REPORT ON THE RAPID APPRAISAL OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION'S INTERACTIVE RADIO INSTRUCTION (IRI) BASIC EDUCATION DELIVERY SYSTEM

PREPARED FOR USAID/Zambia

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

BESSIP	Basic Education Sector Support Investment Program
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
DEO	District Education Officer
DIP	District In-Service Provider
DIS	District Inspector of Schools
EBS	Educational Broadcasting Services
EDC	Education Development Centre Inc
FPE	Free Primary Education
IRI	Interactive Radio Instruction
IRLC	Interactive Radio Learning Centre
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	NonGovernmental Organization
PEO	Provincial Education Officer
UNESCO	United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNZA	University of Zambia
ZIP	Zonal In-Service Provider
ZNBC	Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

A Rapid Appraisal of the Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) program of the Ministry of Education was undertaken between 15th July and 23rd August 2002. The main focus of the appraisal was the quality of the IRI delivery system.

The IRI program started as a pilot project in July 2000 for Grade 1 learners at 22 IRI learning centres(IRLCs). It has since expanded to over 250 registered centres and more than 12,000 learners.

The IRI program is contributing to the attainment of the goals of basic education for all and targets out-of-school children many of whom are unable to enter the formal school system because of poverty, long distances to formal schools, the impact of HIV/AIDS and parental disinterest.

The IRI program is supported by USAID/Zambia through the provision of technical assistance for quality programming. The implementing partner is the Education Development Centre (EDC) of the United States whose consultants work with the MOE's Educational Broadcasting Services which is responsible for the IRI program.

The appraisal gathered data systematically to provide information to decision makers regarding the quality of the IRI delivery system and how it could be improved.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The appraisal attempted to answer a number of questions regarding the IRI system: How were the major components of the delivery system functioning? What were the strengths and limitations of the IRI delivery system and how could the system be improved?

The objective of the appraisal was therefore to determine how the system, consisting of the following major components, could be improved:

- lesson development.
- broadcast production.
- community support/participation.
- partnerships between the MOE, NGOs and private sector alliances.
- the monitoring and evaluation system.
- the management system.
- professional development and support system for mentors and producers.

METHODOLOGY

A Rapid Appraisal Approach was adopted for this study. Rapid appraisal methods have been used because of their strengths:

- They can gather, analyze and report relevant information to decision makers within days or weeks.
- They are good at providing in-depth understanding of complex socio-economic systems or processes.
- Rapid appraisal methods allow evaluators to explore relevant new ideas and issues that may not have been anticipated in planning the study.

Since the main purpose of the study was to determine the quality of IRI delivery system, the study was designed to be interactive and participatory and included major stakeholders, namely mentors, producers, communities, EBS staff and other staff in the Ministry of Education in Lusaka and in districts visited.

A rapid appraisal necessarily requires that the study is undertaken on a small but representative scale. The study was therefore confined to the Chikuni Parish area (in Monze district) and four other districts: Chongwe, Lusaka, Kitwe, and Petauke. These were selected because they represented urban and rural areas and had reasonably large numbers of centers that were at different levels of development.

FINDINGS

The appraisal shows high demand for the program, particularly at the community level. Most of the stakeholders interviewed expressed appreciation of the IRI program and the desire for it to continue. The appraisal exercise also identified a number, children's attendance at centers, commitment and ever-increasing skills of of the program's strengths, particularly, mentor commitment and enthusiasm for the program EBS' writers and technicians, and technical assistance provided to scriptwriting teams by EDC staff. The sustainability and indeed the future of the program, however, are threatened by a number of factors as the following findings show:

- The strength of support for the program by MOE departments outside of EBS varies; not all Departments in the MOE support the IRI program and Senior officers at the Ministry of Education have different perceptions of the role and purpose of the IRI program in providing basic education.

- Building the management system at EBS appears to have taken a back seat to production.

- There was not much formative evaluation which could improve lesson development mainly because of lack of time and transport to undertake field visits. However, all categories of staff at EBS recognised the importance of formative evaluation and expressed willingness to participate in it.

- The fast pace of the lessons and the short pauses tend to reduce the level of interactivity and active participation of all children. While more research is needed to verify initial observations the fast pace of the lessons may run the risk of excluding slower and/or shy learners (many of whom are girls) from participating.

- Broadcast quality varied and this could be attributed to time constraints which impact negatively on the production processes. There was also lack of maintenance of equipment.

- Generally, communities did not support mentors mainly due to higher levels of poverty and ignorance of their responsibilities.

- There were a number of agencies involved in various aspects of the IRI at community level. However, there was no strong enabling structure for partnerships and alliances.

- The monitoring and evaluation system was not systematised.

- The training given to mentors was inadequate.

- The life skills segment is short and mentors are not adequately prepared to "teach" it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the above findings a number of recommendations are being made regarding both the Instructional and Support sub systems of the IRI program.

1. Instructional Systems

(a) Improving Lesson Development

Recommendation 1: EBS should train writers to be more creative and to produce interactive radio lessons. Work schedules for writers should be reviewed to ensure that they are given more time and more resources. In addition both writers and technical staff should understand the importance and role of formative evaluation so that they do not resent it as merely leading to re-recording. In order to achieve this there should be a concise write up on the purpose and role of formative evaluation as well as opportunities for writers and technicians to participate in formative evaluation and to integrate information from formative evaluation into lesson development. Apart from formative evaluation the production schedule should allow for EBS to institute processes such as script review and feedback from senior EBS staff and EDC consultants. The proposed position of Executive Producer in the restructured EBS should provide the necessary leadership required in lesson development.

Recommendation 2: EBS and EDC should identify relevant personnel from CDC to work with writers as a means of providing their expertise as curriculum specialists. EBS should also train or use people who speak clearly as radio teachers.

(b) Improving Broadcast Production

Recommendation 3: EBS should provide necessary equipment for studio production and maintenance services. In addition there should be regular supplies of operating materials.

Recommendation 4: EBS should develop a workable production schedule with sufficient time to record lessons, play back and correct to ensure quality. In this regard EBS should ensure the smooth coordination of studio production activities by hiring a studio manager who supervises the technicians and other studio staff. EBS should also develop studio procedures which will ensure systematic handling of scripts and tapes.

(c) Community participation and support

Recommendation 5: There should be a sustained sensitization program so that communities understand how IRI is to function and their responsibilities. EBS can play a role in sensitizing communities through radio broadcasts. However, most of sensitization activities should be the responsibility of DEOs. It is important for DEOs to identify other partners such as NGOs, Churches, Community Development Assistants (of the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services), head teachers of schools etc. that can help to sensitize the communities and mobilise them.

In order to promote the effective participation of NGOs and other partners in sensitizing and mobilising communities, there is a need for MOE and EBS to create and clarify channels of communication for NGOs and other partners to participate in this activity and DEOs should be given guidelines and orientation on how to facilitate alliances with NGOs and other partners at community level.

Recommendation 6 : EBS/MOE should build the capacity of communities to support IRI centres and mentors by:

- Providing continuing technical advice and training on managing IRI learning centres to communities through NGOs and other partners operating in a given community.
- Beginning the process of developing and gaining consensus within the MOE on criteria and a certification process for the interactive radio instruction learning centres (IRLCs). Once these are established small grants should be made available to IRILCs. Lessons for this process could be drawn from the community schools. But it is important for communities to understand that the grant will be given on certain conditions such as the community to demonstrate that they are supporting the IRILC and mentors, to a certain level, and that there is a functioning committee which is able to mobilise parents and children, monitor the performance of the IRLC, visit the IRILC, have regular meetings, etc.

(d)Improving Monitoring and Evaluation

Recommendation 7: MOE/EBS should define roles and responsibilities regarding various aspects of monitoring and evaluation in light of decentralization of education services and create one clear channel for communicating and utilizing data. But EBS should not be involved in the actual monitoring but concentrate on formative evaluation.

Recommendation 8: MOE should build capacity for monitoring IRI learning centres by allocating money to it in the budget; and by building appropriate expertise in monitors.

(e)Increasing EBS' capacity to manage the IRI program

Recommendation 9 : MOE/EBS should create, streamline and institutionalize procedures of the management system e.g. job description, channels of communication, procurement procedures, performance appraisal systems, etc. and adhere to them. In addition there should be a clear chain of command and delegation of authority.

Recommendation 10: Given the commitment and excellence of staff and the investments made in their professional development, MOE/EBS should create conditions for staff to have job satisfaction and be retained. This includes the urgent need to resolve the issue of transport and other work related expenses now borne by writer-producers. Related to this is the need for senior management to communicate all relevant information on restructuring in a timely manner in order to relieve anxiety of staff members and mitigate against rumors.

2. Support Systems

(a)Working More Closely with other MOE Departments

Recommendation 11 : The MOE must define what is meant by IRI being a "transitional" strategy. This should be done at the same time that strategies to increase formal and community schooling are being discussed. These main modes of delivery should be envisaged as dependent upon the "transitional" mode and vice versa. The clarification may help in getting Heads of Department in MOE to understand their role in the IRI program.

Recommendation 12: Immediate steps should be taken to institutionalise the IRI programs within MOE. This entails that the IRI program should be a shared responsibility of all departments involved in the provision of basic education i.e. Planning and Information; Standards and Curriculum Development; Examinations Council of Zambia; Open and Distance Learning and Teacher Education. Further, the roles and responsibilities of relevant categories of staff in their departments should be clearly defined/redefined to include IRI activities.

Recommendation 13: MOE should decide whether the program will expand to Grade 7. If so a working group drawing membership from Teacher Education, Standards and Curriculum and Examinations Council of Zambia should be appointed to make proposals on the assessment of IRI grade 7 learners and how to integrate them into the formal

school system. Such proposals and any related decisions should clearly be carried to communities.

Recommendation 14: If the IRI program is expanded to Grade 7, relevant training should be given to mentors in all subject areas and printed materials should be developed by EBS in conjunction with the curriculum specialists, to supplement radio lessons.

Recommendation 15: EBS should work with other relevant MOE departments to share information on the objectives, role and nature of the IRI program with provincial, district and zonal MOE officers involved in the provision of basic education through seminars and meetings. This will enable all those involved to develop a common understanding of the IRI program and a sense of ownership and commitment.

Recommendation 16: The Permanent Secretary's Office should define roles of each MOE organ (and provide guidelines for their participation) in promoting the IRI program. *Recommendation 17 :* There is a need to establish a structure or forum that will coordinate all MOE departments for the delivery of alternative basic education.

(b) Facilitating Partnerships

Recommendation 18 : EBS should operationalise the IRI Implementation Forum through which NGOs and private sector partners can share information on the IRI program and develop functional partnerships and strategies for collaboration. As proposed in the EBS Five Year Strategic Plan, the Forum could meet quarterly at provincial and national level. An EBS Outreach Coordinator should be appointed, or one of the officers could take this responsibility to ensure that decisions of the forum are implemented.

There should be clear criteria for membership of the Implementation Forum and definitions of its roles and responsibilities.

Recommendation 19 : The EBS/MOE should create and clarify channels of communication for NGOs and other stakeholders to participate in sensitising and supporting communities. The DEOs should facilitate partnerships and alliances at community level.

Recommendation 20: As highlighted in the EBS' Five Year Strategic Plan, there is a need for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between MOE/EBS and participating NGOs and other stakeholders. Perhaps lessons could be drawn from the model created in the MOU signed between American Peace Corps and MOE.

(c) Professional Development and Support for Mentors

Recommendation 21: MOE should create a career progression route by making mentor training an advantage in selection to teacher training colleges. To a certain extent this already is happening. However, the mechanisms for such a career path should be formalized and informed by information received from DEOs on the performance of mentors.

Recommendation 22: Mentor training should be improved by:
- Providing orientation and guidelines to trainers of mentors at District level.
- Increasing the variety of course, content, duration and frequency.
- Including gender issues and life skills in mentor training.
- Considering the use of self Instructional Training Modules for mentor training.
- Providing basic teaching skills, information on professional conduct and preparation and use of teaching aids (especially for those who will be involved in teaching Grade 5-7 classes).
- Giving certificates of attendance after completing a specific training course.
- Decentralising training to zones but allowing for the participation of officers from EBS.
- Developing a workplan, which provides for writer-producers assisting in mentor training.

(d) Professional Development and Support for Producers

Recommendation 23: The EDC staff should continue to provide the much needed and highly appreciated professional support to all those involved in the production of radio lessons. In addition there is a need to develop a staff development program which should include in- house training sessions, as a means of increasing their competence in radio production.

Recommendation 24: Writer-producers should be supplied with sufficient resources and supplies to design, write and produce high-quality lessons.

Recommendation 25: The training of producers should focus more on interactive style, gender issues, life skills, including prevention of HIV, and guidance and counselling. Training in the use of computers should be given priority so that writers may acquire additional skills to type and fix their own scripts and be able to access the Internet for them to get relevant materials.

Recommendation 26: EBS should develop a plan which increases opportunities for writers to do formative evaluation and assist in mentor training.

(e) Improving Life skills Component

Recommendation 27: EBS should expand the Life skills component of the IRI program by the following measures:
- Increase time for the segment.
- Mentors be given life skills as part of training.
- Provide more teaching aids: charts, pictures, and illustrations.
- In order to increase community support for Life Skills being taught in the IRLCs parents and other community members should be targeted in a program on life skills including HIV/AIDS prevention.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) program of the Ministry of Education (MOE) was launched in July 2000 as a pilot project catering for Grade 1 learners at 22 IRI learning centers. It is estimated that there are now at least 252 registered IRI Centers and more than 12,000 Grade 1 – 3 learners. There are reports of more centers being formed spontaneously throughout the country. Appendix A shows gives a general picture of the distribution of IRI centres.

The program is intended to reach out - of - school children who have no basic education nor access to the formal school system due to a variety of reasons, the main ones being inadequate provision, poverty, distance to the nearest formal/government school, increasing parental disinterest in school education, and the impact of HIV/AIDS.

Since the first programs were broadcast in July 2000, staff working in the Education Broadcasting Services (EBS) have written, recorded and are currently broadcasting radio lessons for Grades 1 through 3. The Grade 3 curriculum not only includes the topics of literacy, numeracy, social studies, science and mathematics, but also includes Life Skills for HIV prevention. Additionally, a 15-minute space between Grade broadcasts is used to deliver informative HIV prevention and mitigation messages using interviews and live reporting. Scriptwriters are currently working on master plans for Grade 4.

