been approved by MOE.
- A graphic module of the PFC Automated Expenditure Tracking program has been integrated into the Education Management Information System (EMIS) by the MOE.

Moreover, the active approach taken by participants for development of these materials was a great success, involving numbers of staff from the local state institutions. This increased their capacity as well as ownership for the new materials. Moreover, while developing these materials, feedback from various stakeholders in education including the teacher practitioners was included, making the materials relevant, meaningful, useful, and clear to all. In the final year of operation, QLP staffs in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have plans to reproduce a large number of these materials and make them broadly available.

## **RQ3. What are the outcomes of USAID/QLP capacity building efforts?**

Many project activities are considered 'complete' when their term is over but unfortunately not much may remain in the aftermath. Learning from the lessons of previous projects and with an aim to make its work sustainable and part of the system, the QLP has managed to initiate a number of capacity-building efforts, both through the IRs and outside them, and at a number of levels. The strengthening of pedagogical institutes through their involvement in the QLP process, the training of various school and local government officials as well as teachers, and the work in per capita financing (PCF), which has involved both Governments and communities (budget hearings), have all built capacity at multiple levels.

The capacity building efforts have spread outside of the project boundaries to additional schools and institutions, and a demand has risen for access to QLP approaches at various levels of the educational system.

#### **RQ4. Has QLP contributed to increased early grade reading outcomes?**

This evaluation did not look at this question specifically. Moreover, the very brief evaluation time limited the possibility to look at any evidence of increased reading outcomes. The CEATM tests on reading outcomes were not yet ready by the time this evaluation was conducted. In conclusion:

- Respondents in schools noted that improved reading outcomes were not yet evident as a result of QLP interventions.
- Respondents in pedagogical colleges noted that reading outcomes will take time to improve and do not expect to see changes in early grade learning yet.

#### **RQ5. Is QLP an appropriate intervention?**

The QLP seems the most appropriate intervention in comparison with other, often much larger, projects of the international organizations in Central Asia. QLP has planned and worked consistently on capacity building and revising already-existing structures by attempting to adapt and improve them. By operating within the system and in local languages, QLP appears to have become a very important and necessary ‘partner’ in reform efforts for local education authorities and a very valuable resource for practitioners.

The QLP also had to maneuver and strategize due to changing circumstances, including the sometimes limited or contradictory involvement of other organizations, but in the end managed to achieve impressive project goals. QLP was able to show other donor agencies how they could work successfully within the system to achieve real change. Integrated and adaptive implementation allowed the QLP to coherently address the goal of improving the quality of education in the two countries.

#### **RQ6. How has QLP supported pedagogic colleges and a safe schools program in Tajikistan?**

Surprisingly, the QLP was virtually the very first large intervention to focus on pre-service teacher education in both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In Kyrgyzstan, the project worked with three universities with large numbers of teaching specializations,<sup>52</sup> while in Tajikistan, the QLP works with the pedagogic universities of Dushanbe and Qurgan-Teppe, as well as a Pedagogic College<sup>53</sup> in Dushanbe. This evaluation found that the Pedagogic College in Dushanbe was most receptive to the changes.

**“Today third year students of the Dushanbe Pedagogical College passed an exam on methodology of teaching Tajik language. The course was led by our master trainer Farosat Olimova. The Head of the Exam commission was the representative of the TSPU Mr. Saidov Saidrakhmon. He so admired the students' knowledge that put 15 students [at] the highest score!! He said, "I am simply amazed with the knowledge and skills the students possess thanks to the USAID/QLP project!"**

DILRABO INOMOVA, COUNTRY DIRECTOR, USAID PROJECT, TAJIKISTAN VIA EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

<sup>52</sup> Unlike in Tajikistan, there is no single pedagogic university in Kyrgyzstan nowadays. Arabaev University was the last university which had a pedagogic university status, but it was changed after the break-up of the USSR when most pedagogic institutions had changed into universities in order to be able to open non-teaching specializations to attract more students (e.g., law, economics and so on) and thus earning money.

<sup>53</sup> Pedagogic College used to be a Pedagogic School during the USSR, and mostly teachers of primary classes are prepared. Students are enrolled after they complete Grade 9 as well as Grade 11.

The Safe School Program was implemented at target schools with the help of Academy of Education and regional ITTIs. Training manuals were developed and training was conducted. A Teachers' Code of Ethics was developed. Thus, sufficient evidence supports the success of the Safe Schools program so far; however, the sustainability of the program is still in question. The evaluation team also wonders whether the Safe Schools program could be introduced at the PTTIs, e.g., under their required discipline areas of Psychology and/or Pedagogy.

### **RQ7. What is the QLP impact on pre-service teacher education in Kyrgyzstan?**



**Local experts preparing a training course for pre-service teachers. Osh State University.**

The QLP in Kyrgyzstan has laid the foundation for stronger pre-service delivery in Kyrgyzstan. Models of improved practice as well as materials for teachers and practicum supervisors have been presented to institutions that should assist them to take on new approaches of teacher preparation. On an individual level, Arabaev University, located in Bishkek, has been more resistant to these changes; in contrast, the regional universities in Jalal-Abad and Osh therefore seem to be more receptive to the changes due to a faster pace of up-take. QLP staffing changes in Kyrgyzstan as well as in Tajikistan have affected this component.

#### *Additional USAID Questions*

### **Q8. Please include if there is a potential to continue doing what QLP is currently doing? Potential to expand? In what ways?**

The potential to continue what QLP is already doing is enormous. Unfortunately, the project began late; therefore only two years between pre- and post-test were available for one cohort in Kyrgyzstan and two cohorts in Tajikistan.

The possibility for local, contextualized, in-depth research, which can be undertaken with Ministry, university, and Academy of Education partnerships, should be considered. Building research capacity is important for the education policy community. The partnerships can be international in nature, and involve research universities (academics, graduate students), and Ministry staff to address their desire for evidence-based decision-making. Research on Teacher Shortages was conducted in this way with UNICEF and government partners.

Research could investigate important questions which will support evidence-based decision-making in the countries. For example, what sub-populations at the pre-service teacher education institutions could be most efficiently targeted? What is the role of correspondence degrees and distance learning in teaching universities? USAID could include funding for longer-term in-depth quality research on key topics related to educational development in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to supplement the quick evaluation studies.

### **Q9. What will the project not accomplish because of time constraints?**

- Per capita financing: In Kyrgyzstan, technical assistance is needed to further sustain accomplishments, but in Tajikistan, if PCG remains a small component, the reform might be reversed. Monitoring needs to be more formal and strenuous to ensure results.

- Teacher training: Further systematic action on the training modules is necessary. The process is becoming stronger, but more needs to be done.
- Pre-service training: Only the surface has been scratched as yet. Focus on pre-service training is the long term answer.

### **Q10. What needs to be done to ensure sustainability in the effectiveness of the education finance system?**

Responses to this general question are of course not within QLP/USAID control but rather the responsibilities of the respective governments. However, QLP's current efforts are viewed as valuable and careful expansion of these same efforts would continue to strengthen the effectiveness of the education finance system. The QLP has developed excellent technical approaches and training materials; these in tandem with the respect and collaboration of governments that the project has engendered should serve as a strong foundation for sustainability. Institutionalization of processes will of course need committed funds and will-power by governments. The QLP can monitor progress and continue to supply technical support. The new salary structure for teachers has been a key step and through the provision of increased incentives should assist to increase teacher retention and professional development.

## **III. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The new USAID global strategy lays out broad intervention directions through three interrelated goals:

1. Improved reading skills for children in primary grades;
2. Improved ability of tertiary and workforce programs to produce;
3. Increased equitable access for learners in environments affected by crisis and conflict.

The recommendations are organized into short-term and long-term horizons and cover new strategy Goals 1 and 3 above. The additional tasks (*Youth Aid*, *Creating Positive Atmosphere at School* and *Safe School Program*), despite having different foci, have one common thread, which is they all deal with making schools better and safer places, and provide better access to schooling. Project work on the additional tasks have positioned the QLP team to generate good ideas for future programming under Goal 3, described as 'increased equitable access for learners in environments affected by crisis and conflict'<sup>54</sup>. The provision of basic education, however, when strengthened, should be a durable source of stability and recovery without the need to develop extensive short-term alternative (emergency) forms of basic education. Country specific recommendations for future projects are listed below, after several general recommendations that pertain to both countries.

The *short term* for the purposes of this report is understood to be the present until September 2012 when the current project will end. For USAID, this is also a period during which the implementers must develop their 'exit strategy.'

The *long term* can be understood as a five-year horizon, but with even longer-term visions about overall development approaches for increased sustainability. The capacity to identify areas for change and improvement and to plan, negotiate and implement those changes is the longer-term goal for ministries of education. USAID should work together with other donors to contribute to more participatory approaches to the reform and advocate for building capacity for such sustainability.

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<sup>54</sup> USAID *Global Education Strategy 2011*, Organizational Chart. Note: Perhaps some activities can be launched in this area in concert with the UN and INEE Education in Emergencies efforts, including those coordinated by the Global Education Cluster. Whether or not USAID collaborates with UNICEF and Save the Children from the 'Cluster' it would be useful for each to be apprised of the other's activities (further area of donor coordination). There is room for preparedness and disaster risk reduction (DRR) within the normal delivery of education and this is an area USAID could capitalize on.

## GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- USAID needs to continue support to the implementer to provide incentives in order to retain the strong staff who are the core of the project's success and whose presence is especially crucial in the project's final year.
- The recommendation is made that USAID found or develop existing Teacher Centers. Many of the beneficiaries thought that a teacher resource center would be timely (with all the materials developed by QLP) and that the center should go into the Pedagogical College in Tajikistan. The Pedagogical College is also a good choice because the majority of graduates become teachers, as opposed to entering other professions. This is evidenced by the fact that 110 out of 119 graduates in 2009 are working in schools now<sup>55</sup>. The Teacher Center (or by another name to be determined) could be useful for teachers who would attend workshops or visit for the practical purposes of his or her development of supplementary materials (class handouts), building on the excellent work done under IR3, *Greater Involvement of Teachers in Curriculum Reform*. Another suggested strategy for this recommendation is to incorporate the ICT centers and the Teacher Centers into one unit, which serves teachers. Further, should the Center care to be focused on one subject specifically, for example Kyrgyz or Tajik Language, then, it could also support the establishment of subject-specific teacher associations at the level of *Oblast*.
- Document the mechanism for student-centered upgrading of curriculum materials to make them more readily available to the colleges and to other donors, so that these organizations can take on these tasks themselves, especially for subjects not yet targeted. While nominally not within the scope of the project, a more visible and accessible step-by-step process for materials production would be an invaluable legacy of QLP. Both the RTTI in Tajikistan and the KAE in Kyrgyzstan have a model and experienced staff for the production of up-dated in-service materials; these organizations could be supported to disseminate this process. The time is right for other subjects, sciences in particular, to seek similar upgrading, the way that Primary Education, Kyrgyz and Tajik Language, and Mathematics enjoyed during the QLP activities. In particular, Chemistry and Physics and the other 'reading intensive' subjects such as History, Biology, and Motherland Studies would benefit from such treatment. With the right 'tools' theoretically the work could be carried on by other projects or through a built-in strategy where in-service teacher training instructors and methodological units would try to pick up the tasks without technical assistance.
- USAID should scrutinize carefully the Education Strategy in both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to find common interests and priorities concerning education, to position their goals with those expressed by the respective Ministries of Education.

## SHORT TERM

### *Kyrgyzstan short term*

- Attention should be paid to education finance; an area of need in which QLP has some exceptional advantages (for the time being). Further assistance in developing public education finance capacity in Kyrgyzstan. The EU wants to invest money in the education system of Kyrgyzstan, but needs the public finance system to be functional and transparent in order to transfer the funds. Having passed over education once already. The EU will make a second

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<sup>55</sup> As reported in Dushanbe, at the Pedagogical College by the Career Coordinator M. Masimov, on May 28, 2011.

attempt in September 2011. Both Larisa Kiseleva and Jyldyz Uzbekova of QLP/Abt Associates have worked through the EFWG with the Ministry of Education and Sciences in recent months. A high level of trust has been built. This is an urgent need, given the upcoming election (October 2011) and the possibility that the widespread teacher strikes that happened in the winter of 2010-2011 may repeat.

*Tajikistan short term*

- The Academy of Education seems to hope for more substantial support. The relationship is very trusting, perhaps dependent. How can the Academy of Education in Tajikistan further be supported to achieve its goals? This is a question that QLP staff in Tajikistan could contribute to, as could a thorough needs assessment for the next USAID initiative.

**LONG TERM**

*Kyrgyzstan long term*

- Future USAID projects should work on summative assessment and development of criteria and tools for effective summative assessment. The quality of summative tests could be improved by introducing higher order thinking questions, as has begun under QLP work, and teachers could use those tests not only for assessment purposes, but as a teaching tool as well (e.g. open test, or using tests' results for identifying students' weaknesses or discussing the test results in the classrooms). This is especially important in light of the standardized tests (multiple-choice) that students are taking for international comparison (e.g. PISA), and national tests in Kyrgyzstan such as National Sample Based Assessment or National Scholarship Tests conducted by CEATM. Unfortunately, teachers in the majority of schools do not develop and use these types of written tests.
- The time is premature to say that teachers now have conceptualized their role as active implementers of curriculum, especially in light of curriculum reform uncertainties, i.e. both approvals of national curriculum framework and subject curricula. Therefore, a more active role of teachers in development the curriculum is needed, not only to 'update' it once, but to understand the sources of curriculum content and how to manage them, for continuous curriculum development.
- One of the most successful marks of the QLP in Kyrgyzstan was closely linked to the use of the local language in deliverables. The language of the materials and the delivery matters. Usage of Kyrgyz and Tajik created a culture at QLP of accessibility, visibility, and respect. USAID should seriously consider in the future continuation of this initiative, whereby large parts of the project are to be conducted in local languages by local experts.

*Tajikistan long term*

- The next project should include teacher training, especially pre-service, with a focus on Tajik language for literacy and primary grade reading. While many partners in education development are working in Tajikistan on various, sometimes overlapping, components, the QLP materials and products are esteemed and sought out by educators in both countries. In order to foster understanding of the need to expand literacy strategies, an investigation into literacy strategies including local reading and literacy expert input could serve as the groundwork.
- The focus on quality is very important. The measurement of quality (for example, measuring reading levels) should be conceived together with partners such as CEATM in Kyrgyzstan so

that project monitoring and evaluation goals coincide with and can be integrated into school monitoring and evaluation. In this way, generated improvements will be measured and will be accessible to all the stakeholders/beneficiaries.

- All three additional tasks of QLP are crucial, and they should continue, but perhaps could be merged. For example, Safe School modules might be used in Kyrgyzstan target areas, or expanded to pre-service teacher education curriculum.
- Testing and measuring literacy will likely be a busy area for Tajikistan and USAID. Formative assessment proved to be successful, but summative assessment, especially developing tests to gauge higher order thinking could be pursued to a greater extent. Moreover, to achieve more equitable and fair assessment and selection into higher education, standardized and independent testing initiatives are recommended in Tajikistan (similar to National Scholarship Testing in Kyrgyzstan). Tajikistan has an underfunded, non-independent testing center to build on. USAID could also take an initiative in establishing an independent testing center similar to CEATM. Such a testing center could conduct fair, objective, independent tests with school graduates so that strong candidates are selected to compete for state grants for higher education.
- The two-country approach could continue or separate country programs could be established. The options are suggested in greater detail in the recommendations. Regardless of the structure of interventions, as there has been so much learning from one country to another (e.g. working on education standards, new salary structure, per capita), it is recommended that the USAID country teams continue to interact about every 6 months.

#### **Intermediate Result 1**

- The QLP should continue to work on building capacity of the local institutions by using its holistic approach of involving education stakeholders at various national, regional and local levels.
- More emphasis should be given to the pre-service component and an attempt should be made to improve course deliveries as well as standards and documentation.

#### **Intermediate Result 2**

- Constructive dialogues with the World Bank education project team should occur. The concepts of formative assessment should be clarified so that teachers and students are not confused. So far QLP has worked on formative assessment without any grading of student learning. In the future, grading of formative and summative assessment and its effects on education quality should also be pursued. Most importantly, teachers should also learn how to develop criteria for grading and use grading of students' performance effectively, fairly and objectively.
- Assessment initiatives and materials need to be institutionalized at the local education authorities (Kyrgyz Academy of Education) so that they become part of the system.
- The recommendation is made that new regulation for Olympiads be developed by the QLP team together with the MOES specialists, pushing for approval until it becomes part of the system. This will send a message and will drive reform in other areas (for example, examination-led reform).

- Future USAID projects should work on summative assessment, developing criteria and tools for an effective process. The quality of summative tests could be improved by introducing higher order thinking questions into them, and teachers could use those tests not only for assessment purposes but as teaching tools as well (e.g. open test, or using tests' results for identifying students' weaknesses or discussing the test results in the classroom. This is especially important, as noted, in light of the many standardized tests (multiple-choice) that students are taking for international comparison (e.g. PISA), as well as national tests in Kyrgyzstan such as the National Sample Based Assessment or National Scholarship Tests conducted by CEATM. Again, teachers in the majority of schools do not develop and use tests.

### **Intermediate Result 3**

- It is premature to say that teachers now have conceptualized their role as active implementers of curriculum, especially in light of curriculum reform uncertainties, i.e. both approvals of national curriculum frameworks and subject curricula. Therefore, future programming should continue to include more active roles for teachers in curriculum reform.

### **Intermediate Result 4**

- Per capita finance has been successfully piloted in three oblasts; Chui by USAID/QLP, and Batken and Issyk-Kul by the World Bank/REP. Now QLP can be involved in advocating for the national expansion of PCF in Kyrgyzstan.
- In addition, QLP may continue to make contributions to the much-needed teacher salary reform initiatives, and assist respective ministries and government agencies in explaining what the new salary scheme means at the school level. Much confusion about salary reform exists on the part of teachers and even in the local education offices.
- The recommendation is made that the advantages of the per capita finance system be the focus of rigorous research. An in-depth study should be conducted in the pilot areas of per capita financing in Kyrgyzstan to explore its effects on educational quality. So far, there is not strong evidence for this. If a study was conducted that could identify if there has been significant improvement of education quality due to per capita financing (e.g. teachers teaching better because they have more incentive, and also students' learning affected because schools improved), then it would be an excellent argument for expanding PCF to all of Kyrgyzstan.

### **ADDITIONAL TASKS**

Both additional tasks in Kyrgyzstan are very timely, relevant and necessary. USAID should work on the improvement of quality of education in the new settlements in the future, especially since QLP has gained valuable experience of working in this field.

#### *Kyrgyzstan long term*

- One of the most successful marks of QLP in Kyrgyzstan was closely linked to the language of its deliveries. The language of the materials and the delivery matters. That the operating languages are Kyrgyz and Tajik created a culture at QLP of accessibility, visibility, and respect. USAID should consider continuing this initiative in the future, so that at least a large portion of the project could be conducted in local languages by local experts.
- QLP has done impressive work so far in all its components, but unfortunately educational change and its impacts do not normally take just a few years. There is a strong need to conduct follow up initiatives, especially at the school level.

- Together with other donor agencies, it is important to advocate for and contribute to more participatory approaches to educational reform and to build capacity for sustainability.

*Tajikistan short term*

**Intermediate Result 1**

- ITTI and PTTI have improved a lot, and this work should continue. Otherwise, much of the good work could just be wasted and forgotten. Therefore, follow-up activities are much needed.
- More emphasis should be given to the pre-service component and there should be an effort to improve course deliveries as well as standards and documentation.

**Intermediate Result 2**

- Together with MOE staff, QLP should work on the revision of Olympiad regulations. The successful experience of Kyrgyzstan could be used as a model. . A large percentage of questions that require thinking (not only memory and recall oriented) should be integrated into Olympiad tasks. Then, these new regulations should be approved and implemented.
- By far QLP has worked on formative assessment without any grading of the students learning. Perhaps, in the future, grading of formative and summative assessment and its effects on education quality could also be pursued. Teachers need to learn how to develop criteria for grading and use grading of students performance effectively, fairly, and objectively.
- Institutionalization of assessment initiatives and materials at the local education authorities is needed so that they become part of the system
- Future USAID projects should work on summative assessment and developing criteria and tools for effective summative assessment. The quality of summative tests could be improved by introducing higher order thinking questions to them, and teachers could use those tests not only for assessment purposes, but as a teaching tool as well (e.g. open test, or using tests' results for identifying students' weakness or discussing the test results in the classrooms).
- USAID should also take the initiative in establishing an independent testing center similar to CEATM in Kyrgyzstan which seems to be by far the most successful USAID initiative of its type in Central Asia. A similar testing center could conduct fair, objective, independent tests with school leavers so that strong candidates are selected to compete for state grants.

**Intermediate Result 3**

- USAID could lend support to advocacy around more participatory approaches to curriculum reform initiatives and development of education strategies.
- QLP should also work on the improvement of textbook development procedures; reportedly a process in which the project is already involved. Teachers are currently left out of textbook-producing procedures but those who have participated in QLP have gained valuable knowledge and experience in developing standards and training modules which should be taken advantage of and developed.

**Intermediate Result 4**

- QLP should continue working on further improving the mechanism of per capita financing, e.g. abolishing coefficients for lyceum.
- QLP should also work on teacher salary reforms in Tajikistan. However, the work on linking quality of teaching and learning to salary reform should also be maintained, i.e. development of mechanisms for rewarding strong teachers who work hard.
- An in-depth research study could be conducted in the pilot areas of per capita financing in Kyrgyzstan to explore the effects of the system on education quality. So far, there is not strong evidence on this.

#### SAFE SCHOOL PROGRAM: TAJIKISTAN

The module for students was developed, and the Academy is working with the international community to find resources for publishing the textbook and disseminate the developed modules. The Academy works with UNFPA which is willing to support the government in publication of textbook Grade 10 – 11 that will include the context of the developed module. The potential for impact on youth is great and development of student materials and student trainings could be very powerful, especially in areas affected by conflict or crisis.

- Elements of the safe school program should be developed further and carried into the next USAID program term with a mind to equitable access for learners in environments affected by crisis and conflict (Global Strategy Goal #3).

#### *Tajikistan long term*

- Support pre-service teacher training, including through the pedagogical colleges, the safe school program for a network of safe schools, and libraries. Bring the importance of reading to all ‘reading subjects.’
- QLP should continue to work on building capacity of the local institutions by using its holistic approach of involving education stakeholders at various national, regional, and local levels.

## IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

While the ‘impact’ lies ahead, many innovative and lasting education reforms have been brought to bear through USAID/QLP. This is due mostly to the project’s agility in re-positioning its strengths to address changing and chaotic circumstances. Because of dedication and the high standards of a hard-working staff and gentle management, and a political willingness to try new things (Ministries of Education in both countries as well as Ministry of Finance<sup>56</sup>), the program has been a success and there is sufficient evidence to support this claim. QLP has not only been able to develop products and train people but has also led and contributed to ongoing discussions about standards, curriculum reform and education reforms in general. The project has been, however, a bit ambitious given the timeframe and volatility in the region.

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<sup>56</sup> As a note, the QLP in Kyrgyzstan did not start according to plan. It took almost one year to get permission from the then Ministry of Education and Science.

As a project, QLP has been reflective and learned from its own missteps and successes, as well as from the lessons of other projects that are operating concurrently or functioned before QLP. One vivid example of this, shared on many occasions, is that QLP has built on organizational knowledge generated by the PEAKS project. From the very beginning, QLP started working within 'the system' and decided to develop capacity within existing, local institutions. This has been a good strategy, and in the words of one consultant, QLP found 'momentum.' Losing this momentum would be unfortunate as QLP has worked very actively to make a sustainable impact on the system.

In a testimonial to its successes to date, the influence of the QLP has had a ripple or multiplier effect outside of its own program framework. This has occurred at many levels and in international organizations as well as in local institutions; from the national level to non-targeted, neighbouring schools and teachers. This should be what most development programs hope for but seldom achieve.

**" Because...it is easy to explain things looking backward, we think that we can then predict them forward. It doesn't work, as many economists know to their cost. The world keeps changing. It is one of the paradoxes of success that the things and the ways that got you where you are, are seldom those that keep you there."**

CHARLES HANDY (1940) THE AGE OF PARADOX, BOSTON: HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL PRESS

## THE EVALUATION TEAM

The evaluation team was composed of three members, with complementary skills and previous experiences. Considering the team had never met before the start of the data collection period, and the fast paced work calendar, the team worked quite well together.

Sean A. Tate completed his Ph.D. at University of Pittsburgh International and Development Education. He brings over 40 years of international experience in education and human capacity development, including in cross-sector work in education, policy, evaluation and assessment. He also has special expertise in evaluation and organizational development. Dr. Tate brings in-depth knowledge of USAID and UN agencies (UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF), the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank. Dr. Tate is an expert with an emphasis on Asia, but has also worked in Africa including projects in Ethiopia, Botswana, Cameroon, Kenya, and Swaziland. Sean is fluent in Bahasa Indonesia, Bahasa Melayu, French, Swahili and Amharic.

Duishon A. Shamatov brings his Ph.D. from University of Toronto, Canada Institute for Studies in Education Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, and adds 18 years of experience in education reform in the Central Asian region. Dr. Shamatov has extensive evaluation and research experience in many countries. He is fluent in English, Russian and other languages. Currently he is a Research Fellow at the University of Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. There his research focuses on primary, secondary and higher education, curriculum, education quality, teacher training, professional development of teachers, students' achievement, equity issues in education.

Erin Weeks-Earp is a PhD student in Comparative and International Education at Columbia University Teachers College. She worked in Russia for American Councils for International Education, and was based at the Herzen State Pedagogical University. She recently participated in an international research project on teacher working conditions in six CEECIS countries region with UNICEF. Her dissertation research is on teachers in Post-Soviet education systems. Erin is fluent in Russian and French.

## ANNEXES

### ANNEX A: STATEMENT OF WORK

*Excerpt: Quality Learning Program and Early Grade Reading Review, Technical Proposal, JBS International, Submitted April 12, 2011* This excerpt focuses on the principal work of the current team; an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevancy, and results of the USAID/CAR Quality Learning Program, and making recommendations for the future to USAID within the framework of its global education strategy.

The purpose of this effort is to conduct an assessment of current Basic Education programming and test the status of early grade reading of young children in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in order to develop conclusions and recommendations for future programming of USAID/CAR. The main goal of this task is to assist USAID to make decisions that are effective, efficient and relevant to the development of future early grade reading programs in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The task has three objectives:

1. Assess the effectiveness, efficiency, relevancy and results of the current USAD/CAR Quality Learning Program;
2. Determine the current status of early grade reading and comprehension of children in grades one to three in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan; and
3. Provide recommendations for future successful USAID/CAR early grade reading program planning and implementation based on the results of the above two activities.

#### A. Background

Education systems in both Tajikistan (TJ) and Kyrgyzstan (KG) have undergone fundamental changes over the last two decades since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Both countries have reform-minded governments and national education strategic plans are in place to guide system improvement. Both countries have received substantial support from multilateral and bilateral donors targeting increased access and quality in the education sector. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have both managed slow if inconsistent economic growth over the last decade; factors related to transitioning economies, weak financial management capacity, and financial short-falls however all constrain governments' desires to more fully support education reform. Both countries have received EFA Fast Track Initiative grants, assisting to make up for the gaps in education financing. The two countries remain the poorest in the Central Asian Region.<sup>57</sup>

Despite positive inputs from donors, the education systems in both countries are in precarious situations. Primary enrollments have reached 97% in Tajikistan with nearly gender parity; secondary enrollments have reached 82% but the gender gap is significant with nearly 10% fewer females than males attending.<sup>58</sup> In Kyrgyzstan, primary enrollment has apparently peaked at 83% while secondary enrollments are slowly declining and now are at 79%. The rural-urban divide is of much greater concern in Kyrgyzstan. On several national and international tests, for example, the academic performance gap between rural and urban students may be equivalent to at least two years of schooling.<sup>59</sup>

Teacher professional preparation and classroom expertise are major constraints to quality education provision in both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. In 2005, only about two-thirds of teachers in both countries had higher education degrees (TJ: 62%, KG: 68%).<sup>60</sup> Modern teaching methodologies such as child-centered teaching and modern practices like distance learning are not generally in use.<sup>61</sup> Poor system incentives (salary, workloads, and resources) drive many teachers out of the profession to find other work and do not attract new candidates into the

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<sup>57</sup> Kyrgyzstan's progress was brutally interrupted by last year's ethnic violence.

<sup>58</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009.

<sup>59</sup> Reported on Eurasianet, December 13, 2010. <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/62558> Accessed on 03.30.2011.

<sup>60</sup> Data are from the respective national education strategies.