Presently, successful IRI centers are largely dependent on the production and broadcast of high quality, highly interactive, child-centered programs, the good will of communities to provide learning center venues and whatever financial support is provided to locally identified mentors (volunteers called mentors) who are briefly trained as program facilitators rather than trained teachers, and with minimal provision of print materials and other resources by government.

The MOE's Education Broadcasting Services (EBS) is responsible for the IRI program. USAID/Zambia supports the initiative through the provision of technical assistance for quality programming through its implementing partners, Education Development Center (EDC). Through that partnership and others, the Mission also encourages and facilitates partnerships with Peace Corps, faith-based and community organizations, and the private sector for supporting the program. EBS uses Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) to work with other PCVs and their communities in forming and supporting IRLCs. EBS works through the Community School Secretariat to obtain the services of an HIV/AIDS counseling volunteer to help develop HIV/AIDS radio programming. EBS works with faith-based organizations and community radio stations to support IRI in their communities.

Although the use of radio as the medium to deliver basic education is a relatively new initiative in Zambia, the Ministry of Education (MOE) views it as an essential tool of education delivery to achieve its education for all goals, as evidenced by some policy objectives in the MOE's Strategic Plan. However, the recent appraisal of the Strategic Plan indicated that the IRI Program is regarded as "transitional".

The relevance and importance of the IRI program as a delivery system designed to reach out-of-school children derive from the growing gap between the government's commitment to providing basic education to all on the one hand and its inability to do so in practical terms on the other. The numbers of extremely vulnerable children are rapidly increasing.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) has committed itself to providing universal basic education under the Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Programme (BESSIP). Some of the goals of this sub-sector are as follows (Ministry of Education, 2002:14):

Access/Equity	1. Provide free and compulsory basic education to all children that is responsive to girls, rural children, children with special educational needs, the poor, orphans and other vulnerable groups.
	2. Develop partnerships at central and district levels with key stakeholders and providers of education that will facilitate the delivery of quality basic education.
	3. Develop strategies in co-ordination with other line Ministries, local councils and civil society organisations for the provision of early childhood education.
	4. Co-ordinate the provision of adult basic education (adult literacy programmes) through formal and informal modes in partnership with UNZA, NGOs and other line Ministries.
Quality	1. Increase learning achievement in literacy and numeracy skills through initial learning in a local language, and a competency-based curriculum for lower basic grades.
	2. Develop a system for provision of sufficient learning and teaching resources for delivery of the curriculum.
	3. Increase provision in the middle and upper basic grades for productive life skills and improve the overall learning achievement in these skills.
	4. Supply all basic schools with adequate numbers of qualified teachers, distributed appropriately by gender.
Administration, Financing and Management	1. Strengthen the capacity of the District Education Boards to plan, cost, manage and monitor the delivery of educational services in their Districts.
HIV/AIDS	1. Develop and support actions aimed at mitigating and reducing the impact of HIV/AIDS in Basic Schools.

However, the high investment costs raise doubts about the MOE's ability to attain these goals by 2007. As Kelly (1998) stated:

The ministry has estimated that the attainment of these targets will necessitate total investment costs of $225.5 million between now and 2005 ($81.4 million for

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Grade 1-7 developments and $144.1 for Grade 8-9). Although expanded and better coordinated donor support seems likely to be forthcoming, it is doubtful whether after years of minimal capital investment the system would have the capacity suddenly to embark on a massive capital development programme. It is also possible that, because of rapid population growth, the potential school-aged population may be almost 40% larger than originally projected (pxi).

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS also constitutes a barrier to schooling. It affects the access and quality of training for all children. As the Ministry of Education observes:

In relative terms population growth and the non-participation of children from poor and AIDS-affected families has led to a decline in enrolment rates for grades 1-7, with the national net enrolment falling each year from 70.4% in 1996 to 65.1% in 2001. During the same period the gross enrolment rate fell from 85.0% to 76%" (Ministry of Education, 2002:20).

According to the Ministry of Education (2002) in 2001 only 152,132 (of the children aged 7) were enrolled out of a total population of 342,355 which meant that 55.6% were not enrolled in schools. It is estimated that 30% of the children of the school going age are not enrolled. This translates into about 620,000 children (Ministry of Education, 2002).

In particular, enrolments for orphans appear to be comparatively low. Kelly (2000) identified a number of reasons for comparatively lower primary enrollment rates among orphans:

- Lack of affordable schooling – a sudden increase in poverty which often accompanies the impacts of AIDS on a household is a significant casual indicator leading to lower enrollment rates as children are unable to pay school-related costs;
- Increased familial responsibilities – children are increasingly relied upon to take care of siblings or ailing family members and therefore unable to begin (or finish) school;
- Family skepticism regarding the value of primary education – some families are skeptical of the usefulness and importance of primary education to their child's future and therefore, opt not to send them to school even if they can afford to do so;
- Poor educational quality – the lack of trained teachers and decreased teacher productivity in the classroom since AIDS has negatively affected the quality of instruction;
- Stigma and trauma – the emotional stress accompanying the loss of a family member or caregiver along with the stigma attached with being an "AIDS orphan" deters school participation;

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Apart from the issues of access and the enormous cost of expansion required to achieve the above stated goals, the quality of education at the basic education level, as much as at the other levels of the educational system, has been affected by a variety of factors:

> The quality of education has been compromised by various factors. The high pupil: teacher ratio of 49:1 is one factor, while the lack of sufficient educational materials has also contributed to the low quality of education. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has also had a devastating impact on the educational system. The loss of teachers through death and sickness has greatly reduced the pupil:teacher contact hours in the schools (Ministry of Education,2002:14)

The challenges that the MOE faces with regard to increasing access and improving the quality of education for all children require radical changes to the provision of education especially in terms of content, processes and delivery methods. In this regard the IRI program represents one of the important strategies for achieving the goals of the basic education sub-sector. It is an important avenue for increasing access to education and improving the quality of learning for out-of-school children and vulnerable children. It is noteworthy against this perspective that there were over 600,000 maternal and double orphans in Zambia in 1999 a number which is expected to rise to about 1,200,000 by the year 2010 (UNICEF 1999, cited by Kariuki and Laflin, 2001:2). About 40% of children are nutritionally stunted and about half of infant and child deaths are under lain by poor nutritional status. The potential of the IRI delivery system to contribute to the attainment of the goals of basic education for all lies in the following:

- The IRI program offers to address the problem of access in the way that conventional systems cannot;

- Radio waves can reach people in remote areas in a way that schools cannot reach; and

- They can be received at little cost and when programmed well, can provide high quality instruction to hundreds of children,

However, the extent to which the IRI will provide expanded opportunities for the out-of-school children, will be determined by the quality of inputs into the whole IRI delivery system.

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2. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

The study was justified by two important considerations. First, the Five Year Strategic Plan for the Zambian Educational Broadcasting Services' IRI program for out-of-school and vulnerable children provides the rationale and strategies for the expansion of the IRI program. According to the Strategic Plan " EBS will expand the radio programmes so that all seven grades of primary school instruction are freely available through ZNBC's daily broadcasts to anyone who wants to listen" (Kariuki and Laflin, 2001:3).

Second, and related to the provisions of EBS' Five Year Strategic Plan are issues raised and useful recommendations made by Letshabo and Kariuki (2001) for improving the IRI program. Underlining the issues raised and recommendations made in their report Letshabo and Kariuki stated that: "Now that the program has gone nationwide, and there will soon be several cohorts of the program, policy decisions on the issues outlined above will need to be made to ensure that IRI maintains desirable educational standards and that IRI remains accessible to disadvantaged learners in Zambia" (Letshabo and Kariuki, 2001:27). In this regard it is important to note the questions raised by Kariuki and Laflin (2001:3-4):

> The issue now is: can EBS systematically write and produce programmes from which children learn as many of the core curriculum skills in thirty or sixty minutes a day for half a year as their counterparts learn in a full year of several hours each day? And can the EBS staff develop design skills that will allow them to develop equally effective programmes at the higher grades, using minimal other materials and books? And can they complete the task of providing these resources in a five year period?

These questions and the issues raised in various studies and EBS' Five Year Strategic Plan itself necessitated the study. There was a need to be more exact and certain about the effectiveness of the IRI delivery system in contributing to the achievement of the goals of the basic education sub-sector as specified in the MOE' Strategic Plan and in the EBS Stragic Plan itself. This is particularly important when one considers the fact that there has been no comprehensive evaluation of the program since it was expanded to cover most parts of the country. It is also important to assess the extent to which the issues raised by Letshabo and Kariuki have been dealt with or could be dealt with in order to improve the effectiveness of the IRI delivery system, thereby improving the quality and standards of education for out-of-school children.

The study was also justified on the grounds that previous studies did not look at the functioning of the delivery system and yet the program has been scaled up.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

As Yates and Tilson (2000) observed, radio across the world is the great educational success story and no other medium has sustained its impact in the same way since the 1920s when the British Broadcasting Corporation introduced its schools broadcasting service.

Radio has been used to offer direct teaching since the 1970s. One variant of the direct teaching is the Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI). It was first developed in Nicaragua in 1974 and has been used in over twenty countries since then, particularly in the Carribean, Latin America, parts of Asia and Africa.

The distinctive characteristics of IRI are:

- Carefully designed curricula based on the best practices, including findings from research;
- Radio programmes which are designed to be more than just supplementary or enrichment; IRI programmes usually focus on the core instruction, and lessons for a given subject and grade may be broadcast on a daily basis;
- Carefully developed scripts which incorporate the best pedagogical approaches;
- Extensive use of formative evaluation during lesson development;
- Summative evaluations which determine the learning achievement gains resulting from the IRI programmes (Yates and Tilson, 2000:13).

Although all the above are very important characteristics of and factors that determine success and effectiveness in an IRI program, formative evaluation needs special emphasis. The success of the Nicaraguan IRI program (1974) is largely attributed to formative evaluation. In Bolivia formative evaluation led to simple revisions of programs which dramatically improved the learners' ability to participate in the programs (Bosch and Miranda, n.d):

> Because there are many reasons why programs may not function well at first, IRI programs use a formative evaluation process of analysing feedback in relation to different design levels. This ensures that many possibilities are reviewed before the source of dysfunction is uncovered. Decisions can then be made about the types of changes that should be made and whether they occur at the level of the format, the instructional techniques, or the details of how activities and directions are presented (Bosch and Miranda, n.d:8).

It is estimated that over the past 15 years about one million students across various countries have been using IRI, annually (Yates and Tilson, 2000). The wide application of radio for interactive instruction is attributable to its strengths, one of which is the ability of the IRI model to adapt to diverse and changing contexts and circumstances.

IRI has also demonstrated its ability to promote gender equity. According to Hertenberger and Bosch (1996:131) "recent evaluation data suggest that when girls

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participate in IRI programs learning gains are achieved and IRI may benefit girls more than boys, the potential for using IRI to improve educational quality and access for girls is promising." (Cited by Yates and Tilson, 2000:13).

Despite its strength IRI has had mixed results in terms of national implementation and long-term sustainability. Some IRI projects have not been sustainable. However, in general, studies of IRI programs worldwide show that such projects have been successful in improving the quality of learning. They also provide useful lessons on the success factors as well as appropriate methods for evaluating an IRI program. IRI projects that have had significant, sustainable impact include mathematics in Bolivia and Venezuela, science in Papua New Guinea, English in South Africa and health in Bolivia.

According to Dock (1999:58) the key factors determining long term sustainability of IRI projects include:

- Vigorous local leadership;
- Securing long term financial commitment;
- Marketing the project in the political and social areas;
- Building commitment and ownership among participants;
- Working for integration into the education system; and
- Regularly re-activating teachers and their supervisors.

These have implications for various community mobilisation and mentor support, funding from the Ministry of Education and donors, and policy on the integration of the IRI into the national education system. It was therefore important to determine how the IRI program was supporting the achievement of these factors especially with regard to community mobilisation and mentor support.

In Zambia, evaluations of the IRI program during the past two years of its implementation provide evidence that there is a demand for the IRI education alternative, that children generally attended regularly, and that children can learn from the IRI approach (See Chondoka, 2001; and Letshabo and Kariuki, 2001). Some of the observations made on the Zambian IRI program were:

- It makes education more affordable for all children. Similar to community schools, it does not deter pupil enrollment with school – related expenses.

- It appears to be cost effective.

- It serves children in both urban and rural areas.

- It has the potential to meet girls' education needs, in the same way as community schools since education is provided at a nominal cost, in a local environment and is flexible.

- It has the potential to be sustainable in the long run

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- Skill retention from IRI appears to be strong, and gains in mathematics counting notable. (Hepburn, 2001).

More specifically Letshabo and Kariuki (2001) noted the following:

- About 90 percent of the learners that enrolled at the beginning of Grade 1 completed the grade. The majority of learners attended regularly.
- IRI attracted learners from various backgrounds.
- Learners exhibit more mastery of numeracy than literacy skills.
- There were many more learners who were transferring from regular schools to IRI centres than those transferring from IRI centres to regular schools (Letshabo and Kariuki, 2001:25-26).It will be important to establish whether the trend has continued, given the re-introduction of free education

A desk review of the literature on the Zambian IRI program and other relevant documents brought out a number of issues many which were summarized as follows:

(a) **Lesson development:** The swift pace of lesson development in the first two years has led to issues of quality in lesson development. Some times scripts were lacking in creativity and variety and it was unclear to what extent they were participatory and interactive. There were insufficient pauses and breaks were not long enough. Pacing was inappropriate. Not enough time was allowed for the mentor to explain, initiate activities and translate from English into local language.

As indicated above, in the IRI design scripts are improved through formative evaluation. Unfortunately formative evaluation was not conducted frequently enough.

(b) **Broadcast production:** It takes expertise, careful coordination and special equipment to produce quality radio broadcasts. Challenges continue in this area.