<sup>61</sup> Government of Tajikistan (2005) National Strategy for Educational Development.



and Kyrgyzstan will provide a more accurate indicator of young children's current reading ability leading to an identification of potential improvements that can be made in early education provision.

## II. Technical Approach

### Phase I: Quality Learning Program (QLP)

#### *Background on the Quality Learning Program*

The goal of the Quality Learning Program is to expand access to quality basic education in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. The QLP supports government efforts to develop and implement their national education strategies. The program aims to increase student learning by up-grading the education system through interventions in teacher training, curriculum development, student assessment, and school finance and management. The program focuses on four components:

- Improved quality of teacher training in student-centered methodologies;
- Improved quality of student assessment;
- Greater involvement of teachers in curriculum reform;
- Increased effectiveness of education finance systems.

#### *Methodology*

The objective of this evaluation will be to examine the four intermediate results of the Quality Learning Program to determine if program targets were met in the most effective, efficient, and relevant manner in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The assessment will look at how the interventions of the QLP, through a programmatic approach to build capacity of the central level of government, are seated in the larger contextual situation in which education operates in both countries. Based on the information gathered from this assessment, recommendations will be made that add support to future programming for early grade reading programs in the region. A mixed method approach involving qualitative and quantitative collection methods will be used to gather information from varied stakeholders about the current program status and implementation progress of the QLP in both countries. The assessment will be conducted in two stages: 1) data collection, and 2) analysis and report writing.

### Stage One: Data Collection

#### *1. Literature Review*

Laying the foundation for the later stages of the assessment, the desktop literature review will provide the background and context for the work in the field. Successful completion of the literature review will serve to answer many of the assessment questions and identify issues for deeper investigation in the field work. The literature review will include all the documents listed in the RFTOP, as well as QLP program implementation documentation, PMP and progress reports, USAID education strategy documents, and relevant country policy documents, as well as documents from other country actors (e.g. World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UNICEF, Step-by-Step organization, Open Society Institute, CEATM, Aga Khan Foundation) that will assist to set the context for issues affecting student learning in reading and teacher training. It is anticipated that the bulk of the literature review will be done before the country visits are made and that documentation will be made available by USAID/CAR. However, it is expected that some documents may be available only in-country (e.g. government and ministry policy documents, other project documents from Step-by-Step, the Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking program of the Open Society Institute, etc) and will be accessed once the evaluation team is on-site.

#### *2. Analysis of Extant Data*

The assessment to determine the extent to which the QLP program achieved its intended results will be partly accomplished through a secondary analysis of the existing quantitative data from the program monitoring and evaluation system. The M&E system developed a series of output indicators against which yearly and final progress can be measured. These output indicators measure, for example, the number of participants trained, the number or percentage of training modules developed, the number of workshops conducted, the number or percentage of teacher groups participating, and the number or percentage of districts receiving funds. This analysis can be done before the team arrives in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan contingent on receiving PMP and program progress reports from USAID/CAR.

### 3. Qualitative Research

In addition to the qualitative analysis, the assessment will collect original qualitative data using one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and site visits and observation. The instruments will include measures related to the specific objectives/activities from the program M&E plan. The complementarity established between the quantitative and qualitative analyses enables a complete picture of the effectiveness, efficiency and relevancy to be formed of each of the four QLP program components. This data will be collected during the field research in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

- **One-on-one interviews (IDI):** Interviews with key stakeholders are crucial to gather insight into personal attitudes and experiences. Individual interviews enhance the quantitative data and give respondents the opportunity to express opinions and contextualize the numerical data. As the bulk of data collection proposed will consist of in-depth interviews, triangulation of questions and responses allows for points of comparison across the two collection methods. Key focus areas for interviews will address perceptions of increased capacity of the government at the different administrative levels in the education system, key factors affecting development of reading skills, and the perceived usefulness of the child-centered methodology trainings and materials received through the program. Individuals who will be given IDI include USAID/CAR staff, Ministry of Education staff, staff of pedagogical colleges and universities, implementing partners, identified donors, school directors, and other Basic Education sector development partners in both countries. The evaluation team will work closely with USAID/CAR to identify high priority individuals to interview. Interviews will be held in two geographic locations within each country to ensure collection of representative contextual information. In Tajikistan, Dushanbe and Khujand will be visited, and in Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek and Osh will be visited.
- **Focus groups:** Focus groups offer an opportunity to investigate program impacts with groups of similar stakeholders in a familiar and non-threatening environment, in a dialogue format. The evaluation proposes to conduct a minimum of two focus groups with teachers in each of the two different geographic locations in each country to get impressions of effectiveness of child-centered methodologies and materials, and factors affecting student reading skill development. The JBS team will seek to interview a minimum of two community/parents groups in all of the same locations to get impressions of factors affecting students' reading skill development such as community/parental support and effectiveness of parents' involvement in school finance oversight. Location and group composition will be determined with USAID and implementer input.
- **Site visits and observations:** Site visits and observations will be the final data collection tool used and will be done in conjunction with the focus group and individual interviews. First-hand observation of programs *in situ* allows the evaluation team to observe the context of the programs, assists to confirm issues identified in the interviews, and gives the evaluators a perspective on organizational processes. In the Quality Learning Program, with its emphasis on child-centered methodologies, it's important that the evaluation team members see how theoretical training has transferred into practical application in the classroom. Again, sampling locations in the four cities will be determined with implementer and USAID input.

#### Stage Two: Analysis and Report Writing

The RFTOP outlines a set of research questions around which the data collection and analysis will be structured. This section details the research questions and how the evaluation will utilize the data collected to develop informed responses.

#### *Programmatic Analysis*

1. *To what extent has the USAID/QLP achieved its intended results in each of the four intermediate results according to the program's initial design?*

The evaluation will conduct a comparison of the results captured in the QLP Performance Monitoring system. Using the output indicators listed in the PMP will give some indication if implementation targets were reached. To determine the full extent of effectiveness of the interventions, the quantitative measures will be complemented by data collected from the individual interviews, the focus groups, and the site visits/observations.

2. *To what extent have the governments of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan adopted and implemented the materials and increased capacity provided through the Quality Learning Program?*

Insights to the extent of government adaptation and implementation of materials and increased capacity provided by the QLP will be gathered largely from qualitative measures, including interviews with USAID/CAR Mission education staff, implementing partners, ministry staff at all levels, university administrators and training, school and teaching personnel, and education sector participating donors and partners. Some information will also come from site visits/observations and the literature review.

3. *What have been the benefits and outcomes of USAID/QLP capacity building efforts in the formal education system?*

Qualitative data obtained from a wide variety of stakeholders during field work will be especially valuable in developing a deeper understanding of the benefits and outcomes of USAID/QLP capacity building efforts in the formal education system. Methodology will also include case studies of successful program components and activities as well as lessons learned drawn from the effectiveness analysis by type of intervention.

4. *In what ways has the QLP contributed to increased early grade reading outcomes even if this was not part of the initial program design?*

Insights to how the QLP has contributed to improved reading by early grade children will be gathered largely from qualitative measures, most specifically from interviews with school personnel – teachers and directors, with some input from parents.

5. *Given the constraints of the education systems, including low capacity of the education ministries and limited ability to institute quality reforms, is the QLP an appropriate intervention?*

The determination if the QLP is an appropriate intervention will be based in part on the analysis of quantitative data from the program M&E system in which specific indicators will be used to create an aggregate measure of effectiveness by program activity. This will be complemented by qualitative data from interviews with all stakeholders in determination of the effectiveness and relevancy of the interventions. This process will also allow lessons learned to be drawn out of the data.

6. *In Tajikistan, review the QLP program additions of support for pedagogic colleges and the safe schools program.*

These two additional activities in the Tajikistan country implementation of the QLP will be analyzed using the same qualitative and quantitative data gathering techniques to assess whether they have met their targets and have been effective in changing behaviors. Interviews with training personnel, teacher candidates, and newly graduated/certified teachers will be given one-on-one or focus group interviews at the pedagogic colleges. Teachers, parents, community members, and students will be given focus group interviews to gather information about the safe schools program. Assistance from USAID and the implementer will be used to identify the appropriate sampling and locations.

7. *In Kyrgyzstan, review the QLP program impact on pre-service teaching education.*

Given the time constraints of the assessment of the total Quality Learning Program, this activity will take the form of a rapid assessment of impact on the pre-service teaching education activity in Kyrgyzstan. Using the current M&E system, the indicators designed to measure the inputs, outputs, and outcomes of this activity will be analyzed. Quantitative data from interviews with training personnel, teacher candidates, ministry officials and administrators, and teachers will compliment the qualitative data.

A final report will be written, summarizing the results of the assessment and appropriate recommendations will be made, serving as a basis to inform USAID program planning and implementation for improved early grade reading in the CAR region. Recommendations will be made in light of the current reform environment in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, current perceived status of early grade reading, the Government of Tajikistan (GoT) and Government of Kyrgyzstan (GoK) priorities, complementarity with other stakeholder activities in the sector, USAID/CAR's comparative advantage in the education sector and within the program budgetary limitations in the foreseeable future. More clarity on specific interventions to improve reading outcomes may not be a quantifiable result of this assessment as that is a specific result of the following early grade reading assessment which will follow in Phase II. The following specific research questions from the RFTOP will be answered in the final QLP report:

- What priority areas should USAID/CAR focus on (programmatically and geographically) to achieve sustainable improvement in early grade reading outcomes from 2013 onwards?

- In what ways can USAID/CAR support the GoT and the GoK efforts to improve reading and comprehension skills in the early grades?
- In what ways can USAID/CAR support parents and communities to improve reading and comprehension skills in the early grades?
- In what ways can the future education portfolio of USAID/CAR achieve greater-lasting national impact while ensuring sustainability within the limitations of program resources and local context?
- What types and kinds of collaborations/partnerships/mechanisms (for example, in the form of host country partnerships, public-private partnerships, contractors, and other donor and partner collaborations) would most effectively and efficiently implement and complement the education portfolio activities.