- Expertise of the production team (producers, radio teachers and other presenters) was questioned in the documents reviewed. It was unclear as to their capacity to operate the equipment (e.g. computers) in order to record the programs, whether the team had all the equipment that they needed and whether they had been trained to use it specifically for IRI.
- Similarly, questions regarding the timely availability of accompanying arrangements (sound effects, scripts, etc.) were raised in the documents.

(c) Community support and participation: Integral to the success of the IRI program is the support given to the Interactive Radio Learning Centre (IRLC) and to the mentors by the community. Documents revealed that communities supported the IRLCs but not so the mentors themselves. This has led to many mentors becoming disillusioned with the program and leaving their posts after being trained. Mentors need support in the form of incentives (monetary or in-kind), shelter for the school, learning materials, radios, and batteries.

In the pilot phase IRI committees were formed to oversee the activities of the IRLC and to mobilize support for the mentors. Some of these committees still exist, but many are dormant or were not formed at all. The program may want to explore revitalizing these community committees as loci of support for mentors and IRLCs.

(d) Relationship between EBS and MOE: Throughout the first two years of the program there had been need to clarify the relationship between EBS and the MOE- what was the responsibility of each regarding IRI and what EBS could reasonably expect from an already overloaded Ministry. The level of buy-into the IRI program by the MOE was unclear. In order to ensure sustainability of the program, it was important to clarify who was doing what and to strengthen the link between the EBS and the MOE in the service of IRI and reaching out-of-school youth. There was need for clarity regarding the relationship between EBS/IRI and the Gender and Equity component and the Distance Education Directorate, specifically what was the role of each of these components regarding IRI, especially in light of the BESSIP MOE's new Strategic Plan. There was also lack of clarity regarding whether the IRI budget was under BESSIP or the MOE's operating budget.

In the pilot phase EBS carried out nearly all promotion of the IRI program and community mobilization. Undertaking this alone, they were not able to meet the demand coming from communities to start up IRLCs. Currently, EBS relies on PEOs, DEOs, DIPs and inspectors to promote IRI, sensitize communities and mobilize them to begin new centers. The ability to meet the demand is still insufficient as district and provincial level officers have other duties to attend to as well.

(e) Partnerships between the MOE, NGOs and private sector alliances: In order for IRI to be sustained and to meet the demand presented for education by communities opportunities presented by the presence and interest of NGOs, churches and others in IRI need to be capitalized upon. This partnership is envisioned in the EBS five year Strategic Plan.

EBS has taken most of the responsibility for promoting IRI to the public and to communities. There are other actors in communities such as local NGOs, churches, Peace Corps Volunteers, etc. who are natural allies to EBS and MOE in the promotion of IRI. These groups can be trained to mobilize communities and monitor the progress of IRLCs in their areas.

(f) Monitoring and evaluation system

The systems used to monitor and evaluate IRI, how it is functioning, how many children are being impacted, etc. need improvement.

EBS did not have up-to-date data from IR Learning centres. It relies upon DEO's offices for gathering and the transmission of this data. How MOE monitoring systems (EMIS) and EBS' needs for data gathering can be streamlined needed to be explored.

District education officers are responsible for monitoring the quality of education being provided at the IRLC's. It was unclear whether this was being done sufficiently, whether their workload was capable of accommodating this responsibility and whether they had been trained to do this monitoring. The question of training is an important one as the method of education delivery offered by IRI is quite different from the formal education that education officers are used to monitoring. If they are not sensitized to the program they run the risk of making the work difficult for mentors.

The availability of transport is a critical issue as well. Data gathering and reporting to the central level from centres is still done somewhat erratically. A system needs to be put in place in order to know how many students are attending and reporting on their progress.

(g) Management system:
EBS' capacity has been stretched to incorporate the IRI program. The whole organization needs to be looked at and reorganized in order that IRI can be supported to reach the hundreds of thousands of children it is envisioned to reach.

- EBS is not equipped to support scriptwriters to design the high-quality scripts they otherwise are capable of designing (administrative support, reference materials, office supplies, computers and computer training, and course syllabi all need to be made available to writers).
- There are insufficient numbers of scriptwriters to produce the number of scripts needed and to ensure quality of these scripts.
- Documents point to difficulties in providing 'allowances' to writers and presenters in a timely manner. One document states that there are problems of "erratic funding." This creates a disincentive to produce good work and to remain with EBS once trained.
Scriptwriters are critical to the success and sustainability of the IRI program. It is to the program's advantage to support the scriptwriters' professional development. Their on-going skills development through workshops and sufficient time allowed for them to reflect on their work should be planned for. In addition, this will lead to their increased job satisfaction and subsequent retention.
- It is unclear whether EBS' staffing plan has been revised and if it has whether the revisions will highlight IRI.
- Reliable communication systems and transport is needed (especially in the instance of delivering tapes to radio stations in a timely manner).

(h) Professional development and support for mentors: Like scriptwriters and participation of the community, mentors are a critical element which ensure the success of the IRI program. There still remain a number of issues regarding mentor support. Currently mentors receive two-three days training before going back to their communities to begin lessons. Some receive no training, if their center starts up after the training has been given. Given the mentors' own inadequate education, a two-day training is insufficient to provide them the necessary skills to lead the class in a participatory and interactive manner and to use the technology. The addition of the life skills curriculum in the program will also necessitate more in-depth training of mentors.

Mentors rely upon the Mentor Guides for delivering their lessons successfully. Because this is the only resource available to them other than the radio, more attention must be paid to the development of these guides and their timely delivery to mentors. The recommendation was also made that the guides be produced in a more durable material.

EBS gave out radios to all centers in the beginning of the program. It was unclear if radio procurement was now left entirely to the community and whether this was feasible. In addition, provision must be made for repairing or replacing the radios, which break quite often.

(i) Life skills curriculum: The life skills curriculum has recently been added to the broadcasts. Since this component is new it has not yet been evaluated. This evaluation was to look at whether this component was being taught, the mentors' impressions of the content and how receptive the mentors and students were to the subject matter (including HIV/AIDS prevention).

(j) The future of IRI: Given that the evaluation was taking place in the context of the MOE's development of a Five-year Strategic Plan, the evaluators thought they would take the opportunity to take a preliminary look at what the various stakeholders saw as the future of IRI. Specifically, the evaluation looked at perceptions of stakeholders regarding IRI in light of the new Free Primary Education (FPE) policy enacted earlier this year.

Additionally, acknowledging the growing numbers of orphans in Zambia, the evaluation sought to gather data regarding how IRI was serving this vulnerable group and how decision makers envision IRI serving orphans, compared to FPE and/or community schools.

4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The quality of the IRI delivery system was the focus of this appraisal. This study was to gather data systematically to provide good information to education decision-makers regarding the quality of the IRI basic education delivery system and how it can be improved. To do that, the study reviewed and appraised the goals to be achieved through the IRI program – especially in light of the Ministry's new Five Year Strategic Plan and the HIV/AIDS environment, the audiences to be reached, the program development processes, products, the partners to be mobilized and encouraged, and the areas that might benefit from increased MOE-cooperating partner support.

Even as EBS continued to develop programming for higher grades, it was important to look at the system itself to see if and how the quality of lesson development, the quality of broadcast production, the quality of mentoring, the quality of community support and MOE, NGO, and private sector alliances, and, ultimately, the quality of IRI children's education could be improved. More specifically the study examined how the system supported the functioning of key components of the system such as lesson development, monitoring, mentor training and teaching and community participation.

The study attempted to answer the following questions:

- How were the major components of the system functioning? What were the strengths and limitations of the IRI delivery system?
- Can the system be improved? How could it be improved?.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In accordance with the purpose of the study, the main objective of the study was to determine how the system, consisting of these major components, could be improved:

- lesson development.
- broadcast production.
- community support/participation.
- partnerships between the MOE, NGOs and private sector alliances.
- the monitoring and evaluation system.
- the management system.
- professional development and support system for mentors and producers.

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6. METHODOLOGY

A Rapid Appraisal Approach was adopted for this study. Rapid appraisal methods have been used because of their strengths:

- They can gather, analyze and report relevant information to decision makers within days or weeks.
- They are good at providing in-depth understanding of complex socio-economic systems or processes.
- Rapid appraisal methods allow evaluators to explore relevant new ideas and issues that may not have been anticipated in planning the study.

Since the main purpose of the study was to determine the quality of IRI delivery system, the study was designed to be interactive and participatory and included major stakeholders, namely mentors, producers, communities, EBS staff and other staff in the Ministry of Education in Lusaka and in districts visited.

6.1 Sample

A rapid appraisal necessarily requires that the study is undertaken on a small but representative scale. The study was therefore confined to the Chikuni Parish area and four other districts: Chongwe, Lusaka, Kitwe, and Petauke. These were selected because they represented urban and rural areas and had reasonably large numbers of centers that were at different levels of development.

These areas also represented different historical and management aspects of the IRI program:

- Lusaka and Chongwe represented the oldest IRI learning centres initiated by the EBS, representing both urban and rural areas.
- Chikuni Parish Area had NGO supported centres.
- Kitwe centres were largely mobilised by the District Education Officers.
- Petauke was a rural area with high levels of poverty. Centres in this district include those managed by American Peace Corps Volunteers.

It was, therefore, hoped that the selected areas would provide a reasonable scope for comparisons in all the components of the IRI delivery system.

In addition to the field visits the study also elicited the views, and determined the experiences, of key stakeholders: staff of EBS (Controller, Technical assistance Staff, Writers, Producers, and technical staff); staff of other departments of the Ministry of Education (Examinations Council of Zambia, Curriculum Development Centre, BESSIP Coordinating Office, Equity and Gender Unit) and District Education Officers, Education Officers, District In Service Providers and NGOs.

At least three centres were selected in each district. Parents/guardians were purposely selected for interviews. All mentors at the selected centers were included in the study.

In the pilot test, two centres (one in Chongwe and one in Lusaka) were visited. There was not enough time to visit more centres.

The issues that emerged from the desk review of the literature on the IRI program in Zambia informed the design of the instruments.

6.2 Data Collection Instruments
The following instruments were used during the study:
- structured interview schedules for DEOs, District Focal Point community focus groups, mentors, and head teachers of neighbouring formal schools.
- structured interviews for staff at EBS including EDC consultants.
- semi-structured interviews for various officers in the Ministry of Education in Lusaka
- lesson observation sheet.

The data collection instruments are contained in Appendices B1-9.

6.3 Field Testing of Instruments.
The rapid assessment methodology and the instruments were field tested at two centres (one in Chongwe and one in Lusaka). They were found to be effective. Information was gathered quickly and a number of perspectives obtained through interviews, observations, and focus group discussion. Time allocated, however, did not allow for thorough checking (triangulation) of data. Data (for example, number of students enrolled) was not checked as much as planned.

Some small adjustments were made to instruments and are explained below. The revised instruments that were developed after the field test are found in Appendices B1 - B9.

A lesson observation checklist was included in the initial proposal. However, given the new focus of the study, the team decided to shorten this instrument to fit the new objective of assessing the system. In addition, using the checklist observation instrument as a data collection procedure was constrained by the fact that lessons had stopped in most areas by the time that the evaluation formally began. Since the evaluation team was only able to observe lessons in at the most 8 (2 in Lusaka, 2 in Chongwe, 4 in Chikuni) out of a possible 15 centers the evaluation includes observations from those centers. The observation instrument was designed to enable the evaluators to assess the functioning of the system: broadcast quality, lesson design, mentor competence, materials provision, and infrastructure.

Structured interview schedules for community focus groups, parents, mentors and head teachers in the formal schools that are near the IRI learning centers were also proposed. The team refined the schedules presented to the Reference Group on July 24 and developed interview schedules for mentor, focus group discussion for community, and the neighboring school head teacher. In addition, a schedule was developed (and administered to) the DEO and District level IRI focal person. All of these were field tested on July 30th. Because of consideration of time limitations, the interview with parents was dropped. Additionally, in field testing it was found that most of the

community focus group were parents of children in IRI classes. These group discussions also allowed for the possibility of checking the accuracy of the information presented by individual parents.

These interview schedules were tested and were changed – questions added and deleted (See appendices B1-B9).

Preliminary schedules for staff at the EBS were presented at the July 24th Reference Group meeting. However, due to time limitations and the need to go to the field early enough to observe some of IRI lessons, these were not finalized by the time we went to field. They were revised based on information gathered in the field test.

The preliminary findings of the evaluation were presented to the Reference group on 16th August, 2002. Comments and observations made by the group were incorporated into the draft final report which was presented at the meeting attended by representatives of various Departments of the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders on 26th August, 2002. A record of the deliberations of the meeting is contained in Appendix C.

7. FINDINGS

The evaluation team visited a total of 11 Interactive Radio Instruction Learning Centres (IRLCs) in the Chikuni Parish in Monze and four other districts namely, Chongwe, Lusaka, Kitwe and Petauke. The evaluation team interviewed 4 District Education Officers (DEOs), 4 IRI focal point persons, 11 Head teachers of Schools located near the IRI centres, 18 mentors, the Controller and staff of the EBS, the EDC Consultants, and 5 senior staff in the Ministry of Education (MOE). Focus group discussions with community representatives were conducted at each of the IRI centres visited. In addition the evaluation team observed lessons in 5 centers.

Most of the people interviewed and community groups had some general understanding of the purpose of the IRI program, which was defined or stated in various ways:

- A basic literacy program and if children continue they can sit for examinations,

- IRI is for children rejected from the regular school because they are over the required age for grade 1 in regular schools;

- It is targeting children who cannot get into a regular school for a variety of reasons such as no school nearby, classes are overenrolled, or cannot pay fees

- It helps vulnerable children (either orphans or children whose parents are poor).

Most of the people interviewed and community focus groups felt that the IRI centres were working and the program enabled children to acquire literacy and numeracy skills. Two community focus groups in Monze and one in Chongwe felt that IRI children were better in terms of knowledge and skills gains than those in regular school. They felt that a Grade 1 child in an IRI centre was equivalent to a grade 3 in a regular school and a grade 2 was equivalent to a grade 5 in a regular school.

There is therefore a high demand for the program, particularly at the community level. Most of the stakeholders interviewed expressed appreciation of the IRI program and the desire for it to continue. The appraisal exercise also identified a number of the program's strengths, particularly, mentor commitment and enthusiasm for the program, children's attendance at centers, commitment and ever-increasing skills of EBS's writers and technicians, and technical assistance provided to scriptwriting teams by EDC staff.