**ANNEX B: QLP EVALUATION WORK CALENDAR: Kyrgyzstan/Tajikistan MAY-JUNE 2011**

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
MAY 1	2 Preliminary Document Review	3 Preliminary Document Review	4 Preliminary Document review	5 Documents received from USAID/Erkin. Evaluation Preparations/reading.  Schedule Revisions	6 Morning conference call Duncan/Roger Rasnake/Tate. Preparations/planning. Flight schedule revisions/ticketing	7 Preparations Document reading/ Draft Work Plan
MAY 8	9 Submission of Preliminary Work Plan and Methodology by COB USA	10 Preparations/ Plan revisions	11 TRAVEL: Night departure from USA by Sean and Erin	TRAVEL 12 Sean/Erin Travel to Bishkek	13 Bishkek Sean/Erin Arrive in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan 5:05am  Initial Team Meeting	14 Team Meeting: Work Plan and Methodology Revisions. Develop protocols.
MAY 15	16 Bishkek 8:00am USAID: Larry Held, Acting Administrator and Erkin Konurbaev  9:30. QLP Staff Meeting. Project Overview and Discussion  10:30. Sean/Erin visit Tajikistan Embassy to obtain visas for Tajikistan. Duishon interviews QLP Country Director.	17 Bishkek 9:00-9:30 Travel to school #86, Kalys Ordo new settlement (Bishkek novostraika) 9:30-12:00  School visit. #86 Kalys Ordo.  13:30-14:00 QLP staff.  14:00-15:00 Kyrgyz Academy of Education Mamytov Abakir.	18 Bishkek 8:30-9:45 Travel to school (Chui #1) about 1 hour.  10:00-12:00 QLP target school visit, Chui #1 QLP staff and administrators  Lesson Observation and post-lesson feedback session  Focus group discussion with teachers and local consultants.	19 Bishkek 9:30 Sean/Erin Arabaev State University  14:00 UNICEF. Chinara Kumenova  15:00 GIZ Ilmira Mamytova and Holger Ehlers  17:00 CEATM Inna Valkova  OSH: (Duishon) 9:30-11:30 Osh oblast, Karasu town, School	20 Bishkek 10:00: Sean/Erin, World Bank. Aisuluu Bedelbayeva.  11:30 QLP Jyldyz Uzbekova, Ed. Financing.  OSH Duishon 9:30-11:00 Osh ITTI heads of departments and instructors.  11:00-12:00 Observation ITTI in-service training course. Focus group, teachers/participants.  QLP M&E  14:00-15:00 Osh State University (OSU). Observation pre-service	21 TEAM AIR TRAVEL TO DUSHANBE  Review of Preparations for next week  Review, analysis of results from previous week  Writing

	<p>11:30. Ministry of Education (MOE)</p> <p>14:00 Presentation of QLP Country Director</p> <p>15:00-17:00. Interviews with key LCs (Local Consultants):</p>	<p>President</p> <p>15:15-15:45 Terry Giles, QLP</p> <p>16:00-17:30 Kyrgyz Academy of Education Target Dept Heads. ITTI.</p>	<p>12:00-13:00 RayOO head, AC member, School Principal,</p> <p>15:00-17:00 World Bank REP representatives</p> <p>TRAVEL. Duishon to Osh, evening.</p>	<p>Visit, Manas School.</p> <p>11:30-12:30 Interview with Karasu RayOO specialists.</p> <p>2:00-4:00 School Visit 2: after Kalinin. Lesson Observation,</p> <p>Focus group interviews</p>	<p>TOT preparations for OSU, JASU.</p> <p>Trainers, trainees, and QLP Programme Specialist</p> <p>15:30-16:00 Altynai, QLP pre- service specialist</p> <p>16:00 OSU Administrators and QLP pre-service participants.</p> <p>17:00-17:30 Summary of Meetings/activities. Osh State U. TRAVEL: Duishon to Bishkek.</p>	
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<p>22</p> <p><b>DELIVERABLE:</b> <i>Finalized Work Plan and Schedule of Visits submitted to USAID.</i></p> <p>Team review of data collection instruments and strategy for Tajikistan evaluation</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Dushanbe</p> <p>8:30 <i>Country Director: Dilrabo Inomova</i></p> <p>10:30: <i>Cohort Target School #41, Varzob.</i></p> <p>14:00: Safe School Partners, RTTI.</p> <p>15:30 Matlyuba Nazirjanova and Ahmedov Ravshan, Chief of Budget Planning Dept, MOF</p> <p>16:30 MOE: Minister Abdujabbor Rahmonov; Deputy Tojinisso Mahmadova; DM MOE Ashurbek Rasulov; Head of Budgeting &amp; Planning Dept MOE and F. Ismonov, Head of Budgeting &amp; Planning Dept, MOE.</p> <p>17:00 Saodat Bazarova, Operations Officer, World Bank.</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Dushanbe</p> <p>8:30 Abduvahob Abdulazizov, Head of Republican Teacher Training Institute (RTTI) and Zikriyo Rajabov, FTI, at RTTI.</p> <p>10:30 Irina Karimova, President of Academy of Education (AO) and Abdusamad Mulloev, Head of Republican Methodological Center at AO</p> <p>14:00 Saodat Bazarova, Operations Officer, World Bank</p> <p>15:00 <i>Departure to Kulyob. Arrival 18:30.</i></p>	<p>25</p> <p>Kulyob</p> <p>8:30 <i>Round table with Hamid Abdullaev, Head of Hukumat; Sharofat Sangova, Deputy Head; D. Amirov, Gorono and Ray FO to discuss impact of project on 4 IRs.</i></p> <p>11:00. <i>QLP Cohort School #7, Kulyob.</i> Discussion with school administration, trained teachers, mentors, Methodists, accountants, students and PTA.</p> <p>Interviews with Recipients (TBD by JBS team.</p> <p>16:00 Depart (Kulyob) for Dushanbe</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Dushanbe</p> <p>8:30 <i>Roundtable with Z. Sharipov, Rector of Pedagogical University and trained teachers, facilitated by QLP.</i></p> <p>11:00 <i>Roundtable , QLP, Regional Pedagogical University, Qurghonteppe Practicum Dept.</i></p> <p>13:00 James J. Callahan, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Embassy.</p> <p>14:00 Necia Quast, Deputy Chief Mission, U.S. Embassy; Jeffrey Lehrer, USAID; Lesley Duncan, USAID; Mavjuda Nabieva, USAID/Tajikistan</p> <p>16:30 Hongwei Gao, Head of Mission and Barno Mukhamadieva, Education Officer, UNICEF.</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Dushanbe</p> <p>9:00 <i>Roundtable with curriculum developers: Farosat Olimova, Pedagogical College; Asror Aliev, RTTI; Kutbiddin Mukhitdinov, Methodological Center, bibinasri; Umeda Ermatova, S. Kurbonov, State University; QLP developers of in-service and pre-service training modules.</i></p> <p>11:00 Zuloby Mamadfozilov, Education Program Manager, Aga Khan Foundation</p> <p>13:00 Additional meetings and interviews: QLP staff.</p> <p>15:00 Simon Jenkins, QLP.</p> <p>16:00 Wrap up with QLP Staff</p>	<p>28</p> <p><b>TEAM TRAVEL:</b></p> <p>Team travels to Bishkek early Saturday morning.</p> <p><b>TEAM WORK:</b> Data analysis, writing</p>
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29 Bishkek  Team Meetings.  Team Analysis and writing	30 Bishkek  Team Analysis and Writing 15:00 European Union Oliver Deasy, At MOES  Further Meetings.	31 Bishkek  Team Analysis and Writing  Further meetings TBD	JUNE 1 Bishkek  DELIVERABLE: Submission of DRAFT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY to USAID (email) USAID Stakeholders DEBRIEFING  Analysis Writing and revisions	2 Bishkek  Analysis and Writing  DELIVERABLE: Submission of First Draft Report to USAID (e-mail). Proposed timing.	3 Erin/Sean  Early Morning Flight departure to USA; 7:25am  Arrival Night in USA.	4
JUNE 5	6  Proposed: Comments from USAID on First Draft of Report by COB in Almaty.	7  Revision of First Draft of Report begins	8	9	10	11
JUNE 12	13	14	15	16	17  Submission of Final Draft QLP evaluation, COB/USA	18

## ANNEX C: LIST OF INDIVIDUALS CONSULTED

\*\*\* Interviewed by Sean   \*\* Interviewed by Duishon   \* Interviewed by Erin

	Name	Title	Location	Organization
1.	Larry Held	Deputy Country Director	Bishkek	USAID
2.	Erkin Konurbaev	Project Management assistant, Office of Economic Growth, Education Portfolio	Bishkek	USAID
3.	Saule Khamzina**	Country Director	Bishkek	Creative Associates/QLP
4.	Nurgul Toktogulova	Deputy Chief of Party	Bishkek	Creative Associates/QLP
5.	Jyldyz Uzbekova*	Education Financing Regional Director	Bishkek	Creative Associates/QLP
6.	Anara Doolotova**	Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator	Bishkek	Creative Associates/QLP
7.	Rashid Shakirov* **	Student Assessment and Curriculum Development Specialist	Bishkek	Creative Associates/QLP
8.	Larisa Kiseleva	Education Financing Specialist	Bishkek	Creative Associates/QLP
9.	Jenishgul Tatybekova	Education Financing Specialist	Bishkek	Creative Associates/QLP
10.	Altynai Abdugarimova*** **	Pre-service Teacher Training Specialist	Bishkek	Creative Associates/QLP
11.	Aikynai Yusupova*	Program Specialist, Mentoring	Bishkek	Creative Associates/QLP
12.	Akylbek Joldoshov**	Program Manager	Bishkek	Creative Associates/QLP
13.	Ainura Japarova	Program Specialist on Youth Support	Bishkek	Creative Associates/QLP
14.	Guljigit Umarovich Sorokulov***	Deputy Minister of Education	Bishkek	Ministry of Education
15.	Larisa Marchenko**	Head of Strategy Department	Bishkek	Ministry of Education
16.	Damira Kudaibergenova***	Head of Schools Department	Bishkek	Ministry of Education
17.	Zoya Pak*	Chui Oblast Curator	Bishkek	Ministry of Education
18.	Mirgul Esengulova**	Local Consultant/Technical Expert	Bishkek	Creative Associates/QLP
19.	Jyldyz Asekova**	Local Consultant/Technical Expert	Bishkek	Creative Associates/QLP
20.	Symbat Ismailova*	Local Consultant/Technical Expert	Bishkek	Creative Associates/QLP
21.	Nodira Jusupbekova	Local Consultant/Technical Expert	Bishkek	Creative Associates/QLP