However, despite the useful purpose the IRI program was generally seen to be serving and the perceived effectiveness and enthusiasm expressed by some respondents and communities the evaluation revealed that the sustainability and indeed the future of the program were threatened by a number of factors as the findings below show. The findings are presented under two general themes, namely Instructional Systems and Support systems.

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7.1 INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEMS
7.1.1. Lesson Development
The evaluation focused on, among other things, lesson design i.e. the timing/pauses of the radio lessons, pacing, clarity/broadcast quality, creativity, variety and interactivity. Mentors expressed different opinions on these aspects of the program. One of the 18 mentors interviewed felt that there were too many songs in each lesson, to the extent that children complained. He recommended that the number of songs should be reduced, at least for the upper grades. The differences in mentors' views were more distinct with regard to the questions of speaking speed and pause length. Of the 18 mentors interviewed, seven said the radio teachers' speaking speed was easy for them to understand; but eight of them said the radio teachers were speaking too fast. Regarding pause length, six of the mentors said it was enough for them to explain or translate things to the learners; but 12 said the pauses were far too short. One of the mentors at one centre in the Chikuni Parish felt that the timing and pauses were all right and that the pauses gave him enough time to explain to the learners; however, he felt that the pause between English and the mathematics components of the program was too short.

Observation of two lessons at two different centres in the Chikuni parish showed that broadcast was clear and the radio lesson was sequenced. However, the sound effects did not seem to be appropriate nor relevant. It also appeared that the pauses (sometimes 20 seconds) were too short for the mentor to explain some aspects of the lesson. The short pauses tended to reduce the level of participation of children and interactivity.

For example at Shiyala in Chongwe the mentor had to translate everything and did not have enough time to do translation as well as make class interactive. Because of this even in activities that called for children organizing themselves ("sets" in the Mathematics and science segment) she did the activity and the learners were just moved around by her. The mentor used a lot of drill and repetition (perhaps mimicking how she was taught in school). Another example is the Namakube centre in Chikuni where the mentor was well prepared and used the guide while teaching. But because of the quick pace of the radio lesson and the unequal participation of learners one boy dominated and the girls did not respond at all. The mentor understood the instructions quickly and translated efficiently. The fast pace of the lesson meant that those that were not fast learners or thinkers were left behind. At Singonya centre in Chikuni (grade 1) the mentor did not have enough time to write the exercise on the board and so did not complete the exercise.

Another interesting finding was that four of the mentors interviewed felt that the lessons themselves were too short; they suggested extending them to 40 minutes. One possible explanation for this feeling is that both the mentors and the learners found the lessons very interesting, as all the mentors admitted. One mentor even confessed that he too was learning a lot from the lessons, particularly the ones on life skills.

One major weakness of the lesson development system was lack of formative evaluation. However, all categories of staff at EBS recognized the importance of formative evaluation in improving the quality of lesson development and that this should be done

very often (for example, every fifth lesson) and should involve scriptwriters as well as technicians. Developing two programs per calendar year means that all staff in EBS are preoccupied with lesson development and broadcast production.

It was stated that lesson development is always improving as writers gain more experience. The perceived improvements in the quality of lesson development can be attributed to the system's ability to retain a large group of writers for about two years. A sense of commitment and positive interactions between writers are also felt to lead to high quality programs. The contribution of the EDC consultants was highly appreciated and was seen as a major factor in the improvement of programs.

In order to achieve better results writers need more training (including in studio production), more materials and more time. The current schedule is stressful. There is also need for better furniture and other improvements to the working environment. Writers also need enough copies of teachers' guide to avoid sharing which slows down the process of script writing. The need for continuous paper supply was also highlighted. Access to Internet and other reference materials was considered important for writers to improve their skills. The writer-producers were supported by the Controller of EBS, EDC consultants and mentors in recognising the need for quality print materials for grades 5-7.

7.1.2 Broadcast Production
The production of programs is the central activity of the IRI delivery system and it is one area in which the EBS faces challenges. The evaluation assessed the capacity of the EBS to produce quality programs in terms of equipment, staffing and relevant skills. There were a number of positive factors that contributed to the production of broadcasts as well as constraints and challenges. The EBS had four technicians (all have about two years experience) whose main responsibilities were to record and edit programs, identifying and reporting faults on equipment to the Controller and sometimes carrying tapes to the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) for transmission. There were 17 scriptwriters whose main function was to research, write, produce, edit and undertake formative evaluation. They were also responsible for planning and designing lessons, and had some responsibility for training mentors as well as administering tests at IRI centres. Two of the writers were responsible for taking tapes to the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) for transmission.

Technicians had problems with the equipment; they worked on computers and had access to a minidisk, but did not use it because it some times did not work. However, they did not make full use of the computers because of inadequate training. A major problem identified by both the technicians and the Controller was lack of maintenance services. The only maintenance that the machines had received had been from ZNBC who had not been able to provide a satisfactory service because the EBS machines were different from those that ZNBC technicians were familiar with.

Like writers, technical staff also felt that they needed more training; the training at ZNBC was not sufficient since the EBS machines differ from those used at ZNBC. In February 2002, the Controller of EBS indicated that she would contract further services from

"Dominique," who provided some initial technical training but this had not happened at the time of the study. Other issues raised by the technicians were delays in the submission of scripts for recording. Some times actors did not come to the studio at the same time and so they had to be recorded separately and later merged. This and some mistakes in the scripts doubled the amount of time for recording the programs.

Despite all these problems they felt that quality was "fair," and improvements had been made. But one member of staff at Chikuni radio felt that the production of broadcasts was problematic; sometimes the tapes were not good. He felt that EBS needed to choose their people better. In this regard both the technicians and the Controller of EBS recognised the need to increase studio capacity both in terms of staff expertise and equipment.

Observations of a few lessons by the evaluators showed variability of broadcast quality. At Shiyala in Chongwe a grade 3 (prog.100) broadcast was clear. But words in songs were not clear enough. At Namakube centre in Chikuni the English lesson could not be heard and there was an echo. But the mathematics and science broadcast was clear.

At Singonya centre in Chikuni sound quality was good but not very clear. The broadcast was the same as the previous day. Learners were asked to recognize the sounds of places but there was either no sound or a very low sound and yet they were supposed to identify this as a market. The recording level was poor.

7.1.3 Community Support and Participation

The IRI program was founded on the principle that communities would provide the necessary support to the learning centres and to the mentors. The formation of committees for each learning centre was seen as the main enabling structure for providing this support and for mobilising support for mentors. At all the three centres visited in Chikuni, at two in Petauke, one in Chongwe and one in Kitwe, there were committees that were functioning. The most active and impressive committee was at Singonya centre in Chikuni where there were 11 members with 8 women. The Committee understood its responsibilities, recruited mentors, supported the mentor in kind and monitored attendance.

The levels and types of support given to IRI centres and mentors varied across communities. Support for the IRI centres was expected to be in the form of providing shelter, mobilising children to attend lessons and providing teaching/learning materials such as chalk, chalk board, radio and batteries where EBS did not provide wind up radios. At the three centres visited in Chikuni (Namakube, Sikabenga and Singonya) communities assisted in finding a place for the IRI lessons and recruited the mentors. They sometimes supported the mentor in kind.

In other areas visited it was discovered that in some centers, the community was in the process of constructing shelter and toilet facilities. These centers were: Chibengelele, Chiminwa, Chilando, and Ndeke. At the other centers, the community had not done anything by way of providing shelter, or even maintaining the one offered by church organizations. This could be explained by some of the communities' ignorance of their

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responsibilities in the IRI system, sheer indifference by some parents to children's education in light of their not being educated themselves, and for others the argument that the government should provide education.

In most of the centers, eleven in all (Ndeke, Garden, Chiminwa, Mwaiseni, Chipungu, Ipusukilo, Race Course, Chibekwe and those in Chikuni), the communities did mobilize children to attend lessons, although it was through the effort of individual parents who encouraged their own children. Only in four (Race Course, Namakumbe, Sikabenga and Singonya) did the communities do so through their committees. At Chainda and Chilando, it was reported by the mentors that they were the ones who mobilized children.

Regarding provision of teaching aids, it was discovered that the community did provide a chalk board in two of the centers (Chibengelele, and Ndeke). In Chikuni communities were in the past able to make contributions for buying chalk. At one center (Ipusukilo), the radio was borrowed from a local pastor and at one time, some of the parents contributed K100 each towards the purchase of batteries. At another center (Ndeke) the radio was borrowed from the chairperson of the committee who also bought batteries. At two of the centers (Chibekwe and Chipungu) the community did buy batteries, but only once.

In summary, it could be said that some of the communities made effort to support the center, although not sufficiently.

For any community to be able to organize support for both the mentor and the center, there is need for an active committee to be in place. In the table below, information is given center by center regarding the existence of a committee and its performance.

Center	Committee existing	Committee functioning
Chilando	Yes	Yes
Ndeke	Yes	Yes
Chipungu	Yes	Poorly
Chibekwe	Yes	No
Chibengelele	Yes	Yes
Chainda	No	Not applicable
Garden	Yes - just formed	Yet to be seen
Chiminwa	Yes	Yes
Mwaiseni	Yes	No
Ipusukilo	No	Not applicable
Race Course	No	Not applicable
Sikabenga	Yes	Yes
Namakube	Yes	Yes
Siyala	Yes	Poorly
Singonya	Yes	Yes

The additional information here is that in two of the centers with no committee in place (Chainda and Race Course), there was a committee for the community school which operated at the same premises. These committees also attended to the affairs of the respective IRI center. The focus group discussion explained that there was no need for another committee since it was the same community and children are from the same community.

At centers where committees existed and functioned, there was a range of activities cited by both mentors and community members as evidence of the committee's functionality: projects to build shelter and toilets (Chilando, Chibengele, Chiminwa and Ndeke). At Chilando, the committee also organized for provision of chalk and batteries, and sensitized parents to encourage children to attend lessons.

Regarding support for the mentor, most of the mentors interviewed said that they were not being supported in any way. In some cases, parents of the children at the center had contributed money and had given it to the mentors for upkeep (e.g. at Chilando: K7,000 for two mentors for the whole year), but only once. Most of the mentors expressed frustration for lack of community support. For this reason, in some centers mentors had stopped mentoring. For example, at Chilando researchers interviewed one former mentor who gave this as his reason for stopping mentoring. At Chipungu, researchers interviewed a mentor who had replaced another one who had left for the same reason. At the same center, the assistant had confiscated the radio for not being supported. Some mentors (e.g. the one at Chipungu in Petauke and the other at Mwaiseni in Kitwe) had already made up their mind not to continue mentoring when the next sessions resume; but they said they now had changed their mind after being consoled and encouraged by the researchers' visit.

At most centres, 11 in all in Petauke, Lusaka and Copperbelt, the community admitted that they were not supporting the mentors. They advanced a number of reasons for this, ranging from poverty, ignorance of their responsibility to do so, to the argument that there was free education now. Although the community focus groups at all the three centres in Chikuni indicated that they had in the past supported the mentors with material support due to poverty they were no longer able to do so.

Thus poverty seems to be the main reason for community failure to support mentors. Even in those few centers where the community was organized and seems conscious of the need to support the mentors, the participants in the focus group discussions said they were barely surviving themselves and had no means to support the mentors. At another rural center, they said they had just thought of it now and promised to do so during the next rainy season. At most urban centres (especially in Kitwe) the community had never thought of supporting the mentors in kind.

Ignorance of their responsibility to support mentors was one other major cause of lack of mentor support in some centers. For example, the Kitwe centers were initiated by the DEO's office, but apparently without sufficient sensitisation. The result of this is that the community thought the MOE would take care of the mentors too. As a matter of fact, the

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community at Ipusukilo thought that the mentor was being sponsored by a large donor organization and that they were supposed to have a share of what she was being given; i.e. they kept asking her when she would be paid. Ignorance of the way the IRI system is supposed to work tended to fuel suspicions among community members; those who were trying to organize others were suspected to be secretly benefiting from a dubious project. Attempts by active members of the community to explain their effort as voluntary work was received with scepticism, saying "who can work for nothing these days?"

The introduction of free primary education (FPE) has made some communities feel no need to contribute to the welfare of the mentors, arguing that they too deserve to benefit from the policy. This argument came out strongly in Ipusukilo, Race course, and Chainda. In the pilot phase of this study, the same argument was expressed forcefully by the community members at Shiyala in Chongwe District as well as in Chikuni. This point was made by communities that were both very near and far away from the IRI centres.

7.1.4 Monitoring and Evaluation of the System

For the system to work efficiently, there is need for consistent monitoring, a task that EBS has delegated to DEOs. One key issue regarding this is whether DEOs have the necessary capability and capacity to carry out the task. For example, DEOs would need vehicles, fuel, and resources with appropriate expertise. In some of the districts visited, mentors reported that no monitoring was being carried out by the DEOs, and a check with the DEOs' officers concerned confirmed this. In those districts where a DEO's officer had visited a center at all on the way to other duties in formal schools, the interaction had merely consisted of a stop-over to greet the mentors and the children, or simply to deliver chalk, pencils, exercise books and mentor's guides. In most centers, it is the mentors themselves who went to the DEO's offices to ask for these materials.

In two of the districts (Chongwe and Kitwe), officers claimed to have expertise to inspect an interactive lesson for example, but this is doubtful in view of their not having been trained to do so. In Petauke, the focal person specifically asked if EBS could design and circulate a sample of lesson observation guide. In Lusaka, the DEO's officers admitted not having sufficient knowledge of how the IRI system works. The DEO himself admitted sufficient knowledge of the system, but complained that he and his officers were just too busy with other duties relevant to formal schools. He suggested that somebody should be appointed to specifically oversee the operations of the IRI system in the district. However, in Chikuni monitoring of teaching was being carried out by the DIP, the ZIP and a Parish priest. At Sikabenga the IRI committee also monitored teaching.. In short, other than in Chikuni Parish, very little monitoring was being done by DEOs. Further probing revealed that they lacked the capacity in terms of availability of vehicles, fuel and human resource with appropriate expertise.