## Kyrgyzstan &amp; Tajikistan QLP: Program Assessment &amp;

## Recommendations

22.	Asanakunov, T***	Local Consultant/Technical Expert	Bishkek	Creative Associates/QLP
23.	Chinara Attokurova*	Local Consultant/Technical Expert	Bishkek	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
24.	Elnura Essenokunova	Local Consultant/Technical Expert	Bishkek	Creative Associates/QLP
25.	Venera Musaieva **	Local Consultant/Technical Expert	Bishkek	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
26.	Tezina Osipovich	Local Consultant/Technical Expert	Bishkek	Creative Associates/QLP
27.	Keneshbek Sainazarov	Former QLP Country Director	Bishkek	Now at UNDP
28.	Joodar Jumagulov*	Social Development Specialist	Kalys Ordo	Bishkek Mayor's office
29.	Natayla Suhadubova*	Deputy Head	Kalys Ordo	Bishkek City Education Department
30.	Nurjamal Ibraevna Djakubova*	Local Consultant on Social Pedagogy	Kalys Ordo	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
31.	Salamat Kolbaeva***	Director	Kalys Ordo	School #86
32.	Jyrgal Kurmanbekov***	Social Pedagogue	Kalys Ordo	School #86
33.	Kumar Ergeshova**	Coordinator	Kalys Ordo	NGO "Buchur"
34.	Saparbek Myzakulov	Director	Kalys Ordo	NGO "Ashar"
35.	Mirzat Adjiev	Director	Kalys Ordo	NGO "Erep"
36.	Dukonaly Akmatov	Representative	Kalys Ordo	MTA #16
37.	Abakir Mamytov	President	Bishkek	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
38.	Alia Burkitova*	Program Specialist In-Service Teacher Training Component	Bishkek	Creative Associates/QLP
39.	Terry Giles	Chief of Party	Bishkek	Creative Associates/QLP
40.	Dolon Babaev***	Head of In-Service Teacher Training Institutes	Bishkek	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
41.	Makil Imankulova	Head of Management Department	Bishkek	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
42.	Batima	Department of Natural Sciences/Chemistry	Bishkek	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
43.	Osmonalieva	Head of Math Department	Bishkek	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
44.	Khamidova	Head of Language Department	Bishkek	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
45.	Bigram	Russian and other Foreign Languages	Bishkek	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
46.	Uzbekova	Management and communications	Bishkek	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
47.	Milkan Subanova	Department of Natural Sciences/Biology	Bishkek	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
48.	Aitkul Sabyrovna	Chui Head of RayOO	Chui	District Education Department
49.	Nina Kuliyeva	Director	Chui	Markov School #1

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50.	Sarbaeva	Deputy Director	Chui	Markov School #1
51.	Roza Djunosova	Deputy Director	Chui	Markov School #1
52.		School Accountant	Chui	Markov School #1
53.	Teachers/Heads of Methodological Units	Kyrgyz Language	Chui	Markov School #1 and surrounding mentor schools
54.	Saltir	Expert on Teacher Manuals	Chui	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
55.	Gulmira Sultanova	Head	Bishkek	WB Rural Education Project
56.	Ayat Djamansariev	Education budgeting & strategic planning Component Coordinator	Bishkek	WB Rural Education Project
57.	4 names	EFWG Members	Bishkek	Ministry of Education
58.	Tuganbai Konurbaev	Vice-Chancellor	Bishkek	Arabaev State University
59.	Melis Onolbaev*	Head of Mathematics Department (Primary)	Bishkek	Arabaev State University
60.	Kanyshai Torogeldieva	Head of Mathematics Department	Bishkek	Arabaev State University
61.	Raihan Abdullaeva	Head of Kyrgyz Language Department	Bishkek	Arabaev State University
62.	Stella Pak	Senior Teacher, Pedagogy Department	Bishkek	Arabaev State University
63.	Ainura Akunova	Senior Teacher, Kyrgyz Language (Primary)	Bishkek	Arabaev State University
64.	Kulumkan Sadykova	Senior Teacher, Kyrgyz Language and Literature	Bishkek	Arabaev State University
65.	Nazgul Saginalieva*	Senior Teacher, Mathematics Department	Bishkek	Arabaev State University
66.	Kumushai Bakova*	Head of Practicum Department	Bishkek	Arabaev State University
67.	Chynara Kumenova	Education Officer	Bishkek	UNICEF
68.	Ilmira Mamytova* ***	Country Manager	Bishkek	German International Cooperation (GIZ)
69.	Holdgar Ehlers* ***		Bishkek	German International Cooperation (GIZ)
70.	Inna Valkova* ***	Director	Bishkek	Center for Educational Assessment and Teaching Methods
71.	Rahman Nazarov	Karasuu Head of RayOO	Osh	District Education Department
72.	Aisuluu Madanova**	Director	Osh	Jangy Aryk, Kalinin School
73.	Inayat Jamankulova**	Zavuch (Deputy Director)	Osh	Jangy Aryk, Kalinin School
74.	Mukaram Pazylova	Head of Methodological Unit, Mathematics	Osh	Jangy Aryk, Kalinin School
75.	Rajap Aliyeva	Head of Methodological Unit,	Osh	Jangy Aryk, Kalinin School

## Recommendations

		Kyrgyz Language		
76.	Zamira Atakulova	Head of Methodological Unit, Primary Grades	Osh	Jangy Aryk, Kalinin School
77.	Kubanychbek Ormonov	Head	Osh	In-Service Teacher Training Institute
78.	Omurbek Kochobaev**	Deputy Head	Osh	In-Service Teacher Training Institute
79.	Amatov Sovetbek**	Head of School Administration	Osh	In-Service Teacher Training Institute
80.	Nizamidin Zakirov	Department of Math	Osh	In-Service Teacher Training Institute
81.	Tolgonai Myrzakulova	Department of Information Technology	Osh	In-Service Teacher Training Institute
82.	Inabat Gaipova	Department of Kyrgyz Language Primary Education	Osh	In-Service Teacher Training Institute
83.	Saadat Mahmudova	Head Teacher, Kyrgyz Language Primary Education	Osh	In-Service Teacher Training Institute
84.	Abdulaziz Arykbaev	Department of Kyrgyz Language	Osh	In-Service Teacher Training Institute
85.	Tajimamat Berkebaev	First Deputy Rector	Osh	Osh State University
86.	Meilikan Altybaeva	Local Consultant	Osh	Osh State University
87.	Zulaika Tagaeva	Head of Kyrgyz Language and Literature Department	Osh	Osh State University
88.	Anarkan Attokurova	Head of Mathematics Department	Osh	Osh State University
89.	Gulmira Jutonova	Senior Instructor, Pedagogy Department	Osh	Osh State University
90.	Misiraly Koldoshev	Associate Prof, Pedagogy Department	Osh	Osh State University
91.	Abibilla Berdiev	Head of Psychology Department	Osh	Osh State University
92.	Zaripa Abdraimova	Senior Instructor, Pedagogy and Psychology in Preschool	Osh	Osh State University
93.	Rahmatilla Anarkulov	Head, Primary Education Methodology Department	Osh	Osh State University
94.	Okibat Ismanova	Associate Prof, Languages and Literature in Primary Education	Osh	Osh State University
95.	Aisuluu Bedelbayeva	Education Specialist	Bishkek	World Bank
96.	Dingyong Hou	Senior Education Specialist	Bishkek	World Bank
97.	Paul Cahu	Economist, Europe & Central Asia Education	Bishkek	World Bank
98.	Name	Title	Location	Organization
99.	Lesley Duncan	Regional Education	Dushanbe	USAID/CAR

## Recommendations

		Advisor		
100.	Mavjuda Nabieva	COTR	Dushanbe	USAID/CAR
101.	Dilrabo Inomova*	Country Director	Dushanbe	QLP/Creative Associates
102.	Abdurahim Karimov	Education Financing Specialist	Dushanbe	QLP/Creative Associates
103.	Ibrohim Saidov*	Primary School Teacher	Varzob	QLP Target School (#41)
104.	Shavkat	Deputy Director	Varzob	QLP Target School (#41)
105.		Director (History Teacher)	Varzob	QLP Target School (#41)
106.		Tajik Language Teacher	Varzob	QLP Target School (#41)
107.		Deputy Director	Dushanbe	Republican Teacher Training Institute
108.	Sherladatova		Dushanbe	Safe Schools target secondary School (#52)
109.	Shukratov	Secondary School Deputy Director	Dushanbe	Safe Schools target secondary School (#52)
110.		Teacher	Dushanbe	Safe Schools target secondary School (#52)
111.	Sarvar Sadonova*	Nurse	Dushanbe	Safe Schools target secondary School (#52)
112.	Torsunova*	Parent Association Representative	Dushanbe	Safe Schools target secondary School (#52)
113.	Zulfia*	Head of Department for Healthy Lifestyle	Dushanbe	Ministry of Health
114.	Kholmurodov Alisher	Teacher of Pedagogy and Psychology	Dushanbe	Republican Teacher Training Institute
115.	Toshbaeva Zulfia	Teacher in Management	Dushanbe	Republican Teacher Training Institute
116.	Ashurova Barno	Teacher in Pedagogy and Psychology	Dushanbe	Republican Teacher Training Institute

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117.	Gulnura Khasanova*	Teacher of Language (School #1) and Director of NGO	Dushanbe	Reproductive Health and Adolescents
118.	Matlyuba Nazirjanova	Budget and Planning Department	Dushanbe	Ministry of Finance
119.	Parvina Asadova*	Safe Schools Program Specialist	Dushanbe	QLP/Creative Associates
120.	Vahobjon Abdulazizov*	Rector	Dushanbe	Republican Teacher Training Institute
121.	Zikriyo Rajabov***	Fast Track Initiative Coordinator	Dushanbe	Republican Teacher Training Institute
122.	Asror Aliev **	Head, Natural Sciences Department	Dushanbe	Republican Teacher Training Institute
123.	Nusratov **	Head, Mathematics Department	Dushanbe	Republican Teacher Training Institute
124.	Irina Karimova	President	Dushanbe	Academy of Education
125.	Abdusamad Mulloev	Head of Republican Methodological Center	Dushanbe	Academy of Education
126.	Saodat Bazarova	Education Specialist	Dushanbe	World Bank
127.	Zulaikho Komilova***		Kulob	Hukumat
128.	Rakhmon Odinaev*	Head	Kulob	Regional Finance Department
129.	Abdualib Yuldashev**	Head	Kulob	Regional Education Department
130.	***	School Director and two deputies	Kulob	QLP Target School (#7)
131.		Math, Tajik Language and Primary Grades Methodists	Kulob	City Education Department
132.	*	School Accountant	Kulob	QLP Target School (#7)
133.	*	Treasurer	Kulob	City Finance Department
134.	*	Budget Department	Kulob	City Finance Department
135.	PTA Representative?		Kulob	QLP Target School (#7)

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136.	Khudoidodov	Deputy Rector	Dushanbe	Pedagogical University
137.	T Rajabov***	Head of Primary Education Department	Dushanbe	Pedagogical University
138.	T Sattorov	Director of Professional Development Center	Dushanbe	Pedagogical University
139.	Shokir Makhmudov*	Head of Psychology Department	Dushanbe	Pedagogical University
140.	Hassim Gulov***	Deputy Rector	Qurghonteppa	Regional Pedagogical University
141.	M Sharipov**	Head of Practicum Department	Qurghonteppa	Regional Pedagogical University
142.	Alimat Gulov*	Head of Pedagogy and Psychology Department	Qurghonteppa	Regional Pedagogical University
143.	Murat Assmanov*	Head of Formal Education Department	Qurghonteppa	Regional Pedagogical University
144.	James J. Callahan	Public Affairs Officer	Dushanbe	US Embassy/Public Affairs
145.	Jeffrey Lehrer***	Country Program Officer	Dushanbe	US Embassy/USAID
146.	Faizadin	Program Specialist	Dushanbe	QLP/Creative Associates
147.	Khurmat	Program Specialist	Dushanbe	QLP/Creative Associates
148.	Nurullo Mirzamatov	Program Specialist	Dushanbe	QLP/Creative Associates
149.	Mualimsho	Specialist of PCF	Dushanbe	QLP
150.	Hongwei Gao	Head of Mission	Dushanbe	UNICEF
151.	Barno Mukhamadieva	Education Officer	Dushanbe	UNICEF
152.	Kutbiddin Mukhitdinov*	Deputy Director (LC Curriculum Developer)	Dushanbe	Republican Methodological Center
153.	Farosat Olimova*	Head of Tajik Language Department (LC Curriculum Developer)	Dushanbe	Pedagogical College

## Recommendations

154.	Mostogul Azizova	Mathematics Specialist	Dushanbe	Republican Methodological Center
155.	Zainura Shodiva	LC Mentoring	Dushanbe	
156.	Ramacho Fateloev	Deputy Director (LC Trainer)	Dushanbe	School #1
157.	Zuloby Mamadfozilov	Education Program Manager	Dushanbe	Aga Khan Foundation
158.	Simon Jenkins	International Consultant	Dushanbe	QLP/ Creative Associates
159.	Oliver Deasy	Team Leader/Education Policy Expert	Bishkek	European Union
160.	Necia L. Quast	Deputy Chief Mission	Dushanbe	U.S. Embassy

**ANNEX D LIST OF SCHOOLS AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS (USAID/YA and QLP Project Beneficiaries)**

Date of visit	Country	School Location	Name	Setting	Size	Languages	Notes/focus
5/16/11	Kyrgyzstan – Bishkek City	Kalys Ordo Novostroika	School #86	Semi-urban 3 Shifts Grades 1-11	6 Admin 26 Teachers 632 Students	Kyrgyz	Youth Aid Program Target School
5/18/11	Kyrgyzstan – Chui Oblast	Chui Village	Markov Secondary School #1	Rural 2 Shifts Grades 1-11	5 Admin 55 Teachers 1393 Students	Kyrgyz and Russian	QLP Target School
5/19/11	Kyrgyzstan – Osh Oblast	Jany-Aryk Village	Kalinin Secondary School	Rural Grades 1-11	5 Admin 47 Teachers 868 Students	Kyrgyz and Russian (primary)	QLP Target School
5/19/11	Kyrgyzstan – Osh Oblast	Karasu town, District center	Manas Secondary School	Urban Grades 1-11	3 Admin 30 Teachers 519 Students	Kyrgyz	QLP Target School
5/23/11	Tajikistan	Varzob	School #41	Rural 2 Shifts	7 Admin 18 Teachers 286 Students	Tajik	Cohort Target School
5/25/11	Tajikistan	Kulyob	School #7	Urban 2 shifts	16 Admin 66 Teachers 1466 Students	Tajik	QLP Cohort School

## **ANNEX E: REQUESTED INFORMATION ON QLP SCHOOL VISITS**

The following additional information was requested from QLP staff in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan prior to the evaluation team's visits to selected schools.

The QLP Evaluation Team sincerely appreciates the arrangements that have been made for appointments for the team, and for the opportunity to visit a few schools. In terms of the school visits, it would help us even further if we had some basic information about each of the schools we are to visit before we actually make those visits.

We are sensitive to impinging further on your time and other work, but some information related to the following topics about the schools to be visited would be so helpful to us:

1. Brief historical context: opened/closed, population served, past languages, renovations;
2. Size of school (numbers of Administrators, Teachers, Students);
3. Average class size
4. Dropouts? Dropout rates if available (boys/girls)
5. Languages of instruction (KG/TJ/RUS/UZB);
6. School setting (Urban, Semi-urban, Rural);
7. Program and/or Interventions that the school participated in such as: Books/Teacher Trainings/Leadership training/ Child Friendly School/Whole School Improvement/ Professional Development school/ Innovative School/Cluster school, etc.
8. Note on criteria/rationale for selecting the school for visit.

## **ANNEX F: INSTRUMENTS/PROTOCOLS**

The following questions are the basis of the protocols used in this study. For ease of use, the field protocols appear in a different format. The consultants will have the option to select among the questions as necessary because of time constraints that may occur, and to add to the questions when elaboration or the situation is called for.

### **USAID/CAR QLP STAFF**

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today. We are conducting an evaluation of the USAID/CAR project: Quality Learning Program (2007-2011). Your opinion is of utmost value to our understanding of the project's impact and its future direction. We appreciate your candid responses, as we hope your feedback will provide the donors and implementers with valuable material to continue to improve the educational situation moving forward.

#### *Background*

1. Please describe your involvement in QLP. (For how long, in what capacity?)
2. Which parts of QLP were you involved in? (Specific tasks?)
3. What content areas is QLP focusing on now? Why those particular areas? Why was the focus of QLP rural schools? Are all project schools Kyrgyz-medium schools? What were the reasons for that? Do you think it is strength of QLP?
4. What are the successes (anticipated or not) of QLP in your view?
5. What are some challenges (anticipated or not) of QLP in your view?
6. In your opinion what are the prospects for expanding access to quality basic education in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan?
7. What progress has been made on the per capita financing pilot in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan?
8. What progress has been made on the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan?

#### *Research Questions*

9. To what extent has the USAID/QLP achieved its intended results in each of the four intermediate results according to the project's initial design?
10. To what extent has the USAID/QLP program achieved its intended results in Kyrgyzstan in the new tasks re (1) Novostroika and (2) Jalal-Abad?
11. To what extent have the governments of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan adopted and implemented the materials, and increased system capacity, through the Quality Learning Project?
12. What have been the outcomes of USAID/QLP capacity building efforts in the formal education system?
13. In what ways has the QLP contributed to increased early grade reading outcomes even if this was not part of the initial project design?
14. Given the constraints of the education systems, including low capacity of the education ministries and limited ability to institute quality reforms, is the QLP an appropriate intervention?

*Follow up on previous assessment*

The previous assessment in 2007 identified three areas where programming should continue and be strengthened: Can you comment on the project's activities in these specific areas?

*Working with schools*

15. What model of training dissemination do you use now? Why?
16. Has student centered teaching been tied to subject or grade level trainings focused on curricular standards and student assessment?
17. Have subject specific teacher associations been created?
18. What has been done in the area of special needs/inclusive education?