Lesson inspection is just one aspect of monitoring. Two other aspects are those of data gathering and scaffolding; i.e. collecting information on how the center is working, including learner attendance/attrition statistics, and offering advice wherever possible. In all the centers, mentors reported that the DEO's offices did not visit them to collect data, but that they themselves went over to the offices to deliver it. In some districts, officers

claimed to be collecting the data and passing it on to EBS either through the PEO (in the case of Chongwe), through the local ZNBC person responsible for educational broadcasts (in the case of Kitwe), or directly (in the case of Petauke, once on EBS' request). But since mentors refuted the claims, how much of this type of monitoring was being carried out by DEOs offices is unclear.

In all the centers visited in Chikuni both the IRI committees and the mentors confirmed that there was no visit from the DEOs office. However, in Monze, the DIP did collect information on IRI activities, data collection was done by the Parish priests and the ZIP sporadically visited some centres to collect data.

Regarding scaffolding (giving moral support), there was ample evidence that DEOs did not do so. For example, in many centers the community complained that they did not see DEO officers at all to be able to discuss their problems with them, to seek their advice. In all the centers visited, community members and their mentors found the visit by the researchers to be an encouragement. As a matter of fact, some mentors who were contemplating stopping mentoring changed their mind because of this visit (e.g. at Chipungu, at Mwaiseni). Some dormant committees promised to step up their effort to organise parents to support the center. It may be difficult for DEOs to perform this function if the boundary between their responsibilities to the center and those of EBS is not made clear. DEOs were also not sure about the MOE's policy regarding further grade expansion of the IRI system. They may thus find it difficult to assure parents on the fate of their children; i.e. whether they will be given a chance to write Grade 7 examinations.

Regarding other evaluative activities (summative and formative evaluation) two major evaluations of the IRI program have been undertaken (Chondoka, 2001; Letshabo and Kariuki, 2001) and important issues came out of these evaluations as discussed above. As stated in section 7.1.1 little formative evaluation has been undertaken because EBS lacked time and transport to go to the centres.

7.1.5 Management of the System

There were a number of issues raised regarding the management of various components of the IRI system. The management of the production system for example was made difficult due to scripts coming late and not all presenters being there at the same time. It appeared that script writers were rushed and this could have affected the quality of their work. According to those interviewed activities in the studio were not well coordinated and presenters often recorded without having rehearsed, making the recording process very slow.

One of the strengths of the management system was the weekly production meetings where problems were discussed. It was, however, not clear whether issues discussed were followed up. A studio manager with technical know-how and the authority to work with the Controller to solve problems in the studio could help to solve some of the issues related to the studio and production.

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The technicians expressed the need for a production schedule be put in place and adhered to.

Another weakness of the management system is that it appeared that other than the weekly production meetings there was no other forum for discussion of issues. Currently issue and problems are relayed via the Assistant Controllers to the Controller for her action. However, there is no way for staff to know that the Controller was informed and there is insufficient response and feedback regarding these concerns raised.

7.2 SUPPORT SYSTEMS
7.2.1 Relationship between EBS and MOE
This aspect of the IRI delivery system was examined on three levels. At national level the study focused on the operational relationships and linkages between the EBS and other Departments of the Ministry of Education in Lusaka. At Provincial and District level, the study examined the support given to the IRI program by various officers in the Provincial Education and District Education offices. The third level was the IRI centers/community level where the evaluators assessed the kind of collaboration between the IRI centers and the neighboring regular or formal schools.

EBS has been working hard to involve the Provincial Education Officers (PEOs) and District Education Officers (DEOs). Focal point persons have been identified at these levels. Secondly, EBS has organised consultative meetings with PEOs and DEOs aimed at promoting active participation of these officers in support for the IRI program.

One such consultative meeting was held in January, 2002 at which PEOs, and DEOs presented reports on the IRI program in their areas. The meeting was significant in achieving a common understanding of the nature and role of PEOs and DEOs (and their staff) in the IRI delivery system. The evaluation team requested a copy of the minutes from the seminal meeting between the PEOs, DEOs and EBS. When the report was finally given to the team, it was found not to contain any clear definition of the DEOs and PEOs roles and responsibilities regarding IRI.

Significantly the PEOs and DEOs recognised the fact that the IRI program was in line with the national policy on education that places emphasis on increasing access to education. They therefore made some resolutions aimed at strengthening the IRI program and integrating it into the mainstream education system.

It was evident from the discussions held with a number of senior officers/heads of Department that the IRI program had not been taken on by the MOE as one of its main line activities. It was also clear that senior officers in the Ministry of Education did not have useful knowledge about the nature, potential, and needs of the IRI program, certainly not as much as they seemed to understand the nature and role of community schools.

It appeared that the IRI program was seen as a community initiative facilitated by the EBS and a stopgap measure. Operationally the relationship between EBS and other

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departments in the MOE appeared tenuous. There appeared to be lack of communication and collaboration between EBS and other key departments in the Ministry of Education. This means that the IRI program is not integrated into the mainstream MOE operational structure. The weak integration/operational links is represented by Appendix D (current system).

However, EBS is working more closely with the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) in developing competency tests and to a certain extent with the Teacher Education Department.

At the IRI center/community level, there was evidence that most head teachers of neighboring primary schools actively supported the program either through the provision of materials or space at their schools. They also gave professional advice to mentors. Some head teachers, for example in Chongwe and Chikuni area, had been more involved by helping to organise the community in the initial stages. In Chikuni one head teacher serves as Secretary of the IRI committee. In the same area one Deputy Head Teacher assisted the mentors at the nearest IRI centre to develop and administer tests.

It was quite clear that the level of acceptance of the IRI determined the head teachers' support for and participation in the IRI program. All head teachers in the Chikuni area regarded the program as beneficial and expressed a sense of goodwill. They saw it as "part of the same system". In particular they felt that the IRI program helped the formal schools to deal with problems of over enrolment that all regular schools encounter. They further indicated that the IRI program served those who, for some reasons, cannot get into a formal school. Some head teachers saw it as having the potential of being a type of feeder program.

The strength of the relationship between MOE at provincial and district levels varied. At district level the current arrangement is that EBS relies upon DEO's offices for the gathering and transmission of data from IRI learning centres . One issue that arose here is that of whether this arrangement is effective, and how it actually works, if it does. One indicator of the effectiveness of this arrangement is that the data found on the ground should be the same data that the DEO and EBS have. The finding was that this arrangement was not working well. For example, one aspect of data is that regarding enrolment figures. It was found in Chongwe that the enrolment figures, which the DEO had for Chibengelele, were different from those that the mentors had in their register, and also different from what EBS had. In addition, the enrolment figures that the DEO and EBS had for the above center were not elaborate enough in terms of indicating the grades.

In Monze the District In-Service Provider (DIP) collected data on IRI from the centres she was able to visit. However, when asked for it by the evaluation team the designated District IRI focal point did not have the data which was to be supplied by the DIP.

EBS also relies on DEOs and PEOs offices to sensitize the communities and to mobilize them to be supportive to their respective centers. There was evidence in what was said by community members and mentors in some of the centers visited that sensitisation had

not sufficiently been carried out, at least not by the DEOs or PEOs. For example, in the Petauke centers visited the communities said they came to know about the IRI system through American Peace Corps and that the DEO's officers visited them long after the centers had started. In the Kitwe centers visited, the communities stated that the DEO's officers did initiate the formation of their respective IRI centers. However, from their ignorance of how the system was supposed to work and particularly of their own responsibilities to the center it could be taken to mean that sensitisation had not sufficiently been carried out even here. The mentor at Ipusukilo made a direct appeal for the community to be sensitised.

The evaluation team was informed by the Controller of EBS that a number of DEOs were actively involved in and supportive of the IRI program. The Kasama DEO was particularly singled out as very supportive. On the other hand the evidence from the field was or (suggested) that the DEOs offices did not appear to perform their functions effectively. This appears to be due to lack of capacity in terms of resources and knowledge of the IRI program.

The variable levels and quality of participation and support from the DEOs could be attributed to the fact that the IRI program was not institutionalised in the Ministry of Education and the operational links between EBS and the MOE at various levels were not systematised. The job descriptions and accountabilities of various officers do not currently include IRI related functions.

The weak operational linkages between EBS and other Departments can also be attributed to the fact that the program started as a pilot project and it is an innovation, outside the conventional system, which takes time to appreciate. As with any innovation there was need to move quickly and respond to situations as they arise. However, if IRI is to continue to be expand and be expand, it must be institutionalized within the larger MOE bureaucratic structure.

7.2.2 Partnerships between the MOE, NGOs and private sector alliances
In the districts visited, there was evidence of NGO involvement in either the setting up of IRI centers or facilitating their operations. For example, in Lusaka, World Vision was instrumental in setting up an IRI center in Chainda. In Petauke, American Peace Corps Volunteers were involved in setting up centers at Chipungu, Chibekwe and at Chilando. According to the Petauke DEO, World Vision were also involved in setting up some of the centers that researchers did not visit. Most of the centers in these districts as well as those in the other three centers in Chikuni were operating from a building offered by one church organisation or the other e.g. the Anglican church in the case of Chilando, the Catholic church at Chipungu, some small church organisations in the case of Ipusukilo, Chiminwa and Mwaiseni etc. It may be added that these organisations made such contributions not so much in sympathy with the DEO's efforts but to fulfil their own mission to assist the local communities; in other words, partnership was not between an NGO and the MOE but rather between the former and the local community.

The Chikuni Parish broadcasts all IRI programs through its community radio station. The parish also provides teaching-learning materials to the centers. There is very close collaboration between the Parish and the District and Zonal In – Service Providers especially in the area of mentor training and visits to centers for which the Parish provides transport.

7.2.3 Professional Development for Mentors
The quality of mentoring is obviously crucial to the ultimate effectiveness of the IRI system, and this quality may largely depend on the type and amount of training the mentors have received. The evaluation team sought to establish whether or not the training that the mentors in the centers visited had received was sufficient for them to perform this role. The general picture is that the majority of mentors (13 out of 18) underwent some training for three days on average (some for two days and others for four days). The mentor at Chilando had never been trained; he had volunteered nonetheless to replace the trained one who had stopped mentoring. At Singonya in Chikuni one mentor trained his assistant.

There seems to be enough evidence that the amount of this training was too small and the intensity not emphatic enough, most probably on account of its short duration. Thus for example, of the 13 mentors who were trained, three said the training was sufficient while the other 10 said it was not. Some of the mentors cited the following as some of the areas of need in their performance: assisting slow learners, child psychology in general and learning processes and styles specifically, questioning techniques, class control, assessing children, handling children with special needs generally and learning needs specifically, improvising teaching aids, and teaching life skills (especially on HIV/AIDS).

The question of intensity relates to whether or not the mentors had adequate chances in the training process to try to practice again and again whatever they were being taught. It is unlikely that this was the case given the short duration of the training.

Related to mentor training is the issue of the expertise of the DEOs' officers who assisted in the training of the mentors. The study needed to verify whom specifically at the DEO offices has done the training and whether they themselves had been trained. This may be admitted as the study's oversight, but caused by researchers' consciousness of time limitation.

7.2.4 Life Skills Curriculum
The life skills curriculum has recently been added to the broadcasts, coming on air for 15 minutes between the two main lesson segments. As this component had as yet not been evaluated, there are three issues needing to be addressed in the study: first, whether IRI classes attend it; secondly, whether mentors and learners understand what is discussed; and thirdly, how mentors and learners react to its content.

Of the 18 mentors interviewed, 12 said that they listened to this segment of the broadcasts with the learners. Two mentors said they did not. One mentor cited learners being too young as her reason for not involving them in listening to this segment. It may be added

that some of the children at her center (Ndeke, in Petauke) are as young as four years. The other mentor did not give any reasons for not taking the class through this segment.

On the question of whether or not learners understand what was discussed, 10 of the 14 mentors said they did. Those who said their learners understood the delivery in the segment cited the following as some of the evidence of this:

- They keep quiet, listening attentively, and are subsequently able to answer questions correctly.

- They ask questions wanting to know more.

- They implement what they are taught; for example, a lesson on hygiene prompted learners to compare their hands and point out whose were dirty.

- They can explain in their own words what they have learnt.

Two possibilities were suggested as the reasons why some learners could not understand the life skills segment. One was that the learners had not yet mastered the language (English) sufficiently. The other was that the background information presented in each segment was too scanty for learners to make sense of what was discussed; it would appear that effort to condense content in each short segment deprives radio teachers a chance to present other vital contextual information.

A number of measures to improve the segment were suggested by mentors as follows:

- Teach the learners English.

- Present the lessons in a local language.

- Provide supporting materials over each subject: charts, pictures, books, etc.

- Increase the time to 30 minutes or more.

Regarding attitude to the content of the segment, there was some evidence particularly from one center (Race Course) that both the mentor and the learners welcomed the discussions. This mentor openly admitted that he was also learning a lot from it himself. The mentor said that learners discuss boldly and freely even on issues of HIV/AIDS where it may be expected that children who have been orphaned because of it may resent the discussion. He cited the case of one orphaned learner who told the class that his parents had died of it, citing his father's loss of weight prior to dying as evidence of it. The general picture is that in those centers where this segment was listened to both the mentors and the learners react positively to the segment.

7.2.5 The Future of IRI

By and large, the future of the IRI program depends on a number of factors, namely the perceptions of key stakeholders (the communities, heads of nearby regular schools, MOE officials at national, provincial and district levels, mentors, NGOs, churhes and mentors); the performance of learners; the purpose of the IRI program and the capacity of the IRI delivery system. Almost all the stakeholders interviewed expressed appreciation of the IRI program and the desire for it to continue. Most communities expressed their desire to build permanent structures for the program. At Sikabenga centre for example the community felt that the IRI program should have its own structure, with more classes (including upper grades). They said that there was need to engage more mentors, to provide continuous training to mentors, and to provide teaching materials. Similarly at Singonya center the community was planning to build their own structure for the IRI program and felt that it should be extended to grade 7 as well as to adults and regular schools. The Chikuni Parish Priests feel that the program should go to grade 7 and that if MOE did not extend its programs to this level, it would do so on its own.