*Pre-service Teacher Education*

19. What has the QLP done in terms of pre-service? Has the practicum been improved?
20. Does the project target budget students, correspondent students?
21. Does the project do any professional development for university lecturers at teacher training colleges?
22. Have any school-university partnerships been formed?
23. Has the project explored multi-subject teaching with the ministry?
24. Have professional development schools (PDS) cooperated with pre-service institutions?
25. What would you recommend in terms of project improvements? What could be done to improve the project?

*Curriculum and Assessment*

26. What has the QLP done in the area of curriculum reform? Assessment?
27. Have there been any discussions of a standardized test for university entrance in Tajikistan?
28. Has the focus remained secondary education? That is, grades 5-11?
29. How has the addition of 12<sup>th</sup> grade affected the project?
30. Have curriculum and assessment materials and trainings targeted teacher shortage subjects (English, Math, Physics, etc) and tried to address teacher retention problems?

*Wrap up*

31. What would you recommend to improve the QLP program?
32. What would you suggest be done differently in QLP?
33. Do you have any other comments you would like us to include in the report?
34. Are there any questions you have?

**Ministry of Education Staff**

*General Questions*

1. What were some of your first impressions of the QLP project when it was introduced?
2. Have your opinions changed since then? Explain...
3. Based on your experience do you think QLP has been successful? Compared to other programs? What makes it a success/not a success?

4. How would you describe the progress so far on the Fast Track Initiative? What have been some of the influences on the progress/non-progress?
5. Are you involved in any of the national planning or reporting for FTI?
6. What are your views on per capita financing of education in KG? In Tajikistan?
7. What are the prospects for expansion of access to quality basic education in KG in your view?
8. What are the most challenging aspects of this expansion looking ahead?
9. To what extent have you, in the governments of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, adopted and mainstreamed the materials provided through the Quality Learning Project? (Examples: Student centered teaching, pre-service and in- service teacher training).
10. Are there any trends you noticed in delivery of education in the past few years? (since 2007?)

*Questions to the Deputy MOES*

11. Do you think USAID/QLP has made any significant contribution to the education system in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and if yes, in what ways?
12. How do you rate the quality of the work of QLP (out of 10, for example and ten being the highest)

*Head of Strategy Department*

13. What contribution has QLP done to education strategy development, in-service teacher training, syllabus guides development and so on?
14. What was the essence of this contribution?

*Head of Novostroika activities (Kyrgyzstan only)*

15. What has QLP done in novostroikas and why?
16. What is your assessment of the work of QLP in Novostroikas?

*Coordinator of PCF in Chui oblast.*

17. What has QLP done with PCF in Chui?
18. What are the successes of QLP in PCF in Chui oblast?
19. Can these successes be replicated to other regions? Nationally?

*Wrap up*

20. Do you have any other comments you would like us to include in the report?

**Implementing Partners/Local Consultants**

*General Questions*

1. In which content areas of QLP were you involved?
2. What were your specific tasks? How did you accomplish them?
3. How would you assess your contribution?
4. Do you think USAID/QLP achieved its intended results in each of the four intermediate results according to the project's initial design?
5. How did you develop materials? With the help of whom? Was it a collaborative effort?

6. Do you think the government has been implementing the materials, and has increased system capacity, through the Quality Learning Project?
7. Has QLP been also involved in capacity building of government educators? At what level and how?
8. What has QLP been doing with pre-service and in-service teacher training institutes?

#### *Research Questions*

9. To what extent has the USAID/QLP achieved its intended results in each of the four intermediate results according to the project's initial design?
10. To what extent has the governments and Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan adopted and implemented the materials, and increased system capacity, through the Quality Learning Project?
11. What have been the outcomes of USAID/QLP capacity building efforts in the formal education system?
12. In what ways has the QLP contributed to increased early grade reading outcomes even if this was not part of the initial project design?
13. Given the constraints of the education systems, including low capacity of the education ministries and limited ability to institute quality reforms, is the QLP an appropriate intervention?
14. What is the QLP impact on pre-service teaching education?

#### *Wrap up*

15. Do you have any other comments you would like us to include in the report?

#### **Implementing Partner/Academy of Education and Regional ITTIs**

1. How have you been working with QLP? In what areas?
2. What was your first impression of it? Why?
3. Has your opinion changed since then? Why?
4. Do you think this collaboration was useful? In what ways?
5. What else could be improved?
6. What has QLP done exactly to the in-service teacher training system?
7. Approximately how many teachers have participated in QLP related seminars / in-service training? How were they different from the previous trainings?
8. Have the AE/ITTI staff members participated in QLP related professional development? If yes, how do you rate those trainings? Do AE/ITTI staff members use the materials and/or tools they received at that training?
9. To what extent has the AE/ITTI been implementing the materials provided through the Quality Learning Project? (Examples: Student centered teaching, syllabus of teacher training).
10. Do you think the work of QLP can be sustained in the future? If not, why not? If yes, in what ways?
11. What strategies would you suggest for USAID to work in the future?
12. Have you heard of the voucher system of professional development by the previous USAID project? What happened to it? Has it been successful? If not, why not?

**Other Basic Education Development Partners/International Organizations** UNICEF, GIZ, WB.

1. Do you collaborate with QLP in any education areas? If yes, specify please?
2. How do you assess these collaborations?
3. How do you coordinate your work?
4. Do you feel there is duplication or overlap with QLP or other projects? If yes, in which?
5. Is your organization working on sustainable influence of your projects successes? If yes, in what ways?
6. What are the similarities and differences of QLP or your project's / organization's approaches to education intervention?

### **Pre-service Teacher Training (PTTI) Institutes**

1. What is the impact of QLP on pre-service teacher training?
2. What do you think was the rationale that QLP chose to work with pre-service? And why do you think no one worked with pre-service previously?
3. Do you think the collaboration with QLP was useful? In what ways? What else could be improved?
4. What has QLP done exactly to the pre-service teacher training system?
5. What is being done with practicum improvement?
6. How many teachers have participated in QLP related seminars / in-service training? How were they different from the previous trainings (if at all)?
7. Have the PTTI staff members participated in QLP related professional development? If yes, how do you rate those trainings? Do PTTI instructors use the materials and/or tools they received at that training?
8. To what extent has the university instructors been implementing the materials provided through QLP in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan? (Examples: Student centered teaching, syllabus of teacher training).
9. Do you think the work of QLP can be sustained in the future? If not, why not? If yes, in what ways?
10. What strategies would you suggest for USAID to work in the future?
11. What are some challenges you face in attracting good students to become teachers?
12. What are some successful practices you have encountered to support teachers and quality teaching in KG/TJ?
13. Why are these particular practices successful?
14. Have your students participated in QLP related pre-service training?
15. Have you participated in QLP related professional development?
16. If Yes, Do you/will you use the materials and/or tools you received at that training?
17. How do you prepare your students, future teachers, for student assessments?
18. How do you prepare your students, future teachers, for their professional tasks related curriculum development?
19. To what extent have the governments of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan adopted and implemented the materials provided through the Quality Learning Project? (Examples: Student centered teaching, pre-service and in- service teacher training).

We have a few questions specifically about pre-service teacher education (from the previous, 2007 assessment)

1. Are there any special efforts for budget students, correspondent students, and pre-certified candidates? (who are judged more likely to become teachers and remain in the profession).
2. What are the opportunities for professional development for university lecturers here at the teacher training college?

3. Are there any school-university partnerships?
4. Have you had discussions about multi-subject teaching (multi-subject teacher certification) with the ministry?
5. Have professional development schools (PDS) cooperated with pre-service institutions?

**School Directors and Teachers in 6 schools.** (See Annex C).

*School Director (Individual Interview)*

1. What is your impression of the (QLP) training programs?
2. Do your staff participate in any grade-specific training?
3. Do your teachers participate in subject-specific training?
4. What other kinds of support has your school received from this project?
5. Are there other special activities or international projects your school is involved in?
6. What, in your opinion, does your school need most today? (Possible answers could be renovations or computers, higher teacher salaries, professional development for teachers, expert advice in curriculum development, teacher training, school governance, and financial management.) Try not to prompt.
7. What about Per Capita Financing (in schools, where applicable).
8. How were the public hearings on school budget organized?
9. How did it go?

*We have a few questions from the previous 2007 assessment:*

10. Has student centered teaching been tied to subject or grade level trainings focused on curricular standards? and student assessment?
11. Have subject specific teacher associations been created?
12. What is happening with special needs/inclusive education?
13. Do you have any other comments you would like us to include in the report?

*School Teachers (Pair or individual interview)*

14. What Subject/grade level do you teach?
15. What influenced you to become a teacher?
16. Are you a full time teacher? Do you have another job?
17. How long have you been teaching?
18. What is your highest education degree?
19. Did you receive (QLP) training? If yes, when?
20. If yes, could you describe your experience?
21. Have you received training in student-centered pedagogy?
22. Did the training focus on the grade/subject that you teach? Explain...
23. If yes, what are your impressions of student centered pedagogy? Of the training? Elaborate...
24. How did the trainings influence your teaching? In what ways?
25. If no, have you heard about it from your peers? What have you heard?
26. What student assessment methods do you use? (Formative/summative/both) Explain and elaborate...

27. Have you had any personal success implanting these new approaches? What is the secret of your success?
28. Have you heard of or participated in subject-specific teacher associations?
29. Do you have any other comments you would like us to include in the report?

## **ANNEX G: SELECTED LIST OF DOCUMENTS CONSULTED**

### **General**

- Bryant, Coralie and Christina Kappaz, (2005) *Reducing Poverty, Building Peace*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press Inc.
- Chapman, David and Jessica Jester Quijada (2009). "An Analysis of USAID assistance to basic education In the developing world, 1990-2005." *International Journal of Educational Development*, 29, 268-280
- Creative Associates International. USAID Quality Learning Project (QLP) Quarterly Report. January 1 – March 31, 2010.
- DFiD Department for International Development (UK). (2004) "Drivers of Change" paper.
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