The evaluators explained things to acquaint those communities where members had not yet grasped how the IRI system is supposed to function; so that it can safely be said that those community members who attended the discussions have now come to fully understand this. For example, many of them did not know differences between an IRI learning center and a community school, or between an IRI learning center and a formal school. When they understood the differences, they unanimously expressed preference for an IRI learning center, saying children learn more there, and more quickly, and that there are no teacher strikes and less teacher absenteeism (a submission from Chibengelele). However, in some centers each community openly expressed resentment over the responsibilities they are expected to shoulder, particularly in light of the policy of free primary education now in place.

In all, eleven head teachers (or representatives) of nearest formal schools were interviewed. Of these, seven said the IRI system must continue; they gave various reasons for this:

- It is a way of removing children from the streets.

- Some parents want their children to continue learning.

- It helps children who cannot walk long distances to formal schools.

- It increases access to education for the most vulnerable.

- It helps poor parents who cannot afford uniforms and other school requirements.

The head teachers added the following conditions, however:

- The centers must be attached to formal schools.

- Mentors must be given incentives, such as remuneration.

- Mentors must be given sufficient teacher training.
- Infrastructure must be provided.

The only head teacher who said it should not continue gave as a reason the fact that the mentors were not trained teachers.

In the five districts visited, evaluators interviewed three DEOs and four focal persons (one DIS, one DIP and one Continuing Education Officer). Four of these offers said the IRI system must continue, citing similar reasons as the ones by head teachers. However, the officers gave the following as conditions for continuing the system:

- Mentors must be remunerated.

- Improve facilities for monitoring the program, by providing vehicles, fuel, and human resource.

- Mentors must be trained adequately.

- Streamline and clarify the organizational structure of the system.

- Concretize arrangements for examinations.

In general, the majority of the stakeholders interviewed expressed the wish for the IRI system to continue.

One officer said it should not continue because mentors lack support and are therefore frustrated, and that it gives an extra burden to some parents who are already very poor.

All the staff at EBS felt that the IRI programme should continue and gave the following as reasons for continuing the programme:

- Children in centers are learning, whereas in schools teachers may not show up.
- Objectives in the syllabus are covered.
- The program is reaching many children because there is no age restriction.
- Writers are learning new things, and are becoming more creative.
- Teams are a source of motivation for writers.
- Programs are ever improving.

However, some officers in the Ministry of Education in Lusaka felt that the delivery system did not have the capacity to expand the program to Grade 7. Although extending the IRI program to grade 7 and creating opportunities for IRI pupils to write grade 7 examinations is an important goal, the purpose of the IRI program should also be seen in terms of its contribution towards more equitable education. It is noteworthy against this perspective that equity does not imply precisely equal provision nor does it entail a

mathematical equality of outcomes. According to Unesco (2000:55) equitable education for all requires that:

- All are engaged in the process and are given equal consideration:

- The opportunities, facilities and programmes appropriate to their specific needs and requirements of all people are available and used ; and

- The learning programmes undertaken and their outcomes are of an equivalent value and use to all individuals and society.

The IRI program can also contribute to reducing levels of illiteracy in the country. As the International Consultative Forum on Education For All (Unesco, 2000), noted:

> Universal access to basic schooling and literacy training for children cannot be overlooked when reviewing adult literacy rates. Looking to the future, it is extremely important to bring children's literacy into the equation...The pool of adult illiteracy should not be enlarged by inflows of illiterate children who have either not attended school at all or have had only minimum and inadequate schooling (p42).

Regardless of the comparable performance of the IRI learners and regular school children, it is important to note that the acquisition of literacy, numeracy and life skills provides an important opportunity for the IRI program to improve the quality of life of vulnerable children. This derives its importance from the fact that all the centers visited reported that there were substantial numbers of orphans. The above-mentioned skills could enable such children to:

- Survive;

- Develop their full capacities to live and work in dignity;

- Participate fully in development

- Improve the quality of life; and

- Make informed decisions, and continue learning (Unesco, 2000:50).

All those interviewed felt that the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) would not diminish the importance of the IRI program. More and more children would want to enter school but the limited capacities of regular schools and the long distances to formal schools would require provision of basic education through IRI centers. In addition, it was observed that all the IRI learning centres were located in places where some geographical features impeded children's access to formal schools, for example, a deep fast flowing river like in the case of Chipungu in Petauke, or a busy road or dual carriage way like in the case of Chiminwa in Kitwe.

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This underlines the importance of IRI learning centres in filling in gaps in education provision.

Some parents depend on their children to undertake income-generating chores, as a result of which they do not take them to school. The IRI system does not require the child to be away from home for longer stretches of time, unlike the formal schools system. For such parents, the IRI system may therefore be preferable.

The IRI as a delivery system has the potential to deliver its programs more efficiently. But a lot of changes are required most of which were proposed by various respondents.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The importance of the findings is not so much in their newness as in confirming some of the findings of earlier evaluations. The study brought out many issues which were also identified in EBS' Five Year Strategic Plan.

A number of lessons can be drawn from the findings, one of the most important ones being that the efficient production of programmes requires well - trained and motivated staff, special equipment to produce quality programmes and coordination of activities relating to production processes. It is therefore recommended that all the required resources be made available for timely production of programmes. It is also important to develop a workable production schedule and provide mechanisms for ensuring that the production schedule is adhered to strictly.

It was evident from the study that unless a program is integrated into the main stream education system it will not attract the support that is required for its implementation. In this particular case many senior officers do not see the IRI program as one of the MOE strategies for providing basic education to all school age children within and outside the formal school system

Another important lesson is that the provision of basic education to vulnerable children who cannot get into regular schools should be seen in the broader context of efforts to reduce illiteracy, poverty, disease, and thereby promote community development particularly in rural areas and poor communities in urban areas. Such efforts require sustained strategies for promoting the participation of and collaboration between communities, NGOs, churches and various government ministries (including the MOE). The challenges faced by the MOE and EBS in gaining support for the IRI program is no different.

In summary the following observations/conclusions can be made about the IRI program:

- The strength of support for the program by MOE departments outside of EBS varies; not all Departments in the MOE support the IRI program and senior officers at the Ministry of Education have different perceptions of the role and purpose of the IRI program in providing basic education.

- Building the management system at EBS appears to have taken a back seat to production.

- There was little formative evaluation to improve lesson development mainly because of lack of time and transport to undertake field visits. However, all categories of staff at EBS recognized the importance of formative evaluation and expressed willingness to participate in it.

- The fast pace of the lessons and the short pauses tend to reduce the level of interactivity and active participation of all children. While more research is

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needed to verify initial observations the fast pace of the lessons may run the risk of excluding slower and/or shy learners (many of whom are girls) from participating.

- Broadcast quality varied. This could be attributed to time constraints which impact negatively on the production processes. There is also lack of maintenance of equipment.

- Generally, communities do not support mentors mainly due to high levels of poverty and ignorance of their responsibilities.

- There were a number of agencies involved in various aspects of the IRI at community level. However, there is no strong enabling structure for partnerships and alliances.

- The monitoring and evaluation system was not systematized.

- The training given to mentors was inadequate.

- The life skills segment is short and mentors are not adequately prepared to "teach" it.

In light of the above some recommendations are being made for strengthening the IRI delivery system. The starting point should be the discussion of the future of the IRI, which should itself be located in a broader policy context.

The MOE's Strategic Plan: 2003-2007 provides for the provision of basic education through, among other channels, Interactive Radio Instruction. The following basic education sub-sector objectives have direct implications for the future of the IRI program:

- Establish by 2003 a mechanism for provision of quality basic education to out-of-school children, orphans and other vulnerable groups;
- Guide Education Boards, PTAs and communities to develop agreements by 2003 to ensure equitable and relevant community support to all basic schools;
- Strengthen monitoring of pedagogical performance and resources at community schools interactive radio centres, open learning centres and other alternative institutions by 2005;
- Provide for the production and transmission of educational programmes for radio and television;
- Establish, by 2003, mechanisms for provision of quality basic education to out-of-school children and other vulnerable groups through grants, teacher provision and compensation, and supply of learning materials to all community schools and IRI centres (Ministry of Education, 2002).

Within the context of these policy objectives the Strategic Plan's program of activities with regard to IRI are to:

- Increase the number of IRI centres.
- Train more mentors to manage IRI centres.
- Sensitise communities to send orphans/youths to IRI centres.

The above provisions provide policy and logistical frameworks for implementing EBS' strategic objective:

> *EBS will provide the equivalent of seven grades of basic education by radio to children who currently receive none, and will work with other units of the government and civil society to design and deliver all necessary supporting services so that children in interactive radio learning centres will be equipped for the world of work or to join the formal school system.*

Although the above policy provisions support the future development of the IRI, the evaluation team was informed that following the appraisal of the Strategic Plan, the IRI program is now regarded as a "transitional" program.

On the basis of the above findings a number of recommendations are being made regarding both the Instructional and Support sub systems of the IRI program.

8.1 Recommendations - Instructional System
8.1.1 Improving Lesson Development
Lesson development is the core activity of the EBS. It is important and necessary to take immediate steps to improve the quality of radio lessons so that they are interactive, participatory, and creative and allow for productive facilitation by mentors.

Recommendation 1: EBS should train writers to be more creative and to produce interactive radio lessons. Work schedules for writers should be reviewed to ensure that they are given more time and more resources. In addition both writers and technical staff should understand the importance and role of formative evaluation so that they do not resent it as merely leading to re-recording. In order to achieve this there should be a concise write up on the purpose and role of formative evaluation as well as opportunities for writers and technicians to participate in formative evaluation and to integrate information from formative evaluation into lesson development. Apart from formative evaluation the production schedule should allow for EBS to institute processes such as script review and feedback from senior EBS staff and EDC consultants. The proposed position of Executive Producer in the restructured EBS should provide the necessary leadership required in lesson development.

Recommendation 2: EBS and EDC should identify relevant personnel from CDC to work with writers as a means of providing their expertise as curriculum specialists. EBS should also train or use people who speak clearly as radio teachers.

8.1.2 Improving Broadcast Production

A lesson drawn from the study is that broadcast production requires expertise, coordination and special equipment to produce quality broadcasts. This is another area that should benefit from the proposed position of Executive Producer in the restructured EBS.

Recommendation 3: EBS should provide necessary equipment for studio production and maintenance services. In addition there should be regular supplies of operating materials.

Recommendation 4: EBS should develop a workable production schedule with sufficient time to record lessons, play back and correct to ensure quality. In this regard EBS should ensure the smooth coordination of studio production activities by hiring a studio manager who supervises the technicians and other studio staff. EBS should also develop studio procedures which will ensure systematic handling of scripts and tapes.

8.1.3 Facilitating Community participation and support

The support given to IRI learning centres and to the mentors by the community is integral to the success of the IRI program. However, as indicated earlier in the report, many communities are finding it difficult to give the necessary support to mentors and IRI centres.

Recommendation 5: There should be a sustained sensitization program so that communities understand how IRI is to function and their responsibilities. EBS can play a role in sensitizing communities through radio broadcasts. However, most of sensitization activities should be the responsibility of DEOs. It is important for DEOs to identify other partners such as NGOs, Churches, Community Development Assistants (of the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services), head teachers of schools etc. that can help to sensitize the communities and mobilise them.

In order to promote the effective participation of NGOs and other partners in sensitizing and mobilising communities, there is a need for MOE and EBS to create and clarify channels of communication for NGOs and other partners to participate in this activity and DEOs should be given guidelines and orientation on how to facilitate alliances with NGOs and other partners at community level.

Recommendation 6 : EBS/MOE should build the capacity of communities to support IRI centres and mentors by:

- Providing continuing technical advice and training on managing IRI learning centres to communities through NGOs and other partners operating in a given community.
- Beginning the process of developing and gaining consensus within the MOE on criteria and a certification process for the interactive radio instruction learning centres (IRLCs). Once these are established small grants should be made available to IRILCs. Lessons for this process could be drawn from the community schools. But it is important for communities to understand that the grant will be given on certain conditions such as the community to demonstrate that they are supporting the IRILC

and mentors, to a certain level, and that there is a functioning committee which is able to mobilise parents and children, monitor the performance of the IRLC, visit the IRILC, have regular meetings, etc.

8.1.4 Improving Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation should necessarily involve the EBS staff, District Education Staff and even the communities. Monitoring and Evaluation has many aspects:

- Checking on the performance of mentors and the expertise and functioning of IRI center committees.
- Assessing the level of support given to mentors.
- Checking on availability of resources for an IRI center.
- Checking on learner attendance and management of registers by mentors.
- Collection of data on various aspects of the IRI centers.
- Formative Evaluation.
- Advising on trouble shooting.

Recommendation 7: MOE/EBS should define roles and responsibilities regarding various aspects of monitoring and evaluation in light of decentralization of education services and create one clear channel for communicating and utilizing data. But EBS should not be involved in the actual monitoring but concentrate on formative evaluation.

Recommendation 8: MOE should build capacity for monitoring IRI learning centres by allocating money to it in the budget; and by building appropriate expertise in monitors.

8.1.5 Increasing EBS' capacity to manage the IRI program

The restructuring of the Ministry of Education provides an opportunity to review the Management System of EBS in general and the IRI program in particular. The new structure provides detailed job descriptions and the levels and types of staff.

Recommendation 9 : MOE/EBS should create, streamline and institutionalize procedures of the management system e.g. job description, channels of communication, procurement procedures, performance appraisal systems, etc. and adhere to them. In addition there should be a clear chain of command and delegation of authority.

Recommendation 10: Given the commitment and excellence of staff and the investments made in their professional development, MOE/EBS should create conditions for staff to have job satisfaction and be retained. This includes the urgent need to resolve the issue of transport and other work related expenses now born by writer-producers. Related to this is the need for senior management to communicate all relevant information on restructuring in a timely manner in order to relieve anxiety of staff members and mitigate against rumors.

8.2 Recommendations - Support Systems
8.2.1 Working More Closely with other MOE Departments
The integration of the IRI program into the mainstream education system is crucial to its success.

Recommendation 11 : The MOE must define what is meant by IRI being a "transitional" strategy. This should be done at the same time that strategies to increase formal and community schooling are being discussed. These main modes of delivery should be envisaged as dependent upon the "transitional" mode and vice versa. The clarification may help in getting Heads of Department in MOE to understand their role in the IRI program.

Recommendation 12: Immediate steps should be taken to institutionalise the IRI programs within MOE. This entails that the IRI program should be a shared responsibility of all departments involved in the provision of basic education i.e. Planning and Information; Standards and Curriculum Development; Examinations Council of Zambia; Open and Distance Learning and Teacher Education. Further, the roles and responsibilities of relevant categories of staff in their departments should be clearly defined/redefined to include IRI activities.

Recommendation 13: MOE should decide whether the program will expand to Grade 7. If so a working group drawing membership from Teacher Education, Standards and Curriculum and Examinations Council of Zambia should be appointed to make proposals on the assessment of IRI grade 7 learners and how to integrate them into the formal school system. Such proposals and any related decisions should clearly be carried to communities.

Recommendation 14: If the IRI program is expanded to Grade 7, relevant training should be given to mentors in all subject areas and printed materials should be developed by EBS in conjunction with the curriculum specialists, to supplement radio lessons.

Recommendation 15: EBS should work with other relevant MOE departments to share information on the objectives, role and nature of the IRI program with provincial, district and zonal MOE officers involved in the provision of basic education through seminars and meetings. This will enable all those involved to develop a common understanding of the IRI program and a sense of ownership and commitment.

Recommendation 16: The Permanent Secretary's Office should define roles of each MOE organ (and provide guidelines for their participation) in promoting the IRI program.

Recommendation 17.: There is a need to establish a structure or forum that will coordinate all MOE departments for the delivery of alternative basic education.

8.2.2 Facilitating Partnerships
One of the major determinants of the sustainability of the IRI program is to involve NGOs, churches and other agencies operating in communities where the IRI learning centers are located or could be established.

Recommendation 18 : EBS should operationalise the IRI Implementation Forum through which NGOs and private sector partners can share information on the IRI program and develop functional partnerships and strategies for collaboration. As proposed in the EBS Five Year Strategic Plan, the Forum could meet quarterly at provincial and national level. An EBS Outreach Coordinator should be appointed, or one of the officers could take this responsibility to ensure that decisions of the forum are implemented.

There should be clear criteria for membership of the Implementation Forum and definitions of its roles and responsibilities.

Recommendation 19 : The EBS/MOE should create and clarify channels of communication for NGOs and other stakeholders to participate in sensitising and supporting communities. The DEOs should facilitate partnerships and alliances at community level.

Recommendation 20: As highlighted in the EBS' Five Year Strategic Plan, there is a need for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between MOE/EBS and participating NGOs and other stakeholders. Perhaps lessons could be drawn from the model created in the MOU signed between American Peace Corps and MOE.

8.2.3 Professional Development and Support for Mentors
Mentors are a very critical element in the success of the IRI program. And yet the IRI program is threatened by lack of materials and professional support to mentors.

Recommendation 21: MOE should create a career progression route by making mentor training an advantage in selection to teacher training colleges. To a certain extent this already is happening. However, the mechanisms for such a career path should be formalized and informed by information received from DEOs on the performance of mentors.

Recommendation 22: Mentor training should be improved by:
- Providing orientation and guidelines to trainers of mentors at District level.
- Increasing the variety of course, content, duration and frequency.
- Including gender issues and life skills in mentor training.
- Considering the use of self Instructional Training Modules for mentor training.
- Providing basic teaching skills, information on professional conduct and preparation and use of teaching aids (especially for those who will be involved in teaching Grade 5-7 classes).
- Giving certificates of attendance after completing a specific training course.
- Decentralising training to zones but allowing for the participation of officers from EBS.
- Developing a workplan, which provides for writer-producers assisting in mentor training.

8.2.4 Professional Development and Support for Producers

The EBS producers have shown an incredible level of commitment and are continuously gaining confidence, knowledge and skills in lesson development. The creation of the positions of Lecturers and Producers provides an opportunity to increase their levels of remuneration which may provide the necessary incentives.

Recommendation 23: The EDC staff should continue to provide the much needed and highly appreciated professional support to all those involved in the production of radio lessons. In addition there is a need to develop a staff development program which should include in- house training sessions, as a means of increasing their competence in radio production.

Recommendation 24: Writer-producers should be supplied with sufficient resources and supplies to design, write and produce high-quality lessons.

Recommendation 25: The training of producers should focus more on interactive style, gender issues, life skills, including prevention of HIV, and guidance and counselling. Training in the use of computers should be considered so that writers may be able to access the Internet for them to get relevant materials.

Recommendation 26: EBS should develop a plan which increases opportunities for writers to do formative evaluation and assist in mentor training.

8.2.5 Improving Life skills Component

This is an important component of the basic education curriculum but for which both writers and mentors are not sufficiently prepared to handle.

Recommendation 27: EBS should expand the Life skills component of the IRI program by the following measures:
- Increase time for the segment.
- Mentors be given life skills as part of training.
- Provide more teaching aids: charts, pictures, and illustrations.
- In order to increase community support for Life Skills being taught in the IRLCs parents and other community members should be targeted in a program on life skills including HIV/AIDS prevention.

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PROVINCES OF ZAMBIA SHOWING THE DISTIRBUTION OF IRI LEARNING CENTRES
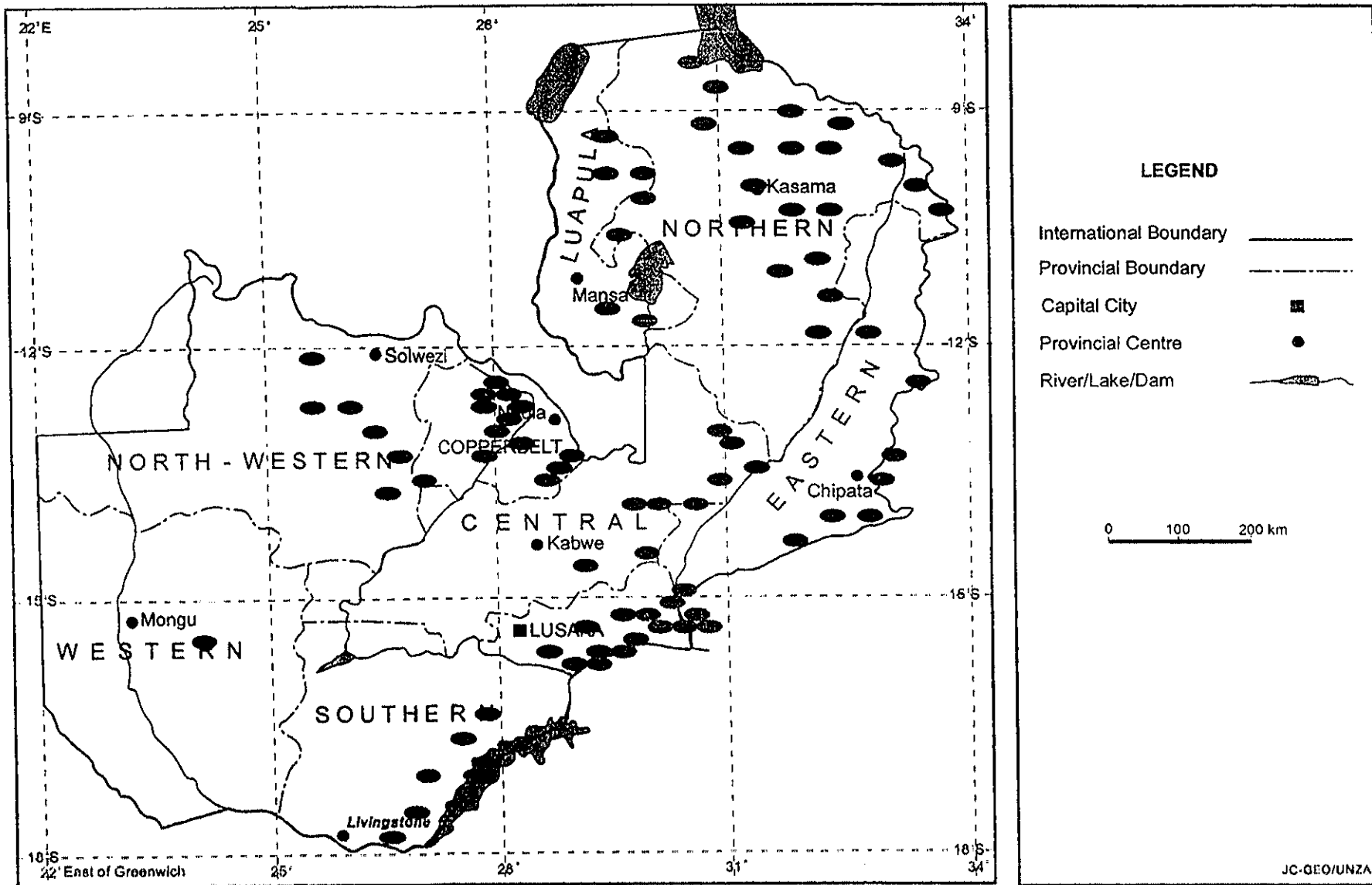
APPENDIX B1

Interview schedule for DEO:

Date:_____

Name:_____ District:_____

Number of IRI centers

(Preface interview with explanation as to who we are(NOT MOE/EBS), the purpose of the interview- we want to look at what is going well and what is going not as well in order to improve the program)

1. What do you understand to be the objectives of the IRI program?

2. What population does it serve:
   (a) Are there orphans here?
   (b) Are they getting an education? How?

3. Do you think the program is effective? Yes/No? Why?

4. What are your office's responsibilities for IRI in your district?
   i.   Data collection
   ii.   Community sensitisation (initial information on program)
   iii.   Community mobilisation (organising, recruiting mentor etc.)
   iv.   Mentor training
   v.   Monitoring of centres
   vi.   Other?

5. Who carries these out?

6. How is data gathered and reported to the Central level?

7. Do you also act on this data? How?

8. Does your office have capacity to carry out these responsibilities regarding IRI? If not, what have you done to cover these?

   a. What do you suggest should be changed in order for all activities to be covered?

9. What is your understanding of EBS' responsibilities re. IRI?

10. What do you see as the community's responsibility:

11. What role do NGOs, churches, other organisations play in supporting the objectives of IRI in your district?

    a. If one, what role do you think they could play?

12. In some areas communities beyond those originally mobilised have set up their own centers. Do you have this situation in your district?

    a. How did you find out about them?

    b. Have you been able to support them? How?

13. What other suggestions do you have for improving IRI?

14. What do you think should be the future of the IRI program in light of FPE?

Interview schedule for District IRI focal point:

Date _____

Name _____ District _____

(Preface interview with explanation as to who we are (NOT THE MOE/EBS), the purpose of the interview- we want to look at what is going well and what is going not as well in order to improve the program)

1. What do you understand to be the objectives of the IRI program?

2. What population does it serve?

    a. Are there orphans here?
    b. Are they getting an education? How?

3. Do you think the program is effective? Yes/No? Why?

4. What are your office's responsibilities for IRI in your district?

    i.   Data collection
    ii.   Community sensitisation (initial information on program)
    iii.   Community mobilisation (Organising, recruiting mentor, etc.)
    iv.   Mentor training
    v.   Monitoring of centers
    vi.   Other?

5. Who carries these out?

6. How is data gathered and reported to the Central level?

7. Do you also act on this data? How?

8. Does your office have the capacity to carry out these responsibilities regarding IRI? If not, what have you done to cover these?

   a. What do you suggest should be changed in order for all activities to be covered?

9. What is your understanding of EBS' responsibilities re. IRI?

10. What do you see as the community's responsibility?

11. What role do NGOs, churches, other organisations play in supporting the objectives of IRI in your district?

   a. If none, what role do you think they could play?

12. In some areas communities beyond those originally mobilized have set up their own centres. Do you have this situation in your district?

   a. How did you find out about them?

   b. Have you been able to support them? How?

13. What other suggestions do you have for improving IRI?

14. What do you think should be the future of the IRI program in light of FPE

APPENDIX B3

Interview schedule for Mentors

Date _____   Number of students registered: Total _____

                                                           Male _____ Female _____

                                                           If not avail, why? _____

Name _____   Name of assistant _____

Name of center _____   District _____

Age _____ Sex _____

Level of schooling attained _____

Training relevant to IRI (include date of training if trained)

_____

_____

Other relevant experience

_____

_____

Date engaged as a mentor _____

(Preface interview with explanation as to who we are and the purpose of the interview (NOT MOE/EBS) – we want to look at what is going well and what is going not as well in order to improve the program)

1. Are you happy with your work as a mentor? Yes/No? Why? Why not?

2. How did you learn about the IRI program? How did you come to become a mentor?

3. What else apart from mentoring do you do related to the center?

4. Do you feel the training you received is sufficient for your role as a mentor?

a. If no, what are some areas of need?

5. Does the community support you in doing your work? Yes/No?

    a. If yes, what type of support?

        i.   supply radio
        ii.   supply batteries
        iii.   money
        iv.   housing
        v.   in-kind (help in cultivation or house-hold duties, food stuffs, clothes)
        vi.   other?

6. Has the community done other activities to support the existence of the center?

    a. If yes, in what form?

        i.   Built/improved shelter for class
        ii.   Mobilized children
        iii.   Raised funds?
        iv.   Other?

    b. If no, why not?

7. Is there a functioning IRI Committee or other supporting structure in place? Yes/No?

    a. If yes, how is it functioning? If well, some examples of what they have done.

    b. If yes, does it support your work?

    c. If not, why?

8. What is the general trend of attendance? If not consistent, why is that?

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9. Do you have orphans (children who's parents are not longer living- one or both?) in your class? If yes, how many?

10. What do you think about the lessons?

   a. Are the lessons easy for you to explain to the children? Yes/No? Explain.

   b. Do the children find them interesting? Yes/No? Explain.

11. Is the reception good? Yes/No?

12. How do you find the production?
   i.   Timing/pauses
   ii.   Pacing?
   iii.   Is it audible?
   iv.   Other comments?

13. Life skills (health, environment and HIV/AIDS prevention) are currently being broadcast between the two 30 minute sessions. What does the class do during this time?

   a. Do you follow this lesson with the class?
   b. If yes, do you think the children follow this lesson? Why do you say so?
   How do you think this lesson can be improved?

14. What materials do you receive to help in your work?

    a. Have you received Mentor Guides?

        i.   If yes, when? In a timely manner?
        ii.   Do you use it?
        iii.   Are they useful to you?

15. What interaction do you have with the District Education Office?

    i.   Data collection?
    ii.   Monitoring of teaching?
    iii.   Community mobilization?
    iv.   Other?

        Has he/she visited the center?

        Have you gone to the DEO's office? For what?

16. Are there some things that you think could be done differently in running the IRI program?

17. What are your career ambitions?

Interview schedule for Head teacher of the nearest formal school:

Date _____

Name _____   Sex _____

Tenure at school _____   Distance from Center _____

Name of school _____   District _____

(Preface interview with explanation as to who we are (NOT MOE/EBS) , the purpose of the interview-we want to look at what is going well and what is going not as well in order to improve the program)

1. Have you heard of the IRI program?

2. What do you understand to be the objectives of the IRI program?

3. What do you think about it?

4. Are there any children from IRI centres coming to your school asking for spaces?

   a. If yes, how are they doing?

5. Do you have any children leaving your school going to the IRI center? If so, what reasons do they give?

6. What do you think about the movement of children between the center and your school?

7. Are there mentors coming to join your school as untrained teachers? If so, what reasons do they give?

8. What do you do for the IRI center, if anything? Why?

9. What should be the future of the IRI program in light of FPE?

APPENDIX B5

Lesson Observation Sheet

Date _____

	Broadcast quality	Lesson design	Mentor competence	Materials provision	Infrastructure	Other
District/school						

Interview questions for EBS CONTROLLER

1. What are the objectives of the IRI Programme?

2. What are the major components of the IRI delivery system?

3. What strategies have you used to market the programme? How have they worked?

4. What are the strategies for monitoring the IRI system? How are they working?

5. What strategies are in place to cultivate sense of ownership and commitment among community members?

6. Who is responsible for each?

7. How is each going?

8. What's working?

9. What's not working?

10. Who do you collaborate with in the Ministry? How has it worked? How can it be improved?

11. Who else have you partnered with outside the Ministry? In what way? Is it successful? Why?

12. How many staff do you have?

13. Assistant manager(s)?

14. Scriptwriters

15. Technicians

16. Support staff

17. If there is a shortage, how is this being addressed?

18. What is your vision of the future of the IRI programme?

19. Do you think the current set up is sufficient for the vision to be realized? Explain

20. How do you think FPE will impact IRI programme?

N.B.: Other questions for the EBS Controller and other officers in MOE will be formulated after site visits.

Interview schedule for EDC Coordinator

1. What are the objectives of the IRI Programme?

2. What are the major components of the IRI delivery system?

   (a) What strategies have you used to market the programme? How have they worked?
   (b) What are the strategies for monitoring the IRI system? How are they working?
   (c) What strategies are in place to cultivate sense of ownership and commitment among community members?

3. Who is responsible for each?

4. How is each going?

5. What's working?

6. What's not working?

7. Who do you collaborate with in the Ministry? How has it worked? How can it be improved?

8. Who else have you partnered with outside the Ministry? In what way? Is it successful? Why?

9. How many staff do you have?

   (a) Assistant manager(s)?
   (b) Scriptwriters
   (c) Technicians
   (d) Support staff

10. If there is a shortage, how is this being addressed?

11. What is the status of the reorganization?

12. How much of the strategic plan has been implemented?

13. What is your vision of the future of the IRI programme?

14. Do you think the current set up is sufficient for the vision to be realized?

15. How do you think FPE will impact IRI programme?

16. Given that the MOE's new plan identifies IRI as a "transitional" strategy, how will this influence your plans for IRI?

APPENDIX B8

Focus group questions for scriptwriters

1. How many scriptwriters are there?

2. How many support staff?

3. What are your responsibilities in the IRI programme?

    a. Have you been involved in formative evaluation of the programmes you write?
    b. How often does that happen?
    c. How often do you think it should?

4. What areas are going well?

5. What is not going well?

6. Which responsibilities do you feel not adequately trained for?

7. How do you feel about the environment you are working in? What do you should be changed and/or improved to make it better?

8. Do you get feedback on the work you do? From who? How do you use that feedback?

9. Do you feel that you are sufficiently equipped with resources to perform your duties? (Explain)

10. What do you feel needs to be changed for the IRI delivery system to function more effectively?

11. Is there anything else you would like to say about the program?

Focus group questions for technicians

1. How many technicians are there?

2. How many support staff?

3. What are your responsibilities in the IRI programme?

4. What areas are going well?

5. What is not going well?

6. Which responsibilities do you feel not adequately trained for?

7. How do you feel about the environment you are working in? What do you should be changed and/or improved to make it better?

8. Do you get feedback on the work you do? From who? How do you use that feedback?

9. Do you feel that you are sufficiently equipped with resources to perform your duties? (Explain)

10. What do you feel needs to be changed for the IRI delivery system to function more effectively?

11. Is there anything else you would like to say about the program?

APPENDIX C

RECORD OF THE MEETING OF THE REFERENCE GROUP AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS HELD AT MINISTRY OF EDUCATION HEADQUARTERS ON IRI RAPID APPRAISAL REPORT ON MONDAY 26TH AUGUST, 2002.

ATTENDANCE:

A.K. Sikazwe	:	A/CIS MOE, HQ (Chairman)
C. Haambokoma	:	UNZA
M. Simenda	:	Zambia Library Service
W.H. Chilala	:	Bursaries Committee
P.E. Machona	:	ECZ
F.K. Sampa	:	Teacher Education Department
F.B.K. Sinyangwe	:	EBS
R. Siaciwena	:	Consulting Team Leader – UNZA
L.W. Musonda	:	BESSIP Coordinator
Mary M. Lungu	:	MOE/CDC
Kent Noel	:	USAID
William M. Kapambwe	:	ECZ
Sera W. Kariuki	:	EDC/EBS
H.C. Kalwani	:	A/SIS PEO's office, Lusaka
N. Siluyele	:	Planning Unit Ag/D/Director
S. Hakalima	:	MOE – MEPSU
P. Chiluba	:	School Infrastructure Section MOE HQ
F.E. Besa	:	EBS
M.M. Simunchembu	:	DEO, Lusaka Dis.
G.B. Chola	:	MEPSU – MOE HQ
B.M. Chibeba	:	PIS MOE HQs
Catherine Mulenga	:	DFID
Matilda C.N. Makuzunga	:	Department C. Education
J. Luangala	:	UNZA (Secretary)

PROCEEDINGS

1. Mr. Kent Noel explained the context of the study as follows: USAID was planning to prepare for future support to the sector, which would form part of the next strategic plan. The study was intended to obtain information needed in deciding the nature of future support and in designing the strategic plan. The study was also some kind of evaluation of the IRI program, since this had not yet been done. Time constraint made it necessary that it took the form of a rapid appraisal instead of a country wide survey.

2. Professor Siaciwena presented the report to the panel, highlighting the recommendation on the need to sensitize and support communities to encourage them to support the

centres and the mentors particularly. It was also stressed that mentors should be viewed as facilitators in lesson delivery and not as teachers ; teaching was done by the radio teacher at EBS.

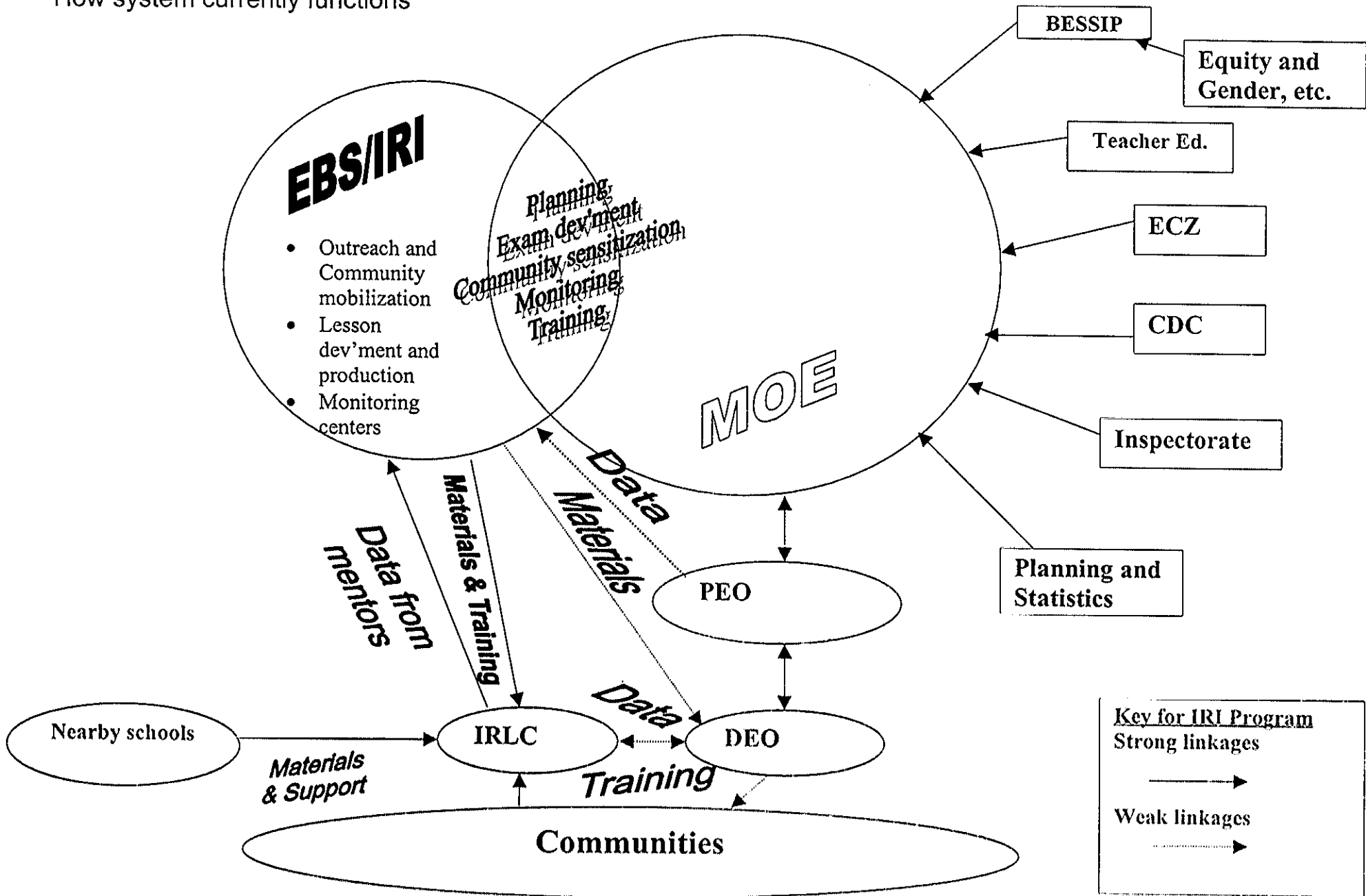3. The panel made a number of observations:

- There was a suggestion that the study should have also targeted the impact of free primary education (FPE) policy on the IRI system. However, it was explained that the issue was addressed in the findings section in the main text.

- There was a contradiction between what was implied in recommendation 19, that MOE seemed undecided on the IRI system of education delivery, and that in the statement at the bottom of page 11, that MOE viewed it as an essential tool.

- Despite the FPE policy, the IRI system would for a long time still be necessary, given limitations of space in formal schools. MOE needed to identify which areas of the system of education delivery would be transitional and which ones would be permanent. The panel had three systems in mind; formal schools, community schools, and the IRI system.

- Standards officers did not seem to know much about the IRI system. It was important to involve them more than was the case presently.

- There was need to break the artificial boundaries that existed among departments in MOE.

- One effect of the FPE policy was that learners were now leaving IRI centres and joining formal schools.

- A question was raised as to whether MOE had the capacity to support IRI centres once USAID stopped. It was clarified that it was the responsibility of communities to support centres, and not MOE. However, the panel admitted that poverty would be a hindrance. However, it was suggested that EBS and CDC could pilot the PRP in some IRI learning centres.

- A question was raised as to how the IRI system would accommodate objectives of the primary reading program which stressed need for learners' initial literacy to be in a local language. It was admitted that it would be too costly to use local languages in the IRI system, and that English would for sometime continue to be used.

- The suggestion that the IRI system should be transitional implied that the Directorate of Distance Education was also transitional. It was better to be thinking of how to integrate the IRI system into the main stream of education delivery.

- An appeal was made not to put too much pressure on MOE to fund the IRI centres, because MOE did not have much money. It was accepted that IRI centres did not need large amounts of money; they needed just token sums of it for encouragement.

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- An issue arose as to the quality of learners the IRI system produced, wondering whether the country could produce engineers through it. It was clarified, however, that the IRI system focused on the development of literacy and numeracy as part of community development. It was not intended to produce specialists like engineers.

- It was agreed that for a long time to come the IRI system would still be needed to fill up the gap in education provision. It was noted that in places where the centres were located, there was always something that impeded children's access to formal school; i.e. either population density or some geographical feature such as a busy road or a deep fast flowing river.

E N D

How system currently functions

Diagram elements:

EBS/IRI
- Outreach and Community mobilization
- Lesson dev'ment and production
- Monitoring centers

Overlap region: Planning, Exam dev'ment, Community sensitization, Monitoring, Training

MOE

BESSIP

Equity and Gender, etc.

Teacher Ed.

ECZ

CDC

Inspectorate

Planning and Statistics

Data from mentors

Materials & Training

Data Materials

PEO

DEO

Data

Nearby schools

Materials & Support

IRLC

Training

Communities

Key for IRI Program
Strong linkages
Weak linkages

Proposed vision of EBS-MOE-community partnership for educating the most vulnerable

External environment

District and Provincal level

Min. of Ed.

Planning

ECZ

Forum for Educating the most vulnerable

CDC

EBS/MOE
(As Section of
Dir. Of
Distance Ed.)

BESSIP

NGOs

Learning
Centers

Mentors

Churches

Inspectorate

Ministry of Social
Welfare
& other Ministries
working to protect
children

Teacher education

Communities

Peace Corps

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